

The 1890's

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1890 CITY DIRECTORY HAS MANY SURPRISES

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

Which came first, the telephone directory or the yellow pages? The answer: the yellow pages directory, though it was printed on white pages in the 1800's and was known as the city directory, even before telephones.

There's a lot to be learned from a city or county directory, and the 1890 Baraboo city directory is no exception. The first surprise is that there even was a directory back then. It was a cloth-bound hard cover book, and though 111 years have passed, there are both similarities and differences between it and a modern yellow page or other directory.

Baraboo in 1890

To set the scene, imagine Baraboo with a population of only 4605, and no paved streets. There are just two or three street lights downtown, and no telephones. Of course there was no television, radio, motion picture theatre, cell phone, or computer. The automobile had yet to get beyond a small experimental stage, and horses and carriages and wagons were the transportation of the day. There were, however, two seemingly marvelous inventions, the telegraph and the typewriter.

Baraboo did have an Opera House, which may have doubled as a roller skating rink. Athletic teams were but a minor part of the activities at the high school, a three story building with a cupola, located on Second Street between Ash and Oak.

There was, of course, the Northwestern Railroad, by now a fixture of the community with many passenger trains in each direction every day. Stage coaches still went to Sauk City three times a week, and daily to Kilbourn

on the north, to connect there with the Milwaukee Railroad system.

Despite no radio or other media, the city did not lack for news. The telegraph brought in national and international news, sifted and embellished by your choice of three or four newspapers. Most papers identified themselves politically, the Baraboo News being Republican and costing one dollar a year. There was the Sauk County Democrat, the Baraboo Republic (also Republican), and the Baraboo Times at a dollar twenty five a year. Reedsburg had the Independent and the Free Press.

A major source of local news, however, was the barbershop, where men of any means gathered for their morning shave. Many kept their own personal mug at the shop of their choice. Later in the day the women's circles at the churches provided the means of hearing local news and exchange of information.

Banking

Like today there were three banks, but with no branches. Today we can count eleven places in Baraboo where one can make deposits or withdrawals! The Bank of Baraboo, founded in 1857, would become the Baraboo National Bank of today. There was also a Baraboo Savings Bank, in the building on the Northeast corner of Oak and Fourth Street, where the Cornerstone Gallery is now.

And churches! Not as many then, only 12, but three were Methodist, including the First, the German, and the South Side Methodist churches. The only church edifice remaining from that day is the steeple of the present Presbyterian Church, the rest of the original building having been rebuilt recently. Within about a decade of 1890, there would be new buildings for the Congregationalists, the Methodists, and the Catholics.

Postal Hours

There's an interesting notation about the Postal Service of 1890, for it

seems that the post office hours were 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. Moreover, the post office was open on Sunday from noon until 12:30, plus time for a half hour after each stage coach arrival. So much for having Columbus Day off!

There were not as many high school students then, with a graduation class usually amounting to only a couple dozen students. There were a total of nine teachers in the high school. There were three elementary schools, like today, but named after the ward in which they were located. Each of these had but four teachers.

The directory proudly stated that there were 150 volumes in the public library, but that the school had 600 volumes. Despite that deficiency, education and culture were vigorously pursued, proof that civilization existed in what the Easterners called the wild west. Musical programs abounded, both in the school and the churches and in the opera house.

Population

By 1894, Baraboo had reached a population of 5682. This is of interest today, for the recent 2000 census showed a population for the city of 10,711, almost exactly double. Thus it has taken 106 years for the city to double its population, which hardly represents rampant growth threatening the rest of the county! Sauk County has swelled from 30,575 in 1890 to 55225 today, almost double also. Though the farm population has declined, many non-farmers now live outside the city limits, swelling the population of the townships.

Organizations abounded, with half a dozen railroad brotherhoods, the GAR and its Auxiliary, three Odd Fellows Lodges, two Knights of Pythius groups, and the WCTU. In the Masonic Lodge on Third and Walnut, all five Ringling Brothers occupied the chairs at the same time one evening.

Like any good directory, there is a listing of all local citizens. Four of the Ringling Brothers listed their address as

the Warren Hotel, perhaps a business address. The Parents, August and Salome, still lived on Broadway and Bench, the name then for First Avenue and Street. Young Henry and Ida lived with them.

There are city directories for many other years at the library and at the Historical Society, covering most of the years. They are a great source of information, and give a flavor of life in the days of our great grandparents. Our descendants will think the same of our yellow pages!



The elegant facade on this building was the pride of the town in the 1890's. It now houses part of Corner Drug, plus the Opera House upstairs



Joe Ward Collection

*Third Avenue Looking East
Taylor Hall on far Right*

A train wreck, an ice house and a Wright dam

It was Thanksgiving week in Baraboo in 1890, but you would never know it by reading the Nov. 26, 1890 edition of the Baraboo Republic. No full-page advertisements proclaimed the purported bargains in the stores, on what is now the biggest shopping weekend of the year. No glowing store flyers were inserted in the paper.

In truth, it probably never crossed the minds of Baraboo merchants to hold a Thanksgiving sale, and to be open on Sunday was an anathema to them and their times.

Instead, one finds only modest advertisements such as that of Henry Alcott, clothier, who simply proclaims "Too busy to write ad. Come and see my large stock and small prices." The Corner Drug Store was giving away a sewing machine ("Call for information") and the ad closed with "Liquor for medical purposes only."

H.F. Jones, clothier, would trade clothing for bushels of wheat, oats, or flax seed, and one could buy Santa Claus soap, "the best for your laundry." Freedom was getting a 90-foot steel bridge at the cost of \$975 plus the masonry costs, and a local news note simply stated "John Ringling is in Chicago." Another short article stated that Baraboo schools would receive all of \$325.11 from the state high school fund for this year.

In general, life was pretty mundane in the city of some 4,605 souls.

'Into the Baraboo'

There was, however, a bigger story in the Nov. 26 issue of the Republic, chronicled not by a streamer headline but only by the simple words "Into the Baraboo." It was about a freight train wreck, an all too frequent occurrence in those busy railroad days, and it was Baraboo's turn to have one — Baraboo and Lyons' turn to have one, that is.

To make matters worse, the wreck involved a bridge between Baraboo and Lyons. In those days the railroad crossed the Baraboo River twice in Lyons (West Baraboo now). It proceeded west across the river from Moore Street, passing through what is now the center of Haskins Park, and then across the land where Wal-Mart is located.

It had been believed, when the railroad came to Baraboo in 1870, that William Canfield's newly platted village of Lyons would soon rival Baraboo in size and importance, so two bridges crossed the river, one to the east and one to the west of the village. Later the tracks were rerouted to the south of the river, its present location.

The train wreck

It is unclear from the Republic article which way the train was headed, for it is spoken of as due in Baraboo at 11 p.m., but Canfield's "Sketches" speaks of it as the 11:30 night train.



BOB
DEWEL

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There is disagreement also about the cause of the wreck. The Canfield story speaks of some timbers dragging from one freight car which "upon reaching the bridge caused that car to derail and break through the ties. The hinder cars doubled onto it, which was too much for the strength of the bridge." Canfield is careful to say "it was no fault of the bridge," the center span of which collapsed under the unusual circumstances.

The Republic's version is a bit different. They say Engineer Hale, "when his engine was about to roll upon the bridge, saw a hot box on the right side of the train near the middle of it, and whistled for brakes, but before his call could be effectively complied with his engine and eight cars had crossed the bridge."

At any rate, the center span of the bridge gave way and 20 cars loaded with wheat, barley, flax seed and stones plunged into the river. Two cars remained on the east span, and one on the west. Naturally, "the car that caused the wreck did not go down into the river!"



SAUK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Pictured above is the 1890 freight train wreck on the Baraboo River in what we now know as West Baraboo.

The wreck happened on Saturday night, Nov. 22, 1890, and by noon Sunday a steam derrick arrived from Milwaukee. Within 24 hours trains were running over the temporarily repaired bridge. Happily, no one was injured, most personnel being in the engine or caboose, both of which escaped the wreck. One brakeman, though, almost went over, the car in which he was riding being the next to the last to plunge into the Baraboo.

The Republic estimated the cost to be an immense sum for the times, up to \$80,000 or more considering the value of the cars and their freight, and the work involved in restoring the bridge. Then, \$80,000 was big money. Canfield says some of the grain was retrieved and sold, and some of the flour was given "to any who wanted it."

Wright dam?

One of the abutments supporting the middle span remains and is readily viewable from Haskins Park, or from the automobile bridge. It was an underwater hazard for motorboats while the woolen mill dam was still intact. That dam was just to the north of the present auto bridge, and backed up the river all the way to North Freedom. Local motorboaters frequently made the pleasant trip then, though at no wake speed.

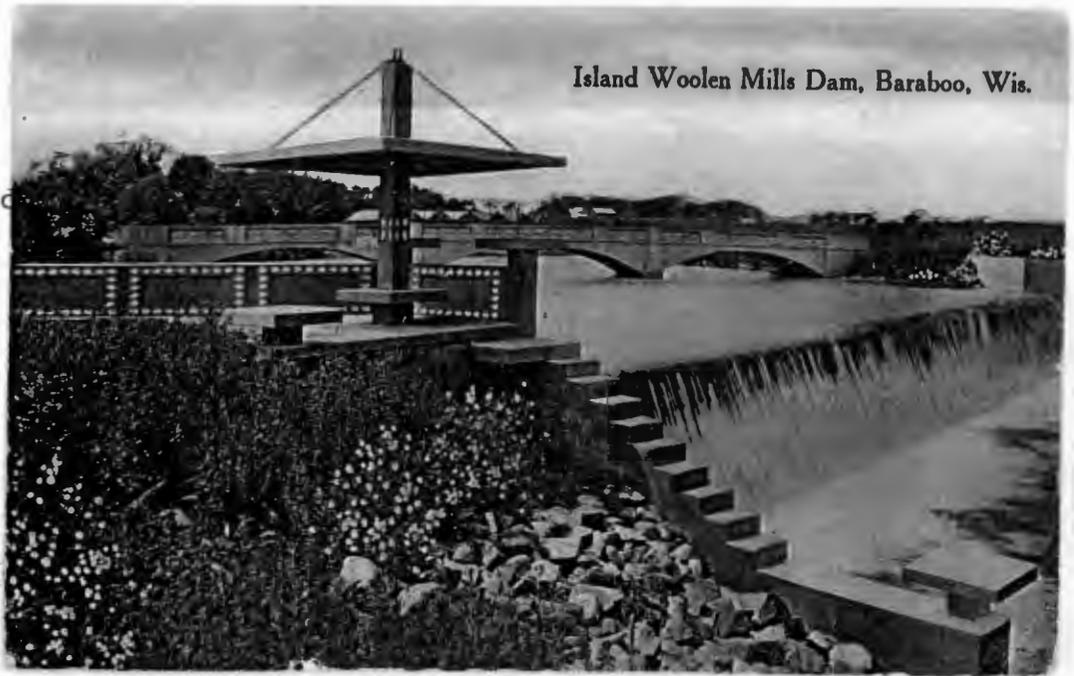
There is considerable evidence that this dam — rebuilt many times since Baraboo's eccentric founder, Abe Wood, first dammed the river in 1840 — had the hand of

Frank Lloyd Wright in its design. The observation platform is now recognized by the F.L.W. Foundation, in its FLW Update publication, as such a landmark. It is cataloged in their system as S. 143, and dated 1912/13.

They state: "This structure was long-known to locals but documentary evidence, namely a photograph, has only recently come to light." The photo shows the platform under construction, with a figure strikingly like that of Wright overlooking the dam. The platform had a flat concrete roof supported by a concrete center pole, with seats for viewing the cascading water.

The dam and observation platform were destroyed in about 1970 following inspection by the ever-vigilant Department of Natural Resources, rather than doing \$20,000 of repairs, according

The platform at the woolen mill dam, with which Frank Lloyd Wright had a part



to a News Republic article in 1983. Thus Baraboo lost its only work by Wright, though there is some indication he had some influence in the design of the old Trimpey Studio.

All that remains to be seen at that location, however, is the high windows in the alley facade of the present Amcore Bank building downtown, which suggest Wright's influence. Landscaping extended between the rear of the building and the alley, with a bench and bubbling fountain in a rock garden, to be used by Trimpey in the photography business.

Michael Goc in "Many a Fine Harvest" confirms the story that Wright was hired by his friend William McFetridge, owner of the dam and woolen mill, to design the observation platforms. McFetridge also wanted him to design a replacement of the "High Bridge" in Baraboo, but Wright replied "Those highway men...they really have no vision."

The ice house

While the dam was just downstream from the railroad and auto bridges, the Baraboo ice house was just upstream in an area now occupied by a private home across the river east of Haskins Park. The same issue of the Republic that told of the train wreck had a much longer feature telling how to build a personal ice house in those days of no mechanical refrigeration whatsoever. Basically it was two buildings, one smaller and within the other, and separated by a solid foot of sawdust. The article had two illustrations, rare in papers those days.

Ice was collected from the Baraboo River in winter, and could either be stored in your personal ice house, or in the commercial ice house at this location on the riverbank. In this method, ice could be preserved and sold well through the summer. A horse-drawn wagon, the ice wagon, made the rounds of town every day to supply up to 100 pounds of ice for the family icebox.

The same horses who pulled the ice wagon were probably used to haul the ice blocks out of the river in winter for storage. The ice wagon was a highlight of the day for boys, who snatched cool slivers of ice while a delivery was being made. People did not worry much about pollution from the farms and villages upstream. Not much interest in environmental or intestinal impact then!

If one walks south on Moore Street some 60 feet from its terminus with Second Avenue and looks to the east, the "cut" of the old railroad tracks through the hill can be seen among the brush. From this vantage point one can

also glimpse the center span abutment of the old railroad bridge, but you have to imagine the dam which once controlled the river just to the north of the auto bridge.

Even the auto bridge is new — it is claimed that removal of the dam was so difficult that the previous bridge was damaged and had to be replaced.

The scene is tranquil now, but it was a busy scene in November 1890!



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

Masons Acquire Historic Ringling Artifacts Yesteryear Revisited By Bob Dewel

The night of January 21, 1891 was a special night for many of the men of Baraboo, and it has a direct connection to a special happening this past month, some 111 years later.

The story includes six soon-to-be-famous brothers, and involves the ceremonial regalia they wore on that special evening. First, the events in 1891, followed by the event of this past October.

January 21, 1891

In those days the Masonic Lodge number 34, Free and Accepted Masons, still met, as did all other fraternal organizations, in rented upstairs halls in downtown Baraboo. Now, however, the Lodge was strong enough that a building of their own was being considered. Members had arrived by horseback or carriage or hack, or on foot, for the decisive evening, and the Temple was full.

Also, in Baraboo of that day, the spectacular 7 year rise to national prominence of the Ringling Brothers Circus had brought not only respect but good fortune to many of the brothers. Their father, August, had been a struggling harness maker.

As is well known, there were seven Ringling boys, and young Henry had only recently become old enough for Masonic membership. It was most unusual for as many as six of the Ringling Brothers to be in town at the same time. It was especially unusual on this evening that the six brothers occupied all of the major Chairs in the ceremony of the Lodge. Before the year was out, Father August Ringling would join his sons in the Masonic Order.

Masonic Rituals

Masonry traces its origins, allegorically at least, to the Biblically historical building of the Temple in Jerusalem some 600 years before Christ. Masons wear a symbolic apron, about 12" by 16", tied around the waist, during meetings of the Lodge. These aprons may also be seen at Masonic rites during a funeral of a brother.

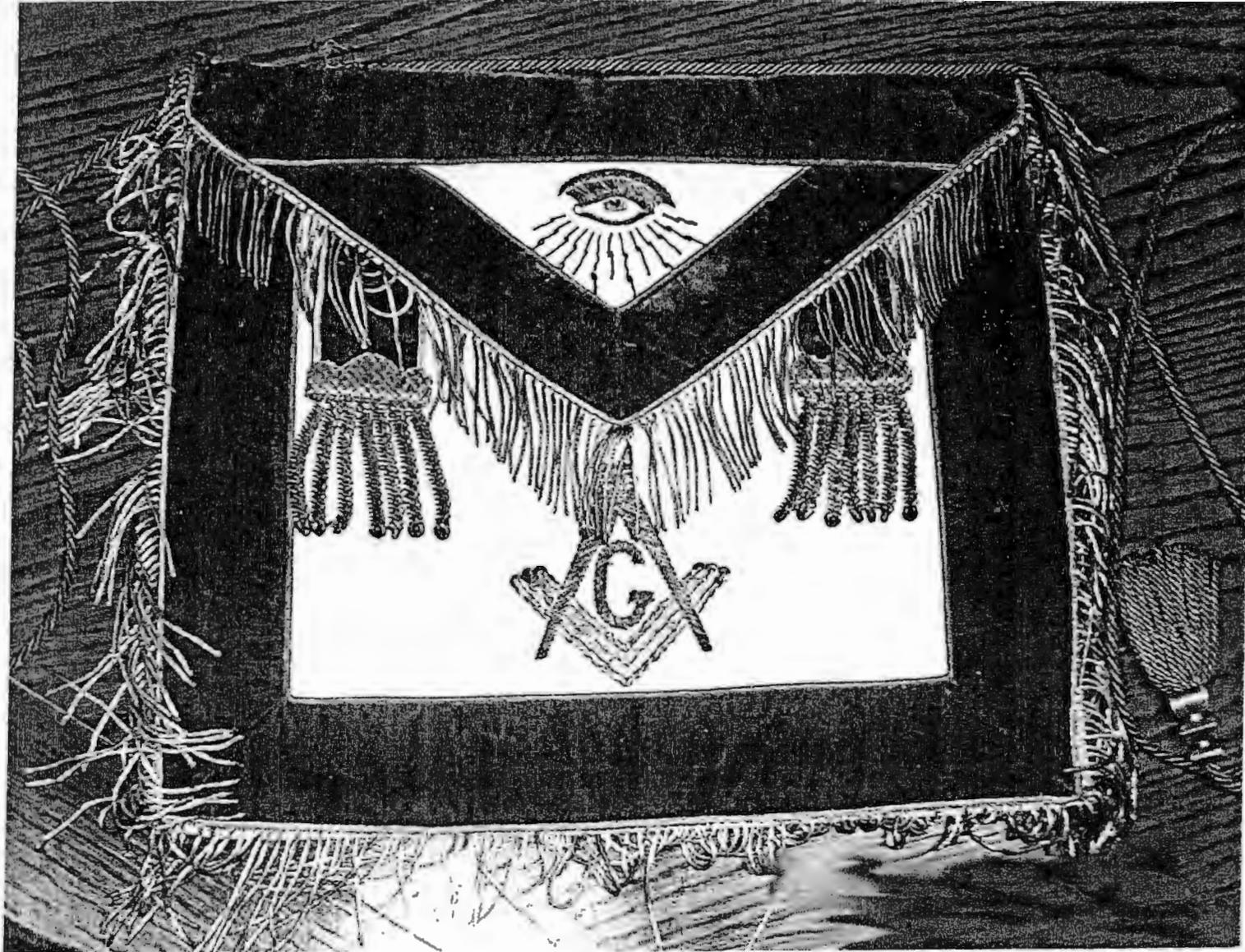
On this particular night in 1891, with such famous brothers occupying the posts or Chairs, some very special aprons had been ordered as gifts. Made of the finest blue velvet instead of the plain white linen usually worn, each apron was embroidered with silver thread and tassels. Central to the blue border was white lambskin, with the symbols of the office or chair being occupied embroidered thereupon.

We don't know about John Ringling, who was not present and was rarely seen in Baraboo, but the other six brothers still called Baraboo home and all were Masons. Masonry is not a religion, and urges its members to be active in their respective church or synagogue, the only requirement being a belief in God. The Ringlings were members of St. John's Lutheran Church, but nearly every church in Baraboo was represented among the other brothers present.

The Ringling Aprons

What happened over the years to the blue velvet and white lambskin aprons, with their silver embroidery, has not yet been determined. Recently an alert brother of the Lodge noted one listed for auction on e-bay, the internet auction web site. Upon investigation, it was determined that not only was this an authentic original apron, but that all six were available.

Moreover, thanks to some unknown but caring people in the last 111 years, the aprons were in mint condition and were still kept in the original boxes. In some cases the original protective tissue paper was still present!



Significant financial outlays were promptly made by five Masonic Brothers, Lee Hoppe, Merlin Zitzner, Dave Deppe, Skip Blake, and Rick Lewison. This made it possible for the aprons to be returned to Baraboo, and they are now in possession of the Lodge. Plans are incomplete, but because of their historic importance, they may be offered for display in summer at the Circus World Museum.

A similar display may appear on occasion at the Al, Ringling Theatre, not even a dream for Al. Ringling when his apron was presented to him in 1891. It would be 24 years before he would build, in Baraboo, what the Theatre Historical Society of America calls the very first of the theatre movie palaces which became so popular throughout the country.

The Meeting

So, it was a special night in Baraboo in 1891. The Ringling Brothers occupied the Chairs, the aprons were presented, and the Lodge prepared to build its own building. Nearly all other Lodge records and regalia and artifacts were lost in the disastrous fire on 1957. It is known that a committee was appointed and a fine building subsequently built, on the NW corner of Oak and Second Avenue.

It was this building, with the Temple rooms upstairs and McGann's Furniture on the ground floor, that was to burn some 65 years later. By good fortune the ceremonial aprons had been removed by someone, and were cared for properly for 111 years. Now they have been returned to their rightful home in Baraboo, relics of a special night.

Don't forget America's

third-largest circus

Suppose we were told that Baraboo was the home of third-largest computer maker in the country. Or Gidget maker. Or producer of satellite dishes — name your industry. We'd swell with pride, the city would adopt an appropriate slogan or logo, and the Chamber of Commerce would trumpet the fact far and wide.

Such civic pride and promotion was not the case in the second decade of this century, when the Gollmar Brothers Circus was the third-largest (or fourth-largest, depending on how you figure) in the entire country. Actually, its comings and goings were only casually noted by the media of the day.

The Gollmar circus' claims to fame had a problem. The problem was that the country's largest circus was also located in this Circus City of circus cities in the circus state of Wisconsin (where 78 circuses were born). The largest, of course, was the circus of their cousins, the Ringling brothers, which started seven years before the Gollmars did. It too was in Baraboo, perhaps the largest in the world. Gollmars' being third-largest didn't seem like a very big deal in Baraboo.

It could be noted at this point that the cousins got along very well, not only with each other but with their cousins the Moellers. Those Moeller cousins were iron smiths and wagon builders — circus wagons, at that.

Circus families

In each case, the mothers of the three sets of cousins were sisters, the Juliar girls, daughters of a French Alsatian immigrant family which farmed near Milwaukee. It was in Milwaukee where the wed-

dings took place, but eventually the Juliar parents moved to Baraboo to watch the activities of their more than two dozen amazing grandchildren. German Lutheran families, like most others of the time, were large!

As with the Ringlings, there are still descendants of the Gollmar family in Baraboo. Fred Gollmar, the last of the great circus kings, was still living (at age 97) when his son, Judge Robert Gollmar, wrote the book "My Father Owned a Circus" in 1965. Parts of this article are taken from that book. Fred was the longest-lived of all the circus kings, and is the subject of a 1962 interview by Paul Meyer published recently by the Sauk County Historical Society.

