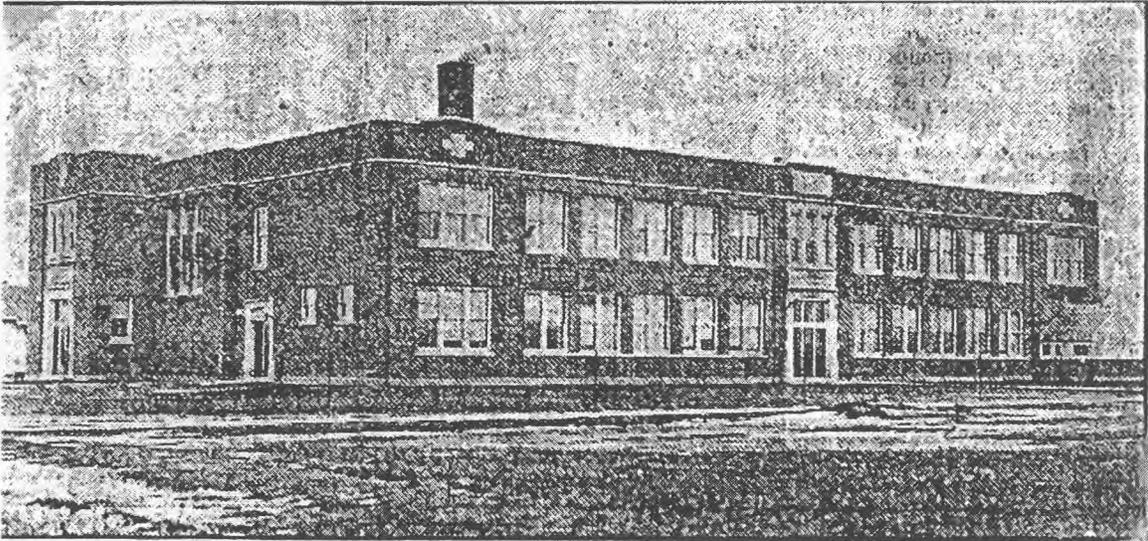

NUGGETS OF HISTORY

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HONONEGAH A NEW BIOGRAPHY PART TWO

By Dean McMakin



A photograph of Hononegah high school at the time of its dedication in February 1923. The school was named after Hononegah, the Winnebago Indian wife of Stephen Mack. This photo was originally published in the Rockford Morning Star on February 14, 1923.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This issue presents the second part of a Biography of Hononegah, the wife of Stephen Mack. Hononegah played an important part in the early history of Winnebago County. Although much has been written about her husband Stephen Mack, relatively little was known about Hononegah. Due to the extensive research done by Dean McMakin, that has changed. Dean has uncovered much information that has never been published before.

Dean McMakin is a native of Rockton and has been doing historical and genealogical research in the Rockton area for 35 years. He collects and researches local genealogies and has a special interest in the *Métis* families (These were people who were half white, usually French, and half Indian. They were the children of fur traders and their Indian wives.) Dean is the author of *The French Trappers and Traders, Friends of Stephen Mack and Residents of Pecatonic*. This is a collection of articles from books and periodicals containing anything of relevance pertaining to their lives. This volume is available at the Talcott Free Library. Dean is the great-great-grandson of Benjamin Franklin Richardson, the first white male born in Roscoe Township. He also plays in the Rockford Wind Ensemble.

NOTICE TO RESEARCHERS

If you have a subject that you have researched, or an idea for an article that you would like to pursue, give me a call. I would like to encourage original research into some aspects of local history that have not been adequately pursued. I can be reached at 885-1740.

Thomas Powers, Editor

HONONEGAH-A NEW BIOGRAPHY PART TWO

In the last issue of *The Nuggets of History* we published the first part of *Hononegah – A New Biography*. This covered some background about her family and her early life, her meeting and marriage to Stephen Mack and the founding of Pecatonic. It also provided some information about her children. Part II is a continuation of this story. It covers some additional information about Pecatonic and its early residents as well as information about Hononegah's adult life, her death and her place in history.

