

Another setting for child's play was the abandoned Pioneer pulp mill on the east bank.

"When the first winter of idleness came along, a few of us descended on the place and cut numerous holes, big enough to crawl through, in the floors in various places and a few in the wall," wrote Arpin. "The idea was to provide a nice place to engage in a rather rough game which we called 'Beg.'"

Arpin and his gang also played Beg in the vacant Roenius foundry but it was full of black dust "and not nearly as wholesome a place as the Old Pioneer."

Much of Arpin's recreation came to be centered around the use of firearms. His first was acquired by the sedulous consumption of "Vigor," a "new-fangled dry-flake breakfast food" he had persuaded his family to eat.

Finally, Ed got the "i" that filled out the word "V-i-g-o-r," and with it, a single shot .22 rifle.

A year later, Ed began sneaking a .12 gauge shotgun out of the house in a gunny sack until it was stuck in the mud and subsequently blown up by his brother, Dan.

A major misadventure involved a "32-20" Marlin level action with a hammer. When he was 12 years old, Ed with Dan took a boat to the family's cranberry marsh, but the boat almost immediately sank. Pushing the boat back on shore, Ed reached out and took the 32-20 by the "business end." Shaking with cold, he attempted to remove the gun, but bumped a boat seat and it discharged.

The bullet entered Arpin's arm just below the right shoulder. A tourniquet was applied at the marsh and he was rushed to Grand Rapids, where two surgeons recommended amputation. Another young doctor thought the arm could be saved. The decision was left to the boy.

"I would not part with the arm," he said, although it became so swollen with gangrene it seemed like it might pop. Suddenly one day the pain was gone and the arm deflated.

After that, Arpin felt pain in his shoulder due to height. Some friends dared him to climb the standpipe near the high school "I hated it like hell but said OK. I couldn't bear the thought of going down. The more I stayed, the worse I felt. They went down first. I got down two spaces and

couldn't stand it any more and jumped. My feet were buried in sand from the impact," he said."

As a 14-year-old, Arpin and friends Don Johnson, George Hill, Buff (Albert) Natwick, Dean Brundage and Jiggy Jergenson planned a trip down the Wisconsin River. It began at Nekoosa.

"Jiggy brought some dynamite. He wanted to shoot some fish. About 50 yards from the mill, he dropped the charge."

The explosion blew the boat out of the water. The surface was covered with carp.

"We never ate a particle of carp," Arpin said. "We couldn't stand the smell of it."

That men could be boys too is shown in an anecdote involving a small burro shipped to Grand Rapids by an uncle in Colorado. The burro was named Jim and soon became famous for his appetite.

When first turned loose in the pasture, Jim ignored the grass and devoured the thistles. Later, he escaped and ate clothes off neighbor's lines. One night, he even chewed items off the S.S. Peter and Paul rectory clothesline.

Father Beyerle, still holding a long-stemmed meerschaum pipe between his teeth, rushed out to chase Jim away, "upon which Jim drew a bead and with his rear hoof pretty well demolished it."

The tolerance of Ed's father, Edmund Arpin Sr., for the burro lasted long enough for the brothers Harold, George, Dan and Ed to hook Jim to a small two-seated cart decorated with crinkled paper and bunting and join "the morning parade down the main street of the east side of town."

"When our little contribution to the procession was about in front of the J.E. Daly's Drug Store, my uncle, Art, the youngest and 'black sheep uncle,' appeared in the open doorway of the store, holding out a generous offering of long-cut Adams Standard fine-cut tobacco, the most potent of all, and called out, and showed the pack to Jim," wrote Arpin.

"The result was that Jim bolted, cart and all, right over the sidewalk and halfway through the doorway of the store before he could be stopped. For us the parade ended, right there!"

What Uncle Art knew was that Jim not only had a taste for thistles and priestly raiment, he also found fine-cut chewing tobacco irresistible.

J.C. Penney & Joe Hagen

When Jo Hagen stepped off the train in River City in 1920, he was, in the eyes of certain future competitors, not welcome. Hagen's nefarious mission was to bring the first modern chain store to Rapids. He was the manager of the new J.C. Penney's.

Joseph Hagen, stockboy, first met Mr. James Cash Penney, entrepreneur, at Penney's Grand Forks, N.D., store, where Hagen was employed. Later, he saw Penney in Fond du Lac, for the first time in 11 years.

"The minute he saw me, he called me by my first name," said Hagen. That ability to place a face, together with an abhorrence for tobacco, booze and shabby dress, would characterize the founder throughout his career.

When Hagen retired in 1956 after 40 years with J.C. Penney, it was possibly as its longest-employed manager. He was considered by Mr. Penney a pioneer with the firm.

Hagen was born in 1896 at Fertile, Minn., son of Norwegian immigrants. In their attempts at Gréat Plains farming, the family met with several misfortunes.

In 1901, a tornado picked up the house, flipped it in the air and dumped it on the ground, upside down. Joe's father and older brother, had managed to get to the cellar but the slowness of a hired hand had kept mother and three other sons in the house. All were injured to some degree.

Joe himself couldn't be found.

A frantic search revealed him sunk in a mud puddle. He had been shaken out of the house like a die from a box.

The family gave up that homestead and drove their cattle 15 miles to a rented farm at Gentilly, Minn. When Joe and his brothers saw carcasses of cattle lying in the field, they informed their parents, who were not alarmed. The common practice was to haul dead animals out in the field; wolves would take care of them.

But when their own stock started standing in the pond, fever was feared. "Didn't you know the cattle on that piece died of blackleg?" a veterinarian asked.

Soon the entire herd succumbed to the contagious disease and the family moved again, to Crookston, to Mentor and Maple Lake, all in northwestern Minnesota.

By the time he had reached the teen-age years,

Hagen had given up school to work on local farms and resorts. Winter work, however, was slow, so Hagen "got a notion" to try nearby Grand Forks, where he found a job at a candy factory.

He soon soured on that occupation and took his brother's advice: "Why don't you take my place at the 5 and 10 cent store?"

Joe went to work at Woolworth's and the brother went on to J.C. Penney's "Golden Rule" store. When the same brother was called up by the National Guard to duty at the Mexican border, Joe again took his place, at \$8 per week, rather than the \$7 he had received at Woolworth's.

After four years, Hagen was offered, in 1920, store "292," at Grand Rapids, Wis., where he arrived by train on Feb. 29. He was met by his landlord and future friend, John E. Daly.

Daly advised Hagen to seek temporary quarters in the Bandelin Hotel, which offered room and board and would be cheaper than the Witter. He also told Hagen that his store building, what was in later years the Brauer store, had not yet been cleaned and painted. Because it had been Krause's tavern, a lot of work awaited.

As parcel post and express packages piled up in the mess of the too-small facility, Hagen complained. If he didn't like it, he was told, store "292" would be given to someone else.

It wasn't long before Hagen was shopping for stationery across the street at Daly Drug. One of the pretty, young clerks was named Esma Zeaman.

"You ought to have a remedy for that," Hagen told her.

He provided the remedy himself. The two were married that year and she became Esma Hagen.

Not everything came that easy.

Like a true Westerner, Hagen had stocked up on silver dollars to give in change. Wisconsin shoppers rebelled at the unaccustomed weight and he had to go back to the bank for paper.

Then Hagen saw prices drop out from under him. Overalls fell from \$3.29 to \$1.98. Percalé went from 39 cents to 19 cents. Other goods declined a like amount. The new manager lost half his capital. He was somewhat reassured when he found that other Penney managers had lost more.



The Daly Block

Most trying was the local competition.

One store continually cut prices on sale items to a few cents below Hagen's, advertising that they were cheaper than "elsewhere." It got so bad that customers entering Penney's proclaimed, "So this is Elsewhere!"

A competitor called a meeting of the East Side merchants and asked Hagen to attend. There, he was asked to change the time of store opening to later than the 7 a.m. he had been using. Soon, Hagen found that all the meetings he was invited to were called to complain about a Penney policy.

"I figured every knock was a boost," he said.

Hagen opposed the change, sometime around 1923, from Saturday night shopping to Friday night, but lost. Since then, stores have been open Friday nights and, he said, business was just as good anyway.

In 1924, Penney's moved across 2nd Street into the Daly Block. Within that block, several moves

were made until, finally, three storefronts were occupied.

From that location, Penney's became a landmark for underwear and socks while Hagen became an accepted and respected merchant. Yet nothing pleased him more than recognition from his boss.

"When Mr. Penney was speaking in Florida, I went to see if I could talk to him," said Hagen, but there were so many people already lined up to get some contact with the famous man that Penney left by an undisclosed exit.

Later, Hagen was driving through a college campus not far away when he spotted a crowd congregated around an individual.

"I'll bet that's Mr. Penney," he said.

Hagen pressed through the masses and took hold of Mr. Penney's sleeve to get his attention. The world-renowned retail magnate turned to one of thousands of employees and without hesitation said, "Hello, Joe!"



Lewis Shugart

Mead-Witter Block

What's Left?

A Survey of Downtown Wisconsin Rapids

by
Jo Anne Ahles

1. MEAD-WITTER BLOCK

Date of completion: 1925

Architect: L.A. De Guere and E. Erol Smith

Builder: Consolidated Water Power and Paper Co.

History: Conceived by George W. Mead and Isaac Witter, the Mead-Witter block cost \$127,000. Construction took place in stages with Woolworth's opening first in November of 1924 and Frank Abel's in March 1925. Other original occupants were A & P, Whitrock and Wolt drugs, Western Union, Rapids Bakery, Fritz and Pete Pool Tables and Eron plumbing. The second floor has held offices for doctors, lawyers, dentists and insurance companies.

First-floor businesses have included Harstad's Shoes, Jr. Miss, Wilpolt's Restaurant, Joe Arnold's barber shop. Haefner's barber shop, Wisconsin Rapids Gas Co., Wallen's Ben Franklin, Campbell's Dollar Store, Anderson Drugs and Livingston's Women's Apparel.

2. JOHNSON HILL'S

Date of construction: March 25, 1912

General contractor: A.F. Billmeyer

History: The Johnson Hill's structure is of brick resting on a rock foundation. When built, it had electricity, steam heat and a fire control sprinkler system. The east and south walls were almost entirely of glass on the second and third floors. Johnson and Hill Co. was considered a most complete and luxurious department store of which the city was very proud. Departments long gone include dry goods, drugs, meat, groceries, a tin shop, millinery shop and a soda fountain.

3. WALLOCH'S TYPEWRITER EXCHANGE & OFFICE SUPPLIES

Date of construction: Between 1909 and 1919

History: The older east half of this building was Mr. and Mrs. John Walloch's restaurant until 1936. In 1928, the west half was built, completing the structure, which is still owned by the Walloch family. By 1933, the family operated the

Typewriter Exchange and by 1935 the La Grande Beauty Shop. Today, Walloch's is located in the east half. The west half has been rented out over the years to Quality Liquor Shop, Siewert's Real Estate and Insurance, and Armed Forces Recruiters and Merle Norman Cosmetics.

4. DALY'S MUSIC & APPLIANCE

Date of construction: Dec. 15, 1922

Architect and general contractor: A.F. Billmeyer

Builders: Henry Hahner and Otto Staven, masons; Frank Billmeyer and John and Henry Plenke, carpenters.

History: This brick building houses the city's oldest family owned business. Considered very modern, it originally included a vapor steam heating system installed by Mike Kubisiak. Plumbing by Herman's, electrical work by Miller and building materials from Kellogg Bros. and Marling Lumber were utilized. In 1946, an addition was built on the south side. 1955 saw extensive remodeling of the interior and front exterior of the store. The building has remained in the Daly family, passing from Mrs. F.P. Daly to Glen and Francis Daly Sr., to its current owner, Francis Daly Jr.

5. GLEN DALY PIANO & ORGAN

Date of construction: 1926

Architect and general contractor: A.F. Billmeyer

History: Also known as the Wilcox building, this structure uses the east wall of the Daly building as a common wall. I.E. Wilcox operated a women's ready-to-wear store here, purchased from Wilcox's son, George, by Glen Daly in 1955. Carl Billmeyer remodeled the building as Glen Daly Piano and Organ. In 1969, Mr. and Mrs. Duane Shaw bought both the building and the business. The upstairs has been used as apartments and offices and today contains United Way and Yamaha Educational Systems.

The West Side

6. FIRST NATIONAL BANK

Date of construction: October 1921

Architect: Childs and Smith of Chicago

History: This imposing building is done in the Greek Doric style of architecture. The north and east sides are of Bedford limestone and other sides are of brick. The Ionic columns in front each weighs 42,000 pounds. Decorative carvings adorn the tops of the windows and the front doorway.

J.A. Staub did the electrical work and Grand Rapids Plumbing installed the plumbing and heating. The building, "which is the dream of its founder, J.D. Witter," according to a 1912 Daily Tribune, has been remodeled both inside and out over the years. For example, the original hollow bronze entrance and vestibule doors have been removed. An addition was built on the west side in the mid 1970s.

7. CHURCH'S DRUG STORE

Date of construction: 1879

History: 1884 maps name this building the Key City Hotel, purchased in 1888 by Clark Lyon, who conducted the business as the Lyon Hotel until 1904, when he remodeled the structure into a store. In or about 1904, Sam Church used the premises as a drug store. In 1920, Lyon sold to Otto H. Siewert. At that time, the occupants were Church's, Ray Sutor's Confectionary, the People's Cash and Carry Store and a tailor shop entered from 3rd Avenue. Offices were on the second floor and there was a small third-floor apartment, since removed.

In 1945, the Kruger-Walrath Co. bought the structure. In 1959, the building was sold to the Reisbeck family, owners of Church's since the early 1940s. Reisbecks remodeled inside and out, including the removal of the second-floor bay windows. Before Church's expanded to include

the entire ground floor, you could find Consumer's Grocery, LeRay's Ladies Shop and a tailor in back.

8. NATWICK FURNITURE

Date of construction: August 1893

History: This structure, known as the Natwick building, was built for J.W. Natwick's Furniture and Undertaking business. Because Natwick was the postmaster at the time, the Centralia Post Office was headquartered there also. The brick building was built at a time when brick was replacing the older frame buildings of the city. Natwick sold the building in 1921 to Tony Peerenboom, who ran his grocery there until 1935, when it became Kroger's Grocery and Baking Co. By 1955, the occupants were the Badger Paint Store and Bill's Billiards. In 1967, the Speltz Music Co. bought the structure and established its business there until moving this summer to Johnson Street. The building currently is for sale.

9. LUNCH BOX

Date of construction: 1883

Builder: Michael A. Bogoger

History: This 100-year-old building was erected by Bogoger as a restaurant. In 1887, the building ended up in the hands of William Scott and was occupied by a confectionary, a jeweler and, by 1902, was an office building housing Taylor and Scott Realty, Bossert Brothers, the U.S. Express and F.P. Lighting Systems. In 1909, Harvey Gee purchased the building, where he located his real estate office. Soon after, it became a restaurant again and has remained so until the present, being best known as the Quick Lunch. In 1980, the structure became the Lunch Box. Harvey Gee's heirs sold the building in 1976. The present owner is Gary Gruetzmacher.

10. BIG M SALOON

Date of construction: Before 1884

History: On 1884 maps, this building is shown as a saloon. Taylor and Scott owned the structure at about the same time they owned the Lunch Box building and rented it out as offices. Harvey Gee purchased the building in 1909 and would use it as a saloon, according to the Grand Rapids Tribune. The tavern is best known as the Mecca. Before being remodeled, Braun's barber shop, Johnson Jewelry and Larson Jewelry were between the present Big M Saloon and the Lunch Box. In 1976, the Gee heirs sold the building to C.A. Winegarden Construction. Gary Gruetzmacher is the current owner.

11. WISCONSIN THEATRE

Date of construction: July 28, 1917

Architect: A. Moorman and Co. of St. Paul

General contractor: A.F. Billmeyer

History: As the inscription across the front of the second floor indicates, this building was originally the Citizens National Bank. "Its walls were erected of pressed brick and tile. The front is of Carthage Missouri marble," said the Wood County Reporter in 1917. F.S. Gill was the interior decorator and painter. Electrical work was by J.A. Staub, plumbing and heating was by J.F. Farley.

The bank closed in 1929 and the building was bought at an auction by Frank and Henrietta Eckardt in 1938. Donn Hougen was hired by Eckardts to design a theatre. An auditorium, which extends to 2nd Avenue, was added at this time. On Feb. 1, 1939, the grand opening of this modern and glamorous theatre was held. The latest change was the "twinning" by current owner Carmen Gruetzmacher. The second on the east now housing the Carousel ice cream parlor was at one time Kerrin's Candy Shop, later Speltz's Music.

12. SIEBER'S RESTAURANT

Date of construction: Between 1891 and 1895.

History: From 1895 to 1902, this brick building was a grocery. By 1908, Dominic Reiland operated the west side Reiland Meat Market there. In the 1930s, the property was acquired by

Joseph A. Staub and rented out to various businesses such as the Rapids Sports Shop; Rapids Tea, Coffee, and Grocery Co.; the Ideal Tavern; and Nash's Tavern. The building is most recognized as Art's Restaurant until 1970, when it became Sieber's. In 1967, John Potter purchased the building from the Staub estate.

13. WISCONSIN FITNESS

History: The earliest occupant found in this building is Harvey Gee and Co. about 1904, a liquor store and saloon he ran until 1909, when he moved into the present Big M. Soon after, Otto H. Siewert moved his meat market into the building for some time. The structure was owned by Joseph A. Staub from the 1930s on and rented out to H.J. Leloff, a tailor, Aton's Boys Shop and Pauline's Dress Shop. Household Finance moved there in 1957. In 1967, John Potter bought the structure from the Staub estate and removed the second floor, which had been used as apartments.

14. PALACE THEATRE

Date of construction: December 1914

History: The theatre, owned by Robert A. McDonald until 1920, is concrete block faced with brick, the interior done in Spanish style decor. At some point after McDonald owned the building, Henrietta Eckardt also owned it. In 1957, Palace Recreation took over, consisting of a dance hall, lunch counter and a pool room. In 1962, Ed-Syl Furniture Center occupied the building for two years until Sears Roebuck and Co. moved in. John Potter acquired the building from the Kruger-Walrath Co. in the mid-1960s and, after Sears moved out in 1972, remodeled the structure into separate stores. These were Kim's Classics Shoe Rack and Mr. Image. DeByle's bought the building in 1980 and changed the interior into one store.

