February 2009
Volume II #20
Five years of Transcendental History

ARTIFACTS

Looks like **Stunt Night** at the Fieldhouse: Eileen Keating contributed photo and ID: girl, Audrey Newman; sailor, Virginia Zach; officer, Ethel Richard. Shadowlawn photo, page 2; President's message, 3; 1909 Wood County Atlas, 3-5; Administrator's message, 6; Beth Cochran pictures, 7; Joan Haasl, 8-9; Joe Jackan, 10-11; Gerald Johnson, 12-14; LuVerne Conway letter, 15; Lawrence Oliver photo, 16-17; Tim O'Day, 18-19; Sis Bouton, Buzz's Bar, 20-31; Uncle Dave, 32.

Shadowlawn

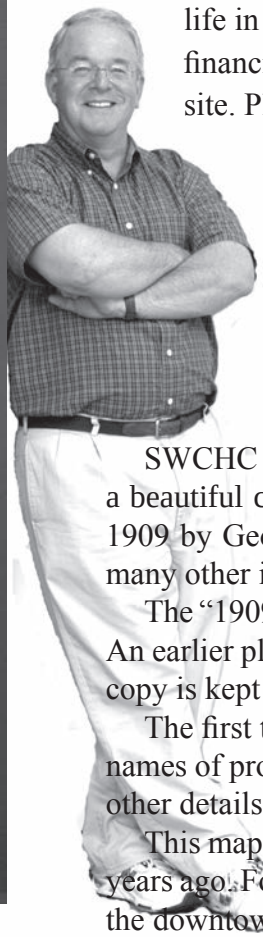
Charlotte Witter sometimes called her home at 540 Third Street S., "Shadowlawn." After 1948, it was the T.B. Scott Public Library and, since 1970, the SWCHC Museum. Photo by Uncle Dave shows window shadows on the stairway leading to second floor former living quarters of Charlotte, Isaac and Jere; later, children's room of the library.

A message from SWCHC president

Phil Brown

Thank you for your positive response to our annual appeal. Not only did most members renew but many sent in an extra donation. As of the end of January 2009, we counted 400 members, an all time high. I attribute most of this growth to the popularity of *Artifacts*. Please let Museum Administrator and assistant editor Lori Brost know of any address changes or problems with your current membership information.

Board members Barry Jens has done a great job putting an assortment of Don Krohn photographs on our web site. Don worked as a photographer for the *Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune* from 1947 to 1953. His collection of news photos beautifully depicts life in post World War II Wisconsin Rapids. In the coming years, with your continued financial support, we will be able to make more of our collection available on our web site. Please view the Krohn photographs at www.swch-museum.com.



From Phil's Den of Antiquity

1909 Atlas: Rapids, a Century Ago

SWCHC recently received, from member and *Artifacts* contributor, Gerald "Gene" Johnson, a beautiful copy of the *Standard Atlas of Wood County Wisconsin,* compiled and published in 1909 by George A. Ogle & Company, Chicago. Thanks to Mr. Johnson for this donation and many other items.

The "1909 Atlas" is one of the first plat books of Wood County that was extensively distributed. An earlier plat book, compiled and published by E.I. Philleo in the 1890s is so rare that our only copy is kept in a safety deposit box.

The first thing remarkable about the Atlas is its size. Each page is 17.5 X 15 inches. Besides names of property owners, we find schools, cemeteries, depots, railroads, hotels, town halls and other details for every township, village and city in Wood County.

This map of "Grand Rapids" shows in great detail what our "Wisconsin Rapids" was like 100 years ago. For instance, on the east side of the river, Oak Street was the main thoroughfare out of the downtown area; the city limit to the south was the Chicago & Northwestern R.R. line, now the path of our Riverview Expressway; the eastern boundary was primarily Sixteenth Street So.; taking up the large area in what is now the Witter Field area are Lincoln High School, the J.D. Witter Manual Training School and the Wood County Training (Normal) School.

On the west side of the river, note that the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul R.R. line runs down what is now Second Ave. The Chicago & Northwestern R.R. tracks cross Grand Ave. just west of the current location of City Hall. The Chicago & Northwestern depot was also located there. The Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul R.R. depot also had a prominent spot on the west side and Lowell School is well marked on this map.

See a portion of the 1909 Grand Rapids atlas on following two pages


FRANKLIN ST.(W.)
Stang Ellis Lumber Co.
C.M.& St.P. R.R. Depot Grounds
WEED ST.
HALE
Lowell School
SUMNER'S
C.M.& St.P.R.R.
NAYLOR'S
CHASE ST.
GARDNER
TENTH
NINTH & ST.
EIGHTH AVE.(S.)
SEVENTH
NAYLOR'S ADD
Union
FOURTH
JOHNSON
GRAND AVE.
JACKSON
ORIGINAL
COTTONMARS
Ger. Moravian Church Parsonage
GOGGINS ST.
BECHER
WITTER
McCOMB'S
THIRD
FIRST
HIGHWAY BRIDGE
WISCONSIN RIVER
RIVER
T. E. Nash
Mrs. N. Johnson
SECTION 18 CENTER
Lyon Land Co.
C.& N.W.R.R.
Public Park
G. L. Williams
Lot 18
WEEBER'S
RE-PLAT
NEEVES ADD
SECOND
THIRD
FOURTH
MADISON
Church
FRL LOT 5
J. D. Witter Est.
SUB OF NW 1/4
J. D. Witter Est.
SW 1/4
GRANITE ST.
PARK ST.
CHESTNUT
SHERMAN
DEWEY
GARDNER'S
WISCONSIN HEIGHTS ADD
SUB. OF
LOT 6
Lot 8
City


Standard Atlas of Wood County 1909

Beth: More Than Just A Pretty Face

By Lori Brost
Museum Administrator

Working with history is truly "turning data into insight," a phrase I noticed on a recent television commercial.

An important part of my assignment is to update the records of the artifacts collected by the South Wood County Historical Museum and enter them into PastPerfect software. Recording decades of paper files electronically allows us to identify the donor and the dates donated as well as to attach a picture of the artifact for easy recognition. After accessioning in the electronic format we can search for items in a number of ways. We can also back up information, reducing the chances of losing that data, a process which proved to be crucial when the main office computer had to be reformatted.

The software also gives us the opportunity to track artifacts used in our exhibits. For example, if someone has a question about an item used within the Toy Room, the donor information can easily be found with a few simple keystrokes.

When something has been donated or loaned, it goes through the following process. First an accession number is assigned, made up of the year, the rank in the number of donations during that year and the rank of that item within the donation. For example, the first item of this year was labeled as 2009-01-01. The name and address of the donor was recorded as well as the date of the donation. Included is a description of each item, including any previous owners and/or users. 2009-01-01 happened to be our first Nekoosa high school yearbooks (1927-30) and they came from my grandpa, Clifford Lewis!

Photographs are especially accessible in the digital format. We can scan a picture into the system for printing or viewing, while attaching a smaller "thumbnail" image for easy identification. The software also allows the user to record where the item is located or in what exhibit it is being used.

In deciding to enhance the Toy Room exhibit, I went through our photo collection and found a portrait of a beautiful little girl. The accession number was 57-03-88; which means the donation was made in 1957, the third donation of the year and the 88th piece of the donation. The paperwork stated that this is a picture of Katherine Elizabeth (Beth) Cochran, daughter of J.W. and Ella. There was another picture in that donation, of Beth with her father.

After the information was entered, I had to create a record for a third portrait, a painting. It had two separate numbers on the back, one of them being 57-03-88, the same as previously mentioned. There was another number that wasn't linked to any information. But there was a stamp on the back that said "Shepards Portraits in Chicago."

The History Center staff searched the Internet and found that this company specialized in life like pictures. Further searches showed Katherine Elizabeth was born in June 1886 and at some time between 1900 and 1910, began to reside at the House of the Feeble Minded in Chippewa Falls, Wis., where she passed away in February 1913, one month before her father. Uncle Dave found this story so interesting, he displayed the three pictures in the History Center office rather than the toy room as originally planned.

It's interesting to see how the desire to hang a picture in a room can lead to finding out a story of a vulnerable young girl and the struggle of her short life.

The Case of Toy Room Beth

Can you read the clues in the portraits now above the fireplace in the History Center office? Between two photographs is a painting. "Beth" Cochran seems to be wearing the same garment in all three. What is it about her posture and expression that invites speculation? What would the mentalist of Baker Street see? Lori's story opposite has some answers.

Photo by Uncle Dave

Joan Haasl

We Should Learn from History

"When fry cooks are in the market, it's time for everyone else to get out." So I read in a book about what lead up to the 1929 crash.

I remembered those words as I read about the soaring markets, and how twenty-something's on Wall Street were millionaires and were claiming they had forever tamed the market cycles. My mother gave me good advice about money. She always said "what goes up, can and will go down." She also said about her brokers, Merrill Lynch, "they are honest within the law and that should be no comfort for anyone." She also was fond of saying "don't put your money in anything that eats hay."

