August 2010
Volume II #26

# Artifacts



*Page 7: Natwick poster sale*

By Dave Engel (1981)

# Downtown Demolition Derby

*A Good Tenant Is Hard to Find*

As two pieces of the old world collided, the floor we stood on wasn't about to crack and neither was the heavy plank that crashed into it. Instead, the big board, a roof support, was piled in good shape by two of the several workers with gloved hands who assembled in downtown River City that day in 1981. One young man needed employment of any kind, for the impression it would make upon authorities. One wanted cash, the sooner the better. Another wanted the thick rough-cut lumber itself, a resource that accumulated in wide fully two-inch boards almost too heavy to be lifted.

Nineteenth-century Wisconsin Rapids was, like this block, framed with strong timber. First, white pine marketed by barons such as Daniel Whitney, Thomas B. Scott, George Neeves, and Francis Biron – whose mansions would elevate the look of Wisconsin River towns for a century.

Twentieth-century Wisconsin Rapids ate up the leftovers: poplar, birch, spruce, hemlock, red pine and jack pine that fed the new paper mills and brought prosperity to most. By the 1950s, subdivisions spread into Grand Rapids and Saratoga and the first supermarket out on Highway 13 presented a then-unrecognized threat to the original downtown.

During the "progressive" 1970s, demolition, helped along by government grants, startled even the dim-visioned. Whole blocks of 1880s buildings collapsed under the weight of change. Much of the west side was cleared for Rapids Mall. When the River Block went, in favor of the Consolidated Papers, Inc. office building, the town's oldest store and a former newspaper office were flattened for a parking lot.

On the east side, the riverbank structures were systematically removed by Consolidated to make way for green and gracious municipal parks. Only a few aged edifices withstood the erosion of social change, standing like Monadnocks among the rubble.

The latest [in 1981] was a structure so typical that few noticed when it was in place and none protested its demise. Rectangular, brick, unnamed, undated, only subtly adorned, it had been exposed when the more frequented blocks along the river left for renewal Heaven. The ground floor had been rented to, at times, a tavern, a meat market, Penney's, a hardware store, a clothing store. The upstairs, reached lately by a wooden, enclosed stairway on the south side, had as inhabitants a doctor, dentist, dancer, musician and apartment dwellers whose only public function was to check the contents of a row of mailboxes at the Second Street entrance.

Originally known as the Gardner Block, after George R. Gardner, a prominent politician who had it built, the name recognized a hundred years later was "Brauer's," for a clothier in business since the 1920s.

Salvagers said the block could easily have lasted another century.

It was one of a set of sturdy, "fireproof," brick replacements for wood-frame frontier shacks that alternately burned or were knocked off their foundations by the flooding river. Built to last, the Gardner block and its ilk were meant for an enduring city. In February 1883, the Wood County Reporter called the then-new structure, "one of the best constructed buildings in the northwest."

"The carpenter work in the finishing parts, such as door and window casings, is of the best and much pains is taken to have everything plumb. The boys are doing nice work and the building will be one of which our people may feel justly proud."

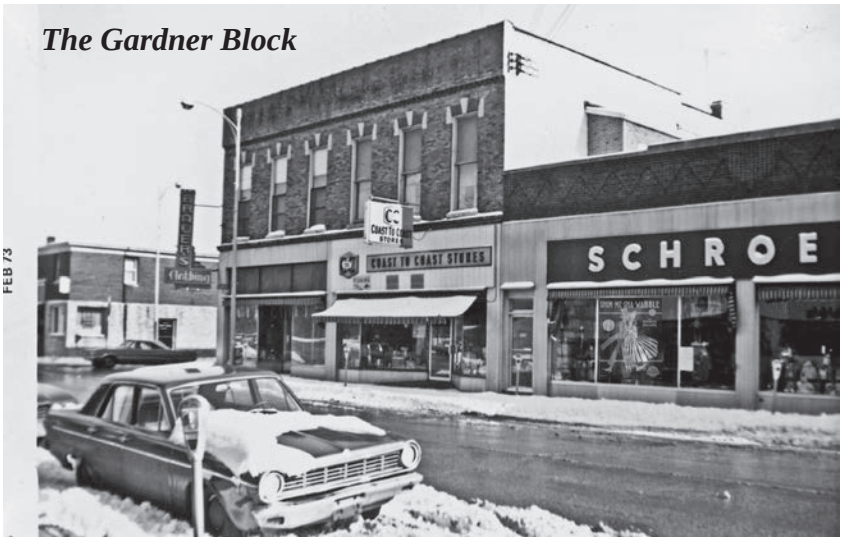
The rival Grand Rapids Tribune applauded likewise, "The finest building, the most obliging accommodating proprietors and the finest line of goods..."

"The building is in bad shape," said Wood County Bank controller Butch De Vries in 1981, two years after the bank had purchased it. "The upstairs could not be used without major remodeling. The heating system was very old. There was no insulation. Due to competition from other sites, tenants would be hard to find. We

couldn't foresee any use that would justify the expense."

Salvagers Alan Moll and Jere O'Day had taken apart many of the old town's components over the past ten years: the Normal School, City Gas, Wards Tire, Fischer's Dairy, Judge's Laundry, the Sugar Bowl Restaurant and the Dixon Hotel. "Lumber is the most valuable commodity," said O'Day. "They used better grade and full size. That joist is brown now, but they dropped it and let it hit and it did not break." A 25 foot 2-by-12 of such wood, "all pine," would be worth about $50. And the roof is made of one such plank each foot.

"They wasted a lot of wood," said O'Day's nephew, John O'Day. The builders were also generous with space. Ceilings were hung sixteen feet above the floor, twice that of the average 1981 bungalow.



***The Gardner Block***

Window frames of 12-foot height had to be counterbalanced by heavy weights in order that their halves be raised. Heating on the second floor was provided by eight fireplaces along the outside walls. Radiators had been added, and now stood in humble but shining rows, valued only as scrap. Same for pipes and wire. Cast iron bathtubs were the only items that compared with lumber for value; they made good hog "troths." The ornate window trim was not worth taking off the wall though had anyone wanted to do so, the task would have been easy.

The process of demolition and salvage begins at the top: rippled layers of tar peeled off, then roof boards that had blocked the sun for a century.

Partitions added to divide the second floor into five apartments are knocked down to reveal a wide hardwood floor in what could be a ballroom. It is 2 ½"-wide maple on a subfloor of one-inch-thick tongue-and-groove pine, which probably made up the original floor surface. Under the pine, an inch of plaster and sand. Whether for fireproofing or insulation, workers cannot say. It may have been construction residue. The plaster is supported by another layer of one-inch pine, under which was a span of air space and finally an embossed tin ceiling facing, of course, down.

"It's crazy," said Jere O'Day, "but that's the way they built 'em."

The first floor is treated similarly. When the last scraps of floor are shoveled out to a waiting truck (if anybody wants it for kindling), the last lumber piled and whatever rubble allowed to fall into the basement, John climbs into the gutless shell and straps on a cable. Outside, a Caterpillar tractor tugs, tugs again. The brick wall holds. The cable drops instead and must be reattached. Another jerk and, with the first crack, mortar crumbles between brick and a dust puff hits the breeze. The fissure bulges and the midriff of the wall heaves. Falling bricks crack on the street and the boys dodge aside in a fog of dust. Standing by the pit, the salvagers survey with some satisfaction their new work, while at their backs, lies the flattened town, most of which has gone to the dump – except the best lumber, still a valuable commodity after 98 years of functional storage.

One worker says he will build, perhaps by coincidence on the same land from which the pine wood was taken, his own house, entirely from lumber collected from these pinery stores. "It may not be pretty, but it'll be better than the ones they build now."

The lumber is a renewable resource of sorts, says Jere. "By the time we tear down the old ones, we'll be tearing down the new ones."


1973

**Survivor**: For a few years before this World War I era photo, it held the Grand Rapids Business College. In recent times, it has housed a tavern, currently named The Bar, at 150 Second Street North (adjacent to the historically refurbished and enhanced offices of Attorney Richard Bender). Parade below is passing from the upstream to downstream, left to right, First Street, bottom left. Edge of Flatiron building barely visible.

## *Second Street North*

## *Parade on First*


RAGAN AUTO SALES

TUBES

## Notes from the Den of Antiquity

**By Phil Brown SWCHC President**

With this issue of *Artifacts*, we mark the passing of a long time SWCHC board member, Joan "Josie" Haasl. Joan, pronounced Jo Ann, served as secretary of the board for many years.

***From 1998 SWCHC interview by Uncle Dave***

Joan always took great pride in producing concise minutes and getting them to the board members within a matter of days of the meeting. She was also proud of being one of the original - and finest - contributors to *Artifacts*. Her fresh and witty takes on history and life have entertained us for years.

What I really liked personally about Joan is that she had a no-baloney attitude and didn't care who you were or what side of the track you were from. She could tell stories with (and about) the valedictorian as well as with the class clown. And she was always positive, upbeat and ready for a good laugh.

SWCHC people at Garden Party. Seated front: B. Jens, F. Daly, P. Gross, J. Gross. Second row R. Zimmerman, J.M. Buehler, P. Clark. Standing: H.P. Knoll, L.M.C. Brost, P. Smart, T. Arndt

## Garden Party: June 11, 2010

***Especially to thank Master Gardeners bringing exceptional care to the Museum grounds***

SWCHC Pres. Brown and board member Francis "Bud" Daly

Below: Warren Miller, printer of *Artifacts*

Stock car legend Vic Kopacz with Evan "Blackie" O'Day, grandson of driver Jere O'Day

Master Gardener Apollonia makes a point

Below, left. Pres. Brown accepting artifact found on grounds by gardener Julie Carlsen. Jere Witter's clay marble?

Board members N. Brazeau and J.M. Buehler

***Photos by UD***

# SUITABLE FOR FRAMING

1.

Woman with Parasol

2.


Real Kind Mama

3.


Shim-Me-Sha-Wabble

4.