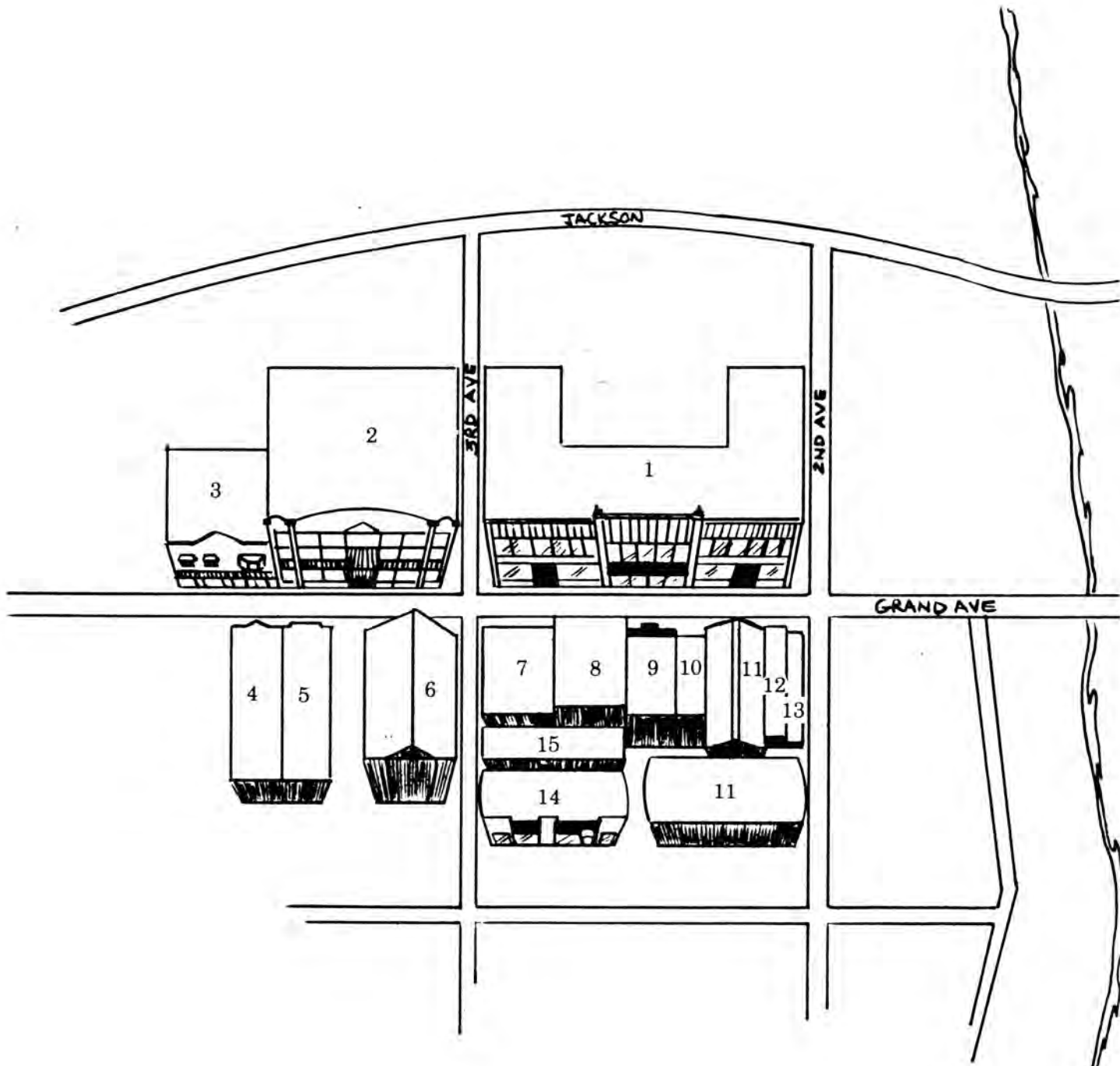
15. BUZZ'S BAR

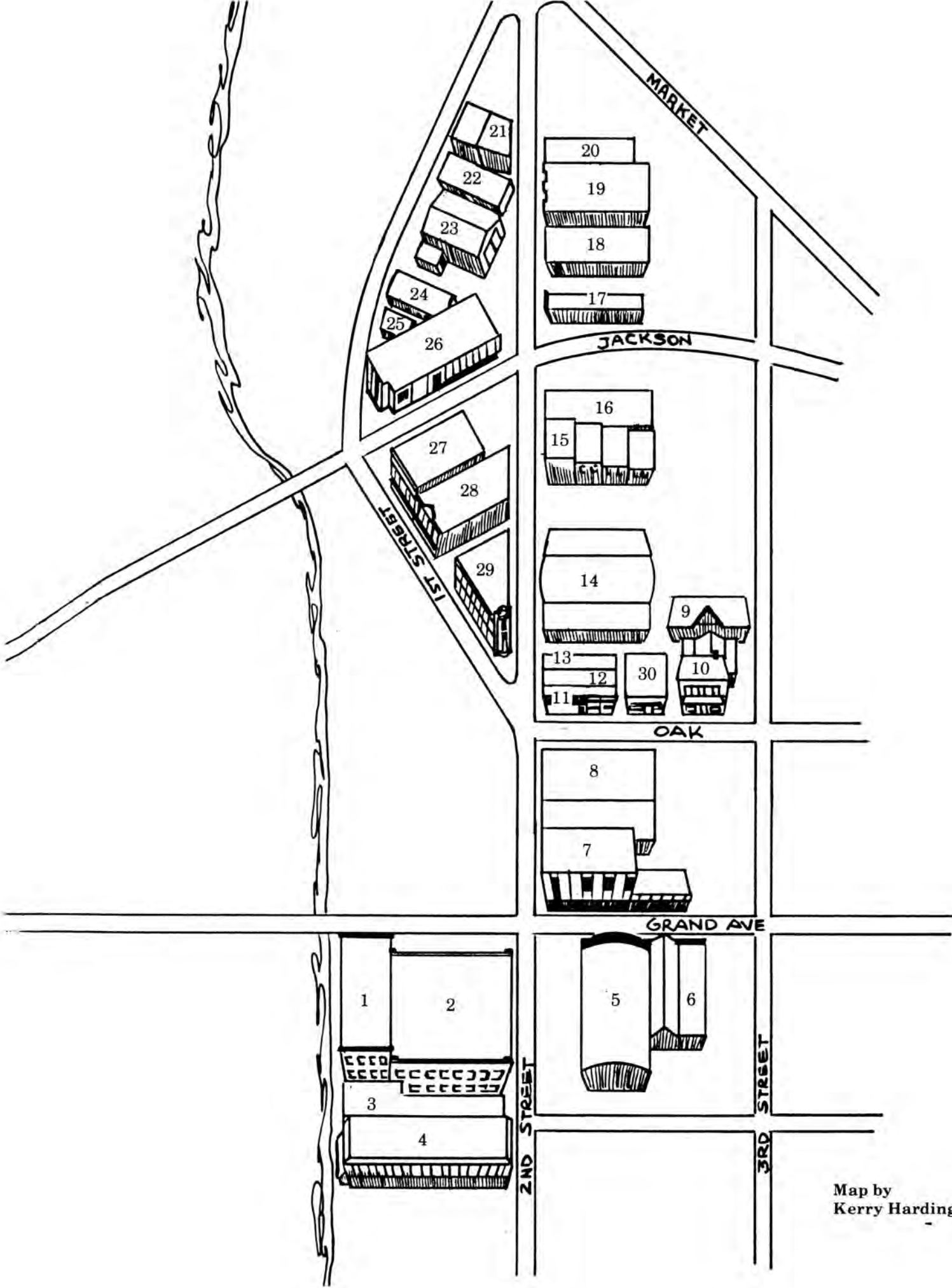
Date of construction: 1922

History: The original owner was Joseph Wheir, who ran his grocery there until 1934. Since then, it has been a tavern under the name of the Dutch Mill and, more recently, Buzz's Bar, owned by the Farnum Bouton Family.

The Project

Upon earning a degree in history from St. Cloud State University in Minnesota, Jo Anne Ahles returned to Wisconsin Rapids. Here, she undertook an ambitious survey of existing buildings in downtown "River City," using old photographs, newspapers, maps, city directories, books, abstracts and interviews. Appalled by the destruction of so many historic buildings, Jo Anne hopes her work will encourage a more thoughtful awareness of our architectural heritage.





Map by
Kerry Harding

1. OLD POST OFFICE

Date of construction: August 1905

History: Built by F.J. Wood as U.S. Post Office, first and second floor and the Elks Club on the third floor. In 1907, the Chambers Creamery moved into the basement. The post office moved out in 1933. Ted Walrath bought the structure from the Wood estate in 1946. Occupants after 1933 were the Boot Shop, Tri-City Sporting Goods, Behrend's barber shop, Rollie's Bar and architect Donn Hougen. Walrath sold the building to the Wood County Telephone Co. in 1948. The present owner, James Retzlaff, hopes to have the old post office listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

2. WOOD BLOCK

Date of construction: October 1894

History: Constructed of Lessig's town of Rudolph brick laid by Fred Gehler and Reinhold Brehm. Original occupants were F.W. Kruger, east section, John E. Daly, center, and J.R. Chapman, jeweler, west. The second floor was used for offices and lodge rooms. The jewelry shop passed from Chapman to A.P. Hirzy to E.J. Schmidt. Daly Drug became Wood County Drug and Coyle's Drug until a 1947 fire. After remodeling, the Town Shop moved in, then Gleue's Shoes and, finally, Barty's Shoes. Kruger's clothing store became Kruger & Cameron, Kruger & Warner, Kruger & Turbin, Schnabel & Turbin, Schnabel's, and Gordon's Better Clothing before 1967, when Don Arndt moved his photo studio in. Rollie's Bar, in the post office building, moved to the basement in the Wood block in 1949, later becoming the Speak Easy. Ownership of the building went from the Wood heirs to Ted Walrath to George Schmidt to James Retzlaff.

3. WOOD COUNTY TELEPHONE CO.

Date of construction: December 1917

General contractor: A.F. Billmeyer

History: By 1917, the Wood County Telephone Co. was in need of larger quarters and decided to build this brick building and installed the most updated telephone equipment possible from

Kellogg Switchboard and Supply Co. of Chicago. The company occupied the building until 1958, when it moved to 440 E. Grand Ave. The current owner is E.J. Smith of Wherley-Smith Insurance.

4. ELKS CLUB

Date of construction: February 1915

Architect: Robert Messmer, Milwaukee

General contractor: A.F. Billmeyer

History: At an April 17, 1915, grand-opening ball, the Mediterranean-style quarters were displayed, including a pool room, a dance hall and balcony, a parlor with a fireplace and porches overlooking the river. Electrician: Joseph Staub; plumbing: Nash Hardware; decorating: F.S. Gill.

5. RAPIDS THEATER

Date of construction: Feb. 10, 1913

Architect: A.F. Billmeyer

History: John T. Stark relocated the Ideal Theater from the north side of East Grand Avenue to the present Rogers Cinema location. Other owners were John Gruell, Frank and Henrietta Echardt and Tom Poulos, who sold it in 1977 to Paul Rogers, who "twinned" the interior.

6. PERRY'S SPORT SHOP

Date of construction: Before 1900

History: Michael Bogoger may have built the west half of the two-building structure in 1900, although it may, with its mate, be much older. The east half was a carriage house and the west, a livery for Bogoger's undertaking business, until he moved his exchange store into the west, selling in 1917 to Kruetzer Furniture. Hess Plumbing had the east building from 1908 to 1935, when the firm sold to Vinckle Ice Cream. Herschleb's bought out Vinckle's business and, in 1940, from Bogoger's daughter, Vi Strauss, purchased the east building. In the meantime, Perry's Sport Shop and A.B. Sutor's grocery used the west building. In 1940, Herschleb's ice cream parlor and Perry's switched buildings. Herschleb's became the Friendly Fountain from 1946 to 1967, when Perry's bought the building and combined both halves into one store.

The East Side

7. WOOD COUNTY NATIONAL BANK

Date of construction: May 1910

General contractor: Wineberg Construction Co.

History: The original bank building, of Bedford cut stone, was constructed in 1909 with Joseph Staub responsible for electrical work and Centralia Hardware for the heating. The building stood in its original form until July 1962, when architect Donn Hougen designed a modernization of the interior and resurfaced the entire exterior with gray polished granite slabs. An addition was built on the east side at that time. Since, the bank has built an addition on the north side and, about 1979, expanded into the Schroeder building.

8. SCHROEDER'S

Date of construction: Between 1909 and 1919

History: Fridstein Inc., a clothing store, was probably the first occupant of this building with other early occupants being Howard's Variety Store and Link and Werle Meat Market. Link and Werle was replaced by the Reiland Meat Market, which remained in the north section of the building until the 1940s. Ragan's Used Furniture was in the south store until 1934, when Lewis Hardware moved in and then a Ben Franklin store. By 1955, Martin Schroeder's Variety Store was in the south section and took over the entire building in 1965. Past owners were George and Rachel Gardner, John E. Daly, Taylor and Scott Co., Donald Daly and currently the Wood County National Bank, which has converted the store to offices.

9. K & W GLASS

History: Originally a dwelling, by 1926 this house was used by George W. Baker and George Jr. for their undertaking business. By 1935, it was remodeled into three apartments until the early 1950s, when Kay Wesley and her family

lived in the back section and ran Kay's Dress Shop. For the next five years, Ann Babcock and Shirley Jacobson operated bridal shops until K & W Glass moved in under owner Kenneth Hagman. He bought the building from Mrs. Frank Gill.

10. GETZIN OFFICE

Date of construction: 1860.

History: Probably built 1860. John Martini bought the lot in 1865. Prior to Martini's 1903 death, Elizabeth Martini Cooney acquired the house, provided she care for Martini there. After Cooney's death, her son, Daniel, sold to George and Anastasia Gerum, who ran a market there until 1959. Crowns, Crowns, Merklein & Midthun converted the building into offices and added on to the east side. The current owner is John Getzin, who operates his accounting firm there.

11. BENDER & BENDER

Date of construction: Between 1920 and 1926

History: William Cummings was the first occupant and owner of this structure operating under various names such as the Owl Lunch Cafe, the Ideal Cafe, Cummings Tavern and Cummings Hamburger Store. By 1956, the Foot-So-Port Shoe Shop was located there—until 1962, when attorney Robert Bender bought the building. Bender converted the interior into an office, made two complete stories, and faced the exterior with brick.

12. YOUR RECORD SHOP

Date of construction: 1884?

History: May have been built in 1884 as a furniture repair shop for M.C. Warren, passing on by 1902 to George W. Baker for undertaking purposes. A & P took over the building in 1933. By 1955, and until the 1970s, Your Record Shop was housed here. The building, owned by Robert Bender, is vacant.

13. MICHAEL'S

History: In 1909, George W. Baker's furniture store. By 1919, a dry-goods store operated by Max Steinberg and later Joseph Stoler. In the mid-1920s, the Model Drug Store used the building—until 1936, when Piper's Badger Paint Store moved in. Then it became Davis's Restaurant, owned by Art Davis. In 1962, Davis's son, Michael, opened Michael's Lounge. The structure is owned by Robert Bender.

14. EAST TOWN PLAZA

Date of construction: 1915-part

History: Consists of three buildings. The center was built in 1952 and was used by Ed Hartman for Wisconsin Rapids Furniture. Hartman purchased it in 1977 from Polansky Properties. The north building was erected about 1915 as a garage operated by Kampe and William Schill. In 1933, Andrew Schill purchased it from his brother and ran the Schill Motor Co. until 1969, after which Wisconsin Rapids Furniture expanded into the former garage. The south building was J.C. Werle's meat market in the 1930s. By 1950, it was the Veterans of Foreign Wars hall and, more recently, Pelot's Inn and Blondie & Jerry's. In 1979, Fred Romanski converted all three buildings into offices. Jim Gruetzmacher is the current owner.

15. GOOSE'S

Date of construction: 1906

Architect: George B. Miller

History: Built for John D. Smith hardware store, the second floor rented to the Grand Rapids Business College until 1911. Jeff Sadlemyer bought "Smith Hardware" in the 1940s and ran a bar there prior to building the Chancery structure in 1948. Sadlemyer sold to Wisconsin Auto Supply who sold to Al Goska in 1963. Goska operated Goska Furniture and still owns the building, where his sons manage Goose's Night Club.

16. RAPIDS PAINT & GLASS

Date of construction: 1926-1936?

History: Built by F.S. Gill as Gill's Paint Store, called by 1955 the Frank Gill Co. Leased in 1962 to T.C. Esser & Co. until Donald Penza purchased the property in the early 1970s.

17. JOURNEY INN

History: Existing in 1926 but architectural characteristics indicate an earlier construction

date. About 1933, the building was used as a tavern by Sam Bodette. John and Betty Mielcarek bought it from Mrs. Bodette and operated as the Towne Club. Recent occupants include Lloyd's Double LL Saloon and the Journey Inn.

18. CHOI'S TAE KWON DO

History: This building, owned by Elwell and Eileen Shannon, was originally Gerald Herschleb's Bakery. By 1967 the Doctors' Clinic occupied the structure until it moved out about 1976. Former occupants include Eileen's Across the Street, Nature's Karma and Choi's Tae Kwon Do Karate and Judo Academy.

19. CPI OFFICES I

History: Kruetzer Brothers occupied this building for quite some time using it as an exchange store, then for storage and a moving company. About 1964, the Doctors' Clinic expanded into this structure, remodeling it as a medical clinic. After it moved out, CPI located offices there. The current owner is Mrs. Donald Daly.

20. CPI OFFICES II

History: 1909 maps show this building as a grocery through 1926. By 1933 the Yellow Cab Co. was located there. Dr. C.N. Nelson, dentist, and the Arendt Clinic occupied the building in 1956. The Arendt Clinic became the Doctor's Clinic by 1964, Nelson moved out, and Dr. Charles Gurtler, dentist, moved in. After the clinic relocated in 1976, CPI established offices in the structure. Mrs. Donald Daly also owns this building.

21. THE EMPIRE

Date of construction: 1890s

History: In 1874, William S. Miller bought the tract of land this building stands on and erected a store, now part of this building. By 1894, Jacob Lutz Jr. acquired the property, which he ran as the Empire Saloon. Lutz sold the building to Ernest Andrews and William Bodette, who ran the Empire Buffet until Lewis J. Eron bought the property in 1929 for Eron Plumbing and Heating. His daughter, Eileen Shannon, owned the building after his death and rented it to Frank's Appliances and later operated Eileen's Fabrics there. In 1979, the law firm of Lukas Starr Zappan & Huttenburg bought the building and converted it into offices.



Wood County National Bank

22. BRING'S

Date of construction: 1895-1902?

History: May have been part of the Empire Saloon, containing bowling alleys in 1902, owned by Jacob Lutz Jr. until 1920. Lutz sold to Arthur and Roy Klug who sold to Max Eberhardt in 1926. Klug's second-hand store became Ed Schmidt's tin shop in 1936. Schmidt bought the building in 1942. Nick Zynda and Gilbert Ahles Sr. owned it for a short time. In 1956, Glen W. Bring purchased the property for Bring's Cycle and Motor Sales. In 1979, he sold to Lukas Starr Zappen & Huttenburg, who converted it to offices used by Baillies, Denson, Erickson and Smith CPA.

23. OLD FIRE STATION

Date of construction: 1918

History: Constructed to house horse-drawn equipment. Now vacant and owned by the city of Wisconsin Rapids. See p. 75.

24. PARTS HOUSE

Date of construction: 1925

History: George Huntington was the first owner of this building erected as an auto garage. Later it became Dagen's Service Garage and Wisconsin Rapids Motor Co. until John Plahmer established his Buick sales there when he purchased the structure in 1946. This later became George Nimtz Buick in the mid-1960s. In 1974, the Tri-City Labor Temple Association bought the garage with the current business being the Parts House.

25. DEEP ROCK STATION

History: About 1922, the Home Oil Corp., a local company, had this station erected. Within a few years, the Deep Rock Oil Co. took over. Roger Jacob bought the building in 1949 and rented it to Roy Flick, who operated Roy's Deep Rock Service Station. The Tri-City Labor Temple Association purchased it from Jacob in 1979.

26. LABOR TEMPLE

History: In 1883, Rosalie Boguslawsky and Rickey Falk probably built the Central Hotel on this site. In 1899, they sold to H.H. Wipperman, who sold in 1911 to F.W. Kruger and W.E. Wheelan. The "East Side Pool Hall" then passed to Frank Wheelan, who installed bowling alleys. He sold in 1936 to Lloyd Franson, who ran Lloyd's Recreation for 12 years and built Jackson's Restaurant before selling to the Tri-City Labor Temple Association. Today, Milwaukee Journal and Sentinel offices occupy the Jackson's Restaurant area.

27. REILAND BUILDING

Date of construction: October 1899

General contractor: A.F. Billmeyer

History: Built for Nicolas Weiland and his son-in-law, Nicolas Reiland. The center portion was Reiland's Meat Market. In the north section was Muir Shoe Co. Gitchell and Lubeck plumbing occupied the south. In 1912, Joseph Staub purchased the north section for his electrical shop. Mrs. Staub sold to Norman Utech who sold to Gerald and Phyllis Krueger in 1967. The center store, for some time J.E. Farley's Plumbing, remained under the ownership of the Reiland family until 1944, when it was sold to James Bogie and then Daniel Estreen for a beauty shop. Joseph Klun bought the center section in 1948 and it was used as a photo studio until 1978, when Dave Smith moved Modern Shoe Repair in. In the south section were Ragan's funeral chapel, Rapids Bargain, Wisconsin Auto Supply, Jones Paint Store, Foot-So-Port Shoe Shop and Wisconsin Rapids Advertiser.

