



ARTIFACTS

Volume 2001.1

Early Spring



This Old House...*Wisconsin Rapids* version.



For those of you enjoying period living and the complexities that go with owning an older home, you are in good company with the building that houses the South Wood county Museum. Isaac Witter did not know Bob Villa or Tim "the Tool Man" Taylor, but almost 100 years after construction began would wish they were both on the museum staff.

Many residents have watched as we have Undertaken the rigors of maintaining this structure, new sprinkler system, new porch, new lawn and more paint. But this winter has presented us with the next round of "issues". I know you are patiently waiting for the new white railing to be positioned on the front porch. For the aficionados...we are returning to the concept of a wooden system after the fiberglass bids came in too high. But you will be asked to wait a bit longer as our attention (and budget) this winter has been rerouted towards the chimney dilemma. Santa would have a tough time descending through the south chimney as it is collapsing from the inside. Last winter this deterioration caused the furnace to shut down and our rescue team emptied 2 garbage cans of sand, plaster and crud out of the basement exhaust....remember all of our chimneys extend three floors.

This year, what we thought to be an ice dam pushing water through crevices into the exhibit areas, is actually the next phase of the chimney falling apart...now it has our full attention. currently we are working with contractors to develop a plan that can be orchestrated as soon as the weather allows in spring. This will mean that the "Betty Boop" exhibit will be temporarily closed as will an area on the second floor where damage has already occurred.

I guess we will provide another round of entertainment to the "construction minded". This might make *Junkyard Wars*, a TV Program my family finds intriguing, look good. Stay tuned for more episodes as we embark on the next series of *Witter's This Old House*.



NEWSPAPERS IN OUR AREA

This may sound exaggerated in our thinking today, but at one time Wisconsin Rapids, (Grand Rapids then) supported six newspapers not to mention the Nekoosa Tribune. I guess our grand parents relied on the newspaper for their news and entertainment and not TV.

There was a newspaper as early as 1857 when on November 28th of that year, the first issue of the WOOD COUNTY REPORTER was published by J.N.Brundage. Other printers must have thought that newspapers were profitable and accordingly the following papers came into being.

The Daily Reporter
Centralia Enterprise
Grand Rapids Tribune
Wisconsin Valley Leader
Wis. National Zeitung

The last one listed was a German language newspaper for the people of that heritage residing in the area. Sorry to say, the French, who were very plentiful and influential, did not have a French newspaper!

Through consolidations and buy outs, the papers eventually dwindled down to only one in 1920 when Wm. Huffman Sr. started publishing the Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune. The name has since been changed to The Daily Tribune and is no longer published by Huffman.

Excerpted from HISTORY
OF WOOD COUNTY.

WANTED::: Alexander House and the museum will buy your copies of the book, NEKOOSA STORY, published in 1987. The book was sold for five dollars at the museum. All copies are sold out and if you want to spare a copy we will buy it back for five dollars. So you had a chance to read it for nothing!

LEADERSHIP TALK::: Pam and Marshall were guest speakers at the Chamber of Commerce Leadership Training Course. Pam spoke on the museum facilities and our overall projects and operations. She also presented a Paul Gross video. Marshall presented a slide tour of the area the way it looked 125 years ago. The majority of the attendees were new to the area and accordingly were enlightened into our heritage.

PARKING AREA LIGHTS::: Have you noticed that our parking area has two classic ornamental light posts that are now illuminated at night. The three globe posts were there for some time but we were having trouble finding a glass globe for one of them. Now there are three globes on each one and they add a distinguished look to our grounds.

A THANK YOU::: To John Billings who came in and helped the staff mail out the annual fund letters. John is one of our docents at the museum and a good one at having around. He can tell you a story about most any subject of local history that you name. Thanks John and we look forward to your help this summer when we reopen the museum.

HUMOROUS ADVERTISEMENTS

THESE ADVERTISEMENTS ARE REPRODUCED FROM A 1913 CITY DIRECTORY. THEY SHOULD GET A CHUCKLE FROM YOU AS YOU COMPARE THEM WITH SIMILAR BUSINESS ADVERTISEMENTS OF TODAY.



