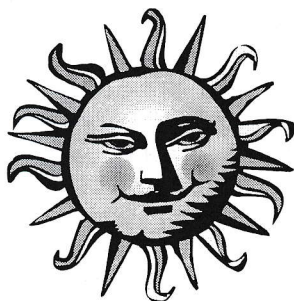


SOUTH WOOD COUNTY HISTORICAL CORPORATION

ARTIFACTS

Volume 99.1

March 17, 1999



Springtime!!! The snow continues to melt, daffodils and crocus have poked their greenery above ground and the earth is reborn. After our "winter nap", the Museum is readying itself for another season of programs and historical displays for the public.

The Board of Directors, staff and volunteers have devised some changes for the 1999-2000 Museum calendar based on a review of the last ten years in the history business. Three main areas of focus include staff requirements, public programs and museum "season".

First: We have redefined the staff responsibilities and job descriptions, and will reduce the number of students that are hired as seasonal docents to 6 – 8. **Carole Milkey** will continue as *Curator*, with primary responsibility of computerizing our collection by 2005. She has also assumed the development and management of the Museum Gift Shop. **Karen Pecher** is the *Administrative Assistant* and handles all duties and responsibilities of general museum operation including school tours, research and collections management.

Second: The Museum will offer a public program each month of summer. We experienced great success with the performance by Madison Brass and would like to continue providing more opportunities in this arena. The Chamber of Commerce has re-organized the River Cities Fun Fest, so we have taken the opportunity to create our own package of offerings.

Third: The Museum season will begin a major schedule change this spring. The Museum will *open May 2, 1999*, and *will close September 30, 1999*. Visitor numbers reveal that people most often tour the building during the summer months, therefore we are experimenting with changes in start and stop dates. **ALSO**, we will now be open to the public *Sunday - Thursday from 1:00pm until 4:00pm*.

As always, we maintain regular morning office hours, can be reached by voice mail and e-mail. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your questions regarding local history, donations to the Museum or any other topic we may assist you with.

Pam Walker



ELECTION RESULTS

At the October annual meeting of the SWCHC the membership elected the following directors:

Nick Brazeau	Marshall Buehler
Bud Daly	Cynthia Reisbeck
Pam Walker	Sandy Normington
Joan Haasl	Gert Raprager
Paul Gross	Betty Zimmerman
Natalie Smart	Phil Brown
Karen Blaser	

Karen and Phil are new to the board, replacing Bud Wagner who resigned and Kathryn Boyce who passed away.

Karen is a teacher at Howe School while Phil raises cranberries. We welcome both to our board and at the same time acknowledge the contributions by the two board members that they are replacing.

Following the annual general meeting, the directors elected the following officers.

President	Marshall Buehler
Vice Pres.	Nick Brazeau
Secretary	Natalie Smart
Treasurer	Cynthia Reisbeck
Membership	
Secretary	Gert Raprager
Curator	Pam Walker

This lineup would be incomplete without mentioning that our staff at the museum is made up of Karen Pecher and Carol Milkey.

It's a great team that we have.

CHRISTMAS AT THE MUSEUM

The exterior of the Museum building on Third Street for the past few years has reflected the Yuletide season with the timely decorations. Thanks to the team of Haasls, Reisbecks, and Zimmermans, the exterior once again was decorated for the season. Thanks to these people who put up and took down the decorations.

But this year the interior was also decorated. Once you stepped in the door the christmas season was noticeable. Complete with a Christmas tree, the first floor was transformed into a holiday gift setting. Pam, Carol and Karen had a selection of gifts that were appropriate to stuffing stockings of people of all ages. Most of the gift items were of a vintage nature. There were toys for children but they were not space guns or computer games.

Thanks to Pam, Carol and Karen for setting it all up, staffing the shop and putting away the leftovers.

