

Artifacts



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By Uncle Dave

If not for Earle
(You wouldn't be reading this)

"Ifs" were previously published in River City Memoirs

If not for the Jews of Arpin, there would be no "Uncle Dave," your *Artifacts* editor.

If not for a Frank Garber Co. ad in a newspaper, Donald Engel, a submarine welder at a Manitowoc shipyard, would not have applied for a job and the fetus of his son would not have been transported here (to wake up and smell the coffee at Riverview Hospital).

If not for the Arpin settlement, Frank Garber, a Jewish immigrant, wouldn't have come to this area. If not for cheap land in Arpin, Jews from Russia would not have joined an agricultural experiment sponsored by a Milwaukee philanthropist.

If not for the glaciers and their haphazard apportionment of rubble, there wouldn't have been cheap land in the Arpin cutover, ready to be promoted to the dreamers.

If Frank and Bernard Garber had not asked young Earle to return here from a music career in Chicago, I wouldn't have been able to get trumpet lessons from him in 1962 and then we wouldn't be able to reminisce about how Don came here as a young father-to-be.

Earle was one of the last to recall my dad and called him, "Don." He wrote that he met Don at the Garber welding supply company.

"When they brought him in he worked in the supply room before he went out to drive for the gas business. Boy, they (Don and Sally) were so young when they came here. They were just married. I could walk through the Rapids division. There were any number of men like Don, everybody would stop working come over and talk. What was it like for those two to move from Manitowoc? They had never lived anywhere else."

The Bernard and Harry Garber residences on Lincoln Street were part of my Sunday Milwaukee *Journal* paper route. The Bernard Garber house always had a quarter ready, giving me a dependable nickel tip. At Harry's they probably forgot to leave the money out.

Most recently, Earle and I roamed around Arpin with Glen Zieher, stopping at former residences of the Jewish settlement and walking the vacant corner of a field to look for the imprint of a synagogue.

If not for PBS, my talking head wouldn't have appeared in *Chosen Towns*, a documentary out of UW-Milwaukee, describing Midwestern communities such as that which included his remote benefactors, the Jews of Arpin.

Earle was also a valued and vocal member of an evening class I led at Mid-State technical college.

Over UD's time here, Earle was a frequent visitor to SWCHC and an ardent supporter of *Artifacts*. He couldn't imagine why more residents didn't subscribe to this transcendental source of the news of River City and environs. "They are too cheap," I told him.

Alvin Garber? I would ask Earle about him if I could. Formerly of Ukraine, Arpin, Rapids and Point, Alvin died at age 92 in Shorewood, Wis.

Daily Tribune
Dec, 23, 1920

HOME IN UKRAINE IS MASS OF RUINS BUT FAMILY OF LOCAL MAN IS SAFE ON SEA-COAST AWAITING PASSAGE

Back in Roumania there is a little mass of ruins, swept by flames, riddled with the fire of machine gun shattered by bursting shells. Not many months ago this little mass of ruins was the home of Mrs. Alvin Garber and her children, who were awaiting an opportunity to come to Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, to join her husband. Mr. Garber formerly lived in this city but is now farming at Arpin, where he has a nice place started and a cozy home awaiting his family who have lost everything in the war swept country.

Tribune mug shot



Earle Garber
1928-2023



Photo by UD

August 2005

Earle's Beat
by Earle Garber

What was it like, living between the tracks and the Bushnell tank farm?

In the 1920s and 30s the road from Fourth Avenue wasn't paved. My mother and I would jump from puddle to puddle, through torrents of rainwater or snow melt to Rickoff's Grocery. Milk, bread or eggs were 10 cents. On my own, often with a dime in my pocket, I would walk the rails or skip across ties along the mill spur track used to supply the old pulp mill wood room. A block west, the graveled Fifth Avenue ended at our house with an outlet along the spur track back to Fourth. The parking lot of Consolidated's Number 16 machine replaced it.

The house was an up-and-down duplex we shared with the Narel family. The Saturday night bath was tolerated. I could knock on the wall and the girls next door would answer. We had indoor plumbing and a small cast iron coal stove in the basement that took forever to heat water. That house had been purchased, cut in half and moved to stand adjacent to a magnificent three story warehouse my grandfather built using cast off brick and timber from the sawmills, wagon and furniture factories of years past. The town was making room for the paper mill.

Grandfather's warehouse housed the Wisconsin state highway sign shop in a drive-in basement. A coverall factory was upstairs and the main floor was stocked with used inventory collected with grandfather's first big move.

In those days, the scrap yard was on Fifth Avenue in front of the Henke house. The Mrs. wasn't too pleased. When I was a mere tot getting ready to walk to old Emerson School, she often let me know while hanging her laundry.

A few years after Black Monday's 1929 bank closing, when I was in Kindergarten, grandfather sold the factory to Byron Cranberry. He would take a loss and move to a vacated blacksmith shop on McKinley Street.

LHS



The business survived another forty years. Years later, my uncle Ben, my grandfather's brother, joked about the business they were in. His name on the business card read "Ben Garber M.D. - R. E." Metals Dealer - Recycling Engineer; he was a man ahead of his time.

During my years at Emerson School, we were introduced to music and learned with a Tonette, a white plastic whistle we learned to play on. The black mouthpiece, if overblown, made a shrill noise, but we learned to read music and we played simple songs and we gave our folks something to cheer about. It was like "The Music Man," a sort of music make believe, to bring out the best of us. We were dressed in red crepe uniforms, long pants and jacket with paper milk bottle caps covered with white crepe. When we played, it must have been wild, like a passage from "parade of the animals."

In those days, kids often came down with German measles. The Doc called it Rubella and the health department posted a quarantine sign on our door. Dad went to live with his father and I was wrapped and fussed over for the next six weeks. When the quarantine sign was finally taken off the door, our family moved to the east side. It was that day that what we later called the Montgomery Ward Block burned. With only one bridge on Grand Avenue, our car bumped over a number of fire hoses as they directed us around the fire trucks. My sister and I covered our ears from the clamor of sirens and bells. We could see streets crowded with spectators.

The house on 8th Street had been a farmhouse Grandfather purchased and remodeled. We were across from what is now Warsinske Motor Company. My kid sister and I could now walk to old Howe school, the city's original high school would enter fourth grade; sister B. J. would start kindergarten.

At Howe, the band program used real instruments. In fifth grade, I suppose because my dad played horn in city band and made a few dollars at dances, Grandfather thought a cornet for me would be a good move. He paid for it with \$10 and a used sink, a small fortune in 1936 when

Photo by UD



By Uncle Dave



1966 Tribune mug shot

Lewie Benitz

1942-2023

Took Rapids to the top

Thanks to Lewie Benitz, we were, in our time, Number One. As other institutions of River City descended into mediocrity, Benitz's Lincoln high school wrestling team, as reported by newsletterian Chuck Hinners, won more than 700 dual meets and 17 state team titles (21 with the four he and his son, Scott, coached together).

If it came to a distressing end in 2011, it started rough in 1966 for Lewie at Lincoln. My brother, Gary Engel, was on the 1967 wrestling team stunned by the deaths of three talented LHS athletes in a car crash.

Later, my daughters, like a multitude of nervous teens, took Lewie's driver ed class and reported he was anything but warm and fuzzy.

When I interviewed him in 2006 and later consulted about a book Lewie was writing, I learned that, beneath his gnarly facade there beat the tender heart of a winner who knew what it was like to lose.

From River City Memoirs/Ghost of Myself

When Rapids wrestling coach Lewie Benitz was hired in 1966, he imagined a grand entrance via West Grand Avenue.

"I visualized coming in by that root beer stand and the people waving." It would be a few years before anything like that happened.

What Benitz knew of Wisconsin Rapids he had heard from two Lincoln High School graduates: Dale Dix, like Benitz, a member of the Stout college wrestling team; and Benitz's sometimes opponent, Larry Ironside of UW-Madison and Stevens Point.

Benitz arrived here when wrestling was being adopted at schools across the state. A high school senior in 1958-1959, on the first Boyceville team, he finished "undefeated," he said. "I was 3-0."

He had just turned a baby-faced 17 when Benitz played football at Eau Claire teachers college before

dropping out to work on the family's farm. After a year, he enrolled at Stout state college, Menomonie, where he joined the wrestling team.

Later, while Benitz pursued a master's degree at Stout, the local Menomonie high school wrestling coach was injured and Benitz "inherited" the job and a squad good enough to win the Big Rivers Conference. He could have stayed at Menomonie with his wife, Joyce, and son, Scott, but it was time for a fresh start.

Finding an ad for a driver education teacher here, Benitz called to see if the position could include that of wrestling coach. Schools Superintendent Ray Clausen told him Lincoln wanted an experienced coach who could bring the program back to the level it had enjoyed under Ken Hurlbut.

After biding his time on a construction job that summer, Benitz got a better offer from Clausen: driver ed and assistant wrestling coach. "Young and stupid," Benitz declined. "I wanted to coach."



Lewie Benitz is the new Lincoln head wrestling coach, replacing Bill Devlin who resigned previously to work on a masters degree. Benitz is 23, married and the father of one child. He holds both bachelors and masters degrees in industrial arts from Stout State University. At Stout he was a member of the wrestling team and captained the squad in 1964-65. Last year he coached at Menomonie High School. Benitz is from Boyceville.

1966 Daily Tribune

A couple weeks later, after football practice had started, Lincoln football coach Roger Harring called. "I think I can help you get that wrestling job if you will help me with the football team."

Needing to transfer their possessions to Rapids, Benitz turned to a family friend on a nearby farm. "I went out there and asked him if we could borrow his cattle truck. We washed it out, threw in the little stuff we had, and that's how we moved here.

"I was in awe of the size of Lincoln. I had an office up on the third floor in a broom closet I shared with a janitor.

"Bob Marx, Gary Campbell and I would carry our stuff down to the little theater and teach. Our wrestling room was a chair storage room on the south side of the field house. We had 100 kids out that second year and there was no place to put them, so we'd go in shifts.

"Just being around guys like Mr. [Dale] Rheel and Cepek and Roger Harring; here I was, a little kid off the farm who had a chance to rub elbows with some really great coaches.

