

OBHS News

Newsletter of the Old-Brule Heritage Society, Inc. ©2002
Founded in 1998 to Preserve and Share the Heritage of the Old-Brule Region.

Volume IV, Issue 3

June 3, 2002

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NEXT MEETING/PROGRAM WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12TH, 7 PM, AT THE AMNICON TOWN HALL IN WENTWORTH.

MAE JOHNSON WILL PRESENT “THE HISTORY OF MIDDLE RIVER HEALTH CARE FACILITY” AS THE PROGRAM FOR OUR MEETING.

Middle River Health Care Facility has provided vital medical services to Douglas County residents for decades. Located on San Road over the years it has changed its identity from a county owned facility serving the victims of tuberculosis to one now privately managed which provides long term nursing care to the region’s aged, and to those recovering from major illnesses.

Mae Johnson, who resides not far from Middle River, is a local historian and a current member of the Board of Directors of the Douglas County Historical Society. She will share a video tape on the history of the site. We would also like to invite all those with insights into Middle River’s past to share their personal recollections of their own or other’s having worked or of having recovered from illness there.

Our business meeting will follow. If inspired please bring a treat to share for our coffee break.

WELCOME EVERYONE!

From the President:

On Saturday, May 4th, I took a welcome break from my sister’s house building project and went with Bob Aho, Audrey Hakkila, Irene Parenteau, and my mother, Delores Pellman, to Hayward to attend the latest Wisconsin Historical Society Local History Office annual workshop offerings. We split up among the three different programs offered: archival care of textiles, creation of historical exhibits, and fundraising. As usual the overall impression was a high level of expertise on the part of the presenters and a willingness on their part to expend extra effort in helping us do a better job in preserving and presenting our local past. We all felt it had been a rewarding day.

However, from the scuttlebutt I heard, there and afterward, the news regarding local history at the State level has not improved significantly. The State Historical Society assures us of their concern for the continuation of “field” historical services to our local groups, but we at the greatest distance from Madison stand to lose the most as the State Society is forced to contract due to the severe budget shortfall. Many people have added their names to petitions circulated by the Wisconsin Council for Local History hoping to hold the line on cuts in services to local societies, and local legislators, namely Senator Bob Jauch and Representative Gary Sherman, thankfully have been active in attempting to

restore some of the loss in funding.

The Wisconsin State revenue deficits, which have led Governor McCallum to propose similar broad cuts in shared revenue to local governments, are a sign that the more our local society budgets can remain free of unstable distant support the better off we will be. Reliance on the State affects the larger, county wide societies especially. Those of us with a love for our collective heritage at all levels must remind our elected representatives that the vital, but very small percentage of direct and indirect governmental spending we receive in support of retaining the foundations of our very identity as a free people must be maintained. It is important for the State to support those at the heart of this local, mostly volunteer, effort.

I remain confident that, whatever happens, with the high level of private and local government, non-monetary support we have continued to receive, the Old-Brule Heritage Society will carry on despite diminished direct professional support from the State. I thank you all for your continued voluntary contributions.

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

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.

FUNDRAISING MERCHANDISE FOR SALE

The Society 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.

A new order of shirts will have a new enlarged design.

Available also are 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.

MAPLE COMMUNITY CENTER FIRE PROOF ARCHIVE ROOM

Your president attended a recent Maple Town Board meeting and shared with the Board our understanding of the operation and access to the archives which we will jointly maintain there. For now the President will hold a key to the room, along with elected Maple Board members. We were authorized at the meeting to place a "Regional Archives" sign on the archive door. At our last heritage society meeting we further organized our archive and history gathering committee, which is to gather, copy, transcribe, and catalog the many items we have in our growing collection which we will be placing in the files and on shelves there. The archive door needs to be properly installed and sealed. Again, our thanks to the Town of Maple and to Chairman Gary Saari. Also thanks, to Maple Supervisor, Doug Montavon, to Paul Hakkila, and Marvin Haukkala for their past work, and to J. R. Jensen and Sons for use of their equipment. Thanks, too, to Jackie Plunkett and to Alice Christensen for their filing cabinets. And thanks to Douglas County and to Supervisor Tony Coletta for the County support. Audrey Hakkila, Shirley Kankas and others have volunteered for the committee. We will welcome other volunteers to help in this important part of our efforts.

