

# ARTIFACTS



Cover story: See Phil Brown, p. 2; T.B. Scott Library by Lori Brost, 3; Podawiltz by Uncle Dave, 4-7; Dollie Hibbing by Uncle Dave and Mike Koller, 8-13; Ed Beck and Vesper by Don Litzer, 14-15; Vesper tavern photo, 16-17; Roy Nash by UD, 18-21; William Karberg by Jeff Johannes, 22-27; Chase Street Kids by Bette Kohnen, 28-31; 1970 photo West Grand, 32.

## The Story... about the Photo

**Background:** The SWCHC-Museum was then the Isaac Witter house. On front steps, Witters or workers?

### Collateral Information *Background and foreground* Secrets revealed

**Foreground:** Inadvertent selfie? A face can be seen reflected or double-exposed on the toy car. Probably the person who took the photo.

Phil Brown  
SWCHC President

## View from the Briere house

The Witter house photo on the cover is a perfect introduction—ahead to 2022 and back to 1972. That was the year the Museum opened its doors to the public: 50 years ago.

### What about the family behind the photo?

*Artifacts* editor Uncle Dave can come up with a wealth of information about anything under the sun. About the cover, he says the two siblings are identified on *ancestry.com* as Dorothy May Briere, who was born in 1920, and Charles Ridgman Briere, 1919. Looks like Dorothy might have been about two years old, which would date the photo to 1922.

That was a big year for her father, Charles E. Briere, mayor of Wisconsin Rapids when the Grand Avenue bridge was built. His honor was also the lawyer who defended John Magnuson against charges brought by my wife's grandfather, T.W. Brazeau, in the famous mailbox bombing case.

The mother of Dorothy and Charles Jr., the first wife of Mayor Briere, was Georgia Ridgman Briere, a Wood County girl born in 1886. Upon her divorce from the mayor, Georgia took Dorothy and young Charles R. Briere to Santa Monica, Cal., never to return to live in our fair city again.

Mayor Briere's (b. 1884) second marriage was in 1931 to a schoolteacher, Mabel Johnson (b. 1902).

First wife Georgia Briere died in Santa Monica in 1940. The daughter pictured on the cover married Robert Kline that year and John Ramsey in 1947. She died in 2018 in Florida.

Dorothy's brother, Charles, worked for Douglas Aircraft. Tragically, he lost his life at Okinawa towards the end of WWII.

### What about the house behind the photographer?

Just before Charles Briere died of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1936 while working in his yard, the big house at 831 Third Street was moved to lots owned by Ben Sparks in Sampson's addition south of the city on what older residents like Uncle Dave call "Sand Hill."

As the cover photos shows, located directly across from the Museum, the Briere house was one of the most historic in town. It had been built 80 years before, around 1856, by George Neeves, a pioneer lumberman. In about 1892, Charles E. Briere's father, also named Charles, purchased the building for his home.

At the time of his death, ex-mayor Briere was having a new single-story English-style house built on the site, planned to be made of stone. A small English-style house is there to this day.

In 1937, Mrs. Mabel Briere is listed in the city directory, living at that 831 Third Street South address. At the time of her 1984 death, she lived on 8th Avenue and had been a proud South Wood County Historical Museum volunteer.

### 1987 Tribune/River City Memoirs



THEY ONCE WERE ONE: Parsons Grocery, 1630 Lincoln St., and the white house to the left (west), on Case Street, once were joined by a third section as one house. It was built by Charlie Briere, former mayor, on 3rd Street South.

The Neeves/Briere house served an unlikely purpose on Sand Hill—as Parsons Grocery.



Lori Brost  
Museum Administrator

More about the house on the cover.

## The Museum Story, Part One

### *From distinguished home to educational landmark*

On Aug. 5, 1947, the *Daily Tribune* ran a “25 Years Ago” article celebrating the efforts of both the J.D. Witter Traveling Libraries and T.B. Scott Public Library—announcing that for the first time, circulation had passed the 50,000 mark.

Just over a month later, the *Tribune* reported that Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. president George W. Mead had purchased one of the most palatial homes in town as a gift to the city for a new library.

Built on Third Street in 1907 by Charlotte and Isaac P. Witter, the Witters would call it home until Isaac’s death in 1942 after which Charlotte continued to maintain the Third Street house and a lovely residence in Beverly Hills, Cal. In 1947, wanting to relocate permanently, she sold the Third Street building to Mead, her husband’s brother-in-law, for \$15,000.

Mead had informed the library board of his intent to sign over the deed to the City with the understanding that the former house be used for the sole purpose of a library. Accordingly, the board passed a resolution that the main floor would replace the existing library, the second floor to be converted specifically for children.

The offer was to be discussed at the October 14 library board meeting, considered a formality. Compared to the downtown East Side location, the building allowed for expansion and was safer for children. Any modifications needed would be of minimal cost.

However, on October 7, when the City Council voted on the offer, there were four votes against. Initially, Mead had stated that he would keep the adjacent lot, formerly the Webb property. However, at the meeting, a letter was read offering the full estate to the city.

Mead did ask that the city provide office quarters at the new library for the Girl Scouts. He also recommended that the existing library at Baker and 1st street be razed and the property used as a street or a park to enhance the planned new courthouse.

The next day, October 8, 1947, a Warranty Deed to the City of Wisconsin Rapids was signed by George W. Mead. The dedication ceremony was held on Monday, April 19, 1948, when Mead declared, “This library will be dedicated again and again as we use it.” He expressed his hope that the library would be a center of culture and learning for the city.

The building would remain the city library until the construction and opening of McMillan Memorial Library in 1970.

### Old house, new library

Aileen McGeorge, president of Wisconsin River Valley Library conference; George W. Mead, library donor; T.W. Brazeau, lawyer, historian and a founder of SWCHC; W.W. Rickman, city council planning commission member



April 20, 1948,  
Wisconsin  
Rapids  
*Daily Tribune*

# The Picture



Upon a closer look, the photo of boaters on the Wisconsin River takes on an ominous aspect.



# The Story

Uncle Dave

*River City Memoirs*

## Another Wisconsin River Heartbreak

I thought I knew something about Elsie. A SWCHC board member, in the early 1980s, she caught a ride with me to Milwaukee where I dropped her off at the house of relatives.

Her surname was unusual and I was determined to pronounce it, not as “Podalwitz” as it wanted to come out—but Podawiltz.

Her maiden name was easy and familiar: Exner.

I had known about Elsie’s brother all my life and might have feared him in my errant youth. Rudolph “R.J.” Exner was Wisconsin Rapids Chief of Police for 31 years.

In his retirement, I interviewed Rudy at his house, a gallery of safari trophies, and soon learned another surprising feature. Exner and his sister, Emma, had been professional vaudeville-era dancers.

Visitors to my own collection of oddities are intrigued by two vaguely-neon green Flexsteel “Mystery Chair” recliners—previously owned by Exner himself.

I knew a few things about Elsie and Rudy but not what had happened 40 years earlier on Wednesday, June 10, 1942.

Early in that fateful day, James Albert “Jimmie,” the almost two-year-old son of Elsie and Albert Podawiltz, had been playing on the river bank across Second Street from the family home with his brother, John, 9, and other neighborhood pals, catching frogs and turtles.

Before supper, Elsie and Jimmie had moved on to chasing chickens by their backyard coop, when she lost track of the “tot.”

“It was just as the 5 o’clock whistle blew,” she told the *Tribune*, “when I noticed he wasn’t with me. I hurried out into the street, looking both ways, but I didn’t see him. I went right on down to the river...that is the last place you want to look but the first place you go.”

Jimmie was wearing a light sun suit and was

barefoot, his mother said. He carried a small tin cup. The cup, as far as she knew, had not been found.

