

The 1970's

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'60s, '70s and sophistication too?

by Bob Dewel

If the Nifty '50s, mentioned in the previous article, initiated the regeneration of industry and jobs and payrolls in Baraboo, the Soaring '60s and '70s brought a veritable renaissance in building, both public and semi-private.

In Education

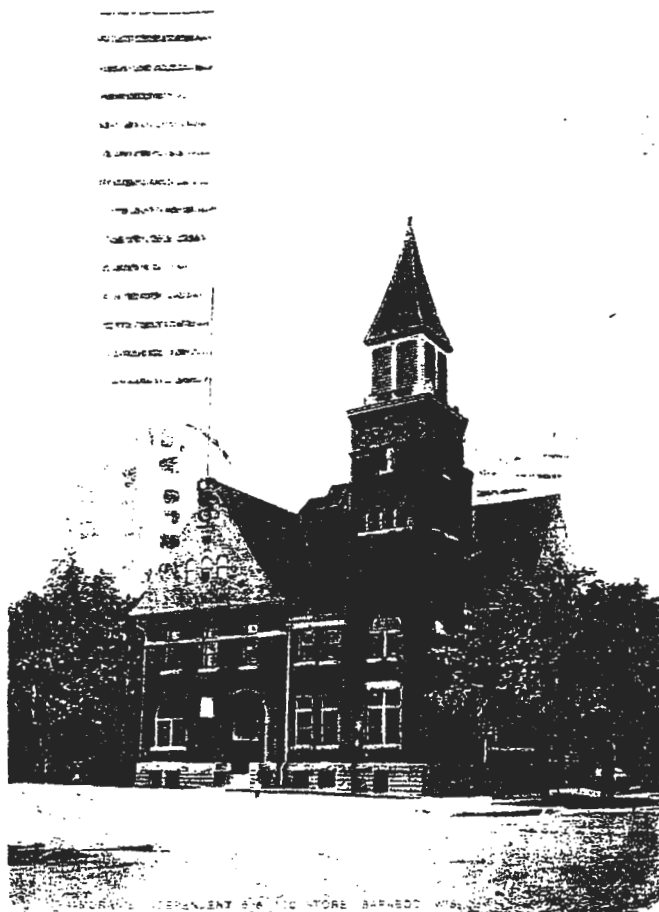
It began in 1950 when fire destroyed the Second Ward School, which was quickly replaced by West School for \$225,000. In rapid succession came East School (\$310,000) in 1954, South School (\$200,000) in 1956, three parochial schools, and Gordon L. Willson in 1963.

The new Senior High School (\$1,622,700) was finished in 1963 after two failed referenda in the late '50s. By 1975 the Junior High School (\$2,990,000) was built, and all buildings have had additions and extensive renovations, \$3,000,000 in 1986 and \$14,900,000 in 1996. Note the progress of inflation!

With the advent of the UW-Baraboo-Sauk County Center in 1968, Baraboo had a most enviable educational system. It adjoined land donated by the Drapers for the Junior and Senior High Schools, and also touched the Willson grade school property. Curiously, though, Baraboo citizens have to pass through West Baraboo to reach the college campus, though West Baraboo does not participate in Baraboo's share of the financing.

Citywide changes

The building boom was not confined to schools, but was city-wide. The Post Office moved in 1961, the same year the new golf course was laid out. An imposing new hospital rose in 1963 on choice land donated by the Adamskes, and a Court House addition with modern jail facilities was also completed that year. The old municipal building gave way to a modern city hall in 1967. Baraboo now presented a new and progressive and modern face to the world.



Contributed photo from the John McNabb collection
Baraboo City Hall was replaced 1967.

Progress in the form of new modern buildings is not pleasing to some, who prefer the Victorian majesty of some of the old buildings pictured on this page. They had in their time replaced older and less pretentious structures, now long since forgotten. The time may come when today's modern buildings will themselves be replaced by even more efficient structures.

The point is that Baraboo's renaissance since World War II has been timely, impressive and significant as Baraboo arose with a roar in the last half of the twentieth century.

Some losses

True, the railroad was hardly a skeleton of its old self, the last passenger train leaving in 1963. The mighty woolen mill had closed, marking the demise of Baraboo as a river town. While only four percent of the citizens were employed by industry in 1947, 1975 found 22 percent so employed.

Population

Population in 1950 had been 7,264, but by 1970 it rose to 7,660, and now in 1998 totals 10,192, not counting West Baraboo and perhaps a couple thousand others living outside the city limits. No longer did the Kiwanis and other civic groups feel the need to petition Congress for federal facilities — they had asked for the Air Force Academy in the '50s but to no avail! The National Guard did erect a fine building, however.

Attractions make Baraboo different

No more doldrums for Baraboo, and over it all presided the A.I. Ringling Theatre, the Circus World Museum, Devils Lake State Park, and the new International Crane Foundation, making Baraboo an interesting as well as a prosperous place to live.

Threatened with the sale and probable remodeling into three or four box-like movie "theatres" in 1989, the A.I. Ringling Theatre was purchased instead by the A.I. Ringling Theatre Friends, an open membership non-profit group. They are dedicated to accurate restoration, not remodeling, of what the Theatre Historical Society of America calls "not just any old theatre" but rather "the first of the great movie palaces" in America. It has been rough sledding at times, but much has already been done to save this historic gem.

The Circus World Museum has been a classic success story, and its founder John Kelley would find that it far exceeds what were derided as the dreams of an old man at the time. Thanks to C.P. "Chappie" Fox's contributions to it and to the "Great American Circus Parade," and thanks to the present dedicated staff, Baraboo can again claim to be the Circus Capital of the World.

The motorboats have long been silenced at Devils Lake, and the tourists no longer



German Lutheran Church, Baraboo, Wis.

Contributed photo from the John McNabb collection

Like St. John's Lutheran, most churches rebuilt, remodeled or added on.

tent at lakeside, but this historically and geologically significant midwest landmark still attracts tourists by the thousands, just as it did in the halcyon days of the last century when special trains brought visitors from Chicago and Milwaukee to its hotels. Baraboo would not be Baraboo without Devils Lake nearby.

Another attraction significant to Baraboo developed in the '70s. The International Crane Foundation, growing out of a local young man's love of nature and its birds, is dedicated to restoration and preservation of one of nature's finest, the crane. Baraboo became the destination of visitors and students from all over the world.

Baraboo's geographic location also favors it. Within less than half an hour are such destinations as Mirror Lake, the Dells-Delton complex, The Mid-Continent Railway and Museum, and Lake Wisconsin for boating and fishing.

A great place to live

Baraboo was always a great place to live —

before the railroad, before the circus, and before the industrial expansion of the '50s. The Soaring '60s and '70s brought it a modest measure of sophistication without destroying the small town ambience.

But lest we become complacent, the final article in this series will deal with Baraboo's problems and challenges!



Contributed photo from the John McNabb collection
St. Mary's-Ringling Hospital was replaced in 1963.



SECOND WARD SCHOOL BLDG., BARABOO, WIS.

*Am still among the living.
 Still write soon. Myrtle.*

G. O. KROPP, MILWAUKEE.

The Second Ward School



Contributed photo from the John McNabb collection

The Sauk County Jail was replaced in 1963.



B. O. C. WIS.

Congregational Church

So, how goes it with Baraboo, anyway?

994

The Baraboo Sun • Thursday, July 9, 1998 Page 13

by Bob Dewel

This is the last of a series of 15 articles entitled *Tales for the Sesquicentennial*, tracing many important events in the history of Baraboo. The series is in recognition of the state sesquicentennial, but Baraboo's settlement predates the State of Wisconsin by some nine years.

Together with the *Benefactors of Baraboo* series in 1997 and the *Tales from the Fox* series earlier this year, this makes a total of 35 articles about events in Baraboo over the years.

The author is well aware that this effort does not qualify him as a certified local historian. Hopefully the reader will indulge the author in some observations resulting from the research for and composition of the essays.

The Setting

In a nutshell, Baraboo has not only an admirable and remarkable history, but also presents a more than ordinarily interesting and stimulating place to live and work.

The attractive setting between the two ranges of the ancient Baraboo Bluffs is perhaps not as spectacular as one might find in more mountainous areas, but is a refreshing relief from the usual flatland towns of the midwest, indeed of Wisconsin. The Devils Lake State Park and the Nature Conservancy holdings ensure that much will remain in its present pristine state for those who follow us.

No less inviting is the Baraboo River, whose only rapids to speak of in its 65 mile course are those in the city limits of Baraboo. Here the lovers of the free flowing river must still accept the presence of the two dam mill ponds, which others stoutly defend.

Historically the dams were essential to the first 100 years or so of the city, and are used even now for the production of electricity. Unfortunately the two most historical of the dams have been destroyed. Now, however, the beginning of a scenic riverwalk is taking shape in Ochsner Park.

The location

The somewhat remote location of the city in the early days was not always a blessing. Ignored by the early railroads, it took the virtual gift of \$70,000, a huge sum in 1870, to bring a railroad through the Bluffs. Baraboo citizens soundly backed the daring city council in a referendum on the matter.

Moreover, the years have seen the major arterial highway, U.S. 12, bypass downtown Baraboo in 1936, with talk today of another bypass of that bypass! It is curious that there is no talk of rerouting Highway 12 onto I-90 so as to bypass the Lake Delton Strip, which must have the highest traffic count between Madison and St. Paul by far.

There are also those who predict that State Highway 33 will bypass the city on the North in time! Nor did Baraboo ever get an interstate highway exit on County A, the most logical approach to the city — possibly due to outside political pressure?

Yet Baraboo thrives! Why?

Perhaps the answer lies in the current cliché, "If you build it, they will come." The city enticed the railroad to come and developed the present downtown business section as a result. The city also nurtured the circus, and became for a time the circus capital of the world — a title it is now reclaiming. Then after WWII, civic leaders made the right moves and significant industry came to the city, making possible the boom in buildings and population mentioned in the last article.

The attractive location of the Gem City helped, but it took liberal and forward-looking city businessmen and councilmen to encourage solid growth and prosperity.

Problems

This is not to say that Baraboo can rest on its laurels, or that the epitome of small city convenience and ambience has been achieved. It would be a miracle if the city did not have significant problems. One hardly need mention the deplorable condition of many city streets, for which a modest tax increase seems the only real solution.

Eighth street shows alarming symptoms of over-capacity at times. It is the only viable East-West street in the city, thanks to unwise approval in the past of residential developments that effectively block any other through street in those directions.

The North-South situation is even worse, one having to switch from East Street to Ash or Broadway to cross the river. Future zoning committees will hopefully have greater vision.

Happily, there are signs now, in the summer of 1998, that the city is going to proceed with meaningful long-range planning efforts. Signage control should be enhanced so as to avoid problems such as those being experienced by our neighbors to the north at this time, for example.

Culturally

While the expanding UW Center and the greatly expanded library have rightly received generous financial aid from the City and County, we have for too long had it too easy in the matter of civic support for the spoken and vocalized word, as represented by the Al. Ringling Theatre. It was self-supporting for 75 years, but now needs public help.

Neighboring cities have never enjoyed the presence of a significant city auditorium, say nothing of the magnificence and historical significance of the Al. Ringling. Referendums of three million dollars or so for ordinary civic auditoriums often fail elsewhere. Would Baraboo be any different if it had to face such a referendum to build an auditorium? Thanks to the Al. Ringling, we haven't had to find out!

Taken together then, the University Center, the Library and the Al. Ringling, seem to serve as a significant regional cultural force in the county.



Undated. From Goc, Mary A Fine Harvest
 The transformation of this scene from a country crossroads to a regional shopping center is a fact of life for the Baraboo area. The photo looks northeast. Only two buildings in the picture remain now.

Regional shopping center

For some 150 years Baraboo was the center of what was known as "The Baraboo Area," just as Reedsburg and Portage and the Sauk-Prairie villages are centers to their immediate surroundings. Now, with the advent of several discount stores and a mall, we should perhaps speak of the Baraboo community area as the "Baraboo Regional Shopping Area!"

Baraboo and West Baraboo find their futures more closely entwined than ever, with a combined Chamber of Commerce, and West Baraboo dependent on the City for water, sewer, and cultural and business opportunities. The City's importance to the region is underscored also by the new and massive West Square Building downtown across the street from the courthouse. The presence of the latter symbolizes the growing importance of county government in the area as well as in Wisconsin.

Downtown Baraboo

Interestingly, the downtown business section has not been decimated by the mall, though there have been changes which feature more specialty stores to attract shoppers from outside the region, rather than the traditional downtown stores. As buildings are emptied, another type of enterprise seems to quickly fill the space, and hardly three percent to four percent of the total downtown square footage is vacant at one time.

One author recently wrote that the courthouse square had the atmosphere of a Norman Rockwell painting, albeit with modern stores behind the facades. The new sidewalks and quality streetlights enhance this image, with the courthouse and the Al. Ringling Theatre as the anchors.

Parking downtown is always a problem — people don't mind walking in a mall parking lot, but somehow expect to park directly in front of a downtown business for some reason! A parking problem, though, is a sure sign that the downtown is vibrant. There are even movements to revive even older areas, such as Walnut Street across the river to the south, and the Water Street approach to the Circus World Museum from Broadway to Walnut.

The pressing question of the day, however, is residential sidewalks. Alma Waite gave the city a considerable sum, part of which was for repair of existing walks, but not installation of new sidewalks!

A challenge, and an opportunity

Some 150 years ago Historian-surveyor Canfield platted his village of Lyons, now West Baraboo, with a rather smallish town square which he named after DeWitt Clinton. Canfield had worked on the Erie Canal in New York with Clinton.

His vision for Lyons with the courthouse in Clinton Square was greater than its fulfillment, and Lyons remained a smaller cousin to the larger Baraboo, even when the highway 12 bypass in 1936 took the junction of highways 12 and 33 from downtown Baraboo to the "Ritz Corners."

Things change slowly sometimes, and it was 50 years before what was virtually a country crossroads became the mall and regional shopping center it is today. Now, the State Department of Transportation cautiously probes the idea of a bypass of the West Baraboo shopping area!

The people

Like many cities, Baraboo has many nearby citizens who use the city streets and services but live outside the city limits and pay taxes only to the township. While recognizing the right of citizens to do so, the legislature has provided means for a city to control, to some degree, the proliferation of large residential developments until annexation becomes feasible.

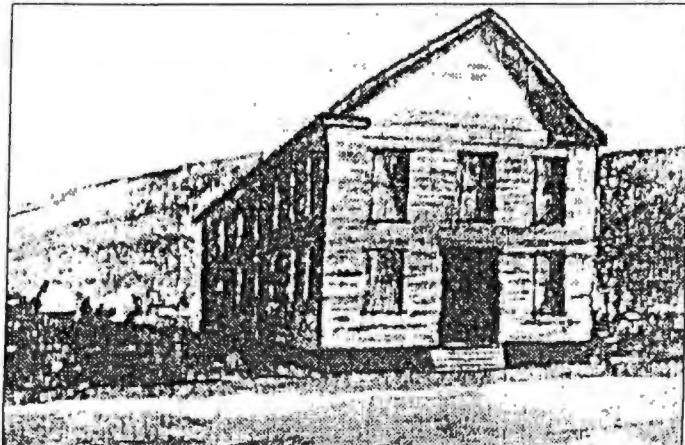
Maybe the present arrangement seems unfair to the citizens who live within the city limits and pay city taxes to support the roads and services, but it should be recognized that there are some of the residents living outside the city limits who are true civic leaders, and have contributed to the city and its future in other ways than paying taxes. Their loyalty, when present, needs to be recognized and encouraged.

City and non-city citizens together support not only our businesses and clubs and theatre, but our plethora of churches, which thrive thanks to the separation of church and state guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Not to be overlooked, however, is the fact that the major fund donors of recent years — The Langes, Alma Waite, Mrs. Ritzenthaler, Kate Hill, and Esther Gray, to mention a few — have all been city taxpayers.

Conclusion

This series has followed the fortunes of Baraboo from the first cabins on the Baraboo River rapids to the modern city of 1998, with both its successes and its problems. The history is fascinating, the successes are compelling, and the problems are solvable.

A couple years ago some national rating agency placed Baraboo as the 64th best small city in the country, out of thousands. A lot of folks know it is much better than that — how about number one?



First courthouse in Baraboo. Drawn from description by Robert Koch.

Then.....and now



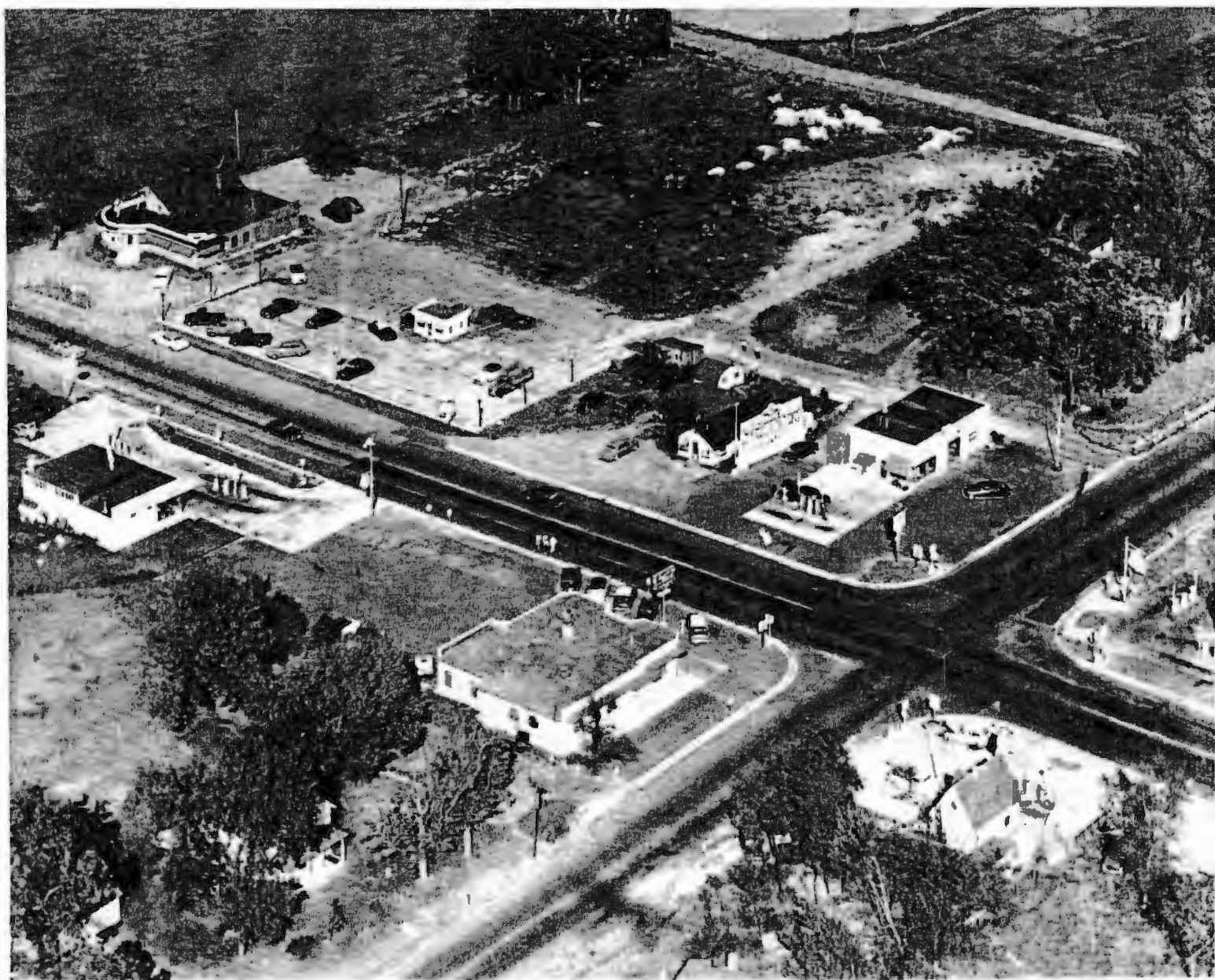
Like Hotels, Baraboo Restaurants Come and Go

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel,

Take a look at the photo accompanying this article. Of the nine buildings pictured only one remains today, the Hiway House. The building in the lower center of the picture is the Ritz Café, once Baraboo's newest and finest, which was bulldozed to oblivion on May Day of this year, 2003.

