Cover by Prairie Kramer; Havitz uniform by William Parker, p. 2-3; Bloodstone by J. Johannes, 4-15; Courage by Ee Khang, 8; Neitzel by Renae Behnke, 11; Refuge by Jamie Hamann, 12-14; Bike Shop by Angelica Engel, 15; baseball photo, 16-17; Polio by Marge Hamm, 2-22; Polio by UD, 23; Moe Hill, 18-19; L.P. Powers, 24; Powers Bluff, 25; Skunk Hill, 26-27; Wendell Nelson by Justin Isherwood, 28-29; Wendell Nelson by UD, 30-31; O'Keefe-Kramer, 32.

Display commemorates groundbreaking Marine

By William Parker

Military reenactor and SWCHC-Museum volunteer

Through our daily lives, we may see people in the present but not know their past. I knew my friend, Kathi Havitz, owns and operates Chat-R-Box Restaurant and Catering in Kellner, Wis. I learned she was also on the front lines of change in the military.

When Kathi, a graduate of Lincoln High School, Wis. Rapids, reported to Parris Island, S.C., for basic training, Feb. 9, 1981, she was among the first female Marine recruits to be issued rifles and receive individual combat training. "Pvt." Havitz graduated from boot camp in April 1981 in the Honor Platoon with a Meritorious Promotion to Private First Class for being strongest in her battalion.

PFC Havitz's first job after basic training was in General Administration for the Fleet Marine Force Pacific in Okinawa, Japan. After five months, she was the only woman deployed to South Korea for Operation Team Spirit 82 with Combat Service Support Detachment 31.

In Jencheon, South Korea, by then "Lance Corporal" Havitz arrived with the advance party to build the camp, setting up tents, digging ditches, installing latrines and building showers in preparation for joint training with South Korea's military. The only American woman on site for her first seven weeks, Havitz drove a bulk fuel truck and composed the unit's correspondence on a 1950s typewriter.

In the Jencheon operation, 13 people died from accidents. One person froze to death.

Havitz spent the rest of her career with Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, based in Norfolk. Va., where she was a correspondence clerk, distributing teletype messages from the Atlantic Fleet, proofing responses and typing them up on the Marine Corps' first computer, one that, in 1983, filled a large room.

During the Beirut bombing recovery, Havitz was assigned the task of gathering up the names of the Marines killed and contacting the closest Marine, normally a recruiter, who would notify the families of the fallen. She also participated in the Grenada Operation.

From Kathi's album, 1982, South Korea

Continually picking up extra duty and performing her duties beyond expectations, Havitz was awarded a Navy Achievement Medal for her time with G-3, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic. "Sergeant" Havitz ended her enlistment in 1987.

As a civilian, she became a service manager for an electronics company for 14 years, living coast to coast before returning to the Wisconsin Rapids area. Havitz actively supports VFW Post 2534 and the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Campaign.

With her experience in South Korea, she became a Life Member of VFW Post 2534 in Wisconsin Rapids.

On Exhibit

For the next two seasons, Kathleen Havitz' 1980s dress uniform will be on display in the Veterans Wing on the second floor of the South Wood County Historical Museum.

Right: "Can do" Marine receiving medal in 1983

Left: 2020 award from Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce for best food truck vendor

Havitz, front: basic training, first time women were issued rifles

Bloodstone

A History of Student Creativity

By Jeffrey Johannes

A bloodstone is a stone consisting of green chalcedony (a form of quartz) sprinkled with red spots, which are said to resemble blood. Its red and green colors are complementary, and each is beautiful alone. Yet, when they appear together in the bloodstone, these separate colors enrich each other. This is also true of the works in Bloodstone.

So begins the introduction to Lincoln High School's student art and literary publication, *Bloodstone*. The inclusion of this explanation was part of the evolution the magazine went through during the 30 years I was its faculty art advisor. As *Bloodstone* matured, volume numbers, dates, and "Lincoln High School" were included on the cover. A table of contents and a colophon were added.

Bloodstone staff, Bethany Graf, Megan Raabe, Ingrid Bender, and Ee Nang Khang, 2002

These additions were required for competition and *Bloodstone* consistently won national recognition from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association and the National Council of Teachers of English. The success was so well-known the advisors were asked to present a session at the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English conference on how to produce an award-winning journal.

The quality of paper also improved with donations from Fey Publishing, Wisconsin Rapids. A decade or so into publication, computer programs created dazzling graphics and, in 2003, *Bloodstone* was changed from a 6" x 8.5" format to 8.5" x 11", which allowed for more creativity during layout.

At Lincoln High School during the 1977-78 school year, the arts were in full swing, making it an exciting time to be an art teacher. The previous fall, my students had helped artist Sachio Yamashita paint a cranberry mural on the Daly Building (See February 2021 *Artifacts*) and 1978 was the year of Lincoln's Festival of the Arts, which occurred every other spring.

Art Day, which incorporated Ag Day, saw the LHS field house filled with artists highlighting Youth Art Month. A *Tribune* photographer captured one artist demonstrating on a loom and another spinning raw wool into yarn as an audience of Head Start students watched in awe. The Badger Bloodmobile made an appearance in April, encouraging staff and student donations. The music department presented orchestra, symphony band, and choir performances all spring. The A Cappella choir performed "Schubert's Mass in G Minor" at an SS Peter & Paul Church service in Latin! The music department hosted a community dance at West Junior High and the play "Blithe Spirit" was performed in the school's auditorium.

There was a spelldown, a sewing and modeling contest, a pentathlon competition and a lecture: "Value of the Fine Arts in Modern Society" by UWSP philosophy department chairman, Dr. John Zawadsky. Dr. Robert P. Dickey, University of Missouri, was the poet in residence, sharing his poetry in the classroom and reading at McMillan Memorial Library. An all-school assembly featured the Mountain Music Makers. The Lincoln High Senior Art Student Show was on its way to becoming a May fixture at McMillan.

Amidst all this fanfare and artistic hoopla, one event may have been almost unnoticed. The first issue of *Bloodstone* was published in conjunction with Lincoln's Festival of the Arts.

The first faculty co-editors, Bob Slaby, Duane Clark and I, had a model in its short-lived precursor, the *Ruby Insulator,* a student art and literary journal published during the 1972 and 1974 Festivals of the Arts. We expanded the journal to incorporate more student work, edited and laid out the contributions, and sent it to Don Kryshak's Action Printing until 1983 when the Print Shop took over. Little did we know that *Bloodstone* would become an institution at Lincoln High School, publishing the works of close to 2,000 young writers and artists.

The first co-editors of *Bloodstone*, Robert Slaby, Duane Clark, and Jeffrey Johannes (standing) in 1978 (photo by Wayne Martin)

Although *Bloodstone* initially contained works by faculty members, including Fred Ginocchio, Joan McCumber Johannes, Bonnie Duchac, Gary Rosencrans, Duane Clark and yours truly, it soon became a showcase dedicated to student creativity exclusively.

After Clark moved to Colorado, the faculty editors expanded to include at various times Cathy Call Lobner, Joan McCumber Johannes, Kurt Jensen and Nicole Reetz from the English Department and Sherry Zei and Mark Larson from the Art Department. In 1986, we started selecting students as editors, and the faculty editors took on the role of advisors.

Some of the biggest contributions by an advisor came from Larson. There were no computers in the early years, so the poetry and prose were typed on typewriters. Larson's Advanced Photography class developed negatives and made prints, which were submitted to the The Print Shop with the poetry and prose. Larson was also instrumental in creating a web page for *Bloodstone* in 1996. By the mid 1990s, his graphic editor students created the layout in house, then delivered the results to The Print Shop on discs.

Allison Kester, one of two writing editors for the 1991 volume, told reporter Mark Scarborough in a *Daily Tribune* interview, "*Bloodstone* has grown from a typewritten manuscript accompanied by poorly reproduced photographs and art work to a computer-designed, high-contrast publication."

Timothy Laatsch, LHS principal (1978-91), told Scarborough, "We're fortunate to have talents that are unbridled. Talent comes out of their pores. What ideas they have. Just look at these ideas. They're fantastic!"

This sentiment was echoed recently by Gus Mancuso, LHS principal (1991-08), who said, "Each student has a gift, and *Bloodstone* and the Visual Arts gave students a chance to achieve excellence that was measured beyond a test score. It was especially satisfying when students who normally were not in the school 'spotlight' received praise, recognition, and felt connected to the culture of Lincoln High School."

Many of these students have their *Bloodstone* work hanging in the stairwells, offices, and classrooms as part of Lincoln's permanent art collection, including the original drawing on the cover of the first issue, "Friends" by Ngyuen Vinh Hoang, on display in the foyer of the Performing Arts Center.

Other talented students have positive memories. Darlene Brunzel commented, "It was a privilege to be poetry editor in the late 80s. The talent was truly amazing." Cheryl S. Prusynski Theisen remembers that having work in *Bloodstone* made her feel validated and more confident. Lisa Knuth Mancl wrote, "I felt very special." Stephanie Dobos Pierce remarked, "I felt honored." Linda Randrup, whose son's drawing was selected for the 1985 cover, added, "So proud of our son Travis; it was a big deal for us!"

"Friends" by Nguyen Vinh Hoang, first *Bloodstone* cover 1978

Some students who responded to my query said they had majored in art and made careers based on their talent.

Adam Andreasen of Andreasen Arts LLC in Port Edwards said, "It was a huge honor to a part of the history of *Bloodstone*!" Travis Janssen, Associate Professor & Head of Printmaking at Southern Illinois University, reflected, "The acknowledgment was also encouragement to continue creating." Bryan Alft, the 1991 art editor, recently emailed that, "It hinted at possibilities that I explored throughout my college years and beyond. I went on to publish zines, records, posters, etc. *Bloodstone* was my first opportunity to help publish something that I could hold in my hands. That seems like a pretty important thing and an amazing opportunity to have when you are a kid in high school."

I also learned that *Bloodstone* was multi-generational.

Julie O'Keefe Kramer called my attention to the fact that she had a painting in the 1980 version and 30 years later her daughter's work was featured on the cover. Sue Kuechle Becker, who had art work in the first *Bloodstone*, said, "I still have copies and find it fun to share with my grand babies." Decades after graduation, former students or their family members would contact my wife or me to get replacement copies so they could show their children their work in print or have a memory of someone they had since lost. In retirement, I still get these calls, although copies are no longer available, so instead of giving them copies I let them know that complete sets, 1978-2008, are at the South Wood County Historical Museum and McMillan library.

