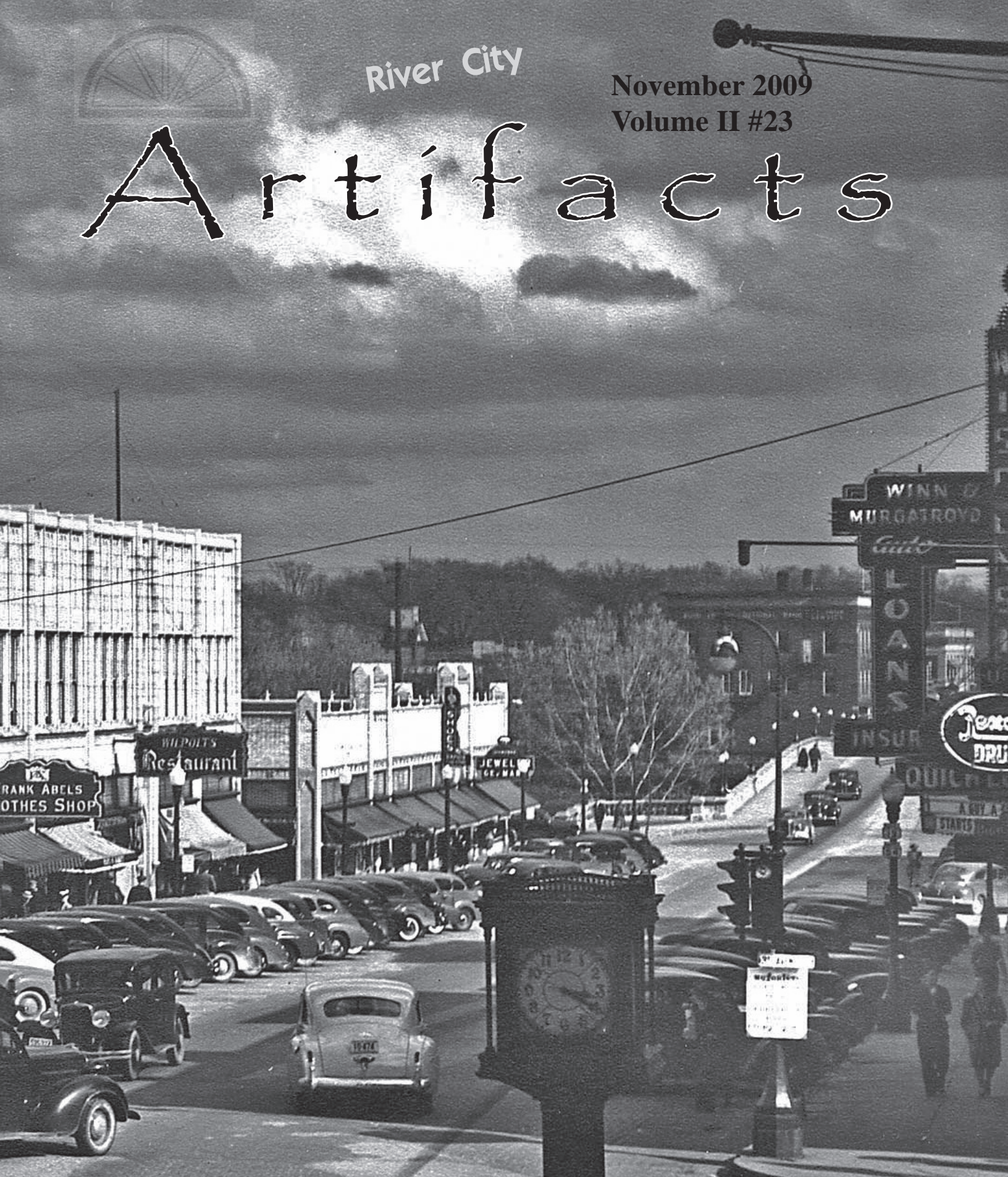


River City

November 2009

Volume II #23

Artifacts



Cover: Grand Avenue, 1940s (Auril Harding). Inside: Kellogg Connection by Lori Brost, 2-3; Phil, 3; No Bargain by Joan Haasl, 4-5; Bean Factory by LuVerne Conway, 6-7; Homesteading by Gene Johnson, 8-10; Two Maestros by Earle Garber, 11-13; Stub & Me by Joe Jackan, 14-15; Oak Street photo, 16-17; Robinson Park by Ed Severson, 18-19; Murgatroyd's Way by Auril Harding, 20-31; Uncle Dave, 32.

The Kellogg Connection

By Lori Brost
Museum Administrator

Visitors to the Museum during the 2009 season may have noticed some changes. For example, on the second floor in the General Store, we have added a display featuring businesses from Centralia, Grand Rapids and Wisconsin Rapids. This exhibit includes ads from the phone books, photos and souvenirs.

This allows us a couple of opportunities. Besides the general update to the area, we can display more items previously donated and our visitors can take a “memory walk” through businesses they have known, some of which have come and gone and some that have made the changes and survived the test of time.

While looking through the numerous boxes on the third floor, I was amazed at some of the items. For example, not only did I find an entire silver serving set from the Witter Hotel, I also found photos of some of the staff at work. I also found numerous items from our local lumber company history featuring Marling and the Kellogg Brothers. In addition to finding those hidden treasures, I have talked with many of our visitors who have mentioned they had either photos of old businesses or items from those businesses in either their possession or that of a family member. And even a few who have shared stories of a business that they had fond memories of.

This is the effect I wish, that each of your visits brings back a memory, reminds you of a story or takes you back to a different time in your life. In this way, you get to be part of the exhibit or even enhance the experience for someone else.

As a coincidence, within days of completing the lumber area display, I received a phone call

from Jamelle Milne of Wausau. She had some Kellogg family photos that she was wondering if we would be interested in. And to say the least, we were! Now let me say this, when she said she had pictures, SHE HAD PICTURES! It was a wonderful donation and the fun and interesting part of this donation was that I had seen pictures and memorabilia of a business but the pictures brought the family behind the business to life.

If you have photographs of businesses from our area (and that includes Nekoosa and Port Edwards) that you would like to share but that you would like to keep, please contact me. I can scan the photos and duplicate the image to be used within the Museum as well as added to our digital collection.

If you have other items from those businesses that you think would be an addition to our display, please bring them in also.

To the snowbirds

Whether it be Arizona, California or Florida that shelters you from the blustering winter weather, be sure to let me know the address and when you will be there, so I can ensure that you never miss an issue of Artifacts.

Lori

*Kellogg Family Photos*

From the President

Living within our reduced budget this year has been a challenge but I am pleased to report that our belt tightening measures seem to have paid off. Uncle Dave and Lori have done a great job keeping our expenses down this year compared to other years. Not only has Lori been able to run the Digital History Center, but she and her high school assistant, Katie Sigler, have been able to scan over 20 of our photo collections.

The board of directors remains committed to maintaining *Artifacts* in its current format. On top of that, Uncle Dave is nearing completion of *River Cities Memoirs VII*.

Budgeting for a non-profit organization is tough these days and sticking to that budget is even tougher. However, through the generosity of our membership, we will hopefully be able to continue to provide the valuable services that the membership expects.

I want to thank the board of directors and the membership for your continued support. It is an honor to be the president of the SWCHC and I will continue to do my best to help make local history accessible to anybody who is interested.

Phil Brown
Den of Antiquity

Man of Mystery

You can call him Zimmy, you can call him R.J., you can call him Whitey, but don't call him late for tacos. He's a SWCHC board member, jack of all trades and intermittent raconteur. Can you identify this issue's photo subject? Send your answer to Lori at 540 Third Street South. Correct answerer will receive a cheap but nice prize. Hint: he still looks the same.



WEDNESDAY

Bout

CONQUEROR OF ALL THE MIGHTY MONARCH

WINNING WITH ED LEWIS

Wrestling Expected to

"STRANGLE DEFEATS"

LEWIS WILL TAKE ON TWO WRESTLERS

BROOK

WIN THE AMERICAN



"THEY CALL STRANGLED I LOOK"

LEWIS DOWNS LUNDIN TWICE

Strangler Too for Swedish Champion.

No Bargain

My mother was born and raised in Nekoosa in a small house next to the fire station and across from the Herrick House. Nekoosa was a microcosm and my mother was a very intelligent child who observed and recorded everything that came her way. Living near bars and having a hard drinking step-father didn't give her a positive view of the human condition. Knowing the local Priest also drank soured her on religion for life. Being the oldest and expected to help with her step brothers and sister gave her a very negative view of bringing children into the world.

My mother told me her first date was with Bob Friedrich. She described him as “no bargain.” When I was in grade school Bob stopped at the store several times to see my Dad. He always asked “how’s Mamie?” That was my mothers’ nickname.

My Dad had been a boxer in college and for many years he was a judge for the Golden Gloves here. His two sports were boxing and wrestling. I never knew him to have any interest in any other sport.

He and Bob would have long conversations about wrestling and I was bored listening. To this day, I detest wrestling.

I did marvel at the size of Bob. He was shaped like a wedge and had the biggest neck I ever saw on a man.

When Dad got home he would tell my mother that Bob had been in and had asked about her. They would discuss his travels and career. Of course neither would know that someday Bob would have a historical marker at Nekoosa.

My uncle Neil Christian also knew Bob. Neil and other boys were recruited to help Bob train. Neil said they had to hold his ankles while Bob did sit-ups. When one boy tired out, another took his place. Neil always was interested in Bob's career.

When one of my sons was in high school, there was a discussion about celebrities. My son mentioned that our family knew someone famous. The teacher indicated that probably wasn't true. He said families make these things up.

Not our family, we really did know Ed “Strangler” Lewis, aka Bob Friedrich who is in the athletic Hall of Fame. For twenty years, he defeated all contenders. He studied anatomy and used pressure points to defeat his challengers. If my mother was alive, she would still say he was “no bargain.”



STRANGLER LEWIS' FAVORABLE
COMPASSED MARVEL

By JOHN J. FLEESON.

Blasted Marvel is human
who was a remark by an old
who has been following
for many years. Its as-

claimed
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for the s
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The

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, DEC

Young American Grapplers Gi
hibition of Wrestling—Dis
Strength Wings Appl
House.

NEW YORK HERALD, TU
INCER, T

WRESTLER
LEWIS

I. C. "STRANGLER"
DECL

Draws
Rad

WORLD'S
Cl
ED. "C

Wrestling
Views

COVERING
ALL
FIELDS

THE BROOKLYN

ED "STRANGLER" L

A revelation in the sc
catch-as-catch-can W

A remarkable record of mat
back of this scientific K
whirlwind grappl

Big

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his
defe
the
gave
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won

Under Personal
Direction

BILL
BILLY C. SA

WINS AGA

"Strangler" Lewis, Whirlwind
Flores Hugo Russian in
Straight Falls.

LEXINGTON, N. Y. F
"Strangler" Lewis defeated P
nawell, Russian Champion, to
take the title. Lewis' 1907
speed finished the Russian
lucky young boxer.

ORITE HOLD
LEVEL'S DEFEAT

The victory was no accident, but the winning hold was the strangler.



DECEMBER 21, 1915. Copyright, 1915, by the Sun Printing and Publishing Assoc.

ve Wonderful Ex-
play of Defensive
use from Packed

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1915.
THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1915

**"STRANGLER" LEWIS GIVEN
VISION OVER DR. ROLLER**

CHAMPION WRESTLER
Winner of the Second World's
Championship Wrestling Tournament

**"STRANGLER" LEWIS
FELLS SEVEN GIANTS**

Catch as Catch Can Expert
Quickly Disposes of Oppo-
nents at Garden.

RUEFST FIRST VICTIM

DAILY EAGLE, NEW YORK.

