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Volume II #41



T.B. Scott Library



SWCHC Museum

Cover: T.B. Scott Library, March 1966 (see page 6). President's message by Phil Brown, 2; Electric Paper Machine by J. Marshall Buehler, 3-5; Library photo, 6; Grandma's House by Lori Brost, 6; Johnson House, 7-13; Johnson Hill's by Don Solie, 14-15; Lincoln basketball, 16-22; First Car by Bill Hartley; 23-25; Mrs. Ellie by Scott Brehm, 26; Kissinger Hill by Scott Brehm, 27-29; Interwar Armory by William Parker, 30-31; Basketball photo, 32.

ARTICLES

Phil Brown
 SWCHC President

A Productive Season

It has been a busy winter at the Museum.

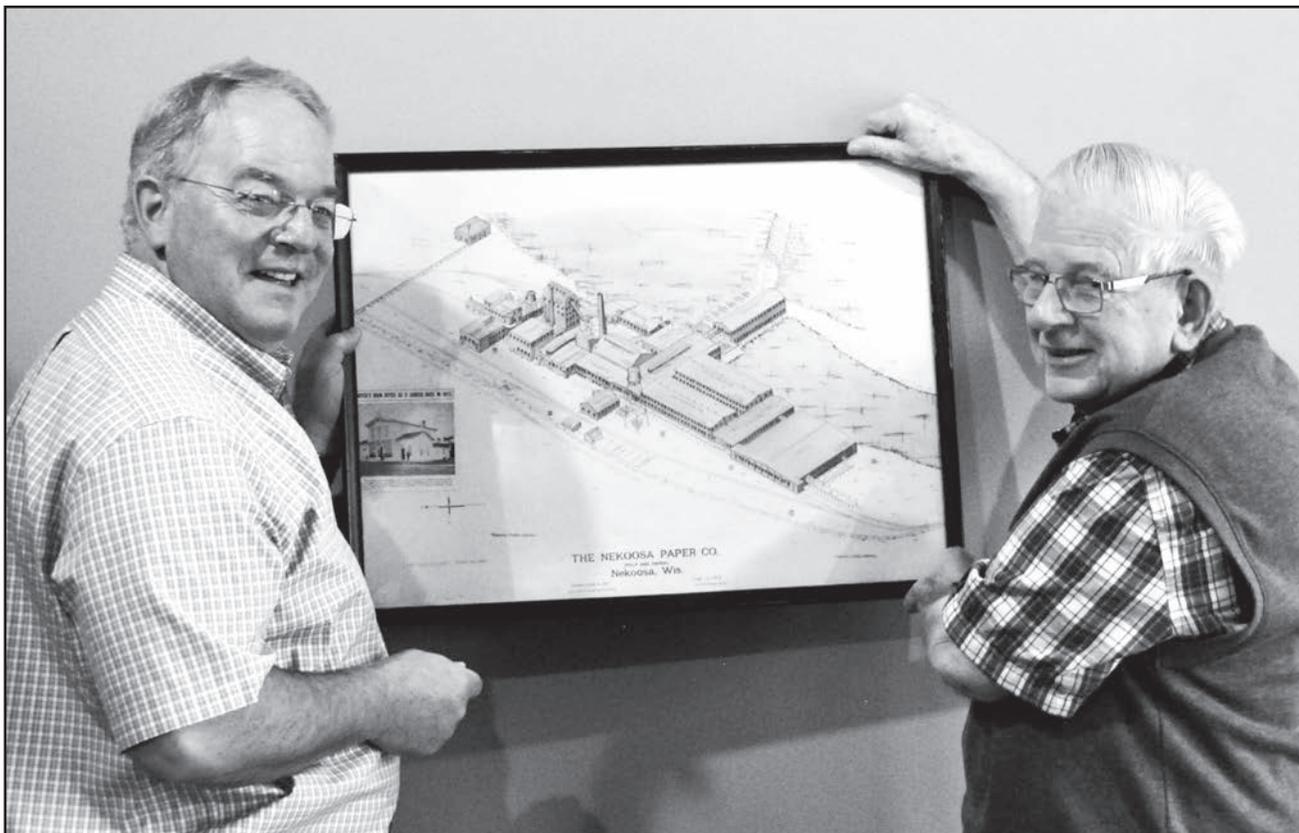
Perhaps inspired by the presence of intern Emily Ho, a Lincoln High School graduate who had been studying art history in Florence, Italy, Uncle Dave focused his attention on an intensive reorganization of the third floor “ballroom” archives area. He and Emily were joined in the effort by SWCHC volunteers Barry Jens and Billy Parker. The latter also assisted me in reorganizing the photo archive room on the third floor and has taken on the task of bringing order to the military archives, while working on a display on the second floor landing. Meanwhile, the clothing room was sorted by volunteers Connie Jagodzinski, Kris Willfahrt, Becky Engstrand and Bobbi O’Shasky.



Emily

We have also repainted the front entryway, front hallway, main office and Front Gallery, where Museum Administrator Lori Brost has done an excellent job of upgrading the Grim Natwick display. Also with the help of Emily Ho (who has moved on to professional opportunities in greater Boston), we were able to put many digital images on our website, including postcards from Grand Rapids, Nekoosa and Port Edwards. Please visit www.swch-museum.com to see what we have added.

After two years of Civil War Exhibits in the J. Marshall Buehler Gallery, I am pleased to announce that, with the help of Marshall himself, this year’s exhibit will feature views of the local paper mills in the South Wood County area. I am sure you will find these images a fitting tribute to our greatest industry.



J. Marshall Buehler

John's Electric Paper Machine

In 1922, future company leader John Alexander held the position of Chief Chemist for Nekoosa Edwards Paper Co. Already holding several patents, his latest developmental inspiration was the invention of an all-electric paper making machine.

To review the function of a paper machine: wood cellulose fiber in water enters the machine at one end at a consistency of 99.5 percent water and only a half a percent fiber. The machine is designed to remove most of that water via drainage, suction, pressing and drying.

The final drying stage is accomplished by means of 30 to 40 large, hollow, drums heated by steam injected through the axle of the rotating drum. The entire paper machine was driven by a steam engine located underneath.

But Nekoosa Edwards operated four hydro-electric plants. Rather than use steam for power and heat, why not drive the machine with electric motors and dry the paper with an electrically heated dryer?

The first step was to build a pilot model machine. This was a 16-inch-wide machine that had a single, large dryer drum with electric heaters

inside the drum. It was located in the Port Edwards mill and was built by the mill's machine shop and maintenance crew. The paper would be wrapped around the heated drum to dry it out. However, the drum did not heat uniformly and as a result the paper exiting the machine contained wet spots.

But John did not give up. His solution was to dry the paper in a large oven heated with electricity, similar to the oven on an electric range in your kitchen. The steel drum was replaced with a 16-foot-long brick oven. On this experimental machine, some Kraft wrapping paper and a small amount of newsprint and writing paper was produced.

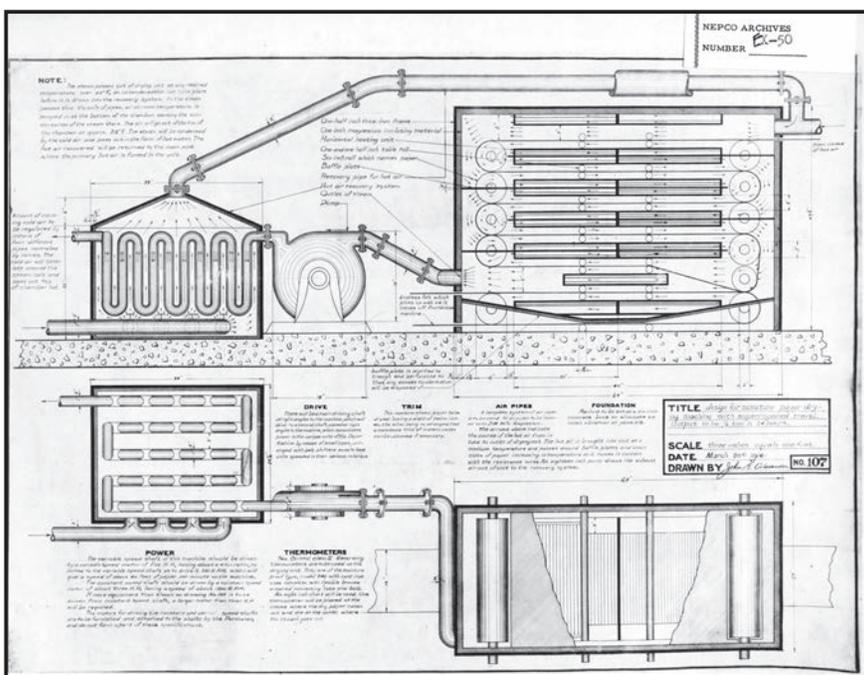
Results were promising to John, now promoted to General Manager of the company. Accordingly he decided to attempt a commercial size production machine.

He convinced not only his father, Lewis Alexander, President of Nekoosa Edwards, but also Westinghouse Electric Manufacturing Company, to collaborate in building this commercial size machine. The fact that Nekoosa Edwards had just recently purchased several hydro-electric generators from Westinghouse probably helped consummate the agreement.

A 94-inch-wide paper machine, designed to run at a speed of 300 feet per minute was built in the Port Edwards mill. Nekoosa Foundry produced the metal castings, Westinghouse furnished the electrical gear and the Port Edwards machine shop and maintenance crew all contributed to the building of this unique machine.

The insulated 36-foot-long oven was constructed of two courses of brick and contained 2500 kilowatts of electric heating elements inside it.

The wet paper, sandwiched between two bronze screens, zigzagged back and forth six times as it passed over steel supporting rollers.



Design for miniature paper-drying machine

On July 7th, 1924, the first sheet of paper came off the machine; dry but not without problems. A daily log of operations was kept and the following notes are derived from the log:

- Started at 8 a.m. but dryer drive clutched developed wrinkle which transferred to paper. Machine stopped and wire wrinkle hammered out.
- Started up at 8 a.m. but after one hour belt driving wire broke. Heat turned off but not before paper in machine burned up. This is the fourth time in ten days that this happened.
- Started at 8 a.m. but dryer drive clutch broke. Stopped machine and blacksmith and machine shop crew repaired.
- Made five tons of paper today. Ran to 6 p.m. Sheet is dry on edges but damp in middle.
- Finishing room crew not very enthused about product and doubt that it will be acceptable by customers.
- Eleven heating elements badly burned at terminals and connectors melted away. Melted metal fell on wire, making dents in wire.
- The lubricants in the bearings will not stay on bearings because of heat. Standard Oil Company man to suggest high temperature grease.
- Standard Oil man did not come up with satisfactory lubricant so will install water cooled bearings in dryer.

