



JUNE 2024

~~May 2004~~

#71

South Wood County Historical Corp.

Artifacts



West Grand Avenue
Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.
April 8, 1950
Daily Tribune photo
by Don Krohn

John J. Jeffrey
wheels Richard Paulson.
(See back cover)

20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Krohnographs II by Lori Brost, pp. 2-5; Guy Nash WWI uniform by Bill Parker, 6-7; Here Today Gone Tomorrow by Marshall Buehler, 8; American Carbonic by Lori Brost, 9-11; Former industries by Alison Bruener, 12-15; Paper Mill centerfold, 16-17; The Library by Ellen Roeseler, 17-18; Jeffrey house, 21-31; Jeffrey photo, 32.

Artifacts in 2004 was enhanced by images from “Krohnographs”
a collection of Don Krohn’s *Daily Tribune* photographs



Donald Krohn
1928-2012



Inez Ruesch Krohn

Krohn before Krohnographs

By Lori Brost

Museum Administrator

My 2008 introduction to the Museum began in Uncle Dave’s old office where former *Daily Tribune* photographer Don Krohn was giving us a history of photos he was donating. Meanwhile, Don’s wife, Inez, was happy to be getting rid of the boxes taking up space in her basement and garage.

As conversation turned to their home in Port Edwards, it dawned on me that I knew someone named Krohn, my friend Steve. He was their son!

After that initial meeting, I had plenty of conversations with Don and Inez, even visiting their home.

I learned that Donald John was born Oct. 29, 1928, at St. Joseph’s Hospital, Marshfield, son of John and Molly Krohn who thus added the “Halloween Baby” to the two daughters they already had.

The Krohns moved to Baker Street, Wisconsin Rapids, when Don’s dad took a job selling Prudential insurance. Along came a brother and playmate for Don: Alan Gene. After the Depression struck, many people were unable to afford insurance and, in a valiant effort to ensure their coverage didn’t lapse, John Krohn helped with the premiums. This caused financial problems and the family moved to a lower-level apartment on Washington Street and John took a part-time job as a shoe salesman.

John was hired at Consolidated Papers. With a new job, came a new home. This one was on Goggins Street, behind John’s brother’s Krohn & Berard Funeral Home. Along with the move came a new brother, John Thomas “Tommy.”

The neighborhood gave the kids a lot more areas for fun, games and adventure, and a little heroism! While walking around on a Sunday afternoon, hearing a tapping noise from a closed boxcar and the faint sounds of “help,” Don and a few others rescued a young man who was near exhaustion from not eating or drinking for days.

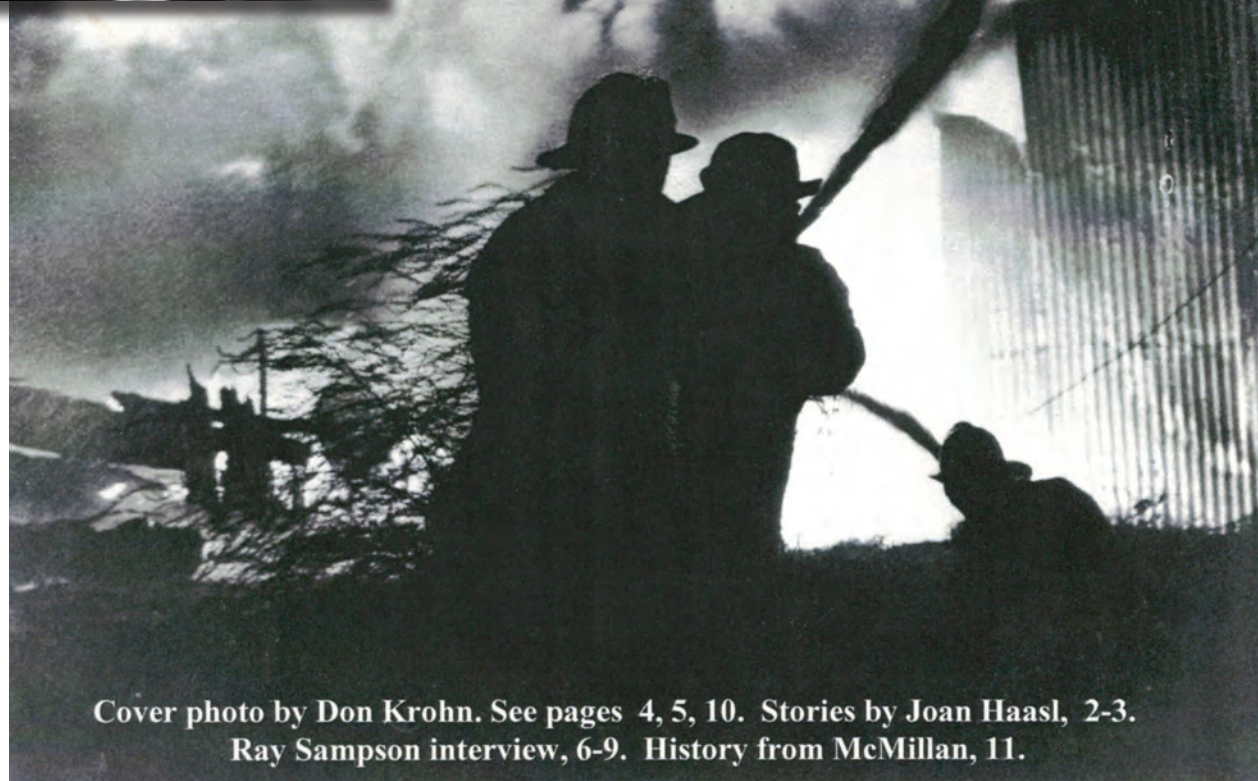
Cont. p. 4



May 2004

South Wood County Historical Corp.

Artifacts



Cover photo by Don Krohn. See pages 4, 5, 10. Stories by Joan Haasl, 2-3.
Ray Sampson interview, 6-9. History from McMillan, 11.

Award-winning photo (minus self portrait) provided the cover of the *Artifacts* #1 20 years ago.

Cont. from p. 2



Tom, Gene and Don



Don Krohn

Through tears, the grateful traveler gave Don a half dollar as a reward, which he tried to return but was forced to accept. After being given food and drink, the stranger headed downtown, never to be seen again. Molly thought this was something Don should share with his dad; she was right, he was very proud.

While Don and close friend Rolf Utegaard spent a great deal of their time hanging out, getting into trouble and enjoying their youth, Uncle Fred Krohn, local mortician and senior partner in the Krohn & Berard Funeral Home, decided that Don and his brother, Gene, had too much free time playing hide-and-seek between caskets, shooting off fire crackers during funerals and peeking into the embalming room windows.

After Fred suggested the boys “needed religion,” they finished their schooling at Immanuel Lutheran.

Then, another move, another house, another job for Dad and another adventure, Don bought a *Daily Tribune* paper route from Verne Alpine for \$10. But in order to deliver the papers, a bike was needed, hard to come by during World War II. This led to a \$35 purchase of a used bike that took seven months to pay off. Brother Gene got a paper route delivering the *Milwaukee Journal* and made more money per issue, but Don delivered more papers.

The 13th Avenue home took Don and his siblings through high school, during which time he began working at the *Tribune*, mailing newspapers and assisting the circulation manager with distribution to the carriers. In June 1945, Don arrived at work, to the surprise of his co-workers who had learned prior to him of the drowning death of his brother, Gene, at Lake Wazeecha. It was a devastating end to a 15-year special brotherly relationship.

That year, the war ended and Don received a crash course in film developing, photo printing and engraving—skills that led to a full-time photographer position during his senior year of high school. The summer after graduation, with college on the horizon, the *Tribune* made a tempting offer that wouldn’t require any further education: \$27.50 a week for the first three months and \$32.50 from then on. He accepted.

Out of school, employed and feeling like a ladies' man, Don was introduced to a girl and her friend by one of his buddies, Doug Trantow, at an evening out at the Skyway Ballroom. That "friend" was Inez Ruesch. A pretty young lady, guys out for the evening; after a few Schlitz beers, it was quickly decided, "I'm going to get to know her." And while that may have been his plan, it was not hers. She wasn't interested in a drink, a chat or a dance and the plan was not successful. At first.

Inez wasn't just the "pretty girl" he met. She had her own job, her own car and was living in an apartment with her cousin. She took evening classes offered by the vocational school, learning knitting and sewing.

During that first year, it was an on-again off-again romance disturbed by parental pressure over a difference in religions. Eventually the couple decided that nothing was going to keep them apart and on August 11, 1956, they married.

