

The 1960's

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THE I 90-94 EXIT THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

If you look at the Sauk County exits from I 90-94 on a map, you will notice a curious discrepancy. To begin with, there is no exit for fourteen miles, from the Portage exit on state 33 to the US 12 exit at Lake Delton. This is the longest stretch of I 90-94 interstate without an exit in Wisconsin.

Then, when you reach Lake Delton, it seems like the powers that be have showered the area, placing four exits within seven miles. The highway sort of loops around Delton, festooning it with interchanges. The first one, at U.S. 12, lists Baraboo, but really goes to West Baraboo.

How did this happen?

Why is this? How did it happen that Lake Delton, and Wisconsin Dells included, merit such expensive generosity on the part of the Department of Transportation? And why did Baraboo, with easily triple their population, not have an interchange at County A, the closest suitable road to the heart of Baraboo?

Why indeed? That was the question in Baraboo in 1958, when the proposed snub was made public. The question was raised at length in the city, with an October headline in the News-Republic stating "Say New Highway Unfair to City".

The article reads in part: "Baraboo citizens are becoming mighty upset upon what they consider unfair treatment in the matter of no interchange on the super highway to this city. Many economists believe that the nation's growth will be along the superhighways. With one of these highways to be constructed near Baraboo soon, we will not have a turnoff while the Delton-Dells area will have three." Later Delton got a fourth exit!

Community leader Jack Epstein also questioned the discrepancy. "It cannot be purely for the tourist business because Baraboo is the gateway to Devils Lake State Park where over a million and a third visitors come every year. Surely the state highway commission will reconsider this ill-advised action." Others quoted included Allen Paschen and William Garrison.

The matter even got into the fall political campaign, with a quarter-page ad by senate candidate John Semrad. He pointed out that "Jess Miller, our present state senator, is chairman of the state highway committee...why didn't the senator fight for the rights of Baraboo?"

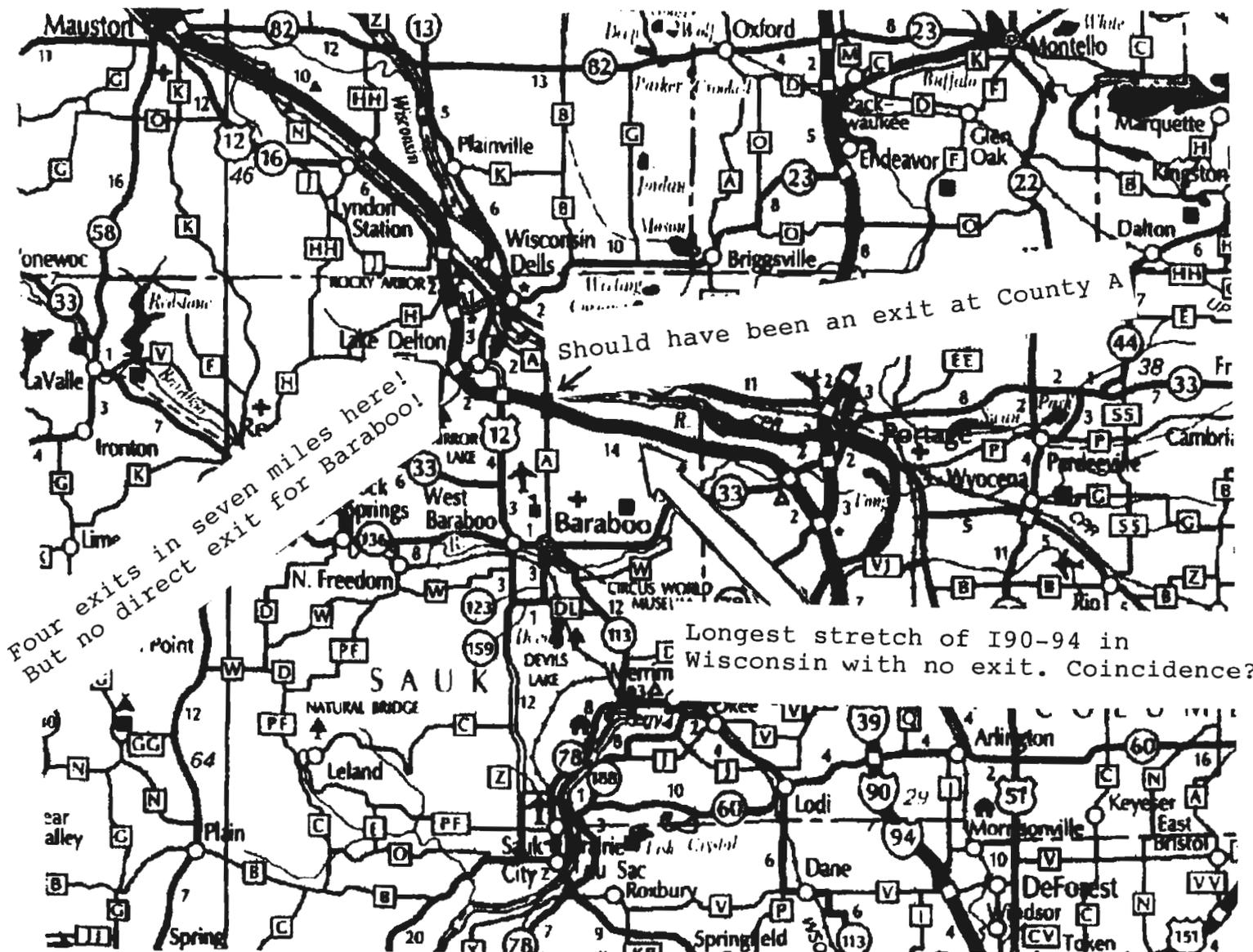
According to Semrad's ad, Baraboo's turnoff had been nullified. He pledged an all-out fight in the legislature "to challenge this iniquitous abuse of bureaucratic power...to get for Baraboo and vicinity that to which it is entitled."

It smelled pretty fishy

The whole thing smelled pretty fishy. County A would be the logical Baraboo turn-off, but look what it does to the infamous "strip" in Lake Delton—it bypasses it for those who turn north at county A. Even today, when there is a plan to bypass Baraboo on the west because of congestion, there is no suggestion of bypassing the Delton Strip. It is perhaps the most congested part of U.S. 12 between Chicago and Minneapolis.

Now, no one in Baraboo seems to have proposed elimination of any of the three proposed Lake Delton exits—actually they got four! The fact is, however, that no sympathetic aid and encouragement for Baraboo seems to have been proffered by our friends to the north. In a Kiwanis speech a year or so later, Lt. Gov. Olson of the Dells denied influence being used in the matter for the benefit of his community.

Well, the protests fell on deaf or perhaps previously influenced ears, and Baraboo did not get and still does not have a direct exit. Meantime U.S. 12 is



Four exits in seven miles here!
But no direct exit for Baraboo!

Should have been an exit at County A

Longest stretch of I90-94 in Wisconsin with no exit. Coincidence?

The longest stretch of I90-94 in Wisconsin without an exit

approaching bumper-to bumper status, even before reaching the super congestion of the strip. The County A exit would and could help relieve that problem.

Baraboo thrives despite snub

And what was the result over the years? No, Baraboo did not wither on the vine, as was fearfully predicted. Baraboo has a propensity for thriving in adversity. We've had the West Baraboo bypass in 1937, this interchange lock-out in 1958, and the current proposal to bypass to the west of West Baraboo. None have been able to stop the growth and progress of this gem city, set so perfectly in the scenic valley of the Baraboo river, with its tumbling rapids and quality cultural attractions.

Indeed, despite the snub to Baraboo by the highway department and perhaps some influential "friends", Baraboo has managed to successfully launch UW Baraboo-Sauk County, now in its 35th year. In addition, quality attractions have arisen, such as the Circus World Museum, the International Crane Foundation, Mid-Continent Railway and Museum. They, the Al. Ringling Theatre, and the specialty shops have thrived, making Baraboo a tourist attraction of a different and charming quality and style.

Not much withering on the vine here, and Devils Lake continues to attract despite awkward access from the interstate. Population growth has been excellent, the 8000 figure of 1958 rising to about 12,000 just within the city limits of Baraboo.

We still should have the County A exit, to relieve U.S. 12 if for no other reason. We suspect that the Delton strip would survive this new exit also! It wouldn't have to be labeled a Dells or Delton exit if they wished, just labeled "shortcut to U.S. 12 North" as well as the Baraboo designation to the south. Think about it!

Kennedys abounded locally



**BOB
DEWEL**

▼
YESTERYEAR
REVISITED

It wasn't exactly a Kennedy family reunion — it is a large family. But present in Baraboo on March 4, 1960 were Bobby Kennedy and his sister Pat Kennedy Lawford. Arriving in five days would be presidential primary candidate John Fitzgerald Kennedy and his striking, fashion-setting wife Jaqueline.

It was obvious that Wisconsin's vote in the upcoming Democratic Party primary would be crucial, and the Kennedys had selected Baraboo and Sauk County as an important area for campaigning.

Little did anyone realize that in well less than a decade, the two Kennedy men, having reached the pinnacle of national and international fame and power, would be assassinated. Also killed would be Martin Luther King, and Bobby Kennedy's arch enemy Jimmy Hoffa, would disappear in one of history's great vanishing acts. Even the Warren Hotel, where the meetings were held, would soon be destroyed by fire. But in the spring of 1960, the visits were pretty exciting for local citizenry.

On the Republican primary side, vice president Nixon seemed poised for the nomination, but the real question in 1960 was who the Democratic Party nominee would be.



CONTRIBU

Both Bobby and Jack Kennedy spoke at the Warren Hotel in 1960. In a few short years both men were assassinated and the hotel burned. Jack Kennedy is shown at right stumping in Reedsburg.

Presidential primaries

It is unlikely that Baraboo and Sauk County will receive personal campaign visits from either Al Gore or George W. Bush this year. Wisconsin's meager electoral votes will probably not make or break the winning ticket, whichever it may be.

This was true even in the primaries this past spring of the year 2000, in which the new system of politics determines early in the game who the party nominees will be. In this new and curious arrangement, politically small states





John Kennedy speaking at the Warren Hotel.

like Iowa and Vermont, followed by a procession of other early state primaries, make Wisconsin's late primary meaningless.

Not so 40 years ago in the turbulent 1960 political race.

On the Democratic side, leaders such as Hubert Humphrey, Stuart Symington, Lyndon Johnson and Adlai Stephenson vied with the eventual winner, John F. Kennedy. Campaign stops were frequent, and Baraboo was on the list.

Senators Humphrey and Bobby Kennedy

It had begun in February 1960 when the News Republic announced that Sen. Humphrey would appear that morning. It was even reported some of what he would say, but Humphrey abruptly canceled the delayed breakfast appearance, being replaced by Lt. Governor Phileo Nash. Nash was popular locally because the year before he had ridden an elephant in the 1959 parade opening the Circus World Museum.

* Actress Agnes Moorhead had declined to ride the pachyderm, though she had been scheduled to do so.

Nash touted Humphrey's family farm program, designed to save the family-sized farm. He also said Humphrey was for world disarmament and for fair treatment of labor.

Within five days, Bobby Kennedy arrived for a breakfast with civic leaders sponsored by Kiwanis. He spoke of Congressional efforts to aid labor in controlling its union funds, often misappropriated by corrupt union officials like Jimmy Hoffa. Kennedy gave many examples of corruption. According to research in the Kiwanis Club archives, Jimmy Hoffa happened to have spoken a month earlier in Wisconsin Dells and denounced Kennedy as "the most dangerous man in America."

Because of a winter storm, Lawford's car had been marooned for a time in Prairie du Sac. She also attended coffees in Prairie du Sac, Reedsburg, Wonegan and Hillsboro. Two other Kennedy sisters were elsewhere in the state with similar marathon coffees.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

The main event was to come in five days, with the arrival of the eventual nominee in Baraboo. He had previously called for an increased defense budget, calling Eisenhower's defense stance a "gamble with our survival." Because of a religious issue, Kennedy had also affirmed his unqualified support of separation of church and state.

A breakfast sponsored at the Warren Hotel by the Kiwanis Club was to be followed by an appearance at the chocolate shop, a popular coffee stop for local businessmen. Unlike Humphrey, Kennedy showed up about on time and spoke of the inadequate milk price support program and also of Wisconsin's forest resources programs and the need for uniform grading standards.

The News Republic commented that "Senator Kennedy meets people well, and so does his wife. They both made a personal effort to say 'hello' to everyone they saw in Baraboo, greeting many on the street and in various business places, in addition to those persons in the hotel."

The paper had several pictures of both Kennedy events, but unfortunately time has taken its toll on the newsprint, even of the filmed copies at the library, and none are reproducible. One picture is of particular interest, for after his speech Bobby Kennedy posed with his local host, Jack Epstein, and Baraboo Kiwanis Club President James Karch.

Karch says he remembers well what Kennedy had for lunch — a toasted cheese sandwich.

The late Jack Epstein once told Baraboo Sun editor Mike O'Connell that after John Kennedy left the hotel he strode "several paces ahead of his wife, allowing the gentlemanly Epstein to escort the gallant and very pregnant Jackie around some fruit puddles in the middle of Oak Street."

Baraboo in 1960

The Kennedys were not the only excitement of the late winter of 1960. There was talk of bringing the state fair to the Badger Plant south of the bluffs. The Circus World Museum now had five wagons, one of which had been a corn crib on the Wm. Alexander farm. Woody Zantow had purchased Badger Village for \$52,500, and a new city well was to go in at Seventh and Jefferson streets. New salaries at the city hall were announced, with the city clerk to get \$5100 a year, the engineer \$4800, the treasurer \$4500, and a policeman \$4164. A small item on the front page stated that James Jantz had been appointed to be a county traffic officer.

On the national scene, Elvis Presley had reported to Ft. Dix for army duty, and people marveled that a beach ball size satellite had been sent into space, weighing all of 94 pounds.

Still to come for Jack Kennedy was the loss of Sauk County's primary votes to Hubert Humphrey, (Jack carried the state against Humphrey) and his eventual but narrow national triumph over Richard Nixon. The Bay of Pigs would be his first challenge, plus the standoff with Krushchev over nuclear missiles in Cuba. Camelot would not last long.

Manhunt headlined summer of '61

936



BOB
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The summer of 1961 had not proven to be memorable by the middle of August. True, the circus museum now had an elephant performing in its only building, the ring barn. The National Guard had announced plans to build an armory on South Boulevard, and plans were announced for a new post office on Broadway.

Baraboo now had two clerics named Henry — Father Henry at St. Joe's and Pastor Archie Henry at First Methodist. Gerald Vosen of Merrimac was ordained in Madison. In Baraboo, Baraboo High School drum majorette Judy Peterson received an award from music director Dick Temple, and wedding bells rang out for Deanna Darrow and Evan Fischer. O.J. Befera was making plans to open a pizza restaurant, but Walter Kerndt was closing up his grocery store. A favorite drive was the Ochsner Park river road, which is now the new riverwalk, from Second Avenue all the way to West Baraboo.

All in all, it was a pretty quiet summer in Sauk County — quiet until the night of Aug. 20-21. Events that night sparked Wisconsin's greatest manhunt ever, eventually involving nearly 1000 lawmen, civilian posse members, National Guardsmen, Native Americans and even local

businessmen. Several stayed open overnight to supply food, gasoline and other essentials to the grim-faced lawmen intent on getting their man, or three men in this case.

