

The 1950's

Pages 860 to 928

The Good old Days at Devils Lake	861
Devils Lake Cottages and Smokestacks	864
Society, Cottages, and Dissention at Devils	867
John Kelly, Babe Ruth, and a Green Bull	870
The Ringling Kelly Potter Leopold Property	873
John Kelly, Circus Attorney, and Benefactor of Baraboo	877
Industrial Acronym Soup feeds Local Economy	881
Industry History Included Air Force Academy Bid	884
BIEC Success Ends, other Corporations Carry On	888
Community Development Authority and BID	893
Half a Century in Downtown Baraboo	897
Sauk County Murder led to Manhunt, 1954	900
Aldo Leopold and Sauk County	903
Hollywood Museum of the Movies	905
National Publicity for a local Collector	909
Masonic Lodge and McGann's Razed by Fire	913
A High School Referendum and the Annex	917
The Second Referendum, 1959	921
Third Referendum Passes, 1960	925

The good old years at Devils Lake

Does Baraboo have a social center? The theater? The golf club, the Civic Center? The hockey rink or the ballpark? It depends on who you are and what you like. According to this article, the social center for decades was Devils Lake.

BARABOO — Devils Lake was first seen by Western man when James Alban came upon it in 1839. He was probably the first settler in that rich farming area south of the Baraboo Bluffs.

For more than 70 years thereafter, the Devils Lake area was in private hands, being used for farming and orchards as well as tourism.

There were hotels, tour boats, and many private cottages ringing the shores. On the North Shore, several dozen cottages clustered together across the tracks east of the chateau, being occupied principally by Baraboo residents in summer.

The cottages sometimes sat on privately owned land, but some were built later, being on land leased from the state park system, which took over the area early in the 20th century. The formation of the park received great support and promotion from Baraboo and its citizens, and both existed in harmony for about half a century.

Friction arose in the late 1960s and early 1970s when the leases on the land expired. In anticipation of the loss of their cottages, some citizens had failed to keep them in good repair, adding to the state's desire to have them removed. They were finally moved or demolished following prolonged and only partially successful legal attempts to extend the leases.

Meantime, as the structures on private lands went on the market, the state purchased them and then removed the buildings. There appear to be only three private structures left on the shores of the lake at this time.

The halcyon years

The decades of the first half of the 20th century, and indeed until the controversy of the late 1960s, could be referred to as the "Devils Lake halcyon days" as far as many citizens of Baraboo were concerned. The large summer population of summer residents, plus the advent of the Chateau and its dance bands, made the lake the social center of the community.

Adding to the ambience was the Devils Lake golf course, operated until 1961 by the Baraboo Golf Club. Located in the present group campground, and within easy walking distance of the cottages, its presence added to the importance of the lake as the center of Baraboo activities.

The Warner Memorial Road bequest, now Highway 123, was completed about 1920 and made access from the city very easy, though some still took one of the dozen or so trains a day which stopped at the lake.

The removal of the cottages and the elimination of speedboats on the lake coincided with the aging of some of the cottage owners and the demise of the lake as a social center.

The golf course had already been closed in 1961, shifting some activity to the new course on the edge of Baraboo. Many of the park roads became one-way, though of better quality than the one pictured above.

The change was only mildly disabling for Baraboo, and perhaps helped shift attention from the joys of the lake to more of the events in the city, with more attention to civic affairs and the theater and other local activities.

Memories remain among some old-timers, however, of the "good old days," the halcyon days of Baraboo and Devils Lake.

Now, in a different way, the Friends of Devils Lake, with a large Baraboo membership, carries on the tradition of use and care of the natural treasure.

The dance bands play big band music in summer, and cross country skiing is big in winter. There has always been a close kinship between Baraboo and its lake, social center or not. Neither would be the same without the other.





The South Shore Road Today



The South Shore "road" in the 1920's



Devils Lake Photo by Tom Michele

Devils Lake Cottages, and Smokestacks

Tales of Earlier Days

By Bob Dewel

In previous articles about Devils Lake, We have alluded to the large number of private cottages which once occupied premier locations on or near the lakeside. This subject is covered well in Ken Lange's "A Lake Where Spirits Dwell" which is an excellent source of information about that beautiful body of water and its history.

New information has come, however, in the form of a letter from Mrs. Forrest N. Miles of Belvidere, IL. When she married into the Miles family, it already had decades of camping experience at the lake, a practice which has continued to as recently as 2005. She generously shared some family photos, two of which are hopefully reproduced with this article if space permits.

The Miles Family

The Miles family relationship with the lake began in or before 1889 with the birth of Forrest's father, Harvey, to Fred and Lulu (Nichols) Miles in Baraboo. Fred was a railroad yard engineer. Harvey was a young boy when the family moved to Belvidere, but they returned to Devils Lake for a vacation every summer. On becoming a man, Harvey married and had a son, Forrest, born in 1922, and it was Forrest who became the husband of Mrs. Miles. She has contacted us and shared her information.

As a boy, Forrest camped with his parents in a tent on the north shore near the Chateau. It was in the 1930's that the family purchased one of the cottages on the North shore, near the railroad but with a view of the lake. The cottage was named Bel-Mir, and was designated as cottage number 10. Harvey taped the sound of the train whistle "as it climbed the Baraboo Hill, and you can hear the slippage of the leaves when they were wet on the tracks". These tapes were used to make a record titled 'Steam Power'. It was sold for many years at the Circus World Museum in Baraboo.



The Enright Cottage, Bel-Mir at Devils Lake

After a stint in the Burma-India theatre of operation during WW II, Forrest and his young family followed the custom of his Father and Grandfather, vacationing in Devils Lake. The family speaks of those times as "The Golden Days of Yore" Sometimes it involved camping with the Girl Scouts on what once was the old golf course, which was removed after the 1961 season. I have an aerial picture (Vol V-89) of the course.

Summer Vacations

A regular feature of the summer vacation was a visit to Shi Hi apple orchards, as well as dinner at the Farm Kitchen, Services at the Baraboo Presbyterian Church, and other features of life in Baraboo. A change came, though, in about 1970 when the leases on the ground under the cottages expired and the State required that the cottages be removed. Although some were destroyed, others were moved to locations on Old Lake Road and perhaps into the city.

As recently as 2005, however, The Miles' joined a group of 50 from their church who were camped at the lake. Therefore the Miles family's relation to the lake date well over a century that we know of, beginning with the birth of Harvey in 1889. It is a testimonial to the beauty and unique nature of this geological and ecological gem, which we local residents so casually take for granted as one of the benefits of living in Baraboo. A few others: The Theatre, Circus Museum, Railroad Museum, Crane Foundation, Boo-U, Historical Society, Riverwalk, and the Zoo.

Mrs. Miles recalls meeting Louise Claude, who spent her entire life in the family home at the lake, now gone, called Eagle Craig. At age 90 Louise could still climb the bluff. Mrs. Miles also recalls the need to back the car up the Baraboo Bluff hill on Highway 12, since the cars of the early 1920's could not make it in forward gear.



Mrs. Miles included six photos, some of which are reproduced here. They will be deposited with the Sauk County Historical Society for sharing with anyone interested.

Smokestacks

Also in our mailbag recently was a note from Mrs. J. E. Enright of Dodgeville, who enjoyed our story about the 1930 school annual. She recalls the free standing smokestack on what is now the Civic Center ground but which then served the High School. Old timers will recall the class competition in painting "Class of (whatever year)" at a dizzying height on the brick chimney.

This was not an approved class activity, and it distressed Supt. Kingsford. He convinced the boys in the class of 1930 that since the smokestack was probably going to be removed, a school annual would be a more appropriate remembrance, there not having been one for 10 years. As a result there was indeed a fine annual, our story about which inspired Mrs. Enright to contact us.

One should not accuse Supt Kingsford of subterfuge, but the smokestack remained for at least 35 years, succeeding boys perpetuating the risky custom. Mrs. Enright wrote also about graduation at the Al Ringling Theatre, and memories of the attractive business section. Like Mrs. Miles, she has fond memories of Baraboo, the place that most readers of this column call home. Things we take for granted are fond memories for others, and we in Baraboo are indeed fortunate.

For additional information and picture, we again recommend Ken Lange's "A Lake Where Spirits Dwell" at bookstores and the library.



Society, Cottages and Dissention at Devils Lake

Tales of Other Days

By Bob Dewel

Baraboo area citizens and residents are most fortunate when it comes to lakes, for the nearby Devils Lake State Park is perhaps the most unusual and spectacular park in the American Midwest. Its management has not been free of dissention and controversy in the past, however, as we will see in the following report.

As was indicated in earlier articles, the entire area was once privately owned, a railroad tourist destination with hotels and various aquatic events. It also barely escaped "development" as a private city atop the West Bluff, to be called the Palisades. Around the turn of the twentieth century a quarrying operation threatened the integrity of the East bluff. Baraboo today has descendants from that "Little Italy" quarrying colony. It took a determined effort by the state legislature to force the quarry's removal to a point around the bend to the East, well away from the lake.

Notes on park history

Its development into Wisconsin's second state park was facilitated mainly by a group of public minded and largely local citizens in those early days. They realized that the beautiful area had barely escaped the destructive Palisades operation. Continued access to the magnificent area should be shared by everyone, they felt, not just the affluent. By 1911-12 most of the land had been secured for public use, and its expansion into the adjacent forested Baraboo Bluffs area has continued over the years.

This was significant for the Baraboo Area, and for many years the lake served as sort of a public social center for the city and townships. The Warner Memorial Road in 1921 and the Chateau in 1924 provided both easy access and an entertainment venue. A golf course was developed on park grounds, open to all but used mainly by Baraboo golfers until 1962.

The 1960's saw a gradual shift away from the lake as the local social center, with the removal of the golf course and scores of private cottages on both the North and South Shores. These had been allowed on leased ground for decades, but the structures tended to deteriorate as the expiration period approached. Today only four private lots with buildings remain. The banishment of water skiing and power boats at the time also shifted the emphasis away from local use, and the lake and park are now a mecca for campers and vacationers from all over the Midwest.

As can be seen by the accompanying photos, Devils Lakes for some time catered to slides and water apparatus which now would be considered dangerous in our increasingly litigious society. The old days are not forgotten, however, and the Park recently received pictures and a long descriptive letter from Mrs. Forrest N. Miles of Dodgeville, detailing the Miles family patronage of the park for nearly a century. For a time they had cottage number 10, named Bel-Mi.

Louis Claude's Complaint

Mrs. Miles' letter was of special interest for it mentions a visit with Louise Claude, who still lived in the family home, Eagle Craig, on the park grounds in 1950. She was still climbing the bluffs at age 90. The Claudes, however, had disliked the Warner Memorial Road because it was built on the crest of the terminal moraine, which Claude says was contrary to Warner's wishes. It is said that Louise requested that her funeral cortege leave the home via the lower (now the exit) road rather than over the Warner Memorial Road.

The Claude's complaint is found in a letter to the editor in 1930 from her brother, Louis Claude, a respected Madison architect. He designed the Baraboo Library, the



The lake at low level in early days. The Chateau is on the left, with a slide into shallow water in the distance.



Aquaplaning on Devil's Lake



Water Toboggan North Shore Beach

present Civic Center and the former Woolen Mill office building in Attridge Park. It should be noted that the Claude Family, along with four other major owners of property surrounding the lake, had voluntarily offered their land for the park when it was established.

The public spirited nature of this act is found in his statement as follows: "The principal owners, feeling that the state was the only agency that could preserve the region...agreed to the project in every way," They felt that a natural resource was more properly owned by all of the citizens rather than a single property owner. His letter does not regret that, but objects to the 1930 policies of the Commissioners.

For example, his well written letter recounts that an effort was started to blast a road along the base of the West Bluff, "the only undefiled part of the lake", and laundry and garbage operations were poorly managed. There were many other complaints about the commercialization of the area, rather than preservation with accessibility for all.

To Claude's credit, he offers ten remedies, nearly all of which have since been implemented. He suggests a fee for and limit to campsites, removal of campsites from directly on the shoreline, a night watchman, police powers for the wardens, and penalties for violations. Claude is not pleased with the chateau, saying "dancing with their accompaniments should be eliminated." He also feels people should be educated to use the park "rationally and decently (so that) each generation shall leave what they had, and more, to the next generation."

The park was made possible largely by the efforts of local people, and for yeas it served as a social center, with the chateau and golf course and nearby Devi Bara and the Farm Kitchen as centers of activity. Times have changed and today the Friends of Devils Lake continue that tradition in another way, aiding the park staff in countless ways. We think Louis Claude would be pleased. The Park, along with the Circus Museum, the Ringling Theatre, the Crane Foundation, Boo U, and the Mid-Continent Railway, make Baraboo the unique and diverse American city that it is.



An early day slide at Devil's Lake. Note the diver in mid-air. It is said that this is young Curt Page Sr., later to become editor of the News-Republic.

JOHN KELLY, BABE RUTH AND A GREEN BULL

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

The previous article spoke of the early life of John Kelly, his work as a circus attorney, and his determination to have a circus museum in Baraboo. There are a number of sidelights to his life and character that can be considered.

His Sons

John had a family of four sons, and two of them had occasion to be in the limelight, not in the circus but in national affairs.

Like his father, Harlan Kelly was an attorney, and for a time was District Attorney of Sauk County. His greatest fame came, however, when he spoke from his wheelchair at the Republican National Convention of 1948, nominating General Douglas McArthur for President.

Another son, John Jr. was one of the Federal prosecutors in the trial of Axis Sally. WWII soldiers in the European Theatre of operations will remember that she broadcast propoganda to American troops from her safe haven in Berlin. Her outlandish interpretations of the war were good for many a laugh, and a diversion for our troops, and she had absolutely no effect on the conduct of the war.

There were two other sons, Owen and Curran, of which little information was found. When John Kelly went to New Hampshire in 1960 or 1961 he lived with Curran, who it is believed had a motel.

John died there in 1963 at the age of 90, having served, as noted, as Honorary Grand Marshall of the Milwaukee Parade. He should always be remembered as a benefactor of Baraboo, his adopted city.

The Potter Property

Only about five miles from Baraboo is a private acreage, known recently as the Potter Property. It is said to have been originally developed in about 1900 by Alf. T. Ringling, and the pseudo-Swiss style of the home was chosen after Alf. T. had spent some time in Switzerland. A very secluded and untouched natural area, it recently came under the administration of the Leopold Foundation, but the buildings are in deplorable shape.

As was written recently, the property was sold to John Kelly, Alf. T's brother-in-law, probably in 1919 or 1920 after the death of Alf. T. John's wife, Mortilla Andrews and Alf.T's first wife Della Andrews were sisters. John had the land until about 1925, when he sold it back to Alf.T's son Richard of Montana and Sarasota.

Richard died in 1931, and in May, 1934 the property was purchased from his widow by Howard Potter, who had been raised in Baraboo but was now a highly successful realtor in Chicago. Potter preserved the rustic character of the property until his death in 1968, when it was willed to the University of Wisconsin.

BIG HITTERS. Babe Ruth (right) hit .625 during the '28 World Series. Boxers Gene Tunney and Jack Dempsey (below in 1926) retired in '28.