When I read about these kids on Wall Street I decided it was time to get out. I wasn't going to stick around for the crash I was sure was coming.

My mother and dad were on their way to being very comfortable. Dad was doing electrical contracting in a wide area. The day of the crash, my brother, four years old, remembered Dad coming home and mother saying 'can you save anything?" And Dad saying "only the business, if that."

My father's blood pressure and heart problems started then, but I never heard him complain. Asked about his health, he always said "just fine, thanks." Then he would say to me "how are you is a greeting, not a question."

When he died September 27, 1942, he was only fifty-nine, but looked like a tired, sick old man. President Roosevelt had the same look in his last term. One worn out by the worry and stress of keeping a business going during the depression, the other worn out by war.

When he died, an editorial in the *Daily Tribune* said he was one of the best known of us ordinary folks. It said he died with his boots on, (Russell Bird shooters) a fitting way for a man of his nature to pass on in the pursuit of life as he lived it and enjoyed. It said he made popular the greeting "Hi-Neighbor." What it didn't say was after this greeting always came, "How's business?" And of course in the 1930s business wasn't very good most of the time.

My mother hated mortgages and felt the road to hell was paved with them. When the FHA started backing mortgages, Dad's business picked up. My mother would say, "the fools, the fools, they will never get those mortgages paid off." I heard Dad say, "Mayme, don't you realize that's the only business I have right now."

He lost the bid on P.J. Jacobs High School at Stevens Point and was really upset about that. He did get a Sewage Treatment plant at Park Falls. One of the last good-size jobs was the National Guard Armory on Second Avenue South.

The depression helped my dad to die at what is now a young age, but his two pack a day cigarette habit also helped, as well as his diet of thick steaks, potatoes and gravy and always pie *al a mode* at the Quick Lunch.

Joan Haasl

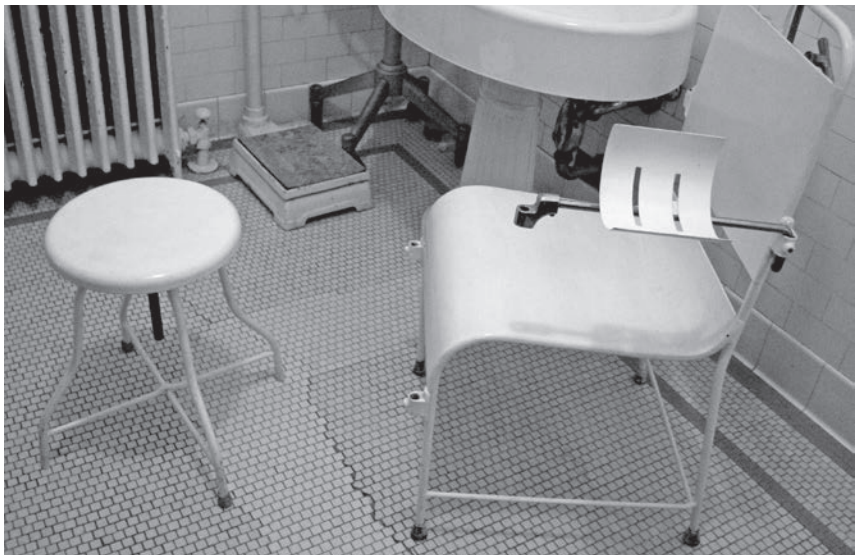
Memories of Dr. F.X. Pomainville

Dr. F.X. Pomainville was quite a character. There are many stories about him. When I was born in the big old house at 441 Third Street South, he was the attending physician. My mother must have been making a lot of noise because Dr. F.X. took a wood clothes pin from his black bag and told her to bite on it and be quiet.

At the old Howe School the students would be lined up to get shots. Nobody wanted to get a shot from F.X. His shots always resulted in a bruised arm. We would try to get in line by one of the other doctors, but the teachers would always grab kids and put them in F.X.'s line.

My personal experience with Dr. F.X. involved a white metal stool that is now at the Museum. It was in F.X.'s office upstairs in the Flat Iron Building. I had an ingrown toe nail. My dad took me to this office. Dr. F.X. had a big belly and a bald head. He sat on the metal stool, braced one of my feet against his big belly. With no freezing he pulled my toe nail from the other foot.

When he did that, I kicked and he fell off the stool. Out of breath, he finally managed to say "I don't know what you had to do that for girl." Seeing that white stool at the Museum always brings back memories of that painful day at the doctor's office.



Metal stool used by F.X Pomainville and chair for patient now part of medical display at the Museum. *Photo by Lori*

From: Jeeper Joe [mailto:jeepr@attglobal.net] Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2008 11:01 PM
To: kdengel@wctc.net
Subject: Artifacts February 2008

Hello Dave. Dick Morland, Lincoln '56 and a classmate sent me some *Artifacts*. In the February 2008 issue on page 11 is a photo of Rudy Exner and 3 boys. This photo was taken at a Patrol Boy Picnic sponsored by the Rapids Police Department. I attended the 1952 PBP. We were given all the pop and hot dogs we could handle. Enjoy the Artifacts very much. Lots of memories there.
Joe Jackan

Joe Jackan

12-Year-Old Motorhead

One day in the spring of 1950, I was walking past the Coast to Coast hardware store in Wisconsin Rapids when I was stopped in my tracks by an unusual poster. On it was an old Ford Tudor with all 4 wheels pointed skyward. Next to it stood a young man grinning ear to ear.

I discovered that the young man was Bert Carlton and he had just rolled the Ford. Further reading produced the information that Bert had built a new speedway for stock cars about 10 miles from town. The most exciting news was that it was only three miles from my home.

Thursday night was the first race. I didn't know anything about stock car racing, but neither did anyone else in town. I hopped on my bike and pedaled over to see my friend, Lee Wilke, who lived close to the track. I could hear unmuffled engines revving up as I drew close.

Lee and I started walking down the railroad tracks that passed behind the speedway. As we stopped next to the track, we could see that the pits were behind a screen of trees. We crept through the trees and waited until something exciting happened on the track, then boldly strolled into the pits.

What a great place for a 12 year old motorhead!

It seems they used a formula that allowed any combination, as long as engine and chassis matched. GM engines ran in GM chassis and Fords ran in Ford chassis. Since the new Oldsmobile V8 had just been introduced, Chevy Coupes with Olds engines ruled the roost. This would soon change when the Chrysler hemi hit the track. The Fords were down on power, but often managed to win due to being lighter and more agile. The Dodge red rams did well because they were lighter and almost as powerful as the Chryslers. One driver ran an old Hudson sedan with a Hornet 6. One of the noisiest cars on the track was a Chevy coupe with a 270 Jimmy engine. If you have ever heard a six with a split manifold, you will know how it sounded. Alas, old Noisy Ernie never won a main, but everyone knew when he was on the track.

As I grew older, girls and other things began to occupy my time. I still managed to attend an occasional race, but now as a paying customer. I will never forget those good times at Carlton's, later Crowns' Speedway, behind Al & Hazel's bar on Highway 54 East of Wisconsin Rapids.

Joe Jackan

Three Yanks Invade the South

Just after New Years in 1958, I was sitting in the Blue Note feeling sorry for myself because I had just wrecked my car and lost my driver's license. I started bemoaning the miserable sub-zero Wisconsin weather with two friends, Stu Miller and Art Lieber. We decided that a trip south was in order. A quick glance at a map told us that U.S. 51 went straight as a string right to the Promised Land. New Orleans here we come!

The next morning, I went in to see the district engineer at the State Highway Commission where I worked to see about a leave of absence. He said no dice, so I quit.

We were soon on our way south in Stu's tired 1955 Chevy four door, bought cheap at an auto auction, dark green and totally devoid of chrome. I think it was a taxi in its previous incarnation. It did have a stout V8 and standard transmission.

Stu had an unusual driving style, full of sound and fury. Foot on the floor, up through the gears until 10 miles over the posted speed limit was reached. Why we never collected a speeding ticket during the trip I'll never know.

Our first memorable stop was Memphis. Here we started to feel we were finally in the South. Our next stop was Jackson, Mississippi. We checked in at the Y and the evening being young, set out for adventure.

Some university students, recognizing our thirst in this dry state, agreed to lead us to some beer. Way out in the boondocks, we came to a shack surrounded by good old boys in various stages of inebriation. An old black man was busy selling Budweiser for a buck a can. We had several while the locals regaled us with stories of lynchings and cross burnings. This didn't seem to bother the old man dispensing the beer at all. We began to see that the South was really different.

As we entered Louisiana, we noticed some funny stuff hanging from the trees. Wow, Spanish moss, now we're cookin'! We stopped at a local diner for our morning coffee. One gulp brought gasps and grimaces. This was our first encounter with chicory, a diabolical beverage if there ever was one.

Soon we were on the causeway crossing Lake Ponchartrain. We had never seen so much concrete, twenty-three miles of it. You couldn't even see land when you were in the middle.

