

October 2016

Volume II #48

ARTIFACTS



Cover, see page 3; President's message by Phil Brown, p. 2; Roddis, 3; Yellow Book by Lori Brost, 4-7; Billmeyer by Rosanne Billmeyer Mehta, 8-15, 18-25; Fischer Cycle photo, 16-17; Catholic schools, 18-19; Pow Wow pix, 24-25; Goldsworthy by Vesper Correspondent Scott Brehm, 26-29; Junkyards by Bill Hartley, 30-31; Catholic school pix, 32.

Phil Brown,
SWCHC President

Staying the Course

Hard to believe another summer has passed—46 of them since the SWCHC found a home in the old T.B. Scott Public Library. I am happy to say our staff and volunteers continue to work together to achieve goals set in the 1950s by our founders, a group that includes our still active board member, J. Marshall Buehler.

As things stay the same, they change a little too. This year's upgrade of the original Lumber-and-Logging and Depot exhibits in the lower level (basement) has been very well received. Thanks to Marshall Buehler, Barry Jens, Dave Engel, Bob Zimmerman, John Berg and Lori Brost.

Our current Cranberry exhibit, assembled by then-volunteer and director-to-be Pam Walker, was dedicated in May 1988 and has served us very well over the past 28 years. It is time to bring this important topic up to date. If you are interested in helping make it happen, let me know.

The June edition of *Artifacts* and the "Vaughan Suitcase" story showed how the Third Floor Archives has been actively expanding our collection and will continue to do so as valuable materials come our way. Most recently, we have received a donation of photos and memorabilia from the Rablin family that included a leather-bound Bible brought over from Cornwall, England, by Grand Rapids pioneer John Rablin.

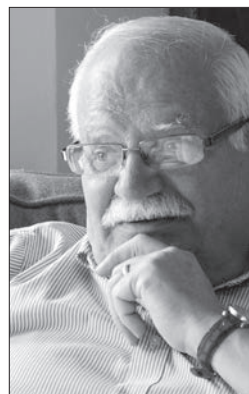
Over the summer, a number of former residents came into town for their high school or family reunion. It is always nice when they stop by the Museum to reminisce about their years of growing up here, visiting what they remember as the old T.B. Scott Public Library. For those of you who have moved out of the area (and those who still call this area home), please jot down some of those memories and share them with the SWCHC. If you wish, we may even share some of these memories with our readers as part of our continuing mission to collect, preserve and share the history of the colorful community we sometimes call "River City."



Phil

On Friday, July 8, a summit meeting of sorts with leaders of the Portage County Historical Society was held in Uncle Dave's office, giving us a chance to show off our building and archives. Many similarities were observed and mutual admiration expressed.

Tim Siebert,
President
Portage County
Historical Society



Anton Anday
Historian
Portage County
Historical Society

Point's version of Phil and Dave

Roddis Redux

The October 2015 *Artifacts* profiled the statue known as “The Troubadours” and its return to the Museum grounds—after which Mary Connor Pierce, a previous owner of the long-time home of the iconic yard art, responded further. Mrs. Pierce explained that, during the disposition of the Isaac and Charlotte Witter estate, the Roddises of Marshfield, related to our Witters, had bid on “The Troubadour,” along with two smaller statues, a painting and a Queen Anne chair that Pierce’s aunt, Augusta Roddis, donated to the SWCHC Museum.



“The Connor, Roddis, and Witter families were friends, business associates, and visitors in each others homes for three generations,” wrote Pierce. In Marshfield, the Roddises had “a huge yard, lovely gardens, and a perfect spot for the statuary.” Their house also displayed notable paintings and other art works.

The Roddis family, she said, were “typical of educated industrialists in America in the 19th and 20th centuries who traveled to Europe, South America, Africa, Turkey, and Egypt – to name some places that I know about. (They probably visited the Holy Land too.)”

In 1938, Hamilton Roddis inspected plywood plants in England, France and Holland, purchasing two plywood presses in Krefeld, Germany; a core machine in Remagen-On-Rhine; and a veneer edge-gluing machine in Stuttgart. The new 16-foot plywood presses put Roddis Plywood in the forefront of plywood manufacturing, said Pierce, whose sister, Sara Witter Connor, published *Wisconsin Flying Trees in World War II*, in 2014, “which explains the importance of the 1938 trip for the future war effort.” The presses were used to build plywood for gliders and Mosquito bombers. A core machine was used for doors and battleship interiors.

Mrs. Pierce also clarified the Third Street South historical record, explaining that the tennis court at the base of the hill at 530 Third St. S. had been in existence for decades when she and her husband, Dudley, purchased it.



Cover

From Helen Morland Zimmerman, wife of SWCHC board member Robert Zimmerman whose own always-engaging cameo has appeared in this pages numerous times: “This picture [above] was taken in 1944 in Wisconsin Rapids of my brother, Dick Morland, and myself. I am four years old and Dick is six.

“My aunt Bernice [Virum], who lived with us, worked at the local clothing factory then making uniforms for the US armed forces fighting WWII. She made us these outfits from scraps of material which were not big enough for regular uniform patterns. We were very proud of our patriotic clothes.”

Lori Brost
Museum Administrator

Adding Chapters

Preserving and sharing history has been the priority of the South Wood County Historical Museum since its founding; but it doesn't end there. When we come across items that document history, we want to add as much information as we can so that years later it's a more complete and valuable piece.

While going through the photo room on the third floor, I came across a large box that held the "Yellow Books," three oversized books labeled "History of Wisconsin Rapids." We knew these books included some wonderful images, however, the books' size and weight made it difficult to utilize them fully.

Insurance agent and antiquarian Tom Taylor had begun documenting the area with a pictorial collection that spanned through the 1930s. Then a group in the early 1970s that included Don Anderson, Rita Brockman and Everett Lambert added their own chapter. Not only did they take photographs, they also included images copied from postcards. The book referred to what was labeled as a "location map." Unfortunately, that map has not been found.

This is where we would like to add a chapter of our own.

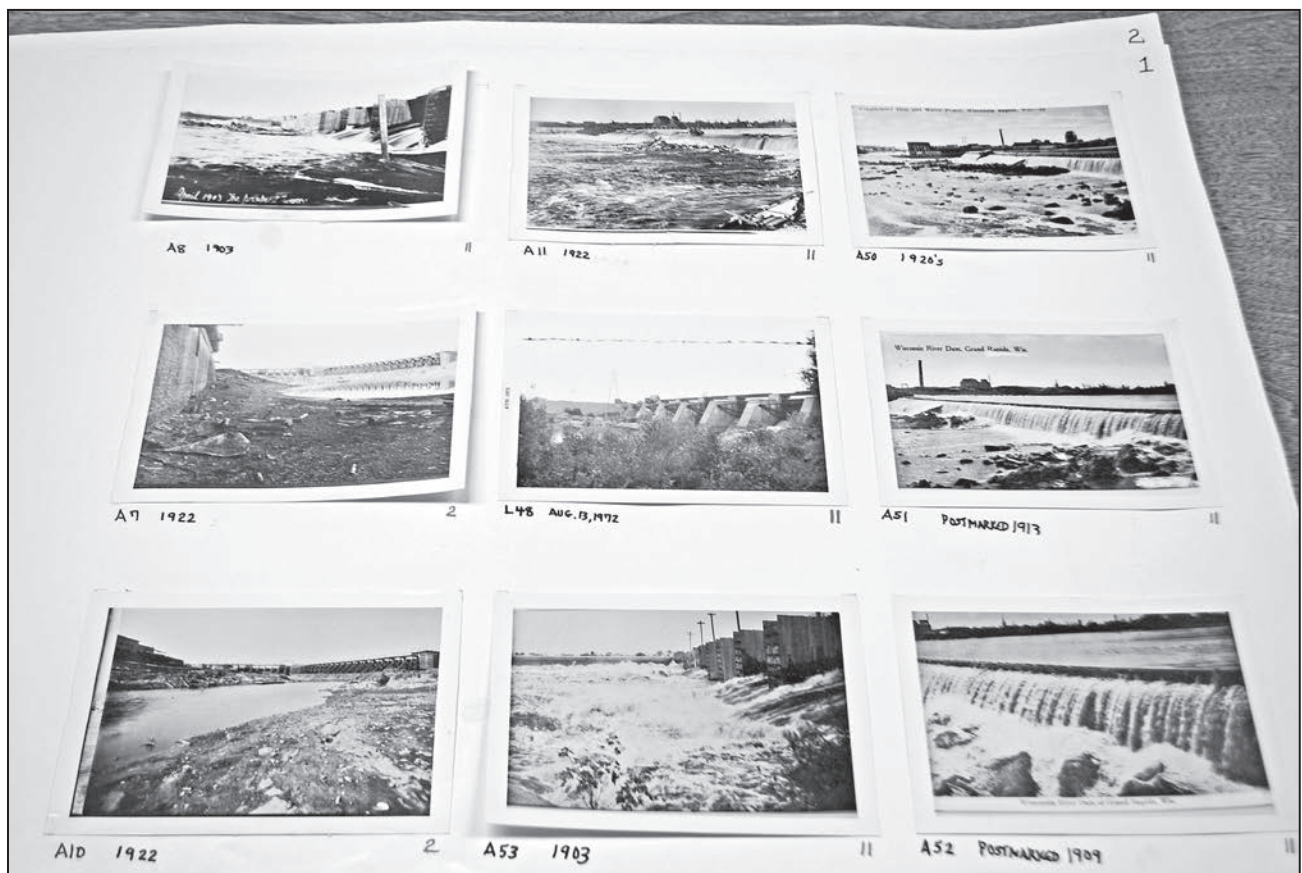
Starting with "Book One," the first task was to document the book itself, photographing the pages to ensure they were put into the new binders in the same order. Then, the images were scanned and labeled to match the information that was recorded. At this point, I went through the photocopied images from the Yellow Book to try to find the originals to use in this new book, which would have better resolution. In most cases we were able to locate them. With the scans complete, we started printing. The original images were mainly 3" x 5" in size. We decided to re-print them at 4" x 6". Arranging the new binders has begun.