LEWIS BEATS ZBYSZKO

American Wrestler Continues
Winning in Big Tourney.

Wladislaw Zbyszko, the mighty son of
Poland, went down to defeat at the
hands of

LEWIS WON AGAIN

College Lad Disposed of American
Champion Last Night at Oswego
In Quick Time.

and was received here today from
Oswego, N. Y., stating that Ed "Stran-
gler" Lewis added another big victory to
his list at that place last evening by
defeating Yankee Jones, American
champion, in record time. The first fall
in one minute and ten seconds, and
second in three minutes. Lewis was
in a great position for his clever

Y. C. SANDOW
Manager

IN
Grapples, Two

ch 18-
star four-
straight
come and
who was

**ANCE AND
CLEAN SPORT**

mat, was
tournament without a defeat, and many
expect him to take the measure of
Aberg and Zbyszko before the tourna-
ment is ended.

The results of the other bouts fol-
low:

Solo Boerapa defeated Joseph Pao, a Chinese
F. F. Boerapa defeated Fung, a Chinese
a kick and body hold. In the George Lewis
defeated Frank Wladis, a Czech, with a
kick and a body hold. In the George Lewis
defeated Frank Wladis, a Czech, with a
kick and a body hold. In the George Lewis
defeated Frank Wladis, a Czech, with a
kick and a body hold.

Sun

'STRANGLER' LEWIS THE MAN TO TEST STECHEK'S ABILITY

Kentuckian Culminates Sensational Campaign In
Manhattan Opera House Tournament By
Pinning Wladek Zbyszko's Shoulders to Mat
Has Also Defeated Famous "Masked Mar-
vel" and Dr. Roller.

By DAN LYONS.

**"LEWIS ONLY MAN
TO BEAT STECHER"**

CHARLES CUTLER

**ED TEARS STRENGTH
TEST MACHINE LOOSE**

Lewis All But Wrecks the Y. M. C.
A. Gymnasium Equipment
in Trials of Strength

**STECHEK GIVEN
ONLY A DRAW;
LEWIS HURT**

Men Went to Mat but Four Times
in Two Hours and Lewis Was
Behind Every Time



Ed (Strangler) Lewis.

College Boy vs. Farmer Boy in Mat Test

"Strangler" Lewis Logical Opponent of Joe Stecher for Ap
Will Meet In S

TOURNAMENT
A CLEAN RECORD

LEWIS WENT THROUGH THE
INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT
AT N.Y. WITH A CLEAN RECORD

USES "MIND CONTROL" - MAKES OPPONENTS
DO WHAT HE WANTS THEM TO.



LEWIS DOWNS ZBYSZKO IN WRESTLING MATCH

Strangler Lewis W. Zbyszko to

American Defeats the Polish
Wrestler After Bout That
Lasts an Hour and Twenty-
One Minutes.



ED ("STRANGLER")

LEWIS AND STECHER WILL MEET IN NEW YORK

Will be this city last night
manager of "Stran-
gler" Lewis announced that Lewis
would be matched in a wrestling
match in New York City on May
10. The prize of \$20,000. This show
will

Lewis to Win

The Ladies of the Bean Factory

By LuVerne Conway

There is a fine red-brick building behind the ladies in the picture at right. It stood for many years on the eastern shore of the Wisconsin River, above the dam and below the Green Bay and Western Railroad bridge. A fire in 2005 destroyed much of the building and although rebuilt, it does not in any way resemble the classic brick factory of the turn of the century. I believe it originally housed the Grand Rapids Brewery Company which suffered a death blow when the Women's Christian Temperance Union, along with other anti-alcohol organizations, succeeded in getting the 18th Amendment to the Constitution passed.

The Sampson family transformed the building into a canning factory in the early 20s. The sign on the building and the labels on the canned vegetables said, "Sampson Canning Company," but to the families living in the near neighborhood, it was always referred to as the Bean Factory, and it was an important part of our lives in the summer and fall.

I am writing this little memoir looking back 85 years (I am now 91) so I may err in some details, but I believe the beans came to the factory in gunny sacks from the farms of nearby counties. The beans were graded into ones, twos and threes according to size and then sent to the snippers. The snipping operation was on the second floor of the factory and involved a rotating iron tube containing curved knives. Because the knives missed many "snips" women were stationed along a moving belt to snip the missed beans. My memory picture has three or four seated women on each side of the moving belt busily grabbing and snipping beans with their fingers. My grandmother, Mariah Johnson was a snipper.

My mother, Carrie Heger, worked on the first floor where the beans were canned. The cans arrived on a moving apparatus too, and then onto circular machines around which seven or

eight women stood, putting beans into the cans. I remember a lot of water around this operation, as water was squirted into the cans before they were lidded. My mother told me once how the women had great difficulty suppressing their laughter when Mr. Zern (the manager?) was trying to repair a squirting pipe, striking it with a hammer and swearing at it repeatedly.

The filled cans were finally placed in huge iron baskets and submerged in the preserving vats with iron chains and hooks and other overhead apparatus to cook the beans. Cooling and labeling came later but I do not recall observing that part of the operation. The work was done only in the summer and fall and I think the women considered their pay as "extra" money (like egg-money was to a farm wife). My own mother would buy us something extra with her wages. One year, we all got "camping" outfits to wear on a trip to Minnesota in our Model T Ford.

One of the remarkable facts about the Bean Factory was the permission of children to visit their mothers on the job. When necessary, I remember climbing the elegant filigreed iron stairs to the second floor to bring a message to Grandma. I was seven or eight years old.

Children also contributed to the Bean Factory work by doing "piece" work. One of the older kids would go to the factory with a wagon and get a gunny sack of beans. A group of kids would sit under a tree or someone's porch and snip beans. When the beans were snipped, returned, and weighed, we were paid according to the size of the beans. Number ones paid the best, but took forever to complete. We all got a good lesson in basic economics.

The group picture of the ladies of the bean factory clearly shows that they were having a good time. But why had they gathered outside for the picture? It was taken with a Brownie or other simple camera. My grandmother, Mariah Johnson, is seated in front on the left and she seems to have a railroad lunch box. Next to her is my mother, Carrie Heger. Does the picnic basket indicate a picnic? I particularly like the two women hugging each other. My wish is that

they are celebrating a paid day off, or a bonus, but it may simply be the end of the season for green beans.

Sauerkraut did not seem to require women's work, but it did require men in hip boots stomping around in big vats of sauerkraut, producing a heady aroma. I only saw the operation once because it was performed in a different part of the factory, and I was probably

told to "git."

But one performance I did witness and enjoy, outside the factory was the unloading of the new cans from the box car on the RR siding next to the factory. Big wooden rakes were used to pick up about ten cans at a time and placed on a moving belt which carried them on to the factory. I see women handling the rakes efficiently, but I can't see further ... in my memories video.



Homesteading

By Gene Johnson

Peacetime 1938-1941

The move from the farm in 1938 to the Johnson homestead — a raw wooded and boulder strewn double lot between developed areas of Boles Street ending at Thirteenth Avenue on the East and Woodbine Street on the West — was like jumping out of the frying pan into the fire.

Many weeks John Johnson had shoveled sand in 1938, when the unsupported side walls of a hand dug basement hole collapsed in a driving rain storm. A basement without sewer and water service made no sense of course; drainage would have made it a swimming hole the day it was finished. The digging disaster should have been recognized as a sign that the little house being constructed was desperately in need of a literate design person.

Following the heartbreak of the failed dig, an eighteen by twenty two foot concrete foundation on the adjoining lot marked the new site of what was to become the Johnson Homestead. Contractors Pat and Tom Patterson poured the footing, very likely with only a few dollars down and the rest on credit. Dad worshipped these men, and they were to be paid every cent of credit proffered.

The collapsed basement hole was shoveled shut and this second lot was later to become the main lawn of our “front yard.”

The little house was “designed” to be a story and one half, and became a challenge from day one. The first floor plan had four rooms technically, because in what was the living room, a large archway made a sort of separation into two small living rooms. In reality, it was a three room house with a kitchen, living room and bedroom and no bathroom. The “upstairs” was to have two bedrooms and an attic when completed.

When we moved into the homestead, there were no interior doors, and the interior walls were

of unfinished sheetrock and insulite board. The upstairs had no walls, only open two by fours. Wires were strung across the top of the bedroom and stairway doorways, and mother sewed lightweight “drapes” to serve as doors.

The steep stairway leading to the upstairs bedroom opened off the kitchen, and had no entry steps. The stairs came down straight, and ran into the outer wall, with the bottom three steps blocking off the doorway. Just one of many small design problems. The roof and outside of the little home were covered with heavy black tar paper.

Since there was no sewer and water service, Dad hand dug a nine foot deep well and dumped a wheel barrow of clean sand into it. Our well water was in fact rusty-colored surface water. We continued to use a water pail and dipper, but no longer had the pristine water of the old Boles farm.

As I recall, our soapy sink water was run off by an underground pipe to a low draining spot in the nearby woods. An old WPA wooden outdoor toilet was obtained; Dad dug a pit, and posted it about thirty feet south of the house.

The upstairs bedroom had lap siding wood floor covered by linoleum. For a time, all three of us boys slept together in a double bed placed in the framed out, but unwallled room. The other upstairs bedroom was not floored.

When the house was wired, expensive BX metal covered conduit was used rather than simple fourteen gauge two wire Romex, an indication of how little John Johnson understood home building.

As soon as we moved into the homestead, brush was cleared on the rising slope of our back property for a large garden. While the war time “victory gardens” lay a few years ahead, mother’s garden was more of a “survival” garden. Potatoes and corn, a large berry patch, and peas, beans, lettuce, beets, rutabaga and rhubarb all thrived on the newly broken ground. In breaking this land, Dad uncovered several ox shoes and found the arrow point that led to my life in numismatics.

The yard between the back of the house and

mother's garden was full of tall old trees and large boulders. Lightning hit two of our large Elm trees, and these had to be taken down. How well I remember the terrifying ball of blue fire that shot across my upstairs window the night the second tree was struck.

Dad "buried" several large backyard boulders; he just dug and dug around and under them until they sunk a few inches below the ground level. He broke down smaller boulders with an eight pound sledge hammer.

One huge boulder near our west lot line defied resolution, a raised flower bed was created over the mammoth stone and remains on the site today.

Our venerable old wood stove from the farm was positioned just beyond the kitchen/living room doorway in an attempt to distribute the heat to both rooms. The single bedroom and upstairs had no heat.

When the WPA put the sewer and water through this dirt road section in 1941, Dad was working for the WPA as a "bottom man," down in the mud and drainage. Bottom men were paid an extra four dollars per month, forty four dollars.

The bottom man shoveled the blasted rock and dirt up into a head high rectangular sluice box, and there it was reshoveled by a "top man" out onto the roadway.

Although the Works Project Administration had been given a nickname of "we poke along," the blasting of the heavy rock made this Boles Street work slow and labor intensive.

With the newly provided sewer and water service, a basement was dug under our little house. Again, Pat and Tom Patterson came to the rescue, jacking up the house and placing a big ten by ten inch wooden beam under the frame.

I did assist a little with the excavation, but sixteen year old brother, Dale, was the big help to mother and Dad on the shovels. We borrowed or rented a small electric conveyer belt device that passed the dirt out of the hole, dumping it onto our extra lot.

Pattersons poured the basement floor, a small

coal fired furnace was installed and a coal chute cut through the cement block basement wall.

This basement was to serve as a home for our first washing machine, a hand me down that had part of a leg broken off. A wooden block was attached under this side and although the wringer section often popped apart on the old Speed Queen, it was a wonder for Mother.

