

Highway 12 Evolution Addendum

Evolution of Highway 12 Addendum

The following data is in the system but may not be printed at the address in which it belongs. It is not practical to have to print up to two pages to inject a few lines.

Madison to Baraboo...Route No. 8...1909

Go west on angling road along railroad tracks, thence angling to the northwest 5.5 miles to:

PLEASANT BRANCH, thence straight north, angling to the northwest 7 miles, thence to the west 1 mile, thence north 3/4 mile, thence to the west 1 mile, and thence, follow main traveled road north 7 miles to...

LODI, Take road leading northwest 1.5 miles, thence angling to the west 2 miles, to cross roads, follow main traveled road to the right, going northwest, crossing Wisconsin River 3 miles to...

MERRIMAC, From here it is a straight road northwest 8 miles to...

BARABOO.

CONDITION OF ROAD: Level and fair.

HOTEL: The Wellington.

GARAGES: A. S. Lanich; R. W. Prothero.

Baraboo to Madison...Route No. 8...1909

Direct south following railroad tracks part way 11.5 miles to...

PRAIRIE DU SAC. Continue south along main traveled road following river on the east 2 miles to...

SAUK CITY. Cross river, go southeast along main traveled road 3 miles, passing...

ROXBURY on the east. Continue southeast 4 miles, thence angling southeast 3 miles to...

SPRINGFIELD CORNERS. From here follow main traveled road southeast 4 miles to...

ASHTON. Continue south almost in a direct line 3 miles to...

PLEASANT BRANCH. Go east angling to the south, follow main traveled road and railroad tracks on the south shore of Lake Mendota, 5.5 miles to...

MADISON.

CONDITION OF ROAD: Good; bad hill right before reaching Prairie du Sac, the fair macadam road part of the way to Madison.

HOTEL: Capital House

GARAGES: L. F. Schoelkopf; Hokanson Auto Co.

About the evolution of roads leading to and through Baraboo including Hi-Way 12

The following is a synopsis of the development of roadways to Baraboo from the south as taken from the 5-volume set of
"BARABOO...Then and Now"
Located at the Baraboo Library

During the early years of our country, waterways were known as "roads" and land travel was by paths and "blazed" trails. (Blazed trails were tracked by trees that were defaced with a hatchet or knife, thus "blazed"). Of course roads as we refer to them did eventually develop for land travel although at the beginning they were pretty rudimentary.

Turnpike companies constructed and owned corduroy roads (logs laid crosswise) that would make one feel as though they were going over cobble-stones and animals did not like them as they were hard to get a foothold on. "Cobbles" are round rocks and were collected from rivers and fields and placed in beds of sand and gravel, sometimes with concrete mortar. The surface, albeit a bit bumpy, provided some traction and kept travelers out of the mud.

Turnpikes were so named during the early 1800's in England, where landowners charged a toll for public use of their private roads. Their roads were blocked with long poles (*pikes*), which were *turned* when the fees were paid.

Few horses were employed early on for travel or field work. For the most part, oxen outnumbered horses ten to one. There were plank roads which were just that and animals did not like them either. There were even charcoal roads; the necessary wood being hauled and spread over a leveled-off surface and after the manner of charcoal burning, was torched. The coals were then spread over the road bed and firmly stamped down. One had to pay a toll to the turnpike companies to travel over these Turnpike roads.

By the mid 1800's, the popularity of bicycles began to drive further improvements in road surfacing. The League of

American Wheelmen was organized in 1880, largely to lobby for tire-friendly roads. By the early 1900's the automobile took over the primary use of paved roads and prompted the development stronger and longer routes of highways.

The period from the Civil War until 1890 has often been referred to as the "dark ages" for road building in the United States. The turnpike companies had for the most part passed out of existence. The highway was a neighborhood media of traffic, controlled by the neighborhood unit of government, the township. City dwellers had little occasion to use the rural highways and evinced little interest in their improvement. While the bicycle was a factor in early-day road development in Wisconsin, it was so in a preliminary way. With the development of the motor vehicle a new and more powerful impulse was aroused and the modern era began.

Consider this...in 1899 there were 3,700 automobiles manufactured in the United States; in 1904, 21,281; in 1909, 127,731; in 1912, 356,000; and in 1916, almost 1,500,000.

Later macadam (graveled) roads were developed. Size of stones was central to Scotsman John McAdam's road building theory. The lower 8" road thickness was restricted to stones no larger than 3.0". The upper 2.0" layer of stones was limited to 0.79" size and stones were checked by supervisors who carried scales. A workman could check the stone size himself by seeing if the stone would fit into his mouth. The importance of the .79" stone size was that the stones needed to be much smaller than the 4" width of the iron carriage tires that travelled on the roads. McAdam believed that the "proper method" of breaking stones for utility and rapidity was accomplished by people sitting down and using small

hammers, breaking the stones so that none of them was larger than six ounces in weight. He also wrote that the quality of the road would depend on how carefully the stones were spread on the surface over a sizeable space, one shovelful at a time.

