



**May 2007** Volume II #13

*South Wood County Historical Corp.*

# **Artifacts**



Cover: J. Marshall Buehler at Nekoosa Paper Co. archives. President Phil Brown's message, page 2; Photo Feedback, page 3; Interview with J. Marshall Buehler, 4-21; "Little League, Big Hitters," by Chuck Hinners, 22-29; "Romanski," by Marjorie Hamm, 30-33; "Library Recollections," by Helen Morland Zimmerman, 34; "A Visit with Mr. Mead," by Dave Patrykus, 35.

*In Appreciation:  
For Half-a-Century (and  
More!) of Service*

By Phil Brown, SWCHC president



*Photo by Dave Engel*

Welcome to the fifth month of the “Year of the Museum,” as the South Wood County Historical Corp. reaches several important milestones.

In 1907, our beautiful building was built for Isaac and Charlotte Witter. They made it their home until 1948 when it was bought by George W. Mead and donated to the City of Wisconsin Rapids to become the T.B. Scott Public Library. Since 1970, it has been the SWCHC Museum.

A special display currently portrays these various stages in the building’s history. We urge you to use the display and centennial as a reason to reconnect with your historical society.

The Museum opens to the public on Sunday, May 27, and will be open Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday 1-4 p.m. through Labor Day. In addition, in order to commemorate this unique year, we have scheduled the following events:

June 23 – Cranberry Blossom Festival

July 14 – Wood County Master Gardener’s Garden Walk

July 15 – Mid-summer Centennial Celebration on the lawn, featuring local musicians and cool refreshments.

This year, we also celebrate the Golden Anniversary (plus a year) of the SWCHC. I am very pleased to report that one of our charter board members still serves today. Yes, our very own J. Marshall Buehler, featured in this issue, was there when founding-president T.W. Brazeau presided over the first board meetings in 1956.

One final thought from your still relatively new president. The South Wood County Area is truly blessed to have such a long and interesting past, saved for future generations thanks in part to the hard work of three individuals still with us: Marshall Buehler, Paul Gross, and Dave Engel.

As we honor Marshall for his 50-plus years of service to the SWCHC, Paul is currently working on his 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> videos of local history. Paul is also in the process of transferring all of our reel-to-reel oral histories to CD and our videos to DVD. “Uncle Dave,” *Artifacts* editor, has taken on additional society responsibilities in 2007, to be described in more detail in later issues.

I want to publicly thank these three historians for their lifelong devotion to preserving our colorful past and personally invite you to join them and us in celebrating the “Year of the Museum.”



## Photo Feedback from #12



*Page 3*

### **Library Dedication**

April 19, 1948

Photo at left, from left: Aileen MacGeorge, Stevens Point librarian and president of the Wisconsin River Valley Library conference; George W. Mead, who purchased the building and presented it to the city; T. W. Brazeau, who gave historical data on other benefactors of the library; and W.W. Rickman, representing the planning commission of the Wisconsin Rapids city council.

Photo at right: In the new T.B. Scott Public Library, Lelynn Trumball, right, on behalf of the VFW, presents a pictorial history of World War II to Miss Jessie Sanford, head librarian, and George W. Mead, president of the library board.

*Page 6*

Correction. The building behind the truck is not a church. It is the Holstein farmhouse.



*Pages 16-17*

Leona Reichert, third from left, between Bevins and Hunger; Harriet Sleich (sp. ?) Timm, center (to right of sign); Earl Lewis, at right.



*Page 21*

From Robert Sanderson, North Tustin, Cal.: "I arrived in the Rapids to work for WFHR as an announcer/salesman in 1952. I was surprised to see my picture on page 21. I am the one that looks like I am ready to go to sleep...the sad looking one just over the head of the person whose back is to the camera.

"After three years, I joined Preway, in sales, for the next 13 years. Also, I do believe the person in the far rear over B. Beichel's shoulder is Jim Tighe of WFHR."

*Page 22*

The question mark is Tad Meyer.



*Page 23*

With Duke Hornigold, at left, Bob Olson. Rear, tall, curly hair, Ronnie Amundson. In front of Amundson, short, John Sweeney.



*Page 23*

Girls at car: Barbara Brener, second from left; Yvonne Rhode, third from left; Nan Hornigold, in car, right; Eunice Rued, Dolores Petta, Eunice Rued's mother, all standing at right. Correction: Labeled as Bud Rued's wife, it is more likely his sister, Eunice.

## Marshall: The Interview

### Interview with J. Marshall Buehler

Alexander House, Port Edwards

By Dave Engel

(A series sponsored by SWCHC)

September 30, 1998

My full name is John Marshall Buehler. I prefer to go by the name of Marshall because there are too many John Buehlers floating around.

I was born June 21, 1927, in Wisconsin Rapids at Riverview hospital. I've lived in Port Edwards all my life except for my Army career and schooling.

My parents lived in Port Edwards. Their names were August and Helen Buehler.

Helen was born in 1900; August in 1898, I believe.

Helen came from Wisconsin Rapids and August from Nekoosa.

Her maiden name was Benkowski.

### Grandpa Buehler

My father's father, John Buehler Sr. was born in Germany. Quit school after the fourth grade. He came to this country and went to La Crescent, Minnesota, on a farm just outside of La Crescent, where he had a brother. From there, he got tangled up with the gold rush. He went out to Colorado first and worked there. Then he headed out to California. Finally, took a load up to Alaska and got involved with the Klondike gold rush in the 1880s, I guess. He and a partner had a grubstake.

He sold out after two years to his partner and came back to his brother in Minnesota; from there went back to Germany and married a woman named Mary Blessing, brought her to this country, settled in Sigel. Bought a farm in central Wisconsin, moved to Nekoosa. After a couple years, right after they built the Nekoosa paper mill, he got a job there in the maintenance department, as a millwright, as it was called. He died in Nekoosa.

During his life in Nekoosa, he was mayor for two terms, city engineer; that's why I alluded to a fourth grade education; ending up doing surveying work. Of course, it was simple surveying. For sewer lines, probably, and getting the street corners straight. He was a charter member of the Nekoosa Chamber of Commerce. A treasurer of the Nekoosa school board and treasurer of the Nekoosa library board.

He died in the mid-1940s.

He came from Stuttgart, Germany.

The farm? Yes, it's still there. I have it pinpointed on a map. Our dad used to drive us by there and say, "There's where I was born." I haven't seen it for years.

He [John] got a job as a millwright, a maintenance man, and, they used to call it the chain gang, because they're constantly moving around. That was his career.

There's a Buehler Avenue in Nekoosa. That's where the homestead was located. Where Imation's plant is located now. Where Buehler Avenue starts, runs west.

I used to help him survey. Hold the rod, stretch the tape out.

Go down and visit Grandma and Grandpa. Take the streetcar down. Later years, the bus. Stay overnight. When he got done with his job in the mill at 4 o'clock, get in the old blue Buick car and bring the transit

and the rod and go out and help him survey. Hold it straight.

He was a typical German with a mustache like yours. Big fellow. Well-liked, I guess. Stout. Beer-drinking German.

They lived right across the street from one of the mill gates. They had a clock house just outside the gate. As I recall, there were two of them for the Nekoosa mill. One on Market Street, one on Buehler Avenue.

My aunt tells me that, at Christmas time, this was probably a political gesture. He always would stand outside the gate, which was across the street from his house, and hand out apples to the employees coming out. Probably good for election ballots coming a couple of months later.

When he was mayor, he was also employed by Nekoosa Papers. He didn't retire; he died of a heart attack before retiring.

I would say he was mayor the late thirties, early forties. He had two four-year terms.



J. Marshall Buehler

### Grandma Buehler

Almost every Sunday there was a routine visit to the grandparents'. I would go down because it was very convenient, in my early youth, on the street car line. Later years, the bus replaced it.

I also went to Catholic school in Nekoosa for five years. Sacred Heart. Frequently, I would walk from the school down to Grandma's house and spend the night, rather than come home.

Grandma was a typical German woman, stout, I hate to use the word fat, but well built. If you went to Germany, you would see a lot of the older women looking like that. Both of them spoke with a definite accent.

I think at that time there was a lot of German spoke because several of my aunts and uncles have an ability to speak German. Mine was all learned in school.

Grandpa Buehler had to have his beer for supper every night. It was one of my jobs to take a Karo syrup pail, tin, probably held a quart, and go down to Waljohn's away, with fifteen cents and get a little bring it home for They made beer of course.

Grandma's making wine. She and it was loaded you name it. From various wines, all sounds like they family. A typical I know that she made sauerkraut by the big fifteen gallon crock every year.



expertise was had a wine cellar with wine bottles, dandelion to the the fruit flavors. It were a drinking German family. I

Family get-togethers where all the cousins and uncles came was a common thing. We were there almost every Sunday for a visit if not for the noon meal. Chicken would be a typical meal. They raised their own chickens.

In the early days, they had a cow. Auntie Vic tells about taking the cow to school with her. Tying it up across from the Catholic school in Nekoosa, down by the river, where the park is now. Taking it home with them. A little barn, which I remember as a garage. Hayloft up above. A pile of hay.

They lived on Point Basse Avenue. They had indoor plumbing. I'm sure that in the years before I knew them that there was an outhouse.

He was mayor, I believe, when he died.

He wrote an article, for the Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune, many years ago. I would say, around the late 30s. He reminisced on his travels to Alaska.

### Grandpa Benkowski

Bernard Benkowski came to Wisconsin Rapids from Milwaukee, originally from Poland. There were a lot of relatives in Milwaukee.

He came to Milwaukee and was married. His wife had tuberculosis. He was told by a Milwaukee doctor to move into the country. It would be good for her health.

So they moved to Kellner, where they bought a farm a mile out of Kellner, probably through a land agent. She died in spite of the move, when my mother was five years old.

My grandfather then moved to Wisconsin Rapids, where he spent the rest of his life as a carpenter, cabinetry carpenter, home finishing carpenter. He worked for Billmeyer, who was an architect, contractor. He did a lot of freelance in his later years. In his last couple of years, he moved in with my parents.

Eva Marshall [Bernard's wife?], that's where I get the Marshall.

### August Buehler

My dad was born in Nekoosa and went to grade school in Nekoosa and then went to Lincoln High School for two years because Nekoosa didn't have a high school. Riding the street car each day. Then he got a job; he worked for the railroad for a couple months. That's probably where I get my interest.

Then he got a job at a general store at Nekoosa. Mrs. Gutheil. She had a store in Nekoosa and she had one in Port Edwards. They were actually run by her son-in-law, Frank McGargle. Frank McGargle hired my dad to work in the store in Nekoosa, then moved him to the Port Edwards store as the manager. My dad bought the store at Port Edwards then, from McGargle. Frank McGargle married a Gutheil girl.

It was the You could buy a pound of ground Store. Because nicknamed the all the homes in painted white at reasons. First of paper company houses. Secondly, was president of



old general store. gallon of gas. A quart A pair of overalls, a beef. The White City the village was White City. Almost Port Edwards were one time. For two all, Port Edwards owned most of the L.M. Alexander, who Nekoosa-Edwards

Paper Co., wanted a clean, neat village and he made white paint available to village residents, most of whom were employees. He sold it to them at a reasonable cost. It was an incentive for the people to keep their houses painted. Any color you want as long as it's white.

When they built the shopping center in 1947 or 1948 at Port:

Dad always dreamed of a beautiful big super market, grocery store only. But he never had the finances to build it. John Alexander came along and had a meeting with all the business people in Port Edwards and said that Nekoosa-

*Photos: Left, at home in Port Edwards, about four years old. Right, "high school age," early 1940s. Marshall was an Eagle Scout from Port Edwards Troop 70.*



Edwards paper company was going to build a shopping center; would they move in as tenants? Dad grabbed the opportunity. One merchant declined. The shopping center was built. Dad gave up on the lady's dresses, men's overalls and shoes and ran strictly a grocery store called Buehler's Superette.

That continued until he died. He was only in there, I don't think even a year, and he had a stroke. I was in college at the time. I came home from college at mid-year, 1949.

