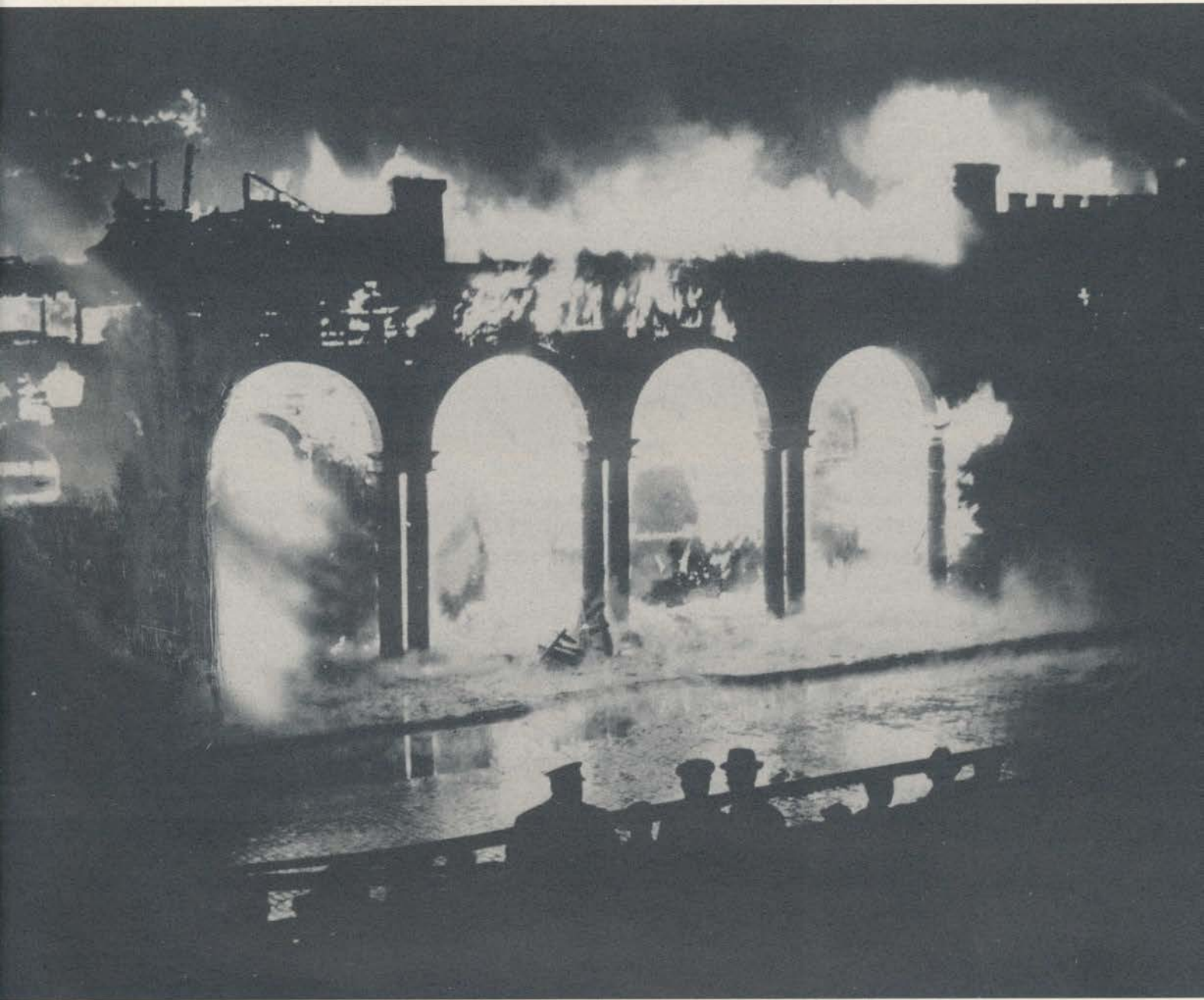




May 2006 Volume II #9

South Wood County Historical Corp.

Artifacts



Cover: A 15-hour blaze on Nov. 14, 1938, destroyed the Battery E Armory, a wooden structure on the east river bank originally known as the Amusement Hall. It had been used for roller skating, basketball games, indoor carnivals and exhibits in addition to a drill hall by the National Guard unit.

Contents: Joan Haasl 2-3; Gib Endrizzi's This & That 4-5; Melvin R. Laird interview 6-9; Phil Brown's Den of Antiquity (Wood County Centennial) 10-15; Memorial Day centerfold 16-17; Centennial Edition Samples 18-27; Richard Bender's Happy Thoughts 28-29; Replies from readers 20-31; New Exhibit at Musuem 32.

Joan Haasl

Kirby and Billy

My brother and I were born at home in the old house on Third Street South, Wisconsin Rapids. This was the house that was cut in two when I was four years old. My grandmother Staub was alive and well when Bill was born and lived with my parents. When I was born three years later, she was very sick and died three months later. I wish she could have lived a few more years so I would have known a grandparent.

Dr. F.X. Pomainville delivered both my brother and me. He was known as a no-nonsense doctor without a bedside manner. My mother said he carried wood clothespins in his black bag. When women in labor cried out, he handed them the clothespin and told them to bite on it and keep quiet.

I had an ingrown toenail when I was four. Pa took me to Dr. Pomainville's office upstairs in the Flatiron building. Pomainville sat on a round metal stool that's now in the Museum. Bracing one foot against his massive belly, he grabbed a pliers and yanked the toenail off with no freezing. I kicked him so hard he fell off the stool. Puffing, he wheezed, "I don't know what you did that for, my girl."

Dr. Pomainville was very friendly with my dad, so I think that's why Kirby Richard disappeared. F.X., as the health officer, made out and sent in the birth certificates. Where my mother got the Kirby Richard, I don't know. But that's what she named the new baby boy. But my dad wanted to use William Thurston after his uncle in Mt. Vernon, Ill., Judge William Thurston Pace. So he went to F.X. and had the birth certificate changed. My mother was calling the baby Kirby and my father was calling him Billy. When the certificate finally came, Billy it was.

Years later, when I was expecting my children, mother always lobbied for Kirby Richard. She was angry with Richard Joseph, even angrier with Edward Felix. She wasn't alive for Leland Robert. But her brother, my uncle Jim, liked Leland, because it was his middle name. If alive, Ma still would have wanted Kirby Richard. I told her once, "I don't have a dog in that fight," and that made her even angrier.

Joan Haasl

Billy Drank Gin, I Caught Hell

My father was like a magnet around steel filings when it came to getting into shaky business deals. There was the mouse trap factory, located in an old building on the east-side river bank. This was in the 1930s, during the depression. I can remember the clanking of the stamping machines and the traps in bins. But the traps were too strong for mice and not strong enough for rats. The business failed. There are mouse traps on the market today very similar and I suspect if they had time and capital it could have succeeded.

Then there were the genuine Persian rugs. They weren't Persian. They were cheaply-made imitations without much value. Pa's friends were involved with Prentiss-Wabers and convinced him it was a much more promising investment than Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. My mother's cousin was married to the manager of what is now Paperboard Products. He advised my dad to go with Consolidated. Good advice, but he didn't take it and he never got a dividend from Prentiss-Wabers.

But the most interesting misadventure was the warehouse of booze in Chicago. During prohibition, Pa and Tony Peerenboom were always going to Chicago. On one trip, they witnessed the St. Valentine's Day massacre. God only knows what other sure-fire deals they got involved in. Tony and Pa bought into this warehouse of whiskey and gin with some Chicago fellows. The warehouse burned down, arson suspected, but never proved. What Tony got, I don't know. Pa got a big load of booze that was stored in the basement of the shop. A tin cup always hung by the stair well. Friends came often, grabbing the cup and disappearing into the basement for what Pa said was a "scoop of booze." I never saw my dad drink anything down there.

My brother Billy was seven and I was four when I told him the gin was soda pop. He drank some and got sick. Billy was always tattling and he couldn't wait to get home and tell my mother what I had done to him. Ma was mad at me, but nothing like how angry she was with Pa and Lila, our hired girl. They laughed and that always set Ma off. It was like the time Billy got in turpentine and then went to the bathroom. He shot from upstairs and spun around the living room like a pinwheel. My mother called Pa home from the store and Dr. Lee Pomainville from his office. As soon as Lee smelled turpentine, he knew what had happened. Pa and Lee sat on the back steps laughing with tears running down their cheeks. My mother was furious and said they were two damned fools. I guess Billy wasn't sick enough to call Lee about the gin. Or maybe she knew Pa and Lee would laugh about that too.

Gib's This & That

Conceived as an emailing to friends and relatives, Gilbert Endrizzi's "This & That" shares artistic and historic images of his original home town, Hurley, Wis., his second home town, Wisconsin Rapids, and a lot of the rest of the world too. Unless added by the editor, the commentary for these photos is taken from his emails.



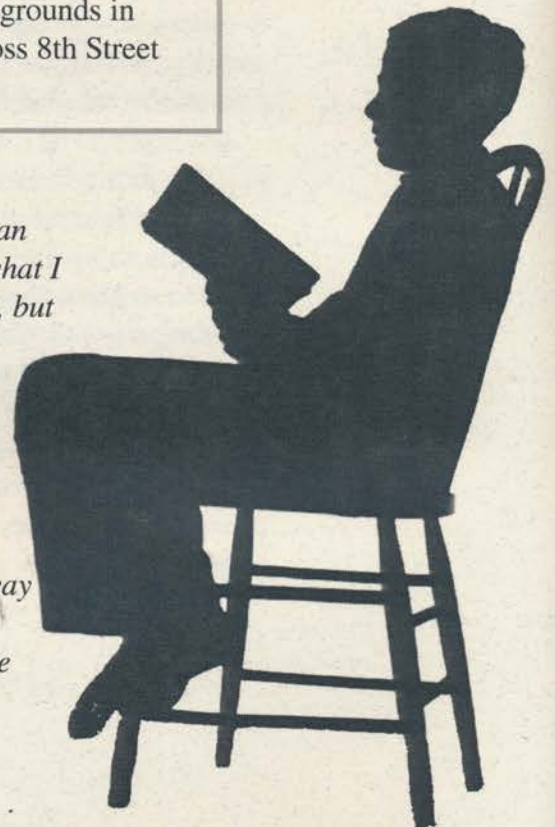
**Two
Mile
School,
early
1960s**

Two Mile School at Two Mile Avenue and 8th Street was a neighborhood landmark for the Endizzis as it was for the Engels. In the background can be seen Woodside School, built for the 1958-59 school year. On its grounds in 2006 is the old bell from Two Mile School. This view looks across 8th Street toward the west.

Bob In Silhouette

As with most anything, the greatest pleasure to be derived from an activity, is to carry it to its ultimate. This image is an example of what I mean. Photography has given me much satisfaction over the years, but none more so than my early years in cutting my eye teeth, so to speak, in getting the most out of my mother's fixed-focus Kodak Brownie Box Camera. Before going on to more sophisticated cameras, and in addition to usual family pictures, I experimented with all sorts of photo challenges.

This particular silhouette was achieved by placing my brother in front of a backlight sheet which was stretched over the archway between our living room and dining room. A time exposure was required. With a bit of experimentation, Mother's old \$1.00 Brownie came through again.



I'm no expert, but to me this laddie is as Irish as Paddy's pig. Irish or not, I get a big charge out of his demeanor. Talk about self-assurance! This is from the old Jones Studio. Some 40-odd years ago I acquired about 5000 glass plate negatives which were stored in the basement of what was once the Jeanette Jones Photo Studio in Ironwood, Michigan. Most of the negatives were formal studio shots covering a period of about 1918 to 1923. I recall having borrowed a truck to transport them from Ironwood to the Rapids. I spent the better part of a summer in cataloguing and identifying as many as I could. They have provided a lot of fun over the years.