What was originally recorded, coupled with our comments and the addition of information our readers may provide, history will give us a much more complete look at our town.

Before: as
 displayed in
 original
 "Yellow Book"



Yellow Book



After copying and
reprinting



See page 15 for Centralia Hardware

AUG 71

East Bank of Wisconsin river, downtown Wisconsin Rapids, Grand Avenue Bridge, right



Buildings above, to the left of the bridge, are now park land. Those below, still in place!

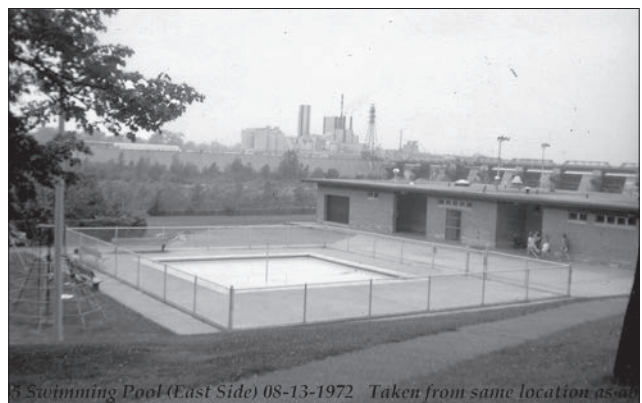
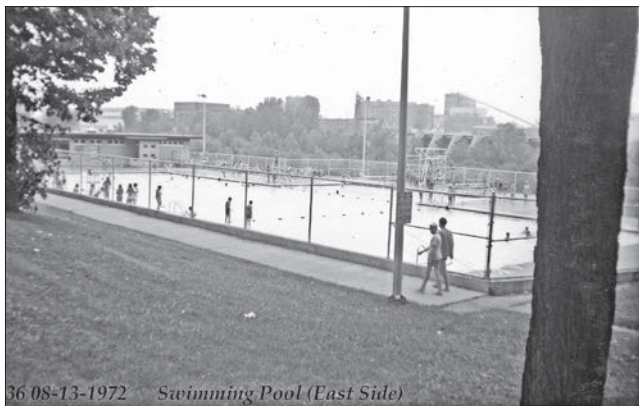


Corner of East Grand Avenue and 2nd Street South, also shown at top



Left: Specializing in staying the same is the SWCHC Museum, 540 Third St. S., established in 1970, about the time of this photo, in the former T.B. Scott Public Library building.

Below, 1955 Aquatic Center, a/k/a East Side Pool, Carl Billmeyer, architect.



“Hold to the now, the here, through which all future plunges to the past.”
James Joyce, Ulysses

Billmeyer

Imprints made from Germany

By Rosanne Billmeyer Mehta

Bihlmaier, Bihlmeier, Buhlmeier, Bihlmaier, Billmeier: in the end it was Billmeyer. Anton, the first of the line to emigrate, was born Sept. 2, 1826, in Nagelsberg, now a suburb of Kunzelsau, Württemberg, Germany.

On March 19, 1868, Anton Billmeyer and his wife, Ludwena, along with their two daughters, Mary and Rosa, left Hamburg, Germany, aboard one of the first steamships. After landing in New York City, they traveled to Chicago and on to New Lisbon, Wis., then to Grand Rapids via stagecoach driven by Franklin J. Wood. They resided with Ludwena's sister and husband, who was employed by F.J.'s father, Joseph Wood, for whom the county is named.

Anton was a stonemason by trade but, unable to find work in Rapids, went to nearby Stevens Point, Wis., where he succeeded in finding employment. He returned every Saturday night, making the journey of 22 miles on foot, often carrying a sack of flour for the family on his shoulders.

At that time, as described later by Anton's wife, Ludwena, there were but few dwellings in Grand Rapids with two or three stores and one church but no school. After about a year and a half, the new residents bought a small house and lot on 11th Street North. The senior Anton Billmeyer died of heart failure Nov. 18, 1894.

Anton and Ludwena had seven children. The youngest was future architect Anton Frank (Tony) born Feb. 22, 1873, in Grand Rapids, Wis., now

Wisconsin Rapids. Tony died unexpectedly in 1927, at the age of 54 following an emergency appendectomy performed in Marshfield, Wis.

His eulogy stated that, “Tony used to sketch neighboring houses and while a mere boy got a handsaw and hammer and began working for 50 cents a day while most boys were at play. At the age of 16, in 1889, with his older brother, Frank – by 3 years, went to Milwaukee where he hired out as a carpenter and showing leadership signs was placed in charge of a crew. He soon had saved a fortune of \$500 and bought into his employer's business. Then came the terrible panic of 1893 and he lost everything.”



Anton Billmeyer Sr.

While in Milwaukee, “A.F.” attended a night class, studying drawing with a civil engineer. In 1895, he returned to Grand Rapids, starting business as a contractor, builder and architect and hiring his brother Frank as a carpenter. The March 17, 1900, *Centralia Enterprise & Tribune* noted “A.F. Billmeyer is the champion bowler of the new consolidated [Grand Rapids/Centralia] city, having made a score of 242 at ten pins.”

He married Mary Ann Jeffrey from Seneca, Wis., Nov. 29, 1900. He served as an alderman 1904-06.



Anton F. (Tony) Billmeyer, architect, and wife, the former Mary Ann Jeffrey

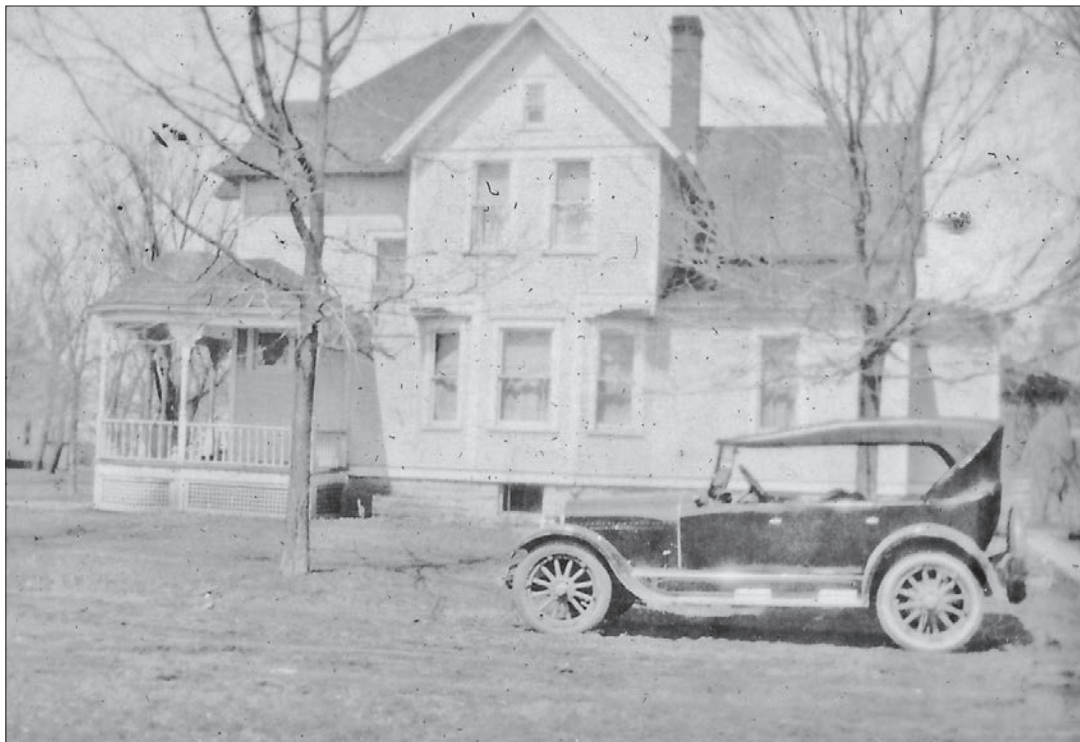
The Billmeyers moved into their first home at 1110 Washington Street about 1872, per warranty deed dated 9/28/1872. They later built their home at 710 11th Street North from land purchased from J. D. Witter. That house had a major fire in 2013 and now is a vacant lot.

Tony valued education and made sure all his children received a higher education.

