



Bayview History Bulletin

Summer 2026

Mission Statement: The Bayview History Committee exists to collect and preserve the history of the Town of Bayview and to make it available to residents and the public.

Committee Members: Paul Johnson, Ella Cross, Linda Jorgensen, Mike Bunch, Mary Gruhl, Jenny Murphy, Michael Peyton. Contributions by Susan Raasch

Thank You

For three years, the Bayview History Committee has been publishing a yearly newsletter celebrating all that continues to happen at the Houghton Depot. The BHC is proud to continue its efforts to put Bayview on the map by sharing the history and what makes Bayview unique.

This year is no exception. We are working on the development of a switching display to show how it worked and its importance to Bayview's Brownstone days. Also, this year we have added Wednesday open houses as well as our usual Saturday open houses. Over 300 visitors from all over the USA have stopped by over the past 4 years,

The Bayview History Committee, which is part of the Washburn Heritage Association, extends its thanks to all who have and continue to support the development and maintenance of the historic Houghton Depot. Thanks also to the Apostle Islands Historic Preservation Conservancy and the Washburn Community Education Foundation for their support through grants. Please consider supporting the Houghton Depot by sending your contribution to Bayview History Committee, P.O. Box 837, Washburn, WI 54891. Volunteers are needed for Open Houses and Programs. Please let us know at bayviewhistcom@hotmail.com if you can help.



Paul Johnson and Tom Tardiff shoveling gravel as ballast.

Town of Bayview History *Submitted by Hazel Maki*

One of the first settlements in the Town of Bayview was known as the Village of Houghton. Complete with its own train depot and post office, the village sprang up above the brownstone it began to quarry. The Hartley Quarry, Smith Babcock Quarry, and Prentice Quarry all opened in the 1880s. Men with stone cutting skills were necessary laborers in the quarries and as they took up residence the community grew. The "Great Monolith" stone exhibited at the Chicago World Fair was cut from the Prentice Quarry. It was never lifted out of the quarry. Many local buildings in the City of Washburn are made from these brownstone quarries. The quarries closed in the mid-1890s. Many of the quarries had already filled with



Brownstone Bowl today.

water as springs were sometimes tapped while cutting; additionally, the abandoned quarries filled with water. The swimmable waters of the Bodin Brownstone Bowl led to the creation of the World's Log Rolling Championships during the early 1920's. For several years, this event brought thousands of

people to the quarry's edge. People also settled along the lakeshore, and many families fished for their livelihoods. Some of the old homesteads, boathouses, docks, and cribbing remain visible on the water's edge.

In the 1890s, immigrants from Finland began to settle among the stumpage of the forests west of the Sioux River. Farming was the primary occupation in the "Finn Settlement".

Early settlers of the Town of Bayview had to work long, hard days to make ends meet. When the week's work was done, there was always room for fun, and the need for communion of neighbors was always evident. The town schoolhouses and Finnish Workers Hall were often the sites of community dances, pie socials, and school programs. Women's groups formed to provide fellowship and to address community needs. The shoreline women between the Sioux River and Houghton Point formed the Sunshine Club, primarily as a social gathering group, but also to support their community and those of greater need. Similarly, the women of the Finn Settlement also met as the Homemakers Club. Many of the children were also organized and continue to be a part of the Friendly Valley 4-H Club.



The Sounds of 1890s Houghton Village

By Paul Johnson



If you lived in Houghton Village in 1893, you would have experienced a lot of noises. At the south end of the village near Houghton Point, the steam train could have stopped south of Houghton Falls for a number of tourists to take the trek to the dock to board the Plowboy for a ride to Madeline Island, the steamboat toot announcing its departure. The train by this time has stopped at the Houghton Depot to take on or drop off passengers or colleagues of Frederick Prentice, or maybe a prospective buyer of brownstone from the Twin



Cities, wanting to see the action. While the locals had to get used to the pounding of channelers chiseling into the brownstone, the buyer might have plugged his ears for this unique sound of the steam operated machines cutting a channel in the relatively soft sandstone, in comparison to the granite of the Mellen area. Dynamite was not an option since the shape of the stone was its value. The swing boom derricks with inch or more thick cables straining through pulleys called blocks lifted the stone blocks up from below and set on a flat car or a tram to the dock, for stone moved by ship. The band saws in the stone mill had their screeching of the saw making the shapes for local brownstone construction. Horses pulled wagons to deliver goods to stores and businesses including



the blacksmith shop. Horses needed shoes and doors needed hinges. The quarry machines and tools got service or parts replaced.

