HARBORING JEWS

Netherlands Christians risked home for others

As a child, Bernie Zylstra knew that at any time, his father and mother could be dragged from their home and shot to death.

Zylstra, formerly of Nekoosa, was born April 6, 1935, in Friesland, the Netherlands. During the German occupation, the Zylstras, to fulfill what they saw as an obligation of their Christian beliefs, harbored Jews in their small farmhouse.

Following several lesser visitations, two sets of Jewish couples came to the farm for what was to be two weeks. They stayed two-and-a-half years.

"On day one, the Jews wouldn't pray," Zylstra said. "Dad couldn't handle that and made a rule, 'When you're in our home, you do as we do.' They said they couldn't pray unless they had their heads covered. Dad said, 'Well, cover them,' and they did."

In the small farmhouse, lived Bernie's parents, Herman and Wilma Zylstra, their seven children, a grandmother and the four Jews.

The population was lessened when two Zylstra brothers were sent to work on German farms. A third brother was ordered into the German army but escaped and returned home. He was also hidden on the farm, for six months, although young Bernie was not aware of his presence.

In normal conditions, most of the residents, family and Jews alike, slept in the one-room second floor which had been partitioned wall-to-wall with sheets hung from the ceiling.

The years of close confinement caused considerable stress. For one stretch, the Jews stayed in a hiding place under the haymow without seeing daylight for 14 days.

The four spent a lot of time in the barn loft, said Zylstra, playing cards and trying to amuse themselves. They also peeled large numbers of potatoes. "We had potatoes breakfast, dinner and supper," he said.

"We could plant potatoes, whereas bread we would have to purchase. From that, the bakery man would know you had extra people."

Zylstra said the older man, a photographer, often would taunt the younger, a scientist. Bernie's father had to separate the two "time and again when they were peeling potatoes, and they were going with knives at each other.

"We kept them busy polishing shoes to prepare for the Lord's day," said Zylstra. "All the children had shiny shoes."

As schoolchildren, Bernie and friends admired the way the occupying Germans marched past the school in time to music and singing.

"It was beautiful. We would get out of the classroom and walk down to the fence to watch them go."

The Germans posed a consistent threat. Toward the end of the war, two hungry German soldiers came to the front door as the Jews were in the kitchen, drinking coffee.

Zylstra's father and brother were armed and ready to "take care of any emergency," but his mother placed herself in the doorway, and "there wasn't a German who was going to get by her," he said.

At another time, Germans searched the house. With rifles, they shot through a stack of peat fuel in the attic without finding anyone.

When an English plane crashed, the Zylstras were first on the scene. The pilot had escaped, and Bernie's dad retrieved confidential papers from the wreck.

That night, German soldiers came to the house. After a futile search, one soldier stayed behind and said in fluent Friesian, "We are the underground. We know you have the papers."

"Dad said he did not have the papers," Zylstra related. "He did not trust them."

As the Germans faced invasion by the Allies, they began to flood the occupied Netherlands to make attack difficult. In the process, water reached the corner of the Zylstra homestead. The high water made the already remote house more inaccessible and German inspection less likely.

Combat nearby became a common occurrence as Dutch cities were bombed and Allied troops, many in tanks, cleared out the remaining Germans, who often holed up in strategically located farmhouses.

When a messenger said the Netherlands had been liberated, the four Jews wanted to leave immediately, Zylstra said. But there still seemed to be a war going on.

At 10 a.m., two German bicyclists were doing battle from foxholes and canals with seven Canadian tanks. By late afternoon, the fighting quieted, and the Jews no longer could be contained. "They whooped and hollered all over town," Zylstra said.

In 1952, Zylstra and his family immigrated to the United States.

Reviewing the effect of his childhood experiences, Zylstra said, "War puts a fear in you and a respect in you that is unlike anything else that you've experienced.

"When your parents said, 'Silence about this,' that is what they meant. Silence was silence. If somebody asked you, you told them a lie."

He still has dreams, Zylstra said.

"Nazis or police are always after me. I am constantly on the run. It has been with me since the war. That fear, you just don't get rid of it."

December 7, 1941

Where were you on that fateful day?

PEARL HARBOR

In January 1992, a United Methodist breakfast group recalled what they had been doing December 7, 1941.

Gina Walters: It was a Sunday evening and we (Harris and I) were listening to a radio program (Jack Benny) with our family when an announcement was made that Pearl Harbor was bombed by Japan. This was in Wausau.

Kathryn Green: I was in Neenah visiting my grandparents. The women were doing dishes in the kitchen. My grandfather was listening to the radio in the bedroom. He called out in a shocked voice with the news.

Phyllis Ritchie; I was at home in Vesper with my family. W.W. Clark was my father. We were listening to the radio when the news came on. We did not believe it at first. John was in the service and my first thought was that his leave would be cancelled.

Monday I was to return to my job as a rural school teacher. I had five brothers and a brother-in-law who were all in the age range where they might be called.

My brother Bill went into the Air Force, Bob went into the Navy. Jack went into service in the maintenance branch. My brother Max and my brother-in-law were ready to go when a ruling was made that fathers did not have to go. Each of them had one child. My youngest brother was too young. He later entered the Air Force and was in the Vietnam War.

John C. Ritchie: Sitting in the Army barracks in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, singing "I'll be back in a Year Little Darling" (My year was almost up). I decided to go to town (after chow) but found a mouse had chewed a hole in the back of my civilian suit which I figured I'd wear for one last time.

Sally Engel: Don and I were with another couple, friends of ours, planning their wedding, which was to be on December 18 of the same year. On the way home from our home town, Seymour, to Neenah, where I was employed, we heard about it on the late afternoon radio news. Needless to say, not much was accomplished at the office where I worked the next day. Also the fellows were concerned about either enlisting or being drafted.

Iola Cox: Just a routine Sunday: church in a.m. (where I was organist). Family day, until evening when we turned on our radio and heard the dreadful news. I was a senior in high school at the time. I was with my parents at Park Falls, Wisconsin.

The event I remember the most is the Declaration of War the next morning. In school, in German class, we listened to President Roosevelt declare war on the Japanese.

Percival Cox: I was at home in Calumet, Michigan, studying for Monday at Michigan Tech at Houghton, where I was a sophomore. I heard about it around 1:30 p.m. or 2 p.m. and we kept the radio on most of the rest of the day and evening.

LaVerne Anderson: It was a Sunday morning and I was lying on the floor in the living room reading the Sunday funny papers. The radio was on, as it usually was, to hear the war news. It was quite a surprise announcement. I was 15 years old at the time.

Nila Anunson: It was Sunday afternoon. I was with the Arv. Frestedt family in Minneapolis. News came over the radio.

Didn't want to believe it. Must be a mistake. Angry. How could this happen? I was working at Donaldson Department Store.

Alice Otto: I was living in Chicago. My neighbor and I went into the Loop. Just to see what reaction people had. My husband and his three brothers later were engaged in the war.

Harvey Fidler: Was to a movie. It flashed on the screen about 7 p.m. Gas was 18 cents a gallon or six for a dollar. Was with my wife. We were single then. Everyone was very serious. The people were very much behind the effort in the Rapids. They had collection places for aluminum.

I then served in the Army Corps of Engineers.

Gordon Harmon: I was 10 years old. My brother and I were playing in the snow. When we got home my parents said we were in the war because Pearl Harbor had been bombed by the Japanese.

Warren Rhynas: A friend, whose birthday was December 7, and I, were calling on a friend who was sick. We were at her house when we heard the news.

We were 18 at the time and on the trip home from her house we talked about which service we would get into and decided, the Navy. We both joined and were there in the Navy (Okinawa) till the war ended.

Paul Fleming: Having entered the U.S. Air Corps on a one-year enlistment in 1940, I was already in service—Scott Air Corps Base, Illinois, lying on my bunk when the news came.

That was the start of four more years in the Air Corps. Not married yet but courting Marcia Nelson whom I married after completing officers school in 1942.

Marge Urban: My aunt and uncle from Spencer were at our home in Pittsville for dinner. Bud and I were dating. He had come over and we'd gone in his '36 Chevy for a ride, listening to the car radio when we heard the news again.

I was teaching—my first year at Rocky Run School (rural, all eight grades) west of Pittsville.

Bertram Urban: I had stopped for gas and found we were at war. Went to Pittsville to see my girl friend (now my wife). Entered service September 1942 after having been rejected earlier in 1941.

Hazel Mayer: My husband-to-be, Frank Mayer, and I were riding, sightseeing around the Bancroft marsh area and listening to the radio. The news interrupted the music and our pleasant afternoon was ended.

Civic Secrets

Only after World War II ended in August 1945 could the exact nature of their activities be revealed. Like comrades all over America, yeoman papermakers, plastic men and seamstresses had been busy outfitting the war effort.

"We found out we could do the impossible," said Henry P. Baldwin, Consolidated's assistant director of manufacture. Early in the war, national defense authorities had placed other industries before the paper industry in the allocations of materials, causing shortages of raw materials, machines and replacement parts.

As the wartime bureaucracy inflated, paper, particularly for mimeographing, became more important, and by the end, was regarded as one of the most critical materials. In order to use less raw material and fuel, Consolidated made a lighter-weight coated book paper and increased the use of locally cut poplar.

Not generally known was the fact that the Consolidated machine shop ran three shifts for 14 months on a subcontract for a large builder, making mounts for guns and other combat equipment.

A plastics division was organized in 1942 and required an entirely new plant. Its product was Consoweld, a paper-based plastic used for gliders and aircraft cargo flooring.

With peace came an unprecedented demand for coated paper. Consolidated increased production by converting the recently acquired Wisconsin River Pulp and Paper Co. newsprint mill near Stevens Point and launching a $1 million expansion at Biron. The new projects would swell the Consolidated payroll to more than 2,600 people.

Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co. also experienced changes caused by the war, said John E. Alexander, president. With sulfite bond, printing, duplicating, ledger and high-grade wrapping papers pouring from its mills at Nekoosa and Port Edwards, the company found an average of 92 percent of its production ticketed directly for government agencies. Through its machine shop, "Nepco" also was a subcontractor for the Manitowoc Shipbuilding Co., making submarine parts.

Alexander said the company would continue to make same grades of pulp and paper as before the war. Under construction was a new bleach plant and water filtration plant at Nekoosa.

The entire output of the Ahdawagam Paper Products Co. was swallowed up by the war effort, according to Frank Walsh, president, who said shipments in 1940 totaled 11,000 tons but in 1944 zoomed to 17,000 tons.

The four main products were cardboard containers, corrugated containers, folded cartons and paper tubes. Boxes were used for dried milk, K-rations, ice cream mix, soap and walkie-talkie batteries. Ahdawagam also supplied corrugated material for packing radar equipment and paper tubes to protect the noses of large shells. A weatherproof, laminated "V" box was invented that could withstand beachhead environments.

The plant went into war with about 100 employees. The payroll soon rose to 150 on a two-shift basis. Walsh expected a steady postwar employment level of 160.

According to A.E. Bark, secretary, $10 million in government war contracts were completed by Prentiss Wabers Co. during the war without a single shipment being rejected by the armed forces.

Before the war, the company manufactured gas stoves, fuel oil circulating heaters, blow torches, lanterns, picnic lunch boxes and camp stoves.

The first war contract came in July 1942, for bombs, detonator fuses and field-kitchen fire-unit equipment, some made on special government-installed machines. The company subcontracted with Ahdawagam Paper Products Co. and the Central Electric Service Co. for the machinery of parts.

Along with war products, the company made kerosene stoves, trailer stoves and fuel oil heaters for a civilian market.

The war brought a 300 percent increase in employment—from 300 to 911. All employees had been fingerprinted and given courses on prevention of sabotage, and their character histories were taken.

More than 500 employees were expected to be retained for postwar production.

Superintendent Samuel W. Palay said Harvard Clothing produced more than 175,000 overcoats and blouses for the armed forces during the war.

Bolts of cloth were received from the government, cut into patterns and directed to one of many sewing machines, where women quickly sewed the pieces together.

Most Harvard employees were women, many of whom had husbands in the service.

Harvard had increased its payroll from 80 to 140 during the war and professed no plans to discharge any for some time. In fact, they expected to add one or two factories in Wisconsin Rapids at some later date.

More than $1 million worth of war contracts were filled by the Nekoosa Foundry and Machine Works Inc., said Ted Olson, vice president, including work for shipyards in Massachusetts, Manitowoc, Sturgeon Bay and Milwaukee.

Nekoosa had converted from making paper and pulp mill machinery to making parts for destroyer-escorts and submarines, parts for diesel engines, pumps and generators, and equipment used to make atomic bombs.

Employment increased from 60 to 110.

After the war, Nekoosa reverted to the manufacture of machinery for paper and pulp mills.

"Some of the equipment we made for the atomic bomb factories was very touchy," Olson explained to the *Tribune*. "A lot of the parts we made had to be precision-tooled as exacting as watch parts. We knew we were working on something secretive but had no idea that we were instrumental in making parts for factories making atomic bombs that were loosed on Japan and brought the war to a sudden end."

PRENTISS WABERS

"E"

IS FOR EXCELLENCE

"I don't care what people say just so they talk about me"

While waiting outside the old building at 1430 2nd Street North, Wes Snyder's musing took a turn. Inside the walls, he could hear pounding punch presses, humming screw machines, whining lathes, roaring lift trucks, clatter, ringing telephones, sounds of voices.

They were familiar noises in what was once the vibrant, renowned Prentiss Wabers manufacturing plant.

"Oct. 20, 1943—most of us old-timers who remain remember where we were," wrote Snyder, in a personal account. The *Daily Tribune* called the event that day "epochal."

"My thoughts drifted to a decorated stage in front of the old plant," said Snyder. "There were dignitaries, uniformed Army-Navy personnel, city officials, members of our own management. A huge crowd had gathered in front of this stage to witness the awarding of the prestigious Army-Navy 'E' Award."

The "E" was being presented to the Prentiss Wabers Products Co. plant and employees for outstanding achievement in the production of war material, the first such award conferred in this area and one received by only about 3 percent of such concerns. The presentation included an "E" flag to fly above the factory, commonly known as Preway, and an "E" pin for each employee.

A ceremony, open to the public, offered a band concert, remarks by Mayor William T. Nobles and the acceptance by Ralph S. Wiltrout, general manager of Preway.

The 1943 *Tribune* was precluded by wartime security from revealing the products of Prentiss Wabers.

At that time, according to Snyder, they were field-kitchen, gasoline-burning units; paratrooper stoves; oil space heaters; artillery shell burster parts; detonator parts and a host of repair parts.

In 1943, Prentiss Wabers had 700 employees. By war's end, thanks in part to the "E" award, there were 1,100 people working, on a three-shift, round-the-clock basis, said Snyder. "All of us worked long hours, all with either a relative or friend in uniform."

In his memory, Snyder said he could see one familiar character scurrying about trying his best to make things "just proper" for the receiving of the Army-Navy "E." Mike Woolf, vice president in charge of sales, was one of the most colorful individuals around.

"As he sleeps up at Forest Hill, a long ways from his native England," Snyder remarked, he had no fear of telling some "behind the scene" stories. Anyway, Woolf had maintained, "I don't care what people say, just so they talk about me."

Snyder described Woolf as "short in stature, balding, an easy smile, twinkle in his eye, cigar-chomping, a pleasant face, tireless."

Snyder said his first encounter with Woolf's antics happened soon after Snyder started at Preway as a youngster.

"I was seated at my work bench shortly after the start-up whistle blew following the noon lunch break. Suddenly, little Mike scurried past my work place shouting, 'Ooool, Ooool!' at the top of his lungs.

"What he was trying to say in his English-Cockney accent was 'Earl-Earl.' Earl was a foreman, the biggest man in the plant."

During the lunch break, a soap salesman had set up shop selling to the employees. When the whistle blew, he hadn't quite finished making change.

Rushing up to the bewildered salesman, Mike threatened to throw him out of the plant.

The salesman took his belongings outside the employee entrance and returned to Mike, who had obviously relished the first encounter.

"Now who did you say you were going to throw out of this place?"

That's when little Mike went looking for "Ooool."

Prior to World War II, said Snyder, Woolf traveled west, selling camping equipment to hardware dealers.

While demonstrating a gasoline camp stove, he set the dealer's place on fire and it burned to the ground.

Undaunted, after the dealer rebuilt his store, Woolf returned and sold the man Preway camp stoves.

Woolf's biggest selling job happened somewhere between Adams and Wyeville, on the Chicago-Milwaukee railroad.

He had boarded a sleeping car in Chicago at about 11 p.m., giving the porter instructions to wake him before the train reached Adams so he could catch Art Heger's bus service to Rapids.

The train stopped but the porter forgot to wake Woolf.

