

THE REPORTER

Volume 14, Issue 1

The Newsletter of the Waupaca Historical Society

Winter 2010

WHS Board of Directors: Dick Bidwell, President, Mike Kirk, Vice President, Betty Stewart, Secretary, Robert Kessler, Treasurer, Gerald Chappell, Vera Duesterbeck, Jim Boyer, Glenda Rhodes, Dennis Lear, David Trombla, Joyce Woldt, and Marge Writt

WHS Director: Julie Hintz

Hutcheson House Museum Curator: Barbara Fay Wiese

Summary of the 2009 Activities of the Waupaca Historical Society

Membership: The Waupaca Historical Society has a membership of 240 historians (149 life time, 17 five year, 74 one year; 190 live in Waupaca County, 50 outside of Waupaca County).

Volunteers: There were 26 volunteers at the Holly Center and/or the Hutcheson House Museum; 17 at the Depot.

Special Events at the Holly Center, Hutcheson House, or Depot:

Strawberry Festival Saturday, 6/23/09,

4th of July Celebration, 4/7/09.

Rod and Classic Car Show and Bake Sale, 8/22/09.

Fall Fourth Grade School Field Trips, September 2009.

Dedication of the Cynthia Phillips Holly Room - 12/5/09

Display of Special Exhibit - Remember Last Winter - Holly Center, January to March, 2009

Hosting of the "Chamber After 5" Social Gathering - 2/24/09

Engagement in a Director's Challenge to raise funds - several months

Completion of the Replacement of the Lower Level Floor for the Holly History Center - 2/5/09

Donation of a railroad baggage cart from Dale Feldt.

Participation in the Waupaca Music and Memories Concert - 7/17/09

Display of Vintage Children's Clothing Exhibit, Hutcheson House, Summer 2009

Sponsorship of "Open Depot During the Strawberry Festival" and "Art at the Depot" - 8/15/09

Engagement in the Annual Membership Meeting and Potluck Picnic

With Guest Speaker - 8/19/09

Continued Restoration of the Waupaca Train Depot - all season.

Building the Train Baggage Car Barn - all season.

Attendance by Joyce Woldt at the Regional Meeting of the Wisconsin Historical Society, 8/22/09.

Hosting of the "Waupaca City Council After 5" Social Gathering - 8/27/09

Hosting the Fall "Think Tank" of the Waupaca County Historical Societies - 9/19/09.

Presentation of the *On The Hunt* speaker (Robert C. Willging's history of deer hunting in Wisconsin) - 10/22/09.

Display of "On the Hunt Exhibit" of Vintage Guns and Vintage Deer Hunting Photos, September - November, 2009.

Publication of Four Issues of the WHS Newsletter (The Reporter) - Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall.

Distribution of the Passport to History to All Visitors at Our Three Historic Sites - all season.

Board of Directors' Holiday Dinner Gathering, hosted by WHS President Dick and Kathy Bidwell - 12/30/2009.

The Early History of the Waupaca Curling Club (1879-1924)

A history article by J. J. Johnson

On November 18, 1909 the *Waupaca Republican Post* reported that among the resolutions of the Park Commission's final meeting of the year, an appropriation of \$30.00 to maintain approximately four acres of Mirror Lake for ice skating and curling, both popular winter activities that required separate ice areas, was approved.

Curling started in Waupaca in 1879 through the efforts of H. W. Williams. The men held their games on Mirror Lake through approximately 1883. Arrangements were made for the use of two boat houses for skaters to rest within and for use as wardrobe rooms.

In 1884 the curling club moved to Shadow Lake and in March 1886 a rink was prepared between the back of Edward (E. L.) and Paul Browne's law office and the Episcopal Church. Later, a notice in the *Waupaca Post* that same month mentioned the curlers had met at Williams' hardware store and decided to make a curling rink for dues paying members in the Waupaca Opera House. This was the first location where the rinks were covered, eliminating the need to keep the ice clear of snow. The building was still being leased to the curlers in winters in 1888.



Curling on a lake in 1909.

In 1892 an attempt was made in December to put up a covered structure for curling on the east side of the Waupaca River (on Sessions Street, just north of Hansen's premises, where the old barrel factory once stood). The deal fell through and the group returned to the opera house which was too hard to heat for use by theater groups during the winter. They continued to use the building the following year.

