

THE COUNTY CHRONICLER

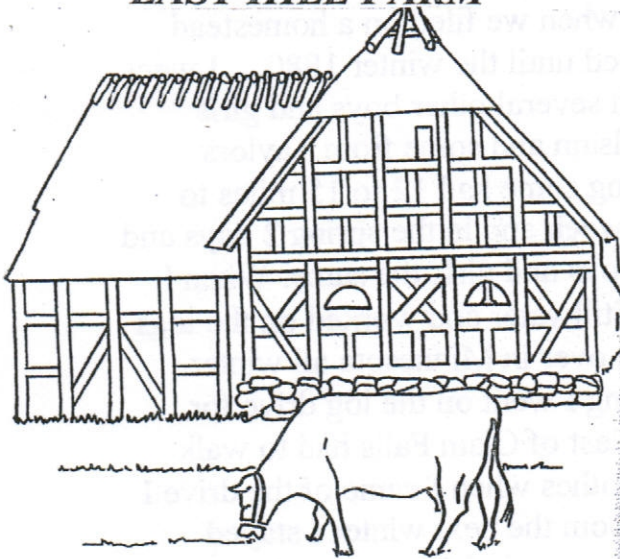
Polk County Historical Society

August

2004

JLW

Tuesday, August 24th
Community Room at the
NEW JUSTICE CENTER
5:45 Board Meeting
7:15 Video of life in Norway
LAST HILL FARM



Bring a farm item, tool, picture or story to share.

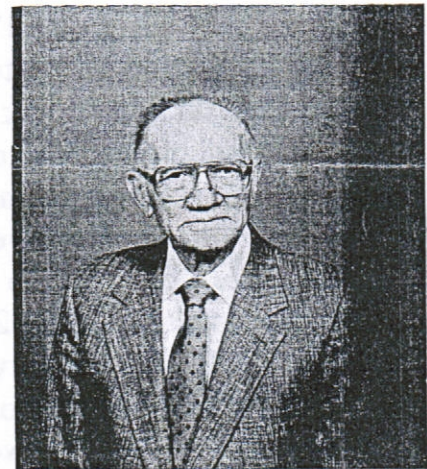
September Project **Fine Arts Room Redo**

Plans are underway for a new paint job and new background curtains in the display cases of our beautiful Fine Arts Room to be worked on (and finished) September, 2004.

This is one of our attractive rooms people see first when coming in our museum and it is much in need of a redo. We have a team leader and need some followers to move and wash our fine art collection, paint the display cases and reset the collection. Call Rosalie for dates and times – 483-3979.



Irene (Lofdahl) Dombrock – See page 4



Ralph (Ike) Dombrock – See page 3

We have a family of three featured Polk County personalities this month. Page 2 is a copy of a letter written by Aleck E. Anderson, an early pioneer from Sweden, who settled near Sand Lake and raised a large family. Page 3 is the story of his grandson, Ike Dombrock, and on page 4 we have the story of Ike's wife, Irene, who still resides in the home she grew up in, 967 210th St., Dresser, Wisconsin.

"My name is Aleck E. Anderson. [Ike Dombrock's maternal grandfather] I was born in the province of Smoland, the Southern part of Sweden on the 23 of November 1862 and I lived in Sweden until I was past 6 years old. In the fall of 1862 I had an uncle that lived in America that came back to Sweden to get our family so in the spring of 1869 my stepfather and my mother and 4 brothers and two sisters on the 1st day of May left Sweden for America and it took eleven days to cross the Atlantic Ocean and on the last day of May 1869 we landed at Taylors Falls and the next day we traveled on foot down to another uncle Gustaf Nelson that lived where Dresser is now and we lived there until the spring of 1870 when we filed on a homestead near East Lake and there we settled and lived until the winter 1880... I went to confirmation school at Taylors Falls with several other boys and girls some from our congregation some from Balsam and some from Taylors Falls and we all had to travel by foot walking some had 12 to 15 miles to walk one boy had to walk 21 miles once a week and in the spring 2 days and no one rode a single time always walking boys and girls the same. When I was 15 years old in the Summer I went to Stillwater and worked on the logs on the River when I was 17 years old I was over in Minnesota all winter cutting cord wood all winter and in the spring I went on the log drive for Esrael Juell on Sand creek about 15 miles East of Clam Falls had to walk up and through mud and carry a sack of clothes when I came of the drive I went to Stillwater again and worked the Boom the next winter I stayed home but in the spring I went on the log drive up in Minnesota when I was though there I went on the boom again altogether I was on the Boom 9 summers in the fall of 1892 I went up in the woods in Minnesota altogether I worked in the woods 20 winters and 15 spring and summers on the Rivers in the fall of 1881 I hired out to Frank Corey to haul water fer his Threshing Machine. after that fall I worked on different machines until 1890 when C. W. Carlson and I bought a threshing machine and we were in partnership until 1913 when he retired then I kept up the threshing until 1941 then I quit farming to so now I have it easy but I fergot to tell you one thing in the winter 1883 I took a trip home from the woods and I met a Girl which I thought was the best girl in the world so on the 20th of December 1885 we got married and have raised a family of 10 children and all living but scattered pretty wide – Robert in Portland, Oregon, Nellie, Gascoyne, N. D. Mable at Sand Lake Irvin in Alaska Raymond in Spokane Washington Clarence Waco, Texas Marvin at home Lester at home Harvey in the army and Wilmer at Dresser. I could tell you some more but this will do.

