

ARTIFACTS

Volume 1

July 20, 1996



*Yes Bernadine,
there really is a newsletter....*

I admit to having an aversion to the computer for far too long. Those of accurate recall will soon be amazed that this is the first newsletter since July 4, 1995, to appear from the South Wood County Historical Corporation. There are no magical reasons why the elusive ponderings pulled together quarterly, or almost so, never congealed. Even great editors have those lapses when nothing seems to transcend the fingers... to the page ...to the patron.

And it was when Bernadine pondered out loud (on a weekly basis),

*Is there a newsletter?
Will there be another?
Do we archive those copies
remaining from last year and
complete the collection?*

that I hastened to fire up the computer in hopes of creating another ARTIFACTS edition.

Well Bernadine, here you go...finally!!! We even included the few articles that were written for a winter edition. They may appear out of season, but the writer (Marshall) went to great pains on that manual typewriter to produce the requisite number of lines for their inclusion.

To the remaining readers, my apologies for the temporary dysfunction...I hope to make a better attempt at timeliness this year.



Did you know???

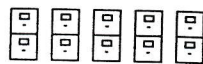
Most people from this area are familiar with the Indian Mounds located at Ross Lake. They are historically perpetuated in a book by Phileo Nash and the Milwaukee Public Museum following an excavation by Nash in the 1930's. But did you know that there is reported to be an interesting group of mounds closer to the city limits of Wisconsin Rapids?

The Five Mile Creek group is composed of seventeen conical mounds and two linear mounds and another mound of irregular shape. They are situated along the edge of the bluff facing Five Mile Creek. They are located in the Town of Grand Rapids, about five miles south of downtown Wisconsin Rapids. Highway 13 passes through the group. Most of the mounds are covered by underbrush and possibly even a few homes by now. The westernmost mound is 51 feet long and 18 feet wide. East of this is a club shaped linear mound. This mound is 198 feet long and from 6 - 24 feet in width. The height above ground varies from 2 - 4 feet.

(History of Wood County)



The V E R T I C A L



File Syndrome...

or how Karen and Bernadine spent most of the winter working on the collections from the third floor.

Yes, there were echoes of laughter (?) coming from the work area as we discovered boxes and boxes of newspaper clippings, xerox copies and remnants of at least three attempts to organize material into a system that could actually be retrieved for research use.

We decided to consolidate a few of the collections of obituaries and other miscellaneous information. Karen and Bernadine spent last summer in the sunroom and office photocopying everything that was to be saved. We color coded the file system and purchased new cabinets to house the collection.

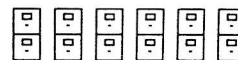
In the move from work area to the reference area on the third floor we discovered a "few" additional boxes. Those boxes lead to more boxes, and more boxes. Until this June when Karen proudly announced, we really have no more papers of any kind, in any unknown box, and this project should be finished.

For those people who call with questions relating to local history, the new vertical file system gives office staff quick reference to a number of subjects. The information tends to fall in the following categories:

people,
places,
businesses,
churches and schools.

We are now able to respond more quickly to requests for information.

And we are all holding our breath as the last file is inserted in hopes that no other unmarked box appears heaped to the top with an assortment of news clippings!!!



With all the snow we have had this winter it is interesting that no one has had to shovel out the "Rudolph Cut".

ARTIFACTS

A publication of
South Wood County Historical Corporation
540 Third Street South
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494
(715) 423-1580

Editor: Pam Walker

ARTIFACTS is a publication that contains articles and information for the members of the South Wood County Historical Corporation. Its contents are not copyrighted.



