

SOUTH WOOD COUNTY HISTORICAL CORPORATION

ARTIFACTS

March 1997

Volume

BRAZEAU'S COMMENTS

South Wood County Historical Corporation has a vast and valuable collection of tape recordings that were recorded by local pioneers. One of those people is Theodore Brazeau. Mr. Brazeau was a prominent pioneer lawyer in Grand Rapids and was one of the organizers of this society and it's first president.

Whereas most of the recording artists only filled one side of a tape or a tape at the most Mr. Brazeau filled at least two tapes as he commented on life in early Wisconsin Rapids. We thought that you might like to read what Theede had to say and accordingly each issue of the next few ARTIFACTS will contain a "THEDE'S COMMENTS". These are direct quotations taken from his tapes.

"We didn't have autos or parking places for autos. We never dreamed of such things as cars and nobody but a fantastic person like Charles Reed who wrote a book, THE HORSELESS CARRIAGE when I was a child. He told about a man who owned a horseless carriage that ran without a horse. It ran with its own power and could run as high as ten miles an hour. But we didn't believe it. It was all fantasy. But they are here now. Where there

are parking places today there were parking places for horses and wagons. Every store had a shed behind the store where tied up your horses or oxen. And there were just as many yoke of oxen in town at that time as there were teams of horses.

And all of the toll bridges in town had a schedule of fees--how much it cost to take a yoke of oxen across and how much for a team of horses, a sheep, a hog and everything of that kind.

Cows ran at large when I was a boy. You saw them on Main street right down town where Daily's drug store is (now Tower Clock River Bank Park). You would see a cow standing in the street. It wasn't a strange animal. It wasn't a strange occurrence to have a cow or perhaps a dozen of them walk down the street at one time.

And the Howe school had a board fence around it to keep the cows out and posts up where the students could walk through but the cows could not get in. They were everywhere on the streets. And when they proposed an ordinance the first time to keep the cows off the streets the people rose up in wrath and the alderman were threatened with defeat at the next election and the first attempt was beaten by the aldermen almost unanimously. Let the cows run at large"

NEKOOSA'S ARMORY

I suppose that you thought only Wisconsin Rapids had a armory building. Well in the early 1920's, Nekoosa Edwards Paper Company remodeled a building on Main Street to serve as a armory facility. The building was originally built as a boarding house for single mill employees and served an important role during the mill's strike of 1919. But following the strike, mill employees were pretty much family people and preferred to live in their own home rather than a boarding house such as the mill provided.

So, Nekoosa Edwards management remodeled the building to a configuration that would serve as an armory. Remember that this was only a couple years after World War One and State and National Guard units were played an important role in the defense of the country.

The 1922 remodeling was primarily to the first floor where an assembly room was provided. But an all important commissioned officer's room and an office for the first sargent were provided. There already was kitchen and that was not changed. Guardsmen had a locker room and a canteen to buy their daily needs from. A new addition to the building was a equipment room and it is interesting to note that this room was to be protected from would be thieves by adding heavy wire screen to all the windows and a double door to the area. An ice box and a ice room were at opposite ends of the kitchen. Remember this was in the era of ice boxes, not refrigerators.

The second floor was most likely left as is; that is small sleeping rooms for the men.

How long the building was used as an armory is not indicated but the building has since been removed and the space is now occupied by a recent addition to the Nekoosa pulp mill.

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MAIN and CRANBERRY STS.,

CENTRALIA, WIS.

Spring fashions from Karen and Bernadine

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GODEY'S LADY'S BOOK AND MAGAZINE.

silk. The outer row of the pines are 17 stitches broad and 12 stitches high.

PENWIPER.

