

ARTIFACTS

Botany Class of May 1910

Wisconsin River above Wisconsin Rapids?

From back of photo: 1. Ethel Hayes Haertel, 2. Lielia Hanson Erön, 3. Myrtle Ule Nobles, 4. Lida Nelson Grey, 5. Florence Lynn, 6. Esther Gill, 7. Fern Millenbah Gleason, 8. Anna Corcoran Kirschling, 9. Cassie Gibson Lumsden, 10. Mildred Michelson, 11. Agnes Dolan, 12. Rose Rosplock, 13. Evla Winger Moore, Ethel Waters, 15. Bess Margeson (?) Clark, 16. Katherine Vaughan, 17. Gertrude Golla (?), 18. Eva Lind Linville?, 19. Esther Witte Mortenson, 20. Stella Hickey, X. Herbert Wolf, X. (?) Canning

Vaughan collection



Contents: President's Report by Phil Brown, p. 2; Doctor's Bag by Lori, 3-4; Vaughan Suitcase, 5-32; "Curating the Vaughan Collection" by Kathy Engel, 6-14; Bancroft, Iowa, 10-14; Riverdale Seed Farm, 15-19; "Union Soldier": John Wesley Vaughan, 20-23; Blakes of Rudolph, 24-25; Byrde Vaughan, 26-31.

Suitcase Issue



Phil Brown
SWCHC President



All Aboard!

The past winter has been very busy at the South Wood County Historical Museum. We have been working on two major exhibit upgrades since last fall.

The first exhibit upgrade was to our Depot Exhibit in the basement area and has been overseen by our Museum Administrator, Lori Brost. Everything was taken off the walls so they could be repainted.

The new version will feature the four depots in Wisconsin Rapids, the three depots in Port Edwards, and the three depots in Nekoosa. Just think, at one time we had ten depots in the south Wood County area!

Lori had the assistance of two local railroad history buffs, John Berg, retired teacher from East Junior High and our very own J. Marshall Buehler, retired Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co. employee and charter SWCHC board member. In fact, Marshall was instrumental in putting the original exhibit together in 1993.

Other railroad artifacts will also be part of this exhibit.

The second upgrade was made to our Lumber and Logging exhibit, also located in the basement of the Museum. The wood products history in the south Wood County area goes back to 1827, well before Wisconsin was a state or even a territory. This rich and colorful history has been painstakingly documented by another Nepco retiree, SWCHC board member, Barry Jens.

This is the third upgrade of this seminal exhibit over the past dozen years. As the old saying goes, “third time’s a charm” and with the help of board member, Bob Zimmerman, Wisconsin Rapids City Historian/Artifacts Editor/SWCHC Archivist (Uncle) Dave Engel, Lori Brost and others, Barry has nailed it!

The South Wood County Historical Museum opened for the 2016 season on May 29th. If you have not been to the Museum lately, please plan on joining us this year. The Museum is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday afternoons from 1-4. If those times do not work for you, please call the Museum at 715-423-1580 and we can arrange a special time for your visit.



Editor’s note: Richard Bender, attorney, gently noted during a visit to Uncle Dave’s Thoreauvian bacchanal, that he was absent from those SWCHC board members listed in #46. Indeed, Bender is more than a nominal member; he has lovingly preserved more than one historical East Side building; but wanted *Artifacts* to know he is a proud West Sider from way back, hailing from the same neighborhood that was the first home of the editor himself.

U.D.

Lori Brost

Museum Administrator

Doctor's Bag

A lot of the conversations I have with people at the Museum start with something like "I'm not sure if you'd be interested in this or not, but" and the day that Denisa Panis walked in was no different.

She told me she had been a caregiver for a local doctor who had died Oct. 2, 2015, and wondered if we were interested in a brown leather doctors bag with the golden inscription L.R. Pfeiffer M.D. and full medicines, supplies and tools. My response to her is 'We would definitely be interested'.

So many conversations I have here at work intertwine with my life outside of the Museum so it wasn't a big surprise when I realized that Dr. Pfeiffer was the father of a former co-worker of my husband and someone I had known as well, Wade Pfeiffer who, with a little help from his siblings, shared some information about his dad.

Louis R. Pfeiffer was born in Cumberland Wis., Dec. 16, 1926, and after high school, joined the U.S. Army, returning in 1946. He graduated from U.W.-Madison in 1951 and began his internship in Duluth, Minn. He returned to his hometown and then on to Strum, Wis., until his move to Nekoosa.

One of the items in the bag was a photo of Dr. Pfeiffer and a man we suspected was Dr. John Thompson.

To ensure the identity of the man, I posted the photo on Facebook's "Vanished River Cities - Central Wisconsin," run by Rhonda Whetstone. Comment after comment verified that the photo showed both Drs. Pfeiffer and Thompson. Dr. Thompson's daughter, Vicki Herzberg, added that the photo was taken at the open house of the Medical Center in Nekoosa.

With the first part of the mystery solved, I started looking for photos of the Medical Center when it first opened and found that the Museum had none. So, again, I went to Vanished River Cities and once again, they came through. Darla Engwell-Allen of the Nekoosa library said she had the May 1958 *Nekoosa News* that featured the opening of the Center. Darla allowed me to scan the issue and it was added to the records.

So we learned that after arriving in Nekoosa, Dr. Pfeiffer and Dr. John Thompson embarked on the Nekoosa Medical Center. The \$90,000 medical facility also included a dentist as well as a fully equipped laboratory.

Dr. Pfeiffer would practice in Nekoosa until he retired in March of 1988, wrapping up a 30 year career.



Ready for a house call



Dr. Louis R. Pfeiffer
U.W. Medical school
graduation photo



Loaned
by
Charles
and
Jo Ann
Lester
Public
Library,
Nekoosa



The modern new medical building located in Nekoosa is equipped with the finest medical and dental facilities available.

Camera Tour of Nekoosa Medical Center

Functional design and a sparkling array of the finest in new equipment made a big hit with several hundred persons who visited Nekoosa's \$90,000 medical center last month.

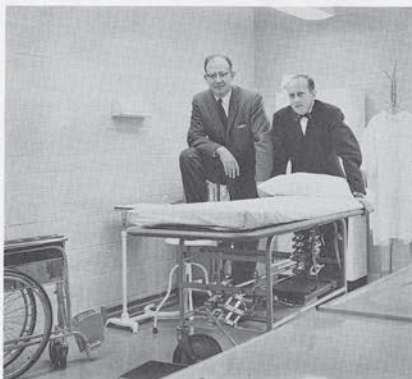
On hand to greet the visitors were Dr. John Thompson, Dr. Louis Pfeiffer, physicians; Dr. James McGrath, dentist; James Wagner, x-ray technician, and two nurses, Mrs. Helen Kuhnke and Mrs. Norma Hoke, all of whom comprise the staff of the center.

The handsome building houses five examining rooms, x-ray room, general business office and recep-

tion area, waiting room, orthopedic room, two dental operating rooms and private offices for each of the doctors. Additional facilities include a fully-equipped laboratory and an emergency operating room.

Fluorescent lighting and forced air heating and air conditioning are features of the construction. The building covers about 4,000 square feet and has a brick exterior with Waylite block interior partitions.

The News congratulates the city of Nekoosa for providing this outstanding facility to service community needs.



DRS. PFEIFFER AND THOMPSON pose in the emergency operating room of the center. The doctors, both newcomers to Nekoosa, were classmates at the U. of W. medical school.



STAFF NURSES are Helen Kuhnke and Norma Hoke. They are shown in the laboratory which is fully equipped for bacteriological experiments and other medical tests.

From p. 3,
documenting
an
artifact:
the
doctor's
bag



The Suitcase

**Alanson & Elizabeth
Blake**

Rudolph Pioneers

Wesley Vaughan
Union Soldier

Byrde Vaughan
Rapids Dignitary

Emma Blake Bliss
'From Iowa to Home'

Sarah Blake Vaughan
#1 Correspondent

Provenance

It took a long line of captains to bring this ordinary-looking vessel of history through the stormy weather of 160 years. The earliest artifacts within were letters that must have been saved first in the 1850s by the recipients, Alanson and Elizabeth Blake of Rudolph township—and passed on to their daughter, Sarah Vaughan—who added her letters and passed it all on to her son Byrde Vaughan—from him most likely to his daughter, Catherine Vaughan—and upon Catherine's death, to brother Carl Vaughan.

Then to Carl Vaughan's second cousin once-removed, Eudora Beadle, who descends from Sarah Vaughan's sister, Josephine Blake Beadle, married to Flavel Beadle way back in the early days of Rudolph, more recently, from Eudora Beadle to her sister Ardith Beadle Kubisiak's daughter Elizabeth "Liz" Stern.

And from Liz to Wisconsin Rapids City Historian and *Artifacts* editor (Uncle) Dave Engel—from him to SWCHC and now—to you.

Kathy Engel
SWCHC Librarian

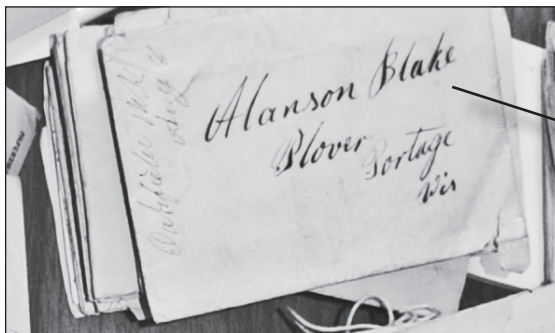
Curating the Vaughan Collection



“That suitcase donated by Liz and Tom Stern, you can start going through it any time and maybe write a story—about what goes into adding a donated collection to the museum archives.”

So remarked (Uncle) Dave Engel, SWCHC archivist, *Artifacts* publisher and my husband. That was the first I heard about what we were about to name, “the Vaughan suitcase.” I learned that Liz had gotten it, filled with letters and photos, after her Aunt Eudora Beadle died in 2013. What was in it I was soon to find out.

The first step was to open the suitcase and photograph the contents, sorted by type of artifact: photographs, letters, documents, physical objects, memorabilia.



Alanson Blake? Dave told me he was an early settler of Wood County and showed me the standard reference, the 1923 *History of Wood County*, where I found Blake moved to what is now the town of Rudolph in 1857.

