

OBHS News

Newsletter of the Old-Brule Heritage Society, Inc. ©2012
Founded in 1998 to Preserve and Share the History and Heritage of the Old-Brule Region.

Volume XIV, Issue 2

April 5, 2012

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OLD-BRULE HERITAGE SOCIETY GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 11, 2012, 6:00 p.m., at the Bennett Town Hall

Program: Our Treasurer, Ron Hendrickson, will present his research on the
“**Louden loose hay lifting equipment**” and its effect on the style and
construction of some of the barns in our area.

After a light lunch, our business meeting will follow.

Thanks to the Town of Bennett for the use of their hall, and thanks to all who
provide food and refreshments to share.

All members and guests are welcome!

FROM OUR PRESIDENT:

I wanted to share again from the book, *Amnicon From the Beginning: a Window into the Past*, which was published last year as part of our Town of Amnicon Centennial Celebration. Sales of the book have been steady, and are being handled by the Old-Brule Heritage Society, through its members and at local business outlets, namely, Poplar Hardware, and Nan Wisherd's Cable Publishing in Waino (north Brule) and in Lake Nebagamon, and by the Amnicon Volunteer Fire Department, which generously divided the printed copies remaining after the publication costs were recovered. Materials gathered in the research process have been entrusted by the writing committee to the OBHS Archive. Dennis Hill, local historian, Amnicon Town Board member and active Volunteer Fire Department member, headed up the writing effort. Our deep thanks to this OBHS member. Among the interesting material gathered was that which follows called *Clearing Land With Dynamite*, another article by Fred J. Renman, whose family has long resided in the area, printed with his permission.

Much of the land around Amnicon in the early 1900s was cutover by the lumber companies, leaving behind stumps, brush and small trees. Early homesteaders and farmers began clearing the land using axes, hand saws and horses. When it came time to remove the large stumps, many purchased dynamite to blast them out. It could be purchased at the Brule Store; Hawthorne; Pease Hardware in Superior and likely was available at Poplar and Wentworth too.

Dynamite was very effective for removing stumps and ditching, but it could also be very dangerous. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture was active in educating farmers about explosives and Du Pont published the “Du Pont Farmer's Handbook” with instructions in the use of dynamite for clearing land and ditching, etc. For safety, it was important to keep dynamite and blasting caps separated until setting the charges. Specially made pliers called “cap crimpers” were used to carefully crimp blasting caps onto fuse cord without, accidentally igniting the caps.

Once in a while dynamite could misfire and not explode, so it was important to count the blasts and be sure that all the charges that were set at one time had exploded. When a misfire occurred, it was necessary to go home and wait a day before going back to investigate, just in case the blast was only delayed for some reason.

In the late 1930s, Ray Sundet and his father Olaf used dynamite to blast out old stumps to clear land. They kept their dynamite in an old outhouse on their farm, which was located near the south end of the 22 Road. Ray said, when setting the charges they used a heavy bar to make a hole for the dynamite, one or two feet deep under each stump. Olaf would set charges on about 7 or 8 stumps at a time then Ray would go around lighting the fuses on all the stumps at once and then run off to safety. The blasts would go off one after another, bang, bang, bang with debris flying about a hundred feet in all directions. Afterwards there would be a hole about a foot and a half deep where each stump was and they hauled the remains of the stumps home to cut up for firewood.

Enjoy our balmy spring,
President Alice

1998 to 2005, 2006 to 2012 LOCAL HISTORY PHOTO CALENDARS FOR SALE.

The Brule History Research Group, organized in 1995, produced its eighth and final calendar in 2005 with pictures of Brule's past. Proceeds of these annual calendar sales since 1998, when the first one was produced, are being used for the publication of the history of Brule, to be completed very soon. Limited numbers of their 2005 calendar & earlier issues are available. Please contact Janet Follis, P.O. Box 114, Brule, WI 54820, (715) 372-4948.