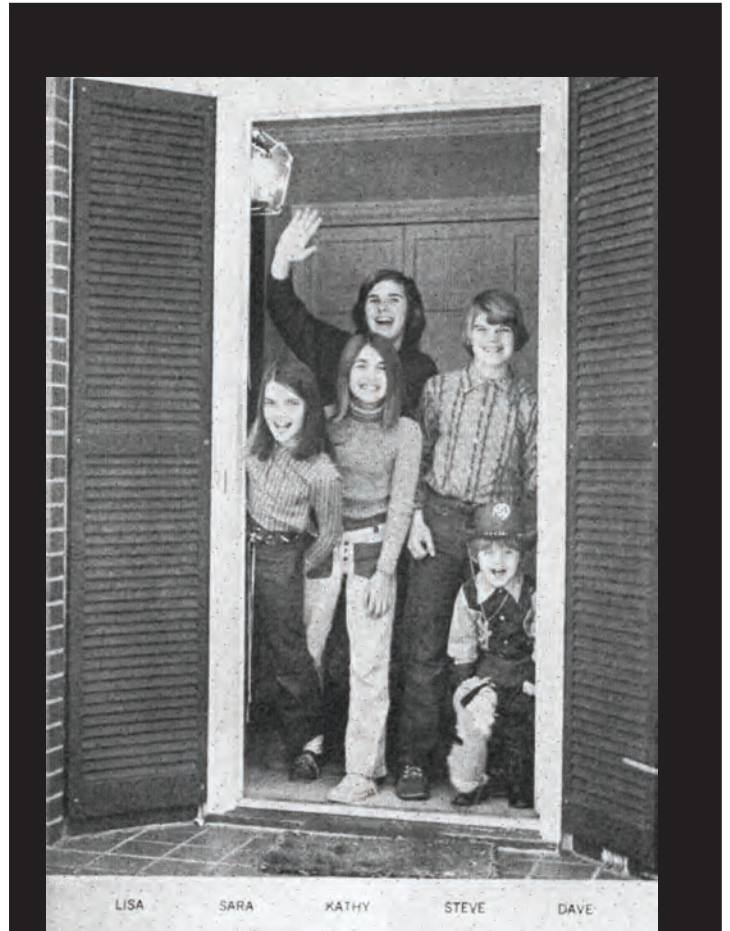
That adventure would include the birth of five children; Kathy, Steve (my friend, "Weevil"), Sara, Lisa and David.

Tribune photographer would not be the only successful career Don pursued. A 37-year span for the Nekoosa Edwards Paper Co. included a position as Manager of Public Relations with responsibilities that covered operations in Wisconsin and Arkansas. He edited *Nekoosa News* for almost 30 years.

Don was also part of the Port Edwards Volunteer Fire Department, the Incident Command Team of the DNR's Wildfire Suppression organization as the public information officer, a Chamber of Commerce officer, Kiwanian, conservationist and forest steward.

Around 1955, Don and Inez bought the first seven of their 34-acre Roche-a-Cri Tree Farm in the town of Big Flats. The couple won both Adams County Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year and Wisconsin runner-up for the same category in 2002. Don continued to write articles about fishing, hunting, conservation and forestry for the *Daily Tribune* until November 2012.

Sadly, we lost Don in that same month. Fortunately, his memory is kept alive at the Museum through his timely and now-historical photos.



Children of Inez and Don Krohn



Inez and Don at their tree farm

Bringing History Home

Discovering Guy Nash's World War I Uniform

By Bill Parker

SWCHC Military Historian

This story starts back in 2011, when I became the military historian at the South Wood County Historical Museum. As I went through the military archives, one of the items that stood out was an old wooden footlocker. Of course, I had to open it and see what was inside.

At the time, I wasn't too impressed. It was mostly field gear, a pack, a couple of uniform bags and a tent. I closed it up, put it back in its corner and hadn't touched it till March 2024.

The name on the footlocker would become very important: "Captain Guy Nash 151st Field Artillery AEF."

Nash's military journey began around August 1917 when, at Camp Custer near Battle Creek, Mich., the 85th Infantry Division was formed—originally made up of draftees from Wisconsin and Michigan. Guy's unit was the 330th Field Artillery for which he became the Regimental Adjutant. The unit shipped to England and, in August 1918, to France.

Unfortunately for the 85th, once in France it became a Depot division and its units were broken up and scattered to replace soldiers killed in combat from other front line divisions. Only one regiment of the 85th division saw combat as a whole unit and that was in northern Russia.

In France, Nash replaced an officer in the 151st Field Artillery's 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" division, made up of National Guard units from all over the country. This could have been before or after the armistice, so I don't know if he saw combat with the 151st. I do know he departed Brest, France, on April 17, 1919, on board the USS Huntington with the rest of the 151st Field Artillery and was discharged at Camp Merritt, New Jersey, on April 29, 1919.

February 2024 found me in Louisville, Ky., at the largest military collectors show in the country. I had a table there and was dealing from my collection and shopping for new items.

By day three, I had already spent what I could. While waiting for 8 a.m. when dealers were allowed in, I was looking through the Facebook militaria forums. On the World War I AEF collectors forum, a particular uniform caught my eye. At the show, Elliot Smith, of Colorado, had found the uniform belonging to Captain Guy Nash of Grand Rapids, Wis.!

I had to strike up a conversation with Elliot that started with "I know where his footlocker is." I ended up trading Elliot for the uniform and am learning the uniform itself has had quite a journey across America.

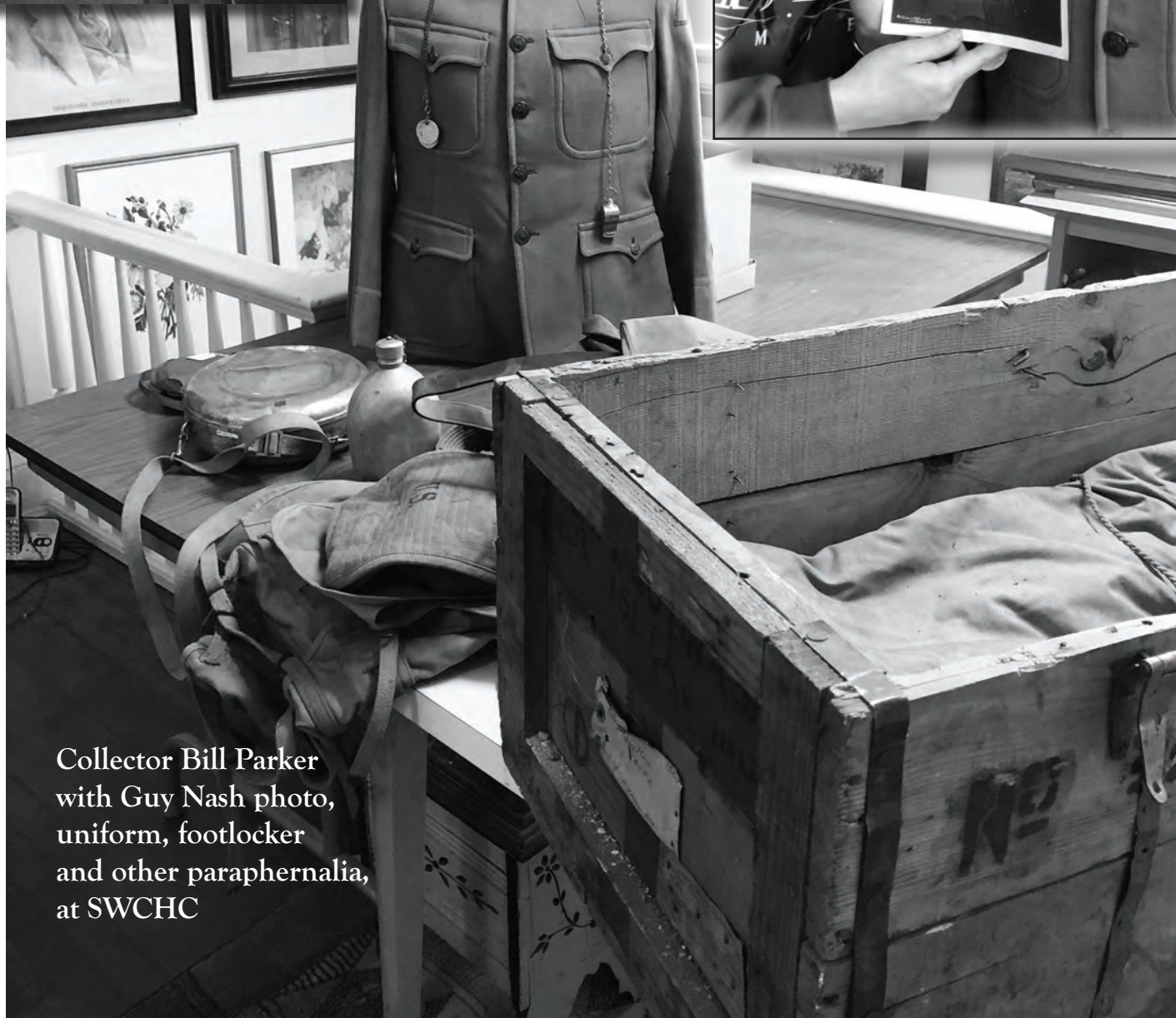
In 2016, it had been discovered by a New Orleans dealer in a Mississippi storage unit. He sold it to a collector in central Illinois who sold it to a dealer in Schaumburg, Ill., who sold it to Elliot who had it for a day before trading it to me.

I will be the last collector to own the uniform. As far as I am concerned, it will never leave Wisconsin Rapids again. When I can no longer display it at events or care for it myself, it will go to the Museum.