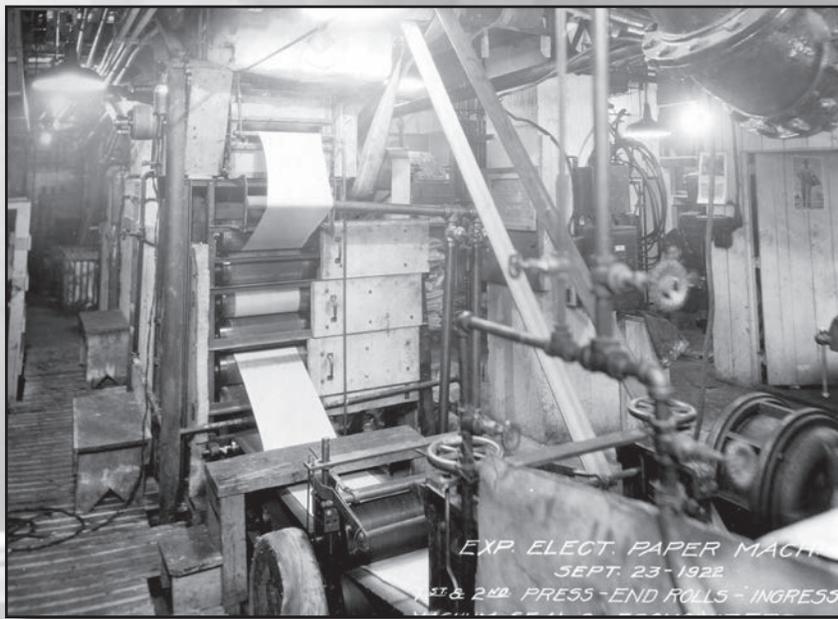
- Paper broke in dryer but caught fire. Could not go into dryer for an hour until it cooled down.

To address this last problem, which was becoming somewhat repetitive, a large ventilating fan was installed to make for a more rapid cooling of the oven.

So it went, on and off, for about two years. Then after being idle for about a year, the project was abandoned. A plan to convert the machine to a traditional steam heated driver had proved to be too costly. Subsequently, it was dismantled.

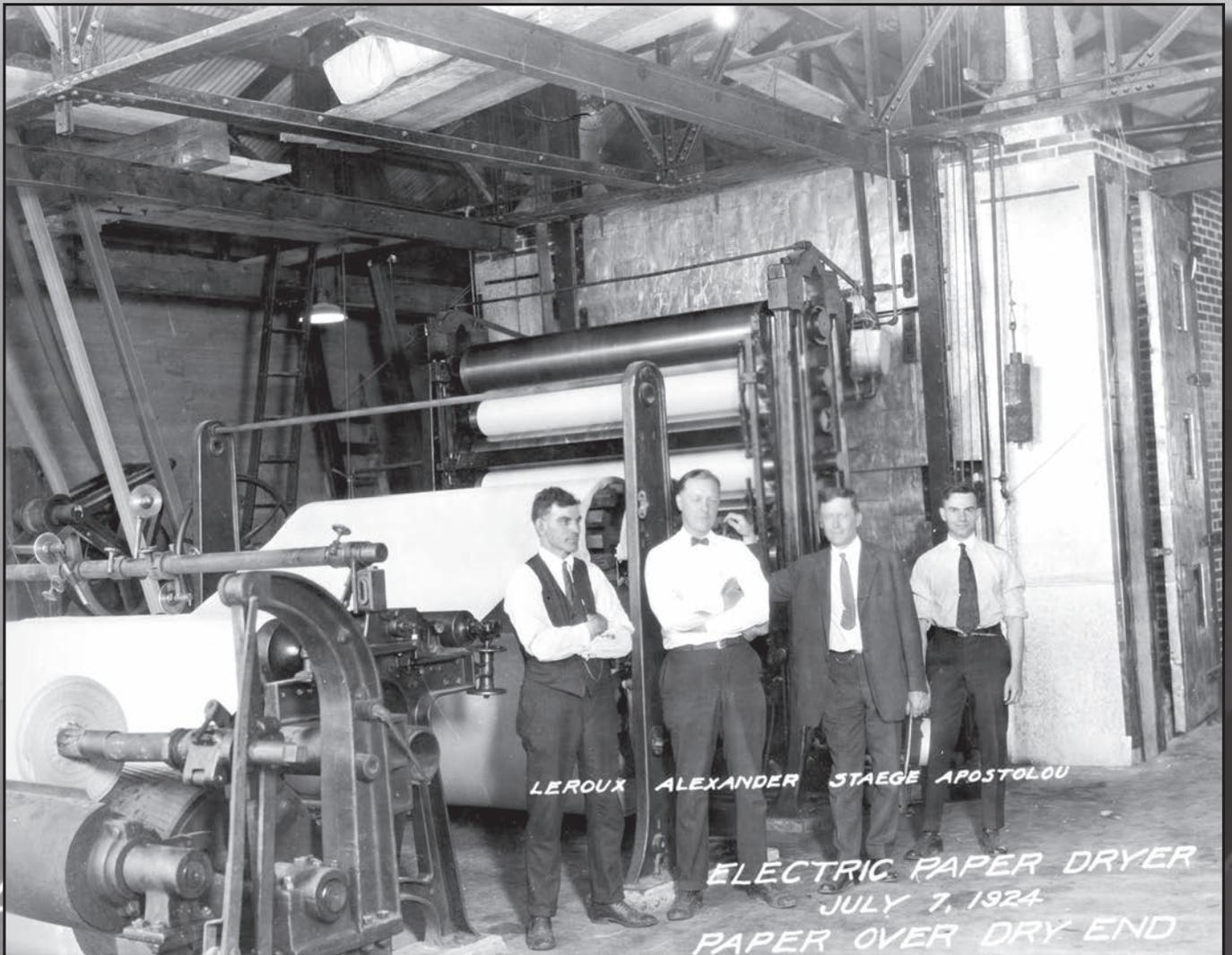
Meanwhile, a steam heated drying drum was added to the 16-inch pilot machine and it finally became a pilot model coating machine in the laboratory.

Surprisingly, nothing has replaced steam to this day for the drying of paper. As John's friends and coworkers bade farewell to "John's Electric Machine," his adversaries said goodbye to "John's Folly."



EXP. ELECT. PAPER MACH.
SEPT. 23-1922
ST. & 2ND. PRESS-END ROLLS-INGRESS

John Alexander's Electric Machine



LEROUX ALEXANDER STAEGE APOSTOLOU

ELECTRIC PAPER DRYER
JULY 7, 1924
PAPER OVER DRY-END

Did you know? we make photocopies of library materials 25¢ per page



In early 1966, libraries received this book from the American Cancer Society

“Smoking and Health,” still controversial in 1966

What is now “J. Marshall Buehler Gallery” looks much the same as the above T.B. Scott library as pictured in the *Daily Tribune* of March 1966. The Witter family owned the classical revival landmark for 40 years, 1907-1947. T.B. Scott Library occupied it for 22 years, 1948-70. The longest resident has been the South Wood County Historical Museum, 44 years and counting.

Lori Brost

Museum Administrator

Grandma’s House



Lori wasn’t always camera shy!

It all starts with the locked chest at Grandma’s house. Off limits and locked, it had to be full of mystery or treasure.

As children age and grandchildren grow up, the chest is handed down through the years, but it isn’t until now that the lock is removed and the treasure revealed: photos of relatives sometimes not seen for years or never met; photos of a grand home that was in itself a family heirloom; news clippings of marriages, birth announcements and death notices; articles about the family businesses; local interest stories; diaries of those long gone whose stories are now being passed down.

As another entry is added to the obituary file, Grandma’s house is prepared for a funeral and every piece is in place at least one more time. The photos beginning on page 6 are a walk through a house many adored from the outside but would never enter themselves. The landmark structure would be remodeled a few more times but still stands on its original location overlooking the beautiful Wisconsin River.

The chest was not my Grandma’s but someone’s. The house was the Nels Johnson house on 1st Avenue South, Wisconsin Rapids. Among the contents are the photos featured here.



A First-Class Residence

It was Christmas Eve and the halls of the Johnson house were decked, not with joyful boughs but with garlands of mourning. On Dec. 17, 1902, the beloved husband and father, Nels Johnson, while on a business trip to Wilmington, Del., suddenly and without warning, died. His death came among strangers in a hotel room at 1:15 a.m.

On the evening of Dec. 16 Johnson had enjoyed a hearty supper in Baltimore, Md., and had retired somewhat later to his room at the Clayton House, Wilmington. After a gin cocktail, he went to bed.

Soon Johnson experienced pain and distress in his chest and stomach to such an extent that he urged the clerk to immediately seek out the best doctor in town. Dr. Willard Springer arrived and, upon examination, diagnosed the problem as indigestion. He injected Johnson with "morphia."

The doctor wrote out a prescription and prepared to leave, but Johnson prevailed upon him to stay until the medicine was delivered. Before it came, Johnson underwent a sudden convulsion and died. Death was attributed to uremia or Bright's disease, a kidney malfunction.

Accompanying Johnson's body on the longer ride back from Wilmington was Arsin Arpin, who happened to be visiting in Woonsocket, R.I., and from Chicago, George M. Hill and George Mead.

As the shocked community came reluctantly to grips with its grief, the body, from its arrival on Saturday lay in state at the big Johnson home on 1st Avenue. At the Sunday funeral, the large gathering heard a Catholic service and remarks by Judge W.J. Conway. "Almost without warning, alone and away from home and loved ones, and within a few miles of the spot where a quarter of a century before he first set foot upon the soil of his adoption, death came to him from the unseen world," said Conway.

Johnson, said Conway, had arrived in New York with 25 cents in his pocket, but had quickly become "the architect of his fortune."

"He was essentially a business man. He did things. To him, theories were subordinate to practical results."

Johnson, according to his eulogist, delighted in his happy home on the banks of the Wisconsin where he lived "in the sweet companionship of those he loved." At his death, Johnson left, out of

"the smooth current of domestic joy," eight children and his widow, the pretty Nellie Hanifin from Sigel.

Johnson was 55, hale and hearty, so everyone thought. A fanatic proponent of the Consolidated Water Power and Paper Co., he had just convinced George Mead to back him in the venture and had gone east to look at paper machines. He planned to come home and build a dam and paper mill.

Born June 17, 1847, in Denmark, Johnson became the quintessential self-made man of the frontier.

In 1867, he immigrated through New York to Chicago, where he worked as a laborer before coming up to Grand Rapids in search of some employment suitable to a "green country boy."

Johnson started, like so many others had, as a laborer in the employ of Francis Biron. He worked in the woods during the winter and in the saw mill at Biron during the summer. "He advanced himself up until he held the position of head sawyer," wrote the Wood County Reporter, "when he quit to enter the general mercantile business with Henry Langord in 1876."

Apparently, Johnson sent \$500 to Marshall Field in Chicago and asked him to do the buying for the Grand Rapids concern. The two continued to correspond.

