

The **Portage County Historical Society** is a non-profit organization that depends on generosity of its supporters. Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to the PCHS at the **Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin**. Your contribution will be part of an endowment account. Only the interest earnings from this account will be expended.

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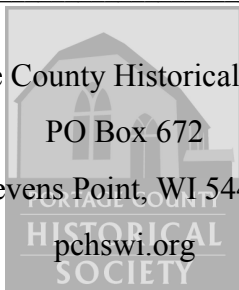
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Portage County Historical Society

PO Box 672

Stevens Point, WI 54481

pchswi.org



**ENGFORD HOUSE (1850)**

The Engford house is the County's oldest documented house. Known locally as the "Circus House", because several circus families have owned it over the years, it was built in 1850 by Miner Strobe, a pioneer attorney and judge, who lived in it until his death in 1880. In 1923 Robert Engford purchased the house. Engford was a pioneer in the motorized circus equipment industry and one of the first to tour Wisconsin with that equipment. After his death in 1967 his daughter Florence lived in the house. Displays in the house tell the story of the circus and its role in Portage County as well as life in the 1920s and 1930s.

**YELLOWSTONE CABIN (ca. 1930)**

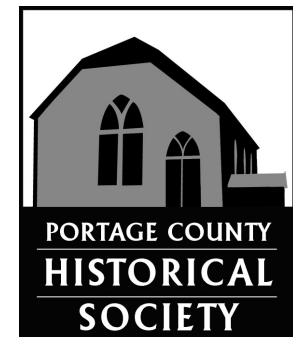
Originally part of the Yellowstone Motel in Park Ridge on the *Yellowstone Trail*, a route known for its yellow markers pointing the way to Yellowstone Park. In Portage County, parts of the *Yellowstone Trail* were integrated into the highway system and by 1926 received the designation US Hwy 10.

**HEI CORNER SCHOOL (ca. 1894)**

This school was built on the corner of County Trunk V and County Trunk T, just a few yards from the Portage-Waupaca line about 18 miles east of Plover. The school functioned until the late 1940's. During April and May hundreds of fourth grade students from Stevens Point Schools spend a half day at the school.



**HERITAGE PARK**  
**PLOVER, WI**



**Open Memorial Day—Labor Day**

**Saturday & Sunday 1 - 4 pm**

**or by appointment 715-344-4423**

**pchswi.org**

## HERITAGE PARK

The park began in 1978 when the Historical Society acquired the Old Methodist Church. In 1983, the board of the Society purchased six adjoining lots in the park and moved the Franklin-Calkins House to the site. The remaining structures were moved from various locations in Portage County. The Park is a living monument to life in Portage County during the early settlement years.

## OLD PLOVER METHODIST CHURCH

(ca. 1857)

This church, a gift from the Village of Plover in 1978, is oldest church building in the County. It was sold to the Methodist Congregation in 1866 and used until 1963 when a new church was built.

The church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The architectural style is Greek revival. Although its steeple was lost in a storm, the Church's basic exterior and interior features have been maintained. It currently serves as a Society museum.

## FRANKLIN-CALKINS HOUSE (ca. 1857)

Built by George Washington Franklin who became wealthy by selling potatoes to the Union Army during the Civil War. His granddaughter married into the Calkins family. The house is a combination of Greek revival and Federalist styles. The exterior and interior have changed very little over the years. The interior has been decorated and furnished in the style of a house owned by a prosperous farm family in the 1870s.

## PIERCE BUILDING (ca. 1880)

This building was built by the Pierce family in the Village of Plover and functioned as a grocery and butcher shop. The Society intends to create a print shop to house our extensive collection of printing machines.

## PRECOURT BLACKSMITH SHOP (ca. 1880)

From one of the earliest homesteads in the county from the town of Buena Vista. The original site of the shop was on land granted as payment to a veteran of the Seminole Wars in Florida, who then sold the land to Antoine Precourt, who presumably built the smithy. The Society restored the building, which again functions as a smithy.

## GENERAL STORE.

This building housed a wide variety of businesses in Plover for well over 100 years. The Society will refurbish the building to represent a general store of the late 19th century.

## PLOVER POST OFFICE

This was the second Post Office building in Plover and subsequently housed a store, a doctor's office, a taxidermy shop, and a tavern.

## GB&W CABOOSE 167

The Canadian National Railroad donated this Green Bay and Western Caboose 117 in 2002. The CN delivered rail, ties, tie plates, and spikes and the Central Wisconsin Model Railroaders laid the track on which it stands. Built in 1967 this caboose has been restored to its colors of that time.

## BANCROFT DEPOT (1898)

Originally located in Bancroft, this depot was an important stop on the "P" line, the Soo Line's branch extending from Portage to Stevens Point. The exterior of this building and its first floor have been restored to a 1920's look by the Central Wisconsin Model Railroaders, Ltd. who use the basement as their meeting hall.

The Historical Society also maintains:

## Temple Beth Israel Museum (1905)

From 1871-2000 some 140 Jewish businesses were established in Stevens Point. In 1905 the Jewish Community built this Synagogue, which housed the congregation until 1985 when it disbanded and the building was deeded to the Historical Society. The permanent exhibit in Temple Beth Israel Museum illustrates practices of the Jewish religion and memorializes the Stevens Point Jewish Community and its many contributions to the Stevens Point community.

## Historic Fire House N°2 (1885-96)

Stevens Point's oldest municipal building served as a fire station until 1967. Today it houses the 1933 LaFrance pumper, a ca. 1890 wagon, the first printing press in Wisconsin, and an art gallery.

Rising Star Mill (ca.1860) in Nelsonville is one of the oldest mills in this part of the state and the last of its kind in Portage County. The Mill hosts several music concerts each season. The current schedule can be accessed at [pchswi.org/calendar](http://pchswi.org/calendar).

