

volume TWO

Pages 389 to 809

The 1900's

PAGES 389 TO 454

Opera Houses and Turn-of-the-century Baraboo	389
At Turn of the Century, 60 Lights were Talk-of-the-town	394
Personal Conduct Rules Circa 1900	398
How They Celebrated the Fourth in the old Days	402
A Carriage without a Horse, Built in Baraboo	406
Thanksgiving was Different in 1902	410
Elks Filled a Niche in Baraboo	412
Whatever Happened to Christmas in 1901?	417
The Sophomore Journal of 1905	420
A 1911 Class Play, but Who are the Actors?	424
Past Powerhouses were Hard to Beat	427
Paving the Roads in 1905 was a Contest	431
A 1906 Cadillac and a Generous Bequest	435
Charlie Ringling's Sporty 1904 Knox Auto	439
From a Gas Plant to a Mega-Utility	443
Baraboo's Old Streetcar--Named Desire?	447
The Risley Brothers First Store, in 1901	450
1910 Risley Store was Upscale Indeed	452

Opera houses and turn-of-the-century Baraboo

How would you like to live in this town: "A quiet restful place to live and a good location for business ... a bracing atmosphere ... with enchanting scenery ... palatial and home-like residences ... churches with able divines ... a courteous postmaster and assistant ... mills for lumber, flour, linen, and wool ... shops with reliable merchants ... and a costly library."

Such were the talking points of hometown boosters at the turn of the century in Baraboo. Industries listed with pride were the Chicago & Northwestern railroad division point, the Great Northern Nursery and a canning factory. There was no mention of the Ringling and Gollmar circuses, though they were receiving nationwide attention at the time.

The city boasted 6,200 souls, plus 300 in Lyons (now West Baraboo) and was dominated by the railroad. There were a few telephones, but most homes were still lighted with kerosene or gas, and many had outhouses. Most streets were unpaved.

Yet to happen, and unfathomable at the time, would be the loss of the railroad as a major factor, the loss of both circuses in less than 20 years, and the eventual closing of the mills and canning factory. Nor could the remarkable industrial revitalization of the city after World War II be imagined.

The city directory

The town certainly seemed to be thriving, a study of the 1895 city directory reveals. What we would now call the **Yellow Pages** showed some occupations that would be unusual today. Categories included **dealers in baled hay and barbed wire**. There were two public bathrooms, six

milliners, six oyster dealers, and six merchant tailors. Joseph Junk was the baker.

There were only two plumbers and three dentists, but there were 14 physicians, 17 dressmakers, nine fur dealers, seven lawyers, three music dealers, 14 groceries and 17 saloons. Interestingly, there were 23 cigar manufacturers and dealers listed!

In the trades, carpenters and plasterers numbered 26. Also listed were eight blacksmiths, six sausage makers and three wagon makers. Three banks served the community, each from one office — we now have 10 locations in Baraboo to bank, plus many ATMs! Libations were provided by the Effinger and Ruhland breweries, but there were also two temperance organizations.

Besides the railroad, there were stages. The stage to Kilbourn went daily except Sunday, but the Sauk City stage only went on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Meeting places

Of special interest now, in view of the impending opening of the opera house above the recently relocated Corner Drug Store, is a listing of halls in 1895, as reported in the Baraboo Intensive Survey, published in 1989. All but one, the Capener Opera House at 701 Oak, are believed to have been upstairs over a retail store.

Included are halls for the GAR, Knights of Pythias, American Order of United Workmen, and the Masonic organizations, which in 1891 had built a splendid building at the northwest corner of Oak and Second Avenue. Their hall was upstairs in the building, which had an imposing tower, and the lower level housed the

Melzel and McGann furniture store. This building, faced with terra cotta bricks, burned on Feb. 2, 1957.

There was also a large YMCA building on the northwest corner of Ash and Second Street, now a parking lot. Pratt's Hall was on the south side of the river. The BIS lists many other halls for those who are interested, for groups such as the

Eagles, Elks, Royal Neighbors, and agricultural societies. The Knights of Columbus were not organized until 1903. The list of organizations is staggering. Of special mention are the Inter Se, 1898, and the Fortnightly Club, 1889, both still extant today.

Meeting halls had never been very elegant. In the early days the basement of the unfinished Methodist Church on the southeast corner of Broadway and Fifth Avenue served both for religious services and court sessions and other public meetings. In 1857 the new red brick courthouse came into use, followed by Taylor Hall on the southeast corner of Broadway and Third Avenue.

The most interesting name for a group is the "Quindecim Club", according to the BIS. It was composed of "fifteen members, as per the name. These gentlemen kept a club room at 150 Third Street, the floor of which was covered with double canvass, while the ceiling was hung with gilt and black chandeliers." The room contained a piano and billiard table and card tables. Little is known about a women's group which existed between 1861 and 1880, named the Goose Club.

Opera houses

The first mention of an opera house was in 1884, when the Brotherhood of Railroad Engineers "undertook the commendable enterprise of building an opera house" with the sale of 200 shares at \$100 each. The result, if any, may have been the Warren Opera House at 518 Oak St. Since Jerry's Hallmark today is 516 Oak and Corner Drug Store is 522 Oak, it is probable that this hall was located where the present opera house is being established.

The words opera house were used rather loosely in those days, it usually being just a large room or hall, but the name gave a small town the aura of a larger city. As an example, the Capener Opera House on the northwest corner of Oak and Fifth Avenue was originally a roller skating rink. It was well-built according to the BIS, with a floor space of 60 by 100 feet for skating. When remodeled, there was both level and elevated seating, with theatrical scenery. It claimed to seat about 1,000, with both gas and incandescent lighting. Famous speakers there included Robert La Follette and William Jennings Bryan.

Fire destroyed the building in 1905, and the subsequent loss to the cultural fabric of the city has been discussed in a previous article. For 10 years no hall was available for either large public meetings or theatrical performances. A purse of \$5,000 raised as an inducement went unclaimed.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JANET BJORNSEN

The McGann furniture store on the northwest corner of Second Avenue and Oak Street (above) had the Masonic Lodge hall on the second floor.



Pictured is the YMCA that once stood at the northwest corner of Second and Ash streets.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JANET BJORNSEN

There were at the time several small movie theatres, often little more than a storefront or upstairs hall. There was the Gem at 142 Third St., the Orpheum (location unknown), the Lyceum at 145-47 Third St., the Electric at 129 Third St., and the Urodoram located "near the Wellington" hotel." Lange, in "A County Called Sauk," says one of the early movies, in 1897, was the Corbett-Fitzsimmons boxing match

No one at the time even dared to dream of the 1915 advent of the Al. Ringling Theatre which still, 85 years later, evokes awe from not only first-time visitors but many hometown folks, as

well. So magnificent was the Al. that the other movie houses faded from the scene. At mid-century the Al. had as its junior partner the Juliar Theatre, named after the grandparents of the Ringling, Moeller and Gollmar circus families. Seating about 400, it was sacrificed in about 1997 to make room for the new West Square Building. Soon, a plaque in that building may mark the spot where it stood.

Of special interest today, with the upstairs opera house about to open over Corner Drug, is the record that the Warren Opera House apparently occupied that space in 1884 when the

building was built. It was said to measure 25 by 75 feet, plus baggage and dressing rooms, and suitable scenery. Like its successor, the opera house on the corner of Oak and Fifth Avenue, it too was used as a roller rink for a time.

Thus there have been three opera houses in Baraboo, counting the new hall bearing the name. Different, though, is the fact that the new hall may at times be used for dinner theater, for there is no record of such use in the previous halls. Thus "bon appetit" can now be associated with the time-honored theatrical words of encouragement, "break a leg."



Most of downtown Baraboo presents architecture of the late 1800's, following major fires. It has been described as reminiscent of Normal Rockwell's style. In contrast, the west side of the square presents Sauk County's West Square building, shown above. Its massive modern façade, though different from the rest of downtown Baraboo, provides a convenient comparison of the two styles.



Above, The Warren Hotel



Left, the Wellington Hotel building, 2003

At turn of century, 60 lights were talk of the town

Have you ever known darkness? Real darkness? Complete darkness, darkness even after the pupils of your eyes have widened to let in any possible glimmer of light—and there wasn't any light?

We can't escape from the light these days. Even if you drove to the remotest valley in Sauk County at midnight, with no farm buildings in sight, you could still look at the sky and get the reflected glare of the city lights of Baraboo, ski runs and other artificial light sources. You could still make out rises in the land, trees and bushes once your pupils had adapted to the lesser light.

Oh sure, on a moonlit night you'd have plenty of light, and even on a clear star-lit night with no moon you could get along, but how about a moonless heavily overcast night? That's darkness.

But it is hard to obtain darkness in our modern world. Astronauts report seeing city lights as they pass overhead, and the recent weekend Y2K extravaganza marking the supposed beginning of a new millennium was a festival of lights. The British even claimed their river of moving light on the Thames would be visible from distant space.

Olden days

It was not always thus. In fact, not much more than 100 years ago there were no street lights of any kind in Baraboo, gas or electric. Early of an evening you might catch the soft glow of a kerosene lamp or candle in a house window. But people went to bed early then, and, soon, total darkness laid its impersonal and smothering grip on the city on a moonless cloudy night. No hand flashlight then, either!

Such was the scene in Baraboo and most smaller cities in the middle of the 19th century. The bigger cities had solved the problem even in colonial times, for the dark streets had been teeming with the poor and the criminal, ready to pounce on a careless passerby, and recognition was impossible in the darkness. To fight crime, and to extend the working day into the otherwise unused night hours, street lights of a sort were installed, but not street lights as we know them.

Gas Lights

Each pole, short enough for the lamplighter to reach it, contained an oil lamp or, if the city were really advanced, a lamp supplied with manufactured gas which could be lighted, much like the Coleman camp lights of today. Spaced a block or so apart, they would be considered worthless today, but were a



BOB
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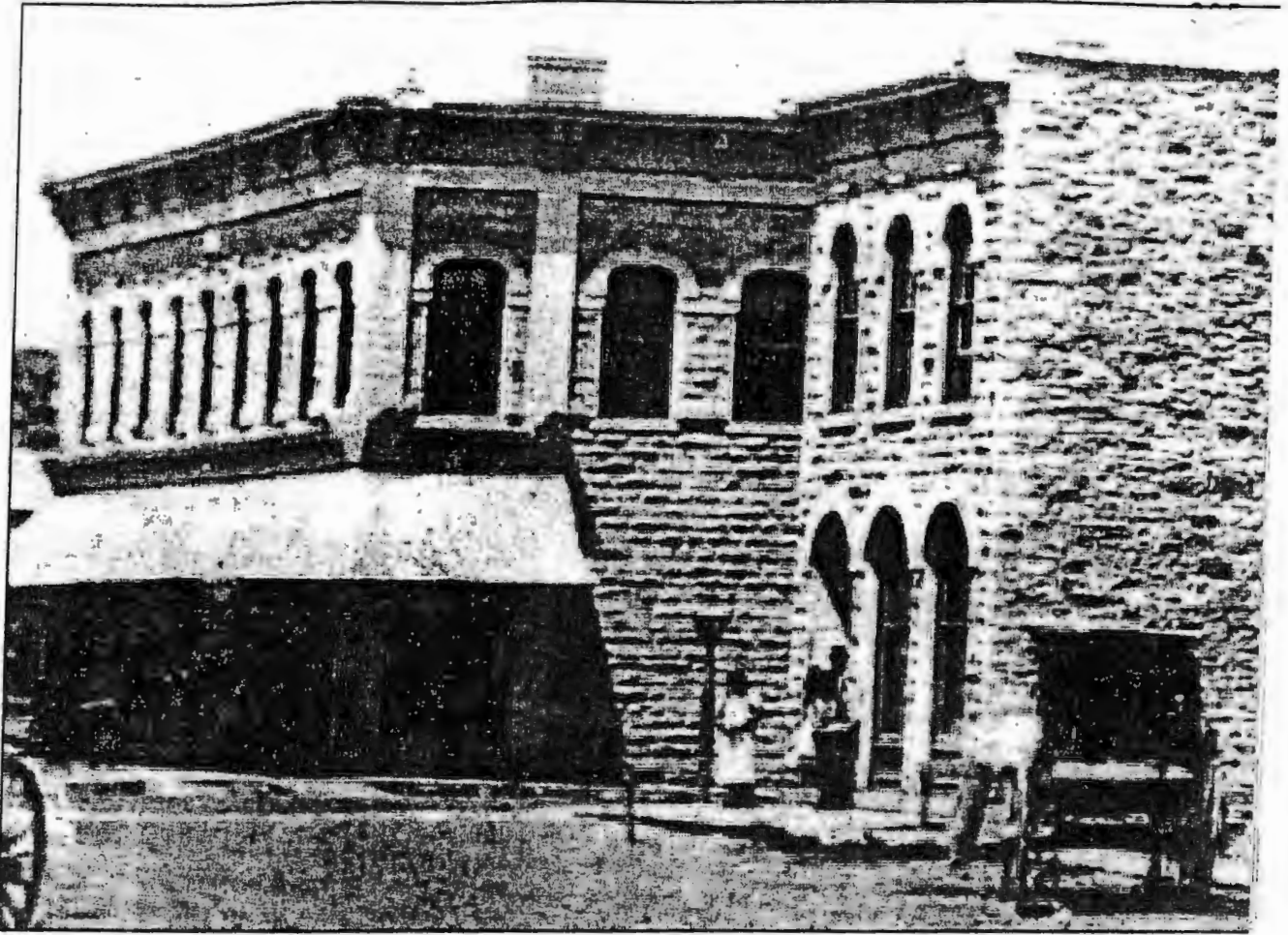
modern advancement in their time.

In Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin and friends were instrumental in getting the city lighted, and the lamplighter was a regular visitor at dusk to provide the city with at least a modicum of light.

These were not natural gas lights, with underground piping carrying the gas thousands of miles, as we have today. This system, if it was gas and not oil, was a manufactured gas, and the time came when the city of Baraboo entered the business of making and selling manufactured gas, just as it distributes water today.

Every generation has its fixers and doers, and Baraboo has been no exception. It began with the dam builders, creating power for sawing and milling for a burgeoning population. The 1860s saw the determination of ambitious men to get a railroad through the city. Other men of skill developed industries, most famous for us being the circus, while still others brought in other enterprises.

Following the first demise of the powder plant in 1945, committees arose to revitalize the community with new industries, a heroic effort which contin-



This 1880s view shows a gas light on the corner of Fourth and Oak streets. The Warren hotel in the background does not yet have its third story.

ues today with city and county promotional organizations. Meantime, hockey rinks and swimming pools and river walks and other conveniences of modern civilization appear in Baraboo because interested persons get together and say, let's do it. The new downtown streetlights are another example!

Such was the case before the turn of the century, when people who had seen the streetlights of the larger cities said, we can have that in Baraboo, too. And that is how Baraboo got its gas lights and then its electric lights. That's also how we got the pollution behind the Oak Street dam, remediation of which is taking place as we write.

Early attempts

The Wisconsin Power & Light Company, now known as Alliant, was not the first in Baraboo to supply power and gas to the city, but it has produced an excellent history of the events, expanded on in a talk to the Fortnightly club by Lyle Coates. Much of the following material has been taken from their records through the courtesy of Ron Cowan, local manager, and other WPL personnel.

Gas first came to Baraboo in the early 1880s when steam from the Walker Foundry was used to generate gas from a chemical called naphthalene, the first such plant in the state. This local company

was known as the Baraboo Gas Company and served but a limited number of stoves and homes and lights. Coates says there was one gas light in front of the post office and one on the bridge lighting the way to the railroad station, and some 46 others.

