

# O-B-H-S News

Newsletter of the Old-Brule Heritage Society, Inc. ©2001  
Founded in 1998 to Preserve and Share the Heritage of the Old-Brule Region.

Volume III, Issue 2

April 1, 2001

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**OUR NEXT REGULAR MEETING WILL BE HELD WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 2001  
AT 7 P.M., AT THE AMNICON TOWN HALL.**

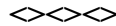
**For our program Mayme I. Sevander will speak on the topic  
"From Lake Superior to Lake Onega."**

Born in Brule, Mayme spent time as a child in both Wisconsin and Minnesota and in New York City from where at the age of 10 with her parents she moved to Petrozavodsk, Russia. Thousands of other Finnish Americans and Canadians were also departing in pursuit of the dream to establish a better world for workers.

The dream for many shattered when Stalin's unconscionable purge began. Mayme Sevander described this in her book, *They Took My Father*. In her second book, *Red Exodus*, she expands on her personal experience and describes the experiences of hundreds of other emigres, including identification and related statistics. *Soviet Bondage*, the sequel to *Red Exodus*, documents Sevander's meticulous and expansive research of records. Information from this research has enabled hundreds of families to reunite or at least find a sense of closure to their sense of loss of loved ones.

Mayme has recently returned from Finland where she published her fourth book, *Vaeltajat* (Wanderers). And since her research is ongoing, she also spent time in Russia and Sweden.

An Associate Professor of Languages, Sevander spent 45 years in education in Russia and holds an Honorary Doctor of Law degree from the College of St. Scholastica where she taught Russian.



**Also, the Davidson Windmill Committee will share its plans with the full group for the May 12 "Dedication" Ceremony at the mill. The Committee will also be seeking authorization for payment of orders for Windmill fundraising items we've ordered in advance of dedication day (caps, T-shirts, mugs, some of which may be available at the meeting).**

**WELCOME ALL!**

The Brule History 2001 Calendars are still available. Proceeds benefit the publication of the history of Brule. Please submit orders to Brule History Research Group, P. O. Box 114, Brule, WI 54820. Cost is \$7.50 which includes postage and handling.

OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THE O-BHS NEWS ARE THOSE OF THE WRITERS ALONE AND ARE NOT INTENDED TO REPRESENT OFFICIAL POSITIONS OF THE O-BHS ORGANIZATION.

### From the President

In heated session in early summer, 1948, Chairman Edwin Pearson of Cloverland called for order, and kept a process on track that finally led to construction of what became Northwestern High School. Eight communities had surrendered the separate autonomy of their respective school boards in order to gather the collective resources and support necessary to bring an orderly high school education to students in this rural region. Each of those gathered in Lake Nebagamon for the vote would have liked to see the new structure rise in his or her own neighborhood. The members of Maple's Farmers' Cooperative had committed themselves to donating the balance of their forty acre site, and at this public meeting on a close vote, Maple, as the most central location, became host to the new high school, now for fifty two years. The town hall of Old-Brule, also centrally located, but long gone from the scene, had been located a block south of the newly chosen site.

The high school facility that we now see is little like the early structure that I used to trudge to to wait for the morning bus to take me and the Maple neighborhood kids to Corner School. New classrooms have replaced the early Quonset hut rooms, one of which was filled with the intriguing smells and colors of the art works of Miss Hope Metcalf's students. Other facilities have been improved throughout the sprawling structure since. The building remains serviceable but its educational usefulness is now under perhaps mortal assault. The only estimate we have gives \$14,000,000 as the amount needed to correct the deficits in its structure and design, compared to \$16,000,000 to build a brand new school. In May the public in the communities now served by the Maple District will be asked to decide in an historic referendum whether the board and administration and their supporters have made an adequate case, in either direction.