ARTIFACTS

A publication of
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Editor: Pam Walker

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River City Memoirs VI.

by Dave Engel

The grant was made possible by the Unrestricted Funds within the Foundation including:

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Brazeau Family Fund
The Susan Nash Geiger Fund
The Donald L. Stein Family fund
The General Unrestricted Fund

The Museum staff has begun this collaborative effort with the writer, local historian Dave Engel. We anticipate a mid-August completion date and plan for book signing at local functions beginning in September. This book will be available at the SWCHC Museum Gift Shop along with other fine renderings from this writer.

THEDE'S MEMORIES

A continuation of the audio recordings of Theodore Brazeau.

Question: Can you give us other highlights of your career as state senator?

Answer: "Well, the highlight started when I attended the platform convention. At the platform convention the question was raised of electing W.D. Connor as state chairman. The LaFollett forces opposed him. He was a client of ours and an acquaint of mine and I favored him. I made a speech on his behalf at the platform convention which created quite a sensation in the papers. It was written up in most of the state papers and we elected him. That was my introduction to the politicians of the state."

Question: Can you give us your opinion of the Progressive Movement in general?

Answer: "Well, when I was elected, I was not opposed to LaFollett. In fact I favored him and advocated him, favored his election and contributed to his election campaign. When I got down there (Madison) I got my eyes completely opened. I found he was not as saintly a gentleman as I thought, and not disinterested and not much of a Progressive. The sole question he presented to us at all times when I met with the group was, which position will get the most votes?. And that was the question he asked the different members of the group. 'What do you think, Brazeau, will get us the most votes, to favor it or oppose it?'".



"During the session, the first rub I had with the LaFollett group was a bill that came up to pay C.W.Chinwith(sp), an attorney from Madison, for legal services in connection with suite against the railroads. The state already had a very capable attorney general, Mr. Sturdevant(sp) and the same question had been brought up in Michigan and decided in favor of the state and there wasn't much question on the bill. Chinworth(sp) presented nothing to the attorney general according to his own statement to me, not one word to the bill. He rendered nothing but was submitting a bill for \$48,000, I believe, for services in connection with the railroad bill."

"I was on the judicial committee and the LaFollett fellows came to me and told me that LaFollett wants this bill passed and I was suppose to vote for it. And I voted against it in committee and opposed it on the floor of the senate. They then served notice on me that I was not a progressive and they never invited me to anymore of their meetings. I spoke against the bill on the senate floor and W.D.Conner cast the deciding vote defeating the recovery. The bill was a steal out and out from the start for which I would not stand. Later I had several encounters along the same line. One was the election of Stevenson to the U.S.Senate. Stevenson was the candidate for the short term. John Spooner had resigned. Stevenson at that time was

seventy-eight years of age and had no education. His sole qualification was having made a success in business, having accumulated several million dollars. He had contributed to the LaFollett campaign heavily. He was a LaFollett man. He then owned the Milwaukee Free Press newspaper and supported LaFollett as president in his newspaper. He also contributed a large sum of money, I believe he put it at \$500,000... to get LaFollett nominated for president of the United States and paid for his headquarters in Chicago. At that time the legislature elected the U.S. Senator and Stevenson was up for election. I wouldn't vote for Stevenson and told the LaFollett fellows so. They all lined up in favor of Stevenson except a few that favored Lynwood(sp). But one of the close friends of LaFollett who sat next to me said the Lynwood(sp) business was just a joke; that eventually they would sell out all their votes to Stevenson.

Stevenson also had a contract with W.D. Conner that Conner was to support him for the short term in the senate and then in return he, (Stevenson), would turn his support and that of the Milwaukee Free Press to support the election of Conner for the long term as U.S. Senator.

"W.D. Conner told me that he had this in writing from Stevenson. So Conner supported Stevenson and advocated his election together with LaFollett.. And the LaFollett fellows ran back and fourth, screaming to get Stevenson elected. So both factions,

Conner who was a conservative and LaFollett who was a Progressive, were both trying to get Stevenson elected. Later, the caucus was deadlocked for several days. Finally, some of the followers of LaFollett started to leak over to the Lynwood camp as I was told. I was told that if I knew what was good for me, I would change my vote to Stevenson.

"I said I was a free man and I would not vote for an old man in his dotage just because he was furnishing millions of dollars to LaFollett. Well that ended me hopelessly and completely as a conservative.

