



November 2004 Volume II #3
South Wood County Historical Corp.

Artifacts



Election Issue

Cover Photo by Don Krohn. At “old” Wood County Courthouse?

It's that time again: counting the chads. The Fritzsinger's Insurance Agency wall calendar seems to matches those dated November 1952.

In this issue: Krohn photos of politicians, pages 2-5; Peterson plane photo, p. 6; May 2004 *Artifacts* bicycle photo I.D., Brown Derby photo, 7; Our 20th Century interview with Don and Marion Farrish, 10-21; Harold Stassen pix, 23; History From McMillan by Don Litzer, 23; From the Museum by Karen Pecher, Jeff Davis, 24.



One of the LaFollettes, maybe Philip, second from left. Far right, local judge Herbert A. Bunde. Looks like photo may have been taken in February.



Republican U.S. Senator Alexander Wiley (1939-63), left, c. 1950, with Rapids attorney John M. Potter and Consolidated employee Robert Mader.





↑ Richard Brazeau, left, with candidate Harold Stassen, shaking hands.

← Harold Stassen (1907-2001) provided an autograph. Republican, Stassen ran for President nine times between 1948 and 1992 but never won the nomination. At the 1952 convention, he released Minnesota's delegates to Dwight Eisenhower.

Stassen, at 31, had been elected Minnesota governor.



A youthful Melvin R. Laird, future Republican Congressional leader and Secretary of Defense. After service in World War II that yielded numerous medals and ribbons, in 1946, he was elected state senator from Marshfield, and reelected in 1948.

Laird had succeeded his father, who died in office. In 1952, Mel was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.



Left to right: Tentatively identified as William Taylor; Thomas Dewey, Michigan native and Republican governor of New York who ran unsuccessfully for President in 1944 and 1948; Charles Stark; Clayton Crowns (standing); Norb Daly; unknown.





↑ Wisconsin Rapids Mayor William T. Nobles passing gavel to successor Carl C. Knudsen.

← Republican Wisconsin governor Oscar Rennebohm (1947-1951) at center. To his right is state senator W.W. Clark and, (the next male to the right), Henry Baldwin. Possibly at Pittsville high school gym.



Russell Peterson

Several years after this photo was taken by *Tribune* photographer Don Krohn, on July 30, 1954, local lumber yard owner and residential developer Russell Peterson crashed and died in his Cessna plane at his landing strip near what is now Ridges golf course. The incident is described by the June 14, 2004, *River City Memoirs* in the *Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune*.

Former Peterson employee Darwin Lamb, Wisconsin Rapids, identifies Peterson, above, in what may be the late 1940s. "Russ was quite stocky and you can see the cigar he always smoked, in his right hand."

The photo was probably taken in front of Peterson's hanger, said Lamb, which would be about 100 yards south of the Grand Rapids municipal garage on Two Mile Avenue. At left may be Morris Wolcott, a prominent Grand Rapids businessman, who operated a wrecking yard on 8th Street South near Wal-Mart. Peterson's father, Oscar, lived in a small house nearby.

Behind Wolcott is the Peterson lumber yard "round logo," said Lamb, as seen on the invoice shown here.

Peterson provided the name and land for "Camp Peterson." Barry Jens, Wisconsin Rapids, reports that there may have been two such camps at different times between lakes Wazeecha and Nepco. The first was accessed by crossing the Four Mile Creek on a cable bridge, the second via an extension of 32nd Street South.

STATEMENT
 Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., APR 1 1958
 Darwin Lamb
 In Account With
 Two Mile Ave.
 4777
 EIGHTH STREET
 SOUTH

TELEPHONE 2277

SLIP NO. #008634
 #008714
 #008799
 #008860
 #008942

CHARGES	CREDITS
11	23
34	38
36	48
3	57
18	
85.84	
19.05	
66.99	

PAY DEDUCT 4.29
 PAID BY THE 10th OF
 THIS MONTH

Schwinn Win

The girls in this photo, published in the May 2004 *Artifacts*, have been identified by Marge Hamm, Wisconsin Rapids, and their aunt, Pat Bodette, Madison, Wis.

Valerie Cepress, left, has a bike that “Aunt Pat” Bodette won in a Schwinn company contest when Pat was in 6th grade. She had written a song answering why she wanted a bicycle. The blue model was one of the first in Rapids to have balloon tires. Pat gave the bike to the Cepresses when she outgrew it. Valerie’s sister, Susan, is at right.

Valerie Cepress McGonagle, a nurse, now lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Susan Cepress married a pharmacist, Chet Radecki, who died ten years ago. Susan Radecki also lives in Santa Fe.

Pat Bodette, a SS. Peter & Paul and LHS graduate was active in Girl Scouts and a director at Camp Sacajawea. She graduated from college, worked in the Madison, Wis., schools for many years, and is now retired, said Marge Hamm.

Rapids Market, shown in the background, was a meat market and grocery store, owned and operated by Marge’s father, Leonard Romanski, from January 1930-July 1955. Leonard then leased the store to Buzz and Sis Bouton for Buzz’s Bar. The building at left was City Gas Co.

The 1955 City Directory lists, in the 400 Block of West Grand Avenue, going west, Gottschalk’s Grocery (410 West Grand), Guarantee Hardware (420), Rapids Market (440) and Wisconsin Rapids Gas & Elec. Co. (444). In 1969, Blenker’s TV (410), Guarantee Hardware (420), Buzz’s Bar (440), Wisconsin Gas Co. (444).



Brown Derby tavern, West Grand Avenue. See *River City Memoirs*, Sept. 27, in the *Daily Tribune*, for a history of the “Bar-Muda Triangle” on West Grand.

The car at left looks pretty old to be at the Brown Derby, considering that the tavern by that name is not mentioned in a 1941 city directory.

Our 20th Century

Donald and Marion

Farrish

1010 Baker Street

18 February 2004

Interviewed by Dave Engel

Members of Sunrise Rotary oral history project present.

When this interviewer has to do his own typing, his questions are usually omitted, along with any extraneous verbiage. But, because the interview tape was "typed up" by a court reporter (in her personal time) as a court transcript before being restored to a more conventional format by me, the entire interview will be published pretty much as it was. This will show how the history game is really played.

Missing from the transcript: strawberry shortcake for all.

MR. ENGEL: Okay. At this time, it's February 18th, 2004, Wednesday. We're at Baker Street with Don and Marion Farrish, and there's a whole crowd of people here with me tonight so I won't name everybody. To get this officially on tape, could you give me your full name? I'll start with Don. What is your full name?

Don

MR. FARRISH: Don Haley Farrish.

MR. ENGEL: How do you spell Haley?

MR. FARRISH: H-A-L-E-Y. It's a family name. My mother's maiden or married name.

MR. ENGEL: And how do you spell Farrish?

MR. FARRISH: Farrish is F-A-R-R-I-S-H.

MR. ENGEL: What's the origin of that name?

MR. FARRISH: It's Scotch and Irish, and my great, great grandmother was a full Mohawk Indian, full-blooded.

MR. ENGEL: Where was that?

MR. FARRISH: Out in Nova Scotia, Rushabucktoe [phonetic].

MR. ENGEL: What?

MR. FARRISH: Up in Canada, Rushabucktoe.

MR. ENGEL: I don't know that word.

MR. FARRISH: It's on the map up in Nova Scotia.

MR. ENGEL: It's a place name?

MR. FARRISH: Yeah.

MR. ENGEL: Maybe I could find it. [ed.

Musquodoboit?] What was the date of birth?

MR. FARRISH: January 24th, 1910.

MR. ENGEL: And where was that?

MR. FARRISH: I was born in the 19-room house right on Third Street.

MR. ENGEL: In what city?

MR. FARRISH: In Wisconsin Rapids and the location is exactly where the Episcopal Church now stands.

MR. ENGEL: But you said it was Third Street?

MR. FARRISH: Third Street.

MR. ENGEL: So, is it on Grand Avenue now?

MR. FARRISH: At that time, the street that runs along was called Vine Street. It wasn't named Grand Avenue at that time.

MR. ENGEL: Right.

MR. FARRISH: And, in fact, where the post office sits, we had a fairly large lot there. There were three homes. Our home faced Third Street. Right next to us on the corner of Oak and Third was McCarty, the horse shoe-er.

MR. ENGEL: Yeah.

MR. FARRISH: And then right next to that was the home of Bell. In fact, Howard Bell married Emily Baldwin. Lived in that house right there.

MR. ENGEL: Hmm-hmm. You know, I have seen pictures of the old Farrish house that had to be removed.

MR. FARRISH: That was moved, was bought up by the Episcopal Church and it was moved back so it faced Fourth Street, and then several of the engineers...

Well, we lost it all. We went bankrupt. My father was in the lumbering business and he made several fortunes in that. He was in business with John Daly, Hiram Sampson—that would be Ray Sampson's grandfather—and my father.

The three of them formed Grand Rapids Lumber Company.

And they logged off the majority of the Big Eau Plaine and the Little Eau Plaine. It's quite a lot of acreage and the company was finally disbursed; and Sampson and Daly, they took their money and got out of the business.

The Farrishes wound up with it and we had thousands and thousands of acres of cut-over timber land. My father took the timber, the cut-over timber land, assuming that he could sell them for farms.