Competition arrived in 1887, however, when a direct current electric plant was installed at the Hoyt flour mill, now McArthur's mill. Electricity had first been identified and many of its characteristics named by Benjamin Franklin some two hundred years before, but it took Edison's invention of the electric light to make it usable for illumination.

In Baraboo at this time a line was run uptown, and some 60 lights were the talk of the town. The promoter was Warren — any relation to the Warren Park area? — and he called his company the Baraboo Lighting Company. Then, business names described the kind of business involved, a trait not so easily observed in these days of acronyms. Baraboo was growing, and both companies expanded, with incandescent lighting introduced in 1894.

There was now a name change, for the Baraboo Gas Company now became the Baraboo Gas & Electric Company, having installed its own 425 horsepower engine. Two companies now served the city with 200 kilowatt direct current.

Enter now a third group of citizens in 1893, choosing as their name the Baraboo Light, Heat, & Power Company, with alternating current. The confusion was alleviated the next year when all three companies were consolidated into the Baraboo Gas & Electric Company.

Now there was another change, for the inefficient and limited gas-producing naphthalene process was replaced by a coal gas plant with a purifying process that produced clean burning gas for lighting homes

and streets.

Further consolidation in 1911 brought alternating current to all subscribers, plus twenty-four hour service. It is hard to realize, but in general the power plants had shut down for the night in the late evening! It should be noted that the cost of electricity dropped during this time period, from 20 cents per kilowatt to 14 cents. We pay much less than that now, of course.

Expansion

Up to this time there had been street lighting for some 20 years, counting the occasional gas light and then the few lights from the McArthur dam in 1887. Now, in 1914, a real electric street lighting program began, using cement poles (as we do today) and open overhead wiring, which we don't use today, at least in the business section.

Gas service expanded rapidly, and by 1915 there were several miles of gas main. If the stove was purchased from the gas company, the service and gas connection was done free. The following year brought more change, and in 1916 for the first time we find the Wisconsin Power & Light & Heat Company entering Baraboo, purchasing and modernizing the facilities.

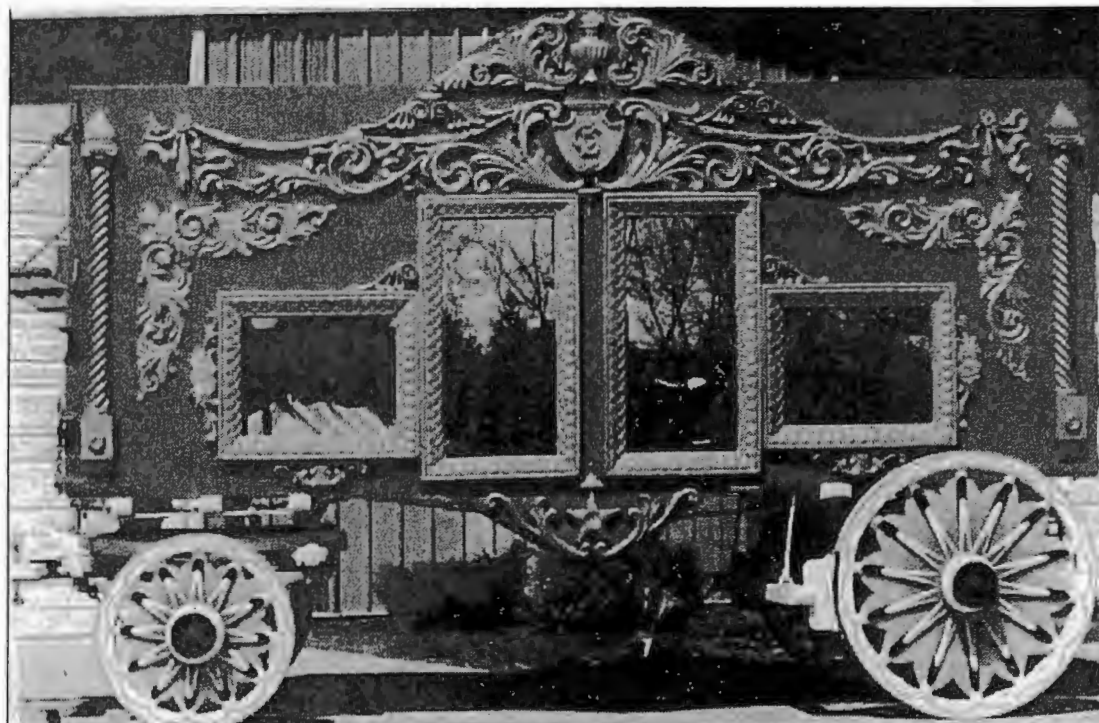
This company developed from a myriad of small locally organized and owned utilities like Baraboo's, and was later under the general ownership and supervision of Samuel Insull, whose empire collapsed dramatically during the Great Depression. The WPL & Heat Company became the Wisconsin Power and Light Company officially in 1924.

Improvements were dramatic, with power lines coming in from Portage and Prairie du Sac and greatly increasing the power sources available to the city. The old steam plant was shut down.

Pollution

In those carefree days, little attention was paid to pollution. The groundwater was pure, the river flowed freely, and the gas plant merrily burned the coal to produce the gas, with its purifying process and the resultant coke residue a seemingly minor annoyance at best.

A coming article will deal more directly with the pollution problem now being addressed on the Baraboo river at the foot of Oak street. It's time to pay the piper for innocent ignorance of pollution problems of the past.



CONTRIBUTED

The #21 Gollmar Brothers Band Tableau, also known as The Gollmar Mirror Bandwagon.

■ At a meeting of the City Council, L. E. Hoyt asked that a franchise be granted him for the privilege of maintaining wires and poles on the streets for an electric light and power plant. Mr. Hoyt expected to build a flouring mill on the site where his mill burned up. There being an abundance of power furnished by this dam, Mr. Hoyt decided to utilize it to the greatest advantage. An ordinance was read and laid over under the rules. 7 Oct

Personal Conduct Rules, circa 1900

Tales of earlier days

By Bob Dewel

We live today in a permissive society. Some say it is the dumbing down of America. Rules of acceptable dress, language, and personal conduct seem to barely exist. Fewer and fewer individuals produce music or other forms of entertainment, it all being fed to us through electronic devices and television. The latter is pervasive and influenced by the advertising mega-corporations of today. Life was very different for our great grandparents, however.

For example let's examine the rules of conduct expected of employees in 1900, as presented in a Ringling circus document. This often had to do not with the person's job in the operation of the circus, but in his relationship with fellow workers, particularly those of the opposite sex. This material is excerpted from a publication labeled "Suggestions and Rules, Employees, Ringling Brothers"

Boy-girl relations

Rules regarding the relations between the sexes among the employees are spelled out in some detail. Male performers "are not to visit with the ballet girls. The excuse of 'accidental' meetings on Sunday, in parks, at picture shows, etc., will not be accepted. "

The ballet girls, in turn, are exhorted "not to dress in flashy loud style". They must not stop at hotels at any time. They cannot even visit with relatives, etc., in cities where the show appears without the permission of the Ballet Master.

If you think that is tough, consider this rule: "You are not permitted to talk or visit with male members of the Show Company, excepting the management, and under no circumstances with the residents of the cities visited. The excuse of "accidental" meetings will not be accepted." In addition, "you must not go in the big dressing room."

Male restrictions

Many rules seem to be aimed at male employees, including performers. One must not sit cross legged, and should "button up coats, etc". No chewing of gum or tobacco, even in the parade, and you should not nod to friends or acquaintances in the audience while performing..

Other rules: Do not play ball in the back yard (of the main tent), do not charge interest on loans made to other employees. Do not clean teeth at wash bowls. Coats must be worn in the dining tent at all times. No liquors or intoxicants in the dressing rooms, or strangers or fiends in those rooms either. Employees must even not pass by the front gate!

The above is a sampling of the rules for employees in the Ringling operation in about 1900. The Ringling show was sometimes referred to as a "Sunday School" circus, because of their rules of conduct and their genuine effort to rid the circus of pickpockets and swindlers. It is said that their German immigrant father, August, reluctantly gave the boys his blessing on the understanding that they would run an honest and clean show

Schoolteacher Restrictions

Lest one think that such strict rules of conduct were confined to the circus, consider the rules in those supposedly halcyon days for school teachers. In an article several years ago (III-10), we wrote of the severe restrictions there were on the personal life of both male and female teachers.

In 1872, for example, female teaches "who marry or engage in unseemingly conduct will be discharged...after 10 hours in school the

teacher may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books. Male teachers could "use one evening a week for courting, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly". Male teachers were not to be shaved in a barber shop, however! Apparently there were bad influences in barber shops!

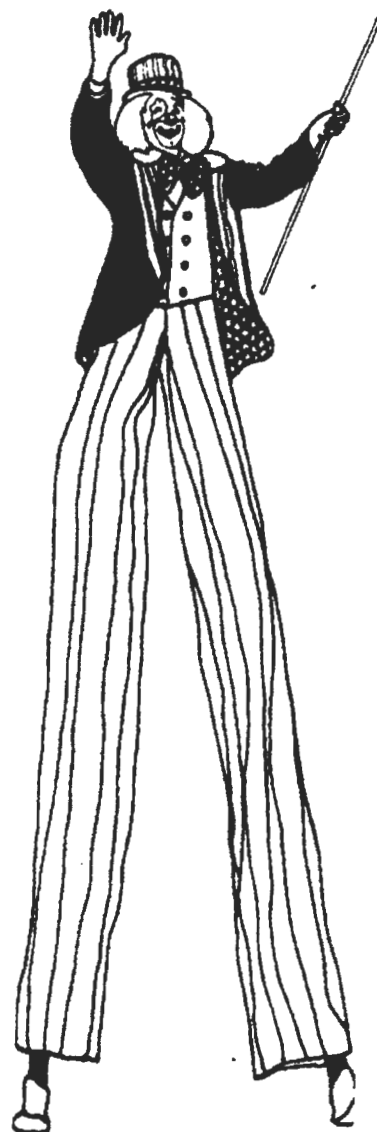
Even by 1915, some time after the Ringling rules quoted above, female teachers were not to wear skirts slit to expose the ankles. Marriage was forbidden, and they were not allowed to join any women's movement such as the suffragettes. Women teachers could not marry or "keep company with men (or) loiter downtown in ice cream stores...or travel beyond the city limits". In 1917, teachers were only paid \$50 per month, and even in 1962 the rural school teacher was only paid \$350 per month. How cheap can we be with our education professionals?

It is said that the human experience in history swings from one extreme to the other. The rules for the Ringling employers and the schoolteachers seem archaic today as we experiment with permissiveness. The time may come when future generations will scoff at our sloppy and sometimes revealing manner of dressing, our dependence on canned and sometimes obscene music and other "cultural" forms, and our permissive personal relationships.

Like the pendulum on a clock, there is a time when the extreme swings of the weight balance for a moment in the center. We submit that the Depression days were one of those times, when women were finding freedom from the oppressiveness of former times, yet retained the mystery and dignity of their sex. Males proved their personal merit the war which followed, but then the pendulum began to swing toward the permissiveness and cultural shallowness we often see today.

Will the pendulum of human experience swing back and stop at a

happy medium? On the other hand, some today still advocate extreme legal restrictions in personal matters such as abortion, gay rights, contraception, stem cell research, etc. Hopefully the pendulum will not swing too far and revert to new restrictions similar to the Ringling regulations and the school teacher's rules. Wise heads will hopefully find acceptable modern compromises in such matters of personal decision.



SUGGESTIONS AND RULES EMPLOYEES RINGLING BROTHERS

The object of these rules and suggestions is not to limit the employees in the enjoyment of their rights, but rather to promote harmony and goodwill, and to co-operate with our employees in conducting our institution in a business-like, high-standard manner.

The personal appearance and behavior of each individual is important, not only in so far as the relations of employee with employee are concerned, but equally as much for the impression we make on the public. We should want the "town folks" to feel that the "show folks" are real men and women and ladies and gentlemen as well.

Undoubtedly few of us would adopt a course opposite to some of the rules given; however, the rules are made to protect the majority against imposition by the few who might thoughtlessly annoy and disturb:

1. Be cleanly and neat in dress and avoid loud display.
2. Absence from work will not be permitted without making arrangement with your department head. If this is not possible and you are unavoidably absent, you must send information at the earliest possible moment in order that your place may be filled; and on your return, immediately give explanation of cause of absence. In case you should be ill and not able to leave the cars, you must immediately notify the head-porter, who will send a message to the show grounds.
3. No employee will be permitted to loan money to other employees and receive any profit from the transaction.
4. Gambling, especially in the cars or near the cars, on or near the show ground, is strictly prohibited.

IN THE CARS

5. No pet animals, revolvers, intoxicants or inflammables allowed in the sleeping cars. Candles must not be used in the cars; if an individual light is wanted, supply a "flash light" type electric. No others will be allowed.
6. No smoking in cars at any time.
7. Loud talking, singing, playing upon musical instruments, or disturbing noises in or near the cars must stop at 11 P. M.
8. Do not clean teeth at wash-bowls.
9. Cooking is prohibited in the cars.
10. Be considerate in using toilet rooms.

CAUTION—Look both ways; be careful in crossing railroad tracks or in walking upon same.

AT THE DINING TENT

11. No dogs allowed in the dining room during meal time.
12. Coats must be worn in the dining room at meal time.
13. When the "HOTEL" flag is up the meal is ready; when the blue flag is up the meal is over.
14. No food nor dishes can be taken from the dining room without permission.
15. Drinking glasses are thoroughly washed and rinsed. Do not waste water washing them at the drinking tank.
16. People bringing friends into dining room to eat will purchase meal tickets at the commissary wagon.
17. MEAL HOURS: Breakfast will be over at 9:15, excepting on late arrival of show. Lunch will be over at 12:45 noon.
18. People will remain outside the guard rope until the flag is raised.

Since you have chosen to travel with the circus, it is evident that your success depends upon the success of circuses in general, and the one by which you are employed in particular. Therefore, the greater the success of the circus, and especially the part of that success to which you contribute, the better it is for you and the more valuable you will be in your profession.—Don't overlook this point—do your best—it is for you first and the company second.

All the foregoing rules and suggestions will also apply for the government

of the Ballet Girls. In addition thereto the following special rules are given for their guidance:

1. Do not dress in a flashy, loud style; be neat and modest in appearance.
2. You are required to be in the sleeping car and register your name not later than 11 P. M. and not to leave car after registering.
3. Girls must not stop at Hotels at any time.
4. You are not permitted to visit with relatives, etc., in cities where show appears without permission from Ballet Master.
5. You are not permitted to talk or visit with male members of the Show Company, excepting the management, and under no circumstances with residents of the cities visited.
6. The excuse of "accidental" meetings will not be accepted.
7. You must be in the ballet dressing room at 1 o'clock for matinee and at 7 o'clock P. M. for night performance.
8. You must not go into the big dressing room.

NOTE—If some of the rules seem harsh and exacting, please remember—experience has taught the management that they are necessary. It is intended to protect the girls in every possible way. Good order and good behavior are necessary, if you are to be comfortable and happy. The management urges each girl to live up to the spirit of the rules as well as to the letter.

TO PERFORMERS

19. Take the same care of company wardrobe as you do of your own; do not sit on dirty boxes, pedestals, wagons, the ground, etc., while wearing spectacle costumes.
20. Ladies must return bundled wardrobe to wardrobe mistress as soon as possible.
21. Gentlemen must fold costumes and place in proper location.