The Moeller family line ended, however, with the death of granddaughter Alma Waite in 1981. Her blockbuster gift to the city is an ongoing memorial to the family, as well as her lifetime gifts to Circus World Museum and other entertainment venues. She was quoted as saying, "My money is circus money," and the lifetime gifts were usually to related forms of the world of entertainment. But the city has frequently used the gift for other purposes.

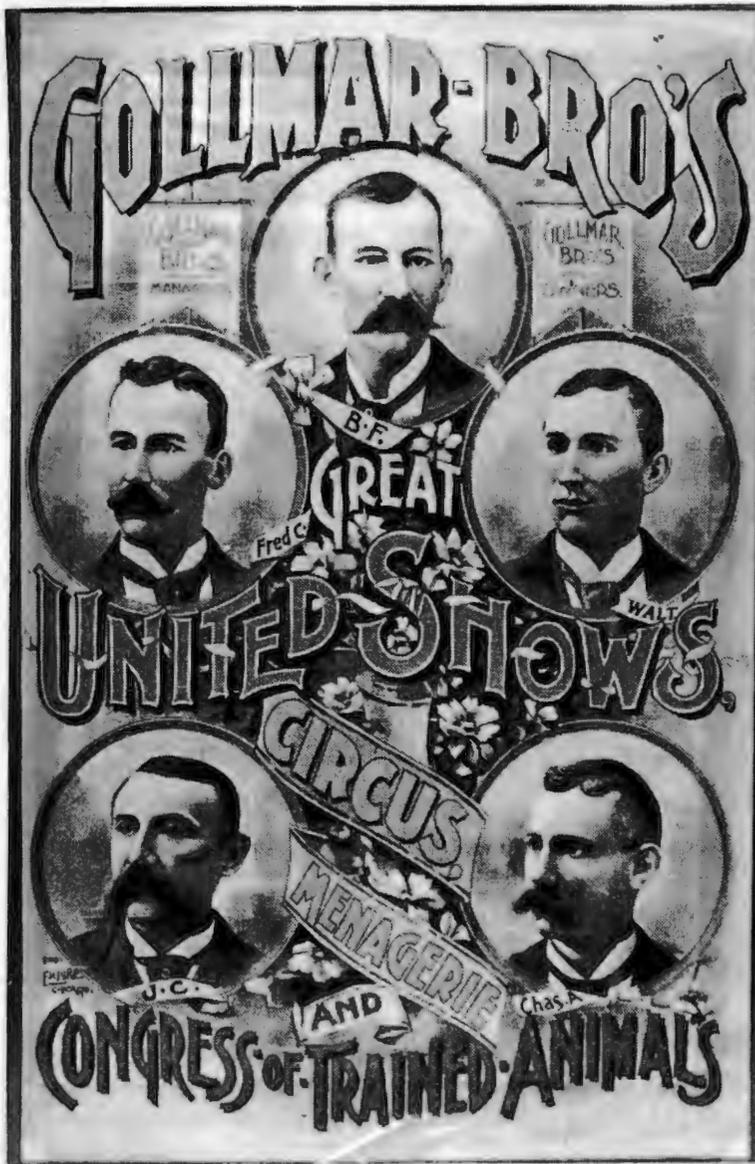
Baraboo, Circus City

With the Ringlings starting in 1884, the Gollmars in 1891, and the Moellers building circus wagons for both, Baraboo was indeed Circus City USA, as it is again now with Circus World, the Robert Parkinson Library and Research Center and the Al. Ringling Theatre.

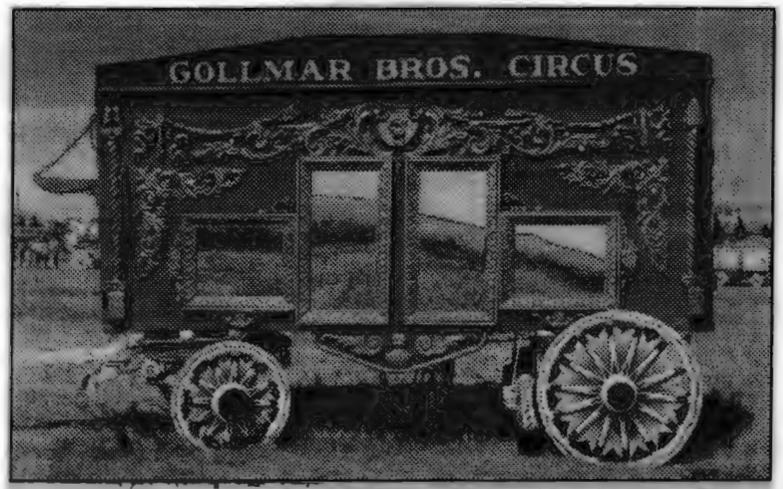
There are other reasons for the paucity of information about the Gollmar circus as compared to the Ringlings, for the Gollmar operation was sold in 1916 to the Patterson Carnival Co. The Gollmar name, after a couple of false starts, was not retained. Even the Sauk County Historical Society has only a modest file on the Gollmar circus.

Moreover, the vast paraphernalia and properties of the operation were scattered and combined into other circuses, so that few artifacts remained for Circus World Museum to accumulate.

To be sure, the museum does have the Gollmar mirror wagon No. 21, properly known as the band tableau wagon (1903). The undercarriage was built by the Moellers, and the body by the Gollmars themselves, with carved figures purchased separately.



According to Fred Dahlinger, curator of the Parkinson library, the Gollmars were "especially innovative and self-reliant," doing some of their construction themselves. One example was a stake-driving wagon that used a heavy weight to drive tent stakes. This eliminated the traditional group of sledgehammer experts driving a stake in rapid, rhythmic strokes.



Pictured at left is a lithograph depicting the Gollmar brothers circa 1891. Above is the Gollmar band tableau wagon, which is now on display at Circus World Museum

There are also two tableau wagons, Nos. 22 and 44 in the collection, as well as an especially rare and large collection of business ledgers showing expenses and income over many years. Fortunately, some of the history was retained and published in the book by the late Judge Gollmar.

The Gollmar circus

The Gollmars confined their sphere of operation to that area of the country between the Rocky Mountains and the Appalachians, a vast territory, indeed, in those days of dirt roads — if roads were present at all. Their early travels were by horse-drawn wagons, graduating to a railroad operation in 1903. Even by 1910, only eight circuses could afford to travel by rail.

By 1908 the Gollmars had a full-fledged, three-ring circus, complete with leopards, camels, wolves, lions, seals and a large herd of elephants. Part of the elephant act included their performance of a square dance.

Like their Ringling cousins, the Gollmar brothers were skilled blacksmiths, iron manufacturers, furniture and funeral parlor operators and "good citizens," according to Cole in his "History of Sauk County." They were Elks, Masons and churchgoing citizens.

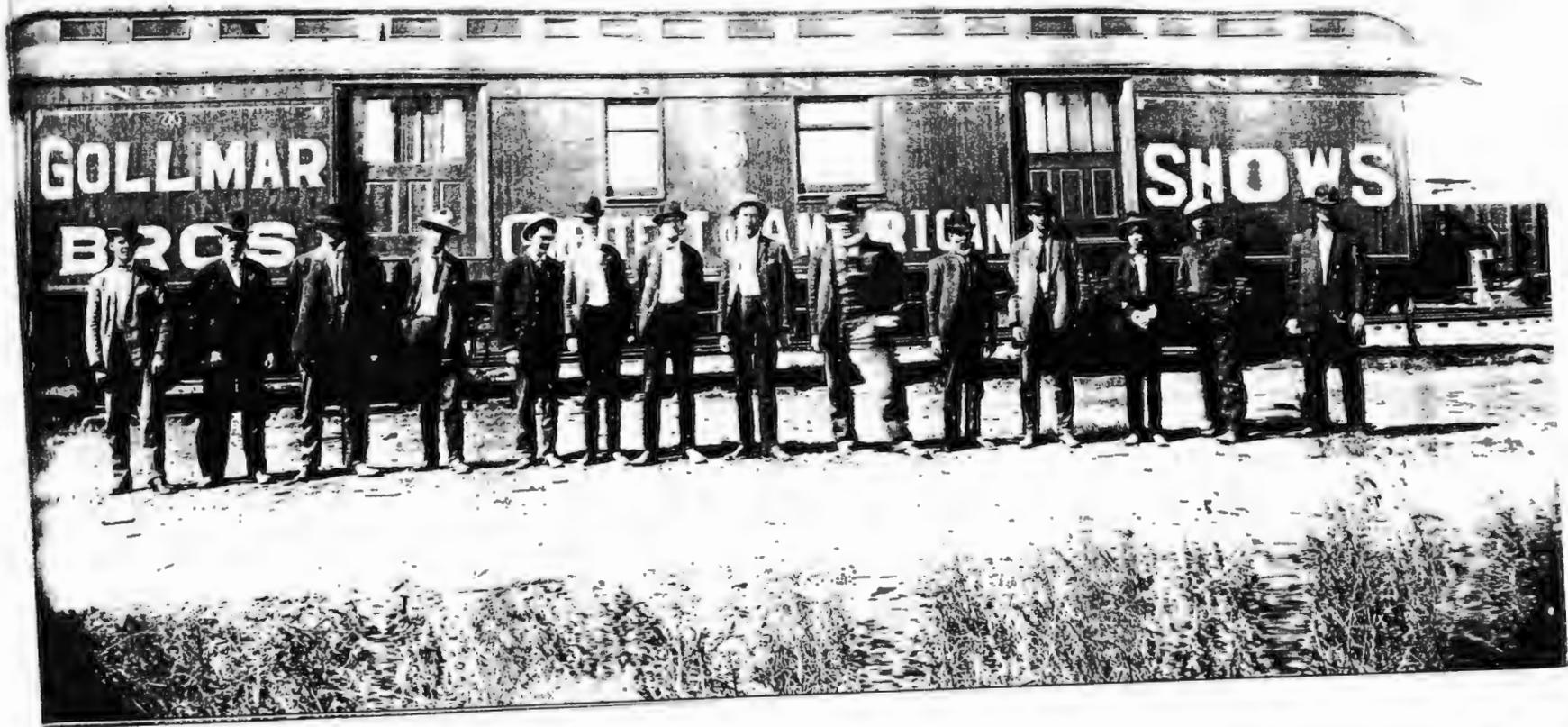
The first performance was in Mineral Point in 1891, but by spring 1892, they ventured to open in Baraboo, beginning the tradition of parading past their parents' home on Third Avenue and Birch. The winter quarters were south of the woolen mill, at 835 Second Ave., and their parade destination was downtown Baraboo.

Bored Baraboo, however, was used to circus parades, for Ringlings had been open-

ing here for some seven years. The general reaction of the day, as reported in Judge Gollmar's book, was that "people on the streets hurry by, utterly ignoring the whole thing. Baraboo in those days was very blasé indeed. What was another circus more or less in a city that had several of them?" There probably was, in those days before horseless carriages, a cry of "Watch your horses, here come the elephants," however.

Of the 14 Gollmar children, only five sons (Fred, Ben, Charles, Walter and Jacob) owned the circus. Their father, a German immigrant in 1823, had worked on the Ohio canal with president-to-be James Garfield, before the Milwaukee marriage to Mary Magdalene Juliar, a union that was to last 67 years. The Gollmar sons were good musicians, and had their own eight-piece band with the assistance of cousin Henry Moeller. Eventually the Gollmar circus band expanded to 20 musicians. The Gollmars operated a clean show, that is, one without pickpockets and cheaters.

To be continued.



The Gollmar circus

BOB DEWEL
YESTERYEAR REVISITED

The Gollmar circus escaped a great tragedy in New Richmond on June 12, 1899, but only by chance. The owners of the lot where they usually showed were not available when Fred was in town earlier to negotiate, so the show set up the tents on a lot on the opposite end of town.

Fortune was really with the Gollmars, for a tornado that afternoon destroyed not only everything on or near the old lot, but took 115 citizens to their death, an appalling toll by modern standards. Six hundred people were injured in the small town also. The tornado struck not long after the afternoon performance, when many were still crowded into the city.

One of the dead was indeed a circus employee, and Ben Gollmar sustained serious injuries. Had the tent been on the original lot, it is believed that the entire operation would have been damaged beyond salvage, with dozens of wild circus animals loose in the community, as well as a severe loss of personnel. As it was, only a few wagons were overturned, and no animals were injured.

As with all tornados, curious things happened. A horse was carried 400 feet and buried feet first "up to his gambles," (sic) but still hitched to his post. In another incident, Ben Gollmar and Wallie, while dining in the hotel, had a satchel with several hundred dollars disappear when the hotel was smashed to splinters. The bag was "found uninjured and unopened a block away, all the money intact."

survives a tornado

The New Richmond tornado ranks with some of the worst in American history. Sums of money were raised for their aid, and from Baraboo, "Mrs. Ben Gollmar, Mrs. A. Brown, and Mrs. Carrie McFarland left for New Richmond to be of assistance to those who were caught in the tornado." Mrs. Brown and Mrs. McFarland were sisters of the Gollmar brothers. Fred Gollmar was in North Dakota at the time, "so he had to backtrack to reorganize schedules and replace lost equipment."

It is hard to comprehend the devastation this tornado produced. One fourth of the town's residents were injured, if not killed, and the entire business section destroyed. Fire followed the tornado, and some who were trapped by the debris burned to death. A heavy rain during the night helped extinguish the flames, however.

The search for bodies went through the night, by the light of lanterns and torches. Bodies were taken to the Congregational and Catholic churches, where they were held until coffins could be

shipped in. Trains of medical staff from St. Paul arrived on the scene within a few hours, and the wounded were loaded onto the empty trains for removal to St. Paul hospitals.

Among the dead were the town undertaker, a druggist, a photographer and a town marshal. So great was the destruction that even some who hastily retired to a basement were crushed by falling debris from the structure above them. Even the sturdy brick business buildings were destroyed to the foundation.

The Gollmars' operation, however, was relatively unharmed, with but minor damage. Needless to say, the show did not go on that night as circus personnel aided the stricken town in its recovery effort.

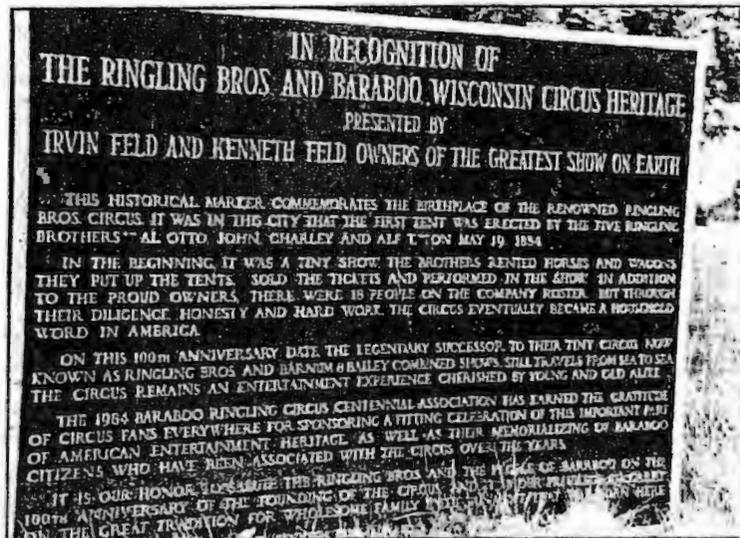
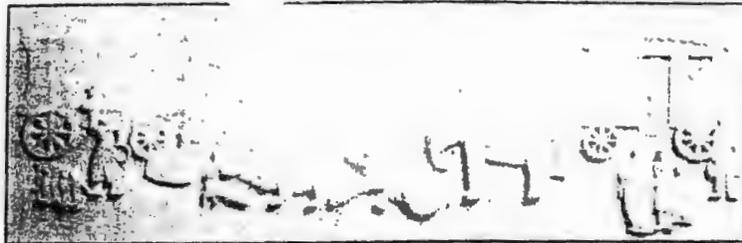
The Gollmar circus survived this natural disaster. It is unfortunate, however, that it failed to survive the management of the new owners in 1917. The Gollmar circus empire was quickly scattered when they retired. They deserve more credit than they receive from circus historians as a result.

The circus in Baraboo
Circus heritage is pervasive in Baraboo, not only with the Circus World Museum, but in many other places. The 1960s courthouse addition features several historical diorama relief panels, two of which relate to the circus.

Also, on the retaining wall near the northeast corner of the square, various circuses and personalities closely related to Baraboo are illustrated with cast metal reliefs set into the concrete cap. This was a gift to the city by the current owners of the Ringling enterprise, Irwin and Kenneth Feld. It was suggested by Chappie Fox at the time of the 100th anniversary of the first Ringling performance in Baraboo, and was presented to "memorialize Baraboo citizens who have been associated with the circus over the years."

Here one finds plaques referring to circus operations such as Forepaugh-Sells 1910-1911, John Robinson Circus 1898, Fun on the Farm (1924), and Deppe Classic Circus 1961-1966. Also memorialized are the names of not only the Ringlings and Gollmars, but such luminaries as John Kelley, The Herriots and Smahas, Jim Williams, Frank Larkin, Paul Luckey, Fred Terbilcox, and a host of other names familiar to many Baraboo citizens.

Baraboo's circus impresario Chappie Fox tells a story about John Kelley's "Fun on the Farm" operation. It seems that Kelley's animals included a green bull, reputedly because it ate shamrocks which Irishman Kelley imported for it. The Minnesota State Fair invited him to bring the bull, but he offered to send a purple cow instead.



Pictured above are a circus relief diorama found on an outer wall of the Sauk County Courthouse addition and a brass plaque that marks Courthouse Square's circus wall.

Kelley was the moving force which prodded Baraboo into establishing Circus World Museum in 1959, so when the first parade went to Milwaukee in 1963, Fox saw to it that Kelley rode in the lead carriage with the Uihlein family. Kelley said then that, "Now by God people will know there is a circus in Baraboo." Kelley died six months later, and Fox says it was one of the greatest satisfactions of his life to see that Kelley rode in the parade.

The spirit of Baraboo's circus people lives on today in the more than 260 volunteers who help operate Circus World. Other volunteers help out at the Al. Ringling Theatre, as well as several other nonprofit enterprises, and make them the successes they are. *It is what you would expect in Circus City USA!

*Line left out of Newspaper

Fred C. Gollmar

Paul Meyer recorded an interview early in the spring of 1962 with Fred C. Gollmar while he was at the Sauk Prairie Memorial Nursing Home. The recording was filed away and not replayed until the fall of 1998. Paul Meyer recently wrote the following report based on information from that recorded 1962 interview.

by Paul Meyer

Fred Gollmar was 94 years old at the time of the 1962 interview. For our visit, Mr. Gollmar first provided the framework that was the cornerstone of Baraboo circus history. There were three Juliar sisters: Fred's mother who was Mary Magdelene Juliar Gollmar; Marie Salome Juliar Ringling, whose sons were the founding Ringling Brothers of circus fame; and Kate Juliar Moeller, whose husband and family owned and operated a wagon-carriage manufacturing business that constructed circus wagons for Ringling Brothers and Gollmar Brothers circuses. Of the five Gollmar brothers, Jacob, Charles A., Benjamin F., Fred C., and Walter S. "Wally"; four brothers worked the circus as Jacob died shortly after the circus began in May 1891. Charles A. became the overall manager, Benjamin F. was the treasurer, Fred C. was the advance manager and Walter S. was the equestrian director.

I asked Fred how he became interested in the circus. He told me that he was engaged in the furniture and undertaking business in Baraboo and became tired of that. Fred told me that at the time he became an embalmer, to become licensed he had to attend an embalming class in Milwaukee for a period of one week after which he was granted an embalmer's certificate. Fred was just 16 1/4 years old when he received his embalmer's certificate. By 1891 his cousins, the Ringling brothers, were already experiencing fame and fortune in the circus business.

From 1891 until the spring of 1903 the Gollmar Brothers Circus traveled by horse-drawn wagon. Its winter quarters were located at the west end of Second Avenue, across from the Woolen Mill Island in Baraboo. The Gollmar Circus opened its first show in Baraboo on a Saturday in May of 1891. Horses and Shetland ponies pulled the show wagons. The Monday following the Gollmar Brothers Circus opening in Baraboo, the troop presented its next show in Sauk City.

Baraboo Once Abounded With Grocery Stores Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

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The recent demise of Darrow's Country Market, household grocery for many, coincided with the arrival of the early Baraboo grocery picture shown on this page. Now long gone, it is the Wallace W. Morse Grocery, located at 150 Third Street. This is the present (2004) location of Baraboo Printing.

The photo posed a problem in location since the upper floor facade is not shown. Faintly discernable, however, is the street number, 150, and a counting of bricks and other features helped confirm the Third Street location.

The photo was lent to us by Mary Hein, and W.W. Morse was her grandfather. His son and wife Clarissa were Mary's parents, and old timers will remember Clarissa as the long time organist at the First United Methodist Church. As is becoming the trend downtown today, Mr. Morse occupied a fair amount of the wooden sidewalk with his merchandise. Note the large barrels, plus bushel baskets, as many things were bought in bulk.

Of interest also are the circus posters in the windows, for which Mr. Morse no doubt received complimentary tickets to the performance. Circus World Museum Director Fred Dahlinger was able to identify the circus date, and hence the picture itself, as being taken on or about Saturday April 30, 1892.

Historian Joe Wright reached the same conclusion by noting that there were only two April 10 dates on Saturdays in that time period, namely 1892 and 1898, but that records show Erswell's second hand furniture store there starting in 1896. Ergo, the picture

was taken in 1892. He finds that in 1897, "the whole front of the storeroom was to be remodeled and replaced with plate glass and modern architecture."

There is more information, for Ward's records show that "in April of 1884, plans were underway to move the post office from 150 Third Street to the northern most room in the Wright Block." This is now, in 2004, the Corner On Wisconsin store. Though there are no more records, it might be assumed that Morse operated his grocery from 1884 to 1896. He later became a rural mail carrier, retiring in 1920. He then was janitor at the library, plus active participation in the Methodist Sunday School.

Little is known of the opposition Morse had in the grocery business, but it is likely that there was plenty, if one can judge from the situation some six decades later. By that time the storefront next east was occupied by the Harley Wickus Grocery, one of perhaps a dozen storefront groceries throughout Baraboo. This situation persisted well into the latter six or seven decades of the 20th century, the stores falling one by one as Darrow's and Pierce's emerged from the pack as the leaders.

Interestingly, neither Darrow's nor Pierce's had been downtown stores. Darrow's previous location had been on Elizabeth Street across the street east of the Lutheran School. Pierce's was on Walnut street near the bridge, moving later to just south of the Broadway Bridge on the east, and later to the west side of Broadway. River Stop and shops now occupies the former site, and St. Vincent's the latter.

Darrow's in the meantime had already moved to a site on Eighth Street, now Ace Hardware, and then to the former K- Mart building near the east edge of town. Pierce's then moved to the Westdayl Mall, its present location.

Within the memory of this writer and many of our readers is the plethora of groceries existing in 1961, both



The W.W. Morse Grocery, 150 Third Street
on or about April 30, 1892

downtown and scattered throughout the city. Besides the Wickus store mentioned above, downtown had Barnhart's, formerly Swansons, the present Vodak's Radio Shack), which served coffee and no doubt doughnuts to the firemen in 1957 during the Masonic Lodge-McGann's fire (Volume 5, page 60).

Nehs store area is now occupied by part of Wells Fargo Bank. Kerndt's market was at 107 Fourth Street, and Marichowski's storefront is now occupied by part of the Baraboo National Bank. Kropps at 424 Oak, was the last downtown grocery to close. Long time residents will remember more stores that we have failed to mention.