The 2012 Old-Brule Heritage Society History Photo Calendars are available at \$8.00 each. Other earlier OBHS calendars are also available at \$5.00 (2006 - 2009), 2010 at \$6.00, & 2011 at \$7.00 in limited numbers. Brule's Round Up North, Poplar Hardware, Poplar Village Market are also carrying them. An e-mail address for more info: musketeer6@cheqnet.net, and phone: 715-363-2549, or check our Web site at www.oldbrule.org. Shipping & handling costs are \$3.50 each. Please contact us for larger quantities, or if interested in selling them for us.

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

ARCHIVES/COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE.

The Archives Committee would welcome other volunteers to help us in this important part of our OBHS mission. Our continuing project is learning to use the computer in support of our work, scanning and interpreting documents and photos, storing records and creating databases. Our thanks to our loyal committee members and donors, and to the Town of Maple for Archive space. If you enjoy exacting work please join us at 1 p.m. at the Pellmans' some Monday afternoon. The next formal meeting will be on April 16, 2012, and generally every other week thereafter. Please call 715-363-2549 to confirm meeting time and place.

Unapproved GENERAL MEETING MINUTES OLD-BRULE HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.

Amnicon Town Hall, February 8, 2012

Program: Teddie Meronek, Area Research Librarian at the Superior Public Library, was our featured speaker. She immediately piqued our attention when she told us that Irvine Lenroot, the subject of her talk, was almost the President of the United States.

Irvine was born in 1869, the son of a blacksmith and logger. A bright and hard-working youngster, he started logging at age 10 and, four years later, went into business with his father. He attended the Parson's Business School in Duluth, and passed the bar exam in 1897, despite not having gone to law school. Interested in politics, he became a state representative to the Wisconsin Assembly in 1901 and was elected to Congress in 1908 and to the Senate in 1918. In 1920, he turned down an invitation to run with Warren G. Harding as the Vice-Presidential candidate, because he considered this position an empty job.

[Coolidge did get the nomination and, upon Harding's death, became President of the US.] Irvine served in the Senate until 1927, and was appointed as a judge in 1929.

Clara Clough McCoy, Irvin's wife, was a widow and 13 years his senior, when they married in 1890. Clara's father had been a circuit court judge and the family lived in Superior for a number of years. Over 50 years later, Clara wrote the book *Long, Long Ago*, describing her life in Superior as a youth. She and Irvin had two daughters. After Clara's death in 1942; Irvin married her cousin in 1943.

Irvin Lenroot loved to fish on the Brule River and convinced President Coolidge to summer in the vicinity. Irvin and Clara owned 65 acres on the Brule which is now owned by the Wisconsin Conservation Department. Martin Hanson built their cabin in 1928 by the N.P. Johnson Bridge. (This cabin was dismantled in 1963 by Ed Pudas and moved to Tainter Lodge). Clara loved wild flowers and wrote *Will You Walk Into my Garden?* In this book, Clara spoke kindly about the local neighbors in Brule, noting their trustworthiness, work-ethic, and support.

Thank you, Teddie! Everyone appreciated your informative and interesting talk.

Following the program, a supper buffet was enjoyed by all. Thanks to everyone who brought food to share and to those who worked in the kitchen.

BUSINESS MEETING

CALL TO ORDER: President Alice Christensen called the meeting to order at about 7:20 p.m.

MINUTES: Mary Ann moved to approve the minutes, as printed in the February *OBHS News*, of the previous General Meeting held on December 14, 2011 at the Amnicon Town Hall. Following a second by Earl, the motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Ron reported the following balances at the National Bank of Commerce in Poplar, effective January 31, 2012: Checking account -- \$ 3,668.36 and Certificate of Deposit -- \$ 5,688.17. Jim moved to accept the report as presented. Jack seconded the motion, which passed.

Because our Certificate of Deposit (CD) will mature soon, Ron presented several options for consideration: (1.) 24-month CD earning .65%; (2.) 20-month CD earning .843 %; and (3.) 59-month CD earning 1.833%. After discussion, Earl moved that we select the 20-month option for our Certificate of Deposit. Following a second by Audrey, the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

New Member Drive: Dennis said that we need to decide when we will hold our first general meeting tailored to promote new membership in OBHS. Then we can plan an interesting program and send out invitations to area residents.