Art of Grim Natwick

## *Natwick Posters Available!*

**•In recognition of native son Myron "Grim" Natwick and his artistry, four commemorative posters will be available for purchase at the South Wood County Historical Museum, 540 Third Street South, Wisconsin Rapids WI 54494.**

**•Prints are full color by Fey Publishing Co., on poster stock suitable as is or framed. This limited printing is numbered by Grim's great nephew, Jim Natwick.**

**•Size is 12x18" but could be framed 11x14."**

**•Price: $15 each ($20.00 if mailed)**
**Or**
**•$50.00 for any four posters. For $50 order, free shipping.**

**Only 265 shopping days until Uncles' Day !**

## *A Doll Named Homely*

By Lori Brost
Museum Administrator

Since our latest issue, Uncle Dave's classmate, Bill Hartley, stopped in and shared a memory from his childhood of a special toy he had donated to the Museum. "I recall seeing the elephant standing on the wood slat floor of the Coast to Coast store on 1st Street in the Rapids in about 1950. I think it might have been locally made.

"I was an energized 5 year-old and knew I had to have that elephant. My mom (Nellie Hartley) ended up buying it for me and she probably thought that was the end of it. I remember pulling the elephant by the string, trying to get it to walk all the way to 12th and Prospect Streets! Looking back, I'm sure it was a long, agonizing walk home for my mom."

My own memory was of a special doll. She was handmade with black hair and a blue outfit. Only last night did I find out who brought her into my life. It was my aunt, Sharon.

Mom says Grampa gave her the name, "Homely." Gramma thinks Mom may have. Everyone agrees on one thing; she was my favorite.

To keep Homely company, I had Big Red, Raggedy Ann and Andy. We had a daily routine of lining up on Gramma's couch and "going for a ride." It was Big Red's job to be the driver, and not a great driver because we would have accidents from time to time.

As much as I loved her, mom hated her. She still says it's because it was the ugliest doll ever, but not to a little girl. Gramma says she thinks Homely, Raggedy Ann and Andy are still upstairs. Sadly, Big Red didn't make it. Apparently she made one road trip without us (I think mom was driving!).

Since that story, I've thought a lot about Homely. I've shared some laughs with Mom and Gramma and I'm pretty sure Gramma is looking for her right now. Maybe it's time for her to come out of hiding and find a new little "driving partner."

## Museum Visitors

Dave Patrykus above, and Paul Koeshall, right, shared fond memories with fellow Two Mile habitué Uncle Dave

Paul Miller, LHS '65 above, now of Canada, and mother Marie Miller, right, Rapids

**Ice Cream Social, June 26**
Hugh and Carol Midor with Hank "'Scoop" Bruse

# Outreach

By Holly Knoll

While discussing future projects with Uncle Dave, the word "outreach" came up. Would I be interested? What would I do?

As a believer in bringing an institution's resources to the community, I was ready and willing. Something I had missed when I was in high school was just what we specialize in: local history. In none of the history classes I had taken from grade school through high school, had I ever once learned anything about the Wisconsin Rapids area. Why should the youth be so in the dark about topics such as the founders of Wisconsin Rapids and why we as a town are here in this locale?

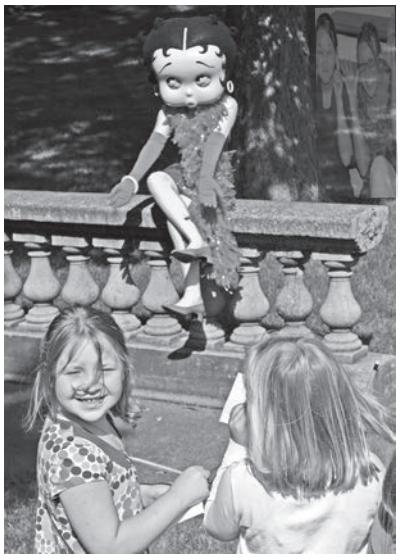

My hope is to bring the history of Wisconsin Rapids and the surrounding towns into the schools through "talks" to classrooms of 4th-6th grades. Besides enriching their understanding of the area, more history would give them a sense of hometown pride.

The other part of my plan is to bring to junior and high school students the challenge of area research. Although my high school prepared me for the future and for college, it was lacking in one department, research. While in high school I found that I would be asked to write a paper on a very narrow topic such as the conflict between two main characters in a book. This type of paper did not require much research.

However, in college, I was often asked to research a broad topic such as an environmental problem the world is faced with. This required finding a problem, looking for sources and bringing it all together in a focused paper. This was difficult at first because I did not know how to pick a narrow subject that would be relevant or narrow down research.

My idea is to have junior and high school students research and write a paper about a piece, person or place of Central Wisconsin history. These students would then be given more free reign on the topic that they choose. The Museum would open its doors and research facilities to the students who would be learning a vital piece of local history along with learning to research in a setting other than the school.

Also, these ideas do not only pertain to history classes. Art, photography and creative writing classes could also be integrated by creating artful pieces that either include historic events or by contrasting the historic projects and writing or taking pictures of contemporary Central Wisconsin. A future display could also be in the works.



A June 28 commercial shoot on the Museum grounds included Mayci Brost, bottom left. Railing shown is from the "old" Grand Avenue Bridge.

**Autumn Tours**

Animation expert Stephen Worth has been generous enough to allow his collection of works by Grim Natwick to be on display at the Museum through October. Please don't miss the opportunity to view this exhibit. Please contact Lori at 715-423-1580 to schedule a tour for your special group or club.

# Job for a Lifetime

By Sara Parsons

When my mother married Clarence Jackson in 1940, he came complete with a lovely house, a daughter Jane, who had been my best friend since childhood, and a butler.

C.E. Jackson, for many years the general manager of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co., Wisconsin Rapids, lived in one of the big, old homes on Third Street South. The butler, Mr. [Andrew] Stainbrook had worked for some of the first families in what was then Grand Rapids. Back then, help was inexpensive and many people had maids, yard boys and even a butler.

As we had no use for a butler, or were not even sure just what a butler was supposed to do, Mr. Stainbrook became an all-around handyman. In summer, he mowed and raked and kept our lawn looking the best on the street. When winter came and there was no more lawn to care for, my step-father could not see laying off Mr. Stainbrook.

We found plenty of work to keep him busy in the house. We enjoyed having a fire in the living room fireplace every evening and one of Mr. Stainbrook's jobs was to clean out the ashes each morning and lay a fresh fire. Even on nights almost too warm to have a fire we lit one anyway so that we would be sure to have something for Mr. Stainbrook to do the next morning.

He also emptied waste baskets and did any odd jobs that needed doing. My step-father had fixed up a very attractive room for his billiard table in the basement. He never missed his billiard game with friends like Otto Hassel, who came to our home almost every day at noon. The task of keeping the billiard table brushed and spotless fell to Mr. Stainbrook.

At this time Mr. Stainbrook was probably in his late seventies or early eighties and he moved very slowly so it did not take many tasks to keep him occupied for a full morning. He was a little man when we knew him; I don't think he was much over five feet tall. He was a true gentleman, in every sense of the word.

Later when I had children, they adored him, partly because he wasn't much taller than they were but also because he always had time to spend and interesting things to tell them.

As time went on, Mr. Stainbrook got older and less able. He could no longer mow the lawn or wash the windows, but still he came each day.

What to do with Mr. Stainbrook? He was a part of our family and there was no way that we would tell him he was too old to work.

My step-father came up with the idea of hiring a helper. We found a young man who wanted part-time work and made him understand that Mr. Stainbrook was the boss. The work got done and there was a new spring in his step and a twinkle in his eyes as Mr. Stainbrook went about the task of checking-up on his assistant to be sure everything was being done to his satisfaction.

Time went on and my step-father became ill and died. When my mother sold her home and came to live with us, Stainbrook was out of a job, or was he?

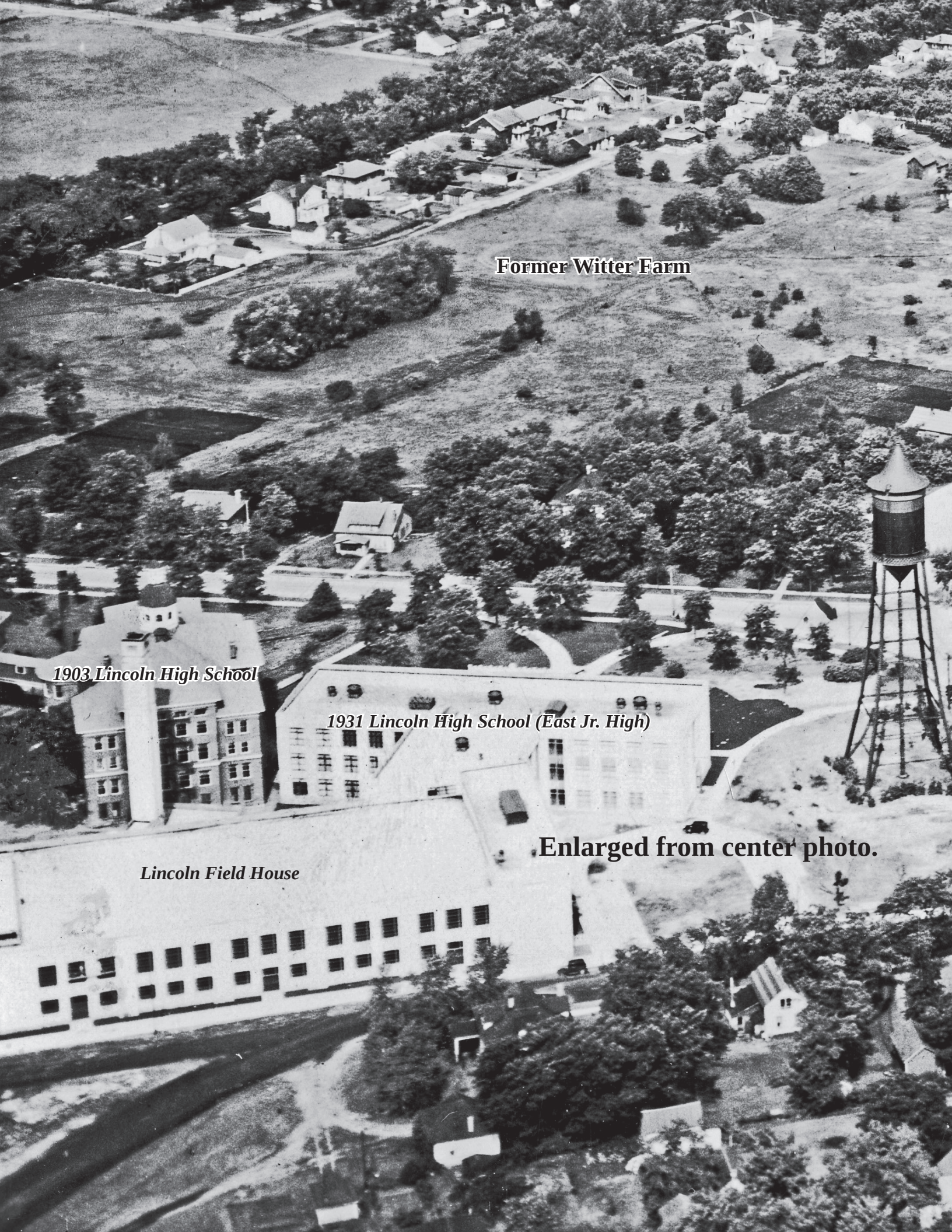
He was quite old and getting feeble by this time but whenever the blueberries were at their ripest we could be sure he would show up at our door with enough for a good pie. As time went on we saw less and less of the old man.