"A lot of the stuff I learned on coaching I learned from Rog. He would always say, 'I want to surround myself with good people.' Roger was always fair and he could keep things in perspective."

Benitz said he also learned a lesson or two from athletic director Charles Swartz, "like patching uniforms if they could be patched. I wanted to get some new uniforms that second year and he said, 'Does your wife do some sewing?'"

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"When I came here, I don't think there could have been a better fit than a green, redneck farm kid in a blue-collar town at a time when they'd had a good wrestling program that had slipped a little bit.

"I was always the kid, always the boy. I was smart enough to sit back and listen. So many things I missed that I thought other people knew.

"Then one day I came to an in-service meeting in the fall, sitting by Denny Nelson, looking around, and I whispered, 'Denny, I'm the oldest guy here.'

"Just like that, it happened!"

"Sorry," from Benitz Interview, Part Two

"One morning, when I was 19 or 20, after I had been out late the night before, I went out and milked. I knew we had to combine that day so I greased the machine. But it was too wet; so I went back to bed.

"My dad didn't know I had been out there and did all that stuff. You're talking about two really bull-headed, stubborn people with bad tempers. He came up and he said some things he shouldn't have. One of them was about my wife [to be]. We both lost our temper and got into a fight. I was a college wrestler and I hurt him; he went off up in the woods somewhere.

"My mom and I were really close. I cried to her, but I never got around to telling him I was sorry, and I suppose he would have wanted to tell me he was sorry.

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"Joyce and I married on Jan. 4, 1964, right in the middle of wrestling season. Then that day in March, we were supposed to be with my mom and dad. On Sundays, we cut logs; I was always finding ways to make my way through school.

"We got this call from Chippewa Falls on March 4, 1964. They'd slid into a train. They were both killed.

"I can recall yet being on my hands and knees in front of two caskets there in that little Methodist church, hoping he could hear me tell him I was sorry.

"After that, nobody was living at home on the farm. I was the youngest one; the other kids had all left. Joyce and I moved back out and I basically quit school. It was right during the NFO strike. It was a traumatic thing.

"My wrestling coach, Max Sparger, came out one day to this little farm up in the hills and he said, 'God gave you a gift, don't throw it away.'

"I remember saying, 'Mr. Sparger, I'm so far behind in school.'

"And he said, 'I'll talk to your teachers. We'll get it straightened out.'

"It was the only reason I ever went back.

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"Aren't too many days when something doesn't cause me to think back to what happened. I made a few promises to myself. One was that I was never going to do anything unless I thought it out pretty carefully. I wasn't going to let that temper hurt me or other people again."

Photos courtesy of Ann Kreiter, Betsy's niece

Classmates

Janie (Johnson) Lemke, LHS 1963

I met Betsy in ballet class when we were three and classes were held with Miss Applegate upstairs at the former Odd Fellows Hall on Third Street. We both stayed in ballet for years and eventually were classmates at Howe School upon entering fifth grade. Her mom, Jane Brauer, was the Girl Scout leader.

I always thought Betsy was both book smart and street smart. Her built-in “crap detector” was highly valued, especially in college. A tendency to bend or ignore the rules...always Betsy. Loved her, she loved people, miss her.

Marcy (Koonz) Hodges, LHS 1963

We gravitate toward people that make us feel good “when we stand next to them” and standing next to Betsy was the best. Since kindergarten, Betsy and I carpooled with our mothers, taking turns. Our mothers were also Brownie and Girl Scout leaders and she and I were so proud of them.

When we began to walk to school, Betsy picked me up; then we would picked up Nancy Householder, and then Dawn Siewert on our way to Howe school.

She was always upbeat and fun to hang out with: her enthusiasm in life and her splendid personality that always kept us laughing and having fun. I never ceased to be amazed at her humor. She had the Smothers Brothers lines down pat and used them at the most hilarious moments.

Betsy was a straight A student and I used to envy her for that.

She was a Waupaca gal and always loved that place. She was so generous and invited everyone. We all had such great memories from our canoe trips, swimming, and oh yes !! going to the Casino. We loved it when Betsy got to borrow her dad's car. What a ride!



With
sister
Barbara



With
Barbara
and mother
Jane

With Nick Brazeau Sr., c. 1950

Betsy, right, with Sharon Wefel

By Uncle Dave

Elizabeth “Betsy” Mallery Brauer, 78, of Appleton, died Oct. 22, 2023, after a rapid health decline. As her niece, Ann Kreiter, stated, “We were comforted knowing it was 5 o'clock in heaven, and Jimmy Buffett was waiting, ready to greet one of his biggest fans with a margarita and a song.”

Betsy was born April 21, 1945, to Jane and John Brauer in Wisconsin Rapids. She arrived on her mother's and [then Princess] Queen Elizabeth's birthday, thus her name. “Betsy and older sister Barbara spent their childhood loving books, waterskiing, and snow skiing. Summers on the Chain O'Lakes in Waupaca and road trips to Fort Lauderdale provided countless family memories.”

Betsy reluctantly attended Wayland Academy, Beaver Dam, but graduated from Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln (1963), from UW-Madison and, with a master's degree in history, UW-Milwaukee.

Her grandfather, Robert Brauer and his son, John Brauer, Betsy's father, owned Brauer's men's clothing store on the East Side of Wisconsin Rapids (1924-1959).



Garry Moore
& friends

The editor met Betsy at LHS in Barbara Santapaolo's freshman speech class, where the future Parrothead claimed little Uncle Dave resembled Dave Guard from the Kingston Trio (wrong) and Garry Moore, host of “I've Got a Secret” (more or less). Must be the crew cuts.



Photo by Kathy Engel



Betsy at her New Hampshire retreat. Later, UD's daughter, Angelica, a proofreader for *Artifacts*, reported Betsy's preoccupation with a philosophical dilemma, namely, “How does a Thermos know whether to keep its contents hot or cold?”



5 o'clock in Margaritaville North aka Mid-State Poetry Towers with classmate Jim Nuhlicek (1945-2017) after working up a thirst looking for a lost bocce ball. In the 1950s and 1960s, Jim's family operated the Chatterbox restaurant on West Grand Avenue.



Betsy was the heart and soul of the classmates group shown at the Harbor Bar, Waupaca, Wis. From left, Carl and Janie (J.J.) Lemke, UD, Betsy and her best pal from childhood to forever, Nick Brazeau Sr. (Janie J. claims that UD has resembled the late-great Jimmy Buffett himself.)



Jimmy or UD?



Photo by UD

1984 at SWCHC Museum: SWCHC president Wally Ives, left, band leader Donald J. Chesebro (1934-2010), Mike Irish, Barney Goggins

Local boy makes news

By Uncle Dave

An accomplished former local youth, Kenneth J. Chesebro, (b. June 5, 1961) has been convicted as the architect of the Trump “fake electors” plot that conspired to overturn the 2020 presidential election.

On Aug. 14, 2023, Chesebro was indicted with 18 others in Georgia and in October 2023, pleading guilty to a felony count of conspiracy to commit filing false documents, was sentenced to probation, fines and community service. He also agreed to testify against former president Donald Trump and the remaining defendants.

Kenneth Chesebro spent some time in Wisconsin Rapids, where his father, Donald J. Chesebro, became a high school music teacher, clarinetist and band-leader in the Polka Hall of Fame. His mother, Rita, had married Donald in 1959. When they divorced in 1968 at Stevens Point, Wis., they were parents of three minor children.

Kenneth graduated from Stevens Point Area High School and Northwestern University. His Harvard law degree came with the class of 1986 that included Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan. Classmates called him, “the Cheese.”

Formerly a registered Democrat, he contributed to the campaigns of Bill Clinton, John Kerry, Barack Obama and Russ Feingold. In 2014, Chesebro made several million dollars from an investment in Bitcoin after which he traveled extensively, bought houses, divorced and donated to Republicans, who in 2016, included J.D. Vance, Ron Johnson and Donald J. Trump.

(New York Times, Guardian, Harvard Crimson, PBS, Wall Street Journal, Wikipedia)



Kenneth Chesebro in Fulton Co., Ga. court
WPR photo

Harvard graduate
CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Kenneth Chesebro, son of Donald Chesebro, 2890 16th St. S., and Rita Erickson, Austin, Texas, will graduate from Harvard Law School June 5.
During law school, Chesebro was an editor of the Harvard Law Review, served as a member of the Supreme Court and Articles offices, and published an analysis of the free speech aspects of campaign financing laws.
He has been a teaching and research assistant and has litigated free speech and death penalty cases. He also was a member of the school's student life council.
He attended Northwestern University as a National Merit and Hardy Debate Scholar. He earned a bachelor of science degree, summa cum laude, in communication studies in 1983.
He will spend the summer working with Harvard Professor Laurence Tribe, a constitution law expert, and will then begin a one-year stint as law clerk to Federal Judge Gerhard Gesell, Washington, D.C.