28. HAMM BUILDING

Date of construction: December 1894

Architect and builder: Joseph Golla

History: Mrs. John Hamm had this structure built for her mercantile business, which she

operated until 1902, then selling out to Heineman Mercantile Co. By 1912, the ground floor was divided into two stores with McCamley and Pomainville Hardware and Miller Cycle Repair as occupants and, in 1917, Weisel Department Store. In the 1930s, Beardsley Grocery, under Mrs. Hamm's daughter, was in the building with Heilman's Dry Goods, who had bought out Weisel's in 1924. Occupants since then include Mirman's Furniture Store, Braun's TV and Appliance and the Schmit Sewing Center. Badger Bar located in the building around 1965 with Elmer Pohlmann buying the facility in 1966 from the Beardsley Estate. In 1972, John Christy purchased the structure and then sold to current owners Janine and David Malcolm.

29. FLATIRON BUILDING

Date of construction: Jan. 11, 1906

Architects: Jacobson and DeGuere

General contractor: A.F. Billmeyer

History: This structure, of Bedford cut stone, was the second location of the First National Bank and is called the Flatiron due to its shape. Original occupants in the upstairs offices were attorney D.D. Conway, Judge W.J. Conway and the Western Union Telegraph Co. The bank moved to the west side in 1921 and the Wisconsin Rapids Building and Loan Association took over until it sold to Ahdawagam Credit union in 1972.

30. PAUL GROSS JEWELERS

Date of construction: 1926-1927

History: Brick block built east of Gilbert Hein and D.B. Sutor print shop for Hein Dry Cleaning, Earl Hein, prop. In 1937, Rapids Shoe and Harness Shop occupied the building prior to Modern Dry Cleaners in the early 1940s. Modern moved and Hein Printing expanded. Gilbert Hein leased to J.C. Penney as a catalog center in 1968. Paul Gross Jewelers have owned and occupied the building since 1979.

The Historian's Umpteenth Lament

Knowing our town's predilection for starting over, it's about time to say good-bye to the old fire station.

Fire department minutes show that discussion of an East Side "engine house" to replace use of the old city hall began in 1916. It was September of 1918 when the city council approved sale of \$28,000 in bonds for the station. At that time, Alderman Geoghan "brought up the matter of having public toilets for both ladies and gentlemen."

A committee was appointed in October to inspect "the new fire building and report changes wanted before the builders get through building." In December, a committee was asked to arrange for a "feed" to commemorate the grand opening.

The following summer, Chief Schuman spoke on the subject of allowing basketball "members of Co. K." to use the shower bath. A motion was made and seconded that they would be allowed the use of same at a charge of \$1 per night.

The actual playing of basketball took place at the Armory across the street.

The engine house was built for a horsedrawn vehicle. But, in 1920, a 750-gallon La France engine was purchased. It was sold in 1961 to Milwaukee's Peck Meat Packing.

Four former firefighters met at the station to discuss their part in its 65-year history. They were former Chief Ceylon "Cy" Miller, Virgil Jacoby, Glenn Athorp, and Clarence Cheatle. Their reminiscences evoked a life of jarring contrast.

Most of the 24-hour work day meant a routine of cleaning, inspection and drill that left a lot of time to kill spinning yarns about such subjects as the mating of the chief's bird dog on the freshly waxed floor or the fireman who raised flowers in window boxes (when a parade came by, he hurried out with a shovel after the elephants passed), or the time the aquarium broke.

There were card games and horseshoes, when the firefighters could get away with it. There were meals at regular intervals and, of course, sleep.

Sleep, that is, with one eye open.

"Those alarm bells go off and you come right out of the bag," said Jacoby. In a few seconds, the rudely awakened had jumped into boots and trousers placed at bedside, pulled up suspenders and, just after the bang! bang! of the two trap doors, slid down the brass pole.

By the time they got to the truck, Chief Augie

Miller (1920-1950) was probably on board ready to chew out the late wakers. The truck pulled out of the station with the men hanging on by one arm and struggling with the other to put on their coats.

It could be a false alarm, a muck fire at Stange & Ellis, a flaming roof or real danger such as the paint store fire that blew Jacoby off the outside stairway. "There I was knocked out on the ground," he said, "and the guy quit pumping fresh air for the gas mask too."

It could be a sinking sensation in a smoky room. At a furniture store fire, Clint Falkosky told Miller, "Cy, we're going downhill." The two pulled out of the room just in time to hear the floor fall into the basement.

Sometimes the city fire department was called to rural fires, since only a few townships had their own equipment. At a fire at the Rudolph community hall, said Cheatle, "It was colder than a hillbilly on a hill" when they ran out of water.

Whey from the nearby cheese factory was used instead and the fire was put out, he said.

At country houses, the water as often as not ran out. About all a disgruntled fireman could say was, "At least we saved the basement and the chimney."

Even as close as the Skyway ballroom near the airport, it was impossible to keep supplied with water. They "blacked her out" but couldn't keep it out and the fire came back to destroy the building. At least one fireman wept in frustration.

Certain men had a knack for dealing with fires. Like Hank Miller. "He could smell a fire out just like that." Or Clarence Cheatle. "I was sure of myself when I went with Clarence," said Miller. "He knew where the seat of the fire was."

So much for a hint at the drama and history centered around one of the last buildings of our heritage. Is it worth saving?

The yearning for flat hard places seems to be irresistible. They say about 15 more parking spots could be added to the 400 or so in the courthouse area. They say if the fire station were only removed, then the throngs clammering to get into nearby office buildings could accommodate their vehicles.

If sentimentalists must drag out their tear-drenched hankies once again and historians lament, leave it to a fireman to find a bright spot glowing in the darkness. "Everything is torn down," said Miller. "At least it's safer now."

Building Tradition

"Imagine a man working in Stevens Point and carrying a sack of flour 22 miles each weekend," remarked SS. Peter and Paul's Father Reding to the Elks Club in 1927, following the death of a parishioner, A.F. Billmeyer.

Anton Billmeyer, a mason of German birth, had come to Grand Rapids in 1869. He was the first of four generations of Billmeyer builders. Great-grandson David continues the tradition as an architect for Billmeyer & Son, 420 3rd St. S.

The eldest A.F. used to collect "store pay." If it were flour, and he were working in Point, that made for a heavy load on payday.

Anton Jr., known as "Tony," was born in 1873 and showed an early fondness for sketching the neighbors' houses. "While a mere boy, he got a hand saw and hammer and began working for 50 cents a day," said Father Reding.

At the age of 16, Tony went to Milwaukee, where he hired out as a carpenter with his brother, Frank. Soon, the able Tony had a crew in his charge.

It wasn't long before Tony saved \$500 and bought into his employer's business. All was lost in the hard times of 1893. Frank and Tony returned to Grand Rapids, where Tony began work as contractor, builder and architect, not necessarily all on the same project.

In 1900, Tony wed Mary Jeffrey, sister to Mrs. F.P. Daly and J.J. Jeffrey. The couple had six children.

One of the six was Harold (born 1908), who said this week that when his father died in 1927 at the age of 54, he was working on seven different jobs, including schools or churches in Thorp, Eagle River, Tomahawk and, locally, the Krohn and Berard Funeral Home (now Ritchay's) and Lowell School.

Harold said his father entered the building trade after an entrepreneurial misadventure in partnership with Theodore Brazeau.

Tony and "Thede" had contracted to tear down a barn. "When they got all through," said Harold, "one decided to become a lawyer and one decided to become a builder."

It is likely that before his death from appendicitis, Billmeyer was the most prominent builder in town. He worked on, but did not necessarily design, such landmarks as Johnson Hill's, the First National Bank, the Citizens National Bank and the Consolidated office building. He built stately homes for Mrs. J.D. Witter, Orestes Garrison, J.A. Lutz, E.A. Schmidt, J.R. Ragan, A.P. Hirzy, A.L. Fontaine, Wm. Kellogg and many

others.

While building the Biron Community Hall, Tony pioneered a new process, said Harold. "It was the first time in Wisconsin that they heated sand, gravel and cement so they could build all winter."

Tony showed equal foresight when he advised Percy Daly not to build the fancy ice house he considered. "No use in building one," said Billmeyer. "It's all going to be electrical anyhow."

Among Tony's many projects was the first brick hospital in the city. "My dad came in toward evening," said Harold, "and looked at what the masons had been doing. 'That wall doesn't look straight to me,' he said."

He said he would check it in the morning.

"They rebuilt it after working hours," said Harold. "When my dad came and checked it the next day, all he said was, 'It wasn't that way last night.'"

Harold's older brother, Carl, was born Nov. 28, 1901. He died April 15 of this year after 60 years as an architect. Works representative of his career include the Glendale Apartments on Gardner Street, some of the first here (1930); Our Lady Queen of Heaven School, known as St. Mary's (1950); SS. Peter and Paul Church and School (1952); Assumption High School and St. Vincent de Paul Church and School (1956). Since Carl attended SS. Peter and Paul School from his 11th St. residence that had been built by his father at the time of his marriage, it was natural that Catholic contracts gravitated his way. Carl graduated from Lincoln High School in 1919 and went to the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh to study architecture. Upon graduation, he came home and went to work for dad. It was already a family tradition.

When Tony suffered an acute attack of appendicitis in 1927, his doctors, including F.X. Pomainville, sent him to Marshfield for the operation. Before he got there, the appendix burst and Tony died shortly thereafter at the age of 54.

Carl took over the Lowell and Krohn and Berard projects already begun, and established himself as a builder in his own right. In 1931, he married Marjorie Gibson.

Carl continued to build as well as design. He enjoyed both occupations and had great respect for his carpenters, such as Herman, Henry and John Plenke and Dick Sowatske. For some time, Anton Billmeyer's brother, Frank, acted as foreman.



David Billmeyer

Carl Billmeyer, rear center

In the 1950s, Carl moved from construction to the exclusive pursuit of the profession of architecture. He never gave it up. Until his death, Carl went down to the office every day. Billmeyer had built houses, rectories, apartments, schools and churches. What had he left undone? Said his wife, "I guess he accomplished everything he wanted to."

Shadowlawn

At Shadowlawn the days are long,
The nights are cool and sweet,
The river pours its endless flow
Right by my door, and
When I go
A-walking down the street
I feel its movement, sense its life,
It's motion swift and fleet.
At Shadowlawn the elms are old,
Their branches strong and green;
In the depth of their shade the air is
cool,

In the heat of the room, or the evening
gold,
As the sun sets over the pool.
The birds awake early at Shadow-
lawn,
Sing their songs of praise
Ere the sun is up or the morning rays
Have met the darker shades of dawn
In the leafy branches of Shadow-
lawn.
And then there are memories that
come.

To us at Shadowlawn—
Some are poignant,
Some are glad,
Some are joyous, and
Some are sad,
And some are dim but many are clear;
They make up the fabric
That holds us fast
In the spell of the present,
The joy of the past
At Shadowlawn, so dear.

Charlotte Witter

The situation demanded poise but poise wasn't so easy to maintain. It was cousin Jere Witter's wedding at Shadowlawn, the 3rd Street mansion of his parents, Isaac and Charlotte Witter. Emily Mead, now Mrs. Howard Bell, was to descend the elegant staircase in as graceful a fashion as possible.

The bridesmaid's plight was caused partly by childhood polio that had left her with some difficulty in walking, worsened by her perception midway that the steps were not all the same size. And the bridal march, played now by a professor from Chicago, rather than the bride-to-be as in practice, was slower than it had been.

But no matter what the temptation, Aunt Charlotte had strictly ordered that the attendants not look at their feet as they descended.

"Jim Gibson said I looked white when I got to the bottom," Mrs. Bell said.

The father of the groom was Isaac Phelps Witter, who, upon his death in 1942, was called by the Daily Tribune a "leading citizen of Wood county and Wisconsin, banker, state senator, business man and philanthropist," who had "inherited and carried on the name and affairs of this city's most important pioneer," Jere Delos Witter.

Isaac graduated in 1891 from Howe High School and attended the State University at Madison, where he was among the founders of the fraternity Theta Delta Chi and where he met George W. Mead, his future brother-in-law. After a year in Germany, Witter returned to Grand Rapids as an accountant in the Bank of Grand Rapids. He advanced in prominence until he held important offices in such firms as the Grand Rapids Milling Co., Ahdawagam Paper Products, the First National Bank, Johnson-Hill Co. and Consolidated Water Power and Paper Co. In 1900, he married Charlotte L. Gibson, daughter

of the Rev. George Gibson, an Episcopal clergyman who had served in various Midwestern cities.

Witter had courted his future bride when she was a music teacher for the children of some of the city's more prosperous citizens. When jealous local belles began "putting the heat on her," Charlotte went to Des Moines. Isaac followed her and was successful in his quest for her hand.

Like her husband, Mrs. Witter occupied a preeminent position in the community. Her domain was club and social work with such organizations as the Federation of Women's Clubs, the Daughters of the American Revolution and the League of Women Voters. She was known for her work promoting the civic beauty of the area.

Emily Mead Bell came to live with the Witters when she was a young girl after her father, George W. Mead I, was injured in a "traffic" accident and had to be taken to Milwaukee for treatment.

"At my house, we had just grown up," she said, "but at Uncle Isaac's, we learned manners."

Mrs. Bell remembers with special fondness the Sunday night suppers that were a tradition at the Witters'. The opening ritual, however, was a chore for the little girl.

"They'd all stand around the door as we came in," she said. "And they kissed everybody. I used to shut my eyes and go around and kiss everybody. One time when I came to the end, I found I'd kissed the village barber."

Also notable were the dances held on the third-floor ballroom. While the older generation sat downstairs on the porch, their children danced the two-step, waltz and fox-trot. Between dances, couples might step out onto a balcony for fresh air and a view of the river.



Travel Class Anniversary Party. Front Row: Mildred McKinnon Jenkins, Nan Reeves Kellogg, Julie Jenkins, Little Labus girl, Inez Witter Johnson, Sally Purves, Mrs. Philleo. **Second Row:** Cecile Arpin Beeman Eager, Lida Edwards Alexander, Rena Philleo Labus, Carmen Taylor, Ella Hasbrouck, Floy Philleo Nash, Hannah Conway. **Third Row:** Evelyn Rosebush, Kate Hambrecht, Charlotte Gibson Witter, Ruth Witter Mead, Dorothy Hougen Daly. **Top Row:** Mrs. Hougen, Belle De Guere, Bufford Kirtley Reeves, ?

Marion Fey also spent many pleasant hours in the house of Isaac and Charlotte Witter. From a once-Catholic Nekoosa family, Mrs. Fey joined the Episcopal church in Wisconsin Rapids when she "came of age."

"I used to visit after church," she said of the Witter house. "They treated everybody as though each one was the most important."

Mrs. Fey said she enjoyed the "very lovely parties and musical evenings." Accompanying the vocalist would be Charlotte Witter on piano. Afterward, there would be a lunch of delicate sandwiches, some of them rolled up and tied with ribbons. "I would stay until the last streetcar left for Nekoosa," she said.

The Witter house was built in 1907 by Anton

Billmeyer on the site of Isaac Witter's boyhood home. Part of the old building is said to have been incorporated in the new.

Many readers are familiar with the Witter house as the "old" T.B. Scott Public Library, which George Mead presented to the city of Wisconsin Rapids in 1948. At that time, there were 23 rooms, excluding the large halls.

After the present library was donated by Mary McMillan, said Mrs. Bell, the South Wood County Historical Corp. acquired the old "T.B. Scott library" and, under the supervision of president Mrs. B.C. Brazeau, restored it, as the society's museum, to something resembling its former state.

City Hall

We have the honorable T.B. Scott to thank for Grand Rapids' 1892 city hall.

Based on the requirements of Scott's \$5,000 bequest to the city for a library, the common council voted on Dec. 20, 1889, to build something, either a library or a city hall and library.

The latter was decided upon and a building committee was formed of F.J. Wood, Dan Case and E.B. Brundage. They reported the best site was that of the old 'Rablin House' on the corner of what is now 1st Street and Baker streets, north of the Wood County Courthouse.

The land cost \$700, but removal of barns on the premises raised the bill to \$1,225.

The old "city building" was sold in 1891 and a new brick building to be used for a city hall and T.B. Scott Library was planned. It would be 55 by 65 feet and would have at least three electric lights.

On Nov. 2, 1891, the placing of a clock in the tower was authorized.

The Wood County Reporter of Oct. 8, 1891, said that Jon Mercer, an architect and builder from Wausau, had come down to inspect the work in progress. "He declared it a fine structure, correctly and well constructed in every point."

Mercer complimented the builder, Joseph Golla, for giving the city such excellent work. "This certainly must be gratifying to the building committee as well as all those who have had a hand in its construction," said the Reporter, "after all the criticisms that have been proffered by many citizens."

Work on the building proceeded at a pace that caused the Enterprise and Tribune to comment in a Dec. 19, 1891, supplement that, "The work at the City Hall is progressing slowly but surely. It has reached that stage where a day's work looks much smaller than it really is; and therefore leads some to believe that the workmen are in the language of the masses, 'killing time.'"

"But those at the head of the work are doing all they can towards rushing the work to completion without slighting any part of it."

The Enterprise and Tribune estimated that the carpenters would be nearly finished in 1½ weeks and the painters in a month.

The city clock, stated the article, had arrived

the previous Monday and was moved out from the depot to the hall on Tuesday. "It is a fine piece of workmanship," estimated the writer, "and will be placed in its proper place as soon as the bell arrives."

"It is not very elaborate," said the newspaper of the clock, "but it is good and substantial. When it is put up in the tower its four faces will be visible from many different points in the city. The great defect of the old bell was that it could not be heard distinctly by those most easily awakened."

Aware of the shortcoming of the old bell, the committee ordered that it be replaced by "one whose mournful toll and clashing fire alarm can be heard from most remote points in the city."

The Reporter of Jan. 1, 1892, could announce completion of the new city hall. "It is antique in style and contains all the latest devices known to architecture for such buildings."

The hall was 2½ stories high with an 80-foot tower on the southeast corner, in which the "elegant town clock notifies the citizens of the time of day, and the bell rings out the alarm of fire."

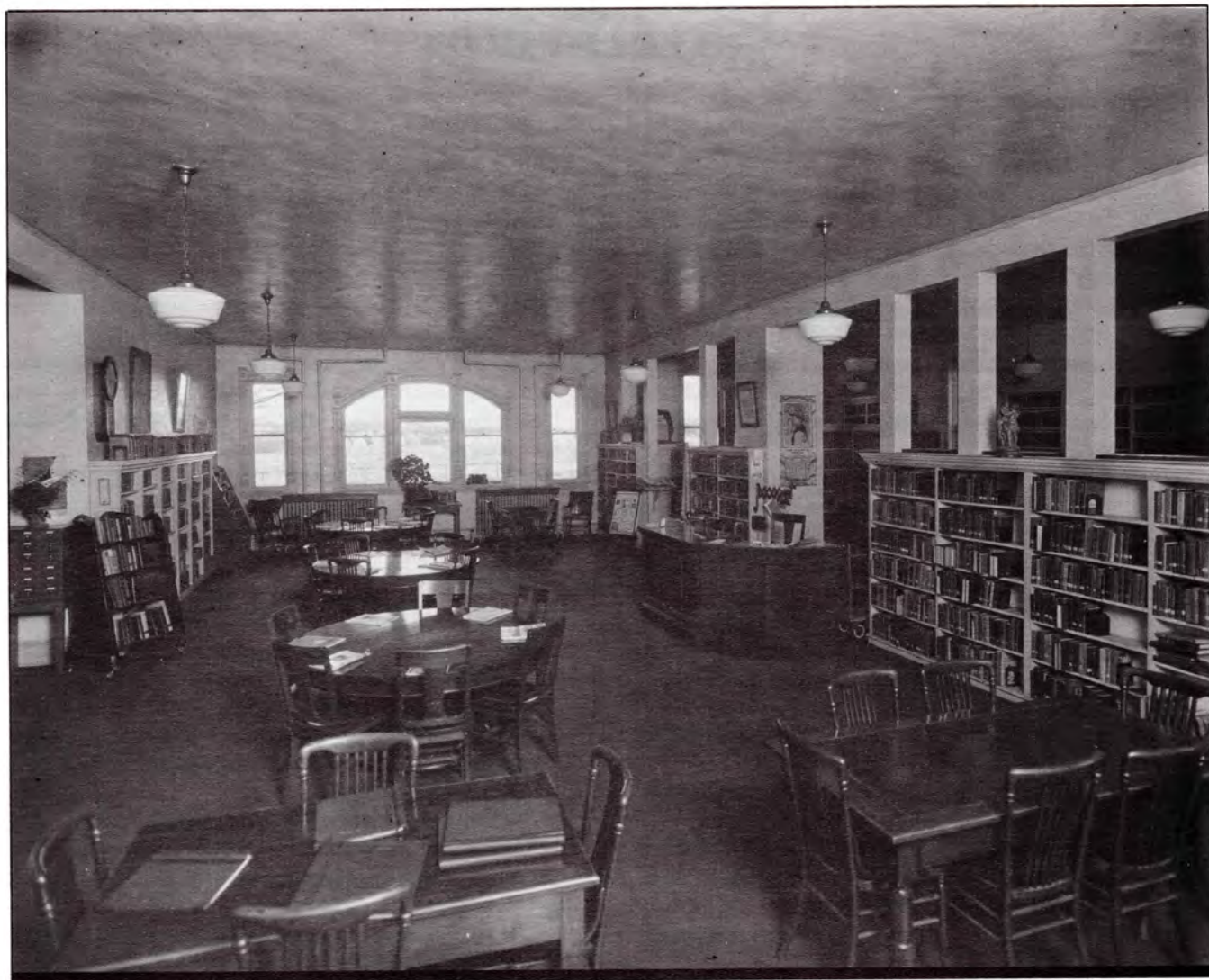
The building was of red brick resting on a masonry wall. It commanded a view of what was then the business center.