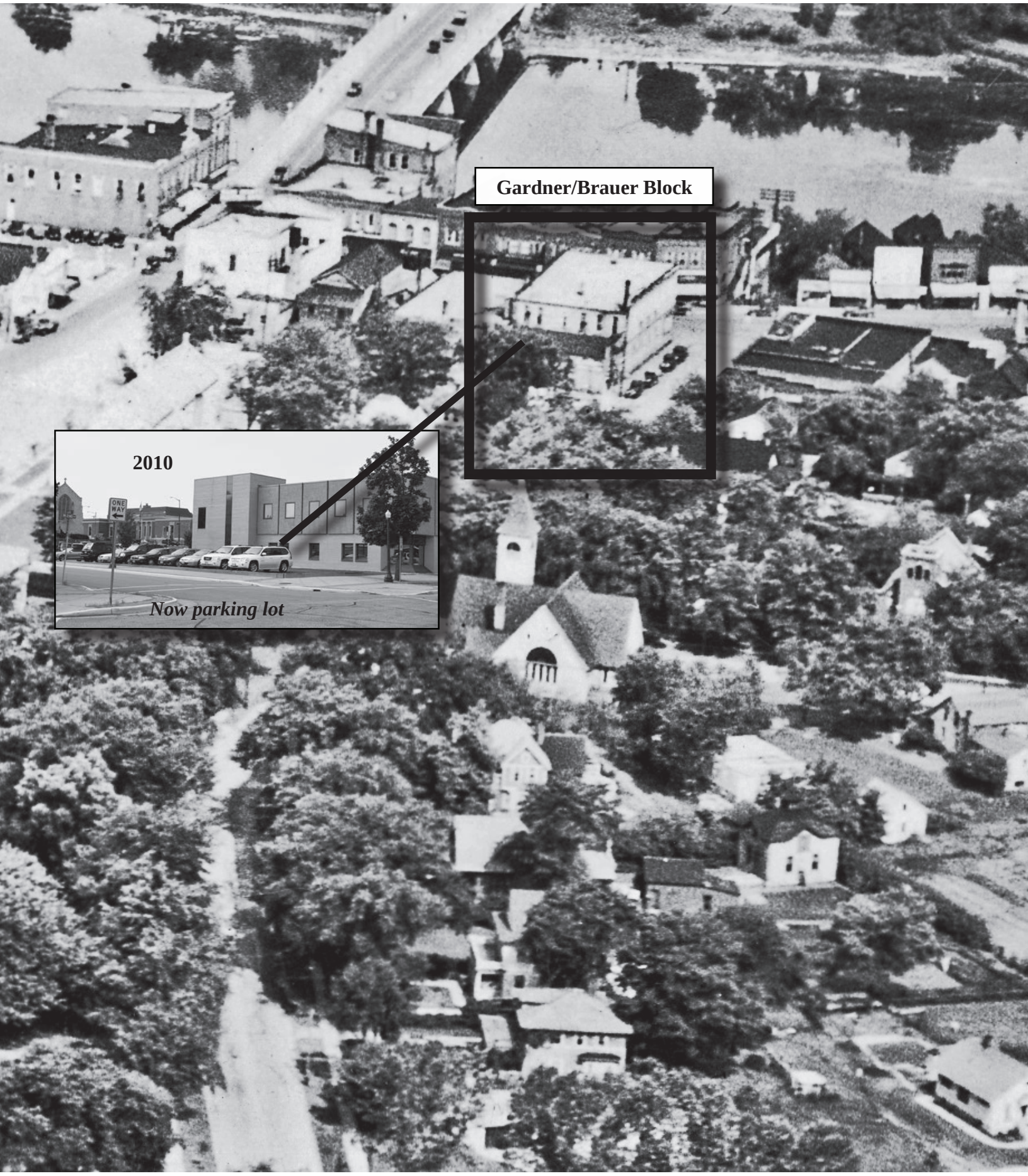
But when I would go to the cemetery I could not help but notice that my step-father's grave was always neater than any of the others. Never a dead leaf or a stray weed to mar the perfection. Sometimes there was a small bunch of flowers, often wild flowers, placed at the headstone.

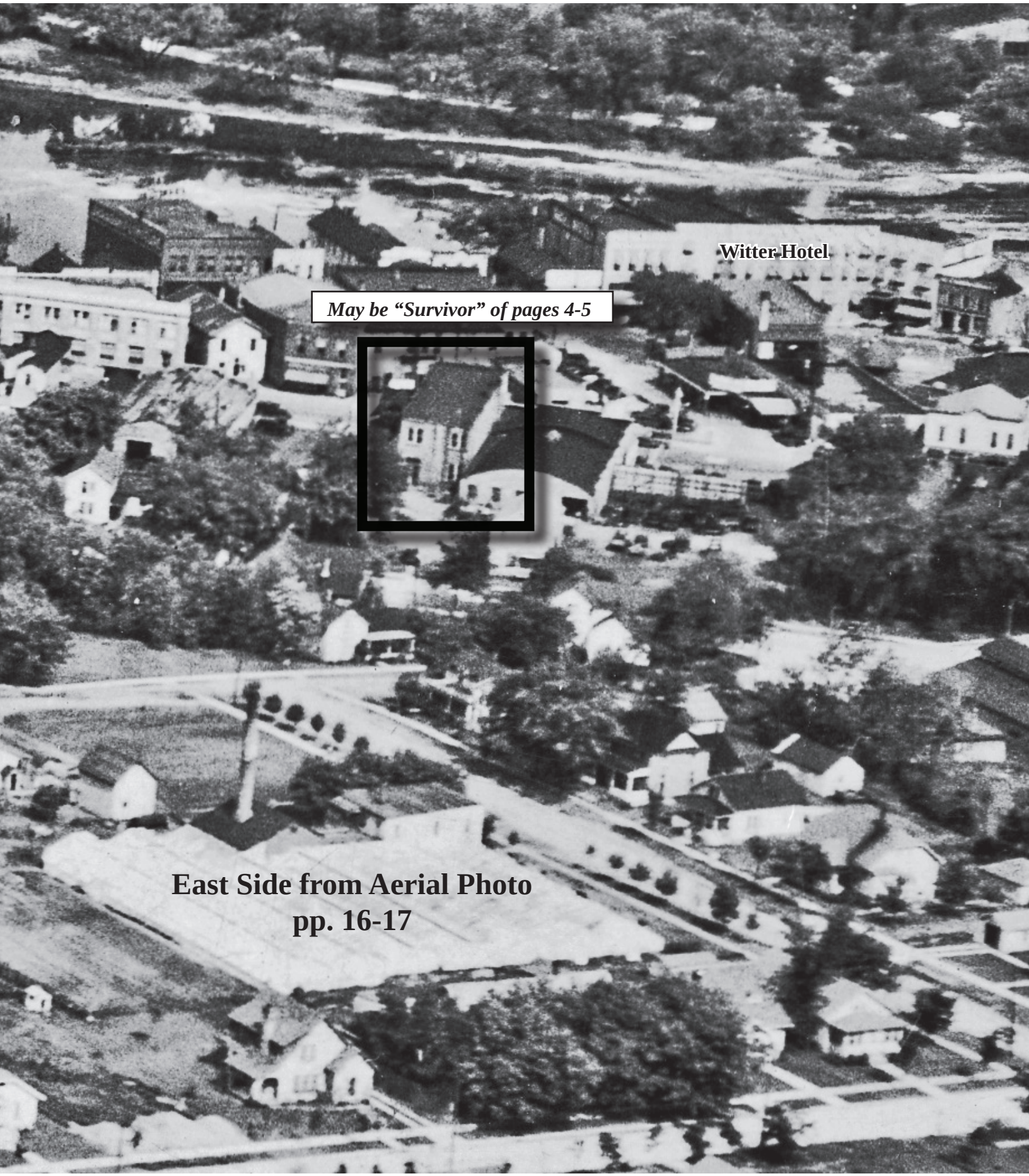
Who could be doing this? Of course, Mr. Stainbrook.

His job was for a lifetime and he remained true to his friends. When I saw him sometime later I asked him about the flowers and the neatness of the grave and his simple answer was, "Mr. Jackson liked things kept neat."