Langord sold out in 1877 to William H.H. Edwards, who sold in 1879 to J.D. Witter, who sold in 1887 to George Hill. Thus, Johnson & Co. became Johnson & Hill.

In 1892, Johnson built a new store and a new house, fulfilling the prophecy of the May 30, 1891, *Enterprise and Tribune*, which reported his purchase of 12 acres for \$1,050. "With a frontage on the beautiful Wisconsin River, a fine stock range in the rear, and the whole only four or five blocks from the business center of the city, Mr. Johnson's new purchase certainly has every commendable feature for a first-class residence site.

In 1895, Johnson presided over the building of a dam at Biron for Grand Rapids Pulp & Paper Co. After the mill was constructed, he continued to manage the firm. He was also part owner of Centralia Hardware.

When Johnson died, he was 55 and Nellie was 45. He had lived in their house 10 years. She would continue 45 more years, raising along the way, her large family.



Nellie Hanifin Johnson, Nels Johnson

After Mrs. Johnson's death on June 28, 1947, the house was sold for use by the Sisters of St. Francis as a chapel and convent. The former pasture in back became the grounds of Our Lady Queen of Heaven school and church.

In 1968, the house was sold to William Foote, who in turn sold to James Manley in 1972. But most significantly, the house has recently returned to the Johnson family, in the person of Nellen Sherwood, granddaughter of Nels Johnson, who, along with her husband, William, purchased the property, renovated the building and restored its grandeur.

It isn't the first time Bill and Nellen revisited the Johnson house. On Sept. 30, 1950, they borrowed the chapel long enough for a wedding. The halls were "lighted with candles and decorated with baskets of gladioli in fall colors, and maple leaf foliage, for the marriage of Miss Kathern Ellen Bellew and William H. Sherwood," said the Daily Tribune.

Miss Bellew, known as Nellen, was the daugh-

ter of Nels Johnson's daughter, Irma, who married Frank Bellew. For a while, Nellen lived with her grandmother in the big house, while her parents fixed up the carriage house out back for a residence.

In other years, when Nellen and her family visited from their home in Minneapolis, they stayed with Grandma Johnson.

Nellen remembers a happy Christmas Eve, midnight Mass and the several Johnson families gathered later for pressed chicken and Christmas pudding.

After aunts and uncles have returned to their homes, after the adults have gone to bed, after the big house has had enough silence to assume a shadowed mystery beyond any particular moment, but long before sunrise, little Nellen, the only child left in the house, gazes through the balustrade at the closed wooden doors to the parlor. On the other side is the promise of the season, a green tree and hopefully, a brand new pair of ice skates.



Photos from
“Grand-
ma’s
chest”
received
this
year









Postcard: Largest rug ever made in Grand Rapids. By Whittall's carpeting in Dept. Store of Johnson & Hill Co. for the Masonic Hall. Size 27 by 40 ft.



Don Solie

Johnson Hill's

Through The Eyes Of An Adolescent

At my 50-year Lincoln High School reunion of the class of 1963, George Zimmerman inquired whether I had seen the "History of Wisconsin Rapids" DVD in which my dad, Gordon Solie, was identified in the section dedicated to Johnson Hill's. George said he'd send it to me because "Gordy looked great!"

Viewing the DVD, many memories immediately were refreshed. I knew everyone who was included, whether identified by name or simply represented pictorially. All of these memories were positive reminders of relationships that my family built and appreciated over more than 50 years. In fact, I realized that my extended family was built around the Johnson Hill's cast of characters.

My earliest recollections relate to the years my dad managed the Men's and Sporting Goods departments. Don Knudson, Bill Johnson, Bill Koslowski, Irene Obrien, Mrs. Warner, Ed Bredow, Bill Sherwood, Bill Schill, Rollie Youngerman, Larry DeLong, and Matt Marshall are just a few of the employees with whom I became familiar. Despite that fact that I was drilled into respecting all customers, employees and management, I, for some reason, referred to them by first name unless I didn't know the first name. Then it was Mr. or Mrs.

In those early years, Ray Johnson was mentioned daily in our household as the primary owner and manager of the store. My mother, Nellie Solie, worked at Johnson Hills and I vividly remember that she was intimidated when Mr. Johnson was present. My dad held him in the highest regard and always referenced him with fondness.

I don't recall the exact year that Ray Johnson sold Johnson Hill's to a consortium led by Chet Bell and Irv Moberg; and I never referred to either of these gentlemen without the appropriated "Mr." That was also the time frame that the store dropped the "&" to become known as Johnson Hill.

Over the years, the family element became more prominent and solidified. The store sponsored a bus trip to Milwaukee to see the Braves play the Phillies. It was a double header and I remember very clearly seeing Joe Adcock slide into second base after hitting a double in the second inning of the second game and Joe broke his leg on that slide. Lots of "twos" in this which probably influenced my memory.

I recall the advent of a really fun observance called Ridikalus Daze. Most if not all of the businesses on East and West Grand Avenue moved merchandise out on the sidewalk and sold the products for ridikalusly low prices. Nearly all J & H employees dressed in ridikalus attire which added to the fun of participating in the event whether one was selling or purchasing "junk."

In the 1950s, Wisconsin Rapids conducted a cranberry festival that included a parade passing from West Grand across the only bridge connecting to East Grand Avenue. The festival concluded at Witter Field with a carnival and the crowning of the “Cranberry Queen.”

Gordy secured sponsorship from “Oshkosh B’gosh” work clothing. They provided a float that featured a large character wearing the Oshkosh work “bib overalls” that I always referred to as “engineer jeans” because I had seen railroad employees wearing them. I rode on the float with Frank Coley and Bill Koslowski, Jr. We threw candy to the parade observers and constantly waved.

The shoe department at J & H was managed by Oscar Adler. Bill Sherwood would generally fit me with whatever my dad determined appropriate footwear. I do remember always checking the fit by inserting my foot into the “X Ray” machine.

Johnson Hill had a restaurant on the mezzanine level. My most memorable recollection was following my sister, Karen, five years older, to the restaurant and embarrassing her. It seems she wanted to portray her worldliness, so she asked for a menu at which time I offered “I don’t want a menu, I want a hamburger.” That outburst was a topic of discussion and I was identified with it for many years by store employees.

Another innocent habit attributed to me was to call the women’s lingerie department and ask to speak with my mother! All knew it was “Donnie” calling for his mother. I hated being referred to as Donnie, and, amazingly, upon returning to Wisconsin Rapids after fulfilling my duty with Uncle Sam and finally graduating from college, store employees both current and past referred to me as “Donnie.” My LHS classmate Bruce Zanow uses that reference to this day when he is in the mood to “pull my chain.”

Of course, my dad made sure I learned to value money and made me work at J & H. My

first job was managing (that’s how I referred to it, Gordy called it “guarding”) the Santa Claus line at Christmas. J & H always hired Santa so that the kids could visit and deliver their “wish lists” to Harlowe Ebbe/Santa Claus. I had to wear a coat and tie and look very professional.

Later, I worked in the hardware department constructing swing sets and lawn mowers. I didn’t mind that as much because I was able to get out of the store and deliver the mowers as well as fertilizer and grass seed. Better yet was delivering and constructing swing sets at the customer’s home.

I spent a summer delivering furniture. It

was not fun carrying a convertible bed/sofa up winding stairs, probably because I was always the guy at the bottom bearing the brunt of the weight.

As I stated, the purpose was to learn value. I’m not sure what I was supposed to learn when Gordy had me sweep the floors of the warehouse

storing the appliances. These floors were “dirt” and let’s just leave it that both of us learned a lesson with that assignment.

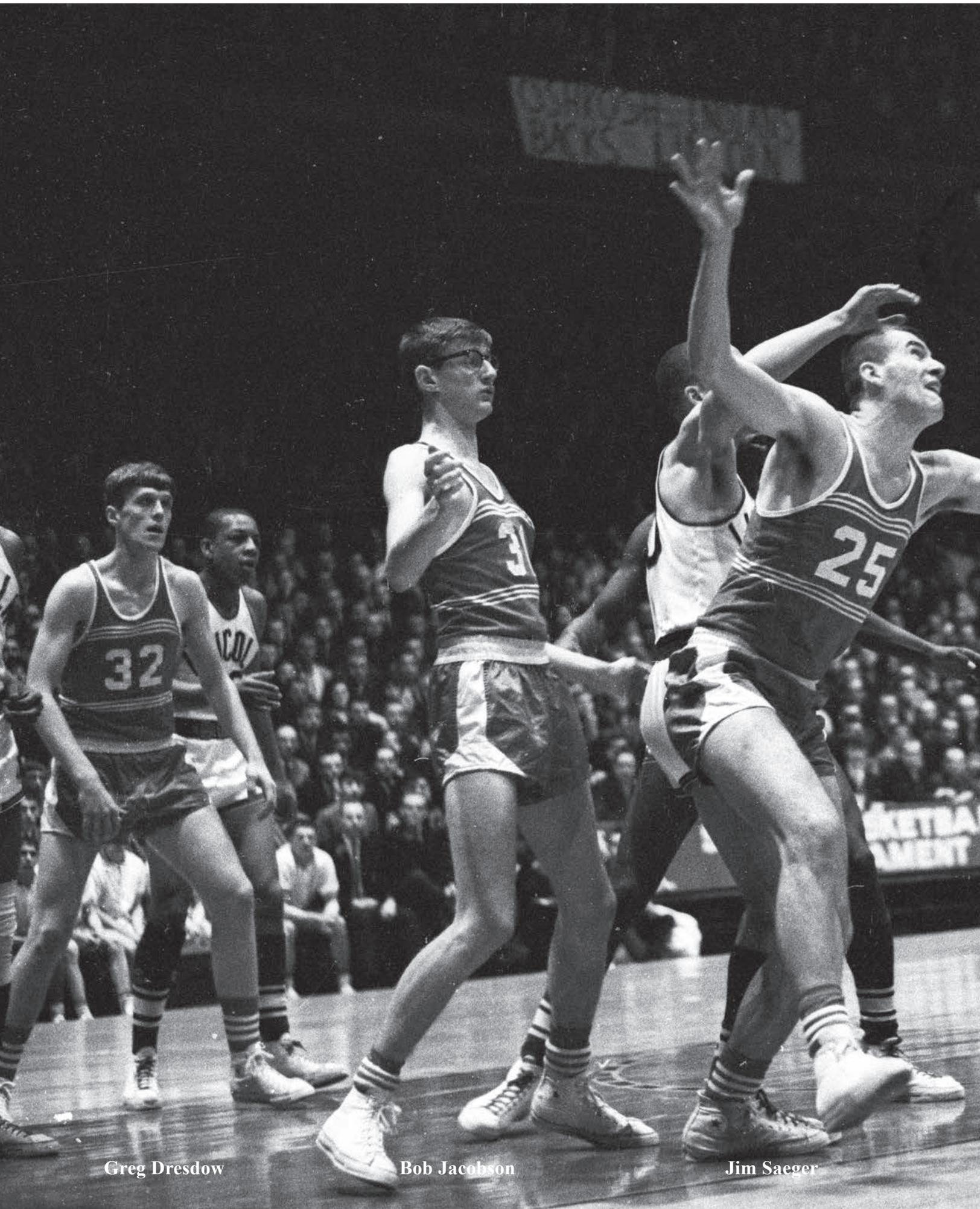
Somewhere in this series of recollections, my dad was promoted to resident manager of Wisconsin Rapids’ Johnson Hill since Misters Bell and Moberg moved to Wood County National Bank to lead the expansion of the company via acquisition and take on additional challenges in the financial services arena.

