

SOUTH WOOD COUNTY HISTORICAL CORPORATION

# ARTIFACTS

Volume

SEPTEMBER 1993

## EXTENDED HOURS

Your museum is so proud of their new look that the board of directors has approved keeping the facility open on Sunday afternoons from one to four P.M. for the months of September and October, and perhaps even into November. The duration of these extended hours will depend upon the attendance each Sunday afternoon.

Not only will this permit more people to visit the collections and displays but it will also permit school groups to visit the museum. This was not possible this past spring as we were in the midst of our refurbishing project. at that time.

Classes that wish to visit the museum other than on Sunday afternoons are required to make an appointment with the museum staff. This should be done at least two or three weeks in advance of the selected date so that we might arrange for staffing.

## SEEDS OF CHANGE EXHIBIT

South Wood County Historical Corporation cooperated with the Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers' Association in taking part in the Seeds of Change display at McMillian Library in August and September. The Smithsonian traveling display was brought closer to home by the special displays that featured corn, potatoes and cranberries. Your museum loaned photos, artifacts and labor to the cranberry display. We overheard several remarks to the effect that that these artifacts that were on display added much interest to the other parts of the exhibit which were primarily pictures and text. And as of this writing, the cranberries in the display were still growing. The library crop is forecast to yield about two cups of berries. Any bidders for the output? They are Walker Premium Berries.

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## RIVER CITY FUNFEST DAYS

Your museum opened two extra days during the recent River City Funfest Days. On Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, we hosted seventy-nine guests. Marshall Buehler demonstrated his toy steam engines. Squeaky whistles and the smell of hot oil drifted down the stairs of the museum from the display room on the second floor. The engines will be on display later this fall, although they will not be operating.

## HIGH WATER STORIES

Wisconsin Rapids experienced some high water this summer following heavy rains. Of course our trauma with high water was not as serious as in other states of the country. But we did have our share of flooded basements as the river rose to a critical level and flow.

But these occurrences were not as devastating as the flood of 1880, probably because of the better control of the river via dams and reservoirs. The following account of the 1880 flood is excerpted from an account printed in the Grand Rapids Tribune dated June 19, 1880.

"In 1847 and again in 1864, other floods occurred which were long remembered by local residents of this area. On June 12, the water rose to a height unparalleled for several years previously, but had receded, when on the following Friday it was noticed that it was again on the rise, and on Saturday it had risen to the mark of a week previous. A fire had occurred on Friday night and many of the people of Grand Rapids had lost their normal rest and they now slept so soundly that they knew nothing of the impending danger. The night watchman, Mr. Bell, was instructed to warn business men when in his judgment their property was in danger. Accordingly, about three in the morning he went to the home of Brundage & Ferguson, hardware dealers, and gave them warning. They went immediately to their store and began moving from the rear end the tools used in the manufacture of tinware and a portion of

their general stock which had been stored their out of the way. They had been at work only a few minutes when the building was swept from its foundation with Messrs. Brundage and Ferguson in it. The former escaped but the latter went down with the sinking building. On the lower side of the room were piled a lot of stoves and with the rush of water against the upper side, it is supposed that the building tipped and that the stoves rolled over on him. Mr. Brundage had an almost miraculous escape. Being near the door opening from the tin shop to the main store, he made a jump for the latter, but jumped in the river. By the merest chance he caught on a large rock and crawled into the store. His cries for help brought a number of men to the scene, who made unavailing efforts to find and rescue his partner, George Ferguson, whose untimely death cast a gloom over the whole city. H. W. Lord had taken the precaution on the previous evening to move his stock and tools away from his place of business to where they would be safe, and in the morning D. P. Morrill followed his example, moving his stock of meats.

