



August 2006 Volume II #10

South Wood County Historical Corp.

Artifacts



1955-56: "Old" Wood County courthouse, razed in favor of the replacement under construction (visible at right). (Photo from Joan Smiley.) **Inside:** Joan Haasl, 2-3; Gib Endrizzi's *This & That*, 4-5; Phil Brown's *Den of Antiquity*, 6-11; Canning & Ingraham logging photo, 12-13; Oldest co-op cheese factory, 14; Hollanders, 15; Brothers of the Bar, 16-18; 1926 *Ahdawagam* yearbook, 18-23; Earle Garber, Chula Vista band photo story, 24-25; Wood County Telephone Co., 26-27; 1856 Rapids vs. Plover, 28; SWCHC, 29; Slang, 30-31; Brother of the Brush, 32.

Joan Haasl

The Armory Fire

(See *Artifacts 9* for cover photo of the Nov. 12, 1938, blaze.)

During the day, the store we called “the shop” was a busy place with customers coming and going and salesmen standing around waiting for Pa to have a free moment. The phone was always ringing, the workmen needing questions answered about current and future jobs. Motors were being re-wound and this was precise work that had to be done exactly right.

Ed “Strangler” Lewis, the famous wrestler originally from Nekoosa, came to see Dad when Ed was in town. He had the biggest neck I’ve ever seen on a human. My mother always said he was her first date and that he was no bargain.

My dad had been a boxer at the University of Illinois and enjoyed boxers and wrestlers. I never knew him to have any interest in football, baseball or basketball. He did love hunting and fishing.

Now, to the night the old Armory burned to the ground. Located on the East Side riverbank, almost across the street from the old fire station, it was a beautiful building. Old postcards show its series of arches that gave it a distinctive look. I think that if it were standing today, it would be on the National Register of Historic Places.

Because Pa couldn’t get any of that kind of work done during the day, he worked on scaling blueprints for the bidding process after supper. I often went with him to the shop and did my homework while he worked. When finished, in nice weather, I would sit on the cast iron stoop and watch the cars go by. Sometimes Albert Bunde or Rudy Exner would stop and exchange a few words. Both were city cops. Both liked to fish and Rudy also loved to hunt. My dad liked both fellows. In fact, my dad liked just about everybody.

The night the Armory burned, I was sitting on the stoop when I saw white tufts of smoke coming from the Armory arches. I yelled, “Pa, the Armory’s on fire!”

Pa kept on working. I yelled again but he didn’t believe me. Both my folks thought I had a vivid imagination. Then I saw flames and yelled at Pa that the Armory really was on fire and that he should come quick. Finally, he looked out and said, “Jesus Christ, it is on fire.”

Perhaps it was a very short time but it seemed to us that it took forever for the fire house doors to open and the fire trucks to chug across the street. The Armory was a total loss. The next day, Pa and I walked over to see the ruins. Still smoldering, everything seemed to be in the basement. The drum and bugle corps instruments were melted globs of metal.

That was the end for what I still think was one of the prettiest buildings in Wisconsin Rapids.

Joan Haasl

The Shop

Its official name was Staub's Electric Shop and Motor Winding Works. My father always called his business "the shop." He was always opening the shop or closing the shop.

Once inside, Dad took his hat and coat off and was ready for the day's business. His motto was "If it's electrical and good, I have it."

I always thought the shop was a mini soap opera with a mix of characters coming and going all day. A selected few had access to the booze in the basement.

As I write this in the hot dry summer of 2003, the shop is gone forever. I worked at the shop on Saturdays during four years of high school. Some family members think it's odd I have no emotional reaction to its closing.

But on September 26, it had been 61 years since Dad locked the big front door for the last time. He died the next day, a Sunday. It was a long time ago.

Norm Utech bought the business from my mother and operated it for 20 years before he died. His widow, Marge, ran it for a short time before selling to the Krueger family. Now the two sons have closed the business and retired.

My son Dick bought the machinists' lathes and a bench with Dad's big old vise attached. He asked me to go with him to pick them up.

I looked the old building over from First to Second Streets and went the basement from front to back. From the main floor, I peeked through a hole in the dropped ceiling and saw the original old tin ceiling above but felt no emotion. My best memories are of people, not of a run-down old building.

Gib's This & That

Conceived as an emailing to friends and relatives, Gilbert Endrizzi's "This & That" shares artistic and historic images of his original home town, Hurley, Wis., his second home town, Wisconsin Rapids, and a lot of the rest of the world too. The story below comes from his father and reminds us that old men were boys and boys will be old men, that boys fought in World War I and that we should interview our parents immediately.

The commentary for these photos is taken from Gib's emails.

Following is a transcript of a second taped interview with Dad, dated about 1978

Voices from the Past Peno Endrizzi

"Jack Johnson was out making an exhibition tour. That was after he was dethroned as (boxing) champion. He was a really good boxer and fighter. He could do both — box and fight. And Red Erspamer got up and fought with Jack Johnson in Bonino's Hall.

"I think Otto (Erspamer) and I put on a exhibition bout — a preliminary to this fight. Jack Johnson fought Red Erspamer and several other locals from Ironwood and Hurley. He couldn't get any more big fights so he was making a tour through the country and stopping at all the jerk-water towns and he was scheduled to fight at Bonino's Hall this night.

"There was a fellow from Hurley — he was one of the Secors and related to Fa Secor's dad, Matt Secor, the old barber. They called him China Mascot.

"He lived out on the west coast and when they were putting on a boxing match at Bonino's Hall in Hurley, they got China Mascot all the way from California to fight some known lightweight, or a bantam-weight. And this was, oh golly, 1914 or 15, when we were just kids, see — maybe 13. And when we went up there and got into the ring, you'd think it was a grudge match the way we went after each other. It ended up as a draw, but we pounded the hell out of each other.

"The China Mascot was a really good fighter, classified in the regular fight ring. I can't recall who he fought at that time. It was a 10-round fight.

"They had some pretty good fights in those days. They used pretty light-weight gloves. I guess they were 4- or 6- ounce gloves. And when you were hit, it was just like a kick, for heaven's sake.

"I had a couple of matches in the navy, but I didn't go too far.

"I wound up in a battle royal, as I may have told you. There were 6 of us in the ring — three soldiers and three sailors, and I wound up the winner.

"They asked for volunteers and I was sitting up on a beam across the ring. We had these big beams that worked automatically to lift the cargo. The ring was set up in the middle of the deck just under one of these beams.

"I was up on top where I could see everything and I was looking down at the proceedings there and they were asking for volunteers. They needed one more guy and so, even without giving it a thought, I jumped down, about 20 feet into the ring.