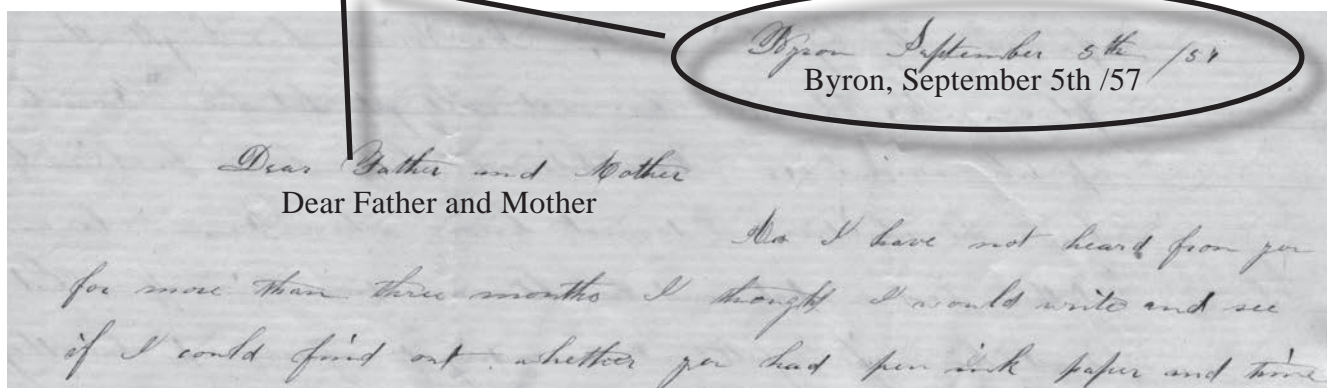


Photos by Kathy Engel

Letters

The letters and envelopes, when available, were divided into piles according to recipient's name and inserted in protective sheets filed in a binder by recipient, then date. Notes, taken while reading, identified date, sender, recipient and any other important memoranda. A small piece of paper with this information was included.

The earliest letters date to the 1850s-1860s. They were tied in bundles with string but included very few envelopes. Luckily, the letter writers were diligent about writing dates and places on the opening to each missive.



Who was writing and receiving these letters? Answers came from the letters themselves.

Letter 1: “Byron September 5 [18]57, Dear Father and Mother”

“I do not think of any thing more to write now for we have not much news or if there is I do not hear them. Now I want you to write as often as you can and tell me every thing. You told about the mosquitoes being so thick if you do not write soon I shall think they have dragged you all into that swamp. That is all this time. Goodbye S Blake”

Letter 2: “Byron, June 2nd, 1861 Dearest Father and Mother...I presume you will not be surprise if in this letter to you, I introduce my husband, Wesley Vaughan...”

Letter 2: “Well George Josephine Carlos and Emma permit me to introduce your new brother.” [to the end signed] “S.E. Vaughan”

From these examples I was able to determine that “Mother and Father” were Alanson and Elizabeth Blake, who lived in central Wisconsin. Sarah was the Blakes’ daughter who was teaching near Byron, Fond du Lac County, Wis. As shown, she married Wesley Vaughan in 1861. Her brothers and sisters were George, Josephine, Carlos and Emma. And, I learned, the mosquitoes in the Rudolph bogs, where we live, were just as bad back in 1857 as they are now.

Later letters: 1880-1890s

Most of these letters had envelopes with addresses and return addresses. The recipients were: Sarah Vaughan, Alanson Blake, Elizabeth Blake and Josephine Beadle, all of Grand Rapids, and Byrde Vaughan, Grand Rapids and Madison, Wis. Most were written by Emma Bliss, her husband Orin, children George, Bert and Elda, of Bancroft, Iowa; Byrde Vaughan, Madison, Wis.; and B.M. Hodskins, Wadham’s Mills, N.Y., the area from which the Blakes had migrated.

Detailed and humorous letters revealed Emma Bliss was Sarah Vaughan’s youngest sister. Much of what she wrote was about her Iowa family but she also commented on family and events in Grand Rapids.

Past-Perfect

Next, Museum Administrator Lori Brost scanned the letters into digital format to be entered into the PastPerfect program for cataloging museum materials.

Research

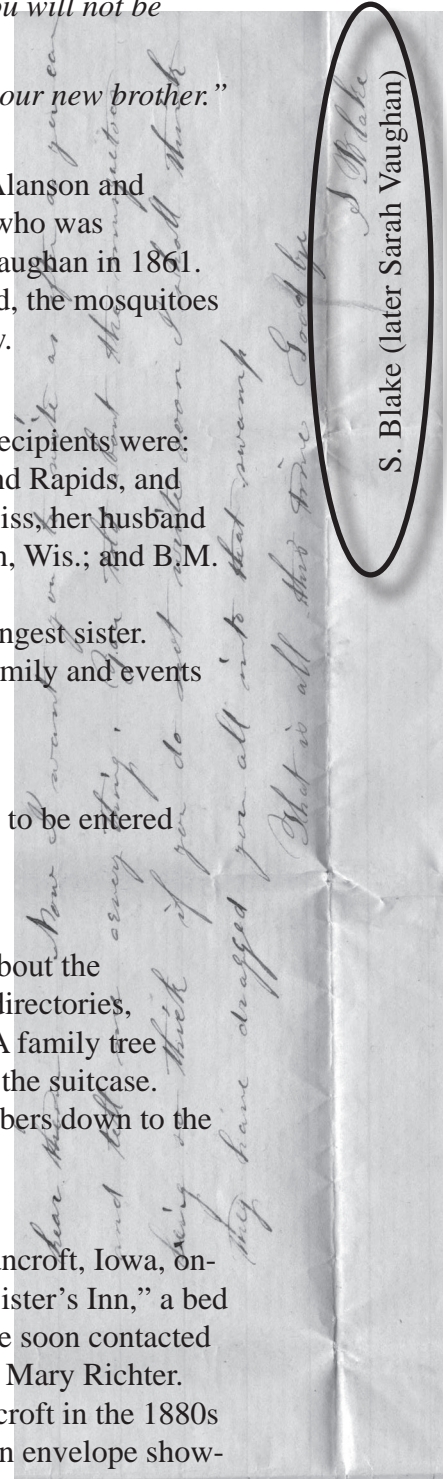
This seemed like a good point to go outside of the letters to find information about the Vaughans, Blakes and Beadles, beginning with online sources and including city directories, clippings, book references, *River City Memoirs* and the *History of Wood County*. A family tree was provided in the Byrde Vaughan “Memorial Record,” one of the documents in the suitcase.

From the letters and funeral booklet, I created a family tree of the family members down to the present time, including Liz and Tom Stern’s grandchildren.

Emma Bliss and Bancroft, Iowa

Because of the Bliss letters from that small farming town, Dave researched Bancroft, Iowa, online and found that the former St. John’s convent there had been converted into “Sister’s Inn,” a bed and breakfast. Staying in a former convent was more than Dave could resist and he soon contacted Bancroft City Director Crysti Neuman, local historian Bill Droessler and librarian Mary Richter.

To prepare for the trip, I sorted Emma Bliss’ letters for information about Bancroft in the 1880s and 1890s to give to Droessler and the Bancroft Historical Society. Included was an envelope showing that Orin Bliss was a house builder in Bancroft at that time.



Photographs

Next, I sorted and identified pictures when possible. Some were fully identified in writing on the back, such as: “May Elizabeth Southard, March 9th, 1887.” Using the funeral booklet family tree, I knew May Southard was Byrde Vaughan’s wife.



“View of River at Riverdale Farm. In the background Centralia on left Grand Rapids on the right – each partly hidden by the wooded island in the center of background – Row of Dahlia next to fence – Wisconsin River beyond fence – Sep 26, 1898”



Some photographs were partially identified, such as:

“Whitney apple tree 4 years from setting – set a straight whip in spring of 1894 picture taken in August 1898 – Riverdale Farm, Grand Rapids Wis. Field of Dewy squash beyond me” -- written on back of picture of a man and a tree.

Soon enough, I figured out that Byrde Vaughan owned Riverdale Farm in Grand Rapids and the handwriting was probably his, so the man in the photo would be Byrde Vaughan.



“Picnic at Pewits Nest Sep 9 1928” – written on back of a snapshot of three women and one man with a rock in the background.

Comparing this photo with others and doing more research, I determined that Byrde Vaughan is on the right and his aunt, Emma Blake Bliss, is second from the left. Pewits Nest is an increasingly popular state natural area near Devil’s Lake in the Baraboo, Wis., area.



After looking at other photos, Dave and I thought this photo was taken at Riverdale Farm. The two women might be Byrde Vaughan's wife, May and his mother, Sarah Vaughan.



Some photographs were unidentified, such as below.



Comparing this picture with others and through research, I determined that Byrde Vaughan was the man on the far right. The photo may have been taken at the State Capitol in Madison, Wis., before 1938, when Byrde, a state legislator, and the man signing the paper, Gov. Phil La Follette, both Progressive Republicans, were voted out of office. Portrait may show former governor John J. Blaine.

Museum Administrator Lori Brost scanned the photographs from the suitcase and they will be entered into PastPerfect.



Research

Both Dave and I used online Grand Rapids/Wisconsin Rapids newspapers to find information about Sarah Vaughan, Byrde Vaughan, Josephine Beadle, Riverdale Seed Farms, Alanson Blake and Elizabeth Blake. This included obituaries, advertisements for Riverdale and various references to the persons of interest.

In preparation for the trip to Bancroft, among the sources was the “Find a Grave,” website, which included a photograph and description of the Emma and Orin Bliss gravesite. At Ancestry.com was information about the Bliss family and a photograph of Emma Bliss and two children.



Road Trip Bancroft, Iowa November 2015

Wednesday, Nov. 12, Dave and I arrived at the Sister’s Inn, a former convent built in 1954, now a bed and breakfast run by JoAnn Quinn and her recently-deceased sister, Brenda Vaske. We had the entire two-story building, which included a chapel and lounge, to ourselves for our entire stay.

At the Bancroft Public Library we met librarian Mary Richter and looked through books in the local history collection. Most helpful were the Bancroft centennial book, St. John’s Catholic church anniversary book and the Buffalo Center Centennial book, where we found an entry for Elda Bliss Sparks and her husband and children.

One of our most prolific letter writers, Emma Blake Bliss, Sarah Vaughan’s sister, is mentioned in the article as having lived with her daughter’s family in Buffalo Center.

