

Old Janesville bell tower new life to community

By Clinton Schemmer
Staff Reporter

Gerald Whitehead, who moved to Janesville in 1955, remembers when the big cast-iron bell of the Baptist Church of Janesville used to ring out through the community every Sunday morning at 10 o'clock, calling church-goers to worship.

"I kind of missed it when they quit ringing it... yeah, I kinda miss it," Whitehead recalls.

The church bell has been quiet for years, as the churchyard lawn, untended, grew high and the church building itself lay still. About five years ago, as the congregation dwindled to nothing, the 70-year old building saw its last religious service.

But last week, the churchyard again bustled with activity as volunteer carpenters worked to erase years of weathering and restore the building to community use. The bell tower was rebuilt, asbestos shingles from the 1950's were torn off, revealing the old pine tongue-and-groove siding, and finishing touches were put on a new ceiling inside.

The restoration project is being undertaken by the Janesville Historical Society, a community group organized in 1978, according to Jerry Rainey, society chairman and owner of Rainey's Market. Volunteers are "trying to make (it) just like it used to be," Rainey said last week.

Late Wednesday afternoon, 40 feet above the ground, in the church's bell tower, Whitehead and Thornton 'Thorny' Edmonds, of Janesville, sent the belfry's pigeons flying and built a new platform for the church bell.

"They're pretty mad," Whitehead said, referring to the startled birds.

Whitehead and Edmonds had their work cut out for them, in building a new platform for the massive cast-iron bell. They removed the weak, weathered boards, and over the course of an afternoon, maneuvered new ones into place under the bell.

The bell, cast in Northville, Michigan and brought by freight wagon into Janesville, weighs "500 pounds if it's anything," Whitehead said.

Last week, the two volunteers also finished a new, lower ceiling built inside the church to reduce heating costs and began removing green asbestos siding nailed in recent years over the church's pine boards.

Last summer, Edmonds tidied up the high, overgrown lawn of the churchyard by putting his pony and donkey to graze there. "They knocked it right down," he said.

Later, a new foundation was laid under the church; the beams of which had rested on rocks and boulders for 70 years. Those pine foundation timbers were hand-hewn with a adze or broadaxe. Most of the cross-members under the church floor are logs that were simply barked, notched, and laid on each other.

The tongue-and-groove boards which form the walls of the church were milled either at the Jellison lumber mill in Janesville or at the lumber mill that once sat up Gold Run Creek. Ornate, hand-painted moldings graced the interior walls of the church.

When use of the church faltered, it was given over to the Baptist Association in Reno, Nevada.

Rainey said he is hoping the building will be used "for a library or a museum or a combination of both."

Those uses are also the wish of William and Blanche Hail, long-time Janesville residents. Hail remembers when the church building was constructed; "I seen all of it happen, but of course I was a kid." Hail said he "was just old enough to get in the way."

Hail's grandfather, J.S. Johnson, one of the organizers of the church, was its first pastor, in 1909. Johnson came west in that year to the Honey Lake Valley from Colorado Springs, Colorado. Johnson, who was born in Kentucky and served in the Union Army in the Civil War, preached for a time in Missouri, then headed west.

Hail's father, William B. Hail, helped build the church in 1911. W.B. Hail farmed profitably in Kansas, then - at the age of 60 - came west and bought 200 acres in Janesville. He planted an orchard of apple and peach trees, and raised cows, hogs, and chickens. The present-day Mr. Hail lives in a house on land that once was that farm.

According to records of the Hails, the baptist church was organized on Nov. 7, 1909. At that meeting, J.S. Johnson was appointed by the congregation to find a site for

the future church building. A year later, on Nov. 7, 1910, a 75' X 120' lot, property of the Christy brothers, was deeded for the church site.

The building, which today stands just a short distance east of Rainey's Market on the old highway, was built by the donated labor of community members in the summer of 1911. The only paid individual was Frank Alexander, the carpenter in charge of seeing the church erected.

Oct. 8, 1911 saw the first service in the new church. J.S. Johnson never lived to see the permanent place of worship he helped to create; he died in Pacific Grove, California before the church building was built.

Blanche Hail, a long-time U.S. Forest Service employee who used to look down on Janesville from high up in the Thompson Peak lookout, recalls the many church activities held years ago - prayer meetings, baptisms using the waters of nearby creeks, and church 'ice cream socials', where church members enjoyed cake, homemade ice cream, and party games. The church "had good-sized congregation," according to Mrs. Hail.

The Hails are glad to see the church being restored. "We fought to keep the church from being torn down. We wanted it



VOLUNTEERS RESTORE 1911 CHURCH - Volunteers Gerald Whitehead and Thornton Edmonds (from left), two of many

involved, take a break from their work last week in restoring the Baptist Church of Janesville to its original condition.

Low survey returns

Good response to North Lassen school building

Response was low for a survey form mailed to 730 Bieber, Nubieber, Adin and Lookout residents requesting sentiment on the possible construction of an Industrial Arts Building for the Big Valley Joint Unified School District, but attendance at a meeting on the subject showed favor for the proposed project.

The school district is presently gathering public input and disseminating information on its proposal, which would cost the district approximately \$300,000 to provide for an industrial arts facility to replace one damaged by fire last year.

Out of the total surveys mailed only 39 residents responded, several of them negatively.

One resident, Thomas Henry, said, "Your people who draw enormous pay checks just don't realize - or just don't give a damn, how much property taxes us landowners must pay out in order to meet your financial demands. You should try it on our end of the shovel for a while..."

Another comment stated that taxes have been going up every year and that he, as an agri-producer, wasn't getting any breaks on the goods he raises. He suggested putting "education first - a vocation second."