22. Do not bring any liquors or intoxicants into the dressing rooms.
23. Remain outside of Big Tent until time for your act or assistance.
24. Do not take strangers or friends into dressing rooms without permission.
25. Cooking, making tea or coffee will not be allowed in dressing rooms.
26. In going from dressing tents to dining tents do not pass through the menagerie or circus tents, and never pass through the main entrance.
27. Do not chew gum while taking part in spectacle.
28. Male performers are not to visit with the ballet girls. The excuse of "accidental" meetings on Sunday, in parks, at picture shows, etc., will not be accepted.
29. The use of alcohol or gasoline irons for pressing is strictly prohibited on show grounds or in the cars.
30. Do not lounge in wardrobe department of dressing rooms.
31. Do not practice or rehearse in main tent after 6:30 P. M.
32. Do not change position of trunks as placed in the dressing room.
33. Do not play ball in the main tent or "back yard."
34. Employees listed for Street Parade must be dressed and ready to "mount" at 10 o'clock A. M., unless notified to report earlier.
35. Do not run horses to "catch up" in parade—be on hand in time.
36. Do not sit "cross-legged" on floats or tableaux wagons.
37. Button up coats, etc.
38. Absolutely, do not chew (gum or tobacco) or smoke in parade.
39. Do not make remarks to anyone while in parade or talk to employees who are ahead of you or follow you in parade.
40. Report to the management at once any accident you may observe which may have been caused by the parade.
41. Do not loiter about the "front" of the show grounds.
42. Do not nod to friends or acquaintances who may be in the audience.
43. Avoid arguments with other employees. Be agreeable and promote harmony.

HOW THEY CELEBRATED THE FOURTH IN THE OLD DAYS

Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

In the early days in Baraboo, the Fourth of July was celebrated with both

patriotism and gusto. In fact, they once set fire to the old courthouse roof!

On another occasion they mistakenly burned down a row of frame buildings on

the north side of the square! But they were also super-patriotic. Read on!

The Fourth of July is Thursday this year. As usual we will all trek to the Newman athletic field for the excellent band, the glorious singers, and the fireworks. It is all really nice, but as far as celebrating the Declaration of Independence, it's not what they used to do.

Actually, the Fourth does not celebrate the birth of our country, and it may not even be the right date. The Declaration of Independence, in 1776, was a joint statement of thirteen former colonies who now considered themselves to be thirteen nations. They agreed to work together for independence, to be sure, but not to form one nation.

The Constitution

It would be 11 more years before our nation would be founded by the proposal and eventual adoption of our Constitution, uniting the thirteen "nations" into one nation. Its first reading was September 18, 1787, but it was July 29, 1790 before New York "agreed sulkily to ratify." It was May 29, 1790 before Rhode Island "decided at last to join the union". Quotes are from "The Grand Convention" by Clinton Rossiter.

Not generally remembered is that neither Adams nor Jefferson was at the Constitutional Convention, and Washington had not stayed at the Declaration of Independence. Only the ubiquitous Benjamin Franklin, of all the major Founding Fathers, was present at and participated vigorously in both the Declaration and the Constitutional conventions.

So, if we want to celebrate the birth of our Country, perhaps Sept. 18 should be the day. Our remarkable Constitution has endured, with minor tweaking, for well over 200 years. It was not perfect. It did not address the slavery question, and would be tested in 1860-65 by the Civil War. Other crises have tested it in our time, when Nixon tried to circumvent it in Watergate, and Reagan in Iran-Contra.

The Constitution was written in strictest secrecy—no open meeting laws then. It mentions neither God nor the Christian Religion. It was only ratified by some states on the promise of enactment of a Bill of Rights, our first ten amendments, guaranteeing freedom for and from religion, a free press, and many others not mentioned in the original document. But all of this happened in 1787, not 1776.

The Fourth in 1900

So it appears that on the Fourth of July we celebrate what amounts to a declaration of war, not the founding of a great nation. It may be that our ancestors understood this better than we do, for we lack the soaring renditions in sonorous tones of the Declaration of Independence, or a public reading of Tom Paine's essay, "Common Sense". There were fireworks usually, as suggested by stuffy John Adams, but they were more of a finale than the main event.

Thanks to the Southard scrapbooks at the Sauk County Historical Society, we have several accounts of the celebrations of a century or more ago. What a day it was in 1900, when the attached photo was taken. There



Sauk County Historical Society Photo
Supplied by Bill Schuette

A Fourth of July Parade, perhaps 1900?



Sauk County Historical Society

This is the way Baraboo used to celebrate the Fourth of July way back when. Unfortunately the date was not on this old photograph but most of the oldtimers we have talked to estimate it to be about 1900, and a check of the old files of this paper show that a celebration was held that year, and none had been held for at least four years previously so it seems likely that this picture was made in 1900. It would seem that the picture was taken from the site of the present First National bank, looking west down Third avenue and with the Baptist church spire in the distance. The sign atop the Calvadtischer Fair store shows that store still in the same location.

"Baraboo Celebrate" About 1900. Have Planned Day in Old City was the way the headlines read in our old files of July, 1900, while a subhead comments, "The automobile is attraction."

The editor went on to say that the celebration was in the old manner, one of the best Baraboo has

hurt
The parade started at 10:30, starting from Ringling Bros. headquarters with Marshall Davis at the head, followed by Mayor Luckow and E. L. Ross in the latter's trap, then came the band. The automobile came next and proved an interesting feature to those who had never seen one. The Columbian quartet had seats in the automobile.

"A Reinking's float was tastily arranged and a number of little girls were showing drygoods. Lee and English's display was most imposing a furnace in full blast beside a wheel range and boys busily engaged as though they were in a hardware store.

The Woodmen of the World had a fine display with emblems of the order. J. Hoppe's float represented his clothing store and was very good. Ed. Barstow had a nice display of flour, characteristic of his business. Marriott Bros. had an airship of 1920. Will Marriott with an Andrea wheel was the motor power and this ship an-

told of Mr. Allen's clothing business. The clown band was very good and there was a creature in a cage, captured in the wilds of Skillet Creek. Lastly came the Indians, a pony hitched between two poles pulling the papoose.

"After the parade the band mounted to the band stand and played until dinner time. On account of the excessive heat the races were cut short. The bicycle race was won by Will Marriott; Wesley Lueder second and E. Noyse third. The foot race was won by Irwin Robinson; C. Link second and J. Kaercher third.

"In the evening there was a sham battle by the members of Joe Hooker's company. The first to fly, and the exhibition was

anticipated, out of 3 or 400 members only a few were out.

"The fireworks were necessarily cut short on account of fun having been exhausted before the part of the celebration had been planned for. However, the private display was very good."

Rare undated photo. Fourth of July? Fourth Ave. looking West

Baptist Church steeple in the distance

Best Available Photo

were bicycle and foot and horse races, a sham battle by the Civil War veterans, and the catching of a greased pig.

The Clown Band played, and the extensive parade featured not only horse-drawn floats, but also one of the new-fangled horseless carriages. All of this took place with the temperature at 102 degrees. Unfortunately, "the fireworks were necessarily cut short on account of funds having been exhausted...however, the private display was very good." Some 6000 persons are said to have been in Baraboo for the events.

The Fourth in 1852

Going back another half century, Baraboo in 1852 was little more than a lumbering and milling village, though there were enough men to organize a Masonic Lodge, as related in another article. American pride in the Declaration of Independence, then only 76 years old, glowed brightly. Part of the day was a combined Sunday Schools event, featuring a march with patriotic banners, speeches, and a picnic in a nearby grove of trees.

In the evening there was a big bonfire on the courthouse square, during which candle wicks soaked in kerosene were lighted and thrown about. The courthouse roof was set on fire, but a bucket brigade of volunteers succeeded in putting it out.

Other 19th Century Celebrations

One year there were competing celebrations on the square, one being about where the Al Ringling stands today. This was conducted by a temperance group, called Cochrainites after a local temperance minister. Across the street west of the courthouse was another group, called the rummies due to alcoholic beverages being served. It was said that epithets were hurled at each other.

Not to be outdone, a celebration a few years later resulted in the fire alarm bell being sounded at 2 A.M., "for the frame row (of buildings) on the north side of the public square was

in a blaze. We had no fire equipment, only buckets and ladders, and the whole frame (block) was burned down". It is believed that a skyrocket started the fire. It was in one of these years that Baraboo heard the first public address by a woman, Maria Crandall, on July 4, 1862.

In today's strange and baffling war, some Americans are required by Attorney General John Ashcroft and the administration to yield up some of our Bill of Rights freedoms, as we lash out at an elusive enemy of terrorists. There is a rising tide of opinion that this is unconstitutional, and a mockery of the Bill of Rights. We can ponder this as we celebrate our Nation and its freedoms.

A carriage without a horse, built in Baraboo

by Bob Dewel

We are indebted to Mr. Marshall Shanks of Baraboo for the information in this sesquicentennial article.

In 1901 the vast automobile industry of today could not have been imagined. There were, however, pioneers who were fascinated with the idea of building a carriage without horses, a carriage that was self-propelled.

Among the tinkerers, besides Ford of course, were men with names like Chrysler, Dodge, Sarnum, and Tavich.

Sarnum?? Yes, C.H. Sarnum of Baraboo, Wisconsin! This is documented in Motor Age magazine in August, 1901.

And Arthur Tavich? Tavich built a "horseless carriage" in 1908 in Baraboo. He sold it to a Dr. English, who planned to promote the car for manufacture. Apparently no more was heard from Dr. English.

Tavich then created a railway motorized runabout that was a commercial success. By the way, he also invented a garage door opener in those early days!

Marshall Shanks

The above information can be found in a paper prepared recently by Baraboo resident Marshall Shanks. Shanks speaks with authority, for he recently retired from an executive position with the Ford Motor Company. His title was Executive Assistant to the VP/General Manager, Phil Benton. Benton became President of Ford Motor Company.

Shanks' work concluded each year with a two-hour presentation to the company president, at one time Lee Iacocca, with Shanks and Iacocca as the principal participants. Because of his position in the automobile industry, Shanks developed an interest in the history of motorized transportation from the days of the horseless carriage to the present time.

As Shanks relates it, it would appear that Baraboo mechanics Sarnum and Tavich were not alone in their efforts, for there are estimates of as many as 5000 automobiles projected or built in the United States. Most were never put into production, but at the turn of the century the race to build cars reached a fever pitch.

built in Baraboo



This was a typical scene on Fourth Street at the time C.H. Sarnum was building his horseless carriage for Dr. English. The building on the right is now Terri's Cafe. It was a tavern then, and the proprietor's name was George Wagen Breth. the beer kegs are from Effinger's Brewery

Production of a model usually occurred in a small machine shop, a carriage maker's shop or even in a bicycle shop. Indeed, the early cars were made to look like the carriages people were used to, but minus the horses. To us today the shapes look ridiculous, but to folks in those days the carriage design seemed natural. When a breakdown occurred to one of the vehicles, the sidewalk hecklers always shouted, "Get a Horse!"

Early builders whose product survived include not only Ford, but Buick and Dodge, dating to 1903, so Sarnum's product predated those two familiar names. Chevrolet did not make an appearance until 1912, while

once prestigious names like Packard, Studebaker, Hupmobile, Essex and Auburn were created even later, but are no longer produced.

In Wisconsin, there were some 170 models created, spurred by the fact that the state had designated a \$10,000 prize to be awarded to those who "did the most to remove animal powered vehicles from the roads."

In Kilbourn, now Wisconsin Dells, the Marshall Machine Shop built one car, called the Marshall. Other Wisconsin cars include the Jeffrey, which became the Nash company, the Johnson and the Eclipse, the latter being the first left-hand steering automobile, now standard. There was also the Smith Flyer, and that company evolved into the A.O. Smith Co.

Nearly all the efforts, including those of Sarnum and Tavich, were doomed to failure, for the builders failed to concentrate, as Ford had, on an efficient manufacturing process for economical production. Management skills and capitalization were not the forte of

Philip Whitney of Portage

The Shanks family has a personal relationship with the early automobile industry in South Central Wisconsin, for Mrs. Shanks is the granddaughter of Philip Whitney of Portage. Mr. Whitney was an engineer for the Portage Woolen Mill at the turn of the century, and was expected to construct a replacement part when a machine failed. His mechanical skills were combined with an intense interest in the new gasoline engines, especially as a power source for farm water pumps. He also developed an inboard motor boat which plied the waters of the Wisconsin River in those early days.

At that time, and into the 1920s, a car had to be cranked by hand to start it. When cold, this often resulted in a loud exhaust bang and a flying crank handle which could break a man's arm.



The center building in this picture is the one where the delivery on the previous page was being made. This picture is much earlier however, and the empty lot shown here was yet to be built upon.

Whitney applied his genius to the development of a spark advance that would allow the starting spark to be retarded and allow a smoother start. Two wooden models survive as part of the device, wooden models being employed in those early days to help visualize a working part.

In 1902 Ford representatives approached Mr. Whitney with the opportunity to join in forming the Ford Motor Company, investing a small amount of money and bringing his invention and inventive genius into the organization. Whitney declined, however, as he didn't want to leave Portage and resisted investing his money in such a dubious enterprise!

Unfortunately, like Benjamin Franklin, Whitney did not patent his inventions. Many years later, Ford established the Ford Museum in Greenfield Village and invited Mr. Whitney to allow his Portage shop to be moved there. Again, Mr. Whitney declined, as his shop was where he still spent a large part of his time and life.

It is not recorded whether any Wisconsin resident was ever awarded the \$10,000 prize, and the pioneer automobiles of Sauk and Columbia Counties are gone, as are the builders and their dreams. Our area was not to see the great factories of the automobile age, with its unheard of wages of \$5 a day. Nor would we see the labor troubles of the Depression years, nor the great smokestacks!

Perhaps it is just as well, for the canoe-shaped Baraboo Valley remains almost as verdant and pristine as in the days when Sarnum and Tavich and Whitney were tinkering in their machine shops.

There is, however, a postscript to this story, with regard to the Dr. English who purchased Tavich's horseless carriage. He was mentioned as not being heard from again after receiving delivery of the vehicle.

However, the 1896 city directory lists a Dr. John E. English as a physician with offices at 501 Oak Street, and residence at 326 Fourth Avenue. Dr. English apparently did not disappear with Tavich's car, or if he did, he soon returned, for he is listed in the 1904 city directory as still practicing in the same location. The fate of Tavich's car is not known, unless the rats at the old city dump know.

It was an interesting time to be living in Baraboo. Dr. English's car was a novelty, for even the Ringling and Gollmar circuses still used horses for personal carriages and for loading flat cars when the circus left in the spring.

All winter the performers had honed their acts in the ring barn. The animal barns were heated only by the body heat of the camels, elephants and other beasts. All over town, seamstresses had been working on the elaborate and colorful costumes for the show, and in the spring the Ringlingville and Gollmar areas presented a colorful atmosphere of anticipation for the coming season. It was a major industry and gave prestige to Baraboo.

There is a story of how Gus Ringling was sent to Milwaukee by the brothers to buy

five of the new horseless carriages, probably Buicks. The price agreed on was between two and three thousand dollars, but when Gus produced a huge roll of bills, the dealer was suspicious, and called a banker over to verify their authenticity!

It took eight hours to drive the cars from Milwaukee to Baraboo, after scarce qualified drivers had been rounded up locally. Some were then hired by the Ringlings permanently.

There were other exciting things for Baraboo in this period of time. Devils Lake was converted to a state park in 1911, and a fine new library had been built in 1905 with funds from an Andrew Carnegie gift, a building still extant and impressive. A handsome classical style courthouse arose on the square to replace the burned-out brick building in 1904.

A new high school, now the Civic Center, rose in 1907, and the first hospital appeared in 1913.

