



PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS IN PLYMOUTH

On Sunday, December 9th from 2:00 - 5:00 pm, the Plymouth Historical Society and Plymouth Park & Recreation Department are co-sponsoring the Fourth Annual "OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS IN PLYMOUTH". The purpose of the event is to provide some old fashioned Christmas spirit and activities for families in Plymouth. Children can visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus will be right there to help the Elves hand out candy canes. A sleigh/hay ride pulled by Belgian horses with bells jingling will be giving rides (\$.50 per person), hot cider and cookies will be provided, storyteller, carollers and making Christmas decorations are other activities for the children.

On Saturday, December 8th starting at 9:00 am, we will decorate the two old fashioned Christmas trees and building. We are looking for help in decorating and bringing items that could be borrowed for the day to add some more old fashioned Christmas spirit.

They can be items as follows:

- Old fashioned antique ornaments
- Old fashioned toys to put under the tree
- Poinsettias
- Evergreen roping

If you can help or bring decorations, please call Myrtle Eckes, 545-6168 or Gary Schiebe, 473-4889.

Attached is a flyer describing the event so bring your friends, relatives, neighbors and kids ages 9 months to 90 years young. We had a great time last year and this year it will be even better.

We thought you might be interested in some of the specific volunteer help and businesses involved to help the Plymouth Park & Recreation Department and the Plymouth Historical Society put on this event:

Santa	- Phil Collins	Cutter	- Bob Paylor
Mrs. Claus	- Mable Swanson	Wreaths, Trees	
Elves	- Girl Scout Troop 486	& Garland	- Dundee Nursery
StoryTeller	- Bob Gasch	Candy Canes	- Tad Jude
Singers	- Armstrong Chamber Singers	Cider	- New Market,
Strolling Carollers	- John Uhrich and Friend	Cider	- Country Store,
Hay Ride	- Firstar Metro Bank-Plymouth		- Janssen's Food Village
	- Bunker Hill Stables	Cookies	- Plymouth Historical Society

VIRGINIA OHMAN

The Plymouth Historical Society mourns the death of Virginia Ohman. She had provided many years of dedicated service to the Society. Virginia served as Secretary since 1977 and contributed her great artistic talent to the many activities sponsored by the Plymouth Historical Society.

Ginny, as her friends called her, was born and raised in Plymouth by her parents Victor O. and Marie E. Bertrand. She attended Beacon Heights Elementary School and Hopkins High School. Ginny then studied Spanish at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter and the University of Minnesota.

She began her high school teaching career in Pine River, Minnesota and moved to St. Cloud. In 1961, she joined the Wayzata Senior High School Language Department and taught until 1975 when she retired.

We will all miss you Ginny.

MUSEUM DONATIONS

Barb Rasmussen has been helping Edith Hopperstad by picking up the duties of the record keeping of the artifacts donated to the museum. We want to thank both Barb and Edith on the great job they are doing. In the next newsletter we will provide a list of the items donated over the last year.

HISTORY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN PLYMOUTH

Niel Nielsen has researched and compiled information about the History of Law Enforcement In Plymouth.

Niel's list provides a chronological list up to present day from May 11, 1858 when the citizens of Plymouth elected Town Constables, Phillip Otto and Alfred Jordan to when Richard J. Carlquist was appointed Chief of Police on June 18, 1979 and is the current Director of Public Safety.

OPENINGS AVAILABLE

We need you - - there are openings on the Plymouth Historical Society Board of Directors. No special qualifications are required, only an interest in the history of Plymouth. We welcome anybody that has an interest. Please call Gary Schiebe, 473-4889.

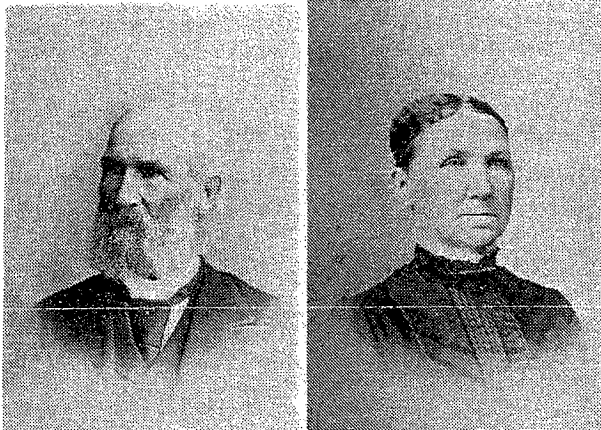
FAMILY HISTORIES

The Plymouth Historical Society has quite a few family histories on file. We welcome people to come and look at them, which may help you trace family roots.

You probably have concluded that the name of Parker's Lake got its name from early settlers in Plymouth and you are correct. The following is a glimpse into the Parker family and their early life from their family history on file at the Historical Society. The first one is about the family history, the second article was written for a Los Angeles newspaper.