The basement contained a furnace, wood room and a "calaboose." On the first floor was the treasurer's office, city clerk's office and an engine room for the fire department. On the second floor was a large businessmen's room, three library rooms, the mayor's office and the council room.

Each floor had a wood room and modern plumbing.

A Feb. 1, 1892, report of the business committee to the common council on the City Hall and T.B. Scott Public Library Building considered the problems surmounted and the "pleasure of presenting to you and the citizens of Grand Rapids, the building in its finished condition."

A total of \$14,251.94 had been paid for the building, much of it to such local craftsmen and vendors as John Farrish, Daly & Sampson, H.H. Voss, J.B. Hasbrouck, L.M. Nash and W.L. Wood. Carpenters were paid \$2,063.86. Building materials and fixtures costs \$5,859.13, the clock and bell, \$728.



McMillan Memorial Library

T.B. Scott Public Library

The city offices remained only eight years. When Centralia and Grand Rapids consolidated in 1900, the city government moved to the West Side and the entire second floor was given over to the library.

In 1923, all the building became "the library," because by then a new city hall had been built on the West Side and a new fire station had been built on the East Side. The council chambers became the children's room.

After the library moved in 1948 to the Isaac Witter house on 3rd Street South, the old city hall received miscellaneous use including that of

courthouse annex until it was razed in 1956, along with the old courthouse, to make room for what is now a parking lot.

The library in its present quarters does not have a town clock to toll "mournfully" our hours, but it fulfills these words, spoken to the city council upon completion of the 1892 city hall and T.B. Scott Public Library.

"We have a building which cannot fail to attract attention and to show to outsiders and ourselves that the city is alive, enterprising . . . and is evidence of life heretofore wanting."

Natatorium

Another boy drowned . . .

Three young brothers swimming by the west end of the Green Bay and Western Bridge . . . the youngest in trouble . . . a second dives in to help . . . a third watches helplessly as the first two are separated by the swift current.

"The little fellow sank from sight and that was the last seen of him," said the June 25, 1913, Grand Rapids Tribune. The body was recovered a short distance away in 20 feet of water by splicing several poles together.

Jack Arpin had searched the Wisconsin River in front of his 1st Street North residence too many times for the body of a drowned swimmer. He wanted to make sure none of his nine children became the victim.

"He went to the city commission and proposed that he and they build a swimming pool together," wrote Jack's son, Julien J. "Dode" Arpin from Pompano Beach, Fla., recently.

An Aug. 18, 1934, Daily Tribune surveyed the history of the East Side pool.

"Wisconsin Rapids enjoyers of the natatory sport have John B. Arpin, former prominent lumber and business man of this city, now of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., to thank for being the motivating spirit in developing the splendid pool which hundreds have been using nearly every day this summer."

Because of his concern for the safety of his children and others, Arpin's name "headed the list of prominent men and business firms in donations for a municipal swimming pool," on July 24, 1913.

Arpin threw \$700 into the pot. His brother, E.P., gave another \$200 and a second brother, D.J., donated \$100. With help from George W. Mead, Isaac P. Witter, Kellogg Bros. Lumber Co. and Johnson & Hill, besides many small gifts, the total came to \$2,600.

A good start was made on the pool basin during the summer. On Aug. 20, the Tribune reported the pool was in use.

"Water was turned into the swimming pool Tuesday morning about 11 o'clock, and by the time the sand was fairly wet up in the bottom of the tank the small fry were on hand and taking a bath. There is no doubt but that the pool will be a popular place for bathers, although the swim-

ming season for this year is nearly over."

On Nov. 7, the city kicked in about \$1,000 under the leadership of Mayor Joseph Cohen.

The property was leased from the Consolidated Water Power and Paper Co. for \$1 per year. "George Mead gladly put a pipe through the dam, and furnished the water," wrote J.J. Arpin.

In July of its second year, large crowds gathered every evening to swim. Arc lights were installed and "the place was patronized more than ever," said the Tribune.

"A flume ran from the dam to the pool, carrying the water," said J.J. Arpin. "Special 'toboggans' were constructed, for the children to ride the flume to the pool."

"Other features were: two slides, copper sheathed, with water running down them; flying rings; trapezes; diving boards; a high dive tower; and a unique device for emptying the pool—two bottom hinged gates, which could be dropped, causing a nine feet deep wall of water to empty the pool in less than five minutes, making rescue of a drowning victim easy."

"Also included were two bathhouses," said Arpin. "Dad had stipulated that he would do his part on the consideration that no child would have to pay."

That summer, newspaper accounts of drownings were conspicuous only by their absence.

Five years after the pool was built, city workmen completed laying a sewer at the pool, connecting with modern bathhouses complete with showers, toilets and dressing rooms. Planted with trees, each dedicated to the memory of a Rapids serviceman who died during World War I, the grounds surrounding the pool were named Legion Memorial Park.

Although the water for the pool was furnished by continuous flow from the river above the dam and was dark in color, it was considered safe for swimming. By 1930, the water was filtered and chlorinated. In addition, it was tested regularly by the state bacteriological laboratory at Wausau. The pool was emptied and cleaned three times a week.

The Tribune of 1934 noted how the chief benefactor of "one of the finest outdoor, free swimming pools in the middlewest" gained by his own foresightedness.



Municipal Swimming Pool

In 1930 all Florida newspapers, read the account, carried two-column pictures and big writeups of little Mary Arpin, who learned to swim at the age of 6 in the pool started by her father and who won all swimming honors in the Sunshine state at 15. She was presented a trophy cup almost as large as herself by former Gov. Alfred E. Smith of New York.

In 1939, said Nellen Sherwood, the gate used to empty the pool went out and she flowed downstream with the water, wearing a bright swimming cap and waving with one arm. "I thought I'd go under the bridge and by Mother and Grandma on the porch," she said. Rescue, however, came first, on the rocks by the Christian

Science church.

In 1955, the first municipal swimming pool had to be replaced. Carl Billmeyer was selected as the builder. His son, David, remembers the difficulty of installing a new pool basin in the hard granite that forms much of our riverbank.

Wisconsin Rapids Common Council minutes for 1955 chronicle the dispensation of the old bathhouses.

Two bids were received. The first contained an offer to purchase the structures for \$560. The second bidder said he would remove them if the council paid him \$250 for his trouble.

The council in this instance, acted with appropriate wisdom.

WFHR

“Who threw the overalls in Mrs. Murphy’s chowder?”

At least one long-time listener to radio station WFHR remembers the question, posed, she said, by Red Blanchard, a country-western-style entertainer with WFHR at the Wisconsin Rapids station’s inception in 1940.

“He loved to sing and play guitar,” said Arnie Strobe, WFHR radio personality, at the studio.

Blanchard, a Pittsville native, got his start singing at the community meetings, said Strobe. “It didn’t cost him anything, but you had to go out and get him.”



Seated: Nancy Dolan, Margie Lynn, Ci Ci Hafermann, Helen Hafermann. Standing: Ruth Sweet, Red Blanchard, Gene Eckes, Les Sturmer, Wilbur Cumberland, Hal Steltenpohl.

The station's first headquarters were in the Nash building, known later as the Montgomery Ward building, on West Grand Avenue.

Many times when Strobe came to work early in the morning, he said, he would find Blanchard and his "Coon County Jamboree" sprawled all over the lobby. They had entertained the night before and without the benefit of sleep were awaiting the morning show on which they performed live.

The founder of WFHR was William F. Huffman Sr., former publisher of the Daily Tribune, from whom the station takes its call letters. Huffman had attempted for 10 years to obtain a broadcasting license. As late as 1937, his application to the Federal Communications Commission had been denied. In 1940, he finally received permission to operate.

The first broadcast came at 6:30 p.m. on Nov. 5, 1940. While carpenters, painters and technicians continued to work on the studio, the election returns went out to "the absorbed, tense public," according to the Daily Tribune.

The newspaper described the WFHR offices on the second floor of the Nash building. "A visitor steps into a broad-L shaped reception room and lobby. Across the Grand Avenue side are, in succession, the office of manager George T. Frechette, office of the program director, the news room and cloak room, and Studio B. Opposite Studio B is the larger Studio A and between them is the control room. All offices and studios open into the reception room."

The station operated with a staff of 11, including Gertrude Kellogg, staff organist-pianist, and Blanchard, "talent bureau director and staff musician." Blanchard had already performed for WLS radio in Chicago, but returned to this area to work at the new radio station.

At the inauguration program of Nov. 5, music was provided not by the staff but by the Castilians orchestra with Agnes Schill. Other music could be supplied regularly by Mrs. Kellogg on the grand piano or Hammond electric organ, "exact replica of the one in the NBC studios in Radio City, New York."

Diversified programming, including regular blocks of religion and education, was promised. A search for local talent would be made. "Auditions will be granted to all who ask them," said Frechette.

By the time a first anniversary "jamboree" was held, a local talent had appeared. Arnold Strobe, a Pittsville farm boy, had been hired.

Well, not exactly hired. He had been allowed to work at WFHR.

It was a vocational rehabilitation program sponsored by the state of Wisconsin that brought Arnie on May 26, 1941, to WFHR. As a "trainee" for the first eight months, Strobe worked for free. When he got on the payroll, it was for \$10 a month. He liked the work and has never had another job.

"I had radio in my head ever since I was a kid," Strobe said. "I was interested in the technical end of it."

Strobe said that as a boy he had bought a rolltop desk for \$3 and had used it as a workbench on which he assembled crystal radio sets.

Although he had never planned to speak on the air, World War II caused so many vacancies that Strobe was pressed into service as an announcer. For a few weeks, Strobe suffered from a bad case of nerves. Early broadcasts were live and there often was an audience in the studio lobby, listening to the broadcast there. "We used to run requests, cards and letters. We had the farm and home hour," Strobe said.

Local musicians such as Mr. and Mrs. Joe Liska or Lucille Teske and her son, Marvin, often played on such programs as the "Consolidated Hour." For "man on the street" interviews, "we put a cord out the Nash Hardware window at 2nd and Grand, hooked it up to a microphone and offered people prizes if they could answer stupid questions, like what day it is."

The news at that time was brought over from the Daily Tribune office on 2nd Avenue South. The sports editor of the Tribune often acted as sports announcer for WFHR.

The station moved in 1958 from Grand Avenue to a former house on the present site of the Daily Tribune. As construction began on the new Tribune-WFHR building, the house was moved with the radio station in it. Strobe said occasionally a jolt might make the record he was playing skip.

In 1960, WFHR and the Daily Tribune occupied their new quarters.

At that time, Strobe began "Kaffee Klatsch," described by a "TV Radio Mirror" magazine of April 1970 as "an audience-participation show via live telephone calls that bring out a discussion of any and all subjects and problems; from fixing a sink and finding a lost child, to sometimes serving as a psychiatrist."

Callers might even query with some inpertinence: Has anyone seen a 1963 class ring? What is the best use for dead cats? And who in the world threw these britches in Mrs. Murphy's chowder?

The Columbian

When George F. Hatton visited Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893, he found his destiny.

Hatton, son of a London postmaster, had arrived 90 years ago in the United States. He heard about the World's Fair, went to Chicago, and fell in love with a paper machine. In fact, Hatton liked the machine so well that he followed it up to its new home in the new paper mill in the brand-new town of Nekoosa.

Thereafter, Hatton, who began as a beater operator, made papermaking his life's work. His last job was at a paper mill in Kalamazoo, Mich. He died there in 1945.

The machine Hatton pursued up to Nekoosa hasn't exactly died. It has been replaced, bolt by bolt, gear by gear and dryer by dryer until no part of the original remains. Yet, like our own bodies, which contain nary a molecule we were born with, it still goes by the same names, either the "World's Fair Machine" or "The Columbian."

According to research published by J. Marshall Buehler of Nekoosa Papers Inc., the Columbian is the only full-size, commercial paper machine ever built and operated specifically for a World's Fair.

The machine was a product of the Beloit Iron Works, already well on its way to becoming a leader in the manufacture of papermaking equipment. Built because paper-trade companies formed the American Paper Making Exhibit Co., and persuaded Beloit to build the machine, it was actually used to produce paper at the fair.

Beloit, in spite of the financial panic of 1893, had invested practically all its surplus funds in the demonstration machine. Now it needed to sell the Columbian to recoup its expense.

Meanwhile, up north on the Wisconsin River, Tom Nash had been trying to develop water power at Point Basse, the site of the old Daniel Whitney sawmill and present Nekoosa. He tried to interest J.A. Kimberly (of Kimberly-Clark).

Kimberly declined, but Nash found support in Lewis M. Alexander, a local banker and lumberman, and Frank Garrison, manager of the Centralia Pulp and Water Power Co. The three established the Nekoosa Paper Co.

Nash, as president, wrote in 1893 to Beloit. Were they interested in building a machine for the new Nekoosa mill?

Beloit responded: "Referring to the machine that you will soon contract for, we would like to

have you consider a probability to take the machine we are building for the World's Fair. The machine will be available for November 15th and will make you a price on this machine of \$21,800 delivered and set up in your mill."

Beloit assured Nash that the machine would receive excellent care at Chicago and would be in just as good, if not better, condition at the end of the fair as it was at the beginning. "Being built for the purpose of exhibit at the Worlds Fair, we think it is unnecessary to say that we have spared no expense or attention to make it a model machine in workmanship, convenience or finish."

Nash still was not sold on the Columbian and continued to bargain for a new machine. Beloit engineers just as stubbornly continued to advocate the World's Fair exhibit "We have never built a machine that received as much care during construction as this did."

Finally, the machine was purchased at a price of \$19,240, delivered and installed.

The April 15, 1893, Centralia Enterprise & Tribune reported that the papermaking machine in operation all summer at the World's Fair in Chicago was to be moved to Nekoosa as soon as the exposition was over. "The machine was built by the Beloit Iron Works as a result of the demand from the world's fair management for a machine that would be the most representative of the paper making industry of the present time."

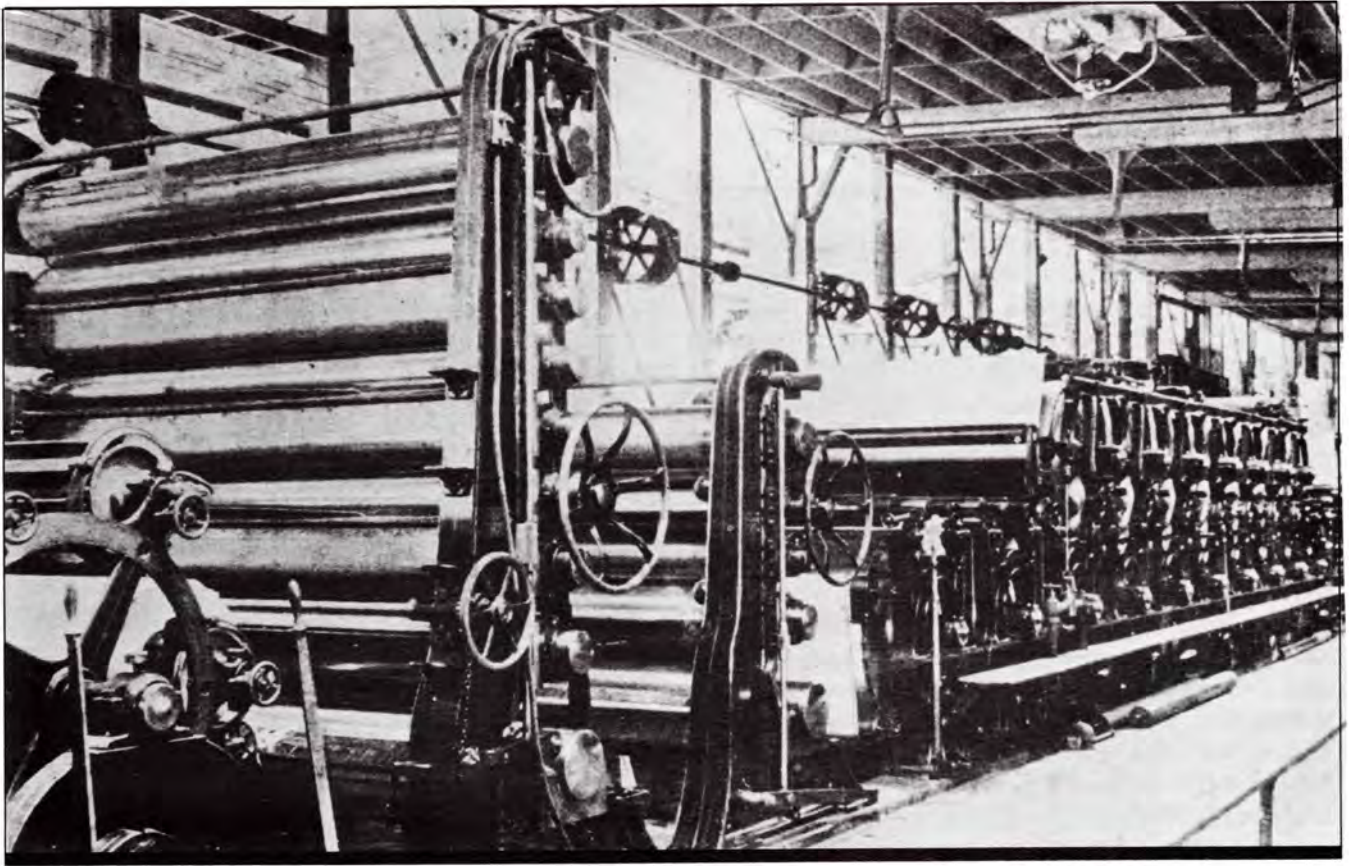
It would be one of two machines that the Nekoosa Paper Co. would have running at full capacity the following year, said the Enterprise & Tribune.

The machine was put in as specified and running at a speed of 250 feet per minute. In 1895, Nash wanted to increase that to 300. He wrote to Beloit.

They answered that to increase the speed, it would be helpful to add sulphite pulp to the raw materials, thereby adding strength. "Thus Nekoosa Paper Co. began construction of a sulphite mill to augment its groundwood pulp supply," said Buehler.

In 1923, the Columbian was dismantled at its Nekoosa site and reassembled in the Port Edwards mill as No. 7 machine.

One of the many employees who have worked on the Columbian is Andrew Pluke, Port Edwards. Like other papermakers of the time, he worked in bare feet.