The uniform itself is quite remarkable. The collar includes Nash's Artillery Regt. Adjutant brass which is quite rare. The name Guy Nash is in the inside coat pocket. On the shoulder is his 42nd infantry division shoulder patch. One shoulder has his dog tag and the other his whistle.

Because of the mismatch of the two divisions mentioned above, it was easy to see why this uniform was easy to overlook. It did come with the transport records for both divisions and a typed list of items that belonged to Guy while still in service.

The list itself is what made me dig out that old footlocker in March 2024 and go back through it at the Museum. Some on the list are missing but fortunately, the most important items in the footlocker, along with the uniform and dog tags are home forevermore in Wisconsin Rapids.



Collector Bill Parker
with Guy Nash photo,
uniform, footlocker
and other paraphernalia,
at SWCHC

Here Today Gone Tomorrow

By J. Marshall Buehler

SWCHC Board of Directors member since 1955

The economic backbone of a community is made up of its industrial and manufacturing enterprises.

In our early industrial life, major pulp and paper mills have called the Tri-City area of Wisconsin Rapids, Port Edwards and Nekoosa home. The two most important were Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. of Rapids and Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co. of Port. [See *Age of Paper* by *River City Memoirs* and *Nepco* histories by Marshall.]

Currently, there are two paper mills remaining, both foreign-owned, Domtar at Nekoosa and ND [Nine Dragons] at Biron.

Of at least eight sawmills that preceded the paper industry, John Edwards Manufacturing Co. was one of the largest, having a sawmill and extensive land holdings, a private railroad, a farm, general store and a boarding house.

The milling industry was represented by the Nash flour mill and Jackson Milling Co., both producing flour. McKercher Milling Co. ground grain for farm consumption. [Building still standing at 750 W. Grand as Metcalf Lumber.]

Food industries now obsolete were Eatmor Cranberry Co., Eatmore Products Co. (sausage and snack food), Bloomer and Herschleb ice cream, Sugar Bowl candy and Mott and Wood butter and cheese. Heinz Pickle Co. had two receiving stations in the area. At least five bakeries vied for business: Herschleb, Rapids, Hamers, Hultquist and Nekoosa.

The Lutz brewery, later "Grand Rapids," satisfied hearty drinkers while Rapids Beverage produced soft

drinks. National products such as Pepsi Cola and Clicquot Club were dispensed along with their own private brand, named Gibson soda after their owner.

And then there were no less than seven dairy producers. All were ready to deliver milk to your doorstep: Curt, Karberg, Helke, Fischer, Glebke, Wisconsin Valley and Hamm dairies.

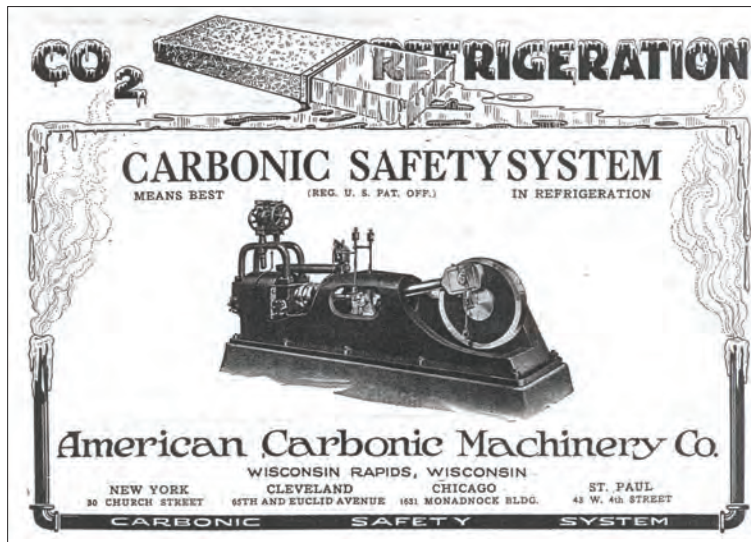
Five railroads, three bus lines and an airline were available to transport you out of town. It was easy to get to Chicago, Milwaukee, Twin Cities, Green Bay or just to Nekoosa.

The metal-working industry had its rise and downfall with Nekoosa Foundry and Machine Co. [now Nekoosa Corporation], Grand Rapids foundry and Grebe foundry.

American Carbonic made refrigeration units for air conditioning and cold storage plants. Their building still stands and is part of the former Consolidated property.

Three quarries provided stone for many a building, augmented by Grand Rapids and Lessig brickyards.

Other manufacturing endeavors that have closed their doors include Latin Clothing Co. (men's clothing), Preway (Prentiss-Wabers: camp stoves and oil burning heaters), Sampson Canning Co. (beans and peas), Rapids Coal and Ice (manufactured ice), Alger Manufacturing (auto engine heaters) and even a clam shell industry for producing buttons.



CO2 Training Pamphlet

Contributed by Lori Brost

In the early 20th Century, carbon dioxide was used as a refrigerant, especially for cooling theaters.

American Carbonic

The next big thing!

1935

Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune
May 10, 1930
(edited)

American Carbonic Machinery Co. was an extension of the Grand Rapids Foundry Co.—operated by Robb & Rablin in 1872 and Patrick & Mahoney from 1876 until 1894 when it was sold to King Brothers.

In 1896, Edmund Roenius joined the firm as secretary treasurer and partner with Benjamin and Julian King. In 1898, the Kings sold their interest to Roenius and his son, Otto Roenius.

The business consisted chiefly of repair work for nearby sawmills.

In 1904, Oscar E. Uehling entered the firm as treasurer and director.

In 1905, Grand Rapids Foundry purchased the present site of the plant (610 High Street) and erected a new machine shop and foundry. In 1907, a subsidiary, Wisconsin Ice Machine was organized to manufacture and market what was then known as the carbonic safety system of refrigerator machinery (using carbon dioxide).

In 1912, the name was changed to the American Carbonic Machinery Co. In the fall of 1914, Otto Labus joined the firm as chief consulting engineer.

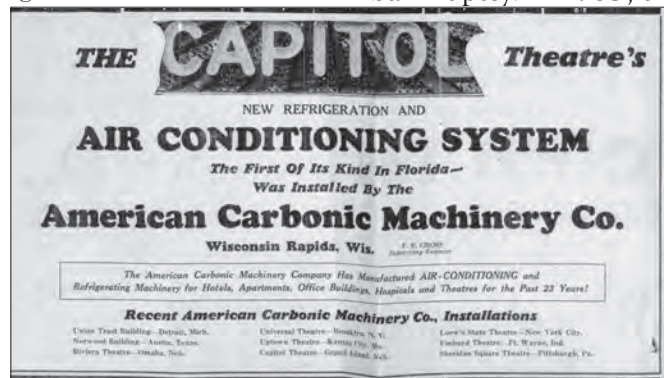
In recent years [1930] the company, although enjoying a tremendous growth in business, installing some of the largest ice machines and air-cooling devices in the country, had difficulty financing these large jobs.



A second account notes that, in 1930, the National Carbonic Machinery company, a newly-organized corporation, took controlling interest in the failing American Carbonic and moved the headquarters to Chicago.

By September 1931, the new company was facing bankruptcy. In 1935, the Wisconsin Rapids plant was reorganized as American Refrigeration, undertaking general repair and contract work.

In 1938, the plant was sold to L&S Company of Milwaukee. L&S proceeded to dismantle and remove all equipment.



Miami Herald 1930



Interior of former American Carbonic building that still stands at corner of Expressway and High Street





1995



The Age of Wood Products

Compiled By Alison Bruener

The following examples evoke a Wisconsin Rapids area gifted with locally-owned industries that employed generations of the citizens who made up the core of our community.

First Sawmills

- **Draper, Fay & Co. (1839), Biron**

Owned by Harrison Fay and Joshua Draper, produced some of first lumber rafted over the Grand Rapids. Sold in 1840 to Weston, Heldon & Kingston, subsequently to Francis Biron.

- **George Kline (1840), Centralia**

On the west bank of the Wisconsin in Centralia (now West Side of Wisconsin Rapids). Kline worked with Daniel and David Whitney in Point Basse.

- **Grignon and Merrill (1836), Port Edwards**

Owned by Amable Grignon II and Sam Merrill in Frenchtown, now Port Edwards. Sold to Henry Clinton and John Edwards Sr.

- **Clinton & Edwards (1840), Port Edwards**

- **Whitney (1831), Nekoosa**

Owned by Daniel Whitney at Whitney Rapids (Point Basse/Nekoosa), produced first lumber on Wisconsin river.

Pulp

- **Mack and Spencer (1881), Centralia**

Owned by Walter E. Mack and Charles A. Spencer in Centralia. First locally-manufactured pulp for paper making. (See *Age of Paper* for complete history of pulp mills in Wisconsin Rapids.)

- **Grand Rapids Pulp and Paper (1896), Biron**

Owned by J.D. Witter, Nels Johnson, and Charles F. Kellogg at site of former Biron sawmill.

- **Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. (1896-), Biron**

Continuation of Grand Rapids Pulp and Paper owned by F. MacKinnon, R.L. Kraus, George W. Mead and Isaac P. Witter. Owned by Consolidated until sale to Verso, when Catalyst Paper Holdings Inc., based in British Columbia, purchased the Biron mill in 2014.