MR. ENGEL: Yeah.

MR. FARRISH: But at the end, right at the start of the 1900s, manufacturing started up in the United States and we were left with all that so the net result was both banks, Wood County and the First National, wound up with all that. In fact, we couldn't even afford to heat several of the rooms in that house towards the end.

MR. ENGEL: When was the end of that company? What years are you talking about?

MR. FARRISH: Back in that—that would be back in the—back in the early 1900s.

MRS. FARRISH: Thirty-seven, I think.

MR. FARRISH: I was 13 years old when my father died.

MR. ENGEL: What was your father's name?

MR. FARRISH: John Farrish. He had no middle initial.

MR. ENGEL: And your mother?

MR. FARRISH: My mother was Estella Haley—Estella Haley.

MR. ENGEL: Where did the Haleys come from? From Canada?

MR. FARRISH: Down in Iowa.

MR. ENGEL: Iowa?
 MR. FARRISH: Yeah.
 MR. ENGEL: Wow.
 MR. FARRISH: My father was married twice. There were eight children in the first family, and when my father married my mother, who was an art teacher in Wisconsin Rapids, she walked around to all of the schools and taught art. And my father was 61, my mother was 31 when they married. That's when I came along.
 MR. ENGEL: Then you are number...
 MR. FARRISH: Number one.
 MR. ENGEL: Of that family.
 MR. FARRISH: Of that family.
 MR. ENGEL: And always number one.
 MR. FARRISH: My half-sister, Catherine Farrish, she died when she was 96.
 MR. ENGEL: How many children did your father have altogether?
 MR. FARRISH: Well, he had eight in the first and two in the second that I know of.

Marion

MR. ENGEL: Yeah, yeah. Marion, what is your name?
 MRS. FARRISH: Marion Backstrom Farrish.
 MR. ENGEL: Spell, please.
 MRS. FARRISH: F-A-R-R-I-S-H.
 MR. ENGEL: Now for the hard one.
 MRS. FARRISH: M-A-R-I-O-N. Ruth. R-U-T-H.
 MR. ENGEL: Hmm-hmm.
 MRS. FARRISH: M-A-R-I-O-N.
 MR. ENGEL: Date of birth?
 MRS. FARRISH: February 11th, 1918.
 MR. ENGEL: Where was that?
 MRS. FARRISH: That was Marshfield. I was from Richfield. I was born in the hospital.
 MR. ENGEL: Marshfield Hospital?
 MRS. FARRISH: Hmm-hmm.
 MR. ENGEL: St. Joseph's.
 MRS. FARRISH: Right. My mother was a registered nurse.
 MR. ENGEL: Um—
 MRS. FARRISH: But I was pretty puny so she thought I better go to the hospital.
 MR. ENGEL: She was a nurse. So, your dad's name was what?
 MRS. FARRISH: Arvid Backstrom.
 MR. ENGEL: And Backstrom is spelled?
 MRS. FARRISH: B-A-C-K-S-T-R-O-M.
 MR. ENGEL: What's the origin of that name?
 MRS. FARRISH: He came from Sweden.
 MR. ENGEL: Right directly to—
 MRS. FARRISH: To Richfield.
 MR. ENGEL: Was he a farmer?
 MRS. FARRISH: No, he was a bricklayer. He built our big house on the farm.

MR. ENGEL: Where would that farm be?
 MRS. FARRISH: When you come across on N from Arpin and you turn right towards Marshfield, and it's the third place on the right-hand side. The house is still there, but—but we sold the farm as my father was killed in 1937 on construction and my mother couldn't work another day so we sold everything: the cattle and animals, whatever we had.
 MR. ENGEL: And your mother's name was?
 MRS. FARRISH: Alma.
 MR. ENGEL: A-L—
 MRS. FARRISH: A-L-M-A Matson: M-A-T-S-O-N.
 MR. ENGEL: And she wouldn't be Scandinavian also, would she?
 MRS. FARRISH: Yes, she would. Her parents were born in Oslo, Norway.
 MR. ENGEL: Oslo? And they came where?
 MRS. FARRISH: They came over to Richfield and built a house between two bridges and the creek was right back of our house and every spring we'd have a basement full of water so I would have to crawl in a big laundry tub and pick up all the canning and everything that was floating around the water and bring it up.
 MR. ENGEL: Was there a Village of Richfield or was it just—
 MRS. FARRISH: Well—
 MR. ENGEL:—the township?
 MRS. FARRISH: Oley [Ole?] Geberts had a store there and he was born on—he died on the same night that my daughter was born, Sandy Sullivan.
 MR. ENGEL: Hmm-hmm.
 MRS. FARRISH: Now—it was Sandy Farrish then. And he had a nice little store. He had a lot of trade. I used to have to walk down there and get the mail every night after school. It was about a half a mile, and I would get the groceries and bring the mail home.
 MR. ENGEL: So, you grew up in a rural location up in northern Wood County?
 MRS. FARRISH: We didn't have indoor plumbing either.
 MR. ENGEL: And you went to a country school?
 MRS. FARRISH: Yes, Farview.
 MR. ENGEL: Farview?
 MRS. FARRISH: Yeah. It's not far from Klondike.
 MR. ENGEL: Klondike?
 MRS. FARRISH: About half a mile.
 MR. ENGEL: You said you were from Richfield. Where does Klondike come in?
 MRS. FARRISH: Well, that's Richfield, too.
 MR. ENGEL: The same?
 MRS. FARRISH: Yeah.
 MR. ENGEL: It's in the same township. That was another little village?
 MRS. FARRISH: Yeah. There should—used to be a cheese factory right on the corner years ago.
 MR. ENGEL: Now, because you two are together tonight for this interview we're going to have to find out how you came to meet.

You grew up in a rural location. You grew up in Rapids?
 MR. FARRISH: Right.
 MRS. FARRISH: Well—
 MR. ENGEL: How did that come about?

Courtship

MRS. FARRISH: I was dairy queen the year I got out of high school. I was the first dairy queen Wood County had.
 MR. ENGEL: What year was that?
 MRS. FARRISH: 1937, the same year my dad was killed.
 MR. ENGEL: And towards the end of the Depression?
 MRS. FARRISH: That's right. And—
 MR. ENGEL: What's a dairy queen?
 MRS. FARRISH: Well, I got pictures of when I won in the county, and then I went to Milwaukee with Mr. Lathrop and I got second in the state. And I had a ruptured appendix, so I was in Milwaukee. My sister came home, Janet, and she had peritonitis and she had to have surgery; so, we were both in the hospital. But Mr. Lathrop said, Marion, you get out of the hospital, I have a job for you. So, this was a job working for him in the office.
 MR. ENGEL: What was his first name, do you remember?
 MRS. FARRISH: No, I don't.
 MR. ENGEL: What office was that? What was his business?
 MRS. FARRISH: It was—he was county agent.
 MR. FARRISH: The county agent.
 MRS. FARRISH: It was in the bank building there across the river.
 MR. ENGEL: In Wisconsin Rapids?
 MRS. FARRISH: Uh-huh.
 UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: Was it Howard?
 MRS. FARRISH: Howard, that's right.
 MR. ENGEL: So, that brought you to Wisconsin Rapids?
 MRS. FARRISH: Yes, brought me to the Rapids. I had a job. My mother was ill. She couldn't work another day, and my sister had surgery. She couldn't work. So, the Lord was kind enough to give me a job so we all moved down here and we ended up in this house. It was partitioned off.
 MR. ENGEL: The house that we're in tonight?
 MRS. FARRISH: Yeah. And Mr. Farley who owned the house, he had his own plumbing business—Jack Farley—and he had it partitioned off right there and five of—we girls lived in this side of the house.
 MR. FARRISH: That would be the front door right over there.
 MRS. FARRISH: Right there.
 MR. FARRISH: The plywood is still—that gap in there.
 MRS. FARRISH: And he let my mother live in the other half for nothing, which was very kind of him, so I worked for Mr. Lathrop for about two years, and I

guess the girls I roomed with in this house took me out dancing and Don was down there at the old Whiting—Witter Hotel, and he came over and asked me to dance, and that was the beginning of the end.
 (Laughter.)
 MR. ENGEL: Do you remember any of the names of those girls?
 MRS. FARRISH: That's right. Ursula Korkamp [Kortkamp], Sis Porterbrook [Forderbrueck], it used to be, but Bouton now.
 MR. ENGEL: Yeah.
 MRS. FARRISH: And Kathleen Haca. She married Woody Swancutt. He was the first one that dropped the bomb over Japan.
 MR. ENGEL: How do you spell Haca?
 MRS. FARRISH: H-A-C-A.
 MR. ENGEL: That's how many? Three? Are there more?
 MRS. FARRISH: And my sister Janet Backstrom.
 MR. ENGEL: So, I know Sis was an Arpin girl from up in the country by you. Were the other ones country girls like you?
 MRS. FARRISH: Ursula was.
 MR. ENGEL: She was?
 MRS. FARRISH: She was from Arpin, too.
 MR. ENGEL: So, what about Kathleen?
 MRS. FARRISH: No, she's from Wisconsin Rapids. She lived across the river, but I don't remember just what her street address was, but she is now in New Mexico and Woody died.
 MR. ENGEL: Woody Swancutt? Did you know him?
 MRS. FARRISH: Yes, I did.
 MR. ENGEL: Personally?
 MRS. FARRISH: Yes, I certainly did. I went home for the weekend and—with my sister – and somehow the boys and the girls had dates. One boy took the wrong girl out so—so they had a rumpus—rumpus between them, so Woody ended up in Fred Haertel's flower bed. And when I came back, Mr. Farley said, You know, I would like to live with my wife out in California. We've been apart so long. And so he said, Marion, I would like to take you with me. But I said, I can't go along with you. I have my mother to take care of, and I have a job, you know.
 MR. FARRISH: Mr. Farley was the owner in the start of the plumbing, Herman's, up here?
 MRS. FARRISH: Yeah.
 MR. FARRISH: That was Herman's Plumbing?
 MRS. FARRISH: Louie Herman took over after Jack Farley left.
 MR. ENGEL: What year was this dance at the Witter Hotel?
 MRS. FARRISH: I came to the Rapids.
 MR. ENGEL: You said you lived here. You worked for a couple of years for—
 MRS. FARRISH: Mr. Lathrop. And then I worked for Gross Brothers Trucking Company for four years.

