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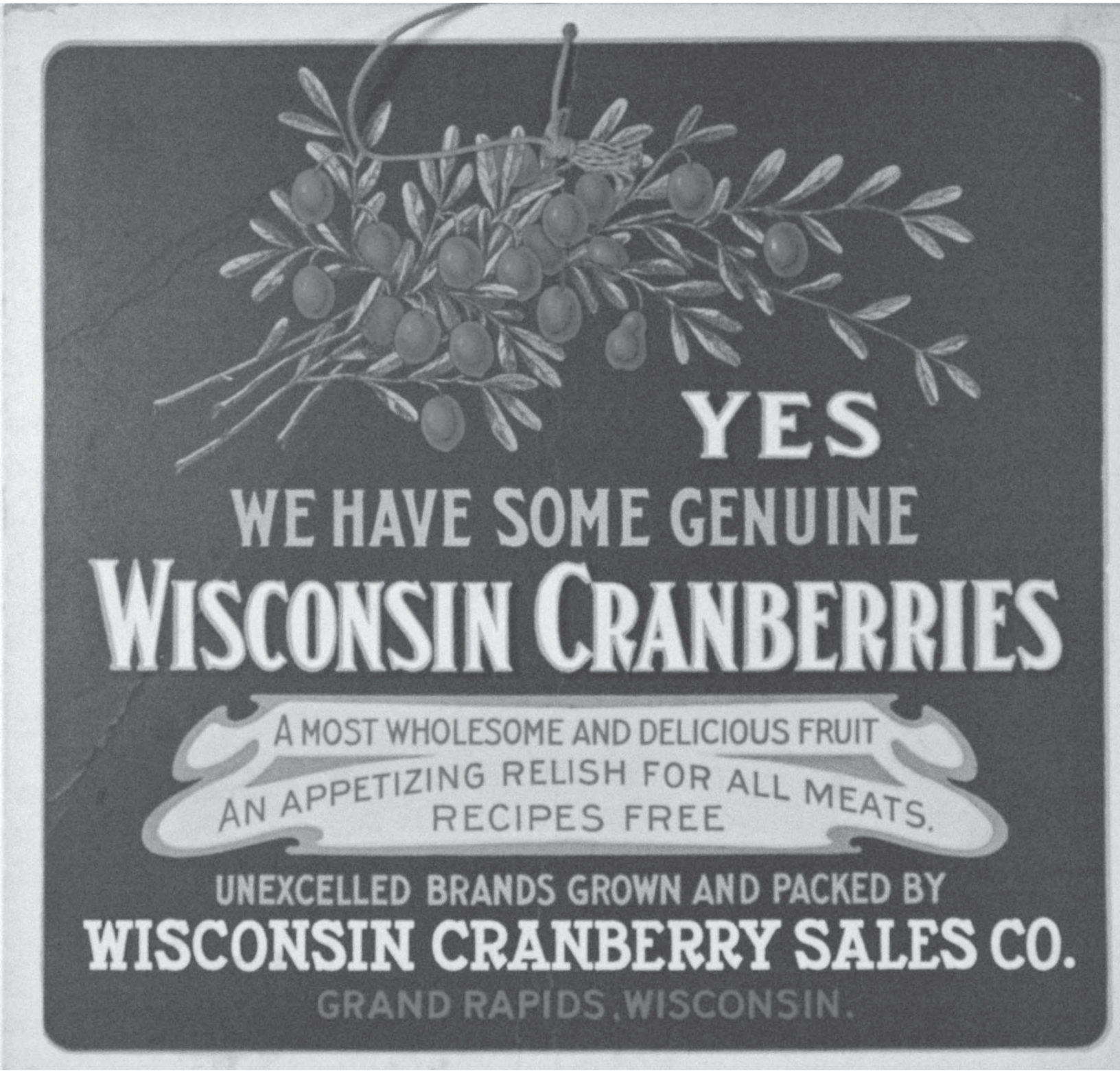
South Wood County Historical Corp.

Artifacts



Joan Haasl

A Long Time Ago

My father, Joe Staub, was an electrical engineer from the University of Illinois. His first job was with General Electric in Cottonwood Falls, Kansas. His next job brought him to central Wisconsin, supervising a crew installing high lines.

My dad had a devilish sense of humor. While working in Nekoosa, he saw my mother, Mary Christian, hanging wash on a clothes line. At this time, the Christian family was living in a small house next to the fire station and across from the Herrick House. Dad noticed that my mother's brother, Charlie, often went to the store for his mother, Annie Mans Christian. My mother said Charlie believed anything he was told. What my dad told Charlie was, "I'm going to cut your ears off."

Charlie was so scared he wouldn't go to the store, so my mother had to go, giving Dad a chance to talk to her. My mother said she didn't like this loud-mouth and refused his offer of a date.

Dad decided to stay in the area and worked a year for the Grand Rapids Electric Utility. This was in 1906. He also kept after my mother for a date. They married in February of 1908 and he opened his own business in May 1908 on the west side of Grand Rapids. He moved the business to the east side in 1911.

My mother worked in the store for many years and loved meeting people and being active in the business community. After my grandmother Staub came to live with them and then my brother and I came along, she no longer worked at the store and she wasn't happy about her new role in life. She would often say "I am NOT a housewife, I am a BUSINESS WOMAN!"

My parents didn't talk about their dating days. All my mother ever said was that she was staying with her Aunt Maggie Mans Chamberlain and Dad came to the house at 350 3rd Avenue South for their first date when her Aunt Mag said "he'll never make a good husband."

My mother's cousin, Eleanor "Toots" Chamberlain married Frank Walsh. She spent her entire life in the house her parents Maggie and Jim Chamberlain built. My mother said that, because her Uncle Jim ran a bar and was a drinker, the builder put the best materials in the 3rd Avenue house. He thought he would get the house back for himself. Instead, it never left the family until it left 3rd Avenue. The house was moved after Frank's death to 1st Street North to make way for the Wal-Mart parking lot, now Centralia Center's parking lot.

I remember the house as a beautiful home with lovely woodwork and pocket doors from the hall to the living room. I didn't like the kitchen after it was remodeled and became a General Electric kitchen. White metal cabinets gave it a hard industrial look. It just didn't fit with the homey atmosphere of the rest of the house, but Toots said she liked it because it was easy to work in.

Aunt Maggie was my grandmother Annie Mans Christian's sister. I never met her but my Uncle Neil said she had a hot temper. Widowed young, I have no idea how she kept the house and kept the family of five children fed and clothed. I know my mother stayed there when she went to the Wood County Normal School, graduating with the first class. The photo I have of the class was taken September 4, 1904. This family is full of mysteries I will never solve, mainly because I didn't ask questions when relatives were still alive to give me answers.

Joan Haasl

A Simpler Time

Recently, I read a book I really liked by M.J. Andersen, titled *Portable Prairie: Confessions of an Unsettled Mid Westerner*. The author grew up in a small town in South Dakota but it could be the same story in many mid-America states.

The small towns of those days had interesting downtowns. Historic old buildings, lovingly built, housed various businesses. Most main streets had a restaurant where people gathered to discuss the news of the day and each other. There was locally-owned everything: hardware store, drug store, gas station with full-service, doctor, dentist and lawyer, ready-to-wear shop, movie theatre. This was all before a giant sucking sound ruined downtowns and planted strip malls in fields on the edge of town. When we were kids, a big box was what a Christmas gift came in, not a huge Wal-Mart.

In the book I'm writing about, the author writes about a family with many kids and little money. These were simpler times when children used their imaginations and created games and fun times without spending money. Their only recreation was going downtown and watching the trains come and go.

After my dad died, I rarely got to go for a car ride. It was wartime and gas was rationed. I walked or rode my bike wherever I went. One day my friend Grace Berg's father asked me if I wanted to go for a ride. I sure did. So we all got in the car, Stuart, Loretta, Grace and me.

We went to the depot and watched the train come in and the train pull out. Stuart, a railroad man, checked the time on his railroad watch. We took another ride, but this was all the way to Adams. We watched the train come and go, and Stuart checked the time. So I learned the long and short of rides, but whichever it was, I was very happy just to be there.

Looking north from Pepin Street. (Mary Jean Romanski standing by Leonard's Packard car). On right, home of Howard Lathrope, Wood County Agent in the 1940s, and family. On left, that of Joseph and Anna Bissig, who owned a cranberry marsh at City Point. Far left, home of Fred Kruger and wife Caroline (Schnabel) Kruger. Fred Kruger's men's clothing shop, Kruger & Turbin Co., was at 140 E. Grand Ave., later Schnabel Men's Clothing.

Before the Mead

OUR OAK STREET NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE 1940s

By Marjorie Hamm

During yearly reunions with my sisters, after having lunch at the Mead Hotel, we spend time in the north side of the Mead parking lot, for a walk down memory lane. As scenes and memories from another era come flooding back, we can picture where our 470 Oak Street home was located, and once again we are transported back to the 1940 scenes of the Oak Street neighborhood.

In October 1937, my parents, Leonard and Jeanette Romanski, my three sisters, Jane, Betty, Mary Jean, and I, moved into the large two story home on the corner of Oak Street and Pepin Street. The home had been previously owned by Dr. Wm. Ruckel, an eye, ear, nose and throat doctor in Wisconsin Rapids.

My father decided to purchase the house from Dr. Ruckel's daughter, Ruth, after looking at rental homes and being told by the landlords that they didn't care to rent to families with children. My sisters, Sally and Susan, were born in 1939 and 1941 respectively.

The two-story home had a screened front porch and spacious yard, very much like the other homes that spanned the area between East Grand Avenue and Oak Street.

The block began on the corner of Fourth Street and East Grand Avenue with the home of Mrs. McDonald,

a kind, elderly lady. She was usually sitting on her front porch as I roller-skated by. A few years later, as I walked my two younger sisters in a wicker stroller, Mrs. McDonald came to the sidewalk and treated us to cookies.

Reverend Alpheus Triggs, with his wife and family, lived on the corner of Fourth Street, the house facing Oak Street. Rev. Triggs was minister of the Methodist Church, which was located directly across Oak Street from his home. When Rev. Triggs' son, Wayne, entered the military during World War II, a service star hung in the bay window of the home.