Almost immediately and no doubt spurred by Jimmie’s uncle, Chief Exner, community leaders rallied to the cause. Fire Chief August C. Miller, Acting Police Chief Arthur Berg, Commander John Podratz of the American Legion, Grant R. Jacobs, civilian defense director, and Boy Scout leaders, organized manpower and boats for the search. By noon Thursday, 30 boats dragged the river and probed the river bank down to the North Western railroad bridge.

Shortly after the hunt began, a searcher found the small aluminum cup Jimmie was carrying when his mother last saw him, lying on the river bottom in front of the Podawiltz home.

As soon as the river, swollen with recent rains, could be shut off at the Rapids dam, 400 searchers moved downstream in lines on foot in the bare river bed while boats plumbed

the deeper depths that did not drain.

Meanwhile, hundreds watched from the river banks as Red Cross workers served food and coffee to the searchers. A call for donations brought over 2,500 sandwiches. The Elks Club brewed 55 gallons of coffee. Ice cream was donated by Herschleb’s, 16 loaves of bread from Knuth’s market.



**DROWNS**—Men dragged the Wisconsin river here today for the body of Jimmy Podawiltz, above, son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Podawiltz, who apparently fell into the stream while playing along the east bank near the Podawiltz home. Jimmy would have been two years old July 5.

On Sunday, June 14, the fifth day of the search, Joseph Zimmerman, 46, a Nekoosa Legionaire, saw what looked like a small body at the edge of a willow-covered island below the Nekoosa dam. He reported to Nekoosa fire chief James Mlsna and the two returned. Now they could see the boy plainly. He had been carried for eight miles through three dams.

Mlsna notified Jimmie's uncle, chief R. J. Exner and Dr. Rogers E. Garrison, Wood county coroner.

James Bruener, an auxiliary fireman, waded to the island and found Jimmie clad in the sun suit he had worn when he slipped away from his mother five days earlier.

The obituary named the victim's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Albert (Elsie) Podawiltz, maternal grandmother Mrs. Joe Exner, brothers Norbert, 16, and John, 9, and a sister, Patricia, 14.

The funeral rites were held at Krohn and Berard funeral home and SS Peter and Paul church, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Reding presiding.

A few months later, Elsie "Mrs. Albert Podawiltz," carried on with a Halloween party for her son, John. The young guests, Bobby Van Alstine, Shirley Morrow,

Bobby Exner, Ann and Bobby McLendon, Tom and Teddy Olson and Paul Reiland came wearing masks. The hostess used the traditional decorations on the table in the "witch's den," where, at the familiar time of 5 o'clock, supper was served. Later the children bobbed for apples and had their fortunes told. The evening concluded with a "trick or treat" hunt, Mrs. Podawiltz accompanying the children.

Jimmie had been born July 5, 1940. He had died under a month before his second birthday.

I don't know why, the next year, a July 3, 1943, *Tribune* "Birthday Club" in (later, SWCHC newsletter coordinator) Lorena Paap's Seckatary Hawkins section said James Albert Podawiltz would be 3 years old that Monday, July 5.

Chief Rudolph Joseph Exner, born 1903, died in 1995 and is buried in Calvary Cemetery, Wisconsin Rapids.

His sister, Elsie Katherine Exner Podawiltz (1907-98) is also buried at Calvary, along with four brothers, a sister, her husband Albert and sons Norbert and Jimmie.

*Daily Tribune*



**RIVER BOTTOM LAID BARE**—Industry cooperated Sunday to let down the water of the Wisconsin river and make possible the search for the body of Jimmy Podawiltz. This is a view of the river bed looking to the west, taken from the east bank above Belle Isle. In the center background is a line of men combing the river bed for the body of the child.

During the search, a surprising number of old tires were found on the river bed and were donated to the WWII scrap drive.



Profiled April 14, 1990, Elsie died in 1998 at age 91.

## FOCUS 50 PLUS

The Daily Tri

# AARP honors Rapids woman

## Elsie Podawiltz receives national service award

WIS. RAPIDS — Elsie Podawiltz has been a volunteer for many years and, on Wednesday, received one of the 1990 national community service awards from the American Association of Retired Persons.

The award was a surprise to her but not to her many friends and fellow AARP members who attended the meeting at Lowell Senior Center.

Mrs. Podawiltz, who has lived at 441 2nd St. S. for more than 50 years, is a charter member of Wisconsin Rapids Chapter 1073 of AARP and served on its board of directors until two years ago. The chapter was formed in 1972. Mrs. Podawiltz also is a past secretary of the group.

In addition to the many hours she has devoted to her AARP work, each week she visits with residents at Edgewater Haven Nursing Home, Port Edwards, and writes letters for them.

Being a good neighbor is important, Mrs. Podawiltz said, and she has been one to the Wisconsin Rapids community for many years.



Elsie Podawiltz

She is a board member and volunteer for the South Wood County Historical Museum and, for many years, coordinated the schedule for volunteers. "You spend a lot of time on the telephone with that job," she said.

She also has planned events to thank those volunteers she recruited. She is a past secretary

of the organization.

Mrs. Podawiltz has served on the board of the Wood County Department on Aging and, since its first edition, has worked at assembling and attaching address labels to the monthly issue of "Golden Times." The news vehicle is mailed to se-

**Being a good neighbor is important, Mrs. Podawiltz said, and she has been one to the Wisconsin Rapids community for many years.**

niors throughout the county.

Her other volunteer work includes:

- Serving on the pilot project to investigate, research and establish Lowell Senior Center.

- A mayoral appointment to the park and recreation commission. She served for eight years, and the City Council awarded her a citation for meritorious service.

Her hobbies include needlework and gardening, although her garden isn't as large as it was. She also has resumed her hobby of fishing and goes to Lake Michigan at least once a month during the fishing season.

She finds time to swim regularly at the South Wood County YMCA, Port Edwards, and continues to do her yard work.

When Mrs. Podawiltz graduated from Lincoln High School and Wood County Normal School, her surname was Exner. She has three children who live in other parts of the country.

The award is presented annually to recognize the exceptional volunteer service of one individual or couple from each of AARP's more than 4,000 local chapters.

AARP is the nation's largest organization of Americans 50 and older. The non-profit, non-partisan organization offers a wide variety of membership benefits, legislative representation at federal and state levels, and educational community-service programs.

### South Wood County Historical Corp.

Wally Ives was named president of the South Wood County Historical Corp. at its October meeting.

Other officers are J. Marshall Buehler, vice president; Barbara Wolden, secretary, and John Getzin, treasurer. Ellen Sabetta is the curator.

Serving on the board of directors are Lorena Paap, membership chairman; Dr. Leland Pomainville, Ruth Fretz, Georgia Ives, Elsie Podawiltz, Kathryn Easter, Helen Gottschalk and Dave Engel.

Early logging in Chippewa Falls

was depicted in a film shown by Buehler. An 18-inch bobbed, loaded with logs, made by Leo Schalla, Pittsville, was on display.

Engel, author of River City Memoirs, spoke on the the impending demise of the Wakely House, Nekoosa. It was the first residence in Wood County to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

October 13, 1984

Jeopardy question: What Rapids native in 1948 was a cameraman in New York City for Allen Funt's "Smile, You're on Candid Camera?" (He returned to Rapids to work as a TV repairman and retired as manager of Alexander Field in 1976. Previously, he had been stationed at Hickham Field, Hawaii, when Pearl Harbor was attacked.)

Answer: Who was Elsie's brother, Herbert Exner?

## The Picture





# The Story

Uncle Dave

## *Miss Hibbing: Dollie of Duluth*

“Dollie Hibbing,” she signed them. The photos at the South Wood County Historical Museum. Who and why?