"I took off my shirt and my blouse and they strapped the gloves on me and then the three soldiers and three sailors were lined up on the side of the ring and when the bell rang we all mingled together.

"This was while we were in troop transport. We were transporting troops across to France.

"Roy Allen was there and he took a picture of that and gol darn it, I don't know what became of that picture.

"The only one I can remember is a man by the name of Terussi. He was a pretty-good-size guy and he weighed about 175 pounds. Of course I went in there at a hundred and thirty, thirty-five pounds. That was my regular weight.

“And then there were these other fellows — the 3 soldiers and the other sailor. I don’t know who he was but I know he was a fireman, and he was a big strapping guy. One of the soldiers was also a good-sized guy.

“The big soldier and the big sailor got together and we assisted the sailor in getting after the big guy and so we got him out of the way right away.

“Then the three of us went after the other two soldiers. These soldiers were in and of course were bouncing around. They had a hell of a time trying to catch ahold of me because I’m skirting around and I was always hitting from the back. Finally we got rid of all three soldiers. So then there were just we three sailors left.

“So, I looked at Terussi and I said ‘Listen, now. If you want to save your hide, you better assist in getting rid of this big fellow, see.’

“So Gene started after him and I was in the back, pommelling him from the back. He turned around to gouge at me and Terussi would come in — he was a pretty good fighter, this Terucci — and so finally, we didn’t have to knock him out, you know, just so long as you knocked him down. That was the end of it, you see. So, finally we knocked him down.

“And then Terucci and I wound it up and I had the better win and outlasted him and he had to quit and so I got the hundred bucks.

“That’s when I made my trip over to Paris. And this John Backis — he died just a year ago, and oh how I wanted to go out and see him — we made the trip together to Paris. He was my buddy.

“This was on the USS Huron. The fight wasn’t planned ahead of time, but developed to provide entertainment.

“The boat was about 550 to 560 feet long. It was formerly the German ship Friedrich der Grosse — one of several ships we took over in New York harbor at the outbreak of the war. The Princess Irene was a sister ship and she was in convoy all the time.



“We travelled in a pack of between 15 to 25 ships. We had some action, but never lost any ships. Submarines were sighted a couple different times and we had destroyers along with us and when we’d sight submarines we would spread out and the destroyers would make a big round circle and they’d drop depth bombs. On two occasions we saw the oil come up . We also saw stuff floating around after the hits. We had 5-inch guns, and I was gun captain of one of these guns.

“We took over one of the Roosevelt brothers — Quentin, I think it was. We carried about 3500 men on each trip.”

WOOD COUNTY CENTURAMA
Narrative Script

SCENE II "THE WOOD COUNTY STORY"

Right after blackout on prologue
Pioneer family in place at C-2,
Indian Chief on Right Pylon,
5 Traders on C-3.

Spot picks up Pioneer
Family Tableau on C-2.

✓ NARR (1) THIS IS THE AMERICAN STORY, AND THE
STORY OF WOOD COUNTY, WISCONSIN. *@ this was*

NARR (2) new world rich with natural resources
beyond the dream of the ages. Rolling
back the great unknown of darkness and
the wilderness they came, across the
trackless ocean, seeking the right to
worship according to their like, to win
sustenance and fortune, to live their
lives untouched by tyrants rule.

RR (2) With
dauntless courage they dared the unknown;
with flashing ax they widened its trails
and cleared its great expanses; with
unceasing determination they built a
new era in civilization. With their
unquenchable spirit it was these
pioneers and their successors who opened
to all men....the FRONTIERS OF FREEDOM....
and built OUR GREAT WOOD COUNTY OF
WISCONSIN.

Phil Brown's Den of Antiquity



A regular feature from a SWCHC board member, historical collector and Cranmoor cranberry grower.

The portions of the script shown here from a 1956 performance was in the possession of Phil's father-in-law, Richard Brazeau, who had been instrumental in Wood County Centennial celebrations.

Iris out on C-1
Red spot picks up Right Pylon.

NARR (2) Our story begins with the Historic American
Indian. Wood County was claimed by various
tribes of Wisconsin Indians who never in
their history were hostile to the settlers.

Iris out on Right Pylon.

Spot picks up 5 traders on C-3.

NARR (5) When the first white man set foot into the territory, the most numerous were the Chippewa....who made their homes and villages along the Black River, the Wisconsin River, and other streams and waterways that now make up our community and the surrounding counties.

SCENE III "THE MEN OF DESTINY"

Field lights up..Red gelatins on...

RECORD # _____ CUT--

Indian brave runs in...pointing to traders on C-3.

NARR (2) A runner comes into the village, and informs the Chief that a group of white men *are* approach ⁱⁿ ~~the village~~. The Indians become immediately excited, for they have traded with the French, and after them the English, for many years. And since the organization of "The Great American Fur Co." by John Astor in 1809, they ^{have dealt} ~~began to deal~~ with the new masters of the territory; the Americans,,,, and have found them to be both fair and honest in their dealings.

Spot follows traders down to Chief.

Fur traders make short quick transactions...then sit in council.

NARR (4) The Fur Traders exchange gifts with the Chief of the tribe, making him a present of colorful trinkets and baubles in exchange for the valuable furs and hides they seek. The visitors are welcomed and invited to sit in council,,,, and the brave whose inherent duty it is to light the peace pipe,,, does so....and then presents it to the ruling Chief.

Brave lights peace pipe.

RECORD # _____ Cut--

White spot on Chief

(alternates 1, 2)

Green spot on Chief

Red spot on Chief

Amber spot on Chief

Pink spot on Chief

Blue spot on Chief.

Iris out on Chief

INDIAN DANCERS IN PLACE

RECORD # _____ CUT--

Red spot on center of C-1... follow girls down front. Vary light patterns to fit mood of dance.

NARR (2) The ceremony of the Calumet is about to begin...this scene had been repeated many times in the Indian villages between the Red man and the local Fur Traders..

NARR (5) The Chief takes the pipe and says:

NARR (3) I offer this to Wakantanka for all the good that comes from above..... I offer this to Makakin,, the Earth from whence comes all good gifts.....

(West) To you, Wiyo Peyata, who dwells where the sun falls, help us with the strength of the thunder.....

(South) To you, Ito Kagata, who dwells in the direction we face with out-stretched arms, may the sun shine ^{out} in full to us, and let the tribe live.

(East) To you, Wiyo Hinyapata, who dwells where the sun continually returns, send us good days, and let the tribe live.

(North) To you, Wazi Yata, who dwells whence comes the cold, send us the cold winters and let the tribe live.....