If school was going the bell announced the start of classes and the end of recess. The boys listened for the train stopping at the depot down the line, the bell ringing as it was stopped there, or slowly passing through. A whistle post before road crossings let the people and horses know that the train had priority at the crossing. A freight from Bayfield might have flat cars to set out at the Babcock and Smith Quarry, the switch not far from the school.

If you happen to stop by the Houghton Depot at Bayview Park this summer you will see evidence of another sound, spiking rail and loading gravel for ballast. A temporary flat car with 4 flanged wheels is loaded, then pushed to where ballast is needed between ties. You might hear a hearty song, "I've been working on the railroad...."



Moonlight Sleigh Ride,

Don't forget the moonlight sleighride this Friday evening, Feb. 13, by the M. E. Ladies Aid Society, to Houghton. Rigs will leave from Mrs. Everson's, lower Bayfield street and the Washburn Hospital at 7:30 sharp. Fare for the round trip, including refreshments at Houghton, will be 25 cents. A short literary and musical program will be rendered at Houghton and all who attend will be sure of a most enjoyable evening.

February 12, 1903

As you read the article about Bayview's Clam Bake, you will note several spelling and punctuation errors. This article was originally published as a newspaper article. Except for inserting a few punctuation corrections to avoid total confusion, the article was left as it was viewed in the original publication. It was a time before auto correct.

CLAM BAKE WAS A BIG SUCCESS

September 19, 2016

Will Become Annual Event For Business Folk

Glorious Time Had at the Bodin Farm Last Sunday

Afternoon For good times with plenty of good things to eat the Clam Bake held at the Bodin Farm at Houghton last Sunday by the Washburn Commercial & Credit Association and their guests has everything backed cleared off the boards. Even the weather did not seem to interfere with the good time for the day started off with the weather anything but the best but so jovial was the crowd that attended the clam bake that even the old weather man warmed up during the day and gave fairly decent weather. The clam bake was arranged by a committee of the Commercial Association who engaged Bodin Brothers of Houghton to prepare the "eats" and make arrangement for the entertainment of those attending. Tickets had been issued to the number of sixty and the attendance was limited to this number, although dozens of others expressed their desire to attend. The trip to the Bodin farm at Houghton was made by automobile, the first load arriving at about ten o'clock and from that time on until about noon the autos continued to arrive. Bodin Brothers had prepared in advance for the early arrival of visitors and had prepared a lunch of baked fish, pickles, sandwiches, etc. with which to relieve the hungry feeling of early arrivals.

The morning hours were spent at various games and sports, including a tug of war captained by Ike Berman and Andrew Lien, and some of the boys are laughing at the spill made by the Lien side when Berman's crowd accidentally let go of the rope. The time for the clam bake was set for one o'clock and promptly at the appointed hour Bodin Brothers and their assistance called the guests to gather around the pit and watch the opening. Men were set at work shoveling away the sand and seaweed and as the pit was uncovered the aroma that came therefrom would tempt the appetite of the most delicate invalid.

In layers there were clams and oysters, baked chicken, roasted corn on the cob, sweet and "Irish" potatoes, baked fish, etc. When the call was given to gather around the festive boards there was rush by the sixty odd people to gather at their places and for more than one hour the boys continued to stow away the "good things to eat". Every thing was cooked to perfection as the appetites of the guests would indicate, but

Bodin Brothers had provided things aplenty and there was plenty for all.