A. E. Anderson"

Extracted from *Thru Sands of Time* by Ruth Lau Hjelle, Osceola Sun/Osceola WI/1978

Aug 04

RALPH (IKE) DOMBROCK

Mable Anderson, daughter of Aleck and Hannah Johansson married Emil Dombrock and lived in a brick house by Horse Lake (Osceola Township, three miles south of Sand Lake). Most of the Dombrock's had brick houses because they worked in their cousin's, Ed Brick Yard. The Bethesda Lutheran Church is built with the bricks from the Dombrock Brick Yard. The Brickyard was about a mile north of the present Wal-Mart. The Polk County Museum has a nice display of the Brick Yard in the lower level of the museum. It was located about two miles north of Wal-Mart. The Brick Yard is no longer there but the land is still in the Dombrock name.

Mable and Emil had three children: Leon, who was in World War II, Ralph (Ike), and Lorene. Under Ike's picture in the 1936 St. Croix Falls yearbook, it describes him, "*Everybody's Friend and No Man's Enemy, He's True Blue.*" He lived this in his school years and all his life. Irene wrote the following about her husband: "Sports was so very important in Ike's life. In school he was in baseball, football, basketball and tract. After school, he joined the town teams in kitten ball and baseball. He later took up bowling and horseshoe. He was a good competitor.

Ike worked in several feed mills locally: Dresser Feed Mill, Northern Supply at Nye and Wonderoos. He purchased a portable feed mill and operated it for five years. Ike retired at age 65 from his job at Trap Rock, Dresser.

Ike help maintain the Bethesda Church Cemeteries most his life, first helping his father, Emil and when his father became sick, Ike took over the caretaker job which he kept for 30 years. Bethesda Church was an important part of Ike's life, serving on the board for several years and custodian in the 60's & 70's."

Bethesda Church was the center of the community and the Fourth of July celebration was one of the biggest events. It was announced in the Standard Press and attended by hundreds of people. The menu was always chicken with all the trimmings. There was a pavilion which held the stoves, the woman worked hard peeling and boiling the potatoes and roasting the chicken. Pie was a must for dessert. Don Carlson, the butter maker brought the large container of ice cream, wrapped so that it would stay froze all day. The highlight of the event was the fireworks which were set off from a raft on the lake until one time the whole raft exploded at once and he never brought fireworks again.

IRENE (LOFDAHL) DOMBROCK

What was it like to grow up in the Sand Lake area? That was the question I had when I drove toward the home of Irene Dombrock. Irene has spent all her life within a few miles of Sand Lake. Sand Lake is 187 acres with a maximum depth of 90 feet, stocked with northern, walleye, bass and pan fish, located in the northwest corner of Osceola Township. During the 1950's and 60's it had a great swimming beach on the west side, by the 1970's, swimming was better on the east side.

I visited Irene in the home where she grew up with her Aunt Ella (Lidbom) Lofdahl and Uncle Andrew Lofdahl, whose nick-name was Smith. Irene's maternal grandparents, Ole and Martha Wing left Norway with their children and settled in Osceola Township. Irene's mother, Clara, was born here and attended Godfry School. Nels Lidbom was a fellow student and love blossomed between them and after graduation they married.

Nels's parents were Gabriel and Bertha (Frank) Lidbom. The Lidbom's had migrated from Sweden. Gabriel had been a shoemaker in Sweden and Bertha was a candy maker. They came with nothing and life was not easy trying to farm the poor land. The Wing family and the Lidbom family were early members of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Dresser.

Francis Irene was born to Clara and Nels in the year of the great influenza which struck all in the family. Irene's mother succumbed to it ten weeks after Irene was born. The traveling minister thought that she should have her mother's name so she was baptized Irene Clara the same day as her mother's funeral, both taking place in their home.

