

Disconsolidation

In March, 1895, the Consolidated stockholders were Hoskinson, MacKinnon, Mack, Spencer, Johnson and the "Bensley Estate."

Chandos sold the Bensley lands and rights through Hooper & Hooper of Oshkosh to Jere Witter in April 1895. Witter, a prominent banker, had long been Johnson's partner, both in the Johnson & Hill store and in the Grand Rapids Paper Co. mill at Biron.

At a May 6 meeting, the new board agreed to get T.W. Orbison of Appleton to survey and plan a dam. Ben Hooper was elected director, a position he would hold only briefly. J.D. Witter's First National Bank was chosen to handle the Consolidated finances.

Witter replaced Hooper on May 20, MacKinnon was elected president, Spencer secretary, Johnson general manager. It was resolved to offer the Nashes further options. The Nash brothers did not respond. On June 1, the matter was referred to an attorney in order to commence a lawsuit.

The Nash brothers offered on June 10 a choice of five demands: 1. 270 shares of stock instead of 135; 2. \$18,000; 3. perpetual water power delivered to the Nash mill in exchange for the right of Consolidated to abut its dam on Nash property; 4. submission of the issue to George R. Gardner, Consolidated attorney and B.R. Goggin, Nash attorney for settlement; or 5. submission of the issue to Judge Webb

for arbitration.

All were rejected. It would be idle to "arbitrate upon an arbitration," said MacKinnon.

"I am further directed to say that at the date when your propositions were received, our attorneys were engaged in preparing the necessary papers for the commencement of an action against you to compel specific performance of your agreement of July 16, 1894, to convey your lands to this company and accept stock therefore. This company therefore proposes that you join issue in the action commenced and that trial be had before Judge Webb at once and judgment be obtained thereon as speedily as possible."

"All those interested in the new company, and the people in the Twin Cities generally, are pained to know that the Nash Bros. refuse to enter amicably and that litigation is necessary," wrote the Centralia Enterprise and Tribune.

A year after its conception, the object of the Consolidated plan had been frustrated.

In August of 1895, Hoskinson asked that his Pioneer pulp mill be returned to him until it was actually needed. Spencer and Mack asked that their Wisconsin Wood Pulp Co. be allowed to grind up their present supply of pulp. Each owner was allowed to resume his original venture.

For the moment, cooperation had failed. The next step was court.



Nels Johnson

Specific Performance Demanded

The Consolidated Water Power Co.'s resolution to develop the "grand rapids" became frustrated almost immediately when Tom and John Nash refused to cooperate.

On July 16, 1894, the Nashes had agreed to surrender their flour mill and water rights in return for stock in the company they were helping to found. But, when the report of arbitrators hired to evaluate properties involved was handed to them, the Nash brothers bailed out.

Consolidated, by then controlled by Nels Johnson and J.D. Witter, demanded that the Nashes honor the original agreement. On June 15, 1895, Consolidated issued a formal complaint and summons to appear in Wood County Court. According to the complaint, the Nash brothers had joined the agreement "to avoid litigation in the future and believing the water power owned by several parties would be of more value if improved and consolidated upon one general plan."

They also had consented to have a board of arbitrators made up of Peter R. Thom, T.W. Orbison and Frank T. Russell of the Fox River valley apportion the company's stock according to the value of the holdings. The board's report on Feb-

ruary 13, 1895, awarded the Nashes 75 shares for their land and water power, and 60 shares for machinery and buildings, for a total of 135, not including the electric plant, which was to be sold.

Witter and Johnson claimed the defendants were among the chief promoters and were most active in procuring and executing the agreement. Their refusal to convey prevented the consolidation, since the Nash property sat on the east end of the proposed dam.

The complaint stated that the title of all property belonging to the estate of Marion L. Bensley had been perfected and was vested "clear of liens and encumbrances" in Johnson and Witter. The partners of Witter and Johnson at the time of the lawsuit were George Hoskinson, Falkland MacKinnon, B. Ramsey, W.E. Mack and C.A. Spencer.

"Consolidated Water Power Co.," the plaintiff, demanded that the defendants, Thomas E. and John Nash, "specifically perform" the agreement of July 16, 1894 and hand over the deeds to their property. Witter and Johnson were impatient to have the matter settled. Legal expenses, said the complaint, already totaled \$2,500.



Mill Burning (Nash Bros. Flour Mill?)

A Necromantic Revenge

Through their attorney, B.R. Goggins, the Nashes answered forcefully on July 20, 1895.

The defendants denied that any organization had been completed by law that would allow Consolidated to transact business or to sue. The defendants claimed any agreement would have required other land that was not included—that of Joseph Sweeney, John Rablin, the Jackson Milling Co., F.L. Witter, Fredrick Horton, Benjamin and Julian King, and Thomas Burns.

The defendants denied that B.G. Chandos had any power to commit the Bensley estate, and also denied that Spencer, MacKinnon and Hoskinson had that authority.

The defendants claimed great value had been placed on property of little value, and little value had been placed on their property, which was of great value, thus robbing the Nashes of lands, riparian rights and water power.

To be specific:

—The Bensley estate had not been used for years and was impaired by the lawsuit of the Jackson Milling Co. against it.

—Mack and Spencer owned but a small area of land, with limited flowage value (the tail race often flooded with back water), and were impaired by a lawsuit against Marion Bensley.

—Grand Rapids Water Power Co. held chiefly riparian rights and had no land for a dam.

—Chandos' property was only valuable in connection with the others.

—Pioneer Wood Pulp had a dam so old and leaky that the mill often was obliged to shut down.

On the other hand, claimed the defendants, the Nashes owned the only property among the signers that had sufficient water power to run its mill at all times of the year.

The market value, without machinery, was no less than \$15,000, the equivalent of \$25,000 worth of stock.

The defendants also denied that they were

among the chief promoters of the scheme.

They alleged that the culprits were Mack and Spencer, "the reason therefore being that the said mill and machinery of said Wisconsin Wood Pulp Co. had deteriorated and fallen into (such) decay that it would be impossible for them or said corporation to do business much longer."

A further obligation, with implications beyond the ken of the participants, was brought forth.

The defendants complained that no legal proceedings had justified the sale of the Bensley lands by Chandos and his sisters, Jennie Goodrich, Lucy Rountree and Nellie Hardesty. In fact, Mrs. Bensley, who died intestate in New Mexico on November 30, 1889, had left an only child, who now lived in Kansas. The survivor and sole heir, Edward McMahon, had filed a complaint against the "pretended title" of Witter and Johnson.

In court, Chandos was asked to testify regarding this curious development. No, he said, Mrs. Bensley had not left children nor brothers besides himself although, yes, three or four additional sisters he had not known about had emerged about the time McMahon began his lawsuit the preceding spring. Those sisters seemed to be Lavina Pickens of Oklahoma Territory, Mrs. Debora Boso of Wood County, West Virginia, and Bathsheba McKinley of Skull Run, W. Va.

Nash attorney Goggins argued that the Bensley property now claimed by Witter and Johnson was in such a legal mess that the entire Consolidated company should be considered invalid. At that point, the plaintiffs could not help but feel the weakness of their position. The lawsuit against the Nash brothers was dismissed on their motion November 9, 1895.

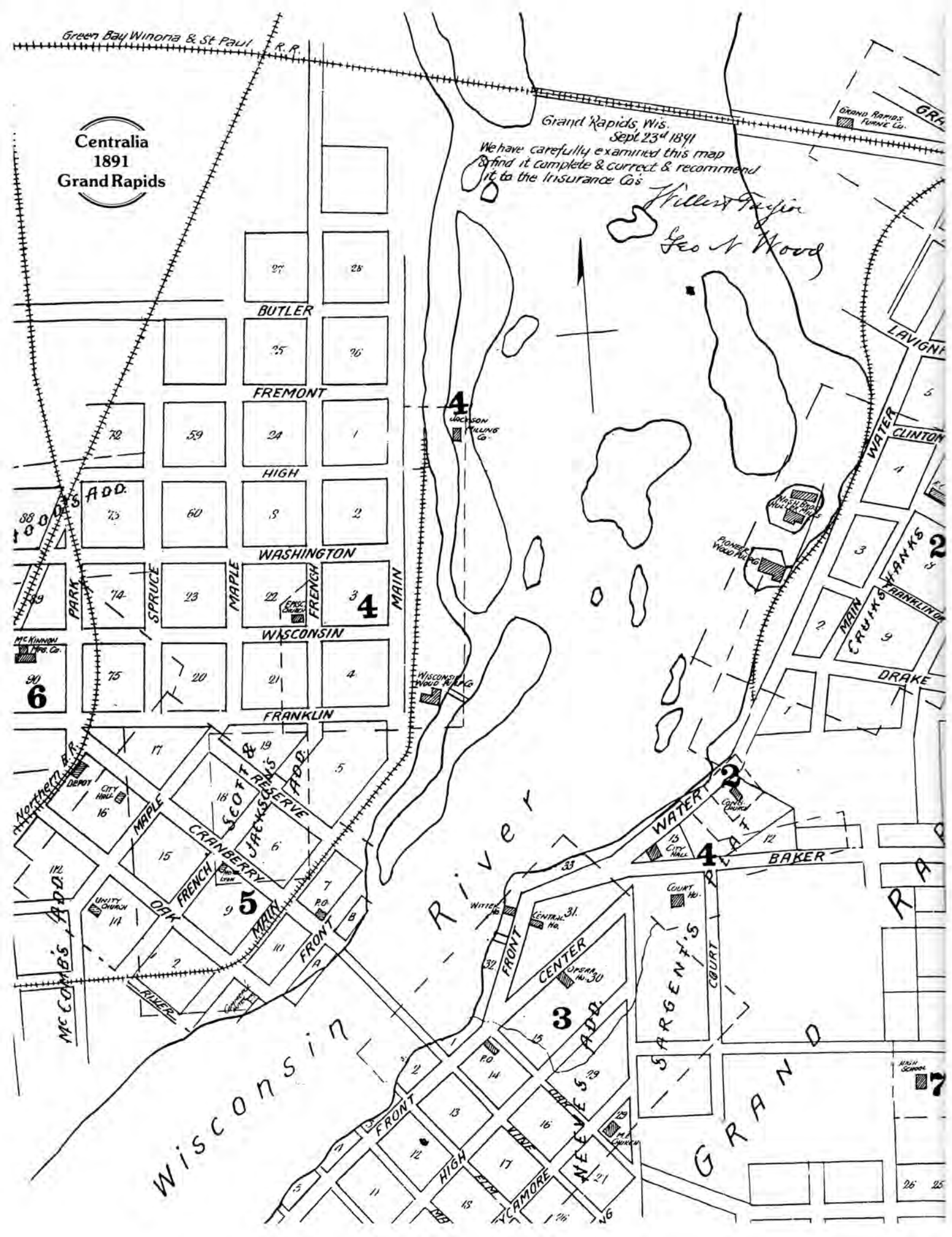
Too many heirs had disconsolidated the firm. Mrs. Bensley, already participant in supernumerary litigious actions, enjoyed a necromantic revenge.

**Centralia
1891
Grand Rapids**

Grand Rapids, Wis.
Sept 23^d 1891

We have carefully examined this map
and find it complete & correct & recommend
it to the Insurance Co's

*Willard Taylor
Geo A Wood*



Nels Johnson Refuses

"I am not sure but the value of that Grand Rapids power may come to be all it will cost to consolidate it," wrote William F. Vilas to Thomas E. Nash on April 18, 1896. "Are there any new developments in that business?"

The Nash brothers walking out of the agreement had been the first setback for the Consolidated Water Power Co.'s major figures, Nels Johnson and J.D. Witter. The 1895 fiasco in Wood County Circuit Court had been a second.

On July 5, 1896, another unexpected misfortune occurred when company Treasurer C.A. Spencer, 46, while on a boating excursion near his home town of Lafayette, Ind., felt a numbness in his arms and pain in his chest. Before a doctor could arrive, Spencer died of a blood clot on his heart.

Beginning in the hardware business and moving into sales in Chicago, Spencer teamed with W.E. Mack, in 1882, to buy the Lyon shingle mill at Centralia and convert to a pulp mill. Mack and Spencer split up in 1895, leaving Mack to run the electric company and Spencer, the pulp mill.

For Consolidated, events reached a sorry state by March 1898, when it was unable to repay a loan from the First National Bank for the Lutz brewery property.

As company minutes show, the object for which Consolidated had been formed was being "frustrated by the

withdrawal of one company of the original corporation involving litigation tying up the other members to prevent the sale or hypothecation of their property."

More of the stockholders wanted out. However, with the death of Spencer, the almost fanatical Johnson had been elected secretary. He refused to sign deeds conveying properties back to their original owners.

MacKinnon, Hoskinson and Mack voted Johnson out of office and demanded that his records be turned over to the new secretary, Hoskinson.

"Nels Johnson refused to do so," wrote the secretary they hoped to make ex-secretary: Nels Johnson.

Instead, Johnson requested a meeting of stockholders for April 18. Hoskinson, Mack and MacKinnon didn't want a meeting of stockholders. They wanted to get Johnson out of office. Failing that, they moved to adjourn.

Witter and Johnson suddenly had more problems. Unable to get Johnson to cooperate or to get his property back, Mack brought a lawsuit in the U.S. circuit court at Madison against Consolidated on the grounds that the Nash problem had made consolidation an impossibility. "Indeed, it would seem impossible for Johnson & Witter to defend Mack's suit," wrote Vilas to Nash on March 4, 1898, "unless they could bring you to cooperation."



B.K. Goggins

Helping a Friend

Johnson, not much daunted, moved ahead in characteristic fashion. With Hoskinson, Mack and MacKinnon opposing him, he brought in his own stockholders by selling one share each to John Arpin and to George Hill. It was no surprise, then, that Arpin, Hill and Johnson elected Johnson chairman of the board on May 14, 1898. On May 4, Johnson was elected president and general manager, with Hill as vice president, Arpin as secretary and Witter as treasurer.

Meanwhile, Vilas hoped that his friend, Nash, soon would be able not to sell his own rights but to buy out the entire Consolidated concern. "It seems to me it will improve the price downwards to have Nels Johnson fight his proceedings awhile," wrote Vilas on April 6, 1898. "If he and Witter were out of the way, would not the others be comparatively easy to deal with? It would seem to me that the more promising course would be to let the fight get well-tangled, and then buy them out."

Despite the obvious difficulties, Johnson wanted to go ahead and build a dam. If the Nashes wouldn't allow it to abut on their flour-mill island, the dam would have to be built upstream. Johnson engineered a vote to build a dam in the summer of 1899 at a projected cost of \$80,000. It was an idea hastily conceived. The dam motion was rescinded on August 23 as too costly.

While MacKinnon, a moderating influence, becoming more aligned with Mack, traveled in Europe, Johnson persuaded the board to hire a lawyer, George L. Williams of Milwaukee, and force Tom Nash, who had bought out John Nash, to convey his property.

For 20 years, until 1899, "Judge" Williams had practiced law in Grand Rapids. He also served as school superintendent, district attorney, mayor and county judge. Williams acted as attorney for W.E. Mack in 1883 against Mrs. Marion Bensley and served as a director of the Wisconsin Wood Pulp Co.

At the same time Johnson had these problems,

so did Nash have his own. Lawyer B.R. Goggins wrote to Vilas on November 25, 1899: "The past six months has been a very hard season for Mr. Nash. It was almost impossible to get the wood necessary to keep the (Nekoosa) mill a-going, and other business piled up in such a way as to overwork him and he came home the last time . . . ill, with a serious attack of erysipelas in the head and face; and, when I tell you that the inflammation was so great that he was delirious part of the time and that his face was swelled to such an extent as to present almost one even surface . . . you will fully understand what a serious time he had."

In his aggravated condition, Nash had discussed with Goggins that it might be wiser for him to accept Consolidated's offer of \$15,000 for his property than to attempt another defense in court. Certain unstated "business reasons" made the sale urgent.

Giving up was as contrary to the character of William F. Vilas as it had been to that of Nels Johnson. "You have worked too hard and strained too much," he wrote Nash immediately.

"We have stood ready to meet them and they know it. But they are the ones who must advance and, so long as they do not, they are losing. Always, nearly, delay is defensive in law," advised Vilas.

Although he did not know the business reasons that Goggins had referred to, Vilas had more confidence than he had had in 1895, "and can hardly believe it possible you can be beaten in the suit, if properly presented."

Vilas determined to see that any action would indeed be properly presented. He promised to help "Bro. Goggins," to the best of his ability, without any cost to Nash. "I take pleasure in helping a friend I love when in trouble."

"Give up nothing for a settlement," the fiduciary Vilas exhorted, final fighting words from the absentee adviser who had so much influence on activities in River City.



Looking Upstream from the Witter House



Grand Rapids, Wisconsin: 1900

Failure to Act

What "business development" caused Tom Nash to consider selling his interest in the nascent consolidated Water Power Co. to Nels Johnson and Jere Witter?

In a December 5, 1899, letter to his adviser, William F. Vilas, Nash explained that a new paper mill was being planned for Wausau or Schofield, so much closer to raw materials that it would diminish the value of the Grand Rapids site. When Witter and Johnson found out, they might not want to buy the Nash property or even develop the power.

Vilas told Nash that if he hung tough, in the end, he would win. For now, Nash should take a vacation. As usual, Nash followed the advice of ex-Senator Vilas, departing for Hot Springs.

On December 16, Nash's attorney, B.R. Goggins, informed Vilas he didn't believe Witter and Johnson any longer wanted a settlement because W.E. Mack was suing them to get back his property; in the meantime, they preferred Nash to have owner's expenses. "Present prices of labor and material also frighten them and if they were now the owners of the whole thing I am of the opinion that they would not now do a single thing towards the improvement of the power."

Mack's lawsuit began in March of 1898, prompted by the failure of Consolidated to act (due to Nash's withdrawal) and was an extension of Mack's earlier conflict with Nels Johnson, now chairman of the Board.

By this time MacKinnon and Hoskinson also were somewhat alienated from the venture. MacKinnon himself brought a

suit similar to Mack's and would support Nash in court action.

In early September, 1899, Witter and Johnson sued Nash for the second time in order to force him to fulfill his agreement to join Consolidated.

When he appeared in court to defend his course once again, Nash had bought his brother's half interest for \$9,500 and his flour mill had burned, for which he received \$5,500 insurance. At the time of the fire, Nash was said to be negotiating to have a paper-bag factory built on his site.

For their part, officials at Consolidated had obtained a better title for the Bensley estate and from the state a franchise to build a dam at Grand Rapids. Their complaint in 1899 stated that Nash, who had been a chief promoter of the Consolidated idea, held the best spot for that dam. The complaint demanded that Nash turn over his property.

Once again, Goggins and Vilas responded that the organization had never been completed, that the signers did not have authority to commit their organizations, that the Bensley estate was hopelessly entangled in litigation and that the arbitrators had badly misevaluated the properties involved.

The arbitration dispute sprang from the method of awarding valuation on the basis of how many "footfalls" of water passed by rather than on the location of the property or its true market value. Actually, claimed the defense, the Nash property was the only truly productive power involved and its value should rightly exceed \$20,000.

