

The Reporter

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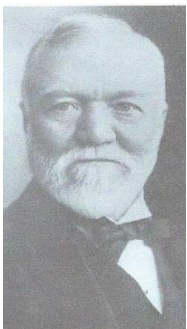
Waupaca Historical Society Celebrates 100th Anniversary of Carnegie Building

The Waupaca Historical Society will celebrate the 100th anniversary of Waupaca's Carnegie Library Building on Sunday, July 20th. Waupaca's Free Public Library was first opened in 1914 after the city received a grant from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation. The Waupaca building was one of 60 Carnegie buildings erected in the State of Wisconsin in the early 1900's. The historic building served as the library from 1914 until 1992, when a new modern library was built on the City Square. From 1992 to 2000 the building was the site of "Carnegie's Café" and was privately owned. In 2001, the Waupaca Historical Society purchased the historic property at 321 S. Main Street and renamed it the Holly History & Genealogy Center. The Society will celebrate this historic landmark during its 100th year with a special program on Sunday evening, July 20th, at the Holly History Center. The building will be open for a public "Open House" from 5:30 p. m. to 6:30 p. m. At 6:30 p. m. a special program, with guest speaker Marie App, will be held in the Holly Center's lower level meeting room. The Open House and Program are free and open to the public. Waupaca Historical Society members are encouraged to attend. Cake, coffee, and refreshments will be served after the program.



Aply serving the public of the Waupaca area as a free library for a century.

Andrew Carnegie's Inspiration



Andrew Carnegie.

This section is from scheduled guest speaker Marie App's excellent comprehensive account entitled the *History of the Waupaca Area Public Library*, 2000. A review of the library history, including these excerpts, was also included in the Fall 2010 issue of *The Reporter*. Ms. App provides background on the millionaire philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, whom the library board first approached for financial assistance in 1902, then again in 1905, and finally in a grant application in 1913. Carnegie took a job as a clerk and telegraph operator for the Pennsylvania Railroad. He rose through the ranks, even surpassing his boss as division superintendent. While working for the railroad, Carnegie invested in several iron companies, an oil company, and the Woodruff Sleeping Car Company. While on a trip to Europe in 1872, Carnegie realized that the demand for steel would increase dramatically in the years ahead. The following year, he and several partners established the most modern steel mill of the time, the J. Edgar Thomson Works, near Pittsburgh.

Carnegie survived two nationwide business slumps by continuing to expand his business while others were cutting back. In 1892 Carnegie combined three of his companies into the Carnegie Steel Company. This was sold in 1901 for \$480 million to J. P. Morgan. Carnegie retired with a fortune estimated at \$500 million. He began to give his money away, using it for the benefit of others. Libraries were Carnegie's first choice, and his monies financed libraries built in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the Seychelles, Mauritius, and the Islands of Fiji. In the end he had endowed 2,811 free libraries. The total cost to Carnegie was over fifty million dollars."(p. 11)

"Wisconsin was the recipient of 63 Carnegie public library grants, seventh highest in the U. S. The most grants, 203, were awarded in 1903, one year after the Waupaca Library Board contacted Carnegie for the first time."(p. 12)

"In one of his essays, Carnegie, a self-educated man, wrote that 'the main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves; to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so; to give those who desire to raise the aids by which they may rise; to assist, but rarely, or never, to do all'."

"Carnegie once said that the best gift that can be given to a community is a free library, providing the community maintains it as a public institution. "The library gives nothing for nothing, because it helps only those that help themselves . . . (It) stretches a hand to the aspiring and places a ladder upon which they can only ascend by doing the climbing themselves." (p. 11)

James Sickel ("Carnegie Libraries in Northeast Wisconsin," *Voyageur*, Volume 18, No 1, 2001, p.12) adds further reference to Carnegie's philosophy about reading and giving:

"The New York Times quoted Carnegie as saying 'let no man know more of your specialty than you do yourself. Then far less important, but still important, to bring sweetness and light into your life, be sure to read promiscuously and know a little about as many things as you have time to read about, one domain, your work, and the other, your recreation. Severe study of scientific books must not be permitted to exclude the equally important duty of reading the masters of literature and, by all means, of fiction.'"

Carnegie, in his article "Wealth," wrote that: 'wealthy men were to live without extravagance, provide moderately for the legitimate needs of the dependents and then consider all the remainder as surplus funds which they, as trustee, should distribute in their life time for the best promotion of welfare and happiness of the common man.'"

History of Miniature Golf – August 7th



Ms. June Melby

The Waupaca Historical Society will host guest speaker Ms. June Melby on Thursday evening, August 7th, at the Holly History & Genealogy Center. June will give a special lecture on "History of Miniature Golf". June grew up in the Waupaca area, spending much of her time at the Tom Thumb Miniature Golf Course, which her parents, Jean and George Melby owned from 1973 to 2003. June has recently published a new book entitled "My Family and Other Hazards", a charming memoir about summers spent at the family-owned mini-golf range located on the famous Waupaca Chain O' Lakes. The book also includes a researched chapter on the history of miniature golf, which dates back to 1929. You are invited to come and hear June share her experiences and memories. The program will be held at 6:30 p. m. at the lower level meeting room of the Holly History Center, 321 S. Main Street, Waupaca. The program is free and open to the public. Copies of the book, "My Family and Other Hazards" will be available for purchase after the program for \$25 with 20% of the book proceeds being given back to the Waupaca Historical Society. The Author will gladly sign all copies of the book purchased that evening. Cookies and refreshments will be served.