NARR (2) The Chief then orders that a great feast be prepared and the Indian Maidens are summoned to perform the DANCE OF THE SUN GOD.

NARR (4) (AS DANCE BEGINS) This ceremonial dance symbolized the mystery of the Indian god of light and fire. A ritual with a pulsating and vibrating recurrence from

the Unknown. This was a song of the Earth, an expression of thanks and a votive consecration to the spirits.

NARR (1) At a treaty negotiated in Chicago in 1833, this territory was ceded to the United States, and the Indians were removed to Iowa. Later they were given land in Kansas. The Indians of Wood County were not removed to Kansas, and many of them lived for some years in their former forest homes; however, with the influx of white settlers they were soon crowded from their homes and hunting grounds, and gradually drifted north and westward.

during dance

cut

NARR (5) ~~Historians have called the westward migration of the Indian.... "The Trail of Tears".... for they bade farewell to their ancestral homes and to the reservations they were moved.~~ One can never forget a tribute to the Redman....his customs and civilization....for they were indeedTHE FIRST AMERICANS.

LIGHTS OUT AT END OF DANCE
SCENE IV "UNTO THIS LAND"
MUSIC: "THIS IS MY COUNTRY"

(alternate 1)

NARR (3) Even before the land came into the possession of the United States Government, the first settlers had pushed into the Wood County Wilderness.

Spot on 3 Trappers on Right Pylon-Iris out
Spot on 2 Traders on C-3-Iris out
Spot on left pedestal and right platform
Lights upon right platform

NARR (2) First came the trappers.....
NARR (1) He brought need of the Fur Traders.....
And then came the home-maker and his family. The American emigrant now appeared on the scene, bringing with him

Spot on C-2...then follows
Whitney down to C-1

Lights up on C-1 and C-2.

NARR (4) In 1827 Daniel Whitney, of Green Bay, obtained a permit from the Indians to erect a sawmill and cut timber on the Wisconsin River. In 1831, Daniel Whitney, assisted by his nephew, and A.B. Sampson, built the first sawmill below Pointe Basse, and about ten miles below Wisconsin Rapids, at a spot that soon became familiar as Whitney Rapids. Here, Mr. Whitney conducted a trading post for his dealings with the Indians, and an Inn for weary travelers.

Spots on Covered Wagons
entering from Stage Right.

NARR (2) The Pioneer Spirit leaped forward, westward. On came the covered wagons,, ,bringing all their worldly belongings as the pioneers searched for a new way of life. Settlers from Eastern States flocked to Wisconsin... Through the timberlands they came,, ,into the unknown...seeking new lands and new homes.

NARR (3) Where once a lonely cabin stood in a small clearing, there were soon small hamlets and villages...and the ~~small settlements~~ surrounding the Whitney Mill soon became a thriving ~~little~~ village. In such ~~small~~ wilderness settlements the wagon trains

were indeed welcome. With them came many stories of their long journey.....new people with new hopes and ideas and news from the East.

✓ NARR (1) Here we see a wagon train heading west.... but planning to stop for a while. In each wagon a different story, a different plan and ambition....a different religion..... a different prayer.



‘DOWN THE OLD OX ROAD’—Seldom if ever seen in this modern era, ox-drawn vehicles were once a fairly common sight in rural Wood county. Oxen were used extensively both in farming and logging operations during the pioneer days. Standing at the left in the two-wheel rig are Mr. and Mrs. A.E. Bennett, and seated at the left is Mrs. Clinton Bennett. Others in the pictures are unidentified. From the *Wood County Centennial Edition, First Section, 1956. State Historical Society*



Canning & Ingraham's Logging



Ingraham's
Grew.

Of partners James Canning and James Edward Ingraham, the latter (1843-1913) was a New York state native and Wood County newspaperman, druggist, lumberman and cranberry grower.



OLDEST CO-OP FACTORY

Fairview Cheese Factory, located 2 1/2 miles northwest of Vesper, was established about 1902 and was the first cooperative cheese factory in Wood county. The above view was taken shortly after the building was erected. Owner in 1956 of the factory was Elmer Aschenbrener. *Wood County Centennial Edition*



HOLLANDERS

Following the Vesper fire of 1894 there was an influx of Dutch families to the area. The first such family to settle near Vesper was the Theodore Hoeneveld family in 1896. The above view, taken about 1900, shows the members of the family in front of their log home. Left to right are Martin, Claus, Mr. Hoeneveld, John, Marie and Mrs. Hoeneveld. Another daughter, Kate, was not present at the time the picture was taken. Still living in 1956 were Martin and Claus, who resided in Vesper, and Marie, then Mrs. Ernest Koch, who resided in Boaz, Wis. Martin Hoeneveld was president of the village of Vesper. *Wood County Centennial Edition*