The next house going east on Oak Street belonged to Tom Taylor. Mr. Taylor was an insurance man but spent his free time photographing the Wisconsin Rapids area. His wonderful photographic collection is featured at McMillan Library and in Paul Gross' "The History of Wisconsin Rapids" videos. Tom enjoyed the company of his little terrier, who sat on a chair across from his master, at a table by the window.

When I used his double driveway to make my roller-skating turn-around to head back home, the little terrier jumped up and down and barked at me. One day, my mother received a phone call from Tom. He preferred that I keep off his driveway as I was making his little dog nervous.

There was an open field between the Taylor house and ours that reached from Oak Street to East Grand Avenue. According to a conversation with John Billings, a retired mailman, the paths that were worn through the field were from the postmen taking a short cut to return to the post office which was located in the 300 block of East Grand Avenue. We often saw the postmaster, Joe Wheir, also use the field as a shortcut to walk to his home which was on the corner of Eighth Street and Oak.

There were some summers that a traveling revival tent was set up in the open field. When the gospel meetings were held, we enjoyed hearing the beautiful religious songs in the quiet of the evening hours.

Romanski's backyard with Arthur Heger's garage in background. L. to R., Billy Brenner, Barbara LaMar, Susan Romanski, Billy Heger, Linda Brenner, Sally Romanski. *Photo courtesy of Sally (Romanski) Cook*

Birthday party for Barbara LaMar taken at the Oak Street home of her grandparents, Charles and Nellie Dixon. The party hats were made by Grace Lamar, a kindergarten teacher. Bottom row: Kathie Sullivan, Sandra Anderson, Bonnie Loewen, Barbara LaMar, DeeDee Backus, Susie McDougall. Middle row: Billy Brenner, Donald Worzella, Susan Romanski, Peter Backus, Jon Krapfeldt, Joan Krapfeldt. Top row: John R. Billings, Billy Heger, Sally Romanski, Linda Brenner. Photo courtesy of Sally (Romanski) Cook

One day the preacher knocked on the front door of our house. He asked if we had seen anyone in the tent area, as he was missing some reels of film. My little sister Mary Jean offered that she helped two children from across the street carry the films to their house. The films were recovered without any damage and Mary Jean was to stay in her yard from then on.

Our house was located on the corner of Oak and Pepin Streets which we often referred to as, "the alley." Across Pepin Street was the home of Arthur and Marguerite Heger and their son Billy, who spent a lot of time at our house. We didn't have a little brother, so Billy, who was my sister Susan's age, received a lot of attention from my parents and us six girls!

As we continued up the Oak Street hill to Fifth Street, the lovely, large home on the Oak Street corner was owned by Henry and Emily Baldwin, who had daughters Ruth and Sandy. Mrs. Baldwin invited me over to string cranberries and popcorn with the girls on our first Oak Street Christmas. The Baldwins had nursemaids who took Sandy off to her afternoon nap after an hour of fun.

The Baldwins moved from Oak Street after our first year in the neighborhood at which time the Bory Bocaner family moved into the home. Their children were Gloria, Irene, Lawrence and Marvin. Around the corner on Fifth Street were three rental houses and then the large house on top of the East Grand and Fifth Street hill, which was owned by Mrs. Mabel Peterson, a widow. Her husband, Ralph, had been the County Agent for Wood County. Mabel had a son Don, and daughters, Phyllis and Priscilla. She rented rooms to

teachers and store clerks from Heilman's, a women's and children's clothing store located on West Grand Avenue, just across the Grand Avenue Bridge.

The open front porch of Mrs. Petersons's house was set off by two large mounted deer antlers. Her home had an exposed basement where her daughters and I played Monopoly and paper dolls on winter afternoons. At the base of the hill facing Pepin Street was the small white house of Mertz Petersen and his wife, Margaret.

Mr. Petersen always rode a bicycle and Margaret gave good advice to my mother about not letting the children play in the water-filled ditch that ran along Pepin Street. The Petersens owned a red barn located on Pepin Street and later Arthur Heger built a garage near it to house the bus he used to transport passengers to Adams, Wis., to meet the "400" or Hiawatha Train.

On East Grand Avenue, there was an empty field before arriving at the beautiful brick home of Louis and Lillian Gross. The home was built in 1939 and we enjoyed the neighborly friendship of the Gross family.

Mary Jean Romanski. Charles and Nellie (a piano teacher) Dixon home on right. Daughter, Grace LaMar (kindergarten teacher at Howe school) and granddaughter, Barbara Jean, lived with Dixons while Grace's husband was overseas. At center, Frank Roach (a rural route mailman) family home. Far left, Methodist Church.

Home of Arthur and Marguerite Heger, corner of Pepin and Oak Streets

They had sons Bob and Jim and a daughter, Betty. With our back yards connecting, Betty became a dear friend of mine.

On summer days, we roller-skated up East Grand Avenue to Eighth Street. We made a quick stop at McCamley's Grocery for "Chocolate Chowder" ice cream cones. They were the only cones in town in the shape of a cylinder, or tube. On other occasions we stopped at Wilpolt's Restaurant, located in the downtown west side for hot fudge sundaes!

Louis and my father always entertained the families with a great fireworks display on The Fourth of July.

There are many Oak Streets in villages, towns and cities throughout our country. Like our old neighborhood at 470 Oak Street, in Wisconsin Rapids, many were very special places in which to grow up.

We knew the people who lived in every house in the two-block area. It was with these folks we shared the peaceful pre-World War II years and the tension of the war years as many of the young men in the area were drafted into the service.

In 1949, my family moved to a new home in the town of Seneca. The Oak Street house was used as a rental home until being the first to be demolished before the construction of the Mead Hotel.

470 Oak St., Susan Romanski, Barbara LaMar, Betty Romanski, Billy Heger and Sally Romanski

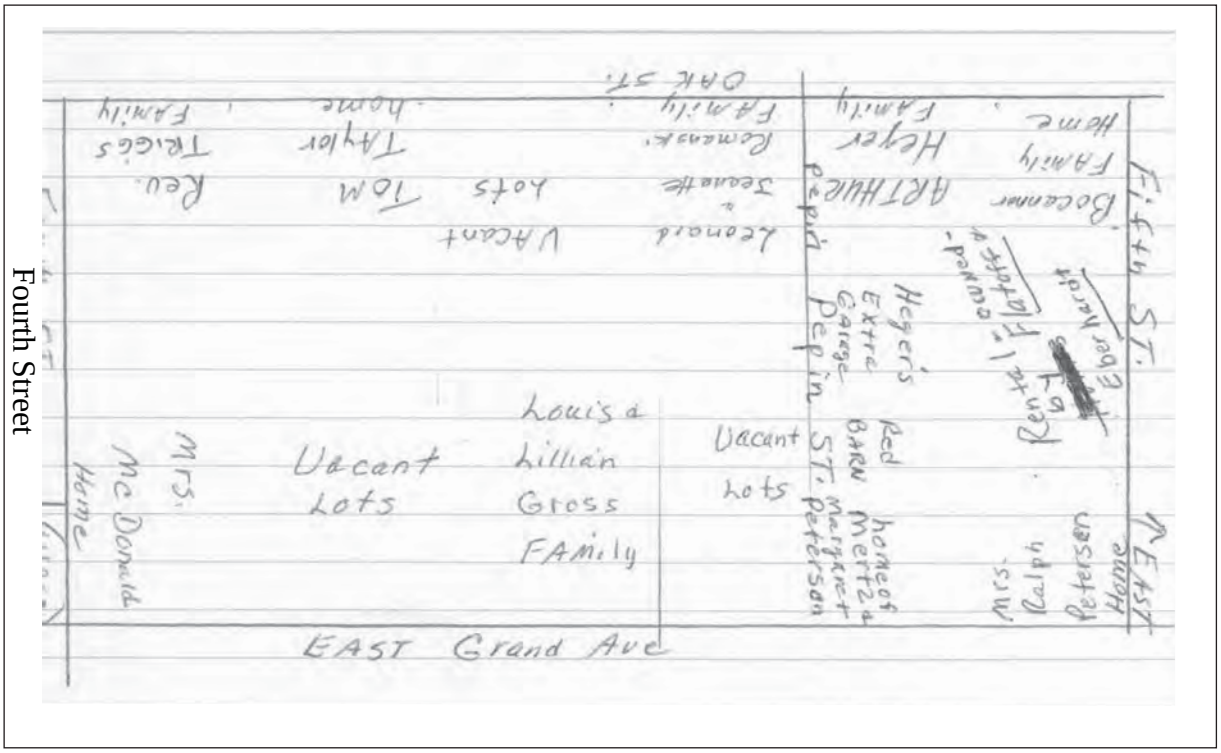
Leonard Romanski home at 470 Oak Street

Back yard 470 Oak St. Left to right, Sally Romanski, Billy Brenner (grandson of the Dixons), Mary Jean Romanski, Linda Brenner (sister of Billy) and Susan Romanski. On ladder, Barbara LaMar and Billy Heger.

Grand Avenue home of Louis and Lillian Gross. Far left background, Tom Taylor's Oak Street home.
The Gross house was moved to the corner of Witter and Mead streets.
Photo courtesy of Betty Gross Soe

HOW ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, MR. ROGERS?

Why not do as Marjorie Hamm has and come up with a portrait of the people, streets and houses that were important to you? Some neighborhoods haven't changes so much in 60 years, while others, such as those surrounding 8th Street, Rapids Mall the Kraft mill and, most lately, West Grand Avenue, can only be brought back to mind with your help. Send your material to Dave Engel, 5597 Third Avenue, Rudolph, WI 54475 or email kdengel@wctc.net.