Bunde Memorial

Kathryn Brown Bunde, a long time volunteer at the South Wood County Historical Museum, passed away on Monday, January 29, 1996. Stephen Brown, Kathryn's son, directed that SWCHC shall be one of the recipients of memorials supporting his mother's participation in community endeavors. Those people who contributed to this memorial fund include:

Stephen, Mary and Jennifer Brown
Erma Schroedel
Mr. and Mrs. David Kumm
Mr. and Mrs. Garth Spees
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Podvin
Jean Wilkins
Laura Bubeck
Helen Arndt
Marie J. Millington
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Kalscheuer
Mr. and Mrs. T. C. Murphy
Gwen Cobleigh
Phyllis Hunger
Mr. and Mrs. David Mancusi

We gratefully appreciate their generous spirit.

A Concert From Overhead

Usually a concert is enjoyed by listening to the performers doing their renditions from a stage in front of us. But picture yourself looking skyward to hear a concert!

That's what happened on September 12, 1929 when the NEPCO Ford Trimotor airplane took to the sky with twelve members of the 120th Field Artillery Band from Appleton, Wisconsin. The band boasted more members than twelve, but that was the seating capacity of the plane.

A microphone inside the plane plus an amplifier would reproduce the music through several large speakers mounted on the belly of the plane.

This first time (and perhaps only time) experiment was performed right here in the Wisconsin Rapids area.

Carl Schiebler, a resident of Wisconsin Rapids, was a member of that performing band. Carl recalls that the three engines on the Ford Trimotor plane made more noise than the twelve piece band. And when the amplifiers picked up the engine noise, the people on the ground heard little of the music. But that was not too bad since the entire band presented a concert later that afternoon at the airport (Alexander Field). The idea was to get people to come out to the airport and take an airplane ride, flying over the Tri-city area and viewing the two large paper mills of Nekoosa Edwards Paper Company. After all, Nekoosa Edwards owned the plane. Why not show off their mills during the brief ride.

J. EDWARDS & CO.,

Manufacturers and Wholesale Dealers to

WISCONSIN RIVER

Gang Sawed Lumber,

Shingles, Lath, Pickets, Etc.



Artifact Donations 1995

We are pleased to add the following items to our collection of artifacts. Donors of important artifacts documenting the local history are the backbone of our acquisitions each year. We greatly appreciate their kind thoughtfulness and consideration.

Wood County Directories.....	Rose Smazel
Photos of Wisconsin Rapids buildings.....	Lincoln High School, Sherry Zei
Tapes, books, photo, magazines, Wisconsin Rapids directories.....	Pamela Walker
Book.....	Patricia Warsinske
Washing Machine.....	Joyce Durrant
Photo.....	John Berg
Toy trucks and photo.....	Joan Haasl
Ash trays, booklets, magazines.....	David Johnson
Woman's fan.....	Nathalie Smart
<i>Badger History</i> magazines.....	Ilene Larson
<i>Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune</i>	Ruth Moody
Photos, paper documents, newspapers, miscellaneous articles.....	Patricia Schuetz
Shell (ammunition).....	Elton Polansky
Book, plat book, catalog.....	John Billings
Glass jug.....	Michael Speich
Miscellaneous articles from the Witter Hotel.....	Nancy Henke
Yearbooks.....	Kathleen Clark
Brochure on Preway stoves.....	Thomas Becher
Photo.....	Grace Berg



Magazines, newspapers.....	Lenore Joslin
Dixon Hotel towel.....	Peter Waltz
Photos, beaded purse, Native American dress.....	Helen Murtfeldt
Books, magazines.....	Alfred Race
Articles from Art's Restaurant.....	Mrs. Arthur Davis
Map.....	Henrietta Brandl
Photos.....	Marjorie Williams
Ledgers, atlas, miscellaneous documents.....	Abner Atwood Estate
Watermark.....	Albert Giese
Milk bottles.....	John Ritchie
<i>Cranberries</i> magazine.....	Helen Jasperson
Photos of local businesses.....	Country Kitchen

Comments From Others



During the fall Council for Local History meeting hosted by SWCHC on September 30th, several nice complements were made regarding our Museum. Here are some of the comments that we overheard and would like to share with you:

"I never realized the building was so large."

