



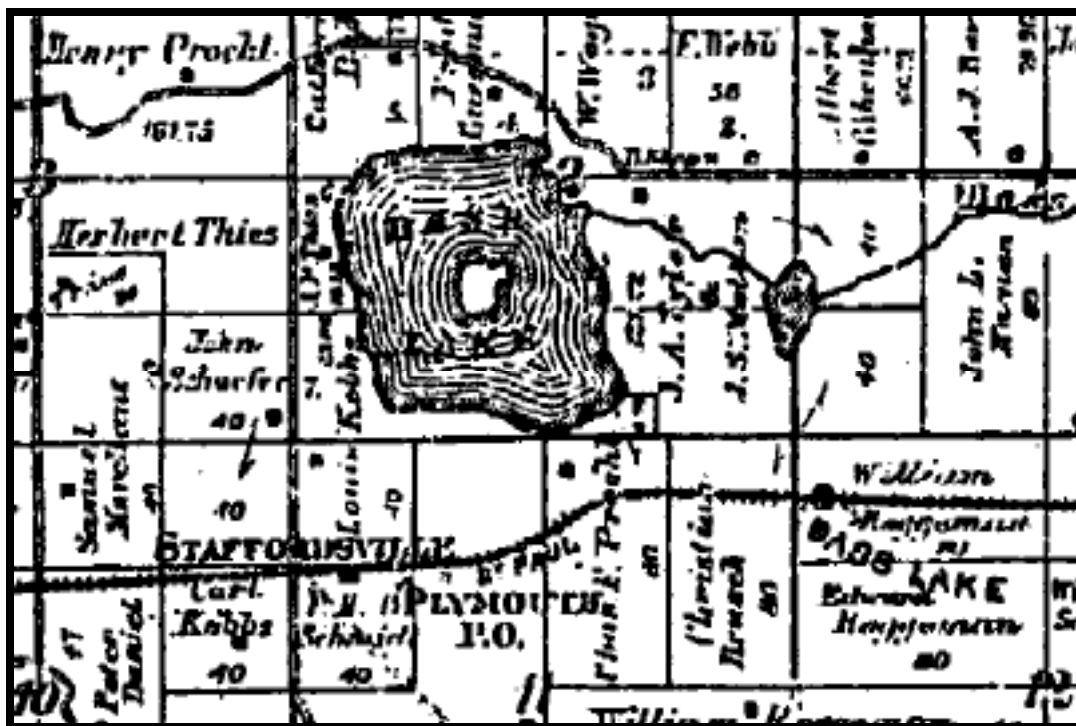
PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2015

Spring

Can you solve the Staffordsville station mystery?

By Ted Hoshal



Staffordsville, a long lost railroad station southwest of Bass Lake in Plymouth, was one of two rail stops that first appeared on the Plymouth Township plat map of 1898. A sister station called Bass Lake was located just about a mile to the east. It appears there were no families named Stafford in the area at this time and no early Plymouth settlers with this name. So just who was the “Stafford” of Staffordsville?

One theory is that the stop was named for Alice Stafford Robbins, the second wife of Frederick Douglas Underwood, general superintendent of the Minnesota and Pacific Railway and later, general manager of its successor, the Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault St. Marie Railroad (Soo Line).

Underwood was responsible for creating 1,300 miles of line and appurtenances for the Soo Line from 1886 until 1899, including development of the rail line through Plymouth. Underwood divorced his first wife in 1886 and married Stafford Robbins in 1893. Dee Zimmerman, writing for the Clark County

Press (Clark County, Wisconsin) in 1994, reports that Alice Stafford Robbins, whose first husband died (Ed Robbins of LaCrosse, Wisconsin) later married Frederick Underwood, president of the Erie Railroad.

However, according to a Wikipedia article on Frederick Douglas Underwood, Underwood married Robbins in 1893 while working for the Soo Line in Minneapolis. In January of 1899, Underwood became general manager of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad. He did not take the Presidency job at the Erie Railroad until May of 1901. That leaves at least eight years of Soo line railroad development while married to Stafford Robbins, ample time from which the Staffordsville station in Plymouth may have received its name.

The Wikipedia article indicates that Alice Stafford's name was used in naming both a Lake Michigan passenger ferry steamer (1897) and a tugboat (1914) in service to the Erie Railroad. Given her husband's positions with the railroads, the history of her name being used in the transportation arena and the history of her family name being used as part of a frontier Wisconsin town of a similar name (Staffordville, Clark County, WI), it is quite likely the long lost Staffordsville station of Plymouth may also have been named in her honor.