A *Bloodstone* reading by creative writing students became an annual feature in the McMillan Library Coffeehouse series. The *Bloodstone* Dedication and Art Show Reception, at which students were recognized and received their copies was sponsored by the Arts Council of South Wood County and attended by over 200 teachers, parents and students every spring. Mancuso recently recalled that, "Attending the Bloodstone Awards night, regularly visiting art classrooms, and seeing what students accomplished were some of my most gratifying moments as principal." Since the *Bloodstone* Dedication was included in the already existing Arts Award Presentation, for which the Arts Council was giving awards for art and photography, the need for literary awards was met by the Riverwood Round Table, a writing group begun by Edith Nash.

I retired in 2008 but *Bloodstone* is alive and well. Although the current school budget does not allow giving a copy to each participant, students and the public can purchase a digital or hard copy at this link — https://www.magcloud.com/browse/issue/1797492. With orders of a hard copy, the digital copy is free.

"Spire" by Chris Buras 1988
Karberg sculpture LHS

"The Sky's the Limit" by Phil Arendt 1988
Bender Flatiron Building, East Side

"My Life" by James Allen 1989
Wood County Courthouse

"A Walk by the Riverside" by Harold Engelbright 1989

West Grand Avenue

Courage

Mom smiles her clown smile as she
bellies down on the laboratory table.
I stand behind paper-thin curtains held by
rings as big as earrings that superstars wear.

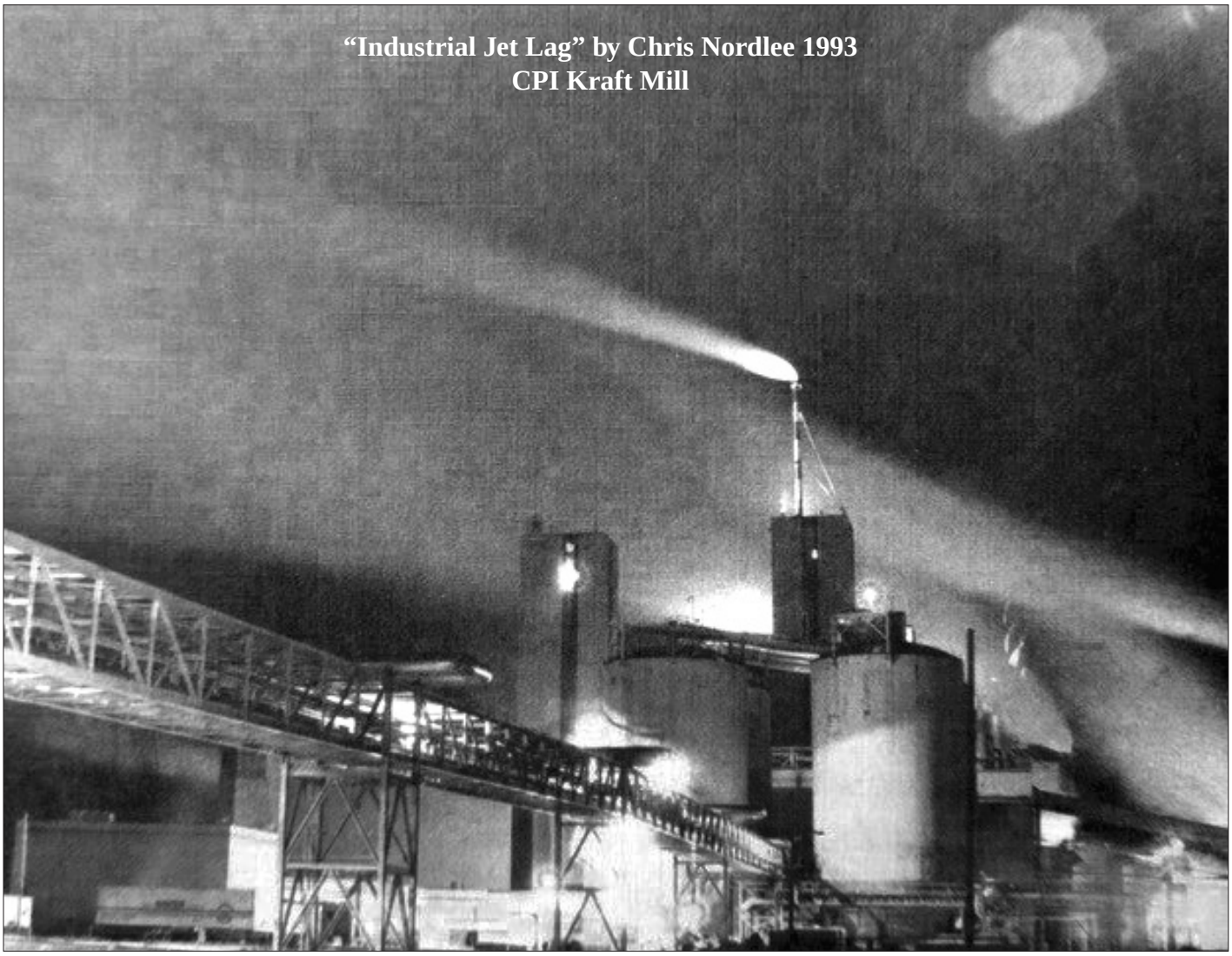
He walks into the room, brings with him
the smell of cleanness that only exists here.
"Now, let's start," he says casually.
My ten-year-old fingers intertwine,
praying for a quick release as a finger-length
needle spits into the air, then inserts into Mom.

As he closes the door, he says, "Next week,
same time?" I reach to touch her face with
stubby fingers and whisper. "Will you die?"

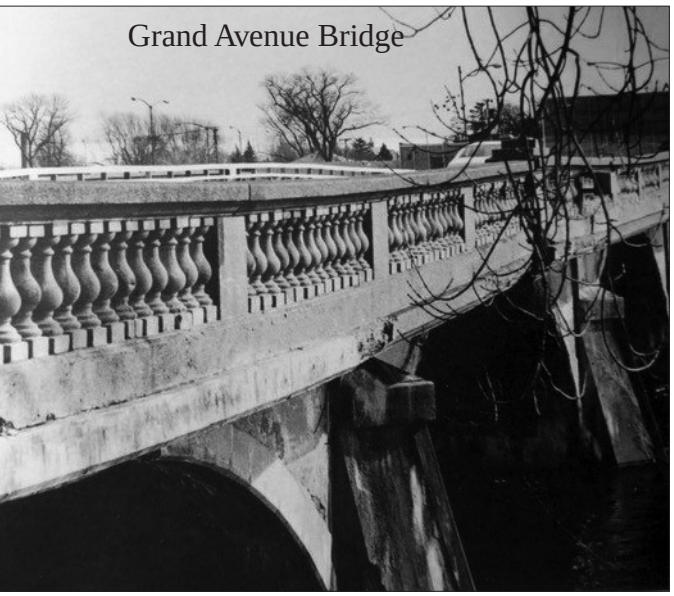
She smiles like a ninety-nine year old
grandmother, weak, almost lifeless,
and whispers back, "Never in the heart."

Ee Nang Khang (also an editor)
2002 *Bloodstone*

"Too Much of Nothing" by Jim A. Johnson 1983
Rapids Mall

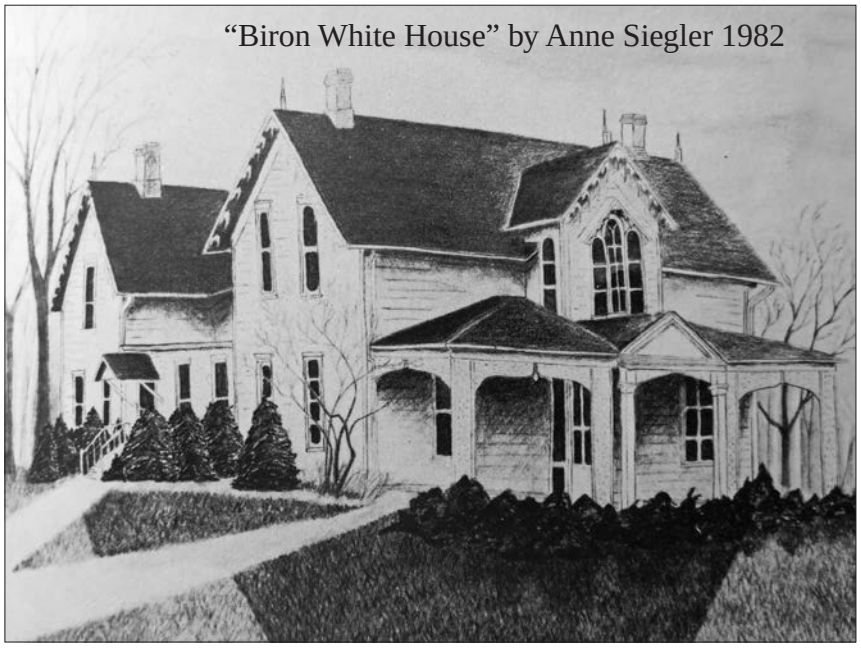


“Industrial Jet Lag” by Chris Nordlee 1993
CPI Kraft Mill



Grand Avenue Bridge

“Down in History” by Loni Weigel 1986



“Biron White House” by Anne Siegler 1982

"The Artifact" by Gary Grosklaus 1985
SWCHC Museum

"The Rapids"
by
Dale Jirschele
1980

Then
Baker
Wilkinson
Mortuary,
right

weekend photo

Water distorts the look of Oscar Neitzel's body as he floats in the Lincoln High School pool Tuesday. Neitzel, 417 Strodman Ave., was among senior citizens and handicapped people participating in the Fun Fest for the Young at Heart. The event featured free health screening and information, lunch and entertainment. (Tribune photo by Dave Engel)

THE DAILY TRIBUNE

Saturday, June 28, 1980 Section 2 Page 1

Oscar Neitzel: Wisconsin Rapids Native

By Renae Behnke

The history of Wisconsin Rapids is quite an interesting story I recently found out. Being an Indiana native, I never knew how exciting this town was until I talked to Oscar Neitzel. Oscar, my next-door neighbor, has been in Wisconsin Rapids since his birth in 1914. From Oscar's memories I learned a lot about progress, play, and work in Wisconsin Rapids many years ago.