Much credit for the prosperity of the community was due to its selection as division point for the Chicago and Northwestern railway. A handsome depot was built

in 1901, and there were up to 12 trains a day each direction, plus many freight trains.

The railroad had first come in 1870, thanks to a generous donation by the city council and other government bodies along the route, and the railroad was often the largest employer in town. There was a hanging footbridge across the Baraboo River, near the foot of Victoria Street, so engineers and roundhouse employees could quickly cross to their homes on the north side of the river. Even the first mayor of the chartered village had been one of the engineers.

It was a glorious time for Baraboo, with the future looking bright. The scene was capped in 1915 by Al. Ringling's glorious masterpiece, the Al. Ringling Theatre.

Unforeseen, however, were clouds on the horizon, beginning near the end of the second decade of the century, events which would slow the exuberance of the bustling community.



Contributed photo from Mrs. Catherine Rinkob
The intersection of Oak and Fourth Streets. Dr. English had to drive his car around this street marker, called the Iron Policeman. It now rests in Ochsner Park near the corner of Eighth Avenue and Park Street. The monument indicates that it marked the junction of Highway 12 and 33 in downtown Baraboo.

• C H Farnum was pleased with his new Oldsmobile and gave many residents a ride. To give it a severe test in hill climbing a representative of the *Republic* accompanied Arthur Lanich on a short trip on the south side. The most severe test was in going up Vine street from the depot where the pitch is nearly 40 degrees. The machine made it very nicely. Farnum and Lanich later went on a nine-mile trip over the west Sauk Road. The trip over took them 45 minutes while the trip back took them 55 minutes because of the head wind. The new machine was a winner.

Nov 1906

100 years ago this week BMR 2-27-07

■ A. S. Lanich opened an automobile garage at 131 Fourth St., in the Baraboo Telephone Co.'s building next to the city hall. He installed a machine shop in the basement. Besides having a lot of small tools, he added a 16 inch by 7 foot automatic lathe, drill press, emery wheels, forage, etc., so that he had a very complete shop for repairing automobiles and general machine work.

Kathy Waddell is a guest columnist for the Baraboo News Republic, which is a member of Central Wisconsin Newspapers.

Thanksgiving was Different in 1902 Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

Well, it is Thanksgiving time, and again we will retell the story of the Pilgrims, and how they celebrated their first harvest by inviting the Native Americans as guests. The Pilgrims in their clean starched clothes were a contrast to the nearly naked Indians. The Indians were dazzled by the tables groaning with the weight of such wondrous food as squash, corn, pumpkins, and Turkey.

Right? Well, not exactly. Fact is, all those exotic foods were "exclusively indigenous to the Americas and had been provided by or with the aid of the local tribe", according to James W. Loemen in the book "Lies My Teacher Taught Me". The World Book even says that the Indians brought the turkey, and also venison!

Loemen says that it was the Pilgrims that were dazzled by the food, unknown in Europe. He says that Squanto, the Indian sent by the tribe to help the Pilgrims, taught them how to plant corn and where to fish. This despite the charge that four days after their arrival the Pilgrims had robbed Indian graves and stolen corn, wheat and beans left there to be used by the deceased in the hereafter.

All of this is not to put down giving thanks to God or Nature for a bountiful harvest and a successful year. For centuries, humans in virtually all cultures have done so. But the Pilgrim Governor Bradford jumped the gun, for he proclaimed that Thanksgiving Day be July 30, well before the harvest had begun!

Washington suggested several days of thanks, after battles especially, but it was not until 1863 that President Lincoln "when the Union needed all the

patriotism it could muster", proclaimed Thanksgiving as a national holiday.

Well, the Pilgrim story aside, we can thank our grandparents and great grandparents for Thanksgiving as we know it, and visualize them with their table loaded with squash, pumpkin, corn, and turkey, can't we? Well, not exactly.

The Nation in 1902

Let's go back to life in 1902, 100 years ago. Thanksgiving that year was on November 27, but the daily Evening News has nary a mention of the holiday in all 6 issues prior to Thanksgiving. None of the merchants were having a Thanksgiving sale, the traditional opening of Christmas shopping today. Church service notices were routine, with no mention of a joint service or of any service regarding Thanksgiving.

So what was going on in 1902? Not very much, according to the Evening News, which was only concerned with a potential strike in the Appalachian coal mines—everyone heated with coal then, and a strike might mean higher prices. Wages in those days ran between 22 cents and 78 cents per hour. This came to about \$400 per year income for a laborer.

There is an e-mail making the rounds, and its facts are probably close to the truth. Some 24 statements about life in 1902 are made. Consider the following: Only 14 % of the homes had a bathtub, and only 8% had telephones. There were only about 8000 automobiles in the country, with only 144 miles of paved roads.

Iowa was more populated than California. So was Tennessee. The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was only 60 persons. In the entire country there were only 230 reported murders. More than 95 % of all births took place in the home. Women washed their hair about once a month, using borax and egg yolks for shampoo.

There was no Mother's Day, nor Father's Day. Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high

school. Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea had not yet been invented. The average life expectancy was 47 years, with diarrhea a more common cause of death than heart disease or stroke. The speed limit in most cities was 10 mile per hour. Sugar was four cents a pound. Eggs were 14 cents a dozen, and coffee cost 15 cents per pound.

Life was a Challenge

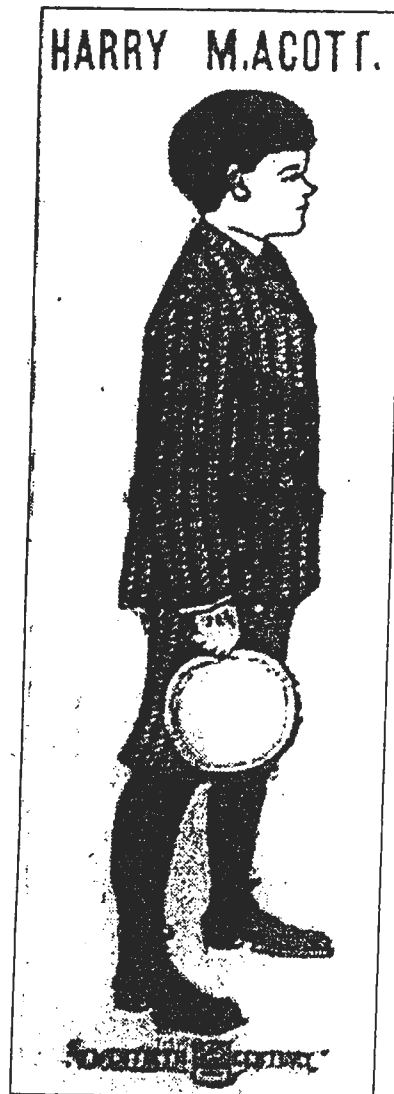
So in many ways it was a different and difficult world then. Times were tough even in good times, with businessmen putting in long and tedious hours, and their women working equally hard to run the household—scrub boards in place of our automatic washers, for example. We suspect they found ways to give thanks, and things for which to give thanks.

We notice that the Evening News did not publish a paper on the 27th, Thanksgiving Day. Funny they didn't mention it all week though. Apparently Thanksgiving was not a very big deal in 1902.

Speaking of Christmas Shopping, Bob Dewel's 108 page book, "Yesteryear Revisited in 2002", is now available by calling the writer at 356-3791. This is volume five in a series, and contains his 34 most recent articles plus additional pictures and an index. Supplies are very limited for the \$15 book.

Harry M. Alcott was selling this outfit for boys in 1902. Called the Twentieth Century Creedmore, it was "as full of style and character

as a boy is full of pranks. It sets off any boy" Sure does! Notice the high top shoes.



CONTRIBUTED

Harry M. Alcott was selling this outfit for boys in 1902, as shown in a newspaper advertisement. Called the Twentieth Century Creedmore, it was "as full of style and character as a boy is full of pranks. It sets off any boy." Sure does! Notice the high top shoes.

By Bob Dewel

April 17, 1901 was an important day in Baraboo, for the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Lodge 688 was chartered here with 44 original members as its nucleus. Regarding its installation on April 26, the Baraboo News reported that "the city is full of visitors here for the installation of the Baraboo Elks Lodge tonight."

That beginning will be celebrated on October 20 with a dinner and program at the Elks Lodge meeting hall, open to the public. Following refreshments at 5:30 and dinner at 7, Jerry Stitch's orchestra will play for dancing during the evening.

Another Lodge?

It must have taken real dedication for the promoters to organize and install another lodge in Baraboo in 1901, for the city was teeming with fraternal groups. Already celebrating its 50th anniversary that year was the large and influential Masonic Lodge.

There also were up to a dozen fraternal insurance groups associated with the railroad, such as the Brotherhoods of Railroad Trainmen, engineers, firemen, conductors, etc. as well as other groups such as the Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, and Woodmen of America.

Thus it seemed that the men of the city were already well organized, as were the women, mostly in church circles and relief or mission organizations. In those days of no radio, or television,

and with motion pictures in their infancy, groups such as this were the entertainment venue of the day.

It is obvious, though, that those 44 men had seen a niche to be filled, an opportunity to be taken, and public service to be rendered, so they had successfully petitioned for a charter. Elkdom would supply an unfilled need in the city.

Early Meeting Places

M.H. Morey was the first Exalted Ruler, with H.M. Alcott as the first secretary, followed for many years by Adolph Andro, who also served as Mayor of the city for a time. An examination of the founding roster reveals an impressive list of the civic leaders of the day. The Elks were off to a significant start.

None of the groups had a separate building, except for the Masons, most organizations meeting in lodge halls upstairs over some business. The original Elk meetings were held in the Knights of Pythias rooms on the second floor of 127 Third Street. Rental was \$100 per year, and Friday night was Elks night. Though Elk club rooms were established at 106 Fourth Avenue in 1911, meetings continued in the K.P. hall until 1913, on the second floor at 117 Third Street.

The Ringling House

By 1936 the expanding lodge was bursting at the seams, and a major purchase was made--the acquisition of the 30 year old Al. Ringling mansion on the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and Broadway.

Completed in 1906 by Baraboo contractor George Isenberg, Al's widow had vacated the home after his death in 1915, it being too large for her. For several years following, it was owned and occupied by Al's sister, Ida Ringling North. There she raised her two teenage sons of later circus fame, John Ringling North and Henry Ringling North.

By 1927, however, Ida was persuaded to move nearer to the circus headquarters in Sarasota, Florida. There being no use for such a mansion in Baraboo, the home was scheduled to be demolished and a wrecker was actually in the city on October 24, 1927 to begin the demolition. The News-Republic stated that the work was beginning that day, but denied that the house would be reassembled in Madison as a fraternity house.

Community pride was aroused at the prospect of the loss of Baraboo's most imposing home, and three days later the newspaper headline announced that the "Chamber of Commerce has secured temporary suspension of the razing of the Ringling house", the plan being to take it over for civic purposes.

The Kiwanis Club appointed a prestigious committee to negotiate a solution. The purchase price was said to be \$30,000, of which Ida would "donate" \$10,000, reducing the price to \$20,000. Ida and her daughter Salome were leaving Baraboo for good the following Wednesday.

Ideas for the house included possible use by the county historical society or the American Legion. Just what happened has not been determined, but demolition

was halted and it appears the building stood empty for nine years. Apparently no taxes were paid on the property during that time, and the accumulated taxes and interest amounted to some \$6000.

The Purchase

In October, 1936, the vigorous and growing Elks lodge purchased the mansion, the price being reported as low as \$7000 and as high as \$15,000, these being in Depression dollars. Dedication was January 14, 1937, Exalted Ruler L.C. Welch being a prime mover in the purchase and subsequent renovation. Membership increased, especially during WWII and the Powder Plant operation.

The acquisition was quite elegant for the Lodge. The Romanesque Revival building, faced with Superior brownstone, presented a potpourri of European motifs, with its English vestibule and great hall and library, the French Louis XIV drawing room, Gothic dining room, Dutch billiard room, and conservatory. The stable was as large as an ordinary house. The Lodge has made significant restorations, both exterior and interior over the years to the main edifice, at no small cost.

In the late 1940's the large \$250,000 addition to the west of the home was made, providing a large meeting hall with bowling lanes in the lower level. Care was taken in razing the stable to save and re-use the brown stone as a facing on that part of the addition facing Broadway, near the porte cochere, a testimonial to the care by the Lodge in its

stewardship of the building.

Like any structure, maintenance has been a continual challenge, and in recent years roofing, tuckpointing and painting have served to preserve the building. On the interior, restoration has been completed on some of the rooms, keeping the decor authentic to the time of Al and Lou's occupation. The Elks Ladies Auxillary has been especially active in the restoration and refurbishing effort. The edifice has served the Lodge for the past 65 years, and its restoration and preservation has been a fine service to the city as well as to the Elks.

Public Service

But there is far more to an Elks lodge than its building, however grand or humble. The Lodge's commitment to youth is well illustrated by the decades-old Christmas party, formerly held at the Al. Ringling, with Santa traditionally appearing in the fireplace after an apparent slide down a chimney. Charter member Fred Morey is credited for being the guiding force behind this tradition.

Flag Day has been an important time for the Elks, beginning in 1939 as war in Europe threatened to involve us. A scholarship is presented each year, and funds for medical care, food, and clothing were a tradition long before government welfare programs took over.

In recent years the Lodge has participated in a statewide program in association with Camp Waubeek, called Respite Center. There parents of



LADIES SITTING ROOM



LADIES SITTING ROOM



LIBRARY



LIBRARY

loved ones with a disability can have a few days of much-needed break from their usual 24 hours a day responsibility as caregivers.

Even the non-disabled siblings of a disabled brother or sister are eligible for the respite program.

Like many other organizations, the Elks do not publicize their good deeds from the rooftops, but those 44 men in 1901 were right, there was a niche to be filled in Baraboo. While many of the old fraternal lodges are gone, the Elks have survived and filled that niche for a century. And in doing so, they saved Baraboo's most prestigious private home from demolition!

Jerry Johnson requested that the following be added to the story:

The Elks remember the Veterans of all wars with magazines and deer hides that are taken to the Tomah, Wisconsin Veterans Hospital. The brothers also arrange for two buses of Veterans to attend the Circus World Museum and then take them out to lunch.

Photo Courtesy of
James dams



FORMER AL RINGLING HOME



*Baraboo High A School before
the 1905 fire*



Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Devel

Remember when the old folks used to talk nostalgically about the good old days? Remember how they reminisced about Christmas and the importance people gave to its religious observance rather than to commercial opportunism? No commercialization of the holy holiday then like they do now, no siree!

Or was there? We decided to compare Christmas 2001 with its counterpart a century ago--Christmas in 1901, as reported in the columns of the Daily News of the day. We arranged to start reading the News from Dec. 1, 1901, and record all the religious observances in the churches, to show that our modern commercialization was not so ubiquitous then.

Well, surprise! Over an hour searching the newspaper files from Dec. 1, 1901 to Jan. 2, 1902 brought no mention of religious observance of Christmas in the churches! The best the News could do, on the day before Christmas, was a 4 line inconspicuous note saying "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to readers of the News, regardless of race or color, regardless of whether the paper was paid for or borrowed." That was it.

Church news? Surely there was church news, but you'd not know it from reading the paper. Only once, early in December, did we find the routine listing of times of services every Sunday for the year. We found no notice of special music, candlelight

services, children's programs, or all the opportunities our modern churches offer around Christmas.. Nor in the public sector were there cantatas or instrumental programs, like the recent flute-harp noon meditation times at the Methodist Church.

Many of the church buildings of today existed then. The Presbyterian steeple dates back to the 1880's, as does the United Church of Christ. The First United Methodists had only been in their new building a year in 1901.