G. J. HAYES, Proprietor

A FIRST CLASS HOTEL

Good Sample Rooms in
Connection

Clean Rooms and a Good
Table

Corner Grand and Fourth Aves., Grand Rapids, Wis.

We Weld Cast Iron, Steel, Aluminum, Brass and Iron
Tires Vulcanized, Auto Supplies

JENSEN BROTHERS

Agents for Case, Reo, Oakland and Little Cars

106 4th Avenue South

Grand Rapids, Wis.

E. T. McCARTHY

The Leading Horse Shoer of the city of Grand Rapids,

Shop on the cor. of Third and Oak St. East Side

Horse Shoeing is my specialty, my shop is convenient and lots of light to treat horses feet right and lots of room.

I also have a feeding and boarding stable in connection with my horse shoeing shop. My stable is of brick, 36 by 60 feet, and has all the latest improvements for good accommodations.

I have a black Imported Percheron Stallion, the only Imported Percheron Stallion in Wood County. He weighs between 1900 and 2000 pounds; I also have a trotting bred stallion weighing 1200 pounds.

E. T. McCARTHY

HOTEL WITTER

This hotel is under new management and has no connection with any other house.

BEST BEDS IN THE STATE

GOOD SAMPLE ROOMS

ORCHESTRA EVER SUNDAY

AN A 1 BILL OF FARE EVERY DAY

Rates \$2.00 Per Day

Good as any \$2.50
Per Day House

D. J. GEROW, Proprietor

Drink Grand Rapids Beer

Phone 177

For durability use Mackinnon Wagons, light and heavy.
They give satisfaction

O. A. POLZIN, Hardware

FOR PIANOS ON EASY TERMS, SEE
MRS. F. P. DALY,

Exclusive Dealer, Phone 198, Residence 903 Eighth Ave.

A full line of staple and fancy dry goods in large assortment always in stock. All the latest novelties in neckwear, etc.

BRAZEAU MERCANTILE CO. Nekoosa

CLARA SMITH MEMOIRS

A continuation of excerpts from a tape recording made by Clara Smith in 1958-a part of the museum's extensive oral history resources.)

Q. In the early days was there a cranberry association?

A. No not in the early days. Each grower sold separately. I remember my folks talking about the Piper Brothers in Saint Louis that sent a man up here to buy berries. And then there was a wholesaler in Milwaukee who came here and went from one grower to another and bought berries. He would tell one grower that he bought so and so's berries for so much and would you be willing to sell yours at that price. Sometimes you would find out too late, that they didn't get the berries for the price they said. They had paid more than what they said they paid. There was quite a bit of that going on and I understand that is why they got together and decided they had better get an association. The association would sell the berries and set the price instead of letting the city boys come in and 'hoodwink' the growers.

So they formed this association to help the growers. They helped each other out. They had trouble shooters that would go out and try to solve your problems. They got the orders and took care of complaints. You didn't have to wait for someone to come to your house and set their price for your crop. I think it was 1902 or maybe 1903 that the association was

formed.

Q. What was the name of the association?

A. I believe it was the Wisconsin Cranberry Sales Company at that time.

Q. What is the name of the association now?

A. Oh, I think there are three now. They sort of split up. It's a mixed up affair now. Each association took some of the growers. There's Eatmore, and National and I don't pay much attention anymore since I sold out. I just eat the berries. (Chuckles).

Q. Weren't you secretary of the association at one time?

A. Yes, I was. There was an association of growers and they took care of the growing of the berries. The sale of them was handled by the Sales company. They were different organizations. Yes, I was secretary for fifteen years. But when my mother died, I had too much to do as I was running the marsh then and I decided I didn't have time to continue as secretary of the association so I resigned.

