

O-BHS 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 6

December 3, 2001

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OUR NEXT REGULAR MEETING WILL BE OUR CHRISTMAS MEETING, TO BE HELD WEDNESDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 12, 2001, 6 P.M., AT THE BRULE TOWN HALL.

A pot luck dinner starting immediately at 6 P.M. will begin the evening's events.

We will then hear our guest speaker, Dr. Alexis Pogorelskin, who will talk on the subject "Karelian Fever." Dr. Pogorelskin is Chair of the History Department at UMD. An expert in Russian history, she has been doing important work on this Depression Era, pre-Cold War, phenomenon which saw around 6,000 Finnish-Americans depart America for what many believed would be a *Finnish speaking* "workers' paradise" in the Karelian Autonomous Republic of the Soviet Union, in Dr. Pogorelskin's view. Several families from the Old-Brule region were involved in recruitment activities, emigration and the tragic consequences which former Brule resident, Mayme Corgan Sevander, has addressed in her books.

Opinions vary sharply regarding the personal dynamics motivating participants and the appeals being made to them. The Finnish language newspaper *Työmies* ("Workingman"), which was published right in Superior with a national readership, was an influential voice for the early professed ideals of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Ultimately the dictator Stalin's purges would in short order destroy what amounted to a Socialist Finnish Karelian cultural enclave and the lives and the families of many who had bound their lives to it. We look forward to hearing Dr. Pogorelskin's latest findings.

After her talk we will conduct our business meeting which will be followed by our fundraising Christmas gift exchange. Everyone interested in participating in the gift exchange is asked to bring a wrapped gift \$5 or more in value, marked "man" or "woman." Then, to receive a gift each participant will be asked to pay an additional \$5.00.

Thanks to Laila Magnuson, Chair of the Brule History Research Group, who has secured the hall for the evening.

WELCOME EVERYONE!

The Brule History Research Group 2002 Calendars are still available. Proceeds go toward the publication of the history of Brule. Please submit orders to Brule History Research Group, P. O. Box 114, Brule, WI 54820. Cost by mail is \$7.50 which includes postage and handling. Purchased from Brule outlets the calendar is \$6.00.

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

A dozen years ago in connection with my early research on the history of Maple I stopped at the Douglas County Museum, where I thought I might find and use the Douglas County Historical Society archives. These were of course located at the impressive Fairlawn Mansion in Superior. I was disappointed to be turned away by the man behind the

desk who on my follow up visit said he had found nothing related to Maple in the archives. I was stunned by this result, and wondered how it was possible that the Douglas County Historical Society would not even have a vertical file on Maple, a town that had existed since 1907. Who, I wondered, might have something? I then spent several years

gathering what I could find at the Superior Public Library, then at the Jim Dan Hill Library at UWS which at the time held the old town and village tax records, and finally from the memories, albums and scrap books of many local residents.

I had naively thought there would be some group somewhere gathering in faithful fashion neatly organized clipping files on each of our communities throughout the county, and that with a convenient history of Douglas County grabbed from the shelf at the library I would be able to speedily complete my history of Maple's past by summarizing these readily available materials. Was I ever wrong. There was no group gathering neat files. There was no exhaustive history, not even a cursory history of Douglas County, unless the important historical sketch of Jess M. Schuldt from 1942 counts. Now, after all of this time I have located much of the work that was done in the past, yet I could go on gathering material indefinitely, especially material in the Finnish language. But, finally, I'm saturated and I'm tidying up mountains of raw material for a final push to completion....How much has changed since that first visit to Fairlawn!

How much *has* changed? Foremost is the change in my awareness about the resources that are (or should I say "are not") available for small local community research, as for such as Maple, or for any of the communities which the Old-Brule Heritage Society now serves. I have even been told that Maple does not have a history, and by implication, that none of these other communities has a past worth recording either! The local political and cultural vessels that shaped and supported the lives of my grandfathers and grandmothers, and the vessel that shaped the life of a national hero like Major Richard Ira Bong do not have histories: these small places we call home are invisible to history of a certain type. It falls to us to muster the energy to tell the story of these our towns and villages through our oral history gathering, and our collecting of other materials, photos and documents to fill a local archive. We must index this material and then find a way to share it with Douglas County, the State, and beyond. We must open the eyes of history to our presence and to the importance of local past.