MR. ENGEL: But you met Don the first year he [you?] came to town?

MRS. FARRISH: Yes, I did.

MR. ENGEL: Okay. What was going on at the Witter Hotel that night?

MRS. FARRISH: They had a juke box down there. They had some good music on.

MR. ENGEL: Juke box?

MRS. FARRISH: And the following Saturday, he invited me to go to the Elks Club to a dance and then from then on we took walks. He's a great walker.

MR. ENGEL: Tell me more about the first night at the Witter Hotel. Well, what was the Witter Hotel? Not everybody knows.

MRS. FARRISH: It was along the river on this side.

MR. ENGEL: On the east side?

MRS. FARRISH: Yeah.

MR. FARRISH: It was the main hotel.

MRS. FARRISH: And three of those girls worked at the Witter Hotel.

MR. ENGEL: Oh.

MRS. FARRISH: Ursula Kortcamp [Kortkamp] and Sis Bouton and Kathleen Haca. They were all waitresses. I was the only office worker. And my sister, Janet, after she was well enough, she went to work and run that little restaurant back of the—back of drug store on main street. I think it was Anderson's.

MR. FARRISH: On the west side in the Green Winter [Mead-Witter] properties.

MR. ENGEL: So, the Witter Hotel was the common place for young people to get together?

MRS. FARRISH: Right, right. Everybody went down dancing.

MR. ENGEL: Did you dance even when there was a juke box?

MRS. FARRISH: Yeah.

MR. ENGEL: Rather than a band?

MRS. FARRISH: Oh, yes.

MR. ENGEL: Can you give a sample of what might be on the juke box at the Witter Hotel?

MRS. FARRISH: Yellow Bird was one of the songs that I remember.

MR. ENGEL: Hmm-hmm.

MRS. FARRISH: Bing Crosby, he had some songs on there. I don't recall what they were, but that was very good music.

MR. ENGEL: How do you remember that night, Don?

MR. FARRISH: I remember it very well.

MR. ENGEL: Tell us the story of how you met.

MR. FARRISH: Well, that was—I asked her to dance. We got along fine. She didn't talk too much so—didn't annoy me too much, so we went out again and we had several more dates, and one thing led to another.

MR. ENGEL: Did you dance that first night?

MR. FARRISH: Oh, yes. Sure.

MR. ENGEL: Was there a dance hall, a dance room that was—

MRS. FARRISH: It was a big room.

MR. ENGEL: A ballroom?

MRS. FARRISH: Booths around it.

MR. ENGEL: Did it have a name, the room?

MR. FARRISH: Not that I remember; no.

MR. ENGEL: Did you have to pay to get in?

MRS. FARRISH: No.

MR. FARRISH: Oh, no.

MRS. FARRISH: But you paid for any drinks you ordered.

MR. ENGEL: And how old were you two at that time?

You were—

MRS. FARRISH: I was 24.

MR. ENGEL: And you were.

MRS. FARRISH: Eight years older.

MR. ENGEL: Thirty-two?

MR. FARRISH: In the 30s.

MRS. FARRISH: And then we moved to Chicago.

MR. ENGEL: Who did?

MRS. FARRISH: Don and I.

MR. ENGEL: After that, years later?

MRS. FARRISH: Right after that because he went in the service. He sold paper for Consolidated.

MR. ENGEL: Okay. You jumped ahead a couple of years, though, I think.

MR. FARRISH: Right.

MR. ENGEL: You met at the Witter Hotel, which was quite a landmark in this town then. You went to another landmark on your second date.

MR. FARRISH: The Elks.

MR. ENGEL: What was going on there?

MR. FARRISH: A regular dance. And Friday night—I think it was Friday or Saturday; it would be.

MR. ENGEL: And where was that in the Elks Club?

MR. FARRISH: At the present Elks Club.

MR. ENGEL: Was that upstairs or downstairs?

MR. FARRISH: Upstairs on the main – on the main floor of the lodge was the dance floor.

MR. ENGEL: And who was playing at the dance?

MR. FARRISH: I don't know.

MR. ENGEL: Was it a band?

MR. FARRISH: You know a little more about that.

MR. ENGEL: Was it a band?

MRS. FARRISH: I think it was a DJ.

MR. ENGEL: Might have been records?

MRS. FARRISH: Records.

MR. ENGEL: How did you get around on these dates?

Did you have a car?

MR. FARRISH: Oh, no. Walked. Didn't bother me a bit.

MR. ENGEL: So, you lived in the house you told us about.

MR. FARRISH: No. We had—we lost the property by that time. It was levied [?] over – still Vine Street over right

near where the Community—South Wood County, in that area right there.

MR. ENGEL: The foundation?

MR. FARRISH: Yeah. We owned several houses over there.

MR. ENGEL: Where Haney Drug was at?

MR. FARRISH: Right.

MR. ENGEL: In that area?

MRS. FARRISH: Right across from Witter, the Mead Inn. Grandma had two houses right across the street there.

MR. ENGEL: So, then you had a courtship. What did you do, like to do, when you were going out in those days?

MRS. FARRISH: Go to movies.

MR. ENGEL: Movies.

MRS. FARRISH: Go for walks.

MR. ENGEL: Where were the movies held, or where would you go to?

MRS. FARRISH: Across the river.

MR. ENGEL: On the west side?

MRS. FARRISH: Yeah.

MR. FARRISH: There were only two movies at that time, on the west side. And where that community center is over there in the building that's been converted, and then the present location, Ideal Theater.

MR. ENGEL: So, you went to the Palace Theater?

MR. FARRISH: Palace.

MR. ENGEL: On the west side. What kind of movies did you go to?

MRS. FARRISH: Well. We went to one movie—and what was the name of that movie we went to? We thought...

MR. FARRISH: I forget what the name of it was, but it wasn't the one we had planned on going. It was wound [?] up by—

MRS. FARRISH: *Hell's Angels*. We turned around and left. At Girl Scout camp at that time there was one naughty little girl, and she told everybody in that camp that Hell's Angels were coming out there to kill everybody. Little girl from England. She wouldn't salute the flag either. Well, we worked it out real fine. I called her mother to come out and get her and that solved everything.

MR. ENGEL: You two went to the Palace Theater and then you went probably to the Wisconsin Theater. That was kind of new at that time.

MRS. FARRISH: Right.

MR. ENGEL: Brand new?

MRS. FARRISH: Hmm-hmm.

MR. ENGEL: Do you remember?

MR. FARRISH: The one on this side was called the Ideal Theater.

MRS. FARRISH: That's the only one we have left.

MR. FARRISH: Right.

MR. ENGEL: Did they show different kinds of movies? Was one of them better than the other?

MR. FARRISH: Not necessarily.

MRS. FARRISH: They were about the same.

MR. FARRISH: Probably shows they were lucky to get a hold of.

MR. ENGEL: Did you hang out with other people at that time, like another couple you went out with?

MRS. FARRISH: There were about five couples.

MR. ENGEL: That were associated—

MRS. FARRISH: Yeah. Fritz and Leone Panter.

MR. ENGEL: Yeah.

MRS. FARRISH: And Louise and Ted Gleue, and Mabel and—Bob and Mabel—

MR. FARRISH: Mader.

MRS. FARRISH: Mader.

MRS. FARRISH: And Lawrence Bever and Marian Ladwig.

MR. FARRISH: That was the main ones.

MR. ENGEL: Yeah. So, I have a feeling you went to a game once in a while or something.

MRS. FARRISH: We went to Packer game.

MR. ENGEL: How did you get there?

MRS. FARRISH: Oh, somebody had cars.

MR. ENGEL: How about Badger games? Did you ever go there?

MR. FARRISH: Oh, yeah.

MRS. FARRISH: Yeah. In fact we went—

MR. ENGEL: This was in your courtship days.

MRS. FARRISH: Yeah. In fact, we saw everything. I looked like a pumpkin when I got home I was so sunburned.

MR. FARRISH: I took her down, one time. I saw a baseball game, a track meet, a second baseball game, and then I saw the spring practice. It so happened that the guy that was taking tickets at the spring practice, he said, For God's sake, you still here? Come on in, he said. I'll let you in free up.