"When we came out of the caucus session around one AM in the morning, I found out that W.D. Conner had changed the votes of a Senator Nelson and Goldsworthy of my own county. He (Conner) stopped me in the hallway and told me I was to vote for Stevenson. I told him that I wouldn't do it. Conner was the biggest client our law firm had. We represented all his companies, businesses and interests. He had been a client of Mr. Goggins for a number of years. (Note: Brazeau was a partner in the firm of Goggins-Brazeau Law firm of Wisconsin Rapids.)

Mr. Conner and I had a verbal fight, witnessed by a hundred people in the hall, but I went in and voted against Stevenson. He (Conner) told me he was through with me and didn't want anymore to do with me. I was no friend of his and they nominated Stevenson that night. All of the LaFollett fellows voted for an old millionaire and he was elected to the

the U.S. Senate.

IN THE PAPER CITIES, THEY LOVE BOOKS

By Dave Engel

Municipal Historian

Can a strong healthy girl love a sickly puny man? That's an age-old question.

To be sure young man, take Rocky Mountain Tea.

Brings strength.

For sale by John E. Daly.

(1898 advertisement)

By 1898, the rough and tumble logging settlement called River Village has become a proud pair of River Cities.

In the late 19th Century, the rapids provides a valuable water power, using the latest technology of the time. That ingenuity institutes industries that continue to nurture the very essence of our community.

Brand new paper mills! At Nekoosa, Port Edwards, South Centralia and Biron.

As I prepared an address to be delivered at McMillan library in October, I found that 100 years earlier, Frank Garrison, T.E. Nash and L.M. Alexander had been invited as dinner guests of G.S. Biron to the premier local hotel, the Witter House. All four are paper mill managers.

Conspicuously absent: George Mead of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Company. George W. Mead I still makes his home in Rockford, Illinois, and the big mill at century's end is yet a gleam in J.D. Witter's eye ... and a heck of a mess in court.

Delicate negotiations are in process to join the two cities into one: Centralia

on the west side and Grand Rapids on the east, to become the single city of Grand Rapids. The blessed event will climax in 1900 with a dramatic wedding on the bridge.

The Paper Cities, October, 1898.

Each has its own newspaper, one Democratic (the *Centralia enterprise*) and one Republican (the *Wood County Reporter* of Grand Rapids).

To eliminate the saloon influence, all candidates in the upcoming election promise not to furnish liquor to voters during the campaign. According to the partisan *Enterprise*, Republican candidates violate the agreement immediately.

Epitomizing the rivalry between the cities, newspapers couldn't agree about the first snow of the season.

In Centralia, the event is pleasing to the eye: "The white flakes continued to fall for several hours and covered everything in sight with their mantle of purity."

In Grand Rapids, it is a meteorological assault: "Last Tuesday's driving storm of snow and sleet had the effect of stopping the city clock in the Grand Rapids city hall. Such weather as we have been having during the past ten days is enough to stop almost any clock."

Just before the turn of the century, there are two local high schools and two football teams:

Howe High school, also known as Grand Rapids High school, which

vanquishes a snappy little team from Wausau 6-0.

Says the newspaper: "For half an hour afterwards any one within a mile of the town would have known that without being told. The noise of the rejoicing hosts was simply terrific in recognition of the fact that the Howe Highs had maintained their record of not being scored against this season."

Across the river, Centralia high school plays Stevens Point.

On that day a century ago, not far from the Paper Cities, the Arpin Lumber Co. at Arpin is doing double the business of any other year through its four camps, employing 300 men and 75 teams, and advertising for more.

"100 Men Wanted! To Work in Logging Camps at Arpin, Wisconsin. We need at once, swampers, sawyers, and a few good loaders and teamsters. At good wages."

John B. Arpin is also distributing "fragrant smokes" to celebrate the birth of a first child.

His house on Drake Street will become slumlord property in the mid-20th century and is condemned and razed in the 1980s.