Once in the city, we headed for the Y. Bad news, no rooms were available. They sent us down the street to the Seaman's Town House where we were able to obtain rooms at the same rate as the Y.

In no time at all we discovered Bourbon Street, with establishments well equipped to separate fools from their money. The next morning, we started looking for gainful employment. Art and Stu were not successful. Due to previous work experience, I landed a job as rod man on an oil company survey crew. Since we could not all find work, I declined.

A few days were spent checking out the coeds at Tulane University and feeding the monkeys at Audubon Park. By this time, Bourbon Street had siphoned off enough of our capital to make a return home mandatory.

Heading back through Mississippi, the long suffering clutch finally gave up. We were able to find a local mechanic who put in a used clutch disk for twenty bucks. We left in the usual cloud of tire smoke. Art and I finally informed Stu that if he continued in this fashion, the next breakdown would find us beside the road with our thumbs out.

Entering Illinois at Cairo, we soon spotted a roadhouse and pulled in for some liquid refreshment. Being early, we were immediately surrounded by the entire female population. It didn't take them long to extract from my companions the fact that I had recently come across a windfall, the insurance settlement from my accident. Since the money was safely deposited in a bank back home, I was able to escape with my virginity intact.

On arrival home, we were greeted at the Blue Note with massive indifference. Behind our backs, the guys cast envious glances at our southern tans while we were busy boring the local maidens with our tales of derring-do. The weather was still sub-zero and we were flat broke.

Gerald Johnson

Paper Boy, 1940

"Out on the corner, standing so bold,
The little paper boy, hungry and cold"

Hank Williams song

When I received a bicycle for my twelfth birthday, little did I realize it was a prelude to a lifetime of employment.

Twelve years old was the entry level age for "carriers" of the *Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune*, and as luck would have it, my daily paper route included our home at 411 Boles Street. This "way station" and warming house about one half way through the paper route was a lifesaver in the winters of below zero temperatures and heavy snows that precluded the use of my bicycle.

The old *Tribune* building was "tucked in" across a small alleyway just south of the large Montgomery Ward store on the corner of West Grand Avenue and First Avenue. The building was a long low one-story plant, with offices facing the river, and a vintage letterpress printing press stationed at the back end bordering downtown Second Avenue.

The *Tribune* carrier crew of paper boys was the charge of Don Arndt, who was also the *Tribune* photographer. Carriers were paid four cents per customer per week, so my 100-household route generated four dollars weekly. I also had a Sunday *Milwaukee Sentinel* route in the same neighborhood with about 30 customers, earning five cents per sale ($1.50).

My 1940 *Daily Tribune* paper route curled down the Wisconsin River along First Avenue, starting at the *Tribune* building, skipping the Normington Laundry and Wisconsin Valley Creamery, and making the first delivery across Johnson Street at the old wooden Commercial Hotel (now the site of the round Tribune building).

The route continued down First Avenue, joining Second Avenue at Sweet's Grocery, past the Stanton Mead and Sherwood mansions, and then followed the river serving the Ted Olson, Dan Teas, Cicily Damon and Doctor Nehls homes before passing on a paved roadway under the NW railroad bridge into the heart of Lyon Park.

This old railroad bed is now the Riverview Expressway, and only a bike path crosses under the new bridge into Lyon Park at the rivers edge.

When the expressway was built, the railroad underpass on Second Avenue was filled in and turned into a broad intersection. This little underpass was an important hideout for my bicycle, paper bag, and me during the heavy rainstorms that were part of the *Daily Tribune* "carriers" lot.

All that remains of the underpass today is a half block long dead end lane called "Viaduct Street."

Crossing Lyon Park the delivery route served the homes just south of the railroad tracks in the area of Second Avenue, before cutting back into what was known as "Dogtown." Robert Street did not exist at this time.

To define Dogtown today in terms of perimeters, it would be necessary to draw a line from the expressway bridge at the river crossing, and carry it straight west across the railroad crossing on Seventeenth Avenue. This then would be the north boundary of the storied place called "Dogtown".

The southern boundary of Dogtown would be Sisco's grocery at the corners of Second Avenue, Seventeenth and Gaynor, now the site of the traffic control "roundabout."

Another possible south boundary would be the long ago removed trap shooting gallery in Tourist Park, about five hundred yards down on Second Avenue towards Port Edwards.

Sisco's Grocery deserves further mention. It had two exotic gas pumps. Gasoline was hand lever pumped into a glass tank at the top of the pump structure (fun to watch) and then drained by hose into the automobile. Owner Lyle Sisco was often exhausted from pumping when several customers at a time needed fuel. The glass tanks held only five gallons of gasoline.

Across from Sisco's on the other side of the Second Avenue highway was the upper end of Tourist Auto Park. Here a telephone pole marked the "stop" of the Tri City bus line owned by John Schenk.

The west boundary of Dogtown was the end of Gaynor Avenue, ending at the William farm. (The connecting George Road did not exist at this time.) The William farm is today a cranberry marsh.

The Twenty-first Avenue to Twenty-ninth Avenue area was heavily wooded until Tom Teske built several hundred units of housing in the area in the 1970s.

The Dairy State Cheese Storage Plant at the railroad tracks and Tony Golla farm across the street pretty much defined Gaynor Avenue, although three old farms existed west on this unpaved road.

Two of these old farms, the Boles Farm where we Johnson's lived from 1933-1938, and the Wilson Farm, are now part of the West Junior High School site.

The inside streets of Dogtown in this area are Wickham, Spencer and Woodbine Streets, and Eighteenth and Nineteenth Avenues.

Our 1938 Johnson homestead was hand-built on Boles Street in Dogtown, in a heavily wooded area on an unpaved road with no sewer or water in this undeveloped section of that street.

When our family moved to the homestead, the term "Dogtown" had long been in place, and no one ever explained to me the origin of the nickname.

During my paper carrier tour in Dogtown 1940-1944, there were few dogs in the area. Of the few on my paper route, one comes to mind, a big black Labrador to whom I "handed" a rolled up newspaper each day at the back door of a home on the corner of Twentieth and Gaynor Avenues.

While dogs were scarce, kids were everywhere.

My Dogtown gang numbered eleven boys the same age (ten years old) and there were perhaps another dozen a couple of years younger. Add to that another twenty a couple years or so younger than that, and maybe a dozen a few years older, including my two brothers.

Of our Dogtown gang, George Andrin, Bob Keith, Ozzie Shegonee and I lived on Boles Street, Bernie Musch, Bror Worland and Louie Roach lived on Seventeenth Avenue, Bill Sullivan lived on Gaynor Avenue, and on the inner streets Bob Jepson, Darrell Knuth and near Lyon Park, Bob Husome.

The North end of Tourist Park was our baseball field. The home plate was across from Sisco's grocery store, now the site of the Wisconsin State office building. The infield of our ball park was fairly level, but the outfield was dotted with Norway and white pine trees, and was "rolling" in nature.

A fly ball that landed in the pine trees, automatically became a "double" and a number of other eclectic rules were also in place. Several left-handed hitters, especially Bill Sullivan, caused problems by lining hits past first base and out onto the highway. I recall several bouncing off automobiles.

Where the armory sits today was a sanitary landfill, more simply called a dump. This landfill ran south along the west side of the highway over an area that now houses the elderly housing complex, and ended in the area further south where private homes exist today.

With the riverside (Tourist) park on the other side of the street, there were no homes on the highway until the road crossed over the Boles Creek, and then became Centralia, or Southside, as it was more commonly called.

Southside was a Nekoosa Edwards Paper Company town. Men employed at the Centralia Power Plant and Port Edwards mill lived here in company houses, although there were a number of 'non company' homes in the small settlement as well.

Some of the residents living there at the time were the Vincent Bliss family, Westovers, Jensens, Newfeldts and Grogans, as well as police chief Todd Payne and his daughter Laura. Southside was a separate entity, not considered part of Dogtown.

Bernard Musch senior was always known as the "Mayor" of Dogtown. A stern-faced paper mill worker (Consolidated) with a large family, he always sat on his front porch and waited for the evening *Daily Tribune* newspaper.

Johnson - Dogtown cont.

The area across the street to the west for several blocks was an open field at the time, and when I stopped on my paper route to pay court to pretty Margaret Mrochek, the "mayor," who could see his lollygagging paper boy, fumed as the minutes flew by without his beloved newspaper.

A very unique "Dogtown" tradition was the "Lutesfisk" feed put on yearly by the Anderson family that lived at the corner of Boles and Woodbine Street.

Jo Anderson, Bernard Musch, Sr., Pete Jepson and Bror Worland Sr. were "experts" in the creation of this "exotic" and smelly ethnic food.

The overall preparation of the fish took several days and was marked by the delivery of a number of one-eighth and quarter barrels of beer to the cooking site, which was in the Anderson's home basement.