Fairlawn, too, has changed dramatically. The man who I appealed to for Maple material who I later found out was an employee of the City of Superior which then and now owned Fairlawn, is long gone, and his successor, Rachael Martin, [who was a true employee of the Douglas County Historical Society (DCHS)] now works maybe less stressfully at Glensheen Mansion in Duluth, after a major shakeup, which now finds the DCHS free-standing in offices at the Old Post Office building on Tower Avenue; and a new organization, Superior Public Museums, now runs Fairlawn. Fairlawn's amazing renovation, initiated by DCHS, makes the building a grand regional resource as it displays a significant portion of the DCHS collection.

During Rachael's tenure things began to turn around at the DCHS, and its archives were taking shape under curator Joe Korman's direction. One at least might have found vertical files on Cloverland, Maple and Poplar. A major inventorying and indexing effort was truly opening up the photos and other archive materials. These processes continue at the Old Post Office and should become even more efficient with the new stability of DCHS, a new outlook, a new computer system, added staff, and professional guidance sponsored by the State Historical Society. We at O-BHS must work to keep lines of communication open to all history preserving groups, and to strengthen those in place with the DCHS. We need to offer our help in joint enterprises, namely, in the Douglas County Sesquicentennial planning now in progress.

And finally, there has been a sea change among those people at DCHS whom I have admired who have selflessly dedicated themselves to preserving our region's past, giving of their time and skills, most recently, DCHS Board Emeritus Member, Helene Lesynski. Helene died at 94 on Sunday, Oct. 21, at St. Mary's Hospital in Duluth. Helene proved her loyalty and helped the DCHS crew hold a steady course during the recent stormy changes, and I can honestly say that without the example and encouragement of such as she my own energies would not have become focused as they have in the O-BHS to capture our own past. Thank you, Helene, and may you find serene eternal seas.

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

***Lake Superior Magazine* has returned our photos and sent us a complimentary copy of the late summer edition which had the update article on the Davidson Windmill. We thank them for their article and the copy.**

DONATIONS

We have received a \$500 cash donation from Frederick and Ellen Wells who joined us at our last meeting. We have enrolled them in a family membership and the balance of their gift has gone into the Davidson Windmill Fund at their request.

The Town of Lakeside has sent us a contribution of \$250. Our Treasurer has placed that gift into the Davidson Windmill Fund.

On top of their \$1000 donation last year, Bob and Irene Lundberg have renewed their memberships for 2002 with a \$100 gift.

We have also received cash donations from Edith Warner, Jack and Maryann Gronquist, and Karen Bridge.

Jon Winter from Lakeside has donated a hay lift. Paul Colby is involved in gathering history from the older residents of the Lakeside area. Paul has donated many hours to this task, and we need to encourage this same energy for researching the past of all the communities in our region.

WE CANNOT THANK YOU ALL ENOUGH FOR YOUR MEASURES OF CONFIDENCE AND SUPPORT.

OCTOBER 10th BIMONTHLY MEETING AT POPLAR VILLAGE HALL.

Unapproved Minutes of Minerva Johnson, Acting Secretary

The meeting was called to order by Jim Pellman at 7:05 p.m. There were 29 people present.

A brief deferred Board Meeting was conducted in which Minerva nominated Jerry Fechtelkotter to be Second Vice President. On motion by acclamation Jerry was elected to office. Motion was made to return all other prior officers to their previous positions by acclamation. Motion carried.

Regular meeting agenda was resumed. Guests introduced were Dr. Richard Sauers, Paul Williams, Frederick and Ellen Wells, and member Douglas Seis from Racine. Jim then introduced our speaker, Dr. Richard Sauers of Lake Nebagamon, currently researcher for the Bong Heritage Center and Civil War book author.

Dr. Sauers said the ground breaking of the Bong Heritage Center would be Thursday at 9:30 a.m. The Center would include local history of World War II - shipyards and iron mines. He informed us that the Caterpillar tractor that Bong operated as a young man on his farm in Poplar had been located, and that it will be restored with funds provided by the Caterpillar Corporation.

He then spoke on his main theme about the American Civil War and how to research someone who was in it. There are many books about the war - one which he had with him was entitled: *Military History of Wisconsin in the War of the Union*.

After the program we recessed for lunch.

Business Meeting

Minutes

Minerva moved to accept the prior meeting's minutes as printed. Seconded and carried.

Financial Report:

Treasurer's Report was good! As printed in agenda:

Main Acct \$1,393.33; Windmill Acct. \$1,937.62.