MRS. FARRISH: I was all sunburn by that time.

MR. ENGEL: How did you get around to getting married then? How did that come about?

MRS. FARRISH: Well, now this is very interesting. Don proposed to me at your mother and dad's house.

MR. ENGEL: Hmm-hmm.

MRS. FARRISH: On the davenport.

MR. ENGEL: This is at the Mason house? [Jim Mason present]

MRS. FARRISH: At the Masons, Lloyd and Dorothy's.

MR. ENGEL: Lloyd Mason.

MRS. FARRISH: I stayed there for a while.

MR. ENGEL: As a roomer?

MRS. FARRISH: As a roomer.

MR. ENGEL: Where was that house?

MRS. FARRISH: That was on—what street is that?

MR. MASON: Mead? Mead Street?

MRS. FARRISH: Mead Street.

MR. ENGEL: Huh? Well, that's a coincidence. How did that come about, that proposal?

MRS. FARRISH: Well, I don't know. I guess he must have liked me for some reason.

MR. ENGEL: Do you remember that night?

MR. FARRISH: Not—not necessarily. (Laughter.)

MR. ENGEL: What year was that?

MR. FARRISH: I got married in 1928—oh, no, '41.
MR. ENGEL: '41?
MRS. FARRISH: '41, we were married.
MR. FARRISH: '41, we were married.

Marion

MRS. FARRISH: Then I worked. I stayed with Dorothy and Lloyd Mason, and I used to walk way across the river to Gross Brothers trucking company. And it was cold in the wintertime.
MR. ENGEL: To work, you mean?
MRS. FARRISH: Yes. And I was there four years.
MR. ENGEL: What was going on at Gross Brothers trucking in those days?
MRS. FARRISH: Well, Bobbie Berard and I were the only two in the office at that time.
MR. ENGEL: And who was the owner?
MRS. FARRISH: Ques and Louie Gross. Very nice people.
MR. ENGEL: Were they around most of the time?
MRS. FARRISH: They were around, sure. They run the business. After we—after I went to Chicago with Don, then Georgia Strobe took my job with Bobbie.
MR. ENGEL: Arnie Strobe?
MRS. FARRISH: Arnie Strobe's wife.
MR. ENGEL: And while you were working at Gross Brothers Trucking, that's on the west side?
MRS. FARRISH: Hmm-hmm.
MR. ENGEL: You were doing what – what were you doing?
MRS. FARRISH: Well, I took care of everybody that came in. They had a little office off, way out in the yard, and they would call in to me. I was on switchboard. I had a teletype and also recordings of everything that went on in every office and I took care of and gave it to the steno department and they would type it all up.
MR. ENGEL: You were the administrative assistant?
MRS. FARRISH: Right.
MR. ENGEL: But they didn't have those titles in those days.
MRS. FARRISH: No, they didn't say that. I did.
MR. ENGEL: And Don, where were you?

Consolidated

MR. FARRISH: I was starting working for Consolidated Papers. I was hired by Leo Barrette.
MR. ENGEL: Tell me about Leo Barrette. A lot of people knew him.
MRS. FARRISH: He was the head.
MR. FARRISH: He was the head man. He was quite a guy. And I started out in the sulfite mill, in the laboratory, and I worked there—
MR. ENGEL: What year was that?

MR. FARRISH: Jeeze, I forget the exact year. Then I—they got—
MR. ENGEL: Before you were married.
MR. FARRISH: Pardon?
MR. ENGEL: Before you were married? Prior to your marriage, or was it after your marriage?
MR. FARRISH: Prior to—prior to my marriage.
MR. ENGEL: So, it's probably the late '30s?
MR. FARRISH: Late '30s, right.
MR. ENGEL: And you started at the sulfite mill?
MR. FARRISH: Right. In the laboratory, and then I got picked out, to work in the sales office over there, and I got started in training – training in sales and then I went to work for the Stevens Point mill as a junior salesman.
MR. ENGEL: What did a salesman do out of the Point mill?
MR. FARRISH: Sold tissue and products that they made over—
MR. ENGEL: They were making tissue paper?
MR. FARRISH: In those days, yeah.
MR. ENGEL: What were—what was the sulfite mill? That's gone. What was that?
MR. FARRISH: Well, the sulfite mill would be the pulp mill. Still be. They called it the sulfite mill where they make the pulp and so forth.
MR. ENGEL: So, you started there in the lab?
MR. FARRISH: Yeah.
MR. ENGEL: Then who was running the sulfite mill at that time, or who can you—who did you know there?
MR. FARRISH: I can't think of the name.
MR. ENGEL: Was it Prebbenow?
MR. FARRISH: Who?
MR. ENGEL: Was there a Prebbenow?
MR. FARRISH: No.
MR. ENGEL: Then you went to Point?
MR. FARRISH: I went work in the main office, and I worked for Art Madsen who run the—who run the main office. That's where all the sales organizations—
MR. ENGEL: This is in Rapids?
MR. FARRISH: In the main office over there.
MR. ENGEL: The office they have today is still there, the same one? When you were married, where were you working in?
MR. FARRISH: I was working for Consolidated.
MR. ENGEL: In which department?
MR. FARRISH: In the sales.
MR. ENGEL: And you lived where?
MR. FARRISH: I lived in Wisconsin Rapids.
MRS. FARRISH: At the YMCA in Chicago.
MR. ENGEL: He did, or both of you did?
MRS. FARRISH: He did.
MR. ENGEL: So, you spent a lot of time in Chicago at that time?
MR. FARRISH: After we got married, we moved down there.
MR. ENGEL: So, you went down there, too?
MRS. FARRISH: Hmm-hmm. Got an apartment.

MR. ENGEL: Who was in charge of Consolidated in Chicago?

MR. FARRISH: Stanton Mead's brother, Walter Mead, was the sales manager.

MR. ENGEL: Tell us a little bit about Walter Mead.

Mead

MR. FARRISH: Well, Walter Mead was quite a contrast from Stanton. Very, very nice fella to work for. And his father-in-law was Mr. Durham. And he, at one time, had a very high job in Sears Roebuck, and it didn't take him long to realize that Marion and I were from the farm country up here so he started to educate us, and he found out that Marion was a good cook, and I took him home a couple times. So, we had him out there and we learned a lot about Chicago.

MRS. FARRISH: He's a great guy. Wonderful person.

MR. ENGEL: Tell us a little bit about what you did with Walter Mead, or what did he show you.

MRS. FARRISH: He wanted us to live with him—and I had Sandy. She was seven months old, and I couldn't figure out how I could live with our boss.

MR. FARRISH: He had—Walter Mead had a summer home in Oconomowoc, and every Thursday he would leave on the one o'clock train for Oconomowoc for a weekend, and four o'clock I would leave on the Hiawatha for Wisconsin Rapids.

MR. ENGEL: That was a famous train.

MR. FARRISH: Yeah. I rode them both many, many times.

MR. ENGEL: You didn't mention Walter Mead's wife. Did he have a wife?

MRS. FARRISH: Oh, yes. Nice lady.

MR. FARRISH: Oh, yes.

MRS. FARRISH: Very pretty.

MR. FARRISH: Her name?

MR. ENGEL: Mrs. Durham. [?]

MR. FARRISH: Mrs. Durham.

MR. ENGEL: Did you go to his house? Did you go to the Mead house?

MR. FARRISH: Not—not—

MRS. FARRISH: No.

MR. FARRISH: Not during the — the reason he wanted us to live — because he come back during this, the summer, the summer back to work and would—he liked to have us cook some meals, you see, so he tried to talk somebody to move in with him. I died a million deaths to figure that one out. I thought, I'm going to lose, either way. But I finally turned him down.

MR. ENGEL: You said he was a little different than Stanton. What did you mean by that?

MR. FARRISH: Not many—many of you gentlemen here knew George W., Senior. He had charisma. He had a personality and so forth. And neither of his boys had—neither Stanton nor Walter had the charisma the old man

had. In fact, he was my Sunday school teacher, and I was his main caddy out at the Bull's Eye Country Club when it first started up.

MR. ENGEL: Tell us a little more about George Mead the first, the person. You knew him when he was a kid? He was an old guy?

MRS. FARRISH: He was his Sunday school teacher.

MR. FARRISH: My Sunday school teacher, and he was—

MR. ENGEL: You said he had charisma.

MR. FARRISH: He had very wonderful personality, and which he didn't pass on to his two sons.

MRS. FARRISH: He used to shake hands with everybody out in the mill. They just loved him. He was so kind.

MR. FARRISH: Very, very outgoing, and he took care of all the young people going to school around here. And he lent most of them money to go to college, and he wanted me to borrow money from him, but I didn't want to borrow money from him in the event I wanted to work for Consolidated. I was lucky. I borrowed the money from a—from the two McMillan girls that built the library. They were terrific, big stockholders. My sister and I both borrowed money from them at no interest.

MRS. FARRISH: And they both paid it back.

MR. FARRISH: Paid it all back.

MR. ENGEL: How did you even know them? How could you get money from them? I mean, did you—were they—

MR. FARRISH: They all went to the Congregational Church.

MR. ENGEL: Oh.

MR. FARRISH: George Mead was my Sunday school teacher. My attendance was very good when he was there. When he was gone, so forth, I didn't always show up. (Laughter.)