The event was always memorable, a very noisy time! Since Joe Anderson was a sheeting department supervisor at the Consolidated Wisconsin Rapids mill, company executives, including personnel manager Leo Barrette were invited to attend.

At these memorable events, my young friend, Jim Anderson, was often given a small soup bowl of beer to take out into the yard. Jim was about eight years old.

The Anderson home was also the site of the "Garage Theater" shows put on by the older Anderson and Musch girls and the pretty next door neighbor, Betty Kester.

The Anderson garage (Andersons had no car), was double width and the innovative dance program put on by the fourteen to fifteen year old girls was a costume show. Blankets were stretched on a wire across the front of the garage, where the performers were staged, and chairs were set up for the audience of kids, all younger than the performers.

We sat in awe of the pretty costumes, the shows were not especially daring, but back then a bare belly button was a big deal. Once I was made to sit outside for one "set" because I was so wowed. (I had no sisters!)

Dogtown was a spacious, expansive place to grow up. The fields and woods around the area were great playgrounds, there were several small ponds to build rafts on, and when we were a little older, the river was nearby to fish for suckers, carp and bullheads.

Delivering papers to Dogtown was comfortable. The subscribers were almost all like neighbors except for the riverfront section, and when the snow was deep, or the rain cold and miserable, the living room or front porch of many homes was opened to me.

Our little homestead house in Dogtown still stands, now numbered 1411 Boles Street. I sold it at the time of my mother's death in 1990.

Don Krohn photo of WR police chief Exner and patrol boys as described on p. 10.

Letter to Lori

December 13, 2008

LuVerne Heger Conway
Sarasota, FL 34236

Dear Lori,

I will try to write very clearly, although I was an expert typist when I graduated from Lincoln High School in 1936. I have given up on all communication gadgets except the telephone, and the pen.

I mentioned to you that 3rd Street North was very different from 3rd Street South. Our third street was by and large working class. The men were employed by the Green Bay & Western RR, the paper mill, Sampson Canning (we called it The Bean Factory) and Prentiss Wabers (the "Stove Factory").

The important cross street was Plover and we played under the arc light and sometimes on Johnson's big front porch, an important retreat when it rained or the horses got loose from the Armory Barn near Arpin's Hill. I am speaking of my childhood years, early twenties, before we moved to Port Arthur, Ontario, in 1927.

My playmates were the Draland girls, Agnes Johnson, and Clara Flammang. Agnes and Clara went to SS Peter & Paul across the street but most of us went to the Irving School. I am so glad it has been saved. We had good teachers (Miss Link and Miss Schnable) and a janitor (Ikey?) who pushed us in the swings and let us ring the big bell on top of the school.

The Mothers' Club helped the teachers produce Peter Rabbit. Bob Whitrock was Peter, Stella Amundson was Mrs. Rabbit, Dona Draland was Mopsy and I was Flopsy. Donald Schroeder was Mr. McGregor and the rest of the school were vegetables in his garden. Sidney Garber was "the biggest, biggest bean, growing in the garden green" and I also did a dance as The Queen of the Lettuce Leaves.

Five years in Port Arthur started out with a shock, but we quickly got used to our new schools and neighborhood. The move had been necessary because Mr. Mead had bought a paper mill there in 1927 and he needed some trained people to get things organized. He sold that mill in 1932, just in time for me to begin my freshman year at Lincoln High, and I was happy to be an American again.

Most of my high school years, were "Depression" years. I well remember the "Blue Eagle" when it was first posted on Sutor's Grocery Store window. People were hopeful, trusting FDR to bring back better times. There were bright spots. You could get a super hamburger for ten cents at Harry's (Wilpolt's) and Mrs. Sparks would make you a great dress for five dollars to wear to Homecoming. One of our neighbors, however, assured me that I would never see the money put into the Social Security system.

After I graduated, I got a job at Consolidated doing stenographic work at fourteen dollars a week. I saved half of every check to build a bankroll to go to college, which I did after two and a half years. My last years at the Mill were an education I have long cherished.

I was secretary to Clarence Jackson, the mill manager. He could "manage" without effort because the workmen trusted him and he trusted the workers. He believed that an employer should not encroach on matters not relevant to the job, such as dictating house colors or hedge heights like in the Kohler Company "villages" of the time. The worker had a right to bargain for his labor and alone he would not get very far, but a union could bargain for him effectively. I can only remember one man being fired while I worked for Mr. Jackson, and that was for repeated drunkenness.

There were other town leaders I remember with pleasure: F.X. Pomainville, Mrs. Farrish, Torry Torresani, Mr. Horningold, Bernie Ziegler. The last named was ever so patient with all aspiring musicians. He tried me out on the bass drum, but I was always a half a beat slow, so he let me carry the civil war rifle as color guard so I could march with the band.

My closest friend at Lincoln High was Mary Ellen Daly, who sadly, died six months ago. I am now 90.

Box Camera, c. 1950

Photo by Lawrence Oliver, Vesper

Tim O'Day

Sister Annabelle

Sister Annabelle was six foot two.
Wore a raven black veil,
Wore pointy black shoes.
When the weather was cold
She wore a woolen black shawl.
It was said she hated children,
Hated them all!

Strict disciplinarian, tugger of ears.
How I loathed her
in my grade school years.

Got scars on my knuckles
From being hit with a rule
Because God will not tolerate
Left-handed fools.

She was mean, she was vile,
Her tongue a terrible sword.
She devoted her life
To the cause of the Lord.

A Winter's Tale

When the mercury sinks faster than my 401K,
when the polar wind howls, when the sky turns leaden gray,
when the icy grip of old man winter freezes the batteries in cars,
it reminds me of the time my cousin licked the monkey bars.

When there is treacherous ice on every sidewalk, when the driveway is full of snow,
when I can only find one mitten, when it's 25 below,
when the possibility of frostbite is oh so very real
I remember how my cousin once licked that playground steel.

Whose idea was it? I swear it wasn't me!
It may have been his older brother, more adept in cruelty.
It may have been his sister, she could show a nasty streak,
or any of my childhood kin. We all preyed upon the weak.

Winter's Tale cont.

It may have been a double-dog-dare, the kind you can't refuse,
It may have been some other bet he was sure he wouldn't lose.
The one thing I can tell you (he still bears the scars) is that
He'd be unhappy I've told you he licked the monkey bars.

It doesn't matter how it happened, just that it did.
I'm sure you've all done something stupid like all bratty kids.
Oh I wish you could have seen it, it's a memory that lasts
how he just gave one little lick and how it held him fast!

He knew he was in trouble ("What the heck is going on?")
("Hey you guys I think I'm stuck!") Famous words that linger on.
("Come on you guys please help me") He begged with a moan.
But if we tried to remove him, he'd emit a painful groan.

Someone suggested matches, someone else boiling tea!
Somebody shouted, "Hey I got it! Anybody got to pee?"
"Rip his tongue off ," someone hollered, "Get a knife!" I heard another say.
"C'mon you guys," my cousin whimpered, "Don't leave me here all day."

Suggestions fell like snowflakes on the playground of de Paul
how we reveled in our merriment until we heard a stern voice call.
"What have we here?" asked Sister Annabelle, fierce Franciscan nun.
She loomed like sin above us, mean as they come.

But her glare became a smile, she laughed, "Oh my stars!"
"Didn't your mother ever tell you not to lick the monkey bars?"
From somewhere deep inside her habit she produced a crystal glass,
poured warm water till the metal no longer held him fast.

Do you believe in miracles? I believe I witnessed one that day
I saw the meanest nun at St. Vinny's mean demeanor melt away.
So now when winter starts to get me down, as it does every year
To recall my cousin and Sister Annabelle fills me with good cheer.

She was like a mother but everybody called her

Sis

Lucille "Sis" Bouton
931 19th Street South, Wisconsin Rapids
SWCHC Interview with Dave Engel
19 November 1998
Edited and condensed in 2009

My dad nicknamed me. He always called me 'Sis' and that stuck with me. My full name is Lucille Eleanor. I was born June 9, 1918, in Globe, Wis., right outside Neillsville. I guess there's nothing left there any more.

I was born at home, the baby of five children. My parents were John and Mayme Forderbrueck.

They came from someplace in Iowa with horses and buggy. They followed my mother's mother and father who had come just previous to them. My grandparents built a log house behind those mounds in Neillsville.

I don't remember living in Globe at all. I never was back there. The first I can remember is when we moved north of Hewitt on a farm. My mother was sick. She had a kidney problem. I vaguely remember a few things with her. How she made donut holes and told me to take them out to my brother. And coming home from the hospital and I was afraid of her when my dad brought her home one time. And I remember a Christmas tree that she'd trimmed and we had the candles we couldn't light unless people were in that room.

One time I remember crawling in bed between the both of them. I thought that I was just the luckiest girl in the world, to be able to do that. I had that feeling. I remember that.

And I remember about Easter. Two brown eggs were on the porch and she told me to go out and get them. She must have put them out there. Isn't that crazy?