\$1,273.25 = Gross proceeds from Windmill Tours and Bake Sale.

Irene Parenteau moved we place 25% of windmill fundraising proceeds into our Main Account and 75% into the Windmill Fund. Seconded and carried.

Old Business

1. No action was taken on the Heritage Park.
2. We hope we can have another day like the Windmill Tour & Sale...Jim thanked everyone who participated.
3. Now that Paul Hakkila is home from vacation may be we can get started on the O-BHS archives.
4. Tentative date of November 7th was set for Regional History Gathering Committee to meet to work on oral histories. Jim would let the Committee members know exact date.
5. Dickie Tuura should fill in blanks for 100 year farms...There should be notices at the Town meetings so people know about the program. Forms should be made available for the 2002 program.
6. The committee had a good trip to Moquah-Ashland August 25th. The Moquah Heritage Society has 340+ members. They have no museum. They do language studies and publish a large newsletter.

New Business

1. Brule was named the tentative site for the December 12th meeting. Pot luck lunch at 6 p.m. Motion made to bring \$5.00 gift (wrapped) & labeled "man" or "woman." These were to be sold for \$5.00 each as a money maker. The speaker is to be Dr. Alexis Pogorelskin.
2. We have the latest Wisconsin Historical Society quarterly magazine and other mailings available.

Committee Reports

1. Davidson Windmill: covered with Windmill Tour and Bake Sale report above. No new meeting yet scheduled.
2. Programs/Speakers: Pat Labadie to be asked for February's meeting. Creameries, Farms as future topics?
3. Maple Community Center Archives: Discussed above. Needs final work completed. County matching check of \$588 has arrived.
4. Fundraising: More windmill magnets are needed. A new version is in the works.
5. Web site: Donna Bergsten is working on site. Not present at meeting to attend class on site creation.
6. Publicity: Audrey Hakkila continues to do a great job.
7. CESA: School contact, Michelle Byholm has moved. We still want school contact. Sites created by students last year are located at www.hereathome.org.
8. Newsletter: deadline set for December issue, Nov. 23rd.
9. Scholarship: was paid for last year. Awaiting information on 2002 scholarship. Scholarship contact, Counselor Kathie Matushak had retired. She had been a great help.
10. Collection: (Coolidge Tape now available, also tape: "For the Common Good" on the Työmies newspaper.) Arnold Perala/Ketola family donations at the annual meeting. Paul Colby donations. Gene Davidson donations. Erland Ukkola donation of old Maple School District and Town records.
11. Membership: (committee inactive). We got at least two new memberships on the tours. Mr. Art Haugen of East End Drug took out a Business Membership at \$50 for which we thank him.
12. Regional History Gathering Committee: (Follow up work for this evening - indexing and possibly transcribing interviews. Typists? Volunteers?) See 4 under Old Business for date.

Communications

1. Routine State Historical Society mailings.

Adjournment.

Motion by Marge Koskie to adjourn.

Thanks to Jerry Fechtelkotter for securing the Poplar Village Hall for the evening, to Jerry, and all others for supplying the great treats and hospitality. Thanks too, to the Village of Poplar for use of the hall, and finally, to Dr. Sauers.

VCR TAPES TO CHECK OUT.

We would like to again remind everyone that the tape we ordered from CSPAN on the life of President Calvin Coolidge is available to check out for use.

We also now have available from the opposite end of the political spectrum the tape "For the Common Good: The History of the Työmies Newspaper." This tape is close to ninety minutes long, and was presented to the O-BHS by Douglas County Historical Society. It is the creative work of T. Selinski Productions and was copyrighted in 2000. It was presented to viewers recently on public television in Duluth. Please see or call Jim Pellman (363-2453) to check out either tape.

REBATES FOR WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS.

Recently we received a check from the Wisconsin Historical Society. This check amounts to a rebate on dues paid to the State Historical Society for annual memberships by members of our group. As an incentive to join, for each person in our group who becomes a member of the State Society the O-BHS gets five dollars.

FUNDRAISING MERCHANDISE FOR SALE.

The Society now has available regional history magnets, plus Davidson Windmill memorabilia: mugs, caps and tee shirts for sale. Magnets are going for \$1 each or 6 for \$5.00, proceeds to our general fund. The Windmill mugs are \$8.00, caps, \$9.00 and tee shirts, any size, \$10, all proceeds going into the Windmill Fund.