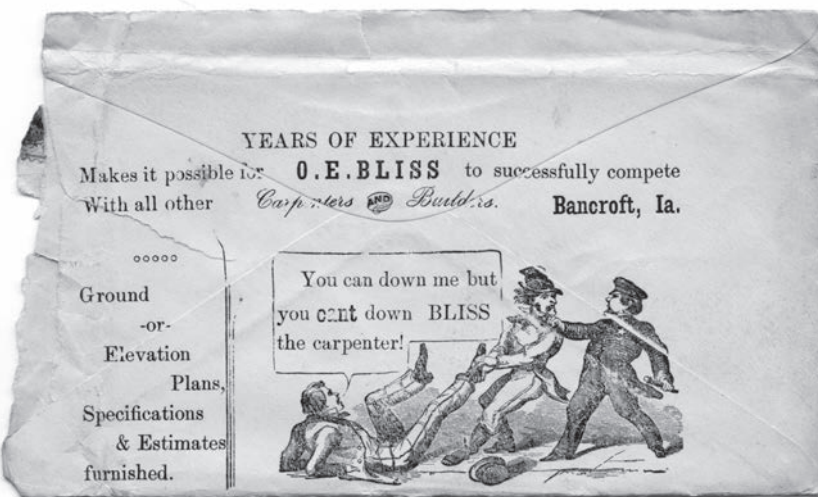


SWCHC researcher Kathy Engel at Bancroft library.

Retired university librarian and Bancroft historian Bill Droessler provided information about Emma and Orin Bliss from his archives and received letters we brought from SWCHC that the Blisses had sent back to her family in her former home of Wood County, Wis., describing the building of the brand-new town of Bancroft, Iowa, in the 1880s and 1890s when Orin Bliss was a well-known carpenter. Droessler shared an 1896 atlas of Kossuth County, Iowa, in which we found property belonging to the Bliss family in Town 98 Range 30 West Section 7.



With Bill Droessler in the convent lounge.



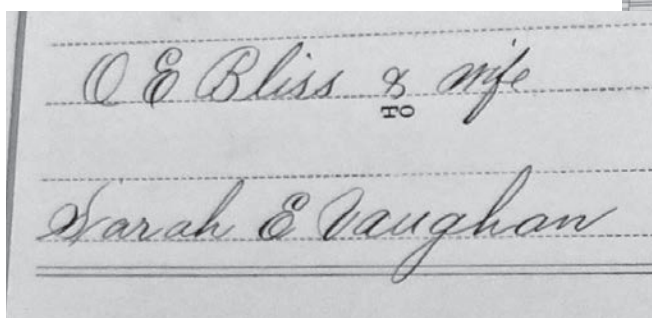
Orin E. Bliss, husband of Emma Blake, built many of the houses in Bancroft, Iowa.



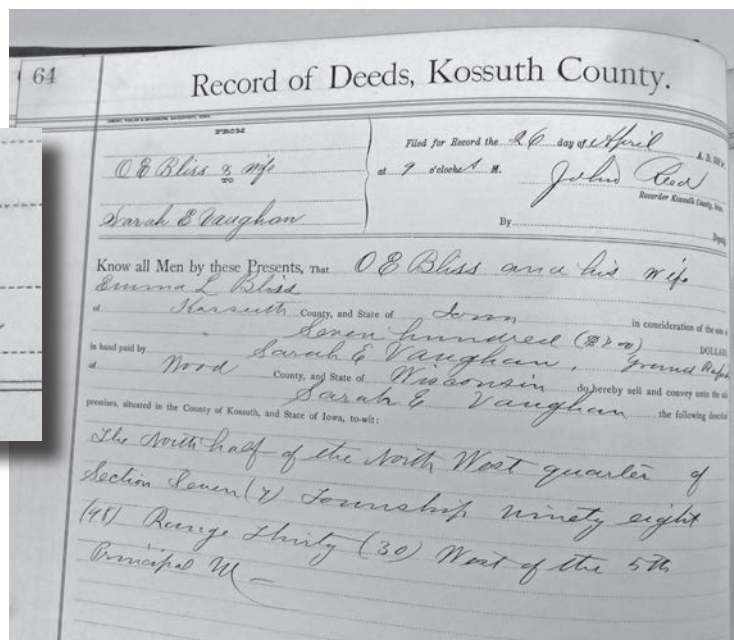
Former Rudolph resident, Emma Blake Bliss with son George and daughter Elda

November 13, we drove to Algona, Iowa, 20 miles south of Bancroft and the county seat of Kossuth County. At the County Courthouse, we found several land transactions for Orin E. Bliss and copied these into our research notes.

In the suitcase was an 1891 letter from Emma in Bancroft: "I mean to get you paid up Sarah and then we will have a good quarter section of land clear of encumbrance worth about \$2,600 and our place here in town."



Land in Iowa was financed from a sister back in Grand Rapids.



Still in Algona, we visited the Kossuth County Historical Museum, a former schoolhouse, library and meeting house. The Camp Algona POW Museum was not open but we drove by the site of the former Prisoner of War Camp near the Algona airport, reminiscent of a similar site at the Wisconsin Rapids airport.

Back in Bancroft, we visited Greenwood Cemetery where we found the grave of Emma and Orin Bliss.



We drove with historian Bill Droessler to the former Bliss land in Town 98 Range 30 West Section 7, town of Seneca and took pictures. Since we found out about Orin Bliss' involvement with constructing houses in the Winkels subdivision of Bancroft, we searched for that subdivision and saw a house carpenter Orin Bliss may have built in 1888.

We visited the Bancroft Historical Society Museum, which was a creamery at one time.

November 14

Bill Droessler stopped over at the Sister's Inn with the 1896 Kossuth County atlas, where he found a section that had the streets of Bancroft platted. Dave took pictures. We also discovered where the house stood on the Bliss' Seneca land.

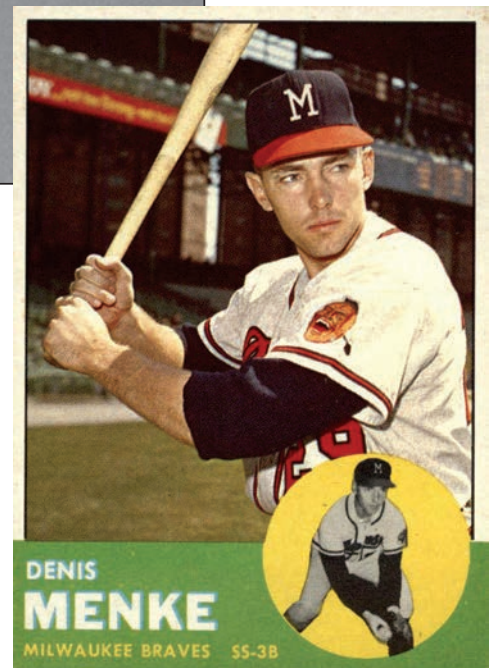
On our way out of town we again drove near the Bliss' Seneca land and wondered if the farm down an unmaintained road was the former Bliss farm.



At the Bancroft, Iowa, historical museum is a display of sports history featuring the home town boy who became a Milwaukee Brave.

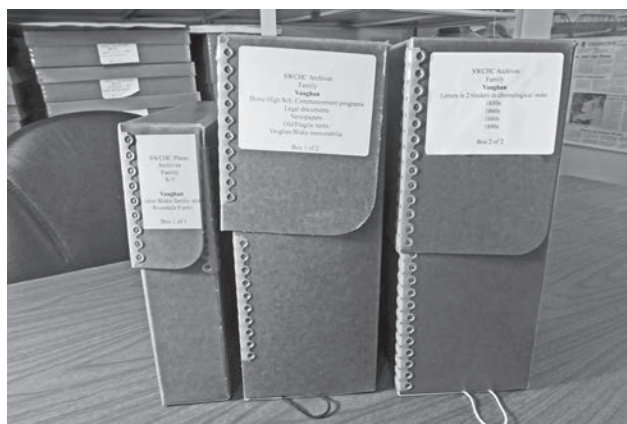
A figure from the time Uncle Dave was a baseball fan, before the Braves moved from Milwaukee, Denis Menke (born July 21, 1940) played for the Milwaukee Braves (1962–65), Atlanta Braves (1966–67), Houston Astros (1968–71, 1974) and Cincinnati Reds (1972–73). He was elected to the National League All-Star team in 1969 and 1970.

Denis was born July 21, 1940, on a 480-acre farm in Bancroft, Iowa, 15 miles from Minnesota's southern border. As a 17-year-old shortstop and pitcher, Denis had already interested major-league scouts when he led his American Legion post to the regional playoffs. Bancroft, whose population has never much exceeded 1,000, produced two major leaguers, Menke and left-handed hurler Joe Hatten.



Back at the SWCHC Museum Final Steps

After reading letters, researching—online and traditional—and traveling to Bancroft, Iowa, I typed up all my notes. The Vaughan Collection was then divided into archival boxes for storage in the third floor Archives. The contents of each of three archival boxes were itemized, typed, accessioned and added to PastPerfect.



Jumbo

Sorrows of a Plainfield giant

Bancroft Register, Feb. 18, 1891, contributed by Bill Droessler:

"Harley Gay Jewett, more familiarly known as "Jumbo" died very suddenly at the home of his parents at Pole Station, Worth Co., Iowa, Feb. 8, 1891, at about the age of 31 years. He was born in Plainfield, Wis., and until he was 13 years old was very small for his age. About 5 years ago he spent the winter with his uncle, O.E. Bliss and made many friends by his genial disposition.

"Shortly after leaving this county [Kossuth, Iowa] he took to traveling with Robinson's Museum, making a tour of the southern states. During the winter of 1889-90, he was confined to his home by sickness from which he recovered and during the past fall and winter he had been traveling in Shaw's Museum."

The *Register* is supplemented by a letter from the suitcase, written the same week by Emma Blake Bliss, Bancroft, to Sarah Vaughan, Grand Rapids: When Gay got back from N.C., she said, "it took 3 stout men to get him from the sleigh into the house. Orin said they could just get him through the door.

"He got home Friday and Sat. evening he sat on the edge of his bed and played 3 or 4 pieces on the fiddle and sang and Sunday morning when Orin came down stairs he found him dying.