Does the term "flapper" mean anything to you? My American Heritage dictionary gives as one definition, "A young woman, especially one who flaunts her disdain for conventional dress and behavior. Used chiefly during the 1920s." Behold my maiden aunts. (All subsequently married.)

One of the chief artists and cartoonists of that period was John Held, Jr. His style and humor were evident everywhere and are recognized, even today. I borrowed from him a long time ago and made a mosaic from one of his typical cartoons. It is entitled "The Sheik and his Sheba." It seems appropriate to view it alongside the shenanigans shown here.

I can't help but wonder who these people are, where they are going, and the story behind the dog.



Beginning fifth from left: Mel Laird, Richard Nixon, Sam Casey, Manny Fey, Wisconsin Rapids Mayor Nels Justeson, Bernard Garber, Greg Thibodeau. *Contributed by Earle Garber*



River City Memoirs

A conversation with Mel Laird

Local heritage crucial to
character of favorite son

By Dave Engel
For the Daily Tribune
Part One

"This is Mel Laird."

Hello! Not the first person I expected to hear from on a mundane Memoirs morning—an eminent son of central Wisconsin but just as down-to-earth as ever.

Long associated with Marshfield, Laird had been the predecessor, beginning in 1952, of current office-holder, Dave Obey, as "our" Congressman.

In 1969, Laird was named Secretary of Defense by President Richard M. Nixon. His challenge was to manage a dignified exit from Viet Nam.

Now a senior editor at Readers Digest, he continues to have a major impact here through the Melvin R. Laird Center at Marshfield Clinic.

It was Nov. 8, 2004, that Laird telephoned from Florida to discuss his roots here.

His mother, Helen, was born in Wisconsin Rapids, Laird said, noting that the community was then split between Grand Rapids and Centralia.

In 1891, the prospective parents of Laird's mother, W.D. and Huldah MaryBelle "Mame" Connor, lived in Auburndale but took the train to Rapids for the birth because Dr. George F. Witter, Mame's father, practiced medicine here.

Laird said that, through the Witters, he is related to the Mead family of Wisconsin Rapids.

"Of course I've done a lot of things for the Consolidated. It's no longer owned by the Meads, which is too bad. Consolidated was kind of a family company."

Mel's father was Melvin R. Laird Sr. "The R is for Robert, same as mine; I'm a junior."

The elder Laird was born on a farm at Maysville, Illinois, worked his way through Illinois College, then attended Princeton Theological Seminary where one of his professors was Woodrow Wilson.

Laird Sr. came to Marshfield as a young Presbyterian minister. After chaplain service in World War I, he assumed the pulpit at Westminster Presbyterian church in Omaha,

Neb. and married former Marshfield parishioner Helen Connor.

That's how Mel Jr. came to be born in Omaha, Sept. 1, 1922. After a year, the Laids moved back to Marshfield.

"The records show I checked into the Marshfield Clinic as a young baby in December of '23," Laird said.

Back in "Hub City," Laird Sr. served as secretary of the Connor wood products company. His father had retired as a minister, said Laird Jr., but he filled in at Wausau, Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids.

He also became involved in politics, becoming chairman of the Wood County board and elected to the state senate in 1940, serving to his death in 1946.

"He was a fine father, a fine man, a fine leader," said Laird. "He organized the first Boy Scout troop in Marshfield.

"He was interested in young people, and he was interested in his family. We were very close.

"My father gave me the greatest inheritance a man can give a son, a good name and a fine reputation.

"I was 23 years old, still in my Navy uniform as a lieutenant, junior grade, when the people of Wood County, Clark County and Taylor County elected me to the state senate on the reputation of my father."

Laird also said he owes a lot to Helen Connor Laird.

"Mother was very active, a great lady. She was first woman president of the school board in Marshfield, president of the Marshfield library board and a member of the board of regents of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, for nine years. She was on the state library commission and head of the 7th district Federation of Women's Clubs.

"There couldn't have been a better relationship with my mother. After my father died, I spent a lot of time with her.

"We took the train all the way across Canada and stopped at Banff and Lake Louise and made that about a three-and-a-half week trip and got out to Victoria in British Columbia. We had many trips like that.

"When I was Secretary of Defense, I used to call her almost every day or she would call me, giving me advice. She always gave me a lot of advice when I was in Congress too.

"Sometimes I took it, sometimes I didn't but it was nice to have her there."

Part Two

It happened at the big cannery in Marshfield. Call it the Pea Wagon Incident.

"I was young," recalled Mel Laird.

"Ellen Roddis and I were out there and we liked to steal some peas, take 'em off the wagon as it went by, a tractor pulling a big wagon full; so we were stealing pea vines and we would sit down and eat 'em and it was kind of fun.

"I ran out from behind the wagon and bang, I got hit and it ran right over my left leg and most of my right leg but the one that got damaged was the left."

That was the testimony of former Congressman and U.S. Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird, who, as a mostly-law abiding lad, called Marshfield home.

Laird said the Roddis family and his family spent a lot of time together. His uncle, Gordon Connor, married "the oldest Roddis girl."

Laird was also well-acquainted with my wife's mother, then named Kathryn Kenney. He said she was a smart and attractive girl.

Kathryn's father, Bill Kenney, sold Laird his first life insurance policy.

"Bill was an insurance salesman for New York Life. And he was very active in the American Legion. He was a great supporter of mine when I came back to run for office.

"Kathryn's mother was a straight-laced person. She liked to give tea parties.

"When we were in high school and grade school, she'd have four or five boys, and four or five girls in. She really did a fine job of entertaining and showing us some of the fine things of life."

Laird also remembered former Rapids resident and "Memoirs" subject, Wally Ives, the popular trumpeter.

"Wally must have been two years behind me in school. His father was mayor of Marshfield."

Laird said he went to a lot of Wally's gigs. "He would put in plugs for me when I was running for office."

Laird didn't participate in high school sports much because of the Pea Wagon Incident, he said.

"I had a knee cap that was in two pieces so I had a little problem with that. I tried to play basketball but I was never any good."

A favorite hangout for Laird and his pals was the clothing store owned by the father of Jack McDonald: "Gag's" or "Jack's."

"It had a good back room where we used to do all our algebra and geometry and trigonometry and stuff. We used to play cards back there. It was right next to Wayne's drug store that had a nice soda fountain in it.

"Once we got our licenses, we drove up and down the street.

"I had a good church program at the Presbyterian church there which I was active in. I was active in the YMCA camp in Boulder Junction. I was up there in the summer quite a bit. I was a counselor at Manitowish one summer, when I was in high school.

"I was in the Boy Scouts. My dad organized the first troop in Marshfield in 1908.

"We always tried to get some kind of a job in the summer. It kept you busy and you had a little spending money.

"I worked at the cheese factory on Vine Street in Marshfield. I was one of the best paraffiners of cheese that you've ever seen.

"I worked pulling plywood at Roddis plywood plant in the summertime. But that cheese work was the toughest job.

"It was hot over that paraffin. You dipped that big cheese. You'd have to take 'em out and get 'em ready for storage. I did that one whole summer."

Laird said he told his father, Melvin R. Laird Sr., a teetotaler and former pastor, about the first time he tried a beer.

Rev. Laird said, "I'd rather you not but that's a decision you'll have to make in your life and I wouldn't tell you that you couldn't do it."

"I had to tell him," said Laird Jr. "We had a great relationship."

Another item of minor mischief involved playing golf with Bill Copps on a school day when the district superintendent drove by.

"Our dads didn't give us as much hell as the principal did. They just kind of reprimanded us, told us they were disappointed and they hoped we wouldn't do it again."

Part Three

Like father, like son.

Before WWII, former Congressman and Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird Jr. had been introduced to politics through his father, Melvin R. Laird Sr., a successful state senate candidate for whom Mel campaigned in 1940.

"I was just finishing high school that year. I worked awfully hard in that campaign, went door to door every place, to Neillsville, Wisconsin Rapids."

Politics were interrupted by World War II the following year, when Mel and his older brothers, Connor and Dick, joined the Navy.

"Connor did it on the Monday after Pearl Harbor, my brother Dick, about two months later and I, about three months later. So we all went into the Navy approximately at the same time.

"My oldest brother, Connor, was killed in the service. Dick came back okay."

Laird served on the destroyer Maddox DD731. "I was almost three years in the Pacific: Okinawa, Leyte, Luzon, all of those."

Laird returned from the war to take his father's place in the state senate at age 24.

"I had a lot of supporters after World War II. Carl Otto [*Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune* editor] was one of them.

"There was a guy that worked at the paper by the name of Felker. He was from Marshfield. He helped me sometimes with speeches and ideas and so forth.

"Bill Huffman Sr. always supported me. He supported me better than his son. His son thought I was a little too conservative.

"My relatives in Rapids were all supporters, like Emily Baldwin, and Henry. And Roy Potter and all those county board members, they were out working for me like the dickens. The Brazeaus were great.

"The Nashes were Democrats but they always supported me. Even Philleo Nash supported me and he was a big Democrat.

"I never lost Wisconsin Rapids and always carried it big. I carried Wood County big always.

"Otto Zieher was a great supporter. Glen is Otto's boy. Otto was on the county board with my dad.

"Those county board members were all great friends of my dad. All those town chairmen loved my dad because he was such a good leader and such a thoughtful man.

"During the Depression, people would come to our house for aid and support. My dad always would find something for them even if he had to give them a handout of some sort.

"During the bad part of the depression, Reuben Connor [a relative] was running the county welfare program to take care of people the best they could.

"We used to go over to Wisconsin Rapids to see the Mead family now and then. That's when George lived out on the island, the old man.

"George Mead I was a pioneer, like D.C. Everest was up in Rothschild. D.C. came up there as a lumberjack on the river and built the Marathon paper company

"He was the man that called me in and said, 'Mel, you're gonna run for Congress and I'm gonna support you 100 percent. I'll raise the money but I want a good treasurer that you can trust.'

"So he gets in touch with Carl Jacobs in Stevens Point and he gets that young attorney who was my classmate in high school, Bob Froehlke, to come up there as attorney with then Hardware Mutual in Stevens Point. That's how we got that campaign going.

"D.C. was probably my greatest supporter. He knew my father and he knew my grandfather.

"In 1952, I ran for the House. I had four opponents, [including] Malcolm Rosholt and a guy by the name of Kopitsky, head of the cheese makers union.

"Krause down in Iola started out with a little paper. He supported me and it was a hard job for him to support me because he liked Malcolm too.

"I remember going in and seeing Chet Krause in that little Iola print shop. He was actually putting that paper together by hand.

A big event locally was the appearance here in 1959 of Vice President Richard Nixon for an event at the Lincoln Field House and a testimonial dinner at Assumption high school in honor of Laird.

At that dinner, according to Laird, everybody ate a lot of cranberries because the cranberry crop had just been "banned" over possible contamination by the chemical, amino-triazole.

"You'd have to eat about two barrels of it to get sick so I was able to convince the Congress to indemnify them for their crop that year and I got reimbursement for them when they burned it."

Like his father before him, Laird was proud of helping when his constituents needed him.

