



Unidentified gadabouts at Winona Oil Co., Third Avenue and Johnson, featuring Pomiac filtered gasoline (1923). At rear, Lyon Hotel (Church's Drug) and Palace theater, both recently razed.

# Artifacts



**Family History in Yearbooks by Lori Brost, pp. 2-7; Rapids Mural by Jeffrey Johannes, 8-13; Taylor house on the Island, 14-17; Consolidated's Dan Meyer, 18-27; "Ahdawagam" by Cecilia Gibson, 28-31; 1923 photo, 32.**



Alexander school yearbook, Nekoosa

# The MOCCASIN 1932

## SEVENTH GRADE



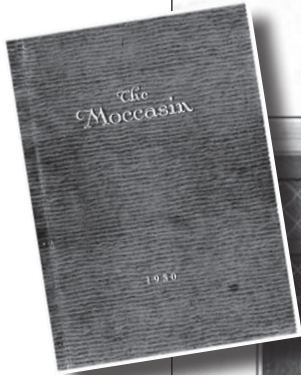
President ----- Jesse Long  
 Vice President ----- Leonard Peckham  
 Secretary-Treasurer ----- Gail Aughey

First row: M. Bentz, D. Sarver, G. Aughey, M. I. Sultze, E. Wells, M. Carlson, B. Davey, E. Elmer, R. Brown, M. Bentz.

Second row: H. Grover, D. Ferkey, F. Hamre, C. Warner, M. Benner, E. M. Clark, L. Vandenberg, I. Brown, K. Graff, L. Peckham.

Third row: F. Wolfe, D. Kirst, J. Wolfe, H. Fluno, J. Long, G. Winker, B. Kuehl, C. Lewis, E. Vehrs, R. Wolfe.

The spirit of progress is truly shown in the valiant little group that pioneered the frontiers of Alexander High School last September. Sixteen girls and sixteen boys were introduced to the opportunities that the "upstairs" offers and they have made the most of these. Everything that the seventh grade attempted was a success. A candy sale at an early football sale furnished the financial foundation for the for the year. Good-looking posters made by this class advertised the Homecoming and a beautiful float carried this group in the parade. The Freshmen realized the Seventh Graders were worth knowing and entertained them at a Christmas party. The rest of the school discovered the ability of the class of 1937 when the latter presented a debate on Interscholastic Athletics before the main room. The Seniors had to give way their coveted position as leaders in banking to the Seventh graders, and as a reward the youngsters were allowed a party at which everyone enjoyed the best time ever. 1931-32 has been a good year for this group and they are determined to make next year even better.



Probably  
 named for  
 local  
 landmark,  
 Moccasin  
 Creek



## Family history found in school publications

By Lori Brost  
Museum Administrator

It starts with a request for information: an e-mail, a phone call or visit, a message on Facebook—someone looking for information about a family member, a friend or even about themselves. We can't guarantee that we will always find what you're looking for, but we will always try. Sometimes, we even learn something for ourselves. And that makes it even more worth the effort.

Last year, I received a phone call. A lady was interested to see if we could help her figure out when or if a relative graduated from the Nekoosa high school.

There is something both educational and interesting about looking at our past through yearbooks collected from high schools such as Lincoln, Assumption, Nekoosa, Port Edwards, Pittsville or Rudolph. It could be changes in hair and clothing styles, even in the way kids wrote to each other.

As luck would have it, I did find the person the caller was looking for, but that wasn't all I found. I saw the last name Lewis in the list and realized this is one of my maternal grampa's half-sisters!

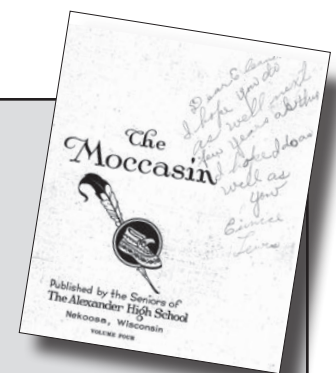
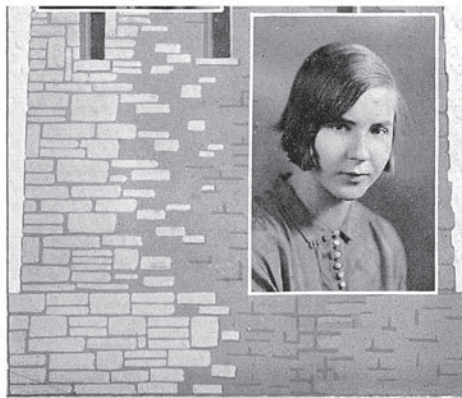
Ironically, it hadn't even dawned on me years ago, when my grampa donated the books to the Museum, to actually look through them for my own family. Finding Eleanor on the pages of the 1927 through 1930 Nekoosa high school *Moccasin* reminded me what a gold mine of information these books are.

Eleanor was one of the sisters I hadn't found much information about; however, these dates gave me a better starting point to reboot my inquiries. After pinpointing the year she graduated, I started searching *newspapers.com* and learned that after high school Eleanor attended Wood County Normal. *Tribune* articles list her name numerous times when "cadets" toured county schools.

Eleanor eventually ended up in Marshfield where she spent the remainder of her life. She passed away of cancer in 1978.

Able to write a large chapter of Eleanor's life all because one person asked me a question, I decided to look into the other siblings to see if I could track them through their school days.

**ELEANOR LEWIS**  
English and Foreign Language Course  
Commercial Contest 2  
French Club 4, Secretary 4  
"And so from day to day,  
She stored knowledge away."



Dear Eleanor,  
I hope you do as well next  
few years as this. I hope I do  
as well as you  
Eunice Lewis

1930 *Moccasin*

Eunice Lewis, front, 5th from left, 1929 *Moccasin*, 8th grade

My great-grampa Hubert Lewis had a marriage and family prior to the one that brought his son, my grampa, into the world. With Hubert's first wife, Edna Fellows Lewis, he had three daughters, my grampa's half-sisters, Opal, Eleanor and Eunice.

The youngest daughter, Eunice, appears in the *Moccasin* as a seventh grader in 1928 and in eighth grade in 1929, but does not appear again in Nekoosa.

During my research I had found Eunice was married in 1933, in Wisconsin Rapids. After reviewing the announcement again, I noted it stated she was from Rapids, not Nekoosa. That gave me the idea to look into the Lincoln high school yearbooks, and in 1930, she appears as a freshman in her new school.

When Eunice's mother, Edna, moved out of Nekoosa, Eunice was the only child that moved with her. Eunice graduated from Lincoln in 1933.

On Dec. 14, 1933, the announcement of a marriage license issued to both Edna Lewis and her daughter Eunice, was published. Eunice married Andrew Paulson Jr. on December 16 and the following week, her mother re-married. Eunice had three children before her first marriage ended in divorce. She remarried, had another daughter, and died in a 1977 car accident in California.

I had never known either Eleanor or Eunice. The only one of Grampa Lewis's sisters I had any knowledge of was Opal, the oldest of the three.

After graduation from Nekoosa high school in 1925 towards the top of her class, Opal taught at Green Grove and Daly schools until 1930 when she began a 40-year career at Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co. In April 1941, she married Frederick Fierke in Iron Mountain, Mich., but they resided around the corner from my grandparents for my entire life. At one point, Fred called his property Shady Corner Bird Ranch where he raised exotic peafowls and wild ducks. For her part, Opal's love for dogs was channeled into breeding dachshunds.