The picture was taken in the early 1950's, a time when Baraboo featured a different set of cafes, restaurants, and dining places. The history of the Ritz was printed recently in a story by Jennifer McBride, with its many owners listed, such as the Boyds, Culvers, Morgans, and Donny's. Schreier's also had it, and it was known as T.J.'s. Otherwise it was always called The Ritz, the name being derived from Ed Ritzenthaler's gas station, which previously had occupied the site. Everyone knew the location as the Ritz Corners.



Note the gas stations on three of the corners. At first, the Ritz is said to have had gas pumps also. There are no traffic lights, and the intersection is a four-way stop. The Hiway House was originally on Broadway, across from the post office, and was known as the Broadway Café. The building had been moved to its present location, with a new front.

Forty Years Ago

A comparison of the eating establishments some 40 years ago, and those now, is surprising. The Warren Hotel, for example, had two restaurants, plus the Pine Room for banquets, and the Rose Room. The latter room, small and intimate if not elegant, was located in the rear of the building, and was perhaps the only dining room in Wisconsin which one had to pass through the kitchen to reach.

Perhaps the premier dining establishment of those years was the Devi Bara Resort, a supper club. It featured an entrance hall, and the bar was separate from the dining room. A Maitre d' was often present, and the sommelier wore a neck chain to which was attached a small silver cup. He personally tasted each bottle he opened for quality, before pouring it for the guests. Adding to the amenities was organ music by Bob Vethe. The Devi Bara, located across from the North Shore exit of Devil's Lake, burned in about 1983.

Farm Kitchen

Still extant and with a rich history, is the Farm Kitchen, near the North Shore to Devils Lake. It was created out of a farm house in 1923, following a suicide in the nearby barn, and the new owner, Helen Baldwin, operated it at first as a small tea room. There was no electricity and no running water, a change for Baldwin, who was a graduate of Vassar College and formerly editor of the Woman's Home Companion magazine.

Born on 10-5-1892 as Helen Harthman, she died on 9-25-84, at age 91. Her ashes were spread over the adjacent hillside east of the barn. For a time the driving force in the restaurant was said to be Lorene Ochsner. Baldwin had early on added the western porch, and both the Deckers and the present owners, the Kuesters, added large dining halls to this popular eating establishment. Nearby was The Barn restaurant.

Another popular café in earlier years was the BarBQue, later called Herman's, and then Pierce's, at the junction of South Blvd and Parkway. It was on the outskirts of town when built, and the structure had an attractive stone exterior and interior. In earlier years there was a stairway to the basement, with a juke box for dancing.

Others

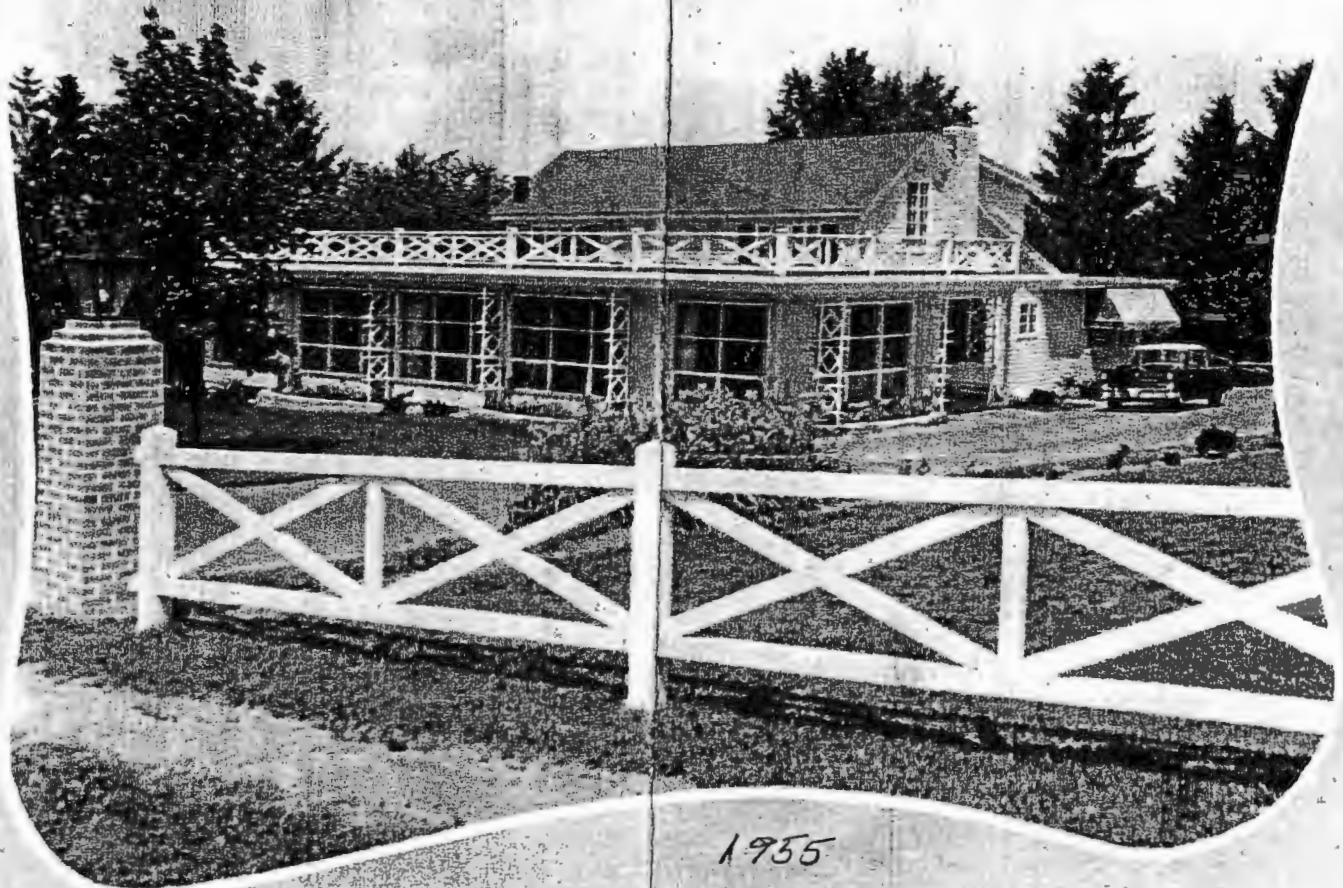
It is not possible to list all of the eating establishments of 40 years ago, nor those of today, except to note that the city still has 10 places to dine in the downtown area, not including the bars. The comparison from then to now is similar as far as downtown goes, with the Alpine as the only café surviving with the original name. Popular with the school crowd then was Mel's Café on Oak Street. Today many places, including fast food, are located on Highways 33 and 12 for the traveling public.

Encouraging from the standpoint of more elegant dining is the impending opening of Glacier Rock Restaurant in the Park Plaza Hotel. Should plans for a near-downtown restaurant materialize, one may be able to have riverfront dining on the Baraboo.

The restaurant business is highly competitive and the public is either loyal or fickle. The loss of the Warren Hotel, Devi Bara, The Three Lions, and others caused many people to seek fine dining elsewhere. The past cannot be recreated, but the tables may be turning, as befits a city the size and sophistication of Baraboo.

THE *Farm Kitchen* RESORT
AT ENTRANCE TO DEVIL'S LAKE STATE PARK
BARABOO, WISCONSIN

THE *Farm Kitchen* RESORT
AT ENTRANCE TO DEVIL'S LAKE STATE PARK
BARABOO, WISCONSIN 1000



1955

THE FARM KITCHEN COTTAGES

THE FARM KITCHEN cottages are extremely well built. The exterior is colonial in effect. . . every bedroom has cross ventilation. Each accommodation has its own private lavatory, shower and toilet. Hot and cold running water, of course. In addition each cottage has its own automatic heat for those days when there is a chill in the air.

Some of the cottages are equipped with twin beds; others with a double; a twin and a double; two

doubles or a double with a Hollywood for the children. Cribs also are furnished. For larger groups some of our duplex cottages have connecting halls with two bedrooms, each having its own lavatory, shower and toilet. However, when two bedrooms are desired there must be a minimum of two adults or one adult and two juniors on half rates in each room.

All bedding is furnished and maid service will add to your comfort. Checking out time—10:00 A.M. Daylight Time. Checking in time—noon.

A smaller but still very elegant Farm Kitchen is shown in a 1955 color brochure. Prices are not given, but a 1949 brochure we have seen listed the fee for a week as \$55 per person per cabin, but including two meals a day!

DEVILS BAR-B-Q RECREATIONAL CENTER,
BARABOO, WISCONSIN



PLEASE OBSERVE THE FOOT LINE - DO NOT LOFT BALL



and one clowns around

by Dr. Bob Dewel

Article ten in this series about the benefactors of Baraboo discusses the role of those, including the city itself, who made the Circus World Museum possible.

The Oct. 9 article in the *Baraboo Sun* entitled "Baraboo's Three Cultural Sisters" has received enough comment that we are encouraged to suggest a continuation of the analogy.

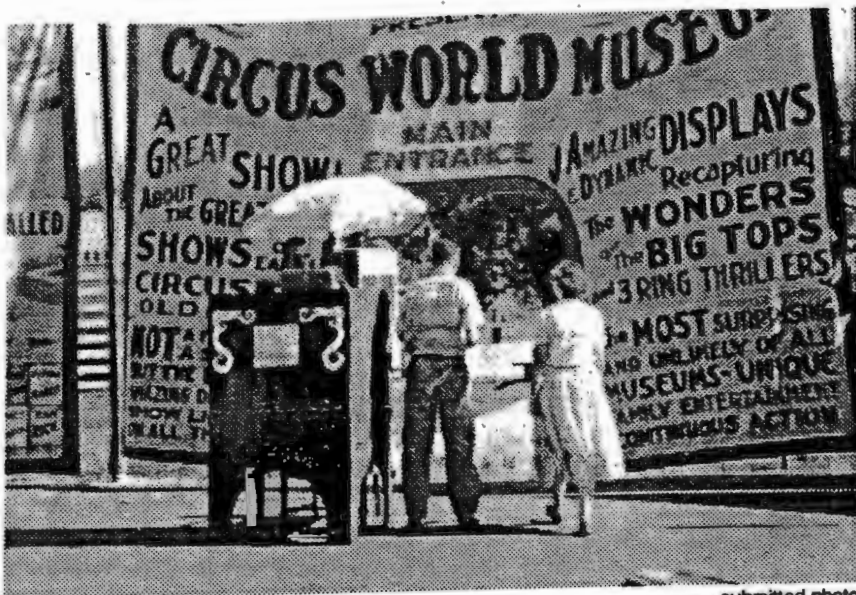
In this little extension, therefore, we will speak briefly of the four benevolent uncles of the Baraboo community — benevolent because they enhance the quality of life in the city. They are also unique in that they draw their support not only from Baraboo citizens but from national and sometimes international sources.

The oldest of the "uncles" is Devils Lake State Park, and its benefactors are both the citizens of Baraboo at the turn of the century, plus the State and to some extent the federal park service. This pristine area, with its lake and towering bluffs, would enhance even a location in the Colorado mountains. We have it near Baraboo!

Another "uncle" is the Mid-Continent Railway Museum, operated in our vicinity by volunteers from all over the midwest — railroad buffs who give freely of their time and money for their love of the railroad and its lore. The steam whistle still echoes in the Baraboo Range, a reminder of the importance of the railroad to Baraboo.

The third "uncle" is the International Crane Foundation, unique in its mission to save the cranes as an important part of our world environment. It is the beneficiary of national and international as well as local benefactors, and attracts international visitors to our community.

The fourth "uncle" is the Circus World Museum, familiarly known as just "the circus" and aided by some 250 local volunteers. It too has local, state and national bene-



The front entrance in 1959, not too fancy.

submitted photo

factors, and attracts international attention and inquiry from circus buffs all over the world.

What a great bunch of "uncles" our Baraboo family has! We promise that we will not carry the family analogy any further, but simply ask: What small or not-so-small city in the United States can boast of such a varied and worthwhile set of attractions and significant *raisons d'être*?

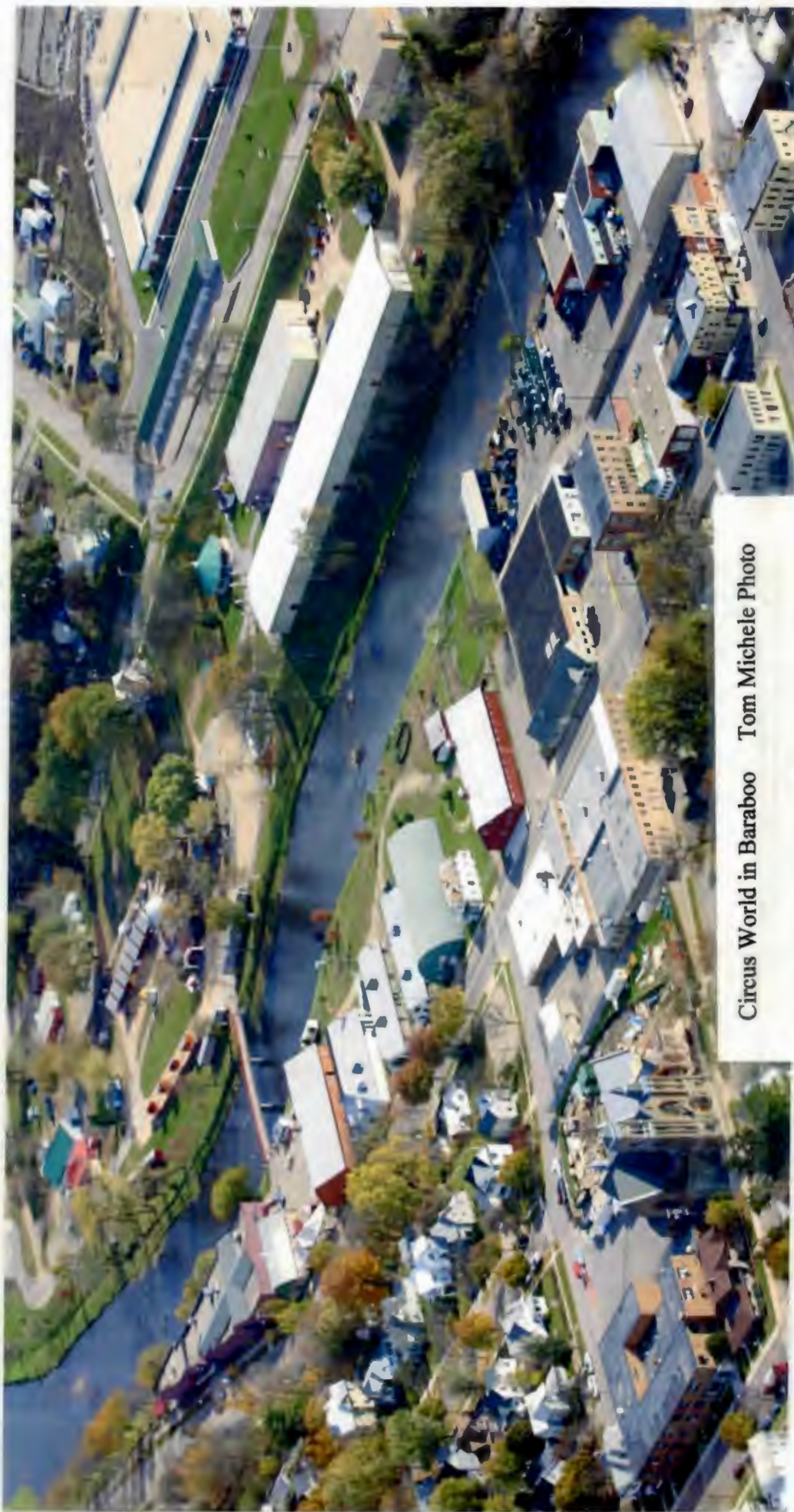
Combined with our parks, athletic facilities, super schools, university center, library, theatre and other cultural facilities and general small city ambience, Baraboo can be proud of the benefactors who have made all this possible. Baraboo must also guard against smugness and complacency, and continue to support all of our facilities. They make our city attractive, significant and different, and a great place to live.

The Circus World Museum

Because they are not located within the city limits, this series of articles will not delve more deeply into the mission and benefactors of the first three "uncles" listed above, other than to recognize their importance to our area.

However, the Circus World Museum (CWM), with its close association with 113 years of circus history in Baraboo, deserves a closer look. Unfortunately, there is no way we can adequately cover in detail the many benefactors of this institution, even in several articles.

Already mentioned in previous stories is the Moeller Hippodrome, given by Alma Waite in memory of her uncles. Other names of Baraboo people memorialized on the grounds are the W.W. Deppe Wagon Barn, the Robert Parkinson Research center, and the C.P. Fox wagon reconstruction building now being constructed. Another major building, the Feld reception center, was graciously made possi-



Circus World in Baraboo Tom Michele Photo

ble by Irwin and Kenneth Feld, present owners of the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus. Just inside the doors and on the right is a brass plaque listing the names of other donors to the building, many of them being Baraboo citizens living today.

Perhaps another article by another writer can more adequately address the history of gifts and bequests to the CWM. The present articles will be confined to two aspects, the early history up to the opening of the museum, and the remarkable contributions of C.P. "Chappie" Fox over the years. 1003

The Dream

When considering the origin of the CWM, the name of John Kelly is pre-eminent. It was this 77-year-old man, formerly attorney for the Ringling Brothers from 1905 to 1937, whose persistence in 1952 got the ball rolling for a museum.

Kelly had his ups and downs in life, but never deviated from his love of the circus and its relation to Baraboo. He collected old advertising posters and route books — in fact anything related to the circus — and it was he who contributed what must have been the first wagon in the museum, the Columbia wagon.

Both the CWM Research Center and the public library have copious records and clippings on the development of the museum. Beginning in 1952 at Kelly's prodding, a city-wide committee was soon formed, with such old and respected Baraboo names as Deppe, Nelson, Welch, Martiny, Barker, Hunt, Prothero, Mandt, Lange, Ott, Gollmar, Cavanaugh, Weber, Darrow, Ringling, Moeller, Thompson, Epstein, O'Brien, Ritzenthaler, Barnhart, Schaefer, Crawford, and Brannon (Esther).

Nearly all the old timers are gone now, and there are surely names we have missed in the above list, but special mention is made here of C.P. Fox, then of Oconomowoc, and Clark Wilkinson of Baraboo, as well as Kelly of course. Formal organization of the CWM Inc. came in 1954, but five years would elapse before the museum opened.

Meantime, the historic old circus buildings in Ringlingville on Water Street had been allowed to deteriorate in most cases, with an auto junkyard occupying part of the now landscaped and attractive river bank and its dammed-up lake.