Kenneth Chesebro

Daily Tribune, 1986

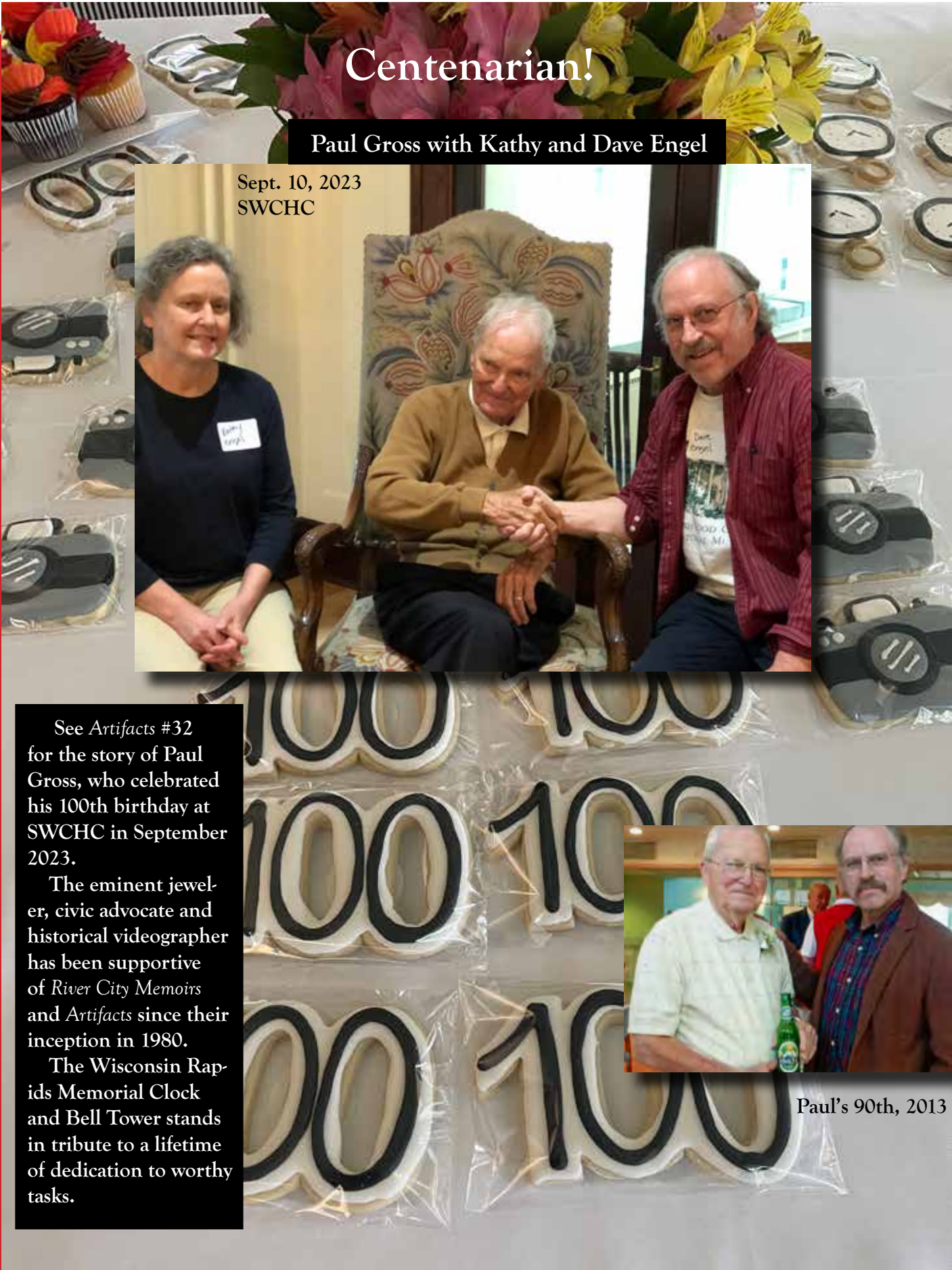


Kenneth Chesebro
Chesebro wins Merit Scholarship

Kenneth J. Chesebro, a senior at Stevens Point Area Senior High School, has received a four-year scholarship award from the National Merit Scholarship Program. The scholarship award, which ranges from \$1,000 to \$6,000 over four years, is sponsored by Northwestern University.

Chesebro, son of Rita and Jay Erickson, 1501 April Lane, plans to study political science and enroll in the pre-law program at Northwestern University.

Stevens Point Journal, 1979



See Artifacts #32 for the story of Paul Gross, who celebrated his 100th birthday at SWCHC in September 2023.

The eminent jeweler, civic advocate and historical videographer has been supportive of *River City Memoirs* and *Artifacts* since their inception in 1980.

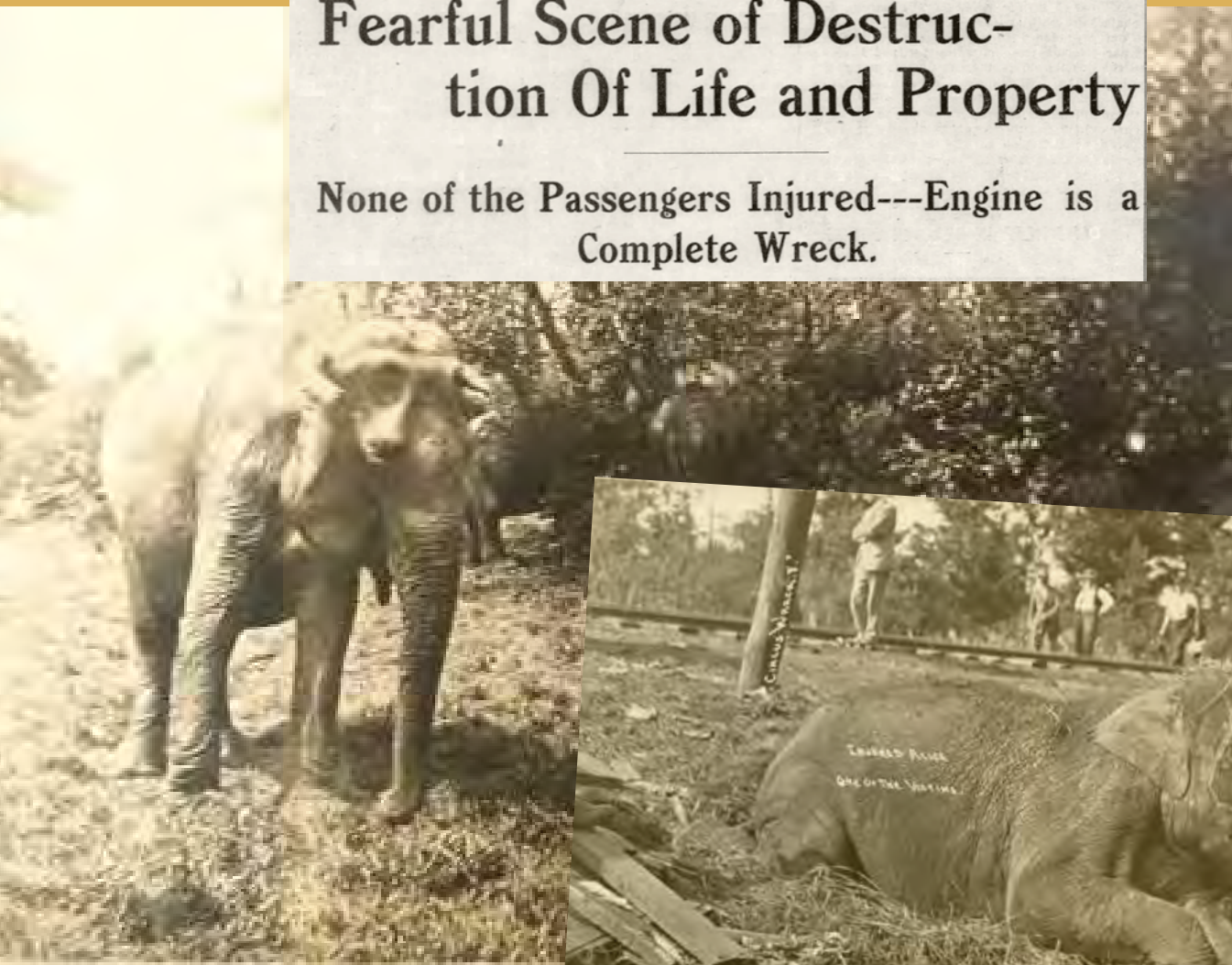
The Wisconsin Rapids Memorial Clock and Bell Tower stands in tribute to a lifetime of dedication to worthy tasks.

Big Wreck On St. Paul Ry. Tuesday A. M. Near Babcock

Two Elephants, Six Camels, and Six Horses Killed and Other Animals Injured.

Fearful Scene of Destruction Of Life and Property

None of the Passengers Injured---Engine is a Complete Wreck.



A special train from Babcock Tuesday morning at about 5 o'clock came to this city for physicians to help care for people who had been injured in a railroad wreck that occurred on the main line of the C. M. & St. P. R. R. just south of Babcock. The morning passenger which is due in Babcock at 4 o'clock a. m. ran into the circus special which was pulling out on the main track going south toward Tomah, going about 6 miles an hour. The passenger was going about the rate of 25 miles an hour when it ran into the circus trainwrecking several cars, killing several animals that were in the circus train, and injuring several people. One

circus man is not expected to live and others are badly injured.

LATER.

A representative of the Daily Reporter visited the scene of the wreck. It was truly a gruesome sight. Seven or eight cars were in a heap mixed up with dead animals, debris and later partially consumed by fire. Almost the entire circus train was more or less wrecked. The passenger engine was a total wreck and upside down. The engineer and fireman jumped in time to save their lives. No one on the passenger train was injured but many were badly shaken up. Two elephants were badly injured so that they had to be killed by poisoning. Two more elephants had wandered away from the scene of the accident about two miles north from Babcock where they were captured at Wm. Bowden's farm. Six of the eight camels were killed and partially burned. Four Shetland ponies were killed outright and two horses had to be shot, on account of being so badly injured. Several other animals were injured and it is expected that they will have to be killed.

Soon after the accident occurred and it became known in Grand Rapids many of our citizens visited the scene of the wreck. Twelve automobiles made the trip and about 75 of our citizens went down on the noon train and came back on the evening train. They all report it a very bad wreck and the greatest surprise is that not more of the men were killed. Six were seriously injured, one of whom has already died and one other is not expected to live thru the day. The others have been conveyed to the Simonson Hospital in Tomah.

