

Title: TAH-QUA-KIK – SKUNK HILL – POWER’S BLUFF PAPERS

Inclusive Dates: 1763, 1774, 1937, 1989, 1992-1993, 1997-1998, 2000-2003

Call Number: Collection 46 (Letter, Envelope on Letter Shelf)

Quantity: 2 archives boxes & 1 oversize package

Donor: Edith Nash

See also: for an overview of the history of Skunk Hill read *Tah-qua-kik: Continuity and Change at the Community on a Hill* by Robert A. Birmingham at the Wisconsin Historical Society’s website:

<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/archaeology/communities/tah-qua-kik.pdf>

Abstract:

The Ho-Chuck people named this rocky hill in Wood County, Wisconsin Tah-qua-kik (Skunk Hill). Members of the Ho-Chuck Nation lived on or near this area; portions of the hill also served as the community’s ceremonial site and the burial ground of their families and friends. Other Native Americans also lived at Tah-qua-kik, including the Prairie Band Potawatomi, Ojibwa and Menominee. Native Americans residing here were probably displaced by logging and other economic activities of white settlers during the 1880s and 1890s. In 1905, after the area was logged, Native Americans resettled the area.

According to Robert A. Birmingham, who served as the Wisconsin Historical Society’s State Archaeologist for fifteen years and assisted with research at Skunk Hill, Wood County acquired Power’s Bluff and the remnants of the Skunk Hill Community in 1936 to create a park, which was named Power’s Bluff County Park. Development included ski and toboggan runs on the north slope, park shelter, garage, firewood shelter, roadways, parking lot, transmission tower, walking and cross-country ski trails, and playground. Birmingham’s research also noted there was some blasting of the rock formations, including what is known as the Spirit Chair. Despite these modifications to the landscape, much of the southern part of the park is undisturbed and consists mainly of wooded areas.

As early as 1998, Caroline Perkins, a graduate student in the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point’s College of Natural Resources, recognized the conflict between park users who were interested in preserving the park’s cultural and natural sites, and those who wanted to further develop the park’s recreational facilities. Her master thesis, *Understanding the Natural and Cultural Significance of Powers Bluff: Implications for Park Interpretation and Design*, offered recommendations for the redesign of the 160 acre park, which includes a seventy acre Scientific Preservation Area. Perkins proposed that a comprehensive plan should be developed that accommodated all users, while protecting the park’s natural and cultural resources to minimize user conflicts.

In December 1999, the conflict between the park’s diverse stakeholders erupted when the Wood County Board decided to expand the winter recreational facilities. Their plan included cutting a large number of trees. The conflict between those opposed to cutting the trees (some were Native American marker trees for burial sites) and the Wood County Board escalated over this issue. In July 2000, the logging proposal was terminated through the efforts of the Native American Action Committee and other concerned parties, including Descendants of Powers Bluff, Concerned Citizens for Power’s Bluff, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation representatives and Friends of Power’s Bluff. All of the parties involved in the negotiations formed an ad hoc committee called the Power’s Bluff Long-Range Planning Committee. The committee’s goal was to maintain existing and develop new day use areas, preserve and expand existing winter sports facilities; protect and preserve archeological and culturally significant sites; protect and preserve natural areas, and find additional funding for the park.

In March 2001, without prior notification to the park's other stakeholders by Wood County, logging took place in the park and several Native American burial marker trees were cut. This led to legal action by the Potawatomi Nation (Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation v. Wood County Park and Forestry Department, et. Al, Case No. 01-CV-117). The Potawatomi filed suit in Wisconsin State Court seeking a temporary restraining order (TRO) and injunction to stop Wood County from further desecration of burial sites. This led to negotiations between the county and concerned parties. It also led to the research that documents the park's archeological and natural resources.

Scope and Content of the Collection:

The period from 2000 – 2002 is the primary focus of the collection. It covers two major subjects: 1) the research done by those who opposed the cutting of the trees and wanted to preserve significant natural and cultural sites, including archeological, botanical and historical studies of the park, 2) materials that document the negotiations that took place from 2000– 2002 between the Board, and its agency the Wood County Parks and Forestry Department, and a number of groups that united in opposition to the development plan, including Descendants of Powers Bluff, Concerned Citizens For Power's Bluff, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation representatives and Friends of Power's Bluff. All of the parties involved in the negotiations that took place after the TRO and injunction were filed in April 2001 formed an ad hoc committee called the Power's Bluff Long-Range Planning Committee, which negotiated an agreement on park use and preservation.

Folder List

Box 1	Archeological Studies – Jeff Lindow, Robert Birmingham, Charles E. Brown, 1937, 2000; & undated
	Botanical Studies – Edith Nash, Carol Lamphear-Cook, Chad Kirschbaum, Karl Jensen, 2000-2002; & undated
	Clippings from newspapers and other publications, 1992; 2000
	Clippings from newspapers and other publications, 2001
	Clippings from newspapers and other publications, 2002
	Clippings from newspapers and other publications, 2003; & undated
	Correspondence, 2000
	Correspondence, 2001; & undated
	Correspondence, 2002
	Correspondence and Working Papers – Edith Nash, 2000-2001; & undated
	Histories – Skunk Hill, Potawatomi and Ho-Chunk Nations, 1998, 2000, 2002; & undated
	Legal – Circuit Court & Community Plan, 2001-2002; & undated
	National Registry of Historic Places Application, undated
	Newsletter – <i>Friends of Powers Bluff</i> , 2002-2003
	Publications and Studies – Miscellaneous, 2001-2002; & undated
Box 2	Publications and Studies – Perkins, Caroline, <i>Understanding the Natural and Cultural Significance of Powers Bluff: Implications for Park Interpretation and Design</i> , 1998, thesis, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, College of Natural Resources
	Publications and Studies – Stanislawski, Jennifer, <i>Wisconsin American Indian Cultural Resource Management and Historical Preservation</i> , 2000, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, History 399

	Wisconsin Statutes, Federal Legislation & British Proclamations, 1763, 1774, 1989, 1993, 1997; & undated
	Wood County Forestry Committee – Minutes, 2000-2003
1 oversize package	<i>Prairie Band Potawatomi News</i> , “Skunk Hill Report,” by Rey Kitchkummi, February 2002 User copy & preservation copy