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From-

Portage (Wis.) Democrat.

April 12, 1905.

# PAUQUETTE'S GRAVE MARKED BY PLACING MEMORIAL TABLET

GIFT OF COLDEN GOSSIP  
CLUB IN HONOR OF  
FAMOUS SCOUT.

PUBLIC EXERCISES AT BAPTIST  
PARSONAGE.

Address by Supt. Clough, Historical  
Sketch by Mr. Turner, Re-  
marks by Rev. Brady.



**PAUQUETTE'S CHURCH.**  
The First Erected at "The Portage."

State Historical Society  
OF WISCONSIN.

ON a window casing of the new Baptist parsonage, Adams and Conant streets, is securely fixed a small aluminum tablet bearing this inscription:

PIERRE PAUQUETTE  
1795-1836  
Removed to Catholic Cemetery  
1904  
Placed by the Golden Gossip Club.

The tablet marks the spot where for many years reposed the remains of the famous pioneer scout and trader of "the portage." As near as may be the tablet is above where the head of the casket lay.

The placing of this memorial was the occasion of public exercises, held at 4 o'clock this afternoon in the yard of the parsonage. In the bright spring sunshine were gathered many people, to see and to listen. Special invitations from the donors of the tablet, the Golden Gossip Club, to Mrs. Therese Prescott of Caledonia, daughter of Pauquette, and family; to the Daughters of the American Revolution, the

public library board, the members of the Baptist church and the pupils of the schools had been accepted. The general public, too, had been assured a welcome.

- The program of exercises was as follows:
- Call to order by Dr. W. H. Stone, pastor of the Baptist church, who presided.
- Prayer by Rev. J. G. Blue of the Presbyterian church.
- Explanatory remarks by Dr. Stone.
- Address—"Landmarks and Monuments," by W. G. Clough, city superintendent of schools.
- Sketch of Pierre Pauquette by Mr. A. J. Turner.
- Remarks by Rev. James H. Brady of St. Mary's Catholic church.
- Placing of the memorial tablet.
- Benediction by Rev. A. C. Jones of St. John's Episcopal church.

**Supt. Clough Commends Memorial.**  
Discussing "Landmarks and Monuments," W. G. Clough, city superintendent of schools, said:

The patriotism of a nation is proportionate to its interest in its history. The people that are indifferent to their past will be indifferent to their future. No people so actuated have ever risen to eminence. The nations of the earth have gloried in their past and have raised monuments to commemorate every manner of incident in their

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history. Such monuments have had a most potent educative influence upon the lives of the people. They have held up to view the motive, the aim and purpose of a race. They have awakened inspiration and have incited to achievement. And when in the fulness of time the nation's story is told and its people called to render their final account before the bar of the God of nations, the monuments have lived on to tell the tale to later peoples, to awaken a new inspiration, to quicken to a new life.

It is instinctive in man even in savagery to set up landmarks to fix the site of notable incidents in his history, whether it be a cromlech, a cairn of stones, a mound of earth or a pyramid of skulls. A rise in culture only renders the monument the more refined.

When the human race in the children of Ham first emerged from the darkness of prehistoric time their land was already filled with monuments. As time endured their pyramids and obelisks multiplied beyond number even to the amazement of the after-world. Today we read the history of Egypt in the monuments and more correctly than did the contemporary Greeks who took their information from the priests of On.

The Persian left his landmarks in every corner of his empire and we still read his greatness in the rock hewn tablets in the mighty wall of Behistun.

On every field of Grecian valor was raised a landmark. At the Pass of Thermopylae was set that monument whose simple legend thrilled the soul of Hellas till its remotest day:—"Go tell the Spartans that we lie here in obedience to their commands."

The Romans, too, raised their landmarks. In legend they traced a lineage from Romulus and Remus and in the Forum of the Eternal City builded by the elder they raised a monument to the twins and to the she-wolf that suckled them—a monument that still endures to show how this people caught their spirit from the milk that nourished their progenitor.

Our early English ancestry, too, raised their landmarks. The great Alfred had the mystic White Horse carved upon the rocky hillside that overlooked the field of Ashdune where his prowess did such damage to his Danish foes. So, too, William of Normandy erected Battle Abbey to mark the great victory of the conquest.

But it is not always victories or conquests or bloody conflicts that are commemorated in landmarks, Edward I, the Lion of Justice, the conqueror of two realms, attested his loving devotion to his wife, the fair and fond Eleanor, by erecting some thirteen crosses to mark the several spots where rested the coffin that enclosed her remains, on the sad march from Grantham, the scene of the death, to the final resting place in the Abbey at Westminster. Several of them still stand to charm the wanderer in rural England while the site of another marks the busiest spot upon the earth in Charing Cross. But landmarks are not always set with that definite purpose in view. Wherever the eyes of men are attracted toward an object, the object

becomes a landmark. It is this tendency to set apart the habitations or scenes that the great have clothed with interest, that prompts us to hold as hallowed ground the house where Shakespeare was born, where Milton composed his Paradise Lost, where Lamb wrote the *Ella* in the Inner Temple. The eyes of men were already fixed upon the place before a monument was set up to Burns at Alloway or to Scott at Abbotsford.