At 2 a.m., on the highway in front of the Marshall Building in Lake Delton, lay the body of young officer James Jantz, shot in the head. Nearby was Delton officer Bob Kohl with serious chest and abdominal wounds. Officer Fred Bayer, some one-and-a-half blocks away, had heard the shots, but was warned by the prostrate Kohl to stay back. His shots were not able to prevent the killer's car from escaping. And all of this was observed from the doorway of a nearby motel by a witness.

The summer of 1961 would now be long remembered.

First Knowledge

In the creaky 1890 red brick jail on the corner of Broadway and Second Avenue in Baraboo, Sheriff Mike Spencer and his young family lived in close proximity to Sauk County's incarcerated men and women. A dutch door separated the family living quarters from the rather small jail, which rarely had as many as 20 inmates. A small peek hole allowed an occasional glance toward the three cell blocks.

Dolly (Elsing) Spencer, Mike's bride in 1944, not only did the cooking for family and inmates alike, but was actually the sheriff that year, since state law did not allow husband Mike to have a third term. Mike's title, therefore, was Chief Sheriff's Deputy. There was no 911 emergency call system, nor were there any ambulances, except for the hearses of the funeral homes.

It was not exactly Mayberry of later television fame, but out of this unsophisticated small county law enforcement facility arose a manhunt which drew nationwide attention and the admiration of the Chicago Police Department. It all began at 2 a.m. when the dispatcher rushed unannounced into the Spencer's private bedroom with the words, "two of our men have been shot." Nearly a week would pass before the accused were all incarcerated.

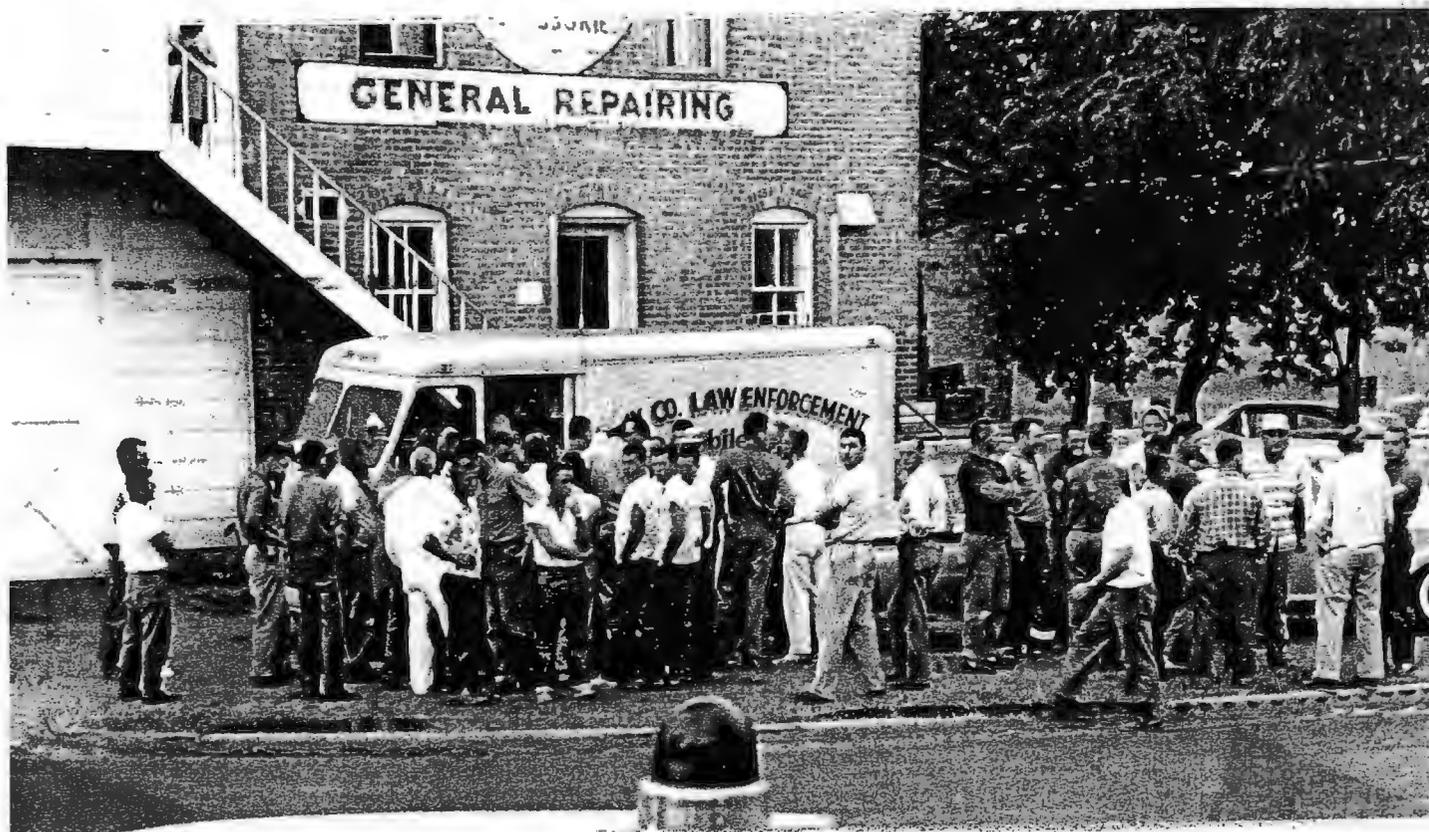
The Crime

William Welter, 23, Lawrence Nutley, 27, and Richard Nickl, 27, had dined at Ishnala Sunday evening, Aug. 20. Their swaggering and free spending actions had already aroused suspicion in the area. They had registered under assumed names at the Dell View Hotel, and it was later learned that they not only had attracted the attention of Illinois police in previous years, but were under suspicion for the recent \$25,000 robbery of the Chicago Motor Club, as well as a robbery in Sun Prairie.





A posse (above) readies to hunt in some woods near Highway 33 for fugitives. Below, ready volunteers surround the search command post at Lyndon Station.



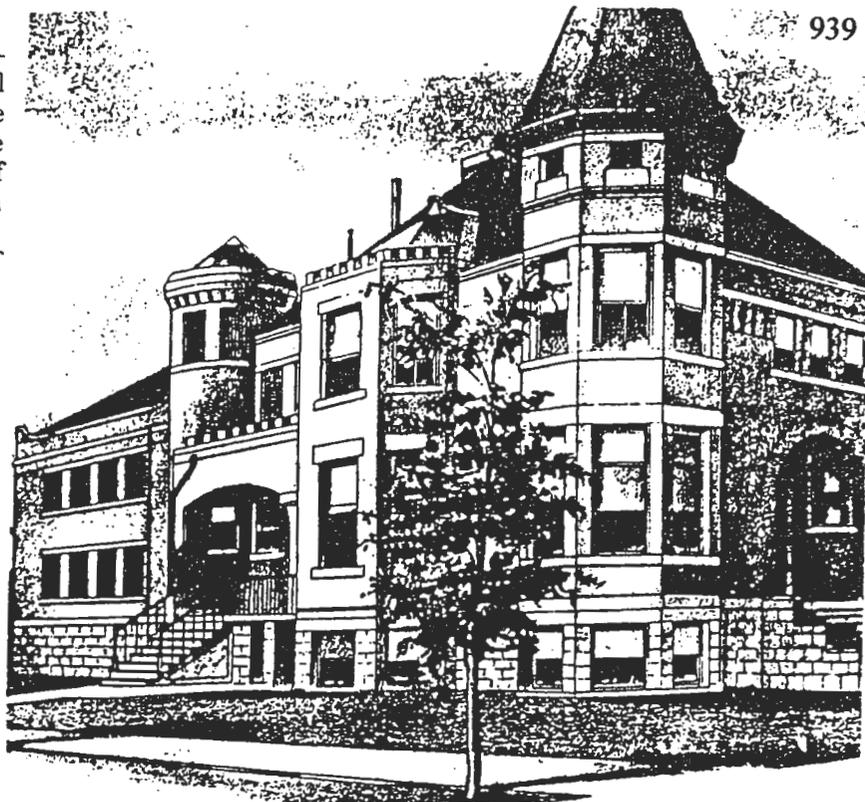
Alerted by Ishnala personnel, lawmen Jantz and Kohl followed them into Lake Delton where they were stopped because of unmatched license plates on the car.

Standing in the doorway of a nearby motel was one James Agan, who described the scene in some detail. He said shots rang out immediately when the 1960 Oldsmobile was stopped. "Bob (Kohl) spun to the street and I knew he was hit. As the other officer (Jantz) ran toward the squad car to take cover, the three men came out both sides of their car shooting. One of them fired over the top of the squad car and got the officer. Then they picked up the policemen's guns and sped away just as another officer, Fred Bayer, drove up and started shooting at them. There must have been thirty shots fired in thirty seconds."

Roused from sleep by the dispatcher, de facto Sheriff Spencer radioed for action as he sped to Delton, and roadblocks were quickly set up at Baraboo, Mauston and Lyndon Station — the interstate highway did not exist then. It is believed the accused may have stopped at the Dell View to pick up things from their rooms, but the speed with which roadblocks were set up in the middle of the night remains amazing in retrospect — and very effective.

The First Capture

Lawmen are especially sensitive to assaults on one another. As the news crackled over police radio throughout the state, a migration began and by daybreak there were some 500 lawmen of various positions on the scene. Spencer had prepared for emergencies of any nature during previous terms of



1890-Sauk County Jail

office and quickly established his command center in Lyndon Station.

The roadblock a mile south of Mauston soon served its purpose. The fleeing gunmen, upon encountering a semi truck blocking the highway, spun into a U-turn to reverse direction. A car door flew open, and one of the gunmen was ejected, breaking a leg. The other leg was also damaged, perhaps by one of patrolman Fred Bayer's shots.

Thus was the first fugitive captured, through he pretended to be a hitchhiker in hopes of getting through the blockade. Although the men had registered under assumed names at the Dell View Hotel, he was soon identified as Richard Nickl. He was transported to the Mauston hospital under guard.

By now, Columbia County patrolman William Johnson had encountered the fleeing car, headed back toward Lyndon Station. Informed of this via police radio, Spencer

told Johnson to hold back a little and prepared to fire his sawed-off shotgun as the fugitive car came into sight. The shot found its target, and Spencer still retains part of the car fender, riddled with shotgun holes.

The speeding car now lurched to a halt after striking two parked cars and a power pole, and the two remaining fugitives disappeared into the brush on foot, too far away for Spencer to stop them. The night was described as "blacker than a witch's heart." At this point, neither man had been identified, though the car contained not only an arsenal of weapons but identification for a William Welter and a George Kristovich. The latter person soon identified himself in Chicago with a plausible alibi, so the real name of the other fugitive remained unknown. Also in the car were the firearms of officers Jantz and Kohl.

The manhunt in the rough countryside would now begin.

To Be Continued

Bloodhounds sniff out fugitive to end manhunt

940

Part II

Merle "Mike" Spencer was born and raised in Sauk County. He worked at Badger Ordnance, drove a Greyhound bus and also drove a beer truck before joining the Sauk County traffic patrol under Claude Frye in 1951. Rising through the ranks, he then was elected Sheriff in 1956 and served in that capacity (as deputy under wife, Dolly in the final years, since state law did not allow Spencer to have a third term) until 1968, when his skills were pressed into service statewide as Deputy Director of Emergency Police Service for Wisconsin.

Mike Spencer did not serve in the armed forces in World War II, having lost part of one foot in a childhood accident. No army general, however, ever took firmer control of the disparate group of volunteers, grim jawed lawmen, National Guardsmen, Native Americans and assorted laymen than did Spencer on Monday, August 21, 1961. The Jantz murder and Kohl shooting roused not only the county residents, but law enforcement officers statewide.

Thanks to an extensive scrapbook of newspaper clippings prepared at the time by Carol Sorg, we have a good account of developments as the pursuit and capture played out. Readers wishing more hour by hour details as they unfolded should see the scrapbook at the Sauk County Historical Society in Baraboo.

Command Center

Spencer had previously prepared plans for an emergency in the county, and after establishing the roadblocks he quickly activated the plans in preparation for a search for William Welter, 23, and Lawrence Nutley, 27, known then as "Fletcher." Richard Nickl, 27, was already in custody.

The Sauk County command truck was stationed in Lyndon Station, near where the fugitives had last been seen fading into the underbrush on foot, and the countryside was soon systematically combed for clues. Residents were urged to lock their cars and their houses, and not to pick up hitchhikers. Outlying residents stayed in town. Even a freight train was searched.

Two helicopters and two planes participated, as well as bloodhounds, but Monday brought little results. On Tuesday a break came when Mrs. John Klug, a Stand Rock Motel operator, was approached by a disheveled stranger asking for two bottles of soda. A young helper tried to delay the sale while Mrs. Klug vainly attempted to get control of the party telephone line. By the time she could notify authorities, the man had slipped back into the woods.

Nutley is Captured

With plenty of lawmen and volunteers available, the area was quickly occupied by a posse. Jerry Coughlin of Baraboo soon found the man hiding in the brush, scratched and tired but still defiant. He wrestled with Coughlin for his gun, and was subdued with the aid of John

Schleicher, but only after Don fired a shotgun near the suspect's feet. Now identified as Lawrence Nutly, he was taken to the obsolete and insecure red brick Sauk County jail, but within a day was transferred to the more secure Dane County facility. The fear was that gangland connections in Chicago might attempt a rescue.

There was another concern, for with some 500 assorted lawmen and volunteers manning guns in the field and at roadblocks, the last thing anyone wanted was an accidental shooting. There were a few background checks made, but it turned out that the crime witness, James Agan, was really named Hemmanson and was wanted in Madison. He was soon incarcerated there along with Nickl and Nutley, and was seen at a later date giving one of the accused a haircut!

Search for Welter

Meantime, Welter's whereabouts were unknown, and it was questioned whether a Chicago city boy could long endure privation in the wilds of Juneau County. As the week dragged on, weary volunteers continued to probe suspected areas with no success. Finally, roadblocks were lifted on Friday, but planes with loudspeakers were employed to advise Welter to surrender. Bloodhounds from Madison and La Crosse failed to turn up clues, and it was feared that he had somehow escaped the dragnet, or had perished.



Exhausted and delirious after a week in the woods, William Welter said, "call the cops" when they discovered him.



Bloodhounds

Jerome Yelk of Ft. Atkinson had an idea. He noted that certain marsh areas had not been searched, believing them to be too inhospitable for a human being to survive in. Bringing his bloodhounds, King and Polly to the area on Sunday, he began a search, and within a short time the bloodhounds picked up the scent of Welter. A rain had moistened the ground and area, which is often helpful to bloodhounds, and Yelk, Chuck Hulbert of Jefferson, and Max Kapelke of North Freedom were led by the dogs for two hours through the wet and heavily wooded marshy area north of Lyndon Station.

Finally, they came upon an exhausted and perhaps delirious Welter, lying on his side on the ground near a small water hole. Incredibly, his first words were "call the police," which he repeated three more times. When informed that they were the police, "he didn't seem to understand," said Yelk. "While we waited we tore the lining from his jacket to put over a bad cut on his leg. The cut looked pretty bad."

Welter was exhausted, dirty, unresisting and too weak to walk, so he was carried out on a stretcher over the difficult terrain by deputies. Dr. K.D. Hannon found him suffering from exposure, as well as from the damaged knee, which eventually required removal of a part of the kneecap. He told authorities he survived by eating berries, and crawling to the waterhole several times a day.

