

OBHS News

Newsletter of the Old-Brule Heritage Society, Inc. ©2000
Founded in 1998 to Preserve and Share the Heritage of the Old-Brule Region.

Volume II, Issue 6

December 1, 2000

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OUR NEXT REGULAR MEETING WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2000 AT 6 P.M., AT THE MAPLE COMMUNITY CENTER.

FOR OUR SPECIAL PROGRAM OF THE EVENING WE ASK OUR MEMBERS AND VISITORS TO BRING AND SHARE THE STORY ABOUT AN OLD CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT THEY MIGHT HAVE. WE WILL ALSO DECORATE A TREE FOR THE HOLIDAY WHICH WE WILL LEAVE AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER. IF ANYONE HAS EXTRA ORNAMENTS OR LIGHTS TO DONATE OR TO SHARE OVER THE HOLIDAY WE ASK THAT THEY BRING THEM.

Linda Hendrickson has offered to bring in a synthetic tree, and the Town of Maple also has a tree. Norma Lind has volunteered to coordinate the decorating.

Refreshments for the evening will be cold pot luck. Business will be kept to a minimum. Please bring a friend to share the color and the traditions of the season. We will record on video the recollections participants might have regarding their ornaments. All precious ornaments should be taken home after the meeting.

WELCOME ALL!

From the President

As we close in on the Christmas season we still await the naming of our President. The national press and the comedians are enjoying the unprecedented court battles and their casts of characters. A well known newspaper columnist, Mike Barnacle, shortly after the election, in more thoughtful fashion, brought to our attention on TV a very interesting map that had appeared in the *USA Today* which showed the election results across the USA by *counties*. Amazingly the whole country was covered in red which represented counties that went for Gov. George Bush. Much smaller isolated blue pockets, clustered in and around large urban areas, showed counties that had gone to Vice President Al Gore. I noticed an exception to this broad visual pattern: the large counties containing the local Twin Ports.

Despite our apparent remoteness and lack of a city of over 100,000 people, this region seems to have aligned itself with New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago. This must say something very important about our region's history. Is there some way in which

the culture of these larger places has imposed itself successfully upon our region, or has this collective pattern grown out of our own unique experiences...or both?

I think the divide that we are looking at on such a map might be even more interesting if we carried it one step further, bringing it to the level of villages, towns and precincts. At that level we might see another pattern emerge, one even more interesting, important and insight bringing. As a free people, despite the "impositions" of administrations of opposing parties, in America individuals and communities still are free to go their own way, at least at the ballot box. Such a map would give evidence of our precious freedom and vital independence of thought. One would hope that similar maps made up for prior years would show no trends toward less evidence of this free and independent spirit as we move toward the present.

We must not forget why separate towns and villages formed in the first place. There was a time when local

government was the main government. And it was important under such circumstances to exercise local control. On much larger scale, the electoral college itself is evidence of this desire for local control. It is a fact that we do not elect the President directly. The separate States, through the college of electors, elect the president. These separate, relatively free standing communities which we call “States” have reserved to themselves certain powers of self-determination, and equality of standing among peers, that is, among the other states, regardless of size and power in numbers.

The fact that each state, regardless of its total population, still is allowed two U. S. Senators, helps enforce this equality of community status, and desire for

self-determination. If it is true that we as creatures in our small communities are responsible for our own actions within the space and limits allotted to us, we need the protection the law provides us against those larger collective forces that by sheer number might want to force their will upon us. Unless we clearly see this and respect this, “individual freedom” is only lip service and our local communities become merely rubber stamps to unexamined, and some cases socially and individually unhealthy grand agendas. I believe societies like the O-BHS have in part this obligation to help preserve our freedoms.

—Jim Pellman (715) 363-2453, <musketeer6@juno.com>

Fresh news: The Historic Davidson Windmill is now the responsibility of the Old-Brule Heritage Society. The work of Mr. Gene Davidson and the Windmill Committee finally brings us this property transfer...and responsibility. As the final paperwork is completed we must now consider the preservation, interpretation, and fundraising matters before us. We will have to plan for a major fundraising event and official public announcement of the transfer of the site for this spring or early summer. The Committee will welcome all ideas as we take this major step. We thank you, Gene Davidson, for your generous gift.