On the outskirts of the business section, as sort of a harbinger of things to come, were at times two chain groceries, Kroger and A&P. These were the big box groceries of that time. The latter location is now the Fifth Avenue parking lot, and Kroger was on Third Avenue west of McGann's Furniture store. On Broadway for a time was Bomgars, at 715 Broadway.

This listing however, is incomplete, for scattered throughout the city were small neighborhood groceries, often in the front part of the family home. Zoning laws were lax then. Well remembered are Warren Park Grocery (Biversi's), plus Anstett's (Sp?) and Wilcox' on the South Side, and Hayes in West Baraboo. Allen Paschen's grandparents, the A.M. Rodems, operated a grocery from 1910 to 1919 at 416 and 424 Oak, a double front then. Later it was known as Leigel's Grocery.

Many groceries offered home delivery in the early days of the twentieth century. The housewife was a busy traffic director, with home deliveries arriving from the grocer, the dry cleaner, the milk man, and the ice man, as well as twice daily mail delivery.

Today, within in the city limits, the only grocery is in Walmart, though convenience stores offer a limited

choice of staples and frozen products. West Baraboo has a convenience store plus two groceries, Pierce's Pic and Save and Aldi's.

It is a big change from Morse and his cash grocery, with its barrels and bushel baskets out on the sidewalk. We wouldn't want to go back to the limited choices he had to offer, though he probably felt he was overstocked. He'd have been dazzled by the grocery stores of today.

Dewel on a duel, a murder and a bear hunt

Suppose you were engaged in a duel, and your opponent violated the rules by taking a shot at you at the count of eight instead of 10. Assuming he missed, would you be justified in shooting him in self-defense before he shot again?

Suppose also that a man who had threatened you for some time was seen approaching you with an unsheathed knife, so you shot and killed him. Were you justified?

Both events happened in Sauk County, and in each case the victims of aggression went to prison! Was justice served?

The duel

The duel took place in or near Plain early in the 1890s, a rather recent date for a duel. August Derleth reports that Adam Volk, a tavern keeper, was being harassed in his place of business by an Irishman, resulting in Volk being challenged to a duel.

Now Volk was a veteran of an Austria-Prussia war of the 19th century, and was a crack shot. Despite the pleadings of his wife, he accepted the challenge to his manhood, and arrangements for the duel were made.

The dueling code called for the participants to wait until the count of 10 before shooting, but when a shot was fired at him at the count of eight, Volk responded in kind, shooting the Irishman through the heart.

Curiously, it had taken until just before this time period for the state to outlaw dueling, and only now was it against the law. The Irishman could not be prosecuted for breaking the law, being dead, but Volk could. He was arrested, according to Derleth, and sentenced to prison in Waupun. Apparently the infraction of law was for participating in a duel, not for killing his opponent. Sadly, Volk died in



**BOB
DEWEL**

▼
YESTERYEAR
REVISITED

prison in less than six months.

In a previous article, we related the story of a much earlier duel, in which the sheriff was in charge of loading the weapons, dueling being legal at the time. The sheriff secretly used blanks in each pistol, but one of the duelers was so frightened when the shots were fired that he claimed to have been shot. When he was reassured, the three men then retired to the ministrations of a bottle of whiskey, and the duel was over.

Dueling is said to have begun in German judicial disputes in early times. The accused person would challenge the accuser to a duel, and the gods were supposed to give victory to the innocent person. Duels in history include the death of Alexander Hamilton in 1804 at the hands of Aaron Burr, vice president of the United States! Commodore Stephen Decatur died at the hands of Commodore James Barron in 1820, who claimed Decatur was persecuting him. (If we had duels today, we would lose many of our public figures due to actual or fanciful derogatory remarks!) Usually, however, "satisfaction" was gained when blood was drawn by one or the other of the contestants.

Locus in quo

The murder episode occurred before 1860 near the then-flourishing city of

Newport. Newport was a speculative real estate venture which had developed near the present northeast end

the jury, the verdict and the speech of the prisoner.

It seems that Osborne had quarreled for some time with Hunter

ple whose names were prominent in the early history of the area. Some streets in Baraboo bear those names. Clerk of court was George Mertons, later to operate the Bank of Baraboo.

Truman Wood was foreman of the jury, and Nelson W.

Wheeler was district attorney, and the latter two names are also names of Baraboo streets. The judge was Charles Larrabee, and David Munson was sheriff.

The trial Wheeler ridiculed Osborne's

Culver

story, and when the verdict was given, Mertons, in his troubled English speech, polled each jurist with the words "Iss diss undt vas dass your verdict?"

All agreed, and the prisoner was given an opportunity to speak. He politely thanked the court, and stated that he had received a fair trial. He defended his claim of self-defense, but said he was a good shoemaker and would work at his trade for the state while in prison.

Despite his conciliatory attitude, he was sentenced to serve seven years in prison, starting with 10 days in solitary confinement on a diet of bread and water.

There are problems with dates and places in Warner's story, he being in old age at the time of his telling of the story. The Methodist Church was completed well before the Newport boom and bust, for example, though it is true that court and many social



WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA

Aaron Burr killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel in 1804.

of Lake Delton, where the creek enters the Wisconsin River.

The locus in quo of the murder was a mile or so out of Newport, and occurred because of lingering hostility between the settler, a man named Osborne, and his victim. The story was told in a long article in the Baraboo News on June 6, 1918, consisting of recollections of Mr. R.T. Warner, an Everett, Wash., attorney. One wonders if he was related to W.W. Warner, a Baraboo boy at the time R.T. Warner was remembering, and the donor of Baraboo's Warner Memorial Road.

Like W.W. R.T. was a youth in the late 1850s and apparently attended much of the trial. He claims to have heard the arguments in the case, the judge's charge to

Davis, a drifter frontiersman whose only occupation was fishing and hunting, sometimes with the Indians. Supposedly Davis had threatened Osborne, who said he was in fear of the frontiersman. When Osborne saw Davis approaching him with an unsheathed knife, he fatally shot Davis.

The trial is said to have been the first murder trial in the county, which then was but a few years old, and was held in the basement of the partially erected Methodist Church on the southeast corner of Broadway and Fifth Avenue in Baraboo. The first story of the church had not been erected, but the basement room was used for several years for court and other civic purposes.

The court, according to Warner, included several peo-

activities were held there in the early days, there being no other public building of any size. Also, Mertons is not believed to have been on the scene at such an early date, though he did indeed become head of the Bank of Baraboo during the late 1870s, and was instrumental in helping the young Ringling boys start their circus. Nevertheless, the Warner story has a ring of truth in it.

The first county trial

In a remarkable and rarely seen book called "The American Sketch Book," Belle French Swisher relates the first court trial in the county as follows:

"The first case was held at Sauk (probably at Prairie du Sac) in 1844, Judge Irwin presiding. Capt. Moore says that the people took their arms and tomahawks with them, intending to whip the courts if their suits were decided against them ... Sometime during the session two bears were seen on the island, whereupon the whole court adjourned, without even putting the matter at hand to a vote, until after the capture of the animals, when they took up the broken threads of their work, and went on calmly, as though they had suffered no interruption."

Frontier law was swift, informal, and had a no-nonsense approach. Life was hard and men were busy. There was little time or patience for legal maneuvering and appeals. In addition, there were not many lawyers among the scattered population.

Dueling is out of style now, but we still have the murders. Too bad they, too, don't go out of style.

THE LEGENDS OF DEVIL'S LAKE

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

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The Greeks had their Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon, and Aphrodite.

The Romans had their Jupiter, Venus, Vesta, and Ceres.

The Middle Ages had their witches, demons, inquisitions, and trial by water.

And Devil's Lake has its Ke-she-ah-ben-o-qua, the bird called Thunder, and its Vulcan and Neptune legend.

The legends

There are three major legends of Devil's Lake, accounts which are described in this article. The original Native American name of the lake is said to be Spirit Lake (Ta-wa-chuk-dah), or Minnewauken, or Lake of the Hills. Visitors to North Dakota will recall that they have a Devil's Lake too, and moreover there is a village on the west end of the lake named Minnewauken, so we do not have total rights to the names.

Kenneth Lange, in his excellent book, Ancient Rocks and Vanished Glaciers, prefers other Native American names, such as Mystery Lake or Lake of the Red Mountain Shadows. With regard to Minnewauken, the Baraboo high school annual bears that name, and one wonders if the athletic teams' nickname, Thunderbirds, came from one of the legends.

That legend was dramatized in a part of the 1948 Centennial pageant mentioned in another article, and is summarized as follows:

The Thunder Bird

Having been sent by the spirits to the Holy Lake (Devil's Lake), the young Indian brave Blue Feather observed a dark serpentine fog lowering, followed by the voice of the powerful Water Spirit. She spoke her Indian name, in a feminine voice, and then Thunder Bird spoke his name, in a deep male voice.

At this point "the Water Spirit shot up great spouts of water out of the lake....taking his great ash bow from his shoulder, Blue Feather shot Thunder Bird with a flaming arrow. Water Spirit pulled the wounded Thunder Bird into the water (after which) the world became black, the bluffs shook, and the heavens were rocked by thunder and lightning. Then all was still."

In the 1948 pageant, the narrator continued: "Now we often hear thunder shake the bluffs, and see the bolts of lightning which friends of Thunder Bird aim at the Water Spirit. So we know that a great struggle between the Water Spirit and Thunder Bird still occurs deep below the surface of the lake."

Ke-she-ah-ben-o-qua

Another classical legend is recounted in an 1880 news clipping in the Southard collection at the Sauk County Historical Society. It is found in an article about the Cliff House Hotel and its proprietor, Mr. W.B. Pearl, regarding the raising of the body of Princess Ke-she-sh-ben-o-qua from the depths of the lake.

According to the legend, a French trader named Pierle (not Pearl) arrived at a Native American tribe encamped at the lake. When he came upon the Princess in her secret place by the lake, the bashful girl immediately retreated, but not without an admiring look at the stranger. Pierle's reaction was similar, and as the summer wore on they became lovers.

"For months the French hunter camped with the Indian braves, and when the corn was ripe and rustled in its stalks, and the moon hung full in the sky, Pierle went to the chieftan to ask of him her daughter. Windago a young brave who had jealously watched Pierle, and loved the princess also, went too."

"The old chief...pointed to a pine tree high up in the crags of the opposite shore, on the topmost branch of which he had seen an eagle," and said that whomever brought him a fledged eaglet from the nest would win the girl. Both men swam the lake, Pierle a little faster, and he reached the tree and the eaglet first.

"But fierce Windago, seeing his adversary triumph, gave the branch of the tree on which Pierle was standing a wrench that sent poor Pierle headlong, bleeding and lifeless on the rocks." The princess then threw herself into the water and joined her lover in spirit. It is alleged that the shades of the lovers can be seen floating on the waters on moonlit nights.

Here the legend gains new life, for hotel proprietor Pearl, sometime in the late 1800's, advertised that he

would bring the body of Princess Ke-she-ah-ben-o-gua to the surface of the lake. Nine thousand people are said to have gathered at the lake for this and other events, and a cannon first used in the battle of New Orleans was brought in.

At a given time, after three shots from the ancient piece, a body could be seen floating momentarily on the surface. The audience, dumbstruck at first, dared Pearl to do it again, which he did. The body appeared again for a moment.

Skeptics pointed out that a boat in the distance seemed to have something to do with it, and perhaps a man with wires in the bathhouse did also. Besides, it was alleged that the head of the apparition was probably grown in the hotel garden, and that the flowing hair was from the back of a buffalo. Nothing was ever proven, and an exciting day was had by all. Apparently no one was interested in raising the body of the French trader, the male lead in all of this drama.

Vulcan and Neptune

The third legend is said to have its parallel legends in areas of the wilds of Scotland and Wales. According to this tale, as recorded in the Southard collection at the historical society, "Millions of years ago, when the earth was young, Vulcan forged a drill for Hercules, who bored a hole through the mountain straight down to the rock foundations of the globe, and placed therein a godlike charge of dynamite.

When all was ready swift



An 1889 portrait of a family hunting and fishing trip.

Are these the rocks from which Monsieur Pierle fell to his death

winged Mercury flew to high Olympus, bearing a message to Jove. With unerring aim the thunderer hurled a bolt into the shaft, and cubic miles of primordial rock went whirling to the stars.

Aroused from his slumbers on the bed of the nether ocean by the shock, Neptune plunged upward through the aperture to learn the cause, bringing with him a section of his domain. Angered that such mighty deeds should be done without his counsel or consent, he set his watery seal upon the awful chasm, there to rest forever as evidence of his wrath. This is Devil's Lake."

There is not room in this article to follow such noble tales with the true and detailed story of the formation of Devil's Lake, told so well by Lange and others, and also in recent articles by News-Republic reporters. Suffice to say that layers of sandstone a thousand feet deep in a primordial sea, were later subjected to intense pressure, resulting in the ultra-hard Baraboo quartzite of today. Ancient upheavals then created the Baraboo Range.

Eons later the fortuitous halting of two tongues of the Wisconsin glacier, plugging the south and north ends of the chasm with debris, and leaving Devil's Lake in the middle, is a better and truer story than the legends.

Lange's book tells it in scholarly detail, and the panorama at the nature center at the lake ought to be viewed by every citizen of the city and county. Truth is indeed better than fiction--or legend.



The Annex, part of the Cliff House complex.

DEVIL'S LAKE, PALISADES, AND SHADOW TOWN

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

Devil's Lake has a history all its own, some of which is as intriguing as the fables mentioned in the previous article on August 15. Had plans been fulfilled, for example, there would now be a development with several hundred residents atop the west bluff, with a spectacular view of the lake.

Another promoter even had a poem written about his establishment, the elusive Shadow Town. Both promotions were in the time of private ownership of the area, long before it became a state park. Moreover, in its first vote, the state legislature voted against a park! First, consider those early days.

Private Property

There is thorough documentation of the days of private ownership, beginning with the Indian village Dr. Cowles saw there in 1846. Between then and about 1907, an influx of hotels, cabins, and of course the railroad altered forever its pristine nature.

The popularity of the area is attested to by the fact that former Presidents Grant and Hayes vacationed there, as well as former first lady Mary Todd Lincoln. General Sherman and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow are said to have visited also. Hordes of less famous visitors came by special trains from Chicago and Milwaukee for a day. The hotel capacity was probably as great as that of Baraboo's motels today.

All of this is well documented by Lange and Bouche and others in excellent books and publications, including a 1985 publication by the park itself, celebrating 75 years of state operation. They tell of pleasure steamers giving guided tours of the lake, describing its "beetling crags on the acclivity" (look it up, I had to) in the picturesque language of the day.

The lake was the social center of Baraboo both before and after the advent of the state park, with many families living in cottages there during the summer. The men commuted to town by train or by the circuitous shadow road (old Lake Road). In 1921 the Warner Memorial Highway, now highway 123, provided more direct auto access. There was also a "club house owned by a few gentlemen from Baraboo", perhaps a group that still exists.

The days of private ownership lasted until about 1910, though there is still some private property in the park. There are three or four private cottages on the southwest shore, and of course the railroad bed is private. Also, both the north shore and south shore roads are town roads, not state property.

A State Park?

By the turn of the century the time was ripe to consider the future of this gem of nature. Wisconsin was only then developing its first park, the Interstate Park agreement with Minnesota. Despite some opposition from

a few property owners, a local committee was formed headed by none other than the town's principal employer and proverbial rich man, W.H. McFetridge. An illustrated booklet was published pointing out the advantages of state ownership and development of the area. A state investigative commission recommended state ownership in 1907. Incidentally, options had previously been taken on some of the land, at the suggestion of Evan A Evans, who later would donate land for the Mary Rountree Evans park in Baraboo.

The legislature came en mass on May Day that year for a first-hand look, but a subsequent park measure failed to pass, 32-31, the deciding vote being cast by a Door County representative who wanted Peninsula Park to be considered first. In 1909 an renowned architect diplomatically recommended parks at Devil's Lake, Peninsula, Wyalusing, and Wisconsin Dells, and \$50,000 a year for two years was allocated to the local project.

By Dec. 1910 the state owned 740 acres, in 1911 the acreage increased to 1040, and by 1913 the park consisted of 1090 acres. People sold their cottages for \$1, but with a rent-free 60 year lease. Attempts to extend the leases in later years failed.

Though there was some local opposition, most felt a state park would be beneficial to Baraboo, and indeed the lake became the social center of the town for several decades. The Chateau was built in 1925 for \$40,000, and the Rodwell orchestra played there until

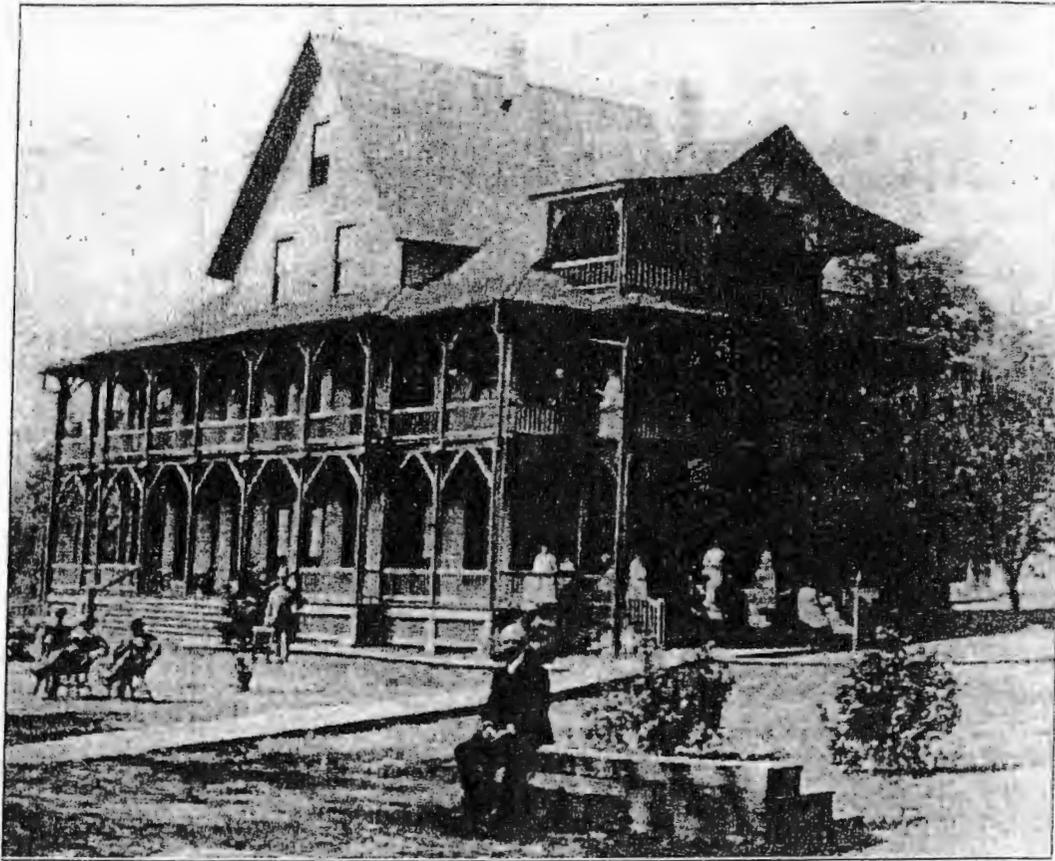
midnight for the dancing public. One local wag, speaking of the early days at the lake, says that the girls wore more clothing to go swimming in those times than they do now to go to school.

Pleasure boats plied the waters, the first being the Capitola in 1869, followed by the Minnewauken in 1875, then the Minnewopsi, and others, including the rather recent John Muir, from 1957 to 1965. Fishing was good, though an 1877 attempt to introduce salmon failed despite 60,000 of that species being dumped in the lake. Many local events were held at the lake, such as the July 17, 1919 homecoming day for the WWI soldiers.

Palisades Park

Typhoid Fever was a dreaded disease in the early days, and it plays an important part in the history of the lake. In 1894, some 90 acres atop the west bluff were platted out into 300 lots, a crushed rock road was constructed, and a few buildings built. The promoter, 23 year old UW geology graduate Arthur R. Zeimer, envisioned a small city there. The unparalleled view of the lake below was enhanced by an 85 foot tower which he built. There also was a hotel and a reservoir.

According to Zeimer, the "chief purpose of the management is to permanently locate a summer colony of the best class of people." Unfortunately, he contracted typhoid fever and died in 1895. His dream died with him, people fearing he got Typhoid fever from the spring water. Thus that bluff top view, open yet to the young



CONTRIBUTED

Correction

In Wednesday's "Yesteryear Revisited" column by Bob Dewel, the *News Republic* used the wrong photo for the Cliff House annex. The photo above is the actual 30-

room Cliff House annex at Devil's Lake. It was completed in 1884.

The *News Republic* apologizes for the error.

and vigorous who can climb the trails, is not available for the aged and infirm or disabled.

All of the development is gone, save a few fragments of foundation and steps. His house was torn down and the lumber used in North Freedom homes. Lange believes that had Zeimer succeeded, the entire area would have been commercialized like the Dells-Delton area, and there would not be a state park.

Shadow Town.

It probably didn't amount to much, but the scarcity of information makes the story of Shadow Town even more intriguing than it may in fact be. It referred to an area near the present north shore exit, between it and the railroad tracks. Lange, in "A lake where Spirits Dwell", says people gathered there to drink pop and eat cracker jack. The main attraction was an Edison cylinder phonograph with its



Devils Lake is beautiful from any angle

large horn, ensconced in a screened shed on a raised platform. People sat on benches, to eat and listen, and concerts were given between 1899 and 1903.

Only parts of a poem remain, reading roughly as follows: "where three roads meet, and deep shadows fall, there Thompsons had to make friends glad....from that place came shadow town." There was a Thompson operating a lake steamer at about this time, and perhaps the poem refers to him.

More Legends

A previous article spoke of the myths and legends on the origin of the lake. Lest we be too critical, it is a matter of record that men in the latter part of the nineteenth century were convinced that the lake either had no bottom, or was two thousand feet deep, or was "absolutely 1144 feet deep." The correct figure is now said to be 43 feet, but the ancient river bed, now filled in, is said to be 300 feet below that.

Others wrongly claimed that because of its slight resemblance to places like Crater Lake in Oregon, it was volcanic in origin. The correct story of its origin is, of course, the propitious halting of two tongues of the Wisconsin glacier before they met, creating the lake, as described in the previous article.

Legend or fact, Devil's Lake inspires respect and reverence, a unique geologic and botanical special place in what the Nature Conservancy calls one of the last great places on earth. It took them a while, but the turn of the century legislature finally got it right.

100 years ago this week (1907)

³⁻⁶⁻²⁰⁰⁷
 ■ The legislative committee for the Devil's Lake Park, having heard the people from Baraboo on the subject of converting the region into a state park, recommended that the bill be passed. When a bill was recommended by one of the committees whose duty it was to investigate it carefully, it generally became law. Therefore it was almost an assured fact that Devil's Lake region would be converted into a state park.

Palisades Park Could Have Doomed State Park

Tales of Other Days

By Bob Dewel

We've mentioned the Palisades Park project before, but new material has surfaced and it deserves mention again. Had Palisades Park succeeded, we doubtless would not have Devils Lake State Park. In the words of Ken Lange in an earlier article, "Devils Lake would most likely be another private resort development, probably like Wisconsin Dells."