THE RESIDENTS OF PECATONIC

Oliver Amelle met Stephen Mack in 1822, and they were long time friends. From 1822 until about 1844 the two lived near or within the general vicinity of one another. There is some circumstantial evidence that suggests that Amelle was living in Rockton as early as 1825. This would make him the first permanent white resident of Winnebago County, and therefore the claim that Stephen Mack was the first permanent resident here may need to be reevaluated.

Amelle was born in Canada in 1798 and came to the region around 1820. His wife was a Winnebago named E-nou-kah (called Elizabeth), and they had a family of eight children. Amelle is first noted in August of 1829 while living "near Beloit". He was traveling through the Four Lakes Country when he spotted a horse stolen by the Indians from Major Deviese and contacted the owner as to its whereabouts. Amelle was residing in Illinois in 1831, but in October of 1832 he was encamped on Lake Monona where the capitol building now stands selling bad whisky to the five hundred or so natives encamped around his establishment. He did his trading business from a rude hut, and was believed to be Madison's first businessman, causing a local historian to disparagingly remark that Madison's first business was a grog shop. From 1834 to 1835 he is back in Illinois. By July 4, 1837 he was back in Wisconsin living on the west shore of Lake Waubesa. He remained there until the summer of 1839 when he removed to Pecatonic.

The Amelle's were never lot owners. Their cabin was on a lot owned by Joe Pelkie. In the *History of Rockton*, Oliver Amelle is known only as Mr. Hemel. By the terms of the 1829 treaty Amelle bought the rights to claim section 27 in Rockton Township. Edson Carr relates the amusing story of how Amelle tried to induce Sylvester Stevens to marry his daughter by offering him the section of land. We now know that the daughter was named Catherine. She was twenty-five years old in 1850 and still hadn't married.

Henry N. Bates was born at East Granville, Massachusetts July 5, 1803. He married on April 16, 1826 to Mary Lillie who was born in Damascus, Pennsylvania July 28, 1809. They had three children. They arrived at Pecatonic in 1840 or perhaps the year previous.

Stephen Mack was intrigued by a story about a settler who lived in a rude cabin that caught fire claiming the man's only boots. The man had to walk ninety miles barefoot to Chicago to have new boots made. Mack wanted a boot maker to reside in his new community, so as an inducement he sold to Bates a lot for only fifty dollars. Bates built a nice frame house there and a building, where he made boots and repaired harnesses.

The Bates's did not survive Pecatonic's decline. Henry died March 6, 1851. Mary died January 28, 1862. They were originally buried at Pecatonic, but when the farmer who succeeded Mack on his property announced his intentions to plow over the graves, their son Erastus Bates had the bodies exhumed and moved to the Rockton cemetery where a marker for Henry Bates still remains.

Jesse Blinn was born in Bennington, Vermont on August 9, 1809. He married at Columbus, Ohio March 16, 1835 to Aurilla Simons, who was born in New Hampshire in 1814. They had seven children. The Blinn's had resided in Toledo, Ohio before arriving at Pecatonic in May or June of

1838, where they succeeded Eli and Sophronia Hayes in their tavern house. Blinn succeeded William Hulin in the operation of the ferry across the river and was to continue there until Mack completed his bridge in 1842 or 1843. Jesse Blinn was also a Justice of the Peace for many years. Blinn was regarded as an accomplished wagon maker. He made wagons while operating the ferry, and after Mack's bridge was completed, he moved from Pecatonic to Thayer's subdivision on the south bank of the river where he continued his trade.

In 1851, the Blinn family moved to Rockford. Jesse Blinn died there August 29, 1879. Aurilla died there May 30, 1905. They are buried at Greenwood Cemetery. Their descendants continued in Rockford.

Charles Challifoux (pronounced Shellefous) was born in Canada in 1805. He was married firstly to a Winnebago woman named Margaret by whom he had a son born in 1834, but her bad personal habits were more than he could bear, so he separated from her. In about the year 1836 he married another Winnebago woman named We-hun-ka by whom he had five children.

