

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PINE CITY

CLARK, MR. JAMES W. and MR. RALPH AUSMUS

This tape covers the personal background of Mr. Clark and Mr. Ausmus. It also gives background information on the mission and the church.

INTERVIEWERS: John LeDoux and Al NielsenDATE: August 10, 1979SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 1 Side 1010 PERSONAL BACKGROUND - JAMES W. CLARK

- 010 James W. Clark was born in 1893 at Lake Preston, South Dakota.
- 013 At the age of 9 he and his parents moved to just north of Pine City where they started a farm and home.
- 018 Clark's paternal grandfather was a Presbyterian minister, and at the time of his death the oldest living Civil War chaplain as well as the oldest living Princeton graduate in the country.
- 026 Clark's grandfather served as minister on several occasions at Pine City.
- 029 James Clark graduated from the University of Minnesota and went into the field of education.
- 032 He worked for Rhode Textbooks in the field of history - this led indirectly to employment with the State of Minnesota as a commissioner of one of the administrative departments.
- 039 He retired from that job in 1965 and returned to Pine City.
- 047 In 1970 the First Presbyterian Church of Pine City celebrated its centennial year, James Clark served as centennial committee chairman.
- 053 James Clark's date of birth is March 2, 1893.
- 056 His job with the state government was the commissioner for the Department of Economic Development. He worked there for over 20 years, under 6 governors.
- 063 His position was Secretary of Commerce for the State of Minnesota.
- 066 He taught at St. Cloud Teachers College in the summer, teaching history between the years 1922 and 1924.
- 073 He wrote at least a half dozen books about history - some examples are:
 - 1) Social Studies for Minnesota Schools, 2) Community Life in Minnesota,
 - 3) Early Days and Ways in the Old Northwest, 4) The People Rule,
 - 5) Minnesota Heritage.
- 084 His writing style is simple, and it is educationally applied - he wrote for the junior high school level.
- 089 The State of Minnesota Department of Education interested James Clark to write.
- 100 He was employed by Charles Scribner and Sons, and he asked if they would publish a book if he wrote it - as a result he got Maude Lindquist of Duluth to co-author a textbook with him.
- 109 Random House took over publication.
- 112 The textbook is still the commonly used book today, and he still writes.

121 RALPH AUSMUS: EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

121 Ralph Ausmus was born May 31, 1922.

126 He owns the property where the First Presbyterian Church was in Minnesota.

- 128 Upon building a house in 1951 he discovered the mission site by digging into the foundation; the site had previously been lost.
- 141 Ann Fox, Pine County Historical Society Historian, became interested in the mission, and obtained copies of papers from the Minnesota Historical Society.
- 148 He couldn't copy these papers, so he took notes instead as a reference, and Reverend Heller made a written summary from those notes.

161 PERSONAL BACKGROUND - RALPH AUSMUS

- 161 Mr. Ausmus became involved with the First Presbyterian Church when he married a neighbor girl whose father was an elder in the church for many years. They married in 1945, and he became a member in 1946.
- 170 Mr. Ausmus was born in Pine City in 1922 - his father was born here also.
- 173 His grandfather came there in 1883 at the age of 17 - he couldn't hold the title for the land until he turned 21 so his father had it. He liked it because it had 30 acres of cleared land, done by missionaries.
- 182 The lumber company had used the land to pasture their oxen after the mission had closed in 1847, so they used the land and the buildings also from 1847 to 1883 - they never bought the land.
- 192 The mission had a grant from the Indian chief.
- 204 Mr. Ausmus' parents were Lutheran and the church was right across the street.
- 207 The original Lutheran church was built from his grandfather's logs - his grandfather was a lumberman, and his grandfather's father gave away the logs to build this new German Lutheran church.
- 220 His grandfather was upset, and had to cut more logs for his house.