"How do you keep your basement so dry??"
(They happened to be here in the dry season!)

"Your grounds are so attractive."

"What happened to the old train depot in our city?"
(After seeing our restored railroad depot)

"Your displays are so professional looking."

"Why you have a complete blacksmith shop."

"What a great collection of tools"
(Another comment from the blacksmith shop)

"Your Victorian Secret display is a good idea."

"One is not overwrought by the collections."
(I'm not sure what that means, but I think she meant that the artifacts were not overcrowded or jammed into the displays.)



Clapp tape evokes images of old Rapids

by Dave Engel
Wisconsin Rapids City Historian

In Stanley Clapp's boyhood, kids with nothing to do went downtown to watch the trains come in.

Better mention that Clapp was a boy a hundred and more years ago. According to a 1968 tape recording provided by Clapp's daughter, Marian Henke, Ft. Wayne, Ind., he was born in 1888 at Meehan Station, town of Plover, where his grandfather worked in the depot—until it burned to the ground.

OUT BACK OF OBERBECK'S

In 1904, Clapp's family moved to Centralia, on the "West Side" of what is now Wisconsin Rapids. His father built a house on 11th Avenue North near his place of employment, the Oberbeck furniture company.

Behind the factory, Clapp and friends found plenty of scrap wood for their own purposes. In winter, barrel staves were made into skis. In summer, six-foot-slats became stilts.

One night, Clapp was stilting around the outside of the house when he decided to rest by leaning against the front door. His father opened the door to come out and Clapp fell into the house on him.

"He chased me out in the yard and slapped my face and that was the end of that," Clapp said.

Clapp enjoyed playing on the 12-acre Oberbeck farm.

"They used to make ice cream and we'd have cookies and cake and milk. It was a treat for me. We didn't have any of that stuff at home."

When one of the Oberbeck girls married a conductor on the Soo Line, Clapp said, he and his friends had license to hop aboard, free of charge.

"A couple times we went up to Marshfield for the Grand Rapids football

game. They'd stop at some crossing and we'd get off."

THE BIG TOP

Circuses, such as Gollmar Bros., provided summer entertainment at various sites around town. Clapp mentioned "the place where the German Lutheran church is" on the west side; off 17th Avenue at what is now Mead Field; at the Lincoln high school field; on the north side of the Green Bay & Western tracks west of 1st Street North and in a field near Chestnut Street.

ODD JOBS

About the time Clapp began 8th grade at the new Lincoln High School, he went to work doing odd jobs for the Spafford, Cole & Lipke general store on the east side riverbank "across from the fire department." His pay was 50 cents per day.

Still living on the West Side, Clapp said he used to get up at 5:30 a.m. to cross the "old bridge." In the mornings, as he swept up the Spafford store, most sales were for tobacco and snacks to businessmen on their way to work.

Later, Clapp worked for the Johnson & Hill hardware department, blackening new "round oak" Kalamazoo brand stoves with a powder that he mixed with gasoline.

OFFICE BOY

His break came in 1906, said Clapp, when an office boy was needed at the Grand Rapids Pulp & Paper Co. mill in Biron.

Clapp, who hadn't finished high school, was hired. He figured it was

because Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. president and Grand Rapids Pulp & Paper Co. stockholder George W. Mead had been his Sunday School teacher.

At the time, the Biron mill produced newsprint and wallpaper on two machines. Mr. Kempfert, the superintendent, lived in the front part of the old Francis Biron "white house"; the mill office was in the rear of the building.

To arrive at work at 8 a.m., Clapp, who lived on 11th Avenue North, walked or rode a bicycle the mile to the Green Bay & Western Bridge, crossed the bridge and traveled four more miles to Biron. The trek took an hour and a half.

As Biron office boy, Clapp sat on a high stool at a desk about twelve feet long. There was one stenographer and an old Wales adding machine. He said he worked faster than the machine and seldom used it. His records were kept with a pen that was dipped in ink.