Circus World Museum Photo

Baseball Great Babe riding John Kelly's Green Bull in Baraboo, according to legend.

John Kelly's ownership of this land is of interest, for it was during this time that he had the "Fun on the Farm" circus. One of the chariots used by John Agee for chariot races was found there by Chappie Fox and is now at the Circus World Museum.

Babe Ruth, Tom Mix

Records about the property as found so far have several inaccuracies, but at one point they list as guests in the chalet such famous persons as early silent screen star Tom Mix, the legendary Buffalo Bill Cody, Madison Square Garden impresario Tex Rickard, and baseball great Babe Ruth.

We doubted the veracity of these claims, but the Mekkelson paper mentioned in the previous article included a blurred copy of a picture of Babe Ruth, the famous baseball star, riding a bull owned by Kelly.

Always a circus man, Kelly claimed the bull was green because it ate too many shamrocks in Ireland, but a little water base paint or colored whitewash may have helped. The Circus World Museum archives did indeed have a picture of Babe Ruth on a bull, displayed on this page with this article.

As for Tom Mix and Tex Rickard, it is said that Kelly was their personal attorney, so a visit from them is possible. Mix died in 1940. Mix may have also visited fellow tent show owner Alf. T., though Alf. T. was rarely here, especially after his divorce from Della.

As for Buffalo Bill Cody, he was age 56 by the time Alf. T. built the chalet, and dead by 1917, so his appearance in Baraboo is more

questionable. At any rate, the presence of these celebrities must have created considerable talk for the coffee groups of the time, or in the barbershops.

Later Years

Something like twelve years later, John Kelly and his "creative accounting" were to be his downfall. Some say he cooked the books on orders from the Ringlings, but this was never proven, and the brothers were all gone by the time of the trial, John Ringling having died in 1936. Kelly never lost his love of the circus through all of this, and pursued his dream of a circus museum in Baraboo, with eventual success.

John Kelly's enlarged likeness can be seen at any time just inside the doors of the Circus World Museum. It should always remain on display there, for without John Kelly it seems sure there would never have been a Circus World Museum, and Baraboo could not claim to be the circus museum and research center of the world.

TUESDAY, MAY 15, 1934

Ringling Farm Is to Be Sold

Howard I. Potter of Glencoe, Ill., was in Baraboo today on business connected with his purchase of the former Richard T. Ringling farm east of Baraboo. The 300 acre farm is now owned by Mr. Ringling's widow and it was expected that the transaction whereby Mr. Potter purchases it would be completed today. The Illinois man, formerly of Baraboo, will use the property as a summer home.

He was accompanied to Baraboo today by Mrs. Potter.

THE RINGLING-KELLY-POTTER-LEOPOLD PROPERTY

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

There's a heavily wooded area hardly five miles from Baraboo that is steeped in a century of history. Always private then, and still so today, this mysterious property is now going public, but just for a day. What's more, you can buy a piece of its history if you attend the Leopold Foundation's Auction on September 8.

The various owners

This is the fabled Potter property, once known as the Alf. T. Ringling lands at the turn of the century. According to the legend, Alf. T. built it in 1898 following a few weeks in Switzerland, where he was impressed by the unique Swiss chalets. He hired scouts to scour the state for a suitable location for a similar chalet, and behold, here was the perfect spot just on the edge of the Baraboo Bluffs!

The house he built still stands, though its intended use as a honeymoon cottage for his bride, Della, didn't work out too well. In a few years they were divorced. Since the chalet was more of a summer cottage, they also had built an ostentacious home on Oak Street between tenth and eleventh.

The next owner was John Kelly, former Baraboo attorney and now attorney for the Ringling Circus enterprises. Just when he bought is not known, but probably in 1920, the year after Alf. T. died. These must have been exciting times at the rustic wooded area with the Swiss chalet,

for John was a gregarious individual. There are unconfirmed rumors of celebrities visiting John, to be considered in a future article. It was then that John, for a year, had his own circus, a farm-related enterprise.

John seems to have sold the area to Richard Ringling of Montana, Alf.T's son, in about 1925. Richard died in 1931.

The next owner, Howard Potter, purchased the area from Richard's widow, and he owned the property the longest of anyone. Potter was a Baraboo-raised boy who was by now an important insurance executive in Chicago, and his tenure on the property lasted from May, 1934 to his death in 1968.

In his Will, the 400 acres were a bequest to the University of Wisconsin, which made somewhat modest additions. A guest house was added also. Just who constructed it is not known, but at some time a fine but modest swimming pool was built, complete with diving board. It is now a Shangri-la for plants, aquatic life, and frogs. It is reached by crossing a small dam with a culvert on the ever-babbling Boulder Creek, featuring a walkway on the crest of the dam.

The Auction.

Now the property has been purchased by the Leopold Foundation, and it is they who will be holding the auction. Included are some rather unique household furnishings, some of which may or may not date back to



Pix Donated by Mrs Charles Ringling Lancaster, Sarasota
Woman in center is probably Edith Conway Ringling, Charles' wife
Bull must be Kelly's "queen" bull

Book IV



the Ringlings and Kellys.

The round dining room table features eight additional leaves, just the thing for a family reunion! A buffet, and china closet are of early vintage also, plus many books and other items of interest or potential historical value.

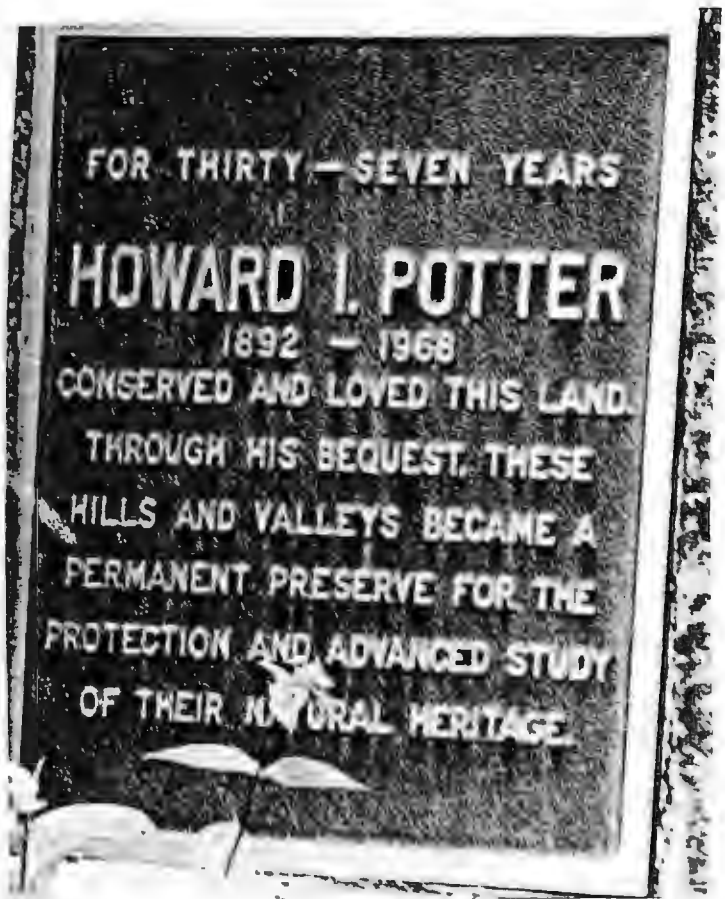
This property is somewhat remote, and requires directions. It lies on a dead end road, appropriately named Potter Road, which joins County Highway W about four miles east of the junction of W and Highway 113. From the other direction, it is west perhaps a mile on W from its junction with X. X is a very short connector from Highway 33 East of Baraboo to Co. W.

Whether the chalet evokes memory pictures of Switzerland is up to the viewer, but the house is unique in that it features a moat of sorts.

Actually the house is built into a steep hillside, but the area between the foundation and the hill, on three sides, has been excavated for a width of perhaps three feet. This space is held open by cement walls and braces, as and the space was supposed to provide cooling in summer. The property will be in good hands with the Leopold folks.



The "moat"



Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

He wasn't a rich man like Al. Ringling, but like Al., he ranks high among the great benefactors of the city. He didn't have the money to build a theatre, like Al., but he had the diligence and enthusiasm to create a living memorial to the city's past. That memorial still brings thousands to the city each year.

For one year he had his own circus, and it was the third largest in Baraboo history. His name was John Kelly, and without him there probably wouldn't be a Circus World Museum. How and why did he do it? Read On! Thanks to research by Phyllis Mekkelson, we know a lot about John. We thank her for permission to review her work, included as part of this article.

Early Life History

John Kelly was born in 1873 near Portage. He never finished high school but may have taught in a country school. Despite no high school diploma he got a law degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1901.

Upon moving to Baraboo he settled his wife and young family on a dairy farm where the Baraboo High School stands today, this being "out in the country" then. It was later sold to Draper, whose name the principal street carries. It might have been Kelly Street instead! As a dairyman he helped form the Holstein Breeders Association. Along with dairying he maintained a

law practice, and became Baraboo City Attorney.

He was in that position when in 1905, Charles Ringling selected John to represent him in a lawsuit, and John's success caused Ringling to invite him to be the circus attorney. Kelly served in that position for 30 years, outlasting all the brothers except John Ringling, who by 1935 no longer controlled the circus, as reported in another article.

It was in about that time that the Ringlings had a problem with the federal income tax, for which Kelly as their attorney was prosecuted. The brothers had never been ones to gracefully share their excessive riches with the public through taxes, and Kelly had to be the sacrificial lamb. The government's three and a half million federal claim was later settled for \$800,000, or 25 cents on the dollar.

Though he served the family for thirty years, there never was a written contract, and during that time he also was attorney for silent movie star Tom Mix and Madison Square Garden Impresario Tex Rickard. As will be seen in the next article, he also had close personal as well as business relations with baseball's great, Babe Ruth.

Fun On The Farm

Due to his close association with the circus industry, John got the circus fever and in 1924 fielded what is probably the third largest circus to come out

of Baraboo, Circus City USA. Ringlings and Gollmars were first and second largest, of course.

Thanks to his dairying background, Kelly was an avid promoter of farm products, and faulted farmers for being "as sound asleep as Rip Van Winkle....lack of interest among farmers has become a farm malady....the greatest obstruction to farm progress is the farmer himself."

With characteristic vigor he determined to do something about it, and conceived a farm animal circus to entertain, inform, and promote Wisconsin dairying all at the same time. Though different, this was no ordinary circus: 20 clowns, 50 performers and workers, 20 horses, and bulls which performed in bull roping and throwing and bull ascension. The latter is not explained anywhere--perhaps it was as in "the cow jumped over the moon"?

Moreover his horse trainer John Agee, of later circus fame, put on chariot races.

Kelly's circus performed in 40 towns, and at the state fair. Kelly said "Here we are producing the greatest health food in the world, Wisconsin milk, yet there is a surplus going begging while millions are being made out of cheap charged water with chemical drinks." And that was in 1924! The flavored sugar water industry is even bigger now.

Because it conflicted with his duties as circus attorney, Kelly closed his circus after only one year, but became even more immersed in the circus life. He spoke

of it as his "loving mistress", and was glad and rejoiced with her in good times and hurt and cried when she did, according to Mekkelson. He even wrote a book, possibly unpublished, called Circus Lawyer.

Kelly was as hurt as many fans when the tent circus, under John Ringling North, folded in 1957 and went to auditorium or coliseum shows. He said "If there had been no AL. Ringling, there would never have been a circus, but the other four brothers, in later years, molded the circus into the greatest show".

Circus World Museum

It was in the decade between 1950 and 1960 that John Kelly became a pest in the view of some, but in the view of others a man with a glorious dream. The Ringling and Gollmar circuses had been gone from Baraboo for 30 years, but Kelly thought the heritage demanded recognition by the city, and conceived the idea of a circus museum, a shrine and historical research center.

He was determined that the nation would not forget Baraboo and the circus, with its parades and animals and all that goes with a circus. He resolved that the heritage must be preserved--and what better place than in Baraboo, home to the Ringlings and Gollmars, and eventually with ownership of Barnum and Bailey also.

Fortunately the old winter quarters still existed, albeit run down and decrepit. Kelly is said to have had a foghorn voice, Irish eyes under hooded eyelids, and most of all, boundless energy. Not only



CREDIT CIRCUS WORLD MUSEUM

JOHN KELLEY AND GOVERNOR BLAINE

Baraboo folks, but the Wisconsin Legislature itself heard from Kelly. Finally a Baraboo committee was formed, with memberships as low as one dollar, but lifetime memberships at \$100.

The city reluctantly purchased the old ring barn for \$10,000, then headquarters of Louis List's salvage and junk business. Kelly put his money where his mouth was by purchasing the 70 year old Barnum and Bailey Columbia band wagon as a startup gift.

Other items followed, and by July 1, 1959, the little museum was ready to open. Eighty-six year old Kelly danced a jig with actress Rhonda Fleming, here for the event and the parade. "Now we're on a roll", he said, and people will recognize us."

The fortuitous arrival of Chappie Fox was just the right timing, for Kelly's health was failing. Fox guided the little museum into not only great expansion but international recognition, and it now is the world center of circus memorabilia wagons, and archives.

Milwaukee Parade

The first parade in Milwaukee was in 1963, and a thoughtful Chappie Fox saw to it that John Kelly, now living in New Hampshire with a son, was able to return and be honorary Grand Marshall for the event. It was a day of crowning glory for Kelly, and barely in the nick of time, for he died in 6 months.

There's more to know about John Kelly, that great benefactor of Baraboo and of the circus world, and the next article will tell of his connection with the Potter

Property, Babe Ruth, and perhaps Tom Mix and Buffalo Bill.

John Kelly was buried in Baraboo, about a mile from his dream come true. Someone has saved a 1962 poem he wrote on his Christmas card, the last one he sent before this death. It reads as follows:

Stand ye no more under
the berry-laden Myrtle,
Or abreast of the pine
tree scent, to mellow
in the warmth of Christmas
tidings.

Breathe ye (instead)
heavenly-deep in the Yuletide
fragrance of elephant
aromatic redolence

For celebrating Christmas
at its best.

John Ringling didn't even bother to establish a circus museum. The one in Sarasota was started long after John died. Perhaps John Kelly loved the circus even more than the Ringlings! And he recognized that it belonged in Baraboo.

Industrial acronym soup feeds local economy

The author is obligated to Robert C. Fleming, former director of the Sauk County Development Corp. (SCDC), and Chester Corson, who headed the Community Development Corporation (CDA), and the Baraboo Economic Development Corporation (BEDC), for many years, and to many others who contributed to this series of articles.

Is our language becoming a cacophony of acronyms? Are acronyms a conversational shortcut, or do you lose time trying to figure out their meaning in a conversation, or when reading an article in the newspaper?

We are all pretty cognizant of the meaning of IRS, for example, and DNR seems to dominate our lives more and more. The DOT has been in the news in regard to two bridge proposals in Baraboo and one in Merrinac. All the talk last December was of Y2K, so we do use acronyms.