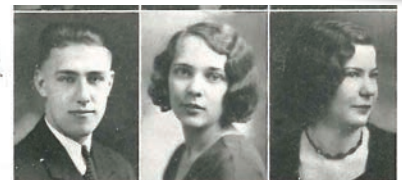


Opal and Eunice Lewis

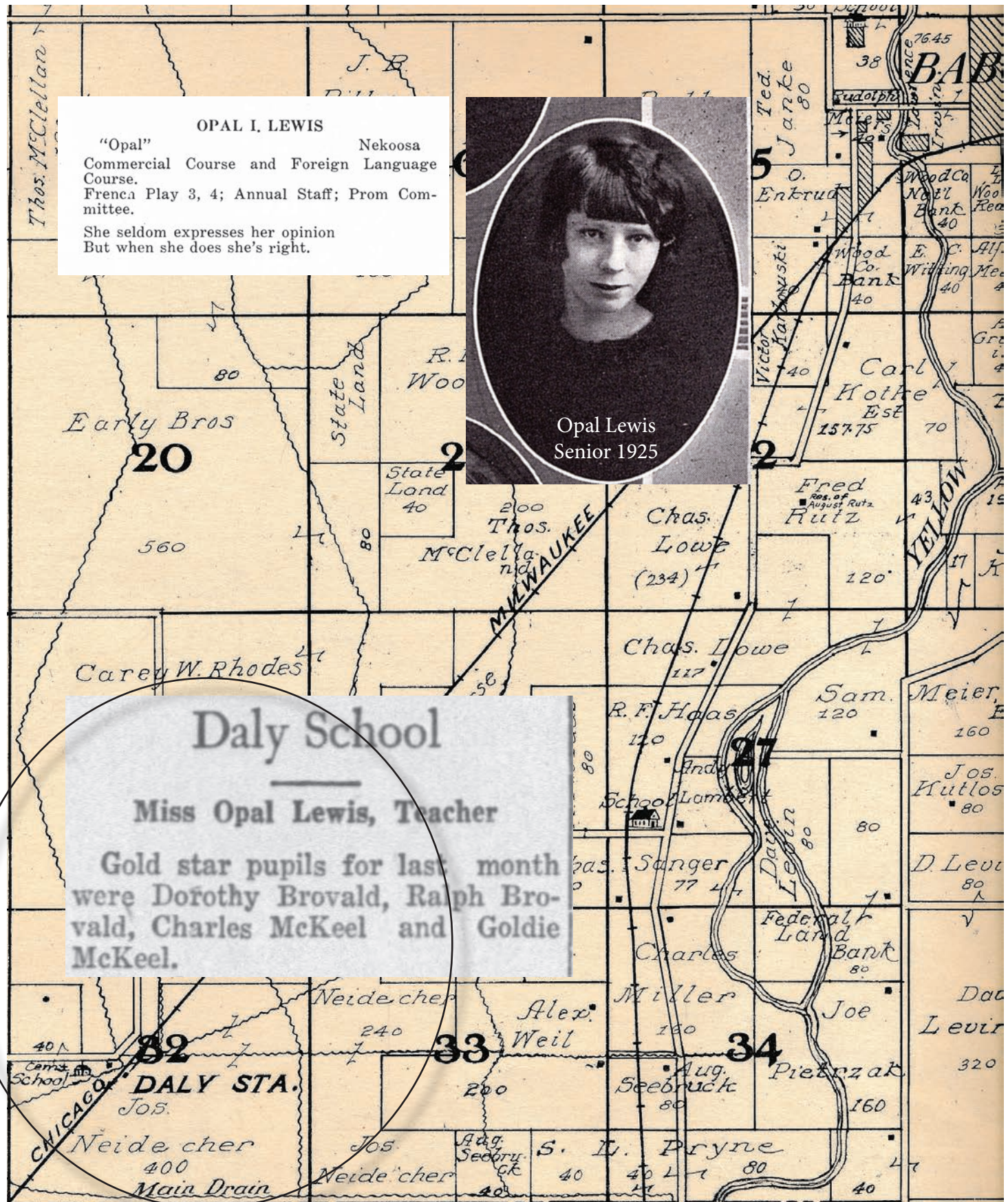


WILLIAM C. LEDER  
English  
BETTY I. LEWIS  
Latin  
EUNICE H. LEWIS  
English

*Bill*







Normal school grads were often sent to remote locations for their first teaching positions.



The second marriage, between Hubert Lewis and Mary Neugart, produced four sons: Clarence, Clifford, Lester (died eight days after birth) and Ronald. Finding the boys in yearbooks was not so easy.

Clarence appears in 1932 as a 7th grader and in 1933 as the vice-president of his 8th-grade class. I haven't been able to find a 1934 or 1936 yearbook and there may have been no *Moccasin* in 1935.

Clarence married Florence Wipperman in May 1936. I was only three in 1972 when Clarence passed away. The only thing I truly remember related to him was the A-frame on the land the Lewis boys had up north. Now belonging to a cousin of mine, the house still remains.

The sad part of this research is that I was never able to find Grampa Clifford Lewis in any of the yearbooks, so it is unclear what years he attended high school. In 1939, he began working at the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co. and Aug. 22, 1940, married Irene Saunders, beginning the adventure that included his military service and their four children.

He retired in 1982 and began the second chapter of that romance, traveling, hunting and fishing as well as enjoying the grand, great-grand and even great-great-grandchildren that would follow.

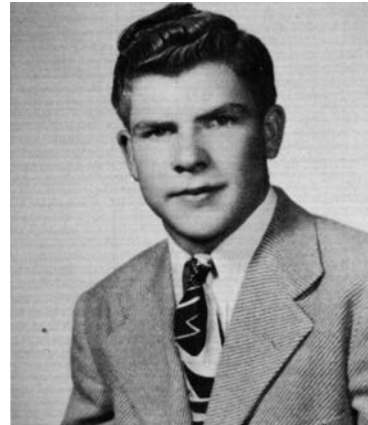
That story came to a halt in July 2015, when my Gramma passed away one-month shy of their 75th wedding anniversary. Grampa followed her in 2016.

Then there was Ronald, the baby of the family, 11 years younger than Clifford. I was able to document his entire high school career using yearbooks from his freshman year in 1946 through his graduation in 1949.

After high school he followed his older brother into the military during the Korean war until 1953 when he began a lifetime of employment in the Nekoosa mill. While on leave in 1952, he married Betty Soward.

In the years after we lost my grampa, I established a newfound closeness with Ronnie, enjoying more than one glass of Coors Light "up on the Hill" (Headin' West) and sharing stories, memories and a lot of laughs. We lost Ronnie March 13, 2020.

Ronald Lewis as a senior, 1949



Alexander high school yearbook, *The Moccasin*

**RONALD LEWIS** ..... "Ronnie"  
*"Greater Love hath no man."* Majors:  
 English, Social Studies, Science, Math.  
 Minors: Manual Arts. Activities: Football  
 2 yrs. Baseball 2 yrs.

As you can see, a lot of the information in my family files is driven by lookups in our local yearbooks. And this is why I strive to get as complete a set as possible for the schools in our area. That request that comes into our office may not be completely answered by these books, but it may open more avenues of information than one could ever expect.

Bonus yearbook photo:



*Ahdawagam*  
1987

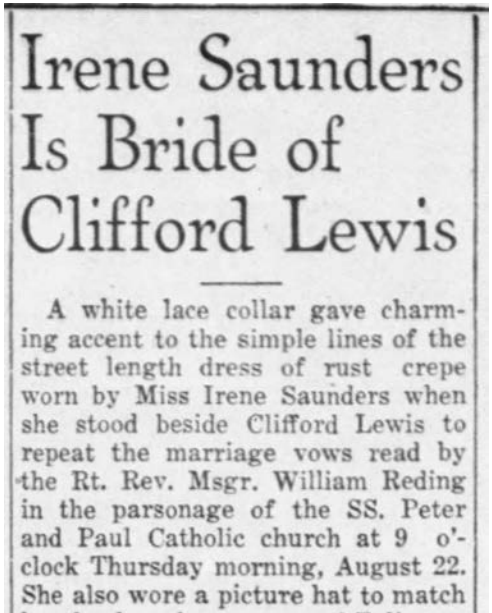
**Lori Jackson:** DECA 10,11,12; Departmental Intern 12.

Our own Lori Brost

(Uncle Dave recalls that the first impulse of former Museum curator Ellen Sabetta after their meeting in 1980 was to look him up in the 1963 LHS yearbook, *Ahdawagam*.)

70th Anniversary celebration  
August 22, 2010

*Tribute to some favorite people*



Mary, Clifford, Hubert, Ronald (front) Lewis

Photo at right has been within sight of Lori's desk since she came to the Museum in 2008.



Clifford and Irene Lewis, married Aug. 22, 1940

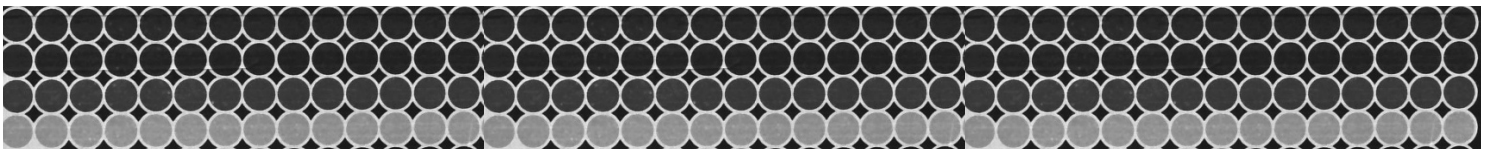


1978



“When Wisconsin Rapids Was A Canvas”

This story’s author, Jeffrey J. Johannes, former Lincoln high school art teacher, sports a knit cap at right, as his colleague, William Karberg, instructs at center. At rear can be seen the Red Owl “supermarket” (1957-87), a convenient stop during its fading years for *Artifacts* editor Uncle Dave, heading home to his rural Rudolph estate. A portion of the Red Owl structure, across a quintessential Rapids parking lot from the Wood County courthouse, was retained for utilitarian purposes.





# Thinking Big

By Jeffrey Johannes

Lincoln high school art teacher, retired

Liability!

That was the first word that popped into Wisconsin Rapids' Director of K-12 Art John Davenport's head when he received a call from Consolidated Papers, Inc., in autumn 1977—asking if Lincoln high school art students would help paint a mural on the Daly Building between the Wood County courthouse and the Jackson Street Bridge. The caller told Davenport that Sachio Yamashita, a Japanese-American artist known for his public art throughout the Midwest, would be creating a mural commemorating the cranberry industry. He wanted the involvement of high school students, a practice Sachio incorporated for many of his public works.

Student liability was also the first thing I thought of. It was on my mind throughout the project.

This project would be Sachio's second in Rapids. The previous fall, with his assistant, Mary Coughlin, he had painted a mural depicting the conversion of wood into paper, located on the south wall of Consolidated's Wisconsin Rapids Division recycling plant near the 3rd Avenue North employee entrance.

Sandy Artz, a retired Consolidated employee told me, "I worked there when the artist was doing the painting, and I know some of the old guys on the machines told him that he made the cant hook backwards. It was interesting to see the work in progress."