"If they didn't like the bookkeeper, they'd take a bar of soap and rub it on the books before you started," he said. "Then, with the old type of ink, you couldn't write at all."

At 5 p.m. if he was lucky enough to catch a switching train, he'd throw the bicycle on a box car and ride down to Rapids on the Green Bay & Western, then pedal across the railroad bridge and be home "in no time." If he had to walk, he'd get home at 6:30 or 7 p.m.

Clapp recalled riding the bike to work in a snowstorm, arriving with his clothes wet to the waist. "But they dried out; we had steam heat in the office up there."

His first wages at Biron were \$50 per month, Clapp said. After a couple months, that was raised to \$60.

THE MAIN OFFICE

When he left, five years later, in October, 1911, his pay was \$75 per month; it was the same on his next job.

Clapp's employer, the Grand Rapids Pulp & Paper Co. of Biron, had been acquired by Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. of Rapids. Clapp's former

Sunday School teacher, George Mead, called him down to work at the brand new main office, where Clapp stayed until his 1957 retirement.

"A couple salesmen, the manager, two stenographers, that's about all we had at the time in the main office," Clapp said.

Everything at Wisconsin Rapids division, including the general ledger and bookkeeping work, Clapp said, was recorded in pen and ink.

DOWNTOWN

Besides his recollections of Consolidated, Clapp offered some memories of the old downtown, which was located a block from the office.

From Church's corner to the old Grand Rapids Bridge was a sea of mud much of the year. Planks were laid across the mud to connect with the wood sidewalks in front of the stores.

Grand Avenue had not yet expanded into adjacent residential areas. Where Johnson & Hill's new store was later built, "Jackson," from the Bank of Grand Rapids, had a house. At the future site of the First National Bank, was the house of "Dudley," a barber.

On the south side of West Grand were Sam Church's drug store and Natwick's furniture store (both still standing in 1996); Brandt's meat market, Nash Hardware, a candy shop, a tavern and an ice cream company, said Clapp.

Across the street, before the Mead-Witter building was built, were: a "pool shack"; a couple taverns; Western Union; Abel's clothing; and the old Bank of Grand Rapids.

"That stone building is still in there as part of the Mead-Witter building," Clapp said, 28 years ago. "They built around it and made it over inside."

Just about everything else Clapp described has entered the afterlife. That old bank, apparently, is with us yet, tucked away in that enduring monument to Clapp's boss, and the man whose name is bound to keep coming up in any River City history—George W. Mead.

HOWDY!!
Wisconsin Rapids



GOOD BYE
Grand Rapids, Wis.

By The Chamber of Commerce

SO WOOD CO.
HISTORICAL CORP.

Grand Rapids, Wis.
AN OLD CITY



WITH A NEW NAME
Wisconsin Rapids

Name Changed Aug. 4, 1920

The Great Wisconsin River Flows Through This City

Population 8,000. Area ten square miles.
County Seat Wood County.
Abundant pure spring water.
(Best in Wisconsin.)
Municipally owned electric light plant,
water, and sewer systems.
Seven miles paved streets.
Four banks.
Four railroads. One interurban line.
Tributary population 10,000.
Metropolis for fifteen outlying towns.
Schools—Five graded, High school, Manual
Training, Domestic Science, Commer-
cial, County Normal, and County Agri-
cultural schools.
Public Library. All Lodges.
Twelve Churches. Fine Lodge Homes.
Parks, nine acres, two miles river bank
parks.
Municipal outdoor swimming pool and play
grounds.
Excellent boating, fishing, scenic drives.
Public camping site for tourists.

INDUSTRIES

Paper,	Pulp,
Flour,	Fibre Carton,
Cement Blocks,	Lumber,
Rotary Air Compressors,	
Sash and Door,	Wagons,
Boxes,	Hub and Spokes,
Foundry Supplies, Dredging Machinery,	
Refrigerating Machines,	
Auto Camp Stoves, Butter,	
Cooperage,	Ice Cream,
Cheese,	Soft Drinks.