Of the 39 responses, 20 residents said 'yes' to the proposal while 19 said 'no'.

However, a majority of the residents attending an information exchange sponsored by the school district and the local farm bureau indicated a favorable attitude towards the proposal.

Five board members, 16 staff members and 18 people turned out for the meeting. Tom Pearson of Pearson Realty said, "I believe that our school district does need an industrial arts building," and Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service chairman Jerry Parks agreed.

The district stated during the meeting that the proposed building would contain ap-

proximately 3,500 to 4,000 square feet of space, would be an open span, forced air structure and could be utilized for seven periods a day. It was also estimated that a property tax of 22 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation would be necessary for the construction.

It was also reported that if the school district paid for a portion of the instructor's salary that students from the junior high through senior grade levels could use the Regional Occupations Program funded equipment, instructor and supplies. There is also a possibility for a working agreement to be made with the Lassen College Extension Outreach Division for establishing adult evening classes.

Federal, state and county educational building codes were blamed for the high estimated cost of construction.

Speaking for the construction was agri-business salesman Bob Covington who said, "Both vocational skills and the three R's rely and benefit from one another and many valuable skills will be learned that can be applied daily when the student enters the real world."

Preliminary approval to construct the building has been given by the state.

Other support for the construction was voiced by Superintendent Thomas Henry and Intermediate School Principal Liz Alt. Instructional Aide Micki Kaderabek said that as the nation tightens its belt and welfare is cut back, more students will seek ways to improve their chances for employment and that the shop would be worth its costs.

Board member Gary Lemke reinforced this sentiment by saying that the time is right for the facility.

A proposed construction completion date has been set for April, 1982, depending on weather and other construction variables. A final decision of the board is expected to be made in the next three months.



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Section II

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Geothermal: a novelty becomes a resource

(Note: This is the second of three articles on the potential, the problems and progress of geothermal energy as a U.S. energy resource.)

--At some moment in the distant past, a prehistoric man may have taken a doothing dip in a natural warm-water pool. Perhaps that beneficial utilization of geothermal energy even predated man's use of fire.

Geothermal energy is as old as the earth itself. It has long been used by man for cooking, bathing, warmth and therapy. We have not used it to any great extent, however, because we have not known enough about it; and we have had other easy and cheap energies with which to fulfill our major needs.

"At present our understanding of (geologic) processes which govern the distribution of geothermal areas on the earth's surface is rather sketchy," says earth scientist Phillip M. Wright of the University of Utah Research Institute. "But with rapidly increasing need for use of geothermal resources, our learning rate is high."

Since the center of the earth is composed of rock so hot it is molten, there has to be heat and energy beneath every spot on the surface. Known or soon-foreseen technology, however, limits usable geothermal energy to only those "geothermal areas" where higher earth temperatures are found at shallower depths than normal.

Since geothermal heat is mostly underground, only drilling can finally confirm the existence, nature and extent of a resource reservoir.

"Drilling a well represents both the greatest expense and the greatest risk in the utilization of geothermal energy," says the Geothermal Resources Council (GRC) at Davis, California.

Geothermal exploration also must compete with the oil industry for availability of drilling rigs. Earnings capability for an oil or gas

well is greater than that of a geothermal well; and there is a great deal of development activity under way in oil and gas exploration in the United States.

The lack of a utilization and technology database for geothermal results from the fact that only since the early 1970's has there been much interest in, or development of, geothermal resources. Prior to that time, the availability of cheap fossil fuels relegated geothermal to the status of a novelty energy source.

Now the world energy situation and passage of time are removing these barriers which have hampered geothermal energy development and utilization; and this once novelty energy source has become a real resource.

The need for alternatives to fading fossil fuel supplies has caused an explosion of knowledge about the geology, geophysics, geochemistry, exploration, drilling, production and the development of geothermal energy systems. The first annual meeting of the GRC drew as few as 650 geologists and energy dilettantes. Its annual meetings are now attended by more than a thousand professionals with various backgrounds of geothermal expertise.

The escalating use of geothermal energy for space heat, industrial processes, agriculture, aquaculture and unique new applications, as well as for electric generation, is producing the needed technology and utilization databases. Such data are now being developed, collected, assessed and disseminated by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), state energy offices, the GRC and similar institutions. Federal, state and private programs provide these data together with actual technical assistance to potential geothermal energy users to accelerate and commercialization of the resource.

The pace at which geothermal energy will proceed, of course, will

depend heavily on the cost of competitive sources of energy.

"There is no magic formula for pricing geothermal energy for direct use," says a GRC report. "Experience has shown that each application must be judged on its site-specific characteristics and evaluated accordingly."

The availability of knowledge and appropriate data help with these judgements and evaluations. Knowledge and data remove some of the risk from exploration and confirmation phases of geothermal development. People now know where to look for the resource and how to assess its potential when they find it. The reduction of development uncertainties reduces costs and attracts financial backing that makes geothermal exploration more attractive for both financiers and drillers.

Overcoming the hindrances to geothermal development is worth the effort. Many direct-use geothermal systems can supply energy at a fraction of the cost of conventional fuels. And low cost is not the only reason for a commitment to geothermal development.

"Benefits from the development and use of the hydrothermal resource through direct applications are nationally important," says DOE. "Development can mean new employment opportunities, contributions to energy independence, additional tax revenues, increased capital investments and industrial growth, and with a lesser impact on environment than most other sources of energy."

This list contains a lot of public benefit in addition to the private cost savings and profits which accrue to a successful geothermal user. Therefore, cooperative projects of government and commercial developers can be expected to continue to expand the use of direct applications of geothermal energy.