Sachio's new mural was being sponsored by Consolidated, Ocean Spray Cranberries and Viola Daly, owner of the soon-to-be-decorated building across Market Street from the Wood County Courthouse. After receiving the call from Consolidated, Davenport talked to Lincoln art teachers Bill Karberg and me about involving students in the mural project. We both thought it was a great idea and made arrangements with school officials and parents to allow students to work on the project.

Once the parental permission slips were signed, sealed and filed, the fun began! Fortunately, the advanced two-dimensional and three-dimensional art

classes were two hours long, which allowed the students time to walk from the old Lincoln high school to the Daly Building and back and still have over an hour of work time.

In all, there were about 35 LHS advanced art students involved in the project. They worked during art class or free periods, as well as weekends, transposing the design to the building and then applying paint.

Karberg doesn't remember the names of his "three-dimensional" students, except for Mary Wingarden (Anderson), who can be seen on page 169 in the 1978 LHS yearbook, bent over, standing on top of a stepladder, talking to Bill Karberg (p. 11).

Remember that word, "Liability?" Luckily, no one fell off the roof of the Daly Building during this project.

Mary remembers being asked to help with the mural project and recently said, "I felt that seeing an artist making a living at something he loved encouraged young people to care about and partake in what happened in our town. We were beautifying an old building with art and cleaning up areas in other places around town. I remember when we were finished with the project, we had a supper together, adults and students. I had the feeling that we were really a part of the whole picture, one of the reasons for doing it in the first place. I also remember that, coming down from the ladder, I put my foot in a bucket of orange paint."

I agreed that Sachio was very supportive and that students picked up on his enthusiasm. I showed him one of my drawings, "Love Token," which featured an anthropomorphic figure with a heart-shaped head riding a wave similar to "The Great Wave" in the woodblock print by the Japanese artist Hokusai.

Sachio complimented my use of enamel, flocking, and the decoratively painted frame. I felt very encouraged by his comments.

This mural project was one of the many times I considered myself blessed to be working in a high school art department with teachers who created as well as taught art. Being part of this large art project under the direction of a working artist was not only an education for me, but a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

*Johannes, continued*

This project was also a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the young participants. I still have a class list of the two-dimensional-art students who worked on the cranberry mural: Jim Breitenstein, Goldie Dittburner, Mark Ellis, Kathy Falk, Cheryl Fleischman, Jean Gansch, Yvonne Knobeck, Sue Kuechle, Karen Larson, Mike Lillie, Vinnie Nguyen, Bryan O'Day, Cindy Pesko, Bill Porter, Laurie Schelvan, Diane Schickling, Penny Schultz, Carol Van Ert and Debra White.

When I contacted her about the experience. Sue Kuechle Becker said, "It's fun to have been part of a big project like that! I remember it being very cold a few days, but it never stopped us from painting."

Carol Van Ert Koeshall remembers the brisk walk to the building and then the painting.

Jane Walter Ogurek thought, "The artist dude was a little quirky and organizing us high schoolers must have been similar to herding cats, but it was so much fun. The weather was beautiful, and I was amazed at what we were able to develop. I was sad to see it was gone."

Assumption students under art teacher Judith Lessig were involved but they volunteered their time after school. Jean Cwiklo Kennedy, who graduated from Assumption in 1978, recalls painting some of the circles on the mural.

Matt Groshek, another Assumption student, now an Assistant Professor of Graphic Design and Curator of the Edna Carlsten Gallery at UW-Stevens Point, is currently preparing a presentation about his relationship to public art. Matt realized that his first experience was working on Sachio's cranberry mural—at the end of classes at Assumption and on his way to meet his dad after work at Fey Publishing.

Many Rapids residents remember the mural and responded recently when I asked about memories on the Facebook page, "YOU KNOW YOU ARE FROM WISCONSIN RAPIDS IF..."

Darla Engwall-Allen remembers counting the mural's circles whenever she had to sit in the car while an errand was run at the courthouse or Red Owl. She said, "Honestly, at the time, I didn't know they were cranberries. I thought it was like the punch

game on Price is Right, so I would count the circles and imagine different prizes inside. Nor did I understand what the cranberry rakes were. I thought it was a steam shovel dumping something into a chopper of some sort. I had a vivid imagination as a kid."

Steven R. Brown remembered of Sachio, "I heard that guy could drink like there was no tomorrow."

Jack Kurtz said, "He stayed at the Mead when I worked there and I knew him well. I served him many a night at the bar. My friend Erica Erickson and I had him over for dinner a couple of times. I remember how much we enjoyed him."

Along with Sachio, I was invited to fellow art teacher Bill Karberg's house for supper. Sachio brought several bottles of sake. We consumed a more-than-adequate amount during the evening, which prevents me from specific memories of what I assume was an entertaining evening.

My favorite occasion with Sachio took place in my yellow 1974 Dodge Dart. Sachio wanted to take Karberg and me out to eat as a thank you for our involvement with the mural. On our way to the Ridges for supper, I slipped a cassette into my tape deck.

Sachio was sitting in the back seat because Bill was too tall to fit there. At the gradual fade-in of a synthesized heartbeat and instrumental collage, maniacal laughter slowly filled the car, Sachio stopped speaking in mid-sentence, leaned forward between the bucket seats and said, "This music is very beautiful!" It was Pink Floyd's "Dark Side of the Moon."

According to Chicago art historian Rebecca Zorach, Sachio showed how murals could be understood "not just as community-based art but as huge environmental installations, breaking free from the gallery," and changing a city dweller's consciousness.

Sachio painted more than a hundred public murals throughout the Midwest. He eventually settled in San Francisco, where he continued creating more personal paintings until his death in 2009 at the age of 76. His murals that transformed two Wisconsin Rapids buildings fell into disrepair and are no longer part of the Wisconsin Rapids' landscape.

Fortunately, they are still in the memories of many of our residents and in mine.



From *Ahdawagam* 1978

Jeff Warsinski

What coverings for space containers...



Bill Karberg, art teacher

Sachio's cranberries cartooned by another master.

Cranberry Mix: paint, energy, and a lot of forearm.



Author Johannes says he is in this pix, wearing a black cloak.



Mary Winegarden, Bill Karberg

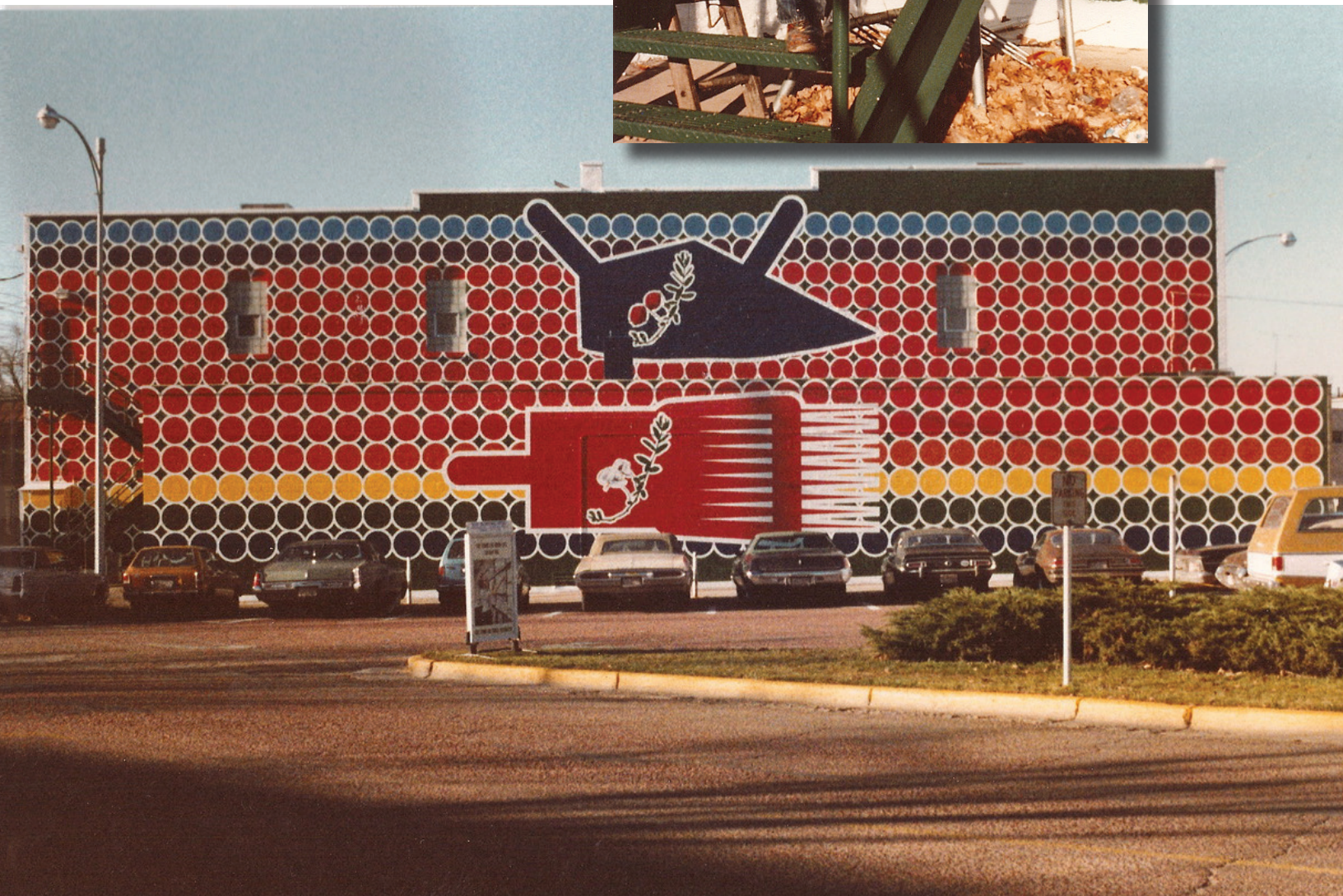
169



## Artist in Residence

Sachio Yamashita (1933-2009), a Japanese-American based in Chicago, created more than 100 public murals in the Midwest between 1968 and 1982. He supervised the “cranberry mural” on the east side of Wisconsin Rapids.