WE ARE FAMOUS FOR

WATER POWER—Ample hydro-electric
power for industries. Cheap rates.

PAPER—Print and wrapping paper center.
The largest and fastest paper making
machine in world.

CRANBERRIES—This is the greatest
Cranberry center. The world's largest
marshes.

"You Can't Stop The River or Wisconsin Rapids"

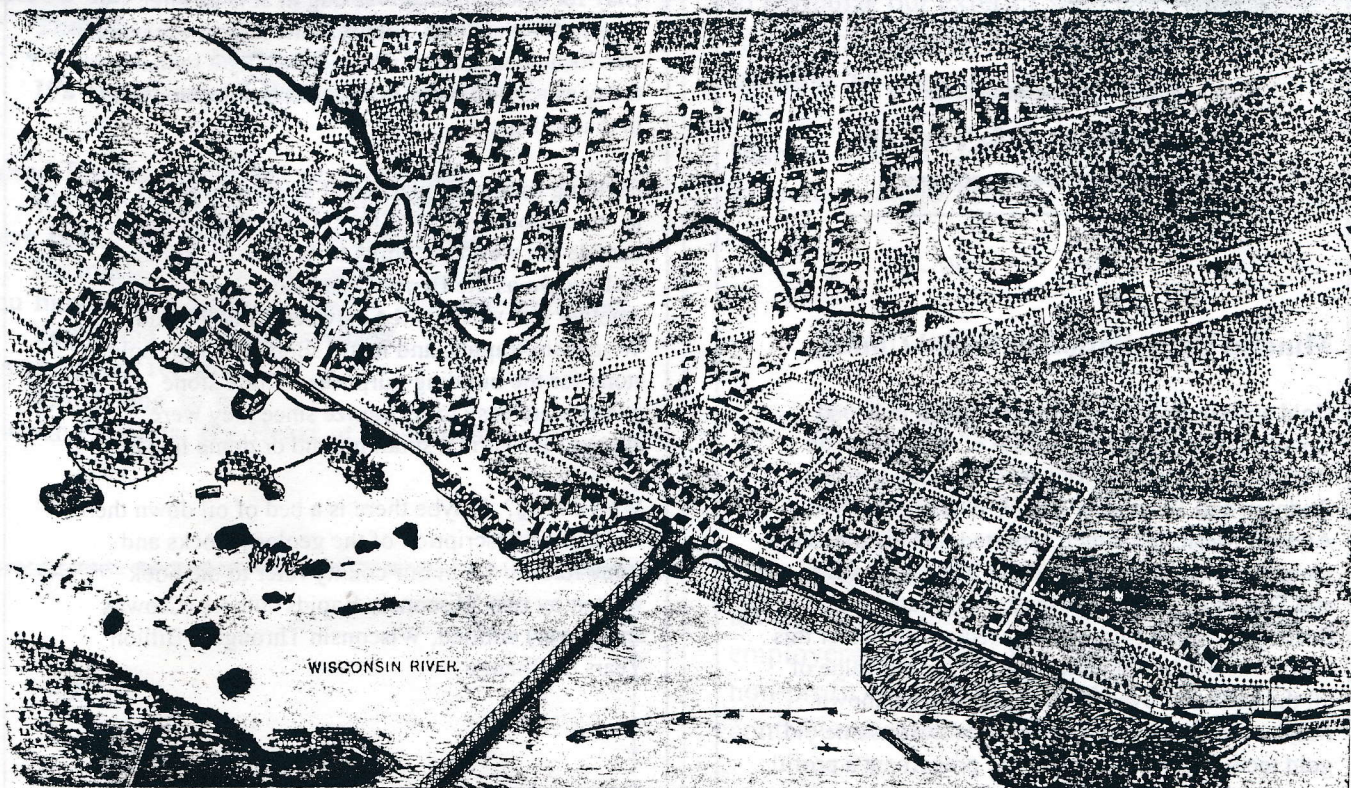




The Front Gallery at the SWCH Museum features *From A Bird's Eye: 19th Century Perspective Views of Wisconsin Communities* for a second season. This exhibit includes some 30 original bird's eye views of communities throughout Wisconsin.