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Life in the Skunk Hill Indian Residential and Ceremonial Community at Powers Bluff

By Jerry Chappell, Waupaca Historical Society, 2014.

Background

In 1830 as a federal policy, President Andrew Jackson authorized the removal of all Native Americans from east of the Mississippi River, including the Menominee, Potawatomi, and Winnebago of the Wisconsin Territory. The policy led to a number of “governmental removal actions”, often including federal troop enforcement and Indian ‘death walks’, which continued into the 1850s. Most of the Potawatomi bands of central Wisconsin (esp. Dodge, Portage, Wood, and Shawano counties) were rounded up and moved into a reservation in Kansas. Although the tribes ceded their land by treaty, not all the bands within the tribal nations agreed with and accepted that loss of their homeland. Even in the 1860s, some were still “straying or wandering” bands in central Wisconsin, hunting and existing like nomads, while staying clear of the ‘settlement-growing- into- village activity’ of such settler sites as Stevens Point and Grand Rapids.



Residents and visitors at Skunk Hill rock formations. Photo from the National Register document.

John Young is believed to be one of the Indians from the Kansas Potawatomi Reservation who found the life on the reservation to be increasingly repressive as undesired allotment policies and religious restraints were imposed on the Indians by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. So, leading a small Potawatomi Prairie Band, Young returned to central Wisconsin in the late 1870s to forge a living in the area of Powers Bluff. The band settled briefly on or near the Powers Bluff Hill, which they called Tah-quakik and others called Skunk Hill, until the early 1880s when they moved to a place called Indian Farms in

Rozellville, and lived there until the 1890s.

Historical records indicate that some iron prospecting took place in the 1880s and the John Arpin Logging Company clear-cut all the trees of the Powers Bluff area in the 1890s. Thus, at the beginning of the 20th Century, the hill had also become known as “bald mountain.” The Company closed its holdings, including Skunk Hill, in 1904.

Many of the local Potawatomi, and many directly from the Kansas Reservation, returned to Skunk Hill in 1905 after it was abandoned by loggers and commenced to turn it into a residential and ceremonial community. Powers Bluff is a sizable hill of quartzite towering 250 feet over mostly level terrain and spreading out 20 acres to allow for dwellings on the top and south side. {Seemingly, the location was far enough in the distant “northwoods” to, for a time, avoid the Americanizing clutches of the federal government. And it was about 10 miles northwest of, and therefore not imposing upon, developing Grand

(Wisconsin) Rapids. Since the soils of the hill were shallow and rocky, the Indians figured the ‘wanna be white farmers’ who were buying cream of the crop farmland would not be interested. Apparently, at least a handful of Indians purchased land on or around Powers Bluff, doing so with money they had from leasing land allotted to them back on the Kansas Reservation.

Residential community

For 25 years (1905-1930) the new inhabitants, through the joining of bands from various tribes, and through intermarriage, became a mixed community of Potawatomi, Ho-Chunk, Chippewa, and Menominee Indians. The Community continued to be called Tahqua-kik by its residents, and Skunk Hill by many others. {John Young may have previously established good ties with the farmers of the surrounding area}.



Powers Bluff Indian Village. Photo from National Register document.

The community (with the center on top of the bluff on the south side of large distinctive rock formations), which extended down the south slope and into the surrounding area, contained 70 to 100 people during the 1910s and early 1920s. The top area had at least eight permanent dwellings, including small log and substantial wood frame (bark) houses, tar paper shacks, as well as traditional wigwams. There were also ceremonial structures, two dance rings and a cemetery. A second cemetery was located at the base of the hill. During the years the community existed, none of the dwellings were equipped with running water, electricity, or telephones. Light was provided by kerosene lamps and heat by iron stoves or fireplaces.

While living at Skunk Hill, the people subsisted by a variety of traditional means such as hunting, gathering berries, gardening and trapping. Cash or barter was obtained by work at area farms, berry-picking, and the sale of crafts, such as baskets and beadwork. Maple sugar was also made on the bluff, once the forest had regenerated, and the sugar traded to surrounding communities. Water was obtained from several springs. The women washed clothes in a nearby pool.

Ceremonial community

Communities like Skunk Hill, largely beyond federal authority, functioned as places where traditional values, practices, languages, and ceremonies could be shared, preserved, and celebrated.

The Indians believed the rock formations at Powers Bluff had spiritual connotations, including one called Spirit’s Chair.

