

NOSTALGIA EDITION GIVES OVERVIEW OF PINE CITY HISTORY

In this, our ~~nostalgia~~ Heritage edition of the Pine City Pioneer we have attempted to give a nostalgic overview of Pine City throughout the years.

While family names have changed and some that played an important role in the early settlement of the area no longer exist, the contributions all of the early settlers made will never be forgotten.

Today, the Pine City phone directory lists 32 Andersons[†], 60 Johnsons[†], 29 Petersons[†], 11 Smetanas[†], 21 Nelsons[†], 17 Carlsons[†], 10 Cummings[†], 12 Hansons[†], 11 Lindstroms[†], 25 Olsons[†], 13 Teichs[†], and 18 Pangerls[†], 8 Stoffels[†] and 12 Smetanas[†].

These names are just the tip of the iceberg. There are also the descendents of the Ezechs[†] that settled the area and the Germans and Danes and Finns and Irish.

To do a complete history of the contributions ancestors of all these families made would take years and once compiled, would be bound in a volume so large it would never find a place in the average home.

Instead, by researching old newspapers and historical documents and interviewing citizens who were a part of that history we believe we have succeeded in providing an accurate reflection of all those rugged pioneers who helped make Pine City what it is today.

Included in this edition you will read about the history of Pine City. It is the story of men and women ^{who} dreamed the dreams and who had the strength and the courage and vision to make them come true. They are the people who helped to build a new country that would change the world.

Pine County was officially organized on March 31, 1856 with Chengwatana as its county seat. A military road was completed linking St. Paul with Superior, Wisconsin and that road is still referred to as the "Old Government road".

By 1860 the census reported there were 92 settlers living in Pine County and that the village of Chengwatana was the largest settlement north of Taylors Falls.

Suddenly we were involved in a war between the states and Minnesota, in the midst of Civil War suddenly found itself with a bloody Indian war within its own borders as well.

When the Civil War ended the population of Pine County was down to 64. Chengwatana was destined to be the county seat until the city fathers made the mistake of setting the price too high on property they deemed indispensable to the railway company.

As a result the railroad company moved to a town that was just developing on the west side of Cross Lake and built their junction at Pine City rather than at Chengwatana.

In 1872 the county seat was moved to Pine City and the people followed.

Within the next ten years the new village grew offering jobs in a shingle mill, a stave factory, two hotels, two

general stores, a school house and several saw mills.

Pine City's growth and progress in the early years was very dependent on the lumber industry. Situated as it was just north of the "Big Woods" of hard timber which covered the lower Mississippi and St. Croix valleys, and at the southern edge of the great pine forests, Pine City found itself in an ideal location with access to a sizeable river that wound its way southward for fifty miles through some of the best pine stands in the state.

The rapid changes that were to be the twentieth century were forecast in the years between 1890 and 1900. It was the happiest, most prosperous, exciting decade of them all. It is no wonder that even today we still refer to that time as the Gay Nineties.

It became obvious to many Pine City citizens that they would have to meet challenges brought by the new decade. This ability to meet such change, the ability to adapt, is probably the single most important trait of these people. It was a trait which bound them together as a growing industrious community.

Lumberjacks had to move on or switch their occupation to farming which is just exactly what many of them did.

Barn raisings became common community cooperative celebrations as the land proved it could support farms once the pine stumps were removed.

During these years the village of Pine City grew. There were new names and new business and professional establishments each year. There were men who had started out in Pine City as lowly wage earners who soon became professional or business entrepreneurs.

They were all willing to hold public office if that seemed to be the best way to serve their families, their neighbors and their own ambitions.

Men like J. Adam Bède who became a national figure when serving in the U.S. Congress was one of them. Another was John Y. Breckenridge who with the help of his wife established the famous Breckenridge Drug Store and held about every village office at the time.

Julius Dosey, the Prussian timber estimator was a prominent figure and served as mayor 19 times. His daughter, Esther, still lives in Pine City in the family home he built at the turn of the century.