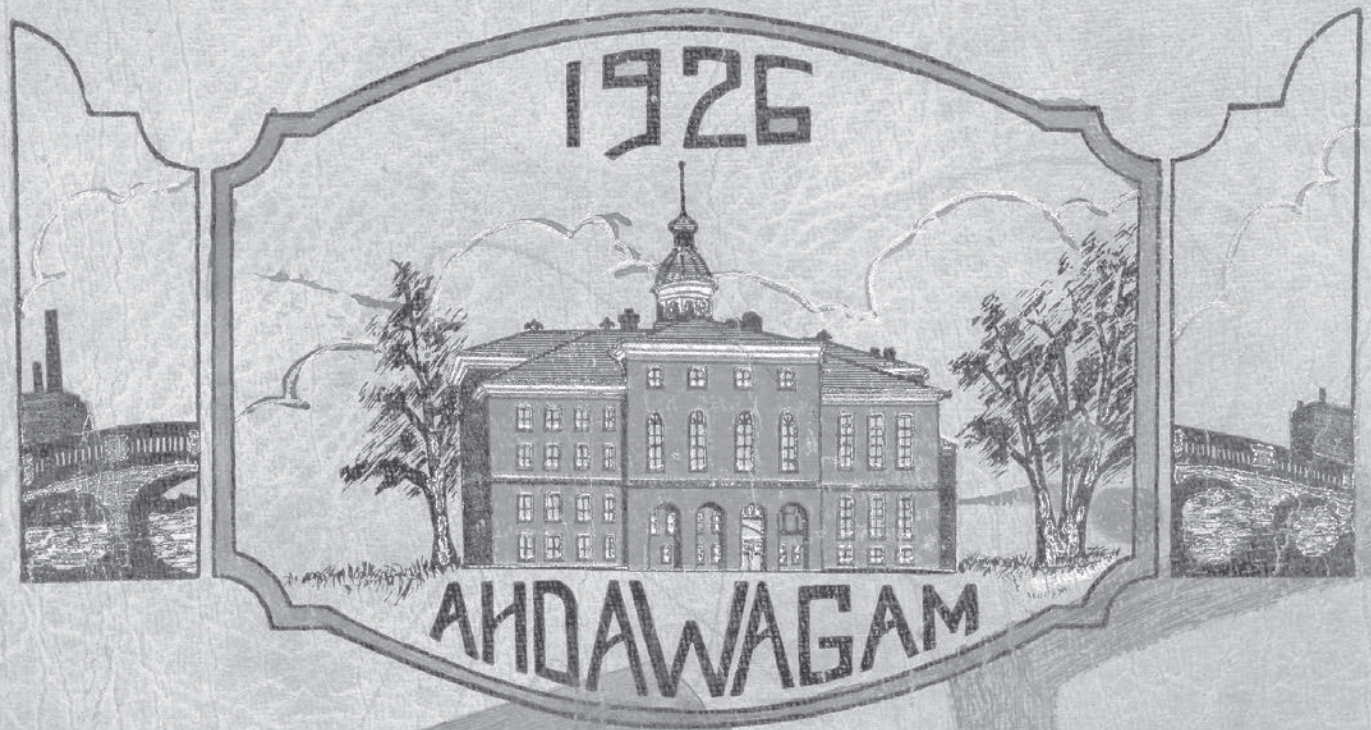
NO SMOKING



Photo, pages 16-17

**Brothers of the Bar
I.D. from *The Fat Memoirs*:**

William Pors, Charles Pors, Robert P. Bender, Fred Eberhardt, Richard Brazeau, John Jeffrey, Clerk of Court Jasper Johnson, William Conway, Leon Schmidt, Sr., Circuit Court Judge Herbert Bunde, Circuit Court Reporter Clarence Oaks, John Potter, County Judge Byron B. Conway, County Judge Reporter Nellie Dolan, Harold Billmeyer, Theodore Brazeau, William J. Nobles, E.D. Helke, Donald Reiland, Byron Crowns., Morgan Midthun.



Lincoln high school yearbook, *Ahdawagam*, originally owned by Eleanor Sawaske Janz, contributed by David Patrykus, whose wife, Marlis, is the daughter of Eleanor.

Dear Eleanor,
 We sure have had many good times together haven't we? Of all the parties we went to together. Remember Perry's "whithers" I don't think I'll ever forget him he was such a sweet child. I mean young man. I don't think I'll ever be able to write to me since in any paper because you know I'll be an year or so ago.

COMPLIMENTS OF
American Carbonic Machinery Company
 Don't forget the good times we had at H. L. Can't you just see us kids at night at the Slumber party at Dorothy's. I feel over all the furniture in the house it's a wonder I didn't break my neck.

- OFFICERS**
 F. J. WOOD, President
 L. M. ALEXANDER, Vice-Pres.
 GUY O. BABCOCK, Vice Pres. and Cashier
 E. C. WITTIG, Asst. Cashier

Don't forget "peanuts" & the nice haircut he gave you. I bet he still thinks of you. You better be careful or P. will be jealous.

When school time is Saving Time as well as Learning Time, it's doubly valuable!

Let's go to the Home School and see if we can't get sick again, should we?

We want every school boy and girl in the Wisconsin Rapids community, to consider this a personal invitation to open a Savings Account at this bank.

Wood County National Bank

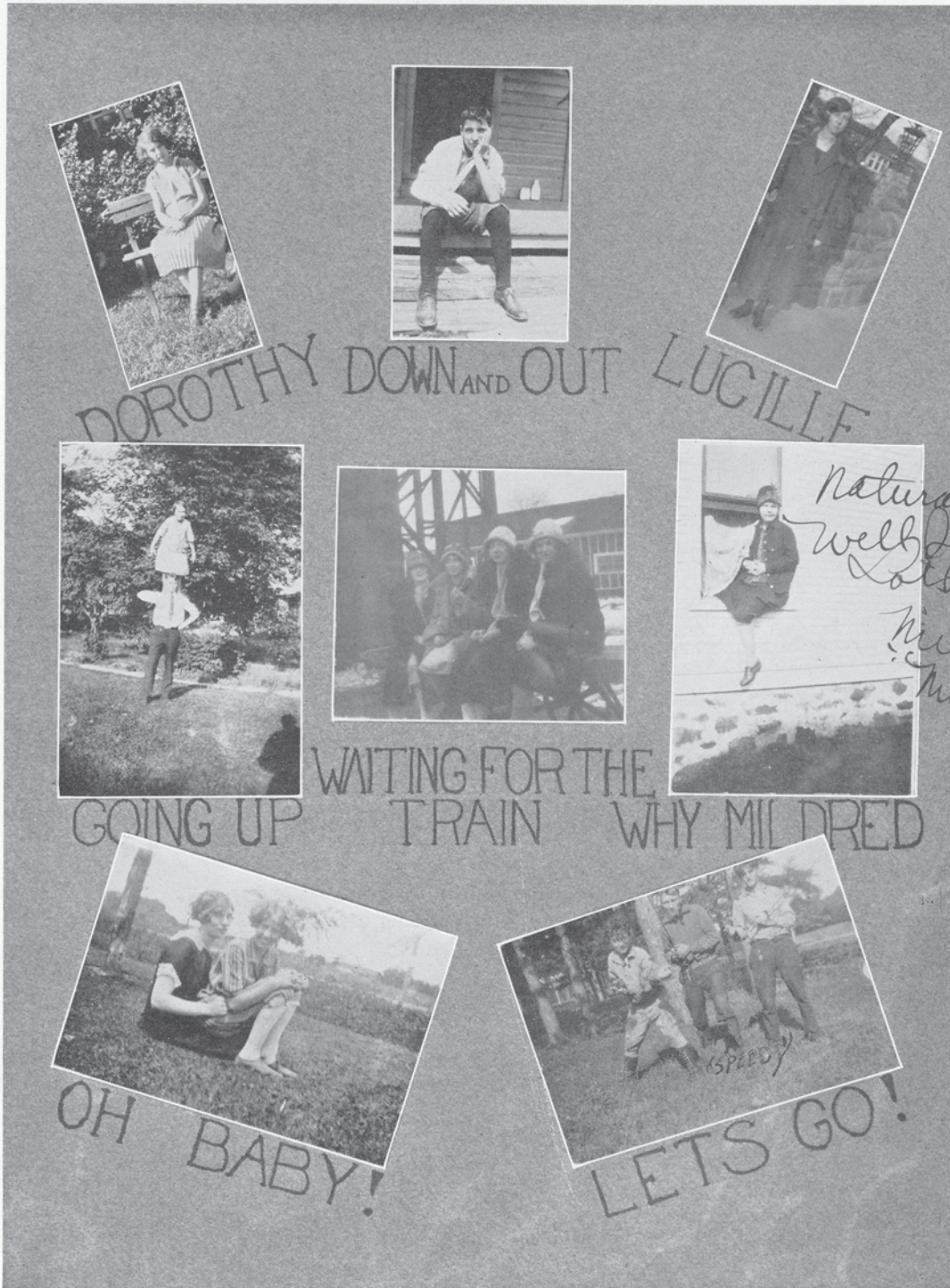
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Will Elly is this enough.

may you live to be an old woman & Paulie to be an old man.