Oscar and I live on a street that today would be considered in town, but back in 1914 our part of town was "out in nowhere." Today there's a hospital two miles away; in 1914 Oscar was born in a white clapboard house down at the end of the street. Our street was just about the only one around in these parts then. In fact, when electricity became available, our street was too far away to receive it. So, Oscar's father said they would cut the poles from pine trees on their property by what is now Nepco Lake. When his father told the electrician that, he was quite happy to string the wires. Even so, Oscar's house had only one plug on the front wall and one light on the front room ceiling. He remembered that was a major deal to them because it became so much easier to do their homework by a bright light instead of a tiny kerosene lamp. Oscar also recalled that although they had electricity, they really didn't have anything to plug in. They didn't have a radio until about 1928, which led to the question of whatever did they do for fun in Wisconsin Rapids?

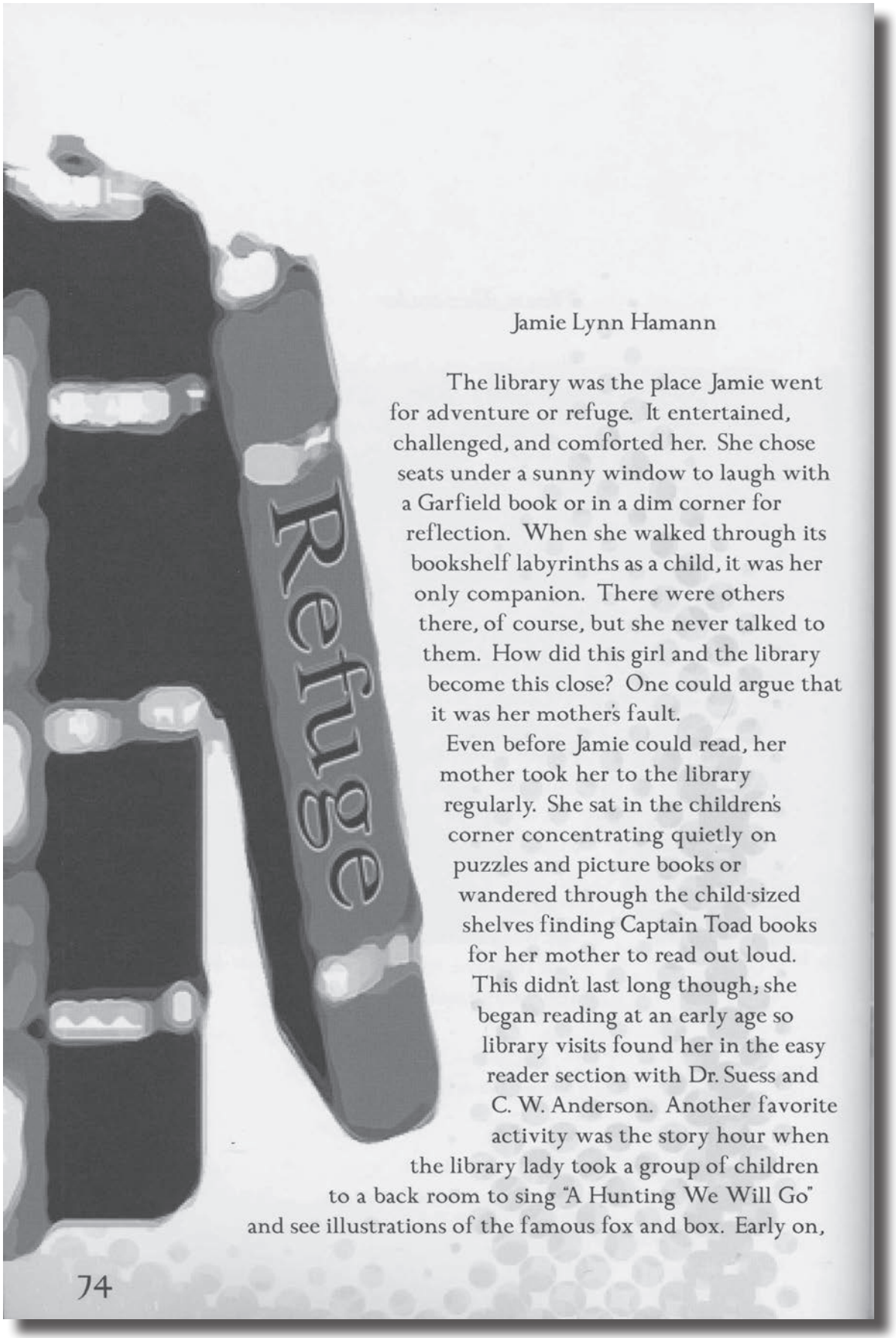
There was much more snow around than today, and seeing as how Wisconsin is a winter state, the things they loved to do were cold weather related. Late November always brought the freeze to Rapids. Oscar said that was a fun time because then they could ice-skate. Ice-skating on the river, being their favorite activity, was what they did with most of their free time. Back then, the river was solid all through town so they would start at where the Riverview Expressway Bridge is and usually skate past the Grand Avenue Bridge. The winter also brought snow, lots of snow. The hill behind our houses became a great hill to fly down. Then, the expressway hadn't even been dreamed of, so skiing all around there was quite feasible. Skiing to school was another thing they enjoyed doing. Oscar knew a kind, older woman who owned a huge abandoned barn which was on their way to school. They would hide their skis in the barn during school, and after school race to see who could make it home fastest. The winters also brought about a problem with Oscar's transportation. In 1930 he bought his first Chevy. It had a rumble seat. Yet, he couldn't even drive it since there were no plows to clear the roads. He recalls that even though deep snow was fun to play in, it made working a little difficult.

The biggest complaints about working during Wisconsin Rapids winters, he recalls, came from the mailman. When the snows came, the mailman put long skis on the front of his model T and big tractor when winter came around. His father's land (now by Nepco Lake) was a good place for Oscar to get his lumber. His father and he frequently felled logs which Oscar carved into doll houses, carvings, figures, or just anything his hands felt like creating. To this day, each fall and winter, you can find Oscar out in his workshop tinkering away at what he loves most.

Oscar told me many times that he had a happy life growing up and living in Wisconsin Rapids. He has seen many changes take place in town during his 75 years. So many memories have been put away on a shelf in his mind just waiting for someone to reach up and take them down. I consider myself lucky to have been one of those people who reached up to take a peek at Oscar's fond memories.

In *Bloodstone* 1989

Bloodstone 2002



Jamie Lynn Hamann

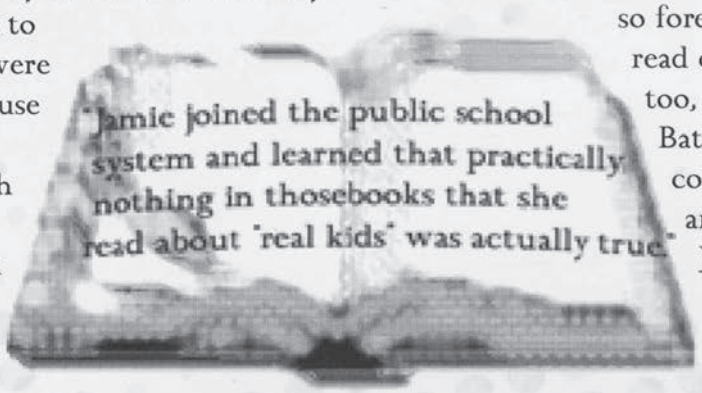
The library was the place Jamie went for adventure or refuge. It entertained, challenged, and comforted her. She chose seats under a sunny window to laugh with a Garfield book or in a dim corner for reflection. When she walked through its bookshelf labyrinths as a child, it was her only companion. There were others there, of course, but she never talked to them. How did this girl and the library become this close? One could argue that it was her mother's fault.

Even before Jamie could read, her mother took her to the library regularly. She sat in the children's corner concentrating quietly on puzzles and picture books or wandered through the child-sized shelves finding Captain Toad books for her mother to read out loud. This didn't last long though; she began reading at an early age so library visits found her in the easy reader section with Dr. Suess and C. W. Anderson. Another favorite activity was the story hour when the library lady took a group of children to a back room to sing "A Hunting We Will Go" and see illustrations of the famous fox and box. Early on,

74

the library was associated with safety, quiet, and fun. She knew nothing bad could ever happen to her in a place like the library.

A few years later, in the early grades, visits to the library were heaven because Jamie could read so much better than before. Each visit resulted in a pile of books, and she read every one. She went in anticipation of a new journey with the subjects she liked best: horses, dogs, and faraway places. The library never disappointed her. It imparted stories such as Stone Fox, the "American Girls" Series, Saddle Club Books, and Nancy Drew. Jamie spent hours taking books off shelves just to admire them, read the teasers and then put them back. There were too many wonderful stories in the building to waste time with ones she wasn't sure she would like.



Starting around fifth grade, Jamie found herself drawn to the stories about "real people," still fiction but about kids in middle school and high school. She was home-schooled so "real school" and "real life" always seemed a mystery. In an attempt to understand, she read hundreds of Sweet Valley Twins and Baby-Sitters Club books. Clothes, gossip, shopping, and classes fascinated her because they seemed so foreign. She read other things too, such as Batman Comic collections and The Witch of Blackbird Pond. Visits to the library were mostly for fun at this stage. She didn't bother to count the books she used to research the history projects her mother assigned.

In eighth grade the fiction sign hanging over a section of bookshelves in the library took on new meaning. Jamie joined the public school system and learned that practically nothing in those books that she read about "real kids" was actually true. The difference between the fiction section and the nonfiction became much clearer. Life seemed crazy at West Junior High. Adapting to the bells was especially difficult; they waited until she was completely absorbed in work to ring so they could make her jump a mile. The seemingly

constant rush and clamor of junior high and then high school pushed her library visits into a different phase. In this part of her life, she treasured each silent second she was there, but she didn't have a lot of time anymore. It got so some days she only went as far as the desk to pick up the books she had on hold. When she could spend an extended period of time, however, she found she loved to find a book and relax in an isolated corner. Some days it was with a book of fashion design to look at pictures. Other days, spent with Edgar Allan Poe, made her skin crawl. Still other visits she escaped with The Green Rider into a world of fantasy. The library became a place for solitude, a place for reflection after a day of frantic scrambling.

Down through the years the library changed in Jamie's eyes. It began as a child's fantasy world, changed to a storehouse of information with stories to absorb as fast as possible, and finally became a paradise escape from the world.