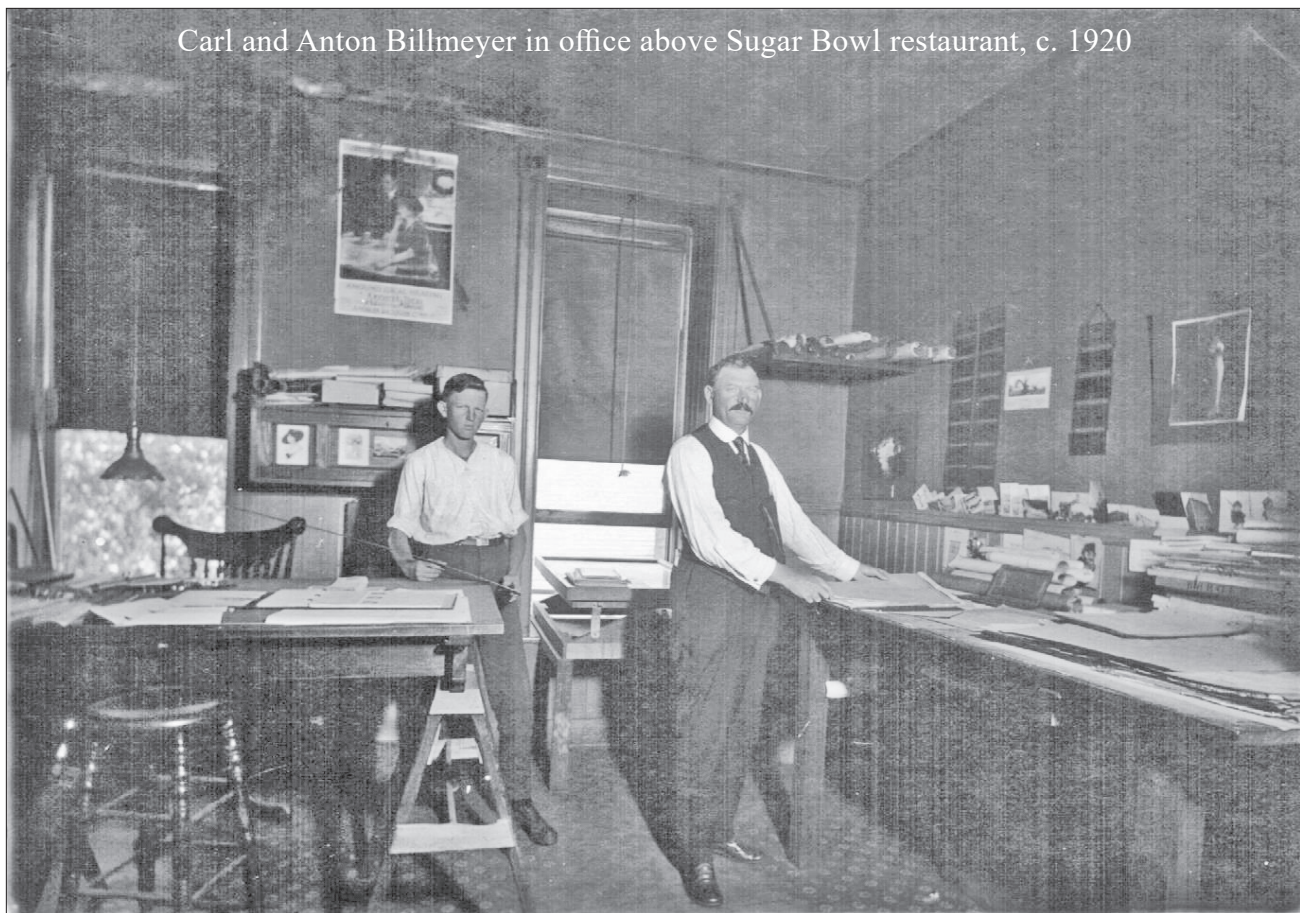
The oldest of Anton and Mary Ann's six children was Carl Jeffrey Billmeyer born Nov. 28, 1901. Carl graduated from Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Penn., and joined his father in A.F. Billmeyer & Son.

Carl, at the age of 25, following Anton's death, helped his mother and siblings by carrying on the business. His log shows that, in 1927, he took his mother to Kilbourn (Wisconsin Dells) at a cost of \$1.50, more than likely to discuss a business deal begun before his father's death.

Carl married Marjorie Rachael Gibson of Grand Rapids June 23, 1931. He designed and built their new home at 931 Washington Street which had all the modern conveniences—at a cost of \$6,400, securing the first Federal Housing Administration "FHA" loan granted in Wisconsin Rapids.



11th Street home of A.F. and Mary Billmeyer family



Carl and Anton Billmeyer in office above Sugar Bowl restaurant, c. 1920

Having resided 58 years above the Sugar Bowl restaurant in the Wood County National Bank Building, the original firm, “A.F. Billmeyer & Son,” moved to 420 3rd St. South, in a building which Carl had designed and built for Paul Manske, chiropractor.

Carl died April 15, 1983. He had worked at his office almost daily (as can be seen from his daily log) until he suffered a fatal heart attack in the morning hours.

Carl’s son, David, came into the business and changed the name to Billmeyer & Son rather than A.F. Billmeyer & Son. After a number of years, David became the Wisconsin Rapids building inspector.

A.F. (Tony) Billmeyer, Carl Billmeyer and David Billmeyer were avid deer hunters. Carl belonged to the “Panzys Hunting Club,” a joking reference to “pansies.” Many of their stories (and nicknames) have been written down.

Numerous homes, churches, schools and building projects were well illustrated in the May 14, 1983, *Daily Tribune* in “A Family tradition on the drawing board” by Dave Engel, republished in *River City Memoirs II*.



David Billmeyer was a frequent visitor to the SWCHC Museum—enjoying extensive tours as Wisconsin Rapids building inspector.

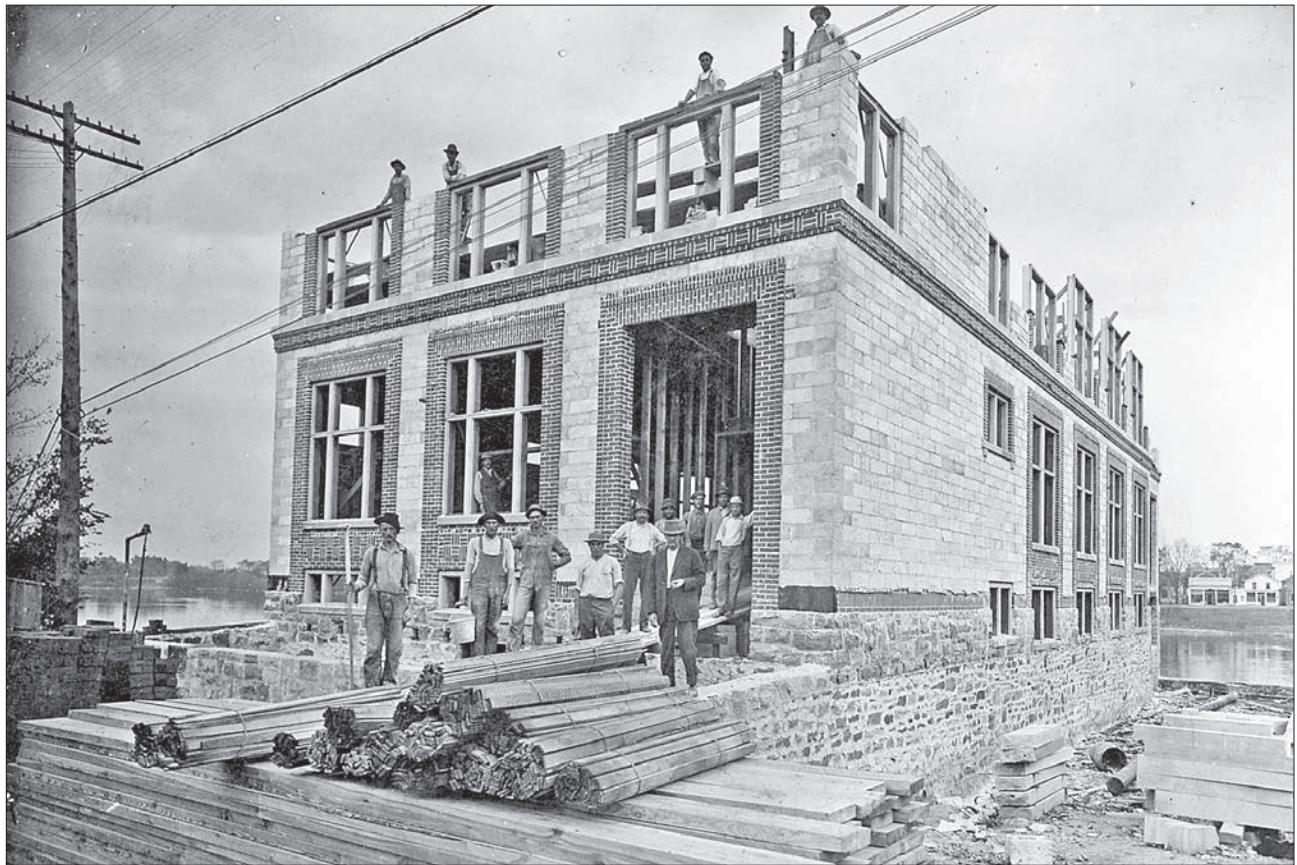


Photo dated Oct. 4, 1914, of the Elks club, 240 2nd St. S., built by A.F. Billmeyer, according to plans by R.A. Messmer & Bro., architects, Milwaukee, Wis., later the site of numerous dances and high school reunions. A.F., center, in window? Building still standing.

PAGE SIX

Who's Who In Wisconsin Rapids

The Who's Who column will be run each Saturday in the Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune. It will include a brief sketch of the life of citizens who have helped make history for Wisconsin Rapids.

Mrs. Ludwena Billmeyer



Mrs. Ludwena Lambach Billmeyer

ington Avenue, on which is now erected one of the most beautiful homes in the city, owned and occupied by Mr. Wood's son, P. J. Wood and his wife.

Ancient History Recollections

All entertainments were held in Music Hall, the music for dancing parties was furnished by Spafford & Martini who had won fame as being the very best fiddlers in this section of the country.

Mrs. Billmeyer recollects how Joseph Wood and John Wagner owned and conducted a furniture and undertaking store on what is now the E. P. Argin lot, and which was then a field, Mr. Wagner manufactured the furniture they sold.

Mrs. Billmeyer is the mother of six children, three daughters and three sons, four of whom are still living: Mrs. Joseph Fisher, Frank Billmeyer, and Anton Billmeyer, the well known architect, all of this city, and Mrs. Louis Wipfli of Lewiston, Mont.

Mr. Billmeyer passed away at his home in this city, November 18, 1894.

A *Daily Tribune* from May 11, 1921, profiled the wife of Anton Billmeyer and mother of Anton, "A.F." or "Tony" and provided a look at the "River City" community in the mid-1800s.