No matter what happens, wherever the high school ends up, the Old-Brule Heritage Society will continue to serve the adult public and the youth within this joint district, and we will continue to share in the work of building the vitality of the communities in our region. For this reason I would encourage one thought especially, among the many considerations that will go into this important decision: What community values are served or harmed in a decision to move, or to remove any school? Just as Duluthians, and Northshore Elementary parents have risen to save their neighborhood schools, the character of a neighborhood here is at stake as well. It is not just dollars at issue. We are not looking simply at a map and moving something to a clean blank space. A community's cultural pattern, past sacrifices and traditions—roots—would be torn up in this process of change. We give this legacy, too, to our children. How do we place the right value on it so that what we decide is wise and not sentimental or fleeting? We measure still, in the end, only with informed hearts.

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

### **Jerry Parenteau, a Founding Member Dies.**

**We have lost another friend and founding member, Jerry Parenteau. Retired after a long career with Superior, Water, Light and Power, he was the husband of former Mapleite, Irene Pellman Tuura, and a loyal supporter of our group. His roots went back to a large family in Superior's Allouez neighborhood. Our sympathy goes out to wife, Irene, his children and family. We will miss his helpfulness, infectious laugh and positive spirit.**

### **FEBRUARY MEETING REVIEW**

We held our latest regular meeting on Wednesday, February 14, 2001 at the Maple Community Center beginning at 7:00 p.m. **Chuck Zosel** gave us a richly informed talk with slides and map on the history of the Brule River State Forest. **Mr. Steve Peterson**, his current successor on the State Forest staff was introduced and assisted Chuck. We held our first fundraising raffle, the winners being: Grand Prize: **Jenna Olson** of Duluth; First Prize: **Hilary Ferando**, \$100, and 2nd Prize: **Nancy Culhane**, \$50. Alice said our intake from the raffle tickets should cover the amount of the scholarship after the expenses for the raffle were taken out of

the returns. The president recognized **Margie Koskie** for the amount of her sales and thanked everyone for their efforts, especially Jackie Plunkett for her organizing efforts. **Gene Davidson** should be thanked as well.

The Davidson Windmill Committee reported it is moving forward with the May 12th dedication ceremony preparations. **Bob Aho** of Duluth joined the committee and his architectural and design skills will be a real asset.

The O-BHS Northwestern Scholarship was raised to \$250. We should encourage any senior attending Northwestern planning to go on for higher education to apply.

The Secretary still has many magnets yet to sell. Jim agreed to promote sale more in the newsletter. To move the stock we have magnets of all types were gathered into packets of 6 to sell for \$5. They make good gifts.

Thanks to **Delores Pellman, Irene Brazill, Elvie Agacki, and MaryAnn Gronquist** (forget anyone?) for supplying the meeting “hospitality.” Also, many thanks to Maple for use of their community center.

#### PRESIDENT COOLIDGE BIOGRAPHICAL VCR TAPE

The tape we ordered from CSPAN on the life of President Calvin Coolidge has arrived and is available to check out for use. For those not familiar with our region’s history, Silent Cal, while President, stayed the summer of 1928 at the home of a friend on the Brule River. Superior Central High School became the Summer White House. American Aviation Ace of Aces, Richard Ira Bong of Poplar (one of the communities carved from Old-Brule), as a young man on the family farm, watched the government mail planes flying overhead on their way to the Brule River landing strip., inspiring in him a desire to fly. Please see Jim P. to check out the tape.