NPI

The Columbian

Pluke, with shoes on, began working outside, but soon moved to the beaters and then to the machines. In 1916, he was made machine tender. That was the year the mill went from 11-hour days to eight-hour days, he said, at the same pay.

Wages in 1911 were 13 cents per hour for outside work and 15 cents on the beaters. They rose steadily, Pluke said, with the exception of the depression years, when pay was cut along with hours.

Pluke said the first union was established in or about 1913. In 1919, came the first strike. The reason for it, he doesn't know, but Pluke left Port Edwards to work at Janesville, waiting on tables. "Somebody wrote to me to come and get my job back," he said.

He came back and stayed. When he first worked on the World's Fair machine, it was making newsprint and wrapping paper. In the early 1930s, it changed to fine high-grade papers.

"They treated me good and I always had a job," he said.

The Columbian is still going, sort of. Over the years, new dryers, calendar stack, winder and size press have been added. The machine has been totally rebuilt to such an extent that it now produces four times as much paper without the benefit of any original parts.

Nothing remains of the 1893 World's Fair but an oil stain, a grand title and a chapter in the paper city memoirs.

Old No. 1

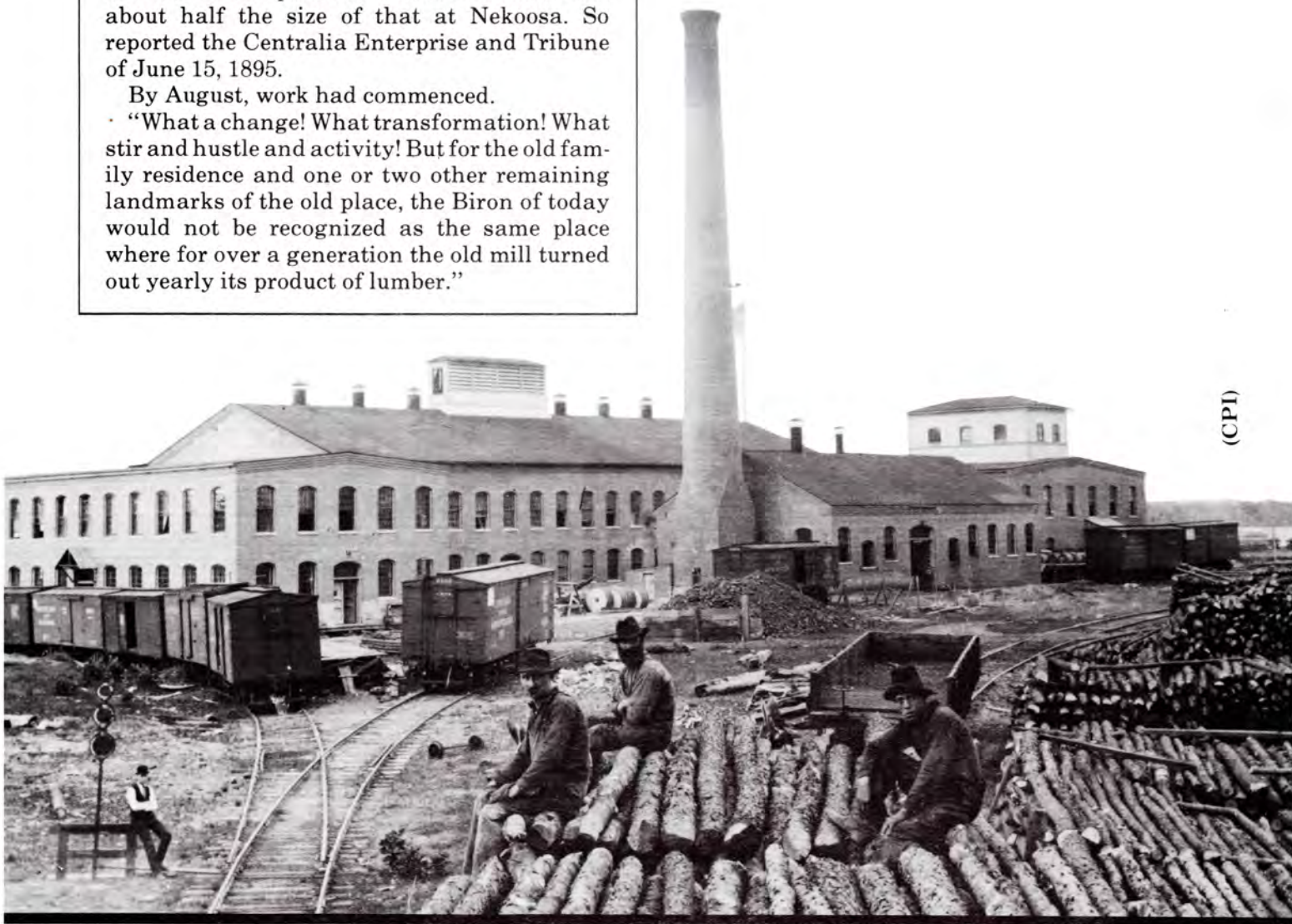
After 88 years, the last of two original paper machines at the Biron Divison of Consolidated Papers has been put on standby. Old No. 1 started up in 1896, the nucleus of the new Grand Rapids Pulp and Paper Co.

The incorporation papers of that company were recorded in 1892 by J.D. Witter, George Severe Biron, J.W. Cameron, "Daly & Sampson" and E.T. Harmon. They purchased and razed the old Biron saw mill.

Due to a business "depression," the firm deferred further action until 1895, when operations began on a new dam and mill. Initially, the mill was planned to contain seven grinders and a single paper machine. That would make it the size of the plant at South Centralia and about half the size of that at Nekoosa. So reported the Centralia Enterprise and Tribune of June 15, 1895.

By August, work had commenced.

"What a change! What transformation! What stir and hustle and activity! But for the old family residence and one or two other remaining landmarks of the old place, the Biron of today would not be recognized as the same place where for over a generation the old mill turned out yearly its product of lumber."



(CPI)

Grand Rapids Pulp and Paper Co., Biron

"Year by year," continued the Enterprise and Tribune of Aug. 10, 1895, "its products rose in long rows of towering lumber piles along the banks of the river that furnished the sinews of power that made the buzzing saws gnaw their way greedily through the heart of thousands of pine logs that were spring floated into the mill pond.

"But year by year the rows of lumber piles grew shorter and shorter, as the supply of timber became exhausted more and more, until for a number of seasons the annual output was very slight. The lumber industry on the Wisconsin in this vicinity was a thing of the past."

At Biron, brick walls of the new boiler room, the beater room and the machine room were going up, built on a foundation of solid rock. Two steam drills worked at excavating a wheel pit for the seven turbine wheels.

General Superintendent Nels Johnson told the Enterprise editor that more than 2 million feet of lumber would be used in the dam and plant, practically all furnished by the John Arpin Lumber Co. About 800,000 bricks would be used and 3,000 cords of rock.

Pulp making started on Jan. 20, 1896.

"The Enterprise was furnished a sample of the product, taken from the first sheet by Mr. Flavel Deadle, one of the millwrights. We were indeed surprised that the first run of pulp should be of such high quality. There was not a defect in composition or color, and the whole presented an excellent fiber."

"The mill has been running almost continuously ever since it was started up," reported the Enterprise.

"The Company now has four grinders running and will have two more ready in a day or two. From the four grinders they made 312 bundles of pulp during Tuesday night. They made their first shipment on Wednesday, which consisted of two carloads of pulp consigned to the Centralia Pulp and Water Power Co. of this city."

In April, the editor visited Biron again and found more great changes in "that great industrial center."

"The main thoroughfare has been moved west about four rods and all of the business houses, except for the 'white house' which is used as a hotel and as offices for the Company, are ranged on the west side there of. This is desirable for more reason than one. It gives to the hamlet a more symmetrical appearance and removed from the pulp and paper mill and the

surrounding piles of pulp wood a great fire risk."

In April, 85 workers turned out four carloads of pulp per day, to be stored for the purpose of having a surplus on hand when the mill started making paper, an event predicted for the following week.

Twenty-seven years later, Chester Reimer, 77, went to work on that same machine. As it turned out, he stayed with No. 1 until his retirement, 47 years later.

Consolidated bought the Grand Rapids Pulp and Paper mill at Biron in 1911. It was 1922 when Reimer started, skinning pulp rolls for 32 cents an hour.

Even on the paper machines, work was by hand not button. "We used pulleys or chain blocks," Reimer said. "And there were no gauges for the stock. You raised a board in the stock box if it was light, lowered it if the stock was heavy."

Reimer started as a fourth hand. While he learned, he cleaned up "broke," or discarded paper. "All the shoving and pushing you did in those days," he said. "They kept you on the hop."

The only ventilation in the machine room, he said, was to open or shut a window. "We were right against the river. In winter it was pretty cold." Especially since in those days, papermakers wore no shoes. More troublesome than the cold to bare feet, said Reimer, were the quantities of tobacco spit on them.

Besides fourth hand, Reimer worked as third hand, back tender and machine tender on No. 1. He was faithful to her all but two weeks, when he served on No. 2, a smaller machine.

"It run good," he said of No. 1. "Some days it might go for two or three days without a break in the sheet. Then there were times you brought your lunch home with you and sat outdoors and ate it."

Over the years, Reimer and his machine produced wall paper, "oatmeal" paper ("they threw everything in"), newsprint (pink and green sheets were colored in the beater room) and tablet paper. In the late 1930s, No. 1, like most Consolidated machines, converted to enamel-coated paper.

Reimer said No. 1 was a good machine for him. "I'm short a left thumb. It's a right-handed machine."

"They always ran steady. They always had orders," he said. "It gave me a good living."

A First-Class Residence

It was Christmas Eve and the halls of the Johnson house were decked, not with joyful boughs but with garlands of mourning. On Dec. 17, 1902, the beloved husband and father, Nels Johnson, while on a business trip to Wilmington, Del., suddenly and without warning, died. His death came among strangers in a hotel room at 1:15 a.m.

On the evening of Dec. 16 Johnson had enjoyed a hearty supper in Baltimore, Md., and had retired somewhat later to his room at the Clayton House, Wilmington. After a gin cocktail, he went to bed.

Soon Johnson experienced pain and distress in his chest and stomach to such an extent that he urged the clerk to immediately seek out the best doctor in town. Dr. Willard Springer arrived and, upon examination, diagnosed the problem as indigestion. He injected Johnson with "morphia."

The doctor wrote out a prescription and prepared to leave, but Johnson prevailed upon him to stay until the medicine was delivered. Before it came, Johnson underwent a sudden convulsion and died. Death was attributed to uremia or Bright's disease, a kidney malfunction.

Accompanying Johnson's body on the longer ride back from Wilmington was Arsin Arpin, who happened to be visiting in Woonsocket, R.I., and from Chicago, George M. Hill and George Mead.

As the shocked community came reluctantly to grips with its grief, the body, from its arrival on Saturday lay in state at the big Johnson home on 1st Avenue. At the Sunday funeral, the large gathering heard a Catholic service and remarks by Judge W.J. Conway. "Almost without warning, alone and away from home and loved ones, and within a few miles of the spot where a quarter of a century before he first set foot upon the soil of his adoption, death came to him from the unseen world," said Conway.

Johnson, said Conway, had arrived in New York with 25 cents in his pocket, but had quickly become "the architect of his fortune."

"He was essentially a business man. He did things. To him, theories were subordinate to practical results."

Johnson, according to his eulogist, delighted in his happy home on the banks of the Wisconsin where he lived "in the sweet companionship of those he loved." At his death, Johnson left, out of

"the smooth current of domestic joy," eight children and his widow, the pretty Nellie Hanifin from Sigel.

Johnson was 55, hale and hearty, so everyone thought. A fanatic proponent of the Consolidated Water Power and Paper Co., he had just convinced George Mead to back him in the venture and had gone east to look at paper machines. He planned to come home and build a dam and paper mill.

Born June 17, 1847, in Denmark, Johnson became the quintessential self-made man of the frontier.

In 1867, he immigrated through New York to Chicago, where he worked as a laborer before coming up to Grand Rapids in search of some employment suitable to a "green country boy."

Johnson started, like so many others had, as a laborer in the employ of Francis Biron. He worked in the woods during the winter and in the saw mill at Biron during the summer. "He advanced himself up until he held the position of head sawyer," wrote the Wood County Reporter, "when he quit to enter the general mercantile business with Henry Langord in 1876."

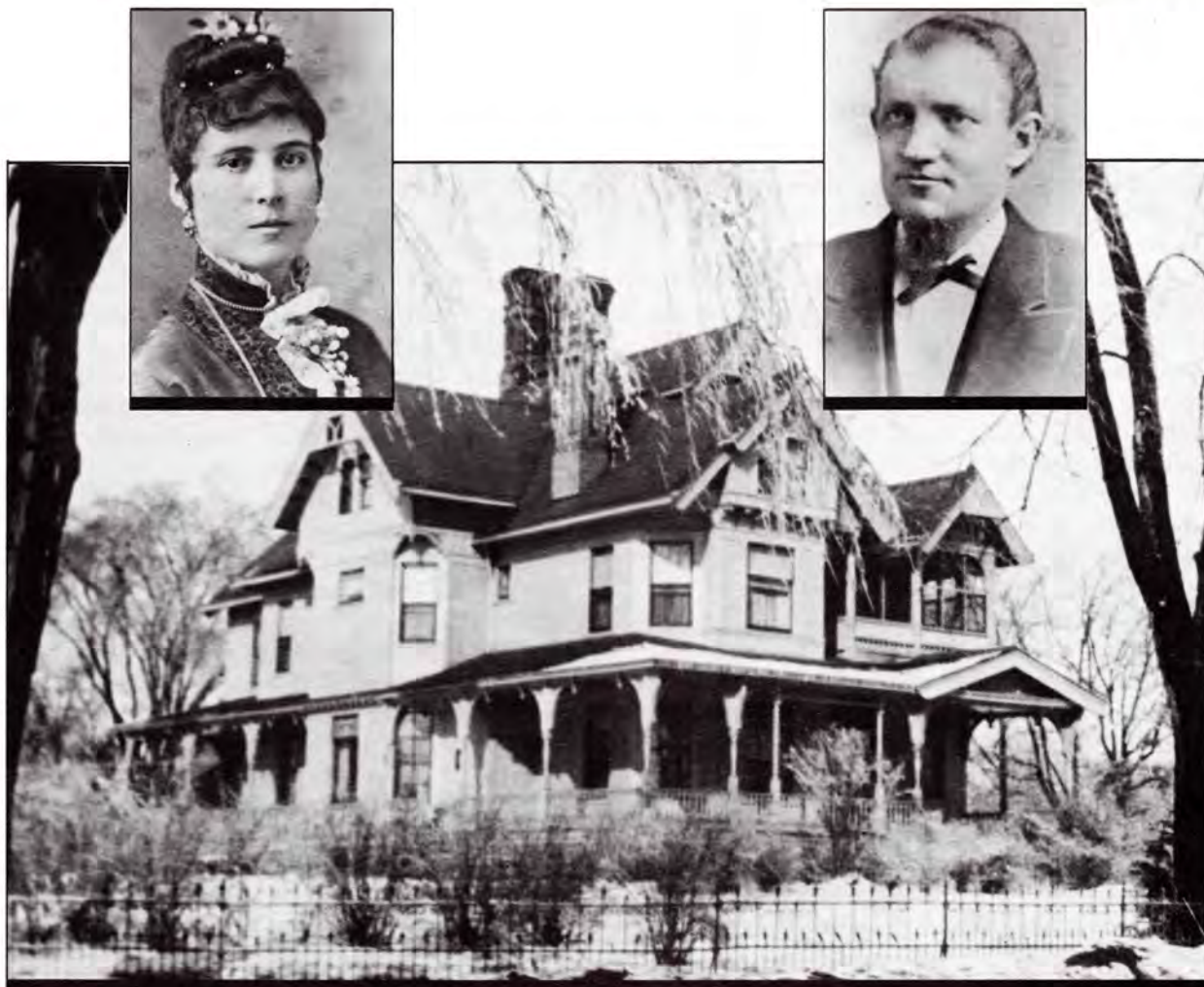
Apparently, Johnson sent \$500 to Marshall Field in Chicago and asked him to do the buying for the Grand Rapids concern. The two continued to correspond.

Langord sold out in 1877 to William H.H. Edwards, who sold in 1879 to J.D. Witter, who sold in 1887 to George Hill. Thus, Johnson & Co. became Johnson & Hill.

In 1892, Johnson built a new store and a new house, fulfilling the prophecy of the May 30, 1891, Enterprise and Tribune, which reported his purchase of 12 acres for \$1,050. "With a frontage on the beautiful Wisconsin River, a fine stock range in the rear, and the whole only four or five blocks from the business center of the city, Mr. Johnson's new purchase certainly has every commendable feature for a first-class residence site.

In 1895, Johnson presided over the building of a dam at Biron for Grand Rapids Pulp & Paper Co. After the mill was constructed, he continued to manage the firm. He was also part owner of Centralia Hardware.

When Johnson died, he was 55 and Nellie was 45. He had lived in their house 10 years. She would continue 45 more years, raising along the way, her large family.



Nellen Sherwood

Nellie Hanifin Johnson, Nels Johnson

After Mrs. Johnson's death on June 28, 1947, the house was sold for use by the Sisters of St. Francis as a chapel and convent. The former pasture in back became the grounds of Our Lady Queen of Heaven school and church.

In 1968, the house was sold to William Foote, who in turn sold to James Manley in 1972. But most significantly, the house has recently returned to the Johnson family, in the person of Nellen Sherwood, granddaughter of Nels Johnson, who, along with her husband, William, purchased the property, renovated the building and restored its grandeur.

It isn't the first time Bill and Nellen revisited the Johnson house. On Sept. 30, 1950, they borrowed the chapel long enough for a wedding. The halls were "lighted with candles and decorated with baskets of gladioli in fall colors, and maple leaf foliage, for the marriage of Miss Kathern Ellen Bellew and William H. Sherwood," said the Daily Tribune.

Miss Bellew, known as Nellen, was the daughter

of Nels Johnson's daughter, Irma, who married Frank Bellew. For a while, Nellen lived with her grandmother in the big house, while her parents fixed up the carriage house out back for a residence.

In other years, when Nellen and her family visited from their home in Minneapolis, they stayed with Grandma Johnson.

Nellen remembers a happy Christmas Eve, midnight Mass and the several Johnson families gathered later for pressed chicken and Christmas pudding.

After aunts and uncles have returned to their homes, after the adults have gone to bed, after the big house has had enough silence to assume a shadowed mystery beyond any particular moment, but long before sunrise, little Nellen, the only child left in the house, gazes through the balustrade at the closed wooden doors to the parlor. On the other side is the promise of the season, a green tree and hopefully, a brand new pair of ice skates.

Consolidated

How did an appealing but unpretentious furniture salesman from Rockford, Ill., rise to riches and renown in River City?

We have it in his own clear and specific words, written on Nov. 8, 1950, when he was 79. "I want to dictate some facts of the early activities of Consolidated . . ."

The speaker was George W. Mead I.

Water-power owners in the vicinity of the "grand rapids" had already in the 1890s "consolidated" their holdings with hopes of building one efficient dam and possibly a paper mill. Nels Johnson, an industrialist, and J.D. Witter, a banker, had by 1902 acquired all shares of the new Consolidated Water Power Co.

Johnson, said Mead, was eager, almost crazy to develop the project, while Witter, Mead's father-in-law, took a more reluctant and conservative view, as bankers almost always do, according to Mead.

On March 22, 1902, Witter died, leaving his affairs in the hands of his son, Isaac. Johnson began "hectoring" the affable but flappable heir to go ahead with the Consolidated plans. Isaac wrote to his brother-in-law, Mead, and asked him to come up and help.

Mead at first refused, "busily engaged in my own affairs in Rockford."

Isaac continued to implore the more decisive Mead to come until Mead agreed to travel to Grand Rapids and stay for a week or two until the matter was settled.

On the clear, bright morning of May 2, 1902, Mead with his wife, Ruth, and baby son, Stanton, arrived in town. Now it was his turn to confront Johnson.