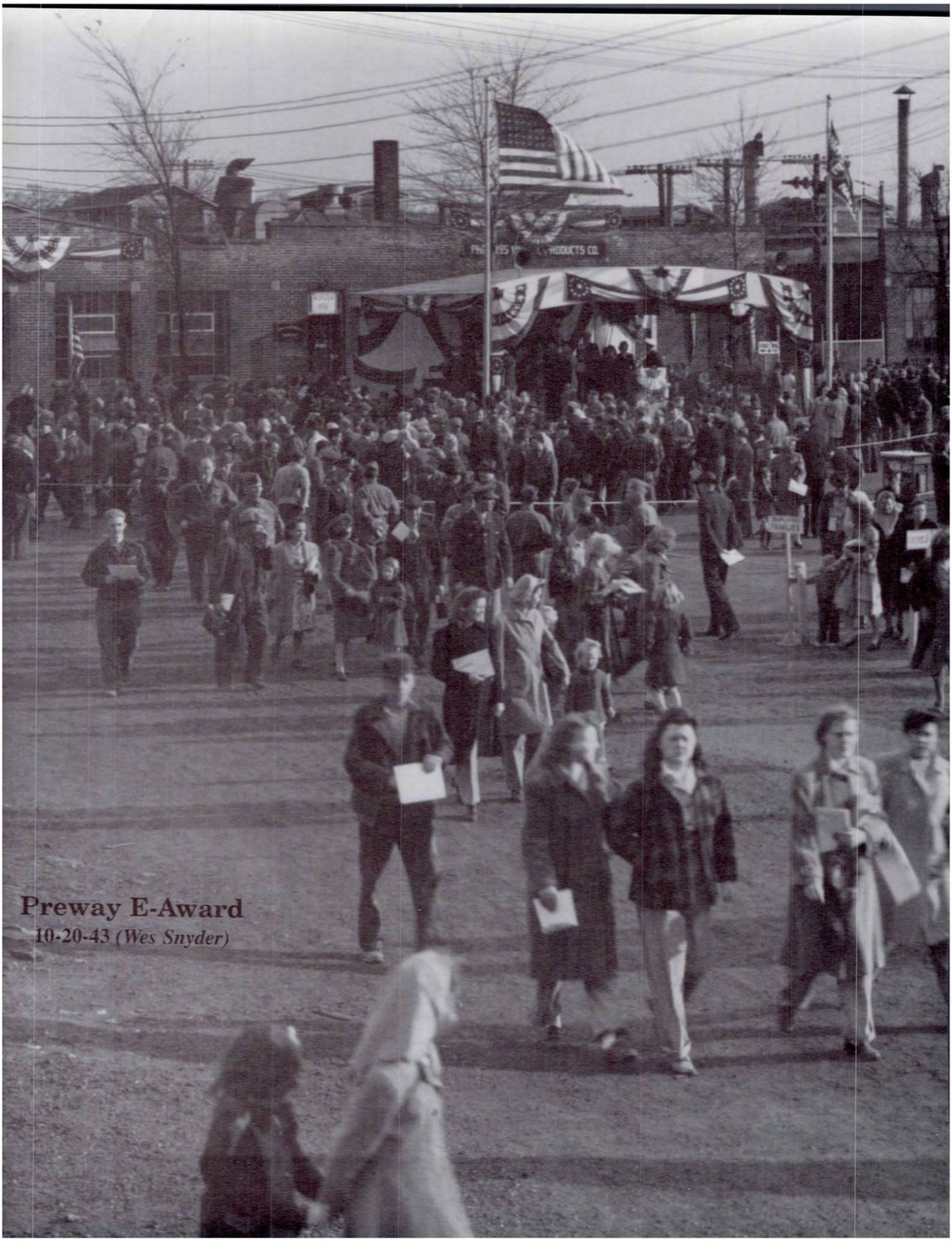
Somewhere between Adams and Wyeville, he awakened to see an unfamiliar landscape rushing by and pulled the emergency cord; the train came to a halt.

"Boiling, little Mike soon had everyone who had anything to do with the train's operation in front of him," recounted Snyder. "He demanded they take him back to Adams."

The train crew eventually wired its control office in Minneapolis for instructions.

Within minutes, they were told to back the train to Adams for "Mr. Woolf," a distance of 20-some miles.

He had accomplished a feat unheard of in the history of railroading.



Preway E-Award
10-20-43 *(Wes Snyder)*

VETERANS HOSPITAL

"Why not Rapids?" asked local boosters

In July 1940, it was apparent the United States was about to be drawn into war with Japan and Germany. Casualties could be expected.

No doubt with that in mind, a veterans hospital was proposed for a centrally located city in Wisconsin.

Why not Wisconsin Rapids?

To that end, a document had been prepared, entitled, "A Presentation from the Wisconsin Rapids Community to Brigadier General Ralph M. Immell, The Adjutant General, State of Wisconsin."

A copy of the "Presentation" was recently located by Linda White Sullivan and her sister, Diane White Staniforth, among the possessions of their late parents, Leo A. and Beatrice M. White.

The spiral-bound, well-illustrated document, signed by Donald J. Daly, W.J. Taylor and William F. Huffman, contains letters, sketches, maps and photographs, promoting a "magnificent site" to the state of Wisconsin and to the U.S. Veterans Administration.

Needed land would be given free to the state of Wisconsin by owners George W. Mead, Isaac P. Witter and the stockholders of the Consolidated Water Power Co.

Rapids Mayor W.T. Nobles said his city would annex the property in order to place it under police, fire and other protective services, and to extend water mains and city sewers. No commercial use of any lands on the river bank in that area would be allowed.

Consolidated President Stanton W. Mead pledged to provide power and light service at low rates.

D.G. Smart, manager of the Wood County Telephone Co., promised telephone service.

The village of Biron would cede Long Island to the city of Wisconsin Rapids and would cooperate in non-commercial zoning, as would the town of Rudolph.

Three adjacent parcels were offered: 305-acre Long Island in the village of Biron, 63.5-acre Hunters Island in the city of Wisconsin Rapids and the town of Rudolph, and a 107-acre strip on the Wisconsin River in the town of Rudolph.

The specific site, according to the presentation, "is a veritable natural garden spot.

"It lends itself to any treatment in any season, which human imagination can conjure up. It has been pronounced a landscape architect's paradise."

Bathing beaches, boat landings and building sites would all be readily available.

"The unusual character of the area is that it is a delightful rural district, unmarred by any commercialization, and, yet within a very short distance of a modern American city."

The entrance to the proposed development would be from Highway 34 on the Rudolph side.

Flooding would not pose a problem, said the report. The site never overflowed because water levels had been stabilized by various reservoirs and dams.

"Selling" the city of Wisconsin Rapids would be crucial to acceptance of the presentation. It had increased in population from 8,726 in 1930 to an expected 11,417 in 1940.

Rapids was described as a trading and distribution center with four railroad lines, two large motor trucking companies and a modern airport. Excellent railway transportation was provided via the Hiawatha and Northwestern road with connecting bus services to the famous "400" streamliner at Adams.

The Rapids area's chief industries manufactured paper, pulp, paper boxes, dairy and food products, clothing, paints and varnishes, stoves, oil heaters, and gasoline and oil pressure equipment.

Private home ownership was stated as 80 percent. Per capita wages per week were "4th place" in the state.

"The city is definitely high class and is outstanding in that respect in spite of being a basically industrial center.

"The city has no negro population whatever," touted the presentation. "The majority of the citizens are American born and there is virtually no illiteracy."

"Wisconsin Rapids is a beautiful city, being situated upon the Wisconsin River, which is an artery of tremendous value industrially and yet a definitely majestically beautiful stream."

All municipalities along the Wisconsin River were prevented by law from emptying sewers into the river. "Thus the entire watercourse will by June 1, 1941, be free of municipal pollution. With the pollution problem virtually solved the river will again abound in game fish and water fowl."

The presentation reported "normal" winter temperatures with a pleasant dry cold. Spring, summer and fall were considered ideal.

Much space was devoted to describing conservation projects in the area that might be used for work or recreation: three of the largest tree nurseries in the state; three Civilian Conservation Corps camps; and vast government lands in Adams, Wood, Juneau and Clark counties that could become "one of the world's greatest recreation areas."

"There is assurance that the whole community will welcome the selection of the site and will contribute in human values in every respect," concluded the presentation. "A constant hospitable attitude will always prevail in this friendly community."

CALIFORNIA

Wartime Garden of Eden

In 1943, when Dave Patrykus was seven, his dad, Edward, decided to move the family from Pepper Avenue to California, where Ed intended to try his hand at defense work.

With seven children, a dog and the family's belongings packed in a 1937 Buick and the house trailer it towed, the Patrykus bunch headed west.

"People who witnessed us thought, 'There goes another group of Okies to California,'" Dave said.

In order to travel, Ed Patrykus had to obtain ration stamps for gasoline, and tires were only available through the black market, when they could be found at all. In Oklahoma, the family came up one tire short and was stranded until an unlikely rescue by a man hauling a 1941 Chevrolet on a flatbed truck.

The driver jacked up the car and took a tire from it, offering, "Take it and use it, and here's a place you can get in touch with me and bring it back.

While Edward worked at a defense-parts factory, his wife, Frances was employed at the laundry of El Toro Marine base. Also nearby was a Navy blimp base and an Army Air Force base.

With all of the flying activity, Patrykus and his brothers learned to identify all of the airplanes.

Accidents in the vicinity were common. A plane crashed into the house where one of Patrykus' classmates lived and killed several family members.

From the school he attended, planes could be seen towing targets toward the ocean, six miles away. One day, dangerously heavy brass cartridges spilled from a plane's wing container and fell near the school.

At Christmas 1943, a young Marine from Bancroft visited, and Patrykus attempted unsuccessfully to get some war stories. "It was the first honest-to-God soldier we had met," he said.

On one occasion, the family was awakened in the middle of the night. Blimps dropping flares had made it seem like an attack was taking place.

Fearing Japanese attacks from ships and submarines, California cities employed blackouts. Barrage balloons along the coast were hooked to cables, and spotlights swept the sky, creating a combat-ready image.

At the same time, Patrykus' California experience was a brief sojourn in what seemed like a Garden of Eden.

With his father's job came an offer from "the boss" to live at a farmhouse in a ranch-like setting near Irvine. The climate was warm and sunny. Groves of walnuts and oranges surrounded the farm. Farther to the east rose spectacular mountain scenery. To the west was the Pacific Ocean. For a young boy who had never been exposed to any other culture, there was the novelty of neighbors of Mexican heritage to play with.

Unlike in Wood County, Patrykus rode a bus to school. Whenever it started raining during the rainy season, they'd call off school.

After a year and a half in California, the Patrykus family moved back to the 1200 block of Two Mile Avenue and enrolled the youngsters in Two Mile School

Several Two Mile Avenue neighbors were away serving in the military, and local factories, such as Preway and Consoweld, produced primarily war materials.

At school, "Whip the Japs" sentiment was strong. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited every day under the direction of teachers Leona Rucinski (later Reichert) and Dorothy Retzlaff. Savings bond and war stamp days were regular occurrences. On the school grounds was a crib for scrap metals.

Patrykus collected scrap at the old town of Grand Rapids dump. He remembers fondly a cache of zinc fruit-jar covers. One year yielded for the Patrykus brothers a profit of $30 from Garber's salvage yard.

Patrykus speculated that the scrap drives contributed to the scarcity of certain antique cars because "so many were hauled off to the scrap yard in a patriotic fervor to build into tanks or whatever was needed."

Also in demand were common milkweed pods, collected in the fall. "A couple farmers would provide a tractor and hay wagon," said Patrykus. "We'd go out and pick in gunny sacks." The feathery milkweed seeds were used for stuffing life preservers. Patrykus said posters showing aviators downed in the ocean made it seem "crucial that these milkweed pods be picked."

The faraway war effort was dramatized by the "Captured Caravan," a traveling display set up in the parking lot across from Lincoln Fieldhouse. The exhibit included a German plane, a halftrack, cannons and other equipment, some with actual bullet holes.

Toward the end of the war, another German "exhibit" arose in the Rapids area. At the local airport, then in disuse, a German POW camp had been constructed. Patrykus remembered four two-story barracks, administration buildings and the old airport hangar.

The camp was visited several times by Dave and his brothers, who attempted to sneak past the guard towers and patrolling Jeeps. "We would holler and call them 'Nazi swine' and all that," he said. "They would laugh at us."

The POWs were a common sight, either behind the camp fence or going by on a truck wearing jackets emblazoned with "PW." They were on the way to work at Griffith nursery, Sampson's canning factory, cranberry marshes or farms.

"I think the German prisoners were glad to be there," Patrykus said. "They could be in a lot worse position."

Certain national and international events impressed themselves on the mind of the grade schooler. "On the day FDR died, I was in the back yard with my dad when my mother came out of the house crying," he said. "She said the president had died. FDR was a hero to my parents."

Patrykus was at Two Mile School on the May day when word came that the Germans had surrendered. A holiday was declared, and everybody went home.

KOLSTRA

From Depression to War

When Idelle Kolstra was asked what she remembered about the 1940s, she said, "We were still reeling from the disastrous effects of the Depression of the Thirties."

Mrs. Kolstra's written reminiscences, in somewhat shortened form:

When Louis and I were married June 5, 1930, I had been teaching rural and state graded schools in the Rudolph area for six years. Married teachers were not allowed at that time, so we thought my teaching career had ended with our marriage.

We were going to be farmers. Louis had worked his father's farm near Rudolph and thought it would one day be his.

I had been raised on a farm and, as an only child, had done every kind of work: milking, barn chores, field work, gardening, taking care of the chickens, canning, helping with butchering and curing of meat. I prepared meals and baked bread when I was just a little girl.

But we were not experienced in depressions. The bottom fell out of farm prices, and there was no keeping up with expenses. The Federal Land Bank had a mortgage on the farm, and the interest had to be paid. The personal property was mortgaged, so that was more interest to be paid.

I sold eggs all summer for eight cents a dozen, but that barely paid for groceries. We sold a cow for beef. After shipping expenses, our check was $4.75.

We had to disconnect our telephone and electricity. We had to go back to pumping water by hand for all the cattle. We couldn't use the milking machine, so the two of us had 19 cows to milk by hand.

I couldn't use the washing machine, so I had to use the washboard and tub. We went back to kerosene lamps for light.

We didn't milk much in winter and, one December, our milk check was only $4.40.

Louis laid the check on the counter of the village hardware store and said, "Give me the best gas lamp you have for this price. We have to have a light at night." That was our only Christmas present that year.

It was a very hot, dry summer. We worked hard, but everything was discouraging.

On the 11th of August, 1930, we were dealt the worst blow of all. We were threshing and blowing the straw into the barn. It was late in the evening so the men wanted to finish the job. With supper partly ready, I went after the cows, put them in the barn and started milking.

Suddenly, someone yelled, "Fire! Fire!"

A wall of flame came out of the blowpipe. It went into the barn. Soon the barn and all its contents were on fire. I turned the cows out, and we kept them in the corner of the cow yard, away from falling wires.

There were no fire departments to call for help. The threshing crew pumped both of our wells dry trying to save other buildings. They then hauled whey from the cheese factory across the road. But we lost the barn and granary, and all the hay, straw and grain.

This stroke of bad luck brought about many changes.

Louis' family, who had moved to town, decided they must return to the farm so Louis' father could start building the barn. Without hay, straw and grain, it was necessary to have an auction and sell most of the livestock. Our farming days had ended.

Louis tried all that fall to get a job at the Consolidated paper mill. But so did hundreds of other jobless men.

Farmers were at a disadvantage because they had no trade. He finally turned to the want-ads for farm help in the *Wisconsin Agriculturist*. He was ready to accept a job in eastern Wisconsin when a farmer north of Rudolph hired him to clear land on his farm. So, Louis took the job for $1 a day and board.

I went home to stay with my parents, south of Rudolph. Louis always had to be on his job for milking. The only time he could come to see us was for a few hours Sunday afternoons.

Our first baby was born that year, 1931, but she never saw her daddy often enough to know him.

One Sunday, Louis came to see us in great pain. We put him to bed and tried home remedies, but to no avail. He was very sick all night and, at 4 a.m., I helped him into my father's car and hurried to Wisconsin Rapids.

I knew where Dr. Waters lived on Third Street South, and I stopped there. I rang the doorbell several times and finally heard the measured tread of the doctor coming down stairs to answer the bell. The old doctor was well known for always taking his time.

"Take him to the hospital," the doctor said. "I'll be right down." Emergency surgery was performed on the nearly ruptured appendix. Louis spent a couple weeks at Riverview Hospital and another week at rest.

The year was 1932, and we finally had some time together. But it was an expensive vacation.

In March of 1933, another bombshell fell upon us.

Louis' father died suddenly of a ruptured appendix. That left his mother alone on the farm with two daughters in school.

So, we all moved back and lived together again. The barn had been rebuilt, but there wasn't much hope of farming again as the Federal Land Bank was foreclosing. Louis' parents and my parents lost their farms and everything they had worked so hard on all their lives.

We had very little income, so Louis cut wood in the winter and sold it for $4 a cord. Most went for groceries. He continued to go to Consolidated, but it wasn't until the summer of 1937 that he was called. He started working in the boiler house. It was the hottest, dirtiest place in the mill, but he worked there seven years.

We moved off the farm and went to Wisconsin Rapids in September 1937.

During the winter of 1938-39, while working in the boiler house, Louis decided to go to night school and learn to be a welder. Maybe some day he could work in the machine shop!

After we moved to Wisconsin Rapids, I took seasonal jobs. At the Sampson canning factory, I sorted beans. I also sorted cranberries out on the marshes later in the fall. In the early 1940s, I worked at the Harvard clothing factory in Rapids when extra help was needed to complete a large order of army overcoats.

In the winter of 1943-44, recruiters appeared in town, looking for workers to go to the Puget Sound Navy Yard at Bremerton, Washington. Many men were needed to repair ships being brought in from the Pacific war against Japan. Louis felt he could make use of and improve his welding skills.

He finally signed up to go to Washington in April. But he didn't think the family should go. Both girls were in good schools and doing well with piano lessens.

Finally, I made the decision. Either we all go or nobody goes. I was pregnant with my third child, and it was not an easy decision.

On April 11, 1944, at 4 a.m., we left in our V-8 Ford, pulling a two-wheel trailer with all our clothes and three pieces of furniture: a large cabinet Victrola and records, a washing machine and my sewing machine.

Gas stamps were provided for the trip to Port Orchard, but no stamps for a return trip. And we were promised a new tire if needed.

As we traveled through North Dakota on U.S. Highway 10, which in places was little more than a cow path, it seemed one of our tires needed attention. We stopped at the next town and asked where we had to go for a permit for a new tire and were directed to the office. There, we were told, "The committee will not meet until next Wednesday, so we cannot do anything for you until then."

We had to continue on our way and hope for the best.

We were to live in a new housing project near Port Orchard. That was a redeeming feature. We had never lived in a brand new apartment. It would be furnished with new furniture but we did not know how meager the furnishings would be: a coal stove to cook on; an icebox (not a refrigerator); a small table; and four chairs in the kitchen.