Very few personages anywhere are named “Hibbing” and none I ever heard of in Rapids. Occasionally, someone here—came from there, like Andrew Hulme (1923-2005), 41 years a doctor in Rapids. Who knew he was son of a Finnish miner on the Mesabi Iron Range, Minnesota?

He had been my family’s doctor but I didn’t even know that when I wrote a book about Hibbing, Minn., and its unfavorite son, Bob Dylan née Zimmerman.

So I was familiar with German immigrant Frank Hibbing (probably not his née name), who helped establish the Minnesota mining scene in the late 1800s, where the then-rustic settlement in the heart of the Mesabi was named for him.

Frank and his wife, Barbara, née Lutz, were biologically childless, leading them to adopt a niece, Anna Marie, when she was five or so. That was “Dollie.”

Like her adoptive mother, her birth name was Lutz. According to Hibbing family genealogist Michael Koller, she was the daughter of Michael Lutz Jr. (1861-1943) who was the brother of Barbara Lutz Hibbing.

The 1891 death of Michael’s wife, Louise, came from pneumonia in Duluth, Minn., when Dollie was about four years old. Newspaper reports from her home town, Grand Rapids, Wis., imply that she had been chronically ill.

Dollie’s grandmother and Barbara Hibbing’s mother, was Barbara Lutz, wife of Michael Lutz, Sr. of the extended family that ran breweries in Stevens Point and Grand Rapids, including the owners of the Twin City and Grand Rapids Brewing companies.

The Lutz brewery became Sampson Canning Co., from which I learned the fine art of legume harvesting and preservation.

While living in Duluth, combinations of Barbara the mother and Barbara the grandmother, along with Dollie, often visited relatives in Stevens Point and Grand Rapids.

The elder couple of Barbara and Michael Lutz had resided in Stevens Point for about ten years before moving to the new iron-mining town of Bessemer, Mich., and to Duluth, the major iron-shipping port. Their daughter, Barbara, then married Frank Hibbing and moved to Minnesota, where, by purchasing lands that contained immense deposits of iron ore, they made the fortune Dollie would enjoy later.

Frank Hibbing died at age 40 in 1897, 25 years earlier than his wife.

Barbara Hibbing’s father, Michael, died in 1902, Michael’s wife, Barbara, in 1916 at the home of her daughter, Barbara Hibbing, in Duluth.

Barbara Lutz Hibbing died in 1922, shortly after returning from Europe, in a Minneapolis sanitarium, where she had been cared for by her daughter, Dollie, by then the wife of Dr. Hermann Koller. Barbara was buried in Duluth beside Frank Hibbing and her parents, Michael and Barbara Lutz.

According to the *Minneapolis Star*, Mrs. Anna M. Koller (Dollie) before her marriage had lived much of her time in “the east” and in Europe. Upon the death of her mother, she inherited practically all the fortune of her father, Frank Hibbing.

When he had arrived on the iron range, the former Stevens Point resident, Frank Hibbing, was more or less impecunious; but in 1893, he had enjoyed his eureka moment and a promising village was laid out in his name.

The result was something to behold. Said the 1922 *Star*, “Today Hibbing is the richest city for its size in the whole world.”

SWCHC



"For Grandma"  
~~Donated by~~  
 Mrs Merle Decker

### Who is Mrs. Merle Decker?

The photos in question no doubt came into our possession because Dollie Lutz Hibbing had relatives all over central Wisconsin. They were donated by "Mrs. Merle Decker" in 1965. What's the story?

With help from Michael Koller:

- Mrs. Merle Decker was the former Geraldine Helke (1903-1974).
- Geraldine Helke (Mrs. Merle Decker) was the daughter of Carrie Kline Helke (1873-1926).
- Carrie Kline Helke was the younger sister of Louise Kline Lutz.
- Louise Kline Lutz was Anna Marie "Dollie" Lutz Hibbing's biological mother.

Mike Koller figures that makes Mrs. Merle Decker—Dollie's first cousin. Dollie may have sent the photo on page eight dedicated to her aunt to Aunt Carolyn "Carrie" Kline Helke.

Dollie Hibbing kept in touch with Klines, Lutzes and Kalashinskis in central Wisconsin.

Marie's Album



Dollie—same day as photo at right?

Marie's Album



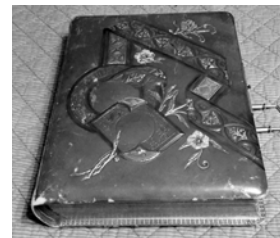
(Adoptive mother) Barbara and Marie (Dollie) Hibbing



By  
Michael Koller, M.D.  
St. Louis, Mo.



## MARIE'S ALBUM



Anna Marie “Dollie” Hibbing (1888-1946) and my father, Hermann Michael Koller, were married April 15, 1914, in Marie’s home, 1830 E. Superior St, Duluth, Minn. [pictured on p. 12].

Marie and Hermann had three children: Frank Hibbing Koller (1915-1936) and identical-twin daughters Barbara “Bobbi” (1917-2008) and Marie “Mia” (1917-2009). From 1922-1936 they all lived in a beautiful home at 1214 W. Minnehaha Parkway, south Minneapolis.

Marie died in 1946; Hermann married my mother, Kathryn, in 1948. I was born in 1952.

In June 2009, Marie’s daughter “Mia” died, and it was decided she would be buried at St. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery in Minneapolis, where her mother Marie, her father Hermann Koller, and her brother Frank were also buried. In arranging for the burial service to be conducted by the priest from Annunciation parish in Minneapolis where Mia and her family had attended, I provided a short biography of Mia’s life that discussed Mia’s childhood home and provided its address: 1214 W. Minnehaha Parkway.

Within days, the Annunciation School president contacted me, informing me that current members of Annunciation were now living at “1214.” I then emailed and introduced myself to the current owners of the home, but I was unable to meet them or visit the home at that time.

In 2016, at a conference in Houston, I noticed that a presenter had the name of the current owner of “1214,” with whom I had been in contact by email seven years before. After the session ended I introduced myself and the speaker informed me that just a year earlier, when the attic of their home was being insulated, a box was found and, in the box, a photo album.

The owners decided this must have been Marie’s, because it contained photos of Frank and Barbara Hibbing in addition to Marie at various stages of her childhood and young adult life. Apparently it had been in the attic since at least 1936, when Marie and her family moved away from that home.

The current owners invited my family and me to visit a few months later, in May 2016. After we looked at the photo album together, they gave it to us as Hibbing and Koller descendants and relatives. The album is now in the possession of one of Marie’s grandsons and the Hibbing Historical Society has been provided with a digital copy.

Shortly after they were married in April 1914, Marie and my father were in Vienna, Austria, where he was training in ophthalmology at the Vienna General Hospital. He told me that while in Vienna that spring, he saw Archduke Ferdinand of Austria in procession. I am sure Marie was with him and saw the Archduke, too.

It was the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in late June 1914 that sparked the beginning of World War I. That story always impressed me when I was growing up.

Marie's Album



Louise Kline Lutz, Michael Lutz Jr., Barbara Lutz Hibbing

*At Home***The Hibblings***Frank, Barbara and Family*

On photo below, from left on porch: servant, Michael Lutz (Marie's grandfather), servant, Barbara Lutz Hibbing, Frank Hibbing, seated.

On ground: Barbara Baass Lutz (Marie's grandmother), Marie a.k.a. Dollie

The building still stands at 1830 East Superior St., Duluth, east of the historic downtown.