224 EARLY MISSION HISTORY

- 224 The mission had no direct connection with this church, although there would have been great possibilities of some of the converts, both Indians and lumbermen, to join the church.
- 240 STORY: In May 1836, Reverend Ayer, a Presbyterian minister, ^{moved} served his mission to the Ojibway, the Chippewa Indians from Yellow Lake near what is now Danbury, Wisconsin, to a site on Pokegama Lake.
- 247 Reverend Ayer had been granted the land to establish a mission from an Ojibway chief who could speak some English, and wanted his children to be educated.
- 250 The soil was a deep ^{loam} ~~loam~~ as opposed to the Yellow Lake soil that was sandy and unproductive - the game and fish were becoming scarce. They were running out of fish at Yellow Lake, and wanted to move.
- 264 Reverend Ayer and his wife Elizabeth were joined later by Reverend and Mrs. Boutwell and Reverend and Mrs. Ely.
- 267 A man was hired to teach the Indians to farm and how to assist in building log cabins, and a girl was hired to teach, along with the wives of the missionaries. They taught the 3 R's to a class of 15 to 40, depending on the year.
- 273 The Indian women and girls were taught how to knit, sew, cook and to do other household chores the white way.
- 275 All the people mentioned were ^{not} ~~at~~ there at the same time; the average was about 6.
- 277 The mission consisted of 4 buildings when completed; a church or worship building, school, storehouse, and a barn as well as a root cellar, which stored the 300 bushels of potatoes that were raised in good years. The worship building was probably the first one between St. Cloud and Duluth - Indians anxious to learn the white man's building methods made buildings near the missionary.

- 287 Ten to 12 cattle were kept for milk and meat. Other meat came from deer, fish, and other game; wheat, oats, corn, potatoes and garden vegetables were raised in the cleared fields. Maple sugar was made in the spring, berries picked and dried, and wild rice harvested in the Fall.
- 295 Mission operated on a yearly budget of \$500 to \$1,000 a year. From this budget, 5 or 6 people had to live, buy supplies and help the Indians.
- 302 The money came from the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions" in Boston, and consisted of donations from several denominations.
- 305 The area was heavily wooded, nearly all travel was by water or snowshoes in winter.
- 308 Supplies were brought down the St. Croix from Fond du Lac and were hard to haul - tools came without handles in wooden boxes.
- 311 Life for the missionaries was hard, with many disappointments and few successes.
- 314 Their accomplishments included: Teaching the Ojibway to raise crops, educating the children in the basics, translating several books of the New Testament into Ojibway and having them printed in Boston and shipped back.
- 319 Teaching the old Testament was easy because the Indians believed that the white man's God was the same as their Manitou, but much stronger because he gave the white man tools, knowledge and guns that they didn't possess.
- 324 The New Testament was much harder for the Indians to understand, and the non-Christians living outside gave the ones being converted a hard time by tempting them to drink, work on Sundays, and other things.
- 330 No one was accepted as a member until they gave up their heathen ways for at least a year and accepted Jesus Christ as their savior.
- 334 While they had less than 10 members, they often had an attendance of over 40, as lumbermen joined the Indians in Sunday worship.
- 338 A major setback occurred in 1841 when the Sioux attacked the mission at dawn. Although only 2 teenage Indian girls were the casualties, the Indians scattered and didn't come back for over a year.
- 343 The mission had been warned by Reverend Peter Pond, a ~~catholic~~ *protestant* missionary who knew the Sioux were going on a warpath.
- 347 The mission was barricaded and saved - they harvested their crops, but not many returned to use them. They slowly returned, but were in constant fear of another attack - this caused the closing of the mission in 1847. END OF STORY.
- 353 Some questioning between the gentlemen on the beginning date of the mission and where the testament translations were printed.
- 440 The missionaries lived on a mere pittance.
- 468 The Pond brothers, Gideon and Peter, saved the mission because they were missionaries to the Sioux.

500 INDIAN HISTORY

- 500 Pine County was the line between the Sioux and the Chippewa.
- 531 In 1837 there was a treaty between the federal government (through Fort Snelling because there was no state government at the time) and the Chippewa Indians around Stillwater and the Twin Cities.
- 547 Another treaty came in 1847 - the one thing that closed the mission. The Indians were supposed to go to Mille Lacs Lake to a reservation, but many didn't go.

