



PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May 2005

Volume XXVII

Number 1

1860 Settlers Northeast of Medicine Lake

Written for the Families:
Sandhoff, Begin, Bigner, Shillock, Lefevre, and Roggman *
Who lived where I live now.

By Dona Champlain

Where did they come from?
What did they do?

Clues from census records
Guide me on my quest.

Canada, Prussia, France,
Ireland dominate as
Settlers' places of birth.

Children born in Minnesota
Begin the next generation.

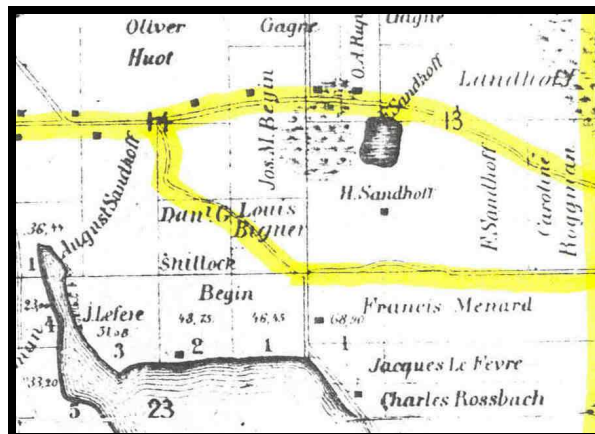
Men's occupation "Farmer"
Women's occupation "Keeping house"
Is what the census says.

Clues from census records
Guide me on my quest.

March 28, 2005

* Names were often spelled differently or incorrectly on documents.

Where above Settlers lived on Plymouth Township Map

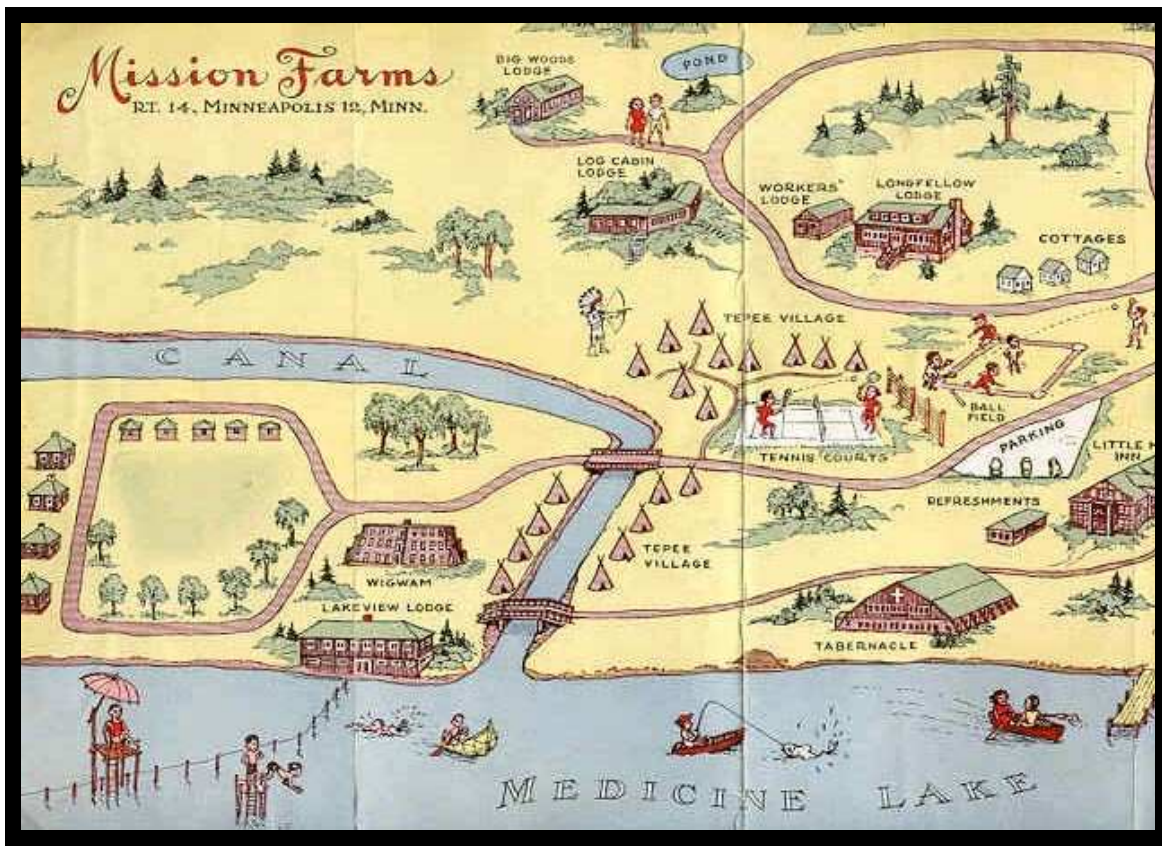


Mission Farms at Medicine Lake

A century ago a man of faith had a vision to serve those who were most in need with commitment to the dignity and worth of each person.