Barbara and Frank Hibbing  
adopted Dollie Lutz, Barbara's niece



Hibbing Historical Society





A statue in Hibbing, Minn., portrays Dollie's father, Frank Hibbing, shown here in an altered state with Uncle Dave, in 1995 or so when he was researching a book about Bob Dylan in Minnesota.

## Stevens Point *Special*

Below can be seen some of the family and workers at the Stevens Point brewery, founded in 1857, making it one of the oldest in the country.

In Uncle Dave's youth, Point Special Beer was considered cheap and flavorful to a fault. His first beer ever (1959?) had been obtained illegally (Someone call Chief Exner!) and was an unfinished warm Point.

No longer locally-owned, the Point Brewery is still going strong, offering a spectrum of craft-style beers.



Jan 20, 1961



## Centerfold Story

### Don Litzer

Merrill, Wis.

Formerly of T.B. Scott Library, Merrill, and McMillan Memorial Library, Wisconsin Rapids

### Tavern in Vesper, Wis., 1910s

The originals of the photo postcards on pages 14-17 showing images in front of a tavern are in the possession of Lucille (Seymour) Bedish, niece of Ed and Mabel (Seymour) Beck. One of the postcards has a Vesper, Wis., postmark of 1911; another not shown here has a Vesper, Wis., postmark of 1915.

Ed Beck (1888-1978) worked as a cheesemaker in Vesper in the late 1910s. He married Mabel Seymour (1896-1972) in the Town of Easton, Marathon County, Wis., in 1914. Ed and Mabel later moved to Wausau and worked there for Kleinheinz Dairy and Steuber Dairy.

In December 2020, Dave Engel of the South Wood County Historical Museum speculated that this photo [pages 16-17] shows what is currently JoJo's in Vesper, of which a Google Maps image is shown at bottom, facing page.

In December 2020, *Artifacts* correspondent and Vesper historian Scott Brehm confirmed Engel's identification and, further, identified the business to the left of the tavern as a sawmill which was later the site of Woodruff Lumber in Vesper.





Ed Beck, Cheesemaker  
Vesper 1916-1919

Messrs. Clarence and Harry Hill, Ed. Beck, Axel Worlund and Martin Kubisiak attended the picnic at the grove Sunday.

The Vesper Creamery has a new buttermaker, Mr. Beck who is a graduate from Madison and has learned how to get out of cream all there is in it. You can't do wrong in sending your cream to him. The stockholders voted to pay all they got for butter for a year only the bare expense of making the butter. They won't even charge you the wear and tear on the machinery. You can't get a better deal in the state than that. This is no slur but a fact voted and carried at the last annual meeting.

Ed. Beck was taken to the River-view hospital at Grand Rapids on Friday where he underwent an operation for appendicitis.

VESPER BREVITIES

Dr. and Mrs. Allen, motored to

Ed. Beck and wife and Milton Gumn and wife autoed to Marshfield Sunday to take in the auto races held there.

ing: Mr. and Mrs. Coleman and family, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver and Mr. and Mrs. Van Matre.

Ed Beck and wife, of Wausau, visited old friends in Vesper Sunday.

Ed. Beck has resigned as cheesemaker for Mott & Wood at the Equitable Creamery Co. and will leave next week for Wausau where he expects to engage in another line of work for the winter at least.

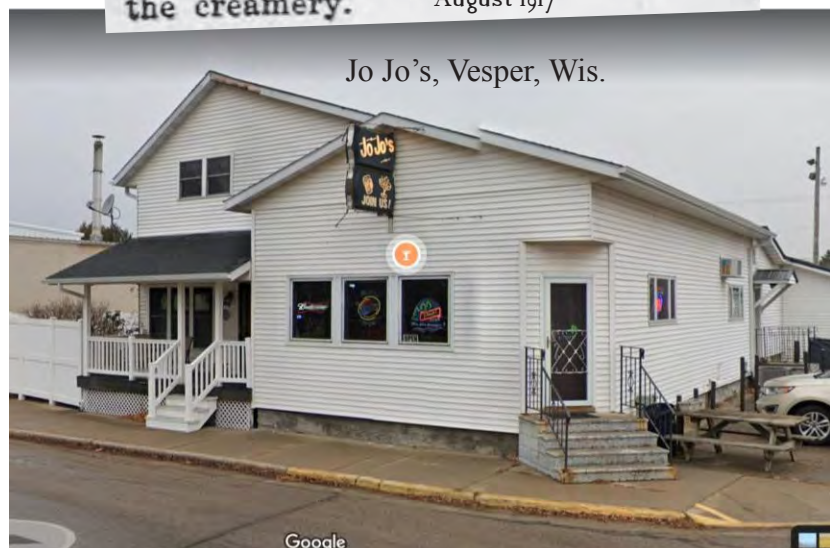
spent the week end at her home.

W. H. Bean and wife returned from their fishing trip Saturday.

Ed. Beck met with a bad accident at the creamery Tuesday afternoon. He slipped on the wet floor and fell against the sharp knives of the curd mill cutting deep gashes in the muscles of his right arm. A small piece of bone was also chipped off. Joe Peterson is taking his place at the creamery.

August 1917

Jo Jo's, Vesper, Wis.



Google

Same building as pp. 16-17?

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Form 1 1124 REGISTRATION CARD 706 No. 57

1	Name in full <i>Edward Paul Beck</i>	Age in yrs. <i>29</i>
2	Home address <i>Vesper Wis</i>	
3	Date of birth <i>July 17 1888</i>	
4	Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? <i>a natural born</i>	
5	Where were you born? <i>Marathon Co. Wis. U.S.</i>	
6	If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject?	
7	What is your present trade, occupation, or office? <i>Cheese &amp; Buttermaker</i>	
8	By whom employed? <i>Equitable Creamery Co.</i>	
9	Where employed? <i>Vesper</i>	
10	Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)? <i>wife</i>	
11	Marrried or single (which)? <i>Marrried</i> Race (specify which) <i>Caucasian</i>	
12	What military service have you had? Rank <i>No</i> ; branch <i>No</i>	
13	Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)? <i>wife to support</i>	

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

WWI Draft Card



## The Photo



Vesper 1911





*Courtesy of Don Litzer*



## The Picture



T.E. Nash family photo in Lori's office since 2014. The Museum has received collections from Guy Nash's children, Jean and Philleo (through Edith). One result was Uncle Dave's book, *Shanagolden: An Industrial Romance*.





# The Story

Uncle Dave

## Roy Nash *Wanted to make the world a better place*

In 1931, the U.S. Senate issued a "Survey of the Seminole Indians of Florida" by Roy Nash, a who reported directly to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles J. Rhoads. Nash spent several months in Florida gathering data for the report, the most comprehensive view of the Seminoles of its time.

Pretty good for a Rapids kid.

He had been born Feb. 22, 1885, in Centralia (now the West Side) to Ella and Thomas Nash. His father was one of the founders of Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co.

After graduating from Cornell University, N.Y., Roy became director of the Philippine School of Forestry. When Florida Senator Duncan Fletcher inquired about the qualifications of the official the Indian Office was sending to Florida, he was told that Nash was a trained social worker, writer, and explorer who had served as executive secretary of the NAACP. Following service in World War I as artillery officer, he spent three years on a social survey of the Indian population of Brazil and wrote the important book, *The Conquest of Brazil*.

When the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People hired Royal Nash, he had formerly led the NAACP Northern California branch, as secretary (1916-1917). He would succeed May Childs Nerney.

The new leader, Nash, thought the name "National Association etc." too cumbersome. In a memorandum still kept at the Library of Congress, he suggested other names such as "The Garrison Association," "The Wendell Phillips Association," and "The Lincoln Association." No action

was taken after Nash left the NAACP in 1917 to join the army.

