

Chapter 8: Supporting Businesses

No More Steps

There was a period in the village's background when one had to climb four or five steps in order to enter a retail establishment. That's because the stores, mostly located on Market Street, had a basement for the heating plant and storage purposes.

All that changed in the early 1930s when Reiland's Drug Store built a brick building on ground level. What an improvement!

However, retail merchandising goes back a long time before the 1930s. John Edwards opened the first general store in the late 1840s. Just where the store was located is not revealed, but it most likely was in the vicinity of his lumbering enterprise at the south edge of the village.

A 1849 store ledger of Edwards indicates that prices were quite a bargain compared to today's

standards. But let's not forget that wages were as low as \$20 a month! Here are some of the bargains:

Snuff, 5 cents a box; eggs, 10 cents a dozen; shoes, \$1 a pair; ham, 8 cents a pound; molasses, 50 cents a gallon, and a bottle of sarsaparilla, \$1.

Then, in 1872, when Edwards built a new office building on the site where his statue is located today, he included a general store annex and a post office annex on either side of this office structure. Of course, Edwards was the postmaster for the village.

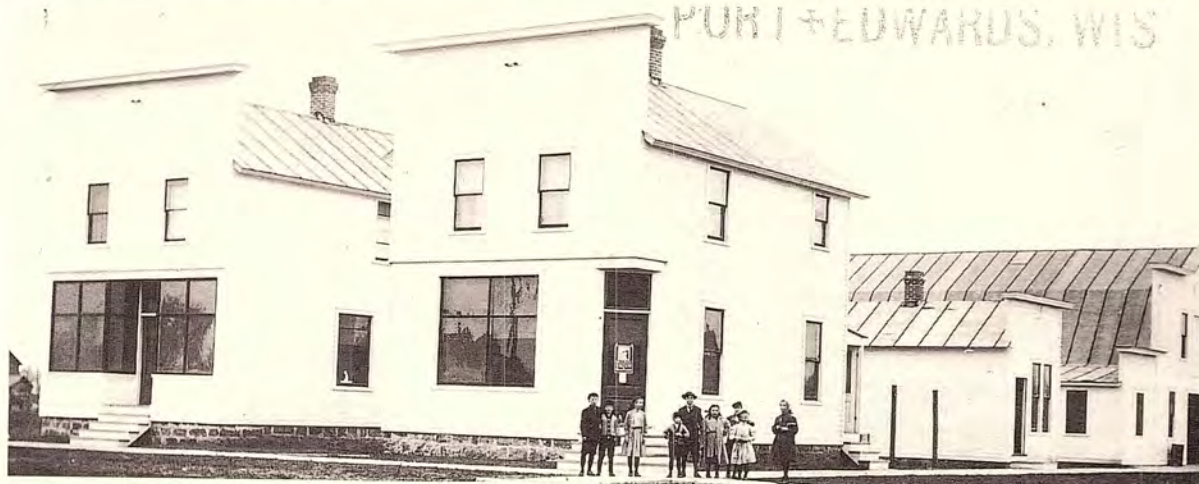
The blacksmith shop became a livery stable, an auto garage, and, finally, an apartment building. The stores would be replaced by units in the new shopping center, which was dedicated in 1949.



Port Edwards drug store on Market Street was later destined to become the village post office until moved to make room for the present bank.



Charles Dixon, in his white apron, and his dog proudly pose outside the new Dixon grocery store. This building was later used as a post office until torn down in 1950.



The White City store, Port barber shop, confectionery and livery stable on Market Street. The store and barber shop were merged, the confectionery was converted into a residence, and the livery stable became a four-apartment housing unit.



Ice cream store located on Market Street about where the Port Edwards Credit Union is today. Selling ice cream, soft drinks and candy was apparently a lucrative business, as Port Edwards had three such businesses.



Ole Boger's ice cream parlor before a pool hall was added to the left side of the building. Located on corner of Second and Market Streets.



A rare old photograph showing the Port Edwards Hotel on the right. The building in the center is the annex, later moved adjacent to the hotel. On the extreme left is John Edwards' sawmill.



Port Edwards Hotel, annex and the White City cafeteria. The cafeteria was originally the mill barracks built during the 1919 strike. It was later converted into the Paper Inn. Photo is reproduced from a cracked glass plate negative.

The shopping center was a vision of John Alexander, who took a devoted interest in the community's beauty and prosperity. After taking a group of local business people to Milwaukee to view a shopping center, they returned to Port Edwards where Alexander announced that Nekoosa Edwards was prepared to make the shopping center a reality.

Prior to the building of the shopping center, shoppers relied on phone-in orders and store delivery. There was no use for shopping carts. Buehler's Store offered four deliveries each day. Gasoline, clothing, feed, and groceries were all available. Practically all purchases were charged to an open account. Settlement was made on the mill's payday when workers cashed their checks at the general store, paid their account, and received a small bag of candy in appreciation.

Over the years, Port Edwards business ventures have included a barber shop, hardware store, three grocery stores that operated simultaneously, two gas stations, a drug store, a doctor's office, two meat markets, an ice delivery service, three confectionery shops, a pool and billiard hall, an insurance agency, a root beer stand, a hotel, a coal dealer, and yes, even a speakeasy during the prohibition years.

Still prospering, as of this writing, are two banking establishments, a gas station/convenience store, an auto repair facility, a beauty shop, a restaurant, a kennel club, and an instrument repair service.

It appears that we have regressed somewhat, but on the positive side, the businesses are all located on the ground floor. There are no longer any steps to climb.



It's meal time in the Port Edwards Hotel as is evidenced by the pre-set tables.



Built by Nekoosa Edwards Paper Company across the street from the administration building, the station was originally operated by "Babe" Millenbah standing in the photo. It is not often that one sees a cut stone masonry gas station.



Port Edwards Shopping Center in 1949. Only three units are still being used for what they were originally planned for. They are the municipal building, the dentist's office and the beauty shop.

Chapter 9: Transportation

A Blot on our History

How did John Edwards and Henry Clinton arrive here in 1840? I wish I knew, but I can speculate. There were no railroads and no roads into the area. A military road had been built in 1833 from Prairie du Chien to Portage, Fond du Lac and Green Bay. Chances are that this thoroughfare, about 60 miles south of Frenchtown, was connected to our settlement via a Native American trail along the east bank of the Wisconsin River. These Native American trails formed a network of well-trampled pathways that were reported as actually being ruts in the path due to their frequent usage. The two- or three-foot-wide trail provided good passage for a pedestrian, a horse and even an ox pulling a small wagon.

And, of course, the river provided an alternate source of travel by canoes for passengers and flat boats for the movement of heavier merchandise. These flat boats were poled up and down the river as far as Pointe Basse, now Nekoosa. Rapids at that location made boat travel impossible from thereon. A steam boat, the "Enterprise," operated for one season, connected the area with the Mississippi River, but it could not cope with these same rapids nor the ever-shifting sandbars of the lower Wisconsin River.

The Native American trails grew wider as traffic increased on them, and soon they were reclassified as roads rather than trails. Now, stage coaches and wagon trains could begin service to the pioneer settlements. The river continued to provide the only means of moving lumber out of this very productive pinery.



John Edwards and L.M. Alexander used this elaborate horse-drawn carriage prior to the time when autos were introduced. The carriage is being preserved by the South Wood County Historical Corporation.

So, how did Edwards, Clinton, Ver Bunker, LaVigne, Carrivou, Brenner, and other settlers arrive here? Well, most certainly by one of the aforementioned means. But sometime in the 1850s, stage coaches began serving the tri-city area. In fact, as early as 1857, three stage lines were competing for business, offering daily service to Portage and New Lisbon, as well as three times a week to Kilbourn (Wisconsin Dells).



A wagon load of merchandise is claimed at the Port Edwards depot, most likely destined for Surprison Brothers' store.

But in 1873, all this would become history. The crude means of moving passengers and freight would be modernized by the building of railroads to the community. Wisconsin Rapids had a rail connection to Green Bay in 1872, and Port Edwards benefited by this convenience a year later, when Wisconsin Valley Railroad arrived from New Lisbon. No longer would passengers have to endure a journey of a whole day over dusty, rough roads to get to a train connection. Finally, lumber could be shipped to market year round rather than just in the spring of the year, when the river flow was at its peak.

During the next 75 years, Port Edwards experienced a growth of rail service reaching its epitome in the middle 1940s. At that time, there were two southbound and two northbound passenger trains each day. One had the choice of traveling on the through sleeping cars to Milwaukee or Chicago, or taking the streamlined Hiawatha day train, which featured a parlor lounge car and full dining service in the diner.



The streamlined afternoon Hiawatha passenger train departing Port Edwards.



Not all trains passed through Port Edwards safely. This freight train had this little disaster just north of the Letendre Avenue crossing.

Three railroads and an electric interurban line served the village. The "Northwestern," the "Soo Line" and the "Milwaukee Road" were the three railroads, and although the "Milwaukee Road" was the primary provider of passenger service, the other two lines did carry a coach on the rear of their freight trains, offering mixed train service. The service was limited to travel between Marshfield and Nekoosa.