Contributed by Joan Smiley

MELVIN R. LAIRD
7TH DISTRICT, WISCONSIN

HOME OFFICE:
MARSHFIELD, WISCONSIN

COMMITTEE:
APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE:
AGRICULTURE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

May 7, 1954

Mr. Jasper C. Johnson
Clerk of Courts
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

Dear Jasper:

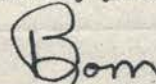
I was pleased to have your letter of May 5, expressing your interest in H. J. Res. 479, introduced by me in the House of Representatives, amending the pledge of allegiance to the flag to include the words "under God."

Hearings were held on this measure by the Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, May 5, and I appeared in support of my resolution. I am hopeful that favorable action will be taken.

Your interest and support in my efforts are very much appreciated and I was particularly pleased to learn that you are enjoying "Your Washington Office Report."

With best wishes and kindest personal regards,
I am

Sincerely yours,



Melvin R. Laird, M. C.

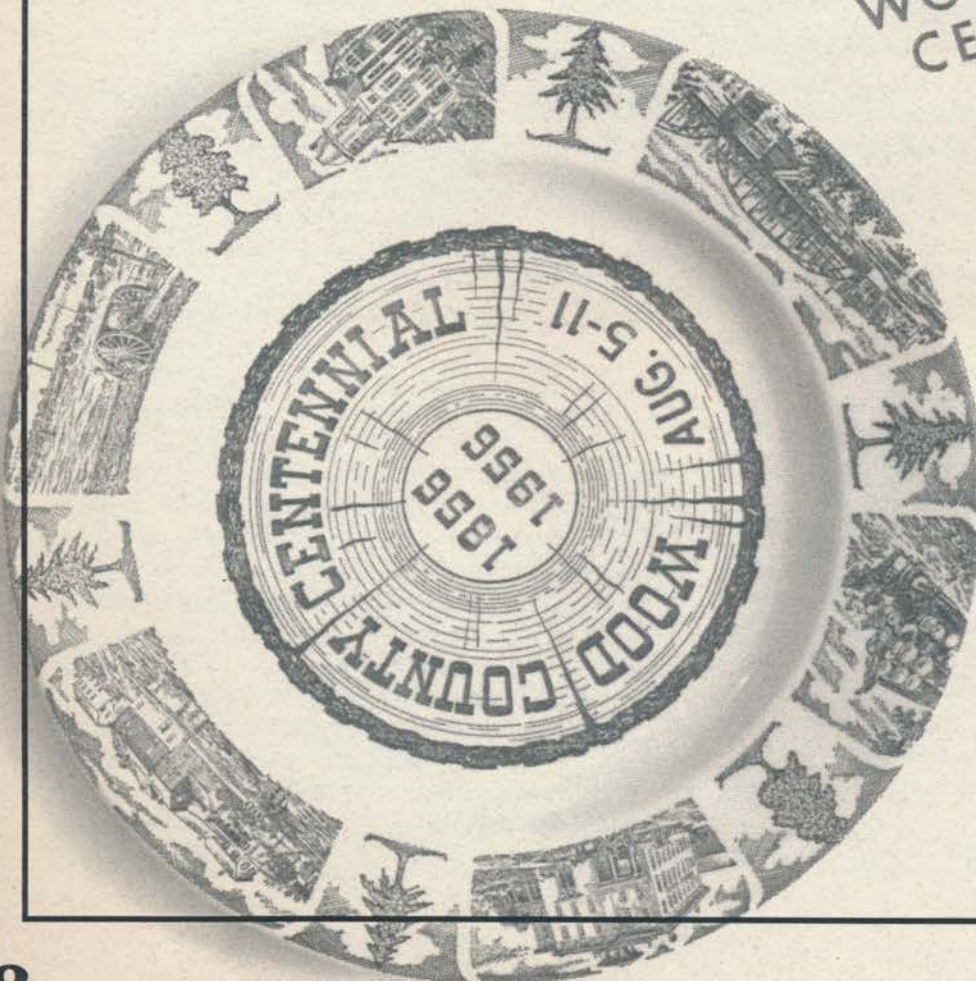
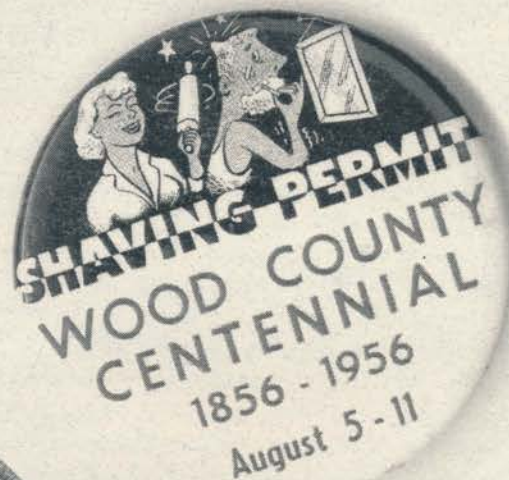
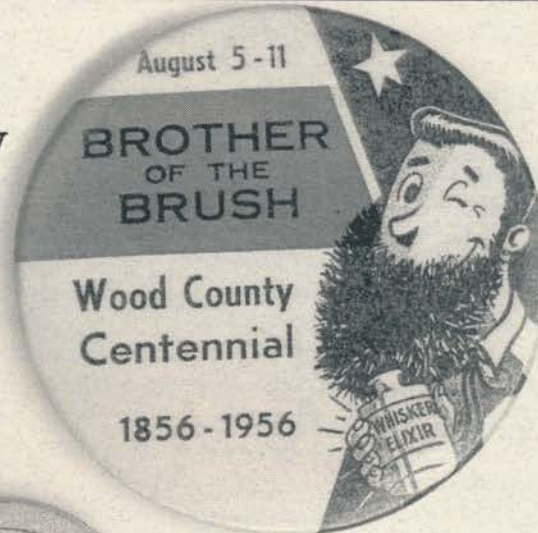
MRL/2

Phil Brown's Den of Antiquity



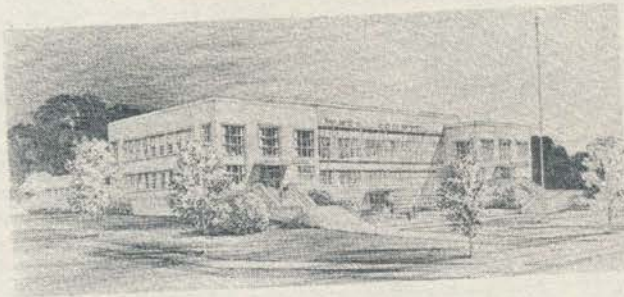
Sesquicentennial Echoes

A century and a half ago Wood County was formed from Portage County. The wooden nickels, buttons and programs here were part of the centennial that was celebrated in high style fifty years ago.



WOOD COUNTY COURT HOUSE AND JAIL

ERECTED 1954-56



County Board Chairman, 1953-5 - Romeo Villeneuve
County Board Chairman, 1955-7 - Alba Bump

PUBLIC PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Frank D. Abel
Harvey Gee Warren Beadle, Jr.
I. W. Wendt F. G. Kilp

ARCHITECT

Donn Hougen, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Thomsen-Abbott Const. Co., Marshfield, Wisconsin

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR

K. & M Electric Company
Marshfield, Wis.

HEATING & VENTILATING CONTRACTOR

Wenzel Brothers Company
Appleton, Wis.

PLUMBING CONTRACTOR

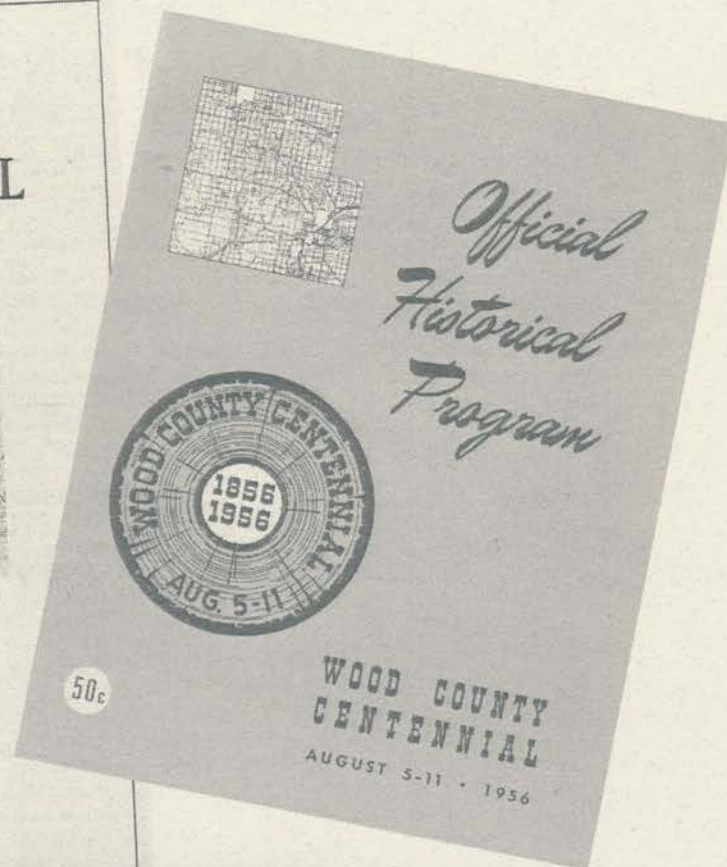
Eron Plumbing & Heating Company
Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.

ELEVATOR & DUMB-WAITER

Otis Elevator Company
Milwaukee, Wis.

JAIL EQUIPMENT

Fries & Son Steel Construction & Engineering Company
Covington, Ky.



Memorabilia

from 1956 celebrates the first century of Wood County's existence as a political entity. The courthouse built in coincidence with the commemoration continues in use fifty years later.

We Are Proud To Be Serving In Our CENTENNIAL YEAR

WOOD COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Chairman of County Board

Alba F. Bump	Rt. 5, Marshfield
Albert Vandenberg	Town of Arpin
Oswald Dohm	Town of Cameron
C. A. Searles	Town of Cranmoor
William R. Moll	Town of Grand Rapids
Allen Yetter	Town of Hiles
Alba F. Bump	Town of Marshfield
George Bredl	Town of Port Edwards
Louis Brey	Town of Richfield
Peter Lang	Town of Rudolph
Hans Vollert	Town of Seneca
Joe Smits	Town of Sigel
Walter M. Brandl	Village of Auburndale
Lambert Cherney	Village of Milladore
Arthur Hartsough	Village of Vesper
Ernest T. Oppman	City of Marshfield
Norman H. Fehrenbach	City of Marshfield
Roy E. Pucker	City of Marshfield
Irwin W. Wendt	City of Marshfield
Roman J. Neder	City of Marshfield
Wm. F. Lueck	City of Marshfield
C. W. Mitten	City of Marshfield
A. A. Hunter	City of Marshfield
Steve Miles	City of Marshfield
Edward R. Beebe	City of Marshfield
William Rusk	City of Nekoosa
George A. Anderson	City of Nekoosa

County Clerk

Joachim A. Schindler	Wisconsin Rapids
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Sheriff

Arthur E. Berg	Wisconsin Rapids
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Clerk of Circuit Court

Jasper C. Johnson	Wisconsin Rapids
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Register of Deeds

Robert J. Ryan	Wisconsin Rapids
----------------	------------------

County Judge

Hon. Byron B. Conway	Wisconsin Rapids
----------------------	------------------

Superintendent of County Hospital

M. J. Ferrando	Marshfield
----------------	------------

Superintendent of County Parks

Emil F. Mueller	Arpin
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Superintendent of County Schools

Matt Knedle	Wisconsin Rapids
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County Highway Commissioner

Russell Sullivan	Wisconsin Rapids
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4H Club Agent

Keith Nelson	Wisconsin Rapids
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Vice-Chairman of County Board