The basement also served as a place where I molded soldiers with my new Christmas gift, a three figure lead molding set. As I remember, the three soldiers were an infantryman aiming a rifle, a man on horseback (the largest and center mold), and a bugler. In what would horrify parents today, molten lead was poured into pot metal molds which had been blackened with a candle to make the lead soldiers come out of the mold.

Inside the house, a carpenter named Riley Mullinix converted the pantry into a little bathroom, and curled three narrow entry steps from the kitchen to the stairs, repairing the stairway door blocking design mess.

Wood for the interior trim and mopboards was procured from two large pine trees on our back lot line that Dad arranged to have cut down and saw milled on shares. The pines were huge, at least thirty inches in diameter. The sawmill received half of the wood as I recall. The giant pine stumps were blasted out by a man named Cook, who was the "dynamite man" for the WPA. Dad always seemed to know someone who could fill the void.

This lumber was also used to build a strange "lean to" addition to the back of the house, making room for a little basement stairway and kitchen space for a wooden ice box and kerosene stove with a one gallon inverted glass fuel tank. When this lean to addition was added, the floor in the kitchen had to be raised, permanently making the kitchen cupboards too low.

Gene Johnson, continued

Wartime 1942-1946

When Dad was pressed into war work at Badger Ordnance at Baraboo, Wis., about 1943, money for home improvements became available, but materials were scarce due to the war effort. Dad lived at the Baraboo site during the week, coming home only on weekends. Brother Roger was married by then and Dale drafted into the Army.

Around this time, plaster was put over the sheet rock and insulite interior walls of our home. The plasterer was fun to watch. He and his son were a smooth working team, the son mixing the “mud” and the father sweeping it onto the ceilings and walls.

Kerosene for the cook stove was supplied by a battered five gallon can with a hand carved wooden plug on the top (instead of a screw cap). This was filled at Sisco’s Grocery. With no family automobile, the oversized basket on my new bike eliminated the embarrassment of using our coaster wagon which had been used to transport the kerosene. When filled, the heavy five gallon can proved to be a precarious balancing act.

In addition to my providing our family errand running, an interesting little employment “sideline” came into use on the wartime scene in 1943.

Two blocks away, at the corner of Seventeenth Avenue and Boles Street was the widow Zimmerman’s home. Her two sons were in the service, her younger son, Zip, was my brother Dale’s age, and was serving in the China/Burma/India Theater of operations.

A lucrative bicycle delivery business soon developed, probably initiated through my paper route customer contact with Mrs. Zimmerman.

Mrs. Zimmerman would phone in grocery orders to Sisco’s on Second Avenue and Seventeenth (now the site of the round-about), or the “Farmer Store” located on the West side of town near the Milwaukee Road depot. (This depot was across the

railroad tracks east of where Metcalf’s lumber yard is now located.) I would ride my bike to the stores, make the pick up and usually end up spending a half hour or more visiting with the sweet old lady. My fee was ten cents for the Sisco delivery and twenty five cents for the longer trip to the Farmer Store.

Mrs. Zimmerman often gave me little collectables that her son “Zip” had pack ratted as a youngster, such as little Cracker Jack favors. Years later I realized that these were rewards for spending time chatting with this wonderful and lonely old lady.

Between my paper routes and deliveries for Mrs. Zimmerman, I was financially wealthy, even though I never received an allowance from my parents.

At this time, Mother took me to the dentist for the first time in life. Doctor Nehl’s office was located right above the Church’s Drug Store, along with the office of another dentist, Dr. Oakes.

With no oral care prior to this time, brushing included, I had a mouthful of cavities. A long period of repair came to pass. Dentistry at the time was just at the point of finding that heat caused most of the drilling pain. Dr. Nehl changed drills frequently and very little anesthetic was used. Dr. Nehl’s tried valiantly, but was unable to save my front teeth, which had grown in crooked and overlapping and were badly decayed.

Gene Johnson is an antiquarian and a regular contributor to Artifacts.

Two Maestros

By Earle Garber

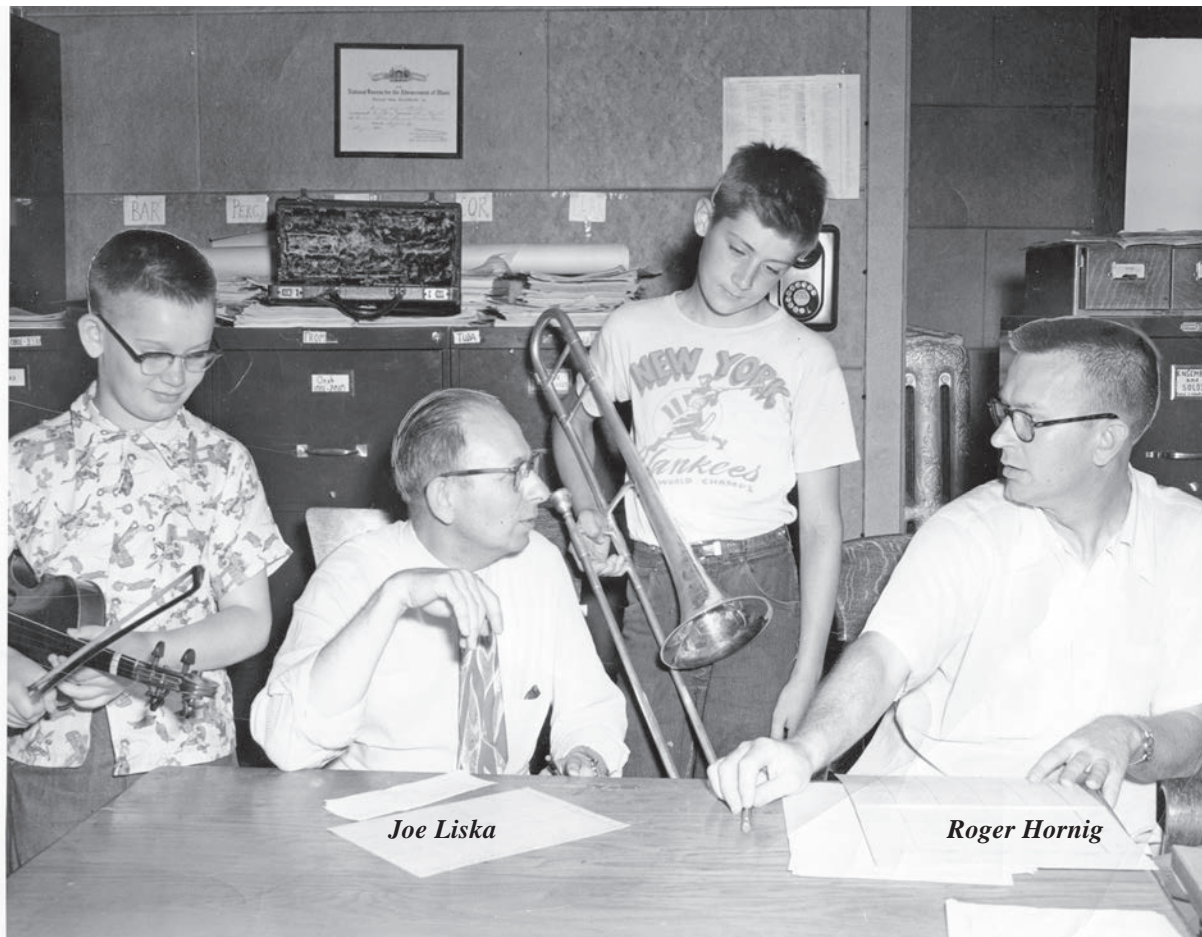
The teaching of music in Wisconsin Rapids schools has a distinguished history, including long time band and orchestra director Emil Lambert, followed by Bernard Ziegler, who didn't last as long, needing to earn a living wage. Then came Aaron Manis, a graduate of Central State Teachers College in Stevens Point, who left after two years in order to study medicine. The board of education soon figured out what was needed in spite of the depression: a decent salary.

Joseph E. Liska Jr. joined the Wisconsin Rapids school system in 1936. Joe was a Ripon College graduate with post graduate credits from the American Conservatory (now Chicago's De Paul University). More than a teacher, Joe was a professional violinist who chose teaching to support his young family. His entire career was in Rapids. Joe was a soft spoken mentor who brought professional education and love of fine music to Wisconsin Rapids. He knew the literature and he had the wherewithal to both teach and perform.

Roger O. Hornig came as band director in 1939. Roger was a graduate of Milwaukee State Teachers College (now UW-Milwaukee) with a Bachelor in Education. He practice-taught in Mineral Point before continuing with post graduate work at University of Wisconsin, Madison. Roger was personally disciplined and expected as much from his students. Being on time and practicing met his approval. Being late and lazy did not. After only three years Roger was drafted to train military in the ways he knew worked. He returned to Lincoln High School in January of 1946 to a music department Joe was holding together as best he could.

Jack Kahoun, class of '44, a retired engineer, writes, that, "a band director was hired in 1942 from a nearby small school district. The gentleman was not up to the standards Roger Hornig instilled in us. We were bored with the class stuff and refused to play for him. Embarrassed, the poor man left before the end of his first semester."

Donald Murgatroyd, class of '44, retired educator, Parker City, Colo.: "I remember how excited we were. Roger Hornig took time to



Joe Liska

Roger Hornig

*Ahdawagam*

help us (Swing Shifters). He lined up music and spent unpaid time until our playing was up to par. With dance band music like “In the Mood” and “Cherokee” Roger had garnered, we coaxed the owner of City Sign, Tom Acott, to let Hank, his son, who was in the band, do the art work for music stands. Swing Shifters was ready for school dances. With shortages of musicians, many were serving their country. The Local 910 Musicians union cleared the way for us to perform and collect expenses. We began by performing after games in the field house, then a dance at the Bulls Eye Country Club and on the College campus in Stevens Point; I played tuba. Roger asked Joe Liska to teach me bass fiddle, a smart move on their part.”

Wayne Williams class of 45, retired accountant,

Waukesha, Wis.: “Roger was one of the most influential people in my life. I started lessons on saxophone in seventh grade. Roger was a perfectionist. I couldn’t get away with anything. He had me doing scales and exercises over and over until the notes came freely. He wouldn’t let me quit. Mr. Hornig taught me discipline and the value of hard work. He was a friend. The Swing Shifters were not like high school stage bands of today. We had no faculty leadership, only mentoring, and during Mr. Hornig’s time in the military, Mr. Liska traveled as chaperone to the prom in Wild Rose, a sorority dance at Central State Teachers college and on the train to play in New London. Joe thought we should be dressed in the orchestra’s white jackets; we were a class act. At 83, I’m still

Swing Shifters

From left, including all rows:

Ed Murgatroyd
 Ken Burmeister
 Henry Acott
 Shirley Fuller
 Dana Norman
 Earle Garber
 Irene Knuth
 Don Murgatroyd
 Jack Kahoun
 Wayne Williams
 Robert Brehm
 Myrtle Timm

playing sax although not quite as often.

Richard Haertel class of 48, retired educator, Plymouth, Mich.: "It seems to me Swing Shifters were somewhat unique for the times. At any rate, I remember playing in Stevens Point. I have fond memories of both Roger Hornig and Joe Liska. Both were fine men, excellent teachers who helped me in many ways, not only percussion instruction; they listened to my problems from time to time. I trusted and looked up to them. Joe in orchestra and Roger in concert band, Swing Shifters and later Roger with the Drum and Bugle Corp. They were special people.

Tom Hornig, class of 65, an attorney practicing in Madison, Wis., writes; "My mother was teaching school in Shawano at the time dating a local judge, soon to become U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy. She turned Joe down to marry dad. The trips dad made to Shawano on yesterdays roads in those days and the competition was probably instrumental, not meant as a pun, in his decision to propose."