Challifoux was a hunter and fisherman who had come to the Four Lakes Country prior to 1834. The first mention of him is by John T. de la Ronde who celebrated the Fourth of July in 1836 with Challifoux, along with Oliver Amelle, Joe Pelkie and a number of others. In June of 1840 Challifoux purchased a lot in Pecatonic, which was located near where the first green on the golf course currently sits. He sold back the lot to Mack in April of 1844. The Challifoux family withdrew to Iowa with the Winnebago, following them to Minnesota and then to Nebraska. In the 1870's when the *metis* families were given a choice to become white or Indian, the Challifoux family chose to become white.

Daniel Fairchild was born in Fabius, New York in 1810. In 1841 he married Maria Denison, who was born in New York May 24, 1819. They had two sons Denison and Daniel, Jr.

Daniel Fairchild and his brother Burke Fairchild went first to Mineral Point, Wisconsin. Daniel was present at Pecatonic in 1836 and voted in the county's first election in that year. He lived in a house south of the Mack home, which is now on the golf course. He died September 22, 1847 of congestion of the lungs while living on the Fleming farm in Owen Township. He is buried at Rockton, where his grave has only recently been marked. His son Daniel, Jr. married Diema Springer and had eight children. A number of their descendants have attended Hononegah High School.

Eli and Sophronia Hayes came to Pecatonic from Indiana. They moved into a double log house built by Mack, and because the couple showed a willingness to entertain travelers, the established became known as Hayes's Tavern. They numbered among the fourteen original members of the Congregational church. In 1838 Jesse Blinn moved into the house which the Hayes's had occupied. Sophronia Hayes died March 24, 1839, and her husband soon moved away.

William Hulin was born in Salem, Massachusetts in October of 1808. He was operating Mack's ferry in 1837, and it is said he was living in the Mack home. He later went to live with Jesse Blinn who succeeded Hulin as ferry operator.

Hulin took an early interest in county government. He was county commissioner from 1841 to 1844, and perhaps at this time he had moved to Rockford, though he continued to own land in Rockton Township. He was appointed the county's first clerk in 1843, and he was county recorder in 1849.

David Jewett was born at Warsaw, New York August 24, 1811. He married firstly in Janesville June 15, 1846 to Louisa R. Mosher who died in Harrison May 9, 1847. Jewett married secondly at Harrison October 5, 1853 to Maria A. Reckhow, by whom he had four children.

David Jewett was part owner in a sawmill in Rockton as early as 1837. He subsequently built a house at Pecatonic, but his stay there was very brief. Jewett was the founder of Harrison and platted the village in 1838 choosing to remain in that locale. He died April 15, 1883. He and both wives are buried at Harrison. Of his four children, only his son Fred Jewett had descendants who continued in this area.

Hiram Wheeler Leffingwell was born at Norwich Hill, Massachusetts May 3, 1809. He married firstly on April 21, 1833 to Laura Simons who a sister of Aurilla Simons, wife of Jesse Blinn. The only surviving child from this marriage, a son, resided in Milwaukee. They were present in

Pecatonic as early as 1838. Shortly after 1840 they removed to a farm in southern Rockton Township. They later removed to St. Louis where they resided for many years. Hiram died in Ellenton, Florida August 28, 1897.

John Lovesee was born in Reading, Berkshire, England on February 1, 1815. At the age of eleven years he learned the weaving trade. On September 13, 1831 he sailed for America and settled in Pittsford, Monroe County, New York. In 1835 he walked from Detroit to Winnebago County carrying his shoes most of the way to save them from wearing out. On arriving at Pecatonic he boarded with Stephen Mack for a time. He worked for Caleb Blodgett, and built the first house in Beloit. Later Lovesee and Robert P. Cross took possession of Mack's old trading post at Bird's Grove.

