



Mary Day, Julia Waubiness,
Sarah Pigeon Young



Home of Frank Young

A farm boy digging in sand finds the first skull. The bone shell is brown and brittle but the teeth are sound enough to please the half-Indian hired man. The man extracts the teeth and carries them a long time.

Three skulls found in a mound south of Powers Bluff County Park, near Arpin, illustrate people traversed that terrain well before memory and without other documentation. Their heads are relics of the "mound-builders," who came and went before history.

It is said the Potawatomi, who came after the mound-builders, lived at the hill, known variously as Pwa Keek, Bald Mountain, Tah-quakik, Powers Bluff and Skunk Hill, in 1866. If they did, they were fugitives. Most of their brothers and sisters had been forcibly removed to Kansas. Preferring Wisconsin, some of the "Prairie Band" migrated back in the 1890s. After wandering the swamps of the Big Eau Plaine and suffering a cholera epidemic that wiped out much of the population, a group settled at Skunk Hill in 1905.

Here they enjoyed for a decade a thriving community that acted as a rendezvous for the Kansas prairie branch and the northern branch. With tribal payments received from the U.S. government for land near Mayetta, Kans., the Skunk Hill band bought homesteads near the quartzite outcroppings. For a decade, the sometimes numerous band lived in bark huts, tents, logs and cabins on the recently logged "bald mountain." However, by World War I, many moved away, some to Kansas.

In 1923, the only permanent residents were John Nouwe, Mrs. Rose Decorah and the Eagle Pigeon family. Albert Thunder lived at the south base, where a second settlement had arisen. Several frame houses were erected on Indian-owned land on the south side of the east-west road that transverses the hill. At one time, houses were owned by John Quotose, Eagle Pigeon, John Nouwe, Frank Young and Frank Aniwash.

About the time of World War II, younger members had departed to find work. Aged relatives could not maintain the property or pay the taxes. One by one, the sites were abandoned—the last in 1944.

Mary Day (1898-1984) was born in Kansas and came to Skunk Hill with her grandfather, White Pigeon, in 1905. Whereas in Kansas, the family had lived in a house, here they lived in what seemed to Mary a flimsy shelter in a wild woods full of deer, porcupines and mosquitoes. Bears came around too but were frightened away by fire.

Upon arrival, Mary's family camped in tents by the Arpin depot. Toward autumn, they built bark wigwams. She remembered early residents Joe Cook, Joe Turtle, Joe Bill Potts, Indian Joe, Tom and John Young, the Kitchkummes and the Shegonees. Receiving "lease money" once a month, some bought 20-acre parcels.

After a while, said Mary, it seemed so many people died, of tuberculosis, pneumonia and old age, and the land went back for unpaid property taxes.

White Pigeon, or Wab-me-me, was the best known and closest approximation of a chief to the Skunk Hill band yet he was a Winnebago who had walked back to Wisconsin from Nebraska where he had been taken by federal troops. He married a Potawatomi named Mary Kitchkumme and lived with the Potawatomi so long he was canceled from the Winnebago roll.

Emma Doering Brody, Richfield, born 1901, related her first meeting with White Pigeon. She said her dad was driving the bobsled and she was playing in the back when they met an old man walking and offered him a ride. "I was afraid of him," she said. "He just laughed. Later he put his hand on my head and said I'd make a good squaw."

Louis Grimm, Arpin, born 1902, said his father was similarly alarmed when he looked up from a task to find a group of Indians waiting for him. They had come for lumber to make a rough box for a grave.

After that, Grimm's new neighbors often stopped by to purchase chickens, eggs or woodchucks. Indian Bill would ask young Louis, "You got woodchuck today? A little ripe? Oh well, take skin off, it'll be all right."

"Eagle Pigeon owned 40 acres at one time," said Grimm. "He had a pretty good house, a barn and a chicken coop. My dad bought it. Little by little, they all disappeared. Aniwash and Young stayed the longest."

During their tenure on our highest bluff, the Potawatomi pictorial spectacles and auditory spectacles provided exotic memories for otherwise insular agrarians for as miles during certain calm summer nights the sound of the drums went out from Skunk Hill. With the sacred Drum Dance born in the 1880s, the Indians enlivened their pantheistic vision.

The "History of Wood County" describes the four-day ritual in 1923. "It is conducted in the dance circle. There are five drums and eight

drummers, the latter going from one drum to another until all drums have been in use. Eagle Pigeon, who wears an eagle feather in his hat, is one of the leaders. The old men, White Pigeon, John Mustache, John Nouvee, Jim Young, and a few others, are the speakers. After each interval one of these gives a brief address. The Link boys, Bill and James, are masters of ceremony at the dance. The women at certain times join in the chant but do not dance."

A Vesper newspaper, the State Center, of Oct. 10, 1912, depicted the scene. On the summit of the hill, an arena about 65 feet in diameter had been "scalped," the sods piled around the outside as seats. At the entrance stood three American flags and one white flag. Four or five Indians beat drums while "a weird song in Indian fashion" was sung or chanted. "When the drummers would start a piece some of the older Indians would get up and dance by merely keeping time." The younger generation played drums or sat outside the arena.

A number of rituals involved tobacco. As the participant entered the arena, he went to certain stations and offered pieces of tobacco as sacrifice. After noon dinners, elders brought out pipes three feet long and artistically carved. They were lighted and passed around for each male to take two or three puffs. The "white man" writing thought it odd that each Indian had a can or spittoon beside him to spit in. "Several times we noticed one squaw pick up her can and holding it about three inches from her face expectorated into it by squirting the spittle between her teeth."

The observer noted that White Pigeon seemed to be spokesman and acting chief. "White Pigeon is a good Indian. He neither smokes, chews nor drinks and greatly abhors these evils. He is much opposed to white people giving liquors to members of his tribe or otherwise molesting their peace."

For that matter, White Pigeon probably wished the State Center would have stayed away. "The Indians do not like to have white people around when they dance. Much less would they allow anybody to take a picture of the dance." The Drum Dance was a private ritual at a sacred place where a spiritual people worshiped a god unknown to most Vesperunians and Arpinites. The journalist had intruded. Here was another culture desperately trying to save itself—from him.



White Pigeon, Rubeen Young

McCutcheon

The upper Wisconsin pinery: clearings in the dark woods, nights made hideous by the howling of wolves, the barking of Indian dogs and the hooting of Indians and owls. Nights made frightful by the not-very-distant glimmering of fires and dark forms with painted faces and crowns of feathers, surrounding their heads. In those days it was nothing uncommon to see from the door of the house bears of wolves. Many were shot from the bedroom window.

So describes the narrative dated Sept. 18, 1875, of Mrs. S.J. Yarker, daughter of Rapids pioneer Hugh McCutcheon.

On the way north from Madison through Portage and into the pinery around 1840, Mrs. Yarker's parents, stopped at a hotel, though "not much after the modern style." It consisted of a double log house, one part a sleeping room and the other a dining, cooking and sitting room generally. The cooking was French because the host was a Frenchman (probably by the name of Grignon). His apparatus consisted of an open fire-

place, a hook or two to hang pots and kettles on and an iron kettle to bake bread in when he did not bake in the ashes.

From that "hotel" the family went to Point Basse where the Wakely's inn hosted the travelers. "I do not think there was any other white woman living there. I know I was the first white child who could claim its nativity," said Mrs. Yarker.

Although it was so wild, people arrived at the village of Grand Rapids a few miles upstream expecting to find railroads and boats. The McCutcheons asked Mr. Bloomer of Grand Rapids where his railroad was on which the cars were said to run every day. The next morning he took them out on a lane cut through the pines. After a mile they came to an opening. There he pointed to the railroad: wooden rails servicing a wooden car for the purpose of carrying logs to a mill. As for boats, they were keel boats that came up the river only when the water was high.

Making lumber was carried on rather informally. Anyone who could afford a yoke or two of oxen hired a couple hands, went into the woods the best place they could find, built a house of pine logs in one day and commenced logging. The logs were hauled to a stream which carried them to a mill where they were converted into lumber and run down the Wisconsin.

When Mrs. Yarker was seven years old, her parents took a place 12 miles from Grand Rapids, about three miles from Plover and six from Stevens Point. "Father cleared off a place and commenced farming on a small scale, the first farming that was ever done in the pinery," she wrote.

McCutcheon raised good corn, potatoes and oats. "It was afterward found there could be good wheat raised and a grist mill was put up "between our place and Plover, on a stream called the Big Plover." The farm was placed in the midst of an Indian sugar maple camp "which made the Indians very angry and they threatened to kill us." Mrs. Yarker's father soon made friends with the Indians. Yet, she wrote, "they would steal from us whenever they could." One day about noon, the pioneer farmers noticed a patch of turnips wilting and pulled up a few. Someone had taken the roots and set the tops back on the ground. Potatoes were scooped up from under the vines.

"Hand soap was to them very valuable in dressing buckskin, and many a piece I laid on a railing on the side of the house to see if I could tell how they stole it. I found they would stand with their back against the house, put their hand behind them, raise up their blanket, and take it; a proceeding I used to like to watch at the expense of considerable of my mother's soap."

Another incident occurred that Mrs. Yarker said she would never forget. Three young Indians came to the house when the men were gone, went to the cupboard and took something to eat. Then they called out one of the young dogs and shot him.

"Mother always thought her life depended on her courage, or the appearance of it; therefore she went out, took her other dog up, carried him in, telling the Indian when the men came home, which she expected soon, they would pay for it. They told her to go in or they would shoot her too, a command she instantly obeyed."

Soon Mrs. Yarker's brother came running almost frightened to death saying there were Indians in the cornfield who

had pointed a gun at him. Then the Indians began to gather around the house. The executioners of the dead dog had gone off to eat it. Those remaining called the former visitors "bad Indians and Chippewa" and said that they themselves were Menomonies.

Mrs. Yarker's mother wasn't sure. When an old Indian asked her to light his pipe through the window, she stood on one side of the curtain and reached his long stemmed pipe without letting him see her.

The events happened long before Mrs. Yarker wrote them down. "I have since met old men who said they had held me when a babe," she wrote. "They are almost all gone now. Weston and Kingston, of Yellow River, are all that I can locate. Bloomer, the first mill owner, and first in almost everything, was almost king in those days, for we had no laws of State or county; he was found dead in Galena more than thirty years ago; his loaded wagon having passed over him in the night. Clinton, another mill owner, was killed by a saloon keeper a few years since, he having attacked his door with a rail, his men being there drunk."

"David Sheldon, who claimed to have discovered Grand Rapids, died between Portage and Madison; it was thought by many he was poisoned. Brawley, another early mill owner, died or was killed in the last war. Esq. or Col. Alban, a very old resident of Plover, was also killed in the war.

"My father, Hugh McCutchin, died here about three years since."

Mrs. Yarker, too, author of the narrative, has herself long since joined the old pioneers of the pinery who saw what we do not see and heard what we do not hear—wolves howling by night and by day the falling of ancient pines.

River City CCXXV

The latest from the office of city historian here is that 1984 brings a remarkable anniversary to our town: 225 years of incorporation. This means Wisconsin Rapids has more history than any other city on the upper Wisconsin River.

How was the exact figure arrived at? Grand Rapids, on the east bank, incorporated in 1869, 115 years ago. Centralia, on the west bank, incorporated in 1874, 110 years ago. The rest is simple-minded addition: 115 plus 110 equals 225 sometimes glorious, often dreary but always historic years.

Let's consider for the moment how the "twin cities" became not two rivals divided by a great stream but one symbiotic municipality bound by a bridge of concrete and commonality.

By 1873, approximately 35 years after the first settlement, suggestions were made in the direction of merger but it was not until March 13, 1900, that the matter was referred to plebiscite. Pushed mainly by the new Business Men's Association, itself formed to further the mutual interests of the twin cities, the consolidation was supported as well by both the west side Centralia Enterprise and the east side Wood County Reporter, who printed the same lengthy argument prepared by a bilateral committee. "As one city, with united business and commercial interests and with a population of 4,500 to 5,000, their standing in the business and commercial world would be improved." Already, the argument read, the twin cities, of equal size, had the appearance of one community and in a business and social sense were.

Compared to such metropoli as Wausau (population 15,000), Stevens Point (9,500) and Merrill (9,000), said the report, "We have the greatest waterpower on the Wisconsin River, and our natural resources and general surroundings are such that we ought to be the leading city in the valley; yet our standing in the business world is far inferior to that of a number of other cities whose natural advantages are much less."

Examples of previous cooperation were "our excellent local telephone exchange" and "our fine and efficient system of electric lights." Hoped for was free delivery of mail, possible only with a larger census or increased business. Also to be expected was a reduction in the cost of public improvements such as sidewalks and sewers. A strong argument was that the two high schools

could be reduced to one, with the consequent increase in efficiency. To entice the Centralia citizen was prospective use of the Grand Rapids public library.

At the same time, twin city businessmen lobbied for consolidation, the Wisconsin Valley Advancement Association promoted a "general awakening" of settlement, investment and manufacturing all along the Wisconsin River.

Other than such abstractions as prejudice, jealousy and hatred, no strong arguments against consolidation were outlined. Apparently, the greatest fear was that one side's Peter would be taxed to pay for the other side's Paul. This would not happen, said the Enterprise and the Reporter. Both sides would be represented in a common council and taxes would be levied in the interests of the whole. "Centralia's much prized waterworks system had very bitter opponents," said the Reporter. "The retaining wall, public buildings, macadamized streets, in Grand Rapids had bitter opponents; but substantially all these now recognize their error. Effect consolidation and in a year's time you will wonder how you ever came to be opposed to it."

An 11th-hour meeting was held in the Daly Block Business Men's rooms for a capacity 200 Centralia voters, who were as a group known to be more hostile to the proposition than their east-bank cousins. Chief among the speakers was B.R. Goggins, who said the tax issue was absurd and that the interests of the two sides of the river were in harmony, not opposition. Also influential was Lester A. Rose of the Wisconsin Valley Advancement Association.

Rose said that men who "toil for a living, need not be told that the greater the population the more diversified the industrial institutions at any given point, the better the pay, the more harmony between employer and employee." He said the time would come when such as an opera house might be desired. "Now, what would you do if you started to build an opera house and requested a subscription from your citizens as we did in Wausau? You would bump up against the proposition. 'Where is it going to be built—in Grand Rapids or Centralia?' wouldn't you? And, then if it was decided to build it in Centralia, you Grand Rapids people when asked for a subscription, would say 'nit' and vice versa."



SWCHC

1884 Centralia city hall, moved in 1900 150 feet back from Cranberry Street

After the vote, the Reporter exulted. "This is the best day in the history of the twin cities. Never before did light shine so largely and opportunity shower so lavishly upon the sleeping and placid places. By an overwhelming vote on Tuesday, March 13, 1900, the twin cities of Grand Rapids and Centralia, in Wood county, Wisconsin, were consolidated."

"By that vote," continued the Reporter, "the threefold needs of the hour for our city and our homes were handsomely emphasized—Freedom to stand alone—sanity to see a brother's needs and worth—fraternism to lift him up. The golden age for this new city is in the future, not in the past, and today the citizens tread upon its very threshold."

Only 11 votes out of 331 in Grand Rapids opposed consolidation. In Centralia, the margin was narrow, 244 in favor and 183 against.