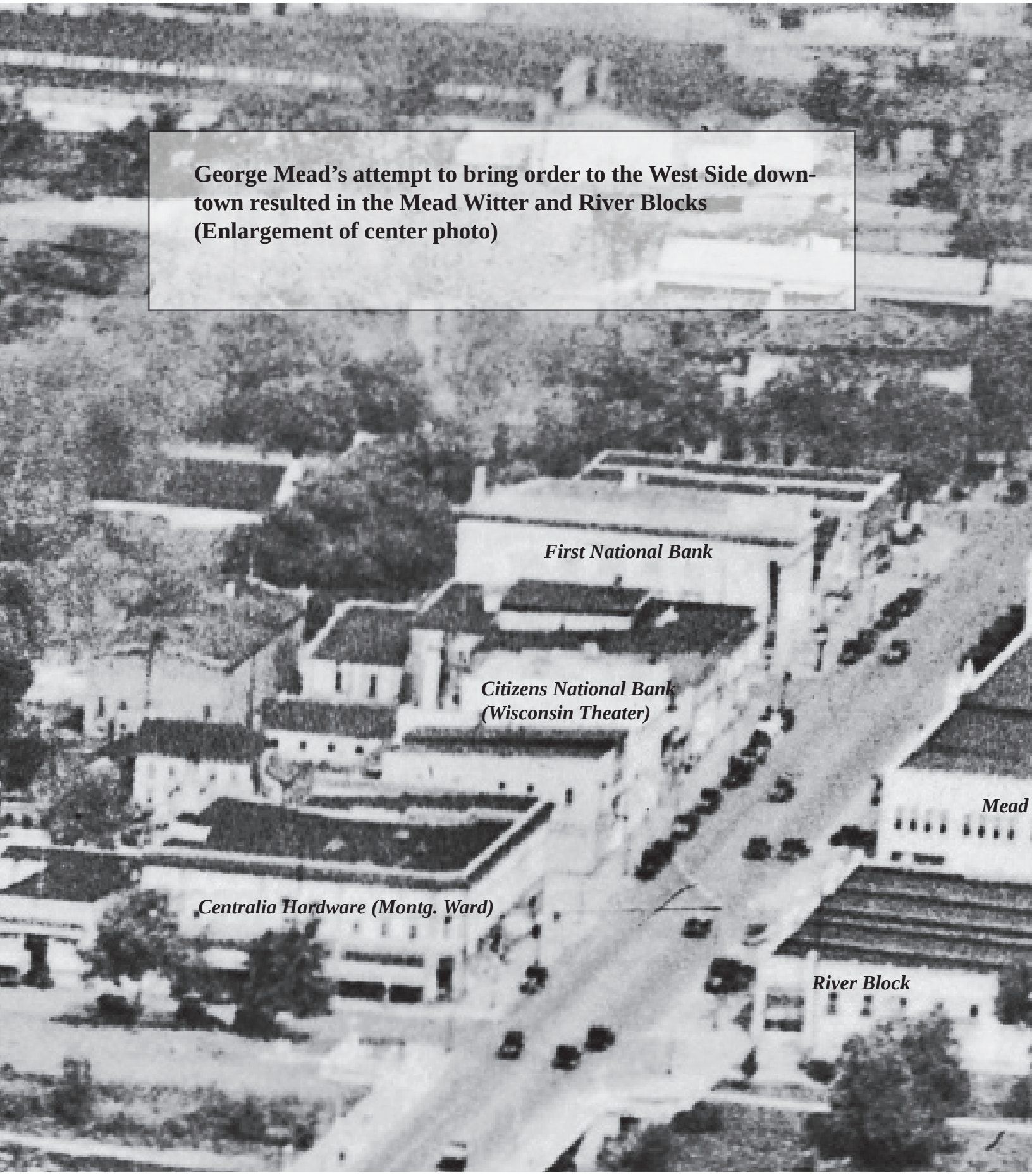
*Mr. Stainbrook lived to be 101 years old [1872-1973] and I attended his 100th birthday party. His mind had slipped and he could no longer remember who we were, or the long years he had been a true friend, a willing worker and always a complete gentleman.*


Former Witter Farm
1903 Lincoln High School
1931 Lincoln High School (East Jr. High)
Enlarged from center photo.
Lincoln Field House


Gardner/Brauer Block
2010
ONE WAY
Now parking lot

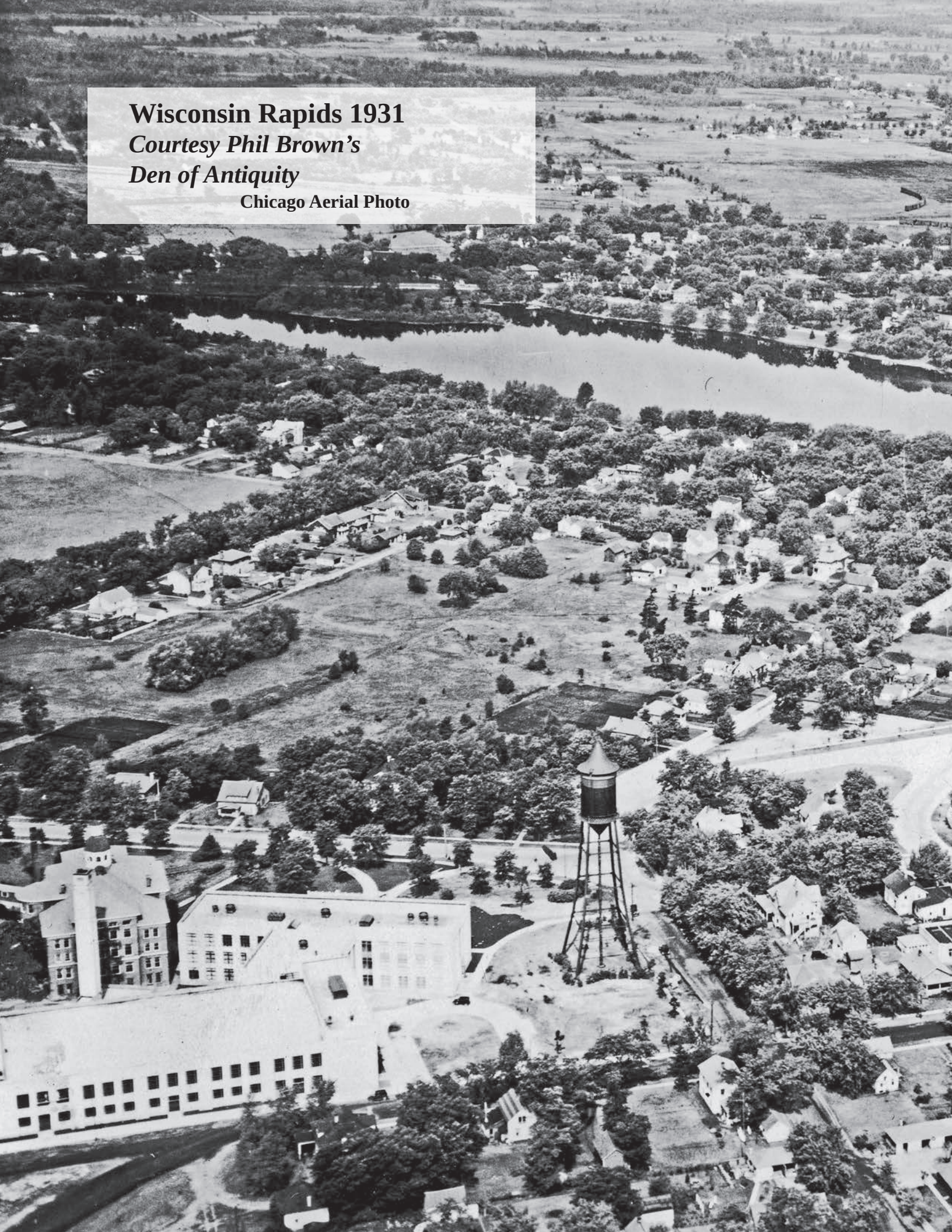



**East Side from Aerial Photo**
**pp. 16-17**




**George Mead's attempt to bring order to the West Side downtown resulted in the Mead Witter and River Blocks (Enlargement of center photo)**


Depot
Johnson Hills
Witter



**Wisconsin Rapids 1931**
***Courtesy Phil Brown's***
***Den of Antiquity***
**Chicago Aerial Photo**

*In 1998 then-Director Pam Walker and SWCHC contracted with Uncle for a series of interviews that have contributed irreplaceable perspective to* Artifacts, *the* Daily Tribune *and* River City Memoirs *books.*

*The following narrative was delivered by one of the premier citizens who came here via Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. (later Consolidated Papers, Inc.), and contributed talents and resources above and beyond that employment.*

## *Citizen of the Years*

# Dan Meyer

With Dave Engel
Interview 6 May 1998

My name is Daniel Patrick Meyer. Date of birth, Dec. 19, 1927. It was a good year.

That was in Marion, Wis. Our home at the time was on U.S. 45, a busy little highway right through town. Of course, in those days, all the highways did go through town.

My mother was a teacher and principal in the Marion school system. She came from Brillion, Wis., south of Appleton, a graduate of Oshkosh Normal. The family name was Horn. Rena Nora Horn. She never liked the name.

My father, Bernard Meyer, taught school for several years in Oconto, Wis., and other places. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin law school and came back to Marion, where he grew up, to practice law.

My mother wasn't Catholic. Old [Grandpa] Bernard Meyer wasn't Catholic either but he married Mary O'Keeffe, who was the Catholic. Their son was Bernard Meyer. That makes me one-quarter Irish.

### Doc Mulvany

My father's sister, Mary Maude, married Doctor Mulvaney. If we had any problem, they sent us to "Go ask Doc." And Doc lived two blocks away. We'd go to his office and say, "We have a stomach ache."

My father and Doc believed strongly in professional courtesy. If you're a lawyer or doctor, you don't charge each other.

### Hub

I was born on the 19th of December. My mother used to tell how I was born in a parlor because she and dad wanted her to be downstairs with the family for Christmas. The tree was across the parlor from the bed. Dad threw the icicles on the tree. You're supposed to put them on carefully.

There were seven of us in the family; all but the last child were born at home. Doctor Mulvaney delivered us.

I was number five. The oldest brother and sister were twins who died within a couple months of each other. The priest said, "They came into the world together and they left together."

Frank was the third child, then Tom. Tom made the supreme sacrifice in World War II at nineteen. [Later, the subject of a family book.] He was about a year and a half older than I.

I had a younger brother Robert, who died of leukemia when he was about kindergarten age, in 1936. One more child is still living: my brother Bernie.

Everybody had their little nickname within the family. My father was an athlete and my brothers were fans of the Packers. There was a football player by the name of Cal Hubbard. He was a little heavy. As a child, I was heavy, so I was called Hubbard, or Hub. It was just within the family. My brother Tom, was "Rudy," also named after a Packer.

### Late Bloomer

We were only about three blocks across Highway 45 from Marion's one public school. We had the little kindergarten with the fireplace and wienie roasts and that sort of thing. That school has burned. We have a brick, which Jeannine has quilted. It's a door stop up at the cottage.