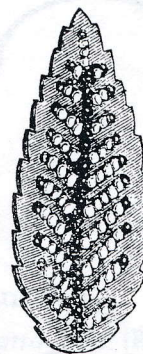
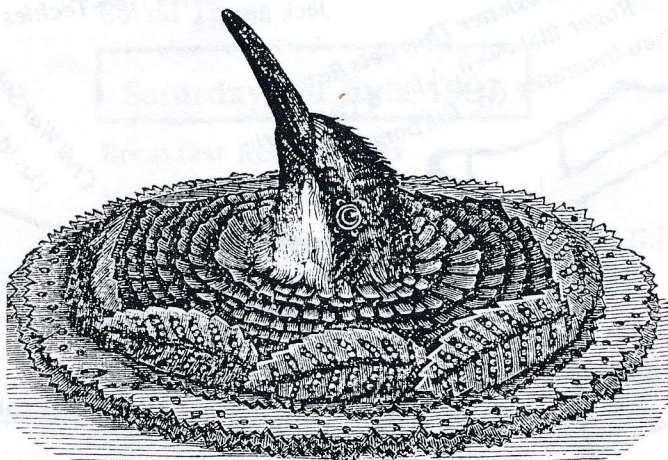
Materials.—Humming bird's head; black, scarlet, green, brown, and white cloth. Gold and opal white beads.

THIS original penwiper consists of a foundation of several rounds of black cloth pinked out at the edges; these are ornamented first with a round of white cloth worked with gold beads, in the centre there is a humming-bird's head; and around it, as if to form frills round its

rosettes, each part of the stand of 1 only. 3 of each of the 6 rosettes forming 1 pattern must be larger, 3 smaller. Begin in the centre, and work 1 circle as follows: 1 double, 10 purl divided by 2 double, 1 double, fasten the cotton on the 1st purl of the circle. * Another circle at a short distance consisting of 4 double, 1 purl, 3 double, 3 purl divided by 2 double, 3 double, 1 purl, 4 double fastened on the next purl of the 1st circle at a short distance; repeat 9 times from *, only in the following circles fasten the cotton always on the last purl of the preceding circle instead of working the 1st purl. In each of the smaller rosettes the middle circle

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.



Detail
for penwiper.

throat, are quillings of white, green, brown, and scarlet cloth. These quillings are bordered with leaves cut out of black cloth and studded with gold and opal white beads alternately. The leaves are given full working size, Fig. 2.

WISCONSIN GENEALOGICAL COUNCIL, INC.

GENE-A-RAMA '97

Ramada Inn and Conference Center
Wausau, Wisconsin

13-14 June 1997

No, They're Not Rabbits, They're CD-ROMs
Jack Brissee

Irish Estate Records
David Rencher, A.G.

Finding Your Polish Ancestral Village
Adeline Sopa

The Guyant Collection of Cemetery Transcriptions
Nancy Helbach

*Tips from a Professional Genealogist
for Using the Family History Library™
and Family History Centers™*
David Rencher, A.G.

Genealogy and the Internet for Non-Techies
Jack Brissee

Newsletter That Gets Results
Roger Blakewell, A.B.C. & Gary Carle
of Wausau Insurance Co., Corporate Communications

Sources and Methods for Doing Irish Research
David Rencher, A.G.

Finding Your Family Tree—Beginner's Session
Ruth Steffen

Resources of the UW-Stevens Point Library and ARC
Ruth Steffen

Civil War Soldiers System
David Rencher, A.G.

For Registration Forms:
Emil Krause
6083 County Trunk S
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-9212
(715) 435-3683

ARTIFACTS

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South Wood County Historical Corporation
540 Third Street South
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Editor: Pam Walker

