

ARTIFACTS

Volume 2003.1

Early Summer

Serving up Summer

Memorial Day signaled the beginning of a new season at the museum. The hours of operation have changed this year so please visit us on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday between 1 and 4pm to view your favorite exhibits.

The Master Gardeners are busy coaxing blossoms to open and everything is so colorful. These dedicated volunteers will continue to work throughout the summer insuring us of a building surrounded by beauty.

Karen has spruced up the inside to welcome school children who have been touring since April. They have enjoyed the railroad station and the school room, plus the cranberry exhibit and Witter family history, and finally the animations of Grim Natwick. Students are encouraged to return in the summer with parents and grandparents for another, longer peak at the rich history of our area.

Summer will find staff members working on 5 different collections along with supervising the floors and processing recent donations. The general photo collection will be reconfigured for easier use, the Wood County Normal School materials will be completed by the end of August and we will tidy up some database work that was begun last summer on a number of small collections. Molly Adams, Amy Konietski and Amy Klein will serve as museum assistants this summer. Stacy Lobner will join them in July when she returns from Australia.

And finally, our resident storyteller John Billings will be at his post near the front door ready to tempt you with the secrets of Wisconsin Rapids yesteryear. He enjoys recounting all those wonderful stories to eager audiences.

Come and visit, we are all waiting for you.

Museum Hours

Memorial Day – Labor Day

Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday

From 1-4 pm

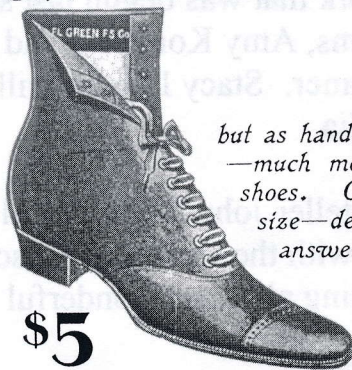
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Practical Housekeeping in 1881

~Eating snow, except in *very* limited quantities, is very injurious, producing catarrh, congestion and many other troubles.

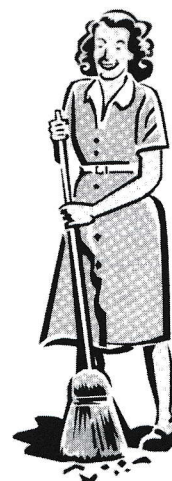
~Jumping the rope is an injurious and dangerous amusement, often resulting in disease of the spine and brain.

~Bathe children in the forenoon when possible, or, if not too tired, and hour before the evening meal; *never for at least an hour after eating*. When possible bathe before an open fire or in a warm room near, and rub dry before an open fire. It is injurious to bathe children on rising before breakfast, especially in cold weather. Washing the face, neck, and hands, and dressing, is enough before refreshing the body by eating.

~Great care should be given that children are not fed with milk that has been turned by a thunderstorm. The chemical change is rapid, and extra caution is necessary.

General Housekeeping Suggestions for Living in 1881

On Monday, wash: Tuesday, iron: Wednesday, bake and scrub kitchen and pantry: Thursday, clean the silverware, examine the pots and kettles, and look after store-room and cellar: Friday, devote to general sweeping and dusting: Saturday, bake and scrub kitchen and pantry floors, and prepare for Sunday. When the clothes are folded off the frame after ironing, examine each piece to see that none are laid away that need a button or a stitch. Clean all the silver on the last Friday of each month, and go through each room and closet to see if things are kept in order and nothing going to waste. Have the sitting-room tidied up every night before retiring. Make the most of your brain and your eyes, and let no one dare tell you that you are devoting yourself to a low sphere of action. Keep cool and self-possessed. Work done *quietly* about the house seems easier. A slamming of oven doors, and the rattle and clatter of dishes, tire and bewilder every body about the house. Those who accomplish much in house-keeping—and the same is true of every other walk in life—are the quiet workers.