Notecard map drawn by Marjorie Hamm shows location of Oak Street area houses in the 1940s

Brownie Scouts

On back steps of old Howe School (1939)

Left to right: Bottom row, unidentified girl, Joan Cotterill, Madella Robbins. Row two: Teckla Jacobsen, Irene Thirkill, Nancy Smart, Joan Wilpolt, Carol Cole. Top row, L. to R., Marjorie Romanski, Priscilla Peterson, Betty Gross, Violet Reddick, Patricia Bronson, Joan Laramie. *Photo courtesy Marge Hamm*

A Tale of Two Banks

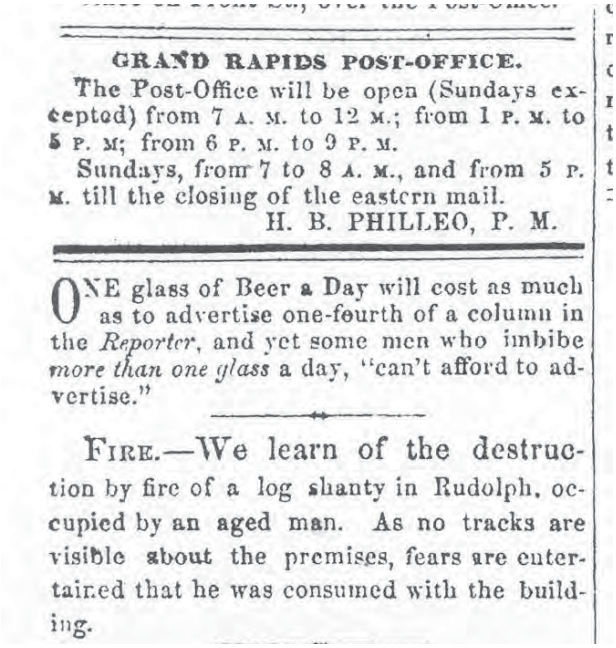
by Earle Garber

Joining the CommUnity Initiative in Wisconsin Rapids, I volunteered to conduct research for the Historical Mural Cluster .

Historic murals tell about treaties with native Americans. They show where the first sawmills were in the 1840s and what happened when log drives no longer ran the Wisconsin river. They continue the story to the 1870s when the railroads began to arrive and when bridges replaced rope-guided ferries and barges. They speak of the eventual rise of the age of papermaking.

Rather than pursue the well-documented topics of logging and transportation, I chose to research the history of banking in the twin cities of Grand Rapids and Centralia, now Wisconsin Rapids. Let's call it "Follow the money." More specifically, my quest was to learn about the Wood County Bank. What was it and what happened to it?

I soon found myself camped at McMillan Memorial Library, Wisconsin Rapids, a fine source for local history.



GRAND RAPIDS POST-OFFICE.

The Post-Office will be open (Sundays excepted) from 7 A. M. to 12 M.; from 1 P. M. to 5 P. M; from 6 P. M. to 9 P. M.

Sundays, from 7 to 8 A. M., and from 5 P. M. till the closing of the eastern mail.

H. B. PHILLEO, P. M.

ONE glass of Beer a Day will cost as much as to advertise one-fourth of a column in the *Reporter*, and yet some men who imbibe *more than one glass* a day, "can't afford to advertise."

FIRE.—We learn of the destruction by fire of a log shanty in Rudolph, occupied by an aged man. As no tracks are visible about the premises, fears are entertained that he was consumed with the building.

The earliest newspaper on file is the *Stevens Point Pinery.* The editor wrote from a natural rival that sensed future commerce would bless the twin cities, where a great water power would drive the wheels of industry to come.

From the 1854 *Pinery* came a correspondent's statistics for "Grand Rapids," counting 16 "saws for lumber," seven stores, six taverns, three wagon-making shops, four blacksmiths, three carpenters & joiners, two shoemakers, one painter, one tailor, one clock & watch maker, one doctor and one lawyer for a population of 127 families totaling 400-500 persons. There were 140 children in the one public school. For 200 Catholics, there was a church under construction.

"The prospects of this village are fair for becoming quite a town," said the *Pinery*, predicting Grand Rapids would become, "the principle [sic] village on this River, between Plover and Portage City."

In 1856, Wood County was, in the parlance of Sesquicentennial-era pundits, "carved" from Portage County. At that time, Joseph Wood, serving in the Wisconsin state legislature, took the opportunity to name "Greenwood County." The legislators, not surprisingly, elected to call it Wood County.

The newly-named was a busy place, as the 1860 *Pinery* "saw"; "Last Saturday we made an excursion to our neighboring village of Grand Rapids...We found the place much improved since last we saw it. Saw saw mills and saw grist mills; saw steam mills, saw water mills; saw shingle mills and saw other mills going and gone up in profusion; trade brisk and everybody happy and hopeful."

But the praise, said the *Pinery*, was suspect, having come from the "pin-feathered editor of the Stanton Times, and he continues in a strain of incoherent conglomerations of sarcasm towards our diffident self." The rivalry between Stevens Point, Grand (Wisconsin) Rapids and Stanton (Plover) was to continue indefinitely.

As Grand Rapids, along with Centralia, its twin across the river, achieved respectability, the "banking house" of "Brundage, Benchley and Philleo," advertised in the *Wood County Reporter.*

It was prepared to receive on deposit: gold, silver and currency at par, school orders at 95 cents, county orders at 75 cents, and town orders at 60 cents – to be drawn at the pleasure of depositors in drugs, medicines, paper, ink, lawyers and justice blanks and all kinds of fancy articles; the best and largest ever brought into the Pinery."

In the December 1859 issue of the *Reporter,* an ad appeared that meant competition for Brundage and partners: the Wood County Bank. With a certificate of incorporation on file in the register of deeds office at the Wood county courthouse, J.M. Dickinson and S. Dickman, both of Madison, had established an "office of discount, deposit and circulation" in the village of Grand Rapids that had begun service in May 1859.

The $25,000 in capital was divided into 250 shares, split equally between Dickinson and Dickman. Later that year, the capital stock was increased to $35,000.

Newspaper ads name George Paine, an early trader and lumberman, president, and W.W. Botkin (William Wallace, born about 1840, formerly of Madison, then Wood County board clerk), cashier. Local "references" were Joseph Wood, T.B. Scott and "Powers and Lang," all business leaders and substantial dealers in real estate. "Will transact a Banking business in all its branches. Collections are solicited, and proceeds will be promptly remitted at current rates of exchange."

The Wood descendants being honored in 2006, during Wood County's 150th year celebrations, were unaware that their family had been involved in a bank that preceded the current Wood County National Bank or "WoodTrust." The great-grandson of Joseph Wood replied: "If there was a bank before my father Frank became cashier of the Wood County National Bank in 1891, we didn't know it. We were only aware something serious had happened when my grandfather, Joseph's son Frank, was called home from Madison."

During 1859 and into 1860, both the Brundage-Philleo and Wood County banks advertised in the *Reporter*. In July 1860, a semi-annual Wood County Bank statement appeared, signed by J.M. Dickinson, vice president, whose signature was on the charter.

After the Civil War erupted in 1861, ads for the Wood bank seem to have disappeared. In 1863, the *Reporter* noted; "W.W. Botkin, former county clerk and cashier of the bank organized a militia, donned the uniform of Captain and marched off to war."

Boys from Wisconsin were among the casualties as President Abraham Lincoln, hampered by opposing politicians, began the game of musical chairs to find a commanding general to end the war. Amid national turmoil, banks throughout the Midwest found themselves in trouble. Notices from the Bank Controller of the United States appeared in the *Milwaukee Sentinel*; "We are now redeeming in gold, bills from discredited banks." Following in quick succession were long lists of banks in Illinois and Wisconsin whose bills were discounted.

The *Milwaukee Sentinel* stated, "There is but little ground for doubt, that within a few days the monetary excitement now operating so disastrously to the business community will have subsided, and all bills *except those thrown out* will be received by banking houses at par." Now appeared ads in the *Reporter* from: central Wisconsin's Pinery Bank; a branch of the New York Mechanics bank; and several Milwaukee banks. Then, I found an announcement, not an ad, by cashier Joseph Wood: "Bills will be received for the present at the Wood County Bank for the following banks in Wisconsin." A long list of rates follow, well below paper value. The Wood County Bank was buying discounted bills to keep other banks afloat.

At the same time, lands were being forfeited for non-payment of taxes and Joseph and Matilda Wood topped the list. However, it was not necessarily a hint at bankruptcy. In many cases, the property had been owned only long enough to log it off and then it was abandoned. There were ads of auctions too numerous to print: "Sale of forfeited Mortgaged Lands." Wood County Circuit Court judgments appeared in issue upon issue in the *Reporter*. Plaintiffs such as Endrick Shank, Joseph Lovell, Spenser Bryant, Curtiss and Baker, Crandon, had come knocking. Mr. Woods and Mrs. Woods were among dozens of names of investors being sued by the Park Bank and the Park Bank was being sued by defendants.

There is no further mention of the Wood County Bank. For his part, rival H.B. Philleo hoped to use the war to his financial advantage as he placed this notice: "WAR! WAR! The undersigned having recently formed an arrangement with the firm of Page & Co., of Richland Centre, Wis., calls

the attention of the community to the fact that it is prepared to obtain pensions, back pay, bounty money, and attend to all wants of discharged or disabled soldiers or their heirs with promptness and dispatch. Pensions procured for wounded or disabled soldiers, seamen, marines, widows and orphan children of them who have died or been killed while in service, also bounty money and arrears of pay for widows or other deceased soldiers. All desiring information can obtain it by calling at the Grand Rapids Post Office."