Welter's shoes had been found in the abandoned escape car the previous Sunday, and he was shoeless when found, his socks being



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIKE SPENCER

Lawrence Nutley (center) is transferred to the Dane County Jail by Sheriff Mike Spencer (left) and Traffic Control Chief Red Wyatt. Nutley always tried to hide his face.

in shreds. After less than an hour in the Sauk County Jail, he was transferred to the Dane County facility where his cohorts were already lodged. All were under medical treatment for various injuries for weeks.

The Hearing

Sauk County authorities could not relax for long, for it became necessary for hearings as the legal system took over. This required frequent appearances in the Sauk County Courthouse for each of the accused as their physical condition improved. There was some delay, however, until Officer Kohl could be

released from the hospital to testify, and so the final hearing did not take place until Wednesday, Sept. 27, over a month after the murder and attempted murder.

Both Welter and Nickl remained on stretchers during the hearing, which lasted through the following Thursday, Oct. 5. At this time, Judge Robert Gollmar, finding sufficient evidence to justify a trial, bound them over to circuit court.

The manhunt was over, and the suspects had been arrested. It would be months, though, before things returned to normal at the old red brick Sauk County Jail.

To Be Continued

Manhunt ends in suspect's capture

■ A man accused of murdering his girlfriend, a Chicago cop, is arrested after extensive search.

By Richard W. Jaeger
Regional reporter

LYNDON STATION — A man wanted in the murder of his Chicago police officer girlfriend was arrested Thursday evening after authorities from six Wisconsin counties spent the day scouring a wooded area along the Sauk and Juneau county line north of Rocky Arbor State Park.

Samuel M. Lupo Jr., 29, of Chicago was apprehended around 7:45 p.m. about a mile west of the searchers' Highway 12 command post, Juneau County Sheriff Brent Oleson said.

Lupo was caught after someone saw a man matching his description and reported it to police, Oleson said. Police dogs were able to pick up on his scent and lead police to Lupo, who then tried to hide behind trees before being arrested, Oleson said.

The manhunt began when Lupo fled on foot after being stopped by Lake Delton and Wisconsin Dells police just after 2 a.m. Thursday, authorities said.

A first-degree murder warrant was issued for Lupo in Chicago in the beating death of Brenda Sexton, 31, a patrol officer for Chicago's 8th Police District. He was dating her, they said.

Chicago police Detective James O'Brien said Sexton was found dead in her apartment Tuesday morning on Chicago's southwest

side. She had been bludgeoned to death with a baseball bat, he said.

"Her body was discovered after her kids were found out in the street early in the morning telling neighbors their mother was bleeding," O'Brien said as he waited outside a command post along Highway 12, near where Lupo fled into the woods.

O'Brien and several other Chicago officers arrived at the search scene shortly before 7 a.m. Thursday with the arrest warrant.

Lupo also faces a Wisconsin warrant for crossing the state line as a fugitive. He would have to be extradited to Illinois to face the murder count, O'Brien said.

Oleson and Sauk County Sheriff Randy Stammen led Thursday's manhunt, which concentrated on a 6-square-mile area west of Highway 12 and across Interstate 90-94 along their county borders. Bloodhound dogs from Dunn County and a search helicopter from Milwaukee County also joined the hunt late Thursday.

A 9mm Beretta belonging to Sexton was found near where Lupo's car was found. It was stumbled on by a Chicago television reporter and cameraman shortly after noon Thursday.

Lupo also is believed to have taken some \$1,800 in cash from Brown's Chicken Restaurant, which is owned by a relative.

Stammen said his department was alerted to watch for Lupo, who was known to frequent the Lake Delton, Wisconsin Dells area. He said Lake Delton police officers spotted Lupo's car and pursued it north out of Wisconsin Dells before running it off the road just north of Cruisin' at Chubby's bar.

As we go to press, history repeats itself
39 years later, same month!

8-18-2000

Wisconsin State Journal

Please see next four articles

Insolence, schemes, attempted escape precede trial



BOB
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Part III, the Trial

With all three suspects in custody, what was called Wisconsin's greatest man-hunt was over and the wheels of justice began to turn — but slowly.

It took five and a half days for the preliminary hearing in September 1961, after which Judge Robert Gollmar, on Sept. 5, bound William Welter, Richard Nickl and Lawrence Nutly over for trial on the charges of murder and attempted murder.

Thanks to the Sorg scrapbook, and now another kept by Ardene Voil, we have a very complete newspaper record of the highly publicized events and the trial. It was at about this time that John Glenn became the first American to orbit the Earth, and the about-to-be-murdered President Deim of Viet Nam was besieged in his palace.

But you'd never know it from the front pages of the State Journal and the News-Republic. Most issues featured the trial.

Because of local sentiment, it was arranged that the trial would take place in Dane County, where the men were being held for maximum security according to the paper — Sauk County's old red brick jail had been condemned and a new jail would not rise until the following year, next to the courthouse. It would be too late, though, for this trial of the century for Sauk County.

The trial judge was to be Judge Beilfuss of Neillsville. However, the medical condition of the prisoners, and especially the health of Officer Bob Kohl, caused several postponements, and it was not until Oct. 26 that Beilfuss arraigned the men.

Jailbreak Attempt

Meanwhile, Lawrence Nutly did not prove to be an ideal prisoner. On Oct. 13 he started a small fire with crumpled magazine pages, ostensibly in order to be transferred to solitary confinement. "It's clean and quiet there," he was quoted as saying.

He got it, with no cigarettes or magazines. On Oct. 19 he tore up his bed sheet, so the bed and chair were removed and he slept on the floor with a blanket.

Undeterred, Nutly and Welter staged a dramatic jailbreak attempt at 2 a.m. on Dec. 26. The cell locks were secretly jammed with paper and soap, and a bar of soap in a sock served as a blackjack as they attacked the jailers. An attendant nearby shut off the elevators, or they might have escaped, though they clawed at a ceiling ventilator in a vain attempt to find passage out of the building.

In an interview, Nutly told Mike Spencer that "jails are made to escape from. We should have killed the old guy (jailer) and then we would have made it," he told Mike. "I'm going to try it again." For another escape, see article IV in an upcoming issue of the News Republic.

Jury Selection

After psychiatric examinations in January and an attempt to have the Supreme Court require separate trials, jury selection began on Monday, Feb. 3, 1962. By Feb. 18, a 225-person panel had been exhausted, and the sheriff was instructed to bring people in "off the streets" to be considered. The judge had already threatened to have night sessions to speed up the process.

Finally, on Feb. 20, a jury was sworn in. It had taken two and a half weeks for this process. Alternates were selected, taking another two days, and on Feb. 22 the jury was sequestered in the Lorraine Hotel with no contact with their families, no alcoholic beverages and supervised meals. Church on Sunday was allowed, however.

The Trial

It will not be possible to report in detail a trial that lasted seven weeks. To be mentioned, however, should be the grilling of the first witness, Officer Bob Kohl. The trial had been delayed until it was felt he could appear, though it was not expected that he would be on the stand from Saturday, Feb. 24 until the afternoon of March 1, a total of five and a half days.

A flu epidemic was raging at the time, affecting even one of the defendants, though he

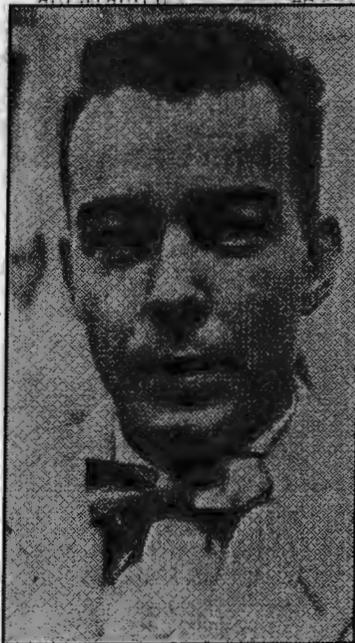


CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS COURTESY OF WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL

In a dramatic moment, Officer Bob Kohl identifies William Welter as the man who shot him.



Welter



Nickl



Nutley

For Mentally Deranged

Welter Nutley

947

MADISON (UPI)—Two Chicago area men were being held in cells for mentally deranged criminals today after failing in a bid to escape from the Dane County Jail here Tuesday.

The pair, charged with first degree murder in the slaying Aug. 21 of Sauk County Patrol Officer James Jantz at Lake Delton, are William J. Welter, 23, and Lawrence Nutley, 27. Authorities transferred them to the cells usually reserved for mentally deranged prisoners because of the greater security there.

They indicated the pair would not be tried for jailbreak until after their trial in February on charges of killing Jantz.

Deputy Sheriff Mike Spencer, called to Madison in the early hours of Tuesday by word of the attempted escape, talked with Nutley at some length and says that Nutley observed that "jails are made to escape from." Nutley told the Sauk county officer that he would try it again if he got a chance — which is just what Spencer had believed when he saw to it that the men were transferred to the more secure Dane county jail from the obsolete Sauk county structure, soon to be abandoned.

The Sauk county officer in his conversation with Nutley was told that Nutley felt the biggest mistake he had made in the attempted break Tuesday was that he got "soft - hearted" and didn't put the guard, who was an older fellow out of commission but put him in the cell, rather than injuring him. (As it was the officer had to have stitches taken in cuts received in the fracas.)

Nutley had told Mike more than once that the Sauk county officer had better never give

him a break, that he would be sorry if he did, the officer says.

Welter and Nutley got out of their cells, slugged jailers Harold Pinger and William Keys and reached an outer hall before they were arrested at gunpoint by officer August Pieper.

Head Jailer Otis Lund said the prisoners stuffed paper in the cell door after taking showers Monday morning. Pinger noticed the door ajar at 2:03 a.m. and as he went to turn on the lights, Welter hit him with a bar of soap in a sock. Nutley and Keys joined the fray and the two jailers were injured slightly.

Welter and Nutley took a set of keys from Pinger and went out of the cell block, slamming the door behind them. As they headed toward a public elevator, Matron Mrs. Lucey Johnson pushed the emergency button that alerts the City-County Building and prevents its elevators from going down.

Pieper, who had been patrolling around the building, heard the jailbreak call and took an elevator to the sixth floor jail. He found Nutley trying to get through the top of another elevator.

"Welter rushed at me and attempted to take my pistol," Pieper reported. "After a struggle in which neither Welter nor I could gain control of the pistol, Nutley said, 'What the hell, stop fighting. Where can we go from here?'"

Welter, Nutley and Richard Nickl, 28, also of the Chicago area, are to be tried in circuit court here Feb. 12 on the murder charges and also on charges of attempted murder in the wounding of Lake Delton Police Chief Eugene (Butch) Kohl. The three were arrested during a week-long man-hunt in the Lake Delton area

remained in the courtroom. Fortunately, Kohl finished his ordeal before getting the bug. In his weakened condition, he entered the hospital, which he had been in and out of the previous six months due to the seriousness of his injuries. Released after a few days, he collapsed on March 10 in a barber shop, requiring hospitalization. During his testimony, however, he had pointed a finger at Welter as the man who shot him.

On March 5, the prosecution announced that they had about 40 more witnesses to be called. This, capped with relentless questioning by the defense, pointed to a long trial ahead for the sequestered jury. Lawmen in the courtroom were required to wear civilian clothes with weapons concealed, and the defendants were allowed civilian clothes also, with handcuffs and shackles removed while in the courtroom. All three suspects were on the stand, and denied significant complicity in the events of August 21, 1961.

Meantime, Nickl was found to have shaped a makeshift key from a metal spoon, but had not yet used it. A jailmate claimed during the trial that Nickl offered up to \$5000 to aid in an escape, though Nickl may still have been on crutches.

The Verdict

Finally, the defense rested its case on March 27, and both sides were given time to prepare their closing statements. Then, on March 30, after seven weeks of testimony, the judge gave the jury his charge, and, as it was late in the afternoon, allowed them to adjourn until 9 a.m. the following morning.

In less than five hours, the jury returned with verdicts of guilty on both counts, with sentences of life imprisonment for all three men. In Wisconsin at the time, a life sentence provided for a parole hearing in 12 years. Without time for commiseration with their relatives in the audience, the men were handcuffed and shackled and immediately whisked to the Waupun prison. Bob Kohl helped guard Welter on the way.

Even if paroled in 12 years, the men were wanted in Illinois on other charges. In Waupun, they could earn 35 cents a day working and were allowed to purchase a \$10 coupon each month for cigarettes, etc. Total family visits were limited to one hour a month.

In Baraboo, the News Republic reported that there

was "No shouting in Baraboo today, only a mass sigh of relief that the whole business was over with." Mike Spencer stated his feeling, saying "Justice was done."

Court Clerk Vera Terry had the job of adding up the cost of the trial to the county — costs that included attorneys, as the defendants were all indigent. The county was also responsible for their medical expenses and the cost of housing them in Dane County, and the jury's meals and hotel rooms for 7 weeks. Total costs added up to between \$80,000 and \$100,000, a large item in the county budget in those days.

Mike Spencer, however, said, "The American system of government can have no price. We must remember that Officers Jantz and Kohl sacrificed more than money."

Sauk County had not heard the last of this case, however, including an escape and recapture, and legal appeals.

To Be Concluded

Trial's ripple effect reached far and wide

949



BOB
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REVISITED

Part IV, After the Trial

William Welter, Richard Nickl and Lawrence Nutley had been found guilty on March 31, 1962, and were incarcerated in the Waupun prison before the day was over. This was not the last Sauk County would hear of them, for the next ten years saw repeated individual or combined attempts at a new trial or release.

The complaint was that the men had not been tried separately and that the jury selection was flawed. It was also claimed that the trial in Madison was conducted in a circus-like manner, perhaps a reference not only to Baraboo's past as a circus city, but maybe to Baraboo's budding Circus World Museum, then only two years old.

In June 1964 the Wisconsin Supreme Court denied a new trial, and this decision was appealed to the United States Supreme Court by the new attorney, Jack McManus of Madison. In October 1966, Welter requested release for various reasons, and in August 1968 the request was denied in a hearing.

Again in February, 1970, the Supreme Court upheld Judge Beilfuss and the jury, deciding that the trial was not held in a circus-like atmosphere. On one occasion Beilfuss, now a Supreme Court Justice, found himself in the witness box. As late as February 1, 1972, Welter was applying for release. At a time that we have not determined, Welter and Nutley were released on parole, not to be heard from in Sauk County again.

A Prison Walkaway

Not so with Richard Nickl. He had not participated in the attempted jailbreak by Welter and Nutley in December 1961, and September 1972 found him serving as prisoner representative on an advisory council appointed by Governor Lucey.

It was called the Prisoner Rehabilitation Task Force, which made headlines, to say the least, by recommending that all Wisconsin prisons be emptied by 1975.

Apparently trying to set an example, Nickl went to Horicon in 1974 for a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous in the Presbyterian Church, and failed to return to prison. He was described as wearing a brown sport coat, light brown shirt and dark trousers, and his nice appearance apparently allowed him to elude the authorities easily. The police bulletin described him as "very friendly and outgoing."

Apparently trying to set an example, Nickl went to Horicon in 1974 for a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous in the Presbyterian Church, and failed to return to prison. He was described as wearing a brown sport coat, light brown shirt and dark trousers, and his nice appearance apparently allowed him to elude the authorities easily. The police bulletin described him as "very friendly and outgoing."

Nov. 1, 1989 found Nickl, 55, living in Las Vegas and selling cable TV unscrambling devices to gain television reception, apparently illegally. Going under the alias Michael Conner, his fingerprints proved him to be Nickl, but by this time he had fled to Phoenix. By remarkable coincidence, he lived for a time in the same general neighborhood where former Sauk County Sheriff Mike and Dolly Spencer spent part of the winter. One can be sure that neither Mike nor Nickl were aware of this.

