

## The Story of the BURLEIGH TOWNSHIP HALL: One Century Young

By Lugene Daniels

Burleigh Township of Iosco County was legally separated from Alabaster Township and organized by an Act of the Michigan Legislature on May 1, 1877. The first township meetings and elections were held at the homes of the various leaders in this sparsely-populated, rural community.

For nearly 31 years, the Burleigh Township Board continued to meet in various locations, most commonly one of the four schools within the township.

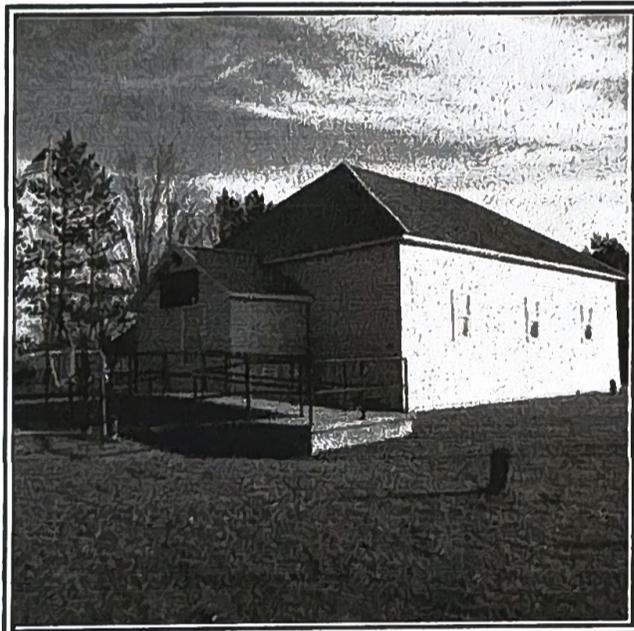
Finally, and most likely long overdue, at the April 6, 1908 township board meeting, John SLOAT moved to take \$50 from the contingent fund of the township to purchase a site to build a hall in the center of the township. This motion was supported by Joel P COLVIN, and eventually carried and approved by the board at the time. Peter J HOTTOIS was the Burleigh Township supervisor and Irving BEARDSLEE served as the township clerk.

Obviously, not much happened for the next year. At the February 4, 1909 meeting of the Burleigh Township board, the question of buying the site for the township hall was raised and discussed and laid over until the next meeting. That next meeting was held on March 23, 1909, and once again the question of the purchase site for the hall was laid over. HOTTOIS and BEARDSLEE continued in the same positions as the previous year.

The election of April 1909 produced some new township officials, and at the April 5 meeting of that year, under the direction of a new supervisor, John G LAIL, and new clerks, Court H BEARDSLEE and Mike O'FARRELL, the future of the township hall seemed more likely. At this same meeting, Sam NICHOLS moved, Ben ELLSWORTH supported,

that the township buy one acre of land for a hall. The motion passed.

At that same meeting, Ben ELLSWORTH moved that the township buy a site for the hall from Adam DOERR on the southwest corner of Section 15; supported by James E BARLOW. The motion passed. In keeping the momentum, Byron LOMASON moved and Charles FENTON supported that the township raise \$1,000 for the purpose of a hall; which was amended by Ed WILSON, supported by Alex HURFORD, to raise \$500. The amendment lost: ayes 19, nays 30. Then, that same motion was moved and supported with an amendment to raise \$200 for a hall. Likewise, that amendment lost: ayes 21, nays 25. Eventually the original motion was voted on and not passed: ayes 5, nays 50.



For another two years, Burleigh Township struggled to find the funds and site for a hall. It was not until the meeting of April 3, 1911 that the building of a township hall was once again discussed. While Irving BEARDSLEE served as township supervisor and Ernest BELLEN was the township clerk, BELLEN moved to raise \$1200 for building the township hall. George HUNT moved, Fred MILLS supported, to lay this motion on the table. The motion lost.

Then, finally, under a motion made by Ed WILSON, and supported by Angus DUNHAM, the previous motion was amended to raise \$800 for the building of a township hall. With triumph, this motion passed, and Burleigh Township was finally on the way to securing a building site and erecting a hall for township business and activities. At this same meeting, John SLOAT moved to appoint a building committee of five members. Those appointed were: Fred MILLS, John SLOAT, Joel P COLVIN, N P ST JAMES, and Angus DUNHAM.

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At the meeting of the following month (May 5, 1911), a motion was approved that the township clerk (Richard FUERST) be instructed to draw \$750 at the Iosco County Bank in Whittemore for the town hall fund.

Assuredly, Burleigh Township finally had its hall. The first meeting at the Burleigh Township Hall was held after the annual election on April 1, 1912. The meeting was held at 1:00 pm.

The first general election to be held at the Burleigh Township Hall was on November 5, 1912. George H WERELEY and Irving BEARDSLEE served as polling clerks and William STAPLETON and Joseph CAVERLY were the gatekeepers. The polls were open from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, and closed during the one-hour lunch break at noon.

Unfortunately, the saga of the Burleigh Township Hall continued. Printed in the Tawas Herald dated April 4, 1913 was this statement: "The Burleigh town hall was destroyed by the big wind of the 21<sup>st</sup> of last month."

At the next meeting of the township board, on April 7, 1913, it was moved and supported that \$1,000 be raised to repair the township hall. This motion lost. Instead, a motion was passed to raise \$500 to repair the hall. At this time Peter J HOTTOIS was the supervisor and Richard FUERST was the township clerk.

Obviously, the damage to the hall was beyond repair, because at a meeting held on April 28, 1913, a motion was entertained to draw up plans for a new hall. That motion passed. And, under new leadership, Burleigh Township was on its way to building another new hall.

With Irving BEARDSLEE as supervisor and Theo BELLVILLE as clerk, several motions relative to the hall were approved. The old cement blocks from the wind-struck hall would be sold for six cents each to anyone who wanted to buy them. A motion was approved to accept the bid of \$15.25 from Eli BARNUM for tearing

down the old hall building, cleaning up the site for the new building, and pulling all nails. A new building committee was appointed: John SLOAT, Joel P COLVIN, and Fred MILLS. These men had all served on the building committee of the first hall. However, these three men submitted a written resignation from the committee on this very day. It was also moved, supported, and carried that the town clerk post notice of building a new hall and that the same clerk collect all money from sale of blocks and turn that money over to the township treasurer for the hall fund.

The minutes of the next meeting, held on May 9, 1913, disclosed why the three-man building committee had resigned. The two bids for the new town hall were opened. Fred MILLS had the winning bid of \$195.00. Alex MILLS had also submitted a bid, that being for \$190.00. The board moved, supported, and approved the bid of Fred MILLS. An additional stipulation was made on the building of the new hall—the hall project had to be completed by July 1.

On June 4, 1913, the board awarded Fred MILLS \$150 for the hall construction completed thus far at this point.

The first meeting that was held at the rebuilt Burleigh Township Hall was held there on July 2, 1913. At that same meeting, the board moved, supported, and paid the balance to Fred MILLS for building the township hall.

Located at the south end of Putnam Road, that rebuilt Burleigh Township Hall is the same building where township officials continue to meet. Township meetings, elections, and township business is conducted from this hall. The building is also a popular hall for graduation parties, showers, family reunions, and other social activities. Hopefully, it will withstand the tests of time and serve the Burleigh Township community for another one hundred years.