McAdam directed that no substance that would absorb water and affect the road by frost should be incorporated into the road. Neither was anything to be laid on the clean stone to bind the road. The action of the road traffic would cause the broken stone to combine with its own angles, merging into a level, solid surface that would withstand weather or traffic. Through his road-building experience McAdam had learned that a layer of broken angular stones would act as a solid mass and would not require the large stone layer previously used to build roads. By keeping the surface stones smaller than the tire width, a good running surface could be created for traffic. The small surface stones also provided low stress on the road, so long as it could be kept reasonably dry.

Fast-moving vehicles suck dust from the road surface, creating dust clouds and a gradual unraveling of the road material. This problem was approached by spraying tar on the surface to create tar-bound "*macadam*". In 1902, a mixture of coal-tar and ironworks slag, patented by Edgar Purnell Hooley as *tarmac*, was introduced.

A more durable road surface, modern mixed asphalt pavement, known as blacktop, was introduced in the 1920s. This pavement method mixed the aggregates into the asphalt with the binding material before they were laid. The macadam surface method laid the stone and sand aggregates on the road and then sprayed it with the binding material. The first macadam road built in the United States was constructed between Hagerstown and Boonsboro, Maryland and was named *Boonsboro Turnpike Road*. This was the last section of unimproved road between Baltimore on the Chesapeake Bay to Wheeling on the Ohio River. Stagecoaches travelling the Hagerstown to Boonsboro road in the winter took 5 to 7 hours to cover the 10-mile stretch. This road was built using McAdam's road techniques, except that the finished road was compacted with a cast-iron roller instead of relying on road traffic

for compaction. The second American road built using McAdam principles was the Cumberland Road which was 73 miles long and required five years of work.

Due to uses of macadam as a road surface in former times, roads in some parts of the United States, as parts of Pennsylvania are often referred to as macadam, even though they might be made of asphalt or concrete. Similarly, the term "tarmac" is sometimes colloquially misapplied to asphalt roads or aircraft runways.

In the matter of road maintenance, Wisconsin's entire state trunk highway system was placed under patrol maintenance in the year 1918. This was the first attempt on a large scale to maintain a system of state highways, of which most of the mileage had not been surfaced. There were 1,000 patrolmen on the state trunk highway system in Wisconsin, each man covering on an average seven miles, somewhat similar to the section men on the railroad right of way. The patrolman was equipped with a team, wagon and road grader and all the necessary implements and his duty was to keep the road in a condition as good as its present type would permit. The patrolled maintenance took on two aspects: the maintenance of the roads in travelable condition and the placing of other roads not in travelable condition in such a shape that with patrol maintenance they would be able to carry traffic.

East Sauk Road (1830's and 1840's)

The first Sauk Road, which connected Baraboo to the village "Harazsthy", now known as Sauk City, was deemed by some to be nothing more than an "Indian path" or a "blazed" trail. It ran pretty close to due North & South, and ran through the area that would later be developed as the Badger Ordinance Works. It entered Baraboo via what is now known as the Burma Road (on the western edge of Devil's Lake) and/or highway 123. The path led directly to where the Maxwell Dam would later be constructed.

It was recalled by some early residents that when the first settlers were traversing over this road with an ox team, one pioneer

About the evolution of roads leading to and through Baraboo including Hi-Way 12

family lost the trail and at nightfall found themselves at the top of the south bluff overlooking Devil's lake. The mother in the party sat down and sobbed. "*There ain't any use going any farther, we've come to the jumping off place.*"

As time passed, Haseltine's Tavern was constructed on the east road and a stagecoach line with regular service was established between Baraboo and Sauk City in 1855. The road over the bluff between the Martin place and the prairie was always looked upon as a gruesome stretch of travel. Even then the passengers had to walk up the steep slope of the range. Many an early traveler told of narrow escapes from Indians, robbers, wildcats and even ghosts.

In those early days, pork was cheap in the fall, coming from swine that ran wild and bred in the woods. The animals lived on acorns and other natural provender, the meat being worth but one dollar and seventy-five cents per hundred pounds dressed. The farmers of Sauk prairie permitted their hogs to range on the Baraboo bluffs and more than one, shot down like deer, provided meat for the Haseltine Tavern

In time several houses were built along this stretch, homes of the Smiths, Whites, Harts, Harrisons and Clarks. As these families passed out of existence the little shacks remained and became strong-holds for other families

The following chronology will speak of the East Sauk Road and the West Sauk Road. The East Sauk Road was the first road between Baraboo and Sauk City and ran through the area that the Badger Ordinance would later occupy. The West Sauk Road would skirt around and to the west of the Badger Ordinance...as it exists today, 2011.

(1845) Crossing the Baraboo River

In 1845, you would have entered the village of Baraboo from the south by way of what is now Vine Street. You may have taken your meals in the basement of the old Baraboo Hotel on the northwest corner of the intersection of what would later be called Walnut and Lynn. The Baraboo House was the first tavern in Baraboo and was at the terminal of the stage line. It was operated

by Lyman Clark, who it was rumored, had some influence with the road surveyor and convinced him to run the road past his tavern rather than the less hilly area where Maxwell's Dam would later be constructed. If you wished at that time to cross the river to your north, you would have to zigzag your way from Vine Street, turning east onto Lynn Street, then north down Walnut Street where men were probably busy removing stumps from the middle of the wagon path. There were no bridges across the river at that time but this part of the river was a good shallow fording spot.