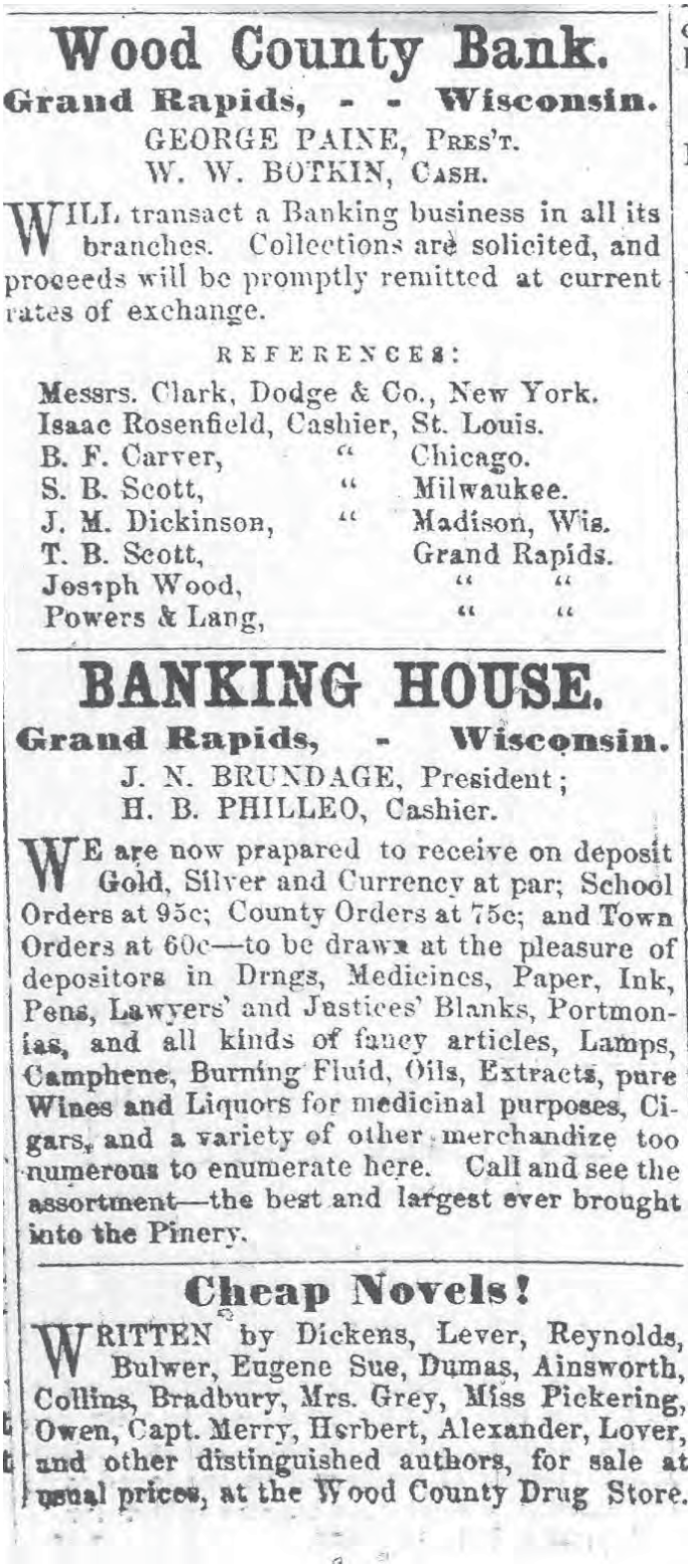
By then, General Ulysses S. Grant had taken Vicksburg and accepted a reassignment to command the Army of Northern Virginia and General Billy Sherman was at Lookout Mountain and moving on to Atlanta. The War Between the States was coming to an end.

By 1865, legal notices no longer took up so much space in the *Reporter*. On my final trip to the courthouse, I acquired copies of documents indicating that, while the original Wood County Bank may have closed, nowhere were there words to the effect that its charter had been affected. Back at the library, I read on.

In 1873, the *Wood County Reporter* stated; "Joseph Wood returns home from the coast and mountains, looking ten years younger than when he left us, and feeling like a boy of the period. We congratulate the Judge in the recovery of his health. Mr. Wood reports Mr. Garrison (owner of the South Centralia mill), which blew up in his absence, is rapidly improving. Mr. Garrison will probably return in a few weeks. He is also in the White Mountains having a good time, and regaining his wanted health." Perhaps the stress of the war years had taken its toll.

The Wood County register of deeds office documents show a merger took place in May 1991 of The Community State Bank, the Wood County National Bank and the Wood County Bank. It is signed by S. Bell, current president.

What connection is there with the bank of Civil War times? Is it possible the 1852 charter was not dissolved? Further research may one day reveal the answer.



Wood County Bank.

Grand Rapids, - - Wisconsin.

GEORGE PAINE, PRES'T.
W. W. BOTKIN, CASH.

WILL transact a Banking business in all its branches. Collections are solicited, and proceeds will be promptly remitted at current rates of exchange.

REFERENCES:

Messrs. Clark, Dodge & Co., New York.
Isaac Rosenfield, Cashier, St. Louis.
B. F. Carver, " Chicago.
S. B. Scott, " Milwaukee.
J. M. Dickinson, " Madison, Wis.
T. B. Scott, Grand Rapids.
Joseph Wood, " "
Powers & Lang, " "

BANKING HOUSE.

Grand Rapids, - Wisconsin.

J. N. BRUNDAGE, President;
H. B. PHILLEO, Cashier.

WE are now prapared to receive on deposit Gold, Silver and Currency at par; School Orders at 95c; County Orders at 75c; and Town Orders at 60c—to be drawn at the pleasure of depositors in Drugs, Medicines, Paper, Ink, Pens, Lawyers' and Justices' Blanks, Portmonias, and all kinds of fancy articles, Lamps, Camphene, Burning Fluid, Oils, Extracts, pure Wines and Liquors for medicinal purposes, Cigars, and a variety of other merchandize too numerous to enumerate here. Call and see the assortment—the best and largest ever brought into the Pinery.

Cheap Novels!

WRITTEN by Dickens, Lever, Reynolds, Bulwer, Eugene Sue, Dumas, Ainsworth, Collins, Bradbury, Mrs. Grey, Miss Pickering, Owen, Capt. Merry, Herbert, Alexander, Lover, and other distinguished authors, for sale at usual prices, at the Wood County Drug Store.

1859

Phil Brown's

Den of Antiquity

A regular feature from the SWCHC board president, historical collector and town of Cranmoor cranberry grower.

The Grand Rapids brewery was the feature of a previous *Artifacts.* What do beer and berries have in common, besides Babcock?

Roll Out the Barrel

Among the fascinating artifacts of cranberry history is the barrel label. Both artistic and historic, the paper slapped on the end of each container of fresh cranberries tells a story.

Originally, the growers of cranberries had no uniform way of marketing their fruit, which in many cases had been plucked from the wild by great crews of imported pickers.

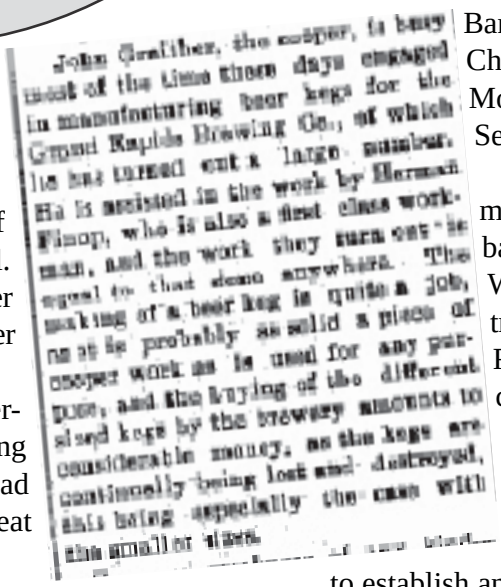
In 1899, as reported in *Cranmoor: The Cranberry Eldorado* by my good pal and eminent macrocarpologist Dave Engel, J.A. Gaynor, Andrew Searls and A.E. Bennett secured enactment before the state legislature of standard container sizes. The barrel adopted was the "Cape Cod barrel" at 100 quarts; the crate or picking box would be the size used in New Jersey, 32 quarts; and a bushel would weigh 32 pounds.

Bennett wrote in a letter that "Some of us sought to establish a personal reputation ... by the use of certain brands and trade marks," naming Standard, Bouquet, Metallic Bell and Star.. But unscrupulous rivals applied the same brands to bad berries. The full barrel remained the standard until the mid-twenties when it was changed to the half-barrel and, in 1928, the quarter-barrel box. After World War II, plastic bags came into use.

The rarest of Wisconsin barrel labels are those of the A.U. Chaney company shown here on page 16. Chaney-era brands known to exist are Antler, Badger, Beaver, Chief, Holly, Favorite, Fox and Monogram. These labels date back to around 1903.

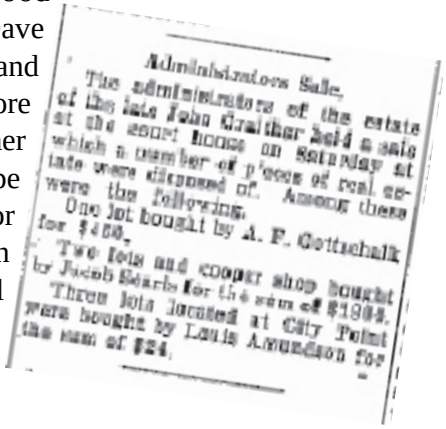
The National Fruit Exchange began in 1907; its labels were used until 1911. Brands known to exist are Beaver, Bessie, Fox, Holly, Poppy and Monogram. See page 17.

The series of red labels from the American Cranberry Exchange were first used in 1911 and continued until the mid-1920s. Brand names are: Antler, Badger, Banner, Beaver, Bessie, Bouquet, Chief, Daisy, Deer, Favorite, Fox, Monogram, Pennant and Poppy. See pages 15 and 18.



John Graither, the cooper, is busy most of the time these days engaged in manufacturing beer kegs for the Grand Rapids Brewing Co., of which he has turned out a large number. He is assisted in the work by Herman Fimop, who is also a first class workman, and the work they turn out is equal to that done anywhere. The making of a beer keg is quite a job, as it is probably as solid a piece of cooper work as is used for any purpose, and the buying of the different sized kegs by the brewery amounts to considerable money, as the kegs are continually being lost and destroyed, this being especially the case with the smaller sizes.

The need for cranberry barrels may have brought the cooper or barrel-making industry to central Wisconsin, for example, in Centralia, the west side of Wisconsin Raids. At the turn of the 20th century, John Graither was furnishing barrels to cranberry growers from his cooperage in Centralia. When the crop got too large, he found it necessary to establish another factory, this time at City Point in the cranberry district.



Administrators Sale.

The administrators of the estate of the late John Graither held a sale at the court house on Saturday at which a number of pieces of real estate were disposed of. Among these were the following.

One lot bought by A. F. Gottschalk for $450.

Two lots and cooper shop bought by Jacob Edarls for the sum of $1300.

Three lots located at City Point were bought by Louis Amundson for the sum of $24.

Top clipping, 1913, lower, 1915 (from an Internet archives - difficult to read)

Circular labels shown on pages 15-18 have been reduced by about 50%.