O-BHS NWHS SCHOLARSHIP

We have again sponsored our O-BHS Northwestern High School Scholarship. The amount to be given this year remains at \$250. The recipient for 2002 is Morganna Moon, daughter of Bill and Gemma Moon of Poplar. Morganna plans to attend St. Scholastica. Our congratulations to Morganna and to her family. Our best wishes to Morganna in her college and professional career.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Old-Brule Heritage Society, Inc. Regular Meeting April 10, 2002, Maple Community Center

Attendance: 29

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** 7:05 p.m.

Welcome and opening remarks by President, Jim Pellman. He introduced new audience people.

II. **PROGRAM:** Jim talked about an 1889 Map showing Old-Brule. Poplar was a railroad stop since 1883. He then introduced Norman (Bud) LaPole who summarized the history of the Poplar Canning Enterprise which began as the Lange Canning Company in 1924. Bud carried this important history up to the time the plant left the ownership of his family. Questions were taken from the floor, and the program was recorded on video tape for use of future researchers.

Short break before the business meeting. Pot lunch was served.

III. **BUSINESS MEETING.**

A. **MINUTES:** (Hope Swenson) Secretary's minutes were printed in the latest *O-BHS News*. Minerva Johnson moved the minutes be approved as printed. Marge Koskie seconded the motion. Motion carried.

B. **FINANCIAL REPORT:** (Alice Christensen) Main checking account: \$1,853.70; Windmill Account in savings:

\$3,653.40. Paul moved we approve this financial report. Jerry Fechtelkotter seconded the motion. Motion carried. There are 111 adult members in our group.

C. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Heritage Park. No new action taken.
2. Davidson Windmill: Permanent road signs yet to be ordered (under study). Tentative painting date of May 11th. Possible lead abatement necessary. Testing to be done before painting. Jim will call a meeting to address immediate issues in the next few weeks.
3. Regional History Gathering and Archives Committee. Additional work necessary on O-BHS Archives, Maple Community Center was discussed. Jim suggested we tour the archives after our coffee break. Eddie Walman, Margie Koskie, Paul Hakkila, Irene Parenteau and Jim Pellman were some of the members who volunteered or were suggested as workers. Once the rooms are painted and the door installed file cabinets and shelving can be moved in. Contact will be made with these volunteers for painting. Audrey H. has volunteered to do archival work as well as Shirley Kankas.
4. Centennial Homes/Farms: Contact had been made with the local governments. No returns as yet.
5. Merchandise for Sale. Card sales: Nancy Moreland's and Cathy Carlson's cards were passed around. Alice C. will investigate the sale of Carlson's cards and report. No new action taken.
6. Volunteer hours. Jim reminded members to keep a record of volunteer hours, including time of attendance at our meetings and passed around forms to those who hadn't earlier received them.
7. Report from Jim and Eddie Walman on tour of Eskolin house/log cabin. The report was positive. No legal documents are yet drawn up, nor has the dismantling been determined. Paul moved that we move forward to get document of claim from the Andersons. Delores seconded. Motion carried. The Silta barn and the Hakala/Wirtanen site were also discussed with no action taken.
8. Workshop in Hayward, May 4th reminder. Five members authorized at 1/2 tuition paid and mileage for one vehicles. Participants to go: Jim Pellman, Delores Pellman, Audrey Hakkila, Bob Aho, Alice Christensen? (Irene Parenteau went instead of Alice.)

D. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Next meeting program was discussed. Date of June 12th was set; location, Amnicon Town Hall. Program will be given by Mae Johnson if her health permits. Theme: the Middle River Rest Home Site. Alice C. will make final arrangements. Hospitality will be a pot luck lunch.
2. Archive Room Grand Opening. Once fully complete we will hold a grand opening, inviting the regional press.
3. O-BHS to volunteer to help Channel 8 on their fundraising drives. Minerva Johnson proposed we contact them, and the group agreed by acclamation.
4. A new order of T-shirts will be ordered to replenish our supply.