Bird's eye views of growing cities graced walls in homes and offices of proud citizens during the second half of the 19th century. These detailed illustrations showed communities from a perspective that could only be imagined by an artist, a view from high overhead, decades before it could have been seen from an airplane window. Although popular at the time, few of these original lithographs have survived. They provide us with an interesting glimpse of our past.

A special focus is on the 1874 view of Grand Rapids, now known as Wisconsin Rapids, and other cities of Central Wisconsin. We extend our deepest appreciation and thanks to Portage County Library, the City of Marshfield and Marathon County Historical Museum for loaning us their original pieces for inclusion in this display. The exhibit will run through the end of the museum season of 1996 before its return to the State Historical Society.



- LEGEND**
1. Court House and Jail
 2. River High School
 3. Public School
 4. Saw Mill, Harris & Son
 5. Saw Mill, John Rablin
 6. Foundry & Machine Shop, John Rablin
 7. Nicola House, Wm. Roster
 8. Thresher, D. P. Merrill
 9. Rablin House
 10. House, Rev. & Misses R. R. Depot

BIRDS EYE VIEW OF THE CITY OF
GRAND RAPIDS.
WOOD CO. WIS.
1874.

- LEGEND**
11. First National Bank
 12. Bank of Grand Rapids
 13. Congregational Church, Rev. R. M. Webster
 14. Methodist Church, Rev. James Cole
 15. Catholic Church, R. E. Peter & Paul Rev. Wm. DeKalver
 16. Otto Lumber Sheds, A. W. Lynn
 17. Planing Mill & Saw Factory, John Rablin
 18. Post Office, D. P. Miller, M. D., P. M.
 19. Mason Hall, R. C. Worthington, Prop.
 20. House, Mrs. B. R. House

GRAND RAPIDS IRON WORKS.

J. PATERICK & E. MAHONEY,

PROPRIETORS.

MANUFACTURERS OF

**STEAM ENGINES,
Saw and Grist Mill Irons,**

BRASS CASTINGS,

Of every description. Also manufacturers of

The Walsh Double

Turbine Water Wheel.

N. B.—Repairs of all kinds will receive strict attention, and satisfaction guaranteed. We also keep a general assortment of

Gas Pipes and Trimmings.

Steel Shoes Rounded to Order.

Shops North of Hyde & Co.'s Pulp Mills.

GRAND RAPIDS, WISCONSIN.

Mineral Exploitation in Wood County

Gold and silver were reportedly mined in Wood County just a few miles outside of the Wisconsin Rapids City limits. A trial shaft was dug between Rudolph and Wisconsin Rapids back in the 1890's. Andrew Merit, the miner, reported that his trial shaft yielded ore assaying at a value of \$6.82 for silver and \$83.34 of gold. The shaft was located on Section 10 in the Rudolph Township. Whether this assay was per ton of earth removed or the value of all the earth removed from the shaft is unknown. Maybe Mr. Merit seeded the ground with some old gold teeth in an effort to sell the property at a profit!

This writer, as a high school lad, located the shaft which was in the corner of the field and amounted to about a six foot square hole dug into earth and rock.

But other minerals and stone have been mined or excavated in this area. Soapstone (used for laundry tubs and industrial counter tops) was quarried in Auburndale. Talc was recognized as being present in the county and John Edwards and some associates were on the verge of developing this business, as well as fine clay for paper making. Clay is used to make paper opaque and improve the surface for printing.