Leta Rose Lucille

AHDAWAGAM



*Best of
towards the
Lily*

AHD AW AGAM



"Yearning"



"Down by the
Old Mill Stream"



"Olive-Ya"



Out where the
tall corn grows



Lollypops



"That Old Gang of Mine"

*Well,
Oliver
I hope
you get
the
all your
subjects
and you
go to see
George
more. Do
you have
good
small*

*When you get old & can not see,
put on the spectacles & think of me
L.D.*

Class of 1926

AT SCHOOL

LAWRENCE COLLEGE

Alice Bennett
Barbara Daly
Ernestine Johnsen

OSHKOSH NORMAL

Jack Plenke
Carlos Ross
Norman Eberhardt

WESLEYAN COLLEGE

Ethelyn Dunn

WAUSAU BUSINESS COLLEGE

Mary Norton

CHICAGO BUSINESS SCHOOL

George Warren

WISCONSIN UNIVERSITY

Edward Hougen

MILWAUKEE-DOWNER

Babette Brauer

LA CROSSE NORMAL

Jack Trier

WAUTOMA NORMAL

Louise Ellis

STEVENS POINT NORMAL

Mabel Ablard

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

Harold Beardsley

WOOD COUNTY NORMAL

Dorothy Bandelin
Viola Bean
Dorothy Berard
Lillian Gross

Audrey Johnson
Elmer Knuteson
Erika Leloff
Frances Luth
Lucille Vaughn

ST. VIATOR

Francis Brockman

CURTIS SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Philleo Nash

ST. THERESA'S

Jane Smart

HOSPITAL TRAINING

Vera Holmes

WOOD COUNTY AGR. SCHOOL

Richard Gaffney

JOLIET COLLEGE

Marian Fahrner

Inez Newman
Irene Schact
Claribel Staffeld
Edna Sydow

IN INDUSTRIES

Bessie Bender -----Woolworth's
Carol Bodette -----Wisconsin Rapids Tribune
Raymond Bunde -----Whitrock & Wolt's
Anne Burgeson -----Stenographer at Duluth
Jean Cichy -----Stenographer
Marguerite Dickoff -----
-----Stenographer Kellogg Lumber Co.
Isabelle Gehrs -----Latin Clothing Company
Marvin Herrick -----Chauffeur
Virginia Johnson -----Consolidated Office
Kenneth Kruger -----Consolidated Mill
Vincent Kubisiak -----Store at Chicago
Elizabeth Latus -----Johnson & Hill Store

Phillip LeBlond -----Carpenter at Lansing
Ruth Lord -----Johnson & Hill's Store
John Margeson -----Herschleb's Bakery
Donald McKercher -----McKercher Feed Co.
Francis Mathis -----American Carbonic Co.
Arvilla Mindak -----Latin Clothing Company
Peter Nohelty -----Johnson & Hill Co.
Adella Triegor -----Triegor's Store
Clarence Warren -----Highway Office
Hester Whitmore -----Johnson & Hill Co.
Theodore Welton -----Biron Mill Office
Wolcott Riley -----Calkin's Office
Fern Hamiel -----Milwaukee Firm

AT HOME

Paul Billmeyer,
Jack Clark,
Elna Doughty,
Marjorie Gibson,

Gerhard Zager,

Mabel Gilbertson,
Helen Glick,
Stella Gross,
Bernice Heiser,

Ione Taylor.

Edith Johnson,
Louis Kolstra,
Genevieve Otto,
Harold Vanderhei,

MARRIED

Hulda Strack—Hulda Cumberland

MOVED AWAY

Carl Magraf, Colorado—Reginald Stemerson

COMPLIMENTS OF

MODEL DRUG STORE

"Better Than You Expected"

R. W. COFFEY, Pharmacist
Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.

LINK'S

SANITARY MEAT MARKET

Quality and Service is Our Motto
The Best Cooling System
in the City
Phone 34

Office Phone 1227

Dr. Glenn Bennett DENTIST

Suite 7, Mead-Witter Block
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

HAMM'S

Sanitary Barber Shop

JOHN HAMM, Prop.
First Street North

"Good Things To Eat"

at

BEARDSLEY'S

Phone 51

MIKE KUBISIAK

*High Grade Heating
and Plumbing*

"NUFF SAID"

GLEUE'S

Exclusive Footwear for Men and Boys

We Fit Your Feet
We feature 4, 5, 6, 7 Dollars,
FLORSHEIM AGENCY
Goodyear Repair System
East Side Wisconsin Rapids

Daly Drug & Jewelry Co.

Drugs Jewelry Stationery

Oldest Eastman Kodak Dealer in Wood
County. Developing and Printing. We
use "Velox" which means better prints.

Chula Vista Photo Commentary

By Earle Garber

Pictured is the 1945-46 City Band photograph on the grounds of the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells, during a concert. Denny Danielson managed Chula Vista and sponsored the trip. I drove by the grounds this spring. It's all overgrown with enormous hardwoods.

A number of people from that time helped me identify some of the band members. Emil Lambert, prominently featured in a previous *Artifacts*, is Band Director.

Starting on the left is Rusty Knuth Acott playing alto sax. In front of her is Richard Hagen who taught high school orchestras in a Milwaukee County School system and entertained at the Milwaukee Inn. He was a close friend of Marvin Teske, who, among other accomplishments, was Jayne Mansfield's accompanist.

Sitting next to him is Lorraine Lyons Weaver, now retired from teaching here in Rapids.

In front of Richard is Lola Payne, the Wisconsin Rapids police chief's daughter, in front of Jimmy Miller of Miller Trucking (dating back to the 1950s and 60s). She held first chair on clarinet.

Opposite Lola; Dan Ellis, Bernard Garber and me (Earle Garber) at 16, then Leo Neitzel, Nona Drew's father, on trumpet. Actually, only Dad still played the cornet. Behind Dan, next to the gal, is Everett Lambert, Emil's son.