What may be surprising to the reader is today's daily loss of money and jobs and how the 1930s

board of education handled the greatest depression. With city support the board elected to build a state of the art high school and gym, a field house, rivaling the University of Wisconsin Madison's big box. It did come up short for instrumental music. Like the Performing Arts Center at current Lincoln High School, that wing would be added twenty years later. The then new Lincoln building did feature a little theater one staff member grabbed to rehearse choirs. It was across from the cafeteria, another new idea in schools.

At the time children who chose band and orchestra acquired far more than music. Gym was required, those of us who chose to play an instrument would climb four flights to reach band and orchestra space. It was another form of body building called the Witter Building. Students walked or ran the 100 yards from the new class room building to climb four floors of an enclosed unheated fire escape to avoid disturbing Voc-tech classes. Some student ran it twice a day. And they did it rain or shine, the colder it was the faster they ran.

The Witter Building was the vocational training school (now Mid State Technical College), teaching cooking, sewing, drafting, automobile repair, welding, skills in these days needed to survive. The Voc-Tech fourth floor auditorium and stage, with several practice rooms, served band and orchestra children.

What our folks went through is happening again. In the 1930s people had money, some money. At least those who worked in the mill were employed part time. Back then it was called a short week. We had the neighborhood Mom and Pop grocery store, shoe repair, furriers and tailoring shops and milk was delivered by horse and buggy. World War II required the country's meager wealth and energy. Teaching hasn't changed. It is still the profession that makes a difference in a child's life. For those of us who benefited from their patience and expertise it was important to remember.

Stub & Me

By Joe Jackan

The day after I graduated from high school, I started a new career with the State Highway Commission. My father didn't want me loafing around all summer, so he asked his good friend George Finup to find a job for me. George did payroll and expenses for the Highway Commission and was able to place me with a Marking and Signing crew. Little did I know the adventures in store for me.

After the usual paper work, I was taken to the M&S shop behind the Chatterbox on Grand Avenue. M&S covered 9 counties in central Wisconsin, erecting, repairing and replacing highway signs. Ken Staven and Doug Dix crewed one M&S truck. Lawrence "Stub" Rodeghier and I would crew the second. Stub's daughter Nancy was in my graduating class and he had gone to school with my mother and knew my father. Our truck was a ton-and-a-half Chevrolet with a special body to hold signs and tools

We normally took two overnight trips during the week so we could service the end of our territory without excess traveling. On Monday, we loaded the trucks and then waited until Ken came back from the office with our weekly assignments. My corruption began immediately, as I was introduced to schafskopf (sheepshead), a card game used to while away the time until Ken returned. This naïve youngster was also introduced to liar's poker, which we used to settle who would buy the rolls to accompany our morning coffee.

Stub was a great practical joker and you will see much evidence of this as we proceed. One day we were parked in a rest area during lunch hour. Stub brought his lunch and I had just finished a can of V8 juice and a box of Cheezits, obtained from a nearby IGA. Stub disappeared while I stretched out under a tree for a nap. Stub woke me and we returned to the truck. I felt a small crunch as I placed my feet on the floor mat on the passenger side, but assumed it was because of some dirt on my shoes. Soon I realized that something was not right. A foul odor began to permeate the cab. I looked over at Stub, but he seemed not to notice.

It got so bad that I rolled down the window and stuck my head out, gagging and retching. I asked Stub if he knew what the problem was. He replied, "Maybe it's those rotten pheasant eggs that I found in a dump and placed under your floor mat."

Stub hated cats. One Friday, we were coming home when Stub hit the brakes and pulled off the road. "What's the matter, Stub"? "There's a dead cat back there. Go get it, we can always find a use for it."

I went back and retrieved the cat. The only place I could think of to put it was up on the roof. We got back to the shop late and left for the weekend.

When I opened the shop door on Monday, I realized that I had forgotten something. Three days of dead cat ripening in an enclosed space in the middle of summer had left an olfactory reminder. I got a ladder and proceeded to scrape the corpse off the roof. I observed that dead cat makes an excellent paint remover. I took it out back and buried it.

On Wednesday, Butch, our counterpart in the Rapids M&S department stopped by in his truck. Stub took me aside and whispered "I'll take Butch inside while you go out in back and dig up the cat".

"Then what?"

"Put it behind his seat."

After Butch came out and got in his truck, Stub leaned on the door, continuing their conversation. A look of panic soon crossed Butch's face. He started clawing at the door, but Stub kept leaning on it. He finally relented when it looked like Butch was ready to dump his breakfast. Butch got out and peered behind the seat. "There's a dead cat in here," he said.

"Why would anyone drive around with a dead cat in the truck?" Stub asked.

Butch never stopped by again without locking his truck.

Living was less expensive in those days. It had to be. My salary was 277 dollars a month. Fortunately our expenses were reimbursed on overnights. I can remember getting a meal including salad and pie for 75 cents in the smaller towns like Hatley or Red Granite. Hotel or motel rooms were about 3 dollars. The Top Hat restaurant in Wausau, about 2 blocks from the Constance Hotel, had the best

pancakes I have ever eaten. The Log Cabin at the junction of Highways 29 and 51 was another great place to eat. One time in Marquette County, instead of staying at a hotel, we rented a cabin on Lake Puckaway. Stub had stopped at home and picked up his fishing gear. After work, we took the boat that came with the cabin and went fishing.

Marathon County was the largest county in Wisconsin so we stayed in Wausau often. One night when we were staying at the Constance, we ran into Harry Schmidt. Harry was married to Stub's daughter Marcia, and also worked for the Highway Commission. We decided to go out for a few beers. Since we had no transportation other than the truck, Harry offered to drive. He had just purchased a new Chevrolet and was eager to show it to us. We wound up at closing time at the Rib River Ballroom. It was late in the year and the roads had a few ice patches. We were heading back to Wausau on 29 when Harry mentioned that the Chevy would do 90 mph in low range. Harry proved his point, but almost killed us doing it.

The Centerline Crew shared our shop. They went out for three weeks at a time, repainting the centerline on state highways. Their territory was the whole northern half of the state. I went out with them on a trip when one of the crew was sick. They worked much harder than we did. The black and the white paint came in 55-gallon drums and it was simple to transfer the pickup hose from one drum to the next. The yellow paint came in 5 gallon buckets and had to be transferred into a tank on the truck. This was really labor intensive. The top was removed from each bucket by bending back dozens of tabs. Then it had to be lifted and dumped in the tank. The tank was good for from 3 to 10 miles, depending on how often the yellow was needed.

We dreaded those twisty roads in the lake region of Northern Wisconsin. Glass beads were sprinkled on the white paint for nighttime visibility. They came in sacks and had to be loaded in the bead hopper. Flags were slid down a chute from the truck to warn motorists that the paint was fresh. Les Brown drove a Morris pickup to retrieve the flags. The driver's door was taken off and placed in a bracket in the bed. The Morris was low enough

so Les could drive next to the centerline and pick up the flags and toss them over his shoulder into the bed. Les was just a little fellow, but had a bone-crushing grip from tossing all those flags.

Frank Pearson was the boss of the Centerline Crew. He was totally devoid of humor. This was irresistible to Stub. Frank had a maroon 48 Ford Tudor. He parked it in the shop while the crew was out. The paint was chalked and faded. Stub got the idea that Frank would like to have it polished. We did a great job on the hood, but ran out of ambition once that was done. When Frank came in, he never said a word. The faded car still had a shiny hood when I last saw it several years later.

We were cruising through a supermarket one day looking for something for lunch when Stub spotted a jar of Limburger cheese paste. Needless to say, we left with the paste. When we got back to the shop, Stub headed right for Frank's truck. The centerline crew had already gone home for the weekend. Monday morning arrived and Frank got in his truck. He sniffed a few times and a puzzled look came over his face. He got out and started looking around in the cab. He knew just where to go. He found Stub and brought him back to the truck. "Look under the dash," he said. Stub took a look and said, "That looks just like the hand soap we use."

"Soap yer ass, that's Limburger cheese," Frank replied. Ever since then, all I had to do to crack Stub up was say "soap yer ass."

It may not sound like it, but we did manage to sandwich in some work between the dead cats and Limburger cheese. I became familiar with every road, restaurant, hotel, motel, and bar in Central Wisconsin. I can't think of a better way to start a working career than with those highway commission guys. I've had many jobs since then, but I will never forget my first job.





*First question:
Does this man,
presumably
the manager of
A&P (110 2nd
Street N.), have
forearms?*





*See anything
else funny
about this Oak
Street corner
photo?
(Of unknown
origin,
courtesy of
Uncle Dave.)*

Robinson Park

By Ed Severson

In my mind, Robinson Park came into existence when I was about nine years old (1954). Our family lived at 1621 Apricot Street, half a block from the park, which occupies approximately 320 acres on the northeast side of Wisconsin Rapids. It borders Highway 54 on the east, Apricot Street on the south, 17th Street on the west and railroad tracks on the north.

Attractions for kids included:

- Sledding hill on the Highway 54 viaduct.
- Band shells, the first a raised wooden platform and the second concrete with a peaked roof.
- Shelter house for picnics.
- Restroom facility in approximately the center of the park.
- Hundreds of trees for shade, wind resistance and other uses.
- Open areas with mowed grass.
- Playground area with swings, teeter-totters, a small merry-go-round and monkey bars.
- Little League sized baseball diamond with dugouts and wooden bleachers, no lights.
- Basketball area with a concrete court.
- Picnic areas with small grills.
- Hill on the north side by the tracks.
- Power line tower on the northeast side near the tracks.

From various resources, I have determined that the following boys (sorry, no girls were allowed with one exception) were involved in play at the park; Roger Gray, Kenny Jagodzinski, Bill Jensen and his brother, Kreuser boys, Albert Nelson, Donnie Nelson, David Nelson, Gary Nelson, Bill Peavy, Bill Severson, Ed Severson, Mark Suckow, Jim Vallin, Tom Vallin and Marv Zimmerman.

So many boys living in such a small area and within one to three years of age of each other getting together at a park? I would wager that this would be impossible today with the emphasis on the internet, cell phones and electronic games. We played real life hands-on games with each other with tremendous enthusiasm and camaraderie.

The sledding hill on the Highway 54 viaduct was actually two hills: one on the north side of the

viaduct and the other on the south side. The north one was steeper and smoother. Girls were invited to this game. Old fashioned sleds, toboggans and skis were used with a great deal of pleasure and glee. We tried to outdo ourselves in terms of distance. Sometimes twenty or so kids were there for hours. We often went home soaking wet.

The band shells allowed not only us kids but adults to listen to “contemporary” music during the summer. I believe there were some types of symphony orchestras that put on the concerts. There were three interesting activities involved with these concerts. 1. Cars were allowed to park around the perimeter of the shells and after each presentation, the people would honk their horns. 2. The old shell was a wooden platform with spaces between the boards. There was a crawl space which allowed us young boys to crawl under and peer up to observe the young ladies in their dresses. 3. The old shell was also used for a game entitled “Captain May I?” also involving girls.

The “Captain” would allow someone in line to step forward and while doing so, another player could sneak forward. If caught, that person went back to the beginning. The goal was to get in line with the “Captain.” It seems like a very simple game, but great fun.

The shelter house was built primarily for adult social gatherings, so we boys had little use for it. Later on, it served as the focal point of the annual “old car” show which I attended a number of times with my “old” cars.

You wouldn’t think of a restroom building as a source of boyhood enjoyment, but it was. The building had an outdoor sink and faucet. We would turn on the faucet full blast and dare others to run by the area without getting sprayed. Again, a simple game, but great fun.

