

OBS 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 4

August 3, 2002

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NEXT MEETING/PROGRAM THURSDAY, AUG. 15TH, 5:30 AND 7:00 PM, AT PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN POPLAR.

MR. LEIF METHER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF FINLAND WILL PRESENT "THE HERITAGE OF THE BONG FAMILY" AT THE 7 PM PROGRAM FOR OUR MEETING.

The Old-Brule Heritage Society will be one of a sequence of hosts for a group of touring Finnish genealogists accompanying Mr. Leif Mether, Executive Director of the Finnish Genealogical Society and founder of "Finngen," an internet based organization collecting and organizing materials which serve Finnish genealogical researchers. Finngen also serves the genealogical research needs of ethnic Finns and their descendants and other researchers scattered throughout the world. The group will be touring areas of the upper Midwest which have large numbers of Finnish settlers and their descendants including Minnesota, Wisconsin and Upper Michigan.

The travelers will enter the Old-Brule region about noon and they will be hosted to a lunch at Round Up North in Brule which will be generously provided by O-BHS members Richard and Ruth Guhl whose daughter and son-in-law run the business. Following lunch the group will board their bus for an afternoon tour of the area. Among stops along the way will be Maple, Waino Everest and Oulu cemeteries, Finnish churches, the Davidson (Tapola) Windmill, and the Korhonen Farm in Brule. We welcome Finnish speakers to join us at these stops to help with interpreting the history of the region.

The evening will begin when we host the travelers to a potluck dinner with our membership starting at 5:30 pm held in the lunch room at Poplar's Peace Lutheran Church. In addition to Leif, we will be overnight host to his group of sixteen Finns who will be coming via FinnFest USA held in Minneapolis at the U of M this year. They will be coming directly from Carlton County, and the Twin Ports after an earlier visit to the Iron Range. At each stop they will tour with an eye toward the Finnish connection.

At 7:00 pm Leif Mether will address our groups on "The Heritage of the Bong Family." The roots of the Bong family has long been an interest of Leif. Sweden and Finland were one nation for hundreds of years and share a long history. The Bong family history straddles these two geographical areas.

Overnight host families will include Shirley Kankas, Janine and Doug Seis, Lois Pollari and Delores Pellman. After breakfast Friday morning the group will leave our area for Ironwood and then the Houghton-Hancock region of Upper Michigan.

A brief business meeting will follow Leif's talk in preparation for our annual meeting which comes in September.

THE PUBLIC IS WELCOME TO THE 7 PM TALK AND OUR BUSINESS MEETING.

From the President:

The Old-Brule Heritage Society has lost two more charter members since our last newsletter. I was related to both: Marvin Haukkala, my first cousin once removed on my father's mother's side, and Esther Pollari, my maternal grandmother. I cannot claim to be unbiased, but I believe each in their own way richly and admirably served the history of our region.

Marvin's wife, Doris, explained to me on the day of his funeral that Marvin had felt that I as president needed a gavel and he had made one that his health had prevented him from

presenting to me at one of our meetings. We also appreciated Marvin's many donated hours to the construction of the archives room and for his sound input at our committee meetings.

My Grandmother, Esther Pollari, already in her 90s at the time our group formed, was unable to attend meetings but faithfully maintained her membership and gave me countless hours of historical interviews and access to many many important photographs and documents related to Maple's and the region's past. An incurable collector and wonderful

storyteller, her contributions to the history of Maple that I us. have long been working on are beyond estimate.

I, personally, and we all shall miss the encouragement and support of each of these long time Mapleites. Their dedication to our group and to their friends, families and communities will remain an inspiration to all of

—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

We look forward to the completion of the archive room in the Maple Community Center. The archive door still 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 Hakkala 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, Arnold and Doris Perala and others have volunteered for the archive committee. We will welcome other volunteers to help us in this important part of our efforts.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Old-Brule Heritage Society, Inc. Regular Meeting June 12, 2002, Amnicon Town Hall

Attendance: 25

Hostesses: Alice Christensen and her group from there.

I. **CALL TO ORDER:** 7:00 p.m.

Welcome and opening remarks by President, Jim Pellman. Adjourned in deference to Mae Johnson's talk.

II. **PROGRAM:** Mae Johnson, Douglas County Historical Society Board spoke on the heritage and updates of the Middle River Health Care Facility. She had pictures and memorabilia from her time spent there and gave a very interesting overview of her association with that hospital.

Short break before the business meeting.

III. **BUSINESS MEETING,** reconvened at 8:30 pm.

A. **MINUTES:** (Hope Swenson) Secretary's minutes were printed in the latest *O-BHS News*. Marvin Hakkila moved the minutes be accepted as printed. Shirley Kankas seconded the motion. Motion carried.