John Lovesee married on June 20, 1840 to Pamela McCrady who was born at Niagara Falls, Canada April 29, 1821. They resided in Roscoe and have four children. John Lovesee was the first of his family to immigrate to America. Soon afterward, he was followed by his parents and remaining siblings. John died in Roscoe October 22, 1894. Pamela died there February 9, 1901. They are buried at Roscoe. Many members of the Lovesee family have attended Hononegah High School.

Merrill Elmaren Mack was born at Gilsun, New Hampshire September 14, 1812 and was a cousin of Stephen Mack. He married on September 21, 1841 to Vienna Dart, who was born at Middle Haddam, Connecticut April 4, 1817. It is not known when Merrill Mack came to Pecatonic, only that he became Stephen Mack's business partner. He lived in a fine house similar to the Mack home that was situated near where the golf course clubhouse now sits. The house burned to the ground in 1851.

Merrill Mack died March 25, 1844. In a letter to his sister Lovicy Cooper dated August 26, 1847, Stephen Mack indicated that Merrill Mack's estate proved insolvent, and Mack lost from \$4,000 to \$5,000, leaving him with "old goods or other worthless trash." Stephen Mack was forced to give up his trade, and for the last three years of his life he operated some farms.

Merrill and Vienna Mack had a daughter Virginia who married George Ross. Their descendants continued in the Chicago area. Vienna married secondly to William Hulin. She and her husbands are buried at Greenwood Cemetery.

Joe Pelkie was the familiar name of a man who is always recorded in legal documents as John Pelkie. He was born in Michigan in 1805. He came to the Four Lakes Country in 1829. There seems to be two families for him. His second wife was We-un-kah, niece of Wild Geese, a principle chief of the Winnebago, by whom he had three children. Edson Carr's *History of Rockton* mentions a man named Pelkey "who lived with a squaw wife. He was an educated man of fine appearance, and could speak five different Indian languages." Carr's informant must have memories about a different man other than the Joe Pelkie of this sketch. While living in Madison he was once summoned as a juryman in Judge Irvin's court, but after appearing the judge exclaimed: "*Go home, you dirty Frenchman, and wash yourself, and put on some clean clothes, and then come back and take the oath.*" Court adjourned to give Pelkie time to obey the order. Pelkie and another Frenchman whose identity has now been forgotten built the first house in Madison.

Pelkie was a hunter and fisherman. He remained in the Madison area thru 1839, but in 1840 he was residing at Pecatonic where he bought a lot. In May of 1911, a column entitled 'Being a Boy in Old Rockford No.82' was published in the Rockford paper and relates the following story; "One of the memories of this time that stands out in broad relief upon the minds of the children of this neighborhood is the serious illness of the trader 'Pelkie' and the Indian incantations by which the red men strove to restore him to health. Attracted by the unusual commotion, the children gathered about the windows of the Pelkie house and looking in saw the trader ill unto death, lying upon a couch of skins in a farther corner. A bright fire burned on the hearth, and before it lay the body of a mongrel dog, killed as a sacrifice, the body decorated with gaudy ribbons. All about the room Indians were squatted mute as statues, their blankets drawn well upon their faces, and before them danced the medicine man in all of the splendor of his hideous official trappings."

"Someone informed Mr. Blinn of the condition of affairs at his neighbor's home, and he dropped in to see if he could be of any service. One by one the dusky watchers disappeared at his

approach, gliding away as noiselessly as mists before the sun. Mr. Blinn took in the situation at a glance, and returning to his home said to his wife, '*Rill, that man is dying of starvation.*'"

"His wife, with her excellent judgment, thought that that was a complaint easily remedied and prepared one of her attractive chicken curries in the shortest possible time possible, and with this her husband returned to the sickroom. He fed the sufferer carefully just a little at a time, until he restored a little of his strength; and the event proved excellent of his diagnosis of the case. Pelkie recovered and to the end maintained that Mrs. Blinn saved his life by her cooking."

Some four years later the Pelkie family withdrew to Iowa with the Winnebago. When the choice was given to the *metis* families whether to become white or Indian, the Pelkie's chose to become white.