We also now have copies of a David Noah Seis photograph of the mill for sale. This improved image comes in three sizes: 4 by 5 inches, 5 by 7 inches, and 8 1/2 by 11 inches. The smaller reproductions can also be used as post cards as each has a brief historical description on half of its reverse side. Prices are \$1.00, \$2.00 and the largest one which has no printing on it \$3.00. All are laser reproductions on card stock suitable for framing. This same improved image is now available in our magnet series. Our thanks to Noah who donated the digital image to O-BHS.

Wisconsin tax is included in all our prices. Shipping and handling for mugs, caps and tee shirts is a \$4.00 minimum. All items will also be available for purchase at our meetings, or by contacting your President at 363-2453.

Area History: No. 21

The East Cloverland Improvement and Co-operative Fair Association

In 1921 the Town of Cloverland was carved out of the northern portions of the existing towns of Maple and of Brule. Despite petitions the Douglas County Board failed to pass a measure creating the new town so a citizens' group headed by Philip Nelson of Maple carried the case of his neighboring citizens to the Wisconsin Assembly. Legislation was passed which ordered that a new town be formed and that it hold its first meeting in April of 1921.

The new town extended nine miles from east to west, about two miles of that distance falling on the east side of the Brule River and seven sections to the west. A new boundary about seven and a half miles from Lake Superior divided those who had all been Brule residents into separate communities. These were long distances for the roads and cars of the day, with horses and steers still the draft mainstays of the region's farmers.

Farmers in Cloverland to the east of the Brule shared the problems of the Finnish speaking district known as Waino, also east of the Brule River, just to their south. They were both removed by some distance from the railroads serving the villages of Maple and Brule miles to the south. It was in the interests of the families in each of the communities to pool their efforts, and despite what amounted to a significant cultural divide, even to attempt joint efforts across the new town boundary.

Sometime in 1925 residents at the eastern end of the new town gathered informally to create what they later called the "East Cloverland Improvement and Co-operative

Fair Association." Minutes just donated to the O-BHS by the latest members of the Cloverland Community Club, their successor organization, pick up at their January 29, 1926, meeting with M. O. Burhans acting as Secretary. Apparently a highlight of the early meetings were debates on topics of the day, the topic for the February 27, 1926, was the merits of "Pediagreed animals." The meetings opened with a song by a member. The local 4-H club was invited to the meetings. Extremely well written formal by-laws were adopted on October 29, 1926. These reveal that the object of the association was "to promote the agricultural interest, improve social conditions, and better the general welfare of the community, also a closer co-operation in buying the things on the farm, and selling farm produce...It shall be the aim of this association to hold an annual 2 day community fair...The purpose of the fair to encourage 4H club members, and other young people of the community to do their best along agricultural lines, and to give prizes to those who makes the best exhibits. It is also the aim of this association to encouraged farmers and their wives to raise better garden truck... better crops, poultry, live stock, etc..."

By 1931 the association had built its own hall and the future looked bright. There were even efforts underway to merge with the Waino Community Club. And then disaster struck. We will pick up the story in our next newsletter. Editor.

Calendar:

December 6 through January 6, 2002, Superior Public Museums presents “Holiday Tours of Fairlawn Mansion.” There will also be a full schedule of holiday concerts and performances through December 22nd, at 4 or 7 pm. Many events are free and open to the public. Call 394-5712 for more information.

December 9, Sunday, 2 p.m. Brule Town Hall; Douglas County Historical Society’s History Sunday: Barry Hanson on the Kensington Runestone.

December 12, Wednesday, 6 p.m., Brule Town Hall. O-BHS bimonthly “Christmas” meeting. Pot luck dinner followed by talk by Dr. Alexis Pogorelskin on “Karelian Fever.” Business meeting. Gift exchange fundraiser.

January 25, Friday, deadline for contributions to the next issue of O-BHS News.

February 13, Wednesday, next regular bimonthly meeting. Location and speaker to be announced.

WEB SITE ON LINE

Again a reminder that computer volunteer, **Mr. Dave Short** of Poplar, has designed our web site and has kept it running. It’s web address remains for now <http://discover-net.net/~dshort/>. Check it out! **Donna Bergsten** has been working on site changes which will lead eventually to a changed address and to our own independent site. **Thanks Dave, Audrey, Jackie & Donna.**

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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