E. COMMITTEE REPORTS (items not covered above):

1. **Davidson Windmill:** replacement of ash tree by Eddie and Alice as weather improves. A flagpole is planned, once we have night illumination.
2. **Future Programs/Activities:** Pat Labadie has agreed to speak to our group late this year. [Also Lorrie Madden on Osaugie, and Dr. Alexis Pogorelskin has offered to share her video but still in progress.]
3. **O-BHS Archives,** Maple Community Center. Jim will visit Maple Town meeting to discuss procedures, etc.
4. **Fundraising.** Web site and O-BHS News will offer items for sale. Grants still need to be identified.
5. **Web Site:** New web site is not complete. Audrey Hakkila will report at our next meeting to see if help is needed.
6. **Publicity:** Audrey continues her good work.
7. **CESA/NW School District:** Dormant. A digital camera that was ordered for the project should still be available for historical documentation. Nancy Moreland was going to investigate.
8. **Newsletter:** deadline for June 1st issue, May 25th.
9. **Scholarship:** The secretary has contacted the NWHS Guidance Office re. sponsorship of a senior scholarship of \$250 again this year.
10. **Collection:** Accessioning necessary on recent donations.
11. **Membership.** Alice C. reported good renewal and contacts being made.
12. **Archives and History Gathering:** Typists and other volunteers will be needed.

F. **ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting was adjourned at 10 p.m.

Hope Swenson, Secretary

Special News: May 8, Hope was given the name of Morganna Moon, daughter of Bill and Gemma Moon, as the recipient of the OBHS Scholarship. St. Scholastica is in her plans.

THANK YOU & RECOGNITIONS

Many thank yous are in order:

—To **Richard and Ruth Guhl** of Elmwood Park, Illinois, near Chicago, and summertime Oulu residents. Their daughter's family runs *Round Up North* in Brule. Ruth's mother was a daughter of Gust Taipale from the Oulu area, and her father was Walter Anderson from Superior. Ruth and her husband have been active in recording and preserving our local cemetery sites. Lorraine Perala Korhonen and Norma Tuura Lind have helped them with Finnish names and relationships. We will bring the Guhl's latest effort to our next meeting for input from our membership. Recently they have been working on the Maple Finnish Lutheran Cemetery. The south half is owned by the Maple Independent Apostolic Lutheran Congregation, the north half by the Faith Lutheran Congregation.

—To **Jan and Bill Follis** who have provided even more documents dealing with early Brule.

—To **All Members** who have renewed their memberships for 2002. We would like to thank **Sister Genevieve Schillo** and the **Sister's of St. Joseph** in Superior for a recent \$25 donation. Thanks, too, to **Mr. John Altshool** of Cincinnati for his membership renewal at the \$25 family level.

—To **Paul Colby** who dropped off for our archives a copy of the video *Talvisota (The Winter War)*, (©1990) a movie by Finnish movie maker, Pekka Parikka, about the 105 day Soviet invasion of Finland in the winter of 1939-40. The screenplay is based upon Antti Tuuri's book. Paul is also taking care of the grass at the Windmill site, as long a job duties permit.

—To **Dickie and Barbara Tuura** who donated a copy of a Tuura photo showing family members harvesting peas. They also left to copy news articles on early copper mining activities in the Old-Brule region.

—To the **Douglas County Hist. Soc.** for inviting us to send a representative to their Mission Statement Workshop held June 1st.

In case we have failed to give thanks elsewhere we want to acknowledge the gift of the clock from the old Riverside School given by **Elmer Hermanson** via **Gene Davidson** at our recent Lakeside meeting. **Norma Lind** donated the gavel from the Brule Women's Cooperative Guild at the end of the same meeting.

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

—We extend our sympathy to the family of **Ilene Anderson**, wife of Oscar, who died this past week at a young 75.

—Congratulations to our Treasurer, **Alice Christensen**, who has joined the club of those retired after many years of cheerful service at Poplar Hardware.

—Our sympathy also to members of Maple's **Laina Olson** family. *Laina, who resided in Maple all of her life, died at Middle River at the age of 93....*

—and who have we forgotten?