Reap & Sow Corbin King

76

2007

I Sold the Bike Shop, Orville

The insistent sky
sears my liver and scalds my skin.
I climb the tree-covered ridge
without using my feeble legs,
writhing in leaves and sticks
and forest dirt,
knocking moss off tree trunks
as I struggle to hide from the sky.

I never wish to leave
the breathing plants,
the wise leaves,
the inhabitants of the ground.
I cling to tree trunks
and shudder under ferns;
I deny my fear of the sky.

I shut my eyes and then slide,
pulled down to the path
by my skeptical soul.
Doubt drags me out of
the comforting green-gray
of complacence.
In the field, far from the forest,
I tie my fingers to the ground with grass
and play among personable plants
that, with intimate whispers,
compel me to stay.

But the ants of ambition
gnaw my grassy bonds.
Vision's eagles pluck me off the ground
and drop me from miles high.
In cloudy despondency, I plummet and weep,
leaving a trail of tears through the sky.

But to my surprise, wings unfold.
I did not know I had wings;
the fearful plants had hidden them from me.
Now, wind whispers through my feathers
and leaves out nothing.

by Angelica Engel

17

"Drip Drop" by Kristal Brown

Angelica, *Bloodstone* 2007 creative writing editor, is a contributor to *Artifacts.*

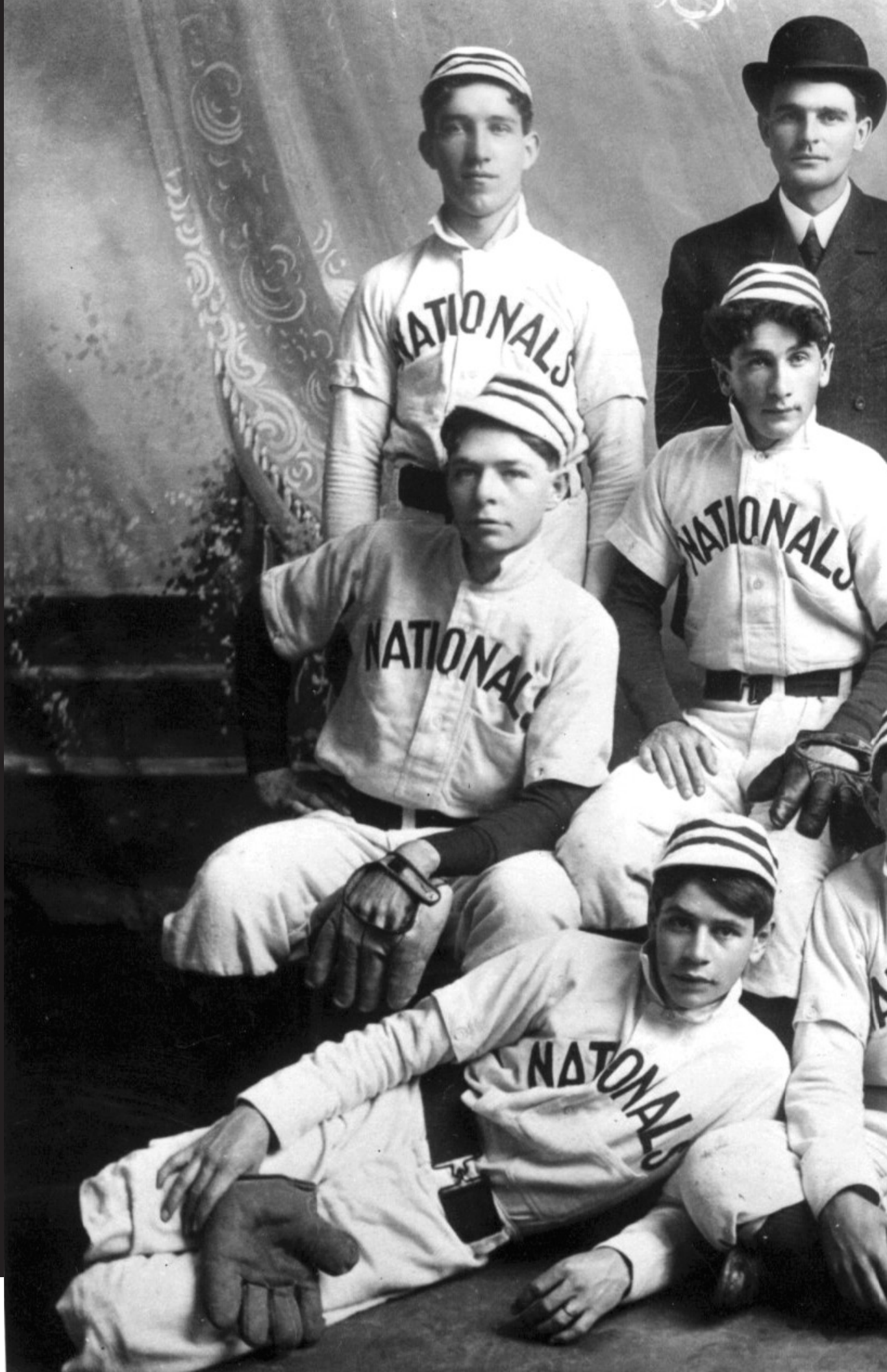


Photo from Centennial Edition of *Daily Tribune,* 1956

In July 1904, the Grand Rapids team, among many local and state teams, hosted and lost to the semi-pro Chicago Unions, "the colored gentry."

1904
Grand Rapids
"iron man"
baseball

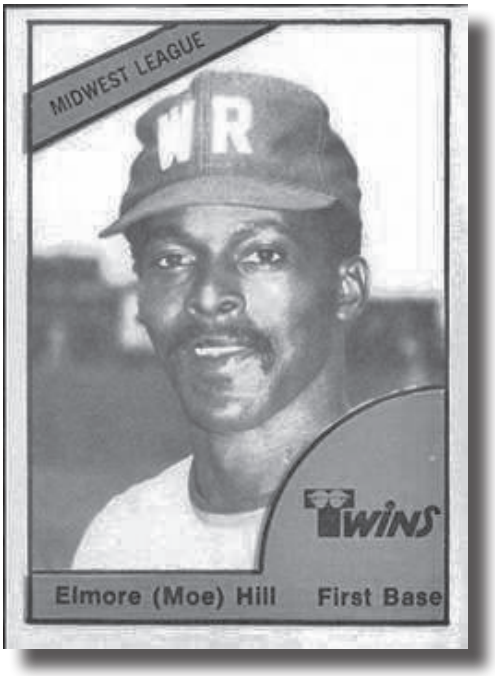
L to R
top row
Carl Fahrner,
Art Rintelman,
manager,
George Smith,
Neil Brennan
Middle: Pat
Starr,
Bert Brennan,
Wilbur
Duesberg,
George
Odegard
Front:
Ed Harding,
George
Fahrner,
Wilbur
McCarthy

Uncle Dave

The Moe Hill Decade

As old-time Rapids baseball fans know, Elmore "Moe" Hill was a crowd favorite on the Wisconsin Rapids Twins of the Midwest League.

Originally, in 1965, with Appleton's Fox Cities Foxes of the Baltimore Orioles organization, Hill was released and signed to the Minnesota Twins, finding himself on the Wisconsin Rapids "farm" team with expectations of playing major league baseball somewhere else soon.

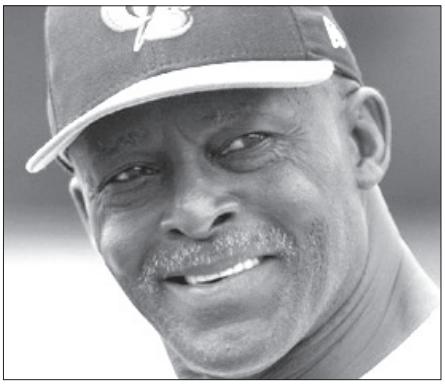


By 1974, Hill was 27 and still in Rapids, already an old guy for minor league class A ball but still a high-performing hitter who was awarded the first Triple Crown in league history with a .339 average, 32 home runs and 113 RBIs.

He won four straight home run titles from 1974 to 1977.

He was league leader in games played (969), home runs (201) and RBIs (720). *Baseball America* magazine in 1999 voted him "Best Midwest League player ever."

Returning to the scene, Hill appeared at a June 7, 2010, Wisconsin Rapids Rafters home game at Witter Field to have his number 24 retired.



Somewhere in the SWCH-Museum is a photo of Moe Hill autographed to Uncle Dave dating to a 2010 Rafters game attended with *Tribune* editor Allen Hicks.

Team publicity called him a legend.

"A Midwest League star will never shine so bright, or so long, as Moe Hill did during his stay in Wisconsin Rapids from 1971 to 1978. He hit 194 homeruns during that span."

After Hill's playing career ended, he spent the next 32 years as a coach in the Royals, Orioles, Seattle Mariners and Texas Rangers' organizations. He has lived much of his life in Gastonia, N.C.

Why had Moe Hill not been allowed to advance into the major leagues? Some sports commentators believe the Twins did not promote the talented batter.

Perhaps, the now-online story goes, he had not done enough in the minors to be promoted and passed the age when one can be a prospect for the majors.

Maybe it was convoluted racism—bringing his veteran guidance to the team and hoping to build approval for young black players in the lily-white town of Wisconsin Rapids.

Hill said in 2010 that he had done everything asked of him, "then I come back to Wisconsin Rapids and hit 30 home runs and the next year, same thing—hit 30 more home runs. And then 41 home runs. And then the Triple Crown.

"You kind of ask, 'What the hell do you have to do to even get away from here?

"There were reporters I've been interviewed by that have asked if I think it was racism," said Hill.

"Yes I do. You're talking racism, a black man in a predominately white organization. You can do the math on that."

Uncle Dave

Black Lives Matter 1974

But maybe you don't know that, on July 8, 1974, halfway through Moe Hill's Rapids years, came the *Daily Tribune* headline, "Twins player accidentally shot."

The victim was Terry "Bud" Bulling, 21, from California, who was being treated at Riverview hospital for an accidental gunshot wound to his stomach, inflicted by a .22 caliber "gun," presumably a pistol, at a party at the Beach View Resort, Lake Wazeecha, east of Wisconsin Rapids.

Entering the stomach near the belt, the bullet lodged adjacent to Bulling's spinal column.