The Erie Railroad tug - Alice Stafford



Lake Michigan steamer - Alice Stafford

Hold your box cars! According to a recently discovered Adams Express Shippers Guide published in 1890, Staffordsville already existed as a railroad shipping point. That was three years *before* the marriage of Stafford Robbins to Underwood. If Staffordsville was named for Stafford Robbins, was it over a promise from a clandestine love interest? An extended courtship? A secret affair? Or has this whole theory went completely off the rails?

Write us or send an e-mail on how you think Staffordsville got its name. Help us put Plymouth history back on track!

Research

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Douglas_Underwood

See also: http://www.wiclarkcountyhistory.org/clark/news/OldDays/1994_3_23.htm

See also: http://www.archive.org/stream/underwoodfamilie02unde/underwoodfamilie02unde_djvu.txt pp. 523-524

See also: <http://mmm.lib.msu.edu/record.php?id=5711>

Staffordsville station has an elevation of 927' according to *A dictionary of altitudes in the United States*, Henry Gannett, 1906, p. 497.

Source: [http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.\\$b199636;view=1up;seq=503](http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.$b199636;view=1up;seq=503)

Staffordsville is noted as a delivery point location in the book *Shippers Guide to 50,000 Express Offices and Railway Stations*, published by Adams Express Company, 1890, p. 130

Source: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015011168146?urlappend=%3Bseq=130>

Alice Stafford tug boat photo, p. 77

Source: <http://www.mhpress.com/GLCF.pdf>

Orthography

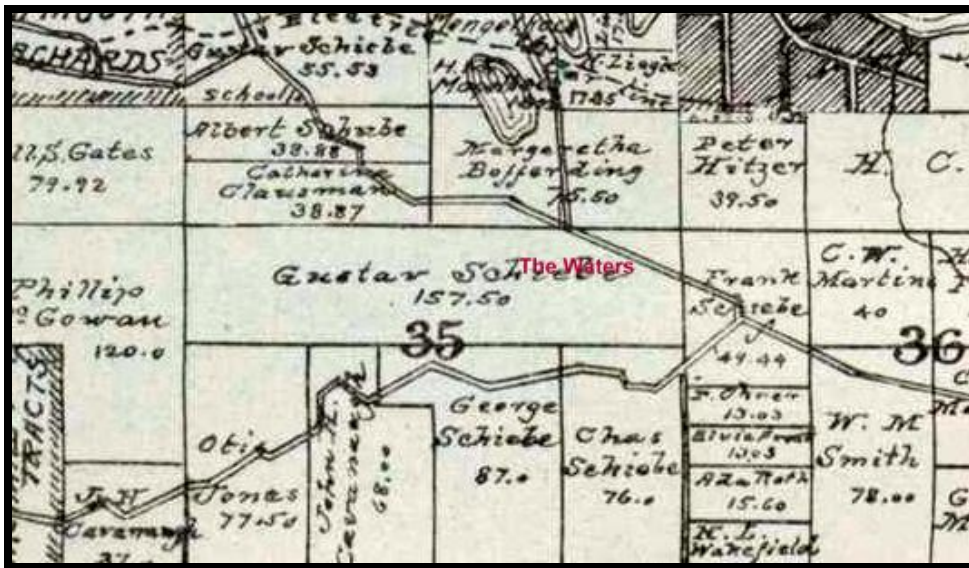
A Plymouth resident and reader of the Winter 2014 PHS Newsletter provided clarification on the historical orthography used at that time in history as Minnesota moved towards statehood. The definition for the word orthography is the “*The art of writing words with the proper letters according to standard usage*” at a time in history. The following is his correction on what appeared to be a misspelling of Mississippi.

The Winter 2014 newsletter states that the Clerk spelled Mississippi “Chipippi.” I believe that is incorrect. The letter that was interpreted as a capital “C” is actually a capital “M,” with a decorative initial flourish that looks like a “C.” (See image at p. 3 of the newsletter. That image shows “Minneapolis” with the same beginning letter.) The letters interpreted as the first “p” and the double “pp” are actually both “fs.” The letter that looks like an “f” in “fs” is what is known as a long “s,” which would now be written “s.” Thus, “fs” would now be written “ss.” (See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_s) The Clerk actually spelled Mississippi as “Mifsissippi,” using the long “s.” If you look at the U.S. Constitution, you will see an example of the use of the long “s,” with “Congress” being spelled “Congrefs.”