MR. ENGEL: You remember anything about what he talked about in Sunday school? Do you remember any part of that, like —

MR. FARRISH: He did the level best to keep on the religious stuff, but he wound up telling us about his trips and so forth. Those were things that drew me there.

MR. ENGEL: Oh.

MR. ENGEL: Did you know him?

MRS. FARRISH: Yes.

MR. ENGEL: When would you see him or where?

MRS. FARRISH: At the Congregational Church.

MR. ENGEL: Yeah. You still didn't tell me how Walter is different from Stanton, though.

MR. FARRISH: Well, they were two different personalities. Walter was very good. In fact, he had quite an outstanding reputation. He acknowledged the fact that he had one of the best sales organizations in fewest numbers during World War II, and against some of the other companies that had many, many more people, and he was nice to work for.

MR. ENGEL: Was he more fun than Stanton?

MR. FARRISH: Not necessarily.

MR. ENGEL: No?

MR. FARRISH: But I think Stanton was more fun-loving up here.

MR. ENGEL: Because we don't know much about Walter. He didn't live here very much.

MR. FARRISH: He didn't live here, no. In fact, he lived in the suburbs. He lived on the Gold Coast down there. There's a main road that runs right along Michigan Avenue down there, just a short street. It's called the Gold Coast. It's quite an extensive place. He had a home in there. It was awful nice of him to invite Marion and I to live with him, but I could see ramifications. I didn't want to get involved in that.

MRS. FARRISH: Took such good care of his father-in-law.

MR. ENGEL: Father-in-law. You said he was in business. What was that business?

MR. FARRISH: He was the retiree. He was office manager. At one time, he had a top job at Sears Roebuck down there.

MR. ENGEL: Did you know George Mead, the young George Mead?

MR. FARRISH: Oh, sure.

MRS. FARRISH: Oh, yes.

MR. FARRISH: I worked for all three of them. In fact, I worked for the father and Walter and Stanton and young George.

MR. ENGEL: How was he in terms of personality?

MR. FARRISH: He was more—somewhat like his grandfather [...].

MRS. FARRISH: He worked in Cub Scouts when I did.

MR. ENGEL: George did?

MRS. FARRISH: Hmm-hmm.

MR. ENGEL: As a Cub Scout or a leader?

MRS. FARRISH: He wasn't a leader either. He would come down and Stanton would come down, and Stanton would play his little instrument and sing songs to us. He was really very nice. I had Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts at the same time. Don never knew which one was over when he come in off the road. One group would leave and the other group would come in.

MR. ENGEL: Your first child was—

MRS. FARRISH: Sandy.

MR. ENGEL: Sandra.

MRS. FARRISH: Sandra.

MR. FARRISH: Sandra Jean.

MR. ENGEL: What was that year?

MRS. FARRISH: 1941.

MR. ENGEL: And then your next child?

MRS. FARRISH: Was born three years later, John Richard Farrish.

MR. ENGEL: Are there any more?

MRS. FARRISH: Yes. I had one a year later that was born dead from surgery. They gave me wrong medicine at the hospital, and it collapsed my respiratory system.

MR. ENGEL: So, those years in between '41 and '44, were you in the service? Did you say he went in the service?

MRS. FARRISH: Don went in the service, yeah.

MR. ENGEL: How did that come about, military?

World War II

MR. FARRISH: Well, at that time, we were all—around here, they were all getting drafted, and I thought if I'm going to go in service, at least I better go somewhere where I could sleep good and eat good, so I picked out the Navy. And first of all, I elected to go in the—oh, they were getting volunteers to work on the shipping on the east coast, but the Germans were knocking those ships down right and left, and I thought to myself, hell, that's a foolish place to go. So, the next thing I applied for was in the Gene Tunney Athletic Program. There was only two that got in around here. What was his name?

MR. ENGEL: As boxers or what? What do you mean, in the athletic program?

MRS. FARRISH: Athletic director.

MR. ENGEL: Director?

MRS. FARRISH: Hmm-hmm.

MRS. FARRISH: Coaches.

MR. FARRISH: They were registered as specialist, athletic specialist. You had to do everything. Hell, I coached more games out in Boston, like a college coaching job. Then I got too ambitious, and I thought I would get a commission, assuming I could get a commission back in the athletic field. And hell, I wound up as a beach master, leading in the Marines and sailors. Thought, well, Jeeze, that's a stupid move to make. I got through. All right, over in Japan.

MR. ENGEL: That was a couple of years later.

MRS. FARRISH: What's that noise? Is that you making that noise?

MR. FARRISH: She's got something hooked on back here.

MRS. FARRISH: Oh.

MR. ENGEL: Yeah. So, you skipped a couple of years there. You started on the east coast, and you ended up in Japan.

MR. FARRISH: Well, I went from the east coast. I got sent down to Florida to go in advanced officer training, and I had to go swimming in that damn ocean every day down there. Geeze, I hated that, after you've been an enlisted man and you go in the program for officer work. Of course, I was 32 years old at that time, it's—I wasn't too enthused about it, but I became an officer and did well that way. I got along good, but I felt sorry for all these young kids that were starting out. They couldn't take care of themselves that way.

MR. ENGEL: What were you doing while he was gone?

MRS. FARRISH: I was working at Gross Brothers trucking company, and I moved back up to the farm.

I helped my mother. I had the baby, and I hired a girl to help my mother so I could work. And the baby was Sandy, was just seven-and-a-half months old, and she had whooping cough when I brought her up when she called me. So, I took the next day, and I went back to Chicago and I packed up everything. I stayed awake all night packing clothes and packing everything, and the next day we moved to Marshfield, and I put my furniture and everything in storage and moved in with my mother on the farm because she needed help, too. She was ill.

MR. ENGEL: Your father?

MRS. FARRISH: He was killed on construction at Juneau, Wisconsin. The cornerstone, 2,000 pounds came down on his head. He was turning the crank, you know, that raised the stone up and he had given it to another fellow and he stooped down to pick up a plank, a board to drive the stone from the wall, and whoever had the crank dropped it, and it came right down on his head, 2,000 pounds. So, that was a tragedy.

MR. ENGEL: So, neither of you were in Wisconsin Rapids during World War II? You were both gone during that period.

MRS. FARRISH: Right.

MR. ENGEL: How did you get back together and back to Rapids? How did that come about?

The Chicago Years

MR. FARRISH: Well, when I got back from service, we—

MRS. FARRISH: He wanted me to live with his mother.

MR. ENGEL: With his mother?

MRS. FARRISH: But I couldn't see moving in with his mother with two little kids.

MR. ENGEL: After John was born.

MRS. FARRISH: Hmm-hmm. So, I looked around for a house and I found this one. We—and we all lived happy here.

MR. FARRISH: And I was traveling back and forth every Sunday on a sleeper to the Chicago office. Consolidated was awful nice. They paid my—they bought—I had a standing offer every Sunday. I had one of the two sleepers out of here for Chicago. They paid my expenses and my room. I stayed at the brand new YMCA down there. Paid for all my meals, and that went on for several years. And—

MR. ENGEL: So, how did that work? You got on the train at night?

MR. FARRISH: At night here.

MR. ENGEL: Right downtown?

MR. FARRISH: Right downtown here.

MR. ENGEL: On the west side?

MR. FARRISH: On the west side. Got in my sleeper, and they unhooked that sleeper in Milwaukee and hooked it up to the main line going to Chicago. And I got off

there every—in the morning and went to the YMCA and into the office. I rode that thing for a couple of years.

MR. ENGEL: So, did you get a good night's sleep on the train? Could you sleep?

MR. FARRISH: Somewhat; yes. Air conditioning was just beginning and it wasn't too good, you know, but I managed to sleep.

MR. ENGEL: You like Consolidated? They were good to you?

MR. FARRISH: Very good.

MR. ENGEL: Did you retire from there?

MR. FARRISH: You're right. Worked years, and it's a very good company. They took care of people. In fact, when I—I was the first board salesman; I was already the salesman for the Stevens Point division, and I got appointed also to handle the board sales over here.

MR. ENGEL: Oh, board. Like cardboard?

MR. FARRISH: Yeah. Among the machines that's really hooked up. They had a [part in] Corenso.

MR. ENGEL: #3, it used to be?

MR. FARRISH: #3 yeah. And I'll never forget Walter Mead took me up to meet a broker that was helping to sell this stuff. And I assumed from when I went to Chicago office up to where the broker is, walking up one of those streets. I can he ask [?] me something about business. Geeze, all the way he talked music. Asked me all about music. Hell, I don't know one damn note from the other. I died a million deaths on that walk, but I made 'er.

MR. ENGEL: So, we're getting in the late 1940s when you're back to Rapids here. You got little kids at that time?

MRS. FARRISH: Yeah, two.

MR. ENGEL: He's not here much more than he was during the war?

MRS. FARRISH: No, that's for sure.

MR. FARRISH: I was gone every week.

MR. ENGEL: Home on the weekends and gone.

MR. FARRISH: Home on weekends, right.

MRS. FARRISH: I stayed busy with scouts and kids and school things and my mother. Always lots to do, too.

The—it was fun. We all had a good time together.

MR. ENGEL: Who were some of the other mothers you knew at that time?