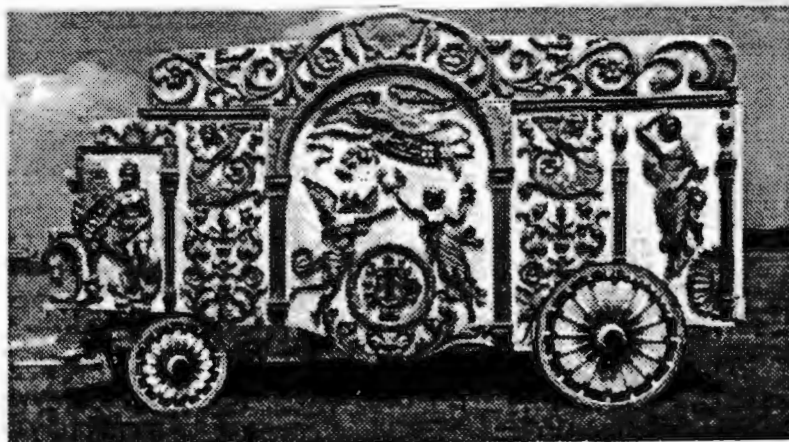
A gift from the city

The State Historical Society had been on board the project since 1952, with lots of encouragement but little financial help. The City of Baraboo had purchased the old red ring barn at a cost of \$10,000, added repairs, and made it available to the infant organization, if the museum ever got going. The city firemen had painted it, red of course, and it remains so today.

The gift by the city is significant, for it is another example of our usually forward-looking city councils, harking back to the great railroad gamble with the city's money in 1870. The city's circus investment of perhaps \$17,000 in the building would compare to perhaps \$100,000 today after inflation. For example, the Milwaukee Journal reported that hotel rooms in Baraboo were \$4, (or \$6 double) for tourists in 1959!

The city later vacated the stub of Elizabeth street going to the river, and widened Water street, along with other favors. The *Chicago Tribune* heaped praise on the city's help to the museum, saying it had "dug so deeply to purchase the first building."

Soon a financial drive began, headed by Chappie Fox. The Bradley Corporation gave \$5000, as did other major donors, but Baraboo citizens came through also. Of special interest was the offer of Henry Moeller, retired circus wagon builder, to add \$1,000 to the first \$9,000 raised in Baraboo. A steam calliope arrived as a gift from Cleaver-Brooks of Milwaukee. Another gift was the Zwiefel miniature circus still on view in the ring barn. It was carefully assembled by its owner and his new wife, here on their honeymoon!



*The Columbia Wagon
Contributed by John M. Kelly*

With typical circus hyperbole, Dr. Lord of the State Historical Society predicted that 500,000 persons a year would visit the museum in a speech before a joint meeting of the Kiwanis and Lions clubs. Collections on hand, he said, include "the John M. Kelly collection, Henry Moeller's collection, Gollmar Bros. circus material" and others. Clark Wilkinson had introduced Dr. Lord, and announced that \$7,725 had already been raised locally.

Opening day

Finally the big opening day arrived, a cool July 1 in 1959. A city parade featured actress Rhonda Fleming, who had just completed, with Victor Mature, a circus movie called "The Big Circus." It was playing at the Al. Ringling Theatre as a benefit for the museum. Fleming declined to ride Blanche the elephant in the parade, but Lt. Gov. Nash gamely did so.

Barbershoppers sang from one of the floats, dressed as clowns, and the Mother Goose and Old Woman in a Shoe vehicles were proudly paraded. The crowd was estimated at 40,000, and an aerial view tends to confirm that. The parade ended at the new museum grounds, formerly Ringlingville.

The museum was formally turned over to the State Historical Society by Clark Wilkinson, "developed with private funds by Baraboo citizens and other circus fans." In attendance were special guests Fred Gollmar, Henry Moeller, and Mrs. Ida (Henry) Ringling.

Campaign chairman Chappie Fox served as master of ceremonies for the day. Fortunately for Baraboo, it was not the last they would hear from Chappie Fox!

—To be continued—

Sources:

- C.P. Chappie Fox
- Baraboo Public Library
- CWM Research Library,
Fred Dahlinger
Bill Jackson

Ball powder, factories and clowns,

in that order

by Bob Dewel

Few events have had the impact on Baraboo as has the Badger Army Ordnance Plant (Badger) from 1943 to 1975, a roller coaster ride with exhilarating highs followed by disheartening lows, during and after World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

Unpreparedness

It is hard to remember, in the dissidence and dissonance of the present controversy about the disposition of Badger, that World War II was an emergency that demanded quick decisions. Hitler allowed no time for environmental impact statements in those days.

America had kept her head in the sand even after the European conflict began in 1939, while the Japanese were raping their neighbors. We had a small army of hardly a few hundred thousand soldiers in 1940, much of which still traveled with horses!

Congress passed a draft law that year with only a one vote margin, and only the stupidity of the Pearl Harbor attack and Hitler's subsequent declaration of war on us brought the nation out of the sand. Our prospects for survival were slim at best in 1942. The outlook was devastating, and only in 1943 was there a glimmer of hope that we might win the war. Badger was part of that glimmer.

New Industrial Stamp On Sale

April 3, 1957



Pictured above is the stamp which is being used in the Baraboo Industrial Corp. plan to make shares available to everybody. The stamps are priced at \$1 each and can be purchased at either bank, as well as at Herberger's, Penney's and the Circus City Printers. A booklet will be given purchasers and when the book is filled with 50 stamps, it can be exchanged for a share of stock or a debenture.

Clark Wilkinson reported today that so far \$58,500 in new money has been paid in or subscribed in the current drive. The drive will continue until the minimum goal of \$65,000 is reached.

1005

Badger Army Ordnance

Obviously a supply of ammunition was essential, and for reasons of security it had to be manufactured away from the coasts. There are several versions of why Sauk County was chosen and the suffering of those who lost their land is deplored, but it is only fair to remember, too, that the plant was needed, it was needed then, and it served our country well.

In retrospect, it probably should have been located elsewhere. Perhaps now, when no emergency threatens, the clamor will subside and cool heads and calm rhetoric will prevail in determining the disposition of its assets.

Badger Statistics

The October, 1941, announcement about Badger came as a bombshell, but by January 1943, production had started. Badger grew to 1,307 buildings covering 1,403,125 square feet, with 157 miles of roads, 60 miles of railroad, 116 miles of water lines, and sewage disposal capacity of 350,000 gallons per day. Some 20,000 persons worked at Badger, and 2,216 eventually served in the armed forces.

The impact

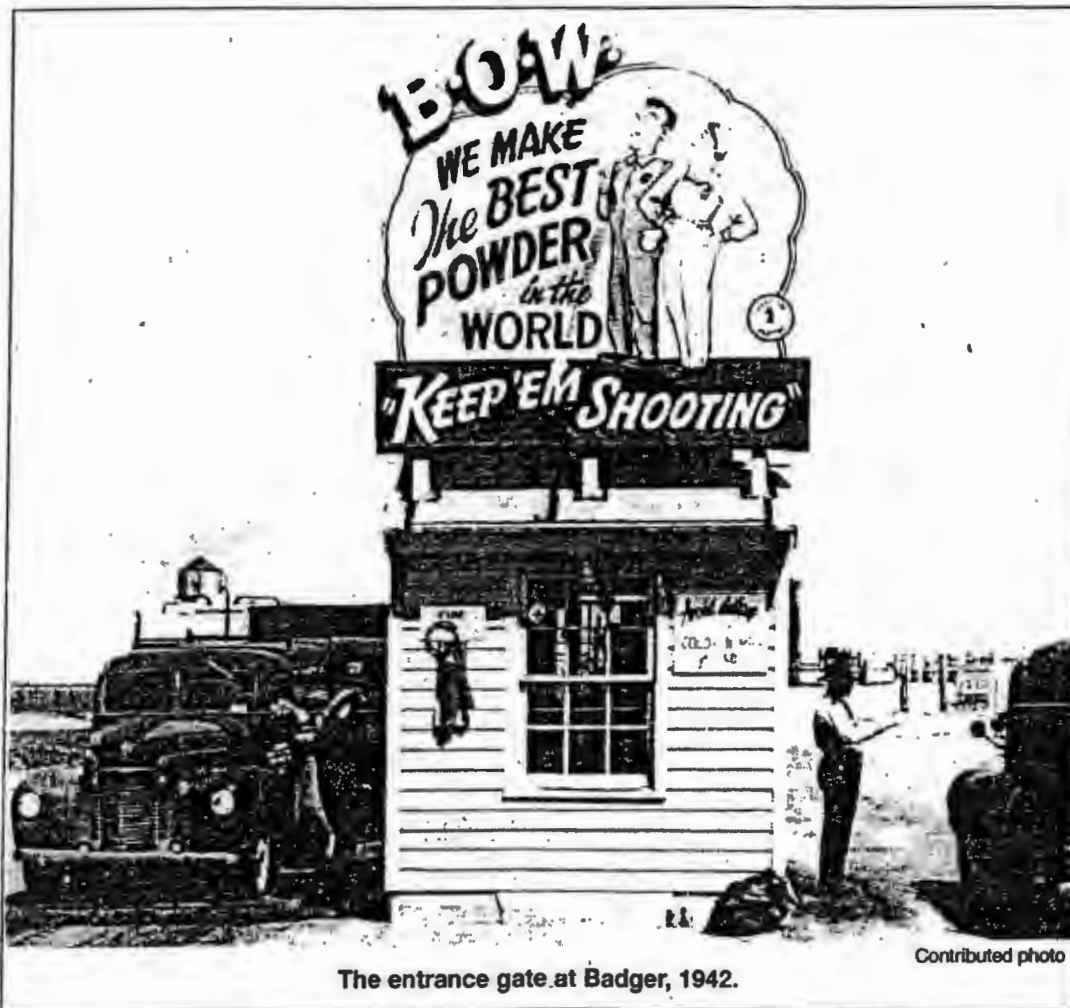
Badger operated from 1943 to 1945, 1951 to 1953, and 1966 to 1975, but even when not operating, some 250 employees at times kept it on standby, just as our armed forces are on standby in peacetime. However, the roller coaster effect of employment was disruptive to the Sauk County employers due to frequent turnover of staff as the plant opened and closed.

In 1992 the plant was valued at \$1,846,524,100, and its Sauk County purchases totaled \$1,112,840. Some 74 percent of the employees lived in the county, and the operator, Olin Corporation, was a contributor to some 35 charities or non-profit organizations. It was a major industry in the county.

The above statistics suggest the massive impact of the plant, but do not address the strain it put on Baraboo's housing and public services. Even the staid Warren Hotel Pine Room became the "Bomb Shelter," a bar, and the Kiwanis members sat on bar stools for their noon meetings for a couple years.

The effect on Baraboo

The town had been awakened with a jolt from its Depression lethargy, but it was not all bad. Baraboo leaders noted carefully the value of industry to a community. As a result, with the victorious end of the war and Badger's deactivation, the let-down was a wake-up call for Baraboo, a wake-up call which found its answer in a remarkable group of men determined to return Baraboo to the vital and thriving state of the previous century. The change meant going forward with jobs, factories and the population growth which would follow.



The entrance gate at Badger, 1942.

Contributed photo

Baraboo industrial expansion corporation

The new leaders, augmented by returning veterans, were an energetic bunch. Equally important, the newspaper, then locally owned, provided vigorous and accurate and timely support under the leadership of long-time editors, the Page brothers.

A scrapbook donated recently by Nancy Mandt to the Historical Society chronicles the birth and growth of the Baraboo Industrial Expansion Corporation (BIEC). The original investors, at \$5,000 each, were Charles Calfish, Roy Lindgren, Laurie Welch, George Martiny, the Boyd brothers, John Moon, and the Mandt brothers. All are long since gone. The stockholder list which followed, numbering 90 citizens with varying degrees of investment, is a who's who of post-war Baraboo, a few of whom are alive today. The corporation is now inactive, but it provided a generous return to those investors, many of whom must have considered their share a donation in 1947.

T.A. Mandt

The overall sparkplug to the group was dairy operator T.A. "Ted" Mandt, who served as President of the Corporation for more than 30 years. Prominent among his cohorts over the years were George Martiny, real estate developer, and John Lange,



Contributed photo
T.A. "Ted" Mandt

whose estate recently endowed the UW Baraboo-Sauk County College, The Nature Conservancy and several other public institutions. It is not possible to name all the other active supporters, but certainly the entire business community, plus other public spirited citizens, were involved.

Beginning with the incorporation meeting in September 1947, the scrapbook of newspaper articles reported \$50,650 pledged in just two weeks, and by October 1948, the national magazine *Business Week* was reporting on the activities in the "colorful little town."

Within one year, 100 persons were employed in the new Hagen Manufacturing plant, ~~near R.Pac. e. Hammond~~. Payroll by new industries in 1950 was greater than before by half a million dollars, and during this year Flambeau arrived and set up in the old county shops on Seventh Street.

Soon to follow were Industrial Coils and two industries no longer extant, Brickcrete and Boreva, so not all acquisitions survived. Insemikit soon arrived, and by 1955 Mandt had speaking engagements to explain the Baraboo miracle. Debenture investors were now getting four percent return on their investment, and the additional payroll was one million dollars.

Besides the solid support from the home-owned *News-Republic* of the day, there are clippings from many national media. They had even had a visitor from Uganda wanting to learn how to attract industry.

A problem had arisen, however, as the factories were outgrowing the Industrial Park area which the group had purchased. In particular, Flambeau Plastics had to decide, in 1959, how to finance growth here or elsewhere. BIEC stepped in with a local fund drive, and some \$65,000 was raised to loan money to the company for expansion. Flambeau remains one of our largest industries, with nationwide affiliates under the Nordic Group.

Mandt, Martiny and Lange

By 1965, the Wisconsin Department of Resource Development was touting the "Team of Mandt, Martiny and Lange" for the 17 new industries in 17 years. In none of these years were Mandt or his officers or board paid for their services, and new jobs since 1950 totaled 1440! E.W. Bliss, later called Eagle Signal, arrived in the '60s, along with Klein Industries and Soiltest, now gone often the way was smoothed for new arrivals by local entrepreneur W.W. Deppe. Through it all, McArthur Industries, founded before the turn of the century, remained a solid industrial community supporter.

By 1969 Mandt, still the President, was profiled in a newspaper article which mentioned his past public service as President of Jaycees, Chamber Of Commerce and Lions Club, and he received the Jaycee Distinguished Service Award.

During this time the Corporation had encouraged development of the UW Baraboo-Sauk County campus, the airport, Circus World Museum and the growth of a local business into the giant it is today, Baraboo Foods Corporation (now Sysco). Mandt became Mayor of the city, replacing William Hommel, who had led a young and progressive city council in cooperation with BIEC.

In the 1980s BIEC began phasing out with the emergence of the

Sauk County Development Corporation and the Baraboo CDA, BEDC and other groups. Perry Printing arrived at this time, having observed the vital community now thriving from the results of BIEC. Forty years had passed since BIEC's first success, Northern Engineering, and now the city had a diversified mix of medium-sized industries instead of dependence on one huge employer like Badger.

Recognition

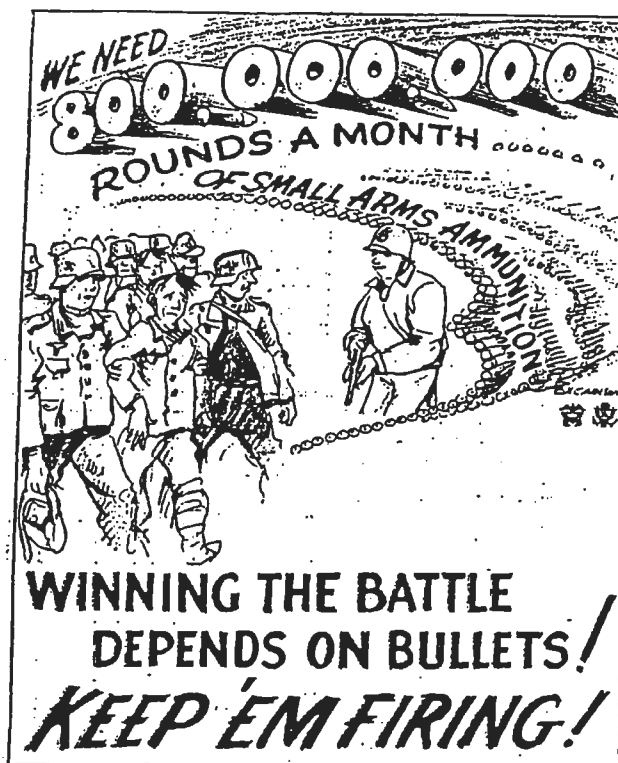
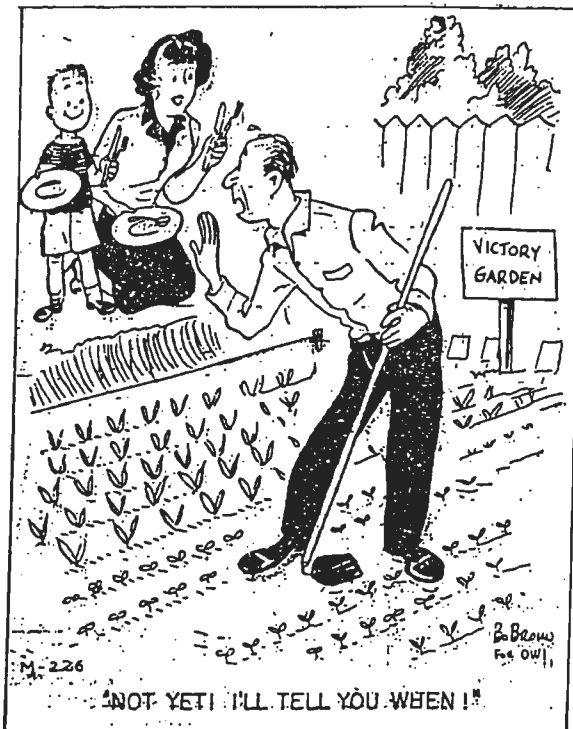
Modest recognition has been given to the ringleaders of this Old Guard. Martiny has a housing development bearing his name. Lange has a small street, plus the Lange Center at the University Campus. Only very modest recognition came to Mandt, finally, in the new but small Deppe-Mandt Industrial Park planned west of Highway 12 at County W.

We could have done better by Ted Mandt!

* Hagen became Eagle Signal

Bring on the clowns

Mention should be made of the climax of the "nifty 50s" in Baraboo, the opening of Circus World Museum in 1959. The circus has been covered in other articles in the "Benefactors of Baraboo" series in this newspaper last year. It was a fitting climax to the post-war renaissance of Baraboo, and is in itself a colorful and significant industry, bringing hundreds of visitors to the Gem City on the Baraboo River, now a thriving community. Baraboo had awakened.



BADGER ARMY AMMUNITION PLANT

TWO GIANTS OF THE CIRCUS WORLD MUSEUM

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel (See Dr Bob Dewel at
Yahoo)

How could our circus days and parade happen? How is it possible that on July 3, 2004, the City of Baraboo, population 11,300, will be host to an extraordinary extravaganza—an event which can be envied by most every other small city in America?

Sure, Baraboo has a circus history, but the last circus left the city 86 years ago, and few if any local persons remember those heady days of calliopes and elephants and tigers and acrobats. Despite the time gap, the city expects as many as 120,000 visitors for a circus parade that would have done the Ringlings and Gollmars proud.

How can Baraboo do this after all those years? There are two men who were giants in the field of circus memories and memorabilia. It is they whom we should thank for this event, unique only to Baraboo, Wisconsin.

John Kelly

First, consider John Kelly. He was just a small town lawyer in Baraboo, but he so impressed Charles Ringling with his pursuit of some obscure legal matter that Charlie hired him to be the Ringling Brothers Circus attorney. Kelly served them through the glory years of the triumphant circus enterprise, representing the Ringlings for better and sometimes for worse.

It is in his declining years, however, that Kelly made his greatest contribution to the world of the circus. Upon his return to Baraboo at mid-century he became obsessed with the vision of a circus museum. Naturally it was to be located not only in Wisconsin, the "Mother of Circuses", but in Baraboo, where the Ringling and

Gollmar and many other circuses had their genesis.

Kelly was indefatigable in his pursuit of his dream, and was described by some at the time as a real pest in the matter. He must have been a proud man indeed when the infant Circus World Museum opened on July 1, 1959, fittingly in an old Ringling winter quarters barn on Water Street. Appropriately, there was a parade, and Kelly, putting his money where his mouth was, donated the beautiful Columbia circus wagon. It was the first of over 180 authentic wagons that the museum has acquired.