A small living area had only two arm chairs and a small cot to sit on. Two small bedrooms were furnished with beds and small dressers.

School was in session when we first arrived in April. If I had not been pregnant, I could have taught school. Anyone who could hold a book was trying to teach.

Our baby was due to arrive in September with the accompanying, doctor and hospital bills. I felt I should get a job, so I picked beans in fields where I could take our daughter Nancy with me.

People had flocked to the area from all over the United States. We stood in line for everything, and there were many shortages.

I had not brought clothespins from Wisconsin. I thought I could buy some when I got to Port Orchard. There were none to be purchased and, for two months, I hung up the washing with safety pins.

The little post office could not handle the deluge of mail for the project. Long lines waited at the post office windows. Christmas 1944 was especially bad. The storage area was visible from the windows. Boxes and packages were piled to the ceiling. But, when 5 o'clock came, the windows closed, no matter how long the lines were. We were receiving Christmas mail in late January 1945.

To save gas and tires, the men who lived in the project usually took a bus to the boat landing at the village of Port Orchard, then took a boat across the bay to the Navy yard.

One morning, they were crossing the bay when Louis noticed the water was acting strangely, making waves that caused odd movements of the boat.

He asked the men what made it do that. They answered in a matter-of-fact manner, "Oh, that's an earthquake."

Louis enjoyed his work but felt our daughters were not getting the good education they would receive at home in Wisconsin Rapids. In the spring of 1945, we decided to return to Wisconsin Rapids.

How could we get the gas stamps we needed? None were given for the return trip.

A sailor waiting for his ship to be repaired made a deal with us. He said, "When you go back to Wisconsin, take my wife with you part way. Then put her on a bus that has a straight route south to Texas and I'll get you the gas stamps you need."

By the time we were ready to leave, in August 1945, the war was over, and everyone wanted to return to their former homes. We had a head start.

On the way home, we stopped at Yellowstone park and rented a little cabin. When our baby, Judy, 11 months old at the time, developed a fever, we decided we had better drive to Cody, Wyoming, 100 miles away, to see a doctor.

All I could think of on that long trip was, "It is August, polio season. Polio victims have a high temperature. Judy's has remained at 104 for too many hours."

We had a small pail in the car. Whenever I saw a water-filled ditch along the road, we stopped and filled the pail, so I could bathe Judy to bring the fever down.

We finally got to Cody and, from the telephone book, we chose the name of a doctor. He was an old man and said Judy had an intestinal disturbance and prescribed a bad-tasting liquid which she spit out as fast as I could give it to her.

The next day, we went to a little hospital. The young doctor there gave her a thorough exam and said, "I cannot find anything wrong with this child except that she is trying to cut a whole mouthful of teeth."

We arrived home a couple days before Labor Day 1945. On Tuesday, Louis went to Consolidated and came home on "Cloud 9." He was going to work the next day in the machine shop. That "pipe dream" of 1938-39 had come to pass.

HOTEL ROMANSKI

Newcomer looks for a home

Although he doesn't know it and never will, the young man is not alone. As he sits writing, a stranger, unknown and invisible to him, looks over his shoulder.

It is an evening in July 1945, and the world is taking a turn.

The 26-year-old correspondent is Donald Engel, a former Seymour farm kid who has recently fulfilled his war duty as a welder at a Manitowoc shipyard. He corresponds from Wisconsin Rapids.

His wife since 1942, Arline "Sally" Engel, waits with some impatience at her parents' farm near Seymour. Sally is pregnant with the couple's first child.

"It went pretty good today, just about as I expected," Donald writes. "I worked harder than all the while I was at the shipyards, putting away pipe fittings and welding rods and such stuff. The people were all very nice to me. I think I will get along all right."

"The people" are the operators of the Frank Garber Co. From its McKinley Street location, "Garber's" sells plumbing and industrial supplies.

Frank Garber, a Russian Jew, had immigrated 40 years earlier. One son, Bernard, had been born in Russia of a first wife. In the United States, a second marriage produced sons Harry and Sidney.

As World War II approached an end, advertisements were placed in newspapers for a stock clerk. One of the applicants was Donald Engel.

"The job is still open," Bernard wrote to Donald on December 2, 1944. The new employee would work a 48-hour week, selling pipe, fittings and plumbing fixtures.

"The living conditions in Wisconsin Rapids are very much lower than they would be in Manitowoc. The rent in this city runs about $25, $30, or $35 per month. We have a fine, progressive city here," wrote Garber.

For his interview, Donald rode to Wisconsin Rapids in a passenger car attached to a Green Bay and Western freight train.

Having accepted the position, Donald asks Sally in his letter, "Did you notice I'm staying at the Hotel Romanski? Frank got this room for me."

The small room is above a tavern, says Donald, a non-drinker. "It seems to be a pretty nice place." The window looks out at another building about five feet away.

"Bernie Garber plays in the band. He took me along to the band concert tonight. They played at the old people's home. Then we went to look at an apartment. It has three rooms."

That upstairs apartment "in a new house fixed up pretty nice" includes an L-shaped bedroom and a bathroom without bathtub. The apartment is insulated and wired for an electric stove.

"After we looked at the apartment house, Bernie, his wife and daughter, who is about six years old, took me down to have some root beer. Mrs. Garber says we should come over some time. They were very nice to me."

As for the apartment, "He told me to come back tomorrow. The rent is only $20 a month. It is heated with an oil burner, which he furnishes."

Donald doesn't mention the bedroom is so small that, to make the bed, Sally will have to crawl over the mattress itself to get to the far side.

Donald writes again from Hotel Romanski to his wife in July 1945. He has gone to look at "our house" again after work and has talked to "the lady downstairs," Mrs. Kubisiak.

In view of the postwar housing shortage, he says he is lucky to get the apartment because there are three or four other couples after it.

Somewhat apologetically, he remarks that the apartment is "a little smaller than our last place," and that she better leave anything they won't need for a while, including the kitchen cupboard he had made, the wash boiler, big kettles and a work bench.

Donald mentions that Company F of the Wisconsin State Guard, in which he is a sergeant, is, going on two-day bivouac that weekend.

In a third letter, Donald writes that he is getting along better at Garber's every day, filling most of the orders, waiting on customers and straightening up.

"It's quite a mess, but it looks a lot better already, and it will be better when we get in the new building. I probably will go to the show tonight to see Mrs. Parkinton."

A fourth letter purports to include a picture of the apartment. "I don't even know what our new address will be. I know it's at 11th Avenue at Fremont, way out on the west side of town, not very far from Garber's."

Donald says he ate supper "at a better place tonight" and got a good meal for a nickel less that the 45 cents he had paid the night before.

He continued to find the work more difficult than welding had been. "I can't sit down all day. I get pretty dirty, too."

Donald mentions that he has seen the movie, "Abbott and Costello Lost in a Harem." "It was real good and a nice theater, too."

Sally joins Donald in Wisconsin Rapids in time to have her baby delivered by Dr. Nelson early Sunday morning, August 12, at Riverview Hospital. The name is David Donald.

From Okinawa in the South Pacific arrives a letter from Donald's brother, now "Uncle" Roy, a Navy construction worker or "Seabee."

"Congratulations," says Roy. "I sure would like to see David. I bet he is cute. How do you like Rapids now?"

On 11th Avenue, not far from St. Lawrence Catholic church, the stranger cocks an ear. From a window above comes what will become a familiar sound on the west side and later out by Sand Hill, the seemingly incessant wailing of the Engel heir.

Two Mile Gypsies

Adventures at the edge of town

From first grade to graduation, Pudge Rucinski moved 57 times "and we never left Two Mile School," she said.

"We moved 13 times in one year," said Dave Rucinski, the brother of "Pudge," who, at the time of her 1999 death, was Pauline Rucinski Schroer.

According to their sister, Joan Fritsche, "We were known as the Two Mile gypsies."

Children of Sophie and the late Harry Rucinski, the three knew a pastoral world around Two Mile Avenue in the 1940s and 1950s. They told me about it as we sat at my mother's kitchen table on the fabled thoroughfare.

The numerous moves were caused by their father's profession, they explained. Harry Rucinski built houses and sold them, usually before they were completed.

In a typical cycle, the outhouse was erected first, then the garage.

The family would move into the garage and Harry would start on the house. Then they'd move into the basement, when there was a basement.

When Harry got the main floor finished, the move was made upstairs, "if we got that far."

Typically, the units had two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen—no bathroom. For a bath, you sat in the sink; toilets were out back.

On the corner of Two Mile Avenue and 8th Street stood the dominant landmark of the neighborhood in those days: Two Mile School.

"How many times in winter I stuck my tongue on those fence posts," said Pudge, viewing an old photo.

Rucinski mother Sophie and a grandmother cooked school lunches.

"Everything was served in cups," said Joan. "With a slice of bread. All for five cents."

Next door to the school was the Gray sawmill. You could hear the buzz of saws during class.

Just north of school was the Snack Shack restaurant. To the south on 8th Street were the free movies shown at John Dove's tavern.

On the corner of 8th and Two Mile was the big log building that housed Radomski's tavern.

Across 8th was a meat market and grocery owned by Stamels, "from Milwaukee."

Two Mile Creek to the south provided a memorable incident for Pudge. With a couple friends, she dragged her mother's new copper wash boiler across the field for a little boating.

The vessel adequately held two friends but, said Pudge, "They're bobbin' along and I jumped in; right to the bottom it went.

"Ma didn't know what happened to her boiler."

"Them Gypsies," she said, meaning the real kind, that used to travel Two Mile with their horse-drawn cart, pots and pans hanging from all sides.

"Ma always warned us not to go out by the road because they took kids," Pudge said.

The place that perhaps most reveals the former character of the area was the Paul Thalacker farm, southwest of the then dead-end of Lincoln Street at Two Mile.

In appearance, they say, Thalacker was "a bruiser of a man with eyebrows like John L. Lewis."

His wife was soft and gentle, white-aproned, her hair in a beautiful pug; she always gave you a cookie. When you picked up milk, you waited for her to spoon off the cream.

"There were cows, horses and pigs running around where Pine Avenue is now, all the way down to Two Mile Creek," said Joan. "Where Woodside School is, they used to make hay and corn and everything."

"One night a window-peeker took off across the hay field. We would not go get milk in the dark after that."

When pigs were butchered by Thalacker, they were dipped in a large cauldron to scald.

"He used to give me the curly tails," Pudge said. "One time, he surprised me and gave me a little pig. I used to ride him to school."

Dave said he spent a lot of time around the farm. Once, when Thalacker failed to kill a pig by shooting through the bars of a cage, he lifted the gate to slit the throat.

"We opened the door and the pig come sailing out," said Dave. "He caught the knife in its throat and it took off halfway to the creek, bleeding all the way. It ran out of blood and fell down."

"You boys go drag that pig in," Thalacker ordered.

Dave and his friend, Tom Gray, tried but failed and had to shovel a path through snow so a horse could haul it in.

By the time they got the porker to the big pot, the pig was nearly frozen and the hair had set.

"Well, skin it then," said Thalacker.

"That's when Tom and I took off," said Dave.

In 1945, the Rucinski kids watched Army trucks coming down Two Mile Avenue carrying German prisoners.

Because Dave did yard work for one of the guards, he was allowed to visit at the Tri-City Airport prisoner of war camp, with his friend, Gray.

The prisoners, he said, ate well. Leftover chicken or steak was handed over to the visitors.

Dave said the Germans had no intention of escaping, although the creek-side of the airport was unfenced.

Having also worked with the prisoners at the Griffith nursery, Dave said, "There were a lot of nice guys there. Some of 'em didn't even want to go back after the war."

LAURA

Part Two

Laura. She was one of the richest women in the world.

The night before her death, she said, "I know I have done a lot of foolish things in my life, but as a little girl I often dreamed of knowing all the kings and queens in the world. And I've had my wish!"

Laura Corrigan, who, in the latter days of the Depression, had three armored trucks move her $21 million from Cleveland to New York to spite the city that had rejected her 20 years earlier.

Laura, who had married Jimmy Corrigan, heir of the big steel company, Corrigan-McKinney of Cleveland, December 2, 1916, at the Biltmore Hotel, New York.

But there was a problem. Jimmy was a known playboy. After his father, James C. Corrigan, died in 1907, former accountant Price McKinney was put in charge of the firm.

Wealthy enough even when unemployed, the newlyweds greeted the city of Cleveland in Laura's wedding present, a lavender Rolls-Royce. She planned to wow the locals from the Corrigan villa.

But invitations were ignored and parties proved dismal. Some charged the snub to Price McKinney, who judged Laura an unrefined fortune hunter and advised his friends to stay home and play whist when the Corrigans were entertaining.

Following an unhappy year in Cleveland, Laura and Jimmy departed for New York. When their welcome in that metropolis proved nearly as chilly as it had been in Cleveland, the two moved on to London.

But in 1925, they returned to Ohio.

Laura.

By now she had acquired enough stock to give herself and her husband a majority vote in the steel company. The two walked into a directors' meeting and voted McKinney out.

After the deposed executive committed suicide, Laura was more unpopular than ever in Ohio. While a sobered Jimmy remained in Cleveland, Laura frequented numerous locales: her villa outside Rome; a Palm Beach mansion; a London townhouse; and an apartment at the Ritz Hotel in Paris.

When Jimmy died in 1928 at age 47, Laura controlled nearly 55 percent of Corrigan-McKinney stock.

By then, she had learned a few lessons in achieving social success. But still Laura was lampooned, at least in print.

For example: upon her return from Europe, she was asked if she liked the Dardenelles.

"Loved him, hated her," she replied in a flat Midwestern "twang," supposedly not recognizing the reference to a famous waterway.

She was also known for standing on her head, according to sources.

In 1930, Laura sold her interest in Corrigan-McKinney for over $30 million, resulting in an annual income of about $800,000.

Laura.

Rich, spoiled, silly. But Laura soon became a saint.

Her continental spending spree abbreviated by the Blitzkrieg, Laura, residing at the Paris Ritz, began a charity campaign to help the French people, at the same time assisting hundreds of needy American citizens abroad.

Wearing a self-designed uniform, she converted her hotel suite to a workshop for hospital supplies and contributed $21,000 a month to French war relief, supplementing a U.S. government allowance of $500 per month with $400,000 worth of jewels, tapestry and furniture.

When Paris fell to the Germans in 1940, Laura was forced to go south to Vichy in unoccupied France.

There, wonder of wonders, she shared a bathroom with six other women, writing to a friend: "I have sold everything except my pearls, my two wedding rings and my wristwatch. All I possess here could be put in a suitcase."

She had gone so far to help others that she had undermined her own health. In December 1940, while rushing to help a sick woman, Laura was injured in a traffic accident, breaking both wrists and an ankle.

In 1944, she escaped to London via Portugal. There, she organized the Wings Club for Allied air force officers.

Returning to Paris, she opened another canteen for Allied airmen.

Her benefactions continued after war's end.

A January 1946 Cleveland newspaper said, "Mrs. Laura Corrigan, lady bountiful to war-stricken French refugees and heiress to a fabulous Cleveland steel fortune, has regained control of her $800,000-a-year income and is mapping plans to spend it on French war relief."

For her good deeds, the French government awarded Laura the Croix de Guerre, the Legion of Honor and the Croix du Conbattant. The British government added the King's Medal.

While in New York for cancer surgery, Laura drew up a will and soon died, on January 22, 1948. Her body was cremated and buried in Lake View Cemetery.

Of a personal estate of $1,350,000, over a million went to her sister, Mrs. Mabel Florence Armstrong-Taylor of San Francisco and $50,000 to another sister, Clara Andrews.

Miscellaneous heirs included princesses, marchionesses, viscounts, barons and knights. At the same time, the $20 million estate of her late husband was divided into 16ths as his will dictated, meaning $5 million more to Mabel Taylor.

A 16th of the mighty fortune also went to another sister.

This one, Mrs. Grace Parker Bassett, lived a long way from Paris, New York and even Cleveland.

She lived in Wisconsin Rapids, hometown of one of the world's most notable women, Laura Corrigan.

Laura was a Rapids girl.

Laura Corrigan

LAURA

Part One

River City poor home to famous figure

Who was the little girl Laura who dreamed?

Who was that little Laura, who became Mrs. James Corrigan, one of the world's richest women?

She was little Laura Mae Wittrock, born in the "German Settlement," a few miles east of Grand, Rapids, now Wisconsin Rapids, on January 2, 1879, a date she later revised to make herself appear younger.

Her German-born parents were 29-year-old Charles Wittrock (later spelled Whitrock), a harness maker, and 23-year-old Emma.

When she was born, Laura had a sister, Clara, three years older than she was.

Laura's father, Charles, had apparently been married previously, in 1873, at "Seneca," probably Seneca Corners or the township of Seneca, west of Rapids.

Two years following that date, his wife, Lina, told the divorce court that Charles had deserted immediately after the wedding.

Charles Wittrock moved on to Stevens Point, where, about 1875, he married Laura's mother, Emma Sitherwood.

Suffering delusions of persecution, Charles repeatedly threatened suicide.

Then, on a Tuesday morning in 1881, while brother-in-law Henry Osterman, and others of the Whitrock clan, stood outside his house, Charles put a shotgun to his head and pulled the trigger.

His wife, Emma, and the girls had been visiting her parents in Stevens Point.

"Though surprised and terrified at the sad intelligence, she bore her most sorrowful bereavement with fortitude and genuine womanly courage," Charles' obituary said.

After Charles' death, Emma took Clara and Laura to her parents' home in Stevens Point.

Emma married lumberjack and handyman painter William F. Parker, November 24, 1884.

At Stevens Point were Laura's half-sisters: Mabel, whose father has been identified as Charles Wittrock; Vera, who died young; Veda, who would die a newlywed; and Grace, who survived to inherit part of a fortune.

Laura's older sister, Clara, married Louis Andrews, a mill worker.

Laura attended Point schools and the local business college, attracting attention for her "exquisite" dressing and "strong, pleasing personality."

