



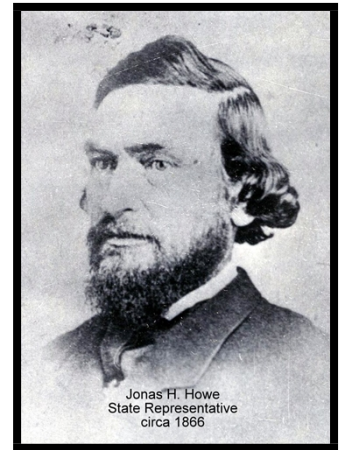
PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2017

Summer

Jonas Howe first Town Clerk of Plymouth

Jonas Howe was Plymouth's first Town Clerk and very instrumental in the initial formation of our community. He was a very educated man, proponent of a good education and also an artist. He was brought up in Petersham, MA and was told by his doctor because of health issues he should go out to the new "Eldorado called the Minnesota Territory" to help clear his lungs. In 1854 he left his wife and children back in MA and set out for the Minnesota Territory.



Rather an unusual family migrated to Minnesota Territory in 1854 and 1855. Jonas Howe and his brother, Benjamin, were artists of real ability as was an aunt who was teacher of painting. Jonas was a fine miniature painter, interested in education and fine arts. His acquaintance with Whittier and others of renown is a recorded fact. His early years were spent in Boston, acquiring his education and art instruction, where he met his friend Margaret Swindell whom he married. From then on, he lived in Petersham, Massachusetts and in time, had a family of five girls. Due to ill health, he desired a change of living and the idea of

pioneering in Minnesota Territory took his fancy.

In 1854, Jonas arrived in Minnesota alone, to view the land and conditions, and in 1855 he sent for his wife and five daughters, who came by train and boat under adverse circumstances landing in St. Paul. They traveled from St. Paul to St. Anthony, thence by wagon with a stranger to Plymouth Township. Jonas evidently did not know when they would arrive as he did not meet them.

A log house 16" x 16' and been built by Jonas, among

beautiful maple and elm trees, some of which are still standing. A small creek flowed through the farm which delighted the children. The location of the cabin was such that it was in the line of travel from St. Anthony to the west. It enabled them to see and meet travelers with news or messages. The cabin was very crude, but Margaret, his wife, made it homey and livable. She had been used to fine homes and beautiful furnishings, so it was quite a change from her mode of living.

With all the hard work and crude furnishings, they managed to find entertainment and simple pleasures in games, little trips on holidays and enjoyment in reading good books or articles from papers which were sent from the east. Jonas Howe was a great patriot and made care to observe national holidays, the Fourth of July in particular. One Fourth of July mention is made of a trip to what is now Wayzata Bay, with his wife and children and a family who were neighbors, going by ox team, July 4, 1856. Another celebration was mentioned in the Minnesota State Newspaper, July 7, 1862. *"At the July 4th celebration at Medicine Lake Hotel, salute of 34 guns was fired by Francis Day Esq...The Declaration of Independence read by Jonas Howe and seven baskets of food were left over."* Neighbors were friendly and helpful, for Margaret Howe knew very little about knitting, spinning and home making as some country women were versed in, and they taught her how to do these things which were so necessary. Even shoes, brooms and bullets were made at home by Jonas. As they lived in the center of a maple woods, of course, maple syrup and sugar were made - ending in a frolic.

In the summer of 1858, the children went to their first school and to the Township's first school, District #51, on the present Rockford Road. The school was held in an old building belonging to a Mr. Huot. They marched single file through the woods and tall grass to get there, one helping the other, always on the lookout for snakes and animals. They seemed to have no fear of the Indians as they seemed quite friendly. Jonas Howe was a firm believer in education. His eldest daughter, Cora, became deaf and dumb at the age of four, due possibly to a childhood disease. In 1860, he and another man from St. Paul, went before the legislature and petitioned them to institute a state school for the deaf and dumb. The bill was passed and Cora was one of the school's first pupils. Articles from newspapers were read and copied by Jonas Howe, on subjects of interest, particularly pertaining to slavery, farming, philosophy and working conditions. He copied many of the articles and clipped them from papers to put in a ledger for further reading. He also wrote protesting or

complimenting editors on what they wrote. He was a fine orator and spoke at many political sessions in the town of St. Anthony. Jonas was very much opposed to capitalism and if he had lived now, would have been considered a great social reformer. He was also a dreamer, visualizing improved agricultural conditions and as a member of the Plymouth Grange, he would prod the members to change conditions to improve the crops and themselves.