The many drawings, photos and blueprints of the Billmeyer firm have found a home at the SWCHC Museum which was itself built by A.F. Billmeyer as a residence for banker Isaac Witter.

In 1927, this entrance was added to the 1874 Forest Hill Cemetery, a gift from cemetery benefactor Frank Wood in honor of his parents, Joseph and Matilda Wood, for whom the county is named.

Plans were drawn by Carl Billmeyer with help from his dying father, A.F. (who was buried that year next door in Calvary Cemetery). The gate was constructed of granite obtained north of Rudolph.



Imprints

Of interest, there was the earlier “Cruikshank Cemetery,” located behind the 931 Washington Street property at what was called the “Sand Hill” where all the kids used to go sledding. The hill ended near the “frog pond” that contained numerous tadpoles in the spring. This was before houses and a road were constructed on the property.

I used to find roses growing out of lilac bushes and my mother told me about the former cemetery. I remember a few large slabs of burial markings still lying above the woods. My sister and her friends once tried digging up any bones or relics. They were stopped abruptly when Mrs. (Walter) Hilda Wood, a neighbor, told

our mother about it. They had to fill in the hole which didn’t reveal anything that I can remember.

John J. Cruikshank had donated to the city this land for the people because they evidently could not afford to buy land for a cemetery. Earliest burials were in 1837. In 1874, because of the unrecorded burial areas and the Cruickshank cemetery not being maintained, the remains were to be removed to the new Forest Hill/Calvary Cemetery on land donated by F. J. Wood.

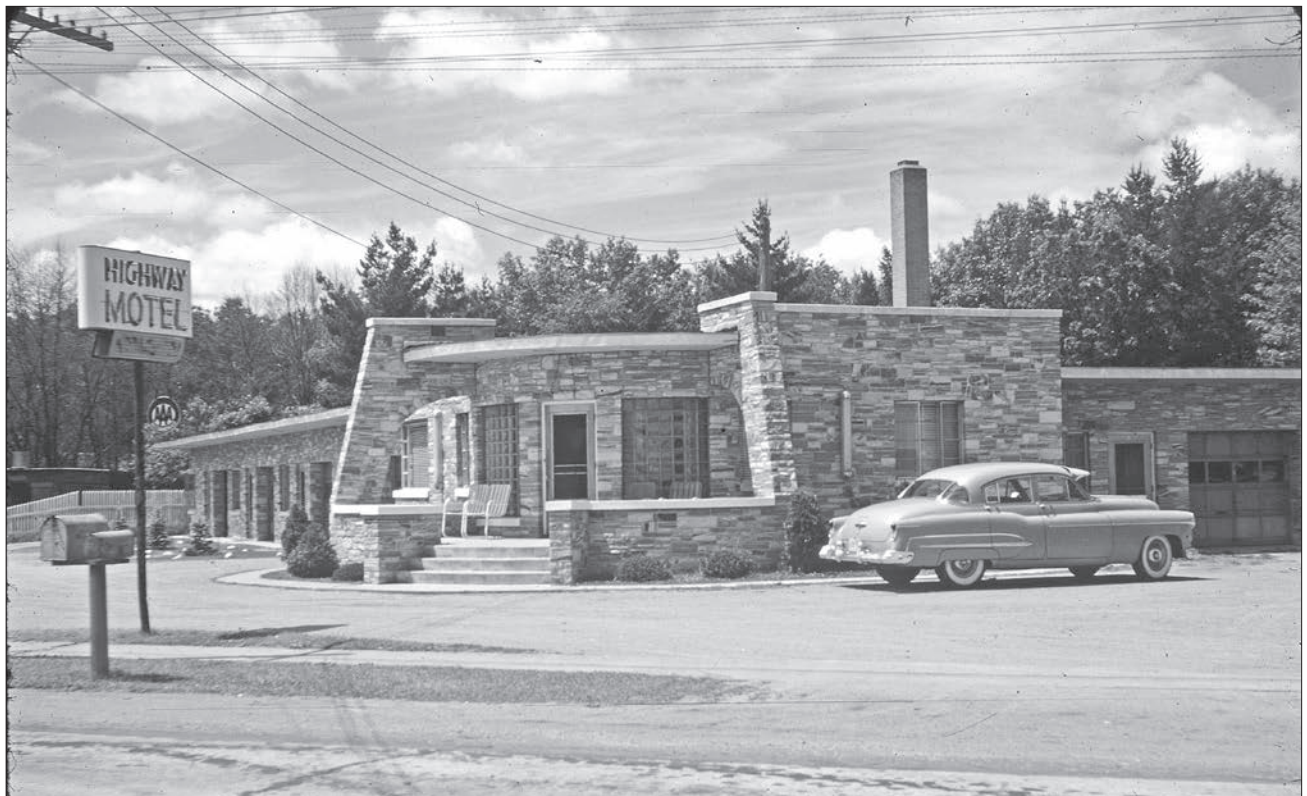


*Cruikshank cemetery
(1902 Sanborn map)*

Carl drew the design for the south entrance.

The Billmeyer men eventually found their way into Calvary Cemetery but they definitely left their imprints behind.

Rosanne Billmeyer Mehta



Harry Sweat's Highway Motel (also Knott's), a 1948 project of A.F. Billmeyer & Son, eight housing units with attached garages, 3010 8th St. S. Mostly gone.



Krohn & Berard funeral home, later Ritchay's, 240 1st Ave. S., now a parking lot



Marling Lumber was at 250 3rd Ave. S. Everything on this page is gone.



In a view the editor does not remember, the lower building at rear may be the first story of the Obermeier block that lasted into modern times. In 1956, the National (Tea) store was at 111 4th Ave. N.; Braun's Hardware and Appliance at 131 4th; "Col." Wm. Obermeier residence, 137 4th.



For a couple generations it was Nash Hardware, for a couple more, “Monkey” Wards, a department store usually just called “Wards.” Razed in the early 1980s, now a parking lot.







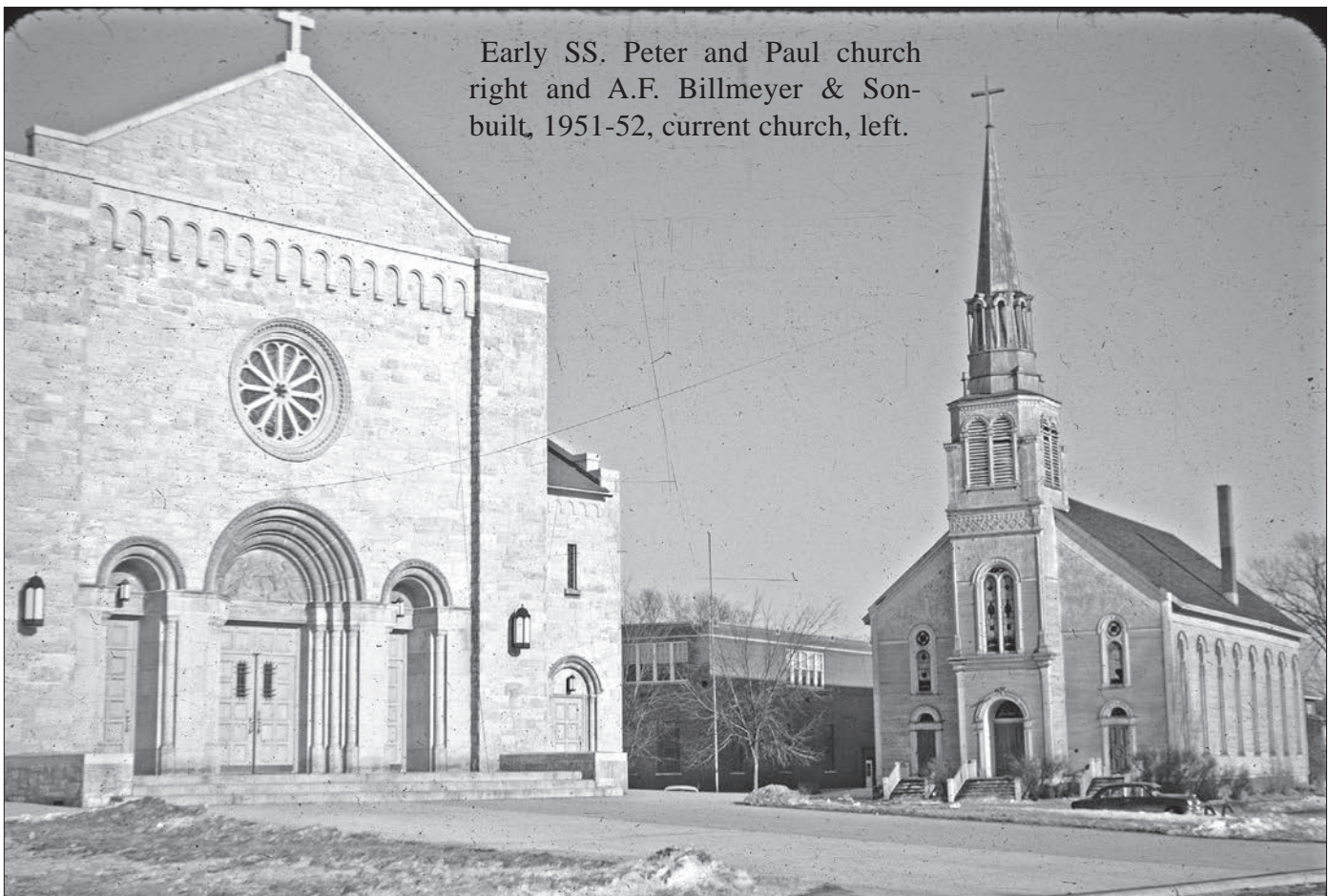
From Thomas J. Johnson, LHS '63: "My dad, Russell Johnson, is on the far left with his brand new 1937 Harley, considered a classic. The Fischer Cycle Shop was located on [411] 1st St. N. near the river. I believe that is the dam in the distance on the right." Also, Leo Reiman, 6th from left; Thelma and Donald Fischer far right.