There were two areas in the park of sufficient size to play both football and/or baseball. As noted in the list of boys, we usually had enough to field two teams and others would join. Sometimes we played a game entitled “500 up.” A batter would hit hardballs in various directions, heights and distances to the fielders. Points were assigned to the distance and degree of difficulty (highly subjective). Whoever accumulated 500 points was

the next batter. This was really a highly competitive sport with some fielders colliding in order to make the catch.

Football was played tackle style with absolutely no padding. There were never any serious injuries but great fun. Although Bill Jensen's glasses were broken and he ended up at the ophthalmologists' office that night to remove glass fragments from an eye, there was no real harm done.

The highlights of the playground area were the swings and small merry-go-round. With the swings, the challenge was to get the swing as high as possible without the swing folding in on itself. This involved a team of a pusher and a sitter. Both had to work in tandem to achieve the goal. Once while doing this, a girl made the mistake of walking into a swing. The swing hit her head resulting in a deep cut and concussion. We all felt bad for her, especially her crying. She was fine after awhile, no lawsuit.

The game with the merry-go-round was to have two or three kids on it and get it going as fast as possible by standing beside it and pushing on the handles. Sometimes, you would grip the handle too long and end up being pulled to the ground and dragged. Again, no harm done.

The baseball diamond was a great addition to the park as it allowed us to play in a more organized way and it had fences. The Little League program in Wisconsin Rapids had a "minor" league also for those boys who couldn't quite make the "majors." The Robinson Park diamond was used by the minor league. It made no difference to the minor league boys that they didn't make the Little League rosters as they had an opportunity to play. This brought quite a few boys to the park and gave us an opportunity to meet others outside the neighborhood. I was in the program for four years and, by the way, I had the highest batting average.

The basketball area wasn't really used for basketball by us boys. We would set up picnic tables throughout the concrete floor and then have bicycle races around and between them. As you could well imagine, these were brutal with many crashes, bumps and bruises. But again, no serious injuries.

The hill by the tracks was probably no more than

25 feet high. We used it for basically three games. 1. Who could ride their bike the fastest to the top. 2. We set up a command post and challenged others to sneak up on us through the underbrush. 3. We obtained a barrel and took barrel rides down the slope. Boy would that barrel roll after a push with us coming out quite dizzy. A barrel of fun.

Lastly, there was the steel framework electrical transmission tower in the park. Then, there was no fence around the tower. Therefore, guess what, it was ready to be climbed. This was a real dare due to the warning signs on the tower and its height. Yet being young, ignorant and uninhibited, we would climb it. After all, the tower was there and ready to be put to an additional useful purpose. We all survived.

The park was also known for its trees. Most were evergreens of various varieties. Some were monstrous in girth and height. These trees presented another challenge for us, climbing. The biggest challenge was how high before we chickened out. Being quite light, perhaps a hundred pounds, I could go the highest without breaking branches. There was a further benefit to height, the availability of fir cones. These were treats like trophies when brought down. The bigger, the better.

On a visit July 29, 2009, with my sister, Ann Weber, we noted other amenities that make the park even more attractive: horseshoe pits, hockey rink, volleyball area, huge softball field.

My sister Ann also told me she used to go to the park to "think." So, I guess that is one more use. I never thought of Robinson Park as a place to think as we were so active and there were always at least three of us there.

I hope that anyone reading this article who made use of the park can reflect back on the good times they had there. Our time was the 1950s (after Korea) and early 1960s, when the world was basically at peace. That was a good time to be a kid.



As Ed Severson had Robinson Park, youngsters (such as Uncle Dave) in the Two Mile Avenue neighborhood had a private playground of their own: Murgatroyd's. This is how it came about.

Murgatroyd's Way

By Auril (Winn Murgatroyd) Harding

Excerpts from a life story

Cranberries on Grandpa Potter's marsh were harvested during September. Indians were hired to do the raking by hand. The berries were brought into the cool warehouse. Every Saturday I had to help the other women sort, picking out the green ones and the rotten ones. We sat on both sides of a table on which ran a conveyer belt, with the cranberries rolling along. I could tell the rotten ones because they felt soft and squashy.

I hated that job. The building had to be kept cool, which meant that no heat was turned on. I was not only cold, but the work was terribly boring. Grandpa insisted that it was good training for me so I stuck with it. I did enjoy riding out to the marsh with him because he was fun to talk with.

My Dad extended credit freely to his customers and particularly to his brothers. Then came the crash of 1929. The local bank went broke and the farmers lost their money. I will never forget that I lost my entire life's saving of \$50 when that bank collapsed. The end result was that my dad lost his feed mill. Not only his business, but also our home when the mortgage was foreclosed.

In order to have some sort of income, Dad tried selling Fuller Brushes from house to house, during winter. When spring arrived he was able to get part time work on a road construction crew.

One of the most traumatic times of my life happened in the summer of 1930. I returned to Granton from a week visiting with a friend, to find that we no longer had our home. I had no idea that we were to lose it. I loved that house where I was born. My folks undoubtedly had me visit my friend, so that I wouldn't have to be there when they had to move out.

We lived in a tent parked in the cow pasture belonging to the Wilsons, that summer. Dad got a job working at a pea vinery. It was a machine for removing peas from the vine, and then shelling them for the canning companies. We called it "peanery" because it smelled so terrible.

I remember the experience of camping that season as a happy one. It must have been simply awful for Mother and Dad, but they never showed their worries to me or my two brothers, Bud and Art. We had lots of company as our friends got a big thrill out of this unusual experience. I shall always admire my parents for their endurance with what had to have been a terrible loss for them.

By fall, Dad had cashed in his life insurance policies, and bought a small home in Wisconsin Rapids, located across the street from my grandparents, Melvin and Auril Potter. The front of our house faced Eighth Avenue South, and the back was on Third Avenue South. The house was located on a triangular piece of ground with a wider front yard, and the back coming to a point.

The municipal street car track was right beside our home. That street car ran from Nekoosa, through Port Edwards and then into Wisconsin Rapids. It had done very well, but now that cars were becoming common, it was used very little. It wasn't too long after we moved to Wisconsin Rapids, that the street car was given up for good. After that, someone developed a city bus, to run the same route. My cousin George Wooddell drove that for a while, but it too came to an end.

Dad was very lucky when he obtained a job with the Nekoosa Edwards Paper Mill in Port Edwards, cutting pulp. He earned seventy-five cents a day. Not much, but it kept us from starving. One night he came home with a hundred pound bag of cracked rice, which he had been able to buy for fifty cents. We ate rice all winter, rice soup, rice pudding, rice hot dishes, rice cereal, and any other rice dish that Mother could come up with. But we never tired of rice.

These were the years when we listened to the radio so much. Fibber McGee and Molly, Amos and Andy and Gabriel Heatter with his opening "There is good news tonight."

I was now back in the high school where I had started as a freshman. But it was a brand new Lincoln High School this time. No more sitting three to a seat in a general assembly. Now we went directly to our first class and had lockers near that for our books. All through my high school days I was so shy that it bothered me to have to get up and talk in class. I blushed easily, and the more I blushed the worse it became. Even my ears were red. I finally wrote a theme about blushing for my composition class. I had to read it aloud and somehow that made the situation better.

I was so bashful that I was unable to tune my clarinet during band practice because that required me to play all by myself, so that the band leader could hear only my horn. I was so afraid that my mouth would tremble and I couldn't get any sound out of the instrument. In fact, I'm surprised that the director never caught on that my fellow band member helped me out by playing his clarinet when I was supposed to toot my own horn.

I turned sixteen in May of 1932. Now I could obtain a driver's license. My dad had taught me the essentials, even though I was not quick to understand and he had very little patience. All I had to do was go down to the City Hall and apply for my license, automatically given out to anyone who had reached the age of sixteen. I came home anxious to try "solo" driving. Our car was beautiful green and gold with a rumble seat in the back. I stepped on the gas and shot out of the garage, across the road and up against the shrubs bordering our neighbor's front porch! I had not realized that when I stepped on the gas the foot feed stuck down. Our friends were sitting out on that porch and saw the whole thing. Fortunately just the shrubbery was torn up a bit and only my feelings were hurt.

While in high school, and for a year after I graduated, I worked at Otto's Pharmacy, doing

book work. Gus Otto was the pharmacist, but a better druggist than businessman. He had borrowed money from my grandparents, and after several years of no payments, Mel and Auril Potter foreclosed on the mortgage. They kept Gus on as the pharmacist, until he could no longer work because of ill health. Then Vic Sandman was hired as their new druggist and manager. He was a young man, just starting out in the business world and did very well.

We had an excellent soda fountain in the store. Uncle Roy Potter came up with the idea of "curb service," a novel idea at the time. During the summer when I was a junior in high school, another

girl and I sat outside the store. As cars parked in front, we hurried to their open windows and took their orders. Our meager income came from tips. I did this for two summers.

During the summer months when my friend Edith Gottschalk was home from college, she helped her dad in his grocery store. She joined me at the drug store, and we both walked to the bank across the river with company deposits. This was a nice break in the middle of the day. Gottschalk's grocery did a lot of business with the cranberry people out on Cranmoor. On Saturdays he delivered groceries to them, in a little old truck. I rode with Edith

several times delivering those groceries.

Otto's Rexall Pharmacy had a one cent sale twice a year. When this happened, one could buy any article and get another one for one cent. I put in two long days when we had that sale and went home at night with tired aching feet.

Ford Hopkins, a small chain of drug stores, purchased Otto's Pharmacy. Their stores also offered restaurant facilities, so our store added food to its operation.

The Fond du Lac store had an excellent cook. Arrangements were made to test her abilities. Four of us were chosen to drive down to her store and try her food. We left about 4 o'clock in the



John and Auril Murgatroyd in their trailer home

afternoon, had an excellent dinner with the cook, Mary Couse, and reached home at 5 a.m. Our report was that Mary was great. She was famous for her Parker House rolls. Mary and her family moved to Wisconsin Rapids. Mary needed an assistant, and Irene Porter was chosen. Those two women were wonderful, and they worked together like a team of horses.

John [Murgatroyd] and I finally kept a date, and went to our first movie together: "It Happened One Night" with Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable.

It was good, funny and thoroughly enjoyable. Consequently we relaxed and talking came easily.

John said he was terribly sorry that he did not call me when he hadn't shown up at the time he had told me he would. I believed him as he explained that

when he reached home, his favorite cousin, Gerrie Jackson had just arrived for a visit. Somehow, he didn't have the nerve to break away to make a telephone call.

He felt unhappy too, that he hadn't been able to find his money at the theater. He was very sincere, and so contrite, that I knew then and there, that he was the kind of person who would always try to do the right thing for everyone. In all the years we had together, I never knew him to deliberately hurt anyone. He always tried to do his best. I am sure that was one of the reasons he was so successful in his future business of real estate and insurance sales. People sensed that he was doing his utmost for them, and that he would do anything he could to be of help.

We found that we were both quite shy. Though John had just completed his bachelor's degree at Stevens Point Teachers College, and I had graduated from high school as an honor student a year earlier, neither of us had dated much. He

laughed when he told me that all he could think of when he first saw me, was that little girl in the blue suit. Blue was his favorite color, and because of that, I have always had a blue suit, especially for him.

He told me that only four graduates from his class were able to get teaching jobs. When they did, it was because they were related to someone on the school board, or could coach, teach music, or some other activity, along with a couple of subjects.

On our next time together, the following week, we went for a ride in the evening, just south of

Wisconsin Rapids, where there was a high tower, used by rangers to spot forest fires. It was a great adventure to climb the tower. John was a student of astronomy and loved the starry sky. He planned to show me the various stars, from way up at the top of the tower.



Trailer at Two Mile site

He parked his car alongside the road, but when he started to move forward, it wouldn't budge. We were stuck in the sand! For years he had driven a motorcycle, and had never had a problem parking on the side of the road. But a car was very different from a cycle. Wouldn't you know, it seemed that everyone we ever knew came along the road that night.