Mongrel Decision

At Wood County Circuit Court before Judge Wyman of Viroqua, George L. Williams of Milwaukee, formerly of Grand Rapids and Moses Hooper of Oshkosh represented Consolidated against Goggins and Vilas.

Once again, B.G. Chandos was called to testify in an attempt to straighten out his family tree in relation to the Bensley estate. He identified the pretender to the fortune as Edward McMahon, whom he said was the son of Mrs. Bensley's sister, Nellie Hardesty, by her first husband. Chandos said that Mrs. Bensley's father was John Ingles and that her mother was May Smith, the second wife of John Ingles.

The defense presented testimony on what they considered to be the true value of the Nash property. Local experts MacKinnon, F.J. Wood, John Farrish, George Wood, Frank Garrison and L.M. Alexander supported, for the most part, the \$20,000 figure presented by Nash.

Plaintiff attorney Hooper argued that the Consolidated claim could hardly be more meritorious because the Nash land was very useful if included in the corporation and useless out of it as the agreement itself was useless in that situation.

Judge Wyman's "mongrel decision" agreed with both.

Nash would have to turn over his property to Consolidated as the 1894 agreement stipulated. However, Wyman agreed that 135 shares had been an unfair amount and boosted Nash's award to 342 shares.

At home, the Nels Johnson stockholder faction met on May 3, 1900, and elected a new board of directors: Johnson, Witter, George Hill and Isaac P. Witter, J.D. Witter's son. MacKinnon also was placed on the board although he had been advised by his attorney, T.C. Ryan of Wausau, not to attend the meeting.

"MacKinnon and Hoskinson have linked fortunes in this difficulty with Mack and look to Ryan for guidance," wrote Goggins to Vilas, "their great desire being to rip up the whole thing and get back their properties."

In May, Ryan sent Vilas the decision of Judge Woods in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Chicago, in the case of Mack vs. Consolidated Water Power Co. reversing a former decree by declaring that, since the original Consolidated plan to develop the entire power had become impossible, the parties conveying their property could recover it. "It seems to me this will sicken J & W and they will try to get out. But they may not and if they persist, it will I think compel you to appeal," wrote Vilas on May 18.

"One thing I think J & W will concede I was right on, that having such interest at stake they were fools of the first water for not coming to terms with you. I fear Nels may yet drop more than Hooper did on that Bensley Estate, by proving Hooper's reason to be well based.

Concluded Vilas, "I 'tink' we will try to bear up under his troubles."

Mack Sells Out

While Tom Nash had Consolidated Water Power Co. tied up in litigation Utah was admitted to the Union, the Spanish American War started and ended, Marconi perfected the wireless telegraph, Hawaii was annexed, babbling babies grew to the age of reason and many men saw their health, hopes and hair recede dramatically.

From September 16, 1894, until the turn of the century, the Consolidated attempt to compel Nash to join the industrial agglomeration he had helped form pressed on.

The Consolidated case, however, was not helped by an adverse decision in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, declaring that W.E. Mack could withdraw from Consolidated and retrieve his property. Immediately, Mack set about selling out. He told Nash that Nels Johnson of Consolidated wanted to buy his interests and that he had written to Falkland MacKinnon, asking him if he were interested or "Do you wish to purchase it?" Mack asked Nash.

B.R. Goggins of Grand Rapids wrote William Vilas on June 21, 1900, that Johnson had obtained Mack's property for \$10,000. "I am quite satisfied in Johnson and Witter's action in buying out Mack's interest that they would be very willing to call it quits with Tom," said Goggins.

"Ryan and Hurley were in my office with MacKinnon and Hoskinson, and concluded (that) if Mack sold, MacKinnon and their corporation would begin similar actions."

On September 13, Goggins told Vilas that appeals from the 7th Circuit Court would head the Wisconsin Supreme court calendar for January.

Unless Johnson and Witter backed down, Nash's appeal against an earlier judgment that required Nash to join Consolidated would be on the docket. It had become clear that Johnson, especially, would not rest his initiative.

Johnson solved the MacKinnon issue the way he had Mack's, by buying out his erstwhile partner. He and Witter, on December 10, purchased MacKinnon and Hoskinson's Pioneer Wood Pulp Co.

According to Goggins: "Witter showed some disposition to treat with Tom for a purchase of his property but Nels Johnson is assured by his attorneys, Geo. L. Williams and Burr W. Jones, that they have an absolute cinch on Tom's case in the supreme court and he is counting on the great personal satisfaction of beating Tom ultimately, and I think it very improbable indeed that, under the circumstances, any settlement will be made with Tom."

Victory and Defeat

On January 4, 1901, Goggins continued: "I am really of the opinion that the other side contemplate building the dam. I am quite satisfied that this suit, in case we win, is not the end of the trouble. T.C. Ryan, of Wausau, said to me a few weeks ago that Johnson is very susceptible to bad legal advice and that he is getting it. However, if they are cleaned out in the case in the Supreme Court, even he may begin to feel that the sources of his inspiration are not infallible."

As expected, Consolidated vs. T.E. Nash went to the Wisconsin Supreme Court on February 5, 1901. The arguments hadn't changed much since 1894, when Tom and John Nash walked out of the Consolidated agreement: Consolidated claimed Nash was obligated to turn over his property; Nash answered that the original agreement had been rendered null and void.

Nash waited in Grand Rapids for a verdict. Vilas wrote, on February 26, 1901, that "I was obliged to wire you a few minutes since that no decision was announced . . . but I hardly think Nels and Jerry will begin building the dam in the meantime."

On March 5, Vilas told Nash that he believed Witter was about ready to buy Nash out.

"I would think Jere would now show his wisdom by dealing before judgement because he ought to gain something by so doing, since no case undecided is absolutely sure. True, their attorneys give it up. But they haven't been as shrewd as they might have been."

Vilas also urged Nash to head off the sale of the Jackson flour mill in Grand Rapids until Witter and Johnson were ready to deal with Nash. On the day he wrote, however, the sale was made, believed locally to have been aided by the efforts of Nash himself.

Nash wrote Vilas on March 14 that nothing

new had developed in water power matters except that the Jackson deal had been closed. "Witter and his son have bought 125 hp from the Consolidated for 18,000, this to be transmitted electrically and used to operate a grist mill, the Grand Rapids Milling Co., which they are today forming."

At the March 16, 1901, annual meeting, Witter, Johnson, George Hill and Witter's son, Isaac, were the only stockholders. Minutes record the sale of a parcel of land to the "Grand Rapids Milling Co." for \$18,000.

The long-awaited court decision came finally on March 19, 1901. As expected, the state Supreme Court completely released Nash from obligation to Consolidated by reversing Judge O.B. Wyman's Circuit Court decision. The court stated that the Nash brothers had properly withdrawn from the July 16 agreement, that the corporations participating had not received proper authority from their stockholders, and that arbitrators had improperly determined the value of water powers involved.

Four days after the decision, Nash agreed to sell to Consolidated water power and lands along the Grand Rapids for his price of \$33,750.

"On learning the result in Tom's case, I can assure you it was with no small amount of pleasure and satisfaction that I took down my old brief book and I found that the points of defense there jotted down at your dictation in June 1895 had been by the Supreme Court adjudged sound," wrote Goggins to Vilas. "Tom has undoubtedly advised you of the sale of his property to the Consolidated Water Power Company and the price received therefore. Was there ever a victory so fruitful of satisfaction and profit? Was there ever a defeat more humiliating and crushing?"

Amicable Settlement

Col. William F. Vilas rejoiced. He had just won an important court decision against Consolidated Water Power Co. and in favor of his friend, Tom Nash. "I am delighted with your sale to Witter and Johnson and 'the happy issue of all our affliction,' " wrote Vilas on March 26, 1901.

Nash, of course, enjoyed even further his "vindication." In what was called an "amicable settlement," he had been paid \$33,750 for his interest in the Consolidated company.

Even Nels Johnson and J.D. Witter, the plaintiffs in a fairly disastrous seven-year litigation, probably joined in the general celebration. The Consolidated partners had lost battle after battle in a tiring campaign but, with heroic infusions of fresh cash, could see that they might win the war. The painful last skirmish, in the Wisconsin Supreme Court, at least brought an end to the fighting.

With the purchase of Nash's water-power and mill site, only Roenius' Grand Rapids foundry stood between Consolidated and complete ownership of the Grand Rapids. That impediment fell rapidly. Witter and Johnson purchased the foundry on March 30.

The immediate expectation was that Johnson and Witter would build a dam, paper mill and powerhouse. In addition to more than \$70,000 already spent for taxes, insurance, attorney fees and property purchases, \$300,000 was expected to be demanded by the project.

While the efforts of Johnson and Witter were being backed by their other holdings, such as Johnson & Hill, the Grand Rapids Pulp and Paper Co. and the First National Bank, T.E. Nash also had been accumulating capital. After all, he was part-owner and manager of what was said to be the largest operation of its kind in the state, the Nekoosa Paper Co. mill at Nekoosa.

Nash continued to negotiate with Witter, hoping to buy all the Consolidated property at Grand Rapids or to get control of some of Witter's holdings at Stevens Point. "As surely as J.D. gets the idea you want Stevens Point

power, so surely you won't get it unless you 'pay back.' You can count on his nature for that," Vilas advised on October 24, 1901.

"I suspect he has already got the idea you want it, and will hold on until he is pushed for money, and no other cause will relax his grip. I would be mighty indifferent," wrote Vilas, whose counsel was always seriously considered, "until I saw a better opening."

Nels Johnson knew Nash still wanted Witter's property. He wrote to George M. Hill, Johnson's partner in the Johnson & Hill department store, on February 16, 1902. "I had a talk with J.D. Friday eve. It was rather stormy but I felt a ease to talk, having disposed of my stock and paid him that. Have reduced my obligation to him to an extent that I can handle myself, if necessary."

Part of the "obligation" was a note for Johnson's share of the payment to Nash. "Of course, his nerve is gone if he ever had any," said Johnson of Witter.

"He finally told me that Mr. Nash came down to Rockford to see him and, accidentally, before he went away, asked him if we intended to improve the Power and, of course, he admitted he was rather undecided and would not talk about it. Mr. Nash told him if we did not improve it, why not sell; that he, MacNorton and Wiles and Cameron had lots of money and would buy. That, of course, touched his nerve the other way. But that meant to give up the management to them. That, of course, he will do. Now that means a lot to me.

"There is no question," said Johnson, "but what it is a good thing and would pay for itself in four or five years and the stock before that time would be worth \$1.50."

While Johnson questioned Witter's seeming lack of fortitude, he recognized that seven years of legal conflict had undermined his own health.

"Last summer, between what I thought was stomach trouble and the Water Power, nearly used me up but that is something of the past."

Bright's Disease

The reason for Witter's appearance of pusillanimity soon became public.

For 12 years, said the Reporter, Witter had fought against Bright's disease, a kidney ailment common at the time. His suffering in the last years had been intense. Physicians had told him the disease could prove fatal at any time.

In February of 1902, Witter consulted physicians at Rockford, Ill., the home of his daughter, Ruth Mead, and son-in-law, George W. Mead.

Even before he had left for Rockford, according to the Wood County Reporter, Witter had said, "I would like to live a few more years and begin to give to the different objects I love. I would like to dispose of most of my fortune before I die that I may see the good resulting from it."

Commented the Reporter, "He saw the possibilities of great industries being established here and run by the water power, which is now wasted. It was one of his greatest desires before his death to see this water power developed."

In March, it was decided that an operation was necessary. For that, Witter would go to Chicago.

On the afternoon of March 21, George and Ruth Mead were notified that they should come to Chicago because Witter was gravely ill. Upon arrival, Mead first found Mrs. Witter new quarters, this time at the Palmer House. After she and Mrs. Mead had settled in for the night, Mead went without them to the hospital, where he found Witter awake.

Witter said he had been greatly disappointed at the supreme court's decision and emphasized, "George, I think the best thing in my estate is that interest in the water power at Grand Rapids, and maybe something large can be made of it."

After seeing Mead, Witter rallied but suffered a relapse, and went into a comatose condition and shortly died. With him were his wife, Emily; son, Isaac; daughter, Ruth; George Mead and two sisters of Mrs. Witter—Mrs. Stanton and

Mrs. Berkey.

Witter was said to be a good friend but not a bitter enemy. Among the pallbearers at the funeral on High Street were friends E.T. Harmon, W.D. Connor, G.M. Hill, T.A. Lipke, E.P. Arpin, J.P. Horton and Wm. Scott. Also bearing the burden was a man who could have been considered an enemy but apparently was not, B.R. Goggins, the attorney who had worked with Nash and Vilas to defeat Consolidated in the courts.

Goggins also helped draw up Witter's will, in which the philanthropist provided:

1. \$5,000 each to his brother, George W. Witter, and sisters, Sarah Coon, Harriet Ingraham, Lucy Knapp, Susan Billins and Florence Johnson.
2. \$2,500 each to four nieces and nephews.
3. \$5,000 each to the J.D. Witter Free Traveling Library and to the T.B. Scott Free Public Library.
4. \$1,000 to every church within the Grand Rapids city limits.
5. \$500 to Emma Buss, a family employee.
6. \$50,000 to the Grand Rapids board of education but not to be used for the proposed new high school.
7. Home and furnishings to his wife.
8. \$5,000 in trust to adopted daughter, Laura Inez Witter.
9. All the rest to wife, Emily; son Isaac, and daughter, Ruth Mead, "to share and share alike."

Witter believed in the city's future, said his obituary. That future was yoked to the use of water power on the great rapids of the Wisconsin.

But making a reality of the "Consolidated Water Power Company" dream in which Witter had invested so heavily of his resources, both personal and financial, would fall to men younger and less experienced than the old onion farmer of Grand Rapids.

Hectoring

Following the death of J.D. Witter on March 22, 1902, his longtime partner, Nels Johnson, stood alone to carry on the hopes and ideas of the Consolidated Water Power Co. The only other stockholders at that time were George M. Hill, J.D.'s son Isaac Witter, and J.D.'s daughter, Ruth Mead, as a trustee of the Witter estate.

Johnson had always been eager, almost crazy, to develop the project, while the elder Witter took a more reluctant and conservative view, as bankers almost always do. With Witter gone, Johnson began "hectoring" the affable but flappable heir, Isaac, to proceed as planned with the Consolidated scheme. Somewhat daunted by the turn of events and the pressure of the impetuous Dane, Isaac wrote to his brother-in-law, George W. Mead, a furniture dealer in Rockford, Ill., and implored him to come up and assist. Mead at first refused, "busily engaged in my own affairs in Rockford."

Mead's connection with Grand Rapids had been made ten years earlier. As a student at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Mead became friends with fraternity brother, Isaac Witter. While visiting Isaac at the Witter home, Mead became acquainted with Isaac's sister, Ruth. They were married in 1899.

The 1902 request from Isaac was at first unsuccessful but continued pleading induced Mead to agree that he would travel to Grand Rapids and stay "for a week or two" until the matter was settled. With his wife and baby son, Mead arrived on the bright morning of May 2, 1902.

Now Mead confronted the enthusiasm of Nels Johnson. "He would sidle in to the old Bank of Grand Rapids," wrote Mead, "dragging his hand against the south wall until he

reached the back room where I sat and would start the conversation, 'I've been a-thinking,' and he fairly glowed with enthusiasm and was willing to talk by the hour as long as I would listen and take part."

Isaac could stand the pressure only a few minutes before he left the room worried, said Mead, "that I might be overcome by Johnson. Isaac kept telling me that he would not put one dollar of his father's estate into any development and would not sign any notes."

Johnson took Mead walking up to Biron and across the river by boat. He brought him down the west bank, showing Mead nails embedded ten and twenty feet high in trees at what he described as the future water level. Johnson said there were few titles or rights he and Witter had not already acquired.

At family councils, Mead, his wife Ruth and Isaac sat around "Mother Witter's" table, figuring the estate that had been left them and wondering what to do next. Inevitably, it came to the point of building a paper mill. Plans had been made by Orbison and O'Keefe of Appleton for a small, two-machine mill that would cost \$600,000. Isaac claimed the plans would cost more than a million dollars and would sink them all in a mire of debt. Isaac was ready to sell out to another group of capitalists. J.D. Witter's widow, Emily, argued tearfully that the project had been Jere's dream and she didn't want it to go.

"Then you might say we were all in tears," Mead said. "I went over to Mrs. Witter, put my arm around her and said 'Mother, we will not sell out. We will stick to this thing and try to see it through.'"

Evangelist of Paper

When George Mead explained to Isaac Witter that Nels Johnson and Isaac's mother had convinced Mead to go ahead and build a paper mill, "Isaac was dumbfounded and asked me how I planned to pay for it," wrote Mead. Isaac told him that he would participate only if Mead could raise the capital stock to \$400,000 and get "two strong men" to each take \$50,000 worth of stock.

Mead went to Marshfield, "to lay the whole thing before W.D. Connor. I persuaded him to sign up and came back and tackled F. MacKinnon. I did not know that he had no money nor did Isaac, but MacKinnon was easily persuaded and he put himself down for \$50,000. Of that amount, MacKinnon, Mead said, borrowed \$40,000 from Witter's Bank of Grand Rapids.

Besides Connor and MacKinnon, Mead and Johnson interested Theodore Brazeau, George M. Hill, Charles F. Kruger, George B. McMillan, Hiram G. Freeman and others who "pledged all the money they had, all they could borrow, all their friends had and all their friends could borrow." In addition, Mead obtained a loan from the Wisconsin National Bank of Milwaukee for at least \$150,000, endorsed by the Witter estate. In accordance with the expanded mission, the company name was changed to Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. Capital stock was

raised from \$300,000 to \$400,000 and offered for sale as Isaac had requested.

The broad support and financial backing impressed Isaac and he agreed to support the paper mill construction. O'Keefe and Orbison were contacted but demanded what was considered too great a fee. In their place, John C. Jacobson, a millwright and "practical building engineer," was hired to draw plans and supervise architectural work.

At 10 a.m. Sunday morning, December 14, 1902, the Wood County Reporter visited with Johnson, having accidentally met him in front of his place of business, presumably the Johnson & Hill store.

The eager evangelist of paper was in splendid spirits: genial, cordial and contented. Johnson was particularly cheerful and satisfied by the thought that the water power he had been promoting for so long finally was going to be developed. He said he was leaving that night for Chicago to consult with officials of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railroad about a side track leading to the Consolidated property.

The Reporter asked for the privilege of announcing to the public the contemplated improvements to be made the coming year by Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. Johnson referred him to Jacobson for further information.

Climax of Failure

On December 18, the Reporter printed the information that Consolidated had reorganized to manufacture paper, had increased its capital stock and offered it for sale, had changed its name, and was proceeding to dredge a canal along the west bank all in order to build a pulp and paper mill. A dam was planned above the Green Bay railroad bridge. A 10-grinder pulp mill, paper mill, power house, boiler room, beater room, wood room and finishing room were to be built under one roof. There was a provision for six paper machines although only two would be installed immediately. A large sulphite plant was predicted. Half the electric power generated by the power house was to be used by the pulp and paper mill and the rest returned to private and public customers in any part of the city.