By 1900, Laura was back in Grand Rapids, working as a bookkeeper and/or stenographer for attorney and mayor William E. Wheelan and boarding on what is now Third Street South.

"She wore such beautiful clothes, swishing taffeta skirts, carrying a parasol," recalled Emily Bell, who said an invitation to Travel Class was Laura's "start."

In 1902, the *Wisconsin Valley Leader* reprinted a photo of Laura's face under an immense, rose-shaped hat.

"The charming subject of this sketch is not only fair in form and feature but possessed of no common talent for literary work," the *Leader* said.

The *Leader* also reprinted a short story "from Miss Laura's facile pen," a short story that investigates the relationship between poverty, wealth and "fortune hunting."

From Grand Rapids, Laura moved to Chicago, where she worked as a writer and editor. In 1907, she married Dr. Duncan R. MacMarten, house physician at the Great Northern Hotel.

The *Stevens Point Journal* observed that a large portrait of Laura appeared in the *Chicago Herald*, March 13, 1911. "She is noted for her beauty and vivacity," the *Journal* said.

While married to MacMarten, Laura began an affair with Jimmy Corrigan, son of the Cleveland iron magnate. When she divorced the 49-year-old MacMarten in 1914, Laura was 35.

Shortly after her marriage to the younger Corrigan three years later, she bought, for her mother and stepfather, one of Stevens Point's finest homes, at 731 Main St., providing a maid, nurse, automobile and chauffeur.

Her mother, Emma, died July 18, 1933. Two table lamps bearing Mrs. Parker's name are still in use at the Stevens Point public library.

Her stepfather, W.F. Parker, died a year later.

Laura didn't forget her old home town, Grand Rapids, now Wisconsin Rapids.

In 1933, she sent $10,000 to be divided among nine institutions by her half-sister, Grace Bassett (Mrs. J. Edward), a Rapids resident.

But it seems the little poor girl that became one of the world's richest women, would never be unconditionally loved and accepted by the River City elite.

According to Consolidated heiress Emily Bell, Mrs. Bassett called Emily's mother, Ruth Mead. Could Mrs. Parker bring Laura down to the paper city's most distinguished residence, the Mead house on "The Island?"

"Of course," Emily heard her mother say. But when Emily came downstairs later, the house was darkened. Her mother had pulled the curtains and locked the doors.

"Mother, for Heaven's sake. What is going on?"

"Laura Corrigan is coming down to see the island," Mrs. Mead said, "And she's not coming into this house."

In support of Republican candidate Vernon W. Thomson (Governor 1957-59), possibly at the Witter Hotel, Wisconsin Rapids: Emily Mead Baldwin, second from left, and Henry Baldwin, standing. At left, Thomson? *(SWCHC)*

THE PRINCESS: *Emily*

My affair with Princess Emily is over. It ended with her death on "Mead's Island" October 5, 1990. Emily Mead Baldwin Bell was 85.

It was an unlikely relationship, that of the elderly and distinguished princess and the pedestrian pauper, stimulated most by a shared interest in history and in her father, the untitled former monarch of Wisconsin Rapids, George Mead I.

Judging by the attitudes and comments of others, I had first assumed the princess would be a royal pain; so many prostrated themselves on cold ground before her.

Indeed, the princess could be difficult. Her tongue was sharp, both in public and via electronic connection. "The answer is no, absolutely not," she was likely to say on the telephone, before concluding, "What time can you come?"

In her heart Emily wore the cloak of privilege as if it were common cloth; she had endured as much outrageous fortune as anyone.

"What are you most afraid of?" I asked her.

"Having people see all that stuff and read about me so much."

"It's about time," I said.

"Time for my obituary, you mean?"

She spoke mockingly, without self-pity.

"I know you don't have much to tell about me," she said. "I'm a relic. I'm old. When I walk down Third Street, everybody knows me. I don't know them.

"That's the trouble. I can't see. When I can't see, I'm lost."

Emily liked to talk about her mother's family, the Witters, whose patriarch settled "somewhere around Wautoma" before moving to Rapids. She said nothing could be grown on that "terrible land."

"Oh now you can't say that. I'll insult somebody who lives in Wautoma."

"Grandfather [J.D.] Witter had quite a lot of sisters and, oh, they were terrors in a religious way. Grandmother Witter had an awful time with those sisters."

After a pause: "They were Methodists."

One of the old cousins told Emily that Grandmother (Emily) Witter had gone practically crazy after the death from scarlet fever, of her two pretty, red-haired children, Laura and Alice. Her husband, J.D., took her to Arizona for a cure.

"He was there too long," she said. "When he came back, the bank was empty. Frank Wood, the cashier, had gone across the river and started the Wood County Bank. He took all the customers, including T.E. Nash and the people who made Nekoosa."

Emily said J.D. had been "in" the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co., but "they put him out when he was in Phoenix."

"We Meads. The teachers would look down their noses at us. We were the Third Street crowd, the privileged few.

"We certainly weren't privileged. We certainly were not spoiled. We had to work hard. We had to do our lessons.

"After the [1926] quarrel, the Witters were the favored people, and we Meads didn't know if anybody'd speak to us or not."

Though her childhood infantile paralysis was treated with the best rehabilitative care that her influential father could summon, Emily remained a partial "cripple."

"I didn't run, and I couldn't climb a tree, and I couldn't play tennis because I couldn't hop on that side, but I played a darn good game of golf.

"People on the street would say, 'You're limping today. Is something wrong?'

"After Father had his strokes, he couldn't walk, so I'd repeat what he'd told me.

"'Stand up and keep your shoulders straight.'"

Emily had to cope with the death of her son, husband and father in a short period.

"I lived," she said. "I wondered why in the world I lived. It killed Henry. I guess women are stronger than men."

"Do you have a source of strength?"

"No," said the princess. "Just me."

"Did you pray?"

"No. I didn't think the Lord was very good to me. If there was a Lord, he was a mean old thing."

"What if I said you were an atheist?"

"I think everybody knows it," she said. Then a pause.

"I support the church, you know. I decorated the Congregational church."

"How could you teach Sunday school if you don't believe in God?"

"The superintendent didn't like it very well. He gave me my walking papers.

"I had taken a course in the *Bible* at Smith College that I thought was just wonderful. We analyzed all the books; who wrote what and when.

"I used that, I guess, too much. You see, God wrote the Bible, not St. Luke, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

"I approve of churches. It's other people that should go to church. I think Jesus Christ is the greatest religious leader.

"I wrote my thesis on Orientalism, the five great religions. Hindu was great, except you didn't care what happened in the world.

"Henry was moderator of the Congregational Church. He was very religious. He went off on weekends all the time, which bothered me greatly. I wanted to go to the country club dance."

"I was never demure. I was a naughty girl from the beginning."

"What do you think of people always asking you for money?"

"I have kind of a budget. The worst thing now is politics. I support all Republican candidates in Wisconsin, but I object to trying to correct the whole nation."

"What was George Mead terrible at?"

"You're asking me? I adored the man."

"Henry had a conference with Father one time, and he said, 'I can't take Emily to Cleveland if she can't drink and go to cocktail parties, because everybody does.'

"So father allowed it. He hadn't before. He was very much prohibition people. He changed later. Mother did, too. We would have a cocktail before dinner."

When Pearl Harbor was bombed, Henry, who had relatives in Hawaii, went down to enlist but was turned down. "His heart wasn't good enough. He was furious.

"He didn't say anything after Pearl Harbor. He was just silent. It scared me to death. I just shook all during that time.

"I did the block system.

"The Germans were coming down the Wisconsin to bomb the factories in Milwaukee and, on the way back they'd have an extra bomb left over, so they would bomb our dam; everybody in town had to be organized when that happened.

"We talked business at the table for breakfast and lunch. I heard all about it. I loved hearing about it.

"Father wouldn't let me. It wasn't proper for a girl. You had to embroider and knit. You had to learn poetry and music.

"When Henry died, Stanton came down [to ask Emily to take Henry's place on the board of directors].

"I said, 'I don't know anything about Consolidated.' He said, 'You know about making paper, don't you?'"

"I had played on the floor of the office while Father talked to [mill manager] George Berkey."

"Dorothy and Stanton were down in Miami with their little boy one day. They'd been staying at a hotel on the beach that was all filled up and wanted to stay another week.

"So Father walked up the street, saw a house being built and said, 'I'll buy it.'

"That was our house on Collins Avenue. Oh, it was lovely. The house is gone. Somebody thought it would be great for the city to straighten out the road right through what used to be our house.

"In Florida, Father was a single man and very attractive. They had parties. You had to have an equal number of men and women around the table, so Father was very popular."

In her later years, Emily bantered with her helper, Kurt Bassuener, about a familiar pest:

"Don't waste any tears on them. Honestly, you don't love a woodchuck? All of my lilies across there are gone. They've done awful things to me. You don't like lilies? You're just like Ken Rahn, I suppose. Honestly, I hate a woodchuck. You go out there, and the whole garden's eaten off."

I asked Emily what she thought of Wisconsin Rapids.

"I love it. I think it's a wonderful town." She said she felt a personal responsibility to keep it "wonderful."

Prior to its building, she insisted she was "against the clock tower" because it would be "another building on the riverbank." She already had gotten rid of several structures there and, if she were younger, probably would have done battle again.

"The riverbank should be kept," she said .

"It started with Mother." For Ruth Witter Mead, "It had to be the prettiest, nicest town in the world. She's the one who pushed the riverbank.

"When mother talked to you, with her eyes blazing, you did it. You didn't argue.

"Mother had a lot more influence than we thought. Mother loved everybody that lived here. She was always thinking of the people and the beauty of the town.

"Gosh, she'd go to the grocery store and stay for two hours talking to people."

Emily said her brother Stanton was "against having the riverbanks all blank, 'all naked,' he says. 'Are you in favor of that!?'"

Emily said she had tried to buy the Elks building and tear it down, but it was too expensive. "They're too fond of their building."

Nevertheless, she had misgivings about the clearing of the old downtown shopping area. "That was Father's idea, the Penney building and all that.

"It ruined the town, hasn't it, really? By the time they built that great big Consolidated [River Block] building, that took care of the rest of it. It isn't a pretty town any more."

The old Witter Hotel was involved in one of the many "urban renewal" projects of the Mead family.

"There was a spell during that time when riverbank hotels were burning up, and people were jumping out the windows and being killed.

"Father was also clearing up the riverbanks. He wanted to make the city pretty, so he tore down the Witter Hotel, but the town needed a hotel, so he built one.

"He had a stroke about that time but, when we took him to the train to go to Florida, we took him by the (Mead Inn) hotel so he could see it being built."

She said she had tried to get Stanton to help her "save" Eighth Street "and not take all those elm trees down" but had failed. "It was a pretty road to come in on. It's not pretty. Eighth Street is not pretty."

There was another, even more personal reason she didn't like the clock tower, Emily said. When she was much younger, and grieving over a lost love, the tolling of the clock used to keep her awake.

"I liked to be back from Florida when the first signs of spring came because I have my greenhouse," she said. "I always liked the tulips and jonquils and the garden.

"Of course, March is not a good month. You never know if you are going to have any good weather or not."

PACKER THIEF

Charlie Brock

A child growing up in Packerland could not help but hear of a team that had once existed, a team of past Green Bay Packers far greater than the 1-10-1 team that foundered in 1958. In the play-by-play of the supper table, highlights of the glory days featured Isbell, Hutson, Hinkle, Herber and Fritsch.

Add Charlie Brock.

Brock, "the thief," all-pro center and linebacker, hailed from the Iron Man era, when you played both offense and defense, sometimes for an entire game.

In 1986, Brock told me about a decade in which the Packers fought their way to the pinnacle of professional football.

At the University of Nebraska, Brock proved to be one of the best players in the school's history. His All-American honors at center and linebacker helped make him a second-round draft choice of the Green Bay Packers in 1939.

Brock said he was happy to be chosen by the Packers. He knew Green Bay was a small town and that other Nebraska players had gone to the Packers.

Brock was in California, practicing for the East-West game, when Curly Lambeau, the only coach the Packers had ever had, came to see him. Lambeau said he would talk to Brock at Nebraska soon.

Two weeks later, Lambeau arrived in Lincoln and made a breakfast date with Brock for the following morning. First, however, Lambeau had dinner with Brock's line coach. "What do you think I can sign Charlie Brock for?"

"I don't think you can get him for any less than $3,300," said the coach, hoping to keep the salary offer honest.

"That's no problem," Lambeau said.

When Lambeau was on the road, signing up players, said Brock, he was a real gentleman and quite a salesman, too. "He could sell you on the idea that you were going to be great."

At breakfast, Lambeau offered Brock $2,500 for his first year as a Green Bay Packer.

Brock wasn't going to be that easy. "I can't play for twenty-five hundred."

Lambeau offered him $2,800. If the Packers won the championship, he would kick in a $1,000 bonus. Used to working for room and board in order to play football, the money looked good enough and Brock accepted.

"Lambeau really screwed you around," the Nebraska line coach told Brock later. So what? He was going to the Packers.

Brock bought a $50 Model A from his mother-in-law and drove up to Green Bay, a place he had never seen. In front of the old Astor Hotel, Brock found an assortment of Packer players.

"I looked at some of those guys and I thought, 'What am I doing up here, a little guy like me?' Brock, at 6-foot-2, weighed 228 Pounds.

Coach Lambeau presented a different impression in training camp than he had when he signed Brock.

"You had to earn your job or you wouldn't stick around. You never knew whether you were going to get fired from one week to the next. I've seen him fire guys on the road after a bad game. They'd have to get home on their own."

Brock said the old veterans took a liking to him. "They helped me a lot as a rookie."

The first year, Brock did not start every game, but he played a lot, on offense at center and on defense at linebacker.

As a center under the old "Notre Dame shift," Brock held his head down between his knees, looking backwards. He had to pass the ball directly to one of the four backs who, in many cases, already was moving.

"You took a lot of beatings," said Brock. "I had my nose broke five or six times."

As a linebacker, Brock excelled at intercepting passes and stealing balls.

The larceny started at a game the Packers needed to win to get to the playoffs. The Packers were trailing when Lambeau ordered Brock to "Go out there and get that ball, if you have to steal it."

"Fortunately, the fullback ran right off tackle. All I could see was the football. I took it out of his arms and scored. We beat them to get into the playoffs.

"It worked pretty well so I started to do a lot of that. One time, in New York, I stole the ball three times. It got to be kind of a knack. That's why I was called 'the thief.'"

In 1939, Brock's first year, the Packers won the championship game in Milwaukee against the New York Giants. Each player got $714, said Brock.

In addition, written on the back of his contract, Brock had that promise from Lambeau for $1,000 if the Packers won the championship.

He reminded his coach. "Oh no," said Lambeau. "We didn't *make* a thousand dollars."

Lambeau handed over $350 to go with the $714 Brock had received from the league. Beyond that, Brock had to be satisfied with the warm welcome that awaited him and the rest of the giant-killing Packers back at their little town of Green Bay.

Following a Packer win, Coach Curly Lambeau liked to say, "The lid's off," and beers were on him.

After a loss though, the lid was on. You didn't have a beer and you were very quiet.

If it were a particularly bad game, the lid went on Monday, too. You went out on the practice field to learn blocking and tackling all over again.

That was Lambeau's style, said Charlie Brock. He coached "his way."

Win or lose, the lid went down after the usual Monday night on the town. Until the next Monday, you watched your diet (nothing fried), drank neither alcohol nor soft drinks, and were home by 11 p.m.

You had to be in shape. Two hours' scrimmage and he'd run you around the track a couple of times with pads on.

Team meetings were set for 7 p.m. One minute late cost you $25. Every minute after was just as expensive. And you'd better be over at East High on time for practice.

In 1940, Brock said, his back hurt so badly that he hardly could move through practices all week. On Sunday morning, he took two big needles to the stadium with him to deaden the pain in his legs.

Brock played hurt because he loved to play football more than anything else. Besides, he didn't want to be fired.

On another occasion, Brock had checked out of a New York hospital the previous Wednesday, after having his appendix removed.

"What do you want me to do today," Brock asked Lambeau before the Sunday game.

"Just put on your uniform and sit on the bench."

The game wasn't two minutes old, said Brock, and he was in the game, still with stitches in his side.

"He didn't care how bad you were hurt as long as you could run and move," said Brock.

Lambeau approached football like it *wasn't* a game. Green Bay had a 50-point lead over Navy in an exhibition when Charlie decided to loosen up. He told Lou Brock, the Packer quarterback, to let Navy's back intercept the ball and go for a touchdown.

On the first attempt, Brock threw as instructed, but the Navy man dropped the ball.

"Throw it again," said Charlie.

This time, the halfback caught the ball. With a lot of cooperation from the Packers, he scored.

Lambeau pulled his quarterback out of the game. "We don't have a play like that," he scolded.

"Lambeau wanted you to play all out regardless of whether it was an exhibition game. He wanted to win. That's all he wanted to do."

For the most part, Lambeau succeeded. "His biggest asset was that he knew how to pick football players," said Brock.

Lambeau had signed fullback Clarke Hinkle from Bucknell, quarterback Cecil Isbell from Purdue, quarterback Arnie Herber from Green Bay, halfback Tony Canadeo from Gonzaga, Ted Fritsch from Stevens Point, Baby Ray from Vanderbilt and Don Hutson from Alabama.

Lambeau liked Hutson, considered at the time the best player in the National Football League. Hutson was small, but he had the moves, he was fast and he could catch the football. When coach got too tough to talk to, Hutson was the go-between.

Lambeau's downfall had something to do with Rockwood Lodge, a complex north of Green Bay that he bought so the team could live and play together. There were rooms in a big lodge for the single guys and cabins for the married players.

The problem was that the field had rocks—a considerable number above ground and more below on their way out. Lambeau hired kids to pick up the rocks, but they couldn't pick up enough.

