

THE COUNTY CHRONICLER

Polk County Historical Society

October 2008

Lake Wapogasset Park – Garfield Township, pages 2, 3, & 4



We invite you to
Last Leaves

Celebrating the
Autumn of our 2008 Season

Tuesday, October 28, 2008
7 p.m.
At the Museum

We'll wrap up the year
And
Wish each other cheer.

Board of Directors meet at 5:45 p.m.

Our October meeting will be a time of
sharing the accomplishments of 2008.

- Elevator Addition (take a ride)
- Laundry Room
- Post Office
- W.W. Winchester Watch Store
- Entrance to Record Room
- Weaving, spinning, and sewing Display

And sharing our wishes to each other –



A short business meeting will be held to
elect the coming season's board
members.

The prospective board members are:
David Knutson, Martha Filip, Larry
Phillipson, Diane Dueholm.

LAKE WAPOGASSET PARK

Lake Wapogasset Park belongs to the people of the Town of Garfield.

This park was deeded to the Town of Garfield November 13, 1926 after a public subscription raised the necessary money to buy the property from the estate of Major J. Stannard Baker, the St Croix Falls representative of the Cushing Land Agency. There were stipulations in the deed:

- “That said property will be held, used and maintained exclusively for and only for a public playground and recreation center subject to such rules and restrictions as to its use as may from time to time be ordered by the Town Board of Supervisors of said Town of Garfield; that it shall be known as Lake Wapogasset Park and that no public dancing, use of intoxicating liquors or disorderly conduct of any kind shall be permitted on said premises.”

The park was established because of the vision of some lake residents, notably Dr. James Wallace, the local Garfield Town Board officials, and the residents of the town. Garfield added to the original area by buying two more parcels: a lakeshore lot bordering the park in 1926; and a block of land in 1937 that brought the size of the park to about seven acres.

This land has always been a recreation area. William L. Sadler, the first permanent settler in the immediate area, established a sawmill on this location in 1865 and improved the primitive dam. He wrote at the time of our nation's 1876 centennial that Sucker (later renamed Wapogasset) and Bear Trap Lakes have long been a favorite resort for fishermen and pleasure parties. Sadler built the first frame house in the town of Lincoln at this site and later was authorized in 1878 by the legislature to build a dam. Sadler moved away in 1882 but his dam probably remained until 1910 when it was dynamited by New Richmond logging interests, reportedly unhappy with the debris collecting at the dam site. Sadler's place was a stop on an early tote road from St Croix County to St Croix Falls; he served as postmaster (1874-80) and a town official in Lincoln (Garfield became a separate town in 1886).

In 1901, Dr. James Wallace, President of Macalester College in St Paul, purchased Pine Island (now the site of the Minneapolis YMCA) as his summer retreat. Wallace pursued many efforts to make the lake a prime recreation area: in 1910 he hired Worthy Prentice to survey the lake preparatory to repairing the dam; in 1911 he took the lead in forming the Lake Wapogasset Improvement Association, the first lake association in Wisconsin; in 1912 he successfully proposed and later

obtained the approval of the Geographic Board in Washington DC to change the name from Sucker Lake to Wapogasset, the latter closely resembling various names such as Wahpuggaisee in the government survey notes; he requested government stocking of crappies to increase fishing variety; from 1911 onward he sought various schemes to obtain control of the park and the dam site from Major Baker, with whom he had real estate investments at various Polk County locations. Baker platted the land surrounding the park in 1914; he had already started selling lots for vacation-minded people who arrived via train at Deronda.

It was Dr. Wallace who successfully sought the cooperation of the Garfield Town Board in helping in the public subscription which ultimately resulted in the purchase of this land. He also pushed for the acquisition of the dam to prevent it from falling into the hands of power companies. In 1922 Dr. Wallace and six local farmers bought the dam site. In 1962 it was turned over to the Wapogasset and Bear Trap Lake Association. The dam was rebuilt by the association in 1999. Dr. Wallace was honored in 1941 with the monument that stands on the highest point in the park for his many activities on behalf of the local community.