I came home and was going to run the store on a temporary basis until we could sell it. We had no luck in selling it in two years. I got married in the meantime. So finally, we decided to just have one gigantic clearance sale and rid our hands of the store business. We didn't own the property; just the fixtures and the merchandise.

The White City Store was on the corner where Complete Control is today. Across the street from the present shopping center. That would be old downtown Port Edwards.

### **Market Street**

Everything was on the north side of Market Street. There was a post office building which originally was a small grocery store. That's gone. The next building was a barber shop which had originally been a meat market. Then next to that, adjacent to that, was the Port Edwards Mercantile Co., which was a store just like my dad's.

They were competitors in one respect, and yet, very cooperative. It's amazing. Two stores, both dealing in the same merchandise.

Everything was ordered over the telephone in those days. Delivered, twice a day. If the Mercantile's truck broke down, we delivered their groceries for them. If Mrs. Jones called my dad and wanted 25 pounds of Pillsbury flour and we didn't have it, my dad would say, "Take a bag of Gold Medal across the street and trade it for a bag of Pillsbury so we can satisfy Mrs. Jones." Back and forth, borrowing things. We'd go over and borrow a carton of cigarettes because we had run out of Camels and the truck didn't come in for a week. Once a month, you'd settle up. "Well, we owe you two cartons of cigarettes," and things like that.

They were right across 2<sup>nd</sup> to the East from us, where the post office is today.

Then came my dad's store.

There was a small, little brick store that came in around World War II and closed during World War II. He and the Mercantile elected not to go into the shopping center. They both closed up and the Mercantile building was closed down. The little brick store was converted into a garage that Nekoosa papers used for some of their trucks for a while.

Then came a drug store. In the back of the drug store was a dentist's office. Upstairs, over the drug store, was a beauty shop.

Then came the gas station. Which is there today but it's been rebuilt. Then across the street from the gas station was a confectionery store. Across to the south. That was the only building on the south side.

Next to that was a big, empty field that was an ice pond. Across the street from that was a ball field, tennis court, bandstand and village hall. That was all on the south side, where the shopping center went. The village hall is in the shopping center now.

The building that was the village hall is now out on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. It's Johnny's Rapids Inn. That was the village hall.

The streets were dirt except for Market Street. Market Street was paved. And 3<sup>rd</sup> Street was paved because Highway 73 came down 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Every other street was dirt, sand, dusty as hell, created by a team of horses with a drag grader behind it.

We lived about a block south of the shopping center at 350 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The building is still there. My dad bought it from Nekoosa-Edwards paper company. It was quite a large piece of property, apple trees, plum trees and a very large two-story home. It had been built originally by the mill manager or they built it for him.

I could see my father's store. Look out the kitchen window, and only a block away was Dad's store. There was a wide open space between.

I put my ice skates on at home in the kitchen and walked across the road and I was ice skating. Baseball was right adjacent. Tennis courts, less than 100 yards away. The school: that was north about four blocks. It had been built in 1932, I believe.

If you go into that school today, Dave; I'm on the school board. I'm still proud of it, the condition of that school at 65 years old, it is beautiful. There was some foresight went into building that building. Outside décor, exposure, looks like it was built maybe twenty, thirty years ago. It's been added on to and of course they have the new school across the railroad tracks. It was the grade and high school.

I started in this school and, in fourth grade, went down to Sacred Heart for five years and came back here for high school.

### **Fort Sheridan**

I graduated from high school in 1945 and immediately went in the Army, not by choice. I got out of school in June and had an induction notice for August. The war ended in Germany, even in Japan, before I was inducted. I thought, ah hell, they'll cancel my induction.

I think I went in at the end of August. I served 14 months at Ft. Sheridan, Illinois, working in the finance office. I never even had basic training. They inducted us and they were discharging people like mad. Thousands a day, through Ft. Sheridan alone. They needed people in the office so I was stuck in the finance office, computing final paychecks for discharge. After 14 months of that, they decided that we were surplus and they were either going to send us for basic training or discharge us. On the bottom of my discharge it was stamped, "Recommended for further military training." But it never came.

So I got out and went to Marquette University, majored in chemistry. After about two years, that's when my father had

a stroke. I thought I'd take a semester off and help mother get rid of the store. That wasn't too easy to do because the day of the big supermarkets was coming. We were no competition.

There was one other grocer that did open in the shopping center, George Klement, who sold out to one of his employees, Don Kincaid. Don Kincaid built a bigger store across the street and that went through three or four owners and finally became Complete Control's electric shop. There is no grocery store now, except for a few commodities handled by the gas station.

### Nekoosa Papers

I had gotten married and I was offered a job at Nekoosa Papers. You know, every job I've had, Dave, I'm bragging now, I have never in my life gone out and solicited a job.

When I got out of high school, it was June, I was told by the grapevine, "Hey, they're looking for someone in the laboratory of Nekoosa papers. Why don't you go down and ask them for a job?"

I went down and Dr. Pascoe said, "Yeah, we'll hire you for the summer."

When the Army came along and offered me a job, it was handed to me. Then the job in Dad's store was handed to me, to help my mother out. While I was in there, Nekoosa-Edwards came back one day and Dr. Rowe said, one noon hour, "Marshall," he knew we were trying to get rid of the store, he was head of the research department, "We have some money to spend for somebody. We want to hire a chemist and think that you can qualify. Do you want a job?"

Sixteen years in research, then the sales department manager called and said, "We need someone in sales. Did you ever consider..." They gave me that job, which was a promotion.

When I was in the Army, I worked in the post theater, nights. The fellow that was in charge of the finance office was the theater manager. He came in one night and said, "Hey Marshall, I need an usher tonight. Do you want a job? It pays 75 cents for the evening and you get to see the movie," which was 15 cents. I got discharged and ended up manager of the post theater. It paid two dollars and a half then. I never had to look over want ads.

The chemistry job: when I worked there out of high school, I was just a lab technician. When I went back to work after the store, I was hired back as a water technician. These were the

days when they were getting very much involved in stream pollution. I was hired to work on stream pollution abatement. It was water treatment of various natures, whether it was waste water or process water.

I left the research department as chief chemist about 1968 and moved over in sales. The first title I got was Manager of Customer Affairs. All the customers we had to the Lodge and entertaining customers. That gave the idea that every customer came here to have an affair. So we got that changed to Manager of Customer Promotions.

So I was based here in Port Edwards, running that guest house out at Nepco Lake, another one down at Ashdown.

The company fleet of airplanes, which consisted of a jet and a turboprop commander. Those were my baby because they were used to transport customers.

I ended up with jurisdiction over the car pool. Here in Port Edwards, it was usually ten to fifteen automobiles.

It was goodwill. Don Krohn was public relations, I was customer relations. I went around the country putting on seminars and

conferences where you invite a lot of customers and go to some fancy resort. Managers of several paper distributors. Entertain them. Wine 'em and dine 'em. I coordinated those.

On many of those meetings, I could take my wife along, because we'd invited the wives. We hit some pretty plush places across the country.

I was up there when G-P took over. That was 1990 and I had announced in 1989 that I was going to retire. My anniversary date was July 1. I would have been 62 years old. I was talked into staying another year.

In April of 1990, Georgia-Pacific took over after a hostile battle. I was called in and told my job was being eliminated. The airplanes and the cars. They were selling the lodges.

I said, "That's no great problem. You've already got my announced retirement. So I'm just going three months sooner."

They said, "No. We're going to fire you." The idea was that it qualified me for some benefits. They could have just as easily saved some money. Not a golden parachute but a nice silver one.

Then they turned around and said, within the same week, would I come back to work as a consultant?

I had come back as a consultant because they had made promises to customers to bring them back that summer.



Photo: "Der Deutsche Verein" German club at Marquette University, 1948, Marshall center, with pretzel

We had committed this lodge visitation program to our customers. So would I come back and sort of see it wind down rather than call a customer and say, "We're canceling your visit." They stuck to their commitments.

### Alexander House

That lasted until about October of 1990. That's when I started getting involved in Alexander House. They bought this house, I think, in August of 1990. I am the Director of the Alexander House.

I was winding down one job and starting a new one here. Believe me, this has replaced it. This is a volunteer job. However, the Alexander Foundation is very kind to all the volunteers. Don Krohn and I are the co-managers. He handles the art arrangements. I handle the rest of the details. [Marshall and Don have since retired.]

The Alexander Foundation is very nice to us at Christmas time, with cash gifts. One year, it was a blank airplane ticket. If they didn't give us anything, I'd still be here. There is no salary as such.

When Sam Casey, who was retired president of Great Northern-Nekoosa, heard that I was out of a job, that I had been severed/slash retired, he came to me one day and said, "Have we got the perfect job for you!"

They had made arrangements with Georgia-Pacific to get all the archival collections donated to the Alexander Foundation on the promise they would provide a home for all this. Perfect.

Then we went around looking for a home for it. We looked at two other places but finally settled on this one. This was built by Joe Auchter and had several owners along the line. Neil Nash's house is three houses down.



### Archives

At Nekoosa Papers, the archives were an extra-curricular duty that I just loved. I love history. I have all my life. It probably goes back to my dad, because he did too. Spent a lot of Sunday afternoons driving down country roads by some old Indian mound or some old farm or some old railroad right of way. Local history. Old cemeteries.

I had started writing stories for the old *Nekoosa News* magazine, an employees' magazine. Every month, I'd write a one-page article with a photograph. Of mill history. This was going on for several years.

Then they built the new administration building in 1961 or so. One Sunday afternoon, John Alexander called me down to his office, which was the old white building that stood where the John Edwards statue is today. He was packing up in boxes, things in his office, getting ready for the move from the old office into the new office. He knew of my love

of history because he had been reading my articles every month and he went to a credenza behind his desk and he opened two big, deep file drawers.

"Look at all this stuff in here," he said. "Some of this stuff goes back to the 1840s. I don't want it in my office. Why don't you take it home? See what's worth saving and what isn't."

So I took a couple cartons, packed it up took it home and started going through. I said, "My god, here's a contract going back to 1840, between John Edwards and Henry Clinton." I threw nothing away, Dave, absolutely nothing. I mounted it in a loose-leaf binder, catalogued it, and gave it back to him. He didn't want it in his office.

"Why don't we take a little room downstairs and make an artifacts room out of it? Get some display cases, open 'em up and put 'em on display."

For a couple of years, we had a little archives room.

As office needs grew, that archives room disappeared. The display cases were moved out into the hallways of the office building. I think we started with four and then added four more. I kept changing them periodically so there would be fresh material for visitors to browse through, and employees. They found it interesting.

Then John Alexander called me over and said, "Jeez, you did a nice job on that, Marshall. In the attic of my garage at my home there's a file cabinet full of old records. Why don't you go through those and see?"

We enhanced the collection considerably. It kept going like that. When the mill would abandon an old office, when they tore down the old time office at Nekoosa, they called me down on a Friday and said, "We're tearing the building down Monday. There's a

roomful of old records in the basement."

I spent a weekend down there. I should have moved the whole damn thing. I could only take what I could glean in a matter of two days, Saturday and Sunday.

So this is building up and the Alexander Foundation went to Georgia-Pacific and said, "You're just going to ship it to Atlanta," which was where their corporate headquarters were, "by the truckloads." Georgia-Pacific agreed to give it to the Alexander Foundation, that's how it came about.

I had a space in the basement, a wire cage, a little section of file cabinets.

I think as he got older, John Alexander realized, "Let's preserve some of this stuff." Then, of course, Sam Casey and Jerry Veneman. Mrs. Veneman and Mrs. Casey, let's put it that way. They didn't want to see Grandpa and great-

*Photo: Cutting meat at family grocery store 1950 to test Nekoosa Paper Co. wrapping paper, by Don Krohn?*



Grandpa's records all destroyed. Down in Atlanta, some clerk: "150 years old." Shred it.

They were behind saving this stuff. I think as you get older, you want to save more and more. I wish my grandfather were alive today. When I knew him, history was a boring subject in school.