OCTOBER MEETING REVIEW

We held our latest regular meeting on Wednesday, October 11, 2000 at the Brule Town Hall beginning at 7:00 p.m. A fine group of 27 was in attendance for our meeting, and, for our program we videotaped a “conversation” with Larry Berube, local author, educator, and fishing guide.

Sadly, in today’s paper we found Larry’s brief obituary: He died two days ago in Duluth at 87 years of age. He is survived by Mildred, his wife; daughters Margaret (Bob) Wiinamaki, Rene’e (Jim) Jamiska and Cathy (Jim) Peepo; a sister, Lorraine Armagost; a brother, Donald (Judy) Berube; seven grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. We were so fortunate as a group to have shared the evening with him and his wife. A memorial service will be held in Iron River on Dec. 9th.

In addition to the interview with Larry, Jerry Fechtelkotter shared photos of the last Northern Pacific Railway train through Poplar and the Old-Brule communities from 1981.

Under old business we discussed progress on the Davidson Mill, on our February Raffle, and on “Heritage Park.” Funds were approved for preparing plans for the Heritage Park site, and for purchase of a President Coolidge biographical VCR tape.

Under new business we learned that Nancy and Keith Moreland have purchased the retired Brule School Building. They also have graciously asked that our organization consider possible use of space there. We also felt with regret that we could not at this time accept the offer of Mr. Fred Johnson of Lake Nebagamon for an old log building he had available located in Bennett. He planned to move it to a cabin site in Barnes.

Thanks to Laila Magnuson and the entire Brule History Research Group for their instrumental roles in securing our speaker, and for serving refreshments. Also many thanks to the Town of Brule for use of their hall.

Area History: No. 13

DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL DIVISIONS

The County was organized in 1854. The whole county was embraced in the Town of Superior until April 1887, excepting that about 1859 and 1860 the towns known as Nemadji and Pokegama were set off and maintained an organization for a short time.

The Towns of Brule and Nebagamon [actually "Nebagamain" until 1902] were set off in April, 1887, the present City of Superior, formed a villaged corporation in September, 1887, and became a city in April, 1889.

The Town of Gordon elected its first officers in April, 1888.

The Town of Amnicon was formed from the west half of the Town of Brule in April, 1906.

The Village of Lake Nebagamon seceded from the town of the same name (Nebagamon) in February, 1907, and the balance of the territory of the Town of Nebagamon was divided by the legislature in March, 1907, into the Towns of Hawthorne, Highland, Solon Springs and Nebagamon, and these towns elected officers on April 2, 1907.

What was left of the old Town of Brule, after Amnicon had been organized, was again amputated on the west side by the formation of the Town of Maple out of the west tier of four sections wide. Maple elected its officers April 2, 1907.

The Town of South Range was cut off from the Town of Superior and the Town of Summit took territory from the Town of Superior and the Town of Gordon, and these towns also elected their officers April 2, 1907.

The vote polled at the April, 1908, elections in the different towns was as follows:

Amnicon	162
Brule	163
Gordon	220
Hawthorne	119
Highland	42
Maple	152
Nebagamon	83
Solon Springs	127
South Range	120
Summit	82
Superior	143
Lake Nebagamon (village 1907).....	160
Total	1,233

(Taken from pages 12 and 13 of the Official Douglas County Directory 1908-1909)

[Please recall that only male residents at least 21 years of age could vote. Notice that this list actually totals 1,573, or 340 votes are not accounted for. The Town of Nebagamon would change its name to Bennett in 1908. The Amnicon in the above list would become Lakeside in 1910. At the time of this election (1908) Hawthorne, Highland, Solon Springs, and South Range (which became Oakland in 1918) had all been just formed. In 1910 Parkland, Wascott and Midland would be formed. Midland would become a new Amnicon in 1910, and Dairyland would form in 1919. Poplar and Oliver would both become villages in 1917, and Solon Springs in 1920. Finally Cloverland would be created by the Legislature in 1921. Ed.]

