

SOUTH WOOD COUNTY HISTORICAL CORPORATION

ARTIFACTS

Volume *Spring*

March 1998



The Madison Brass

Always popular **The Madison Brass** is one of Wisconsin's finest and most versatile musical groups! Their exciting programs use music from many musical period and styles. The South Wood County Historical Museum is pleased to present Sesquicentennial entertainment on the lawn **Sunday, June 7, 1998**. Programs are scheduled for **1:30 PM and 3:00 PM**. We'll be serving up Bucky Badger Sundaes and the Madison Brass...enjoy a large serving of each!!!

DOES ANYONE REMEMBER DEER LODGE ?

Deer Lodge. Located on the Fourteen Mile Creek, about ten miles south of Nekoosa, it was built in the 1920's. The word "lodge" would make one think of it as a single building but Deer Lodge came to be known as a complex of a tavern, dance hall, picnic area, two small lakes, about eight or ten summer homes, and two hydroelectric plants.

The initial effort to create a lake there was made by Harvey Gee Senior, father of Assemblyman Harvey Gee from Wisconsin Rapids. Gee owned the land along both sides of the Fourteen Mile Creek, (formerly known as Griggnon's Creek). The location of the dam was somewhat east of Highway 13. He built a dance hall on the edge of the lake and sold lots for homes along the shore. Next, a hydroelectric plant was built at the dam. All of ten by ten feet square, the buiding was large enough for a turbine and generator unit. Electric lines were run to the dance hall and to the cottages that had been built along the lake shores.

Just above the dam, a small stream called Spring Branch Creek entered the lake. Another enterprising pioneer was Louis Gotz. Louis was a supervisor in the Nekoosa mill but lived on a parcel of land that had originally belonged to Gee. Gotz, although working in Nekoosa, found time to operate a tavern which was located on Highway 13 near the Fourteen Mile Creek. Gotz no doubt looked at his neighbor's (Gee) project

and decided to duplicate it. Accordingly in the mid 1930's he dammed up Spring Branch Creek and created another somewhat smaller lake.

He also built a power plant at the dam and supplied power for his home and tavern.

Louis Gotz's son, Frank, who lived on the Lake as a young boy informed the writer that before the Deer Lodge Lake was filled and the power plant became operative, electricity was supplied to the pavilion by jacking up the rear wheels of a Model T Ford car, putting blocks under the axle and running a belt from a rear wheel to the generator. When the car started to overheat, just shut down for a few minutes while another Ford Model T was brought in. This also kept the dance hall going, as well as the homes, when stream flow became diminished in dry periods.

ARTIFACTS

A publication of

South Wood County Historical Corporation

540 Third Street South

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Editor: Pam Walker

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Louis Gotz, who had bought the property for \$400, now had a tavern, home, a lake and a power plant on his property. However, Spring Branch Creek was erratic in its flow. Often there was insufficient water flow to operate the power plant all day long. A "dam man" was employed to monitor the flow of the streams. It was his duty to shut down the penstock valve when flow was low. This would be done late at night or early in the morning, thereby permitting the water to accumulate during the daylight hours. Then at sundown, he would reopen the valves to permit the generator to do its duty. It took lots of good old Yankee ingenuity to operate these early electric plants.

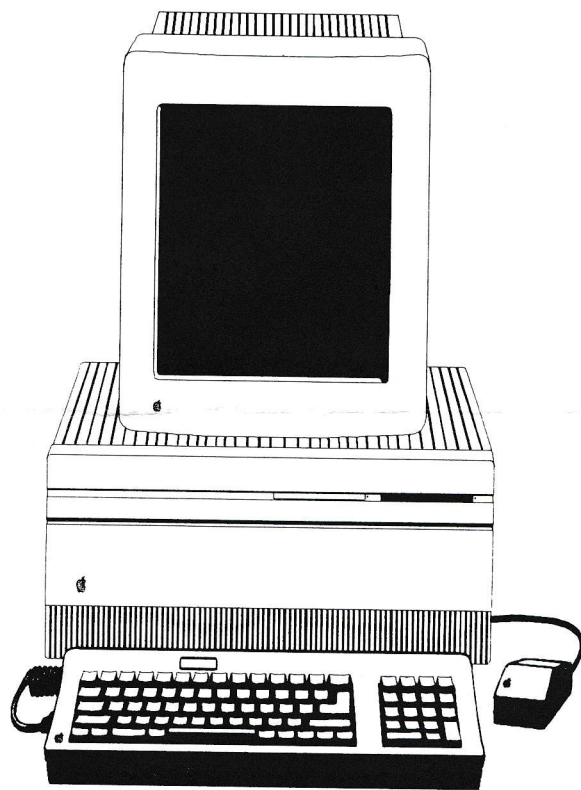
Both Frank Gotz and the writer remember that the area was a wonderful habitat for snakes, especially just below the dams.