"They had to bury him the next day after he died, had to have a coffin made to order. It was 6 ft 6 in long, 2 ft 10 inches wide and 2 ft high inside measurements. They could not get the coffin into a sleighbox but had to take the box off and put stout planks on the sleigh. Cordelia felt pretty bad. Gay has not walked for over a year..."

Temple of Art,
Corner Canal and Dauphine streets.

The Battle of Paris
By special request will remain open until further notice during the hours of daylight only.
Lectures Every Hour.
The grandest and most vivid WAR PANORAMA yet produced.
Doors open from 8:30 A. M. to 5 P. M. daily.
Admission, ADULTS 25 cents. CHILDREN 15 cents. 04-tf

Eugene Robinson's Museum.
10 Living Curiosities this Week 10
The Child Reader, Fat Bearded Lady, the Smallest man living, the Legless Wonder, Tattooed Circassian Man, Circassian Beauty, Mammoth Fat Man, Hairy Child, Royal Marionettes, etc.
Miles & Adams' European Novelty Company in the theatre. Jal0-tf

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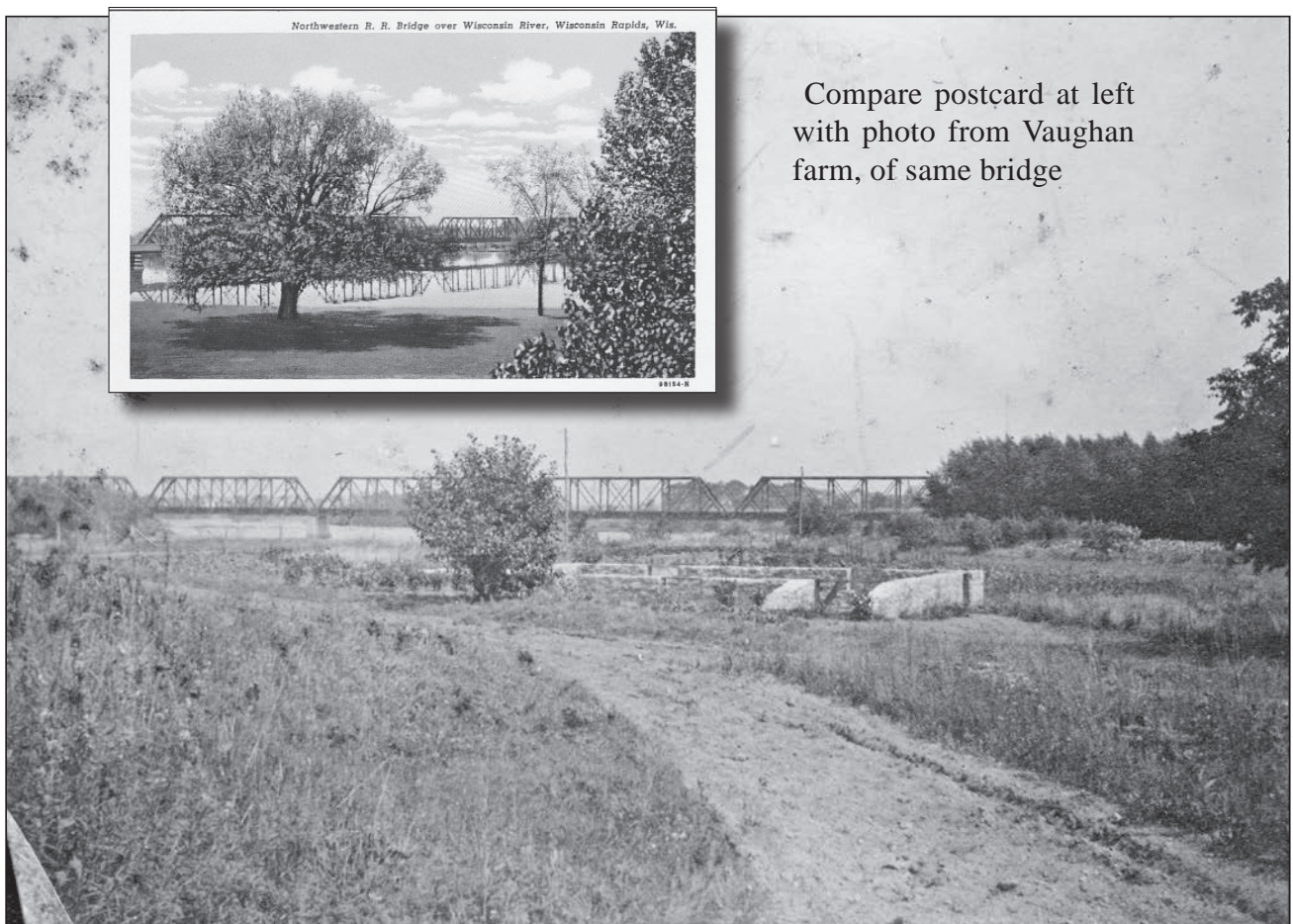
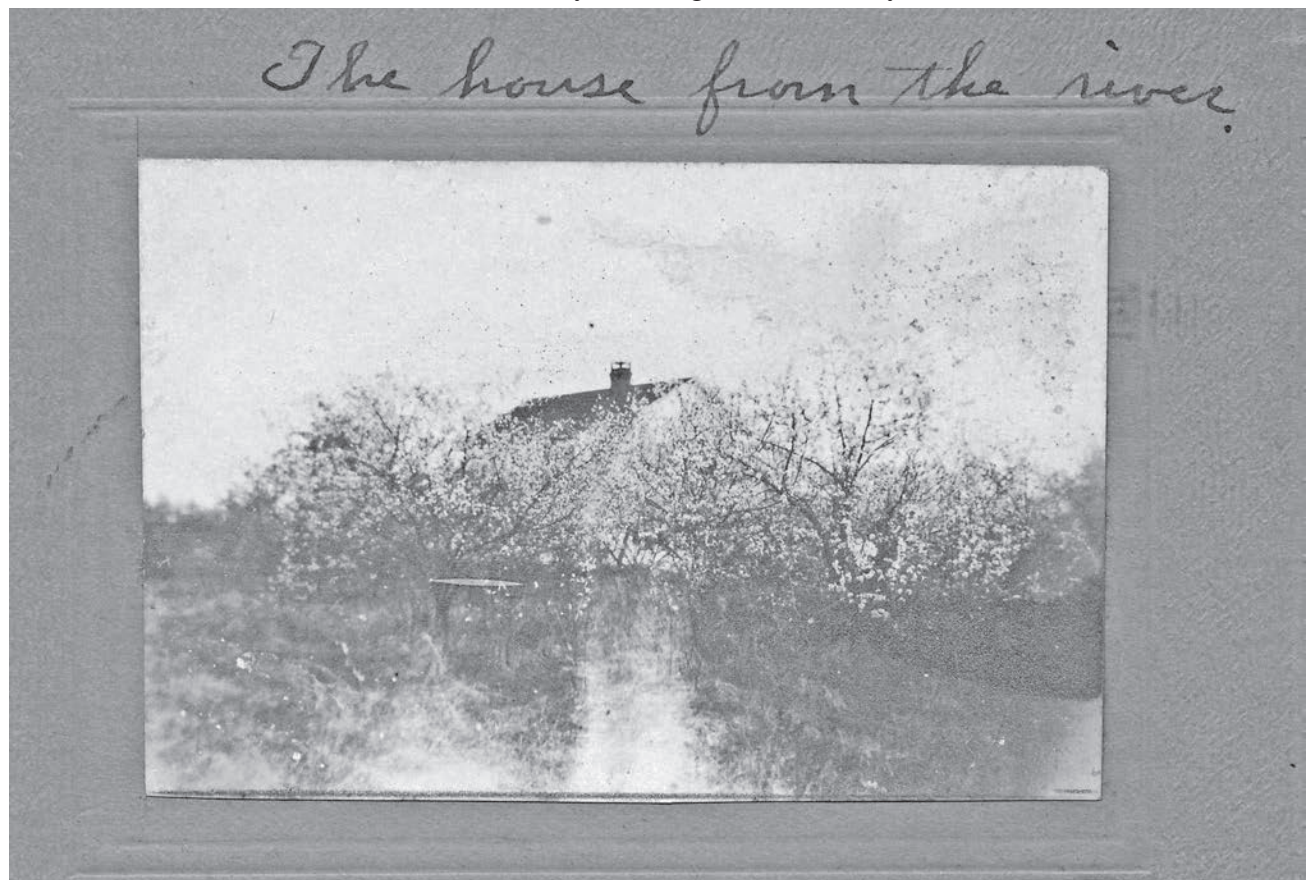
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Eugene Robinson's Museum.
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Miles & Adams' European Novelty Company

Riverdale Seed Farm, where Byrde Vaughan and family lived around 1900







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BULBS. We can furnish
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CUT FLOWERS.

Fine bouquets of Dahlias, Phlox, Forget-me-nots, &c., from 10 to 25c.

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and other Greenhouse plants
at reasonable prices.

We still have a fine lot of Beets, Cabbage, Carrots, Peppers, Onions, Turnips and Tomatoes.

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Record - 1898 -
we raised on south end Brauns - then potatoes
running nearly up to Washout - some brauns
berries north of Washout.

this side of old house we had cabbage, Caul-
potato seedlings and tomatoes of 10 lb

that old house stands on we raised a
side next elm. In and

Wisconsin Horticulturalist

PREMIUMS ON POTATOES.

Best display, not to exceed ten varieties, 1st, Riverdale Seed Farm, Grand Rapids; 2d, J. M. Smith's Sons, Green Bay

Best new seedling originating in Wisconsin within two years
1st, Riverdale Seed Farm on No. 11; 2d, Riverdale Seed Farm on "Yukon."

Best half peck early, 1st, Riverdale Seed Farm on "Early Michigan;" 2d, Waupaca Seed Potato Co. on "Bovee."

Best half peck late, 1st, Riverdale Seed Farm on "Wilson's First Choice;" 2d, Riverdale Seed Farm on "Enormous."
We have not room for the long list of specials.