BESSIE BRAND
WISCONSIN
CRANBERRIES
PACKED BY
WISCONSIN CRANBERRY SALES CO.
GRAND RAPIDS, WIS.
PACKER No.
FOR
AMERICAN CRANBERRY EXCHANGE
NEW YORK, CHICAGO, U.S.A.


Holly
BRAND
EXTRA
CHOICE
· CULTIVATED WISCONSIN ·
CRANBERRIES
GRADED XX
HAND ASSORTED AND UNIFORMLY PACKED
WISCONSIN CRANBERRY SALES CO.
· GRAND RAPIDS, WIS. ·
PACKERS No.
· A·U·CHANEY CO. ·
SOLE
SELLING AGENTS
DES MOINES, IA.


BEAVER BRAND
EXTRA
FANCY
HIGHLY CULTIVATED WISCONSIN
CRANBERRIES
LATE KEEPING VARIETY
GROWN AND PACKED ESPECIALLY FOR FANCY TRADE
HAND ASSORTED AND UNIFORMLY PACKED
WISCONSIN CRANBERRY SALES CO.
GRAND RAPIDS, WIS.
PACKER'S
NATIONAL FRUIT EXCHANGE
SOLE SELLING AGENTS
NEW YORK CHICAGO U.S.A.
No


DEER BRAND
ONE STANDARD
U.S. BARREL OF
WISCONSIN CRANBERRIES
PACKED BY
WISCONSIN CRANBERRY SALES CO.
WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WIS.
PACKER NO.
FOR
AMERICAN CRANBERRY EXCHANGE
NEW YORK, CHICAGO, U.S.A.

Our 20th Century

Newell and Helen Jasperson

Interview with Dave Engel (Edited)
April 22, 1998

Newell: I was born November 4, 1918. My parents were Clarence Alexander Jasperson and Harriet Frear Whittlesey.

My mother grew up on the marsh. I think she was born in the Rapids but they lived out here summers. I grew up in Port Edwards. My father was secretary and treasurer of Nekoosa-Edwards paper company until he retired. I think in 1947.

This marsh was started by my grandfather, Sherman Newell Whittlesey, in 1871. He had other farms in Nebraska and South Dakota, but he always kept this place. He sold the others and stayed here. He was born in 1849. He was 86 when he died in November of 1935. I graduated from Port Edwards High School in 1935. My mother and father ran the place then. [See *Cranmoor: The Cranberry Eldorado* for more on S.N. Whittlesey and related topics.]

My uncle, Charlie, was one of the heirs. My grandfather had three children. Uncle Charlie was the oldest. My mother and her brother, Harry, followed. My mother was a twin. My cousin Virginia Whittlesey was the other heir.

I'm all family names. My grandfather's mother's name was Harriet Newell. My grandmother Whittlesey was Annie Elizabeth Downs. So the "Newell" and the "Downs" comes from those two families.

Clarence Jasperson

My father was born in Neenah in 1878. When he was nineteen years old, he went a year or two to business school to learn shorthand, stenography and typing. L.M. Alexander [of Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co.] needed a stenographer. My dad came over and interviewed and L.M. hired him.

My dad just grew with the company. He and L.M. were the best of friends. They were pretty close. They both thought a lot of each other. So he ended up being secretary-treasurer of the company when he retired.

When my grandfather died, my dad said to me, "Are you interested in the cranberry marsh?"

I was sixteen when I got out of high school so I really didn't have many goals at that time. I had always liked it out here on the marsh and I said, "Sure. It'd be great."

I went to Stevens Point to State Teachers College for two years, then I went to Madison for the next two years. Graduated in 1939. I majored in Economic Entomology in the Ag School so I got a B.S. in Agriculture and came out here from 1939 on.

When I was in Madison, I met the girl that became my wife, in 1940, January 25. I married Helen Hernlem from Red Wing, Minnesota.

Grandfather Whittlesey

We started here in 1940. At that time, it really was pretty primitive, compared to what we have now. We didn't have any pickups. We had a couple Model A dump trucks. We had a team of horses that hauled cranberries in the fall.

My grandfather was a great one with horses. He loved horses so he had these draft horses. For several years, we still used horses to haul in the cranberry wagon. It was part of why I liked it out here. It was always fun out here, especially in the fall, when they harvested with the wagon. The load of cranberries coming in and dumping them in the flat crates in the warehouse.

We lived here year round. It wasn't made for year round. My grandfather had no heat except for wood stoves. There were wood stoves all over in here. A lot of chimneys

In his later years, my grandfather lived with us in Port Edwards in the winter time. I still remember him in 1933, when he was writing his memoirs. My grandmother died in 1928, so he had a lonely life from then until 1935, when he died.

He lived here. Some summers they'd go out to Nebraska. They always came back here. Thank goodness, they had the foresight to know that cranberries were better than corn.

He lived with us from about 1930. It might have been after my grandmother died.

The Oldest House

This house was built in three parts. When Sherman was first married, he brought my grandmother to some old log cabin. It was very primitive. That was 1875, when they were married. I'm guessing he built the first part of this in about 1876. The second gable end, the one we're sitting in, was probably not too long after that. The other extension would have been 1891 or thereabouts. All of it is well over 100 years now. I think this is the oldest house out here.

Ralph Smith came about the same time as my grandfather but his home is not there any more.

In 1940, the home was here. The warehouse was here. There was the old bunkhouse that my grandfather had. My dad had raised and put another story under it.

Working Crew

We had the foreman on the marsh. My dad just left it up to him. He knew we needed a bunkhouse. He did the things that had to be done. He knew the house should have heat and he got the heat in. He did a lot of things around here. As far as the growing end, he went by the foreman. Emmericks, they ran their property. Lloyd Rezin ran his. Bob Gottschalk, the Wards, all ran their own marshes.

In those days, we harvested with hand rakes. It was traditional on most marshes to start the day after Labor Day. So on Labor Day, one of us would take a truck over to Oneida and pick up a bunch of Indians. They always expected a truck to come over and get a load of them. Some would come in cars.

There were a lot of white people available too. Jobs weren't too plentiful back then. A lot of locals, like the Polish people from Stevens Point would come over. I remember the Ramprowlskis [sp.?]. There were two brothers that were big, strong Polish boys. Really good. Of the Indians, we had Matocsins, Doxtators, Isaiah Thomas, Wilbur Smith.

The Indians and Whites that would come would live upstairs in the bunkhouse. Downstairs they had a kitchen and dining room and recreation area. They had showers. It was pretty nice for its time. My dad put it up in '37, '38, that era. Because we had to have help in those days.

Potters, Gaynors, had buildings. I think Bennetts too. Rezins didn't, Gottschalks didn't. Brazeaus had a tent there, where the skeet club is now, I think. They'd camp out.

Helen: We had two rooms. They were all upstairs. The white people and the Indians. But they did eat together downstairs.

Newell: There were some Indians in the white part, the older ones, that didn't carouse quite so much. The weekends were sort of messy around here. Mondays were a short-handed crew. They'd be hung over from the weekend. They'd got to town and they'd get drunk.

Helen: Newell's mother would have a little store downstairs. She'd come out here to live in the fall just to run that little store and take care of the Indians. She was a good friend to a lot of them. They'd keep coming back just to see her. I don't think we ever had a problem. As I remember, they were pretty nice, because they were taken care of in this building.

Newell: We had some good white boys. There were three of them that came from over near Manawa that were really good. We had some from Abbotsford. They were all good help.

The first year I was here for a harvest, we had the Indians and the first morning, I bet there were 25 people in the front yard wanting a job. Our foreman knew which were the best ones. He picked out who he wanted and the rest went on to the next place.

My grandfather had a man named Reinart Damme. After my grandfather died, he bought the old wilderness marsh that Brazeaus own now. He moved up there. Then we had Clarence Larson from about '36 until '42. He was a good teamster.