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WISCONSIN GENEALOGICAL COUNCIL GENE-A-RAMA

Ramada Inn and Conference Center, Wausau, Wisconsin

Friday, 13 June 1997

- 10:00 a.m. Registration Opens
11:00-1:00 Vendor Set-up
11:00-1:00 *Finding Your Family Tree—Beginner's Session* [Ruth Steffen]
1:00-2:00 Vendors Open
2:00-3:00 *Sources and Methods for Doing Irish Research* [David Rencher, A.G.]
3:00-3:30 Vendors/Break
3:30-4:30 *No, They're Not Rabbits, They're CD-ROMs* [Jack Brisseel]
Newsletter That Gets Results [Roger Blakewell, A.B.C & Gary Carle
of Wausau Insurance Co., Corporate Communications]
4:30-5:00 Vendors/Break
5:00-6:30 Dinner in Courtyard
6:30-7:00 Vendors/Break
7:00-8:00 *Civil War Soldiers System* [David Rencher, A.G.]
8:10 WGC Board Meeting
8:30 WGC Annual Meeting
9:00-11:00 Social Time

Saturday, 14 June 1997

- 7:30-8:30 a.m. Breakfast Roundtables
9:00 Vendors Open
9:00-10:00 *Irish Estate Records* [David Rencher, A.G.]
10:00-10:30 Vendors/Break
10:30-11:30 *Finding Your Polish Ancestral Village* [Adeline Sopa]
Resources of the UW-Stevens Point Library and ARC [Ruth Steffen]
11:30-12:00 Vendors/Break
12:00 Announcements and Door Prizes
12:30-1:30 Luncheon
1:30-2:00 Vendors/Break Last chance to shop!
2:00-3:00 *Genealogy and the Internet for Non-Techies* [Jack Brisseel]
The Guyant Collection of Cemetery Transcriptions [Nancy Helbach]
3:00-4:30 Vendors Close and Take Down Displays
3:30-4:30 *Tips from a Professional Genealogist for Using the Family History
Library™ and Family History Centers™* [David Rencher, A.G.]

Stumbling Through Historic Point Basse: Ouch!

Wise wanderers will watch for dirk knives, hack saws and journalists

By Dave Engel

Wisconsin Rapids City Historian

MEN WANTED

100 CARPENTERS & LABORERS wanted to whom will be paid good wages per month or day. Men preferred who will work for the season.

STEPHEN J. CARPENTER

Point Bausse, Wis., June 5, 1860

As the spring of 1860 approaches, any workman might be forgiven if he chooses "Point Bausse" for a season's employment. Good wages, after all, are hard to find and the Point is a busy place, with the Nekoosa Lumber Co. building their dam and thousands of lumber rafts to be reconstructed for the rough ride down the Wisconsin River.

Unfortunately, the area surrounding Wakely's inn, just below the last of the "grand" rapids, is not what you would call *lucky*. Many of the tavern keepers, carpenters, rafters and profiteers who have rolled the dice here have come up several times broke.

MISS FORTUNE KNOCKS TWICE

The dam, in a constant state of construction by Stephen J. Carpenter, has "enemies." First is the mighty Wisconsin, not easily inhibited; the annual flood of April takes out a 50-foot section. Second are hostile "lumbermen from upriver," who curse any obstruction to the white pine they are attempting to float to Galena, Dubuque or St. Louis. Adding to the damage caused by the river, the enterprising lumbermen knock out a couple of piers, causing the whole dam to sink a foot or two under the hemlock-bronzed whirlpool.

AN EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Then comes personal injury, so common to the pickaroon yeomanry. One

such incident, perhaps not the most momentous, but certainly one with a colorful controversy, follows the flood. It seems that James Carpenter, attempting to "cable" a raft at Point Bausse, became entangled in its cords, which resulted in the severing of his foot at the ankle. Two local physicians, the Drs. G.W. Witter and G.F. Whitney, were called and found themselves "obliged to amputate the limb below the knee," according to the May 5, 1860, Wood County Reporter. "The unfortunate man is doing very well."

BARBAROUS!

Speaking of enemies: the perennial adversary of all things Wood and lair of numerous "lumbermen upriver" is Stevens Point, where Caleb Swayze's *Wisconsin Pinery* newspaper happily instigates a nasty row.