### SWCHC

The historical society was formed as a result of Wisconsin's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, wasn't it? When the South Wood County historical society was formed, they were meeting at the Howe School.

Lee Pomainville was a shirt-tail relative of mine. His sister, Carol Buehler of Nekoosa, was married to my uncle, Louis Buehler. Lee knew that I loved history and that I loved boating. He invited me to the second meeting they had. I think it was old Thede Brazeau who was kind of the president.

I can remember as a young kid, standing up at the end of the meeting, saying, remember it was the second meeting, I said, "I hope you don't limit this to Wisconsin Rapids only. I hope you include Port Edwards and Nekoosa."

Of course, old Thede Brazeau said, "Good idea, young man."

I think Lee introduced me at that point. I kept going to the meetings. At the end of the first year, damned if I wasn't elected president or vice president. Then for the next fifteen years, Lee Pomainville and I switched off, president and vice president, until we inherited the present building.

When they built McMillan Library, they gave us the old building. We had all our artifacts in storage in that barn/carriage house next door.

Now, Lee and I, I think Lee was president at that time, said, "We got a building and all the artifacts but I don't have time to turn that into a museum," and I said, "Lee I don't either," so we both quit. He resigned as president.

Then Cay Brazeau, Nick Brazeau's mother, was elected president. Lee and I were still directors. I tip my hat to her. She's the one who ruled with an iron hand and said, "Marshall, you're going to do this." "Lee, I expect you to take the doctors' stuff and outfit this room as a doctor's office."

She assigned it and said, "I want it done by next spring."

It got done. She was president and then she died. Nathalie Smart became president for a couple years and I guess I was reelected and I still am.

So I've been involved since the second meeting. [Marshall stepped down in 2007 as president, though he remains an active board member.]

In the early years, we were primarily an entertainment center. We had a speaker at every meeting. They were held mostly in the Howe school. Seems like they had sort of a public room. We would meet, probably half a dozen times a year.

Our primary purpose was to provide a historic program. A movie, a slide series, a speaker. Lee was good at getting programs. People would come into his office. All of a sudden, he'd find out that they'd lived in the town of such and such for so many years and their parents lived there. The next thing you knew, we'd have a speaker for our next program.

### Doc Lee

Lee Pomainville. He was the old family doctor. Lee was the kind that I often said, if I needed brain surgery, I'd never go to him. But if you had an ache or a pain or a sore throat,

he was the kind that took care of you. His personality, his bedside manner was, you couldn't ask for a better bedside manner. He had time to talk to you, put you at ease. Talking about history or boating or whatever your interest was. Diagnosing your problem. Giving you a handful of free sample pills. They had a bigger supply, I think, than the salesmen did. I went to him as a physician. Fortunately, I never needed any brain surgery or heart surgery. I had warts removed by him.

Quite late in life, I was circumcised by him. For that reason, his nickname was "Rabbi." I would call him "Rabbi" and his office girls would call up and say, "Marshall, Rabbi wants to talk to you." Elaine Witt, she was there for years.

We made a lot of historical trips. We made some just to take a look at something or to talk to somebody. Took the old reel-to-reel tape recorder along to

interview them. People that he would meet through his office or something. He didn't know how to run the tape recorder. He constantly got it jammed up. I would say, "Jeez, you can run an electrocardiograph machine but you can't run the tape recorder."

We went on several overnight trips, historical-type trips, convention things. We did a lot of boating trips that were two or three nights. He was good. He always footed all the bills. That made it nice. He was very generous.

I also went to several medical meetings with him. It got to the point in his later years when he was still practicing, he didn't want to drive. He was chairman of the state medical society's education foundation or something. And the Pomainville room at Prairie du Chien. His wife didn't want to go, so he would take me along as his chauffeur.



Photo: Marshall in Nekoosa Paper Co. office, mid 1980s

So, I sat in on several lectures that didn't mean a damn thing to me. He'd take me around and introduce me to the vendors. I even made medical calls a couple times with him. We'd be going on a boat trip and he'd say, "I've got to stop in and see this guy. Come on along. Don't sit in the car. I'll introduce you to this guy...This is Marshall Buehler, he's interning in medicine."

Lee had my son practically enrolling in medical school. Lee had no sons. We went down to Madison once for a historical meeting and my son, Ken, went along. We went on the campus and he said, "This is the medical school. This is where I went. This is where I want you to go. I think it would be great if..."

In Kenny's senior year in high school, he kept saying, "Go into medicine, Kenny. I'll fix it all up. I got friends down there." Ken did not have any desire to go into medicine.

Lee had a twin brother, Harold. He was in medicine too.

Bill Scherek worked at the state historical society. He organized and became the director of the Wisconsin Council for Local History which was an association of all the local historical societies. At that time, there were probably about 60.

Lee and I were again president and vice president so we went to Madison for the organizational meeting. At this meeting, each society was supposed to pick a representative.

Lee said, "Marshall, I'm going to appoint you as our representative because I don't have the time." I said, "Okay."

Before that meeting ended, Lee was made president of the Wisconsin Council for Local History, thanks to Bill Scherek's efforts. It became more than just an historic relationship; it was social and boating.

Scherek lived on Lake Wisconsin. We went down there boating and stopped at his house. If he were in the area, it was always good for a dinner together, the three of us.

### Strike Story

When I was writing the series of stories for *Nekoosa* magazine, I wrote an article on the strike of 1919. I have written for the state historical magazine, the *Milwaukee Journal*, the *Marquette Tribune*, the *Papermaker* magazine, *Tappe* magazine, and the book, the *Daily Tribune*.

The only thing that was ever rejected of mine that I wrote, was the article I did on the strike. The reason it was rejected by Sam Casey was, he said, "Marshall, I'm afraid we're rekindling old embers. There are still employees whose parents worked here. I think we better just forget that."

When it came to publishing the book, Sam was not there any more. Before I wrote that chapter, I had all the material;

I asked if I should include that or not and the answer was, "Yes, that's part of our history."

But we didn't use any pictures. If you remember the *Nekoosa Story*, every other chapter is illustrated except that chapter, which is about three pages of text. I was told not to include any pictures.

The whole issue was on the introduction of a national union. Nekoosa-Edwards paper company tried to fight it with what they called an employee's association. L.M. Alexander was president. They encouraged them to form an organization but it was strictly the local employees. He fought it and they went out on strike.

It went on for a whole winter. He gradually started up the paper machines using quote-unquote scab labor. In one case, a railroad car was switched right into the yard. He built a barracks for them. Put a fence around. Gradually started up the paper machines one by one, got 'em all going again.

The pickets stayed outside the mill fence for that whole winter, standing around fires, trying to keep warm, throwing stones and rocks at those that went across the line. This was both at Nekoosa and Port. There were threats to blow up John Alexander's home. There was a group of wives in Nekoosa, women for justice, they petitioned to change the name of the school from Alexander high school to something more appropriate.

### Depression

Dad had a store and everything was charged. We didn't even have a cash register for many years. It was broken. Didn't need it.

If someone came in and paid cash, it was probably for a bottle of Coca-Cola for a nickel. You just threw that in a box.

The charge system coincided with the mill payday every other Friday. Dad would go to Nekoosa on Friday morning to the bank, and borrow \$2,000 to \$3,000 in a cloth sack and then people'd start getting out of work at 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock in the afternoon and there was a stream of people cashing their checks and paying their grocery bill at the same time. You paid your bill and you got a little bag of candy. That was a tradition. He'd pay the interest for two or three days. On Saturday morning, he'd take that money back to the Nekoosa State Bank.

During the Depression, when I was seven or eight years old, people were still cashing their checks, Dad was good-hearted. "I can't pay you. I got school clothes to buy and so and so is sick."

Well, okay, they didn't get cut off and their bills ran up pretty good. I can remember as a kid on a Sunday afternoon,



Photo: Marshall, Pat and guide, Mexico City honeymoon, 1951

getting in an old Model A coupe. We would get in the car, my sister and I, my mother and dad, and my dad would say, "We're going to go out collecting. If we can get a dollar, we'll stop at the root beer stand."

That was the old A&W. A nickel for a glass of root beer, a small one like that free. He'd spend ten cents for he and mother and we got the two small ones. And we'd go to different houses. He'd have his little book and he'd go up and knock on the door and try to get some money. People would pay fifty cents, seventy five, a dollar. He never did collect some of them.

### **Pat**

I married Patricia Kennedy. Her parents lived here until World War II broke out so we went to school together.

Her father was a pipe fitter and pipe fitters were in demand during World War II. He went to Manitowoc shipyard, building submarines. He then went to La Crosse and got a job with the Crane company, pipefitting. He went to Alaska and helped build Richardson airbase up there. But his home right at that time was in La Crosse and that's where Pat went to school, La Crosse teacher's college then. And she went to Viterbo for a year too. She got her degree at the age of fifty.

She started off at Viterbo which was a one-year college course. She then switched to the La Crosse teachers college. Then she went to Madison and spent a year. Then she went to teaching in a rural country school north of La Crosse. Then we got married and she came to Port Edwards and taught, all this on a teacher's certificate. That's when I married her: 1951. Then she went to Stevens Point night school and finished up. When she got her degree, she became a full-time teacher in the Nekoosa school system.

She got her scuba diving certificate at the same age.

### **Wakely**

I often say I wish there was some way we could communicate with a couple old timers. One was my grandfather. His gold rush days, prior to his getting married.

The other person, I'd love to pick their brain, would be John Edwards, or someone from that era that lived here in the 1840s and 1850s. Right across the street from us, this river is loaded with piers, booms, remnants of dams. The west bank of the river is lined with timbers yet. There must have been a massive boomage, with dams and chutes and the like. You can see them when the river is down.

What is this? What is the purpose of it? I'd like to have someone come in to explain it. A lot could be written about

that era. Roughly from the Civil War on, we've got a pretty good history.

The story on Wakely House: yes, Lee and I got a historical marker down there. That was the time Lee was buying historical markers. About five historic markers. I was writing them as long as he was paying for 'em.

We put one up down on the Wakely property. That's when Charlie Otto lived there. Charlie gave us a tour of the place, and his wife gave us a tour of the place, through the house, while they were living in it. [Talked about] the old charcoal pit which sounded farfetched to me. I don't believe that story. You gotta bring in sulfur and you gotta bring in saltpeter. Why didn't you bring in the gunpowder itself? You're only saving on one-third of the ingredients.

And she showed us one place where the bank of the creek... this was where the Indians used to ride their ponies up and they'd get to the top of the creek and stop suddenly and the ponies would knock down the bank as they were going down to get a drink of water.

Mrs. Otto's mother, her name was Schroeder, she was a fortune-teller. I remember, we'd hitchhike home from the Catholic school to save on the bus fare, which was a nickel. I remember the other kids saying, "Don't flag that one down. That's that crazy Mrs. Schroeder. You didn't want to ride with her." The daughter told us the stories of the charcoal and the ponies.

She was brought up on that property.

Lee told the story how he had the Schroeders [as patients]. She called Lee when he [Schroeder] died. Lee went down there and the old fella was dead already.

He said, "Where is he?"

She said, "He's laying out in the barn."

Charlie Otto was coming up here for the summers and, as you know, the Nekoosa mill piles are just north of his property, and he ran into a disagreement, claiming that his well water was being polluted from the sludge pits. That could have been, I don't know. It could have been true for the simple reason that Nekoosa Papers company bought Charlie Otto's property. If you can't accommodate him any other way, buy his property and kick him out.

Nekoosa Edwards Paper Company then offered the building to the South Wood County Historical society, but we had to move the building. We said "No."

I can remember a good old friend of both of ours, Emily Baldwin. Going to an historical meeting and announcing that we could have the building and put it on our property down there.



*Photo: Marshall and Pat at a sales conference, 1980s*



Emily said, "We can move it to our property, right down below the museum. There's lots of room there."

How were we going to move it?

She said, "We could float it up the river!"

God bless Emily. She was good to us, though.