William Shores and his wife Anna came to Pecatonic from Pennsylvania, the exact time of their arrival has not survived. In August of 1842 Shores built a house across from Whitman's trading post. They are not in the 1850 census. On May 6, 1852 William Shores married Esther Mureton, and nothing more is seen of him.

Aaron Shores was the son of William and Anna Shores, born in Ontario County, New York June 2, 1806. He married Jane Ann Horton who was born in Bradford County, Pennsylvania in 1810. They had five children. Aaron and his two sons were carpenters. Jane died at Rockton September 28, 1873. Her gravestone in the Rockton cemetery is in very poor condition. Aaron died September 23, 1893. His grave is unmarked. Many of their descendants have attended Hononegah High School.

Sylvester Stevens was born in England in 1820 and immigrated to Ohio with his parents. He was operating a cabinet shop in Pecatonic in 1838. Stevens purchased the house built by William Shores, which was across from the Whitman trading post (other contend that Stephen Mack built the house ca 1839). The downstairs was used as his residence and workshop, while the upstairs served as Rockton's first classroom. Stevens had the house dismantled and moved across the river ice in 1853 and reassembled at 305 West Franklin Street where it presently stands. Stevens married November 11, 1851 to Louisa, daughter of Aaron Shores. They had six children. Sylvester died at Rockton November 27, 1892. Louisa died there June 27, 1920. They are buried at Rockton in unmarked graves. Many of their descendants have attended Hononegah High School.

William Whitman was responsible for building the Whitman trading post, one of the two buildings that still survive at the Macktown Forest Preserve. However we know very little about Whitman himself. He was born in Connecticut in 1785. He built his original trading post out of logs in 1841. In the meantime the Whitman's resided at Hayes's Tavern until the stone trading post was completed in 1846. Afterwards, the Whitman's lived in the older log trading post. The stone trading post is a unique structure to our area, and many are unaware that it was only utilized for a brief time. When Edson Carr wrote his 1898 history about Rockton, Carr described the old trading post as being in ruins.

The first wife of William Whitman was named Bede. She died April 19, 1847, aged 60 years. She is buried at Rockton where her grave is marked. By 1850, Whitman is married to a woman named Clarissa who was born in Connecticut in 1805. They are not seen again. There are some unmarked graves next to Bede Whitman's grave, and perhaps William Whitman is buried in one of them.

HONONEGAH: HER PERSONALITY, CHARACTER AND TALENTS

Every person is a product of the culture that they were raised in and no study of Hononegah would be complete without an understanding about the role of women in Winnebago culture. The Winnebago did not hold the work of women in high regards. Winnebago women were expected to perform the most menial tasks, and their lives were lives of back-breaking drudgery. This compiler once met a Winnebago woman who was understandably very conscious of her background. She spent all her undergraduate years at college sifting through all the books and studies that she could, searching for something that could make her feel proud to be a Winnebago woman. The contact with the white man proved to be a liberating experience for Winnebago women. Their gadgets and simple

technologies helped to make the life of a Winnebago woman easier. We no longer can know when Hononegah saw her first white woman. We also do not know how hard her life was before she met Stephen Mack. Was her attraction to Mack the infatuation of a teenaged girl, or did she see Mack as a deliverance from a possible life of hard labor?

As the Rockton area filled with settlers and the white man's laws grew in prevalence, Mack had become a wealthy man. He was not legally married to Hononegah, and he began to worry that if he should die, his children might be considered illegitimate and that they might not be allowed to inherit his estate. So on September 14, 1840 Stephen Mack and Hononegah were married by William Hulin, Justice of the Peace. Their marriage is of public record, and Hononegah is called Nancy Hounegok. Did the early residents know Hononegah as Nancy, or was this Mack's idea to attempt to create a legal identity for her?