Jubilation reigned. Whistles were tied down blowing, every bell in the cities rang out, fireworks exploded while bonfires illuminated an animated scene. Tin-horn hands played constantly. The streets were crowded as revelers paraded over the bridge and back.

Lela Winn, (born 1891) remembers that even though her family was moving that day from their Commercial hotel, her father put up a greased pole on the corner for the crowd's amusement and she watched from the present Daily Tribune location as parades crossed the old bridge. B.R. Goggins, mayor-to-be, in top hat and tails, cut a stately figure leading the celebrants, she said.

Tuesday, March 13, 1900, recorded the Enterprise, had witnessed the passing away of the city of Centralia, and, they might have added, the "Centralia" Enterprise. "The name is no more. It has been wiped off the map by the will of its citizens. It remains the same city as heretofore in population, strength and industry only. We have been joined to Grand Rapids, and that city takes a jump in population of nearly 3,000 souls in less than a day."

"Put your shoulders to the big municipal wheel that so advantageously doubled its size in a day," said the Reporter, across the way. "Let the history of the progress of Grand Rapids from now on be the keynote to the mental growth and enlightenment of the people."



1866 Wooden Bridge

The Bridge

Joining the east and west sides, in what now is Wisconsin Rapids, has not been easy. For the first 30 or so years of settlement here, there was no bridge at the “grand rapids” of the Wisconsin River. The settlers on the east bank, Grand Rapids, and those on the west, Centralia, were for the most part content to stay at home. Should a desperate Jack spy what he figured to be a pretty Jill across the way, he could commandeer a flatboat or canoe for the short, but turbulent, trip.

The first attempt to span the tide for the general interest came in 1857, when Eusebe La Vigne, under a charter from the state, commenced a regular ferry service. The force of the river drove his 30- by 16-foot flat-bottomed boat, attached to an overhead cable, across the waterway. Able to carry three teams, La Vigne’s conveyance, said the April 20, 1859, Wood County Reporter, “guarantees safety and rapidity in all stages of water.”

The first actual bridge, according to an 1887 article by attorney George Gardner in the Wood County Reporter, was built in 1866 at a cost of \$20,000. Owner George Neeves and his bridge company charged a toll: 25 cents for a team-drawn vehicle, 10 cents per horse and 3 cents per pedestrian.

The opening of the bridge suspended the ferry business, although many thrifty travelers used their own boats rather than pay the toll.

The 1866 charter allowed Wood County to take over the bridge, provided the county permitted free passage and paid a fair price for the structure. In 1873, the county purchased the bridge for \$10,000, but soon allowed the span to fall into disrepair.

When the bridge was built, Grand Rapids-Centralia pretty much ruled a one-town county. But now a new force had grown up in the far corner: Marshfield. The northwest forces did not care to spend money for upkeep on a distant bridge and, in 1876, Neeves and his cohorts sued a reluctant Wood County to compel it to repair the bridge. The state Supreme Court ruled that the county must indeed assume that responsibility. When the bridge was taken out by floods in 1877, it was rebuilt by the county at a cost of \$8,000. The controversy over the bridge continued to mount as Marshfield insisted that Grand Rapids-Centralia pay for its maintenance, either from their own funds or by charging a toll.

Rapids strenuously objected.

Gardner, who represented the Rapids faction in court, wrote in the March 3, 1887, Reporter: “She (the county) could not be authorized to shirk this responsibility upon the two cities, because to do so would be to consummate a gross injustice upon them; would involve a breach of duty, a violation of plighted faith upon the part of the County, which the Legislature cannot authorize if it would, and would not, if it could.”



The Bridge

"Look the situation squarely in the face," Gardner continued, "Centralia and Grand Rapids lie upon directly opposite shores of the river, and are connected by the bridge in question. They are in reality but a single town; and so regarded by their own citizens, and those of the surrounding towns. One railroad depot, (that of the G.B. road,) has its passenger and freight depot upon the Grand Rapids side; the other (the St. Paul road,) has its depot on the Centralia side. There are stores and hotels and grist mills and pulp mills upon either side."

The controversy climaxed dramatically on April 11, 1888, when an ice jam took out the rebuilt bridge. A contemplated \$25,000 replacement was voted down by northern members of the county board. Rapids bridge backers, including Neeves and Gardner, sued the county again, this time to compel it to replace the bridge. The Supreme Court ruled against the applicants on the grounds that no authority had been given by the electors of the county and no tax had been authorized.

A history of Rapid's bridges, written by Theodore Brazeau, stated that the refusal to build the bridge precipitated a "civil war" of sorts between the rival cities. Marshfield, having burned to the ground in 1887, resisted more than ever having to divert its own rebuilding capital. Democrats and Republicans formed new loyalties with the Bridge and Anti-Bridge tickets.

The outcome once again went against the twin cities. The anti-bridge forces won a sweeping victory. If Grand Rapids wanted a bridge to Centralia and back, it would have to pay for it.

Meanwhile, Eusebe La Vigna got out his ferry. He also had competition from W.H. Cochran until, by a joint action of Grand Rapids and Centralia, a new wooden bridge with an arch suspension was erected in 1899 at a cost, said Tom Taylor, of \$17,400.

Regarded as an engineering marvel in its first days, the two spans of 248 feet each made it something of a freak as a highway bridge. Only 15 feet wide, there also was little room for run-ways to avoid colliding. When the wood decayed, it was replaced by steel, making it valuable enough for Frank Garber to remove when the 1922 Grand Avenue Bridge was built.

Since 1889, then, there has been free access to whatever destiny might await on the other side of the river.

"All these people—the well to do and poor alike," wrote the July 28, 1887, Reporter, "have settled among us, cast their fortunes with us, relying, as they had a right to do, that they would not be shut off from their markets; their churches, their post-offices, and county seat, either by the erection of a toll gate upon the bridge over which they must pass to reach them," or, said the newspaper, "by allowing the bridge to rot down."

The Pinch of Unrighteousness

Real or fancied injustice has been visited on our citizens in many forms. Often it came dramatically at the hands of the law. The reaction of the victim has been various: violent, sullen or, in many cases, sarcastic.

Dr. Charles C. Edson, a physician, felt the sting of a social wrong done to himself back in January of 1883. The scene was on or about the structure previous to our present Grand Avenue Bridge. The situation? Let us allow Dr. Edson to tell the tale as he wrote it in an extended letter to the Centralia Enterprise of Jan. 25, 1883. "Arriving in this city less than five months ago, I soon learned what everybody knows to be a fact, that the ordinance concerning fast driving over the Wood Co. bridge was a dead letter on the statute book and had been from time immemorial.

"And, as it appeared to be the custom for the majority of our citizens to trot their teams on said bridge, I, of course, had a right to suppose that in this country of equal rights, I too, could with impunity exercise the same privileges others enjoyed, and that I could urge my horse a little faster than a walk, when the life of my patient required it.

"But upon the memorable 17th day of January 1883, a brave knight from Rudolph, Geo. Baker by name, in company with one Reuben C. Lyon, Sen. of Centralia, caught me in the very act of committing the heinous crime of trotting my horse on the bridge two whole rods, as I was leaving it at the east end, which distance their fancy drew out to the extreme length of 66 feet.

"Then, this said valiant knight from Rudolph being a law-abiding citizen, felt

in duty bound to enter a complaint against this flagrant violation of the law. What influence prompted him to this very kind act, I know not, yet I presume he must have been remunerated.

"My overt violation of the ordinance aroused the sleeping minions of the law. A warrant for my arrest was decided upon, for—as the officials remarked—'An example must be made of some one, and we will make it out of Edson.'

"But before my friends could see me dragged through the streets and conveyed to a felon's cell, and while the vigilant officers were scouring the two cities for witnesses to convict me, I had skipped across the ice, gave myself up and paid the minimum fine of \$5.00 feeling truly grateful that I had been permitted to hasten to the bedside of my patient, where I was sorely needed—and at the cost so trifling.

"And I shall deem it my duty, in the future as in the past, to use all possible speed to go to the relief of my patients. But, believing consistency to be a jewel, and, as all just and impartial laws deal equally with all violators, without regard to persons, I would respectfully ask the honorable commissioners of Wood County, why I am prosecuted while hundreds of others equally flagrant and daily violators of the same ordinance go unpunished."

After comparing the county commissioners to Rip Van Winkle, Edson offered a list of persons who had violated the same ordinance since Jan. 18, the day proceedings were begun against himself: Mrs. Albert Fontaine, wife of the newspaper editor, Miss Lilly Kirby, Armond Benedict and lady, Thos. Bratton, Mr.

Billins, Frank Pomainville with his two children, Mr. Rouleau's gray team with two persons and three other parties to him unknown.

Edson said he had seen 14 persons in three days drive their horses at a gait faster than a walk across the bridge and he had witnesses to prove it. He said that if he had seen so many transgressors ("and I have not devoted a minute to watching the bridge") in such a short time, "how many must have violated the same ordinance that I did not see?"

In the same issue of the Enterprise, the editor adds an historical perspective. "It is pretty tough, doctor, and we have no

doubt others are as guilty or more so than you are. But the principle is all right, and the rule should be strictly enforced. Of late, a great many owners of driving horses, seem to consider the bridge as a kind of miniature racetrack, and if they are not checked, the time is near at hand when we shall have no bridge at all. It is more injurious to the structure to trot twenty feet, than to haul 5,000 feet of lumber, at one load, the whole length of it."

As order is preserved, an individual feels the pinch of unrighteousness and reacts in the best way he knows how, with the wry wit of the righteous.

January 25, 1883

—Dr. Edson accompanied by his wife and two other ladies in a double seated sleigh lost his way on his return from Pittsville last week, and strayed off to Wafer's camp, at 12 o'clock at night. Emile Rossier placed them back on the road home.

The party was singing religious melodies at the time, the Doctor neglecting to watch the team.

Grand Avenue

In how many seasons has the photographer focused on the Grand Avenue Bridge? In the spring tumult of ice, the summer burst of fireworks, the autumn blaze, the winter fog rising at dawn full of cold mystery. There is an antique grandeur in the abstract arched design and the concrete construction that seems to suggest another time and place while giving a physical symbol to our own. Despite its classic symmetry, the Grand Avenue Bridge is not, by an antiquarian's standard, very old. In fact, it is younger than many of the citizens who tread it. A few even remember the day of its dedication: Oct. 18, 1922. By that date, a name for the new bridge had been chosen from 122 suggested possibilities. Among the rejects were Ah-dah-wa-gam, The Monolith, Everybody's Bridge and River Park Side View Bridge. Also eliminated was Grand Vine Street Bridge. (Vine Street, the approach from the east, has been renamed as part of Grand Avenue.)

The first event on the program of Oct. 18 was the crowning of Miss Mary Herron as "Queen of the Bridge" by Mayor O.R. Roenius. Subsequently, A.R. Hirst, state highway engineer, described the new bridge as "undoubtedly the best—both in architecture and construction—in the state." Solidly anchored in the Precambrian granite bedrock, the six-pier bridge was built of reinforced concrete acting as retaining walls for 6,000 yards of earth fill placed over the seven arches. A cantilever walk 10 feet wide with an ornamental concrete railing was considered a rather elegant fixture.

Work on the bridge had begun in August 1921 by general contractor C.R. Meyer of Oshkosh. The cost was \$150,000. Meyer said at the dedication that "Wisconsin Rapids can well be proud of its beautiful new bridge now connecting the two sections of the city. The old two span steel and timber constructed bridge had for many years served the purpose for which it was intended in a most satisfactory manner, taking care of team traffic (and) pedestrians and withstanding many a siege of high water and ice floes, such as often came down the Wisconsin during the Fall and Spring seasons. The old bridge however, was not designed for the present day mode of travel, huge trucks and autos, which the general trend of

the times has created."

It was first planned that the old bridge would be moved north or south "to establish communications between the mainland and the islands." When the cost of such a project was established, the bridge was sold instead as scrap to Frank Garber for \$1,010.

The builders had to overcome more than one obstacle. Special influence in the state Senate was needed to obtain an amendment to a state statute that stipulated financial support would extend only to bridges of 500 feet or more. The Grand Avenue span was approximately 490 feet. Fortunately for local boosters, Wisconsin Rapids' own state senator, Isaac P. Witter, was able in 1919 to have the requirement lowered to 475 feet.

Another potential problem was that the MacKinnon block at the west approach did not allow room for a concrete arch bridge. This was surmounted by the removal of those buildings by the owner, Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co.

When the Grand Avenue Bridge was dedicated, a parade, of course, marched—from the East Side Market Square across the bridge to the "old depot" and back, this time to the fairgrounds at the present Witter Field. Judged to be the fairest of the parade floats was that of the Charles Hagerstrom American Legion post. It carried a large globe representing the earth. A dove of peace perched at the top. An aerial circus preceded an exhibition by Battery E of the Wisconsin National Guard. In the evening, a large display of fireworks showered the new creation.

Of particular interest to local chauvinists was an afternoon football game pitting A.A. Rit-chay's Lincoln High team against Marshfield. An estimated 10,000 spectators watched such heroes as Donn Hougen, running, Phil Nobles, running and blocking, and Bert Nason, drop-kicking, on the way to a 27-0 victory.

But most unique in this picturesque pageant was an actual wedding performed at the fairgrounds, uniting Cora Danielson and Louis A. Fritz, whose names had been kept somewhat secret until the event. Judge Getts, officiating, said the marriage bonds were symbolic of joining the two sides of the city in a harmonious union heretofore not existent.



Paul Gross

Construction of the Grand Avenue Bridge, the old two-span bridge still standing.

To join us further, other bridges have been extended across the tawny waters: the Jackson Street Bridge in 1955 and the Riverview Bridge in 1980. Although functional, neither provides the imagination with the archetypal charm and photogenic features of that “old” River City landmark, the Grand Avenue Bridge.

Wood County Telephone

Only 20 years after Alexander G. Bell's 1876 invention, John Gaynor got so mad at the phone company that he convinced his townsmen to start one of their own.

Centralia and Grand Rapids had received their first telephones in 1878, leased to the First National Bank, the Jackson Milling Co., the Wisconsin Valley Railroad Co. depot and the Green Bay and Western depot. There was no switchboard. Calling on the one line was accomplished by a series of rings such as rural patrons later used.

The first long-distance toll line consisted of a single No. 9 wire, connected in 1887 from the switchboard of the Wisconsin Telephone Co. at Stevens Point to a single phone in the Rapids' Slocum drug store. That year, the first Wisconsin Telephone Co. switchboard here was installed in the Slocum facility, to service 80 phones.

In 1894, the exchange was moved to a frame building south of the Ragan furniture store and, in 1897, to rooms over the John E. Daly drug store. Meanwhile, certain influential citizens of River City chafed under the oppressive monopoly of Wisconsin Telephone.

E.P. Arpin, in his memoirs, summarized the developments that were to result in an independent telephone system. "In 1895, the two cities of Grand Rapids and Centralia were not very friendly. They lay opposite each other along the banks of the Wisconsin River at the foot of the 'Grand Rapids' and each had a small water power developed but none of much value being used to run two pulp mills and two flour mills. The business men decided that to be successful the two cities ought to be united and this would likely encourage the joint building of a large dam." To that end, a business man's association was formed, including Arpin, "a young lumberman of Grand Rapids," as secretary.