Cranberry image below includes a rake at center, shown from its side in blue/black and from the top in red.



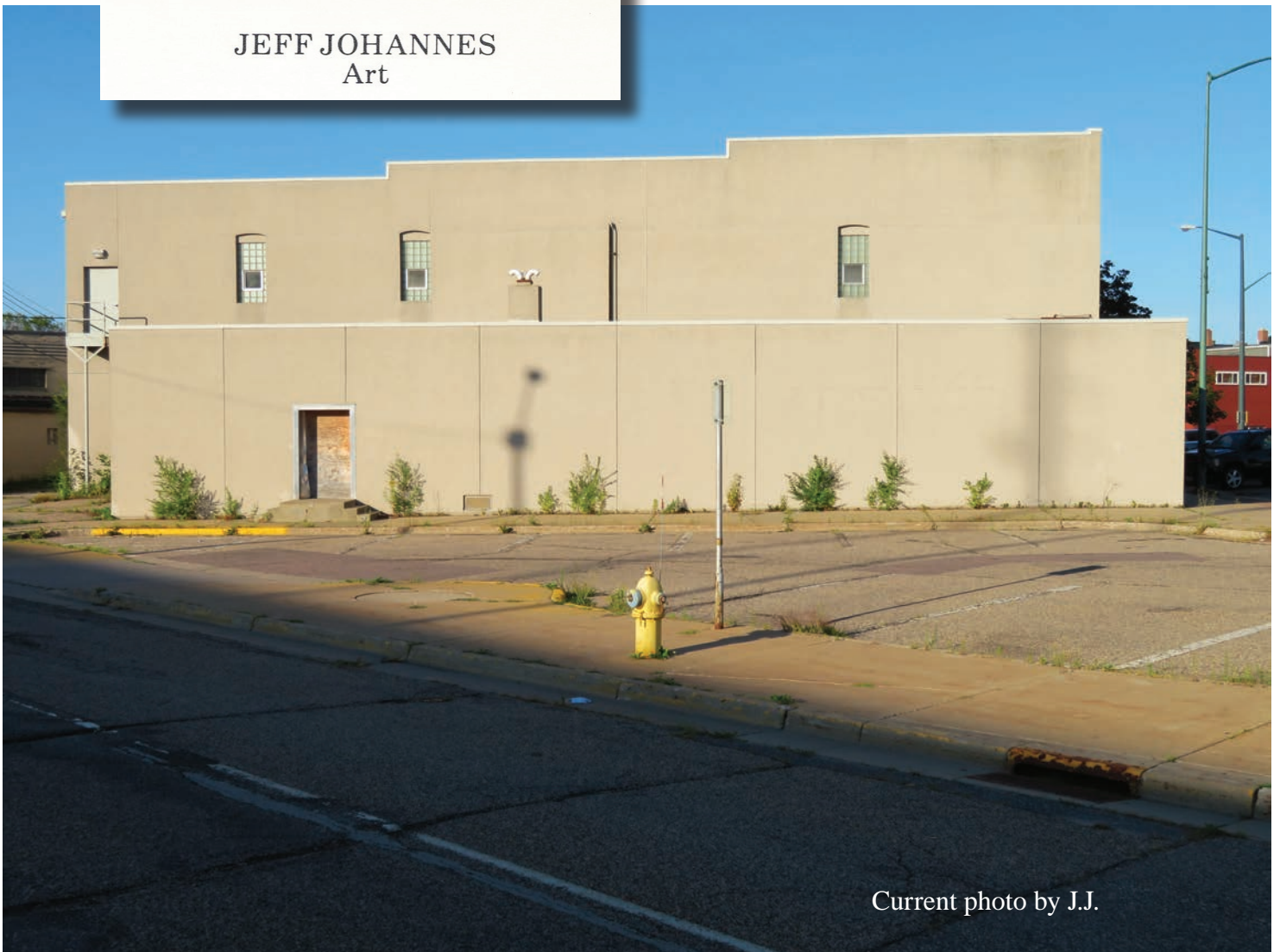




From 1978 *Ahdawagam*

JEFF JOHANNES  
Art

Former Daly Building mural site



Current photo by J.J.





“Belle Island” photo courtesy Judith Brown, Petaluma, Cal., daughter of Rosemary Taylor shown on the centerfold as a child

### Beautifying Home Grounds.

The grounds surrounding the palatial residence of Mr. and Mrs. Earle Pease on William's Island, which is now rapidly nearing completion, are now in the hands of a landscape artist and his crew of assistants. What was once a wild and unsightly looking spot, is rapidly being transformed into one of veritable beauty.

Warren Manning of Boston, a landscape artist of national repute, drew the plans for the layout of these grounds, and the same are being ably executed by Wm. Geibles of Minneapolis, an artist of no mean ability.

When all has been completed, Mr. and Mrs. Pease, no doubt, will have one of the most attractive home sites in the city.

### W. J. TAYLOR, CASHIER

Grand Rapids, Wis.—The appointment of W. J. Taylor as cashier of the First National bank, which will shortly merge with the Bank of Grand Rapids, is announced here. Mr. Taylor, who will assume his new duties here on Dec. 15, has for the last nine years been cashier of the State bank of Kiel.

The merger of the two banks here will give the new institution aggregate deposits of close to \$2,000,000. The two banks will be housed in a new home, which will be built in 1920.

The change in the cashiership is necessitated by the departure of Earle Pease, who leaves the local bank to take up the work in Milwaukee of H. A. Moehlenpah, who quit the presidency of the Wisconsin Mortgage and Securities company to become a member of the federal reserve board. —Milwaukee Sentinel.

If the above article published in the Milwaukee Sentinel on Monday is correct, the new bank cashier W. J. Taylor, of Kiel, Wis., will be here December 15th to take charge of the new merged bank. He will be cordially received in the business circles of Grand Rapids. He will find Grand Rapids and Wood county an excellent field to work in.

Nov. 20, 1919

De Pere native W.J. “Bill” Taylor arrived in 1919 and moved into the house shown above left, recently vacated by his predecessor at the First National Bank, “Earle Pease on the Island.” In 1925, the Taylors bought the Marling house on Witter Street—the year after the photo on pages 16-17 was taken. (Taylor and his wife, Carmen, had three children: Jane, Bill Jr. and Rosemary.)

Aug. 4, 1909: Original landscaping of Island



**Officials Celebrate First National's Sixtieth Birthday**



ISAAC P. WITTER  
President

W. J. TAYLOR  
Executive Vice President

HENRY C. DEMITZ  
Cashier

**First National Bank Opened Doors  
For Business 60 Years Ago Today**

June 18, 1932

## W. J. Taylor, former business leader, dies

William J. Taylor, 611 Witter St., former president of the First National Bank of Wisconsin Rapids and a long-time business leader in the city, died at 1:15 p.m. Monday at Riverview Manor after an

extended illness. He was 84.

Taylor's career with the bank covered nearly 30 years. He started with the bank in 1919 as cashier, later served as vice president and executive vice president, and in 1943 took over as president, succeeding Isaac Witter.

Taylor was president until 1918 when he and the Witter interests sold their stock in the bank, representing the controlling interest, to B.C. Brazeau, George W. Mead and Stanton Mead. Taylor continued with the bank as a director and member of the executive committee.

During his early years with First National, the bank merged with the old Bank of Grand Rapids. Taylor had other business interests, serving as a director of the Wisconsin Rapids



William Taylor

See—Taylor—Page 2

Jan. 29, 1974

## Centerfold

**Injun Party—**

Billy, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Taylor, entertained thirty boy friends at his home on Belle Isle yesterday at an 'Injun' party, on the occasion of his sixth birthday. Attired in Indian costumes, the youngsters were entertained by Chief White, his son and grandson. Dressed in full Indian regalia and beating the tom tom, the old Chief furnished a striking contrast to the youthful pale-faces assembled around him, whose interest increased as the son and grandson danced to the weird Indian music. Several group pictures were then taken, after which Boy Scouts made demonstrations of fire building with the use of sticks. Games were then participated in after which refreshments were served.

June 7, 1924, *Daily Tribune* describes the event shown on the following pages.



Winnebago [Ho Chunk] Chief [Ray?] White, his son [Andrew?] and grandson(s) pose with youthful party guests who lived mainly up the hill on Third Street—June 6, 1924. Chief White was a frequent performer at nearby Sand Hill and other local venues. Belle Island/Isle resident W.J. Taylor was known to act as an “interpretor” for Chief White at public events.