Hononegah, the caregiver and hostess

Francis Leveque knew the Mack family for ten or eleven years, and for a time he lived with them. In an affidavit dated July 26, 1839 on behalf of Stephen Mack's claim for re-compensation in the 1837 treaty he states: "Mack's wife is of $\frac{3}{4}$ or full Winnebago blood, by whom he has five children all lively and intelligent children, that said Mack has ever since his marriage and does still live with her as man and wife and deponent has every reason to believe they will ever continue as such – Deponent has known of two instances when the relatives of Mrs. Mack have sickened and died at said Mack's house, in which cases all possible care and attention was rendered them...Mack's house was always a great resort for the Indians and that it was seldom or never free from them, that they were always treated with great kindness and it would be impossible to calculate the amount of provisions, tobacco, ammunition and etc. that he was constantly furnishing them for which he made no charge whatsoever he never expecting any re-numeration unless it were in the shape of a donation from the tribe to his wife and children..."

From Edson Carr's *History of Rockton*: "[Mack's] Indian wife was a very faithful and devoted woman. She was largely absorbed in the care of her home and children, save when sickness of the early settlers called for her kind and skillful care and attention. With her supply of nature's remedies which the Great Spirit had so kindly spread out all around her, she would seek out the afflicted and bring sunshine and relief to many a suffering one who fell prey to the ills of a new country. The high tribute of respect to Mack's Indian wife was genuine and sincere, and although of a dusky hue, she possessed a noble soul and did all she could to make those around her comfortable and happy."

The following quote comes from an undated affidavit by the Reverend William M. Adams on behalf of Stephen Mack's claim for re-compensation in the 1837 treaty. "His family is interesting. His wife, who is an Indian woman, and of the Winnebago nation (it is said) appears like an amiable person; and the children are sprightly."

From an article written by Laura (Blinn) Holland and published August 23, 1924 in the *Rockford Morning Star*: "Everyone kept open house. A young niece of Hiram Bellows came from Ohio to live with her relatives. One night the Bellows home had more applicants for lodging than beds, so the young niece Martha Bellows (in later life Mrs. Reuben Alworth), went to Mack's to sleep with one of the numerous children.

"A lively shower in the night made some of the Indians seek shelter, as they quietly entered Mack's house and stretched themselves out on the floor of the big kitchen..."

"The little Ohio Girl rose early, dressed and started for 'Uncle Hi's'. Ah! An obstruction! Her route was blocked by sleeping Indians.

"She heard a slight sound and looking toward the bedroom, beheld Mack and Hononegah sitting up in bed, enjoying a good laugh over the situation.

"What's the trouble, Martha?"

"Why, why! I – I can't get out."

"Go right along," said Mack. "Step right over them. They won't wake up."

Hononegah, the seamstress and clothing designer

The women who knew Hononegah all mention her interest in decorating her clothing. Mrs. Jesse Blinn relates the following, cited in *The History of Rockton*; "She was very skillful in ornamenting her clothing. She made herself for extra occasions an Indian dress of fine blue broadcloth, with a border five inches deep all around it, worked with various colored ribbons; her taste in blending colors to have a pleasing effect was very fine, and her needle work almost perfect. Many articles about her home bore witness of her skillful handiwork. Being a Pottawatomie, she, like her tribe, felt above the Winnebago's in skill, and showed much ability in fashioning many articles of merchandise." Mrs. Blinn can be excused for not knowing that Hononegah was a Winnebago.

Laura (Blinn) Holland, daughter of Jesse and Aurilla Blinn published an account of her childhood in the August 23, 1924 edition of the *Rockford Morning Star*: "Hononegah was living in the finest house west of Chicago, yet she clung to her Indian dress. The neighbors made a dress for her such as the white women wore. Mrs. Mack showed her appreciation in her own peculiar way. Donning the dress, she peered cautiously around, hoping there were no watchers; then ran to her husband's store. Staying there a short time, she took the second look about and ran swiftly home. The white woman's dress was never worn again. It must be admitted, however, that there were times and occasions when Mrs. Mack out dressed her neighbors. My mother frequently described a dress, which Hononegah wore on great occasions.