The first matter of importance that came up was the telephone situation. According to Arpin, the Bell Co. station was giving poor service and the rates of \$4 per month for businesses and \$3 for residences was too high.

Frank Garrison and Arpin were appointed

to confer with Mr. McCleod of the Milwaukee company, which they did, calling the New York offices long distance. No satisfaction was obtained. When told the local group might build their own exchange, McCleod said his firm had driven away such competition at Escanaba, Mich., by giving free services until the Michigan competitor quit. The threat perturbed John A. Gaynor, a public-minded Irishman, lawyer and cranberry grower, who was quoted in the Centralia Enterprise and Tribune of April 27, 1895. "This corporation is here solely for the purpose of making money out of us. If the service is poor or the rate excessive the individual who is dependent on them for service has no remedy. He may protest and demand, and in a passion throw out his 'phone, but the corporation managers laugh at his feebleness, and know that when he is tired of kicking he will come under the yoke and carry his burden again like a sulky mule."

Gaynor believed that through "combination" or cooperation, the patrons could furnish their own telephones at cost and would need no high-priced, salaried officers whose chief services were "devising schemes to pluck the greatest amount of feathers from the public goose with the least amount of kicking and squawking."

The Enterprise agreed in a May 1895 edition. "Let it be further remembered that kicks from individual patrons don't do any good. If the kick isn't unanimous and propelled with all possible force and precision it will pass unfelt and unnoticed through the elephantine hide of a greedy corporation."

A Dec. 9, 1895, meeting resulted in the determination of "the undersigned residents of Wood County, desiring to secure telephone service and feeling assured that by mutual cooperation (we will) secure better service and lower rates than we can hope to secure from the Wisconsin Telephone Co., or any other private corporation."

On Jan. 16, 1896, directors E.P. Arpin, F. MacKinnon, J.A. Gaynor, E. Oberbeck, L.M. Nash, T.A. Taylor, and H.H. Voss were "instructed to proceed at once—to place a



Wood County Telephone

1887 Wood County Telephone Co. office: Wm. Martin, Charley Dougherty, Marie Douville

telephone line or exchange—in the two cities and have same in operation by June 1, 1896.” J.A. Gaynor was soon elected president and Wm. Martin employed as general manager at \$75 month. On Jan. 9, Gaynor was instructed to hire an operator at a salary not to exceed \$25 per month. In June, 1896, the Wood County Telephone Co. was organized with 85 members and a capital stock. Only people holding stock could be members and stock was sold only to those renting service, one share only allowed per telephone.

The telephone fight was deadly, according to the “History of Wood County.” “The Bell Company offered to give subscribers three years’ free service contracts in order to put the new company out of business, but Judge Gaynor, without hope of personal reward, personally fought out with each telephone patron the question of the ultimate effect of entering into such contracts, and the result was that the old company was eliminated from the local exchange business in the city of Grand Rapids.”

“We braced ourselves for this kind of attack,” wrote Gaynor in 1905, “by getting two thirds of their patrons pledged to take stock in the new company, and from those who did not take

stock, we generally got their promises that they would take their local service entirely from the home company. Within a few days after we were ready for business, the Bell telephones were carried back to the Bell office by its former patrons, and we were practically in full possession of the field.”

From the new exchange in the Wood block, 95 phones were initially served at \$2 per month for businesses and \$1.50 for residences. The Enterprise encouraged its subscribers to “order out your old phones and put in one of the new company, thus helping to put down the old monopoly and lift up our own company.”

Indeed, the ire of Arpin, Gaynor & company had resulted in the “death blow to the Wisconsin Telephone Co. in the twin cities,” said the Enterprise, “and the springing into active life of the Wood County Telephone Co.” According to Arpin, it was the first time that a Bell company had to abandon a local exchange. “Many other communities followed this plan,” wrote Gaynor, “and the general result was that in this state at large the local exchange telephone business became so cheap and popular that the telephone came into very general use.”

Immanuel Lutheran

Running a parochial school 100 years ago presented problems prevalent today: maintaining buildings and paying teachers.

Not long after the 1881 founding of the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids, parishioners decided a school would enhance the keeping of the faith here. Minutes of a March 23, 1883, meeting, translated this week from the German by Walter Born, state that a school would be held in the church. A "schul-geld" or "school money" fee of 50 cents per child would be exacted. Sessions were held by Pastor F. Leyhe in the church balcony with written lessons required four days per week.

In August of 1883, a resolution asked for a church building, provided sufficient funds could be raised. A list of the constituency available for subscription was drawn up and the building approved on Sept. 12, 1886. Built to the rear of the church, the school size was prescribed as 20 by 30 feet with two hallways and two floors. Eight windows of 9 by 16 feet with 12 panels in each window would illuminate the rooms. The color of the building was to be white. Later it was determined that the windows were to "move up and down." The building itself was to be set "southeast" with a table east and west and an entry on the west. The sides would be "12 feet" and covered with two coats of paint. Agreement was reached to build a wardrobe with two doors and a podium with two drawers "which can be locked up." Also available, as stipulated, would be a table and a chair.

By 1886, according to an historical booklet published by Immanuel Lutheran Church in honor of its 75th anniversary, children who weren't members of the congregation were attending the school. The additional expense required a tuition charge of 80 cents per month.

In 1886, J. Bittner became pastor and, as a result, schoolteacher. Under his supervision it was found that the large windows produced too much light so "cloth" had to be purchased to diminish the glare. At that time, the congregation also considered purchasing a new stove.

Apparently, the first children's Christmas Eve program was presented in 1887. Another annual event was the whitewashing of the interior of the school.

Enrollment had reached such numbers by 1880, at 65, that the Lutherans considered

hiring a permanent teacher. A "permanent teacher" seemed too great an expense so a "lady teacher" was hired instead, at \$15 per week.

A permanent teacher was still desired so in February 1890, it was decided that \$300 should be raised to pay a candidate from one of the Lutheran teachers' colleges. Efforts failed to reach that sum and \$250 was offered.

For the fall 1890 terms, such a teacher arrived, Mr. F. Schaefer, a graduate of the teaching seminary at Addison, Ill. He served Immanuel three years.

The young congregation found it difficult to shake financial problems with the school. In 1892, a special committee was set up to visit homes and solicit funds for the teacher's salary. It became crucial as the pedagogue considered answering a call to another post.

Part of the problem was solved by handing over the profits from the school picnic to Schaefer. It kept him in town until the end of the school year when he departed.

From 1893 to 1905, the school was taught by "supply teachers" and by Pastor Bittner. At one time, 122 pupils attended.

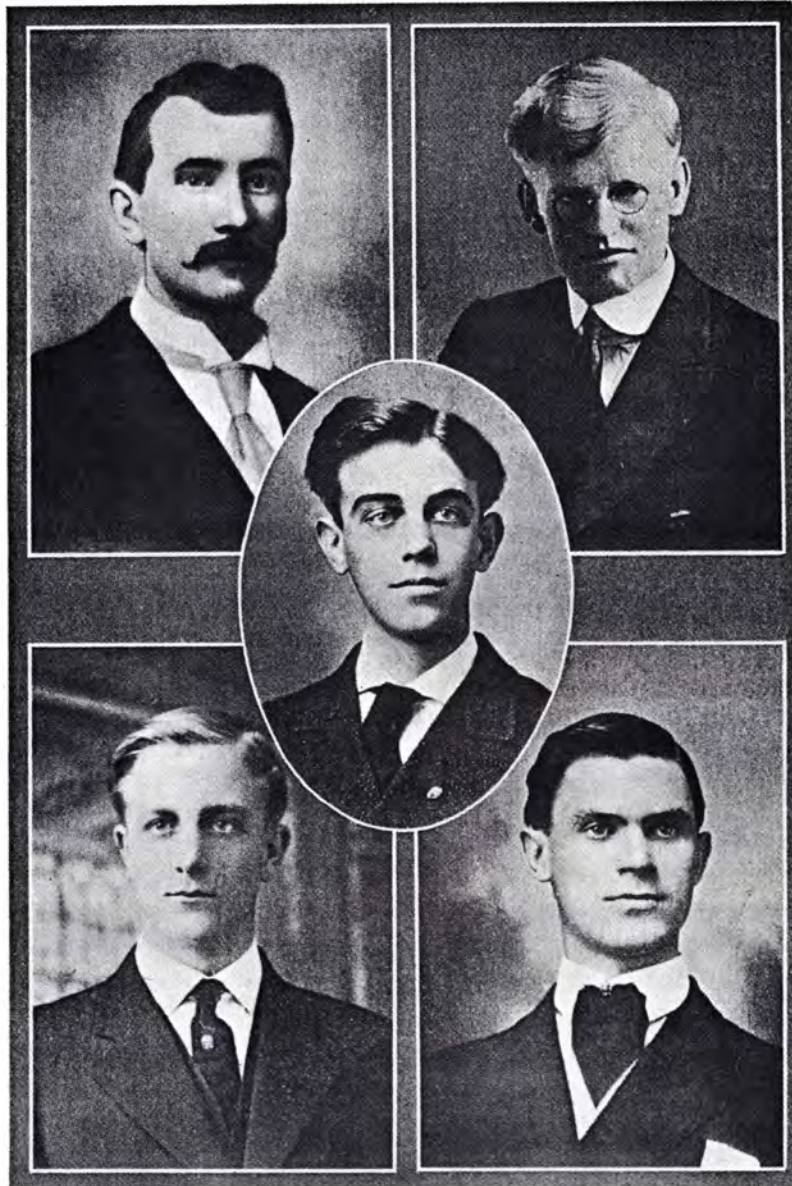
No janitor was employed for the school. Instead, Bittner suggested that each student bring 10 cents and that the congregation provide \$10 to be placed in a fund to pay one or two girls who would keep the school in an orderly condition as well as pay a boy \$2.50 to keep the school warm in winter.

In 1900, the school was improved by adding a ceiling and obtaining 40 benches, a teacher's desk and blackboards. The pastor also asked the right to have the children sweep the floors.

For years, there was no regular teacher. In 1905, another graduate of Addison, Hugo Oldsen came, taught for two years and resigned. Two years later, Herman Tewes arrived for a three-year term after which he quit due to "ill health." During Tewes' term, the school was transferred to the basement of the newly completed larger church. The frame schoolhouse was sold and moved from the premises.

In 1922, school activities moved to structures acquired (on Oak Street) which had been enlarged in 1926 to four classrooms. Thence, education in the Lutheran manner would achieve a structure and a stability hitherto lacking.

Early Teachers



F. Schaeffer

E.H. Voskamp

H. Tewes

H. Richert

H. Oldsen

John Edwards High

In spite of the depression, in spite of his landlady yelling at him for money he didn't have and the banks being closed and in spite of the confused state at his place of employment, Kenneth O. Rawson was a happy man; thousands were unemployed and he had work.

"Not a soul with a degree in geology could get a job at the bottom of the depression," Rawson, born 1904, said last week from his home in Clintonville, "Since I'd taught before, I got busy and took a summer course at the University of Wisconsin Madison so I could teach legally."

One day, Rawson got a call from teacher placement that someone wanted to talk to him in a hurry. It was the Port Edwards School Board, represented by Principal Roy Normington, Franz Rosebush and E.G. Ross. They were looking for a teacher and had some questions to ask. The first three were easy.

"Can you teach social studies?"

"Yes."

"Can you teach general science?"

"Yes."

"Can you teach chemistry?"

"Yes."

The fourth was more troublesome. "Can you teach shop?"

"No." For the moment, the job was in jeopardy. Then came the last question.

"Can you direct a band?"

"Yes!"

Rawson had played in the Purdue University concert band and in the UW band and orchestra in addition to having directed a school band at Hebron, Ill. He was hired as teacher and band leader at the as yet uncompleted John Edwards High school for the 1931-32 school year. He would teach an eight-hour day: social studies, general science, chemistry and band. Preparation periods? "There wasn't any such thing."

Conditions were makeshift while the new school was being built. Typing was taught on the stage of the adjacent auditorium.

Rawson's social studies classes were held in a small cloak room.

Also trying were the teacher's "commandments" of 1933.

1. A full day's work for a full day's pay. Don't short change.

2. Do more than what is expected of you.

3. Keep regular hours.

4. Don't let whims interfere with your life.

5. Have enthusiasm for your work and your pupils.

6. Sympathize with pupils.

7. Have cheerful optimism.

8. Be sincere, straight forward. Use reasonable dress.

9. Cultivate good, moderate personal habits.

10. Be prompt, loyal, and willing. Loyal to the administration.

The building in progress was designed by Childs and Smith, the out-of-town firm who had designed the 1931 Lincoln High School in Wisconsin Rapids. Its construction had been the subject of some discussion because Port Edwards at that time offered schooling only through grade 10. In 1931, eight 11th and 12th-grade students were sent to Wisconsin Rapids and 14 to Nekoosa.

According to a 1931 survey by the state Department of Public Instruction, the small number of potential students was a negative consideration in adding a full-scale high school. "If all the pupils in Port Edwards in grades 9 to 12 had attended a central school this year, their number would barely reach 50, even including the 'drop outs.' "

Nevertheless, the report continued, more students might be expected in the future because of the "local paper company" and its "housing project of 1928," offering steady employment, free lots, trees, shrubbery and financing. The survey also stated that it was evident that the community was willing to assume financial responsibility for the project. It recommended a new elementary school and a complete four-year high school.

A pamphlet circulated by supporters of the



Kenneth O. Rawson

new school contained economic rationale followed by an appeal to Edwardian pride. "If Port Edwards is ever to be anything but a suburb of our neighboring communities, if it is ever to become a self-contained and self-sustaining community, if it is to grow as we hope and towards which every indication points, then it must provide adequate elementary and high school education." A Daily Tribune editorial supported the project. "More and more the people of Wisconsin Rapids are coming to recognize the advantages of the new Lincoln high school and field house. Port Edwards will also feel these advantages when their new building is completed."

Plans for the structure had already been drawn when a bond issue for \$75,000 was approved on Dec. 10, 1931. A.F. Billmeyer and Son of Wisconsin Rapids began construction in the spring of 1932. School opened on Oct. 1 although dedication ceremonies for the \$125,000 school were not held until Jan. 20.

In 1936, Rawson was named principal of John Edwards High School, two years after

its first graduating class, that of 1934. Its 13 members were Ruth Boger, Marian Frazer, Revae Frost, Katherine Gavre, Ethel Gibson, Ila Howard, Merle Kriegl, Douglass McGlynn, Howard Murgatroyd, Margaret Mollen, Rosemary Sage, Doris Tiougen and Dorothy Vechinski.

That was 50 years ago. This class, along with all the graduating classes from 1934 to 1939, met for a reunion. Some had fulfilled the promises of 1931. Some had fulfilled the 1934 class motto. "He conquers who conquers himself." Some look back as Principal Rawson did in a 1975 memoir.

"The people were wonderful. They wanted a good school system and were willing to pay for it. I admired many teachers as willing to give all that was asked, even in those teacher commandments of 1931. I still look back upon the days at Port Edwards," said the once-new teacher who had come with the almost-built village school, "as being very rewarding. The days were so full, one never caught up, nor came to classes fully prepared, but I was a very happy man to have the job."