A group of ladies with Mrs. D. J. Arpin "comprise a merry party" who make a "pilgrimage to Arpin among the smell of ... the pines and giant oaks of that immediate vicinity."

On the west side, Centralia, they fear typhoid.

The Centralia Board of health have been quietly having the water analyzed by the state board of health. A chemist concludes that the river is not safe to drink from.

The Spanish American War of 1898 lasts a few months. Home from Puerto Rico are local soldiers, such as Chas.

Parker, a member of Dana's Third regiment band and Hugh Beadle with the Third Wisconsin regiment.

The new J.D. Witter traveling library has 27 libraries of 40 volumes, soon to be increased to 1,800 books passing from farmhouse to farmhouse. What that means, says the Milwaukee *Sentinel*, only those who have experienced the book hunger that farm life often engenders can really appreciate.

The distributing station for the traveling library is the TB. Scott library at Grand Rapids. Any group of ten persons can send in \$2 to pay part of the cost for the little bookcase which is sent along with the books and becomes the property of the new association.

At Arpin there is a library in the store of the Arpin Lumber Co., patronized by the loggers and sawyers.

At Nekoosa the collection of 40 is doubled and then trebled and now a popular subscription is being taken up to open a reading room.

At Port Edwards, the library is kept over the pigeon holes of the post office in the single store of the place.

At Blenker, the case stands open upon the counter of the general store.

One mother of eight who works 14-16 hours a day in the fields with her husband also serves as the librarian of her community. The library is set up over the cupboard in which she keeps her milk pans.

At another farmhouse, someone reads aloud while the rest of the family works.

In another, the patrons like to read straight through their library, beginning at a certain place on the shelves and keeping on in regular order, regardless of the kind of literature.

Books and libraries—very important to the Paper Cities of 1898.

**CONSOLIDATED PAPERS INC.
INVOLVED IN MERGER TALKS**

Now before you go out and buy or sell CPI stock, remember that this publication is a historical periodical and not a current events review.

But, yes, back in the summer of 1919, Consolidated Papers had extensive talks relating to a merger with another paper manufacturer. And who was this partner to be? Why none other than the neighbor down the river, Nekoosa Edwards Paper Co.

On August 14, 1919, George W. Mead wrote to L.M. Alexander (the two respective presidents of the companies), stating, "Would you and your directors enter into a discussion looking toward a possible consolidation of Nekoosa Edwards Paper Company and Consolidated Water Power and Paper Company?"

Mead's reasons for seeking such a merger were that they did not have a local supply of chemical wood pulp and that sulfite pulp that they obtained from their Appleton mill "is not suitable for the grades that we make." NEPCO's mills at Port Edwards and Nekoosa were operating three chemical pulp plants, two sulphite and one Kraft. They had an excess of chemical wood pulp. Incidentally, chemical wood pulp is obtained by cooking the wood to release the cellulose fiber. It is superior to ground wood fiber which is abraded out of the wood.

Mead went on to speculate on the efficiency of such a merger as it related to all operations but especially in purchasing of raw

materials, (including pulp wood), personel, accounting and especially sales.

"These suggestions touch upon the important gains only which could be made by a merger, for every department of such, the plants could get an added benefit in one way or another." Mead's letter went on to say.

L.M. Alexander passed Mead's letter on to Judson Rosebush, President of Patten Paper Company in Kaukauna, and also a director of Nekoosa Edwards Paper Co. Rosebush was asked to meet with Mead to formulate initial plans and then Alexander would join in on the talks. Rosebush agreed to Alexander's request and accordingly set up a meeting with Mead. But in a letter to Alexander, he suggested that the Wisconsin Pulp and Paper Company of Stevens Point, owned by Charles Babcock, be included in the merger. Rosebush's reasoning was two fold: "I do not believe the Interlake mill, (Appleton) belongs in the property of consolidation at all and personally I would rather not have it in because the property is located on a leasehold both as to land and water power owned by the Green Bay and Mississippi Canal Company." He added, "It also looks to me that with Babcock in the merger, Mr. Mead would not swing out so big a whip in the enlarged corporation and perhaps this would be disadvantageous from your (Alexander's) point of view."