Rev. William Paul was that man. He knew God had a plan for him but fortunately he didn't know ahead of time of the worry, anguish, and opposition he would encounter. Had he known **The Mission Farms at Medicine Lake** might never have become a successful reality.

Thirteen churches in Minneapolis originally founded the Union City Mission in 1895. The St. James Hotel and the Gateway district * of downtown Minneapolis served as home to thousand of men who came to the city when their work in the fields, forests, and mines in the northern part of the state ended each season. He believed that unemployed, aging, ill, or convalescing men were better off both mentally and physically being productive rather than being idle. There was a high incidence of alcoholism in this population. Rev. William Paul, a recovered alcoholic himself had suffered severe frostbite to his feet during one of his last drinking episodes. He felt God had work for him to do.



Mission Farms at Medicine Lake Brochure

A plan was formed to find land suitable for farming. They hoped to find a site with no more than fifteen acres of woodland, several feet of lakeshore and no more than fifteen miles from Minneapolis. You can only imagine how excited they were to find 93 acres of woodland and 8,000 feet of lakeshore property available on the north side of Medicine Lake 10 miles from the city. In 1927 they rented the property to demonstrate that "The Experiment" was workable. It was successful and the land was purchased in 1928.

Time doesn't change some things, there was opposition, and there was criticism. Some thought it couldn't be done. Some thought it shouldn't be done. Some didn't want it in their neighborhood. The major obstacle was lack of money and there were major headaches and heartaches not to mention backbreaking labor for the men. They began their work with used materials and the basic rudiment of tools. The only thing they had enough of was Faith.

In 1929, the beginning of the Great Depression, "The Farm" was in operation, and ready to meet the emergency. The National Government sent men from almost every state to study the Farms. Many of the principles were incorporated into transient camps and the C. C. Camps. Rev. Paul's success was more than he could have imagined.

**The Gateway district was Minneapolis' eye sore, located at the entrance of downtown Minneapolis. Both the Northern Pacific and Milwaukee railroads were at their passenger peak with bustling depots just blocks away. A small park was a bedroom to drunks sleeping it off with empty, cheap wine bottles littering all over the place. A room could be had for a buck and driving down Washington and Hennepin Avenues you could see the red lights in the upstairs windows. It was finally cleaned up and replaced with shiny new office buildings in the early 1950s.*

The Work Began

In pre-depression days 40 to 75 men occupied the Farm. Rev. Paul would drive a truck down to the Gateway District and load it up with needy men and bring them out to the Farm. The buildings were erected out of old materials.

The Tabernacle was built out of the lumber from the old National Hotel. They were given \$1,000 to tear it down and were able to keep the lumber and bricks. The windows came from the Catholic Church on Rockford Road.



They were continually faced with building something from nothing. The plan was to have conferences at the Farm. They didn't have chairs or tables. So they built rustic chairs and tables. The lumber came from fallen trees on the property. A portable saw mill was overhauled and the fallen trees were milled: their body used for lumber and the branches used for firewood.

Nothing was junk to these men. They gathered and scrounged anything they could get their hands on, brought it back, and put the parts to use. In the blacksmith and machine shop they repaired plows, cultivators, and built wagons. One wagon had three different wheels. With their own lumber they built the tongues for the wagons, sleds, and sleighs.

What to do for bed and mattresses? Discarded springs and hospital beds were taken back to the machine shop and turned into rustic beds. They built more than a thousand mattresses in their own factory. They bought old and used hotel ranges and rebuilt them.

Rev. William Paul wrote, "We borrowed a herd of cattle and saved the calves, a good friend gave us money. No greater love hath no man than a Guernsey breeder, who will give money to purchase Jersey cows." The herd grew.

Seven little pigs grew up to supply the Mission Farm with pork: five became mother's, one died and the sixth became the father of the herd, which grew to several hundred pigs.

The Farm became know as "The Old Horse Farm." Old gift horses that had some good years left in them tilled the soft soil along with a few odd oxen.

In the height of the depression 775 men at one time were housed on the four mission farms. Men learned to work with the cattle and in the dairy. Some of the men re-established work habits, went out and found jobs of their own. One thousand-three hundred and eight men were taken off relief to jobs and were self-supporting.

The question arose of what to do with the grounds and buildings during the summer, the most beautiful time of the year in Minnesota. The woodlands were opened up to church and Sunday Schools for picnics, and young peoples societies. Soon the entire season was reserved. The first conference was the Northwestern Bible Conference in 1929. Religious Conferences, Camps, and Conventions had grown to the point where reservations had to be made a year ahead.

A program was developed for young folks year around. Winter activities included skating, sleigh rides, and skiing. Faith and works, together with the willing hands, made Rev. William Paul's vision a success for many years to come.