A landmark hallows with time till it becomes a shrine. It is the interest that all men take in these landmarks that keeps up the tide of travel to other lands. For every stranger in London who visits the office of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, ten if not one hundred pass on to view the plate inscribed to Rare Ben Jenson in the Abbey, or even go off in quest of the bare apartments of the choleric old cynic of Chelsea.

The same interest attaches to notable places in our own land, whether it be the rock at Plymouth, that marks the coming of the early settlers, or the oak at Hartford that stood for the defence of liberty; or Washington's headquarters, or the famous apple tree at Appomattox.

Our own country is recognizing the importance of landmarks and monuments, and the various states are marking on the sites of the battlefields of the Civil War the positions occupied by the troops they furnished in the action.

But it may be said, the things that we have mentioned stand out in the greater life of the people. What have they to do with life in this sequestered vale? They have much to do with it. Growth and development in the local community is just as important both in kind and in degree as is the growth of the more striking life. The lives of the greatest of men are chiefly taken up with the details of simple living while the lives of most men are entirely so marked. Local interests preponderate in every community and attach to us every on side. They practically bound our lives.

Yet incidents in the simple life of a community have a varying value. Some stand out distinctive as marking a beginning or a change or a crisis in the midst of events that otherwise move in even tenor. Then, too, individuals in the lesser spheres exert an influence or direct a movement quite in parallel if not in keeping with the greater movements of the larger world. And we that stand within the immediate influence feel the effect far more than the effect of the greater incidents in the larger national life, much more remote.

Such individuals and such incidents deserve recognition and landmarks and monuments may well be erected to commemorate their work and service. A series of such, selected with discrimination may have a historic value in their connections apart from their individual worth. Such a series should be chronological, should mark epochs, should illustrate causes of growth and prosperity and distinguish general movements as well as the acts of individuals.

A tablet set up by the public should stand for more than a name. It should stand for a type or class, for an idea or line of action, for something that has affected the interest or the life of the people. We are not here to honor Pauquette alone. It is rather that he stands out signally as a type of the men who were making the modest history of this community some three score years ago.

Not every worthy individual or every worthy act can claim a distinctive recognition. Worthy men and worthy deeds are like the leaves of the forest. It is only when they open a way or mark a crisis or are supereminent in degree that we can distinguish them from their kind. Then we should not fail to give them consideration in measure with their prominence. The cord that connects them will become the thread of local history.

We are living on historic ground. Our city and its immediate vicinity are rich in men and incidents that are worthy of such designation.

And now to particulars: We are now living upon the line of a great natural thoroughfare, on a ground that was made the site of towns and camps and burial places of the prehistoric tribes that dominated this wilderness before the advent of the whites. The Foxes, Sauks, Menomonies and Winnebagoes and others, all rendezvoused in turn at this meeting of the waters. Any knowledge that those now living may possess of these sites is fast becoming limited. The mounds that cover their dead are wearing down through the operations of nature and the effects of cultivation. In a short time all traditional knowledge will be gone and every natural vestige will have disappeared.

Suitable tablets should designate these spots and at the same time the knowledge and information still existent should be gathered and written down in charts and descriptions and filed in public repositories. Such facts will have a value in themselves growing out of local interest and they will have a value in relation to the great mass of other similar facts that are to be worked up by the future historian and antiquarian.

It is natural perhaps to be indifferent to that which lies around us. Investigators travel hundreds of miles to examine what is lying in profusion at our very doors or in close proximity. Along the Baraboo, in Pacific and north of the Neenah along the Fox are there numerous but disappearing mounds. We should rejoice in our opportunity to visit, explore and suitably designate them.

Then when we shall have given the prehistoric remains the attendance they deserve, we should turn to the coming of our own race. On the banks of the Wisconsin we should raise a tablet to the great Marquette who first disclosed the path through this savage wilderness—a herald at once of truth and civilization. The state has placed his statue in Statuary hall in the capitol at Washington. Why should we not hasten to claim our share in greatness?

Then, we should raise another tablet upon the Fox to the simple and unlettered French

Canadian Lawrence Barth, the pioneer who was the first to bring his household goods to this Wauona, the first to break its virgin soil. Not that he was great, but he was first and stands for a class. The history of Portage must forever start with the uncouth Frenchman who with others of his kind initiated the first and only occupations that were to hold the attention of the people of this vicinage for a generation—the portaging of canoes and keelboats from river to river, and the prosecution of an Indian barter in which they trafficked for peltries, their blankets, cotton, beads and deadly firearms and even more deadly firewater. Wherein was Solomon Juneau any better for whom Milwaukee has named a park and set up a monument?

