

Memories of snow ice cream and Thompson churches

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THOMPSON'S METHODIST CHURCH AND BAPTIST CHURCH

Earliest Methodist Sunday School and Church meetings were held in a small frame school building known as the Bouschor School, located on Little Harbor Road. This school was later moved to Little Harbor and placed on the top of Little Harbor hill, on the right side of the road overlooking Lake Michigan. There it was used for school children in the area and also Methodist Sunday School.

In the early 1900 era the Methodist Church of Manistique purchased Lot #1 of a recorded plat in the Village of Thompson, located on the corner of Cedar and Front Streets. Lot #1 being the N.E. corner in the second block south of Town Hall on the west side of town.

A building was purchased from a Mr. Sharkey. The building was located near the present Fish Hatchery house on County Road-149. This house was moved to Lot #1 in the Village, becoming the Methodist Mission Church in Thompson.

Later this church was sold to the Thompson Grange for \$250 with reservation that the Methodist Church could continue to use it as long as desired. The Grange later sold the building to a Mrs. Hursh, from Thompson, for \$100. She in turn sold or gave the building to her son, Joseph, who lost his home by fire. He tore the building down using the lumber to rebuild a two room home with an addition on a parcel of land about 1,000 ft. west of the site of the Sharkey property or Fish Hatchery House.

The Methodist Church was also used by the First Baptist Church of Manistique for Sunday School and Mission work. Sunday School teachers were Ida F. Maclaurin, Edith Fuller, Dr. Don Sellers, Minnie Sellers (Dr. Seller's wife), and Mr. and Mrs. E.W. Miller. These people traveled by horse and buggy and came on Sunday afternoons. Also traveling to serve as Sunday School teachers were Mrs. Goodwin and her daughter, Edith, the late Mrs. Edwin Ekdahl.

Along with the Grange members this church was also used by the local representative of the Salvation Army, Captain Edward Severs, who preached and also led the Salvation Army band in Thompson, in the evenings, resplendent in uniform for this good cause.

THOMPSON'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Thompson's Catholic Church was named "St. Frederick". This church was built in early 1900, located on lot #7 in the Village of Thompson. A recorded plat on the north side of Pine St. second lot east of Bluff St. where US-2 now crosses. Pine St. being the street where our Town Hall is located.

Early records show the first babies in the Village, before St. Frederick Church was built, were Alice Bell, baptized April 20, 1884; Edward Elias Herrick, born Nov. 2, 1885 and baptized Nov. 7, 1885 by Father Geers.

Later Father Cebul came to Thompson and baptized Joseph Dufour born Oct. 25, 1886, Minnie Jane Hursh, Joseph Donald Balck and Arthur Louis Riband on Nov. 7, 1886. These babies were brought to one home in the Village when it was learned that Father Cebul was coming for baptism.

Among the early priests who served the people of Thompson was Father LaForest, 1905, who

came on Saturday afternoon and recited the Rosary on Saturday evenings and Mass on Sunday morning. Father LaForest stayed overnight at the homes of early parishioners. Some of these were the Casper Gilmet, Fred Miller, and Henry Voisine homes. Another well-known and well liked priest was Father Corcoran. Early families of St. Frederick Church were: Bouschors, Hruska, Vincent, Quinlin, Moran, Brown and Fitzgerald. Father LaForest, like Father Geers and Father Cebul, traveled by horse from Manistique to Thompson.

The IXL Lumber Co. provided the lumber for the entire floor of the church. It was 1-inch clear white maple. Charles Witters and Emery Haskins were the carpenters in charge and they were assisted by three local Thompson men: Aldred Bouschor, Morton Miller and Earl Hruska. In the new church the first children baptized were two Gierke babies. The first funeral was that of Rena Hinkson.

Mrs. Art Linmon of the store at Thompson made the cassocks for the altar boys.

This church served the village and surrounding area for many years and then was obtained by Mr. Joseph Hoholik who moved it from Thompson to his farm located on County Road-149. The back portion of the church is still intact and standing on his farm neatly painted white and kept in good repair.