Somehow he was apprehended and returned to prison. Incredibly, he had walked away from the Horicon meeting in 1974 with only nine months remaining before his parole hearing. His cohorts had long since been released when he was picked up and returned to prison.

Back in Sauk County

Changes in the legal structure in Sauk County were almost breathtaking following the trial. In a regular elec-



State Rep. Kenyon Giese and Bob Kohl are pictured (right) at a legislative hearing. Above, Mike Spencer is shown in civilian clothes at the time of the trial.



Above photo courtesy of Robert Coorough Collection
Left photo courtesy of Mike Spencer Collection

tion held just three days after the trial on April 3, Prosecutor Seering was elected judge of the Sauk County Court, Branch Two. In the same election, Judge Gollmar advanced from county court to Circuit Court, and Special Prosecutor Harland Hill replaced Judge Gollmar, having been appointed to fill the vacancy by Governor Nelson. In the following year, 1963, Judge Beilfuss was elected to the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

Mike Spencer, after six more years as Sheriff or Deputy Sheriff, capped his brilliant career by becoming a Wisconsin Emergency Police Coordinator in 1968. Interestingly, the paper reported that Spencer told an FBI workshop on roadblocks that a few of his volunteers were former inmates of the county jail. "He saw that these men were as enraged as anyone at the slaying of a policeman," an article stated, "an action on a completely different level from the less violent crimes. Meanwhile, the Sauk County Board, following the trial, had quickly hired four new officers for the county at a salary of \$3800 per year per man, the going rate then.

Bob Kohl

Things had not gone well, however, for Lake Delton Officer Bob Kohl. He had been plagued with illness and disability resulting from his bullet wound, which had passed through both lungs, the liver, kidney and spleen. His life had been in serious question the first few weeks following the shooting, and he required 17 transfusions and lost 53 pounds. Had he died, prosecution might have been more difficult without his eye witness account. He was frequently hospitalized, not only in the months preceding and following the trial, but well into 1965. Several scrapbooks belonging now to his stepson, Robert Coorough, testify not only to his physical condition but to the nationwide newspaper coverage of the story.

Kohl was unable to work much of this time, and with a workmen's compensation payment of only \$42 per month, he and his wife were forced to sell their home and move into a trailer.

Eventually, he was able to find work as a graveyard jailer, but had to quit that in 1972. Occasional fund drives were of some help.

The matter came to the attention of State Rep. Kenyon Giese, who was able to obtain some financial relief for Kohl. However, his life had been permanently altered by the events of Aug. 21, 1961, when he was shot while on duty.

James Jantz

And how about James Jantz, gunned down in the same altercation? The previous year he had rescued a local man from a burning car, saving his life. Jantz's young wife Barbara, with a baby and expecting their second child in March, found solace at St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

The community rallied to her aid for a time, following Jantz's funeral at St. Joseph's, with the greatest Mass funeral attendance Father Henry had ever presided over.

A benefit circus performance by Deppe's County Classic Circus at the new Circus World Museum raised over \$2500, along with other funds started for her and for Bob Kohl.

James Jantz's body lies in his grave, but he is not forgotten, along with other officers of the law whose lives have been lost in the service of Sauk County citizens. A memorial on the Broadway side of the Courthouse Square testifies to their courage and devotion to duty. Special remembrance is given to them on National Police Recognition Day, when the officers who have succeeded them gather for tribute.

By 1961, the potential of Sauk County's national beauty — including Devils Lake, the Baraboo Bluffs and Parfrey's Glen potential — was being realized, and its popularity was growing. It remains so in the year 2000. But the events of March 21, 1961, were a turning point from which there was no retreat. The idyllic hills and valleys and streams and cliffs remain, but the good folks of Sauk County lost some of their innocence on that fateful night.

Diligence was the
Byword of C.P. Chappie
Fox
Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

This article was first published in the old Baraboo Sun in 1997, following six hours of recorded interviews. Only slightly edited, it is presented today, the day of his funeral, as a tribute to Chappie Fox. He was truly a benefactor of the Baraboo and Sauk County area, and indeed of the State of Wisconsin.

It was a cold and dreary day, the second of January in 1960, when Chappie Fox became director of the little circus museum in Baraboo. He borrowed a shovel from Ed O'Brien, then a moving van proprietor next door, and with some difficulty forced open the door of the old red building.

It was partially filled with what now seems a meager collection of circus memorabilia. There was no office, no chair, no desk, and not even a heating system, for the Ringlings had used the body heat of the animals to take out the winter chill.

At the old nineteenth century city hall downtown, Mayor Ritzenthaler and City Clerk Jesse Walker found an attic room for the new director, and even dusted off an old desk and chair. This served until summer, when the old Ringling ticket wagon became Chappie's office. So began the first full year of the Circus World Museum (CWM).

It was Fox, coming from Oconomowoc, who brought with him a lifelong interest in not only the circus but in the railroad and in draft horses, all of which would be invaluable assets for the museum.

Fox knew the history and location of nearly every circus wagon in existence, whether pristine or rotting.

Before long they were the property of the museum, in a remarkable series of incidents (reported in eight other articles). The CWM now has 170 of the possible 200 wagons or parts of wagons still extant (still more in 2003-Ed).

Eight wagons were shipped from England from the old Fossett Circus, and 12 wagons were from Walt Disney for example, and nearly every other wagon has a story of how Fox obtained it for the CWM.

A calliope (pronounced like antelope) soon skirled its piercing sounds into the Baraboo sky. Some wagons had even been built in Baraboo by the Mueller brothers, and now had returned home, Fox himself had not come empty handed, contributing the Mother Goose Float and other memorabilia.

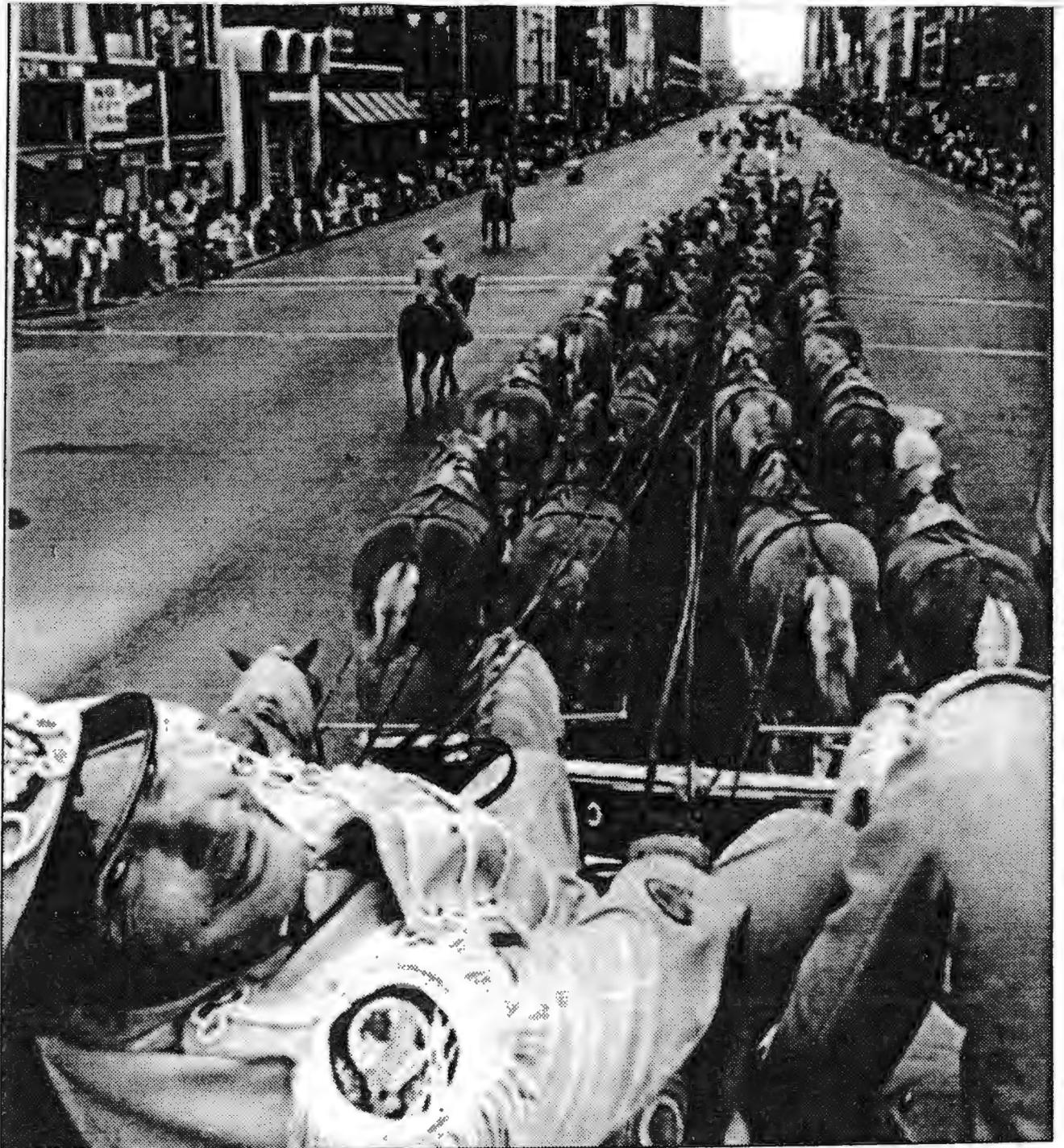
But people started wondering about all these wagons. Why so many, and where would they be stored, and for that matter, restored? But the wily Fox knew what he was up to. Calling on his railroad savvy, Fox for all practical purposes begged an entire circus train, part by part!

There were flat cars galore, Pullmans, a diner, open-sided baggage cars, and yes, a steam engine, and later a caboose. Nearly all were donations or fire sale items from the Santa Fe, Milwaukee, and Northwestern railroads. And then, to top it all off, Fox got the North American Refrigerator Car Company to donate its recently vacated shops, with ample storage for the train and the wagons too!

But on that winter day, Fox had a special problem. Already he had obtained four flat cars, temporarily stored at Badger Ordnance. He had been told by "the boys downtown" that no one in Baraboo would know how to move the cars from the Northwestern tracks to the circus grounds 50 feet below.

A visit with Deppe

Aubrey Barnhart had finally suggested he talk to Wilbur Deppe about it, so with some trepidation Fox



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

submitted photos



Chappie's Funeral Cortege

Sept. 18, 2003

was ushered into Deppe's office, blue with cigar smoke. Deppe listened politely, but when Fox quoted the downtown business people as saying that the job couldn't be done, Deppe started chewing his cigar double time. No promises were made, but by early summer the 30-ton flat cars were in place. Deppe used two trucks, one moving forward and one backward, for the hauling. Also moved was the Ringling advertising car, which weighed 85 tons, purchased with a donation from Alma Waite!

And for what, folks still said. But Chappie had only begun. One by one and sometimes five by five, circus wagons from all over the country, and from England, rolled in. Not only that, but more and more railroad cars kept appearing, all to be stored in the old Refrigerator Company car shops. The story is too long to tell here, but before long, when a steam engine appeared, it became apparent to all—Chappie had a circus train, with the world's largest collection of authentic circus wagons!

A Circus Parade

And what do you do with a circus train? You can transport your wagons and have an authentic parade! Wisconsin is known as the Mother of circuses, so what could be more appropriate than a circus parade in Milwaukee? It seemed logical to Chappie, even after he had been turned down by eleven major Milwaukee firms. Through persistence and a remarkable series of events, the Schlitz Company bought the idea, and the rest is history, also too long to tell in this article.

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

The Museum Expands

Back to the first three years of the museum: By this time no less a man than Wilbur Deppe had fallen under Chappie's spell. A footbridge across the river, estimated to cost \$30,000, was built by Deppe for "peanuts". Deppe and son David trucked wagons in from Texas, donated a used circus tent, and even purchased Bertha, the first elephant, who later appeared in Las Vegas. Often Deppe "forgot" to send a bill.

Deppe had demanded anonymity, but was surprised to enter the grounds one day and find a huge sign reading "Deppe's County Classic Circus." Wilbur is gone now, but his name, fittingly, is on the Deppe Wagon Exhibition Building.

Chappie Fox can't claim anonymity, but when his contributions are mentioned, he modestly says he was being paid and was simply doing his job. And what a job he did! When he left for Florida in 1973, Governor Pat Lucey declared Sunday Sept. 10 as Chappie Fox Day. There were tributes from Happy the Clown, Ringmaster Paul Luckey and others, Ethel Rommelfanger played Auld Lang Syne to a standing ovation and very few had dry eyes.

Forty years before, Chappie had applied for a job with the Ringling Operation, and they had never replied. Now they wanted him, as he was recognized as the world's foremost circus historian. Chappie remained in Florida a few years, and then returned to Baraboo, always supporting the museum.

Chappie had a quote posted in his office: "You can't plow a field by turning it in your mind—do it now". Chappie has another motto that is worth repeating: "Diligence is the Mother of Good Luck." It was diligence and perseverance, more than luck that brought Chappie success. It all adds up to making Baraboo an exciting and interesting place to live, thanks especially to men like Chappie Fox.

Sleep well, Chappie, for a job well done.

This is just a short sesquicentennial note involving the circus which Chappie Fox volunteered. Perhaps could be run at the time of the dedication of the Fox Wagon reconstruction bldg., or along with the enclosed final article about the circus wagons.

P.T. Barnum and Wisconsin Circus History

By Bob Dewel

Leave it to Chappie Fox to come up with some obscure but significant circus history, appropriate in the year of Wisconsin's Sesquicentennial.

It is true that Wisconsin is known as "The Mother of Circuses". Some 125 circuses got their start in our state, mostly in the 19th century. Most famous was Baraboo's Ringling Brothers, closely followed by the Gollmar Brothers, also of Baraboo.

But it is Chappie, with his vast knowledge of circus history, who can trace even the massive Barnum and Bailey Circus to Wisconsin! This circus was the great rival of the Ringling Brothers, but they eventually owned Barnum and Bailey, as is well known.

The story of the Barnum circus begins in 1871 when a man named William Coup had a railroad wagon show based in Delevan, and a Mr. Costello had a small Great Lakes boat circus, based in Racine. These men conceived the idea in 1871 of persuading Mr. Barnum, a flamboyant eastern museum owner, to allow the use of his name and call their combined show the Barnum circus.

Barnum agreed, subject to a 10% cut of the profits. The new "P.T. Barnum Museum, Menagerie, and Circus" was the result. Thus half of the Barnum and Bailey Circus began in Wisconsin!

Meantime, James Bailey, who had the Cooper and Bailey circus based in the east, had the good fortune to have one of his elephants give birth in 1880, this being the first baby elephant born in North America. The animal was named Columbia.

This happening, and Bailey's adroit exploitation of the

event, elicited the envy of P.T. Barnum, who wired Bailey with an offer of \$10,000 for the beast. Barnum was furious when Bailey not only rejected the offer, but publicized the telegram in his circus promotional material to further enhance the importance of the event!

P.T. Barnum was not a man to be discouraged, and after swallowing his pride he adopted the old axiom "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em". He made a deal with the Bailey circus, combining it with his own, to form the Barnum and Bailey Circus, the Greatest Show on Earth, in 1883.

It would not be until the following year that the Ringlings began their circus career, but by 1907 they had purchased their rival, the Barnum and Bailey Circus. It was combined with theirs in 1918, as the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus, now truly the Greatest Show on Earth.