MRS. FARRISH: Oh, my goodness. Phyllis Schmidt.

MR. ENGEL: Is that Leon's mother?

MRS. FARRISH: Yeah. And Kay Brazeau. That would be—

MR. ENGEL: Nick.

MRS. FARRISH: His mother, yeah. And, oh, who were some of the other ladies? It seemed like whenever they had a teacher's dinner, Marion was the one that had fixed all the pies. The one time I had pies standing all over the house. Sandy said she'll never forget that. Cherry pies.

MR. ENGEL: You were closely associated with Howe School?

MRS. FARRISH: Yes. I would bring down—I had a big basket, and I would bring down the service for the coffee and the tea, and I would be all equipped. Earl Jule said he would never forget Marion Farrish when she would come with all her finery and all her good bakery. Everybody had a good time.

MR. ENGEL: What was that name?

MRS. FARRISH: Earl Jule.

MR. ENGEL: Earl Jule.

MRS. FARRISH: He lived across the street. J-E-W—

MR. FARRISH: J-U-L-E.

MR. ENGEL: J-U-L-E.

MRS. FARRISH: He and his mother lived there. And I took care of a lot of the elderly people around the neighborhood like Mr. Heartel, Fred Heartel [Haertel]. He was a nice old man. He called me the neighborhood nurse. I took care of all my relatives, all—my mother's whole family and my aunt that lived at Marshfield. She said, Marion, I'm going to die tomorrow and nobody wants to take care of Oscar. Would you take care of him? I had been taking care of him, driving to Marshfield all the time and taking care of her. And I said, yes, I would take care of him, but he's going to have to move to Wisconsin Rapids. I'm tired of driving three times a week with the kids and everything, is just too hard on me. In fact, I got a toxic thyroid. I was in the hospital for two and a half months. I lost 60 pounds. That's not a nice way to lose 60 pounds. I tell you, I never had suffered so much in my life. I couldn't keep food down. It was an awful sickness. I had more cortisone shots than Carter had pills, but it was quite an experience.

Schools

MR. ENGEL: Now, that Howe School they had then, that was a different building than they have now, right?

MRS. FARRISH: Well—

MR. ENGEL: Was there an old building there?

MRS. FARRISH: They added onto it as they went along.

MR. ENGEL: But would you remember an older building?

MR. FARRISH: I went to the older building.

MR. ENGEL: You went to the old building?

MR. FARRISH: Yeah.

MRS. FARRISH: Miss Foucher was principal of the Howe School at one time. She lived across the street in the Gill house. Anna Moody ran the one on the corner. Anna Moody run that house, she and her sister. And she took—she had other ladies in there with her. And it's people like that that I took care of because—she lost her money one day. She said Marion, I had \$175 and I know they took it here. And I said, Would you let me look through your purses. It just might be there. So, I got them all out for her and went through everything. Sure

enough, there was the \$175. So, from then on I was her great, great friend.

MR. ENGEL: Yes.

MRS. FARRISH: She gave me her wheelchair, and I should put it over to the museum, but I sold it because we needed the money back in those days.

MR. ENGEL: While we're talking about Howe School, take us back to the old Howe School then that you went to.

MR. FARRISH: Well, it was about in the same location as—I mean, set almost in the same area. But, oh, it—it was a good school.

MR. ENGEL: What did it look like?

MR. FARRISH: Well—

MR. ENGEL: It looked different than this one?

MR. FARRISH: It was built the old—up.

MR. ENGEL: A couple stories.

MR. FARRISH: A couple, three, four stories. Yeah.

MR. ENGEL: Made of—

MR. FARRISH: Primarily wood. Some concrete, but mostly wood.

MR. ENGEL: You went to grade school there?

MR. FARRISH: Yup.

MR. ENGEL: Did they have any teachers or principals that would stick out in your mind?

MR. FARRISH: One of them is named Mrs. Pitch [Pitsch], and she was pretty rough.

MRS. FARRISH: Our children had the same teacher.

MR. ENGEL: Mrs. Pitch? Your son had the same teacher? Your daughter that you had—

MRS. FARRISH: Yeah. And Hazel Knuth was another one.

MR. ENGEL: What was Mrs. Pitch's full name?

MR. FARRISH: I can't remember.

MR. ENGEL: Lucille? Did you have her for a teacher?

MR. FARRISH: Yup.

MR. ENGEL: I bet there's a school named after her now.

MR. FARRISH: Right.

MR. ENGEL: And you remember her being strict?

MR. FARRISH: Oh, yeah.

MRS. FARRISH: Yeah. She would take one of those desks and she would just shove it across the room, and you in it.

MR. ENGEL: Is that how you get a school named after you?

MRS. FARRISH: I suppose. She was quite a character. Never married.

MR. ENGEL: Who did you go to school with, Don?

MR. FARRISH: Well, I went mostly with Harold Sampson.

MR. ENGEL: Oh, yeah. Is he Ray's brother? Ray's brother.

MR. FARRISH: Ray's younger brother. He died up on the marsh up at Two Lakes, I think.

MR. ENGEL: Three Lakes?

MR. FARRISH: Three Lakes.

MRS. FARRISH: His brother died on the marsh with his dog. He died on the marsh.

MR. ENGEL: Who was the other one?

MR. FARRISH: Ted Gleue.

MR. ENGEL: Gleue. Yeah.

MR. FARRISH: Ron Bassett. Fritz Panter. We were all in the same area.

MR. ENGEL: They all lived around?

MR. FARRISH: Fairly close.

MRS. FARRISH: Is that Ron Bassett that we were trying to think of, the name of that you were in the service with? That was in the athlete program?

MR. FARRISH: No. It was Roger.

MRS. FARRISH: Roger.

MR. FARRISH: Roger. He run the Johnson Hills store. I can't think of his last name.

MRS. FARRISH: Rheinhardt?

MR. FARRISH: Huh?

MRS. FARRISH: Rheinhardt?

MR. FARRISH: Roger Rheinhardt and myself were the only two in this area that got in the athletic program.

MR. ENGEL: Were you an athlete?

MR. FARRISH: I could play any sport you want.

MR. ENGEL: In high school—were you in sports in high school?

MR. FARRISH: I sat on the bench a hell of a lot.

MR. ENGEL: Was that at Lincoln High School?

MR. FARRISH: What?

MR. ENGEL: Was that at Lincoln High School?

MR. FARRISH: Lincoln. And Aaron Ritchay, he was our coach.

MR. ENGEL: Tell us about Aaron Ritchay. He's pretty famous.

MR. FARRISH: I was on the school board, and Aaron could handle all these rough kids. And he come to the school board and he said, Gee, I'm getting worried about the parents. I said, Aaron, you take care of the students. We'll take care of the parents. Don't worry about it. We got along good.

MR. ENGEL: What was his method of taking care of those kids?

MR. FARRISH: He used to take them right down in the gym, put a pair of boxing gloves on them, and he would whittle them down.

MRS. FARRISH: He was tough.

MR. ENGEL: He was tough, but he wasn't very big; was he?

MR. FARRISH: No. He didn't have to be.

MRS. FARRISH: He was honest and honorable.

MR. ENGEL: You liked him?

MRS. FARRISH: Yes, very much. A nice family.

MR. ENGEL: Did you say he was your coach also?

MR. FARRISH: Coach also.

MR. ENGEL: Of what sport?

MR. FARRISH: Football. And I had Torresani for track, and Ritchay was track coach for a while, too.

MR. ENGEL: What was Torresani's first name? Tory; right?

MRS. FARRISH: That's what they called him—

MR. ENGEL: Man, I can't think of it right now myself.

MR. FARRISH: Gene, wasn't it?

MRS. FARRISH: Jack was his son.

MR. ENGEL: I bet his name was John. Yeah. Aaron Ritchay.

MR. FARRISH: When Aaron was our principal at that time, it just was the time that they were just starting Assumption High School. He used to talk to me a lot about it.

MR. ENGEL: What did he think about it?

MR. FARRISH: Well, he told them—he told them in the long run it would be better off not starting it.

MR. ENGEL: Because—

MR. FARRISH: Well, because of the increased costs and the lower enrollments later on and so forth. And it panned out just about like he told them.

MR. ENGEL: And he was Catholic, I guess.

MR. FARRISH: Oh, yeah.

MRS. FARRISH: Oh, yeah.

Consoweld

MR. FARRISH: I got along good with him, though. And of course, I was flying all the time all over the country for Consolidated and I was working for Consoweld Corporation.

MR. ENGEL: Consoweld?

MR. FARRISH: Setting up the nationwide distribution. And I covered the whole United States on their expenses. Took the curiosity out of my soul. I saw the whole country.

MR. ENGEL: What decade was this? Was it the '40s or '50s?

MR. FARRISH: Both. Both.

MR. ENGEL: You know, there's people nowadays, they don't know what Consoweld even is.

MR. FARRISH: Right.

MR. ENGEL: What is that?

MR. FARRISH: Well, the manufacturer of laminate for covering and countertops, and so forth.

MR. ENGEL: And they did that in Wisconsin Rapids?

MR. FARRISH: Right.

MRS. FARRISH: They had a good—

MR. FARRISH: They joined forces with, well, Domtar down here that owns Nekoosa-Edwards is the owner of Arborate (phonetic) who made plastic up in Canada, and they're the ones that got hooked up with Consolidated and they formed Consoweld Corporation.