- **ND Paper (2018-), Biron**

ND Paper, Oak Brook, Ill., a subsidiary of Nine Dragons Paper, Hong Kong, purchased the Biron mill from Catalyst Paper in 2018. Produces brown paper for cardboard boxes, paper bags, and other packaging materials. Recently suspended operation of one of two machines.

Here Yesterday

• Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. (1902-2020), Wisconsin Rapids

Originally owned by Isaac P. Witter, George W. Mead, Nels Johnson, F. MacKinnon and the F. Poma-inville estate.

Shipped first paper in 1904. First electrically-powered paper machine. First on-machine coated paper in 1935. Name changed in 1962 to Consolidated Papers Inc.

Wisconsin Rapids was world headquarters until 2000 sale by Consolidated to Helsinki-based Stora Enso Oyj; and by Stora Enso in 2007 to NewPage Corp of Ohio; in 2014, by NewPage to Tennessee-based Verso, which in 2020 shut down the Rapids mill.

In 2022, Verso merged with BillerudKorsnäs of Sweden which, as Billerud, in 2024 announced it would sell the idled mill to Capital Recovery Group LLC. Billerud continued to own and operate the hydroelectric and converting facilities.

• Jackson Mill “Library”

by Uncle Dave

In 1901 the Grand Rapids Milling Co., incorporated by J.D. Witter, I.P. Witter and John P. Horton, bought out the Jackson Milling Co. and built the brick mill shown below. The discontinued flour mill was absorbed by Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. and became a storehouse for recyclable books and newspapers to be beaten into brown paper stock.

As a summer worker in the early 1960s, I was sent to the “Jackson Mill” for an uncertain purpose. All that remained was the base of the old structure, in which were piled tons of paperback books with the covers removed. Many would find their way into the mill itself to be stashed behind workbenches and brought out for perusal on the interminable 11-7 shift.

Jackson Mill

Gone Today

• Consoweld Corp. (1943-c. 1996), Wis. Rapids

Created during WWII by Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. at 700 DuraBeauty Lane.

Opened the (building still extant) factory at DuraBeauty Lane (Hooker Street) in 1953.

Produced a resin-coated kraft paper laminate surfaced with a decorative pattern similar to the popular brand, Formica. In the post-war years, Consoweld product was used for house construction.

In 1996, sold to Libby Owens Ford (Sterling Products). Operations ceased not long after the purchase for lack of “synergy.”

• Nekoosa Edwards Paper Co. (1896-2008), Port Edwards

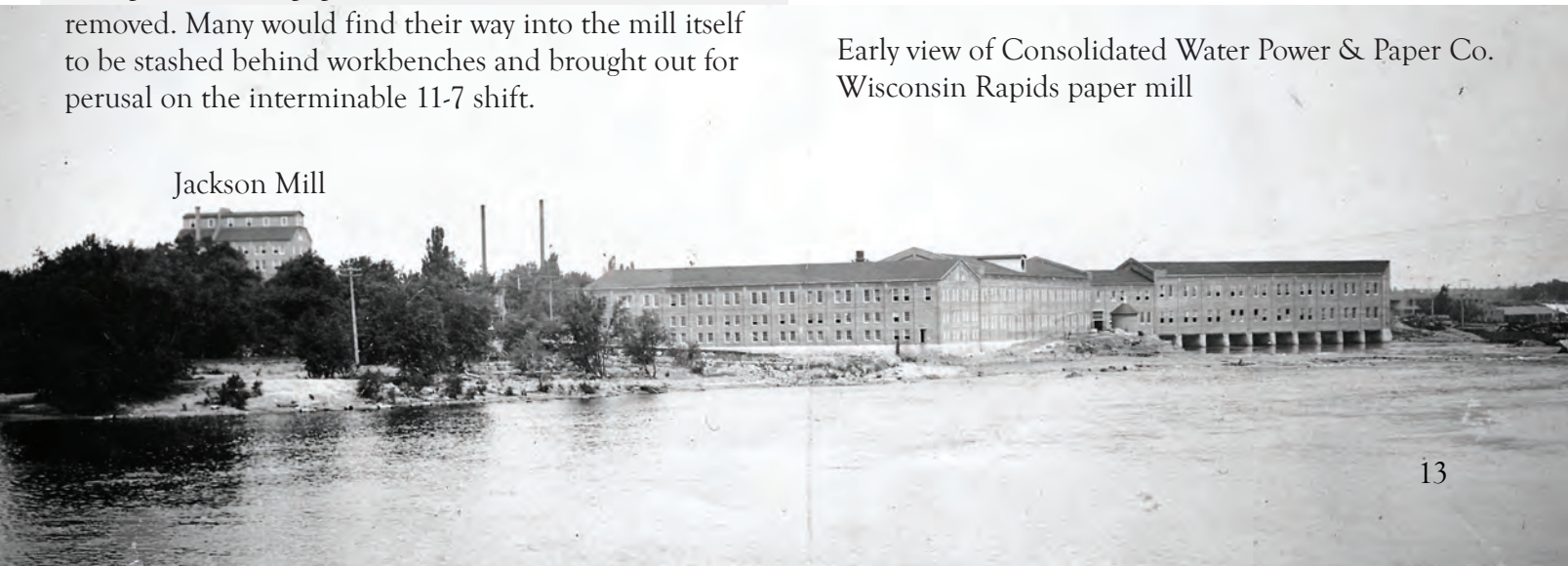
Original primary owner: Lewis M. Alexander. World headquarters: Port Edwards.

The John Edwards Manufacturing Co. of Port Edwards; Centralia Water Power & Paper Co., two miles north of Port Edwards; and Nekoosa Paper Co., three miles south, merged in 1908 as the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co. (Nepco), which merged in 1970 with Great Northern Paper Co. to become Great Northern Nekoosa Corp.

In 1990, Great Northern Nekoosa merged with Georgia-Pacific Corp. In 2001, Canada’s Domtar Corp. purchased the Port Edwards and Nekoosa mills and shut down Port Edwards mill in 2008.

The Nekoosa mill continues to operate under the ownership of Domtar, itself an acquisition in 2021 of Paper Excellence Group.

Early view of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Co. Wisconsin Rapids paper mill



Furniture

• Grand Rapids Furniture Company (1891-1895)

Owned by Charles Wipperman, located near Green Bay depot on First Street North, made rockers and tables.

In 1895, incorporated as • **Grand Rapids Table Company (1895-1924)**, owners including F.J. Wood, F. Garrison, A.K. Hatteberg, L.M. Alexander, Ed. Roenius, D.J., and E.P. Arpin. Made tables in two buildings connected by an elevated track.

Remodeled by Roenius in 1924 as United Art Works and in 1925, became Latin Clothing and later, S. & S. Clothing Company (Sonnenshein & Siegel) which burned in 1934 and was rebuilt by the city on 12th Avenue S.

• Oberbeck Manufacturing Co. (1891-1913)

Owned by Ernest, Fred, and Louis Oberbeck of Chicago and J.D. Witter, John Daly and Henry Sampson here. Located at 800 Fremont Street, Wisconsin Rapids. Produced bedroom furniture. Included a three-story factory, a large warehouse, a dry kiln, a boiler and an engine house. Later taken over by • **Ahdawagam Furniture Company (1913-1918)**.

When Consolidated's new No. 3 machine produced a surplus of heavy mill wrappers, George Mead converted Ahdawagam to make paper cartons and tubes. The three-story building made way in 1965 for the new • **Paperboard Products Division**.

• Kaudy Manufacturing (1905-Prohibition)

Owned by G.J. Kaudy, E.P. Arpin and F.J. Wood by the Green Bay and Western tracks on First Street N. Manufactured bars for saloons, ice boxes, chairs, and cigar displays.



Much has changed over the years since our city's Industrial Revolution. After harnessing the Wisconsin River's power, we became significant leaders in making paper products in North America, with companies whose headquarters stayed here for decades. What was referred to as the hostile takeover by Georgia-Pacific Corp. of the Great Northern Nekoosa Corp. in 1990 marked the beginning of the end of locally-run paper mills. Across the country, mills were merged and acquired to combat the increased competition from the global market's cheaper products.

In 2008, the Port Edwards mill ceased operations, and the Wisconsin Rapids Consolidated Papers Inc. mill did the same in 2020. Today, the community is still struggling to find an economic footing in a time when we are no longer leaders in the paper industry.

Alison Bruener, SWCHC

Historic Biron house razed by ND in 2022. See Artifacts #64.