Thus, the Coup and Costello circus adopted the Barnum name while still in Wisconsin, and ownership was returned to Wisconsin through the Ringling Brothers. The two largest circuses in the country, perhaps the world, had their origin in Wisconsin. Leave it to Chappie Fox to know details like this!

Chappie also likes to point out that, unlike books and stage and screen productions, the circus industry is alone in having never been censored, being as it is a family type entertainment, appealing to all ages and all walks of life.

VIETNAM DEATH SPURS CITY TO SUPPORT TROOPS

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

Baraboo is a Blue Spader City. There are two official city resolutions to that effect, signed by two different Mayors, after approval by two different city councils. Each proclamation is complete with several whereas's, and bears the seal of the city.

The resolutions are separated by some 27 years. In the first proclamation, the date of Oct. 22, 1966, was first officially proclaimed Blue Spader Day in Baraboo.

So, who are the Blue Spaders, and why is Baraboo a Blue Spader community? It all goes back to July 29, 1966, when Baraboo's Clayton Luther was killed in the Vietnam conflict. Luther was a Blue Spader, the adopted name of the 26th Infantry, First Division, United States Army. He was the first local casualty of that bitter conflict.

The Vietnam Conflict

It was a time of controversy for our nation, in an era clouded with dissension. Lyndon Johnson was President, and only 3 years had elapsed since President Kennedy was assassinated. The cold war was at its height, with western democracies engaged with a never-ending struggle to contain communism.

The communist political system had already succeeded in conquering much of Eastern Europe, as well as Korea and China. As the only free world power of any significance, it was America's destiny to counter further spread of communism, first in Korea in

the 50's and now Southeast Asia in the 60's and 70's.

A few felt communism as an empty threat, and in Baraboo the Friday morning Men's Conversation Group had dissenters vigorously opposed to the war.

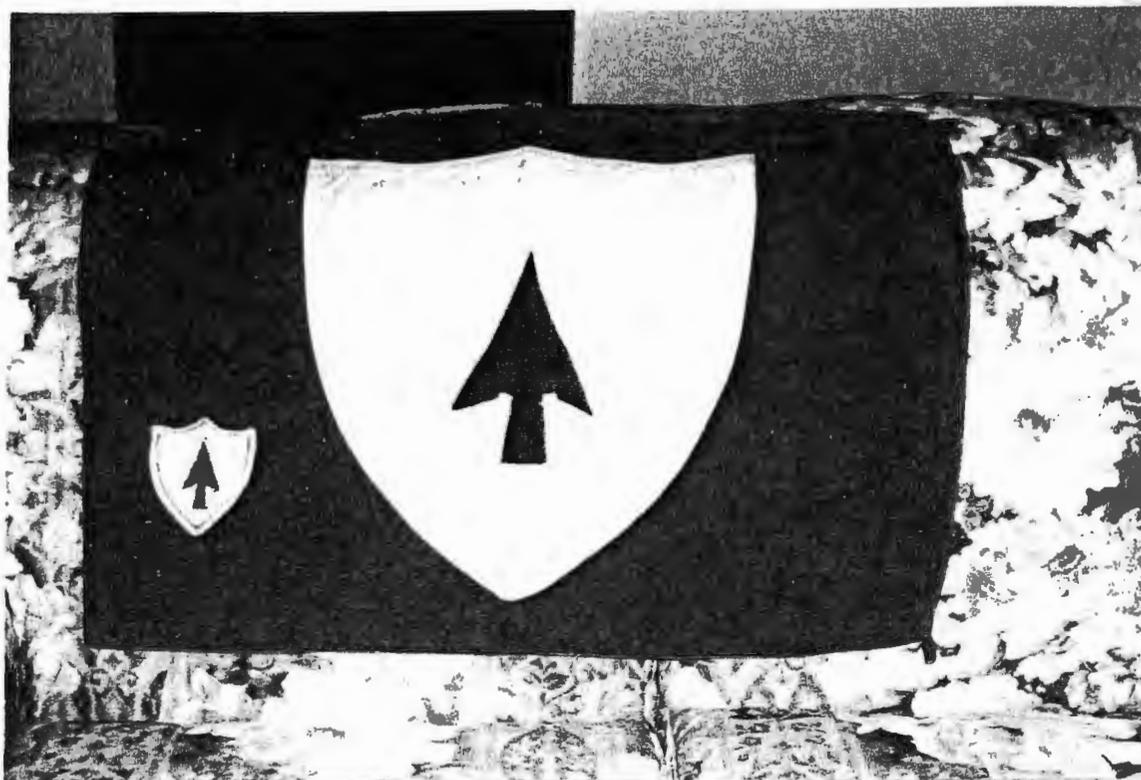
To its everlasting shame, Americans were not even united in supporting their servicemen. Even the vast majority who supported the Vietnam conflict at the time seemed apathetic in its attitude toward members of the armed forces.

Clayton Luther

The death of Clayton Luther, one of Baraboo's own, was the catalyst for the city to re-assess its indifference toward the men in military service. For Luther, it was not to be a good year. On January 7, 1966, he lost several teeth, plus mouth and chest injuries, in an auto accident on the Ochsner park curve in Baraboo. Within ten days of the accident, he was inducted into the army. In six months he was shipped to Vietnam, and 10 days after joining the Blue Spaders, he was killed in action when he stepped on a mine.

A 1964 graduate of Baraboo High School, young Luther was one of 14 children of the Herman Luthers, and had worked at Pierces Market. In the First Infantry Division, he was assigned to be a rifleman in the 26th Infantry, known as Blue Spaders.

Luther's death after only ten days with an army outfit seemed hardly long enough for



The First Division Colors, with a shoulder patch attached on the lower left. This division served in both World Wars as well as Vietnam

a man to bond with his fellow grunts, or Johnnies as they were sometimes called. But this is the Blue Spaders, as you will see.

"War Nearer to Baraboo Today" was the front page editorial in the News-Republic on August 5, 1966. At Luther's funeral, an honor guard of Legion and VFW members participated, as well as an honor guard from Truax Field. As late as 1997, three decades later, a member of that squad, who did not even know Luther, wrote "I will never forget that day...his mom kept calling out his name...I kept thinking about him even though I never knew him."

Later in the month Clayton's father, Herman Luther, was presented with a purple heart medal. Luther's name is on the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington D.C.

The Proclamation

Luther's death had a profound effect on the community. Although records are incomplete for the month following Luther's death, it is apparent that a committee was formed, under the auspices of the Baraboo Image Group.

By August 30, a city proclamation adopted the Blue Spaders as Baraboo's own. Prepared in hand-written old English, it read in part as follows:



On October 22, 1966, the News-Republic ran this cartoon, welcoming David DeMelle, who was flown here from Vietnam to represent the Blue Spaders at the event. Sgt. Major . Dobel, former Blue Spader, was also recognized as representing the military unit.

"Whereas the City of Baraboo is proud and honored to have the privilege of adopting this gallant 26th Infantry, known as the Blue Spaders, which unit is now engaged in active combat in South Vietnam, and

Whereas in connection with the adoption of the 26th Infantry, appropriate ceremonies will be held in the city to commemorate the event, now therefore I, J. William Hommel Jr., Mayor of the City of Baraboo, do hereby proclaim the day of Oct. 22, 1966 as Blue Spader Day."

The Plans

On Sept. 10th, 1966, the News-Republic announced that a representative of the 900 man unit would be flown back from Vietnam to accept the adoption proclamation and a key to the city. The entire event was to be a tribute not only to Luther, the first and hopefully the only Vietnam casualty, but to all servicemen in harms way. In a burst of optimism, the committee invited dignitaries from all over the country, ranging from Vice-President Hubert Humphrey and Bob Hope to Army Chief of Staff General Johnson. Thankfully, the only dignitary to attend was Lt. Governor Lucey. Had others done so, attention would have been directed from the purpose of the event.

None of the available news stories mention the names of the committee members, except that Bill Luethy and Ralph Bailey were selling tickets to a luncheon. On Oct. 17 the paper printed a letter from Blue Spader Lt. Colonel Gorman, expressing gratitude for the adoption. He appointed

specialist Four David DeMelle of Sturgeon Bay to come and represent the Blue Spaders, and spoke of the unit's honorable history in three wars, dating back to 1917.

The newspaper said that 900 copies of the NewsRepublic would be sent for distribution among the men.

The paper also printed a list of local men known to be in service. Admittedly incomplete, there were 90 men in the list. Since the war would grind on for another six or seven years, many young men reading of or attending the event were destined to be called to serve their country also.

The Blue Spader 3 day event in Baraboo was a well-orchestrated event, and the Baraboo Image group had done its work well. At last. Blue Spader Days drew near, but that is another story. So is the second proclamation.

BARABOO BECOMES A BLUE SPADER CITY

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

It's not every day, or even every half century, that the United States Fifth Army Band parades in Baraboo. Nor does the 82nd Division Band appear every other decades or so. But in 1966, on Blue Spader Day, the bands were only a part of a special three day event.

As mentioned in the previous article, Blue Spader Day was designed as a memorial to Baraboo's first Vietnam casualty, Clayton Luther, and to servicemen everywhere. Putting action with rhetoric, it was a show of support for his Vietnam outfit, the First Division's 26th Infantry Blue Spaders.

Early Events

On October 20, 1966, Specialist Four David DeMelle was flown home from the combat area to Baraboo to represent the Blue Spaders. He spoke at a luncheon after appearing at a high school assembly. DeMelle told the students that his fellow soldiers "were thrilled to think a city had cared enough to adopt us." He also so spoke at Sauk Prairie High school.

Guests at the luncheon, besides DeMelle's family, were the Herman Luthers and twelve of their thirteen other children. One brother, Robert, had enlisted shortly after learning of his brother's death, and was not able to leave Marine Corps basic training for the event.

Earlier, De Melle had accepted a key to the city on behalf of the Blue Spaders,

plus a plaque and the proclamation mentioned in the previous article. The key was in the form of a bull hook, which is a cane with a hook on the end of it, for leading elephants. Baraboo, after all, is Circus City USA, and an ordinary key would not do.

Friday, October 21, was devoted to an appearance at Reedsburg High School, following a press and television conference in the morning at the Elks Club. A guided tour of the area was provided in the afternoon, including a chilly boat ride on the Dells waterways.

Saturday

Saturday was the big day. The 10:30 A.M. Parade must have been a masterpiece. The crack Fifth Army Band not only gave a concert but paraded in military precision. The 82nd Division Band also marched proudly, along with the Sauk County Circus Band and the Baraboo High School Band.

There was also an army marching platoon, along with several army vehicles, plus the VFW and Legion color guards. Local patriotic floats abounded.

In a special appearance, Sauk County's only Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, Baraboo's Beryl Newman, returned to the city to act as parade marshall for the event.

The parade terminated at the Baraboo athletic field of those years, Mary Rountree Evans Park, where a cold blustery October wind caused the festivities to be



NewsRepublic photo by Marcia Schlottmann

The original Blue Spader flag of the Army's 26th Infantry Division is displayed above. Baraboo area Girl Scouts and veterans organizations are raising money to restore the flag. The flag was donated to Baraboo after the city adopted the Blue Spader unit on Oct. 22, 1966.

abbreviated. The city proclamation was presented to DeMelle, and in return De Melle presented the colors of the First Infantry Division and of the 26th Infantry Regiment. Major General W.A. Jensen of the XIV Corps spoke briefly, commending the city for its support, as did MSG Dobil of West Point, a former WWII Blue Spader.

Saturday afternoon featured another luncheon with numerous citations and presentations, including further recognition of the Herman Luther family. The three day observance culminated that evening in a dance to the music of Hal Edwards Band.

The Followup

In the days that followed, letters of appreciation poured in, first from the DeMelle soldier's parents, who said "Words cannot express our appreciation." David Rhode, local serviceman with the Marines, wrote that he was "proud of the citizens of my home town."

A Major General wrote "Few other communities compare in magnitude with the patriotism and loyalty that you have extended...your outstanding efforts are not taken lightly....they do have a great impact on us." A Lt. Colonel wrote that the effort "is immense, a constant source of reassurance."

Most telling was a letter from Chaplain Keizer, who stated that too often "the uniform is not respected...many Vietnam returnees were spat upon (in New York)...we cherish the friendship offered by the kind hand of Baraboo."

In Vietnam, the embattled Blue Spaders found the time for 600 of the 900 men to personally sign an expression of gratitude, signatures still retained in Baraboo today. All of this from a regiment in which Clayton Luther was assigned only ten days before his death. Blue Spaders are a tightly knit group.

People didn't realize it in 1966, but the Vietnam conflict would drone on for several years, culminating in a "strategic withdrawal". Many said it was because our troops had to fight with one hand tied behind their back, so to speak. The war had been designed to prevent the "domino effect", the possibility that if Vietnam fell to the communists, so would Laos and Cambodia and much of southeast Asia, and this did indeed happen when we withdrew.

Baraboo can be proud that, in a time of dissention, it chose to support our servicemen serving involuntarily at the call of their country. Unfortunately, there is no record that it did as much during the Korean conflict.

The Rest of the Story

The story does not end in 1966. In the following years, efforts were made to collect gifts for the Blue Spaders, and a pen pal network was set up so that lonely soldiers could receive mail.

Details are sketchy, but at one point the Blue Spaders, to show their appreciation, sent the city a gift of money. Drive East on Eighth Street,

or South on Broadway, and you can see the result--blocks and blocks of Columnar Norway Maple trees, planted in April, 1976. As a result, Baraboo frequently receives awards as a tree city. Though that street already has two names, we could at least think of 8th Street as Blue Spader avenue!

Nor is the Blue Spader story over with the end of hostilities in Vietnam. Periodically over the years,

contacts have been re-established with the Battalion or its civilian association, and on May 25, 1993, Mayor Steinhorst signed another proclamation, this one with six whereas's, to the effect that the city reaffirms its affiliation with the 26th Infantry. On Memorial day of that year, the speakers at the cemetery were a Col. Phillip and CSM Dobel. Dobel had spoken at the 1966 observance. He and Phillip had been Blue Spaders in WWII. Aachen had been the first German city to be captured, and it was to Blue Spaders that it surrendered.

Even that was not the end, for only 4 years ago, a letter of inquiry was received from George Romais of Hawaii, recalling the funeral service for Clayton Luther in Baraboo in 1966. In another letter, in 1998, the 26th Infantry Association remembered Baraboo's adoption, and hoped to re-establish the close relationship the city and the regiment once had. Those Vietnam Soldiers are in their middle to late 50's now, but some remember the patriotism of a city in Wisconsin, which lost one of its sons, a Blue Spader for hardly two weeks,

The American Legion Post currently has possession of the Blue Spader Baraboo records. Copies of this and the previous article will be sent to the 26th Infantry Regiment Association.

Perhaps someone there will remember this poem, by a Jim Lingg, which appeared in one of their publications:

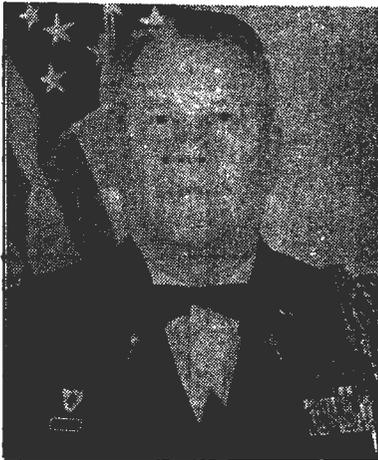
There is a spot in Heaven
Reserved for me and you.
God calls this sacred
place

The Heaven for Infantry
Blue.