"We join with the businessmen of this city in a sincere wish that nothing may happen to prevent this venture from being carried out to a successful issue," wrote the Reporter.

As winter approached, Johnson wanted to get the rest committed so they could not back out, and proposed to go to Wilmington,

Del., for a look at some paper machines. "We were just on the eve of beginning the actual work of construction," wrote Mead, "when we were met with another catastrophe."

The 55-year old Johnson, seemingly hale and hearty, had, on December 16, enjoyed a supper and a gin cocktail, and had gone to bed. A pain in his chest and stomach prevented sleep and he called a doctor. Before morning, he lay dead, of Bright's disease.

Wilmington Elk's club officers shipped Johnson's remains to Chicago, where they were met by Hill and Mead. "This seemed to be the climax of the failure of the Consolidated idea," wrote Mead. "All had quit or were dead." A group of successful paper manufacturers headed by Tom Nash and L.M. Alexander offered \$50,000 for all the "overrated" stock of Consolidated. "They said it would cost probably \$2,000,000 to build a dam and a small paper mill, and they would not think of doing it at that time, but they might plan to do it sometime in the future."

It was an offer, said Mead, that he almost accepted.

A Paper Man

"The day after the funeral," said Mead, "a few of us sat around in the First National Bank trying to decide what to do."

It was George Hill who suggested, "George Mead has had experience in building, he has put up a very fine building in Rockford and knows how to do it. Why not let him carry on until we find a paper man?" Mead said he would "stick to it for a while" but that he was anxious to get back to his own business.

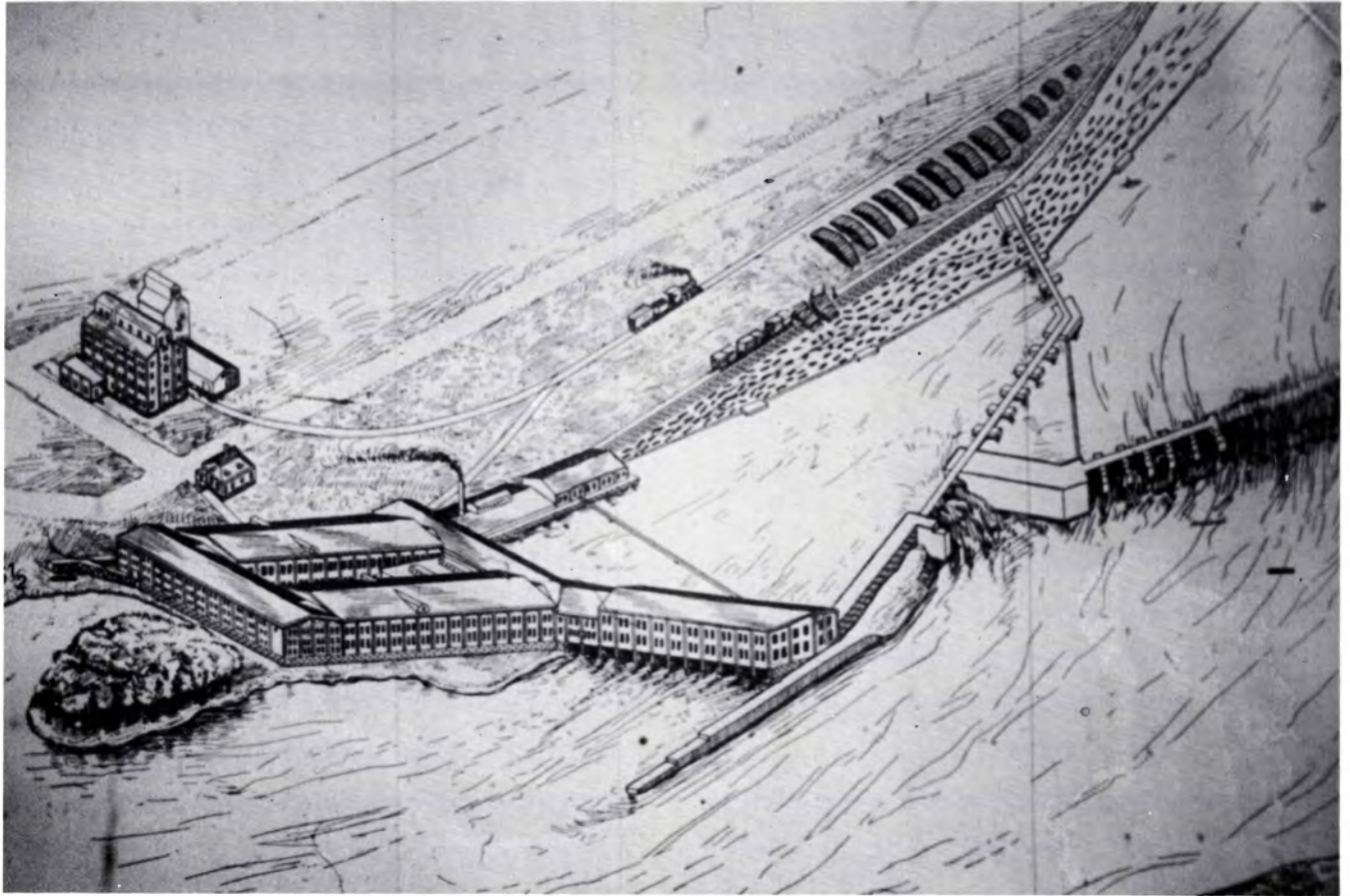
On New Year's Day, Mead met P.C.T. Diedrich at the Witter Hotel. Diedrich said he had built all the dams up and down the river, told Mead how he constructed them and convinced Mead to hire him to take charge of building a dam.

Mead had decided to build the dam; now he had to decide how. "It was a big river and the rapids were terrific," said George Mead's daughter, Emily Baldwin Bell. "He used to wake up in the middle of the night. He'd go and sit on the rock by the rapids. One time he was sitting, looking how they'd build a dam. 'Well, we don't have to go straight. We can take it

across to the island and turn it.' he thought."

"And he didn't have enough money," recounted Mrs. Bell. "Something like \$25,000 soon gave out. Down to Milwaukee he went to see the bankers. He'd borrow from one and go back and worry. Then he'd borrow from another to pay off the first. All the bankers in Milwaukee liked him. He always paid off on time but he was scared out of his wits. He had an ulcer. When he came home at night, he'd be so worried and tired we were not allowed to make noise. Father intended all the time to go back with his brother in the furniture store but he'd worked so hard on the paper mill, he kind of wanted to stay."

From it all emerged a new leader, a man who would combine the brave vision of Johnson with the practical sense of Witter. Maybe his arm had to be twisted a little out of joint but nevertheless George Mead agreed to leave Rockford furniture behind and place his fate with the hydrophilic mediopolis pundits called "River City."



May 28, 1903, artist's conception of Consolidated mill. The Jackson Flour Milling Co. is at upper left.

Obstacles Removed

Upon her husband's death, Nels Johnson's widow, Nellie, almost immediately did what he never would have done: She cashed in \$30,000 worth of Consolidated stock.

In order to pay Mrs. Johnson, the company, rich in water rights and property but poor in monetary assets, had to borrow \$25,000. It also sold \$5,000 worth of stock to George McMillan, T.W. Brazeau and its former adversary, B.R. Goggins. Another \$10,000 soon was sold to H.G. Freeman.

On April 28, a man very recently an Illinois furniture dealer—George Mead, son-in-law of J.D. Witter—was elected to the board of directors. Mead offered a resolution to raise the total company stock from \$300,000 to \$400,000. Of that, Mead wanted \$201,000 designated to the Witter estate, split between Mrs. Witter, Isaac Witter and Mead's wife, Ruth. It also was voted to sell more Johnson stock.

By the May 15, 1903, annual meeting, the 12 stockholders included W.D. Connor and F. Pomainville. George Mead had assumed a leadership role. Anything major accomplished after this time can be attributed to his

initiative.

A special "paper mill issue" of the Wood County Reporter for May 28 celebrated the prospects of the new industry with dramatic typography, illustration and prose. "For the past 20 years, the city has been handicapped on account of the difficulty of settling the litigation, which prevented the development of the water power of the Wisconsin River here. Fortunately for the city's future, this obstacle has been removed. Now we can boast of a water power, which will be harnessed in a few months, that cannot be equalled by any other city in the United States."

The Reporter said \$700,000 would be invested in a "mammoth" and "magnificent" paper mill expected to employ more than 200. Plans drawn by J.C. Jacobson included a wood room, a pulp and power house, a beater room, and engine room and two 130-inch-wide Beloit paper machines.

Board officers at the end of May were President MacKinnon, Vice President Connor, Treasurer I.P. Witter and Secretary Mead. On June 2, Mead also was elected manager at an annual salary of \$3,000.

Hearing Voices

As George W. Mead sat one 1903 morning at 5 a.m. watching the excavation for the tailrace of the paper mill then under construction, a voice seemed to speak to him from behind his back. "Why don't you build your dam on the top of those granite rocks of that island coming right down to the powerhouse instead of going straight across the river?" Mead turned to see who was doing the talking. There was no one else present but Mead remembered what old Billy Brown had said to him a year before. Old Billy had suggested the new Consolidated Water Power and Paper Co. might use the island Mead was staring at as part of their dam.

Mead studied the situation for another hour and went to his office to call John Jacobson, his engineer. "Mr. Mead, you must not change now," said Jacobson. "We have all the blueprints made."

Mead told Jacobson to think about it for an hour or two and come back to the office at 10 o'clock. After he went home for his own breakfast and returned to the office, Mead found Jacobson full of enthusiasm for the new plan. "I think that scheme saved us not less than a quarter million dollars and perhaps a full year of building time so it shows what thinking and studying a problem will do," wrote Mead in his 1950 memoirs.

It had been the idea of Nels Johnson, Consolidated's main proponent, to build the dam north of the Green Bay Railroad bridge. When Mead assumed control of the firm after Johnson's death, he, along with Jacobson and Leonard DeGuere, a new mill architect, decided to start the dam below the Green Bay bridge from the east side where the present permanent dam exists and go straight across the river to a canal then extant.

After Mead managed to get enough

money and credit to go ahead, "We realized we must get all the dam and powerhouse completed before the ice breakup in 1904 so from the very beginning we rushed everything as fast as possible."

Work started in the spring of 1903.

Actual construction began with a 390-foot coffer dam built by Peter Diederich, who also had installed dams at Nekoosa, South Centralia, Biron, Plover and Stevens Point. "The grand chute, the whirlpool in which so many men have lost their lives, has at last been conquered," wrote the Reporter.

The first piers were to be of rock. There was no good "Portland" cement at that time to make concrete so the dam had to be of timber cribs filled with stones.

A small railway with an engine and cars were filled at the tailrace excavation and puffed their way across the dam to piers where the stone was dumped. A crane that proved to be the wonder of local inhabitants lifted the heavier rock up into the cars.

It was a beehive of action, said Mead, night and day in the tailrace and 10 hours a day on the other work. "We paid the men 15 cents an hour and had no difficulty in getting all the men we could use."

Mead said the dike on the west side was built "very strong." The Wisconsin Central railroad, said Mead, "did a marvelous job, bringing in thousands of carloads of material, scraping it off with mechanical scrapers, and charging a very reasonable price per yard. They made a cut in their line near Marshfield and used that material for us. It was our very salvation for we had the dam completed and all the dike well done and ripped before the spring of 1904 at which time a big flood came down with the running of the ice and we had to take care of it."

Green Bay & Western

Early in 1904, Mead heard another voice as he was standing on a pier at the west end of the dam looking out into the flood waters. "What in the name of hell do you think you are doing, young man?"

This time when Mead turned around, he faced a man with shaggy black hair and a tremendous black mustache to whom he answered, "I am building a dam across the Wisconsin River."

"Yes," said the other, "and you are intending to set the water back onto the Green Bay & Western bridge which you have no right to do."

The man with the black mustache began swearing at Mead in a terrible way when a gust of wind and a lot of snow and rain dashed into his face. He looked toward the heavens and swore at the creator in terrible words, according to Mead.

"I stamped my foot and said, 'Down, down on your knees, man, you're praying, you're not swearing.' He sized me up with a general look, whirled around and left me."

When Mead got back to his office, he had a telephone call from Rapids attorney Goggins who said a Mr. Frank Seymour had just called about the recent dam conversation. Goggins said, "I think you need not worry, George, but when you get to it come down and talk to me."

Mead did not know but was about to find out what Nels Johnson had neglected to tell him, that his company had no right to back water onto the Green

Bay land.

The next morning Mead had a telegram from Mr. Jordan, president of the Green Bay railroad, asking whether he and Mr. Seymour could meet in Mead's office. "Yes, I am here and will be glad to see you," said Mead.

The two men came in, shook hands and visited for a while. Jordan asked Mead if he would walk with him up to the Green Bay tracks. There, he said, "Mr. Mead, if you should put water back on our land it would require us to build a dike pretty much all across the river at this point. Who do you thing ought to pay for that dike?"

"I think I should pay for it, Mr. Jordan," said Mead.

"Oh, you do. Well, if we should build a dike, we would have to riprap it with stone, which would run into a good many cords and quite a lot of money. Who do you think ought to pay for that work?"

"I think I should pay for that work," said Mead.

"Well," said Jordan, "I don't think we'll have any trouble."

In accepting the responsibility for preventing damage to the railroad bridge, Mead was able to continue with the dam.

Repaying the cooperation of the railroad, said Mead, "I immediately began shipping everything possible via Green Bay & Western and for at least forty years following I saw to it that the Green Bay had everything possible that we could give to it."

An Old Dam Picture



CPI

This picture will undoubtedly be of great interest to many of the people who worked during the construction of the Wisconsin Rapids dam. The little engine, known as the dinky in those days, was used for transferring rocks that were blasted from the tailrace. In the locomotive engine is our old friend, George Lynn, who was head pipefitter at the Wisconsin Rapids Division for many years.

Albert Bunde, one of our local policemen, was the brakeman on this switch engine. Henry Hahner, who is general construction foreman on the digester building at this time, admits that he stole many a ride from one end of the dam to the other. We also see the derricks swinging the trays of rock from the pits to the cars. The man that had charge of dumping these trays was Mr. Gus Neiman, a grinderman at the Wisconsin Rapids Division at the present time. It might also be well to say that Mr. Neiman is the man that owns these pictures.

The old landmarks on the east side of the river are very plainly seen, the first one the old Roenius Foundry, and the second, the Pioneer Pulp Mill that made such a beautiful fire some years ago. It is also quite interesting to see that most of the houses on the east bank of the river have been completely changed and remodelled since that time.

Gus Neiman, when giving these pictures to the editor said, "By gee whizz, the time flies like the dickens already."

Consolidated News, 1926

New Generation

Money for building had been obtained by mortgage bonds to John McNaughton and Chas. S. Dickinson of Appleton, based on a series of 250 bonds of \$1,000 each from the Commercial National Bank.

Although a deluge of rain in September destroyed part of the coffer dam, the paper mill and finishing room had been roofed, and the wood and beater rooms stood ready for roofing. In October, the Reporter said that more than 60 carloads of clay were being shipped each day from Marshfield, on the Wisconsin Central, for the Consolidated dike. "It is very interesting to watch the workmen and see how easily they handle large rock weighing tons. With the aid of the immense derricks and steam power, a great amount of rock is elevated from the pit each day."

Apparently, work went on seven days a week. Said the Reporter, "The only religious part of the work on Sunday is the soft tones of the bell on the dummy engine."

By November, the coffer dam had been repaired and completed across the "Old Rablin slough." The "stone dam" was progressing rapidly. Guard locks and gates had been placed in the east end.

During the damming, a curious mishap punctuated the east-bank calm. County Treasurer Searls, Henry Demitz and "Cashier" Miller had been standing outside talking "when a five-pound rock came whizzing through the air, struck the street and then bounded with great force through the window of the First National Bank and landed on the desk." The missile had come from a blast at the dam site.

A more profound event sobered the Christmas season for many. On December 15, the life of yet another original participant in Consolidated ended when George Hoskinson, former owner of the Pioneer pulp mill and a signer of the 1894 incorporation, died of a heart attack. Born in Akron, Ohio, May 17, 1836, of English parents, Hoskinson moved with them to Beloit in the 1840s. After his 1856 graduation from Beloit College, Hoskinson entered the "mercantile" trades in Chicago and Green Bay.

Cast, however, for a professional career, Hoskinson put his "fine education, gentle breeding and courteous address" to work in 1869 by purchasing half-interest in the Green Bay Gazette, which he made into what has been called the first daily paper in Green Bay.

In 1875, Hoskinson was appointed U.S. consul to Jamaica, before joining son-in-law, Bertin Ramsey, at Grand Rapids in 1887 as a partner in the Pioneer pulp mill. "Scholarly, sympathetic and chivalrous to all, he has been the same quiet, loyal citizen, neighbor and friend," eulogized the Reporter. "His life was the very pattern of domesticity and, in all his social relation, he even demonstrated to the fullest the grand old name of 'gentleman.' "

The generation of Johnson, Witter and Hoskinson had passed away in the prolonged interval between idea and action. A new generation had arrived. Without the burden of failure, George Mead and his associates pressed ahead.

Before Christmas, Consolidated stock was raised to \$600,000.



George W. Mead

Mead's Ledger

George Mead found that the \$250,000 worth of pulpwood he had ordered the winter of 1903-04 had to be paid for about as fast as it arrived, and that it streamed in much faster than the money to pay for it. As Mead wondered what he was going to do next, letters began coming in from small banks all over Wisconsin, saying that John McNaughton, the Fox Valley paper financier, had recommended Consolidated for a loan and would Mead be interested in borrowing at 6 percent in amounts from \$5,000 to \$20,000. Mead accepted every offer for a loan. The total may have run as high as \$500,000.

In his pocket, Mead carried a small ledger showing the dates that the notes were due. About 10 days before the due date, he wrote the bank, stating that it held the Consolidated note and that he would have the balance and interest for it on the due date. Four out of five banks offered to renew the notes. Mead

accepted every offer for renewal. In this way, he met all obligations through 1904.

Mead said he got his advice on paying notes from an old banker friend, Mr. Alexander Forbes of Rockford, Ill., who told him never to go to a banker and say he could not pay his note. "George, if you cannot pay all of it, offer to pay 20 percent or 10 percent . . . Manage to get the money somewhere, even if you go to another bank and borrow it."

"I never confided in anyone what I had been doing," wrote Mead in 1950. "Bankers today would be appalled at the idea of loaning to a company for capital investment without any other security than my signature and Mr. F. MacKinnon's which was as worthless as mine. Isaac Witter would have clamped down on me in a rough way if he had known it. But, as Mr. McNaughton was back of me to such an extent, I could carry on and have no fear."