"Barbarous. — A man named Carpenter of Mill Creek had his leg so badly injured at Grand Rapids, to render amputation necessary. Drs. — and — were called upon to perform the operation, (which was performed with a dirk knife and a rusty old hack-saw, which had to be filed before the bone could be sawed off and after the flesh was all cut away).

"But when they had got the wounded limb nearly ready for the bandages they discovered that an artery had not been taken up; and, as they could not find it, the scene of butchery had to be enacted.

"Had this been the first operation of the kind which had been performed by these gentlemen the case would have been different. But as the matter now stands we cannot but condemn as reprehensible in the extreme, the practice of any man in presuming to act as a surgeon without the necessary instruments and the knowledge of how an operation of this kind should be performed."

MACARONI'S PIECE

Them is fighting words in Rapids and the *Wood County Reporter* responds with plenty of spice through the "Spinal Column (Subject to Local Diseases)," penned by P.P. Macaroni, May 19, 1860, in which Macaroni calls the Pinery story "maliciously and...premeditatedly false" in its slander of the surgeons.

According to Macaroni, the *Pinery* author was either *wrongly informed* or a *base liar* seeking to injure the reputation of two young practitioners "for the mere purpose of creating an excitement."

"Drs. Witter and Whitney have each an excellent case of surgical instruments, and both understand the profession much better than the sneak who penned the above understands telling the truth.

"The operation was performed in 20 minutes, and the patient is doing well and is perfectly satisfied with the present condition of his limb. If Swayze, or Skeesocks, or what's his name, wrote this lie, it's time he quit the editorial chair, for he's way ahead of the fraternity. Satan will by-and-by disown him. He'd better go back to Long Island and along with his cousin Christopher go to raising watermelons, and thereby recruit his moral nature. Go, lovely Sweezix."

CARPENTER SQUARES OFF

For his part, Carpenter, or someone using his name, signs a letter to the Point paper from Saratoga, Wood County, May 15, 1860—strongly denying that a "dirk knife" or rusty hack saw had been used.

"The operation was performed in the least possible time, with tools well adapted to their use, and to my entire

satisfaction. I am now doing well, and ask no such sympathies as was intended to be created by the publication of your article...James B. Carpenter."

But, points out the *Pinery*, the letter and the signature are in different handwriting. The *Reporter* answers, "If the *Pinery* scribbler was in the same state of mind and health as Mr. Carpenter, we venture to assert that he could not even write his own name. Even marriage has had a deleterious effect on him," adding, "The author of the letter was neither of the surgeons." The denial brings to the attention of the reader that the good doctors probably were instrumental in drafting the document.

BLOW SNAKES

In addition, G.F. Whitney, MD, and G.W. Witter personally pen their own grandiloquent defense.

"Every statement made in your article of the 11th, relative to the amputation we wholly denounce as being a libel as base as the source from which it originated." In roundabout and windy terms, they demand an apology and ask for the "informants" to step forward.

"We expect now and then to be objects of slanderous reports, and malignant insinuation by a class of ignorant, self-sufficient, envious Blow snakes who may be found in many localities. But you are not compelled to step aside from your proper sphere and collect such calumniating venom and hurl it abroad to poison the public mind."

GOOD-BYE WISCONSIN

The conflict wanes as the participants dissipate. In 1862, dam-builder Stephen Carpenter goes off with the light artillery and is killed at Murfreesboro, Tenn., in the War Between the States. During his absence, the Nekoosa Lumber Co. fails. What of James B. Carpenter? We can only imagine him hopping happily on his one good leg into the sunset of history.

River City Memoirs, 1997

At the Movies

"It's Miller Time!"

by H.J. (Bud) Wagner



Over the past year or so, I have become increasingly taken with the Miller plaster figures made in 1950 and 1951. I found the workmanship of the sculptor to be outstanding and was particularly impressed with the perfect likeness in the face of the MacArthur figure.