In 1965, Gordy purchased the former Schnabel’s Men’s Store on East Grand and departed J & H. That year, I left Wisconsin Rapids and my assumed J & H family, never to return as a resident. Gordy rejoined J & H as Assistant Manager in Oshkosh and manager in Marshfield. He managed two men’s stores in other communities and eventually retired from Johnson Hill.

That brought an end to my opportunity to associate with that loyal and happy family. All of the team was really kind to us. We shared more than respect; we loved them!



Johnson & Hill



Greg Dresdow

Bob Jacobson

Jim Saeger



Clarence Sherrod

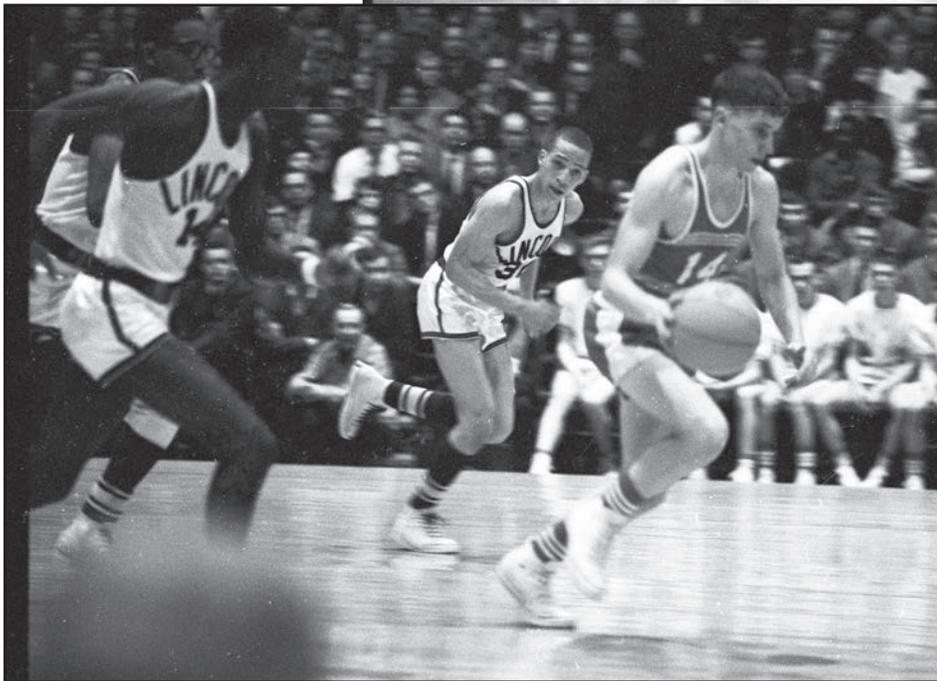
Gary Dempze

March Madness

1966



Greg Dresdow

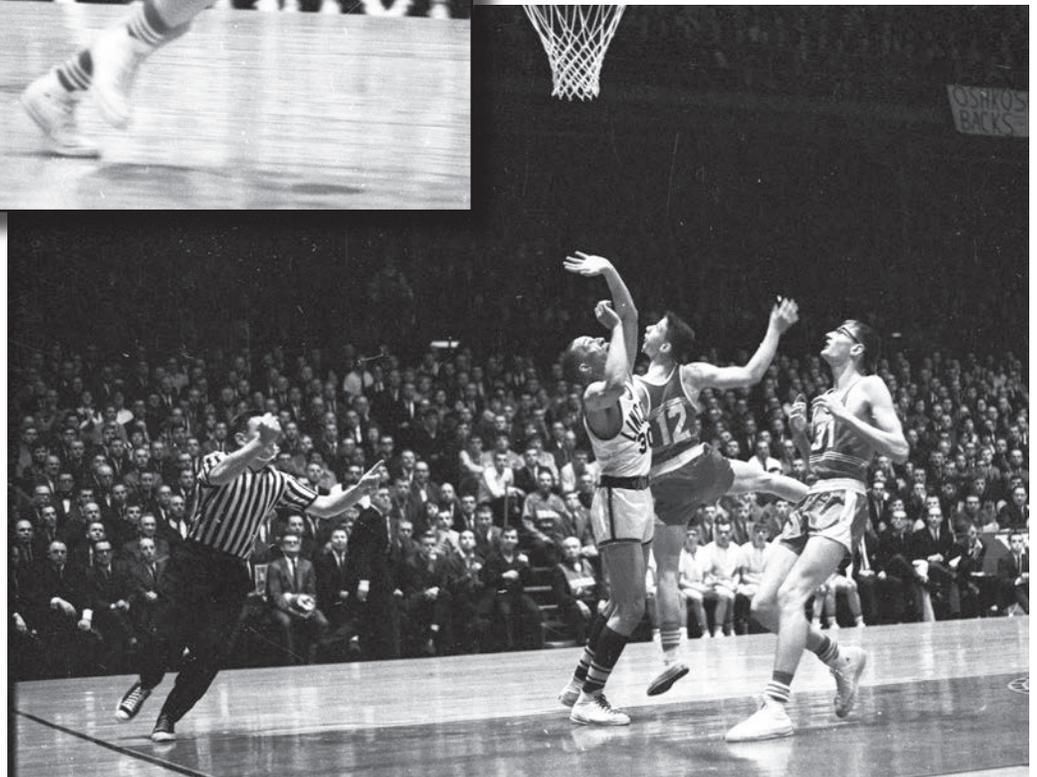


Left: Captain and all-tournament first team pick Greg Ebsen. Fellow guard Gary “Gus” Dempze made second-team.

Ebsen’s brother, Mike, was a soul brother of Uncle Dave, who also recalls playing basketball with the younger, already-talented, Dempze at the Biron village hall in the early 1960s.

Right: Gary Dempze, #12 and Bob Jacobson of Rapids Lincoln, a “Cinderella” playing one of the best teams in state history, with players John Rushing, Clarence Sherrod and Fred Brown, compiling a 50-1 record over two seasons.

Tribune photos by Bill Kiefer. Negatives scanned by C. Henry Bruse.



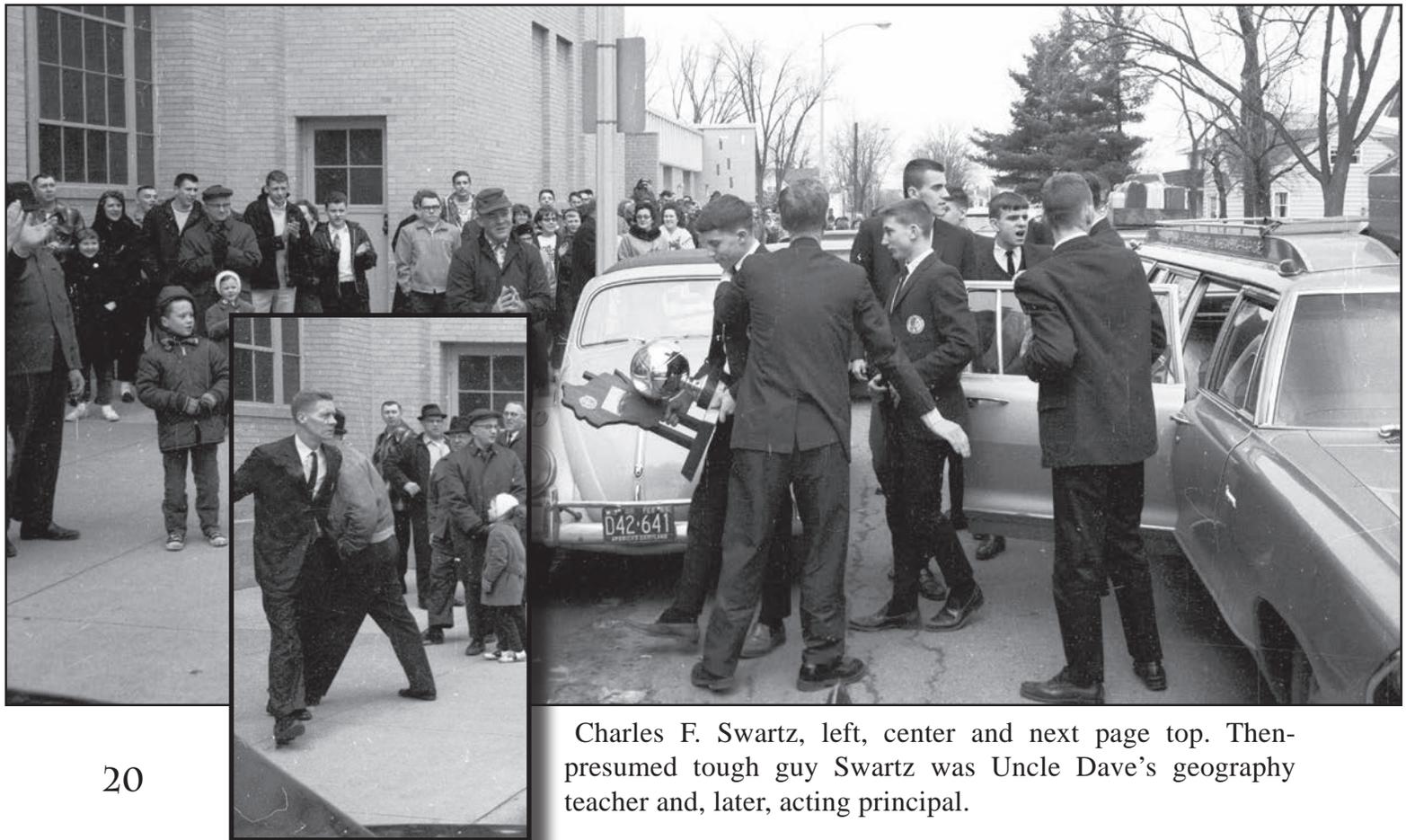
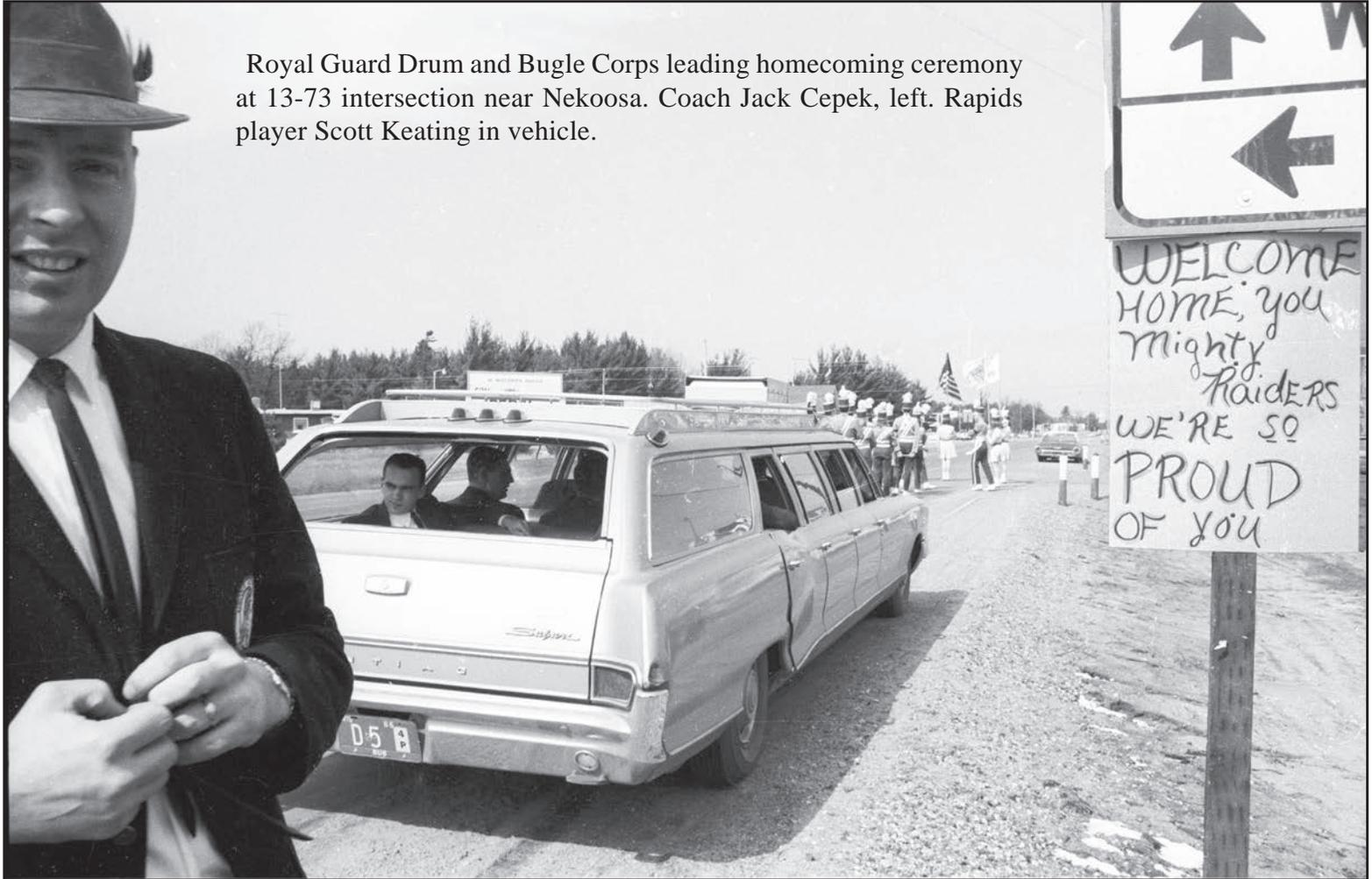