MERIT AND WORTH WIN!
Native Grand Rapids Boys Making Good

It's a Pleasure to their Relatives and Friends to Watch their Progress and Success in Life

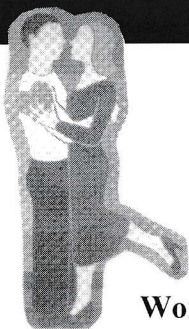
Wood County Reporter~ Thursday, July 5, 1917



Names of those standing in the Picture, commencing at the left: Glenn Williams, Frank E. Compton, William J. Conway, Isaac P. Witter. Seated Oscar Winger, Theodore W. Brazeau, Dennis D. Conway, Roy Farrish, Guy Nash.

Isaac P. Witter was born in the city of Grand Rapids, Wood County, Wisconsin, May 11, 1873. He attended the public schools of the city, and graduated from its high school with the class of 1891. Entered the University of Wisconsin with the class of 1896, where he spent three years, leaving to associate himself with his father, Jere D. Witter, in the banking business. After spending two years in the bank of Grand Rapids, he continued his studies for a year in Berlin, Germany. Returning to Grand Rapids he again affiliated himself with the Bank of Grand Rapids, and became its President in 1902, which position he holds at the present time. He has also been actively engaged in other varied business interests in the

city of Grand Rapids. He was elected Commissioner on the Board of Education, of the city of Grand Rapids, in 1899, on which Board he has served continuously with the exception of two years, acting as its President for the past five years. He has been a Director of the T. B. Scott Free Public Library in the city of Grand Rapids, for the past sixteen years. He has served for the past two years, on the Good Roads Organization of Wood County. He has always been interested in every public question, and actively identified with every movement for civic betterment. He was elected to the state senate in 1916, receiving 6,331 votes against 3,706 votes for Carl C. Hoehne, Democrat.



Woman's the Cause of It All

When a man waxes his mustache and
tries to look neat,

 Woman's the cause of it all;
He brushes his clothes from his head to
his feet,

 Woman's the cause of it all;
He walks down the street, a young lady
he'll meet,
He's caught by her smile, because she
looks neat,
But when he feels the effect of her
husband's big feet,

 Woman's the cause of it all.

When a man's married a year he loses
his brain,

 Woman's the cause of it all;
One year, that's all, and he's fully
insane,

 Woman's the cause of it all;
A baby is born, he raved and he swore,
He carries the kid and walks over the
floor;
One kid is enough, he don't want any
more,

 Woman's the cause of it all.

Adam one time the apple did bite,

 Woman's the cause of it all;
He must have done wrong, for he didn't
do right,

 Woman's the cause of it all;
Mother Eve made him do it, he wasn't to
blame,
And when they got Abel they started to
raise Cain
And now the whole world is doing the
same—

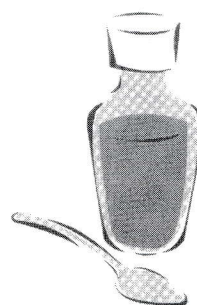
 Woman's the cause of it all.

1 oz. hor-round (?)
1 stick licorice
1 lb. loaf sugar
1 cup New Orleans molasses

Boil licorice in a little water until
dissolved

Take 2 spoonfuls flaxseed and 1 piece of
slippery elm about 6 inches long.
Boil in pint of water, then strain through
cheese cloth.
Boil twice, again putting through cloth.

Put everything together and boil until all
are smooth.
Put in little brandy and bottle.



Sore Throat Gargle Recipe

1 teaspoon Chloride of Potash
2 tablespoons of Extract of Witch Hazel

Put into large teacup and fill with boiling
water and gargle every five minutes until
relieved.
Then take a dose of salts.

Getting to know Emily and Jere's kids

Continuing the saga of Rapids' first family

By Dave Engel
Municipal Historian

What exactly was wrong with his wife?

That's what J.D. Witter asked Walter Kempster in a letter dated May 15, 1876.

J.D. Witter (1835-1902): Grand Rapids, Wis., bank owner with shares in almost every important enterprise. A founder of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Company, later developed by his son-in-law, George W. Mead. The Third Street house of J.D.'s son, Isaac, became the T.B. Scott public library and is now the South Wood County Historical Corp. museum.