Generally speaking, primary locations for bridges in those early years were always those locations which had been the easiest to ford and where Indian paths led.

(1846) First Bridge over the Baraboo River

The first bridge across the Baraboo River, leading to Adams "on the hill", was constructed joining Walnut (South Bridge Street) and Ash (North Bridge Street) in 1846. During that time, the village south of the river was called Baraboo and north of the river was Adams. The Ash Street Bridge, later referred to as the "old red bridge", had log piers with stringers connecting them and covered with planks, the construction type was that of a "crib bridge". If you wished then to cross through the village of Adams to travel to points west, you would somehow have to manage the hill that ran from the Old Red Bridge to First Street (Bench Street). This was an extremely steep, difficult and rugged hill. You would then travel west via a path now known as Third Street and diagonally across the courthouse square in a north-westerly manner. The county owned that square piece of the city but there was no building on it at that point in history. Then you would continue west, probably on what we now know as Fourth Avenue until the path would turn in a north-westerly direction following the high bank overlooking the Baraboo River (Ochsner Park today) and then continue west on what is now Eighth Avenue.

(1848) Matson Road

During the 1848 legislative session, authorization was established to lay out a territorial road from Madison, via Lodi (Palmer's Mills), to Baraboo (AKA Rowan's Rapids), county of Sauk. At the same time, a franchise of keeping and maintaining a ferry across a navigable stream was granted to Chester Matson for crossing the Wisconsin River at what is now the village of Merrimac, thus the label "Matson Road." However, the trip to Baraboo via Matson Road was not an easy one due to the vast marshy areas.

(1866) Ash Street Bridge

In the spring of 1866, the lower bridge (Walnut-Ash Street) was washed away and a new \$2500 bridge replaced it. In September of 1886, S. F. Amy was given a contract to raise the Bridge Street (Walnut-Ash) Bridge three feet. Work was to have begun immediately.

(1875) New Walnut-Ash Street Bridge

In July of 1875, the lumber for a new bridge was on the ground waiting for the bridge builder Jerry Dodd, to go to work. The three sections of the bridge would be constructed on the grounds near the freight depot. The Wagon Bridge proper (center portion) would be modeled after the one near the Island Woolen Mills, with two causeways for foot traffic, one on each side and outside of the center enclosure but under the same roof. The bridge was expected to be assembled and set in place by the first of August.

The middle waterpower dam between Vine and Oak Street was temporarily turned into a roadbed while the Ash-Walnut Bridge was being erected. This move got people to thinking that there should be a permanent bridge there, at least for foot traffic.

(1881) New High Bridge connecting Oak & Vine Streets

In April of 1880, Philharmon Pratt asked for subscriptions to help in the construction of a bridge over the middle waterpower

dam connecting Vine and Water Streets. Pratt felt that eventually a high bridge would be constructed at that point but that construction had not as yet gained favor with the voting populous. The railroad had created large throngs of pedestrian traffic to that side of town and the Ash Street Bridge was a long way around.

On May 25, 1881, it was announced that the new Pratt Bridge was open for public usage. By the middle of July, "Captain" Pratt and a crew of men were busy lowering the grade from First Street to the bridge.

(1888) Pratt's High Bridge deemed unsafe

In March of 1888 signs were placed at each end of Pratt's bridge with the following notice: ***"The Street ends here, The Pratt Bridge is unsafe, Keep off!"***

(1889) New High Bridge to replace the Pratt Bridge

In June of 1889 an informal ballot, which was taken for the location of the new iron bridge, resulted in 6 votes for Oak Street, 2 for Bridge Street and 1 for Broadway. A formal ballot was then taken for the location and Oak Street decided upon, receiving 7 votes, while the Bridge Street and Broadway locations received 1 each. The bridge committee was then authorized to employ a competent engineer to design the bridge. The bridge was constructed during the years 1889 and 1890. The council accepted it on April 29th of 1890 and payment was authorized.

Therefore, the main route through town now crossed this bridge bypassing the Ash and Walnut Street businesses.

(1909) Navigating instructions to and through Baraboo from Madison to LaCrosse, sponsored by local businesses:

(Note: This portion of the driving instructions and directions will start as one approaches Sauk City from the east and departs Ableman (Rock Springs) to the north.)