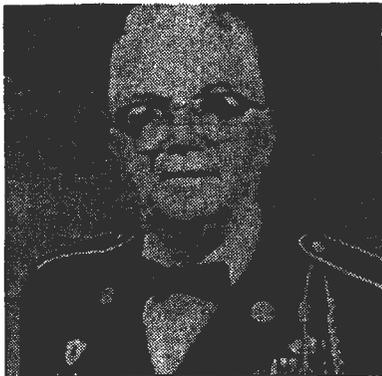
You've served your time
in hell

And paid the price for
a view.

Rest in peace and honor
We'll see you in Infantry
Blue.



STEVE PHILLIPS, JR.



THEODORE DOBOL

How Baraboo supported the Troops in Vietnam

Tales of Earlier Days

By Bob Dewel

How are these eight subjects interrelated: Cutting down some of the trees on Eighth Street? Our national guard and other soldiers in Iraq. The Vietnam conflict. The Blue Spades. David DeMelle of Green Bay. A parade. How to support the troops without believing in the war. Former Mayor Bill Hommel. We'll try and sort out the above, retelling a tale from earlier days. It's about a time of which Baraboo can be proud.

Clayton Luther

The story begins in 1966 with the death in Vietnam of Clayton Luther. His death was especially shocking, for the 1964 Baraboo High School graduate had only been drafted into the army in January of 1966. In six months he was in Vietnam, and was a rifleman in what was called the 26th Infantry or Blue Spaders Division. Within ten days of arrival, on July 20, 1966, Luther was killed after stepping on a mine.

The loss to the community was a shock, since such a short time had elapsed since he had been regularly seen in Baraboo as a young civilian, sometimes at work at Pierces. Some did not even realize he was in military service. The News-Republic headline the next day was "War nearer to Baraboo Today", and community leaders gathered to discuss the development.

Luther would be a man of about 61 today had he lived. Many years have elapsed, but the public attitude towards wars is remarkably similar, Vietnam then being about as popular as the Iraq conflict is today. Soldiers were on occasion despised and denigrated for serving. We have learned a little since then, and protestors today can differentiate between their attitude toward a war and their attitude towards the unfortunate soldier trapped in the conflict. There are ways to support the troops without supporting the war—more on this later.

Baraboo Decides to Act

To Baraboo's lasting credit, the residents did differentiate, despite the presence of Badger Ordnance, a major munitions operation in which many local persons were employed. A civic committee was formed by a group called Baraboo Vision, and on Oct. 23 the News-Republic reported on our recognition of Luther's outfit, the Blue Spades.

Now, the Blue Spaders were an infantry group with whom Luther had simply been another new replacement. He hardly had time to bond with fellow soldiers during the ten days before his death. In some outfits the death would have soon been forgotten, but this was the Blue Spades and Baraboo was, well, Baraboo. In cooperation with the Baraboo committee, arrangements were made for the city to adopt the Spades as our special connection to the war, and as a memorial to Luther, our first local casualty.

The three-day Observance

Thanks to Mayor Bill Hommel and a forward-looking city council, grand plans had been made for a three day Blue Spader support observance. And what a time it was, despite a blustery October 22 overcast! The parade featured not only Lt. Gov. Lucey but the crack Fifth Army Band. Equally impressive was the 82nd Division Band, plus the high school band and the Sauk Co Circus Band. Legion and VFW color guards marched alongside several army vehicles and local floats.

And who was Grand Marshall of the parade but Berle Newman, Sauk County's only Congressional Medal of Honor recipient. Only some 17 Wisconsin men had received that honor in World War II, including Newman. The parade honored Luther's memory with the participation of his family in several events, as well as honoring the newly adopted Amy Division.

3-27-1957

The City Council gave formal notice that the state highway commission had approved the Eighth Street improvement and would proceed with the construction "during 1958." The project called for the widening and construction of a concrete roadway on Eighth Street from Ash Street east to Lincoln Avenue, a distance of nearly a mile. The estimated cost was \$251,400 of which the cost to the city would be about \$61,000.

Widening the street took away all of the trees. They were replaced with the Blue Spader gift of money

Newspoint



David De Melle in the Parade



Newsprint

And what did the Blue Spaders do in return? They sent a very lucky soldier, Specialist Four David DeMelle of Sturgeon Bay, all the way from Vietnam to represent the Division. He rode in the parade and participated in many ceremonies here and in Reedsburg and Sauk Prairie. DeMelle reported that the division was "thrilled to think a city had cared enough to adopt us". The Division colors he presented are preserved today in the Legion and VFW halls.

We have written before of Blue Spader Days, (2002 book, Pages 4-12), so what is the point of this article, and how does it relate to the trees on Eighth Street? Well, a grateful Blue Spader 26th Infantry not only sent their thanks, signed by 600 soldiers, they took up a collection for Baraboo! That \$1447 donation was used later to plant the Columnar Norway Maple trees gracing much of Eighth Street these many years. A few are being removed due to disease, but it still ought to be called Blue Spader Avenue.

Pro or Con, Support the Troops

With a little detective work, we were able to locate David DeMelle, now of Green Bay, and he remembers well and with pleasure the days he represented his fellow soldiers in Baraboo. He has graciously shared his clippings with me, and they will be copied and donated to the Historical Society, which also contributed to this article. DeMelle writes "Believe me, the support from the citizens of Baraboo was appreciated by the men of the Blue Spades...you can be proud of your support... whether a war is popular or not, soldiers are only the messengers and deserve our support."

And how can we support our soldiers today whether supporting the war or not? Donate frequently, not just once a year, to groups which support the military, organizations such as the Salvation Army, USO and wounded veterans groups. Join an organization and write to some lonely soldier who is often overlooked at mail call—see the attached sidebar for directions. You can send gifts also. Demand that deplorable conditions at Walter Reed and other hospitals be rectified. Write and demand that our leaders be honest, open, and accountable.

Baraboo was proud and yet humble in 1966. We may not have a parade and adopt a unit today, but we can support the troops whether we are pro or con on the war.

Dr. Dewell:

I hope this information will be of some help. I thought I had more.

Hearing from you Sunday, rekindled the 1966 memories of Baraboo. I will always appreciate the kindness and friendliness the people of Baraboo extended to my family and myself. I/we didn't do anything special. We were soldiers and we were told to go fight a war. Right or wrong that's what soldiers do. Believe me; the support from the citizens of Baraboo was appreciated by the men of the Blue Spaders. We must remember that whether a war is popular or not, the soldiers are only the messengers and still deserve our support.

You can be proud of your support of the Blue Spaders. They were a very tough and honorable unit. I'm sure you have heard stories of civilians being murdered and villages being burned to the ground. Was it done? Yes, but not by Blue Spaders. I was in a recon platoon that did the recon work for the Battalion, we were involved in probably 30 to 40 search and destroy operations. At no time did I see anyone do anything inappropriate. They were professional soldiers and behaved like professionals.

I included a picture of my recon platoon. I am on the far left bottom row. We were a lean mean fighting machine.

Thanks for remembering our troops. We all need to remember that freedom is not free and must never, never, never be taken for granted.

Dave DeMelle



**FEBRUARY 1967 WAS A VERY
GOOD MONTH FOR BARABOO**

Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

Sometimes, in researching for one story, another story pops up and begs to be written.

Such was the case when we were searching for the date of the Blue Spaders Adoption Days, the story reported in previous articles. One tipster had told us to look in the paper on Feb. 14, 1967. After going over that issue twice we could only find one lonely paragraph about Blue Spaders, buried in a report of a council meeting.

Obviously Blue Spader Days had already taken place, for in this paragraph the council was considering the possible gift from the Blue Spaders of a Russian made automatic weapon which they had captured from the Vietnamese. Whether this gift was ever received remains a puzzle.

Meantime, another tipster steered us to the correct date for the Blue Spader Days, October, 1966. Al Zipsie had all of the documents, so the two Blue Spaders articles could now be written.

A Special Month

What led this writer to do it is not clear, but we then proceeded to look through every issue of the News-Republic for the month of February, 1967, and what a month it was for Baraboo!

Twenty years previously, Baraboo had been devastated by unemployment after the closure of the Badger Ammunition Plant following the successful conclusion of WWII. A Baraboo Industrial Expansion Corporation had been formed and, thanks to its efforts, the city by 1967 had several industries. Even more important, Baraboo now had a confident outlook towards the future. Here is a list of some of the things we found going on in

February, 1967, reflecting that confidence:

1. Funds were voted for what became the UW Baraboo-Sauk County campus.

This educational institution has by now provided college education to thousands of local students, without the cost of board and room in Madison or elsewhere. Baraboo residents (but not West Baraboo) fund about 63% of the cost, the balance being picked up by the rest of the county.

2. The new Municipal Building at Fourth Street and Ash was about to open,

replacing a large but inefficient and costly 19th century building at the same location.

3. Plans for another new school, Gordon Wilson, were presented. It would

replace the old Lyons school building on highway 12. This followed new elementary buildings constructed at East, West, and South schools, plus the brand new high school on Draper Street. All had been completed since the dark days of 1946.

4. It was announced that work had begun on a new and really local radio station. Burt Murphy of Cedar Rapids was the owner. This became the old WBOO radio station.

5. It was announced that a joint computer operation would be built across from the airport, incorporating Equity Co-op, Tri-State Breeders, and Wisconsin Dairy Co-op. These fine industries have grown, and recently completed an expansion.

6. Eagle Signal was having an open house in its new facility on Lake Street. Gone now, it was a significant local employer in its day.

7. A cable television company would soon be installing cable reception for the television audience. Cable fees, and channel choices, were limited in those days.

Other News



In 1967 John Lange was prominent in business and industrial commission affairs. Thirty years later his and his wife's Wills provided four million dollars to construct the Lange Center at Boo-U. Besides the gymnasium and dining area, it serves many other functions at the University Center.

All of the above were announced in just the month of February, 1967, in the midst of winter. Ray Forbes was the new school superintendent, replacing Gordon Wilson, who resigned after a long and prestigious career.

In other news the State Supreme Court ruled that the cottage owners on leased land at Devils Lake must vacate, thus upholding the ruling of Judge Gollmar in the matter. An appeal was immediately announced. Of dozens of summer homes at the lake at that time, only 3 or 4 remain at this time. In other news, someone had robbed the cash register at the Onikel Iron and Metal Works.

In sports, basketball was king, at least in Baraboo, where coach Dick Ofsten's crew saw successive defeats of

Edgewood, Sauk-Prairie, Richland Center, Portage, and Dells. In the next month, they just missed going to state. Tom Ritzenthaler was the current athlete of that very athletic family, which had had other sons on the team for fifteen consecutive years. A testimonial dinner was given for the family.

The News-Republic was especially newsy that month. Tuition at the University in Madison was now \$325. There was much speculation as to who would replace Vince Lombardi with the Packers. In national news. Mention had been made of New York Senator Jacob Javits for the Vice-Presidential nomination. Javits in earlier years had been married to Marjorie Ringling, adopted daughter of Alf. T. and Della Ringling.

All was not peace and tranquility, however. In Madison, riots had followed Vietnam war protests, in contrast to Baraboo's adoption of the Vietnam Blue Spaders. At Cape Canaveral, three astronauts had perished in their capsule on the ground, when fire broke out.

In Chicago, in an event suggestive of the 2001 Twin Towers assault, two apartment buildings had been hit on the 25th story by a small plane. The damage was limited. Apparently it was similar to the recent Tampa event in January, 2002, when a small plane struck a tall building, but without the effect seen in the New York Twin Towers assault.

And "that's the way it was" in February, 1967, as Walter Kronkite said every evening at the close of his CBS broadcast in those days. Another familiar figure, Frank Sinatra, was singing "It was a very good year" somewhere in this time frame also. Despite the riots and growing dissention nationwide, it was indeed a very good month in Baraboo, a city on the move.



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

proved historically dramatic

Maybe we are stretching the point a bit, but there is an interesting correlation between the establishment of the University of Wisconsin-Baraboo/Sauk County ("Boo-U") and the adoption of the United State Constitution. Both illustrate in dramatic ways the importance of one vote.

In 1787 the fate of the proposed Constitution of what was to become the United States hung in the balance at times. Such was the case when it came time for the Delaware representatives to vote their state's position. Three delegates favored ratification, and three opposed. Temporarily absent from the delegation was Caesar Rodney. When he learned of the deadlock, he rode by horseback to Philadelphia to break the deadlock and vote for ratification. Other states followed suit, and the constitution was adopted. Had Delaware declined, other delegates whose states had not yet voted might have been tempted to "wait and see," — that old excuse for inaction.

Now, move forward 180 years to 1967 when the fate of Boo-U, as its students affectionately call it, hung in the balance. In the vote proposing Sauk County pay its share (50 percent) of a new and increased cost, the County Board vote was split at 15 for and 15 against.

Absent because of his job was Burr Simonds, but when he was informed of the deadlock, this modern Rodney presented himself to the meeting and cast the deciding vote in favor of establishing UW-Baraboo/Sauk County. Happily, he did not have to ride a horse 80 miles to do so.

The background

As related in a previous article, there was a "Baraboo Collegiate Institute" back in the 1860s at the time of the Civil War. It failed due to lack of local support. In the 1960s a century had passed without an institution of higher learning in Baraboo, unlike Beloit, Ripon, Milton and other small cities where colleges were supported and surviving.

In Baraboo, Leo Rodems was serving on the state Coordinating Council for Higher Education and learned of the University of Wisconsin's plan to establish several two-year centers around the state. The localities were to supply suitable land and buildings, after which UW would staff and equip them with quality professors.

Rodems was a graduate of Baraboo High School, and in 1946 had collaborated with

the new Baraboo Industrial Expansion Commission in bringing its first industry, Neco Hammond, to town. A dedicated and vocal supporter of Baraboo and Sauk County, Rodems saw to it that the city and the county, if they chose to do so, would be strongly considered as a location for one of the centers.

The city council

The timing was propitious as far as Baraboo was concerned, for a young and civic-minded city council, presided over by Mayor Ed Ritzenthaler, heard Rodem's suggestion on July 15, 1964.



BOB
DEWEL

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A committee was appointed — headed by councilman Allen Paschen — to pursue the matter. Paschen was aided by new Mayor Bill Hommel and attorney James Karch, as well as William Kieffer and W.W. Deppe, and the council voted unanimously to consider the project.

The County Board's first consideration of the matter was on July 21, 1964 and on Dec. 12, 1964 it passed a resolution of intent. By May 11 of 1965 it confirmed its participation, voting 40 to 6 in favor. Its committee consisted of Ray Schoephorster, John Hoppe, Clarence Sprecher, Elder Benien, Walter Muchow and William Bremmer. Later, Ken Nelson and Robert Hirschinger aided in supporting the effort.

It was expected that 300 students would be accommodated and the city borrowed \$30,000 at 3 percent interest from the First National Bank to purchase the land, after considering some 20 possible locations.

All of this was in anticipation of a federal grant of \$400,000 from a college aid measure first proposed by President Kennedy. It took a progressive Congress, implemented by Lyndon Johnson's support, to enact the meas-



PHOTO BY R.J. BRAYER

In this fall 1968 photo (above), the buildings of the new University of Wisconsin-Baraboo/Sauk County campus seem stark and lonely without landscaping. The view from the school is one of the finest in the University system. By 1996, the square footage of the buildings had been doubled. At the 1967 groundbreaking (below), three elephants were joined by

Mayor William Hommel, UW Vice President Robert Clodius, Dean T.N. Savides and committee chairman Allen Paschen. On the circus wagon in the rear are Oscar Laper, Walter Terry, Rev. Henry, James Karch, Ray Schoephorster and Elder Bernein.



ure. Wisconsin was to get federal money to spread among several proposed sites. The News Republic opined that "it took considerable foresight on the part of the Sauk County Board or Supervisors as well as the Baraboo Mayor and City Council to bring about this great educational advance for our community."