William Rusk	Nekoosa
Geo. C. Kunderling	Town of Auburndale
Leonard Knapp	Town of Cary
Emil Mattner	Town of Dexter
Kurt Zellmer	Town of Hansen
Alex Dix	Town of Lincoln
Charles Feit	Town of Milladore
James Scott	Town of Remington
Will H. Dix	Town of Rock
Elmer T. Knuteson	Town of Saratoga
George Schroeder	Town of Sherry
Louis Woodman	Town of Wood
Warren Beadle, Jr.	Village of Biron
F. Geo. Kilp	Village of Port Edwards
Chester Tyjeski	City of Pittsville
Romeo E. Villeneuve	City of Wisconsin Rapids
Fred H. Eberhardt	City of Wisconsin Rapids
Frank D. Abel	City of Wisconsin Rapids
Thomas C. Burmeister	City of Wisconsin Rapids
William Bodette	City of Wisconsin Rapids
Harold Larson	City of Wisconsin Rapids
Harvey Gee	City of Wisconsin Rapids
Arthur P. Hayward	City of Wisconsin Rapids
Arthur B. Berg	City of Wisconsin Rapids
Henry W. Yetter	City of Wisconsin Rapids
John L. Swinghammer	City of Nekoosa
Ingwall M. Stensberg	City of Nekoosa

County Treasurer

Vernon M. Kelly	Wisconsin Rapids
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Coroner

Harold Pomainville	Wisconsin Rapids
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District Attorney

John M. Potter	Port Edwards
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Surveyor

Edgar J. Carrington	Marshfield
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Veteran's Service Officer

Ernest O. Anderson	Wisconsin Rapids
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Superintendent of Home for Aged

George Law	Rt. 3, Wisconsin Rapids
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Director of Welfare and Pensions

Harry H. Precious	Wisconsin Rapids
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County Health Nurse

Leone Norton	Wisconsin Rapids
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County Agricultural Agent

Leo Schaefer	Wisconsin Rapids
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Home Demonstration Agent

Loretta M. Zastrow	Wisconsin Rapids
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COUNTY OF WOOD

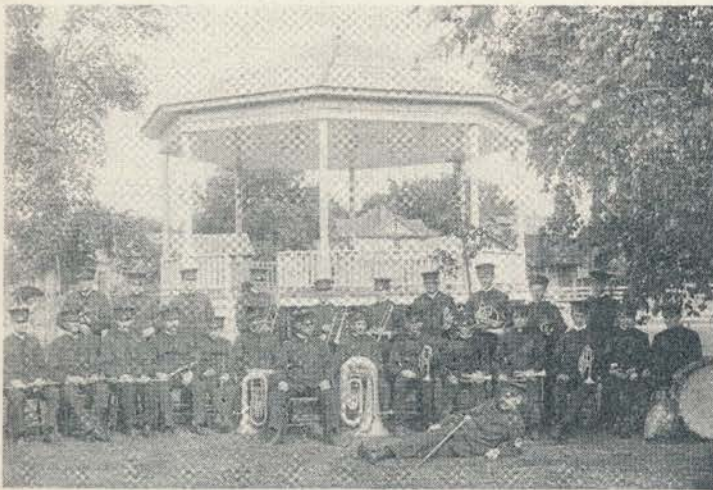
FIRST MEETING OF SUPERVISORS . . OCTOBER 8, 1856

Events
All
Week

Daily Tours - Wood County's New Court House - Daily Tour - Consolidated Water Power & Paper Company (Major Industries in County on Tuesday, August 7th only) - Centennial Carnival Rides and Fun, Wisconsin Rapids - Wisconsin State Historymobile, Wisconsin Rapids, August 7-8-9, near Court House. Daily Hospitality Center for Pioneer and Former Residents. Please Register. Located at Health Center, 111 First Street North, Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin.

Morning: Afternoon:	Evening:	Sun. Aug. 5	2:30 P.M. Courthouse Dedication. 7:30 P.M. "Centennial of Sabbaths," featuring massed County church choirs, at Marshfield Fairgrounds.
			Wisconsin Rapids and other communities. Awards for best old-fashioned costumes, best decorated vehicles, and most novel pets. 1:30 to 5:00 P.M. Countywide family picnic at North Wood County Park. Games, tug-o-war, firemen's water battle, awarding of final prizes for children's parade winners. 9:00 P.M. Centennial Ball, Lincoln Fieldhouse, Wisconsin Rapids
All Day:	Evening:	Mon. Aug. 6	Local Amateur Talent Contests: Pittsville, Sherry, Marshfield, Wisconsin Rapids and other communities. 7:30 P.M. Final Championship Competition for local winners of Amateur Talent Contests at Witter Field. 8:15 P.M. Centennial Queen's Coronation Ceremony - Witter Field. Representative Melvin R. Laird will crown the Queen and present her with her awards. "Weekend at The Waldorf" for two. Also he will present awards to Princesses of the Court of Honor. 8:30 P.M. Wood County Centurama: "FROM TREES TO TRIUMPH" - Witter Field. A cast of 450 people will depict Wood County's history on a 250-foot outdoor stage. This 90-minute spectacular will be climaxed by a fireworks finale.
			7:15 P.M. "Sisters of the Swiss Promenade" Milwaukee Railroad Station along Grand Avenue to Witter Field. 7:45 P.M. Final judging of old-fashioned costumes, at Witter Field. Awards for best authentic costume, best replica and best family group. 8:30 P.M. Wood County Centurama: "FROM TREES TO TRIUMPH," with fireworks finale - at Witter Field. 9:30 P.M. Pavement Dance - East Side Market Square, Wisconsin Rapids.
All Day: Morning: Afternoon:	Evening:	Wed. Aug. 8	7:15 P.M. "Sisters of the Swiss Promenade" Milwaukee Railroad Station along Grand Avenue to Witter Field. 7:45 P.M. Final judging of old-fashioned costumes, at Witter Field. Awards for best authentic costume, best replica and best family group. 8:30 P.M. Wood County Centurama: "FROM TREES TO TRIUMPH," with fireworks finale - at Witter Field. 9:30 P.M. Pavement Dance - East Side Market Square, Wisconsin Rapids.
			7:15 P.M. "Brothers of the Brush Promenade" Milwaukee Railroad Station along Grand Avenue to Witter Field. 7:45 P.M. Final judging of beards and awards for best mustache, best goatee, best sideburns, best full beard etc. Beard shaving contest. 8:30 P.M. Wood County Centurama: "FROM TREES TO TRIUMPH," with fireworks finale - at Witter Field. 9:30 P.M. Pavement Dance, West Side Market Square, Wisconsin Rapids.
All Day: Morning: Noon: Afternoon:	Evening:	Thurs. Aug. 9	7:15 P.M. "Brothers of the Brush Promenade" Milwaukee Railroad Station along Grand Avenue to Witter Field. 7:45 P.M. Final judging of beards and awards for best mustache, best goatee, best sideburns, best full beard etc. Beard shaving contest. 8:30 P.M. Wood County Centurama: "FROM TREES TO TRIUMPH," with fireworks finale - at Witter Field. 9:30 P.M. Pavement Dance, West Side Market Square, Wisconsin Rapids.
			8:00 P.M. Pioneer Recognition Ceremonies at Witter Field. Awards to oldest man and woman of continuous residence, and to former residents returning for the ceremony from farthest compass points; north, east, south, west. 8:30 P.M. Wood County Centurama: "FROM TREES TO TRIUMPH," with fireworks finale - at Witter Field. 9:00 P.M. Pavement Dance - 4th and Central - Marshfield.
Morning: Afternoon:	Evening:	Fri. Aug. 10	civic, labor, fraternal, agricultural, commercial, industrial, religious and educational groups; bands and marching units. 7:30 P.M. Musical program Witter Field. 8:30 P.M. Wood County Centurama: "FROM TREES TO TRIUMPH," with fireworks finale - at Witter Field. 9:00 P.M. Hoedown, Wisconsin Rapids Armory.
			civic, labor, fraternal, agricultural, commercial, industrial, religious and educational groups; bands and marching units. 7:30 P.M. Musical program Witter Field. 8:30 P.M. Wood County Centurama: "FROM TREES TO TRIUMPH," with fireworks finale - at Witter Field. 9:00 P.M. Hoedown, Wisconsin Rapids Armory.
Morning: Afternoon:	Evening:	Sat. Aug. 11	civic, labor, fraternal, agricultural, commercial, industrial, religious and educational groups; bands and marching units. 7:30 P.M. Musical program Witter Field. 8:30 P.M. Wood County Centurama: "FROM TREES TO TRIUMPH," with fireworks finale - at Witter Field. 9:00 P.M. Hoedown, Wisconsin Rapids Armory.
			civic, labor, fraternal, agricultural, commercial, industrial, religious and educational groups; bands and marching units. 7:30 P.M. Musical program Witter Field. 8:30 P.M. Wood County Centurama: "FROM TREES TO TRIUMPH," with fireworks finale - at Witter Field. 9:00 P.M. Hoedown, Wisconsin Rapids Armory.
Morning: Afternoon:	Evening:	Rain	civic, labor, fraternal, agricultural, commercial, industrial, religious and educational groups; bands and marching units. 7:30 P.M. Musical program Witter Field. 8:30 P.M. Wood County Centurama: "FROM TREES TO TRIUMPH," with fireworks finale - at Witter Field. 9:00 P.M. Hoedown, Wisconsin Rapids Armory.
			civic, labor, fraternal, agricultural, commercial, industrial, religious and educational groups; bands and marching units. 7:30 P.M. Musical program Witter Field. 8:30 P.M. Wood County Centurama: "FROM TREES TO TRIUMPH," with fireworks finale - at Witter Field. 9:00 P.M. Hoedown, Wisconsin Rapids Armory.

The above program is subject to additions to be announced in newspapers and on radio. Sunday evening, Aug. 12 held open for possible rained-out performance of Centurama. WHAT IF IT RAINS - Your committee approves of rain on certain occasions, but takes a dim view of the idea during the days and evenings of August 3 to 11. All events will proceed as scheduled with one exception. If rain should cancel any performance of 'Centurama' a postponed performance will be given Sunday evening, August 12 or on the first clear evening following.



City band and old band stand on Court House grounds.



Old Opera House — home talent show "King Chop Suey" January 24, 1905.



Colcord dance orchestra.



Gardner Rilles, group of 60. Encampment site of present Consolidated office park. Dr. Crawford, captain.



Early graduation class of old Howe High School.



Howe High School, March 11, 1888.



A family of Potawatomi Indians near Pittsville.



Fr. John Eisen funeral.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS—Marshfield men-about-town posed this picture about 1897, probably to prove to their descendants that the Gay Nineties were all they are cracked up to be. Left to right are Emil Kliner, early hardware merchant and theater operator; George Ascott, a temporary resident of the "Hub City"; Al Meffert, railroad station agent; Joe Himmel, millwright, veneer cutter and lumberjack; and Jackie Jacobson, fruit stand operator.



Grist mill fire, Wisconsin Rapids, site of present new swimming pool.



Bicycle Club at Lake Emily.

A group of unidentified bathing beauties.



Memorial Day, 1880s

From *Tribune/News Herald Centennial Edition*

(See page 22, this issue.)





Walter P. Claring

Wood County Centennial Edition

Supplement of the Marshfield News-Herald and Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune

SECOND SECTION

CENTENNIAL DAYS, AUGUST 5-11, 1956

24 PAGES

Wisconsin Rapids Story Is Up-to-Date 'Tale of Two Cities'

**Pioneer Hamlets
Effected Merger
To Forge Ahead**

**Original Settlement
On Wisconsin River
Established in 1838**

WISCONSIN RAPIDS — An appropriate title for this historical sketch of Wisconsin Rapids, county seat of Wood County, would be "A Tale of Two Cities."