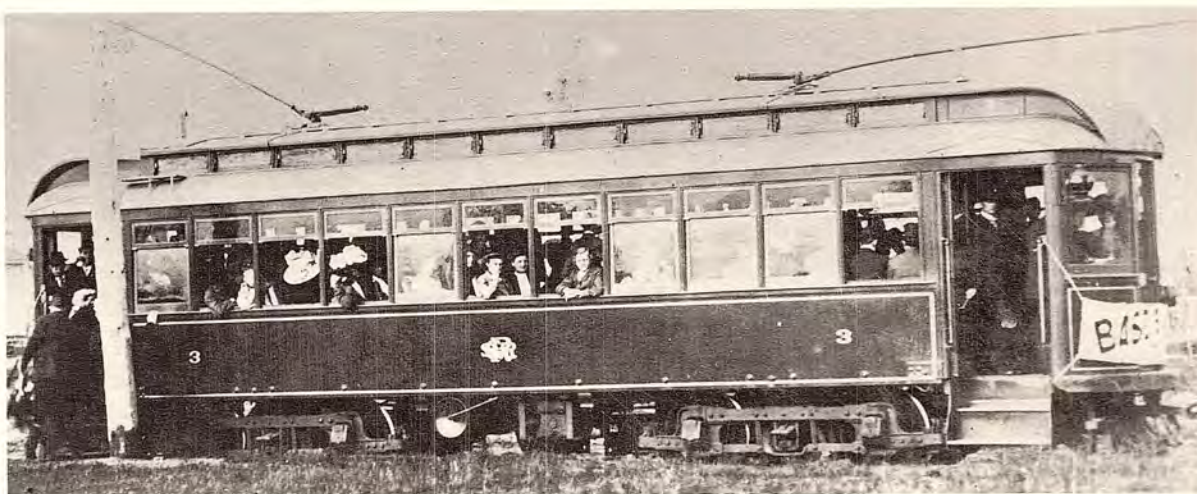
Rail passenger service continued until 1970, when the last passenger train departed from Port Edwards. After that, freight service reigned on these three lines, which were parallel from Nekoosa to Wisconsin Rapids, their tracks being within a few yards of each other. It was only a simple matter of economics that it would be

more profitable to consolidate service onto one track. This has resulted in one very busy line through Port Edwards, now operated by Canadian National Railroad, successor to the aforementioned three lines.

Incidentally, one of the original lines built through Port Edwards was named the Port Edwards Centralia and Northern Railroad; nicknamed the PECAN line.

INTERURBAN LINE

Shortly after the turn of the century in the early 1900s, electric interurban, short line railroads became a popular venture. Port Edwards was no exception. In 1909, the Grand Rapids Street



The interurban street car stops for passengers opposite the Port Edwards school.

Railway built a line from Wisconsin Rapids to Port Edwards, and on to Nekoosa. Hourly service was provided. One could board the cars, which ran down along the west side of Third Street, at the school, at Market Street, and at the south edge of the village at Edwards Avenue. Although there was a windbreak type shelter at Edwards Avenue, it was more desirable to catch the cars at Market Street as one had the opportunity to wait in Ole Boger's confectionery store, enjoying a few pieces of his penny candy.

To generate traffic, the interurban line built a baseball diamond at the north limits of Port Edwards, at a place known as Kipp's Hill near Seneca Road. By sponsoring ball games, additional revenue was generated by transporting passengers to the games. Likewise, a pavilion was built at Moccasin Creek at the south village limit, providing additional income. Incidentally, this some-

what famous local site of entertainment was built on piers out into the river, while the floor was mounted on railroad car springs. Thus, a lively polka dance would cause the floor to undulate, lending an added sensation to the dancer's delight.

The Grand Rapids Street Railway, later named Wisconsin Rapids Street Railway, eventually came under the control of Nekoosa Edwards Paper Company. Although the line carried nearly 600,000 passengers during the peak year of 1929, riders began to dwindle thereafter and, in 1930, the line was operating in the red. Accordingly, the directors, in 1931, petitioned the Wisconsin Public Service Commission for authority to discontinue service.

The state said yes, provided that a bus service would be started to replace the service offered by the line.

Two of the cars were sent to Wausau, where they operated for several additional years; one became a storage shed at a local auto garage, and one went to Cottonwood, where it became a summer cottage.

TRI-CITY BUS LINE

John Schenk purchased a bus from Nekoosa Edwards Paper Company in 1931 and started the Tri-City Bus Line. The bus had been used by



Street car ticket for trip from Port Edwards to Nekoosa. Cost was 5 cents.



This bus was used for tri-city passenger service after the street car line was abandoned. It is shown here in a scene at Alexander Field where it met the Nepco plane.

NEPCO to connect with their Ford Tri-motor airplane at the local airport. The bus had become a surplus item when NEPCO sold the plane during the depression years of the early 1930s. The bus line, like its predecessor, the street car line, provided hourly service to Nekoosa and Wisconsin Rapids.

Schenk transferred ownership to a successor, and the service continued until just after World War II. With gasoline being no longer rationed, the private automobile became a threat to the bus line and, accordingly, service was discontinued in the late 1940s.

Cardinal Bus Lines provided daily bus service to Milwaukee for a few years in the 1950s, but this

venture only survived a few years before being taken over by Greyhound Bus Lines, who featured Stevens Point as their closest stop to Port Edwards.

AIR SERVICE

Local village residents had the opportunity of traveling to and from Chicago and Milwaukee, as well as to Minneapolis for a few years. In the late 1960s, one had the choice of four flights each day to and from Chicago, offered from Alexander Field via Mid State Airline. Later, American Central and finally, Lakeland Airline, would take over the convenient service. However, the last air



The demise of the Ford airplane came during a tornado in Iowa when the plane was picked up by the wind and dropped, resulting in this sad mess.



To promote the sale of their paper, Nekoosa Edwards purchased this Ford Tri-motor airplane. It brought customers to the mill for a first-hand view of papermaking.

Chapter 10: Utilities

Making Village Life More Comfortable

There are hundreds of communities around the country that do not enjoy the conveniences of full-service utilities. In most cases, Port Edwards had the advantage of these services long before many other cities of our size had them.

ELECTRICITY

The story of the electric light in this area dates back to 1896, when John Edwards Manufacturing company built their paper mill. One of the river flumes which contained the water turbines for powering the mill equipment was also equipped with a small water turbine for driving a direct-current generator. The power generated was used for lighting purposes only in and about the mill, including the hotel and the main office of the company.

A very short time later, company president and general manager, L.M. Alexander, had a line installed to his home from the mill. This line, about a block long, was the beginning of a public utility venture on the part of the paper company.

As additional homes were connected to the lines, NEPCO thought seriously of forming a public electric utility. Incorporated in 1913, Nekoosa Edwards Light and Power Company received a franchise from the village of Port Edwards to service the village and surrounding area.

From that date on, the lines of N.E.L.&P. Co. were pushed outward. Port Edwards, Nekoosa, Cranmoor and the towns of Grand Rapids and Seneca all benefited by the company's service. The utility company owned no electric generat-

ing equipment, but rather purchased its needs from the parent company, Nekoosa Edwards Paper Co.

At first, the company was going to string their distribution wires on the existing telephone poles, but the local telephone company, after thinking it over, decided that electric lines and telephone lines were not compatible on the same post, and that the electric lines would interfere with good telephone service.

To supply the electric needs of the mills and the village, as well as the street car line, the paper mill operated water powered generators and steam turbine generators. The electricity supplied to the utility and passed on to the consumer was 220 volt direct current. However, this was changed after just one year to the standard 110 volt alternating current. The reason for the change was twofold. First of all, as lines were extended further from the mill, the direct current had a tendency to drop in voltage. The further one was from the source, the lower was their voltage. Secondly, it was just not compatible with other electric systems. An inconvenience was put on patrons who moved into or out of the area since their appliances, lamps, etc., required conversion from one voltage to another.

The 1914 annual report of the utility stated that they were servicing nine customers who were not being metered! However, they promised to correct this by connecting six of them, leaving only three "charity" cases; the Community church, the village band stand, and the street car waiting station.

An interesting side note is the fact that electric street lights in the village were turned off at midnight. In winter months, they were turned back on at 6 a.m.

With ever-increasing demands placed on it by the utility and mill expansion, NEPCO found that even with the addition of a new hydro-electric facility in Port Edwards, the building of the Centralia hydro plant, and the Nepco Lake unit, there just was not enough electricity to meet all these demands. Accordingly, in 1952, NEPCO sold its utility franchise, all transmission lines, a few pieces of office equipment and seven motor



A Nekoosa Edwards Light and Power utility truck, their only vehicle, circa 1920s.

vehicles to Wisconsin Power and Light company, now Alliant Energy Co. On January 2, 1953, the 39-year history of the utility came to an end when they filed articles of dissolution with the state.

WATER UTILITY

The days of the kitchen sink pump began their demise in 1922 when the paper mill installed a water collection system and began the distribution of water to the village residents. Although some of those original lines are still in use today, they have been deeded to the village.

Actually, an earlier system was installed in 1909. At that time, water was taken directly from the river and was used for fire protection only.