Kempster, of the Northern Hospital for Insane, Oshkosh, Wis., said he had received a letter from J.D.'s brother, George Witter, a physician, explaining Emily Witter's symptoms.

"Mental weakness invariably follows mental excitement," said Kempster. "From the Drs description I presume Mrs. W. is entering into the stage of dementia and I have written to him fully...relative to her removal from home I would say, that if she can be cared for there it would be best to let her stay, if she can not have the care her case demands I should lose no time in placing her in the hospital."

Emily Witter had reason for despair. Her first born, Herbert Ellis Witter, had died in 1865 at the age of 2; her second-born, Laura Estelle Witter, died February 8, 1874, at the age of four. Also, Jere Witter's father, Josiah, in 1872; his mother, Calista, in 1874.

Water Cure

Shortly after her daughter's death, Emily, at Harrison's Water Cure, Milwaukee, received a letter signed "J.D. Witter."

Her husband had traveled to Tomah to meet a train on which he expected Emily to arrive but she wasn't on board.

"Now if there is anything under the Heavens that is annoying and provoking," he wrote, "it was to go the station expecting to meet 'the dearest friend you have' but no one shows and 'you don't know whether sick or dead. You [go] into [the] house, pass a sleepless night and go again the next day and meet with like results and so repeat."

Two years later, a friend wrote to Emily from Marinette, Wis.

"I learned through a letter from the Rapids that your health was very much improved indeed...I thank our Heavenly Father for your recovery. I had never given up the faith I had that you would be fully restored. L.P.B."

Dearest Little Fellow

Emily's sister, Laura, wrote from Grand Rapids, Mich., September 19, 1876, echoing Jere's letter.

"I do not believe there has been a morning but I have thought, 'I wouldn't wonder if Em and Jere came today,' and each night gone to bed disappointed.

"I suppose you are anxious to hear about Isaac [Emily and Jere's son, born May 11, 1873]. I find him at times quite unmanageable since we left. He finds out he can plague me by doing or not doing certain things and you may rest assured those are the very things he is sure to do or not to do.

"But he is the dearest little fellow that ever lived...He said the other day and says it often. 'Is my mamma coming after me when she gets all well?' And when I tell him yes and how much his papa and mamma love him and miss him he says, 'Oh no. I don't want to go to "sennie." [?] This is my home.' So I guess you will have to let him stay here altogether. You love another and don't need Isaac do you?"

Besides sister Laura, Emily's mother, Laura Phelps, also felt very close to her grandson, Isaac. "Emaly & Jerry, and dear little ones...Emm kiss the little ones for grandma I feel anxious to hear often from them. Isaacs dear little hurt face just haunts me still I think it will get well soon."

Birdie

The next letter available is from Laura, November 2, 1879, from Grand Rapids, Mich. It is addressed to Friendship, New York, where Emily had lived and now visited.

"We don't care if you stay East all winter—so that the babies are left here. Birdie & Isaac went to church with me this morning and Isaac stayed to Sunday School.

"Birdie [Isaac's sister, Ruth, born October 29, 1875] came home with Henry who was waiting for her with a sled when we came out of church. She has a new pair of kid shoes which she is very proud and careful of. Isaac has a new fur hat. They are perfectly contented.

"Birdie said the other day 'My mamma is good-but I shant let her take me away—I'll hang on to my Grandma—tight.'"

The next available letter is seven years later as Laura writes, March 11, 1883, to "My dear brother and sister."

"How did you find Birdie when you reached home Em? Dear children! How I would love to see them today."

Rapids to Rapids

To Isaac from Grandma Laura in Grand Rapids, Michigan, dated May 5, 1884, upon his return from Los Angeles:

"My boy tell grandma honestly have you seen any place that seemed any better or nicer or have you found any friends you liked any better than those of your native home that is of your birth place. I have been with you a great deal in thought the past winter, imagined I could see you as you went from place to place and know you must have enjoyed it so much..."