Above, celebrating at Lincoln Field House, Wisconsin Rapids, Charles Swartz, foreground.

Right and below, at Madison. Send us your identifications of individuals portrayed.



Royal Guard Drum and Bugle Corps leading homecoming ceremony at 13-73 intersection near Nekoosa. Coach Jack Cepek, left. Rapids player Scott Keating in vehicle.



Charles F. Swartz, left, center and next page top. Then-presumed tough guy Swartz was Uncle Dave's geography teacher and, later, acting principal.



Above: LHS athletic director C.F. Swartz embraces team captain Greg Ebsen.



Cake at LHS Field House. With coach Jack Cepek are Greg Dresdow, Lyle Anderson, Bob Jacobson, unidentified ear, Harry Babcock, Greg Ebsen, Dan Blanchfield and Mike Casey.

On to State!

1966 *Ahdawagam*: “ON TO STATE!” Every team’s dream and our reality! This familiar cry sounded from the Raider fans this past season as they followed and proudly backed the best basketball team at Lincoln High since 1951 when Wisconsin Rapids claimed the State Championship.

“A desired and longed for ‘Trip to State’ became a reality for the 1966 basketball team as they breezed through regionals and sectionals with a most impressing game and important victory over Wausau, 71-60.

“Rapids, however, did not end here. Two spectacular upsets placed Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln against Milwaukee Lincoln in the championship game of the W.I.A.A. State Tournament at Madison. With the University Field House filled to capacity and thousands of T.V. viewers glued to their set, the Raiders proved to their fans, news writers, and the state, they had the spirit and desire to play a good game to the finish no matter what the score.”

Retrospective

Chuck Hinners, LHS '65, a freshman at UW-Madison when he watched the game from the upper deck, later attended UW law school with Milwaukee Lincoln’s ace guard, Clarence Sherrod, a former record-setting basketball player at UW. Sherrod, who retired as a lawyer for the Madison school board, told Hinners that the Rapids game may have been the hardest to win that year.

Hinners, a former LHS basketball player, visited the Rapids locker room in Madison after the game and talked to the team members and coach Cepek.

Hinners told me that, in a series of “small world” connections, Roger Wiebe was Rapids assistant coach for one year before transferring to Madison as assistant coach to Robert “Boomer” Harris, who had coached the Madison West team that lost the 1951 championship to Rapids. Wiebe had played on Madison West’s 1957 and 1958 tournament teams and coached the school to a state title in 1992.

Hinners remembered Cepek giving his game memento to manager Ron Henke, saying not to worry, “I’ll be back.” Seemed pretty likely at the time but the Rapids variety of Lincoln is still waiting, credited with second place in 1916, 1936 and 1966 and that storied win in 1951.

Oprah Winfrey attended Milwaukee Lincoln.

Resident Alchemist

As scanning specialist C. Henry “Hank” Bruse digitizes hundreds of old *Daily Tribune* negatives each week, he notes they can be “boring.” Understandable, due to their oppressively quotidian content and because the 35mm strips often contain six or more nearly identical shots by film photographers, such as your editor, who snapped multiple alternatives, hoping to get one frame that was usable in an era when the results could only be viewed after the precarious developing process.

But no, what do you mean, boring? Hank, by chance, was working on film from March 1966, so that’s what we sampled. Immediately apparent to the pictorial historian, these images were far from tedious. They were a gift of the gods, a cornucopia, a bonanza, a revelation, a veritable mother lode of glowing imagery. To borrow a phrase from Seinfeld’s quotable nemesis: *It’s gold, Hankstir, gold.*

UD



Bill Hartley

Bill Hartley

My First Car – How Cool Was That?!

Most of us remember fondly our first cars and the list of “cool” items by which cars were judged. The convertible topped that list, but not many of us could start there.

My first car was a dark green 1953 Ford Customline two-door sedan, with the legendary “flat-head” V-8 and a 3-speed stick shift on the column. Because 1953 was the 50th anniversary of Ford Motor Company, the center of the steering wheel had an emblem commemorative to that event. I thought that was extra-cool.

That car scored a few more points on the cool index because it was a two-door sedan. Four doors were for families, but a two-door hardtop would have scored higher. It had a V-8 (the ultimate powerhouse engine), a stick shift (automatics, or “slush boxes,” were for sissies), and a fuzzy mirror muff.

I bought it three months before my 16th birthday for \$250 from a used car lot on 8th Street South behind the Enco gas station. My dad couldn’t drive a stick shift, so we had to get the neighbor guy to go with us to pick it up and drive it home. We put it in the back yard of our house on Chestnut Street – on the dirt basketball court so I could “work on it” until I turned 16 and could drive it on the streets.

I remember choosing this car over a green 1932 Lincoln rumble seat coupe with wood spoke

wheels that was for sale at a Pure Oil gas station in town. Good choice.

My Ford was partially customized when I got it. The previous owner (Jim Barton, as I recall) had installed a custom grille bar and cut-down ’57 Ford taillight lenses to give it a different look. I never did figure out what that grille bar was from, but I think maybe a period DeSoto.

Anyway, it was really cool, but not cool enough. I spent the summer “fixing” it up so it would be ready when August 14 would finally arrive. I took the door handles off and replaced them with electric solenoids with buttons hidden under the front fenders; took the hood emblem off; took the trunk emblems off and installed a pull-cable in the back window to get it open. I installed the mandatory dice on the rear view mirror and “moon” hubcaps, and “Frenched” the headlights. I realized that I could move up even further on the cool chart if I had dual exhausts. So I found a two-foot piece of tail pipe and mounted it under the other side of the back bumper from my tail pipe. It looked cool when the engine wasn’t running, anyway.

A popular source of hot rod parts in those days was JC Whitney in Chicago. Most of us who were anybody in the car world were on their mailing list and got a new “wish book” every month or so in the mail.

A few of us extra savvy car guys knew that Warshawsky & Co. had a catalog identical to JC Whitney's, but the prices were lower in theirs. They were located right around the corner from JC Whitney and I'm sure they were the same company drawing out of the same warehouse. I always ordered from Warshawsky in those early days. Later I discovered Honest Charlie's Speed Shop in Chattanooga, Tenn., but that's another story.

I bought a set of lake pipes from Warshawsky. Short chrome exhaust pipes that stuck out behind your front wheels, they were cut and welded into the exhaust pipes ahead of the mufflers so when you removed the caps, you had open exhaust with no mufflers. When you were racing, they were opened to reduce exhaust back pressure and make the car breathe better and go faster. They were used on speed trial cars on the Bonneville Salt Flats by the Great Salt Lake, hence the name lake pipes. I don't think I ever cut or welded them in. I think they were dummies like my tail pipe. But the girls never knew and I got my cool points for them.

I think I put 50 miles on the car in the backyard that summer. Everything I did had to be tested, I rationalized. I think Mom and Dad bought it. One day I looked at the flat head engine and the heads looked easy to remove, so I decided they had to come off. So I went to Hemmersbach Ford on 3rd and Oak and bought two head gaskets from Jim Bach, the parts guy. The next day I took the heads off. The next day I put them back on. I still don't know why. I guess just because I could. I had a new S-K socket set that I bought a year or so earlier at Gambles (between the Sugar Bowl and JC Penney) with my paper route money. They needed to be used on a car. Fortunately, the car still ran after that.

August 14 finally arrived, and I was 16! Unfortunately, the 14th was a Monday, and the State Patrol only came to Rapids to give drivers tests on Wednesday and Thursday. Wednesday finally arrived and I passed the test the first try.