What's left of the projects today? Gotz sold his tavern to the state in 1956 for a widening of Highway 13 right of way. Then in 1967, the lake property as well as the Fourteen Mile Creek project was all acquired by the Isacson developing firm of Reedsburg.

Isacson built a new and larger dam along side of Highway 13, thereby creating a new lake that covered both of the old lakes. The new dam created a lake whose water level was four feet higher than the preceding lakes. The two power plants were removed and the small power houses demolished. One of the turbines and waterwheels is believed to be still operating on a small stream

at White Creek, about ten miles south of Adams, Wis.

The shore lines of the new lakewere parceled into building lots and we know it today as Lake Sherwood.



We've added some new communication links:

Museum fax: (715) 423-6369

E-mail: museum@wctc.net

Web page: www.wctc.net/swc-museum

JAKE LUTZ'S CLEARANCE SALE

Picture the following scenario that might have taken place in Grand Rapids on January 15th, 1920. Congress has passed the eighteenth constitutional amendment which forbid the sale of alcoholic beverages. We know it as the era of prohibition.

Jake Lutz was the owner of the Grand Rapids Brewing Company. He had bought the business from a Mr. Schmidt in 1880 and in 1905, had tore down the old wooden building and replaced it with a modern brick building. The establishment was located on the river bank, just north of the east side swimming pool in Wisconsin Rapids. Before being converted to its present use as a storage building, it was last used as the canning plant of Sampson Canning Company.

But to get back to our scenario. Jake has a dilemma on his hands; how to dispose of his suds inventory for on the following day it will be illegal to sell the product. Who knows? The revenueurs might dump it in the river which was just outside the building. A shameful waste! So Jake announces a clearance sale.

The first to arrive are the Irish; the Mullins, Dalys, Collins, Careys and others. They buy the barrels, half barrels and quarter barrels, hauling it home in their horse drawn wagons. The spirits would keep them warm for the balance of the winter.

The Germans; the Grosses, Buehlers, Reisbecks, Haasls etc. arrived next, only to

find that there were only bottles left. But they loaded their wagons and a few Model Ts with the cases of beer. Their ingenuity would find a use for the bottles in the years to come.

The French; the Brazeaus, Pomainvilles, Lavignes, and Letenders, along with their freinds, got there too late. The stock was exhausted so empty handed, they returned home where they started to make wine from any cultivated or wild fruit that they could put their hands on, including the lowly dandelion blossom.. After all, they always did consider wine a superior way of warming the body on the cold northwoods winter nights.

But alas, improvement in conditions in washington were not forth coming. Prohibition lasted until 1933 before it was repealed. Jake Lutz began bottling a line of soft drinks and marketed candy in order that the Lutz family and some of the employees might have an income.

It wasn't long before the non Frenchmen and the non teetotalers had a burning thirst that needed quenching. They did not realize that this "stupid" law, instigated by a group of women, would last this long. So they reverted to try to duplicate in their basement what Jake Lutz had been doing.

For the Germans, this was relatively simple. It was a common custom to make home brew in their native Germany. Many of them brought the recipes with them when they immigrated to this country; perhaps not on paper but at least in their heads. And here was where their German ingenuity paid dividends.

Those bottles that they had accumulated from their purchases at the Lutz Brewery had not been disposed of. Recycle them!. Not in the usual sense of the word today but reuse them.

My auntie Vic tells me that about every other Saturday, a batch of brew would be made, thereby allowing about two weeks for "curing". It was then bottled. Grocery stores sold the crimp style bottle caps on the same shelf as canning lids and covers. And if you were visiting her home and sitting there listening to the radio in the evening and there happened to be a loud noise resembling a gun shot, coming from the basement, have no fear. A bottle of beer had just blew its cap. Hopefully the bottle wasn't broken. Vic says it was routine to paint the ceiling every summer because of beer stains thereon.