Kelly's dream was fulfilled, though he could not have imagined the explosive expansion of the museum that was to come. Circus World is now the world's largest depository of circus lore and equipment and artifacts, recognized internationally. With declining health, Kelly now moved out of state to the home of a son to live out his few short remaining years.

Kelly may not have realized it, but another giant would follow in his footsteps.

C.P. "Chappie" Fox

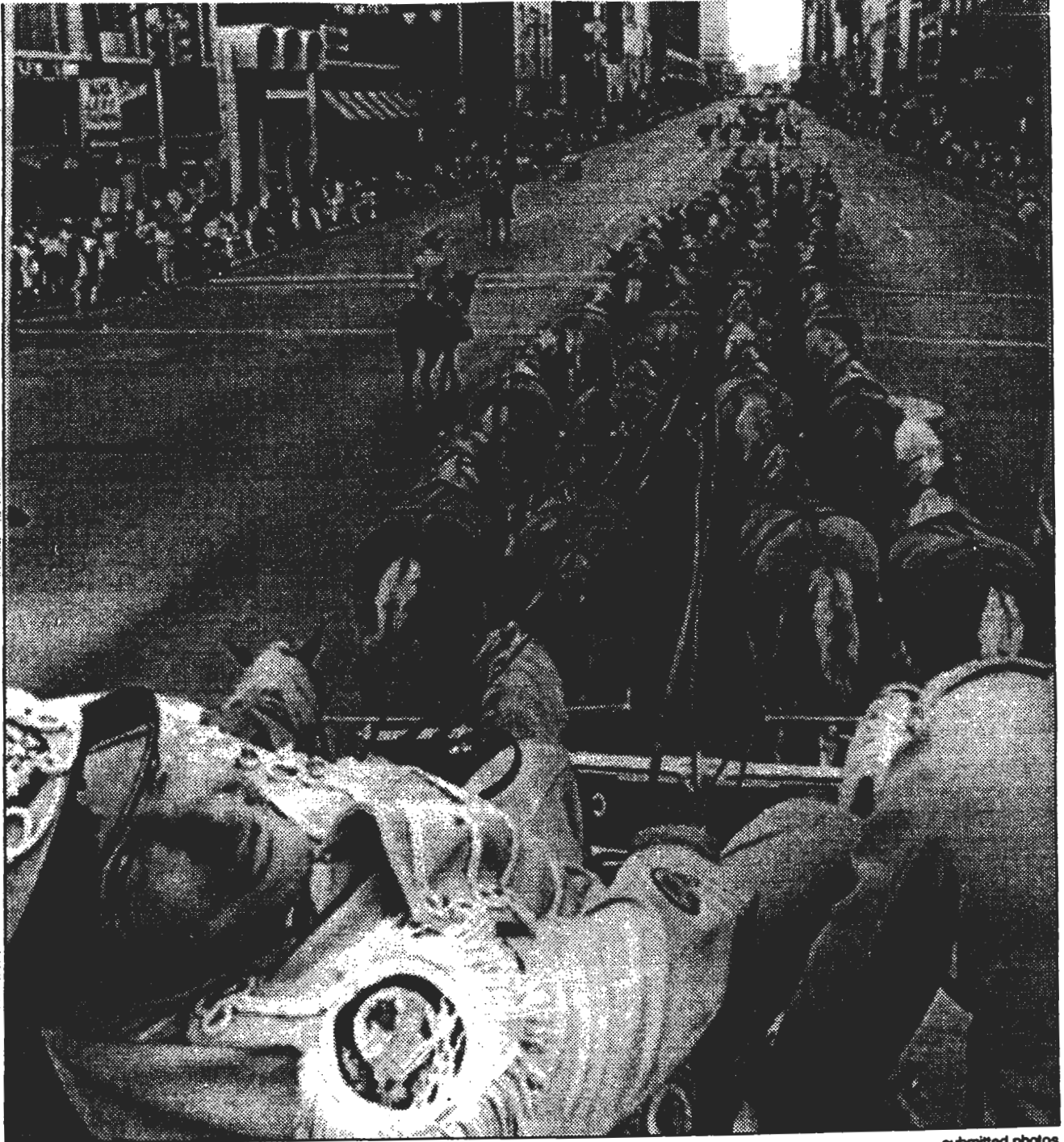
It was a cold and dreary winter day, the second of January in 1960, when C.P. "Chappie" Fox became the director of the new little circus museum in Baraboo. He borrowed a shovel from Ed O'Brien next door, and with some difficulty forced open the door of the old red Ringling winter quarters building. It was only partially filled with what now seems a meager collection of circus memorabilia.

There was no office, no chair, no desk, but Mayor Ritzenthaler and City Clerk Jesse Walker found an attic room in the old city hall for Fox, plus dusting off an old desk and chair. This served until summer, when the old Ringling ticket wagon became Chappie's office. So began the first year of the CWM.

Fox knew the history of virtually every circus wagon in existence. Before long, most were the property of the



John Kelly and C.P.Fox,
Giants of the Circus World
Museum. Early 1960's



Dick Sparrow and the 40-horse hitch in 1972, not duplicated since 1904.

submitted photos

museum in a remarkable series of wheelings and dealings by the enterprising Fox. The CWM now has 182 of the some 240 circus, wild west, and British wagons still existing in the world, as described in a series of articles already published by this writer. The Sarasota museum, for example, has only about 20 wagons.

No source was spared, large or small, and wagons came rolling in from Texas, Disney Studios, Universal Studios, private firms and individuals, and even from England. This was accomplished with a nearly non-existent budget, but through the personal charm and knowledge and wide acquaintanceship of Fox.

Not only wagons and floats but calliopes, flat cars and floats came from any and all circuses. For many of the wagons, it was a homecoming, for the Moeller Brothers of Baraboo built wagons not only for their Ringling and Gollmar cousins, but for other circuses. In some cases the Gollmar boys built their own wagons.

To top it all off, Fox obtained, as a gift, the North American Refrigerator Company shops. Formerly the Ringling rail yards, they had recently been vacated by that firm. Now he had adequate storage for the wagons and other equipment, indeed enough that in 1963 the CWM staged the first of many parades in Milwaukee.

Fox's personal charm melted the stern exterior demeanor of local contractor Wilbur Deppe, and the men became fast friends. Deppe also became a major contributor of time, men and machinery to the museum's needs. In Milwaukee, Ben Barkin was of special help in many ways, and he and Deppe were invaluable in the success of the early days of the museum.

Kelly in the parade

By now it was obvious to all that Fox had cleverly assembled all the ingredients needed for not only a major parade but for a circus train. After being turned down by eleven major

Milwaukee firms, his persistence [paid off as the Schlitz Brewing Company signed on as underwriter for the first of many authentic circus parades.

Riding in that first parade, in the lead carriage with Schlitz President Bob Uihlein and his wife, was John Kelly, the Baraboo man whose dream had become a reality. Chappie had seen to it that Kelly was there. In a year Kelly was dead, but his dream had been realized.

Fox is now gone also, but without those two giants, and the help of many others, the Circus World Museum would not exist, and Baraboo could not claim, as it rightly does, to be "Circus City, USA"

Acquiring circus railcars

was colossal feat

1013

Last week Circus World Museum announced the arrival of a new acquisition, the Ringling Bros. 66 (RB 66) private varnish car. Its imminent arrival was alluded to in a previous article in this column.

The RB 66 has a close relationship to the Ringling Bill (advertising) Car, which has been on the grounds of the CWM since 1960. The Bill Car will be the focus of this article.

The RB66

Both the RB 66 and the advertising car, built as hospital cars in World War II, were purchased from the government by the Ringling operation in 1946. Along with several others, they were converted for circus use, the RB 66 receiving special treatment as a "private varnish" car. It often was attached to the older Jomar private car described in a previous article.

The RB 66 was used until about 1970 as a private car by various circus officials, and was eventually given or sold to Rudy Bundy by his friend John Ringling North. It finally became the property of Harry Fraser of Ruston, La., from whom the CWM acquired it recently. Now, both cars are important and very large artifacts at the CWM.

The Ringling Bill Car

No one knows the history of the Ringling Bill (advertising) car better than Chappie Fox, who played the key role in bringing it to the CWM in 1960, with the stellar help of Wilbur Deppe.

After its remodeling from a hospital car to an advertising car in 1946, it was used to precede the circus by about two weeks, placing huge billboards or plastering the sides of buildings with advertising for an upcoming circus performance. As many as 30 men accompanied it for that purpose. When the circus — in mid-season of 1956 — abruptly ceased being a train circus, the car was relegated to Sarasota rail yards along with flat cars and circus parade wagons galore.

Ever alert both to happenings in the circus world and in the plans for a CWM in Baraboo, Chappie Fox and Tom Parkinson went to Florida in 1958 to buy what they could. In this first trip they were successful in obtaining two flat cars and eight circus wagons, including the giraffe wagon and a stake driver wagon, much of it donated by the Ringling organization.

Chappie had his eye on the advertising car, but the current manager, Art Concello, refused to consider the matter. Undaunted, Chappie went to see Baraboo's Alma Waite, and she agreed to make \$2,500 available when needed.

Diligence and Persistence

Time went by, and one day Chappie got a phone call from Concello requesting help in getting a circus date in the Milwaukee Arena. The problem was that the Shriners



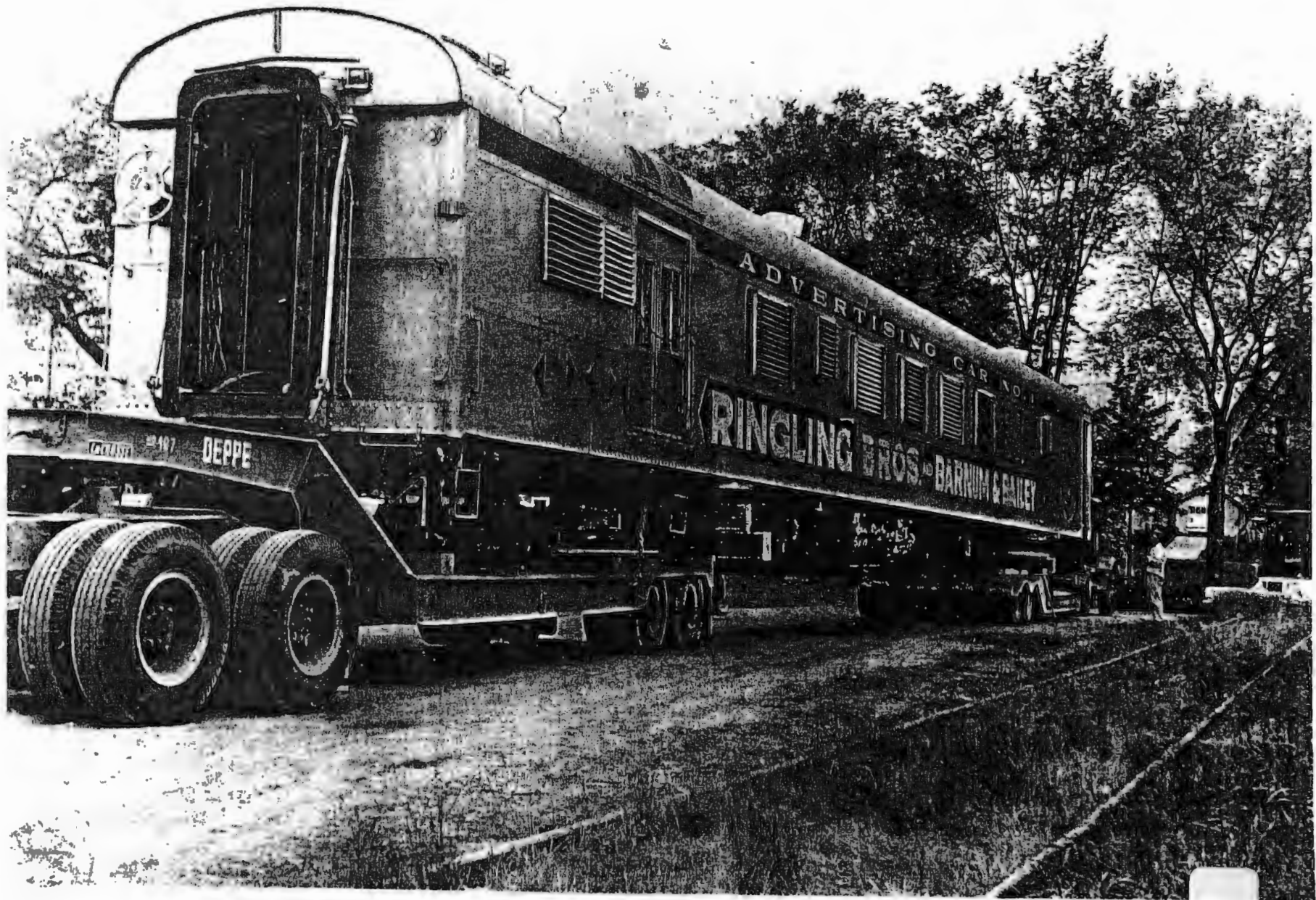
BOB
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had an iron-tight contract that no circus could precede or follow the Shrine Circus within six months, effectively blocking any other performance.

Concello wondered if Chappie had any connections that would help. Well, Chappie didn't really have the right connections, but he did have diligence and persistence, so he told Concello that if he succeeded, Concello had to sell him the advertising car. Starting from scratch, Chappie then learned what commission controlled the Milwaukee public properties like the Arena, and discovered that one member, Fredrick Sammond, served on both the Milwaukee commission and also on the State Historical Society Board, the very board that had just hired Chappie to run the CWM.

A prominent Milwaukee lawyer, Sammond was able to loosen the Shrine agreement sufficiently to allow the Ringling Circus to play in the Arena. Art Concello was delighted with the news and reluctantly had to agree to sell the advertising car in return for the favor from Chappie. Soon the advertising car, the flat cars and another acquisition, an Al G. Barnes advertising car, were parked on a rail siding at Badger Ordnance Plant.



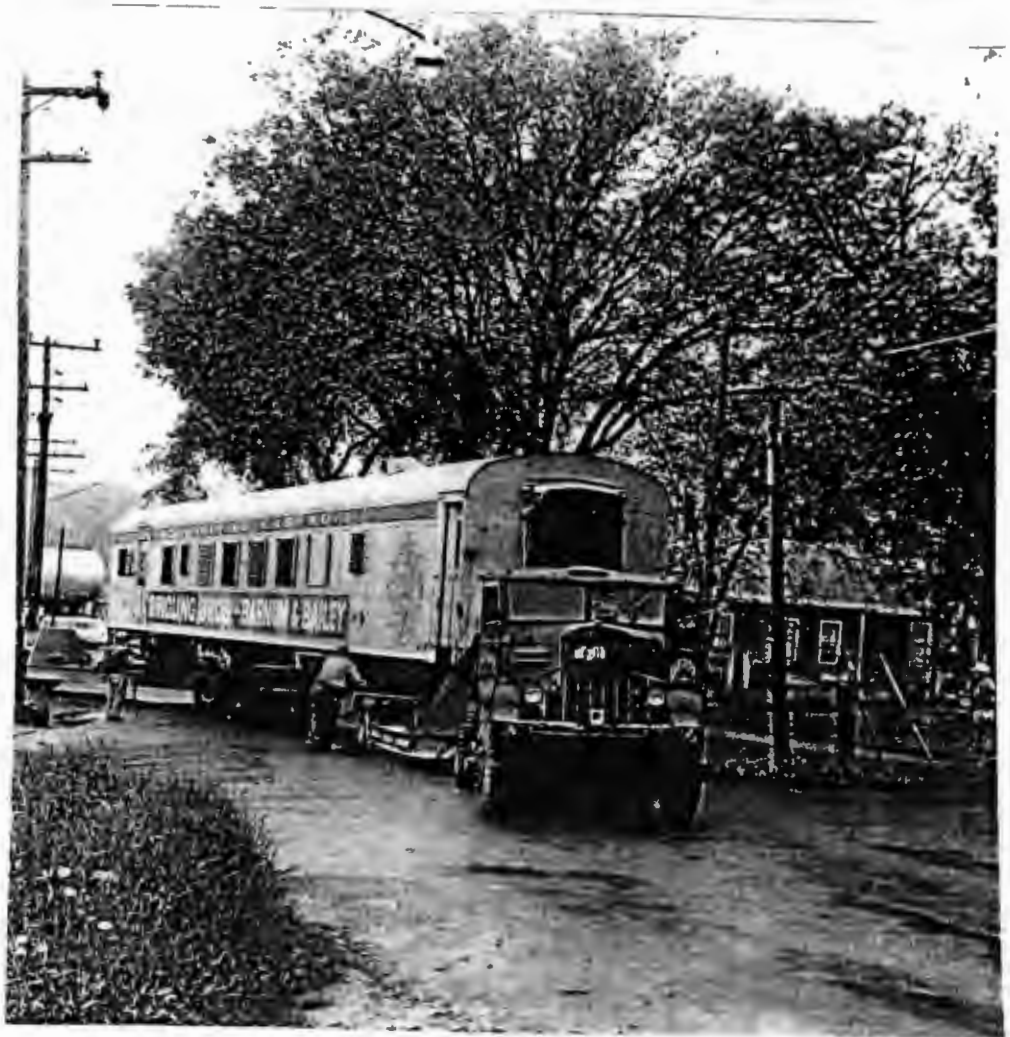
Not satisfied, Fox and Parkinson had previously begged three center poles 62 feet long from the circus, each weighing a ton. They fitted neatly into the passageway of the 80 foot car. They also got six huge elephant blankets, into which they packed china from the abandoned Jomar private varnish car which first belonged to John Ringling.

On the CWM Grounds

As the new director of the infant CWM in 1960, Chappie Fox now faced a problem. The CWM show grounds, although near the rail yards, were inaccessible by rail due to a 50-foot drop in the terrain, yet he had huge and heavy rail cars to be moved down to the grounds. He had made the rounds of Baraboo businessmen to get acquainted, and they all said there was no way to move the cars onto the grounds. Finally, Aubrey Barnhart had suggested that the only one in town who might be able to help was Wilbur Deppe, but told Chappie, "be on your guard". Deppe could be gruff.

When ushered into Deppe's office, Fox says he could hardly see Wilbur due to the cigar smoke. When presented with the problem, it turned out Deppe already had seen the rail cars and said "Who says it can't be done?" He offered no specifics, and Chappie went on down the street to the ring barn, the only building the CWM had at the time. It was ten below outside and ten above inside, but Mayor Ed Ritzenthaler and Lee Shaw found a small room on the third floor of the city hall for Chappie to use as an office until spring.

Chappie and Deppe became 6 a.m. breakfast friends, meeting at the old Chocolate Shop, now Christina's. Finally, in the spring, Deppe told Chappie to arrange for



the cars to be brought to the rail yards on a specific day. Separating the body of each car from the trucks (wheels), each car was in turn loaded onto Deppe flatbed trucks, one moving forward and one backing up.

One rail car was moved down the hill each day for five days, and the Milwaukee Journal devoted four pages of pictures to the operation. Rail tracks leading nowhere were laid on the CWM grounds, and the cars reassembled where they are today.

Now Chappie used the advertising car as his office, with a small electric heater to take off the chill. Newsmen seeking publicity articles were fascinated with the advertising facilities on the car, which helped in obtaining good public relations for the CWM.

The RB 66 today

At present, the RB 66 rests in the Baraboo railyards across from the CWM's Robert Parkinson Library and Research Center. The railcar's fate and the decisions regarding moving it onto the CWM grounds rests in the hands of new leaders.

Like Fox and Deppe in 1960, they will have to be innovative. Like the advertising car, the RB66 is the largest acquisition of the

CWM and is an important and impressive addition to the artifacts of the world's largest circus museum and research center.

