

The 1930's

Pages 730 to 808

1930 Students Thank Citizens for School	730
1931 Co-eds Complain of Male Immodesty	733
Banks took a long long Holiday in 1933	737
Depression Wore a Sober Face in Area	741
Baraboo Remembers Great Depression	743
Depression Era Full of Significant Events	746
College Days during the Great Depression	749
Restaurants, Organs, Directories, and Commencements	752
West Side of Square had Many Occupants	756
Chain Store Competition in 1936	759
The South "Y"	761
Ice was a Big Commodity Before the Fridge	763
Baraboo River Ice Business was Competitive	767
Highway Bypasses were of Concern in 1935	770
The Wives of John Ringling, Part I. Mable	773
The Wives of John Ringling Part II, Emily	775
A Golden Circus Anniversary	779
Famous People Once Came From Baraboo	762
John Ringling Loses Control of the Circus	786
Slots and a 1936 Docket	789
WPA Benefited County in Many Ways	791
Bronze Statue is one of few in Area	797
CCC Benefited Park, City	794
Devil's Lake—Amusement park or Nature Preserve?	800
1937 Team Undefeated, Un-scored Upon	804
The Juliar Theatre, Once Baraboo's Newest	806

1930 Students Thank Citizens for School

Tales of Other Days

By Bob Dewel

This is a follow-up to a previous article about the 1921 Min-Ne-W-Kan. I don't intend to write about every class's yearbook, but the 1930 issue seems special. So were some of the students, who will be listed shortly.

To begin with, nine years had passed since the previous 1921 issue, with no annuals and no explanation. Times were good, and advertisers must have been willing, but no annuals were published until 1930, at least under the Minnewakan name. Moreover, the 1930 annual is labeled as volume four, indicating there had been only two annuals published before 1921.

"Thanks for unstinting efforts"

This appears to be the first year that the "new" high school was occupied, the building we know of in 2006 as the Civic Center. The schools in those days were strictly a city operation, with students from outside the city limits paying tuition.

The annual is dedicated, appropriately, "To the citizens of Baraboo, who by their unstinting efforts have made this high school possible." As so often happens, an anti-school group had managed to defeat a referendum in 1920. By 1927, when the new referendum passed handily, the cost (in 1920's dollars) had soared from \$165,000 to \$225,000. Thus the 1920 referendum defeat caused quite an extra tax burden for the taxpayer later on.

The Ringling and Moeller circuses were history, having left Baraboo about 12 years before, but the Baraboo circus heritage remained strong. The 1930 publication is cleverly divided into sections called the big tent (the new building), the trainers (the teachers), and the performers (the students).

Other sections were the side shows (school organizations), the acrobats (the athletes), and the slap sticks jokes (the clowns). The advertisers were called the Billboard.

The fine new building

The new building had not been constructed without delay or difficulty. As noted above, a proposal to build just a 3 grade junior high for \$165,000 had been defeated 1022 to 693 in a 1920 referendum. It would be 1927 before a referendum was held again, with the old red brick school bursting at the seams, as was the antiquated Annex of which we have written previously. Led by a carefully orchestrated effort by Supt. Kingsford in 1927, the \$225,000 proposal passed with a resounding vote of 1114 to 363.

Thus what is now the Civic Center was constructed, elegant and structurally sound, the architect being one of Baraboo's own, Louis Claude. Then in a Madison firm, he had been raised in the Eagle Craig home on the North Shore of Devils Lake. His school building still stands proudly in 2006, a brick structure with class and style. We have written in detail previously about the struggle to build the present high school on Draper Street in 1960.

The 1930 annual carries six detailed pages of description of the school, reflecting the pride of the students and community in the new building. Photos show the gym is identical to that of today, state of the art then, with seating for 700 at a game, or 2500 when chairs were placed on the gymnasium floor. The small and crowded auditorium seated 550, complete with stage, curtain, and movie projection booth. It generally took second place to the Al Ringling Theatre for plays and concerts over the years, however, because of poor lines of sight and acoustics.

The Faculty and Students

The 1930 faculty is of interest, for pictured in the "Trainers" section are very young looking men such as Harland



"JACK" TERBILCOX



BERYL NEWMAN

Some of the athletes in the 1930 Annual



"JACK" MCGANN



CARL OCKERSHAUSER

Hill, Severn Rinkob, and Gordon Willson, all of whom became long time public servants. Despite the elegance of the new building and the distinguished faculty, it was the student body (the performers) which we found to be of the greatest interest in this annual. We will only list the names of seniors known to this writer: Jack McGann, Robert Scheible, Arthur Bassett, Merl Hanley, and dozens of familiar Baraboo family names.

In the junior Class were Tom Ocherhauser, Louise McArthur, Don Behnke, Jack Terbilcox, Harold Wickus, and Arthur Marquardt, plus dozens of familiar Baraboo family names. Carl Ocherhauser went on to West Point. Missing from the class listings, but mentioned prominently in football and forensics, was Beryl Newman. He played bass in the band. Of Newman, the annual said he "was always rough and ready and could be depended on to do his part."

Beryl Newmnn

It was Newman who, with only 16 other Wisconsin men, received the Congressional Medal of Honor for valor in WWII, of which we have written previously. In 1931, however, he was the state track 440 Champion, and he captained of the football team the same year. A plaque near the entrance of Beryl Newman Athletic Field commemorates the bravery of this Baraboo High School graduate.

All classes have had brave and strong men and women, who went on to achieve success, and sometimes greatness. Only the Class of 1930 had a Congressional of Medal honor winner, Beryl Newman. Our first-class educational system had served the community, state and nation!

1931 Co-eds Complain of Male Immodesty

Tales of Earlier Days

By Bob Dewel

It is amazing what one can find while surfing through the old newspaper microfilm reels in the Library—until your eyes reel from the strain, that is. Often one cannot resist the temptation to press the print button, so as to have the story to use someday. We have accumulated lots of unrelated stories, none justifying a full article but perhaps worth noting. Today's stories involve male bathing trunks, a young men's mutual improvement society, and the Broadway-8th Avenue stoplight,

The Stoplight

Imagine if you can the junction of Broadway and Eighth without a stoplight. At least half of the citizens don't have to imagine, for a light has been there only a little over 30 years. Moreover, the City Council had petitioned as early as 1954 for a light there, but had to wait until the state's idea of excessive traffic volume justified it. Nearby residents had objected, since the intersection would require no parking for some 50 feet either way from the lights—Eighth was only two-lane then, and allowed parking. It took many more years to get lights at Eighth and East, and even more to get the lights at Draper and Eighth Avenue. Now the immediate Baraboo area sports ten stoplights, with more coming.

Young Men's Improvement Society

Skip back 150 years now, to 1858 in the village of Baraboo. If you think there is nothing to do today, imagine life then—not even baseball teams to join. The newspaper of the day reports that young men of the village formed a

debating society, called the Young Men's Improvement Society. You not only had to be age eighteen, you had to be of good moral character, but this was not defined however.

On top of that, your peers had to elect you with a two-thirds vote, and the big initiation fee of twenty five cents had to be prepaid. Little else is known about this Society, which existed about the time of the Baraboo Collegiate Institute and the Baraboo Female Seminary. There is mention on the same page of the paper about some Chicago friends visiting, and it was taken for granted that they came by stage, for the railroad was still but a dream for Baraboo.

Semi-nude Men bathers

Skip ahead nearly 75 years now. It is 1931. The Men's Improvement Society has faded into history, and what do we find the men doing? Bathing semi-nude, that's what! The July 30, 1931 News-Republic featured a front page story to that effect, quoting none other than coeds at the University of Wisconsin.

The summer coeds were distraught, saying that they "can't study while semi-nude men are parading" on the Lake Mendota beaches. It appears that the men were wearing only swimming trunks, according to the Daily Cardinal. "Men must wear swimming suits that come up to the neck," declared Dean Goodnight and Police Chief McCormick, and they authorized the arrest of all males not complying. Even the Committee on Student Conduct joined in the edict.

It was specified that the complaints came from the coeds trying to study in the lake shore rooming houses. They obviously needed the light from their lakeside windows for proper pursuit of their course assignments, no other light being suitable. This was a time of change, with men now wearing very scanty tops, if any, and their bathing trunks were without the old modesty skirts. Little could the coeds imagine that their daughters would wear

trunks that made the 1931 males look overdressed indeed—not to mention the rest of a coeds' Bikini outfit! We are not aware of a news article of the UW men complaining about that distraction to their studies.

Coming for this column will be the Civil War. We recently were given 124 (yes 124) pages of typewritten transcripts of a remarkable Baraboo boy's experiences at Gettysburg, the bloody and defining battle of the Civil War. Watch for it!



John McNabb Collection
 Stoplight, Oak and 4th, about 1930. The cannon is not yet on the courthouse lawn, and the bank does not have its signature clock. Note the brick paving

7-30-31 *about*

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is to be repeated at the
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Boy Scouts will again as-
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Rosenwald Sent To Bed For Rest

Chicago —(UP)— Julius Rosenwald, merchant and philanthropist, was resting in his Ravinia home today under care of a physician.

Rosenwald's condition was not regarded as serious. He was sent to bed by his physician for a rest after too strenuous activity in his various business and charitable interests.

fair latter hall with somewhat lower temperatures.

Gets 5 Years For Attacking Girl

Milwaukee—(UP)— Charged with attacking a 16 year old girl, a student in his Sunday school class, Herbert Kaetel, 22, was sentenced to five years in the house of correction today. Kaetel is married and the father of one child.

U. W. Co-eds Complain of Semi-Nude Men Bathers

Madison —(UP)— Complaints of University of Wisconsin summer school coeds that they "can't study while semi-nude men are parading" led to the issuance of an order banning from Lake Mendota beaches all male students who wear only trunks for swimming suits, the Daily Cardinal, student publication, said today.

Dean Scott H. Goodnight and

Police Chief William H. McCormick have authorized the arrest of all partially clad males.

"Men must wear swimming suits that come up to the neck," the edict read. "All violators will be punished by the committee on student conduct."

The coed complaintants are all residents of lake shore rooming houses, the Cardinal said.

DEBATING SOCIETIES.—There are on successful operation in this village, two Debating Societies, one of which has sent us for publication its Constitution, given in another column. If the other Association, which is, we believe, attached to the Baraboo Seminary, will furnish us with a copy of theirs we will publish the same with pleasure. We rejoice to know that so much zeal is now manifested in intellectual and moral improvement, as the successful working of two such Societies would seem to indicate. 1858

Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society. 1858

This is the name of a Debating Literary Association just organized in this village by a number of young men, who, in conformity with a resolution of the Society, have furnished us with a copy of the Constitution, which we publish with pleasure. As an improving mental exercise, and one that will serve its proficients many a good turn in after life, debating is perhaps unsurpassed.

CONSTITUTION.

Art. 1.—The name of the Association shall be the "Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society."

Art. 2.—The object of the Society shall be, as its name indicates, to encourage mutual improvement on the part of all its members.

Art. 3.—The officers shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, to be elected by ballot at the first meeting in each quarter.

Art. 4.—Any young man eighteen years of age, bearing a good moral character, shall be eligible for membership in this Society.

Art. 5.—Candidates for membership must be proposed at least one week previous to election, and shall be admitted by a vote of two-thirds of the members present.

Art. 6.—No person shall be considered a member until he shall have signed the Constitution and paid an initiation fee of twenty-five cents.

Art. 7.—The quarterly dues shall be ten cents, payable in advance, and any person joining the Association during any quarter shall pay the full dues for the fractional current quarter.

Art. 8.—Any article of the Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting by a two-thirds vote, notice of such amendment being given at least one week previous to the time when it is taken up.

The officers of the Society are AVERY, President; D. D. DOANE, Vice-President; H. A. PERKINS, Secy and HIRSH LANGDON, Treasr, whom applications for membership may be made.

Donation.—The members and friends of the Free Congregational Society of Baraboo, Rev. I. CODDING Pastor, will hold a donation in the afternoon and festival in the evening of Wednesday the 18th inst., at the Court House.—Music and Refreshments in the evening. The public are invited to attend. The committee will be in attendance to receive all donations.

By order of Com. of Arrangements.
B. L. PEABY, Chm. Dec. 15th 1861

Mrs. Arabella B. Savage and daughter, Miss Jessie, who have been living in Washington for the past year or two, and who lately have been visiting at Chicago and Fond du Lac arrived Friday to visit for a few days with Mrs. J. G. Train. They will go from Baraboo to Pottstown, Pa., where Mrs. Savage's son, Fred, is secretary of the Y. M. C. A.

FORMER BARABOO RESIDENT

Miss Jessica Savage United in Marriage to Reverend Lester E. Deline at Wenatchee, Wash.

June 30 1895
Mrs. K. Crandall Train has received word announcing the marriage of Miss Jessica Savage to Reverend Lester Eugene Deline of Seattle, Washington. The wedding occurred June 21st at the home of the bride's mother, Mrs. Arabella Savage, in Wenatchee, Washington. The happy couple went to Spokane and other points of interest on their bridal tour.

Miss Savage spent her girlhood in Baraboo and has visited here several times in recent years. The family is well known hereabouts.

Reverend Deline, who is a Presbyterian clergyman, and Miss Savage met 10 years ago in Chicago at the Bible Institute.

Frederick Savage, a brother, accompanied by his wife and little child, of Pennsylvania were present at the wedding.

Thursday 1915

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Savage and two sons of Lancaster, N. H., are stopping at the Wellington. The family came to be present at the '95 reunion. They expect to visit Mr. Savage's mother and sister in Wenatchee, Washington, before returning to their eastern home. During Mr. Savage's last years at school here he made his home with Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Thrain.

Dec 23 1915
Mr. Fred Savage who was in Baraboo last summer to meet his high school class of 1895, writes that he is now Sec. of the Y. M. C. A. at Dover, N. J.

Zero Wave Hits Baraboo, First Of The Season

Dec 23 1924
The first real zero wave of the winter hit Baraboo Thursday night. The mercury dropped to ten below during the night and today hovered just below the zero mark. The morning trains from the south were all considerable behind schedule due to the storm and sudden change in temperature.

Wisconsin community betterment and horticultural improvement has suffered a loss in the death of Wm. Toole of Baraboo. Mr Toole died last week at his well known country home sometimes called "the pansy farm" and which he had named "Garry-Needle". The horticultural business which he so long and faithfully managed has been taken over by his son, W. A. Toole, president of the Wisconsin Horticultural Society. Wm. Toole was born in the British Isles 84 years ago and came to this country when a boy. For a long time he lived in New Jersey and later came to Wisconsin and was a blacksmith for some time. For a few years he operated a general farm at North Freedom, in Sauk county, and after that he bought his present farmstead about two miles west of Baraboo. Here he followed some general farming, but put in most of his time in the cultivation of small fruits and flowers. Pansies were his specialty for a number of years.

We do not believe that the culture of pansies remains as the biggest mark of honor credited to Mr. Toole. We believe that his loyal and unselfish promotion of rural community work in social and educational lines deserves first place when we mention him. Outstanding in this respect is the community life around the social center known as the Skillet Creek Farmers' Club. The Sauk County Federation of Rural Clubs which used to meet at Devil's Lake Park was another accomplishment largely due to the zeal of Mr. Toole and his friends.

Another lasting memorial to Mr. Toole's energy and foresight is the book and articles he has written on Wisconsin's shrubs, trees, ferns and vines. Outside of the realm of scientific botany as practiced by a few select people in our colleges there has probably been no person in the past twenty years in Wisconsin who so thoroughly knew the native plants growing in our woods and marshes. It was a delight to go on a tramp through the open country with Mr. Toole, who usually chatted amiably concerning anticipated herbal wonders which the next few steps might reveal. It was a deep pleasure to go forth with a farmer and have him speak with such clear understanding and depth of knowledge concerning the wonders of our native landscape.

Wisconsin horticulture and floriculture will sadly miss this good friend. Perhaps as the world usu-

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—Mortise—Real Bronze—
1695, 1701 to 1705, 1716, 1717,
—Mortise—Real Bronze—
1750 to 1755

ally counts riches, Mr. Toole was not rich. However, he contributed so much out of the fullness of his spirit, and often unconsciously, to the welfare of those about him that he leaves a legacy far greater than material things. Wisconsin Farmer.

1710
1706, 1707, 1747 to 1752
1708, 1709, 1771 to 1775
1802, 1803
1808 to 1816

SIMMONS
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COMPANY.

Banks took a long, long

737

'holiday' in 1933

Suppose your bank refused, by law, to allow you to withdraw any of your money. Suppose the ATM's were all closed, and your credit cards were suspended. What's worse, you could not write a check to someone because the bank, by law, could not transfer your draft to pay a bill.

Impossible? Well, it happened not only in Baraboo but all over the country, on March 4, 1933. It was called a bank holiday. Sort of a week-long Columbus Day. Some holiday!

But first, the Depression, and then the explanation. And a warning: this isn't a fun article—but there's an invitation for you at the end!

The Depression

Let us take you back now to those good old/bad old days of the Great Depression, that cold economic and emotional vacuum into which our nation, and indeed the world, fell at the end of the 1920's.

Its not that they were all bad days. Tom Brokaw has written of those days as being great character builders, a quality which served the nation well when we were challenged with World War II. His book, "The Greatest Generation", is almost too lavish in its praise of those qualities of character which matured during the Depression and which ended the war victoriously.

No, they weren't all bad days, but it is pretty hard to put a favorable light on an unemployment rate of 25%, or on a million and a half hobos riding the rails in constant search for sustenance. For three long years the nation drifted under a good but uninspiring President, Herbert Hoover, and the adherence to rugged individualism.

World War I veterans who had assembled in Washington to demand payment of their bonus were driven out by the army, led by Generals McArthur and Eisenhower. Hoover assured the nation that we would soon have "a chicken in every pot, and two cars in every garage, (with) prosperity just around the corner."

Hoover whistle-stopped his train

in Baraboo in his 1932 campaign, and spoke in vain to some 10,000 people at the railroad station. The election that fall brought in a neo slate of leaders nationwide, with Franklin Roosevelt and a Democratic Party landslide. His espousal of the return of 3.2% beer, and the end of the useless experiment in Prohibition, was especially decisive in Wisconsin, with its breweries. The country, however, was ready for a New Deal, as he called it and he won handily. His first 100 days transformed America.

There couldn't have been a worse time to become President, with the record unemployment, soup lines, closed factories, and a population losing faith in its government, and its way of life. No government relief and welfare programs then, of course. No food stamps. No medicare or medicaid. Rabble rousers like Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and Gerald L.K. Smith abounded. A month before his inauguration, an assassin attempted to take Roosevelt's life, and a bomb was mailed to him on March 10.

Even the head of Bethlehem Steel said "I'm Afraid—every man is afraid." But the country was electrified when, in his inaugural speech, Roosevelt declared, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself."

Well, he was pretty optimistic. The whole world seemed to be drifting toward anarchy, with dictators Hitler in Germany, Mussolini in Italy, and Tojo in Japan. Indeed the socialist and communist movements in our own country could hardly be dismissed. The America First movement would be beating the drums against it's bogy man, foreign entanglement, and succeeded in our foolish maintenance of only a token army as late a 1940. By then Europe was at war with the seem-



BOB
DEWEL

▼
YESTERYEAR
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ingly invincible Hitler, yet a draft law in this country passed the House of Representatives by only one vote!

Baraboo and the Depression

Depression was not a new thing for Baraboo. Some say the Depression began here in 1918 with the departure of the Ringling Circus winter quarters, and some say it even started in 1916 when the Gollmar Circus broke up. The city population declined from 6,324 in 1910 to 5,538 in 1920. The city seemed bereft of industry except for the faltering Woolen Mill and the McArthur industries.

The Northwestern Railroad was divesting itself of Baraboo as a railroad division center. The farm situation was not good, as described in Goc's "Many a Fine Harvest", so bad in fact that a Sauk County Sheriff's deputy was disarmed by an irate farmer, and his shotgun deposited in the Woolen Mill pond.

The Bank Holiday

Times were bad all over the country. The new President may have said "We have nothing to fear but fear itself," but his hand must have trembled a bit when, as almost the first act of his administration on March 4, 1933 he signed an order closing all banks in the country! Actually, several states had already closed the state-chartered banks, but the mass closing of all banks was ominous.



HERBLOCK

All over the country bank "runs" were emptying the institutions of ready cash. The bank holiday put an end to that, providing a breathing spell for both bankers and the public, and an opportunity for the government to inspect and perhaps close permanently some poorly run banks. The downside was the traumatic effect on cash flow, as described in paragraph one of this article. Happily, after the bank holiday was lifted, deposits exceeded withdrawals, a measure of renewed confidence for the new President.

Baraboo was no exception, both The Baraboo National Bank and the First National Bank having to curtail their activities for several days.