MR. ENGEL: After World War II?

MR. FARRISH: Right, and they got the sales manager down here from Arborate up there and—

MR. ENGEL: Who were some of the people that were involved in Consoweld?

MR. FARRISH: Well, Jay Somers was the general manager.

MR. ENGEL: S-O-M-E-R-S?

MR. FARRISH: Right. Yeah, right. And Ralph Cole was the secretary of the Consolidated at that time.

MR. ENGEL: Ralph Cole?

MR. FARRISH: Ralph Cole.

MR. ENGEL: C-O-L-E?

MR. FARRISH: C-O-L-E. His home was torn down and Ralph Swendrowski built that mammoth house where Cole used to live.

MR. ENGEL: Where is that?

MR. FARRISH: Way off the golf course.

MR. ENGEL: There was a house there previously?

MR. FARRISH: Oh, yeah. Beautiful home, Ralph Cole had, and Ralph Swendrowski tore it all down or moved it or something, and built a place about four times as big.

MRS. FARRISH: Takes up the whole lot.

MR. ENGEL: I understand their warehouses [were houses] that were built out of Consoweld.

MR. FARRISH: That's right. That was during that time when—and that was when George—George W. was still quite active, and he sent me out on a trip out west. He wanted me to go out and talk to Weyerhaeuser and several—and find out whether they should continue building those plastic houses or not. Hell, it was costing more to build them and they couldn't begin to sell them. And I went out there and talked to people out there, and I came back and told him he ought to get out of that business, and he did.

MR. ENGEL: There's a dozen of them still here; aren't there?

MR. FARRISH: Right.

MR. ENGEL: Well—

MR. FARRISH: You see, George, when I was getting involved with them, he was getting at the spot where, you know, he was getting along in age. And one time I remember Art Dugan came through there and with some people from *Time* and so forth, and I was just in the sales there and he introduced me as the general manager of Consoweld there in front—in front of the guy that was the general manager, one of those deals. Embarrassing. I used to have to—when I started out with Consoweld, we were still a part of Consolidated. Hell, I just planned my trips around the United States. I managed to go down south during the winter months and I managed to get in a football game, the Rose Bowl game and so forth. It was working out pretty good.

Roddis

MRS. FARRISH: While he was in the Navy, I got a job at Roddis in Marshfield as a receptionist and I had about the same deal that I had at Gross Brothers. I had all the traffic and all the salesmen coming in and set up teletype and switchboard, and I had lines, the

lines coming through, and I was busy all the time. Mr. Roddis said I never saw one person that could do five jobs at one time, and he liked me.

MR. ENGEL: What were they selling at that time?

MRS. FARRISH: They were selling parts for airplanes, working for the federal government. And I got a ticket to go out to Boston to see Don because I could have them because of what they manufactured there.

MR. ENGEL: And did you do it?

MRS. FARRISH: I did. I was the first one in the family that flew. So, I stayed about a week and then I came home. And I was grounded in a snowstorm. And then they wouldn't fly out because there was ice on the wings of the plane. So, I was standing in the terminal and this lady said, Do you have to go home? And I said, Oh, I really do. I got a job. I'm supposed to be there tomorrow. Well—she said, Well, I got train tickets, she said, and I don't want to use them. Here, she said, take my tickets. So, I did. I took her tickets and thanked her. I was real happy and I made it home. So, I called—the girls called me from the office, from the Roddis office. They said, Marion, you're being fired tomorrow. I said, I am? I couldn't help it I couldn't get home on time. I was grounded in a snowstorm. And I called Mr. Roddis and he called me in. He said—he was just such a nice old guy. And he said, Marion—I said, The girls told me I was being fired tomorrow because I'm late coming in to the office. He said to me, How did you find that out? I said, The girls told me in the office. They called me ahead of time. He said, You just be there tomorrow and I'll be right there with you. He was there, too. And I didn't get a raise in pay, but he sure was nice to me.

MR. ENGEL: But you didn't get fired either?

MRS. FARRISH: No, sir. No, sir.

Consolidated

MR. ENGEL: Consolidated in Rapids, when you were working there, Consolidated was pretty important to Rapids; would you say it was?

MR. FARRISH: Right.

MRS. FARRISH: Oh, yes.

MR. ENGEL: Tell us a little bit about how Consolidated was.

MR. FARRISH: Consolidated run a good organization, and they took care of their people. The Mead family did many, many things for welfare around that people don't know about. They were very generous. And old G.W., he lent all the kids money to go to school; very few of them paid him back. And he used to have—during the Christmas, he would open his house up on the Island down there and invite us for parties, and it was quite a thing to go to a party like that during the Christmas time, you know. And—

MR. ENGEL: Did you think that Wisconsin Rapids was

especially privileged or was just that normal for that time?

MR. FARRISH: It was normal for that time. They treated everybody like that.

MR. ENGEL: I mean, was every town like Rapids or was every town—

MR. FARRISH: Oh, Rapids was a town by itself.

MR. ENGEL: Better than—better than the average town, would you say?

MR. FARRISH: Oh, yeah.

MRS. FARRISH: Oh, yeah.

MR. FARRISH: Very definitely. Very definitely.

MR. ENGEL: Say in the 1950s?

MR. FARRISH: Right.

MR. ENGEL: Around then? What was—what was good about Rapids at that time?

MR. FARRISH: Well, the economy was good. Everybody had jobs.

MRS. FARRISH: Business was going good.

MR. ENGEL: The economics were good?

MR. FARRISH: Right.

Nekoosa Papers

MR. ENGEL: What about Nekoosa Papers? Did you have any contact with them?

MR. FARRISH: Oh, yes. I used to fly out every Monday to travel towards the end. I traveled a lot with Sam—with Sam Casey.

MR. ENGEL: Hmm-hmm.

MR. FARRISH: And I went to a couple of board meetings or meetings at Wood County Bank and Sam Casey was the main—one of the main speakers starting out. And one time I was there he said, I don't know, I think I should let Don Farrish take part in this program here. He said, He goes around the county as much as I do. I used to travel a lot with [ed.: name omitted], too, that run Preway in the ground.

MR. ENGEL: Preway. What's Preway?

Preway

MR. FARRISH: Preway was a stove factory. Prentiss-Waber. They manufactured stoves.

MR. ENGEL: And this was going pretty good at that time?

MR. FARRISH: Was going good.

MR. ENGEL: It's gone now?

MR. FARRISH: It's gone now.

MRS. FARRISH: Now it's full of a lot of businesses.

MR. ENGEL: You [knew] Thomas? What's his first name?

MR. FARRISH: Bill, I think it is. Bill Thomas.

MRS. FARRISH: It was.

MR. ENGEL: You had—Consoweld, you mentioned; Consolidated; Nekoosa Papers.

MR. FARRISH: Preway.

MR. ENGEL: Preway. They were all local companies?

MR. FARRISH: All local companies.

MRS. FARRISH: His son is my doctor.

MR. ENGEL: Whose son?

MRS. FARRISH: Dr. Thomas.

MR. ENGEL: Oh, yeah?

MR. FARRISH: He's at the Marshfield.

MRS. FARRISH: The new Marshfield Clinic?

MR. ENGEL: Did you have any contact with Preway?

MR. FARRISH: Oh, yes. I knew—

MRS. FARRISH: Don Able [Abel?].

MR. FARRISH: I knew Don Able who was the sales manager. And I knew the other guy that was catting around all the time. I would see him in Chicago. What was his name?

MRS. FARRISH: [Name omitted]

MR. FARRISH: I used to bump into the guy from Nekoosa-Edwards. I would see him around. Married one of the Alexander girls.

MR. ENGEL: And when they had all the executives, all the sales people here in Rapids, would you see each other all around town?

MR. FARRISH: Right.

MR. ENGEL: Even in Chicago? So, that was—

MR. FARRISH: Most everyone belonged to the Elks Club and the country club around here.

MR. ENGEL: What country club is that? What's the name of that?

Golf

MR. FARRISH: Bull's Eye.

MR. ENGEL: Bull's Eye. But were you associated with it?

MR. FARRISH: I worked there years. I was a member for many, many times.

MRS. FARRISH: He was top guy.

MR. FARRISH: I was caddy master out there.

MRS. FARRISH: Things up there on the top that he won (indicating).

MR. FARRISH: I won the champion in '35, '36, '37, three years in a row. Sitting on the corner up there (indicating).

MR. ENGEL: We are getting towards the end of our 90-minute session, I think. So, I know you've been interviewed before on Tri-City Golf Course.

MR. FARRISH: Right.

MR. ENGEL: Tell us a little bit about that for this interview, though. What's the story of that?

MR. FARRISH: Well, I was; there were nine people involved in starting it up. You see, during the depression, Bull's Eye couldn't afford to run the second nine and they closed it down. And Henry Baldwin who married George Mead's daughter, he was quite an outgoing fella—he came from the east—and an all around good guy, and I got to know him pretty well. In fact, I often felt myself if Henry Baldwin would have lived and wasn't killed, or his son was killed, Consolidated would have been a different company altogether, but—

MR. ENGEL: He was involved in the—

MR. FARRISH: He was involved.

MR. ENGEL:—in the golf course?