The *Waupaca Republican* reported on October 11, 1894 that the curlers had secured the island in the rear of the city hall building (on the north end of Main Street) for ten years. By November the group was talking of erecting another covered rink the following winter. They continued at this location through 1897 but snow, flooding and heaving waters had them looking at other locations.

In 1898 they leased property just west of the corner of Franklin and Badger Streets for five years with options for five more. Simon Jensen built a covered rink with a lean-to for warming rooms. The following year Waupaca held its first state bonspiel at this site, but at the end of the lease in 1909 they returned to Mirror Lake.

The *County Post* announced on December 11, 1924 "The rink this year will not be located on the usual grounds on the courthouse square (they had met there for three years) but the club has purchased the old rink property on the south side of West Union Street (Harry Ashdown's lot on South Franklin Street)."



Central Wisconsin - the land of historic winter sports, including . . . curling, down hill skiing, and cross - country skiing. Photos from 2009 *Waupaca County Visitor's Guide*.



Later History of the Waupaca Curling Club (1924 - 1976)

A history article by Jerry Chappell

Enticed by J. J. Johnson's article, and never having seen a curling event, I went to Wikipedia and learned the following basics:

The game of curling was already in existence in Scotland in the early 16th century. The verbal noun **curling** is formed from the Scots (and English) verb **curl** which describes the motion of the stone. Curling is a game similar to shuffleboard, played by two teams of four players each on a rectangular sheet of carefully prepared ice. Teams take turns sliding heavy, polished granite stone down the ice towards the target (called the house). Two sweepers with brooms accompany each rock and use timing equipment and their best judgement, along with direction from their teammates, to help direct the stones to the their resting place. The complex nature of stone placement and shot selection has led some to refer to curling as "chess on ice."

In *Our Heritage: A Bicentennial Project* (1976, pp. 105-106) Vern Hanke reported later highlights from a history of Waupaca Curling by Ray W. Pinkerton:

[. . .]

In 1924, a group of 40 curlers built the original portion of the present Waupaca Curling Club. Each member donated \$25 to the building Fund. This "curling shed" housed two sheets [long strips] of ice and a small warming room which contained a wood stove and park benches.

Articles of Organization had been filed in 1928 declaring the Waupaca Curling Club a non-stock, non-profit organization.

By 1930 the members purchased 14 pairs of stones from the A. K. Drew Kay Co. in Scotland. Owners treated the stones as some of their fondest possessions.

During the early 1900s the curlers from Waupaca developed keen rivalry between the Club here and those in Wausau and Appleton. Also a rink {competing team} from Waupaca attended a bonspiel in Canada.

[. . .]



Waupaca Lochs in the early 1950s. Isabel Salan, Onie Dushek, Margarete Dushek, and Fran Turner. Photo from the *Waupaca Sesquicentennial History*, Volume I, 2007, p. 58.

By 1945, 32 matched stones were purchased and in 1948 another 32 were bought in anticipation of enlargement of the Club.

After several curlers saw the colored house in ice at Wausau, it was decided to make ice with color in 1943 in our Club. Also scoreboards were added to the Club to replace score keeping for 12 ends on printed sheets of paper.

The first annual Men's Bonspiel (16 rinks), under the chairmanship of Ray Pinkerton was held February 18-20, 1944. There were ten out-of-town rinks that attended that year.

In 1950 the Clubroom was expanded and two more sheets of ice were added. This was the year that women curlers were allowed to use the curling club and the Waupaca Lochs were organized with 14 women participating. Presently {In 1976} the Lochs have three leagues with 30-40 curlers. Artificial ice

and all the machinery needed for this was installed in the Club in 1957.

Mixed Curling had its beginning in the 1950s and annually the Club hosts an invitational Mixed Bonspiel with rinks coming from clubs in Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota and Canada.

[...]

By 1964 a new metal building replaced the old wooden shed and an updated clubroom was added. Sixty-four rocks were purchased to replace the worn ones.

Curling in bonspiels and hosting bonspiels became a favorite pastime for many curlers. In 1969 a Waupaca tradition had its origin in that the Men's Bonspiel was named "Champagne Bonspiel" and each rink received a bottle of champagne in honor of the 25th Annual bonspiel.

In this Bicentennial year in our Club's 96th year, the Men's Club hosted the 31st Annual Bonspiel with 32 rinks competing, including 12 Canadian rinks.

In her article on "The Waupaca Curling Club" in the *Waupaca Sesquicentennial History* (Volume I, 2007, pp. 57-58) Janet Hanke comments on the advancement of curling in Waupaca:

[...]