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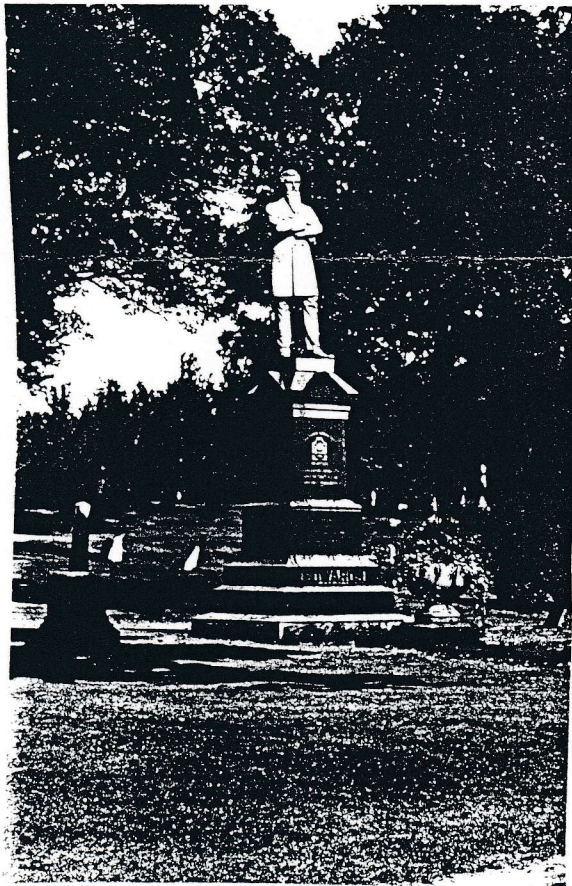
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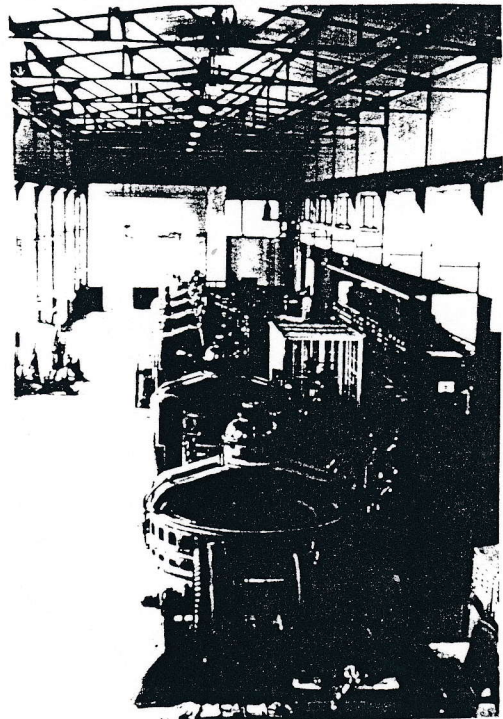
### VOLUNTEER COCKTAIL PARTY

The Venemans' have again invited us to the Pullman Car on Nepco Lake for our Volunteer Wrap-up Party. The date will be set for later in September, when Marshall returns from Russia.

The Lesters' gardens will be open for touring at the same time. Watch for your invitation in the mail in mid-September.



How many of you are aware that the statue of John Edwards, located in Port Edwards, was originally a family cemetery marker at Forest Hill cemetery?



CENTRALIA HYDROELECTRIC PLANT

CIRCA 1920

### RIVER CITIES BUSINESS EXPO '93

The Wisconsin Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a Business Expo on Saturday, October 23, 1993. This event will take place at Lincoln High School field-house from 10:00 am - 5:00 pm.

South Wood County Museum will be there, too!! We will be sharing a booth with other local historical agencies. We will be handing out brochures, tokens and pencils to make people aware of the services offered at the Museum. Join in the fun and stop at our booth for a visit.

### A TRIBUTE TO ROY REMITZ

Roy has been approached by local residents, asking if he would care for their lawns and shrubs. If you haven't noticed, we have some beautiful grounds around our museum building. The shrubs are extremely well manicured, and they are not small plants to work with but require working from a ladder. Roy has had to turn them down however. His main devotion is to the museum shrubs and lawn. The grounds look great, Roy. Too bad that winter will soon bring an end to all this beauty, but then perhaps that is what Roy is really waiting for.