Baraboo has its own acronyms, such as CWM, ICF, and ART Friends, which we all recognize rather easily. There are other Baraboo acronyms, however, which appear to some as a confusion of organizations, as groups which seem to be doing somewhat the same things. Actually, their job descriptions, if you know them, do outline the parameters of their bailiwick and define their boundaries. The purpose of these articles will be to give the history and explain the field of activity of several acronyms, namely BIEC, CDA, BID, BEDC, SCDC, and discuss the meaning of TID and TIF. There are others too — stay tuned!

Boom and bust

Historically, the Baraboo Industrial Expansion Corp., or BIEC, is the first of the acronyms, and had a great impact on industrial development in the city. It is also the only one of those acronyms not closely associated with government grants and city projects. Founded in 1947, it was a private corporation formed in a desperate attempt by intrepid Baraboo leaders to rescue the city from the doldrums into which it had descended following the giddy boom days of the Badger Army Ammunition Plant during World War II.

That highly successful army plant had been an important part of the American "Arsenal of Democracy," which helped turn the tide in the war. That war had started out badly for the United States of America (USA, another acronym!), a nation then pitifully unprepared for combat.

One may second guess how the choice of the Sauk Prairie for BAAP came about, and who made the decision, but the fact was that an ordnance plant was needed, it was needed immediately, and Hitler was making no allowances for environmental impact studies. In a massive burst of energy, the plant was built, and at war's end it was just as rapidly reduced to stand-by. Booming Baraboo now faced financial depression — industry was needed, and the BIEC was formed.

Now, our species is not blessed with fore-knowledge. Had the eager band of hometown promoters in 1946 known of the future conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, and the subsequent re-activation of BAAP, they might not have sought industry so eagerly, figuring that the World War II plant jobs and local prosperity would return, making their efforts less necessary.

Today, there is a clamor for removal of the entire plant, and many groups are jockeying for control of its future, be it entirely agricultural, entirely state park, or industrial, or a combination of industrial and environmental uses. Rarely is a voice raised to acknowledge Badger's importance in the worldwide conflict of the 1940s.

Moreover, some say our own lack of foresight today, as with the founders of BIEC in 1946, might make us regret Badger's total destruction should a future conflict arise. Back in 1946, the leaders wisely hedged their bets — Baraboo developed industry, but Badger was kept on stand-by just in case.

As a Sauk County Board member said recently, the armed forces who were our savior in those dark days are hardly our enemy now, and attacks on the army and its representatives are inappropriate and misguided.

The problem

Baraboo had been reeling from the influx of many of the 12,000 employees needed at Badger, and reeled again from the massive exodus after the war. To add to the misery, the closing of the woolen mill left the city in shock.

To be sure, a few small industries remained, such as the McArthur enterprises and Tent and Awning (1925), but only 4 percent of the population, about 250 people, were employed in industry, and there were some 500 to 800 unemployed people, a 15 percent unemployment rate.

In early recognition of the problem, a small "Committee of Seven" had been formed to help guide the city, according to its secretary, Jay Henke. He remembers the group as including Al Dippel, John Lange, Ted Mandt, W.W. Deppe, Bill Noble, Clausen Stekl and himself. They served as an advisory board to the city council, and Henke remembers that they instituted water fluoridation as one project. It was obvious, however, that more vigorous steps were needed to assure the city's postwar growth.

The BIEC

The story of the BIEC has been discussed to some extent in a previous article. Thanks to David Deppe, the minutes of the organization from its inception to 1957, including his father's prominent participation as the practical facilitator, have been preserved. They record how local leaders, led by such civic volunteers as Ted Mandt, W.W. Deppe, George Martiny, Curt Page, John Lange and many others formed a private corporation supported by dozens of local stockholders. Land was purchased and they ventured into the highly competitive melée of industrial enticement, encouraging industries to locate in the city.



Ted Mandt, left, and Mayor Bill Hommel are shown at a dinner meeting

No officer took a salary during the some three or four decades of operation. It should be remembered also that in those days there were no government grants to encourage industrial expansion, now low-interest government loans to ease the skids for a young or expanding industry.

BIEC's success at mid-century is legendary, and saved Baraboo from industrial oblivion with a string of successes in attracting new industries, an action which also strengthened existing industries. Not all of the new enterprises survived, but those which prospered include Northern Engineering (now NECO Hammond), Blackhawk (now Hein-Werner), Gardner Bakery, and Humane Manufacturing Co. A small local company, Baraboo Frozen Foods, was formed and grew to the behemoth it is today, Sysco Food Services.

As Corson writes: "When the farmland now occupied by Flambeau, Humane, Sysco and Seneca became full, BIEC's mission was accomplished and the corporation was disbanded. What had been small companies

had grown to become significant contenders among their competitors, and they employed hundreds of people."

BIEC was succeeded in about 1976 by CDA and BEDC, using the new government grant programs of the Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon administrations, and developed Madalon Industrial Park. BIEC also found locations elsewhere in town for industries, as told in article two of this series. BIEC was a miracle in its time, gaining national recognition for its success.

Eagle Signal

Considerable information is available with regard to two of the industries — Northern Engineering and Eagle Signal being examples. Eagle Signal in Baraboo was originally a small local industry known as Hagen Manufacturing, which was purchased in 1951 with the help and encouragement of the BIEC. The parent company became Eagle Signal of Moline, Ill., a maker of traffic lights and industrial timers.



Elephants assisted at the ground-breaking for Eagle Signal. From the left: elephant trainer John Herriot, plant manager Chester Corson, Carl Anderson of E.W.Bliss, Gov. Warren Knowles, and Mayor Bill Hommel.

During World War II Eagle Signal provided timers needed to train pilots to use the Norden bomb sight. It also developed timers used at Badger in the production of gun powder.

In Baraboo the industry occupied, in turn, the recently vacated Fishkin Accounting building, the old Ruhland brewery, and eventually a factory on Lake Street built by Deppe in 1967. Corson reports that the plant originally produced heavy duty clock-type motors, but operations were expanded to include commercial timers. Though no longer in the city, it was an important cog in the industrial mix for three decades. Starting with three employees, employment grew to 200 at its peak.

Over the years Eagle's success was noted by companies desiring to expand, so there followed a succession of new owners. Though Eagle has been dismembered and relocated, the product lines are still being produced under the Eagle brand name.

Rambo and Corson

Of particularly good fortune to Baraboo was the transfer here of two men. George Rambo, a competent and innovative inventor, arrived in 1962, followed in 1964 by Corson, a plant manager. Both men eventually were named Man of the Year by local organizations, not for operating an industry but rather for their service to the community outside of work. Corson went on to serve for two decades as

head of the Community Development Corporation, and was honored upon his retirement as Baraboo's \$16 million man, referring to the funds he brought to the CDA for community development.

Servo

Eagle Signal spawned another Baraboo industry, Servo Instruments, which manufactures precision potentiometers. Over the years the parent company, Eagle Signal, changed hands several times, and in 1993 the Baraboo plant was closed, but is well remembered in Baraboo, with Corson as a permanent resident and Rambo as a regular summer resident.

The next article will outline more successes in the financial adventure known as BIEC.

Industry history included

Air Force academy bid

Baraboo Industrial Development II

If a study of the minutes of a corporation written 45 years ago sounds boring, take note: There once were serious efforts made to locate the United States Air Force Academy near Baraboo.

Had the efforts succeeded, we might now be complaining about air and sound pollution at Badger. More importantly, one reads in these minutes about the genesis of John Kelley's grand idea of a circus museum in Baraboo.

The BIEC

The infant Baraboo Industrial Expansion Corporation, BIEC, had no models to follow and had to find its way pretty much alone, albeit with the help of Professor Colbert of the University of Wisconsin. Steadfast through the years, however, was its purpose, as stated in the articles of incorporation: "To make certain that the future development of the city of Baraboo will be beneficial and worthwhile to all the citizens and the surrounding area."

This statement of purpose, along with the rest of the document, was signed on Oct. 16, 1947 by Ted Mandt and attorney Jim Hall Jr. Such was the effort to jump-start the devastated Baraboo economy following the closure of the Badger Army Ammunition Plant (BAAP).

Thanks to copious minutes preserved all these years by David Deppe, we know a lot about the early years of BIEC. Minutes of the later years have not been pursued for this article.

Almost the first order of business, one that proved fruitless over the next two decades, so the record shows, was the attempt to reopen the Island Woolen Mill. Owner McFetridge and subsequent owners, the Makley Brothers, seemed surprisingly reluctant to pursue rental of the sprawling plant. Today all that remains is a building owned by the city and used partly for a small youth center, the rest succumbing to a fire years ago.

Undeterred, the eager group of BIEC leaders announced rental of a building to Boreva Sportswear, located at 123 Second Street. This business seems to have sputtered along until 1955 or 1956. In the meantime, the receipt of corporation stock sales from 150 local investors made possible the purchase of some 60 acres of the Alexander farm for \$20,220, and an acreage called the Chaplin place for \$2750.

Acquiring this land was none too soon, for the mention of its first occupant, Northern Engineering, was on Jan. 17, 1948, for whom a building was quickly built for some \$55,631 and leased to it. Alexander, in the meantime, leased back the rest of the land for farming, and not until the late 1950's was farming discontinued when the park became more full. Though many contacts did not pan out, the group persisted, and in May 1948, there came a loan request from Hagen Mfg. This was significant, for Hagen eventually was purchased in late 1951, by Eagle Signal of Moline Ill.



BOB
DEWEL

▼
YESTERYEAR
REVISITED

This firm, mentioned in the previous article, was important in the local industrial picture, with a new factory erected for them by Deppe on Lake Street.

Another firm, Bricrete, showed great promise but limped along until 1957, when there is a mention of "the old Bricrete building." In 1949, the BIEC had purchased the old county shops on seventh street for about \$15,000. Plans to rent or sell it to Gunninson Mfg. (farm machinery) fell through. This was a great piece of fortune; it was at this time that the Flambeau Corporation is first mentioned. The ready availability of that building in Baraboo, and Flambeau's further growth, are legendary.

Good news came in August, for it was announced that W.W. Deppe had rented part of the former Ringling horse barn to Industrial Coils, a Michigan firm. Like Flambeau, and Eagle Signal for many years, Coils has been an integral part of the Baraboo industrial complex.

By 1951, the Industrial Expansion Corporation was flush enough to declare a \$2 dividend per share. Badger had not yet re-opened for the Korea War, and wages remained fairly stable. It turned out that Badger plant training on a resume was not always useful for jobs in other industries. The little BIEC corporation kept full steam ahead, but sometimes failed to attract an industry.

Air Force Academy

Long forgotten was a joint effort by Baraboo, Wisconsin Dells, Lake Delton, and

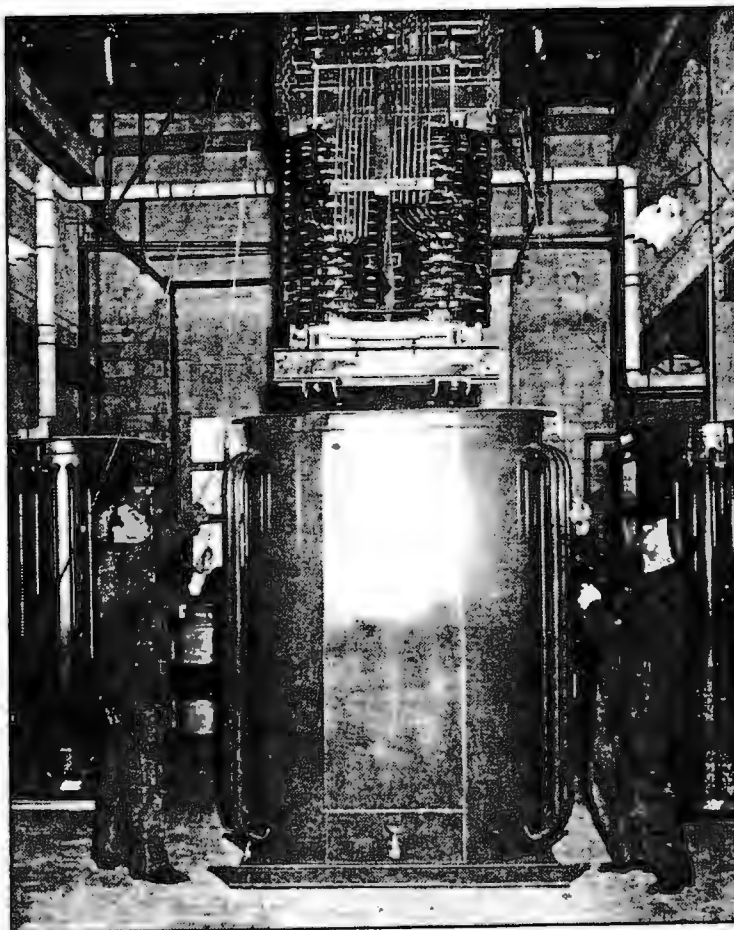
Reedsburg to have the proposed Air Force Academy locate in Sauk County, perhaps at the Badger Plant. A delegation was sent to Washington to lobby for it, and expenses of \$425 are listed in August by the Corporation. Kiwanis Club archives also mention the effort, saying the club petitioned that the Air Force Academy be located here. There was some mention of a Quartermaster Testing Lab also, but as in so many federal projects, Wisconsin was passed by. There is mention of it in the BIEC minutes as late as 1954, however.

Among early industries was Insemikit in 1950, which over the years has expanded and is Teel plastics today. Land for expansion was sold to W.F. Teelin in the 1950s, perhaps along with a loan from the Corporation. It is now a major industry in the city.

The name Zachary Onikel first appeared in Baraboo in 1951, Zach inquiring about land near a railroad spur. Other new names were Baraboo Manufacturing Co. (farm equipment) and Richardson Paint.

Circus World Museum

Even John M. Kelley, who appeared before the BIEC board of directors on Feb. 19, 1952, could not have imagined the result of his modest request. He "gave a resume of plans for a circus museum and asked for help in setting up an organization." A city-wide meeting of various organizations resulted, with a dinner on March 6, 1952 at the Broadway Cafe. John persisted over the next few years, and in 1959 the Circus World Museum became a reality. Now, in 2000, it is a major educational and entertain-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLEN PASCHEN

In this 1950 photo, Tom Mattison and Jack Reed prepare a Neco transformer for shipment.

ment venue in Wisconsin, with worldwide recognition.

By April 1955, Flambeau was overcrowded, and it became critical as to whether it would remain in the city. In 1957 the BIEC promoted a local sale, spearheaded by Clark Wilkinson, of stock and debentures for a building for the firm, the old county shops on seventh street not allowing room for expansion. A building on the corner of Lynn and Moore streets was proposed. Some 532 people pledged \$76,750 toward the campaign to build a \$200,000 plant. In the meantime, Eagle Signal (formerly Hagen) had expanded to its new plant on Lake Street. Baraboo now had real industry.

Northern Engineering

Considerable information is available regarding Northern Engineering, now NECO-Hammond, the only surviving industry of the first three (Northern Engineering, Hagen, Boreva) that BIEC brought in. Leo Rodems and Mitch Melnik of Milwaukee had purchased a transformer business being spun off another corporation, and they needed a location.