Douglas Greeley, son of the Chengwatana dam builder was an early county auditor and bank official and Frederick Hodge served in the state senate and was superintendent of the county schools.

W.H. Hamlin, farmer, teacher, county surveyor was the man Pine City turned to when leadership in any good cause was needed. James Hurley was a business leader, community builder and leader of Pine City's outstanding baseball team known locally as Hurley's Barringtons.

A.R.W. Olson edited the Pine City Piker and kept his readers appraised of what was going on locally and nationally. Captain Elijah Seavey piloted the steamboats on Pokegama and Cross Lakes and added his melodious tenor voice for all community programs.

Robert Wilcox served as judge of county probate most of his life and John G. Wilcox served as an officer in the Union Army, teacher in the Chengwatana school, Pine County superintendent of schools, judge of probate court, county attorney, registrar of deeds,

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and county surveyor.

These men were among the leaders of the town who, regardless of religious, political or ethnic differences, drew together in pursuing a common goal and in understanding that serving their community and their neighbors was indeed a rich and fulfilling achievement.

On September 1, 1894, one of the worst disasters of early Minnesota history took place in Hinckley when a fire completely destroyed that town, Brook Park, Mission Creek, Sandstone and Askov. The fire consumed over 400 square miles of timber. Four hundred eighteen people perished and 138 of them were never identified.

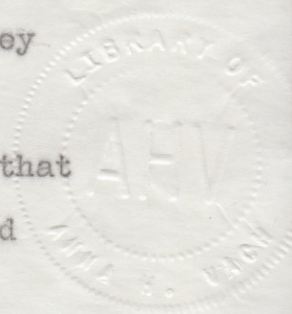
Pine City was set up as the official relief center and the citizens supplied homes and lodging for survivors ^{until} ~~as~~ Hinckley and other towns were rebuilt.

The Twentieth Century will always be known as the era that witnessed more changes than all the other centuries recorded throughout time.

People were singing "In the Good Ol' Summertime" and "Sweet Adeline", the Wright Brothers took their first powered ~~ap~~ airplane flight and Henry Ford produced his first Model-T.

Women were getting daring and the brave ones were wearing bloomers in the gym even though they contained over five yards of material.

The Mayo Brothers opened their Rochester Medical Center to the world in 1905 and Dr. Longstreet Taylor opened a private institution on Lake Pokegama for the isolation and treatment of T.B. patients.



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It became known as one of the finest sanitoriums of its kind in America if not the world.

It was during this period that Pine City was fast becoming a thriving dairy center and a creamery became part of the local scene.

Word spread that opportunity and the need for man power was plentiful in Pine County and immigrants from Europe took up roots in the area.

The Swedes bought land south of Pine City. Land north of the river was cheaper and immigrants of first generation Bohemian families found they could buy a quarter section for a fraction of what land cost in the old country.

There were Germans, Irishmen, Danes, Frenchmen and Chippewa who established themselves in and around Pine City.

The Northern Pacific Railroad set about to encourage land purchase in the area and hired a Bohemian named Frank Karas as a field agent to sell thousands of acres of land the ~~real~~ railroad had been given by the government.

The Chengwatana Dam controversy raged on during this period and the farmers took matters into their own hands several times and blew it up.

Attention was temporarily diverted when a \$5,000. fresh water pearl was found in a clam shell from Lake Pokegama. A button factory was established to use up the clamshells as clammers worked day and night hoping ~~to get rich ever~~ for instant wealth.

World War I broke out and Pine City men were quick to volunteer for duty. By 1918 the war had ended and the

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boys came marching home.

The future looked bright and prosperity was just down the road.

The ROARING TWENTIES WERE UNDERWAY. Prohibition was nation wide and the law designed to end drinking seemed to encourage it. No one cared just what they were drinking just as long as it was alcoholic.

The Soderbeck Ferry provided a shortcut for Wisconsin people coming to Pine City as well as for Pine City people going to Wisconsin. Magnus Soderbeck had a good idea back there in 1922.

Mary Pickford was America's Sweetheart and Clara Bow, the "It" girl was beginning to gain popularity.