Standing back on the right is long-time musician union secretary, Martin Lipke, on trombone. Then we slip past a couple of guys I would appreciate readers helping us to name, to Emil Beck on sousaphone, a tailor in town I fondly remember and a friend of our old Howe School janitor Skinny Morrell.

The photograph illustrates a time long past, when tubas (Sousaphones) were made for marching, not like the smaller lap horns used today and the peck horns (the mellophone) that were popular brass instruments in bands at the time. The South Wood County Historical Museum has several mellophones in the attic.

This 1945 band was the transition organization when instruments were slowly being modified from early Civil War-era instruments to today's trumpets and trombones. Baritones are still popular in brass bands. Except in traditional early American music and Civil war vintage groups, Peck horns have been replaced by rotary-type valve double French-horns. Saxophones still back up the woodwinds, including



clarinets, flutes and oboes. Woodwinds have not changed much except for the fingering systems.

In issues of the *Wood County Reporter*, I found articles about a Twin City Band, 1880, and a notice that instruments had been shipped from New York in 1871, making a total of about 134 years of band activity in the Wisconsin Rapids area. Musicians often played in several groups in an era when live entertainment was all that was available.

An 1882 *Wood County Reporter* mentioned the Grand Rapids Band with names like Lyons, Muelstein and others we're familiar with.

At McMillan Memorial Library during the month of June we displayed blowups of articles from the above issues as well as a band picture from each decade: the White City Band of Port Edwards; a Nekoosa Band; a City Band called the Twin City Band; the Consolidated Water Power and Paper band which entertained at the 1920 State fair; and the band of 1945 shown here.

Jenny Lind, a prominent opera star at the time performed in Grand Rapids in the 1870s, according to the W.C. Reporter, taking in about \$65, then a good sum of money.



River City Memoirs

Local phone company made big move

By Dave Engel
For the Daily Tribune

“Solarus.” It’s the new name for my phone and internet provider. I prefer the tongue-twisting “WCTC,” good ol’ Wood County Telephone Co. The familiar letters represent the history of one of the last important world headquarters located right here in River City.

Some of my wife’s relatives still own a phone company in northeast Wisconsin, so I have a personal appreciation for a company like WCTC that pulled itself up by its own fiber-optic cable. Founded in 1896 in reaction to the big bully, “Bell,” Wood County Telephone Co. was making a major change sixty years later and fifty years ago, and it came, naturally, in technology.

In 1956, WCTC (not then known by its initials) was preparing to install dial services throughout what was then called the Tri-Cities area. Plans called for new buildings in Wisconsin Rapids and Nekoosa, according to H.B. Flower, company manager. The site in Rapids would be at 440 E. Grand Ave., across from the almost-new Hotel Mead. Donn Hougen of Rapids had been engaged as architect. (A check of the “telephone book” shows WCTC continues to operate at the same East Grand Avenue address.) A garage for the company would be located at 10th Avenue and Chase Street.

The \$1 million program would also require construction of underground conduit and cables, and aerial cables, (telephone lines?) throughout the service area.

The company had expanded modestly in the 1930s, with the purchase of the Kellner exchange and a small exchange on Plover Road, but the worldwide depression slowed communications growth. Although dial equipment had been ordered for Port Edwards in 1941, World War II again halted production of needed materials for civilian use. After the shipment was received in 1945, Port converted early the following year.

In 1953-54, WCTC acquired the Chrystal-Saratoga Telephone Co. which served a large area south and east of Rapids in what has been our fastest-growing area for more than half a century. Other small companies were absorbed and the company’s own rural lines converted to eight-party service so all was ready in 1956 to begin the changeover to dial, which was completed in 1959.

A 1956 Tribune Centennial edition enumerated the expansion of telephone use here. In 1878, four telephones. In 1896, 65 telephones; increasing to 229 in 1900; 2,933 in 1925; 8,175 in 1950; and 9,710 in 1955.

The local phone company’s first office was in the Wood Block, a building still at the east end of the Grand Avenue bridge. After 1918, the office moved to a then-new structure fronting on 2nd St. S.

In the olden days, homesters called “central” by turning a small crank which projected from the side of the phone cabinet. Connection was made with an operator seated at a switchboard, sometimes in a residence. The resulting “calls” went out on a “party line,” with varying combinations of short and long rings for each household.

There was no hand-cranking here in 1956 but, to make a call, it was necessary to answer the operator’s “Number please.” Dial would change all that.

Directors re-elected that year were: Earl Bossert, Frank J. Henry, William T. Nobles, Ellsworth Helke and Flower.

“The large-scale modernization program becomes necessary because of the ever-increasing demands for more and better service,” Flower explained in what has become a tech mantra.

President Bossert told stockholders that 1955 had been the most successful in the company’s history. Good dividends had been paid to the 1,300 stockholders in the Tri-City area.





Don Krohn Photo

“We have actually reached the end of the rope with our present equipment. Our switchboards, which were more than adequate a few years ago, have been extended and extended to the point where it is impossible to add more to them.

“There is nothing to be gained by discussing our shortcomings at the moment. It is enough to say that we must take every step necessary to make ourselves strong in order to meet the ever-increasing demands of the present and of the future.”

River City Memoirs

Rapids, Plover, long time rivals

By Dave Engel
For the Daily Tribune

In 1856, two new and adjacent county seats were already competing. The settlement of Plover headed Portage County, from which that year was carved Wood County, whose seat was Grand Rapids.

A January "Wisconsin Pinery" newspaper from yet a third rival, Stevens Point, contained spirited praise for Grand Rapids. "Perhaps we shall move down there and take the County Seat as we go along. There is something there, folks, that's alive and stirring.

"Five live boys down there have given a hundred dollars apiece to open a road from that village to Black River. Without gas or talk, the thing is done and the teams are running between their village and Black River Falls. Hurrah for the Rapids and its boys say we."

In August of the same year, a "traveler" wrote to the "Democrat" newspaper of Waukegan, Illinois.

"Grand Rapids, although it has been some years in settling, is but just beginning to attract attention. It is beautifully situated upon the Wisconsin River about 20 miles below Stevens Point, and is well-termed the Rochester of Wisconsin.

"It possesses the best water powers I have ever seen in the Western Country, not only from the amount of water and rapid fall, but from the peculiarity of the stream, by which it can be dammed at numerous points within a short distance with comparatively little expense.

"The town contains about 1,000 inhabitants, and is rapidly increasing. The buildings and business ... are at present mostly upon the east side of the river.

"The property upon the west side has, however, lately been purchased by O. Garrison Esq., late of McHenry County in your State [Illinois], whose enterprising spirit, with the capital he possesses, will soon give an impetus to that side of the river by which it will rapidly increase.

