



PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Master Model Builder

We are very fortunate to have a Master Model Builder helping Plymouth make our history come alive. Gene Heezen has volunteered countless hours to build large scale models of a variety of early Plymouths buildings. Some of these early buildings are long gone but others are still standing having withstood the ravages of time and redevelopment. The following are models are the ones he has completed over the last few years. They are kept at the Plymouth Historical Society Museum and at the Plymouth Public Works building:

- Gilfillan Log Cabin
- Parkers Lake Dance Pavilion
- Old Town Hall
- Farmer's Home Inn (Schiebe's Corner)
- St. Joseph Church
- Old German Church (Mt. Olivet Chapel)
- Wig-Wam Inn (Mission Farm)
- Medicine Inn (Engman's Resort)

Even though Gene and Mary Ann live in Florida their daughter and family live here in Plymouth. He works on the models from pictures and then brings them north when visiting. Gene also frames a copy of the old picture along with a write up of the history of the building to go along with the model. Gene no sooner finishes one and he wants to work on another one; which is presently the Ryan Farm House buildings. He expects to finish the Ryan farm by this October, stop by the museum to see the models and his handy work.

We asked Gene to provide a little background on how he became interested in model building. The following is his input and have included a few pictures of some of his models:

"It was at a Parkers Lake craft-fair where Harold Willegalle took special notice of my rendition of a small fallen down cabin. Harold explained that he was with the Plymouth Historical Society. He pointed to the old Gilfillan log cabin some distance away asking if I could replicate it. The cabin was too old to salvage and too valuable to simply forget. Harold put me in touch with park superintendent Mark Peterson who gave me the low-down on the cabin. I counted logs and measured and made notes and sketches while Mark and his crew prepared to demolish this falling down piece of history.

While I built the miniature replica of the cabin Mark and his crew salvaged the logs from the original building and had them cut into boards. Some of the boards are now picture frames for the historical pictures painted by Dean Heng. On delivering the model cabin to Mark he gave me a picture of the Parkers Lake Pavilion; a picture of a large dance hall with a railroad track on one side and a lake on the other side. No easy task but that replica turned out well. On delivering it, Mark took me over to the original town-hall now on Fernbrook. The town-hall was the third replica I made for the City of Plymouth.

When we moved to Plymouth in 1968 Ridgedale was a swamp, the Farmers Home Inn was still there on Schiebe's corner, and Engman's resort on Medicine Lake had just been razed. I retired in 1993 and Mary Ann retired in 1997.



Model of Schiebe's Corner

She was born in Arkansas and I was born in Wisconsin. As I do not winter well I agreed with her that we should move south when she retired. She suggested Florida but I won out with our moving to the Ozarks in 1997. I had taken up woodcarving in the early 60's in fulfillment of neighbors teasing me about always going down to Arkansas to whittle.

We lived in the Ozarks for five years not far from three Civil War battlefields. The nearest was the Pea Ridge National Military Park which hosted the largest Civil War battle west of the Mississippi in 1862. It is known as the Battle of the Elkhorn Tavern as that was the name of the stagecoach stop where the battle took place. The Elkhorn Tavern is still there on that 4000 acre battlefield although it is not the original. The Elkhorn Tavern had been used as a hospital by both sides during the battle while the residents hid in the

basement.....blood dripping through the floor. With the help of Superintendent Mary Davis and curator Douglas Keller I replicated the Elkhorn Tavern before the battle as a stately inn on Wire Road with the Butterfield stagecoach in the foreground. I made another replica of the inn after the battle; broken windows, cannons in the foreground and all outbuildings destroyed. The inn remained standing and the Elkhorn on the roof were damaged but still there. Both scenes are on display at the Pea Ridge National Battlefield visitor's center.

Having seen a write-up about the Elkhorn Tavern scene historian and author Maggie Smith of Siloam Springs sent me a picture of her great grandfather's original cabin built in 1837. The cabin is on the campus of John Brown University and is still in use. It is the Simon Sager cabin which is in the National Register of Historical Places. The replica of that cabin is in the Siloam Springs Museum courtesy of Maggie Smith and curator Don Ward.

The Sunset Hotel was a landmark high on a hill in Bella Vista Arkansas. Seems it was there forever.....until it burned to the ground. It was a large horseshoe shaped structure whose hey-day was long past when it burned down. I surveyed the site and took measurements and obtained a picture of the original hotel. As a resident of Bella Vista and a member of their historical society I donated the very large replica of the Sunset Hotel to the museum where it is on display.

The Peel House is an historical mansion in Bentonville, Arkansas across from Wal-Mart's home office. The museum and gift shop is the original Andy Lynch cabin which was spared in the Civil War and moved to the Peel House site. I replicated the Andy Lynch cabin after consulting with Nuel Lynch who was born in the cabin. I offered the completed cabin model to the Benton County Historical Society but they turned it down as they had no place to put it as they rented space from the Peel House. Nuel Lynch had no place for it and the church that was built on the original site of the cabin could not make up their mind so when we moved to Florida in 2001 I crated it up. I reworked it and it is now a Florida fruit stand and smokehouse restaurant in the Florida State Historical Museum in Ft. Myers.