While involved with the NAACP, Nash was an important voice against lynching, which he declared in 1916 could be stopped "when we reach the heart and conscience of the American people." He instigated a media campaign that investigated lynchings, wrote newspaper articles, published pamphlets, and printed its own magazine, *The Crisis*.

In early 1916, Elisabeth Freeman was hired by the Texas Woman's Suffrage Association to help. On the long train trip down to Texas, Freeman met Nash, whose middle name was Freeman. He later asked her to travel to Waco, Texas, to investigate the lynching of a black man, Jesse Washington. "Will you not get the facts for us? Your suffrage work will probably give you an excuse for being in Waco..."

"You will probably be able very soon to locate liberals or Northerners there with whom you can talk freely."

In 1917, as the U.S. entered World War I, Nash persuaded Secretary of War Newton Baker to let him recruit a black combat unit and became its leader. The entire enlisted personnel of the 167th Field Artillery was made up of "Negroes" and represented practically all the States in the Union.

Not in any way representing Nash's views, the Staff and Field Officers, officers of the Supply Units, Quartermaster Corps, Engineers' Corps, and of the Artillery Units, with few exceptions, were white.



Roy



SWCHC

After his Brazil book, as a staff member of the U.S. Select Committee on Indian Affairs, Royal F. Nash advocated reforms for the Menominee Tribal forest in Wisconsin, villages of the Seminoles in Florida and the management of reindeer herds in Alaska.

During World War II, he served as cultural affairs officer in Brazil for the U.S. State Department.

Nash retired from government and public affairs in 1946, and lived with his wife, the former Lucille Jolley, in Berkeley, Cal., where he died April 28, 1982.

Survivors included his wife, one daughter, one stepdaughter and four grandchildren.

And some folks back in the intermittently progressive state of Wisconsin.



SWCHC

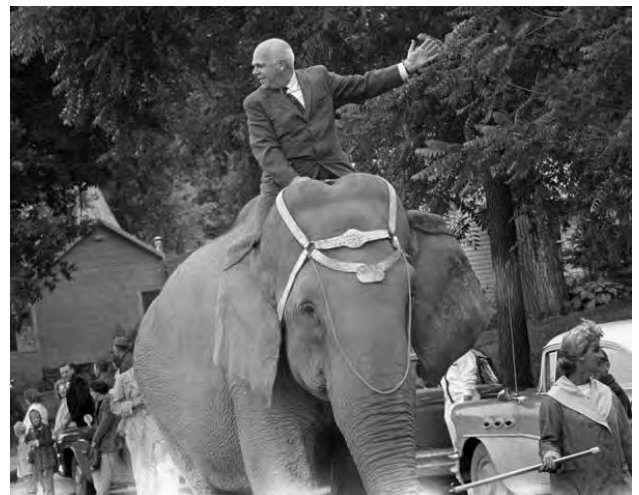


Royal  
Freeman  
Nash

1885-1982

### 1959, Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis.

Philleo Nash has told us that, in the spirit of his Uncle Roy, he lived for a year on an Indian reservation to further his doctoral dissertation and later worked toward racial equality with the Office of War information in WWII. As special assistant for minority affairs under Truman, he promoted equality in hiring practices and was famously accused of Communist sympathies by Wisconsin's Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy. Philleo headed the Bureau of Indian Affairs under Kennedy and Johnson and advised them on minority affairs. As a Democrat, he was Wisconsin's Lt. Governor 1959-61. He was born in Wisconsin Rapids and much later returned to operate his family's cranberry marsh.



A grand old party

By Jeffrey Johannes

## William Karberg

*From farm boy to artist and teacher*

Call him William, Willie, or Bill, my friend Karberg was born in 1944 into a family with a long history in Port Edwards. Beginning in 1903, his relatives served a total of 65 years as village trustees.

Bill was raised on the family farm at 720 Ver Bunker Ave., homesteaded by his grandfather William (1868-1940) in 1896 after arriving from Weidendorf, Germany, five years earlier. Also in 1896, the elder William married Caroline Wittenberg (1879-1913) who had come from West Prussia.

Bill said he is the fourth Karberg named William.

When Grandpa William wasn't working the farm, he was a carpenter for Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co., building many of the houses in the southern part of the village.

Bill's Uncle Erwin (1896-1950) began operating a dairy on the same farm in 1920, which continued until his death, when Erwin's younger brother, Russ (1909-1970) and his wife Dorothy Pluke Karberg (1913-2014), Bill's parents, bought the property at auction in 1950 and moved into the farmhouse in 1954.

The ten-year-old artist liked building tunnels and secret compartments under hay bales stacked in the barn. "Farm life gave me plenty of opportunities to learn how things worked," he said, "and to tinker with them to make them work differently."

Bill learned more about how things worked from his father, who built several houses in Port Edwards and sold them. Russ also remodeled the farmhouse between shifts at NEPCO and chores on the farm.

Bill's mother, Dorothy, was employed as a bookkeeper at John Edwards High School when Bill was a student there, so he had to "mind his Ps and Qs."

Farm life kept the whole family busy, except for Bill's older sister Mary Ann (born in 1935), away at school. When Bill wasn't tending beef cattle, riding the horses Daisy or Chief or making hay, he was usually in an upstairs bedroom that he had turned into an art studio. According to Bill, "When I was in sixth or seventh grade, I decided to make my own chisels by grinding down old files so I could sculpt my portrait out of wood. I did the carving in the basement because my mother didn't want the mess upstairs!"



*Photo by  
Jeff Johannes*

William Karberg

If all that weren't enough to keep him busy, in 1960, Russ and Dorothy purchased The Switch, a tavern on state highway 73 near what is now ERCO Worldwide, where the teenaged Bill bartended and learned how to mix a mean Old Fashioned.

Bill attended the later-named University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, majoring in art education while working the farm. After his father's death in 1970, he helped his mother until 1980 when he sold the cattle.

Bill graduated from Point and taught art in Marion, Wis., for the 1966-1967 school year. He was featured in *The Marion Advertiser* for his "snow bank art."

One night after school, armed with various colors of paint, Bill painted scenes of trees, houses, flowers, and an Easter Bunny on the sloping snow drifts outside the kindergarten room to the delight of students and teachers.

Bill left Marion after a year and taught art at Ben Franklin Junior High in Stevens Point (1967-1972) before moving on to West Junior High in Wisconsin Rapids (1972-1973) and Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln High School the following year.



By the time I student-taught under Bill's supervision in fall 1973, he had married Joanne Hofschild, a farm girl from out Rudolph way, and had two young daughters, Trina and Lisa. He had converted the milk house on his mother's farm into an art studio, and built gas and raku kilns for firing ceramics. He built a potter's wheel and displayed the resulting work in a small showroom in the entry. "At that time," he said, "I spent many evenings, after days of teaching, working on my art in the same building my uncle once processed milk.

"Growing up on the farm helped me develop a strong appreciation of nature. My mother's love of flowers and gardening also strengthened this view. My art is inspired by the natural world."

This appreciation and use of nature's harmony and movement can be seen in Bill's jewelry, watercolors, and sculptures, which he has been exhibiting in the Rapids area since 1966. His kinetic wind sculptures at Vesper Community Academy and Grant School in Kellner were inspired by student drawings of fish and birds created when he was an artist-in-residence at those schools. Another kinetic sculpture of a butterfly is located in the Monarch Garden next to the Nekoosa Port Edwards State Bank in Port Edwards.

Bill's Cor-Ten Steel sculpture, "Spire," at Lincoln High School was created in 1978 under his supervision by BDT Fabricating's Josef Thauer, who began working in the Rapids area in the late 1960s after immigrating from Germany. Cor-Ten Steel is rust-colored and oxidizes to a resistant finish, preventing further damage from the elements.