It was like the effect of closing off a water main. In the latter case only your toilet and the water heater hold water. With money, only one's pocket cash was available to provide the necessities of life, and who knew when the banks would reopen.

The Headlines

Perhaps the events can be put in perspective from the files of the News Republic of the time. Monday, March 4 found all banks and stock exchanges closed nationwide, but local people were said to be taking it calmly. The News Republic bravely announced that Baraboo business was good, and the theatre patronage OK also. The Chamber of Commerce decided against issuing scrip on March 6, but the newspaper announced that the state would vote on the repeal of Prohibition on April 25!



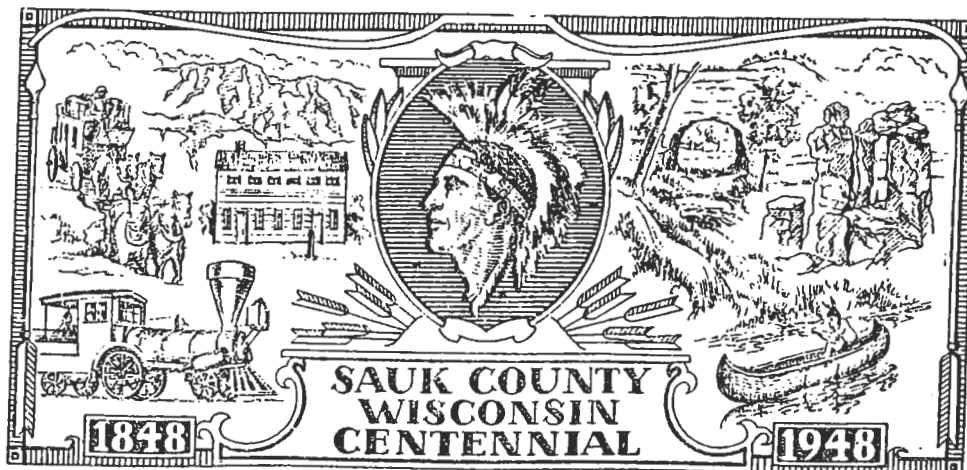
A national plan for scrip was shelved, and on the 9th the state announced a plan for its own scrip, and that state-chartered banks would open on March 15. On March 14 the banks got scrip, and on the 15th the paper stated that 450 state-chartered banks were open, but that one of the banks in Baraboo was still awaiting word from Washington as of 3 p.m. On the 15th the Al. Ringling announced that scrip "was just as acceptable as gold itself" for admission. And the paper speculated that 3.2 percent beer would be available by April — no indication whether scrip would buy beer also!

Good news in Baraboo was that the Woolen Mill, closed due to the bank holiday, would now reopen. Just what the banking situation in Baraboo was seems hard to deter-

mine, for one account said the banks were open for making change, but that no funds could be withdrawn during the so-called holiday. It appears that the local Chamber of Commerce did not issue scrip then, but they did the following November at the time of the Ringling Bros. Circus 50th anniversary appearance in Baraboo.

These were attractive multi-color mini-bills, with pictures of the Ringling Brothers and in denominations ranging from 5 cents for John, to 50 cents for Al. with the dollar certificate picturing all five of the brothers connected with the circus. Dr. Jon Stock of Baraboo has a collection of these. Scrip was also issued for the Sauk County Centennial in 1948.

During the bank holiday scrip served an essential need, since many persons were hoarding the truly silver and gold coins of that day and the resulting shortage hindered commerce. Scrip was usually paper printed to look like money, with a value printed on it.





This writer's Depression

As a Depression teenager, this writer recalls not only the bank holiday but other memories of modest deprivation. My father owned a small-town newspaper, and two weeks in a row he was unable to pay his employees. What did they do — they reported for work as usual, and I believe eventually took pay cuts to keep the newspaper going.

Embarrassing to me was the haggling over a winter coat, with my father finally trading free advertising to the clothing merchant in exchange for a rather tent-like topcoat, which served for six years in college also.

Summers were spent as a bill collector (with dismal results) and reporting for the newspaper, a train-

ing that now serves me in writing these articles. One summer vacation found me employed and lucky to have a job, as a waiter in a cafe at 23 cents per hour. Tips were rare, and probably not deserved!

An Invitation

Time is taking its toll, and the Depression-raised generation will soon be gone. Readers are hereby urged to write short or long stories of their Depression experiences and memories, or of stories told by their elders, so that present generations can learn of the times. Address such stories to the News Republic, and if enough come in, an article will be prepared. Don't be bashful. If you don't tell your remembrances now, they may be lost forever.

Depression wore sober face

741

in area

Several previous articles have alluded to the great Depression of the 1930s. It was an event that affected the lives of nearly every living person during those difficult days, for a depression means many men out of work, idle machines and scarcity of money.

It occurred to this writer that some modest effort should be made to represent life at that time. Since the Depression and its events spanned about a decade, from the market crash of 1929 to 1940, the project seemed daunting. The troubled times ended about 1940 when America's belated military buildup began.

We chose, as possibly representative of the woes of the the Depression, the year 1935, considered by some to be near the depth of the worldwide Depression. Other articles may follow, and this article will concentrate on the Thanksgiving and Christmas season of 1935, as reported in the news columns of the News Republic.

To our astonishment, the newspaper's accounts of news in the late fall and early winter articles was not all that different from today. Now in its sixth year, the Depression was a way of life, and people tried to keep life as normal as possible. By now the Depression was no longer news—everyone knew more than they wished about it.

Christmas plans

In 1935 Santa Claus was scheduled to make his usual pre-Christmas appearance on a fire truck, no circus wagons being available in those days before the Circus World Museum. Nor was there a parade, unlike this year when the street lights were doused and floats and people decorated with lights paraded the business section.

It was explained then that Santa came by fire truck as the "lack of snow made it impractical for the jolly old fellow to bring his sleigh." He arrived on Dec. 20, 1935, a Friday night, and he distributed candy. Saturday he was expected to make appearances in certain stores, a supreme customer lure.

Santa would make other appearances also. In a tradition observed today, there was an annual Elks Club party. In 1935 it was held at the Al Ringling Theatre, where children would be allowed to see a movie and see Santa arrive by sliding out of the chimney on stage.

The News Republic specified that no child over 12 would be admitted, nor would there be seats for adults, since the event was always crowded. Meantime, children could leave their Santa requests in a box at the foot of the steps leading to "the Elks' Rooms." Apparently the club had not yet purchased the Al. Ringling home, which it occupies today.

There was one somber note to these plans, however. City Health officer Dr. Tryon warned that no child with a sore throat, cough, or cold would be admitted due to the epidemic of scarlet fever in neighboring communities. Scarlet fever was occasionally the grim cause of death in those days before antibiotics.

As it does most years, the News Republic published a special Christmas issue to drum up shopping for the local merchants. One can almost read between the lines, however, of pleas that couples with no children "borrow the neighbor's children" and bring them to town and into the stores. Readers were urged to "pick out the things you wish to buy, and buy them."

The courthouse park area was to be decorated with special lights by the Chamber of Commerce. In a plan difficult to understand, it was said that "each merchant is erecting a Christmas tree between the first and second story of his building ... to be illuminated with Christmas lights."

In another correlation with today, a Christian musical program was to be presented by the Civic Chorus of 125 voices under the direction of Flora Heise. Where? The Al. Ringling, of course, where the organ would be played by Mrs. Arthur Lange. Martha's musical skills

would serve the community for another five to six decades. Curiously, there were few announcements of church activity open to the public.

The Depression

So, where was the Depression in all of this? Though it rarely mentioned depression, the News Republic at one point proclaimed "to feast merrily is to celebrate today fittingly" — small solace to the man who could not even consider buying a turkey for his family so they, too, could feast merrily.

Perhaps the paper was trying, as did everyone, to put as good a face as possible on the doldrums of the years. In Baraboo, 17 difficult years

had passed since Baraboo's pre-eminent industries, the Ringling and Gollmar circuses had left the scene. There was no avoiding the

fact that another industry, the Island Woolen Mill, was now having a hard time getting orders, though it was said they manufactured a lot of the mohair cloth for the automobiles of the day.

Incidentally, a new four-door Plymouth was selling for \$510, and a comparable Chevrolet was about \$490.

There is a clue to the depression in the advertising columns of the paper, for there is a dearth of ads by local merchants. Most of the significant ads were national, for cigarettes or autos. Ott Hardware, however, did advertise a beautiful piece of furniture, including a built-in Philco radio, for \$59.95.

If one went back to the papers before Thanksgiving, one found little interest in the holiday except that a small prayer for the day was printed. What few ads there were revealed that Schweke's Department Store was selling men's suits for \$9.95 to \$19.50. Carey's store sold women's frocks for \$1. Effinger Brewery was promoting beer as a suitable drink for Thanksgiving — Prohibition had only been repealed two years prior.

Most of the paper was national or international news, unlike today's emphasis on local news. Mayor Prothero did announce the possibility of a stoker factory coming to town. Part of Broadway, which was also Highway 12 then, was being repaved, but the state contracts had now been let for the bypass bridge over the river and railroad in West Baraboo — the same bridge removed this past fall.

Some 176 persons had attended a Masonic dinner-dance, and in the post office Mark Anerson had been promoted to clerk. That post office building is now used as the school district administration building.

On the national scene, Italian dictator Mussolini's war on Ethiopia got headlines, as did the amazing new China Clipper flying boat, which had reached the Philippines. Bruno Hauptman's were trying to save him from the electric chair, he having been convicted earlier in the year of the kidnapping and murder of the Lindberg child. Lindberg had moved to England, fearing for the safety of his other child. Also on the national scene, big business was fighting the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt. Internationally, Japan had by now occupied much of China.

The local scene

Back in Sauk County, two men had perished in a plane crash in the forests near Devils Lake. The County Historical Society had received the magnificent sum of \$10,000 from the Griggs estate and was considering moving its museum from the courthouse to the Griggs home.



CONTRIBUTED

This 1935 cartoon, listed the "battle of the century," is still appropriate today. The 1935 Maytag (below) still had a wringer but was electric instead of hand operated. The listed price in a News Republic ad is \$99.

Residents were reading with interest John Ringling's renewed divorce suit against his second wife,

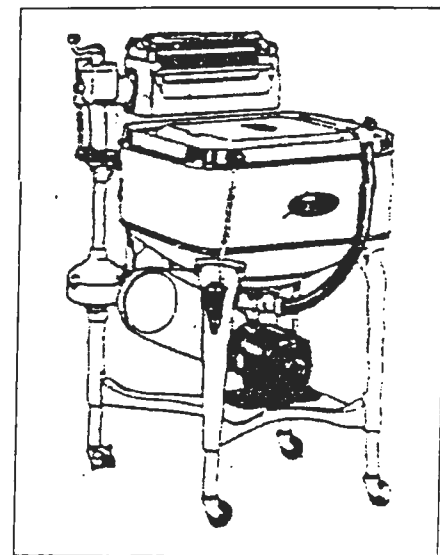
Emily Haag Buck, saying she was guilty of "nagging, cursing, and scolding, thus undermining his already ill health." Among Baraboo's youth, the big news was that a skating rink was being prepared on the "city circus grounds" on Fourth Street just east of Camp Street.

A special event in November was the 20th birthday of the Al. Ringling theatre. (We just last month celebrated its 85th birthday) The News

Republic spoke of the theatre as an old friend. Because of its French setting, the movie "Three Musketeers" would be shown, and 750 roses were reserved for the ladies.

Conclusion

The writer spent some hours researching the November and December 1935 issues of the News Republic, but found little reference to the Great Depression. By now the



Depression was six or seven years old. Was it now like the proverbial elephant in the living room that no one talked about? Or were folks just trying to make the best of a bad situation? There are still many people around who experienced the event and who can testify to its reality. It just didn't show up much in the columns of the News Republic. A review of the rest of the year in a future article may tell a different story.

Baraboo remembers Great Depression

743

"Are you going to tell that old story about walking to school seven miles every day in the snow and that it was uphill both directions?"

That was the reaction in the newsroom of the News-Republic when I told the editorial staff I planned to follow up on the Depression. Despite their obvious insolence, impudence and mischievous disrespect for the elderly, my wish is that they shall never see a depression — I'm not sure I could handle it!

The Great Depression

Seriously, the dreadful misfortune that began with the fall of the stock market in October 1929 left hardly any person in the world unscathed, some to the point of suicide. In America, riding the rails became a way of life for thousands of older boys and men, foraging for themselves and leaving the dwindling family resources to the wives and younger children back home.

When they could find work, they sent money home to the family. Many later found shelter and work in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) of the Roosevelt administration, where they earned \$21 per month, with \$15 of it going directly home.

President Herbert Hoover unfortunately had signed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Bill despite the protests of about a thousand economists and of every important nation in the world. The latter, in self-protection, enacted tariff bills of their own, all of which helped precipitate the 1929 stock market debacle.

The World Book Encyclopedia describes what happened succinctly, as follows: "Millions of persons lost every cent they owned. Banks failed, factories, shut down, stores closed, and almost every business seemed paralyzed. Empty trains ran between once-busy cities...foreign trade almost came to a stop.

"For a while Hoover and business leaders assured the country that prosperity was 'just around the corner'.... But conditions grew steadily worse.... More than 12 million Americans were out of work (in a population of about 130 million). More than 5000 banks failed ... farm prices fell lower than ever before ... desperate men sold apples on street corners, ate in soup kitchens and lived in shacks called 'Hoovervilles.' Angry farmers prevented mortgage foreclosures and workers demanded radical government action."

In truth, communist and fascist parties gained strength in America, with unrest created by Gerald L.K. Smith, Father Coughlin, the Townsend Plan and others. Thus, there were tense times politically, also.

Roosevelt and recovery

To its credit, the Hoover administration did start the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) with \$2 billion in aid for public construction projects and aid to public credit facilities, but it was far too modest an effort, and in 1932 the country gave President Franklin D. Roosevelt an overwhelming victory and a mandate to do something.

Roosevelt possessed the charisma and foresight of a leader and introduced an alphabet soup of government projects, similar to the RFC but far more extensive and innovative than the Hoover effort. Despite opposition from reactionary businessmen and congressmen and the conservative Supreme Court, the Democratic Congress, in a 99-day marathon, passed the most sweeping changes in American history.

Baraboo was a direct benefit of one of the agencies, the CCC, whose work remains visible 65 years later in the swimming pool and the stone walls on the courthouse square, eighth avenue, and Ochsner Park, as well as work at Devils Lake State Park. Some three million men, some of whom had been riding the rails, at least received jobs with modest pay to send home. The local contingent lived in a pseudo-military camp at Devils Lake.

Depression in Baraboo

As this writer learned after pursuing several months of News Republics from 1935, the Depression was not mentioned regularly in the news columns. I didn't really expect the paper to regularly run headlines stating, "This is a Depression, woe are we." Apparently hard times were old news and a way of life after six years, with everyone doing the best they could. Instead, people were preoccupied with national news of that year, such as railroad strikes. Mary Pickford's

* Probably WPA



CONTRIBUTED

Excess produce was sometimes donated for distribution to the needy and unemployed.

divorce of Douglas Fairbanks, the death mask of bank robber John Dillinger and the second Byrd expedition to the South Pole.

Locally, Merrimac folks petitioned for a bridge, young Ted Mandt became President of the Jaycees (Andy McArthur Secretary), the American Legion had renovated the former German Methodist Church, parts of the old YMCA were falling onto the sidewalk and young Vaughn Conway was District Attorney. He had directed raids on slot machine locations and said that "next time I will prosecute to the full extent of the law."

Personal Stories

A number of persons, upon being asked, have volunteered their remembrances of the Depression. Without naming names, the stories are consistent with the reputation of the Depression. Among men, one remembers shucking grain for \$1 a day and noon meal. Another man

recalls his mother cutting the teacher's hair in barter for piano lessons for him. (He is now a good musician). One sold pots and pans for extra money. It seemed to some like they lived on canned tomatoes. Another earned 23 cents per hour as a waiter in a cafe.

A man living in Racine at the time recalls communist rallies downtown. His parents put the car up on blocks for 18 months due to the high cost of gasoline (15 cents per gallon). Neighborhood young men earned 25 cents each job for painting street numbers on the curbs of homes. Television person Hugh Downs worked a job for \$12.50 per week while in college.

One local man was kind enough to lend his memoirs to me. He recalls that "there was no social security, no welfare, no food stamps, no retirement plans, no unemployment

insurance, no farm subsidies, no minimum wage, no overtime pay and no medical insurance.

The man believes that Hoover once said the welfare of a citizen should not be the concern of the government. He and his sister had an allowance of 5 cents per week, which usually went, after the great deliberation, to the purchase of candy. Another memory was the cooking of a hog's head to make a German dish, Kanip.

Women volunteered similar tales. During the bank holiday a local woman recalls the parents removing all of the couch and chair pillows in search of small change, when all banks were closed. Another woman recalls her fortune in having just paid a semester's tuition at a teacher's college the day before the bank closed its doors forever, losing the rest of her money. However,



another local lady recalls her parents losing \$3000 to a bank, reaching the bank just as the doors were closed to them. The same lady remembers eating wax beans from the garden "until we were sick of them."

Like this writer, her high school class could not afford a yearbook. As the annual editor, this writer used the school mimeograph for texts and makeshift annual. The pictures are still pretty good, if you don't mind everyone being as blue as blueing.

When her young husband lost his job in Beloit, his wife, now a Baraboo lady, was given commodities from the government. She used them

to bake bread, rolls and coffee cake to sell to more affluent Beloit neighbors.

Well, people kept their sense of humor despite the depressing times. In a sad but also humorous dispatch, the News Republic reported on a Chicago man named Straub who secretly had three wives. He was at the home of his third wife when four women appeared, two of whom were the other wives and two of whom were said to be sweethearts. Police said Straub married the women "for a place to sleep and something to eat during the depression." Straub solved his problem by running to the rear of the house and committing sui-

cide. Now, there were three widows and two grieving sweethearts — and one less mouth to feed.

Well, enough of depressing news of the Depression. That walk to the schoolhouse (or anywhere) does seem like seven miles these days, and those hills are growing steeper, too. — both ways.

Depression era full of significant events

In two previous articles on the Great Depression, we chose parts of the year 1935 to represent an era near the depth of the Depression. Enough reminiscing and comments have been made that more of 1935, as reported in the News Republic of the day, has now been skimmed from its pages. It presents a mosaic of life in the area 65 years ago, but with less emphasis on the Depression.

Before pursuing that, however, there is a housekeeping matter to be considered. In reference to the modest skepticism of the current News Republic editorial staff, I wrote my wish "that they shall never see a Great Depression — I'm not sure they could handle it." The office gremlins were busy, however, and the "they" came out as "I," meaning me.

I guess it works either way, whether they can handle hard times or whether I can handle their reaction to it. Whatever.

Final notes

First, a few leftover notes on the Depression: Those living on farms fared the best, raising their own food, though corn at 10 cents a bushel was not of much use except to fire the furnace. Some of them lost their farms, of course, and one woman recalls that her brother, who seriously dated the banker's daughter, was forced to break up the relationship due to hard feelings over the foreclosure. In Iowa, a foreclosure judge came within a hair, so to speak, of being hung by angry farmers.

The new Federal Land Bank program often helped in saving the family farm. Farming in general was made even tougher by the unbelievable dust storms of the midwest, even darkening the skies in Sauk County. President Roosevelt promoted planting trees as windbreaks, many of which are still visible today.

There is no way a modern writer can affectively present the Great Depression era. Fellow columnists Charlie Schluter and Myra Furse would remember it well. For most folks, however, it is something that their parents sort of remember and their grandparents can bore you with. Interestingly, as stated in article II, the Depression was not mentioned continually, at least in the News Republic.

We turn in this article, then, to the news of the day, as gleaned from its columns, though it was mostly national and state news from its wire service, with not much emphasis on local news then. Even so, some pretty interesting things happened. First, the national news.

The nation in 1935

Despite the alarming military buildups in Germany, Italy and Japan, conservative and isolationist elements had kept the United States a fifth-rate military power. For example, while we had but a few hundred thousand men in uniform and small air force, France alone now had 4000 airplanes, more for the moment than Britain, Russia, Italy, Japan and Germany — though that would quickly change. Little Italy under its dictator, Mussolini, had nearly two million men under arms to harass little Ethiopia.

The American hero Charles Lindberg lived in England and gave admiring reports on the military skill and strength of the German forces being developed by Hitler, in defiance of the Treaty of Versailles which had ended World War I just 16 years before. In America, young

men signed a pledge "not to support the government in any war it may contract," a pledge quickly and rightly forgotten by that fated generation of males after Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

The Hoover-Coolidge Supreme Court was ruling as unconstitutional many of Roosevelt's depression remedies, with even Social Security and Unemployment Compensation in danger due to the court's fear of "radical laws." It was a court similar to today's fractious court in makeup and inclination, but Roosevelt's attempt to enlarge and modernize it failed, and only the attrition of age brought needed change and wise nominations.