Leo grew up in Baraboo, was a graduate of Baraboo High School, and maintained close ties to editor Curt Page.

Baraboo Shows How to Encourage New Industry

Baraboo is repeatedly pointed out as an example of what a small Wisconsin city can do to pull itself up by its own bootstraps, economically speaking.

The community development corporation there, financed by local money, has been the means of bringing five new industries to Baraboo. One of them is doing so well it needs capital for a larger plant. So the development group is out on a door to door drive to sell \$50 bonds or shares of stock—even \$1 stamps to fill a stamp book good, when filled, for a stock or bond.

That is real enterprise. It is the kind of enterprise which many small communities have lacked and for lack of which they have been dying—as Baraboo refused to do. On the other hand some of this same sort of community enterprise, poorly advised and directed, has led to grim disappointment and financial loss.

News report

industries, just as his uncle had in 1948. He has also served on the city council, and was recently honored with the annual Kiwanis Community Service Award for those and may other activities.

Forging Ahead

Back in the 1950s Baraboo was definitely in the industrial picture in Wisconsin, and the Corporation was touted as an example for other cities around the state. Not resting on its laurels, the group continued promotion of industry for the city for several additional years, making some 36 serious contacts by 1957, altogether, according to a count of the minutes by Fleming, who also lists 26 local names of persons involved.

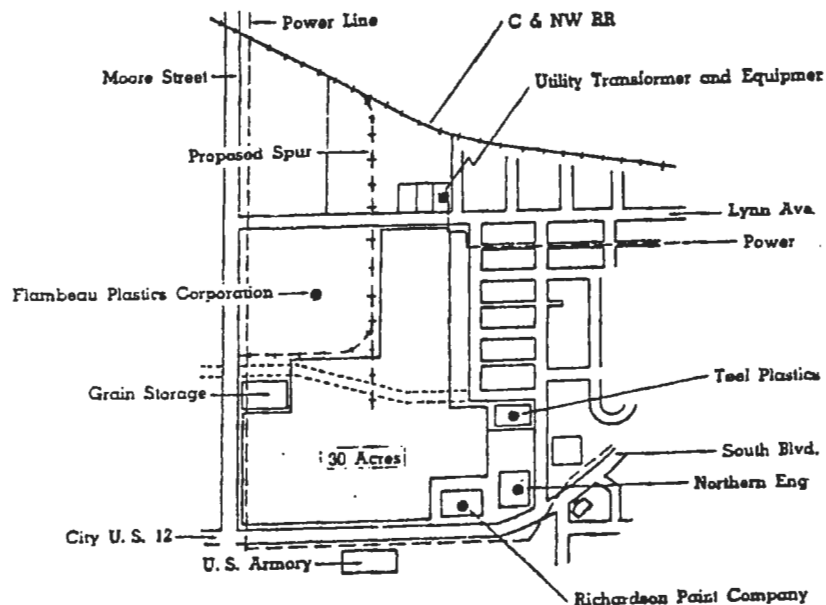
Many more industries were added in the 1960's and 1970's, with BIEC being replaced eventually by the Community Development Association (CDA) and the BEDC. But that is another story.

As an active member of BIEC, Page learned of the need for a location for the businessmen, and the BIEC proposal proved attractive to the Milwaukee men, who subsequently became virtually lifelong residents of the city. Two Milwaukee men, Bob Gudmanson and Bob Forseth, also became permanent residents. BIEC financed a 12,000 square foot building for \$55,631 on the newly acquired industrial park land, and the business was off to a long and distinguished career in Baraboo.

Rodems nephew, Allen Paschen, whose mother also graduated here, was brought into the firm in 1950 (at 93 cents per hour, he recalls), working every job in the plant, which had 40 employees by this time and 60 in the 1960's. Customers included Allen Bradley, Square D and a major contract with the Bonneville Dam in Washington state.

After a change of ownership to Sta-Rite Industries for eight years, Allen Paschen and other local investors purchased the business in 1976 and employment rose to 90 persons. In 1983 the company was sold to the Hammond Corporation, retaining Paschen as local president until his retirement in 1990. A new factory had now been built at 1100 Lake Street, and employment approaches 150 presently.

For 52 years, thanks to BIEC and Leo Rodems, NECO-Hammond has been a good industrial citizen of Baraboo. Moreover, Rodems and Paschen have been outstanding civic leaders, being most influential in the establishment of the UW-Baraboo/Sauk County campus. Paschen served for many years on the Baraboo Economic Development Corporation (BEDC), a sort of successor to BIEC, and has helped in bringing in new



EXPLODED VIEW INDUSTRIAL SITE

Early promotional material

Questions and Answers About ^{3/21/57} Baraboo Industrial Expansion

This is to be considered an investment in your community. It is an investment of risk capital the same as an investment in your own business or an investment in the stocks and bonds of other corporations.

QUESTION: What is the Baraboo Industrial Expansion Corporation?

ANSWER: It is a group of Baraboo community citizens who have organized together to create jobs for present and future workers in the City of Baraboo by financing the purchase and/or building of factories and factory sites in the City of Baraboo in order to invite new industries and retain those that we have.

QUESTION: Who - owns the BIEC?

ANSWER: The corporation is owned by the people who have purchased stock at the rate of \$50 per share. No one stockholder owns more than 20 shares or \$1,000 worth of stock.

QUESTION: Who manages the BIEC?

ANSWER: The corporation is managed by a board of 11 directors who are chosen annually by a meeting of all of the stockholders. The officers of the corporation are, in turn, chosen by the board of directors.

QUESTION: Who are the officers and directors of the BIEC?

ANSWER: The officers are: President, T. A. Mandt, Co-partner, Gem City Dairy; Vice-President, George Martiny, Real Estate and Builder; Secretary, John Lange, Co - partner, Lange - Wilkinson Agency; Treasurer, Henry Moeller, Retired. The directors are: W. W. Deppe, Deppe Lumber Co.; Al Boyd, Boyd's Ritz; Dr. J. F. Moon, MD; Curt Page sr., Baraboo News-Republic; Charles Cafilisch, Badger Cleaners; Henry Roser, Roser Plumbing Co.; Andy McArthur, Geo. McArthur and Sons.

QUESTION: What salaries or bonuses are paid to the officers and board of directors.

ANSWER: No salaries or bonuses of any kind whatsoever are paid to any officers or directors of the corporation. All of them serve with-

out pay.

QUESTION: What are the terms of the directors?

ANSWER: Three directors are elected each year for a three year term.

QUESTION: How does the BIEC obtain money to perform its functions in financing building and building sites?

ANSWER: By the sale of stock at \$50.00 per share and debentures at \$50.00 per share.

QUESTION: Is any interest paid to me on the stock I purchase?

ANSWER: No, interest is not paid on stock. Profits, if any, are paid to stockholders in dividends if warranted and voted by the board of directors. If an investor is desirous of an immediate money return, he may purchase debentures.

QUESTION: What is a debenture?

ANSWER: A debenture is a written acknowledgment of a debt and chargeable against the assets of the person or corporation who issues it. In the case of BIEC its debentures carry interest at the rate or up to 4% per year, which has been paid continuously to date. The money obtained from the debentures is used as capital by the corporation. The corporation is not obliged to pay taxes on debenture interest but is required to pay taxes on dividends earned.

QUESTION: How do I purchase stock and debentures in the BIEC?

ANSWER: Stock or debentures in units of \$50 per share can be purchased through any member of the campaign committee. The headquarters for the campaign is located in the lobby of the Warren Hotel in Baraboo, and will be open at noon on Wednesday, March 20, and thereafter from 12 to 6 and 7 to 9 p.m. weekdays.

QUESTION: Is the Flambeau Plastics Corp. the only company which the BIEC intends to assist in financing?

ANSWER: Definitely not. At the present time the BIEC is financing several factories in Baraboo with a total pay roll of more than a million and a quarter dollars per year. Additional money obtained by the sale of stock and/or debentures is intended to be used not only to retain the Flambeau Plastics Corp. in Baraboo but to make Baraboo attractive to new factories which would locate here if provided with adequate buildings and building sites. It should be borne in mind that the BIEC does not GIVE any building or property to any company. It SELLS it, but on a delayed or amortised payment basis, thus enabling the factory to use more of its own funds in working capital.

BIEC success ends, other corporations carry on

Baraboo Industrial Development III

BARABOO —This series on the industrial development of Baraboo began with a promise to explain the acronyms involved. The first two articles dealt with the BIEC. Now it is time to deal with the CDA, BEDC, TID, and TIF.

BEDC

By 1975, the financially successful Baraboo Industrial Expansion Corporation (BIEC) had no more land to sell, and its investors eventually received a ten-fold return on their investment gamble. Since it was a private corporation, it was not eligible for the new federal and state industrial incentive programs. To carry on its mission, the city created the Baraboo Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) and the Community Development Corporation (CDA).

Chester Corson, erstwhile manager of the Eagle Signal plant, served as chairman of both entities for two decades, and writes, "To consider the pursuit of economic development, considered at the time to mean attracting new industry, the city council created the Baraboo Economic Development Commission, (BEDC)...meeting on March 9, 1977. The commission consisted of nine members all appointed by the Mayor, and confirmed by the common council — two members are required to be members from the council.

"Attorney Fred Wagner was named President, Lee Hoppe as Vice-president, John Eckhardt as Secretary-Treasurer. Other members were William Harder, Elizabeth Johnson, Leo Eastman, Chet Corson, John Lange, and Richard Spragg.

"With no land available for growth, BEDC recommended the purchase of the land now known as the Madalon Industrial Park. With an \$884,000 EDA government grant and the creation of the first Tax Incremental District (TIF), land preparation and roads and utilities made the land desirable for industry."

Leaders such as Fritz Wagner and Bob Fleming had energized the Kiwanis Club as early as Jan. 13, 1975 regarding the project, the extensive minutes of which still exist. Wagner and Fleming, the new (1976) Sauk County Development Corporation (SCDC) executive director, were instrumental in obtaining a \$452,000 awards in September of that year for a water tower and pumping station on South Moore Street. Fleming went on to become an Area Development Director for the State, where he served for fifteen years.

The Baraboo industrial park acreage was doubled with the purchase of nearly 70 adjacent acres at \$2300 per acre, now Madalon Industrial Park, as related above. Corson reports that Soiltest, Perry Printing, Midstates Associates, Best-Ex, Dearborn Wood Fabricators, Dell Tool, and

Hapco soon occupied the land, as well as that part of the land sold for the Huber Center, which is now to be expanded into a new county jail.

The success of BIEC was followed by an equally impressive growth by BEDC, "working with the city administration and with a close relationship with the SCDC." Unfortunately, the action was too late to capture a Land-o-Lakes feed mill and a Finnish scissors manufacturer, according to former SCDC chairman Fleming. This illustrates the crucial point of having land available and improved first, rather than locating an industry and then finding land for it. At the time, the county was suffering from a 17 percent post-Vietnam unemployment rate. This factor, however, made the area more eligible than some cities were for government aid.

In November 1979, the News Republic and Mark Tatge, the latest in a bewildering series of editors, began a series of articles highlighting the industrial possibilities of the "Baraboo of Tomorrow." The series began with a fanciful and perhaps tongue-in-

cheek prediction of Baraboo in the year 2000, with "high-rise buildings with indoor fountains bordering the courthouse square...a 30-story building...an enclosed shopping mall on South Broadway...a rapid transit system connecting Baraboo and Madison" — perhaps so Madisonians could shop here?

TID AND TIF

Coming down to earth, Tatge then explained the new concept of a Tax Incremental Financing District, or TID, a concept still not generally understood today despite its successful use in Baraboo and elsewhere. Simply, a TID district would aid a city in bringing in new industry by using the increased taxes on that industry to pay the city for needed improvements such as sewer, water, streets, and other requirements of the industry. TID is the district, TIF is the means of financing it.

Taxes as paid previously on the once undeveloped land would continue to go to the state and the county and the school district as before, until the city has been reimbursed and only until then. When the city has recovered its expenses, it and the county and the school district would now share in the increased flow of taxes from assessment of the new industry. Both entities are eventual winners.

The concept is attractive and proven and has been used by Baraboo some six times to increase the tax base of not only itself but of the county and the schools, so every taxing district wins. Reedsburg is a user of the TID concept also.

The establishment of the TID district and the increased acreage of the industrial park brought quick results, for within four weeks Humane . . . Corporation announced an expansion of both building and work force, aided by revenue bonds issued through the city to obtain a lower rate of interest but not binding the city in case of default.

A week later Flambeau Corporation proposed a \$1.4 million expansion, its eighth since moving to Baraboo in 1951. In the meantime, the new Madalon Industrial Park bid for its preparation and



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHET CORSON

Wilbur Deppe, right, provided buildings for many new Baraboo industries. He is pictured here at the Eagle Signal ground-breaking with company official Carl Anderson.

improvement came in at a whopping \$100,000 below estimates, or \$816,953 instead of \$930,700 as projected. The expense was partially absorbed by a matching grant of \$838,400 from the federal Economic Development Association. The rapidly filling industrial park's success was assured in October 1981 with the news that Perry Printing, now Perry-Judd, would soon locate here. Perry wanted to move rapidly, and again Baraboo had the land ready and prepared, thanks to good fortune and good planning. Now, in 2000, Baraboo again needs land ready and waiting, and has proposed an annexation east of town.

With regard to BEDC, Corson writes: "Other land purchases were made over the years...around the golf course...and more recently the acreage west of Highway 12 where Slumberland is located. The mission of BEDC still remains to assist the city in economic development, but the tight labor market restricts active solicitation of new industry. However, history teaches us that industries and business come and go and there will always be a need to find replacements... Among those companies that have departed the scene are Almet, Boreva, Dearborn, Eagle Signal, Hi-Tech Signs, Klein, Production Equipment, Snow White, and Wisconsin Cheesemen."

The CDA and SCDC

So, where does the Community Development Authority (CDA) come into the picture? By good fortune, Corson served as chairman for both CDA and BEDC for much of the time. He was honored upon his retirement as the sixteen-million dollar man, referring to government aid procured during his direction. Corson explains that

CDA was concerned mainly with housing for the elderly (such as Donahue and Corson Square) and also economic development and renewal. It was this entity, the CDA, that Attorney Fritz Wagner and Kiwanis spearheaded. Later, CDA and BEDC, though completely independent, worked closely, with the CDA obtaining and BEDC implementing grants for community development. A future article concerning the ongoing importance of the CDA yet today is planned.

The SCDC — founded in 1975 and led by Robert Fleming and by President Merlin Zitzner — aided all Sauk County communities in industrial development, each community contributing according to its relative population. Both men have demonstrated community leadership in other civic matters, also.

In addition to the BIEC Park and Madalon park, which are separate though contiguous, other adjacent land was purchased and used, largely by Sysco in its rapid and extensive expansion. Baraboo Tent and Awning are now in their new

location on Warner Memorial Road.

NECO-Hammond and others are located on Lake Street, which has some pockets of land available. Most recently, the Slumberland-Wal-Mart area on county W has been developed, and land east of the city along Highway 33 is proposed for development and availability. Industries exist and will locate somewhere. "They and their employees will pay taxes to some city and some county — why not Baraboo and Sauk County?" goes the line of reasoning.

