

Our County Our Story

PORTAGE COUNTY WISCONSIN

BY

Malcolm Rosholt

**Charles M. White
Memorial Public Library**

PORTAGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STEVENS POINT, WISCONSIN

1959

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FOREWORD

With the approach of the first frost in Portage County the leaves begin to fall from the white birch and the poplar trees. Shortly the basswood turns yellow and the elm tree takes on a reddish hue. The real glory of autumn begins in October when the maples, as if blushing in modesty, turn to gold and crimson, and the entire forest around is aflame with color set off against deeper shades of evergreens and newly-planted Christmas trees. To me this is the most beautiful season of the year. But it is not of her beauty only that I write, but of her colorful past, for Portage County is already rich in history and legend. And I share, in part, at least, the conviction of Margaret Fuller who wrote more than a century ago that "not one seed from the past" should be lost.

Some may wonder why I include the names listed in the first tax rolls. It is part of my purpose to anchor these names in our history because, if for no other reason, they were here first and there can never be another first.

The spellings of names and places follow the spellings in the documents as far as legibility permits. Some no doubt are incorrect in the original entry, but the majority were probably correct and since have changed, which makes the original entry a matter of historic significance.

The text is documented throughout with the exception of the township and village records or references to these records. A start was made toward page documentation but became impractical when it was discovered that many of these books have no page numbers. But easy reference may be made to these records in the office of the town or village clerk.

In any work of local nature, reference is often made

to present locations as they are related to the past. To avoid the constant use of the expression "on the present site of" I have used the word "modern" in its wider sense to mean any contemporary place or thing in being. I also refer to sites along the rivers as either on the *left* or *right* bank rather than to the directions from the river. To determine which is left and which is right, picture a fly fisherman in the middle of a stream. He always drops his line down stream which means that he faces down stream. Thus his left hand points to the left bank, his right hand to the right bank, no matter which way the river bends. The town of Linwood, for example, lies entirely on the *right* bank of the Wisconsin River.

References are made to the "Sherman account" and the "Helgeson account." The former consists of many note-book size diaries kept by S. A. Sherman, only a few of which have been edited, now in the archives of the States Historical Society. The "Helgeson account" is a book written in Norwegian by Thor Helgeson called "*Fra Indianernes Lande*" (From the Land of the Indians) which I have translated and made excerpts from.

The footnotes on the County Board of Supervisors and the County Commissioners Sessions also require a word of explanation. Several changes in the form of county government were made in the first three decades as between "commissioners" and "supervisors." As a result, the minutes of the proceedings of the County Commissioners Sessions and the Board of Supervisors both appear in Volume I and both run together. In fact, when the changes were made, the clerk was apt to forget himself in the first meeting and use the old designation under the new dispensation. But the page numbers run consistently.

I wish to express my appreciation for pictures appearing in the two sections of the book to the following: Mr. & Mrs. John Ksioszk, Mr. Howard Newby, Mrs. Emil Zimmer (deceased), Mrs. Alice Guyant, Mr. & Mrs. Jesse Grant, Mr. & Mrs. Dominic Bembenek, Mr. Leo Mallek, Mrs. George Isherwood, Mr. & Mrs. Cecil Coel, Mr. & Mrs. George W. Allen, Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Rogers,

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Malcolm Rosholt
Rosholt, Wis.

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