In lighter news, the Dionne Quintuplets, the world's first quint, remained in the news, for control of their lives had been assumed by the Canadian government, contrary to the wishes of the parents. In other news, one Amelia Earhart had flown from Mexico City to New York nonstop and planned to fly the Pacific Ocean alone. Her subsequent disappearance is still speculative news today.

Meantime, one could fly from Chicago to San Francisco in 10 hours at the fantastic speed of 206 miles per hour on average. Most travel was by train, then with "400" claiming the fastest service in the world between Chicago and Minneapolis, via the Baraboo and Reedsburg Northwestern line route.

There was some interest locally in the acquittal of Samuel Insull, erstwhile owner of a vast midwest utility network, including the Baraboo power service. By this time he was relatively



CONTRIBUTED

The cartoonist symbolically has "Ulysses Sam" lashed to the mast so he will not be swept overboard into the murky waters of foreign wars.

destitute compared to his previous situation.

The paper was full of advertisements for cigarettes, and one ad featured baseball great Lou Gehrig saying of Camels, "They don't get your wind." Wind or no wind, Gehrig succumbed to the disease which now bears his name, though a connection to smoking is not listed medically. A particularly offensive ad, as viewed today, was one that featured a cigarette saying, "I am a friend indeed, a better friend than others...I am a soothing companion, the best of friends." Seemingly everyone smoked.

County and Baraboo news

Are all years as interesting, when studied in depth, as *1945? There is material remaining for several articles. For example, those placid authority-respecting well-behaved kids of old, as we like to think of them, made significant news one week. The issue was the failure of the school board to renew the contracts for Principal Schumann and Coach Petrosik. Students left school and paraded downtown in protest, as well as parading in the halls of the old red brick building on Second and Oak.

*1935

And these were Junior High School students! The two-day walkout included a torchlight parade. Pickets kept other students from entering the school.

At the end of the second day they were back in school, however, at the personal request of Principal Schumann himself. Schumann pled respect for the law. Meantime, in school board elections Dr. Al Dippel and woolen mill owner William McFetridge emerged victorious. Student unrest was copy-catted the example of the sit-down strikes of Ford and elsewhere, but

University of Wisconsin-Madison students were more innovative — they threw an unpopular speaker into Lake Mendota.

With regard to school, 85 of 88 students graduated from the stage of the Al. Ringling following an earlier and voluntary Baccalaureate service at the Methodist Episcopal Church (now First United Methodist). The senior banquet was held at Lake Delton. Meantime, rural schools had also used the prestigious Al. Ringling for the graduation of 210 students. The senior high basketball team had won the conference, but met defeat in sectionals to LaCrosse.

Speaking of banquets, the new Ritz restaurant had opened, and was located on the "Lyons Corner," now known as the Ritz corners. It started as a night club, with an orchestra and dancing and an overflow crowd. Nearby was Ed Ritzenthaler's Ritz Oil Station. It and the restaurant were about the only businesses on the corners, with the Lyons school nearby also.

The newly remodeled Melzel and McGann furniture store was also a funeral parlor, presumably offering lots of seating on the chairs and sofas, all of which happened to be for sale. You could shop while you mourned. They sold rag rugs for 19 cents, or a 27 x 45 rug for \$2.50. Doughnuts were 10 cents a dozen at the nearby A&P grocery, with two pounds of hamburger for 23 cents.

Down the street, the Scheible and Dryand furniture store would sell a four-piece bedroom suite for \$67.50, and local clothing merchants had put on a big spring style show, using 75 models. The News Republic proudly announced that there were now 1790 telephones in Baraboo.

The empty YMCA building on Second and Ash had been condemned and was sold to Wm. Ott for \$185. He planned to tear it down and use the materials in the construction of two homes.

So it was in the late spring of 1935 in Baraboo. If there is enough interest, a final article will chronicle the summer activities in those difficult keep-a-stiff-upper-lip days.

By pure co-incidence, fellow columnist wrote about the Depression. Here are excerpts from her column, which appeared in the same issue of the News-Republic:



MYRA
FURSE
▼
THE EYE OF
THE
BEHOLDER

I called my brother and sister to confirm what I remembered of our childhood Christmases. They, too, recalled that we each received a stocking with an orange, an apple, some nuts and some candy and *one present*.

"Could that be true?" I thought. "What a bummer!"

My siblings remembered the same scenario. What we didn't remember was that we were ever disappointed or expecting more. In those days, that's what most children got. How we treasured that one special gift! A doll, a little cookstove kitchen set, a new pair of shoe skates — how we cherished them! My brother put in many miles on his scooter and coaster wagon.

My sister recalls a Christmas during the Depression when she and I each got a little Scotty dog pin with rhinestone eyes. That was it! She remembers our mother crying. I'm surprised we didn't

all bawl along with her. Children often don't know what their parents are crying about. We were proud of our little pins. As we got a bit older and the Depression abated, we began to get a few more gifts, possibly a sweater or a watch.

After World War II, as the economy got progressively better, merchandising and advertising led to piles of gifts under our trees. My five children each got five gifts: a book, a game, an article of clothing and two things from their lists. We were often far from family, so in some ways we may have been trying to compensate for the loneliness we all felt. I have to admit, 25 presents made an impressive display under our tree. However, the pile of packaging could be a problem to dispose of afterward — a continuing problem, only worse, today.

COLLEGE DAYS DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

Journey back with me, if you will, to the 1930's, those good old Depression years, featuring a nasty war brewing in Europe, just to spice things up. Let's say it is 1937, you've just graduated from high school, and are college material—hopefully!

Colleges are begging for students, but the money factor is a problem. Too bad there isn't a college or junior college in Baraboo, so you can sleep and eat at home rather than pay the landlords in Madison. There once was such a college, the Baraboo Institute of the 1860's, but thanks to the Civil War and the failure of the conservative city council and citizens to support it, the Institute failed.

Baraboo could have been a college town, like Beloit or Carroll or Ripon. More forward-looking citizens in 1870 did bring in the railroad, but it was too late to revive the college opportunity. A hundred years would pass before the happy advent of Boo U.

But here you are, age 18, college material, but faced with tuition in some college town that might run as high as \$700 a year, board and room included! That is not a misprint, and don't laugh. This was Depression, and not too many had \$700 available to invest in an education.

Grinnell College

In Sept. 1937, this writer, not then from Baraboo, entered Grinnell College in the Iowa town of the same name. Old scrapbooks happen to have a great deal of material on college life in those ancient days. Grinnell liked to call itself the Harvard of the Midwest, with some justification, and this writer was lucky to enjoy a year there as a "Son of the Pioneers". In size and location, the

college and town are comparable to Ripon in Wisconsin.

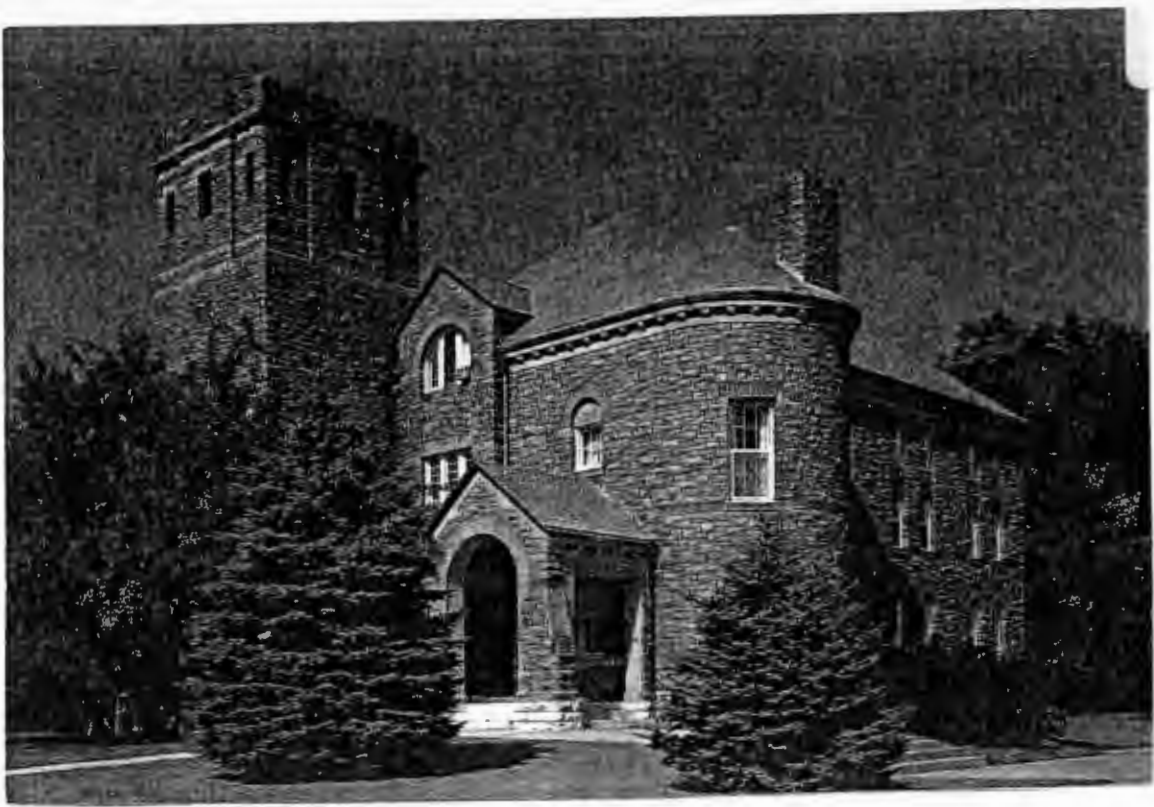
College was different then, as you will soon see. Taking a look at the introductory booklet makes one feel like it was comparable to a minimum security prison today! Here are some examples of the rules, which usually were preceded with the word "required":

"There will be no smoking on the main campus from sun up to sun down." Actually, for men this was not a great problem, for smoking was allowed in the men's dorms—all students lived in dorms, never in nearby apartments. For the women, however, there was only one room in all the six dormitory buildings where they could go to smoke. Besides, with money so tight, many students bought only a tin of ten cigarettes to last all week, at a cost of about 18 cents. Moreover, between classes some students simply crossed the street and smoked in someone's front lawn, or at least on the tree bank.

Social Life

Here's another rule: "Grinnellians do not attend dances (in the town of Grinnell) other than those which the college endorses." In memory no such endorsement ever occurred. The college itself sponsored dances most Saturday nights with good bands, which sometimes were "name" bands,

Speaking of music, however, another rule stated "None of the so-called popular music is played on the drawing room piano". This was a grand piano, located in the Great Hall in the women's dorms. Each men's dorm, and probably the women's also, had old uprights, and anything could be played on those instruments. There was 9 A.M. Chapel daily, but attendance was not required. Cultural programs included



Private Colleges always had several buildings in the classical style of Goodnow Hall in Grinnell.

the Vienna Boys Choir one evening, and there was an active theatre group.

Women were to be inside locked dormitory doors by 10 P.M. weekdays, with freshmen as early as 8 P.M., but with an 11:30 curfew on Saturday nights. Men had no hours, it being believed that when the girls were safely locked into the dorms the guys might as well go back to their own dorms. Co-ed dorms were beyond our wildest dreams!

On Sundays, male visitors had to leave the women's dormitory reception parlors by 4:30 P.M. Men entertained in their parlors on Friday nights, with what was then state of the art 78 rpm recorded music. Hit songs of the year were I'll Never Smile Again, Thanks for the Memories, I've got my Love to Keep me Warm, and Just too Marvelous for Words. In dry Iowa, liquor was not a problem for the college.

Hell Week

And then there was Hell Week, endorsed by the college and euphemistically called Freshmen Improvement Days. In one of its less vigorous variations, a totally impossible sort of scavenger hunt was featured in which "freshmen are not to be sent more than twenty miles from the campus", a seemingly impossible assignment since no student could have a car at Grinnell—there's another rule!

Somehow we traveled more than twenty miles that night in search of some unmentionable article on the list. The rest of Hell Week shall remain untold, except for remembrance of the ominous announcement of its arrival with a bulletin board notice "All freshmen to Clark Hall at 7 P.M.—BE THERE. BOYS."

The Baraboo Institute of the 1860's was reviewed in depth in an

earlier article. It did not leave a record of its rules and regulations, but it appears that there was dormitory living, for there is a curious note in the prospectus that "each boarder will furnish one half of the entire covers for a bed." This sleeping arrangement went unexplained, but we can be sure there were no co-ed dorms in Baraboo in 1860.

Today Baraboo and Sauk County can boast of UW Baraboo-Sauk County College, with a beautiful campus and expanded curriculum, saving area students the cost of board and room in Madison or elsewhere. The Center physical setup is supported by the County and Baraboo, with the latter paying about 63 percent of that cost, but without participation by West Baraboo in the city share. Center rules have one connection to the Grinnell College of the past, for, like in the women's dorms, smoking is allowed at only one place on the Boo U campus, and it is outside!

Tom Brokaw's characterization of the motley youths of the Depression days as the Greatest Generation perhaps generously overstates our challenges and our response to them in both hard times and in war. The college experience related here is but one example of how some members of that generation were prepared for those challenges. On December 7, 1941, however, most of the old rules were suddenly passé, at least at the state university levels, as young men with an uncertain and probably violent future struggled to live life more fully while they could.

Restaurants, Organs, Directories, and Commencements Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

We've written before about the Great Baraboo Brewing Company, a large restaurant near Detroit, and now we have more proof that it exists. Some years ago they adopted the Baraboo name because of the Baraboo Whiskey Ladies of 1854, who raided the local saloons early one morning.

The restaurant names several of its extensive menu items after Baraboo, such as Baraboo Sirloin Tips (sautéed with roasted red peppers smothered in Massala wine sauce) at \$7.99, and that is just one of the appetizers! Many other menu items carry the Baraboo name. They brew four beers, but none is named the Baraboo Brew.

My proof of its existence is in my good friend and book customer Tom Birch, who recently visited the restaurant. He brought us a cap, T-shirt, menu, and a two quart beer jug, all emblazoned with the Great Baraboo Brewing Company logo. Now if someone will visit the Baraboo Restaurant in Miami, Florida, my proof of stories about restaurants named Baraboo will be complete! Some say Johnny Cash mentions Baraboo in his song "I've Been Everywhere." There's something about the name Baraboo!

1935 City Directory

Another recent visitor was Tracy Zimmerman, who brought a 1935 Evans City Directory of Baraboo. This hard cover book was published near the height of the Depression. The only remaining businesses among those who advertised on the cover and back of the book are Corner Drug, Bank of Baraboo, Melzel-McGann Furniture, Wisconsin Power and Light, and Brittingham and Hixon Lumber Co.

Of interest is the fact that the directory lists 19 grocery stores, while the City of Baraboo now only has two within the city limits, with Walmart and the recent opening of Pierce's. There were 19 taverns then, Prohibition having just ended a couple years earlier. Of the cafes, only the Alpine remains today. One could still patronize dealers in straw, coal and harnesses, as well as buyers of hides. The Moeller Wagon Works still made wagons in 1935.

There were three justices of the peace. Yet to be built by the WPA was the Baraboo outdoor swimming pool. Only one interior decorator was listed, but there were 14 insurance agents and 16 filling stations. There are only four real estate agents, in 1935, whereas now we are said to have 27 such individuals.

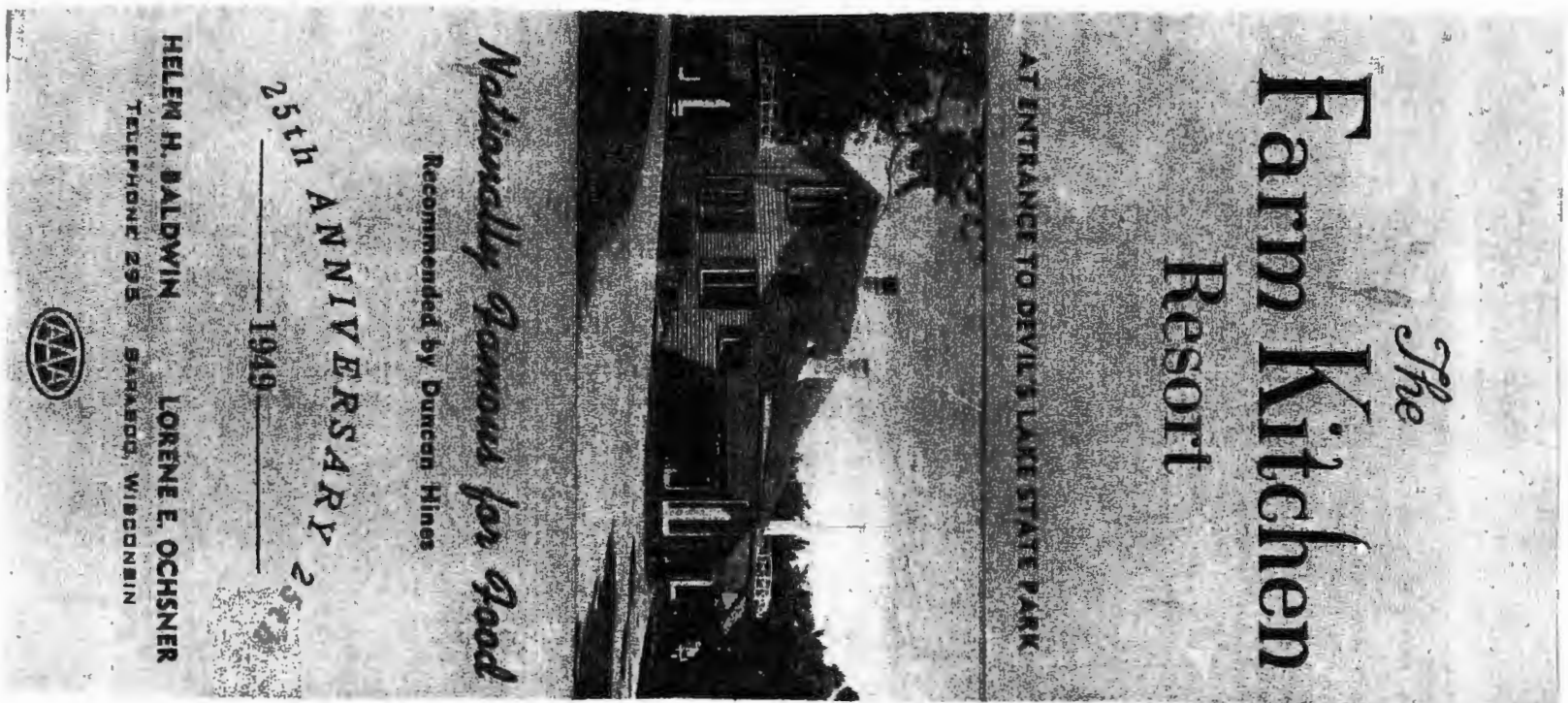
This was Depression time, both in Baraboo and in the county. Besides that, the area still suffered from the loss of the Ringling and Gollmar Circuses, as well as the Northwestern Railroad Division Point. In the years since the 1910 census, the county had not only failed to add citizens, but had actually lost population slightly. In 1934, according to Goc in "Many a Fine Harvest." 11% of the people in the county were on poor relief, which didn't amount to much anyway. So much for the "Good Old Day!"

The directory of citizens listed the simple telephone numbers of the day. You simply told the live operator 64W for Jones Shoe Store, 91 for Power and Light, and you only needed the number 8 for the Corner Drug. There was no privacy for widows, for that designation was given following their name in the directory!

Lying ahead for the city was the boom of Badger Ordnance and wartime employment, and the bust following its closure at the end of the war. Also to follow was the emergence among the citizens of Baraboo was the Baraboo Industrial Expansion Corporation, chronicled in earlier articles by this writer.



The author with an empty beer jug



The Farm Kitchen

Recently someone left a 1949 advertising brochure for the Farm Kitchen at that restaurant, and Tom Kuester has shared it with me. Owner at that time were Helen Baldwin and Lorene Ochsner, and it proudly carried the distinctive statement "Recommended by Duncan Hines."

The brochure promotes Baraboo as a good place to vacation. Of especial interest are the 1949 fees. It clearly states that the cost per week per person is \$55, "Including cottage, breakfast, and dinner." A station wagon would meet all of the [passenger trains of the day, and at movie time would transport patrons to the Al Ringling or Juliar Theatres. They would even take you to the church of your choice.

Darla Kuester says that some of the tables pictured in the brochure are still in use. According to the brochure, they served two tons of cherry dill pickles per season. As was mentioned before, Baldwin's ashes were spread on the hill to the east of the restaurant. Three dining rooms have been added since her sale of the property in 1960.