Davidson Windmill Reports:

Publicity/Advertising: Paul reported that he has e-mailed a form to Jim to be completed in order to include a reference to our Davidson Windmill site in the Douglas County Tourist Catalog, published by the Chamber of Commerce. There would be no cost if the script is fewer than 30 words.

Taylor's Bridge: Ron reviewed several options to finish the bridge that the Board discussed during their January meeting. Reactions/suggestions to these suggested plans are welcome:

1. The approach to the north side will be the way for handicapped accessibility. Some fill needs to be added. A notch will be created by the flagpole leading to a fairly even grade to the bridge (pretend road). Some shaving of the road bed may be needed. (Dean Amys might come back with his excavator to reshape and create the roadway.) An old vehicle could be parked on the bridge for special occasions. Security, such as a pasture gate, would need to be provided to prevent four-wheelers from using it.
2. On the south side, railroad ties would create a stair case, and hand-rails would be added, finishing that end.
3. An old Bayfield Road sign could be placed near the bridge as well as original signage indicating a three-ton limit.
4. A barricade of some kind would be needed to allow people on the bridge.
5. Additional grounds preparation would include replacing the planks and extending the gravel area.
6. To enhance the bridge itself, sand-blasting and the use of hand-wire brushes would knock the surface dirt off and clean up the hardware.

Jim will investigate whether we can get National Register Status for the bridge. He thought that, at one time, new applications to what is already in the National Register could be included, but we need to see if that procedure still applies.

Jim noted that we need to integrate previously-planned fencing along the current sidewalk to the intended stair case and hand-rails of the bridge.

While none of the Taylor's Bridge completion will affect parking, we may wish to think about extending the current parking lot.

Ron said that we might use gas burners to control weeds. The rock wall facing the "river" bend will need maintenance.

NEW BUSINESS:

Eco-Geo History Tours: Ron reported that Dave Thorson, Town of Highland, provides day-long van tours from mid-May to October which take in about 100 miles of history-oriented country. The tour starts in Highland, and includes seven stops, each about ½ hour in length. (Little, if any, walking is required.) Lunch is at the Delta Diner. Total cost is \$ 40. A sheet was passed around so those in attendance could indicate their interest in participating. Ron Hendrickson is our contact person.

Next year, Dave plans to offer a tour to the Pioneer Village in Barron, with its collection of historic buildings.

Book Sales: Additional books need to be purchased for Poplar Hardware. We need to think about adjusting our wholesale prices, because we are paying \$10.00 per copy and putting them out for the same price. Jim made a motion, seconded by Paul, that we change our wholesale price to \$14.00 for these books that sell for \$20.00. The motion passed.

The ten copies that we are ordered of *The Brule River of Wisconsin*, authored by Leigh P. Jerrard and Richard Jerrard, cost \$16.00 plus freight per copy. Jim made a motion, seconded by Paul, that we set \$20 as the wholesale price and \$25 as our retail price of these books. The motion passed.

OBHS Website Merchandise Listing: Earl plans to remove that merchandise for which we have limited quantities. Inventory needs to be up-dated and current prices verified so that Earl can keep the website listing accurate. The Board will address this subject at their next meeting.

Historian Vacancy: Audrey reminded everyone that she has requested to be replaced as the OBHS Historian, a position which she has superbly dedicated herself to for many years. She also wanted to make sure that everyone has received their 2012 Membership Card.

Mid-Summer Activities: Mary Ann reminded everyone that we need to schedule our Mid-Summer activities. Earl has put Saturday, June 23, on our Website; typically we schedule this date for the Saturday closest to June 21.

Women Today—This publication is available at *Super One*. The last edition including an article about our Windmill, written by Kathy Laakso.

Donations: Thanks to Teddie Meronek for providing the program today and for her cash donation.