Right to left (backward): Bill Mengel, Jim Daly, Bill Graves, Nelson Johnson, Dave Graves, Tim Berkey, Dick Brazeau, Jack Rogers, Kelly Nash, John Gibson.

Next four unidentified

Jim Nash, a cousin of Jim Daly, Bob Rogers, (?), Charles Briere, (?), Rosemary Taylor, Billy Taylor









Dave Engel

For the *Daily Tribune*

## Meeting Dan

*A Day in the Age of Paper*

That day in history, January 1980, I first came to work at the *Daily Tribune*, the local paper I had been reading all my literate life.

That day, like most days then, was a busy one. On the first floor resided the classified and business offices of the *Trib* and the studio and offices of Radio Station WFHR, call-lettered for founder William F. Huffman, Sr. Here, the legendary Arnie Strope ran his popular Kaffee Klatsch program, sending neophytes to Neipp's Hardware for Whink or chastising housewives trying to give away dead cats and calling it compost.

At first-floor rear, the big Goss press was operated by Bruce Leberg, a bear at work but a gentle Santa on his own time. The second floor was shared by the newsroom and advertising departments.

Editor Joe Karius surveyed the newsroom through a big window in his office. He was assisted by Bob Des Jarlais at his city editor desk. The advertising department surrounded the closed door of publisher-owner William F. Huffman, Jr.

Toward the rear was a small room with an already outdated teletype machine, still clicking. Further, a darkroom, photo studio and the "backshop" where the next issue was prepped for printing. The employee lounge featured ten-cent Mountain Dews, a rare journalistic perk most employees were addicted to.

That day in history, 28 years ago [now 41], if I took the riverside walk to Grand, I passed Emmons' office supply store, Normington's cleaners and the previous *Tribune* building, still recalled by long term backshoppers LaVerne Keller and John Thompson.

To the east was the Grand Avenue bridge.

West across the Avenue on the upstream "north" side was the River Block, about to be replaced, housing a former jewelry store, the former Fey photo studio and old branch library, also housing a public rest room.

In what was then and now the Mead-Witter block was the restaurant that had been Wilpolt's, continued under various names. Sometimes I stopped at Rapids Bakery, seldom at Abel's Men's Wear and at Newton's Women's Apparel only to see Ellen Sabetta, SWCHC curator, who clerked there.

On the 3rd Avenue N. corner was the former Woolworth's site, in 1980 the Coast to Coast hardware store. Across 3rd was Johnson Hill's, a department store, complete with mezzanines, a jewelry store, beauty salon, gift store and sporting goods in a basement that had formerly housed a grocery.

That day in 1980, on the downstream or "south" side of Grand, returning toward the river, was the First National Bank, followed across 3rd Avenue by Church's Drugs, the former Quick Lunch, the former Mecca saloon, the Lunch Box, the Wisconsin Theater in its seedier manifestation and Siebers' restaurant. On Grand, across 2nd Avenue on the right, the entire block was taken up by Montgomery Ward.

Here on that day in history was, despite a subtly precarious "downtown" situation, Paper City at its zenith, humming along like a big roll of Consolith, its growth rings ever thicker, richer, slicker. Our town was the coated enamel paper capital of the world. The corporate brain trust occupied its World Headquarters a block north of West Grand Avenue. In the main office, attached to the mill, were personnel and records offices. An old stone building in a park-like setting was reserved for company leaders.

Recognizing me as Don's son, Consolidated Public Affairs director Daniel P. Meyer escorted me from office to office, to meet and greet each dark-suited board member, officer or vice president and to shake the hand of the board chairman. With the exception of me, everybody seemed to be doing pretty well that day in history.

*First published 1-28-08*



## Consolidated and its leaders: Gone, forgotten, sorely missed

The name sounds phony, like “Verso” or “NewPage.” But to call it “Consolidated” made sense back in the late 1890s when numerous pulp and flour mill properties in Centralia and Grand Rapids were being joined under the aegis of founders J.D. Witter and Nels Johnson. Through the 20th Century, even under the generic nomenclature, Consolidated was a home-town outfit with mostly home-town owners and best of all, home-town world headquarters, memorialized in its old office building and the “new” one in 2021 used as a Wood County courthouse annex.

Consolidated Papers, Inc., was incorporated as Consolidated Water Power Co. in 1894, soon becoming Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co., with divisions at times in Biron, Stevens Point, Whiting, Appleton and Port Arthur, Ontario (for about a year). In the 1930s, the company developed coating processes that enabled it to become the industry leader in coated enamel paper.

The litany of decline in the late 1990s is worthy of a fake-name and included decreased earnings, rising pulp cost, global overcapacity, cost cutting and layoffs. In 2000, getting on board an international trend toward the new “consolidation,” our economic heart and soul was sold to the Finnish wood products company Stora Enso, again in 2007 to NewPage, then to Verso in 2015.

We had become a third world investment. With the 2000 sale, a class of residents, those who worked in administration, office, engineering, maintenance, sales, public affairs, etc., was deleted from our demographics.



The girls from the front and back covers stopped off at the Consolidated office building on their 1923 tour of the west side. This photo appeared in *Artifacts* #49 with discussion.

## You are all a lost generation

*Former Paper City bereft of Consolidated stalwarts*

Daniel P. Meyer exemplified the best of Consolidated's corporate communitarians.

When he retired in 1994, Meyer, after 42 years, was the only person ever to lead the public affairs department, then grown to six full-time employees.

Following graduation from UW-Madison, Meyer had joined Consolidated in 1951 as the newly-created administrative assistant of public relations.

Under Meyer's leadership, the company hosted its first open house in 1954, marking 50 years of paper-making at Wisconsin Rapids. Among the 25,000 visitors grabbing free spruce seedlings that day was your editor, then nine years old.

That year, Meyer initiated the *Management Newsletter*, followed by *Consolidated News* and *News Chips*. He led the company United Way campaigns in the late 1950s and convinced Consolidated to open their forest lands to the public.

Meyer presided over the Consolidated Papers Foundation, Inc. board of directors from 1977-1993, sponsoring four-year college scholarships through the National Merit Scholarship Corp.

Meyer initiated scholarships to Mid-State Technical College, and in 1981 a Consolidated matching gifts program. He held offices in the Wisconsin Paper Council (including two terms as chairman), the American Paper Institute and the American Forest Council.

He was chairman of the Wisconsin Council on Recycling and a member of the Governor's Council on Forestry.

→  
Vocational, Technical and Adult Education District Board, 1973. Robert Kirslenlohr, member-at-large; James Wypych, employee member; Lloyd A. Mitchell, employee member, secretary; Richard J. Dignan, school superintendent member; Daniel P. Meyer, employer member, vice-chairman; John Korda, employer member, treasurer; and Frederick J. Wenzel, member-at-large, chairman. Photo from *Building for the Future: Mid-State Technical College* by Dave Engel and Holly Knoll

Meyer was named 1974 Wisconsin Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year. He served on the Mid-State Vocational, Technical and Adult Education board, including as chairman and chaired the building committee for the new campus. He was chairman of the Riverview Hospital Health Care Foundation and a board member of the Mid-State Technical College Foundation. Meyer held offices with the Wisconsin Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, the Wood County Republican party, and the South Wood County Economic Development Corporation.

He was a supporter of River City Memoirs and had a brief tenure on the South Wood County Historical Corp. board.

Good public relations, according to Meyer, meant "living right and getting credit for it. I am proud that Consolidated has consistently done that."

*Meyer was born Dec. 19, 1927, in Marion, Wis., to Bernard and Rena (Horn) Meyer. He graduated from UW-Madison with a degree in Economics and served in the U.S. Army 1946-1948. He married Jeannine Marie Forsmo Jan. 19, 1952.*

*After 42 years at Consolidated Papers, Meyer retired in 1994 as the Director of Public Affairs.*

*Jeannine died Nov. 6, 2015. Daniel Patrick Meyer, 88, died June 15, 2016.*





## Dan Meyer Expounds With (Uncle) Dave Engel, 1998

*Too bad Dan isn't on the phone, saying, "Can I speak to the famous H.B. Philleo? I need to know the meaning of that big word, 'expounds?'"*

Because of his UW-Madison roommate and fraternity brother, Jack Cole, young Dan Meyer had visited Rapids several times—before Jack's father, Consolidated treasurer Ralph Cole, made the offer. "We don't really have any openings in marketing but if you'd like to come over, we think we need some help here in public relations."

When the big day arrived, the applicant couldn't find the main office.

"There was no Jackson Street bridge. And it was park most of the way from Grand Avenue over to Consolidated, reached by a single-lane bridge because that was all low land. I learned that when the river got high in the spring, water flowed back, almost like the pool in Washington."

Meyer was interviewed by Consolidated financial specialist Ira Boyce and president Stanton Mead before he was hired in August 1951. His title was Administrative Assistant, Public Relations. Early for the paper industry, it was a one-person department.

"They didn't know where to put me. The first year, we were down in the Timberlands department. There wasn't room for a desk.

"In 1953, Stanton told me, 'I don't think we want to have another company publication.' Later on, he said he didn't have good experiences with the first one. You know [fictional columnist] Sam Spufus? Apparently, it irritated him or irritated people.