Then my mother died when I was four-and-a-half [1923].

She was very religious. Catholic. When my mother was sick, my oldest sister, Olive, was about in fourth grade. She had to quit school to take care of us. We couldn't take care of my mother, so my dad had to take her to Neillsville, to her mother. My grandmother took care of her and then she died in Grandma's house. She's buried in Neillsville.

I walked into the room after she died, with Grandma. My mother's eyes were open. My grandma just closed them. Then, my grandma, I don't know if she made this up, or what, but she told us kids that when my mother was dying, she said, 'Mom, just look. The heavens opened up and there's a stairway and Trace, [another sister], is coming down to get me.'

I remember that, and this I can't figure out: my grandma had two big cherry trees in the back of her house. The big ones, the bing ones. The funeral director took two pails of something that they drew out of my mother, and poured it under those cherry trees. Would it have been the blood, or what? I remember that.

Grandma's name was Kesseler. But I don't know what her first name was. Just Grandma.

She wasn't afraid of a snake because I was out getting cows with her one time and there was a snake right close to the path. The cows always had a path and we were walking down that. She just jerked me to the side and kept on walking. But they tell me if a mouse was in the house, she'd get up on the table. So that's about the size of remembering her.

My grandma wanted to keep me, my next sister and me, but oh no, we went down the road and we cried. We didn't want to stay with her.

Sis Bouton 1998

Photo by Uncle Dave

We wanted to be together. So my dad took us all back to Hewitt, or the other side of Hewitt. Olive had to quit school and help us, take care of us. She was the oldest.

We moved from there to Neillsville. Why, I don't know. From Neillsville, we moved to Arpin, where we went on another farm there. In the Depression, I think it was '29, we lost the farm. My dad went on the road as a salesman. He was a good talker.

Two of my sisters were married, so us kids, if we didn't have a job, we could live with them. At least we had a roof over our heads.

My brother died, in about '38 or something [Nov. 19, 1937, at Chili, Wis.]. He died in a traffic accident. He was my only brother. His named was Leonard.

I worked on the farm, Dave, for a dollar a week. Not on our farm, but a family from Arpin. I had a roof over my head and that. I also baby-sat. You'd get ten cents a night. And I washed walls and everything for this one woman and I got 20 cents that day. Picked beans all one day and made 21 cents.

I went to Powers Bluff grade school. It was right below the hill, on the east side of the road going down from Arpin. That was when I lived on our farm that we lost. It was a mile south of Arpin. Schuenemans were neighbors. 'Shine-a-mun.' They say 'Shoonamun' now. There's only Eldon left.

And Roetses. Their son was in the same grade with me. Elsie was like a mother. They were like father and mother to me when our family split up. They lived a half a mile south of Arpin and we lived a mile.

We moved to Arpin when I was eight. I went to Arpin graded for a little while, in the village. For a little while, after we got off the farm. I stayed with my sister then. She lived right in town. Both of my sisters did for a while.

In Arpin, we had a Pansy Club [1933-34]. I don't know where we got the name.

There would be three carloads. We had the justice of the peace, Max Leopold. Max never took his wife along. We had the barber and his wife. Then we had Jack Joiner? And his wife. He was the town chairman. Cliff Bluett. Was an undersheriff. He had a hardware store out there. He would be with us. Lester Lashke, he was the storekeeper.

I was the youngest one in the bunch and I'd run from bar to bar and get people going. Three carloads would travel together and we'd go to Marshfield. We stopped at that one bar, then we'd go to Marshfield. Everybody loved to dance. The barber and his wife, they were good singers. They sang. They always had some small bands and that around.

The main place we went would be the Rendezvous, seven miles on the other side of Marshfield. They always had a band there. We knew Wes Haydon, he was from Arpin. He played the piano and guitar. He played with Howie Sturtz for quite a few years. They played on TV. We used to watch it.

There was a couple of bachelors that was older than me but they were with the bunch. Nick Tischendorf and Leo Deneering and those guys. Clarence Deedon was supposed to be Seventh Day Advent but he wasn't. Clarence Deedon took my older sisters out. I introduced him to his wife.

I worked at the farm at these Hauses for that dollar a week. I was sixteen, seventeen. Just ask Ralph Hause who his best hired man was. I would help out at the barns and I would milk cows. One night, I milked fifteen by hand because they were threshing.

I was going out, because with my sisters and all of us, they always took me along.

Grace Hause was a great friend of Rudy Exner's sister, Jingles. They worked in Milwaukee but Grace got TB at that time and she was in a sanitarium down there for a while. When she got well, she still had to rest. She came to room at Arpin with her mother and then the two brothers that I worked for.

We could stay out all night. One night, I was getting home early in the morning and she said, 'Sis,' and I thought, 'Now what.'

She called me into her room and she said, 'You sure have a good time.'

'Yeah,' I said, 'I do.'

Something came up and she said, 'What about me?' She just didn't know anybody any more.

I said, 'Would you like to go along, Grace?'

She was very refined and way different than this farmer girl, you know. I said, 'Well, next week, you're gonna go with us.'

That's how she met this Clarence Deedon. He would come and get me a lot of times but he dated my two older sisters first. He always felt like he had to take care of me, so we all called him, 'Father.' We called him 'Father' until the day he died. If I was talking about 'Father Deedon,' people thought it was a priest. He was no priest, you know.

He and his brother always came to the old Armory in Rapids. That's how I got started coming. I guess I missed eleven dances in five years.

It was great. They had the big bands. You just met people. Everybody was such good dancers then it seemed like. You could get in there for fifteen cents.

After Mr. and Mr. Roets moved to the Rapids, he had a filling station on Third or Fourth Avenue, a little Cities Service, Joe Roets. They moved here and they were the ones that were like a mother and father to me. They wanted me to come to the Rapids too. She took me to the Witter Hotel one day and I got a job waiting table. We had to do rooms too. I knew nothing about setting a table. Years ago, you just put the spoons in the glass on the table. I learned a lot.

I knew Ursula Kortkamp there. She is my very best friend to this day. Hazel's sister. You must have met Ursula. I met her in Arpin, roller skating on Saturday nights, and the free shows when I went with my dad and whoever was around. We had free shows outside at Arpin, I think it was on the side, between the drugstore and a house. That's how I met Ursula. I never had skates, so she brought Hazel's down so I

used to wear Hazel's. We were darn hard up all the time. But we didn't know we were hard up because everybody was.

So then I knew Ursula was at the Witter Hotel. She was working here and going to school. I never had ten dollars to pay tuition to go to Auburndale and I never had a way to go. Then my one brother-in-law says he'd give me fifty cents a week if I helped his wife take care of the two oldest kids so then I had a roof over my head too for a few years. Then I went and worked at Hause's for a dollar a week and that's how I come to the Rapids [1935].

We sure had a lot of fun. I wouldn't change my life for anybody I knew.

The Armory had the big bands. One fella, every time they played 'In the Mood,' he'd holler at me. That's the only talent I've got, is to dance, and I danced with all the best dancers around in this area. This one guy'd always holler at me when it was 'In the Mood.' That was our dance.

Another one, Bud Bandelin, was a dentist's son, when they played 'White Heat,' that was a fast song; and Pat Vaughn, 'Tea for Two' was our song.

There was one band that dressed like clowns. Each one had a different clown suit on and they were good. Most of the bands were dressed in suits. The leader would be probably in a tux. So they all had class.

It was crowded. It was great. We could go to dances almost every night of the week. Ursula and I would be some place where you could dance.

We got through [Witter Hotel] at 8 o'clock and when you're young, you're not staying in. If we didn't have a date, we'd go to Wilpolt's. The pool hall was right next door. If you didn't have a date, the boys would naturally come in. One time, some darn guys, Ursula and I were walking by there and they pulled me in there.

I thought, 'Oh my God.' You never go to a pool hall. 'Now you can say you was to a pool hall!'

I got a big bang out of that but I was embarrassed.

So then, you could go out to Jim Campbell's, before it was Wilbern's, called Club 8, I think.

We could go out there. You went in the bar and most of the places we went had a back room with booths and a juke box. So every night, there was some place we could go. Then we went to the [Indian Crossing] Casino [Waupaca], about three nights a week. There was always somebody taking us.

One night, there was somebody just in a coupe. So there was seven of us in that coupe. We got as far as Plover and the cop stopped us. They were hanging on the outside. So then, three of us had to get off. But somebody else came along from Rapids and picked us up and we got to the Casino.

We didn't usually want to go on a date there because we would probably go to Pep's first. That was Tomorrow River. That was a bar. We'd go there first, and Dave, believe it or not, we'd have probably nine dances ahead by the time we got to the Casino. We just remembered it like that.

Even from the Armory, if there wasn't enough songs that night, we would say, 'Well, next week then.' There was a fellow that I dated from Point. I saw him dance one night there and I thought, 'Oh God, is he a good dancer. Would I ever love to dance with him.' Before the night was over, he asked me and I almost fainted.