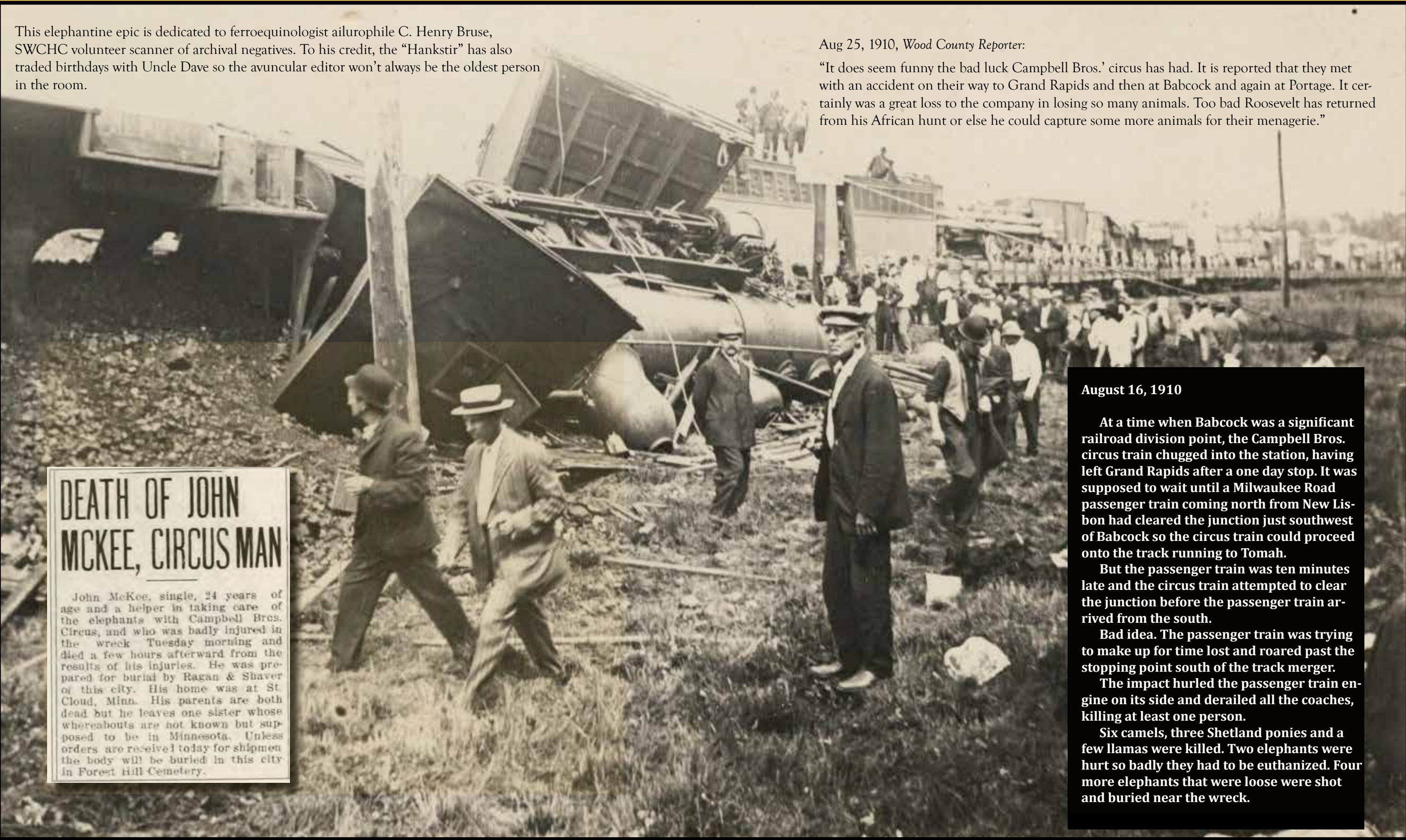
It is reported that many of the snakes got loose in the wreck and have wandered away from the scene of the accident into the woods and swamps nearby. The blame for the accident is not known but it must have been carelessness on somebody's part, either connected with the passenger or the circus trains.



This elephantine epic is dedicated to ferroequinologist ailurophile C. Henry Bruse, SWCHC volunteer scanner of archival negatives. To his credit, the “Hankstir” has also traded birthdays with Uncle Dave so the avuncular editor won’t always be the oldest person in the room.

Aug 25, 1910, *Wood County Reporter*:

“It does seem funny the bad luck Campbell Bros.’ circus has had. It is reported that they met with an accident on their way to Grand Rapids and then at Babcock and again at Portage. It certainly was a great loss to the company in losing so many animals. Too bad Roosevelt has returned from his African hunt or else he could capture some more animals for their menagerie.”



DEATH OF JOHN MCKEE, CIRCUS MAN

John McKee, single, 24 years of age and a helper in taking care of the elephants with Campbell Bros. Circus, and who was badly injured in the wreck Tuesday morning and died a few hours afterward from the results of his injuries. He was prepared for burial by Ragan & Shaver of this city. His home was at St. Cloud, Minn. His parents are both dead but he leaves one sister whose whereabouts are not known but supposed to be in Minnesota. Unless orders are received today for shipment the body will be buried in this city in Forest Hill Cemetery.

August 16, 1910

At a time when Babcock was a significant railroad division point, the Campbell Bros. circus train chugged into the station, having left Grand Rapids after a one day stop. It was supposed to wait until a Milwaukee Road passenger train coming north from New Lisbon had cleared the junction just southwest of Babcock so the circus train could proceed onto the track running to Tomah.

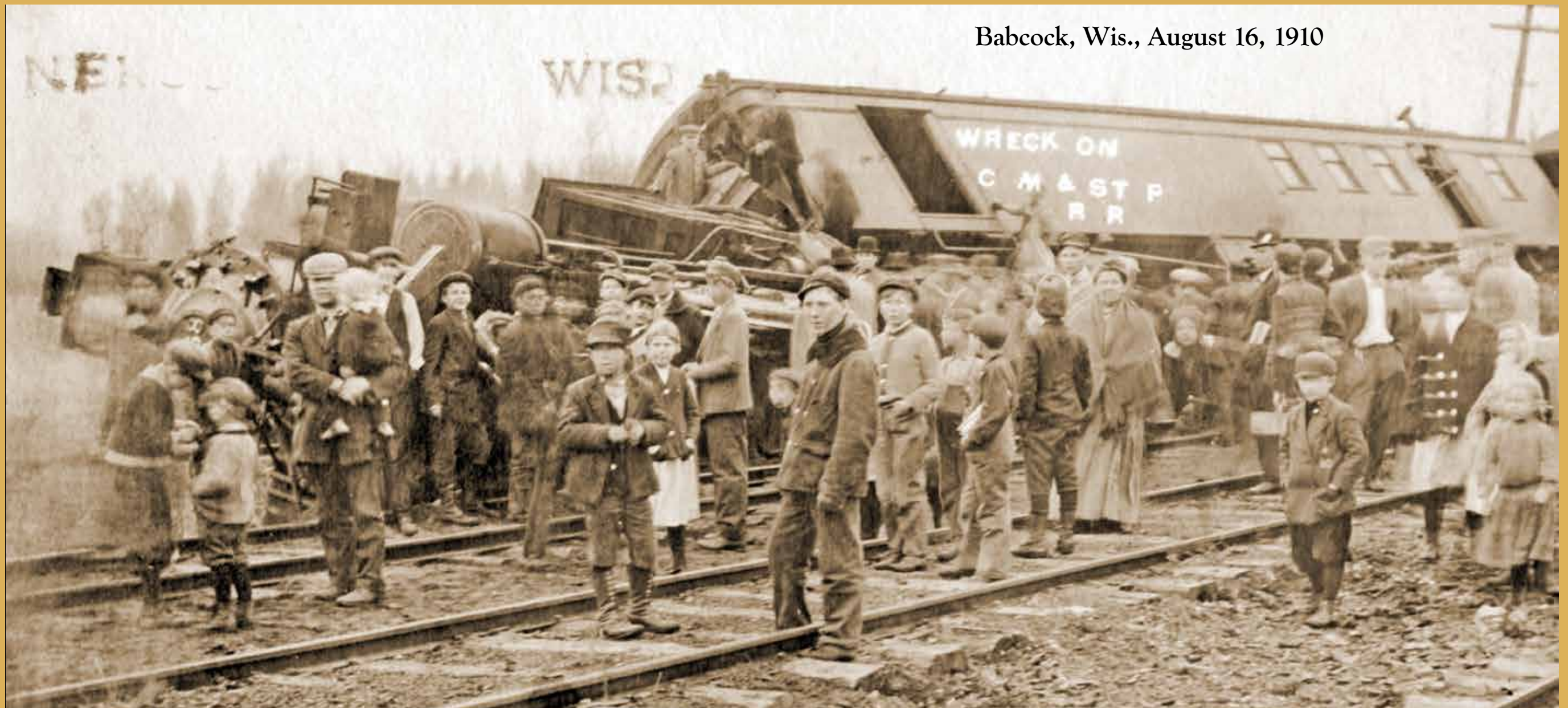
But the passenger train was ten minutes late and the circus train attempted to clear the junction before the passenger train arrived from the south.

Bad idea. The passenger train was trying to make up for time lost and roared past the stopping point south of the track merger.

The impact hurled the passenger train engine on its side and derailed all the coaches, killing at least one person.

Six camels, three Shetland ponies and a few llamas were killed. Two elephants were hurt so badly they had to be euthanized. Four more elephants that were loose were shot and buried near the wreck.

Babcock, Wis., August 16, 1910



CIRCUS WRECK AFTER NOTES

The engine No. 183 pulling No. 15 was reduced to scrap iron; massive bars of iron and steel were twisted into all sorts of shapes.

Two elephants were thrown from their car and remained helpless. They were finally dragged from the track and as they were injured so badly that they could not be saved an attempt was made to poison them with cyanide of potassium, but it failed and they were finally shot.

Some great tales of the ingenuity of the animals were told, for instance when the elephant car was burning and the men were unsuccessful in their efforts to tip the car from the track one of the elephants assisted in tipping the car and helped free itself and its mates.

The water buffalo broke out of its car and ran a little ways with its sides a mass of flames, then laid down and rolled until the flames were smothered, but is badly burned and will probably die.

When the fire started there was no water at hand with which to fight the fire and pits were dug on the side of the track and water was obtained in this way and the flames soon quenched.

This is the second wreck that this show has had this season. Last spring in Idaho they were in a head-on collision and twenty-five valuable horses were killed instantly and a like number severely injured, most of them having to be killed.

This wreck was a serious loss to them, losing two performing elephants who will be very hard to replace, also their fine herd of camels, trained ponies and two sacred cattle.

The cars containing the horses were reduced to splinters and the peculiar part of it was that not a horse was killed and only a few of them received minor injuries.

The cars containing the elephants camels and Shetland ponies suffered the most and to add to the horror of the scene, soon after the crash the cars started to burn and the moans of the dying animals together with the injured persons, made the scene one of horror, which it is impossible to describe.