I knew how to drive a stick, because I had taken Drivers Ed that summer. Some of you may remember the aqua 1960 Dodge with the slant 6 engine and a three-speed stick on the column that we had to drive. I remember that thing grew to about a mile wide one day when I met a Central

Wisconsin Transport semi on the old Nekoosa bridge. I think the teachers used to set that up to humble us. It worked for me. For a while.

Anyway, after all that training and backyard practice, and now legal, I was ready to hit the streets with my custom Ford. I was so excited. I felt I was ten feet tall and bullet-proof. I was free – I could go anywhere I wanted, come and go as I pleased, travel to the far reaches of the world.

Then reality set in. My parents still told me when to come and go and where I could not go. There were laws that governed how fast you could go to get there and where you could park when you got there. There were laws against burning rubber on the city streets, and against playing the AM radio too loud. And I discovered that wherever you went, you burned gas (and oil, in my case) and it took money to buy that gas and oil. And I had to buy car insurance, whatever that was. Let me get this straight – I have to give money to somebody every month and I had to wreck my car before I could get any of it back? That didn't sound like a very good investment to me.

I learned that the wheels that steer the car are on the front, and the car behaves differently when you are backing up. I learned that lesson in Nancy Sabota's driveway on Avon Street. There should have been a law against putting garages behind houses with crooked driveways with retaining walls on the side.

Somehow I made it through my first month or so of driving and I decided I needed to move up another notch on the cool index. So I took my Ford to Hemmersbach's again and had their body shop paint the entire car with dark gray primer. This was a sign that it was a "work in process," a cool thing to be.

Many winter mornings in Wisconsin were cold. Cold mornings and a 6-volt electrical system equated to a car that wouldn't start. Therefore, jumper cables became standard equipment.

Cars didn't have seat belts, shoulder belts or air bags. The front seat was like a living room couch. Mine had those green plaid nylon seat covers that were VERY slippery when confronted with the blue jeans that were a staple of my wardrobe. Western Auto, next to the Branch Library on West Grand,

sold add-on seat belts. I rationalized that if I had one of those seat belts in there, I wouldn't slide clear across the car when I was spinning donuts in the mud out by Blueberry Ridge, or on the ice of Nepco Lake. Thus began my obsession with safety belts.

My Ford burned a little oil, as did a lot of cars in those days. It smoked a bit of blue out of the tail pipe. That made my dual exhaust ruse a bit more obvious. It also made it necessary to stop at the Consolidated Gas Station on 8th Street South across from the East side ice rink warming house to buy drain oil every day. I was delivering newspapers to rural carriers and subscribers for the *Milwaukee Journal* and needed about two quarts a day to make it around my route.



Bill, 1965

Drain oil taken out of other cars during an oil change was a lot cheaper than new oil. I think it was about 15 cents a quart, compared to a quarter for new oil. Gasoline was under a quarter a gallon then, too. I remember when Bob Stoflet, who owned the Standard Station on Highway 54 and 32nd Street raised his Ethyl (premium) price to a quarter a gallon. It almost ended our friendship.

As I look back on my first car now, I realize it was a piece of junk. It smoked, didn't start when it was cloudy or cool, didn't go very fast, didn't stop very good and the tires were probably bald. But I loved it, and as I think about it today, I only remember the good stuff.

Untouchable!

March 8, 1963

SAYS 'HOT RODDERS'
ARE SAFETY-MINDED

To the Editor:

The primary purpose of this letter is to better acquaint the public with the goals of the Hot Rod and Custom Car Clubs of the area.

The "stereotyped" picture of the "Hot Rodder" is a character who squeals his tires at every stop sign, screams at old ladies who get in his way, and rounds every corner on two wheels. Now we'd like a chance to change that picture.

Hot Rod and Custom Car Clubs in this area are made up of fellows of all ages who are not only interested in speed and high powered engines, but in car safety, durability, beauty, and excellence of design. In the Untouchables Car Club alone, the majority of the fellows have attended the driver safety school at one time or another. Also we have a safety committee consisting of three members who safety check the

members' vehicles monthly and impose fines upon those convicted of traffic violations. The "drag races" that our local car clubs participate in are supervised very strictly. All participants must prove to the judges that their cars are in safe operating condition, and any indications of recklessness or carelessness result in immediate expulsion from competition.

People who work with hot rods and custom cars are very safety and beauty conscious, and many of their ideas and innovations such as better braking systems, etc., have been adopted by the car makers in Detroit.

We certainly hope that this article has given you a better understanding of the purposes and aims of Hot Rod and Custom Car Clubs in Wisconsin Rapids and all over the United States.

Untouchables Car Club
Bill Hartley, Vice Pres.

Scott Brehm and Yvonne Ellie

**Scott Brehm**

Vesper Correspondent

Mrs. Ellie

There is a hill with a history in the Town of Sigel near the corner of Highway 186 and 73 at Seneca Corners. Owned by five generations of the Kissinger family, it has been known as Kissinger Hill. On top is a flat rock, called for decades Picnic Rock.

When I made contact with the current owner of Kissinger Hill, Jeff Kissinger, this story took a twist.

Jeff gave me a phone number and told me to contact his elder sister.

When he told me her name, I was overwhelmed by many feelings and memories of the past: Yvonne Ellie, my 1st grade teacher at Vesper school, 40 years ago. I knew her as Mrs. Ellie and will continue to call her Mrs. Ellie.

Mrs. Ellie taught 1st and 2nd grade school in Vesper for 11 years before becoming principal of Howe School in Wisconsin Rapids.

When I heard her voice, as warm and sweet as I remember, tears welled up in my eyes. A few

days later, I arrived at Mrs. Ellie's home along the Wisconsin River in Wisconsin Rapids, where she had gathered a stack of old items next to her.

We first talked about how she still remembered me from 1st grade after all these years. I didn't know that her father and my grandfather, Carl Brehm, hauled milk together for years, back when they used milk cans.

Mrs. Ellie began her story of Kissinger Hill by showing me the original abstract for the land.

The first page begins with George and Henry Beckwith purchasing the land from the United States in 1854 and follows up with the purchase of the hill and property around the hill being bought by the Kissinger family.

I could see a gleam in Mrs. Ellie's eyes when she talked about all the memories. As we left, we hugged and created a new bond. I promised to visit her more often and bring over my old 1st grade picture.

Scott Brehm

Vesper Correspondent

Kissinger Hill

Mrs. Ellie's great-grandmother used to tell her stories about how, when she was a little girl, she and her siblings would cross what became old State Highway 13 and take a walking path to the Lutheran Church which was built in 1890 and is located adjacent to Kissinger Hill. Her great-grandmother told of being scared while walking on this trail because there was another path in the woods, on land now owned by Ralph Hamel, that "Indians" used on their way to their next village.

Mrs. Ellie's great-grandfather Jacob Kissinger was the Town of Sigel's assessor back in the early 1900s. She showed me his assessor book which had years of Town of Sigel records listed.

Mrs. Ellie was born and lived in the upstairs of her great-grandparents' property north of Kissinger Hill on Apple Road. Mrs. Ellie's father, Alfred Kissinger, and mother, Louise, bought Kissinger Hill, in 1941, making them the 24th owners of the property. Alfred and Louise lived on the property until 2001 when Alfred passed away.

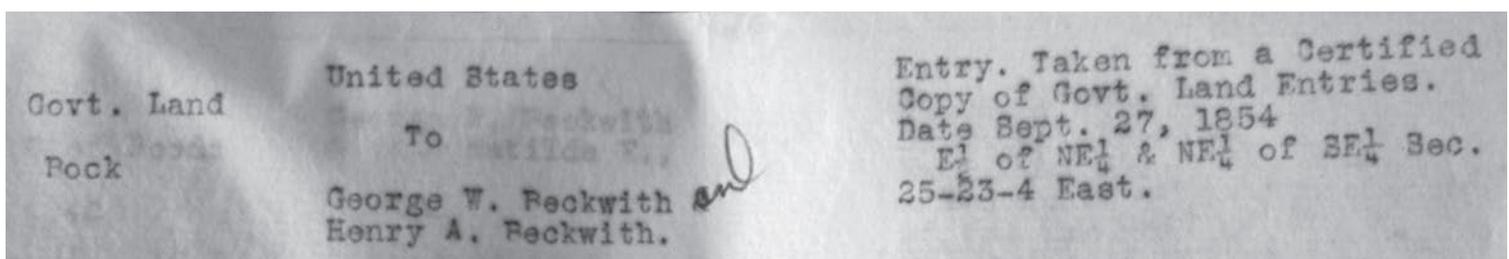
Mrs. Ellie recalls being five years old when Pearl Harbor happened. She lived on the property until she was 22, when she got married.

She recalls the bar, adjacent from their property, which was owned by Harry Griffen, and was closer to the highway than it is now. The Schooley family owned a grocery store directly across the highway from Kissinger Hill. When the highway was moved, the grocery store was torn down and the bar was moved back to its present location and bought by Schooleys.

Throughout Mrs. Ellie's childhood, she and her siblings would go up on the hill and eat lunches her mother made, on a large flat rock on top of the hill which is known as "Picnic Rock." When I asked Mrs. Ellie if it was true that the hill was used by area churches for a gathering point, she stated this did not happen in the time since her father owned the property.

She does recall that she and many others would meet on the hill in the winter on Sundays and would toboggan down all day long. They even built a jump so they could get over the fence near the highway and would have crossed into the street had they not dragged their feet.

Mrs. Ellie heard stories, later in life, that her family hid alcohol on the property during the Prohibition days. Mrs. Ellie's son eventually purchased the house and five acres that she grew up on. Her brother, Jeff, bought the other 40 acres which Kissinger Hill is part of.



Original purchase of Kissinger property

Kissinger Hill, Seneca Corners



May 21, 1931

Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune

Seneca Corners Couple Has Golden Wedding Anniversary

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Kissinger of Seneca Corners celebrated their golden wedding Tuesday, May 19, at the home of their daughter, Mrs. Emil Staven, at Eight Corners, where a delicious wedding dinner was served to about 50 relatives and guests. The tables were beautifully decorated with yellow candles and spring flowers, a large gold and white cake forming the center piece.

...

Elizabeth Harth was born in Richfield, Wis., in 1863 and Jacob Kissinger was born in Mayfield, Wis., in 1854.

[Mayfield, northwest of Milwaukee, was settled and platted by Andreas Reiderer in 1852, an immigrant from Switzerland, who named it after the Swiss town of Maienfeld.]

They were married May 10, 1881, in Mayfield, moving at once to the town of Sigel to what is now [1931] known as the George Kahlke farm

southeast of Vesper, where they resided 35 years. At this time there were no roads, only a trail.

For the first two years Mr. Kissinger worked at the big saw mill in Vesper, until the mill was destroyed by fire, after which they began to carve a farm out of 40 acres of timber, having at the time a team of oxen and one cow. They have been residents of the town of Sigel for 47 years and the town of Hansen for three years.

...