We turned it down. Said no to Nekoosa papers. That we had one building already. And then, I think, they did come along and said, all right, we could keep it down there, but you can't live in it. We said, no, we had enough problems with one museum already, taking care of it and didn't want to try to run two locations. The next thing, the Wakely foundation was organized and acquired it. They have it today. I have not been a part of it at all.

She [Mrs. Otto] was happy when we put the historical marker down there. This was a small one, supported on a single post. Lee paid for it.

The house, when I went through it was real nice. They had it real comfortable. I said to Lee, "I could live there. This is comfortable."

Then I went through it once, after Nekoosa Papers. That was probably after they offered it to us. It had been abandoned then, for at least a season. It was starting to deteriorate. The living room floor had a big bulge in it.

We went down in the basement and we went up in the upstairs. Well, you've been in the building, I guess. I haven't been in the house since that day and that was before Wakely got it.

Myths? I think that charcoal pit for making gunpowder and the ponies knocking down the bank of that creek. Then she pointed to the road that goes up the hill. She said that was the old stage coach road that ran from Portage to Stevens Point. I think she was guessing. I think the stage coach road was roughly where County Trunk Z is today.

She had a lot of stories. I would hate to stand up in court and swear that that is the building that Wakely built. I don't think it is. I saw the picture once in a Consolidated employees magazine and it shows the Wakely house and it's a lot different than that. It has porches on it. Maybe they tore the porches off.

She had another building; that was another one of her stories. There was another building, just north of that, which was the tavern/rooming house. There's kind of an incline there by the house.

### Antiquities

Lee and I took a lot of interest in Indian history. I think that was one of Lee's favorites. You probably heard the story about the Indian babies that had the name Leland in their name. It could have been White Horse Leland somebody. They couldn't pay their doctor bill after delivery so they named the baby after him. Anyway, Lee made it sound good.

We frequently went down to Ross Lake with Boy Scout groups, gave them a tour of the Ross Lake mounds. On the Hemlock Creek, there was a council ground. We drove through some Indian's farm yard, got out of the car, walked back in the woods. There was a circle of benches. We went up to Powers Bluff several times.

Lee had an interest in Native American history and I was just running along with him on all these things.

### Edwards

Hazel Green? I visited John Edwards' home down there. I knocked on the door and talked to the owner.

At that time, it was [standing], it's a big, there's a picture of it down in this building [Alexander House]. I talked to the owner. It's a farm.

Probably two hundred yards from his farm is the Hazel Green school. It's right on the edge of Hazel Green. It might even be in the village.

I told him why I was interested. John Edwards is the founder of Port Edwards. I said I wanted to visit his house. I said, "Do you mind if I take a few pictures?"

"No go ahead. My wife wants to tear it down. She wants to build a new one."

I said, "God, don't do that!"

I went back there, oh, about two years ago, and it was still standing.

"My wife wants to tear it down. Take all the pictures you want!"

It was a beautiful home in its day. I then went to someone who ran an antique shop in Hazel Green, the president of their historical society, talked to that lady. She didn't know too much about Edwards. She's the one that directed me to the home.

He never lived here. He must have visited because he had a financial interest here. But he had a home in Hazel Green and later, in Dubuque, Iowa. Or, he's buried in Dubuque, Iowa.

Hazel Green, that's where he lived when he came from Scotland. Sent his son, John Jr. up here, who oversaw the operation of his financial interest in the sawmill. I think John Edwards Jr. sort of eased Clinton out of the deal. There are several documents here. Clinton was killed in a tavern brawl. The killer was tried. I saw the article at McMillan. It told about poor Mrs. Clinton. She had so many dollars left.

Clinton had lost his equity in this operation pretty much by then. There are documents: Edwards and Clinton are making adjustments. Finally Clinton is sent up to Mill Creek to run the company's farm up there. Then he gets shot. I often wondered where Clinton is buried.



*Photo: Don Krohn and Marshall with an entertainer at a conference in Albuquerque, N.M.*

**Alexander**

L.M. died in 1934. I was about seven years old. I only knew him as, "That's Mr. Alexander walking by."

I knew his wife though, Lida. She didn't die until the forties. I was still in the grocery store. She'd come in. Joanne Alexander Lester and I were about the same age. We'd play a lot and I'd go to her grandma's house and play.

If you stop to look at it, Nekoosa Edwards paper company was a home company before merging with Great Northern-Nekoosa. The entire management, with the exception of the Nekoosa mill manager; the corporate managers, all were in Port Edwards. The Nekoosa manager lived in a company house right behind the bank in Nekoosa. That was a beautiful home, but built by the mill. All the corporate managers were in Port Edwards.

That's one reason why Port Edwards became, as you said earlier today, a wealthy little Mecca here. Improvements other communities didn't see as early as we did perhaps. And the company was good to the community. John Alexander...I could just go on.

The YMCA was a perfect example. Like the shopping center. Just because he saw a little model shopping center down in Milwaukee once. He took the business people down to Milwaukee on an overnight adventure. Wined 'em, dined 'em, put 'em up in a motel. Said, "This is what we want to build for you in Port Edwards."

I'm tempted to think it was in Menomonee Falls. Dad went down there and came back all enthused.

Joanne Alexander Lester and I were roughly the same age. Naturally, I lived about a block from where she lived. They had a little gymnasium attached to their garage. As a kid, we were constantly playing over there. In the gym, or going out to their cottage, in the summertime. We were just good friends. Naturally, I got to know John Alexander that way.

I gotta admit, the Alexanders were probably the best customers we had in the store. They didn't want the generic brands. They wanted the deluxe, the best stuffed olives. That's where the profit was.

I got a job at Nekoosa Papers. I was just a lab technician at that time. John Alexander had a fish pond out there at that cottage. It had a complete water filtration system on it, an iron removal unit. It had to be serviced once a week. I was the lab technician. I specialized in water. Once a week in the summer, I went out, back-washed the filter and regenerated it with new chemicals. He'd be walking around. "How's it look today, Marshall?"

"It looks good."

One day, he was having a supervisor's picnic, on a Sunday, at his cottage, which he had every year. I was washing the

filter and they were getting ready for the picnic.

"Coming to the picnic Sunday, Marshall?"

"I don't think so."

"Why not?"

"I guess I didn't get an invitation. I'm not a supervisor."

"Well, you got your invitation right now."

So I walked across that bridge Sunday afternoon. I thought, "Oh no. Everybody's got name tags on. I'm going to be an intruder."

I'll be damned if he didn't have a name tag at the table for me. And about a year later, I was a supervisor.

He came to me one day. I kept saying, "Mr. Alexander." "Hello, Mr. Alexander."

He said, "If you can't call me John, don't bother talking to me. I've known you since you were old enough to walk across the street and play with Joanne."



**Ken**

You asked about my children.

Ken was the oldest. He was in radio in Duluth, Pine City and Detroit Lakes. He went to school in Superior, majored in Communications. Ended up, he owned the AM and FM in Duluth. Sold those for a profit, then bought one in Detroit Lakes and Pine City, which he has to this day.

Kenny went to the University at Superior and got a job on the campus radio station. From there, he got a job doing sport events for a radio station in Duluth. Then he got a job in sales and he was in the sales department.

The sales manager, believe it or not, was a young lady. He was working for her and they got married.

It was a Ridder station, Bobby Ridder, the son of the Knight Ridder fame. He offered the station to these two young entrepreneurs. It was WDSM and the FM was KZIO. So they bought that and ran that and sold the station to some fellow from Madison. Kenny then took his portion and some more loans from Daddy, from the bank, the one in Pine City first, then Detroit Lakes.

**Gretchen**

Number two, my daughter, is Gretchen, who went to Milwaukee, St. John's School for the Deaf. Graduated from high school there. Then went to Gallaudet college in Washington D.C., which is a college for the deaf.

John Alexander called me over to his office one day. Gretchen was four years old. He said, "I hear you had a daughter who's deaf."

*Photo: Marshall and Gretchen Buehler with Lee Pomainville, probably on Lake Petenwell, early 1970s.*

"Yeah."

He says, "I've got a friend in St. Louis who has a deaf son and there's a school in St. Louis that's supposed to be outstanding. Have you ever investigated it?"

I said, "No, but we have investigated one down in Milwaukee." That's the school for the deaf.

I said, "However, Gretchen's enrolled in Stevens Point in a deaf class."

This was in August and Pat was going to drive her to this class in Stevens Point, every day.

He says, "Have you investigated the one in Milwaukee? What's it like?"

"Boarding school just for the deaf. Catholic nuns. St. John's School for the Deaf."

"Why don't you send her there?"

I said, "Well, it's a matter of money. I just built a house, you know, that I'm paying off."

"You see if you can still get her in down there. Let me know how much it is."

So I went home at noon that day and I told Pat. We called there to see if Gretchen could get in there a month later. They said yes and gave a price. I went back to John Alexander that afternoon.

"Okay! You just get her enrolled and tell her the dough comes to me."

So that naturally created a very close [relationship] and as she went through high school there, graduation from high school...

John died when she was in high school. Graduation was in church on a Sunday morning. Dorothy went down to Milwaukee with us that Saturday night. With my aunt and Pat's mother. We had a series of hotel rooms. Little old ladies, they were playing bridge. And it was warm in the hotel with the rooms open. They were all adjacent rooms.

Management, about ten o'clock at night, ordered: "Quiet down."

They were all playing bridge, including Dorothy Alexander.

Then Gretchen graduated from high school. Sam Casey, who was the administrator of the estate for John and Dorothy, said that John and Dorothy wanted Gretchen to continue college. So she went to Gallaudet for six years. They didn't pay for all of it.

When it first started out, Dave, she was in kindergarten in Milwaukee. The tab for the year was just short of \$600. Naturally, when you go to college in Washington, D.C., it's considerably more. They paid about half of it.

When Dorothy Alexander died, Jerry Veneman and I pretty much arranged the funeral. Whenever there was a party, we always invited Dorothy Alexander. John died first. He said, "Your job is to pick up Dorothy and bring her to the party. Take her home when she wants to go home."

So lots of times, and Dorothy knew she could rely on me for lots of other things: "Come on out, I got a group of ladies out here. Could you come out and give them a ride around the lake? I got a new float boat too. I want you to know that mine is two feet longer than Emily's."

John and Dorothy were close friends, very very close friends. Basically, that's why I'm involved here for the last seven years. John and Dorothy Alexander don't know it but I'm repaying them.

## Julie

Julie went to the University at Eau Claire in communications and is news director for Fox 11 in Green Bay.

Julie went to the University at Eau Claire. She was mad at me because she wanted to go to Creighton. I said it was too expensive. I remember at the graduation party, people would come up and say, 'Julie, where are you going to go?'

"Oh, I'm going to the University at Eau Claire. I wanted to go to Creighton but I'm going to Eau Claire

so my dad can go back to Europe again."

On the other hand, I remember Julie calling me from Eau Claire once and saying, "God I'm glad you didn't..."

Because Julie fell into a niche over there with an instructor and got very early involved in radio and TV on the campus level station. She told me, "Am I glad you didn't send me to Creighton because I don't think I would have got what I'm getting here."

She got out and got a job as an announcer at one of the radio stations in Eau Claire and she got an anchor job at Rochester, Minn., a TV station. Then she got a job as a news producer at Green Bay. Then she got married and she got a job at a TV station in New Haven, Conn. Didn't like that area of the country and lo and behold, the station she had left in Green Bay was looking for a news producer and she got her old job back after about two years in Connecticut.

Then she was promoted to news director.

Julie is chairman of the Wisconsin associated press news directors. Just came back from San Antonio, Texas.



Photo: Gretchen, Julie, Ken, Marshall and Pat Buehler, 1980s.



# Dorothy

Getting back to your question about Dorothy. The story I've heard is this. It might be true.

John was very influential in building the Port Edwards auditorium. This is back in the 1920s.

The old wooden schoolhouse: I went to kindergarten in that. It burned down and I went in the new school the next year. The auditorium was built as an addition to that old school. It was a gymnasium and a community auditorium.