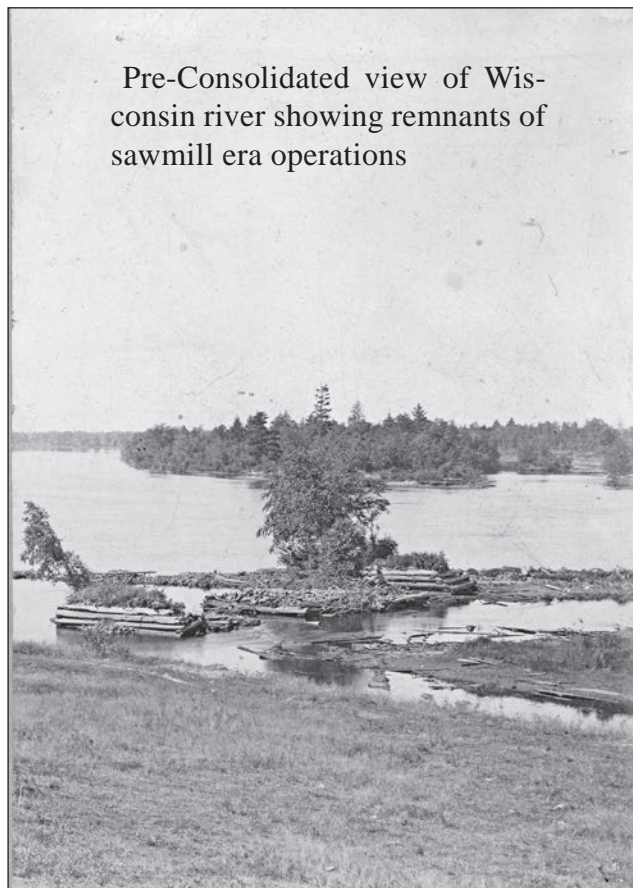
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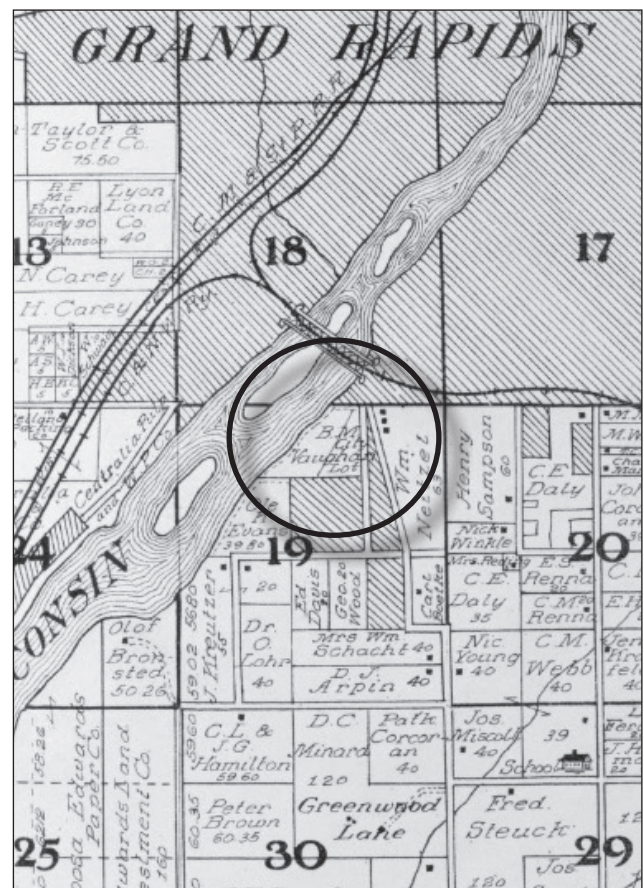
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Pre-Consolidated view of Wisconsin river showing remnants of sawmill era operations



Town of Grand Rapids (1909 Atlas)



Prominent attorney B.M. Vaughan lived on and operated Riverdale Farm just south of the Grand Rapids city limits, as revealed in "the suitcase."



River City Memoirs

Now exclusively published in *Artifacts*.



Union Soldier

John Wesley Vaughan

The first-born daughter stayed behind.

She was Sarah Elizabeth Blake, born 1839 in Elizabethtown, N.Y., to a family whose American roots went back to colonial times.

Sarah had come to Byron, Fond du Lac county, Wis., in 1855, with four siblings and her parents—who barely touched down before they rebounded north to Rudolph township in the new county of Wood, just as it was being organized.

Pinery Travels

Sarah, 18, wrote in 1857 from Oakfield, near the smaller hamlet of Byron, that she had just returned from Rudolph. The stage road from Plover to Almond had been rough but got better as she traveled through Wautoma, where she enjoyed supper, and on to Berlin, Wis., arriving, at 10 p.m.

At another time, Sarah described traveling from Rudolph to Fond Du Lac.

“I went to Plover Thursday morning with that man from the river. I went to see Mrs. Jackson and she made me stay with her, had a good visit.

“Took the stage next morning before 7 o’clock for Gill’s Landing where we arrived about half past 10 then the boat to Oshkosh then the cars to Fonddulac.

“Took breakfast in Plover, dinner on the boat. Supper here so you can see I made shorter work of it.

“It cost me \$2.25 stage fare, \$1.00 on the boat, \$.50 on the car, .25 omnibus into the city, .40 dinner. That’s all it cost me.”

Sarah said she was teaching at a small school with 27 “different scholars” for which she was paid 18 shillings, presumably per month. She tried living at the school board clerk’s home but remarked that either the housework was too hard or she was too lazy, not sure which; in any case she wasn’t inclined to do it, which was “a mystery to some—as though it was any of their business.”

“I can think of no more to write and what I have written is all jumbled up together as though I had put my thoughts in a hat, shook them up and written what comes out first. Well we school-marms are awfully queer after all sometimes and pretty often too. I expect to get sewing to do here too in the neighborhood to keep me out of mischief.”

Future In-Laws

Sarah had a reason for not leaving Byron with her family. His name was John Wesley Vaughan.

“Wesley,” born 1836, was the son of Daniel Carr Vaughan, a Wesleyan Methodist minister and abolitionist, who had come from New York state in 1844.

Daniel’s forebears had immigrated to America in 1632—twelve years after the Pilgrims.

In an 1859 letter, D.C. Vaughan told the Blakes, that he had been preaching every other Sabbath and leading prayer meetings the alternate Sabbaths, sometimes in the school house where Sarah shared in the “blessed work.”

Gem

It had been January 1858, according to Wesley, when “we” started the Byron Literary Society with 15 members some of whom spoke at each session. A “paper” was published composed of compositions by members or others—of which Sarah was the editor. “It is called the Gem and indeed contains gems of thought worth treasuring.”

Wesley

Wesley addressed Alanson Blake as “Respected Friend,” and also sent “respects” to Mrs. Blake and the children: George, Josephine, Carlos and Emma. He reported that “Sarah Blake was here yesterday. She is teaching where she

From the suitcase...



taught last summer and is generally liked as far as I can hear, so I conclude she must be a good teacher. She says she expects to get turned out of school but there is not much danger I think.”

Though Sarah wouldn’t be traveling “home” to see the Blakes because she had taken a school contract, her beau, Wesley, visited rustic Rudolph in January 1860, which he seemed to like all right. After taking the train back, he avowed, “I should like to visit you while you are making [maple] sugar and be there to help you.”

On March 16, 1860, Wesley said the residents of Byron vicinity were always glad to see Sarah. “I do not know what the folks here would do if it was not for her.

“But I see I am thinking only of our hopings, without reflecting upon the pain it has cost you all to part with one so near and dear and when I think that it is partly on my account that she has come.” He repeated the theme before Christmas 1860. “You were disappointed, as she did not come to teach your school this winter—well perhaps she would of if had not been for Wesley (so you must charge it all to him and say well he is nothing but a bother).”

The prospective son-in-law was a devout Christian like his father and often included sentiments such as, “Pray for me dear friends,” he concluded, “that when I pass from this life I may meet you all in Heaven.”

Love to Rudolph

March 1, 1858, an “undutiful daughter,” wrote tongue-in-cheek that the school board was blind, as they couldn’t see how ugly she was and wanted her to teach two schools: for 20 shillings. At the same time she had begun attending religious meetings with Wesley and his father.

In August, she noted that neighbors had been asking how the Blakes liked it “up there.” Were they homesick? Sarah said she offered various answers. If her parents were unhappy, they wouldn’t tell her anyway. She was thankful that they were no farther from her than they were.

“Give my respects to all, my love to Mr. and Mrs. Hecox.” The township of “Rudolph” had taken its name from the Hecox son.

The Great Equivocator

Sarah shared the election year turmoil of 1860 in a November 4 letter. “I have been in a strait betwixt two not knowing whether to vote for Lincoln or not, but I am undecided no longer. I cannot conscientiously vote for a man, who concedes to the idea of property in man, or who thinks the constitution proslavery, both of which points are conceded by Mr. Lincoln, when he says he thinks the south entitled to an efficient fugitive slave law.”

Nevertheless, “The people here are pretty generally wide awake concerning the election, and I think this region will give a large majority for Lincoln.”

Wesley echoed her observations even more vehemently in April after Lincoln’s election, comparing iniquity in the U.S. to that of Biblical times before the flood. Because of the fugitive slave law for which Wesley blamed Lincoln, “If ever any nation deserved destruction, it is ours.”

Married

On June 2, 1861, Sarah told her parents that, two weeks earlier at “Mrs. Buckland’s,” (Wesley’s sister), she had been married by Rev. H. McKee. “I presume you will not be surprised if in this letter to you, I introduce my husband, Wesley Vaughan. I never have had the least doubt but that you would gladly welcome him as your son.”

Sarah and Wesley would honor Rev. “McKee” with the middle name of their son-to-be.

Battling the Hydra

A year after Southern forces fired upon Fort Sumter, South Carolina, in April 1862, Sarah was writing on stationery bearing an American flag and a smoking cannon. She said she regretted her father Alanson’s health had been poor all winter and suggested he not work so hard and enjoy life better and longer. Maybe, she offered, she would come home the following winter.

“I am glad [her brother] George [Blake] did not go to the war. George V[auhan]—says that the camp [Randall] is the wickedest place he ever saw.”

On May 30, 1862, Wesley told the Blakes that his brother George was in Madison, guarding rebel prisoners.

"You probably hear as much about the war as we do here but I fear the rebellion will last much longer than many anticipate but I hope that when it is crushed, the hydra Slavery may go with it. This is my prayer to God daily."

Wesley told the Blakes that the 14th Regiment had left Fond du Lac for St. Louis. "Our street from Uncle Benjamin's to Uncle James' has turned out 11 soldiers."