"The material was a fine quality of red and blue broadcloth. The short skirt was of blue with a border five inches deep of many colored ribbons, the colors used with artistic effect. And it was so skillfully sewed in various patterns that the trimming seemed woven with the broadcloth. The red broadcloth was draped Indian fashion over the shoulders."

THE DEATH OF HONONEGAH

Hononegah died September 8, 1847. A notice of her death was published in the September 22 edition of the *Rockford Forum*. In a letter to his sister Lovicy Cooper dated October 6, 1847, Stephen Mack describes Hononegah's final illness and expresses a deep and heart felt tribute to her: "I have the melancholy duty to inform you that the death published in the paper I sent you was that of my wife. Her health had been failing for several months but was not so as to prevent her from taking the ordinary care of her family until she was attacked by what the doctor called a bilious fever but what I called a lung fever – of this she was sick eight or nine days and died. She was sensible to the last moment and took leave of her children and friends a few hours before she died.

"You say that by the notice in the paper you perceive she died a Christian.

"If I know what a Christian is, she *was* one, not by profession but by her every act, her every deed proclaimed her a follower of Christ. In her the hungry and the naked have lost a benefactor, the sick a nurse and I have lost a friend who taught me to reverence God by doing good to his creatures.

"Her funeral proved that I am not the only sufferer by her loss. My house is large, but it was filled to overflowing by mourning friends who assembled to pay the last sad duties to her who had set them the example how to live and how to die.

"She is gone where in God's mercy I shall meet her soon..."

Years later William C. Blinn related that after Hononegah's funeral, "a little knot of neighbors were speaking of the loss. George Stevens, the postmaster, one of the parties, said most impressively, 'The best woman in Winnebago County died last night', the neighbors all nodding in agreement."

Hononegah was a woman for her time, and what a brief span of time it was! At the time of her birth the world of the red man prevailed with only an occasional white adventurer who ventured forth into that world. By the time of her death the red man was gone and was replaced by the white man and the white man's institutions. Somewhere in the middle was Hononegah's world where two dissimilar cultures coexisted in peace and harmony, both benefiting from their mutual contact.

Hononegah successfully navigated both cultures and reveled in that experience, and when it was over, it was almost as if she then withered away and died. Hononegah was remarkable woman. How could she not have been, for in her brief life of thirty-three years she left such an indelible impression on her generation that for many years to follow, her life would continue to be a source of discussion, and her character held in the same high esteem which was earned by her husband. The Rockton of the Talcott's would prevail with its staid New England ethic, but the Talcott's contributions to the building of Rockton could not cause Hononegah's flame to be extinguished. She has endeared herself to us as no one else has. Hononegah is gone, but she still has so much to teach us.

MUSICAL GRAVES

The relationships between Stephen Mack and William Talcott and his sons were always strained. There is a clue in Talcott's letters, which may explain the origin of the rift between the two men. When Mack and his investors began selling lots at Pecatonic, William Talcott was offered a partnership. He found the terms offered to him so unsatisfactory that perhaps words between himself and Mack were exchanged. It is often said that Mack refused to have anything to do with Talcott's settlement north of the river, but this is not accurate. Mack bough a lot or two from Darius Adams and Charles Fox, but he would never buy lots from William Talcott.

The land where the Rockton cemetery was located was land owned by one of the Talcott's and donated for that purpose. Mack refused to have his family members buried there, and instead, he had them buried in a family cemetery located where the first tee of the golf course is today. In 1948 a bronze plaque attached to a boulder was placed at the first tee to mark the location of the old cemetery. Later the marker was removed and relocated north of the clubhouse near the parking lot.