My wife, Jeannine, referred to me as a late bloomer. I didn't do well in grade school. In fifth

and sixth grade the teacher told my mother that I didn't have the ability of the other kids. "Don't expect too much of him." Naturally, she resented this statement.

### A Happy Life

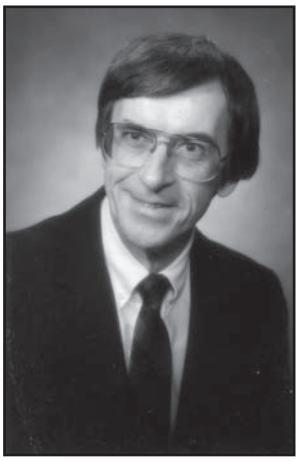
We lived on Main Street but there were open fields behind us. It was a two-story hipped roof house, still there, with four bedrooms.

The biggest bedroom was the boys' room. There were four boys normally sleeping in that room.

My sister had a room. My parents had a room. Then we had what we used to call in those days a spare room. The spare room was up in front. When my grandmother came to visit, that was used.

Sometimes there were seven of us sitting around a big table in the kitchen, plus the hired girl, Bernice Brandenburg. Dad used to say she got a dollar a day plus room and board. During the Depression, though, we couldn't always provide cash.

In those days, everybody had a hired girl. She came off the farm after eighth grade and lived with us as part of the family.



*MSTC Photo*

***Dan Meyer 1970s***

We all worked together. We all had our chores to do. One would wash the dishes. One would dry the dishes. One would sweep the floor and one would take out the garbage.

My dad sat in the other room and listened to Gabriel Heatter. "You kids behave out there and get your work done."

It was a happy life.

### Depression Days

Raised during the Depression, you had a very different attitude toward money and spending. Many times, my dad would be paid in kind. "Oh, somebody's bringing in a load of wood. You guys come home early tonight and get it thrown down in the basement."

Or someone would bring over live chickens in a gunny sack.

There were poor kids but they were all managing. Their grandma lived with them. Or another friend, whose father worked in the cheese factory and they lived upstairs. The hardware store was downstairs and they lived upstairs.

We were reasonably well off. My father had an interest in a couple farms. Every two days, we'd go out to the farm and get this huge can filled with milk. We'd put the milk in the refrigerator and my mother would skim the cream off the top. We'd make ice cream and she'd do all kinds of things with the cream.

We'd get two or three chickens. "All right, hurry up. We've got to get these chickens taken care of."

So we'd go out in the field with a block of wood, grab the chicken, lay it down there, pop! in the throat; they would bounce all over the field, squirting blood all over. Soon as it stops, dip it in the water.

There's a story about when Tom and I were pushing and pulling the stroller through the house. We picked up the gallon jar of vinegar and gave it a ride. Around through the dining room we went. Picked up speed as we passed through the hall. Made the corner into the parlor. We were going too fast. Splash. The gallon jar had spilled all over the good rug in the living room.

That spot from the vinegar was never removed. We lived with it for years.

### Under the Raft

I almost drowned in grade school. I dove under the swimming raft in the pond. An old log raft. There was a big plank out of it. You'd go under the plank and swim out. As I went under the plank, someone moved the raft. I came up, and there was the raft.

Another time, I hitched a ride on a horse-drawn sleigh downtown on Highway 45. I tried to get off and my sheepskin coat hooked and by that time the horse was moving pretty fast.

I was dragged about a block before I managed to get free.

**Fort Knox**

I graduated from high school in ’46. Was I going to be drafted or wasn’t I? Some of the guys were going in the National Guard or ROTC. I enlisted in the Army and spent a year and a half at Fort Knox. I was discharged in ’47 and started at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. I elected to stay in the Reserve. My goodness, here I’d become a Staff Sergeant in one year. That sounded good.

Then along came the Korean War. I was just about finishing the University but I was still enlisted. We were shipping out of Seattle and our ship was hit by a freighter so we had to turn around and go back. That delayed our arrival and probably kept me out of Korea.

I was in the administration end. Started out as a company clerk and ended up at Battalion headquarters. I was typing and that sort of thing. On the ship, we had a newsletter that was put out on the carrier ship, the USS Sylvester.

It was a great adventure, spending time in Tokyo. I saw something, learned some things. I was about ready to go to Korea when there was a great hubbub and anyone who had been involuntarily called in the Reserve was going to be released, so I was released. It all happened in 1951.

I returned home in July so I was really only in Japan for about two months. Then I started looking for a job.

**Freshman English**

You had to take an entrance exam. I didn’t do well enough in English. If you didn’t do well enough on the English part of the entrance exam, you had to take Freshman English. I had a great teacher. She opened whole new worlds for us. She was a T.A. I don’t recall her name.

We read *Hamlet* and we read *Othello* and we read *Moby Dick* and we studied Conrad. It was a tremendously intense course. We learned to write expository writing and all the writing methods and so on and so on.

I think back, and in everybody’s life, there has always been some teacher that has had a great influence on your interests, whether it be cultural, social or what have you. I’m on the advisory council of the American Players Theater. I would have to say my interest there was sparked by that English class.

My brother died in World War II and was buried in Belgium. My parents wanted him brought home. They were going to have a full military burial. I was supposed to take an exam on that particular day and I explained to the teacher I had to do this.

She said, “That’s fine. You go. When you come back, I’ll give you a separate exam.”

She was living on University Avenue. I recall going over there and she said, “Would you like a cup of coffee to sustain you?” and I said, “Oh sure.” I took the test. I got an A in the course.

That’s quite an experience, a boy from a town of twelve hundred, going to the University.

At that time, there were mostly older students. The veterans were back. I had my English in one of those Quonsets. There were Quonsets all over where the big library is. There was a large Quonset, which was the reading room, with a concrete floor. They had most of the books of the library there. You couldn’t check them out. Then it was surrounded by about a dozen of these small Quonsets.

My major in college was Econ with an English minor. That worked.

**Coming to Rapids**

Here’s the story.

I had come to Wisconsin Rapids several times during my college days. I was a roommate and friend of the late Jack Cole, whose father was treasurer of Consolidated. He came back to Rapids as an attorney with Brazeau, Brazeau and Cole. Jack died fifteen years ago. We were very good friends.

My friend from Marion, Doug Mayne, joined the Theta Delts fraternity. These fraternities always had revered graduates or alumni. In your introduction to the fraternity, you found out who the successful people were.

George Mead I was a Theta Delt. I was a Theta Delt, a Theta Delt forever. The bonds are broken never. Whether you pay your voluntary graduate dues or not. Doug Mayne invited me to what they call the rush. And I made the grade, so I was invited to join the Theta Delts.

There were two Theta Delts from Wisconsin Rapids: Jack Cole, a few years younger; Gerald Boyce, Ira Boyce's son. Gerry's still here. You know Catherine, that's his mother. Catherine recently died.

I came to Rapids several times as a guest of Jack Cole, so I knew his parents, and got acquainted. I started looking for a job. I still have the letter I got back from Ralph Cole. Well we don't really have any openings in marketing but if you'd like to come over, we think we need some help here in public relations. Come on over and call Ira Boyce and so and so and so and so. Come and see us. This was in 1951.

**Jeannine**

By that time, I had met Jeannine and was anxious to get married. I met her in Madison. She is from Wausau. Her name was Jeannine Forsmo. That was a blind date.

Jeannine and her sister had a magazine at the University of Wisconsin called the *Octopus*. They would have their dream girl every month. These weren't swimming suit things. They were nice pictures. So Jeannine and her sister were the dream twins. They positioned them so it looked like they were looking into a mirror.

I was living in Schlicter Hall. The building is still there. This man from another small town just up the road, Tigerton, Wisconsin, was trying to fix me up with a blind date. He tried one time and I was committed with something else so he tried another time and said, "Well, let's double date. I'm going to fix you up with one of the dream twins," so I said, "Okay." So we did. He was dating the house mother, one of the house fellows, on Jeannine's floor. That was in '48.

I came to Rapids and was employed by Consolidated in August of '51. Got out of the military in July, came to work at Consolidated in August. Just back from Japan. Then we were married, in January '52.

**Signage**

First of all, I couldn't find the Consolidated office because of the park setting of the main office. There was no Jackson Street bridge. And it was park most of the way from Grand Avenue over to Consolidated.

There was a single lane bridge to the office because that was all low land and when the river got high in the spring, water flowed back, almost like the pool in Washington. When we had our fiftieth anniversary open house, people strolled over that bridge. There was no signage because of Mr. Mead as George Mead I was always called. He didn't want a lot of signs. He wanted to blend with the community, okay? And I was told, he didn't like fences, much to the consternation of safety people and so on.

When we bought the Wisconsin River mill in Whiting, in 1946, the last newsprint mill in the state of Wisconsin, and converted it to the manufacture of coated printing papers in 1946. The story was told that the first thing he did was tear down the fence, there was no fence around "Wisconsin River" [Division]. It used to be the Wisconsin River paper and pulp company, which was acquired in 1946.

So I had a little difficulty finding the office but I finally found it. You walked into the reception area, straight ahead and there was a sort of a banker's cage and behind that was the switchboard. There was an operator sitting there, plugging in. A far cry from today. Of course that was 45 years ago. There were people working on that switchboard that are still very much active. Swanee Yeager Tomscyk was a receptionist, switchboard operator. Another one was a Crotteau girl. Her parents used to live down the street here.

**Public Relations**

It was a relatively small company, a friendly company. I remember Ira taking me on a tour of the paper mill. Sort of walking through, hearing all that noise, I thought, "Oh God."

We found out what some of the problems were. They said, we think we need somebody in public

relations. People don't understand the problems we have in relation to pollution abatement. Earlier that year, the Appleton division in particular was under threat.

Before that, they didn't have any public relations. If the *Tribune* called, they were battered from pillar to post.

The *Tribune* photographer used to refer to this place as "The Bastille," because no one could get in. There was reason for that.

Consolidated had developed a coating process and it was patented. There was a coating infringement suit pending against Kimberly Clark. Which Consolidated eventually won. You could not let a lot of people in there with cameras, etc. So people were discouraged from coming into the mill, although they did have mill tours.