About the evolution of roads leading to and through Baraboo including Hi-Way 12

| | | |
|------|-----|---|
| | | Total Mileage |
| | | Intermediate Mileage |
| 23.3 | 0.4 | Cross bridge over Wisconsin River (24.7 m)-toll 15c, turn right, straight through Sauk City (25.0 m); cross RR, (25.6 m); straight through Prairie du Sac (26,4 m), running upgrade out of town, follow direct road with main travel turning left (28.3 m), and right (29.4 m); pass cemetery and schoolhouse on opposite sides of the road. |
| 31.8 | 8.5 | 4-corners---white church on farther left; turn left. <i>(Author's note: 4-Corners spoke of probably King's Corners)</i> |
| 32.2 | 0.4 | End of road; turn right running uphill (34.2 m) on macadam road. Caution for sharp curves (37.9 m & 38.3 m). |
| 38.6 | 6.4 | Diagonal cross-road---school on left; bear left running onto macadam road (40.0 m). |
| 40.6 | 2.0 | 4-corners; turn right, crossing bridge over RR. (41.1 m); sharp right curve just beyond, running onto bridge over Wisconsin River [Baraboo River] same thorofare [sic] becomes Second Ave., which follow to: <i>(Author's Note: bridge spoke of probably is old Moore Street bridge over RR...replaced with new bridge in recent years).</i> |
| 42.2 | 1.6 | Broadway, turn left to Court House, center of |
| 42.4 | 0.2 | Baraboo. Broadway & 4th Ave. (42.4 m). The Wellington , on right. Prothero-McGinnis Auto & Machine Co. 215 3rd. Ave. |
| 43.1 | 0.2 | Go straight ahead for 2 blocks. |
| 42.6 | 0.2 | 6th Ave.; turn left. |
| 42.9 | 0.3 | End of street; turn right on same street to |
| 43.1 | 0.2 | 4-corners; turn left--avoiding road to the right (43.5 m), continue straight ahead on main traveled road. <i>(Author's note: 4-corners probably King's Corners).</i> |

| | | |
|------|-----|--|
| 44.5 | 1.4 | Fork, bear left, following river bank, pass school (on right--46.2 m). |
| 46.9 | 2.4 | End of road, turn left. Caution for sharp right turn (48.8 m). Pass school (on left--51.6 m); cross bridge over Baraboo River, and immediately turn right over second bridge, following road through "Narrows," cross RR (52.0 m), running through covered wooden bridge (52.7 m); cross RR. just beyond. |

(1919) New High Bridge Pondered

As early as 1919 there was talk of constructing a new concrete bridge. The existing high-bridge was getting old and insecure for traffic. This would require a single pier, which would probably be near or in the center of the river. The question then arose as to how that would affect the McArthur dam. The city council felt that a new dam should be built in conjunction with and as an integral part of the bridge and both would then be owned by the city.

(1919) East Sauk Road

In January of 1919, the city council decided to change the route to access the Warner Memorial Road to Oak-Vine Street. The trip to Devil's Lake would then commence at the high bridge, cross over the railroad tracks, up the Vine street hill, then east on Elm to Walnut Street and then south to Devil's Lake via the Warner Memorial Road (East Sauk Road).

(1922) Baraboo to Sauk City

| | |
|-----|---|
| 0.0 | Leave Baraboo Courthouse on southeast corner of Oak St. and Third Avenue. |
| 0.1 | Go one block on Third Avenue and turn left one block to Second Avenue. Turn right. |
| 0.8 | Cross Baraboo River bridge and bend right. Woolen mills to the right. Winding hill. |

- 1.1 Cross railroad bridge and then right.
 - 1.6 Turn left.
 - 3.6 Turn right. School on right.
 - 3.8 Bend left and cross bridge.
 - 4.1 * "Automobiles Go Slow." Sharp turn to left.
 - 9.4 **King's Corners.** Straight ahead.
 - 9.8 Turn left.
 - 10.2 (Merrimac ahead six miles.) Church on left corner.
- Turn to right.
- 14.0 Turn left on macadamized road.
 - 14.9 Turn right.
 - 15.9 Turn right.
 - 16.0 **Prairie du Sac.** Post office on left.
 - 16.2 Keep to right. Wisconsin River Bridge to left.
 - 16.9 Cross railroad tracks and parallel Wisconsin River.
 - 17.6 **Sauk City.** Take first turn left to toll office of Wisconsin River Bridge. Cross bridge to Madison...

(1926) New Oak-Vine Street Bridge in the planning

At a session of the county board in January of 1926 a petition from the city of Baraboo for a new Oak Street bridge over the Baraboo River was received and granted. A resolution was passed to petition the state Highway Commission for the bridge. The state had already estimated the costs of different types of construction for two different bridges. One bridge would be at the present floor level and one would be a high bridge that would connect First Street with Maple Street It would pass over and above the trains and would be 1350 feet long. The railroad, which was creating draconic traffic back-ups of those traveling to and fro from Devil's Lake, decided that they would donate \$25,000 for the high bridge choice.

(1926) East Sauk Road

In 1926, Mrs. A. K. Bassett wrote for the *Baraboo News*,
Boom! Boom! Boom!
Where is the blasting?

Oh, it is over on the East Sauk Road.

They are grading and graveling it for a highway for automobile travel, to be used as a detour while the west Sauk road (route 12) is closed this summer, outside of Baraboo as far as Sumpter, undergoing repairs.

(1925) Highway 12, ..By Inez M. Stewart

On November 1925 a celebration was planned for the opening of a new road on Armistice Day. The Baraboo Chamber of Commerce planned the celebration with delegations from other Chambers including Wisconsin Rapids and Intervening points, who joined the Kilbourn Delegation.