Area History: No. 25

TAYLOR'S BRIDGE IN AMNICON & ITS NAMESAKES

Douglas County Historical Society has invited the writer to draft a text for a sign to mark the spot where Taylor's Bridge once crossed the Middle River in the Town of Amnicon, here in the Old-Brule region of Douglas County. Based upon a grant proposal written by Kathy Laakso, DCHS's Manager, the site of the bridge is to be suitably marked and its importance to architectural and local history explained. The bridge had carried traffic on the Old Bayfield Road over the river for close to seventy years. It was the last remaining queen-post truss bridge in the state. Part of the terms of the Federal funding that helped build a replacement bridge about 1998 was that suitable recognition be given to the historic replaced bridge and that it remain available for public viewing. It went into the possession of Mr. David Williams who happens to own the site of the Corona Copper Mine, in Section 10, Township 47 North, Range 12 West, near where the bridge now rests in a field about a mile and a half southwest of its original site.

No less historically significant is this mining site, which marks the location of one of several exploratory copper mines in Douglas County from the beginning of the Twentieth Century. Nearby is also the property once owned by Matti Tenhunen, who was one of those involved in "Karelian Fever" recruitment about 1930, from very near the time of the bridge's construction; and just south of the mine site is the berm of an old logging dam on the Middle River which, when opened during the spring in the 1890's to float pine logs down the Middle River, washed out native copper from the river bank which led to the Corona mining operations.

At the time of the 1900 Old-Brule US Census the Taylor family is not yet found in the region, but by 1905 Mr. George A. Taylor has made \$10 worth of improvements on his property, less than three quarters of a mile from the Northern Pacific Railroad, and he owns one horse and two cows. His neighbor is one "M. Taylor," maybe land in his wife's name. The combined land was just under 74.5 acres, the same land now occupied by Roy F. and Bonita Martin. My great-grandfather, Jacob Pellinen, four miles north of the Maple Station at the same time had \$15 in taxable improvements, 2 horses and 3 cows. Jacob had a large family and a large house to hold them all, plus a barn, out buildings and a sauna. Ten and fifteen dollars went a very long way with the tax man of 1905.

By the 1910 Census, taken on the 21st of April, George, a shipyard carpenter, and his wife of 33 years, Margaret, had only one of seven surviving children born to them still at home, their son Earl, who was twenty. George was a venerable 66, born a Scotsman, an 1883 immigrant to the United States who came with, or shortly before, his wife, Margaret, who was now 57. He was naturalized in 1889, and his wife and children with him. They were living in the narrow valley of the Middle River, not far from a Bayfield-Superior Road that had been a main east-west corridor in northern Douglas County since 1870 when a winter stageline first came through. The Village of Lake Nebagamon ten miles to the southeast was still full of the sound of the giant Weyerhaeuser and Rutledge mill, and logging spurs built into the adjacent uncut timber sections around the Taylors had only recently stopped carrying away their pine logs. By the Census of 1920 Margaret, now 68, had been widowed, but she had her 26 year old daughter Florence, a teacher in the public schools, now back home, and son Earl, a sawmill contractor, to help her with the farm chores.

In the fall of 1929 the Town of Amnicon petitioned the Douglas County Board of Supervisors to replace the bridge across the Middle River next to the Taylor farm, for which they were willing to pay one-half of its \$800 cost. The bridge would be 40 feet 8 inches long and have a deck 13 feet 8 inches wide. It was completed in 1930, and was made mostly of wood, suspended and bound by iron, and with a sawmill nearby, it was relatively easy to maintain over the years. In 1982 it was struck by an automobile near its east end. An article in the Superior *Evening Telegram* in November of 1982 questioned the safety of the bridge for vehicular traffic. The article mentioned the historic value of the bridge as the last of its kind in the state. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin was concerned about the Town of Amnicon's plans for the bridge. Most recently before the bridge was moved, a private party in Springbrook, Wisconsin, had intended to buy it.