At that time, it was considered the largest, best-equipped stage outside of Milwaukee in the state of Wisconsin. State of the art electrical lighting, beautiful scenery and drapery and so forth. After they built the place, they staged several complete shows of which there are programs of them here. Performing groups would come up from Chicago.

When they dedicated the auditorium, Dave, and there is documentary proof of this, there was an orchestra from Chicago. They had a newsreel, silent, black and white. Pathé news was in here and photographed on film, the people going into the auditorium.

The closing feature of the evening was showing that movie of the people arriving. Which means they shot it

and in a period of two or three hours, they developed that segment of film and brought it back and showed it and that was 35-millimeter stuff.

John Alexander was a promoter of all these shows that were coming up, the Lyceum circuit was bringing shows up here. One of these shows supposedly featured a dance review. Dorothy Dean was a member of that dance team that came up here and performed, perhaps on more than one occasion. John, being the promoter of these shows and she, being a star in the show: supposedly, he became attracted to her and brought the group back again. Anyway, I understand, that was the beginning of the relationship.

I remember working on a couple of parent-teacher productions. I was never in any of them. The *Merry Widow* was one, *Oklahoma*. I was usually the stage manager. Dorothy Alexander was always the choreographer. They'd always get her to come in and direct the dancers, based on her experience.

When they got married, they lived in a small house that was at that time located right behind L.M. Alexander's home, the big, white Elm Court residence where the YMCA is. That was a small, little wooden, as it was called then, a cottage. I have a strong gut feeling that that was the original Edwards home.

Edwards came here and married Frances Morrell, and needed a place to live and he didn't build that house, that big stately one, I think, until 1872. For a period of a few years, he had to have a place to live and I think he lived in this little house. The little house was then moved over to Island Avenue and added on to but it's still there.

Dorothy Alexander, I asked her one time, they lived in the stone house where Gary Vanatta lives, just before you get to the Y: I said, "Did you move right into that?"

She said, "No, there was a little house behind John's father's house and we lived in there while we were building our house."

You're doing exactly what someone should have done fifty or seventy-five years ago. People weren't too interested, I don't think, then. There were a few. Brennan, a fellow that lived here in Port Edwards. He wrote down some history. Gus Giese. T.W. Brazeau taped a lot. We taped a lot

of it. We should have picked his brain far more than we did. I did it a lot of times. We'd go out there and I'd sit down and start asking him some questions but he would say, "What do you want to dig into the past for? Let those people lie." If you kept needling him, sit there all evening, he'd open up.

*Photo: Marshall speaking at grand opening of Alexander House, 1991, Jerry Veneman, left, Chamber of Commerce ambassadors, right.*



*Back cover: Marshall, 1945, while at first job, in Nekoosa lab. Later, working on Customer Relations, 1970s, Nekoosa Paper Co.*

*Marshall*

*Riding motorbike at Nassau,*

*Center: With wife of Pancho  
Villa, Chihuahua, Mexico, 1974*

*With portrait of L.M. Alexander  
at Alexander house*

*Hand car at North Freedom,  
Wis., 1990s*

*Page 17: As a scoutmaster, Lake  
Arbutus Boy Scout camp by Carl  
R. Schiebler, c. 1953*







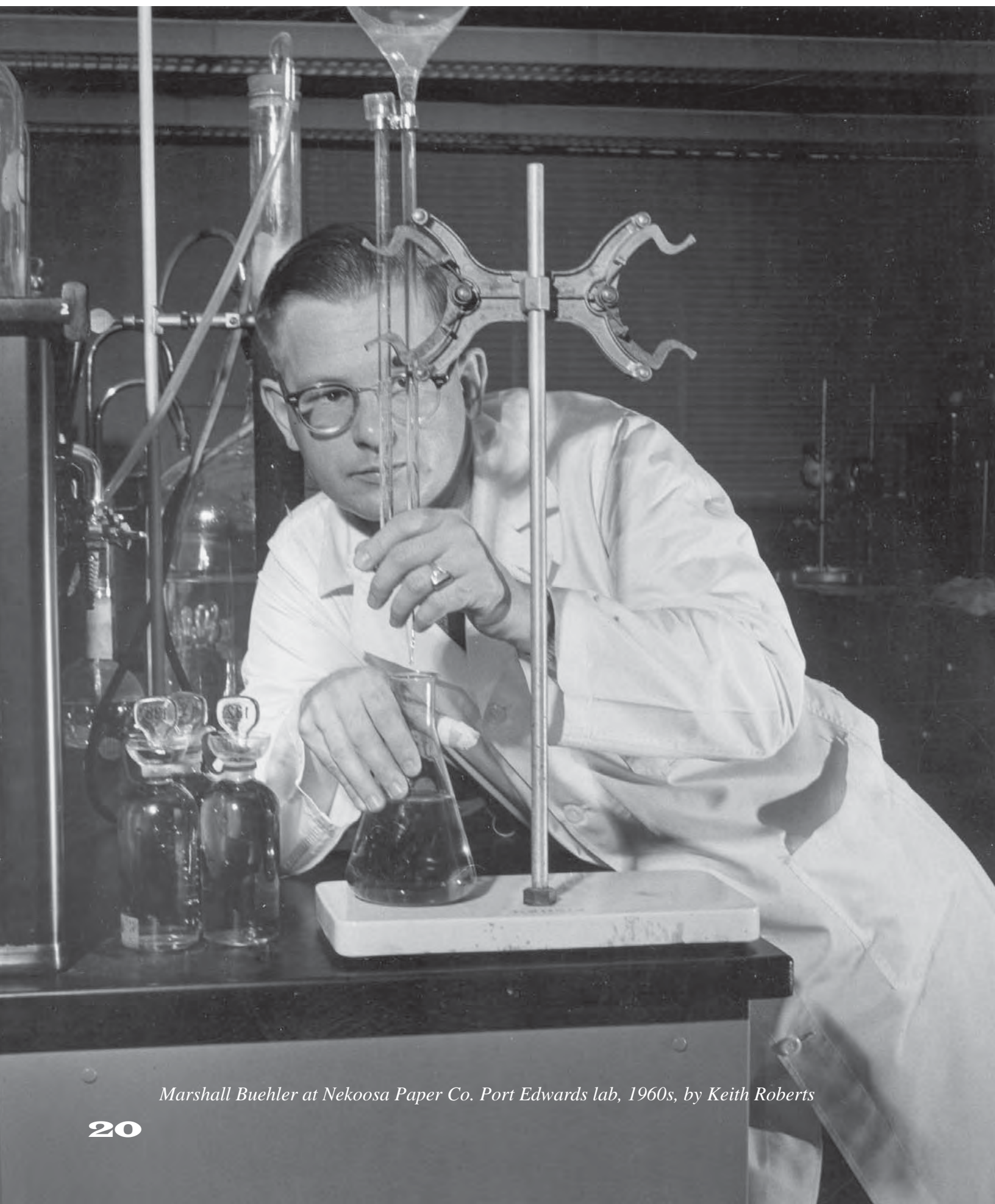
*Quite a picture Marshall*











*Marshall Buehler at Nekoosa Paper Co. Port Edwards lab, 1960s, by Keith Roberts*

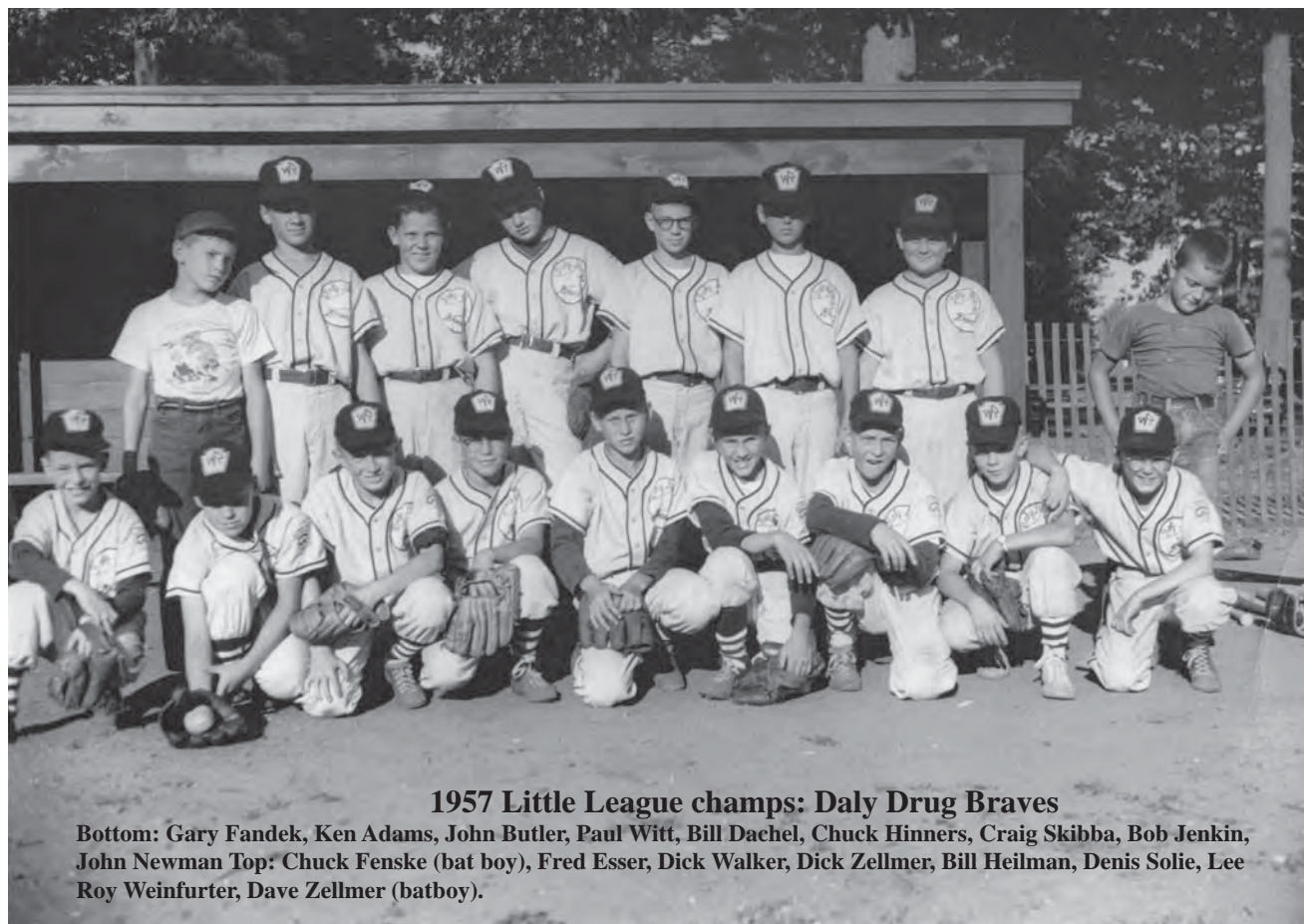




*Marshall at right, train car at North Freedom, early 1980s, by John Gruber*



*White River, Ontario, 2006. Train travel has been a major avocation.*



**1957 Little League champs: Daly Drug Braves**

Bottom: Gary Fandek, Ken Adams, John Butler, Paul Witt, Bill Dachel, Chuck Hinners, Craig Skibba, Bob Jenkin, John Newman Top: Chuck Fenske (bat boy), Fred Esser, Dick Walker, Dick Zellmer, Bill Heilman, Denis Solie, Lee Roy Weinfurter, Dave Zellmer (batboy).

## Little League, Big Hitters

*by Chuck Hinners*



### Early Times and Water—1956

For kids under the age of 13, the biggest baseball games in Wisconsin Rapids were on Saturday afternoons in Nick Brazeau's back yard on Third Street South. All the players wore Milwaukee Braves uniforms that could be purchased at County Stadium or Perry's Sporting Goods for less than \$10. A few of us even wore our uniforms on the last day of third grade, June 4. The Brazeau games were generally by invitation only and if you didn't have a Braves uniform, you couldn't play.