Baraboo met them all at Lyons and escorted them over the roads to Sauk Prairie. At this point they met with the Madison Delegation. The Madison delegation consisted largely of the State Highway Commission and Governor Blain. The delegation returned to Baraboo and congregated at the Al. Ringling Theater. Everyone considered the completion of the road a red letter day. The new, completed concrete Highway 12 eliminated the bad turns and grades. Governor Blain was called upon to give a short but impressive service.

(1926) West Sauk Road (Route 12)

If entering Baraboo from the west Sauk road in 1926 one would follow High Way 12 in an easterly direction into town, then north on Quarry Street to South Street, then east to Vine Street, then north across the High Bridge connecting to Oak Street. However, if one wished to connect with the Warner Road to Devil's Lake they would turn south on Vine Street, following the old route.

(1927) New Broadway Bridge and new route to Devil's Lake (Route 12)

Take note that the new routing of highway 12 across the Broadway Bridge did not form an intersection with the Warner Road (Route 123) to Devil's Lake. There was no "Y", just a curve in the road heading west where the swimming pool sits in 2011.

About the evolution of roads leading to and through Baraboo including Hi-Way 12

In 1927, portions of highway 123 were newly developed due to the new South Boulevard railroad underpass and the building of the Broadway Bridge. If traveling south across the new Broadway Bridge or North towards the bridge, one would turn just north of the underpass and travel east on Lynn Avenue/Street, then south on Vine Street across the railroad tracks to Elm where Mr. & Mrs. Reuben Prothero lived. The new route then ran at an angle behind the Prothero home and through the field south of that point coming out on the Warner Road near the curve at the top of the hill. The new route would eliminate the two sharp corners at Vine-Elm Street intersection and the other at Elm-Walnut Street intersection.

Due to the building of the Broadway Bridge, Lynn Street had been extended west to Broadway on the north side of the tracks, as it is now in year 2011. Prior to that time Lynn Avenue crossed the tracks heading west and ran down hill on the south side of the tracks, more or less parallel with the tracks, and continued west through Dutch Hollow towards the later-to-be industrial area where Flambeau Plastics is located in and prior to the year 2011. (Dutch Hollow was the area south of the river where South Boulevard was constructed and was very low and marshy.)

Also, Highway 12 then ran north through town on Broadway to Fifth Avenue, then west to Summit, then north to Eighth Avenue and then west to Fox Hill Road where it headed north over the hill and then north-west past the cemetery, then north to the Dell's area on what is now county "BD" in 2011.

(1930) Ben Rotzoll's New Garage (Route 12)

About 1929 Al Rotzoll's garage was on the north side of highway 33 in West Baraboo, just about where the Subway restaurant is located now (year 2011). In those days U.S. 12 made its way west on Eighth Avenue to what today is Connie Road, then north. Ben Rotzoll, Al's brother, built a new garage on the south side of that intersection, a great business location.

(1932) Highway 12 connects to the Warner Road (Route 123)

In June of 1928, the **Ritzenthaler** brothers, **Otto** and **Edward**, opened the new Ritz Filling Station in conjunction with the opening of the new high way 12 by way of the new Broadway Bridge. The station was located at what is now (2011) a "Y" at the junction of city-highway 12 and highway 123.

In June of 1930, a Peter Pan golf course was added to the Ritz Station grounds. The 18-hole miniature golf course would be on the east side of the station. The Ritzenthaler's also constructed tourist cabins on the east side of their station and in 1932 graveled an extension of the Warner Road extending it from Vine Street north-west to highway 12 past the cabins. The "Y" and a new route to Devil's Lake were formed!

(1935) June 1935

In June of 1935, the Wisconsin Highway Commission announced that Baraboo's proposal to reroute State Trunk Highway 12 through Baraboo had been given the approval of the commission. The highway would be rerouted up Broadway and west on Eighth Avenue, instead of via Fifth Avenue and Summit to Eighth.

Therefore, the main route through town now changed again by crossing the new Broadway Bridge and bypassing most of the city to the east of Broadway.

Also gone would be the Bluff Post Office on the East Sauk Road, town of Sumpter, near the bluff.

(1937) Highway 12 By-Passes City

In 1937, highway 12 was rerouted to by-pass the whole city about a mile west of town. Instead of curving east at the then Edna's Kitchen location and following what we now know as South Boulevard into town, the new road went straight north requiring a bridge over the Baraboo River. The section of highway 12 that traveled up Connie Road and over Fox Hill was then eliminated with highway 12 running due north past what we would later call

the Ritz Corner or the intersection of the now highway's BD (old highway 12) and 33.

The new highway would still pass within four blocks of the Rotzoll garage which was still a handy location for roaring to the rescue of those in need of towing or repair.

Knowledge of the relocation of the highway of course was known early on and during the summer of 1935 the Ritz Restaurant and filling station was constructed the by Ed Ritzenthaler at the intersection of the Lyon's Corners, where the Walgreen Drug Store sits at this writing (2011). In December of the same year it was announced that the management of the Ritz was taken over by Baraboo brothers, Al and Dusty Boyd. The new management would inaugurate the Ritz with a New Year's Eve party.