Also in or about 1884, Grandma Phelps wrote, "I was sorry to hear that your eyes were so weak and troubling you so much. I hope to hear they are stronger and that you were able to go on with your studies. I am glad you are pleased with St. Nicholas as you wrote to Aunt Laura."

Grandma also wrote to Isaac's then eight-year-old sister, Ruth.

"To Birdie my little pet – As I was writing to Isaac Grandma thought or felt as though she wanted to say a few words to you too so I will not get up from my chair until I have a little talk with you on paper. Thanks for your dear little letter please write again. There were some things I did not speak of in Isaacs that I will tell you and you can read to him and Ma and Pa so it will be just as well.

"Esther was married I think it was the 3rd of March to a Mr. Williamson he is not worth anything in money only as he earns every day. Your grandpa did not like him at all. I said but little but she knew just what we thought and how we felt but she wanted a home and if he is only good and kind I will find no fault..."

"Are you glad to get home or did you like it farther west much better?"

"Grandpa speaks often of his little pets..."

Traveling and Bathing

In April, 1884, the *Centralia Enterprise* noted Jere D. Witter had been "traveling and bathing in the far country, where the orange and the grape grow."

After portraying a busy scene at Witter's local bank, the *Enterprise* continued, "Take this state of things, an improved health, a complexion clarified by the sea baths, and a comfortable home awaiting one's return, where is the fortunate mortal who has more to be thankful for?"

Of that trip, "Deane" wrote from New York state to "Dearest Cousin Emma":

"We hear through George that you have returned home from your doubtless very pleasant tour in California and that your health has been improved by the change, which news I am very glad to hear and

sincerely hope it may be of lasting benefit to you."

From J.D., Nov. 14, 1884:

"My Dear Children...I wrote Isaac yesterday morning from Chicago and promised to write him again when we reached Grand Pa's..."

"Grand ma wondered why you were not with us. We told them you would be very glad to see them but that you were attending school, and that Isaac had recently been promoted and that he wished to hold his place and keep up with his class, but my dear boy you must not study or play too hard. Take it easy, and will come out just as well in the end.

"I wrote you yesterday not to hitch up the horse. I did so because I was afraid that some accident might occur and you get hurt. If you wish to ride have Beaty take you and Birdie out. And if it rains or snows have him take you to and from the school.

"Be good children. I know you will because you are good. Very good.

"We saw Aunt Sarah and Uncle Judson Stanton last evening."

Master and Mistress

The following day, on the letterhead of a Grand Rapids, Michigan, bank (Isaac Phelps, president), J.D. wrote to the children.

"How are you to day. Well, I hope and having a good time. Isaac he is master Birdie she is mistress running the 'home' to suit.

"Well do it well and have a good time. See that Beaty does his chores properly, gives proper care to the horse Daisy and to the colt Emma. And that Daisy has proper exercise. I know that you will see to the latter because you and Birdie will want a ride every day."

In return, Ruth wrote her father, "I received your letters to night and very glad to get them. Isaac and Eddie Fritzsinger went down after them.

"We are having a very good time with Augusta she is very good to us. We do not

have very big meals but we like them very well.

"I am very sorry that Cleveland was elected the girls said that he was shot by the cannon.

"Mr Batty took Lottie Lynn and I a riding yesterday and took us farther than we expected to go. I had a very nice time to the party I went to Saturday I am getting along very well at school.

"I hope you are having a very nice time with Grandpa and Grandma. Isaac has told you all the news so I must close now. Your loving child Birdie."

Hot Springs

From Hot Springs, Arkansas, J.D. wrote, March 26, 1885:

"We received Isaac's letter today and were very glad to get it. Have been to the office every day since our arrival here. Expected sure a letter from either Isaac or Birdie but have been disappointed each day, and had about concluded that you had forgotten us, but this evening when going in to supper found your letter on the stand.