Tom Ellis and I, each barely nine, saw the big 10- and 11-year-olds gathering at the Brazeau residence for the game of the week. Ellie and I said we'd head home to don our uniforms but were told that we'd get back too late to play. Dejected, we watched the game from the sidelines. The most memorable play was Betsy Brauer's home run to

dead center field that sailed over the 12-foot hedge and into Shaw Hill's front yard.

The game was rained out after three innings. Future lawyers Alan Grischke and Nick Brazeau argued the rules of baseball in preparation for their law careers. Most Saturdays, Ellis and I had to be content to play sandlot pick up games. The Brazeau game was literally out of our league. Most kids who wanted a game had to go to the summer playground program at Witter Field.

Other early timers in the Brazeau League were Al Normington, Pete Hittner, Jere Rude, John Blanchard, Carl Normington, Pete Parsons and Tom Parsons.

During June and July, kids gathered each morning at the Lincoln High School field house. The group was divided by age in groups of 18 to 20. Two older boys in each age group chose sides and the games began.

Playground staffers J.A. "Torry" Torresani, Jake Chadwick and Mel Howard supervised the games, often serving as home plate umpire. The games usually



lasted seven innings. Not every kid chosen got to play. The worst player on each team usually batted 9<sup>th</sup> in the lineup and played right field. The phrase “Chuck out in deep right” was a personal insult.

The age groups were usually 10 and under, 11 to 14, and 15 and over. On Friday mornings, Torry, Chadwick, and Howard picked the best players of each age bracket to play against cross-town rivals from the Mead playground.

In 1956, over 30 million viewers watched *Douglas Edwards with the News* report the global east west rivalry on the CBS affiliate, WSAU Channel 7, from Wausau. For baseball crazed kids in Wisconsin Rapids, our east west rivalry played out each Friday morning at Mead or Witter field. This was war on the playground.

For fun we played ping-pong or basketball in the afternoon. The highlight of each summer was to guess how many pieces of candy were in a jar suspended by twine just out of reach of the tallest kid.

During that summer of 1956 we heard rumors that Little League Baseball would arrive in Rapids in time for the 1957 season. Boys that were twelve before August 1, 1956, learned they would be too old to play in the 1957 Little League but for these boys there was always the Junior League for ages 13 through 18.

The Junior League consisted of eight teams that had been playing for many years in Rapids. In fact, Junior League officials and players were thrilled to learn that Little League was being organized, since they didn’t want to deal with 11 and 12 year olds who tried to play in their “big” league.

During the long winter, the Hot Stove League topic in grade schools and local coffee shops was the coming of Little League. The biggest game in town was moving from B.C. Brazeau’s yard to Robinson Park. Who would get to play was another question.

### **Twixt Ike and Sputnik—1957**

Dwight D. Eisenhower was inaugurated for his second term as President on January 20. The Russians would launch Sputnik I, the first man-made satellite on October 4. The United States was engaged in the Cold War with the U.S.S.R. and both countries worried about the military threat of China. For all of this, our

nation’s defense budget was less than \$40 billion. The Internet would not be invented for another 12 years.

Telephones in Wisconsin Rapids did not have push buttons. They did not even have dials! If you wanted to make a telephone call, you picked up the receiver and responded to “number please” from a live operator sitting at Wood County Telephone Company. The switchboard was located on East Grand Avenue—next to the Elks Club, not in the current building across from the Mead Inn. The Wisconsin Rapids *Daily Tribune* cost 7 cents per copy, and circulation manager Henry Silka employed a battalion of paper-boys to make nightly home deliveries.



Between Ike and Sputnik, the Milwaukee Braves began their fifth season on April 16 by beating the Chicago Cubs at Wrigley Field by a score of 4-1. Warren Spahn won the first of 21 games he would win that year. Braves fans thought this would be THE year after a heartbreaking 1956 season that left the Braves a game behind the *Brooklyn* Dodgers. Major League baseball consisted of eight teams in each league. The two teams that won league pennants played in the World Series. There were no league championship series or designated hitters. Pitchers could hit, and Warren Spahn hit 35 home runs in a 21 year major league career.

It was easy to be a Braves fan in Rapids unless you were a Cub fan. Local Chicago Cubs fans stuck with their team when Lou Perini moved the Boston Braves to Milwaukee in 1953. During their short Milwaukee residence, the Braves finished ahead of the Cubs each year in the National League.

However, the Braves didn’t stay long enough to convert many Cub fanatics, and the Cubs still play in Chicago in the same Wrigley Field. The Cubs are number one in the hearts of many baseball fans in central Wisconsin 50 years later.

The same probably cannot be said for the Atlanta Braves. The team’s departure left many central Wisconsin fans cold. When the Seattle Pilots moved into Milwaukee County Stadium in 1970, they couldn’t give tickets away. To many of us, the Milwaukee Brewers are still the recycled Seattle Pilots.

*Photo: J.A. Torresani*



But in 1957, baseball was truly America's game. In 1957 The Milwaukee Braves won their first of two National League pennants and their only World Series.

It was a perfect setting for aspiring Little Leaguers who only had to look as far as Lincoln high school's team for role models. Coach Dale Rheel's Red Raiders were led by future New York Yankee pitcher Tom Metcalf. The Raiders won the Wisconsin Valley Conference championship by whipping Rhinelander 7-2.

At the next level, Rapids native Bob Torresani, Torry's son, was a star infielder at the University of Wisconsin.

The excitement about baseball would soon shift to the youngsters in 1957. Baseball fans, especially those with pre-teen kids, kept the coffee shops, restaurants, taverns, churches, and PTA meetings abuzz with talk of Little League baseball.

Little League in Wisconsin Rapids one day came only with the hard work of dedicated volunteers. Every corps of volunteers needs a leader with vision, and the Wisconsin Rapids Little League was fortunate to have a man who had both the vision to see the big picture and the perseverance to pull together all of the details and do much of the chicken work himself. He did all of this while running one business and organizing a second. His vision and perseverance fulfilled the dreams of the boys who wanted to play ball.

### **The Czar—Bill Heilman**

G.W. Heilman, "Bill" to his many friends, was the organizing force behind Little League baseball in Wisconsin Rapids. According to his son, Bill, G.W. made at least one trip to World Little League Headquarters in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. The groundwork may have begun as early as 1955. According to Heilman, his father spent as many as 40 extra hours weekly to get the league organized. Heilman ran a clothing store on West Grand Avenue

and would soon open a boat dealership in 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

Nevertheless, Heilman was able to jump-start the League by convincing four local businesses to sponsor teams: Daly Drugs (Braves); Church's Drugs (Dodgers); Johnson-Hills (Cubs); and Wood County National Bank (Cardinals). The sponsors bought uniforms, bats, balls, and catcher's equipment. They may have even conscripted a few employees or customers to manage their teams, take care of the ball park and sell candy and soda pop at the games.

The League Charter was signed on March 18, 1957, by Heilman, League President; Vice President Clarence Van Lysal, a local home builder; and Secretary-Treasurer Bud McElroy, a bank executive.

None were lawyers, and there is no lawyer of record for the league. Undaunted by this oversight, the organizers of the league kept moving in preparation for opening day just eleven weeks away.

The charter stated there would be four teams in the league, comprised of fifteen boys each. It named the team sponsors and managers, stated that boys had to reside in the city of Wisconsin Rapids and that sponsors had no voice in

the affairs of the league. This was just 38 years after the Black Sox scandal rocked major league baseball. Heilman was Kenesaw Mountain Landis of the north!

Each team had 15 boys between the ages of 10 and 12 with restrictions. No more than six players could be 12 years of age. No more than five players could be 11 years of age. At least four players had to be 10 years of age, of whom one player could be 9. Age was determined by an August 1 cutoff date. Boys born before August 1, 1944 were ineligible. Players had to reside in the city of Wisconsin Rapids.

The final restriction would be significant as it was observed twice in the breach, as we'll see later.

The four managers were Jim Wilson (Braves), Ed Murgatroyd (Dodgers), Dr. Orville Straub (Cubs), and Don Arendt (Cardinals).



*Photo: Bill Heilman*

Heilman held organizational meetings for players and parents in early April at Howe and at Mead School. He relished the task of making the League successful, but he was not afraid to lay down the law. Heilman told boys and their parents that there might be as many as 200 boys competing for 60 spots on the four teams. He warned that most would be disappointed. This, however was to be a lesson for the players fortunate enough to make a team. We learned that we would have to attend all practices and games and play hard or another kid would take our uniform.

Johnson Hills and Perry's Sporting Goods provided application blanks and accepted completed applications. For the tryouts and auction, each player was assigned a number, the sole method of identification. Dale Rheel, Lincoln High School's baseball coach, was named league commissioner to preside over the selection auction Sunday, May 19.

### **Trying Times— May 4 to May 18**

On Saturday, May 4, at high noon, the first tryouts began, at the Witter Field Stadium. Twelve-year-olds went first, followed by 11-year-olds 90 minutes later, and finally the ten and under group at 3 p.m. Heilman's initial estimate of player numbers was off by half, making the job of the managers especially difficult with more than 400 boys playing their hearts out. Since only 60 could be chosen, managers would have to eliminate 340 players. They would have just three opportunities to assess talent. The question around the grade school sandlots before and during tryouts was who was going to "make it."

At the first tryout, there were so many 10-year-olds that Heilman ordered the team managers to segregate the 9-year-olds from the 10-year-olds on May 11 and 18. Each manager needed the opportunity to observe 400 kids bat, run, pitch, and field. Their task was

complicated by the fact that the position a kid wanted to play was not necessarily where the manager would play him during the coming season.

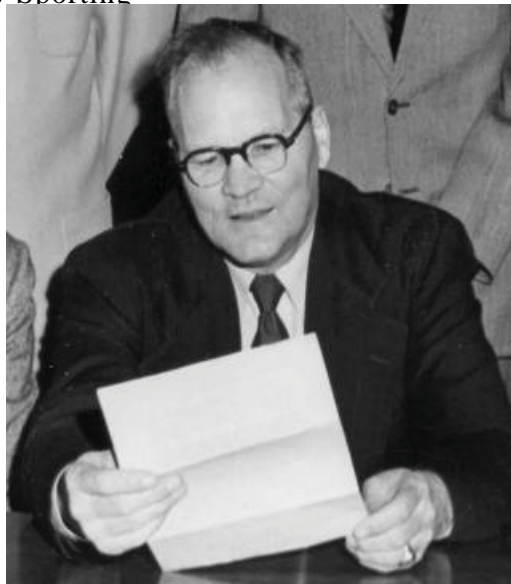
Few players had any experience playing the position of catcher. A Washington Senators catcher, Herold "Muddy" Ruel dubbed the catchers paraphernalia the "tools of ignorance" for good reason. Neither I nor any of my buddies at Howe School wanted to play the number 2 position on the diamond.

I waited at home on Sunday May 19 to find out if I had "made it." The four managers, league officials and other volunteers, including my dad, Clark,

met at the Elks Club, where Dale Rheel supervised the selection auction. Managers submitted names of boys to be placed on the auction block. The managers then used points to bid on players who were placed in the pool. They could not be too aggressive with the early bidding for fear of running out of points. The managers concluded there were too many well-qualified players but were able to pare their choices down to 15 per team without exhausting their points.

The auction procedure, point allocation and price paid for each player remained a secret. Neither the national headquarters of Little League in Williamsport, Penn., nor the regional headquarters in Indianapolis have any record of the auction.

The success of the tryouts and the painstaking auction led Heilman to conclude that there would be a lot of talented boys watching two months of baseball. He immediately ordered the formation of two minor league teams of 25 players each. No 12-year-olds were allowed to play on the minor league teams.