The final article will discuss CDA, BID and other industrial matters.



About
1950?



**THEODORE "TED"
A. MANDT**

BARABOO — Theodore "Ted" A. Mandt, age 89, of Baraboo, died on Wednesday, Dec. 18, 1991, at Jefferson Meadows Care Center.

He was born on June 19, 1902, in the town of Windsor, Wis., the son of Target and Auslaug (Lundee) Mandt. On June 19, 1936, he married Nancy Pfannstiehl. In 1929, Ted and his brother, Matthew, bought the Gem City Dairy which they owned and operated until 1968.

He was always interested in civic affairs and in what he could do for the Baraboo community. As president of the Baraboo Chamber of Commerce, he started the Baraboo Industrial Expansion Company, Inc. of which he had been president since its inception. He was also instrumental in the development of the Baraboo-Dells Airport. He served as mayor of Baraboo for two years. He was a fund-raiser for both St. Mary's Ringling Hospital and St. Clare Hospital and was a member of St. Clare's Advisory Board.

In 1964, he received the Distinguished Service Award from the Baraboo Jaycees. He was helpful in various areas when the Circus World Museum was started. He was a member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

He was preceded in death by two sisters, Eva and Goldie, and four brothers, Paul, Rudy, Gunder and Lawrence.

He is survived by his wife Nancy of Baraboo; one son, Targe (Diane) of Phoenix, Ariz.; one daughter, Agnes (Bob) Fugo of Camillus, NY; six grandchildren, Deborah, Tracy, Kimberly, Pam, Randy and Michael; one great-grandson, Michael; one sister, Mrs. Thea Anderson of Forest City, Iowa; one brother, Matthew of Baraboo; and many nieces and nephews.

A Mass of Christian burial will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 21, 1991, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church with Father Kent Schmitt officiating. Interment will be in St. Joseph's Cemetery. There will be a visitation from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Friday Dec. 20 in the Hanson-Rago Funeral Home. Memorials may be made to the St. Clare Hospital.

Community Development Authority and BID

893

This is the final article in a series regarding industrial development in Baraboo. Somewhat more lighthearted historical articles will appear in the future.

This writer recently received a message requiring a reply, and the return address was VARIOC-(B & O). There was apparently no relation between the contents of the message and the unspelled address of the company, but it shows how inundated we are with acronyms.

Business Improvement District

There are two remaining Baraboo acronyms still to be explained in this series of four articles, namely the Baraboo Business Improvement District and the Community Development Authority.

BID reports to the city council, and operates with a \$2.50 fee per \$1,000 assessment paid by downtown business owners.

Its mission is simply to improve parking, business promotion, special events, etc. for the downtown business area, thus improving Baraboo as a place to live and grow. It illustrates the fact that what is good for Baraboo is good for one's business, as well as one's quality of life.

Community Development Authority

Thanks to CDA director Pat Hamilton, the importance of the CDA to the community can be outlined. Founded in 1978 by combining the Baraboo Housing Authority (created in 1978)

and the Baraboo Redevelopment Authority (created in 1975), the CDA was created with several purposes in mind.

First, the CDA is able to obtain federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to aid both existing businesses and new business ventures and industries in the city. As loans to those entities are repaid, the money then remains in the community for additional lending by the CDA, albeit under strict guidelines.

Second, the CDA "also offers housing rehabilitation loans for homes located within the city limits" with money which also originated in the federal agency HUD, but is administered by the housing division of the Wisconsin Department of Administration. Loans to moderate- and low-income families require no interest payments, and the principal is repaid only when the home is sold. Again, the money paid back can be recycled by the CDA to another homestead.

Both the Donahue Terrace and Corson Square Apartment projects are managed by the CDA for the city, and total 111 housing units. Donahue still receives subsidies from HUD. In the last 10 years the subsidies have amounted to more than \$1 million. Some funding for Corson Square comes from the Comprehensive Improvement Assistance Program (CIAP-another acronym!).

Over the years, since its founding in 1978, the CDA has been able to obtain grants and subsidies totaling some \$16 million, much of it during the time Chester Corson was chairman. The CDA continues to act in cooperation with the Baraboo Economic Development Commission for the benefit of the community.

In a particularly fortunate move in 1992, the CDA refinanced an old FHA loan by issuing double tax-exempt bonds. This move ultimately saved the city and its taxpayers about \$2 million over the next few years, an example of the astute leadership which has guided the CDA.

Bypasses

Baraboo's unique setting between the north and south bluffs of the Baraboo Quartzite Range is both a fortunate blessing and a modest handicap. It took a massive financial city gamble in 1870, recorded in another article, to induce the Chicago and Northwestern railroad to make the difficult passage from Merrimac to Devils Lake and Baraboo. In addition, highway traffic such as stagecoaches from the south had to find a pass through the south bluffs, emerging into the valley somewhat southwest of Baraboo.

Though the highway, U.S. 12, passed through downtown Baraboo for decades, a bypass of Baraboo in 1937 placed the highway in West Baraboo only. Now, a bypass of that bypass is being considered, ostensibly to avoid



The empty pasture land in this view, looking northeast from Ritz corner, is now filled with not only businesses, but a primary, middle and high school and the University of Wisconsin-Baraboo/Sauk County, as well as

three churches. It also contains 100 or more homes filled with taxpayers. Without the community's industrial expansion in the past five decades and the jobs it created, much of this might not have been possible.

traffic congestion in West Baraboo. Curiously, no bypass is being made for Sauk City, nor for the massive congestion of the Highway 12 "strip" in Lake Delton, far worse than that in West Baraboo!

Also, east-west traffic through Baraboo can only be on Eighth Street-Avenue, due to overly generous zoning changes granted in the past that effectively block any other through street in

the city! Nor is there an Interstate interchange on county Highway A, the Interstate's closest approach to Baraboo.

Baraboo thrives

Despite this idyllic and beautiful but travel-awkward location, Baraboo grows and thrives. Baraboo was not known as the Gem City for nothing! Its growth is in part due to the lake and other natural attractions, but also due to the ingenuity and cre-

past 50 years, especially.

Thanks to their far-sightedness, the dismal outlook following the closing of the Badger plant was converted by those leaders into a community spurred into action. The result was not only an ideal mix of industries but all that goes with them: tax-paying residents who make possible parks, a zoo, outdoor athletic facilities, new or remodeled churches, outstanding medical and educa-

tional institutions, and quality entertainment venues (CWM, ICF, ART Friends). Baraboo is indeed thriving!

Suffice to say that our acronyms, mentioned in the other articles in this series as BIEC, BEDC, TID, TIF, CDA and BID, have been significant beyond measure in the emergence of Baraboo as not just the "Baraboo area", but the "Baraboo regional center."

Because farsighted men had land or buildings ready and waiting, and not just proposed, Baraboo became home to such greats as Perry Printing, Flambeau, Hammond, Industrial Coils, Teel and Sysco (to name a few).

They brought not only jobs and taxpayers to the community, but many significant community leaders. Little did the men of BIEC in 1946 realize that along with the industries, they brought in the leaders to replace themselves: Mandt, Martiny, Page, Deppe, Lange, Jim Hall Jr. and all the others would be pleased!



Downtown Baraboo About 2003

Aerial Photos by Tom Michele

Half a century in downtown Baraboo

897

Suppose you left Baraboo 52 years ago, in 1946, and returned this year for a nostalgic visit to the scenes of your youth. As a modern Rip Van Winkel, would you feel at home in downtown Baraboo, or would you think you stopped in the wrong town?

Street by street

It depends partly on where you start. If you started on Third street heading west, the buildings themselves would seem almost unchanged. Storefronts are changed, of course, and the Presbyterian Church seems turned around or something, but unless you looked for old familiar stores, you'd feel pretty much at home until you wondered what happened to the Baptist Church and the lumberyard. And where are the Ford and Chevy garages?

Fourth Street would seem more strange, with the towered city hall and the Warren Hotel nowhere to be seen. The Reinking building looks just the same, but seems empty. The prestigious Al. Ringling theatre still looks grand, but where is the Wellington Hotel sign?

On Broadway, however, you would be completely confused. Traveling south, you would find, on your left, the west addition to the courthouse blocking your remembered view of that fine building.

On the right is a new four story behemoth, the West Square Building, replacing the lumber yard. The Methodist Church seems larger, and not only is the Baptist Church gone but so is the old red jail. Wasn't there a neat theatre on Broadway, oh yes, the Juliar. (The Broadway Cafe was across from the jail. It was moved and is now the Old Hiway House in West Baraboo!)

Missing line:

Speaking of churches, the Evangelical Brethern seem to have moved, along

with the Baptists, but The Methodists still anchor the square on the Northwest corner. And on second street, you'd look in vain for the old red brick Junior High School.

Why all the changes?

You might by now have a sense of resentment--how dare they

change the scenes of your youth, and where are the old community leaders you looked up to with respect and awe so many years ago? Who are all the strangers on the streets?

Well, there are changes in downtown Baraboo all right, but the real change lies elsewhere, in the business strips allowed to grow on East Eighth Street and South Boulevard. As recently as 1960, when business started to proliferate outside of the business district, there were only a flower shop a gas station, an implement dealer, and a new grocery store on east eighth. Now there are 23 more businesses there. Take a drive and count them.

South boulevard is the same story. Outside of an apple orchard and a dairy, South Boulevard seemed out of the city, with recently completed Victory Heights homes in a treeless area. Now there are 23 new locations, an armory, and several factories.

Even North Broadway has expanded, with 10 business locations. Imagine what downtown would be like if all of the above, totaling over 50 enterprises, were located downtown. There would be dozens of new buildings, and what a parking problem! And this is not counting all the West Baraboo concerns!

Growth since 1946

Baraboo's population in 1946 is hard to determine, for the bloated influx of workers for the Badger Army Ordnance Plant was leaving. The real population was probably in the 6000 range, and would stay so until the Baraboo Industrial Expansion Corporation got its act together and re-energized the city in the 1950s and 1960s.

Now Baraboo has a fortunate mix of many small and mid-sized industries, a diversification

envied by some other municipalities with only one large industrial concern. The population increase has been steady and reliable, with the Baraboo-West Baraboo complex approaching 12,000 now.

A regional center

To be mentioned is the startling growth of West Baraboo from a sleepy crossroads to a

thriving center anchored by two large discount stores, plus Farm and Fleet in nearby Baraboo city limits. A cluster of supporting stores and the businesses on the Highway 12 strip south of the Baraboo river bridge adds to the picture. Truly one should speak not of the Baraboo area, but of the Baraboo regional shopping center.

Downtown Baraboo

Downtown still retains its charm, with more specialty stores and a more leisurely and discriminating pace than found in the malls. The courthouse square still offers shaded walkways, and the Ringling Theatre retains its elegance and historical significance. The 137 new streetlights and smartly paved streets add what one visitor



Down Town
BARABOO
1946?

Ron Rich Photo



Downtown Baraboo, about 2000

Air View by Tom Michelle

Sauk County murder led to manhunt

900



BOB
DEWEL

YESTERYEAR
REVISITED

We have written, in another article, about Wisconsin's greatest manhunt, the one in 1961 following the murder of officer James Jantz. But it was not Sauk County's greatest manhunt, for it was conducted in Juneau County.

It is true that the Sauk County Sheriff and County Patrol Officers spearheaded the search with the participation of the Juneau County Sheriff. Nevertheless, the manhunt was outside the boundaries of the county.

It appears, then, that Sauk County's greatest manhunt actually occurred back in 1954, seven years earlier. Although smaller in scale, the 1954 event involved hundreds of searchers from several counties and required 28 hours to conclude.

Both manhunts, incidentally, occurred in the month of August.

Thanks to Greg McMahon and his initial research, we have the actual dates and newspaper reports that trace the story of a murder, an escape and a subsequent search and re-capture through heavily wooded areas not normally traversed by man.

The Murder

The murder happened on Saturday, Aug. 7, 1954. Gilbert Williams, an African American, was fatally shot at about 3 p.m. at the home of Mrs. Stella Anderson, about one-half mile west of the junction of old Reedsburg Road and its junction with Highway 12.

Mrs. Anderson, a widow, was employed at St. Mary's Ringling hospital in the kitchen, and Williams was to drive her to work. When he returned from checking the car, she noticed that he seemed to be in pain and discovered a bullet entrance wound under the right arm. Despite a hurried trip to the hospital, Williams died at 4:30 pm.

Mrs. Anderson stated that they had planned to be married in the fall. Another man, Jimmie Lee Roper, who appears from the newspaper photos to be African American also, had threatened two weeks previously that "if there's a wedding there will be a funeral too." Roper had previously been a roomer at the Anderson home. It was learned that he purchased the gun that day in Baraboo — no background checks or waits in those days.

The Arraignment

Roper was apprehended at about 7 p.m. near Necedah, though he tried to run away when approached. Although he was not exactly in flagrante delicto, he confessed when Patrol Officer Mike Spencer produced a witness as to Roper's presence near the Anderson home.

On the following Monday, Roper appeared before Justice of the Peace Eugene Madalon to waive preliminary hearing. He was then scheduled to appear before circuit Judge Bruce Beilfuss on Aug. 20. (Beilfuss would later preside over the 1961 Jantz murder trial.) Attorney

Vaughn Conway was appointed to defend Roper. (Conway would appear in a similar role in the 1961 trial also.)

The Escape

In an attempt to locate the missing gun, Roper was accompanied by Sheriff Gavin in a roadside search, but escaped at 3:30 pm Wednesday afternoon in some manner not described by the Baraboo News Republic. On the following morning, Roper appeared at the Hanson farmhouse minus his handcuffs. The Hansons hid him in the basement out of fear of officers coming to question them about anything unusual in the area.

As a result of the escape, officers and a posse began a search of the heavily wooded area north of Reedsburg on Highway K. A helicopter and planes helped in the search,

aided by Capt. Claude Frye of the county highway patrol that existed at the time. As in 1961, bloodhounds were used, and railroad yards and trains were searched.

The Capture

The capture of Roper was not too dramatic, as he simply appeared on a road after 28 hours and whistled down a car, which happened to contain Reedsburg Officers aiding in the search. By nightfall Roper was in jail, but so were the Hansons, having been charged with aiding an escapee. Roper was confined in the old red jail with no clothes, as it was not considered a secure building.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS TAKEN FROM A 1954 BARABOO NEWS REPUBLIC

Pictured above is part of a crowd of several hundred men, women and children assembled at the Sauk County jail to see

Jimmie Lee Roper (below) brought in after his escape. Roper was the subject of Sauk County's biggest manhunt.

By Aug. 19, however, the Hansons were released after a four and one-half hour hearing before Medalon. Defense attorneys Vaughn and Kenneth Conway defended the Hansons. The News Republic states, "The hearing was interrupted by frequent exchanges of personalities between Mr. Conway and District Attorney Harlan W. Kelley, the latter assisted by attorney Robert Curtin." In a surprise move, Conway called Kelley to the stand as a witness. Kelley had previously called the prisoner, Jimmie Lee Roper, to be a witness as to his part in the Hanson affair.