A bottle labeled Grand Rapids Brewery Company might contain orange soda, grape drink or who knows what family's brew of "piva". Uncle Joe said it was just rootbeer in the bottles but the family knew better!

The Irish preferred to get their warmth a little faster so accordingly they started to make "white lightning", "fire water" or "moonshine". This might have been called a "moonlight" industry or "bedroom" industry but it flourished right here in River City and the surrounding area. Small stills, of which we have one here at the museum, were usually located in the country in some farmers chicken coop or barn. After all, the wood

smoke fire in summer months might be a tipoff for the revenuers that you were distilling a batch of "juice" rather than roasting brats.

My dad, who owned a grocery store in Port Edwards, told me that he had regular customers who purchased sugar in hundred pound bags; more than enough needed for sweetening one's cereal at breakfast. And the baking department featured along side of the vanilla extract, pint size bottles that were the same shape of a pint liquor bottle that contained rum flavoring and bourbon flavoring. Pint bottles? One usually purchases flavoring extracts in two or four ounce

After thirteen years, prohibition was repealed. After all, congressmen get thirsty too. Grand Rapids Brewery, by this time, had been sold and was canning vegetables under the name of HEART OF WISCONSIN. The Millers, Pabsts and Point Brewery were able to satisfy the demand for beer so there was no need of reopening a brewery in Wisconsin Rapids. However, our neighbors in other central Wisconsin cities preferred their own brew and accordingly, Marshfield, Stevens Point, Wausau, Eau Claire all had breweries well after we gave up the idea of having our own private brew.

But for all practical purposes, an era had come to an end; the era of prohibition and the "hobbies" that were associated with it.

Mrs. Calkins recalls old Centralia

By Dave Engel

Wisconsin Rapids City Historian

If you know anything, you know Centralia. If you know anything about local history, you know that the millenium marks a century since the city on the west bank of the Wisconsin River ceased to exist in name; and you do not doubt that there will be a big celebration at city hall in the year 2 000 marking that fact.

What became known as Centralia began more than a sesquicentennial ago, according to a handwritten memoir by Vida Calkins, the former Vida M. Riley. Wisconsin had only just become a territory in 1836 when "a Mr. Harris" from St. Louis built a sawmill here.

That first industry, she wrote, was run by George Kline and later sold to the redoubtable wheeler-dealer Daniel Whitney of Green Bay. The only other buildings on the west side were three frame houses used by Kline and company and the David Baker log cabin, located on property that is now a parking lot for Consolidated Papers Inc.

Traveling a mile and a half down the west bank of the river, in the vicinity of what is now Lyons Park, Mrs. Calkins found only La Vigne's logging shanty. The next buildings were at the "Merrill Mill," in what is now Port Edwards.

Centralia had been described to her by an old settler, according to Mrs. Calkins, as a small 100-acre island of dry land bounded by the Wisconsin River on the east and swamps

everywhere else. It was inhabited mostly by Indians and wild animals. Cranberry marshes harvested by the Indians extended about as far as the location of today's city hall.

During the period from 1855-1861, said Mrs. Calkins, immigrants poured in from Canada, Europe and the eastern states. At first, they traveled by stagecoach to New Lisbon and walked the rest of the way. In 1857, the steam railway was built as far as New Lisbon where passengers could catch a four-horse stagecoach that ran the forty mostly sandy miles between New Lisbon and Centralia.

After his arrival here, Mrs. Calkin's grandfather, a contractor and builder, erected the first pulp mill ever located on the Wisconsin and the first store building in Centralia, to be occupied by the Jackson & Garrison firm.

The settlement had been named Centralia, probably because of its central location, by Henry W. Jackson, the postmaster. Jackson had come from Hinsdale, Mass., in the same year and from the same town as Mrs. Calkin's grandparents.

Storekeeper Jackson first lived in the Baker cabin. He later moved to a house on a site "where the Johnson & Hill's company's store now stands," near his "Jackson, Garrison, and Worthington" store on what is now the site of the Mead-Witter block.

The first newspaper was the Centralia Enterprise, founded by C.H. Clark, later edited by E.B. Rossier, said Mrs. Calkins.

Rossier had come from Switzerland in 1858 and built a home on Cranberry Street opposite Mrs. Calkins' grandparents, "where the West Side Standard oil filling station now is." The former Cranberry Street is now West Grand Avenue. The gas station is part of the vast parking lot that contemporary "Centralia" has become.

