

# 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 5

October 1, 2000

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Marvin Haukkala, Maple  
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Eddy Walman, Maple, alt

**OUR NEXT REGULAR MEETING WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2000  
AT 7 P.M., AT THE BRULE TOWN HALL.**

**FOR OUR PROGRAM LOCAL AUTHOR, EDUCATOR, AND GUIDE, LARRY BERUBE, WILL  
SHARE SOME OF HIS LIFE MEMORIES ABOUT THE REGION AND THE BRULE RIVER.**

**Thanks to Laila Magnuson who has been instrumental in organizing our program and refreshments.**

## *From the President:*

*We deeply appreciate the contribution Dr. Ron Mershart made to our September 13th Annual Meeting on quite short notice. The Douglas County Historical Society officer's talk on visionary surveyor and civil engineer, George R. Stuntz, and the late 19th Century proposed Brule-St. Croix canal, which would have joined the Mississippi River with the Great Lakes here in the far north, underscored how changes in the character of the region are shaped not only by our climate and geography, but by the will of local and distant decision makers.*

*Anyone who has seen the Erie Canal might imagine what changes in settlement patterns and land development would have evolved along the valleys of the two rivers, had the project gone forward as proposed.. A canal-river system, complete with dams and locks would have carried barge traffic up and down this Brule-St. Croix river path. A newly excavated channel would have extended westward leaving a dam on the Brule River just south of where the Kauppi Road intersects County Highway H, through the notch in the "Brule Range," and then over the lands of N. P. Johnson.*

*The diggers would then have pushed the canal onward on a straight line to Kaskenperä, that part of Maple where we once found Elias Niemi and John Pollari living. The canal then would have turned slightly northward running close to the Maple Cemetery and continuing again on a straight line passing just north of the Davidson windmill and finally reaching Superior and connecting with the southeast shore of Allouez Bay a couple of miles east of the mouth of the Nemadji River.*

*Stuntz made his own proposal first in the 1870s and the Federal government refined the plans described here in 1895. Stuntz's dream died at that time due to the cost of the project, the*

*rise of the railroads, and lack of legislative support.*

*But the proposal did not die easily, and at the beginning of the second decade of the Twentieth Century Douglas County's government was again backing a similar plan, this time using the Black? River instead of the Brule. When the St. Lawrence Seaway was finally seriously proposed the canal idea was again resurrected and even advocated by Gov. Harold Stassen who was running for President. This created great controversy even in the days before the environmental movement, as the Brule Valley by then had become a retreat for earlier Presidents and already contained many acres donated to the State by lumberman Frederick Weyerhaeuser for the formation of a permanent Brule River park.*

*George Stuntz, considered one of the "Seven Men of Iron," died early in the Twentieth Century without the great wealth one might expect. A resident of Duluth, and St. Louis County's surveyor for many years, he was instrumental in the establishment of the great Minnesota iron mining industry.*

*Our Thanks and Good Luck to the retiring doctor of history as he now applies his vast historical understanding to other projects which will benefit our understanding and appreciation of our local past, understood in its broader context. He is active in the planning now beginning for Douglas County's sesquicentennial. Best wishes Ron!*

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

## Area History: No. 11

*Gleanings from Douglas County Official Directories gathered by Jackie Plunkett, member of O-BHS Board, the Douglas County Historical Society Board and member of the Twin Ports Genealogical Society.*

### TOWN OF LAKESIDE

By Nicholas Davidson, Chairman

This town adjoins the City of Superior on the east and as its name implies, it borders on Lake Superior for about ten miles. It contains about 30,000 acres of land, every acre of which is suitable for farming. The writer settled there about twenty-four years ago, and was one of the first to undertake farming in the district. From the beginning, we have raised hay, potatoes, and vegetables in plenty; and of late years, with the clearing of more land, we have been successful with wheat, oats, rye and barley.

New settlers are coming in fast now. We have and are making good roads. The whole town is well watered by the Amnicon, Middle, Poplar and Bardon Rivers.

The town of Lakeside contains what may, some day, be very valuable suburban property. Directly across Lake Superior from our town are the finest residences in Duluth, and as the City of Superior grows, it seems that the South Shore should prove as attractive for fine homes as the north shore is now.

Nick Davidson, Itasca Station, Superior, WI

(Taken from the *1911 Douglas County Official Directory of Resources.*)

### Post Offices in Douglas County, WI in 1901

Allouez, Bennett, Blueberry, Brule, Chaffee, Dedham, Foxboro, Gordon, Hawthorne, Hoyt, Itasca, Lake Nebagamon, LeClair, Maple, Nutt, Poplar, Rockmont, South Range, South Superior, Solon, Superior, Waino, Wentworth, West Superior, Winneboujou.

(Taken from the *Official Douglas County Directory 1901*)

### Post Offices in 1905

Bellwood, Bennett, Berg Park, Blueberry, Brule, Chaffee, Coyne, Dedham, Foxboro, Gordon, Hawthorne, Hines, Lake Nebagamon, Martinsen, Maple, Nutt, Poplar, Rockmont, Solon Springs, Superior, Station A, Station B, Allouez Station, Itasca Station, Waino, Wentworth, Wascott.