Palisades Park, of course, was the brain-child of one Arthur R. Ziemer, in 1893. The State Park did not exist then, and all of the land around the lake was privately owned. During his final year at UW Madison, Zeimer's interest in the lake area was piqued while on a geology class visit. This enterprising young man, upon experiencing the magnificent view from the top of the west bluff of the lake, saw the commercial possibility and began planning a 90 acre development there.

Zeimer named the area Palisades Park, after a similar view on the Hudson River in the Catskill Mountains of New York. After acquiring the 90 acre property, work began in earnest in 1894, plating out a village with several small parks dividing areas of housing development. Some lots were directly on the crest of the bluffs, with no doubt a commanding view of the lake. One choice lot on crest of the bluffs is marked on the plat for Zeimer.

This was a surprisingly sophisticated enterprise, and we have copies of the platted area, showing well over 200 building lots. Even the streets were named, including names like Cliff, Range, Plateau, Archer, and of course Palisades. There was also a small lake, really a pond. An incline railroad was proposed for access to the lake below. As if the 560 foot bluff view of the lake was not enough, an 85 foot viewing tower was constructed, and a faded picture of it remains.

The Specifications

In a 1987 article, Lange reports that "For \$500 the management offered to build an 'artistic' story and a half house with stone fireplace, and deed a lot." Frances Schluter, in a 1993 article, reported that the tower had a telescope, and that roads were constructed with stone from the "Hopkins Quarry on the South Bluff." You could rent a cottage, however, for \$2.75 per week per person. Meals in the "large dining pavilion" were \$4.75 per week per person.

A surprisingly well done 8 page promotional booklet was prepared, with illustrations, for the summer 1895 Opening Season. It promised, rest, diversion, repose, and health. A steamer would ply the water, burros would ascend the steepest trail, and a hop (dance) would be given each Friday evening in the large pavilion overlooking the lake. The area was called the "Baraboo Mountain Range" and an absence of mosquitoes was promised.

Swimming instruction would be give, and the water supply could come from the clear 'Minnehaha Spring.' A generous description of the area attractions is given, and the brochure promise "no saloons, stores, or boisterous crowds" to mare the elegant existence. "It is the purpose of the management to secure the best class of people."

Failure

With such glowing reports and a known idyllic area, why did Palisades Pak fail? Fate intervened, for Mr. Zeimer died in October, 1895 from typhoid fever, said to have been acquired by drinking water from a nearby spring. Without his leadership, and perhaps due to the bad publicity about typhoid fever, the resort quickly declined into a ghost city with a few shacks, and eventually only the stone fireplaces remained.



*The A. R. Ziemer house, perched on the crest of the
West Bluff at Devils Lake, about 1895.*

Lange wrote that the 1922 county atlas still showed 22 lots. Schluter says that Ben Shew bought several lots in 1923 and operated a refreshment stand on the crest of the bluff. It was the beginning of the WWII era before the area was shut down completely, though well known to boys of the early century as a place to explore the abandoned buildings, and perhaps assist in their destruction.

We do not wish to exult in the misfortune of Mr. Zeimer, but it is probable that had the project succeeded, the entire lake area would surely have been taken over by attractions such as can be seen in our neighbor to the north. Such attractions may have their place, but not in one of nature's finest lakes and range in the Midwest, and now available to all citizens as a state park and nature preserve.

It was hard enough to get a state park started in the succeeding decade, as detailed in another article (Vol. V, 28-35), without the burden of encroaching tourism and commercial development. The view from the top of the bluff remains breathtaking, even if you are already out of breath from the climb! Also, the view is free to all, not just to the affluent had the Zeimer development succeeded.

The old maids of skillet creek (and their swains)

BOB DEWEL
YESTERYEAR REVISITED

There is a beautifully hand-written document extolling the virtues of several unmarried but marriageable ladies in the Skillet Creek area in days gone by. But before you can understand the document, you must know about its counterpart, the Skillet Creek Bachelor's Club. Adding to the mystery, a lot of action takes place in an area of Sauk County known as "Pansy Heights!"

Inter-sex communication

How times change, and yet remain the same. It was then, and is now, a case of "boy seeks girl" and "girl wishes boy would seek her." Or "girl seeks boy."

One needs not look too far to find evidence of this trait of human nature. Today we see it in the personal want-ad columns of this newspaper and others, and even find it on the Internet. An occasional swain trumpets his desires with a billboard and the question "Will you marry me?" posed to his sweetheart.

Even some churches have singles clubs, though that is not all that new — Baraboo's Methodists had a similar group in 1890, known as the Busy Bee, and with dues of 6 cents. Many a marriage had its inception in those days in the church choir, also. There was no Internet then, and an advertisement in the newspaper for a mate would have been unthinkable. A billboard was equally unthinkable. You couldn't even pour out your troubles to Ann Landers.

So how did a boy meet a girl at the turn of the century, especially since few had telephones and most people lived on a farm, where work began at dawn and lasted well into the dusk of evening? Well, nature has it ways, and that brings us to the SKB Club.

The SKB Club

This remarkable group of young men had two levels of membership, unmarried and married, the latter known as "advisers." Lest the charge of chauvinism be raised, let it be said at the outset that the purpose of the club was promoting marriage, not bachelorhood, as many young men "are dilatory in assuming life's responsibilities." The club provided not only social events but other methods — some of which were a burden to the bachelors — to promote

matrimony. There was even a code of ethics of courtship in order to invoke "the ideals of the graces and qualities sought which they think will incite the divine passion for the one being chosen." The language is stilted, but the ideal is the same — worthiness, honor, value, reasonable expectations.

The code of ethics required that no member "shall cut out a brother unless he wants the girl himself." No holds barred in that case? However, if one is not in earnest, he must "continue his attentions to a lady long enough (that she can) inquire her present prospects elsewhere."

In no way, however, was this a stuffy organization. Bachelor applicants could expect an initiation which included riding an Angora goat and other unmentioned indignities. He must pledge to "promote matrimony and end (his) present condition of single wretchedness."

A kangaroo court could be invoked should he violate the rules or fail to find a damsel to court. One hapless initiate

who failed to escort a young lady to a social event, as promised, was "brought before the most high court of the SKB Club to plead," the jury being 12 ladies! When the defendant asked to remove his suitcoat because of the sweltering heat, the request was refused — "Let him sweat," they said.

The club had regular meetings and once considered having a coat lapel badge. A celluloid button was rejected because it "might explode, being inflammable, when the members went out 'courting.'" Social events were promoted and records kept of marriageable ladies as a service to the bachelors. "Liberal advice" was provided by the married members of the club to the neophytes.

The group drew the attention of the pastor of the First Baptist Church, who in 1910 printed a generally favorable editorial in his church publication. He said, "I tremble for those who rush into marriage without thought ... beware of the girl who is always helping keep a stick of gum from freezing ... (or) tries to catch on to some fellow at the depot Sunday afternoon ... (don't marry) if your income is less than \$600 a year." That's 1910 dollars, of course.

Club minutes

Minutes of SKB Club meetings are on file at the Sauk County Historical Society, covering the period 1910 to 1914. At one social event popcorn was served to suggest to bachelors that they pop the question "when the time, the place, and the girl are propitious, and the moon is in the right quarter."



Sauk Conty Historical Society

1912 Initiation of a hapless bachelor. His feet are bound and he wears a blindfold while rowing a cart. He probably has already ridden the goat.

Dinners were held at the Wellington Hotel, where couples entered the dining room to the tune of the wedding march. Bleeding heart plants were given to the bachelors present. The evening didn't end until midnight.

Ladies organizations

Less is known about the ladies' organizations. In one document the "Ladies of the Fellowship challenge the SKB Club to debate, the challengers taking the affirmative of the following question: Resolved, that the rights of women should be extended."

Another group of women, perhaps at a different time, were known as the Arachne Club. The dictionary defines arachne as derived from a Greek myth, a girl turned into a spider by Athena for challenging the goddess to a weaving contest. These women, besides having joint social events with the SKB's,

made a quilt, had a button-hole making contest, and did Red Cross work during WWI when the bachelors and advisers were away at war.

There appears to be no record that the organizations survived after that war, but there were reunions in 1935 and 1936, testimony to the strength and quality of the young and light-hearted group from the turn of the century. There was no radio or television, and few telephones, nor did Hollywood dictate our ideas of entertain-

ment or morals as it does now. People were creative and clever in developing their own modes of entertainment.

With regard to women, it should be remembered that in most ways it was a man's world then. Rare was the working woman seen. Instead, as late as 1915 according to the "Good Old Golden Rule Days" book at the Historical Society, a female school teacher could not only not marry, she could not keep company with men,

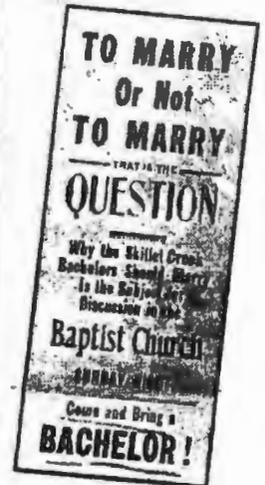
travel beyond the city limits, ride in a carriage with a man unless he was her brother, dye her hair or dress in bright colors, but had to wear at least two petticoat. Femininity was a highly valued but highly restricted state indeed!

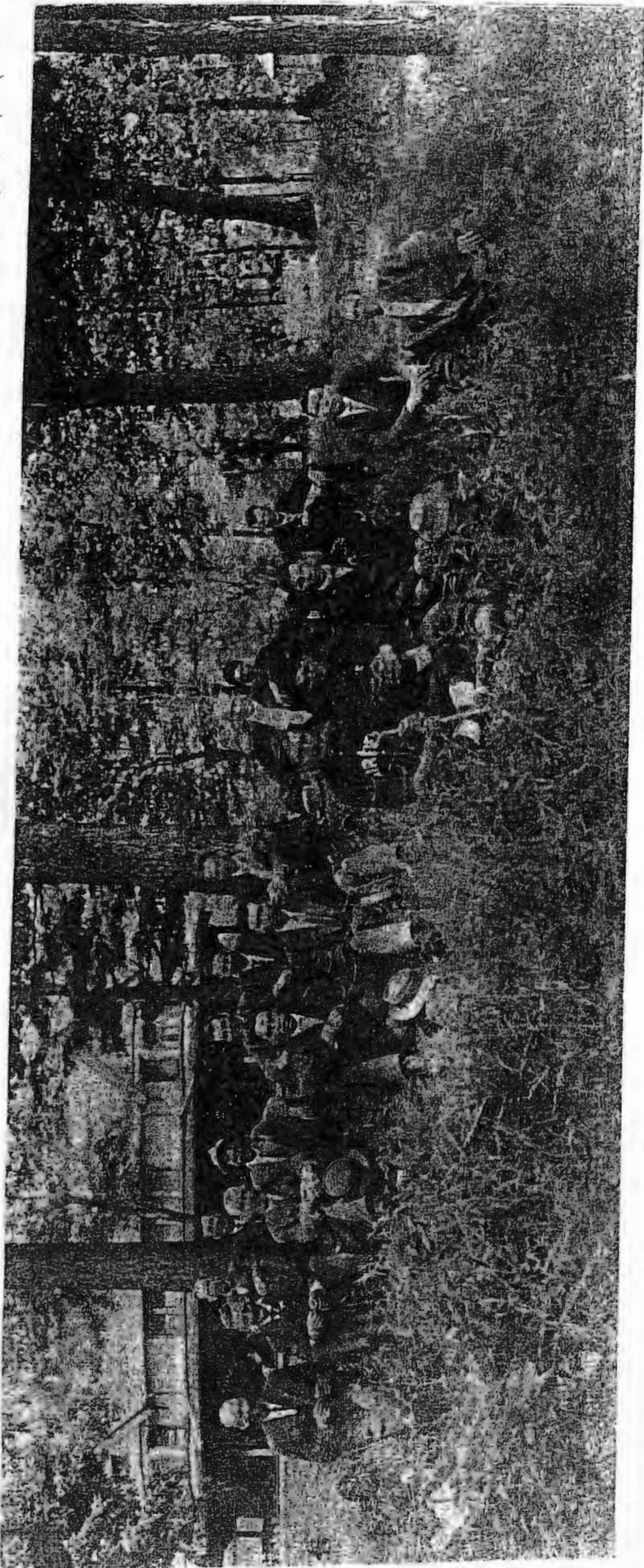
Skillet Creek's old maids

This brings us, then, to one "Old Maids of Skillet Creek," a beautifully scripted document submitted to the writer by Baraboo's Ray Wickus. Ray got it from his Reedsburg cousin, Dorothy Pierce Parent, who found it in her mother's papers.

Indeed some of the people mentioned in the paper include his grandfather and his aunt. The latter, mentioned as one of the old maids who was "somewhere under 30," did not marry until she was 40. Ray says that her husband greatly desired children, and made her walk five miles a day in hopes of improving her frail health and subsequent conception — but to no avail.

The document is undated, but was unauthored by one A.B. Wood who, "wishing to be of some use to the ladies,





Sauk County Historical Society
Bachelors at a camp in 1911. All but one wear suits and ties!

thought of keeping a list of marriageable ones and publishing it in our valuable paper." A total of seven young women are profiled in 50 words or less, mostly laudatory editorial comments. One finds phrases such as "prepared to accept a matrimonial contract ... will consider favorably any proposition from a young man of temperate habits and good moral character ... hope to see her married soon ... apply at once, no eligible offer refused ... will keep his clothes dusted."

Sometimes the lady had qualifications for the male suitor, such as "must keep a horse and cutter ... must be posted on comets ... be able to converse fluently about the weather." Sometimes, with the women, there is a poignant note of despair — "Is at home all the time ... she makes good bread ... no eligible offer refused ... correspondence solicited."

Turnabout is fair play, and the document goes on to profile five young men, sometimes more frankly. For example, "is fond of roving but so far had always returned and resides on his farm ... looks facts in the face ... he does not hide his light (abilities) but hangs it aloft where it illumines the house."

Even more frankly, one B.W. is said to be a "poet, traveler and farmer, is still sowing his wild oats ... is a fine marksman, having been known to shoot peas in a bee line from a distance of 12 feet. He is domestic." The author then solicits letters from the ladies to the gentlemen, as "her communications will doubtless be kindly received and answered."

At first we suspected that the Old Maids document was a spoof, but the SKB Club minutes confirm that the club did indeed keep records of marriageable young ladies. The only trouble is that Ray Wickus dates the Old Maids document, which involves his grandfather and his aunt, as about 1884, and we only found records of the SKB Club starting in about 1910.

Maybe this intersex attempt at communication has been going on longer than we think! Like maybe since the dawn of time?

**TO MARRY
Or Not
TO MARRY**
— THAT IS THE —
QUESTION

Why the Skillet Creek
Bachelors Should Marry
Is the Subject for
Discussion in the

Baptist Church

SUNDAY NIGHT

Come and Bring a
BACHELOR!

About 1912

Methodists mark building centennial

Wisconsin may be celebrating its sesquicentennial this year, but it is old news to the members of the First United Methodist Church of Baraboo. That congregation celebrated its sesquicentennial in 1992, marking the date of Feb. 6, 1842, when Thomas Fullerton, a Methodist circuit rider, "formed a Methodist Class at Baraboo Mills." It was the first church formed in Baraboo.

Instead, their sesquicentennial over, the Methodists are this year celebrating the centennial of their present church building, which anchors the northwest corner of the downtown business center. In fact, it was exactly 100 years ago this week (April 21, 1898) that the contract was let and construction began.

Copious records and building plans exist with regard to the erection of the building in 1898, fueled by an unusually active ministry and by a remarkable Board of Trustees.

The First Church in Baraboo

The 1898 structure replaced a frame building, a combined church and public meeting house, which had been put up in 1853. Previously the members had met in the original rough wood courthouse and operated a Sunday School there jointly with the Baptists and Congregationalists. By 1850 the church felt the need of a meeting place all their own.

Canfield reports that they "cleared away the snow from the ground, and erected a rough board chapel, 24 x 36 feet, boarded on the inside, as on the outside, with unplanned inch boards, and filled between the boards with saw dust." It was located on the Southeast corner of the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Broadway. A stone marker and brass plaque testify to its former presence. The lot had been donated by Alexander Crawford.

The second building

The chapel was quickly found to be inadequate for the growing church, and "steps were taken to build a new church on the ground where the first church stood"

(Cole). This building was complete with a basement, and measured 30 x 50 feet. The basement was used for public school purposes and for a courtroom. Even today this church on the square, in that tradition, provides meeting space for unrelated civic groups.

The second building was completed by summer, 1853, and was enlarged in 1864 to 36 x 74 feet. Somewhere along the line a handsome New England style steeple was added, with belfry and bell. That bell now sounds from the belfry of the present church building. Curiously, the steeple and entry to the building fronted on the alley behind the present Little Village Cafe.

Despite its ungainly proportions and enlargements, the interior was described as beautiful with "blue and gold walls and silver gray fleecy clouds in the dome."

Four wood stoves served to heat the building. By 1871 the preacher's annual salary was \$900, and that same year, for some reason a motion passed that "no popcorn be allowed in the church on Christmas Eve." Pews were rented, and were a constant source of contention. At least two state Methodist conferences were held in this building, and in 1860, at a picnic at the lake, the minutes duly reported that "Bishop Scott fell in."

It was not easy to be a Christian then. The minutes frequently report that persons were excluded for such violations as "having been drinking brandy in Mr. Berlin's bar," "want of integrity in business," or "dancing and neglect of duty." Some are reported as having "died in triumph, in peace," and one entry reports a death in the army in the civil war. One entry simply reads "gone to Pike's Peak."

By 1885 the once proud building was being surpassed by fine new church buildings, particularly the Congregationalists and Presbyterians. Pastor Benson, in his 1887 diary wrote, "This church has not come up to what it ought to be because of a disposition to run along with inferior buildings. Unless a change is made soon, ruin will be the result." A few weeks later, in a better mood, he wrote "I have had three good years here."

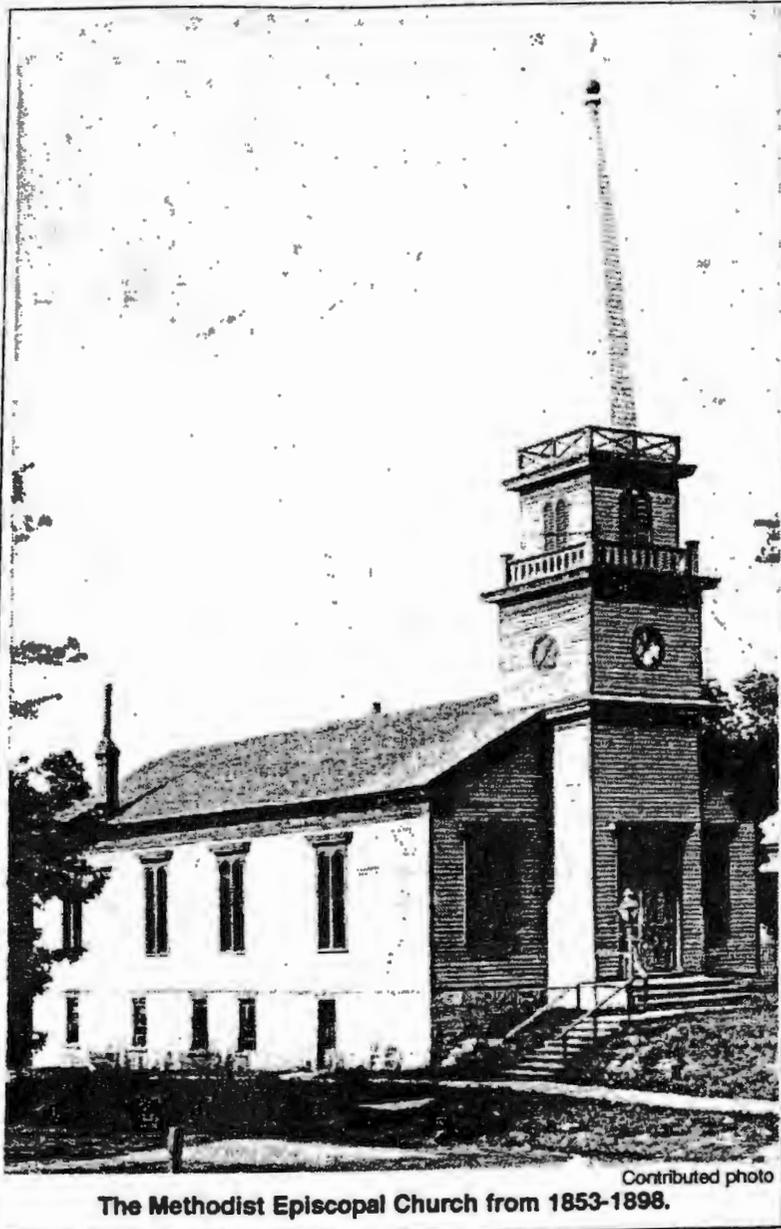
At this time there were three other Methodist churches in the area, The German, the South Side, and the Fairfield congregations. All have since merged into First Church as transportation became more dependable, but until then there was competition for members.

A New Board of Trustees

In the early 1890's a remarkable confluence of ambitious and forward-looking Methodists took control of the Board of Trustees. Constant repair and upkeep on a parsonage at Seventh and Broadway was their first problem, and by 1896 a fine new parsonage had been erected where the present church parking lot is located. That house was removed in 1991, after serving 95 years, to make room for the recent generous enlargement of the church, as was extensively reported in 1992.

The 1898 building

The Trustees kept complete records. In 1896, 55 cords of stone were delivered to the site at \$3.50 per cord. When eleven bids were opened on April 26, 1898, a member was sent to Sparta, by train of course, to investigate a bidder. He returned the next day to report that the contractor was "all right," so the bid was accepted. The old 1853



The Methodist Episcopal Church from 1853-1898.

building was put on the market for \$2,000, and sold later in the year for \$1,810, only to burn shortly after it was vacated by the church.

An idea of prices of that day is the entry "ordered folding chairs at \$8.50 per dozen," or 71 cents each! The pews in the church, still in use today, cost a total of \$595. Construction records show that plumbers got \$.65 for their "labour," but common workmen got only \$.30.

A mysterious entry reads "Mr. P.H.K. has paid off the mortgage on the parsonage," but no member

seems to have those initials. Fund raising had gone on for several years, and still in the possession of Mrs. Mary Hein is a quilt containing the sewed-in names of hundreds of parishioners. It cost \$.10 to have your name included.

After the building was accepted, many finishing touches were added, including the new "incandescent electric lamps," the building already having been lighted with city gas. The council even agreed to pave Fourth Avenue, but Avis McGilvra was denied permission to carpet and paper her Sunday School room.