Nels was left with three small children and a baby plus the farm work, his sister, Ella and her husband Andrew Lofdahl did not have children. Ella and Andrew took care of and eventual adopted of Irene Clara.

The Lofdahl's first built a log cabin. In 1900 they built the house that Irene now shares with her daughter and son-in-law. The Lofdahl family attended Bethesda Lutheran Church at Sand Lake where Irene married Ralph David Dombrock (Ike) in a large wedding officiated by Adolph Serenius. A reception was held at the Osceola Hotel for about 200 guests. Ike and Irene have one daughter, two grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

SAND LAKE, OSCEOLA TOWNSHIP, POLK COUNTY, WISCONSIN

BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH

On April 21, 1872, a group of Swedes, at the home of Peter Weinhardt, East Lake, chartered the Bethesda Lutheran Church. The number composed of 23 men and 22 wives, 11 young people and 40 children. The membership dues were set at \$3.00 per man and \$1.00 per woman and underage communicants. In 1876, a log house was built 26 X 24 feet by 11 feet high on the west side of East Lake. This log building was moved to the beautiful sight on the south of Sand Lake in 1878. A large Jubilee festival was held in 1883, celebrating the birth of Martin Luther and the congregation was challenged to consider building a new church. Two offerings were taken, amounting to \$37. 89. By the fall of 1884, subscriptions had accumulated to \$1, 948.00. During the winter of 1885, oak and ash logs were cut and 12, 972 feet of lumber were sawed for finishing the church woodwork. Master builder Norell from Anoka drew the plans for the church. The size was determined at 36 feet X 56 feet not including the tower and sacristy. At the extra parish meeting on August 7, 1885, it was decided "That all stone should be shaped this fall and delivered during the next winter and be laid in the foundation during the summer of 1886. The local congregation's members should expense free cut and transport to the sawmill all timber required for the church's lower woodwork during the winter of 1886". The church was fully completed in 1891.

From Minnesskrift 1872-1922, translated by Conrad Peterson

THE PAVILION, BANDSTAND AND CHURCH PARK

The church grounds were beautiful but Pastor Stenberg (1895-1905) visualized a beautiful park. Work commenced in 1897, trees were planted in an artistic design; in concentric circles so that whichever way you looked towards the pavilion or bandstand you'd be looking down a straight line of trees all to a common center. A pavilion that seated 100 people was built in 1906. Here were held the basket and ice cream socials, the school picnics, and the fall harvest festivals.

The bandstand was constructed in 1915 by Arthur Stohl and John Peterson. From here, on days gone by, wafting on the summer air, floated the strains of the Sand Lake and East Lake Community Band. On those particular "practice session" evenings, residents of the surrounding communities, and especially those with a kind ear for music, would just sort of find themselves meandering out to the porches and out-of-doors to await the first "tune-ups" and subsequent practice.

SAND LAKE, OSCEOLA TOWNSHIP, POLK COUNTY, WISCONSIN

REFRIDGERATION SERVICE

In the early days, Ice chunks (16 X 16 X30" or so) were cut by a handsaw. First of all, that part of the lake had to be cleared of all the snow. Then the laborious task of cutting the ice by hand began. The chunks of ice were pulled out with tongs. One would have to be on guard so you wouldn't slip into the lake even though "groovy" boots were worn. Residents of the community placed orders and when their ice was ready would come with horses and sled to haul the ice to their ice sheds which were usually built with sawdust between the walls, and more than likely built under trees. Another layer of sawdust was placed over the ice, so, hopefully, some of the ice would last all summer.

THE STORE

Otto Leonard Ohlin, his wife Emily, and his brother Oscar, built the first store, living upstairs. In 1898 Otto became the first postmaster of Sand Lake. In 1902, the Ohlin's sold the store to Joseph C. Englund and Joe became the postmaster. In 1908, part of the old church parsonage was moved across the road and attached to the store building. Pastor Rast's family lived there while the new parsonage was built. The old parsonage part still remains. In 1946, Ike and Irene Dombrock and their daughter, Susan moved in, remodeling the interior. They sold it in 1966 to the Richard Johnson family. This beautiful home is still standing.

THE CREAMERY

Many attempts were made to get a creamery starter. There were wrangles, disputes, meetings, and this went on for many years and finally Sand Lake ended up with two, one in Dresser Junction and one in Ubet. A meeting was held February 1, 1896 at the Sand Lake School House. There was said to be 485 cows within a radius of five miles. Most of the Sand Lake men ended up at Ubet.