Biron paper mill

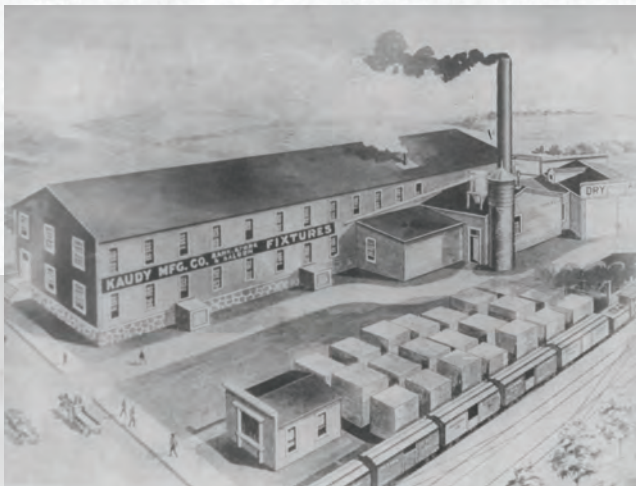


The Age of Wood

Wipperman's
Grand
Rapids
Furniture
Company



SWCHC archives

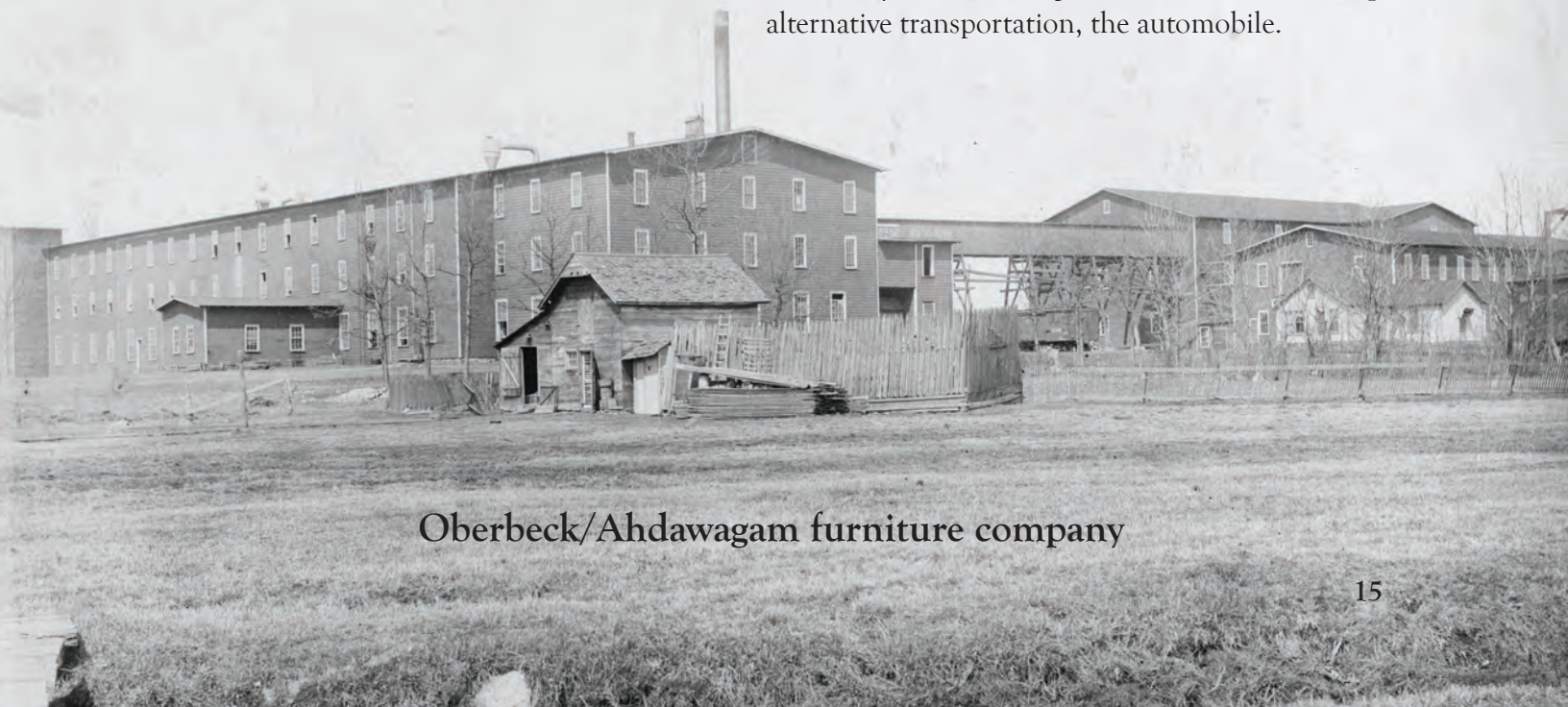


Kaudy Manufacturing



MacKinnon "Hub & Spoke"

Centralia-based MacKinnon factory opened in 1879 and in 1903 expanded to the manufacture of wagons. By 1925, they had ceased operations due to the emergence of alternative transportation, the automobile.



Oberbeck/Ahdawagam furniture company





INSIDE
THE
ANCIENT
AGE OF PAPER

Appears to be a finishing room in an unidentified local paper mill c. 1900

The Library

By Ellen Roeseler
SWCHC volunteer

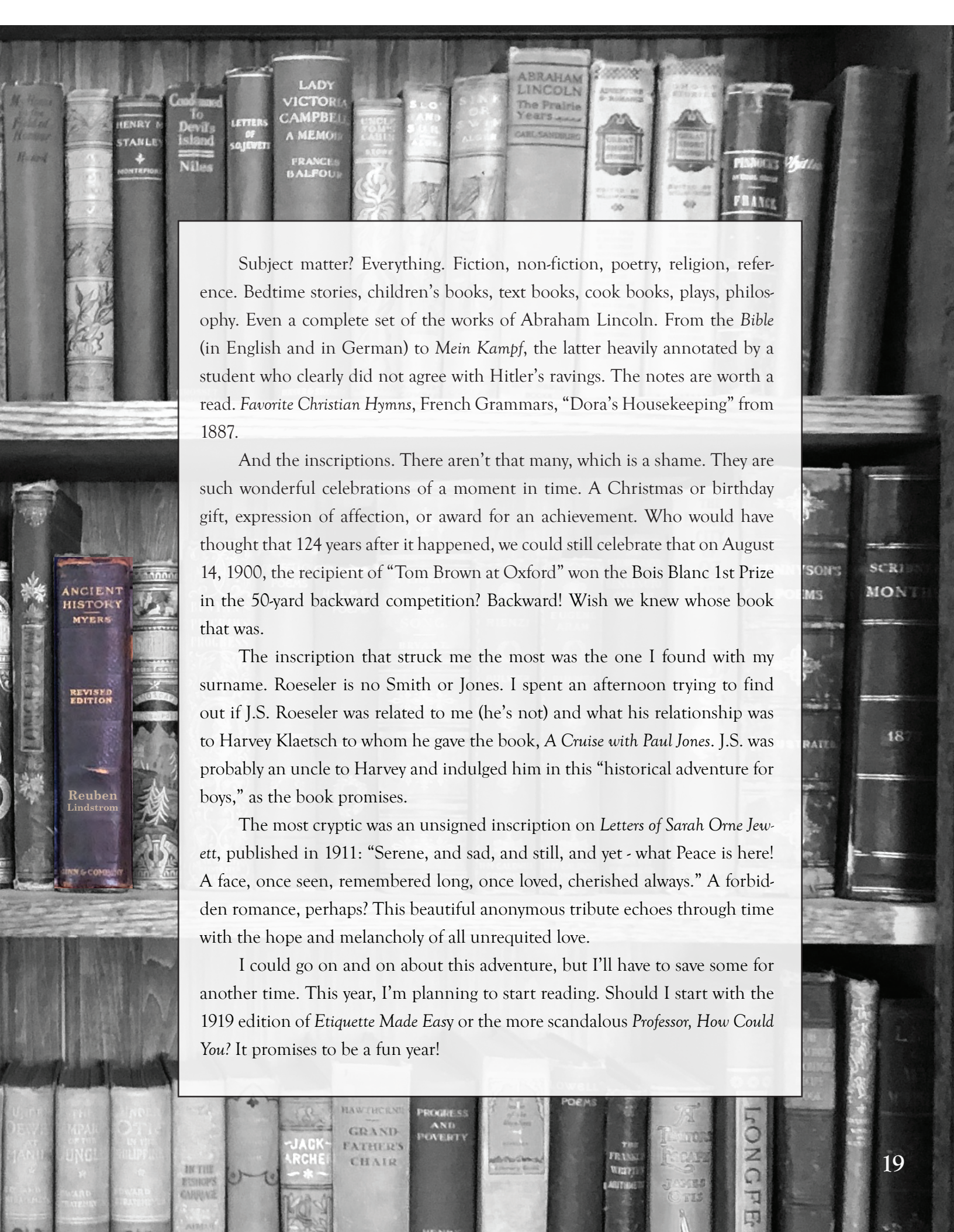
The summer of 2023 was my first as a docent at “the museum,” which I’ve always loved—and retirement gave me the opportunity to devote more time to the things I love. There is always something new to see: a previously undiscovered treasure, a new perspective on an old favorite and that cool feeling that comes over you when you step into the past.

This time, my previously-undiscovered treasure was the library in the parlor just off the right of the main entrance.