Architecture

a survey
by Wendell Nelson



410 4th St. S.: Greek Revival

Except for the log cabin, Greek Revival houses were the first built by the white man. This excellent example illustrates several identifying details: the broken pediment or triangle at the gables; the simple single-ridgepole structure; the wide board or frieze under the eaves; the front doorway with its sidelights (vertical windows) and transom (horizontal window); front stoop with full pediment and square columns; and pilasters (false columns) at the house corners. Also showing the considerable age of the house are the small panes in the upper sash of most windows but absent are the usual milled, straight cornices over the windows. Modern changes besides the front stoop are new shutters, a small addition with a screened-in porch on the second story, a one-story sun room with many windows and a large addition in the rear. The yellow exterior paint is also a new feature. Greek Revival houses were inevitably white to imitate the marble of the ancient temples they were constructed to imitate.

251 Oak St.: Greek Revival

The John P. Getzin CPA office is an example of the Federal-Greek Revival hybrid style, popular here in the 1850s and 1860s. Earmarks of the Federal style are the presentation of the "side" of the house to the street and the symmetrical arrangement of doors and windows. Greek Revival details are the "frieze" or broad board under the eaves, the simple single gable-and-ridgepole structure and the broken "pediment" or triangle at the ends. Modern changes are wide siding, probable removal of pilasters (false columns) from the corners, addition of new windows and shutters, a remodeled front porch and additions to the rear.





**1250 1st St. N.:
Italianate**

The “Rablin House” is one of the few Italianate houses in Wisconsin Rapids. Representative of the style present are the basic cube structure with hip roof and wide eaves with ornate, decorative brackets under the eaves. It also has brackets in the angles of the front-porch posts but in-

stead of the usual Italianate arched windows it has plain rectangles, perhaps installed when the house was resided. A detail from an earlier period (Greek Revival sidelights astride the front door) and one from many years later (wide artificial siding covering the narrow clapboard) are among the deviations from the Italianate.



510 Oak St.: Victorian Eclectic

This fine example has many earmarks of the Victorian Eclectic style. First is the complex roof with four or more gables intersecting in an off-center cross pattern. A gable-in-hip roof extends to the west, various smaller gabled additions to the south and a two-story bay to the east. The final roof detail is the two large chimneys with crowns and a cross pattern laid into the brickwork. The Victorian Eclectic preoccupation with busyness is demonstrated in fish scale shingles on the walls and brackets under the gable ends. Complex, delicate and varied trim contribute to the complexity that is the most conspicuous identifying feature of the Victorian Eclectic style, prominent in Central Wisconsin from 1885 to 1895. Also indicative is the asymmetry of windows and doors. Although three identical windows on the second story are evenly spaced, a larger window and single door on the first floor are not centered or placed in a symmetrical relation to the windows above. The windows on the north side of the west wing are just as unevenly spaced. Finally, the veranda reaching across the west half of the house and half the south side is a fine Victorian Eclectic specimen. It has turned posts, a railing supported by turned spindles, jigsaw fretwork and icicle-like suspensions. The result is a wedding-cake appearance typical of the style.

620 Oak St.: Victorian Eclectic

This typical Victorian Eclectic house has the usual complex roof design and a two-story bay with two near mansard roofs. More interesting are the fanciful "bargeboards" in nearly every gable. These are intricate jigsaw wood trim, a holdover from the Gothic Revival 10 or 20 years earlier, and rare in Wood County. Also anachronistic is the imitation-brick siding. The simple front porch has apparently been remodeled from what was probably a veranda supported by turned points decorated with turned spindles and various jigsaw trim. Unexpected dormers on the back wing may have been added in the 1920s or 1930s when various colonial revival styles returned to fashion.



840 1st St. N: Victorian Eclectic

Built for J.B. Arpin in 1891, this is an excellent example of a Victorian Eclectic house with a tower. It displays the standard complex roof with several gables as well as the bewildering array of ornate trim. The patterned brickwork of the large chimneys imitates clusters of separate chimneys in English manor houses. Also, there are shingles of various designs, brackets under the overhangs, screens of latticework, small, square panels forming borders under eaves and elsewhere and classical dentils under window cornices. The tower resembles that on a European castle, often imitated by American businessmen as they became wealthy enough to travel themselves to the continent and affect titles like "Esq." and "Hon." Another locally distinctive detail is the porte-cochere on the north side. This is a shelter under which carriages were parked to allow passengers to egress without molestation by the elements. This porte-cochere is as ornate as the house itself.



820 1st St. N.: Neo-Classical Revival

Next door is the house built for Daniel Arpin, son of V.B., 10 years later, the best example in Wisconsin Rapids of the Neo-Classical Revival. Like Greek Revival, the Neo-Classical is modeled on ancient temples, in this case, Roman. Larger and more imposing, it became popular here around 1900 when the fortunes of many lumber barons, merchants and bankers were at their peak. The very large house has monumental Ionic columns and a hip roof surmounted by round-headed dormers in contrast to the gables of Greek Revival. Also typical of Neo-Classical but not Greek Revival are the porte-cochere, the northern bay, heavy cornices over the windows and a balcony over the double front doors. Elements in common with Greek Revival are sidelights and transom around the front doors, the frieze (wide board) under the eaves and dentils (small wooden blocks resembling teeth) under the same eaves. The large chimneys are a common turn-of-the-century feature that has nothing to do with the classical styles. An attempt to unify them with the house was made by adding crowns that resemble the capitals on columns.



1011 Oak St.: Bungaloid

This is a good example of the Bungaloid style, first popular in California around 1900 and here from 1905 to 1925 and, like the one-story Bungalow, inspired by the ranch house of folklore. Typically, there is a wide expanse of roof. The "side" of the house faces the street and the integrated front porch runs the length of the house. Above the front porch is a large dormer containing the coolest room in the house. The single-plane roof on the dormer is also consistent with the Bungaloid style. A standard feature is the shingled walls on the dormer and on the upper walls of the house. Exposed rafters are also typical, giving the house an unfinished, rustic look in harmony with the western bunk-house image. The lower portion of the porch walls are solid, not open. Finally, many of the windows throughout are in sets or bands of three. This is a faint hint of the Prairie Style popular at the same time. Many elements of the Bungaloid impart a rugged image in reaction to decades of ornate, busy and delicate houses.

110 8th St. N.: Eccentric

This house and two others nearby are distinctive in central Wisconsin although their antecedents are unclear. The most conspicuous identifying feature is the flat rooftop, which gives the roof three planes. Other details make up a complex structure. Shingled cornice returns are a faint reminder of the classical revival style. These returns are unique because of the absence of a pediment peak and because there are two pairs, one above echoing the first. The theme has been worked into an overall design that suggests a low, crouching animal. The low silhouette also suggests the Prairie Style of Frank Lloyd Wright. Modillions or flat brackets under the eaves were found on many houses around 1900. Also common at that time were long porches such as that on the north and west, which has classical elements woven with late Victorian and possibly Prairie and Bungaloid themes that contribute to this unusual house.





**551 3rd St.:
Gothic Revival**

A combination of two or three styles makes the 1870s St. Amour house unique in central Wisconsin. Most obvious is the Gothic Revival, manifested in the Gothic or lancet (pointed at the top) window, surmounted by a molding in the same shape. More pervasive, however, is the Italianate style shown in the basic structure of the house: the rather low-pitched gabled roofs, the single-ridgepole main upright with a pavilion or front projection; Roman (round-headed) and circular windows on the second and third stories;

and brackets in some gable peaks and under some gable ends. Also distinctive are the quoins (short boards of alternate lengths at the corners). The siding itself is unusual. Instead of the common overlapping clapboards, narrow boards have been laid side-to-side to form a flush service. Two final features are not unified with the styles of the main part of the house. First is the Greek Revival addition at the rear, either the original house or one moved to the site later. Second is the stoop over the front steps, which replaces a larger porch or veranda.

five & dime

If I could go back to that favorite five and dime, I would wear my coonskin cap down the Davy Crocket aisle. I would buy a thousand green rubber soldiers and a cap gun. I would search for a replicated '57 Chevy amongst the aroma of chocolate and the din of parakeets.

If I could return to Woolworth's, I would have my picture taken in a curtained booth and sit in front of a 5-cent cherry Coke. And later, some time later indeed, I would buy for you, sweetheart, a bouquet of plastic flowers, a blue bottle of Evening in Paris and a ring that is guaranteed not to turn green for at least a week.

If Louis Shugart could go back to that same dime store, he'd probably keep a sharp eye on me. For 30 years, Shugart managed the now-closed Woolworth's variety store here.

A farm lad from Tecumseh, Neb., Shugart, like old F.W. Woolworth himself, felt impelled to leave the rural life behind. Milking a barnless cow in the rain, her sopping tail slapping him in the face, was enough to send the 1915 high school grad to Beatrice, Neb., and business college. When he got a job for \$8 a week at the Woolworth store unpacking hogsheads of crockery and the like, Shugart left academia too. Soon he was transferred to Sioux City, Iowa, at a salary of \$25 per week. He advanced to Des Moines before the Army sent him his draft notice.

It was 1918, near the end of the world war. Rather than be drafted, Shugart joined the Navy for that peculiar life interlude servicemen enjoy. After training as a quartermaster in Washington state, Shugart boarded the cargo ship *Western Hope* and headed through the Panama Canal to New York City. Upon his arrival, Gotham was high on the false armistice; Shugart joined a jubilant crowd at Times Square.

Sailing toward Europe, the *Western Hope* proved less than buoyant. A stripped gear sent the ship drifting toward the African coast. Fortunately, among her crew were

certain "old men of the water," who rigged her with tarpaulin sails that saved the *Hope* until tugs towed her to Italy. The Navy shop discharged its cargo of flour in Czechoslovakia and Shugart as well, who had not seen a shot fired but who had quite a tour of the Mediterranean. He went back to Woolworth's at Des Moines.

Shugart was appointed manager of the Fort Madison, Iowa, store in 1920, but cherished a dream of starting his own variety store. Instead, he left Woolworth's in 1923 as a partner in a Sterling, Neb., grocery. Most trade there was delivered to customer's houses. Shugart got lonesome and returned to Woolworth's.

After a stint in Centerville, Iowa, Shugart got the call to take over, in 1927, the Wisconsin Rapids store, in operation three years. Where was Wisconsin Rapids? Shugart looked on the map and still didn't know. The name on the map hadn't been corrected since the town had changed its name in 1920 from Grand Rapids.

When Shugart arrived, there was an east side variety store. Others arose over the years but, he said, Woolworth's could hardly notice when they went in or out of business.

The depression of the 1930s did not threaten his business either, although one local bank closed its doors permanently. In 1938, Woolworth's, housed in the Mead-Witter Block in the 200 block of West Grand Avenue, remodeled and expanded into the adjacent A&P quarters.

In 1927, no item in the Woolworth stores could be priced at over 10 cents. On one side of the interior were the nickel items. On the other side, everything was a dime. The point, Shugart said, had to be stretched a bit at times. Hose, for example, was 10 cents—per leg.

The 10-cent limit was raised to a quarter in 1932. Eventually, the ceiling was lifted entirely.

Despite provocative proposals from Daily Tribune Publisher William F. Huffman Sr.,



Woolworth's, before 1932

the Woolworth chain would not allow Shugart to advertise. Instead, the store relied on window dressing and counter displays, supplemented by spring and autumn sales. Managers were encouraged to allow liberal browsing.

This sometimes surreptitious perusal could lead to the bane of the mercantile community: shoplifting. Shugart had his own way of dealing with young thieves. "I'd call up their parents and ask them to bring the child in each week for four weeks. Instead of mentioning what they'd done wrong, I'd ask about his report card and how he was doing in school. I'd make a friend out of him."

In 1951, the Woolworth store added another room, the former Emmons store. Shugart put in a lunch counter. He also began a pet department, selling goldfish, hamsters and parakeets. It was his downfall.

In 1953, Shugart fell victim to a plague his local physician could not identify, a desper-

ate weakness and lung congestion. He could not stay awake without pills. At Rochester, Minn., after several visits, he found out what was wrong. Shugart had contracted, from sick parakeets he had often taken home to nurse, psittacosis, a bird disease harmful to humans. His working hours had to be shortened and a manager-trainee brought in. Although his symptoms diminished, Shugart retired in 1957 at the age of 62.

He had made a good living all his adult life selling small things for a small price: soap, lotion, corn plasters, combs, brushes, pencils, pens, envelopes, candy, peanuts—for a nickel; hammers, saws, tinware—for a dime; brassieres, roaster pans, cheeseburgers—for a quarter. For 69 cents, he had sold green soldiers. For 99, a model car. One summer, for a few cents a pound, he had sold 2,000 pounds of that special kind of block chocolate any boy can remember gazing at through the glass.

Even at a nickel, said Shugart, it all adds up.

To some, it was embarrassing, even humiliating. To others, it represented emotional torment. To Lafe Enkro, it was hilarious.

As Enkro walked with his busmate, Dave Engel, past the statue of Honest Abe in the front lobby of the old Lincoln High School, he noticed something out of the ordinary; the statue's head was missing.

He elbowed Dave and laughed. A lot of people laughed that spring morning of 1962. Dave, however, kept his reaction somewhere inside, like he would a pack of Camels in English class, and he waited.

What he anticipated happened later that morning. He was called to the principal's office.

The principal, Marvin Maier, who had been hired that year, was a 6-foot-3 inch Iowan who didn't think the decapitation of the school symbol was at all humorous. In effete contrast to his predecessor, the redoubtable Aaron Ritchay, Maier had earlier chastised the entire student body for "tittering" during an assembly, a remonstrance that provoked the scholars, like tree frogs in April, to titter all the more. With a suitable unburdening of arms and legs, Maier unlimbered also a question for Dave. It was the question of the day and he had asked it of all who had attended the Spanish-French students' banquet the night before. "Who took Lincoln's head?"

Dave came up with a rather enigmatic rejoinder. He said that even in the event that he might know who took Lincoln's head, he couldn't possibly reveal the answer. Having been taught not to lie, that was the best he could do. He hadn't been taught to act stupid; it just happened.

When he was called again to the Spanish-French inquisition, Dave received the expected bad news. "Now we know why you wouldn't reveal the perpetrators. You're one of them."

A few minutes later, Dave made one of those phone calls where you just have to pretend it's 10 years later. "Mom, can you come and pick me up? I've been kicked out of school."

The walk along Witter Field to 8th Street and then down 8th Street toward Two Mile Avenue gave him plenty of time to ruminate over the

consequences of a simple-minded act of puckish derangement.

It happened after the annual Spanish-French students' dinner in the Lincoln cafeteria. The building had pretty much emptied except for Dave, his classmate John Farrish, Dutch foreign-exchange student Hendrika Van der Harst and another female student when Farrish suggested they engage in what had become a school tradition, the theft of Lincoln's head.

"Come on," he said. "Let's do something we'll remember this place by."

With his companions as lookouts, Farrish somehow removed the big plaster head and concealed it to whatever extent was possible under his red letter jacket. The other three headed for the south parking lot and Dave walked alone toward Lincoln Street. He was somewhat bemused and somewhat concerned. Now what would happen?