One of the first Millers I acquired was the fox hole figure. When I first looked at the face, it reminded me at once of someone and I quickly realized it was an excellent likeness of actor Robert Mitchum! Just to be sure it was not my imagination, I showed it to my wife and asked her who it looked like; her immediate reply was Mitchum.

At the last OTSN Show, Deb and Ron Eccles had a batch of Millers that Ron was good enough to sell me at a very reasonable price. Among them was the fox hole figure. I showed it to Deb and asked her who it looked like; she quickly stated it was Robert Mitchum. I then showed it to Ron and he, being the slower of the two, took a few minutes and did agree with us on the resemblance.

Continued on next page





I thought possibly the fox hole figure was just a coincidence until Charlie Pitsch, a well known collector from Stevens Point, Wisconsin, and I took a closer look at the faces on the rest of my Millers. To my surprise, we discovered the following figures had quite possibly been made to look like Hollywood personalities of the early 1950s.

The grenade thrower not only has the face of Alan Ladd, but is also short and of slight build as was Ladd.

The dog handler resembles Victor Mature. The figure I have looks a great deal like him and is easily recognized; however, I saw another dog handler recently and the face was a perfect likeness.

The radio operator could be Richard Widmark.

The stretcher bearer looks like Robert Taylor. I have one figure which is an exact likeness; the other one I have appears to have possibly come from a different mold.

The balance of the figures I have seem to have nondescript faces. There may be other Hollywood faces on the four I am missing. Take a look! Those I don't have are ML 15 (standing, firing "grease gun"; ML 18, kneeling with bazooka; ML 19, kneeling, "grease gun"; and ML 20, advancing port arms.

One must remember that these are cast in plaster and it would be quite easy for a face to become distorted in the molding or drying process and therefore all the figures produced may not look exactly like the personalities mentioned here. However, of those I have seen, all are quite recognizable.

I cannot help but feel that the sculptor was a movie buff with a whimsical nature who was having some fun by using the faces of some of his, or her, favorite 50's actors. The sculptor, whoever it may have been, was truly a great artist, able to capture the facial features of these stars very clearly and in a very small scale. For some reason, perhaps the biggest star of the 1950's, The Duke, John Wayne, did not show up!

Photos by Bruce Roberts



FANTASIES OF FLIGHT

In 1928, the epitome of airplanes was the Ford Trimotor, a twelve passenger, aluminum covered plane with three engines. Hence the name tri motor, and yes they were built by the Ford auto company. Nekoosa Edwards Paper Company purchased one of these planes in 1928, paying \$50,000 for it. It was housed at Alexander Field where it filled up the entire hanger.

The captain of the aircraft, L. Mulzer, wrote weekly reports to Nekoosa Edwards management, outlining the flight log of the previous week. Some of the letters contain interesting stories of what aviation was like during that era. Here are a few of some of those episodes.

DELIVERING NEWSREELS

"I had a deal all worked out with Pathe News Film to fly the Daytonia race films to New York City. But as you probably read in the papers, one car crashed and killed the film man taking the pictures I was suppose to fly. I was going to get \$3000 for the trip with the Ford. It would have been non-stop, Daytona to New York, as I would have filled all tanks and put five fifty gallon drums of gasoline in the cabin."

ENGINE FAILURE?

Another report by Mulzer following the crash of another Ford Tri motor plane follows.

"There must have been something else wrong besides one engine conking out. I went up today and cut my right motor off and flew around for twenty minutes with ten passengers on board."

SALES ARE BOOMING.

Nekoosa Edwards also operated a flight school at Alexander Field. Mulzer included in his reports activities at the school. On one occasion he writes, " We sold two of our four training planes to the insurance company this summer. Fortunately, no one was killed."