Other Local News

Meanwhile, in Baraboo it was a pretty quiet week. Dr. Tryon had died after a 40-year practice. As a young doctor he had been with the circus, also playing a trumpet in the circus band. Other medical news included reports on the polio epidemic in the country, this being before Dr. Salk's discovery of a remedy.

At Pierce's market, Butternut coffee was \$1.15 per pound, chopped ham went for 53 cents for 12 ounces, and breast of veal was only 19 cents a pound. You could get two cans of tomato juice for 25 cents. In county news, Highway 113 was finally being blacktopped between Baraboo and Merrimac.

There was also news in the county's law enforcement arm, for two additional patrol officers were hired. Salary was to be \$245 per month, or less than \$3000 per year. It is

not known if the new officers participated in the manhunt, billed then as Sauk County's greatest manhunt. Has there been a manhunt in the county since then to top it?

Report Fugitive Spent Night Near Reedsburg

Helicopter, Planes Used In Search

A helicopter and two planes, five radio equipped police cars, 150 hands from LaCrosse, and dozens of men were this morning conducting an extensive search of the woods in the vicinity of the Ed Steinhorst farm, northeast of Rock Springs in Excelsior township, where Jimmie Lee Roper, escaped murder suspect, is believed to be hiding. He was believed to have headed that way after leaving another farm where he secured food this morning.

Roper escaped about 3:30 Wednesday afternoon after Sheriff James W. Gavin had taken him out to Highway K, between Reedsburg and Mauston, where some 20 members of the Reedsburg ball team had offered to aid in the search for the missing 22 calibre gun, which Roper had told officers he threw at the roadside there last Saturday.

Suspect Taken Near Necedah

District Attorney Harlan W. Kelley this morning issued a warrant charging Jimmie Lee Roper, about 40, of Baraboo with first degree murder in connection with the death of a Minneapolis man in Baraboo Saturday, a few hours after he had been shot from ambush.

According to the district attorney, Roper confessed the shooting late Sunday, after intensive questioning. According to Roper, the weapon had been thrown at the roadside between Reedsburg and Mauston and Sheriff James W. Gavin and Deputy Glen Allen took Roper to that locality this morning in an effort to locate the weapon.

Gilbert Williams, 49, of Minneapolis was fatally shot Saturday afternoon about 3 p.m. at the rural Baraboo home of Mrs. Stella Anderson. Mr. Williams, a negro, was the victim of a bullet shot from a barn near the Anderson home, officers said.

Tells Officers Of Going 15 Miles In Woods

Surrenders In Evening To Posse

BULLETIN

Mr and Mrs Hanson were this morning arraigned before Justice of Peace Eugene Madalon. Date for their preliminary hearing will be set later and they were today returned to the Sauk county jail on failure to furnish bond set at \$500 each by Mr. Madalon.

Concluding what was probably Sauk county's greatest manhunt, Jimmie Lee Roper, who had attempted to escape a murder charge by making a 28-hour escape to back in the county jail today. Also in jail are Mr and Mrs. Henry Hanson, town of Excelsior farm couple, charged with aiding and assisting him to escape.

Dismiss Case Against Hansons

Four and Half-Hour Hearing Well Attended

Charges of aiding and assisting a prisoner to escape from the Sauk county sheriff, brought against Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hanson in the case of James L. Roper, charged with murder, were late Wednesday afternoon dismissed by Justice of Peace Eugene L. Madalon.

The preliminary hearing was held in the circuit courtroom with every seat in the spectators' section filled, many of those attending remaining for the full 4½ hours which the hearing lasted.

Aldo Leopold and Sauk County Yesteryear Revisited By Bob Dewel...(Yahoo: Dr. Bob Dewel)

A few weeks ago the News-Republic carried a story stating that some survey group had rated the best counties in the United States in which to live. Our Sauk County came in seventh among the thousands of counties in the country. This article will comment on that, with special emphasis on Aldo Leopold, one of our adopted sons—or did he adopt us?

Sauk County

The selection of Sauk County as seventh best in the nation was no surprise to many local residents. We already knew that we had the Baraboo Bluffs, the forests, the lakes and farmland, and the parks and scenic roads. We also knew we had the cultural facilities that a balanced society needs, with the theatre venues in Baraboo, Reedsburg, Sauk City, and Lake Delton. An active arts group and superb library system add to the cultural scene.

We knew, too, that we had superb facilities of higher education, such as the campus of UW Baraboo-Sauk County, and the Vocational facility at Reedsburg. Complementing the above are the Circus World Museum's world center of circus memorabilia and documents, and the respected International Crane Foundation.

A plethora of entertainment venues ranges from the Mid-Continent Railway Museum to the dazzling attractions at Lake Delton. Of growing significance are the Leopold Foundation and the Nature Conservancy office, both located in or near downtown Baraboo. All add to the requisites for a great county in which to live.

Such were the thoughts of this writer as he joined several hundred other persons for the free Aldo Leopold event on Friday night at the spectacular Al Ringling Theatre. Not only do we in Sauk County enjoy a fortunate life style, but local persons and events have contributed so much to the rest of the world. Several of our past articles have alluded to this.

Aldo Leopold

We can't quite claim Aldo Leopold as a local boy, for he was born in Burlington, Iowa, and did not come to Sauk County until 1935. His career in conservation had taken him, following graduation from Yale, to Arizona and New Mexico with the Forest Service, and eventually to Madison in 1924. It was only at the age of 48 that he purchased a worn out farm along the banks of the Wisconsin River in Fairfield Township.

It is from that action that much of his national fame is derived.. Leopold's reputation as a conservationist, forester, educator, writer, and outdoor enthusiast was already noted, but the converted chicken coop on the property is now almost a shrine for conservationists.

It was on that Sauk County property that Leopold and his family "initiated their own ecological experiment...planting thousands of pine trees, restoring prairies, and documenting the ensuing changes in the flora and fauna of the area."

His collection of essays was published as "A Sand County Almanac" in 1949, and has sold over two million copies. It is said to be "among the most respected books about the environment ever published, and Leopold is regarded by many as the most influential conservation thinker of the twentieth century", according to material prepared by the Leopold Foundation.

Leopold's book was originally titled "Great Possessions". It was accepted for publication on April 14, 1948, but within a week he was dead, stricken with a heart attack while helping a neighbor extinguish a grass fire.



*Photo Courtesy of the Aldo Leopold
Foundation Archives*

You don't have to be an avid conservationist to enjoy the Leopold book. Its easy style and homey examples of his work in rejuvenating his desolate land make pleasant and inspiring reading. There is no way, however, that this short article can explore all the facets of Leopold and his Land Ethic.

Leopold wrote that "A land ethic changes the role of Homo sapiens, from a conqueror of the land community to a plain member and citizen of it" Among many favorable reviews was that of the San Francisco Chronicle, equating the book to the writings of Thoreau and Muir

Governor Doyle recently signed legislation making the first weekend in March the Aldo Leopold Weekend, and the Ringling Theatre event was just the beginning of area-wide recognition. There's something about Sauk County that can bring out the best in its citizens, may they be present or new or former residents. No wonder we were rated so highly in the country.

BARABOO'S HOLLYWOOD MUSEUM OF THE MOVIES

Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

Baraboo has two major museums, the Circus World Museum's Parkinson Library and Archives, and the Sauk County Historical Society Museum. At one time there were three—any guesses? How about the Hollywood Museum of the Movies? It was so significant in its time that it was featured in a full page color story in the old Life Magazine.

This museum even had two world renowned residents, the infamous King Kong, and the equally disreputable Bela Lugosi. The museum is gone now, sad to say, but it deserves more mention than was given in two previous articles about the local cinephile, Clark Wilkinson.

Wilkinson was a local insurance man who had a lifelong love affair with the movies. It began at age 16 when he operated the Gem Theatre, located at 142 Third Street. This was often a one-boy operation for Clark, who also acted as bouncer if patrons became rowdy. Fifty years later, in a 147 page single space typewritten dissertation about his hobby, he could remember in detail what silent films played at the Gem and who the stars were.

In his later years, he met many of those stars in person, collecting 400, (yes, four hundred) autographs. Wilkinson also collected local newspaper ads and stories on happenings at the Al Ringling Theatre, comprising some 32 scrapbooks. These have been cataloged by Inez Stewart, making a significant record of stage and screen culture of the first fifty years of that remarkable theatre.

A Museum is established

With such familiarity with the motion picture industry, it became natural for Wilkinson to start collecting

memorabilia, and by the 1950's the collection warranted sharing with the public. The Wilkinson basement at 525 Fourth Avenue, became the location for a remarkable display, but the remote location and low key publicity kept it from becoming a major tourist attraction.

The collecting actually began during Wilkinson's days at the Gem Theatre, when he started saving the bill posters which accompanied a film. With help from Cecil B. De Mille's office in 1953, he also eventually acquired some 40,000 8 x 10 still photos, some dating back to 1889 and the dawn of the industry. Old motion picture magazine collections were included, and he housed the museum in eight rooms in the basement of his new home. Each room had a theme, such as old equipment, posters, horror monsters, etc. and including a tiny theatre, appropriately called "The Gem".

Items came from theatres all over the country as well as from Hollywood. With the electronic skills of John Schellkopf, then a young organist and employee at the Al Ringling Theatre, the little Gem was created as a stand-up theatre accommodating only a handful of persons.

As a generous source of information for us, Dr. Schellkopf writes: "I put in a projector that used a cassette, so the films would start over after about 3-4 minutes...also a cassette system of old silent movie piano music to accompany the film as it was shown. He preferred the old Cleopatra film and left it in the projector most of the time. Clark had put red drapes in his Gem Theatre room. As I recall, he masked the screen in black, and with the red drapes around it, it looked very good. Besides, it hid his sump pump."

Among the many displays were Harold Lloyd's glasses, Our Gang Comedy toys, the chimney sweep broom from Mary Poppins, the Head of Christ from "The Greatest Story Ever Told", and most famously, the King Kong



The Hollywood Museum contained gowns worn by such stars as Judy Garland, Lana Turner, Bette Davis, Marilyn Monroe, Dorsy Day, and Elizabeth Taylor.



ing Kong was really only about eighteen inches ta

doll from the picture of the same name. Though Kong appears as a 50 foot monster in the movie, it is actually only 18 inches high. Another prop in the collection is Count Dracula, from "Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein".

Of special interest to the ladies was the gown room, featuring gowns actually worn by Lana Turner, Judy Garland, Bette Davis, Marilyn Monroe, Doris Day, and others in various screen flicks. At least one local woman tried on and perhaps wore for a time one of the gowns. One gown, worn by Marilyn Monroe, is currently for sale.

And the Hollywood Museum of the Movies, where is it now? Alas, as the heroine in the old silents used to say with a helpless gesture, it is no more. In his sunset years Clark sold many items, and donated much of the rest to the Wisconsin Historical Society in Madison. They maintain one of the largest archival collections in the world concerning the motion picture industry.

What a shame that some Baraboo person of means with a sense of public service did not purchase the invaluable collection that Wilkinson had amassed, and re-housed it for more access to the public. Just as visitors are amazed today at the surprising presence of the magnificent and historic Al Ringling Theatre in our thriving city, they would be amazed to find one of the countries major collections of motion picture memorabilia in our ever-interesting municipality.

Alas, it was not to be !

NATIONAL PUBLICITY FOR
A LOCAL COLLECTOR
YESTERYEAR REVISITED
By Bob Dewel

Here's a quiz for you: How many, if any, Baraboo residents have been named and featured in the late but lamented Life Magazine? Or, how many Baraboo folks have filed a lawsuit against mighty MGM Corporation, in its day of motion picture dominance, and won? And, how many Baraboo citizens have not one or two but 400 autographs of Hollywood stars?

One man, the late Clark Wilkinson, did all of the above, and more. This generally quiet and unassuming resident was as aggressive as a tiger when it came to collecting memorabilia and autographs of the famous and beautiful people. He also was a tiger when he sued mighty MGM over a fraudulent misrepresentation.

Life Magazine

The Life magazine article was published in October, 1981, and concerned persons with unusual collections. The page on Wilkinson featured two pictures, one being of his extensive collection of dresses worn by such stars as Marilyn Monroe and Grace Kelly. These were but a small part of his significant collection of Hollywood memorabilia. Life called Wilkinson one of the six major collectors in the United States.

The other picture featured a wood coffin dating back to some unknown movie, probably silent, from the Hal Roach Studios. The coffin was shaped in the Southern European style, wider for the shoulders and narrower for the feet. Upon his death a few years later Wilkinson himself, by his own request, was buried in the same coffin.

Despite its unusual dimensions and an exterior finish black as coal, it was quite nicely appointed inside. Like

his other memorabilia it, too, had been on display in his Hollywood Museum collection, complete with a Frankenstein figure. Thanks to his love of the movies, it finally served the purpose for which it had been made to represent in some movie.

The Autographs

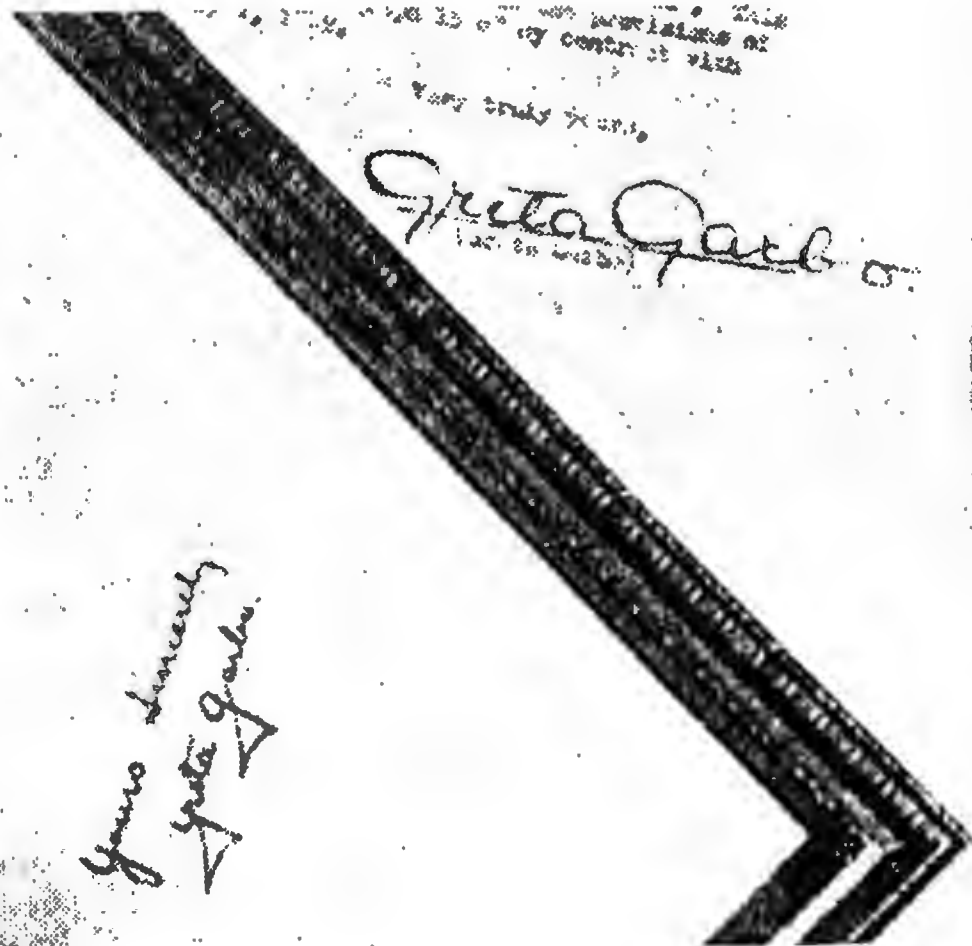
The story of the huge collection of autographs is too long to be covered properly in this article, but it is true that, by diligence and daring, this Baraboo resident persuaded some 400 Hollywood personalities to give him their autographs. This was usually written on a picture of the star which he was carrying for the purpose. He always planned ahead. Another article will chronicle this amazingly large collection. Was it the world's largest private collection?