ADJOURNMENT: Audrey moved to adjourn the meeting. Following a second by Nancy, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lila M. Ronn, Secretary

FUND-RAISING MERCHANDISE FOR SALE

The Society has available regional history magnets, plus Davidson Windmill memorabilia: mugs, caps, tee shirts, sweat shirts, key chains, buttons and photos for sale. Early issue magnets are going for \$1 each, or 6 for \$5.00, proceeds to our general fund. The Windmill mugs are \$4, new stock caps, \$12, and tee shirts, any size, \$10, all proceeds going into the Windmill Fund. **SEE OUR WEB SITE** (www.oldbrule.org) **FOR CURRENT SALE ITEMS AND PRICES.** Our new vests are for sale for \$24.00.

Our book, *Wisconsin Far Northwest*, and Nan Wisherd's books, *Pathways* and *Echoes*, Lakeside's *Sisu and Sauna*, and *Amnicon From the Beginning*, are available for \$20.00 a copy + \$3.50 shipping. Wisconsin sales tax is included in all of our prices. Shipping and handling for mugs, caps and tee shirts is a \$3.00 minimum. All items are also available for purchase at our meetings or by contacting an OBHS member. Our booklet, *Davidson Windmill History* by Jim Pellman and Gene Davidson is available for \$8.00 (+\$2.00 shipping). Leigh P. & Richard Jerrard's new expanded and revised edition of *The Brule River of Wisconsin* is now available at \$25.00 (+\$3.50 shipping).

**Unapproved BOARD MEETING MINUTES
OLD-BRULE HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.**
Eskolin House, Town of Lakeside, March 14, 2012

Members Present: President Alice Christensen, 1st Vice-President Earl Granroth, 2nd Vice-President Brian Paulsen, Treasurer Ron Hendrickson, Secretary Lila Ronn, Paul Colby, Dennis Hill, Jim Pellman, and Nancy Wiitala.

CALL TO ORDER: President Alice Christensen called the meeting to order at 4:45 p.m.

MINUTES: Earl moved to accept the minutes, as published in the February *OBHS News*, of the Board meeting held on Wednesday, January 11, 2011, at the Eskolin House. Following a second by Nancy, the motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Ron reported the following balances at the National Bank of Commerce in Poplar, effective February 29, 2011: Checking Account -- \$ 4,384.32; and Certificate of Deposit -- \$ 5,697.63. All bills have been paid. Lila moved, and Jim seconded the motion, to accept the report as presented. The motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

New Member Drive: Dennis said that we need to set the date for our first general meeting designed to increase membership. An invitation will then be composed which will be sent to residents of a selected town. After discussion, Dennis made a motion to choose the Town of Maple as the site and October 10, 2012, 6:00 p.m. as the date and time for this meeting. Earl seconded the motion, which passed. Door prizes were suggested. Jim will work on developing a program.

Publicity: Paul passed around the completed form that he has sent to Linda Anderson-Drogsvoold, data base specialist with the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, in order that the Davidson Windmill Site be included in the next Tourist Catalog. We can also submit up to five photos.

NEW BUSINESS:

Midsummer Activities: Paul will check with the Oulu Historical group to find out what events they may have planned. If there is no conflict, we will hold our activities on the 4th weekend in June:

Thursday, June 21 –General Meeting at the Lakeside Town Hall
Friday, June 22 --Workday at the Lakeside Town Hall and at the Mill site
Saturday, June 23 -- Dinner at the Lakeside Town Hall from 11 – 2:00 p.m.

Everyone who can is asked to help out during the workday. Grass will need to be mowed around the Mill site. Lila will reserve the Town Hall.

Taylor's Bridge: Various options to finish the bridge and its surroundings were presented at the General Meeting in February. After we receive members' responses at the April meeting, plans can be made and work will begin.

A date needs to be set for the dedication ceremony.

Using wording on the sign that existed at the old Taylor's Bridge site as a guide, Lila will compose a suggested text for the new sign to be reviewed at the next Board meeting.

Jim plans to interview David Williams for further information that could be used.

Eco-Geo History Edu Tour of the Northwoods: May 19, 2012 was selected for the date an OBHS group would take this full-day tour featuring local historical/geological sites of interest. Ten people showed interest in this event at the February general meeting. There will be an opportunity to sign up for this tour at the next meeting on April 11, 2012. If you are unable to attend, please contact Ron Hendrickson for further information.