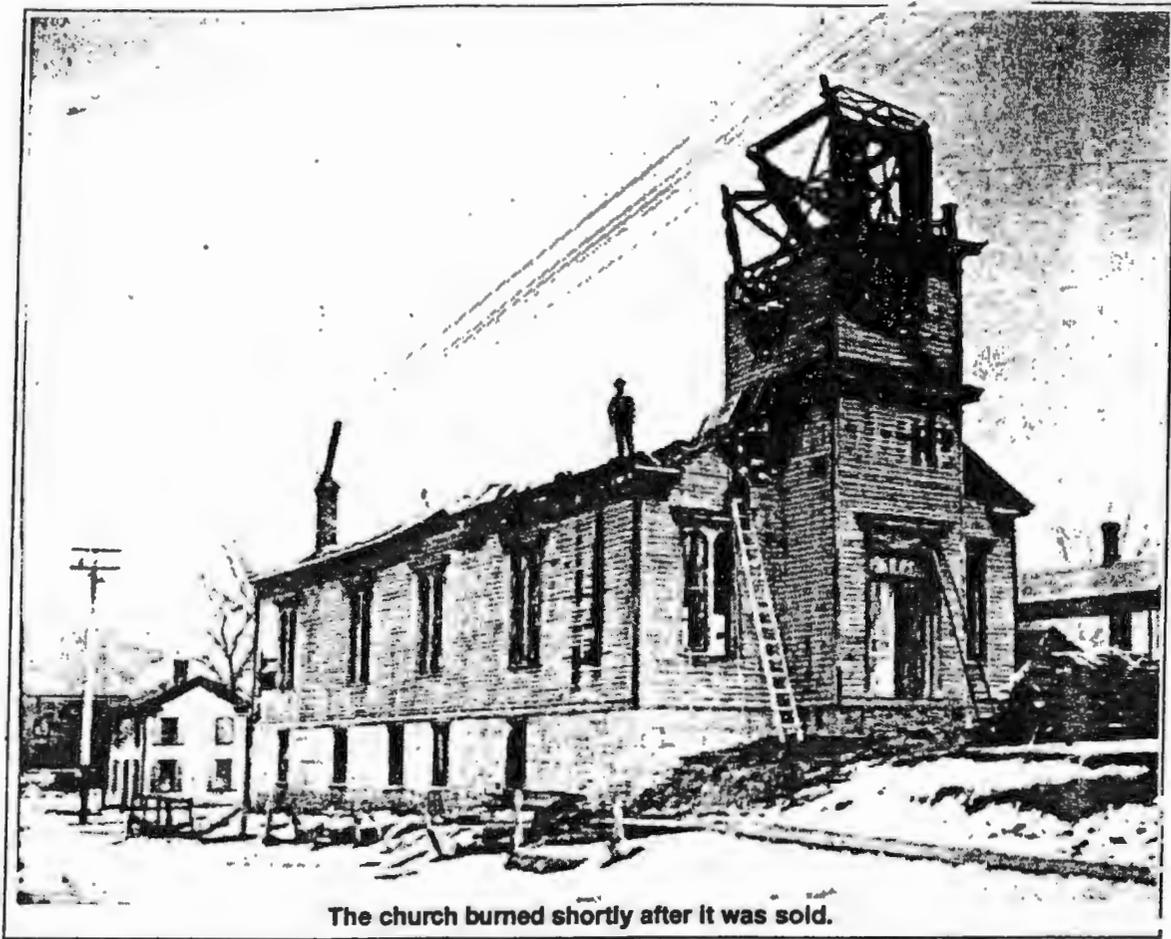
Financing the building

Church pledges were often public knowledge in those days, and were sometimes made verbally at open meetings. At the dedication of the new sanctuary, "at 8:30 Bishop McCabe arose and called the Board of Trustees to the altar. The Bishop said that all the money had not been provided but that he knew it would be within an hour, so would trust the people that long. (Then) Bishop McCabe proceeded to collect the last \$3,000 to wipe out all indebtedness." The local newspaper then published some of the names for a!! to see!

The newspaper also spoke of the new building as "the finest church edifice in the county, and the subject of congratulations from all its sister bodies." The editor even predicted that the building would serve for 50 years, and now, 100 years later, the Methodists know he was underestimating.

A time capsule

Pastor Mayes Martin was in charge of moving the copper time capsule from the previous church building to the new one, and 1898 items were added before it was resealed into the cornerstone. The church plans to retrieve the capsule from the cornerstone at church services May 3, and present it to the congregation on May 17. Contemporary materials will be added later before resealing it. The opening of the time capsule is eagerly awaited, for it should contain papers dating from 1853 or before.



The church burned shortly after it was sold.



The current First United Methodist Church.

The Wigwam: Baraboo Social Center

Tales of Other Days

By Bob Dewel

Or: Baraboo's "hostess with the mostest"

The residents of Baraboo's Magdalene Home probably don't realize it, but their quiet and comfortable residential home is located on historic ground. No, it is not historical in the sense of Lief Erickson, or a Civil War underground, or even a native American battleground.

Its claim to fame is that in the Gay Nineties it was the social Mecca of Baraboo, indeed of Sauk County. Presiding over it was the "hostess with the mostest", Mrs. Harriet Lillian (or Lillias) Mackey, originally Harriet Lillian Marquiessee. She was formerly the widow of John Noyes, and was now the widow of Safford Mackey of Reedsburg. Before the end of the next decade, she would also be known temporarily as Mrs. John Savage, and finally as Mrs. F.B., Clarke.

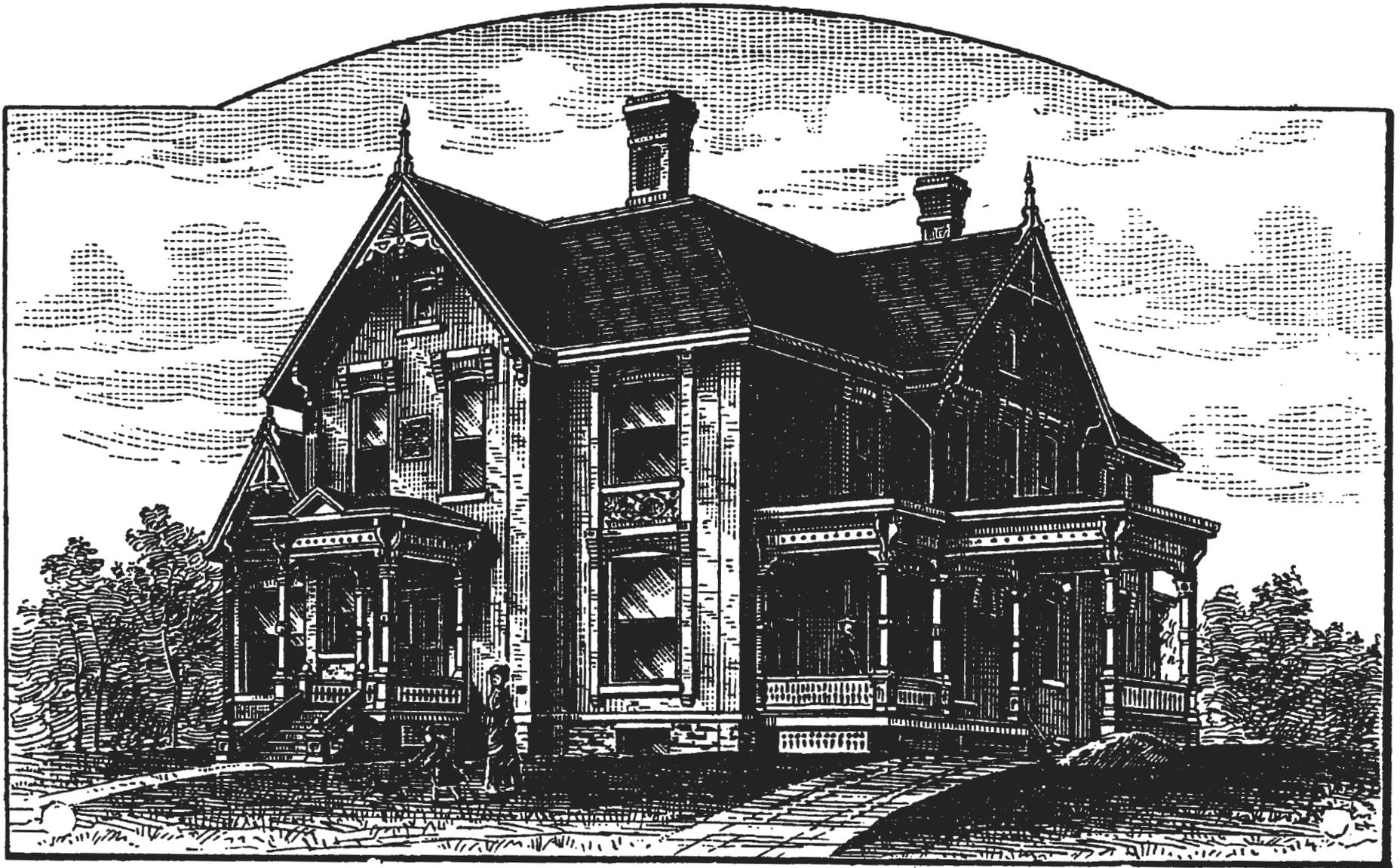
The Wigwam

As far as we know, all were fine men and husbands, but it is not her husbands but her social skills for which she is remembered. Coming from Reedsburg after the death of Safford Mackey, she purchased one of the most magnificent homes in Baraboo, the rather new Brewster Home, standing on the grounds of the present Magdalene Home. Already elegant, she doubled the original building's price with extensive remodeling. This included two massive round porches with umbrella-like roofs, and the home became known for generations as the Wigwam..

In a lesson for us today, Mrs. Mackey purposely patronized Baraboo merchants and tradesmen with her remodeling and decorating. So outstanding was this act that the merchants and tradesmen joined together and purchased a Parisian Marble statue of the Three Muses as a token of appreciation. One speculates how the merchants of Reedsburg felt about the widow of one of their leading merchants (and probably a banker) spending her inheritance in Baraboo.

Décor and Society

The Republic was almost beside itself in describing the glories of the new home, which featured a Venetian Red vestibule, a green and old rose parlor, a library with massive bookcases and leather upholstery, a green dining room, cherry-red sitting room, Bedrooms in blue and Suzanne Pink, a child's room in Primrose pink, and another small room called the Snuggery. The latter featured a green and pink decor, with a broad



RESIDENCE OF MR. F. T. BREWSTER. (COR. SIXTH AND ASH STS.)



Mrs. Mackey remodeled the Frank Brewster home, above, into the Wigwam, pictured below. The Magdalene Home now occupies the property



The Wigwam, Baraboo, Wis.

A Beautiful Home.

Go into any city and let a friend show you about the place, and with a touch of municipal pride he will point out to you the most beautiful residences and ask you if your home city can produce their equal. It is natural for one to delight in seeing his home city produce the best and finest of everything, and as Baraboo's leading enterprises are acknowledged to be unequalled, it is pleasant also to note that in the matter of handsome residences no city of equal size can produce better. These thoughts are brought to mind by the beautiful home of Mr. and Mrs. John H. Savage, the furnishing of which has just been completed. A long time has been used in the work, but the time has been profitably spent in doing it well. In the first place the residence cost a tidy sum, but the expenditure of over four thousand dollars in remodeling and refurnishing has worked a change that hardly leaves the interior recognizable to those who knew it of old. "The Wigwam," as the residence has very appropriately been named, has undergone a complete transformation, and Mrs. Savage has done more to make the home complete and artistic with four thousand dollars than a person with less skill and less good taste might have done with twice that sum. The awkward corners and obstructions have all given place to open ways and pleasant nooks and entire room devoted to their use.

To go further into detail of the furnishings of the home would be either to use too much space or to leave too much unwritten. It is better to see the home for one's self and one is indeed greatly favored by the extension of an opportunity.

SAVAGE-MACKEY.

The Beautiful "Wigwam" the Scene of a Quiet Wedding on Monday.

When Mrs. Mackey purchased the elegant Brewster house on Ash street and took possession of the place it was whispered that cupid had also been given admission, and now there is no doubt about it.

At five o'clock Monday afternoon Hon. John W. Savage, of Shullsburg, Wisconsin, and Mrs. H. Lillias Mackey, formerly of Reedsburg but now of Baraboo, were united in marriage, Rev. Charles L. Barnes of the Trinity church performing the ceremony. Besides the parties to the contract there were present S. H. Marquissee, of Baraboo, father of the bride, and Dr. Rood and wife, of Reedsburg. Beauty and fragrance was added to the interior of the "Wigwam" by a liberal display of cut flowers and palms. An elegant course dinner was served at six o'clock.

The bride was attired in an elegant gown. She is well known in Sauk county, her many good traits having won scores of friends for her.

The groom has been at the head of a bank in Shullsburg for some time, and is spoken of as a competent and enterprising business man.

The couple will reside here, and all friends will join us in wishing them a happy future.

Relatives of Mr. Savage were expected to be present at the wedding, but they were delayed while bound for Baraboo.

divan and luxurious pillows. Everywhere palms and plants and flowers added to the ambience.

Little did Baraboo folks know what awaited them. Soon began a plethora of parties, musicals, celebrations, and other affairs which dazzled the local citizens. As the Ringlings had not yet built their homes, the Wigwam was "the elegant of elegants" in the housing scene, and Mrs. Mackey was more than generous. So were the Republic and the Evening news as they waxed effusive in their descriptions of the home and its charming hostess and her events.

Special train for party

Not often is a train rented for a party, but Mrs. Mackey did so, for the short trip to Devils Lake and a party at the Cliff House. There the guests were greeted with 400 brightly burning Chinese Lanterns. Two launches took the guests on a tour of the lake. After dinner and dancing to the Hackett Orchestra's music, a ride back to town on the train completed the evening.

There are literally dozens of records available on the-unusual-history of the ground on which the Magdalene Home rests, with information supplied by Paul Wolter, Jean Smith at the Sauk County Historical Society, and Keith Anderson representing the Magdalene Home. The home only charges \$825 to 850 a month, which includes three meals a day and some laundry. That's less than Mrs. Mackey would have paid for only one of her lavish parties!

This lady really knew how to throw a party! The late 1890's social scene really sparkled, thanks to Lillias Mackey. There was a Soiree Musicale in Dec. 1898, and a wedding of Reedsburg friends on Jan. 1, 1899. For it, the house was decorated "almost beyond description" with flowers. Ida Ringling supplied the music and the couple knelt on white rugs and a satin pillow. The men escaped to the library, a smoking room trimmed in holly!

Various organizations were entertained there, including the Thirteen Club and Pedro Club. For the latter there was a huge statue of Dionysus (? , spelling blurred), plus several quaint oriental figures, with lighting from Japanese lanterns. In another party, the lawn was decorated with 100 Japanese Lanterns. Pedro Prizes were engraved silver spoons.

There are more stories on the parties, her four husbands, and the unusual history of the plot of land now occupied by the home. Much will happen between this time and the construction of the Madgalene Home. Stay tuned for another article.

Wigwam Falls, Magdalene Rises Tales of Earlier Days

By Bob Dewel Final

Regular readers will recall the story on June 11 about Mrs. Mackey and her fabulous Baraboo parties in the 1890's. Her grandiose home, the Wigwam, was located on the ground on Ash Street now occupied by the Magdalene home. For one of the parties, on Sept. 9, 1900 she had provided a train to take her guests to the Cliff House at Devils Lake for dinner and an evening of dancing.

There is no way we can discuss all of her parties, but a New Year's Day 1901 invitation to local men only, for an afternoon reception (including a fragrant cigar) must be mentioned. She did have two other co-hostesses for this event, it should be noted. Upon leaving, the gentlemen left their cards, one of which read "Koshawaga".

More Parties

Lavish displays of flowers were always a feature, an 1897 party even being named the Chrysanthemum Party. After gushing over her gown and the flowers ("a bower of beauty"), the Republic reported that the 24 guests played Pedro, a card game of the day. Among the guests were the A.G. Ringlings. Even children's parties were lavish, with patriotic costumes, and I note that four of the little guests then were elderly patients 65 years later in my dental practice--did they eat too many sweets at the party? Young Ida Ringling was at times a guest--Ida, who soon would elope against the wishes of the

Ringling family. Shunned for a time, the couple was readmitted to family functions when they named their firstborn son John RINGLING North, later to become owner of the family circus.

Husbands

A few notes about Mrs. Mackey and her husbands. In her younger years she had been the wife, then the widow, of Joseph L. Noyes, probably of the prominent Noyes family of Baraboo. Later she married and then became the widow of Safford Mackey of Reedsburg. This Mackey family was prominent in Reedsburg business circles and Safford may have been a banker. He had a nephew, Frank, who became fabulously rich, with a London home "across from Buckingham Palace". It is reported that Frank entertained the British King and family in his home. Frank also owned the Leamington Hotel in Minneapolis and some 80 loan companies across the country. There is no record that he was ever a guest of Mrs. Mackey, however.

Mrs. Mackey's third husband, John Savage, married her on March 8 1897 in a modest Episcopal ceremony in the Wigwam, modest because it was during Lent. It is curious that after a couple of mentions of her in the press as Mrs. Savage, the newspaper by mid summer was using the old name. Mrs. Mackey. We hear no more of Mr. Savage, but at least it does not appear that he made her a widow for the third time. Mrs. Mackey remained without a spouse for nearly a decade after Mr. Savage, marrying her fourth husband, F.D. Clarke of Evansville, WI on July 30, 1906. The ceremony was of course in the Wigwam, and the honeymoon was an extended automobile trip with friends. Automobile trips were an ambitious undertaking then, with roads rarely paved.

Later Years

Few social events after the turn of the century were reported from the Wigwam. Possibly the money ran out, but there is another possibility--the newspaper, which had fawned over the



Purchase by Generosity of Mrs. A. Waite

Officers and directors of Magdalene Home are pleased to announce the purchase of the former Al Ringling home at 720 Ash street, from Mrs. Merl Scales of Milwaukee. The purchase of the property was made possible through the generosity of Mrs. Arthur Waite, one of the directors of Magdalene Home, who has long been interested in providing a modern home for senior citizens.

Architects will be retained to draw up plans for the new building, keeping in mind the possibility of future expansion. Present plans include the removal of the old Ringling home and the leveling of the land in order to provide a better building site.

The Magdalene Home started from a trust fund first established by Miss Gritli Gattiker. At present it is operating in a site adjacent to Ochsner park.

Later bequests were left to the Home by Mrs. Aida Knoop, T. F. Risley, Mrs. Frieda Nishan and Mrs. Emma Hicks, while the late Maud Carpenter provided that the residue of her estate go to the Home. This amounts to the sum of slightly over \$58,000 and will aid substantially in the building program.

The structure to be removed from the building site was for many years one of the show places of Baraboo. At the time it was owned by a wealthy widow, a Mrs. Mackey, it was known as The Wigwam, and it was the scene of many social gatherings. Since the late Mrs. Al Ringling had occupied it, it has had several owners, most recent being the late Daniel Kelly who had operated it as an apartment house prior to his death at which time it became the property of his sister, Mrs. Scales.

MRS. CLARKE DIES IN WEST

Former Resident of Baraboo
Passes Away In Sanitarium at
Los Angeles, Cal.

(from Friday's daily)

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Hollenbeck and daughters have received a message from Los Angeles announcing the death of Mrs. F. B. Clarke on Wednesday, May 28. A letter received about the same time as the message stated that she was ill in a sanitarium with neuritis and that she was better. Evidently a turn came for the worse.

Mr. Clarke left this morning with the remains and is expected to arrive at Reedsburg on Monday afternoon, the burial to be there.

Former Baraboo Resident

The former home of Mrs. Clarke was at Reedsburg. Her father was S. H. Marquissee, a retired millwright. For some time he made his home at the Warren house in Baraboo. Mrs. Clarke's former husband was Sanford Mackey of Reedsburg. He came from New York to Reedsburg in 1859 and for many years was a merchant there. He bought and sold hops during the busy days in that industry. His brother was Joseph Mackey, the widow dying but a few months since.

Former Ringling Home Is Sold

AUG. — 1954

Willott Warren, realtor, announces the sale of the Dr. McGonigle apartments with its spacious grounds at 720 Ash, formerly the Mrs. Al. Ringling home, to Daniel Kelly of Baraboo, who will take possession of the property on September first.

Quite a coincidence in the transaction are the facts that Mr. Kelley's parents previously owned and lived in the mansion and previous to that Mr. and Mrs. Mark Warren, the parents of Willott Warren, also owned and lived there a number of years. It is one of the city's landmarks and Mr. Kelly will make some improvements and operate the apartments from an investment standpoint.

DR. KELLEY BUYS ASH STREET HOME

Mr. and Mrs. F. D. Clark
Dispose of Their Fine Res-
idence.

4/10/1913 (720 Ash)

Dr. D. M. Kelley has purchased the fine property on Ash street owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. F. D. Clark, the place being familiarly known as the the Wigwam or Mrs. Mackey place. Mrs. Clarke has not been in good health for some months and it was desired to sell the house in order to take rooms at a hotel. Mr. and Mrs. Clark expect to go to Minneapolis and other places during the summer. As soon as the house is vacated Dr. Kelley and family will move into the property.

The ground was once owned by the late Henry Moeller, the building now used as the barn being the residence. The four lots were purchased by F. T. Brewster who built the large brick house. During the financial embarrassment it was sold to W. A. Warren and for a time Mr. A. Warren lived there. H. W. Hamilton and others occupied the house until purchased by Mrs. Mackey, now Mrs. Clark. Mrs. Clark added commodious porches and made other costly improvements during her ownership. The additions amounted to almost a former value which was about \$16,000 when owned by Mr. Warren. For a number of years it was known as the Wigwam. The place has been the scene of many happy social events.

events at the Wigwam for several years, may have run out of superlatives. Her comings and goings had been carefully reported in what were called in that day Locals—"Mrs. Mackey, who has been ill, is improving—Mrs. Mackey will visit with friends in Reedsburg tomorrow—Mrs. Mackey entertained 100 friends in her barn last night" etc. You can bet that the barn was lavishly decorated!

After the marriage to Clarke, he and Lilais traveled, spending much time in California. Her death was reported in Baraboo on 5-05-1923. In this case, her husband, F.D. Clarke survived her, and he brought her remains to Reedsburg for burial. They had sold the Wigwam to Dr. D.M. Kelley in 1913. This sale was no doubt a sad time for her, but she had originally purchased it during F.T. Brewster's time of "financial embarrassment" as they called it then, a sad time for him.

Wigwam falls, Magdalene Rises

The saga of the Wigwam is not over, for a series of residents came and went, including Lou (Mrs. Al) Ringling, who occupied it from 1923 until her death in 1941. Henry Moeller had purchased the land in 1859, and later he and his sons built circus wagons. The property had other circus relationships, for Lou Ringling's ownership was circus money. Later there were various owners, and later apartments. Eventually, Alma Waite participated, in October, 1959, in the funding of the Magdalene Home. Alma was a granddaughter of Henry Moeller, and hers was circus money. Her will provided 3/4 of a million dollars for city needs, including cultural activities.

Early funding for the Magdalene Home had been made by the Gatticker sisters, plus donations from Alda Knoop, T.F. Risley, Frieda Nishan, Emma Hicks, and Maud Carpenter. All these donations still being insufficient, Alma Waite stepped in and completed the funding. The storied Wigwam was removed, and the Magdalene Home was first occupied in 1961.

The Magdalene home boasts its fortunate location in a residential section, preserving a neighborly atmosphere for its guests. On the other hand, the Courthouse Square is hardly three blocks away, not too far perhaps for those who use a walker. Moreover, the modest Magdalene charge of around \$850 per month includes three meals a day. As mentioned, one of Mrs. Mackey's parties probably cost that much for just one night of genteel sociability.

A few volumes remain of Bob Dewel's latest book, Tales of Earlier Days. They are available at the Booksmith, or from the author at 356-3791

**F. C. CLARK WEDS
MRS. H. L. MACKEY**

CEREMONY PERFORMED AT THE
WIGWAM ON ASH STREET BY
JUDGE KELSEY.