Paper City of the West

By January 1904, work on the Consolidated mill and dam was progressing rapidly. The Jan. 12 Reporter listed some of the developments: Cribs placed at the east end of the dam and planking of the sluiceways completed; track for the dummy engine laid the length of the dam; five stone piers completed; turbines set in concrete; an iron stock tank placed in position; No. 1 paper machine in place; all buildings completed except the pulp mill.

Wrote George Mead: "The winter of 1903-04 was desperately cold. We were building the big walls of the powerhouse and the south-east structure of the dam, and could not let the cement freeze, so we bought many carloads of cheap lumber and enclosed the space. We bought big wood-burning stoves and had men cut cord wood from an island we owned at the north, and we kept them going day and night. Of course, that saved a year of time but it did more than that because we could not leave the work partly finished and have a flood with ice dashing down the river and cutting out what we had already accomplished."

The construction was not without incident. Consistent with the early history of the company, misfortune was about to strike.

This time, the victim was the brother of architect J.C. Jacobson, Henry Jacobson, who fell off a plank into a vat of boiling water. He was taken to Dr. Rockwell's hospital, scalded from shoe tops to the waist. Jacobson, a native of Arkdale then engaged to be married, died.

The dam was called completed on March 29. Made of hemlock beams and stone-filled timber cribs, it measured 2,000 feet in length and was considered the largest in the state.

The mill itself approached completion on April 8, when it was visited in the company of C.G. Oberly, "superintendent," by a reporter who wrote: "Nothing has been spared in its construction and the best and latest devices

and improvements in papermaking machinery have been installed."

A story related to one of the firms merging into Consolidated appeared the same day.

Arthur Ramsey, manager of the Pioneer pulp mill, while clearing debris from the mill pond, lost his balance, fell into a sluice and was carried down the current of the river. The body was found the next day.

Ramsey was born in England January 10, 1871. In 1893, he moved to Appleton, where he worked for Edward & Orbison. Later, he went to the state of Washington. After the 1903 death of his father-in-law, George Hoskinson, Ramsey came to Grand Rapids to run the pulp mill in its last days.

At Consolidated on April 26, George Mead opened a valve and the first water wheel turned.

"This is an eventful day in the history of Grand Rapids as she bids fair in the future to rank as the paper city of the west," wrote the Reporter.

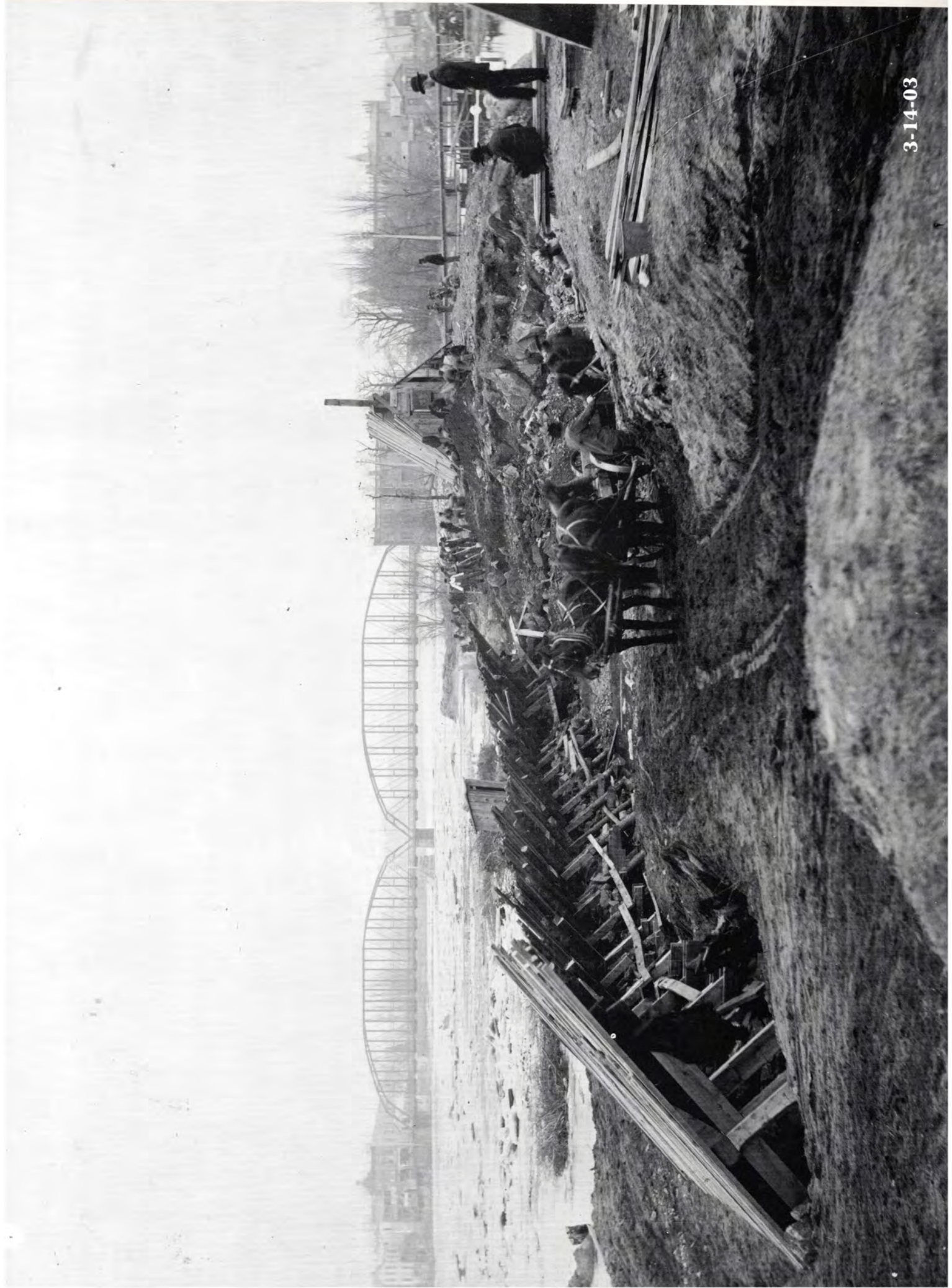
The following Monday, the grinders were to be started. According to Mead, the first paper machine started up on June 1 and shipped the first carload to the Los Angeles Times about June 3.

The Reporter on May 5 anticipated the event.

In all these great movements of the century, paper has been the means of transmitting intellectual force; it has been the messenger and herald of better things than the world had known. Its history has always been closely linked with that of man; it has been the pace-maker of his progress, in the realm of mechanics and of economics as well as in music, literature and art. They [paper and man] have come up together out of the past; they are associated in noble and uplifting work in the present; together they go forward to such broader fields of usefulness as the future may disclose.

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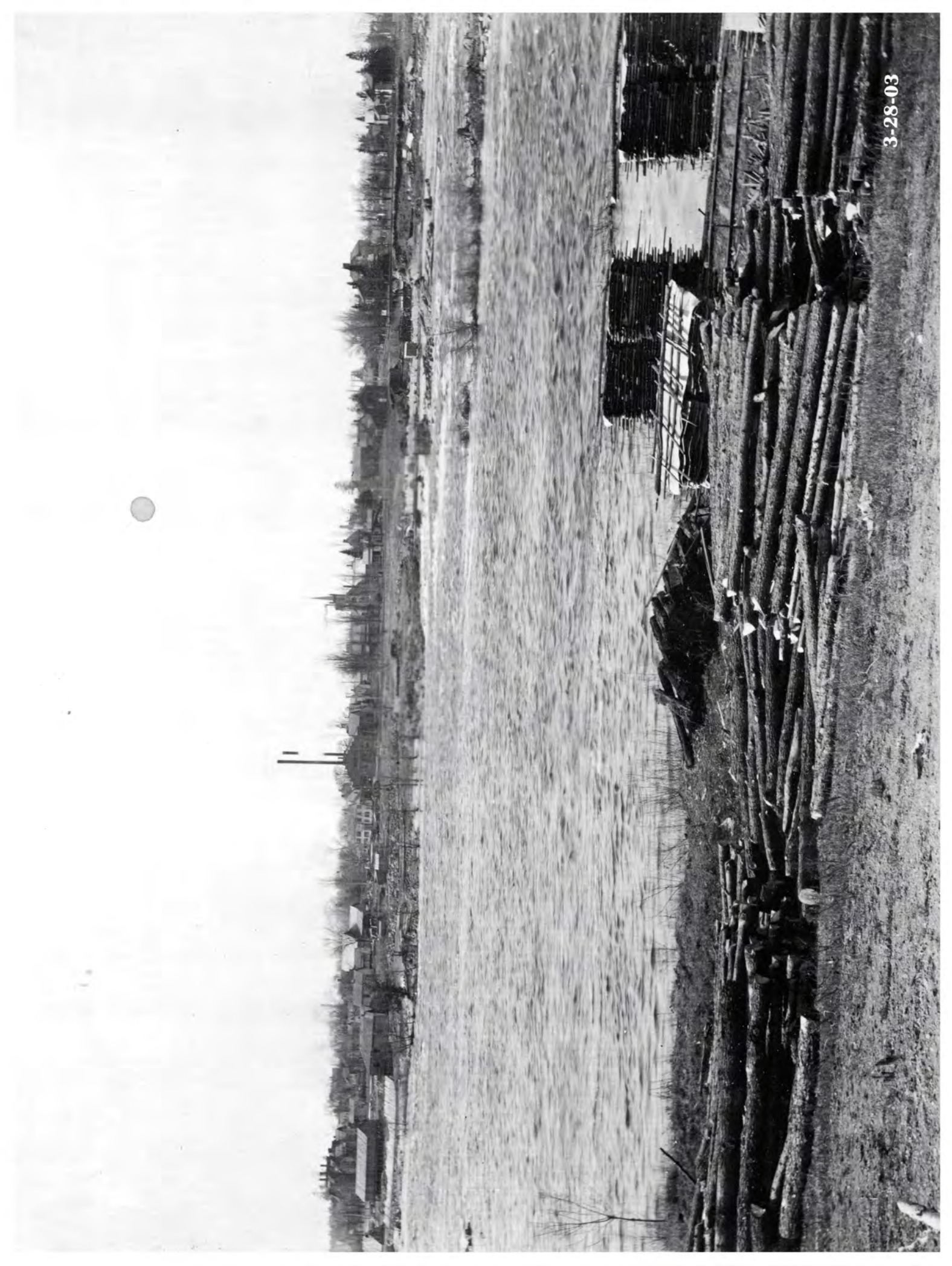




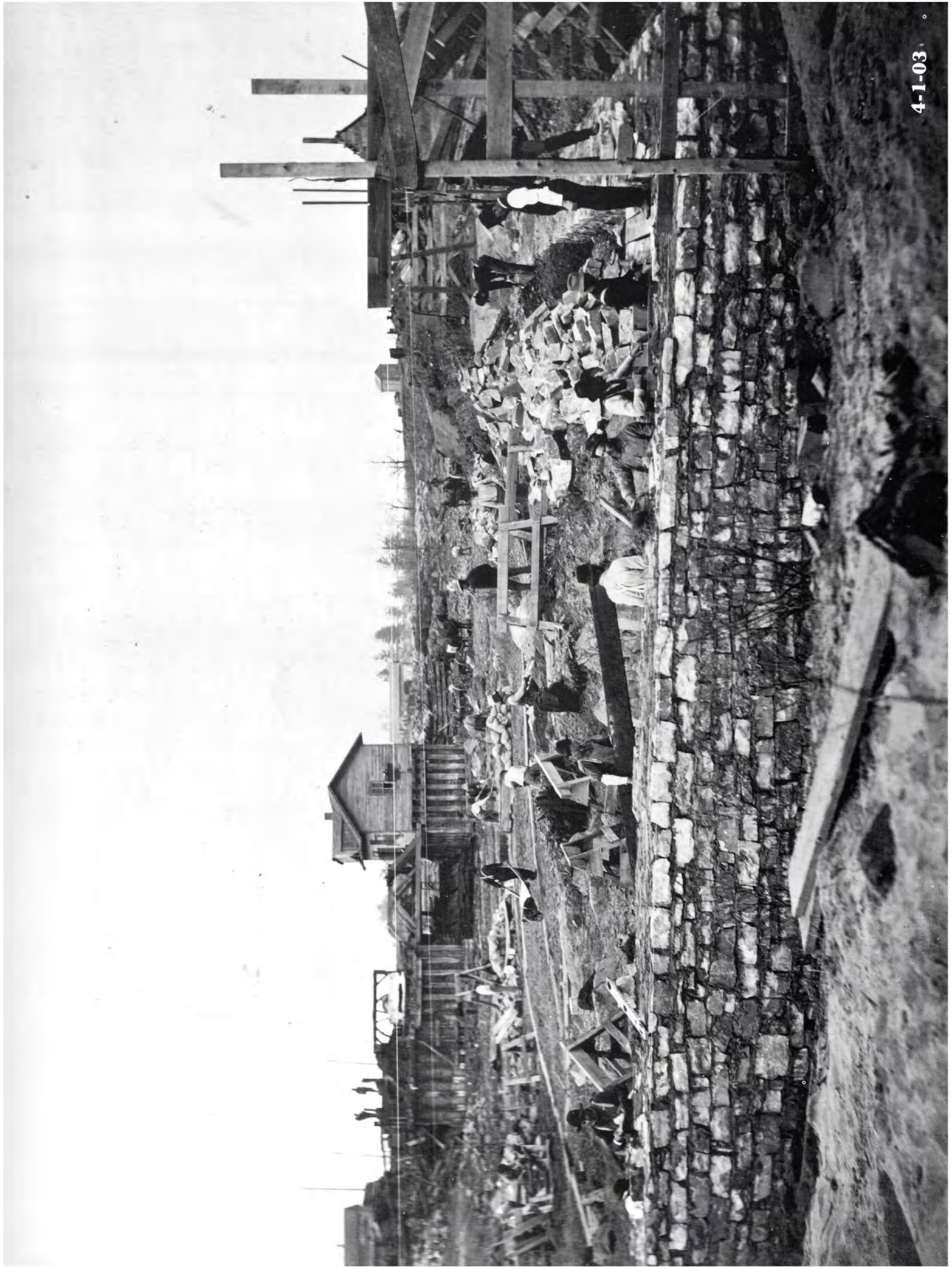
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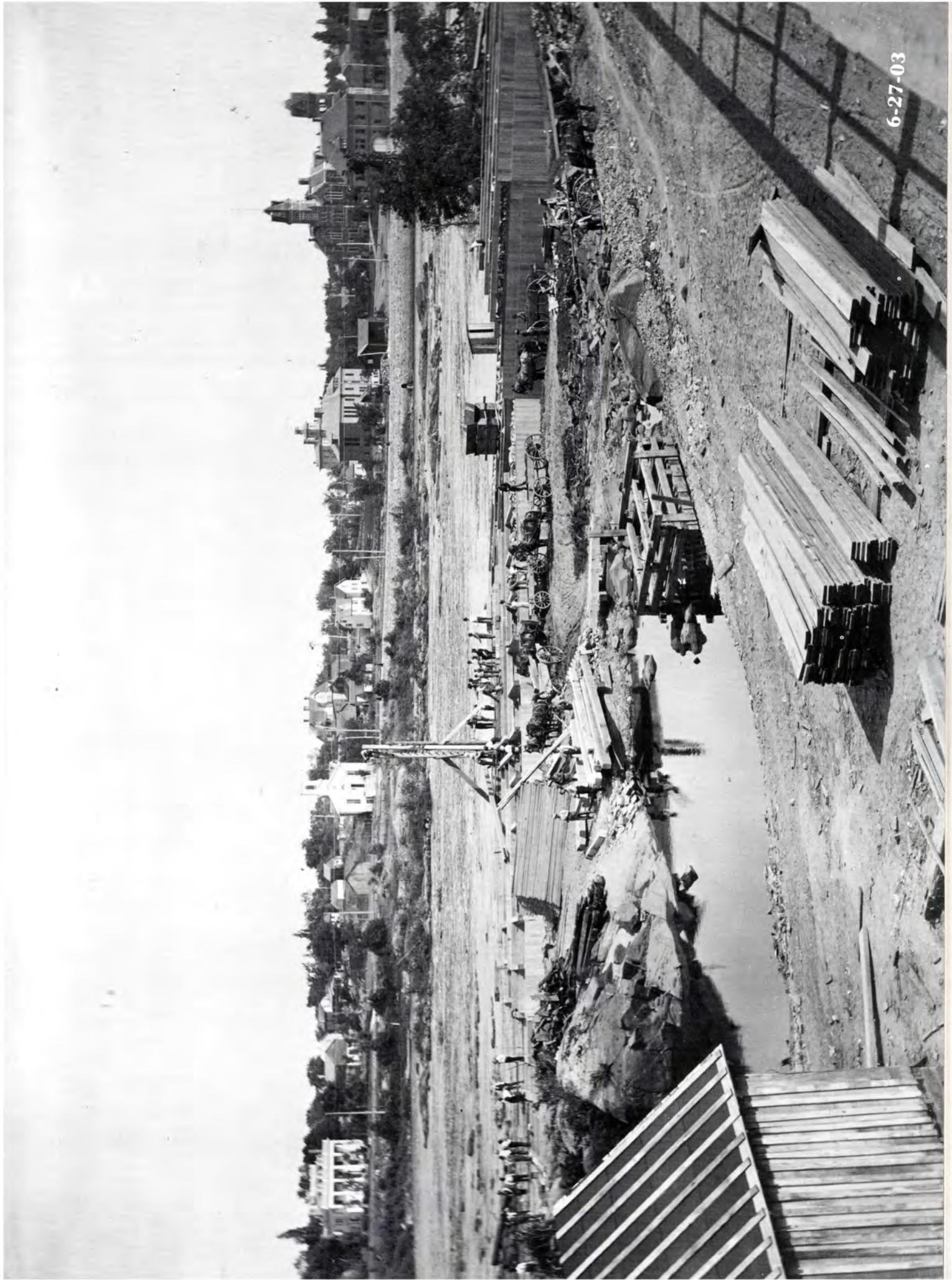
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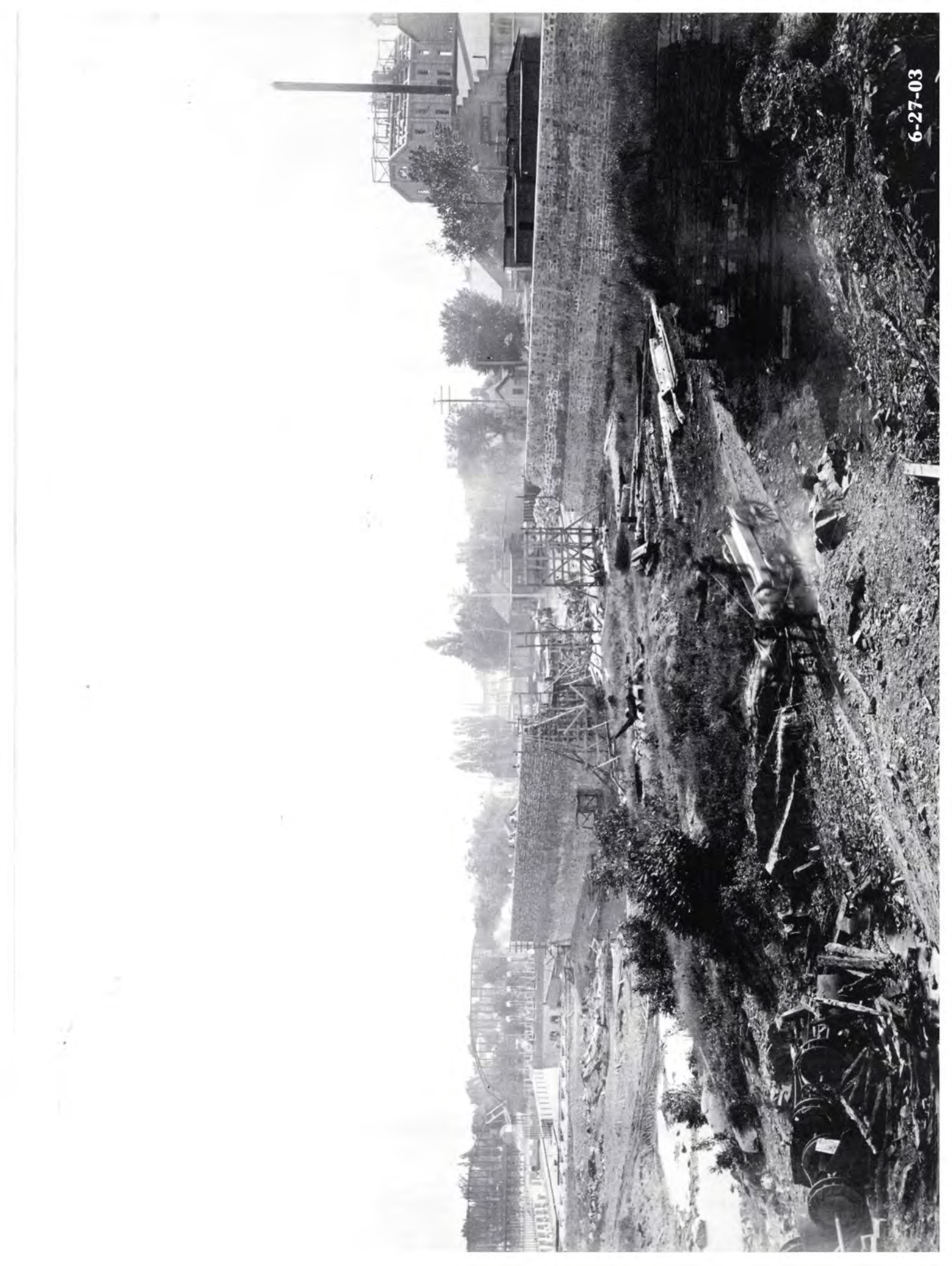
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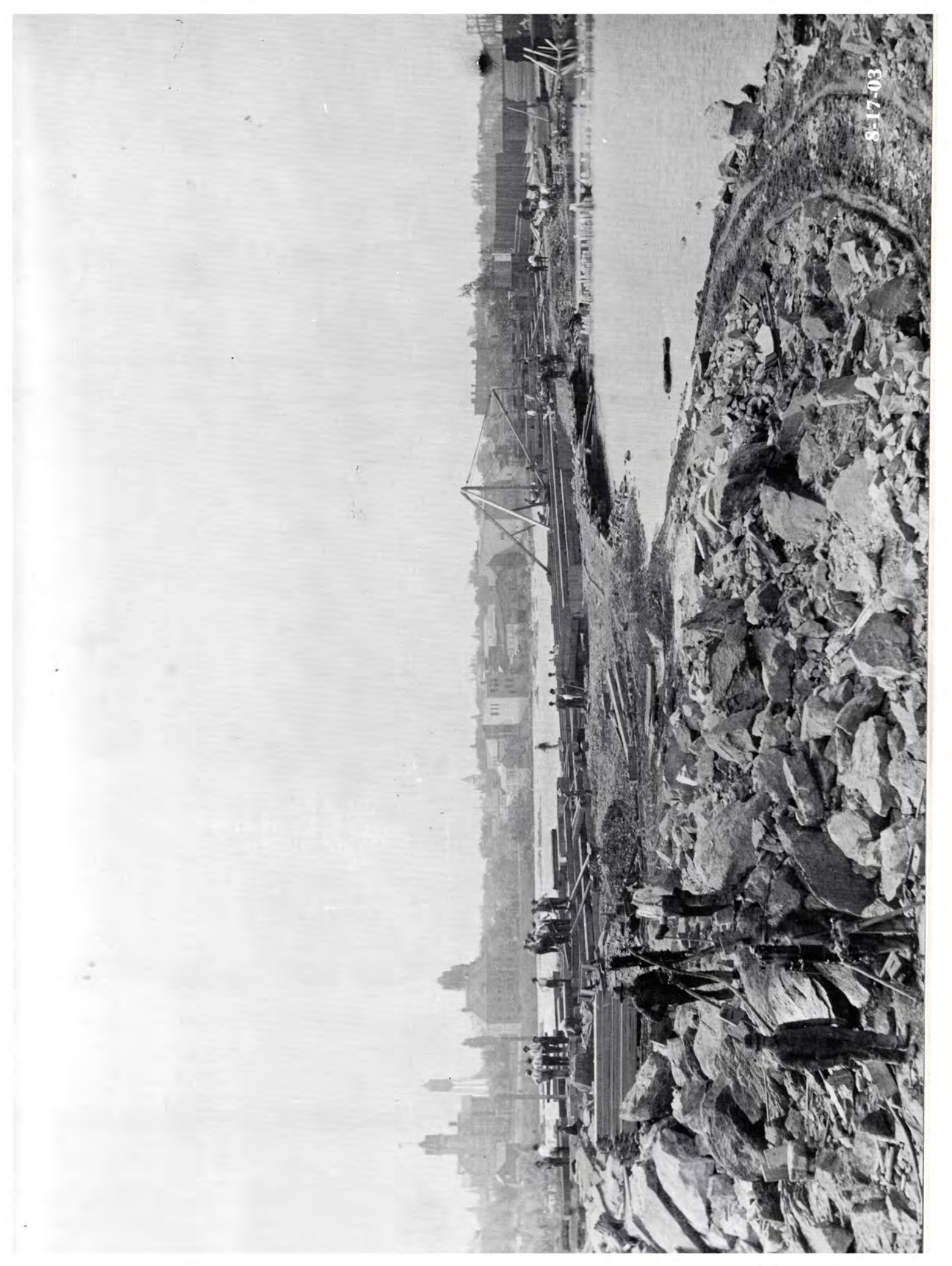