Dr. Lewis and Dr. Frey, the two heavyweights in the crowd, demonstrated beyond a doubt that they could hold down some records for eating for there was not a waiter that passed by that was not called upon to leave something for them. Dan Corning run the heavyweights a close second, but he could not keep up the pace set by the two Doctors and a committee was invited to carry him away from the table in a basket. OFFICIAL PAPER OF THE CITY OF WASHBURN Photographer Henry Johnson was on hand and immediately after the boys had satisfied the "inner man" proceeded to take a picture of the group, and a finer looking bunch of men never was gathered together on an occasion of this kind. After a short rest after dinner Roy Markham and a few of the younger men of the group announced that a base ball game was scheduled for the hay field near by and the crowd adjourned to watch this performance. Two teams were chosen, there being fourteen men on a side with our townsman and Mayor MacLeod as the official scorekeeper the game was started with both sides confident of winning and for nine innings the game was played. The official umpire Charles Morris announced that the game was a tie and the players were so fagged out that they decided that a tie was good enough and the game was called. One of the features of the first game was the "rotten" umpiring by Mayor MacLeod, both sides kicking that they were not getting a square deal. Some of the fans who have watched other games wonder where MacLeod learned to play ball anyway. He would call a man out if a spectator caught a foul, would allow a man a walk if the ball would hit a fan, and would even allow a batter to bunco him out of another strike if he kicked loud enough. Andrew Ehn seemed to be a favorite with the umpire for it was impossible to put him out. Andy could steal bases at will but the distance around the bases was so great that he could not reach home. John Gibson could not get up steam enough to reach first and he went out it every time up to bat. A second game was played with another line-up, and in this contest the spectators got more than enough for the price paid for admission. The official score keeper announced the score 17 to 4 at the end of the ninth when the game was called on account of darkness. During this second game most of the players left the field and made their way to the lunch room and finally all that was left on the field was the pitcher and catcher, one batter and the umpire and the official score keeper. The lunchroom at the fish dock proved to be a popular place during the afternoon and it was here that the boys gathered and exchanged stories and spent a pleasant time. There were none of the sixty-odd guests who were anxious to leave when darkness brought a close to one of the best times enjoyed by the business people in years. All voted that the event be continued from year to year and some suggested that affairs of this kind where the business people could gather together, be made a monthly event, especially during the fall and winter months. All voted Bodin Brothers the finest cooks in the land and the Commercial & Credit Association won fame as entertainers.



Graffiti on the Walls of the Houghton Depot

By Susan Raasch

Included here are a few of the names of individuals recorded on the interior walls of the Houghton Depot. The character of the community is reflected in the lives they led. Their stories unfolded through the bits and pieces that surfaced in family histories, newspaper articles, and public records such as naturalization papers, census, draft cards, and employment documents.



V. Merila 1913 Two gentlemen with connections to Bayview and the Finn Settlement surfaced when searching for V. Merila. They were father Victor, and son Veikko.

There is no way to tell whether it was father or son that carved their surname into the depot wall. The year 1913 is carved one board down near their name. Although uncertain that a Merila carved the year, it is roughly around that time that Victor moved his family into the area. He was 29, and his son Veikko was 3 years old.

Per his Petition for Naturalization document dated April 15th 1941, Victor was born Victor Merilainen in Halsua, Finland October 1884. He came to the United States in 1901. He married Hilja nee Bakkala November 1908 in Bessemer, MI. Of their eight children, Veikko was the eldest. He was born 1910 in Minnesota. After relocating to Michigan

where their second child was born, the family settled in the Washburn area by 1914 to raise their growing family.