Calendar:

2001 O-BHS Annual Dues are being collected to the end of this year. Please contact Treasurer, Alice Christensen, or President, Jim Pellman.

December 7th, Thursday

Wisconsin Humanities Council, Grant Workshop for Northlands Humanities Grants, Douglas County Historical Society, Superior; 10:30 to noon, 1401 Tower Ave., Community Conference Room.

December 13th, Wednesday

O-BHS bimonthly meeting/program. 6 p.m., Maple Community Center. Bring old ornaments and stories of Christmas past.

December 25th, Monday

Christmas Day

December 30th, Saturday

DCHS Special Program

"The Holidays, 1900 Style," Fairlawn Mansion, Superior.

February 2001

O-BHS Raffle

February 11th, Sunday (tentative date)

DCHS History Sunday, \$2 nonDCHS members

Jim Pellman presents "The Creation of Towns in NE Douglas County."

Maple Community Center, Highway 2

WEB SITE NOW ON LINE

Computer volunteer Dave Short of Poplar has been working on our web site and a preliminary site has been in operation for several weeks now. It's web address is <http://discover-net.net/~dshort/>. Check it out! It has been getting high praise from those with access to the Web. The site's address as you can see is under Dave's name. This address will change once we acquire our own free standing site, and we will publish this change when it is made. We need steady input from everyone, for our calendar on the site, especially, and for new ideas. **Thanks Dave, Audrey, & Jackie for your input.**

Area History: No. 14

Christmas on the Farm by Harvey Johnson © 2000

In line with our Christmas theme for our next meeting and program are the following recollections provided by Minerva Johnson which come from husband Harvey's "memories of Christmas." We will be hoping for similar thoughts as we gather stories from throughout the communities once part of Old-Brule. It seems that traditions varied somewhat as to which was the best tree.

It was an exciting time around the house at

My own family in Maple eight miles away insisted that a spruce held its needles better, even though it wasn't as fragrant as a balsam! Thank you Minerva.. Ed.

Christmas time. Santa always seemed to bring the right

things. We always went out on Christmas morning to see if there were tracks on the roof.

We really and truly believed! I received a small windup train that went round and round on an oval track.

Pa would bring a tree from somewhere in the woods. We had trees planted in the front yard and never considered cutting them. But a mistake happened...with an inch or two of snow....Pa brought a tree and stuck it upright into the ground which wasn't frozen solid. When it was time to bring it in, he couldn't get it loose, so he chopped it down near the ground. The next spring a tree toppled over and fell. He had cut off one of his trees in the yard!

It was always a balsam. They didn't shed needles like a spruce. We would trim it carefully with colored paper cutouts, chains, and Christmas balls. We bought candles, and small holders were carefully snapped on the tips of the branches. The candles would burn brightly....and there were more on the window sills. Can't remember worrying about a fire.

There were several coincidences that happened:

Santa wrote just like Mother, and used our tablet paper.

Christmas candies were sticky and we'd swap with each other. Can't remember silly things like apples or fruit.

Harold and Vernon lived next door and were the first to tell us there was no Santa. It was heartbreaking...but for years we believed.

In school we were given the day off to find a tree for the Christmas program, and it invariably took us a day, and we combed the woods to the river and back.

And we practiced long and hard for the program. We made a small stage that would hold everyone and all the rooms had to participate. A clear memory remains of one of the Hill girls with her hands up on the cross as we all sang "Rock of Ages" and the two bags of candy that were distributed by the teachers.

The horses and sleighs were in the yard and families used them to come and go to this very special event. The N. P. Johnson school had a program that we all attended. We would walk there and back from Waino.

FOLLIS FARM RECEIVES YEAR 2000 CENTURY FARM & HOME AWARD

The Follis Farm in Brule was honored as a Century Farm at the State Fair on August 8, 2000.