July 22 — 1908

At the "Wigwam", 720 Ash street, there occurred a very quiet wedding this noon, in which the contracting parties were Mrs. H. L. Mackey and Mr. F. D. Clarke, a member of one of the old and influential families of Evansville, Wis. After the ceremony, which was performed by Judge Kelsey, a luncheon was served to a party of twelve consisting of:

- Mr. and Mrs. F. D. Clarke.
- Judge and Mrs. W. T. Kelsey.
- Mr. and Mrs. Frank Avery.
- Mr. and Mrs. E. Pfannstiehl.
- Mr. and Mrs. George Clarke, brother of the groom, of Evansville, Wis.
- Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Hohn of Reedsburg, Wis.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarke left this afternoon in company with Mr. and Mrs. George Clarke on an extended automobile trip, after which they will be at home at 720 Ash street Baraboo, Wis.

First Civil War Statue Plan was Controversial Yesteryear Revisited By Bob Dewel

The two previous articles promised revelations about two things, a controversy over a Civil War Statue on the Courthouse Square, and the proposed Palisades project on the West Bluff of Devils Lake. It is time to consider these two items, as presented in the 1899 magazine supplement to the Baraboo Republic.

Civil War Statue

For over a century the very excellent statue of a Civil War soldier has stood guard over the Courthouse square. This beautiful granite monument was made possible by an original grant of \$1000 by the ladies of the Women's Relief Corps No. 36. Catherine Cheek, wife of war veteran Philip Cheek, was president, and a joint committee was set up with the men's veterans group, the Grand Army of the Republic (Joe Hooker Post 9). Joe Bender headed the latter group.

Dedication was on May 30, 1897, with a huge crowd present. The monument represented efforts from all over the county, and honors all of the county's soldiers. Amazingly, Sauk County, with a population of only 20,154, contributed 1461 men to the war effort, of whom 285 died from all causes while in the service of the Union.

Research historian Joe Ward found additional information not listed in the Republic supplement. On Monday June 1, 1896 the joint committee had decided upon a base of Barry granite with a total height of 29 feet, and a total weight of 82,000 pounds. The base was to be 9x9 and 8 inches thick, the second base 7.4 x 7.4, the third base 6.2 x 6.2, the die 4.6 x 4.6. The statue was to be six feet in height, and at that time the figure of a soldier was ordered to be bronze.

Apparently the latter specification was changed to granite, a wise move it would seem. The committee had done its work well, and the monument remains imposing after a century of weathering. Several benches complement the setting of the statue, those benches having been dedicated on June 9, 1940 by the Sons of the Civil War Veterans, the Ladies Auxiliary to the Sons, and the by now aged ladies of the G A R Auxiliary.

A referendum failed

What we didn't know until recently was that a previous statue proposal had been voted down! The supplement to the Republic tersely states that "Along in the seventies an effort was made to erect a monument under the provisions of the state statutes, and the proposition was submitted to a vote of the people, and voted down."

Nearly two decades passed until folks took matters into their own hands, as happens so much in smaller governmental districts. Volunteer groups saw to it that the Civil War sacrifices were honored. Lest we be critical of those times, it took us 60 years and a mostly volunteer effort to memorialize the defining event of the 20th century, WWII. Only in this year, 2004, was a national monument opened. Goc, in "Many a Fine Harvest", reports that 93 county men died in that conflict.

The Palisades Development

The supplement to the Republic confirms what we have written in the past about a proposed development that might have altered, and probably degraded, what we know of today as Devils Lake State Park. It is hard to imagine that the park was once entirely in private hands. The railroad had cut through the area in 1871, creating a resort destination for folks from both Wisconsin and Illinois.

Resort hotels crowded what flat lands there were, spewing their sewage into the lake. Today the state is spending multi-thousands to remove the resulting phosphates. Some flat areas were farmed, and private cottages and plots occupied choice spots, a



handful of which remain today. There was no state park system in those days, though the following decade would see, with difficulty, the establishment of the park.

The Republic Supplement in 1899 spoke glowingly of the establishment of what was to be known as Palisades Park, a 90 acre housing development with several hundred lots on the top of the west bluff. They claimed that an "Eiffel Tower" had been built, apparently some 200 feet in height, "enabling the spectator to see Madison, Portage, and other cities, and the wondrous dells at Kilbourn".

According to the supplement, the bluff accorded the viewer a chance to view "crystal waters hundreds of feet below, overlooking 50 miles of rolling mountains," all of which would be reserved for those wealthy enough to invest in the development. There would be eleven small parks and 300 cottage lots.

The poem and the downfall

The supplement gushed at length about the scenic wonders, complete with a poem which read as follows:

The mountain's wall in the water,
It looks like a great blue cup,
And the sky looks like another'
Turned over, bottom side up.

The supplement was right about the wonders of Devils Lake, but had this development gone through, it no doubt would have been the harbinger of "developments" like we see today in our neighbors to the north, with endless motels, slides, go cart tracks, and who know what despoiling the beauty of the area.

Could it be that nature intervened? We have not the right to know, but the first developer, a Mr. Arthur Zeimer, was taken ill with Typhoid Fever, a dread disease of the day, and died. Here the story is complicated, for it is reported elsewhere that Zeimer died in 1895, yet the 1899 supplement speaks of the Palisades project being in the hands of Mr. F.H. Horstman, President of the Palisades Park Co.

It will take future discoveries of information to seal the fate of the plan. By 1909 the state began acquiring land, and a strong movement was underway to obtain the Devils Lake area as a Park for all, not just the private folks who got there first. The story of the establishment of the park is detailed in a previous article published in this column a couple years ago. Thankfully, the pristine beauty described in the 1899 supplement remains unscarred, to the benefit of all.

BARABOO NEWS HEADLINES IN TIMES OF PERIL

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

Perhaps a defining test of a nation is not just its response to success, however generous it may be with its largess. Its response to adversity, whether measured and deliberative or swift and decisive, is also defining.

Presently we are considering our response to the assault on our society and its values, as represented by the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks. Time magazine has called it a "Day of Infamy", rightly so but somewhat of a steal from the Pearl Harbor characterization of 1941, as a "Day That Will Live in Infamy".

Time and others could have called it a day of abominable cowards, or a day of unspeakable duplicity by faceless terrorists, or similar epithets. So far our leaders, though decisive, have not risen to the rhetorical heights of a Franklin or Roosevelt or Churchill.

Be that as it may, the nation has faced man-made tragedies many times before, and we wondered how the Baraboo Evening News treated some of those challenges in the past. We turned to the newspapers published the day after the sinking of the Maine in 1898, the torpedoing of the Lusitania in 1915, and the declaration of war on Germany in 1917.

True, the situations are less than identical, and the means of communication primitive compared to the instant television of today. Moreover, each past crisis seemed to have been preceded

by ample warning, with genuine efforts to ward off a conflict. In addition, the anticipated enemy was easily identifiable then, as opposed to the cowardly anonymity of today's multi-national terrorists.

The Sinking of the Maine

The United States in 1898 was still a young and boisterous nation, free from war for the more than thirty years since the end of the civil war. Quick and sharp with the vigor of youth, expansion was the watchword and covetous eyes had been cast toward neighboring Cuba, just emerging from its civil war with Spain.

War fever began early in 1898 following an explosion which sank the battleship Maine in the harbor in Havana on February 15, with 260 dead. The argument raged as to whether it was an internal or external and unfriendly explosion, presumably attached by the Spanish. The Wm. Randolph Hearst "yellow journalism" newspapers trumpeted the latter charge, and by March 1 the Baraboo Evening News reported that "a War threatens". On March 24 it stated that there was a crisis on hand, and that "The spirit of patriotism is rampant."

By April 16 the U.S. Senate voted three to one for war, and, following an ultimatum to Spain, the local headline read "The War has Begun". It lasted only a few months, with cession of Cuba and Puerto Rico and the Philippines to the United States now a sort of colonial power. Some colonial

power--within fifty years Cuba and the Philippines were independent, with our consent and encouragement! Puerto Rico remains a pampered protectorate which may join the union.

The Sinking of the Lusitania

Perhaps the people of 1915 should have seen it coming. War in Europe had raged for over a year, its most terrifying aspect for civilians being the seemingly unconquerable scourge of the German submarine. Every day the Evening News had featured headlines such as "Three ships go down", and "Merchant Vessel sank." So far the ships being sunk were naval or merchant ships carrying war supplies for the French and English, who controlled the surface of the sea, but not its depths.

All of this changed on May 8, 1915, with the sinking of the Cunard Liner Lusitania. Lost were 1346 souls, and the ship sank in 30 minutes.

Not all passengers were Americans by any means, but President Wilson came under increased pressure to act. He demanded safe travel and full reparations, but the Germans countered with a demand that the Allies stop their embargo, including food, of German ports.

Slowly the war clamor cooled, and Americans stood by Wilson. He was re-elected on the slogan "He kept us out of War". Meantime, Baraboo residents voted to keep the city "wet", meaning allowing the serving of alcoholic beverages, by a large majority. The Gollmar circus opened on May 8, while their cousins the Ringlings had already left for East Coast bookings.

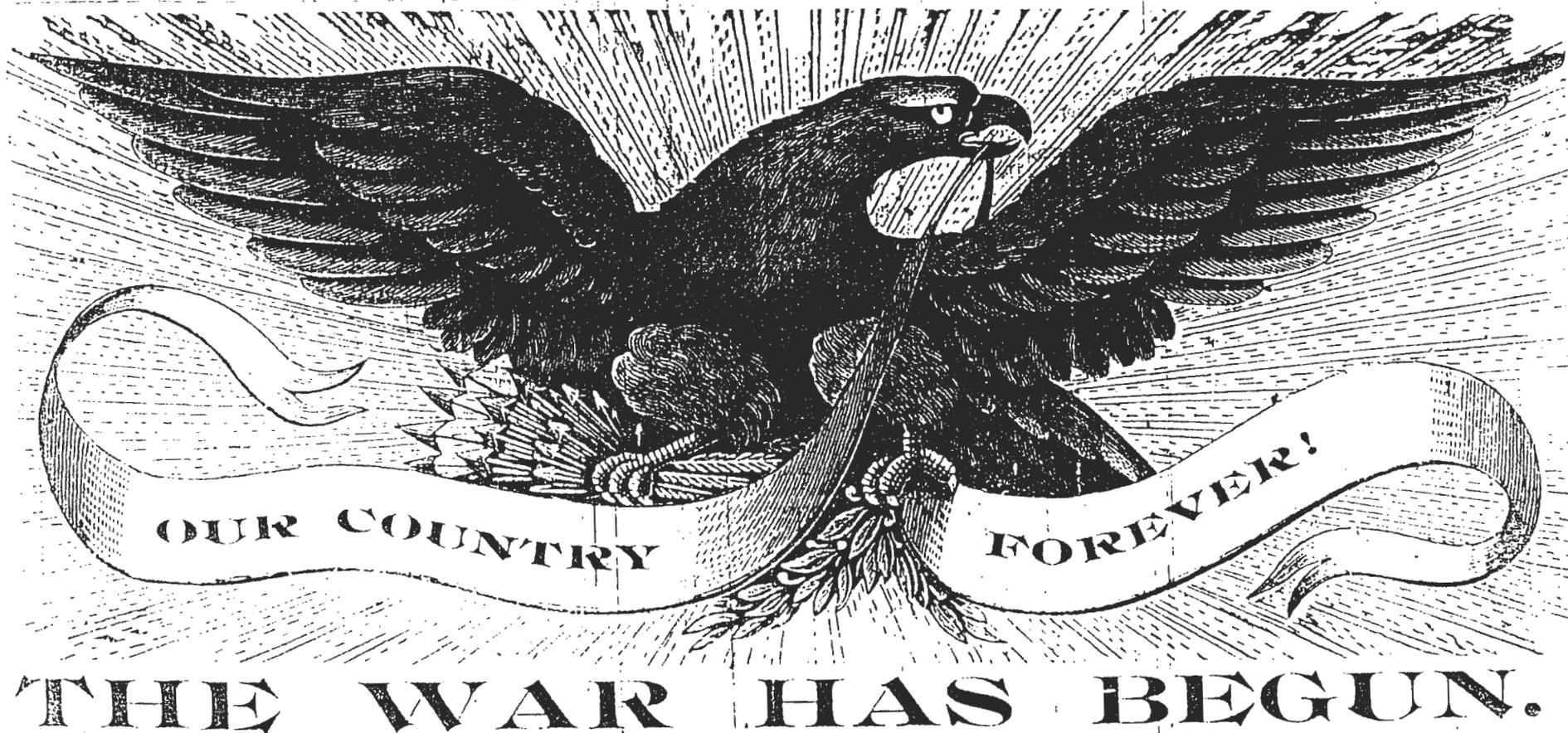
World War I

Americans read with horror the inconclusive sacrifices in the front lines of the war in Europe, hoping America would not become involved. Things had been pretty quiet in Baraboo, however. The Fortnightly club met at Mrs. E.J. Battles to hear a paper about "thrift". At the sparkling new Al. Ringling, a huge stage play, the "Bird of Paradise", was showing, and dynamite had to be used to break up an ice blockage on the river. However, soldiers could be seen guarding the dam at nearby Kilbourn. Slowly it became obvious that we would have to come to the aid of the embattled French and British. Wilson asked for an unheard of number of men, 500,000, in the army "for defense", and the Navy was ordered to full war strength.

In Baraboo the GAR held a patriotic rally in their hall in March. On April 5, 1917, the U.S. Senate voted 82 to 6 for war, Wisconsin's Senator LaFollette being among the dissenters. The House passed the declaration of war 337 to 50, and former President Theodore "Rough Rider" Roosevelt offered to personally lead a military unit to France. The same week an election reversed the vote of 1915, making the city and county "dry" of alcoholic beverages.

Discussion.

The above is but a minute account of what could be written about the altercations and Baraboo's reaction. The Evening News was a different paper than the News-Republic is today, for the front page usually featured national

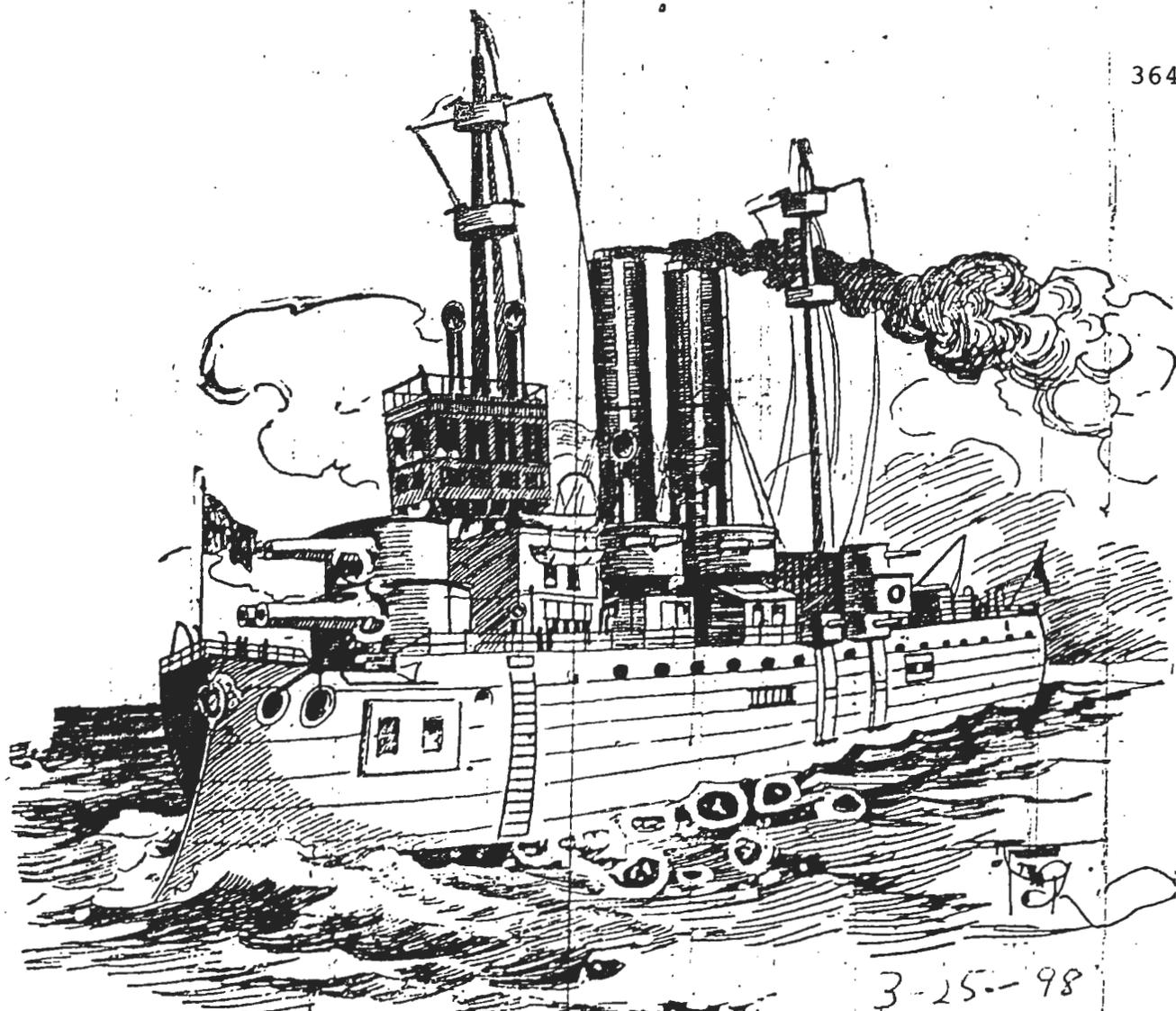


and state news, and little local news was covered.

No radio then, and of course no television, and only an occasional silent movie newsreel a week or so old, so the newspaper and its wire service were the principal sources of information. The front page of the Evening News resembled the State Journal or Capital Times of today, and local

news was secondary. Today television has the headlines, and newspapers fill in the details and provide perspective.

The big difference between the national emergencies of that day and today is that the events we listed were almost predictable--the coming conflict with Spain, the sinking of a passenger liner, the eventual entry into World War I. Some might say that



Kentucky as She Will Appear When Completed—The Keel is a Duplicate

Pearl Harbor in 1941 was predictable, but only to supposed insiders. The shock of that Day of Infamy resembled the shock of the recent Twin Towers tragedy in its abruptness.

So too with the assassination of President Kennedy. A major difference, as mentioned above, is the instant information from television, which seemingly is everywhere. Neither of those events was predictable as far as the public knew.

In the earlier conflicts, time was on the side of reason. In this week's emergency the President had only .0. ent. to order a passenger airplane

shot down if it appeared to be heading for the White House or Capital, and the air force hardly had time to scramble into action.

What they didn't seem to have in the older emergencies, thankfully, was a Falwell, quick to try and lay the guilt for the attack on selected Americans or groups in the country who disagreed with his religious philosophy. Nor did they have, in those days, the military dominance we enjoy today, with which to underline our resolve. America surmounted divisiveness and adversity before, and will do so again.

Who was Who in
Baraboo in 1899
Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

Suppose you were invited to name the 80 most prominent leaders of the Baraboo community. Whom would you name—govt. officials, merchants, bankers, medical and dental professionals, attorneys, accountants, educators, etc?

Suppose then that your 80 leaders were to be featured in a specially printed quality booklet about Baraboo, a souvenir no less, to be preserved for decades, if not over a century.

Well, they did this on April 12, 1899, and Tracy Zimmerman has supplied us with a fairly well preserved 54 page copy, which indeed is over a century old. Not only are the selected leaders named, but each is pictured, along with views of local scenes and buildings. The large number of photos is unusual for that time, when each photo had to be laboriously engraved at considerable expense.

So who were the leaders of 1899, whose always laudatory biography accompanied each picture? A review of the list of 80 finds only a few family names still existing in Baraboo today. Americans are a restless lot, and men and families have come and gone over the decades, some

leaving little trace of the importance they once enjoyed.

One name stands out however, that of Wm. Canfield, an aged patriarch by 1899. This early settler, historian, and surveyor was honored posthumously only last year by the Sauk County Historical Society for his priceless contributions to the community.

There are other names of significance yet today, names such as Schadde, Herfort, Isenberg, Bender, Lueth, Evenson, Stanton, Capener, and Briscoe, to name a few. Others within our memory would be Beringer, True, Peck, McFetridge, and Dithmar. Still others have early historical impact, such as Marriot, Wild, Durward, Warren, Mayes Martin, Evans, and Grotophorst.

Many other names, however, are no longer common in Baraboo, and their leadership contributions are as yet mostly unrecognized, though this column has on occasion reviewed a few of them.

One remarkable thing about the booklet, a supplement to the Republic that April day, is the quality of paper, the plethora of pictures, and the excellent printing format. If there was a cover, it is long gone, and the front page needed major repair, but all of the publication seems to be there.

If truth be known, however, the booklet was produced by a Chicago firm for the Republic, and it is probable that the

selected 80 persons, all men, were chosen because of their willingness to pay for their picture and biography. One fails to find the Seven Ringling Brothers and their Father mentioned, nor the Gollmar Circus operators, nor the Moeller circus wagon makers. Apparently they didn't care to pay the fee for inclusion.

In a petty example of political chauvinism, only if the men are "staunch republicans" is their political affiliation mentioned! Only when the newspaper, the Sauk County Democrat, is mentioned is the word democrat used. Despite these curious omissions, it is a valuable piece of memorabilia. Largely free of advertising.

Photos not usually seen include the interior of the Warren Hotel dining room and front desk, the Baraboo Gas and Light Company, and several store interiors. Exterior views include the Republic Building (now the Little Village Café), Koppke Grocery, and the familiar location and unchanged facade of the former Corner Drug Store, on the southeast corner of Oak and Third Street (now Royce Raymond Investment Services.)

Many Baraboo homes are pictured, and a few pages are devoted to Merrimack and the yellow brick works there, plus a few views in Sauk Prairie and Reedsburg.

There is more to be learned from this booklet, such as new information on Palisades Park, a

proposed 300 lot housing development on the grounds of what is now Devils Lake State Park. There was also a controversy regarding the imposing Civil War statue on the courthouse grounds, but these stories will have to be recounted in the next article.



Store of J. Hoppe.

The Hoppe Clothing Store in 1899. Today the Corner Drug is below, and the Garden Party Cafne is above

Baraboo was a Proud City in 1899

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

Old newspapers are always a great source of information for historians. The April, 1899 magazine supplement to the Baraboo Republic, mentioned in the previous article, is unusually useful, despite its effusive and laudatory references to the young city.

You may have noticed the tendency of modern Chambers of Commerce brochures to exaggerate the glories of their area, but they can't hold a candle to the hyperbole in the 1899 booklet. For example, the booklet proudly announces that Baraboo has five newspapers, but fails to note that both the Republic and the News, both dailies, also published weekly editions which simply repeated the news of the dailies.

There was another newspaper, the Sauk County Democrat, so there were really only three newspapers. That's more than we have today however, and the discriminating reader of 1899 probably subscribed to all three points of view, there being no TV or Radio or record players to distract him. Newspapers try to be non-partisan except on their editorial pages, but some TV networks, (one in particular), are accused of allowing bias throughout out their shows.