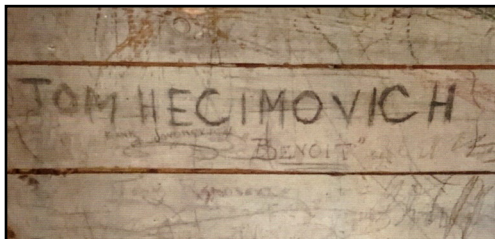
When Victor completed his naturalization papers, he legally changed his surname to Merila, which he had been using at least back to the 1910 Federal Census. Between 1910 and 1940, Victor self-reported to be a miner in an iron mine, a general farmer, and a laborer at a 'powder plant'. In 1941 his title was Labor Foreman. An interesting side note found in the 1930 census is that Victor Merila, along with several other Finn Settlement men (but not Veikko) were recorded as laborers and pipefitters working for a powder plant roughly 75 miles southeast of Chicago in LaSalle County. How long the group of men were transplanted there is not known.

Victor spent many years working for Dupont. In photos of 1958 and 1966, he is recognized along with several other pensioners. Victor passed away in December 1971, age 87. His wife Hilja preceded him in death, passing away in 1966 at age 75.

Victor's son Veikko was recorded on the 1920 census; he was ten years old and now had three younger sisters. Little is recorded about Veikko during the next 20 years. He appears on the 1940 census living with his parents and three younger brothers; they are residing in Washburn, Ward 5. Veikko is employed in 'munition' manufacturing. This same year, he is also filling out his WWII draft card. In 1944, Veikko is recorded as a seaman on a freighter arriving in Superior from Port Arthur, Ontario. By this time, he had been a seaman for two years.

Veikko was on the Finn Settlement in February 1955 when a deadly fire occurred. He discovered the burning building with two of his friends trapped inside. News of this incident was significant enough to be reported in The Capital Times in Madison. It was two years later that Veikko passed away after a 'long illness'. He was 46 years old.

Many Merilas lived on the Finn Settlement. There was the Jack Merila family, Oscar and Olga Merila, Toivo Merila family, and the Victor Merila family. Jack and Victor are acknowledged on the commemorative plaque located at the intersection of Big Rock & Friendly Valley Roads.



Tom Hecimovich This gentleman was the eldest son of John and Minnie Manda Hecimovic(h). Both parents were born in Croatia, Austria. They married in 1903, then immigrated to the United States in 1905. Their first child, Tom was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1907. The family first relocates to Hibbing and then to Minneapolis before settling in Benoit, Wisconsin around 1914-15. They are a farming family and eventually have eleven children

Tom spent a short time in the eastern part of the US with his wife, Mary nee Motel around 1930. Their first child was born in Poughkeepsie, New York. When Tom's father died, the young family returned to Wisconsin to help with the farm. Tom and Mary continued farming and had eight children of their own including Tom Jr. They lived in Kelly, Wisconsin as recorded in the 1940 and 1950 census.

Tom's mother, Minnie signed her petition for US Naturalization in 1938. She was a widow at this time. All her children were listed. The 'h' at the end of her name was clearly dropped. She was a Hecimovic. Her photo attached to the petition reflects a strong and proud woman.

Growing up, Tom's family lived just a few doors from the Tony Radosevich family. Tony Jr, a neighbor of Tom's and also a name found within the depot were about two years apart in age. It can only be envisioned that the two had plenty of opportunities to work and play together including travel to Washburn and the Houghton Depot.



Ralph Dennis This gentleman was born January 1904 in Ashland, WI. First noted in the 1905 census, he is living with his parents William and Mabel, and three year old sister Wilma. Ralph's father, a railroad brakeman, was born in English Canada; his mother was born in Wisconsin. Of interest, both the 1910 and 1920 census noted Ralph's father as a railroad conductor. Ralph must have learned a great deal about the local depots from his father.

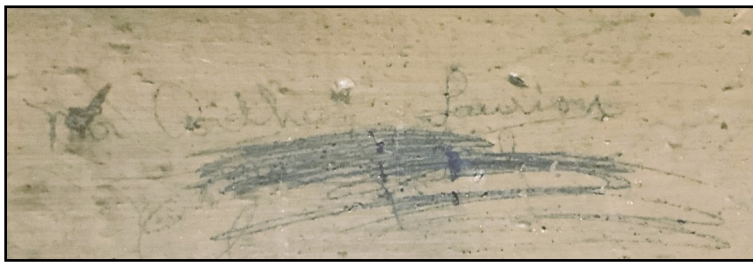
In the 1920 census, Ralph is fifteen years old; he is at a mischievous age and primed for adventure at a period when the train traffic along our shoreline was busy.

