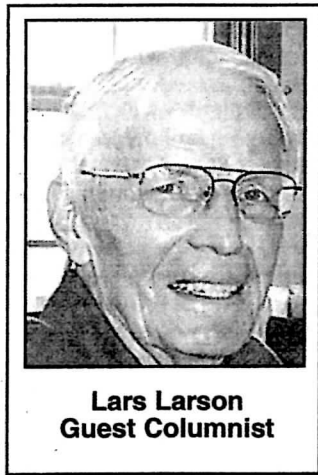


Washburn civic officials, part two CS 4/14/11

The women of Washburn, on whom the fate of the community ultimately depended, served quietly as housewives and mothers, teachers, volunteers, nurses, and clerks. Only one woman gained recognition in what was in the early decades of the last century, a male-dominated world. That woman was Jessie N. Smith, born on December 10 1862 in Cambridge, Wisconsin. The family later moved to western Iowa where she grew up. She taught in rural schools in Iowa for 10 years before coming to Bayfield County in 1891. She taught one year in Washburn, served as principal of the Drummond school for three years, then moved to Bayfield as head of the Central School. In 1896 she was appointed Bayfield County Superintendent of Schools when the incumbent died, and in the following November she was elected to the office, serving for 31 years until July 1927. She visited every school in the county at least once each year, traveling by horse drawn buggy or sleigh, or by boat along the shores of Lake Superior. During her long tenure enrollment in the county education system increased by 150% and the number of teachers by 450%, achievements for which she was in large measure responsible.

She was also active in community affairs as a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the



Lars Larson
Guest Columnist

Women's Study Club, the Federation of Women's Clubs and the Methodist Church. She died on September 12, 1940.

Continuing with the prominent men of the community, who served as civic officials, William O'Neil was born in Scott, Wisconsin on September 20, 1848. In the fall of 1861, when he was 13 years old, he misrepresented his age to enlist in the army. In March 1862 he was sent home because of illness, but rejoined the army in June 1862. He participated in several important battles during the Civil War and was mustered out on July 30, 1865. He then engaged in various occupations, principally logging and lumbering in northern Wisconsin. In 1880 he moved to Chippewa Falls, where he married Mary Judge of Sharon. The couple moved to Eau Claire and then to Washburn in 1886, where he opened a mercan-

tile business.

He served as chairman of the town board of supervisors for several terms and was elected to the Wisconsin Assembly for the 1893 and 1895 sessions. When the United States declared war on Spain in April 1898, he raised a company of volunteers from Washburn and the surrounding area, inducted as Company K into the Fourth Infantry Regiment with him as captain. Returning to Washburn after the war, he reopened his business and was elected to the Wisconsin Senate for the 1901 and 1903 sessions. In 1903 he was appointed superintendent of logging on the Chippewa Indian Reservation at Cass Lake, Minnesota. He died there on March 8, 1917.

Hubert Haskell Peavey was born on January 12, 1881, in Adams, Minnesota. When he was five years old the family moved to Redwood Falls, Minnesota, where he grew up on a farm. He attended school in Redwood and then the Pillsbury School at Owatonna, Minnesota for two years. He was then employed in various businesses in Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma. In 1904 he returned to Redwood Falls, where he engaged in the real estate business and the founding of townsites in South Dakota.

In 1910 he came to Washburn, engaging in the real estate business. He became active in local politi-

cal affairs and was elected alderman in 1914 and mayor in 1912 and again in 1920. He was elected to the state assembly, serving in the 1913 session.

In 1915 he purchased the Washburn News and Itemizer, serving as publisher and editor until its consolidation with the Washburn Times in 1924. In 1917 he was commissioned a captain in the Wisconsin National Guard, recruiting 176 Bayfield County men to form Company D of the Sixth Wisconsin Infantry. The company trained in Waco, Texas and was incorporated into the 32nd Division, in October 1917.

In January 1918 the company was sent to France. He became ill with malaria and was invalided to the army hospital at Des Moines, Iowa, where he was discharged in January 1919. Returning to Washburn, he resumed the editorship of his newspaper. In November 1922 he was elected to the House of Representatives on the Republican ticket. He was re-elected five times, serving until he was defeated in 1934. He returned to Washburn, resuming his real estate business and managing his fox and beaver fur farm on the Cranberry River west of Washburn. He was a founding member of Bodin-Finstad Post of the American Legion and a member of the Masonic fraternal lodge. He died on November 21, 1937.