What happened was that he had to bring his mother to school with him and sit through a homely homily on the consequences of his actions. In the interests of specificity, Maier had drawn up a list of Dave's deadly sins. In the first place, Dave had disgraced his school, the students, the teachers, the alumni, the custodial personnel. Mostly, he had disgraced the administration. Why, said Maier, he had been getting calls all morning asking what had happened. What was he supposed to tell them, not being one to lie, that it was out for cleaning?

Maier also pointed out the intrinsic value of the head itself. It was irreplaceable, invaluable, fragile. He said that Miss Le Perrier, the petite lady who taught both Spanish and French, had been unable to rest in peace since the incident. She was deeply troubled that one of her students might be the culprit. For that matter, Coach Bernie Knauer's mental and physical health had been placed in jeopardy. The head had been stashed in the back seat of Coach's car. What if he'd encountered it in a weak moment and suffered a nervous breakdown or heart attack? Less important, a shadow had been cast over Dave's own future. Something like this was going to be hard to live down.

Lincoln's Head



Had he learned a lesson? Maier wanted to know. "I guess I learned not to do something like this again," Dave said, wondering if he could later stomach his contrition. What he had really learned was that some people have no sense of humor.

So went the loss and recovery of Lincoln's head in one of its many instances. This week, the Great Railsplitter, exhumed from a storeroom in the back reaches of the new school at 1801 16th St. S., arose to haunt Dave again. The plea went out on Arnie Strobe's Kaffee Klatsch. "Does anyone know where the statue of Lincoln came from?"

Kurt Bushman, a student at LHS, was asking. He soon found the answer wasn't going to come easily. Among his 25 fruitless calls was one to the Wisconsin Rapids city historian, the same Dave Engel who had early suffered calumny and disgrace. Now he was to suffer it again. Although he pored over many a volume of antique lore, Dave never did find out where the statue of Old Abe originated. With the assistance of Bushman and many hours of research, he was able to make a few points.

Complete descriptions of both old, old Lincoln (1903) and old Lincoln (now known as East Junior High) (1931) fail to mention the statue, as do the 1902-1910 minutes of the board of education.

At the combined dedication of the 1903 building and commencement ceremonies, Laurie Drumb presented "statuary" purchased for the high school by the class of 1907. As described, her objects of art were entitled, "Belt Bucklers, Hebe, Diana and William McKinley."

Bushman and friends searched through every school annual ("Ahdawagam") from 1912 to 1983 without finding a clue, although a drawing of the statue appeared in 1922 and references in 1943, when it was moved to the area of the main entrance. Bushman and present Lincoln Principal Timothy Laatsch inverted the heavy piece enough to inspect the bottom: no inscription.

But there are eyewitness accounts from the first Lincoln that imply the statue came with the building. Lela Winn, class of 1910, remembers it in the main lobby. Carrie Panter, a graduate previously of Howe School, heard the statue discussed and saw it in the building around 1903. Viola Palmer, class of 1909, saw the statue on the first floor when she started 8th grade at Lincoln in 1904. Leonard Hatten remembers seeing Lincoln in place in 1903.

Now Abe is about to be returned to public view, his shoes shined, freshly gilded, enclosed in a glass box, his head chained to something deep inside. Any contemporary vandals attempting to etch a black mark on history will have to pull harder than those naughty boys of '62.

Brave Boys

John Stults wrote to his sister Angeline Holmes that since he couldn't think of a good enough name for her baby boy, she should name it, "and I will git to see it som day after it is big anuf to swear and to chew tobacco."

John wrote to his brother, Henry, at Baraboo, on Aug. 15, 1862, to warn him against following John's own example. "Better not inlist if yo can git along with out for it is not mutch fun about it you haft to be every ones dog and barke when tha tell yo to."

These letters dramatize the Civil War experiences of two Wisconsin volunteers, John Stults, a corporal in the 12th Infantry and his brother, Henry, a private in the 6th Infantry.

John wrote to his mother, Jane Stults, on Aug. 14, 1862. "The wethar is so awfal hot hear it is very dry hear now I cant think of any thing to right. Now I am so sleepy I cant hardley see. I have bin on guard for two days."

A September letter from John to Angeline said there were a hundred men in his regiment on horse back and that he was one of them. "We have to scout the plantasions all over. I was out yesterday on a scout and we brot 8 horses in and we brot in six sadels."

In December, John wrote that rebel prisoners had been exchanged for government prisoners but that the rebels didn't want to go. "Tha said that tha had fought longe a nuf against the old stars and strips. I think tha will give up to us before next May. I hope so far I want to git out of this and in to something els."

To his mother from Collierville, "Tenasee," on Jan. 20, 1863, John said it was raining like the devil, the frogs were singing and the mud was deep when at 3 a.m., the rebel cavalry sent word that they were coming to pay a visit. "We had to git up," he said, but the rebs didn't show. "I wish this war was over," said John. "But I dont think that it will end for three years to com yet."

The following day, to his sister: "We are left

on the rail road to guard for a while and I am glad of it for have got tierd wading in the mud for a whiled."

On Jan. 31, 1863, John wrote again to his sister from Collierville. He said the rebels were about 10 miles away, although the union sentry had been shot through the ankle the night before. From near Memphis, he said, "I was in the grave yard wher tha buried the soldars and thar was ten achars of them boys . . . well I shal bea glad when this is over but thar ant mutch use of talking eny thing about it."

Another source, John's cousin, "G. Doty," provided a personal view of suffering. "Have been in sevrал close places and have felt the wind of Rebel bullets and saw the horers of the battle field where the cannon balls fell thick and fast and where my comrads fell on all sides of me wounded and bleeding."

At Black River, the government troops routed the rebels and pursued them to Jackson, Miss. "I never knew what hardships was until we came en to that march. The wether was extremely hot. The Rebels spoiled all the water that they could along the rode and it was very scarce at best." Confederate troops also hauled dead mules into drinking places, "so it would stink so bad we could not drink it. I have seen hogs drove out of puddels of water and then men drink it when it was as thick as molasses with mud. Such dear aunt," he wrote, "is the life of a soldier."

"You wanted to know if I had seen John," continued the cousin. "Well I have not, I could not find him altho I have no dout we have bin close to each other sevrал times."

From Grand Gulf, Miss., John wrote that he wouldn't be getting a furlough for six months or more, "so I dont think that I will try to come home untill this is over with if I dont go under. It is so very hot hear that I cant hardley move around eny in the day time."

On Sept. 5, 1863, John said he had been in the service two years to the day "and one year from today I think I will be at home if I live."

Brother Henry, who had enlisted against John's advice, continued to write his nearly illegible missives. "Camped in the field" on Feb. 3, 1865: "I would like to be at home in the spring for the ague is thick here . . . I would like to go to Washington in the spring and think we would stay there all summer."

Henry said the cannon made the ground tremble and that 70 rebels had attacked. "We fixed on them and there was five hundred of them killed and the rest of them came in and give themselves up as prisoners of war."

Sixteen days later, Henry's letters stopped too. At Baltimore, Md., on Feb. 19, 1865, he died of wounds suffered in battle.

His brother John had, the previous summer, been killed in action at Atlanta.

Letters of condolence came to mother Jane Stults. "Dear friend: I suppose you have heard ere this the sad news of John's death. It is a severe blow to you and a loss to the community," wrote Mary Baker from the Baraboo area.

"I would like to see my cousin John before he died," wrote Bell Southard in 1866. "But that Brave Boy filled an honorable grave. May the rebel that killed him I hope he may never see any peace in this world."



Henry and John Stults

Henry dictated a note to his mother on Feb. 12, 1865, from a Baltimore hospital. "I wrote you from City Point that I was slightly wounded but it is worse than I expected. I have lost my leg. It is amputated just above the knee." He died a week later.

The death of John Stults was described by "a brother soldier," James Cornish, in a letter to Jane Stults. "Your son John was killed in the charge on the 21st inst. about 8½ O'clock in the forenoon & was not found till dark. He was shot right through the head & never knew what suffering was . . . He died as he lived at his post next the Captain and the farthest to the front . . . John had nothing but an oil blanket as he was buried in his woolen blanket. We are obliged to carry all we have so we can't carry his oil blanket nor send it home."

In lieu of her son's blanket, his only valuable possession, Mrs. Stults was awarded a pension in the name of Cpl. John Stults of \$8 a month.

Nixon

Although it wasn't an election year, we got a new president 10 years ago—when Gerald Ford was sworn in on Friday, Aug. 9, 1974, as the 38th president of the United States.

Only 37 should have been necessary at the time, but the 37th president of the United States had just made history. He had resigned.

Until then, Ford had been vice president. His former boss, Richard Nixon, had announced that, although the action was abhorrent to every instinct in his body, he had quit. Nixon felt, he said, that he no longer had enough political base in Congress to stay in office and fight impeachment in the Watergate scandal.

Last week, Frank Strobl left a pile of 10-year-old Chicago and Milwaukee newspapers on my desk. He wondered what I thought about them. They made me a little sick and more than a little sad.

My first concern was for myself. I was shocked to realize how quickly 10 years, however traumatic, had passed. If such a decade went so fast, what about the remainder of my life? My second interest was in the historic tragedy invoked by the heavy, black, two-inch banner headlines. They had grown more subtle and more sinister than I remembered. Was it yesterday or in some ancient, dyspeptic dream? NIXON RESIGNS (Says Support has Crumbled); FORD SWORN IN (38th President Asks Nation's Prayers); FORD TAKES OFFICE ('Nightmare is over,' he says).

Nixon said he would prefer "to have carried to the finish despite the personal agony, and my family unanimously urged me to do so" but that America needed a full-time president and a full-time Congress. He said he left without bitterness toward his foes. With this action, Nixon became the first president in the history of the United States to leave office by resignation. Even while out of office, he vowed to continue to work for the "great causes" to which he had devoted his political life. Peace, more than anything, "is

what I hope will be my legacy to you." The entire speech to the press and people lasted 17 minutes. It ended with a prayer: "May God's grace be with you in all the days ahead." The days began quickly and soon there were 10 years.

Nixon, while candidate for various public offices and especially while president, had achieved an unusually personal relationship with other Americans. Many had complete faith in him as a person and as a politician. Others found him murky, loathesome, despicable. My own experience began in the confidence of a young boy that his father and President Eisenhower were always right. And they both, I thought, believed in Richard Nixon. I had no idea that Ike didn't like his vice president any better than some of Nixon's enemies liked him.

As I remember it, Nixon landed at the "Tri-City Airport," in what seemed to be a jet, which would have been a rare occurrence at the largely unused field. Even the landing of a crop duster was likely to bring kids like me running down Two Mile Avenue. Now I saw a jet plane land and a great man get off. I saw "Nixon." With my dad, I watched from somewhere back in the crowded Lincoln Fieldhouse as the great man spoke. Although people cheered enthusiastically, my awe already diminished. What was so amazing about this guy? He was mean looking and mean sounding.

Yet, in 1960, I assumed, as did nearly everyone I knew, that Nixon was "the one" and that he would win the election for president. Who "Kennedy" was I certainly had little notion. I knew he was somehow young, unduly rich and unashamedly Catholic, all thoroughly negative traits, I was sure.

This "Kennedy" beat our Nixon and Nixon went back to California to be beat again. A weaker and less determined man would have been done for. Even Nixon said we wouldn't have him to kick around any more.

He was wrong. Nixon, like he himself said later, was no quitter. For many dark and



WRDT

Patrolman Roger Burmeister, Chief R.J. Exner, Lt. Donald Knuth, Sgt. Edgar Heiser, Sgt. Robert Exner with presidential candidate Richard Nixon.

dogged years, he paid as “former vice president” his dues at political functions all over the country. In 1968, Nixon had risen above defeat and above himself. He had earned the right to be president of the United States.

By this time and for many reasons, I hated him. I hated his ways, his inhumanity, his cheapness. I hated what he stood for: a crass, mean materialism, a self-interest, a smug ugliness. He was a hypocrite, a crook who denounced criminals. Grown larger than life. Nixon was the straw man stuffed with all the evils. He was worth kicking around some more as if he could be hurt as it seemed he couldn't be. He was also the president, the most powerful individual in the world.

A newspaper of Aug. 10, 1974, noted that one of the phrases from Nixon's East Room remarks to his staff might be resurrected by historians as an unintentional illumination of the downfall of the Nixon administration. “Never be petty. Always remember others may hate you, but those who hate you don't

win unless you hate them, and then you destroy yourself.”

I was petty. The Watergate hearings made me feel good. I had been angry. Now the villain had destroyed himself. It was exciting. It was vindication. Then he resigned and all the fun went out of it.

As Nixon descended from the presidency to humanity, he said, through a veil of tears: “Greatness comes not when things go always good for you, but the greatness comes when you are really tested, when you take some knocks, some disappointments, when sadness comes, because only if you have been in the deepest valley can you ever know how magnificent it is to be on the highest mountain.”

The remarks were slightly self-serving. I couldn't even care. Sadness had come to me, too. The mantle of defeat cast a human shadow across Nixon. He had become too much a part of us. Who was there to be mad at any more?

D-Day

June 15, 1944, was a lovely day on the beach, said Ernie Pyle, war correspondent. Men were sleeping on the white Normandy sand—some of them forever. Men were floating in the water, but they didn't know they were in the water because they were dead. The wreckage of the previous nine days seemed vast and startling. "You could see trucks tipped half over and swamped. You could see partly sunken barges, and the angled-up corners of jeeps, and small landing craft half submerged. And at low tide you could still see those vicious, six-pronged iron snares that helped snag and wreck them."

Shortly after dawn on June 6, "D-one day," Pyle had reached the Normandy shore with the second wave of Allied troops. He carried with him the vision of "more ships than any human had ever seen before at one glance."

"There were battleships and all other kinds of warships clear down to patrol boats. There were great fleets of Liberty ships. There were fleets of luxury liners turned into troop transports, and fleets of big landing craft and tank carriers and tankers. And in and out through it all were nondescript ships, converted yachts, river boats, tugs and barges."

George Swarick rode one of those ships, a "Limey coaster," a small non-ocean-going freighter carrying ammunition.

"We took off after supper the night of the 5th," Swarick said. "We crossed the channel at night. We couldn't see much, just the silhouettes of other ships. Actually we had never been told we were going to France and did not know there was going to be an invasion."

Swarick said he was awake all night. There were no sleeping quarters so the men stayed on deck watching the shadows of ships pass by in the darkness while airplanes passed overhead. "There were moments of tension," he said. "You didn't know what to think about. Everyone who had cigarettes was smoking."

After the 3 a.m. arrival of what was called by the missions planners Utah Beach, dawn drew the grey curtain from a sight Swarick would not forget: his modest English ship moving past myriad nations of ships, tall and small, all emerging from darkness. Battleships

further out had begun firing at targets ashore. Other ships unloaded closer to the beach. Amphibious "ducks" shuttling back and forth with men and material were hit by shelling. "We could see dead soldiers and hear men hollering for help, officers and sergeants yelling, 'Don't stop, keep going, this isn't a rescue operation!'"

"We were right in line with a German 88 four miles inland," Swarick said. "The second shell was a little close, so we moved. The next shell fell where we'd been."