"He would sidle in to the old Bank of Grand Rapids," said Mead, "dragging his hand against the south wall until he reached the back room where I sat and would start the conversation, 'I've been a-thinking,' and he fairly glowed with enthusiasm and was willing to talk by the hour so long as I would listen and take part."

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

A group of investors including Tom Nash and

L.M. Alexander offered \$50,000 for all the "over-rated" stock of Consolidated. "They said it would cost probably \$2,000,000 to build a dam and a small paper mill, and they would not think of doing it at that time, but they might plan to do it sometime in the future."

Isaac, said Mead, fell into a low state of mind and told the group he figured he would take their offer. Mead asked that they first consult Mrs. Witter and Mead's wife.

When "Mother Witter" heard the news, she broke into tears, saying that her husband had given "most of his time and thought for ten years besides all that money and it was terrible to give in."

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

It was a fateful day when Johnson took Mead on a walk up to Biron, across the river by boat, and down the west bank. Johnson demonstrated nails embedded 10 and 20 feet high in trees and said the water would reach them. He said there were few titles or rights he and Witter had not acquired.

The following day, Mead told Isaac that Johnson had converted him and they ought to go ahead. "Isaac was dumbfounded and asked me how I planned to pay for it."

Isaac told Mead that if he could raise the capital stock to \$400,000 and get "two strong men" each to take \$50,000 of the stock, he would try to go along with it.

Mead went to Marshfield "to lay the whole thing before W.D. Conner. I persuaded him to sign up and came back and tackled F. MacKinnon. I did not know that he had no money nor did Isaac, but MacKinnon was easily persuaded and he put himself down for \$50,000."

MacKinnon borrowed \$40,000 from Witter's Bank of Grand Rapids. Consolidated was in business.

Mead began to sell stock to various investors around town including Charlie Kruger, Thede Brazeau, George McMillan and George Hill. He obtained a loan from the Wisconsin National Bank of Milwaukee for at least \$150,000, endorsed by the Witter estate.



George W. Mead

In early December, Johnson left for Wilmington, Del., to look at paper machines. "He was not authorized to buy them, but was told he could telegraph us when he got his proposal made."

The telegram that actually arrived brought another kind of news.

Nels Johnson, president and manager of the new Consolidated Water Power and Paper Co., had suddenly and unexpectedly died in a hotel room in Wilmington. Mead went to Chicago to meet the remains.

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

It was George Hill who suggested, "George Mead has had experience in building, he has put

up a very fine building in Rockford and knows how to do it. Why not let him carry on until we find a paper man?"

Mead said he would "stick to it for a while" but that he was anxious to get back to his own business.

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

Circumstances had first seemed to manipulate the fortunes of George Mead. Now, he took control of circumstance. As Mead's business became paper, paper became as well the business of River City.

Civil Disobedience

"I learned how to lay bricks while I was sitting in civics class," William Heilman said in advance of last Saturday's 50-year reunion of the Lincoln High School Class of 1933 at the Mead Inn here.

In their sophomore year at "old, old" Lincoln High School on Lincoln Street, Heilman and his classmates got to watch "old" Lincoln, now East Junior High School, being constructed nearby at 311 Lincoln St.

The older building, largely of wood with a red-brick facade, was built in 1902 for \$65,000. It is said to have trembled while students changed classes.

The 1931 building cost more like \$600,000 and was dedicated on May 29, 1931, by Wisconsin Rapids Mayor George W. Mead, whose backing had been essential to the completion of the project, partially because attached to the high school was the state's second largest fieldhouse.

Despite the grand surroundings, said Heilman, the class of '33 was the cheapest class in history. "They weren't going to let us have an annual. In those depression years, they probably felt we shouldn't go to the merchants for contributions."

A skimpy "Ahdawagam" was produced at the last moment. Photographs were kept to a minimum, although there was room for a series of quotations offered by the staff, such as that by Helen Johnson.

"Life is a series of surprises," she said. "We do not guess today the mood, the pleasure, the power of tomorrow."

The dominant personality of both schools was the principal, Aaron Ritchay, also known as "Little Caesar." Ritchay ruled with an iron hand, or rather one stuck into a boxing glove. Any unruly scholar, no matter how burly, might hear the dreaded command, "Down in the gym!"

There, Ritchay, not much over five and a half feet tall and probably under 150 pounds, would either wrestle the offender or pummel him with big boxing gloves.

Despite his pugilistic attitude, Ritchay was considered fair by students and parents alike. In the old mold, he was said to have known the name of every student.

More controversy surrounded Superintendent Julius Winden, an attentive administrator known for showing up in the classes of every

teacher in town.

At the January 1932 meeting of the Wisconsin Rapids School Board, Winden, superintendent since 1923, handed in his resignation, under duress. Apparently, a conflict over the building of the new school and related expenses had arisen.

Although A.B. Bever, Mabel Gottschalk and Mrs. Edward Hougen of the school board supported Winden, when John Schnabel joined the opposing faction of W.J. Taylor, Arthur Madsen and board President Guy Nash, Winden was asked to leave.

After his resignation, a public outcry arose.

Not insignificant was the civil disobedience of the student body of Lincoln High School.

"We set off the fire bell," said Heilman, "and the whole school walked out on strike. My wife-to-be, Arvilla Kraske, who always has to look nice, was the last one out the door, so Ritchay expelled her."

Benjamin Marx said he was among the group that resorted to such radical tactics as painting "Winden" or "We want Winden" on the stand pipe adjacent to the school and on McKercher's mill.

"We thought we were leading the parade," he said.

The parade came to a halt when Winden himself confronted the "mob" of students across from the school and asked them not to skip school on his account.

The outcome of the controversy was that in regular and special recall elections, the four Winden opponents were removed from the school board and a new board was elected that supported Winden.

All this might have something to do with Winden's choice of a quotation for the 1933 yearbook. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

The football team of the class of '33 followed that advice in its own fashion.

Coach J.A. Torresani made this statement: "Give me the man who holds on when others let go; who pushes ahead when others turn back; who stiffens up when others retreat; who knows no such word as 'can't' or 'give up'; and I will show you a man who will win at the end."

What happened at the end was that the opposing teams held on while Rapids let go, pushed too many Lincoln players ahead and didn't know such words as "can't". After an opening victory of 13-0 over Tomahawk that so demoralized that team that it dropped out of the conference, Lincoln piled up a total of six points in six games.

Opponents Antigo, Marshfield, Merrill, Nekoosa, Wausau and Stevens Point scored 185 points in the same interim.

With the possible exception of the class of '63, which also held a reunion in 1983, it is the worst record on record.

What had become of a team as promising at the start as any? Mostly, it seems, it was a morale problem that began when Coach Leo Huber, a rakish fellow in his raccoon coat, was abruptly dismissed just before the second game. Informed sources say the coach had run up against it because of an encounter with one of what was then called the "fairer" sex.

Huber, a Nekoosa native, returned to Nekoosa, where he operated a grocery store.

After Huber's departure and the naming of J.A. Torresani as temporary mentor, the team careened downhill to "the most disastrous football seen in the history of Wisconsin Rapids athletics," as the Daily Tribune reported after the final game against Stevens Point, which ended up 49-0. "Never before has a Rapids eleven drunk such bitter dregs in Valley football competition."

Among the reasons for the defeat, said the Tribune, was the loss of two key players for training infractions. Apparently they hadn't had enough "bitter dregs."

If the football team offers graduates of the class of '33 with little cause for pride, the marching band made up for it. Sporting new uniforms purchased in 1931, "nearly anyone who was anyone" joined up and practiced for such highlighted events as the 1932 state high school band tournament held here and the performance at the half-time of the Packer game.

It would be band leader Bernard T. Ziegler who had the last word. "Music study," he said, "exalts life."



Strength of the Moment

"Leading the Red Raiders through the crowds that lined the sidewalk outside the Armory was Game Captain Don Brewster, carrying the mammoth trophy presented to the team after their championship conquest of Madison West on Saturday night. Amid wild cheering and the popping of flashbulbs, the Raiders and their coaches were escorted to the stage."

Sixteen times the Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln Red Raiders had gone to the state basketball tournament in Madison and 16 times they had quietly taken their fans and supporters and gone home. But in 1951 they didn't fold.

It might not be the best team he'd ever coached, said Phil Manders after it was over, "but it had more guts."

"They were a gang who hated to lose but lost graciously when they were defeated—only twice all year," wrote Ed Hanson, Daily Tribune sports writer and WFHR sports announcer. "They won just as graciously, happily but without insult to their opponents. Their unbending will to win carried them through many a tough situation, their poise and class under pressure stamped them with extra greatness.

"Gill and Ritchay worried the West defenses all night with fast breaks, feints and long shots. Charley Gurtler, with his tremendous scoring and rebounding in this tournament, had to be covered like a blanket, and when the emphasis shifted to this trio, Jerry Raasch and Game Captain Don Brewster came through in blazing style."

Because of their fast-paced style of play, wrote Hanson this year from his home in Milwaukee, Rapids was the crowd favorite, despite being ranked No. 1 in the "Sweet Sixteen."

"There was such a crunch of Wisconsin Rapids fans after tickets for the finals," said Hanson, "that I can still see Aaron Ritchay, principal of Lincoln at the time, with his back against the wall trying to hand out tickets that he had scrounged wherever he could get them."

Hanson characterized the 1951 team as a "great bunch of kids. Their conduct on and off the court was beyond reproach. They were difficult to interview because of their natural humility and shyness. Gill was an irrepressible kid with a great sense of humor but hard to get to say anything to a sportswriter."

Manders, contacted by telephone at his Arkansas residence, compiled a 186-46 record in 10 years at Lincoln, including four trips to the

state tournament. He said the team of '51 was a family-type group who had come up together through the grade school basketball programs and who had the similar ideals that go along with making a championship team.

In the tournament, he said, the team was cool and coordinated under pressure. Their ability to play as a team enabled them to handle any situation. "Anything you would ask them to do, they did," he said, including, he presumed, take a nap at 2 on the afternoon before the final game, like he did.

Manders was one of the first in the state to fully utilize the fast-break offense. "We used to score off the center tip," said Bob Olson, now basketball coach at Assumption. "Whenever you'd have an advantage, you'd go for a basket."

"We would yell it out, 'three on two' or 'two on one,' when we started the fast break," said Gurtler. "You didn't have to turn around and look. We knew where the others were."

The skillful Rapids guards were well known for their ability to break a press. They also were adept at the man-to-man defense used. "Raasch and I were not that good at scoring," said Brewster of the forwards, "but we were a balanced ball club on defense."

During the regular season, Rapids lost the second game to Neenah and lost the first of three games against Stevens Point, when the players decided to stall on a lead, against coach's orders, losing in overtime by five.

"That's a lesson to you," said Manders.

In the second Point game, not only was the conference championship on the line but the state No. 1 ranking as well, which Point held. Rapids won that game, the conference championship, the No. 1 ranking and, later the Wisconsin Rapids regional finals against Point and their star, Dick Cable, in a game featuring Gurtler's 10 straight free throws.

The team that went to Madison included, besides Gurtler, Olson and Brewster, Doug "Boola" Gill and Jimmy Ritchay at guard and Jerry Raasch at forward. Reserves were Jack Crook, Jim Grossklaus, Wayne Oestreich and Rodney Anderson. All 10 wore the fashionable "flat-top" crewcut and black tennis shoes.

The first game was against Menasha. "They told us they were going to run 10 men at us all night and run us out of the tournament," said Hanson, "but our guards broke their press without trouble and went on to maintain complete



Doug "Boola" Gill, Bob Olson, Rodney Olson, Rodney Anderson, Jerry Raasch, Jack Crook, Charles Gurtler, Don Brewster, James Grosklous, Wayne Oestreich and James Ritchay. At far right is Coach Phil Manders. In the center is manager Thomas Tate.

control throughout the tournament."

"I knew what he was going to do, how he was going to do it and I knew he wasn't going to do it," said Gurtler of the Menasha star, Pat O'Keefe. Raiders won 76-59.

The second game against Menomonie provoked no anxiety and Rapids won 65-41.

Tension rose for the championship game against Madison West. "Boola was our leader," said Gurtler. "He kept saying, 'we're gonna beat this team.' He was determined." West had been ranked second to Rapids in the last polls.

The halftime score was 26-26, but, wrote Hanson in a special Daily Tribune Victory Edition, "There was hardly a Rapids rooter in the huge throng which packed every corner of the (Madison) fieldhouse who didn't feel at halftime that the state title was going to rest with Wisconsin Rapids for the next season, because the Red Raiders have been a great second half team all season."

For listeners back home, the outcome was to remain in doubt. "We were broadcasting on a state network through Baraboo," said Hanson. "The game went down to the wire. Just then our

lines went down in a sleet storm. Nobody ever heard the last few minutes of the game."

The fans learned soon enough of the 64-55 victory and 3,000 went out after the Saturday night storm to meet the team. "Wisconsin Rapids fandom, always filled with an excellent menu of basketball but always starved for that sweet dessert, the state championship," wrote Hanson, welcomed home the heroes.

"No city will ever be more proud of its champions," said Hanson. "No champions were ever more proud of their city."

"At the time," said Olson, "it was a bunch of friends having a good time. It took a while for the impact to hit, but eventually it comes back to you, that you were on this team . . ."

"You just went out and played and won and it was fun," said Brewster. "You didn't realize what it meant or how long it would last. It never hit me for about three years. Now, every time you get a contending club, they start talking about it, what happened, plays we made."

"It was an event," he said, "but only later did I realize the strength of the moment."

An Evening With Dr. Bop

"Well, I'm finally leaving all you mean little freshmen. Just kidding. I'll miss you all. Have fun these years. They are really the best in your life. It's true. I found out. Luck & success to a swell guy.

*—Kathy Halverson to Dave Engel
in Lincoln High's
"Ahdawagam, 1960"*

It's the last dance, the slow song that has brought some of the freshman boys from their stag party by the "bubbler" onto the dance floor. These are the popular and athletic boys, the attractive and confident boys, the hipsters. You know, like Gary Utech, Bill Dachel, Butch La Chapelle, Mel Cleveland, me.

Most freshmen will stand around until the dance is over, still considering making a move they will not be able to make for years, if ever. These are the shy boys: Dave Hanson, Mark Suckow, Jim Nuhlicek, Leon Schmidt, George Zimmerman.

For a moment it seems as if nothing has changed. Then the music stops, the lights go on and we are past almost grown to almost 40. We are old enough that some of our children are older than we were when we dreamed the nice dreams of 1960.

The merriment this time is not the fieldhouse at "old" Lincoln High School, but the Churchill Room of the Mead Inn. The mummerns this time are garbed not in penny loafers, white socks and plaid shirts, but in plaid suits, white shirts and thick ties.

The event is not a post-game dance but the post-graduation 20-year reunion of the Class of '63, only the second time we have met.

Let it be said that some improvements have been made. Along with a modicum of social grace and a dignified number of gray hairs, we have attained maturity, tolerance and a sense of our own nature. As a rule, we are fit, not fat.

Some of the shy boys, invigorated by equal doses of Goodhue's Best and Powdermilk Biscuits, have got themselves dancing.

Others remain introspective as ever, surveying this, our clan, to whom we are forever bound by common birth, age and experience. These are the middle-aged of the '80s, the parents of the 70's, the young adults of the '60s and the children of the '50s, who have too often been portrayed as simple-minded soda jerks and bobbie-soxers.

Indeed, we were innocent. We believed good would triumph over evil. On the good side was God, America and opportunity. Evil was drugs, abortion, divorce, promiscuity and brown shoes. We believed that we would fall more to the side of good and that if you found the right person to dance with, you would live happily ever after even if you had to move to South Milwaukee.

Along the way to Dick Clark's Shangri La arose a few surprises.

Who would have imagined that our hopeful and handsome young president would be assassinated five months after our graduation, the same year the Beatles shook their mop heads and the girls wet their pants.

Who would have thought that within half a decade of 1963, men would be wearing women's hair and women would be wearing Oshkosh B'Gosh overalls? Who would have accused children of using drugs before known only to jazz musicians and derelicts?

Did anyone think the America of the atomic bomb would soon be humiliated by a small Asian country and devastated by a revolution that reached into even little river cities like ours? What teacher taught us that our lakes, our air and our economy would go dead?

What classmate warned us grandchildren of Ike and Mamie that our own marriages were forged in Oz, not Kansas?

And what about Ike's vice president getting on television to lie like crazy?

For that matter, what mayor announced that when the Class of '63 came back 20 years later in search its town, they would have to use their rear-view mirrors? The old City Hall had been annihilated in favor of an exotic stretch of concrete some called "Grand Mall."

All this, which intervened between us and that dance in the high school gym, was not mentioned. There were no histrionics, few tears and scant nostalgia. There was only a minor controversy about who stole Lincoln's head. Betsy Brauer said it was Jim McEvers and Henny VanDerHarst. John Farish and I knew better.

For the most part, our reaction was typical of us, who hadn't changed as much as the times. Once, we were labeled "apathetic." We did not discuss our emotions or our troubles readily, since we were supposed to have neither.

Mostly we wanted to be with our class, who, wherever they lived and whatever they thought of us, had gone through the passage together.

When you came right down to it, we had come to drink, gab and party, just like back in high school. But this time we wouldn't have to run into the bushes if the cops came. They would find us in a setting of some elegance fulfilling an image of substance, not unlike any convention of teachers, social workers or Ducks Unlimited.

A good party it turned out to be, with beer, good buddies and a rock revival band named Dr. Bop. One or two enthusiasts forgot what a hangover was and stayed up all night.

But others didn't come to the reunion at all: those too far away and those too close; those five deceased; those who have had it with parties and those whose lives made other demands.

Or, like Gary Kickland, who prophesied in the "Agdawagam" yearbook when we were green freshmen, "Dave, it has been nice knowing you . . . but I hope I don't have to see you again."



Uncle Dave & the Big Inch

Since it was bedtime, we weren't the least bit tired. "Please tell us, Uncle Dave, the story about the little boy and the Big Inch."

Uncle Dave sighed, "I've told you that sad, old story a hundred times. But if you get your pajamas on and sit very, very still . . ."

It all started back in the old days, back in 1955, when a little boy much like you sat in the dark and listened to what they called a "radio program." He heard about a fine and honorable man named Sergeant Preston of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and also about his good dog, Yukon King.

From the program, he learned that a mountie always gets his man and that a good dog will always come when you call.

The sponsor of Sergeant Preston was the Quaker Oats Co. The little boy sometimes ate the company's puffed wheat and rice. "Mom, are they really shot from guns?" he asked. Since the crunchy little puffs of air didn't have much flavor, he assumed they were good for you.

More important than nutrition, Quaker Puffed Wheat gave the little boy a chance to join his hero, Sergeant Preston. By sending in one box top to Box Q, Chicago 77, Ill., he could become a "sour-dough" in the Yukon Territory.

Sure enough, the "Klondike Big Inch Land Co." sent him a deed to land in the Yukon Territory. "Just sign your name to this authentic Deed and you automatically become an owner of 1 square inch of land in the Yukon Gold Rush Country," read the little boy when he opened the manila envelope. So he signed his name on the deed.

"The arrow on the front of your deed shows where the land you now own is situated on the banks of the icy Yukon River near the famous Gold Rush town of Dawson.

"Your land lies in a rugged wilderness. There are no roads or even trails to your land. The way you get there is by boat down the treacherous Yukon River or by 'mushing' across wilderness. Temperatures on the land you now own go down to 80 degrees below zero in the winter . . . far colder than it ever gets even at the North Pole!

"Keep this authentic Deed in a safe place!" the papers warned, and he did, for 28 years. "This Deed is your proof that you are a real sourdough . . . that you actually own land in the fabulous Yukon. Note the red number on the front of the Deed. That number refers to your very own special 1 square inch tract of land."

The boy believed what the papers said because he believed in Sergeant Preston. He had read about the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and he knew the motto engraved on their official badge: "Maintiens le Droit—Uphold the Right."

When the little boy grew up, he wanted to find out what his inch of land in the Yukon was like. Maybe he owned part of a gold mine or at least some good scenery.