THE DANIEL CURTIS PARKER STORY

Daniel Curtis Parker, my grandfather, was born June 9, 1825 in Scarborough, Maine. He came to Minnesota in April 1855, bringing his young wife, Hester Anne, and a small daughter, Harriet; also his father, Reverend James Parker and his mother, Deborah Small Parker.



Reverend James Parker was a Methodist minister and a circuit rider in Ohio and Maine. He met and married Deborah Small, who was teaching school on Harpswell Island, off the coast of Maine. They had five sons and two daughters; namely, Daniel, Alfred, James, Charles, Israel, Elizabeth and Jane. All the sons and one daughter, Elizabeth, came to Minnesota as early settlers and all took up land.

Daniel and Alfred went to California in the 1849 Gold Rush. Daniel went back to Maine but Alfred came to Minnesota with James, Israel and Charles in 1854. Alfred wrote to Daniel telling him of the wonderful opportunities for land and the fine future for them all in Minnesota. So Daniel decided to come in 1855. Daniel, his wife and daughter, father and mother, came by train...common day coaches... as far as Galena, Illinois. The trip was very difficult so they got off the train nights to give the old father and mother and Daniel's wife, who was expecting another child, rest and a good night's sleep. With them, they brought all their clothing and bedding and the simplest of household articles. From Galena, Illinois, they continued by steamboat to St. Paul, Minnesota. Many people were ill on the boat and among them was Daniel's mother. She died of Cholera before reaching St. Anthony. She was buried in the deep forest on what is now Hoag Avenue in North Minneapolis.

Alfred, James, Charles and Israel had staked out their claims and had their cabins up in 1854. After Daniel got to Minnesota, he didn't want to stay as it was so wild and rough, but his brothers and wife urged him to do so. They continued the journey out to the claims and Daniel took up land too, on what is now known as Parker's Lake. My grandmother told me how she sat in the little buggy with her little girl and Reverend Parker, who was 80 years old then,

and my grandfather, Daniel, led the horse through the thick forest and brush out to their brother's claims. They were so tired and there was such a lot of hard work ahead of them. They lived with the brothers until five years after coming to Minnesota. He was buried on my grandfather's claim out in the field.

After their cabins were up, they went back to get their mother's body to bury her near the father, but they couldn't find the grave again because the woods were so deep.

The settlement of the brother's claim was named Parker's Lake and was about 15 miles west of what is now Minneapolis.

Their early pioneer life was rough and hard. The land had to be cleared by hand. In clearing the land, they would have log-burning parties. All the logs were cut down and piled up and set on fire. People came for miles around, making a day of helping, bringing their food and children and then after the work was done, they would dance. However, in spite of the hardships, my grandmother told me they were very happy. They had just got their cabin up when their second child was born. Due to the hard journey coming from Maine and the rough work when they arrived, the baby was born prematurely and did not live. The baby was named Forrest because of the deep woods. Grandfather cried when the baby died and he cut a short log and hollowed it out for a casket. They had brought bolts of cloth with them from Maine so they lined that small log with the cloth and buried the baby outside the cabin window. There were no doctors here then and Daniel was the only one there with his wife when the baby was born.

There was no furniture except what my grandfather built. They had just the bare necessities and the simple things that they had been able to bring with them from Maine, such as clothing and bedding.

The women of the area would have quilting parties, bringing all the children and food with them in large wagons. They all had to help each other. The women did all the knitting for their families. Later on, my grandmother had the only sewing machine for miles around. The women used to come there to sew on that machine. They had no patterns for making clothes. Cloth was laid on a person's body and cut around the shape. Grandmother taught all her girls to knit and in the evening, they all sat around her and had to knit a certain amount while grandfather read to them. Newspapers and books were very scarce but he did have the Bible to read from.

My grandfather's first log cabin burned down but a new one was built with a hand-hewn floor and it was much larger and so much better than the first cabin. Years later they had a good frame house.

Grandfather and grandmother Parker had five daughters and one son. They were as follows: Harriet Parker Varner, Jane Parker Magladry, Emma Parker Downs, Cora Parker Getchell, Lillian Parker Koons and Fred Parker, who died at the age of 16.

There was always the fear of the Indians, although some of them were friendly. When the Indian Massacre at New Ulm occurred, they received word by men coming through on horseback to warn the settlers. Grandmother told me how they turned their cattle loose and that the family got into a big lumber wagon and drove to Uncle James Parker's home which was on the main road to the fort. The families all gathered there to go to Fort Snelling, while they were waiting for others to come, Grandfather and Grandmother decided to go back to their cabin and get some more clothing for the children. They took hold of hands and walked back through the woods in the dark. They didn't even dare speak to one another. When they would accidentally step on a twig and it would make a crackly sound, they would stop still, expecting it to be an Indian on their trail. But they made it safely to their cabin and back with a small leather trunk full of clothing. It must have been a very long frightening trip, walking through the dark woods. By morning, word came that the soldiers had arrived at New Ulm and had the situation well in hand, so that the settlers could go home again and round up their cattle. That fear of the Indians was always with them. The Indians were all through the Minnesota River Valley.