Q. Can you tell us more about the early days on the Marsh? What about the people who worked on the marsh?

A. We didn't have big groups coming in to work on our marsh for us. You see, we had a small marsh and dad always thought he wanted something that he could handle pretty much by himself. He was not a strong man so he would call in some Indians to work. I remember when Indians would come in and work. There were hundreds at a time. They

had their camp in the area and would work on all of the marshes. I loved playing with the Indians but I didn't like their food. They had their pow wows and some of the bigger growers had dance halls. They had dances, sometimes every other night until ten thirty in the night. That was about two hours and on Saturday they went to midnight. And they had a hilarious time, specially after they had a little of the 'firewater'. But we didn't have and trouble at our place because we did not have big crowds. When dad died, we didn't have dances anymore. The dance hall was turned into a storage shed. Mr. Bennett, our nearest neighbor, had a nice big hall and he was right there to see that the crowd behaved. If they didn't, they got out quick. Gaynor's had some pretty nice dances. My cousins and I went to them. Big crowds, mostly Oneida Indians. They were good dancers. The growers thought that the dances limbered up the workers. You see, they worked on their hands and knees a lot of the time and you got pretty cramped by the time the day was done. And it did help limber them up for the next day.

Note: Clara's tape goes on but deals with family genealogy. Next issue we will start the memoirs of Minnie Getz. Wisconsin Rapids pioneer.

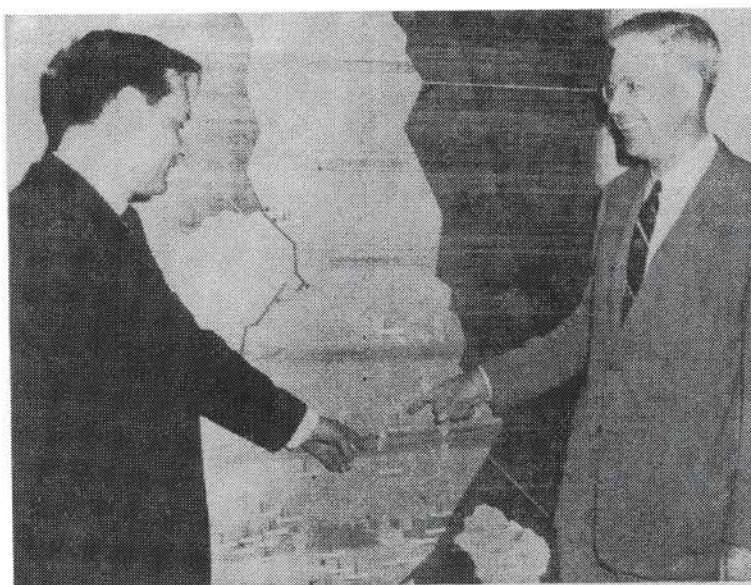


River City Memoirs

CONSOLIDATED *Part One of Two*

Rapids men: *The Meads*

By Dave Engel
Municipal Historian



BRIEFED FOR TOUR — Stanton W. Mead, president of Consolidated Papers, Inc., gets advance briefing about industrial sites in Finland which he and his technical assistant, G. K. Dickerman, are now visiting as guests of the Finnish Paper Mills Association. At left is Pentti Mahlamäki of the Madden Corp., New York, who is accompanying the group of U.S. and Canadian paper industry executives on this tour, which will continue until June 5.

1965

Appropriately, it was at the pub of the Hotel Mead that my companion, literary agent Mary “Casey” Martin confided, “The Finns are coming.”

“Who are ‘the Finns?’”

“Does the name Stora Enso mean anything to you?”

“Let me guess; he discovered America?”

The Finns

Stanton Mead knew who the Finns are and he didn’t wait for them to tumble into the breach. He went to them, thirty-five years ago, when Consolidated was securely established and nearly synonymous with Wisconsin Rapids. If anybody was going to get bought, it was going to be the other guy.

In March, 1965, Stanton W. Mead, president of Consolidated Papers, Inc., the world’s leading producer of coated enamel papers, and Mead’s assistant, G.K. Dickerman, joined a “friendship tour” of Finland as guests of the Finnish Paper Mills Association.