**Anniversary**

One of the first things I suggested that we do was have the 50th anniversary open house in 1954. It really wasn't the 50th anniversary of the organization; it was the 50th anniversary of the beginning of papermaking. The first paper was made at the mill in 1904.

We talked to Stanton. He said, "Sure, go ahead. Do it."

We opened the doors. It wasn't just a bunch of mortar. Come on down! See what's going on. We had 25,000 people.

We had just built that addition to the main office in the back, that square section there. They came in the front door of the main office. Then they walked out the office and through the mill. They went in through an area that is now offices.

They got a little introduction on the tour, safety and so and so. They walked through a couple of paper machines and out to an area which, at that time, was the new finishing room, which we had set up as a reception area, with displays of everything from pollution abatement to R&D.

We had packed up trees to give away. We served a choice of two or three kinds of sandwiches from the Mead Inn. It was kind of a big party out there.

That was part of the process of opening it up.

**Living Right & Getting Credit for It**

Burt Williams was Dorothy Mead's father. He wasn't alive then but I guess he would have been the predecessor, although I think his emphasis was more in promotion and marketing rather than in public relations as we know it: George Mead fishing camp and all that.

My supervisor was Ira Boyce, assistant to the president. Finance was his background. Stanton [Mead] had him as his right-hand man. He had the office right next to Stanton. I think he was vice president at the time.

That was also the year we started what we called our modern annual report. That was Ira's responsibility and I worked with him on that. In those days you only published an annual report. There weren't any quarterly reports.

So we moved through, let's get into quarterly reports. We worked with the financial people in developing the numbers but we started out with a little insert.

We were early for the paper industry, certainly in the advance pioneers. My title was administrative assistant, public relations. The first year, we were down in the Timberlands department. They didn't know where to put me. There wasn't room for a desk. It was a one-person department.

One of the things that was missing was a communications program with employees. The Wisconsin Paper Council was concentrating on, if you're going into a PR program, start with internally, your own people. Inform them of the basic philosophy so they can, in turn, interpret the company to their friends and relatives, to the people of their acquaintance. And that's still a good policy. They can be ambassadors for the company.

I was interviewed by Ira and then Ira took me in to meet Stanton before I was hired. And he told me right there in 1951, "I don't think we want to have another company publication."

Later on he told me he didn't have some good experiences with that. You know Sam Spufus? Apparently, it irritated him, or irritated people. It wasn't good spoof. We started out with that hurdle to overcome.

We didn't start out with a magazine. We started out with the *Consoletter*, a little newsletter that started out on a modest basis and it grew. Then we moved to a magazine as it proved its worth.

That was one characteristic of Consolidated. Sometimes we moved slowly in some areas but we didn't jump off into an area and then retreat. It's pretty solid stuff, just like the buildings. We're going to move in this direction but we're going to move slowly. If you're going to be in PR, the basic philosophy is living right and getting credit for it.

In 1956-74, I was director of public relations.

**Stanton**

It was a cordial relationship with Stanton. It didn't frighten me. I consider him, as well as an associate or superior, a friend.

I remember visiting him when he was dying, up there in Marshfield. He wasn't talking very well. He tried to introduce me to the aide when they brought his food in.

"Dan Meyer," he sort of whispered. So he knew who I was.

We developed a mutual respect. Stanton would ask me to do this or to do that and I was not one to say, "Oh, that doesn't belong in our department." I would say, "Let's do it."

Mr. Mead is always George the first. Stanton was Stanton from day one. Maybe at first, I had some reservations about that.

You had to understand where the company was, where Stanton, the leader of the company, was, and appreciate that, so that was part of the historical culture. What was the culture of the community and what was the culture of the company and how could you address that to make necessary changes to keep pace with the changing society.

That's the way Stanton did things. Didn't make a big fuss about it.

Certain areas he just didn't want to talk about. He told the story about how he tried to work shifts as a tester or whatever it was. He said, "I couldn't do that. I told Father, 'I can't do this.'"

He never forgot. He had a long memory. He knew who he could count on and who he couldn't count on. Don't ever break a trust with a guy like that. And that's fine.

He was modest but very proud of things like the Mead Inn. We might need a new paper machine but he was very happy one day that we got the Mead Inn modernization, when we built the tower part.

**Consolidated Papers, Inc.**

When I started, it was Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co., the historic name, and a long one, a complicated one. I remember suggesting to Stanton that we change the name. I think it was 1960 or in the sixties. I pointed out that we were being confused with power companies. I even got a letter for Consolidated Wallpaper and Paint.

Mind you, this wasn't the year after I came. I would also say that PR as I practiced it, required a great deal of patience and persistence. Make sure it's right to begin with, then be patient and persistent and carry it through.

Stanton said, "Why don't you work on it? You can work with George." George had just moved over to the main office.

Marketing told us everybody in the marketplace knew us as Consolidated. We can't drop that name. We ought to change the style of our name and we ought to incorporate the stylized, "Consolidated" we were using with our advertising program.

I worked with Harold Murtfeldt, who later became president. Harold said he wanted to keep the Consolidated name. There were other names in the hopper but we finally were able to find, checking with Dick Brazeau and lawyers and so on, that indeed we could use the name Consolidated Papers, Inc. It had not been patented by others.

That brought a whole new assignment. To change the name, you have to announce the name change. You have to redesign the letterhead; you have to redesign your whole company identification, your whole logo, paper supply, calling cards. We headed that.

One alternative suggested was Wisconsin River, and Consolidated Enterprises was another.

They tell me they went through the whole process before they named the Mead Inn. Finally, someone said, "Why don't we call it the Mead Hotel?"

When Consolidated built the addition out over the river, the blade coater addition, and I suggested we put some kind of company identification on there, he said, "That's all right, Dan, you can put it there, but I don't want some big, garish neon sign."

Working with him after we changed the company name, he said, "Why don't you work with Henry on signage for all the plants." Okay, well, let's make them so they identify but they are consistent and properly landscaped.

One time, we were trying to establish a consistent color for the Consolidated trucks. It came to a little more than we figured. But they said, "Oh boy when you see those trucks go down I-90, it's a good quality outfit."

**Old George**

George I had retired. That was the year, 1950, he had his stroke. The Mead Inn had been opened in August. I met him at, I think, at a party at his house. Ira took us. I shook hands with him. I had no ordinary contact with him.

He had his little man who was taking good care of him, a Filipino.

He was making some communications but he wasn't talking. He was writing some of his history, about the Biron mill and the Appleton mill and those other stories.

He was out of the picture. So it was Stanton and Walter.

**Walter**

Stanton was more interested in the raw materials, forestry end of the business. Stanton was the oldest. The buck usually stops with the president; but there was a partnership.

Walter was living in Chicago. He was handling the marketing end of the business and Harold Murtfeldt was the ad manager although he was a lawyer by training.

We worked with Walter on the annual report.

Ira and I'd go down, at least in the first few years, we'd go together. We'd have to get the marketing story and we'd get this and this and we'd spend time with Walter, sure. The office was on La Salle street. They had their marketing group down there.

You could get the night train from Rapids or Adams Friendship and get a roomette. You'd arrive around seven in the morning. The only problem was, you take that train coming back, you'd get off the train in Wisconsin Rapids at six o'clock in the morning on some of those cold, dark mornings. That's why Consolidated had its marketing office down there.

**Henry**

Henry Baldwin [Emily Mead Baldwin's husband] was coordinator of plants and processes when I came. Later, he became vice president of manufacturing. But he was definitely on the production end of the business. He had considerable authority. I think Stanton relied on him.

I think Stanton, Walter and he became acquainted with one another when they were at Yale. Everyone had their own area of special expertise. Henry had some of that. So did Ira. I think a good leader knows where to turn for advice in a particular area. One doesn't have it all, does he?

**Emily**

Emily [Mead Baldwin Bell, Stanton Mead's sister] was out there in the trenches. She worked hard. One of her common interests was politics. She loved to talk politics. She loved to tell the story. I had many visits with her until weeks before she passed away.

Emily was very Republican. Jeannine used to kid me, "I think you were more of a Democrat when I met you."

I would say, "Well, that's what happens when you get out in the real world. You find out how the bottom line is."

We were living at 1430 Baker Street before we built this place. Emily was going door to door for the Republican party. It was on Sunday.

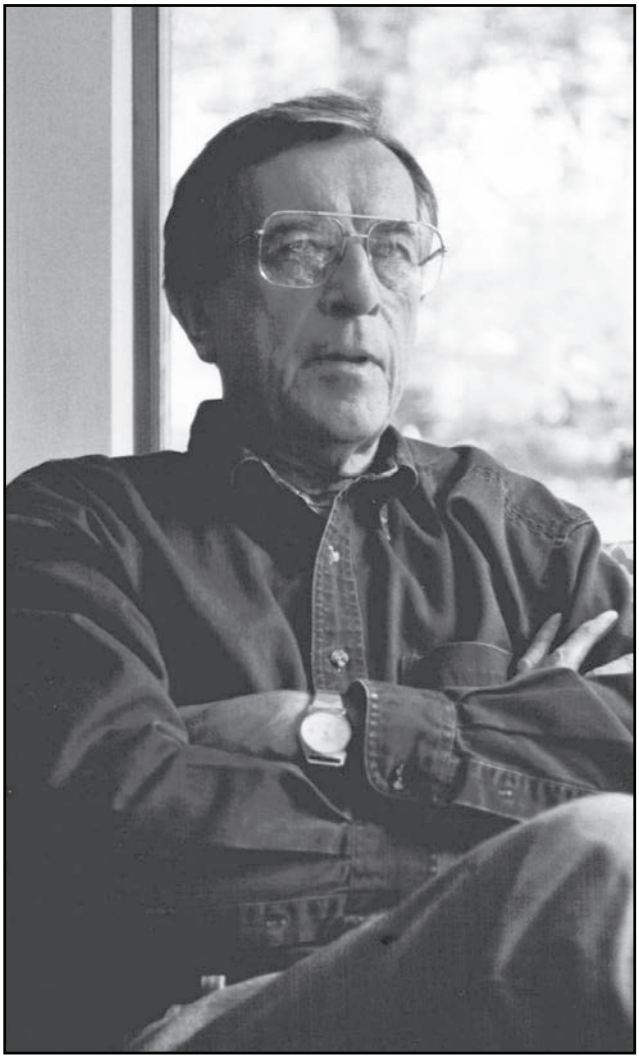
We'd gone to Wausau to see Jeannine's folks or something and we came back and the door bell

rang. And here was Emily. She handed me our *Milwaukee Journal*. She said, "You don't read *this* paper, do you?"