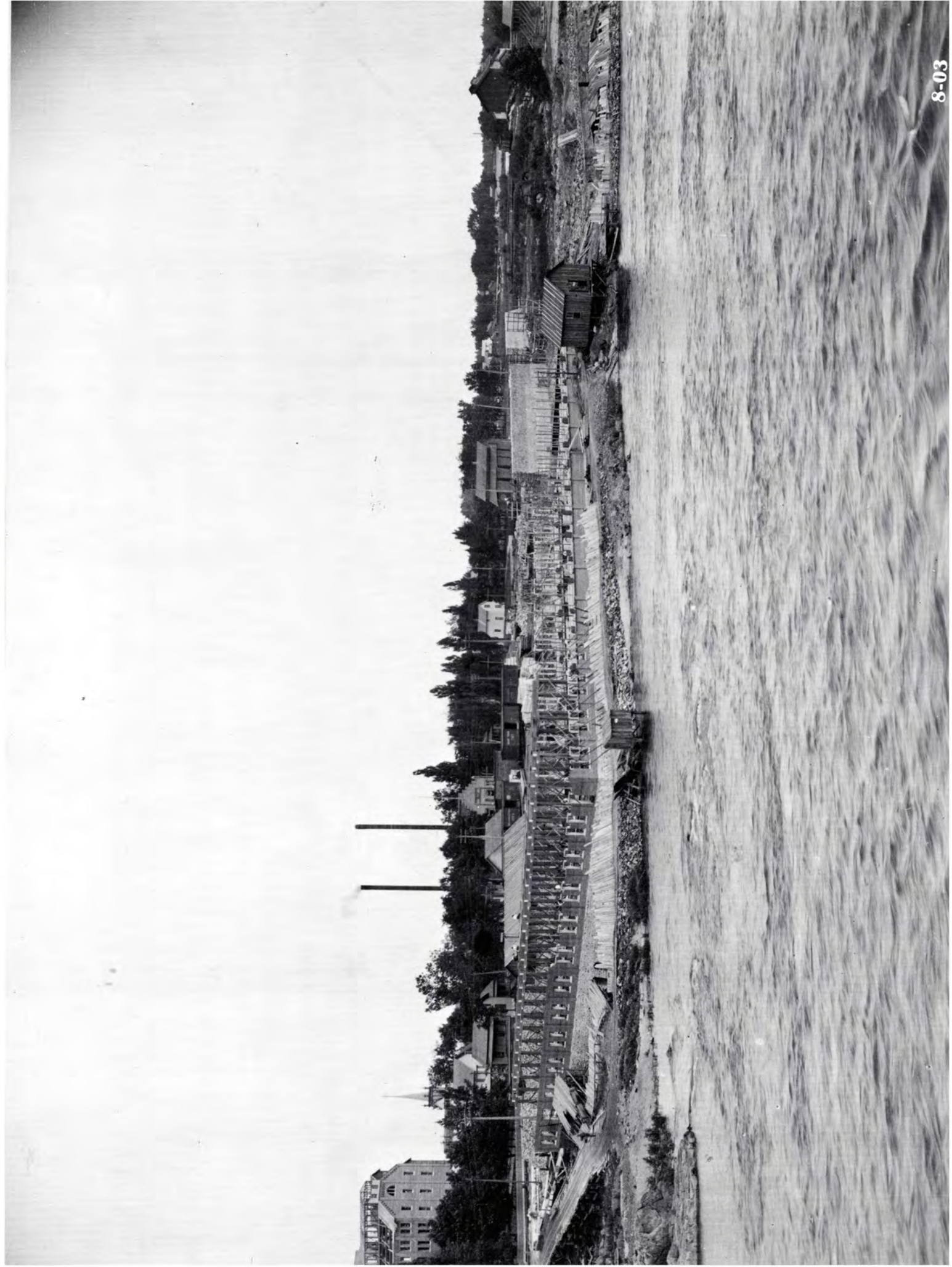
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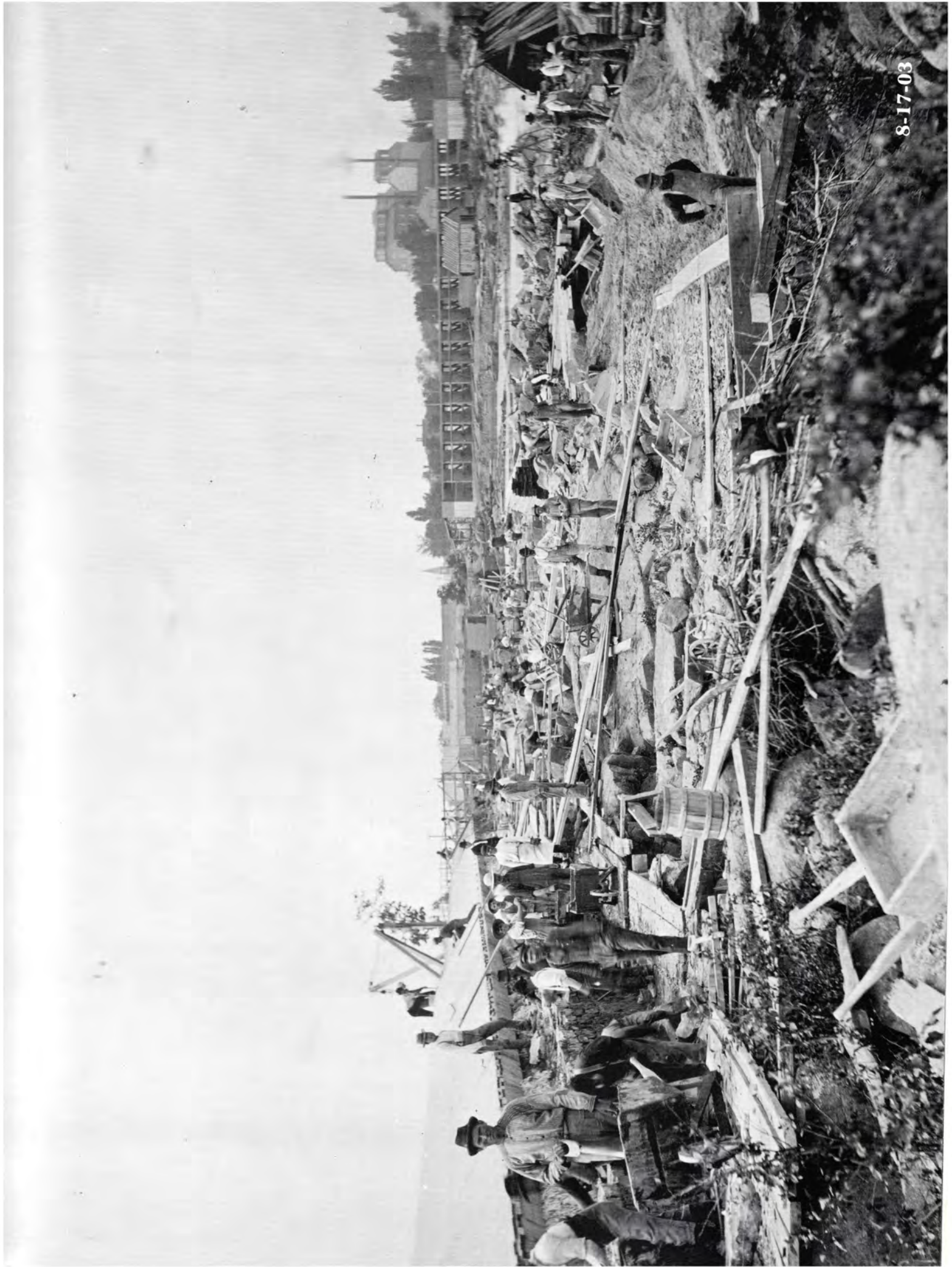


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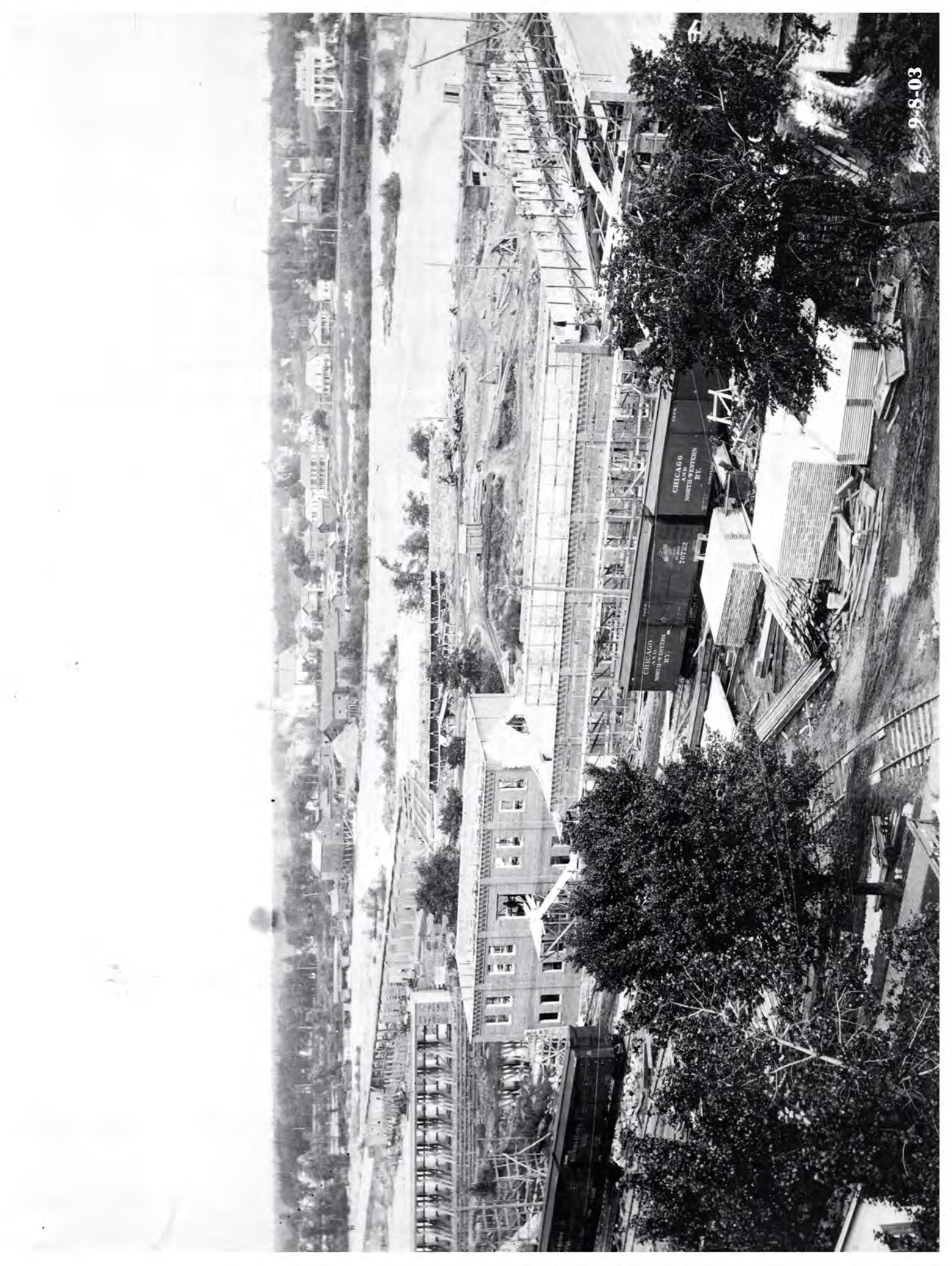