Suing mighty MGM

The story of the lawsuit against MGM covers a period of 55 years. In 1927 Greta Garbo was at the pinnacle of fame as a Hollywood actress. For a publicity stunt, MGM had put a quiz about Garbo in Photoplay Magazine offering prizes for those who returned a correct questionnaire. Already an expert on motion pictures, 21 year old Wilkinson entered, winning an autographed picture of Garbo "which I prized highly." He should, for her autographs are considered rare.

In 1982 however, Wilkinson discovered to his chagrin that his prized autograph did not even bear close resemblance to authenticated Garbo signatures, as found on legal documents signed by her. When he confronted MGM they denied ever having had such a contest. When he proved his point with a copy of the 1921 magazine they dismissed his claim as being legally too old.

Among Clark's friends was a Beverly Hills Attorney, and a lawsuit for \$15,000 was filed against MGM. Due to the 55 year passage of time, however, it developed that such a



*Yours sincerely
Greta Garbo*

For 50 years Clark Wilkinson thought that the autograph on the left was genuine. When he learned of the deception, he sued Mighty MGM and got the genuine isgnature on the right.

suit could not be won. Two letters to Garbo went unanswered.

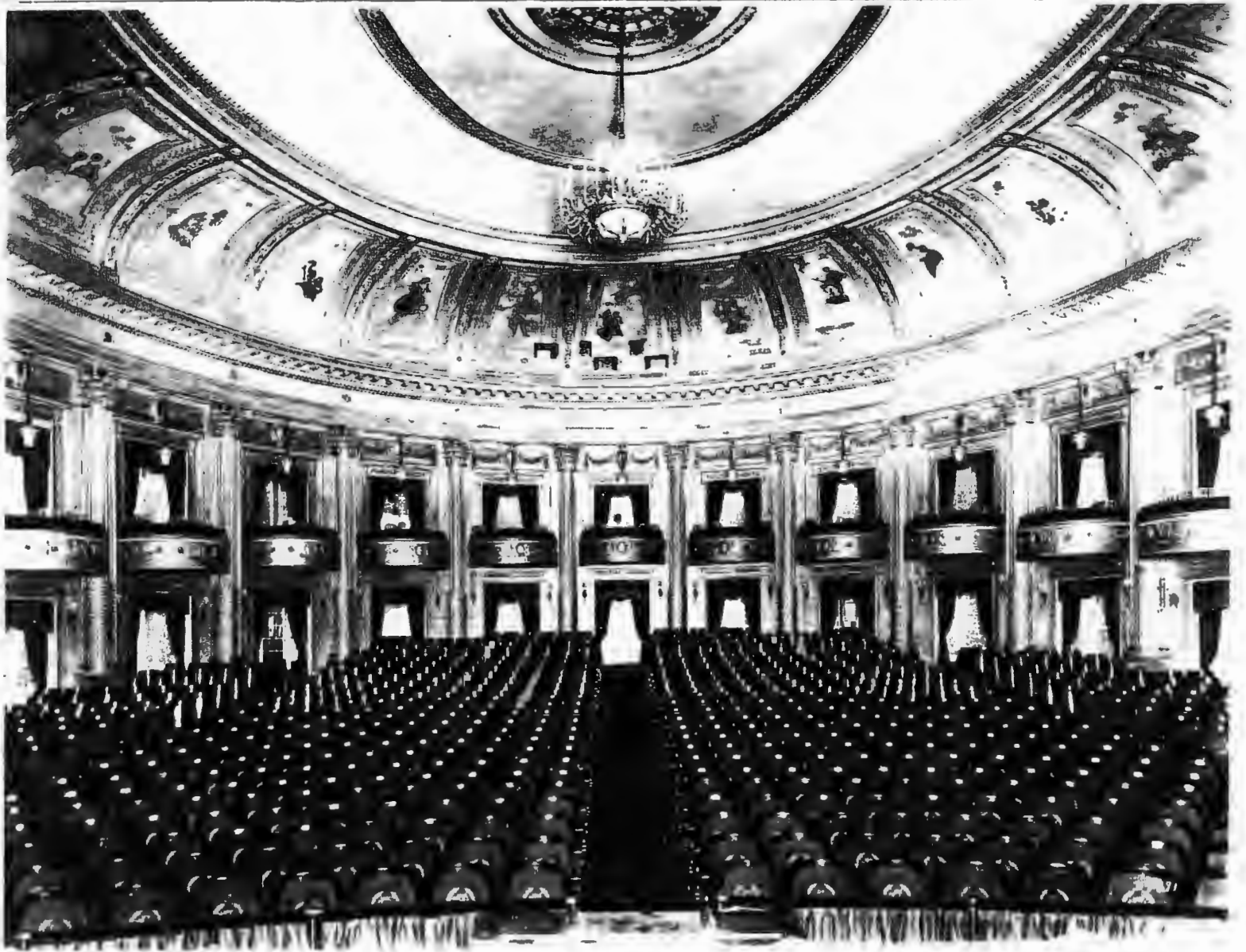
Enter the tiger in Wilkinson. Angry and determined, he filed for \$1500 damages in a small claims court where the age of a claim did not matter. He also notified the L.A. media, it being the saga of a small town "nobody" suing a giant corporation. In an effort to get the suit dismissed, MGM now offered to give him a genuine Garbo signature, which Clark accepted on the stipulation that the court record would show a judgment in his favor.

In a curious move, MGM representatives now invited Clark and his wife Muriel to lunch at the studio! Pictures were taken, but a tour of the studio proved disappointing as heavy rain had stopped production of most films. The Wilkinson's were then chauffeured back to their Beverly Hills winter apartment by MGM. Clark now had his Garbo signature, genuine this time.

The L.A. newspapers featured the developing story on three successive days, and it was picked up nationally, including write-ups in some legal magazines. When the judge of the small claims courts was interviewed a couple years later, she stated that it was her most famous case.

The Life Magazine feature, the 400 autographs, and the suit against MGM are all true, part of the saga of a normally quiet and unassuming Baraboo resident. As Clark himself stated, "it was a little country boy suing a big studio".

Everyone, it is said, has his 15 minutes of fame. In these three matters alone Wilkinson achieved recognition. Despite those little episodes of fame, Wilkinson did not neglect Baraboo. As an ace pledge gatherer for St. Clare hospital, and as first President of the proposed and struggling Circus World Museum, he was an important contributor to his home town. There is more to learn about Wilkinson, to be found in future articles.



Al Ringling Theatre

Baraboo has always been a good theatre town

Masonic Lodge and
McGanns Razed by Fire,
1957

Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

As related in the previous article, Baraboo Masons had celebrated their first 100 years with ceremonies in 1952. The elegant building on the Northeast corner of Oak and Second streets had served since 1892, with the temple rooms on the upper floor. McGanns Furniture and funeral parlor was on the main floor with a full basement, and also a balcony. McGanns had come in 1906 when the post office moved across the street south, a building still extant today.

The year 1957 dawned with great promise for the brothers of Baraboo Lodge 34, F. and A.M. With a membership in good standing of over 400, the Lodge included many of the community leaders. Walter Jenks had just completed a history of the Lodge, but what he and the brothers would not foresee was that 33 days into the new year, the Lodge building would be completely destroyed in one of the great Baraboo fires of the twentieth century. Yet to come would be, in eight years, the loss of the Warren Hotel, another great fire.

The conflagration

It was February 2, 1957, a Saturday evening, when the fire was discovered by Gloria Behnke. With other young friends, she had stopped to meet still more youths in Mel's Dairy Bar, next door north of the McGann store. Before entering Mel's, she heard the tinkling of broken glass, followed by billowing smoke and fire from a window which had blown out.

In an all night effort to save nearby structures, it was 12 hours before the firemen could go on standby. By then only the west and north walls stood as well as the shaft of the elevator which

had been installed only a few months previously. Gone were all of the properties of the Lodge, including a 100 year old Masonic apron. In addition, the entire stock of McGanns Furniture was destroyed

McGanns were able to quickly rent an empty building on Fifth Avenue, and were back in business on Monday. Meantime Lodge Master Charles Harradan received offers from several nearby lodges for the use of their temples. By good fortune, Walter Jenks apparently had retained copies of his newly written history, for virtually all of the old records were lost.

The newspaper account

The News-Republic required three full columns to report on the conflagration, with additional comment on other pages plus several pictures. The paper's report included the following: "The blaze became so hot that windows all along the opposite side of the street shattered. The cast iron light pole leaned perilously, then as it cooled off, straightened up again. "

"Huge embers floated into the night sky....but foresight by the firemen in wetting down the buildings prevented further blazes from starting." Five years later, however, the Barnhart grocery, opposite McGanns on Oak, would itself be gutted by fire.

The News-Republic continued: "Glass all along the row of stores must be replaced, even as far as the alley, where Spot's Tavern has a cracked window." Spots' incidentally, had remained open all night, as had Barnhart's, supplying coffee to the firemen. Included in the news item was a mention that Deputy State Fire Marshall Ed Borski "is now a resident of Baraboo, and was assisting the fire chief to determine the cause of the fire."

Rebuilding

Only a little over a week passed before Attorney Jenks had an opinion on the abstract of the property. Soon three plans for building were presented. One was to build near Fourth Avenue



and Center Street. One provided a Temple on the site of the previous one, and the third plan provided not only a Temple but commercial space on the old property. It was the latter plan that was chosen, with a projected cost of \$120,000. The actual cost, however, became \$175,000.

The cornerstone was laid on May 6, 1959, and the cornerstone of the old building was salvaged and incorporated in the outside walls of the new Temple. Dedication was on December 12, 1959, and a copy of the printed program features several pictures of the interior rooms, appearing much as they do today.

Carpeting was a gift from the Eastern Star Order, as was the tile floor in the dining room and lower hallways. Other affiliated bodies made similar contributions, Oak trim was used throughout the structure. Charles Harradan had been succeeded as Master by Ralph Halvorsen in 1958, and Ed Tooley in 1959.

By 1969 the mortgage had been reduced to \$27,000 and on May 8, 1976, a mortgage burning ceremony was held, with Phil Maas as Worshipful Master. Of interest in the note on the program that "Past Master Charles Harradan was the first Mason to be buried from the Temple, the Temple he helped to build."

Today

Though the venerable building and its historical contents were destroyed, the brotherhood established 150 years ago remains strong and relevant. The 150th Anniversary Trestleboard publication shows some seventeen active committees, showing how the Lodge serves the community. Recently the Job's Daughters organization for girls was established, as will be DeMolay for young men. The Temple also shelters the Order of the Eastern Star, York Rite, and Vacationland Shrine.

As an organization hundreds of years old, Masonry likes to count among

its brothers some 16 Presidents of the United States, including Washington, who laid the cornerstone of the nation's capitol wearing his Masonic regalia. Other Presidents include such recent men as Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and Gerald Ford.

One of the most famous Founding Fathers, Benjamin Franklin, was not only Master of his Philadelphia Lodge, but Grand Master of Pennsylvania. While our minister plenipotentiary to France, his prestige was so great that he was elected Venerable (Master) of a French Lodge, one which included the sages of that century, Voltaire and Rousseau.

The Masonic Fraternity includes 11 astronauts, Cecil B. DeMille, John Wayne, Clark Gable, Glenn Miller, Mozart, Bach, Jack Nicklaus, and 150 recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor. More importantly, it includes many of the ordinary unsung heroes of everyday America, indeed of the world.

On April 17, area Masons will gather to observe the sesquicentennial of Masonry in Baraboo. Present Master of the Lodge Steve Emerson wrote recently "May our Lodge's 150th Anniversary help us to reflect and revere the achievements, dedication, and sacrifices of those Masonic brothers who came before us. From its inception, Masonry has taught men to treat others with respect and dignity. May this observance inspire, regenerate, and ignite our Masonic spirit of brotherly service."



Baraboo Lodge 150th Anniversary Table Lodge - On April 17, 2002.



There was much activity on Oak Street as cleanup work started following the disastrous fire which wiped out the Masonic Temple building and McGann furniture. At Mel's Dairy Bar, located next to the burned out building, Mel Porter, proprietor, faced an enormous task in cleaning up the damage done by the smoke and water to his restaurant. Most of the stores, including the *News-Republic* office, were working behind boarded up windows, while insurance adjusters, painters, carpenters and other workmen estimated the damage and computed repairs.

A later view Note the new streetlights

THREE HIGH SCHOOLS, AN ANNEX,
AND A REFERENDUM
Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

Baraboo has had its times of controversy, but perhaps never as much as in the years 1958 and 1959. People were already feeling put down by the interstate highway snub, as related in another article. Mysterious powers seemed to have persuaded the State Highway Commission to nullify plans for an exit to Baraboo on County A, a seemingly nefarious deed.

When they weren't protesting about that issue, many were involved in what you could at least call a very spirited controversy over the location of a proposed new high school. Most everyone favored a new building, but it was the proposed locations that caused all the trouble.

The
two sides

On the one hand were the traditionalists, who felt the new building should remain adjacent to downtown. The present Civic Center was the high school then, and next west of it was the old red brick high school, which opened Sept. 9, 1907, and was now being used as a junior high school. Neither served its purpose well at all. Many but not all business people wanted the schools to remain downtown, for the convenience of parents shopping before school let out, and also for youths shopping after school.

Other interested citizens maintained that there was already inadequate parking, and noted that downtown parking for shoppers was being taken up by school staff and students. Moreover, there was only minimum room for future expansion, even if neighboring streets and houses were condemned to gain space.

School history

The traditionalists had one point on their side, for the local high school had been on the same block, bordered by First and Second streets and Ash and Oak, since 1869. The first building, pictured in another article, had replaced a makeshift log structure "in the northwest part of the village on what is now Seventh Avenue west of Birch". That older structure had a door so low you had to stoop to enter, and it was said that "you could throw a cat through the cracks without touching a hair".

The 1869 two story brick structure with cupola once had Belle Case Lafollette as a teacher, and some of the Ringling boys attended classes there. It burned on Feb. 9, 1906, and was replaced by a red brick building facing Oak Street. By 1927 this building was no longer adequate for a high school.