Grandfather did most of the buying for the family. He would buy yarn for knitting in huge boxes. He would draw around the children's feet with a pencil for the size of shoes. All food was purchased in large amounts, such as whole cod fish, flour by the barrel, etc.

All of Daniel and Hester Anne Parker's daughters

taught in the country schools, boarding during the week in one of the homes near the school and on weekends coming home to be with their parents.

Grandfather and Grandmother Parker had a good home for their children and later a fine well-stocked prosperous farm. They were a credit to their community. They gave land and helped build a Methodist Church at Parker's Lake.

Daniel Curtis Parker and Hester Anne Parker both lived to be 85 years of age, after a long, hard and full life.

by
Bessie Koons Wallace

FORGOTTEN HEROINES

As one leaves the city of Minneapolis, winding out over a royal highway toward the once famous Minnetonka, out the Wayzata way and beyond, he may discover a little country church with its accompanying burial ground. Near by is what was once a beautiful little lake, set in a forest of hard maple and birch with the usual sprinkling of elm and basswood.

If one is further interested, he may try to decipher the names and dates on the mossy headstones, which he will find date back to a time when there was no Minneapolis, and when St. Anthony was only an infant of uncertain growth.

He will also notice on many of these headstones, the name of Parker, and it is after these brothers for there were five of them, that the little lake was named.

Coming upon this beautiful scene in the early forties and noting the rich black loam and luxuriant vegetation, a brother-in-law, Hoyt by name, made haste to write back to the old home state, enlarging on the paradise he had discovered which awaited only the hand of man to turn it into fruitful fields, gardens and orchards. It was a real "Garden of Eden" where maple syrup would flow into barrels and the bees would fill hives to overflowing with golden sweetness, garnered from basswood and clover.

Needless to say it was not long before the five brothers sold their possessions and, leaving friends and loved ones behind, started toward this land of promise in what was then called the new West. In their eyes was that far-off gleam of one who sees already the home he intends to build for his wife and little ones.

All honor to these mighty "Giants of the Earth" who like Caesar, "came, saw and conquered" the forest, the streams, and the prairies, until from a howling wilderness, where only

the Red Man and a few trappers roamed, our beautiful state has come into being.

*"With her wealth of wheat and pine
Cities great and iron mine; Limpid
lakes and rivers running to the sea."*

Nor would we forget the brave wives who many times, I fear, did not catch the vision which gave hope and courage to the husband, but followed meekly, patiently, enduring the hardships and privations which necessarily must have a part in this conquering of the wilderness. It is one of these brave-spirited women I wish to tell.

The late August sun shone brightly on the dancing waters of the little lake, reflecting on its liquid surface little fleecy white clouds that seemed to skip and run like lambs at play. An early frost had painted the sumac and maples a brilliant scarlet, the birches were turning yellow, while in little fields, around the lake soldierly rows of rustling corn shocks stood guard to piles of golden pumpkins and crookednecked Hubbard squashes...yellow and green.

Wild grapes were turning purple in the sun, while orchards bowed beneath their weight of apples and plums.

A herd of cattle came rushing down to the lake, wading out into the cool waters to rid themselves of that torment of the back woods, the deerfly.

On a rocky hillside fleecy ewes lay contentedly chesing their cuds, while their almost full grown lambs bamboled in the sunshine. Can this be the wilderness of ten short years ago? Truly it had "*blossomed as the rose*".

There were comfortable homes and barns, a schoolhouse and a church where the Rev. James Parker, father of the five Parker boys, like a patriarch of old had called his tribe to worship, and God had blest them there with health and plenty.

But one dark shadow hung over the little settlement which filled their nights with fear and days with anxiety. Warring tribes of Chippewa and Sioux were getting too close for comfort.

Almost every day bands of Indians hideous in war paint passed by or stopped to ask for food. Both sides were given courteous treatment and their demands were granted, even to the dressing of their wounds and caring for those who were unable to travel, and in return neither Parker's nor their possessions had ever been molested.

On the afternoon of which I write, Hestor, the beautiful wife of Daniel Parker, gazed anxiously down the road. Daniel had gone to town for supplies, taking with him the golden roots of butter that were in such demand in the new little city which was fast springing up around the falls of St. Anthony.