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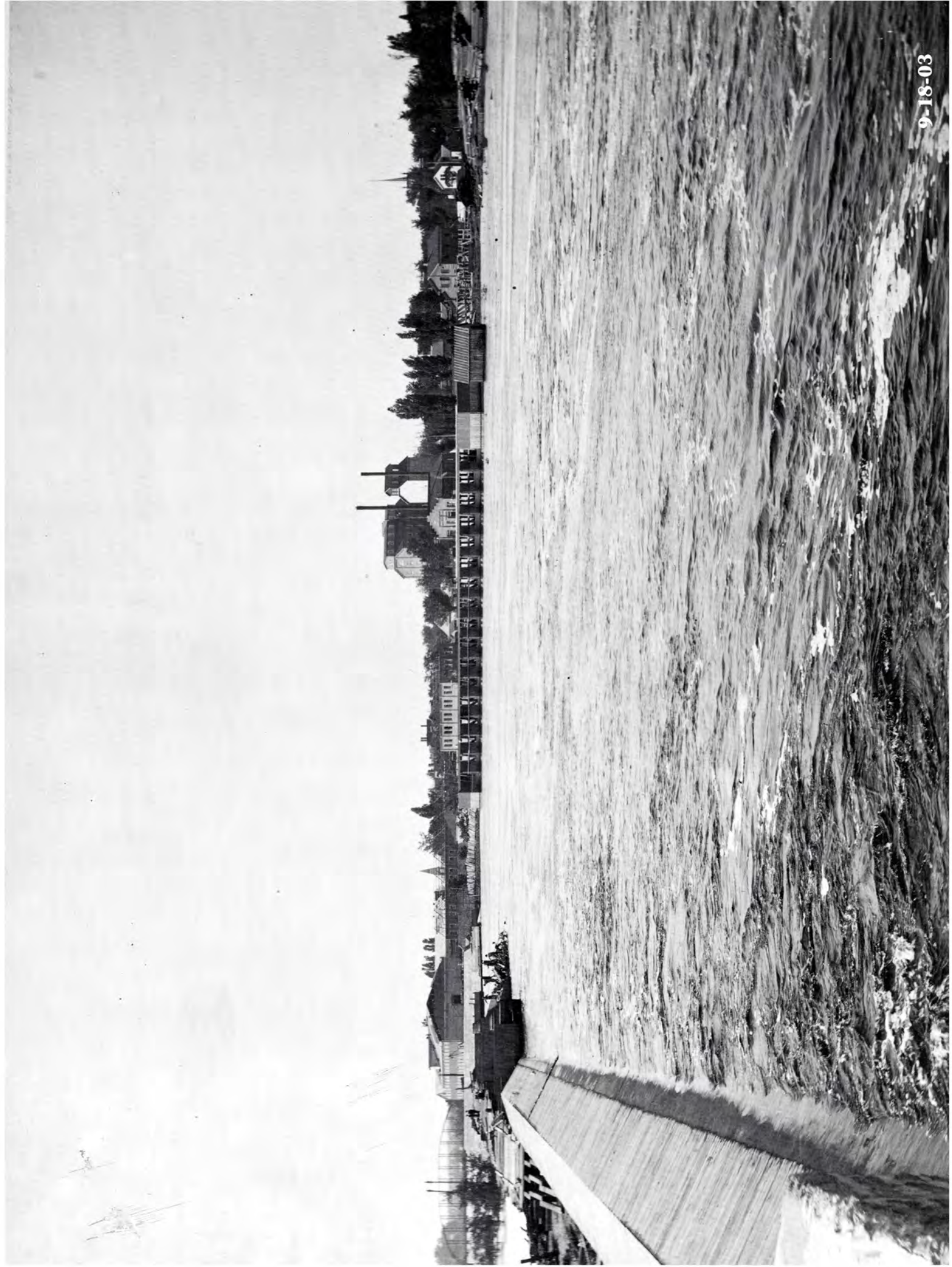


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9-18-03

Wisconsin River

By George W. Mead

The Wisconsin River is the greatest and most valuable servant of Consolidated Water Power & Paper company. I saw it first in the early summer of 1891, when I was twenty years of age. I had been sent up into central Wisconsin on a business errand and arrived in Wisconsin Rapids one June afternoon on the Green Bay Railroad. Walking toward the town, I heard a great roar of waters and suddenly there came to my view the wonderful rapids of the "old Wisconsin." I stopped on the bank near an old pulp mill,—the municipal swimming pool is there now,—and watched the flood of water fighting its way over the big rock that I later learned was called the "Hog's Back," which lay in the bed of the river where the center cement pier of our dam now stands. The river was running at flood stage and the view was magnificent. I felt spell-bound with a strange fascination as I watched the fury of the waters striking in their very madness the big rocks and dashing up great showers of spray and foam. I knew nothing about water power and little dreamed that it would one day in the future become my task to harness and set to work that majestic force of the river. I went on my way as one who had been changed by some new experience. Only a few times have I been so impressed. Until that day I had not realized that nature held such great power and beauty in her hands.

In 1902 I again came to Wisconsin Rapids shortly after the death of Mr. J.D. Witter who in company with Mr. Nels Johnson had acquired the several small water powers formerly owned by various corporations. They had planned to develop all these small powers into one big power under the name of Consolidated Water Power Co. They had purchased all the shore line on both sides of the river and all the islands, literally owning the shores and bed of the river from Wisconsin Rapids to Biron. That summer Mr. Johnson took me almost daily up the banks of the Wisconsin as far as Biron and back on the other side, visiting the beautiful islands and measuring the height that the waters would reach after the dam should be built. Death removed Mr. Johnson very suddenly that Fall and it then fell to my lot to carry out the long delayed project of building the dam and the paper mill. To assist me in the work I selected a group of honest and rugged men of experience in river work and in mill building. We started early in 1903 and had the big dam and the mill buildings all completed by the first of June, 1904. Since that time the two water powers at Biron and Stevens Point have been joined to our properties, so the waters of the Wisconsin on their way to the sea serve our Company three times as they turn the great turbines in the power houses at Stevens Point, Biron and Wisconsin Rapids. From the windows of my office I can always see the glistening water of the Wisconsin and again from my home on the little island known as Belle Isle the river talks to me as it flows along and falls in cascades over the rocks. Never at rest, never quiet, the Wisconsin is a thing of life, of movement and of beauty.

Consolidated News, April, 1926

The Consolidated

By George W. Mead, President

Our Port Arthur paper mill is the product in visible form of a quarter of a century of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. history. This magnificent creation of 1927 is indeed a far cry from the ambitions and ideals of 1902, when plans were laid for the building in Wisconsin Rapids of our first paper mill. But anyone who is well acquainted with Consolidated men and its mills would know at once that this is a Consolidated institution. It looks like Consolidated just as a child resembles its natural parent. And we may all be well proud of this fact, for it is indeed a well formed and comely child. This is the thought that kept running through my mind when I visited the new mill one day in the last week of June. And I felt somewhat as a father might feel who had seen his infant in its babyhood and then after a separation of years had met the matured child. For I had not visited Port Arthur since January, and the five intervening months from then to late June had matured the first beginnings into a complete paper mill, all now in readiness for the turn of wheels and machinery.

"To consolidate" means to make firm and solid, it also means to become united. From the day when we first called our Company "Consolidated" to the present day of triumph in our new achievement at Port Arthur, our Company has lived up to the full meaning of its name. In the early days of Wisconsin Rapids the Wisconsin River flowed unrestrained in its fall of thirty-two feet in the beautiful cascade which gave the little city its name of Rapids. Anon came builders of sawmills, of flour mills, of foundries and other manufactories. Each claimed a share of the falls along the bank where his factory stood. And thus many small water-powered plants were created which

very inadequately developed the power of the river. So many men could not get along in harmony when the rights of each were measured in gallons of the river's flow, and very naturally quarrels and lawsuits followed as a consequence. One time in the early eighteen nineties, Mr. Moses Hooper, an attorney, now living in Oshkosh in his ninety-fifth year, upon being consulted by one of the litigants made the remark: "You men will spend fortunes in fighting. You can make fortunes by consolidating your interests and developing one power out of the many separately owned powers." They took his advice to unite the powers but unfortunately did not follow his path of peace. Consolidated Water Power Company was formed, but nothing more than that was accomplished until every one of the original owners had sold out his interest or had died. Mr. Thos. E. Nash sold his share in 1901 to J.D. Witter and Nels Johnson, the two last remaining partners of the original group. Mr. Witter died in March, 1902, leaving Nels Johnson alone to carry on the hopes and ideals.

Early in the spring of that year, the writer of this article came to Wisconsin Rapids, intending to remain only a few weeks and then to return to his own affairs in Rockford, Illinois. Nels Johnson called on him daily, twice a day, hourly, urging him to join in finding a way to raise the necessary money to build the dam and paper mill; for Mr. Johnson believed a paper mill was a necessary adjunct to the power development. We studied maps together, we walked along the banks of the river on both sides from Wisconsin Rapids to Biron, we visited the islands, and we made plans of dam and mill. We interested George M. Hill, Chas. F. Kruger, F. MacKinnon, George B.

MacMillan, Hiram G. Freeman, and several others, who pledged all the money they had, all they could borrow, all their friends had and all their friends could borrow, and we were just on the eve of beginning the actual work of construction when we were met with another catastrophe.

Nels Johnson had gone to Wilmington, Delaware, to purchase two paper machines, which we all thought was the first important thing to do. On the second day after he left home we received a telegram from the proprietor of the hotel in Wilmington, stating that Nels Johnson had died very suddenly in the night. This seemed to be the climax of the failure of the Consolidated idea. All had quit or were dead. We were offered \$50,000 for the power by another group of men, successful paper manufacturers, and almost accepted it. We came together in a meeting, and it was Mr. George M. Hill who said, "Let's go on."

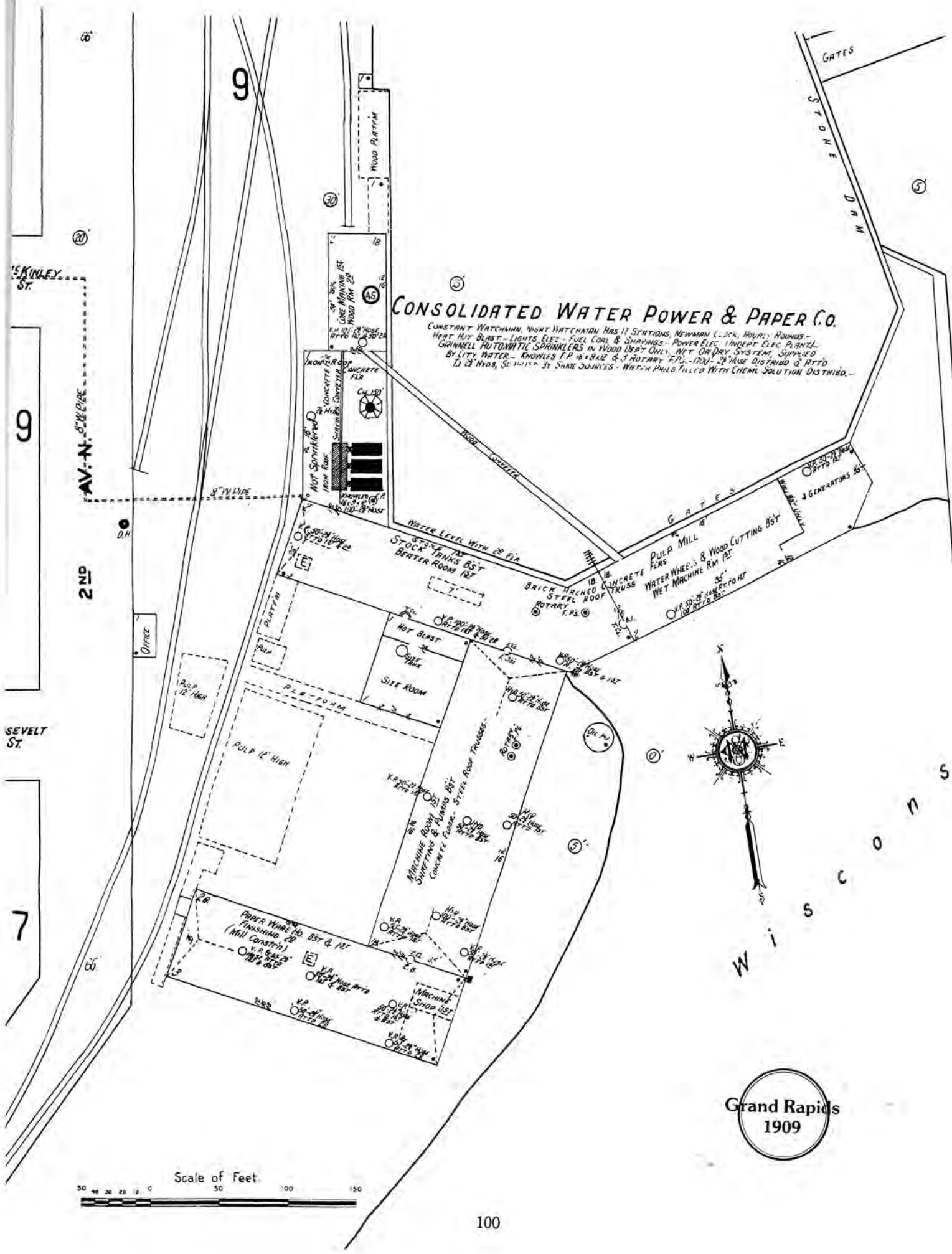
It was a tremendous task, this "going on," much more than we knew, and almost too much for the youthful and inexperienced men who tackled it. Winter had come, and there was not much that we could do in the actual construction until the warm days of spring should arrive. But we developed an organization of men, with Pete Diedrick in charge of the dam, Billy Ule in charge of stone and concrete, Henry Hahner and Louis Ule bossing the buildings, V.D. Simons in the electrical work, George Lynn, Henry Binneboose, Alfred Rember and many others in various departments. We were successful in picking strong and capable men, experienced in the work for which they were appointed. We adopted the same course we have followed in the Port Arthur project, making no contracts, but simply purchasing materials and machinery and employing men to build and erect.

John C. Jacobson, a millwright and practical building engineer, entered the service of the company as our only engineer and superintendent of construction, at a salary of fifteen hundred dollars a year. The spring of 1903 opened up early, and the work was in full blast by the middle of March. A year later we raised the water above the new dam, and on June 1, 1904, just fourteen months from the start of the work, we made and shipped the first car of paper.

The years passed with their earnest labor, their worries, and their successes; new and ever greater tasks confronted us, duties that we could not avoid if we would. These tasks added Biron, Stevens Point and Interlake. Port Arthur is another link in the chain and also came as a task and a duty which we felt we must accept and accomplish.

And so I say again that Consolidated has expressed itself in the Port Arthur mill. This time we have had such men as W.F. Thiele, R.L. Kittell, E.B. Redford, J.E. Schnabel, C.E. Jackson, G.C. Schneider, W.E. Beadle, Thos. Utegaard, H.D. Wake, Albert Zager, F.A. Drumb, Henry Hahner, Max Janz, Alex Thrasher, Wm. Harper, Otto Mittelsteadt, Peter Diesberg, Earl McCourt, R.G. Edwards, Erle Smith, and many others, who have given their minds to this fine undertaking. Consolidated brains conceived and planned it, Consolidated men built it. No famous and high salaried engineers with their expensive staffs had a hand in it. It is entirely our own. The wisdom that came from long experience in practical paper making was the guide in this creation. It is a composite wisdom, for many true men have given their full share. It is that genius, that talent, that wisdom, joined with much labor, all "made firm and solid," become united,"—Consolidated.

Consolidated News: May, 1927



CONSOLIDATED WATER POWER & PAPER CO.

CONSTANT WATCHMAN, NIGHT WATCHMAN HAS 11 STATIONS, NEWMAN L-24, HOURS ROOMS -
HEAT HOT BLAST - LIGHTS ELEC - FUEL COAL & SHAPINGS - POWER ELEC. UNDER ELEC. PLANT -
GAINELL AUTOMATIC SPRINKLERS IN WOOD YARD ONLY. W.T. OR DRY SYSTEM, SUPPLIED
BY CITY WATER - KNOWLES F.P. 18' X 14' & 3' ROTARY F.P.S. - 1700' - 28' HISE DISTANCE & RTTO
TO 28' HYD. S. WHICH BY SHAPE SHAPINGS - WATCH PILES FILLED WITH CHEM. SOLUTION DISTIBD.

Grand Rapids
1909

George W. Mead

George Wilson Mead, President, Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co., was born in Chicago, February 22, 1871, the year of the Great Chicago fire. His father, Darius R. Mead, was a lumber merchant, one of the prominent men who helped rebuild Chicago from its mass of ruins.

George Mead attended school in Oak Park, Illinois in the primary grades, until the family moved to Galena and from there to Rockford, Illinois, where he completed his grade school work and was graduated from Rockford High School with the class of 1888. His father died when Mr. Mead was seven years old.

Upon graduating from high school he taught in the Rockford Public Schools for one semester. He then entered Beloit College where he remained one year. Transferring to the University of Wisconsin, he completed his college course, taking the Bachelor of Arts degree with the class of 1894. He earned his own way through college, absenting himself from the University two years in order to earn funds to go on in his course. Thus he emerged from college, not owing money but with a substantial bank account, the possessor of a diploma which recorded him as one of the best students in the class. It should be remembered that a college training at that time was regarded more as an individual matter for the student to decide upon. The finishing of a man's education with a college degree was not taken as a matter of course.

Following his graduation, Mr. Mead hoped to receive a teaching position in the Rockford High School. However the position of Latin instructor which he wished to obtain was given to another, and he gave up teaching to engage in the furniture business with his brother, D. Raymond Mead, in Rockford, where they developed a splendid business.

On October 18, 1900, Mr. Mead married Ruth Emily Witter, daughter of Jere D. Witter, Wisconsin Rapids. Mr. and Mrs. Mead made their home in Rockford until early in 1902, when he was called to Wisconsin Rapids to assist in the business affairs left unfinished by the untimely death of J.D. Witter.

No biography of Mr. Mead would be complete without mentioning his outstanding courage, industry and public spirit. At the time that he undertook the development of the water power at Wisconsin Rapids and laid the foundation for the magnificent industry of which he has since been the head, he was only thirty-one years of age. Water power and paper manufacturing were absolutely new to him. He started practically alone to study and develop the plan that resulted in the first unit of the Consolidated system. Before the first wheel started, he was a master of the paper industry. He knew that the industry from the standpoint of water power, generators, paper machines, raw products and markets, and it was not long before he was a recognized authority in the paper trade. The growth of the Consolidated Company is not due to accident or luck. It is due almost wholly to the untiring efforts of one man who sat at his desk early and late studying the problems which confronted the industry. That man was George W. Mead. When he had mastered a problem he had the courage to develop it, very often in the face of tremendous opposition.

The untiring devotion to business did not allow him to lose sight of the needs of his community. The successful business man is often charged with lack of imagination and with being prosaic and inartistic. Mr. Mead is a refutation of this charge. The beauty of the Consolidated Park and the surroundings of the Consolidated mill and a great deal of the beauty of Wisconsin Rapids is the direct product of his efforts. He was constantly looking for opportunities to improve his community and make it a better and happier place in which to live.

The addition of the Port Arthur Plant to the Consolidated system is but another result of his foresight and courage.—Theodore W. Brazeau.

Consolidated News: May, 1927

MEAD-WITTER WEDDING.

A Brilliant Society Event that has been the Center of Interest among Twin City People.

Perhaps the prettiest and most elaborate nuptial event which has ever taken place in Wood County was that which united in holy wedlock George Wilson Mead, of Rockford, Ill., and Ruth Emily Witter, of Grand Rapids, last Wednesday afternoon, Oct. 18th.

The wedding ceremony took place at the M.E. church, where from three hundred to four hundred guests had assembled on invitation of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jere Delos Witter.