The two-week tour, arranged by New York agents, included forestry installations, research centers and mills manufacturing both paper and pulp.

The program had been sponsored since 1957 to express Finnish gratitude to U.S. and Canadian paper companies that helped rebuild Finland’s facilities after World War II. The 1965 Finnish industry was rated among the world’s most modern and efficient, a major supplier of paper to European markets.

At the Millennium, in what has become a familiar cycle, “the Finns” are picking up U.S. and Canadian paper mills like so many Nokia phones.

Stanton

It almost seems like it’s too late to write about Consolidated without Catherine Boyce at her familiar Third Street house to read the results.

Years ago, when I published a photo of an unidentified Stanton Mead walking

across the old Grand Avenue Bridge to the Elks Club for his customary game of cards, she phoned me. *You know who that was, don't you?*

Catherine Boyce was one of the countless residents who *knew* Consolidated, and, more than most, she knew the Meads; her husband, Ira, had been a fixture of the Consolidated administration.

But even for the rest of us in Rapids, Consolidated seemed to be *our* company and Stanton Mead was a neighbor. He had spent most of his life right here in River City and, when he died in 1988, the 88-year-old still resided in the house his father had given him as a wedding present in 1926.

"You could have lived anywhere in the world," I challenged him in 1987.

"I'm a small-town boy," he said. In his mind, there was no choice.

Forty years ago, accepting the 1959 Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year award, he remarked, in his earnest, unassuming manner, "I treasure my friendship and association with the people of Wisconsin Rapids, and the fact that you think I'm okay means an awful lot to me."

The award had been prompted by philanthropy. In Mead's words: "The fine public acceptance of our gift to the state of our long-held Little Eau Pleine lands as the George W. Mead Wildlife Area was an exhilarating experience."

As his father's son, Mead considered it his duty to be a good citizen overall and more particularly, to perpetuate the success of Consolidated.

In 1965, he said, "Our objectives have been to safeguard our resources, to make appropriate revisions in our processing and methods, to keep abreast of progress in all departments, to broaden our product lines and markets, to be adaptable to needs for expanded service, and, in short, to live a full life in our particular environment.

"To date we have not given serious thought to mergers nor to radical types of diversification such as acquiring a printing plant (or) to plan additional mills or converting plants in other sections of the country."

During Stanton's term as president, 1950-1966, the company undertook extensive expansions, developed a major marketing program for its coated papers, competed in the laminated plastic field, capitalized on changing technology and contributed to water purification and forest management programs

Among his honors, and one that Mead certainly cherished, was his election, in 1954, as president of the Samoset Council of the Boy Scouts of America. He had already received Scouting's Silver Beaver award.

In the late 1980s, after five years of trying to break through a mutual reticence, we arranged an interview: "Just come in the back door," he said.

I parked behind the mansion that is now headquarters for Northland Cranberries. It was early but on the back step was a freshly-drained Point Special beer bottle.

"Have your fun but don't expect a lot from the old man," he cautioned.

Mr. Mead

Stanton's father, George W. Mead, at the age of 88, had been present at the acceptance ceremony at Eau Pleine, seated in a car in the care of a nurse.

The relationship between the senior George Mead and Wisconsin Rapids had begun before the turn of the century. At the University of Wisconsin, he became friends with Isaac Witter, son of Consolidated pioneer Jere D. Witter, and later married Isaac's sister, Ruth. When Mead was asked by his mother-in-law, Emily Witter, to go forward with the paper mill project after the death of her husband, J.D., he agreed.

In the course of his life, the fact that "Mr. Mead" continued to live here had a positive effect on the Wisconsin Rapids and Stevens Point areas.

The industrialist, financier and philanthropist died in 1961 at age 90 at his home on The Island and was buried at Forest Hill Cemetery, Wisconsin Rapids. His death brought recognition of a legacy from those who knew him well.

The *Tribune*: "Structures built, jobs created, products manufactured, power harnessed, educational institutions guided, recreation provided, churches fostered, charities aided – these are the astonishingly diverse accomplishments of George Mead."