Organization Chart: The most recent draft of an organizational chart was reviewed. Lila will make suggested changes to this draft and have it ready for the next Board meeting.

Inventory: An updated inventory is needed. (Alice, Ron, and Lila completed this task after the meeting.)

Louden Machinery Company: Ron presented information about this company which designed the first system to bring loose hay up into a hay barn. As a result, Loudon designed barns during the early 1900s to accommodate this system. Some of their barn “kits” were erected in our area.

Next Board Meeting: 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 9, 2012, at the Eskolin House

Next General Meeting: 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 11. Tentative location is the Hawthorne Town Hall. Ron Hendrickson will provide the program; his topic will be the Loudon Machinery Company’s various barn designs, especially those that were constructed locally.

ADJOURNMENT: Earl moved, and Paul seconded the motion, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lila M. Ronn, Secretary

Area History: No. 83

The following text and image are from the month of April in our current 2012 OBHS History Calendar:

4. Thomas Nephew and his Wife Mary c. 1890. At the time Thomas Nephew (*Démas Neveu*, his French name – he used both) and his wife made the final claim on their forty acre Federal Homestead which surrounded the Little Canada station on the Northern Pacific Railroad, white pine logging was near its peak in the Old-Brule region. Nephew was named the postmaster in this community at the heart of the large Town of Brule which had recently broken with the towns of Nebagamain and Gordon from the Town of Superior in 1887. The latter town had covered all of Douglas County prior to this. Thomas had erected a hotel next to the railroad which served guests staying for short periods in the region in their service to the logging company camps which were scattered amidst the surrounding tall pine and hardwood forest. The Nephews were part of a colony of French and English speaking Canadians, extending to Blueberry to the east, many of whom had followed the logging industry into northern Wisconsin from Bay City, Michigan, and other exhausted pine logging centers to the south and east. When the depot was built the railroad decided to call the station Maple after the fine stands of the hardwood that covered the Brule Copper Range over which the locomotives had to climb eastward on their way to Ashland where the NP connected to the Wisconsin Central and other lines. When Brule looked for a place for their Town Hall they found none better than a site near Nephew’s hotel and the little Maple School house that had been erected the year before in 1888. Thomas would soon become Brule’s Town Chairman. With the success he was having in establishing his farm all would go well until a tragic hunting accident broke what had been an indomitable spirit. They moved west to Yakima, Washington, for a change, but soon returned to this area to finally rebuild their lives. *From the collection of Tub Olson, courtesy of Mike Denny, and the Brule History Research Group.*



- NOTICES -

THANK YOU'S & RECOGNITIONS: To all of you **OBHS Members** who are up to date on your 2012 Memberships. [Members, please check your newsletter mailing labels to see what we have in our records: The last day of the year date shown is when your membership expires.] To **Delores, Jody and Doreen Swanson** for recent donations from the collection of the late **Oscar Carlson** of Brule; To **Nan Wisherd** of **Cable Publishing**, to **Poplar Hardware** and to **Poplar Village Market** for carrying our recent calendars and books; For their vital contributions to the work of our Archive Committee: **Earl, Irene B., Audrey, Shirley, Elvie, Nancy & Ina**. They hope for more help.

CONGRATULATIONS: To Member **Doug Seis**, recently turning 65; To Member **Paul Hakkila** on his front page inclusion and article in *rgv* [for Rio Grande Valley] + *Beyond Arts and more*, a new Arizona arts magazine in a recent issue.