The supplement noted that there were two telephone companies in Baraboo, one of which proudly claimed 300 customer hookups. The city library, located in the city hall, boasted all of 3000 books. Electric power, such as it was, came from the locally owned and operated Baraboo Gas and Light Company. Two interior photos illustrated the dynamos, operated by water power from the Baraboo River.

The rather new and prestigious Warren Hotel had already had its third

story added. It had previously opened on April 29, 1883. We learn of another Warren enterprise from the supplement, for the Warren Livery Stables proudly kept 22 "roadsters" and various other carriages for rent. These were horse-drawn, of course—an automobile had hardly ever been seen in Baraboo in 1899.

Ten passenger trains visited Baraboo daily, plus five freights. The fire department consisted of two hose companies and a hook and ladder company. We have read elsewhere that the equipment was drawn to a fire by the first privately owned team of horses to arrive at the fire station!

An early water department system consisted of two reservoirs "fed by natural springs", one being a 180 foot high water tower on upper Birch Street, and another an underground reservoir near the pumping station, the pumps being operated by river power. Surprisingly the city claimed 12 miles of water mains, 112 hydrants, 800 tap water customers, and numerous fountains, plus drinking troughs for the horses.

One of the main industries was the woolen mill, which was soon to be greatly enlarged, become Baraboo's main industry, and then close after WWII. In 1899 it employed 125 persons, and traced its beginning to 1864, with "the best water power on the Baraboo." Its products include "fine all wool cassineres (?) and cheviots (overcoats made of Cheviot sheep wool)." The mill had its own water tower. Most of the mill was later destroyed by fire, and the grounds are now known as Attridge Park.

In 1899 the mill was headed by young George McFetridge, pictured in the supplement as one of the youngest leaders in the city. He was also on the city council. Another youth was Bruce Struthers, who at age 21 had opened a candy store at 532 Oak Street. Baraboo's population was listed as 6000. It took us over 100 years to double in size

to the present 12,000---hardly a threat to the neighboring townships at that rate!

The supplement to the Republic is profusely illustrated with views of store interiors, and also of homes, many of which still stand today. A few pages are reserved for Merrimac, plus similar pages for Prairie Du Sac and a couple pages for Reedsburg. Of special interest are plans for a residential development on the west bluff at Devils Lake, to be called Palisades Park, and also a surprising revelation about the soldier's monument on the courthouse square. These will be presented in the final article, to follow



Can you locate this reservoir? It is only seven blocks from downtown Baraboo. A reservoir has been in this location for well over a century. *Look on Birch Street.*

bob dewel

From: "bob dewel" <bdewel@charter.net>
To: "Bill Schuette" <wschuette@direcway.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 29, 2004 1:36 PM
Subject: Re: Water Works

Hi Bill—Intereting, and maybe it was the underground water storage facvility. My story suddendly made it in the paper today, so I am done with the water story, but thanks anyway. I'll copy this and put it in my story file for future use. Bob

----- Original Message -----

From: Bill Schuette
To: Bob Dewel
Sent: Wednesday, September 29, 2004 1:07 PM
Subject: Water Works

Bob,

Below is the photo which is simply identified as "water works". It's from an H.E. Cole glass negative, dated around 1906. Could the building possibly be the underground water storage facility?

Should you wish it to go to the BNR, let me know and I'll e-mail a better resolution copy to them.
Bill



9/29/2004



City Water Pumping Station

The Puzzling UFO Sightings of 1897 Yesteryear Revisited By Bob Dewel

In our modern twenty-first century world, we all know about the UFO phenomenon. Some of us believe in them, some don't, but those that do are passionate believers.

UFO's are nothing new, some even claiming that the Star of Bethlehem was a lingering UFO, or at least a comet. We might be surprised to learn, however, that our Wisconsin great grandparents in 1897, along with thousands of persons throughout the Midwest, claimed to have visually sighted the primitive UFO's of that day, and referred to them as airships. This included Baraboo citizens at the time, with multiple sightings.

Background of Airships

First, let's set the stage for these sightings. In 1897 flying as we know it today was derided as being impossible. True, there were balloon ascensions, and these had been around for 120 years. The first successful ascension in Paris was on August 27, 1783, and was viewed and described by Benjamin Franklin. By Dec. 22 of that year, Franklin was the recipient of the first "airmail" letter, brought to France across the Channel from England by a balloon.

With his usual vision and prescience, Franklin remarked that military invasions by air of "five thousand balloons, capable of raising two men each, could not cost more than five (ships of the sea), and where is the prince who can afford so to cover his country with troops for its defense, as that ten thousand men descending from the clouds might not, in many places, do a great deal of mischief before a force could be brought together to repel them." Shades of the paratroopers of World War III!

Ben speculated that such a threat would have the effect of convincing the royal warmongers of the day of the folly of warfare. Though balloons were used for reconnaissance, it would be 110 years before man would fly, and 125 years before aircraft would be used in warfare in World War I.

The Web Site

Having set the background, we can now proceed to the events of 1897. There is a web site called "Baraboo assisted Living", which appears to be a catch-all for some 200 articles, virtually none of which have anything to do with Baraboo, say nothing of its assisted living facilities.

However, one of the some 200 items listed therein is an especially long 84 page documentation of the 1897 airship sightings, as assembled by a Mr. Ray Varner. Titled "The Airships over Michigan and Other Locations in the Midwest in 1897", it consists of virtually hundreds of newspaper reports. These range from Michigan to California, quoting hundreds of individual observations of a mysterious airship.

As Varner reports, "No UFO flap or wave has ever matched the magnitude, intensity, or longevity of the airship reports. As such, the airship stands alone in the annals of unsolved or unidentified aerial phenomena apparently generated by a single source." The hundreds of newspaper reports are assembled chronologically to show the progress of the airship across the northern tier of Midwest states, including Wisconsin and Baraboo.

The chronological listing of reports is overwhelming, involving about 125 cities from Michigan as far west as the Dakotas and as far south as Missouri and Kansas. Newspaper reports are lengthy, ranging from the Chicago Tribune and the New York Times and the Sacramento Bee, to dozens of weekly newspapers in the Midwest.

The Descriptions

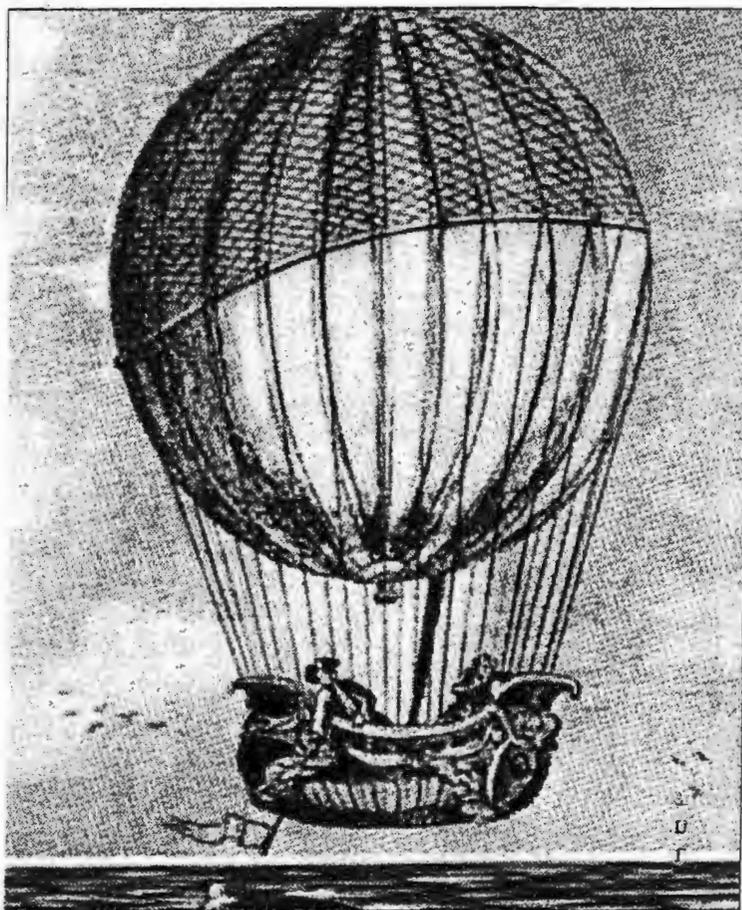
And what did they report? Headlines such as "airship explodes,

airship crashes, drops keys, airship races train, is shot at, has debris collected in lawyer's office". Other headlines say "heifer stolen by airship, giant occupants therein, man fishing from airship, music heard, oriental occupants, and voices and laughter and whistling heard".

The original report was on Nov. 18, 1896 in the Sacramento Bee, which reported observers testifying to voices in the sky, and a light which acted very strangely. All observations occurred between 6 and 7 P.M., and the aircraft was described as being an electric light sailing over the city, dropping and rising. Hundreds of people saw it, and it "created much consternation in the city."

No more sightings are reported until April, 1897, this time in the Midwest. We have reported the Sacramento reports, since they are typical of what was seen later. Never at any time is the object described in our modern terms, as a flying saucer or disc. People thought then in terms of balloons, the only objects in the sky besides birds.

No Sauk County newspapers are quoted, yet one Madison newspaper places the blame for what they call a hoax squarely in Baraboo, with a surprise connection! This will be quoted in full in the next article.



CONTRIBUTED

This World Book drawing depicts the balloon Ben Franklin saw in Paris in 1783.

Ringlings are Blamed for
 1897 UFO's
 Yesteryear Revisited
 By Bob Dewel

As reported in the previous article, the great airship sightings of 1897 created a sensation in at least eight Midwest states, especially since airships had not yet been invented. Up until then the only man-made objects to be seen in the sky were a rare and occasional balloon.

Balloons came in various shapes, with a capsule or carriage hung below, similar to the baskets of today. Early balloon models got their lift from hot smoke or steam, and later some used lighter-than-air gas for lift. In any case, there were few balloons in the sky, and their appearance always drew a crowd, often at the county fair.

The airships sighted in 1897 were different from anything seen before, and were seemingly everywhere. Hundreds of newspaper reports and viewings from at least 125 mid-west towns and villages participated in the sensational frenzy, as reported by Mr. Ray Varner on his airship website.

Though there is no newspaper report from either the Baraboo News or the Republic, there is plenty of information as to a Baraboo sighting, according to an 1897 article dated simply Madison, April 13. It asserts:

"The airship problem has been solved. It is not a star, but its promoters may take credit for being orbs of the first magnitude in the matter of advertising. Railroad men who reached Madison reported that the much talked of aerial machine was seen at Baraboo, and that as the sky was thoroughly overcast with clouds there was no Alpha Orions about it."

The Baraboo appearance was described as follows: "It first appeared over the east end of the city, and after drifting westward about a mile it sailed

back again and hovered over the quarters of the Ringling Brothers Circus. Suspicion was at once aroused that the airship was nothing more than a clever well-designed and better-executed advertising scheme".

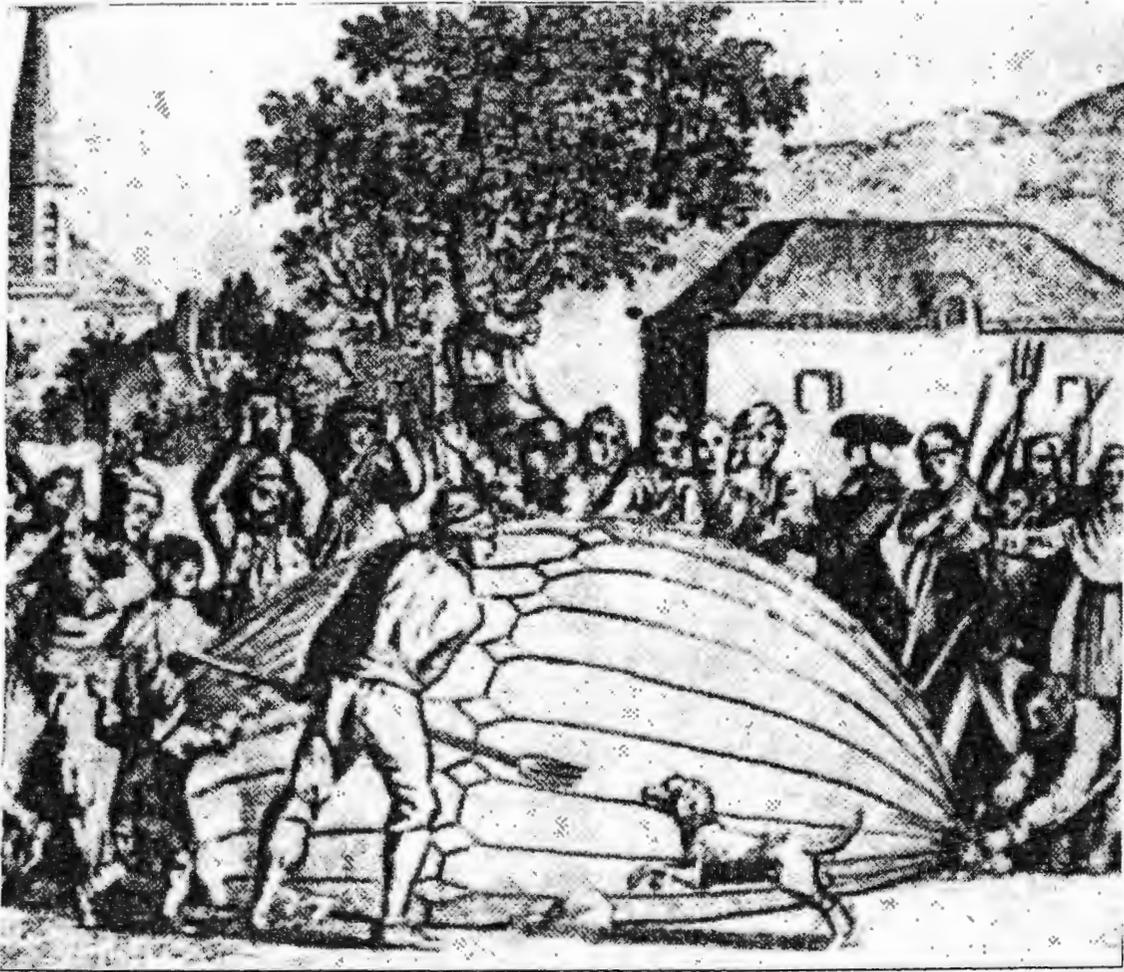
"It was recalled that one of the Ringling brothers had been in Baraboo Sunday and had been seen taking some large and mysterious bundle from the train to the winter quarters. It was further recalled that he was seen about the city little during the day, and that more than usual life was manifest in the big building down on the waterfront."

Waxing even more eloquently, the writer continued: "It was then remembered that the ship of air made its appearance in Chicago simultaneously with the advent to that city of the Ringlings, and that Omaha, Des Moines, and other points where it had been seen were already marked out for the circus next summer."

As is well known, the Gollmar brothers, who also had one of the largest American circuses, were cousins of the Ringlings and were headquartered in Baraboo near the Second Avenue Bridge. Taking this into account the Madison writer asserted that "the western orbit of the airship was rather significantly over the winter quarters of the Gollmar Brothers Circus."

Now the writer speculates more specifically as to the ownership of the airship. "To the skeptical observer at Baraboo, the airship had the appearance of being controlled from the two circus grounds, about a mile apart. In the evening a heavy rain came in, and this had the effect of obscuring the strange aerial visitor and preventing the people from noting its later movements."

"The belief cannot be dissipated from the minds of Baraboo people that Mr. Ringling, who made a flying visit to the city Sunday, knows more about the matter than he has told, even to his friends. They are of the opinion that the airship was a succession of balloons or



CONTRIBUTED

This World Book drawing depicts French farmers destroying a balloon as the work of the devil.

something of the kind, which were aimed to pique the curiosity of the public to the end that shining half dollars would pour into the big wagon where tickets for the big show are sold."

It is hard to credit the Madison writer with objectivity in his dissertation, since he is relying on hearsay and gossip. The airship made hundreds of appearances, real or imagined, in all sorts of little hamlets in the mid-west where the circus had no intention of showing, and the Ringlings never acknowledged it as an advertising trick. No report suggests lettering on the airship advertising the circus.

The article does, however, illustrate the importance of the Ringling operation, then only thirteen years old but a national challenge to the Barnum and Bailey circus. The Ringlings had been a railroad circus for several years by then, with their own rail yards in Baraboo, still extant and owned today by the Circus World Museum. Within ten years the Ringling Brothers would own the famed Barnum and Bailey circus.

The Ringling and Gollmar operations were gone from Baraboo within twenty years, but they left a significant legacy personified in the Circus World Museum. Baraboo is now the world center of circus memorabilia and research. Ringling and Gollmar descendants still live here, and their cousins, the Moeller circus wagon builders, are memorialized in the Alma Waite Memorial Trust.

As for the airship, its disappearance was almost as abrupt as its appearance in 1897. Perhaps it was a mass hysteria of "sightings", a phenomenon still manifest today in other forms. The unknown writer tried to blame it all on Baraboo and the Ringlings, but the sightings stopped abruptly, and in time everyone forgot about it.

P.S. With typical circus hyperbole, Alf. T Ringling announced on Aug. 26, 1909, that the circus of the future would travel in immense airships!

**Turmoil in Turtleville: The
 Turtles vs. the
 Koshawagos**
 Yesteryear Revisited
 By Bob Dewel
www.drbobdewel.i8.com

You've heard of Ringlingville and Glenville. Most everyone knows where Terrytown is. Baraboo has its old Manchester area. But Turtleville?

Other rural areas familiar to many are Happy Hill, Skillet Creek (of the Bachelor's Club fame, volume 2, page 1), and nearby is an area once known as Pansy Hill. Also in that area is Hoot Owl Hollow. But Turtleville?

Only old timers, however, remember this area. The boundaries of Turtleville seem rather vague, but in the 1890's it seems to have been in the area of today's Kessler Road, just southeast of the city. Effinger Brewery had a beer garden in the area at one time. Contemporary to Turtleville was Shadow Town in nearby Devils Lake State Park.

The name is all but forgotten now, but in 1899 Turtleville was front page news in a copy of the Daily Republic owned by Mary Hein. In fact, it was about the only news, except for a few one line local notes. And the front page story is about sports, specifically about a baseball game involving the Koshawago club, still extant today, (albeit with a change in membership)

Sports writers don't write stories like this anymore. It was a whimsical report of a loosely organized group of local youths and an afternoon baseball game. The writer speaks of the Turtleville grounds, as if there are regular games played there. He reports that "a combination of Turtles and Owls was formed to down the Koshawagos, and no pains were spared by either side to win the day. They did everything to

further their cause except to practice—and in this they expected to win on conceit or through the mercies of the umpire".

Speaking of umpires, the Republic went on to report that "the greatest difficulty arose in securing an umpire, but after a long siege, Levi Cahoon agreed...taking his life in his hands he went upon the field." Cahoon's work was cut out for him, for "every score was contested, the losers demanding their rights, which happened nearly every time a score was made, and both sides were clamoring for justice. The score keeper, who was a friend in need, would quietly whisper to the umpire the score in the game. The decision was then made in favor of the team with the smallest score."

At the end of the game the score was wisely tied at 19 for each team, and "the players thanked the umpire for not treating them any worse than he did." Jim Turtle and Bill Indian, the "hustlers for the day, were successful in keeping up a constant tumult about something all afternoon, and have hardly gotten over it yet", reported the Republic

The unnamed scorekeeper's deceit in coaching the umpire in the scoring did not go unnoticed, so, "after everything was settled the Indians (Koshawagos) made a rush and used him as a football. They were reinforced by the Owls and the Turtles...during the melee Beebe Owl captured the score sheet and fled to the woods."

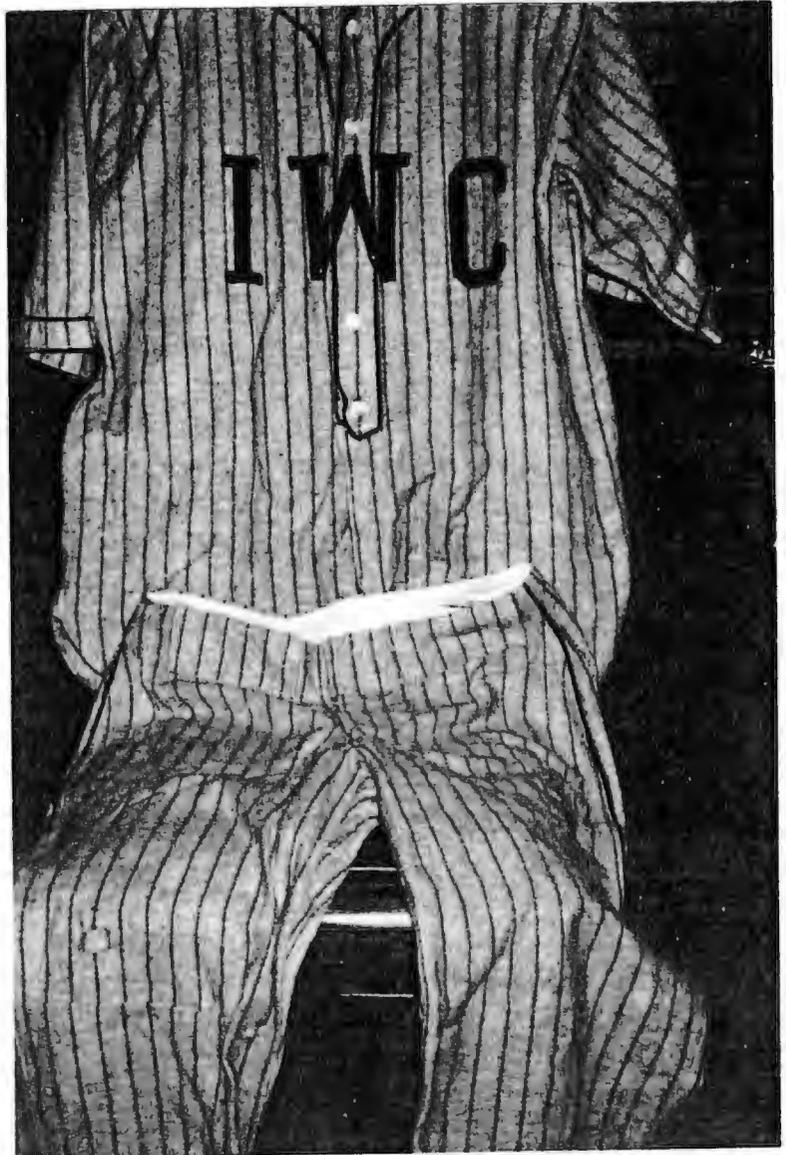
It is surmised that the gentle ladies of that era eschewed attendance at such a rowdy event, and passed their time at Shadow Town, listening to the new gramophone. They would have returned by buggy to Turtleville after the melee, for the paper states that "an elegant repast which had been prepared by the wives of the Turtles was served after all the contests were at an end."

The Owls, Turtles, and Koshawagons would have been awed by today's four lighted ball fields at Pierce Park. The park is but a couple miles west of Turtleville, a bit of a jog in a buggy on the primitive roads of 1899.

Baseball was truly becoming the national pastime at the turn of the century, and in our Volume One page 71 we discussed at some length one of the earlier teams. Their hot wool uniforms were made by the Island Woolen Mill in Baraboo, and the Historical Society has one on display. Also on display, at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., is a baseball from an early Baraboo team.