Nine of the camels were lying in a heap on the side of the track and ponies were lying dead on both sides.



The Travel Class

By Mary Kay Schmidt

“The Travel Class” recently celebrated their 125th anniversary. When it was founded in 1898, Grand Rapids and Centralia were on the eve of their 1900 “marriage.”

By organizing this study club, the members were stepping out of their traditional roles and pursuing a course of self-education through shared reading and discussion about foreign countries and their culture. The first membership list reads like a roll call of the wives, daughters and daughters-in-law of the community’s founders.

Lida Edwards Alexander
Kate Barrows Hambrecht
Louise Hoskinson MacKinnon
Beulah Cochran Biron
Caroline King Hoskinson
Stella Jackson Paulus
Emma Miller Brundage
Harriet Humphrey Hougen
Minnie Spafford Philleo
Cecilia King Gibson
Johanna Lyons Kellogg
Emily Phelps Witter
Elizabeth Hooton Goggins
Emma Bellows Lipke

Honorary Members

Ella Hathaway Arpin
Julia Morris Wood

Each year the class studied a single country. Two members at each weekly meeting presented 15-minute talks, followed by a group discussion. The first studied in depth was Japan, its history, literature, art, music, political and religious institutions. The class met at 2:45 p.m. to accommodate the average member’s schedule.

Study was the only goal. After the program, the class adjourned. There were no luncheons or after-program desserts.

However, as the flapper replaced the club woman as a symbol of the times, Travel Class scheduled more bridge teas than programs. The pace soon slowed from weekly to alternate Tuesdays as the meetings concluded with “delectable treats,” “delicious dainties” or even “bountiful repasts.”

None of this could have been accomplished without the help of one or two maids at home looking after the children and serving dinner prepared by the cook.

Soon there were social events: black tie dinners and speakers from the University of Wisconsin, Beloit College and Lawrence College. There were formal dances, picnics and lawn parties.

At its second meeting in 1898, Travel Class joined the Wisconsin Federation of Women’s Clubs, an organization formed to enlist women in civic activities. Often under Charlotte Witter’s leadership, the members promoted city parks and playgrounds, conducted city-wide “clean-up days” and appeared before the city council to urge the city to provide a women’s restroom. They found themselves doing what was unthinkable a few years before: speaking to the public.

After the arrival of George and Ruth Witter Mead, the history of the club is intricately tied to the Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. as executive’s wives provided many a quorum.

In 1914, the club endorsed the no-longer-radical idea of women’s suffrage and, in 1916, voted to furnish and maintain a four-bed women’s ward in the new red brick Riverview hospital. The proposal to pay for this project read, “All members who can afford to do so will contribute \$10.00. Those who cannot afford this amount will give as generously as they can.” Though most members had wealthy husbands, the statement recognized that, in 1916, some had to ask for every cent they wanted to spend.

In 1917, after the United States entered WWI, members rolled bandages for the war effort in

At 25 years



25th Anniversary Costume Party Nov. 15, 1923, @ the Witter home. Front: Mildred MacKinnon Jenkins, Nan Reeves Kellogg, Julie Jenkins, Patricia Jane Labus, Inez Witter Johnson, Sally Purvis, and Minnie Spafford Philleo. Second Row: Cecile Arpin Beeman Eager, Lida Edwards Alexander, Rena Philleo Labus, Carmen Getzloe Taylor, Ella Hasbrouck, Florence Philleo Nash, and Hannah McGrath Conway. Third Row: Evelyn Ward Rosebush, Kate Barrow Hambrecht Wilkinson, Charlotte Gibson Witter, Ruth Witter Mead and Dorothy Hougen Daly Mullen. Back Row: Mary Reilly Boles?, Isabelle McArthur De Guere, Mrs. Buford Kirtley Reeves?. (Harriet Humphrey Hougen and Mary Brahany Demitz have also been thought to be in the photo, previously published in *River City Memoirs II*.)

France. They held rummage sales and sold popcorn and tickets for benefits. The money raised went to charitable civic projects such as archery equipment for the Girls Summer Camp, a “Gold Star Garden” for the American Legion Auxiliary and the city athletic site that became Witter Field.

Travel Class sponsored the Helen Farnsworth Mears Art Contest, a state-wide project of the Wisconsin Federation of Women’s Clubs. In 1942, 14-year-old Jean Gross, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Gross of Wisconsin Rapids, took first place in

the state contest with her drawing, “What I love best in America.” Her prize was a book of paintings for the Lincoln High School library.

The years between 1920 and 1945 brought both the Great Depression and World War II. It was a period of adjustment for the club, balancing its intended purpose as a study club with civic improvement.

During World War II, members individually worked in the war effort.

At 100 years



Above: 1998 Centennial Year, front from left: Naomi Nash, Patti Evans, Alice Hayward, Mary Kay Schmidt.

Middle: Kathy Vanatta, Crystal Metcalf, Nancy Lucas, Kathy Daly.

Back: Debbie Swanson, Karen Rifleman, Ruth Smithers, Pam Walker (former director of SWCHC)

Mace Garrison, a graduate microbiologist, initiated and directed the first blood-typing center in the area. Emily Baldwin became the City Chairman of the Council of Defense Block System.

In 1948, Travel Class noted its Golden Anniversary at a formal dinner with “floral arrangements of golden iris and lemon lilies.”

Nationally, during the next decades, special interest organizations devoted to gardening, books and handicrafts replaced general study clubs like Travel Class. Also growing were social clubs, church groups, PTAs and branches of national groups. For the first 16 years after a Wisconsin Rapids branch of the American Association of University Women was formed, eight Travel Class members served as president. Emily Baldwin organized the South Wood County Republican Women’s Club and Lila Collett became the first Friends of McMillan Memorial Library president.

Member and Rapids native Ella Hasbrouck was a founder and active member of the Wisconsin Rapids Business and Professional Women’s Club.

Her father, Joseph Hasbrouck, had arrived in 1845 as a young blacksmith, before Wisconsin was a state. When Ella was in her forties, she took the unusual step of becoming an agent of the New York Life Insurance Co. In 1917, she was invited to join Travel Class and became an honored member for the rest of her life.

With so many organizations available, Travel Class might have diminished. Instead, it flourished.

There were demands. The club met twice a month and required each member to host a luncheon and present a program once each year. The studies were often difficult.

Following the end of WWII, focus was on the Cold War and the reconstruction of Europe. Papers on “Soviet Satellite States in Europe,” and “The Oil-rich, Restless Middle East” are examples. One year-long program was titled “World Religions” and there was a two-year study of European Painting.

In 1969 and 1970, when student revolts against the Viet Nam war were at their height, the program was “Change.” Papers included “Protest Songs and What They Tell Us” and “the Draft Dilemma.”

Most felt that the biggest dividend Travel Class paid was an assignment that forced them to touch on subjects outside their interests. As one secretary noted within the minutes: “It’s wonderful how much we’re learning this year about things we always thought we knew.”

The club’s cultural life continued with field trips to the Worcester Art Museum in Appleton, Pendarvis in Mineral Point, Women’s Day in Madison and the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis.

There was also “ATC” – After Travel Class. Members who didn’t have to dash off to pick up children stayed to catch up on the latest news, while enjoying snacks and cocktails.

In 1925, the women of Travel Class could not even get a hearing with city officers. In 1979, the new McMillan Library opened and, for her work as chairman of the building committee, Travel Class member Margaret “Mugs” McCourt was named Citizen of the Year by the Wisconsin Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce.

In 1973, Travel Class celebrated its 75th Anniversary with a formal dinner. Moving into its 4th quarter-century, meetings were no longer devoted to planning fundraisers but shifted back to the original study club while individuals supported the Equal Rights Amendment and an end to sexual abuse and discrimination. Members chose their own topics, such as hot-air ballooning, and enjoyed trips to Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and Green Bay.

Until 1958, Ella Hasbrouck had been the only member of Travel Class engaged in business or a profession. Now, several members became full-time teachers. Another was the chief dietitian at Riverview Hospital and an accredited dietitian became a part-time instructor at UWSP.

In spite of their varied occupations and interests, Travel Class women continued to serve the community. Many served on local boards and organizations, including school boards, Arts Council, Community Theater, and Riverview Hospital Association.

Not just “arm-chair travelers,” members in the early years explored the U.S. in Pullman cars and sailed on the Aquitania and Mauritania to

the tourist spots of Europe. They traveled on the Orient Express, the Trans-Siberian railroad and the Concorde. When they returned, they brought insights and impressions to share.

Interesting programs, informative papers and pleasant luncheons have always been a part of the Travel Class experience and that is true today, 125 years later. Enjoying and appreciating the traditions of the past, members bring new ideas and fresh thinking that have constantly revitalized it throughout its long history.

See “The Travel Class Story” by Alice McCaul Hayward (1908-2000), pictured below, for a more extensive chronicle. And who would recognize UD’s distinguished LHS English teacher?



1992: Author Mary Kay’s husband, Leon, center, semi-retired lawyer and current SWCHC president, proposed this story. With Consolidated’s Larry Boling (left) and Tom Metcalf of Metcalf Lumber.

From The Travel Class Archives



Margaret “Mugs” McCourt (1901-1990), McMillan Memorial Library advocate and 1979 Wisconsin Rapids Citizen of the Year



Edith Rosenfels Nash to become (1913-2003), host of Riverwood Roundtable, wife of Philleo, friend of UD



Emily Mead Baldwin Bell (1905-1990), SWCHC benefactor and subject of a record number of interviews for *River City Memoirs*, loved her Travel and Tuesday clubs.

The Travel Class



Back: Unknown, Emily Baldwin, Louise Mead, Ida Crain, Carmen Taylor, Urcille "Mike" Powers Olson Vetter, Evelyn Remley, Inez Johnson, Elsie Buckstaff MacKinnon, Jean Nash, K.G. Conway. Middle Row: Isabelle De Guere, Rena Labus, Mary Whitney Scott, Ella Hasbrouck, Margaret McCourt, Katie Schmeltz McLendon, Sarah Purvis, Eunice Hyslop. Bottom: Isabelle Utegaard, Dorothy Williams Mead, Alice McCaul Hayward, Elizabeth Dickerman

At 100 years



Then-current and former members in Centennial year, 1998. Front from Left: Shirley Cuff, Barbara Brazeau Underwood, Kathy Vanatta, Alice Hayward, Naomi Nash, Debbie Swanson, Crystal Metcalf, Phyllis Huffman, Mary Kay Schmidt. Back from left: Kathy Potter, Cindy Stueve, Helen Mead, Pam Walker, Lila Collett, Ruth Smithers, Pat Teas, Karen Rifleman, Louise Parvin, Kathy Daly.