It fell to Brock, as team captain, to tell Lambeau that the players were getting shin splints from the hard surface. Lambeau finally agreed and a short period of commuting back to Green Bay began.

Rockwood burned in 1949. A certain amount of suspicion for the fire fell in Lambeau's direction, but Brock, an assistant coach in his last year as a Packer, said Lambeau was with him in Philadelphia for the college draft at the time.

In his later years, Lambeau's health problems brought a recommendation from his physician that he give up coaching. "You fellas are going to have to run the team," Lambeau told the Packers.

The freedom was short-lived. "He came out on the field and saw us running different defenses," said Brock, "and called us into the office and told us, 'Now, this is what we're going to do.'"

With successive divorces and remarriages, and a new life in California, Lambeau came to be seen by the Packer management as something of a big-spender. Some of his power was stripped away and he quit to take a job as coach with the Chicago Cardinals.

Lambeau never prospered again as a coach. "Everybody was going to the T-formation. Curly didn't know the T-formation. He couldn't adjust to it," said Brock.

Charlie Brock was something of a stickler himself. As captain, he studied the game until he knew what every player was supposed to do. If a player didn't seem enthusiastic about performing his function, Brock might order him to sit on the bench until he felt more like playing.

"That'd make 'em mad and they'd play a little better," he said. "Other guys, you'd chew out and they'd fall apart."

Brock played at Green Bay from 1939 to 1948, and coached in 1949. When Lambeau departed, so did Brock. He managed an advertising business, then went into insurance.

"I didn't want anyone throwing flowers at me or anything, just because I was an ex-football player," he said. "It's your profession for a short period of time. Then, you have to find your own way in life."

Brock was used to finding his own way. His Packer salary had gone from $2,800 in 1939 to $4,700 when he quit. To make ends meet, he took off-season jobs, such as coaching at Omaha University and working at a Green Bay drop forge during World War II.

"If you had a family, you had to supplement your income," he said.

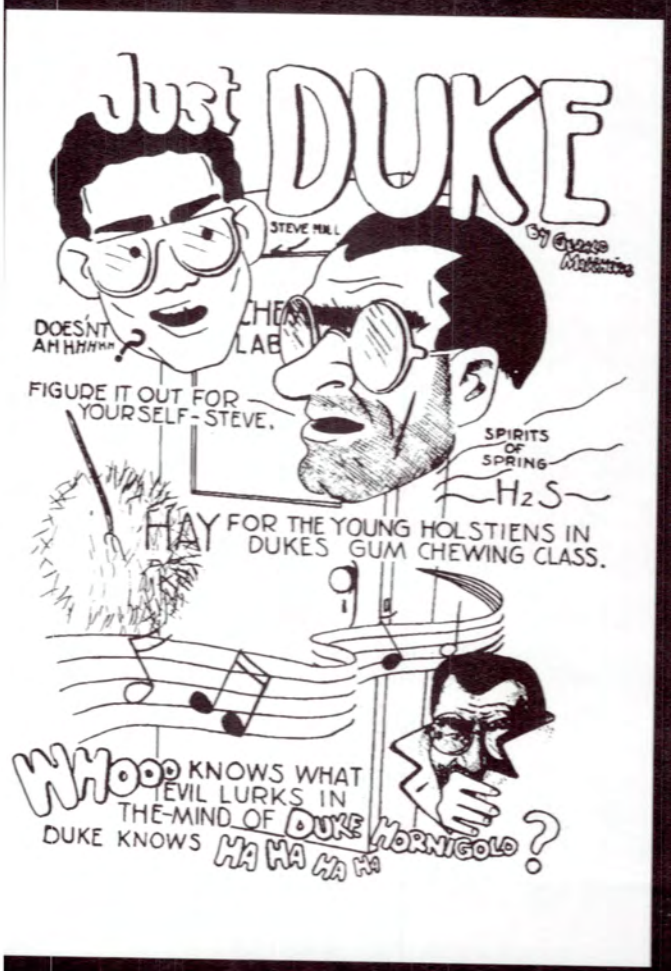
Although the best team Brock played on, he believes, was that of his 1939 rookie season, he enjoyed the 1944 championship more.

After the game, the season was over, the lid was off and the champagne flowed. "It was great to say that you played on a championship team, the best pro football team in the country," said Brock.

As it was great to go back home after such a win, so was it difficult to pass off a loss.

"We didn't lose many ball games. We didn't want to lose because of the people," said Brock. "Everybody in town knew you. When you walked down the street, they wanted to know what happened.

"They backed us whether we won or lost, but I hated to lose," said Brock. "I didn't want to let these people down. That was it more than anything else. If you lost, they were nice on Monday, but you knew you had let them down."



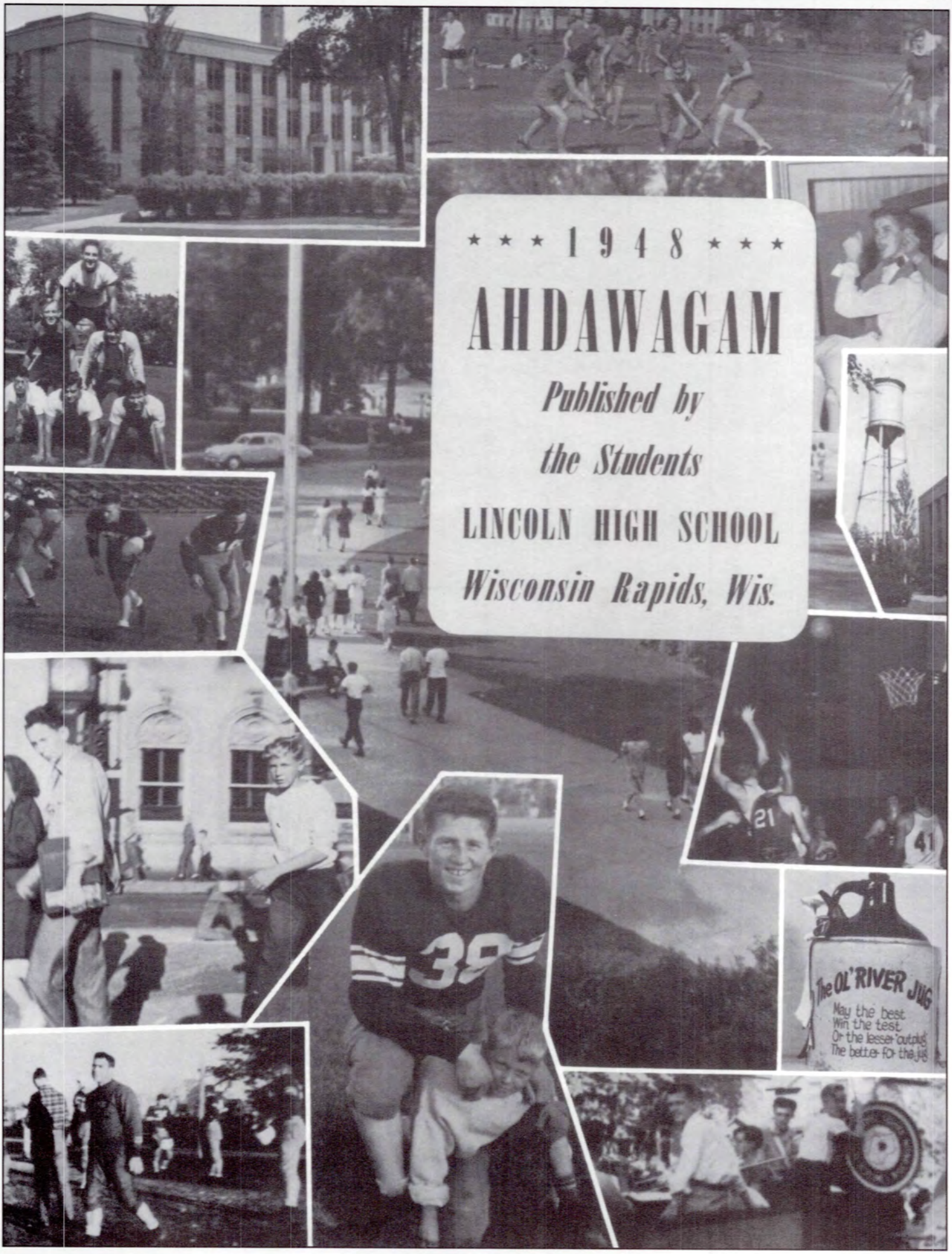
1947 LHS

Who could forget?

Two Personalities From The Hallowed Halls

Left: Alfred Hornigold, Chemistry Teacher

A. A. RITCHAY
PRINCIPAL OF LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL
Northwestern University, M.A.



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AHDAWAGAM

Published by

the Students

LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL

Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.

Sand Hill 1948

David, Arline "Sally" (1920-1999) and Kathryn (1946-1988) Engel

SESQUICENTENNIAL MEMOIRS

1948

A Year of Saturdays

Recognizing the State of Wisconsin's 150th anniversary, the South Wood County Historical Corp. sponsored "Sesquicentennial Memoirs," a weekly series in the Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune. The brief weekly articles were taken from the Tribune of that day, fifty years previous.

January 3 (1998/48)

Fifty years ago today, according to the *Daily Tribune*, no "Badger" resident will want to let 1948 pass without participating in Wisconsin's centennial. The "gala" celebration is set to begin at Madison with addresses by Governor Rennebohm and others. In Wood county, plans are being made for exhibits, pageants and festivals.

Fifty years ago: the *Tribune* announces the founding of a new organization, one which undoubtedly will join the centennial observations of that year—the Wisconsin Rapids Chamber of Commerce.

January 10

Obits: Clifton W. Bluett, 67, former Wood county sheriff, from a heart attack in the line of duty. Fred W. Krohn, 60, of Krohn & Berard funeral home, from a stroke.

Married: Miss Doris Dean Alexander, Port Edwards, to Gerald Earl Veneman, Chicago, at the First Methodist church, Rev. A.W. Triggs officiating.

A fan: Joseph A. Peck, following a visit here, writes from Chicago, congratulating the women of Rapids for "their good sense and good taste in the matter of styles, a refreshing contrast to what the so-called 'woman of fashion' is wearing these days in Chicago.

"Not that Wisconsin Rapids styles are old-fashioned. Wisconsin Rapids women ... know how to wear clothes that enhance their natural beauty rather than the bizarre creations their big city sisters wear to attract attention."

January 17

The nations coldest spot is Gordon, Wisconsin, at 54 below zero. Wisconsin Rapids records a "mild" 30 below. Local taxis and tow trucks do a "rushing" business.

The Rapids theater, 220 East Grand Avenue, opens under new management: Tom Poulos, president; M.S. King, vice president; C.V. Stark, treasurer; and James Stark, secretary and manager—grandson of the 1914 theater's founder, John T. Stark, who called it the "Ideal."

The company plans a 60-foot extension on the south of the theater, increasing the seating capacity from 311 to 871.

Inside are fancy seats, a new screen, new projectors and an RCA phototone sound system. The walls are decorated with life-size paintings of scenes from the motion picture industry.

January 24

Fire guts the two-story Jones-Exner Paint store at 161 Second Street, causing property damage estimated by Fire Chief A.C. Miller at $5,000. As the blaze is fought for three hours in temperatures as low as 24 below, Virgil Jacoby, a fireman, is injured when an explosion throws him from the roof; Don Briselden, a spectator, receives cuts from flying glass.

The building, adjacent to the Wood County National Bank, is part of the Mead-Witter property.

Lincoln High School's basketball team notches its 14th victory in 15 outings as Phil Manders' "teamwork-conscious" quintet of Harold Brewster, Jim Reimer, Jack Torresani, Mike Daly and Francis Simonis beats South Milwaukee at the Fieldhouse.

January 31

"Primed to the hilt for the avenging mood," the Lincoln High school Red Raider basketball team, led by Mike Daly with 14 points and his "magnificent dribbling and floor game" and Harold Brewster with high scoring honors of 15, "crushes" Wausau 51-24 before 3,500 fans at Lincoln Fieldhouse. Wausau had been the only team to defeat Rapids (15-1) this season.

"The relentless, driving Raiders had a bit of trouble getting started but once they began to click, Wausau's Lumberjacks were bedazzled, to the evident delight of the large gathering," reports the *Daily Tribune*.

February 7

Boy Scouts take over the government of Wisconsin Rapids, determined to have a crack at some of the municipal problems that have baffled their elders during the past year. At a brief session of the common council, Bob Fancher and Wayne Kauth, acting jointly as mayor, look into problems such as acquiring a swimming pool for the West Side and obtaining a better quality of water for the city.

Appointed to municipal offices are Don Lau, chief of police; Gerald Raasch, fire chief; Richard Turner, city engineer; Donald Swanson and Eugene Bauman, justices of the peace; Dinon Boyer, water and light commissioner; Henry Kingdon and Wayne Baldwin, policemen; and Dick Jung and Lawrence Heineck, firemen.

February 14

In the only appearance of professional basketball that winter in Wisconsin Rapids, the Olo Soaps of Beaver Dam meet the Badger Sports All-Stars of Madison at Lincoln Fieldhouse.

Among the "Badgers" are Johnny Kotz and Elroy Hirsch, both formerly of the Wisconsin Valley conference and University of Wisconsin. Art "Happy" Felsch, slow motion comedian from Milwaukee, entertains the crowd between games.

Newest food-saving campaign promoted by the local extension service: householders are urged to remove the food from their kitchen cupboards and spray the interior with 5 per cent DDT. A deposit of DDT crystals would remain and be effective against grain-eating insects for several months but was not expected to harm food inside the packets.

February 21

On radio station WFHR: Philip F. LaFollette promotes the general, "Douglas MacArthur for president."

At the new Rapids theater: Charged! With shocking excitement! The Burning Cross, a "daring expose" of the Ku Klux Klan.

Nekoosa High School gym: the Famous Red Heads, one of the nation's leading all-girl teams, playing "Red-Hot Basketball" against the Nekoosa Blackhawks. The Red Heads play men's teams only and by straight men's rules.

P.J. Jacobs gym, Stevens Point: Rapids barely subdues the Point Panthers to share the Wisconsin Valley conference basketball championship with Rhinelander, both with 11-1 records. "Maybe the Red Raiders are beginning to believe those newspaper articles making the rounds saying that they were the No. 1 team in the state." They better get it out of their heads or be "rudely jolted" next week, says the *Tribune*.

February 28

P.J. Jacobs high school, Stevens Point: hundreds of Rapids fans brave a blinding snowstorm to attend Friday night's regional tournament game against Mosinee. On Saturday night, the Red Raiders, under coach Phil Manders, defeat Stevens Point for the championship.

Lincoln High School: Opening with their theme song, "The Talk of the Town," the Swing Shifters student band plays for an assembly. Jim Pfeiffer, Louis Kermitz, and Jack Billmeyer appear as the "Andrews Sisters."

Green Bay: professional football statistics show the Packers are indeed "Number One"—only in punting, led by Jack Jacobs, with an average of 43.5 yards and a long kick of 74 yards.

March 6

At a Lincoln high school pep assembly, principal Aaron A. Ritchay, wearing a letterman's sweater, is joined by teachers Edgar Bird and Charles Swartz. They provide a rousing demonstration of form, dressed as cheerleaders. Leading "sports yells" while dressed in cheerleader uniforms are faculty members Christine Pedersen, Betty Ruggles, Gwen Cobleigh and Frances Nairn. Motivational speakers are Floyd Smith, superintendent of schools, J.A. Torresani, Dale Rheel, Coach Phil Manders and Jim Reimer.

Tribune: "Picture, if you will, huge Lincoln Fieldhouse almost jam-packed and a clutch battle with a deadly rival..."

On Saturday night, Rapids' "granite" defense beats Rhinelander 35-29 "before 4,000 howling fans" to capture the sectional championship and on to Madison!

March 13

In the first game of the state tournament, the top-rated Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln Red Raiders lose to the Menasha Blue Jays. In the consolation semi-final, the Red Raiders defeat the Monroe Cheesemakers but, in a miserable session of marksmanship (.229), bow to the Hurley Midgets, 39-35. The final season record is 24-4.

A long-range building plan is announced by Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic parish for construction of a church, school, gymnasium, rectory and convent on Tenth Avenue South land, purchased from Stanton Mead and the Mrs. Nels Johnson estate. The school will be ready in fall, 1948. The parish was organized in 1947 and is popularly known as St. Mary's.

March 20

More than 50 display booths greet 10,000 visitors over the three days of the first Heart of Wisconsin Sports Show, displaying apparatus for hunting and fishing, live specimens of Wisconsin wildlife, an operating model railroad and movies of the Walcott-Lewis boxing bout. The Wisconsin Rapids White Sox provide an opportunity for local fans to meet Johnny Rigney and Red Ormsby of the Chicago White Sox. Dozens of trees give the host Lincoln Fieldhouse a strong aroma of evergreen.

A variety stage show features golfing, fly casting, tumbling, marksmanship, table tennis, retrieving, diving and comedy.

The Sports Show is sponsored by the Wood County Conservation league, Frank Shymanski, president.

March 27

A new frost warning service for cranberry growers is instituted, with a full-time forecaster headquartered in Wisconsin Rapids. Six radio stations agree to broadcast the weather warnings, including WFHR, Wisconsin Rapids and WLBL, Stevens Point.

Walter A. Peterson, a resident of Wisconsin Rapids for 30 years, now living at the Grand Army home at King, Wis., reports he has been granted patent rights for a "Rapid Calculator" to be used with a carpenter's square. With it, computations can be made mechanically without use of a pencil and paper.

One of the more interesting Easter sunrise services is that of the Moravian church, concluding at Forest Hill cemetery.

April 3

LHS: Mike Daly is elected junior prom king. Also candidates are Francis Simonis, Jack Torresani and Ronny

Johnson. The Student Council votes to allow faculty to enter the cafeteria without waiting in line with the students.

Madison West wins the Rapids indoor invitational championship at the 15th staging of the track meet at Lincoln Fieldhouse. Jim Reimer in the shot put and Don Soe in the half mile set records.