B. **FINANCIAL REPORT:** (Alice Christensen) Main checking account: \$1,853.70 (from April); Windmill Account in savings: \$3,661.29; Interest \$4.13; Donations: \$78.50; Magnet sales: \$31.00. Balance of cost of workshops: \$15.00. Irene Parenteau and Audrey Hakkila will pay their fees tonight if possible. Jackie Plunkett moved the Treasurer's report be accepted. Delores Pellman seconded the motion.

C. **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Regional History/Archives Committee. No new action taken. Room is not complete. Door still to install. Committee to meet at archives regardless. Audrey Hakkila has volunteered to do archival work as well as Shirley Kankas, and Arnold and Doris Perala.

2. Davidson Windmill: Permanent road signs yet to be ordered (under study). Possible lead abatement necessary. Testing to be done before painting. Jim will call a meeting to address immediate issues in the next few weeks. Alice will call work crew together at short notice as possible. Paul Colby will continue to mow grass. Should be compensated for expenses. Jim expressed appreciation for his efforts. Replacement of memorial tree will take place this summer.

3. Archives Room, Maple Community Center. Additional work necessary. Contact needed with Town of Maple as to whether O-BHS should hire professional door installer. Eddie Walman, Margie Koskie, Paul Hakkila, Irene Parenteau and Jim Pellman 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.

4. Merchandise for sale. No new action. The committee is still looking into items and pricing.

5. Brule History update given. They hope by July 5th to receive final family histories.

6. Volunteer hours. Jim reminded members to keep a record of volunteer hours, including time of attendance at our meetings and he passed around forms to those who hadn't earlier received them.

7. Report on Eskolin house/log cabin. No legal documents are yet drawn up, nor has the dismantling been determined. Document of legal transfer from the Andersons needed.

8. Hayward meeting discussed. Irene P., Audrey H., Delores P., Jim P. and Bob Aho went. A good trip.

D. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Next meeting program was discussed. Date of Thursday, August 15th was set; location, Peace Lutheran Church in Poplar per approval. Program will be given by Leif Methner, Exec. Director of the Finnish Genealogical Society. Theme: Bong Family Heritage. Methner will be on Midwest tour with 15 Finnish genealogists. Alice C. will be in charge of meeting food. Hospitality will be a pot luck lunch meal beginning at 5:30 pm., plus a main course supplied by O-BHS. Bob Aho moved we become official hosts for the Finnish travelers with Leif Methner. Lois Pollari seconded the motion. Motion accepted. Velma Dobie moved we contribute \$75.00 to the event. Irene Parenteau seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2. Archive Room Grand Opening. Once fully complete we will hold a grand opening, inviting the regional press. Plans pending.

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. Pending.

E. COMMITTEE REPORTS (items not covered above):

1. **Davidson Windmill:** Night illumination if flag pole is installed.

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**

4. **Fundraising**

5. **Web Site:** New web site is not complete. Audrey Hakkila, Donna Bergsten and Jon Winters will continue working on the project.

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 October issue, September 25th.

9. **Scholarship:** money has been given for 2002. Slight discussion for 2003. No action taken.

10. **Collection:** Accessioning necessary on recent donations.

11. **Membership:** Alice C. reported good renewal and contacts being made.

12. Jim made reference to correspondence.

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

Hope Swenson, Secretary

NOTE: PLEASE R.S.V.P TO ALICE CHRISTENSEN IF YOU PLAN TO JOIN US FOR THE POT LUCK DINNER AT OUR NEXT MEETING. 364-2535

THANK YOUS & RECOGNITIONS

Many thank yous are in order:

—Again 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. 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 **All Members** who have renewed their memberships throughout 2002. **Karen and Ron Simpson** of Augusta, Georgia, have recently renewed their family membership. We also have received the new individual membership of **Mr. Robert A. Sideman** of Glencoe, Illinois. I talked briefly with Robert after my talk in Ashland at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center. He was much interested in our preservation of the Davidson Windmill.

—Also to **Ms. Claudia Postl** of the Gordon-Wascott Historical Society. Claudia personally sends us a video tape of a painting class she took from the late artist, Tony Yaworkski, when they visited the Davidson Windmill in preparation for a painting project, and were treated to a grand tour by the owner.

—To **Paul Colby** who continues to care for the grounds at the Davidson Windmill, as long as his job assignment permits.

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

—We extend our sympathy to the family of **Marvin Haukkala**, husband of **Doris**, who died this past month at a young 74.