No doubt curlers in the early days were a very hardy lot. The conditions at best were unpredictable, but as the sport became more prevalent in the United States and Canada in the last 100 years, so did the technology and sophistication. The local facilities have undergone numerous additions and improvements up to the present, and four sheets of ice now are of such quality that regional playoff tournaments (en route to the national championships) are held here.

For 128 years curling has provided good recreation and entertainment to many generations of Waupacans.

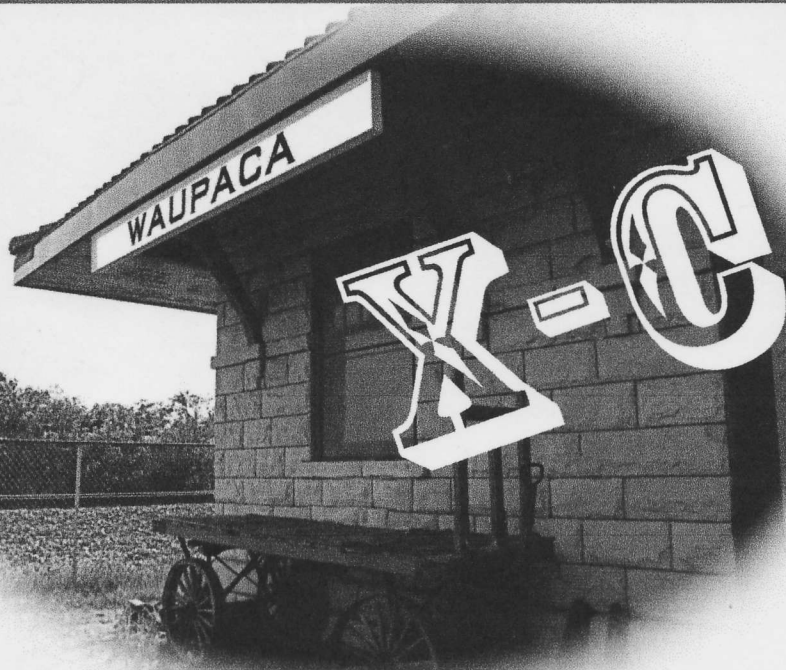
[...]



... and ice fishing.

WHS is Awarded a Bridge Grant

The Waupaca Historical Society was the recipient of a Bridge Grant from unrestricted funds within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region. The amount of the grant was \$16,000 and can be used for general budget expenses. The Waupaca Historical Society received this grant in early December, 2009, and the funds will be applied to the 2010 budget year. Much time and dedication went into the grant application and the Waupaca Historical Society Board of Directors wishes to thank the following individuals who worked on the grant application: Gerald Chappell, Dick Bidwell, Betty Stewart, Bob Kessler, Joyce Woldt, and Julie Hintz.



at the
RR

FREE EVENT

After you've shivered at your shanty

*X-Country skiing
at the
Rail Road Depot
(+ part of the
River Ridge Trail)*

Sun. Jan. 24

1 p.m. on ... 'til about 5

on Oak Street, just north of the Rail Road bridge

- ☼ cross country skiing from the depot around the quarry trail
(bring your own skis)
- ☼ easy, scenic trails suitable for families and infrequent skiers
- ☼ a nearby section of the River Ridge Trail can also be skied
- ☼ snowshoe too (just do not ruin the ski track!)
- ☼ no snow? -- the trails can be walked
- ☼ Hot Chocolate back at the Depot

Questions - call
715-258-2295

Snowmobiling: One of Wisconsin's Best Winter Sports

A history article by Ron Reynolds

There are dozens of Snowmobile Clubs in Wisconsin, covering thousands of trail miles. These clubs take care of the trails by grooming them throughout the winter season. Although the clubs function through volunteers, their expenses are reimbursed by the Wisconsin DNR in accordance with the miles they service, and how often they service them. Clubs also acquire extra money through fund raisers throughout the year. Each club operates on its own by maintaining its designated trails, using its own grooming equipment, and supplying and erecting dozens of trail markers.