"Our landlord had taken it from the office and placed it there for us. It is a good letter containing lots of news. And now one of you must write us each and every day. We shall probably remain here until April 6th or 7th when we shall start for New Orleans

"This place takes its name and character from the Hot Springs found here, springs from which flow hot water so hot that it will boil eggs. There are several of these springs. Over them they build bathhouses like the one at Santa Monica only nicer. In one of these mama and I take a bath each day.

"Look on your map and find Hot Springs. You see that it is in Arkansas which was one of the old slave states and there are many colored people here. They have given us a concert two evenings.

"A lot of 'niggers' come quietly into the house and the first we know they are playing and singing.

"Well Darlings you must be very good. Mind Mrs. Wagner and be happy—Yours Affectionately, Father."

From Emily in New Orleans, April 11, 1885, to "Miss Birdie Witter," Grand Rapids:

"Here we are at last away down South where it is warm and pleasant as in June.

"The flowers are everywhere in bloom, and the birds & chickens are twittering and cheeping happy as can be. I think it too warm to be out today. And papa has gone alone to the Exposition a place I have not yet seen as we just reached this place last night, and I had a bad headache for my comfort...

"Your episodes at church are very funny indeed. We have had a good laugh over them. And you must have felt queer too when you were locked out of your own house.

"I do not worry about you for I know Mrs. Wagner will do for you all that I could. Be good children. Give my love to Annie & Mrs. Wagner and all who may ask about me. Your Loving Mama."

Lectricity

April 12, 1885, from Ruth to "Papa and Mama":

"I am thinking of going to Sunday School to day. School will commence to-morrow it seems very funny to think about it.

"Frankie is getting cuter every day he will shake hands with you and he says papa and mama. I go up to see him a good deal.

"We went calling last night over to Mrs. Demmits and had a very nice time.

"We had another snow-storm last week but the snow only lasted a day. Its very muddy out in the road.

"There has been four things going on. First there was a man to the roller rink and he acted on skates. Second last night Edith Jackson acted fifty difficult movements on skates and Monday night there is going to be a man that is going throw out lectricity from his hand and lot of other performances and Thursday there is going to be a home theater

but of course we cannot go to any of them because not any of us have got any money but me and I do not want to spend mine.

"We are going to take Daisy out this afternoon and I expect we will have a nice ride. Annie Mrs. Wagner Isaac send our love."

"Good by

"Your loving daughter

"Birdie"

On the same day, J.D. wrote to his son.

"My boy Isaac

"You had no money therefore could not go to the oyster supper. That was wrong. You should have had money enough to go there or any where else when it was proper for you to go, and I ought to have left money enough with you or Mrs. Wagner to defray all expenses of that kind but I forgot it. Enclosed find CK on BK for \$5. Draw it and use it keeping an account of the same."

Precious Treasures

From Grandma Laura, Grand Rapids, Michigan, April 21, year unknown.

"Emaly, my dear child,

"Mother must write you to night if it be but a few lines to let you know how much you are in my mind. When I say you I mean all of you, Jerry and yourself and the two little precious treasures.

"There has been so much of sickness through the land during the past winter and present Spring so far I have at times had perhaps an undue anxiety concerning you and yours. Still this is nature and how can we help it.

"I do so wish we were nearer together to help and comfort one another for we all need at times building up encouragement mentally, morally and physically. We are poor weak critters at the best and we all of us as regards this are in the same boat and liable to the same reefs shoals and quicksand."

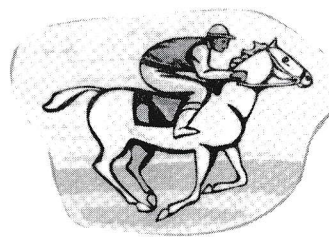
For previous correspondence regarding the Witters and for more information see River City Memoirs, especially Volume V.