Assigned to the 303rd Port Co. of the U.S. Army's 519th Port Battalion, Swarick's function was to load ammunition from the ship onto ducks that went between ship and shore. It took four days, he said, to empty his ship. In the meantime, he and the crew ate K-rations and "borrowed" the rest of their food—oblong tins of sardines and coarse dark bread—from the galley of the English boat. "Every time we didn't have to work, we'd lay down and catnap," he said.

Carl Polansky, also of the 519th Port Battalion, 303 Port Co., left Southampton on "a little two-hatch channel freighter."

"Nobody told us," he said, "but we presumed we were going to France for the invasion." Crossing the channel, he said, he and his mates enjoyed a bright, sunny morning, as they sprawled on the hatch covers. "We didn't realize the magnitude until five miles off the French coast." There, a battleship let go a salvo of 16-inchers. "All of a sudden she fired and rolled." Polansky's smaller craft lay at the battleship's starboard end. "The realization hit us when the swell hit us that something heavy was coming off."

A winch operator unloading ammunition, Polansky enjoyed a good view of the vast flotilla, each ship flying an anti-aircraft balloon. He watched freighters, LSTs and LCTs unloading jeeps and trucks. "There was a lot of noise, firing, anti-aircraft, a little strafing. A story had it that the German 88 was directed by a French girl from a church steeple," he said. "I don't recall it ever hit anything, but it got our attention."

By the time Polansky got ashore at D plus 26



George Swarick (front, 5th from right) at the Arc de Triomphe

hours, the casualties had mostly been removed from the long white beach. He saw instead an expanse of materials of all types stacked in an orderly manner. "There was very little confusion. We had the sense that everything was under control."

While unloading incoming ships, the company bivouacked for a while near the beach. "One time we really got pasted," Polansky said. "A German plane we called 'Bed Check Charlie' would come by at night and drop chandelier flares. One night they followed the flares up with an attack. They kind of tore our camp apart that night."

Earl Taylor, also of the Port Battalion, said he left England on a Liberty ship, which he described as a converted transport ship, on the third wave of the assault. In the rough channel seas, many men became so seasick they could not walk. A half-track broke loose, said Taylor,

and slammed from side to side in the hold below. "We realized what was happening," he said, "when we saw the tremendous amount of ships. Combat had started, paratroopers had gone in. There was air combat and shelling. We couldn't see the ground combat."

Of the aftermath, Ernie Pyle wrote: "Standing out there on the water beyond all this wreckage was the greatest armada man has ever seen. You simply could not believe the gigantic collection of ships that lay out there waiting to unload. It lay thick and clear to the far horizon of the sea and beyond, and it spread out to the sides and was miles wide. Its utter enormity would move the hardest man."

Among the armada were at least three of our own citizens, sent from River City to Utah Beach, Normandy, to help return to its former owners dominion over an imperiled land.

Milk Strike

Law and order had been suspended. An angry gang of insurgents blocked the main roads into the city, interfering not only with obvious enemies, but stopping vehicles of any description and subjecting ordinary citizens to angry shouts, searches and, sometimes, beatings. What they did not approve of was confiscated and destroyed. Many residents feared to enter or leave town. Who dared anarchy? Why intimidate neighbor and friend? What was the commodity that inflamed the citizenry?

The guerrillas were, as so often in our history, farmers. The substance so controversial was milk. The motive was self-interest. This was the culmination of the milk strike of 1933.

First called in spring, the strike was suspended until autumn, when it emerged with new vigor as farmers across the country protested low prices by withholding milk and other products, demanding the "fundamental right" to receive at least the cost of production. It was meant to be peaceful.

However, on Oct. 23, 1933, the Daily Tribune reported that milk cans, owned by an unwilling Vesper agrarian, were dumped by 20 pickets of the "milk pool."

The next day, four county cheese and milk plants closed voluntarily. Oct. 25 saw the first violence, as 3,500 pounds of milk were dumped in Sigel. On Oct. 27, a county pulp-truck driver was seriously injured by a striker's beating. In Dane County, a picket was killed.

Wisconsin Rapids was considered a "storm center" as the strike tightened its hold on the city. By the end of October, deputies had to patrol the highways, where pickets placed spiked planks. Trucks were

tipped over, arrests were made and tear gas was used to clear the highways.

When Sheriff Martin Bey ordered removal of a blockade on what is now Highway 34, 200 pickets rushed a milk truck owned by the Rocheleau dairy and overpowered deputies in order to break into the back and dump the contents. Pickets also converged on the Konkol truck and up-ended it before they could be dispersed by tear gas.

Some pickets had consumed moonshine liquor and had begun to stop not only milk trucks, but everybody who came down the road, seizing milk brought from farms in glass jugs for relatives in town. According to the Daily Tribune of Nov. 3, "Clear the highways" was the command given Deputy Henry Becker, Milladore, by Sheriff Martin Bey, who is nursing a lame back at the Sheriff's office today and 'clear the highways' he did."

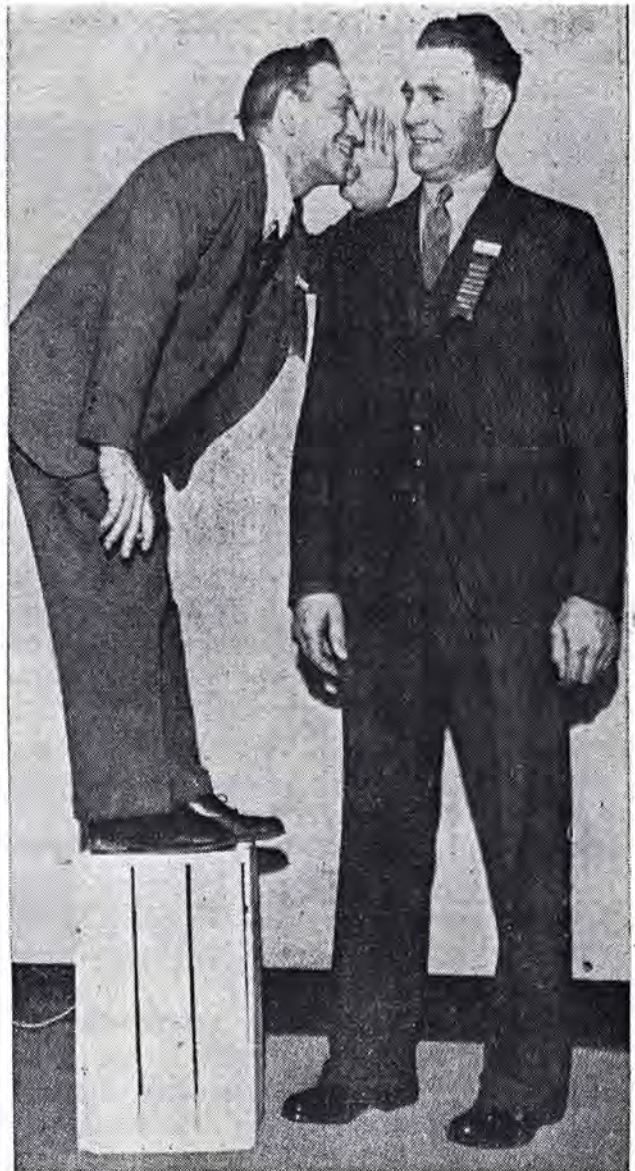
The rout of the pickets started on Highway 13 North, where deputies, armed with tear-gas bombs, led 75 colleagues into a band of 150 pickets. Although he heard bullets fired over his head and was gassed, Becker wasn't intimidated. He stood 6-foot-5 and, at one time, weighed more than 300 pounds. When he was attacked by several strikers, Becker subdued and arrested them, leaving the rest with the threat of similar action if they didn't clean up their stuff and get off the highway in approximately eight minutes. "In less than five minutes, they were gone," he said.

At other roadblocks leading into Wisconsin Rapids, pickets dispersed and their makeshift shelters were destroyed. The strike was over.

The son of German and Czech immigrants, Becker grew up on a farm north of Milladore. His father, John, was a well-known sausage maker and butcher there. In 1921, Becker became Milladore town constable and Wood County deputy sheriff. Big and tough, he was called on not just to run tramps and gypsies out of town and to moderate family quarrels, but to quell moonshine-inspired dance-hall gang fights all over the northern sections of the county.

His successful effort in the milk strike brought Becker to the attention of public and private individuals throughout the county. He was urged by Daily Tribune Publisher William Huffman to run for sheriff, which he did, on the Republican ticket. In 1934, Becker won the primary, but lost the general election to the Progressive candidate. In 1936, he was successful and served the two terms the law permitted. After two years with the state traffic patrol, Becker returned to the sheriff's office for two more terms, 1942-1946.

While living in quarters at the jail, which was north of the present courthouse, Becker's wife, a deputy, served as radio dispatcher. His children played with the prisoners. His mother cooked such good food that "We couldn't get some to leave. In fall they'd do anything to get in."



EDWARD FISCHER

HENRY J. BECKER

Even sheriffs go to extremes some times. A soap box was necessary for this conversation at the Wisconsin Sheriffs association convention between Edward (Ace) Fischer, newly elected sheriff of Dane county, who at 5 feet 4 inches was the shortest delegate, and Sheriff Becker, Wood county, the tallest. Becker stands 6 feet 5 inches tall.

King of Fools

Who among us can name the king of fools?

None but the king himself, who lived by a dozen odd appellations: Jevons Zalinsky, for us. Lester Price, back in Kentucky. Clifton Buchanan, in Texas. Prestone Greenfield, Wilber Holloway, elsewhere. Charles Vanderbilt, Arley Browning, Hal Nixon. He was Duke Darrell, in Kansas. By any name, it was the same mad monarch.

This fool, this black-haired, slightly built, dark-eyed and puckish jailbird with a flair for expensive cars and a penchant for getting money the easy way had the misfortune in 1938 of running into trouble with a "country sheriff," name of Henry Becker, way up north in a piney place called Wood County.

Zalinsky, who described himself as a salesman and theatrical agent, met his downfall driving west out of Port Edwards on May 8, 1938, when his Cadillac rammed the rear bumper of another car as he attempted to pass. Although the traveling salesman was uninjured, three local residents occupying the second vehicle were killed. Charged with manslaughter, Zalinsky was held in the antiquated county jail in lieu of a \$2,000 bond. Only a week later, apparently by means of blades secreted in his shoe soles, Zalinsky sawed through the bars of his second floor cell and descended by the sheet and blanket method, evading police and leaving town by a "rented" automobile.

Our fair river city remained ever in his thoughts, however, as the king indulged in more folly, writing almost immediately to the "honorable sheriff" and people of Wood County. "I take pen in hand to thank you for being human, kind, too considerate, too willing to trust, and to ask you to forgive me for any wrong I have did you. Your jail is like a home, your food good, and I found all your people the best and kindest I've ever known."

To District Attorney Hugh Goggins, Jevons Z. sent a money order for \$10. He said he wanted to pay for repairs caused by his escape, including some stronger bars if necessary.

To the driver of the victims' car, Zalinsky offered an automobile of the make he'd

damaged "or any other that you may care to own." He said he made his money at cards, but "that which I earn is yours until we settle it forever."

The verbose miscreant added further explanation. "True I have a police history, but never from using a gun or lifting my hand against anyone. They were all of a petty nature, but I have been trying to live it down. The only reason I couldn't face this accident count was because of my mistakes of the past."

According to a report from the FBI, those mistakes were rather ample. Zalinsky, a.k.a. just about anything, had a police record in 10 states and Canada, starting in 1922 at Frankfort, N.Y., when he was 15. In ensuing years, he was arrested and convicted for breaking and entering, burglary, fraud, defacing currency, grand larceny and vagabondage. Yet he felt compelled to apologize to the community he had lately offended. "Unique and beyond comparison is the barrage of letters being received from that soft-hearted culprit, one Mr. Jevons Zalinsky, who came, who killed and who sawed his way out of the local bastille," editorialized the Daily Tribune. "And now he writes, almost as a modern Robin Hood. If we were all to believe him, we would be right in there crying tears as big as pool balls in his sad behalf."

The Tribune had every right to wax sarcastic. Just after the accident, Zalinsky had thrown out a .38 revolver, which he claimed had been found in the car when he bought it. Not to mention the half dozen crimes he committed between his escape and recapture. Zalinsky had been apprehended at Mansfield, Ohio, by detectives who recognized the car he was driving as one seen near the Mansfield high school while Zalinsky was breaking into the building. Upon his arrest, Jevons Z. assured police he was Harley Marmaduke of New York. He was unable to explain the kit of burglary tools in his room or the \$300 in nickels and dimes he had stolen in nearby Piqua. He admitted a theft at Marion, Ohio, and an attempt at cracking



JEVONS ZALINSKY

Behind the bars for the third time, after having twice escaped, once by sawing the bars of his cell, Zalinsky appears not the least downhearted as he awaits hearing in Wood county jail at Wisconsin Rapids after his arrest in Mansfield, O.

The original charge was first degree manslaughter in connection with an automobile crash. Possibly Jevons expects a credit mark because he wrote the sheriff praising his jail, regretting the necessity of his leavetaking and enclosing \$10 to offset the sawing of his bars.

the safe of the Mansfield library. On his way to Ohio, in fact the very night of his escape, Zalinsky had stolen several hundred dollars from the Waukesha, Wis., high school.

"I mean to marry and settle down," he had written. "Please forgive me! I am weak morally, physically and I suppose mentally."

After Zalinsky's Ohio detention, Sheriff Becker, undersheriff Cliff Bluett and deputy Mrs. Becker drove to Mansfield to pick up the suspect. "We were warned in Mansfield that there might be trouble," said Becker last week. "I still shiver when I think about what happened on the way back."

It was suspected that Zalinsky had connections with organized crime, in particular, Baby Face Nelson. While driving, Becker and his companions had the uncomfortable feeling they were under surveillance.

At a restaurant on the outskirts of Chicago, where the party stopped for lunch, the suspicion was confirmed. Zalinsky was handcuffed to Bluett, who sat on the end seat of a booth. Across the table, Becker held the only gun. Before Becker could finish his soup, the lights went out.

The result was a dark moment of waitress's shouts, customer anxiety and confusion. A flashlight from somewhere shone on Becker. "I held the gun on Zalinsky," said Becker, who feared the mob had arrived. "If they wanted him, they'd have him dead. That was all that saved us."

The lights back on, no one could explain what had happened. "It's still a mystery," said Becker. "We knew he was no ordinary criminal."

On June 8, 1938, according to state prison records at Waupun, Zalinsky, born Jewish in New York City, was sentenced to five to six years for first-degree manslaughter and three additional years for the Waukesha crimes. He was released early, on Nov. 2, 1942, with a political pardon.

Once again, he had been sprung, this Jevons Zalinsky, Harley Marmaduke, or Robin Hood, the celebrated yardbird who had written to his captors from afar. "But truly, sir, I am sorry," he said, "and I pray that you will forgive the King of Fools (FOR SUCH I'VE BEEN)."

Ottumwa

"Hey," she yelled, the second time by on her motorbike, "You know you're standing right in front of the mental hospital."

I wanted to tell her that of course I knew. Wasn't this Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, and why shouldn't there be an insane asylum behind me? I had come a long way.

It began on the dark side of a Wisconsin Christmas when I badly needed something to look forward to. Come spring, I decided, I would hit the road in the romantic style, hitchhiking. But for where?