For this thriving industrial city of some 15,000 people traces its origin to two pioneer hamlets, Grand Rapids and Centralia, which more than a century ago grew out of the pine wilderness on opposite banks of the Wisconsin River.

Before the advent of the white man, the Indians gave to this place the name of Ah-dab-wab-gam, meaning "Two-Sided Rapids," since the rapids in the river at this point were divided by a great boulevard.

The turbulence of the downward rushing stream, unhindered then by dams, gripped the attention of the first white settlers, as it had the redman before them, and so it came to pass that the name "Grand Rapids" was chosen.

Grand Rapids was not a city when Wisconsin was admitted to the union on May 23, 1848, nor was it even an incorporated village. It was nothing more than a struggling backwoods settlement, numbering some 150 hardy inhabitants and consisting of a scattering of crude wooden buildings, frame or log, and a few simple trading establishments catering to the needs of the settlers.

The community had really sprung into being only 10 years before, when, in 1838, Nelson Slogrove, here and being Elmer, who arrived with the first group of pioneers on a trading trip.

This mill was the third in Wood county, the first having been established in 1832 by Daniel Whitney at "Whitney's Rapids," below

Rablin Residence Is Exactly as Old As Wood County

Mrs. Clara Rablin Nelson (upper photo), oldest living granddaughter of pioneer lumberman John A. Rablin (center photo), and her daughter, Mrs. Edith Fraley, 1211 First St. N., Wisconsin Rapids, built by their grandfather in 1836, the same year Wood county was established by the Legislature. The picture of the dwelling was taken in 1884.



community's first merchants, also arrived in 1835, followed in 1846 by Ira Purdy. Joseph Wood, who is a member of the Legislature the following decade of Wood county, entered the Grand Rapids in 1848. He subsequently arrived as the first settler in Centralia while Kromer became the first clerk of court.

The first tract of land here to be platted into business and residential lots was in an area east of the present municipal swimming pool. The survey and plat were made by R. G. Horner in November, 1837, for John J. Crank, owner of the land.

In 1851 William J. Balderston established the first shoe store in Grand Rapids. L. P. Powers arrived in 1853 to establish a law office, and until 1858 he was the only lawyer at the county seat. When the county came into being he was elected to the dual position of district attorney and county clerk.

Dr. G. W. Willings, who settled here in 1855, was the first resident physician in Wood county.

John Rablin came to 1858 to engage in the lumber business, becoming a partner in the firm of Howe & Rablin which operated a sawmill where he and Rablin built a hotel known as the Rablin House, where the old library building now stands.

Prior to its destruction by fire in 1880, the hotel was considered to be one of the best in the state outside of Milwaukee.

In 1859, when Grand Rapids' population had grown to about 600, Charles M. Webb came here from Pennsylvania to begin the practice of law and subsequently became state senator and circuit judge.

While Grand Rapids was going through its early stages of growth on the east bank of the river, another settlement had sprung up on the west side, bearing the name of Centralia. This name, it is said, was chosen for the new community by Henry W. Jackson, who arrived in 1854 and who was the first postmaster and first surveyor in Centralia.

Prior to that time, about 1848, George Kline Sr. had built a sawmill on the west river bank, and in 1850 the first sawmill in Wisconsin Rapids was built at a point near the present Grand Rapids.

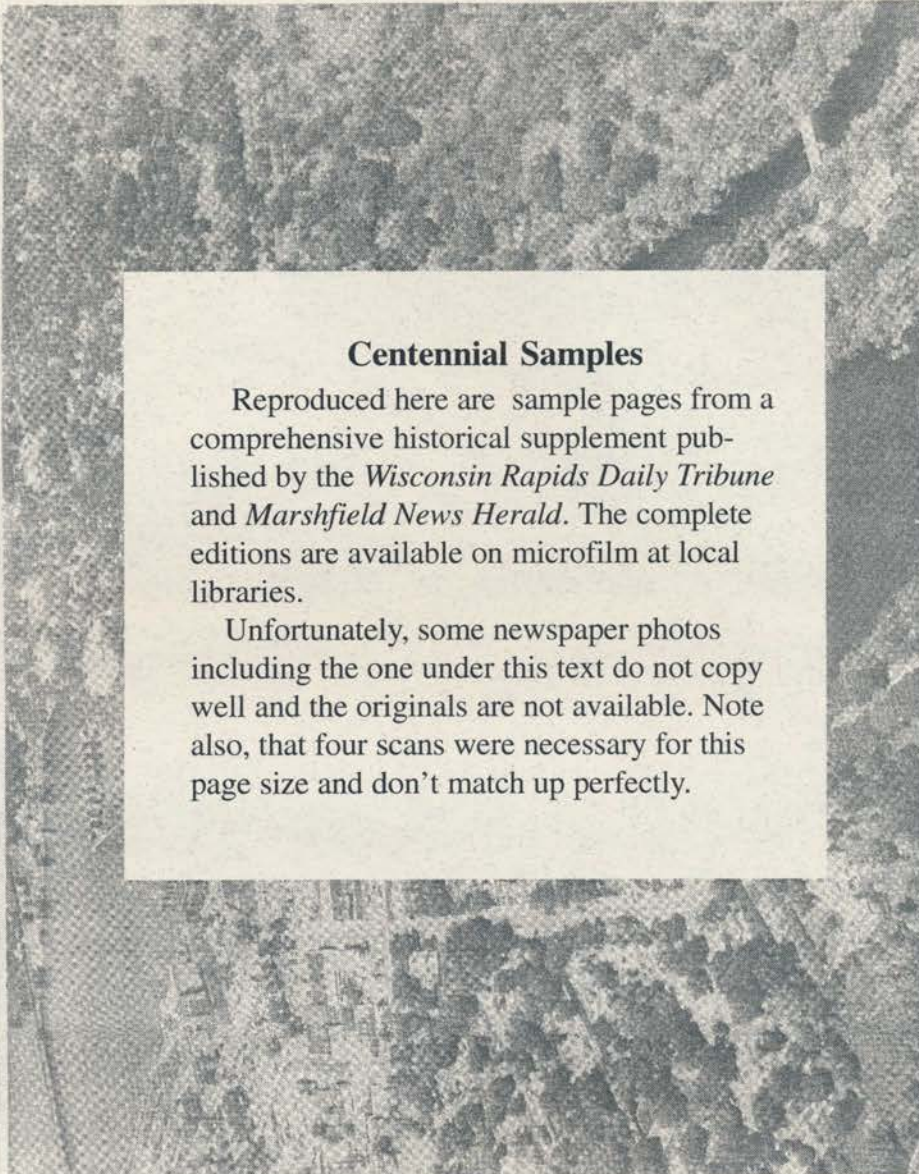
sa's early population but as the checked. Many of the metoik re- sponded to the call for volunteers, and of the enlistees accredited to the county less than one-half returned.

The big local event at the year 1905 was a fire which destroyed a sawmill as well as several houses and a point near the present Grand Rapids.

Centennial Samples

Reproduced here are sample pages from a comprehensive historical supplement published by the *Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune* and *Marshfield News Herald*. The complete editions are available on microfilm at local libraries.

Unfortunately, some newspaper photos including the one under this text do not copy well and the originals are not available. Note also, that four scans were necessary for this page size and don't match up perfectly.



City of Wisconsin Rapids

of the residents of both cities that cooperation might well supplant competition. In the fall of 1889 a proposal for consolidation, which had been agitated for some years, was presented before the two counties. Unopposedly the years of growth and progress for

Centralia was incorporated as a city in April, 1874, with R. C. Moore as the first mayor and R. J. Huston as city clerk. The aldermen were E. R. Osterander, H. Charles (Karrison), H. W. Jackson, G. A. Carriveau, Hebert C. Lyon and B. On March 24, 1890 the propo-

On March 31, 1860, the proposal was adopted and the consolidation went into effect in April of that year. The new municipality took the name of Grand Rapids, with B. H. Higgins as the first mayor. At that time the population of the east side was 1,702 and that of the west side 1,425, making a combined population (with additional territory taken in) of 4,493.

Shortly after the twin cities became one, an event occurred which was to have far-reaching influence upon the community's future. This was the organization of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co., which built its mill in 1860 and began the manufacture of paper the following year. This company today is the largest single industry in Wisconsin Rapids and Wood County.

Grand Rapids continued to be the city's name until 1920, when, following a petition signed by 1,608 electors, the Common Council on Aug. 3 enacted an ordinance changing the name to Wisconsin Rapids, the change going into effect the following day.

Principal reason for adoption of the new name was the fact that a

portion of the Grand Rapids business district in an area near the east end of the bridge. It was not until 30 years after that the area was consolidated. In 1890, the proposition of incorporating Grand Rapids as a village or seeking a city charter was introduced and submitted to a vote of the people.

The majority were in favor of a city form of government, and the charter was formally granted on April 6, 1890. The first City Council meeting was held April 13 of that year with Mayor L. P. Powers presiding. C. O. Baker was city clerk and members of the council were Aldermen Stevenson, Ebert, Norton, Hushon and Neve.

In the following year, 1870, the population of Grand Rapids was 1,115. By this time daily mail service was being rendered, barring bad weather or accident, with a four-horse stage coach carrying the mail here from New Lisbon, then the nearest railroad point.

The "iron horse" made its first appearance in Grand Rapids in November, 1872, when the Green Bay & Lake Pepin Railway Co. (now the Green Bay & Western) extended its tracks into the city from the east. The Wisconsin Valley railroad (now a part of the Milwaukee Road) built a line into Centralia from Tomah in June, 1873.

With each of the twin communities getting rail service within a period of little more than six months, one possible cause of friction was eliminated. But there were plenty of other incentives for brisk rivalry.

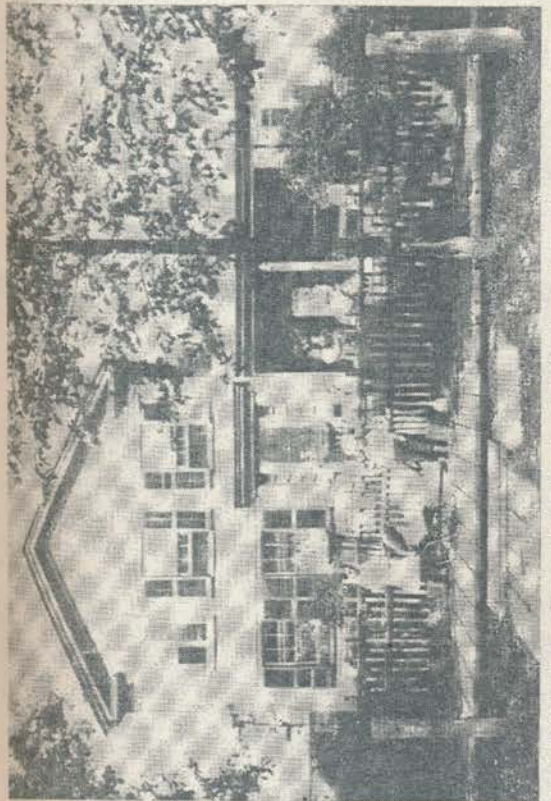
History records that when Wood County was formed in 1856 and the county seat was established in Grand Rapids, folks on the west side of the river were reported as feeling "very much chagrined."

Later, when the new Courthouse was erected in 1881, Centralia made a determined but futile bid for it.