(Taken from the *Official Douglas County Directory 1905*)

### ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

Besides our program the business portion of the annual meeting did accomplish some business. We re-elected to the Board all of those whose two year terms were expiring by acclamation. There were no nominations from the floor. This included Velma Doby, Audrey Hakkila, Paul M. Hakkila, Jackie Plunkett, and Hope Swenson. Mr. Arnold O. Saari served as Nomination Committee Chair. Thank you to all of you for your willingness to serve.

The President presented Certificates of Recognition and Appreciation to each of the Charter Members of our organization. For those members who could not be in attendance we will be enclosing a copy of the agenda for the evening with this newsletter as well as the Charter member certificates that could not be presented there.

At a brief meeting following the annual meeting the Board re-elected all officers to their prior positions.

**Thanks to the refreshment committee, which included Delores Pellman, Lois Pollari, with help from Irene Parenteau.**

**Calendar:**

2001 O-BHS Annual Dues were collected at our annual meetings on September 13th and will be collected at our regular meetings/programs to the end of this year. Please contact Treasurer, Alice Christensen, or President, Jim Pellman.

**October 5th-8th, Thursday to Sunday**

Douglas County Historical Society's Goblins to Reindeer Craft Sale held at Fairlawn Mansion in Superior. \$2 admission to go to DCHS.

**October 9th, Monday**

The Brule History Research Group will meet at the Brule Apartments at 3 p.m. Anyone interested in the writing of the history of Brule is welcome.

**October 11th, Wednesday**

Old-Brule Heritage Society's next regular bimonthly meeting/program will be held Wednesday, October 11th at 7pm in the Brule Town Hall. Author, educator and Brule River guide, Larry Berube, will be our speaker.

**October 22nd, Sunday**

DCHS History Sunday Program (& Quarterly Meeting of DCHS and other Historical Societies in Douglas County). \$2 nonDCHS members

"Gunhild Johansson, Swedish Immigrant: A Historical Interpretation," by Rachael Martin. Lakeside Town Hall (Highway 13 and County Road "D"), 2 p.m.

**November 11th, Saturday**

Veterans' Day

**November 22nd, Wednesday**

Tentative deadline for submissions to the December 1st edition of "O-BHS News"

**November 23rd, Thursday**

Thanksgiving Day

**November 26th, Sunday**

DCHS History Sunday, \$2 nonDCHS members

Elmer Engman presents "Shipwrecks of Lake Superior." Amnicon Town Hall (8985 E.U.S.Highway 2) 2 p.m.

**December 13th (tentative), Wednesday**

O-BHS bimonthly meeting/program. 7 p.m.

**December 25th, Monday**

Christmas Day

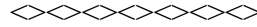
**December 30th, Saturday**

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



### Area History: No. 12

#### *"Memorium" as History*

*The Town of Brule within each of its different boundaries has had many Johnson families. They are not all related. Even Smith Creek with its source in modern Brule takes its name from a Johnson...one who changed his name to Smith.*

*At Thanksgiving in 1948 Anna (Fredell), Mrs. Art Johnson, the mother of "Clancy," wrote the following touching memorial letter to her brother-in-law, Bill Johnson. Her excellent writing skills exhibited here were honed over the years as teacher in the Waino and N. P. Johnson Schools. Her husband, Art, was Bill's brother.*

*William V. Johnson was the son of ethnic Finns, Charles and Elsie M. Johnson. Elsie's family was among those Finnish speaking*

*families who had moved first to Norway, as had the family of N. P. Johnson, before coming to America, typically to the mining regions in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. As Anna's letter reveals, and as the 1920 US Census confirms, Bill was born in Michigan, about 1887. At the time of the 1920 Census, taken January 2, Bill was 33, married to Lizzie, and had daughters Helen and Hazel. Their brother Harvey would come along shortly after the Census.*

*This touching tribute comes to us courtesy of the Brule History Research Group. Further information came from former Waino resident, Irene Parenteau. Thanks to all. Ed.*

#### In Memorium of William Johnson of Brule, Wisconsin by Anna Johnson ©

Today is Thanksgiving. Yesterday you slept away, leaving us a beautiful memory, a better human being, and an empty nook in our hearts that no one else can fill.

You know as I sit here and think, I'd like to tell you now all the things that you knew I felt, but some how have never been spoken.

First of all I am thankful that I knew you so well, the golden hours we spent over our coffee, laughing and chuckling over some picture of Norman Rockwell's, or briefing some book we both appreciated, I am thankful that you were a good husband, a kind and loving father, friend and brother of mine.

Thankful, too, I am for [your] showing me the true value of the things in life that endure and have endured through the ages, your love of home and family, your sincere hope that peace will come and through our schools and education this will be a better place to raise our children of tomorrow.