Dr. Gus Turbeville, Northland College: "When asked why he did not establish permanent residence in Florida to escape the heavy income taxes of this state, Mr. Mead replied, 'I earned my money in Wisconsin...I'll pay my taxes in Wisconsin.'"

Rapids Mayor Nels M. Justeson: "Wisconsin has been a better place in which to live because George Mead has lived with us."

Biron Village president Phil Nobles: "We owe much to him, and we who knew him in his active years will always remember and hold dear all the personal contacts and his most understanding friendship."

Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co. president and general manager John E. Alexander: "The record of his deeds is equally distinguished by his abiding interest in and unswerving devotion to civic progress in all its phases."

Attorney T.W. Brazeau: "A day didn't pass in his life that he was not thinking of some way of improving and beautifying the city. Nearly every one of our great public improvements may well be credited to his influence and initiative."

Superintendent of schools R.E. Clausen: "His activity in our community through the years has pointed up vividly his great interest in young people."

Chamber of Commerce president Carl W. Guelcher: "Among his many contributions to the area, his beautifying of the river banks and the acquisition of lands, principally in the Wisconsin River areas, for later public use will be appreciated and enjoyed for many generations."

Central Labor Council president Reinhard Ziehr: "and he was never too busy to take a deep personal interest in the welfare of his employees."

Library board president Mrs. Arthur Hayward: "The beautiful building now housing the T.B. Scott Public Library was Mr. Mead's personal gift to this city and, as such, it stands as evidence of his deep-felt interest in promoting library services in our community."

Congregational church president Roger Hornig: "His talents, both material and spiritual, were freely given and seemed to multiply because of this generosity...By 1908 he was teaching his now famous class in the church Sunday school. Not a few men of Wisconsin Rapids still remember and feel his influences as a teacher."

George

Remember mention of Stanton Mead receiving the citizen of year award? It had been presented by his son, George, the third Mead to preside over the company and a figure who continued a tradition of loyalty to Wisconsin Rapids.

Commented the *Milwaukee Journal* of December 18, 1966, "Just as his grandfather and father before him, Mead has become absorbed in the paper industry. He was asked if, as a younger man, he had had any thoughts of not joining the company."

"It never occurred to me to do anything else," he replied with a grin. "I'm the oldest son of an oldest son, and granddad and dad indoctrinated me."

Henry

Other members of the family were influential here.

In April 1963, came the death of Henry P. Baldwin, 60, Consolidated vice president. His widow, Emily, was daughter of George Mead I and sister to Stanton.

From his start in 1933 as a shift worker, Baldwin advanced up the administrative ladder to become Stanton Mead's right hand man.

Said Stanton: "In the passing of Henry Baldwin I have lost a big part of my own self."

Walter

Stanton's brother, Walter L. Mead, 61, a vice president and director, died in 1964. The Consolidated sales manager before his 1953 retirement, had spent his childhood in Wisconsin Rapids.

Dorothy

Dorothy Elizabeth Mead, 62, Stanton's wife, died in 1966 at Lakeland Hospital, Woodruff, near the couple's Hazelhurst vacation home. She was the daughter of Ashland, Wis., mayor and *Daily News* publisher Burt Williams, later a promotional director of CPI and owner of a Biron cranberry marsh. Williams also directed the U.S. senatorial campaign of George Mead I.

Emily

George's daughter and Stanton's sister, known to us in the 1980s as Emily Baldwin

Bell, was named Citizen of the Year in 1978.

A sample of causes Emily contributed time and money to: the conversion of the T.B. Scott library as historical museum; McMillan library; Riverview Hospital; First Congregational Church; Girl Scouts; Wisconsin History Foundation; State Historical Society of Wisconsin; Elvehjem Art Museum, Madison; Beloit College; Northland College; Carroll College; University of Wisconsin; Wisconsin Development Authority; Wisconsin Federation of Women; Republican party.

Emily was a member of the CPI board of directors and the board of Consolidated Civic Foundation besides serving as an officer in numerous state and local organizations.