Up until 1874, Centralia was an unincorporated village within the township of the same name. The town of Centralia originally included an area comprising the present townships of Port Edwards and Seneca, plus some adjacent territory, having been established in 1857.

Frontier early day businessmen in the village included Orsler Garrison, Reuben C. Lyon, I. L. Mosher, George Corriveau, Emil B. Rossier (who in addition to being a pioneer merchant was editor of the Centralia Enterprise), George Weller, Tom Hinley, John Compton and J. Homer. Dr. Patrick Hurley was the first physician.

In 1883 the Weller grist mill was converted into a fort where women and children were sheltered while the men stood guard outside. Apparently the "scare" was unfounded, for there is no record of a clash



Arthur St. Lawrence, a Rapids "now Fort Edwards" in 1860. Strong was the first settler here to make improvements in a permanent character. He used the first lumber turned out at his sawmill to build a house for his family, it being the first frame house in the county and the second of any description in Grand Rapids.

The first house here is said to have been a small log structure erected by H. McClellan, cook for the men employed at the Strong & Bloomer mill.

From this humble start, a decade before the territory of Wisconsin achieved statehood, Grand Rapids grew slowly at first but steadily, as new settlers moved in, imbued with the frontier spirit and attracted by the opportunities offered by the burgeoning timber operations. Some of them were adventurers, who remained only a short time and then moved on. But many were stable industrious folk, anxious to establish permanent homes and businesses and contribute their part to building the infant community.

A. B. Sampson, who had been superintendent of the sawmill at White's Rapids, moved to Grand Rapids with his family in 1846. Three years later he purchased a hotel, which had been erected by Nelson Strong, and operated it as the first hotel in the county.

Mrs. Sampson was one of the most energetic and fearless women of the early settlement days. It is told that on one occasion, after she had served three of Chief Oshkosh's Indian band with food, one of them acted in so insolent a manner that she reproved him, whereupon he threatened her with his gun. Seiz-

ing a stick of wood, Mrs. Sampson belabored the Indian so vigorously that he lost his courage and fled, leaving his gun behind.

In 1855 Centralia had but one general store, a small wooden structure where the Nash Block now stands. Another small wooden building, housing a tavern operated by a Grand Rapids sawmill operator, Louis Meunier, stood on ground later occupied by the Commercial Hotel, which was torn down a year ago.

Two sawmills and a grist mill were located on property which now is included in the Consolidated parcel. At that time only one small pond of mail each week, delivered by stage coach.

Lemuel Kroner, one of the companions comprised most of Centralia's early families and In-

Dr. Witter served for six years, 1863-69, as county superintendent of schools, while J. D. Witter captained a highly successful banking career by becoming one of the prime movers in establishing Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co., around the turn of the century.

Mrs. Clarice Corey Arpin, who came to Grand Rapids about the time of her marriage to John Baptiste Arpin in 1859, described it as being "a rough lumbering town, filled with lumberjacks who engaged in many drunken brawls, and Indians who, when they had an oversupply of firewater, yelled and danced in the middle of the streets."

At one time a band of more than a thousand Indians passed the Arpin home (on what is now Drake St.), journeying south. Mrs. Arpin recalled that it took this host of rednecks nearly two hours to pass. With the outbreak of the Civil War, the growth of Grand Rapids and Centralia was temporarily

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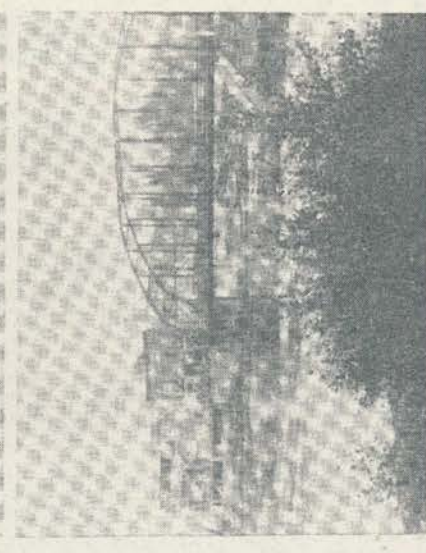
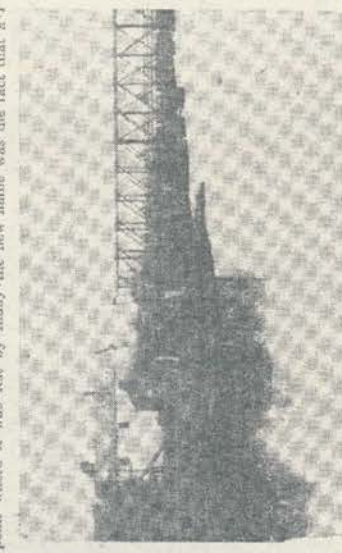
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UNTAMED RIVER—While the Wisconsin River brought destruction and death during its early ramblings, before it was harnessed by power dams and reservoirs, it was a wild and magnificent site. Above is a typical scene at the turn of the century, taken from the Centralia side of the river, looking north toward the Green Bay & Western bridge.



EARLY BRIDGES—First bridge across the Wisconsin River to link the city and Centralia is shown in the top photo as it appeared shortly after its construction. The bridge was built by a private company, its original cost is not known. Taken in April, 1888, a huge ice jam ripped the bridge apart. A ferry was used following year when the steel truss span shown in the lower picture was built. This bridge served until 1922, when the present Grand Avenue bridge was built. Wisconsin Rapids became a two-bridge city when the new Jackson str

Tri-Cities Look Back Upon Music

Musical Group Existed in '60s

Area Enlivened by Bands, Orchestras

WISCONSIN RAPIDS—Music in many forms has harmoniously threaded through the history of the Tri-Cities during the past century, and as music always does, it has reflected the life, hopes, joys and disappointments of each succeeding generation.

When Wood county came into official being, the chants of the Indians were still prevalent. Through such music, they dedicated their hopes for good crops, for rain and food, and prayers for those of their number whose life on earth had ended.

Lumbermen sang as they propelled their log rafts down the Wisconsin River. Some of these songs were nostalgic, others a little too salty for literal translation, but they represented a significant phase of this area's early history.

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For these were rough times and often tragic ones when communities of this area were being hewn from the wilderness. Timber provided a back-breaking livelihood.

Singing broke the monotony of days away from home and eased the tension of ever present dangers — the hidden rocks and swift rapids that dotted the watery route of the rafts.

As small settlements took root at the river's edge, family music became an important facet of everyday life. From the oldest to the toddler, all joined in hymn singing at the close of each day.

When communities became settled enough to permit social activity, singing was a popular pastime. Harmonizing was rich and plentiful at parties and instrumen-

talists were much in demand.

The music represented contributions of several nationalities for many divergent groups were among the area's early pioneers. French, German, Swiss, Polish and Scandinavian music was prevalent and formed a basis for a cosmopolitan blend of song as the years went on.

It was in 1870 that the Wood County Reporter carried a story quoting a Professor Balcomb concerning music in the area. He reported a total of 15 piano-fortes, 13 melodeons and 11 organs in Grand Rapids and Centralia. While he did not list other instruments, there were many.

Reminiscences recorded by early settlers make reference to what was thought to be one of the earli-

est musical groups in the community — an organization that played for dances in the late 1860's. Musicians in this group included Seth Spafford, M. L. Bensley, R. F. Worthington, Louis Livernash, Reuben Lyon Sr., and Professor Balcomb, the latter a Centralia music teacher.

The group played at Worthington's Hall. There is no indication whether these were public or private dances, but it is probably accurate to assume that the hall was rented for private parties . . . since decorum, at least for ladies, was a social "must." Public dances would be slightly incongruous to this rule.

"Lyon" was a familiar family name in the musical history of the Centralia and Grand Rapids communities. This family organized a band in about 1870. Playing in it were Reuben Lyon Sr., clarinetist; Russell Lyon, bass drum; Clark Lyon, tuba; Theron Lyon, trombone; Reuben Lyon Jr., alto. J. T. Houston, a relative of the Lyons, Sam Bensley and Billy Bremer also played with the band that performed for special public events.

When the band entertained for family gatherings, two of the Lyon girls, Esther (Mrs. Hooper) and Henrietta (Mrs. J. W. Natwick), played with the group. Both played piano and organ.

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It was not considered proper for ladies to participate in such public gatherings so the two girls were not on the bandstand when the platform was first used during a Fourth of July celebration.

ciety. Later in the day, the Centralia cornet band entertained the crowd at a concert.

The Odd Fellows Lodge made a specific contribution to this area's musical history. Its band, organized in 1876, gained considerable local fame. So well established in the loyalties of the townspeople was this group that the City Council was approached on the subject of hiring a leader.

This was done — apparently without debate or referendum — and a Mr. Riggs took over as band leader. In his spare time, he looked after the city's fire fighting equipment.

The Odd Fellows band went to the GAR encampment in Milwaukee in 1880 and the following year won first place at Baraboo in competition with bands from all over the state. It also represented Grand Rapids at a reception tendered President Grant in Milwaukee.

Included in the personnel of this band were Frank Morrill, Ed Fritzinger, Dean Philleo, Russell Lyon, Walter Wood, Rudolph Muehlstein, J. Houston, Mr. Schultz, August Banlein, Theron Lyon, John Schnabel Sr., Steve Demarais, Sam Parker and Albert Fontaine.

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Another band listed in the records of about 1883 was the McKinnon Hub and Spoke Factory band made up entirely of factory employees. This existed only about two years.

Prominent in this era, too, were the "Saengerfests," held by the German people. Groups from the



FIRST HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA—The first high school orchestra in the Grand Rapids community was formed in 1902, the year the original Lincoln High School was built. Members of the orchestra, left to right, were (standing) Wilbur McCarthy, Carl Fritzsinger, Director E. A. Lambert and Kirk Muir; (second row) Selmer Chase, William Muehlstein, Frank Natwick and Hugh Goggins; (seated on floor) Fred Ebert and William T. Nobles.



More Than a Century of Music

with the organization between 1890 and 1895 when it was known as the Twin City band were Russell and Reuben Lyon, Theodore Brazeau, Mr. Billmeyer, Frank Compton, Charles Parker, Dean Philleo, John Plenke, Fred Stamm, Ed Morrill, John Schnabel Jr., Carl Banderlin, Charles Bender, Carson Burt and George Houston.

One of the stories from this decade, presumably recorded by reliable witnesses, concerned the innocent ingenuity of three band members and their trip home.

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The communities of Grand Rapids and Centralia were served for a time by two ferry boats after the bridge had been washed out by high water.

The three musicians, emerging from the rehearsal hall at about midnight, would untie the ropes on one of the boats and "borrow" transportation home. Crossings were made in pitch darkness with the hope that the currents would take them to the proper landing spot on the west side.