One day, I opened the glass doors and started perusing titles and publication dates. Museum Administrator Lori Brost told me that several people had donated books which had been published by 1947 (before the opening of T.B. Scott Library) and which might conceivably have been in the Witter’s library when they lived in the building. I asked if anyone had cataloged them. She said, “No,” and, trembling with anticipation, I meekly inquired – “Could I?” She said basically, “Knock yourself out,” like it was a job no one else wanted!

If each book is a world of its own, there are 535 worlds in that little parlor, many more than I thought when I started the count. The earliest publication date I could find (some didn’t have them) was in a collection of “Mrs. Browning’s Poems” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, dated 1813.

There are several sets, the largest two being the complete works of Charles Dickens and Mark Twain. There are some duplicates, but not many. If you’re looking for the world as it existed in 1907, turn to the *Americana Encyclopedia* set, although, for some mysterious reason, volume V is missing, a painful secret revealed perhaps, or just holding up a piano leg?



Subject matter? Everything. Fiction, non-fiction, poetry, religion, reference. Bedtime stories, children's books, text books, cook books, plays, philosophy. Even a complete set of the works of Abraham Lincoln. From the *Bible* (in English and in German) to *Mein Kampf*, the latter heavily annotated by a student who clearly did not agree with Hitler's ravings. The notes are worth a read. *Favorite Christian Hymns*, French Grammars, "Dora's Housekeeping" from 1887.

And the inscriptions. There aren't that many, which is a shame. They are such wonderful celebrations of a moment in time. A Christmas or birthday gift, expression of affection, or award for an achievement. Who would have thought that 124 years after it happened, we could still celebrate that on August 14, 1900, the recipient of "Tom Brown at Oxford" won the Bois Blanc 1st Prize in the 50-yard backward competition? Backward! Wish we knew whose book that was.

The inscription that struck me the most was the one I found with my surname. Roeseler is no Smith or Jones. I spent an afternoon trying to find out if J.S. Roeseler was related to me (he's not) and what his relationship was to Harvey Klaetsch to whom he gave the book, *A Cruise with Paul Jones*. J.S. was probably an uncle to Harvey and indulged him in this "historical adventure for boys," as the book promises.

The most cryptic was an unsigned inscription on *Letters of Sarah Orne Jewett*, published in 1911: "Serene, and sad, and still, and yet - what Peace is here! A face, once seen, remembered long, once loved, cherished always." A forbidden romance, perhaps? This beautiful anonymous tribute echoes through time with the hope and melancholy of all unrequited love.

I could go on and on about this adventure, but I'll have to save some for another time. This year, I'm planning to start reading. Should I start with the 1919 edition of *Etiquette Made Easy* or the more scandalous *Professor, How Could You?* It promises to be a fun year!



God Save the Queen

It may be the longest tenure in town. Since 1892, a member of the Jeffrey family has lived in the house at 640 10th Ave. S., Wisconsin Rapids, affectionately referred to as “the Queen” to reflect its Queen Anne architecture. The Queen was the childhood home of Julie Jeffrey Bach, who returned to reside there since 1991 with her husband, former Wisconsin Rapids mayor Gerald Bach.

By Julie Jeffrey Bach

In 1821, my great-great-grandfather, Stephen Jeffrey Sr. (1794-1865), a 23-year-old Cornish farmer, sailed from England to Canada with his wife, Anne Mary, and two children, settling in Niagara Falls, N.Y., where Stephen Jeffrey Jr. was born.

In 1829, the Jeffreys moved on to Penetanguishene, Ont., on the shore of Georgian Bay, Lake Huron,

where Stephen constructed much of the town with sandstone blocks from a quarry he owned.

He died in 1865 and is buried in Penetanguishene, where he and wife Anne named streets for each of their children—except for Stephen Jr., who, at age 18, left to work as a sailor on the Great Lakes.

2024 photos by UD

Stephen Jeffrey Jr. (1826-1902)

For three years after landing in Wisconsin, Stephen drove a stagecoach from Sheboygan to Fond du Lac, a route that included a stop at Wade House, now a state historical site.

In the early 1860s, Stephen Jr. often acted as cook on Wisconsin River lumber rafts. At Grand Rapids, he exchanged recipes with Ann Hinchey Keenan who worked at the Rablin House hotel. A widow with two children, she was to become my great grandmother, but not until after the Civil War ended.

Stephen trained in Madison, Wis., at Camp Randall, now Camp Randall football stadium. With Company G of the 12th Regiment, he left for the war in January 1862. Among his fellow soldiers were several Wakely boys, who would later be among his pallbearers.

Stephen joined Grant's army at Memphis and Vicksburg and Sherman's at Kennesaw Mountain and Atlanta. He returned in 1865 and married Ann a year later. They farmed for 30 years in the Town of Hansen on what became county highway D.

Stephen and Ann raised Dan and Margaret Keenan from Ann's first marriage and their own three children, Louise (Frank Daly) Mary Ann (A.F. Billmeyer) and John Jonas (Retta Cleveland).

As Stephen's vision deteriorated, his children decided he and Ann should live in Centralia, twin city of Grand Rapids, where A.F. Billmeyer built "the Queen" at the end of a dirt path. To the south was a field and to the west were woods, a creek and railroad tracks, a corridor that became Riverview Expressway.

The Queen

The tall balloon-frame Victorian-era structure included characteristic steep roofs, large rooms, pine plank floors, gasolier chandeliers, scroll woodwork and pocket doors.

The south side featured large bay windows with colored glass decoration and extra gables above. In 1892, with two bedrooms up and two down, the house and belongings were insured for \$1,500 by Fritzsinger and Daly.

Exploring the exterior, blind Stephen spread his arms "to see" and said, "Why did you make it so damn big?" As a housewarming event, daughter Mary Ann celebrated her marriage to the builder, A.F. Billmeyer, in the parlor.

With no electricity or plumbing available for even such a fine house, a hand pump stood at the north edge of the lot and an outhouse at the south. Heat was provided by wood-burning stoves and a small coal stove for the parlor when visitors or suitors came a-calling.

The central room had a large dark wood dining table under the gasolier with a chain to the wall for lowering and refilling. As a youngster in the late 1940s, one of my chores was to dust-mop around the edges of the oriental carpet and "vacuum" with the carpet sweeper. Great Grandmother's large buffet was in the west corner; Great Grandfather

Stephen's rocking chair sat by the south bay window. The potbelly coal stove was by the north wall. My father told of Indians coming in to sit by the bay window and visit with Stephen who could speak their dialects.

My father said he was born in a corner of a bedroom off the central room in the north wing. Later, his mother, Retta Cleveland Jeffrey, turned that bedroom into a dining room, cutting a doorway through to the kitchen. My mother served a big roast beef dinner there every Sunday.

Stories were told of Stephen, blind, walking from the front parlor to the back of the kitchen for exercise, feeling his way through doorways and furnishings, singing the old marching songs: "Don't sit under the apple tree with anyone else but me," "When Johnny comes marching home," and "The old gray mare."



Julie Jeffrey Bach at home



Standing:
Margaret Keenan Gagen,
Dan Keenan,
Louise Jeffrey Daly,
John Jeffrey, Sr.,
Mary Jeffrey Billmeyer,
Seated:
Ann Hinchey Keenan
Jeffrey,
Stephen Jeffrey,
c. 1895

Today, well over a century later, I find myself walking that same route for exercise on cold, icy days.

The large west wing was divided into the kitchen, a small bedroom and the food pantry/summer kitchen, all heated by the cook stove and a smaller porcelain wood-burning stove now stored in our basement, just in case.

When we were grade schoolers, we would take our clothes from the cold upstairs bedroom down to that warm corner in the kitchen to dress in the morning. It was also the best place to dry our woolen snow pants and buckle galoshes.

Originally, there was a small barn for the cow and horse, an apple and plum orchard and a garden of corn, potatoes, and vegetables. With no grocery stores, each family did their own cultivating, planting, weeding, harvesting and preserving.

A white plank fence kept animals out of the yard. When I was a child, I liked to bounce on the fence that at the time was laying on the ground.

Curley Cleveland (1867-1932)

Victorian homes usually have a “house ghost.” When our three young granddaughters were visiting, I told them about Great-Great Uncle Curley, who lived on the pie-shaped step at the curve in the staircase and loved children and their stories.

The steep narrow staircase in 1912 led to the upstairs two-bedroom apartment for John Sr.’s mother-in-law, Harriet Lord Cleveland, and her stroke-invalid (since 1915) son, Curley Cleveland.

The steps were difficult but later we youngsters would race up them two at a time. For fun we slid down fast, sitting on a piece of cardboard.