(2011) Highway 12 Moving West

For the past few years a new high-way 12 by-pass has been underway connecting Middleton with I-90/94 north of Baraboo. The first phase, from Middleton to Sauk City, was complete a few years ago. The second phase, which by-passed Baraboo to the west was completed and opened in the year 2011. This by-pass connected with I-90/94, which by-passed the Wisconsin Dell's area also. The old highway 12 was designate "BD", short for Baraboo-Delton, I assume.

Today, the number of autos on the roads and safety concerns dictate safer highways. It has always been very common for workers to travel as far as Madison and farther for employment but the traffic increase has got out of hand. Thanks to the Wisconsin Dells tourist area, there are thousands of people who find employment there. Many travel from all points for fifty to seventy-five miles. This area has long needed improved pathways.

So, to wrap it up, the main highway accessing Baraboo has changed many times. The adding of the Lyon's bridge in 1937 and later a proposed by-pass farther to the west that is expected to be finished about 2017, will bypass Baraboo and West Baraboo completely. The by-pass created in 1937 created a new shopping strip with some of our home-grown businesses moving to that area.

Unfortunately, other so-called Big-Box stores would also locate on that strip with prices that would eventually put many local down-town stores out of business. Gone would be the competence, quality and friendliness that shoppers had forever been accustomed. That's the 21st. century we live in....unfortunately!

About the Evolution of Highway 12 Through and Around Baraboo



Early road maintenance by a highway patrolmen c1910-1920

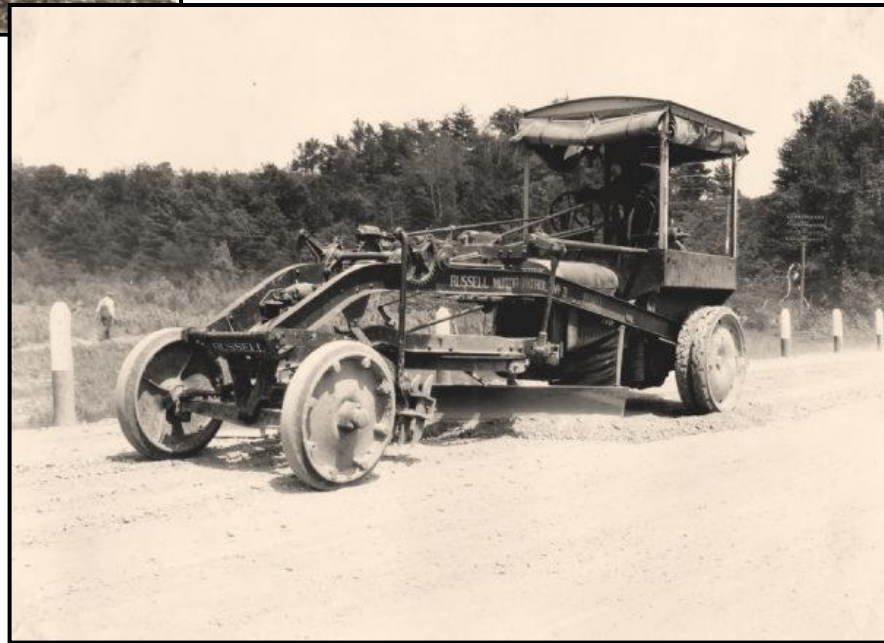


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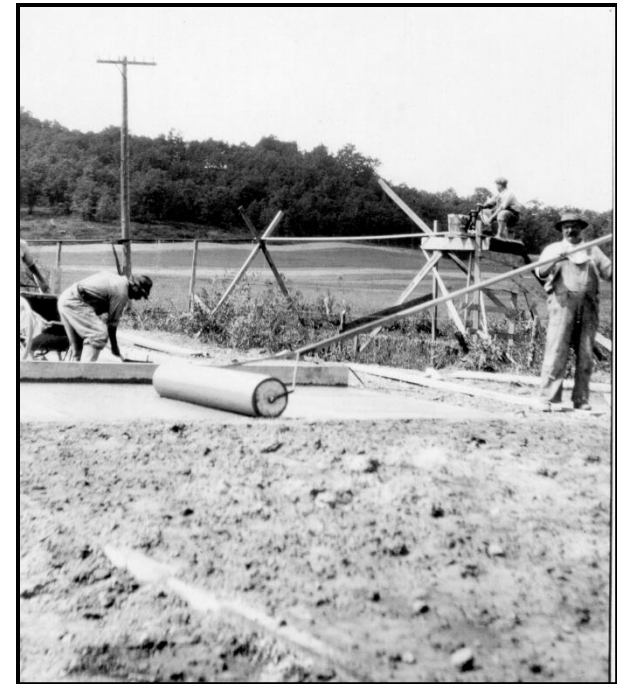