Newell Jasperson

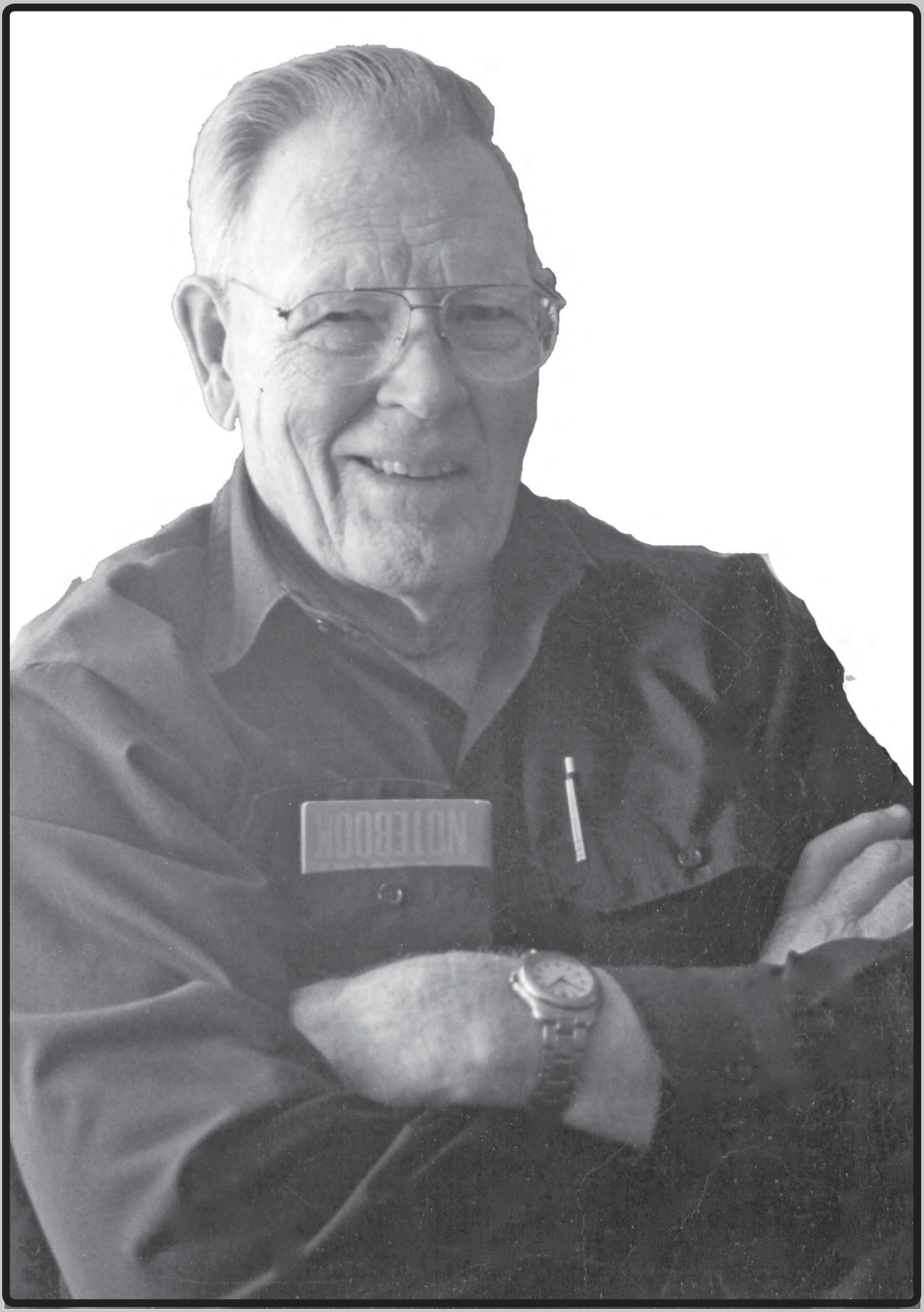


Photo by Dave Engel (1998)

Then we had Carl Bodin from Babcock. He's dead now.

Labor in those days was probably, when my grandfather died, it was 25 cents an hour. They worked ten hours a day, six days a week. After we came, we got it to five days and we got it down to nine hours and finally eight. We got on a forty hour week. The wages had to go up. But it was quite a while before they did.

Harvesting

Helen: He brought in the first crop when I was here. They were stored in the warehouse because they were raked in September and they stood in the warehouse until about Thanksgiving. That's when we would get orders to send them.

Newell: The team would drive right in through that door there in the lean-to of the warehouse. The cranberry wagon we used to haul them in on had steel wheels about that wide. We could haul 125 bushels on the thing.

There was a platform up a ways and you'd lift these bushel boxes of cranberries up on to the platform. A couple guys up there would set them up onto a cart. Then you'd wheel them on these carts over to where the flat crates were.

The flat crates then were two feet wide by four feet long. They'd hold two bushel of cranberries.

They'd throw a flat crate up, dump two bushels in, level it off, throw another flat crate on, dump a couple more bushels in.

Harvesting the day after Labor Day, they were pretty green. It was the beginning of the season. In storage, they colored nicely.

That tile in there is made of Vesper clay. You could cool the building nicely. It's regular tile, it had a division in the center. When we finally put a furnace in there, it took hardly any heat. One year we kept Howe cranberries, which are good keepers anyway. I think we were sorting them in February.

Marketing

Helen: We always belonged to a cooperative that sold the berries: Eatmor Cranberries and American Cranberry Exchange, which had a Wisconsin division.

Newell: Cranberries were all sold fresh. There wasn't any canning in 1940. Pie berries would be packed in quarter barrels. They would go to hotels for sauce and pies, whatever. The larger berries would go for trade in the stores.

When we came, I think they had just got rid of the half barrel boxes and they were starting quarter barrels. This was 25 pounds. They were all shipped by rail in 1940. The siding was right down at the end of our road.

We'd load the sorted cranberries into boxes on a truck, take them down and load them into a boxcar. There'd be anywhere from 850 to 1,200 boxes in a car. They would be shipped all over the United States.

Cranmoor P.O.

Helen: We were on the map, Cranmoor, halfway between Nekoosa and Babcock.

Newell: There weren't any buildings at that time. There was a sign that said, "Cranmoor." There was a mail drop there. My grandmother was postmistress at one time. They had a thing to pick up a bag, so they wouldn't stop. They let the mail off every day. Somebody'd bring it up here and my grandmother would sort it. Somebody from the north end of town would come down and pick up mail for the north end. My grandmother had a desk in the corner of our dining room.

So I remember those days. When I was a kid, I used to be out here.

Raking

Newell: As far as harvesting, it took us probably two weeks. We only had 62 acres to harvest at that time. We harvested it all by hand.

My grandfather was one for dry raking because they keep better than when you harvest in the water. End rot was one of the bad problems. When you harvested dry, he had less of a problem with rot.

When we came, it was all dry raked. Harder work than wet raking. The rake goes through the vines in water easier than it does when it's dry.

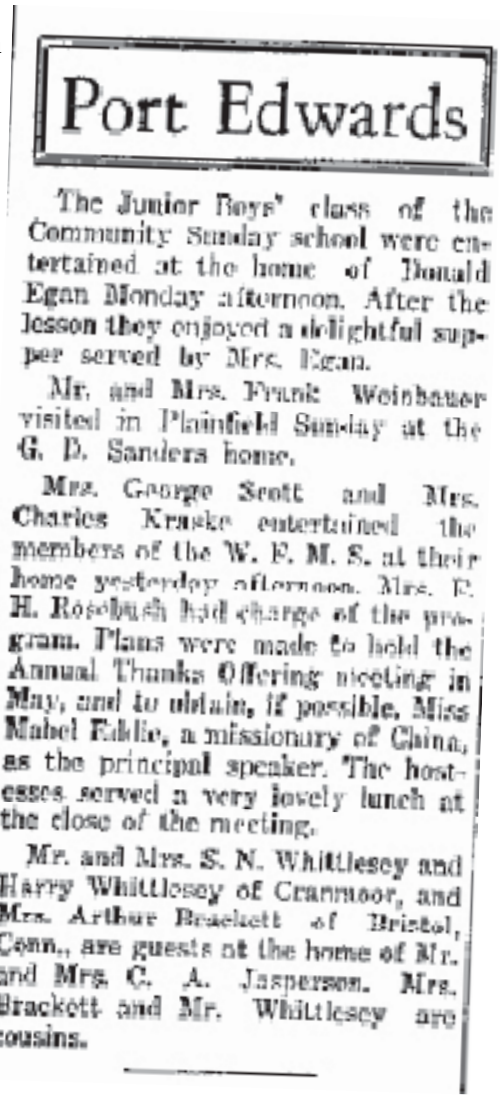
Did I ever hand rake? Oh, yeah. I didn't do it all day long like the people we hired. I know how to rake. I know it's hard work.

For harvesting, we had as high as 30 hand-rakers, sometimes a few more. There'd probably be another ten or twelve handling the berries, bringing them in, dumping them.

After harvest, in those days, we'd get right back on the marsh. We'd comb it with wooden rakes and do weeding too. People'd stay around for a week or two. We'd have our cleanup session in the fall after harvest. We were all done in September.

Now, we don't start until October. The reason for that is it's all processed fruit now. Most of it goes into cranberry juice. They want ripe cranberries so we wait as long as we can; but we have to get it done before it freezes up.

They were very green then when we raked them. They had some color, but not a lot. They colored up really nice in the warehouse.



Port Edwards

The Junior Boys' class of the Community Sunday school were entertained at the home of Donald Egan Monday afternoon. After the lesson they enjoyed a delightful supper served by Mrs. Egan.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Weinbauer visited in Plainfield Sunday at the G. B. Sanders home.

Mrs. George Scott and Mrs. Charles Kruske entertained the members of the W. F. M. S. at their home yesterday afternoon. Mrs. F. H. Rosbush had charge of the program. Plans were made to hold the Annual Thanks Offering meeting in May, and to obtain, if possible, Miss Mabel Fahlie, a missionary of China, as the principal speaker. The hostesses served a very lovely lunch at the close of the meeting.

Mr. and Mrs. S. N. Whittlesey and Harry Whittlesey of Cranmoor, and Mrs. Arthur Brackett of Bristol, Conn., are guests at the home of Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Jasperson. Mrs. Brackett and Mr. Whittlesey are cousins.

Eatmor

Eatmor Cranberries, actually the first cooperative in the United States, started here in Wisconsin.

First, the cranberry growers formed the Wisconsin Cranberry Sales Company. They hired A.U. Chaney from Chicago to sell the cranberries for them because buyers from Chicago came up here and tried to get the best deal they could. So actually, it was a cooperative where the cranberry growers banded together to not be beat down on the price, to get what the market should be, what the market would bear. So he, Chaney, would be the agent, the broker for the cranberries.

Then he decided it would be good to get the eastern growers involved in the same kind of a deal: the New England Cranberry Sales Company and the New Jersey Cranberry Sales Company.

Those three sales companies formed Eatmor Cranberries. There were very few independents. Overall, I would say 85% belonged to Eatmor Cooperative.

Barrels & Boxes

Newell: In 1940, 3,000 barrels here was a pretty good crop. You take $30,000 and out of the $30,000, 5% was taken out to run the..., 2% the sales company took out to operate on, 3% was for Eatmor to operate on.

Out of that, we had to buy our quarter barrels, which I would imagine back in those days wasn't a big factor. They called them shooks. You'd buy them from Marshfield. They had ends, sides, tops and bottoms. During the summer, we would nail them together, enough for the crop. I know they weren't over 25 cents. We used to paste labels on the ends of the boxes.

Helen: Each marsh had a number. We were 31.

Newell: We had a stamp. We just stamped 31 on there.

In the early forties, it was one year to the next what it was going to be. You kept talking, saying that it'll get up to $12 a barrel some day. As I remember, $10 was pretty much the average.

I never saw any barrel packed here. We always used boxes. Phil Brown had a barrel up at the antique show in Stevens Point the other day.

It would have been a lot easier to fill a barrel than all these quarter barrels. You could let the table run for quite a while. I don't suppose every store wanted a barrel of cranberries. They probably kept better.

Clipping dated March 8, 1928

Varieties

We had mostly natives, we had some Searles variety. My grandfather had 13 acres of Howes. Howes were really good keeping cranberries. Those we would keep for the Christmas trade.

Natives can be anything. When we'd be sorting, we'd hit some berries and we'd say, oh there's some number nine. Some would be long and peaked, some would be round. Some would color better. Some were smaller, some were bigger. They all went over a screen, so you sold on size.