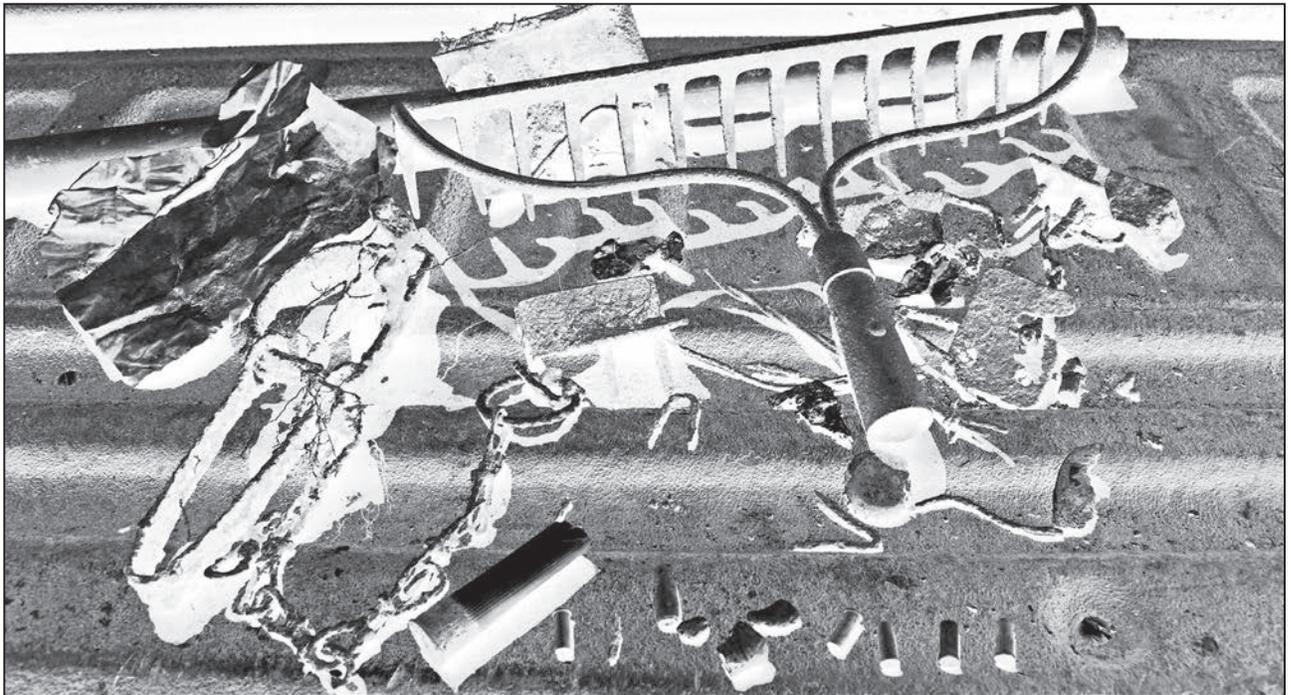
Mr. Kissinger was a member of the Woodman lodge for many years, assessor of the town of Sigel for ten years, treasurer for two years, member of the school board for twenty years and also held the offices of secretary and (___ ator) of the Seneca-Sigel Insurance company. For thirty years he managed a crew of men each fall through the cranberry harvest at Searles' marsh.

Seneca

Hemlock Township, organized in 1857, was changed to Seneca Township in 1861, apparently named for Seneca, a former settlement in the midst of lumber mills: Tuttle's, Stearn's and Scott's. The settlement was also known as Forest City, Little Mill and Hansen, and later as Seneca Corners.



Relics



Printed
in
negative
mode

Photos by Scott Brehm

Several years ago, Steve Livernash and I performed a grid search of the top portion of Kissinger Hill for Jeff Kissinger. We were able to recover some artifacts, including, near the top of the hill, twisted-strand barbed wire which only Mrs. Ellie could remember being there. We determined the barbed wire was patented in 1874 by Joseph Glidden. Also located were assorted bullets and other metal pieces including a Civil War-era bullet.

Scott Brehm, Vesper Correspondent

Armory: The Interwar Period

Battery E 120th Field Artillery

By William Parker

With the end of World War I in 1918, the U.S. Army budget was cut to prewar standards and Battery E, 120th Field Artillery, returned to Grand Rapids, soon to be renamed Wisconsin Rapids.

The 1920s were relatively quiet for Battery E, other than the purchase of an old amusement hall located at 351 1st Street N. for \$17,000 to be used as the National Guard Armory. This was at a time when artillery was still horse-drawn, although the Army was rapidly approaching the mechanization highlighted by the development of the Jeep just prior to World War II.

In November 1938, disaster struck the Armory on 1st Street N., when the building burned, along with most of the Battery's equipment.

Funding for a new armory became a controversial topic. While what would come to be called World War II waged on in Europe and China, the U.S. remained neutral. The Wisconsin National Guard threatening to move to Nekoosa was enough to get the city of Wisconsin Rapids to act.

Purchasing the old armory's East Side downtown site from Battery E, 120th Field Artillery, for \$9,000, the city donated new land at the corner of 2nd Avenue South and Gaynor Avenues.

The Wisconsin Rapids city council also approved a bond for \$54,000 to be used for the

construction of a new armory building. The rest of the funds were raised through private donation with the help of the American Legion's Charles Hagerstrom Post. The local armory would be one of the last to be built using only local and private funding.

The contract to build the Armory was given to the Dan Christensen Co. of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The design was by Lt. Col. Henry Hengels, State Military Architect and Engineer. Work began November 1940.

The building and grounds would not be finished until 1942 at a cost of \$63,500, although the dedication took place as part of the Wisconsin Rapids 4th of July celebrations in 1941, at which time the *Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune* described the Armory as, "A new symbol of American Freedom."

Unfortunately for the members of Battery E, they would not see the dedication of their new armory, having been activated for federal service in the fall of 1940 over fear of war with Germany and Japan and sent to Camp Beauregard, La. In spring of 1941, they trained with the old 32nd infantry division at Camp Livingston, La. Battery E would not see the new building until after its service in World War II.



New Memorial Armory to Be Dedicated Here on July 4th

\$63,500 Building Completed After Six Months' Work

Wisconsin Rapids next Friday will dedicate a new public building, the \$63,500 Memorial armory, constructed during the past six months for the combined purposes of housing the National Guard battery and serving as a general public building.

A fireproofed, air conditioned brick and steel structure, built in the shape of a fat T, the armory architecturally is ranked with the best in designing and arrangement of facilities in a building primarily for military use.

It has a drill floor 60 by 70 feet forming the one-story auditorium section of the T. The front, or top of the T, is of two-story and basement construction, with an auxiliary room intended for radio equipment forming a small third-floor space at the high center elevation.

Dedicated to Soldiers

From a staff atop the highest portion waves the nation's flag. A Bedford stone tablet, 2 1/2 by 4 feet in size set into the brick work flanking the front entrance at the right, carries the dedicatory words:

"This armory is dedicated by the city of Wisconsin Rapids to those valiant soldier-sons who served their country in the Wisconsin National Guard and the Army of the United States. Ralph M. Linn, the adjutant general, Wisconsin. Henry C. Hengels, architect."

Recognition for Officials

At the left a similar tablet reads: "City officers whose public spirit made this armory a reality. W. T. Niles, mayor; Carl J. Cahan, city treasurer; Joe Norton, treasurer; Nels M. Jusness, city clerk; Harold L. Billmeyer, city attorney; aldermen, John L. Johnson, Walter Farmer, Charles W. Warren, E. K. Beadle, Herman Knuth, William M. Grogan, Henry C. Demita, Rudolph Hahn, Randolph Knuth, Y. Kubiak, Lawrence Behrems, Reinhard Knuth, Robert Sanger, Fred Duncan, J. A. Kenyon, Messie Reeves."

Above the tablets are 15-inch, bronze plaques—the seal of the United States and the seal of the Wisconsin National Guard.

Don Christensen, president of the city council last October, construction began in November. Harry Blackburn, Wisconsin National Guard, employed by the city, was the inspector on the project.

16,500 Square Feet of Space

The building contains 16,500 square feet of floor space, one-fourth of it occupied by the drill floor. Basement, main floor and second floor are partitioned into a variety of rooms space fitting in with the purposes of the armory as to be employed.

A flight of concrete steps, 26 feet in width, leads to the Second avenue entrance. Over the three wide, wood doors is a balcony grille with a baluster for three flag stands in the center. The doors open into a vestibule which leads into the main lobby, a space 15 by 19 feet.

Straight ahead the lobby gives onto the drill floor down three stairs from the level of the lobby. Two tile-covered pillars break the entrance to the drill floor into triple archways.

Two Meeting Rooms

Opening off the right and left at the rear of the lobby are corridors. On both the second and basement floors corridors, six feet wide, and in the same relative position, lead to stairways up and down. In front, opening off the right of the lobby are a ticket booth and the building's largest meeting room, 21 1/2 by 28 feet. At the left, a cloak and check room, the women's rest room and a meeting room 21 1/2 by 28 feet.

The second floor is given over to the military quarters. In the center is a trophy room. On the north side is the locker room, 21 1/2 by 41 1/2 feet in dimensions, and on the south side a supply room with shelving in place. Off the supply room is a built-in arms vault, with a steel vault door. An office for the commanding officer, an orderly's room and a

built-in first aid cabinet are provided.

From the second floor corridor, mechanically operated windows give a full view of the drill floor. Here, officers will watch the battery at drill.

Mess Hall in Basement

In the basement is the mess hall 21 by 41 feet in size. Sinks have been installed and the room wired for electrical cooking and refrigerating equipment. The men's toilet and shower room, furnished with four showers, a caretaker's quarters, the boiler room and an indoor target range complete the basement layout.

The target range is 50 feet in length and will provide for practice of four men at a time. The boiler is stoker-fed and an electric heater will furnish hot water.

Maple edge-grain flooring, laid in 1 1/2 inch pieces 12 inches long, is laid over concrete to form a floor built to stand a live-load weight of 200 pounds per square foot. In the northeast and southeast corners of the hall are specially constructed gun rooms to house the field pieces of the battery. The rooms, 17 1/2 by 21 feet, are finished with over-head steel doors. The only opening from the rooms is into the drill hall.

Building Air Conditioned

Two fan-driven air conditioner units are installed at the east end of the hall, flanking the equipped way. At the west end are two ventilating ducts, leading air from near the floor to be exhausted outside. The hall has no windows, daylight being provided by glass block sections in the walls. The hall is lighted by 16 fixtures, half equipped with 40-watt and half with 300-watt direct lighting.

Height of the hall from floor to ceiling is 20 feet. Ceiling and exposed eirders are painted aluminum. Entrances at the west end of the drill hall lead into Gaynor street and to the rear of the building from the southwest corner.

Roof Insulated

The hall, flanking the entrance with a layer of 3-inch Thermox. Over the insulation is one-half inch concrete ceiling, with a 2 1/2 inch built-up asphalt top covered with gravel. The roof on the front section is built up with a 2 1/2 inch layer of concrete slabs.