For a closer look at this industry, let us visit one of our local clubs. The Waupaca County-line Trailblazers Snowmobile Club services a sector of Waupaca County consisting of sixty-five miles of trail. Each year the property owners whose land is used for trails are contacted to gain their permission to use their land. This is done in Fall, followed by the actual installation of the various trail markers. And, the markers are also removed in Spring each year. There are many kinds and sizes of markers. The majority of them are orange colored diamond shaped markers, called "Blazers". There are also smaller versions of road signs commonly seen on streets and highways. Some of these are: Stop Ahead, Stop, Caution, Curve signs, Winding Trail, Small Trees, Stay on Trail Or Stay Home, and others. The entire inventory of these markers is owned and maintained by the Club. Now, why not leave the trail markers in all year long? The answer is because things change, people/owners change, and the club cannot be presumptuous from year-to-year that the land owners will continue giving the club their permission to use their property.

The Trailblazers also own land on which they built their own 2,000 square foot clubhouse. It was entirely built by the club member volunteers, and is a very fine and functional building indeed. It is fully insulated, heated, and has fresh water and rest room facilities. It houses the two huge Groomers, and two fifteen foot long drags, which are hydraulically operated behind the Groomers. The clubhouse also contains the large inventory of trail markers mentioned above, and dozens of hand and electric tools used in making up trail markers, and maintaining the Groomers and drags. There are also several picnic tables and a bar and kitchen, including a refrigerator and microwave oven. The building has a cement floor, and is kept neat, clean and tidy by the club members at all times. On the property also, exists a large fifteen foot long BBQ pit, covered by a roof. Each winter the club hosts a big chili and refreshment day for all members and families. Since virtually all members have snowmobiles, there are races on the property, as well as sledding for the kids. Summers are also used to host BBQ parties etc.

In general, members of snowmobile clubs are good stewards of the trails and surrounding lands. They follow the rules of the road, and discourage improper use of sleds by speeding, excessive drinking and recklessness. The clubs also cooperate with law enforcement, especially when problems arise from renegade snowmobilers.

Finally, modern day snowmobiles are more comfortable, faster, and sturdier than the old days. Technology has greatly improved the machines. Since the mid-1980's, sleds have gone from air cooled to water cooled, from having to mix oil and gas together, to oil injection, from bumpy to smooth suspension, from manual to electric start, and the feature of reverse drive. In the beginning, there were one-hundred makes and kinds of snowmobiles. Today there are some six manufacturers, and they



... and snowmobiling. Photo from 2009
Wisconsin Journeys.

compete with truly quality and safe machines.

Depending on snow conditions, Wisconsin's snowmobiling is a very real, and enjoyable winter sport for the entire family, and is surely a boost to Wisconsin's economy!

Waupaca's First High School

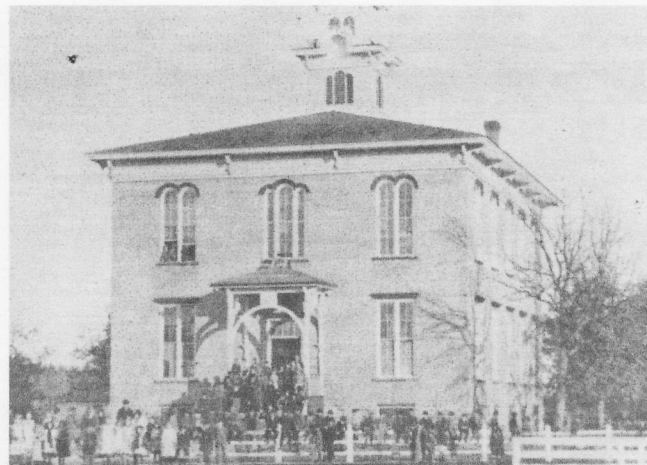
A history article by Jerry Chappell

Often when I've driven by or attended sports, drama, or concert activities in Waupaca's impressive High School I've wondered about the earlier high schools. Here are a few facts about the old Union High School.

Sophelia Kurkowski reported the earliest history of Waupaca's first high school(uncertain source):

A brick high school, called the Union High School, was built in 1867. It was then the finest school building in the county. Its bricks were products of the clay bed that is still worked outside the city. The Union High School was heated by stoves in each room and two in the assembly hall. In 1877, Mr. Rasmus Jorgenson was hired as janitor and served thirty-six years – a well loved and respected gentleman. Just before the new school was built in 1912, a student could move his toes back and forth and jar the room.

The regular high school course was not adopted until 1875 and the first graduating class of ten was in 1876.



Waupaca High School in 1888.

Excerpts from an essay by Miss Theodora Claussen (entitled, "History - Waupaca Schools," in the *Waupaca Republican* June 26, 1896) tells of the teaching personnel and activity in the high school from its birth to 1896).