—Our sympathy also to members of Maple's **Esther Pollari** family. *Esther, who was born in Marengo, had resided in Maple from 1920 onward. She died at Middle River at the age of 96....*

—**and who have we missed or forgotten?**

Area History: No. 26

In honor of the passing of Member Esther Mattson Pollari who died July 29, 2002, I would like to offer some excerpts from material prepared for the Pollari family reunion held last summer. At her death Esther was the oldest resident of Maple and the last person named Pollari in the community. She was the last surviving child of Anna and Charles Mattson of Marengo, Wisconsin, and she was the widow of Maple Garage owner, Theodore Pollari (1904-1981), the youngest son of Rev. John Pollari who came to America in 1893. Esther had resided in Maple of the Old-Brule region since 1920 when she came to work for her sister and her merchant brother-in-law, Hulda and Edward Niemi. Another sister, Lena Erickson served as a cook at Northwestern High School for many years. —Editor.

Excerpts from *A Brief Life of John and Maria Pollari*

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John (Juho) Viktor Pollari was born on April 29, 1865, in Veteli, (on *Pollarinmäki?*), Vaasanlääni, Finland, the son of **Hans Juho (Salo) Pollari** of Veteli and **Kaisa Loviisa Kuorikoski (Rauma)**, daughter of **Jaakko Kuorikoski (Rauma)**, second most prolific of the famous Kaustinen "folk" church architects and master builders for many generations in western Finland. They made their home in Kaustinen, Vaasanlääni. John's wife, **Maija Liisa (Maria Elizabeth) Juho's daughter, Järvelä**, was born on December 5, 1861, in Toholampi, Finland, located about thirty miles east-northeast of Veteli and Kaustinen, and died on August 30, 1920, in Maple.

John and Maria were married in Toholampi, her home, on February 7, 1886, and moved to John's home

village of Veteli, just south of Kaustinen, February 12, 1886. Church records indicate the family moved from Veteli back to Toholampi on October 29, 1892, probably in anticipation of his journey to America. Their home may have been her family home. According to immigration records it was in the following May, 1893, the year of a great economic panic in the United States, that Juho Viktor Pollari arrived in America, traveling in the footsteps of many of those from the regions of Veteli and Toholampi who had left the old country to make their fortunes in a booming America. John later said he believed he knew everything about building until he landed in New York and saw the structures there, a sure indication that he had spent time in his years growing up under the tutelage of his respected maternal grandfather,

Jaakko Kuorikoski, Rauma's master.

Once settled in America John sent for Maria and their two surviving children, **Jack**, and his oldest daughter, **Hilda**. The *kirkkoherra* or minister of Toholampi provided Maija Liisa, Juho's daughter, Pollari, of Järvelä place or farm, a church records document on the 30th of July, 1894, in anticipation of her travels. While John was away their youngest daughter, almost two-year-old **Maria Josefiina**, had died February 16, 1894, six months before departure. Once in America John continued the preaching and the individual mission work he had been inspired to dedicate himself to already in Finland where his mother was converted under his influence when he was still only a teen.

The Kaustinen people have long been noted for their artistic natures, and a major folk music festival is held there each summer. The Pollaris descending from Juho Viktor and his sisters are related to a famous folk fiddler from that region, and to **Tapio Wirkkala**, a world famous designer in glass. The Maple Pollari brothers and cousins were known locally for their great physical strength, their mechanical skills, and for their artistic and musical natures and abilities. As a lad John Pellman was inspired to write a long poem about John Pollari's nephew, "**Big Oscar**" **Pollari**, and his many achievements. Written in Finnish, sadly the poem has been lost. Big Oscar married the daughter of the builder of the Davidson (Tapola) Windmill.

Juho Viktor came to America as a builder and a mason. He first lived and worked in Lanesville, Massachusetts, on Cape Anne, finding work as a granite quarry worker, cutting paving stones. He built a large house in Lanesville (later occupied by the family of famous "**Hoolie**" **Ahola**, the sax jazz great, whose ancestry also goes back to Veteli and Toholampi) shortly after his arrival in America, which he had to soon abandon. John was also later instrumental as well, in the construction of the Maple Apostolic Lutheran Church, both of which structures still stand. He also applied his skills in the construction of the buildings of his family farm.

John and Maria were living in Lanesville when son **Oscar** was born in March of 1897, first child born in America. In the following year, pressured by more traditional Finnish Lutheran neighbors for his Laestadian religious activities, John was forced to abandon his new home and boarding house to legal foreclosure action, and moved west, stopping for a time with a sister's or sister-in-law's family in Upper Michigan, and eventually settled in a growing Finnish settlement in what is now Maple, Wisconsin. He had found cutover land for sale by real estate agents of Twin Ports lumbermen, Peyton, Kimball and Barber, in a region these lumbermen had recently stripped of its giant white pine timber, north of the Maple railroad station in what was then still within the Town of Brule. The locals

later nicknamed the region *Kaskenperä*, which means "burned and beaten area," which, perhaps with a touch of "rye" humor, accurately reflected the burned over character of the region. Here the Pollaris established their farm and continued to raise their children, **Kaarle (or Charlie)**, the first of their children born in Maple in March of 1899.