What a difference from today in the News-Republic! The Dec. 1 2001 edition. the most recent available when this article is being written, contains eleven mentions of upcoming Christmas events, plus two color pictures on the front page. If there is that much on Dec. 1, there will surely be lots of Christmas news in the paper before Dec. 25. Included will be ecumenical events, a word not even known to most people in 1901.

So what forerunner of Christmas was there in the entire month of December in 1901? Advertisements! Two column eight inch ads on the front page of the News, listing the wares they had for Christmas gifts. And the first one we saw was from Fred Tobler's liqueur store, suggesting Tom and Jerry mix, wine, rum, claret, and sherry as appropriate gifts. Herfort's store had "a pair of nice suspenders for your husband, or a silk umbrella



CONTRIBUTED

There is no picture of Christmas in 1901. This is how that generation's grandsons celebrated Christmas in 1943.

for your wife" as Christmas ideas. Someone advertised that they would do art needle work to order.

The Ulrich Company would sell silver plated butter knives for \$2 each, while Risleys had "dainty, well-made aprons" for twenty-five cents. Fisher drug suggested cuff and collar button boxes as a gift for a man. Gifts were modest then.

It took J.E. Von Wald to go big, however. He advertised "Don't wear your wife's watch when you can get one at such a reasonable price from my stock...get your wife to make you a holiday gift of one", price not mentioned. Ulrich had them as low as \$11. You could get a Pathfinder cigar for five cents with which to observe the holy day.

So yes, the merchants knew about the Christmas holiday. No doubt the churches did also, but preferred to keep their plans within their own church family, doing what they do best. Religion was not infused into public life then, as some folks would have it be today--the words "under God" would not be added to the patriotic pledge of allegiance until fifty years later, and religion and government were kept separate.

No talk of posting the Ten Commandments in government buildings then, a problem since there are different versions and the government would have to choose which version and sect to favor. There was no national anthem, though most people knew "My Country. 'tis of Thee."

The Daily News of 1901, was not dull reading however. As a result of the McKinley assassination, there was a movement to search and even bar foreign immigrants. New President Theodore Roosevelt's address to Congress was reprinted in full, some 22,000 words, including his vow to bust the trusts of his day----where are you when we need you now, Teddy? Funds were being voted to attempt to breach the Columbian or Nicaraguan isthmus, the successful result being our former Panama Canal. Marconi had succeeded in sending a radio message across the ocean.

The Supreme Court (ours, not theirs) had declared the formerly Spanish Philippine Islands as American Territory, a land in rebellion against us. Moreover, the deal was just about completed to purchase the Danish islands and rename them the Virgin Islands. In Baraboo, a new record of thirty-five degrees below zero was set on December 16. And somewhere, a man had invented an automated phone exchange, which would eventually "put all the lady operators out of business". This took nearly sixty years.

There was no Christmas Light Parade in 1901 to rival our interesting and well-attended parade on November 24 this year, but there is a connection that the folks of 1901 would recognize as normal. One of the floats pulled by horses waited its turn this year in front of our library. Nature took its course and, to put it delicately, the horse droppings are still there 10 days later. This was a normal finding in the streets for the folks in Baraboo in 1901.

THE SOPHOMORE JOURNAL OF 1904
 Yesteryer Revisited
 By Bob Dewel

In a previous article regarding a picture of a 1911 class play, it was mentioned that the high school has relatively few records of the activities of the early classes. Unlike today, there were no "annuals" to chronicle the achievements of a class.

We do have, however, the 1904 Sophomore Journal! Sometime in the past a now unknown donor gave the Sauk County Historical Society (SCHS) a well-preserved copy of the Sophomore Journal of 1904. This document, though devoted principally to literary achievement, is an excellent early version of our modern high school annuals, publications that did not exist in those early days.

Appropriately, the Sophomore Journal is "dedicated to the Citizens of Baraboo, through whose generosity our high school has been so liberally assisted in its onward program". The Journal apparently was an ongoing literary publication, this being a special graduation issue. Included are pictures of all 32 graduates, as well as the school board which consisted of Mrs. Emma Potter, John M. True, C.H. Evenson, and Jacob Van Orden.

The literary compositions included 13 on literature, 5 on nature, 4 on character studies, and 7 storyettes. In addition there is a 12 verse poem of 8 lines each, in perfect rhyme and rhythm. There was also a rather bland editorial.

Class yells and colors

Each class had its own colors, and the 1904 class had chosen turquoise blue and gold, suggestive of our current school colors. At another point, the Journal seems to indicate that the school colors are white and gold.

Each class has its own yell, that of the graduating class being: Bella, Baloo, Baloo, Ballak

Wa Hu, Wa Hu, Kabity

Kak

Razoo, Bazoo, Hippity

Hoo,

High School, High School, Baraboo.

Not to be outdone, the Sophomores came up with the following class yell: U Rah, U Rah, Zip Boom, Zip Boom BA!

We, are, We, are, We are bricks (?)
 Baraboo High School, 1906

If you can handle one more class yell, here is the somewhat more traditional (well, sort of) Junior Class yell:

U Rah Rah, U Rah Rah
 High School High School. Tiger!

Apparently the freshmen just yelled.

The Buildings

All of this occurred in an older high school building, now gone, located between Ash and Oak on Second Street, where the civic center is today. Modest compared to its successor, this building had been built in the eighteenth century, but fire would destroy it in 1905. (USE BEFORE AND AFTER FIRE PIX HERE).)

The red brick building on Oak and Second Street which

replaced the burnt buiding was itself replaced as a high school in 1927 by the present yellow brick civic center on Ash south of Second, designed by architect Louis Claude. Claude, a contemporary and friend of Frank Lloyd Wright, had been raised at the Claude residence, Eagle Craig, on the north shore of Devils Lake.

The red brick building, a junior high since 1929, was torn down in the mid-sixties, at which time the junior high school students took over the yellow brick building. The new and present high school on Draper street had first been occupied in 1963 by the class of 1967.

Back to the comparatively modest building occupied by the Class of 1904, before the fire. It apparently did not have an auditorium, and the Journal shows that the Commencement Lecture on June 5, 1904, and Commencement itself on June 6, were held at the Opera House. This was not the Opera House meeting room of today, but a building on the Northwest Corner of Oak and Fifth which was considerably less pretentious than its name. No grand Al. Ringling Theatre then, of course.

If there was a Baccalaureate religious ceremony, it was not mentioned, being a private function and a matter of Faith, not of public function. There was, however a Class Day at Devils Lake on June 9 consisting of a musical program and a dance. The entire class was also entertained at the Superintendent's home on June 2, with games, refreshments,

and music.

Other Features

Sports were not emphasized in the 1904 Journal, but it does have a page for foot ball (record 1-3), and base ball, (record 3-3). It was foot ball, two words, and base ball, two words, not the one word football and baseball words of today.

There was also a page or two on girl's athletics, stating that "the girl of today (1904) is more independent and has a broader life" than before. There was concern, however, that the girls would become too enthusiastic and would ovedo in sports.

There was a debating society, limited to the male students. Two plays were given. Jammed together, in the back of the book were 55 advertisements by local business and professional groups. Only one advertiser survives today, the Baraboo National Bank, known then as the Bank of Baraboo. Even the Republic, which printed the book, did not advertise, nor did the Corner Drug of 1904. They would today.

Alumni Association

Unlike Reedsburg, Baraboo apparently has no alumni Association to provide support and loyalty to their Alma Mater. Were there one, both the High School archives and the SCHS archives would surely have more memorabilia. Thanks to a thoughtful individual in the past, we had the 1904 Sophomore Journal, but precious little else from those early years.



Skip Blake Collection
Alf. T Ringling had already built his home in 1904



Al Ringling was ready to build his home in 1904



1904-5 The "new" Methodist Church. Work continues
on Al Ringling mansion in the distance

A 1911 CLASS PLAY, BUT WHO ARE THE ACTORS?
 Yesteryear Revisited
 By Bob Dewel

It was hoped, when the attached picture was received from a Hester Ringling family descendant in Sarasota, that we could identify the students of that day. However, little information is available.

If Hester Ringling is in this picture, center front probably, it is likely that the date is 1910 or 1911, not the 1906 suggested on the back of the picture, for she graduated in 1911.

Hester was the daughter of Charles and Edith Ringling. They built the large yellow home on the corner of Eighth Street and Ash in 1900, and this would have been Hester's home at the time of her graduation from high school.

Unfortunately the Baraboo High School has no records on the activities of the classes of those early days, only a list of the graduates and what their field of interest was. The picture is printed here in hopes that some identification can be made. Surely someone's grandmother or grandfather is in the picture and can be recognized. Call 356-3791 if you can make an identification. As an aid in identification, here are the members of the class of 1911.

There were 37 members of the 1911 class. Those taking the Classical Course were Arthur Flanagan, Marion Goldfarb, Lucile Hatch, Hazel Jones, John Lindsay, Glenn McHugh, Ella Paddock, Hester Ringling, Doris Wilby, and



Hester Ringling High School Graduation 1911



J. Sterling Withington.

Enrolled in the English Course were Doris Blachly, Lurlynn Hoves, Margery Caflish, Charles Diener, Royal Draper, Ernest Marquardt, Harold McFarland, Duane Peck, Leonare Raymour, Mary Sansum, and THomas Wood.

Taking the General Science Course were Helen Barker, James Dickie, Elsie Genske, Lilliam Gropp, Carrol Hackett, Myrtle Hughes, Ernest Isenberg, Roy Kunzelman, Bernice Roser, Paul Rumpf, Theo Squires, Herbert Weiland, Ernest Weinke, Hilda Yarkie, and Emma Zastrow. The lone enrollee in the Latin curriculum was Lydia Howard.

The picture will be deposited later in the Sauk County Historical Society archives for preservation. The Society welcomes any old photos, preferably with identification, as well as old documents and publications of most any nature.

As for Hester Ringling, 1911 was not the end of her Thespian career. In later years she and her son Stuart owned and operated a playhouse in Sarasota, with Hester acting in many of the plays. She also wrote a play about Lillian Leitzel, the famous circus aerialist. A copy of the play has been donated to the Circus World Museum's Parkinson library.

Past powerhouses were tough to beat

This story is about two Baraboo athletic teams, both State Champions in their field. They have to share the spotlight, for in each case their story is incomplete. The trouble is that we have a picture of one team, but no newspaper clippings telling of their fame. For the other team, we have several newspaper stores, but no usable picture.

We suspect there may be other high school athletic events with as outstanding a record as those we are featuring, and if so, such information should be submitted for consideration. It has to be good, however, for we are dealing here with state champions! Undefeated seasons will count, however, as you will see at the end of the article.

Football in 1904

The picture of the 1904 football team which accompanies this article was supplied by Frank Terbilcox, whose father is pictured among the team members. Frank says his father never had mentioned being on the team. Frank Senior was apparently more proud of his training as a musician and harpist, making an interesting combination of football and heavenly music.

An analysis of the picture shows differences in football uniforms from those we are use to today. Frank says the wool sweaters were usually knitted by the player's mothers, as were the stockings. Some of the shin guards were worn inside the socks, some outside. At least one player seems to have some sort of nose-guard hanging from his neck. In some cases the shoulder pads seem to be worn outside the sweaters.

Parting the hair in the middle seems to have been de rigueur at the time. Note the well-dressed and happier appearance of John Sneathen, complete with derby. Superintendent Gerard stands at far left, also properly dressed with the then-popular starched collar. Coach Randy Sanders is in the middle of the back row, wearing a coat and tie, as did all male teachers at the time.

Unfortunately, a reasonably diligent search of both the News and Republic files for the fall of 1904 fails to produce any mention of the record and photos of the team, nor is there an explanation of the small child in the center portion of the picture, except that he might be the team mascot, Earl Bartz. What the newspapers also did not know was that the old, three-story high school which these students attended would burn within a year or so, to be replaced by the old, red brick building. That building has in turn been razed and replaced by a third high school, now known as the Civic Center.

Basketball in 1916

For the 1916 basketball team, the story is different, for here we have several columns of news coverage, not only from the Baraboo papers but from the Appleton Daily Post. Though there is a picture in one of the newspapers, it is faded and not reproducible.

In 1916 the state championship teams were determined by invitation rather than by tournament elimination as is done today, for the tournament was sponsored by Lawrence College, now known as Lawrence University. Other teams in the invitational were Madison, Oshkosh, Menomonie, Wittenburg, Fond du Lac, and Grand Rapids, Baraboo being possibly the smallest school to participate.

Basketball scores were low in those days, and Baraboo eliminated Menomonie 36 to 22, and then Wittenberg 41 to 19. Wittenberg had previously eliminated Madison, while Grand Rapids eliminated Monroe, and Fond du Lac beat Ashland.

When Grand Rapids eliminated Fond du Lac by the close score of 18 to 16, the stage was set for the championship game with Baraboo. The locals won it handily, 31 to 13, becoming the state champions.

The Baraboo newspaper said, "The Boo stars played such a game as has made this hamlet famous in other lines, and their speedy attack (was) full of pep, passion and power." It is surprising that a Baraboo paper spoke of the city as a hamlet. It is also interesting that Baraboo was apparently referred to as Boo (as in Boo U) in those early times.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FRANK TERBILCOX

Unlike other fabled athletic teams of Baraboo, the 1904 football team (above) received nary a mention in local newspapers. From left, in the back row are Supt. Gerrard, Hank Drener, (unlisted), coach Rüdý Sanders, Bob Langdon and John Sneathen. In the middle

are Perry Goetchall, Fred Stewart, Caroll Hook, Lawrence Reynolds, Burl Williams, Lawrence Stilson and McRaeth. In front are Frank Terbilcox, Dell Stewart, mascot Earl Bartz, Ray Messinger, Aldon Potter and Nels Sanberg.

Though a picture, now faded, appears in the Appleton newspaper, the men are not identified. In the news accounts, they are spoken of as Laydon, Warren, Pearson, Terry, Kaiser, Bailey, and Sprecher, the latter being the outstanding star of the tournament.

There were only two substitutions by Baraboo in the entire game. One of them was Warren for Terry, Warren being Willott Warren, well-known real estate agent in Baraboo in the 1960's to 1980's. Also of interest: Baraboo played Viroqua that year, and that team's star was L.H. Eckhardt, who became a Baraboo banker. Curt Page Jr. says the score was something like 40 to 5, with Eckhardt scoring at least three of the five points.

The champion Baraboo men of 1916 received gold watch fob basketballs, while the Wittenberg team got silver watch fob basketballs. The expenses of the tournament were covered by Lawrence College, along with a banquet.

Baraboo celebrates

The excitement generated by the win is reflected in the report by the unidentified Baraboo newspaper. It states, "There was a great outburst in Baraboo when the message came over the wires. . .there was a mighty blast of trumpets. . .the sky was soon illuminated by a bonfire at the corner of Oak and Third, the boys dancing about in high glee."

The Appleton Daily Post took a more subdued view, noting that the defeat of Fond du Lac was the "biggest defeat of the dope (odds) in the tournament." Fond du Lac had been state champion the previous year. The Post spoke of the Baraboo team as "the big boys from the South," and predicted that Grand Rapids would win over Baraboo.

Other news in Baraboo in 1916 is of interest. On Jan. 1, Al. Ringling had died, six weeks after the opening of his theatre, called "The envy of Broadway." The Skillet Creek Bachelors had met to promote marriage, with the slogan "Remember boys, this is a leap year." In Milwaukee, a prohibition speaker was

badly beaten, and Baraboo voted to remain wet in a referendum. It was the last year for the Gollmar circus in Baraboo, and in Portage Zona Gale joined an anti-preparedness committee to oppose President Wilson.