So by and by he wrote to Quaker Oats: "What do I own?"

A "corporate communications manager" named Marcia had her secretary with the initials "pw" type up a letter to the little boy who had grown up. The letter said that, yes, the Quaker Oats Co. had bought some land in the Yukon Territory and had "passed the title on to the Big Inch Land Company."



The letter said that the land had been divided into 21 million parcels of 1 square inch each. The deeds were valid deeds, said the letter, but the Yukon land office refused to register them—possibly because of the work involved.

The little boy who had grown up found out that he was not after all a landowner in the Yukon. He was not a sourdough and never had been. He owned nothing but the paper in his hands (yes, he had taken good care of those deeds!).

Oh well, said the letter, it didn't really matter. The land was in a very remote area that, as far as she knew, was just worthless scrub land. If the deeds had any real value, it "was based on the romantic appeal of being a property owner in the Great Yukon Territory, rather than on any intrinsic value of a one-inch square piece of property."

On the bright side, the letter reported that some people were buying the deeds for collector's items. Some had supposedly been sold for as much as \$40.

Now that the little boy had grown up, he wanted more of an explanation. What had the Quaker Oats people been thinking when they made out 21 million deeds? Did they really expect the land office to register them? And why didn't they hold on to the land for all the little boys who had deeds, instead of letting it go back to the Canadian government by not paying the taxes.

One of the Quaker Oats lawyers said it was just a promotional scheme. There never was any land! He also said the little boy who had grown up had nothing to complain about because he was not "out of pocket anything" because he never had anything.

The grown up boy complained anyway. He wrote to the Wisconsin Office of Consumer Protection and the U.S. Office of Consumer Protection and the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs and to Ralph Nader.

The consumer offices said they couldn't do anything about it even if they wanted to. They suggested small-claims court. (Ralph Nader didn't answer.)

Well, figured the boy, if an inch isn't a small claim, then what is. He filed a complaint with the Wood County clerk of court, who sent a summons by mail to the Quaker Oats office in the Mer-

chandise Mart, Chicago, demanding his speck of land in the Yukon Territory or \$951, the amount he figured it would take to fly up there and get some land.

Officials in the clerk of court office warned the boy that Quaker Oats would probably throw the summons into the wastebasket.

But the people at Quaker Oats were too worried to throw the papers into the wastebasket. They called and asked what it was all about. Then they hired a lawyer named H. James Tuchscherer of Chambers Nash Pierce & Podvin in Wisconsin Rapids to represent them in court.

When he heard about the small claim in the Yukon, Mr. Tuchscherer couldn't decide whether to smile or frown.

He said the whole thing would be thrown out of court. He said the little boy who had grown up was dead in the water for any number of reasons. Soon Mr. Tuchscherer filed with the court a motion to dismiss the case because the summons had not been properly served.

"But I want to argue about right or wrong," the boy told Mr. Tuchscherer.

"It doesn't matter," Mr. Tuchscherer said. His job, he explained, as Quaker Oats' attorney, was to see that the little boy never did get to argue his case.

So it happened that they met in small-claims court on Thursday, May 12, 1983. Mr. Tuchscherer asked Wood County Judge Frederick Fink to dismiss the case because the summons had been sent through the mail, which, according to the book was an improper way to serve a summons.

Judge Fink couldn't help but agree. The case was dismissed before it really got started. And that was the end of the story of the little boy and how he lost his big inch.

"But Uncle Dave," complained a not-very-sleepy nephew, "what would Sergeant Preston say?"

Uncle Dave thought for a moment. Then he answered. "Sergeant Preston would say, 'We must uphold the right!'"

Then he thought again. "No, I'll tell you what Sergeant Preston would really say. He would say, 'Mush, you huskies!'"

The Chicago Route

You never know where you might find a message from the past.

When Larry Anderson remodeled his house at 430 14th Ave. N., he found newspapers dating from 1860 to 1862 pasted to the back of the stairs and against the walls of the bathroom. Although the house is located in a relatively new subdivision, it was moved in the 1940s from a site near the river by Frank Garber.

The following passages were taken from the Dec. 19, 1860 Northwestern Christian Advocate, only months before the start of war between the states. They permit us to ascertain with some feeling what was going on the day a 19th century artisan stacked up some stairs.

THE SECESSION PROGRAMME: "With many, a grand Gulf Confederacy has for decades been a cherished scheme. With others, the dream has been of a Southern Empire.

"It should embrace the best portion of the United States, the Gem of the Antilles, and the fairest of the Mexican states. It should rival Rome in its power, and the Orient in magnificence. Its aristocracy should be duly exalted above the 'mudsills' of the body politic, and ripen into nobility."

The description of a prospective Southern empire was stated sarcastically. Here was the answer from the "Northwest:"

"We believe that communities are sometimes stricken by delirium tremens, the consequences of their excesses. The Southern leaders are thus stricken now, and mean to stagger out of the Union.

"They utter terrible anathemas, they see horrid specters, gory heads, hands of fire write upon the wall, while serpents hiss about their feet, and they are determined to rush out of doors.

"It may cool their brain," concluded the Advocate.

DRIVING OUT THE POOR WHITE MEN: In a similar spirit, another page quoted the Mobile Mercury. "Slaves are constantly associating with low white people who are not slave owners. Such people are dangerous to a community and should be made to leave our city."

Now the retort. "This is the spirit of secession! All white people who do not own negroes are 'low white people'—they are dangerous to any community, and ought to be made to leave the cities and towns and states where they are! No wonder

they are down upon Andy Johnson!"

GENERAL INTELLIGENCE (December 1860): "The governor of Louisiana, in his message to the extra session of the legislature, says that the self-respect and honor of the state does not comport with her remaining under a Black Republican president . . . A military bill has also passed both houses, which appropriates \$500,000 to the purpose of establishing a military commission and bureau, and arming the state."

THE NATIONAL CAPITAL: Washington, April 19 (1861)—"The president has issued his proclamation stating that there is an insurrection against the Government in several states; that laws for the collection of revenue cannot be executed therein conformably to the Constitution, which requires the duties throughout the country to be uniform.

"They have further threatened to grant pretended letters of marque. I therefore deem it advisable to set on foot a blockade. Therefore a competent force will be posted to prevent entrance and exit to vessels from the ports of seceded states. Signed, A. Lincoln."

Not all the items referred to the impending crisis.

I WORK FOR MONEY: A man on a journey, having expended all his money applied to a teamster for a short ride. "I will take you nine miles for fifty cents," was the answer.

"But I have been on a long journey and have become destitute of funds."

"That is unfortunate," replied the other, "but sir, I WORK FOR MONEY."

"That reply was conclusive," wrote the Advocate, "and from such a decision the poor fellow had no appeal . . . he was not bothered by telling those little fibs which we so often hear when men are applied to in charitable matters."

THE WRONG ROAD: "Where are you going?" said a young gentleman to an elderly one in white cravat, whom he overtook a few miles from Chicago.

"I am going to heaven, my son: I have been on my way there this last eighteen years."

"Well, good-by old fellow; if you have been traveling toward heaven eighteen years, and got no nearer to it than Chicago, I'd take another route."

NOTICE

AGENTS WANTED

DISC

ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY TO SELL OUR
SILVER MEDALLION OF



JOHN WESLEY.

THE MEDALLION is a fine PROFILE LIKENESS, executed in *basso relievo*, by the celebrated M. Jules Lebrethon. By our peculiar process of electrotyping, the silver assumes a metallic luster, much admired by people of cultivated

THE AMALGAM
dency in this age
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HEADACHE is the favorite sign by which
known any deviation whatever from the
brain, and viewed in this light it may be
guard intended to give notice of disease wh
escape attention, till too late to be remed
tions should never be neglected. Headach
under two names, viz.: Symptomatic and
tomatic Headache is exceedingly common
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Gout, Rheumatism, and all febrile diseas
form it is sympathetic of disease of the st
ack headache, of hepatic disease constituti
of worms, constipation, and other disorder
well as renal and uterine affections. Diser
very frequently attended with Headaches

Gathering Evidence

As David Steinhilber ripped out the second floor of the "Penza house" at 171 3rd St. N., he found certain brittle, brown, dirt-caked papers. Many were legal documents. Had they been purposely secreted between the floor and the lower ceiling? Some of the contents would not offer a clue. Others seemed to imply the possibility of such intent.

This is the inventory:

—A set of certificates from the Commissioners of School and University Lands relating to Swamp Land Grants of the 1850s with the name L.P. Powers written on the back.

—Wood County Circuit Court, Victor Martin, Plaintiff, against Joseph Gervais, defended by C.O. Baker. In a dispute over labor and costs, Gervais denied "each and every allegation of the

plaintiff."

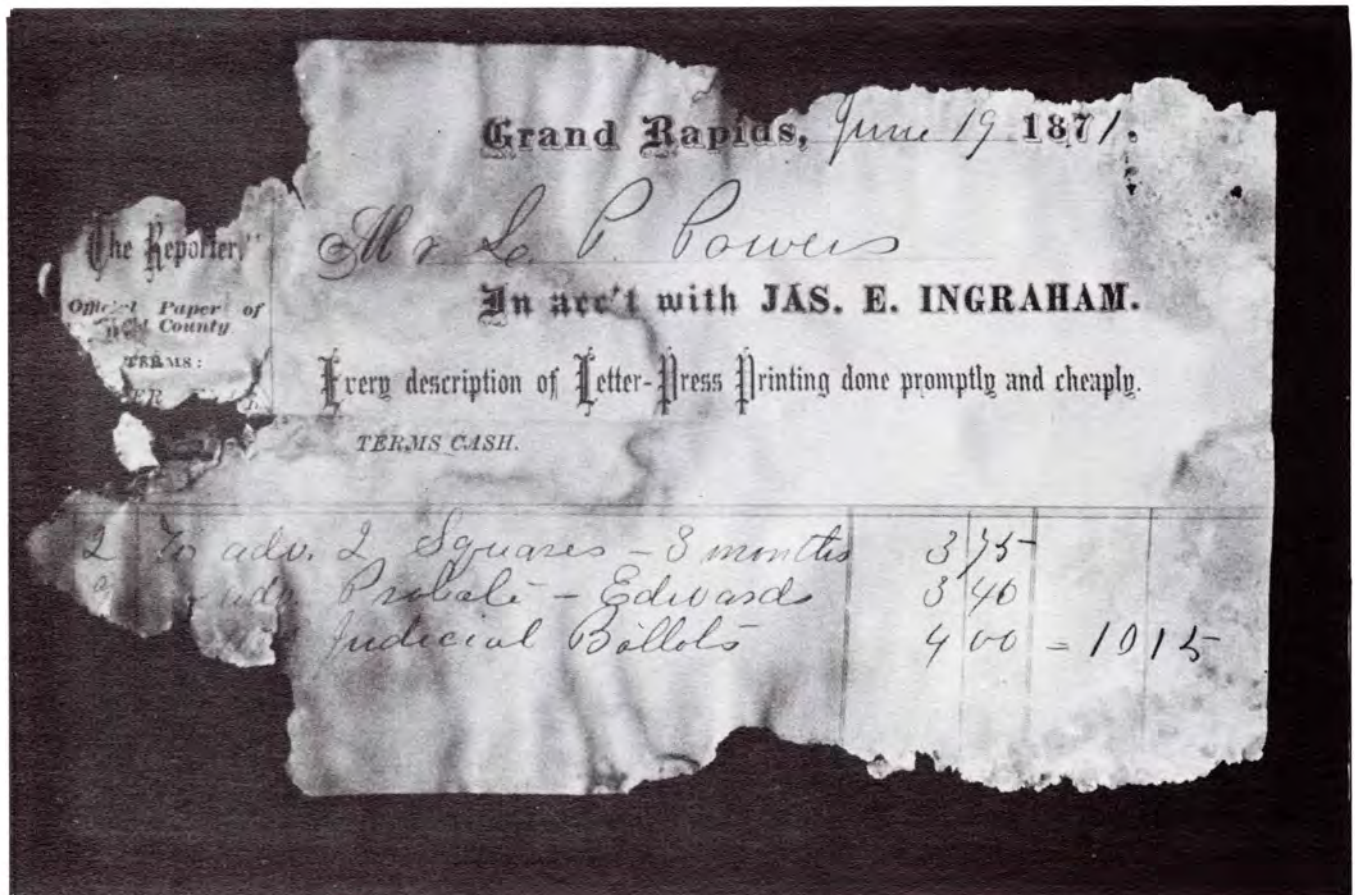
—Business card, L.P. Powers, insurance agent.

—A bill from Worthington's general store on Oak Street for shoes, buttons, thread, etc. for \$40.40.

—An envelope from the general office of the Wisconsin, Pittsville & Superior R'y. Geo. Hiles, President, and a letter signed C.O. Baker, sent from Dexterville, April 16, 1884. "Friend Powers: Have you ascertained yet what can be done towards a remittance of the \$200 fine? I wish you would take hold of the matter for me over there."

—A receipt for an item sent from Chicago by American Express "marked" C.W. Briggs, Grand Rapids.

—A one-cent postcard to Briggs, illegible.



—Oct. 18, 1870, shopping list from Spafford & Compton, including salt, sugar, currants, citron, "rasons," lemon extract, matches, pepper, stove and scrub brushes, a clothes line, a broom (45 cents), a mop stick, half a bushel of potatoes, kerosene, vinegar, a pail, a wash board, blueing, cinnamon, starch, soap, cream of tartar, nutmeg, ginger, flour, and a lamp chimney.

—Bill for a dozen barrels of apples from A. Worden.

—A half sheet of paper with these names, followed by the notation, "yes." John Rablin, Geo. Neeves, M.C. Lyon, J.D. Witter, L.P. Powers, Jos. Wood, I.L. Mosher, and E. Dutruit.

—1879 school board figures related to taxes and expenses.

—From the Democratic State Central Committee of Wis., Milwaukee, Oct. 8, 1884, to Capt. C.W. Briggs, Grand Rapids. "After filling engagements in Shawano Co. you are assigned to Depere, Oct. 2, Oconto, Oct. 22, Peshtigo, Oct. 23; and Appleton Oct. 25."

—From Necedah, 1873, Geo. Burch & Co. lumber and shingles to L.P. Powers, concerning financial matters.

—L.P. Powers account with Geo. Neeves & Lee for sugar, nutmeg, "rasins," and buttons.

—On acc't with Jas. E. Ingraham, Wood Co. Reporter, 1871: Mr. L.P. Powers, Co. Clerk, 500 election notices and 100 tax certificates.

—From Chicago to Mr. C.W. Briggs. "... very thankful for your kind offer and if the offer is still open ... Mr. Slater is some 1,200 miles from here ... west on a new road in Colorado doing some construction work ... Carl please do all that lays in your your power for me ... Your Coz. (Sarah?) E. Slater."

—Two scraps mentioning Howe and Powers.

—Milwaukee, Oct. 7, 1880. From the Democratic State Central Committee. Request for \$5 from each member of the "late Democratic State Convention." "It is the purpose of this Committee to spare no effort to carry Wisconsin for Hancock and English."

—May 3, '81. From H.C. Spaulding, Attorney, Tomah, Wis. "Dear sir: Why do you not say that Nash or (McKenyon?) & Griffiths bought their timber as well as Mr. Bearss as they were buying timber at the Station as well as Bearss. Who was the party that committed the flipflop? Who sold the logs & ties to the Bearss? If we knew his name

it might throw some light upon the matter."

—Lancaster, O., Dec. 17, 1870, to L.P. Powers, Esq. "Last July or August I wrote you that I had sold my land in your county to Geo. E. Howe & John Groce of this place, but since then I have taken the land back from them without having conveyed it by deed. So that it now stands as before; my land; and I wish you to continue as my agent in paying tax & see that timber is not stolen off it.

"You wrote me last winter that a party wished to purchase the timber off one quarter sect. at \$450 dollars and I authorised you to sell but too late in the season. I want you to make the same sale if you can or better if possible, but with the understanding that they must remove the timber during the present winter and spring. J.R. Murnaugh."

—Lyman & Son, Lumber, Lath & Shingles, Necedah, Nov. 15, 1881, to L.P. Powers, Esq. "Enclosed find summons of Mrs. Elizabeth Ives vs. Wm. McCoy & W.P. Wheelihan. I wish you to make an answer in the case and deny that I had anything to do with him what-ever. Yours Truly, W.P. Wheelihan."

—Wood Co. Circuit Court. Hippolite Lefebre, Plaintiff against Isaac L. Mosher, John Daly and William T. King. "The above named defendant who appears by Powers & Briggs their attorneys answers the complaint herein and allege as follows ..." Complaint involves a \$1,000 note.

—Circuit Court, Wood Co., Jan. 15, 1876. The City of Grand Rapids "to the use of J.D. Witter as Treasurer of the Board of Education, Plaintiff, against L.P. Powers, I.L. Mosher, Wm. Roche & L.B. Warner, represented by Powers.

"They admit the execution approved and delivery of the bond mentioned in the complaint and that said L.P. Powers was the Treasurer of said City as stated in the complaint ..."

"The defendants deny that there is or was at the time of the commencement of this action, in the hands of the said L.P. Powers moneys belonging to said School District, the sum of eight-hundred and sixty-seven and 54/100 dollars. These defendants allege that said L.P. Powers has settled and paid over to the Treasurer of said school district all sums of money that have come into his hands as treasurer of said City except the sum of (...) dollars, which they admit is still unpaid."

The Centralia Enterprise

Centralia: that sawmill hamlet on the west side, across the Wisconsin River from its counterpart, Grand Rapids, incorporated in 1874 and extinguished as a nominal entity in 1900 by the merger of the two towns into what became Wisconsin Rapids.

Enterprise: that newspaper published in Centralia from 1879 to 1887 or thereabouts by Messrs. Clark, Baker and Rossier in succession, combined in 1888 with the Grand Rapids Tribune as the Enterprise and Tribune, thus insuring the eventual loss of its name.

What was going on in Centralia, September, 1886? Even minor items can reveal a considerable amount about a past hitherto hidden in the back pages. The following examples are taken from a single page of the Enterprise:

"Cranberry picking has commenced in earnest," wrote Enterprise editor E.B. Rossier, a native since 1858. "Mr. Nash went out with a large force of pickers; S.N. Whittlesey will not begin operations until next Monday."

From this we learn that in 1886, cranberries were harvested in September near Centralia by large picking crews and that two of the operators were named "Nash" and "Whittlesey."

"The firm of Talmadge & Blodgett is dissolved by mutual consent. Mr. Talmadge continuing the business of the firm, in their three stores on Water street in Grand Rapids."

So we know that, though all the names in this passage have been lost to us, Talmadge and Blodgett were businessmen here, with apparent varying degrees of success and that they did their vending on a street named Water, which has also passed from us in a town called Grand Rapids, whose title has gone the way of "Centralia."

"Messrs. J. Edwards & Co.'s mill started up Monday morning last, with a million feet of new logs, which came on in the last water, with the prospect of getting in many more, if we get more rain."

Lesson: In or around Centralia, Wis., in 1896, a man and his company, named Edwards, were engaged, apparently intermittently, in milling large quantities of logs. Acquiring the logs was dependent upon the water level.

"The street crossings in the city are all being renewed and clay taken from W.H. Cochran's cellar used for the approaches.

Our streets will soon be in first-class condition and compare favorably with those of any county-city in the state."

Lesson: Whatever their names, the streets of Centralia were mud. It seemed they weren't much better elsewhere. The subsoil was clay. W.H. Cochran was putting up a building that required a basement.

"Messrs. Spencer & Mack are putting in the electric light in several of our residences in Centralia and Grand Rapids of late. Kerosene and other artificial light will soon be things of the past and relicts of barbarism."

Already in 1886, River City, blessed with hydraulic energy, had entered the electric age, although we now know it would be eighty years before some rural residents got wired.

"Getting home late a few days since with some household supplies in his hands, the Grand Rapids Postmaster stumbled over his cow and some other obstructions and ruined a pair of new pants."

In 1886, Grand Rapids had a post office. Its head official wore pants. That postmaster had a cow at his residence. Sometimes the cow got in the way. The mental and moral condition of the postmaster can only be left to speculation.