The annual spring tea for senior girls of Lincoln, John Edwards and Alexander High school is held at the Elks club.

Now showing: the fourth annual art exhibit at Wood County Normal school, welcoming participants from surrounding counties.

April 10

Dance! Old time and modern with Red Saeger & His Orchestra at Eagles Ballroom. With Frank Wilde & His Troubadours at the Rudolph Community Hall. In honor of Estell Chojnicki and John Krzykowski at Lang's Ballroom.

Dance! To Val's Radio Players from WKBH La Crosse at New Miner Pavilion. With Frank Novotney & His Orchestra at Hillside. To Dale Simmons & His Blue Denim Boys at Skyway Ballroom.

Sunday dinner: at the Paper Inn, Port Edwards. The chef suggests Boston Fried Chicken for $1.35.

Charles Comisky II, heir to the Chicago White Sox baseball dynasty, is guest speaker at an Elks Club dinner to welcome back the Rapids State league nine.

Consolidated's 1947 sales increase by $8 million over 1946 sales to $35 million, according to president George W. Mead. The main problem is procuring enough pulpwood.

April 17

A man and his cousin die in the crash of a light plane north of Highway 73, west of Pittsville. The couple had taken off from Tri-City airpark, Rapids. The plane was owned by the Ace of Clubs Flying club of Rapids.

Obit.: Edgar G. Doudna, 71, former Rapids superintendent of schools (1918-1923) and secretary of the state board of normal school regents. At the time of his death, he was at work on a 100th anniversary history of Wisconsin.

According to head librarian Miss Jessie Sanford, the T.B. Scott public library will open Tuesday at its new home on Third Street south. The former Charlotte G. Witter home was purchased the previous September by George W. Mead, who presented it to the city for use as a library.

Bill "Lefty" Habeck pitches a no-hit, no-run game against Marshfield at Witter Field, the first by a Rapids "prep flinger" in Valley play.

LHS wins their third championship in the three years of the annual Lincoln Fieldhouse "carnival" track meet.

April 24

The finding of an object that may have been used in the fatal assault the previous week on Silas Paxton, town of Sigel farmer, is announced by Sheriff Arthur E. Berg. The unnamed object is sent to the FBI laboratory at Washington, D.C., in an effort to find fingerprints.

A squad of women bowlers from Rapids, including Mildred Adler, Bernadine Crowns, Birdie Crowns, Ethel Kelly and Marge Gross, heads to the Women's International Bowling congress tournament in Dallas.

Obit.: C.A. Normington, 70, former president of Normington's Inc., a laundry and dry cleaning plant on 1st Avenue South. Normington was a prominent member of the Chamber of Commerce, the Community club, the Elks lodge, the Rotary club and the Masonic lodge. He was also one of the city's foremost boosters of organized sports.

May 1

The third annual state convention of the Catholic War Veterans opens in Wisconsin Rapids at the Witter Hotel. A parade in the evening travels the flag-bedecked streets from the Milwaukee Road depot down Grand Avenue to Lincoln Fieldhouse. Sunday's pontifical high mass at the Fieldhouse is lead by Bishop John P. Treacy, assisted by Rev. C.W. Gille, pastor of SS. Peter and Paul church.

The Nekoosa-Port Edwards Labor Temple, 318 Market Street, Nekoosa, incorporated earlier in the year, opens to the public with a dance in the temple hall by Al Rickel and his Nekoosa orchestra.

In the first local case of "reckless flying," James Fritz pleads guilty and is fined $15 by Justice Byron B. Conway.

At Witter field, Rapids wins its fourth championship in four annual Penta Scholastic track and field meets. New records are set by Don Soe, Jim Reimer, Dick Kuehl, Jack Lukes and Steve Fanning.

May 8

For the Lincoln Junior Prom, Queen Pat Pivinski, escorted by king Mike Daly, wears a white gown sewn partly of Japanese silk sent by her brother Walter, Jr., from Korea. "Neptune's Nocturne" is the theme, with sea creatures throughout the Fieldhouse, fish net hung from the balcony and plastic bubbles wafting down from the ceiling.

Nearly 600 mothers attend a free movie, "Her Sister's Secret," at the Wisconsin theater under the auspices of the Wisconsin Rapids Chamber of Commerce. Herbert Graef, theater manager, presents corsages to various mothers, e.g., the oldest (Emma Lee), tallest (Mrs. John Arendt), shortest (Mrs. Lawrence Omholt), etc.

The Sheboygan Indians trounce the Wisconsin Rapids White Sox 22-5 before 466 frozen patrons at Witter field in the concluding game of the initial series of the State league campaign. In 35-degree weather, customers consume 700 bags of peanuts and exhaust the supply of 420 hot dogs by the sixth inning.

The Lincoln track team retains the championship of the annual Wisconsin Valley conference track and field meet under the Witter field lights.

May 15

Ray F. Johnson announces the purchase of the controlling stock in Johnson & Hill company, pioneer department store, from George W. Mead, Stanton W. Mead and the Witter interests. Johnson's partners are his brothers, Leland and Malcolm P. Johnson; his sister, Mrs. Erma Bellew; his brother-in-law, James B. Nash; other heirs of the late Mrs. Nellie H. Johnson; and Claude H. Helms.

The Johnson & Hill company operates 16 retail departments and a wholesale department. It leases out four departments, which include Eatmor Products meats, Mrs. Emmett Gaulke millinery, Mrs. Mildred Adler beauty shop and Al Otterlee jewelry.

A 35-year-old farmhand is sought for questioning in the bludgeoning death of Silas E. Paxton, a town of Sigel farmer, who had eluded Sheriff Arthur E. Berg and Traffic Officer Arthur Boll at a Portage county farm near Almond.

J.A. Torresani's "thinclad" Lincoln High School track team continues to excel, qualifying for 14 places in the annual state meet at Madison.

May 22

The Nekoosa school board proposes erecting homes for teachers to ease a housing shortage that also affects Nekoosa-Edwards paper company employees. Several low-priced homes are designed by Rapids' architect Donn Hougen.

A 35-year-old former Biron paper mill worker admits to the murder of town of Sigel farmer Silas E. Paxton. Following five hours of questioning by District Attorney Herbert A. Bunde and Sheriff Arthur E. Berg, he is charged with second degree murder.

Charles Mras, 19, Vesper, is killed when his motorcycle overturns on County Trunk F near the WFHR radio transmitter. His death is the first traffic fatality of the year in Rapids.

While fertilizing beds for the Wisconsin Cranberry Growers association, a helicopter crashes at the F.F. Mengel cranberry marsh in the town of Saratoga. The pilot, of Ithaca, Mich., escapes injury, though the machine is a complete loss.

The Lincoln high school track team finishes 12th in the Class A division of the 52nd annual state high school track meet at Camp Randall stadium at Madison. Madison West wins the Class A title.

May 29

The first shovelful is turned by Rev. Joseph Tetzloff, pastor, as ground is broken for a new St Mary's Catholic parish school and auditorium on Tenth avenue south.

Centennial and Memorial days are observed together in Wisconsin Rapids with a parade, followed by "spectacular" fireworks at Witter athletic field, viewed by a crowd of 2,500.

Rev. A.W. Triggs retires as pastor of the First Methodist church, to be succeeded by Rev. Milton C. Feldt, most recently of Niagara, Wisconsin. Triggs continues as pastor of the Community church of Port Edwards.

Remains of 12 Wood county soldiers who lost their lives in the Pacific during World War II are returned from temporary military cemeteries. From Wisconsin Rapids: Sgt. Jack H. Matthews; S/Sgt. Eugene W. Smith; Pvt. Fred A. Baumbach; Pfc. Chester S. Secosh. From Nekoosa: Pfc. Matthew E. Stempinski. Milladore: S/Sgt. Joseph P. Bayerl.

June 5

Frank Demaree, manager of the Wisconsin Rapids White Sox for only three days, is replaced by Johnny Kerr, "brilliant" Chicago White Sox infielder in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Demaree had replaced Frank Parenti earlier the same week.

Among those at a Rapids Sox tryout camp are Bill "Lefty" Habeck, Bob Gazeley and Dickie Rehman, all of Wisconsin Rapids. Joe Dahlke, Wausau pitcher, is signed.

The Wisconsin Valley Camera club's night photography field trip includes twilight shots at the baseball park, Lake Wazeecha and East Grand Avenue.

Plenty of thrills from 50 riders are promised for the annual Wisconsin Rapids Motorcycle Club hill climb at Dyracuse Mound.

Now showing: at the Rialto Theatre, Nekoosa: Roy Rogers, "Home In Oklahoma."

June 12

The relocation of State Highway 13 between Pittsville and Klondike Corners is approved by Governor Oscar Rennebohm. From the junction of Highway 73 west of Pittsville, the new highway will follow the current route of County Trunk T, eliminating numerous sharp turns on the present Highway 13. The 16-foot pavement on the existing route was built in 1922 and is badly broken by frost-heaving.

"Girl Scout Corner" columnist Jane Fey visits Camp Sacajawea and finds Mrs. Art Hayward reading a story to "enthralled" Brownies. The Tri City line's "master deluxe" bus transports the record enrollment each day but it cannot turn around inside the camp and the Brownies have to walk in from the town hall. Mrs. Henry Baldwin's Howe

troop entertains its mothers for tea at the Baldwin home on Belle Isle.

June 19

A traveling Chicago & North Western Centennial exhibit will visit Wisconsin Rapids in commemoration of the railroad's one-hundredth year of operation. It features a 10-ton "Pioneer" locomotive that was at the head of the first train out of Chicago in 1848—transported via a flat car. Museum car exhibits trace railroad history.

Ray Sampson of the Sampson Canning company calls the aphis infestation of the pea crop the worst ever seen in these parts.

Against insects, farmers dust fields with DDT and rotenone. To combat weeds such as wild mustard on other farms, 2,4-D is sprayed by airplane.

West Side home owners are alerted through a large ad and photo that Mike Daly, well-known Lincoln High School athlete, will replace west side Normington's Laundry and Dry Cleaners route man Gordon Berg for three weeks.

June 26

A group of old-timers who attended the old Howe school in the 1880s, then known as the "bastille," are invited to be guests of T.W. Brazeau at the Rose room of the Hotel Witter.

Brazeau's invitation goes out "to those who knew the old Grand Rapids before it took on its modern new look; who knew 'Punkin Hill,' and 'Quality Row;' who knew the old Wisconsin with its ice jams and logs and rafts of lumber floating to market; who knew the old swimming holes, 'Long Dam,' 'Five Pier,' 'Guard Locks,' 'Neeves Mill,' and 'Johnson's Pier;' who skated and played shinny on the Wisconsin river and on Arpin's hill; who picked blackberries on Big Island and blueberries on Sand Hill; those who spent their boyhood without movies or funny sheets, automobiles, oil heat, toy pistols or bubble gum; who ran barefoot from May to September and who walked miles for fishing with a long cane pole or hunting along unmarked trails."

July 3

Independence Day celebrations in Wisconsin Rapids:

First, a parade. At Witter athletic field—carnival rides and shows, concessions, free acts, amateur contests, baseball games and fireworks. Finally, a dance at Lincoln Fieldhouse. A rodeo Sunday and Monday at Fel's Race Park east of Wisconsin Rapids on Highway 54.

Celebrations also at Vesper, Pittsville, Kellner, and New Miner.

During the summer, thousands of 4-H club boys and girls join to collect Norway pine cones, of which there is a great shortage, in conjunction with Trees for Tomorrow, Inc., according to W.H. Brener, Wisconsin Rapids, manager of state nurseries.

Luncheonette Menu: Sauerkraut and Spare Ribs, potato roll, salad—45 cents, at Johnson Hill's.

Root beer curb service: Cozy Dog House, 8th Street and Two Mile Avenue, Clarence and Cecil Brave, owners.

July 10

Obit.: Frank Boles, 76, Nekoosa's first fire chief and a former postmaster. He had arrived in 1893 to help build the Nekoosa Paper company dam.

Men of the Wisconsin Rapids National Guard unit—Battery C, 173rd Field Artillery, head for the first post-war encampment at Camp McCoy. Capt. John C. Ritchie, commander of Battery C, reports the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper company will supplement army pay until it equals the amount that would have been earned by remaining at work.

Among the most popular names this year are Barbara, Linda, Patricia, Mary and Susan for girls; Robert, John, James, Michael and David for boys.

Two lives lost on the Third Street south hill in recent weeks demonstrate the narrow thoroughfare is not designed for the motorized age. The only concrete-paved street in that section of the city is heavily traveled to Riverview hospital, the airport, Bull's Eye County club and the new public library. It is also County Trunk Highway Z.

July 17

E.E. Belter, power engineer for Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. cites figures that show a sharp decline in the flow of the river from the previous year, due to the lack of rainfall. So far in 1948, the six-month total of 9.61 is 5.76 inches short of average. Reservoirs contain only half as much water as in past years.

Under the sponsorship of the Central Wisconsin Shrine club and heralded as the world's largest indoor circus, Polack Brothers opens a three-day engagement at Lincoln Fieldhouse. Several hundred area orphans will be special guests.

American planes supply Soviet-blockaded Berlin, Germany, in the greatest show of air might since the end of World War II.

July 24

Wanted:

- Service station attendant. Christy Service Station, 611 E. Grand Ave.
- Scrap iron, rags, old batteries. Frank Garber, 650 McKinley St.
- Girl for house work. Jean Nash.
- Waitress for night work. Davis Restaurant.
- Handy man. Bethke Chevrolet.

For Sale:

- 5-room modern home, $5,000, Walter V. Parmeter.
- 96-acre clay farm south of Pittsville, $2,500. C. Mathis, owner.
- 10-acre farm near city, $5,300. G.M. Coombs, Real Estate and Insurance.

•New plastic dishes in assorted colors. Johnson-Hill's hardware dept.

•New hardware, used furniture. Kreutzer Bros.

•40-acres standing marsh hay. Fel's Race Park.

•Spinet pianos. Daly Music Co.

•Used Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Fischer Cycle Shop, 530 East Grand Ave.

July 31

From the funnies:

Out Our Way: "No! No cold stuff—We're too hot! No starches—too fattening! No stuffing—We're too tired! No stimulants—They have a letdown!"

Our Boarding House...with...Major Hoople. "Pshaw!"

Boots and Her Buddies: "Just look at the jolly side!"

Freckles and Friends: "One measly egg gets us into the jolly prunes and we're stuck with a balky biddy!"

Alley Oop. "I'm here to see the king!! Trot him out an' quick or the depopulation of Egypt will begin in just about fifty-nine seconds."

Red Ryder. "Come pronto, Red Ryder! Stage coach guard just come from Jake Darle's saloon!"

Wash Tubbs. "Yeah, but—Hey! S'pose ol Snell was in on the' swindle."

Carnival. "Amazing!! Jason can write the Lord's prayer on the head of a pin."

Side Glances. "Can't we borrow enough to go places on your vacation? We could have it paid back by the time you're ready for another vacation!"

August 7

A Saturday evening with WFHR radio:

5:00—Take a Number

5:30—True or False

6:00—Dinner Melodies

6:15—News

6:20—Baseball Scores

6:25—Unferth's Sports Huddle

6:30—Dinner Melodies

6:55—News

7:00—Music in Three Quarter Time

7:30—Juke Box Review

8:00—News

8:05—Saturday Serenade

8:30—Dugout Dope

8:35—Appleton vs. Rapids Sox

10:15—Music till Signoff

A sampling from other stations: Grand Ole Opery, Radio City playhouse, Vic Damone, Morey Amsterdam, Let's Dance, Famous Jury trials, Amazing Malone, Gangbusters, Hayloft Hoedown, Hawaii Calls, Twenty Questions.

August 14

Twin calves are born three weeks apart to the same Hereford cow on the Albert Marcoux farm, south of Nekoosa.

A runaway steel box car narrowly misses crashing into the Prentiss Wabers Products company plant after hurling a concrete retaining wall.

Don Unferth, *Tribune* sports editor and sportscaster for radio station WFHR since 1942, resigns to become assistant to the director of the White Sox farm system, of which the Rapids club is a part.

He had succeeded Arch Davis and Bill Draves when both entered the military.

Unferth also served as sportscaster for the University of Wisconsin football and basketball games.

After an altercation, seven minors and a rural bar owner are fined for underage drinking.

Jane Fey, "Girl Scout Corner": "A bit of wistfulness always enters into the closing ceremonies at camp, but happy memories of this camp season and dreams of other happy years to come make it a cheerful time, too."

August 21

"Wisconsin Rapids day" at the Wisconsin Centennial exposition in Milwaukee is "an occasion long to be remembered," according to the *Tribune*. The city band entertains with two concerts; the local American Legion drum and bugle corps parades in front of the cranberry booth (advertising the industry in which Wood county leads the state); and the Barber Shop singers of the Wisconsin Rapids chapter of S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A. join other groups in a massed chorus of 600 voices.

The *Tribune* runs a commemorative issue to recognize one of the state's "pioneer communities": "There was no city of Wisconsin Rapids when Wisconsin was admitted to the union on May 29, 1848. But there was, at that time, a settlement on the east bank of the Wisconsin river at this point, known as Grand Rapids..."

August 28

A sprinkling of rain brings relief from the humid near-100 degree temperatures which prevailed during the first four days of the week. The heat wave had claimed five lives in Wisconsin.

R.S. Wiltrout and Michael Woolf of Prentiss Wabers Products company are recognized for 25 years of industrial achievement and community service by the Wisconsin Rapids Chamber of Commerce, having developed the company from "humble beginnings" to a position of "national eminence in its field."

Johnny Kerr night at Witter field honors the former American league infielder and popular manager of the Rapids White Sox in their most successful season.

Gardens which during the war were called Victory gardens are now known as Freedom gardens, in which "many a Wood county 4-H youngster is doing his (or her) bit with the hoe and other garden implements this summer, in the cause of food-for-freedom."