A big thanks goes out to our sharp reader and it proves again that we learn something “new” every day or maybe it is something “new” about something “old” every day.

The Waters

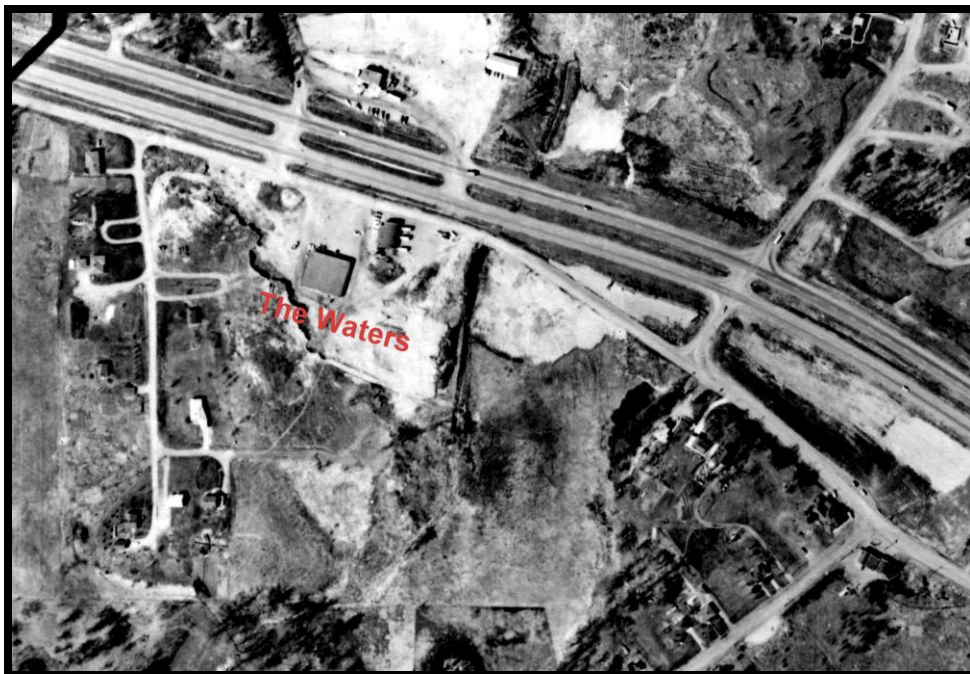
The Waters of Plymouth senior living center asked if the Plymouth Historical Society could provide an overview of what the general area was like around The Waters before all the modern development. About an hour was spent presenting pictures of past farms, business’s and aerial photos from 1937 up to current times of how the area around The Waters has changed.



1913 Map of area indicating where The Waters is located today



**1937 Aerial Map showing where The Waters is located today
Rural farm land before Hwy 55, Cty Rd 6 (Water Town Rd) is two lane.
On lower right is Farmers Home & Tavern (Schiebe's Corner)**



1956 Aerial Map showing Plymouth Shopping Center and the new Hwy 55

A large hill once stood where the Plymouth Shopping Center was built in 1955. A few years ago The Waters and McDonalds were built on the land occupied by the Plymouth Shopping Center. The original hill had good gravel that found its way via truck to gravel the many early roads in Plymouth and around Medicine Lake.