An exploratory attempt at iron mining was looked into at South Bluff, near Babcock. After all, there was an extensive commercial iron ore operation just thirty miles west of Babcock near Black River Falls.

But perhaps the most profitable mineral excavations to take place in this area are those of: brick clay, sand and sandstone.

The fact that we are located on top of the bed of an old glacial lake means that there is an abundance of sand under the topsoil. This sand deposit has been and is still being removed in many sandpits in the county.

Clay for brick making was dug in at least three sites in South Wood County. The largest excavation was located at Vesper where the clay pit remains today as a small pond in a residential development in that village.

Building rock was quarried at several locations in Wood county, one of them being loaded just outside the west city limits of Wisconsin Rapids and known as the Bender quarry on George Road. Another one was located between Rudolph and Wisconsin Rapids, and it still supplies a little split stone for the building purposes. These stone quarries are easy to recognize since they were always located in a small mound or dome like hill.

Who knows? Maybe there is a bed of oil down there! For a good description of the geology, rocks and stone formations in our county refer to the book written by two Wisconsin Rapids authors (Crowns and Boyer) entitled, Wisconsin Through 5 Billion Years of Change.

Grand Rapids, The Heart of Wisconsin

Words and music by Cleve Akey

I know a beautiful city,
Its the best in all the land.
You'd like it too, if you only knew
All its virtues so great and grand.
It lies on the banks of the river
And its people are spreading its fame
There's no other city that can compare
Tho several bear the same name.

Michigan has its Grand Rapids
And Minnesota too,
We're in the game to boost the good name
That's why we're telling you,
There's only one state of Wisconsin
Though you search the world to the end
So, whenever you hear of Grand Rapids
It's the Heart of Wisconsin, my friend.

Grand Rapids, the Heart of Wisconsin,
We're proud to call you our home.
More beautiful spot you will never find
No matter where you roam.
You may search north or south, and east and west,
You'll find it's people are best
It's the place for me
And I long to be
In Grand Rapids, the Heart of Wisconsin.



Fund raising activities undertaken in December make us all realize the strong and steady private support enjoyed by the South Wood County Historical Corporation.

SWCHC is a non-profit organization that relies on private donations for annual revenue. No funds are received from city, county, or state governmental agencies. We thus rely on an annual fund raising effort to generate the working capital necessary for major renovation items.

This summer we have undertaken an ambitious campaign to address exterior building renovations. We will continue to revitalize our exterior with landscaping, renovating shutters, storm windows and painting the porch railing and trim.

Monies received were recorded in the following categories:

\$ 1 - 99	79
\$ 100 - 499	31
\$ 500 - 999	2
\$1000 and over	3

This campaign realized \$12,315, not including matching funds offered by some employers. SWCHC is a 501 (c) (3), non-profit corporation and all contributions are tax deductible.





Popcorn and Paul



Visit the Museum during River Cities Fun Fest and enjoy popcorn and a video.

July 30: Wisconsin Rapids 1930

July 31: Wisconsin Rapids, East Side, Part I

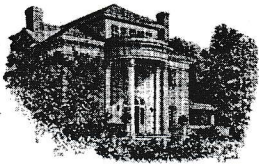
August 1: Wisconsin Rapids, East Side, Part II

August 2: Wisconsin Rapids, West Side

August 3: Railroads and Industries and
Tom Taylor Days

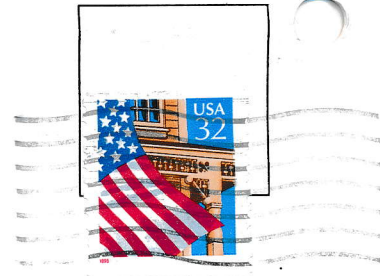


All showings begin promptly at 2:00 pm



SOUTH WOOD COUNTY HISTORICAL CORPORATION

540 Third Street South
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494-4352



To:

Dave Engel
5597 3rd Ave
Rudolph, WI
54475