I am thankful for all your stories; for your fine sense of the "Right" and what money cannot buy.

Remember where we met at the Waino School house thirty years ago. Your lovely wife and two little girls were there to see what the "New Teacher" looked like.

If I remember rightly I became a frequent visitor that winter. You told me you were born in Bessemer, Michigan, and when very small moved to the "Immigrant's Paradise," Connor's Point, my own birthplace. From there your parents homesteaded in the Town of Brule, that journey recalled again and again, made us both laugh and shiver. Your father carried a sack of flour on his back and you trudged along, trotting beside your father's friend. You were two then, and in the course of that journey became tired, whereupon the friend put you into his pocket.

This coat it seems was an enormous sheepskin affair; the lining was loose but stitched at the bottom, so you could sit in there nicely and look at the trees and brush, and incidentally fall asleep.

Then, too, I am thankful you told me of your young school days and "Red Rob's" lumber camp. The trips with the lantern, in the early morning hours, devouring sixteen fried eggs on a place and cookies till you could eat no more, pockets bulging, with raisins, and prunes, and cookies. The morning the teamster Jack O'Day started down the river hill with sixteen thousand feet of logs on the sleds. The hill was a glacier of ice. The lead team stumbled and the second team was buried under the avalanche of logs. Your telling

with all the cuss words, the brandishing of cant hooks and peaveys come to my mind as I ride today to see your daughter.

I can hear your bellowing voice in the forest and the light of your lantern as you came to see my first son. You held him long and sang a song I have sung a thousand times. Your cheery manner, content whatever the weather, if it blew the roof off, well so what; tomorrow it wouldn't blow so hard, and sure enough tomorrow was always brighter.

Then, too, I recall, when your brother-in-law's little boy came to live with you. The love, the care, and the songs you lulled his sick body to sleep with. What a fine job you have done, raising your own son and that one. How you sang and bellered when your youngest daughter was born.

I am thankful to this day for your sympathy, understanding and daily visits when our great sorrow hit. I'll never forget those days.

Some how, Bill, I could write on and on, for through you and Harvey I have found what I missed for a long period of time

Then one day not too long ago when our controversial community life was at a very low ebb, you stood your ground, though your physical prowess was gone, I sweat with you, knowing your strength was oozing away, and in your quiet low voice and tottering erectness, order was restored.

The next day you stopped, as was your want to do, either coming from the town or journeying hence. I see your misty blue eyes as we went over the events of the previous evening, your voice husky with emotion and these words I'll remember "I'd like to see Every Mother's Child" have the opportunity of a High School

Education." When you left, Bill, I wrote this little verse:

*Every Mother's Child*

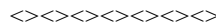
Your armor of courage sustains me  
When others lust for greed and gain  
Material wealth at such a price,  
Cannot live for long  
Reading, thinking in the right way,  
Not for few, but for all  
Something better, something higher  
Seeking a goal today.

That was two years ago.

Your recent illness came so suddenly, trapped us and stunned us. Slowly you came back to us, your faltering steps and hesitant voice reminding us that the sands of time had almost run their span.

Dear Bill, this is my last visit with you, how I'll miss your step on my threshold, your place at my table, your words of understanding and sympathy. But I would not have it otherwise. The Lord knoweth best. I am thankful.

The chickens are doing nicely. I know you'd like to know I found the first egg today and now I've been escorted to the door wherein I cannot enter, saying as I have said so many times before, Good Night, Bill, Good Night, Brother.



The **CESA Team**, which is working to help create a "museum on the web" in the Maple District, will be meeting at Northwestern Elementary School in Poplar, very shortly. Now with a year of experience we hope to see greater progress this year. It remains our goal to establish and to maintain a close relationship with the local school district and this is one way.

### WEB SITE NOW ON LINE

Dave Short has been working on our web site and a preliminary site is now in operation. It's web address is <http://discover-net.net/~dshort/> . **Check it out!** This address as you can see is under Dave's name. The address will change once we acquire our own free standing site. We need input from everyone for our calendar on the site especially, and for new ideas.

**Thanks Dave**

### NW REGIONAL CONVENTION, BRANTWOOD

Four members of O-BHS will attend the NW REGIONAL CONVENTION of the Wisconsin Council for Local History to be 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.) Last year's convention was held in Rice Lake and the several who attended had an enjoyable day. The O-BHS has voted to pay transportation

costs for participants representing us, which includes Norma Lind, Arnold Perala, Delores Pellman and Jim Pellman. A key part of the discussions there will be on the topic of the relationship of local historical societies such as ours to the local school districts. The program of events contains several items with Finnish themes. The Brantwood/Knox Creek area has a substantial ethnic Finnish population.

**Welcome New Members: Jeanette Wisherd who joins with a \$50/year membership in the name of her business, Northland Tax Services, Inc. of Brule.**

**Robert Aho of Duluth, and  
Mrs. Linda E. Hendrickson of Maple!**

**Also, thank you to the many of you who have renewed your memberships for 2001.**

**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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