Oct. 26, 1862: "I see by the last week's paper that there is to be a draft for men made in 28 counties in this state amounting to about 4,200 men. Our county has raised their quota so no draft will be done here at present. It is heart sickening at present to see how the war has been carried on. I think the President means to save the Union and his Emancipation Proclamation will mark the brightest era of American history or of the world."

Birdie

On Jan. 2, 1863, as was his custom, Wesley discussed coming up in winter for a long visit that often did not happen. "We have got a Badger Boy to take our attention now and well he does it I tell you for he is not very well and worries a good deal. He was 4 weeks old last Sunday morning."

Wesley didn't reveal the name of the infant Badger. It was "Byrde McKee Vaughan," typically called "Birdie" but officially pronounced, "bird." The birth Nov. 30, 1862, had come at "a very dark hour in our nation's history. Nothing can save us but the most unflinching integrity on the part of those in authority," said Wesley.

On March 30, 1863, he wrote to brother George: "I am not at work to day. It is the day set apart by the president for fasting and prayer." (A. Lincoln: Proclamation 97—Appointing a Day of National Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer.)

Sarah must have been staying with the Blakes when Wesley wrote, "Give Byrdie one good kiss for me and tell Sarah to read this. There is a com-

pany of home guards organizing here of which I think I shall become a member."

Back at home, Sarah reported, "Birdie is well and makes me tend him when he is [hungry?] a good share of the time. He has got two teeth. He has a high chair and sits at the table and eats like other folks."

Wesley wrote that he was working in a wagon shop.

By July, said Sarah, Byrde "grows like a pig. He has four teeth and chatters like a blackbird. He has his clothes tucked up, sits alone, and is considered pretty smart by the relation all of whom want to kiss and shake him almost to pieces."

Zouaves

Wesley was still working in "the shop" but also drilling with the company of Home Guards called the Badger State Zouaves, noted for uniforms she described in detail: caps of red and blue trimmed with white braid, dark blue coats trimmed with buttons, bright red pants with a black stripe outside of the leg and yellow sandals that buckled round the bottom of the pants. Rifles with sword

bayonets, were "rather savage looking."

"They were out yesterday and round town in the procession with the fire companies.

"Yesterday" was the 4th of July. The company was given a flag and treated with lemonade, horse races and fireworks.

Wesley added that "threats had been thrown out that an attack would be made upon our militia company which is an eye sore to the [anti-war] copperhead element of this City with the intention of taking our arms from us; but I guess they have concluded to let the job out or let us alone."

In general, war news was good for the Union and he looked for better days coming.

The Next World

June 4, 1860, Wesley wrote, "Let us remember that our chief object in this world should be to prepare for the next."



Wisconsin Zouave



On Feb. 13, 1864, Wesley enlisted in the 35th regiment at Milwaukee. His brothers, Irad and George, had been killed the year before. Sarah wrote the following week that she didn't know what she would do or where she and Byrde would live while Wesley was gone.

Wesley added, "I expect to have to leave these dear ones for a time but hope God is willing that I may see them again and enjoy their society after this rebellion.

"Perhaps you in common with some of our friends here may think that there was no cause for me to go to war but from the commencement of it the feeling (which has grown stronger as health has grown better) that my country called me and that should the rebellion be put down (or succeed) without my offering to help the government this feeling would darken all my after years with shame and remorse."

May 22, Wesley wrote from Port Hudson, La., on the Mississippi. Many of the regiment were sick with diarrhea, he said, but he "had not a touch of it," thanks to a small case of medicine he carried.

Wesley, a sergeant in Company D of the 35th Regiment of Wisconsin Volunteers had been busy since he enlisted, often on extra duty writ-

ing payrolls for his company. On June 7, 1864, he provided an extensive description of Port Hudson, counting 10,000 men.

He said he had left Camp Washburn, Milwaukee, April 18, by train to St. Louis, boat to New Orleans and steamer back up the Mississippi to Port Hudson through some of the most desolate-looking ever beheld.

It was his last letter.

John Wesley Vaughan, husband of Sarah and father of Byrde, died of "disease" at Natchez, Miss., Sept. 2, 1864. The 35th Wisconsin suffered two enlisted men killed or fatally wounded in action and three officers and 271 enlisted men who died of disease, for a total of 276 fatalities. Four died of accidents.

Rudolph

Sarah often wrote about coming up to Rudolph with Byrde.

"Do you think you could stand it with such a rogue this summer?" She wanted to know how to get to their place from Plover. "I shall have to bring my trunk, and I suppose you will want me to bring my boy."

After Wesley's death, it was a sure thing.



Natchez military hospital, likely where Wesley Vaughan died

Rudolph Pioneers

In middle-age, couple hewed homestead from wilderness



In this family and amid primitive conditions Byrde Vaughan spent his childhood.

His grandfather, Alanson Blake, was born around 1815 in Essex County, N.Y., of Welsh-Irish parents who had moved from Vermont.

At 19, he married Elizabeth Shepherd, herself born in New York City c. 1811 of English parents, making her somewhat older than husband Alanson.

All their children were born at Elizabethtown, N.Y.: Sarah, George, Josephine, Carlos and Emily (Emma). In 1854, they moved to Fond du Lac county, Wis., and again in the spring of 1857, minus Sarah, by ox team to Rudolph township, Wood county, Wis.

An Oct. 1, 1858, deed shows Alanson purchased a 120-acre plot, including the east half of the southwest quarter of Section 12, Rudolph township and another 40 acres across the nearby Portage county line. The deed was signed by James Buchanan, U.S. president.

Alanson, 48, and Elizabeth, 50, were enumerated in the 1860 Rudolph census, along with the four children mentioned above. By 1870, only Carlos and Emma remained at home, joined by grandson "Birdie" Vaughan, 7. Across the road were Flavel Beadle and his wife, a Blake daughter, Josephine, and their children.

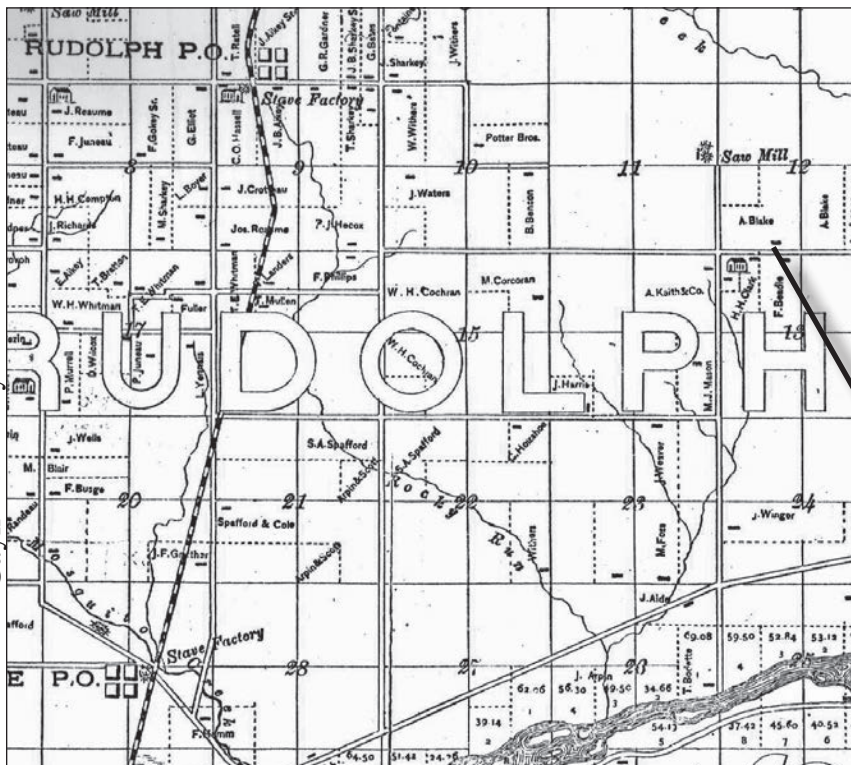
Byrde M. Vaughan was asked in 1928, "What is the first thing you remember?"

He answered that, "It was during the Civil War and we were visiting my grandmother at Rudolph. My father was in his uniform just before he left to join his regiment.

"Grandmother was going down the cellar steps when she slipped and fell. My father was holding me, and he quickly threw me into the arms of my mother, who was standing nearby, and went to help my grandmother.

"I never saw my father after that day, for he died in Natchez, Miss., while holding the line of communication in July 1863, after General Grant moved east."

Gaynor & Purdy c. 1878.



From the suitcase...



In 2016, Matthew Groshek owns the Blake house, his childhood home.

The 1870 census valued Alanson's real estate at \$5,000, his personal estate at \$2,000—figures high enough to suggest prosperity. On neighboring property stood "Three dwellings temporarily uninhabited, being tenements for mill men and families during winter and fall and spring months." The map opposite shows a sawmill directly to the north.

In 1880, living with the elder Blakes were son Carlos, a farmer; son George and wife Ella; daughter Sarah Vaughn, a 40-year-old school teacher; and grandson Byrde, 17, attending school.

The 1923 *History of Wood County* says the Blakes had cleared a farm from dense hardwood and pine forest when there was but one other farmer in the township. Their nearest neighbor was four miles away and the nearest store was at Plover, Portage county. There was no passable road out from their farm in summer, and mail and much of their groceries were 'packed in' on

the men's backs." Until 1871, the nearest railroad connection was New Lisbon.

Alanson was a member of the local school board, town assessor, and for several years its chairman. Two daughters taught school in the area. Son George was a Union soldier.

"No one in need of aid, whether friend or stranger, was ever turned away from his home empty-handed," claimed the 1923 *History*. "He was a great friend of the Indians, and in the so-called 'Indian scare' of 1862, in which the Indians were in fact as much scared as the whites, he acted as a go-between to prevent trouble and quiet the excitement."

"He was a little man, but entirely without fear. He and his wife were members of the Baptist church in New York, but aided all churches here."

The Blakes lived in Rudolph for 30 years, until 1888. He died at 78 and his wife at 88 in the city of Grand Rapids.



Most likely Alanson Blake and his grandson, Byrde Vaughan, in one of the oldest photos relating to the township of Rudolph, around 1866.



Most Famous Person You've Never Heard Of

Byrde Vaughan, Leading Citizen of River City.