Out of the archives...

These excerpts of old minutes are examples of some of Inc.'s accomplishments.

From the minutes of the October 22, 1959 meeting:

The secretary (Clark Wilkinson) explained that Director C.P. Fox had called and advised that if the Circus World Museum at Baraboo was to acquire any of the Ringling Circus items at Sarasota, it was necessary to take immediate action as the State of Florida and the Circus Hall of Fame were both after said items.

He explained the Ringlings were giving a coach and stock car and eight wagons, together with miscellaneous items and it was necessary to

buy two flat cars at once. These would be used to haul the eight wagons and to make up the circus train display when they arrive. The State Historical Society had agreed to pay the cost of transportation of everything up here. But it would take time to get the Bureau of Purchases to approve the purchase money for the two flat cars at \$2,500 each.

Time was something that could not wait in this case, so it was proposed by Fox that the Circus World Museum, Inc. purchase the said two circus flat cars at \$2,500 each. The bill for them to be paid at a later date, either spring or August, 1960, by which time the State Historical Society would advance the money.

Inc. moved to authorize Chappie Fox to purchase the circus flat cars.

From the minutes of the May 10, 1986 meeting:

Inc. gave Circus World Museum a grant of \$4,500 to restore the Seils-Sterling horse trailer and Forepaugh-Sells baggage wagon. The money was taken from the 1986-1987 budget. Chappie Fox reported that the Circus Memorial Wall on the courthouse square had added several more names and that funds were needed to pay for this project. Inc. gave \$300 towards the project. ☺

HOW CHAPPIE FOX RECREATED THE CIRCUS TRAIN

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

Perhaps nowhere in the world can you see so many happy people, year after year, as on the Great Circus Train. This year's venture was no exception. Standing room only for most--yes. Loud, with a Dixieland band competing with the sound of a moving train--yes. But happy--yes, very happy!

Happy even for the smokers, despite the no smoking ban. Happy also for the cocktail crowd, though no alcoholic beverages are allowed. Even the conductors were happy despite the mobbed aisles.

There was one man on the train, however, who was happier than all the rest. He sat in his special chair in the dining car, the omnipresent fedora in place, and wore the modest smile of a man who knows his job was well done, a job responsible for all the happiness of all the people on board.

The man, of course, was C.P. "Chappie" Fox.

He was supposed to be a surgeon, coming from a family of surgeons, but Chappie liked anything about the circus, and anything about horses. It was he who became the first director of the infant Circus World Museum (CWM) in 1960, and it was he who, in that year and the next, gathered together in Baraboo most of the historic but abandoned circus wagons in the country--and some from England too!

It was this same Chappie who saw the opportunity and gathered not only railroad flat cars but an historic smoke-belching steam engine. Craftily, he had collected the makings of a circus train as of old! In his mind it would be as grand or grander than the rapidly forgotten trains of old.

Robert Uihlein

Ken Jensen, in his book "The Biggest, the Smallest, the Largest, the Shortest", relates a conversation in 1965 between Fox, Ben Barkin, and Robert Uihlein, President of Schlitz Brewing of Milwaukee. Plans were being made for the third Great American

Circus Parade in 1965, sponsored by Schlitz. Trucks had heretofore been used to transport the circus wagons from Baraboo to Milwaukee, with little fanfare. Fox had just proposed a circus train, complete with steam engine, for 1965. Uihlein is speaking to Barkin:

"It,s crazy. Utterly outrageous. Does Fox have bats in the upper story? Doesn't he know we're in the 1960's, and that we're sending men into outer space? Has anybody informed him that this is not the steam age? Has he the faintest notion that it would cost a fortune to operate a special train to run between Baraboo and Milwaukee just once a year?"

Chappie Fox is a patient but persuasive man--he calls it being diligent. Quietly he ticked off the engine, flat cars, caboose, and wagons he had assembled. He spoke eloquently of the beauty of the train "winding its way as colorful as any rainbow, through the bucolic countryside..what a sight..there'd be jams of people at every crossing"!

The circus train

The result, of course, was the annual series of circus trains beginning in 1965 and culminating in the great parade of 1972. Featured then was the first 40-horse hitch in over half a century. Unfortunately, it was to be the last Chappie Fox parade, and Schlitz turned its advertising and public relations activities to other venues. It was also Chappie's last year as director of the CWM, though his heart never left Baraboo and his Circus World Museum.

Revived in 1985 by Milwaukee interests, the parade is again staged every year in July, preceded by the Great Circus Train from Baraboo. As it was for the last 14 years, this year's parade was sponsored by Strong Investments of Milwaukee, in cooperation with the Wisconsin Southern and Wisconsin Central Railroads.

Some two dozen red-shirted Strong employees served as hostesses. The ever happy crowd gulped down breakfast rolls, soft drinks and coffee, and turkey sandwiches and brownies at lunch time, thanks to Strong.

And the Band Played On, and on, and on!



A very happy crowd indeed



Our Host, Chappie Fox

Other happiness

There was another happy item on the train, we believe, though she rode on an open flat car. One could see there the inscrutable smile of the golden Cinderella. The smile was not for the plume-headed Prince trying the glass slipper on her foot, but rather it was that she knew, in her aged wooden head, that her real live prince was also riding on the train, albeit in the dining car. He was the man with the ubiquitous trademark, an old fedora hat.

Chappie had long ago rescued Cinderella from a horse pasture near St. Louis, almost buried in weeds and manure. The persuasive Fox obtained her as a donation from Guy Mullen, a circus fan, along with the Sells-Floto leopard cage and other items.

Restored to her former glory as was the prince and the carriage, she now rides proudly in the Milwaukee parade each year. It is not such a big deal for Cinderella, however, for she made her first Milwaukee appearance in 1888, some 112 years ago! And what is another Milwaukee parade when you have toured Europe with Barnum and Bailey? Besides, she had found her real prince in Baraboo.

On the same flat car with Cinderella was the matching Mother Goose float, which the diligent Fox had gotten at no charge for brokering a deal in the 1950's for a Milwaukee steam company. They wanted a calliope, which came with Mother Goose thrown in. Chappie's "fee" was the Mother Goose float, which he started towing from Milwaukee to Oconomowoc at 20 mph. When a patrolman stopped him, Chappie expected the worst. The patrolman refrained from making any insinuating remarks about a grown man towing a Mother Goose float, but did ask Chappie to let an army convoy pass on the two lane road. Wouldn't you know, in a few years the steam company tired of the calliope and donated it to Chappie as head of the new CWM in Baraboo.

Other Wagons

Each wagon has its own story. The Gollmar Mirror Wagon, built by the brothers themselves, was deteriorating in a park

in Peoria, a park that desperately ^ewanted lions for its little zoo. Enter Chappie Fox, who persuaded Pabst Brewing Co. to donate 3 lions in exchange for the calliope wagon. Pabst then donated the wagon to the CWM. Everybody won: Peoria got its lions, the CWM got the Gollmar wagon, and Pabst reaped good will and publicity in both Peoria and Baraboo. What a deal!

Seemingly every wagon has a story on how Fox obtained it for the museum, as related in his highly illustrated book "America's Great Circus Parade". Many of the stories have been reported in previous articles by this writer also. A new book by CWM's Fred Dahlinger, "Great Circus trains, 1872-1956", provides great insight to the circus trains of the past. Never before have more than 25 wagons traveled with any circus, but the recent great trains have carried 75 of the CWM wagons, with plenty of wagons left in Baraboo--the world's largest collection by far.

It was a great train all right, at about one-half mile in length--though one circus train in the old days was a mile and a half long! You can bet, though, that no circus train of the old days was happier than the Great Circus Trains of today, nor could they match the happiness of the man who made them possible. Whether we ride the train or not, we all owe a lot to Chappie, and also to all the folks of today who spent the past year working out the details!



Fond memories of **Exercising the elephants**

by Bob Dewel

In 1955 the Ringling Brothers Circus had been gone from Baraboo for 37 years, but editor Curt Page Sr. was still waxing nostalgic about it in his *News Republic* on 8-11-55.

He wrote how "it was always a thrilling sight in Baraboo to see the elephants being exercised . . . there is something about the old-time circus that gets in your system, and you can never forget it."

Page could not have imagined that within four years the infant Circus World Museum would open in Baraboo, complete with W. W. Deppe's elephant, Bertha. True, John Kelly, the former attorney for the Ringlings, had been loudly buttonholing people about the need for a circus museum, but few people paid attention to the old man in 1955.

By 1959, Kelly's dream was a reality, and today elephants splash around in the Baraboo river daily at 4:45 p.m.

Page also wrote about Henry Moeller still painting on a wagon on the moving train as it left Baraboo one season. In addition, Page wrote about the Moeller circus wagons, saying, "There is one at the circus museum in Sarasota called the Bell Wagon, which is one of the most famous circus wagons in existence in the world today."

That Sarasota wagon, built in Baraboo, has now been on loan to the Circus World Museum for several years!

Editor Page would have been pleased!

THE CWM PARADE WAGONS

International Sleuth nabs Historic English Tableau

Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

Circus World Museum (CWM) director Chappie Fox's knowledge of circus lore knew no international boundaries, so you can imagine his interest when a young service man and circus fan, Hugo Zeiter, casually mentioned in 1968 that he had seen ancient circus wagons stored in a barn while in England in WWII.

Unfortunately, he could not remember the location, but his description convinced Chappie that the wagons were the historic telescoping tableau wagons of the Sir Robert Fossett English circus. Despite several setbacks, but with his usual diligence to the task at hand, Chappie finally located the objects in a pole barn in Tiffield, near Northhampton.

As the story developed later, the British government had, in 1917, confiscated all horses, including those of the circuses, as part of the WWI effort. Thus the eleven wagons had sat there for 50 years, their canvass covering long gone, and exposed to the English weather.

Like an international sleuth, Fox was soon in England and calling on circus owner Bailey Fossett and his sister Mary, grandchildren of the famous circus owner, Sir Robert Fossett. After viewing the deplorable condition of the wagons on a rainy English day, Fox was invited in for a spot of tea and crumpets.

Of course, the subject of the wagons came up. Chappie had sent a promotional kit about the CWM, and now gingerly broached the subject of the future of the wagons. "Oh, but Mr. Fox, the wagons are not for sale" remarked Mr. Fossett, and Chappie's heart fell to his heels. "But," continued the host, "we want to give them to the museum." Chappie's heart now flew to his throat like a yo yo.

Chappie Fox, always prepared, had previously talked to Ben Barkin and the Schlitz Brewing Company about arrangements, and soon a British shipping company arrived to load the decrepit wagons for transport. Chappie insisted that the barn floor be raked for any missing parts or carvings, and soon the crates were on the way to Milwaukee on a German cargo ship.

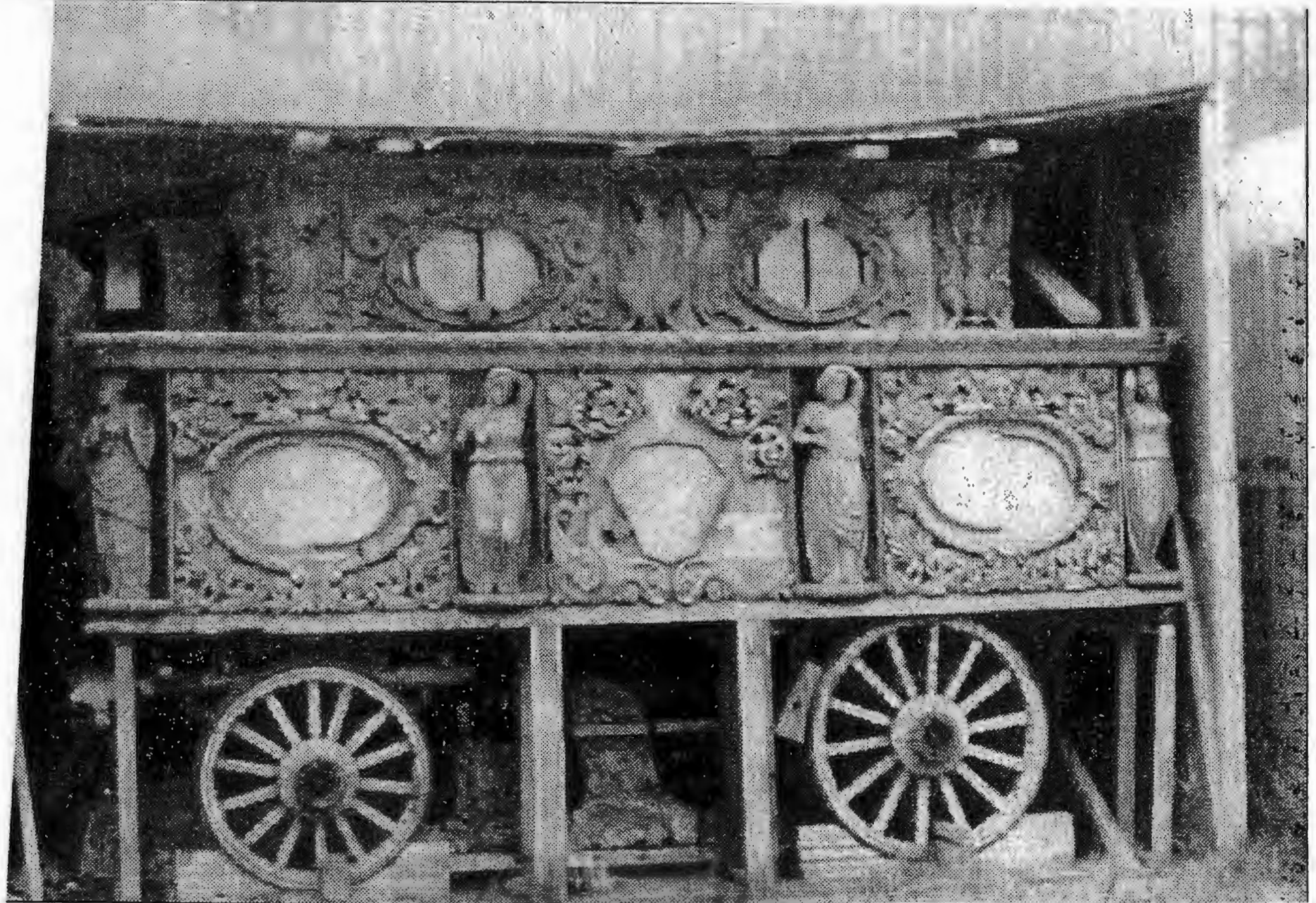
Chappie had proposed to the Fossetts that a publicity release be prepared for the British and American media, but they mysteriously declined. Fox later learned that had the word gotten out, a rival British circus might have blocked shipment on the basis of historical preservation. Obviously the Fossetts preferred the CWM to whatever their rivals had in store for the wagons. Chappie had thwarted the British Lion!

But Chappie was not out of the woods yet, for it seemed on arrival that the Milwaukee Customs office would be imposing a duty on the shipment. Schlitz had already paid \$17,000 on the deal, and the CWM had no money for customs fees. Thanks to the marvelous circumstances of chance, the customs officer was a circus and Milwaukee Parade buff. Since the wagons might be 100 years old, he observed they could be classified as antiques, and the crates were allowed to proceed to Baraboo.

Trouble awaited there, for the Dept. of Agriculture quarantined the crates until they could be inspected for British seeds and for diseases in the rotting wood and straw. After a week's delay the crates were cleared, and the following winter was spent sorting out the broken pieces for each of the 11 wagons. Restoration then proceeded, funded with generous allowances from the ever-generous Schlitz Company.

The telescoping Tableaus are among the most beautiful wagons at the CWM, and British circus buffs now know that Americans revere ancient and historical things, in this case British things.

Circus World Museum Photo



THE CWM PARADE WAGONS

Cinderella Finds Her Prince in Baraboo

Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

"There she was", said Chappie Fox, "Cinderella (the float) sitting in a horse pasture almost buried in weeds, forgotten and forlorn."

No, there weren't any wicked sisters that had done her in at the St Louis Pasture. The once stunning larger-than-life woodcarving, including the prince fitting the slipper, no longer had protective paint, and rot was beginning to show. The 1880 Barnum and Bailey float was close to being beyond repair, a great letdown from her fame during the B&B European tour.

Her most recent owner, Terril Jacobs, had frequently warned Chappie that "as long as I am alive, I will own Cinderella." However, hard times had changed that resolve, and she now resided in a pasture on a pony farm. The present owner, Guy Mullen, also had the Sells-Floto leopard cage. Cinderella is properly known as the Barnum and Bailey "Cinderella' pony float.

This time Chappie did not have to be innovative, for Mullen generously donated both Cinderella and the Leopard Cage, plus three other wagons. It is to Chappie's credit that he knew where to ask for things, and his lifetime knowledge of circus lore gave him that ability.

On October 6, 1962, these valuable wagons arrived on the CWM grounds. Restoration specialist Ernie Zimmerly treated Cinderella with linseed oil—and the prince too, we presume, followed by primer and gold paint. In recent years, she has been gloriously covered with gold foil, and is more

resplendent than even the Barnum and Bailey folks could have imagined.

Cinderella's first public appearance had been in Milwaukee in 1888, so it was appropriate that she appeared in the first modern parade in 1963. That smile on her face is because she had finally found a real live prince, in a fedora hat, in Baraboo Wisconsin.

Golden Age of Chivalry

The Barnum and Bailey Golden Age of Chivalry wagon is one of the most spectacular tableaux at the Circus World Museum (CWM). Built in 1902 for Barnum and Bailey, it was for many years part of an antique automobile exhibit in Princeton, Mass, and later in Harrisburg PA.

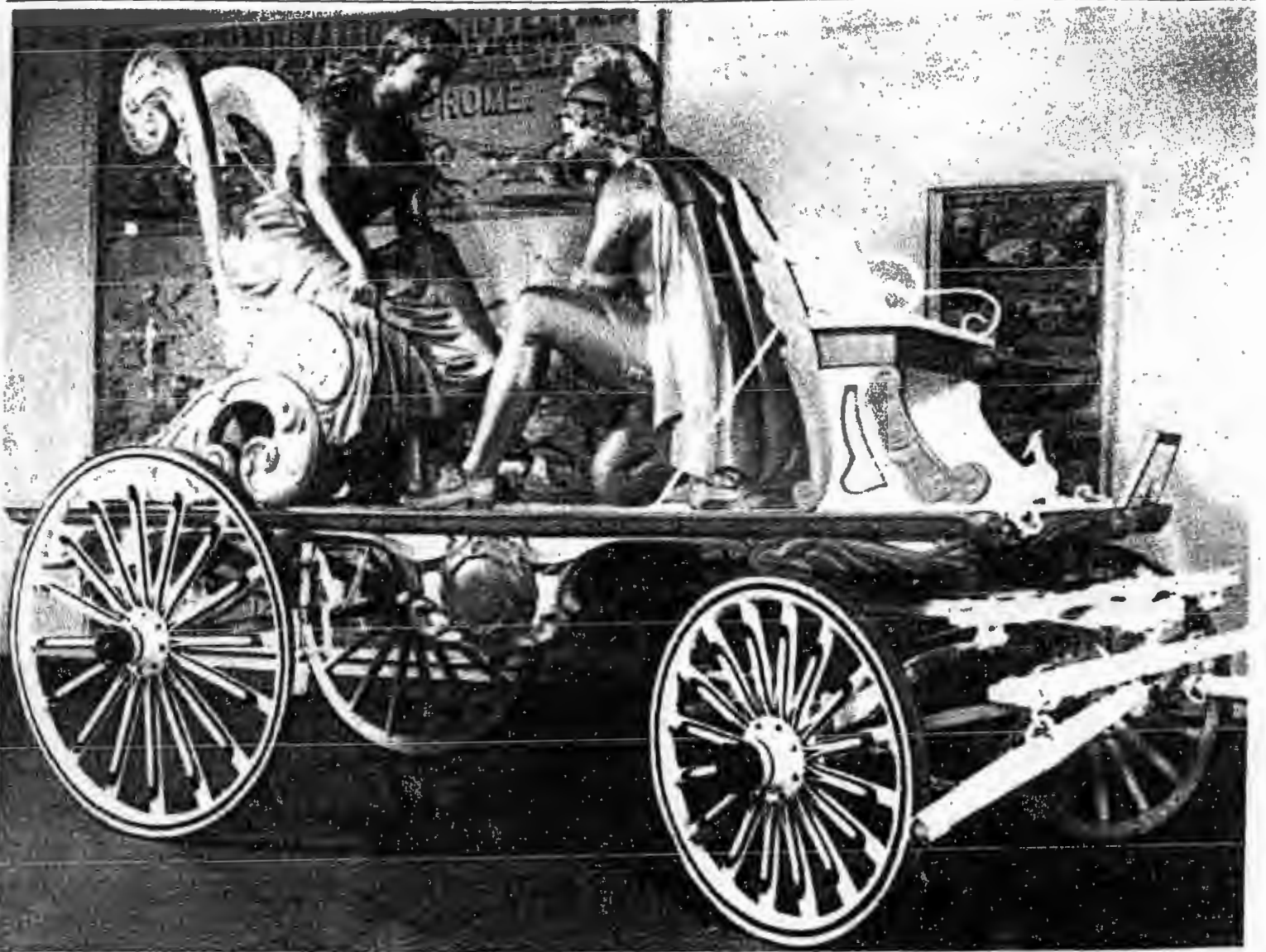
Probably no wagon in the museum took longer to acquire or required more contacts than this wagon, expending a lot of time and effort by the enterprising director, C.P. "Chappie" Fox. The prestigious antique museum finally offered to trade it for a 1915 Rolls Royce or Dusenberg, both cars being rare or non-existent. Through a complicated maneuver, Fox obtained a 1902 Franklin auto. He was told that it would not do, but a 1903 might be considered. Talk about picky!