OUR ENCOURAGEMENT & SYMPATHY: Sympathy to family and friends of the many who have recently passed away: **David James Saari**, 51, of Maple, March 11, 2012, of cancer; **Elsie I. Dennis**, 91, a lifelong Douglas County area resident, April 3, while at her daughter's home in Yuma, Ariz; **Kevin C. Little**, 55, of South Range, April 1, unexpectedly at home, served in 2003-4 in Iraq deployed with the Wisc. Army National Guard; **Hildegarde Geneva Josephine (Grube) Paulson**, 91, longtime resident of Poplar, April 1, at her home surrounded by her children; **Esther Dutton (Christensen) Kates**, 93, White Plains NY, Stamford CT, was born on the family farm in Wentworth; **Kevin Jon Teppo**, 51, Minneapolis, Feb. 28, unexpectedly due to a stroke, nephew of Paul & Delores Hakkila; **Walter R. Burger**, 82, of Barnes WS, March 9 at Middle River, born to Robert and Ovedea Burger in 1929 in Glendive, Mont;

Jerry Semanko, 64, Superior, March 12, at his residence; **Raymond John Hossalla**, 84, Mesa AZ; **Walter F Krivinchuk**, 83, Superior, March 6 at St. Mary's Hospital in Duluth; **Eleanor Kinney Jardine**, 72, and **Dale (Skip) Jardine**, 74, of Port Wing WS, Feb. 26 and March 3 respectively at St. Mary's Hospital in Duluth; **Ernest "Ernie" Nutt**, 80, Poplar & Superior, Feb. 25, at Villa-Marina,. born in 1931 to Edwin and Gilma (Barsness) Nutt; **Laura J. (Brew) Bunnell**, 51, Lake Nebagamom, unexpectedly Feb. 18 at her residence; **Ray W. Laakso**, 86, Brule, Feb. 14 at St. Luke's Hospital in Duluth with his family by his side, born in 1925 in a sauna in Oulu to Charles and Aina (Jaakola) Laakso; **Walter E. Taipale**, 85, Maple, passed away Feb. 10, 2012, at Middle River, born in 1926, in Oulu, to John and Mary Taipale;

Marie Luella (Olson) Willoughby, 98, Feb. 13 at the Northern Lights Health Center in Washburn, born in 1914 in Iron River to Harry and Annie (Jacobson) Olson; **Lorraine Ida Sundet**, 85, Superior, Feb. 13 at Villa-Marina, born in 1926 in Superior to Olaf and Minnie (Sparby) Scanlon; **Earl D. Forslund**, 84, Iron River, WI, Feb. 7 at Memorial Medical Center, Ashland, born in 1927 in Milwaukee to Otto and Bertha (Odegard) Forslund; **Helen C. Shereda**, 103, Lake Nebagamom area resident, Jan. 28 at Middle River, Hawthorne., foster mom to 46 children.

May these, our dear friends and neighbors rest in peace.

... and who have we missed or forgotten?

RETURN ADDRESS:**OLD-BRULE HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.**

Post Office Box 24

Maple, WI 54854

Anyone interested in joining the Old-Brule Heritage Society is encouraged to attend any of our meetings and programs. To join they may also contact any member or the Board at the return address below, or our Treasurer, Ron Hendrickson, at the same address. Our annual dues are \$15.00 for individuals, and \$25.00 for families, payable at the annual meeting in August. Higher levels of support are always welcome.

New Members and Visitors are Always WELCOME!

CALENDAR.

April 6 – 8, Friday-Sunday. Good Friday, Passover, Easter Sunday.

April 11, Wednesday, 6 p.m. OBHS General Meeting, Bennett Town Hall. Ron Hendrickson, Speaker.

April 16, Monday, 1 p.m. Archive Committee work session, Pellmans'. **Income Tax**. 7 p.m. No. Lakes Arch.Soc. "Early PaleoOccupations in Minn.: the Neubauer Collection of Pine County."Sup. Pub.Library

April 30, Monday, 1 p.m. Archives Committee work session, Pellmans'.

May 9, Wednesday, 4:30 p.m. OBHS Board Meeting. Eskolin House.

May 13, Sunday. Mother's Day.

May 18, Friday. Deadline for contributions to the June *OBHS News*.

May 19, Saturday. Armed Forces Day.

May 28, Monday. Memorial Day.

OLD-BRULE HERITAGE SOCIETY WEB SITE ON LINE

The Website Committee has been maintaining our Web site (www.oldbrule.org). **Earl Granroth** continues to make regular updates, and **Jon Winter** of **Winter Systems** in **Superior** is our Web host at no charge to us. **Thanks again to Earl and Jon.**