HULL, The Township of

On Nov. 11, 1858 the committee on town organiza-
tion, (the first time this committee is mentioned in the
proceedings of the County Board), approved the or-
ganization of the town of Hull which was to include all
that part of the county formerly under the town of
Stevens Point in Towns 24 & 25 in Range 9 (part of
future Sharon) and the east one-half of Towns 24 & 25
in Range 8. The board recommended that the first
town meeting be held at the house of Hugh McGreer
on the first Tuesday in April 1859, (later changed to
read "March" instead of April). There were nine
'yeas' and one 'nay' on this motion.

Before the election was held the County Board
amended its earlier action and gave Hull three more
sections, 1, 2 and 3 in Town 23, Range 8. Apparently
this was done following the incorporation of the city of
Stevens Point in 1858 which left three sections to the
east of the city more or less in a corner between Hull
and the town of Plover. It would have been equally as
logical, if not more so, to include these three sections
in Plover as they lie in the same constitutional town-
ship, i.e., Town 23, and apparently Plover felt the same
way, for in 1859 the board reversed itself and gave
these three sections to Plover.

In 1859 a big part of Hull was set off to constitute the
new town of Sharon. This led to a petition from the
citizens of Hull in February 1860 urging the County
Board to rescind this action and "the matter was taken
up and debated at some length..."[1] In fact, Hull re-
quested that the whole town of Sharon be handed back
to it. A vote was taken and the petition lost by a vote

[1] *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 58.

of six to eight. At a meeting held the following day, the matter came up again and this time it lost nine to six.

Hull, by this time an odd-shaped township, narrow in the middle and seemingly perched on one leg, continued agitation for more territory and in November 1860 a number of sections to the north and east of the city of Stevens Point were taken from the town of Stevens Point and attached to Hull. A few days later Hull was also given the north one-half of Sec 1, Town 23, Range 8, east of Plover River which was detached from the town of Plover. This half section is still retained by Hull.

Effective April 1, 1899 the board ordered sections 6, 7, 18, 19 and the west half of 30 and 31 in Town 25, Range 9, detached from Hull and attached to Sharon. In the same motion it detached Town 25, Range 8, from Hull and all that portion of Town 25, Range 7, which lay east of the Wisconsin River, formerly part of Eau Pleine, to form the new town of Dewey. However, Hull was compensated by annexing sections 2, 3, 10, 14, 23, and 25, east of the Wisconsin River in Town 24, Range 7, formerly part of the town of Stevens Point which had been vacated.

The subdivision of the town of Hull in Town 24, Range 8, not included in the Indian Survey of 1839-40, was begun March 22 and completed March 29, 1853.

The first election in Hull was "held agreeable to the law" at School House No. 9 which stood about a quarter of a mile northwest of Jordan bridge. Elected were Samuel Brown, chairman; Joseph Oesterly and Michael Dawson, supervisors; Alexander Jack, clerk; Timothy Leary, treasurer; James Moore, town superintendent of schools; James Delany, assessor; James Moore, Michael Sweeney, Samuel Brown and Alonzo Streeter, justices of the peace; Michael Finneran, Archy Sievwright and William Carver, constables; and Richard Keaff, sealer of weights and measures.

School House No. 9 was the scene of many town meetings in the first years of Hull. It was later moved to

where Pulaski School is located in 1958. Modern H-66 cuts through the southeast corner of the forty on which the earlier school house stood. In the very southeast corner of this forty, that is, on the south side of H-66, there once stood a grocery store operated by Frank W. Muzzy who was also the first postmaster here in 1864 of a post office called Hull. The township may have been named after Hull, England, probably to favor the Englishmen, not the Irish. On the other hand a D. B. Hull voted in the 3rd Ward of Stevens Point in 1860. The post office was discontinued in 1903 and the last postmaster was Chryst Marchel whose son, Severen, still lives on this forty.

A direct road between Jordan, (pronounced "Jerdan" by the early settlers) and the village of Stevens Point developed in the early 1850s. Previous to this, Hugh McGreer had been using a road developed along the left (east) bank of the Plover River all the way into Plover village. By 1857 the village of New Jordan had been laid out on the left bank of the Plover near McGreer's saw mill. It may have been known as "Mc-Greer's Rapids" before this time. The fact that it was platted as "New Jordan" suggests that it was named after another community of the same name, probably Jordan, New York, where Robert Maine, an Englishman, stopped for a time before coming to work in the mills on the Plover. A plat of four village blocks was laid out with streets called Main, Wells, Clinton, Mason and St. Louis, with 12 lots in each of the four blocks. Here someone risked a dollar and probably lost it, for it proved to be a boom town founded on one economic fact — the timber business, and when the timber ran out, the boom went out with the timber. It happened all over northern Wisconsin.

Meanwhile the village of New Jordan was moving ahead. In 1860 Sunday School classes were being conducted by Ansolm Vaughn and Alonzo Streeter.[1] In 1862 a "war meeting"[2] was held here with Wilson

[1] *Pinery,* Aug. 31, 1860.
[2] *Ibid.,* Aug. 30, 1862.