"Why, John, what are doing in the ditch?!"

"Johnny, I thought you knew how to drive!"

"How do you happen to be parked in that loose sand and with a girl by your side?"

We heard that over and over; but in spite of all the teasing, they were friends. They got out of their cars, came to the side of the road, and with a mighty heave by the group, pushed us out of the ditch. We were grateful, as I am sure it would have taken the rest of the evening for us to push the car free all by ourselves. After they left, we climbed the tower. I had a thoroughly enjoyable time viewing the heavens and learning about the stars.

For ten cents we could go to a dance at the local Armory every Saturday night. When we heard Bonny Baker singing “Oh Johnny, Oh Johnny, Oh how you can love” it became our theme song. From then on, John answered to either John, or Johnny. One could buy an ice cream sundae hand packed with real ice cream, for fifteen cents. A hamburger cost ten cents. Coffee at a nickel included refills. A big three dip ice cream banana split was a quarter. Although we could not afford the luxury of eating out, we hiked many trails, and took long rides in the country. Gas cost was five gallons for a dollar and that went a long way. It was wonderful to just be able to go off by ourselves and talk.

The time soon came for John to meet my folks. I invited Johnny over for a dinner all of which I made myself. I even had home baked rolls made from scratch, of course, because there were no ready mixes at that time. After dinner, mother washed the dishes, and I dried them. John had the fly swatter and was after a fly in the kitchen. That pesky fly landed on one of the water glasses. John hit the fly, and the glass, and six other tumblers fell over and broke. John almost cried because he felt so bad. Mom was very nice about it and everything was fine. The next day, Johnny arrived with six new glasses!

My family all enjoyed John. Mother suggested that we have a picnic the following Sunday. We planned to go to the big rock area on the other side of the river from Consolidated Paper Co. We would bring the makings for pancakes that were to be cooked on an open fire laid among the rocks. John was to bring the sausage. Everything went fine until he opened the sausage, and it turned out to be hamburger. We were shocked! We all liked pork sausage with pancakes but not hamburger. We ate it and forever after we laughed about Johnny and his “sausage.”

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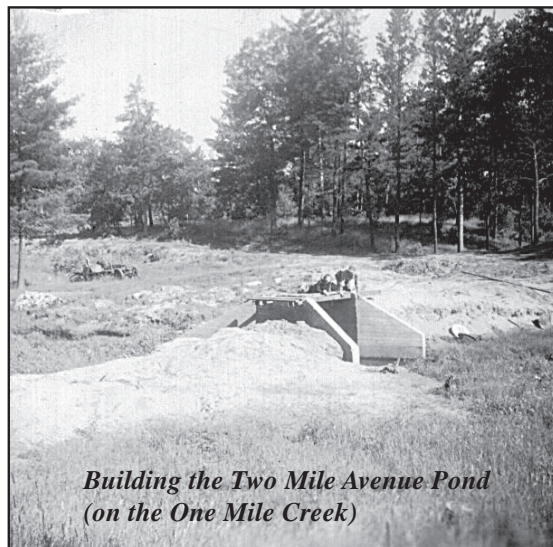
For our second summer we moved the trailer to a vacant lot on First Street North, beside the Christian Science Church, and across from the swimming pool. We even put in a little garden there. John’s cousin Evelyn Murgatroyd came down most every morning and we went over to the pool for a swim. Jerry Rowland, another cousin, came often to play croquet on the front lawn. He and John became such good friends, that he had John as an usher at his wedding a few years later.

Grandpa Winn and Aunt Ruby came to visit one Sunday. It was a lovely day, so we spread a blanket out on the lawn, and sat there to visit. Grandpa wanted to see the necklace that he had given me when Grandma died. I brought it out, and we all looked at it, and talked about the beginning of it.

Several weeks later, I wanted to wear the necklace to a party. When I went to get it, it wasn’t there! We looked all over the trailer. Then thinking we might have left it on the ground when we had shown it to Grandpa, we raked and raked the lawn, but no necklace. We never locked

the trailer in those days, so we thought maybe someone had stolen it. I never found that necklace again. It was the most valuable piece of jewelry that I had ever owned.

As we began to make a little money, we decided that we should buy some land. We found a beautiful wooded parcel, located on a small creek a few miles south of the city limits. We negotiated with the owner, Paul Thalacker, and arrived at the price of \$1,000 for twenty acres. We didn’t sign any papers. Paul said it was enough to shake hands. So with that, and his repeating, “True Blue, Johnny, True Blue,” our purchase was completed and we received the deed and abstract. We spent all the time we could spare from our business out on the new land we named Murwin Pines, a combination of our two names, Murgatroyd and Winn.



*Building the Two Mile Avenue Pond
(on the One Mile Creek)*

Our insurance business had become fairly well established in our first two years so we felt that we could begin to think about building a home. One of the first things we did was to design a small lake in part of the swampy creek bottom. I guess I would have to say that was typical Murgatroyd trick, constructing a lake before building a house.

We had wanted to dam up our little creek and create a small lake. A local contractor agreed to take the job of excavating all the swampy land along the stream. He worked and worked, but his machinery was not big enough to do the job. Another contractor, Harry Bassuener, was hired, who would take our trailer as payment.

He did a beautiful job digging and building the dam. I can still see him on his big machinery with mosquitoes buzzing around his head. He wore a red bandanna wrapped around his hat and neck to ward them off.

He agreed that we could live in the trailer that summer, and could keep the "addition" to it. He finished the excavation for the lake in late summer and completed the dam in the fall. By spring, our little lake would be full of water creating its own beauty, and we would still have the running stream above the lake, and below the dam.

Having a vegetable garden appealed to us. Our second hand tractor was purchased shortly after we bought the property. We had enough cleared land across the creek. John bought an old plow. Early in the spring we drove the plow and tractor to the other side. I drove the tractor and John guided the plow from behind. Very soon he was yelling at me to go straighter. I tried, but kept misjudging the lines. John screamed at me to straighten up and I screamed back that I was doing my best. Finally

the bit of land was plowed and ready to plant. We did not realize that our yelling was being heard by the neighbors, until they told us about the fun they had listening to us.

But now we had no trailer. We rented one room beside our office located on the second floor above Church's Drug Store. It was handy for the office, but not so good for living quarters. There was a small bathroom sink on one wall, so we had running hot and cold water. The public toilet was down the hall from our room.

We bought a sofa which opened up for our bed. A two burner electric hot plate was used for cooking, set up on a small stand next to the sink. I received countless electric shocks when I removed something from the stove and had one hand in the water. A card table and four folding chairs completed our furnishings.

There was only one window. It faced another building about two feet away. So there was no light, and very little air coming in. I was horrified one day when I plugged in the electric coffee pot and several cockroaches



New Two Mile home

ran from under it.

We found a plan we liked through the *Better Homes and Garden* magazine and located the spot where we would like to have the house stand.

Early in the spring as soon as the ground had thawed, we had a family picnic out in the woods of our property. The fellows took turns driving our old tractor and John walked along behind guiding the scoop, removing the dirt where our basement was to be located. This was on a side hill, so that he was able to excavate the whole thing because there were just three sides and the bottom to do. The fellows took turns, while us gals kept drinks

and food coming to them. By the end of the day the basement hole was pretty well completed.

Now it was time to get our financing. When we applied at the local Savings and Loan, they informed us that they only loaned money on remodeling jobs. This was the year 1939 and the United States was concerned about the war in Europe. Businesses were extremely careful with their future plans. We decided to move our trailer "porch" on to the west side of where the house would be. This enabled us to apply for a remodeling loan. That trailer "addition" proved to be invaluable to us.

We hired a builder to construct the house. But then came plumbing, electricity, and heating. We financed each of these separately. By the middle of the summer we

were able to move into the basement. We were excited to be there, and between that and the croaking frogs it was hard to sleep. When we had moved our bed and clothing out from that roach infested room downtown, we left them outside for three days and treated them with spray to make sure that there would be no cockroaches.

We covered the living room walls with knotty pine cut from our own trees. John and I did all the painting, and staining. We also finished the oak floors ourselves.

By fall we were ready to move upstairs, but we had no furniture other than a cuckoo clock and our bed. John had sold a young couple, Bud and Armie (Armella Marie Ethel Michaels) Halloran a commercial lot where they planned to build a filling station. They became very good friend in the process. Armie and Bud invited us over for dinner one evening. It was extremely hot, so John, even though he wore a suit coat, left off his shirt and

tie. The Hallorans got so much fun out of that. It cemented our friendship. They were quite unhappy with the house they were renting. We came up with the idea that they would furnish their lovely furniture and we our house, and we would live together. So we did.

We had a wonderful life with the Hallorans. Armie had a great sense of humor. The only quarrel we ever had happened over garden peas! Armie was fixing lunch that day. I went to the garden to pick nice sweet fresh peas for lunch. When I brought them

in, I found that she had fixed canned peas. I was really upset. We cooled down soon, and that was the end of that.

We had a lot of competition with our gardens. One day John and I tied a store bought ripe tomato to one

of our plants. We bragged about getting the first tomato, but they went up to the garden and took a look.

John's sister Marion had become engaged to John Smart. We were very close and did many things together. Marion was a beautiful singer, and we sang all the old songs as we rode along the way to something or other. My John knew all the words, but couldn't carry a tune nor could I sing a note. But that didn't matter, it was always fun.

As Marion came down the aisle between the seats, we all picked up our ears. The music was all wrong. We had set the portable player in the sun, and the record was warped. So much for music. A bit of moisture dropped from the trees onto the minister's forehead. He anxiously mopped his brow and was relieved to find that it had not been caused by a bird. John acted as best man, and John Smart's sister was the bridesmaid. A light lunch was served,

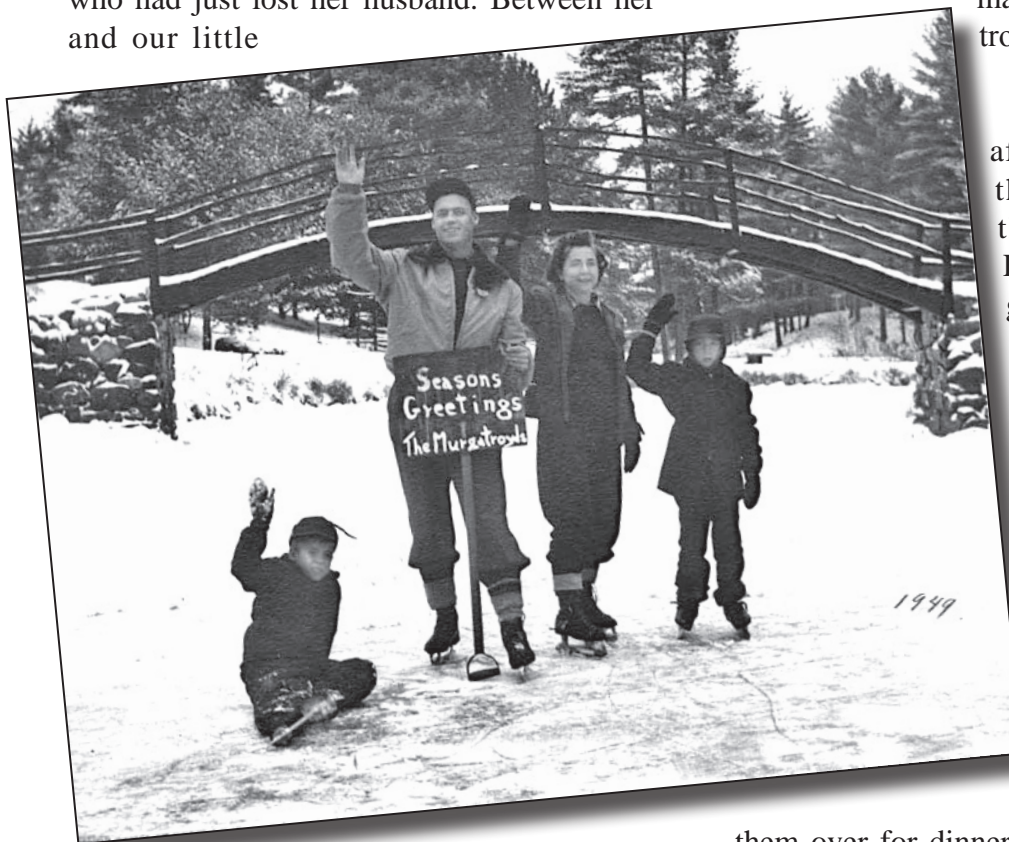


and the bride and groom were soon on their way. Their son John Paul (Jay) was born the following year in October 1940.