Mack survived his beloved Hononegah by only a few years. We do know from his letters to his sister that his health had declined by the time the estate of his cousin Merrill Mack was resolved which forced him out of merchandising and into farming. By that time he was not well enough to operate his farms by himself, and he had hired someone to operate the farms for him. During the 1846-1847 legislative term, Sylvester Talcott succeeded to have the settlement renamed Rockton, a name that he himself had suggested. Mack would not see his Pecatonic, the name for his community survive. On February 24, 1848, Stephen Mack married the widow Mrs. Isabella Daniels. In a letter to his sister dated March 10, 1848, he explains: "I will now say that I have entered into this marriage solely with the view to the benefit of my children. There is a vacancy in my family, which hired help could not fill. My children wanted a counselor, a guide, a mother. My duty to them required that in providing one I should consult their good in preference to my own fancy, and I believe I have conscientiously discharged this duty." In May of 1849 Mrs. Daniels deserted Mack and his children (she did not poison Mack, as it has been charged in the past). On April 2, 1850 Mack ran against Sylvester Talcott for Rockton's first township supervisor and narrowly lost the election. Only eight days later, on April 10, Mack died suddenly after a brief illness. A long tribute to his life was published in the April 24, 1850 issue of the *Rockford Forum*.

Sylvester Smith eventually became the owner of Mack's estate. By 1880 the grounds of the old cemetery was in such poor condition that Smith announced that he was plowing under the graves, and in the case anyone was interested in removing the remains, they had better do it immediately. Some of Mack's friends decided to remove the remains of Mack and Hononegah. The persons involved in the move left records of the event, which have survived through their descendants. Burns Jewett did the digging, which was observed by a number of people including his father John R. Jewett, Richard Comstock and William Halley. Mack was identified by a missing tooth in the upper jaw next to the eye tooth, where his friends indicated that he carried his pipe. A silver comb that Hononegah kept in her hair was still present. The remains were reburied at Phillips Cemetery. J. R. Jewett, Richard Comstock and S. M. Church erected new markers for their graves.

In May of 1964 Ronald Pennock and the county board of supervisors of the forest preserve executive committee announced their intentions to exhume the remains of Stephen Mack and Hononegah from Phillips Cemetery and to rebury them in a fenced enclosure at Macktown Forest Preserve near the old Mack home. The reasons cited for this move were that the present location of their remains were in an isolated cemetery subject to vandalism and the other destructive elements of time, and that the move would provide a more suitable and dignified place of burial for the county's honored founding father. They had obtained permission from one of the Mack descendants for the move, and they planned to have the remains moved the following June. Almost immediately a resistance movement formed to oppose the move. Some of the members were descendants of the persons who had been responsible for the removal of the remains to Phillips in 1880. The movement collapsed by the end of June when the persons involved realized that the weight of the law was totally on their opponent's side. The board waited a year to allow things to cool off, and then without any prior announcement in the dead of night of July 23, 1965, workmen, employees of Willwood Burial Park descended on the cemetery and removed the remains of Hononegah and Mack. Many expressed their disapproval, complaining that no announcement of the move had been forthcoming, and many were further put off to it when the June 24, 1980 issue of the *Rockford Register Star* published a photo of Hononegah's and Mack's skulls in front of a tombstone.

The old stones for Mack and Hononegah still remain at Phillips. In 1967 new markers were provided for their present graves.

HONONEGAH HIGH SCHOOL

Prior to 1919, Rockton's only schoolhouse was a two-story frame structure where the old brick grade school is now located. Grade school classes were held on the first floor while high school classes were conducted on the second floor. In 1919 Rockton High School was renamed Hononegah High School, and it was announced that a new high school building would be built. Bids were taken for the construction of the new building, but the bids were unsatisfactory. Six months later bidding was reopened, and this time the job was awarded to Ross Beckstrom of Rockford. Construction began on the building in 1921, and the new building was dedicated February 12, 1923. In attendance was the daughter of Hononegah, Mrs. Caroline Newberry of Pontiac, Michigan, her son Almond Mack Newberry, and her daughter Edith and husband James N. Mackin of Sidney, Australia, whom by chance were in this country when the invitation was received. After the dedication the descendants of Hononegah would have no further connection to the school until 2000 when Ryan Kelly enrolled at the school.

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