Floors in the front portion of terrazzo and concrete. Stairways are steel. Walls are of tile, glazed a darker shade to form a mansueting. Steel shaft is used throughout the building, painted green on the exterior and brown inside. Several of the rooms have steel doors.

Fluorescent lighting is installed in the vestibule, lobby, corridors and meeting rooms and direct lighting in storage and utility rooms.

The second avenue elevation is 50 feet back from the roadway and the northeast corner of the armory, built into the triangle formed by Second and Gaynor avenues, is 73 feet from Gaynor. Overall dimensions of the building are 108 by 100 feet 3 inches. Depth of the two-story portion is 50 feet.

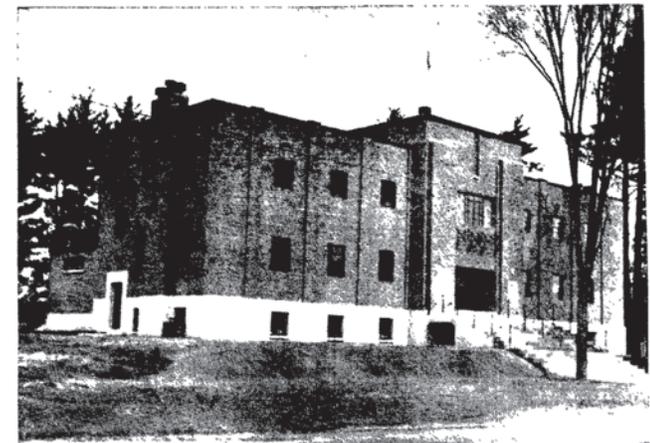
Build Portable Stage

The city has purchased 570 steel folding chairs with plywood seats for the auditorium. General of four sections and sides of stained plywood, is being built by city workmen. A walnut speaker's stand has been provided, and tables for the meeting room are being made.

Grading of the grounds and preparation of a parking lot, approximately 100 by 100 feet south of the building, is being completed. The grounds will be seeded this year and some landscaping may be done. The armory committee contemplates construction of sidewalk, curb and gutter along the Second avenue side.

The armory number will be 1720 Second avenue south.

Nearly half the station in the United States operate airplanes in connection with some governmental



NEW WISCONSIN RAPIDS MEMORIAL ARMORY—Above is the two-story and basement front elevation of the Memorial armory on Second avenue south which the city of Wisconsin Rapids will dedicate Friday, July Fourth. To those valiant soldier-sons who served their country in the Wisconsin National Guard and the Army of the United States. In a setting of pines opposite the tourist park, on the west bank of the Wisconsin river, the armory and its grounds will be part of a unique and beautiful city development. At the extreme left is the southwest corner of the drill hall which extends west of the Second avenue elevation. The building, designed around the primary purpose of serving as a home for Battery K, 120th Field Artillery, will have important use as a general meeting place for the city at large. Two smaller meeting rooms, as well as the large drill hall-auditorium, will be available to the public. The fireproofed brick and steel structure, cost \$63,500. The city floated a bond issue of \$52,500 and the Guardsmen, as a business association, contributed \$11,000 in cash in addition to turning over to the city the site of the old armory on First street north.

Wisconsin Rapids Had Quite a Time Getting New Armory, But Job's Done Now and Community Is Proud of It

Wisconsin Rapids had quite a time getting the Memorial armory built—an intensely human time of it.

The progressive steps that led to the fine public building which will be dedicated on July 4, were replete with human interest, and the reasons as they were created and were almost unobtrusively, made conversation over many a dinner table and on many a street corner.

"Grandpa" Tell the Story

The Tribune attempts in the following manner to recreate for a moment in a whimsical way that side of the story. It is the story as might be told a couple of decades hence by a person who was on the ground to a grandchild preparing to write a theme on the community's history:

"Yes sir, Johnny, I can remember the night of the armory fire, 'way back there in 1938. Made quite a blaze, and it certainly started a lot of things that free don't ordinarily start. It started the whole city talking about how we were going to keep old Fattery E here, and just about everybody wanted to do that. Trouble was, nobody knew just how.

"It was kind of like they were all sitting in the front seat of a car, and all knew where they wanted to go, but couldn't decide what road to take and who was going to put the gasoline in the tank.

Way Things Got Done

"There's a lesson in it for you, Johnny. It's a good thing to remember that when everybody's stirred up and all excited about something, that that's just the

necessary way things get done—you've got to raise a lot of hub-bub first and after a while things settle down and the logical thing comes out of it. . . . Yes, I know, you're a big boy now and a senior in high school, but you'll realize there's a lot of truth in that. When we dedicated our armory in 1941, things were in an awful hubbub.

But after a while, the world got sensible and here you are, still a citizen in the U. S. A. Hubbub have got to happen. . . . Well, well, I guess I was telling about the armory, wasn't I?

Battery Left Homeless

"The armory went up in smoke, as I was saying. And there was our battery—homeless as a stray pup. You see, the men in the battery themselves owned the armory on an association basis and each member of that association had some money coming from the insurance. There were some of the boys could have used the money they had coming if the insurance wasn't spent for a new building.

"But finally, the battery decided not to declare any dividends. The insurance money would be used for a new armory and our National Guard would stay here. That was the first thing that had to be settled, and I guess you can see now that was the right way to settle it.

"Well, where was the rest of the money coming from? The battery had their old site, down on the river bank. And they had, maybe, \$15,000 or so. But someone that will satisfy Uncle Sam cost more

than that, so the battery played around with a scheme to raise the rest of the money and build a new building of their own. They got some plans, but they found out they had a cocktail appetite and a beer line.

Things Cooled for Awhile

"Things were along quite a spell and everybody sort of sat back on their haunches. The battery boys moved into the old Eagles hall and drilled up at the field house to keep together, just makeshift and cat-in-a-hat can. There was talk about the city putting up a building for them, and all kinds of schemes for getting your Uncle Sam to help out with what we call PWA in those days. But nothing much came of them.

"Then the National Guard officers from headquarters let it be known that the battery would have to have something better. About that time some folks down in Nekeka got the idea that if nobody was going to start something they would. There were some meetings, and some ideas, but it turned out an armory was too big a proposition. Quite a few folks thought it would be a good start if little Nekeka could show up Wisconsin Rapids. You know how people are.

"It was more than a year after the armory burned that the battery moved into the Rogger building on Oak street. It was a tight squeeze, though, and the officers said it would do only until some-

ing was put up that was suitable.

New Plan Pops Up

"Folks finally realized that the city would have to take over if anything was going to save the battery for Wisconsin Rapids. And then a brand new plan popped up. If there was going to be a city building, why not make it a good, big building and have a community recreational center along with an armory?"

"Pretty near every important club and organization in the city put its okay on the plan, Johnny. I guess it was just a case of not enough gasoline for that big a tank. Maybe there was something about public spirit, too. When you're going to be a man, you'll understand about public spirit. It is a tough proposition to back.

"All mixed up in the talk about building an armory were the laws that governed financing of such a job, and some folks said they meant one thing and some said they meant another. There was a lot of argument, too, about whether the building would bring in enough money to make it a pay-as-you-go proposition, or whether the city would have to make up deficiencies in the operation and maintenance. The National Guard officers said \$2,000 would be paid every year for rent to the city, but that wouldn't cover everything, some folks said. A lot of chatter just said, 'What of it—we'll have the building, won't we?' And then there were some said, 'What about the field house? We thought that was supposed to take care of meeting places for everybody.'"

"Start Ball Rolling"

"I just can't seem to remember

all the talk, but there was a lot of it. . . . So finally, one of the National Guard officers came to town and said it was a case of do something or the battery would be lost. Some started the ball rolling, a special committee was appointed and they went into things for the council and come to find out the city could finance the building and it wouldn't break the taxpayers, either.

"After the money was put up, there was a lot of talk about where the armory should be put. Some wanted it one place and some wanted it another. For a while, it almost seemed like we'd have to fill in an island out in the middle of the river and build the armory there to satisfy everybody. But the logical place eventually appeared to be where it was finally built.

Was Talk Wasn't Funny

"I remember that there was talk about having the armory put quite a ways out from the city because everybody was talking about war in those days. And if Hitler was going to loom and anything, it would be just as well not to have a military building smack in the middle of things.

Sounds funny now, but in 1940 it wasn't funny, Johnny.

"You wouldn't want to use all this in your history for your English class, but you should mention one thing, Johnny. By the time we had the armory built, we had lost the battery anyhow. Yes sir, the boys were down in Louisiana. They had been called up to get ready for defense, as we said in those days.

"And so when we came to dedicate the armory, we had everything around except the men we had put it up for in the first place. It just goes to show."

PATRIOTS—NOT PRESIDENTS

Not named for presidents were the counties of Lincoln, Cleveland and Wilson in North Carolina. The first two were named for Revolutionary patriots and the third for a general in the Mexican war.

Department store sales in Washington, D. C. are more than 20 per cent higher than a year ago because of the influx of defense workers.

When Inspecting the new Armory at the dedicatory on July 4th, be sure to note the fine quality

SARGENT HARDWARE
On Doors, Windows and Lockers
SARGENT HARDWARE SOLD IN WIS. RAPIDS AT

THE Nash Hardware COMPANY

MEMORIAL TABLETS AND ENGRAVINGS
on the New
WISCONSIN RAPIDS ARMORY
Installed by Us

We are pleased to have this opportunity to congratulate the City of Wisconsin Rapids and all concerned on the dedication of this fine building.

HENRY HAERTEL SERVICE, INC.
Memorials 510 Baker St.

ELECTRICAL WORK
By Staub . . .

Another Fine Building is to be dedicated and added to the ever growing list of Stately Edifices in Wisconsin Rapids . . . and again we say 'Electrical work by Staub'

The Citizens of Wisconsin Rapids are indeed to be congratulated on the addition of the new Armory to our city.

STAUB ELECTRIC SHOP
and Motor Winding Works

Phone 203 Wisconsin Rapids 210 First St. No.

GUARDING
The Home of the
GUARDS

Guarding the Army against winter's cold and the heat of the summer was our job. Our 24 years of experience in guarding the homes and public buildings of this area against the weather is our qualification for the job. We are grateful for having been chosen to bring comfort to the many people who will use this building in the years to come.

Heating and Air Conditioning furnished and installed by

Mike Kubiak
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621 W. Grand Ave. Phone 61

PAINTING and DECORATING
of the New Armory
by **McCarthy Paint Co.**

When inspecting the New Armory note carefully the painting and decorating work . . . It is an example of the fine work we ALWAYS do.

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Members of the 1966 Rapids Lincoln basketball team at the Madison state tournament where they finished second to Milwaukee Lincoln. From left: Coach Jack Cepek, captain Greg Ebsen, unidentified, Jim Saeger, Bob Jacobson, Assistant Coach Roger Wiebe.