Other great teams

As is always the case, school athletic programs have good and bad years. Hanging in the office of Mark Lange's automobile body shop on Water street are pictures of two undefeated Baraboo football teams. In 1937, the team was neither defeated nor scored upon. Coach M. E. Willson was assisted by Garner Smith, with Severin Rinkob providing faculty representation.

Six years later, the 1943 team was unscored upon in conference play, and only one touchdown was scored on them in non-conference action. A total of 307 points were scored, compared to a total of 7 points by all of the opponents. Opponents were Stoughton, Richland Center, Reedsburg, Portage, Wisconsin High, Sparta and Viroqua. Two Baraboo players are said to have gone on to the UW team, and two ended up in professional sports. Team manager was Frank Terbilcox, and Garner Smith was still coaching.

It is not known when Baraboo adopted the Thunderbird name and logo. No doubt there are other

years than those mentioned in this article when Baraboo athletes successfully vied for temporary fame and glory, and there have been many other years of disappointment.

Perhaps there are two ways to view athletic efforts. Some adhere to the Vince Lombardi axiom, that "Winning is the Only Thing." Others support a time-honored but apparently anonymous saying, which reads: For when the One great Scorer comes to write against your name, He writes not if you won or lost, but how you played the game.

It is nice when a team can claim both victory and honor.

Champions Meet 50 Years Later - - -



An unusual side reunion was held when the Baraboo High school class of 1916 met in recent reunion here. It was a reunion of 7 members of Baraboo High school's only state basketball champions with their coach, taken back in 1916. Here they are, 50 years later: Left to right (seated, front row) Frank Terry, Lloyd Pearson and Kendall Layden; (standing) Willott Warren, John Sprecher, Lawrence Kaiser, Otto Ritzenthaler and Coach Edgar P. Rosenthal.



Left to right: (front row) Floyd Bailey, Lloyd Pearson, Kendall Layden; (second row) Frank Terry, Willott Warren, Frank Koons, John Sprecher. (third row) Earl Veerhusen, manager, Fredrick Dippel, Lawrence Kaiser, Otto Ritzenthaler and Coach Edgar P. Rosenthal.

Paving the Roads in 1905 was a Contest Yesteryear Revisited By Bob Dewel

It is said that Wisconsin has only two seasons, winter and road construction, and the current rebuilding of East Street is a good example. Last year it was the Broadway Bridge and Broadway from Lynn Avenue to Fifth Avenue. Presumably East Street will be as smooth and attractive. Water Street is rumored to be on next year's list, but miserly budgets are allowing road work to pile up. Read how they did it in the early days!

Fox Hill Road

Paving streets properly is expensive, and is paid for by taxes in one form or another. Not so in the early days, however. Ever vigilant for early historical items, Joe Ward has given us two items relating to paving in Baraboo in 1905 and 1906. It appears that in those days, neighborhoods would compete to see how much money could be raised for their particular project. The winner would then be awarded the contract for their project, with a meager allotment provided by a city or township added to the pot.

In 1905, for example, the contest was between the Lyons (West Baraboo) folks, who wanted Fox Hill Road surfaced, and Baraboo folks who wanted Cemetery Road (now East Street and County A) to be done.

The opposing forces met one afternoon in the G.A.R. Hall, and it was found that the Baraboo folks subscribed \$1425, but were narrowly bested by the Lyons community, which raised \$1444. As a result of the \$19 difference, the Town of Baraboo and the County each added \$1000 to the pot, and what is now Connie Road was surfaced "past the Fox vineyard" in 1905.

Cemetery Road

Undaunted, the Baraboo group raised \$2062 in 1906 for paving the Cemetery Road, beating out the North Freedom Road group, which raised \$2031. In third place were the folks promoting the East Sauk Road, sometimes called the Burma Road, which raised only \$1200. Had the latter been successful, Highway 12 might have entered Baraboo on what is now the Warner Memorial Road, (Highway 123), near to Devils Lake. The south half of the road was closed when Badger Ordinance came in 1942.

Of interest today, with the rebuilding of East Street, is the statement in the 1906 newspaper that "if East Street is paved to the city limits it would probably be done without the sewer, which should be against the common custom as the sewer should be laid first." Rumor has it that the present day pavers are finding a curious mix of sewer and catch basins as they prepare the street for reconstruction.

The newspaper reported, in a separate article, that "there is some talk of continuing the paving on Ash Street to the city line and let the township take up the work from there. In that event an opening to the cemetery grounds would be made at the end of Ash Street." The city limits then are believed to have been a little north of 11th Street, and the city had already paved Ash to 11th. Alas, Ash Street never was opened all the way to Madison Street, though Oak Street does go through to provide access to the cemetery.

Road and Sidewalks

The earliest paving in Baraboo is said to have taken place downtown in 1894. The News of Nov. 24, 1936 quoted an old timer, Guy Glazier, who said that "the block on the south side of the Courthouse (Third Avenue) was paved with white cedar round blocks, about 7 inches long, set up on end.....As closely as possible and chinked with sand. Glazier said it was the first "paving" in the city. When the present Methodist



Baraboo Police Force (1905). Officers from left to right: Walter Stone, Walter DeClap, Timothy Desmond, Charles Butterfield.

*Credit, Derleth, Centennial History
This was Baraboo's entire police force in 1905. If they patrolled the new East street, it was with horse and buggy, or just horse.*

Church was finished in 1898, the trustees voted to pave Fourth Avenue by the church, but there is no further record of that endeavor.

With streets go sidewalks, today anyway, but not always in the past. Talk about history repeating itself—in 1897, the city passed ordinance No. 197, mandating sidewalks "to be built and constructed within thirty days:" along certain described lots and premises in the city. The ordinance specifies in detail certain areas in blocks 22, 29, 3, 8, 13, 12, and 33 which must receive "Standard Sidewalks."

At the same session, incidentally, the council rescinded a previous Ordinance granting to the Baraboo Edison Electric Light Company the right to "erect poles and string lights thereon in the streets and alleys of the city." No reason is given, but at the time there were competing power companies, minuscule by today's standards, vying for the right to provide power to a city.

These were exciting times, with telephones and electric lights and street paving constituting the new technology. In 1905, incidentally, California was a comparatively small state population-wise then. More citizens lived in each of Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and even Iowa, than in California, which was only the 21st most populous state in the nation.

The maximum speed in most cities was 10 miles per hour. When climbing the newly paved Fox Hill Road, the handful of cars in the city probably had trouble reaching a speed of 10 miles per hour! East Street would be just as difficult, and the steep grade of Birch between Eighth and Tenth Avenues would have been considered impossible! Will the next 100 years match the changes of the last 100?

CEMETERY ROAD WINS PAVING

For some days there has been a contest going on as to which division could secure the most subscriptions for paving and the result was announced on Saturday evening. The result was as follows:

Cemetery road.....	\$2,062
North Freedom road.....	\$2,031
East Sauk road.....	\$1,200

According to previous custom the amount of \$2,062 subscribed will go toward paving the cemetery road at the end of East street. The town of Baraboo gives \$1,000 and the state \$1,000 additional.

Some questions have arisen that may change expectations. East street has no sewer and in order to provide for the water the sewer must be extended from near the Second ward building. It would be necessary to have a very large pipe in order to carry the water and this improvement would be expensive. If East street is paved to the city limits it would probably be done without the sewer which would be against the common custom as the sewer should be laid first.

North From Baraboo to be Improved.

(From Saturday's Daily.)

For some time there has been a merry contest going on between two factions in getting subscriptions for road improvement in the town of Baraboo. One section was interested in improving the road north from Lyons and the other in the highway passing the Baraboo cemetery north from the city. When the opposing forces met in the G. A. R. hall this afternoon to ascertain the amount subscribed it was found that the Lyons road people had raised \$1,444 while the road to the cemetery had \$1,425. The contest was close but the improvement goes to the road passing the Fox vineyard.

Besides the amount raised by popular subscription the town of Baraboo contributes \$1,000 and the county \$1,000 more.

James H. Adams
1607 Birch St.
Baraboo, WI 53913



434

1913
date
on
card



1929
date
on
card

Believe the top (1913) post card is in error - both seem to be looking south.

This page and pictures contributed by James Adams.

Jim

A 1906 CADILLAC AND A GENEROUS BEQUEST

Yeteryear Revisited

By Bob Devel

What do a 1906 Cadillac, a \$250,000 bequest, a parade, a school orchestra, and a grain binder have in common? Especially in Baraboo? First, the parade:

The Circus Parade

It all began in 1906 and will culminate in Milwaukee on July 15, where a 1906 Cadillac will appear again as it has for so many parades. Proudly at the helm will be Herman Seufzer, with Mae, his bride of 65 years, at his side.

This isn't so unusual. The Seufzers have been in every parade since 1970 except for the year 2000, when Herman was inconveniently detained by open heart surgery.

As always, Seufzer and Mae and their antique auto will be number one, leading the antique car section of the Milwaukee parade. Herman says his car has never broken down during a parade, unlike a six million dollar limo the Domino Pizza people used.

Locals may have seen the car tooling around the courthouse square in Baraboo last November 16. It was the Seufzer's sixtyfifth wedding anniversary, and they decided to take a little spin despite a raging snowstorm.

Herman and Mae came to Baraboo in 1941 to work at the powder plant and, like so many who visit Baraboo, decided to stay after the war ended. An expert auto mechanic, Herman soon hooked up with Chappie Fox in restoring the Circus World Museum's antique Mack truck, still in use daily. When Chappie saw the 1906 Cadillac,

he invited Herman to take the lead in the antique car division of the parade.

The Cadillac

Amazingly, the Cadillac is only a two-owner car. Robert Rodwell's father purchased it in 1906 for him, paying \$817 in gold coin for the one cylinder, 10 horsepower runabout, certainly one of the first cars in Baraboo. State registration was only \$1, and the certificate still exists. Herman says the original kerosene lights were replaced with acetylene lights in 1912. Otherwise, it is 100% original except for tires, upholstery, and mechanical work.

Rodwell must have been a proud young man, and one old photo has "O.U., Rub a Dub Dub", written on it, apparently the 1906 equivalent of cool, awesome, or whatever this week's superlative is in modern teenspeak.

Designated as the Model K Tulip, the gas tank held only five gallons, with another gallon in a spare emergency tank. Its top speed was a breathtaking 30 miles per hour. Even the Ringling boys didn't have a car like this, preferring to buy five Pierce-Arrows at a time from an astonished Milwaukee dealer.

The car has another surprise in its history, for in its later years tractor wheels were added on the rear, the body stripped of its seats and fenders, and it was hooked up to a grain binder for work in the fields. There are several pictures of it in this distressed time of its life.



The bequest

Neither Robert Rodwell
or his sister Ethel ever

married. When Herman purchased the car from a now aged Rodwell in 1970, he learned that Robert had no heirs and no will. Herman took him to visit Robert Kent, President of the Baraboo National Bank, and the omission was rectified.

That trip to the bank was a fortunate one for Baraboo. At Rodwell's death in 1973 it was learned that he had bequeathed income from the estate to the music department of the Baraboo High School. There were bonds and C.D.'s, but in a safe under some old grain sacks, or under the steps of the two story grainary, was gold coin worth some \$250,000, according to Herman.

There is agreement that gold coins were hidden in this manner, but the amount involved is disputed, as well as where the coins went. The school did receive over \$100,000, and the funds, now increased in value, are known as the Robert and Ethel Rodwell Trust Fund.

The Orchestra

It is funny how things sometimes fit together. Some three years ago Ray Wickus urged me to write an article questioning why the school no longer has an orchestra, only a band. He showed me pictures of the orchestra's of the 1920's and 1930's, but there just wasn't enough material to write a story about it. Even when the Sa Loutos's gave me a clipping about the Rodwell bequest, I procrastinated.

Now it all fits together. The Rodwell Cadillac, the grain binder, the Rodwell bequest, the Seufzers in the parade, and the Wickus concern about an orchestra unite in one story.

The reason: like Wickus, the Rodwells were products of the school system and were accomplished musicians. They organized an adult orchestra in their time, adding to the cultural climate of the city. It is rumored this month that a string orchestra is being formed. Remaining, however, is Ray's question...will the Baraboo schools someday have an orchestra again?



Robert and Ethel Rodwell



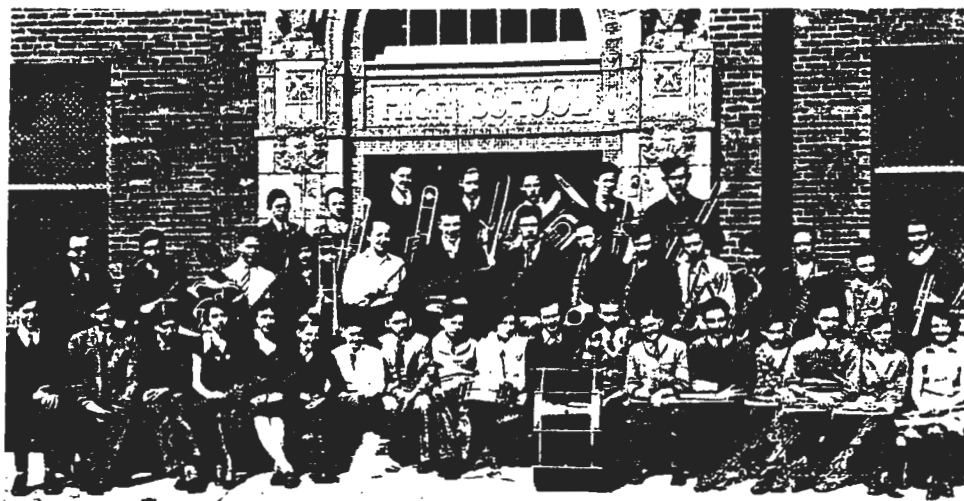
Front Row: C. Anderson, L. Harvey, B. Staub, A. Johnson, R. Wickus, H. Andrews, S. Dudley, H. Gall, J. Melter, O. Baier.

Second Row: J. Melter, B. Dahlke, Miss Heise, E. Hilson, P. Boettcher, M. Williams, J. Bohn, P. Brockley, R. Butterfield, R. Kirkpatrick.

Third Row: P. Scheible, R. Hawkins, G. Devereaux, J. Leigh, C. Gasner.

1932

THE HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA



The Band 1930

One of the greatest difficulties in the Baraboo High School is presenting a good band. Perhaps it is because too much interest is given to other activities, or not enough students are musically inclined. However, when players are turned out, they are usually finished musicians. Most girls do not seem interested in band, although girls frequently make better players on some instruments than boys do.

This year we have had an exceptionally good band considering the inexperience of many of the players. Mr. Schumann has made real progress and now has about a forty-piece band, with about seven girls. This is a remarkable aggregation for Baraboo.

The band has presented a few concerts before the assembly, and one concert was given at the Al. Ringling Theatre on April 9. It also played for the veteran soldiers at Mendota.