In 1980 Missions Inc. initiated programming that would infuse its traditional service with an advocacy orientation. At the urging of women in the community, Mission Inc. renovated and opened the former home of Rev. William Paul to provide shelters and advocacy services for battered women and their children.

Today the Mission Inc. provides services for over 10,000 men, women and children each year, while it continues to serve the changing needs of the community and plans for its future. The Mission Inc. has undergone tremendous changes since it's beginnings, but it has remained true to Rev. Paul: To serve those most in need with a commitment to the dignity and worth of each person.

Gloria Griffin Hoglund

4/18/05

Plymouth Writers Group

We would like to thank the Plymouth Writers Group, especially Dona and Gloria, for providing the above free form poem and article for publication in the Plymouth Historical Society's newsletter. The purpose of the group is to provide support and encouragement for seniors who write fiction, non-fiction, memoir, poetry, and prose.

They usually meet weekly at the Plymouth Creek Center. If you are interested in writing, please contact Sara Mittelstaedt at 763 509-5280.

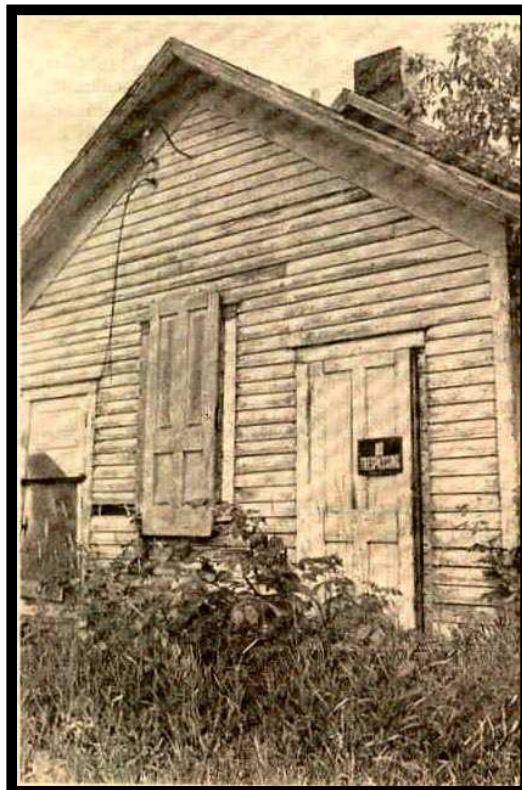
Sara, along with Gary Schiebe, invited the group to the PHS Building to spark an interest in writing about local history. Members of PWG have visited the museum on several occasions to review historical documents and gather information. In 2003 they published "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, A Collection of Poetry and Prose". For \$5.00 you may buy the book at PCC or call 763 509-5280 to reserve a copy. We applaud the group's interest in capturing the history of the local area and welcome any future articles members of PWG can provide.

City of Plymouth Celebrates 50 Years

In May 1955 Plymouth Township became a Village and then a City. There are several celebrations planned throughout the year, to name a few - Music In Plymouth on July 6th 2005 and Plymouth on Parade September 24th, 2005.

Plymouth Schools

Children in early Plymouth attended schools in districts that were located completely in Plymouth or were shared with neighboring townships. These were District 47, 48, 49, 51, 95, 104, 120 and 123. We have the most information about District 95 "Beacon Heights", a little about #47, 48 and 104 and nothing about the other school districts. If you have pictures or other information about any of the above schools please contact anyone of our officers listed below.



District #51 School

This is the only picture we have of District #51 on old Rockford Road and we believe this was the first school in Plymouth. Does any one have a better picture of the school either inside or out and possibly class pictures? Dig through those old photos and school information that may have been handed down through the generations.

Current Officers

The following are the present officers:

President	Vern Doseth	763-559-3777
Vice President	Ben Broman	763-559-5721
Secretary	Mable Swanson	763-545-7705
Treasurer	Harvey Schiebe	763-545-6127



Meetings

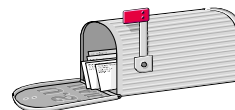
The monthly meetings are held on the 4th Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Plymouth Historical Society Building, located at 3605 Fernbrook Lane North, Plymouth, MN.

The Museum is open the third Sunday of the Month in the afternoon. The next open house will be Sunday May 15th so please stop by.

Donations

The Plymouth Lions donated \$1300.00 to the Plymouth Historical Society to add two additional lighted display cabinets. This is a very welcomed gift and will enhance the presentation of Plymouth's History.

Mailing and Membership List



If you are not a member and want to sign up or if you have any questions, please call:

Kay Bertrand, 763-249-0138.

A mailing for membership renewal for the coming year will be made in January 2005.

The annual dues are:

Individual	\$10.00
Family	\$15.00
Individual Lifetime	\$100.00
Family Lifetime	\$150.00