As past president and board member of the South Wood County Historical Corp., she, at her Island home, received a committee (including myself) seeking funds to rehabilitate the Third Street museum.

"How much do you want?" she demanded sharply and wrote out a check for \$25,000.

Lt. Henry P. Baldwin

The February 1963 *Tribune* headline read *Rapids Man Among 43 Plane Crash Victims*.

Emily's son, Army Lt. Henry P. Baldwin, 24, a Wisconsin Rapids native, was killed in 1963 when a Northwest Orient Airlines plane crashed in the Florida Everglades.

Baldwin, stationed at Ft Lewis, Wash., on leave from Consolidated and scheduled for discharge from the Army in two weeks, had stopped at Miami Beach to see his ailing father, Henry Baldwin.

The lieutenant was a *Rapids man*. Every Mead had been a Rapids man or woman and Rapids proved to be better for it.

PERSONAL PRIVATE CONFIDENTIAL

(Excerpts from the 1878 diary of John Edwards, Jr.)

Mar.4 Went up to Mill Creek camp today. Not a particle of snow on ground.

Mar.6 Got home from Mill Creek today. Two camps on creek got 2,500,000 (board feet) in water tonight.

Mar 9 Got home from Stevens Point. Sold Mr. Hart the lumber we had at Riley and Bosworth mill. 32,720 ft. @ \$10.00 per Thousand.

Mar.11 Weather warm. Rained hard. Putting the booms in river today.

Mar 12. Horse teams came out of woods today.

Mar 19 Cattle came out from Mill Creek today.

Mar 21 Crew came down from Mill Creek (log) drive tonight. T.B.Scott returned from Madison.

Mar22 Started up the mill this morning. Good flow in river. Benedick came to work this morning @ \$20.00 per month. Chimney burned out today in my house.

Mar 27 Signed note with Wm. Edwards(Brother) from this date @ 10 percent for \$250.00.

Apr 1 Engine set fire in Farrish field today.

Apr 2 Town meeting today. 53 votes cast of which I received the whole as chairman.

Apr 12. Up to Mill Creek camp with T.B.Scott. Stopped tonight at Quinn's camp.

Apr 13 Home from Mill Creek today. The sack at 10AM down to opposite the farm. (Located on Mill Creek)

Note: Sack means to temporarily stop a lumber or log drive as it floated down a stream.

Apr 16 Went up to Mill Creek Drive at RR bridge. (Between Rudolph and Junction City. in Portage County.) The rear of the logs coming just in at the bridge tonight. Water very low and falling. Quinn and his men came down from their drive and joined Con. (Nick name of foreman).

Apr 22 Rained hard all night and forenoon. Am hiring log drivers today.

Apr 23 Up to Grand Rapids today. Sending log drivers up to Mill Creek today. River rising fast.

Apr 29 Quinn got the rear of his drive through the RR bridge today. Con got his drive out of Mill Creek today and moved to Stevens Point.



It's a good thing that John Edwards left a forwarding address. Otherwise he might not have received his tax refund! Or was the Treasury Department sending a statement for taxes due? The contents of this envelope are unknown but what is interesting is that the letter sent to Grand Rapids was forwarded to Frenchtown which is now Port Edwards. The village was known as Frenchtown from its inception in 1840 until 1869 when the name became Port Edwards. The latter name was chosen because it was a logging port on the river and to honor John Edwards. However, whether it was John Senior or Junior that was being honored is not clear. Nevertheless, the Edwards name as been perpetuated.

*Franklin Frenchtown
Max Co.
Jno. Edwards Jr. City*

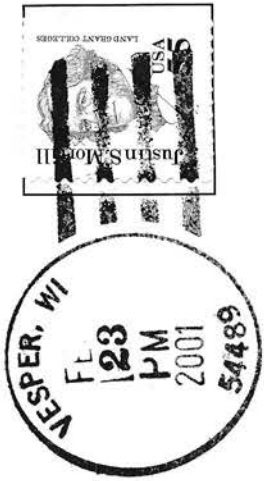
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