"We started out with the *Consoletter*, a little newsletter. As it proved its worth, we moved to a magazine.

"That was one characteristic of Consolidated. Sometimes we moved slowly but we didn't jump into an area and then retreat. It's pretty solid stuff, just like the buildings."

From "old" Consolidated News



*Daily Tribune, Aug. 27, 1951*

**Welcome NEW-COMERS To Wisconsin Rapids**

The business establishments listed here wish to welcome you to Wisconsin Rapids and will present you with a gift. Please stop in at your convenience to get acquainted. You will receive a letter of identification to present for your "Welcome" gift.

<b>ANDERSON DRUGS</b> 224 W. Grand Ave. Ph. 211 Stop in our Downtown Store for your welcome gift.	Each week several names of recent newcomers will be chosen from the records of the Chamber of Commerce. Watch for your name if you are a newcomer. This feature will be found in this space every Monday.	<b>THE RAPIDS BAKERY</b> 224 W. Grand Ave. Ph. 1463 Come in for Your Welcome Gift.
<b>RAPIDS SPORTING GOODS</b> 110 2nd St. N. Ph. 1703 Come in for your free gift.	<b>WISCONSIN RAPIDS DAILY TRIBUNE</b> "The Paper With the Warm Ad" FREE to Newcomers: A 3 line Want Ad run for one week, anytime within the next 30 days.	
<b>Guarantee Hardware and Warehouse Furniture</b> 420 W. Grand 521 W. Grand Come in and get acquainted. There's a free gift waiting for you!	<b>This Week We Welcome...</b> George Ray 1660 First St. North From Plattville, Wis. <b>Daniel P. Meyer</b> 340 Third St. South From Marion, Wis.	<b>MODERN DRY CLEANERS</b> 341 Oak Street Ph. 32 Stop in for free dry cleaning coupons.
<b>NYSTROM'S</b> 341 W. Grand Ave. Ph. 332 Come in for your Welcome Gift.	<b>SCHREINER'S STANDARD SERVICE</b> 361 W. Grand Ave. Ph. 1688 Our gift—one free lubrication job for your car.	
<b>EBSEN GREENHOUSE</b> 430 Saratoga St. Ph. 25 Welcome newcomer. We invite you to visit our greenhouse and receive your gift.	<b>INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT WISCONSIN RAPIDS</b> The official population of the city of Wisconsin Rapids, as determined by the 1950 decennial census, is 13,496.	<b>YOUR LAUNDERETTE</b> 171 Market St. Ph. 2173-W Our gift to you—Four Dixie loads of washing free. Does not include handling drying or ironing.
<b>NOTICE TO NEWCOMERS</b> If your name hasn't appeared in this ad, please phone No. 7 and give your name, home, and present address to the Classified Ad-Taker. It will appear soon.	<b>MODERN SHOE REPAIR</b> 230 Oak Street A pair of rubber heels for any member of your family.	

### Thought Questions

Through the century or so of "Consolidated," how many newcomers came and stayed?

How much did they contribute to community life?

Can they be replaced?

Without Consolidated, would *you* be here?

*Meyer continued*

1998 photo by Uncle Dave



Meyer described a cordial relationship with president Stanton Mead. “He never frightened me. I considered him an associate, a friend. We developed a mutual respect. There were many things Stanton would ask me to do and I was not one to say, ‘Oh that doesn’t belong in our department.’”

“Stanton was pretty frugal in terms of what he did himself. On the other hand, he was generous in his annual contributions and not looking for a lot of recognition. Very modest. He talked about how, when he was young he tried to work shifts as a tester or whatever it was. He told his father, Mr. Mead, ‘I can’t do this.’



Meyer said Consolidated “didn’t have what we now call a company identification program. There was no signage because of Mr. Mead, as George Mead I was always called. He didn’t want a lot of signs. He wanted to blend with the community.”

Meyer suggested to the Consolidated execs that it was important to keep pace with modern society by coming up with some timely visuals.

“That didn’t really come until we changed the name of the company. When I started, it was Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co., the historic name, and a long one, a complicated one.”

In what he considered a bold move, Meyer told Stanton, “One of these days we ought to think about changing the company name.”

He explained that, “we were being confused with power companies and others. I even got a letter for Consolidated Wall Paper and Paint.

“Mind you, this wasn’t the first year after I came. I think it was in the early sixties. I would say that PR as I practiced it, required a great deal of patience and persistence.

“Stanton said, ‘Why don’t you work on it with George?’ George [Mead II] had just moved over to the main office.

“Marketing told us everybody knew us as Consolidated. Harold Murtfeldt, who later became president, said they wanted to keep the Consolidated name. There were other names in the hopper, like Wisconsin River and Consolidated Enterprises.

“But we finally were able to find, checking with lawyer Dick Brazeau, that indeed we could use the name Consolidated Papers, Inc. It had not been patented by others.”



“We had some great people at Consolidated,” Meyer said.

“Clarence Jackson was running the Rapids mill. We had mill tours that Clarence had started. Sometimes, he got people to be tour guides who couldn’t handle another job. One guy that was showing number 14 machine used to say, ‘This is the world’s largest and fastest paper machine.’

“Clarence called him in and said, ‘What are you talking about? It’s not the world’s fastest and largest.’

“A few weeks later, Clarence overheard him again. Now the guy said, ‘This is the *second* largest...’

“When they asked Clarence, ‘How many people work here?’ he would answer:

“‘About half of them.’





The Murtfeldt brothers from St. Louis played a big part in the Consolidated saga. Lawrence continued to reside here after his retirement.

Lawrence Murtfeldt was the subject of a May 2005 *Artifacts* interview

### Frederick Harold Murtfeldt


Frederick Harold Murtfeldt, 86, of Carolina Village, Hendersonville, N.C., died on Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2000.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 29, in the Wing Chapel of the First Presbyterian Church, Hendersonville, N.C. The Rev. Jim Wagner will officiate.



## Murtfeldt ends career with CPI

Lawrence Murtfeldt, vice president, enamel paper manufacturing, will retire Jan. 1, 2001, ending a career of 42 years with the company.



Lawrence Murtfeldt

In 1962 he was elected vice president, manufacturing, and four years later, vice president, operations.

In his current position, he has had responsibility for three enamel paper divisions and two pulp mills as well as the company's forestry operations in the U.S. Murtfeldt is also director of Newaygo Timber Co. Ltd., and president of Barcon, Inc., both Consolidated subsidiaries.

During his years with the firm, Consolidated built its largest pulp mill, the \$36 million Kraft Division. More recently he headed the initial planning for the \$64.8 million enamel paper expansion at Wisconsin River Division.

Murtfeldt was praised by George Mead, chairman of the board, and Harold Murtfeldt, company president.

"I found Larry to be the best possible boss — demanding yet supportive and always concerned with developing an employee to full potential," Mead said.

"Consolidated will not be the same without him," Harold Murtfeldt said. "But he has done everything in his power to develop others to carry on his many responsibilities."

"Clarence, I think, had been involved with *Consolidated News*. His wife was a pianist for Rotary. Stanton and Clarence and Mrs. Plzak had this little trio that played at the Elks on Tuesday nights.

Leo Barrette, said Meyer, was another well-known figure at Consolidated.

"He built the Witter Field stadium. Leo was director of industrial relations, of personnel, whatever they called it back then."

Meyer was viewed with suspicion by Barrette. Meyer hadn't come to Consolidated through the employment department but was hired by "those guys over there at the main office."

"One day Leo called, 'Danny, come on out here!'"

"Danny" was 24 years of age at the time.

"I think you ought to be an officer of the Elks."

Seems Barrette was on the nominating committee and someone had backed out. That told Meyer he had established a good relationship with another Consolidated chief.

"Danny! Waltz out here!"

"Do you mind if I do a fox trot?" Danny might reply.

In 1951, Meyer said, Consolidated received a "fairly decent" settlement on an excess-profit tax refund of several millions of dollars "and Ira [Boyce] was responsible for that. So Ira, Stanton, Ralph Cole and T.W. Brazeau organized the Consolidated Papers Foundation."

The thrust at the beginning was general support of private colleges in the state of Wisconsin. "Emily's husband, Henry Baldwin, was interested in Beloit. Mr. [George I] Mead was a graduate of Wisconsin but he'd also gone to Beloit. There was some connection to the Congregational Church with other schools, like Northland. I don't know how Lawrence College got in.

"I didn't get involved in the Foundation until about 1967 when I went on the board of directors. The premise was that the activities of the foundation had an effect on the public relations of Consolidated. I was secretary for a few years and then president."

In 1956, Consolidated was one of the first corporations to support the National Merit Scholarship program.

"They were providing some local scholarships before that and Ira had reservations about it. Along comes National Merit. You take the test; they handle the selection. All you do is give them the money and set up the parameters of what you want to do.

## Thanks to “the mill”

Welder and maintenance planner Don Engel enjoyed a lifetime job at Consolidated. His three sons, including Uncle Dave, worked summers and largely paid their way through UW-Stevens Point. And...delivered personally by Consolidated public relations rep Dan Meyer, the following:

### Three Local Students National Merit Scholars

Lincoln, Assumption and Alexander High Schools each produced one National Merit Scholar for 1964, it was announced today.

Those who qualified for the scholarships are:

Kathryn Engel, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Engel, 439 Two Mile Ave., a student at Lincoln.