The old timers would select a patch of natives that had certain characteristics and then propagate it. There was McFarlins variety. There were Bennetts, Potters Favorites. Searles was the main one. My grandfather had a bed that he called the Harriets. They were really nice berries, but they were small. They kept very well. It was not a berry that would have any value because it was not a large berry. People wanted the large, jumbo berries.

Helen: That's why the Searles took over. This is a label from Potter's Favorite. I don't know if anyone else planted them. Now, a lot of Searles are being replaced by another native, called Ben Lear, because it ripens earlier. It used to be ripped up because it didn't keep until Christmas, Thanksgiving even. Now, they freeze them the next day.

Ocean Spray

Marcus Urann, the founder of Ocean Spray, a large cranberry grower in Massachusetts, had the problem of what to do with pie berries so he started a canning factory. He got people to sell him their pies and seconds that weren't normally on the fresh fruit market.

He came out here in 1941 and tried to get the sales company to sell him their pies and seconds. It sounded like a good deal, so we did.

Then he tried to get members to join, in 1945. He wanted to get this Ocean Spray to…he wanted to compete, he wanted to be the handler for more cranberries. He was successful in getting quite a few of the larger growers in Wisconsin to join with him.

He came out; a lot of the growers came out. While he was here, he talked to the sales company when I was on the board of the Wisconsin Cranberry Sales Company. I would say by '43, my dad wanted to join with him. I really didn't want to. He said, "Well if you don't want to you don't have to."

Urann was friends with the Potters - Oscar, Guy, Roy - and the Bennetts. Hettler up at Phillips, he was the biggest grower in the state. Duckarts, the Andrew Searles marsh.

Helen: After about ten years, the fresh cranberry sales market turned theirs over to Ocean Spray too.

Newell: Ocean Spray and Eatmor tried to get along for a while. They had a deal where Ocean Spray would sell all the canning fruit and Eatmor would sell the fresh from the Ocean Spray members. But there was some problem, I suppose political.

Finally Ocean Spray went on their own. Eatmor had to try to find a canning outfit. When we didn't have an outlet for our pies and seconds, Stokely Van Camp expressed interest and so we made a deal with them to sell them our canning fruit.

This is up about '56 or '57. Stokely lasted one year. Then we got Del Monte and that lasted a year.

Then we got a canner in New Jersey named Morris April (sp.?). That didn't really work out, so it became apparent that we weren't going to survive as a fresh fruit... It just wouldn't work, so Eatmor dissolved and the sales company dissolved and I rather think it was '56 when it happened.

All the Eatmor people joined Ocean Spray. It was a very nice thing of Ocean Spray to do, because we were in trouble. Processing just kept getting bigger and bigger. The tail started wagging the dog.

Fresh fruit now is just a very small part of the cranberry business. In 1940, it was 100%. Then pies and seconds were maybe 20%. Then, canning wanted more volume. Canning grew. I think it was the way people were living, the way women cooked in those days.

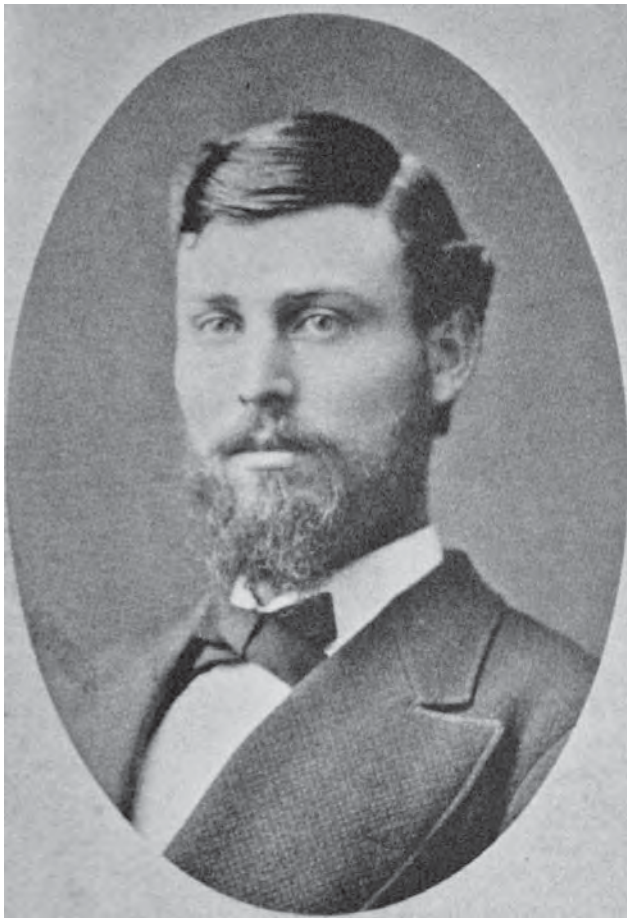
In the early sixties, Ocean Spray had a president named Ed Gelsthorpe. He's the one who mixed apple with cranberry juice. That's when the juice started going.

Helen: I think that was '53. I remember when Del Hammond was sitting here and I had Ocean Spray juice and my own juice that I'd made and

I asked them if they could tell the difference. Really, they couldn't. Ocean Spray had a lot of cranberries in theirs. They thinned it down after that. People seemed to like it thinner.

Newell: Gelsthorpe was a dynamic personality.

Ocean Spray has been the salvation of the cranberry business. That's what's built the cranberry business, the cooperatives. Not the people on the side. It's been cranberry growers, the majority of them working together, to build a business that is a solid business. The buyers were just pitting one against the other when they came up here. So they formed this union to say, "This is the price." If they couldn't get the price, they'd have to lower it. Supply and demand would determine what you could sell something for.



Kruger Marsh

We just kept expanding. We kept selling more. Before we got the Kruger marsh we had 83 acres. We're bigger, because, in the summer of '77, we bought the Kruger marsh. That's about 32 acres of the 135 we have now. It was too small a marsh for anybody else to operate effectively.

They'd sold it. Harrison Kruger died in the later forties. His wife and daughter ran it maybe until ten years. They wanted to sell it. We harvested it for them for a few years. I knew what it was producing.

She said, "If I get out of it will you buy it?"

I said, "I would, Grace, but I bet you're going to want more than I will think it's worth."

When I told her, she got Marcus Havey, a nephew of Marcus Urann, who was running the North Chicago plant; he bought it. That was absentee ownership and it wasn't working out for him. He's now in his late eighties. In '77 he decided to concentrate on another place he had in New Jersey. We came to an agreement and I bought it.

When it became apparent that there might be restrictions on what we'd been able to do for 127 years, to plant on the land that cranberries grow naturally on, we got a permit to plant twenty more acres.

Now, it is so hard to get a permit. With mitigation, you have to make another wetland to do something in your own wetland. It's practically cost-prohibitive. I don't feel like paying somebody $5,000 an acre and then to go and spend another $5,000 on my own to plant something.

Back In The Day

Helen: When I came here, I didn't know how cranberries grew at all. Probably thought they grew on bushes. Like everybody does. But I liked the outdoors so I liked it.

Newell: I didn't have to coax her too much.

Helen: How is it different now? We don't have cows and chickens any more.

Newell: We got married and we came out and you couldn't go to the store. This was a gravel road.

The first time I brought Helen out, it was a gravel road. It might have been dirt. The corner past Cranberry Creek, a mile down the road, that little bend: that used to be a sinkhole every spring. You could hardly get through it. It was dirt, gravel,

Above: Sherman Whittlesey

dusty. In the spring it was a mess. I guess that's why Cranmoor is a township, because all the surrounding townships…all these road problems in here.

Helen: When George Stubbe lived in that house and he brought his wife. I remember that, '58 or so. Instead of coming in this road, he came in through the woods and she really thought she was going into a lonely, uninhabited area. Now she drives through and thinks its pretty nice. She lives down at Rezins now.

Newell: Back in those days, there was no heat except for the wood stove.

Central Heat

Helen: We were the first people to live here all year round. We put the storm windows on and wanted to live here in the winter.

Newell: My dad, about the time my grandfather died, they had the steam line come up from the mill, up to my dad's house, over to the church. When John Alexander took his furnace out, a great big one, my dad bought it to put out here.

Our furnace room was the old ice house. When my grandparents lived here, they put ice in that room. They had a door up above. They hoisted it up and set it down. A double wall, about that thick, filled with sawdust. Dirt floor. They had sawdust on the floor.

During the summer, they'd lift that ice up and put it into a chest by our root cellar now. That ice would melt and they'd drink that water. It was reservoir water. But the water here was about fifteen parts per million of iron. The fixtures out here were just orange. When we were first married, we had to catch rainwater for washing. The water was really bad.

Helen: We didn't mow this much grass in those days. Out there, it was never mowed and the cows would feed on it. Until our children were big enough to ride a lawn mower.

Newell: I was a city boy. When I came out here, I had to get a cow. So I learned to milk. Remember Einer Olson? He used to have Guarantee Hardware. Einer one day said, "What you need are chickens." So he sold us a brooder. So we'd get 100 chicks every year and all the extra milk, we'd let it sour, pour it out there. Boy, the chickens would go after that milk.

When my grandparents lived here, they had pigs and horses and cows and chickens, whatever.

U.S. Mail

Helen: The mail is different. We used to have to go up to the road. And of course, we didn't have gas to go up to the road, which is almost a mile. So we walked. I had little kids and I had to take little kids along. So when we had a chance to get a horse, we got a cart and that horse would take us to the mailbox. For twenty years, we had to go out to the road to get the mail. Now he comes in here.

The horse would come back here with such force that, if the door wasn't wide open to the barn, he'd go right through the narrow door and split it on either side. The cutter behind the horse was demolished a couple times.

Newell: I learned why they call a horse a hay burner. I couldn't keep enough hay there for that horse.

Helen: The children were born in '41, '44 and '47: Steven, William and Joanne**.**

We had a big garden for vegetables. I can remember somebody from whatever, home economist, this person looking at my rows of cans down there. "Why, you've got a couple hundred dollars worth of vegetables canned!" That sounded like a lot in those days.