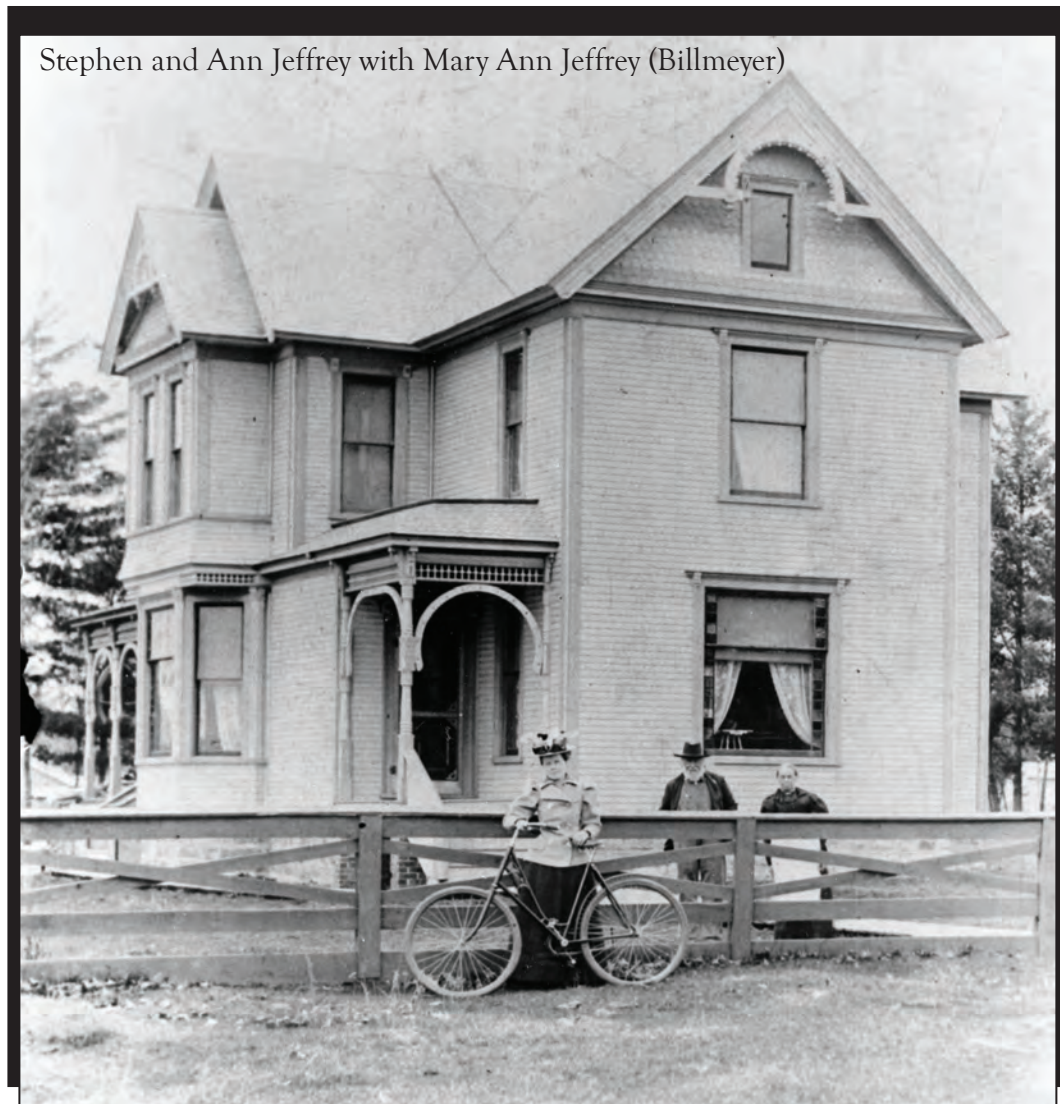
The small bedroom in the back of the kitchen could have been a maid’s room but there was never a maid. It became invalid Uncle Curley’s room after his mother Harriet died and Retta, his sister, became his caregiver. Uncle Curley always liked to hear my then-young father John’s stories about school classes, dances, girls, and his latest escapades.

One night as John was relating some goings on, Curley seemed extra quiet. John touched Curley’s arm to see if he had fallen asleep. He was deathly cold.

Every so often our ghost makes his noises to let us know he is still with us.

Root Cellar

Under the first floor was a root cellar. Great grandmother Ann Jeffrey came in from milking the cow, walked down the six sandstone steps and opened the heavy basement door made of the scraps of the wood siding with cross planking.



She poured the warm milk from a blue-speckled enamel-lined milk pail into quart-sized crocks and set them in the burlap-sided milk cooler. A spring under the circular staircase furnished water to wet the burlap that pulled the heat out of the milk, butter, cheese and eggs.

I have the cooler, stripped and varnished, in our dining room to store dinnerware.

In the late 1800s, washing clothes was done with hot water from the cook stove reservoir, scooped into the portable wash tubs. The used water was thrown out the back kitchen door. In the late 1940s my mother used a wringer washer and metal washtubs on wheels in the basement. The sand floor and the rinse water made good mud pies and sand castles.

Soon my father, John Jeffrey, installed a cement floor, electricity, and water pipes in the basement. When the “modern” coal furnace was brought in, I got the scary job of filling the coal hopper that fed the furnace every night. I always put a babushka on to make sure the bats did not get tangled in my hair as I hurriedly filled the buckets.

A corner of the old basement was the perfect place for a secret fort. Having the door to outside made it even better. With more than 30 neighbor kids to play with, spying on each other’s “gangs” and sending alphabet-coded notes of important secrets was very exciting. Today we use the basement for storage in the old part and exercise equipment in the new addition along with a cozy warm wood pellet stove.

John Jonas Jeffrey (1874-1944)

The son of Stephen Jr. and Ann, John Jonas Jeffrey, was born on the family's Town of Hansen farm in 1874. Fearing wild animals and "Indians," his older sisters walked with him to the local one-room school.

John graduated from Centralia high school, later to be known as "Old Lowell," in the 1895 class of five. His son, my father, John James, attended grade school at "new" Lowell in late 1920s.

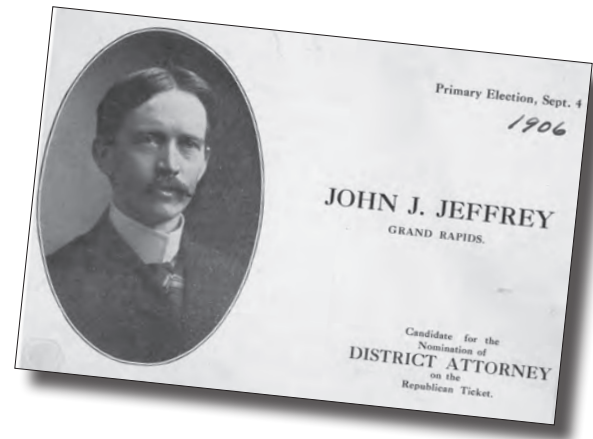
I went to the same Lowell school for kindergarten in the mid-1940s. Later, in 1985, I returned to Lowell school for seven years as Director of the Adult Day Care of South Wood County. In 2005, my husband, Jerry Bach, in his capacity as Wisconsin Rapids mayor, sold Lowell school. Senior living homes occupy the area today.

John Jonas' father, Stephen Jeffrey Jr., never had the chance for schooling at any level and had to sign his name with an "X." John Jonas was the first in the family to complete all grades, including college and law school, graduating in 1902 from the University of Wisconsin, where his father had trained for the Civil War in Camp Randall. In the 1960s, I attended many college football games in Camp Randall stadium.

John's first office was on West Grand Avenue in a wooden building. When it caught fire, he raced to save his law books by throwing them out the window to the street only to have them stolen before he could pick them up.

John Jonas' mother's will states that her older son, Dan Keenan, would inherit the farm and John would inherit the Queen if he "married and produced live issue." It happened that John courted and, in 1913, married his neighbor, Retta Cleveland, a bookkeeper at Weisel's Department store in downtown Centralia.

In 1914, they had a son, my father, John James, who later became John Sr.'s law partner—until the next war.



Retta, John Sr. and John Jr.



John Sr. and Retta Cleveland Jeffrey

John Sr. often went grouse hunting near Pittsville with judge W.J. Conway and Ray Johnson, early owner of Johnson & Hills, shown with a 1910 Marmon car and a string of 31 birds. No bag limits in 1910.



Gun Club

In 1913, John Sr. and friends formed the Grand Rapids Gun Club to shoot trap (clay pigeons). The first location was at the curve of the Wisconsin river where his father, Stephen, had “shot” for the “bull’s eye” with his log rafts. Later, the club moved to Lyon Park. I was very young when I was brought in to pull the lever that threw the “clay” out over the river. As the Heart of Wisconsin Sportsmen’s Club, it was moved to Ranger Road in the 1950s. My sister, Jane, and I began shooting clays as soon as we could hold the shotgun to our shoulder.



1910: Weisel department store, Retta Cleveland (Jeffrey), second from right

Louise Daly (1868-1946)

After John Sr.'s sister Louise's husband, Frank Daly, died young, John, for the next eight years, helped his sister raise her four small children: Agnes (Rowley), Nina (Roenius), Francis (Bernice) Daly, and Glen (Carol) Daly. Louise also continued to run the Daly Music store, delivering pianos by horse and wagon. Glen Daly took over the music store and Bud Daly, Francis Daly's son, ran the appliance store in its later years.

Retta Cleveland Jeffrey (1877-1967)

My grandmother, Retta Cleveland Jeffrey, lived in the small house next to us. My sister and I spent a lot of time trying to win any game from her: cards, checkers, or Old Maid, she never lost. She belonged to bridge clubs, never lost. We have many of her prizes: pretty dessert plates, fancy vases, and a trophy silver tray. As her nieces and nephews grew up, she became a tutor aunt for their math problems. My father often told the story that Francis and Glen Daly would sometimes fall asleep and nap on the bench by the potbelly stove after the tutoring session. When I was in grade school and had a difficult "thought problem" in math, she would solve it easily.