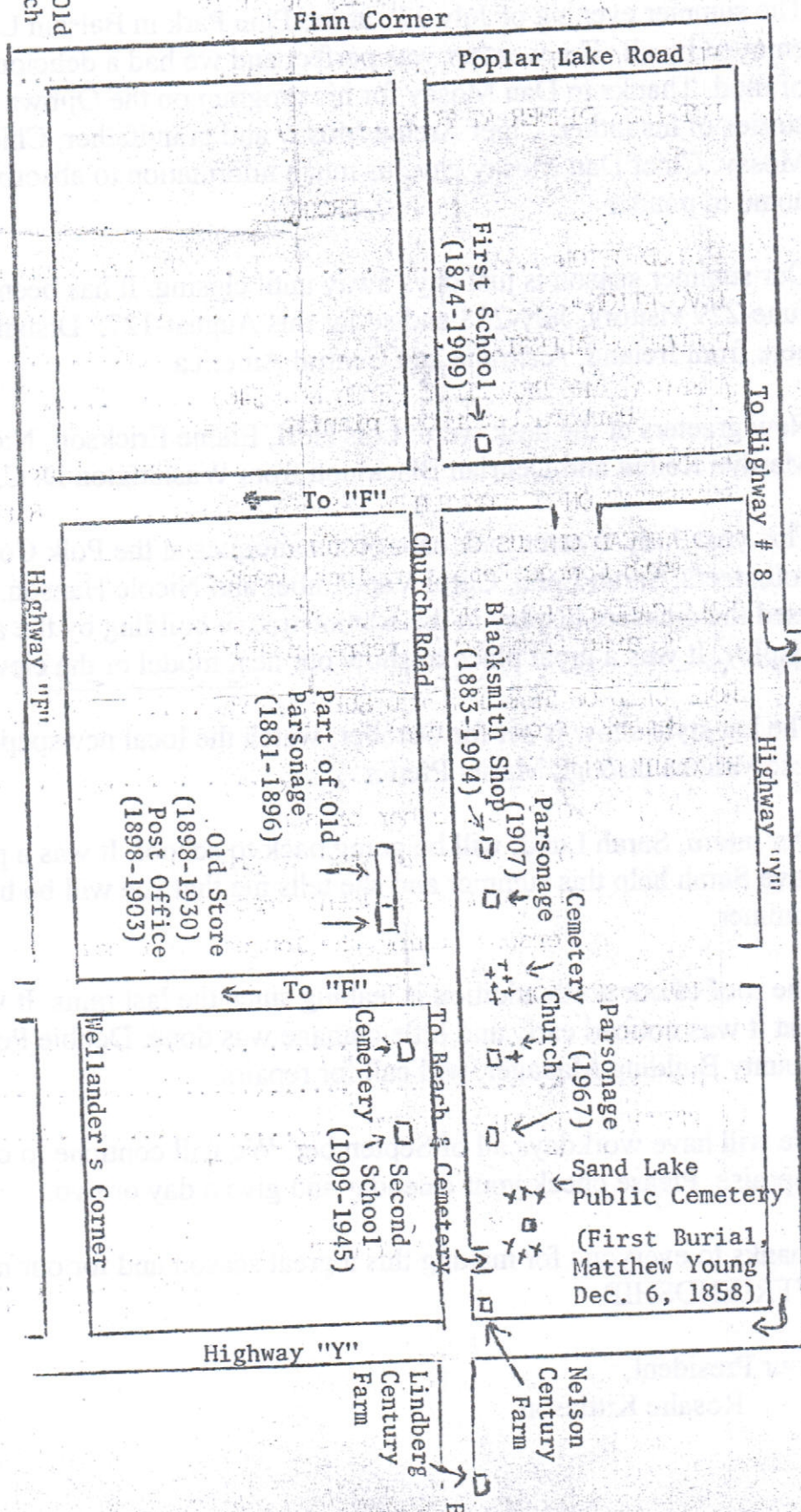
The farmers organized milk routes to pick up the cream and to deliver it to the creamery by turns. Each farmer had a number identification on the can and usually had a milk stand built high enough so that the man hauling it could just slide it right onto his wagon.

From *Thru Sands of Time* by Ruth Lau Hjelle, Osceola Sun/Osceola WI 1978

Part of Old
Log Church
built in
1873.

Moved here to Carl Englund's
who was first settler on
this place.

LOCATION OF OLD SITES



Notes from the President,

The summer evening of July 27th at the Pine Park in Balsam Lake was enjoyed by all. The weather was perfect and we had a delicious assortment of food. Thanks to Dan Mosay for his program on the Ojibwa nation and the stories of his father, Chief Archie Mosay and grandfather, Chief Mike Mosay. Chief Dan Mosay gave us much information to absorb and take home to ponder.