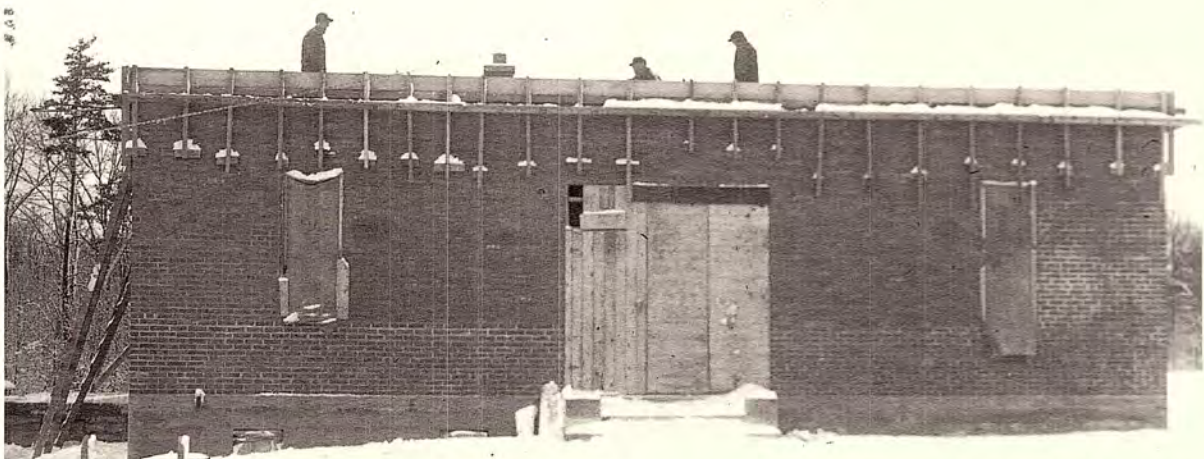


The original supply of potable water for the village came from this spring and well house located at the southern edge of the village. Two lateral, perforated pipes extended from the round building, collecting water and draining it into a cistern in the building.



What appears as a rocket poised for take off is really a new water standpipe under construction in Ripple Creek Park. Karberg's old dairy barn is at the right of the tower.

In 1922, a circular spring house was built at the site now occupied by the new wood chip plant just west of the mill. Two perforated pipes extended out from the spring house, a distance of several hundred feet. Collected water was drained into a cistern inside the building from where it was pumped through the distribution lines. There was no standpipe, but the reliable, constantly running pumps maintained a pressure for the system to function.



Treatment plant for the treatment of village water is shown under construction. The facility was abandoned before it was even paid for! The spring and Nepco Lake water was no longer being used, and the new source did not require the extensive treatment provided by this plant.

In 1945, a stand pipe tank was erected at the football field, and in 1969, a second such elevated tank was built at Ripple Creek Park.

In 1949, due to increased demand and the abandonment of one collector pipe due to high iron content of the water, Nepco Lake water was pumped into the system via a connection to the filter plant at the Port Edwards mill. This increased use of surface water dictated that the village look at more comprehensive treatment. In 1964, a complete treatment plant was built near the original spring house.

In 1982, the village conducted a search for water and found it west of the village where five wells have been bored. As of 2002, three of these wells operate daily, while the fourth one is on standby for emergencies and summer use when demand warrants. The water from these wells is of a quality that it needs minimal treatment and, accordingly, the pump house and treatment plant have been demolished. The treatment plant was de-commissioned and taken out of use even before the loan taken out to build the plant was paid off. The water pumping, treatment and distribution systems have been operated as a public-owned utility since January 1948, when the village made it a village-owned utility.

WASTE TREATMENT

Prior to 1940, there was a waste collecting system in the village, but the sanitary sewage and street runoff water all traveled by a common pipeline to the river. In 1938, the village took steps to treat the waste before discharging it to the river. With \$15,545 from the Federal Public Works Administration (PWA), along with a bond issue of \$15,000 on the part of the village, a new sewage treatment plant was built just west of the Port Edwards paper mill.

The plant was not designed to treat the volume of street runoff that was being collected by the common collection system and, in 1940, again with a PWA grant of \$36,000, a separation of the sanitary sewage and street runoff water was made. New lines were laid about the village, and the old system was converted entirely to a "storm" sewer system, discharging to the river, while the new sanitary system funneled its contents to the new

treatment plant. A new, enlarged treatment plant was built in 1970.

Garbage collection has been a village perk for the entire life of the village. The first service was provided by John Gavre and Tony Newman Sr., and John's two horses, Maude and Claude. In the summer months, they used a horse-drawn wagon, but switched to a sled in winter. The same two men and team of horses were responsible for grading the dirt streets of the village during summer months.

Deposition of the collected trash, garbage and ashes was in a village dump located where the school football field is located today. What treasures came from this dump. As a boy, I made periodic trips to the dump to look for old buggy wheels, glass jugs to shoot at with a BB gun, and boards to build a clubhouse.

A dump truck and relocation of the dump to the island replaced the "residential" dump. In subsequent years, the collection and disposal, including a very successful recycling program, was contracted with a commercial landfill service.



Port Edwards believed in recycling of waste materials long before other communities. The first effort consisted of placing color-coded drums behind the municipal building. Village residents brought their recyclables to the containers. Often their enthusiasm caused an overflowing of the drums.

TELEPHONE SERVICE

Our first lines of communication with the outside world came in 1873 when Western Union telegraph lines were erected along the tracks of the new railroad. The dots and dashes brought us world news and provided a means of sending personal messages when the added advantage of speed was needed.

The Nekoosa Paper Company built their own telephone line to Grand Rapids in 1893. This private line most likely passed through Port Edwards, making service available to the John Edwards Manufacturing Company office. At Grand Rapids, the line connected with the Bell System.

In 1895, to the annoyance of the Bell company, Wood County Telephone Company was incorporated, and their lines were already serving village homes and businesses when the village was incorporated 100 years ago.

Telephone connecting service was made by a "central operator" who connected your line to the line of the phone being called. For several years, the central office was located in a private home, the family members taking turns in making the connections. This necessitated one member of the family sleeping adjacent to the switchboard. Although telephone numbers were simple, often being one single digit, people did not have to know a phone number. All that was necessary was to tell the operator that you wanted to talk to Mary Smith, and the operator knew the number and made the connection.

In the late 1940s, the telephone company moved a small, garage-sized building into the village, which would serve as their central exchange office, as well as provide a small storage room. Fires were reported to the operator who, in turn, notified the mill to blow the mill fire whistle. Another service provided by the operator was the task of calling all subscribers in the spring of the year and advising them to boil their drinking water as the flood waters from the river had invaded the pump house!

With the advent of a dial system about 1950, the need for the friendly voice of the central operator was no longer needed. Today, the exchange switching gear is located in a unit of the shopping center.

GAS AND CABLE TV

These two services operate under franchises granted by the village. Gas, primarily for heating, was installed as early as 1934 when the Wisconsin Rapids Gas Co. started tank service in the village. In later years, the business was sold to the Wisconsin Gas Company, which installed a pipeline distribution system.

Cable television came to Port Edwards in 1973 and, at that time, the telephone company deemed it practical for the TV lines to be installed on their posts. Today, service is rendered by Charter Communications and Wood County Telephone Company.

STEAM

A unique service in our village was the providing of steam from the mill to several businesses, churches, the school and residences. When the high school was built in 1932, a line was buried along Second Street from the mill boilers to the new school, where it was used for heating and hot water. Another line ran along Wisconsin River Drive, serving several residences there.

If you were fortunate enough to live along one of these lines, it was a convenient means of heating a home and providing hot water year round without building a fire in a laundry stove during the summer months. Many secondary lines branched off the main Second Street line.

In 1956, deterioration of the pipelines, resulting in a loss of steam, compelled NEPCO to look at the merit of continuing the operation. The mill felt that repairs to the lines were not its obligation, and the school felt that they could install their own heating plant at a lower cost. Accordingly, the service was abandoned. The pipes are still buried where they were originally installed.



Treasury Department

Third Auditor's Office.

John Nelson

Auditor.

Mr. Edwards Jr. Esq.

Frenchtown *Ground Papers*

Mud Co

Wisconsin

A post office can be considered a utility of a sort, and these two envelopes show a sharp contrast in the development of postal service in the village. One from 1860 was rerouted to John Edwards at Frenchtown. The other is from 1938 and promoted airmail service from Port Edwards.



DAY AND NIGHT
The Mail Is In Flight From
PORT EDWARDS, WIS.



Chapter 11: Police and Fire

Protecting Life and Property

With the formal organization of the village, there came the enactment of laws and ordinances. To enforce these municipal ordinances, as well as state and federal laws, a police department was needed.

Although the appointment of a constable can hardly be called a police department, the village fathers, in 1902, did establish the position of village constable. E. Burrows was appointed the village constable, sometimes referred to as village marshal. For some unknown reason (could it be due to an outburst of crime in River City?), retail merchant, W. A. Brazeau, was appointed as deputy constable. In 1908, George Scott was appointed to the position of constable, and he held the position for over 20 years at a starting salary of \$50 a year.

In 1907, the village authorized the purchase of a gun for his use. However, it is doubtful that he ever used it other than doing away with stray dogs.