By the 1930 census, Ralph is a husband and a father of two sons. He is living in Jackson County, Missouri; he is listed as an engineer for a radio station. Ten years later his family had moved to Cumberland County, Maine. There are now seven children in the household between two and thirteen years of age. Ralph now lists himself as a literature editor of historical and existing research work. Two years later in 1942, Ralph filled out his WWII Draft Card.

Surprisingly, he notes his employer as the Navy Department located in Boston.

In the 1950 census, Ralph had returned to being a radio station engineer. Five of his children remain at home. Marjorie, his wife, is an undergraduate nurse.

Ralph passed away unexpectedly at age 63 in 1967. He is buried in Vermont. Per his obituary in a Fairfax, Va newspaper, Ralph led a most interesting life. He was a member of the International Rotary Club, and a member of the Half-Century Amateur Radio Club with one of the nation's oldest call signs W1CJ. Also, Ralph was a member of Nepalese, the American Society and associated with Sir Edmund Hillary's conquest of Mount Makalu in search of the abominable snowman in the Himalayan Mountains. He must have had many stories to pass on to his children and grandchildren.



Arthur Laurion This gentleman was born August of 1898 in Washburn to Jeremiah (Jerry) Laurion and Alvina nee Brault; they were born in French Canada during the 1860s. This family is noted in the 1900 Federal Census living in the Village of Washburn. There are five children between six months and five years of age including Arthur who is a few months shy of his second birthday. Jerry is noted as a common laborer.

Five years later, in the 1905 census, Alvina is listed as the head of the family which included eight children between six months and nine years old. It was in January of that same year when Arthur's father died after an unsuccessful appendectomy. There was a life insurance policy through the Independent Order of Foresters to help the family during this time.

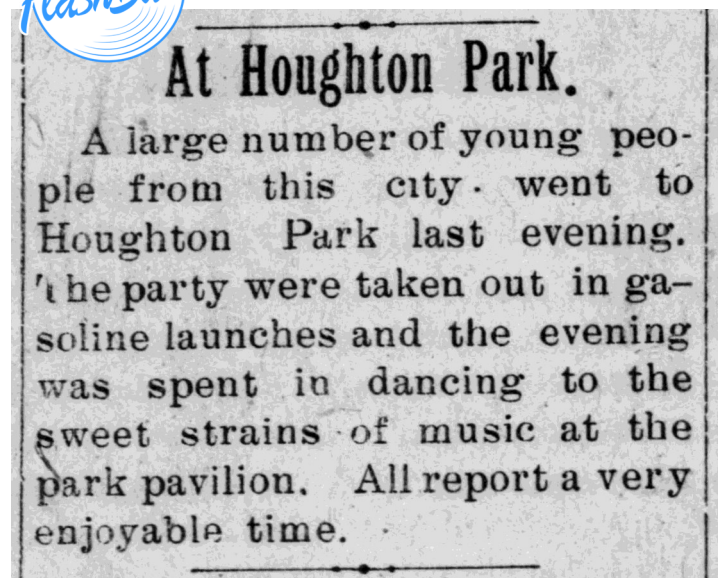
In 1910, seven children were still living with Alvina. Her income was made through sewing at home. The eldest child, Homer, worked at the sawmill. The youngest child noted in the previous census was no longer present.

Fast forward to 1920 and the census reveals an active family still living in Washburn. Four of the six children are employed at a box factory. Arthur is employed at the powder works, but records show he previously had worked at the Kenfield Lamoreaux Co (box factory). Two grandchildren, ages two and four are included in the household, but how they

fit within the family is not clearly noted; but, we know that two years prior, Homer's wife died from influenza and pneumonia leaving behind three children.