Donald E. Pelner, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Pelner, Rt. 4, a student at Assumption.

Mary Jo Rumsey, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Rumsey, 323 Wood Ave., Nekeosa, an Alexander High student.

Miss Engel and Pelner have each been awarded a Consolidated Papers, Inc., Merit Scholarship, sponsored through Consolidated's Civic Foundation.

**Accepted Nepco Scholarship**  
Miss Rumsey is listed as an honorary Merit Scholar. Although she qualified for a scholarship under the program, she decided instead to accept a \$500 annual Nekeosa-Edwards Foundation scholarship.

The Consolidated award also went to Nicholas J. Dobeck, Stevens Point, a student at Pacelli High School who intends to enroll at Michigan State University and plans a career as a physicist.

Three Consolidated scholarships are given annually under the program, and the current awards bring to 21 the number of outstanding students who have received the four-year financial assistance to further their education. Amounts of the scholarships are not announced, since they vary according to financial need.

More than 1,000 students earned National Merit Scholar ratings from a group of 13,000 semifinalists named last September. The annual competition begins with a three-hour qualifying test, and semifinalists undergo a second examination.

**Career Plans**  
Miss Engel intends to major in special education at Wisconsin State College, Eau Claire, and plans a career as a teacher of mentally retarded children. A member of the National Honor Society, she has been on the Lincoln honor roll for four years. In 1960 she won the Wood County Spelling Bee.

Pelner is also a member of the National Honor Society and of the National Latin Honor Society; was an award winner in the Marquette Science Fair and the Wisconsin Junior Academy of Science Fair in 1963; is editor of the Queen's Star, and played three years of varsity football. He intends to major in mathematics at the University of Notre Dame and looks forward to a career in math research.

Miss Rumsey, vice president of her sophomore class and class treasurer as a junior, is also a National Honor Society member. Like the others, she has been active in extra-curricular school affairs, school clubs and associations, church and community activities. She will study molecular biology at the University of Wisconsin.



KATHRYN ENGEL



DONALD PELNER



MARY JO RUMSEY

### This Consolidated Papers, Inc. Merit Scholarship

is awarded to

Kathryn S. Engel

in recognition of outstanding performance and promise in the  
National Merit Scholarship Program in  
nineteen hundred and sixty-four

*John R. Stalander*  
Illness and Retirement Committee

*Heath Boyce*  
Consolidated's Civic Foundation, Inc.

## Meyer continued

“We wanted to select people from Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota, wherever your operation is.

“Also, we moved into the matching gifts program, though there were those in the foundation who argued, ‘Dan, you’re asking for a blank check. They’re going to bankrupt us.’

“I said, ‘All right, let’s start it.’

“At first it was just for education. Then we expanded it and moved out and provided some leadership. We were one of the first companies and foundations to support Wisconsin public television and radio.”

As for Mid-State Technical Institute, soon to be “College”: “I’m always tremendously pleased when I go down 32nd Street and see that big parking lot because that’s a story in itself.”

Mid-State had grown out of the local Witter vocational school. “We were all over town. Auto mechanics was in the old Grand Rapids garage. We had the Bethke building behind Johnson Hills, the school up at Lincoln, the old Normal school.”

According to Meyer, the new campus, “all started out with vying for the University extension. Milt Schneider and the late Paul Fleming and others tried hard to get that and we lost. So we said, let’s go for a community college. That lost.”

State law required school districts be part of a vocational tech district by 1967 so Meyer and Dr. Art Hayward determined that Rapids would be the home base for Mid-State.

“Dave Silverman and company were trying to push Stevens Point. In the meantime, Doc Hayward, county board chairman, said, ‘What the heck, we’re not going to wait. We’ll organize our own district with whoever we’ve got.’

So it [technical school district] became Wood County and we got Adams County. Then we existed. It was a matter of getting Stevens Point into the fold. That was roughly 1970.

“We hired Flad and Associates and developed a mall-type plan. We would build it all at one time under one roof. But we had to go to referendum.

“It wasn’t built. It was too much for Rapids at the time. The vote carried here but the farther you got from the campus, the fewer votes. That was in spring.”



"We had a half a million bucks put away," Meyer said. "We had the land. We were assured of water and sewer even though we were in the town of Grand Rapids."

"Mayor Penza said, 'Let's not worry about that. We've got water.' Taking it right out of Washington School. It comes out to the intersection. It was done!"

"In the fall, we started to build. A few thought we were crazy. There was a little mumbling by a few people on the county board. That's when I remember Stanton saying, 'You guys are doing it the right way. One step at a time.'"

"We hired Earl Yeager as first director. He came to us from Racine. Lorraine, of course is still here and a good friend of Jeannine's."

This 1998 interview took place near Biron at the Meyer home. Meyer told how he came to live there.

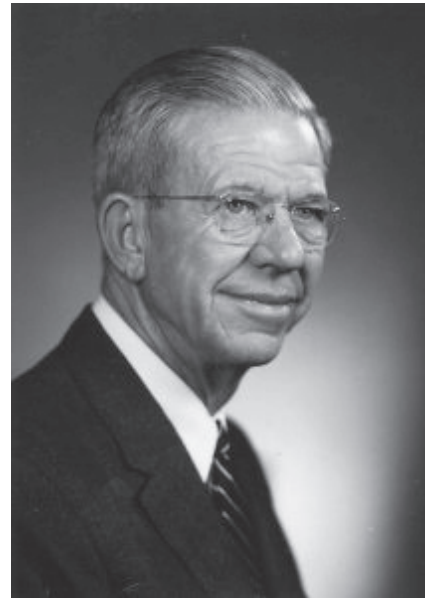
"Shore Acres Drive was undeveloped. There was one house, the Yeskie home. We were looking for a place to possibly build a house. River lots were nice. I found out that this belonged to Consolidated."

"So one day when I was in to see Stanton on other matters, I said, 'Have you ever thought about selling, dividing that property up there in Biron?'"

"He gave me a brisk, 'No!'"

"I said, 'If you are, let me know.,'"

"He said rather sharply, 'There's mosquitoes up there!'"



**Stanton Mead**

"I said, 'Yes, but there are going to be mosquitoes wherever you go.'"

"About two weeks later, I got a call from Earl Starks, secretary of Consolidated, who's also handling property. Max Andrae had come up and plotted it all out. 'Which lot do you want?' That's the way Stanton did things. Didn't make a big fuss about it."

"He never forgot. He had a long memory. He knew who he could count on and who he couldn't count on. Don't ever break a trust with a guy like that and it's fine."

**ORGANIZE VOTE DRIVE**—These representatives of business, industrial and fraternal groups met Tuesday afternoon at the Elks Club to plan the Chamber of Commerce's "Get Out the Vote" campaign. Seated, left to right, are Bernard Garber, George Frechette, Chairman Leon Kimberly, Nels Justeson and William Heilman. Standing, left to right, are Robert Schill, J. O. Ellis, Ralph Boyer, Dan Meyer and B. T. Ziegler. (Tribune Staff Photo)



Krohn photo, October 15, 1952, February 2007 *Artifacts*

"He was modest but very proud of things like the Mead Inn. We might need a new paper machine but he was very happy the day we got the Mead Inn modernization, when we built the tower part."

"When Consolidated built the blade coater addition out over the river and I suggested we put some kind of company identification on there, he said, 'That's all right, Dan, you can put it there, but I don't want some big, garish neon sign.'"

"With Stanton, you develop a relationship of mutual respect. That whole generation was quite different than the ones we have now."

"In many ways, they were more relaxed times. There was closeness among those people."

*Meyer continued*

Stanton's sister, Emily Mead Baldwin Bell, daughter of George Mead I, was "very Republican. She was out there in the trenches," said Meyer.

"We were living at 1430 Baker Street before we built this place. One Sunday, the doorbell rang. And here was Emily.

"She was going door to door for the Republican party. She handed me our [liberal] *Milwaukee Journal*. 'You don't read this paper, do you?'

"It was 1958. I hadn't been here long. I said, 'Emily, you have to find out what the other side is writing.'

"We grew to enjoy a relationship, a lot of which was based on politics. My wife, Jeannine, used to kid me, 'You were more of a Democrat when I met you.'

"I said, 'That's what happens when you get out in the real world.'

"When I would go down to see Emily to solicit funds for the Republican Party, I'd call and she'd say, 'What do you want now?'

"I said 'One of these days, I'm going to call you and say I want a cup of coffee.'

"So I called her. 'This is Dan Meyer. How are you?'

"I'm all right. How are you? I want my president to be in good health.' I was president of the foundation. She was vice president.

"I said, 'Emily, just a cup of coffee.'

"When she got an award of distinguished service to the Republican party up at Telemark, they did the best they could but they had a very small restaurant. Dorothy Lichty, the chairwoman, asked me to help Emily. Emily wasn't walking that well. She had polio when she was young."

Meyer bought lunch at a nearby stand.

"Here she is, sitting and eating a hot dog and twenty minutes later we had to get her back stage where she was honored and had a chance to speak.

"She got up there and she said, 'When I was asked to get involved in politics, I went to Father and asked if I should get involved with the Republican Party.'

He said, 'Yes, but if you're going to do it, get involved and do it all.'