It was 1958, so I hadn't been there that long. I said, "Emily, you have to find out what the other side is writing." Which is true.

We grew to enjoy a relationship, a lot of which is based on politics.

When she got an award of distinguished service to the Republican Party, they had their convention up at Telemark. They did the best that they could to serve all the people but they had a very small restaurant.



***1998 by Uncle Dave***

Henry was gone. He was a rather hyper guy. He would have been there organizing and taking care of "Em," as he called her. Do this or do that.

Dorothy Lichty was the chair, and she had other duties to perform. Emily wasn't walking that well. She had polio. So Dorothy said, "Maybe you could sort of take care of her for lunch and so on," so I said, "Sure, I'll be glad to do that."

We sat there waiting. Finally I said, "Emily, I think we'd better go," because there was about a half-mile walk from the restaurant.

We finally got down and I said, "There's a hot dog stand here. Maybe we could get a hot dog."

I looked back and here she is, sitting there and eating a hot dog and twenty minutes later, we had to get her back stage and she was honored and she had a chance to speak. You make the best of these things and you have some fun.

She wouldn't complain. There wasn't anybody putting on a society role. *This is not good enough for me, I'm Emily Bell.* No. She wasn't that way. She was a real person.

She had her hot dog and got up there and said, "When I was asked to get involved in politics, I went to Father [George W. Mead I] and said, 'Father, should I get involved with the Republican Party and get active?'"

He told me, "Yes, but if you're going to do it, do it right. Get involved and do it all."

She said, "I tried to do that.

"But one of the greatest pleasures that I've had was making so many friends. Like all of you here. And I want to thank all of you friends for giving me this honor and this privilege of serving."

Then she came down. That was all.

When I used to go down to see Emily to solicit funds for the Republican Party, I'd call and she'd say, "What do you want now?"

So a couple of times we had some good visits. I said, "One of these days, I'm going to call you and say I want a cup of coffee."

I called her. "This is Dan Meyer. How are you?"

"I'm all right," she said. "How are you? I want my president to be in good health."

I was president of the Foundation. She was vice president.

I said, "Emily, just a cup of coffee."

She'd say, "Well, I gotta do this, I gotta do that. Why don't you come tomorrow."

Like Stanton, you develop a relationship of mutual respect.

**Clarence Jackson**

We had some great people. Clarence Jackson was running the Rapids mill. Clarence, I think, was involved with *Consolidated News*. He and Jim Plzak.

We had mill tours that Clarence had started. Sometimes, he got people that were tour guides who couldn't handle another job. Clarence would tell the story about this guide that was showing them number 14 machine and he'd say, "This is the world's largest and fastest paper machine."

Clarence called him in and said, "What are you talking about? It's not the world's fastest and largest."

A few weeks later, he overheard him again. "This is the second largest…"

Clarence used to answer the question, "How many people work here?"

"About half of them."

That was his sense of humor.

You had to develop a relationship with those people. Especially when you had the open house and the other things.

When I came to town, the place to go on Tuesday night was the Elks supper club. There was always a good program, like a Rotary program, or whatever they had. Good speakers. Stanton and Clarence and Mrs. Plzak had this little trio, musical ensemble, that played at the Elks on Tuesday night.

**Leo Barrette**

Leo Barrette. There's a lot of history there, with Leo. He built the [Witter Field] stadium. Leo was director of industrial relations, of personnel, whatever they called it back then. I think I was viewed with a little suspicion from Leo, from day one, because I didn't come to Consolidated through the employment department. I was hired by those guys over there at the main office.

After I got there, I sort of found out his point of view. I had to establish myself on my own merits with Leo.

I think I finally arrived when he asked me to join the Elks Club. Maybe he didn't, but I joined the Elks. Everybody joined the Elks. You had to go through the process.

One day he called me, "Danny, come on out here!"

"What's going on?"

Here I'm 24 years old and he gave me the pitch.

"I think you ought to be an officer of the Elks."

He was on the nominating committee. Someone had backed out.

"You don't have to start at the bottom but you have this night and so and so night and then you'll be exalted ruler."

I accepted. I think I had established a trusting relationship with Leo. Even while he was still working.

"Danny! Waltz out here!"

I would say, "Do you mind if I do a Fox Trot?"

He was a good guy.

**Community Chest**

That was kind of a joy, developing the Community Chest with the labor movement.

It became a responsibility of the Public Affairs department, the public relations department. With the United Way people, Bill Tolle, Bill Huffman and others in the community, we were moving toward payroll deduction for the Community Chest. At the time, we didn't have payroll deduction for anything.

Ira must have talked it over with Stanton and he said, "If we want to do this, it's something we don't want to impose on the employees. Let's find out what the unions would like to do."

We told the folks in the community to go over to the labor hall and see if they thought it would be a good idea. Stanton agreed, we don't think it should be part of a bargaining process. That was wise. They came back and said they were pretty well received by the unions.

The next step, Ira said, "I don't think this ought to be in Human Resources, Industrial Rela-

tions, or Labor Relations, because people are sitting across the table, and you see this person and this person, negotiating with them. Let's take a step away from labor negotiations. Let's turn this over to public relations."

So that's how we got it started. It was set up, from day one: employee volunteer solicitors working on the floor in the mill with no supervisor soliciting a subordinate and everybody giving according to what they could do.

This was is in contrast to what was going on in Wausau and other areas in the paper industry where they were saying, *we're going to hire so and so people and we're going to do it this way and this way.*

We said, no, that misses the spirit of the whole thing. The spirit is to get people to recognize and accept that this is our United Way, this is our Community Chest. We can work together and it doesn't make any difference if you belong to a labor union or if you don't belong to a labor union, or if you belong to management. Let's work together.

It started out slowly. The first few years, it wasn't good. But the thing grows. And people recognize they have a responsibility. It's a matter of participation.

You help us set the goals. You tell us how much you think you can raise.

**Daily Tribune**

There was only one strike that shut the mill down. Leo was still there. That was very difficult. Bill Huffman was on my door every day. Bill was getting some information that was published in some internal management newsletter which we'd started but he respected the privacy of that.

I remember sitting in the office with him. I had an office right across the hall. Stanton had moved down to the end. Mine was an inside office. There were two of us in there. Groff Collett shared the space with me for a while.

I can picture Bill sitting there, trying to get more information. But the basis was, we're not going to negotiate this thing in the paper.

There was [editor] Carl Otto and you had Bill and his public right to know. He came down pretty hard on us at times. But that's okay. Then [editor] Joe Karius.

One thing in my experience, just an observation, that, in having a larger corporation with headquarters in a smaller community, you don't have people who are specialists in understanding the business world. At the *Tribune*, there's a huge turnover. So we were involved in the care and training of a new reporter. So he or she knows a supercalender from a cooking calendar. Or has any background on what forest management is.

We developed a relationship and understanding so you don't have to go back to square one. That makes the job a little more difficult.

**Worst Nightmare?**

No question, fatality. I remember one. There may have been more.

You know Jim Moog? Moog was a teacher up at the high school. He was working part time, freelancing, for WFHR.

The accident was at the Kraft Mill. We had established a news release policy and procedure if there was a serious accident, fire or flood.

We got the call from the manager, Jim Russell, down at the Kraft Mill, that they'd had this event. It was a Saturday morning.

He wondered whether the radio heard about it. Moog called and I said, "Can you please hold off on this. If you go on the radio and say someone was killed, they're all going to wonder if it's their brother or husband. You're going to scare the bejeebers out of them. We'll get you the information. We're in the process of notifying the family."

It was the husband of one of the checkout girls at the old Red Owl by the courthouse. The phone rang in the back room or wherever it was and someone's explaining to the manager, could you call so and so.

She happened to pick up and she got the message while she was still there at the checkout. Jim respected us and we got back to him.

Those were difficult days. When it touches the human side of the business, it's always most difficult.

### Kraft Mill

That was a difficult period. There was a tremendous amount of public misunderstanding. "You said it wouldn't stink."

But nobody ever said that. I had you look that up in the files. Did you ever find it? We said we were going to employ the latest technology.

Food poisoning at the Mead? That was a tough one.

They don't seem so tough when you look back. I remember Groff Collett walking in and saying, "Oh Gosh, we've got a real problem."

You weather those things.

It's a scare, are people going to come back? Are you going to cut off the business? Are they going to cancel?

One of the interesting parts of the job was the diversity. Everything from the hotel business to forest management and water power companies. It covered the whole gamut.

### Not Just Bricks & Mortar

Where are the decisions made? They're made at the top.

A good PR person should be reporting to the decision makers and having some influence on the policy. If you're not, then you leave.

You have to believe in your product. Our product was Consolidated papers. Is it worth selling? Is it doing the right thing?

It's not perfect. We never walked on water. We had accidents.

I remember someone saying, "Why do you have to publish all those accident reports in the *Tribune*? Other paper companies don't. Our people were rushed by ambulance to Riverview Hospital. Their folks were not taken by ambulance to Riverview. They were taken to the local doctor so it wasn't that much a matter of public record.

I said, "Listen, you're not going to kid anybody. Everybody know there's an accident."

If you're going to try to cover that up, you're going to lose credibility. Better off to work to make the place safer. Isn't that the answer? Don't cover up. You're only as good as your word. Are you going to deliver the facts or are you going to blow a lot of smoke?

I wouldn't say I was a policy maker, but you have a voice in the development of policy. A news release policy, sure. Other decisions you're making.

Are you going to open your lands for hunting, fishing and hiking and so on. Do you have an open lands policy? We didn't have an open lands policy.

But there was a case here and a case there of having enough vision, saying, let people come into your forest. Let them take the forest tour that we developed. Up here at Biron or up at Rhinelander. So they can understand and appreciate and see.