*Photo: Mayor Nels Justeson*

*Justeson fired the first pitch—June 3, 1957. He was mayor of Wisconsin Rapids for fourteen years, retiring in 1967. He died in 1974 at age 69.*

## Original Rosters, Wisconsin Rapids Little League

<b>Wood Co. Bank Cardinals</b>	<b>Church's Drugs Dodgers</b>	<b>Johnson Hills Cubs</b>	<b>Daly Drugs Braves</b>
<i>Don Arendt Mgr</i>	<i>Ed Murgatroyd Mgr</i>	<i>Orville Straub Mgr</i>	<i>Jim Wilson Mgr</i>
Dennis McCarthy	Mike Miers	Steve Krumrei	Denis Solie
Jack Hesterman <sup>2</sup>	Dave Krumrei	Bill Metcalf	Craig Skibba
Kent Zastava	Bob Bodette	Mike Ebsen	Lee Weinfurter
Gary Utech	Bill Reitz	Keith Fisher	Dick Zellmer
Eric Sydanmaa	Wayne Sparks	Dave Cesare	Bill Dachel
Phil Hamilton	Mike Hittner	Bill Gillis	Fred Esser
Dwaine Henke	Carl Normington	Chris Gorski	Paul Witt
Jere Rude	Gary Greenfield	Bob Serchen	John Newman
Roger Fritz	Mickey Shannon	Larry Johnson	Ken Adams
Nick Couse	Len Ironside	Del Dietzler	John Butler
Jay Somers	Francis Coley	Charlie Lohman	Chuck Hinnens
Larry Boutwell <sup>1</sup>	John Farrish	Steve Halvorson	Bob Jenkin
John Huber	Francis Felch	Jim Herzberg	Dick Walker
David Bodette	Jim Natwick	Tom Winkel	Bill Heilman
John Coulthard	Dick Dent	Jim Bach	Gary Fandek

Two nights later, Heilman presided over the selection of the Yankees and White Sox. There were five 11-year-olds and twenty 10-year-olds on each team. Heilman also announced that a player selected by the Cardinals was ineligible since he lived in the Town of Grand Rapids. Larry Boutwell<sup>1</sup> was therefore dropped from the team and replaced by Dick Clinkenbeard.

League officials later discovered that Jack Hesterman<sup>2</sup>, another Cardinal, lived outside the city limit. Hesterman was replaced by Ron Brazener.

The roster above is the list of the original boys who "made it." Their task was to earn their keep by giving 100% effort throughout the next two weeks of practice leading up to the nine week season. The first game was now just two weeks away on June 3.

The first practices were announced in the May 20 *Daily Tribune* along with the roster of players. The Braves held the first practice at Witter Field Tuesday May 21 at 4:30. Since Howe dismissed class at 3:45, there were six of us at Witter, 40 minutes early. Our manager, Jimmy Wilson, was already there to "check us in and get better acquainted." We probably got an

extra half hour of practice time. No one complained; we were just getting warmed up.

At 4:30, Wilson threw batting practice for over an hour and then Dave Benkowski threw for another half hour. That routine would last the whole season, with Skip Wilson joining his dad in throwing batting practice and Craig Skibba's dad, Wayne, working with the fielders to sharpen their skills. Our first practice lasted over 2½ hours. We were finally bumped off the field by the Cardinals, who had practice scheduled for 6:30 p.m.

Bill Heilman, the League president's son, and I, hopped on our bikes and raced off to Howe School to watch the Cubs practice, which had begun at 6:30. We sat astride our bikes for a while on top of the hill, where we could see the entire field below. Home plate was in front of a chain link backstop.

The plate and pitcher's rubber are gone today. The setting is still defined by the hill which slopes from the upper playground at Howe to a level field below. The hill is now covered with grass but was all sand in 1957. The dimensions of the field from home plate ranged from 195 feet to the bottom of the



hill in left field, to 219 in center and 285 to the cyclone fence in right field.

Presently, Heilman and I skidded our bikes down the sand dune into foul territory on the first base side of the field. We were greeted by a few derisive looks from Cub players and fans. For the most part, however, the Cubs were all business, concentrating on Dr. Straub pitching batting practice. I watched Bill Gillis, their catcher, pound several balls onto the flagstones in left field. Today, there is a tree halfway up the left field hill 230 feet from home plate. That tree marks the spot where several of Gillis' prodigious drives landed.

Straub's coach was Jim Bach, whose son Jimmy was just nine but had made the Cubs team. The Cubs also had Steve Krumrei, another nine-year-old, who played like he was 13. Heilman and I knew our Braves team would need to be very good to beat the Cubs

After the initial practice, managers held workouts in secret during the ensuing two weeks. That didn't keep players from opposing teams from spying on their buddies. Heilman and I continued to scout our opponents and we noticed many of them watching our practice sessions.

At about 5 p.m., June 3, 1957, the entire fleet of Wisconsin Rapids fire trucks left the station on First Street and roared across the Jackson Street Bridge—sirens blaring and lights flashing. All 60 players of the Wisconsin Rapids Little League were on a joyride before the opening game. Several police cars escorted the fire trucks and many cars joined the convoy. The fire engines cruised out West Grand Avenue, turned left on 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, back to First Avenue and over the Grand Avenue Bridge to 8<sup>th</sup> Street, then Baker Drive and on to Robinson Park and the brand new Little League field.

When the fire engines arrived at the field, over 1,000 fans were waiting in the stands and around the snow fence that enclosed the field. Ed Hanson, sports editor of the *Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune* said it was the largest crowd ever to watch any baseball game in Wisconsin Rapids, including those of the Chicago White Sox minor league team that played at Witter Field until 1953. The field was in beautiful condition because of the effort expended by the City Parks Department. There was no grass on the infield, but there were no rocks either, and the dirt was smooth and firm, nearly the consistency of championship clay tennis courts. There is still no infield grass today. The snow fence has been replaced

by a chain link fence.

In 1957, the baseball park was set in a forest of mature white pines, some of which remain fifty years later. There are several blue spruce trees that rise 50 to 60 feet above the field that were babies in 1957. Immediately behind the backstop was a trailer supplied by Rapids Beverage Co., full of soft drinks, candy, popcorn and potato chips. The trailer was run by volunteers each night, Monday through Friday. Most of the players' mothers worked the pop stand at least once during the 1957 season. Edna Hinners coordinated the volunteers. Bob Serchen's mother took a foul ball in the upper arm in one game. She laughed it off and kept selling Pepsi and Red Dot Chips. The fledgling league, despite no legal representation, avoided a lawsuit.

It is 60 feet between the bases in Little League, and the pitcher's mound was 44 feet from home plate. That distance was extended to 46 feet in 1958. The outfield fences were supposed to be 175 feet to left and right and 180 to center. Craig Skibba estimated the fence at 200 feet to all fields. He underestimated a tad. The modest Skibba was the only player in the league to hit more than one home run during the regular season. During the entire 36 game season, there were only 12 round-trippers. The field today is oriented the same as it was in 1957 and measures 208 feet to left field and 210 feet to center and right fields. There is a gravel warning track 10 feet wide in front of the fence. The track was absent in 1957.

The 60 players made their way through the crowd to the field. Mayor Nels Justeson was warming up his arm ready to throw out the first ball. His Honor had to wait, however, as Bill Heilman introduced the managers and players of each team. The players were wearing their uniforms for the first time. On Saturday, May 25, Heilman supervised the distribution of uniforms to the players. He told the boys, "Tell your mothers to wash your uniforms in cold water soap." Asked by a boy what that was, Heilman retorted, "She'll know!"

There can be no doubt that the several mothers knew, since their sons decided to try out their

uniforms during the nine days of anguished waiting for opening day. After all, a player needs to know if his uniform will withstand the rigors of sliding into second base, both head first and feet first of course. There may have even been a team that held a dress rehearsal, though half a century erases lots of memories.

On June 3, the uniforms were singularly spotless and never cleaner than when the players were introduced. Each team's players were numbered from 1 to 15. Generally the younger boys had the lower numbers. All of the boys who wore 15 were 12-year-olds. Each player also sported a brand new cap, colored the same as their uniform piping and bearing the Little League emblem. The Cubs were royal blue, the Braves navy blue, while the Dodgers wore green. The Cardinals wore red, of course. Each player wore rubber spiked baseball shoes that looked like the real shoes at County Stadium.

After two months of anticipation, tryouts, practices, games at school recess and more practices, the Wisconsin Rapids Little League was ready. The National Anthem was played from a scratchy 78 RPM record over the PA system borrowed from Heilman's 15 year old daughter, Linda. Ed Hanson announced the starting lineups for the Braves and Dodgers. The Cubs and Cardinals left the field but watched the first game with nearly as much interest as if they were playing. Steve Krumrei, a Cub, watched his brother Dave, a Dodger, and Dave Bodette, a Cardinal, watched his brother Bob, also a Dodger.

Bill Reitz, the Dodgers' captain, and Craig Skibba, the Braves' Captain, met with umpires Russ Davis and Bruce Johann to review ground rules and player decorum. Mayor Justeson threw the first pitch to Braves' catcher Lee Roy Weinfurter, Umpire Davis yelled "play ball" and Braves pitcher Bill Dachel was ready to throw the first pitch to Francis Coley of the Dodgers.

Little League games lasted six innings, and Dachel, a crafty left-hander, was still throwing by the top of the sixth. "Doc" struck out eight Dodgers but also had great support as his teammates pounded out ten hits. Ten Dodger errors allowed the Braves to score 15 runs. The Dodgers managed just two runs in the second inning. Bill Reitz started as the Dodger pitcher and proved his athleticism by coming in to catch as Dave Krumrei assumed pitching duties in the fourth inning.



Little League would go on for the next nine weeks. The season was divided into two halves of nine games each. The champions of each half would play a three game series for the league championship at the end of the season. The Minor League teams, the Yankees and White Sox, would play each Friday

night. There were many very good players on each of these teams. A few would be promoted before the end of the 1957 season, and many of the rest would go on to star in the 1958, 1959, and 1960 season.

The sun set over the left field fence at Robinson Park as the first game ended; players managers, and coaches shook hands, and parents mingled. The excitement of Little League baseball infected everyone who watched the first game. A fan who saw only the first game would remember it to this day, but they would have missed a lot of exciting baseball that was to be played before Labor Day.

*Read the August issue of Artifacts to see how the 1957 season turned out.*

Chuck Hinnert, who resides near Waunakee, Wis., with his wife Susan, loves to tell stories about historical figures and scenes. His memories of Wisconsin Rapids, where he lived until graduating with the Lincoln high school class of 1965, are particularly fond and sharp.

*Photo: Jim Natwick's Dodger Caps from the 1957 season.*



## Little League Charter

FORM LL 57-1

LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL, INC.  
Williamsport, Pennsylvania

PART 1

As duly elected president of the organization listed herein, I hereby make application for a franchise and for the right to conduct a baseball program under the name "Little League" for the year 1957. This application is accompanied by a registration fee which I understand will be refunded if membership is not granted. If accepted, I pledge myself and my organization to strict compliance with all of the rules and regulations of Little League Baseball, Inc. In the event that any controversy or dissatisfaction may arise in connection with the grant, enjoyment or revocation of the franchise hereby applied for, I agree on behalf of the league mentioned below, to accept the decision of the Franchise Committee as final and binding subject to the later modification or reversal by the Executive Committee. Whatever controversies thereafter remain, shall be submitted to arbitration in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association.