"The place has several extensive saw mills situated upon both sides of the river, where millions of feet of pine lumber are manufactured yearly, which is put into rafts and taken down the Wisconsin into the Mississippi River and sold at good profits.

"This was formerly in Portage County, but by an Act of the last session of the Legislature the county was divided by a line north and south erecting a new county out of the western portion, which is called Wood County, in honor of the Hon. Joseph Wood, now a member of the Assembly of this State, and I am informed the first Postmaster appointed at Waukegan, now your thriving city, and who has been a resident of this place for the past ten years.

"Grand Rapids has become permanently the country seat of this new county.

"Mr. Wood acquired an interest here at an early day, where he engaged in the business of lumbering, in which he has continued more or less of the time up to the present day. Notwithstanding he has sustained some severe losses, he is now reputed to be wealthy; being quite an extensive property holder in the town and the owner of several hundred acres of land in the vicinity."

Meanwhile, Plover, was "one of those delightful villages that combines business and increasing population, with rural beauty and cultivated taste" and one that, "for beauty of locality, scenery and health has but few if any, rivals.

"The face of the country for miles is smooth and dry and shaded with scattering groves of burr oaks. The soil is active and fertile, the water soft and pure, and the town is the home of health.

"Here, the business man may profitably invest his capital, for a large populous and wealthy country surrounds the town. Great inducements are held out to the mechanics and laborers, for wages are high – the demand being greater than the supply

"And for those ... retiring from active business, no place offers more inducements for one to spend the evening of his days — here, rosy health blooms on every cheek. There are no noxious exhalations or poisonous miasma in the balmy atmosphere.

"In the valley of the Wisconsin, and away from the influences of the lakes the atmosphere is dry and pure, and the cough of the consumptive is not heard in the land. Out of a population of several hundred inhabitants, there has been but one death in a twelve month.

"We say to the people of the East, seeking homes in the West, if you want to settle in or near a growing town, with present and future flattering prospects, both for business and health, come to PLOVER."

Early Times

River City Memoirs

Historical society reaches milestone

By Dave Engel
For the Daily Tribune

Even history and the preservation of history has history. Our South Wood County Historical Corp. was founded in 1955 and had its first public meetings fifty years ago. The formation of a society had been undertaken a few months previous, with T.W. Brazeau serving as chairman of the temporary board.

If you've ever founded something, you know a constitution and by-laws must be conceived, or, more likely, derived from that of a similar group. The SWCHC version was adopted in July 1955 at SWCHS, when "Society" rather than "Corporation," capped the name, at least according to news accounts.

At the constitutional convention were C.A. Jasperson, Port Edwards; Warren E. Beadle, Biron; Mrs. Estella Farrish, T.W. Brazeau and W.J. Taylor, Wisconsin Rapids. Also present was William J. Schereck, Madison, field representative of the State Historical Society, who played a large role in the early days of the local organization and ensured a period of mutual support and recognition. The mission of the group here was "to preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge of the history of Wood County."

Headquarters space was contributed in the Mead-Witter block, managed by Mrs. Farrish and in which a grandson and great-grandson of T.W. Brazeau continue the practice of law.

A December 1955 Tribune editorial said that the six-month-old institution filled a long-felt need. "This area is rich in history, and the story of its growth and development from the frontier days of a century ago should be compiled and preserved in readily accessible form for the benefit of present and future generations.

"To be sure, local history has not been entirely ignored. There have been some praiseworthy compilations, largely the result of individual effort—such as the pictorial history assembled by T.A. Taylor, and the History of Wood County, published in 1923 by a Minneapolis concern."

In May 1956, at the multi-purpose room of Howe School, Schereck spoke at the first public meeting of the recently-organized South Wood County Historical Society.

The state representative listed fields of endeavor in which the locals might engage, advising that collection and preservation of historical material was most important.

Other worthwhile activities might include operating a museum, tape recording old settlers, publishing newspaper articles and radio and TV programs, filming historical movies, marking historical sites, sponsoring pilgrimages to places of interest and developing a speakers panel. In fact, most of these suggestions were fulfilled in the productive first decade after organization.

At the May 1956 meeting, Mrs. Hazel Gemberling of the Howe School faculty described activities of the school's Junior Historical Society and introduced three pupils who reported on the group: Susan Wefel, Sally Hazell and John Farrish, grandson of Estella Farrish. Mrs. Farrish, secretary-treasurer, announced that 24 persons had taken charter memberships through annual dues of \$1 per year.

In November 1956 at Howe School, Dan McKercher and James Nash, Wisconsin Rapids, and Marshall Buehler, Port Edwards, presented early community history at a meeting of what continued to be referred to as the South Wood County Historical "Society." Buehler showed early pictures of mill development at Port Edwards. Mrs. Farrish showed articles that had been donated to the future museum.

Eight new directors were appointed to the board: Mrs. Hazel Gemberling, Carl Otto, Buehler, Dr. F.X. Pomainville, Martin Lipke, T.A. Pascoe, Mrs. Fern Amundson and Dr. L.C. Pomainville.

From the 1955 *Tribune* editorial: "History, it should be remembered, is a continuing thing. We are making it today, just as surely as did our forebears when they established the first settlement here some 120 years ago.

"Thus, the society might well set itself the task of keeping the historical record up to date, with the passing of the years, as well as delving into the bygone eras, for the greater enlightenment of those who shall follow in our footsteps."

Hours for the Museum at 540 Third Street S. are 1-4 p.m., Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, Memorial Day through Labor Day. Admission is free.

SWCHC

SLANG

of the 1960s

Submitted by Paracelsus

who knows a little about sports and politics from having played both. He knows about cars mainly by driving them, and received help on technical issues from friends who wish to remain unnamed, and from websites based in California and other weird places.

ape, to go: explode or go completely irate.

bad: awesome

badass: tough guy

bag: to steal. Also, "What's your bag?" meaning "Where are you coming from?" ("Thing" as in Papa's got a brand new bag.)

bitchin: good, exciting, awesome

blast: a great time

blitzed: drunk

boss: great or cool

bread: money

brew (brewski): beer

bug out: leave the premises

bummed out: depressed

bummer, what a: how depressing

burn rubber: to accelerate hard, spinning the tires, making noise and billows of smoke

candyass: a wimp or wimpy

cat: a guy

cherry: pristine, clean, virginal.

chick: a girl or a woman.

chicken, to play: Two cars race toward each other; the first to pull to the side is the chicken (coward)

Chinese fire drill: Stop at a red light. Everyone on the driver's runs around and gets in on the passenger's side, from which passengers run around to driver's side.