The time for John to be with us [in WWII] went so fast, and before we knew it, he had to go back to South Bend Indiana [to work], and I was on my own again, with two little boys to care for.

I rented the downstairs apartment to a friend who had just lost her husband. Between her and our little

The stay in South Bend meant a new way of life for us. John worked the night shift at Studebaker because it paid more money. He had to sleep mornings and we had very little time in the afternoon before he went to work again. While he was at home, the boys were awake and needed constant attention. Folks weren't kidding when they talked about the "terrible two's!" A lovable age, but a time when the little child was learning so many new things and getting in trouble finding out about them.



In May, Japan gave up after the nuclear bomb hit their country. Soon after that Germany conceded. Everybody celebrated with gusto. We rang our big school bell, located over the garage for ten minutes. We no longer needed to worry about John being drafted. I liked to tell folks that when Japan and Germany discovered John was about to be drafted, they quickly threw in the towel!

One of my Club friends was welcoming her husband home from the service. We invited

dog, I was no longer afraid. When one sees our old home on Two Mile Avenue now, it is surrounded by houses on each side and across the road. But when I was alone there, we were way out in the country with no houses nearby except for those way up near 8th Street.

Very soon the government issued ration stamps to be used to purchase meats, certain other foods, and gasoline. Our town established a parcel of land in the city for victory gardens. Anyone not having space for a garden could put in the seeds there. We had our own garden and used it very well. Then the town established a canning center where anyone could can their own vegetable in tin cans. I made good use of that and was able to have many cans of fruits and vegetables on my basement shelves.

them over for dinner and I served chicken. She laughed and laughed when she saw it because she said that every place they had been invited, chicken was served.

Christmas rolled around again. This time we put out our tree early because I was due to entertain my church Circle women. The house was decorated, and the tree beautiful. John always cut our tree from our property.

The next day John decided to build a high frame at the top of our hill slide on the other side of the creek. He finished the frame and then decided to paint it with creosote, so that it would not rot away.

Our boys usually played at the kitchen table, but this morning they were down in the basement playing. John came into the kitchen with a pan of hardened creosote which he put on the stove to

warm up, and then went back outside, saying it would be ready in just five minutes and he would be back to pick it up.

All of a sudden I smelled smoke! That creosote was on fire.

I quickly called the fire department, and rushed downstairs to my boys. Thank goodness they hadn't been in the kitchen, because that table side of the room was the first to catch fire. By that time John had rushed in, grabbed the fire extinguisher and put out the fire. The fire department arrived and made sure that all the fire was out.

Our living room walls were knotty pine. They not only were black from the heavy smoke, but it was hot enough so all the pitch ran out of the knot holes. Our beautiful tree stood there, completely black.

Mother's friend Ruth Corey heard the fire truck go by and followed it. When she could enter the house, she was so comforting. All my good silver laid out on the kitchen table, ready for me to put away. It was also completely black. That good woman picked it up and took it home to clean. She called my mother to tell her about it. Mom and Dad drove out right away. Mother's first words were:

"Well what have you done now, John?"

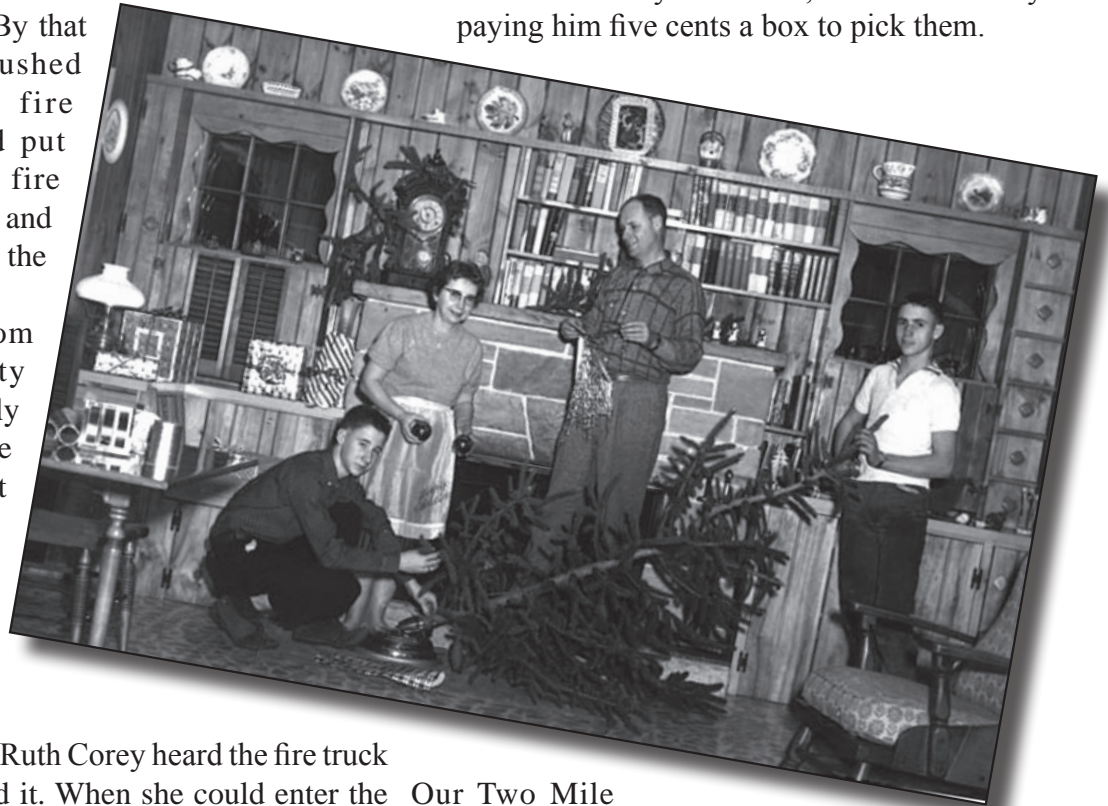
Gardening was my hobby. We had a large flower garden below the dam, which we called our "Dam" garden. A lovely perennial border edged the side hill east of the house. John built a hot bed for starting plants on the side hill west of the house.

When we subdivided the far side of the pond we had to give up our big vegetable garden there. That was sad because we had two long rows of raspberries, and two long rows of asparagus there. We had so much from them that I was able to sell

the surplus to a grocery store. When I answered the phone one day, the caller said she would like some more of the raspberries.

What raspberries?" I asked. She said "the ones that Paul was selling to her for twenty five cents a box."

I promptly told her that there were no more for sale. I had discovered Paul's little trick of selling of boxes for twenty five cents, when I was only paying him five cents a box to pick them.



Our Two Mile

Avenue had changed. Now there were quite a few houses just across the street from us, and further up the road. We were no longer all by ourselves. The new neighbors proved to be very friendly and we all became close friends.

I liked visiting with our neighbor girls during the time when I wasn't working at the office. We would often get together for lunch, and a good chat. Our first neighbors were the Bud Caves family and the Gib Endrizzi family. Later on, Don and Sally Engel built a new house across the road, and Len and Helen Olson built one on the other side of Endrizzi's. These four families became some our closest friends. Kay Endrizzi or Ruby Caves came over often for a cup of coffee. Our David, still at home, had his own little cup for coffee.

The neighborhood often got together for a potluck dinner and an evening of fun. One night

we adults were all sitting on our back porch, while the children played outside. All of a sudden Linda Caves came running in to her mother. Ruby asked her what was the trouble. Linda's reply:

"All the boys are chasing me!"

Her mother, Ruby's reply was, "Why don't you stay in here with me then?"

Linda responded, "No, 'cause I'm having so much fun!"

Our place was the popular gathering place for the kids in the neighborhood. John Endrizzi was visiting one day, but when he arrived he had a big lump in his cheek. I asked him what the trouble was. That kid had a whole Brussels sprout in his mouth. It seems that his folks insisted that he at least try a new food. That poor kid could not bear to chew the sprout, and so he had just kept it in his mouth all the while. Now that he was away from his folks, he finally spit it out.

John's sister, Mary Endrizzi, caught a huge snapping turtle out of our pond one day. She hauled it by the tail back home to her mother, hoping Mom would make turtle soup. Her mom, Kay almost fainted when she saw that turtle. Little Mary was able to get rid of it by hauling it to their pond.

We had a change in ministers at our Methodist Church. My mother shook hands with the new man, and invited him and his family to dinner at our house. I was disgusted with Mom, and asked her why she didn't invite them to *her* house. There wasn't much else to do but fix something.

The Feldts arrived soon. We learned their first names, Milton and Grace, and that their two children were Barbara and Bruce. The girl was the same age as Paul, and the boy the same as David. Those kids had so much fun together and we enjoyed Milton and Grace so much that we became fast friends. I had to admit that my Mother did the right thing.

The Feldts came out often after that. Grace would bring some food and I would add some and we would get it together and enjoy our meal on that beautiful big screened in porch of ours. We let the children go swimming, and that was fun for them too.

We had a couple of amusing events during

church services while Milton Feldt was the minister. Bruce Feldt usually sat with John and me and our two boys. John had just purchased an alarm wristwatch. This particular Sunday was the first day of daylight savings time and he had not changed the time on the watch. All of a sudden that darned alarm rang out. The boys all laughed aloud and John quickly got the thing shut off. Milton told us afterwards that he knew exactly what happened when he heard those boys laugh.

Another time we were running late, as usual, for church. John ran back in the house to grab a handkerchief and away we went. We sat in our usual places for the church sermon. John started to sneeze and grabbed his hanky. We were amused when the handkerchief turned out to be a white sock.

Both our boys were now in school, so I went back to the office full time. Business had increased so much that we needed two office girls. My Dad was heavily involved in the "loan business" and enjoyed it very much. The rooms across the hall in our building became vacant. Because we needed more space we rented them. We were able to remove some partitions, and could make all the rooms part of one unit. Dad had his own office in the front of the building, with bay windows overlooking Grand Avenue. Next came the reception room, in which our two office girls operated. John's office was next to the reception room.

My office was back of his at the rear of the building. Because I now had the space, I kept all the books and records. When income tax time rolled around, I did taxes for people. I had an extra door leading out to the hallway, so my customers didn't interfere with our other business.

The bay window in Dad's office proved to be a very popular place to view any parades or "goings on" on Grand Avenue. We always invited John's sister Marion's family to join us there for special events. Their son Jay and our Paul and David and Susie enjoyed many good times together through the years. One thing Jay couldn't do that David did very well, was to cross the logs from the island to the other side of the pond. Jay nearly always fell in the water.