On further examination, we find that there were two other local stories in the Republic of June 1, 1899. One told of the wedding of Katherine Cheek to Henry Black in the Cheek mansion on Cheek's hill. Three Methodist pastors participated in the full Episcopal (Methodist) Service in the "spacious White Room" with some 100 guests. Another article spoke of the Crockinole Club meeting, where the ladies stood behind a curtain and the men were challenged to identify their guest by seeing only their shoes.

There were 7 trains daily each direction then, Commencement was to be held in the brand new and spacious Methodist Church Sanctuary, still extant. Advertisers included The Stanley Company, (dry goods), and the Baraboo Magnetic Infirmary at 424 Oak Street. Perhaps some of the Owls, Turtles, or Koshawagons became patrons of the latter institution for their aching muscles, after such a strenuous day—especially perhaps the scorekeeper, who was used as a football on that June afternoon in Turtleville.



The Sauk County Historical Society Preserves this early baseball uniform, made for the Island Woolen Mill Club

CWM Receives Century-old Ringling Carriages

Yesteryear Revisited, Part One
By Bob Dewel

In about 1905 brothers Charles and Al Ringling each purchased automobiles for their personal use in Baraboo, not for use in their circus. These new fangled contraptions replaced their horse drawn carriages, which were like the "surrey with the fringe on top" of musical fame, and which also were only for their personal use in Baraboo.

Little could they have imagined that those carriages would be in existence 100 years later, and in the possession of the world's largest circus museum, in their home town of Baraboo. Such is the case, however, and this writer recently had a chance to view the vehicles in the crowded storehouse once known as the Ringling Animal Barn, on the grounds of the Circus World Museum (CWM). Both carriages, though a few items are missing, look as if horses could be hitched to the wagon tongue today for a ride through the city.

The carriages are not, however, ready for close inspection, and must someday face restoration by the skilled and caring staff of the CWM in order to return them to their glory days. The interesting thing is that although they were only recently acquired by the museum, they apparently never left the Baraboo area in the past century. Here then, thanks to the research and generosity of director Fred Dahlinger and staff, is the known or assumed history of the carriages:

Al Ringling's Carriage

Al's carriage is a two seater surrey which was manufactured in Fort Atkinson by the Wisconsin Gear Works. Apparently it was retained for 25 years after Al's death by his widow, Lou. Upon her death in 1941, all of her belongings were inherited by her long time chauffeur, William Prelip.

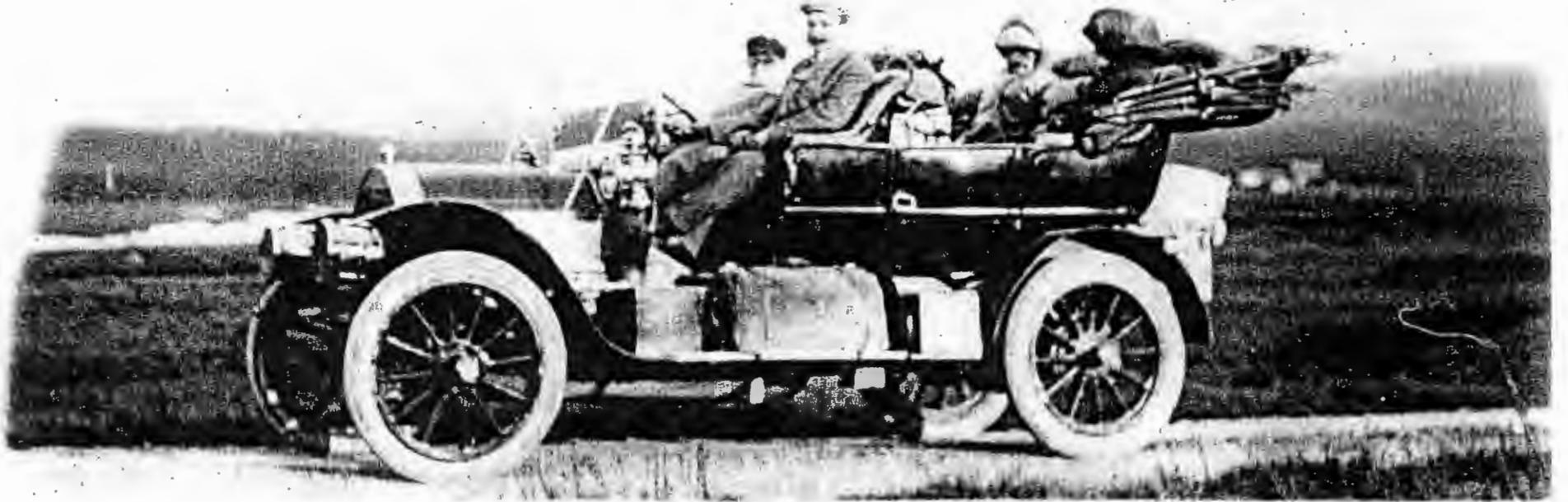
Prelip apparently gave the carriage to Dean DuBois, and subsequent ownership followed among several individuals, culminating in ownership by the late Vernon Albert. Although largely intact, the original wheels have been replaced with wheels lacking the hard rubber working surface, and a few minor missing parts have also been replaced.

The Al Ringling carriage and the automobile which apparently replaced it are pictured with this article. According to oral tradition, Otto Ringling went to Milwaukee to purchase three automobiles, but did not identify himself to the auto dealer. The dealer was suspicious that someone from remote Baraboo would want one of the expensive cars, and was incredulous when Otto not only said, "I'll take three", but then pullout the



Al Ringling's carriage, made
in Ft Atkinson, WI

Charles Ringling's carriage. That
is probably Edith in the rear seat



cash from his pocket for payment in full. It is unknown whether the auto pictured here is one of those first autos.

The next article will feature Charles Ringling's even grander carriage, and the donor who gave it to the museum.

The Ringling Carriages, Part Two

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

The previous article discussed and pictured the carriage of Al Ringling, recently donated to the Circus World Museum. The other carriage which was donated once belonged to Charles Ringling. A little more worldly than his older brother Al, Charles purchased a Park Phaeton two seater model from the "Studebaker Bros. Mfg. Co, South Bend, Indiana, USA", as is attested to by an intact plate on the rear of the body of the carriage.

This vehicle later belonged to the Sauk County Historical Society (SCHS), but due to space limitations at the time it was deaccessioned and sold at auction to Vernon Albert in October, 1980. One interim owner had been Harry Halsted who, along with his father William, appears to have donated it to the SCHS, in or about 1944.

Charlie's Phaeton now lacks both seat bottoms, side steps, and other items. There has been some attempt at restoration in the past. The donor reported that the carriage was painted dark royal blue with light blue fabric seats, and had the initials CER on the side—Charlie's initials.

All of the Ringling homes featured a porte cochere, or coach door, and these can be seen today on the Elks Club building and the yellow Ringling home on Eighth Street. The horse-drawn carriages would pull into the shelter of the porte cochere to discharge its passengers, and the automobile used the same method as time went by. The world's most famous porte cochere is probably that on the front of the White House in Washington D.C., although the word portico is probably a better description.

Vernon Albert

The museum, and indeed the circus world, can be grateful to the late Vernon Albert for donating these historic carriages. They were gifted to the museum on November 1, 2002 by Mr. Albert, only 6 months before his death on May of this year at the age of 85.

A Baraboo native and son of James and Mabel (Schlender) Albert, he married Phyllis Foster in February, 1949 at the Presbyterian Church. A veteran of WWII, he served in the First Cavalry Division in the South Pacific, and was awarded two purple hearts and other battle ribbons. In recent years he drove one of the Ringling carriages in the Chicago, Milwaukee, and Baraboo parades. Thanks to his gift, the carriages are now "home" with other Ringling memorabilia.



How good were the good old golden rule days?

*School days, school days
Good old golden rule days.*

Everybody knows this song, extolling the virtues of schools back in the good old days. But were they all that good? Did the teacher's resort to the hickory stick reflect his or her frustration with a second-class position in society then, with its punitive rules of conduct and its starvation wages? More on this later.

And is it "dear" old, or "good" old? The Sauk County Historical Society uses the word good in their booklet named — you guessed it — "Good Old Golden Rule Days." This is a remarkable booklet prepared in 1994 by a committee of six and a cast of hundreds of contributors.

The rural school booklet consists not only of 222 pages of information on some 150 of the county's former one-room schoolhouses, but also some 50 pages of general information on the once widespread system of rural education, now gone.

In a paean to the idyllic picture of the one-room school of yesteryear, the booklet states: "These walls have heard the voices of generations of children who learned to read, write, and spell ... And didn't learning seem a little easier then? As we sat at our desks, we'd learn by listening to the lessons of the upper classes, and when we reached them, we were already familiar with the material."

It is only when one gets to the section on teacher's salaries that the idyllic picture becomes a little tarnished. For example, teachers in the 1860s were paid only \$10 a month, with room and board sometimes included,

sometimes not. By 1900 the salary had only climbed to \$25 a month, and the princely sum of \$50 was only reached by 1917. Old time dollar figures? Witness that even after World War II, the monthly salary was only \$150. By the time the rural schools were consolidated in 1962, the monthly salary was still only \$350 per month.

Nor were the old schools like the beautiful and efficient classrooms of today. By 1952 County School Superintendent Kurt Schoenoff proudly reported that of 153 one-room schools in Sauk County, all of 79 had electric lights! Somehow 107 had radios, and 103 provided textbooks for the students. Few if any had toilets other than outhouses, with students battling wasps in summer and frosty seats in winter.

*Reading and writing and
arithmetic
Taught to the tune of a
hickory stick*

If the teachers were surviving only on starvation wages, did they then teach "to the tune of a hickory stick" in an occasional intemperate moment? The rules must have been frustrating. In 1872 women teachers who "marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be discharged ... after 10 hours in school, the teacher may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books." The male teachers had some minor rules, too: they could "use one evening a week for courting, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly." However, male teachers were forbidden to get shaved in a barber shop!

Women were forbidden to wear skirts slit to expose the ankles. Marriage was forbidden, nor could they join "any woman's movement, such as the suffragettes."

The rules seem unbelievable archaic, but had hardly improved by 1915. Women teachers still could not marry, or "keep company with men ... (or) loiter downtown in ice cream stores ... (or) travel beyond the city limits."

Cole, in his "History of Sauk County" published in 1920, confirms many of the stories in the booklet. One teacher from an unspecified time period spoke of her salary as being \$3 per month, from which she had to spend \$1.50 for board. No retirement funds in those days, of course, and in 1961 state aid to schools averaged \$2.50 per pupil.

*You were my queen in calico,
I was your bashful barefoot
beau.*

No one has kept records on whether romance flourished in the one-room schools, but it is logical to assume that, in the close-knit communities surrounding each of the 150 schools, many a marriage proposal came forth.

These were also the times mentioned in a previous article, when bachelor's clubs promoted social affairs and even kept lists of eligible females. Their counterpart was the women's Arachne and the Ladies Fellowship. There is no record that the Old Maids of Skillet Creek had an organization, however.



Sauk County's last log school was in the town of Winfield

*You wrote on my slate,
I love you so!*

Ken Lange in "A County called Sauk" writes that the first county schools had homemade wooden desks, and that the blackboards were boards painted black. Pupils did indeed have slates, as in the song, but boys sat on one side of the room and girls on the other. Sometimes a female teacher taught all eight grades in the spring and fall.

However in the winter session, when the big farm boys were relieved of their chores so that they could attend, a male teacher might be employed. Lange writes, "The male teachers needed muscles in those days ... a school board once turned away an applicant because they thought the person didn't look strong enough to handle the big boys."

Cole reports how social life

in some farm communities revolved around the school, with clubs like the Klover Klub of Excelsior, and Excelsior Chorale group and Lyceum. The bachelor's clubs of Skillet Creek and Fairfield are mentioned, as well as the Arachne Club. Of the Skillet Creek Farmers Club, he writes, "Its name and fame are nationwide." Clubs promoted sociability and prosperity, and also provided support to some town activities.

Spelling bees and declamatory contests abounded, and by 1920 experimental warm lunches for school children were contemplated: "We have faith that the time will come when balanced rations will satisfy the appetites of the school children." Those folks would be amazed at the present day school lunch programs, and also at soda pop and junk food dispensers in the schools.

Baraboo's early town school must have been a sight to behold. Cole quotes an old-timer with regard to the first school, built in 1844 in the northwest part of town. The doorway was so low you had to stoop to enter the log building, and "you could throw a cat through the cracks (between the logs) without touching a hair." A better building was built in 1849, and later was moved to the northwest corner of Fourth and Ash, but surely it is not

the building there today—although it was described as a two-story frame building, 35 feet square.

*When we were
a couple of kids*

So, were the good old days all that good? Like most everything else, there were good qualities and bad qualities. Education was limited to the knowledge of one teacher and the bounty of one small farm community.



Lyons School, West Baraboo The copula is now on private property on Moore St. The bell serves Our Savior Lutheran Church

The names of the schools are fascinating. In addition to the usual 'hills, 'views, 'valleys and 'corners, there were interesting names such as Ghost

School, Best Ever, several 'dells, and one school named "unnamed." Another was named Hilldrop. Only Roosevelt was named after a president, but some represented natural features, such as Pleasant Valley, Pleasant Knoll and Shady Lawn.

Statewide consolidation brought an end to the one-room schools in 1962, with busing provided to the town schools. However, as early as 1920 a central commencement exercise was begun in the county, with graduation from the stage of the Al. Ringling Theatre in Baraboo. This helped give the rural

school pupils "the same advantages of an impressive and inspiring graduation time as the pupils from large schools enjoy."

There is no doubt that many pupils of the one-room schools retain an intense loyalty to their school, just like those who attend the larger town schools. Despite the restrictive nature of their service, the teachers seem to have that same loyalty, also.

With transportation the way it was in the early days, no other system could have served so well to bring education and culture to the scattered farming communities represented by the one-room schools.

It could not have happened, however, without the spirit of service and purpose displayed by the teachers. Whitier said it well, in this abridged version of his poem, "At School Close:"

The end has come, as come it must

To all things, in these sweet June days

The teacher and the scholar trust

Their parting feet to separate ways

Her little realm the teacher leaves,

She breaks her wand of power apart,

While, for your love and trust she gives

The warm thanks of a grateful heart.

Across the distance of the years

She sends her God-speed back to you,

She has no thought of doubts or fears;

But be yourselves, be pure, be true.

And, when the world shall link your names

With gracious lives and manners fine,

The teacher shall assert her claim

And proudly whisper, "These were mine!"

The old settlers admonish the young men

"Young man, before you get married, think of this, consider it well. It costs more to run a fashionable woman than it does to run a Corliss engine."

— *From an address by a Mr. Cochrane at the June 23, 1880 Old Settler's meeting.*

More on the speech and the engine later, but first, the old settlers. By the 1880s the Baraboo area had progressed far from its beginning as a few makeshift dams on the Baraboo River. There had been a scattering of small villages (Manchester, Lyons, Adams, and Brown's Baraboo). Now they had pretty much coalesced into a young city with the name Baraboo.

A civic-minded city council and local leaders had, by referendum, committed a huge sum of money as a virtual gift to secure the Northwestern Railroad, and it in turn had named Baraboo an important division headquarters. Many of the sturdy buildings on the Courthouse Square today date back to the railroad boom of the 1870s.

Sauk County, with no white citizens in 1838, would boast 23,868 in 1882. A steamer plied the waters of Devils Lake, with its tourist hotels and railroad station and post office.

The old settlers

It was in 1872 that the remaining hard-working early pioneers realized that their 30 years of effort had produced a city and a county, but also that time would soon take its toll among their numbers.

Seeking to preserve the story of their part in the growing heritage of the area, it was decided to form an Old Settler's Association. They wanted to memorialize their past efforts and sacrifices, as

well as to pass on their advice and morals and way of life, particularly to the young men of the community. This is an effort each generation seems to make, with varying success. The Old Settler's Association was no exception. Thanks to historian William H. Canfield, we have the minutes of many of the county-wide annual meetings which spanned the years from 1872 to 1895, if not longer.

As might be expected, most of the speeches were about the old days, the 1840s and 50s. The Indian scares, described in previous articles, are recalled each year, and speaker after speaker extols the virtues of hard work and clean living. It is speeches such as those, recorded in full in the minutes of the association, which feature the advice to youth referenced in the introductory paragraph.

The admonishments

Mr. Cochrane, quoted above, was well into his speech when he compared the keeping of a woman with that of keeping a Corliss engine. Already in his speech he made a rather confusing comparison to churches and breweries, advising the young men that if they must use beer, whiskey or tobacco, to "stay where these demands could be supplied from civilization, where churches and distilleries stand looking at each other!" Apparently he wanted them to sin openly rather than covertly!

Young men were admonished that they were "on the frontier of your life; you have to meet it; you have the contest to go through. We have got past the simple life when men could live plain and cheap."

Now Cochrane really gets steamed up: "Your Mother could make a dress good enough to wear to church out of six yards of calico. It did not take more than six garments to fit out a woman in those days. They did not run after the god of fashion." It was here that he referred to a Corliss engine, as in paragraph one.

The Corliss engine

Cochrane's reference to a Corliss engine was meaningful to the young men, for the Corliss engine was on the cutting edge of technology in the mid- to late 1800s. A Corliss engine is a steam engine, used for various types of jobs requiring power. Such an engine was used by the Baraboo gas plant before the turn of the century. Steam was produced when water

was heated by a coal or wood fire, oil not being in use yet. One engine is on display yearly at the Baraboo Steam and Gas Show.

The inventor, Corliss, first produced his engines in Rhode Island, but later moved to Wisconsin and set up his plant in a suburb of Milwaukee, which was promptly renamed Corliss. In later years, the name was changed again, to Sturdevant.



FROM GOC'S "MANY A FINE HARVEST"

W.H. Canfield, perennial secretary of the Old Settler's Association, outside his bark-covered tree house at an Association camp at Devils Lake.

Cochrane was not done: "Young gentlemen, right over against you stand these young ladies. To them I say, the young men of these days know everything. They hardly get to be sixteen before they know everything. They have wonderful foresight but dreadful poor hindsight. They know, among other useful things, how to make butter, bread, and pies, and to set a table etc.; so you must have a good stock of patience when

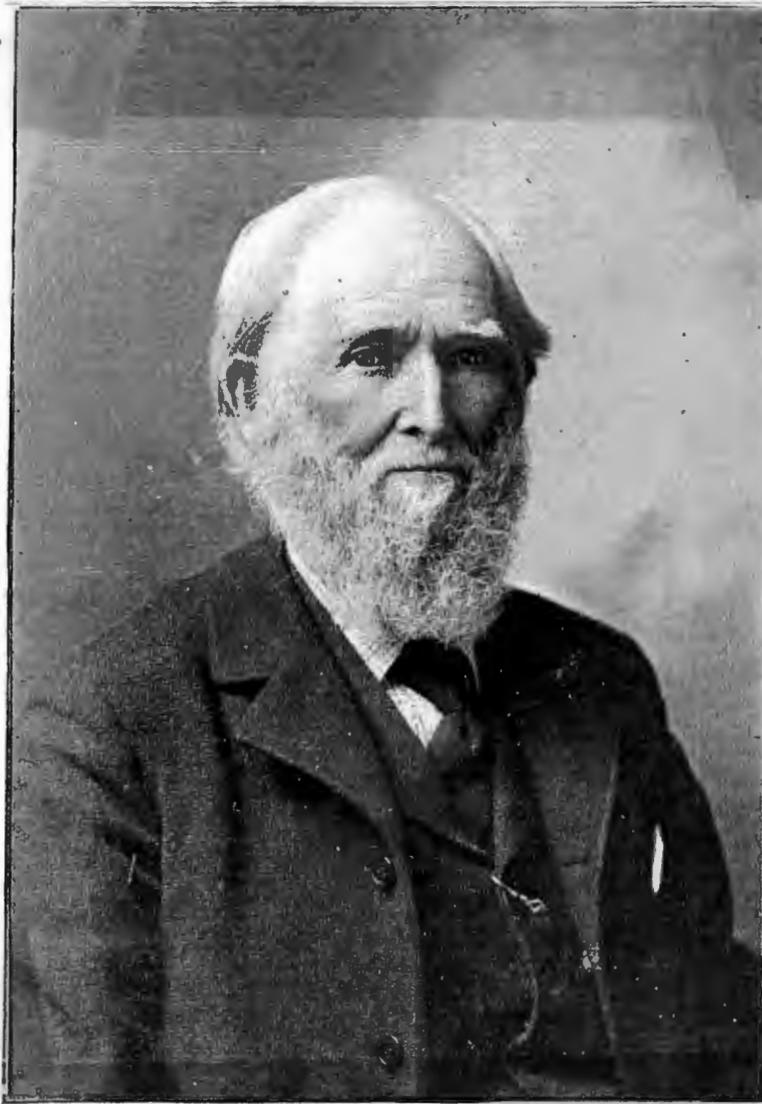
he comes into the kitchen and explains these little matters.

"Young gentlemen and ladies, either keep out of matrimony or make up your minds to endure many things; so that you can say, when you consider the whole matter: We have got out together, we have done pretty well."

Exhausted, Cochrane immediately concluded what had been a very long speech, greatly to the relief, no doubt, of the young men and women present!

Another speaker, a Dr. S.P. Kezerta, was more brief and less condemning. He simply said, "We say to our sons: Go and do as we have done and take these young ladies with you. They will go; try them. Go and settle this Great West."

The young ladies
In a speech delivered at the 17th meeting of the Old



W. H. CANFIELD
AT EIGHTY.

Settler's Association, Judge E.W. Young made clear the contributions of the young married woman to the family. After an impassioned dissertation on the work of men and oxen in breaking the soil, he raises the question, "Was it a holiday for the little woman within the (house), fresh from the old homestead where the ordinary housekeeping (was) a simple kind of play?" When her new husband shows signs or fawning she "cheers him on, bearing even with him her end of the yoke."

With regard to her management of the home, though it consists of only one room, "With little to do with, no conveniences, no labor saving devices, instead of running itself such work must be done

with main strength of muscle and will ... (and then she) helps the good man in the field. Such the wife and mother to bear and bring up heroes."

Invaluable records

Many meetings are carefully recorded by the secretary, and they all contain entertainment of some kind, music by the band, songs by Luce's duet class or the North Freedom Band, and sometimes an opening salute "from the four pounder from the top of the bluff."

The first annual meeting had been in 1872 at the home of Uncle Bill Johnson. This was the site of the "fort" which was hastily developed during the night because of the Indian scare described in a previous article, and tales of that night were recounted at some of the meetings. Other meetings were held around the county on occasion, the last recorded meeting being in 1895.

The founders had apparently hoped that the organization would go on forever, for the last entry of the 1890 meeting called for its continuance as a yearly custom. Members were urged to "enjoin upon your children and your children's children to continue the observance, and to hand down the traditions of the fathers, till in later years the festival shall come to be regarded as sacred, as the Forefathers Day of Sauk County."

The speaker's plea was disregarded, for the meetings continued under the old name until at least 1895, a total of 23 annual meetings. Canfield was the perennial secretary and, one suspects, the sparkplug of the group. He was still going strong in 1895 after 50 years in the county.

And the young men?

Meantime, the young men of the community had taken matters into their own hands, as recounted in a previous article, with their Bachelor's Club. This was designed to ease more shy or resistant young men into matrimony, and a list of eligible young women was published. All this was recounted in a previous article, called the Old Maids of Skillet Creek. The women formed groups also. Whether the admonishments of their elders prompted formation of these groups, we will never know. One suspects that the young men already had plans.