Then he brought over a fellow that used to give dancing lessons at the Aragon, in Chicago. This guy was called, 'Twinkie,' because he was a Twinkie salesman and he stayed at the Whiting Hotel where this friend of mine worked as a bellhop.

Twinkie was there at a few other dances but he had a girlfriend from Rudolph or something. She had her hair braided and they were always dressed up. I used to watch them dance. When this friend of mine, he introduced me first, of course. So this guy asked me to dance and I never made a mistake with him. The girls I knew from town came running up to me and they said, 'Sis, who was that?'

He was a big guy and he had a mustache and he sold Twinkies. I thought that was a big break for me.

I won a jitterbug contest at the Lincoln High School with Joe Landowski from Point. He's dead. He was a friend of this Chuck, this friend of mine. This Chuck took me to maybe four or five formals. Then he was in the Guards. He was a good football player. He made the hall of fame. Chuck Houck.

Some of these sorority girls didn't have dates, so he'd get their card and I would go in like that on somebody else's name.

One night, I was in the rest room at this one dance, I thought it was all pretty special for me, dumb little farmer girl. Two girls came in and they were so excited about this formal. One of them said, something about being excited. 'Oh,' she said. 'Chuck Houck is here.'

The other girl said, 'Who's that?'

'Well, he's only the best dancer at the college.'

And I was in the stall.

Those were the things that meant so much to me that I just felt like I really had a good life. From '34 to '39.

When we worked at the hotel, there were some of these rich girls came in. They never seemed to have any fun. Go out to dinner and that's about it. They didn't have the fun that we had. Ursula and I some weekends we'd have to work down at the [Wisconsin] Dells because the guy that owned the Witter Hotel, Mr. Daniels, owned Chula Vista. And we worked hard. At night, we'd get through maybe eight, nine o'clock and you had to go downtown. We got to know Monk [Monk's Bar, Dells] real well.

They had an open air pavilion right where, I believe, the dime store's there now, and that was nice. You could get three dances for a quarter. We didn't know anybody but Ursula could follow me real good and I could lead. We'd get out there and dance one dance and 'bing!' the rest of the night, all kinds of dances. Some of them were good and some of them weren't. You wouldn't get home until maybe three, four in the morning and have to get up at 5:30 and wait table and make up the cottages. It was rough but at night we were ready to go again.

One couple from town here they eventually got married they were going together, working at the hotel. Through the summer, they were both sent down there. One night she said to me, 'Sis, I met a new bartender downtown. You gotta meet him.'

By the end of the night, by the next morning, I had met 22 of them. Been to 22 places through the night. We never forgot that. Some good times.

We didn't like Daniels. But a lot of times, you don't like your boss. The hostess there, that really run the hotel for him, Eva, we got along real well with her and her mother lived with her. I guess she was Mr. Daniel's girlfriend. As far as I knew, he was never married. They lived right across the hall from one another. Her mother stayed with her but she was just a jewel. Kate, we called her. We always ran to her every day and told us where we were the night before. She was somebody for us to confide in, like a mother figure.

When I first came to town, Joe Roets, he saw that I got some insurance. And then, my first wrist watch and I still have it. He ordered it for me and I think it cost me $28. It's a Waltham. Every dollar I had extra, I'd walk from the Witter Hotel over to 4th Avenue and pay him a dollar on it.

I was out to the Coach one night after the Armory. Buzz was in town working for Red's but we didn't get to Red's Dixie Bar that much. There was a little place to dance but we didn't get there that much.

Anyhow, we're out to the Coach one night and Webb Gaedtke...the Coach was over the viaduct where the Starlight is now. It was a railroad coach. They added something on that you could dance back there. So we were out there and I knew Webb Gaedtke because he married Arna Schueneman, my neighbor in Arpin. I used to dance with Webb. He was with Buzz.

He introduced me to Buzz and then I danced with Buzz. He asked where I worked and I told him. He said he thought he'd get around there some time. But Buzz could never get to the Armory that often because he always had to tend bar Friday nights with his brother at the Dixie Bar.

His brother was called Red. His name was Carl. He married the first cranberry queen. He came up here to play semi-pro ball with old Jake Chadwick and that bunch.

I remember out to Hause's, they had a radio and they would have to have it on because they liked the sports. I remember they talked about the [Rapids baseball] games then already, on the radio. So Red came with those guys.

I didn't go out with Buzz then. Betty Gleason, from Port [Edwards], I saw her one time down at Wilpolt's.

She said, 'Sis, let's walk up to the Dixie Bar. You've gotta meet this bartender up there.'

So she introduced me to Buzz and I said, 'Oh yeah, I had met him.' So I'd seen him a few times and that was it.

He was going with a girl, Marge She worked at the dime store. She was a little girl, a nice girl. They broke up for two weeks. Not Marge Staven, who was Marge Rodeghier, and always chummed with Ursula and I.

So one night, Marge [Rodeghier] and I didn't have a date, so of course, we went to Wilpolt's. Buzz was in there with a friend of his. They were sitting at the counter. We always sat in a booth. Pretty soon, the two of them came down. Buzz sat beside me and that other guy sat by Marge. They wanted to go out to the Venetian, because we could dance out there. So we did.

Then Buzz told me. I didn't know he was going with Marge. He said they had broken up for two weeks and were going to each go their way and see how they felt after two weeks. I kinda forgot about that.

The two weeks were up and we were in Wilpolt's again and Buzz was with me. After I met him and went out with him that night, he was always just around. Then he was called to the phone. When he came back, he had a crazy smile on his face, just like a guilty feeling.

I said, 'What was that all about?'

He said, 'That was Marge,' calling to see if he was coming over, because the two weeks were up. And he told her no.

Then we were going to go down to the Dixie Bar and we walked out of Wilpolt's and we met those girls. She chummed with about four girls. Right smack, we met them. Right by the dime store. That was it.

That was in '38, early spring, it seemed like. I'm not good on dates. He lived with Red on 4th Street, right across from the Post Office. With Red and Fran.

Ursula got sick and she had to quit the Witter Hotel. And I lived above Perry's Sport Shop. I got my ring just before Thanksgiving and we were married the 29th of January, 1939.

We started out, when he worked for Red, and he wanted to get in business for himself. Then Red sold the bar to someone else, which we always felt...but of course we didn't have any money. We rented what was called the Ranch House on 7th Avenue. It was a root beer stand.

Do you remember any bars there, like Emil Schara's? Or anything like that? Emil was across the street there. We were behind the Hiawatha [bar].

The railroad men would come in. We just had sandwiches and that. Some of them knew Buzz from the Dixie Bar. The first thing Buzz had to make would be hamburger steak and boiled potatoes and a vegetable. So they're the ones that pushed him into that.

I think there was about fifteen stools inside of that place. It wasn't that big. The first carhop we had was Peggy Engel. She just retired from the courthouse or something. Did you know Glen Engel? She was his daughter. She was in high school and she was our first carhop. She still comes in the bar.

Then we had a chance to...we knew that Obermeier was going out of that place there so we were able to get that place in his building. It was bigger for us.

At one time, Dave, we had [guys from] four railroads [in Rapids]. We had good cooks there. We would feed a lot of truck drivers. You know if you've got that kind of business, you've got a good business. It was called the Red Ball Café.

Buzz wasn't too happy in the restaurant business. I wasn't either. You had a lot of work and we were raising those kids too and had to get somebody to...

Buzz was working at Red's Dixie Bar during the [World] war [II].

12-24-53

4-29-54

PURCHASE CAFE

Announcement was made today by Mr. and Mrs. Farnum Bouton, former operators of Buzz's Ranch House Drive-In at 151 7th Ave. S., that they have purchased the Red Ball Cafe, 147 4th Ave. N., from Mrs. William Obermeier. The new owners will continue to operate the cafe under its present name.

We were in Manitowoc. He worked at the shipyards down there. He was an inspector. Submarines. We lived in Manitowoc and we lived in Sheboygan for a while before we could get a government house in Manitowoc. We had one kid then.

I can't remember the names of the three submarines that were launched at that time. I did get to see one being launched. [Editor's father, Donald Engel, also worked in Manitowoc shipyards].

When he did get drafted, then we had already moved back here. He was in the hospital with ulcers when he got his notice. That's the only thing we ever heard. When we reported that he was in the hospital, that was it. He was sick seven times in the hospital until Dr. Starr cut that ulcer out. After that, he was better. Then [much later] he got Alzheimer's.

Down there [Manitowoc], Buzz also worked at the Brita Center. That was a bowling alley and a nightclub and a bar. Ask your Mom if she knew the Bricks, Freddy Brick, that owned this Brita Center and that.

We had 03L Custerdale. That was their government homes.

We lived in Sheboygan at first and Buzz had to take the bus. There was a bus going back and forth. At first, he didn't think he wanted to live in a government home. But in Sheboygan, we weren't happy at all. It was a cliquey town and that. So we were happy to get into Manitowoc and make some good friends there.