The \$10,000 46-foot high, 2.5 ton sculpture was sponsored by citizens and businessmen of Wisconsin Rapids—coordinated by the Chamber of Commerce. Wisconsin Valley Concrete Products Co. donated the

concrete for "Spire's" foundation and a truck to move it from the Industrial Park. Altmann & Larson Contractors Inc. installed the concrete fittings and lent its crane and operator. BDT Fabricating employees also assisted.

According to Karberg, "My first idea was for a horizontal sculpture, but thinking it through, I didn't want students climbing on it." Instead, the Class of 1980 attached a paper mache giraffe head to the sculpture as its senior prank.

Also fabricated by Thauer of Cor-ten steel, is Bill's other large sculpture—at First English Lutheran

Church, a 31-foot, 2-ton cross shaped like a Christmas star (1997). The base resembles a communion chalice. When the light is right, its shadow suggests the three crosses of the Crucifixion. The \$25,000 cost was raised through designated memorials at the church.

Bill retired from LHS in 1999 after serving as art department chair since 1985.

He had helped design the new LHS art department and got the three-dimensional program off the ground with jewelry, sculpture, and ceramics. He was especially proud of the gas kiln, a feature uncommon in high schools at the time. He said he "enjoyed teaching so many talented young people over the

years, some who are now creating their own art. I taught by example, letting my students see me create my own art."

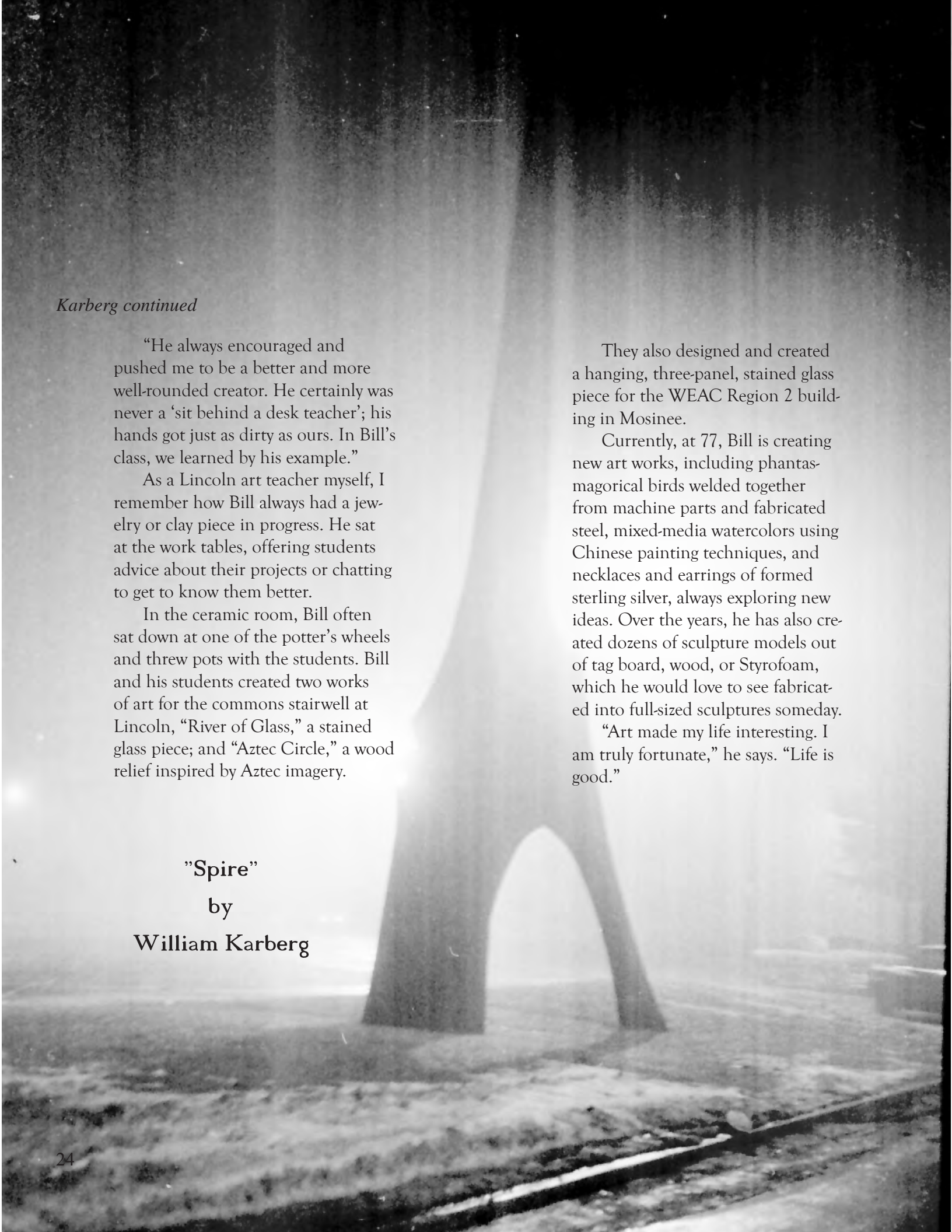
One of those talented students, Ted Haines, a creature creator, costume builder and makeup FX artist, has worked on films such as "Jurassic World," "The "Mandolorian," "Pulp Fiction," and "Ironman," and numerous television shows, commercials, and music videos.

"Bill was my teacher," Haines told me, "but even more he was a fellow artist.

*Karberg  
Self-portrait  
1956*



*Photo by  
Jeff Johannes*



*Karberg continued*

"He always encouraged and pushed me to be a better and more well-rounded creator. He certainly was never a 'sit behind a desk teacher'; his hands got just as dirty as ours. In Bill's class, we learned by his example."

As a Lincoln art teacher myself, I remember how Bill always had a jewelry or clay piece in progress. He sat at the work tables, offering students advice about their projects or chatting to get to know them better.

In the ceramic room, Bill often sat down at one of the potter's wheels and threw pots with the students. Bill and his students created two works of art for the commons stairwell at Lincoln, "River of Glass," a stained glass piece; and "Aztec Circle," a wood relief inspired by Aztec imagery.

They also designed and created a hanging, three-panel, stained glass piece for the WEAC Region 2 building in Mosinee.

Currently, at 77, Bill is creating new art works, including phantasmagorical birds welded together from machine parts and fabricated steel, mixed-media watercolors using Chinese painting techniques, and necklaces and earrings of formed sterling silver, always exploring new ideas. Over the years, he has also created dozens of sculpture models out of tag board, wood, or Styrofoam, which he would love to see fabricated into full-sized sculptures someday.

"Art made my life interesting. I am truly fortunate," he says. "Life is good."

**"Spire"**  
by  
**William Karberg**



Karberg cross at First English Lutheran, 1977



1983 Ahdawagam: Alien visiting LHS  
"Spire"—by Nina Bellanti



William Karberg, Josef Thauer, 1978



Karberg  
with Spire model  
1978





William Karberg and Daisy, 1957, Port Edwards





Russ Karberg with Mary Ann, 1936

Karberg Dairy milk deliveries



27	Milk. (Holtzman)	
"	(Stockman)	
	Pictures	
28	Cal meal	50#
29	Oil	
	Grease	
30	Milk (C. Kocian)	
	Milk. (Mr. Parzer)	
"	(Mrs. Newton)	
"	(John Halley)	
"	(H. Kuhn)	
"	(Mullholland)	
"	(Sage)	
"	(Mathis)	
"	(Buckley)	
"	(Leach)	
"	(Larson)	
"	(E. Cahill)	
"	(Padgham)	
"	(Rosebush)	
"	(Mrs. Kinnon)	
"	(Rozell)	
"	(Bakerwell)	
	Potatoes (Q. Bogert.) 1/2 bu.	2 00
	Eggs. (D.C.L.) 11 doz.	3 95
	Milk. "	8 14
		<hr/>
		70 24
	Milk T.E.T. Co.	119 98

By Bette Teske Kohnen

## CHASE STREET KIDS 1945-1952

I suppose every generation could look back at their own early childhood, say it was the best and that “children now don’t have any idea how to entertain themselves.” Well, we certainly didn’t have that problem! I doubt that any of us ever thought of saying we were “bored”—especially to our parents.