Map study inspired a perverse destination, a place I had never visited because I had not wanted to. No one I knew had either visited there or wanted to. No one but me was likely to ever be there by their own free will. Knowing nothing about it, I could only imagine this sanctuary hidden away in our country's midlands. In this dream there were no video games, discount stores, pesticides, marijuana cigarettes, Sports Vans, hormones, breakdances, golf courses, boom-boxes, joggers, self-service gas stations, punk rock bands or senior centers. In my mind it was the incarnation of sunlit streets, sparrows, cabbages, pink flamingoes, milky kitchens, white churches, cats, jam, farmers, corn, grain elevators, root-beer stands, tractors and apple cobblers. There, above all, was the purity of the young ladies. They did not smoke, curse, drink, snort coke or have sex before marriage. They believed in God, tried to do what He wanted them to and washed the dishes. The girls were too innocent, too trusting and too pure to have anything to do with someone like me.

These were fantasies about the town that I had chosen to go to: Ottumwa, Iowa.

Ottumwa: Miles from the crossroads the hitchhiker has been left at the second night, limping through the dark rain with a heavy pack, prepared to walk until dawn asking himself what others had wondered all along. "Why Ottumwa?"

Ottumwa: A pursuit of the trivial, an existential act of controlled folly, an epic non-event in the hitchhiker's guide to the Galaxies, a purposeful dramatization of stupidity. In mid-introspection (can't get a ride) and the happy despair of black Iowa spring, a trucker who is not allowed to carry riders stops anyway and two days after he left River City, the hitchhiker strolls into Main Street, Ottumwa.

Ottumwa: "Who are we?" According to promotional material. "People in Ottumwa have a high quality of life. Recreational opportunities abound,

air and water are clean, there are no major crimes, schools are well-rated, health care is efficient and stress is at a minimum. The city is large enough to support modern financial, communications and cultural enterprises, yet small enough that you can't walk down the street without finding a friendly face and a warm 'Hello.' "

Ottumwa: Named one of the best towns in America by author Hugh Bayless in 1983 and an All-America City in 1977. "One thing you don't have to worry about," says an elevator operator at the 100-year-old Ballingall Hotel, "is toornaydoes." Never had one, he says. Never will. Twisters, maybe.

Ottumwa: Whose Wapello County history parallels in time Wood County. On the midnight of May 1, 1843, 2,000 land-hungry settlers rushed across the Iowa border to grab the newly opened territory including the site of three Indian villages on the Des Moines River that became the county seat, Ottumwa.

Ottumwa: Once called "Louisville," a term rejected by the U.S. post office for the original in the language of Chief Wapello, meaning variously place of the departed, swift water, a community of hermits or city of self-will and perseverance.

Ottumwa: Whose greatest moment came in 1890 when President Harrison visited the Coal Palace exposition and said, "If I should attempt to interpret the lesson of this structure, I should say it was an illustration of how much that is artistic and graceful is to be found in the common things of life."

Ottumwa: Home of Edna Ferber for her first 12 years but not the home of Radar O'Reilly. He never lived there, not really, any Ottumwan will insist.

Ottumwa: Where a historical society member complains they have "malled the hell out of downtown" in favor of "tin sheds with false fronts," where she says, there is nothing to do unless you like bowling, movies or putting your elbows on the bar.

Ottumwa: Whose largest employer in 1973 closed its meat-packing plant and laid off 3,500 workers. Where 500 more have been laid off in 1984 by John Deere and Hormel. Whose World War II population of 40,000 has declined to 27,000.

Ottumwa: Where there are no picture post cards and almost no souvenirs. There are almost no tourists, admit chamber of commerce representatives, because there is no real tourist attraction other than maybe Oktoberfest, "more exciting than Niagara Falls."



Mt. Pleasant Asylum

Ottumwa Foxes

Ottumwa: Whose First Pentecostal Assembly of God Church proclaims on its sign, "What is bitter to endure is often sweet to remember." The 13-year-old boy moving to Denver advises, "Just passing through? I'd keep on going if I were you."

Main Street: Where they show sex movies across from the bar where bored women take off most of their clothes.

The Fox Lounge: Where the pretty girl drinking her third, fourth or fifth glass of whiskey abruptly stiffens. A thin stream of white liquid slips from her mouth and down her chin like a milky worm. At first she doesn't acknowledge the emission. Then she wipes a hand across her mouth and remarks, in the quizzical innocence of the American dream, "Roloids."

Sunday morning: As families finish breakfast and dress for church, the town bum rattles the mall's newspaper machine for change, a traveler shoulders his pack and, somewhere in Mt. Pleasant, an inmate with his private map of another state looks longingly at the open road.

Grim

Early in his career, that is at the age of 7 or so, Grim Natwick said he drew pictures on the concrete in front of his father's store on the West Side. When he tired of that, he looked under the wooden sidewalk for nickels.

One part of the furniture business Grim enjoyed was picking up furniture at the depot. He and his younger brother, Buff, liked to drive the horse and wagon. They also liked to pitch chairs and other items through the air for fun.

Grim, born 1890, grew up in the area of the intersection of 1st and 3rd avenues among the Nashes, Johnsons and his Grandpa Lyon. With only horses on the street, the triangle formed made a good playground. From a roadbed baseball game, it was only a dash and a hop to the swimming hole in front of Nash's (now 730 1st Ave. S.) There, Grim got the scare of his life when, as usual, he dived to the bottom for the challenge and sprang back toward the surface. Rising took too long and he would have yelled had he been immersed in another medium. Just before it was too late, he hit air.

All the riverside kids built boats. Grim later read Mark Twain and couldn't see anything unusual about life on the Mississippi. He and his gang knew every Wisconsin River island from Rapids to Port and beyond.

Even in the city, turn-of-century families stayed close to nature. In autumn, two or three hired girls or aunts canned bushels of tomatoes. Potatoes and cabbages were grown and stored for winter. In a big icebox were quarters of beef. A deer often hung in the summer kitchen. In spring, a forest of maples down the street was tapped. "We poured the sap in a huge dishpan," said Grim, "and watched it simmer down."

Seemingly from the past came the Indians on their way to the cranberry harvest. "About 200 of them dressed Indian style might pass by," Grim said, "while we stood saying, 'Brajue, brajue,' a word we took to mean 'hello.' Once in a while, one of the men would give us a snarling look but we weren't scared because we knew we could run like deer."

The technology of the future intruded at the same time. When T.E. Nash put in electricity, so did his next-door neighbors, tapping the same wires. "Finally, telephones came in," said Grim. "When you rang a bell, Central would answer. You told her who you wanted to talk to and she might have answered that Aunt Tilly wasn't in right then; she just ran over to the grocery store. Central knew where everybody was all the time."

Jack Arpin drove the first automobile into town, a quaint little piece of machinery that steered with a rod, said Grim. He saw another car

shortly afterward near his Grandmother Natwick's farm near Pittsville. At first, it didn't seem like it was going to be able to make it up the hill at all, but then it disappeared somewhere toward 1984.

It was at the Pittsville farm that Grim had another close call with water. To try his first pipeful of tobacco, he climbed down an empty well and couldn't get out. "It was a potent experience," he said.

Grim's Uncle Joe told a good story about Pittsville's Jim Hiles, son of George Hiles and manager of the "king's" railroad. It seems when they ran the first one-car train from Cranmoor to Pittsville, Mayor Jim Hiles was dressed in a tuxedo and put on the train. Either he was in the habit of drinking occasionally or he never refused a drink, said Uncle Joe. At Pittsville, the whole populace turned out for the big occasion. When the band stopped playing, Hiles made his speech. "I anoint this town Pittsville, I am drunk and dressed up." Then he fell off the platform.

Grim at home found a good friend in Clarence Jackson, whose father ran the normal school. "Old Man Jackson" was considered the smartest man in town. He had to be. He taught teachers.

It was another friend, though, who gave Grim at a young age his pseudonym. Originally he had been named Myron in honor of Uncle Myron Hill who had been killed in a fight on a Mississippi steamboat. Hank Wasser, a blacksmith's kid, used to name everyone in the neighborhood. A series of noises he made while Myron was running bases one day came out "Mim-mee, bim-mee, grim-mee. Grim."

A minor curse of growing up to Grim was school. Although he enjoyed sports, he only went to classes because his father forced him. Although he was to become an accomplished writer, Grim said he had been the worst student in school.

When he raised his hand in history class, the surprised teacher listened to a recitation from a historical romance Grim had been reading the night before. "Myron," she said, "I think you're drawing more from your imagination than on your history book."

Whatever he drew from his imagination, Grim considered his home a fortunate beginning. "Everybody was in total sympathy with what I wanted to do," he said. "Most of my teachers forgave my poor work. My youth couldn't have been better."

Grim somehow graduated from high school in 1910. His River City boyhood over, he took the next train out.



Hollywood,
Consolidated News:—

I think it's time I get a little publicity in your high class magazine so I'm sending you a shot of myself with the stars from the "Our Gang" Comedy's troupe.

I think a good title for this photo would be: "When Good Fellows Get Together". The members of the "gang" are so young they must be good and I'm too old to be bad.

The salary list of this little group of "Our Gang" comedians knocks the comers off of \$2500 a week. Joe Cobb, the boy on the left who looks like a cream puff takes 500 of Uncle Sam's pen wipers home with him every Saturday noon. Farina, the chocolate eclair' at the right has exactly 8,000

nickels to spend on ice cream cones every week end. Mary Ann Jackson on my right knee and Bobby Hutchings on my left earn enough to keep their parents out of the best poorhouse in California for the next 200 years, and Bobby is only three years old.

Jean Darling and Harry Spear, the two little stars standing behind yours truly can't count high enough to count the dollar bills Hal Roach hands them when the Saturday whistle blows. Petey, the dog with the bad lamp barks his way into 200 bucks every week.

The little girl in white is a cousin of mine. We both draw, but not as much as our associates in the tintype.

Very truly,
GRIM NATWICK

Betty Boop

It was a fairy tale all right. Young and sexy Betty Boop from a dog's life in River City to stardom in Hollywood, almost overnight. Well, she didn't exactly get there by herself. She came out of the head of Grim Natwick, considered by his peers to be perhaps the finest animator of the female form and character.

Betty Boop has been called the most famous girl "cartoon" character of all, even more famous than Grim's other creations: Snow White, Princess Glory in "Gulliver's Travels," Nelly Bly in "Rooty-Toot-Toot" and the Mad Holy Old Witch in "The Cobbler and the Thief."

From his boyhood back in Centralia, Grim remembers copying pictures out of books his mother had in her library. Somewhere she had got a folding blackboard upon which he could draw to his heart's content. Every kid in the neighborhood wanted him to draw pictures. A teacher regularly erased the blackboard so he could draw in their season turkeys or angels.

Yet when he transferred from the old Centralia school to Emerson, Grim ran into some better artists: Paul and Baily Preston and Walter Walmouth. "I began copying their drawings," said Grim. "That's when I began thinking beyond the Katzenjammer Kids."

The Preston kids moved and Walmouth dropped out before Grim got to the 1903 Lincoln High School so he was again the best artist though self-proclaimed worst student in school. One of his early projects was making chalk drawings before football games "showing exactly what we were going to do to the opposing teams. He also designed "a



little booklet" called "Ahdawagam."

As soon as he graduated from high school in 1910, Grim headed for Chicago and the Art Institute. "My mother had gone to school with Isaac Witter who owned the bank across the street from the store. She persuaded him to loan me \$1,000 to go to art school."

To supplement that grubstake, Grim got odd jobs like dusting statues, fetching props for plays and cleaning up at a cafeteria. It wasn't long before he got his next break. A commercial artist allowed him to fill in letters for him.

"I was able to make money with no training at all," he said. "Pretty soon he discovered I could draw a comic strip which he couldn't do." For his labors Grim was paid \$3 a week.

Then Grand Rapids' Judge Gaynor's grandson, Sammy, "pretended" to write a song about some beautiful girl and Grim drew a cover for the sheet music. A song publisher liked his work and hired Grim to draw covers for \$10 each enough to rent a room at \$3 a day.

Soon Grim established a reputation as a cover artist which meant that he ended up in New York, drawing song covers while his roommate Gregory LaCava drew a comic strip for the World Telegram. Grim was drafted into World War I while LaCava talked himself into becoming head of the new William Randolph Hearst animated cartoon studio, the second in America.

After the war, LaCava persuaded Grim to try animation. At first Grim hated it. He didn't know how to make Happy Hooligan's horse gallop across the page while Happy injected cocaine into the horse's rump.

Finally it dawned on him. Grim measured the distance across a sheet of paper and punched holes all the way, tracing the drawing LaCava had given him. He

continued moving the drawing and tracing it until 120 drawings completed the first gallop. "Perspiration almost filled to my shoetops," he said.

What Grim really wanted to do was illustrate. Some artists were paid \$2,500 for a single Saturday Evening Post cover. To learn, he rented a room and hired cut-rate models whom he sketched. The next day he got out an anatomy book and tried to put all the muscles and bones in the proper places.

In 1925, Grim decided to continue his studies in Vienna where he could work with European masters and live where an American dollar was worth ten bucks. "My career began at that moment," he said. "I did nothing but study, study, study. I learned to draw."

Three years later, Grim returned to New York with "just enough money to take a ferry across the Hudson river."

By luck, Grim ran into an old friend, Bill Nolan, on Times Square. Nolan was opening a studio just two blocks away and asked Grim to work with him on Krazy Kat. Radio had just about put the song-cover artists out of business so Grim accepted.

"Nolan with Max and Dave Fleischer began to write little stories to go with songs," said Grim. "A song was placed in front of me and Dave Fleischer told me to create a little character to go with it. It was a boo-boop-a-doop song by Helen Kane and I created the Betty Boop character."

Although offered a job by Walt Disney, Grim decided to work for Ub Iwerks on the character Flip the Frog. In 1934, he did go to Disney and began drawing Mickey Mouse and Silly Symphonies. This led to the more ambitious Snow White, the first full length animation.

"Before I finished I had five assistants," he said. "My entire work was the Snow White character for about 600 days. We did 22,000 drawings."

Grim also did "a little work" on Fantasia and Pinocchio before running his car up a wet embankment and tearing his drawing arm. "While I was in a plaster cast I visited New York and the Fleischer studio. They were building a new studio in Florida and wanted me to come down." There Grim directed 1,000 feet of the feature cartoon, Gulliver's Travels.

World War II pretty much wiped out animation, said Grim. Artists were drafted and so was available film. Grim found work making instructional drawings in aircraft plants before joining Walter Lantz in California to work on educational films and Woody Woodpecker cartoons.

The decline continued. "Theaters began to lose to television," said Grim. "MGM, Warner Brothers, Iwerks, even Walt stopped making the little shorts that always opened theaters."

The last studio to give up was Screen Gems. There, Grim animated the first Mr. Magoo and at least one Academy Award picture.

After cartoons, he "virtually finished" his career doing commercial work in New York, including a highly popular series of beer commercials using the voices of Bob and Ray. In 1968, Grim retired at the age of 78 to pursue oil painting.