There are plenty of other donated items of interest, hopefully to be included in a similar article in the near or far future.



*After lunch or dinner, you could cruise
Devils Lake on the John Muir, with
departures every hour.*

West Side of the Square had
Many Occupants
Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

If some civic leaders of the not too distant past were to be reincarnated, imagine their surprise at seeing the West Square county building for the first time. This behemoth replaced both the Brittingham and Hixon lumber yard and the vacant Juliar Theatre building; it would be difficult for those leaders of even 50 years ago to comprehend the complexities of county government, or the need for so much space.

By the same token, it is hard for citizens of today to realize that there were buildings there before the lumber yard and the little theatre. One was quite an imposing structure as viewed in the faded newspaper clipping accompanying this article. No other picture of this building is known to exist, though the Historical Society would like to examine and copy one if any reader has such a photo.

Certainly the folks in the early 1880's would not even know of that building, for the birds eye view of the city drawn by an enterprising and surprisingly accurate artist of the day shows almost nothing on Broadway between Third and Fourth Avenues. Other than a pile of dirt and a long narrow frame shed, the block appears to be vacant, in contrast to the two-story buildings which ring the rest of the square both then and now.

Why that side of the square was neglected is not known. One of the first owners was Prescott Brigham, who had in 1846 donated the land which is now downtown Baraboo for a county seat. He then purchased back two lots partially occupied now by the West Square building. If he had a store there, it was gone by the late 1880's.

Despite the faded nature of this picture, found in a scrapbook lent to us by Ted Meisel, one can make out a sign advertising it as a garage. There is a single gas pump, the old style with the gas visible at the top. Other signs on the side of the building offer services such as storage, supplies, repairs, and Goodyear Tires.

Downtown historian Joe Ward has shared his knowledge of this location. His extensive material finds Art Wilkinson having a livery stable here in the 1890's, followed by the Prothero-McGinnis Co, which purchased the site from one N.H. Smith. By the time of the grand re-opening of the 23,000 square foot quarters in 1915, Glen Simonds and Oriel Philbrick were also members of the firm. Others sharing part of the building were James E. Wilson Auto Livery, and P.L. Sutherland, Automobile Painter and Paperhanger.

Ward reports that in 1929 Prothero built a new brick building at this location, selling the south half to Clyde Stewart and Otto Arndt for a bowling alley. This opened in December, 1929, and included a soda fountain. Soon Arndt became the sole owner, operating the alleys until 1933, after which the Bank of Baraboo owned the property. Plans were to have a Sears home appliance store there, plus mail order facilities, to be operated by Howard Ryan and J. Victor Johnson and Merle H. Hickenther. This move does not appear to have taken place, for in 1938 they planned to open in the Wellington Hotel building. Eventually Sears ended up on Third Avenue.

The reason for the change was the plan of Henry Ringling to construct a theatre on the property, to be named the Juliar in respect to the Juliar family, whose three daughters married August Ringling, Henry Moeller, and Gottlieb Gollmar respectively. Ringling had received his license for a theatre in Sept., 1938, and construction was to begin soon.

It is this building, along with the Brittingham and Hixon lumber yard, which was torn down to make room for the West Square Building. The Weekly News of December, 1938, reported that the marquee was in place, and "adds to the appearance of the courthouse square, particularly at night. Blue and golden yellow predominate in the color scheme effects," in contrast to the Al Ringling, whose new marquee had red as the predominant color.

Returning now to the earlier structures on this block, the Broadway Bowling had all of four lanes, with the address of 513 Broadway. Otto became the sole owner in 1931, and talked of adding shuffleboard to one of the alleys. These

were Depression days, and as noted above, the Bank soon owned the property.

Next door, at 515 Broadway, the Prothero and McGinnis Buick Garage opened in 1930, but by March 1933, they announced plans to move to Water Street. The Broadway building was rented to H.H. Mueller, who moved there from his previous location at 114 Fifth Avenue. In July of the same year, the business was sold to Rollo Curry. This dealer would sell Hudson and Essex Terraplane cars, with Mueller remaining in the garage as an auto salesman.

By 1938 Daniel Edwards was operating the Edwards Motor Co. at this address, followed in 1943 by the Prothero Auto Co. Oldsmobile Sales. By 1950 Fred C. Kruse had established Kruse Oldsmobile Motor Sales, which remains there today, over half a century later.

If this succession of owners has your head spinning, you are not alone. The remarkable thing is that none of us working with local history had seen a picture of this building before. This faded newspaper clipping is all we have of the plans and ambitions of the Baraboo business men of long ago. If any reader has a better picture, please loan it to the Historical Society so a copy can be made.

Prothero Garage was replaced by the Juliar Theatre. The Theatre was later removed to Make space for the County Bldg.





Sauk Co Historical Society

The Sears Building was removed to make room for a theatre, the Juliar. It in turn was removed to make room for the West Square Building

Chain Store Competition in 1936

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

There has been an ongoing discussion in Baraboo the past year about whether the city should cooperate in allowing a new business to come in, in competition to existing businesses. Some say the city should prevent new competitors, while others say it is not the business of the city to determine what new businesses should be allowed. The city can and does regulate to a degree the location and building code requirements, etc., of new structures.

Things were different in 1936, in the days of chain store incursions into small towns across America. In that year, a business which had been in Baraboo since 1921 found its building was now owned by a competitor, who promptly served notice of non-renewal of the lease. In addition, an erstwhile Mayor was involved in some of the complicated real estate deals related to the eviction. Thanks to Joe Ward, downtown Baraboo historian, we can recapitulate what happened.

The mighty Woolworth chain was the victim, and had occupied the western half of what is now 117 Third Street. Next door west was Miss Andro's Specialty Shop, and to the east was the Red Goose shoe Store. Woolworth's was a single front, not the double front now occupied by Nautical Notions. Woolworth's had been there since 1921.

At the time, former Mayor Andro owned the Andro Specialty Shop building, F.J. Effinger owned the Woolworth location, and Roy Lindgren owned the Red Goose location. First, Andro and Effinger sold to Schultz Brothers, a strong Midwest variety store chain. In what surely was a pre-arranged deal, Schultz Brothers then traded the Andro location for the Red Goose location. The latter firm then moved, and remained there for over 40 years.

As a significant Midwest competitor to Woolworth's, Schulz Brothers now owned the Woolworth building and wanted it as part of their projected store. Woolworth's was in the way, so notice was apparently given, though the lease ran until the following July 1. After gaining possession then, the separating wall was removed between Woolworth's and the old Red Goose location, and Schulz Brothers opened on July 29, 1937, with a double front variety store. What had once been seven bays was now only two. The big boxes of that time period had clashed in Baraboo!

Interestingly, all three of these properties were part of one building, the Tousley Block, erected in 1886, after one of the great fires that ravaged downtown Baraboo. Originally there were seven bays, or half-fronts, and had housed such diverse businesses as Groman and Sarahan, Dress Maker (1895), The Charles E. Wild Furniture Annex (1895), G.J. Wareham & Co., Clothing (1898), Madden Clothing (1899), and J. R. Lawsha Flour and Feed (1902).

The Elks Club occupied the upper level, over the old Red Goose Store, until its purchase of the Al Ringling Home in 1936. After Schulz Brothers closed in about 1977, the property was occupied by Dorf's Men's and Women's Fashions, Dorf's Vogue, and now Nautical Notions (1995).

Not to be outdone in the lucrative Baraboo business climate, Woolworth's, in the 1936 spirit of competition, leased 522 Oak and 524 Oak, currently the Village Booksmith and the northern half of the Corner Drug Store. The store was to be open by April, 1937, beating the Schulz store opening by two or three months, with a prime location on the square. In June, 1952, they expanded into the southern half of what is now the Corner Drug Store, 518 Oak, occupying by now a triple front store with a typical Woolworth façade.



The Tausley building on Third Street has two storefronts today. When built in 1886, it had seven narrow storefronts, called bays.

There is not space in this article to list the thirteen previous occupants of 522 and 524 Oak, nor the nine previous occupants of 518 Oak. Suffice to say that Woolworth's outlasted Schulz Brothers by nearly twenty years, closing in 1995. Chain stores had been greeted with fear and dread in Baraboo, but there were tears at Woolworth's departure, and petitions that it remain open. Its undoing was the arrival on the scene of its long-time national competitor, the Kresge Company, in the form of K-Mart.

After the closing of Woolworth's, it was occupied for a time by Golf 2000/Power Play Sports, and then by a Pizza Pit. In 1997 the Fritsch Corner Drug moved there, with the Village Booksmith occupying the north one third of the building.

Upstairs is the Opera House, revived as recorded in another article. There is a list of more than a dozen upstairs occupants of the past, for which there is again insufficient room in this article to name them.. Businesses come and businesses go. It is the nature of the capitalistic system of competition and the laissez Faire concept.

THE SOUTH 'Y'

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

It takes a Baraboo old timer to recognize this scene, and even then they may have some trouble. It is an aerial view of the South Boulevard "Y" intersection, taken sometime between 1928 and 1936. Notice the small circular island in the middle of the intersection. North is toward the lower left corner of the picture.

To the far left, and out of the picture, would be the railroad underpass, and to the left of that would be the then sparkling new Broadway bridge, complete with lights.

In the center, along with the gas station, is the original Bar-B-Q Restaurant, which also featured juke box dancing in the basement. The little stand to the right of the café is where the meat was barbecued. Only recently the Bar-B-Q, lately known as Pierces, was demolished, a sad end for a fine fieldstone structure.

At the top of the picture is the road leading to Devils Lake State Park, now known as highway 123. All of the paving is concrete and perhaps it may still be serving as a base for the present blacktop. It is now one of the worst stretches of main highway in the city. (This article was published in 1998).

Of interest is the dark line in the center of each lane of traffic. The automobiles of that day all leaked oil, and as it accumulated it left a streak in the center of each lane.

In the lower center of the picture there is an apparently well used dirt trail leading to the northwest, the purpose of which is unknown now. It has long since been obliterated by the outdoor swimming pool, built in 1937-38.

Highway 12 still entered the city from the right side of the picture, with the West Baraboo bridge over the river yet to be built. Now, in 1999, that bridge is to be replaced with a four lane bridge,

and there is even talk of bypassing it sometime after it is built!

At that time Highway 12 approached Baraboo in a sweeping curve on what is now the Pace Implement corner. There was a stoplight suspended over a downtown intersection, probably where Highway 12 intersects Highway 33 on the corner of Oak and Fourth.

The building in the upper right, shown here in front of the Ed Ritzenthaler cabin camp, is the present location of Culligan Water. For many years it was the Bering-Luck Dodge dealership, but the building was originally built in the late 1940's as The Tucker Auto Sales garage. No Tucker cars were ever delivered to the dealer, however.

The building soon became the Van Rouh Firestone dealership, and then Curly Powell's Shell station. By 1952 it was the Bering-Luck dealership, which lasted some 40 years. The latter firm had ten Shell stations at one time, including one just to the left of the pillars at the north entrance to Devils Lake State Park. It included a small restaurant.

Leading off to the west, which is to the right in the picture, Highway 12 was at that time essentially a country road. Now business and industries fill it for nearly a mile, to its junction with County W, where WalMart is considering building a super store. The above scene, once at the city limits of Baraboo, can now be considered almost a part of the downtown business areas.

Can you identify this location?



Ice was big commodity

763

before the fridge

"Don't eat that ice — it will make you sick."

How many millions of mother called out such warning to their children almost daily in days gone by? For the kids, the call was welcome, for it meant that the iceman was in the neighborhood.

Alert boys and girls, generally barefoot, were probably already aware of the iceman's approach. Soon they would be grabbing slivers of chipped ice from the back of his wagon, which was usually horse-drawn. What a treat on a hot summer day, with no relief from the heat and no air-conditioned house to retreat to.

Trouble was, the ice may have been harvested from the local river, with its questionable runoff from farms and who knows what else upstream—barnyards, pasture drainage, and yes, human privies and open village sewers. The mothers were right, of course, but somehow the repeated exposure built up some kind of immunity, for there should have been more sickness than there was.

The Ice Box

In those days before mechanical refrigeration, every kitchen or pantry had an icebox, usually a beautifully crafted oak cabinet with up to four doors. One door in the upper half was the ice compartment. When ice was needed, the housewife placed an ice card in the window with the number of pounds needed in the upper position. Each card had choices of 25, 50, 75 or 100 pounds printed in the corner.



BOB
DEWEL

YESTERYEAR
REVISITED

Reading the card from the street, the iceman then skillfully chipped off a chunk of the desired size, lifted it with self-locking ice tongs, hoisted it over his shoulder, and carried it into the house. This was the opportunity the kids waited for, and as he turned his back the scramble for ice began.

A large cowhide leather shoulder drape protected him from the cold ice, and softened the blow as the ice slung over the shoulder. Cleaning up his muddy tracks into the kitchen was part of the daily duties of the housewife, as was her gentle scolding of the iceman for the tracking. Sometimes extra chipping was required right in the kitchen to fit a bulky piece of ice into the compartment in the icebox.

The icebox was dependent on the natural circulation of cold air from the melting ice. Also required was a means of disposing of the meltwater which resulted. All boxes had a large flat pan underneath it with which to collect the water, and the oldest boy was reminded frequently during the day to empty the pan. In some lucky households, a hose carried the water either to a basement drain, or to the outside of the house.

Other Visitors

Besides the daily visit of the iceman, there was the milkman, whose rounds were early in the morning. Groceries could be delivered from many of the small "Mom and Pop" stores of the time, usually by a high school boy after school. Even the dry cleaners made deliveries. At least once a day the mailman made his rounds, greeted loudly by the family dog.

Another visitor to the neighborhood was the ice cream man, with an amplified musical enticement that could be heard for blocks. Each of these deliveries were familiar events of the day for the kids, though the iceman's wagon was the highlight. Even the horse was in on the fun, knowing the route and stopping at regular delivery points without a signal from the driver.

International Shipment

It is hard today to imagine the significance of the ice business as it existed, which was well into the 1940s all over the country. The industry is well described and illustrated in a book by Joseph C. Jones Jr., called "America's Icemen."

Small towns in the North, like Baraboo, were self-sufficient, but cities like Chicago and New York were dependent on ice being shipped in, from Wisconsin and Maine respectively. The further south one went, the less dependable local winter sources were, and the South



Credit Jones, America's Icemen

This Briggs cartoon from 1913 illustrates the iceman's visit

was totally dependent on the northern sources for ice. One Boston pond produced 343,000 tons of ice one winter.

Ships made regular runs from New England to southern coastal cities, and even to Cuba. Rail cars in the mid-west served the Gulf cities. Often, coal or other goods filled the ships and rail cars for the return trip. Although the harvesting of ice from Northern lakes and rivers was obviously restricted to winter, the local summer deliveries, plus rail or sea shipments, provided full-time jobs for many.

Harvesting the ice in winter provided employment for farmers and carpenters and other workmen in their off season. For some farmers, isolated otherwise during the winter, it was a socializing event also. Harvesting had to be done in good ice-making weather, when ice was close to a foot thick and the temperature below freezing.

Rain was an enemy of the operation, as was a heavy cover of snow which had to be shoveled off to expose the ice. One has to think that winters were more severe then than now. Henry Thoreau wrote a dissertation on icemaking at

Walden Pond, and there is a Currier and Ives print of the operation also.

History

The use of ice for food preservation was not new, however. The Greeks and Romans filled valleys with snow and ice, and covered it with grass for insulation. Only the rich and powerful could enjoy it, however. George Washington experimented with having his own icehouse at Mount Vernon, and Thomas Jefferson kept ice in a man-made cave capable of holding 62 wagon loads 16 feet deep.

Franklin D. Roosevelt kept a private icehouse on his estate until 1942. Even the



Pictured at right is the ice card, an essential part of operating a kitchen. Housewives placed this card in the front window so the iceman would know how much to deliver.

News Republic, in a turn of the century issue, described how to make an insulated personal ice house for use on a farm or in the city. For large-scale operations, icehouses as large as a modern multi-story motel were used.

Baraboo's ice operations appear to have been limited

to the Baraboo river in West Baraboo, called Lyons then. In an article to follow, the local ice harvesting and storage will be discussed in more detail.

Bob Dewel is a local historian and regular contributor to the News Republic



Baraboo River ice business was competitive

767

Suppose you were offered a glass of Baraboo River water. Would you drink it? Suppose also that you were given a soft drink into which ice chips saved from last winter's Baraboo River were added. Would you drink it?

Well, all through the 19th century and until about 1950 Baraboo River ice was freely used in food preparation and for the cooling of drinks. What's more, it was said that it tested pure every year by the state laboratories, though what standards were used is not known.

Ice making was a big business in Baraboo. Thanks to extensive records and a well written essay by the late Oliver Clement, we have a multi-page record of ice retrieval, storage and delivery by August Platt and later by his son Harold J. Platt. Harold J.'s son was the late Harold A. Platt, Baraboo City Engineer. Demand for ice was so good that they had competition over the years, including the Ski-Hi and Borkenhagen operations. The latter businesses harvested their ice from Devils Lake.

Platt Ice Company

The Platt enterprise was across the river east of the present Haskins Park in West Baraboo. On good winter ice-making days it was a beehive of activity, with up to 40 part-time workers — often farmers looking for work in their off season. Sometimes prisoners from the jail were recruited.

The mill pond in early days was from a seven foot dam just down river, which was later replaced by the twelve foot Frank Lloyd Wright dam. This dam was removed with great difficulty in the late 1960s. Both dams had provided a wide and still body of

water for ice making, which could only proceed when the ice had reached at least 6 inches in depth. Some winters failed to produce ice of sufficient thickness, and it was shipped in from other sources. In colder years, Baraboo ice was shipped out. The earliest record of ice making locally is in the city directory of 1895-96, being that of Hutch & Nash, 332 Seventh Avenue. August Platt appears to have begun in 1897, and it was a family business for 50 years except for a three-year ownership by Paul Gust.

Harvesting Ice

The harvesting of ice was a difficult and demanding operation, as Clement shows in his well-illustrated document. As soon as the ice was thick enough to support some weight, it was cleared of any snow and kept cleared so that the cold nights would thicken the ice to perhaps twelve inches. Rain and less frigid temperatures were not welcome.

When the desired thickness was achieved, a complex process began. First, the surface of the ice was shaved to dispose of any frozen slush which had accumulated on mild days. The ice field was then scored into squares measuring usually 22 inches by 30 inches, the scoring being about two inches deep. Next a team of horses pulled an "ice plow," with teeth at various depths to deepen the scored grooves to two-thirds of the thickness of the ice.

"The ice field was cut first in one direction, and then at right angles to produce ice blocks," writes Clement.

The presence of horses on the ice, with their drippings of sweat, saliva and other bodily emissions, raises the question of the purity of the product. On occasion, men and horses would slip and plunge into the icy water. When rescued, the men would go to a warming house, while the horses were wiped down and vigorously exercised.

Hand saws with huge teeth were used to separate a section of many ice blocks from the ice field. This large section was floated through open water to the shore, sometimes with a man riding and poling it to the proper point on shore. Then a large iron chisel was inserted in the deep grooves and individual ice blocks were split off the main block.

The Ice House

The latter activity occurred at the base of an endless inclined elevator, part of which went under the water. The large blocks of ice were then raised by the elevator to an appropriate level in the ice house. The elevator was sometimes operated with horse power, though eventually much of the work — including cutting in the ice field — was done by gasoline engine power.

By 1908 the Platt operation included five ice houses, each 32 feet by 52 feet and up to three stories high. The floor was sawdust over dirt, and a foot of sawdust separated the walls of the building from the ice blocks, for purposes of insulation. Sawdust also separated the ice blocks from each other so they would not freeze back together.



The August Platt delivery wagon. Sign says "August Platt, Baraboo river ice".



A pike pole, ice saw and ice tongs were some of the tools of the ice harvesting and delivery trade. At right, an 1886 drawing shows the ice house at Effinger Brewery. Large blocks of ice were usually raised by an elevator to an appropriate level in ice houses, the elevator sometimes being operated with horse power.





The elevator ramp moves chunks of ice up from the river to the ice house. Only two of the five houses are shown

Home Delivery

The Platt operation appears to have had at least two delivery wagons — usually horse drawn — for home delivery throughout the spring and summer season. But they had competition from time to time from other ice retailers such as Hatch & Nash, Joseph Kunzeleman and McGann & Curry, as well as the Devils Lake harvesters. In addition, both the Ruhland and Effinger breweries had their own ice houses, used in production of their beer.

Ice harvesting began to come to an end during the Depression with the advent of mechanical refrigeration in

the home and ice cube production therein. It is known that there was ice delivery in Baraboo as late as 1946, however. Pure tap water for the ice cube trays sounded better than the increasingly suspect Baraboo River ice.