Rossier, an attorney and banker, like Jackson, owned a store and was postmaster; he was also city treasurer, city clerk and superintendent of construction for the Wisconsin Valley railroad.

When Dr. P. Hurley located in Centralia, he built a house on "Main Street," later Second Avenue. It was still standing in Calkin's time. "Mother tells me that Mary Ann Hurley could call from her home to my grandmother Lemley who lived on the present Dixon hotel corner," she wrote, "there being no buildings between the two homes."

Among other early settlers was R.C. Lyon who came in 1846 from New York State. In 1848, the year Wisconsin became a state, he built a saw mill on the south side, "where the Nekoosa Edwards Hydro Electric now stands." The site is now often called South Centralia.

Lyon sold the south side mill to Tim Hurley and Hugh Burnes and in 1866 built a shingle mill near today's Consolidated dam. In 1882, he sold it to Mack & Spencer, who converted the shingle mill to a pulp mill.

In 1854, Orestes Garrison came to Centralia, where he operated a large sawmill and rafted many fleets of lumber as far south as New Orleans. His son,

Frank Garrison, was one of the owners of a store on Cranberry Street. In 1888, Frank built the pulp mill at South Centralia that became the first paper mill on the Wisconsin River.

Centralia incorporated as a city in 1874 and kept its identity until the "marriage" with Grand Rapids in 1900. Each year its identity recedes like that of many of the prominent residents mentioned by Mrs. Calkins.

Do you remember R.E. McFarland, Centralia raftsman and later, cranberry marsh operator?

Mrs. McFarland told Mrs. Calkins that, when they built their home in Centralia, the lot was used by the Indians as a cranberry ground and many times she was kept awake all night long by their "savage yells." The house was surrounded by dense woods seemingly filled with bears, wolves and the other wild animals.

Do you remember Chas. H. Brown, Francis Palmatier, Emanuel Dutruit and U.C. St. Amour?

Or, using her spelling, the Goodmans, Colemans, McKerchers, Kipps, Denies, Juneaus, Ratteltes, Worthingtons, Corriveaus, Le Febres, Getts, Borettes, Le Mays, La Madelines, Kellners and Noiseaus?

T.E. and L.M. Nash, "who came at a later date?" Geo. M. Hill, Nels Johnson. Archie and George McMillian? The McMillians who had the first produce company?

Yes, indeed, we do remember. Many are forgotten but not the "McMillians." They are well-memorialized in modern Wisconsin Rapids—at the million dollar memorial library that perpetuates their identity and, in voluminous history collections, that of their home town, Centralia.



Wisconsin State Fair Park

To: Historical Societies

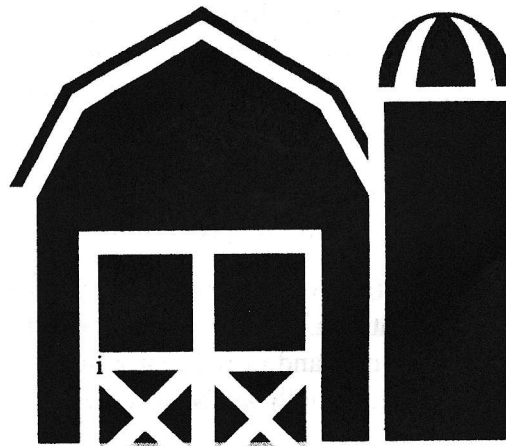
From: Wisconsin State Fair Park
Century Farm and Home Program
jill diehnelt

Date: February 6, 1998

Re: Century Farm & Home Program and the Sesquicentennial Farm & Home Program

To celebrate Wisconsin's Sesquicentennial, we are expanding the Century Farm Program to include Sesquicentennial Farms. The Sesquicentennial program is similar except that the land needs to be in the same family for at least 150 years.

If you need additional forms for either the Century Farm or Sesquicentennial Farm Program.



Call the Museum office for application forms 423-1580

OUR TORNADO



"Saturday afternoon last about two o'clock a destructive tornado passed through the southeastern portion of this county, doing great damage at Port Edwards, Barker town, (at mouth of four Mile Creek), the German settlement on the Four Mile Creek, and to this city and Centralia.