Our Lady Queen of Heaven (St. Mary's), Wisconsin Rapids, under Rev. Joseph Tetzlaff, architect A.F. Billmeyer & Son, built by Frank J. Henry. School opened 1949. Second floor was home to Tri-City (Assumption) high school, 1951-54.

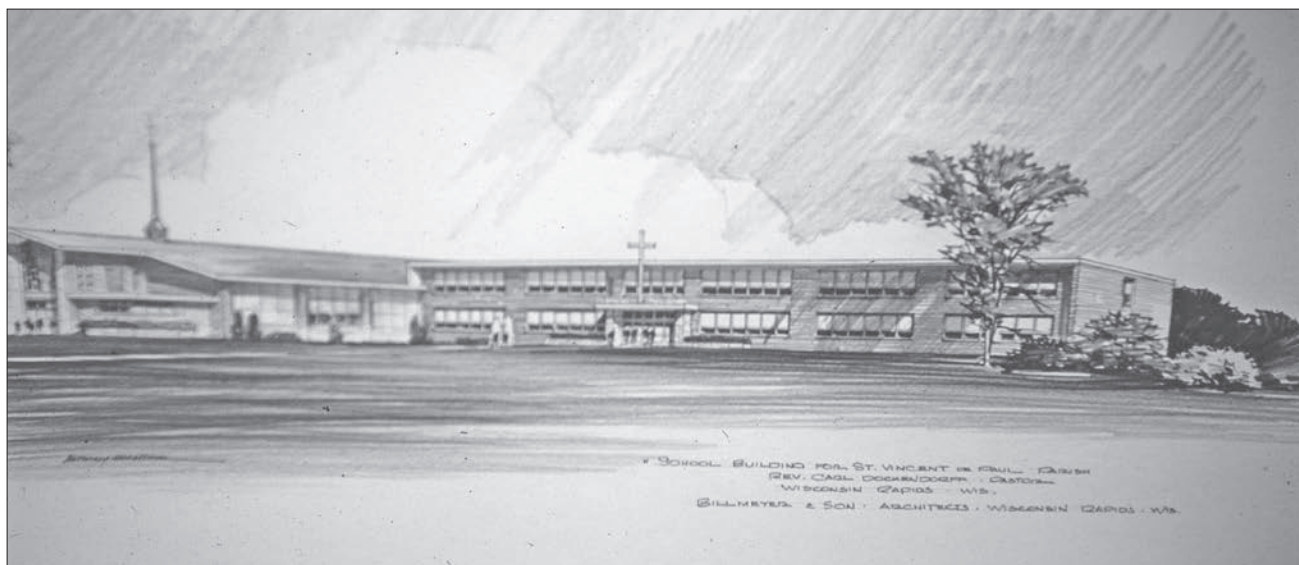


Above: Billmeyer drawing, dated 1952.

In 1974, the firm also designed the 1908 rectory and 1974 school for the St. Lawrence parish on 10th Avenue, West Side.



Scanned from slides by SWCHC volunteer C. Henry Bruse

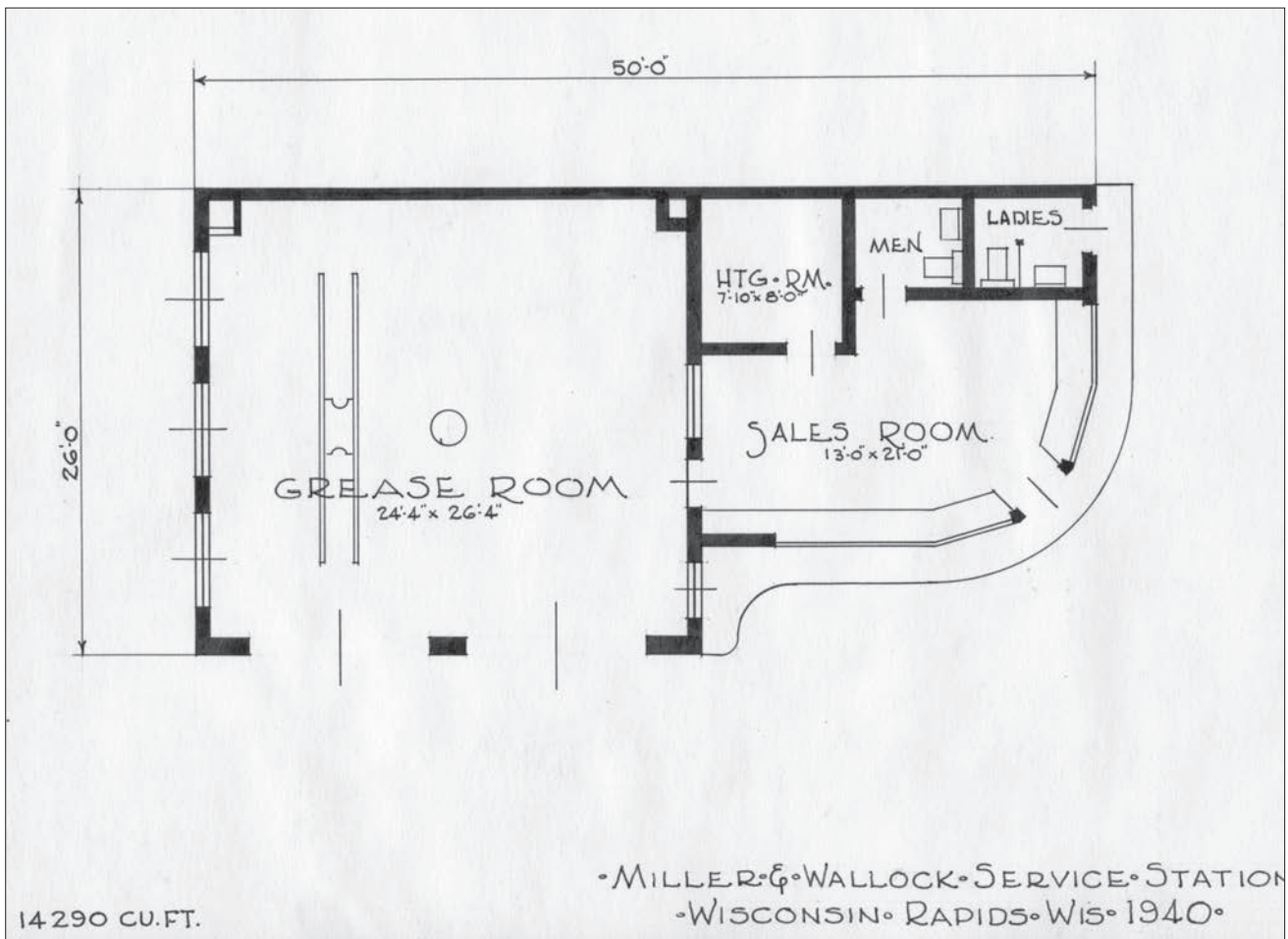


St. Vincent de Paul, sketch above, reality at right. Carl Billmeyer, architect.

Originally considered a school building, in 1957, the sanctuary was termed an auditorium.

Below, Assumption high school and convent 1954.