Clarinets—

HUBERT SCEALES
HAROLD WICKUS
ROBERT KIRKPATRICK
JULIUS GEISSER
AMANDA LANGE
PHYLLIS THOMAS
DELL SCHEUFFLER
ROGER BUTTERFIELD
JOHN BIEGE
PAUL BROCKLEY
JAMES DUDLEY
WARREN GLOVER

Altos—

JOHN BAIER
EZRA SCHAEFER

Cornets—

LYLE CORSAW
PAUL BARTENBACH

SCHUYLER FRENCH
CYRIL GASNER
FRANK HENRY
LUCINA WILLIAMS
FRANCIS FLEMING
RICHARD HAWKINS

Trombones—

CLARK HINNERS
WILLIAM FRENCH
ALBERT JEFFRIES
WILBUR CLEVELAND
IMOJEAN SHULTS
PHILIP SCHEIBLE
JOHN TURNER

E♭ Saxophones—

CARL EFFINGER
RICHARD HOPPE
FLOYD DAHLKE

C. Saxophones—

FRANKLIN MARRIOTT
RODNEY DOHNE
ROBERT BALLINGER

Tenor Sax—

GORDON INGEBRITSON

Baritone Sax—

HAROLD STEINKE

Oboe—

GENEVIEVE LIND

Basses—

BERYL NEWMAN
ROBERT GREENHALGH

Drums—

DAVID BODEN
EARL GEYMAN
PAULINE GALE

Charlie Ringling's Sporty 1904 Knox Auto Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

Take a look at the photo accompanying this article. That 1904 vehicle, or possibly one of its siblings, once clattered and chugged on the streets of old Baraboo, belching gasoline fumes. Here's the story.

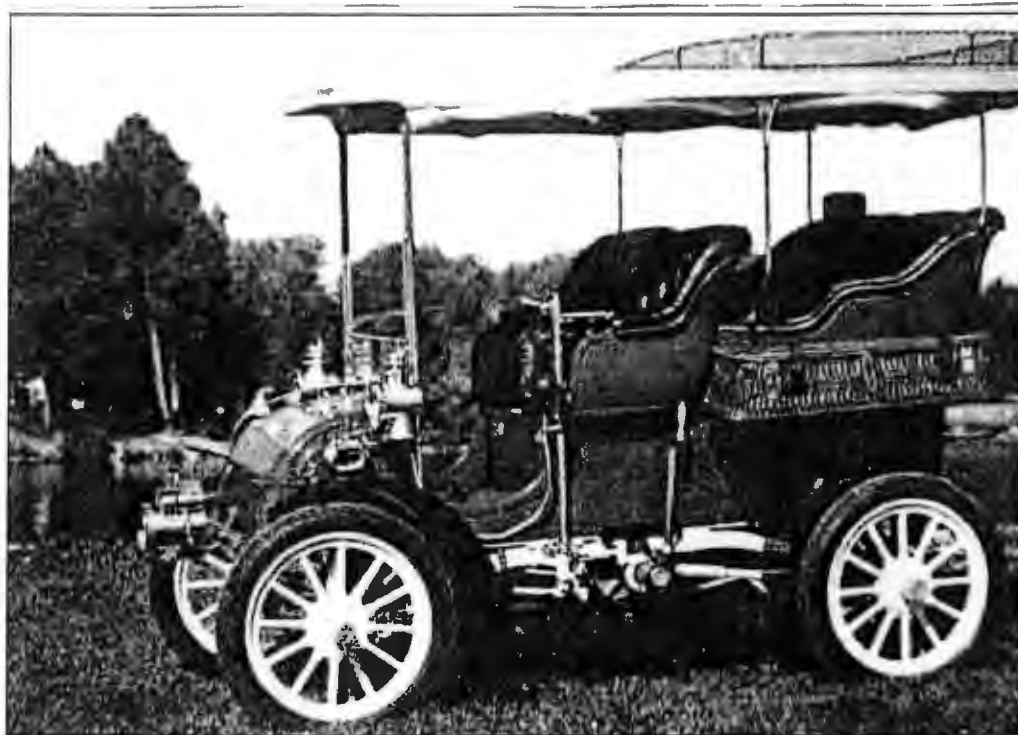
Knobby

One of our faithful correspondents and contributors is Mrs. Charles Ringling Lancaster of Sarasota, Florida. Known by all as "Knobby", she is, among her many accomplishments, an avid recorder of the history and lives of the Charles Ringling family.

She is uniquely qualified with regard to that family, for she is a part of it. She first joined them in the late 1940's as a nurse and caretaker for Charles and Edith's Grandson, Charles Ringling Lancaster, whom she later married. His Mother was Hester (Ringling) Lancaster, a graduate of Baraboo High School in 1911 and the only daughter of Charles and Edith. Knobby and Charles R. Lancaster had nearly 50 years of happy marriage until his death a few years ago. His history and lineage are mentioned in a previous article.

Baraboo in 1904

We thought of Knobby immediately when we read, in Kathy Waddell's column, the mention made of the 1904 Knox automobile which Charles Ringling sported in those early days of the horseless carriage. Her article spoke of Charles as being in training to drive the new-fangled contraption "under the tutorship of A.S. Lanich. Mr. Ringling was making excellent headway."



Charlie had attempted to drive to Mirror Lake on the rutted and often muddy roads of the day, and "he got along all right until he arrived about half a mile west of St. Michael's Cemetery, when the machine stopped." Unable to fix the problem, Charlie had called Mr. Lanich, for a part of a cylinder had come loose.

According to the story, "Mr. Ringling was the first in this locality who dared go so far away from home with an auto during the first day of his experience." I thought of Knobby when I read this account, and mailed her a copy of Kathy's column, and received not only a prompt reply but the fine picture of a 1904 Knox Automobile, as shown on this page.

The Knox Automobile

Koobby's information states that the Knox Company was incorporated in 1900, and manufactured "a number of unusual three-wheeled cars and trucks during its early history", as well as the four-wheeled vehicle pictured. The Knox Company went out of business in 1923. In their time they had produced the first motorized fire company in the United States, developing both pump and ladder trucks.

The car looks like one that a circus king would own, and almost resembles a show wagon or calliope wagon. It may be a take-off from the old horse-drawn surrey with the fringe on top. Note the high seats, covered with genuine leather. Apparently one entered the rear seats from the right side only. That may be a luggage rack on top. It must have been a local sensation in Baraboo in 1904, and would look great in our circus parade next year. Only one appears to remain, it being in the Connecticut Valley Museum.

100 years ago this week (1904)

■ Charles Ringling went into training and the prospects were that he would soon be one of the leading auto men in the city. He commenced learning about his Knox auto under the tutorship of A. S. Lanich. Mr. Ringling was making excellent headway. He went to Mirror Lake after practicing with the auto. He got along all right until he arrived about half a mile west of St. Michael's Cemetery when the machine stopped. Mr. Ringling located the trouble but was unable to remedy it and telephoned for Mr. Lanich. A part of the cylinder had come loose. Mr. Ringling was the first in this locality who dared to go so far from home with an auto during the first day of his experience.



Charlie probably drove his car over the High Bridge



*Bob Schneider
Collection*

A model car convention ?

FROM A GAS PLANT TO A MEGA-UTILITY
Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

Last weeks article alluded to pollution of the Baraboo river and its embankment by the manufactured gas plant operating during the years from 1880's to well into the twentieth century. The story concluded that it is time to pay the piper, and if you want to see the piper working for his pay, drive to Water Street at Oak and take a look.

The Pollution

What is happening is that the riverbed and part of the riverbank is to be excavated and carried away so that the river can be freed of the pollution accumulated in those more carefree days at the turn of the century. The affected material will be burned elsewhere. Hopefully this will not just transfer the chemicals to our overloaded atmosphere and its threatened greenhouse effect!

Because the river water covers much of the affected soil, the flow of water must be diverted by what is called a coffer dam. Diversion would do no good, however, unless the water level is lowered, so the Oak street dam will be destroyed so evacuation can begin. Much of the affected soil on the riverbottom has been there for one hundred years, apparently without moving. Just removing the dam alone would presumably allow it to move downstream. Either way, those who want the dam removed will be pleased.

So how did the pollution get there, and what is it? Early history of gas and electric development in the city is sketchy and conflicting.

Perhaps the best summary is supplied by two Wisconsin Power and Light booklets, Transforming the Heartland, and Lines in the Sky. Lyle Coates and Ron Cowan also supplied information for this report.

Due to the receipt of new information, there will be some repetition and correction of material from last week's article. The additional information will be added also.

Early History

Baraboo's plant history dates from the early 1880's, well before electricity arrived in the city. Gas was produced at that time by passing excess steam from a foundry over a chemical compound called naphthalene. Later coal was similarly treated, the residue being a product called coke--no, not the familiar red beverage, but rather a hard black substance.

Another residue was coal tar, most of which was sold for roofing material. Virtually insoluble in water, the coal tar is not believed to be a health hazard. Surprisingly, the coke could still be burned for fuel if handled properly, and the gas plant frequently sold wagon loads on a come-and-get-it basis. This plant was called the Baraboo Gas Company. Coal was no longer used to produce gas after 1947.

Meantime, in 1887, an electric plant was installed in a flour mill, located where the present Mc Arthur dam is on highway 113. Its power was direct current, with a line to the downtown section where some 60 arc lights

provided what seemed at the time to be miraculous but erratic illumination. Since the gas company also had street lights, it is unclear where most lights were located. Both systems were still used in 1913 for street lighting.

This second company was called the Baraboo Lighting Company. Industry names were simple and descriptive in those days, no acronyms. Not to be outdone, the Baraboo Gas Company installed a small electric plant, which like its competitor sold 220 volt direct current.

It was good old American capitalism at work, for another group of local entrepreneurs formed still another company in 1893, with the more grandiose name Baraboo Light, Heat, and Power Company. By 1902 their plant was leased to the Baraboo Gas and Electric Light Company.

24 hour service!

By 1904 the competing capitalistic system became chaotic, and several citizens gained control of all three companies, which they consolidated in 1911. The direct current was changed to alternating current, and for the first time power was available 24 hours a day. Improved service and lighting were accompanied by a reduction in rates from 20¢/kwh to 14¢/kwh. Only in 1914 was real street lighting achieved, and several miles of gas mains were installed. Curiously, gas mains in those days were often made of wood!

A Municipal Power Plant?

Apparently the locally owned and operated plant was not financially sound, because for two years, from 1911 to 1913, the city council was frequently occupied with the possibility of purchasing the utility and operating it as

a municipal power plant, a common solution in many cities, even today in some towns. Just as it operates the water department, the city would operate the electric department.

There was even a referendum to bond the city for \$45,000, the anticipated purchase price, though the city had no interest in purchasing the gas plant--wisely, we can now say in retrospect. When the company, in receivership, was auctioned off on the courthouse steps, the city was easily outbid by the bondholders, who paid \$60,000 for the struggling company.

Perhaps they knew something, for in 1916 a growing Wisconsin utility, the Wisconsin Power, Light, and Heat Company purchased the Baraboo plants--including the gas plant. It is that purchase which makes that company's successor, the familiar Wisconsin Power and Light Company, responsible today for the remediation of the pollution by the Baraboo Gas Company! Power now flowed in from the Prairie du Sac plant, and services expanded greatly.

It was in 1924 that additional merging and acquisitions had produced larger and larger utility companies, and the parent company of the Baraboo plant became the familiar WP&L we knew until recently, and which now, following interstate merger, is called by the non-descriptive name of Alliant.

Samuel Insull

There is more to the story, however, and it involves a name often associated in the Midwest with the Great Depression--the name Samuel Insull. Despite the similarity, there is no connection between Insull and insulation, but



This view from an old postcard looks east from Broadway bridge. The huge tank on the right was at the junction of Vine Street and Paradise Alley.

We might even see some of that picturesque horde of canoes, and their impact on the local economy, that were promised when the first dam was taken out.

he began building up not only Chicago's Commonwealth Edison Company, but also developed control of a nationwide system of interconnected utilities. By 1924 his companies had 5 million customers.

He had already purchased the Kilbourn and Prairie du Sac dams from private developers. The acquisition of the Wisconsin Power, Heat, and Light company was only a very small part of what became like a jigsaw puzzle of 153 large regional utilities across the country.

By 1926, however, the Insull empire suffered the beginning of several Congressional investigations regarding illegal lobbying, and Wisconsin's Senator Bob La Follette was prominent in the investigations. In 1929, however, it was the Great Depression that found the bloated empire crumbling due to over-extended and under-capitalization. The 71 year old Insull and his brother and son resigned in June 1932, following receivership proceedings in April of that year.

Insull now went into self-imposed exile in Europe, dying in a Paris subway in 1938. Despite the self-exile, he had been brought back to the United States to stand trial. Though he won partial vindication with acquittal of the state and federal charges, he remained vilified by the press in the agony of the Depression, when many lost money invested in his companies. His opulent Venetian mansion in a Chicago suburb rivaled that of John Ringling in Sarasota, and can be toured now.

The Baraboo Gas Plant

Thus the three competing Baraboo gas and power plants of the 19th century had become a small part of the Insull utility empire, which was at the time, and perhaps still is, "the largest property ever received into receivership in American business history." valiant efforts by WP&L's Grover Neff, and Baraboo's A.P. Gale managed to keep the subsidiary independent and Wisconsin-based.

Highly respected today, the company has now embarked on a relatively modest interstate merger in what is now a highly regulated industry. Baraboo's Jim Underkofler headed the company until recently, and Baraboo has always been one of the division headquarters, with respected local managers who live and work in the city.

Power has come a long way from the candles and kerosene of yesteryear, and the primitive conversion of Napthalene into impure gas. The company is now cheerfully correcting the common pollution practices of its predecessors. That's what you see when you visit the river at Water Street and Oak.

It is too late now to see the full mill pond, for the dam busters breached the structure last week. Baraboo came into being because of its dams and the non-polluting power of the rushing water. Perhaps the new river walks will in a way harness the river for beauty instead of power.

We might even see some of that picturesque horde of canoes, and their impact on the local economy, that were promised when the first dam was taken out.

Baraboo's old streetcar - ⁴⁴⁷ - named desire?

Were there once streetcars in Baraboo? Well, look at the picture! There's the former Wellington Hotel on the left. It now houses the Screnock law offices and the Vista Optical.

Next door, beyond the Wellington, is the old Wisconsin House Hotel, which would be torn down in 1914 or before in preparation for construction of the Al. Ringling Theatre. And directly above the streetcar is the "New Warren Hotel," new because they added a third story.

Beyond, one can see the upper story of the Cornerstone Gallery, also above the streetcar. Still skeptical? Old-timers will recognize the distant tower of the old city hall, demolished in the 1960s.

It's Baraboo all right, and you are looking east on Fourth Avenue. And that certainly is a streetcar, though the front end looks slightly off the tracks.

Desire?

We can't make out a name on the streetcar, but Desire seems as good as name as any, for the picture is of course a hoax. It is part of a large group of Baraboo post-cards collected by Janet (Mrs. Martin) Bjornsen.

All growing or would-be growing towns at the turn of the century desired a public transportation system. After all, few if any streets were paved, there were virtually no autos, and hitching up the horse and buggy was time-consuming for a minor trip downtown.

Now we hop in the car and cruise over nicely surfaced roads (usually!), which are cleared of snow before dawn.

They weren't cleared at all in the old days. So, a real trolley system like the big cities had was the desire of all the smaller towns.

It takes little imagination to plan a grid of trackage for Baraboo then. Certainly the far eastern hub, really out of the city then, would be the fairgrounds, going out Eighth Street and returning perhaps on Second Street.

To the west, one might plan a similar loop, going all the way past the city limits to Lyons, now West Baraboo. The return would be passing by the woolen mill, with lots of pickups there, and up Second Street to downtown (called uptown then, I am told). A better bridge would have to replace the covered bridge then existing on Second Avenue, to support the streetcar.

Not too many folks lived north of Eighth Street in those days, but the big problem would be to serve the population south of the river. An ideal route then would be to cross the river at the foot of Ash Street, and loop past the busy railroad station, with its nine trains a day in each direction. There was no Broadway bridge then, and the new High Bridge made no allowance for trolley tracks, so the trolley would have to return on Ash. Perhaps someday Broadway would be extended across the river, it was hoped, for a return. In any event, Baraboo would have a downtown loop, just like Chicago and the other big cities.