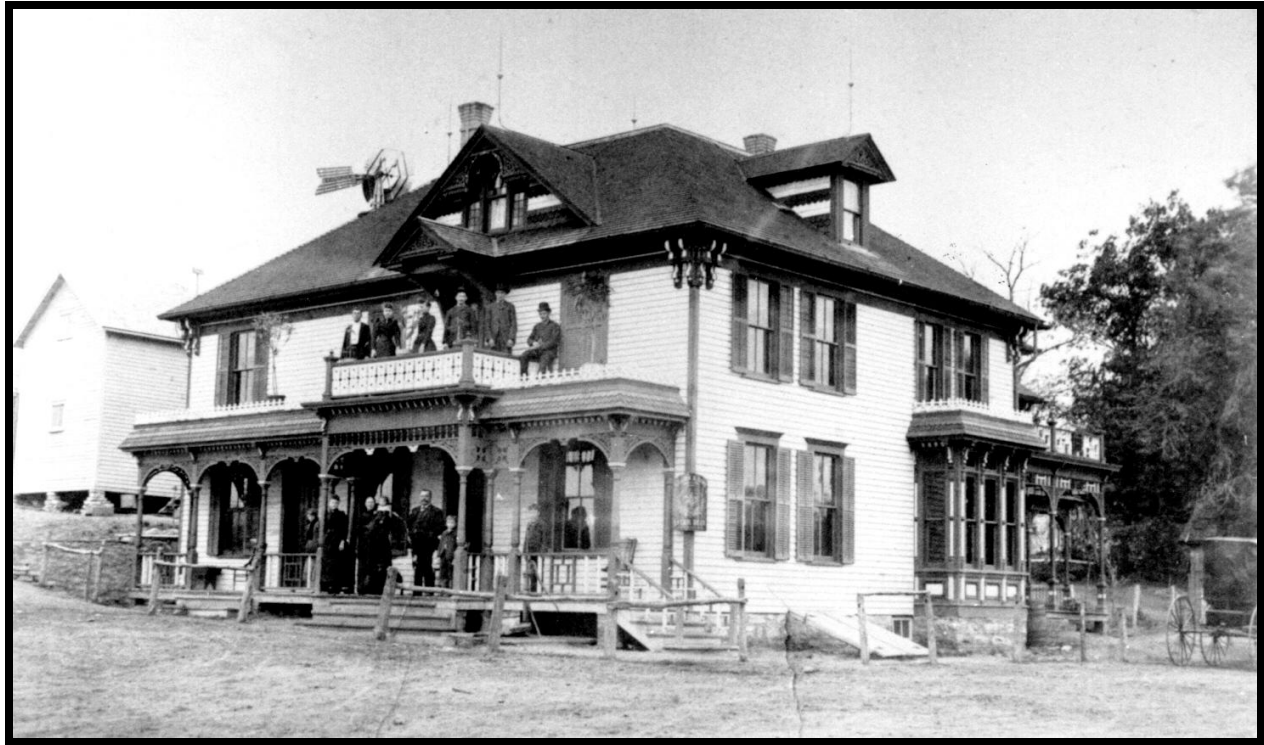
1939 Hauling Gravel from hill – Schiebe Bros Excavating

The presentation was well received and there were three in attendance that had direct ties to the original center of “Downtown” Plymouth called the Farmers Home & Tavern or Schiebe’s Corner just a few blocks away. Below is a picture of the group and an artifact from the building of days gone-by.



Nadyne Balke, Irene Cavanaugh, Gary & Pat Schiebe and Kay Tart

The picture below is the “Downtown” Plymouth of old that was torn down in 1977 to make way for an office building. All that remains of the building is decorative “gingerbread” brackets or corbels which came from the corners up by the eaves of the building. In examining the paint one can determine the different colors that were applied over the years. In the B&W picture below they were probably a dark green at this time period of 1900.



Farmers Home & Tavern (Schiebe's Corner) ca 1900



Crane with wrecking ball standing by and 30 minutes later a pile of rubble



**Attention to detail.
Built up by layering pine lumber.**

From the vantage point high on the building they would have observed the march of progress in Plymouth. These are reminders of days long ago in early Plymouth.



Many layers of paint over the 100 plus years. It appears the original paint on the brackets was red and then green with many subsequent layers.

Website

The Plymouth Historical Society website is:

www.plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com

Check us out!

Note: All past newsletters dating back to 1986 are available on-line in PDF format for viewing or printing.

Donations

Life Time Member:

- \$150 Lifetime Family Membership by Brian & Cindy Schiebe

Donated by:

- \$2500 donation from Plymouth Lions – they provide continued support of organizations in Plymouth like PHS. A big thank you to the Plymouth Lions for all they do for the community.



Meetings

The Museum is also open the 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month in the afternoon from 1:00 to 3:00 PM during Spring, Summer and Fall.

The monthly business 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.

Open by special appointment in January, February & March

Current Officers

The following are the present officers:

President	Dennis Jacobson	763-972-0988
Vice President	Kay Bertrand	763-249-0138
Secretary	Betty Jacobson	763-972-0988
Treasurer	Gary Schiebe	763-473-4889



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.

The 2015 annual dues are:

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

If you would like the newsletter delivered via E-mail please notify Kay Bertrand or send an e-mail to: info@plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com

If you do, it is a plus for both of us. When you receive via e-mail it will be in color. When sent by mail it is in black and white and costs PHS about \$2.00 per copy to print and mail.