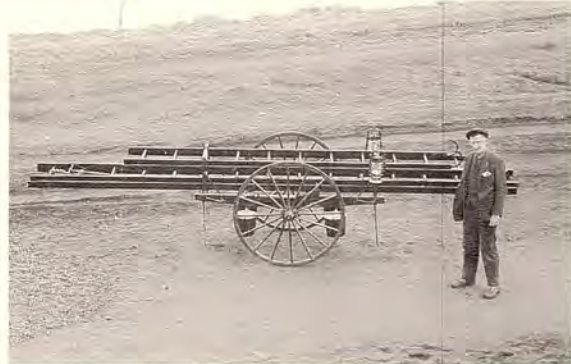
A jail facility was made available to the constables for the benefit of their "criminals." Yes, Port Edwards did have a jail. A room in the basement of the town hall was outfitted with bars on the windows and a secure, locked door. Other than being used for rare overnight shelter for vagrants and sobering up the village drunks, the facility was seldom used. Nevertheless, it lent an air of mystique and speculation to the youth of the village as they cautiously looked through the bars of the window.

The village constable arrangement served the village satisfactorily until 1961, when it was determined that a full-time officer was warranted. Ted Stewart, who was a constable at the time, accepted the position of police officer. Using their personal cars, Stewart and some part-time deputies maintained law and order in the community.

But as the village expanded in population and area, the police department expanded likewise. A car was purchased to be used exclusively as a patrol car. Two additional officers have since been hired so that round-the-clock and weekend coverage can be provided. With more than one officer, it was only logical that one person be in command and accordingly, Stewart was named as the first Chief of Police in Port. He was followed

by Dave Bubolz and Joe Zurfluh. Additional help is provided by part-time auxiliary officers.

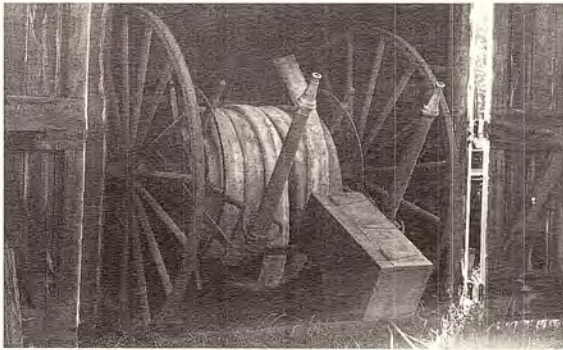
When the medical arts building in the shopping center lost its doctor, part of the quarters was converted into a police office.



Two pails, two lanterns and two ladders are the standard equipment for Port Edwards' first ladder apparatus.

Bucket brigades and barrels of water placed on roofs of the Edwards sawmill were the first means of fire protection in the village. However, by 1880, the Edwards enterprise had a steam-operated pump that could pump water from the river, thereby protecting the wooden structure housing the sawmill and the lumber piles. Evidently, a few hydrants or outlets were installed at the south end of the village, thereby protecting Edwards' home, office and the Port Edwards Hotel. Village records indicate that a hose cart was acquired in 1900 and, two years later, it was placed under jurisdiction of the village Marshall. There was no organized fire brigade as yet. Several of these hose carts were acquired over the next few years and were placed around the village at strategic locations. There was one in the log yard, one at the town hall where there also was a ladder cart, and one at the school house at the north end of the village. Some of the hose carts ended up as playground equipment or in less glorious service as sewer flushing equipment. One is preserved at The Alexander House.

It has been noted earlier in this book that a water distribution system had been installed in some parts of the village in 1909 when a pressurized supply of river water was supplied via NEPCO's new elevated stand tank.



One of several hose carts that were strategically placed around the mill and in the village.

Following the disastrous log yard fire in 1922, L.M. Alexander appeared before the village board and outlined a proposal for the organization of a badly needed volunteer fire department. The group would be jointly sponsored by NEPCO and the village. In 1923, NEPCO donated a 1916 Rio "Speed Wagon" truck, as well as a garage to house it in. Outfitting it to fire truck status was done by the mill and fire department personnel. The new department was named the Nepco Port Edwards Volunteer Fire Department. Alexander suggested the use of the mill whistle as a fire alarm to summon firefighters in time of need.

In 1924, a new truck chassis was purchased. The Dodge vehicle was again rigged as a fire truck by the mill maintenance department. It replaced the original Rio Truck, which was given to the

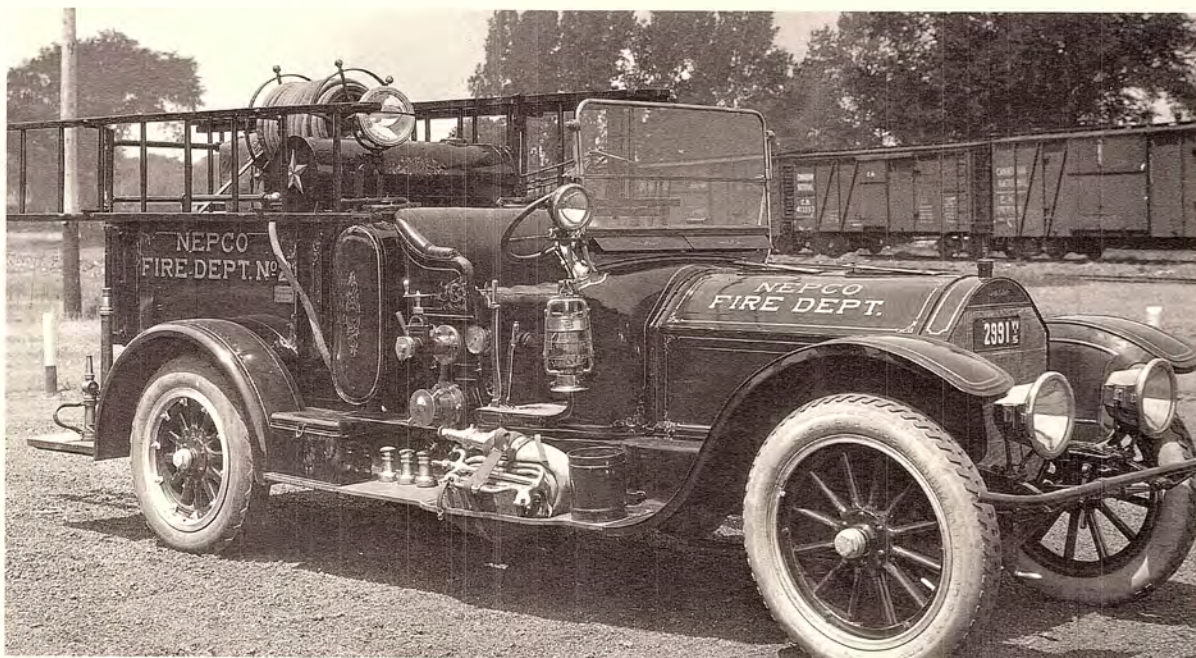
Nekoosa Edwards Light and Power Company. It served out its last days as a utility truck to be used for the village's mosquito abatement program.

Supplementing the original Rio truck was the famous and somewhat notorious 1912 Model 66 Pierce Arrow truck. Famous because it had a reputation of not starting in time of need. But once started, its pump and engine would not take a back seat to any other equipment in the tri-city area.

It was notorious and famous in other respects. Originally purchased as a touring car for the L.M. Alexander family, it carried its owners to many a vacation around the Midwest and even as far as Yellowstone Park. Local Boy Scouts, school groups, and other civic organizations were provided transportation by Alexander's generous loan of the car. Then in 1919, during the bitter strike at NEPCO, it was used as a carrier for transporting non-striking workers to and from the mill. It was nicknamed the "Green Scab Wagon" and incurred many a flat tire during its infamous role during the strike. Sold to an auto dealer in 1922, it was purchased for the fire department to be converted into a fire truck. The village's share of the expense was \$750, and that amount was used primarily for outfitting the vehicle with proper equipment. Two soda/acid foam fire extinguishers were rented from Wisconsin Rapids at an expense of \$25 annually. The truck was retired in 1947 and sold to an antique auto collector.



Village residents could sleep soundly at night knowing they were being protected from fire by the Reo Speed Wagon.



The famous Pierce Arrow poses for a formal portrait.



The Diamond T's stream of water could easily reach the top of a house in Port Edwards, provided the young boy was there to help handle the hose.

In 1937, a new Diamond T pumper with a 200 gallon tank on it was purchased. This unit was sold to the Port Edwards Lions Club, who repainted it from fire engine red to passion purple.

Other trucks that have been used or are still in use are as follows:

1948 Mack Waterous 500-gallon-per-minute pumper. Cost \$10,148 shared by NEPCO and village.

1961 Ford brush truck. 200-gallon tank. Outfitted by department workers.

1963 International American 1,000-gallon tank. Purchased from the Town of Port Edwards.

1971* Ford Welch 1,000 gallon-per-minute pumper.

1987* Chevrolet personnel carrier donated by Wisconsin Power and Light Company.

1989* Ford Darley 1,000-gallon-per-minute pumper. 1,000-gallon on-board storage tank.

1996* Spartan Darley 1,250-gallon-per-minute pumper. 1,000-gallon storage capacity.

2001* Dodge brush truck. 360-gallon-per-minute pump. 300-gallon storage tank.

(*) Denotes equipment in use in 2002

And in case you are interested in donating a new truck to the village, the cost of the 1996 Spartan Darley truck was nearly \$200,000!