choice: really cool or bitchin

chrome dome: a bald guy

church key: before pop tops, a beer or soda can was opened with one of these.



cool: nice.

cool head: nice guy

cooties: someone who wasn't cool had them. (*lice*)

cop a feel: touch a girl's "parts," sometimes pretending it was an accident

copasetic: very good; all right, as in no problems

crash: go to bed; go to sleep (*descend from a drug high*)

cruising: driving up and down the same street looking for races, girls, guys, etc. (*aka "riding around"*)

cut out: to leave without ceremony

daddy-O: a 50s term for man

Dagoed: lower a car in the front (see rake)

deked out: dressed up

deuce: 1932 Ford, as in, "She's my Little Deuce Coupe"

dibs: used with "got." to have first rights on.

dig: understand, comprehend

ditz: idiot

don't flip your wig: see "don't have a cow."

don't have a cow: used when someone was "going ape" or perhaps being a "spaz" (*Cool it.*)

don't sweat it. don't worry about it.

drag: to race another car a short distance from a standing start

a drag: someone or something that's boring or unenlightening

duck butt, duck tail or DA: combing both sides of the hair on the back of the head in towards the middle and parting it down the middle

dude: a geek or a pantywaist.

easy: good bye as in "easy, man." Also, a girl who was a sure thing sexually.

fab: fabulous.

far out: excellent, cool.

fink: tattle tale, *turncoat*

five finger discount: obtained by theft, esp. shoplifting

flake: useless person

flake off: get outta here

flat top: a short hair cut, usually cut flat on top, unlike the rounded crew cut

flat top with fenders: flat top with long sides

flip flops: thongs for feet

flower child: hippie

fox: outstanding-looking girl or woman

freak out: temporarily lose control due to an unpleasant event.

funky: neat, cool; also gone bad.

fuzz: the police

gas, a: a lot of fun

gimme some skin: shake hands

ginchy: complimentary word made famous by Ed Kookie Byrnes in the song, "Kookie, Kookie, lend me your comb"

go all the way: have sexual intercourse

going steady: dating only one person, usually with exchange of rings

gone: cool, groovy, neat, neat, as in "he's a real gone cat"

gnarly: a difficult or large wave, anything big or difficult, later an expletive of approval

greaser: guy that used too much grease in his hair, usually "LB Butch Wax" or "Pomade"

groovy: nice, cool, neat

groady (grow'-tee): shortened version of grotesque. can refer to clothing or describe a messy dorm room

glasspacks: mufflers packed with fiberglass to muffle the sound
gutt waddin’: cheap fast food
hacked (off): angry, disgusted, mad, ticked off

hairy: large, out of control, scary (*impressive*)

hangin’ a B.A. : car full of guys pulls up to another car (usually full of girls) and one of the guys pulls down his pants, bends over, and sticks his “bare ass” out the window (*to moon*)

hang loose: relax; take it easy

haulin’ (ass): move assertively, accelerate

hauls ass: a car that really moves

heat: cops

heavy: deep, cool, chaotic, sad, controversial

hep: with it. describes one who understands the situation

hip: very good, cool, *knowledgeable*

hook: steal

hopped up: see souped up

hunk: what a girl would call a good looking guy

ivy leaguers: men’s pants without pleats, made of polished cotton, and with a buckle in the back

jazzed: elated, excited about

jelly roll: hair combed up and forward on both sides and brought together in the middle of the forehead

keen or keen-o: someone or something that was cool

kibosh: to quickly put a stop to; put the kibosh on

kiss up: “brown nose,” teachers pet

knocked up: pregnant

later: goodbye; see you later

lay it on me: speak your piece.

light’em up: see burn rubber

lip flappin’: talking about things of little importance.

loaded: intoxicated

lowered: to drop a car all the way around

make out: usually a kissing session in a parked car such as at a Drive In movie or other secluded place.

”meanwhile back at the ranch”: used when someone who was telling

a story would ramble off to another subject.

Midnight Auto Supply: car parts obtained through theft.

mirror warmer: pastel blue or pink cashmere attached to elastic, placed around the perimeter of your inside rear view mirror. usually your girl friend’s idea.

moon: drop your pants, bend over, and show your bare butt

moons: chrome hubcaps that were smooth and domed

neat (neato): nice; sharp

nifty: “cool” but usually said by someone who wasn’t

old lady: your mother

old man: your father

on the make: after a break up of steadies, a guy or girl looking very hard for a new mate. looking for another someone, sexually

outta sight: fantastic, awesome

pad: someone’s dwelling place

padiddle: a word “called” by someone who has just seen a car with one headlight. the caller then receives a kiss from the person of their choice.
pants/depants: two or more boys remove the pants from another boy so as to cause him embarrassment in a group setting.

passion pit: drive-in theater

peel out: see burn rubber

peepers: glasses

peppers: men’s pants, similar to today’s Dockers, but with a cuff

PG: pregnant

pig: cop

pig out: overeat

pound: beat up

primo: first class.

rake: lower the front end of a car

rags: clothes

rap: talk

rat fink: see fink

raunchy: raw, rank, disgusting

real gone cat: real cool guy

right on: I agree heartily

righteous: fine, beautiful

ripped off: stolen or cheated

scarf: to eat very fast

score: to obtain something valuable or necessary, esp. marijuana or sex

scratch: money

screwed, got: cheated out of something

screwed up: made a mistake; messed up in the head; intoxicated

shades: sunglasses

shotgun (to ride): place of honor in the front seat of a car nearest the door

skag: ugly or unrefined girl.

skank: see skag

skanky: gross, disgusting

skirt: girl

skuzz: lowdown; undesirable

slut: promiscuous girl

solid: ok or all right.

souped up: car that’s had the engine modified to go fast.

spaz: someone acting less than gracefully

split: leave

sponge: bum from or the bum who bums from

square: not cool

stacked: having large, attractive breasts

steady: boyfriend or Girlfriend

stoked: excited

stoned: intoxicated

stood up: when a date didn’t show up

stuck up: conceited

submarine races: place to park facing water and wait for submarines, allowing for a lot of the term below.

swapping spit: passionate kisses

think fast: get ready because someone is tossing you something.

thongs: something you wore on your feet, similar to sandals

threads: clothes

tooling: cruise or drive around without aim

tough or tuff: neat, cherry, great, bitchin’

whiz, take a: urinate

wicked: term of admiration.

wipe(d) out: fall off a wave while surfing, later to crash one’s vehicle, then later a term for extreme fatigue

zits: pimples.



Brother of the Brush

Local resident and former veterans officer Tom Stern lights up for the 1956 Centennial

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