It was a crazy era. Red Grange had just turned pro and joining the Chicago Bears, had drawn 72,000 fans to a single game in New York City. That same year 135 thousand people paid more than two million dollars and sat in the rain to see Gene Tunney beat Jack Dempsey in ten rounds in the World Heavyweight Championship.

In 1927 Minnesota's Charles A. Lindbergh flew the Atlantic solo, and his book about the adventure was on the coffee tables in many Pine City homes.

Skirts got shorter, waistlines longer, hair was bobbed and tucked under cloche hats and the Flapper was born. Her counterpart, the Shiek, was wearing a raccoon coat and bow tie and everybody was humming "Barney Google" and dancing the Charleston.

And overnight the bubble burst and Pine City along with the rest of the nation was engulfed in the GREAT DEPRESSION.

People struggled to survive widespread unemployment but in those days there were no unemployment checks and little public

Mortgage foreclosures were commonplace and people tried desperately to help one another sharing whatever meager supplies they had.

Those were the days of clothing made out of flour sacks and many a little girl was teased when her dress blew up and her underpants had "PILLSBURY" stamped across the back in large indelible letters.

A popular song of the era was "The Best Things In Life Are Free", and people made the best of things and survived only to have gained from their losses.

During the Thirties the radio was a popular form of family entertainment. Kids hurried home after school to hear the next adventure of Jack Armstrong, the All American Boy. Beau Carter's newscast was a must and shows like "Amos and Andy", Jack Benny, George and Gracie, and Eddie Cantor were rarely missed.

The "Big Bands" were recording songs that are still favorites today and everyone was dancing.

It was during this period that Dr. E. G. Nethercott converted the old Buselmeier home on Cross Lake into a hospital.

By the early forties kids were driving their parents crazy with swing music tuned in full blast on their favorite radio station.

The nation had begun to recover from the Depression and then PEARL HARBOR. Our nation was once again involved in a World War.

That was 40 years ago but there is not a person who lived through the trauma of separation, loneliness, and loss that does not get a lump in their throat when the flag passes by or a familiar tune from that era is played. Nor will they forget the day the whistles' blew signaling the war had ended. The country went

Following World War two we were caught up in the fabulous fifties.

Remember how scrabble caught on and 30 million hula hoops were sold in one year.

The fifties brought new people to the Pine City area. People were attracted to the area by the beauty and property around the two lakes was developed into building sites.

The courthouse was struck by lightning on June 12, 1952 and through the heroic efforts of our volunteer fire department the county records were saved.

In 1950 when North Korean Communist troops invaded South Korea, President Truman ordered U.S. forces to help defend South Korea. Before the conflict was over more than 400 young men and women from Pine County were a part of that war. In little more than ten years later over 500 young people from the county were fighting in Viet Nam.

Pine City business and industry picked up during the 50's. W.C.M.P. began broadcasting locally and the Pine City Pioneer, which was 75 years old at that time, became the the two main channels of communication in the community.

The new Pine City drive in theatre opened and couples were lining up in their cars to see Humphrey Bogart in the "African Queen", and "On the Waterfront" starring Marlon Brando.

Television was also becoming a popular form of home entertainment.

The sixties became a time of realization for Pine City. New industries located here and the population grew. For the first time since the beginning of the century the major portion of the community's population was not involved in farming.

With a broader, more diverse economic base the city could look forward to continued growth and prosperity.

Pine City's Heritage celebration is a tribute to everyone who helped make the city what it is today.

We hope you will enjoy our special edition and find it worth keeping for future reference.

Many people have been working hard for over a year to make the celebration a memorable one.

Take part in the activities that have been planned for the Labor Day weekend, Sept. 3, 4 and 5th and wear a Heritage button to signify your pride in the city you call home.

Plan to attend the Heritage Pageant at the fairgrounds ~~all three~~ on one of the nights. It will be presented all three nights of the celebration and each performance will be followed by fireworks.

The musical extravaganza was written by Don Stoltz/^{director}of the Old Log Theatre in the Twin Cities and by Pauline Sills who will direct the production.

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