Another tablet should commemorate the building of Fort Winnebago and the dawn of a new life. It was a most important event in the history of this locality and marked at once the culmination and the decline of the great fur trade that from the beginning had ruled the lives of the people of the northwest but that was soon to yield to the rising industry of the lead traffic that acting directly and indirectly was to people the state and revolutionize its trade and life.

So, too, a tablet should mark the spot when ground was first broken for the canal that promised so much and yet has brought us so little. The first suggestion of a canal was made by those who wished thereby to develop a route to the East for the lead trade; but the tardy building resulted in that traffic being diverted to other channels. But the canal stands for a past idea in the minds of men and is directly responsible for a great accretion in our population.

Then too the building of the first railway should be marked by an appropriate tablet erected in memory of—shall we call it the folly, or the public spirit of—those who poured their fortunes, their homes, their farms into the maw of that corporation known as the Milwaukee and La Crosse Railway Company. The building, supported as it was by the people along the line, and especially by the citizens of Portage, was another most important event in our history, without which we might stand aloof and alone, like neighboring Friendship, in friendship perhaps but out of fellowship with the rest of the world.

It may be invidious to distinguish among our former citizens, but it would be well to select one who first and best perhaps represents that tide of incoming American life that has made our city what it is today—one who came early and came to stay, who lived long among us, served well both city and state and who at the close of a worthy life found his last resting place within our limits. You have, doubtless anticipated the name of Henry Merrell. In such a selection we would not disparage the claims of Daniel Whitney or Captain Low or Henry Carpenter or others who came a little later in the stream.

I think I shall elicit the approval of all when I suggest a tablet to be erected on

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Agency Hill to the memory of Mrs. Kinzie, whose husband as Indian Agent erected the Agency House still standing on the eminence across from the site of Fort Winnebago.

This lady in her graceful and charming narrative of Waubun, has forever made famous the early days of Portage, and has awakened an interest in our locality and given us a name far beyond our borders. She worthily opened the first literary page in our history and in this aspect deserves well not only of literary clubs but of the entire community.

While I shall not attempt to complete a list, I believe that within our precincts should be erected a monument to all our soldiers dear and ca its walls should be inscribed the names of every son and citizen that Portage has sent forth in any war to battle for his country.

Tablets like these will in their connection tell the story of our hamlet and children will insensibly learn its history even as they learn its topography and the nomenclature of its thoroughfares. The tablet of such a series as they, stand for purpose and initiative in what they represent, will emphasize the value of these qualities and so teach a moral as well as a practical lesson in life.

#### Pauquette's Eventful Career'

Mr. A. J. Turner's biographical sketch outlined the life and work of Pauquette. He said:

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The occasion of our meeting here today is to witness the placing of a "Memorial Tablet" to mark the spot where Pierre Pauquette, famed as a fur trader, freighter over the Winnebago portage, government interpreter and scout, and renowned as a "Modern Samson," laid buried for so many years, the exact spot having been unmarked, and knowledge of it unknown to the present generation, until his remains were unearthed last year, while the workmen were engaged in making the excavation for this building, at a point directly beneath the spot where the tablet is to be placed.

The tablet has been prepared by that public spirited woman's club known as the "Golden Gossips," who are supplementing—indeed are they not pioneering?—the work of a state organization known as the "Landmark Club," whose laudible mission it is to mark, in some permanent manner, all points possessing historical interest within the state of Wisconsin. A few years ago another woman's club, the D. A. R., engaged in the same commendable work, planted an elm tree on the opposite side of the street from where we now stand, to mark the spot where the

first church was erected in Wisconsin between the great lakes and the Mississippi river. The church, a somewhat primitive affair constructed of logs, was built by Pierre Pauquette, under the inspiration he received from the famous Dominican missionary Father Samuele Carlo Mazzuchelli, who was the first of his calling to bring tidings of the Master to the untutored savage in this locality. Let us hope that the spot where this church stood will be further marked, in the near future, by some other club or organization, by the placing of a marble tablet on it.

Let no one misconstrue the purpose of what is being done here today. It is not to unduly exalt or glorify the life and services of Pierre Pauquette, but rather to preserve to posterity a knowledge of local events that have, at times, been of absorbing local interest. The location of the church Pauquette built, the point where he met his tragic death, and place of burial are landmarks, and as such, it is entirely fitting that what these ladies are doing today should be done. Let their example be emulated by others until all such points have been permanently marked.