There's no substitute for seeing what you're doing. That's like opening up the mill for the 50th Anniversary and letting people in. Well, this isn't just bricks and mortar. It's a lot of people.

### A Tour for the Team

Another story illustrates the value of tours. We had our baseball team here. One day, the telephone rang. The receptionist said there are some gentlemen here who would like to talk to somebody about pollution.

Through the glass doors, I could see these big guys. "Yes? What can I do for you?"

They looked out the window at the Wisconsin River.

"What are you doing to that river?"

They were from the Des Moines baseball team. The Quad Cities, or whatever it was. Three baseball players who had just walked across the Jackson Street bridge. And the river was brown. They had the vision that coming up to northern Wisconsin, it would be a trout stream.

I explained the whole story about tannic acid and said, "Would you like to take a tour of the mill? Have you ever seen a paper machine? Come on, we'll take a quick tour."

They said, "How much do these guys make an hour?"

"Wow!"

Our people were friendly, and the ballplayers left with a whole different attitude. Making pa-

per is something of value. We were trying to be responsible on pollution abatement, that sort of thing.

Another time in my office, we had someone who was only with our Public Affairs department for a short time. He came in the office and I was answering a complaint, probably something related to the Kraft mill.

I took time to explain what was going on as best I could and I said, "Thank you for calling. We'll see what we can do to fix it."

He said, "Why do you waste your time on things like that?"

As Harold Murtfeldt stressed continually, everybody's important there. You better respect everybody that works in your company. That gripes me when people say, "I am only a…"

Before we had a PR department, they didn't know who they could talk to. I think it must have been Mr. Mead. They were shunted from one to another. Who was going to talk?

**Consolidated Foundation**

Stanton. He was pretty frugal, in terms of what he did himself. Very modest. On the other hand, he was generous in his annual contributions for the park people and not looking for a lot of recognition.

Back in 1951, Consolidated had received a fairly decent settlement on an excess profit tax refund of several millions of dollars. Ira was responsible for that. There was some good flow of cash coming into Consolidated.

So they organized the Consolidated Papers Foundation. The original developers of it were Stanton and Ira and Ralph Cole and T.W. Brazeau.

The thrust at the beginning was general support of independent or private colleges in the state of Wisconsin. Henry was interested in Beloit. Mr. Mead was a graduate of Wisconsin but he'd also gone to Beloit.

There was some connection to the Congregational Church with some of the other schools, like Northland, and so on. I don't know how Lawrence and so on got in.

I didn't get involved in the Foundation until about 1967 when I went on the board of directors. The premise was that the activities of the Foundation had an effect on the public relations of Consolidated. I was secretary for a few years and then president.

When we started the National Merit Scholarship program in 1956, Consolidated was one of the first corporations that came in. They were providing some local scholarships before that and I talked with Ira about this and he said, "Oh gosh, its awfully complicated. You have to set up a local committee to make the selection and so on and so on."

He had reservations about it. Along comes National Merit. They handle the selection. All you have to do is give them the money and set the parameters of what you want to do. "We want to select people from the state of Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota," wherever your operation is.

As Foundation president, one of the more popular programs we moved into was the matching gifts program. There were those in the foundation who worried, "Dan, you're asking for a blank check. They're going to bankrupt us."

I said, "All right, let's start it."

At first it was just for education. Then we expanded it to include miscellaneous. And what's the third area? You could give to United Way agencies but we're not going to match your United Way contribution because we're contributing to United Way itself.

We were one of the first companies and foundations to support Wisconsin public television and radio. [Consolidated Foundation was also the first to support *River City Memoirs* books.]

**MSTC**

Mid-State! I'm always tremendously pleased when I go down 32nd Street and see that big parking lot because that's a story in itself. That's one that Stanton said to me, "I think you did the right thing."

We were told by the state, if you're going to build a school, you need 100 acres with sewer and water, everything. There was a building committee.

We [Mid-State] were all over town. Auto mechanics was in the old Grand Rapids garage. We had the Bethke building behind Johnson Hills. Then the school up at Lincoln. Then we took the old Normal school.

It all started out with vying for the University extension. Milt Schneider and the late Paul Fleming and others tried hard to get that and we lost. Some of the supervisors didn't help us.

So we said, "Let's go for a community college."

At that time, the state was debating whether they should go to community college or not. That lost.

Then we said, "Let's be the home base for Mid-State."

State law required that all school districts be part of a vocational-tech district by 1967. Then there was a major fight.

School districts were going to go where? Dave Silverman and his company were trying to push Stevens Point into Wausau. That raged.

In the meantime, Doc Hayward said, What the heck, we're not going to wait. He was chairman of the county board. "We'll organize our own district right now with whoever we've got."

So it became Wood County and we got Adams County. So we existed. Then it was a matter of getting Stevens Point into the fold.

That was roughly 1970.

We hired Flad and Associates and we developed a mall-type plan. We would build it all at one time, all under one roof. It was wonderful.

But we had to go to referendum. It wasn't built. It was too much for Rapids at the time. The vote carried here but the farther you got from the campus, the fewer votes. That was in spring.

We hired Earl Jaeger as a first director. He came to us from Racine. Lorraine, of course is still here and a good friend of Jeannine's.

We said, "We've got a half a million bucks put away. We've got the land." We were assured of water and sewer connected even though we were in the town of Grand Rapids. Mayor Penza said, "Let's not worry about that."

Penza did things. "Let's not make a big fuss about it. We've got water." Taking it right out to the Washington School. It comes right out to the intersection. Are we going to go for this school or are we going to have a great big debate. I don't think it ever got to the Council. It was done. It was done! Wonderful.

I suggested, "Why don't we go ahead and revise a plan. Can we build a campus?"

We went back to Flad. What do we need most? That was auto mechanics.

In the fall, we started to build. A few thought we were crazy. They just turned you down! There was a little mumbling by a few people on the county board.

That's when I remember Stanton saying, "You guys are doing it the right way. One step at a time."

**Why?**

You get involved in one thing and one thing leads to another. As Bill McGloughlin used to say, it may be immodest, but we sort of established the modern Chamber of Commerce. The other thing, we're witnessing right now, is the Hopa fest. It's the Dick Brazeau legacy.

That's how I got on the Humanities Council and American Players Theater. I got on the advisory council. That goes all the way back to the little Shakespeare I had. It started with the Freshman English at the University of Wisconsin.

"Let's go down there some time." We said. So Potters and Meyers went down to Spring Green and American Players.

One day, I was in the foundation and [APT founder] Charles Bright called me. He gave us the story of APT and it looked good and I managed to get the support of the Foundation. Bill Kraus called me and said, I think we ought to get somebody like Potter on that board. And Jack went on the board for a short period. He said, "I think somebody like Larry Nash would be good."

**Shore Acres**

The address here is 241 Shore Acres Drive. This was undeveloped when we first saw it. The Yeske home was the only one between Shore Acres and Biron Drive.

We were looking for a place to possibly build a house. River lots were nice but Jeannine had great reservations about that. We had several children. It's too dangerous and so on.

I found out that this property belonged to Consolidated. So one day when I was in to see Stanton on other matters and I said, "Have you ever thought about selling, dividing that property up there in Biron?"

He gave me a rather brisk, "No!"

I said, "If you are, let me know."

"There's mosquitoes up there you know!"

I said, "Yes, but there are going to be mosquitoes wherever you go."

About two weeks later, I got a call from Earl Starks, secretary of Consolidated, who was also handling property.

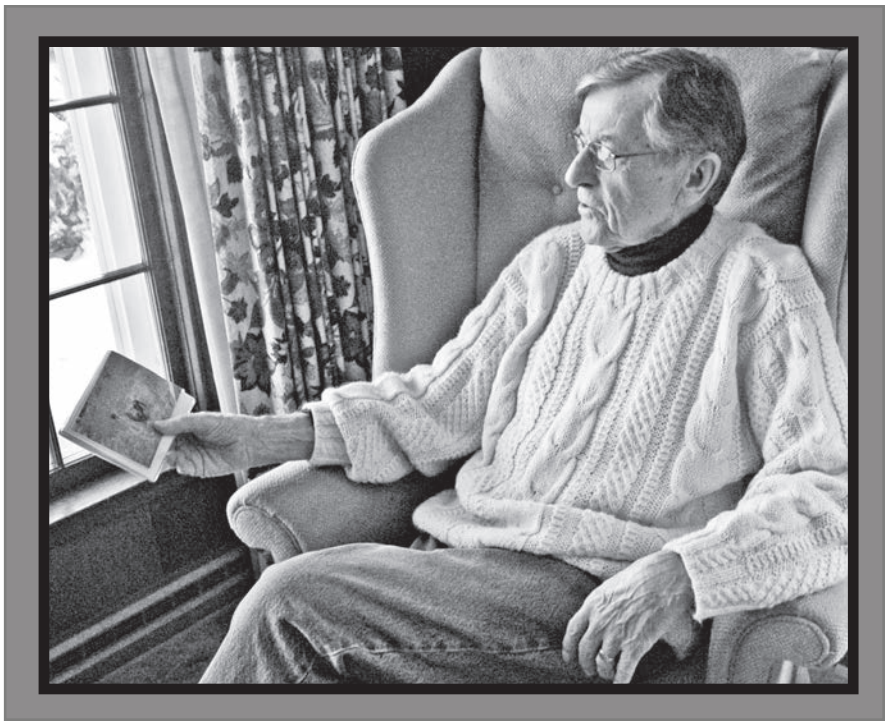
He said, "We've got this land up there. Which one do you want?" That's just the way it went. He said, "We decided we would restrict this to Consolidated employees. We're not going to put it on the open market. Do you know of any others that would be interested?"

I said, "Earl, this isn't for a Consolidated employee but it's for a son of the late Ralph Cole, Jack Cole. I think Ralph would have bought that for his son. I would like to suggest that if he's interested."

We decided this was the one we wanted. Max Andrae had come up and plotted it all out. He was done just like that.

Jack Cole bought the property next door.

The Coles were so good to us when we came to town. They put on a little cocktail party for people they thought we should meet. And they did it in those days. That whole generation was quite different than the ones we have now. In many ways, they were more relaxed times. There was closeness among those people.



*2010 photo by Uncle Dave*

***Dan***

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*See page 7 for Natwick poster deals!*