"She didn't and wouldn't complain. There wasn't anybody putting on a society role. 'This is not good enough for me, I'm Emily Bell.' No. She wasn't that way. She was a real person."

**February 2007****Artifacts**

Don Krohn  
photo from  
February 2007  
*Artifacts*  
includes Emily  
Baldwin Bell

Christmas  
event, location  
unknown

From left: Dr. F.X. Pomainville, Mrs. Richard (Bernice) Lawless, Mrs. Tom (Isabelle) Utegaard, Mrs. Del (Grace) Rowland, Emily Mead Baldwin (Bell), Mrs. William F. (Louise) Huffman.



## Museum has mission

*Board: Historical corporation to act as history resource*

By Dan Meyer

Member, South Wood County Historical Corp. Board of Directors

Why? Yes, why are we here? Who do we serve? What's the need? What's the purpose – the mission of the South Wood County Historical Corporation? These questions have been addressed by the volunteer board of directors at meetings during the last eight months as a Strategic Plan was developed. No, we can't answer all of the questions yet we have hammered out a mission statement:

"The Mission of South Wood County Historical Corporation is to act as a local history resource by providing a focal point for the area so people can experience and enjoy our cultural heritage through educational programs and unique exhibits."

Our first goal toward accomplishing this mission is to "define the cultural history of South Wood County." This goal asks: Why this area is unique? What is our

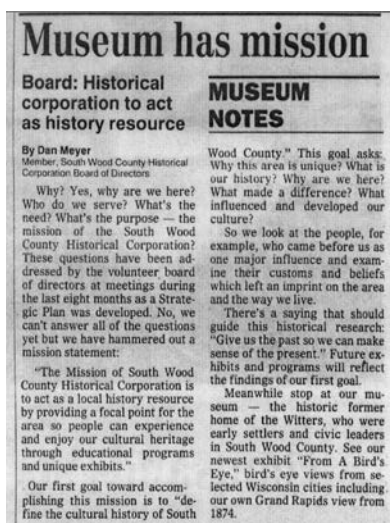
history? Why are we here? What made a difference? What influenced and developed our culture?

So we look at the people, for example, who came before us as one major influence and examine their customs and beliefs which left an imprint on the area and the way we live.

There's a saying that should guide this historical research: "Give us the past so we can make sense of the present." Future exhibits and programs will reflect the findings of our first goal.

Meanwhile stop at our museum – the historic former home of the Witters, who were early settlers and civic leaders in South Wood County. See our newest exhibit, "From a Bird's Eye," bird's eye views from selected Wisconsin cities including our own Grand Rapids view from 1874.

[1995]



Aug. 19, 1995  
In the Wisconsin Rapids  
*Daily Tribune*



*Photo by Uncle Dave*



### **Cecilia Gibson**

*Wisconsin Rapids Poet Has New Book Published*

In a very prettily bound book, issued under the caption of "Poems," Mrs. Cecilia K. Gibson has brought to the people of Wisconsin Rapids, and lovers of verse elsewhere, a number of poems which she has written and has had published.

There are twenty-one in the book, several of which are of particular interest concerning some of the beauty spots around Wisconsin Rapids and the Wisconsin River.

*1921 in Wood County Tribune*



## Dedication

*To my beloved daughter*

*Charlotte Gibson Witter*

*whose loving solicitude, and tender ministrations during many years past, have added sweetness to joy, and comfort to sorrow, in my declining years, I tender this little volume of verses, with all a mother's love and benediction.*

*Cecilia King Gibson*

Cecilia King Gibson was born in Green Bay, Wis., Nov. 19, 1846, daughter of David and Sarah King. She married George Gibson (1829–1908), a Civil War veteran and Episcopal clergyman in Illinois, Wisconsin and Des Moines, Iowa.

By 1905, Cecilia and George were living in Grand Rapids, Wis., to be with their daughter Charlotte Witter and son-in-law, Isaac Witter, with whom Cecilia lived after George's death in what is now the South Wood County Historical Museum.

She died in Wisconsin Rapids Nov. 4, 1926, and is buried in Forest Hill Cemetery.

Cecilia was a member of the prestigious Travel Class along with Lida Edwards Alexander, a poet featured in *Artifacts* #59, June 2020.

## AHDAWAGAM

In the valley by the river,  
The great river, the Wisconsin,  
With the mighty rocks that tower  
On the shores, and shooting upwards,  
Seem like battlements to guard them  
From the foot of the invader –  
And the islands, green and pleasant,  
Lying in the river basin,  
Bright with many colored flowers,  
Golden-rod and purple asters;  
And the graceful trees – the birch trees,  
With the white bark, that the Indians  
Used in olden times to fashion  
Into birch canoes, and mococks;  
Mococks strong, for maple sugar,  
When the sap in Spring was mounting  
In the trunks of the soft maple;  
And the sugar-bush resounded,  
With the mirth and happy laughter  
Of the dusky youths and maidens,  
Gathered round the flowing fires,  
While the sap was slowly boiling,  
And the tempting sweets were tested,  
With the oft dipped wooden ladles,  
Till the “sugaring off” was finished.

You shall hear how in the Autumn,  
When the wind sighed in the pine-trees,  
And the oak leaves, and the maple  
Changed to russet brown and yellow,  
And the forest all resplendent  
With the sumac's crimson glory,  
Seemed to feel the approach of Winter  
In the falling leaves that rushed  
Curled and dying at the tree roots.  
And at night amidst the forest,  
Gathered, as at council fire,  
Then they listened to the Old men,  
Listened to their words of wisdom,  
Of the White men who were building  
Villages along the river,  
Smoking villages with many  
New and strange and toiling people.

Then it was, a band of Indians,  
 With their chief, the mighty Sachem,  
 Of the ancient tribe of Chippewas,  
 Following the river's windings,  
 With their birch canoes and paddles,  
 In and out among the islands,  
 With their bows and feathered arrows,  
 Arrows tipped with flint and sharpened,  
 Hunted for the grouse and partridge,  
 For the squirrel and the rabbit,  
 And the wild geese flying southward.

Then one day, at its declining,  
 When the sky was red and golden,  
 And had streaks of blue and purple,  
 That, reflected on the water,  
 Seemed a shimmering sea of glory  
 From the splendor of the sunset-  
 Suddenly they heard a rushing  
 Like the sound of many waters  
 Leaping, dancing, beating, tumbling,  
 With a noise that still increasing,  
 Broke at last in thunderous cadence  
 Straight before them in the river;  
 And they saw the mighty waters

Breaking, raging, roaring, foaming,  
 Parted by a giant boulder,  
 That divided into two parts  
 The great rapids, that the Sachem  
 Standing on the bank in wonder  
 With his braves about him christened  
 "Ahdawagam" – the "Two Rapids".  
 And the Indians excited  
 Yelled and shouted "Ahdawagam".  
 And the echoes brought the answer  
 Ahdawagam – Ahdawagam,  
 And the river Spirit whispered  
 Ahdawagam – Ahdawagam!

## Poetics

Trochaic tetrameter describes a rhythm in poetry, a line of four trochaic "feet" or units of syllables.

Trochaic means one stressed syllable followed by one unstressed syllable.

RApids/RApids/RApids/RApids

An example with the same scheme and content that probably influenced Cecilia Gibson follows:

## The Song of Hiawatha

*By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

1855

BY the SHORES of GITCHE GUMee,  
 BY the SHIning BIG-Sea-WATER,  
 Stood the wigwam of Nokomis,  
 Daughter of the Moon, Nokomis,  
 Dark behind it rose the forest,  
 Rose the black and gloomy pine-trees,  
 Rose the firs with cones upon them;  
 Bright before it beat the water,  
 Beat the clear and sunny water,  
 Beat the shining Big-Sea-Water.

See *Penultimate Memoirs* for a discussion of the word, "Ahdawagam."



Time rolled on – the tribe returning,  
Saw the changes, and the wonders  
That the white men, toiling ever,  
Had achieved in this same village.  
In the streets were painted houses  
White and clean, with grass and flowers,  
In the yards and in the doorways,  
Children played, while pale-faced women  
Wove and knitted, singing oft' times  
Sweet and soft bewildering music.  
On the river banks were buildings  
Large and strong, the “Mills” they called them,  
Used for making flour and lumber,

And they smoked and screeched and whistled  
Every day from morn till even.  
And the boulder of the Two Rapids  
That had once stood firm between them  
Now was gone, and through the middle  
Dashed the waters unimpeded,  
In a fall of mighty power  
O'er a dam of stone and mortar  
Strong as human hands could build it.  
Then again, with deep emotion  
Pointing to the outstretched village  
“Ahdawagam” said the chieftain  
Ahdawagam, the Great Rapids.

Years are past, the tribes are scattered,  
Gone forever, those old Sachems,  
Gone the magic and the romance  
Of the old Wisconsin River-  
But the name still lives in history  
That the Indians gave the village  
Long ago in their own language;  
Unaccented, soft and liquid.  
Keep the name! for though departed  
Are those old lords of the forest,  
It is meet their fame should never  
Perish, but remain immortal  
The old name AHDAGAM.

South Wood County Historical Museum  
540 Third Street South  
Wisconsin Rapids WI 54494

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32 Same models as cover. West Side Market Square, Wisconsin Rapids, 1923. At rear, Wood County Grocery Wholesale building, razed 1956 for parking lot.