World War II had just ended. But as young children we didn’t realize the impact of shortages, that we had few toys, second-hand bikes or none at all. We made full use of the basics: ice skates, roller skates, chalk for sidewalks and jump ropes.

Our area was the boundary of the six or seven busy railroad tracks that cross Chase Street still, 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South about five houses up from Chase Street, and between 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South to 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. The road was a lot narrower than today and had no curb for a while. There were 16 children in that area in ages from five to teenaged.

We created our own fun. My friend Rachael Berger lived across the street and, as everybody had huge gardens, it was easy to “steal” a kohlrabi or two. We didn’t wash them and headed down through the woods along the tracks. We were going to check out the bum camp.

We could tell if they had been there recently by the heat of the coals. There was always a coffee pot and

some empty cans. Sometimes these men would walk up our driveway, if my dad was outside, and ask for a little money or food. We did not realize that they were probably not bums but men looking for work as they

traveled, jumping on and off trains across the country. We never felt afraid but always were careful not to be seen if the “bums” were still there.

There were a lot of boys in the neighborhood. “Boys being boys,” they had a lot of war games going on. The Berger boys across the street would build their forts and my brother Dave would build his in our backyard. One was about two stories high with wood “borrowed” from dad’s shop. Many hours were spent on that and I doubt that we had a blade of grass in the backyard for years.

Further down the street were the Knights. Nice boys with a widowed mother, they seemed to head up the softball games, of which there were many on the corner where the Wisconsin Rapids City Garage is now. We

would trample down the weeds for our baselines.

Another great place to play was the swamp area between 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue South where St. Paul’s Lutheran Church and School are located now.

We would capture polliwogs there and bring them home. If I forgot my jar, I put the polliwogs in my pocket. I found out the hard way that mothers do not appreciate them in the laundry water.



Terry Butner and Bette Teske



In the winter when the swamp froze over we took a trail through there to go ice skating, which we did by the hours. The pond was in the area of Mead School. At night we could see if the pond lights were on from our house and then head over. There was a warming house with benches to sit to put on skates. What fun to play “crack the whip.” Round and round in a long line, then let go and head for the snowbank. No happiness at home when I broke my glasses, twice. Money was tight—which I didn’t realize until years later.

During the summer months we spent endless days tree climbing in the little area of woods between the tracks and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South. To show we had been there, we carved our initials in the trees.

On some nights there would be a box car filled with cattle on their way to market parked on a siding by this woods. We would go there to “visit” them. I can barely remember it, but at one time there was a circus train parked there for a short while.

Our one older neighbor on Chase Street still had an ice box for a refrigerator. (Refrigerators were another item hard to get after the War.) Probably once a week the ice truck would stop there and some of us would wait patiently for the ice man to break off a few slivers for us to enjoy. What a treat on a hot summer day.

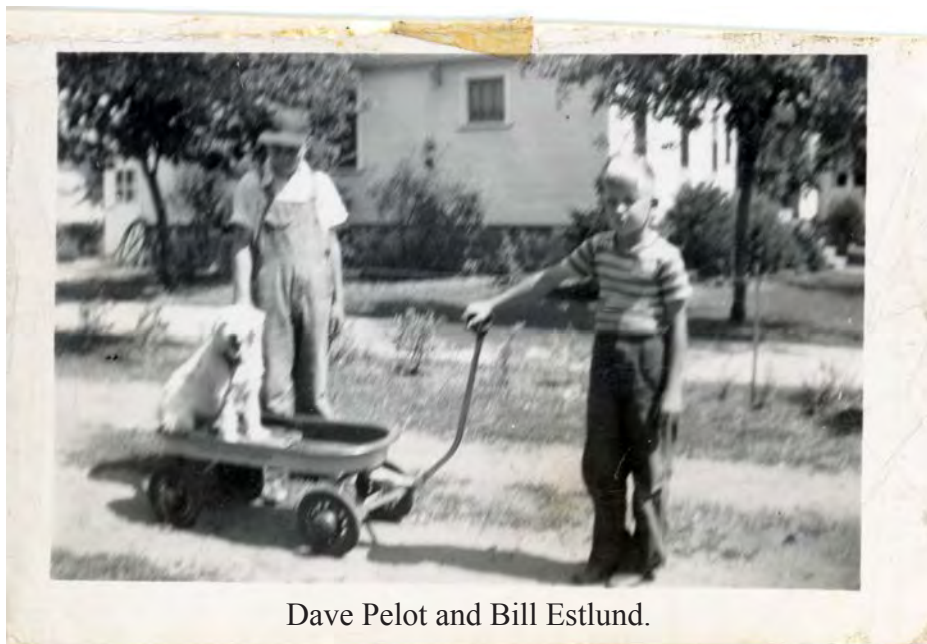
Our backyard seemed to be the gathering place for endless games of Red Rover, Kick-the-Can and Red Light-Green Light. We would get into arguments once in a while, get over it and continue playing.

On summer nights we could play until nine if we stayed in our yard. On a lot of the very warm nights, the adults would gather to visit while we ran around catching lightning bugs in jars.

Once when my parents were sitting outside they looked across the street at my dad’s lumber company and could see some strange lights. The shavings in the shop had started on fire, probably started from a cigarette or cigar ash. There wasn’t much damage.

A girl named Marilyn lived next door to me. She was a few years older than the rest of us and mentally challenged. We knew she was different but it didn’t matter and she was included in all our backyard games

as much as she wanted to be. Her speech was hard to understand but we did our best and when she got tired or frustrated she went home. Her parents took such good care of her. Her mother was a beautiful seamstress and made all her clothes, as well as some for my sister



Dave Pelot and Bill Estlund.

and me. As material was hard to get also after the war, many dresses were made out of feed bag material.

As the weather changed, my girlfriends and I spent many hours in the house playing with paper dolls. If we were lucky, we might have gotten some paper dolls for our birthday. We also cut figurines out of the Montgomery and Sears catalogs.

And furniture pieces. We arranged rooms with plastic sticks that our neighbor Bruno Berger brought home from Ahdawagam Paper Co. We played with our dolls and got out a lot of games.

We spent hours building snow forts at the end of the driveway and had many snowball fights. Also, we would lay in the snow to make snow angels. It was just great to be outside.

One of the strangest memories of winter was walking to the corner of Chase and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue to get our mail. Once, in our box, we found two pheasants, still with their feet on, with mailing tags. My mother's uncle had sent them from South Dakota! Can you imagine that happening now?

During the Christmas season we also got mail twice a day. But, of course, that was when people wrote letters and cards to keep in touch.

Summer was always welcome because we got outside more. One of our neighbors had a few plum trees. What fun to pick the fallen ones off the ground and throw them at one another. Unfortunately, this fun was short-lived as one mother couldn't see the humor. Robert, Peter and Mike were involved.

Peter Hittner, the naughtiest, went on to become a well-known lawyer in the Wausau area. His brother Mike is a successful businessman, [historical preservationist and media personality] in Wisconsin Rapids

The tracks were a big part of our lives. On some Sundays my brother Dave and I would walk the tracks to Grand Avenue on our way to Sunday School at First English Lutheran church, which at that time was on 4th Avenue North. There was a little grocery store on our way, with CANDY. Unfortunately, I'm sure sometimes our Sunday School offering didn't make it to church.