Bulling was transported to Riverview by players Douglas Clarey and Michael Angione.

He had been shot by fellow Wisconsin Rapids Twins player Elmore "Moe" Hill, who lived at the resort.

Two accounts verified the shooting had been an accident.

A beer party that began about 3:30 p.m. included Twins players and two girls thought to be from Wisconsin Rapids.

One witness said Hill was getting ready to take a shower and had a towel wrapped around him.

Perhaps as a prank, Bulling was tugging at the towel. Hill turned and a gun in his hand accidentally fired, striking Bulling.

In a second version of the incident, Bulling said he was talking to someone else when the gun accidentally fired.

A party-goer said Hill may have had the gun because "baseball players are not liked in Wisconsin Rapids by a large number of the younger male citizens," according to the police report. Especially not liked were black players.

True.

Before I was Uncle Dave, your editor, I was one of those younger male citizen and witnessed the negativity toward black players and black persons. It came as a surprise.

As a grade-schooler, I thought there was no racism, then called "prejudice," in River City.

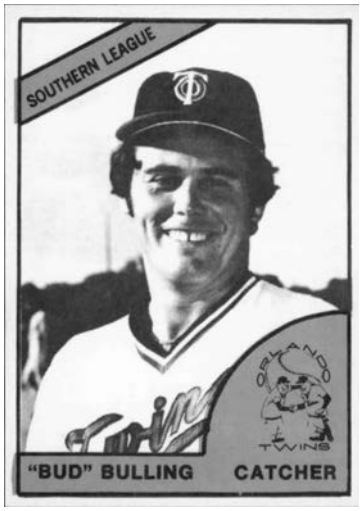
But what did I know? The closest contact I had with an African American came at a Methodist church in Milwaukee when an usher handed my dad and me a bulletin. We had taken a train from Adams to see a Braves game headed by my favorite batter, Hank Aaron.

My parents did not repeat racial slurs and I don't remember anything similar from my relatives or neighbors; but by the time I graduated from high school in 1963, I had heard a lot of prejudice from my classmates.

The tension was palpable when, under the protection of the police station across the street, Twins players ventured into Buzz's Bar.

Racial animosity was only part of the problem.

Local loverboys wanted to keep the girls to themselves and didn't appreciate competition from more interesting players, white or black, from out of town.

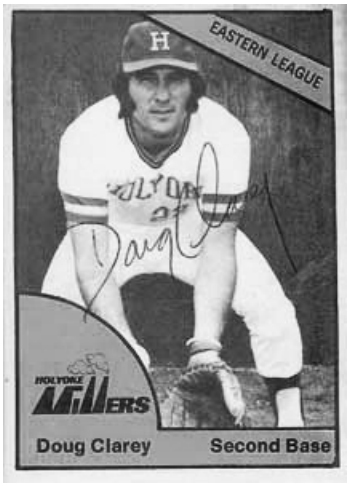


Terry Charles "Bud" Bulling (1952–2014) was a Major League catcher for the Minnesota Twins (1977) and Seattle Mariners (1981-1983).

Bulling died on March 8, 2014.

Like Bulling a Californian, Doug Clarey helped transport Bulling to Riverview Hospital in 1974.

He played one season of Major League ball in 1976.



When Polio Strikes

By Marge Hamm

My mother, Jeanette Romanski, related her experience many times.
Several years ago, I decided to write it up in her words...

Doctor Nelson's diagnosis echoed in my thoughts, "Betty has infantile paralysis and must be placed in the Isolation Ward at St. Joseph's Hospital, in Marshfield, Wisconsin, as soon as possible!"

How I wished my legs were wings that August morning in 1940 as I hurried home from Penney's. I had bought extra pajamas and underwear for Betty to take along to the hospital and was trying to stay calm with the slight hope that maybe it was all a big mistake.

As I entered the front door of our Oak Street home in Wisconsin Rapids, my husband, Leonard, came in the back door. I had contacted him at our meat market and grocery, The Rapids Market, with the devastating news.

It was difficult for us to understand how our healthy little seven-year-old daughter could have been so well the day before and now was burning up with fever and had numbness in her left leg. We weren't familiar with the disease but knew it had been reaching epidemic proportions that summer and was causing permanent crippling.

After reviewing precautions with the babysitter caring for our four other daughters, 13-year-old Jane, 11-year-old Margie, four-year-old Mary Jean and 11-month-old Sally, we carried Betty to our car.

How fortunate that Leonard had bought a new 1939 Packard sedan the year before. The back-seat was spacious enough for Betty to lie down with her head propped on two pillows.

As we began the 35-mile trip to Marshfield, the weather was hot and muggy. We were sure a bad thunderstorm was brewing. It was hard for Leonard to keep his eyes on the road as I sat sideways in the passenger side of the front seat nervously thinking, can't we go a little faster? Betty's cheeks were so rosy-red from the fever, they reminded me of those painted on a Raggedy Ann doll.

At the hospital we were met in the Isolation Ward by a nun in her white habit of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother. In Sister's German accent we were encouraged to hope and pray for the best. We would be permitted to visit Betty in isolation only until other patients were admitted. After that we could visit only through a screened area.

After the kind nun and doctor assured us that Betty was in good hands, it was a tearful departure. As we left the hospital for the parking lot the mid-August skies seemed to be sobbing with us but showed no pity as torrents of rain hit the windshield of the car on our return trip home.

The drive was slow and wearisome as it was difficult to see the road, when suddenly I yelled, "Stop Leonard, there's something in the road!"

It was too late. We had hit the back of an old farm truck that had stalled in the road. A tall, lanky old fellow came to the car, waving a lantern.

"Didn't you see my truck?!" he shouted.

We learned later that he was called "Gooseneck," and his truck had been stalled there for several hours as he hoped for a passing motorist to help him.

Our car was too badly damaged to move. I trudged to a farmhouse up the road to phone the Sheriff's Department and to arrange for a wrecker.

I felt as if I were groping in a dark tunnel as I directed my trembling flashlight towards the distant light in the window of the farmhouse. As my feet were sloshing through the muddy rain-filled ruts of

the road, my mind spun in a whirlwind of thoughts. Just last evening we attended an outdoor movie with the entire family. This morning, the frenzy of Betty's very serious illness and now our new car was badly damaged. How could all of these events be happening in just a few hours?

When the sheriff dropped us off at home in the wee hours of the morning, we prayed for strength to shoulder all of the problems that seemed to be coming in bunches.

Our transportation to Marshfield for the next several weeks was our old panel-truck used for grocery store deliveries. We made daily trips to confer with the doctors for the first week. It was determined that Betty would need to be placed in a body-cast, as there was a curve in her spine. The sisters prayed with Betty and the morning of the planned cast placement it seemed a miracle had happened. Betty's spine had straightened and the cast would not be necessary. How wonderful to have a ray of sunshine in our cloud of misfortune.

Betty's hospitalization lasted four weeks.

For week-end visits our two older daughters, Jane and Margie, sat on wooden milk-crates in the back of the panel-truck. The younger girls, Mary Jean and baby Sally rode up front with Mom and Dad. At the hospital, the nuns pushed Betty out on a second-floor balcony in a wheel-chair. From there she could wave to her sisters and watch Sally take her first steps.

Canada March of Dimes photo

Hamm, continued

With the care of the good sisters, Betty gained strength and became a dear friend of theirs. Her "Buster Brown" haircut had grown long enough to be braided. The nuns tied pretty ribbons on the ends of the braids and carried her to the chapel each day for Mass and prayers. The nuns taught Betty songs, poems and phrases in the German language.

When Betty was well enough to return home, she had paralysis in her left leg and weakness in her spine. The City Nurse came to our house and taught me how to do stretching and strengthening exercises with Betty. The dining-room table was padded and became our therapy bench. Betty's recovery was slow and included many trips to see specialists and to attend special clinics for "polio" patients. She was fitted with a back brace that laced up like a little corset to give extra back support.

I was determined to follow the directions the nurse had instructed me in to increase Betty's strength and flexibility in her leg. When she complained of the pain and discomfort, I encouraged her to keep trying, "We are almost through."

After Christmas, Betty was enrolled in the "Fresh Air Room," at Lowell school, in Wisconsin Rapids, where children with disabilities were given rest periods in the afternoons.

Having a child in the house recuperating from infantile paralysis seemed to cause concern in the neighborhood. Little friends no longer came over to play and a high-school boy who lived nearby pulled his jacket up around his face as he passed our home.

After many months of tender, loving, care Betty regained her strength and was able to walk again, without a brace or limp. She returned to classes at S.S. Peter & Paul parochial school where she had completed first grade before her illness. Conditions in the neighborhood returned to normal.

Our backyard play-gym was in constant use as playmates lined up to take turns on the swings, slide and teeter-totter. In the early evening hours echoes of "Run Sheep Run," and "Tin Can Alley" could be heard, as the neighborhood children played their versions of hide and seek.

The good sisters and doctors at St. Joseph's Hospital in Marshfield, found it hard to believe Betty was a "Complete Cure."

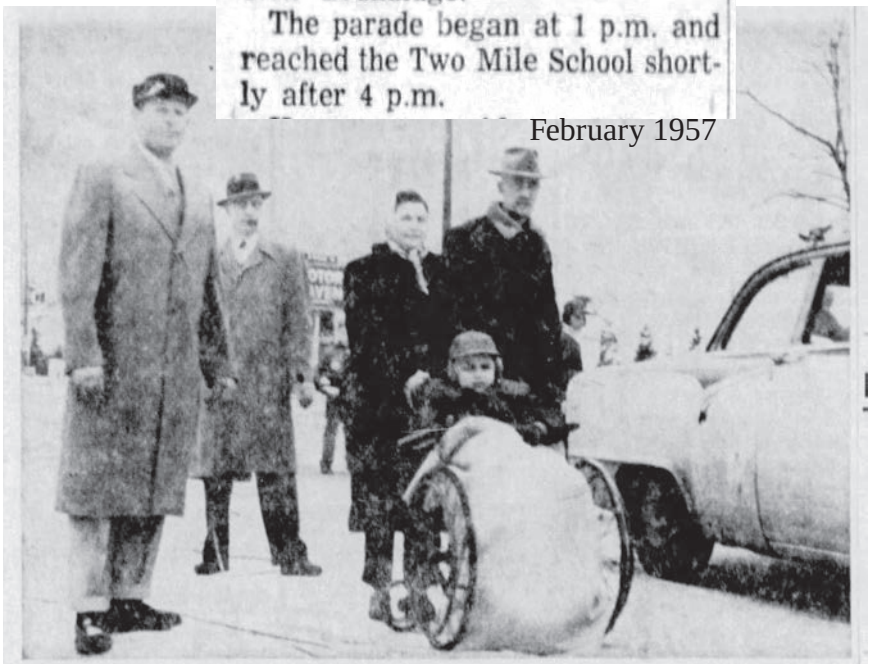
On March 2, 1941, our sixth daughter, Susan, was born. As for the '39 Packard, we were happy it was possible to have it repaired. It saw us through the World War II years and served as our family car until 1950.