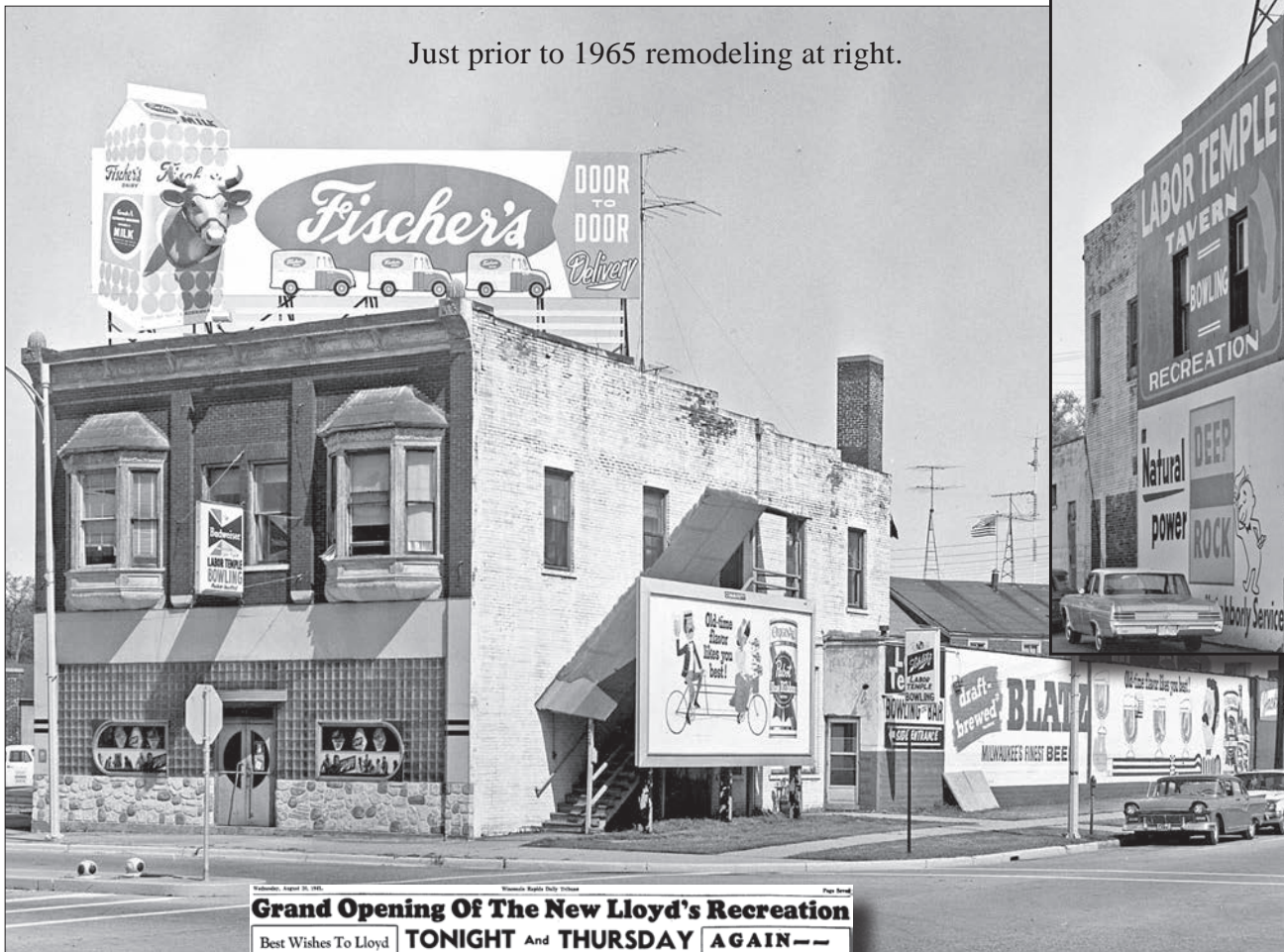






Haney Drugs: For LHS students, home to noon hour candy breaks in the 1960s. *Artifacts* editor Uncle Dave lived in fear of visits to Dr. Orville Straub, dentist, housed on the second floor with partner Oliver Koonz and office manager Dorothy Gringle (later Sampson). UD's mother worked as a part-time bookkeeper for Haney's. Drastically altered, now home to Incourage foundation. East Grand Avenue, across from Hotel Mead.

Just prior to 1965 remodeling at right.



In the 1880s, it may have been a hotel...

8-20-1941

Grand Opening Of The New Lloyd's Recreation
TONIGHT And THURSDAY AGAIN---
 Alley's Open For Bowling Starting Tonight Aug. 20

Best Wishes To Lloyd
 And a grand season to all bowlers
 in the modernized
Lloyd's Recreation
 PLUMBING BY
Frank Brostowitz
 PLUMBING & HEATING

Congratulations
LLOYD'S
RECREATION---
 On the completion of this fine addition to Wisconsin Rapids' recreational facilities.
Wis. Rapids Furniture Co.

Compliments Of
OKEH
NOVELTY CO.
 Wisconsin Rapids

●First bowler on each alley will receive first line FREE.
 ●Free Beer from 7 to 8 P. M. both nights.
 ●Special entertainment by WYOR radio stars.

We have always tried to make your entertainment most enjoyable. Now you are invited to enjoy yourself in grand style in our completely modernized building. Share in the fun these two gala opening nights.

NOTICE TO LEAGUE BOWLERS
 All bowlers who bowl in League at Lloyd's kindly contact the managers, meet at your home nights at once.

We were selected to install the ELECTRICAL WORK in another of Wisconsin Rapids' many fine buildings.
 WE OFFER OUR BEST WISHES TO LLOYD'S RECREATION HOME.
Staub Electric Co.
 And Motor Winding Works

Compliments Of—
Eatmore Products
 —Company—
 Distributors of
 Blatz And Bulweiner Beer

BEST WISHES TO—
LLOYD
 From: "A FRIEND"

Compliments Of
George Damitz
 "INSURANCE AGENCY"
 1111 1st St. So. W. Rapids

Frank Wheelan East Side Billiard Rooms were purchased by Lloyd Franson in 1936 and developed as the bowling alley that in 1949 became Tri-City Labor Temple..



1965,
Architect,
Carl Billmeyer

Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune
A CONSTRUCTIVE NEWSPAPER

Wisconsin Rapids Tribune Labor Temple Dedication Supplement October 8, 1965



BIGGER AND BRIGHTER — This is the exterior view of the Tri-City Labor Temple which is to be dedicated this weekend. The view is from the southwest corner of Jackson and 1st Sts.

Visitors will use the new entrance on Jackson St. The second floor area above the bowling alleys is entirely new, and the older portions of the building have been completely remodeled.

Temple Reflects Labor Growth

Spacious is the word for You see it in the large side of the building provides a course, union events. To achieve a top fire insurance



City Seeking Demolition Proposals for Downtown Site

CITY TIMES STAFF

The city of Wisconsin Rapids is seeking proposals from firms for the demolition of a site in the downtown area, according to their website.

The site of 111 E. Jackson St. will be demolished in the near future, which includes removing the foundation, structures and all contents of the property.

Any and all proposals are due by Sept. 13. This is part of the large scale riverfront and downtown upgrade that has been put into motion as of late.

For more information, please visit <http://www.wirapids.org/egov/documents/1472239686.12652.pdf>



The properties at 111 E. Jackson St. (Photo: City of Wisconsin Rapids)