The origin of the name Wahpuggaisee or Wapogasset is uncertain. Sadler said it meant "White Pelican" from the Sioux language. Other sources believe it was named after the abundant suckers in the lake, hence the popular reference to the lake as Sucker Lake.

During the pre-war years, the park was the site of speeches by gubernatorial and other political candidates, farm leaders, and evangelists. They spoke from a wooden platform between two ridges framed by a canopy of trees. There was a concession stand with boats for rent, a swimming beach, and groups and families picnicked around open campfires. The DeLawyer family operated the concession stand from 1934 to 1942.

The tornado on May 13, 1942 changed everything. It uprooted all the finest trees, destroyed the concession stand, and park life came to a halt. Over the ensuing years, efforts were made from time to time to restore the park but it never came to life like it once had been.

In 2006, as restoration work on this park began, an archeologist hired by the town uncovered a spear tip, several pottery fragments, and other artifacts while inspecting the property. He concluded from his research that the site had been inhabited during various prehistoric periods, as long ago as 3,000 B.P. (years before present). Those artifacts are now in the custody of the Town of Garfield. More recently, prior to pioneer settlement, the Ojibwa and the Sioux used the lake and a bitter battle was fought on a small island in the northern section of the lake.

GARFIELD TOWNSHIP, POLK COUNTY, WISCONSIN¹

Garfield narrowly escaped being a township. The county board organized the town January 20, 1886, setting it off from the towns of Lincoln and Osceola and ordered that the first meeting be held April, 1886... The election was held at the home of James Montgomery.

Officers elected were A. W. Sylvester, chairman; Martin N. Hanson and James T. Montgomery, supervisors; James E. Strong, clerk; E. Van Worman, treasurer; F. H. Rasmussen, assessor; J. E. Strong, E. H. Olson, P. B. Lundberg and Ole Lenroot, Justices of the Peace; S. M. Hillbery, Levi Worman, and Ole Stevenson, constables. The town was divided into five road districts with J. F. Johnson, Andrew Lindberg, S. Nissen, N. H. Hagen, Lars Egnes, and P. A. Anderson, overseers respectively. A two mill town tax, ½ mills for bridges, eight mills for roads were voted. The treasurer was allowed fees of one percent on all taxes collected before January 1.

In 1887 the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sioux Ste Marie built through the town on which road two towns were established; Dwight which later was named Wanderoos, and Deronda on the town line between Garfield and Lincoln.

Garfield had three post offices when it was organized, Ubet, El Salem, Dwight or Wanderoos. David McCourt had Ubet post office established soon after coming to Garfield in 1860. Deronda was named after Daniel Deronda, a fictional character in a novel.

Among the prominent settlers in Garfield was the Frank L. Corey family. He was born in Leroy, which later became Osceola, March 11, 1859, son of Joseph S. and Pamela (Foster) Corey who moved to Osceola in 1856. Frank married Agnes Montgomery Christmas Day 1881. George Corey, also of Garfield, married Margaret Montgomery, a sister to Agnes, daughters of John Montgomery. Edgar Corey, a brother to Frank and George, was a school teacher.

George Corey was elected sheriff of Polk County in 1908 and served one term. Sheriffs at that time could not serve more than one term. He died May 11, 1923, at the age of 74.

*excerpt taken from Garfield Township, Polk County, Wisconsin, Polk County Museum file

¹ Transcribed by Judy L. Wester, September 14, 2007

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The summer season is behind us now, and it was steady with visitors and school tours. It was exciting to end our season with ten wheel-chair visitors from Good Samaritan Nursing Home. It gave the new addition and elevator a real challenge, but we were successful in leaving no person behind. Each level of the three-story museum was seen by all.