Finally, in desperation, Fox pleaded with the Harrisburg folks. Perhaps to get him off their case, he was told that he had 10 days to raise \$12,000, or to forget it. One suspects they knew that the museum did not have that kind of money.

Taking a new tack, Fox arranged a dinner party in Oconomowoc, where the president of the Marshall Field stores, Jerry Sivige, would be present. Before the party was over, the persuasive Fox had a commitment for the \$12,000 as a gift from Marshall Fields, and a surprised Harrisburg museum turned the wagon over to the CWM.

This large and spectacular wagon features two green dragons rising high above the wagon box, and always gets special attention when on display. It remains part of the CWM

wagon collection, largest collection in
the world by far.



Circus World Museum Photos

THE CWM PARADE WAGONS

A Calliope, Mother Goose,
Duke Ellington, and Harry
Truman

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

BNR COPY

This is the first of a series of articles on how Chappie Fox got the world's largest collection of circus wagons for the Museum. The stories are based on several hours of interview in 1998 with the late Mr. Fox.

"Mr. Hainer, I tell you, there is a steam calliope that might be available."

"Mr. Fox, you are dead wrong. I have searched this country over, and there just aren't any steam calliopes left"

This conversation took place in 1952, seven years before the birth of the Circus World Museum (CWM). Hainer was vice-president of Cleaver-Brooks, the Milwaukee steel boiler company. Fox was at that time an Oconomowoc businessman and circus buff. Hainer wanted a calliope to advertise the boiler company.

Though the CWM was still but a dream, Fox was known as an expert on circus memorabilia, and Fox, it developed, was right about a calliope. He knew that Cole Brothers had suffered a disastrous fire in 1940, but that a tablaeu wagon called "America" had survived the fire, being stored elsewhere. It did not contain a calliope at that time, but Cole Bros. had salvaged a calliope from an Ohio riverboat, and had it installed in the America wagon.

Unfortunately, The Cole Bros circus closed in 1950, and Chappie Fox knew that the restored calliope wagon was stored in an air force hanger in Indiana. He took Hainer there to inspect it, but Hainer's purchase offer of \$2000 was rejected. During the negotiations the resourceful Fox had wandered off into the hanger, where he spotted the Mother Goose Float, as well as the Old Woman in the Shoe float. They were forgotten and neglected, not restored as we see them today,

Hainer's company had limited him to \$2500, so he and Fox went into consultation on how to get the best deal. Fox said "Fred, tell them you'll give them \$2500 if they will throw in those two little neglected pony floats".

The Highway Patrol

The deal was soon closed, but Hainer wondered aloud what he was going to do with two pony floats. Seeing Fox's sheepish look, he said "I'll give you one for all your help." In no time Fox could be seen pulling a large Mother Goose behind his car on the way back to Oconomowoc. Fox was embarrassed, however, when a state patrolman pulled him over, a grown man with a large Mother Goose in tow.

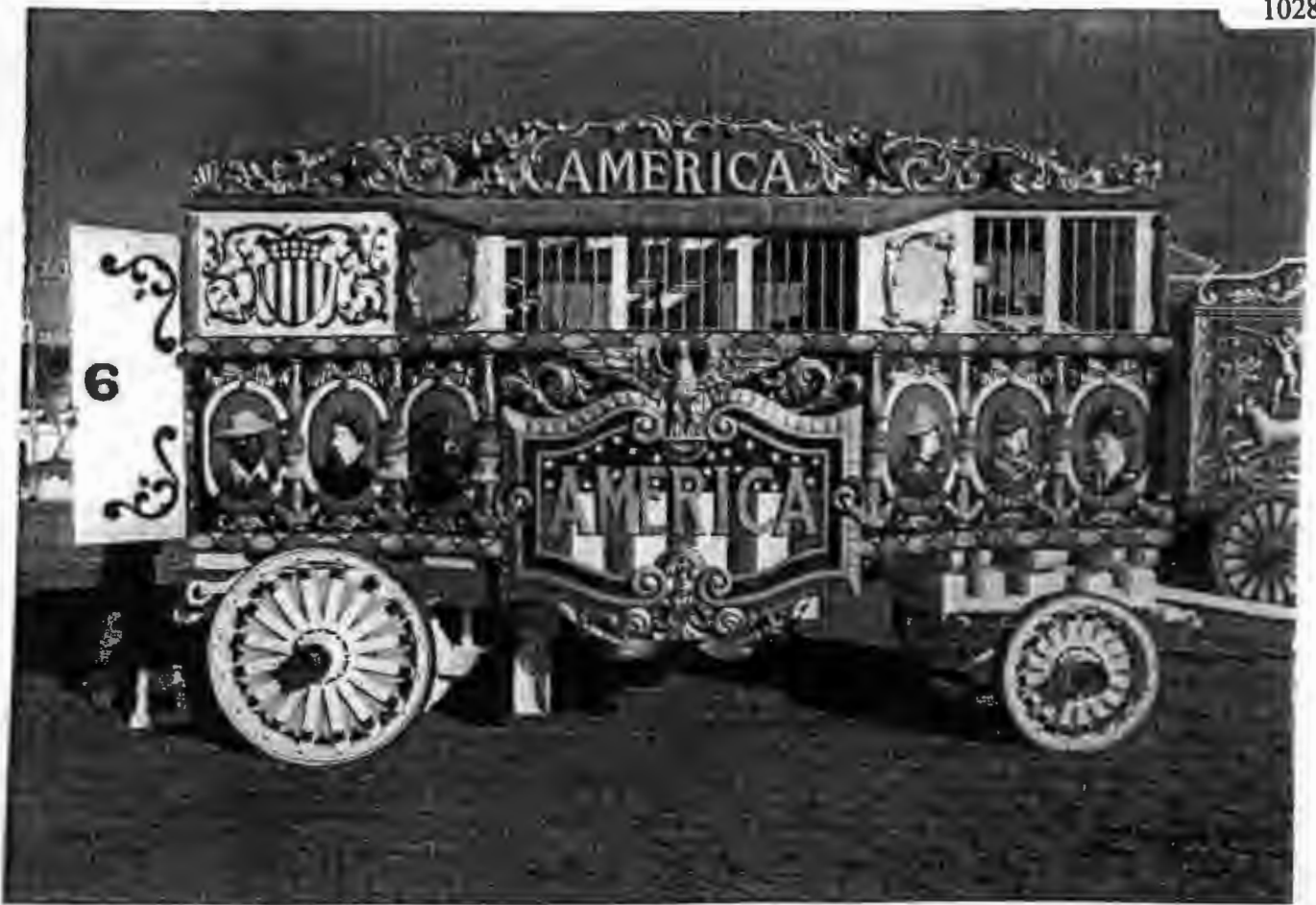
The officer said "I won't ask you what you are doing with this fairy tale, but do me a favor. There is a long military convoy behind you. It would be safer to let them pass, rather than everyone creep along at 20 mph." Chappie readily agreed, but had to endure whistling and jeering and selected witticisms from the passing soldiers in the convoy. It's not every day you pass Mother Goose on a Wisconsin Highway.

Fox kept track of Cleaver-Brooks and their use of the calliope. As he says in his book "The Great Circus Parade", he began to suggest "that I hoped that someday his company would consider giving it to the new CWM in Baraboo." Sure enough, it and the Woman in the Shoe float arrived in Baraboo on July 1, 1959, in time for the opening of the new museum. It was the third wagon to arrive, having been preceded by John Kelly's gift of the Columbia wagon, and the arrival of the Gollmar Mirrored Wagon. For 50 years now, its piercing tones have skirled the Baraboo skies' Chappie of course donated the Goose Float.

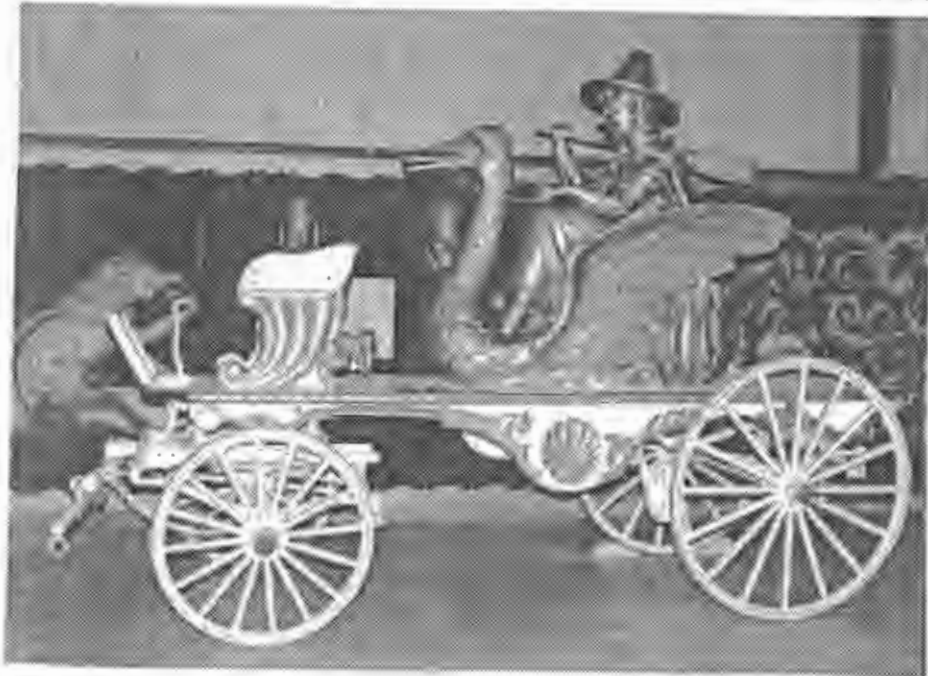
Duke Ellington and Harry Truman

Once, at a party in Milwaukee before a parade, Chappie overheard Duke Ellington say he had played every musical instrument there was. He admitted to Chappie, however, that he hadn't played a calliope, so promptly at 10 A.M. the next day a taxi pulled up at the parade grounds, and out came the Duke. When he started playing the keyboard, nothing happened. Somewhat chagrined, he turned to Chappie, who explained that the keys must be struck with considerable force. Ellington complied, and soon his signature tune, Mood Indigo, roared over the parade ground

The America wagon has had another distinction, for it was in the inaugural parade of President Truman in 1948. A few years ago the wagon and its calliope underwent careful renovation and restoration at the CWM shops, with duplicate wood carvings by Baraboo's expert wood artist Homer Daehn. As the third wagon to arrive at the museum, it has seen some 200 additional original circus wagons arrive,



Above: The "America" calliope was donated in 1959
 Below: Chappie pulled the Mother Goose float behind his car



thus forming the largest collection in the world
 by far of this stellar example of circus
 memorabilia.

THE CWM PARADE WAGONS

Beer, Three Lions, and the Gollmar Mirror Wagon Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel
www.drbobdewel.i8.com

You had to hand it to the diligence and perseverance of C. P. "Chappie" Fox, the new director of the Circus World Museum (CWM) in 1959. In this article his diligence in obtaining circus wagons for the museum involves lions, a brewery, and kitchen equipment!

Pabst and the Lions

In 1959, few artifacts remained from the once mighty Gollmar Brothers Circus of Baraboo, which was sold and dissolved in 1916. With his vast knowledge, however, Fox knew that the Gollmar Mirror Wagon, built in Baraboo by the boys themselves, still existed in a zoo, of all places, in Peoria Illinois.

This is more properly known as the #21 Gollmar Bros. Band Tableau. It's only reason for existence seemed to be to allow children at the zoo to climb all over it. Deterioration was rapidly setting in, but the zoo had no intention of losing it, and certainly not donating it to a little museum in Wisconsin.

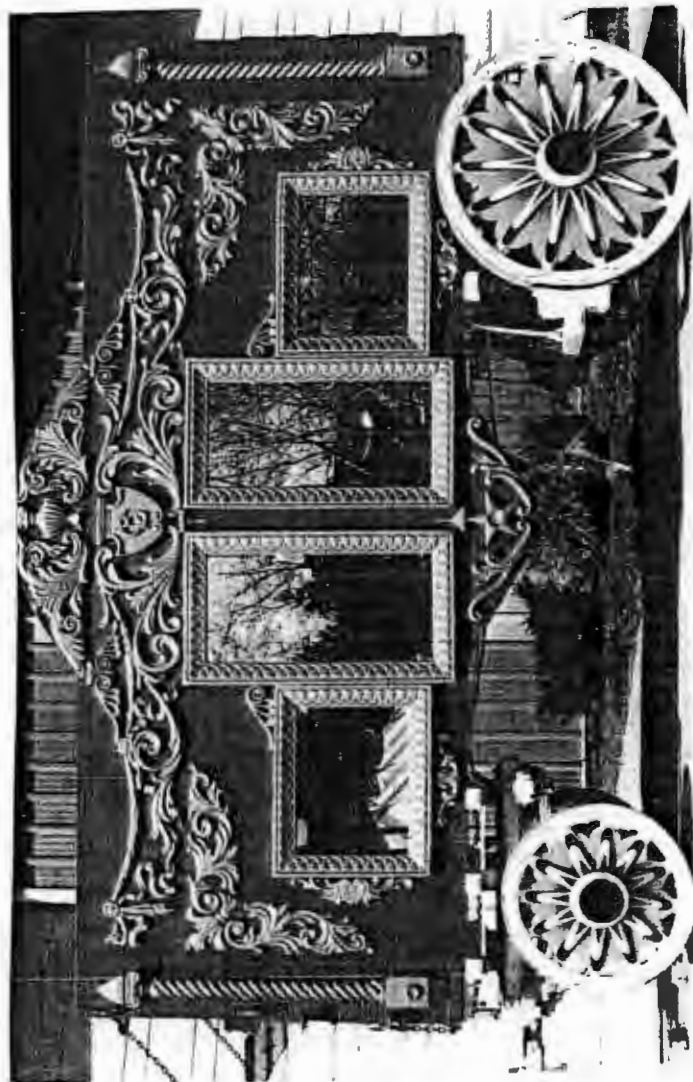
By nosing around, however, Chappie learned that the zoo was badly in need of lions, but was financially strapped. In a master stroke of ingenuity, Fox, who happened at that time to be the President of the Milwaukee Zoological Society, persuaded the Pabst Brewing Company to enter into a clever advertising scheme.

First, they would purchase three young lions and give them to Peoria in exchange for the Gollmar Tableau. The wagon would then be donated to the CWM. Pabst thus obtained favorable

publicity in both Peoria and Baraboo for the very modest purchase price of the lions. Peoria got their lions, and the CWM got the Gollmar wagon. Pabst was delighted with the proposal, and so was Fox, since Pabst covered the shipping costs from Peoria to Baraboo!

The # 21 Gollmar Band Tableau was on display on opening day in 1959, and has since been restored. In its day it opened every circus season in Baraboo with a parade past the Gollmar parents' residence on Third Avenue and Birch Street.

In just a few years Fox acquired dozens more circus wagons, and the CWM now displays the largest collection in the world by far of original gaily decorated wagons. Watch for the #21 Gollmar Bros. Band Tableau in the July 3 parade in Baraboo.



Two poodles work with two of the shows' favorites, Snowball and Hans. The dog-and-pony routine open the show. Newcomer Pepl, is a very peppy little poodle and the children particularly like him.

In addition to the animal acts, Mary Ruth does a Spanish web routine and Hines and Patti Rucker do balancing and juggling. Pattie does some fancy footwork in the ancient art of foot juggling and Hines gains the audience admiration with his blind-folded juggling of burning rods.

Today is the first day for the loading of the railway flat cars. It will now be a daily feature at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

An important visitor for opening day was Walter Hohenadel, editor of "White Tops" magazine, the biggest publication for circus fans.

The museum has received a valued donation from the Cleaver-Brooks company. It is a continuous tape player which provides music throughout the day. "Bud" Potter of Milwaukee produced the tape which required much engineering. Included on the tape is band organ music heard with European circuses.

750 at Opening Of Museum Here

The Circus World Museum opened its fifth season Saturday. Despite the cool, cloudy weekend, 750 persons toured the museum and attended the first performances of the Circus World Museum Trained Animal circus.

The circus promises to be an important highlight of the current season with fresh new acts and clever innovations. During the cool weather, the show is being presented in the Winter quarters and Sunday afternoon it was "standing room only".

John Herriott has accomplished remarkable results with the three baby elephants. Eva, Topsy and Susie can now perform with the best animal acts. They waltz, promenade, stand on their heads, sit up and do the twist. Topsy amused the audience yesterday with her back-talk and Suzie charmingly plays coy.

The twelve pony act may soon be the best seen anywhere in this country. It is amazing to see the 12 respond to command, dancing, and precision drill.

An American Saddle horse, "American Anthem", is a newcomer to the museum. Herriott has been training it only a few months, and his wife Mary Ruth shows the animal. It proved most capable of Spanish dancing.

THE CWM PARADE WAGONS

Three U.S. Senators help the CWM Obtain Wagons Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel www.drbobdewel.i8.com BNR COPY

In 1961, the Circus World Museum was only two years old, but already the scene had changed considerably in old Ringlingville, the site of the new museum.

By then the CWM now owned 12 vintage circus wagons, and the State Historical Society was wondering about the acquisitions, and where they might be stored. Little did they imagine what Chappie Fox had in mind.

America's Great Circus Parade was still just a twinkle in Chappie's eye, but he had just obtained, with his usual diligent methods, the glorious Great Britain Wagon, the Pawnee Bill Bandwagon, and five other treasures donated from Fort Worth Texas. Interestingly, the proper museum name for the Great Britain Bandwagon is "#100 Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Tableau". A tableau is a striking object or scene, an elaborately decorated wagon in this case.

Talk about diligence! Chappie had even enlisted the services of Wisconsin Senators Wiley and Proxmire in the acquisition. Wiley had contacted Texas Senator Lyndon B., Johnson. After some maneuvering, the owners, a family estate, struck a deal, and the wagons were donated.