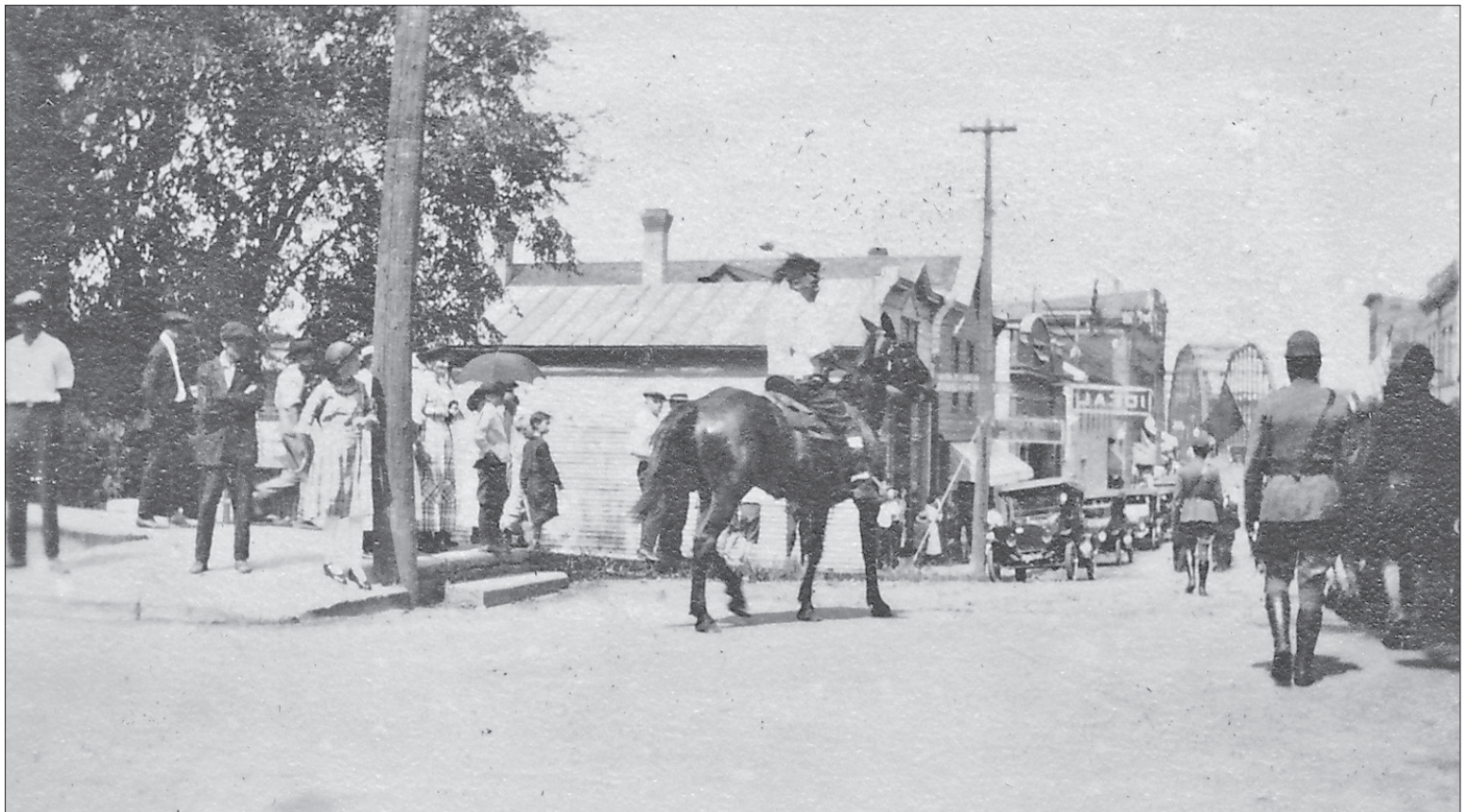
2016

1921

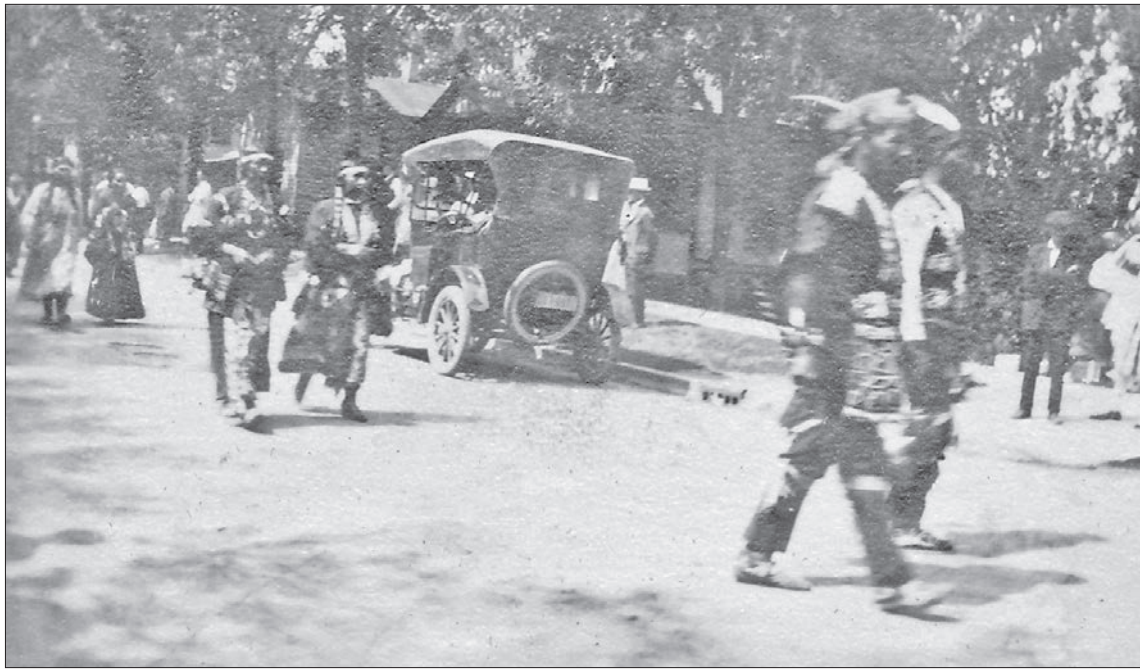
From Carl
Billmeyer's
album: on
loan from
Rosanne
Billmeyer
Mehta



Looking from 3rd Street and Grand Ave corner toward the Grand Avenue bridge, Ideal Theatre at left



1921



Young Brave



A full fledged Chief.



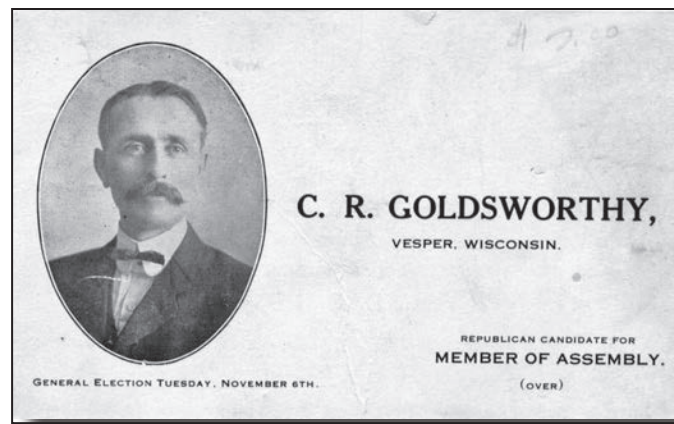
Buckskin & Beads.



Marshal of the Parade.

INDIAN POW WOW
 WISCONSIN RAPIDS, Wis.
 August 11-12-13
 1921.

Native costumes worn by the
 different tribes made it a pic-
 turesque three days.



Scott Brehm
Vesper Correspondent

The Essential, Unacknowledged, Goldsworthy

Where would Vesper be without him?

It seems a long time ago—40 years—when I was 9 years old, riding my bicycle around Vesper with my brother, Todd, and uncle, David, as well as close friends like Rod Friday, Jeff Jepson and Greg Rosplock, creating our own adventures. During the summer, we ventured out early in the morning and knew to get home for lunch by the noon whistle. It still goes off to this day and triggers memories each time.

As soon as we ate, we took off on our misadventures with the understanding that we would return home before dark. We had our own secret bike trails that traveled in and around Vesper. There were many days that we would go by one of the old buildings in town and wonder what it was in its heyday, finding out the real history of these buildings only in our adult life.

Likewise, how did the streets get their names? Many are easy to understand: Wisconsin, Michigan, Oak, Birch etc.; but I have always wondered how some famous or infamous people had their names



put on places. We called the town park, “Vesper Park” not knowing it was named after James Cameron, an important man in our history. Cameron also has a street named after him as do White, Benson and Anderton.



White Street

When Girard and Drake established a saw mill on the banks of the Hemlock, Joseph White was their foreman.

Born at Three Rivers, Quebec, Canada, in 1841, White came to Wood County in 1865, and helped cut the first trees and build the first camp in Vesper. The 1870 federal census shows him living with Samuel Carroll, a lumberman. [Sarah Vaughan, school teacher subject of the June *Artifacts*, lived in the same household.]

In 1873, White bought 40 acres outside the settlement at what would be the intersection of Cameron Avenue and White Street, for his herd of Jersey cattle, establishing a creamery along the way. By 1880, he lived with his wife and three children. White served as school clerk, supervisor, assessor and postmaster and was instrumental in building the Vesper Catholic church.

White died Sept. 21, 1921.

Cameron Avenue and Park

James Cameron of Appleton, with Henry Sherry, and George Gerry bought out the Whor-

"I stand squarely upon the principles of the Republican party as adopted in their convention platform on September 25th, 1906. On matters not covered by that platform, I pledge myself to work for such measures only as will advance and protect the interests of all the people."

C. R. GOLDSWORTHY

ton brothers sawmill, after which Cameron bought out his partners and continued on his own, hauling logs from his four camps each winter or running logs down the creeks in spring. In 1894, a fire burned his Sherry-Cameron mill and the rest of Vesper.

Cameron was the first postmaster of Vesper.

Goldsworthy

During years of research into Vesper's history, I wondered how another person, so prominent and important to the early beginnings of our little town, was never given recognition by having something named after him—C. R. Goldsworthy.

Looking into sources like the 1923 *History of Wood County*, the 1907 Wisconsin *Blue Book*, the "Centennial Edition" of the Wisconsin Rapids *Daily Tribune* of Aug. 2, 1956, and even *Wikipedia*, we find information about him.

Young Clifford Russell Goldsworthy worked on his parents' Kenosha county farm. Having attended but not graduated from Union Grove high school, at the age of 21 he went to Milwaukee, and studied at Spencerian Business College. He returned to the farm, which he purchased and lived on until about 1893, when he moved to Union Grove village and the real estate business.

Goldsworthy in 1896 settled in Vesper village, becoming a leading figure in its redevelopment. He engaged in several occupations while he was here, most importantly selling property to new settlers.

In 1931, Goldsworthy moved back to Union Grove but returned again to Vesper. Unmarried,

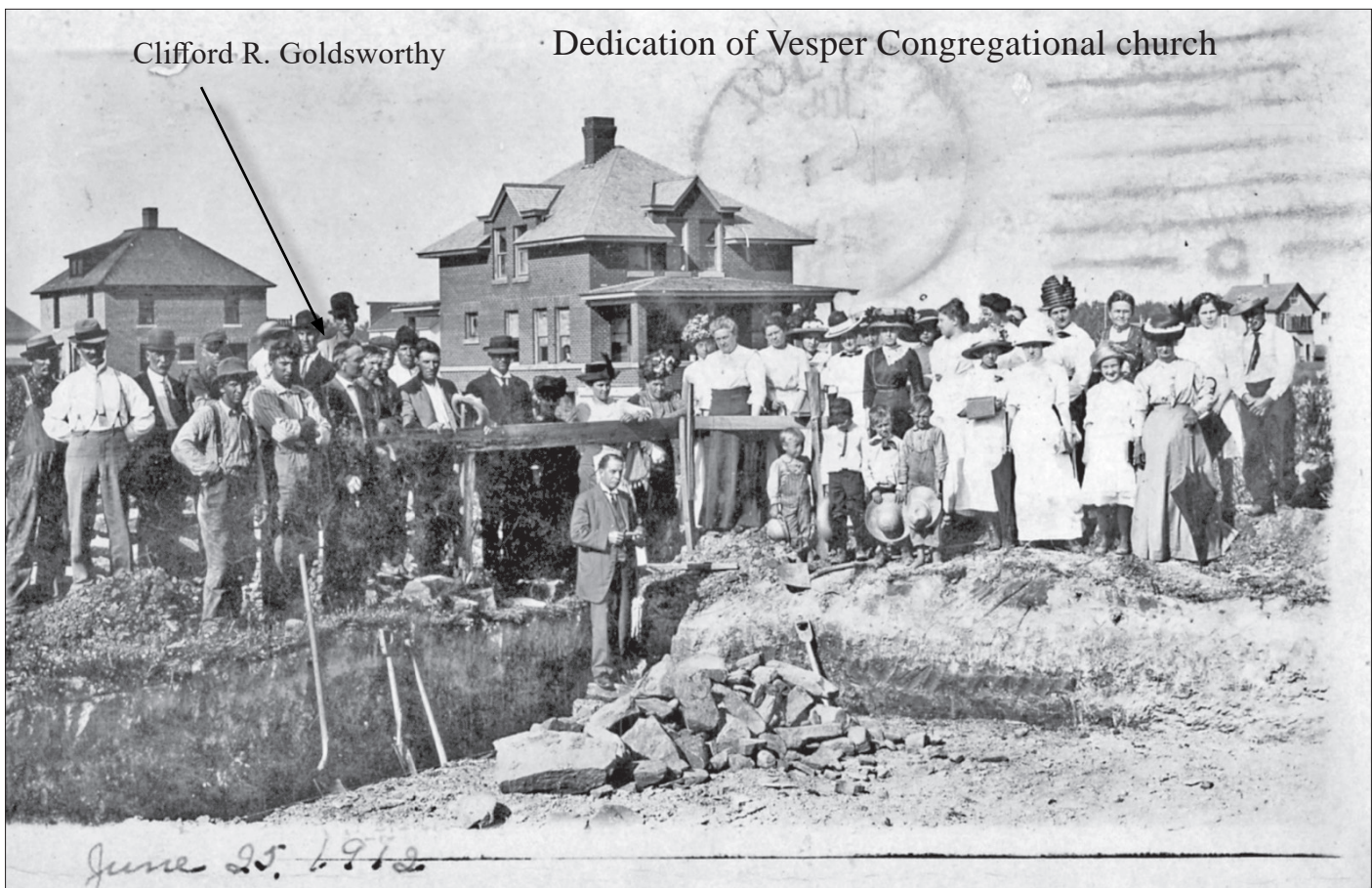
he died in a Madison, Wis., hospital, Oct. 1, 1944. The funeral was held in Vesper and he was buried in Union Grove.