In June of 1920, Arthur and Myrtle nee Steele married. The newspaper announcement acknowledged the couple was well known and had a host of friends in Washburn. Ten years later, the couple is found living in Detroit, Michigan. They have three young daughters. Arthur is listed as a truck driver.

Arthur passed away in October 1938 due to a heart ailment. Although residing in Detroit, The Washburn Times published his obituary. He left behind his wife Myrtle, and three teenage daughters Myrtle, Vera, and Doris.



August 1, 1907

Stories of the Past: Wayne Gilbert's Tales of Early 1900s Life, Local History, and the Bodin Family Legacy



Wayne Gilbert and his wife Laurel moved to their current home in 1983, purchasing it from Wayne Bodin, the grandson of Adolf Bodin, who originally built the house in 1905. The house was

built using wood collected from the shore, as lumber was not readily available at the time. Much of the wood Adolf used had been washed up on the shore after being carried from ships that had sunk near Long Island and other Apostle Islands. The Lucerne was one of the ships whose wreckage contributed to the lumber Adolf gathered to build his home.

It took Adolf a few years to complete the house, and when Wayne visited the basement, he noticed that each piece of wood used to construct the base of the house varied in length and size, some



measuring up to 14 feet in length, 12 inches wide, and 8 inches thick. The pieces were hand-hewn, with no two being alike.

Wayne also noted that Adolf likely sourced other materials for the house from Olson Lumber, including the bowing around the windows. Additionally, he shared a story about a lathe company located in the barrens in the early 1900s, which would cut wood and use sand and plaster to make lathe.



Adolf did not originally include a basement in his house but instead created a root cellar with cobblestone walls and a dirt floor. Later, Adolf's son, Nils Adolf, who worked at the Dupont plant, decided to add a basement. Using

explosives he brought home from work, Nils dug under the house to crack portions of the sandstone beneath it. He would carefully place small amounts of dynamite under the house, ignite it, then wait until the morning to allow fumes to dissipate before removing the blasted stone. This process continued until a full basement had been created. Wayne chuckled as he described the basement, noting that it was so low that only a short person could easily walk through it. Once completed, Nils poured a cement floor, all without raising the house itself.

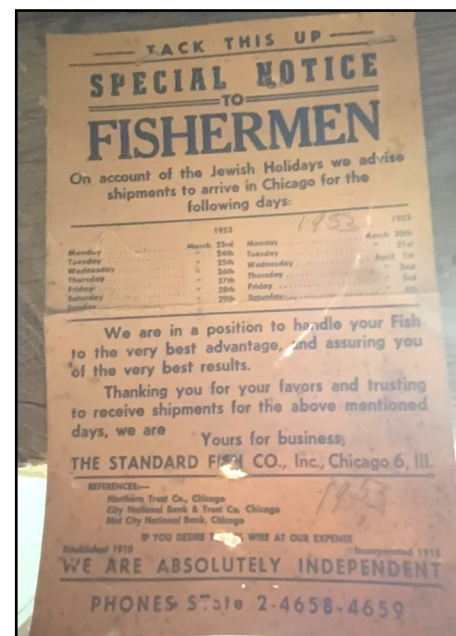


While showing Wayne and his guests around the basement, Wayne shared a story about Adolf's wife, Viola, who would set up lights to help Adolf find his way back to the house from the lake at night. After bringing his boat into the fish house and unloading it, Adolf would clean himself off in the basement shower before heading up to the house. The Bodins originally used an outhouse located north and west of the house, near some pine trees, which had lilacs planted around it. Indoor plumbing was eventually installed in the 1950s.

The Bodins had business contracts with companies in Chicago, and in the basement, Wayne found a notice that dated back to the 1920s, reminding the Bodins when they needed to ship their herring to the Jewish market.

Wayne also shared some of his knowledge of the history of the land and its former owners. He described orchards in the front yard, including a Wolf River apple tree, known for producing large apples that were too big for cows to eat without being quartered. Glen, Adolf's son, used to feed these apples to the cattle by slicing them into quarters.