This honor is given for having the same family farm for over 100 years with continuous farming.

The Follis farm began in 1893. William B. and Ida Follis had eleven children. During the early years, he had a very large barn built and this was one of the finest farms in Douglas County for that time period.

Several species of farm animals and crops were raised with the help of many hired hands as William G. was also the saloon operator.

Son William C. Follis took over the farm in 1919 after his father's death. William C. and his wife Mildred had one son William T.

The farming continued with most of the most of the milk bottled and sold to businesses and people in Brule.

William T. Follis and his wife Janet took over the farm in 1956 due to his fathers failing health. They raised five children and changed from dairy to beef cattle. Today it is a sheep farm.

One son, Tim, and his wife, Francine, and their four children also live on the farm. Their children are the fifth generation enjoying this same farm.

Century Farm and Home Award Program History

The Century Farm and Home Program originated as part of Wisconsin's Centennial Celebration, a 23-day Wisconsin State Fair which also gave birth to the Alice in Dairyland program. Each year over a hundred properties are honored. This marks the 26th year Hillshire Farm has proudly sponsored the Century Farm Program. Today 133 properties will join the 7099 Century Farms already honored since the program began in 1948. Other farms or homes in our area may also be eligible for this honor. Forms for 2001 have arrived. Please contact Jim Pellman.

The **CESA Virtual Museum Team**, which is working to help create a “museum on the web” in the Maple District, has been meeting at Northwestern Elementary School in Poplar and at the Senior Building in Brule to prepare for this, our second year. Nancy Moreland, Mike Denny, Jim Pellman and Michelle Byholm, Media Specialist in the Elementary Schools, have met with five enthusiastic students from the fifth grade who are already gathering information for their projects. It remains a goal of the O-BHS to establish and to maintain a close relationship with the local school district and this is an effective way.

NW REGIONAL CONVENTION, BRANTWOOD

Four members of O-BHS attended the NW REGIONAL CONVENTION of the Wisconsin Council for Local History which was held Saturday, September 30th, this year hosted by the Knox Creek Heritage Center, which is located near Brantwood (just south of Phillips just off State Highway 13 where Highway 8 crosses.) Participants representing us this year included Norma Lind, Arnold Perala, Delores Pellman and Jim Pellman. It was amazing to see the progress of this relatively new society, founded in 1995. The program of events contained several Finnish song selections, as the Brantwood/Knox Creek area has a substantial ethnic Finnish population. Hjalmer Hakkinen’s sister who lives in that area was one of the participants. We took in a prehistoric menhir site not far from heritage center. On the return trip we stopped in Park Falls and viewed the traveling Vietnam War Memorial wall, and had the unwanted added excitement of hitting a deer on our return trip, just as we left Park Falls in Delores Pellman’s van.

Welcome New Members: Mr. John Altshool of Cincinnati, Ohio, Mrs. Linda Hendrickson of Maple, Mrs. Nan Wisherd in the name of Northland Tax Services at the \$50 level, Mr. Michael T. Doherty, Portland, Oregon. Mr. Doherty is descended from the family of Doherty brothers from New Brunswick, Canada, who were among the earliest settlers in Douglas County, finding their way to Poplar and Maple in Old-Brule. Thank you all for your support!

Also, thank you to all of you who have renewed your memberships for 2001. We hope for a 100 percent renewal. Please join us for our Christmas meeting. The more the merrier!

Anyone interested in joining the Old-Brule Heritage Society is encouraged to attend any of our meetings and programs. To join they may contact any member or the President at the return address below, or call him at (715) 363-2453, our Secretary, Hope Swenson, at 364-2296, or our Treasurer, Alice Christensen, at 364-2535. Our annual dues are \$15.00 for individuals, and \$25.00 for families, payable at the time of our annual meeting in September. Higher levels of support are also available.

New Members and Visitors are WELCOME!

Old-Brule Heritage Society, Inc.

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