

**A Touch of
Baraboo in
Cedarburg**
*Tales of Earlier
Days*
 By Bob Dewel

They don't make things like they used to anymore. You hear this all the time, whether it be household goods or buildings or whatever. Nothing lasts---we are a throw-away society, so it goes. Was this always true?

Well there is an example of quality material from Baraboo produced ~~in~~ before 1876, and you can see it in use today in Cedarburg, Wisconsin. You can touch it, lean against it, rap on it, and marvel at its age and quality. Dennis Lindsay has done so, and supplied some of the material for this article. A Don Bohn article in the Milwaukee Sentinel was also used as source.

Cedarburg

Like Baraboo, Cedarburg has several quality attractions for tourists, among which is a genuine covered bridge. It was built in 1876. What's more, the bridge has been in continuous use since then, albeit only as a foot bridge since 1962. Before that it supported highway vehicles!

A well designed informational sign proclaims the following: "This bridge was built by the Town of Cedarburg on petition of neighboring farmers to replace periodically washed out bridges. Pine logs, cut and milled in Baraboo, were milled and put in place in

lattice truss construction with 3 x 10 inch planks secured by 2 inch hardwood pins."

Continuing, the sign notes that this method eliminates "the use of nails or bolts" and was "floored by 3 inch planking. The Ozaukee County Board in 1940 voted to assume the preservation and maintenance of this bridge."

Glenview Timberwrights

The 1878 bridge is thus 132 years old, not bad for a structure with little or no metal support. This would not come as surprise to Baraboo's Tom and Sue Holmes, owners of Glenville Timberwrights---which uses wood dowels and beams today. Quality construction is alive and well in Baraboo! Tom tells me that sometimes the dowels are called trunnels---short for tree nails! Glenview Timberwrights has a great website.

The bridge is about a mile north of Cedarburg, located naturally on Covered Bridge Road. At one time it was called the Red Bridge. It is said to be the last covered bridge in Wisconsin. Too bad we didn't preserve the Baraboo one on Walnut Street, or on Highway 33 at the lower narrows. There was another one west of Rock Springs, in fact all over the county in the early days.

It is said that the bridges prevented the horses or oxen from panicking at the sight of water below them. Cedarburg engineers found only a slight settling at one end. The bridge has a slight rise in the center, perhaps planned. The span is 120 feet.

So, why timbers from Baraboo? Apparently our timber wrights had a very good reputation for the more developed eastern county to seek out our product. The new railroad made shipment across the state possible. Baraboo was a center of lumbering from



BOB DEWEL,

WATERCOLOR PAINTING OF THE
CEDARBURG COVERED BRIDGE
PAINTED BY ALLAN SCHMID,
BARABOO, WI, ABOUT 1990.

Mr. Allan Schmid
S3934 Breezy Hill Rd
Baraboo, WI 53913-9626

(Close by is the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fiber Arts, of special interest to Nancy, a quilter)

the very earliest days, thanks to the free energy supplied by the rapids of the Baraboo River.

Dams and races fed water cascading over water wheels which in turn activated belts and pulleys and eventually saws as early as 1844. Quality timber was readily available along the river, even from well above Reedsburg. Regular readers will recall our article on the "Reedsburg War" over timber passing down the river through Reedsburg and on to the Baraboo mills.

Close by the Cedarburg Covered Bridge is a new modern bridge, over which traffic is now routed. Any bets whether that new bridge will last 132 years?