Ground is broken for a new Donn Hougen-designed Community church in

Port Edwards, Rev. A.W. Triggs, pastor.

September 4

The "greatest clown of present-day baseball," Maxie Patkin, a pitcher for the Rapids White Sox 1940-42, stages his "comical antics" at Witter field prior to the State League game.

A 12-year-old Rapids boy is treated at Riverview hospital for a shotgun slug wound in the chest. The circumstances are not known.

The Odd Fellows lodge on First Street North is razed. It had been built 60-years previous as the Bittner block. Originally a meat market, it was later the home of the Wood County Reporter. The site, sold to Consolidated Water Power and Paper company, has been turned over to the city for park purposes.

The Odd Fellows have acquired the Mrs. Lawrence E. Nash home, 840 Third Street South, as a lodge.

September 11

Purple Heart veteran Robert A. Smith attempts to explain to the common council the need for insulation in the converted army barracks that constitute the city's veterans housing project but receives scant attention. Cold temperatures in the three buildings are seen as a threat to the health of the nearly 50 resident children.

The barracks were erected during the wartime rush to build training camps fast enough to hold the rapidly expanding army.

Burglary of the Herbert Helke root beer stand near the swimming beach on the north side of Lake Wazeecha is reported to the sheriff's office. A similar stand operated by Raymond H. Manske on Highway 13, six miles south of the city, had been burglarized earlier in the week.

Despite the prolonged drought, Henry Meyer, 10th Avenue North, manages to grow a beet that is eight inches in diameter and weighs over seven pounds. He says it tastes "swell."

September 18

The first two cases of poliomyelitis for the year in Wood county are reported by health authorities. The victims are a 32-year-old Rapids painting contractor who had become paralyzed from the waist down and a Pittsville boy whose infection centered in his throat and chest.

At Witter field, more than 4,000 fans watch the Red Raiders and Wausau Lumberjacks battle to a scoreless tie. According to Ed Hanson in the *Tribune*, "One of the most startling sights in that ball game, during the first half, was Bruce Tenpas, refusing to give ground, stopping again and again the thrusts of big Charley Berndt, Wausau fullback."

In the county primary election, there is only one contest: Harvey Gee, county board member from Wisconsin Rapids, challenging W.W. Clark, Vesper. Unopposed candidates include M.R. Laird, Jr., state senator, Arthur E. Berg, sheriff, Dr. H.G. Pomainville, coroner, Jasper C. Johnson, clerk of circuit court, Herbert A. Bunde, district attorney, Robert J. Ryan, register of deeds.

A plane crash south of Nekoosa claims the life of a 21-year-old Rapids man, the passenger. The plane had taken off from Tri-City air park earlier.

September 25

With four touchdowns by Jack Torresani, two by Benkowski and one by Bob Schindler, the Red Raiders "outspeed" the Merrill Blue Jays at Witter field 47-0. John Mader makes five of seven extra point attempts. Dean Showers, game captain, is a standout on defense.

An 11-year-old Pittsville boy dies at Wisconsin General hospital in Madison following a week's illness of bulbar poliomyelitis. He is the second county victim of the disease within a week.

"Crafty Curly Lambeau and crafty George Halas were busy trying to out-craft each other this week as their respective National league football teams prepare for Sunday's tussle" in Green Bay, according to a *Tribune* column. The Packers had defeated the Washington Redskins 43-0 in an exhibition game. Their first league victory was a 31-0 triumph over the Boston Yanks.

October 2

In a week: the University of Wisconsin loses its Big Nine conference opener to Indiana, 35-7; Detroit crushes the Marquette university football team 34-6; and the Green Bay Packers are trounced 45-7 by the Chicago Bears.

Lincoln Hi-Lights by Marilyn Jacobs: In preparation for the Antigo-Rapids football game, a pep meeting is held Friday afternoon "with violent cheering ringing through the fieldhouse." An all-school dance Friday evening from 8 to 11 p.m. features music by the Swing Shifters.

Student council officers are Marjorie Wilcox, president; Marilyn Jacobs, vice president; Dave Lee, secretary; Ronnie Johnson, treasurer.

October 9

Following the discontinuation of the wartime freezes and steel shortages, radio station WFHR-FM at 104.7 megacycles is formally dedicated by William F. Huffman, president of the corporation and owner of the *Tribune*, which devotes a special edition to the event.

The musical program features violin solos by Joseph Liska Jr., accompanied by Mrs. Liska, and singing by Bernadine Speltz and a Port Edwards girl trio made up of Joan Buehler, Jean Pasco and Marcia Alexander, accompanied by Mrs. Frank Hegg. Organ music is furnished by Gordon Hinkley, formerly of WFHR.

WFHR-AM counts its eighth year, having gone on the air November 5, 1940, with a night-long broadcast of presidential election returns.

October 16

At a pre-game ceremony in the fieldhouse, Kathryn Henke is crowned LHS Homecoming queen, a tradition begun in 1940. At the pep session, 1947 alumnus Maurice Mathews declares that graduates enjoy renewing old acquaintances and recalling old times. Principal A.A. Ritchay broadcasts an urgent appeal for coach Phil Manders, shortly found by the dramatic club in a condition of "rigor mortis." Music is provided by the high school band under Roger Hornig.

"The claws of the tiger strike swiftly and unexpectedly." Marshfield hands the football Red Raiders their first conference defeat 26-21 on its homecoming, despite a 65-yard touchdown run by Jack Torresani.

A 52-year-old Oak Street resident, hardware store owner and former Wood County treasurer, claims that an assailant, hiding in the rear seat of his car, struck him numerous times on the head with a blunt object after he drove into his garage.

PLAY SHEEPHEAD. Every Sunday night at the New Sunrise Tavern.

October 23

Elks Club: Judging from the howls of approval when the overflow crowd is asked if it wants more teen-aged dances, the first such social event held here Friday evening is a success. Sponsored by Local 610, American Federation of Musicians, the local VFW and the Elks lodge, the dance attracts about 400.

"It's hopeless," says one owner of a crusade to bring the National football league and the rival All America conference into a working agreement that would include a world series of football. All America teams include the New York Yankees and San Francisco 49ers.

The Raiders football team, led by Dean Showers and Roger Randrup, battles the Rhinelander Hodags to a 0-0 tie.

ORDER NOW: Strikingly beautiful five-pound gift boxes of Indian Trail cranberries: $2.98.

October 30

Halloween, according to the *Tribune*: First, tiny tots, quavering on the front porch. "Rest assured that mama or papa is waiting in the darkness outside."

Then, grade-school youngsters, cramming treats into "an indistinguishable mass of once edible items." A third group: "Residents are a little apprehensive when they hear the clumping of size 11 shoes on their front steps."

Hopefully, editorializes the *Tribune*, the little guys and gals should not have to fear a barrage of tomatoes from an older crowd, or "that the next clump of bushes hides bigger youngsters whose main aim is to make off with their carefully gathered treats" or "the humiliation of a darkened porch or a barred door because the group which previously visited there left unsightly soap marks on clean windows."

Rapids retains the Ol' River Jug, defeating Stevens Point 26-6 in the grid finale.

November 6

4-H Clubs host demonstrations for rural schools: Natwick, Turner , Bean, North Hansen, Jackson, Vesper, Spring Lake, Pioneer, Pleasant View, Lone Pine, Snyder, Lone Birch, Rudolph, Hillview, Sunnyside.

Pittsville, Good Cheer, Pleasant Corners, Veedum. Washington, Golden Glow, Hillcrest, Lindsey, East Rock. Rocky Run, Cary Bluff, West Cary, Wallace.

Dairy Belt, Shady Nook, Oak Leaf, Maple Grove, Far View. Arpin, Woodland Echo, North Arpin, Meadow Brook, Crescent. Sherry, Stepping Stone, Milladore, Mill Creek, Green Elm, Lone Maple.

At the Golden Gate Supper Club. Six nights a week. Floor shows, introducing Lorraine Gerum, vocalist; Leah Wakefield, exotic dancer; and Jack Brooks, master of ceremonies. Music by the Castillians.

Best fans in the world: the worst riot in Green Bay history, according to Mayor Dominic Olejniczak, by hundreds of youths after the East-West high school football game.

November 13

Obit: Simon Joosten, 74, president of the Farmers and Merchants bank at Rudolph.

Police Chief R.J. Exner tells the LHS chemistry club what he learned at FBI school and concludes with a fingerprinting demonstration.

Dean Showers (end), Francis Simonis (tackle), Jerry Ellis (center) and Jack Torresani (backfield) are named to the Valley all conference all-star football team.

The Red Raiders roll to a 57-22 victory over Waupaca in the season basketball opener and a second non-conference win with a 48-30 win over the Mosinee Papermakers.

Members of the Rapids Rotary club and their wives are guests of George W. Mead, president of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. and the Wisconsin River Power Co. for a tour of the new Petenwell dam. Joining Mead is W.F. Thiele, one of the chief planners of the "gigantic hydroelectric power development."

November 20

The first reported deer kill of the season is by Tony Ruesch, Vesper at Blueberry Ridge, town of Seneca.

Philleo Nash, a former Wisconsin Rapids resident, visiting his sister Jean Nash here, is credited by Life magazine with a key role in the Truman election victory as an "expediter."

A graduate doctor of anthropology, Nash serves as the President's advisor on racial and cultural matters in

addition to his other duties on the White House staff.

Nash terms Truman's victory that of "an intelligent, sincere and simple man, to whom the people have always reacted with sincere enthusiasm."

"We were disgraceful out there yesterday," Curly Lambeau says of the Packers 49-3 loss to the New York Giants before a crowd of 13,000 at State Fair Park, Milwaukee.

"I'd like to get rid of 10 or 12 squad members, but there are too many cripples and we couldn't get along."

November 27

With "Miss Mary Christmas," Joan Buehler of Port Edwards, leading the parade, costumed youngsters riding gaily-trimmed bicycles, wagons and scooters are among the features of the Kiddie's Parade in downtown Rapids.

Receiving the grand prize for their Santa's sleigh ensemble are Dale and Daniel Falkosky.

Nekoosa Postmaster Carol P. Buehler vows that no letter to Santa Claus will go unanswered if it is mailed through the Nekoosa post office, addressed to Santa Claus, North Pole.

Gaylord, Mich.: Three boys, 13, 12, and 10, admit to killing a 66-year-old woodcutter with a rifle purchased with stolen money, when he refuses to chop down a tree so that it will fall across a power line and cover up their school truancy.

Advertised as America's lowest cost pickup truck: the Crosley.

December 4

Obit.: C.F. Kruger, 78, German native, prominent Rapids citizen, part owner of Johnson Hill and one-time president of Wood County Grocery and Prentiss Wabers Products.

Reburial services: Pfc. Donald E. Brehm, killed, 1944, in an airplane crash on Corsica, his body returned from Italy.

Missing hunter: Wallace Liebenstein, 39, town of Saratoga, spends a night in a straw pile southwest of Saddle Mound, then narrates his experience on WFHR.

The Tri-Norse Ski club holds a grand opening of its recreational ski area at Dyracuse Mound, showing off two rope ski tows.

The basketball Red Raiders roll to an 82-31 victory over the Merrill Blue Jays before a packed house.

At 3-0, Rapids stands atop a conference that includes Nekoosa and Tomahawk.

The Packers end their most unhappy season with a 42-7 loss to the Chicago Cardinals.

December 11

Interment in Forest Hill cemetery with military rites by Buckley-Baldwin Post 2534, Veterans of Foreign Wars: Sgt. Douglas Conklin, formerly of Vesper, who had died in Germany in 1945 while serving as an infantryman.

Through an "impregnable" defense, the Rapids basketball Red Raiders defeat the Wausau Lumberjacks 52-21, remaining on top of the Valley Conference.

Nekoosa wins its first Valley game by beating Tomahawk 39-29 at home.

Among those scoring are Johnny Voss, Norm Femling, Russ Dunn, B. Gustin, and "Kitrusch."

The Nekoosa B-team rallies to an 18-17 victory over Rudolph high school, the latter team made up of Perry, Ogilvie, Louis, "Goosten," [Joosten] Reber, Suzda, Oleson, Hamm, Lee, Fox, "B'rgeson," and "M'rz'fka."

December 18

Ice storm!

A semi-trailer truck hits a concrete abutment.

A car pulls into a filling station and skids into another vehicle. A driver brakes for a school bus; his car slides into another car and tips over. A third car hits the ditch.

Stopped behind a school bus, Donald Caylor's squad car is struck from the rear.

A motor-operated push car on the Soo Line strikes an auto. A car collides with a dairy truck

A parked panel truck is struck by an auto while the driver aids another driver.

A car strikes a fire hydrant. A bus strikes a parked truck.

Etc. Etc.

Residents on foot slip and fall: five fractured ribs on a sidewalk; a broken leg in Nekoosa; a fractured arm on Washington street. Multiple hand and leg fractures when a ladder falls, its owner having been erecting Christmas decorations.

December 25

Merry Christmas from: C.C. Knudsen, mayor; Nels M. Justeson, city clerk; Raymond Clark, city treasurer; Carl Cajanus, city engineer; Robert Boyarski, city assessor;

Frank Abel, president, Chamber of Commerce; Dr. H. G. Pomainville, county coroner; R.J. Sullivan, highway commissioner.

Arthur Berg, sheriff; Hugo Wettstein, undersheriff; Jasper Johnson, clerk of court; Joe Wheir, postmaster; Frank W. Calkins, county judge; Robert J. Ryan, register of deeds; Donald Caylor, county traffic officer; Arthur Boll, county traffic officer.

Vernon Kelly, county treasurer; Richard S. Brazeau, Rotary Club president; Miss Cecilia Shestock, Home Demonstration Agent; S.G. Corey, Superintendent of Schools;

Captain John Ritchie, Com. Bty. C.; 1st Lt. Hugh Simonson, Com. Bty. C.; Herbert A. Bunde, district attorney.

W.A. Sprise, director of Vocational and Adult Education; Mary E. Zapp, city school Nurse; Harry Precious, welfare dept. director; Joe Ellis, Elks Exalted Ruler;

Phil Manders, Red Raiders coach; Ernest O. Anderson, county veterans service officer; Ken Walker, Quarterbacks Club president; Dave Engel, city historian.

Above: Lake Wazeecha red beach in 1952. Eileen Keating, with David Keating, David Engel, Sherry Keating, Kathryn Engel, Diane Keating, Scott Keating and Gary Engel. *Below:* Two Mile Avenue in 1950. *(RCM)*

1950s – Looking east: Grand Avenue at 8th Street

(Wisconsin Department of Transportation)

Reinhart Henke, president of Pulp & Sulphite Worker's union: George W. Mead, owner of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co., mayor of Wisconsin Rapids; William Huchthausen, president, Paper makers; J.I. Cheatle, president of Central Labor Union; Raymond Richards, secretary of Central Labor Union. *(Milwaukee Leader)*

Right: Consolidated Park *(RCM)*

CONSOLIDATED UNION

Mead settles quickly

Consolidated President George W. Mead didn't have to deal with the 1902 labor unrest that troubled his competitors. His mill wasn't built until 1903.

In 1912, aware that the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers was busy in this area, he instituted the demanded three eight-hour shifts at Grand Rapids and Biron, temporarily heading off union activity, according to labor historian Robert W. Ozanne.

To combat the increasingly militant union movement, many mill owners from Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin formed the Western Paper Manufacturers Association but Consolidated's Mead did not join.

In the summer of 1916, workers struck the Interlake Pulp and Paper Co. at Appleton, demanding eight-hour shifts and the right to form a union. The response of Interlake management was to join the manufacturers association and bring in strikebreakers.

The strike had not been resolved in November, when the mill was sold.

The buyer was George Mead and Consolidated. Because of a shortage due to World War I, he needed Interlake sulphite pulp for his Rapids mill.

At Interlake, Mead also put in the three-tour system and ended the strike.

World War I caused labor shortages that strengthened unions through federal rules intended to avoid strikes. The effect lasted beyond the 1918 armistice.

In the spring of 1919, workers at Mead's Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co., led by unionizer George Schneider of Appleton, wrote to the American Federation of Labor for advice on organizing.

On March 2, speakers at a well-attended meeting at the Rapids Amusement Hall included Rapids mayor Charles E. Briere and supporters of a papermakers union.

On March 30, 1919, Consolidated workers organized Badger Local 187 of the International Brotherhood of Papermakers with 40 charter members.

On the Friday following March 30, Mead announced the Rapids mill would shut down until the union was disbanded.

Mead told the local *Daily Leader* he was not opposed to independent unions here but would not be dictated to by a national group such as the American Federation of Labor.

Newly chartered members of Badger Local 187 met at the Rapids Amusement Hall on April 5 and prepared for a bitter fight.

The confrontation didn't amount to much beyond that.

The day after the union meeting, Mead announced he would recognize the workers' right to a union and would reinstate the strikers.

Mead's proposal was presented Thursday morning, and the men were expected at work Thursday night. The strike was over.

Through the agreement, according to a union spokesman, "not all achieved through our own efforts but through the generosity of Mr. George W. Mead, president of the company," the union grew to 335 members six weeks after formation.

The contract provided a union shop. All new employees were to join the union within 15 days. The same agreement, which did not last, was made at Mead's United Paper Co. at Stevens Point.

Mead became a "pariah," or outcast, according to Ozanne, among paper manufacturers, "who now feared him as much as they feared the union organizers."

Attending a manufacturers meeting, Mead spoke in favor of unions. Later, he drove up to a picket line in front of a mill on strike and talked with strikers.

A May 1919 statement by Mead, printed in *Consolidated News* explained his attitude. He said he at first thought allowing unions would promote strikes, shut down mills and cause unemployment, thus injuring both employee and employer.

However, Mead changed his mind. He had become convinced that collective bargaining was here to stay, and that Consolidated workers would continue to work hard and strive for harmony rather than discord.

"With these principles at work, there is every reason to belief that we can meet together on common ground and determine many of the important matters which have to do with the policy of the company toward the men," he said.