The more optimistic promoters, if indeed there were streetcar promoters at the time, even envisioned a run to Devils Lake directly from the south side of town. As yet there was no direct road — William Warner would not donate money for it in his will until about 1915.

And today?

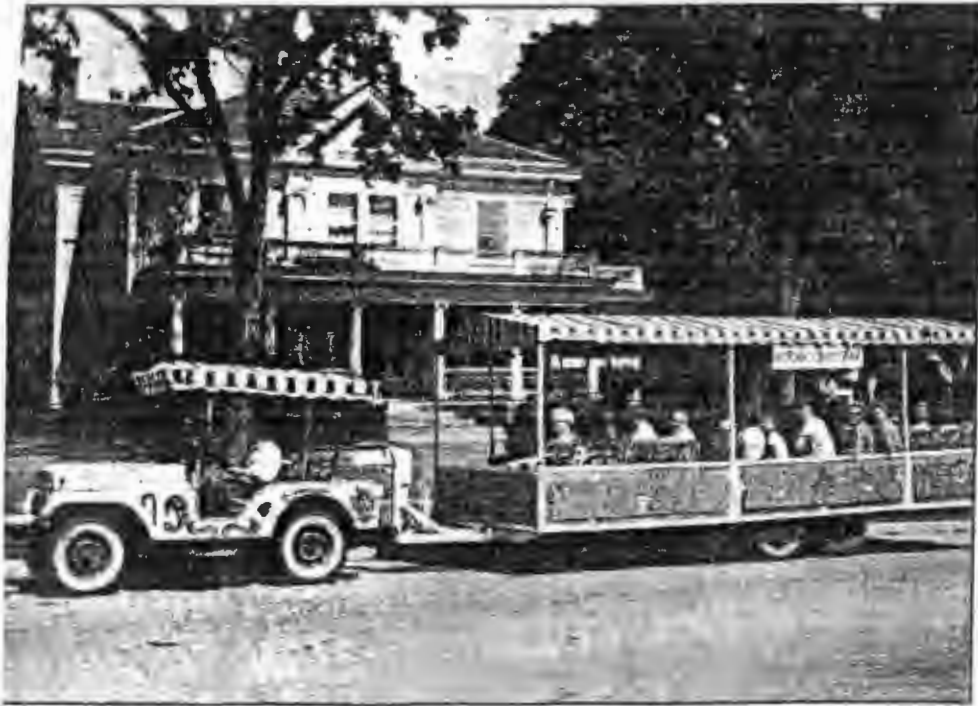
Actually the streetcar routes envisioned above would be a good start on a local bus route plan for today. Due to city growth, one would want to include a route to the hospital and rest home areas. To the northwest, the University of Wisconsin-Baraboo/Sauk County would be a logical stop, and South Boulevard on the southwest would provide access to the many industries in the area, with a return on Moore Street.

Another line would go past Circus World Museum, and then north to the commercial establishments at the corner of Eighth Street and Taft Avenue — yes, there is a Taft street in Baraboo. And to the west, the bus line would certainly go to the West Baraboo shopping areas, then south to County Highway W before returning to town. Sounds like we would need a small fleet of buses!

But wait — it develops that Baraboo did indeed have a residential bus line in the past! Details are sketchy, and its tenure was very short, but in the early 1950s buses used the Corner Drug corner as their hub and fanned out over the city in some manner.

School children used them, but as one city official remarked when told this, "A bus line is only good if it stops at your particular corner."

Going Home
in Baraboo Wis.



The image shown above is a hoax that depicts a streetcar running through downtown Baraboo. At left, Circus World Museum's visitors trolley takes a spin around town, taking in attractions including a Ringling mansion.

Pipe dreams?

Well, the streetcar promoters had their pipe dream, and for now the projected bus system is probably a pipe dream also. We are spoiled by the easy availability of our cars, and there is a taxi system supported by the city for those who need it.

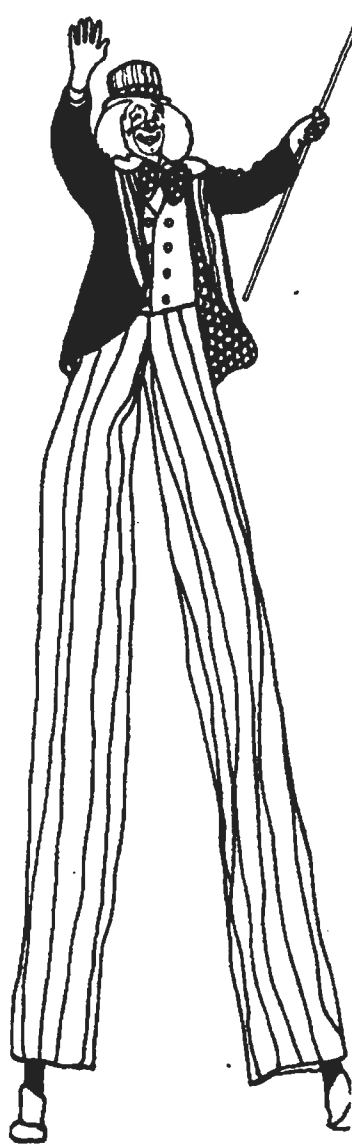
The old-timers might have been surprised in summer, though, because for many years we have had a trolley. It was the Circus World visitors trolley, which gave a 25-minute tour of historical sites in Baraboo.

It should be noted that this more recent trolley had a predecessor, a circus wagon pulled by a jeep and sometimes driven by former County Patrol Chief Red Wyatt, among others. It even toured the cemetery where the elegant mausoleums of some of the Ringling Brothers were pointed out.

In an article a year ago, this writer quoted Jean Ringling as being somewhat miffed at the time, and yet amused, when Wyatt would remark

when passing her home that if the flag was flying, Mrs. Ringling was "in residence," rather than abroad. I am told that this was somewhat of a family myth, for actually there was no flagpole at all. I like to think that Wyatt, with a whimsical sense of humor, said it anyway.

You wouldn't get that kind of comment from a streetcar conductor!



The Risley Brothers First Store in 1901

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

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It is not the intention of this writer to pursue the history of every downtown business. Indeed, space limitations of a newspaper article require the omission of many details when we attempt such a history.

However, the arrival of good pictures of the first Risley store, and of the magnificent one which succeeded it, invites us to touch upon the Risley brothers and their impact on downtown Baraboo in the early part of the Twentieth Century. There were two locations, neither of which presents today the same façade as that presented by the Risleys'. This first article will consider the original location.

The Announcement

There was big news in the barbershops of Baraboo in 1901, for the well known Risley brothers had made a big decision. Charles Edward Risley had for some time been an employee of the Reinking Store, SE corner of Oak and Fourth Streets. His brother, T. Frederick Risley, was manager of the dry goods department of the competing Stanley Store.

The big news was that both young men had resigned their positions, and would be opening a store of their own in competition with their former employers! An additional brother, G.W. Risley, would also be involved but would remain in his position in Chicago.

Appropriately, the new establishment would be known as Risley Brothers. This new venture would quickly dominate the retail business climate in Baraboo, lasting for the next three decades. No wonder that the barbershops were buzzing with rumors of the impending change.

Locations

The location of the first store was at 522 Oak Street, (the present address of the north half of the Corner Drug Store), with a grand opening on September 5, 1901. This was known then as the Ben Brewer building. The success of the enterprise soon brought about expansion into 526 Oak, the 2004 location of the Village Booksmith.

The adjoining picture shows mostly the 522 location, with the 526 front partially visible. Although details of the store window contents are indistinct, it is obvious that the Risleys were aware of the advertising potential of the pulchritude of their female employees, five of whom are pictures at the curbside. The street is probably oiled gravel, and mercifully, any deposits by passing horses, virtually the only means of transportation then, are not visible. Also not present are the sparrows who fed there, the 1901 version of the infamous trickle down theory of the Reagan administration.

This would not be the only expansion of the Risley store, as a significant change was made in 1910, to be considered in the next article. Apparently business was good from the start, for a newspaper account states that the Risleys "for the past several years had been searching for larger quarters."

A New Location

The new purchase, in 1910, was the old Schoenfeldt property at 129 Third Street. Old photos show a small insurance building there, plus a house set back a little from the sidewalk. The purchase was made from Charles Wild, and the Risleys had both structures demolished. Historian Joe Ward's records show the property had been occupied between 1900 and 1910 by Franklin and Heath Photograph Studio, Hagen's gun shop, and Witwen Real Estate and Insurance.

The ensuing structure would stand out sharply among the older late 1800 building which had been erected following various disastrous fires.



This new store, which would command great respect in the Baraboo retail scene for decades, deserves a separate article, with a good photo of the handsome building they built. To be continued.

1910 Risley Store was Upscale Indeed

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel www.drbobdewel.i8.com

The preceding article spoke of the probable speculation in Baraboo's barbershops in 1901. The young Risley boys, ordinary department store clerks, had resigned their jobs to start a store in competition with their former employers.

Imagine the excitement nine years later when the two men, now highly respected merchants, announced their intention to build a three story edifice on Third Street, perhaps the finest store building in the city. As usual, the rumor mills were working overtime, but here are the facts as they emerged:

The Risleys, along with another brother as silent partner, had purchased the property at 129 Third Street in June 1910. An older home still occupied the site, along with a small building housing the J. P. Witwen real estate and insurance firm. Previous occupants of the area had been the L.W. Franklin and J.D. Heath Photographic Studio, and Hagen's Gun Shop. This location was known as the old Schoenfeldt property, currently owned by Charles Wild.

Most of Third Street was more developed than this property, and the word was that the Risleys planned major construction at the site. Indeed it was major, for the three story structure, along with basement, made a commodious four floor department store unrivaled in even the larger cities. The folks at Reinkings and the Stanley Company must have felt that a "big box" store had come to town.

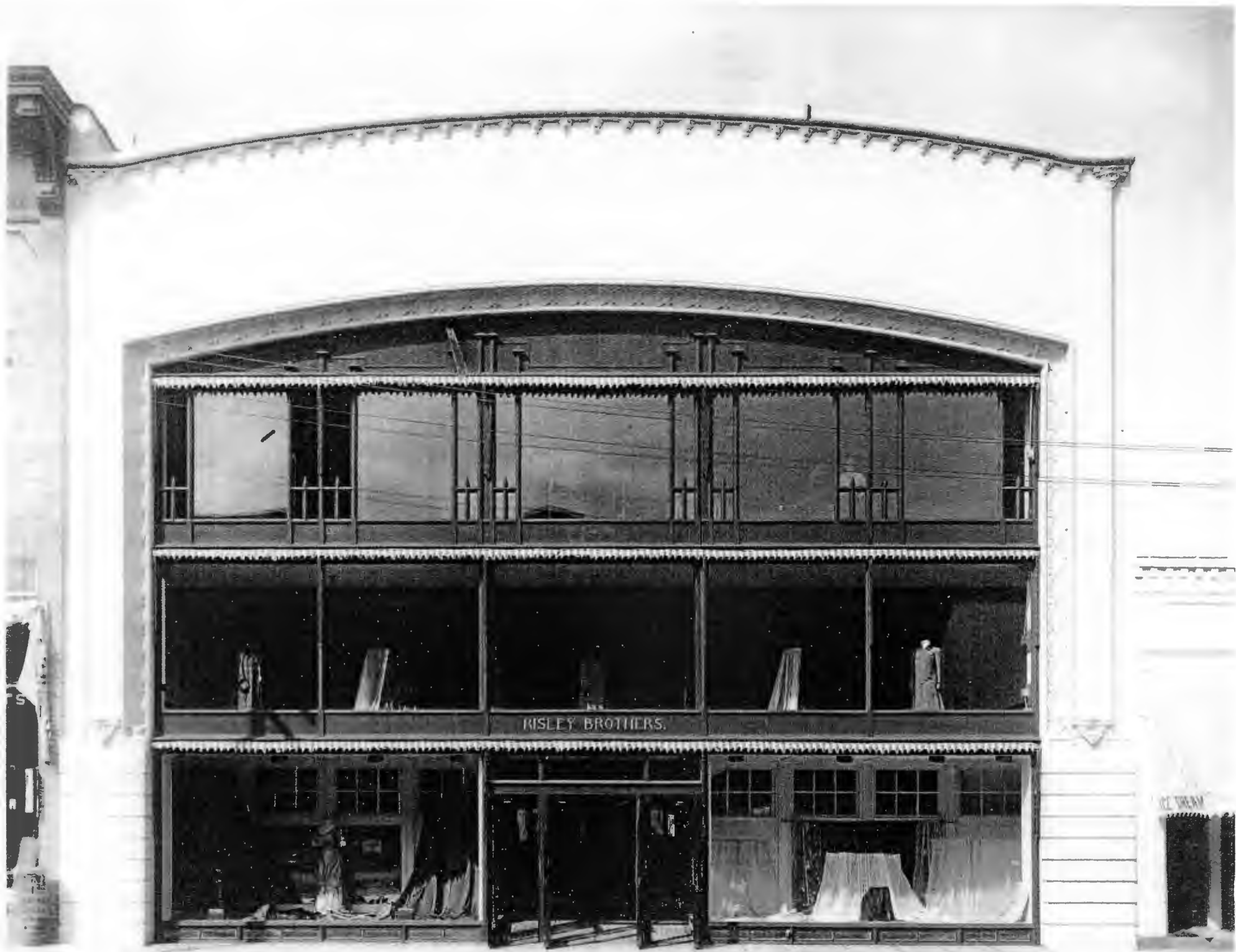
As can be seen in the accompanying photo, the façade alone was striking, with glass display windows on all three floors. In a unique arrangement, the sidewalk was also partially glass brick, and mirrors underneath projected natural light to the far reaches of the basement. In the rear, deliverymen used a shoot to transfer boxes to the basement storage area. Besides the three floors and basement, there also was a balcony.

Well remembered by old timers was the cash register system, with capsules containing the sales slip and payment projected by cable to a central cashier. Here the sale was completed and a receipt and change returned to the sales clerk and his or her customer, also by capsule and cable. There is disagreement as to whether the Reinkings store had a similar system.

In another unique arrangement, the second and third floors are said to be suspended from the roof. A recent visitor found the upper floor still "beautiful—it would make a grand ballroom." The brick façade was said to be the highest priced and best brick in the United States, made in Kattanning, Pennsylvania. Quality material and workmanship were employed throughout the building, and it was the showplace of Baraboo for its opening on Wednesday, October 19, 1910.

The Risley's were destined to operate their fine establishment only until 1933, when the store was vacated and the fixtures sold. Since 1928 the store had been operated by a stock company, headed by D.C. Cordry as president with H.P. Dittmann as Vice-president and Helen L. Case as Secretary-treasurer. Cordry was also with Marshall Fields in Chicago. Lorraine Cummings of Reesburg remembers Esther Murphy as an especially good store clerk.

Downtown historian Joe Ward reports that this now became the location of the P.R. Schweke Dry Goods Store. In subsequent years it was the location of the Burrs, and then the Herbergers stores. In the mid-50's the J.C. Penney store took over the property, changing the façade to that of today. It is said that the upper glass front façade still exists behind the present cover on the second and third floors. Following the move by Penneys to the Hilldayl shopping center, an antique store occupied the property. Now, in 2004, the building is occupied by S and S Interiors



Third Ave. , looking East.

Looking East on Third Street. The Risley store is just a short walk ahead. The Presbyterian Church steeple can be seen in the distance. Sauk Co Historical Society Photo

The many other occupants of this piece of real estate over the past century are typical of most downtown entrepreneurs. Enterprises come and go, each leaving their print upon the community. The changing scene makes for a lively and busy business community, reflecting the diversity and ambience of this growing city.