Thus, the hard working Baraboo River began to be relieved of its icy commodity. The river continued to serve the community for half a century with non-polluting electrical power production. Now even that is about to cease. Baraboo owes a lot in its history to the Baraboo River, whose name it shares. Meantime, the river "just keeps rollin' along."

Highway bypasses were of concern

770

in 1935 Baraboo

This is the fourth and positively final article done in depth on the year 1935. Originally a concept for one article about the Depression, it has been hard to sift and winnow the plethora of information to be gained by looking at the headlines and stories of the News Republic of that year.

This article will dwell mostly on both local and national events as reported in the paper, but just to give you a sense of the time, we might note that youthful Frank Sinatra's voice had only recently changed in 1935, and four years would pass until he would begin his climb to fame. Were the Beatles even born? Yet to be recognized was the Glenn Miller band.

Novelty tunes were "The Music Goes Round and Round" and "On the Good Ship Lollipop," while romantic songs like "Lovely to Look At" and "I'm in the Mood for Love" were the hits at the senior prom.

Grace Moore appeared in "One Night of Love" at the Al. Ringling. Movies were cheap entertainment, and the industry thrived during the Depression.

Highway disputes

For over a year, a main topic of conversation was the state's plan to have Highway 12 bypass Baraboo, passing through Lyons (now West Baraboo) instead. The rerouting required a bridge, the very bridge just torn down this year and now being replaced by four-lane bridge service.

*2000

The original highway, according to an 1872 map, apparently approached Baraboo via what is now South Boulevard, but it was well out in the country then, turning north on Walnut to cross the river via the covered bridge, and proceeded up Ash Street. An alternative approach was over the bluffs and into Baraboo via Burma Road, South Shore Road, and Walnut Street. Highways were hardly even marked in those days.

Later, after the advent of the Broadway bridge (1928), the old high bridge was removed in about 1929. Before, the highway came up Oak Street and through the center of the business district. But now the handsome new Broadway bridge served Highway 12. It crossed Highway 33 in downtown Baraboo, proceeded West on Fifth Avenue to Angle and Summit streets, and thence to Lyons via Eighth Avenue. The stone marker now at the northeast corner of Ochsner Park was once downtown at the corner of Fourth and Oak streets in the center of the intersection.

Businessmen valued the transient traffic and were upset about the rerouting on Pine Street through Lyons, effectively bypassing the city. Now, the state proposes to bypass the 1936 bypass, avoiding both the city and the village with a new highway some 1000 or so feet west of the present route.

Young attorney Bob Gollmar spoke to the Kiwanis club on the subject in 1935, saying that the state had promised to keep

Highway 13 going through Baraboo, and that it was more scenic anyway. It would go north on Broadway and turn west on newly rebuilt and, now, less hilly Eighth Avenue. This project meant jobs for many men and took traffic away from the First Ward School. (That school would burn in 1950.)

Promises were not kept for long, and Highway 13 was taken from Baraboo some 40 years ago, dead-ending at (guess where) Wisconsin Dells. Highway rerouting was a hot topic in 1935. The new Lyons bridge was finished in 1936, and Baraboo survived and thrived. Broadway and Eighth Avenue were paved in 1935 also, creating interest and work. County-wise, the WPA allotted over \$100,000 for farm-to-market roads.

Robbers and deluges

Hard times brought robbery. Places entered included the offices of the Dr's. Dippel for gold, the Plain post office and a local home. Other cases were being investigated by acting police chief Lloyd Wyatt.

In the latter case, Mrs. Gilbertson's life savings of \$905 in two envelopes in a dresser drawer were taken. In Mauston a bank was robbed on March 27. The culprit was sent to prison on April 3 — swift justice indeed. These were also the



Downtown Baraboo's only bridge in 1872 was the Ash-Walnut covered bridge. Travel from the south entered town from South Boulevard

or from Walnut Street. Note that the town ends at about Eighth Street on the north at East Street on the east.

days when Chicago Hoodlum Roger Touhy was hiding out in Northern Wisconsin.

Wyatt would later head the county patrol, but in 1935 the County Board had decided not to have one — it came later. The failed. First National Bank was being liquidated by L.H. Eckhart, a newcomer to town.

In 1935, as in 1993, a deluge raised the level of Devils Lake over a foot in just hours, but without the disastrous results of 1993 — though many small bridges were washed out. Guards were placed at some bridges to warn drivers should the bridge wash out. Later in the summer a water carnival at the lake featured tricks on surf boards. Water skis had yet to be invented, but a board tied behind a

motorboat, on which you stood on your head if you could, was a new sport.

As in the year 2000, pyramid schemes and chain letters were the rage in 1935. Sir Malcom Campbell had reached the impossible

land speed of 300 mph in his race car. The new 400 speed train was averaging 83 mph as it raced through Baraboo and Reedsburg. from Chicago to Minneapolis.

On the social scene, the Clausen Stekls and the H.C. Pages had entertained at the new silver room of the Warren Hotel. Mrs. Lou (Al.) Ringling was honored on her 84th birthday. It had been many decades since she was a snake handler for the young Ringling Circus in the 1880s. Speaking of circuses, the Sells-Sterling Circus played in Baraboo in the summer of 1935, while down in Durwards Glen the new building was being completed. Also on the summer docket was a marching band tournament, including the Madison West outfit. The spectacle drew 3000 persons.

Unrest

Yet, it still was Depression, and the news included a whistling and stomping mob that stormed the state capitol demanding the abolishment of property taxes. Nationally, a WWI bonus bill was being considered, and President Roosevelt promoted four new recovery bills, all of which were promptly denounced by business and banking leaders. Twenty thousand men were on strike in the auto industry, including the Janesville plant. The reactionary Supreme Court pronounced the National Recovery Act (NRA) unconstitutional.

Also on the national scene, Wiley Post and the hugely popular humorist Will Rogers announced plans to fly to Alaska. Post had flown around the world twice, but this would be in a different plane. A few days later they crashed in Alaska, killing both men. Rogers was receiving the

unbelievable sum of \$8000 per week from Fox films, but football great Jim Thorpe was reduced to working three days a week at \$10 per day as a movie extra.

Equalized valuation

Locally, one could collect a \$2 bounty for killing a gray fox. The county was now spending the huge sum of \$7000 per month on relief for indigent citizens. The county was valued at \$45 million equalized valuation, including Baraboo at \$7 million and Reedsburg at \$4 million. Sauk County had now retired the last of its bonds outstanding.

The Sauk County Historical Society was deciding not to move from the courthouse to the Griggs property, as income of the society would not be sufficient to maintain the house. St. Marys-Ringling hospital, the former wood frame home of Alfred T. Ringling, was planning to add eight rooms to the structure at a cost of \$8000.

In downtown Baraboo, the big news was the opening of a Ben Franklin 10-cent store. Yet to come was news that Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA) would build in 1937 a fine swimming pool on south Broadway and South Boulevard. Another big WPA project was sewer work to eliminate the deep gully on Roseline Street, and perhaps the tunnel connecting the junior and senior high schools. At the park, the Civilian

Conservation Corps (CCC) provided work for young men and improvements to the community and park at the same time.

The prestigious Al. Ringling Theatre now possessed modern seating and new carpeting, and the entire interior had been cleaned, including the ceiling and paintings. Even the red velvet curtain had been cleaned. Business was good at the Al. in 1935, and in three years the Juliar Theatre would be built.

Still to come in 1936, was the grand new marquee, "just like in the big cities." One local retired attorney recalls the thrill he and a friend (probably also now a retired attorney) had at their first sight of the "really cool" marquee with its dancing lights and neon splendor. For young boys in Baraboo, oblivious to the Depression, it was a very good year.

THE WIVES OF JOHN RINGLING: PART I, MABLE
 Yesteryear Revisited
 By Bob Dewel

Many men carrying the Ringling name have achieved national or international fame. We've already written of Al. Ringling and John Ringling North, and have mentioned Henry, who became a national committeeman for the Republican Party.

John Ringling

Perhaps the most famous, however, was John Ringling, the next to youngest son of August Ringling and Marie Solome Juliar Ringling. Raised in Baraboo, John came to have the least to do with Baraboo after attaining adulthood. While the others built homes and owned land or businesses in Sauk County, as well as maintaining the circus itself in Baraboo, John was drawn to New York City. He rarely returned to his roots in Baraboo.

As a grade school student, he had as a teacher Belle Case, later to be the wife of Senator "Fighting Bob" LaFollette. Had she accepted the proposal, she might have been the first female United States Senator when husband Bob died in office.

Of her student, John Ringling, Belle said he was "a tall dark-eyed boy..good natured, full of fun...(with) little taste for lessons or books."

In the late 1800's John became advance or front man for the brothers' enterprise, soon to be the world's greatest circus. This required his residence in the best Chicago and New York hotels, and an expense account to match. For

many years he roamed freely as a man-about-town bachelor, traveling also in his private and very opulent rail car for circus or personal business, a man "on the prowl".

Marriage

When John finally married in 1905, his bride was not a society debutante or a woman of means, but rather a quiet and gracious woman whom everyone agreed was good for John. She was born in Fayette County, Ohio, on March 14, 1875 and christened Armilda Burton. This is the name on her birth certificate, later to be changed to Mabel on her wedding certificate and then to the more fashionable spelling of Mable.

Stories abound as to where John found her: as a showgirl, as a shoe factory laborer, or as a waitress or hostess. An extensive newspaper interview with her sister-in-law and nephew revealed, however, that in fact she was a jewelry store salesperson in Atlantic City, New Jersey when they met.

Thanks private research by Deloris Devlin, a former docent in the Sarasota circus museum, we have copies of Mable's birth, marriage, and death certificates. The marriage was performed on Dec. 29, 1905, John being age 39 and Mable 30. John listed his occupation, oddly but correctly, as "capitalist", and Mable's name was spelled "Mabel".

Ca'd'Zan

Still to come in their 23 years of marriage was life

alternating between New York City's luxurious hotels and a frame house on Sarasota Bay, the latter being replaced in 1926 by the fabled and ostentacious Ca'd'Zan.

Meantime, visits were to a 96 acre estate in Alpine, New York with 20 rooms, 2 guest houses, and a stable. By all accounts this was a happy marriage, with Mable as hostess to numerous parties and benefits in the home or in the extensive gardens of Ca'd'Zan.

Nearby was the growing Art Museum, and Mable became an avid and somewhat skilled collector of European paintings and art objects following some tutoring in both art and music. She played an active part in the construction of Ca'd'Zan, making hundreds of changes in the original plans to the despair of the architect. Although detailed records of the Doge's Palace in Venice had been made, the home could no longer be considered a replica after such major change by John and Mable.

Death of Mable

Mable's charmed existence was not to last. Three years after occupying the mansion, she died in New Jersey on June 8, 1929. The death certificate gives hemochromatosis and Addison's disease as the cause, some say complicated by burns received from a fire while on their yacht on Sarasota Bay.

Mable seems to be remembered by all as a quiet and discreet helpmate despite John's reputed wandering, and took no part in the operation of the circus. The relatives quoted above

speak of a time John hugged her so hard he broke a rib.

A tall and willowy woman, Henry North spoke of her piquant face and delicate features. While married to John she raised two nephews and a niece. Their mothers, Mable's sisters, were born deaf and needed help. The girl ran away with the Ringling Chauffeur, much to Mable's disapproval. The boys ran away and joined the Navy. She also supported her parents in their old age.

It would be 61 years, before her body was laid to final rest, the casket being placed "temporarily" in a mausoleum slot in the Brookside Receiving vaults in Englewood, N.J. on June 10, 1929. Her death was the beginning of a precipitous slide from power and riches for John, followed by a disastrous marriage, all of which will be considered in Part II.



A rare picture of Mable
(Mrs. John) Ringling

THE WIVES OF JOHN RINGLING, PART II: EMILY

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

The year 1929 had dawned bright and clear for John Ringling, circus king of the world and oil and railroad capitalist. Times were good, business was good, and both he and Mable seemed to enjoy good health for their ages, 63 and 54 respectively, though Mable was showing some signs of distress.

Rarely if ever did John remember his youth in Baraboo, though the family interests had installed a new Barton organ in the Al. Ringling Theatre the year before--a piddling expense in John's world of finance.

The Troubles Begin

1929 would not be John's best year, however, Furious that the traditional Ringling circus opening at Madison Square Garden had been pre-empted by the rival American Circus Corporation, John solved the insult by purchasing that conglomerate of circuses. This cemented his reputation as circus king, a title not shared with the other owners, Charles' wife Edith and Alf. T's son Richard. The purchase, however was the beginning of his slide from power, thanks to the stock market crash in October.

The persistent illness of Mable had become more severe. Following two weeks in a sanitarium in New York, she died on June 8, 1929. This had been a reasonably good marriage, and John was grief-stricken at her loss, and the steady effect she had on him.

After the funeral her casket was placed "temporarily" in a mausoleum crypt in New Jersey. John would have seven years of additional life until his death in 1936, when his casket joined that of Mable. Twice their caskets were moved to different mausoleums, and it is said that the rent on the unmarked crypts went unpaid for nearly six decades. They were finally moved to the grounds of Ca'd'Zan sometime in the 1990's. The graves are unmarked.

Emily

Following a period of grieving for Mable, accompanied by mounting financial problems, John met a New York society divorcee in Monte Carlo, according to Hammersley in "Big Top Boss", as she "dropped thirty-two thousand dollars in one giggling spree. He married her on December 19, 1930, a few days after arranging a \$50,000 loan from his bride-to-be". The wedding was performed by Mayor Hague in his office in Hoboken, New Jersey.

On the morning of the wedding a surprised Emily was confronted with a pre-nuptial agreement renouncing any claim to his fortune. Although not unusual among the wealthy, the timing was inappropriate, though she may or may not have signed. One report says the paper was left carelessly on a table, and she tore her signature off after the wedding!

This was not a good marriage, as forecast by its rocky start. Thanks to copies

of newspaper clippings held by the Sarasota County Historical Archives, copies of which were obtained by Deloris Devlin of Sarasota and given to this writer, we have a fairly good running account of the stormy marital union of John and Emily Ringling.

The first public rift apparently began on July 28, when John filed for divorce, charging extreme mental cruelty. Emily is said to have collapsed in shock, but she already had her own troubles. Her sister's husband had sued Emily for \$250,000, charging alienation of affections for luring his wife, Emily's sister, to live at Ca'd'Zan rather than with him.

John's divorce action was quickly withdrawn, however, only to be re-filed on March 4, 1934. Emily countered with a suit to collect the \$50,000 loan. John's charges against Emily were cruelty in the form of verbal villification, plus actual physical abuse and profanity, which he claimed aggravated his medical condition. The chronically ill circus king was now attended by a nurse, who testified as to his rise in blood pressure when in conflict with Emily. He said she was a cross between a steam calliope and a tigress at large, though others testified she was always a lady.

Emily claimed to have remained on her knees for 45 minutes, and offered to give him all of her money if he would drop the suit, according to a New York Telegram account on May 13, 1935. Emily stated that she



JOHN RINGLING

had again signed away her dower rights in August, 1933 in return for his dropping the first divorce action. By June 19, 1935, however, a judge refused to set aside her waiver of dower rights, as well as an agreement she had made to extend the \$50,000 loan for four more years.

Bitterly contested in the newspapers, the divorce was finally granted on July 7, 1936, nearly three years after the first filing of a divorce action by John.



Meantime John had written a Will on May 19, 1934, leaving Emily exactly one dollar. The art museum and residence were to go to the State of Florida--its recent transfer to Florida State University is under litigation even today.

John's sister Ida was the principal beneficiary, and nephew John Ringling North was to be Executor. On November 2, 1936, John revoked the legacies to North and sister Ida, but left North as Executor, in which position he was able to eventually gain control of the circus.

Though John died on December 2, 1936, Emily was in court 20 days later in a suit against Ida and other beneficiaries, but it was dismissed. In 1938 she pleaded for a review, charging that the divorce was obtained by fraud. A short news story on November 30, 1940 says she was granted a new hearing on her appeal, and here the collection of clippings ends. Emily died in about 1950, still on good terms with a few of the family at least.

Decline
John had lost control of his circus as early as 1932, and a series of managers ensued until John North was able to gain 51% ownership several years later, as reported in another article. Meantime Ringling's grandiose scheme to build a Ritz-Carlton hotel on Longboat Key had failed, and its uncompleted skeleton blighted the landscape for decades.

It was a sad ending for a circus king, who only a few years before had reigned supreme in the field, living happily with his first wife Mable. John Ringling had come a long way from the days back in the 1870's when Belle Case, later wife of Bob LaFollette, had been his teacher back in Baraboo.

Belle had spoken of him as full of fun. He'd had a great run, but the fun was gone those last seven years. Finally, after nearly six decades, his body and Mable's were returned to his beloved Ca'D'Zan.



John Ringling

A golden circus anniversary

779

You couldn't ask for a nicer day than Thursday, Aug. 3, 1933, especially when it was the 50th anniversary of the Ringling Bros. Circus, and it was returning to Baraboo, the town of its inception. Rain on the previous day had settled the dust and brought cooler temperatures, and the morning brought promise of the old saying, "May every day be a circus day."

The previous article told of the preparations being made by the circus, despite some reservations. The city of Baraboo apparently had no qualms, for an all-star committee had been formed, including Mayor R.W. Prothero, L.C. Roser of the Al. Ringling Theatre, banker H.J. Steeps, editor M.C. Page, plus leaders L.H. Hill, Ben Jones, Paul Gust, and his brother O.L. Gust, former treasurer of the Ringling shows in earlier years.

Events of the day

What's more, visiting dignitaries would include the governor, former Gov. Phillip La Follette, and the legendary U.S. Sen. "Fighting Bob" La Follette. Bob's wife was the former Belle Case, a local girl who taught John Ringling in the Baraboo school system. She once recalled that John was "a tall, heavy, dark-eyed boy ... good-natured, full of fun ... (with) little taste for lessons or books."

A news item in the Evening News quoted R.H. Wilcox of Baraboo as having seen the first Ringling performance with his new wife in 1884. He stated that John Ringling, then still a youth,

sang a song, the tune of which has been forgotten. The words, however were: "I'm a dude, a dude, a butterfly dude, I'm getting to be a big boy now." Perhaps you had to be there to appreciate that!

The Circus Fans convention went well, with a special dinner at which the guests were Mrs. Charles Ringling, Mrs. Al. Ringling, and the younger Henry Ringling. They were introduced as the royal family of the circus world. The welcome to visitors was given by Robert Gollmar, son of one of the Gollmar Circus owners and later to become a court judge. His father and uncles were cousins to the Ringlings, and both families had a circus.

The local philatelic society had arranged a postal cachet to be issued, and the Chamber of Commerce was selling scrip as souvenirs, but also redeemable in Baraboo stores until later in the year. Dr. Jon Stock has an excellent collection of these, with plans for plaques illustrating them, along with an explanation. This scrip is not to be confused with scrip issued by the state earlier in the year during the March banking crisis, as described in an earlier article.

The only parade

It was not long before Baraboo realized it had a big day on its hands. The circus was to be at the fairgrounds, so unloading began and the mostly horse-drawn wagons and animals came up Broadway over the handsome new Broadway Bridge with its 12 street light pedestals, six on each side.

Some of the wagons in that parade now have permanent residence on the grounds of the Circus World Museum, including the red ticket office wagon, a Mack truck and the famous Cinderella float.

The route turned east on Fourth Avenue and proceeded east on Fourth Street toward the fairgrounds. It was the only parade Baraboo would see, for the trains had been late and by parade time the city was so congested that organizing a parade was impossible. The circus did send the circus band led by Merle Evans, to the Court-house Square for a concert and the elephants made it downtown, also.

The Ringling tent was designed to hold 12,000 people, and it received a real workout in Baraboo. John Kelley later said it was the biggest matinee attendance in two years.

Circus World Museum's library and research center has the log book for the circus, and that day shows there were 14,118 paid admissions. Since complimentary tickets were always part of the promotion for the circus, running perhaps 20 percent of the paid gate, it

appears that 17,000 or so people could have attended the matinee and evening performances. The cost was 75 cents for adults, 25 cents for children.

Attendance

The Evening News the next day reported 17,000 at the matinee and 8,000 at the evening performance, which seems an overly generous count. Apparently the News was caught up in the traditional circus hyperbole!



PHOTO COURTESY OF CIRCUS WORLD MUSEUM

Bradbury, in extensive articles in the circus magazine *Big Top*, states that the "Matinee crowd was so vast that it was difficult for some acts to work. It was impossible to use the floats ... (and the) night show was a good house too." Bradbury speaks of it as an "historic date at Baraboo. The show's stand at Baraboo was one of the high spots of the Anniversary year."