### Area History: No. 17

#### FOUR BROTHERS GAVE POPLAR IT’S NAME IN 1882

*This interesting summary of Poplar’s past, contributed to us by Jackie Plunkett, appeared in Superior’s Evening Telegram, July 17, 1954, on page 9. The paper, in honor of the centennial of Douglas County, was running histories of the towns and villages, apparently contributed by or solicited from locals in these places. Several people had tried their hand at recalling or gathering the “firsts” for the Poplar community before this anonymous effort. Victor Isaacson’s notes were available, probably gathered in the early 1930s. Augusta Jones, Mable Sedin, and Boy Scout Troupe 212 also gathered recollections, borrowing from earlier works and contributing their own findings and recollections.*

*Poplar did not form as an incorporated village until 1917. Its political institutions were those of the Town of Superior until 1887, Superior, covering until then, all of Douglas County, then the Town of Old-Brule until 1907,*

*then of the Town of Midland, soon known as the Town of Amnicon in 1910. The town hall mentioned in the article was first constructed as a fire hall for the Poplar region by the Town of Old-Brule.*

*The first school building was constructed by the earliest of Old-Brule’s school districts. Superior had just begun its boom in 1882 with the arrival of the Northern Pacific in 1881, and the Minnesota iron ranges had yet to ship any ore. The Bayfield Road, running east and west one mile north of the Poplar railroad station was to see its last stages carrying Bayfield passengers a couple of years before, once the Wisconsin Central Railroad first arrived at Chequamegon Bay in 1877. These stage runs had started in 1871 due to demands of the Bayfield/Ashland people who wanted to catch the Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad which first arrived in Duluth that year.*

*A parallel route along the Bayfield Road was put in in support of mining efforts along the “Brule Range,” named such to distinguish it from the “Copper Range” more east, centered in what is now Pattison Park. Internal references within the piece to location of buildings and sites reflect the 1954 date of composition.*

*Surprisingly nothing is said about the Richard Bong family which may mean the article was written before World War II. Material in brackets [-] below is by the editor.*

In 1882, tall waving Poplar trees greeted the four Douherty [*sic Doherty*] brothers and Eugene Brainerd, the first settlers of Poplar. From these thick groves, Poplar got its name. [*Brainerd was from Brainerd, Minnesota, according to Isaacson.*]

In December, 1883, came more settlers, among whom were O. P. Peterson and his family. Both C. J. Jones and Fred Gustin came in 1884. In the fall of that year came Frank Asker, Gus Johnson, J. M. Peterson and J. M. M. Peterson. All these people took government homesteads. Their chief occupation was lumbering.

The first railroad came through in 1883, but the trains did not run until 1884. Not long after this, in 1885, Hilma Peterson, the first white child in Poplar, was born. She was born in the house where the Poplar bank now stands.

The first school and also the first building was what is now the section house. The school started in 1885. [*A Town of Superior school.*] The first year there were nineteen pupils. The section house was also used as a post office. Later this house was used as a telegraph office and depot.

The first store was owned by John Douherty [*Thomas Doherty, according to Victor Isaacson, purchased the first store which had been opened about 1885 by Mr. Hart shortly after the railroad was built, who had sold it in a year or two to Thomas Doherty.*] and was located across from the section house.

Lumbering was a chief occupation in those early days. The first sawmill was built in 1886 [*J. E. Chase’s Mill*] and located where Norman LaPole's house now stands. Logs were floated down stream on the river. A brick factory was built in 1891. Later it was converted into a sawmill. Not long after this, in 1890, the town hall was built. [*Perhaps a typographical error. Isaacson states that the town hall was built in 1896.*] This building later became the flour mill. About 1900, the first creamery was built.

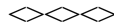
The first automobiles were owned by Eric LaMone, C. O. Lindquist and a Mr. Edquist. Chain-driven, they looked more like tractors, but still they were objects of much pride.

The Mission Church was built in May, 1894, and was remodeled a few times after that. The Lutheran Church was built about 1898 and is still standing.