In 1955, the fire department was severed from its ties with NEPCO and became the Port Edwards Volunteer Fire Department. The department's trucks, which had been housed in a garage addition on the rear of the mill office building, found a new home in the form of a garage on Wisconsin River Drive. The garage was partially funded by NEPCO. Then in 1987, a more spacious garage was built in conjunction with a city garage on Letendre Avenue.

Port Edwards has contracts to serve portions of the townships of Port Edwards, Cranmoor and Seneca, since those townships have no fire department of their own.

The first fire chief in the village was E.P. Gleason, followed by R. Grode, R. Foth, and presently Jim Anderson.



For years, the fire station was quartered in the mill office building. Here, the garages are being converted into a new NEPCO laboratory. A new fire station was built about 200 yards west of this.

Chapter 12: Health and Welfare

Caring for the Babies, Seniors and Those In Between

A viable community has to be a healthy community. The pioneers of our village relied on the doctors of Wisconsin Rapids and Nekoosa to make the horse and buggy trip to Port Edwards to tend to a patient in need, but we did have the benefit of house calls.

The village enjoyed the security of a resident practicing physician for a few years; the service being provided first by Doctor Bigford, to be followed by Doctors Backus and Glenn. What served as their village "clinic" is now the Port Edwards police department office.

The incorporating fathers of the community, as one of their first orders of business, appointed a health officer. The honor was bestowed on Doctor R.C. Aylward of Wisconsin Rapids. For several years thereafter, the position was filled by a doctor until the departure of Doctor Glenn, after which it became a function of the Village Board's Health Committee. One of the duties of a city health officer is to inspect taverns for proper washing of their beverage glasses. Port Edwards not having a tavern is probably the reason why there is no health officer currently appointed by the village president.

The paper mill had a nurse on their staff, and her jurisdiction often extended beyond the confines of the mill fence. She was often consulted by mill workers for diagnosis and remedies for minor afflictions. Even members of families sometimes made a trip to visit the mill nurse. Perhaps that's the reasoning behind the decision that the school and the village made when they hired a village-

school nurse. Her office was in the school building, and she was only a part-time employee, but she made house calls!

New first-time mothers, students with sore throats, and old-age problems for the seniors were some of the cases she dealt with.

After several years of this convenient, dual arrangement, the position was taken over by the school, and the title is now referred to as the school nurse.

In perusing the minutes of the village board, it is interesting to note that in 1914, the village authorized money for the purchase of a supply of "antitoxin." Just what it was for is not stated, but could have been for tetanus, flu, or scarlet fever; all three being prevalent at the time. Many of our early serums were developed in horses and, accordingly, were sometimes called horse serum.

In the field of dentistry, the village blacksmith was reputed to be the tooth extractor. Whether this is fact or fiction is questionable, but Port Edwards had its first resident dentist in 1934 when Dr. Oliver Koonz hung out a shingle on the front of the drug store. His practice was confined to a small room in the back of the drug store. From there, the practice moved into the new shopping center in 1949. For a short time, the village enjoyed the service of two resident dentists, Dr. Killoren and Dr. John Cronkrite, who is still practicing in a newly refurbished office.

Although John Alexander was interested in estab-



Wood County's "poor farm" was located in the village of Port Edwards. The facility was replaced by the more modern accommodation and the name changed to Home For The Aged.





Dr. O.A. Backus attends to a patient in the mill first aid room. The attending nurse often weighed babies and handed out medications for sore throats.

lishing a hospital in Port Edwards after World War II, his dreams shifted to endowing Riverview Hospital instead. However, Edgewater Haven Nursing Home has been a village reality since 1885.

Originally built on Seneca Road, the large white house, plus several adjacent farm buildings, was called the "poor farm" for a number of years. And a farm it was, for they raised their own crops and dairy products, selling what they could not use internally to support the home.

The poor farm built a new building in 1928, and the name was changed to the "poor house." However, in subsequent years, the name was changed to Edgewater Haven Nursing Home. Two major additions have been made to the original building, and the facility provides residential living for elderly, as well as rehabilitation services.

It is interesting to note that back in the 1920s and 1930s, the home maintained a zoo for the entertainment of the residents, as well as village residents. Among the animals on display were a couple bear, deer, monkeys, pheasants, wolves and squirrels. With a little persuasion, Edgewater's custodian, Jim Case, would enter the bear cage and wrestle the bear. It was a popular pastime for village residents to take a picnic lunch to Edgewater and enjoy the antics of the bear and monkey.

The economic welfare of village residents seemed to be a bigger concern for our village fathers during two periods in our background when there was a surge of village welfare cases. One was during World War II and the other was during the Great Depression of the early 1930s. Accordingly, the village president appointed a "poor committee" in 1912. One of the first cases involved a family. The mother and her children were given a dollar a day for food and clothing, plus their rent and heating fuel was paid for. The father was away at the war front or may have been a victim of the war.

Here are some other examples of what the village did for those less fortunate citizens. Remember that amounts reflect the monetary values of the period.

1915: Village payment of grocery store bill for the (blank) family in the amount of \$29.13. Money to be taken from Pauper Fund.

1915: Request from a widow for money to move to Cornell, Wis. Village president authorized to make decision.

1916: A request by a woman of village for child support was denied until the poor committee could investigate the case.

1917: Village will rent a house for family but will compel the older children to help support the family.

1918: Village agrees to pay father's hotel bill while his family is quarantined due to scarlet fever.

And finally, the case of where the village president and the poor committee took it upon themselves to find a sanitarium for a father, a home for the mother, and an orphanage for two children. Let us reflect upon our blessings!

Here are a couple entries from the depression years:

1932: An interest-free loan is made to a family for their needs. The family is allowed to work off the payments by doing school or village labor.



NEPCO Court Apartments are under construction as shown here. The building is being erected on the former site of the village band stand, Randrup's root beer stand, and the village hall.

1931: A village "milk fund" was set up with Karberg Dairy to supply free milk for children of needy families of the village.

Most of these responsibilities have been taken over by the county through their social service programs. But let us never forget that there are less fortunate people than ourselves who need our help.



One might question the health and welfare of mill conditions as portrayed by these pictures. Drinking water was dispensed from a barrel and served to mill workers from a common cup. And certainly a barefoot mill employee doesn't speak highly of a "healthy," safe working condition.

Chapter 13: Government

Bringing It All Together

Port Edwards was 62 years of age before it was decided that it had been a part of Centralia and, later, the Town of Port Edwards long enough. So, in May 1902, W.A. Brazeau, Ernest Eichstead, E.B. Garrison, George Brazeau, and A.E. Gurdy signed a petition that was sent to the Wood County board indicating a desire to incorporate as a village. With a population of 404 people, which included 19 residents of the "poor farm," the area to be included in the village limits was 1,874-1/2 acres. This area would be increased in later years when the property surrounding Nepco Lake was annexed to the village. It is interesting to note that 415 people were included in the original census in June 1902. It appears that 11 additional people were enrolled between the May census and the June 9 roll.

The county appointed H. Miscoil as a clerk and charged him with conducting a village referendum vote on the matter of incorporation. Accordingly, on June 1, 1902, said vote was held. The notice of voting was posted in the office of the John Edwards Manufacturing Company, the corner of the boarding house, on the side of the Brazeau store, and on the telephone post outside the Jarvis house. Only 64 votes were cast, and the results showed 57 people in favor of the proposal and 7 against incorporation.

A charter was granted by the state, and the village of Port Edwards was born. The next thing was to elect officers and a board to administer the village's affairs. The following were elected and without opposition:

President	O.W. Dodge
Treasurer	E.B. Garrison
Clerk	H. Miscoil
Trustees	Mundinger, Bradner, Brennen, Boyle, Shellhammer, Noel

For many years thereafter, the village president would be a "mill man" and was unofficially chosen from mill management. Village presidents that have served their community throughout its existence include the following. How many do you recall?

