Waupaca County Historical Messenger

Scandinavia's Eliason Cabin Project Continues

Scandinavia

The Eliason cabin, which is currently in the process of being restored, is a very important part of our local history. The original structure was probably built in 1851 by Hans Jacob Eliason, an immigrant from Eidanger, Norway . Hans Jacob (1810-1878) and his wife Anne Kristine (1813-1881) were among the first white people to settle in this area north of Waupaca.

The first significant piece of historical importance related to the cabin involved the first white child born in the Indian Land which this area was originally known as. The child, Olina "Ina" Olson who was born in 1850, was adopted by the Eliasons when her mother died a few years later. When the Eliasons passed away Ina inherited the property. She would marry Magnus Brynteson, who in 1918 sold the farm to James Bestul. The cabin and its many additions was acquired by Jen Berna who in turn donated the cabin to Friends Of Scandinavia History (FOSH).

The second important historical happening occurred on April 28, 1854 when the Township of Scandinavia was created at a meeting held in the cabin.

As previously noted, numerous additions were made to the cabin over the years which were to conceal the original cabin in such a way it was no longer recognizable as such.

When FOSH acquired it in 2006 there were three doors in the cabin, each one leading to one of the additions. There was also a "front" porch on the east side which was probably built in the late 1890s, and had no door access. Because no photos are currently available of the original cabin prior to the add-ons, it is impossible to restore the cabin to its original configuration.

The first major project was to "find" the cabin. This involved removing all the additions. This was accomplished with the help of Todd Cartwright and his crew who had the necessary equipment to remove (demolish) the unwanted structures.

The next challenge was to determine how to make the building stable enough to move it from the farm site, to its new home in the village park, a move of approximately 1/2 mile. Fortunately we had the assistance of some very knowledgeable, and dedicated, individuals who were up to the challenge. It took the most of a year to stabilize it.

On June 14, 2008 we were ready for the big move. Robert and Christine Faulks had offered to provide the equipment, and along with a large turnout of volunteers, the cabin made its journey to the park. Restoration work began almost immediately, the most important being getting the cabin lowered on to a cement platform. Saturday mornings became regular work periods.

It was decided that only one door was necessary, and would be placed on the north end. On the south end where there were two doors, windows would be placed instead. We located some original barn logs which were used to replace some of the deteriorated ones.

Jumping ahead to 2009 the work continues. So far this year a portable sawmill has been brought in to cut replacement logs and roof boards. Saturday, May 30th, found our dedicated volunteers nailing on the new roof boards.

Entertainment for the day was provided by yours truly when I fell through the ceiling and was left suspended by the armpits from the ceiling joists--the lower part of my torso hanging like a chandelier to everyone's amusement.

Special thanks goes out to Carl Lantz, a local carpenter, for his tireless efforts in ramrodding this project. Also to Bud Peterson and Phil Wemmer for their dedication and perseverance. ***Doug Watson***

Fremont

Fremont Area Historical Society (FAHS) meetings are held the last Monday of the month, except for January and February. Our goals is to document historical facts, and to present programs about the history of Fremont Wolf River area.

Current officers are: President, Wanda Harrison; Vice-President, Mel Maierhafer; Secretary, Violet Koepp; Treasurer, Ann Mathwig; and Historian, Elsie Yohr.

We recently placed benches in Fremont for people to rest and relax while enjoying the peaceful atmosphere.