Many times we would walk the tracks to Lowell School. We not only watched for the trains but had to

jump a few ditches. The ditches would be full of weird looking chemicals. The chemical company is still on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South but I'm sure they are now under strict environmental laws.

We then passed by the foundry, with open-wide doors. If we had time, we would stop in to see if they had any "steelies" to use with our marbles. Marble games at recess were a favorite, hoping a steelie didn't get dropped on your glass marble.

Trains were such an every-day occurrence that we got to know the sounds of different whistles and steam-releasing sounds. Many times when walking home from Lowell School we were stopped by one or two trains. After waiting, which I'm sure we thought was a long time, we quickly crawled under and contin-

ued on our way. This was just an ordinary thing to do for us. Of course, there were no crossing guards and the rules of the day were "don't talk to strangers" and "look both ways before crossing the street."

My dad's business, Teske Lumber, continued to thrive. Boards were being planed which produced a lot of shavings. The shavings went out a huge vacuum pipe to the back of the shop. That created a huge pile to play in. Unfortunately, it also created a fire

hazard for the coal-burning trains when a few sparks would cause a fire.

We had hours of freedom in which to explore and learn to play with others with a few arguments in between. We went in and out of each other's houses, biked all over, sat around just talking (or singing).

We knew when meal time was and we went home.

One of my chores was to help my sister Joan with dishes at night but sometime I just "snuck out." At 9:00 the dishes would still be waiting.



Rachel Berger and Bette Teske



After I got “reeducated” by my father, I did the dishes with a lot of tears. I think it took about twice before I got the message.

Breakfast was interesting as my brother Dave and I lined up the cereal boxes so we didn’t have to look at each other.

Sometimes on a hot summer Saturday night, my parents would take a few of us children to the root beer stand by the Armory for a root beer. If it had been a good week for the business, we were treated with popcorn. Simple but wonderful.

As the years went by, we started to grow up a little more. Some of the boys had paper routes or were pick-

ing beans for Sampson Canning Co., mowing lawns and other odd jobs. I started doing a lot of babysitting. Some of the families moved away.

In looking back, I’m so grateful that we were just allowed to be children—a gift. As we know, we are adults a long time, with all the responsibilities that go with that.

I only recently heard a story from another of the Chase Street kids. Apparently when my dad was helping my older brother build a duplex on 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, his first big building project, Peter and Tom Parsons, both a few years younger than me, would wander over there to see if they could “pound nails.”

Dad said, “sure if you can go home and bring me a beer from your dad’s refrigerator.”



1948 Wis. Centennial  
Sue Sargent, Bette Teske

#### 1948-49

At former First English Lutheran church on 4th Avenue N.

Standing, left to right—  
Vern Richards,  
Garry Kronstedt,  
Marvin Deranick,  
Al Meyer.

Kneeling, Crystal  
Peterson, Sue Jen-  
kin, Bette Teske.

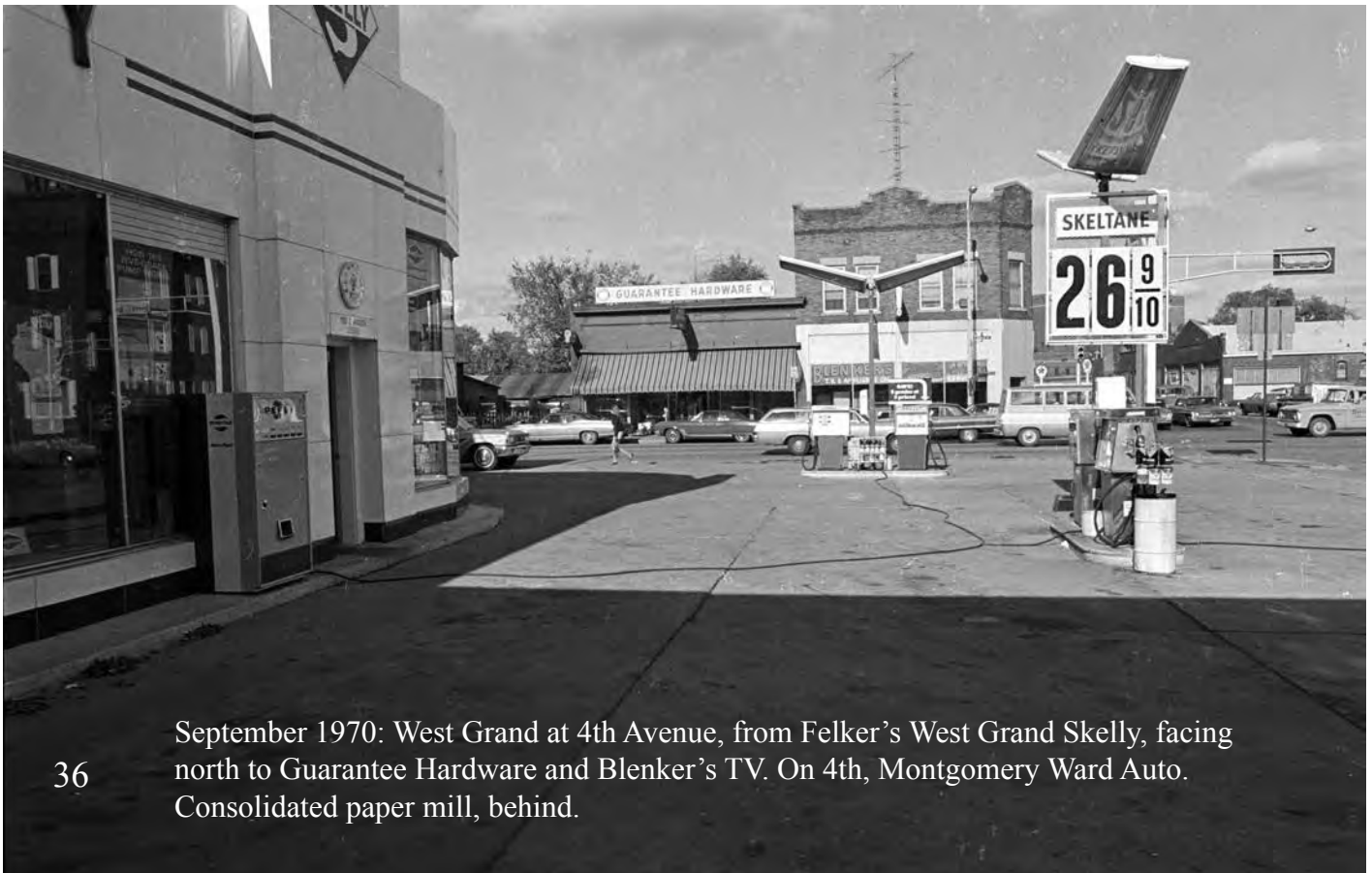


South Wood County Historical Museum  
540 Third Street South  
Wisconsin Rapids WI 54494

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Artifacts: South Wood County Historical Corp., 540 3rd St. S., Wisconsin Rapids WI 54494. SWCHC membership & subscription, \$25. Dave Engel, editor, [dave@southwoodcountyhistory.org](mailto:dave@southwoodcountyhistory.org); Lori Brost, Museum Administrator, 715-423-1580 or [lori@southwoodcountyhistory.org](mailto:lori@southwoodcountyhistory.org).



September 1970: West Grand at 4th Avenue, from Felker's West Grand Skelly, facing north to Guarantee Hardware and Blenker's TV. On 4th, Montgomery Ward Auto. Consolidated paper mill, behind.