Of a subject who had personally experienced almost the entire history of animation, a 1975 "Film Comment" magazine wrote, "Grim Natwick is yet another of the many individual artists who have toiled anonymously under corporate banners and are only now receiving long-overdue public recognition of their special contributions."



Summer Visitors

Tramps, also known as hoboes or bums, rode in on the freight trains all year but were more numerous during the summer when the weather was more hospitable. Wearing baggy pants, battered shoes with soles flapping and often overcoats year round, they went singly from house to house asking for a sandwich and a cup of coffee "for a hungry man." Sometimes they asked for ground coffee, beans, potatoes or carrots which would be taken to one of the bums' camps where the combined haul would be cooked up for a dozen or so men.

They were polite, never caused trouble and were seldom turned down by the woman of the house. However, clothes were not allowed to remain on the line overnight.

In Wisconsin Rapids were three bum's camps: north of the city on the west side of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul tracks; west of the "St. Paul" tracks near Hale St.; and north of the Green Bay & Western tracks north of 12th Street.

The big depression of 1929 produced another group of bums. These were young men and better dressed, traveling from place to place looking for a job.

Gypsies also came to town two or three times during the summer, riding in wagons pulled by large horses. Men and women both wore colorful costumes. They seemed to have a bad reputation as thieves and kidnappers. Younger children who had heard the tales ran and hid when the gypsies appeared.

During the summer, Indian women frequently made calls at homes selling baskets so attractive and well made that they were hard to resist. Many households had a stock larger than they could possibly use.

The organ grinder wandered up the streets entertaining kids with a monkey on a leash wearing a tiny red cap. While the grinder turned the crank to make music on his portable organ, the monkey held out a tin cup into which the kids would put nickels and dimes. The organ grinder always wore a wrinkled hat. His black mustache curled up at the ends and his big white teeth showed when he smiled.

The chimney man carried ropes and brushes over his shoulder while wearing a black witch-style hat, all covered with soot. He showed up in summer when coal and wood fires were at a minimum and was always welcome to the job of climbing up on the roof to clean a chimney.

The scissors grinder made his rounds ringing a bell to announce his arrival. He was an older man carrying a wooden contraption on his back like a folding sawhorse, which would be set up with a foot pedal to turn the grindstone. Women came out of the house to have their knives and scissors sharpened.

Besides these individuals, institutions regularly brought their events. The educational and entertaining Chautauquas included plays put on by traveling actors in tents, minstrel shows in theaters and in tents, religious-revival tent meetings and other forms of entertainment.

A circus coming was an event anticipated for many weeks. Young people were up early in the morning to wait at the railroad tracks for the circus train. They watched the unloading, the setting up of the tents and hoped to get a job installing seats, feeding animals or taking part in the parade wearing the large paper-mache clown heads all in order to get a free ticket to the afternoon show.

by Everett Lambert (1909-1984)

Almost everyone in town walked down to Grand Avenue to watch the noon free parade of band and animal wagons pulled by several teams of matched show horses.

Medicine shows were another form of entertainment that drew large crowds. Around the 4th of July, the shows set up for a two-week stand at empty lots on 8th Street South, selling tonics, tapeworm medicine and Indian snake oil.

A platform about six feet high was set up in front of a tent where the bottles were filled. Entertainment of some sort would precede the entrance of the spellbinding "pitch man." An Indian in full warbonnet dress, standing with his arms folded, was part of the snake-oil show.

The salesmen were terrific and made the audience feel miserable all over as they described symptoms that could be cured only by the tonics. The potency of the snake oil was demonstrated by holding up a piece of thick shoe leather and noting the short time it took for the oil to penetrate.

Best of all was the tapeworm. The showman would with much fast talking hold jars containing five- and six-foot-long worms taken from people who had actually used the formula. At the climax of the show, out came the bottles for sale and many onlookers held up dollar bills to buy from the stage or purchased from assistants walking through the crowd with trays of bottles.

More homely visitors came in the form of nearby farmers who peddled produce door to door. They were usually friendly and chatted with the women who had come out to their wagons to examine vegetables. Some of them used an effective, but negative, sales pitch as they hawked their wares? "Ya don't wanna buy any potatoes, do ya?!"



Rita Brockman

Everett Lambert

Not only did gypsies, tramps and medicine shows come to town; so did the traveling photographer and his patient white mule.

A Winter Day

The boy jumps out of bed into a cold room, pulls on long underwear and enough over it to be decent and rushes down to the red-hot kitchen stove to finish dressing.

Because everyone walked, either to work or to school, heavy clothing was a necessity. Boys wore short pants and black-ribbed knit stockings that extended above the knee. The curse of the winter underwear beneath was that the bottom of the legs stretched out and the ends had to be folded over just above the shoe tops. In mild weather, buttonhook shoes with rubbers were worn. Cold days called for leather knee boots with rawhide laces or for bootpacks, which had solid rubber bottoms with leather uppers and were pulled over several pairs of socks. The disadvantage of the bootpacks was that the solid rubber offered no ventilation and the wearers soon learned not to stand still long enough for the moisture built up inside to freeze. Nearly everyone owned a winter scarf wrapped around the neck and pulled up to cover the nose in cold weather. And mittens, often with a set of gloves inside. Headwear for the boys was a knitted stocking cap. Zippers had yet to come into use and there usually was a button somewhere on the heavy coat ready to fall off or already gone.

When the cold weather started, those who owned automobiles set them up on blocks, removed tires and batteries and drained the radiators. Roads were never plowed. Traffic consisted of horse-drawn cutters or the heavier farm and freight sleighs. Since everyone

was walking, neighbors saw each other nearly every day of the year.

When the ice was thick, people crossed the river on the ice, taking a short cut from the west end of the Green Bay railroad bridge to the east end of the Consolidated dam. Often, the pressure of the ice in the large pond caused cracking, with a noise like thunder, sometimes right under the walker's feet.

Despite any transportation difficulties, it was unthinkable to miss a day of school because of bitter cold or deep snow. There were no hot lunches served in the schools and everyone who lived a distance away took their lunches in a Karo syrup pail. The sandwiches defrosted by noon.

In grade school, the boys sat on one side of the room and the girls on the other, a separation that extended onto the playground and into extracurricular activities.

A favorite pastime of the boys was to get up early Saturday morning and walk out of the city to "hop bobs." Bobs were the heavy two-horse sleighs of the farmers coming into town. Later, loaded with sacks of feed and groceries, they would start back to the farms. Then the boys would hop bobs again and ride out of town late in the day, to walk back sometimes with fingers and feet almost frozen.

Hopping bobs was a rather dangerous activity. To fall under the three-inch-wide runners would have resulted in serious injury. A few farmers did object to the practice and the kids soon knew the mean ones who would swear and use a whip on those trying to hop a ride. A trick soon learned was never to jump off a high place or a moving sled because the shock of landing with cold feet was rather painful.

It was regarded as a special favor when a teamster would allow the boys to help hitch or unhitch a team. Sometimes when a load of firewood was being delivered, it was also allowed to help unload. A generous farmer might even pay a dime for this favor.

by Everett Lambert

Winters seemed long and cold with plenty of snow. All the kids owned sleds and got a lot of use from them. Snow slides were made by shoveling to make a slanting pile about 20 feet long and eight feet high. Water was splashed on the surface to make an icy runway.

Ice skating lasted all winter. A creek on Bonow Avenue, a pond near the old Stange and Ellis box factory and the river itself were popular skating places.

Skis were often fashioned from old wooden barrel staves with a piece of leather nailed at the center to fit over the shoes. It was a crude and ineffective introduction to the sport.

Another winter sport was "shinney," a distant relative of hockey.

The woods were searched for a branch with a heavy curved end. This served as a stick. The puck was a tin can or an old softball frozen stiff. Played in the street, the game's object was to get the puck across a designated line. The only rule was not to get to the left of the puck. Then it was legal to be whacked across the legs with an opponent's stick.

After a day in the cold, the boy came into a house warmed by a coal stove in the front room and a cook stove, fueled by wood, in the kitchen. If it were Saturday night, he would face the social necessity of a bath, with water heated on top of the stove. The lucky ones got to use it first.

At bedtime, smaller children were taken upstairs by the light of a kerosene lamp and tucked into bed. The boy stayed as still as possible to avoid contact with the cold sheets. The only heat came through a small register in the floor. Then the illumination was removed and the night spent in nearly total darkness.

So the boy lies in the slowly warming bed. Beyond the walls that separate him from a cold February night, he can hear the slow exhaust beats, about one per second, as the engineer starts a heavy freight headed out of town, fighting to get traction on icy rails. Then, suddenly, about 10 very rapid beats as it "blows" when the drivers slip and spin . . . a pause . . . then again the slow beats gradually increasing in tempo as the train gains speed. The beat gradually dies out. The whistle blowing at some crossing far in the distance is the last sound heard.



never

never
to
hear
the
mallet
crack!
never
to
finish
the
game

Photographs by Eugene Claflin



starting

starting
the
last
generation

Anton F. Billmeyer, Mary Ann Jeffrey Billmeyer, Anna Billmeyer Wipfli, Louis Wipfli, Teresa Daly Keenan, Daniel Keenan, Margaret Keenan Gagen, Rosa Billmeyer Fischer, Joseph Fischer, unidentified children (near Pittsville).

doll

do we stare?
doll don't care
do we sigh?
doll don't cry

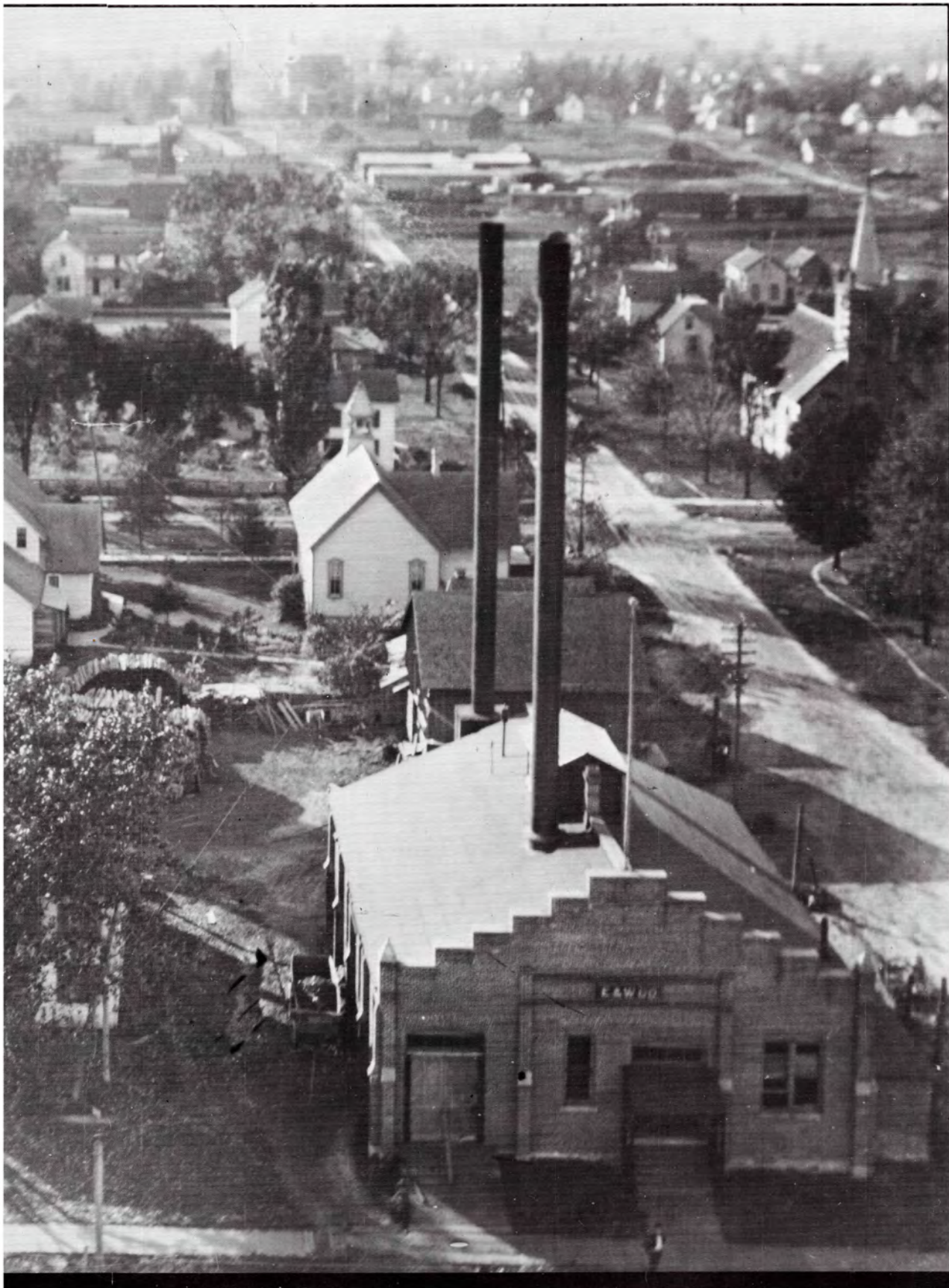
do we dare?
doll don't care
do we die?
doll don't cry

do we dare?
do we die?
doll don't care
doll don't cry





HOME



TOWN



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In Bean Time

So little time
and so many beans
expanding
in the night
to frighten
children
and amuse
women.
Yet the best
and biggest
stay crisp
a short while.
One happy season,
the freeze,
and all is mush.



Eugene Claflin, c. 1910

Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune

1/7	Grand Avenue	6/30	Grim
1/14	The Bridge	7/7	Betty Boop
1/21	Pittsville	7/14	The Wakely House
1/28	Woolworth's	7/21	Point Basse
2/4	A Winter Day	8/11	Summer Visitors
2/11	Lincoln's Head	8/18	McCutcheon
2/18	Babcock	8/25	Photos by Claflin
2/25	Wood County Telephone	9/1	Unrighteousness
3/3	Grand Rapids	9/8	Shanagolden
3/10	The Centralia Dam	9/15	Nixon
3/17	Brave Boys	9/22	T.E. Nash
3/24	Milk Strike	9/29	Immanuel Lutheran
3/31	King of Fools	10/6	Restoring the Mansion
4/7	River City CCXXV	10/13	Plumed Knights
4/14	Vesper	10/20	Saratoga
4/21	Arpin	10/27	The Lost Marsh
4/28	Arpin	11/3	Hog Island
5/5	Architecture	11/10	Nekoosa
5/12	Skunk Hill	11/17	Nekoosa
5/19	Skunk Hill	11/24	Swallow Rock
5/26	Ottumwa	12/1	Nekoosa
6/2	D-Day	12/8	Grand Rapids Street Railroad
6/9	John Edwards High	12/22	Granma
6/23	Architecture	12/29	Rudolph

1984



John Daly's raftsmen (1888)

Front row: Miles Daly, Corrigan, John Starr, Jim Blow.
Second row: Charles Oestrich, Jim Powers, Frank Brown,
W.G. Gardner, Webster. Standing: Ed Welch, Levi Ripley,
Nels Dashneau, Jim Lynch, (bewhiskered John Daly), Jim
Aljoe, John Day, William Starr. Back row: Jim Brown, Pete
Garseau and Joe Short. The remaining men are unidentified.

Dave Engel



River City Memoirs

\$13.95