In his day the name of Pierre Pauquette was probably more frequently on the tongues of men than that of any other man in Wisconsin. He was not a great man, in the proper acceptance of the term, for he was uneducated and could neither read nor write, I believe, and possessed none of those attainments which are usually associated with the lives of famous men; nevertheless he had his own field in the rude beginnings of our west, among the Red Men, and the Men of the Early Day at the Winnebago Portage, in which he was famous above all others, and his name was a household word for many years, even after his tragic death. So it is fitting that events relating to his career should be commemorated, as these ladies would do.

Pierre, or as his name was sometimes anglicised, "Peter" Pauquette was born at or near St. Louis of a French father and a Winnebago woman in 1795. But little is known of his early life much of which was spent among the various tribes in the far west, trapping and trading in furs, under the auspices of the Southwest Fur Company, which at a

later period became merged with the American Fur Company of which the master spirit was John Jacob Astor who had a post at the Winnebago Portage, as this locality was known in the early day. He was married in Prairie du Chien in 1818 to Therese Crele, daughter of Joseph Crele, who obtained much notoriety on account of his fabled age. He came to the portage to do the transporting between the Fox and Wisconsin rivers as the agent of the American Fur Company. Pauquette also did a little business on the side as a trader, his post being on the opposite side of the river at the south end of the bridge. It was while he was thus engaged as a freighter and trader that he gained the power and influence that made him the noted man he became. He was also a farmer having possessed the famous Bellefontain farm, and he was the government farmer for the Indians who were being instructed in the art of agriculture at the Indian Farms in the town of Caledonia.

So familiar was Pauquette with Indian character, who was held by them in an almost superstitious idolatry, that his control over them was almost boundless.

His death occurred in 1836, the result of an altercation he had with an Indian, but this is not the occasion to dwell in detail on that tragic event which so shocked the people of the northwest and which was so universally deplored. The details of the incident are fully set forth in the Wisconsin Historical Collections [Vols. 7, 8] and History of Columbia Co.

To the people of Portage of today it many not seem that Pauquette had left his impress on affairs to such an extent as to warrant much ado over his memory. I speak from the standpoint of half a century ago, and the lapse of fifty years is to relegate to obscurity the names of many men who were justly famous in their day. When I first came to Portage I heard no other name so frequently as I did that of Pauquette. I often listened to the wonderful tales told of him, by such men as Hon. Henry Merrell, Hon. Sat. Clark, B. L. Webb (one of the proprietors of Webb & Bronson's plat) and others who delighted to recount anecdotes of him and tell of his marvelous feats of strength, some of which almost challenged belief, but they

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were told by men as truthful as any, and impressed me with the feeling that Pauquette was indeed, a "Modern Samson," and so Pierre Pauquette became locally famous, and his name is inseparably connected with the early history of Portage and it is fitting that he should be remembered in the manner we are now doing.

As already related Pauquette built the first church in the city, although he was not, as Hon. Sat. Clark has informed us, a member of the church. He was buried under it, but the church was destroyed by fire about 1840. His grave was surrounded by an elaborate palisaded inclosure, which remained until it became necessary to remove his remains, as the grave was found to be situated in a street which had been platted. They were moved to the point which is now to be permanently marked as Pauquette's resting place until they were exhumed, Aug. 19, 1904, while workmen were engaged in the construction of this building. It had been the purpose of Hon. Benj. L. Webb to erect an elaborate monument to Pauquette, and he deeded the lot to the Catholic church, with the condition that his grave should be suitably cared for. His family elected that his remains should be finally interred in the Catholic cemetery where a burial lot had been reserved for him. A futile effort was made at one time to find his remains, but it must be concluded that they were feebly made, for their exact location could have been easily ascertained at that time. The neglect was keenly felt, and his son, Moses, gave expression to his feelings in a paper which may be found in the Wisconsin Historical Collection. [Vol. XII\*]

When Pauquette's remains were brought to light, his aged daughter, Therese, who is an interested spectator of what is being done here today, and who appreciates to the fullest what is being done in honor of her father, was immediately notified, and she made the journey to this city before many of us had partaken of our morning meal. The next day, August 20, Pauquette's remains were once more consigned to mother earth, in the Catholic cemetery,

\*"I submit that this treatment of Pierre Pauquette's bones by the successors of those for those whom he erected the first mission chapel at the Portage is ungenerous." XII.

with appropriate ceremonies, where they are to remain for the balance of unrecorded time.

Ladies of the Golden Gossip Club, I am commissioned by Mrs. Prescott and family to return to you their sincere thanks for your exceeding kindness in the offices you have performed in honor of their distinguished forbear.

This is the kind of work the Ladies Gossip Club  
Committee are trying to do in Malcom  
Mrs F. H. Rogers - Sanduski  
Cottages