Muzzy not only presiding but delivering the main ad-
dress. A year later, despite the war, someone in Jordan
found time to arrange a prize fight between F. L. Floyd,
better known as "Buffalo Pete," and Joseph Griffith of
Berlin, both employees of Thurston, Bowden & Co.,
lumbermen on the Plover. Interest in the fight must
have been fairly keen as the editor of the *Pinery* covered
the match for his newspaper. The event lasted 54
minutes and was said to be the "best fight we have ever
witnessed." While this early-day sports writer goes on
to explain that Floyd succeeded in closing Griffith's
"two shutters" with a "beautiful righthander," the
battle ended in a TKO, as the writer explains that Grif-
fith's second and friends "in spite of his earnest en-
treaties, forced him from the fight."[1] These were the
days when men fought without gloves and the number
of rounds was practically unlimited. A fight lasting
only 54 minutes was short compared to some of the
later classics of John L. Sullivan.

Meanwhile, tragedy had struck one of the pioneer
families of Hull. Michael Finneran, one of the first of
three constables elected to the new town board in 1859,
had been in Stevens Point where he was "kicked by an
ox, directly in front of Grant's store last week, by which
internal injuries were received so that he died in two or
three days."[2] The *Pinery* account identifies him as "an
Irishman," which reflects the ethnic consciousness of the
pioneers and which Americans are not entirely over yet.

On June 1, 1863 John Ryan handed the town clerk
of Hull a petition with 16 names which respectfully re-
quested a special town meeting "for the purpose of
taking into consideration the subject of allowing cattle
and hogs to run at large in said town." It was signed
by Ryan, Patrick Leary, Joseph Roberts, James Barry,
Edward Langenburg, Wm. Walters, Wm. Lynch,
Patrick Mirau, John Leahey, Jeremiah Banker, Aug-
ust Schulteze, Geo. Miller, Solomon O. Andrews, Mich
Carmody, John Welsch and John Quin. The petition-
ers lost. It is doubtful whether many of these were

[1] *Pinery,* March 20, 1863.
[2] *Ibid.,* Jan. 24, 1860.

farmers, or they would have known that building a
rail fence around a quarter section was beyond the
capability of the average free-holder, and, if a cow
strayed through the woods to a neighbor's farm or gar-
den, the owner took evasive action, logically, by build-
ing a rail fence around the garden, not the quarter
section. Barbed wire did not come to Portage County
much before 1900. In the 1880s and '90s, fencing was
done, when necessary, by felling trees in a line and fill-
ing in the holes with brush, or by building a row of
stumps, or by cutting cedar rails, or by tacking up
cheap lumber culls to posts. Here and there stone
fences were built up from nearby fields.

The town of Hull was sparsely settled in the first
three decades of its incorporation. In the 1866 tax roll
nearly 700 forties or portions thereof are listed as un-
known. While the first tax roll is missing, the town
treasurer's book is available which gives the taxpayers
beginning Dec. 24, 1860 through Jan. 29, 1861, pre-
sumably the final day for payment. The biggest tax-
payer was a B. Vanstyle (by S. Campbell) who on Jan.
19, 1861 paid $154.11 and the smallest was "Jos Plato"
(probably Platta) who paid 23 cents. Platta's is also the
only Polish name in this book. Others who paid taxes
were Hugh McGreer ($34.47), Matthew Wadleigh
($56.83), Barney Cassidy, Murt Burns, Patrick Moore,
Am (?) Hirst, Archibald Sievwright (by S. Campbell),
Adam Welch (by S. Campbell), Anslem Vaughan, Wil-
liam Reading, Charles Van Order, E. D. Brown, Alonzo
Streeter, George Wilson, George Senger (?), Isaac Van-
seter, Peter Fisher, Henry Pool, Richard Nugent, Law-
rence Nugent, John Quim, John White, W. E. Cole,
Andre Otis, A. B. Redfield, Patrick Griffith, Michael
Freel, B. Bender, Francis Bender, N. F. Bliss, A. B.
Crosy, John Cinsoll (?), James Delaney, Mary Flyn,
Michael Flyn, Patrick Gallagher, James Hollingsworth,
Wilson P. Muzzy, William Walton (on estate of
Masterson), John Murphy, Daniel (?), Los Schlegel,
Thomas Venner (?), Thomas Welsh, John Patterson,
Francis Shelly, Chas. Treebou (?), John Welsh, Eliza
Wilas, Nathan Corniff, A. J. Aldrich, W. G. Campbell,

Timothy Sweeny, P. H. Buckley, and Smith & Henry Rogers.

The village of Jordan began to peter out in the mid-1880s. While there is no evidence of a village in Jordan today, the view of the Jordan pond from H-66, the rapids below the bridge, the race and power dam are all fascinating, and a new beauty has replaced the old. But who can guess at the manner of men who tamed the river and cleared the forest around?

Aside from the Wisconsin and Plover Rivers, which both drain the town of Hull on the left and right banks, one river runs into the township which originates in Marathon County and flows through the town of Dewey into Hull and on to the Wisconsin above Stevens Point known as Hay Meadow Creek. This appears to have been known as Willow Creek before 1844, but in a division of road districts made by the county that year it is referred to in parenthesis as "Sheritts Hay Meadow Creek..."[1] There are no natural lakes in the township but the flowages formed by the three dams on the Plover at the Jordan, Van Order, and Bentley mills have partially filled this need.

Serving the town of Hull, with a population of 1,524, in 1957-58, were Joseph Wojcik, chairman; Ray Bernas and August Firkus, supervisors; Joseph Bonowski, clerk; Joseph Daczyk, treasurer; Joseph Brillowski, assessor; Lawrence Miller, justice of the peace; Robert S. Coats, constable, and Joseph Bonowski, health officer.

[1] *Proceedings,* County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 54.

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