Representatives of the Taylor family would expand their holdings in the Middle River Valley around that which George had acquired in the early 1900s, at least until 1971. But the Taylor name was gone by 1979 and today Glen and Carol Lindahl hold the southern portion of the Taylor holdings. A Diane C. Taylor has recently appeared as owner of adjacent lands, perhaps a coincidence. An Elizabeth Taylor has for years owned land on Bond ("Pond") Lake in southern Douglas County. At the time of the Weyerhaeuser mill in Lake Nebagamon, a logging camp called Taylor's Camp was located only four miles from the bridge but its construction seems to have preceded George Taylor's arrival. Another landmark with the same family name, Taylor's Falls, on the St. Croix River is about 100 miles south west, but should be investigated for possible connection.

An effort was being made then to preserve the "Taylor Bridge" (or Taylor's Bridge) years before the time of its removal. The Douglas County Historical Society even sent the paperwork in the direction of the Old-Brule Heritage Society in our earliest days (1998), but neither Douglas County nor the Old-Brule group had the means at the time to financially inspire a change of plans to retain the bridge on its original stone abutments. Many of our members remember the quaint experience of crossing the Middle River on the wood and iron structure over the river's narrow solid rock-lined channel. It was a true disappointment that this parklike site could not have been used to interpret the long history of the traffic movement and the settlers along the Bayfield-Superior Road which it so long served. In 1996 the bridge was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The State was already historically aware of the bridge for four years in 1986 when Jeffrey Hess submitted the "Truss Bridge Intensive Survey Form for the Taylor Bridge" to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The region the bridge served was being intensively farmed by the time the bridge was built, but the death knell of the farming culture it was to serve throughout its life came with construction, almost simultaneously with the bridge, of the nearby, newly poured concrete ribbon called US Highway 2 which had replaced a rough and graveled State Highway 10. The improvements in vehicular transport allowed by the new national highway system would eventually collapse the local dairy and produce market. Even the Northern Pacific Railroad which repeatedly crossed and paralleled the Bayfield-Superior Road for close to a century would also finally succumb. And finally Taylor's Bridge would fade from memory as has the family it once commemorated.

Coincidentally, the family of the latest Old-Brule NWHS scholarship recipient, Morganna Moon, lives only a

mile from where the bridge now rests, and just over a mile from where it spent its first seventy years. Jim Pellman.

Calendar:

June 12, Wednesday, 7 p.m., next regular bimonthly O-BHS meeting. Program: Mae Johnson on the Middle River Health Care Facility. Please bring a friend, and goodies to share!

June 16, Sunday, 2 p m, DCHS History Sunday:

June 22-23, Saturday and Sunday, 6th Annual Chequamegon Bay Rendezvous “re-creation”, Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, Ashland.

July 4, Thursday, Independence Day.

July 5, Friday, Brule History Research Group deadline for family materials to go into Brule’s history.

July 12-14, Friday to Sunday, WHS History Fair & Annual Meeting, Milwaukee, (608) 264-6493 for more info.

July 18, Thursday, 7 p.m., Jim Pellman to show slides and talk about the area’s Finnish settlement and the Davidson Windmill at Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center in Ashland.

July 25, Thursday, deadline for contributions to the next issue of *O-BHS News*.

August 7-11, FinnFest, U of M, Minneapolis.

August 15, Thursday, afternoon tour of Old-Brule by Leif Methner and 16 other visiting Finnish genealogists.
7 p m, O-BHS regular bimonthly meeting. Peace Lutheran Church, Poplar. Program: Lecture by Leif Methner, President of the Genealogical Society of Finland; Topic: The Bong Family Heritage.

September 11, Wednesday, O-BHS Annual Meeting.

December 11, O-BHS meeting: Mr. C. Patrick Labadie has accepted our invitation to speak on a maritime historical topic, probably Capt. Alex McDougall, cabin owner on the Brule River, early fisherman there, and whaleback creator...

WEB SITE ON LINE

Again a reminder that computer volunteer, **Mr. Dave Short** of Poplar, designed our web site and long kept it running. **Donna Bergsten** has recently been working on site changes which will lead to a changed address and to our own independent site. Please have patience as we master these changes. **Thanks to 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.

Post Office Box 24

Maple, WI 54854