Other Clubs

At right, mother of current SWCHC president Leon Schmidt, Phyllis Schmidt, who died at age 102 in 2017.

Phyllis, born in Aberdeen, S.D., graduated from Northern State Teachers College in Aberdeen. She married Leon S. Schmidt Sr. at Madison, Wis. in 1940.

Phyllis belonged to three bridge clubs at one time, was president of Law Wives of Wood County and active in the Republican Party in the 1950s. She was a charter member of the Riverview Hospital Auxiliary and chairman of the Hospital Auxiliary Knitting Group for 30 years. Phyllis was a member of Bulls Eye Country Club, A.A.U.W., Margaret Fuller and Current and Classic Clubs.

Uncle Dave observes that his mother, Sally Engel, farmer's daughter and millworker's wife, wouldn't have considered applying to most the groups here but found plenty of action in United Methodist Women, Homemakers, Rebekahs, Three Links, Two Mile and Grove school PTA, Scouting, "Circle," card clubs, square dancing, hospital auxiliary, Meals on Wheels and Ridges golf course, where, research confirms, she was once awarded a prize for shortest drive on #6. And that wasn't the most embarrassing thing she got in the paper for!



CURRENT & CLASSIC—Mrs. Andrew Hulme (center), chairman for the Current & Classic Club, goes over several of the books reviewed this year with some of her fellow members. Left to right are Mrs. Roman Schmidt, Mrs. Hulme, Mrs. Wm. S. Grimes and Mrs. Leon Schmidt. (Tribune Staff Photo)

Study Clubs List Highlights of '54

PEO Sisterhood

By MRS. ROMAN SCHMID

Chapter O of the PEO Sisterhood has an active and continuing interest in Cottey College at Nevada, Mo., which is owned by the PEO Sisterhood. This year, we are taking a special interest in hearing directly about the activities of a Cottey College coed, Miss Mary Pascoe, whose mother, Mrs. Truman Pascoe, is a member of PEO.

Each year, we give an award to an outstanding senior girl at Lincoln High School. This past year, Mary Ann Yeske received that award.

One of the members of Chapter O and a past state president of PEO, Mrs. A. C. Remley, moved to Appleton. We entertained our husbands in a farewell party in honor of the Remleys.

Officers are Mrs. Leland Jens, president; Mrs. Richard Davis, vice president; Mrs. Roman Schmidt, recording secretary; Mrs. Robert Kingdon, corresponding secretary; Mrs. George Handy, treasurer; Mrs. William Huffman Jr., chaplain and Mrs. John Natwick, guard.

Travel Class

By MRS. GEORGE SAWYER

As in the past, Travel Class has chosen a central theme on which to base its papers. This year, the theme is travel literature from the 19th century to the present day. As a member of the Federation of Women's Clubs, Travel Class again sponsored locally, the Helen Mears art contest open to all eighth grade students in the city.

Each year, Travel Class gives a donation to Riverview hospital for new equipment. In the last two years, they have purchased two specially built convalescent chairs to be used exclusively by patients in the women's ward.

Woman's Club

By MRS. HARRY PETERSON

The Woman's Club, one of the oldest organizations of its kind in Wisconsin Rapids, is a study and social group.

Each member prepares a paper or gives a book review during the year. The club contributes to all civic affairs.

Entre Nous

By MRS. OSA MORTENSEN

Regular donations to the March of Dimes, Red Cross and

Cancer Fund are made during the year by the Entre Nous study club. Last spring, we donated to the Wooden Churches Crusade.

Club meetings include a paper followed by cards and refreshments.

The officers for 1954-55 are Mrs. Olive Lamb, president; Miss Elizabeth Herschleb, vice president; Mrs. Osa Mortensen, secretary, and Mrs. Corena Houston, treasurer.

Historical, Literary

By MRS. E. C. DIEHL

In May of this year, the Historical & Literary Club inaugurated a loan service of phonograph records at the T.B. Scott Public Library. This collection contains fine music to be enjoyed by the entire community.

The initial collection consisted of 13 different conductors, eight orchestras and three concertos. The collection includes ballet music, sonatas, organ, violin and cello selections, a boys' choir, Mormon Tabernacle Choir and bands.

Individuals or organizations are invited to donate records to add to this worthy project.

Tawasi

By MRS. JOHN C. RITCHIE

The meaning of "Tawasi" which is "friend and helper", explains the purpose of our club which was organized nearly 13 years ago. Money was given to the Community Chest, March of Dimes and other fund drives. We made a layette at the request of Mrs. William Rusk, county children's board worker.

Our monthly meetings were taken up with travel talks and

movies about many parts of the U. S. as well as Alaska and Canada.

Current & Classic

By MRS. ANDREW HULME

Current & Classic Club, now in its fourth year, has enjoyed reviews of numerous good books—both new and classic—, a play and a collection of short stories of 1954.

Members and their guests met in July and enjoyed a review of Goethe's "Faust" by Mrs. William Huffman Jr. After returning home, one of our California guests organized a similar group which we refer to as our California "branch."

This year for the first time, we devoted one of our meetings to a discussion of a book each member had read. Mrs. Milton Schneider led the discussion of Plato's "Republic."

Other books reviewed this past year are "The Man Who Wouldn't Talk", "One", "House of Seven Gables", "Tom Jones", "Seven Year Itch", "Fall of a Titan", "Seven Years in Tibet", "Best Stories of 1954" and "Ambassador's Report."

New Century

By MRS. MORRIS NYSTROM

With a membership of 15, New Century Club is completing its 19th year, meeting every two weeks to hear a book review and a topic of current importance. Reviews given this year included a variety of types. There were several biographies, a play, an opera, a mystery, papers on the American Home and on Wisconsin in addition to several current fiction best sellers.

Officers this year have been Mrs. John Crook, president; Mrs. Morris Nystrom, secretary; Mrs. Ella Soe, treasurer, and Mrs. Leland Jens, librarian. Two mem-

Women's Clubs: the Federation

By Alison Bruener
SWCHC Staff

Just before the turn of the 20th Century in Grand Rapids came the creation of the Grand Rapids and Consolidated paper companies. A few miles downstream, the Nekoosa and Port Edwards mills joined in what became NEPCO. Other industries of the era made the “tri-city” area a leader in the modern industrial world.

While men typically owned and operated these big companies, their wives, mothers, daughters, and daughters-in-law organized social and literary groups that soon began improving their communities.

The Grand Rapids Federation of Women's Clubs held its first meeting at the Methodist church on March 5, 1906. This umbrella organization sought “to promote unity among its members” and “create an organized center of thought and action among women.” The Federation encouraged social education, library activities, artists' growth and activities related to the city's best interests.

The first officers were Charlotte (Mrs. Isaac) Witter, president, Hannah (Mrs. William J.) Conway, secretary, and Miss Carolyn Brier, treasurer.

Organized under the Federation were The Travel Class, Entre Nous, Woman's Club and the Historical and Literary Society. Members from each club served in five divisions: Central, High (Third) Street, Hill, North Side and West Side. Committees were as follows: Civics, Library and Art, Public Health and Moral Welfare, Relief, Finance, School and Suffrage.

From the May 1907 Grand Rapids *Tribune*: “The Art Committee reported through its chairman, Mrs. [Earle] Pease, that the eighteen pictures had been purchased for the public schools. These were framed by the manual training department of the High school under the supervision of the art instructor and have been placed in different schools.”

Mrs. Youker, chairman of the library committee, described the work as “auspicious.”

“A new furnace is being installed in the library building, hard wood floors are being put in and the

walls are being decorated. The new interior of the building will present a very attractive appearance when these improvements are complete.”

Club minutes from December 1906 reported that with the Business College having recently vacated a room in City Hall, the space would be dedicated as a Children's Room for the library.

Mrs. [Falkland] MacKinnon told the City Improvements committee, “Much has been done toward making Grand Rapids a cleaner city, and the committee offers excellent suggestions for future work.”

In January 1907, the club hosted a “Trip Around the World.” Held between various members' homes, the itinerary was as follows:

“England and Ireland” at the “beautiful new home of Mrs. J.D. Witter” at 865 3rd. St. S.; “Early America” at Dr. and Mrs. O.T. Hougen, 605 1st St. N.; “France” at Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Daly, 1222 3rd St. S.; “Germany” at Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Conway, 467 1st Ave. S.; “Japan” at Mr. and Mrs. B.R. Goggins, 341 1st Ave. S.; and “America” at Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Kellogg, 316 4th Ave. N.

After the city's 1920 name change, the “Wisconsin Rapids Federation of Women” held open meeting sessions and published community concerns in the local newspapers. In some cases, the federation paid for the early stages of a plan until the city determined if it fell under their care. Through this process, the Federation began cleaning and beautifying the streets and school grounds, which the city and school board would later oversee.

Reflecting on the previous years' work and looking toward the future, the Federation stated in 1922, “The Path of a good woman is strewn with flowers, but they rise behind her steps, not before them.”

The Federation was a way for clubs to combine efforts, resources and influence. These initial steps led to services that impact our community today, such as the support of the T.B. Scott Library that preceded McMillan Memorial Library and of Parent-Teacher organizations in our schools.

Historical & Literary

Organized in 1898, the founders stated that the club's object should be intellectual, cultural and social. Charter members were named as “Mrs.” Isabella Tennant, Tryphene Chase, Harriet Brundage, Clarice Arpin, Frances Little, Helen Quin, Minnie Larkin, Ella Hasbrouck, Adelia Corriveau, Mallie Raymond, Grace Daly and Jennie Rossier.

Any woman residing in Wisconsin Rapids or vicinity was eligible to join. The prospective member was to be presented by an existing member two weeks before a vote that had to be a unanimous “yay” for entry.