Wayne also spoke about his time as Superintendent for Bayview from 1983 to 2003, during which he maintained the town's roads, including plowing snow and mowing. He shared stories about the early days, when the original town garage was located at the end of Maunu Road, where Ernie Maunu, one of the original crew members, lived. Ernie would keep the



(continued on back page)

Early Bayview Document:

The First Meeting of the Town of Bayview

By Mike Bunch

Document provided by Kim Suske

The Town of Bayview was formally created by Chapter 89, Laws of 1913 from sections of Towns of Washburn and Bayfield along with a section of the City of Washburn. The first town meeting was held in 1913 in the Houghton School and officers were elected. The Town's assessed value was set at \$270,000. For the next few years, petition requests from the freeholders within the town were heard, and the laying out of roads began. (NOTE: transcribed to the right of original.)

The minutes say this:

Pursuant to notice duly given, the annual meeting of the Town of Bayview, County of Bayfield, state of Wisconsin, was held in the school house in said town of Bayview on this 29th day of April 1913.

Meeting called to order by William Daly. On motion, J. O. Bodin was appointed chairman of the meeting. On motion Oly Hagen and Fred Kirchoff were named as inspectors and Theo Snow and Kearney Anish as clerks of election. (reading hand written notes.)

On motion Alex Nicholson was appointed constable. On motion, duly seconded. That all business except the election of officers to be continued until May 3, 1913 at 2 o'clock PM

Motion seconded and carried that a committee of two be appointed to ascertain the assessed valuation of the new Town of Bayview. W.H. Inish and M. A. Sprague were appointed as such committee. Results of this election held this 29th day of April 1913

Total number of votes cast for Chairman were fifty two - of which member William Daly received Forty three and August Frostman received nine. William Daly declared elected. For all number of votes cast for Supervisor were one hundred and four of which number August Zieldsdorf received fifty two. Alex Nicholson and August Bodin declared elected.

Acting upon previous motion meeting adjourned until May 3, 1913 at 2 o'clock PM Harny Inish, town clerk.

These notes are transcribed from the original notes that were handwritten in the cursive style.

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Harny Inish
Town Clerk.



Wayne Gilbert (continued from page 6)

grader and truck in his garage, and if repairs were needed, he would improvise by digging up a stump to fix tire chains in the snow.

The Bayview Park used to have two outhouses, which were eventually removed and filled with sand after being torn down for firewood. The DNR had issues with the outhouses because they were open-pit structures located near wetlands. The new bathroom is now a large tank that the town must pump out regularly.

Wayne also shared stories about the Barrens, such as the Van Stone plantation, an old farm where cattle were raised, but the sandy soil made it unsustainable for farming. There was also a jackpine area, as well as a road known as "Three Old Maids Road." He described old schools and remnants of towns along various roads, and how he would plow snow at Ernie's house before turning around and heading back.

Finally, Wayne discussed a house by the lake, once owned by C.W. Bodin, the son of John Oscar Bodin, and how it was part of a community where several generations had lived and worked. John Oscar had multiple jobs, including county treasurer and fisherman, and even farmed with a few milk cows.

Wayne's roots trace back to northern Illinois, where his father was a Methodist minister, and his family moved around the northern part of the state. His paternal grandfather hailed from Peterson, Iowa, having come over from England through Canada. Wayne's father's mother's family had connections to the Mayflower, and his maternal side, the Rood family, held reunions but had little other information available about their ancestry.



A Farewell Party

A farewell party was given in honor of Mrs. Carl Frostman at the Houghton school on Monday evening of this week which was attended by large numbers of people from the town of Bayview and Washburn. Carl has enlisted in the United States army. He was presented with a wrist watch as a remembrance from the people of the town of Bayview. This town has given a wrist watch to every boy going into the service from that town and they intend to continue this practice.

October 17, 1918



Mike Peyton built the benches and donated them to the Town of Bayview's Houghton Depot in his wife's name, Judy Peyton



Brownstone Days 2026