Along with this Catholic

heritage is the early Chippewa Indian settlement in Section 12 of Thompson Township near Silver Creek, where the Indians stayed in summer living in bark huts and wood shacks, and when fall came, moved to the north end of Thompson on Lake Michigan. These Indians came from High Island and settled in Section 12.

The local lumber companies provided food and supplies. In the spring they were taken by logging train back up to section 12. There the men worked. The squaws made beautiful baskets and moccasins, which were later sold when they returned in the fall to Thompson.

These Chippewa Indians in earlier years carried their papooses to the site of Bishop Baraga's Shrine on Indian Lake. They walked to the site where a small Indian Church was built in 1835 by Father Baraga.

Here in this little, crudely built church of birch bark and logs, Father Baraga baptized these natives and blessed their little church.

In later years he wrote "I cannot express the grateful feeling and heartfelt joy with which I performed these religious ceremonies."

(Excerpts from Joseph Gregarich, Historian, Bishop Baraga Association)

Nothing remains now but the old Indian graves in the cemetery which he had blessed.

THOMPSON'S SWEDISH CHURCH

When entering the Village of Thompson from the east on US-2 turning south on the Little Harbor road, approximately four blocks south and one block east near Lake Michigan is the site of the first Swedish church in the village.

This church was founded in 1895 by the Swedish people who came to America from Finland. Their home land in Finland was given them by the King of Sweden, as a reward for their loyal aid and bravery in helping Sweden fight the Russian War.

Coming to America...shores of Lake Michigan, they worked in the large sawmill, loaded boats and piled lumber during the summer and went to the logging camps in the winter.

In the spring of 1895, the logging camps broke early...and the saw mill was not ready for its summer operation...which left about 6 weeks of unemployment. Many of the Swedish men were carpenters and at an evening gathering in the home of Mr. Matt Wager, he and John Heggblom suggested "it would be nice to build a church!" All heartily agreed and a subscription list was prepared. Money and promised donations were turned over to Wager and work began. The Delta Lumber Co. gave them lumber...a site was selected at the entrance of Swede Town...and then there was a church! Early Sunday School Superintendents included Wager, Branfors and Abe Sidbeak. Early families attending this

church were Larsons, Frans, Mattsons, Long, Erickson, Olson and others.

Some years later this church was lost by fire...when two buildings in Thompson burned and flying embers settled on the wood-shingled roof causing it to catch fire.

Thompson also had a Temperance Society and meeting hall in Swede Town, organized April 15, 1906 and named "Lilla Hoppet" in Swedish meaning "Little Hope". This was Chapter No. 44 of the Swedish and Finnish Temperance Association of America. There were 37 charter members who took the pledge of total abstinence of alcoholic beverage. In later years the Society became affiliated with the Order of Runeburg, a Christian benevolent order including a sick and death benefit. This order is still active in Manistique and surrounding areas.

According to my mother, Josephine Voisine Taylor, many hours of beautiful Swedish music and dancing were enjoyed by all the Thompson residents in the

Temperance Hall. This Society was a blessing indeed...and most needed during these early years of pioneering and settling a new homeland. The pavillion, located at the extreme end of the road to Swede Town, was frequented by musicians including John Stoor, father of John "Slim" and Stella Stoor of Manistique. Mr. Stoor played the fiddle and accordion. The Swedish church burned in 1929 and on Aug. 23, 1925 forty-two members became affiliated with the Zion Lutheran Church. One of the first pastors who came to Thompson from Manistique to conduct services was Pastor N. J. Lonner.

Yours and my history lesson: Feb. 22, 1973, U.S. Supreme Court sets Lake Erie boundary between Ohio and Michigan; Feb. 23, 1911, G. Mennen Williams Michigan Governor (1949-1960) born in Detroit.

By the way on May 9, 1943 the Dionne quintuplets were going from Calendar, Canada to Superior, Wisconsin where five little girls were to christen five big new submarines.