The Aug. 1 issue of the *Evening News* had contained a special section welcoming the circus to town. There was a full page of advertisements of welcomes, some 45 in all. Today only Corner Drug, J.C. Penney and the Baraboo National Bank remain of that group of advertisers. The special section is full of circus lore and reminiscences of old-timers. Among the

downtown displays were "a veritable gold mine of photographs" at the Trimpey photograph studios.

The Scheible furniture store displayed an 1882 handbill advertising "Al. Ringling's Double Specialty Show," which was described as being a carnival of fun; a new comic play; a Yankee humorist; and a Negro comedian. An 1890 photo showed Alf. T., John, and Charles Ringling without mustaches. Circus fans should consult these pages at the library for a wealth of information.

The day after

Curiously, the papers the day after the celebration had very little to report on the actual performance itself. The train had left for Rockford, Ill. during the night, carrying its 1,600 employees in four train sections.

During the festivities, other news of the world seemed to be blotted out, but an examination of papers in the era does show a report that Sally Rand, the Chicago fan dancer, had been arrested on the basis that two ostrich feather fans were not a decent costume. The New York Stock Exchange had closed early because someone put tear gas in the ventilating system. In Baraboo, four homes were entered during the circus performance, but Mrs. H.E. Cole and Mrs. Caflish were home and both they and the burglars were frightened. Also entered was the Bump home. In the circus parking lot, a car window was smashed.

The Ringling show, or at least one unit of it returned to Baraboo some 38 years later, but under different circumstances. They did not perform, but simply had a two or three day layover in the middle of July 1962 for repairs and upkeep, before continuing on their schedule. The county fairgrounds were rented, and the city again swarmed with circus people, though not in costume or performing. Some 18 elephants exercised on the race track, and for a few days Baraboo was again Circus City U.S.A.

Circus City U.S.A.

Circus World Museum was only in its third full summer of operation at the time, and must have seemed puny compared to the 40-acre extravaganza it presents today. Not to be seen then were the magnificent Feld Building, or the Deppe Wagon Pavilion or the Chappie Fox Wagon Restoration Building.

Not all of the present original winter quarters buildings were owned at that time, and the displays were minimal compared to now.

The Parkinson Library and Research Center were but a dream, but the museum was in the hands of a very practical dreamer, Chappie Fox. Under his firm, guiding hand Circus World would see tremendous growth, and it is now the leading circus research center in the world. And Baraboo is again Circus City U.S.A., as it should be.

Dr. Robert Dewel's "Yesteryear Revisited" column is a regular feature of the News Republic.



COURTESY OF DR. JON STOCK

Day THURSDAY Weather Fine

White Wagon Aft. <u>5,412.25</u>	Cash Received from White Wagon
Nt. <u>2,800.00</u>	<u>2,800.00</u>
	<u>5,412.25</u>
<u>8,212.25</u>	<u>8,212.25</u>

RECAP:

CASH BROT. FORWARD	<u>32,631.29</u>
DAY'S RECEIPTS	<u>25,504.09</u>
	<u>58,135.38</u>
LESS DAY'S EXPENDITURES	<u>31,396.03</u>
BALANCE CASH ON HAND	<u>26,739.35</u>
ADD AMOUNT IN BANKS	
GRAND TOTAL	
CASH ON HAND	
ADD NIGHT CONCERT	
CASH ON HAND	

Famous people once came from Baraboo



BOB
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Who is the most famous person to graduate from Baraboo High School, or from any Sauk County High School for the matter? Who hobnobbed with kings and princes, famous authors, politicians and giants of industry? And who directed and, some say, reinvented one of the major entertainment venues of our country for the better part of 30 years?

Well, does the name John North ring a bell? John R. North? Perhaps the middle name will help — John Ringling North, our nominee for the most famous graduate.

North was born Aug. 17, 1903, the son of Ida Ringling and the man she eloped with, Harry North. Young John was, thus, a nephew to all of the seven Ringling men and knew them all. More especially, he later became the preferred protege of the childless John Ringling.

Legacy

John North did not achieve the lasting fame of his famous uncle, but John Ringling did not graduate from high school, though he did attend here, with Belle Case LaFollette as one of his teachers. Ringling left as his legacy the very excellent art museum and his somewhat garish Sarasota home, ca' d' Zan. In contrast, North, a much richer man at his death, left his entire \$100 million estate to his long-time companion, Countess Ida von Ziedlitz-Trutschler, who also retained his crematorium ashes.

Not even his loyal and admiring brother Henry Ringling North, his sister Salome, nor his namesake, John Ringling North II, were remembered in the will. John even became an Irish citizen to avoid paying taxes to the United States, the country where he made his fortune.

John Ringling's choice of legacy lives on in Sarasota; John North's is not memorable.

John Ringling North was raised in the glorious years of the tented traveling circus, but it was he who abandoned the tents on July 16, 1956 and moved the circus into arenas and stadiums, an action for which parts of the entertainment world, and indeed the public, never forgave him. He also changed the circus from its image of a parade, a menagerie, gaily decorated wagons, and three-ring marvels to more of an artistic spectacle inspired by Broadway and Hollywood. Defenders say it was an inevitable metamorphosis, but circus purists were enraged and never forgave him.

Baraboo Youth

This would have been unthinkable in his early years as a Baraboo youth, when his closest friends were Curt Page Sr. and Lloyd Nolan, and their greatest interest was the circus operated by his famous uncles. Unlike six of those seven original brothers, John Ringling had little to do with Baraboo after reaching his maturity, nor did young North, but Hammerstrom's book contains many references to Baraboo in those formative years.

He refers to the "storybook atmosphere ... centered peacefully in the wooded, largely German world of Wisconsin ... the tree shaded streets of Baraboo and its picturesque town square ... altered little in time ... a

haven from the industrial cities ... and turn of the century small town charms associated with the old values."

This stereotyping of the city as a sleepy backwater community hardly fits its true situation then as the home of the largest (Ringling) and the fourth largest (Gollmar) circuses in the country, plus the largest woolen mill west of the Alleghenies. Sarasota Fla., of later circus fame, was hardly a village then, and did not even reach a population of 10,000 until mid-century.

Hammerstrom speaks of Baraboo then as "a sleepy community ... woken up in the fall by the clattering arrival of the long red and silver circus train. Baraboo was proud of the Ringling success story and willing to turn its head on occasion away from the itinerant roustabouts ... but the spring departure was a source of relief"

It was his association with the circus that provided North with a destiny different from that of his boyhood chums, Page and Nolan. Ida's elopement in the face of commitment to another man had resulted in shunning by the Ringling family, but all was forgiven when she gave Ringling as her first-born's middle name.

Baraboo High School

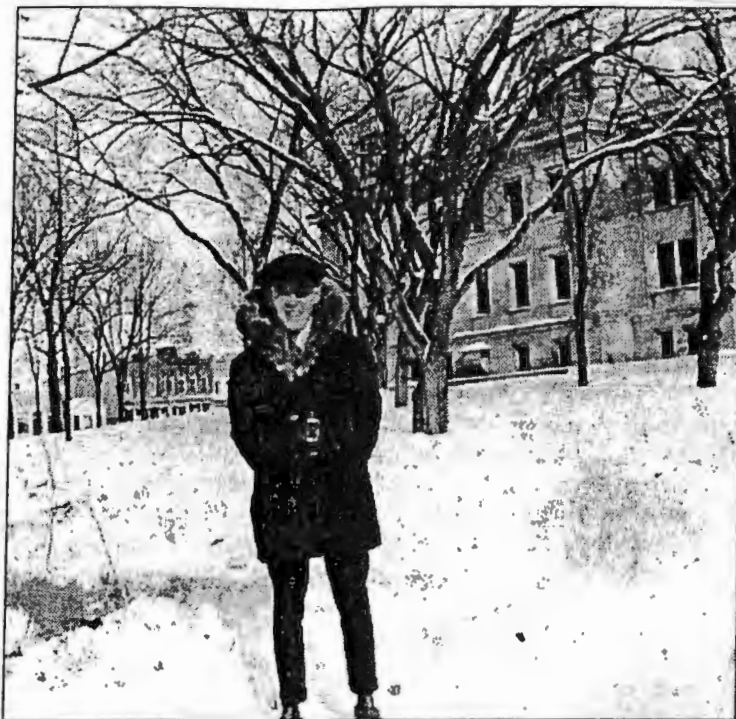
Both Nolan and Page found John to be a "most regular" youth, playing football, with a flair for writing, and some musical talent — he once led the Episcopal Choir. A gang of seven boys, called the Navy, were once accused of snitching ice cream from the Betsy Ross Ice Cream Parlor in the Al. Ringling Theatre.

In 1916, after Al's death, The North family had moved into Al's home, the present Elks Club, and the boys once coaxed a pony from the circus up onto the third floor of the mansion. Baraboo resident Bob King reports that John and brother Henry secretly escaped from their bedroom after hours, via a rope of sheets, to go downtown at night. Quite naturally, the boys also created their adolescent circus, and later they were allowed to travel on the circus train for a week or so.

The high school annual for 1921 contains sparks (jokes) edited by North, and shows him on the football quad (they seem to have been called the Bears then), along with Page and Ken Conway. The junior class had well-known names such as Alton Cady, Ralph Pierce, John Lange and George McArthur. Bob Gollmar had graduated in 1920. John North is noted for having the most detentions of all, five in two days, and the class prophecy lists him as a future jazz artist, due to his self-taught proficiency on the saxophone.

College

Soon, young John North was part-time traveler with the circus, starting with more menial tasks at age 12. In a few years both John and brother Henry were sent to Yale by their uncle, John Ringling. Henry graduated, but John had a falling out with the authorities, first by sporting a Rolls Royce and a mistress, both forbidden for



students, and later by getting married, also forbidden.

In 1924, at age 21, John North had returned to Baraboo to collect a \$20,000 inheritance from the Al Ringling estate. He and Curt Page Sr. had driven to Devils Lake, presumably on the new Warner Memorial Road, and there they met some girls, including Jane Connelly of Pennsylvania, who was visiting her Baraboo aunt, Mrs. Dan Kelley. Jane accepted a ride to Baraboo, but John, never a skilled driver, had an accident and was pinned under the car. Jane's concern and prayers inspired him, and soon they were married.

By now a gregarious promoter of the circus and other ventures, North led too fast a life for Jane, and divorce followed in a few years. As John Ringling's protege, North seemed destined to become eventual king of the circus. Uncle John Ringling owned but a third of the enterprise, as did both Charles' widow, Edith, and Alfred T's family. Ringling did all the managing, however.

With The Circus

It is not the purpose of this article to chronicle the complicated affairs of the circus in relation to John Ringling and John North. Briefly, Ringling died in 1936, but due to a falling out with North, left him nothing except the job of executor of the estate. Due to complicated animosities among the Ringling heirs, North gained, and lost, and gained, and then lost control of the circus, but eventually gained 51 percent of the stock, the first time the circus ever had a majority stockholder.

More and more time was spent in Europe with another failed marriage and also several companions, culminating finally in a more or less permanent relationship to Countess Ida, mentioned earlier. In his entire life, North never owned a home. The circus was finally sold to Irwin Feld and others in 1967 for about \$10 million, the papers being signed in the Colosseum in Rome. Feld sold



Credit Circu s World Museum

John North is on the left. Henry North has his arm around his MOTHER,
Ida Ringling North. Other are not identified.



it to Mattell Corporation in 1971 for \$47 million in stock, and in 1982 he bought it back.

Fame

In his time, John Ringling North was a famous man. He hobnobbed with the likes of Prince Ranier of Monaco, King Farouk of Egypt, Cuba's dictator Batista, and Fidel Castro. Hammerstrom mentions names like Lowell Thomas, Cole Porter, Charlie Chaplin, Bing Crosby, Sammy Davis Jr., Billy Graham, Grace Kelley, Jimmy Dorsey, Frank Buck, Cecil B. DeMille, and Rudy Vallee, the 30s crooner who had been North's roommate at Yale.

North in his time was both praised and reviled. He produced the circus for nearly 30 years. There is little evidence of any return visit to Baraboo.

but Hammerstrom says that in some respects he "never grew out of that little boy back in Baraboo." Does that mean you can take a boy out of Baraboo, but you can't take Baraboo out of a boy? Here's hoping!

Note: Baraboo Concerts on the Square devotees were reminded of North this past Aug. 31 when three of his forgotten musical compositions

were played by the Circus Band. North had picked up the piano skill pretty much on his own and fancied himself a good composer. As owner of the circus in later years, his songs were of course featured in the performance, which by

that time he had converted from a traditional circus program into more of a Broadway production. His songs, though, vaguely pleasant, were forgotten with his

sale of the circus to the Feld Family. Parts of some of the songs were missing, and the local musicians had to figure out suitable insertions.

We are indebted to the "Big Top Boss" by David Hammerstrom for parts of this article. Local sources include newspapers, the 1921 Baraboo High School Annual and the Circus World Museum archives.

John Ringling loses control of the circus

It was a summer of great anticipation in Baraboo, for a circus was coming to town. Not just a circus, it was THE circus, the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Greatest Show on Earth, and it was returning to its Baraboo roots for a golden anniversary appearance!

Fifteen years had passed since the circus had abruptly failed to return to its longtime winter quarters on Water Street in 1918. The reasons were complex, and as early as 1912 the pullout had been suggested due to the Ringling claim that Wisconsin was taxing them unfairly. Despite some tax adjustments, the problem may have still rankled them.

Circus leaves Baraboo

By 1918 only four brothers remained, and the vote was two to two to move the operation to Bridgeport, Conn. That city had been the winter quarters of the Barnum and Bailey operation, which the Ringlings had quietly purchased shortly after the turn of the century. Because of war shortages, poor wartime attendance, and because Charles and John did not live in Baraboo, it was felt to be cheaper and more convenient to maintain only one winter quarters. Alfred T. and Henry still lived here.

A two-to-two vote meant no change in winter quarters, but the subsequent and unexpected death of Henry Ringling of Baraboo changed the vote in favor of Bridgeport. It is said that the train, already under way to Baraboo, was turned around and rerouted to Bridgeport.

Now 15 years had passed, and Baraboo's disappointment and financial loss had been overcome, the newspaper reports of the day indicated that the circus, like the prodigal son, would be welcomed with open arms.

Family problems

Interestingly, it was reported that there was some reluctance on the part of the circus to return to Baraboo at all. Though it was never spelled out, there was a concern that the circus might not be welcome, not so much because of the sudden departure 15 years ago, but rather due to the strained relations within the extended Ringling family.

To understand this, one can read a very detailed account of the matter in "White Tops," the magazine of the circus industry, written in 1974 by Joseph T. Bradbury, circus historian. Much of this article is taken from research notes made on his very lengthy series about the circus at that time in history.

It all goes back to 1932 and the Great Depression. The circus was still under the control of John Ringling, the only surviving brother, plus ownership also by Edith (Mrs. Charles) Ringling and Mrs. Richard Ringling, widow of Alf. T. Ringling's son. The years of the Great Depression, particularly 1931 and 1932, had not been profitable for the circus. In addition, John Ringling was not well and had not traveled much with the circus.



BOB
DEWEL

▼
YESTERYEAR
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John had, however, purchased another circus earlier in the year. The Ringling operation already owned Sells-Floto, Al. G. Barnes, and Hagenbeck-Wallace circuses. John made a bad purchase, since 1932 was the bottom of the Depression. He was not able to meet an interest payment and faced financial disaster.

Curiously, John was not destitute, for he owned an extensive and very valuable art collection, plus his Venetian palace home in Sarasota, Fla., and other business interests. However, when the interest payment came due, he refused to sell any of his art collection to meet the rather modest amount due. Now an admittedly sick man, he later claimed that he signed an agreement with investors with a temperature of 104 degrees and a private nurse.

The agreement

The agreement pledged all his personal assets, including the art collection and his home, as collateral. He was to remain as president of the new stock company, with the two Ringling ladies retaining their ownership, each being a one-third owner, and the creditors having 10 per cent.



The circus is shown on Fourth Street parading its way to the fairgrounds. Because the trains were late and the crowds so vast, this was the only parade.

What John didn't realize was that he was losing control of the circus, since the Ringling ladies sided with the creditors in creating a new position, general manager. This man was Samuel T. Gumpertz. John never forgave the women, for his days as circus king of the world were over. He was a bitter and disillusioned man now, physically sick and unable to run the circus anyway. Incidentally John Kelley, later to found Circus World Museum in Baraboo, was the general attorney for the circus at this time.

Samuel Gumpertz

The new general manager, Samuel Gumpertz, had a home near the Ringling estates in Sarasota, and had been a friend and adviser to John over the years. As a young man he had been an acrobat, but in later years created and managed various entertainment venues in the East. Now at 62 he was in charge of the vast Ringling operations. "The Gump," as he was called, got \$25,000 a year, a respectable salary in the Great Depression.

Mrs. Edith (Charles) Ringling had always had an active part in the circus management, traveling by private car from engagement to engagement. To her, says Bradbury, goes much credit for smoothing the job for Gumpertz.

The golden anniversary

With the advent of 1933 came the celebration of the 50th year of the Ringling operation, counting the limited appearances of the Ringling boys elsewhere in 1883 before their grand opening in Baraboo in 1884. "Plans were made early for the show to play a homecoming date in Baraboo ... with a new opening spectacle ... the greatest pageant ever presented by a circus."

By this time the circus traveled on 90 rail cars in four sections, or trains. Seating in the big top consisted of 18 rows, and the tent could hold 12,000 to 15,000 customers. They employed 50 clowns, and had three rings and four stages.

It can be noted that John Ringling was not present for the Baraboo show, perhaps due to illness, though John had virtually severed ties with Baraboo long ago, living in New York City and Sarasota. Strained family relations may have been a factor. Edith, however, did come for the 50th anniversary, and was apparently well-received.

Circus Fans of America

Also on hand was the eighth annual convention of the Circus Fans of America, with headquarters at the old Devi Bara supper club near Devils Lake. According to Big Top magazine of July-August, 1933, there were two days of sightseeing before the Aug. 3 circus performance, and the Devils Lake area was touted as a great place to visit. Special mention was made of the Al. Ringling Theatre, for "the interior will astound everyone."

Town BARABOO WIS. Date AUG. 3 1933

Breakfasts were held at the Chateau on Devils Lake, and the annual Kookoolub would be held at the Elks Club, former home of Al. Ringling. Visits were planned for the cemetery and mausoleums of the Ringlings, and the Gollmar circus heritage would not be overlooked. Also to be visited was the Ringling summer home on Mirror Lake.

Drivers were assured that you could drive from Chicago to Baraboo in five hours, "with concrete roads all the way." They were also told that there was a museum in the courthouse! On circus day, they would dine with the circus folk on the lot.

Thus the stage was set for what would be one of the big days in the circus world, not only for Baraboo but for the Ringling circus, both struggling to stay afloat in the Great Depression. Influential people had been instrumental in getting the big top to come to Baraboo for this one day, despite reluctance "on the part of certain officials," says Bradbury.

The next article will tell how the day went.

AFTERNOON				
	Yellow Wagon - - - - -		5.412.25	
	Red Wagon - - - - -		6.739.75	
9834	7291 @ 75c. 5.468.25			
	2543 @ 50c. 1.271.50			
	Door Cash - - - - -		277	
	Inside - - - - -		2.091.25	
	Downtown			
1551	1142 @ 75c. 856.50			
11,385	409 @ 50c. 204.50		1.061	15.581.25
EVENING				
	Yellow Wagon - - - - -		2.802	
	Red Wagon - - - - -		1.859	
2594	2248 @ 75c. 1686			
	346 @ 50c. 173			
	Door Cash - - - - -		180.60	
	Inside - - - - -		1.000.50	
	Downtown			
	70 @ 75c. 52.50		62.50	
	120 @ 50c. 10			
139	Back Door			
2733	47 @ 75c. 35.25		36.25	5.940.85
	2 @ 50c. 1			
	Concert Afternoon - NONE		1.505.75	
	Side Show - - - - -		82.60	
14,118	Balloons - - - - -		712.85	
	Candy - - - - -		36.49	
	Lunch Car - - - - -		9	
Pd.	Lunch Tent		10	
Comps.	BUGS			
	LOT SPACE			
	Group Insurance		469	
	Commissary		1.156.30	3.981.99
	TOTAL,			25,504.09
	Night Concert - - - - -			
	TOTAL FOR DAY,			

Slots and a 1936 Court Docket

Tales from Earlier Days

By Bob Dewel

This is an electronic age, and historians wonder if it will be a blank time in history. Our modern discs and tape technology can quickly become obsolete. On the other hand we have paper documents written a thousand years ago, having great longevity. This article will not go that far back, but a single page if the New-Republic in 1936 caught our eye. Standards were different then.