MR. FARRISH: In the golf course, and I worked through him and he presented the name. Those are the names of the people involved, and I was the main spokesman—with Henry Baldwin. And he sold G.W., who owned the course anyway—he owned the whole thing, lock, stock, and barrel at that time. It was owned by him, the land and everything.

MR. ENGEL: Oh.

MR. FARRISH: Whatever he said, went. So, we convinced him. I used to run tournaments for—

I have a lot of experience, a lot of work at Bull's Eye as caddy master and help those pros out. I had tournaments at Tri-City Golf Course against Preway or against Nekoosa-Edwards. They would stage all kinds of tournaments that way. In 1939, I got moved down to Chicago out of here, and I was out of the area for awhile.

MR. ENGEL: But later in life you returned to Bull's Eye. And did you go back to Tri-City, too?

MR. FARRISH: Oh, yeah. In fact, I worked at Tri-City for 14—I retired from Consolidated after 44 years and I worked 14 more years out at Tri-City as a—Lee David and I worked out there. We worked for Pat Carville [McCarville]. She is manager out there.

Estella

MR. ENGEL: Another story. We had more—a little bit more about Estella Farrish and her connection with—

MR. FARRISH: And my mother was—

MRS. FARRISH: Curator.

MR. FARRISH: She was the first curator of the historical society and we were poor church mice at that time. Hell, we couldn't even afford to do anything. George Mead made her manager of the two blocks, the River Block and the other block.

MR. ENGEL: The Mead-Witter Block?

MR. FARRISH: Where the main office is now. There should be two blocks in there, two sections. And she managed both of them that way and worked for George. Then the Meads and the Witters got into a conflict and that was quite trying. She would get most of her instruction from old G.W. Mead, but when they were feuding, then she had to get his version of what they wanted to do, and then she would go over to First National Bank and—

MRS. FARRISH: Mr. Taylor over there.

MR. FARRISH: Taylor over there represented Meads. She had to talk to him and work the thing out and come back and figure out what to do. And she worked, and I'll never forget Earl Starks was secretary, treasurer, and I came off the road and I got a call from Earl Starks, who was secretary or treasurer. He said, I got a job for you. I said, A job for me? And he said, We would like

you to have a talk to your mother and tell her that maybe it's time to retire. I said, Hell, that's not my job. That's your job. They were afraid to tackle her. I did, and I finally agreed to do it. Geeze, she went right through the ceiling.

MRS. FARRISH: She ran a little theater.

MR. ENGEL: What does that mean, "ran"?

MRS. FARRISH: Pictures of all the costumes. I put them—I put a picture book. It's pages, and I did both sides—did everything—and labeled it, where it came from. And there's pictures of all the costumes, trunks of old clothes that she had collected. So, when the telephone company had their centennial, why they borrowed a lot of things. They called me. And they—Marion, what happened to Stella's collection? I said, It's all over at the museum. I took it over. There's trunks. It was a big—a lot of work; lots of work.

MR. FARRISH: She put on theatrical plays at the Mead-Witter Block at the east end. At one time, it was a big—the second story there was a big hall and that's where they would practice their plays and stuff. And then also she put on a city-wide play that was held up at Lincoln—Lincoln High School athletic field during the—during the summer time and she and directed all of that.

MR. ENGEL: She was quite the lady around town.

MRS. FARRISH: Yes, she was.

MR. ENGEL: You should hunt up that camera now probably.

MRS. FARRISH: She had—she had costumes she rented out.

MR. ENGEL: You know where the camera is?

MRS. FARRISH: Yeah, I'll get it. It's hanging on the door knob there where I got the purse. Right there, Polly.

MR. ENGEL: Is this your mother?

MR. FARRISH: Yeah, that's Estella Farrish. Estella Farrish. She was my Sunday schoolteacher. She was the superintendent of school down at the Congregational Church for a long time, and when the new minister came around here recently, she got all families together, and it came time for Marion and I to talk. I told him my mother used to be the superintendent of Sunday school here so I had to go all the time. I never missed. And I said, You won't see me very often and I'm telling you ahead of time. We got along good. Jake—on the Community Foundation. Jake Close.

MRS. FARRISH: Somebody is going to have to run this, a story about that. Are you good at this?

MR. MASON: Did you put—

MRS. FARRISH: There's brand new film in it.

MR. MASON: There it is. Good to go.

MRS. FARRISH: Ready to go.

MR. ENGEL: Where is that piece of paper from the Mead Hotel? Do you know where it was taken?

MR. FARRISH: That was taken—

MRS. FARRISH: Oh, I got a lot of pictures of—loads and loads of them.

(A general conversation was held among the parties.)

(The interview concludes.)

Presidential Candidate
Harold Stassen
in River City



History at McMillan

by Don Litzer

Head of Adult Services

McMillan Memorial Library

The latest *History At McMillan* column promised a discussion here of the Library's historic newspaper collection. While future installments will discuss historic newspapers, recent events have provided an alternative topic too good to pass up.

A news commentator, referring to the collective pummeling of the southern U.S. by Hurricanes Charlie, Frances, and Ivan, recently referred to such disasters as occurring once in a lifetime. McMillan Memorial Library staff members are certainly hopeful the water damage of July 30, 2004, that closed the Library for several days following, is also a once in a lifetime event.

With the Library's water damage event safely in the past, several observations have come to mind that you may find more or less relevant in your own home or workplace, including:

1) However well you calculate the odds of a particular disaster happening, it's not only impossible to consider when anticipated disasters will occur, but one can't begin to imagine unanticipated disaster situations.

In McMillan's recent case, a supply pipe to a restroom toilet broke away from the wall during a routine flush. Plumber Jim Eron, in examining the pipe, said that he had never before seen this type of failure. This event demonstrates that, even in a 34-year-old building, well-built and maintained, the possibility exists for systems to wear out where and when least expected. In older and less well-built structures, the odds of something happening can only be greater.

2) A corollary to #1: Consider your disaster plan in the proper context, i.e., as an exercise in enlightenment rather than a recipe book.

Dwight D. Eisenhower's observation that "Plans are nothing; planning is everything" is quite apt. You can't anticipate the full range of what might happen, but developing an awareness of what needs to be done and how to do it when necessary is critical.

3) Disaster preparation, as respects providing staff expert knowledge, should be both broad and deep. When McMillan's water damage event occurred, the assistant director and director were both out of state, one on a long-planned vacation, the other attending to the affairs of a recently deceased parent. However, other members of the management team (and several spouses) were able to marshal forces to deal with the emergency. Knowledge and expertise, like manure, is best distributed carefully but broadly.

4) There's no substitute for knowing your collection (or belongings) and your physical plant (or your residence) really well. Dealing with a disaster will always involve some triage; you can't deal with everything at once, so you make decisions: whom to call first and whom to call later, which books get saved from falling water first and which can stand to get wet because they're multiple copies or duplicated in other formats, etc. The better you know what you own and what's most important and why, the quicker and better those decisions will be made.

5) However bad things are, they could be worse. For example, while the Library was inundated with hundreds of gallons of water, at least it was clean water. Our brush with water damage gave us a particular empathy for those in the southern U.S. dealing with floodwaters harboring dirt, runoff, waste, snakes and who-knows-what-else.

We emerged from our recent trial exhausted, but also appreciative of each other and what teamwork and dedication can achieve. Thanks for your support as we've dried out, and for your support of McMillan Memorial Library!

From the Museum

The museum is closed for the season. There will be no set hours for the staff during this time. If you need to contact the museum, leave a message on our answering machine at 423-1580 or email museum@wctc.net and the staff will contact you.

We had a busy year. The Museum had over 1,161 visitors, not only from Wisconsin but 15 other states and four foreign countries. Amy, Molly and Megan helped visitors with research and gave school and private tours. They also did the final processing on 91 boxes of archival material. Thank you girls, for all your hard work.

“Thank You” to Earle Garber and everyone that came in and helped identify the band photos and, as always, John Billings for the time he volunteered and for the history lessons.

Karen Pecher



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

To:

The Ongoing Saga of Jeff Davis

Did Jefferson Davis’ son, “Indian Jeff,” work for the Arpin lumber company in central Wisconsin, as suggested by the April 19, 2004, *River City Memoirs* column in the *Daily Tribune*? It seems unlikely.

Yet, something was going on. A March 9, 1882, *Wood County Reporter* article proceeds as follows:

“Jeff Davis, brother of the notorious Jeff Davis, of Louisiana, made this office a brief call on Tuesday last. He claims that he was the champion wood chop[p]er on Hemlock Creek this winter, chopping in one day 100 trees that would average 2 feet in diameter. We give the above by request and leave our readers to judge for themselves as to its truthfulness.”

Former Confederate president Davis was indeed living in Louisiana. But, why would he have a brother named Jeff?

Recent West Point graduate (1828) Davis, accompanied by his slave, Pemberton, had been stationed at Fort Crawford, Prairie du Chien, Wis., under Zachary Taylor. Davis helped build Ft. Winnebago at Portage, Wis., and was involved in the Black Hawk “war.” He married Taylor’s daughter in 1835. She died three months later, from malaria contracted in Louisiana.

To receive *Artifacts* quarterly join the South Wood County Historical Corp. by sending \$15 to the Third Street Address below.