He worked at this Brita Center. One day, he gave blood and the next week, he had to get blood because he just got so pale and he just about passed out. He went to the hospital and he was bleeding. He had bleeding ulcers. That was his first time he heard of that. We had Farney at that time,

Then Marsha was born down there. She was born in the Manitowoc hospital. Oh, the nuns were just so so nice. We were in the hospital quite a while, six, seven days.

One of the nurses, we got to talking about shots for their kids, you know. That's the thing that had really always bothered me. I don't believe in them.

So I mentioned this to one of the nurses and she says, 'Well, Dr. Wahl, he was my doctor down there. He was the county doctor that went around to the schools and gave them all those shots.'

She says, 'He goes around and gives shots to everybody else but he doesn't give them to his own kids.'

Courtesy Marge Romanski Hamm

Leonard Romanski property that became Buzz's Bar (on West Grand Avenue, across from the "old" city hall, property now part of present city hall complex).

Then I doctored with the chiropractors and stuff and I read a lot of literature. I used to lay in bed at night and pray that God would show me the way. Should I give my kids the shots or shouldn't I? I don't have the flu shot either. People say, 'Oh, somebody your age should have it.'

I say, 'Well, I'll probably die with the flu.'

Who cares, at this age?

No, I don't want all that junk in me. I've lived a good life and I've took pretty good care of myself. I used to drink, hang a few on when we were running around but I hardly have a beer now.

I never went into mixed drinks. In the first place, you never could afford them. Although I was drinking Scotch when I first met Buzz.

When we got back from Manitowoc, Buzz worked for Red again. The day the war was over, Buzz had just got home. They worked a split shift. He'd get home twelve, twelve-thirty. By the time he ate, he'd go lay down about two o'clock and five thirty, he'd have to be back to work.

We didn't have a car then either. I was hanging out clothes and he must have had the radio on. He come out of the house, buttoned his shirt. The war was over and he had to go back to work.

Red's bar went just crazy that night. For a good while after that, it was about three or four deep all the time. There was one guy, Lawrence Jepson; his dad was a prisoner of war for a while. When he got home, he was so happy. He used to light up cigarettes with a twenty dollar bill.

He'd say, 'Give 'em all a drink.'

There was just so many many people and they were drinking shots and mixed drinks. Buzz said he'd just get 'em done, all of 'em served. 'Give 'em another round.' He just blew that money. He was so glad to be home.

Finally, Red wanted to get out of it and he sold it, when we were in the Ranch House.

He and Rollie both started almost at the same time. Rollie was another good operator. Rollie Radloff. He just died. He was in the nursing home.

There was another place we used to go. Because you could go in the back room. They had a juke box and a booth back there. It was always private if you were on a date. Us girls would get together and...

This was just about next to Schmidt's jewelry. Dr. Spaeth and Rollie came at the same time to town. Ursula and I were working at the Witter at that time.

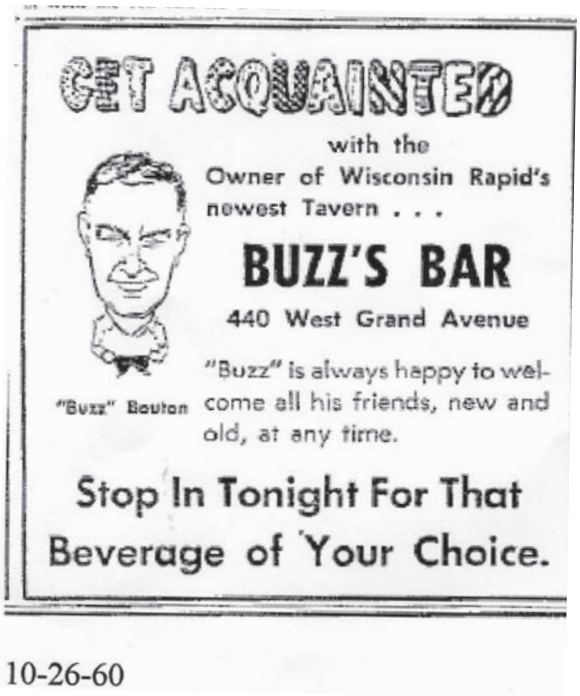
They roomed together. They both got married. Rollie had to borrow ten dollars to put in the till when he opened up for business. Doc Spaeth, I think he said he was paying fifteen dollars a month for rent in his office up there.

I worked for Dr. Spaeth for seventeen months, too, in between bars that time. I knew nothing about being a dentist's hygienist or anything but I didn't clean teeth or anything. I told him that. He called me one time when he knew we weren't in the bar. He's my only dentist that I ever went to.

We knew him from the hotel so we felt real close to him. I said, 'I don't know a darn thing about it.'

He said, 'I'll teach you.'

I said, 'Let me try it for three weeks. Maybe you won't be satisfied or maybe I won't.'



10-26-60

Six and a half years, we were in the Red Ball Café. Then one day, Buzz went over to see if he could get a beer license. He got one just like that.

That Romanski building where we were; that was closed up at that time. He called Leonard Romanski and we rented it, just like that.

It was called the Cloverleaf or something like that. It was a store closed down. He made his sausages. A regular store, like Consumer's was, like that. A grocery store.

He put that terrazzo floor in for us. We had to buy that bar and stools and that's about it. I think that was probably in 1960 or '61. We were there, I think, twelve and a half years. Then we were out of the business for a while. I don't even know when we went back in this bar [Buzz's 1998], but I've been there 23 years.

We weren't [always] the only beer license in town. What was it, the Pour Inn? Buzz knew about the licenses out and around. When we first went in, being right across from the police department, [people said] 'Oh, they'll never make it.'

One night, a guy I didn't like was in there one night. He was a jerk. 'Who is going to buy me a drink?'

We had the three pool tables there. A lot of times if the game was over, the balls were still on the table. He would be too cheap to put the dimes in to shoot a game. So he'd shoot them. Somebody had stuck a glass in the pocket and he shot that ball and broke the glass. So somebody came and told me that.

I went over to him and said, 'Would you pick the glass out of that pocket, please?'

He said, 'No.'

I said, 'Well then give me fifty cents for the glass you broke.'

He said that F-word to me. I can't handle that. I grabbed him by the arm and said, 'Then you get out and don't come back.'

He says, 'I won't.'

I didn't dare tell the bartenders or Buzz that night because there would have been a fight about it and everybody would have left. When we locked up, I told Buzz, 'You know, we've got to get out of here.'

He said, 'Well, why?'

I said, 'It's getting so I hate people.' I told him what had happened.

He said, 'Why didn't you tell us?'

We'd have made it pretty darn good if we didn't have all these bartenders just gave stuff away. They were young.

One guy was tending bar the night Jack Krekowski and Dale Dix went into business out

at Riverside. This couple said they would like to drive out there opening night. So we got somebody to check the doors.

They were just packed, of course. Buzz went up to the bar to get us four a drink and I looked across the bar and there was this guy sitting. And he had been working when we left.

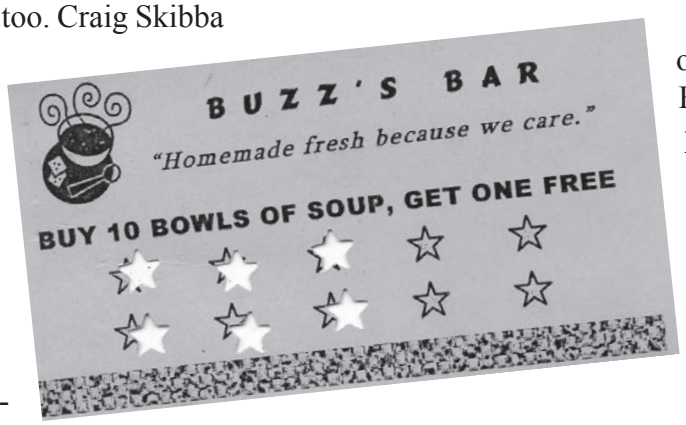
So I told Buzz and he went over and said, 'What the hell are you doing out here?'

He says, 'I needed a break so I thought I'd run out here.'

I don't remember who he said he had working for him.

Buzz says, 'You get back there or you won't have a job any more.' So he was mad when he got back and he gave drinks away the rest of the night.

We had some fine bartenders too. Craig Skibba worked nine years at the other bar for us and now he's been here [Buzz's second location] at least fifteen. He does a heck of a good job. On Saturday afternoons, once in a while if I have to work by myself, George Zimmerman will help me. He knows where everything is.



We never owned the old building. It was just a shell. This building, we own, the one we're in now. It was called the Dutch Mill.

We were out about six years. Buzz wasn't too happy out. I worked at Mid-State in the cafeteria there. Best job I ever had around food. Then I worked at the Chalet, part time. Then the economy got so expensive. It was just tough. Buzz helped tend bar different places and worked over here for Norb.

We had to take our license back from [the purchaser] because he couldn't make it.