The donation created a problem for Chappie though, for the always cramped budget of the CWM did not allow for rail shipment from Texas. Chappie always seemed to have a myriad of well-placed friends, and before long he was introduced to Mr. J.J. Allen, president of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad. Alan turned out to be a great circus fan! Presto, the transportation was provided free, and the Texas wagons arrived in Baraboo on Oct. 3, 1962.

Included in the wagons listed above was a Sells and Downs steam calliope wagon, the 101 Wild West Baggage Wagon, and three carnival wagons. As Chappie writes, "after restoration, the wagons were simply breathtaking!" It was also rather breathtaking how C.P. Fox was able, as time went by, to assemble the world's largest collection of circus wagons for the growing museum in Baraboo. Baraboo hadn't had a circus wagon for some 40 years. Look at her now!

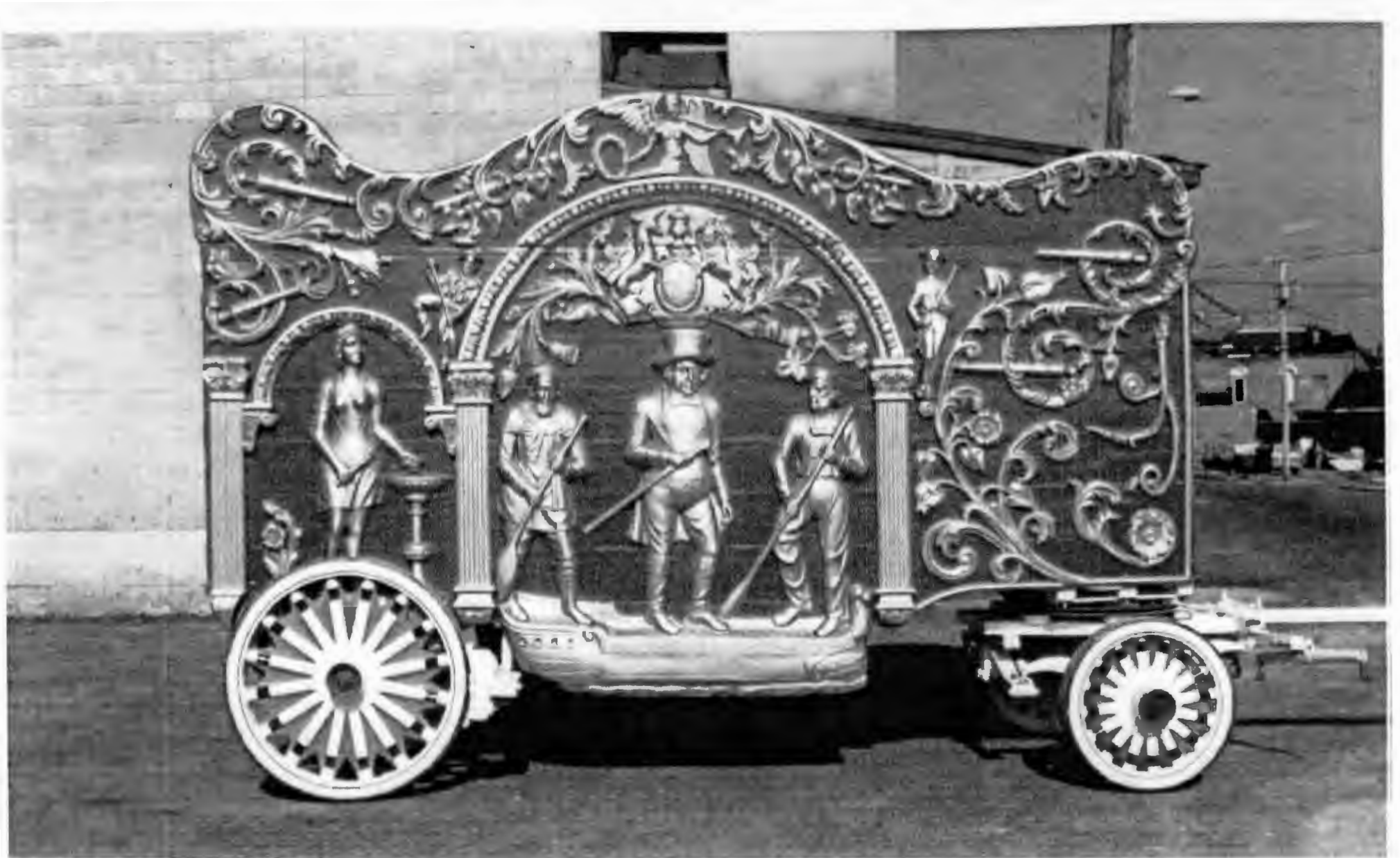
A Calliope in a Coal Bin

Chappie had friends at the Schlitz Brewing Company also, and in 1964 a dozen or so wagons and carts and chariots were obtained, including a Robbins Brothers Circus air (not steam) calliope. Incredibly, it had for some time been serving as a coal bin in Indiana! Pretty fancy coal bin!

Also included was the Hippopotamus wagon, by then little more than a pile of decayed wood and debris. Massive reconstruction at the Museum restored both it and the calliope, thanks to the Schlitz Company, and they were used in the early Milwaukee parades, which were sponsored entirely by Schlitz. Fox pointed out, however, that at no time were beer advertisements allowed in the parade, a tribute to the public spirit motivating Schlitz' sponsorship of the parade for many years.

By now the State Historical Society was concerned about reservation and storage, for wagons were starting to roll in from all parts of the country. Two Madison circus buffs came to the rescue, namely Dean Adams and Bob Pierce. In conjunction with the state building commission they had a pavilion constructed, 70 feet by 150 feet, the present Deppe Wagon Pavilion.

The name was chosen in recognition of the years of service to the museum by Wilbur Deppe of Baraboo, and it is now used for display of dozens of the museum's collection of wagons. Nearby is a more recent building, the Chappie Fox Wagon



Restoration Building. Joined by a courtyard between the two structures, the area is a fitting memorial to the two good friends who did so much for the Circus World Museum.

THE CWM PARADE WAGONS

California Loses, Baraboo
gains 31 wagons

Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

After the major circuses discontinued the circus parade, many of the old wagons ended up in Hollywood for use in the movies. Indeed, "The Big Circus", was premiered in 1959 at the Al Ringling Theatre in Baraboo as part of the ceremonies opening the new Circus World Museum (CWM) that year.

Other circus movies included actress Dorothy Lamour, Doris Day, and Jimmy Durante. Chappie Fox, new director of the museum, was well aware of the existence of the old wagons, now rehabilitated and used in motion pictures by both Disney and Universal Studios.

The Disney Wagons

The Disney wagons had been used for a one-ring circus and street parade at Disneyland for three years, but then were stored when the plans changed. Noting this, the enterprising Fox wrote one, and then another letter to Walt Disney.

No reply was forthcoming, so Fox inquired, wherever he went, as to who might know Walt Disney. He hit the jackpot one night at a party in his brother's home in Winnetka, Illinois. A guest, George Getz Jr., a collector of fire trucks, said he was to have dinner soon with Disney.

George was on the board of directors of the Santa Fe Railroad, and next day he informed Chappie that Fred Gurley, not Getz, would deliver Chappie's message. Gurley was President of the Santa Fe!

Within three days the studio contacted Chappie. To shorten a long story, the railroad sent two 80 foot flat cars to the studio, and eleven beautifully

decorated wagons were delivered to Chicago. Chicago is not Baraboo, and the museum budget was slim, as always. But Gurley said "if we can move those two railroad flat cars 2000 miles for nothing, I think the Northwestern Railroad can handle the last 175 miles for free", and made the arrangements. A special prize among the wagons was the beautiful Swan bandwagon, plus a calliope and wagons from six circuses.

Universal Studios

Chappie was not done with Hollywood, for he knew that five wagons, some from the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus, were at Universal Studios. When he made an approach, however, the response was a flat "NO", and discussion and dealing proved impossible. Even the suggestion of a tax deduction failed to move the studio.

As he flew back to Wisconsin, Chappie went into his diligence mode, and upon arrival he called Joe Johnson of Milwaukee, a friend and circus buff. Johnny got Chappie in touch with the President of a New York bank who had connection to Universal Studios.

Presto! Within a few days came a call from the studio: "Fox, you son of a gun, what are you doing to me?" It was the official who had given Chappie a flat no only a short time before. In exchange for four wagon undercarriages with which to build their own wagons, the Hagenbeck-Wallace wagons were shipped, along with Barnum and Bailey and Sells-Floto wagons. Chappie Fox had scored again.

The Louis Goebel Collection

That's not the end of the California story, however. Within a year thirteen more wagons traveled from that state to the Nation's Dairyland. Goebel had already given the museum two wagons, having been impressed by the quality of the museum in a visit, and particularly with the wagon restoration facility.

Also included in this, the largest collection ever received by the

museum, was the massive Charging Tiger Tableau, properly known as the #11 Arthur Bros. Ticket Wagon. There also was a Robbins Bros. cage wagon and another ticket wagon.

By now the grounds were overflowing with authentic circus wagons, already the largest collection in the world. Chappie had plans, both for storage and for display, as will be seen in another article.



The #11 Arthur Bros. Ticket wagon, also known as
The Charging Tiger Tableau

THE CWM PARADE WAGONS

Kitchen Appliances for "Asia" and "France"

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

The #21 Gollmar Bros Band Tableau (Mirror bandwagon), mentioned in a previous article had originally been used for a time in Peoria as a parade wagon, advertising the Sutcliff and Case drug firm.

Peoria must have been a great place for parades in those days, for another Peoria firm, the Block and Kuhl Department store, also owned circus wagons which they used for a Christmas Parade promotional. With his vast knowledge of circus memorabilia, Fox of course knew about this, and about the interesting manner in which they had obtained the wagons in the first place.



Circus World Museum
The beautiful France Wagon before restoration

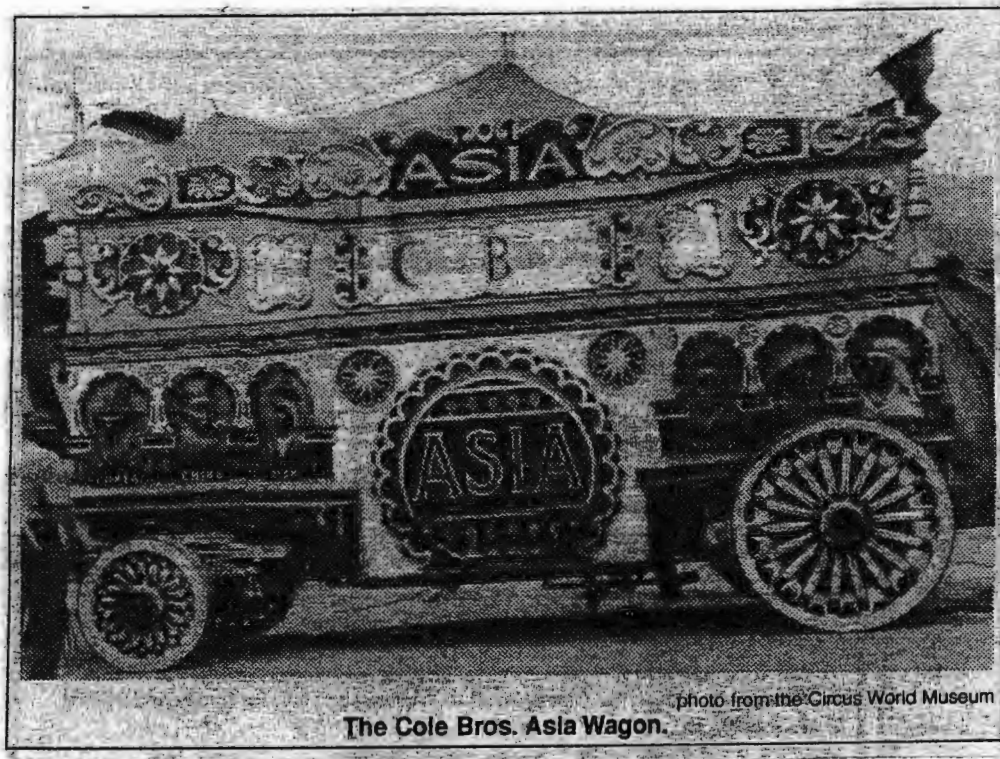
Cole Brothers Circus owner Zach Terrel had retained the Lion and Mirror Bandwagon, the magnificent #71 Cole Bros. Asia Tableau, and the beautiful #80 Cole Bros. France Tableau, both of which were bandwagons, and was not interested in selling them, even though his circus no longer had circus parades.

Early in World War II, however, Terrel had built a home, but was having trouble furnishing it with kitchen appliances due to wartime shortages and restrictions. The Department store people knew this, but since they were in the appliance business they still had access to the limited wartime supplies of appliances. Bingo! A deal was struck: Terrel got his house furnishings and Block and Kuhl got three premier wagons for their promotional parade.

Enter Chappie Fox, who knew more about circus wagons than their owners usually did. Chappie felt that it was a shame that such glorious wagons were seen only once a year in a parade. By 1959, when the Museum opened, he learned that Carson, Perie, and Scott of Chicago had purchased the Peoria store.

Another deal was struck: The CWM could use the wagons, saving the company storage costs, if the CWM would ship the wagons to Peoria every fall for the Christmas parade. Eventually the wagons became permanent property of the CWM.

Zach Terrel's appliances have long since resided in a junkyard or dump, but the restored Asia and France tableau wagons stand proudly at the CWM, ready for the Baraboo and Milwaukee parades. What's more, Chappie did it with no expense to the CWM! Diligence has its reward!



Corson Will Benefits Three Local Non-Profit Groups By Bob Dewel

Three non-profit Baraboo institutions have been named as beneficiaries in the will of the late Chester E Corson, a former resident.

Checks for nearly \$20,000 each have already been received by the Al Ringling Theatre, the St. Clare Health Care Foundation, and The First United Methodist Church. All three institutions were also suggested for memorial gifts at the time of Corson death on Dec. 3, 2003.

Small additional funds may be received by each of the beneficiaries upon final settlement of the estate in the near future. The gifts are a percentage of the estate, which accounts for the odd figures being received.

Corson was a significant local leader, especially in the development of low income housing for the community during the latter half of the twentieth century, and one such housing development, the Corson Square Apartments, bears his name.

He was for many years chairman of both the Community Development Authority (CDA) and the Baraboo Economic Development Committee (BEDC). BEDC was instrumental in bringing industries such as Perry Printing and Best-Ex to the community, as well as other occupants of Madalon Industrial Park.

A special recognition dinner was held on November 14, 1996 at which time Corson was recognized as "Baraboo's Thirteen Million Dollar Man," that sum being the amount of development grants and funds obtained under his CDA chairmanship.

His community contributions had previously been recognized in 1987,

when the Kiwanis Club presented him with one of the first of the annual Dr. Al Dippel Community Service Awards.

Keri Olson, director of the St. Clare Health Center Foundation, expressed appreciation for the gift, which will become part of the Foundation Endowment funds. She said that Corson was "a wonderful friend to the entire community as well as the health care center, and was an advocate and supporter who worked tirelessly in serving his adopted community"

Larry McCoiy, on behalf of the Al Ringling Theatre, spoke of the wonderful gift from the Corson will, and said Corson was often consulted due to his experience in local fund-raising efforts. "He was highly respected, and his advice was valued due to his perspective on the theatre as it related to the community."

Joan Fordham, Chair of the Administrative Board, spoke on behalf of the Methodist Church. She recalled that both Chet and Margaret "were not only long and faithful members, but both were very active in church affairs. The gift is greatly appreciated, and its use will be carefully considered. The Corsons were highly respected members of the church and the community, and are sorely missed."

Neither Margaret nor Chester Corson was a native of Sauk County, moving here in 1964 at about the age of 40 from Moline, Illinois, where both had been prominent in civic and church affairs. Corson was the manager of the Eagle Signal plant, located then on Lake Street. Both were active in the First United Methodist Church and in several civic organizations

Further details on the Corson will can be found in Bob Dewel's "Yesteryear Revisited" column elsewhere in the News-Republic.



Chester and Margaret Corson



Church and Hospital

Corson's activities are not confined to housing and industrial development. Somehow this man, head of a local industry, found time to serve the First United Methodist Church on nearly all of its committees, often as chairman, including extensive remodeling efforts in 1975 and 1990.

In addition, Chet served St. Clare Hospital on its advisory board, chairing more than one fund-raising effort for the Corporation. Corson stated at the time that "I do what I can for St. Clare Hospital because my business experience tells me that a community will attract more industry if the hospital in the area is top-notch."

Corson was one of the earliest community members to be recognized by the Kiwanis Club, receiving its Dr. Al. Dippel Community Service Award in 1987. Corson is among the more recent of a long line of contributors to the area, beginning in 1846 with Prescott Brigham, and continuing with donors such as W.W. Warren, John and Murrel Lange, and a host of others recognized in this column over the years. Many contributors are unsung, and some are recent and still living. All help to improve the area and its industrial and cultural life and amenities.

It is sometimes said that behind every successful man stands a surprised woman. We don't think Margaret was surprised at all, and early in their relationship must have recognized his leadership qualities. She shared Chet with the community, and we all benefited from their activities. The will serves to extend that community devotion beyond their physical presence. We should have suspected that this would happen!

A MUSICAL TRIBUTE TO CHET CORSON

BY DR. ROBERT DEWEL

Sung to the tune: Cruising Down the River

We're singing of Chet Corson,
We honor him tonight.
With Margaret at his side, he stands
So tall he's out of sight.

The C D A was started,
Decades ago, it seems . . . ,
And Chet was "chosed" to head it,
As the leader of the team.

Middle: He worked and worked, and pushed and pushed,
To start the C D A . . . , and
Thanks to Chet, the C D A's
The force it is today.

We'd also sing of BED-C . . . ,
But what would rhyme with that?
Our County also owes him,
Some more feathers in his cap.

Middle: He's not a man of towering height
He stands but five-foot five.
But when it comes to public good,
His head is out of sight.

We've come tonight to honor
This citizen it's true . . . Our
Million Dollar Man is . . . ,
Our own Mis-ter Bar-aboo.

Middle: There's Corson Square, and Donahue
And Park Ridge is just new.
I cannot rhyme with Donahue,
But those are just a few.

Finale:
We've come tonight to honor,
This citizen, it's true . . . our
Million Dollar Man is . . .
Our own Mis-ter Bar-aboo.

Chet Corson's \$13 million legacy

Money received for development of housing complexes, economic development loans and housing rehabilitation programs from 1979-1995 while Chet Corson chaired the Baraboo Community

Development Authority:

- Donahue Terrace Apartments — \$1.49 million
- Corson Square Apartments — \$2.3 million
- 1979 Community Development Block Grant — \$404,000
- 1984 Community Development Block Grant — \$732,000
- 1985 Community Development Block Grant — \$513,285
- 1986 Community Development Block Grant — \$500,750
- 1990 Community Development Block Grant — \$725,000
- 1994 Community Development Block Grant — \$496,700
- Urban Development Action Grant — \$300,000
- NECO Hammond — \$2.3 million
- Comprehensive Improvement Assistance Program — \$650,000
- Park Ridge Apartments — \$2.8 million

Total \$13,211,735

The Corsons Just Keep on
Giving and Giving
Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

Well they've done it again! Chester and Margaret Corson just keep on giving and giving to the Baraboo community, even after death.

It was revealed this week that the will of the late Chester Corson, who survived his wife Margaret by about three years, makes significant gifts to three local non-profit institutions. Beneficiaries receiving nearly \$20,000 each are the Al Ringling Theatre, the First United Methodist Church, and the St. Clare Health Care Foundation.

The gifts are a culmination of some 35 years of community service by this remarkable couple. Neither Chet nor Margaret was a native of Sauk County, having moved here with their family in 1964 at the age of about 40. Chet was the manager of the new Eagle Signal plant.