AT PORT EDWARDS

the destruction to property was great and the life of one man was taken and three others escaped death miraculously. The work of the storm was complete. It passed through the little village in a northeasterly direction destroying the John Edwards & Co. planing mill, unroofing the store, blowing their piled lumber into the river, and destroying many thousand feet, also demolishing their dry house and a fine lot of choice lumber. Mr. Edwards' private residence was considerably damaged by wind and rain and his shade trees completely demolished..

The actual loss to the company will be about \$8,000.00 and possibly not that much. The death of Frank Fry and the injuries received by others who were piling lumber, are the saddest misfortunes which occurred.

The storm crossed the river passing over Barker town and demolished about everything including the Barker mill and his little hut."

The above article was copied from the WOOD COUNTY REPORTER, dated July 26, 1883. Another account states that Edwards' home was actually offset from its foundation by the

winds. This was the former L.M. Alexander home which stood where the YMCA is presently located in Port Edwards.

CENTRALIA ENTERPRISE.

Thursday, APRIL 6, 1887.

Soon after three o'clock on Wednesday morning, our people were awakened by several successive explosions. It seems to be ascertained now that the west end of the old Rablin dam has been destroyed by dynamite used for that purpose. Why, how and by whom this work of destruction was performed is a secret, at present yet wrapped in mystery.

The election returns from the outside towns are meagre. At the time of writing, we hear that the following persons have been elected as Chairmen of their respective towns: Vesper—S. W. Smith; Sigel—J. Blockowitz; Seneca—M. Hansen; Grand Rapids—O. Rocheleau, Port Edwards—John Edwards; Saratoga, W. McDonald; Rudolph—F. Phillips; Wood—James Hiles.

Sherman Cleveland Esq. was a candidate for Chairman of the town of Port Edwards, but some inducement being offered him in the logging business, he at once resigned and abandoned politics to return to private life and a legitimate calling.

In one of the wards in Grand Rapids, a few ladies offered to cast their votes for city officers, but were refused the privilege. The inspectors took a different view of the law than the fair applicants did and refused the female ballots. The matter will probably be laid before the Supreme Court as soon as warm weather sets in.

THEDE'S MEMORIES

A continuation of recorded memories of Theodore Brazeau, Wisconsin Rapids Pioneer .

"After graduation from the Howe High School in 1891, in a class of nine, I worked in the sawmill of R. Conner Company at Auburndale. I worked eleven and a half hours a day with a half hour of nooning. I started work at six AM. I slept in the boarding house and ate at the boarding house."

"In the fall, I got a job teaching in the Town of Rudolph at a salary of thirty dollars a month. The school was located five and a half miles from my home in Wisconsin Rapids. I walked out there every morning and back home every night in any kind of weather, getting out to school by eight AM so as to have time to build a fire, bring in wood and sweep the one room school building before the students arrived. I then got a school, later, in the Town of Lincoln in Wood County , known as the Ebby School , at thirty-eight dollars a month, but I had to pay eight dollars for board. That school was only a two mile walk from where I boarded."

"In the next summer, I worked in various jobs and in the fall I entered the University of Wisconsin , by the help of Mr. J.D.Witter of this city, who was president of the First National Bank and loaned me money to go. I attended the University for two years and then got a job teaching in Wisconsin Rapids in the eighth grade and also as head of the school in the first ward. I then got a job as assistant

principal of the high school under George S. Ford who was principal, who later became president of the University of Minnesota."

"Then I went back to the University for summer school and my senior year, graduating in 1897. I entered the law school and graduated in 1900. While I was in the University, I made my way by tending furnaces, furnishing (serving ?) boarders for a woman and doing other odd jobs and the canvassing in the summer for books. I did this later job in Newark, N.J. for the Compton Encyclopedia Company. Compton was a close friend of mine having been born in Wisconsin Rapids, and attended the highschool with me. We were very close friends up to the time of his death."

"In the university, I had very little time to waste and had been brought up to work hard and I did work hard. I was on two different joint debates. I was the senior orator of my class. I was on the Inter Collegiate debate during the time with Georgetown University in Washington D.C. and I was editor in chief of the Cardinal, for a time, I think it was for one term. And I took about a year and a half of school in one year. I finished the law school in two years instead of the usual three years."