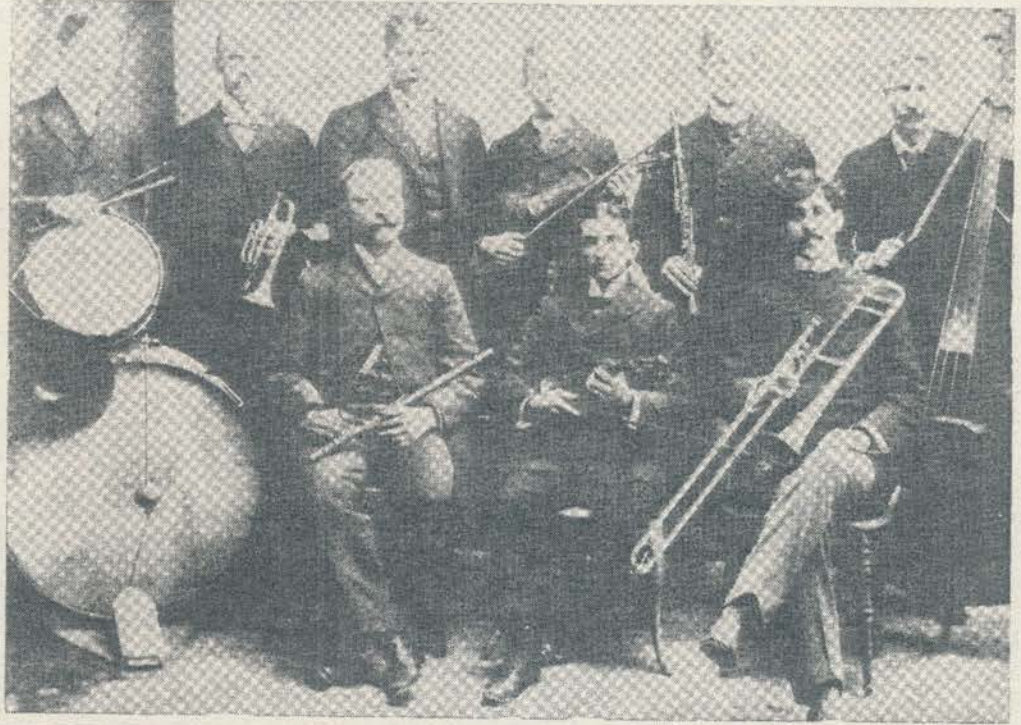
It was not reported how east side residents felt on mornings after such forays when they noted their transportation on the other side of the river.

Later, when a new bridge was constructed, the band played summer concerts from the bandstand erected on the center pier extension.

In this decade before the turn of the century, there was a great deal of music. In addition to the band, there were orchestras such as the Colcord and Steib groups.

Instrumental and vocal music still reigned within the home but a remote ancestor of today's hi-fi recordings — the phonograph — was causing a good deal of excitement within the family circle.

There was music in Nekoosa, too,



MONARCH ORCHESTRA—One of the most popular musical groups in the Tri-Cities area around the turn of the century was the Monarch orchestra. Its membership included, left to right, (back row) Irv Schultz, Rudolph Muehlstein, Ellis Kroner, Jim Hamilton, George Houston and Godfrey Sowatski; (seated) Anton Hirzy, Louis LaBrecche and E. A. Lambert.

Grand Rapids band was revived in 1902. During the period immediately preceding the reorganization, it played only on special occasions and under a number of directors.

Lambert directed this group until 1905 when he went to direct the band in Rushford, Minn.

It was also Lambert who was responsible for organizing the first high school orchestra in the community, this group being formed in 1902 at the Lowell High School. Lambert offered his services for nothing to this infant musical group.

The well known director returned

crease, bands, orchestras and vocal groups each making individual contributions.

Some of the orchestras during that time were the Pattison group, Monarch orchestra, Ball Room Boys, Halverson and Chose orchestra and others.

It was a "dancin'" period.

The Big Four orchestra was widely known and it was one of the first to take up "ragtime" which was introduced during this period. In this group were Louis Peyruse, Louis LaBrecche, Joe Robinson and Dan Ellis.

A mecca for musical events, in

ized at Port Edwards in 1906 and in 1907 the village board voted a sum of \$25 per month to finance the band in return for concerts. Later, a bandstand was built at the corner of First and Market Sts.

During the period between 1912 and 1915 when the Grand Rapids band was not formally organized, Dan Ellis took charge of the White City band. They played weekly concerts in Grand Rapids, Port Edwards and Nekoosa.

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Between 1917 and 1919, a total of 21 members from the local band entered military service. The organization, however, still had enough personnel to provide a musical farewell for the men going into the armed forces. The band again was on hand at the railroad station to musically welcome those who came home from the battles of World War I.

A significant event in the history of music here was the formation of Local 610, American Federation of Musicians, which received its charter in 1919. For those who have never had any connection with professional music, it may be difficult to understand why such an organization was necessary.

Playing a musical instrument in a band or orchestra, while it is enjoyable to the listener or to the dancer, can be a tedious and physically telling job for it represents steady effort for several hours at a stretch.

In earlier days, bands and other musical units could almost literally be hired for a song and as a result



Drum and Bugle Corps Excelled

Vocal Music Also Draws Adherents

(Continued from page 22)

ed over to the Lambert family. One sizable organization making its first appearance in 1919 was the Consolidated band. Composed of employees from the Wisconsin Rapids and Biron Divisions of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co., this band played concerts here and at Biron on alternate weeks. It was directed by Dan Ellis and E. A. Lambert.

Among its members were Emanuel Lyons, C. E. Jackson, George Leverance, Fred Eberhardt, Harold Saeger, Herman Kistow Sr., Leo Barrette, Ed Green, Ernest Kroll, Alfred Buchholz, Irving Kabiske, Lloyd Barton, Charles Parker, Earl Akey, Roy Carlson, William Kiehl, Henry Kroll, Martin Lipke, Clark Gaffney, John Kreinke, George Ellis, Earl F. Otto, Bill Peterson, Clifford Crottean, Ed Gilbertson, Art Wittenberg, Albert Herman, Ed Morrill, Charles Halverson and others.

The Consolidated band which was discontinued in the early 20s has special significance in the musical picture of this area, for it was perhaps the last organization of its type with the exception of the city band.

Up to this time, there had been numerous organizations providing an outlet for adult musical talent. But the days of large musical groups was passing and the Consolidated band represented the last in this line.

There was no dearth of smaller musical units, however, and these groups continued to provide entertainment at dances, parties and civic gatherings.

Some of these groups between 1920 and 1930 were the Peacock band, Poryand, Beppier, Hansmann and Red Devils orchestras.

In the early 20's another mechanical device appeared on the scene and while it provided new and novel entertainment, it undoubtedly contributed to the further de-emphasis of family music as a hobby. This was the radio, and local residents along with the rest of the country were quick to fall for its charms.

The first high school band was organized in Wisconsin Rapids in the year 1932. It marked the beginning of another phase of music

speaking. Through some of its programs, interest in good music has been revived and made more accessible to the average person. On the debit side, it has offered almost insurmountable competition to live local musical entertainment. Home talent shows and high school concerts have felt the sting of this competition at the box offices.

The family circle has deserted the piano and takes its music spectator-wise before the television set. But past history has proven that extremes wrought by new inventions — the phonograph, the crystal set, the juke box — have a way of finally settling into a sensible niche in the scheme of living.

There will be music during the second century in Wood county — in what new forms no one can yet contemplate. But it is safe to predict that as long as people are happy, sad, exalted or discouraged, a song will rise above the noise of machines.

Wayne

YOU

DEALER

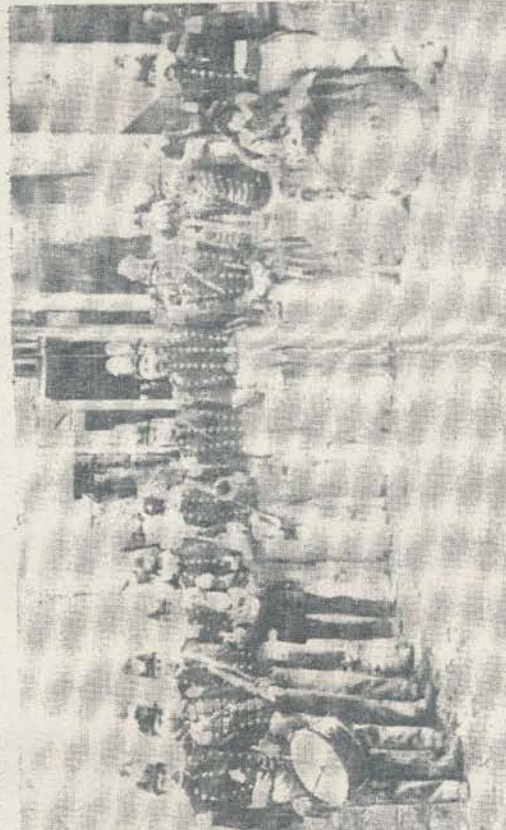
extends its congratulatory
the observance of the
progress.

207 W. 2nd St.



(See Centerfold)

MEMORIAL DAY IN THE '80s—Civil War veterans and townspeople, with a gaudy collection of small fry, posed for this picture during Memorial Day service in Grand Rapids, about 1883. Scene of the gathering in the area.



ODD FELLOWS BAND—The Odd Fellows band of Grand Rapids, a talented group of musicians for several years during the 1880's and represented its home community in several state competitions. Here is the band as it appeared in 1884. Members (left to right) included Frank Morrill, Hendon Lyon, Ed Fritzsinger, Dean Philco, Russell Lyon, Walter Wood, I. Rudolph Muehlstein, August Bandelin, Theron Lyon, John Schanbel Sr. and Steve Demarais. The girl is seated on the drum is a daughter of Demarais.

The latter organization has continued to provide entertainment both at lodge and civic gatherings. Sleeping onto the local scene for the first time in 1931 was the American Legion drum and bugle corps. In 1938 the corps won the state Legion championship and competed at the national convention in Philadelphia.

During this period in the local music story, a civic concert series was promoted for several years. It was to attract attention to the local music scene.

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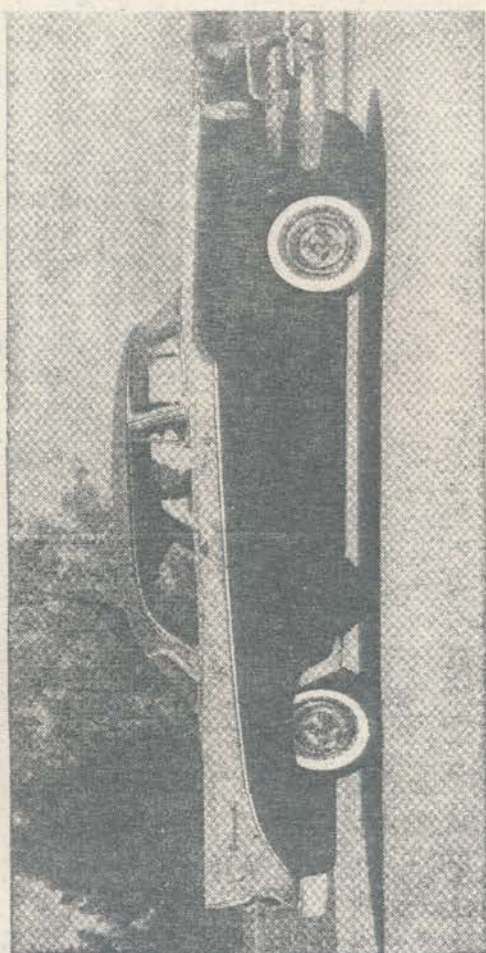
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GUARANTEED
USED CARS

Disbanded during the World War. The city was finally discontinued. The city has had a fair share of composers. Cleve Akey of this city, and continued to function under Legion auspices, placing high in state competition every year until 1935, when the corps severed its Legion affiliation and incorporated as an independent group. Interest in vocal music for men received a boost with the organization in the late 1940's of a local chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. Still active, this group has kept alive many of the



GRAND RAPIDS CITY BAND—This is the Grand Rapids city band as it appeared in 1962. The picture was taken on the steps of the G.A.R. Hall, now the Calvary Baptist Church. Members at the time were, left to right (back row), James Lucia, Herman Yantz, Dan Ellis, Howard Tichnor, Max Sowaski and Bob Bender; (second row) Egbert Bunge, Art Mulroy, Charles Halverson, Carl Fritzsinger, George Ellis and Ed Morrill; (front row) Fred Eberts, Gerald Fritzsinger, E. A. Lambert, Cleve Akey, Mike Slattery, Emil Leloff and Mike Duzel.