Labor Shortage

Helen: During the war, we only had gas to go to town once a week so you had to do everything in one time. Maybe not even once a week. You had coupons to buy sugar or meat or gasoline.

Helen: Cranberries took off after the war.

Newell: There wasn't a lot of help. We had Jamaicans and PWs.

Helen: That was '44 when Bill was born.

Newell: Prisoners of War. That was good. They were just like you or I. We had to take a truck in every morning to the camp at the airport. They had the prisoners and a guard. Ten or twelve German prisoners.

Helen: What I remember about them is that in those days we were sending our pies down to

1896 Whittlesey

Sherman (1849-1933)
and Annie (1848-1924)
with Charles (1876-1940),
Harriet (1878-1967)
and her twin,
Harry (1878-1928)

Ocean Spray in North Chicago in 100-pound sacks and they would send the sacks back to reuse them but they always had a little sugar in because they were sugar sacks. The prisoners would spend their noon hour emptying out those sacks to get a little spoonful of sugar because the government only gave them meager rations.

Newell: They'd take their mess kit. They were starved for sugar. 'Un day beans, 'un day macaroni. Beans! Macaroni!'

They were good eggs, though. We got to be friends with them. There was one 19-year-old trained as a machinist. He taught me how to really sharpen a drill bit. Hunnert and ten degrees. They were just like anybody.

Nineteen was probably the youngest. One fella was probably 45.

Helen: I was busy with kids mostly so I wasn't thinking much beyond the duties right here but it's funny that we didn't write to them afterward. They were prisoners of course; they were supposed to be our enemies but they were nice.

Newell: The camp would bring in a container of food. I don't remember if they had any kind of uniform. I think they had some kind of identifying.

Helen: As I remember, it was Al Shannon that brought them. He was a guard.

Newell: He married Lou Eron's daughter.

Helen: He came here with the Army to guard the prisoners.

Newell: Jamaicans. They were good fellows. We had six of them. They spoke a little more British accent.

Helen: I think your parents visited some of them in Jamaica when they went traveling around.

Newell: One of them was really a nice fellow. We built a little cabin by county trunk D. It's not there any more. I had an Indian after that that stayed there for a while.

The Jamaicans came one year. That would have been before the PWs. Barney Brazeau had the

Barbadians first. Next year, we had Jamaicans. Then we had the PWs. I sort of think ’45 was when the PWs were here.

We, our marsh, had them because labor was short in the war. I think there were eight marshes: Potter’s, Bennett’s, Gaynor’s, probably Duckart’s, maybe Gottschalk’s, and a couple down Warrens way, Oscar Potter.

Beaters

We hired Bob Case from Warrens to build a raker. My dad was instrumental in getting some of the material he needed. We got the first one. He built a couple that year; the next year, he got them all done.

He was a machinist. He’d built things for cranberry growers down there. It’s the same principle that’s still used. Just a bunch of teeth going through the vines.

Helen: One machine did the work of ten men. Now one machine does the work of twenty or thirty.

We were the first ones in this town to start beating. Our neighbors didn’t think much of our operation, I’m sure. We didn’t either. We had to learn.

Newell: We don’t really need much help now. We call them beaters now. We used to treat the berries so gently, with hand rakes. Now, it’s just to get them off to get them to the freezer.

My mother died in 1967 and, a year later, we went to the state of Washington. We heard of a beater out there. A machine to knock berries off the vine. So we went out there in February and saw it.

When I came back, I decided to try it. The year before we had built one of our own. It would get them off but it didn’t have enough power. It didn’t do a good job.

We bought a tractor from a windrower. Instead of adding on the windrower, we just bought the tractor part. We mounted the reel on the front. It took a little fitting. That did a good job.

From then on, it’s just been a matter of refining how you pick them up. We used to elevate them. Now, we pump them up. We’re still refining. We were the first ones in this town to use Babcock for our crop. It started about ’65. It wasn’t used extensively at first.

Helen: When we went to Canada for Expo ’67, our son was in school at Princeton. We came down to New Jersey. They were out there harvesting. They were beating.

Newell: Their machines were three feet wide at the most. They had thirteen of those Jamaicans lined up one in back of the other. I thought, “Wow, that’s for the birds.”

Then I saw them picking up and they had these booms and they pulled all the berries into one corner and they elevated them all up in just a matter of minutes into a truck. Oh boy, that’s pretty, if you get the labor on the harvesting end down, the picking up is really pretty neat.

Helen: It looked so beautiful. It was late October and the sky was so blue, the water was so blue and the berries were so red.

Newell: I think the Jonjaks up in Eagle River were the first to start the beating. We were the first ones in this township and around this area.

After a while, people could see that it was better than raking. So it’s all beating now except for the few marshes that rake for fresh fruit. Duckarts do it in our township, Walkers, that’s it.

L.M. Alexander

L.M. Alexander lived the other end of the street in Port Edwards. My dad thought a lot of him and he thought a lot of my dad. I remember a picture of L.M. in our home. His wife had written, “Lewis thinks you are the salt of the Earth” or something like that. Lida Alexander was out here with my mother when we were putting cranberries up off the wagon. Must have been in the thirties. He died in ’35 or ’36.

I was the age of his granddaughters. Ardean and I, she was a couple years younger than I. I knew John and Dorothy better.

Old Cranmoor

Cranmoor used to be pretty close. Everybody knew everybody. It was a lot more friendly than it is now. They used to have the schoolhouse. We used to have card parties. We used to have get-togethers over there. Nothing like that any more. There was no television then. You’d look forward to getting together. When Joanne was in sixth

Jasperson family, c. 1989. Standing, from left: Guy-Robert Detlefsen, William, Helen, Newell, Steve, and Amy Jasperson. Seated: Robert, JoAnn, Kristen Detlefsen, Ann and Laurie Jasperson.

grade they closed the school and we joined with Port Edwards.

Boy on the Marsh

My folks would go away sometimes. They'd leave me out here. I was out here one time, in the warehouse, and I stepped on a nail. It went into my heel. My grandmother cleaned it.

Have you ever heard of turpentine and goose grease? That's what she used.

There was no electricity in the house. During the night, she'd come in and take the bandage off it, swab it up again.

She had an onion syrup. It was the best damn thing for a sore throat you ever could have taken. I wish I knew how to make that. She had a glass of onions and sugar and all that. You just press the spoon down and get that. Boy was that good.

Used to come out and shoot, with a .22 rifle. Used to swim out there. Get bloodsuckers on you.

200 Barrels

When my grandfather died, my dad started keeping records of production. I don't think my grandfather ever kept a record of production. He'd keep track of the boxes and convert it to barrels per acre. If it came to fifty barrels per acre, he put a red check by it. That was doing good.

Now, fifty barrels you would think you were really having a hard time. Last year, we averaged close to 200. It's awful hard on an old marsh to average much over 200.

Flickering Shadows

Newell: Our first night out here, we opened the window in this quiet countryside and heard all the frogs. It was just very very loud. We thought we were all alone.

Helen: You know what you said. It was so dark. I had to laugh out loud because when you came

from the town, Port Edwards, to the country…

Newell: There was a street light outside my house in Port Edwards.

Helen: Maybe that was it.

Newell: There, it was always light. Out here, there was no light. When I was a kid, I'd be out here. I liked it during the day. There were always a lot of things to do but at night there wasn't much to do and they always had kerosene lanterns, all those flickering shadows…flickering shadows, softly come and go…I hated that.

Then my grandfather got a Kohler plant, a generator in the barn. The wire came over to the house. When you turned the light switch on, you could hear the generator in the barn start up. Then the lights would go on just like a rheostat up to full speed.

Electric Power

When we got power from Nekoosa-Edwards out here, we used that generator to power our clipper for clipping grass and weeds above the vines. It wasn't *always* clean out here. There were more weeds than cranberries.

Our clipper was made of five electric drill motors. We had this cable, probably 150 feet of cable, maybe 200, and we dragged a generator with a tractor, a cat.

We'd drag it as far as the cable would go so that the fellows could get out to the center ditch and back with the clipper. Then you'd work the cable up to the tractor and as far as you could go. That was your shift. Then, one of the guys that was carrying the clipper would tend cable.

One guy could sit. Every other time, he could sit for twenty minutes. It took about twenty minutes to clip the length of that cable.

The thing weighed over 100 pounds. You carried it with your arms sort of bent to carry it at the right height. I remember when I came in to eat under the pine trees, my hand was just jerking. I could hardly get the sandwich up to my mouth. My arms were just so tired. I was pretty young then.

My dad came out one night to see how we were doing, because we worked until six. They got him to go out and carry it a time or two. My mother told me later, that he said, "I don't know how the kid took it." It was work.

Night Shift

One thing I learned: I thought that the middle of the night was going to be the coldest, then it would start warming up toward morning. It's coldest right at sunup. When the sun just starts peeking up there, it'll drop a degree or two. Right when that sun comes out.

In those days, without a pickup to go around, we had a thermometer in the yard. When it'd get to 42 in the yard on the ground, then we'd have to start out and check the thermometers that were on the marsh. In those days, it would take practically all night to flood. It took an hour to just walk over to the Dodge marsh and then up around that 62 acres.

When it got to 42 early in the evening, you knew you were going to have to run some water. So that first trip, you were pulling water.

Then we come back and sit for an hour. Then another hour to go around and see how the water was coming. Come back and sit for an hour. Another hike around for an hour.

All night long.

Just sitting in the garage. We had that old garage out there.

Sitting, you'd hear the whippoorwills. Our light was a kerosene lantern. It'd shine about six, eight feet in front of you.

If there was a skunk, you'd come upon him pretty quick. Once in a while you'd see them. They were pretty close.

I know we still have our deer flies. I don't think progress has made much of a dent on deer flies. The mosquitoes have been less than sixty years ago.

When I was a kid, I'd ride on the wagon with my grandfather, over on the Dodge marsh. There were a lot of horse flies then. They're the ones that really bite.

Promotional tab to be hung in grocery stores, from Phil Brown's *Den of Antiquity.* Prior to 1920, a date evidenced by the "Grand Rapids" location for the Wisconsin Cranberry Sales Company. In 1920, Grand Rapids changed its name to Wisconsin Rapids. The Sales Company began in 1906.

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