After we got the license back, Royce Boyles called. 'Did Buzz want to sell the license?' He just didn't want to.

Royce called him again and said, 'How would you like to go into partnership? About two or three years. We'll build it up and then we'll sell it.'

That sounded kind of good to Buzz and it sounded good to me because Buzz wanted to get back into it. So we went ahead.

Buzz was with Royce until eleven o'clock one day and they were wheeling and dealing.

At one o'clock Royce called him and said, 'I don't want to go into business with anybody. Either you buy me out or I'll buy you out.'

At that time, Buzz didn't want to because we had the license. It cost us $15,000 more for some reason, with the lawyer. He didn't send some kind of a thing to Royce one day when he should have got it.

You want to know how we got our season tickets to the Packers? At the other bar, the guy named Renaldo [not his real name] that you know, used to come in there. I'll show you how he walked. 'Boy, I hung one on last night.'

Well, he was over to Big Ears' shooting pool and he was *such* a good pool player. He probably had a short bottle of Pabst all night. He wasn't a drinker.

He'd come to our bar too. He liked to play sports. Did you ever see the [Lincoln High School] football? He's got it all autographed. Captain Renaldo. He never was a captain.

He wanted to catch [baseball]. Of course, we pretty much had Greeneway and all those people, teachers and coaches and all that. Buzz's Bar. All good players.

Some moved away or got married, had to quit playing ball. Then we had Bob Bemke who was managing the team. Renaldo wanted to play so bad, bragging about his catching. So Bob left him play too.

One day, Renaldo gave Bob Bemke Packer season tickets, four of them. The reason he gave them to Bob was Bob left him play baseball, catch. Bob gave two to Buzz and he kept two.

We couldn't believe it. One day when we went to the ball game, all the way over, Farney

was saying, 'Jeez I can't believe this. Four season tickets.'

Our tickets were right. But here was Dr. Watson [from Rapids, not his real name - wanting his seat]. We had the right tickets. Watson went down and was told that their's got lost. They gave them another ticket but it wasn't the right one. The people around there said to us, 'Well, you got the right ones.'

So Dr. Watson and them had to leave. We sat there and we still couldn't believe it. At half-time I was going to the rest room and Watson says, 'Sis, come here. Where did you get your tickets?'

I says, 'From Renaldo.'

He says, 'That figures.'

Then he told me that Renaldo was over to their house a lot. When those tickets came, they talked about it and Renaldo knew where he put them in the desk.

Then Watson said, 'Would you have Buzz and Bob come down to the main office after the game?' So they did.

They were so nice about it. They gave us two tickets and Bob Bemke two tickets. We paid for them. We were right next to Don Halverson when we sat up there.

So the next day Bob Bemke took the tickets back to Watson, all of them. Ever since that, we've been getting season tickets. Just on account of Renaldo. So he did one good thing.

I used to work a lot of afternoons at the bar. I said, 'We'll never see him again.'

Sure enough, on Tuesday afternoon, he come walking in, like I showed you. He said, 'You know, I almost got in trouble over those tickets.'

I said, 'Yeah?'

He said, 'You know, they were stolen. The kid that I was helping in school stole them from his dad. His dad took tickets at the Packer game.'

He says the kid was so happy he helped him through school, he tutored him, and he says, he give me those tickets, and he stole them from his dad. That was the story he told me.

Another day, he came in, there was a shelf at the beer bar and he set a box under there. Finally, there were some girls, Chris North, and those girls down at the end of the bar. Renaldo was playing pool and that. I just pulled that out to see what he put under there. They were a box of suppositories.

At that time, at Anderson's drug store, they had a girl down there that he liked, the waitress. So he stole those. But he never took them with him that night. Couple days later, [Grampa Koski] came in. He had hemorrhoids so bad, it was just hard sitting.

I said, 'I've got just the thing for you.'

So I gave him some of those.

George [Zimmerman] said he was the only one that went to see Renaldo at the funeral home.

At work, if someone wants to know something, I'll say, 'Just a minute. I'll call George.' We've got that kind of a relationship. We can tell each other just about anything.

I yell at him all the time. When he gets a few drinks, he says that F-word a lot. I gotta yell and yell at him. The more I yell...

Ken McGrath gets a kick out of it. He likes the way I treat George. I always pick on him and he picks on me too.

Lynn Dix was very close to us. Tom McEvers still comes in. Buzz went with Tom's mother. That was his first girlfriend here. Cleo.

When Tom turned 18, he brought some pictures in. He was going to blackmail me. The pictures he showed me, I had those same pictures, because Buzz had them. Cleo and Buzz and Buzz's sister, Edna. Cleo Shipley.

Jim Bouton, the pitcher from the Yankees, that's a distant cousin. We had met him. He roomed with Tom Metcalf. He sent an autographed picture to us from him. I used to send him a birthday card. For eight years, I sent him a birthday card on March 8th.

When he came out with those two books, I didn't like that, *Ball Four*. When you talk to Tom Metcalf, Tom could tell you some stories too,

Mickey is my hero, Mickey Mantle. We used to see them play ball so often. I found out where the Yankees go to drink up there, in Minneapolis, so we found that bar too. To be in the bar, to see all those Yankees in there, was really a big thrill. One night, Jerse [Metcalf] was with us, before the All-Star game, at Duff's Bar. John Benkowski and Farney and the whole bunch. Jerse was going

around giving autographs. I guess he told people he was Pete from Cincinnati, Pete Rose.

I met Jim Bouton in the bar. I met Billy Martin in the bar. I talked to Don Drysdale. Just shook hands and wished him luck the next day. Joe Torre.

One day, when we went up to the Yankees, best day I ever had in baseball, we got there at 9:30 in the morning. Gene was eleven, I guess. He had his Yankee jacket and his cap. Tom was pitching for them. We got the best seats we ever had too, pretty close to home plate.

I said to the ticket agent, 'Where do the Yankees come in?'

She said, 'Right there by the express box.'

'What time will they be here?'

'At eleven twenty five. And I mean eleven twenty five. See, they do everything right. Except they don't wear their suits right, now. So she said if you want to see them, be right there. Sure enough, eleven twenty five that Yankee bus came in from the Radisson Hotel where they stayed.

When Tom got off, I said, 'Tom!'

And of course he came right over. That was such a thrill to see him get off the bus. They were all dressed in their green sport coats. See, they knew how to dress, too.

He talked to us a minute and says, to meet me right here at the express box after the game. 'I'll bring an autographed ball for Gene.' And he would try to bring Jim Bouton up so we could meet him.

So sure enough...

Where's Skibba? Present at a 1997 reunion at the "new" Buzz's Bar, 131 3rd Avenue S., which closed in 2008. The group pictured had come of age in "old" Buzz's at 440 West Grand Ave. Front: Sue Butler, Sis Bouton, Fred Hintz, unidentified. Second row: John Butler, Mike Ebsen, Bruce Zanow, Sue Jagodzinski. Back row: Ken "Whitey" Jagodzinski, George Zimmerman (long time bartender at both Buzz's)

South Wood County Historical Corp.
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Uncle Dave's New Stupid Idea

Uncle's friend, Daniel P. Meyer is the kind of angel that supports culture by seeing it gets paid for. The angel who, in 1983, as president of the Consolidated foundation, came up with $5,000 for the first "River City Memoirs" book. With his steady financial encouragement, there followed *River City Memoirs II* (on Nekoosa paper thanks to Don Krohn), *RCM III*, *The Fat Memoirs (IV)*, *Age of Paper* and *River City Memoirs V.*

Since Dan retired, only one *Rapids Memoirs* book has been funded, in 1999, thanks to SWCHC's Pam Walker (her idea) and Kelly Lucas of the Community Foundation. Since, hundreds of history columns followed, now an endangered species on the brink of oblivion.

How to get another book? Uncle Dave is a funny guy with a thesaurus. Despite his kissing up to Dan here, he sez he will not apply for the *dough-re-mi*, will not bow down, plead, pander, beg, schmooze, jump through hoops, beseech, kiss booty, brown-nose, entreat, supplicate, solicit, petition or crawl on his belly like a reptile. Well, maybe the reptile thing.

$1,000

About what it will cost Uncle to get this book published. To print one single volume of 300 pages more or less. Kind of pricey for one book but cheaper than two. *River City Memoirs 1999-2009*. Rare. See it at the Museum, in the display case with the eye of the tiger.

VOLUME VII

"What I do is catch 'em and pin 'em to the pages," Uncle says, "these words, disappearing down the long-abandoned ruins of dreams left behind, unlike your precious blue butterflies out by Meehan, where you tore down the old nunnery: to save the bugs."

Artifacts, a local history magazine and newsletter for the South Wood County Historical Corp. welcomes contributions of writings and photographs relevant to the greater Wisconsin Rapids area. For a year's subscription and membership send $20 to the address below. Questions? Contact Lori Brost, Museum Administrator and assistant editor, 715-423-1580. Lori@swch-museum.com.