Retta Cleveland Jeffrey, through a Revolutionary War soldier, belonged to DAR and told us stories,

hoping we would pass them on to our children. In 1620, one line of relatives came from England on the Mayflower. We have visited Plymouth and stepped back into "history" at my 12th great-great grandparents' log house. We moved on to Jamestown, where my forefathers helped start that settlement in 1608.

At 16, Retta taught in Cranmoor's one-room school and boarded at Whittlesey's marsh, following the dirt roads and trails of that time to get there. On one bicycle trip, she ran over a big branch that turned out to be a large snake escaped from a circus.

In cold weather, Retta caught the old steam engine from her home in Port Edwards. On the return from Cranmoor, she stood on the track and waved a burning paper torch to flag the train. After teaching, she became the bookkeeper at Weisel's department store in Centralia.

An avid reader, Grandma Retta had been a member of the T.B. Scott Library board for over 30 years and a Rapids school board member. I inherited many books from her personal book collection. When I was eight, Gram gave me my first "grown-up" book as a Christmas gift. She introduced me at age 10 to the wonders of keeping a daily diary.

Cub and the Cat

Young John Jr. had a black cocker spaniel named Cub and a black cat, Bill. In the mornings, Bill was sent upstairs to get John up for the day. He would wiggle under the heavy comforter and put his cold nose on Johnny's feet and then run back down stairs before he got caught.

Cub was always by John's side. One day after a heavy rain storm, the creek behind their back yard woods was overflowing on its way to the river.

Cub in his sniffing around got caught in the rushing water, was sucked into a culvert, and disappeared. John ran along the bank hoping to see his dog. Downstream after the end of the culvert, there was a soggy little black Cub—alive.

Both of the pets slept under the back porch in a wooden barrel with straw bedding, a perfect hiding place for us later in "hide and seek" games of the neighborhood.



John Jr., holding Bill

Mead's Cow

The Mead property south of the house was the neighborhood cow pasture, baseball field, kite flying zone and pond to paddle in with my dad's duck boat when "Canal Creek" flooded. One day the Mead's old cow fell over dead by the pitching mound. The caretaker came, dug a hole, rolled her in and buried her. Dad said that was the best pitching mound they ever had. The mound still kind of showed when I played the game there with my friends 25 years later.



Felix with Winifred and John Jeffrey, Jr. 1939



Felix with John Jonas and Retta Jeffrey, 1942

Felix and the Tramps

The railroad tracks behind the house and woods in the 1920s were busy with transportation of goods and supplies, travelers, wood, coal, and, of course, the boxcar hobos.

The Great Depression was in full swing and the hobos would hop the train to look for jobs, food, and/or whatever they could pilfer. When the old steam engines stopped for a reload of coal and water almost directly behind our house, the hobos would get off and come through the woods to knock on my grandparents' door.

They finally purchased Felix, a Great Dane puppy that grew into a 172-pound dog to guard the property. Felix was the "biggest thing on four feet in the city limits."

He was a friendly dog and especially liked children. My father said that when I was a toddler, Felix would accompany me as I learned to walk, letting me hold on to the loose skin on his leg for balance.

There were a couple things Felix disliked a lot: a German shepherd that cleaned up on him as a puppy and "lived to rue the day..."

And tramps.

When Felix was four years old, he joined Dogs for Defense and went to Fort Robinson, Neb., to train for WWII. He would help guard war plants, serve as a messenger, find wounded soldiers on the battle field, or be a sentry. We have a certificate of appreciation from the War Department thanking us for giving Felix in service to the United States Army.



J.J.J. at 7

John James Jeffrey (1914-1991)

My father, John James Jeffrey, grew up an only child. A friend of his said she attended “some wonderful birthday parties” in the center dining room around the big table with a huge chandelier above it. An elderly aunt remembered that John’s father would walk home from his law office for lunch and then take little John by the hand and walk the path to the outhouse with him for toilet training.

We have a homemade toboggan made with wooden skis and peach crate slats that John probably made with father’s help. In wood burning his name into the ski tips young John missed one letter in his name.

He graduated from Lincoln High School at age 16 and went on to the University of Wisconsin and Law School. John married my mother, Winifred Finucane, in 1938. He finally became the partner that John Sr. had hoped for. After only two years, the war began with the Pearl Harbor attack. I was born that night.

John joined the FBI and headed for the East Coast. His orders were “to put a tail” on German spies from their submarines coming on to our East coast shore in their rubber rafts. The lighthouses were special places for the volunteers with binoculars watching the shore line and reporting all the German raft landings that they could see.

The Germans had bombed and sunk 247 of our supply “Liberty” ships, on our own shores. We citizens were never given that news.

When John’s father, John Jonas, passed, we moved back to Wisconsin Rapids to take care of John’s mother, Retta Cleveland Jeffrey, who lived upstairs for a short time then moved next door to the small home that had been built for Great Grandmother Cleveland.



John J. Jeffrey Jr.
Quantico, Va., F.B.I.
training 1941

Julie Jeffrey, 6
months, John Jr.,
John Sr. 1942



Julie, Winifred and Jane



Julie and Jane Jeffrey

Julie Jeffrey Bach (1941-)

My baby sister, Jane, joined the family and we spread over the whole house.

There were many doorways in the old Queen. We had a lot of after-dinner games of “catch me if you can.” Dad was the “green eyed spook” as my sister and I and our puppy raced through doorways, slamming doors on the spook. Lots of laughing, screaming, and barking as the puppy skidded across the linoleum kitchen floor, chasing after us.

The parlor became the TV room in 1952. Our first television was magical, wonderful, entertainment.

Wazeecha

I loved horses as most young girls do and I would discuss the subject with my father quite often. During the summers, we lived in a one-room cottage by Lake Wazeecha that Dad built in 1948 from the German POW camp buildings at our airport. There was a hand pump in the kitchen sink, an outhouse down a path in the woods and no friends to play with.

As my sister and I got older, stronger and taller, the horse idea became more logical, I thought. Finally, after many promises to do all the horse chores ourselves, he agreed. We helped Dad build a little two-stall barn behind the cottage. The horse dream came true but, after each of the summers in the little cottage, it was comforting to come back to the Queen, city life and the school routine again.

Prom Prep

During my high school years, my girlfriends and I put together “Coketail” parties at our house before the formal dances, the Proms and the Sno-Balls. On entering the house, the girls climbed the narrow steep staircase to put their shawls and coats on my bed and check the hairdos and lipstick.

There was enough room in the main-floor rooms for all the girls in their beautiful full-skirted, long formals, to float around, socialize, and participate in the hors d'oeuvres and sparkling lemonade.



1958: Julie, Win, Jane and John Jeffrey



Julie Jeffrey, lifeguard, July 1961



Julie as male lead for June Lee Haertel Dance Studio



1959: Julie and Duke at Lake Wazeecha

Assumption High School class of 1960



William Fogarty, Marilyn Gamma (Augustyniak), Mary Grace Podvin (Meier), Wayne Kirschling, (rear), Corrine Johnston (Kirschling), John Mancl, Thomas Berg - getting ready for Assumption Sno-Ball dance



Jeanne Bodette (Vollert), Darlene Panko (Cummings), JoAnne Simcowski



Julie



Julie Jeffrey
& '59 Chevy,
August 1961

Rehabbing the Queen

In 1984, Jerry and I bought the small house next to the Queen from my folks. We built an addition and an attached garage with the idea that we exchange houses with my folks eventually, as we all got older, and the narrow, steep stairway to the upstairs became a challenge for them. In 1991, we bought our houses from each other.

For the next 25 years, we had projects of replenishing and repairing the Queen, replacing windows and the roof, painting and adding vinyl siding and a furnace. We moved and rebuilt the garage to include a work shop, added a master bedroom wing, extended the kitchen west wing to include a full bathroom, rearranged the kitchen with cabinets and a sink island and enclosed the outside entrance that was icy in the winter and changed it into a warm entrance.

When our three granddaughters came along, we opened the room above the kitchen that I as a child had sneaked up a ladder to see. Big enough for three beds, the room was well-used for 20 more years until the granddaughters were grown and "went out to explore the West."

For us, the now 133-year-old Queen Ann Victorian is complete, warm, and comfortable for the rest of its life.



Jerry and Julie (Jeffrey) Bach, 1992



Julie Jeffrey (Bach) with Richard M. Nixon, then Vice President. Assumption high school, Nov. 12, 1959



Photo by Julie

Featured in *Artifacts* #70, Entre Nous Club, 1963. Standing: Osa Mortensen, Meta Herschleb, Rachel Smith. Seated: Elizabeth Herschleb, Mabel Gottschalk, Olive Lamb, Retta Jeffrey



From #70, also in 1963, Betsy Brauer with Jane Jeffrey and others at AAUW tea.

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Don Krohn photo



Daily Tribune 1950