Rosebush agreed with the concept and stated, "-- the lack of unity of point of view and management among various properties along the Wisconsin River has been a constant thorn in our flesh for many years

now and at the present time is a cantankerous sore. If we can eliminate this disharmony by unified efforts it certainly would be worthwhile."

Several meetings were held at the Valley Inn at Appleton, Wis. It was best that with the employee strike going on at the time at NEPCO's mills, it would not be wise for the strikers to know about the talks.

Ten typed pages of notes are on file from these meetings and served as a report by Rosebush back to Alexander. They outlined terms of the merger. On the matter of a name, Rosebush suggested 'Consolidated Nekoosa Edwards Paper Company' but Mead thought that this was too much of a mouthfull. The "Wisconsin Paper Company" was proposed but then dropped because it was too similar to Babcock's mill, The Wisconsin Pulp and Paper Company. It would have given the impression to New York bankers that the smallest mill was gobbling up the two larger mills in the deal.

The filling of positions followed and it was decided that Alexander and Mead would act as Chairman of the Board and president, who taking which position to be determined by the flip of a coin.

It looked like a great prospectus. It is noted that there were no major points of disagreement in the notes of the meetings. So what went wrong? I can't tell you, but for some reason the talks were called off. Consolidated built a new chemical pulp mill at Wisconsin Rapids and acquired the Stevens Point mill of Charles Babcock, which was to have been included in the merger.

Neppo decided that they had a surplus of chemical pulp and accordingly shut down their sulphite mill at Nekoosa.

This was not the first time that a merger of the mills had fallen apart. In 1907, a newspaper account states, "Within the next twelve months the International Paper Company will control the print paper market of the United States". "Sales to the International Paper Company said to have been about completed.--price paid for the plants said to run into the millions.--Grand Rapids mills are included."

In all sixty mills were to be included in the IP merger and the local mills involved included:

	Production Tons	
	Pulp	Paper
Nekoosa	90	.30
Consolidated	84	70
Grand Rapids	30	40
(Biron)		
J.E.Mfg.Co	50	50
P.E.Fiber Co	60	0
Centralia	18	25
Pioneer Pulp	6	0

Note the rather piddly production figures of the day. Today, one paper machine could produce the entire tonnage of all the mills and it would be considered a small machine!

This acquisition of mills by International Paper Company did not materialize. Why? I can't say for sure but most likely the federal Sherman anti trust act might have been a factor. It was about this time that Mr. Rockefeller's giant Standard Oil Company was being broken up as a monopoly.

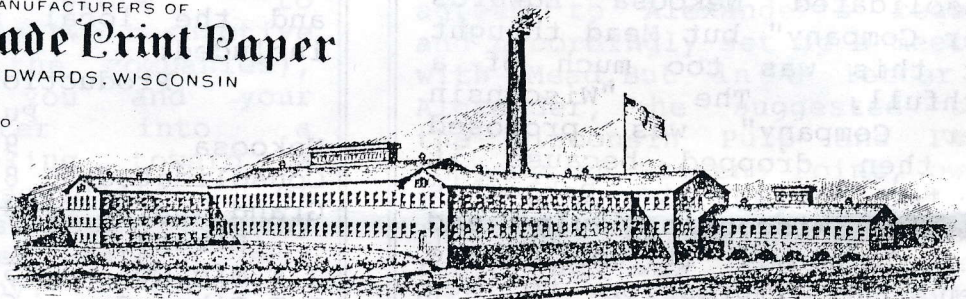
Nekoosa Edwards did merge with Great Northern Paper Company many years later and then with Georgia Pacific Corporation. Consolidated remains independent to this day.

LEWIS M. ALEXANDER, Pres. JOHN McNAUGHTON, Vice Pres. L. E. ALEXANDER, Secy

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Grand Rapids, Wisconsin,

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Sept. 22 1900

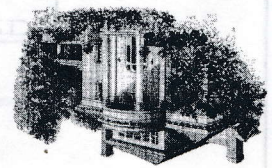


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