Our summer season is just days away until closing. It has been very busy; June-229 visitors, July-258 and so far this August-127. Distant visitors were here from Ireland, Australia and Central America.

New greeters at the desk were: Lois Hoff, Elaine Erickson, Nicole Hanson, Marilyn Reiten and Dehrian Blackmon from Washington D. C..

This year Judy Wester took care of the antiques at the Polk County Fair with volunteers, Sarah Lund, Carol Van Amber and Nicole Hanson. Judy also used the museum display in the administrative building by the antique display. It was a great place to show our neat model of the elevator project.

The hat style show is set for October; watch the local newspaper to make reservations through Muriel Pfeifer.

Our intern, Sarah Lund, will be going back to school. It was a pleasure to have Sarah help this summer and she tells me that she will be back next summer.

The roof of our north addition is leaking since the last rains. It was lucky that it was noticed early and little damage was done. Debbie Peterson, County Building Manager, will call for repairs.

We will have workdays all of September. We will continue to catalogue and appraise. Please check your calendar and give a day or two.

Thanks to everyone for making this a great season and for our new growth of FRIENDSHIP.

Your President,
Rosalie Kittleson

Polk County Historical Society
Board of Directors Meeting Polk County Museum, Balsam Lake
July 23, 2004

Directors Present: Carl Johnson, Judy Wester, Merle Bergren, LeRoy Schwan, Jim Gisch, Ralph LaDuke, Rosalie Kittleson, Diane Dueholm and Art Young. Joyle Anderson was also in attendance.

Absent: Ted Zinn and Rey Lark.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President, Rosalie Kittleson at 2 pm.

Secretary's Report: Minutes were read and one correction noted; profit from bus tour was \$221 not \$290. Secretary asked if members liked receiving their minutes with the newsletter. Discussion followed; LeRoy made a motion, 2nd by Judy to include a copy of the minutes in all the newsletters.

Treasurers Report: Rosalie passed out copies of the report and went over specific items. LeRoy made a motion, 2nd by Carl that it be accepted, passed.

Correspondence: Thank you letters were read from Alan Tomlinson, Gwenth Swain and CRA.

Lanesdale School: Jim reported that he has primed the west and north sides and is beginning 2nd coat. Hot weather has delayed work on the east and south sides. He will need someone to help with the peak on the south end; he does not have a ladder that will reach that high.

Director's report: President Rosalie complimented Judy on her fine job with the monthly newsletters. When an elderly lady visited the museum recently she was delighted to find a picture of herself in the school display upstairs. She visited the Lanesdale School, which she had attended as a child, and was thrilled to see, on display, the attendance chart that included her name.

Volunteers are still cleaning in the law library and have found several treasures, which have been put into the safe. Tom McKay of the Wis. State Hist. Soc. has been contacted in regards to one particular painting that has been found. The artist is Robert Gallon, from England. Darrell looked on the Internet and found a list of his paintings valued from \$2500-\$16,000. However, the painting that the museum has was not among those listed. Tom suggested that we have the painting appraised.

Rosalie asked the board members to think about having Linnea Phillipson help evaluate and catalog items. She has been involved with antiques for some time and has been a volunteer at the museum.

Sarah Lund has helped Rosalie go through the items in the Native American Room to find and mark those items that need to be identified and cataloged. She has written a grant to Polk Burnett and she did the display at the Holiday Inn.

Our Vintage Hat Style Show/Elevator Fundraiser will be in October at the new Paradise Landing.

NEW BUSINESS

Deaver Account: Rosalie explained that this is grant money that we have received for the past 5 years, \$10,000 each year. It is to be used for educational purposes. Each received a handout detailing income and disbursements; it was explained that each school that brings a bus tour receives \$50 toward fuel expenses. They could not afford to come if this wasn't given to them.

Budget: Rosalie distributed copies of the museum's 2005 Polk County budget request. She is asking for \$7950 more than last year.

Walter Brager: Mr. Brager represents the Deaver/Park Foundation and is our contact for grant requests for what we call the Deaver Fund. He was in town recently and had requested a tour of the museum, with Rosalie, Darrell and Joyle Anderson, to discuss the elevator addition. The foundation would provide matching funds of \$100,000. He expressed that they have two requests; that it bear the Park name and that the addition be large enough to provide a room to store paper documents in a climate controlled environment. He was pleased with the proposed location of the addition. It would be in the NE corner where it could utilize two existing walls. It would be a 4-stop elevator. The members went outside to look at the site and after a period of discussion the meeting broke up with no formal adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Young, Secretary