Slot machines banned in 1936

How times change. Today there are well over 1000 slot machines in legal operation within 5 miles of Baraboo, at the Ho Chunk Casino. However, a March, 1936 clipping from the News-Republic tells of a very different local attitude toward such machines of chance.

It seems that District Attorney Vaughn Conway had conducted a raid and netted fourteen slot machines, which were promptly burned at the rear of the grounds of the jail, now a parking lot for Federal Land Bank operations. How one burns a slot machine was not spelled out, but that was what Justice of the Peace Adolph Andro ordered!

In a demonstration of rapid law enforcement at its best, the raids were made Friday night and Saturday afternoon, as directed by Conway. That same afternoon, Justice Andro issued an order to destroy the machines by fire, which was apparently promptly carried out. Not only that, but the content of the machines, \$174.22, was promptly turned over to County Treasurer Victor Johnson the first of the following week, according to Conway. We have written before of Victor Johnson.

The News-Republic discreetly fails to divulge the names of the machine owners. However they were caught and faced charges. Justice was swift then! Moreover, in a strange twist of the law, Conway declared that any money in the machines actually belonged to the law breakers, is not actually contraband, and therefore cannot be confiscated by the government!

However, he did note that the owners would have to appear and identify themselves as owners, at which time Conway said he could then prosecute them for having the machines. The fine could be as much as \$100, and possibly six months in the county jail. Apparently some of the owners had come forward to inquire about the money, but "lost interest", said Conway, when they learned the consequences of proving ownership.

"Next time I will prosecute to the fullest extent" thundered Conway during the interview. "We have complaints that children and people who are on relief have been losing money. The machines are syndicate-owned and most of the money goes out of town, which makes local business suffer" he said.

It is interesting to note that the slot owners, who were from Prairie du Sac, Rock Springs, and La Rue, were not named in the newspaper. Moreover, the fact that the slots were seized in their homes or places of business makes it obvious that they could be charged for possession of the machines. This was 1936, Depression times, and people were sometimes innovative and slightly outside the law in trying to make a living. The law could be lenient. Moreover, in some areas clubs and organizations with club rooms could have slots without law enforcement by the authorities, some of whom might be members.

March Court Calendar

Sometimes when a page in a newspaper is reviewed,, other articles appear on the same page, providing an

opportunity for and additional story. Such is the case with the page about the slot machines, for the Circuit Court Calendar for March was published, showing the trials expected to be held. There are interesting charges, some rarely seen today.

For example, one man was to be tried for adultery. Another man's charge was bastardy, a term rarely heard today, while still another man faced charges of abandonment and non-support. Still another charge found on the calendar was "intent to ravish", while still another unhappy individual was charged with adultery.

Some of those charges are not so unusual, but the docket shows that a woman is charged for "aiding prisoners."—did she bake a cake with a file in it? And another unexplained charge was for selling mortgaged property. There were, of course, charges of larceny of an automobile, and another charge with intent to do great bodily harm. Was less than "great" bodily harm considered O.K.? Assault and robbery were a different charge, and still another was assault and robbery while armed.

Lest you think this was a fairly quiet calendar, we find one man charged with accessory to murder, and another man with aiding abetting a murder, presumably the same murder. Unlike the adjoining story of the slots, where no names were listed, the name of each person charged by the court is listed, no exceptions. What's more, the list is continued on another page in the same issue, a copy of which we did not have. It sound like Judge Hoppermann and his Clark of Courts, H.H. Prange, were in for a busy month.

Not all of the news on this page was local. The 18 year old son of baseball great Ty Cobb was accused of improper advances to a girl, who was pictured. The Cobbs declared it a frame-up and vowed to fight the case to the finish. Other than details of a heavy snowfall, that concludes our

perusal of part of one page of the News-Republic in 1936.

WPA Benefited County in Many Ways

Tales of Earlier Days

By Bob Dewel

If you were around and half grown in the 1930's, you know what WPA means, don't you? There is a little confusion here, for among the myriad Roosevelt New Deal acronyms there was also a PWA. WPA, however, meant Works Progress Administration, (later, Works Projects Administration) and it had a great impact on the Baraboo area.

This writer qualifies to remember the WPA days, and also the Depression doldrums with up to 20% of the work force unemployed. Many other men were just hanging on, with poorly paying jobs. The WPA was Roosevelt's effort to get men back to work and to get the country's infrastructure repaired and back in shape. As long as so many men were on "the dole", they might as well be working and producing for the community, it was reasoned. Salaries ranged from only \$15 to \$90 a month!

Although there are similarities to the better known CCC program, there are major differences in objective and administration. The WPA generally involved major contractors, who hired men to complete projects paid for by the government. The men did not live in camps, like the CCC boys, often being unemployed men from the local labor force.

The WPA in the Area

So what did the 5 year program do for the Baraboo area? Well, quite a bit. After years of frustrated searching, Historical Society Director Peter Shrake has assembled several newspaper clippings, including a nice summary published in the Baraboo Weekly News on Oct. 31, 1940.

Best known project is the swimming pool, completed in 1937 and still in use today. There was a modernization program a few years

ago, but the basic pool structure remains in service after nearly 70 years. Only recently did Madison build a public pool, but Baraboo has had one all this time.

The News article mentions many of the county-wide road projects, of which we publish only a partial list. For example there were 6 miles of sidewalks and paths, and 9 miles of curbs. Sixteen miles of county roads were repaired including two miles in the parks, probably meaning Devil's Lake. Fifty-one culverts and 36 miles of roadside drainage were improved by the WPA also. Not among WPA projects, however, is the stone fence surrounding much of Ochsner Park, this being a city council project, but the WPA did 3690 linear feet of retaining walls, many in Baraboo.

In County and Devils Lake

In larger projects, one school was built in Sauk County. Three schools were reconstructed, including addition of a gymnasium, and 15 decrepit buildings were demolished. Water quality and its improvement were also central to WPA activities in Sauk County, including 2 water tower tanks, 10 miles of storm and sanitary sewers, 5 pump stations, and one water treatment facility. In addition, 1082 trees were planted in Sauk County, and 32,000 tons of pulverized limestone were produced for farm use.

At Devil's Lake the WPA assisted and supplemented the CCC work, including grills and gas stoves. Several stone buildings still around and in use today were built. There seems to be some confusion as to whether the CCC or the WPA was more responsible for the stone buildings. Perhaps both were involved. Curiously, ten recreational supervisors were supplied for children at the lake, plus two recreational leaders for sporting events. The South side road was greatly improved, and two bathhouses were constructed, still usable today.

Street Work in Baraboo

In Baraboo, of special interest and improvement was the paving in reinforced concrete of 8th Street/Avenue from Ash Street to Ochsner Park. This required reduction of a steep hill between Broadway and West Street. Evidence of the hill may still be deduced by examining the stone retaining walls on either side of the highway today in that area, as well as the steep descent of Birch Street to the lowered level of 8th Avenue.

Many Model T Fords of the era could not ascend a steep hill, unless it was done in reverse, so Highway 12 did not even go to Broadway and Eighth Avenue, as it does today. Rather, it turned West from downtown on Fourth or Fifth, using Angle Street and joining Eighth Avenue at or near Ochsner Park. Highway 33 followed somewhat the same route, passing through Downtown Baraboo and then on West with the Highway Twelve route. The Eighth Avenue project, plus widening of Broadway up to Eighth, facilitated a rerouting of the highway with fewer turns.

Nationally the WPA had been formed by Presidential Decree in 1935, indicating the rapidity by which things got done by the Roosevelt Administration, which only took office in March of that year. The Depression was a crisis, and I have written previously on it and of the nationwide closing of Banks. Quickly organized, the WPA was initially a five billion dollar effort, astronomical in the federal budget of that time, to put men to work and also to benefit communities all across the land.

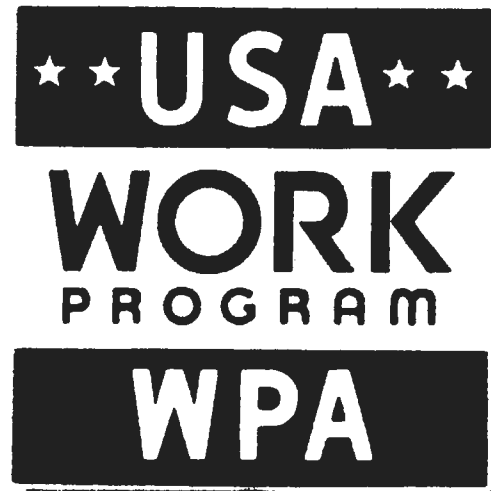
Criticism of WPA

Inevitably there were charges of corruption and waste. Particularly criticized were efforts to promote the arts and music and theatre projects. (The Al Ringling needed no help then!). Conservative Newspapers delighted in printing pictures of a workman leaning on a shovel as he waits for a new project

to start, the inference being that all the laborers were lazy and the WPA effort ineffective, if not Communist or Fascist or whatever,

A year after its formation, however, the WPA was employing nearly three and a half million persons, most previously unemployed, in public improvement projects. It was better than just petting a person on welfare and giving them money, it was believed. By 1943, as we entered World War II, the WPA was terminated. By then it had provided employment for eight and a half million individuals.

Baraboo has the pool, Devils Lake work, Eighth Avenue, and a myriad of smaller public works projects as mementos of a time when local government was paralyzed by lack of funds and the ability to tax. Raised in a conservative Republican family, this writer, as a youth, was critical of Roosevelt's recovery program. I now salute him for wisdom and foresight in one of the most difficult times in our nation's history.



This was a familiar sign during the Depression, providing work, even at minimum wage, for many men. The top third was blue, the center white, the lower third red.

Accomplishments of WPA Listed For Sauk County

Madison, —WPA District Manager F. H. Hiestand today made known the results of a comprehensive survey of WPA accomplishments in Sauk county during the five years of operation of the program in Wisconsin. The report, covering a wide variety of projects operated under the sponsorship and at the request of local communities, is part of a statewide inventory which is being submitted to Washington by Mark Muth, state administrator.

The report is designed primarily to inform citizens of results obtained with labor made available through WPA, and includes a summary of extensive improvements on highways, streets and roads, construction and repair of public buildings, creation of recreational facilities, installation and improvement of public utilities, flood and erosion control, conservation, construction and improvement of airports and airway facilities.

More than 18,000 miles of highways, roads and streets, including 16 miles in Sauk county have been improved throughout the state under the WPA program, according to the report. Of the 16 miles in Sauk county, 13 miles were secondary or farm-to-market roads, one mile was streets and alleys in urban sections and 2 miles in parks, all surfaced with materials other than concrete or asphalt. In addition, a total of 51 culverts were installed, and more than 36 miles of roadside drainage were improved.

A total of 6 miles of sidewalks and paths, and 9 miles of curbs were constructed.

The report also shows that 6 public buildings were constructed by WPA workers in Sauk county, 3 were reconstructed, and an addition built on one. The new construction included one school, one recreational building, 2 garages and 2 other structures. It is unlikely that any of these buildings could have been erected without the assistance provided by WPA. The reconstruction included 3 schools, and the addition was built on a gymnasium. WPA workers were employed also to demolish 15 structures.

WPA workers were employed on 2 parks and one playground. They were also employed to build one swimming pool having a surface area of 10,800 square feet.

A total of 5 utility plants were constructed and one reconstructed or improved. The total includes 5 pump stations and one water treatment plant.

Water mains laid in Sauk county totalled 7 miles, and 51 water consumer connections were installed. In addition, WPA employees improved 2 water storage tanks with a capacity of 57,312 gallons. Also installed were 10 miles of storm and sanitary sewers, 264 individual sewerage service connections, 264 manholes and catch basins and 112 sanitary privies.

The report shows that 3,690 linear feet of retaining walls were constructed, 650 linear feet of bulkheads and 1,807 square yards of riprap.

*WPA workers
planted 1,082 trees
in Sauk county
and landscaped*

8 acres.

*Baraboo Weekly
News, Oct. 31,
1940*

Sauk County WPA Produced 32,000 Tons of Lime

Madison—(UP) — More than 1,336,000 tons of pulverized limestone and nearly 1,430,000 cubic yards of marl and papermill sludge have been made available at low cost to farmers of Wisconsin since 1935 through projects employing Work Projects Administration labor.

This was disclosed today by District Manager F. H. Hiestand in a physical accomplishment report on work done by WPA employees in support of agriculture and rural welfare in Wisconsin and particularly in Sauk county.

"A total of 32,000 tons of pulverized limestone have been produced in Sauk county since the WPA was created," Hiestand said. "Continuous growing of crops eventually takes the lime out of farm land and it becomes sour and unproductive." The spreading of lime over such sour soil counteracts the acidity and results in a larger crop yield.

"The University of Wisconsin maintains a soil testing project, operated by WPA employees, which tests soil samples sent to it by farmers and determines how much lime is needed.

"Rural improvements to the credit of WPA employees in Sauk county, exclusive of limestone production, include development of 15 miles of secondary roads, 16 miles of roadside drainage and installation of 14 culverts."

*Baraboo News,
July 11, 1940*

CCC camp benefited park, city



BOB DEWEL

YESTERYEAR REVISITED

Depression-era workers came to Devil's Lake

You have to be at least 70 years old to remember the great Depression, and there are not too many of that generation left. Though hard hit, Baraboo and Sauk County were fortunate to have a federally sponsored recovery program located here, the Civilian Conservation Corps. Though it brought a modest financial infusion into the faltering economy of the area, the CCC was derided by some as socialist and even fascist. Even today, however, we can enjoy the fruits of the labor of those jobless Depression youths.

John Playman

The recent appearance of John Playman at the Village Booksmith created considerable interest in the camp, located at Devil's Lake. Now a resident of Hot Springs, Ark., Playman was in 1939 an unemployed resident of Kenosha, having graduated from high school there in 1938. With no job in sight, the CCC was an attractive opportunity to earn at least a minimum wage, plus housing and food.

The Civilian Conservation Corps

Playman's reminiscences of the local camp will follow, but first a few notes about the national CCC program, a creation of the Roosevelt administration. It put some of the hordes of unemployed young men to work, and though the salary was low, it used their talents for the betterment of the nation.

Roosevelt took office in March 1932, and by the 27th the plan was proposed. With a solid Democratic majority in both houses of Congress, the measure passed in record time on the 31st. The first enrollee was taken on April 7, a speedy congressional action rarely seen before or since, despite the cries of socialism from the conservative minority.

At first the labor movement was suspicious, fearing loss of jobs, but this did not happen. The Corps was administered mainly by the Army in a semi-military manner, plus participation from all the branches of the armed services, with help from the departments of Agriculture and Interior. The latter were included due to the Corps' emphasis on conservation and forestry.

At first enrollees were paid \$30 per month, of which \$25 had to be sent home to help out during those dark days of the Depression. The enrollees had to have come from a family on welfare -

called relief then — in order to join.

By 1935 there were 2,650 Corps locations nationwide, with 183 in Wisconsin. There were 500,000 enrollees. The Corps planted 1 billion trees, made 97,000 miles of roads to fight forest fires and built 3,470 fire towers. Some 36,400 received educational training, with 40,000 taught to read and write and many taught to type.

The Devil's Lake Corps

The Devil's Lake camp had existed for several years when Playman arrived in 1939. It was constructed in August 1935 by the local workmen pictured in the attached photo contributed by Ralph Marquardt. Like most camps, this one had a capacity of 200 young men.

On his arrival Playman found a camp complete with four barracks holding 50 men each. There was a recreation building and also a dispensary, complete with military medical and dental equipment of that day. The medical service was not full-time, and the old Baraboo hospital, still located in the old Alf. T. Ringling House, was used for emergencies.

The dental equipment was of the field variety all too familiar to this writer from World War II days, with the drill being powered by a foot treadle, and the light supplied by the next patient holding a flashlight.

CONSTRUCTION DIVISION, CAMP DEVIL'S LAKE C.C.C. BARABOO, WISCONSIN
1933-1942

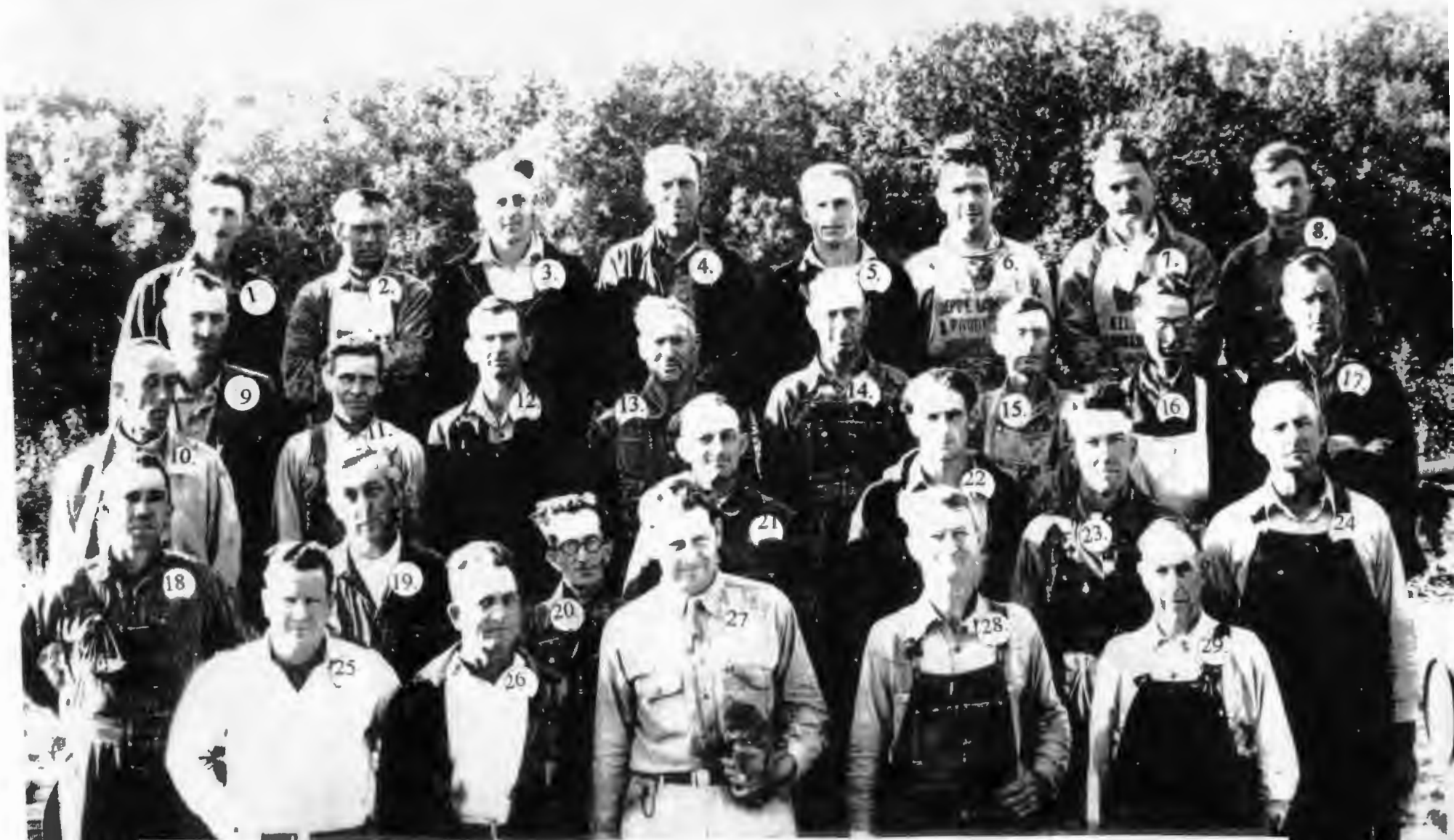


Photo coutesy Clifford Marquardt

This is the local work crew that built the CCC cap in 1935. There is a number on each man's shirt. Number 6 is Leo Crowley, 12 is Ed Stieve, 16 may be a Zimmerman, 23 is Walter Born, and 24 is George Marquardt. Can anyone identify any of the others?

There was a supply building, an office building complete with library, a classroom and a meditation area, plus of course a latrine. In other words, it was like a very small army post.

The local impact

Wisconsin had voted for Roosevelt over Hoover 2-to-1 in 1932, and even more over Landon in 1936, but Playman reports that not all of the citizens of Baraboo viewed the CCC camp favorably, finding it militaristic and vaguely socialistic somehow.

Statistics had shown, however, that the camps brought some \$5,000 per month in 1938 dollars into a community. At one point the enlistees were paid in silver dollars, and as the coins spread throughout the city the anti-camp feelings subsided, Playman said.

The militaristic factor, if any, did serve our nation well in World War II, which followed in but two years, with some young men already familiar with the military routine. Some, of course, paid with their lives. Japan had employed the pre-emptory strike action against us which we now have used against Iraq.