An 1899 article in the *Wood County Reporter* (founded by member Harriet Brundage's husband, John) described a meeting at the residence of Mrs. John Daly, featuring a performance of “Macbeth” in the parlor. “It was doubtless due to the influence of the witches' broth that at a late hour, all departed of one mind and one mind good...”

The club also engaged in book reports, reading of modern plays and poetry, discussion of current events and topics of varied interests and community betterment.

In 1916, the *Reporter* described a fundraiser at the Ideal Theatre with proceeds going towards purchasing books for the children's department of the T.B. Scott Public Library, a favorite cause for several clubs. Performances of three Shakespearean plays raised \$30.

Years later, in 1949, boxes of clothing and other necessities were collected for two needy families in France.

In a brief history for the club's centennial in 1998, Jeanine Freiberg wrote that the group contributed to the South Wood County Emergency Pantry, holiday meals for families and a membership for a needy child to the YMCA.

Uncle Dave's *Tribune* acolyte Mark Scarborough in an excellent history compiled for the 1998 H&L centennial listed then-current members not identified below: Gloria Schneider and Ilse Dietsche.

On stairs, top down: ?, Deb McCabe (in red), ?, Sarah Litzer, ?, Maryann Bunde, Joan McAuliffe (in gold). On floor, standing, left to right: Kathy Gronski, Mary “Casey” Martin, Sara Parsons (white hair and blouse), ?, ?, Jeanine Freiburg, (in white cardigan). Front, with dog, left to right: Candy Van Lysal, Teddie Archer.



Entre Nous

Also under the original Federation was Entre Nous (French for “between us, confidentially.”) The object was “mutual improvement” which meant Entre Nous was active throughout the community.

The 20 original (1902) members were Sylvia Brown, Lina Corriveau, Eva Hill, Ida Lyons, Etta Natwick, Ida Palmer, Jennie Rossier; Marion Ellison, Eva (Gardner) Lyons, Grace Getts, Maud Griffith, Georgia Griffith, Rena Houston, Della Jones, Anna McMillan, Kate McKercher, Kathryn Murray, Eleanor Phillips, Katharine Smith and Emma Schnabel.

In 1922, Entre Nous worked with the Parent-Teacher Association to prepare and serve a lunch at noon, including milk, to 100 students at Lowell (8th Avenue), Emerson (4th Avenue), and Edison (Grand Avenue) schools. The city school nurse, Miss Amelia Schroedel, noted students who took part gained anywhere from ¼ to two pounds a month.

Here Is Combined New Health and Education



The 20 students and their teacher, Miss Katherine Kitowski and the school nurse, Miss Grace Connors, pictured above, represent Wisconsin Rapids' newest experiment in the public schools. Under the teaching guidance of Miss Kitowski, left second row, and the constant supervision of Miss Connors, right second row, these pupils selected from the eight grades of the city schools, are receiving special care in the fresh air room of the Lowell school.

The Club raised \$50 for the cause. \$25.08 was paid for milk and 74 cents for dishes. Early steps were being taken to organize classes in hygiene and cooking. In June 1932, the School Board was informed about implementing the fresh air room. These rooms were to be of use for children who had asthma, heart ailments, or who had encountered tuberculosis.

In the fall of the following year, 20 students in the Lowell school were the first to utilize this space. With the assistance of the Women’s Federation, the school board was convinced to give two rooms in the building for the experiment.

Entre Nous continued to meet through 1958 but no record was found in the 60s.

The fourth club to form under the Women’s Federation was Travel Class, its history by Mary Kay Schmidt featured in this issue.

Beacon Lights

While not original clubs under the Federation, organizations such as the Beacon Lights Club can be added to the roster.

Named after John Lord’s “Beacon Lights of History,” a group of ten women gathered in November 1906 at the home of Josephine (E.J.) Clark, inspired by Annie (M.H.) Jackson, who had brought the idea from Columbus, Wis. Also present were Sadie (F.B.) Warner, Alice (Will) Raymond, Myrtle (Ira) Hubbard, Minnie (E.L.) Hayward, Elizabeth (Louis) Reichel, Mariam (George) Purnell, Catherine (Dr. J.J.) Looze, Emma (William) Holliday.

Study meetings were held once a month, with husbands allowed to attend occasionally. In 1907, at the Oak Street home of Mr. and Mrs. George Purnell, the group entertained teachers of the public schools, training schools, and business colleges. The guest deemed to be the best conversationalist was gifted a candlestick and lighted candle to serve as a beacon light to guide her in life’s journey.

Beacon Lights continued to support the education and well-being of the community through their service under the Federation as the Library committee, studying the needs of the local branch and securing the needed equipment.

The Woman’s Club

The Woman’s Club was organized in 1898, the same year as the Historical & Literary Club and Travel Class. Charter members included: Grace (John) Daly, Mary Elizabeth (N.E.) Emmons, Anna (Robert) Farrish, Nina Webb Gaynor, Rachael (George) Gardner, Kate (George) Hambrecht, Mathilda (Edward) Harmon, Clara (William) Harvie, Agnes (Ross) Hocking, Johanna (William) Kellogg, Helen Edith Kromer, Emma Bellows, Mary (William) Scott, Lela (Joseph) Treat, Prudence (Charles J.) Webb, Laura (Albert) Whitrock, Edith (George) Williams, and Emily (J.D.) Witter, the first president.

The club studied American history and literature, modern authors, and Shakespeare’s dramas in its first years.

Woman’s Club was the first to subsidize the upkeep of Forest Hill Cemetery, reported board member Johanna Kellogg in a 1933 *Daily Tribune*. It hosted suppers, teas, and ice cream festivals to raise funds to employ H.W. Lord as the first caretaker. The group was also responsible for the plantings throughout the cemetery. Later, the upkeep would come under the Forest Hill Cemetery Association.

The club was instrumental in creating library rooms for children and clubs. With the purchasing power of \$5 (\$170.93 in today’s money) in 1906, it supplied books and magazine subscriptions to “Scribner’s” and “World’s.”

With the initial \$10,000 left by Emily Phelps Witter (who had died in 1914), the 1916 Riverview Hospital opened its doors on Third Street in September of the following year. It boasted an operating room with seven large windows, 12 electric lights, and a physician washroom. The clubs under the Federation furnished some of the recovery rooms on the second floor.

Through the first two decades of their work, these clubs aided in numerous causes, from the beautification projects of the Forest Hill Cemetery to sidewalk committees in charge of emptying baskets serving as waste receptacles. They gathered to educate their members and to learn about the world around them. In 1920, a woman earned the right to vote, so long as she was 21 years of age and either her husband or father was a Citizen of the United States. The clubs aided the Red Cross at Christmas and during both World Wars sent care packages.

Earlier Days in Local Woman’s Club



The picture shown here will prove interesting to many local club women as picturing one of the early meetings of the Woman’s club. The group shows a Shakespearian Festival party, the club members in costume, at the home of Mrs. George Gardner. Top row, Mrs. O. T. Hougén, Anna Farrish, Mabel Gardner, Jessie Stetzer, Ella Hasbrouck, Bessie Gaynor, Beulah Biron, Emma Lipke, Helen Kromer. Second row, Mary Emmons, Mrs. W. D. Harvie, Mrs. Ed. Lynch, Mrs. George M. Hill, Mrs. William Scott, Mrs. W. A. Drumb, Mayme Daly (Roberts), Mrs. E. T. Harmon, Dorothy Linscott, Mrs. Ella Cochran, Miss Upham, Emma Brundage, Laura Whitrock, Caroline Briere, Mrs. W. F. Kellogg, Leta Thomas, Celia Emmons, Mrs. Denis, Hannah Mae Jefferson, Mrs. H. Wipperman. Ghost, Mrs. Gardner; witch, Mrs. Grace Daly; Mrs. Youker; witch, not known; Mrs. Isaac P. Witter, witch; Mrs. B. M. Vaughan, witch; Miss Lou Woodworth, Alice Nash, Mrs. F. MacKinnon.

Daily Tribune, Dec. 24, 1932

PEO Sisterhood

Organized at a national and international level is P.E.O. (Philanthropic Educational Organization). The explanation of the letters "P.E.O." was a closely kept secret. It has been acknowledged that it initially held another meaning, which continues to be known only to members.

The local Chapter "O" was organized on June 16, 1924. SWCHC archives include yearbooks 1930-1983. Member names, meeting dates, and themes are listed in the available booklets.

In 1930-31 programs, Mary McMillan (later Mary McMillan Burt, a namesake of McMillan Memorial Library), presented "The New Planet and Modern Astronomy." Topics covered in the 1960-61 yearbook included book reviews, Christmas Tea happenings, and P.E.O. Friendship worldwide discussions.

A 1982-83 yearbook gives the objects and aims of the Sisterhood: "To seek growth in charity toward all with whom we associate and a just comprehension of, and adherence to, the qualities of Faith, Love, Purity, Justice, and Truth.

"To seek Growth in Knowledge and in culture, and to obtain all possible wisdom from nature, art, books, study and society, and to radiate all light possible by

conversation, by writing and by the right exercise of any talent we possess.

"To aim at self-control, equipoise and symmetry of character, and temperance in opinions, speech, and habits.

"It shall be the chief duty of each member to consider thoughtfully the full import of P.E.O. This will include a sincere regard for our influence in the community, a careful consideration of feeling when speaking, and a determination to do all we can at all times and under all circumstances, to express a loving concern for each sister."

In recent years, Chapter O of the Sisterhood has given grants for the P.E.O. Program for Continuing Education that began in 1973 and provided financial assistance to women whose education had been interrupted and who found it necessary to return to school to support themselves and their families.

While many women's clubs from the turn of the 20th Century have disbanded, they were some of the first steps taken to improve their communities and give more opportunities to their daughters and granddaughters.

"In P.E.O., we are still raising money and giving literally millions to women for education," said current local president Janie J. Lemke.