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### MODEL TRAIN DISPLAY

The Tri-city Railroaders presented an excellent and very popular display at the museum during the month of August. Coordinated by Tom VanDreese, the association filled the display cases in the sun room with model trains of all sizes from some as small as your thumb to those that are suitable to run on you lawn out of doors. Much of the equipment was modified to represent local railroad lines serving this area.

There was a collection of conductor's hats from around the world and still another collection of railroad hand lanterns. But the most popular item on display was the railroad switching puzzle. Guests were invited to make model train movements in order to place cars on one siding from another. The museum appreciates the efforts of the Tri-city Railroaders in making this interesting display possible. Every one likes a train.

### Fall Photo Hunt

Three Wednesdays this fall have been reserved for those people wishing to help us process the photo collection. We have compiled most of our collection in one room and are now ready to begin sorting and inventorying the photos.

Many of these remain unidentified, so if you have a particular knack for faces, we'd welcome your input. Circle your calendars for this "white glove" affair!!

Wednesday: October 6

November 3

December 1

### Fund Raising Campaign

Preliminary work is underway in preparation for the fall fund raising campaign. This annual fund drive has helped achieve our renovation goals. We are continuing to pursue a fire escape on the third floor, but will also be considering painting the exterior in phases, a new sprinkler system and rain gutters.

Mailings should be ready by late October or early November. If we inadvertently miss you, please call the Museum Office at 423-1580 so we may correct our mailing list.



Similar measures were taken with the stock of J. E. Ingraham & Co., general merchants, and some of the goods of Brundage & Ferguson were also saved before the building gave way and fell to the rocks below. This building, and also others that were in danger of floating away, were secured by ropes.

During the afternoon the rear end of Spafford & Cole's store, which was packed to the ceiling with goods, was swept away and borne down on the raging waters. When this occurred all eyes were turned toward the Wood County bridge, in the expectation of seeing it hoisted from its piers, but these fears were not realized, as the moment the building struck the bridge it was carried under by the current and ground into a thousand fragments. Miss M. A. Gordon's millinery stock was taken to the rooms over Spafford & Cole's store, as were the goods and appurtenances from Cleveland's restaurant to the room next door to John Hamm's. H. H. Compton's stock of general merchandise was moved across the street. Messrs. Powers and Briggs, who had thought the building occupied by them to be perfectly safe, became frightened at the threatening condition of the water and moved their law library to Klein's saloon. The printing material of the Tribune was taken to Baizaillon & Peterson's blacksmith shop to await the receding of the river. Still the water kept rising and it was seen that more damage must ensue. The buildings of Spafford & Cole and Ingraham & Witter being now threatened, the goods in the former were removed to the Odd Fellows' Hall and those in the latter to Masonic Hall.

Warren's furniture was removed to the second floor of the Music Hall Building. The water came in from the river at the upper eddy, and coming down through the swamp, washed out sixty to eighty feet of the Green Bay railroad track, and on down near Morrill's tannery and Wagner's old furniture factory swept off two of the city's bridges and washed away the embankment. On its way down it joined the waters coming in from the river near the Rablin House site, rushing down the back slough with all the fury of a mountain torrent, carrying before it barns, outhouses and everything not securely fastened to the ground. It washed the underpinning from W. S. Miller's store building nearly half the distance from the front. The store building of Spafford and Cole was undermined until scarcely enough of the store foundation remained to keep it from falling over. Nearly the whole wall on one side of Jere Klein's saloon building was washed away, and had not the water commenced to recede just when it did, the earth would have been washed out from under it. Music Hall building was at one time seriously threatened and would also have been undermined had it not been for the timely receding of the water.

The streets and sidewalks were washed away and seriously gullied in a fearful manner, the damage to the city amounting to \$5000.

The loss to Centralia was small owing to the bank of the river being rather higher on that side, and amounted to only about \$1400.

The setback was only a temporary one and many of the businesses were rebuilt or new ones took their place