The guests were met at the door by Master of Ceremonies E.T. Harmon and by him placed in charge of polite and courteous ushers, who escorted the guests to their seats.

The church was tastily decorated in green and white. The memorial window, as well as the railing near the altar was trimmed in smilax and white carnations. A bank of palms ornamented the north window and white screens draped with smilax partially concealed the orchestra.

At the appointed hour of five o'clock the Arion orchestra of Oshkosh, with Miss Katharine Roode of Stevens Point at the organ, announced the arrival of the wedding party. First came the present pastor and ex-pastor of the M.E. church, Rev. F.A. Nimits, of Grand Rapids and Rev. J.R. Reynolds, now of Waupaca. Then came the groom attended by Isaac P. Witter as groomsman, followed by the ushers, Geo. B. Nelson, of Amherst, Glenn H. Williams, of Grand Rapids, Willard C. Corwith, of Rockford, Ill., and Gerhart M. Dahl, of Waupaca, all members of the Theta Delta Chi fraternity, of which Mr. Mead is also a member. From the opposite aisle came the bridesmaids, Miss Florence B. Philleo, of Grand Rapids, Miss Victoria Fish, of Madison, Miss Ione Wharton, of Appleton, and Miss Charlotte Gibson, of Des Moines, Ia., followed by the maid of honor, Miss Elizabeth Connor, of Auburndale. These were followed by the two little flower girls, Miss Inez Witter, of Grand Rapids, Wis., and Miss Marian Berkey, of Grand Rapids, Mich. The arrival of the bride leaning on

her father's arm marked the completion of the bridal party. All marched up the aisles slowly and reverently, keeping time with the sadly sweet music furnished by the orchestra. When all had arrived at the altar, and the bride's father had given his daughter away, and the ring had been placed on the bride's finger by the groom, Rev. J.R. Reynolds, whose clear, touching accents were plainly audible above the subdued strains of the orchestra, pronounced Mr. Mead and Miss Witter husband and wife in the following words.

Forasmuch as George Wilson Mead and Ruth Emily Witter have consented together holy wedlock and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have pledged their faith either to other, and have declared the same by joining of hands and by giving and receiving of the ring, I pronounce that they are husband and wife together in the name of the Father, and the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

The sweet strains of Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" was taken as an announcement that the ceremony was over. The bride was escorted out of the church and to the carriage in waiting by the groom, followed by the two little flower girls, the maid of honor, by the groomsman, Miss Wharton by Mr. Williams, Miss Fish by Mr. Dahl, Miss Philleo by Mr. Corwith, and Miss Gibson by Mr. Nelson. Then followed the relatives and guests from abroad, after which the others took their departure.

A wedding dinner was served at the house at six o'clock to the bridal party, immediate relatives and guests from abroad. Covers were laid for forty. Beautiful hand painted guest cards in green and white tints in the shape of fleur de lis and lettered in gold were at each plate.

The dinner was followed by a reception which began at 6:30 o'clock and lasted until after nine. This was a fitting climax to the most interesting events of the few previous hours. The residence was profusely decorated on both floors by the richest products of the greenhouse and the most treasured ornaments of the wildwood. Pink roses in unstinted quantity were used exclusively in the decoration of the rooms on the second floor. Creeping pine and buttersweet constituted the

hall decorations. In the double parlors the pink shades of the chandeliers were decorated with green vines, the fireplace was banked with ferns and white carnations and an immense collection of palms served as a background for the receiving party. American Beauty roses and smilax predominated in the decorations of the dining room, the centerpiece of the former on the dining table being the cynosure of all eyes. Festoons of smilax in graceful lines extended over the table, projecting from the silver candlesticks on the table to the ceiling above. All these decorations were planned and arranged by Miss Helen E. Kromer, assisted by several of her lady friends.

As the guests were introduced by Master of Ceremonies Harmon and received by Mr. and Mrs. Witter, Mr. and Mrs. Mead and the balance of the bridal party, they passed into the adjoining rooms and soon were engaged in forming new acquaintances or renewing old ones. The Arion orchestra rendered sweet music during the evening from a convenient recess near the conservatory. Light refreshments were served in the dining room.

The invitations to the wedding announced that there would be "no presents." But a stronger barrier than such an invitation to a wedding is necessary to restrain people from the expression of esteem or friendship in the form of some suitable present. Perhaps the most notable violators of the rule laid down on the wedding card were the bride's father, mother and brother. On the table in the conservatory was a memorandum which read as follows: "Wedding presents from father and mother: Certificate of deposit, \$8,800; bank stock, \$12,800; other stock, \$33,400; horse, harness and carriage, \$350. Total \$55,350. Signed, J.D. Witter and Emily L. Witter." Mrs. Witter also gave a case of sterling silver, including dining, tea and oyster forks, tea, coffee, dessert, table and orange spoons. Isaac P. Witter's present was a tea set of solid silver. Other presents were both numerous and costly, some being from relatives and some from those whose intimate friendship made them bold enough to overstep the injunctions of the wedding card.

Mr. and Mrs. Mead took their departure for Chicago on the 8:56 train. They were accompan-

ied to the depot by a host of well-wishers, who did all in their power to give them an enthusiastic send off, which was limited in its scope only by the intrigue and cunning of the perpetrators. In Chicago, they will spend a portion of their time with a lady whose friendship Miss Witter formed while abroad a little over a year ago. From Chicago they will go to Rockford, where they will be "at home" after Nov. 20th.

The bride was born and reared in Grand Rapids, and it is but natural that we all feel a deep interest in her welfare. A graduate of the Grand Rapids high school, an attendant at the State University for three years, and a student of languages in Europe for a year, it can well be said that she is thoroughly equipped for life's work in an educational way. She is, withal, a young lady whose personal characteristics are most engaging. Her husband, being a graduate of the University of Wisconsin with the class of '94, and having been successfully engaged in the house furnishing business at Rockford since that time, will prove himself a fit companion for his cherished bride. That Mr. and Mrs. Mead start out in life under auspicious conditions none who knew them can well doubt.

Among the guests from abroad who attended the wedding and who are not mentioned above, were the following: Mrs. A.C. Mead, Miss Ruth Mead, D.R. Mead and Mrs. Elliott S. West, of Rockford; Mr. and Mrs. L. M. Alexander and Clarence Du Four, of Milwaukee; Miss Jennie Whorton, of Appleton; Mr. and Mrs. Chas. H. Berkey, George Berkey and Mrs. Sarah Stanton, of Grand Rapids, Mich.; Mr. and Mrs. W.D. Connor, of Marshfield; Mr. and Mrs. J.J. Nelson, of Amherst; the Misses Anne and Agnes Connor of Auburndale. Theo. W. Brazeau and Miss Califer Williams, of Madison; Chas. Seiler, of Alma; Mrs. Solon D. Sittiff, of Woodboro; Mr. and Mrs. John Daly, of Merrill; Mr. and Mrs. M.H. Lynn, of Nekoosa; and Mr. and Mrs. S.N. Whittlesey, of Cranmoor; Mr. and Mrs. W.A. Brazeau, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. B. Brazeau and Mrs. Frances J. Edwards, of Port Edwards.

Centralia Enterprise & Tribune
Oct. 21, 1899

GREATER GRAND RAPIDS ILLUSTRATED

THE CONSOLIDATED WATER POWER & PAPER CO.

The throbbing pulsations of the manufacturing industries of Grand Rapids are felt in all sections of the United States. In insuring this prominence it is probable that no one concern has contributed a larger quota than has the Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co., whose business product and plant is one of the most extensive of any kind in the Wisconsin Valley. It is the pride of Grand Rapids. In no branch of trade has the city received so enviable a reputation as to her very extensive print paper manufacture. As the lumber industry was that which ordained the first stages of development in this now fair and prosperous city, it is befitting that manufacturing of paper from northern timber should be the medium through which in these latter years her supremacy is recognized.

The Consolidated Company is an organization that the public do not quite understand; the first plan and conception of this company was, not to harness this great water power for the express purpose of manufacturing any one commodity. The early founders of this company had in view the best interests of the City. The present manager, G.W. Mead, is now prepared to carry out this plan, by furnishing building sites to other manufacturing plants that are looking for a location, and supplying them with electric power at a moderate price.

The dam is 1,707 feet long, and an average head of thirty feet is secured, developing about ten thousand horse power. It is the plan to turn this immense power, or part of it at least, to a better purpose for the city than the grinding of wood pulp. The Consolidated Company uses twenty thousand cords of spruce timber a year and turns out 130,000 lbs. of paper a day. This paper, however, is of a better grade than the common print paper used in the regular daily or weekly newspaper. It is what is called machine book paper, and is used in special editions, Sunday supplements and sporting sheets. The Methodist Sunday Schools' publication uses sixty tons of this paper a month in their regular edition. The two paper machines of this company are each 120 inches in length, making a sheet of paper equal to 240 inches wide at a speed of 500 feet per minute. The five paper mills located on this part of the Wisconsin River turn out paper that would form a sheet 100 feet wide, and at an average speed of 460 feet per minute, or 120 miles every twenty-four hours, consisting of more than 250 tons. They use in the manufacture of this product seventy thousand cords of spruce, a little tamarack, poplar and balsam timber, while the sulphite mill uses seventy-five thousand cords of hemlock a year.

GREATER GRAND RAPIDS ILLUSTRATED

Wisconsin stands third as a paper producing state, turning out more than three million pounds per day. The United States with characteristic enterprise leads the world in paper making, supplying about one-third of all that is used on the globe. As a staple in this country, paper has come to rank third in importance in the list of men's wants. The product of Mother Earth holds first place, including food stuff, raiment, etc., and the second place must be given to iron and steel, the bulwark of commercial life. Paper follows next as the keystone of our intellectual life, and promises in years to come to play even a more important part in the upbuilding of our modern advancement and business.

If to-day the power of the pen over the sword is greater than it has ever been before, its increased and increasing influence must be credited in large measure to the inventive genius and the public spirited enterprises that has made possible the great output of our modern paper mills.

In all the great improvements of the last century, paper has been the means of transmitting intellectual force; it has been the messenger and herald of better things than the world has known. Its history has always been closely linked with that of man; it has been the pace-maker of his progress. They have come up together out of the past; they are associated in noble and uplifting work in the present; together they go forward to such broader fields of usefulness as the future may disclose.



Dam of the Consolidated Water Power and Paper Co., 1907.



Gate of Dam: Aurelia Bandelin on left.

ALL IN TEN YEARS.

Isn't This a Wonderful Showing of Growth in a Decade.

Special Correspondence to Sentinel.

GRAND RAPIDS, WIS., NOV. 23—The real advantages and resources of the Wisconsin valley are rapidly becoming known throughout the state, but it is hard to realize what great advancement has been made within the last ten years.

Ten years ago the summer just past, the writer traveled down the Wisconsin River from Stevens Point to Kilbourn, most of the distance in a skiff. At that time, after leaving Stevens Point, one encountered a succession of rapids for a distance of ten miles, until the Biron sawmill, about three miles above Grand Rapids, was reached. Few houses were then in sight on either side of the river. At Biron was an old sawmill and dam, and two or three dwelling houses. From Biron to Grand Rapids was practically a succession of rapids, and at Grand Rapids an immense power, only partially developed. At Hurleytown, a distance below Grand Rapids, was another undeveloped water-power. At Port Edwards, a few miles below was an old dam and sawmill, with wreck of an old barn and the remains of a few houses, and at Nekoosa was only the two old "improvement dams," that had been abandoned for more than a decade.

At the present day the trip from Stevens Point to Nekoosa along the Wisconsin River bank shows the tremendous improvement that has taken place since 1891. Stevens Point now has about 12,000 inhabitants; it then had 7,500. Next to Stevens Point in our course and almost joining with it is McDill, a village of 200 inhabitants. Next comes Whiting, where the immense paper mills of the Whiting Paper company are located. This company employs between 600 and 700 men, many of whom live in Stevens Point and McDill. Next comes Plover, a village of between 500 and 600 inhabitants. Thence following down the east bank of the Wisconsin River are located farms along the entire course, where ten years ago was nothing but wild land. At Biron is now a village of 300 inhabitants. The Grand Rapids pulp and paper mills, an immense plant, employs several hundred men, many of whom live at Grand Rapids or on the farms up and down the river. From Biron to Grand Rapids is now a series of fine small farms.

HAS ADVANCED MUCH.

At Upper Grand Rapids there has been less advancement in the line of water-power improvement than elsewhere along the route. Fires have taken several mills and litigation has prevented more being built. But all of the water-power there is now owned by one concern, and a dam that will utilize the entire water-power of the Wisconsin

sin River at this point under an eighteen-foot head will probably be built here within the next year. Crossing the river at Grand Rapids and going down on the west side is now found at Hurleytown, now South Centralia, a fine new dam and a large paper mill. Below this power, at Port Edwards, is a large pulp and paper mill and village of 300 inhabitants, and at Nekoosa, seven miles below Grand Rapids, is one of the largest paper mills in the United States, and a village of 1,200 or more inhabitants. Within the ten years just past there have been built on this stretch of river, less than thirty miles long, five paper mills of tremendous capacity. And the inhabitants of the farms, villages and cities immediately along the river within this strip have increased from 12,000 to fully 25,000.

WHERE MANY WORK.

One fact struck the writer with great force. Large numbers of men, boys and women working in the pulp mills at Whiting, Biron and South Centralia, live in Stevens Point, and the northern part of Grand Rapids, and daily drive, wheel or walk to and from their work. Surely the time will soon come that this large number of work men will want better accommodations in going to and from their work than they now have. One workman familiar with these mills estimates that 700 workmen travel at least six miles per day from their city homes to their work in these mills each day.

The banks of the Wisconsin River, from Stevens Point fully thirty miles down, are most of the way high and healthful, and very beautiful home sites, or sites for summer residences line either side. Many of those sites ten years ago were uncleared. Now residences, or club houses are to be seen at every turn. Considering the beauty of the scenery, few places are now available that are so desirable for summer residences as this stretch of river. The immense ponds made by the dams across the river, with their still deep water and bluff banks, furnish ideal boating and fine bass fishing. Wholesome and abundant spring water flows from these high banks into the river. Trout streams flow into the river on either side.

Such has been the progress of the middle Wisconsin valley in the last ten years. At present not one of the immense water-powers mentioned is used to its full capacity. Not one-third of the beautiful home sites on the river banks are occupied. We believe that ten years hence waste water-power in the Wisconsin valley will be unknown, and that from Stevens Point to Grand Rapids, twenty-two miles, if not to Nekoosa, will be practically one solid city.

Wood County Reporter
Thursday, Nov. 28, 1901

Hurleyville Pulp Mill.

One of the Largest and Best Plants in the State.

Whiting Brothers about to sell out their
interests to the remaining Stock Holders.

Monday afternoon through the kindness of Mr. A.M. Pride, millwright and overseer in the erection of this large mill, we were conducted in every department of this model structure. It is located just off the high bank on the west side of the Wisconsin River at this point, below the abutting of the large dam lately erected by the Centralia Pulp and Water Power Company thereby creating an immense water power.

The front, main and upright part of the mill contains the elevator for loading the pulp into the cars; the circular saw for cutting the wood in proper lengths; the edger, splitting machine and room for the hackers; the two wet machines, vats, scales, etc. Every department arranged with an eye to save labor and accomplish the greatest amount of work.

In the "L" or wing part of the building contains the five flumes and water wheels in the basement and eight grinders on the upper floor. These grinders are propelled with apparent ease and there is but little jar to the frame work. On entering the visitor is immediately impressed with the solidity of this frame work. All the grinders are kept running every day in the week.

This mill turns out 8 tons of pulp a day for seven car loads a week. A switch track of the C.M. St. P. railroad is laid right up side of the mill so that they can load and unload cars at pleasure. It is stated that it will require two cords of wood a day to supply this mill. It was started up three weeks ago today and the machinery has been running every day since without any breakage or trouble. This speaks louder than words in favor of the efficient millwright who had charge of this work. The immense water wheels have not settled an eighth of an inch since the mill was started. When the frame work was put up every timber fitted with exact nicety. The wheels and machinery when placed run without changing any of their positions or altering any of the timbers. This plant is modern in all its apartments and will prove a paying investment for the company.

In passing through the pulp mill we noticed a few familiar faces, J. L. Beadle and Clark Lyon were engaged as carpenters, and C.W. Bailey had charge of the edger. This company employ twenty-five men in the operation of the mill.

A meeting of the stock holders will be held this week to consider Whiting Brothers proposition to sell. The probabilities are that the remaining stock holders will purchase the stock held by them. If this transpires the Company will consider the feasibility of starting a paper mill in conjunction with the present pulp mill (1888).

HERE AND THERE.

Smoke the Mikado 10 cent cigar.

Songs by all of our best local talent.

Kruger & Philleo continue to do a nice cash business. 25 performers all in the Japanese Concert.

Geo. T. Rowland was a guest of his brother's in Necedah last week.

Don't fail to hear Ko Ko the Lord High Executioner in his song and dance.

Miss Annie Huban arrived from the West Saturday morning to spend a few weeks with her parents in this city.

When are the gentleman going to give the return dance party, is the question of the hour?

Don't fail to hear the Japanese Concert Tuesday and Wednesday evenings Feby. 7 and 8.

Do you take the REPORTER? If not, why not? If you read it pay for it and don't borrow it from your neighbor.

A couple of Germans tried to settle a little misunderstanding last Saturday with their fists. One of them was successful.

The three little maids from "School" will be given in the Japanese Concert "Yum Yum" "Petti Sing" and "Peep Bo."

All the taxes were paid to the city treasurer except \$1,049.00 which was turned over to the city marshall to collect. This is a good showing.

The M.E. Society are preparing a paper carnival to be presented on Washington's birthday.

All parties desiring to pay their subscriptions to the REPORTER in wood, will please do so at their earliest opportunity for we want to contract a year's wood ahead.

At the Congregational church next Sabbath evening, there will be a temperance Service, the Pastor speaking particularly on the effects of the use of tobacco.

Henry Edwards has several new horses in his livery stable. One of his late additions is said to be a three-minute horse. Dr. Witter is contemplating purchasing it.

Messrs. W.L. Wood and Alex Zenier and Misses Nellie Kromer and Lucy Woodworth attended an elete dance party at Stevens Point the past week. They report a very pleasant time.

The Centralia Pulp and Water power Company may surprise the people of both cities by adding a paper mill to their already valuable property at Hurleyville.

REWARD.—A rewards of \$5.00 will be given by the undersigned for evidence that will assist in the conviction

of the thief that stole a short piece of chain off of my dray.

M.H. LYNN.

F. MacKinnon & Co. are doing a large business in pine lumber this winter. They have piled in their Centralia yard about 600,000 feet of pine logs, besides red and white oak logs.

Mr. and Mrs. Bensley left for California last week to evade the extreme cold weather of this climate. They will be absent for several months.

The REPORTER will be able to furnish more local news when we get through publishing the everlasting County Board Proceedings. A few weeks more will complete them.