What Baraboo folks didn't know was that the Corsons had been named family of the year in their previous home of Moline, Illinois, and that both Chet and Margaret were prominent in civic activities in that city. Even the Corsons could not have foreseen, however, that someday a civic dinner would honor Chet as "Baraboo's 13 million dollar man."

Early Community Service

Soon after arrival both were involved in community activities, Margaret being involved in the United Methodist Church and the PEO Society. Especially important, however, was her spousal support of Chet in his public service activities, with many nights alone while Chet attended and often chaired meetings of civic committee, some of which are listed below.

Chet's activities were more public and varied than Margaret's. Early in his Baraboo residence he became a

member of the Kiwanis Club. Upon heading a club committee in 1976 he was instrumental in obtaining \$1.49 million in funds and grants which made possible the erection of the 61 unit Donahue Apartments on Second Avenue in 1978. In a speech of remembrance to the Kiwanis Club on Dec 18, 1990, Corson generously gave credit to a dozen or so members who also served on the committee over a period of time.

CDA and BEDC

The experience in obtaining funds and erecting the Donahue building was only the beginning, for soon Corson was involved in housing and economic development funding, often for low income families. These include the \$2.3 million Corson Square Apartments, named for him (probably against his wishes), and the recent \$2.8 million Park Ridge Apartments. Other Community Development Grants, ranging from 1979 to 1994, add up to an additional \$6.6 million. Often the funds are recycled by the CDA

The grand total of loans and grants for housing and community development obtained under Corson's leadership totaled \$13,211,735, and the dinner for "Baraboo's Thirteen Million Dollar Man" was given as a tribute to him on November 14, 1996. He served as chairman of the Community Development Authority from 1979 to 1996, retiring at the age of 82.

Corson also headed the Baraboo Economic Development Committee for many years. Formed in 1978, it acquired land for the Maddalon Industrial Park, and induced industry to locate in Baraboo and provide jobs for the citizens. Perry Printing and Best-Ex are among the industries located here as a result, as well as the expansion of Mid-States and Dell Tool.

Church and Hospital

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development. Somehow this man, head of a local industry, found time to serve the First United Methodist Church on nearly all of its committees, often as chairman, including extensive remodeling efforts in 1975 and 1990.

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Chance Meeting Brought ICF to Baraboo

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

On or near the southern shore of one of New York's Finger Lakes, there once was and perhaps still is a small café. Probably no brass plaque marks the spot, but perhaps there should be, for it was there, in 1971, that Baraboo's International Crane Foundation (ICF) was first envisioned.

This International Foundation has by now sent its representatives on missions to dozens of countries in three continents. Moreover, countless conservationists in those countries have come to know Baraboo as visitors because of the Foundation. In addition, there are over 10,000 members of the Foundation, many of whom visit our area.

Well known in the world of conservation and restoration of species, the ICF is well publicized in its present work. This article, however, will explore only the early days, when it was but a dream of two college students. We'll also consider how it came to Baraboo, and how it remains as a significant asset of the city and the county.

Cornell College

This prestigious Ivy League University is located in Ithaca, New York, at the southern end of Lake Cayuga, one of the finger lakes of that region. As students, it is commonly believed that George Archibald and Ron Sauey were classmates and close friends there, but George says they met only 4 months before the end of the school year, and then by coincidence.

Archibald had long been an admirer of Aldo Leopold and his "Sand County Almanac", and was instantly alert when he happened to overhear Leopold's name and book mentioned. George didn't even know where Wisconsin was, and was amazed to learn that Ron Sauey lived only a few miles from the Leopold shack.

The real friendship began, however, when both young men volunteered for the winter bird count at Lake Cayuga. It was a totally miserable day, so bad that even these dedicated young ornithologists retired to a small café to warm up. Sauey had planned to pursue his research on pheasants, but as they talked he became mesmerized by Archibald's accounts of Cranes and his dedication to that mystical bird. George had been working with eight species of the bird at the time, but with limited facilities and potential for growth.

A Baraboo Visit

The winter of 1971 found Archibald as a guest in the Sauey home in Baraboo. The adjacent property had until recently been a horse farm, but now had unused barns and adjacent acreage. George remembers that Gladys and Gerald Scott were present for dinner, Gerald having been Ron's mentor. Ron had suggested that his parents might let them use the property for a crane farm of sorts, and the dream started to take shape.

The original staff consisted only of George and Ron, with an occasional volunteer. George credits attorney Forrest Hartman with great assistance every Wednesday night in setting up the legal requirement for the organization. Soon there were 100 cranes of various species, and in 1975 the first crane was hatched from an egg that was laid there.

It is estimated that at the time there were only 70 of the Whooping species of crane existing in the world, and eventually the Foundation was able to obtain some. Now there are 450 of that species in existence, largely as a result of the Foundation and associated organizations, with well publicized migratory flights.

The concluding article will follow, with a mention of George's appearance on the Johnny Carson show, the origin of the human crane costumes, and the impact of the Foundation on Baraboo.



Photo credit Jim Harris

George Archibald, left, and Ron Sauey were the entire staff of the Crane Foundation in the early days.

Small Local Organization Went International

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

Suppose you heard that a new organization was coming to our area and that before long it would employ not only 31 full time persons, but also have representatives in a dozen or so countries in three continents. Moreover, it would draw delegations from some of those countries to Baraboo to observe its operation, and it would also attract not only volunteers but thousands of visitors to the area.

You can be sure that it would be warmly welcomed by the Ambassadors business welcoming group, but they did not exist at the time of this operation. We refer to the International Crane Foundation, the conception of which was described in the previous article. Co-founder George Archibald has no estimate today as to how many foreign visitors, and also tourists, have come to learn and participate in the work of the Foundation, nor of its impact on local restaurants, gas stations, and other services in the area.

True to its International scope, Archibald has himself traveled to dozens of countries in three continents, as did Ron Sauey before his sudden and tragic death on December 25, 1986. His parents, both now deceased, were generous donors and boosters both before and after his death.

Johnny Carson Show

Not too many local folks appear on national television with 22 million viewers, but George Archibald did in 1982, a day marked not only by national publicity but by the tragic loss to raccoons of "Tex", a rare Whooping Crane. It was a day of highs and lows for George, the loss of Tex being a major setback. George found solace in a Biblical passage, and was able to go on the show with grace and dignity despite the loss.

This was not too easy, because Carson's reason for inviting George was the novelty of the human crane costume and the dance which George performed to induce the cranes to mate. George gives credit for the costuming idea to his wife, Kyoko, who had used stuffed puppets to feed fledgling birds so they would not imprint on humans. This is but one example of how the Foundation has had to use trial and error in its efforts to save the Whooper and other crane species.

Goals

The Foundation's achievements have been well documented over the years, and will not be enumerated in this article. We did, however, ask George about his goals. One was to become independent of the Foundation, but only when it could be left in competent hands, and this has been accomplished. Another goal was the recent and successful reestablishment of the cranes in Florida in a winter migration. Other goals involve similar efforts to save the Siberian Crane, and the establishment of a crane refuge in Louisiana.

Though he no longer directs the Foundation, George remains a dedicated conservationist and advisor. He does not rest on his laurels but ever seeks new ways to attain and enlarge the dreams he and Ron Sauey dared to dream in that little café near Lake Cayuga on a blustery winter day in 1971.



Photo by John Canfield

Aeroflot gets his first glimpse of the world. In 1977 and again in 1978, Siberian eggs were brought from Moscow to the ICF. Ron Sauey made the trip in 1978. One egg began pipping en route, and hatched in Ron's suitcase on the flight from New York to Madison.

BCSC—From an Acorn to
a Mighty Oak
Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

According to the Baraboo News-Republic of August 28, 1975, there wasn't much local news to report that day. Dean Savides of the 7-year old UW Baraboo-Sauk County campus was pleased to report a total of 250 full time students, but it is more than double that now.

The DNR was threatening to order the removal of the Mirror Lake Dam, if Sauk County failed to take ownership. Repairs would cost all of \$25,000. In national news, Israel was reportedly ready to sign a peace agreement, and Kissinger was close to a Mideast settlement. Déjà vu! Bart Starr was the Packer coach, and Pat Lucey was still Governor.

What the News-Republic did not report, however, was a small Kiwanis committee meeting that would have a favorable impact on Baraboo's young people for generations to come.

The minutes of that meeting, somewhat edited, read as follows: "Hoppe again presented his idea of a scholarship for a Baraboo High School graduate. Bronkalla spoke of the possibility of a Scholarship Foundation (and) moved that we pursue the idea. McConaghy seconded, (and) Hoppe set up a committee (consisting of) Bronkalla, McConaghy, John Ellington, Tom Bales, Bill Mossman, John Langer, and Elmer Johnson."

What the minutes did not say was that Lee Hoppe contributed \$500 as the first scholarship to be awarded by the new Foundation. In the following year, the new Kiwanis President, Attorney Glenn Quale, set up the Foundation as a Corporation.

So what is the significance of this obscure committee meeting? The second year, the Baraboo Community

Scholarship Corporation (BCSC) gave 4 scholarships, and the year after that, 16. This year, 2003, the BCSC gave 78 scholarships totaling some \$82,000. From \$500, it has grown to assets of over a million dollars. From a small acorn, to a mighty oak!

When the transformation took place is not know, but very early on, Kiwanis opened the governing board to representatives from all local service organizations. At the present time, it consists of one member each from Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, Optimists, ABWA, AAUW, BEA, and the Chamber of Commerce. There are also four at large members, and board members and other community leaders serve on seven committees.

Scholarships come from many sources, whether local organizations or from individuals, sometimes as memorials. Donors may specify the criteria to be used in selecting an applicant, which sometimes is financial need, sometimes merit alone. Most, but not all scholarships awarded on Honors Night are channeled through the BCSC. Its advantage is that its non profit status provides a charitable tax deduction to the donor who establishes a fund through the BCSC. In addition, the Corporation can continue an award long after a donor has passed away, following the donor's criteria.

Both of the above advantages are now being offered for community service projects by the newly organized Baraboo Area Community Foundation, which already has assets of over a million dollars in its fourth year of operation, and administers six major funds. Though its focus is community betterment rather than scholarships, the Community Foundation operates in a manner vary similar to that of the Scholarship Corporation.

The News-Republic cannot be faulted for failing to report what seemed to be an obscure Kiwanis board meeting. They did, however, carry a most prescient column by Jack

Anderson, popular Washington columnist of the time. In an astonishing 1975 prediction, Anderson quotes sources, perhaps government, as fearing a future assault by terrorists, employing "horrible fright weapons" such as chemical, biological, and radiation methods of mass destruction, plus blackmail and kidnapping. Missiles capable of shooting down airliners could be used, and international terrorists are plotting to "zero in on the United States."

Remember, this was 28 years ago! Six Presidents have held office since Anderson's revelations, so perhaps this is one thing that detractors can't blame on the Clinton Administration. The 1965 graduates were to live through the Iran-Contra and Nicaragua undercover mess, Reagan's invasion of Grenada and Panama, the Bush I invasion of Somalia and Iraq, and the Bush II Iraq war, to mention a few.

The present generation of graduates may have to live under Anderson's prediction of mass terror for a time. Perhaps the scholarships will help them understand why so much of the rest of the world hates us so much, and how to correct the problem.



The BCSC logo features, appropriately, a graduation cap.

Benefactors of the Baraboo Woodpile

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

This is part two of what could be a whole series about the historical benefactors of Baraboo. In last week's article we wrote briefly about Prescott Brigham, W.W. Warner, The 1870 citizens of Baraboo, and Al Ringling and his majestic theatre.

The
Baraboo Woodpile

There are more, far more than we could mention in a lengthy chronicle of articles—people who loved Baraboo and wanted to leave their mark. It is like the story of the hunter who was lost in the woods in a blizzard. He came upon an empty cabin where he could weather the storm, and the fireplace kept him warm. Before he left, however, he saw to it that the woodpile was a little higher than when he arrived.

So, too, can everyone in his own way leave the Baraboo "woodpile" a little higher—the affluent with some of their financial wealth, the less affluent with their community service. Unfortunately, the latter often go unsung. Let's consider some of the more obvious benevolences.

Dr. Albert Ochsner

This man's name is on our largest park, with its excellent zoo. It appears that the land was donated over several years, with some other family members participating. Like Brigham and Warner, Dr. Ochsner had not lived in Baraboo, or even Wisconsin, for many years. A very prominent Texas physician, he still remembered his Wisconsin roots.

His parents had built the still extant brick home in the park and retired there in 1883. Dr. Ochsner's first proposal was to partially fund a hospital on the property, but the local citizens failed to raise the required \$50,000, so by 1918 he simply donated his share of the inherited property, as did some other

members of the family. Albert died in 1925, and special railroad cars brought some 60 mourners from Chicago. Dr. Mayo, of the Minnesota clinic, spoke at the service in Denzer. Several additions to the park were subsequently made by local banker Herman Grotophorst. Now the Kiwanis Riverwalk enhances the beauty of this historical setting.

Alma Waite

It hardly seems necessary to add information about Alma Waite's well-known blockbuster gift to the city, which administers her fund. It has provided countless amenities over the past 20 years, generally in the form of entertainment. Alma was the niece of the Moeller circus wagon builders.

Alma always said her money was circus money and, while living, she gave generously to the Circus Museum, The Mid-Continent Railway Museum and similar entertainment venues. The Al Ringling Theatre was in private hands in those days, but she surely would have given to the not-for-profit Ringling Theatre Friends group of today, as demonstrated by her pattern of giving to other non-profit entertainment venues.

It is true that she casually mentions sidewalks in her will, but the operating word is REPAIR them. Nothing is said about building new sidewalks by city property.

John and Murrel Lange

Talk about leaving the woodpile a little higher! This couple's wills surpass them all in monetary value, and public service is foremost: Four million dollars to the UW Baraboo-Sauk Co. Center, saving students and their local parents thousands of dollars in housing and meals in Madison or elsewhere; also, four million dollars to Nature Conservancy to help preserve the unique Baraboo Bluffs. Many other groups received lesser but significant funds also, thanks to the generosity of this couple. Both were active workers in their church and in community affairs.

Others

Space limitations prevent us from further extensive listings. We have not noted recent local donors, particularly those still living. The latter have a great advantage, in that they gave while still alive, and have the satisfaction of seeing their gift being enjoyed and appreciated, rather than just giving in their wills.

We've already published an article about the Mary Rountree Evans Park gift. Kate and Jim Hill were generous with the University Center music department, as well as the Al. Ringling Theatre. Marie Ritzenthaler and Esther Gray made significant contributions to several local groups. Who knows how much Wilbur Deppe, working quietly, added to the community. The library and Historical Society have their own list of donors.

The recent Mueller housing grant has now arisen on a hilltop with a great view of the Baraboo River valley. Not to be overlooked are the generosity of the Adamske's for giving prime land for the hospital, and to the Drapers for similar donations of land for the high school.

Community Foundation

With space running out, we know we have missed many significant gifts. As was mentioned in the previous article, the new Baraboo Area Community Foundation, were it in existence, then, could have saved these taxpayers thousands for additional giving. Had there been time, a fund to save the 1873 fairgrounds building could have been set up in the Community Foundation for deductible contributions.

The Foundation offers tax-advantaged methods to manage benevolent gifts. This new organization already administers funds with a value of almost a third of a million dollars, and also owns the Visitor's Center in the Westdayl Plaza. It is of interest that two of the donors to their funds have already passed away, but their funds will live on

for several years, scrupulously managed by the Foundation. Those beneficiaries happen to be the Humane Society and the children of South School, but a donor can recommend his particular charity.

So, we apologize to the donors we have missed, living or dead but want you to know that Baraboo is grateful. What does the future hold for Baraboo? Future historians will have to deal with that, but we suspect there are many citizens who are ready to build up the woodpile while still living. The Theatre needs you, the Circus needs you, the indoor pool, and many other public services need you. That's how things get done in a small city. Here's to the future benefactors of Baraboo, whom ever you are!

Past Benefactors have been Good to Baraboo

Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

Baraboo has had a number of benefactors in the past, men and women who wanted to leave Baraboo a better place than when they arrived. As will be shown, Baraboo's first benefactor was not even from Baraboo, but lived south of the bluffs. More on Baraboo's historical benefactors in a moment.

The Community Foundation

The recent creation and development of the Baraboo Area Community Foundation (BACF) has made charitable giving far more attractive than it was for benefactors of previous generations. By establishing a fund through the Foundation, a donor can enjoy not only the pleasure of giving but an income tax-deductible item as well, especially for projects not normally eligible for such a deduction.

This year the Foundation Board, which in the previous year had concentrated more on policy and administration procedures, was able to turn their attention to accepting additional funds to administer. One such donor increased her donor-advised fund by \$50,000 before the end of the year, bringing the total value of funds administered by the new Foundation to over a third of a million dollars already. The Foundation also owns the Visitor Center building in the Westdayl Mall.

Space in the building is rented to the Chamber of Commerce, and there is also an attractive meeting room with kitchen for rental by individuals or organizations for meetings or special occasions. Had the Foundation existed in the past, Baraboo's benefactors could have enjoyed income tax savings as well as the joy of giving.

Prescott Brigham

So who are some of Baraboo's past benefactors? It all began with one Prescott Brigham, who lived in the Town of Sumpter, not Baraboo. A tavern operator and stage coach jehu, Brigham was in the ad hoc exploratory committee which selected what is now downtown Baraboo as the site for the county seat.

The brand new county was penniless, and Prescott Brigham, in April, 1846, "purchased the said quarter section in his name with his own money and subsequently deeded it to the county." When the new county sold off lots around the square to raise money, Brigham bought back one of the lots, where the West Square Building now sits today! A small framed picture inside the building's entrance testifies to his generosity. Out of the wilderness, Baraboo grew to the remarkable city it is today.

The 1870 Citizens

Despite being repeatedly warned that bonds to bring a railroad to Baraboo would be worthless, the citizens voted 347 to 3 in 1870 to bond the city for \$70,000. That's like a million or so in today's dollars. The railroad was the "big box" issue of its time, threatening the tranquil but futureless village with "change". There were a handful of dissenters, but a huge silent majority voting in favor.

They didn't think of themselves as such, but the citizens of the riverfront village had the clarity to put their struggling town on the road to prosperity and relevance. The railroad made Baraboo its division headquarters, and, as predicted, did not pay off the bonds. Prosperity and growth followed anyway, and the benevolence of the citizens was significant.

W.W.Warner

Raised in Baraboo after the Civil War, this Madison businessman willed \$40,000 to the Town of Baraboo for a "concrete boulevard from Devils Lake to Baraboo" This is highway 123, properly known as the Warner Memorial

Highway. It replaced the tortuous ride out past the pumping station and Old Lake Road. It was dedicated in 1921 with monetary assistance from the Town, the City, and the State Park.

Warner was inspired to do this for his boyhood home after hearing that a prominent and wealthy Baraboo businessman had left nothing in his will for the betterment of the city. Warner's benevolence tied the Park closely to the City.

Al Ringling

In 1914 Baraboo had been without a large assembly hall or theatre for nearly ten years. A fund was even raised to induce someone to build a modest theatre. Rejecting the fund, Al Ringling built a theatre that was the first of its kind in the nation, and is nearly perfectly preserved despite being in constant use since 1915.

Within the last four years both Reedsburg and Sauk-Prairie have spent millions in tax dollars to build comparatively Spartan and less commodious playhouses, but lucky Baraboo has had the Al. for 87 years. What's more, not only did the taxpayers NOT have to pay for it, but the theatre paid taxes TO the city and county for seventy five years! Now the Theatre Friends have taken it over for restoration, and it will again claim the title "America's Prettiest Playhouse."

There are more benevolent givers to mention from the past. All of the above gifts were before the income tax laws. Had those donors had the services of a Community Foundation, even more might have been given. Coming in the next article: Alma Waite, Dr. Ochsner, John and Murrel Lange, Kate Hill—and more, depending on space.