In 1906, Lundberg and Jones bought what is now the Poplar Hardware and used it for a general store. The bank was built in 1919 by C. R. Olson. Then Peterson's Store was built in 1925, first owned by Fred Sandin. The cannery was built in 1924 by Norman LaPole [*Lange Canning*]. The first road was the old Bayfield road. It was built not long after the Civil War [*Actually it was proposed before the Civil War, but was only a trail until the 1870’s when miners were active along the Brule copper range, and it wasn’t improved enough for stage coaches until after the Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad was built into Duluth in 1871.*] It was used as a federal road during that war. [*This has not been documented anywhere. The road it shared in part to connect with Superior was used this way, and this was the “Military Road” which went south to White Birch (Solon Springs) and on to the Twin Cities and Fort Snelling.*]

Now the brightly colored cannery is the most outstanding feature in Poplar. Eleven thriving places of

business and a busy tourist court stand as evidence of a Poplar that has progressed far since the first settler trudged wearily, but happily in.



## Calendar:

### **April 4, Wednesday, 7 PM**

Davidson Windmill Committee meets at Alice and Cassius Christensen's

### **April 8, Sunday, 2 PM**

DCHS Annual Membership Meeting, Old Post Office, 3rd Floor, Superior.

History Sunday will follow at 3 PM. Lorrie Madden, great-great granddaughter of local Ojibway Chief Joseph Osaugie will speak on "Osaugie's Legacy."

### **April 11, Wednesday, 7 PM**

Regular Bimonthly Meeting. Amnicon Town Hall. Mayme Sevander will talk on "From Lake Superior to Lake Onega."

### **May 3—9 Duluth-Superior Archaeology Week**

May 3, 7 PM, Reception and Poster Session, Lake Superior College Atrium

May 4, 7 PM. Archaeology Night, Barnes and Noble Bookstore, Flintknapping, etc.

May 5, 9 AM to 3 PM, Archaeology Festival, Glensheen

May 7, 7 PM, "Scientific Study of the Kensington Runestone," Barry Hanson, Superior Public Library

May 8, 7 PM, "Underwater Archaeology: Great Lakes," Dave Cooper, Superior Public Library (SPL)

May 9, 7PM, "Magic on the Rocks: The Pictographs of the Boundary Waters..." Mike Furtman, SPL

### **May 12, Saturday, 1 PM**

Davidson Windmill Dedication Ceremony, program at the Windmill. Exhibit at the Lakeside Town Hall. Lunch (for donation) available 2-4 PM. Members of the Järvenpää Choir will sing?

DCHS History "Sunday," on Saturday due to Sunday being Mother's Day, Bennett Town Hall.

Local historian, Tom Selinski, will present his video "For the Common Good: A 95-year History of the *Työmies* Newspaper."

### **May 13, Sunday**

Mother's Day

### **May 24, Friday**

Deadline for contributions to June *O-BNews*.

### **June 10, Sunday**

DCHS History Sunday, Summit Town Hall

Joel Sipress historical presentation, "Superior's Labor Wars."

### **June 13, Wednesday, 7 PM**

Regular Bimonthly Meeting. Program to be announced.

(Possible Workshop on oral histories)

Again a reminder that computer volunteer, **Mr. Dave Short** of Poplar, has our web site up and running. It's web address is <http://discover-net.net/~dshort/> . Check it out! **Donna Bergsten** has volunteered to help keep the site updated. **Thanks Dave, Audrey, Jackie & Donna.**

## **Quick notes and additions:**

**Students at the Elementary School working with Michelle Suo and the CESA Virtual Museum Team have started designing their web sites. We look forward to seeing their sites take their place along with those of students in other schools in the region.**

**Fire Proof Room: Construction Update. Work has been proceeding on the Maple Community Building fire rated room. Doug Montavon, and Paul M. Hakkila have been taping the joints. Your president attended the Douglas County Land and Development Committee meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 30 to ask for an extension until March 30th, and this was approved. The County is paying a matching half of the non-labor portion of the project.**

**We can happily and thankfully report that members Marvin Haukkala, Larry Luostari and Alice Christensen, have been seen out and about and have come a long way toward full recovery.**

**Also, thank you to all of you who have renewed your memberships for 2001. We cannot thank you enough for your continued support. Have any of you forgotten us?**

**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.**

Post Office Box 24

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