Scouts Assist

Five Boy Scouts also did yeoman service, following the speaker car on foot and taking donations from passing motorists. They are David Engel, George Zimmerman, James Mahoney, David Zimmerman and Clen Brundidge.

The parade began at 1 p.m. and reached the Two Mile School shortly after 4 p.m.

February 1957



PARADE FOR DIMES—A parade for dimes in which Freddie Paul was pushed one foot for each dime contributed netted $523.15 Sunday for the Grand Rapids March of Dimes campaign. The picture above shows the parade about a quarter of the way between the starting point at the North Western tracks on 8th St. and the Two Mile School, a distance of about a mile. In the picture from left to right are Walter Braun and Tony Fait, with the tape measure; and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Paul, with their son Freddie, 5, in the wheelchair. Other participating in the event are shown on page 9. (Tribune Staff Photo)

Future editor joins march for dimes

1957

Polio

By Uncle Dave

Obit:

Miss Rachel Ann Engel, age 65, of Waxhaw, North Carolina, passed away on Sunday, October 11, 2015, at Shands Hospital at UF in Gainesville, FL.

Miss Engel was born on March 5, 1950, in McAllen, Texas. She was a daughter of the late Ralph Elmer Engel and Mary Ann Alhiser Engel, Bible translators and missionaries to the Zoque people in Francisco León, Chiapas, Mexico, where Miss Engel spent her childhood and contracted infantile paralysis.

Residents of Francisco León were relocated after their town was buried in the eruption of El Chichón Volcano in 1982.

Miss Engel served as a librarian with Wycliffe Bible Translators for 45 years, primarily in Central America. She retired in July 2015.

She was preceded in death by a sister, Elizabeth Engel.

Survivors include two brothers, Stephen Engel and Maria of Alabama and Philip Engel and Elizabeth of Waxhaw and Shoco Costa of Wilmington, NC; one nephew and three nieces.

Rachel is also survived by a cousin, (Uncle) David Engel of Rudolph, Wis., editor of *Artifacts*.

See *Ghost of Myself* by UD for more.

Uncle Dave

L.P. Powers, Quintessential Rich White Guy

Was park named for him and why?

My first baby step into the muck of central Wisconsin history came 45 years ago, while building the house I'm writing from now. The Seventies were a time for caring about land and I joined in that enthusiasm by trying to write a book about a 40-acre parcel in the northeast quarter of the northeast quarter of Town 28 (Rudolph), condensed in legal terms as "NENE28."

Neighbors called it the "Monson place."

Unable to locate Jack, Jenny, Anders, Regina, George, Viola, etc., in reference books (the go-to sources then), I quickly learned there were movers and shakers and the moved and shaken. The former get the ink.

No photo of L.P. Powers was available so Millard Fillmore was substituted

One of the books dedicated to the movers came in 1895 with a title as inflated as the prose within: *Commemorative Biographical Record of the Upper Wisconsin Counties of Waupaca, Portage, Wood, Marathon, Lincoln, Oneida, Vilas, Langlade and Shawano Containing Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens, and of Many of the Early Settled Families, Illustrated*.

As for the first owner of NENE28, "There was no more progressive, well-known or more highly-esteemed citizen in Wood county than the gentleman whose name introduces this memoir—a man of but few words, quiet and undemonstrative, but of great force of character, and a credit to the profession to which he devoted his life."

The "gentleman" was Levi Parsons Powers. Born in 1828, he had come from Vermont as a young man to the Wisconsin pinery. In 1871, he invested in acreage north of Wisconsin Rapids that included NENE28. Other holdings on the south side of Wisconsin Rapids were later subdivided into little pieces that included my boyhood home.

According to the book with the long title, Powers was the county's first lawyer, one of the first judges, a U.S. marshal, political editor at the *Grand Rapids Tribune*, first mayor of Grand Rapids, city treasurer, state assemblyman and president of the Wisconsin Valley railroad. Of indistinct dogma himself, he started the first Sunday school in town.

"In religion it can not be said that he was an unbeliever. He had no fear of death, but the question of the hereafter he could not solve to his satisfaction. He never tired of studying and pondering upon religious and scientific subjects, and his ever honorable and upright life assures us that if existence is continued beyond the grave he will live in immortality.

"He has left an impress upon this State and her laws that will be seen and felt for many generations, and in the records of the courts has built for himself a monument more splendid and enduring than could have been made by the sculptor, and his memory will be cherished throughout Wood county and Wisconsin while the friends who have known him are still in life."

Court records from 1873 show that Powers, one of the "better citizens," testified to losing an illegal bundle of cash at the Rob Roy saloon of Grand Rapids or Centralia, "having fun with the boys and playing faro," for 11 hours.

Powers' Bluff

Having died in 1888, L.P. Powers is barely a ghost of himself here though his name lives on at Powers Bluff Wood County Park. The hill, according to Robert Rudolph (no relation) in *Wood County Place Names,* is probably dubbed in his honor.

The name, according to Rudolph, was in use as early as 1878. Wood County had assumed ownership of the property on May 8, 1877, because of nonpayment of taxes the previous two years.

At the time, Levi P. Powers was notary public of Wood County and a partner of J. H. Lang in the land agency business. The two had collaborated on an 1861 map. Powers witnessed the appropriate deeds in the 1877 transfer.

Current armchair research has failed to reveal a more substantial connection of Powers and Powers Bluff, though one may exist.

Alta

The only child of L.P. Powers and wife Mary Elizabeth ("Lizzie") was Alta, who taught country school at a logging camp in Rudolph township but had to quit when she came down with typhoid fever.

In 1896, Alta Powers married Mart Weaver, abstracter, postmaster and auditor of Algona, Iowa, to which she moved with her widowed mother. There, in 1899, several newspapers reported that Kenneth, the two-year-old son of Alta and Mart, "a pet to all who knew him," swallowed gasoline and died.

In 1920, Alta wrote the W*ood County Reporter* from Algona protesting a proposed name change of her old home town of Grand Rapids to Wisconsin Rapids, arguing with a toponymists' logic, "Grand Rapids wouldn't be home under any other name."

Algona

Alta reported that Algona, where she had moved 25 years previous, was in the midst of a land boom. Farms were selling for an astounding $250 to $350 an acre. If true, that was many times more than any acreage in the Rudolph area. Alta also asserted that the farmers held hog sales almost every day and some hogs sold for over $1,000 apiece.

Her two daughters were busy with college, said Alta, and her mother, Levi's widow, was still active "but doesn't get out much." She died in 1922 in Algona and was buried in Rapids.

Alta died in 1953 at Algona.

As reported in a previous *Artifacts,* my wife, Kathy, and I traveled 300 miles to Algona on the trail of another former Rudolph resident, Emma Blake Bliss.

County Park

A land company not named "Powers" owned most of the Power's Bluff land until in 1914, when 20 acres were sold to four Native American ("Indian") families. The property became tax delinquent for a second time in 1933 and fell to the town of Arpin to become a park. Civil Works Administration crews began improvements in 1934 as the Arpin town board purchased 50 additional acres.

In 1936, Powers Bluff was donated to Wood County by the town of Arpin for the further development of a county park.

Heading West

The first owner of the Engel property in Rudolph, Judge L.P. Powers, had followed a well-trod path from New England and made a substantial name for himself in Wisconsin. Many of his contemporaries left Powers and his bluff behind, gambling on moving further west in search of lady luck.

See *River City Memoirs III* (1984), the 1923 *History of Wood County* and Robert A. Birmingham's *Tah-qua-kik: Continuity and Change at the Community on a Hill* for more about this and the following story.

Uncle Dave

Skunk Hill Revisited

More widely known officially as "Powers Bluff," the quartzite outcropping was equally called "Skunk Hill," said to be a translation of the Native American "Tah-qua-kik."

A Sept. 20, 1906, newspaper mocked the immigrant Europeans in the vicinity of Arpin who believed a massacre by the descendants of former residents who had returned to the site was imminent.

Rumor had it that 150 Indians laid claim to 11 square miles in the neighborhood of Skunk Hill and that 700 more were coming to what some claimed had been set aside years ago as an Indian reservation.

The scare ended when an Indian agent from Wittenberg, Wis., visited and found four Indians on site.

From the *Marshfield News*, Jan. 10, 1907, came a description of "one of the most interesting spots in Wood County for an Indian village"—at Skunk Hill on the old Meecham place. Sheltered from the north wind by high rocks but open to the south winds, the "sacred" place offered a scenic panorama with a compelling, hypnotic influence.

A number of Indian families had lived there through the summer, near the "camping grounds of their forefathers" in log huts and round houses made of a framework of poles and branches covered with bark. Around the inner wall was a platform on which were folded blankets. A fire area on the dirt floor served for cooking on rainy days. Roots of various kinds hung from rafters.

Nearby, the *Marshfield News* reporter saw the grave of a 19-year-old male, covered with sticks.

The shelters were good for summer but bad for winter, said Frank Crow, a resident Menominee.

Crow argued that his people deserved a portion of the land they once had to themselves. His grandfather had moved from the future site of Chicago to that of Milwaukee to Hemlock Creek to Shawano to central Wisconsin near Auburndale and then to Skunk Hill, he said, a good place for maple sugar camps.

Nov. 1, 1911:

The dance of the "Pottawatamie" at Powers Bluff included large numbers of visiting Indians from different parts of the country, especially from Nebraska.

From RCMIII: White Pigeon and Reuben Pigeon

Center, Mrs. Frank Young; right White Pigeon

Nov. 13, 1913, Darlington Republican-Journal:

The U.S. has been trying to persuade the Pottawatomie on Powers Bluff to move to the northern part of the state but the tribe is known to be fond of its old home, more commonly called Skunk Hill.

