

Historic Site Markers 1953

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'Waupaca Makes History' Written by Local Students

An article entitled "Waupaca Sites Make History", written by members of the Chain o' Lakes Junior Historical Society, appears in the October issue of the Badger History, published by the State Historical Society.

A boxed insert in the story reads as follows:

"Hats off to the Chain o' Lakes junior historians! Their good citizenship has helped to unearth some old history and make Waupaca a more interesting city both for the people who live there and for vacationers.

"Two outstanding entries for the Maybell G. Bush Award came from Waupaca High. They were definitely the winning contributions of the entire 51 submitted. A high school, however, is not eligible for the Bush Award. Regrets! Regrets!

"One entry was a scrapbook of historic sites with both pen and ink, and pencil drawings of the sites, descriptions, and a state map showing locations. The other entry was the historic sites marker project for the city of Waupaca. A guidebook was published giving location and description of 11 sites. A map showed the over-all location. The markers were made by the students themselves. A large photograph of each site accompanied the entry."

A picture of the group of junior histories, including Charles Gensmer, Gary Davis, Janet Pope, Linda Jacklin and Jerry Eggleston, accompanied the article.

The complete article follows:

Under the directions of Miss Sophelia Kurkowski, we the Chain o' Lakes junior historians have placed white wooden markers on 11 business places, indicating the early historic buildings of the city of Waupaca.

This historical text on the markers was written by junior chapter members Carol Barden, Beatrice Pillsbury, Leonard Schweltzer, Marjorie Schmah, Marie Doro, Sally Cook, Marilyn Ware, Lenna Rimmel, Barbara Whiteside, Lois Reimer, David Hathaway.

In addition to having the markers placed on the historic sites we wrote a guide book describing these landmarks. Included is a city map marked with a planned tour for vacationers and towns-people.

Historians in industrial art classes, supervised by James Miller, made the markers.

A marker has been placed on the Firestone store on Main Street, site of the first library. In 1899 the Monday Night Club and the Woman's Club made arrangements for a Free Public Library. A meeting was held at the courthouse and a library board was formed. The board rented the back room over the former post office, now Firestone store.

A marker also is located at the Albert Kreeger barber shop, site of the first post office. The post office opened in 1851 with Captain David Scott as postmaster. The mail route ran from Green Bay to Plover. The nearest post office previously was in Oshkosh. Later, mail carriers ran a sailboat from Oshkosh up the Wolf River to Gill's Landing and then to Waupaca. The post offices was located in the Bammel furniture store and the Firestone store, before it was built on its present site in 1939

The first courthouse in the county is now an old secondhand store located by the river on Mill Street. Although it was long since vacated old times recall that the building once held a commanding position in the center of the city. Built in 1855, the building was almost entirely paid for by donations of the townspeople. At one time the judge was authorized to sell the land but he was unable to find a purchaser because all the money in town had been put up on other land earlier in the day. The price asked was \$2.50. In 1881, after 26 years of service, the building was replaced by the present courthouse.

Another marker is on the city hall where the first building was erected in 1854. The city hall was moved to Jefferson street next to Freberg's car lot and later used by the fire department.

Other markers are on the First Methodist church, the first church erected in Waupaca. The church was built in 1853 where the present one now stands. The present place of worship was built in 1874 and the old church was moved to the present site of the Waupaca Motor Sales.

The first Episcopal church was erected between the Modern garage and the former Mead bank building. A new church was erected on the corner of Randall and Main streets where it is still located.

A marker recalls the story of H.C. Mead, one of the most prominent men in Waupaca. In the early 50's he founded the privately owned Exchange bank, which stood near the Delavan hotel. He lived in the rear of his bank and ate meals at a nearby hotel. On October 8, 1882, when he didn't appear for any meals, a waitress went to see whether he was all right. Peering through the bank window, she saw that he had been shot through the head. Detectives came from Chicago but only found a few suspects who later proved to be innocent. In 1892 the case was reopened and the only grand jury held in the county was called. Many people were questioned but the crime was never solved.