The cause of the "Good Roads" Movement

Highway 12 Patrol c1927



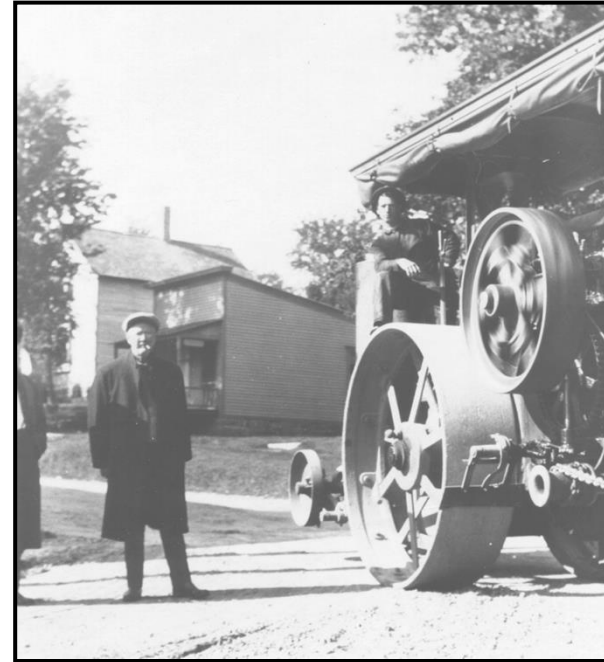
Evolution of Highway 12 Roadwork 1920's



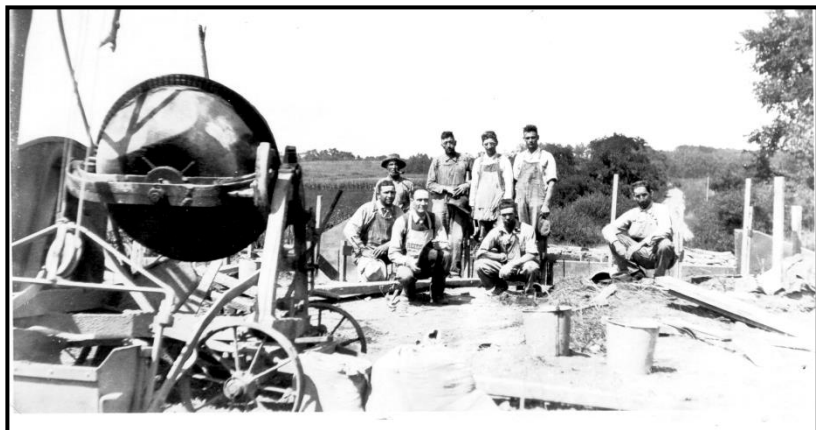
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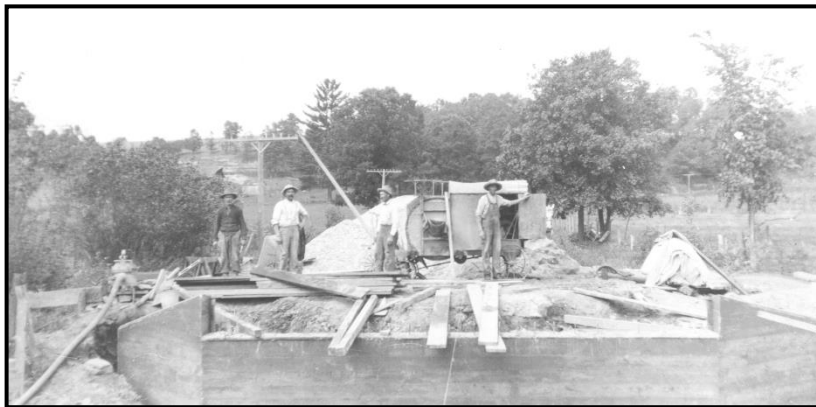
Evolution of Highway 12 Roadwork 1920's



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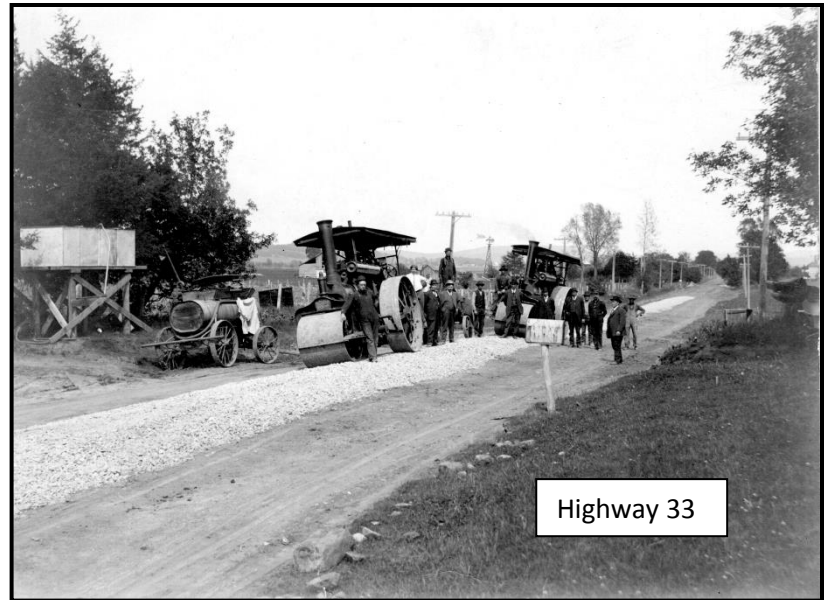
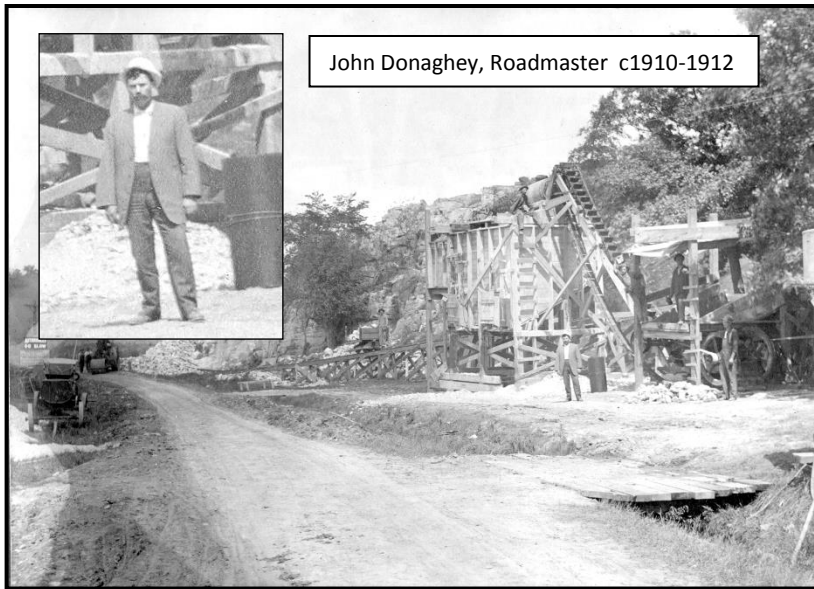
Evolution of Highway 12 Roadwork 1920's