In 1865 Miss Mary Ashmun taught the last of the so called "small schools", for the promoters of education had succeeded in exciting sufficient interest among the citizens to get them to build a school house. Accordingly the older part of our large building was erected. The school was to have begun in September as usual but the building not being completed did not begin until December 1, 1867. Mr. Wm. Jones had been secured as principal and Miss Amy Ely, now Mrs. R. N. Roberts and Miss Mary Fysche as assistants. The school opened with over three hundred pupils and in a few days it was found necessary to engage another teacher and after Christmas two others were engaged. No regular course of study was adopted but efficient work was done in grading the school. Having

everything new it was found necessary to deal with a great many difficulties. Among the desirable things was an organ and this the students resolved to procure. They secured four of Waupaca's prominent citizens to deliver lectures, charging ten cents admission. Again they got up an entertainment. Among the boys who participated were E. B. Knapp, M. Allen, John Pinkerton, Charles Stinchfield, Orin Harrington and others. The students with the assistance of the teachers got up a four page paper. The School Festival, which they had printed and sold at ten cents a copy. Thus by hard work and perseverance they succeeded in all they attempted. [. . .] All the aids that there were in the school at this time were a few blocks for mathematics, two or three maps and a small black board.

Mr. Jones was followed by Mr. Justice Burnham who staid two years. Mr. Burnham always had his pupils numbered and called them by their number. Next came Mr. D. Nicholson who was followed by Mr. Holbrook [who after one year was followed by Mr. J. G. Davies].[. . .]

During Mr. Davies' stay the library was started. The first books were a set of cheap cyclopedias. This foundation steadily grew until now we have between 600 and 700 volumes. At the close of Mr. Davies' second term the first class graduated, ten in number, most of the members of which are known to you.

[. . . .]

After Mr. Davies, Mr. Burnham returned and staid two years and was in turn followed by Mr. C. M. Gates who staid two years and was succeeded by Mr. L. L. Wright who held the position for six years. He was followed by Mr. F. A. Lowell. During whose stay the addition to the old building was erected and the summer before his last year a building of four rooms was built for the primary departments. He was succeeded by our present principal Mr. F. E. Doty.

In conclusion it might be interesting to know that during the life of Waupaca High School, nine gentlemen have served as principal and about twenty-five ladies as assistants while one hundred and forty nine students have received diplomas, eighty-nine of whom were girls and sixty boys.

The Waupaca Republican reported on July 22, 1909 that, based on complaints, two state inspectors had inspected the high school building and recommended a new high school building be erected.

On March 18, 1908, Inspector J. R. Bloom had examined the school building in response to a complaint, filed by Alderman William Fisher, stating that it was unsound and a fire hazard. Bloom cited that the building had faulted short joists that had been used alternately with joists of proper length[resulting in floors "so shaky" that classes were canceled on windy days], a roof attached in such a manner that winds could loosen the old cut nails, a dangerously placed heating furnace and wooden ventilating flues, and fire escapes with small balconies and iron ladders attached to the building. Nothing caused Bloom to feel the need to condemn the building but encouraged the community to consider replacing it within a few years.

Then, in 1909, inspector Terry found the high school building to be "wholly inadequate for the requirements at that time," stating "that it was the poorest building in any town of this size in the state." He recommended that a new high school be erected.

Apparently, the 44 year old Union High School was vacated shortly thereafter and a new three story school was built on School Street, starting in 1911 and completed in 1912.]

Waupaca Historical Society
321 South Main Street
Waupaca, Wisconsin 54981-1745

“Keeping History Alive and Making History”

On The Hunt



... and don't forget snowshoeing.
Photo from 2009 *On the Water*, p. 8.

The Waupaca Historical Society's Board of Directors were disappointed by the limited attendance of the WHS membership and of the people of the Waupaca community for the October 22, 2009 presentation of Wildlife Biologist and author Robert C. Willging on the history of deer hunting in Wisconsin. Willging gave an excellent review of highlights from his book, *On The Hunt*, relative to the groups of hunters down through history who have depended upon the resilient American white-tailed deer population for food and clothing. He included the Ice Age Paleo-Indian hunters of 10, 000 years ago; the north American Indians and fur traders of the 1600s and 1700s; the settlers, loggers, the market hunters of the 1850s through early 1900s; the more recent hunting sportsmen with their deer camps; and finally, a population of teenagers, especially young female hunters.