During the Civil War the Eagle House Hotel stood on the town square in Bentonville, Arkansas. Major General Frans Siegel made the place his headquarters in the Civil War. Author and historian J. Dickson Black loaned me a picture of the hotel and I made a replica of it. It was a difficult piece of wood and brick but it turned out very well. I offered the scene to Mary Davis at the Pea Ridge National Military Park but she deemed it not to be Civil War related. However she agreed to store it and I left it there when we moved to Florida. Later I wrote to Jim Walton as he owns the building and has his office where the Eagle House Hotel originally stood. He graciously accepted the scene and retrieved it from the military park.

Not so long ago we were visiting in Plymouth, Minnesota and there was a festival at Parkers Lake. And there by the pavilion was the replica of the Parkers Lake Pavilion! I introduced myself as being the builder of the scene and explained to the historians there that I was sad that the Farmers Inn Hotel on Schiebe's corner was not saved as an historical landmark. I told them that with good pictures I would make a replica of the inn. In a matter of days Gary Schiebe got some pictures to me. After doing the inn I made the Old German Church and old St. Joseph's Church. Both are old and have historical significance and both original churches are still standing.

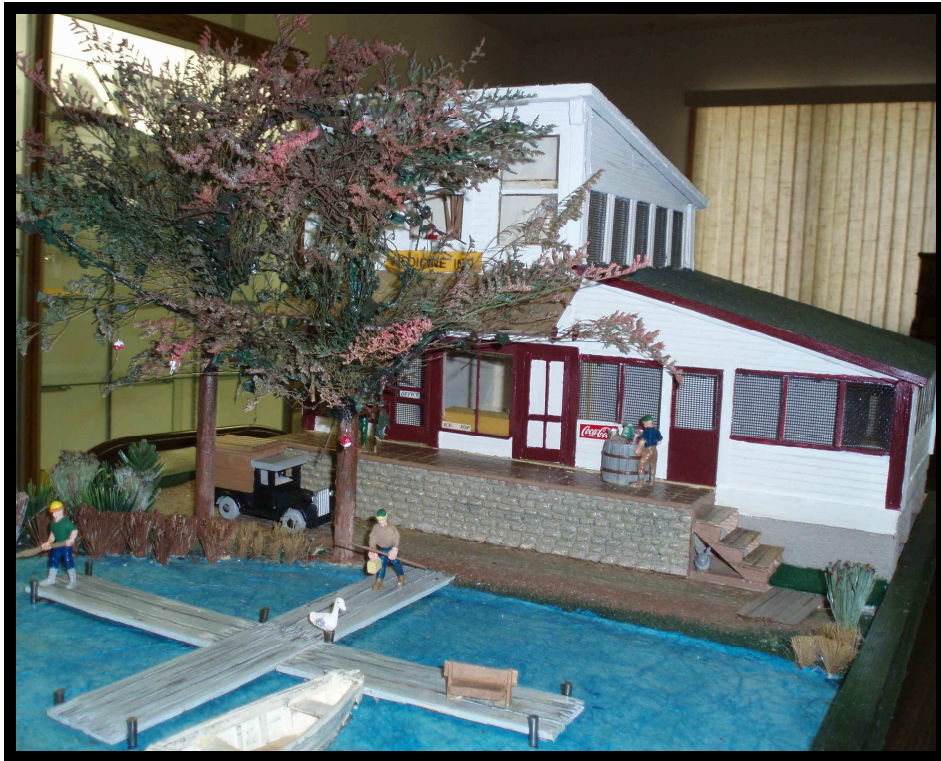
Then I did the Wig-Wam Inn which was very interesting. And my latest creation is the Medicine Inn also known as Engman's Resort which was on the shore of Medicine Lake.”



Old German and St. Joseph's Church



Wig-Wam Inn



Medicine Inn



Picture of Ryan Farm House

Plymouth Public Library

The current Plymouth Public Library will be closed in 2007 and a new one built with planned opening in 2008. The library will more than double in size and they plan on having a Plymouth history display area. This will be perfect to rotate through the library these models along with old photographs and the write ups. They also would like to put our family histories on-line and make available other historical information about Plymouth. There have been fund raising activities by the Friends of the Plymouth Library along with a sizable donation from the Plymouth Lions Club to provide funds for the historical display.

Mailing and Membership List

Current Officers

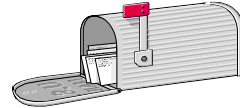
The following are the present officers:

President	Vern Doseth	763-559-3777
Vice President	Ben Broman	763-559-5721
Secretary	Mable Swanson	763-545-7705
Treasurer	Gary Schiebe	763-473-4889



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 also open the third Sunday of the Month in the afternoon from 2:00 to 4:00 PM



If you are not a member and want to sign up or if you have any questions, please call: Kay Bertrand, 763-249-0138.

The 2006 annual dues are:

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