Coming to Powers Bluff in 1905, the Potawatomi Indians brought along a new Indian religion of liberation called the Dream Dance. Over the years, spiritual leaders and spokesmen John Young, Jim Spoon, White Pigeon, and John Nuwi promoted the engagement of the Indians in the Dream Dance, the principles

of which emphasized native world view and rejected American cultural values. The religion strove to continue traditional Indian beliefs and lifeways during a time when there was considerable pressure to assimilate.



Log spirit houses over graves. Photo from National Register document.

The Powers Bluff Community rapidly became the center of regional and pan-tribal ceremonial activities especially involving the Dream Dance or Big Drum and the Medicine Society. The ceremonial structures included two dance rings and two cemeteries with graves covered with Potawatomi log spirit houses. Some wooden or log houses were used as cook houses for feasts or to accommodate visitors.

Over time, the Skunk Hill settlement became a center for

ceremonial life, drawing hundreds of visitors for varying lengths of time from all over Wisconsin and from the Kansas Potawatomi reservation. Notable among the ceremonies conducted were those associated with the Dream Dance and Medicine Society. The Grand Medicine Society is a curing and healing association found among many native peoples that conducts ceremonies in a Medicine Lodge.

Ceremonies ran for several days, with traditional costumes, drumming, dancing, and speaking. There was a thanksgiving dance in May, a religion or thanksgiving dance in July, and a harvest dance in late summer or early fall. The Medicine Lodge dance was held at various times.

Demise of the Community

Although they could speak their own language, educate their own children, and govern the community, perhaps by a tribal council, life was difficult at Skunk Hill as it was for other Native American communities at the time. The mortality rate was apparently high. Throughout the years the community dwindled. In 1928 fewer than 20 individuals were identified as living on Powers Bluff, some apparently living south of the present park in a second community. The main village and ceremonial center was abandoned by 1930.

{The demise undoubtedly occurred for a number of reasons. The Menominee may have relocated back into the Menominee Reservation. The Potawatomi may have finally taken advantage of the Indian Homestead Act of 1884 and went north into the heavily lumbered Nicolet Forest of Forest County to be with the main body of their people - maybe to identify allotment property that they hoped would be given to them by governmental act (the Reorganization Act of 1934). Many may have yielded to the federal wish

and disappeared into the main stream society, i. e., reluctantly assimilated into the American population, culture and ways.}

In 1936 the Town of Arpin gave the land at the top of the bluff to Wood County, which developed it as a park. The ski runs on the north side of the bluff opened in 1948 and the warming house in 1950.

National Register of Historic Places

Archaeologist Robert Birmingham of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin did the archeology leg work in 2001, charting measurements, recording/documenting site features, and completing the paper work necessary to register the Skunk Hill (Tah-qua-kik) Residential and Ceremonial Community (Town of Arpin, Wood County) in 2002.

Significance Statement:

“The Skunk Hill Ceremonial Community site is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the national level because of its association with events that made a significant contribution to Native American History. The settlement, in fact, played an extremely important role in preserving traditional ways at a time when there was enormous external pressure to assimilate into mainstream American life through the forced abandonment of Native American languages and culture. Skunk Hill was the nucleus of an effort to preserve Native American traditions and culture, through the Dream Dance, Medicine Society, and other religious, cultural and social practices, during a time of intense suppression of Native American customs and beliefs. Skunk Hill is also an archaeological site under Criterion D because of its potential to yield information about the lives and history of non-reservation Native Americans during this time. The preserved elements of the site include two dance rings, two cemeteries, house and storage feature remnants, a trail remnant, and several artifact clusters. Many other features are undoubtedly present but obscured by vegetation.”

Sources

State Archeologist John Broihagn’s presentation “Recent Archaeological Expeditions to Central Wisconsin”, Saturday October 12, 2013 for the Seventh Annual Local History and Historic Preservation Conference at Hotel Mead & Conference Center, Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin.

Powers Bluff from Wikipedia, “Natural and Human History” [http:// en. Wikipedia.org/wiki/Powers Bluff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Powers_Bluff).

Wisconsin Historical Society Division of Historic Preservation Certification Form (April 12, 2002) and National Register of Historic Places Form, United States Department of Interior National Park Service by Robert Birmingham, March 6, 2001.

Waupaca Historical Society
321 S. Main Street
Waupaca, Wisconsin, 54981

Annual Membership Meeting – September 4th

The Waupaca Historical Society will hold its annual membership meeting & picnic on Thursday evening, Sept. 4th, at the new Shelter Building in upper South Park. The Hutchinson House Museum (located next to the new Shelter Building in South Park) will be open for member viewing/tours from 4 to 5 p. m. on that afternoon. A potluck will follow at 5:00 p. m. at the new shelter building. A short business meeting of the membership will be held at 6:00 p. m. Members are asked to bring a dish to pass (salads, casseroles, desserts). Brats, Hamburgers, buns, condiments, paper plates, napkins, utensils, and beverages will be furnished by the Society. Please mark your calendars and join us for this fun-filled picnic and your chance to check out South Park's new Shelter Building! **HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!**