We still reap the benefits of the local CCC camp with the many trails at Devil's Lake and the reforestation projects at the park. All local CCC efforts were confined to the park, and should not be confused with the WPA organization, another government project with pay for work. The WPA emphasis was on civic improvement, of which Baraboo received a lot. Little facts are known about the WPA, however, and it is hoped that some readers will come forward and tell the WPA story in Baraboo.

Bob Dewel's latest volume, with 45 recent articles, is now available from the author and at the Village Booksmith.

This article was composed and printed during the time my computer was "down," and the typewritten manuscript has been lost. We reproduce the article here as it appeared in the News-Republic, on or about November 21, 2003.

Bronze Statue is One of Few in the Area

Tales of Other Days

By Bob Dewel

There aren't many public outdoor statues in the Baraboo area. There's the Civil War soldier statue on the square, and at least one in the cemetery. The wedding chapel on Tower Road has an outside statue. This article is about another little known local statue, however.

First, the familiar Civil War statue. The soldier on the square has stood guard there for well over a century, and saw the December, 1904 fire which destroyed most of the 1855 red brick courthouse. He is familiar to us all, but how many can identify the nature and location of the statue shown in the picture on this page?

This statue stands within three miles of the civil war statue and faces much the same direction, mostly east. He too represents an important part of our history, a period 70 years ago. In both cases the statues represent military or quasi-military situations, though the uniforms are very different, and so was their reason for serving their country.

The Civil war soldier reminds us of the bloodiest war in our history, a war among ourselves. That muzzle-loader musket meant business, and 285 of Sauk County's finest young men failed to return from the conflict.

Notice however that the young man shown in the picture of a statue does not have a gun, but rather an axe. Though he has stripped to the waist here, he too wore a uniform. Like the Civil War soldier, this man was also engaged in a war of sorts, a struggle to overcome the Great Depression in what was called—you guessed it, The Civilian Conservation Corps, established by President Franklin Roosevelt.

Perhaps you missed it, but the American Profile Magazine which comes on Saturdays with the News-Republic pictured such a statue in its May 27 issue, remarking that there are several such statues around the country. One is near Baraboo, located appropriately in our Devils Lake State Park. Each is cast bronze and stands six feet tall. Each cost \$18,765 plus freight, the magazine reports, and apparently the statues are inspired by a Michigan-based group, some of whom were former CCC members.

We wrote about the Devils Lake CCC camp, but not the statue, back in 2004 (Book VII, pages 56-58), mentioning the camp's importance in developing trails and retaining walls and buildings for the park. What is more important, it provided work for young men in the Depression along with a taste of discipline in the military-like nature of the camps. A large portion of each month's meager salary went by law to the man's family to help tide them through the hard times. Many of these young men went on to serve in WWII. Our army in 1939 was only the 17th strongest in the world as we drifted into the war, and here these men made a difference also.

So, how was the State Park chosen as a location for a statue? Rich Evans, the genial superintendent of the Park, reports that the statue has only been in the park since early summer of 2004, having been dedicated on July 30 of that year. Seventeen former CCC alumni were present, but not all served in the Devils Lake Camp, but rather in other camps across the country. The DNR supplied the 600 pound statue, with Ed Mortimer building the sturdy base.

The local camp was established in the 25 year old park during the spring of 1936, lasting until 1941 and the advent of WWII preparations. During that period up to 200 young men constructed the stone bathhouse on the North Shore, but that is just the beginning. Their work included the stone office building, 17 drinking fountains, 200 camp stoves, 180 picnic tables, and several toilets. There also were numerous trails constructed plus erosion control, forestry and recreation projects.



Evans said that the work of the CCC men has stood the test of time, remarking that "it's amazing, the amount and quality of work that was done. Some buildings look like they were built yesterday." The CCC work should not be confused with the work done in the city by another Depression-fighting entity, the Works Progress Administration, as the CCC work was confined to the park. Baraboo has benefited greatly from both. The WPA built the swimming pool and many retaining walls, but that is another story.

The CCC statue is located on the park area formerly occupied by the CCC camp, near the South Shore Road leading east from the lake. It is worth a visit, one of the few statues in our area. We are indebted not only to Rich Evans but to a 2004 story in the News-Republic by Scott De Laruelle for some of the information in this story.



On Friday July 4, 2004 This group of former CCC men attended the dedication of the statue.

Devils Lake--Amusement Park or Nature Preserve?

Tales of Earlier Days

By Bob Dewel

We've written about this matter before, but additional information has surfaced. We speak of the question, raised some six or seven decades ago, of the purpose of Devils Lake State park. Should it cater to shallow amusements and entertainment, or shall it preserve its natural beauty for the enjoyment of all?

It is hard to imagine now, but the shores and waters of Devils Lake once appeared destined to become the Depression-era version of the ubiquitous Dells-Delton water parks of today. In previous articles we printed pictures of the water slides and toboggan runs of those Depression days, along with floating rafts. In later years, surf boards and water skiers pulled behind speedboats were the vogue.

A lenient Commission

A lenient Conservation Commission appeared willing to let the park deteriorate into amusements at the expense of the scenic beauty. Particularly offensive to naturalists were proposals to add a road on the west side of the lake, below the west bluffs. Adding insult to injury was a proposal to construct an escalator or inclined train from the lake level to the crest of that bluff, where a tower already existed.

It is true that there some precedent. After all, the Northwester Railroad had been allowed in 1870 to build a roadbed at the base of the east bluff, with a siding later to a quarry. The lake was all private property until creation of the park in 1911. Before the legislature intervened, the quarry was actively destroying the lake side of the bluff for commercial gain. By 1930, motorists were disgruntled that they had to drive a few miles to reach the nearby south shore.

The hotels on the lake, though now gone, were well within the memory of locals of the day. Commercialization of the area seemed a foregone conclusion, and remnants of the Palisades housing development on the crest of the west bluff, of which we have written, attest to possible commercialization there.

Nature was not without its defenders, however. In an undated article by Ernest L. Meyer, preserved in the Historical Society Southard scrapbooks, he cleverly uses sarcasm to decry the plan to build a road below the west bluff, lined with food and drink stands. He speculated that the stands could have names such as Satan's Soda Siphon, Hells Kitchen, and Ye Olde Devil Tea Shoppe for such establishments, perhaps clustered around the proposed escalator to the top of the bluff. There visitors could add to the collection of sardine cans and banana peels already there, he wrote.

Meyer contrasts this vision with that of the nature lover: "the untouched majesty of the place, the silence of the opal of water, a jewel in the casket of the bluffs", and other magnificent phrases. In opposition are what he called the shoddy cottages, "the rasp of the phonograph, and the dance hall".

The Proposals

Major changes had been announced for 1935. Though the Chateau was present and fairly new, plans included building a new Chateau somewhat further back from the lake. There would be a separate grocery building, a bathhouse, and even a post office. There were apparently two railroad crossings close to each other, and these would be combined, which should have reduced the train whistles a bit in that area.

An auxiliary of that time, called the Friends of Our Native Landscape, was sort of a watchdog on the desecration of natural areas of beauty. Although they are not quoted directly, a 1930 article about them speaks of the Conservation Commission

Tourist Camp, Devils Lake State Park, Wis.—3



On the reverse: "A sylvan lake, more beautiful than Lucerne"



The toboggan run was closed following a fatal accident



Even the horse looks disgusted with this stunt !

allowing the Park to become "a place of cottages and shacks, Dances and jazz bands, refreshment stands and mis-development—better located on a highway."

Of particular concern, of course, was the possibility of the road on the west side, "spoiling the atmosphere with gas fumes and oil drippings". A foot trail, if developed, was seen as the opening wedge for a road. Interestingly, cottage and "shack" owners were among those opposed to the trail, since they were sitting pretty and did not wish more crowds at the lake. Opponents noted that the cottages sat on leased land, and that they paid no taxes. Editorials appeared on both sides of the question in many newspapers, and some are preserved in the Southard Files mentioned above,

The Solution

Happily, wise heads eventually prevailed. Only a path was built below the west bluff. Leases were honored until their expiration, a new chateau was not built, and the park slowly moved from being an amusement center to the purpose most suited to it—preservation of a place of unparalleled Midwest beauty, yet open to and welcoming visitors with suitable park facilities.

Indeed the Chateau still has Saturday night dances, and modest provisions can be purchased at the park. Times change, trains appear only occasionally, an escalator does not deface the west Bluff, and nature is relatively undisturbed but available along the trails built by the CCC boys. Experienced naturalists provide hikes and lectures, and an efficient parks staff provides order and many services in a greatly expanded park.

There may be a place for mindless amusements in the scheme of things, but not in areas of rare natural and historical significance. We think that the Friends of our Native Landscape, now succeeded by the Friends of Devils Lake State Park, would be pleased with the outcome. (Suggestion: visit the Park Nature Center this summer, and see the pictures of those old careless days of park management.)



The John Muir plied the waters of Devils Lake in the 1960's

1937 team Undefeated, Unscored Upon Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

FRONT ROW: R. Haskins, B. Moon, R. Campbell, G. Meyer, R. Fitzgerald, C. Cady
SEATED: J. Weiske, P. Steffler, R. Stewart, W. Deppe, R. Hall, E. Koons,
A. Greenhalgh, P. Cloyd, W. Gambrill, O. Wedel, J. Haskins, H. Thoenig
STANDING: Manager R. Lange, H. Arndt, Coach M.E. Willson, K. Harvey, F. Gerber,
O. Mayer, E. Mayer, G. Harvey, G. Weidner, T. Deppe, M. Koons, C. Kerndt, W.
Holiday, D. Schaitel, F. Zantow, J. Wilson, S Schirmer, H. Schmidt, Asst. Coach G.L.
Smith, D Anderson, Faculty Manager Severn Rinkob.

For several years a 1938 calendar has hung on a wall in Marc Lang's auto body shop on Water Street. It pictures the legendary 1937 Baraboo football team. That team had the distinction of not only winning all of its 7 games, but also of being unscored upon all season.

The opposition was formidable, and probably all were conference teams: Reedsburg, Tomah, Portage, Sparta, Viroqua, Richland Center, and Wisconsin High (which may not have been conference). Most scores are rather low, the highest scoring being 26-0 against both Viroqua and Richland Center.

Under the picture are names of the players, reproduced here in larger type. That's ~~Wilbur~~ Deppe in row two, No 24. Harold Arndt is in the back row, as is Faculty Manager Severn Rinkob, and there are other familiar Baraboo names as well.

1937 was not the only year Baraboo has had an undefeated team. Lang has generously given us a picture of another team, and so has Frank Terbilcox Jr. The next story will picture those other two vintage groups of distinction.

CORRECTIONS

The man wearing number 24 in the 1937 Baraboo football team photo is Wilbur Deppe's cousin William Deppe.

The Baraboo News Republic strives to be accurate and fair. If you find an error or other problem in the newspaper's editorial content, please call Editor J. Chris Mueller at 356-4808 ext. 241.

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The News Republic

BARABOO HIGH SCHOOL 1937 FOOTBALL CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS



Baraboo High School's 1937 football team, champions of the South Central conference. Members of the team, reading from left to right are:—Front row, R. Haskins, B. Moon, E. Cady, G. Meyer, R. Fitzgerald and C. Cady; second row, J. Weiske, P. Steffler, R. Stewart, W. Deppe, R. Hall, Co-captains E. Koons and A. Greenhalgh, P. Cloyd, W. Gambrill, O. Wald, J. Haskins and H. Thoenig; standing, Manager R. Lange, H. Arndt, Coach M. E. Willson, K. Harvey, F. Gerber, O. Mayer, E. Meyer, G. Harvey, G. Weidner, T. Deppe, M. Keam, G. Koons, D. Holaday, D. Schaitel, F. Zantow, J. Wilson, S. Schirmer, H. Schmidt, Assistant Coach G. L. Smith, D. Anderson, and Faculty Manager Severn Rinkob.

Things are strange since my computer crashed--some things work better, but so far I can't get WORD back and have to use word pad. I tried for an hour to make these lines smaller, but no luck. We'll see how it comes out. It is better than it was, anyway. Here is the article:

THE JULIAR THEATRE ONCE
WAS BARABOO'S NEWEST
Yeteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

We don't know what the weather was on February 10, 1939, but there was excitement in the air on the square. Before the day was over, Mayor Carl Hornung would perform an important duty.

Following an introduction by Attorney Robert Gollmar, Hornung would deliver a speech of dedication for the new Juliar Theatre. This colorful addition to the business district would brighten the Broadway block, facing the Courthouse from the west.

The Juliar was an enterprise of young Henry Ringling. Son of one of the original brothers of the same name, Henry had been the manager of the Al Ringling Theatre for the John Ringling estate, in receivership to the State of Florida, which had been in effect the owner of the Al Ringling Theatre for a time.

The Juliar was named after Henry's grandmother, whose maiden name was Salome Juliar. She became the wife of August Ringling. One of Salome's sisters had married Gottlieb Gollmar, and another was the wife of Henry Moeller. All three families would be prominent in the circus business, presumably to the surprise and perhaps consternation of their German (Ringling, Moeller, and Gollmar) and French (Juliar) immigrant parents.

Henry's timing was most propitious, for the subsequent flooding of the town with workers at the Army Ammunition Plant two years later provided overflow crowds for the new theatre, as well as for its big brother, the Al Ringling Theatre.

Opening Night

Admission on opening night was all of 40 cents, but you got not only the dedication but several "short subjects" as they were called, and a first run movie starring John Barrymore. Though patriotism was not rampant then, the evening closed with singing of the fairly new national anthem, the Star Spangled Banner. Congress had only adopted it as such in 1931, just eight years previously. Most people still preferred "America", much easier to sing and more peaceful.

The grand opening had been eagerly awaited by the Baraboo Evening News, which in December, 1938, reported that the building "adds to the appearance of the Courthouse Square, particularly at night. Blue and golden yellow predominate in the (marquee) and they have been chosen with an eye to harmony in juxtaposition with Mr. Ringling's other theatre, where red is the predominant color in the canopy." That Juliar marquee is rumored to still be in existence, stored in the countryside near Baraboo.

The paper reported that the theatre would seat 420 persons, but opening was delayed pending the arrival of the seats, "the latest word in seating comfort--in fact this is the first installation of this type in the State of Wisconsin", evidence of the Ringling tradition that "Nothing is Too Good for Baraboo." There was, however, no stage, only a platform for lectures and public meetings.

Dr. Schellkopf

Unlike "The AL", the Juliar had by now seen its 15 minutes of glory, and settled down to routine movie showings for the next two decades, there being few stage for other presentations. We are fortunate, however, to be in correspondence with Dr. John Schellkopf of Pacific Palisades, CA. John worked at both theatres in 1950, 1951, and parts of 1952. He recalls well that when both theatres were showing the same film, he would "bicycle" the reels between the two playhouses. He explains that bicycle was a theatre term, and that he actually just walked the films over the short distance. He also acted as doorman and ticket taker.

Dr. Schellkopf recalls the names of many who worked at the two theatres, men such as Persh Moyle, Ed Roser, Earl Morse, Erle Faber, Ed Burrington, and Rollo Simons. Schellkopf played the Barton organ during intermission and reel changes, and later was organist in a Milwaukee theatre, as well as playing for WCCO in Minneapolis. He retains a keen interest in the fortunes of the Al. Ringling Theatre.

The Closing

By the mid-1950's the Badger Plant crowds were gone and television was beginning to dominate the entertainment scene. This was also a down time for the Baraboo area, not exactly the good old days



*Al Ringling's nephew, Henry Ringling II,
operated and later owned the theatre.*

that some people want to return to. Baraboo's industrial expansion was just beginning to become a factor. Theatre attendance fell, and the theatre was finally closed without ceremony on or about Oct 20, 1959. The final movie was Sign of th Gladiator.

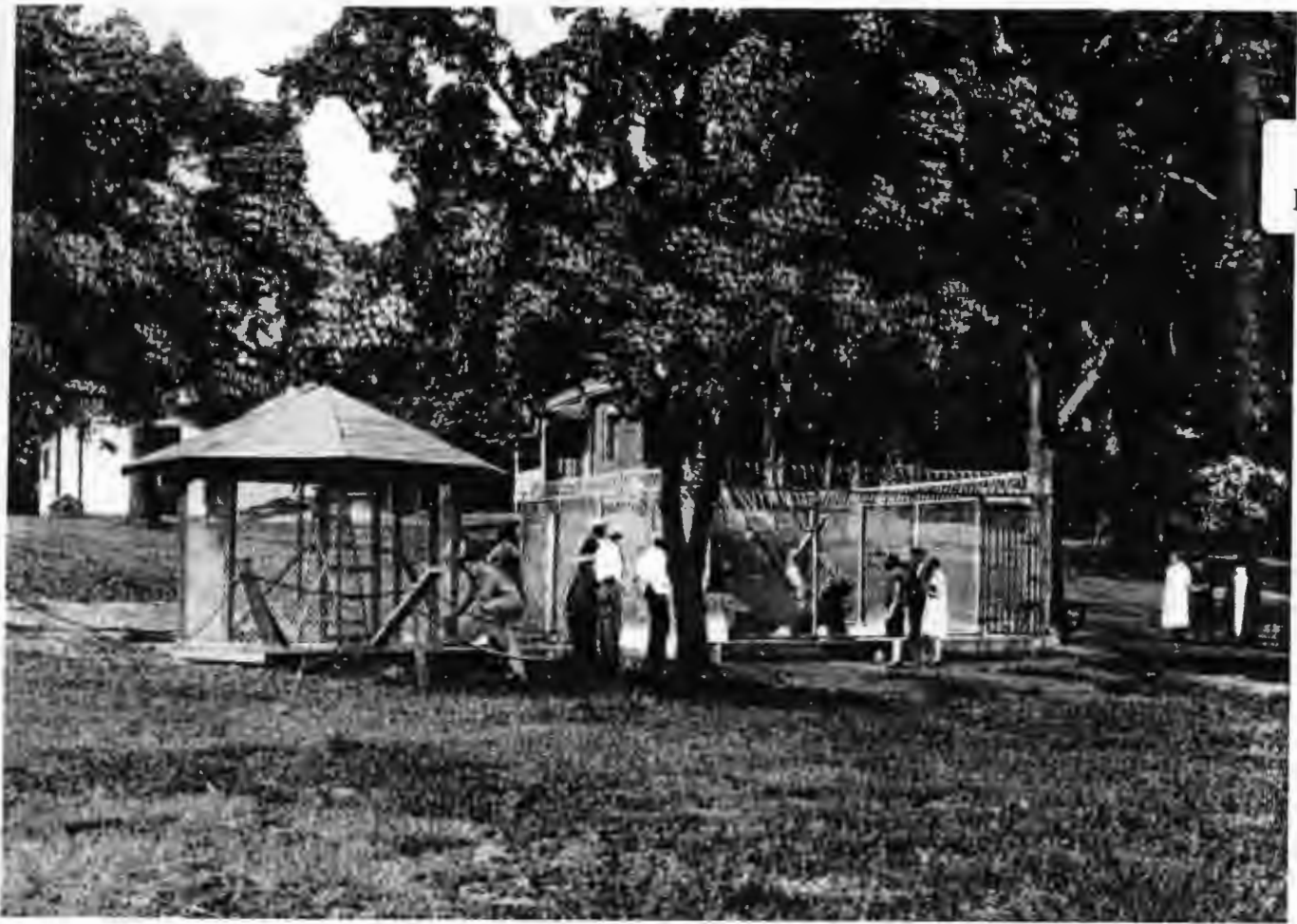
The art deco interior now became a furniture warehouse, but with the marquee still in place, hoping for better days. There was a glimmer of hope when Dick Melcher of Milwaukee bought both theatres in 1986. He announced plans to re-open the Juliar showplace, which he reported was "totally junked. The previous owners in the 50's just turned everything off and walked away."

His plans never progressed beyond that statement, and the building sat unused until its sale, along with the Al Ringling, in 1989. Melcher had paid \$90,000 in 1986, and sold to the ART Friends, present owners for \$225,000, a neat profit for three years of seemingly static operation. Like Melcher, the Friends had hopes of eventually re-opening the Juliar, but found it expedient to sell to the city in the mid-nineties so Baraboo could facilitate the sale of land to the county for the West Square building.

Shortly thereafter, without ceremony, the not so little theatre was bulldozed into oblivion. Only a lonely brass plaque marks its former location, between the county building and Kruse Oldsmobile. Moved, too, is the Brittingham and Hixon lumber yard. The five story white West Square building occupies the land that both the lumber yard and the Juliar once dominated, and from the top story one can look down and across the street onto the domed roof of the Al Ringling, which saw the Juliar come and go.



Extra!



This undated photo appears to be the beginning of Baraboo's fine zoo. Only a few cities in Wisconsin have zoos, and Baraboo is one. The Friends of the Zoo provide much needed funds and help.