P.E.O. "7th birthday party" at home of Dorothy (Stanton) Mead

Standing, left to right: Mae (Ray B.) Graves, Eva (Geo. C.) Hill, Sylvia (Bert) Brown, Evelyn (Franz) Rosebush, Miss Anna McMillan, Lida (L.M.) Alexander, Helen (C.E.) Jackson, Harriet (C.A.) Jaspersen, Mary (J.P.) Gruwell, Mary (John) Roberts, Ruth (Geo.) Mead, Winifred (Guy) Babcock

Seated, rear, left to right: Sarah (John) Purvis, Clara (Dr. Edward) Hougen, Martha (Earl) Hill, Harriet (T.W.) Brazeau. Center, front: Dorothy (Stanton) Mead, Mary (Henry C.) Demitz, Mrs. Stevens. (Order not always clear.)

PEO

1944, cont.

1932

Heads State P.E.O. Sisterhood



Mrs. Franz Rosebush of Port Edwards was signally honored by being elected president of the Wisconsin state chapter of the P. E. O. Sisterhood, at the fifteenth annual state convention, which closed its three day session Friday afternoon, May 27, at Marinette, Wis.

TRACES HISTORY OF SISTERHOOD

P. E. O. FORMED BY AMBITIOUS WOMEN IN WESLEYAN COLLEGE; SIGNIFICANCE OF LETTERS IN ORDER'S NAME HAS ALWAYS BEEN KEPT A SECRET.

**BY MRS. J. P. GRUWELL
Publicity, P. E. O. Sisterhood**

One of the foremost women's organizations in the United States and Canada is P. E. O. Founded in Iowa Wesleyan college, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, in 1848 by seven ambitious girls, who, among them wrote the ritual which in the main is still adhered to. This secret society is known for its constructive and benevolent work for girls, and now has grown, approximately, to a status of 1,700 chapters in 46 states and Canadian provinces.

Organized in 1924

Local Chapter O, organized in 1924, this year has the honor of the state presidency—Mrs. Franz Rosebush, Port Edwards, first president, 1924-26 and who when re-elected was hostess to the state convention in 1930, now is head of the Wisconsin State Chapter. She also had served the state organization as second vice-president and first vice-president. Mrs. Edward Hougen has been president of the Wisconsin Rapids chapter during the past year.

During the eight years of its existence the local society has been exceptionally active in the upbuilding and use of a fund for the assistance of worthy young women who are endeavoring to secure an education. This work has been in addition to the chapter's contribution to the state and national educational fund which latter in August 1932 had reached almost two-thirds of a million dollars.

Can Keep Secret

An interesting sidelight is that the significance of the three mystic letters comprising the name of this organization has never been exposed in 84 years of existence thus proving that women can keep a secret.

1944

20th Anniversary Noted This Year By PEO Sisterhood

BY MISS ANNA McMILLAN

Chapter O of the P. E. O. Sisterhood is this year celebrating the 20th anniversary of its organization. There are in Wisconsin 43 such chapters with an active membership of 1,230 women. Chapters have been organized in every state in the Union with one or two exceptions, as well as in British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario.

1949

Four charter members Mrs. C. A. Jaspersen, Mrs. Fred Wolverton of Oshkosh, Miss Anna McMillan and Mrs. William Marling, Madison, were present for the twenty-fifth anniversary dinner held by Chapter O of the P.E.O. Sisterhood at Bull's Eye Country club Friday evening.

Speaker for the evening was George W. Mead who discussed "The Man of Today." "Man bows in humility to the superiority of women," Mr. Mead declared, "but because of his greater physical strength, the load and the labor of the workaday world falls principally upon him. But of the women who have advanced the ideals of civilization there are millions and in every effort women have taken a part."

Study & Recreation

While most of these clubs allowed members from surrounding communities to join surrounding communities to join, some focused their efforts in their neighborhoods. In 1913, the Study and Recreation Club (S&R) was formed in Port Edwards. Members in 1932 were: Lida (L.M.) Alexander, Dorothy (John) Alexander, Dorothy (Joseph A.) Auchter, Winifred (Guy O.) Babcock, Anna (Francis S.) Brazeau, Miss Dorothy Brazeau, Georgianna (W.S.) Buckley, Frances (Frederick) Goddard, Fern (Edward P.) Gleason, Harriet (Clarence A.) Jasperson, Eva (Julius A.) Johnson, Evelyn (George) Kilp, Olive (John) Midthun, Maurine (James B.) Nash, Floride (Truman) Pascoe, Effie (Reuben C.) Peterson, Gladys (Kenneth O.) Rawson, Adelaide (Charles H.) Reese, Frances (Franz H.) Rosebush, Alice (E. Lee) Turley, Louise (J.K.) Vanatta.

Honorary members were Elizabeth (Bernard R.) Goggins and Sue (George W.) Kibby.

During the early 1930s, the club maintained a large cupboard in the Port Edwards schoolhouse, stocked with clothing by the relief committee. In 1931, the club hosted a tea party and asked community women to bring a garment to replenish the cupboard. Hundreds of items were brought in.

S&R gave \$5 prizes to the pupil who had received the highest academic average in each graduation class from John Edwards High School and an annual donation of \$50 to the school library.

In the 1940s, the club met at member's homes every second Friday to give book reviews and discuss current topics. In 1943, books the club reviewed included "Combined Operations," the official story of the Commandos, and "Times of Peace" by Ben Ames Williams. Topics covered included the geography of the South Seas and Central Europe.

The club sponsored Girl Scout troops in Port Edwards. In 1945, 25 Brownie scouts met every Wednesday after school to work on handicrafts, nature study, dramatics, health and safety, homemaking, arts and crafts and citizenship. Donations assisted scouts in attending camp.

In the 1960s, S&R began the Senior Tea for female graduating students. Donations were made to the American Foreign Exchange Student Program and Christmas packages were sent to service members in Vietnam. In 1998, it was determined to donate to organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club and the Family Center.

Study and Recreation Club at the Paper Inn in Port Edwards: Lida (L.M.) Alexander with Mesdames E.P. Gleason, Goddard, Marvin, T.W. (Harriet) Brazeau, Franz (Evelyn) Rosebush, Dalton, C.A. (Harriet) Jasperson, Herzog, R.C. Peterson, Midthun, Arpin, Goggins, Wake, Nash, Buckley, Normington, Gallery, Guy O. (Winifred) Babcock.

Tuesday Club

If it's Tuesday, there must be a club. On a par with the Travel Club, this national phenomenon must wait for another day.

St. Louis Post Dispatch, 1907

POKER CLUBS OF SOCIETY WOMEN

Strange Discovery by Chicago Police---Numerous Clubs in Fashionable Quarters Where Society Leaders Play Great American Game---Nobody There When Rooms Are "Raided"---How Goings-on in "Tuesday Club" Came to Be Exposed

CHICAGO society women are now astounding the country by playing poker for money at afternoon and evening parties. It is something new to them; it is fascinating; their husbands can afford it, and don't object--at least not all of them--so these fair gamblers have organized little clubs in various fashionable districts, clubs that are not found in the Bluebook, but have a most exclusive membership and exist solely for participation in the great American game of poker. The existence of these women's poker clubs came like a shock to the community when they in the discretion of certain members, due to heavy losses, recently led to disclosures which interested the police. But while the disclosures caused a scandalized feeling in Chicago society, there have been no scandalous doings on the part of the gamblers.

It is a fact that the "Tuesday Club" had been in existence several months and that it was the model for the formation of other clubs that enabled society matrons to turn their leisure hours into a profitable one. The "Tuesday Club" was composed of eight regular members, with eight alternates, all good poker players, and each member was privileged to bring a guest she could count on for the evening.

Mrs. Jaxxon lives in a big home in the West side. A reporter rang her doorbell one afternoon after the last session of the "Tuesday Club" at her house. When he entered the room, he found Mrs. Jaxxon seated at a table, and she was playing poker with a group of women. The reporter asked her if she was playing poker, and she replied that she was. He then asked her if she was a member of the "Tuesday Club," and she replied that she was. He then asked her if she was a member of the "Tuesday Club," and she replied that she was.

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'TUESDAY CLUB' MEMBERS

THE membership of the "Tuesday Club," including alternates, was given as follows: Mrs. J. Jaxxon, a member of the Board of Trade and residing in one of the most exclusive thoroughfares on the North side; Mrs. Joseph Lefebvre, wife of a millionaire diamond merchant, president in North Side society circles; Mrs. Richard Swanson, a North Side social leader; Mrs. Hamilton Durand, wife of a grain merchant, belonging to the exclusive North Side set.

Mrs. William Mangler, wife of a former alderman and the wealthy proprietor of a very high-class cafe in the loop district. The Manglers reside in the Lexington Apartment Building, probably the most luxuriously appointed apart and structure in Chicago owned by the widow of the late millionaire department store magnate.

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Motorcycle May Suppress the Auto Scorchers

THE Police Department of St. Louis believes it has solved the problem of representing auto scorchers by suppressing the motorcycle. The motorcycle is a small machine with a speed of not more than 20 miles an hour, and it is not as noisy as the automobile. It is also a small machine with a speed of not more than 20 miles an hour, and it is not as noisy as the automobile. It is also a small machine with a speed of not more than 20 miles an hour, and it is not as noisy as the automobile.

XMAS BOX SHIPPED

The members of the "Tuesday Club" wish to thank the people of this city, also the merchants, for their liberal donations to our Xmas box, to be sent to the suffering widows and children in Europe. It is gratifying to know there are still a few people broad enough and charitable enough, to feel that perhaps a quarter from each of our pockets, won't cripple us financially for any indefinite length of time, but will furnish a little comfort to a few of those poor, homeless, suffering widows and children in those terror stricken countries of Europe. Following is the list of contents of the Xmas box:

First reference at right to Rapids Tuesday Club, 1914

- 12 wool knitted bonnets for girls.
- 6 woolen baby bonnets.
- 2 woolen petticoats.
- 1 terris nightgown.
- 4 all wool jerseys for boys.
- 2 woolen shirts for boys.
- 30 woolen suits underclothes.
- 1 sleeping garment for child.

By Tuesday Club Committee.

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

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or contact Lori Brost: lori@southwoodcountyhistory.org, 715-423-1580. Uncle Dave: kdengel@wctc.net.

Babcock circus train wreck, Aug. 16, 1910