Not only a great social reformer, he was an ardent patriot. When the Civil War broke out, his resolution for encouragement for enlistments for the Town Board to advertise, was an article almost comparable to the Gettysburg Address. He was drafted in the Army, bought his release, and enlisted. He was on duty for some time at Fort Snelling and in Tennessee in 1864. His release from service was in 1865, when he returned to his home and was elected to the House of Representatives.

In 1873, the old log house burned and the new frame house was built. About ten years ago this was sold and the house, part of which is still standing, was remodeled. Jonas and Margaret needed a large house as they had ten children. Cora died in 1898. Angeline, George and Jonas died of Typhoid in 1864 - within three days of each other. They were buried on the farm and disinterred when the property was sold and laid to rest in Parker's Lake Cemetery. Benjamin, died in 1926, Annie (Mrs. Thomas Best), Gertrude (Mrs. Gus Dow), Laura (Mrs. Walter Carpenter), Carrie (Mrs. Wm. Dallas), Minnie (Mrs. Cecil Carpenter) are all deceased. Jonas Howe died in 1898 and his wife, Margaret, died in 1906. Jonas and his wife are buried in Parker's Lake Cemetery.

Jonas Howe purchased his pre-empted farm at Forest City on November 22, 1860, Section 27, NW 1/4 of NE 1/4, 40 acres and Section 22 W 1/2 of SE 1/4 and SE 1/4 of SE 1/4, 120 acres, totalling 160 acres in all. He held office as town clerk almost continuously, until unable physically to do so and kept very accurate and up to date records.

Of many people who settled in Plymouth, Jonas was one who contributed much to the town in way of good living, culture and advanced farming methods, a feeling of pride in ancestry and was farsighted enough to preserve records of the past to use in the future. It was he who helped organize the first town board meeting, mapping out parliamentary procedure and gave advice concerning legal aspects of such procedure, thus being unexpendable. Plymouth should most certainly be proud of having such a pioneer, whose caliber and integrity played such an important part in the progress of our community!

The article is a reprint from the December 1991 PHS Newsletter. This is one of the many Family Histories in PHS collection written by the family.

The Jonas farm house stood just north of where Red Robin is located on highway 55. The below pictures are two of his paintings that are located in the Hennepin History Museum in Minneapolis along with several other paintings. He painted these later in life at the urging of his family.



Celebrating the life and memory of Kay Bertrand, WHS Class of '54.

PHS lost one of their key people to cancer. Kay was always full of energy and was instrumental in acquiring and displaying the many artifacts for the Plymouth Historical Society. She will be sorely missed with here great attitude and big smile.



Kathleen Ann "Kay" Bertrand, age 81, of Plymouth died of pancreatic cancer surrounded in love, on August 21, 2017. Preceded in death by dear husband Dick. Survived by daughters; Wendy George (Bill), Debra Palmquist (Phil), Shari Nyland (Jeff), grandchildren; Stephen, Kristen and Daniel George, Marie Scholtz (Paul), Anders and Rebecka Palmquist, awaited Scholtz great-grandchild, sister; Karen Jones, beloved nieces and nephews. Survived by treasured friends everywhere; especially her St. Helena and Folwell girls, Roosevelt, and Wayzata classmates, card club, Plymouth Historical Society, grief group, neighbors old and new and the children who knew her as Mrs. Claus.

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

Donated by: Wayzata Class of 1957

- \$112.00

Donated by: Plymouth Lions

- \$2000.00

Donated to: Kay Bertrand Memorial

- \$200 Litwits of Plymouth
- \$50 Shari Nyland

Donated by: Potbelly Restaurants'

- \$100.00



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 the Spring, Summer and Fall.

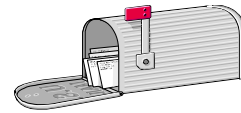
The monthly business meetings are held on the 4th Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Plymouth Historical Society Building, located at 3605 Fernbrook Lane North, Plymouth, MN.

Open by special appointment in January, February & March.

Current Officers

The following are the present officers:

President	Dennis Jacobson 763-972-0988
Vice President	Vacant
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 one of our officers.

New Life Time Members;

- Steve Eckes

The 2017 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 PHS by sending 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.