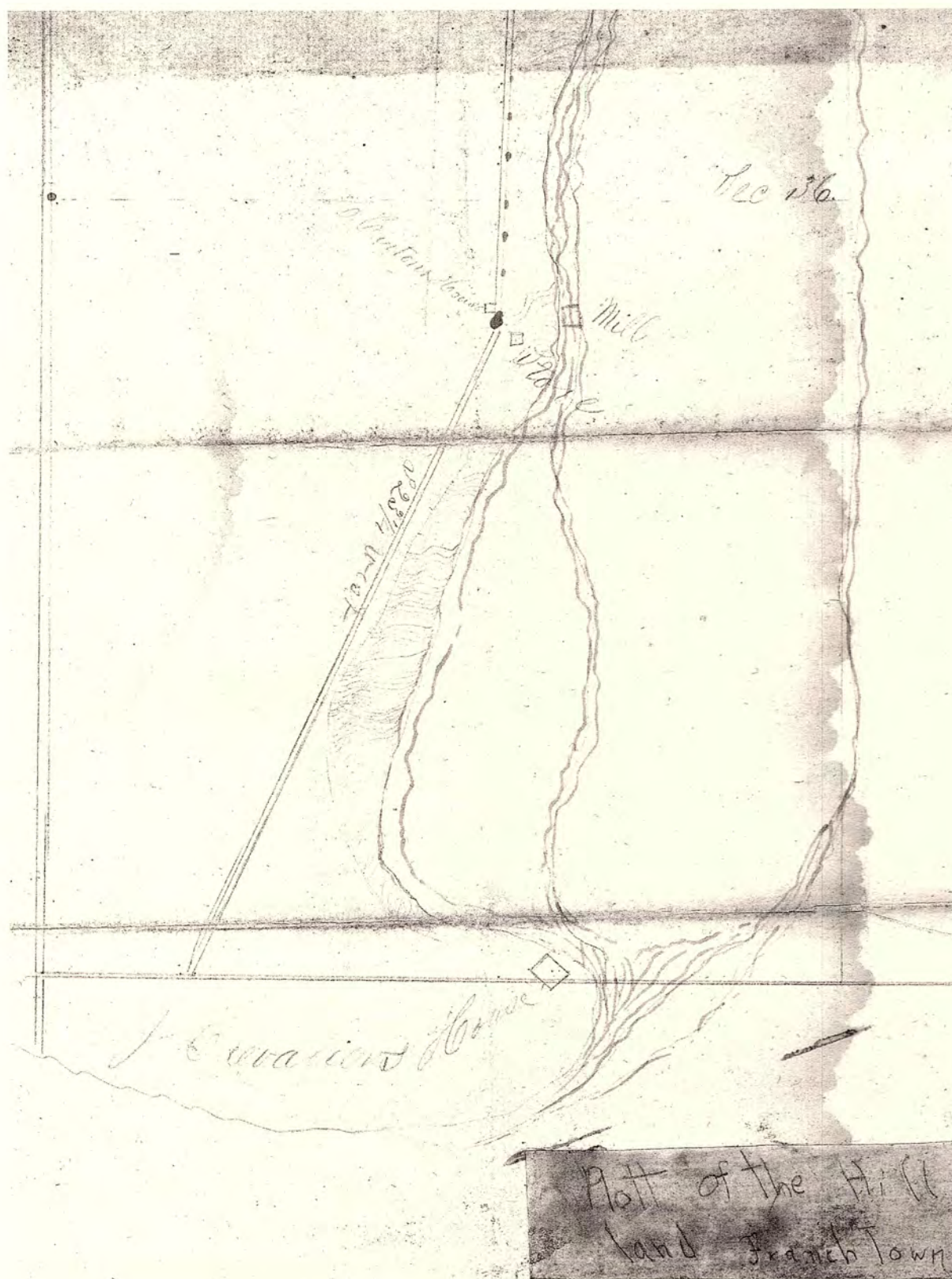
O.W. Dodge; W.G. McNaughton; C.A. Jasperson; N. Nash; L. Sigler; W. Laidig; C. Guelcher; R. Aubey; M. Buehler; M. Clement; W. Karberg; G. Allworden.

Of these, Jasperson served the longest, while Buehler served only three months to fill a vacancy upon the death of R. Aubey.

A town hall was built facing the river on Wisconsin River Drive, on property owned by L.M. Alexander. In 1907, the building was moved to First Street, near Market Avenue. In 1940, it was sold for \$110 and moved once again to Eighth Street in Wisconsin Rapids, where it became Johnny's Rapids Inn. With the loss of their council chambers, the board met in the school Community Room or in the office of NEPCO. Efforts to build a new community hall were brought forward in 1918, but war conditions made it inadvisable to undertake the project at that time. A municipal office would become a reality in 1949 when the shopping center was built.



Wisconsin River Drive. The building on the left is the village hall. After two relocations, it now serves as a pub.



A very early map of Frenchtown. The first sawmill is at the end of Market Street.

BARBECUE TO BE HELD PORT EDWARDS TONIGHT

ONE HUNDRED PORT EDWARDS CITIZENS TO PARTAKE OF ROAST PIG AT BIG PICNIC

About one hundred Port Edwards people are expected to attend a roast pig barbecue, which is to be held on the island near Port Edwards Wednesday evening. Unique invitations, made of birch bark and carved to resemble the animal which is to be sacrificed in the interests of good-fellowship tonight, have been issued to the Port Edwards invitees.

The Port Edwards band will be on hand to furnish music on this occasion, and a supper to consist of roast pig, roast spuds, roast corn, and the rest of the roasts is to be served.

Everyone had a good time except the pig. (1922)

With good government comes taxes. The new village board levied a tax rate to raise \$900 for the year 1904. That's all it cost to run the village that year. But one year later in 1905, the village budget went up an unheard 11.1 percent as the village decided that \$1,000 was needed to operate efficiently. It would be nice to have that village budget today! But then, all things are relevant.

Nothing has been said about streets, an important subject in any municipal government. Port Edwards had streets surfaced with dirt and dust until the late 1930s when a blacktopping program was undertaken. Up until then, the only hard surface streets were Market, Edwards Avenue, Third Street, Letendre, and a few blocks on the extreme south end of Wisconsin River Drive.

Third Street and Edwards Avenue were paved with concrete since they carried traffic for State Highway 13. Washington Street and Wisconsin River Drive were the first streets to receive attention in the blacktopping program. Wisconsin River Drive because it would become the new Highway 73 through the village. Hence, state



The election board poses outside the town hall in Port Edwards. Left to right: Carlson, Hinkley, Ross, Boland, Madden, Deyo and Brazeau. (1925)

funds were made available to assist with the financial burden of the project. Washington Street was the village's boulevard that ran up to the front door of the new school building.

Each summer, a carload of flake calcium chloride was purchased by the village and made available to the property owners, without cost, so that they might sprinkle it on the dusty roads in front of their homes. The chemical absorbs water from the humidity in the air, thereby keeping the sand and dust moist and preventing it from blowing around.

John Edwards Manufacturing Company's teams pulled the grader/snow plow that maintained the streets. Even after the retirement of teams and the debut of trucks, NEPCO still took care of the vil-



The NEPCO "cat" was used to plow village streets when horses and a grader could not cope with the drifts.



Mosquitoes beware! The fogger and its crew are out to get you.

lage streets up to 1940. A company Caterpillar tractor did the snowplowing when snow became too much for the trucks to handle.

Mosquito control was a village project that was unique to Port Edwards. The controversial program was begun in 1946 and was jointly financed by NEPCO and the village. The program had its supporters, such as those who considered it a big relief from the pesty insect. "Be sure to slow down when you drive the fogger past my house." But there were also the opponents who claimed it was a detriment to birds and fish. "You are killing all the insects and, as a result, the birds are leaving town due to lack of food."

The program started out by inheriting the old Dodge fire truck. Each morning, with its crew and its load of oil and insecticide, the men would

spray the exposed water in swamps, marshes and catch basins. The first attack was to drain wetlands, of which there were several acres right in the residential portion of the village. Then what could not be drained by ditching was sprayed with the oil and insecticide mixture. In 1952, a fog applicator was purchased and every other week, and sometimes every week if conditions warranted, the fog "crept like little cat feet," (Frost - The Fog) over the village.

Eventually the swamps were dried up, the marshes were filled in for homebuilding lots, and a ban on the use of DDT insecticide brought an end to the program. Yes, this was all done under the watchful eye of the State Board of Health, the forerunner of the DNR.

In 1946, the village engineering and administrative workload became more than the mill cared to handle and, accordingly, a village engineer was engaged. Harry Sands was hired, and he was followed by Don Krasny and now, Joe Terry. Gradually the supportive work that had been performed for many years by NEPCO started to diminish. The mill whistle was silenced except for fire calls, and, eventually that would be replaced by sirens. Port Edwards was coming of age. No longer did all of the mill workers live in the village, and likewise, no longer was the mill being operated by all Port Edwards residents.

To condense six volumes of village board minutes into a single chapter does not do justice to the works and activities of the village boards. But those minutes are available in the municipal office. They are public information, and the village staff in the village office will retrieve them from the vault.

Chapter 14: Parks

Have Some Fun in a Village Park

Our little village of roughly 2,000 inhabitants can take pride in offering six parks to the public, and one of them is a county park no less. It is not the purpose of this chapter to describe the many fine features or locations of these parks, but rather to acquaint the reader with some Port Edwards park history.

It is quite obvious how Edwards-Alexander Memorial Park received its name. The entire four-city-block area was the L.M. Alexander estate. It was given to the village for park purposes upon the death of Mrs. Alexander. In subsequent years, part of the property was made available to the John E. Alexander YMCA Community Center for their facilities. Incidentally, the swimming pool that is located in the park was originally planned as a natatorium, an indoor year-round pool. Initial cost estimates necessitated some modifications to the plans, and the resulting pool was the outcome. The pool was paid for by the Alexander Foundation and the NEPCO Foundation.



Although ice skating is provided on safe ice ponds today, the danger of thin ice did not stop children and adults from ice skating on the mill pond.

But John Alexander was not completely satisfied with the outdoor pool concept and dreamed of an indoor pool. In 1957, his dreams were realized when he undertook the financing and construction of the YMCA facility.