1. League Name Wisconsin Rapids Little League, Inc.
2. League is in ☒ City Wisconsin  
☐ Village Rapids County of Wood State of Wis.  
☐ Town
3. League Boundaries Corporate limits of the City of Wisconsin Rapids
4. Population within league boundaries 13924 5. No. of teams in league 11
6. Have you filed: (a) A map showing league boundaries? Yes (b) Constitution plus Amendments? Yes
7. No. of uniforms per team 15 8. No. of games per team to be played in regular season 18
9. No. of players in Minor League \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Do you use the recommended Player Selection System? Yes
11. Is every boy within age limits who resides within League Boundaries permitted to try out? Yes
12. Does any sponsor have a voice in league affairs? No If yes, explain fully on separate sheet. \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do all teams in the league have a common treasury? Yes If no, explain fully on separate sheet. \_\_\_\_\_

14. Signed G. Wm. Heilman President15. Dated: March 18 1957

DO NOT WRITE IN NEXT SPACE

Cert. No. 813 Date 5/8/57 Letter 57-N-15  
LOCATION

REG	SEC	DIST.	AREA	TA	L	EA	TR	FEE	T	LTD	P	LEAGUE NAME
6	WIS	1	9/3	O			Y	4				WISCONSIN RAPIDS LITTLE LEAGUE

## 16. LEAGUE PERSONNEL

	NAME	STREET ADDRESS	CITY, ZONE, STATE	PHONE
President	G. Wm. Heilman	1010 Chestnut St.	Wisconsin Rapids, Wis	968
Vice President	Clarence Van Lysal	640 Avon St.	do	2079
Secretary	F. A. McElroy	1720 Smith St.	do	777
Treasurer				
Player Agent	Dale Rheel	531 9th St. So.	do	2283

17. Address mail to: (check one) ☐ President ☐ Vice-President ☒ Secretary ☐ Treasurer

## 18. TEAM PERSONNEL

TEAM NAME	SPONSOR'S NAME	SPONSOR'S BUSINESS	MANAGER'S NAME AND ADDRESS
1. Dodgers	Church's Drugs	Drug Store	Edw. J. Murgatroyd 431 10th St. So. Wis. Rap.
2. Braves	Daly Drug & Jelry	Drug and Jewlery Store	James Wilson 140 1st Ave. So. Wis. Rap.
3. Cubs	Johnson & Hill Co.	Department Store	Dr. Orville Straub 710 Avon St. Wis. Rap.
4. Cardinals	Wood County National Bank	Bank	Richard J. Smith 921 11th St. So. Wis. Rap.
5.			
6.			

## ROMANSKI

*By Marjorie Hamm*

It was a story much like many others in the history of eastern and central Wisconsin when Joseph Sr. and his wife, Theresa (Janowiak) Romanski in 1892 emigrated to the United States, from Posian, Poland. Following a traditional pattern, they settled in Cudahy, Wisconsin, to be near Theresa's brothers, Albert, Frank, Peter and Stanley, and their wives and families.

At Cudahy, the Romanskis acquired a truck farm where they grew vegetables and raised chickens and farm animals. As their six sons, Van, Stanley, Ben, Leonard, Joseph Jr. and Peter, and oldest daughter, Mary, were able to help with the chores, the father and oldest son, Van, went to work in a nearby foundry. The five younger boys took turns riding on a horse-drawn wagon with their mother to the market square in Milwaukee. She sold chickens, eggs and fresh vegetables and the family prospered. Two younger daughters, Martha and Hattie were born in 1910 and 1912.

The mother, Theresa, became unhappy following the sickness and death of their daughter, Mary, who had been a great help. Theresa also disliked the custom of the foundry workers gathering at a local saloon on the day they received payment for their work.

Soon, the Romanskis heard about farmland near Pittsville, Wis., that was for sale. As they traveled from Cudahy by horse and buggy, they stopped at Hallmiller's Saloon, on the west side of Grand Rapids, Wis., to make arrangements for overnight lodging. The horse was fed and bedded for the night in the barn behind the saloon.

Women were not allowed in saloons, so Theresa went to the upstairs living quarters to visit with Rose Hallmiller. Joseph went into the saloon and, while visiting with other patrons,

was told of a 200-acre farm for sale in the Town of Seneca, just two miles west of Centralia.

The farm, as described, included a red-brick house with a black, ornate, wrought-iron fence in front and a large L-shaped barn on the banks of the Moccasin Creek. The next morning Joseph and Theresa went to see the area and decided it would be a beautiful location to raise their family, rather than the Pittsville area.

On March 21, 1911, they made a down-payment on the property, to the Bank of Grand Rapids, before returning to Cudahy to make arrangements to move.

After their move to the Town of Seneca, Joseph, Theresa and their family became members of St. Lawrence Catholic Church. Joseph took great pride in driving the family to Sunday morning Mass with his horse and decorative carriage. They met many lifelong friends at church and along with three other families donated the bell for the new building. On Christmas Eve, 1931, their son, Peter, had the honor of ringing the bell for the first time. The church bell remains in use today at St. Lawrence Church.

In May, 1937, due to declining health, Joseph Sr. and Theresa sold the farm to their son, Leonard, and his wife Jeanette. Leonard and Jeanette raised beef cattle for several years, following his retirement from the "Rapids Market."

The former Romanski farm area today is known as Moccasin Creek Cranberry Marsh, owned by Thomas Sparhawk. After being in the Romanski family for 79 years, only 14 acres of the original farm, west of the creek, is now owned by a family member, Kenneth and Linda Hamm. Kenneth is the great-grandson of Joseph Sr. and Theresa Romanski.





Romanski Hotel & Tavern, Wisconsin Rapids. From left, Joseph Romanski Jr., son, Bill; wife, Anne; son Ronald



Romanski family: standing left to right Van, Stanley, Hattie, Ben, Leonard, Joseph Jr. Seated, Peter, Theresa, Joseph Sr., Martha



West Grand Avenue. Leonard Romanski joined the Clover Farm Store chain about 1943. Flag decorations were for a cranberry festival. City Gas Co. at left



Rapids Market in 1930.  
The building was purchased from Frank Garber. It may have formerly housed a local newspaper office.



Looking toward Grand Avenue Bridge. Rapids Market (440 W. Grand), left; Guarantee Hardware (420 W. Grand), owned by Einar Olsen; and Gottschalk Grocery (410 W. Grand), owned by August Gottschalk. Across the Intersection of West Grand Avenue with 4th Avenue: Dixon Hotel (360 W. Grand); Johnson Hill (320 W. Grand). Across 3rd Avenue: Mead-Witter Bldg. (200 Block).



## **Romanski Brothers**

From left:

Van, farmer and employed at Consolidated

Stanley, employed at Consolidated

Ben, farmer, employed at Consolidated

Leonard, owner Rapids Market, meats and groceries, 330 W Grand Ave.

Joseph Jr., owner Romanski Hotel and Tavern, 640 W. Grand Ave.

Peter, co-owner Consumers Market, 253 W. Grand Ave., later moved to Baker Street



Below: red brick house and L-shaped barn in 1911. When the barn burned in the 1920s after the last load of hay had been brought in, neighbors helped rebuild, through a barn raising.



## T.B. Scott *Library Recollections*

by Helen Morland Zimmerman

My many memories of the T.B. Scott Library, as both a library and a school annex, start early in life.

Between the ages of three and four, I began to spike high fevers, which sometimes resulted in convulsions. During that time, I was taken to many doctors, and finally was diagnosed with rheumatic fever, affecting me with a heart murmur.

I had three such episodes, the last when I was seven. Treatment was complete bed rest for six to seven months. During these times, I was not allowed to walk at all, even having to be carried to the bathroom. For anyone having lived with a four-year-old, you can imagine how difficult it was to keep an active child resting all the time. I felt good all the time, making it extremely hard to keep a lid on me.

My physician was Dr. Smullen. He came to see me every day. If his day was unusually busy and he had no time to come in, he would drive by my sun room daytime bedroom, and he would stop his car, and honk the horn and wave. My mother pretty much devoted the day to either reading to me, playing board games or insisting that I take naps. My brother, being older, also was expected to quietly entertain his sick sister. As he learned to read, he was asked to read to me also and give my mother a break.

Feeling extremely frustrated one day, she went down to the T.B. Scott Library, and got permission to check out 30 to 40 children's books in an effort to entertain us both. When we returned the books each time, she would make a small check mark with a pencil in the left corner of the inside cover, so that she would know that we had

had that book home before.

As I got better and was allowed to go out, we made many a trip to the library, so I could pick out my own books.

In the early 1960s, when I took my small son to the library, now moved to Third Street, to check out books, I found some of the same books we read in 1945, with the small check mark in the corner. It brought back many memories of many good books.

When the library moved to its new location on Third Street, the old library building was converted to an annex of Howe school, while a new school was being built on Eighth Street. At that time, they moved what was called the Fresh Air Room from Lowell school, where I spent first and second grade, to the old library, referred to as Howe

Annex, on the second floor.

This class was designed for students who had health problems, such as rheumatic fever, polio and other illnesses. This was like an old country school, as grades one through eight were all in the same classroom. Another room was devoted to a kitchen, with a dining room connected.

We had a wonderful woman named Mrs. Utegaard who cooked delicious meals for us, and much to my chagrin, we had to eat every thing on our plate. Cooked spinach ruined many a day for me!

A large room was devoted to our required naps. The room was filled with cots and blankets and we spent at least an hour a day, resting on them. I rarely slept, but we were not allowed to talk and we had to lay still. Mid-term fourth grade, we were all moved to the new Howe School, and at that time, I was "mainstreamed." My doctors felt that I was well enough at that time to attend school all day.

I have always explained my high energy level by the fact that I spent half my childhood in bed, and my love for books by the many hours spent listening to my family read to me.



*Photo: Helen and friends, submitted by Helen Zimmerman*



## *A Visit with Mr. Mead*

By Dave Patrykus

It must have been in about 1946 or 47, one of the last years I had gone out trick or treating. My brother, Ed, a friend, Dan Hoffman, and I had gone downtown because the houses were so scattered on Two Mile Avenue where we lived that it would take all night to fill our bags. Third Street was considered to be good pickings, what with all of the big homes bespeaking wealth and perhaps even generosity. Surprisingly, there didn't seem to be as many kids out as we had expected and we decided that we would go out to the Mead house on the island. Everyone knew that Mr. Mead was the richest man in town and no doubt we'd get a nice treat.

Well, we got way more than we bargained for! When we knocked, yelling "Trick or Treat!", who came to the door but Mr. George W. Mead himself. To us kids, from families of modest means, he was a person of almost mythical proportions. He didn't just hand us each a treat and close the door but began visiting with us, asking what grade we were in and what subjects we liked in school. Not having any favorite subjects, I don't recall what I told him but Dan, who was always good at drawing, told him he liked art. He then asked Dan if he wanted to look at some art and when he said, "Sure," Mr. Mead invited us into his home.

He led us to a room, which may have been a den or library, where he showed us several paintings. One of them was a portrait of a Sir Walter Raleigh type. Mr. Mead got out a magnifying glass and told us to look at the man's beard, noting that each hair was a separate brush stroke. We were of course amazed at the art but mostly that the richest man in town had invited us into his home.

After a brief visit he showed us to the door and, as we left, gave us each a dime. Perhaps there was a bit of hesitancy for some kids to cross that bridge to a place of some mystery, because, during our time there, we didn't see another person and left the island in wonder at what had happened.

Kids reading this in 2007 might look down their nose at a dime but at that time, now some 60 years ago, a dime would buy a 12 ounce bottle of Pepsi Cola and a Baby Ruth candy bar! That was considered a TREAT.

I recalled that Halloween not too many years later when Mr. Mead died, and have thought of it many times since. Whatever possessed Mr. Mead to take such an interest in us "kids" and to show us such a kind act? I suppose the simple answer is that he was a kind and gentle man.



## Whose day off?

This special edition honors the good-natured gentleman shown at left when he was a newly-hired lab chemist and, below, as a customer relations specialist for a local paper company. Virtually a founder of our institution, he has contributed for over a half-

century to the South Wood County Historical Corp. Clue: he answers to his middle name. (See front cover for I.D.)



South Wood County Historical Corp.  
540 Third Street South  
Wisconsin Rapids WI 54494

To:



## Uncle Dave Knows

you have memories, stories, photos, maps, artifacts, coins, currency, precious metals, Prentiss-Wabers stock and other valuable materials you haven't shared yet. Now there is a way: *Artifacts!*

This publication is a benefit of membership in the South Wood County Historical Corp., and is received four times per year. Membership is still only \$15.

Send your subscription/membership dues to The Museum, 540 Third Street South, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494.

All other materials to Dave Engel, 5597 Third Avenue, Rudolph WI 54475.

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 31