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 1 Side 2

INDIAN HISTORY (continued)

- 011 The Indians fought among themselves.
- 019 There was never a transfer of religion or social consciousness between the white men and the Indians.
- 025 The Indians were in Pine County in 1902 - James Clark never saw an Indian in the church.

059 PINE AREA HISTORY

- 059 Logging actually settled the land - agriculture came when it was cleared.
- 062 When the trains came the town moved 2 miles west.
- 081 When Minnesota became a territory there were 222 people in the area; Pine County, later divided, had 458 people.
- 088 The village was not known as Pine City, but carried its Indian name of CHENGWATANA, meaning land of pines... Reverend ~~Baldwell~~ *Boutwell* translated the name to Pine City.

125 EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

- 128 Founded in 1870
- 195 The church has been a mission church for 90 years - it started as a mission and was helped along by mission funds.
- 216 There were 4 women who helped establish the church: Mrs. Ann E. Bryan (a member of a church in Brooklyn, New York), Mrs. Sarah E. King (member of a Wisconsin church) and Augusta Ferson (also a Wisconsin member), and her daughter Ida, who was not yet a member.
- 228 Those 4 met on Nov. 23, 1870 in the parlor of Brackets Hotel near the depot - they had previously corresponded with Presbyterian headquarters in St. Paul.
- 234 As a result, Reverends D.C. Lyon and D.E. Wells met with these women, accepted them as charter members - thus was established the First Presbyterian Church of Pine City.
- 246 After 2 years, other members were accepted - women still dominated the membership.
- 267 Ethnic content was such (of members) that it never warranted a service to be done in any other language - there were some ethnic churches, ex. German, Swedish.

282 AREA HISTORY

- 282 Pine City became a village approximately in 1858; the centennial celebration of the county was in 1968.
- 312 There was a great mixture of ethnic communities that settled the area, and quite a number of Germans and Irish.
- 372 The very first church building was dedicated in 1879 - the meetings had been in a hotel and the schoolhouse up until 1878.
- 382 The main part of the church is still the original.
- 393 The Presbyterian church was not only the first in Pine City and Pine County, but was sort of a mother church to those that came to town; if anybody went to church they went to the Presbyterian church because it was the church, and others branched from it.

- 442 The Hinckley Fire came through in 1894...after the trees burned the forestry prospects were done, and people put big advertisements in the European papers. This is why there is such an ethnic mixture.
- 560 The people that attended the First Presbyterian Church and churches all over Minnesota were largely the product of those who were told (in Europe) that if you were willing to work hard and could stand severe winters...(END OF SIDE)

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 2 Side 1

AREA HISTORY (continued)

- 001 They earned every bit of fertility there was in that soil by the removal of stones and stumps - James Clark had a hand in that.
- 011 The Hinckley Fire didn't come to Pine City, but stopped about 3 miles north.
- 027 James Clark's impression when he was 9 - his age when his family came here - was the certainty in people's minds that Minnesota and this area would grow, thrive, and be prosperous.
- 069 The Clark family was extremely poor, but didn't expect to stay that way.

085 CHURCH HISTORY

- 085 Membership at first was very good, over 150 members. Generally speaking, membership has been sustained by small increments.
- 188 Members were very dedicated to church attendance, and would walk miles to be there.
- 230 People would try to raise money for the ministers to keep them there - there was no denominational preference, but all people would give to keep the church open though most were as poor as the minister.
- 320 The First Presbyterian Church has only been independent about 20 years, and is barely on the edge of being self-sustaining and having a full-time minister.
- 343 The First Presbyterian Church was the first church in the area to hire a woman - back in 1973.
- 356 In 1908 they had an old pastor - Reverend Matthews - he grew ill and returned to Illinois. His wife then took over. She was not trained in the ministry. She wouldn't speak from the pulpit as a pastor, but conducted services from the level of the church floor.
- 398 Area reaction has been pretty good towards the present woman pastor, though some are not used to it.