I must confess this has been an exhausting year for all of us at the museum not only with keeping up with the construction dust of the new addition which was started in September of 2007, but also with the needed projects in the old addition. With a wonderful volunteer crew. We accomplished the completion of many new displays, new doorway openings, and new air flow in storage areas. To the visitors of the museum there is a special feature in the basement. The laundry and the hardware store have a new look with the rough cut pine boards on the walls and a new floor covering. Thanks to the genie's society, the research room, which is climate controlled, looks great with the books on the shelves and the archives in files. One of our storage areas on the second floor has an additional doorway creating a new air flow to a much needed closed room. The volunteers were great and we ended our season at the Paradise Landing recognizing the great team that I enjoy being with at our old three-story court house. Special thanks were given to Martha Filip and Marilyn Reiten for countless hours of volunteering. They received the PCHS volunteer shirt of the year.

After a year under construction, we are still working to end the contract with the project manager, Chris Nelson. The new addition has a few items left to resolve. Our dedication was postponed this year. Our grand opening will be announced in 2009 when we will be thanking everyone that has given toward this wonderful project. We have had the use of the elevator since July and what a blessing to us all.

Judy Wester and I went to three-day Past Perfect Software program in Eau Claire this last week. We will be using this program in the future to help us with the organizing of artifacts, archives, and the program will be useful in membership and future campaigns.

October is our election month for new board members and officers. I want to take this time to thank Darrell Kittleson for his excellent work as program chairman for the last three years. Darrell has provided us and the community with interesting history subjects and speakers.

I like to thank everyone for their help this season and their patience with the construction work and dust.

I hope to see you Tuesday October 28th at the museum.

Rosalie

Because of increasing health problems, Rey and Bernice Lark, long-time historical society supporters, have sold their home on Lake Wapogasset and are residing in New Richmond. I'm sure they would appreciate correspondence.

Rey and Bernice Lark
1145 W. Eight St. Apt. 318
New Richmond, WI 54017

MUSEUM BOOKS

The museum has many wonderful and valuable books in its collection, but also many books that are not. Because of the limited space and personnel to care for the books, there is a need to separate the ones that are an asset to the museum from those that are just taking up precious space. It has been suggested that early next spring the books are brought out from the closets and reviewed by competent people from our historical society, the other area historical societies, and area book dealers with the goal of contracting our inventory to a manageable level.

HISTORY PROGRAMS

Fristad Lutheran Church of Centuria invited the historical society to give a presentation for their annual fall dinner for senior members. Larry and Linnea Phillipson volunteered to provide it. Since most of the diners were over 80, it proved hard to stump them on a quiz of "What is this for?" Having the opportunity to tell us stories about the antique tools and kitchen utensils we brought from the museum was the highlight for most of the folks. Items included a tiny stove for heating sad irons, tin match holder, butter mold and paddle, chicken waterer and egg scale, stereoscope and cards, and glass salt dishes, plus other common articles of the 1800's .

We next presented a program at the Swedish Club in Amery. We called it a "Swedish Immigrant Trunk Presentation" even though the trunk proved to be too heavy to fill and bring along! We started with the story of the immigration of Swedes to America beginning in 1841 and followed up with items they would have carried onboard ship to begin life in America. The Swedish display on the second floor of the museum was a treasure trove for authentic Swedish articles to bring the story alive. Larry told personal remembrances about artifacts and ancestors and encouraged others to share their stories.

These two programs were a fun and educational way to bring in extra cash donations for the PCHS while promoting visits to the museum from local people who might have forgotten we are open for their enjoyment.

DONATIONS

We have received a donation from Connie Hill in memory of her husband, Mervin. Connie served many years as secretary of our historical society. We also received a donation from Elaine Sandin of Amery and the Fristad Lutheran Church of Centuria. Anchor Bank gave toward our August dinner dance. St. Croix Valley Community Foundation's grant was used for our PastPerfect software and classes. We are thankful for each contribution.