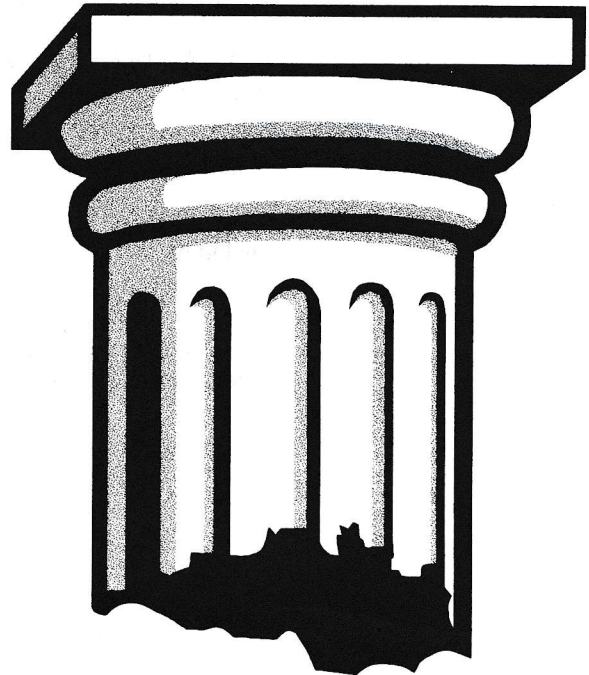
"When I finished law school, I had an offer from a lawyer in South Dakota but got word from Mr. B.R.Goggins who had a very large practice in Grand Rapids, to see him before I made any arrangements. I saw him and we raised a partnership which lasted for twenty-seven years, up to the time of his death.. During that time I did a great deal of the trial

work and argued many cases in the Supreme Court, touching all branches of law and everything in connection with legal work."

"After I left law school, I was a member of the Wood County Board for a time, a member of the school board for about sixteen or eighteen years, and state Senator; terms in 1907 and 1909. I was District Attorney for Wood County for four years."

"While I was state senator I introduced the Workman's Compensation Act which I think was the first constitutional compensation act in the United States and which later became law. I was induced to do this by the fact that we were engaged largely in personal injury litigation on behalf of the insurance companies and I saw the injustice of the common law rules as applied to personal injuries of employees. Other countries, Germany and France, had compensation systems and I got their laws and these formed the basis of the bill that I introduced."

"I did not intend to serve in politics and at the end of my second term in the state senate I voluntarily got out of the race and thereafter devoted my time solely to the practice of law."



FINANCIAL DRIVE A SUCCESS

Our 1997 annual financial drive is just about complete. That does not mean that we will not accept any further contributions but we have heard from 151 donors and that is 45 more than in 1996. The contributions from these good hearted people exceeded 1996's receipts by about \$1800.

The money collected in this annual fund drive is used for museum improvements; building, grounds and displays. We do not use it for our normal operating expenses.

FROM THE OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND MEMBERS, WE ALL EXTEND A BIG THANK YOU TO THOSE THAT HELPED SUPPORT OUR MUSEUM IN THIS 1997 FUND DRIVE.

May 3, 1998 Museum opens for season. Exhibit *Stitching to Statehood... Handcrafts from Home* featured.

May 17, 1998 "A Community Resource: The Central Wisconsin Archaeology Center", presented by Thomas L. Willems, Director at McMillan Memorial Library Fine Arts Center. 3:00 PM

June 7, 1998 *It's a Bucky Badger Sunday*, cranberries and ice cream on the lawn at the Museum from 1 - 4 pm.

June 11, 18, 25, and July 9, 16, 23, 1998 1 - 4 PM

SesquiSummer Camp, hands-on opportunities to craft things of the past including weaving, paper making, quilting and more. A nominal fee to cover material costs will be charged.

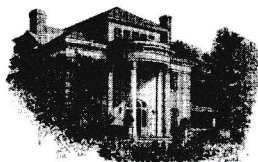
Exhibit Series: "Celebrating Wisconsin: Then and Now" developed by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the sesquicentennial traveling exhibit series.

June 4 - 15, 1998: "Work"

Aug. 3 - 12, 1998: "Urban and Rural"

Aug. 31 - Sept. 9, 1998 "Home and Community"

September 15, 1998 "Logging the River Cities", new exhibit installation scheduled for opening



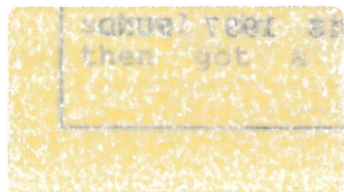
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