An October essay on "Labor and Capital," bearing the style of Mead, recognized that "the quarrel brings out the arbitrary, an many times unyielding, aspects of capitalism on the one hand, and the impulsive, pugnacious and autocratic methods of labor on the other."

It also restated his belief that employer and employee could avoid confrontation by meeting on common ground to solve their problems.

"Strikes are an evil. Nobody denies that. They are a loss to the employer, to the employee and to the consumer."

In November, Mead stated his satisfaction in the results.

"It is important and pleasing to note that the company's relations with the union have proven mutually beneficial.

"The employees are identified with Badger Local No. 187, together with the Consolidated men, and the working agreement now in force has served to standardize employment conditions to the satisfaction of all concerned.

"The union committee has taken a broad and farsighted point view which has, so far, reflected their desire to serve the best interests of their employer as well as the best interests of the men whom they are chosen to represent.

"Employers and employees alike must see their duty and their opportunity to point out the sound-minded methods of doing things. We can not do this by condemnation, retaliation and abuse."

UNITED BROTHERHOOD OF PAPERMAKERS

1902: On strike at local mills

A 13-hour shift could get pretty long, especially six days a week.

That's what the night shift had to work in 1902. The day shift only worked 11 hours.

But more than the long hours, it was working Saturday nights that drove Wisconsin paper-mill workers to organize their first union, which became part of the United Brotherhood of Paper Makers.

In January 1902, union men at Fox River paper mills, including mills owned by stockholders in the Nekoosa Paper Co., went on strike.

The January 23 Wood County *Reporter* considered a similar strike in the Rapids area unlikely. The local union was only about a year old and did not represent workers at all of the mills.

Besides, said the *Reporter*, mills here paid relatively high wages.

Most owners were affiliated with the General Paper Co. of Chicago, which controlled the output of twenty Wisconsin mills. Attending a January 30, 1902, meeting in Chicago were Grand Rapids mill men E.T. Harmon, Thomas E. Nash, Frank Garrison and L.M. Alexander, who also was chief officer of General.

"No sir, we did not even think of making any concessions to the strikers at our meeting today, because we didn't discuss the strike at all," Alexander claimed.

In early February, William Hamilton, a national organizer of the papermakers union, addressed a meeting of workmen at Grand Rapids.

The previous year, Hamilton had organized unions at Stevens Point, Biron and Nekoosa.

A strike threatened at Nekoosa and South Centralia was delayed. Workers supposedly had been induced by misrepresentation to agree to a 10 percent raise without shorter hours if they didn't join a union.

Many Stevens Point-area mill employees, including women, did strike in late February, prompted by the firing of a pro-union employee. They wanted shorter hours and double pay for Sunday work.

Throughout the 1902 strike, management stood firm against the unions.

On February 26, Alexander wrote to T.E. Nash, "I was crucified in 1892 for the principle that unions must not be permitted to dictate ... We are glad you are fighting for the same principle."

The unidentified "manager" of Nash's Nekoosa Paper Co. was quoted by Robert W. Ozanne, in "The Labor Movement in Wisconsin," as saying, "No ... bloodsucker representing ... an alleged union will ever be permitted to inject ... his vile slandering lies between us."

The also unidentified manager of the Grand Rapids Pulp & Paper Co. mill at Biron dismissed six men, replacing them with a non-union crew. He threatened to fire all union men and make the entire mill non-union.

A strike was threatened in March as local papermakers demanded a "short-hour" schedule, with no work Saturday nights. A central question was how many hours constituted a week's work.

"So far, the strikers have conducted themselves with most commendable moderation, never for once showing a disposition to pull a gun or throw a brick bat. What they may do when they begin to feel the pangs of hunger remains to be seen," said the *Tribune*.

The long-anticipated strike occurred at 6 p.m. Saturday, April 5, when 55 union men at Nekoosa and 20 at Biron walked off their jobs "as a result of demands made 60 days previous."

Owners began seeking non-union workers, as production at the Nekoosa mill fell from four machines to one, with similar effects at Biron.

According to J. Marshall Buehler's *The Nekoosa Story*, Nekoosa President T.E. Nash hired out-of-town machine tenders whom he met at the train along with some strikers.

"In a flare of tempers, Nash wielded his revolver at the group," Buehler wrote.

Representatives of the national papermakers' union remained in Grand Rapids to keep strikers in line and ensure union solidarity.

"They (the owners) have no hard feelings towards any of the men and feel that the eastern agitators who are here stirring up the men are more to blame than the men themselves," said a Grand Rapids newspaper.

An April 10 letter from T.E. Nash's son Guy to Guy's sister reported that all the union men at Nekoosa and Biron had gone out the previous Saturday night but not "Garrison's" Centralia mill.

Biron was running one machine 18 hours a day and Nekoosa, one machine day and night, said Nash.

"The men are orderly so far. They [mill owners] are scouring the country for non-union machine hands and will soon be running full again. Only the lack of machine tenders and back tenders troubles, the places of the others being easily filled, and common labor in abundance."

Nash correctly expected the owners to prevail. According to Ozanne, by the end of April 1902, the strikers in the Wisconsin River Valley were defeated. A large number of the Biron and Nekoosa strikers now found themselves shoveling sand for the Chicago & North Western Railroad Co. at less than half the daily $3.75 they had been making in the mills.

1919

Trouble in River City

When the Consolidated papermakers union successfully ended its 1919 strike, the labor-union organizer moved on to Nekoosa.

"We thought what was good for the Rapids was good for the Nekoosa mill, and we all joined," said a Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co. employee named Stellmacher, in a 1933 statement.

According to Robert W. Ozanne in "The Labor Movement in Wisconsin," workers at the two Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co., (now Georgia-Pacific Corp.) mills demanded recognition by the company and collective bargaining for their two locals: the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers and the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers.

The Port Edwards-based company quickly answered that it would deal with neither of the above but would only speak with unaffiliated individuals representing workers within the two mills, or what Ozanne called "company unions."

Prodded by federal "conciliators," Nekoosa-Edwards met with a workers' bargaining committee but continued to offer only a company union.

A May 31, 1919, Nekoosa-Edwards bulletin, now in the archives of the Alexander House, Port Edwards, said "men of business and industry never have unions, except as they are forced upon them."

The company blamed wartime pro-German agitators, socialists, Soviets and the International Workers of the World for misleading "the few strikers who stand shivering around the railroad-tie fire with drawn faces."

On June 22, more than 300 workers struck at the Port Edwards and Nekoosa mills, demanding an eight-hour day and collective bargaining. They may have expected to return to work shortly; the Consolidated men had been out for less than a week.

NEPCO served notice that strikers living in company houses would be expected to vacate in 30 days. Tenants were informed that a company-owned boarding house in Port Edwards would close.

The July 10, 1919, Wisconsin Rapids *Tribune* described a large crowd gathered at the Grand Rapids Armory to hear union organizer George P. Schneider tell them the company was trying to starve the union into submission and force workers from their homes.

He presented a statement of NEPCO profits, that, he said, showed the company could afford the asked-for concessions.

NEPCO had its own "union," said Schneider. Along with many other Wisconsin paper mills, it belonged to the anti-union Western Paper Manufacturers Association, which sent representative Ira Beck to the area.

The union expanded on its position in a July 13 statement calling for the eight-hour day, collective bargaining, time-and-a-half for overtime, and the end of discrimination against labor unions.

The July 17 Nekoosa *Tribune* said local businessmen had met to do what they could to "terminate the trouble," submitting a compromise proposal to NEPCO President L.M. Alexander.

Settlement of the strike seemed possible as Alexander and the strikers repeatedly met at the Moccasin Creek pavilion.

Alexander made several offers, including the formation of an employees' committee to deal with management.

A board of arbitration, made up of one man selected by the employees, one by the company and a third chosen by the other two, would settle disputes.

As the end of July approached, it seemed the company had granted most of the concessions demanded by the businessmen's committee. Yet negotiations were broken off for the final time by NEPCO, and the strike "settled down to a real serious fight, according to the Nekoosa *Tribune*.

If union organizer Schneider had not come, said Stellmacher, the agreement would have been voted on favorably by the workers. "But Schneider said, 'Knock the thing in the head,' so we knocked it in the head."

The result, Stellmacher told a meeting of NEPCO workers in 1933, was that "some of you fellows ... probably came and got our jobs."

NEPCO began to take back former strikers, offering an eight-hour day for shift workers, a nine-hour day for laborers and a 10 percent raise for all.

Following the breakdown of negotiations, serious enmity grew between strikers and those who wanted to return to work.

The August 7 Grand Rapids *Tribune* said three strikers were under arrest following disturbances the previous week.

George Dampier, William Leverance and John Ulrich had "terrorized" the home of a strike breaker the past Saturday night, according to the accusations.

In their defense, the three told a crowded courtroom they had seen a funny sight: a man disguised as a woman sneaking out of the mills after the 3-11 shift. Believing the man was the strikebreaker in question, they had gathered at his house to get a good look at him in feminine attire, the three testified.

The evidence to "contradict their stated motive being insufficient" (and the damage done purely psychological), the case was dismissed.

More serious trouble was to follow.

1919 STRIKE TWO

The strike by Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co. workers did not achieve its foremost objective: to force company president L.M. Alexander to bargain with newly formed unions at the Nekoosa and Port Edwards mills.

Instead, Alexander welcomed former strikers back to work and recruited new employees from as far away as Minneapolis and Chicago, some concealed in boxcars brought into the mill after dark. By the end of the summer of 1919, so many new men had arrived from out of town for work that company-owned houses and the Port Edwards Hotel were filled, requiring the building of employee barracks.

According to J. Marshall Buehler's *Nekoosa Story*, Alexander's Pierce Arrow was nicknamed the "Green Dragon" as it transported strikers to and from their homes.

Former workers resisted the coming of strikebreakers. Strikers hurled rocks at trains bringing in new men, fired shots while a strikebreaker drove to work, and laid tacks in the road used by company officials to transport workers.

Wives organized the "Daughters of Democracy" to cheer strikers on the picket line. They also "called on" strikebreakers' wives in order to bolster wayward consciences.

When a Nekoosa-Edwards official and family welcomed a relative on furlough from the military, the gathered crowd, which included many women, shouted such insults as "scab," "yellow dog" and "skunk," according to press reports.

Threats, beatings and gun pointings were alleged.

Some of the arriving strikebreakers claimed they had not known about the strike when they were hired. They said they were shocked when guards warned them that pickets waited in the woods and along the railroad tracks, armed with shotguns and prepared to shoot strikebreakers if they left the mill compound.

At least 13 men won lawsuits for transportation expenses back to Minneapolis.

Armed guards were hired by the company to protect mill property and strikebreakers. The mill was started up August 18 without the union men.

On September 3, NEPCO told customers it again was making newsprint, according to Buehler.

New workers interviewed by the 1919 *Tribune* said they didn't know much about papermaking but didn't think the operation was going well. When the machines were started up, they saw many carts of waste paper hauled away to the beaters.

With the cooperation of management, the *Tribune* visited the Port Edwards and Nekoosa mills. At Nekoosa, one of the mill's four machines was running, making kraft wrapping paper. It was noted that there were three "girls" working.

On October 23, after four months of the strike, the *Tribune* went to the Port Edwards mill and found it running to capacity. At a barracks near the mill, the *Tribune* found two "colored" waiters in charge of table service.

Alexander's December 24 year-end report declared the strike over, though the unions continued to man bonfires outside.

The company, according to the *Tribune* of January 29, 1920, was planning to erect homes for new employees' families the following summer at Port Edwards.

Sporadic unlawful incidents were reported throughout the winter. A worker was beaten in front of union headquarters at Nekoosa by three Nekoosa men who were arrested for drunkenness, assault and battery.

At union headquarters on March 24, windows were shattered by a volley of stones and bricks. A ruckus followed, involving Andrew Zurfluh, well-known proprietor of an "ice cream parlor," and striker Neal Crowns Jr.

Crowns claimed Zurfluh had started a fight in the union hall.

Others said the occupants had called Zurfluh a scab as he passed the hall. Zurfluh was accused of being the leader of the "gang" that broke the windows of the hall.

Much of the anger no doubt reflected frustration by the strikers. They were losing badly, having found themselves up against not only NEPCO but the Western Paper Manufacturers Association and its strikebreaking fund.

Other association members were assessed to pay off the NEPCO strike debt, according to labor historian Robert Ozanne.

Among other tactics, the company continued to refuse to bargain with the union, sought an injunction against picketing and blacklisted 70 strikers. On April 1, 1920, the NEPCO mills returned to three shifts and gave workers a raise in pay.

As did the company, the local unions received outside assistance.

Some $7,000 in contributions came from unions around the state, of which $4,740 came from Badger Local of Wisconsin Rapids. Badger promised to assess each member one day's pay per month for as long as the strike lasted.

Many former workers struggled for a while on strike, living on credit from Nekoosa businessmen. But with the mill running at full strength, the strike was a dead issue to a management that had no more reason to negotiate.

In 1933, the former striker named Stellmacher, who was quoted in the first part of this series on June 20, recalled he eventually had resumed his job.

"I didn't want to be called a 'scab,'" he said, "but it was foolish for me not to take it while I had a chance because there was someone else there to fill it."

The failed strike formally ended on a vote by the few remaining members of the Nekoosa Local on June 21, 1922.

"That is how that strike was broken," Stellmacher said. "If we had accepted the first proposition, we might have kept the Union."

CONSOLIDATED
Labor Relations

It had been the community's most serious and misunderstood strike, said the *Daily Tribune* in October 1957. After three weeks of work-stoppage at the Consolidated mills, nobody won.

Losses were figured in high numbers. Striking papermakers and idled non-strikers lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in wages. Consolidated lost production of 20,000 tons of paper. Estimated wages lost totaled about $900,000.

My welder father found work clearing brush for the future Ridges golf course, sometimes with me "helping."

Neither the company nor the union was able to explain to the *Tribune* what the strike was about. Later, it seemed that personality conflicts were factors.

According to the *Tribune*, a man in a store asked his companion, "What did you papermakers get?"

The papermaker said, "I got to go back to work."

The *Tribune* celebrated that conclusion. "Well, we all have a touch of poetry in our souls, and it's wonderful to hear the great paper machines roaring again as they pour the community's life blood into the arteries of the nation's commerce."

The 1957 action was the first and only time a strike shut down the Consolidated mill after unions were established in 1919. For the most part, the relationship between Consolidated and the unions has been one of cooperation.

In 1957, Leo Barrette, then Consolidated's director of personnel and labor relations, compiled a history of union agreements upon which much of the following information is based.

The first union contract was signed May 17, 1919, with the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers Badger Local 187, representing employees at Grand Rapids and Biron divisions.

In 1921, seven local unions from various industries organized what would be the Central Labor Council. The number of Consolidated unions expanded quickly.

A joint labor agreement May 1, 1921, included the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers, Locals 94 and 58, and the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers, Locals 187 and 116. In 1923, Electrical Workers Local 1147 came in.

On May 1, 1926, Consolidated initiated a vacation plan. Employees with three to 10 years of service got three days of vacation. Those who had worked for more than 10 years received six days, all with full pay.

May 1928 brought an all-union shop contract.

A 1929 issue of the Milwaukee *Journal* praised fair play between unions and "millionaire president" George W. Mead. American Federation of Labor President William Green, called Mead's unemployment compensation plan "one of the most progressive steps ever taken in the history of American labor." Every man who had worked for the company more than one year was assured of about one-third of his wages when out of work through a shutdown.

Unemployment pay schedules were first drawn up at Consolidated's Port Arthur, Ontario, mill as "part of Mr. Mead's philosophy that fair dealing with the unions is good business, and that a good man is an asset," said the *Journal*.

"Paternalism and benevolence are frowned upon by the Consolidated folks."

C.J. Jackson, Consolidated general manager, said, "Meetings sometimes get pretty hot, but we always get together in the end."

The International Association of Machinists, Lodge 655, was added in 1931. My father, Donald Engel, was its financial secretary in the 1950s.

In 1919, the base rate at Consolidated was 45 cents per hour. The more skilled "mechanics" received 59 cents.

The base rate still was 45 cents in 1931, only to be reduced in 1932 to an all-time low of 36.5 cents in the Depression year of 1932.

Pay began rising toward the end of the 1930s, reaching 63 cents per hour in 1941, and jumped sharply in 1946 to 90 cents. In 1950, it reached $1.34. In 1956, it was $1.73.

When I started working as a vacation-relief laborer in 1964, the base rate was $2.22 per hour, more than twice what I had made per hour the previous summer at Sampson's canning factory.

Skilled rates followed the same pattern, rising through the 1920s, declining in the early 1930s and rising again in 1937 to 80 cents per hour.

In 1950, they were $1.85. In 1956, they were $2.35

In 1919, "time and a half" pay was granted to three-shift workers for work days over 8 hours, Sundays and four holidays. The pay rate was extended to day workers in 1927.

A 40-hour week was mutually agreed on in 1931. In 1932, Thanksgiving was substituted for Armistice Day as a paid holiday.

A one-week vacation after two years, with 40 hours of pay, came in 1941. Easter Sunday became a double-time holiday.

In 1943, a 48-hour week was decreed by presidential order, due to wartime needs. It was cut back to 40 hours in 1946.

Vacations kept getting longer: two weeks after five years of work in 1944; three weeks after 15 years in 1949; four weeks after 25 years in 1955.

Funeral leave of up to three days came in 1955.

The Employees Benefit Association was established in 1916 to provide mutual aid to those members who suffered loss of income or incurred expenses due to illness or injury.

The cost of health insurance and death benefits was borne equally by the company and employees.

In 1948, a pension plan came into being.

Mead wrote in May 1919, just after he signed the first labor agreement: "There is every reason to believe that we can meet together on common ground and determine many of the important matters which have to do with the policy of the company toward the men.

"It is my firm belief that the union can be made an instrument for good rather than bad," said Mead, "and that it can serve as a means for closer relationship."