Not too long later, John built a rounded bridge

to the island, and a flat one from the island to the other side. That ended the falls into the pond. We had a pair of ducks nesting on the island. Although they were told not to, both boys kept checking the nest to see if the eggs had hatched. We happened to be watching from the house, the day it occurred. That smart little mother duck led her ducklings to the water, and they swam immediately to the other side and took off through the woods.

Our pond became a popular place for the neighborhood kids to swim. One day, when I came home from the office, I went down to the back porch to retrieve the boys' swimming trunks which had been hanging on the line to dry. They weren't there! I looked out at the pond, and saw a couple of boys swimming. They had simply borrowed the swim wear off the line and gone swimming with them on.

When Paul was about ten, and David eight, John built a tennis court. He and I liked to play tennis, and Paul soon learned. He liked to shoot baskets in the hoops we had installed on one end. David liked to run his toy machines but Paul immediately bawled David out and made him take his toys back to the house, because it interfered with his basketball shooting.

John always plowed the snow off of the ice on the pond as soon as he could get his tractor on the ice. Most every year, he was so anxious to get going that he went too soon, and broke through the ice, then had to be pulled out. One day, when he had just decided that the ice was thick enough another little neighbor boy came over to skate. There was still snow on the ice, so that little guy said to John:

"If you don't get this pond plowed off pretty soon, I'm not coming here anymore!"

Our acreage was a wonderful place for the boys to grow up. It would seem that the whole area out our way considered our place their "playground."

Every night during the winter ice skating season, we turned on our outside lights for the kids. We built a fire for them to warm themselves. Then we ran into a problem, when so many of them wanted to come in and phone their folks when they were ready to go home. We finally had to tell them to make their arrangements for time before they left home. Then we received several calls from irate parents. After we explained to them they understood, and the problem was solved.

John had been improving his real estate business, but he felt that he needed more activity than just selling houses. There were several parcels of land for sale in the city. John went to my uncle Guy Potter and suggested that they go in partnership to



Auril, David, Paul and John Murgatroyd

develop this land. Uncle Guy would furnish the money and John would do the work. When the land was sold and homes built, Uncle Guy would be repaid the amount of money he had put in. This project went great.

The first houses were constructed by men (Bob and Clem) from Wausau. We bought the materials for them and they did the construction. John's job was to choose the plan to be built and then sell the houses. These houses were priced right and so popular that soon he had buyers for homes before they were built. It became my job to work with the buyer to choose what he wanted in a plan, the outside finish and colors. Then figure out the cost and draw up the contract. Over a period of eight or nine years, John built over sixty houses.

Not only in school were the boys different, but in their hobbies. David loved cars or any machines.

John had purchased an old army jeep. That was Dave's favorite. When he was about ten or so, Dave loved to pretend he was driving. One day, when

the jeep was parked in the driveway, he actually started it. Away it went, halfway down the hill by our house before he was able to get it stopped. I never knew it at the time, but later he told me that he actually took the jeep down Sampson Street to Griffith Avenue and got back safely. I would probably have lost my mind if I had known what was going on. His Dad explained to David how dangerous that ride had been. He could have run in the ditch, bumped another car, been picked up by the police and so on. David's reply was:

"Don't be so 'pistomistic Dad'".

Paul acquired a great stamp collection, thanks to our friends the Trumbulls. Leland was a big help in that process. Eloise was probably my best friend at that time. We talked every day on the phone. When John and I had to take a business trip out of town for a few days, we left the boys in the care of Eloise and Leland.

Paul's great hobby was all sorts of nature. He loved all the little animals that were in our area, and learned a great more of them from some excellent books on animals. Birds were his real interest. Both he and his friend Bill Brener spent many hours identifying birds. While he was in boy scouts, Paul had to identify 50 birds, with which he had no problem. Come David's turn in the Scouts, he had a great deal of trouble naming six.

About the time the boys were old enough to lift fairly heavy stones, John decided to enclose the side hill west of the house with a stone wall, having a fireplace, and an underground room for a sauna. Every weekend for a couple of years we spent gathering rocks around the countryside. We enjoyed our time together with John and Marion Smart, Jay and Susie. So it wasn't long before we had them helping gather rocks too. Everyone except John got sick and tired of that project. But we did get enough rocks to complete the wall. John's uncle Rollie Murgatroyd did the stone work. He was an expert at that. It is to his credit that that stone wall is still in good shape.

Milton Feldt served our church for twelve years. During that last year, our members agreed

that we should have a new church. George Mead, president of Consolidated Papers, gave us a nice parcel of land close to downtown on Garfield Street. Some of the parishioners preferred a location on the far east end of town where they would have more land. There was so much opposition that the group decided to appoint two people to give the arguments for and against the locations. John and another man were chosen. John argued for the Mead location. The debate lasted over an hour, but John finally won.

When the old church was sold, because the new one was not finished, we met in the Palace Theater. Rev. Feldt was moved to a church in Kenosha and Rev. Hulse was installed in our church. He took an active part in the building.

We were beginning to find that folks objected to walking up the long steep stairs to our office. A big two story house on First Avenue South, along the Wisconsin River Bank, was offered for sale. We decided to buy it. It had plenty of room on the first floor for our offices. One for Dad, one for John, one for a reception office and one for me. In addition there was a room that we could use as a conference room with a big table, which was good to gather around for lunch. In addition there was a full sized kitchen.

When we advertised our new location, we called it "The House of Seven Gables." Not long after we settled in, Aunt Ruby retired from her work in Milwaukee, and moved to our city. There was a nice apartment upstairs which we rented to her. Dad and his sister Ruby loved to play Canasta, and he spent many hours up there in her new home. We were glad to have her there for many reasons. One of the things she did was bring down some homemade goody for morning lunch break.

Dad was very good talking with people. He had such a great sense of humor. Many people told me that just meeting him on the street made them feel good. He also enjoyed a coffee break with several buddies every day down at the Quick Lunch Restaurant.

John was often late for his appointments because he would spend so much time with a

prospective customer. Dad would keep John's next appointment entertained while they waited. This particular day, the customer was not happy to be kept waiting. I heard him complaining bitterly to my dad, so much so that I just couldn't stand it. I went into Dad's office, grabbed the fellow by the ear and led him out the door! That sure squelched him for any future sale.

One morning a boy who had formerly worked for us came to our door, all out of breath. He exclaimed: "Our home is being sold for unpaid taxes on the court house steps at two o'clock this afternoon. I know you have always liked that land, so thought you ought to know!"

We went immediately to the First National Bank to see if they would lend us money if we needed it. Then on to the Court House. A representative from the Nekooza Edwards Paper Company was the only other

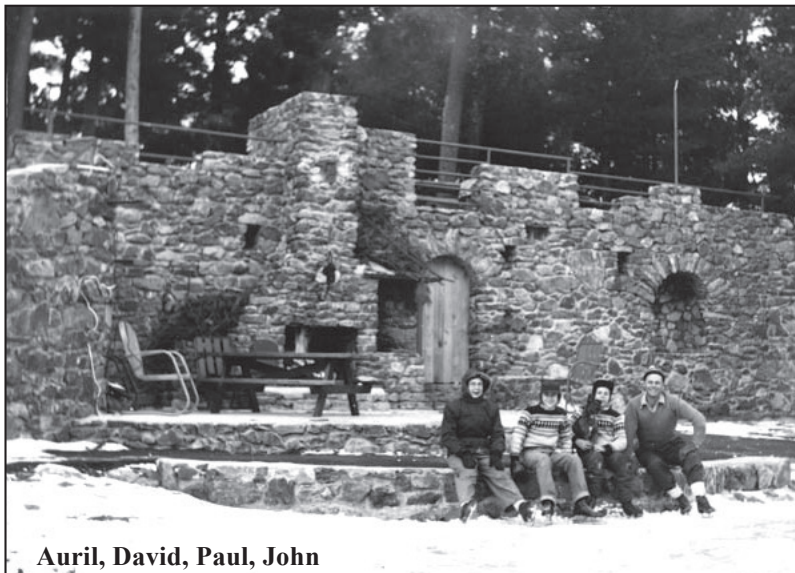
one there. He was only authorized to go up to \$4,400 and we bid \$4,500 for the forty acres and got it. This was beautiful land with the Four Mile creek running through it, and lovely big pines along the stream.

We moved our trailer out there and camped. The Feldts joined us. We discovered that the adjacent forty west of ours could be purchased. It was owned by several descendents of the original owner. It took a lot of legal work to get the abstract and title conveyed to us, but it finally happened. We were the proud owners of eighty acres of beautiful land.

...

A lot of people in the Town of Grand Rapids, adjacent to the city of Wisconsin Rapids wanted to join the city. We did not. John and Gib Endrizzi got involved in trying to prevent this from happening. John never drinks, but he found himself defending the taverns. If the city plan went through, the bars would lose their licenses. Because the city had rules about how many bars could be located in their limits, it was doubtful whether the taverns would be able to get new licenses.

The battle went on for six months or so with many letters to the editor of the paper. Finally the city agreed to accept everything to Two Mile Avenue. Gib, after all his work, was now in the city. But we were outside. Our neighbor, Don Engel, became a city councilman and did a fine job.



Auril, David, Paul, John

John had pretty much filled up the city lots he had purchased with new homes. He decided that the southern half of our property could be developed very nicely into an attractive subdivision. Even though we hated to part with the land, it turned out to be a good project.

In the meantime we had purchased more land adjacent to our acreage off Griffith Avenue. The land had belonged to a good friend of ours, Russ Peterson. He had built a big garage to store his airplane and a small house next to it. John had flown with him many times.

Unfortunately Russ was killed trying to land his plane on a vacant strip of land adjacent to his hanger building. The family decided they no longer wanted the property and we were able to purchase it at a reasonable price.

Editor: More about "the Ridges" later.

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Artifacts, a local history magazine and newsletter for the South Wood County Historical Corp. welcomes contributions of writings and photographs relevant to the greater Wisconsin Rapids area. For a year's subscription and membership send \$20 to the address above. Questions? Contact Lori Brost, Museum Administrator and assistant editor, 715-423-1580. Lori@swch-museum.com.

Hard Bound for Glory

By Uncle Dave

Age-old and beloved: book publishing. Began in the 1400s and culminates in this year's *Ghost of Myself: River City Memoirs VII*. Uncle Dave began publishing books at Palmer Publishing, Amherst, Wis., in 1975 by handing Ray Palmer's daughter a sheaf of papers to type and illustrations to be converted into "half tones." The printer took over from there. In 2009, the entire "book" comes off the computer virtually ready to go to press. So easy, the writer finds himself doing most of the work and earning a major headache.

Though we use make-believe letters on a screen, we continue to insist that the final product is like this, old-fashioned, made by hand, touchable, for practical purposes permanent: on paper. The process is familiar.

Create. The 257 stories in RCMVII were written from 1998-2008 and published in the Wisconsin Rapids *Daily Tribune*. *Assemble.* Thanks to assis-

tant Holly Knoll. *Design.* Sometimes called layout, like this work in progress. *Illustrate.* Lots of pictures in *Artifacts*. RCMVII is mostly words. 250,000.

Compile table of contents. Index. The latter, not available for *Artifacts*; but RCMVII will be fully indexed. *Spell check.* With computer. Fallible.

Proofread. Wife Kathy, the best.

Make CD for Print Shop.

Then it's up to Warren Miller and staff. Somebody's elves will be burning the midnight oil to have this book ready for Christmas giving. Remember that it will not be sold in stores or online.

The only way to get RCMVII is to send \$100 to South Wood County Historical Corp., 540 Third Street South. All proceeds will go to the publication fund. Admittedly, most residents of River City won't pay

that much for anything less greasy than a fish fry; so you know this is going to be a collector's item from Day One. To make it even more so, if you wish your copy to be embossed with your name or another short phrase, include that information for a personal touch from the book world to the bibliophile.