Miscellaneous News Articles

- ❖ Mr. F. Bremer has been very sick for the last ten days past. He is confined to his bed. Mr. B. has now reached the advanced age of 83 years. At his time of life, a final recovery can hardly be hoped for.
- ❖ On Mill Creek, the other day, a mule deliberately committed suicide. He put his head through a post-and-rail fence, slipped his neck down to a narrow place, pulled back and choked himself. The cause of death is not known. He had not been drinking, and there was no trouble with his family. It is thought by some to have been the result of religious excitement.
- ❖ Mr. J.D. Witter has disposed of the west half of lot 1 in block 9 in this city. The purchasers are Wm. Scott and H.P. Chase. Consideration about \$2500. so rumor says.
- ❖ As stated in the *Tribune* of the 13th inst. Mr. H.P. Chase's nose was badly frozen, while he was hunting for working cattle in the southern part of this state. The accident will not disfigure H.P. as the southern end of the damaged limb is intact, but it is singular that a man of his age and experience should allow the elements to play with his nose in that manner, while he was along himself to protect it.



- ❖ Sally Ann, Mr. Billing's yellow trotting mare, is giving her owner signs of great coming speed. It is confidentially whispered that the owners of Bradley trotting stock will have to take the back seats whenever they make an attempt at passing her. She is a she-tornado in the bud, and let no man, who now laughs at her forget it. If anyone does, it will be to his sorrow, whenever Sally Ann is cut loose on the race track—Get out of they way, boys.



❖ 'Once upon a time...' 10 Years Ago Wednesday, March 9, 1938

The Winnebago word "Wa-zee-cha," (Lake of the Land of Pines) suggested by an Indian, James Decorah, town of Cranmoor, was selected by the judges in the contest to name the Wood county park lakes as the name for the lake on the Four Mile creek in the town of Grand Rapids. Twin Indian names, "Kau-ne-win-ne" and "Ma-Na-Ki-Ki" were chosen for the two lakes to be created on the Yellow river in the town of Richfield park in the northern part of the county. They were suggested by Mrs. R.J. Henrichs, Marshfield, and are respectively, the Indian names for the Yellow river and "maple forest."

WISCONSIN STATE FAIR MILWAUKEE

SEPT. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 AND 14
SIX DAYS - FIVE NIGHTS



FIFTY ACRES OF MACHINERY
THIRTY MAKES OF TRACTORS
GREATEST AUTOMOBILE SHOW
IN AMERICA: 100, 1919 MODELS.

20,000 SQUARE FEET OF EXHIBIT
ITS SENT BY U. S. GOVERNMENT.

10,000 SQUARE FEET OF ENG
LISH WAR EXHIBITS: FUNDS GO
TO RED CROSS.

WORLD'S BEST CATTLE, HORSES,
SWINE, SHEEP, AGRICULTURAL
HORTICULTURAL AND DAIRY
PRODUCTS: WOMEN'S WORK AND
FARM BOYS' AND GIRLS' WORK.

PREMIER POULTRY EXHIBIT
NEW BUILDING NEWLY
EQUIPPED.

MAMMOTH U. S. NAVAL TRAIN
ING STATION, "JACKIE" BAND
AND FULL QUOTA OF OTHER
BANDS AND ORCHESTRAS: DAY
AND NIGHT - ALL WEEK.

\$20,000 "WORLD'S WAR" FIRE
WORKS SPECTACLE: STAGE 450
BY 250 FEET: 500 PEOPLE
EVERY NIGHT.

\$20,000 WORTH OF CLEAN
HIGHEST CLASS VAUDEVILLE AND
CIRCUS ACTS: DAY AND NIGHT.

12 WORLD'S CHAMPION WREST
LERS, INCLUDING JOE STECHER,
ZBYSZKO, HUSSANE, WEDNES
DAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY NIGHTS.

TEN-ACRE PAY SHOW
WONDERLAND.

HARNESS RACING -
SEPT. 9, 10, 11, 12.

AUTOMOBILE RACING - SEPT. 13
AND 14: WORLD'S FASTEST
DRIVERS AND CARS.

STATE FAIR EDUCATES, INSPIRES
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DAYS 50 Cts. NIGHTS 25 Cts.
NO WAR TAX.

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The Ideal Bottled Beer

Made and Bottled under
the most sanitary
conditions.

Pure and Healthful

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Company