On Oct. 11, 1922, a chapter in the series, "Who's Who in Wisconsin Rapids," profiled B.M. Vaughan, "who needed no introduction" as one of the best-known citizens of Wisconsin Rapids, who "also enjoys a large acquaintance throughout the state."

Born in Fond du Lac county, Nov. 30, 1862, the son of John Wesley Vaughan and Sara Elizabeth Blake Vaughan, when his father joined the Union army, he lived with his paternal grandfather Daniel C. Vaughan at his Byron, Wis., farm while Byrde's mother, Sarah, taught in the public schools of Fond du Lac.

The future Grand Rapids lawyer and state legislator was two-and-a-half years old when his father died at Natchez, Miss.

Shortly after, Byrde came to Rudolph to live with his maternal

After the death of her husband, Wesley, Sarah Blake Vaughan, then a resident of Fond du Lac county, Wis., had to refigure her life and that of the son born of their short marriage, Byrde.

A few years before, her parents, Alanson and Elizabeth Blake, had moved to Rudolph, Wis., and it was there in the woods on the Wood/Portage county line that Sarah and Byrde joined them. On at least one map, a school is depicted across the road from the Blake house and it may be there that Sarah, like her sister, Josephine, taught for a few years, needing to support herself without her husband.

By the time the letters in our suitcase resume, she lives on High Street, dubbed "Quality Row," now Third Street South, in the vicinity of the present-day SWCHC Museum, which hadn't been built yet.



Byrde Vaughan

grandparents, Alanson and Elizabeth Blake. He attended country schools until 1876 when he enrolled in Howe High School in the first graduating class, under Prof. Julius Rosholt.

After achieving perfect attendance, Byrde delivered an oration in the School Hall at the 1880 graduation exercises—"Free Government." Editor H.B. Philleo, representing the school board, presented diplomas to John Horton, Ermine/Edmund Arpin and Byrde Vaughan.

Following graduation, Byrde worked on farms around Rudolph and later clerked in the Spafford and Cole store in Grand Rapids. In 1885, he matriculated at U.W. Madison to pursue general science, graduating in June 1885. He returned to Rapids to study law in the office of Gardner & Gaynor in the Gardner Block's second floor.

In 1886, Byrde entered law school at U.W. and graduated in 1888, meanwhile "practicing" at law in the Madison office of John M. Olin, "one of the ablest lawyers the state has every produced."

Letter: Trouble at Howe

A May 29, 1885, letter from D.J. Cole, clerk of the school board informed her she had been "elected to continue your service in the Howe High School." The following year, she was hired again to teach the "first Grammar Dept. of the Howe High School for \$40 a month."

But a letter from M.S. Pratt to "Mrs. Vaughan, teacher" included the statement, "Now if you will punish my child as she needs it and leave off your insults to my old Mother," adding the post script, "We desire Grace at home immediately after school."

Soon, Sarah would be out of a job.

Madison

Sarah's son would be her lifetime companion. On April 5, 1887, Byrde McKee Vaughan



wrote from 153 W. Gorham, Madison, Wis., now a parking lot off State Street. Having moved on to the law school, he said he had spent most of his vacation in the state library reading up on the life of Matt Carpenter (a renowned Wisconsin lawyer and U.S. Senator who died in 1881) for the debating society.

Byrde expected the next semester to be easy enough to allow him to visit the courts and observe their workings. Meanwhile, he was studying under Prof. John Myers Olin, who later was called the most important figure in Madison history as the “father” of Madison’s park system.

“Yesterday he argued a matter on which I had been preparing him a brief for the past two weeks,” wrote Byrde. “The decision was in his favor and he came back to the office as tickled as the proverbial small boy over his first new boots.”

In November 1887, Byrde said, “Olin has so far won all the cases he has tried this term. I wish I could leave the office to hear him try some of these cases, especially some that I have worked the law up on.”

Another prominent acquaintance of Byrde was fellow Rapids boy Corydon Purdy, renowned architect-to-be: “Caury Purdy has left Eau Claire and gone to Pittsburg for a permanent location.” (See *The Fat Memoirs* for bio of Purdy.)

Mrs. Bensley’s Revenge

“I see from the last Tribune that a boom [economic] is striking Grand Rapids and Centralia as well as other parts of the State. I wish I was ready to settle to take advantage of the boom but as I am not there is no use in worrying about it. I wish we had bought out Scott’s interest on the Island or Witter & Gardner’s in Centralia but it is too late to do any good to think now. We might have sold it at a handsome profit within the year.”

On Easter Sunday, April 10, 1887, Byrde reported another enthusiasm that was to characterize his later residence here, the love of plants. “I was out yesterday and found two species of spring flowers, one of which I will send you a specimen of.”

In view of his “liberal” philosophical stance, he vowed to attend Easter services at the Unitarian church.

“I see from the Tribune that there is warm work [controversy] over the waterpower up there. I am afraid that they are making work for the lawyers. I wish they had put it off a year to give me time to take a hand in the fight. I am afraid that the bad reputation of the place will draw in some more lawyers before I am ready to locate there.” (See *The Age of Paper* for a complete account of the “warm work.”) “In the matter of that [Grand Rapids] dam-blowing [by Mrs. Marion Bensley, April 4, 1887]—there are two sides to the story of course and I know somewhat of both sides; but I don’t think much of that way of doing things. It looks too much like revenge and revenge is generally poor play.”

School of Hard Knocks

While in Madison, Byrde quoted English poet Alfred Tennyson, who “showed pretty conclusively that most of the progress in the world is due to honest doubt associated with a desire and endeavor to know the truth:—and the more I read and learn the more I come to the same conclusion. The man that lives on faith alone in the moral and religious life gets about as poor living as the man who thought he could keep his body healthy and in repair on a faith diet. I do not see but that it takes moral exercise and hard knocking to keep one morally and spiritually healthy.”

Sarah supported her son’s endeavors. When she sent him \$60, he remarked that \$40 would have been enough.

Canned

March 22, 1887, Byrde said, “One month from today I shall be through here and ready to start home—I see from the Tribune just at hand that you handed in a resignation, as suggested. I think it the best thing that you could have done, wise in all respects. The coming year can be well spent without school work and I think you will be far better off. Then you have forestalled your opponents. As to what [school board clerk] Cole told you about W. [J.D. Witter?], I have no doubt of its truth. I know somewhat of the man and

have no very high estimation of him. But do not put implicit faith in C. [Cole] himself. I might say more. Have nothing in particular to say to A.L.F. [editor A.L. Fontaine?] about the matter of your resignation.

Hogwallow

From Byrde, Sept. 30, 1887: "The E.G. Ryan debating society adjourned to hear [social reformer and suffragette] Miss Susan B. Anthony and Mrs. [suffragette Mary] Livermore. Of course I adjourned with them for the same purpose but the air of the Capitol became so foul for want of ventilation that I left. I had heard both of the speakers the evening before and on the same subject so did not care so much to stay. Their addresses were good.

"Everything in Madison is topsy turvy over the coming of President Cleveland one week from today...Arches are being erected, the capitol draped with flags and wreaths of oak leaves and every street gamin seems to have gone over the prospect of seeing the president...If I were a Democrat I should probably think it was so but not being one it looks foolish to spend four or five thousand dollars in decorations that would much better go to the wise relief of poverty and suffering..."

Byrde reported rain every day for a week causing the streets to become "a hogwallow of Madison mud."

Must Be A Lawyer

Sarah to Byrde, Sept. 13, 1887: "Yesterday, a man came to the door to find where Mr. Webb lives. I told him the next house [corner Third and Locust]. He must have been a Yankee to know [how to find it] from that direction. And he did do all of those gate fastenings very deliberately for a raining morning. However, he held the umbrella while the other man stood in the rain. And I was debating in my own mind whether he was a minister or a lawyer.

"A minister ought to have asked for the lady of the house, if he was wise. I think he must be a lawyer."

"I walked with Mrs. Mosher and Mrs. Talmadge down to Mr. Webb's place," said

Sarah of a couple society ladies. "Mrs. Mosher wished to call on Mrs. Webb in her new house [formerly adjacent to the Museum and moved to Witter Street]. Mrs. Webb has not called on me since she came to find out why I resigned, I believe that was all she came for then. Yesterday was the first day since that [Howe] schoolhouse was built that I had no right to go when school called. I wonder who will take the fault findings now. It seems to me there should be a scape-goat there."

Sarah, a widow since 1864, confessed to her son, "The M[ethodist].E[piscopal]. Conference is in session here this week and tonight there is to be a grand temperance meeting. I would go if it were not so lonesome to come back alone to an empty house."

Carrots Take the Blame

Sarah, Oct. 5, 1887: "I brought down a window and was mixing my paint when I heard a great knocking and I opened the door to Mrs. Dr. Witter. She did not stop long, only to let me know that she would call to see me in my own house. Well ...got busy painting...happened to see Mrs. Kromer & Mrs. Emmons across the street and something told me they would come back on this side and call here.

"I hurried to 'dress up,' but happened to think of my carrots I had taken up in the morning. I gathered them and when I was in the cellar I heard a knock and when I opened the door there was Mrs. Kromer and Mrs. Emmons in calling outfits on one side of the door and on the other in artistic outfit was Mrs. Vaughan."

Murdered for the Money

"I visited with Mrs. Mosher in the evening. Mrs. Mosher told me that Mrs. Reeves is, well she said crazy.

"The report is that Arthur Reeves, working in the telegraph office at Daley had become worried at having to carry money back and forth so he went some distance to board and wanted some change made as he was afraid he would get into trouble. There seemed to be nothing done to relieve him and on the day he was paid off he left and no one knew what became of him.



“His folks were dreadfully troubled and before they found him his mother’s mind was so upset that she would not believe that he was all right but thinks he was murdered for the money he carried. Mrs. Mosher said Arthur had turned over the company’s money to a clerk, gone to Dakota.”

Grover Cleveland

“Well! Before you get this I suppose you will have seen a live president. I do not imagine though you will have worshiped him. You will leave that for Dennis to do.”

Wrapping It Up

During the school year of 1887-88, Byrde was considering his future. Should he continue working for Olin, return to Rapids to work for Gardner or go in with another young lawyer?

His mother offered some advice. “If I were to have an office I would look out that the owners use no tobacco or liquor or give treats in any way, and that they refrain from all these from principle, too. I presume you may not be able to make headway here very fast any way with so many other older, sharper, and some of them more dishonorable heads than yours.” In the end he brought up a partner named Copeland, who stayed for a year.