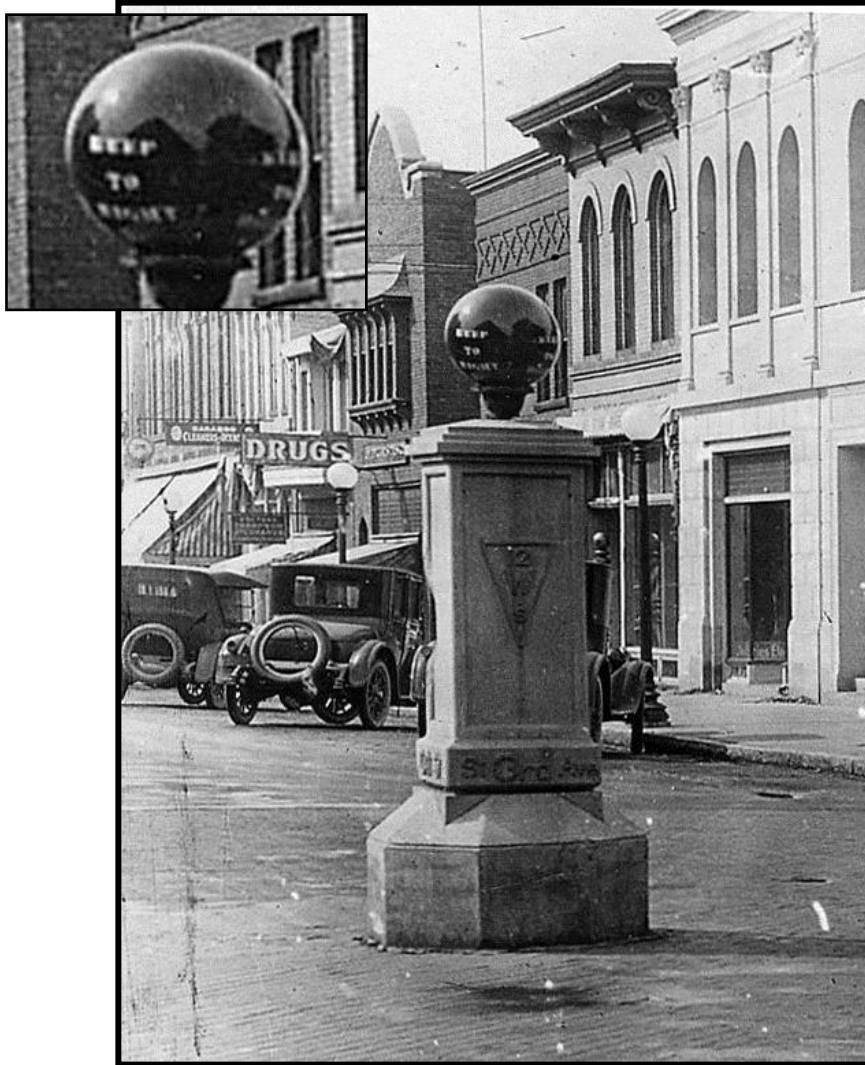
Evolution of Highway 12 Roadwork 1920's



Evolution of Highway 12 Roadwork 1920's



Evolution of Highway 12 500 Oak Street Looking South



Early roundabouts like the one pictured at the left were common in Baraboo in the 1920's, being located on the six major intersections in the business district "on the hill". Close examination of the globe reveals "Keep to Right" message. Though not clear, the upsidedown triangle reads "12 West"....although the photo was taken facing south.

A short time later an "electric policeman" was placed in one or two major intersections as shown in the upper right.