His father, Lewis, also envisioned an extravagance of a park for the village. His dream incorporated tennis courts, baseball and football fields, floral gardens with walking paths around them, picnic area, and a separate playground for boys and girls. It was all to be located on the island across the mill pond. A pedestrian bridge was built at Island Avenue, connecting the island with the mainland. There it connected with the park area that included the school and a library building. A landscape architect from Milwaukee was engaged to prepare a design. But alas, this was in 1931. The famous depression was not treating Alexander and the paper business very well, and he was forced to put his plans aside until better times came. Unfortunately, he died in 1934 before the

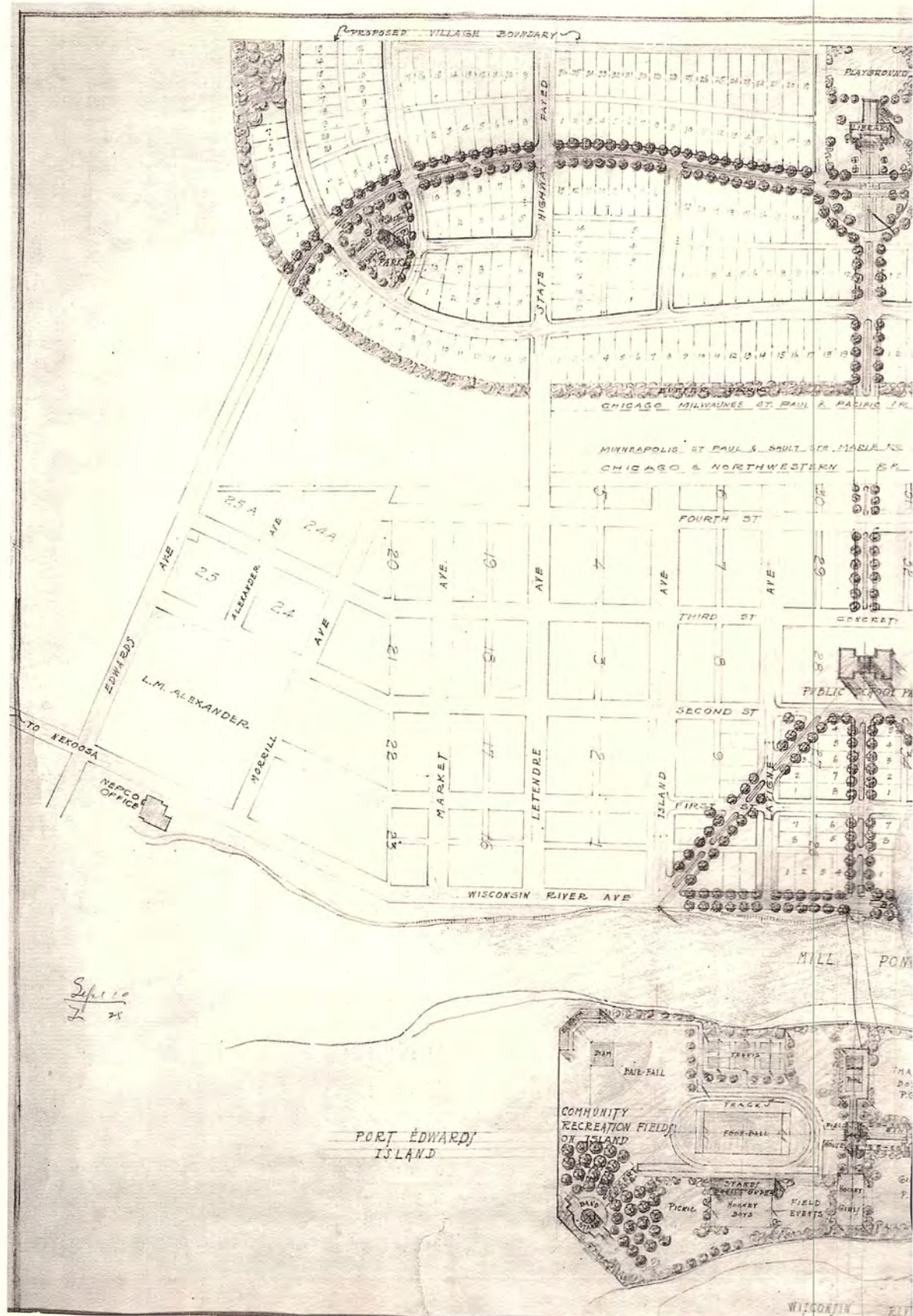


Nepco Lake Park was built when Nepco Lake was built in the mid 1920s. This is the first recreation area just off the present highway that crosses the lake.



Air view of Nepco Lake Employee Recreation Area shortly after opening. The park is still in use today, but its facilities have been greatly enhanced.

Lewis Alexander's dream of landscaping and parks for Port Edwards. The park was to be located on the island.



PRELIMINARY TOWN PLAN VILLAGE OF PORT EDWARDS, WIS.

PREPARED FOR
NEKOOSA-EDWARDS PAPER CO.

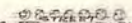
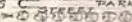
BY

F. A. CUSHING SMITH & ASSOC.
TOWN PLANNING ENGINEERS - LANDSCAPE ARCHTS.

CHICAGO
TO SCALE OF 200 FEET PER INCH

JUNE - 1931



NOTE
PARKWAYS INDICATED THUS 
TREES INDICATED THUS 
TOTAL NEW LOTS - NO. OF THE DUFFERIN AVE & EAST OF 3RD - (82)
TOTAL NEW LOTS - WEST OF TRACKS -
SOUTH OF LETERRE - (80)
NORTH OF " - (201)



The train that became a piece of playground equipment at Nepco Lake Employee Recreation Area. This view shows the equipment as a working unit, before it was remodeled to a play unit.



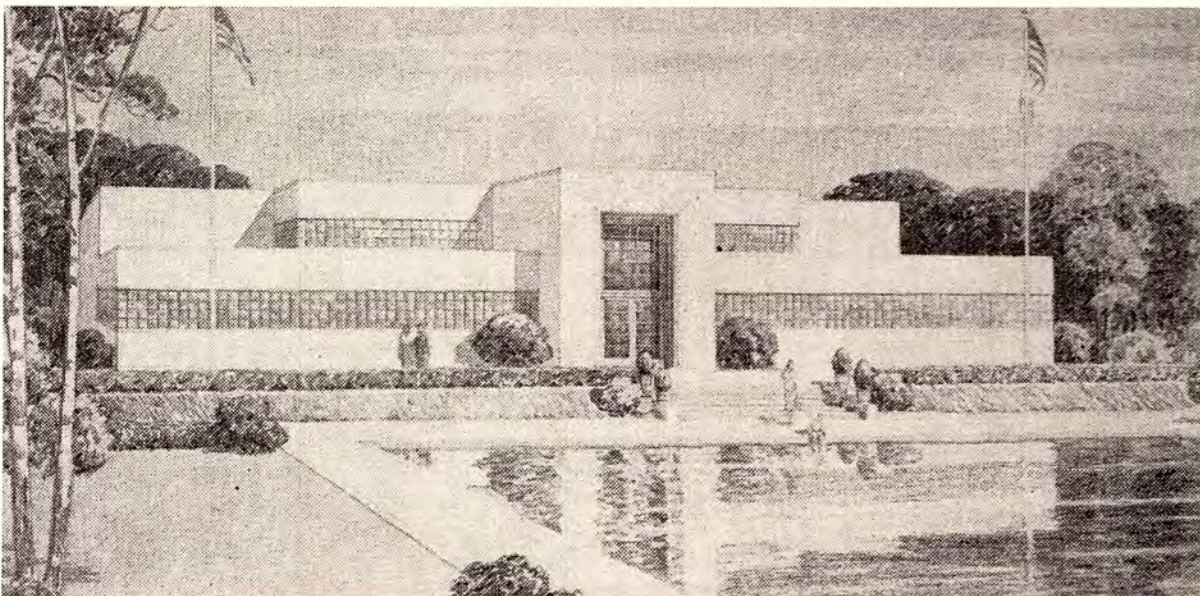
The Nepco Lake Limited, built from the construction train shown above.

recovery from the depression, leaving his benevolent plans for the village to his son, John.

John approached the park situation in a slightly different manner. At the new Nepco Lake, only a half-dozen years old, John developed a swimming beach, changing houses, picnic area, playground equipment and a shelter house. The shelter house was really Gus Giese's old farm homestead. This was a NEPCO park just for employees of the mills and village residents. It was not open to others. Many an old timer will recall the fun-filled firemen's picnics and family reunions that were held at this park, and how Gus Giese, the caretaker, would sit for hours on his wooden bench and talk about anything and everything. Then, when you were ready to depart, he would open the cyclone fence gate and stand there on the roadside and advise you when traffic would permit you to safely pull onto the busy highway.

Because this was a restricted park, a public facility consisting of a beach, boat landing and picnic area was made available to the public. It was located just across Highway 13 and is the Nepco Lake County Park today.