Byrde’s grandpa, with whom he had lived as a boy, Alanson Blake, out in the Rudolph boondocks, was ill, Byrde wrote that he hoped Grandma and Grandpa Blake could come to live with Sarah in Grand Rapids.

Dementia

Meanwhile, Byrde’s uncle and Sarah’s brother, Carlos was driving everyone crazy as he descended into dementia. Dr. Witter tried to calm him down with “quieting medicine” but he “did not mend.” In May, 1888, after spending a few days with Sarah, he was taken to Oshkosh asylum, where he died.

Pioneer Farewell

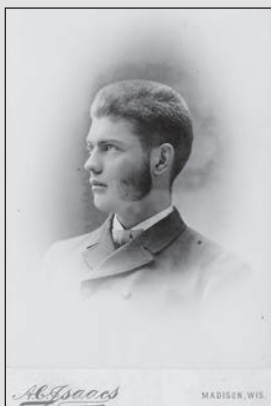
After the death of Carlos, Byrde’s elderly grandparents, Alanson and Elizabeth Blake, moved from the Rudolph farm to Sarah’s in Grand Rapids. Shortly after, Grandpa died. Sarah’s sister Emma wrote Feb. 4, 1889, from Bancroft, Iowa, that Byrde, by now an adult, had telegraphed her about the death of Alanson Blake. She regretted that she could not make it to the funeral and that in one short year, “Father & brother gone where we shall see them no more. I believe I never really understood what death meant before.”

Point Special

On Feb. 7, 1892, Byrde’s cousin, W.E. Beadle, wrote from Milwaukee to ask a favor.

“I will write and run the risk—what kind of a show would a beer bbl cooper have up there? I can get one to go up, if it will pay for him.

“Can you find out of Lutz what he has to pay out per year for bbls.? Can you find out if he will give a cooper his trade if he will come up and start a shop? Do you think he could get any trade from the Stevens Point Brewery?



“Graduating necessitates pictures again and I send you one of them,” Byrde wrote, “a front view or perhaps I will send you one of each. I sent one to Grandma Vaughan last week.” He said they weren’t as good as those taken three years previous. That he was so fat his pictures would show he had a double chin.



"I should think that Lutz would like to have one in town to do his repairing and also to make his new kegs. Suppose he will have to buy all new kegs when he rebuilds his brewery."

The cooper in question, said, Beadle, was his brother-in-law, Joseph Hess Jr. of Milwaukee.

"Tell Grandma," said Beadle, referring to Elizabeth Blake, to send those quilts she promised to every one of her grandchildren.

The last letter in Byrde's correspondence was addressed to "Burd Vaughn Esq Attorney at Law Grand Rapids." Feb. 21, 1893, from

Geo. A. Neeves "Law, Loans and Real Estate," Grand Avenue, Milwaukee. Neeves was the son of George and Mary Neeves, among the most prominent of early Grand Rapids settlers.

"My brother had some talk with you about a part of lot 6 section 18, lot 1 and the adjoining 40 in section 19, adjoining the city of Grand Rapids and the three cornered piece with barn near the Gaynor residence."

The purchase would become Byrde's magnificent obsession—Riverdale farm.

Who's Who In Wisconsin Rapids

The Who's Who column will be run each Saturday in the Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune. It will include a brief sketch of the life of citizens who have helped make history for Wisconsin Rapids.

B. M. Vaughan



B. M. VAUGHAN

Byrde McKee Vaughan needs no introduction to our readers, as he is one of the best known citizens of Wisconsin Rapids, and also enjoys a large acquaintance throughout the state of Wisconsin.

He was born in the town of Byron, Fond du Lac county, November 30, 1862. His parents, John Wesley Vaughan and Sarah Elizabeth Vaughan (nee Blake) were both American born citizens, coming from good old Welsh stock.

committee and several other commit-



B. M. VAUGHAN

MEMBER OF ASSEMBLY

to the Voters of Wood County:

and four years ago you elected me your member of Assembly.

Never, many Wood County voters have never before, and may like to know a little of my

I was born in Wisconsin, came to Wood Co., one year ago and have lived here ever

I was educated in the Common Schools, University and Law School of Wisconsin, have practiced law forty-eight years, and have served you in the legislature during the general sessions of 1933-34, and special session of 1933-34, the time fighting for just and against repressive laws. If I am re-elected all of this experience will be valuable to the state.

(OVER)

After law school, Byrde came home so the letters ended.

In July 1888, Byrde opened a law office in Grand Rapids with Cecil A. Copeland in the Gardner Block. Copeland left after a year for the greener pastures of Milwaukee.

A SWCHC Museum copy of the *Bellis' Twin City Directory* of 1892 is actually signed by "B.M. Vaughan." It lists him as a lawyer, with an office at Front and Oak and a residence at High and Walnut street. His mother, Sarah E., "widow of Wesley," boarded with her son. At the time he was clerk of the board of education and superintendent of schools. J.D. Witter was president of the board and nemesis M.S. Pratt, a member.

In 1893, he married Elizabeth Southard of Baraboo, who died Sept. 3, 1922, shortly before the above profile. An account called Mrs. Vaughan "a prominent educator before they were married." She was connected with the Episcopal church, D.A.R., Woman's Club and State Historical Society to which she was said to be a literary contributor.

Byrde was father of three children, Katherine (or Catherine) his office assistant, Robert and Carlos. Robert died in 1917.



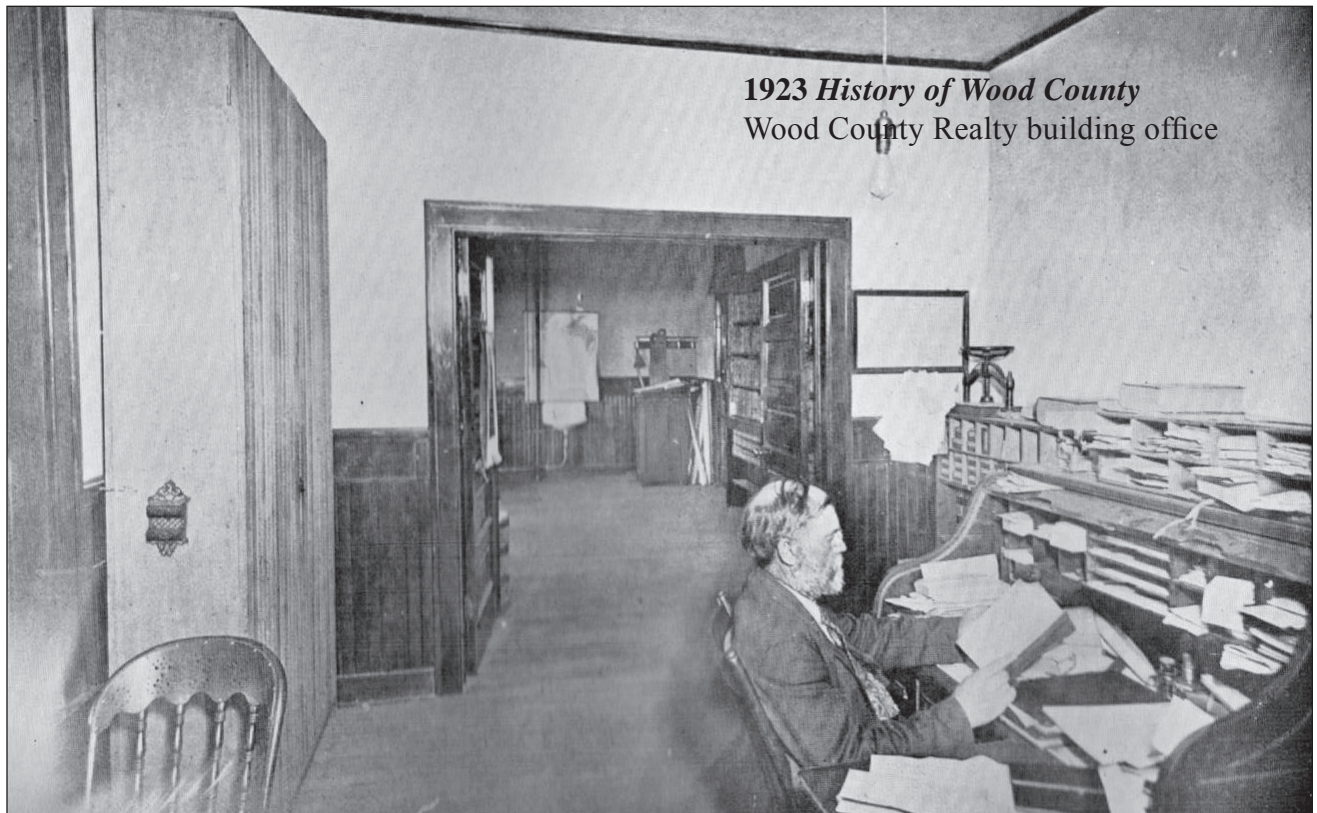
Sarah Elizabeth Blake Vaughan died Jan. 24, 1903, and the funeral was held at the home she shared with Byrde. Her obit said that, after her husband's death 39 years earlier, she had been a teacher from 1864-1889, 13 of those years in Grand Rapids.

At the time of her death, Sarah's sister, Josephine (Mrs. Flavel) Beadle also lived in Rapids.

Vaughn continued in the Gardner Block until 1911 when he moved into F.J. Wood's Wood County Realty building, where he was in 1922, at the time of the Who's Who story.

Vaughan was on the governing boards of Grand Rapids schools, Wood County and the original T.B. Scott library. He was a nationally-recognized expert on drainage law, a court commissioner, president of the Wood County Bar Assoc., member of the Unitarian church and progressive La Follette Republican.

Byrde died May 10, 1941. Survivors were Catherine Ruth Elizabeth Vaughan and Carl Van Valkenburg Vaughan, both of Rapids. Catherine died in 1968. An engineer, he worked at American Carbonic and died in 1977.



1923 *History of Wood County*
Wood County Realty building office

South Wood County Historical Corp.
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Wisconsin Rapids WI 54494

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At Byrde Vaughan's Riverdale Seed Farm, c. 1900. Now called *echinochloa crus-galli* or barnyard grass, it is one of the world's most noxious weeds.