Later, "to keep [his] sons occupied," as he explained it, but also to address the need for pure water in the growing area, John purchased a rig and with help from his sons began drilling wells in the northern Douglas County region, a business that son Charlie carried on until his death in 1949 with the help of brother Jack. The family established a reputation as a principal well driller in the region. Charlie listed in his records over 120 new wells and 19 well deepening. His records begin only in 1928 when drilling with the "Old Rig" had already been going on for close to a decade.

A rural school, erected in 1904 by the local school district of the Town of Brule on land owned by his neighbors, **John** and **Mary Rieskaniemi**, was named in Pollari's honor. It was closed along with the Pellinen School with the building of a new Corner School and expansion of it to graded school status in 1921. The Northern Finnish Mutual Fire Insurance Cooperative in Marengo, Wisconsin, has John Pollari as one of its founding signers. He was also signatory at the founding of the Maple Telephone Cooperative in 1912. As a sign of the respect people felt for his integrity he had responsibility as one of the first election judges for the new Town of Maple in April, 1907.

His other neighbors soon numbered several of his older sisters' children, these sisters being **Maija Liisa**, her children using the name **Pollari**, born September 9, 1854, husband **Juha Läspä (Heikki)**, and **Kaisa Matilda ("Tilda")**, her daughter **Liisa** marrying **Richard Järvinen**, [she born December 10, 1858 in Veteli; moving December 22, 1875, from Veteli to Kaustinen; moving March 1, 1885, from Veteli to Kannus]. Besides these immediate family members on his side his wife's sister, **Josephine**, her husband, **Frank Lavia**, and their family also joined them. [also Edward & Emma Kaarto in Lakeside].

From Maple John traveled free on a ministerial railroad pass throughout the upper Midwest, to Canada, and to both American coasts to preach and to perform ministerial duties among Finnish Independent Apostolic Lutheran (Laestadian) congregations. In 1920 he wrote a short tract which is widely quoted on the divisions up to that time in the Apostolic Lutheran Churches in America. During the times he was off preaching his wife, Maria, had full responsibility for the farm and their children at home. Maria died on August 20, 1920, and John soon remarried, taking as his wife "Liinu" (nee Lake) Niemi of Lakeside, who had six children by two prior deceased husbands. Youngest son Ted was still at home as

were technically his unmarried older brothers, Oscar, Charlie and George. John and Liinu had a house full. John soon gave up his farm to son Jack it is believed and built a new house, barn, and sauna of course, on Maple hill, for his new family, this house still standing. The new home went up next to fellow Laestadian believer, Ed Niemi, and it would later be occupied by another church member, Maple mail carrier, Jack Anttila.

Liinu, too, would soon die, on a day on which she held the infant Delores Pollari in her arms, and one on which she gently ordered her daughters to make a stew, saying, "I can't live all day without eating." She would not live to eat the stew they prepared. John lost then his second wife,

"Liinu" Leenastiina Lake (*Ruuhijärvi*) Hautala Niemi Pollari on October 8, 1926, but his third wife, much his junior, Sofia Peitso, whom he married July 6, 1927, outlived him.

John's death, due to a heart attack in his eightieth year, occurred on September 13, 1945, in Champion, Michigan, where he had gone on a preaching trip. His heart had been giving him trouble for a time and he had sought medical help. He was found dead in a rocking chair, and the saying was, "Pollari rocked himself to heaven."

— J i m

Pellman

Calendar:

August 7-11, FinnFest, U of M, Minneapolis. O-BHS Exhibit in Elmer Anderson Hall.

August 15, Thursday, afternoon tour of Old-Brule by Leif Mether and 16 other visiting Finnish genealogists.

August 15, Thursday, 5:30 p.m., Pot Luck Dinner at Peace Lutheran Church in Poplar, prior to our next regular bimonthly O-BHS meeting. 7 p.m. Program: Leif Mether, Executive Director, Genealogical Society of Finland; Lecture topic: "The Bong Family Heritage." Please bring a friend, and a dish to share!

September 2, Monday, Labor Day

September 11, Wednesday, O-BHS Annual Meeting. Election of new board members.

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

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 with Jon Winter 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, Members Audrey Hakkila, Jackie Plunkett, Donna Bergsten, and Jon Winter.**

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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