

BICENTENNIAL SERIES

A history of Thompson Twp. & Village of Thompson

Mrs. Hasell Osterhout



Swedish Church in Thompson



St. Frederick Catholic Church

Thompson's Methodist Church and Baptist Church

Earliest Methodist Sunday School and Church meetings were held in a small frame school building known as the Bouschor School, located on Little Harbor Road. This school was later moved to Little Harbor and placed on the top of Little Harbor hill, on the right side of the road overlooking Lake Michigan. There it was used for school children in the area and also Methodist Sunday School.

In the early 1900 era the Methodist Church of Manistique purchased Lot No. 1 of a recorded plat in the Village of Thompson, located on the corner of Cedar and Front Streets, Lot No. 1 being the N.E. corner in the second block south of Town Hall on the west side of the road.

A building was purchased from a Mr. Sharkey. The building was located near the present Fish Hatchery house on County Road-148. This house was moved to Lot No. 1 in the Village, becoming the Methodist Mission Church in Thompson.

Later this church was sold to the Thompson Grange for \$250 with the reservation that the Methodist Church could continue to use it as long as desired. The Grange later sold the building to a Mrs. Hursh, from Thompson, for \$100. She in turn sold or gave the building to her son, Joseph, who had lost his home by fire. He tore the building down using the lumber to rebuild a two room home with an addition on a parcel of land about 1,000 ft. west of the site of the Sharkey property or Fish Hatchery House.

The Methodist Church was also used by the First Baptist Church of Manistique for Sunday School and Mission work. Sunday School teachers were Ida F. Maclaurin, Edith Fuller, Dr. Don Sellers, Minnie Sellers (Dr. Seller's wife), and Mr. and Mrs. E.W. Miller. These people traveled by horse and buggy and came on Sunday afternoons. Also traveling to serve as Sunday School teachers were Mrs. Goodwin and her daughter, Edith, Now Mrs. Edwin Ekdahl.

Along with the Grange members this church was also used by the local representative of the Salvation Army, Captain Edward Severs, who preached and also led the Salvation Army band in Thompson.

Thompson's Catholic Church

Thompson's Catholic Church was named "St. Frederick". This church was built in early 1900, located on lot No. 7 in the Village of Thompson. A record of 1911 on the north side of Pine St. second lot east of Bluff St. where U.S.-2 now crosses. Pine St. being the street where our Town Hall is located.

Early records show the first babies baptized in the Village, before St. Frederick Church was built, were Alice

Bell, baptized April 20, 1884, Edward Elias Herrick, born Nov. 2, 1885 and baptized Nov. 7, 1885 by Father Geers.

After Father Cebul came to Thompson he baptized Joseph Dufour born Oct. 25, 1886, Minnie Jane Hursh, Joseph Donald Black and Arthur Louis Riband on Nov. 7, 1886. These babies were brought to one house in the Village when it was learned that Father Cebul was coming for baptisms.

Among the early priests who served the people of Thompson was Father LaForest, 1905, who came on Saturday afternoon and recited the Rosary on Saturday evenings and Mass on Sunday morning. Father LaForest stayed overnight at the homes of early parishioners. Some of these were the Casper Gilmet, Fred Miller, and Henry Vossine homes. Another well-known and well liked priest was Father Corcoran.

Early families of St. Frederick Church were: Bouschors, Hruska, Vincent Quinlin, Moran, Brown and Fitzgerald. Father LaForest, like Father Geers and Father Cebul, traveled by horse from Manistique to Thompson.

The D.L. Lumber Co. provided the lumber for the entire floor of the church. It was 1-inch clear white maple. Charles Witters and Emery Haskins were the carpenters in charge and they were assisted by three local Thompson men; Aldred Bouschour, Morton Miller and Earl Hruska. In the new church the first child baptized was Meta Bouschour. The first funeral was that of Rena Hinkson.

Mrs. Art Limmon of the store at Thompson made the cassocks for the altar boys.

This church served the Village and surrounding area for many years and then was obtained by Mr. Joseph Hoholik who moved it from Thompson to his farm located on County Road-149. The back portion of the church is still intact and standing on his farm.

Along with this Catholic heritage is the early Chippewa Indian settlement in Section 12 of Thompson Township near Silver Creek, where the Indians stayed in summer living in bark huts and wood shacks, and when fall came, moved to the north end of Thompson on Lake Michigan. These Indians came from High Island and settled in Section 12.

The local lumber companies provided food and supplies. In the spring they were taken by logging train back up to section 12. There the men worked. The squaws made beautiful baskets and moccasins, which were later sold when they returned in the fall to Thompson.

These Chippewa Indians in earlier years carried their paposes to the site of Bishop Baraba's Shrine on Indian Lake. They walked to the site where a small Indian Church was built in 1833 by Father Baraga. Here in this little, crudely built church of birch bark and logs, Father Baraga baptized these natives and blessed their little church.

In later years he wrote "I cannot express the grateful feeling and heartfelt joy with which I performed these religious ceremonies."

(Excerpts from Joseph Gregarich, Historian, Bishop Baraga Association)

Nothing remains now but the old Indian graves in the cemetery which he had blessed.

Thompson's Swedish Church

When entering the Village of Thompson from the east on U.S.-2 turning south on the Little Harbor road, approximately three blocks south and one block east near Lake Michigan is the site of the first Swedish church in the village.

This church was founded in 1895 by the Swedish people who came to America from Finland. Their home land in Finland was given them by the King of Sweden, as a reward for their loyal aid and bravery in helping Sweden fight the Russian War.

Coming to America... shores of Lake Michigan, they worked in the large sawmill, loaded boats and piled lumber during the summer and went to the logging camps in the winter.

In the spring of 1895, the logging camps broke early...and the saw mill was not ready for its summer operation...which left about 6 weeks of unemployment. Many of the Swedish men were carpenters and at an evening gathering in the home of Matt Wager, and John Heggblon suggested "it

would be nice to build a church!" All heartily agreed and a subscription list was prepared. Money and promised donations were turned over to Wager and work began. The Delta Lumber Co. gave them lumber...a site was selected at the entrance of Swede Town...and then there was a church! Early Sunday School Superintendents included Wager, Branfors and Abe Sidbeck. Early families attending this church were Larsons, Frans, Mattso Long, Erickson, Olson and others.

Some years later this church was lost in fire...when two buildings in Thompson burned and flying embers settled on the wood-shingled roof causing it to catch fire.

Thompson also had a Temperance Society and meeting hall in Swede Town, organized April 15, 1906 and named "Lilla Hoppe!" in Swedish meaning "Little Hope". This was Chapter 44 of the Swedish and Finnish Temperance Association of America. There were 37 charter members who took the pledge of total abstinence of alcoholic beverage. In later years the Society became affiliated with the Order of Runeburg, a Christian benevolent order including a sick and death benefit. This order is still active in Manistique and surrounding areas.

According to my mother, Josephine Vossine Taylor, many hours of beautiful Swedish music and dancing were enjoyed by all the Thompson residents in the Temperance Hall. This Society was a blessing indeed...and most needed during

these early years of pioneering and settling a new homeland. The pavillion, located at the extreme end of the road to Swede Town, was frequented by musicians including John Stoor, father of Edith Stoor. Mr. Stoor played the fiddle and concertina. The Swedish church burned in 1929 and on Aug. 23, 1925 forty-two members became affiliated with the Zion Lutheran Church. One of the first pastors who came to Thompson from Manistique to conduct services was Pastor M.J. Lonner.