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Our sincere appreciation to all the many fine folks and establishments of Wood County — and outside of Wood County for the patronage in the past!



First Street North, 1899. Photo from *Wood County Centennial Edition* of the *Marshfield News Herald* and *Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune*, Aug. 5-11, 1956. The burning grist mill had been the Rablin & Robb foundry and machine shop, built 1869 near what is now east end of Consolidated dam. Also provided the cover for *River City Memoirs III*.



Oberbeck Bros. Furniture Co., Centralia, later Ahdawagam Division of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. Identified but not designated were E.A. Lambert and Otto Erdman, front row. Andrew King, second row. Ernest Oberbeck and Carl Anthofer, third row. The photo was believed taken shortly after the company's 1891 establishment.





Happy Thoughts from Richard Bender

Received via email from Rick Bender (a Wisconsin Rapids attorney):

I occasionally check Ebay for Grand Rapids-Wisconsin Rapids items. This particular image (it was a post card) had only a pencil-written note on the back that said "Neva's Sunday School Class-Wis. Rapids," which was fortuitous because it would never have come back to Wisconsin Rapids without those six words on the back. The notation was obviously not made at the time the photo was taken, since the photo must be pre-1920 and Wisconsin Rapids did not come to be until 1920.

In any event, the image of these ten teenage girls and their school marm so engaged me that I know I put a big bid on it but ended up getting it for less than \$15.

I couldn't believe that the usual collectors of Grand Rapids memorabilia did not share my enchantment (my luck) and see the irresistibly nostalgic charm of this group of Grand Rapids debutantes in their Sunday best holding what is seemingly a message that transcends the age of innocence in which it was taken. Looking at the present day teenagers holding up the same bannered message, it seems almost a farce.

I set out to see if I could find out who these girls were and what became of them. I showed the photograph to Nick Brazeau and he immediately identified Dorothy Normington Teas as the girl sitting down behind the word "circle," remarking that she looked very much like the girl in the photo, even when she was in her seventies! A search at the museum of old Ahdawagam yearbooks disclosed a graduate by the name of Neva Pearl Leach. How many "Nevas" can there be? When I showed the picture to John Billings, he said Neva Leach was the girl sitting in the middle of the front row. He said she was married to a relative of his wife's.

I Googled her name and she showed up in Clark county records with an article about her June 16, 1920, wedding to Mr. Leslie W. Yorkston. It stated she was a graduate of Grand Rapids High School and was the daughter of Adolph Leach of GR and the sister of Frances Leach. She worked as a

"clerical employee in the Register of Deeds office in Neillsville until overtaken by appendicitis there last winter and through this illness, obliged to give up work." The groom from Neillsville worked at the Farmers St. Bank.

I'm afraid that the other girls have escaped identification in the 21st century despite my tapping some of the oldest minds still working (Don Farrish, John Billings, Mrs. Chadwick, Lenore Schnabel and others at Renaissance Assisted Living.)

My guess on the site of the picture, given it was a church group and that church was a stone church, is the old Congregational Church on 2nd Street, which was built in 1911.

I am especially intrigued by the brunette (2nd from left in back row) with the gingham dress that seems so distinctive from the rest of the dresses. She seems the rebel of the bunch with the "choker" necklace and bracelet worn gypsy-like up her arm. In a gesture to early slow shutter cameras, the girl (far left, front row) moved during exposure and is further disguised from identification. Oh how disappointed she must have been when she found herself obscured.

In an effort to bridge the nearly 100 years since these girls gathered and today, I thought of recreating the scene at my daughter's 8th grade graduation from Assumption Middle School. I enlisted 10 of her classmates and they were enthusiastic about filling the roles of 21st century "happy thinkers."

The banner itself was a challenge since the letters get progressively smaller from left to right. I had a transparency made which I then projected on the wall with an overhead and made stencils of the letters and cut felt letters out for the actual banner. Blue turned out to be a good choice for a color that would match the black and white version in tone.

It is my hope to take this same group again at their high school graduation and encourage them to gather in future years for updates of their "Happy Thought Circle." I think it might be interesting to do an article with the old and modern photos side-by-side showing not only change but also the way teenage girls are still just teenage girls.



The girls below, members of the 2005 graduating class of Assumption Middle School and presently freshman at Assumption High are: Front row, left to right: Emily Bender, Kelsey Peterson, Rebekah Elsen, Erica Skerven, Mary Parmeter. Back row left to right: Kelsey Joosten, Morgan Hartness, Megan Moss, Claire Hieger, Olivia Freundl and Jada Straub. The picture was taken at Assumption on Graduation Day.

Rick Bender



Replies

Regarding previous issues

Earle Garber sends the following from his sister, Barbara Garber Essock, who retired from the Madison, Wis., school system:

Thank you so much for the booklet of writings [*Artifacts*]. I loved the picture of the old Howe School. It brought back memories (some not very pleasant) of my years kindergarten to fifth grade. I learned to say my r's by looking at a rabbit holding a carrot! I can still see that card. I was so proud when I could say Earle! In 5th grade, I remember a piece of plaster falling on my head from those tall ceilings. Miss Bradford sitting on the piano stool. Miss Wilcox and her shaky head (always appeared angry to a child). Miss McFarland with her huge red hairdo in a pompadour. I hated all my teachers!

"Jane Berg Kruger"

Several readers, including the subject herself, informed us that the photo on November's page 18 showed "Jean," Berg, the daughter of Wood County sheriff, Art Berg, not "Jane." Her married name had been Kruger; it is now Schlensz and she writes from Florida.



From Dennis D. Conway

In the picture of Don Unferth (November page 11), the two



women to his right are Fawn O'Gara and Gladys Laramie.

From Dolores Jensen

In the November centerfold, p. 16 - Velma Kukanis with scarf upper left. Near post, with scarf wearing glasses, Gwen Gabler, who married Ervin Tomczyk. Behind her is Gladys Gaber (Wilson).



From LuVerne Heger Conway, Sarasota Florida

My sister Yvonne Tomsyck sent me the May '05 issue of *Artifacts*, which I enjoyed very much. I used to play in the "Bean Factory" when my mother worked there in the summer, and I worked for C.E. Jackson after I graduated from Lincoln High.

I don't know who six of the guys are on p. 16 but I can tell you who the one in the middle is, with the cigar. He's Wilbur Berard, always called Web. My family knew him well because his daughter Charlotte married my brother Rogers Heger in June of 1936. Web was a policeman in the '30s.



From left: Web Berard, Ben Heger with grandchild, Mrs. Berard, Mrs. Ben Heger, Charlotte Berard-Heger with another of "my" children picnic at Wazeecha in summer of 1944. From LuVerne Heger Conway

From Rita Janz

The woman in the center of the cranberry pie baking photo on page 15 is Mrs. Andrew Krause. Also from November, page 8, on left is Bill Heilman Jr. of Heilman Ready to Wear clothing store.

On the baseball photo, p. 5, in the back row, second from left, Pete Sakolosky, who owned Fritz and Pete's with Fritz Third from Eastling; left, Art owned Rapids de-enth may be Jake Chadwick. Seated, with white hat, "Feeney" Fahrner.



Pool Hall Hribernek. left, Earl fifth from Plahmer, who Wisconsin livery, sev-

From Dave Hell

Paging through the November 2005 *Artifacts*, I identified one of the baseball players in the top photo on page 5. The 2nd gentleman from the left in the back row is Pete Sakolosky. The order of the names in the caption are out of order. Pete worked at the Water & Light Department for many years and I believe at one time he also operated a pool hall in Wis Rapids.

He took up golf at the age of 39 and won the Club Championship at Bull's Eye several times. He was known as Pipeline Pete because he hit the ball so straight. He was one of the nicest guys you would ever meet. Some of the older Bulls Eye members would remember him quite well.

I think the gentleman on Page 8 handing out the certificate is Bill Heilman, Bill Heilman Jr.'s dad.



Sunset Tavern

From Artifacts Editor:

It was a coincidence when *Artifacts* published an unidentified photo from Glen Zieher, Wisconsin Rapids, formerly of Arpin, and the first person I showed it to, recognized it. That was Don Litzer, then of McMillan Memorial Library, Wisconsin Rapids.

The February 2005 issue photo showed the Sunrise Tavern, which Litzer placed in the town of Hewitt, Marathon County, Wis. The event was the wedding of his great aunt, Mabel Seymour, to Edward Beck, Sept. 30, 1914.

Remaining was the question of how Glen Zieher happened to possess the photo. Litzer, now a genealogical librarian in Fort Wayne, Indiana, proposes an answer.

"I was just conversing this evening with Maralee (Beck) Shanak of rural Wausau, Wis., a niece of Ed and Mabel Beck and my mom's first

cousin. I mentioned the photo, and of course, she knew why someone in Vesper might have a photo of a northeastern Marathon County nuptial.

It likely had to do with Ed Beck's occupation in the dairy industry. He was a butter maker. Maralee remembered that her uncle Ed's first job in that capacity was in Vesper, before later working at Kleinheinz Dairy in Wausau until it was bought out, then finally for Steuber Dairy in Wausau, where he retired.

Perhaps he had friends in Vesper—perhaps some of those invited to the wedding?

Maralee didn't remember whether her Uncle Ed and Aunt Mabel lived in Vesper or if he just worked there. She did, however, vividly remember a story of the two of them traveling to Vesper on a motorbike. Aunt Mabel, who had a short temper to start with, was relieved of her seat when the motorbike hit a bump and Uncle Ed didn't notice her absence for a while. After retrieving Mabel, Ed was grateful for the noisiness of his machine, which ameliorated Mabel's boisterous expression of her displeasure at the unplanned displacement.



From Glen Zieher

My brother Harry, Dave Woodruff, and Don Tesser, all remember being familiar with the name, Beck [in Vesper]. Dave Woodruff told me that there was a butter factory right behind his business that still exists. Therefore I have one more fact in my large skull. Thank the lord that he gave me an oversized head.

Old Stuff New Exhibit

150 years ago, Wood County was formed out of Portage County as settlement of Wisconsin Territory proceeded northward.

100 years later, Wood County celebrated its Centennial, providing much of the material for this issue of *Artifacts*.

50 years ago, the South Wood County Historical Corp. enjoyed its first year. Organized in late 1955 and meeting in 1956, it did not yet have access to a museum so its archives were held in diverse locations around town. The early society was an enthusiastic and active group, providing numerous public events and gathering many of the historical materials that provide the background for what we know and enjoy today.

In order to commemorate these events, a new exhibit has been developed at the Museum, 540 Third Street South.

The first stage will depict the East Side of downtown Wisconsin Rapids. Now anchored on the south by the Wood County National Bank building, the Wood Block and Rogers Cinema (Rapids Theatre), and on the north by the "Bermuda Triangle," this was once a center of commercial activity.

Also included will be a temporary display of historic photographs representing the entire county on loan from Marshfield Historic Preservation Association.

The site of the new displays was for some years devoted to interpreting a collection of historic surveying equipment.

When the building, former residence of the Isaac Witter family, was donated to the city in 1948, this room, complete with fireplace, became part of the adult area of T.B. Scott Public Library and so it was known by a generation or two of Rapids readers.



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

Artifacts is a publication of the South Wood County Historical Corp. To join and receive four issues per year, send \$15 to SWCHC, 540 Third Street South, Wisconsin Rapids WI 54494.

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