"I wish Daniel would come", she finally remarked to Sarah, the future Mrs. Israel Parker. "I thought I saw an Indian skulking along the edge of the woods. This being continually on the watch is getting on my nerves. We never know when we will wake up and find ourselves all scalped."

Sarah smiled, her mind too busy with future plans, her wedding, the new home and Israel, to give even the Indians a serious thought.

Hestor called the children in, giving them some quilt blocks to sew.

While Sarah continued the ironing, Hestor picked up some soft white cloth and began deftly fashioning little garments. So interested did she become that her fears for the moment were forgotten, when suddenly without warning, a Chippewa Indian, hideous in war paint and feathers, rushed through the open door carrying a gleaming knife with bright red blood dripping on the spotless floor. Rushing to Hestor, he began dragging her toward the door, all the in hand, while jabbering and gesticulating wildly.

Hestor caught frantically at Sarah, and together the two women were pulled through the doorway, while the children looked on in horrified silence.

It is said a drowning person lives over a lifetime in a few seconds to time. Be that as it may, many thoughts went through Hestor's mind on the way to that door.

She saw her long hair with its little piece of bloody scalp dangling from the Indian's belt, her children growing up in captivity. She thought of her mother so many hundreds of miles away, and wondered why they had ever come to wilderness; to die at savage hands. If only Daniel would come. He was wise and good. The Indians respect him. Desperately she prayed he would come in time to save the children, but what was this? A deer skinned and dressed. What did it mean?

By signs the Indian seemed to be giving her the deer, begging her to hurry and tell him where to put it. He hastily picked up some clean shingles and, putting them on the pantry floor, he carefully laid the venison on them and was gone as swiftly and as silently as he had come, never to be seen by any of them again.

No sooner was he out of sight than the pounding of hoofs was heard, and down the road came galloping a party of Sioux warriors. Dismounting, they quickly searched the premises, not molesting the house except to help themselves to Hestor's pumpkin pies which were cooling on the kitchen table, and sending forth such delectable odors as would tempt even a stoic Red Man. At any rate, so satisfying was the effect that with beaming faces and grunts of deep satisfaction, they were soon on their way, apparently satisfied no foe was hidden there.

Hestor and Sarah were laughing and crying in each other's arms when Daniel drove into the yard. *"No pies for supper, Dan, but there will be venison steak",* Hestor called with a gay wave of her hand. All her fears had vanished now Daniel was home.

The sun was setting, making a path of glory across the lake; the cows stood at the bars with full udders waiting to be milked. Shep was bringing in the sheep for the night. Shinning pails were quickly filled with foamy whiteness which Daniel carried into the cool white-washed house for Hestor to strain into waiting pans. The chickens were shut up, kindling was brought by the little girls, and everything made snug for the night while twilight deepened on the lake. The sky turned from flaming orange and red to paler tints of shell pink and blue, followed by the deeper violet and purple velvet shades of the night.

From the woods came the sleepy little sounds of birds and insects. Peaceful, homely sounds that made a lump come in one's throat sometimes, because one loved it so.

Then the family came into the cheery kitchen, with its tempting odors of frying venison and its table loaded with the abundance of field and orchard, mounds of squash and potatoes, golden preserves, a pat of Hestor's sweet butter, a fresh brown loaf of bread, and a pitcher of creamy milk.

As they seated themselves around the family board, each head was bowed while Daniel thanked the Giver of all good gifts for the food and also for peace and safety.

Thus ended another day in the life of an early settler. There were many more like it, but life has its compensations and they were happy and satisfied to take each day as it came.

By

Myrtle Akin Granddaughter of Israel
Parker,
Written for a paper in Los Angeles



PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MUSEUM: 3605 Fernbrook Lane

MAILING: 3400 Plymouth Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55447

Enclosed you will find a copy of our flyer to celebrate the Fourth Annual "OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS IN PLYMOUTH" on December 9th from 2:00 to 5:00 pm. This event is co-sponsored by the Plymouth Historical Society and Plymouth Park and Recreation Department. It will include the following:

- VISIT WITH SANTA
- OLD FASHIONED SLEIGH-HAY RIDE
- HOT CIDER AND COOKIES WILL BE SERVED
- OLD FASHIONED DECORATED CHRISTMAS TREES
- CHILDREN CAN MAKE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS
- STORYTELLER
- STROLLING CAROLERS
- OLD FASHIONED TOYS UNDER THE CHRISTMAS TREES

We are sending information home through the schools to inform the grade school children of the event. Since this is intended for pre-schoolers and grade school children, we would appreciate any publication of this event you could provide. It was a great success last year and it will be bigger this year.

Thanks for your help!

Mary Bisek

Plymouth Park & Recreation Department

550-5000

Gary Schiebe

Plymouth Historical Society

473-4889

"Our Past Is Present . . . Help Us Keep It"