May 31, 1928, Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune:

Powers's [sic] Bluff is dedicated as a "county Playground" by the Arpin Community club in a Memorial Day celebration that included decoration of Indian graves. Everyone, said the *Tribune*, regardless of creed, nationality or color could enjoy to the fullest one of the few remaining beautiful nature spots in the county—the tiny Indian village, the quaint burial grounds, the sunken circle where tribal dances were held...

All Indians of the state were invited but none came.

May 18, 1929, Daily Tribune:

Chief Wab-Me-Na, "venerable Pottawottamie Indian chieftain, lies at the point of death in his little one-story frame house on the southern slope of Power's Bluff. And like the last of the Mohicans, Wa-Me-Na, whose name translated is Chief White Pigeon, is the last of the many Indian families who at one time comprised the Indian village there."

According to this account, "many years ago" White Pigeon and three other families came with a little money received from the U.S. government in return for land owned by the tribe in Kansas, where tuberculosis had "extracted a fearful toll." Survivors believed that Wisconsin would provide a more healthful climate.

Each of the four families bought a 20-acre piece of land they intended to develop into farms. For a while, game was plentiful and, "A contented village sprung up on Skunk Hill. Then one by one the families moved to government reservations."

INDIAN CEMETERY—One of Wood county's historic spots is shown in this old picture of the Indian cemetery on Powers Bluff, near Arpin, which is now a county park. In the foreground is the resting place of Shog-Naab Ko-Quah and to the right is the grave of Kaw-Tow-Ki Ko-Qurh, redmen who roamed the wilderness of central Wisconsin many years ago and over whose remains these unique mounds were erected.

Powers Bluff cemetery, 1945, *Daily Tribune*

The four original families remained for a while. Besides that of White Pigeon, they were the families of Frank Young, Eagle Pigeon, son of White Pigeon, and John Nu-We.

In about 1923, said the *Tribune,* "for some unexplainable reason, these small farms were assessed and taxed." The taxes were not paid.

Only Wab-Me-Na stayed, said the *Tribune*, assisted by "His faithful daughter, Mrs. Schonecook Quitose." The 20-acre farm was to be sold in Wisconsin Rapids to "whoever buys the tax title to it, along with the other farms, once the homes of other Indians on the Bluff's southern slope."

The chief, near 90-years-old, would not consent to a White Man's doctor so an Indian doctor was summoned from Phlox, Wis.

Then called Wab-Me-Na-Iowa died four years later "at Arpin," in 1932 ,and was buried in a rough pine box made of lumber purchased at an Arpin lumber yard, according to a February *Daily Tribune*, in a shallow grave on Powers Bluff, sometimes called Indian hill. The Feb. 4, 1932, account said he was a Winnebago, not a Potawatomie.

More commonly known as White Pigeon, the 90-something elder had recalled being a young man in Iowa when the Sioux massacres took place in Minnesota around 1861.

Justin Isherwood

Wendell Nelson, Bibliophile

By his own admission, Wendell owned 8,000 books. Published in his obituary, it is probably true.

Wendell died Dec. 19, 2020. I met him in 1973.

This is an estimate. I did not note in my journal the discovery of Wendell like Columbus had when he wrote, "they saw petrels and a green branch near the ship." I could have written something equally eager when I made my first landfall of Wendell for he was a continent.

Our meeting occurred at the Methodist parsonage of Lyndon Viel, poet, writer and pottery historian who knew both Wendell and me and thought to put our lives together.

Wendell had several identifying characteristics. He ate well and spoke highly of food. He loved people and relished in their individuality. He could not manage money particularly well; I never loaned him money nor did he ask. Neither did Wendell manage time. If the supper invitation was for 6 p.m., Wendell would arrive at 6:27, a little breathless.

Odds are he got caught up in a book, newspaper, magazine. Wendell read as others breathe. For him it was a biological act, as necessary as oxygenated blood. Wendell never offered to loan me a book, they were simply too precious to risk. For my own selfish reasons I understood this character flaw.

I first visited Wendell at his Wisconsin Street digs shortly after Christmas, probably 1974, for a decidedly ceremonial supper of wine, a favored beast, multiple courses, more wine, dessert. He read before the meal, books were part of the evening's discussion.

No room in his house was without books, the stacks, shelves, piles, heaps. When Wendell and his first wife, Ellen, bought a house in Amherst he commented on the shortage of space for his books. The basement was soon enlarged, duly lined with shelves, almost immediately filled and the plot resumed, where to put the succeeding long tons of Wendell's books?

When we visited Wendell for supper, he had to shift what amounted to a ship's ballast to fit me and my family into their house. Books lined the wall around the dining room table, they were stacked in the living room, on the chairs, on the kitchen table.

Wendell had perfected the means to breed books. It was probably necessary to put two nature books in the same breeding pen to get another nature book.

His interest in books may have been a character flaw had he not read every one of them. While many readers find a niche and exploit it through their lives, reading nature or poetry while leaving history alone or reading well into American history but leaving the Ming dynasty untouched, Wendell read nature, fiction, historical fiction, historical fact, and all that is in between. He read geology, construction, food, music, architecture, Indian culture, Finnish culture, Swedish culture. I suspect Wendell could have traded cars more often than he did, to include a Mercedes or two if he hadn't been so addicted to books.

Wendell's mid-life bachelor pad, the former Keene bar and grocery, was a landmine rendered highly explosive. Living alone simply meant more space for books.

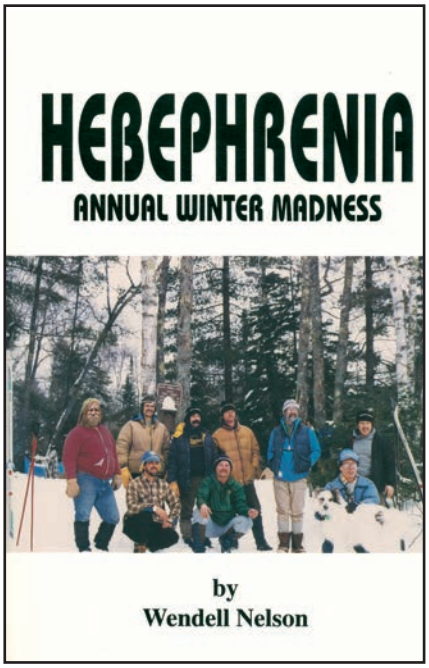
Wendell often commented he'd like to have my wife and me to supper at Keene if he could find space to fit us in. It was easier to just eat at our house. We didn't mind. Like a good hired man, Wendell had no aversions when it came to food. Whatever arrived dead at the table he praised.

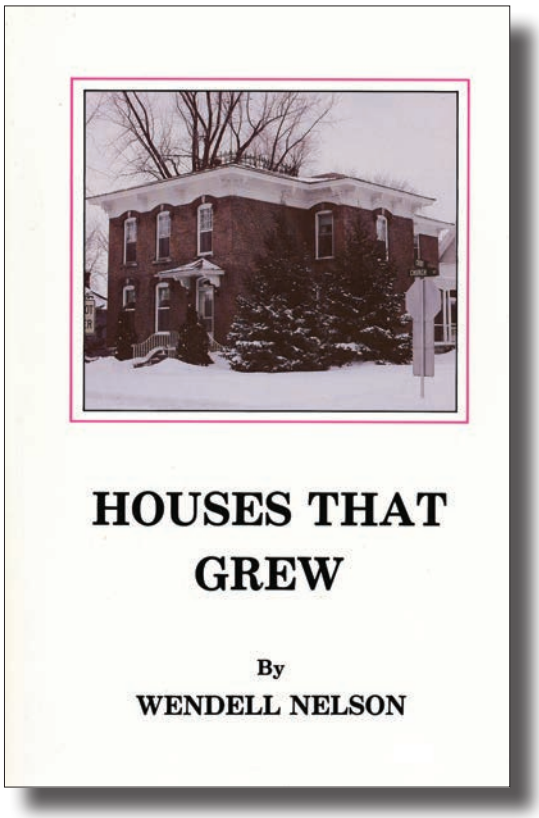
I do not know how fast Wendell read, if I did marvel at the precision of his recall. Normal mortals usually don't gain to memory what they read without a second coat. I think Wendell remembered at the first pass-over, whether accident of nature or a skill I don't know; I will be always envious.

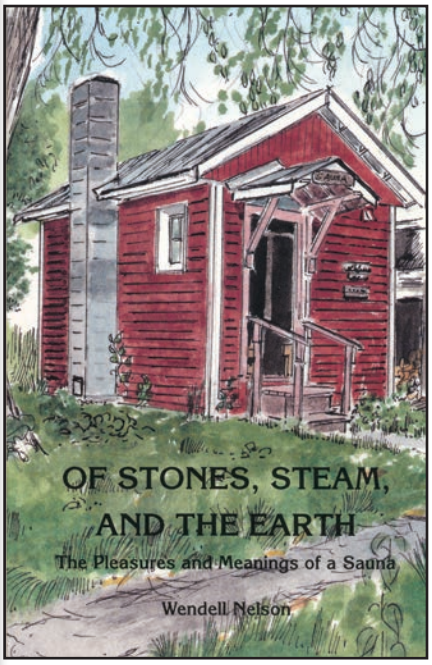
I have wondered if it was the power of his memory to cause his utter devotion to books as if he were feeding some literary monster inside himself. It seemed no author failed to lodge permanently in his head and the only way of escaping was to read more.

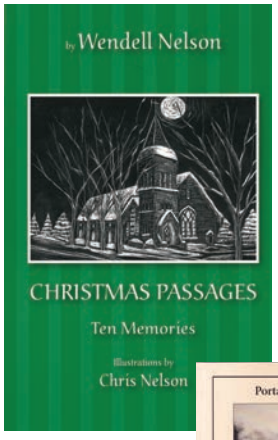
Not until Wendell was on his death bed did he stop reading.

With regret I missed seeing Wendell die. I am burdened by the thought I might have read aloud to him to put into his mind that comforting current of words that was his life. The life of my friend, Wendell Nelson, for whom books were his paradise.