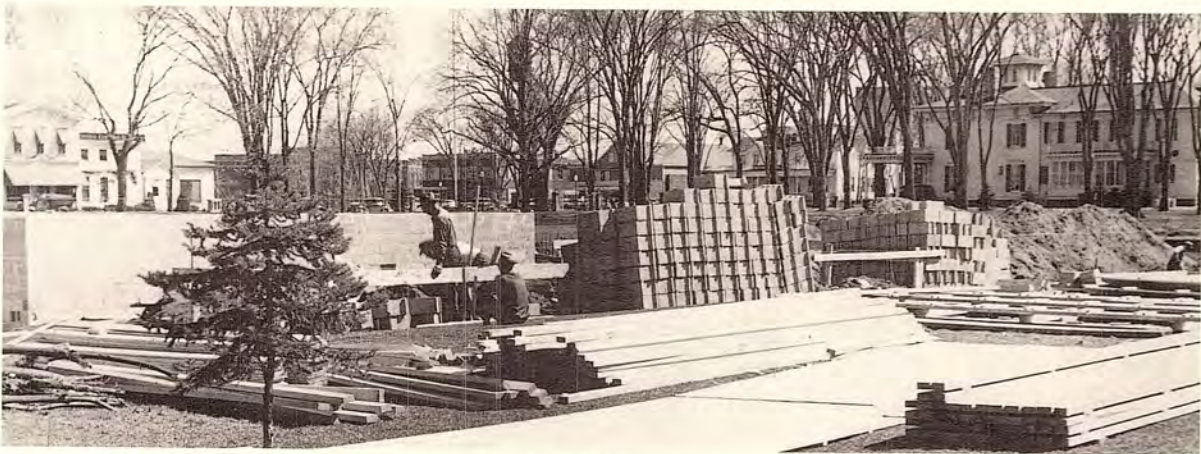
The NEPCO employees' park at Nepco Lake was popular and enjoyed by those privileged to use the facility, but John Alexander wanted something



The original proposal for a swimming pool in Edwards Alexander Park was suppose to be a year-round natatorium. However, when cost estimates came in, the plans were modified to just an outdoor pool.



Port boys dare to swim in the river using an old logging structure as their pier.



Construction of a swimming pool is under way in this photo.



The afternoon train brings a load of Wisconsin Rapids youth to the Port Edwards pool on a summer afternoon. The train schedule was conveniently arranged to allow the children a swim for about three hours.

better and, accordingly, the area at the north end of the Highway 13 bridge was closed down, to be replaced by an enhanced recreation area located about 300 yards to the west. The new employee recreation area was opened in 1955. The popular park offered running water and flushable toilets, stone fireplaces, life guards, and enhanced playground equipment, which included a popular train to play on. Incidentally, that train saw much practical experience as construction equipment for the building of several dams on the Wisconsin River, as well as the building of Nepco Lake and Lake Wazeecha. With a few cosmetic modifications, it is spending its retirement entertaining would-be railroad engineers.

Chapter 15: Service Clubs

We Say, "Thanks"

Service groups. Those organizations that take it upon themselves to make some part of our community a little more attractive. Some are still strong and continue their efforts, while others have disbanded, but not without leaving their mark on the village. Here are some of those dedicated clubs, and if I missed a group, I apologize.

BAND MOTHERS

Just as it indicates, the Band Mothers was a group of mothers whose sons and daughters were in the school's music programs. They provided funds for the purchase of instruments, music and funding for student trips to music tournaments. Providing chaperones for these trips was also an important function of the mothers. A lesser-known task performed by the band mothers was the alterations and repairs to band and choir uniforms.

PTA

The Parent and Teacher Association met monthly in their effort to foster better relations between parents and teachers. The organization is best remembered for their elaborate theatrical productions, which included such renditions as "Oklahoma," "The Merry Widow," "Harvey," and "Abie's Irish Rose." The Broadway shows were adapted to hometown talent, and the profits generated were used to benefit school programs such as playground equipment and stage improvements. Booster clubs have replaced the PTA and provide funding for athletic and music programs.

LIONS CLUB

The village owes a big THANK YOU to the Lions Club. Not only have they provided vision dogs for blind residents and summer camping activities for the physically handicapped, but they have also funded community projects, sometimes committing their club to expenses in future years. Ripple Creek shelter house and the ice pond warming house in that park were funded by the Lions. The all-weather shelter building in Edwards Alexander Park was an accomplishment of that group. Pieces of playground equipment and a gazebo are still other projects endowed by the local Lions Club since their organization in the village in 1965.

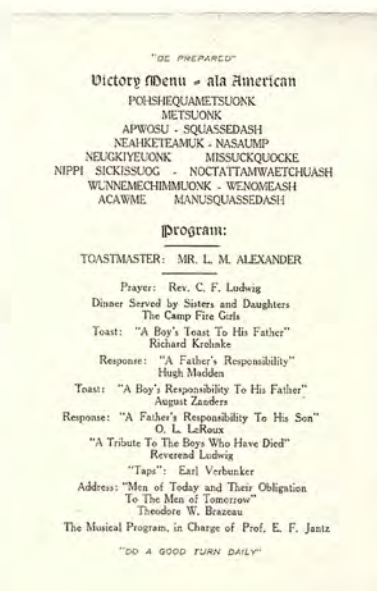
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS

Originally started in 1940 as a Boys Club, a separate Girls Club was organized a year later. The program was directed toward providing summer activities for the community youth. This was accomplished by camping at Nepco Lake, bean growing for a local cannery, newspaper publishing, handicraft sales, sporting activities, and doing odd jobs around the village.

The program was financed by the village, the club's self-generated profits (beans, newspaper, jobs, etc.), but largely through an endowment from Nekoosa Edwards Paper Company. Both clubs were abandoned in 1958 when the John E. Alexander YMCA came into being.



The fall harvest of flowers is displayed in the old school anteroom. The Port Edwards Garden Club sponsored the show.



Above Top: Port Edwards Boy Scouts Father and Son Banquet program and menu.
Above: Port Edwards Boy Scouts proudly stand at attention in their new uniforms, circa 1920s.

A camp, consisting of a central lodge/dining hall and five sleeping cabins, was built on the shore of Nepco Lake and named Camp Oopen. Funded by the paper mill, the construction labor was provided by Port Edwards men who worked evenings and weekends to build the camp buildings. Their only payment was a bottle of beer or two during the evening. The logs used for the construction of the main lodge were cut on the land where the camp was built.

YMCA

The "Y" is best recognized in the community by their elaborate physical plant in Edwards Alexander Memorial Park. Officially, it is known as the John E. Alexander YMCA Community Center. Upon the

organization of a YMCA program in the village, the Boys and Girls Clubs came to an end, their programs being succeeded by the Y's programs.

The Y's building is unique for a small village and was a dream of John Alexander since his childhood. It was built on the site of his grandparents' home and was dedicated in the summer of 1958. Financing was shared by the Alexander Foundation, Nekoosa Edwards Foundation, Consolidated Papers Inc. and Preway Company. A physical exercise building was erected in 1991. A restaurant, The Paper Inn, was located in the basement where the Y's child care service now functions.

A technical innovation that is a rarity today exists at the Y. In order that John Alexander might better project his movies of his world travels, he bought and had installed a carbon arc, 16 mm movie projector in an overhead booth in the Consolidated meeting room. Another unique innovation was the provision of subsidized bus services from Nekoosa and Wisconsin Rapids so that youth might take part in the Y's programs.

HOMEMAKERS & MEN'S CLUBS

The ladies had the afternoon free and the men wanted a night out on the town, so the Homemakers Club was organized as well as the Men's Club. The Homemakers lasted the longest, but both clubs have fallen by the wayside, probably due to time being spent in front of the television and an active church social program provided by our community churches. Both organizations were primarily socially oriented. However, the Homemakers were involved in the sewing of bandages for the war effort as well as for cancer patients.

PORT EDWARDS EDUCATION FOUNDATION

This education foundation was founded in 1996. With a treasury built up through public solicitation and subscription, the foundation has funded a host of school projects that are outside the scope of the school budget. Teachers or students make application to the foundation for a grant for a project or piece of equipment. The foundation has dispersed several thousands of dollars since its founding.

SCOUTS

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Brownies and Cubs. They are all active in the village, but the Boy Scouts trace their roots back the furthest. There is record of a Boy Scout troop having been functioning in the village as early as 1920.

ALEXANDER FOUNDATION

Founded by John and Dorothy Alexander, this foundation funds the Alexander House and scores of other charitable causes, many of them in the village.

PACE

Port Edwards Alcohol And Other Drug Community Education is a group of teachers, parents, students and concerned citizens who have banded together to fight the misuse of drugs. Through their programs, students are offered

alternative activities that are drug-free. For instance, school parties, post-prom parties, school lock-up night parties and weekend camping retreats, plus an extensive education program, are all aimed at providing a good time without resorting to drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

HOME IMPROVEMENT CLUB

Started in 1914, this club's goal was to beautify the village houses, yards, streets, alleys and river banks. The bylaws made special note of improving the railroad depot's grounds in order that arriving passengers would be impressed upon arrival in Port Edwards, and passengers just passing through on the train would remember the neat, clean village.

In 1915, the club sponsored the first of several annual flower shows. The initial show was held in the new school house, but moved to the school auditorium when that building was completed. The evening's program started with several welcome talks by local government officials, followed by a reminiscence delivered by Francis Edwards, wherein she described the village as it existed when she came to town in 1858. A black-and-white silent movie, "Sheridan's Ride," was shown, and then L.M. Alexander awarded the prizes for the best of the show flower entries. He personally contributed the \$100 prize purse.

And for all this, we say, "thank you." You have made this a better community in which to live.



Flower show sponsored by the Port Edwards Home Improvement Club. The flowers were soft and beautiful, but the wooden seats were hard and uncomfortable.