QUILT SCRAPBOOK PROJECT

If you visited the Polk County Courthouse Museum during its first decades, you probably spent some time looking through a scrapbook of quilt squares made by the Indianhead Quilters for the 1976 Bicentennial. Age has taken its toll on this wonderful piece, but plans are in the making to have it on display spring of 2009 in a beautiful archival quality album. Marge Gustafson, one of the original quilters, has consented to help with the project. It will be a wonderful addition to "Stitch in Time," our new home-craft display.

BUTTON COLLECTION

Scott Marek of Krysand Cabinets, Luck, is commissioned to make a wall cabinet to house our marvelous button display. We expect to have it completed by spring.

POLK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY—GARFIELD PARK

Board of Directors Meeting September 23, 2008

Call to Order: Neither the president or vice-president were present so Rosalie Kittleson called the meeting to order at 5:05. Directors present: Larry Phillipson, Carl Johnson, Helen Stoltz-Wood, Joyce Bergstrand and Art Young. Visitors were Linnea Phillipson, Jay Bergstrand, Milton Johnson, and Dave Knutson. Everyone was mindful of the stormy looking sky and windy conditions.

Secretary's Report: Patty read the August and Sept. 8th reports and they were approved on Joyce and Carl motions.

Director's Report: Given by Rosalie Kittleson.

Correspondence: A check for \$40 came from Fristad Lutheran for the presentation given by Larry and Linnea. A check for \$50 was received from Linnea's sister for the same. Anchor Bank gave a check for \$300 for the Dinner Dance.

SEL Society sent a "Thank You" for the post office. They also sent a reminder of their River Ramble coming up on Sat. Sept. 27th.

Genealogy sent a “Thank You” for their new room and furnishings. They have let us know that they are pursuing their own 501c classification.

Old Business:

Rosalie met with the Property Committee and they approved a budget request of \$22,500.

On Oct. 7th, Debbie Peterson will represent us with the Finance Committee as Rosalie will be attending a computer class. Joyce suggested that Darrell also go as a representative of the Society Board.

We discussed having two signatures on all checks written on our accounts. This would begin Jan. 1, 2009 and was approved on a Joyce, Carl motion.

The convention on Sept. 26th - 27th will not be attended because the classes of interest are filled.

The west wall in the lower level of the new addition has been repaired, sheet rock installed, and painted. We are able to go back two years to request repairs if necessary. A hole was found where bats were coming in and has been repaired. The Paradise Landing contract for our 2009 State Convention was discussed. It was approved on a Joyce/Larry motion; Rosalie will sign and return to them. The rental price of \$3000 has been waived by their generous donation; we will send them a letter stating the same for their tax purposes. Each person will be charged \$14 plus 20% for meals. Breakfast will be served from 8:00-8:30, lunch from 12:00-1:00. Lunch menu is pasta salad and cold cuts. Rosalie will check on the kind of pasta salad.

New Business:

Darrell Kittleson’s letter of resignation was accepted with “Thanks” for a job well done.

Others whose terms are due to expire are; Diane Dueholm, Greg Marsten, Larry Phillipson, and Art Young. Art will not be seeking another term. Larry said he would accept a nomination for another term. David Knutson would also accept a nomination.

Other names mentioned were Judy Wester and Fred Salmon. We will also need a program chairman for 2009 and a secretary. The secretary does not have to be a board member.

Joyce Bergstrand and Carl Johnson will be the nominating committee. Election will be at the October meeting.

Rosalie is sponsoring a volunteer luncheon at Paradise Landing at noon on Sept. 25th. Board members are welcome to attend.

There will be an Open House at the museum on Oct. 21st at 5:00 for County Board Members.

Adjournment at 6:00. Even though it was raining, windy and getting dark we remained long enough to share the good food that had been brought for the potluck. Our **October 28th** meeting will be at the museum, at **5:45**. General meeting begins at 7:00.



Box 41
Balsam Lake, WI 54810

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<http://www.PolkCountyMuseum.com>

I would like to become a member of
the Polk County Historical Society:

Lifetime.....\$100
Yearly\$15
Student\$2

Name
Street
City
State & Zip.....
E-mail

darose@centurytel.net