Costs appreciate

Trouble lay ahead, however, for the grant commission passed up the local request for funds in favor of similar proposals from Richland Center, West Bend and Stout. Cost estimates rose also, and instead of contributing \$400,000 each, the city and county eventually were forced to consider contributing over \$800,000 each, with some hope of refund from the federal grants in the future. The challenge was daunting, but in the end both the city and the county voted to go ahead, thanks in part to the one-vote margin on the county board produced by Simonds, as mentioned earlier.

These were not the easiest of times, and prices were different than today even 35 years ago. Pierce's was selling rib roasts at 89 cents per pound, and ground chuck was 79 cents at Wickus Market. The River Inn advertised a fish fry every Friday night for \$1.25, with Jim Hamilton providing background music. In Baraboo, the Jaycees "in their gray vests" ushered at a fund-raiser for the Million Dimes Fund — intended for a community center.

Not all citizens viewed the expenditure for the UW-Baraboo/Sauk County campus favorably, but a modest attempt for a referendum failed, only 83 persons signing the petition. Even two Baraboo's councilmen voted against the increasing costs

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION	
Crissinger Construction Co. Madison, Wisconsin	\$ 884,778
HEATING and VENTILATING	
H. O. Hinrichs, & Sons, Madison, Wisconsin	334,691
PLUMBING	
Winchell Plumbing & Heating Co., Beloit, Wisconsin	114,403
ELECTRICAL	
Van's Electric & Hardware, Inc., Randolph, Wisconsin	152,435
ELEVATOR	
Berman Electric & Elevator, Inc., Madison, Wisconsin	11,048
	Subtotal
	\$1,497,355
Architect's Fees	92,554
Resident Inspection	2,009
Surveys, Testing	3,703
	Subtotal
	\$ 98,266
	Total
	\$1,595,621
Land	\$ 42,287

of the project, but the Baraboo Manufacturing Association backed it.

Breaking ground

Both Baraboo banks signaled cooperation in obtaining the required loans, as the city's contribution requirement rose from \$400,000 to \$600,000; and eventually to \$815,000. Ground-breaking took place on July 6, 1967. The speakers platform was a red circus wagon, and three elephants aided in the ground-breaking, a local tradition for industry beginnings as well. The UW Center committed to by this time was a joint effort, with a committee consisting of six County Board members, five

Baraboo city council members, the city clerk, the mayor, and the County Board chairman. Paschen of Baraboo was the chairman of the UW Center committee and a indefatigable leader for all four years.

Speakers eulogized the ground-breaking as a momentous day, a pipe dream that seemed too good to be true. One speaker pointed out that now "it will not be a question of only the privileged going on to college" with a local center in operation so students could remain at home.

Actually, the groundbreaking was an act of faith, for that very morning, when bids were opened, the cost of the project had risen even more.

It was July 12, 1967 before the city council had its final and unanimous vote authorizing the increased expenditure. The county board had just approved the expenditure a few days earlier, on a motion by Deppe and seconded by Hirschinger. This was when Simond cast the tie-breaking vote, so crucial to the success of the venture. Like the United State Constitution, Boo-U had survived a crisis by one vote.

To be continued

Bob Dewel is a regular contributor to the News Republic

Local campus opened, survived and thrived

977

As related in the previous article, the University of Wisconsin-Baraboo/Sauk County came into being in July 1967, after a hectic series of cost increases and close votes, particularly in the Sauk County's Board's deliberations. Ground was broken July 6.

It was no time for a sigh of relief, however, for difficulties and critical delays plagued Dean Theodore Savides. There were times, he said, "When we wondered if we were going to be able to open on schedule." Open they did, however, on Sept. 16, 1968, with classes surrounded by carpet rolls, painters at work and boxes of books, and mud paths serving as sidewalks. The new but smaller than expected class of 156 students "took it in good spirit, and they were a pioneer class in every sense of the word," Savides said.

By May 25, 1969, the campus was ready for an open house, with the News Republic publishing a special 16-page edition, supported by advertising from mostly Baraboo merchants. It lauded the campus for its advanced and innovative technology, and at the open house, Gov. Warren Knowles and UW president Harrington praised the facility.

A joint city-county building committee had completed its work, and Chairman Allen Paschen symbolically turned over the keys. It was replaced by a county-wide Dean's Advisory Board, with representatives from Reedsburg, Mauston, Wisconsin Dells, Loganville, Sauk Prairie, Portage, Merrimac, and of course Baraboo.

The county and city were to share much of the costs of maintenance as per an agreement with the university, which would equip, staff and operate the facility. Maintenance has been a minor factor in recent years, with Baraboo paying \$4.63 a year per city resident today, while county residents pay only \$1.31 each.

Happily, the federal government, through the Kennedy and Johnson College Aid Act, eventually provided some financial relief to offset some of the construction costs to the city and county.

News reports of the day stated that the city donated \$100,000 of its refund back to Boo-U to provide landscaping, a greenhouse and air conditioning. It had been a remarkable effort of cooperation between the city and the county. The 52,000 square-foot facility of higher education was now a working, two-year university center.

Reality

Reality set in quickly, for these were times of great unrest due to the Vietnam War dissidence. The Madison campus was among the most agitated, and Sauk County citizens wondered whether the unrest would reach our new campus. In September 1968, with the campus just opened for the first time, Savides found it necessary to assure the News Republic readers that only 2 percent of center students are normally foreign or out-of state, that vandalism is usually traced to middle- and high-school students rather than college students, and that college students often pres-

ent good role models to younger students.

No mention was made directly by Savides, in his letter to the editor, about the Vietnam campus protests developing throughout the nation. Savides' reassurances proved to be correct, for the only significant protest remembered locally was a short-lived campout around the campus flagpole, with the American flag flown upside down, the traditional sign of distress. Wisely, the protest was allowed to run its course.

Gym referendum

Despite its overall excellence, the facility stood alone among the centers in having no gymnasium. When one was proposed and submitted to a countywide referendum in 1984, it was soundly defeated. This must have not gone unnoticed in the John and Murrel Lange home in Baraboo, for these community benefactors appear to have made plans with their attorney to correct the situation, as we will see shortly.

Meantime, the center served an increasing number of students, plus a large program of continuing education for others in the county and surrounding area. Plays, musical events and informational lectures and art exhibits added to the cultural needs of the county. By 1974 a highly successful outreach program provided educational opportunities to inmates of the Oxford prison. For a time in the 1970s, however, there was a movement in Madison to promote closing of some of the two-year

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Both Baraboo banks signaled cooperation in obtaining the required loans, as the city's contribution requirement rose from \$400,000 to \$600,000; and eventually to \$815,000. Ground-breaking took place on July 6, 1967. The speakers platform was a red circus wagon, and three elephants aided in the ground-breaking, a local tradition for industry beginnings as well. The UW Center committed to by this time was a joint effort, with a committee consisting of six County Board members, five

Baraboo city council members, the city clerk, the mayor, and the County Board chairman. Paschen of Baraboo was the chairman of the UW Center committee and a indefatigable leader for all four years.

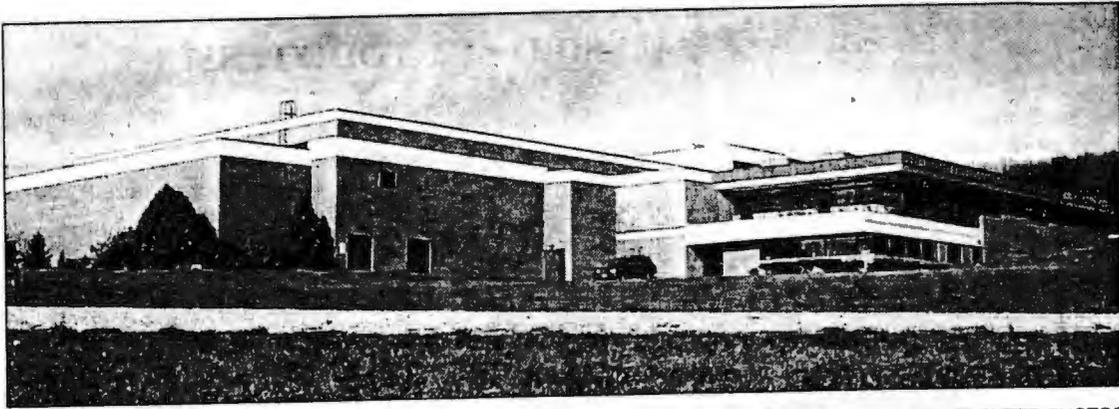
Speakers eulogized the ground-breaking as a momentous day, a pipe dream that seemed too good to be true. One speaker pointed out that now "it will not be a question of only the privileged going on to college" with a local center in operation so students could remain at home.

Actually, the groundbreaking was an act of faith, for that very morning, when bids were opened, the cost of the project had risen even more.

It was July 12, 1967 before the city council had its final and unanimous vote authorizing the increased expenditure. The county board had just approved the expenditure a few days earlier, on a motion by Deppe and seconded by Hirschinger. This was when Simond cast the tie-breaking vote, so crucial to the success of the venture. Like the United State Constitution, Boo-U had survived a crisis by one vote.

To be continued

Bob Dewel is a regular contributor to the News Republic



Joe Wankerl of Plain, who opted for the Taliesen proposal.

This time the county readily agreed, and the city procrastinated, but by March 1, 1997 both entities had agreed to proceed with the general upgrading in conjunction with the Lange bequest. Little publicity has been given so far to another generous gift, that of James and Kathryn Hill to expand the music department.

Baraboo support

The city had reason to carefully consider its options, for it needed a new public works building, city hall renovation, and possibly a police and fire building, plus extensive street paving projects. It

did not have the new one-half percent sales tax income that the county enjoyed. For almost 30 years the city had not only paid 50 percent of the original cost of the land and buildings, but 50 percent of the maintenance costs of the facility, though Baraboo's students did not make up 50 percent of the student body.

Although the center sat within the city limits, it paid no taxes. Moreover, Baraboo residents could not even reach the campus conveniently except to pass through West Baraboo, which benefited more since shopping facilities there were much handier for students.

Baraboo not only paid its 50 percent, but paid its share of the county's 50 percent, so that in effect Baraboo had supported the campus by about 63 percent. West Baraboo does not share in the city's obligation, paying only its share of the county's obligation. Now, two of Baraboo's own citizens, Murrel and John Lange, had supplied a long-needed addition to the center. Despite its other needs, the city cheerfully accepted its part of the cost of the upgrading proposals.

Ground-breaking again

At the ground-breaking ceremony June 12, 1996 for the Lange Center, Dr. Mark Paschen, vice president of the Friends of the Campus, stood in nearly the same spot his father had chosen in 1967 as master of ceremonies of the original ground-breaking.

Regarding the long delay in obtaining an athletic center, Mayor Dean Steinhorst remarked that "Good things come to those who wait," and the new facility has more than lived up to that prediction. The new improvements nearly doubled the square footage of the institution, all of which sparkled like new during the recent rededication following implementation of Phase II.

The campus today

Now, in the fall of 2000, the campus serves 539 regular students, plus 113 at the Oxford institution, for a total of 652. In addition, it is estimated that an astonishing 2,000 people participate in continuing education classes and activities.

The payroll includes 73 persons, the majority of whom live in the county. Two-year students receive associate degrees, with credits fully transferable to any UW campus. The Friends of the Campus organization

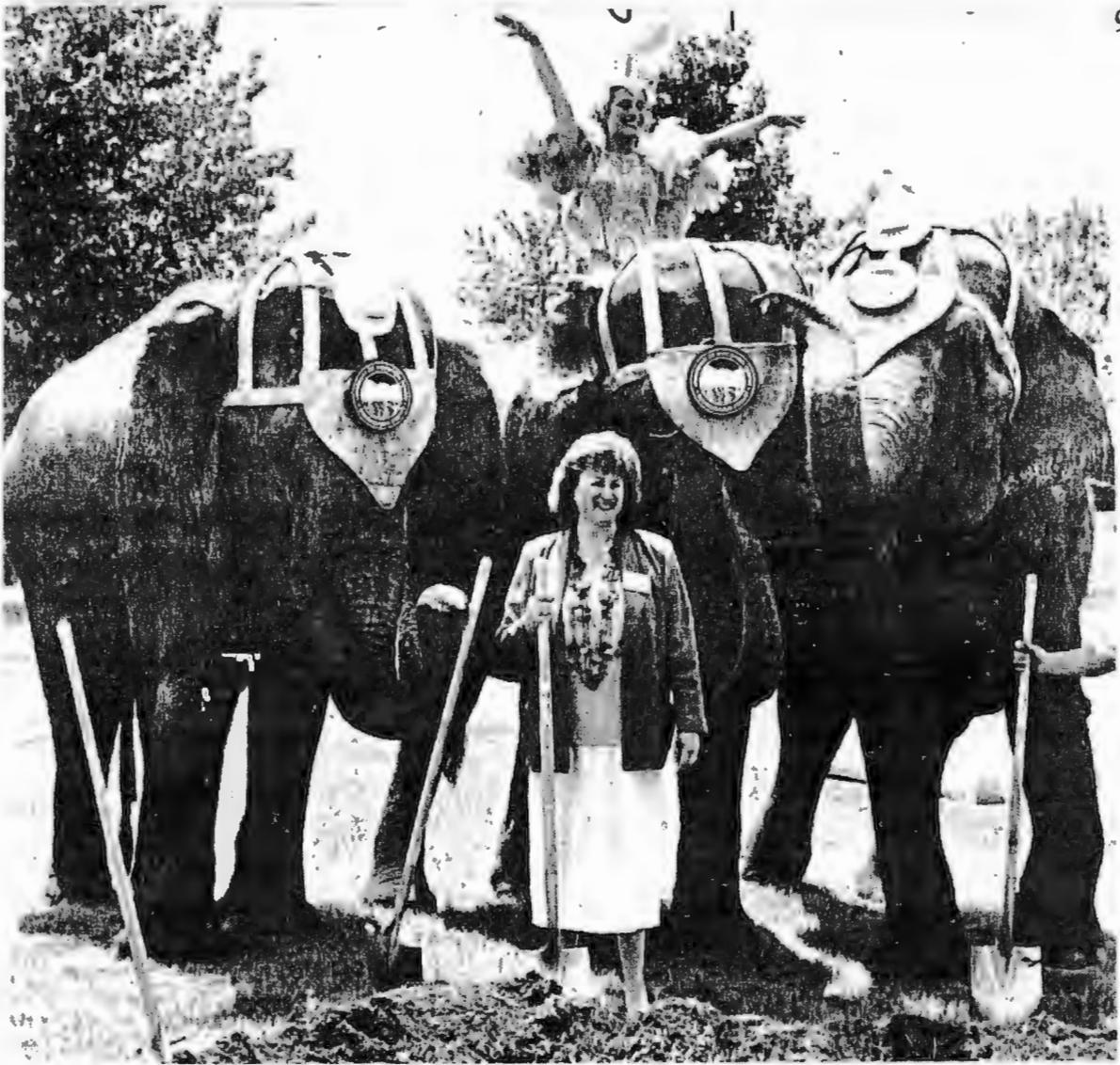
provides financial and other support.

Still on the wish list for Boo-U are major renovations to its 250-seat theater, many mechanical upgrades such as a boiler system, and a new quality grand piano.

Both the city and the county provide yearly maintenance stipends, as always. The center, now known as a college, has been in the capable and caring hands of only two deans, first Theodore Savides and now Aural Umhoefer.