DELIVERY OF FIRST AIRPLANE

Although not written by Mulzer here is a report on delivery of the first airplane to Alexander Field in 1928. The pilot charged with delivery of the plane from Madison, Wisconsin, took off with navigational instructions to follow the the railroad tracks to the Wisconsin River, then follow the river to Wisconsin Rapids. The name of the city is painted on the roof of the hanger. But alas, out of Madison he chose the wrong railroad tracks and ended up in Watertown where he landed in a farmer's field. He had been forced to land after running out of fuel. A supply of gasoline was obtained from a farm tractor, it first being strained through a silk handkerchief. Once refueled the plane took off again, returning to Madison where the pilot spent the night and then attempted the trip the next day."

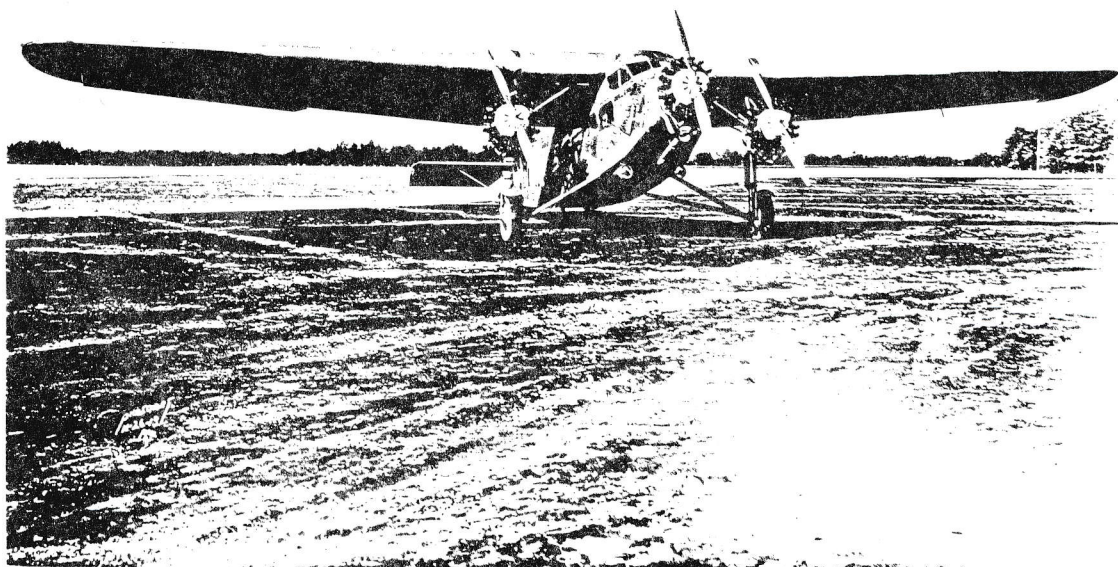
SKY CONCERT

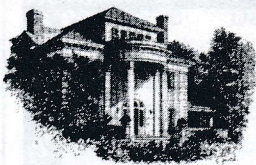
This fete was reported on in a previous issue of ARTIFACTS. Briefly, a concert was presented from the air. An amplifier system was to send the band's music to the spectators on the ground via

four large speakers mounted to the underside of the plane. The only problem was that the microphones picked up the sounds of the three engines and amplified them, drowning out the music of the band.

DON'T WORRY

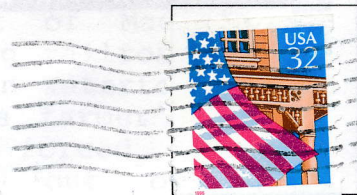
The Ford Tri motor is the world's safest pane. So stated a brochure handed to all passengers on the plane. "What if a motor fails? With the other two, the plane can continue to its destination. If two fail, the remaining motor can extend the angle f descent to cover an area almost half the size f Delaware. And if all three fail, the pane has a gliding range of several miles. Hence you're safe."





**SOUTH WOOD COUNTY
HISTORICAL CORPORATION**

540 Third Street South
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494-4352



To:

David Engel
5597 3rd Avenue
Rudolph WI 54475

5447579343 01