"Why" asked a governess of her little charge "do we pray God to give us our daily bread? Why don't we ask for four days, or five days, or a week?" "Because we want it fresh" replied the ingenious child.

Arthur Loomis left Tuesday evening to accept a position as "Devil" in a printing office at Mattoon, Ill. May Arthur rise from this humble position to that of proprietor is the wish of the REPORTER, in which office he has held a like position part of the time.

Mr. M. McCarty, the meat market man of Merrill, and formerly a resident of Grand Rapids, was in this city Tuesday contracting for good beef, pork, &c. He reports his business good and Merrill a pleasant place to live in.

Local Fire Company Organized.

Twenty-two of the young men have signed a petition agreeing to form themselves into a fire company in compliance with the provisions laid down in the Revised Statutes. They held a meeting Monday evening and organized by the election of the following officers:

President.—I.E. Philleo,
Vice Pres.—T.A. Taylor,
Secretary.—D.M. Huntington,
Treasurer.—W.L. Wood,
Foreman.—E.T. Bodette,
Asst. Foreman.—Dave Kammeren.

We are glad to know that the young men are sufficiently interested in the welfare of the city to organize a society to protect it from great loss by fire.

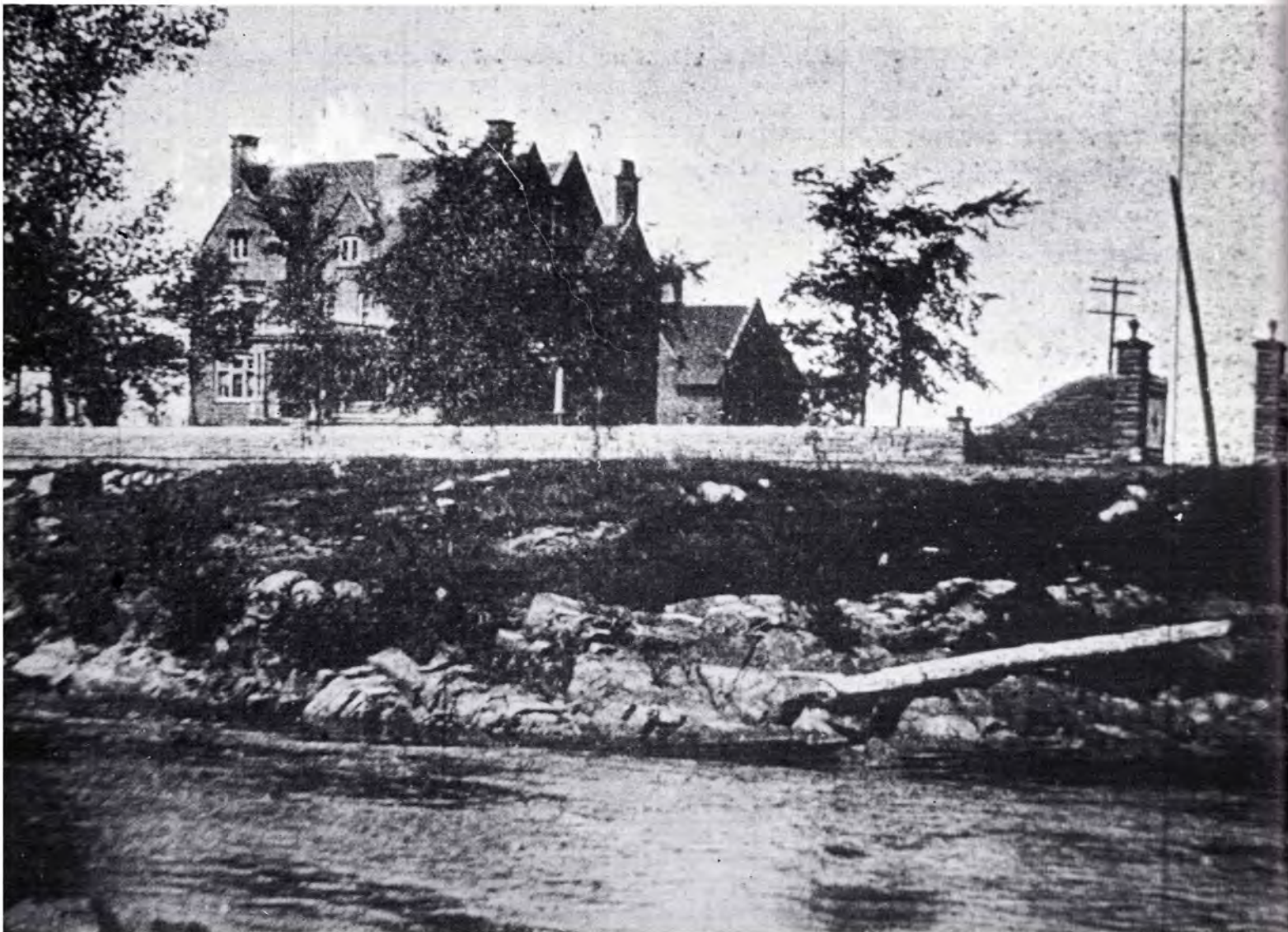
While at Hurleyville Monday we met with Mr. Whiting, a resident of that village, and found him a social and pleasant gentleman. We also renewed our acquaintance with Mr. Frank Steele who is much better from his late illness. Both parties are well pleased with the work being done by the new pulp mill.

Wood County Reporter
January 23, 1888

T.E. NASH'S HANDSOME NEW RESIDENCE

**Ideal in Architecture and Finish—Castle-Like it Stands
Upon the West Bank of the Wisconsin River.**

“If you want a man upon whom you can rely in the hour of the nation’s peril, select the man who loves his home; for in proportion as he loves his home, will he love his country which has protected it.”



Tom Nash's \$33,750 settlement with Consolidated Water Power Co. paid for his 1902 chateau. George Mead of Consolidated bought the house from Nash heirs in 1926 as a wedding present for his son, Stanton, who continues to occupy it in 1986.—D.E.

On the west bank of the Wisconsin River, in the city of Grand Rapids, Wood County, Wisconsin, was recently erected one of the handsomest residences in the Wisconsin River valley, the property of Hon. T.E. Nash. It occupies one of the prettiest locations for an ideal home. It has more the appearance of a 'chateau' or castle than a private residence, on account of its magnitude and English style of architecture. It is centrally located upon a five acre tract of land with a gradual slope from the building to the river's edge. The grounds are beautifully laid out and arranged, with a driveway, lawn tennis court, beautiful flower and vegetable gardens. The house faces the east and overlooks the Wisconsin River with its numerous islands and beautiful shores. The grounds are enclosed by a massive, rustic stone wall fence which is in itself a piece of artistic masonry, with slight curves at the front entrance and driveway and with immense pillars at either end of the wall, and at the gate and driveway.

This property stands as a monument to Mr. Nash's energy and thrift as a successful business man and we join with his many friends in Grand Rapids in the sincere wish that he and his estimable family may live to a good old age to enjoy it. We append a half tone cut likeness of the property in this issue, showing the house and only a part of the grounds, stone fence and barn. It will be noticed that the roadway in front of the property is hidden from view in the picture and only a little of the Wisconsin River is shown. To fully appreciate its beauty and magnificence one must visit the place and see the interior arrangements and furnishings.

The writer had the pleasure of visiting the place both at night and in the day time and the grandeur of the house when lighted by 200 lamps of 16 candle power each, can better be imagined than described. Its loveliness is beyond description, ideal in decoration, elegant in design, furnishings and finish.

The design of this house is a true example of English Renaissance architecture, and it is built in a thorough, substantial and workmanlike manner. It is constructed of solid red Menomonie sand mould brick three stories and basement. The principal feature of this building is the exterior lines, which are uniform, thus giving large square rooms in the interior. The spacious piazza, ornamental balcony, and dormer windows are attractive features.

BASEMENT.

Walls are of heavy sand stone and consists of heating and boiler rooms, drying room, vegetable cellar, private cellar, laundry, coal and wood rooms. Heating is by hot air passing over steam coils, with supplementary radiators in exposed positions in the rooms.

FIRST FLOOR.

Consists of reception room, finished in white mahogany, with fire place set in Onyx; dining room finished with dark mahogany, with fire place set in Tennessee marble; living room finished in birch, with fire place set in Italian marble; library, main and side hall and vestibule, finished in quartered oak; back hall, gun room, kitchen and china closets finished in ash. All wood work is finished in oil. This entire floor is furnished with Oriental rugs, draperies and lace curtains. The furniture has been selected with exquisite taste so that color, fabric and design harmonizes throughout.

SECOND FLOOR.

Consists of five large bedrooms with commodious dressing rooms and closets, off from each; upper main and rear halls. The wood work on this floor is white enamel. Two nickel plated bath rooms with all the latest and modern equipments are provided for. From every room the guests have a beautiful view of the Wisconsin River, in fact this is true from nearly every room in the whole house on any floor. Wilton rugs are used in each room and halls, and the furniture was selected to harmonize with the tinted walls of the various rooms.

THIRD FLOOR.

Consists of three bedrooms, sitting room, trunk room, cedar closet and ball room 22x30 feet. The ball room is finished in ash and the sitting room and bedrooms in Oregon fir.

This home from basement to attic is complete in every detail and reflects great credit, not only upon Ferry & Clas, the architects; but upon Henry Ferge and his foreman John Luber, carpenters and builders; Ule Bros., brick and masonry work; E.H. Loomer, finisher; C.J. Jorgeson, decorator; and the score of employees who have had a part in its erection. It is ideal in every respect. It certainly appears to the visitor that nothing could be added to its convenience or elegance, and in its furnishing Mr. and Mrs. T.E. Nash and family have shown excellent taste and wisdom.

We agree with the author who said: "That the homes of the people are the secret of our country's greatness. Wealth cannot purchase grandeur and renown. Resources, however great and wonderful, cannot crown us with national honor and celebrity. The strength and prowess of any land lies in the character of its citizens; and their character depends largely upon the character of their homes."

Wood County Reporter
August 21, 1902



SWCHC

GRAND CHUTE IS CONQUERED.

**Temporary Cofferd Dam Across
Wisconsin River Closed Up Last
Saturday.**

RATED A SPLENDID ENGINEERING FEAT

**Peter Diederich Has Constructed Many
more Difficult Dams in This
Neighborhood.**

The grand chute, the whirl pool in which so many men have lost their lives, has at last been conquered. The feat was accomplished Saturday and to Peter Diederich, who is constructing the dam across the river, belongs the honor of doing what to many seemed almost impossible.

Mr. Diederich says that the work was not so difficult as it might seem at first sight—in fact to him it was comparatively easy. He has had many other very difficult contracts—seventeen in all—among which may be mentioned the Nekoosa, South Grand Rapids, Biron, Plover and Stevens Point dams and other dams on the Muskegon, Fox and Oconto rivers.

It took two weeks to build the coffer dam across the river here. A week ago Mr. Diederich told some of the citizens that the dam would be closed up by Saturday, June 13, but a number doubted. But Mr. Diederich carried out his promise to the letter.

To start with, three anchoring cribs, 14x14, ten feet high, were built; these were filled with rock and in the center heavy tie-poles were stationed. To these poles were fastened two-inch cables, which aided in locating the cribs for the coffer dam. There are four of these cribs, each of

which is 9x18, and 12 feet high. Between the cribs is a strong plank work, each of the planks being 3x16 and 25 feet long. In seeing this temporary structure one is impressed with the perfect engineering skill which planned and successfully finished it.

The coffer dam is 390 feet long and it took thirty men two weeks to complete it. Work will be begun on the main dam tomorrow.

**Wood County Reporter
June 16, 1903**

VALUABLE STUDY IN ROCK FORMATION

**River Bottom Near Grand Chute of
Much Interest to Citizens.**

There are many peculiar markings on the large rocks which have been uncovered by the building of the coffer dam across the river. The person interested in the study of geology could spend many days making valuable observation about the dam. Among other things, there is a circular hole, eighteen inches deep and ten inches in diameter, which has been cut into the solid granite by the action of the rushing water and small stones. Some sphere and egg shaped stones were brought to this office yesterday; it is very likely that these stones had been ceaselessly at work during the past fifty or seventy years piercing the boulders.

A peavey, or canthook, was found under a 600-pound boulder by George Miller. Its appearance would indicate that it had been lying at the bottom of the river since the days when driving and lumberjacks were common to this community.

**Wood County Reporter
July 19, 1903**

A Piece of Paper

If you will get up early some of these fine Spring mornings and go just out of the city seeking some quiet spot on the banks of the Wisconsin River, not too near to men nor too far from Nature and if you concentrate your mind on this stream, it is not a difficult matter to make the stream of events, as well as this rapid, restless river flow past you so you can gather from it the true condition of things. You must have a good ear and it must be a still, clear morning; also your imagination must be at its best and you must have a little knowledge of the seven paper mills in this immediate locality.

At about 5:30 o'clock or a little after sunrise you will begin to hear the great coarse whistles, speaking to each other in a sullen, long, drawn-out tone.

From Nekoosa to the mills just below Stevens Point, you may hear the same stern penetrating call. It is addressed to the day crews who are wanted at the several mills at 7:00 a.m.

The night crews have been

watching over these great paper machines for more than ten hours and now their period of rest is drawing nigh.

You may ask, why compel this stream, that was once so free, to turn these great wheels twenty-four hours for a day's work? But, you forget that the American people must have paper, and they must have it in large quantities. They must have it continuously.

Now look at this stream carefully through the mind's eye and you may see a sheet of paper floating down on its restless surface 100 feet wide and at a speed of five miles an hour. 120 miles of paper will pass you every twenty-four hours. Can you comprehend this, do you wonder that these seven mills must grind day and night to turn out this immense amount of paper?

The current of the Wisconsin River flows about two and one-half miles an hour at low water and at high water it will average four miles per hour. But this sheet of paper 100 feet wide

must be hurried along at five miles an hour or clog both mill and stream.

Now, who uses this immense amount of paper? It is the newspaper readers of this and adjoining states.

We can supply a copy of the **REPORTER** every evening to every inhabitant of Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa and the two Dakotas from this immense sheet and all this within the sound of the whistles at Grand Rapids and the power of the Wisconsin River. Yes, a piece of paper means a great deal.

Shakespeare said, "We can find sermons in stones, tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, and good in everything." When he wrote that, he must have had the Grand Rapids Paper and Pulp Association in his mind. With the stones of our pulp mills we grind out the paper upon which is printed the beautiful sermon. We take the trees of the forest, and transform them into paper, and the newspaper men here, put the tongues into them like that of the old inde-

pendence bell, "to proclaim liberty throughout the land, to all the people thereof." We lead the running stream captive to make the paper for books for Mr. Carnegie's libraries and for the homes and firesides of the American people. And so Shakespeare had us in his prophetic vision, and thus do we find good in everything.

In all these great movements of the century, paper has been the means of transmitting intellectual force; it has been the messenger and herald of better things than the world had known. Its history has always been closely linked with that of man; it has been the pace-maker of his progress, in the realm of mechanics and of economics as well as in music, literature, and art. They have come up together out of the past; they are associated in noble and uplifting work in the present; together they go forward to such broader fields of usefulness as the future may disclose.

Wood County Reporter
May 27, 1902
A.L. Fontaine, Publisher

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Paper's Debut: March 23, 1985
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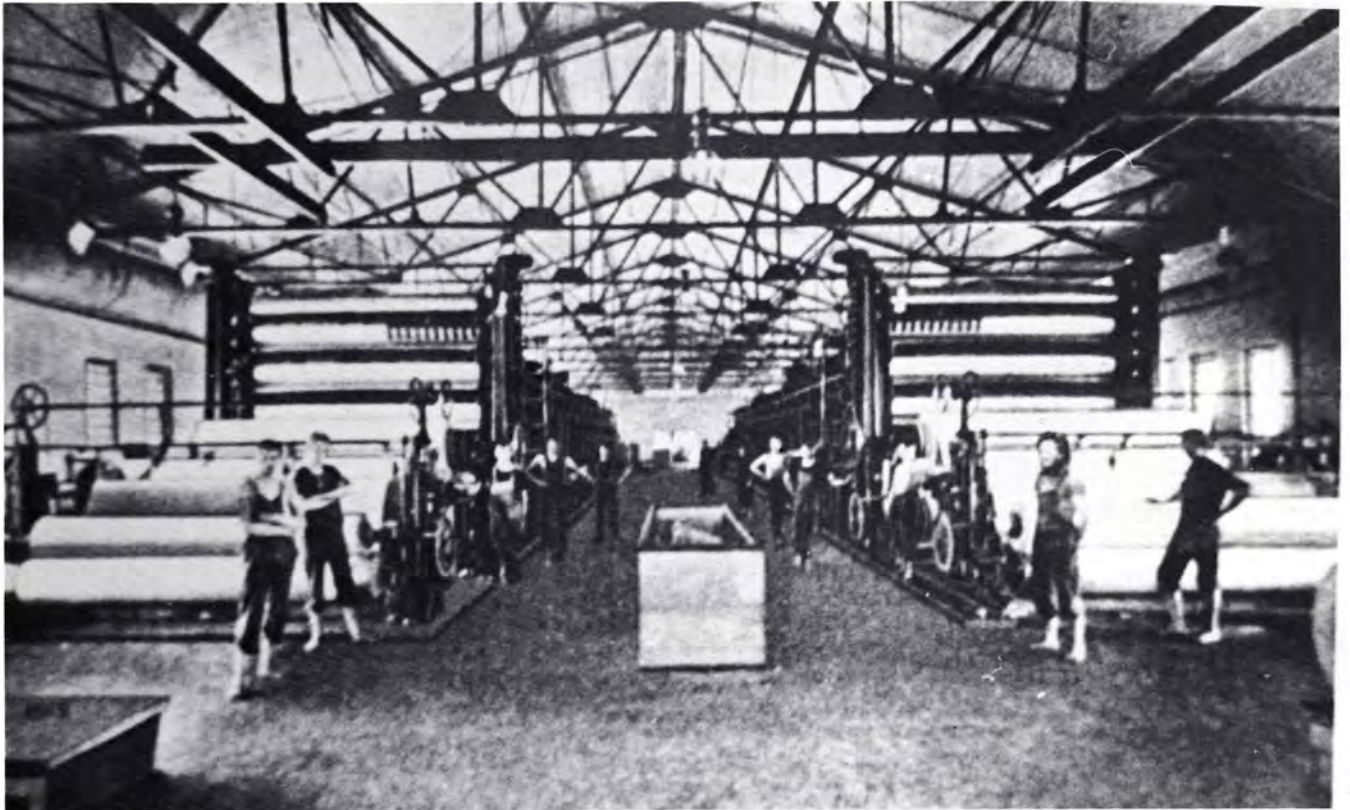
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Since its painfully colorful and chaotic beginnings, Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co., now Consolidated Papers, Inc., has moved forward steadily under the hand of George W. Mead, his son Stanton and grandson George to its present position as the world's largest producer of enamel coated papers, with headquarters at the Wisconsin Rapids mill.



Barefoot Papermakers

First electrically operated paper machines,
Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co.,
Wisconsin Rapids, photo 1907.