It then became a junior high school, when the yellow brick building (still extant) was built as a new high school in 1927. The cost was \$225,000. By 1958 this yellow brick building no longer could house and properly train the burgeoning school population of the city.

The
Annex

There had been another school building on the cramped city block mentioned above. Thanks to Kathryn Rinkob, we have a rare picture and an article on this little known building. It somewhat resembled a traditional English stable, and had been hastily erected in 1906 to serve "until the red brick building is completed."

As usually happens, the "temporary" structure was used for over 20 years. There were four rooms, each with four bare light bulbs hanging from the ceiling. Though the building fronted on Second Street, it was set back at least half a block south from the street, "between the red brick building and Peck's barn." The ground sloped toward the building from all directions.



The assmebly room at the red brick school, complete with Greek or Roman statues.



Annex only temporary but used 20 years

The Annex School Building was a four room structure built in 1906. It housed the seventh and eighth grades of the city. Baraboo, at that time, was divided into three wards, and had a school in each ward for the lower grades. The intention was that the Annex would be used, until the red brick building was completed. Instead it was used over twenty years.

The city owned fifty feet of frontage on Second St., between Oak and Ash St. which ran through to First St. It was here that a temporary building was constructed, and called the Annex. It was an odd choice of name, for the Annex was not connected with anything. When the wind blew hard, those inside wished that it was connected with something. That may have been the reason.

The style of architecture was an enlarged version of an English stable. This class of building was very popular, in the back yards at the turn of the century. To give it the proper setting, it was placed back from the street about a half a block. This was so it would nestle between the red brick building, and Peck's barn. A straight walk, twelve feet wide connected it with the walk on Second St. The land scape was a well drillers dream. It was devoid of trees, shrubs, or plants of any kind. The ground sloped not gently toward the building, from all directions.

pression.

One teacher never to be forgotten, could make the milk of kindness as she spoke, but managed to coat it with the oil of sarcasm before she was through. The number of her friends would make a hermit happy. She was known as Miss Personality.

The red hair of one of the teachers would blend with that of the flag which stood at the side of her desk. When the wind blew, the windows would rattle, the flag unfurl, and her hair flutter. She was spoken of as Miss America.

The physiology classes of the four rooms were taught, by one instructor. On one occasion they assembled in the gym of the red brick building so that they might study together, and form a more realistic idea of the human body. A human skeleton was on display. After a half hour lecture a test was given. The pupils were told to describe their impression of the study in no less than a hundred words.

The next day the teachers returned the test papers, and said that she was proud of the class with one exception. "There is a dreamer among us" she said, "I hope that when he falls off cloud nine, that he is not seriously injured.

During detention hour the Dreamer's Dream was retrieved from the waste basket. Today he would get some credit for being original.

after school.

Our track team was not as they are known today. One did not have to be fleet of foot to be chosen. Any one who was shoved off the walk, onto the lawn, which was a mire most of the time, became a member for that day. A teacher stood at the door to check on our credentials. The reward was a chance to clean the floors, after school.

Peck's donkeys, which he used for delivery purposes, were stabled on the other side of the alley. They used to join when we had singing and often broke up the silence of the class room, with a solo, or quartet number of their own.

The Annex should never have been torn down, but should have been preserved as a shrine for those who suffered there. For future generations of pupils and teachers, it could have been used as a place to gather when they felt sorry for themselves.

NO CANNON ROARED ON
DISTANT HILLS,
NO BUGLE BLEW IT'S
GLORY,
AS THE OLD ANNEX CAME
TUMBLING DOWN,
IT BROUGHT AN END TO MY
STORY.

L.A. Nolan

Every school had its characters, and L.A. Nolan, author of a news article, writes of an unnamed janitor. His desk was in the lower hall, and over it hung the admonition "Loiter not on the trestle, for the train is around the bend. Your future is on the other side, this place is not the end".

The same janitor also delighted in putting his own problem puzzles on the blackboard at night. One read: "If it takes six sticks of dynamite to blow a stump ten feet in the air, how many sticks would it take to blow the Annex over Peck's barn?" Speaking of Peck's barn, Nolan says that Peck's donkeys were stabled just across the alley from the annex. "They used to join when we had singing, and often broke up the silence of the classroom with a solo or quartet of their own." The annex was razed in 1928.

The

First Referendum

In 1957, in two long and scholarly essays printed in the News-Republic, Superintendent Gordon Wilson carefully presented the pressing need for a new high school, not located downtown, and discussed the two alternatives. The rising school census following WWII was a significant factor. Incidentally, Some 40% of the students paid tuition then, as they lived out of the city. There was no wide-ranging school district, such as we have now.

As so often happens in school referenda, persons opposed to change prevail in the first voting, and so it was in 1958. With 67% of the eligible voters participating, the \$1,350,000 bond issue was defeated. Voters could choose between two sites. On the East side was the Hyer property, north of Ninth Street and west of Jefferson. On the west was the John Kelley farm, north of Ninth and west of Summit, and adjoining West Baraboo, whose citizens did not participate in the voting.

The bond issue lost, 1433 to 1667 opposed. The vote on site location was 1218 for the smaller east side location,

and 837 for the Kelley location. Note that about 1000 voters did not express an opinion on the site location. Downtown was not a choice apparently.

A front page editorial in the News-Republic sated "We still have a problem", and Gordon Wilson issued a statement to that effect. He indicated that the board would be back with another proposal, and we too will be back with another article and two more controversial referenda.

THE SECOND HIGH SCHOOL REFERENDUM, 1959

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

When a \$1,350,000 Baraboo High School referendum failed to pass on November 4, 1958, the school board realized it had two problems. One was the incoming crush of students, far beyond the capacity of the existing buildings. The other was a rising divergence of opinion on the location for a new school. This was probably the main reason for the failure of the referendum by 234 votes.

According to the school board, you didn't have to look far into the future to realize that a downtown location was not a good long-term solution, despite a vocal and determined group who felt otherwise.

The latter were especially miffed, for the referendum didn't even list downtown as a possible location, allowing the voters to choose only between the Hyer property bounded by Jefferson and 9th St. and the John Kelly from west of what would become Draper Street. Some 1000 of the voters didn't even bother to express a preference on location. Those that did preferred the Hyer property, 1218 to 857, rather than the Kelly Farm.

Land is Donated

Disappointed but undaunted, the school board regrouped and brought the matter to another referendum on October 20, 1959. A significant development in the matter was publicized on June 12, for the Draper family, owners of the John Kelly farm, offered to donate 30 acres to the city for the purposes of building a school there! This is the land which is now occupied by the Senior High School and Middle School.

It should be remembered that at this time the Baraboo school system was just that, a Baraboo city system overseen by the city council. Although the school accepted tuition students from West Baraboo and the townships, it was not a district school system such as we have today. Tax support came only from Baraboo citizens, not from West Baraboo or the townships, which still had their own primary school systems, usually in one room schools. Some villages, like North Freedom, had their own high school.

The mayor, Ed Ritzenthaler, had appointed a special committee on school affairs, which negotiated the gift from the Drapers. The committee also, in their report, cited the definite need for a new high school, and noted the lack of parking, recreation space, or expansion room if a downtown site were chosen. It also felt that the Hyer property was too small, and favored the Draper proposal.

Particularly active in supporting the new location were community leaders of the day, George Martiny and W.W. Deppe. The Draper family consisted of Ralph and Mary Draper of Oshkosh, and Frank Draper of North Freedom. Land was given for a street (now Draper Street) and additional acres were available for sale at \$1000 per acre. Ralph Draper was a 1915 graduate of Baraboo High School, located then in the old red brick building.

Kiwanis Speech

Another encouraging development occurred in a speech to the Kiwanis Club by Aubrey Barnhart. Aubrey was never noted for spending the taxpayer's money carelessly, and had been among those opposed to locating the new school anywhere away from the downtown area. However, since serving on the Mayor's Special Committee, he stated that he now saw the wisdom of what was



When this 1952 fire destroyed the old West School, it forecast significant changes and improvement in the Baraboo educational system. Within a decade, three new grade schools and a modern high school were built, but not without bitter struggle and three referenda.



needed in a new high school, and now favored the referendum.

Other speakers at the meeting included Harland Hill, President of the school board, Bill Benzies, who was also on the board, and Superintendent Gordon Wilson. It was pointed out that Baraboo was not only losing quality teachers, but that outlying tuition students were choosing Reedsburg or Sauk Prairie, due to the Baraboo congestion. That meant lost revenue. The Kiwanis Club became very active in promoting the passage of the referendum after hearing the speakers.

Lost again!

It was known, however, that Mayor Ritzenthaler, who was not at the meeting, questioned whether the city could afford the bond issue, which had now risen to \$1,450,000 due to the delay.

Although the opposition remained strong, the land donation and public statements were encouraging enough that the board felt compelled to bring the matter to another referendum.

This was held on October 20, 1959, with no other matters on the ballot. Imagine their chagrin and disappointment when this second referendum failed. The vote was 974 for the project, and 1200 opposed, a margin of loss of 226, and hardly different from the 234 vote loss on the previous year's referendum.

It was back to the drawing board, for the problem still existed. Article three will tell of still another referendum. All of this was unusual for Baraboo, whose citizens usually are progressive when it comes to the education of their youth.

THIRD SCHOOL REFERENDUM PASSES, 1960

Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

There was an old adage in the schools of earlier years: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again". This writer well remembers having to write the slogan on the black board some 56,879 times—well, 100 anyway.

The beleaguered school board of 1959 must have rallied around the slogan after the defeat of the second referendum. After hard work, the nay ballots still had outnumbered the yea ballots by some 230 votes. What to do? The need was still there but a determined group wanted the high school to remain downtown, space or no space, parking or no parking.

It appears that a renewed effort was energized to some degree by the Kiwanis Club meeting described in the previous article. Aubrey Barnhart had been a strong advocate of retaining the school downtown, but after serving on the Mayor's Special Committee, he had been convinced that a spacious location, such as the Kelley farm, was needed.

Other speakers had risen at the meeting, and club records show that Jack Epstein, a well known community leader (and staunch Democrat) took considerable leadership in the matter. Details of the campaign are lacking, and it appears that there was little change in the wording of the third referendum now being presented. The difference seems to be that there was a very effective campaign launched in favor of the referendum.

Election day was Sept 15, 1960. In the days preceding the vote, the News-Republic carried full page ads for and against the proposition, with many bitter words in print. The downtown group had a full page ad promoting a

nay vote on anything but a central downtown location, and felt that such a location should have been given as a choice. They also challenged the proposed cost of the new facility.

Proponents of the referendum responded in kind with their own advertisements, including names of persons endorsing the proposal. When the votes were counted, the referendum had finally passed, but by 1426 to 1403, a thin margin of 23 votes.. The cost of the project, originally set at \$1,350,000 had now risen to \$1,485,000 due to the passage of time and inflation.

Hindsight

Hindsight is a wonderful thing, and Monday morning quarterbacks can bask in the glory of being right whether they were or not. However, not even the determined school board could have seen the fortuitous events that have occurred since the referendum passed..

Today Baraboo has a remarkable educational campus, where one can begin his primary education at Gordon Wilson school, continue it at the Middle and High schools, and go on to get a two year certificate at the adjacent UW Baraboo-Sauk County campus. In some cases, the latter can even offer a four year degree.

All of the above are on adjacent lands, well within walking distance of each other, and capable of sharing facilities. Situated between the Middle and High Schools is the excellent Beryl Newman athletic field. Fields for other athletic activities adjoin the area, unlike the old days when, for half a century, gym and varsity students hiked along the river walk several blocks to the small Mary Rountree Evans field.

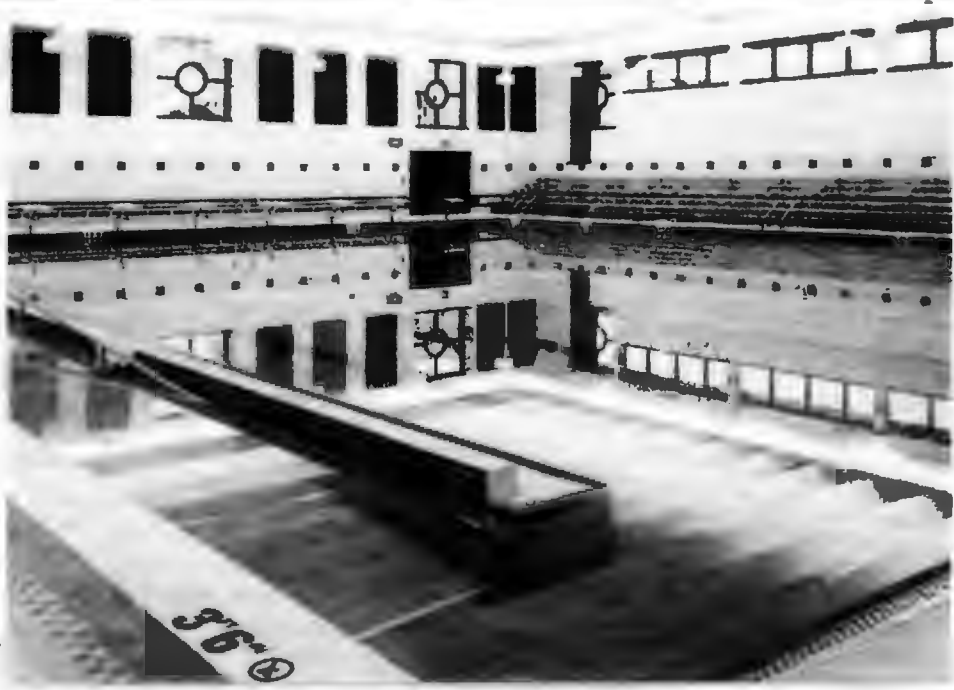
Both the high school and middle schools have required enlargements and additions far beyond the imagination of the 1960 school board, but the groundwork the citizens laid in 1960 made it all possible. One thing Baraboo has not had to do for the past



Baraboo Senior High School opened in 1962. The proposed junior high may be built north of the senior high school.

Fgen'J cto u'rj qq

An Aerial photo today would show a school over double this size





Baraboo Senior High School — 1201 Draper

This original facade is now hidden by new construction

87 years is to build a city auditorium for the schools, thanks to the generosity of Al. Ringling. Sauk and Reedsburg only recently have had to shell out several million dollars for a theatre-type auditorium, while Baraboo has enjoyed a palatial facility at no cost to the taxpayer. The schools made use of the theatre from its very beginning.

All was not bitterness and contention in Baraboo in those referendum years. Industrial development proceeded apace, and the jobs and salaries made possible the building of schools and churches and public buildings.

One thing the citizens came together on during the referenda debates was the Circus World Museum, which opened on a very modest scale in 1959. With the advent of Chappie Fox in 1960 came a whirlwind of growth and activity, and it is now the world center of circus memorabilia and archives.

On May 4, 1961, ground was broken on the Kelley Draper property, with John Hoppe, Robert Greenhalgh, and Wm. Garrison observing. Anger and bitterness lingered for a time with some, but for most persons the battle was soon forgotten, and the new high school opened for classes in the fall of 1963. Future referenda were consistently successful.