"An important improvement is being made on the Bensley mill property. The race is being widened and dug four feet deeper . . . The power of the mill will thus be doubled, which will furnish enough power to run several large pulp grinders in connection with the saw mill."

Due to the Centralia Enterprise, we are informed that already in 1886, pulp grinding was an important element of industry here. The power of the mill, reported the newspaper, was in the process of being doubled.

Since then, we know, it has doubled and doubled again.

E. B. ROSSIER,
Notary Public and Proprietor of Centralia Enterprise
REAL ESTATE AND CONVEYANCE OFFICE.
Enterprise Building,
CENTRALIA, - - WISCONSIN.

CARDNER & CAYNOR,
ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW

Will practice in the several Courts of the Seventh
Judicial Circuit. Office over First National Bank,
GRAND RAPIDS, - WISCONSIN.

W. E. YETTER,
NOTARY PUBLIC,
Justice of the Peace and Conveyancer; also General
Life and Insurance Agent. None but first-class
companies represented.

GRAND RAPIDS, - WISCONSIN.

GEO. L. WILLIAMS,
Counsellor & Attorney-at-Law
First National Bank Building,
CENTRALIA, - - WISCONSIN.

WILLIAM SCOTT,
County Surveyor and Land Agent.
Will attend promptly to the surveying of land
and estimating of timber in Wood and adjoining
counties.

GRAND RAPIDS, - WISCONSIN.

GEO. DE MARS,
Physician and Surgeon
Office over Garrison & Whitley's Store.
Residence opposite Mr. E. B. Roder's residence,
corner of Cranberry and Maple streets,
CENTRALIA, - - WISCONSIN.

M. J. McRAITH,
MERCHANT TAILOR,
Keeps on hand Spring and Summer Cloths,
Cassimeres and Vestings. Has a large stock of
Woolens at the lowest market prices. Call and ex-
amine before purchasing elsewhere.

Main Street,
GRAND RAPIDS, - WISCONSIN.

U. C. St. AMOUR,
PROPRIETOR OF THE
COMMERCIAL HOTEL,
CENTRALIA, - - WISCONSIN.

This House has been enlarged and put in perfect
order for the accommodation of the Traveling Pub-
lic. Sample rooms and Good Stable in connection.

HEZEKIAH RIPLEY,
PRACTICAL SURVEYOR,
Real Estate Agent
AND
TIMBER INSPECTOR.

F. W. BREMER,
Machinist

AND

Model Maker.

Sewing Machines,
Surveyors' Tools,
Safe Locks,

And all kinds of

Small Machinery Repaired.

Complicated Machinery a Specialty.

Brass Castings,

And all kinds of work in

WOOD OR METALS

Made to order.

Twenty years experience in the business warrants
me in stating to the public that I can guarantee sat-
isfaction in all cases. Prices to suit the times.

Main Street:

Centralia, Wisconsin

GRAND RAPIDS
IRON WORKS.

J. PATERICK & E. MAHONEY,
PROPRIETORS.

MANUFACTURERS OF
STEAM ENGINES,
Saw and Grist Mill Irons,
BRASS CASTINGS,

USEFUL INFORMATION.

A BEAUTIFUL quilt for a present to a baby may be made of a nun's veiling lined with white sateen, with rosebuds embroidered on the turned-over corners.

PORTIERES made of leather braided in long strands which fall from the top of the door to the sill are quite the rage by the devoted followers of the Japanese.

For a mayonnaise salad dressing beat a raw egg, a tablespoonful of mustard, half a pint of olive-oil, thin with water and lemon-juice. This dressing keeps well, and is suited to all salads.

NORWICH Bulletin: A little shred from the panicle of almost any one of our grasses in bloom, pressed nicely, makes about the neatest summer vignette you can stick on the left-hand corner of a letter.

To MAKE a pin-cushion cover with little work, get a square of congress canvas. Draw threads on the four sides, leaving a space sufficiently wide for a one-inch hem. Run in narrow ribbons, hem it and edge with lace.

HANDSOME and durable covers for dressing bureaus can be made of plaid or plain Turkish toweling. Cut the covers the size of the bureau, and hem. Crochet an edge around, and finish with a scallop. Use a sharp crochet-hook, and you can push the needle through the toweling. Toilet sets for wash-stand can be made in the same way.

MEAD is easily made by this recipe: Pour two quarts of boiling water upon four pounds and a half of sugar; add one pint of molasses and four ounces of tartaric acid. Boil all together for a few minutes, and, when cool, add one ounce of essence of sassafras. Bottle, cork tightly, and keep in a cool place. Take one-third of a glass of the mead; fill the glass nearly full with water; add a quarter of a teaspoonful of carbonate of soda; stir and drink while it effervesces.

In selecting materials for curtains, toilet sets and tidies, or drapes, in a room that is to be constantly used, buy fabrics that will wash and retain their color and beauty; better pay more money in the beginning than have them ready for the ragman as soon as soiled. Consider, also, whether or not they will harmonize with the other colors and appointments of the room. A good quality of linen scrim or dotted muslin, edged with antique or torchon lace, or without it, will make the prettiest and most durable bed-room curtains.

A DELIGHTFUL temperance drink, and a great improvement on Russian tea, is made with one pint of cold, green tea, one quart of ice-water, half a pound of loaf sugar, the juice of six lemons, and a half pint of any kind of fruit juice. The sugar should be heated over the

Grignon's Problem

Amable Grignon had a problem with the survey of 1840.

Since 1832, Grignon had exclusive privilege to lands and timber in the vicinity of his saw mill on the Wisconsin River just south of what is now the Wood County line. It had been granted directly to him by the Menominee Indians.

In 1836, the Menominees ceded to the United States a strip of land three miles on each side of the river, beginning at a point two miles north of Grignon and extending to Wausau. Grignon feared encroachment and had his lawyer, Morgan L. Martin, write a letter.

"The privilege intended in the treaty is not the mill site," said Martin, "but in the words of Mr. Grignon's grant, it is the privilege of cutting timber upon his three-mile strip granted to him."

The ploy produced negative results. Jasper Whitcomb, commissioner, wrote to A.G. Ellis, surveyor general, that, rather than a point two miles north of the mill, the survey would begin at the mill itself.

Individuals with less claim than Mr. Grignon had made the survey necessary. "Certain intruders are rapidly cutting and running the pine and other timber," Whitcomb wrote Ellis in 1838. "As regards the pine lands acquired from the Menominees under recent treaties with that tribe . . . this office has only been waiting until your office should be in readiness to go into operation."

In February of 1839, Ellis initiated the first yet-unnamed "Discover Wisconsin Rapids Area Week" by contracting with Joshua Hathaway to survey and subdivide the grant of 1836. Hathaway returned the completed "Three Mile Survey" in May 1840. Much of the township that would become "Grand Rapids," legally described as Town 22 North, Range 6 East, was in that survey, with part of what is now Wisconsin Rapids.

In 1851, the remaining portions of T22N, R6E were surveyed by Erskin Stansbury.

Hathaway and Stansbury measured land and set monuments. They also assessed the soil, timber, mineral deposits, topography, water power, property and archaeological sites. In addition, they took a census of whites present.

Perhaps surprisingly, the grand stands of white pine that should characterize "the pinery" get little mention in the field notes. They have already been cut or destroyed by fire. More common are tamarack, aspen, oak, maple and

ubiquitous "pitch pine"—our jack pine.

"The character of the land varies very considerable in this town," wrote Stansbury, "but none of it ranks above 3rd rate. The southern portion consists of pine barrens, the timber mostly gone and grown up in black oak bushes."

"The timber," he said, "is principally pine the variety known as pitch, bastard or black pine of very little use either for fuel or lumber."

"The north part of the town is principally marsh, very wet and entirely unfit for cultivation. Large portions of the marshes are covered with cranberry vines which every alternate year produce large crops."

Just west of the southwest corner of the township and west of what is now Nepco Lake, is a symbol marking "Barker's Milldam and Sawmill." Much of the timber in the area, according to the notes, had been destroyed by fire.

At the "Grand Rapids," where the Consolidated dam now stands, was the core community already established that was to become our town.

In Section 8, "Bloomer & Co." were apparently responsible for a brush dam, a guard lock and a wing dam. Nearby was a double log house, a single log house, a "long" shingle factory, a blacksmith shop, a stable and a barn.

Of as great an interest to the surveyor as to us was the discovery of "A railroad!!!" The tracks led to a mill at what is now Biron.

What manner of line it was is not certain. Likely, it was horse propelled. Possibly, it was wood rather than iron. According to the surveyor, it utilized, at the edge of a clearing in Section 3, south of present County Trunk U, a "depot house and barn."

The first "railroad" has disappeared from sight and map. That the area would one day feature a boastful city with four railroads did not seem entirely likely to Hathaway in 1840.

On the positive side, he noted that "A succession of rapids and chutes called the Grand rapids has two extensive lumbering establishments thereon owned by Bloomer, Chamberlain, Adams, Strong, Hill & others now in operations. The hydraulic power is capable of being increased. Several large pine groves are found."

Less propitiously, he proclaimed, of cranberry marshes and pine barren, "There is hardly any good land in this township."

This is a detailed topographic map of a river section, likely the Mississippi River, showing various rapids and waterfalls. The map is overlaid with a grid and contains numerous handwritten numerical data points, possibly representing elevation or flow measurements. Key features include 'Humboldt Falls', 'Tribal Rapids', and 'Bass dam'. The map is divided into sections labeled 'Sec. 1' through 'Sec. 21'. The river flows from the top left towards the bottom right. The map is a black and white reproduction of a historical document.

5 Billion Years of Change

Tourist, let me take you to an awesome world.

Here, the very crust of the earth bulges and cracks. Mountains arise where there were none. Volcanoes emit spasms of lava. Of plants, there is nothing. Of animal, the same. The barren slopes must do without life.

Let me show you next the sea, where mountains once were. It extends in blue waves so far as to meet the blue sky and nothing more. But in the sea has been born small life: plants and animals and animals that can hardly be distinguished from plants—the redoubtable trilobites, followed by sponges, sea lilies, insects and sometimes fish.

Let me demonstrate later a mass of ice and snow in places two miles deep moving from the north like a continent itself, so slowly, sometimes forward a foot in a cold life time, a yard back in a warm one. If we stand long enough at the edge, it will disappear finally into the northern lights.

Now let me bring forth a menagerie of mammoths, camels, mastodons, peccaries, sloths, dire wolves, giant bison, saber-toothed tigers and short-faced bears. Observe birds of many a feather and a stray dinosaur.

At last, I would present a sentient, thumbed, tool manipulating, selfish, selfless featherless biped who pursues and is pursued by the rest. He would like to poke a stone-tipped projectile into their hearts; some of them would happily tear his arms and legs off for dinner.

This final variety of meat is homo sapien. Our ancestor, man, has arrived in River City.

Yes, right here within the boundaries of that cartographic rectangle named Wood County, Wisconsin, marvelous events have taken place.

Continents, once joined in one mass, split apart and now push and pull continually, sliding even up and upon one another. Meanwhile, the land masses are uplifted in the form of mountains and plateaus.

The opposing force of weathering and erosion, powered by gravity, slowly bring the mountains down. Rivers roll boulders, pebbles and soil to the sea until the continent wears down to a relative flatness.

Then the cycle begins anew.

All this happened before man even thought of existing. It happened without ego, language, witness, industry or history. The only book was the rock. Reading it, we have made many guesses about what occurred.

Besides continents, life, first out of the sea 500 million or more years past, was born. A relative instant ago, compared to our 5-billion-year-old planet, the last glacier receded from underfoot and the first humans came here.

We believe they immigrated from Eurasia by way of a land bridge at the Bering Straits. What they were called we have no notion. That they had a language is conjecture. We call them Paleo-Indians. They are the ancient Americans.

To know these immigrants, we examine their litter. Stone age hunters, they have left little bits of sculpted stone-like letters to us: knives, scrapers, a spear head lying among bones.

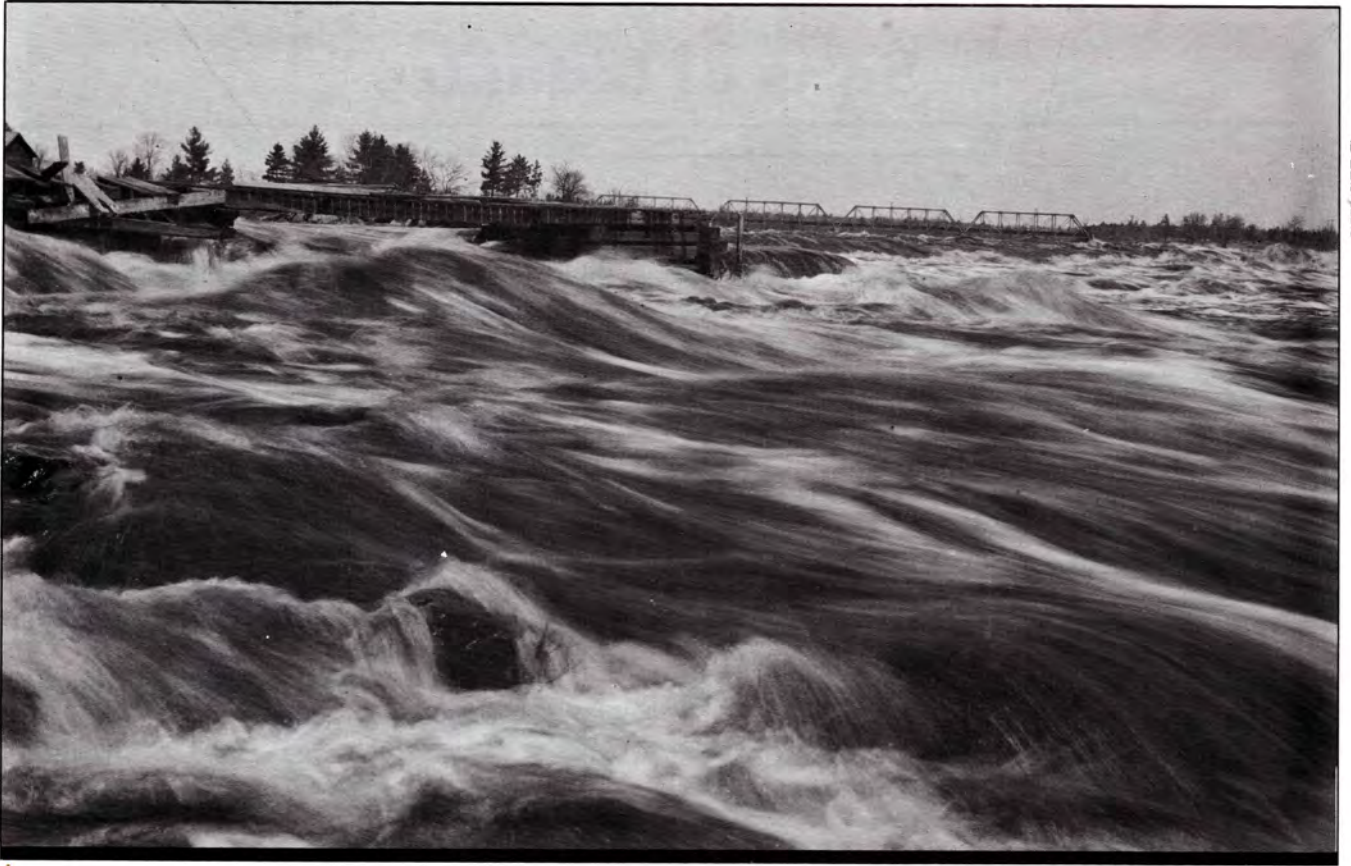
We imagine a museum diorama where hairy, fur-wrapped brown hunters mob a cornered behemoth. Although we see bare-breasted clay women nearby, tending fire or flesh, we assume the group had no settlement, no crops, no domesticated animals.

These people were cousin to our own European ancestors. Their 10,000-year-old billet-doux, chipped from chert, will outlast our own petty missives.

Relics of manless history, or geology, repose nearby. Rib Mountain is the remains of an old volcano. Powers Bluff is the stump of a mountain range. Swallow Rock is sandstone laid down under the sea.

The river itself was once much greater. The first terrace can be seen from the Elks Club to the Wisconsin Rapids Post Office. The Ice Age terrace from there up to 8th Street indicates a momentous stream that extended west infinitely, or at least to Pittsville.

The Grand Rapids, at which we have staged our own pageant, represent the meeting of old, very hard mountain-rock and less resistant sea-deposited sandstone. The water has worn down the softer sandstone leaving a rock dike over which the current pours with a force that can break up a lumber raft or turn a dynamo.



The Grand Rapids

In its time, the river has lifted the stone-age musclemán and the clone-age madman and has laid both hard against the mountain; the river has carried a thousand quiet burdens down to the Nekoosa bayous where, if they awake, it is to another world. Hunter, fisherman, lumberjack, thief—all victims of five billion years of change.

Sons of Industry

"We are not a believer in dreams," wrote the Aug. 13, 1891, Wood County Reporter, "but the one we experienced the past week contained so many pleasant thoughts and such a bright future for the twin cities that we will publish it."

As the driver recalled his dream, he had been absent from the "cities" for several years and returned to find the following changes:

Cities of 50,000 inhabitants throughout the boundaries of which were elegant business blocks of four to 12 stories in height.

Residences that were erected at great cost with all the modern appliances and conveniences.

Factories lining the banks of the beautiful Wisconsin. An immense stone dam spanning the river, a means of making a water power equal to that of St. Anthony Falls at Minneapolis.

Beautiful church edifices of every denomination dotting the residential portion of the "Twins."

The Grand Rapids side, where the business portion was located in 1891, had in the dream been moved back on the hill and the ground vacated given over to manufacturing and lumber yards.

The streets were paved and the sidewalks laid with a material that combined both beauty and durability.

The cities enjoyed a water and drainage system that surpassed anything in the state, brought about by sinking large reservoirs along the bank of the bluff.

The arc electric lights gave the pedestrian an opportunity to find his way about at night without the aid of a lantern or lightning bug.

An electric street railway was a convenience greatly enjoyed by the intraurban travelers.

Among the manufacturing industries were numerous furniture factories, cotton and woolen mills, large iron works, plow works,

flouring mills, railroad shops, wagon works, sash, door and blind factories, pulp mills and breweries.

On the Centralia side, the river bank was built up between South Centralia and the city proper. Electric cars plied their way between the two points and they were constantly crowded.

The most pleasant feature of the writer's 19th century nod, he said, was to find the young businessmen so prosperous. So many of them owned brick blocks and real estate which made them wealthy.

F. Wood, who owned a large tract in the 1st and 2nd wards, was made a millionaire by it and all that territory was settled with beautiful homes costing from \$1,000 to \$5,000. The swamp in back of High Street, owned by J.D. Witter, was all "built up."

Eventually, as is the way with reverie, the dreamer had to awake. "We found that what we had been passing through was simply a dream and our immediate surroundings were just the same," wrote the Reporter.

"May we now hope, with the present favorable outlook for actual future growth in the twin cities, that within the next five years a portion of our dream might yet come to pass. As we read the signs of the time we sincerely believe that the future prospects for the twin cities are bright."

"Time will tell," said the writer and time has told.

The industry envisioned above has occurred. Factories, paved streets, water and sewer, electricity, modern transportation and the dam have come to pass in the twin cities—now singularly known as Wisconsin Rapids. Prosperous businessmen happily stroll the streets and malls.

Yet, we who do not believe much in dreams either, indulge our fantasy on the eve of 1984.



Michelangelo

The Grand Mall

We imagine that out of the new working class has arisen a more studious caste. The generation of 1984 has committed to art, science and enlightenment the energy their fathers spent making money.

We dream that no longer do the sons of industry indulge themselves so much in the pursuit of material gain but that they look more to the cultivation of the ideal. That they manufacture not only fashion but beauty, not merely artifice but art, not simply craft but wit.

We fancy that no longer is it necessary to pray to New York or Madison or even Stevens Point for our culture. We have produced the fine paper. Now where are the pretty pictures, the wise words, the *belles-lettres* to adorn it?

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