Following the 1894 Vesper fire, the Sherry-Cameron Lumber Co. sold their 11,000 acre holdings to Edward Benson and Charles Anderton, a Milwaukee real estate firm. Benson and Anderton were instrumental in platting the current village.

As real estate agent, Goldsworthy helped Benson and Anderton sell as many as two to three farms a day for about 1 ½ years, after which they sold the balance of their land to Goldsworthy and moved on. It is said that Goldsworthy traded them some property in his native Racine County for the 100-acre Vesper village site, which he endeavored to dispose of one lot at a time. From time to time, he donated property for church and other purposes.

Cameron Park, located in the center of the village and measuring 300 x 300 feet, originally was owned and platted by Benson and Anderton, who sold it to Goldsworthy. Goldsworthy then deeded the property to the village for use as a public park. Goldsworthy planted the trees and made other improvements suitable for recreation and band concerts.

Goldsworthy and E. S. Bailey started a general store. They sold it after three years to Oscar and Walter Treutel. The building was later used as the village hall. He also had his real estate office in the same building.



The first Congregational services were held in a wood frame building in the south central part of Cameron Park. This building was owned by Goldsworthy, who donated the use of the hall to the church. A new church was dedicated in 1912 and built on land donated by Goldsworthy.

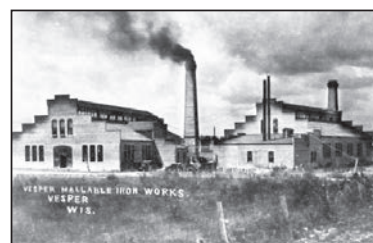
Goldsworthy built a lodge hall of Vesper red brick on the west side of the park in 1912.

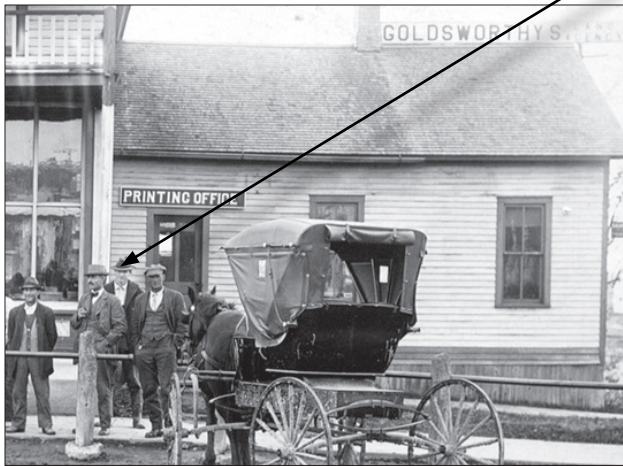
Around 1900, Trinity Lutheran Church was built as the Evangelical Lutheran Church on land donated by Goldsworthy. The congregation, organized about 1900, was for many years served by the pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Arpin. The name of the church has since changed to Trinity Lutheran Church.

Goldsworthy built and owned the Monogram Hotel, operated by a lessee. It was destroyed by fire in the mid 1920's.

The Vesper Safety Clevis and Malleable Iron Company was built in 1908 by Goldsworthy with John N. Hayes, Oshkosh, L. H. Bartholomew, Milwaukee, and F. W. Darling, Wautoma. It started operating on June 13, 1909 but closed after only 11 months.

White, Cameron, Anderton and Benson will be forever memorialized by the streets and park that are named after them, but one name Clifford Russell Goldsworthy has faded into the past even though he was a prominent man that helped create the town we know today.





On a side note, Vesper had its own song made by an unknown person so many years ago.

Vesper, Wisconsin on the Hemlock Creek

1) You can rave about your cities with their glitter and their show,
And the interesting places where people like to go
But to come to solid comfort we can show you all a trick,
Where? Vesper, Wisconsin, on the Hemlock Creek

Chorus

Vesper for mine, yes it's Vesper for mine,
She isn't very big, but she's the best on the line,
They can travel where they want to
But we'll try our best to stick,
Where? Vesper, Wisconsin, on the Hemlock Creek.

2) It's the home of dandy people and their children not a few,
It's the home of cheese and butter and a big condensery, too,
They make drainage tile and silos, have a band and park that're slick
Where? Vesper, Wisconsin, on the Hemlock Creek.

3) Now the people are so busy that it keeps them on the go,
So they haven't got a bit of time to stop and watch her grow,
It's the town where things are doing and we aim to do them quick,
Where? Vesper, Wisconsin, on the Hemlock Creek.

4) To each stranger who is seeking for a place to build his roost,
We extend an invitation to the town for which we boost,
We'll be glad to have you with us and we know you'll want to stick,
Where? Vesper, Wisconsin, on the Hemlock Creek.

*If anyone remembers hearing this song in your childhood, please call me at 715-459-3398.
I would like to hear how the song was sung.*

By
Bill Hartley
LHS '63



The JUNK YARDS of River City

Junk yards, or salvage yards as they are called today, were abundant in and around Wisconsin Rapids in the 1960s, an important source of economical used parts for repairing cars and trucks of the era. But they were more than that to some of us “car guys.”

They were a haven of interesting vehicles in various states of wreck-age and disassembly, owned and offered by some unique individuals. The cars provided us young’ns an unlimited supply of inexpensive parts to keep our old clunkers running, and the owners provided an unlimited supply of advice and entertainment. I frequented several yards that were operating in the area in the ’60s, and these are my recollections.

Mandry’s

Stan Mandry [1910-92] operated a junk yard on Highway 54 East, just over the viaduct from Rapids, near the old windmill motel. Stan was a nice guy who put up with us kids and our questions, and was generally reasonable on his parts prices. Often he would let us go out in the yard to find the part we needed without a chaperone. When I wrecked my ’57 Ford, he towed it to his yard and I bought some of the parts to fix it from him. His daughter, Mary Jane [1945-2007], was my age, but I think she went to Assumption.

Wolcott’s

Morrie Wolcott [1916-2015] owned a yard on 8th Street South. I think he also owned a bank [Community State Bank]. He had a lot of late model cars in his yard, and his prices were about the highest in the area. I didn’t buy much from him because of that, but I did buy some 283 Chevy engine cores (trade-ins) from him. We rebuilt those engines and sold them to racers in the area.

Rapids Auto Wrecking

Don Lewis [part owner 1964] operated Rapids Auto Wrecking during the 60s. It was located on the corner of Griffith and 8th Street South, where Tractor Supply is now. Don was a great guy who was fun to be

1965 City Directory



around. Many of us spent quite a bit of time out there just talking and learning what we could. Don would let us go out and pull our own parts, and was very reasonable on his prices. He and Phyllis went on to own a supper club [Drift Inn, later Royal Hawaiian] out on 54 East. Shirley and I held our wedding reception dinner there on New Years Eve 1966. They had one of the best buffets in the area, regularly serving mini lobster tails among other delicacies. Don and Phyllis were good friends.

Joslin's

Joslin's Auto Wrecking was located on County Z, south of Nekoosa. They used to have a museum out there also. Tom Joslin was the owner and his two sons were taking over during the 60s. When I spent time there, Tom was still rebuilding manual transmissions. He was always willing to share his knowledge and techniques of rebuilding transmissions and living life in general with us, even if we were visiting on an afternoon when we maybe should have been in school. Tom was a great technical resource for transmission and differential questions. They would let us know when they were planning on burning out some cars prior to crushing them so we could take wiring, light bulbs, lenses, etc. out of them before they were burned. I still have some of those light bulbs to this day. They also let us walk the lot ourselves and were very reasonable on prices.

Dahlke's

Jack Dahlke operated a yard on 54 East, [on the north side] a little bit east of County U. Jack had a large lot and would let us walk it to find what we wanted. He was not always the cheapest, but he was somewhat reasonable on prices and he usually had what we needed. And his lot was on the way to Meehan Station, so that was a plus. We often visited Dahlke's on Tuesday afternoon, coincidentally the night of nickel beers at Meehan.

There were other yards that, even though I knew the owner's kids, I didn't frequent as often, as they mostly had older model cars than I did, so I couldn't use their parts. Spaulding's on Lincoln and Pepper, was owned by LHS classmate Fran Spaulding's dad [Ray, Pepper Avenue Garage]. Roeder's on 13th and Apple Streets was owned by Bob Roeder's dad [Palmer Roeder, Rapids Auto Wrecking Co.]. Sparby's was down south towards Adams, and was owned by Mike's dad.

If you remember these places as fondly as I do, you might be a car guy or gal. These people are some of the reasons growing up in Rapids was priceless to me.

South Wood County Historical Corp.
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Artifacts, a local history magazine and newsletter for the South Wood County Historical Corp. welcomes contributions of writings and photographs relevant to the greater Wisconsin Rapids area. For a year's subscription and membership send \$25 to the address above. Contact: Lori Brost, Museum Administrator and assistant editor, 715-423-1580 or lori@swch-museum.com



Billmeyer collection: then-new 1949 Our Lady Queen of Heaven school (St. Mary's)