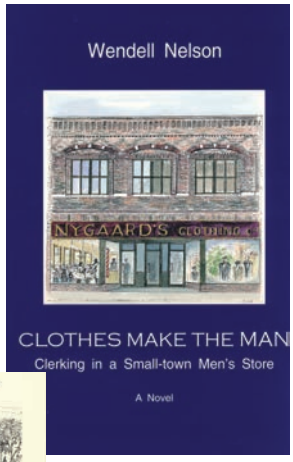


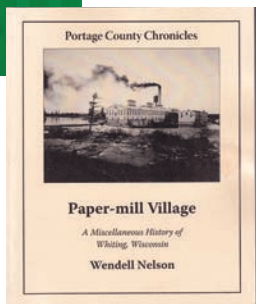


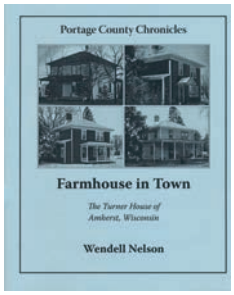


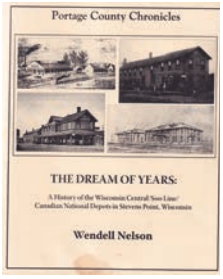
Wendell's books: Unique, generous and meaningful publications devoted to local history, composed at his expense with more in the hopper when the end came.

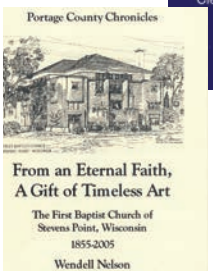
Where's Uncle Dave? His photo and Wendell's can be found on this page in a photograph UD took himself.

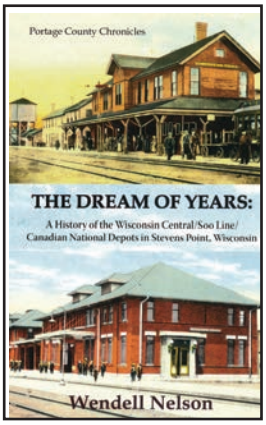


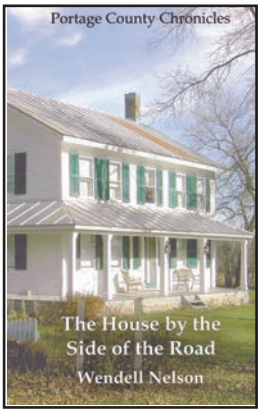


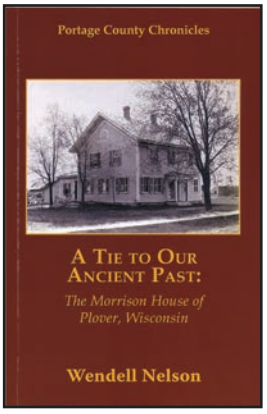


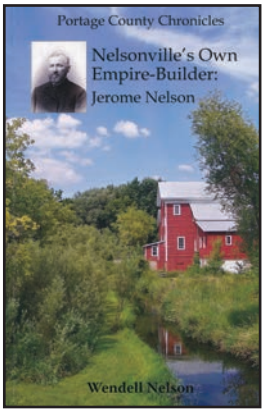












Uncle Dave

VOICEMAIL

"Hi folks. This is Wendell. It's 4:30. I'll be a little late. I have to have some transfusions at the hospital and just leaving now. I need to go home for a couple things and I'll head out to your place."

Minutes ago, I listened again to the message; but Wendell R. Nelson died Dec. 19, 2020.

It is stated that, "The history of the world is but the biography of great men." Around here, Wendell was as great as it gets, though, like any Einstein, he didn't always wear socks.

In 1972, he and I stood on a street corner at the edge of the Point college campus, while I waited for him to finish ruminating about our chronic job insecurity as English professors. The moment introduced two traits.

First, Wendell's endless capacity for oration.

And, because of his extended conversation with me, Wendell was probably late for something.

On a mid-winter morning in the 1980s, I waited in my car outside the Stevens Point Holiday Inn to meet up for his first winter camping trip. Earlier, I had heard his voice on public radio worrying about what and how to pack.

But where was he? 10, 20, 30, 45 minutes late…

Uncle Dave and Uncle Wendell, 2012

Under duress, he explained he had been driving all over town looking for the proper Ziploc bags. I told him next time throw your stuff in a paper bag! But as we drove through the Wisconsin winter, his oration became the "pure Wendell" I enjoyed, full of information, observations and justifications.

His first year, I told him newbies had to haul concrete blocks in for the grill and he complied. For our best "Hebe," we pulled way too much gear on blue tarps across the ice to the far side of Fanny Lake.

Later, he published *Hebephrenia: Annual Winter Madness* about our mid-winter tradition.

My continued tie to Stevens Point was Wendell and my dentist, Thomas R. Petersen, who in my time had begun and ended his practice. Last year, I was able to present Tom's daughter, Dr. Jennifer Peglow, with an autographed copy of Wendell's signature book, *Houses that Grew*, and in it, a history of their office building, a former residence.

My traditional 11 a.m. tooth massages, crowns and root canals made it possible to meet Wendell for lunch, though I couldn't be certain he would be waiting at his desk at the Portage County Library. He might be somewhere already talking to someone else.

He wrote like he talked. The county's premiere local historian, Wendell's story about Bill's Pizza Shop appeared in an unprecedented seven parts in the *Portage County Gazette*.

Wendell's residences rivaled the public book depository he worked at, minus the many volumes he signed and passed on. He sent *Of Human Bondage* to our daughter Angelica following a discourse on novelist Somerset Maugham. He had expounded with equal fervor about J.P. Morgan, the financier.

But he was most known for his expertise on old houses.

Naturally, Wendell set about restoring his own two-story "farmhouse" in Amherst, Wis. A year later, I saw the same gaping hole in the dining room wall and the year after that, and when he left, unless his wife patched it up.

That Amherst "Turner House," the former Keene tavern, a former art professor's ranch house in Park Ridge—each home took on the quality of distracted genius: floor to ceiling packed book shelves, piles of paper research, counter tops stacked with unwashed cookware and pet-stained floors. As an annual birthday gift to him, he allowed me to shampoo his carpets.

An evening at Wendell's was a throwback delight. Before the salad and stuffed squash came his devotional reading—Sigurd Olson, Henry Beston or Hal Borland, whose words take on Wendell's timbre. "The earth turns, and the seasons, and for all his pride and power man cannot temper the winds or change their course."

At theme parties here in Rudolph, each participant was assigned one item. When Wendell spoke first, he covered all possible topics and sub-topics in such detail that those who followed had nothing left to say.

Wendell arrived at those events in costume. For the canceled Covid-year theme of "Paradise," he was ready to play God.

On a late autumn 2020 afternoon, Wendell, weak from leukemia, parked his SAUNA-plated car by my barn and began the hundred yards to party central; but halfway to the fire, he had to set down his package of pickles and canned beans.

At fireside, he recovered to tell us how he, a former hospital employee, had actually enjoyed that day in the hospital getting transfusions, delighted by the pretty blue eyes of the nurses.

After leaving here, he was short of breath again and didn't sleep much. The next night he was again at "St. Mike's," treated for a near-fatal heart attack.

Knowing Wendell might not be around long, I set up another campfire meeting so SWCHC president Phil Brown could witness a real historian in action; but Wendell's leukemia relapsed and Wendell was placed on call for a clinical trial at Froedtert Hospital, Milwaukee.

While waiting, he said, he would revise, finish and edit the Bill's Pizza Shop tome, a history of Whiting and the long-anticipated *Whorehouses of Portage County.*

Knowing I would be writing this soon, I asked for some information. On Nov. 10, 2020, he emailed.

"Sure, I can give you a biographical timeline. If I live long enough, I want to finish my memoir about my first years (in my abusive birth-family), my adoption by the Nelsons, and sketches of the Nelson and Mayer (my adoptive mother's family) family members. It's a tribute and a thank-you to my folks for saving my life. I've had the title chosen for 50+ years: THE STEP-MOTHER WORLD (from MOBY-DICK).

…"Ah, yes, Engel/Teufel [angel devil]. Let us raise our glasses to Gotterdammerung [The Twilight of the Gods]! (I don't know how to summon up umlauts on this laptop.)

UW [Uncle Wendell]"

I suggested he copy umlauts from Google and paste them.

Götterdämmerung

On December 1, came the last words.

"Then I began to have complications. 1) A headache from Hwlll [sic]."

In the new year of 2021, after his December 19 death, a group including Wendell's son Wesley, gathered here at the Poetry Towers blaze, sharing stories much like this about a most unforgettable character.

Shadows flickered, fire crackled, mourners murmured but only silence emitted from the big chair on the far side of the flames where Wendell had sat.

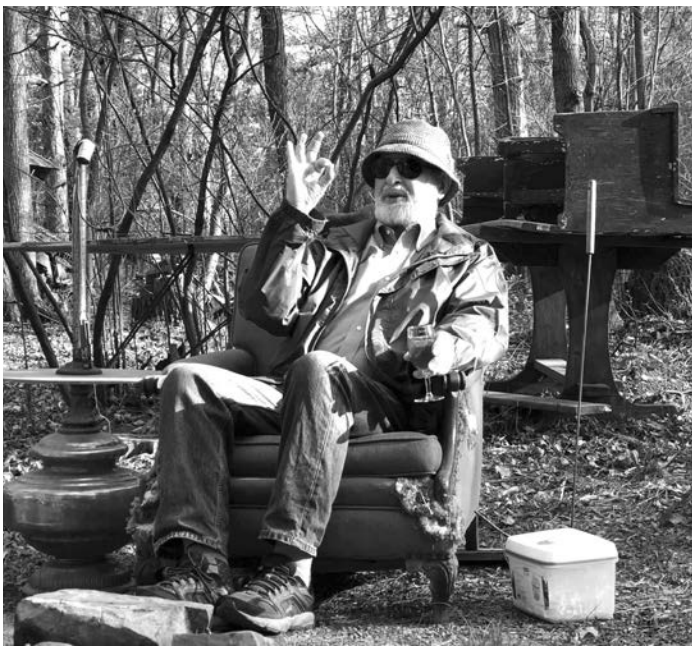
Now that it is said and done, comes the time.

"Hi folks. This is Wendell…"

To erase this message, press 3.

"3."

Monday, 4:15 p.m. End of final message.



Wendell, autumn 2020, Rudolph

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1980 by Julie O'Keefe Kramer, when she was a student. Her daughter composed the Artifacts #62 cover photo 30 years later, both for *Bloodstone*, a publication of Lincoln High School, Wisconsin Rapids.