The folks who saw the Baraboo Collegiate Institute fail 100 years ago would be pleased with Boo-U. So are the citizens of Baraboo and Sauk County.

Dr. Bob Dewel is a Baraboo resident. His column, "Yesteryear Revisited," is a regular feature of the News Republic.



John and Murrel Lange and "The Woodpile"

By Dr. Bob Dewel

This is the sixth in a series about persons who have shared their worldly goods with their hometown, Baraboo. Readers are invited to share information about other significant donors.

"... with the desire to leave the world in a better condition than I found it..."

The above phrase is found in the opening statement of the will of Murrel C. Lange, and presumably also in the will of her husband, John W. Lange, who preceded her in death. The statement is appropriate, for it prefaces remarkable and unprecedented bequests to the Baraboo area by these well-known residents.

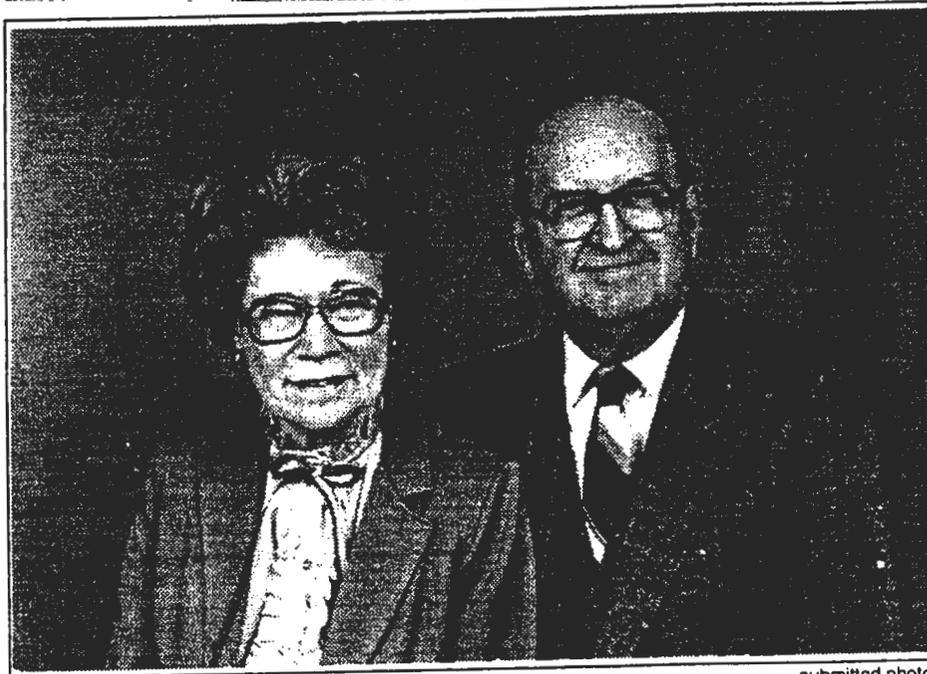
The wills, made out in 1990, provided for a revocable trust of the Lange assets, all of which became bequests following the death of John Lange on Nov. 20, 1993, and Murrel Lange on March 4, 1995.

The Bequests

These gifts were extraordinary, for the assets of the estate totaled out at \$9,024,798! No other bequest in the Baraboo area, is known to even come close to that figure.

Not insignificant by any measure were the first four bequests. Each of these organizations received \$100,000: The Sauk County Historical Society, The Emanuel United Methodist Church, The Baraboo Carnegie Public Library, The Al. Ringling Theatre Friends

But the big news, which soon spread throughout the city, was the division of the remaining assets. Significant sums were to go to:



submitted photo

John and Murrel Lange at their 50th wedding anniversary.

The UW Baraboo-Sauk County Center for an athletic center, and The Nature Conservancy, for purchase or preservation of lands in the Baraboo Hills.

And what about "the woodpile"? Please read on.

The Langes

Before considering the two latter bequests, it is fitting to consider this remarkable couple who wished to "leave the world in a better condition than (they) found it."

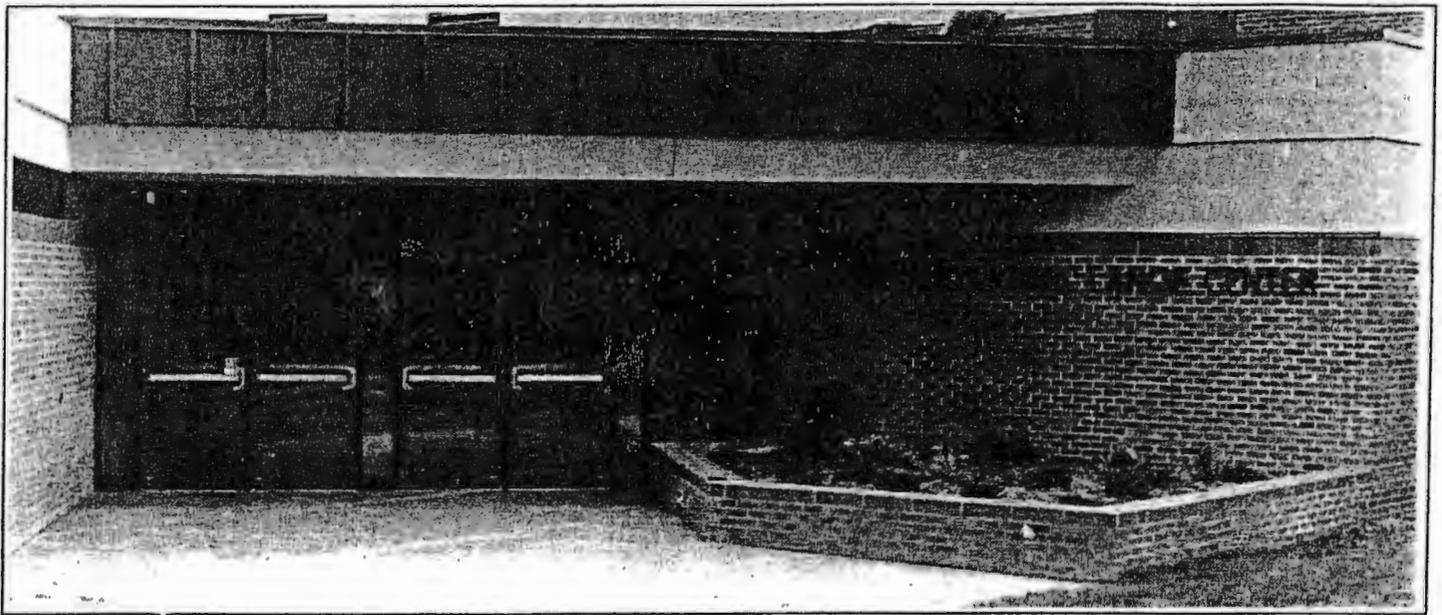
Both John and Murrel were lifelong Sauk County residents, John being born in Merrimac in 1905, and Murrel in Baraboo in 1908. She was the only daughter of Charles and Dora (Brandt) Graf.

The Langes were married in Baraboo in Sept. 1932. Both John and Murrel became active in community affairs, sharing their membership in Emanuel United Methodist Church, the various Masonic organizations including Shrine and Eastern Star, the Sauk County Historical Society, the

Circus World Museum and the International Crane Foundation.

In addition to the above, John was a World War II veteran. He had worked as an accountant for the C&NW railroad for years, and later opened the Lange-Wilkinson Insurance Agency with Clark Wilkinson. He belonged to the American Legion, Odd Fellows, Lions, and Kiwanis Clubs, and the Men's Conversation Group. He served on the Baraboo Economic Development Corporation and the Industrial Expansion Corporation.

Murrel was valedictorian of her 1926 Baraboo High School class, and was employed in various secretarial positions in the city over the years. In 1971 she retired from her position as secretary to the Baraboo Junior High School Principal.



Sun photo by Eliza Puttkamer

The new John and Murrel Lange Center

It would be hard to find, in their time, a more well-known and well-regarded couple in the city, as this writer learned when he first set foot here in 1961. He was immediately referred to John Lange, who conducted an enthusiastic welcome tour of the city.

As a young married couple in the Great Depression of the 1930's, the Langes had a simple life style, not ostentatious in any way, yet they were generous with their church and with their time and services to the community.

As is readily evident from the contents of the will, the Langes, like others in this series of articles, displayed a love for and devotion to this community, leaving a significant and lasting legacy to both education and the environment.

A Bequest for Education

The bequest of the Langes for the UW Baraboo-Sauk County Center solves the long-felt need for an athletic facility. As outstanding as "Boo-U" has been over the years, it was the only University Center without a gymnasium. When the gift was announced, Dean Aural Umhoefer said she was ready to start digging the next day! Now, a little over two years after the will was read, the facility is a reality.

The building will be dedicated later this fall. The beautiful new gymnasium is large enough for two regulation basketball courts side by side. Also in the building are several offices, a weight room and the cafeteria. From the open veranda you can get the best view in town of the city, the Baraboo Valley and the Baraboo Bluffs. Don't miss the open house this fall!

The Lange bequest was unusually generous — four and a half million dollars — and specified a gymnasium. Despite his membership in almost every other civic organization in town, it is believed that John never held office in the Friends of the Campus. Obviously, however, John and Murrel were good friends indeed of the campus!

Next in the campus plans are about three million dollars of renovation and additions to the existing plant, now 30 years old. Residents in 1966 will remember it was touch and go at the time whether the county board would participate and make the university center possible. By only one vote, it concurred! Last year the campus served 480 credit students and 1200 continuing education students.

The campus is a joint project between the county and the city, which together supply and maintain the physical plant, while the University system furnishes and staffs it. The contribution by the Langes adds to the already generous contribution of the citizens who live within the city limits of Baraboo, who not only supply their half but pay their proportionate share of the county's commitment

The Nature Conservancy

Although the Nature Conservancy does not operate within the city limits of Baraboo, the adjacent Baraboo Bluffs are an integral part of the beauty and attractiveness of what we call the Baraboo area. The Lange wills specified that their bequest to the Conservancy be used for the "purchase and preservation of lands in the Baraboo Hills."

The Conservancy not only does this, and does it very well, but they also pay taxes on the land they purchase and control. Last year their tax bill was \$70,000!

*Dewel*

The Baraboo Bluffs

As lifelong residents, the Langes were aware of the threat of exploitation of the Baraboo Range and wanted to do their part in protecting it. In fact, they donated land and money during their lifetimes, thus being able to enjoy seeing the results of their donation while still living.

Organized in 1964, the Conservancy has acquired some 7,000 acres through purchase or donation. Of these, 1,279 acres in 18 tracts were made possible by the Lange bequest. Purchases are made from willing sellers, at fair market value. The Conservancy may well be the largest private landowner in the Baraboo Bluffs.

According to the Conservancy, the Baraboo Range is one of Wisconsin's extraordinary places,

with the last large expanse of deciduous forest in Southern Wisconsin plus a variety of glens and hollows. Their mission is "to preserve the plants and animals that represent the diversity of life on Earth." There are few forests in the Midwest that match the size and diversity of those found in the Baraboo Bluffs.

The Conservancy considers the Bluffs a community resource. The Langes recognized this treasure and the importance of its preservation to the natural beauty and ambience of the Baraboo area.

Comment and Tribute

The story is told of a hunter who ventured into the woods too late in the fall, and found himself in a blizzard which threatened to

take his life. Coming upon a deserted cabin in the woods, he sought shelter, and built a fire for warmth until the storm abated.

Before leaving, however, he saw to it that the woodpile was a little higher than it was when he arrived.

The Langes made their abode in the Baraboo area all of their lives, through depression and wars. They shared in the delights of this most favored city, as did the hunter in the cabin. By their magnificent bequests, they too have left the civic "woodpile" a little — no a LOT — higher!

Sources of information:

- The Baraboo Public Library and the Probate Office
- Mrs. Ann (John) Effinger
- Dean Aural Umhoefer, UW-Baraboo
- Mary Jean Huston, Nature Conservancy
- *News-Republic* files

Yesterday Revisited

By Bob Deuel

There was a time, in the not too distant past, when the cloudless upper reaches of the venerable Al. Ringling Theatre would ring, yes reverberate, with a melodious mix of hearty male voices raised in song.

The men sang in parts with the traditional tenor, lead, baritone, and bass parts blended in harmony. Some say that such a blend, on occasion, magically included a fifth tone, not sung but produced by the combination of four tones. They were Barbershoppers, and at the time the News-Republic said that "no entertainment in Baraboo packs the house as does the Baraboo Parade of Barbershop quartets."

Area buffs of all musical tastes will again enjoy such harmony at the Al. on July 18 at 7 P.M. More on this shortly, including news of a female quartet which will perform also.

Barbershoppers got their name from the nineteenth century tradition of businessmen who stopped at the local barbershop for a shave on the way to work. Music was hardly a major industry in those days, but the men, while waiting, would often raise their voice in song while waiting their turn and the tonsorial skills of the town barber.

The custom disappeared in the less leisurely pace of the twentieth century, but the tradition was revived in 1938 with the organization of the whimsically named SPEBSQSA, or Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Singing in America.

In Baraboo, starting in 1945, some 40 area men belonged

to the Baraboo chorus. From it, several quartets emerged, including one which competed in national finals, allowing local men such as Elwin Fels, Earl Wichern, Clinton Platt, and Louis Gerald to brag that they once sang in Madison Square Garden in New York City.

The local group practiced weekly at the Warren Hotel until it burned, and then at the Methodist Church on the Square. There were annual shows at the Al., plus guest appearances at different organizations in the area.

A 1962 program survives, and shows that an elaborate commemoration of the Civil War and its songs was presented, plus a parade in the aisles. The chorus was led by Elwin Fels, but the program narrator was Harold Hulterstrom. Piccolo players were Ramona Harpold and Emma L. Grimstad, with Sue Caflish and Nancy Roche playing the drums.

Anna Lehman and Linda Wickus were flag bearers for the parade, during which the chorus sang. Abraham Lincoln appeared, in the person of Harland Wendlick, and Lucille Meyer of Reedsburg did the Pre-Glo on the Mighty Barton Organ.

The local chorus sang Civil War songs such as Battle Hymn of the Republic, Home Sweet Home, Dixie, and Goober Peas. Soloists for the latter included Wesley Rohr, Gerald Brillowski, Wilis Koch, August Schuettler, and Ray Steinhorst.

As is customary, there were guest quartets, including the 1946 national semi-finalists Velvetones from Ripon-Baraboo, the Four Renegades, and the Mid-States Four, the latter being past international champions. All quartets joined



the local chorus in the grand finale.

Included in the Baraboo chorus, pictured with this article, were men from all walks of life--physicians, farmers, storekeepers, dentists--and of all ages, one of the men being age 90. He brought his 88 year brother along too. Trained voices are never required, only a love of singing.

It was a busy time in Baraboo. The large jail--annex to the Courthouse was under construction, and the new Circus World Museum was making a name for itself--there was even talk of a circus parade for Milwaukee.

The Interstate 90 was to open to Madison soon, though no one foresaw the trucking and auto congestion of today. Baraboo had just beaten the Dells in football, 48-0. Ice cream was on special at 49¢ a quart. The previous year had seen its last pseudo-minstrel show in Baraboo, but that is another story.

The coming program at the Al. on July 28 promises a real revival of the barbershop quartet programs of old. Three award-winning quartets will be headlined by the Sundowners, followed by groups named Nightwatch, which is a comedy group, and By Popular Demand. Each group has extensive national and international credentials, including appearances on the television show "Cheers", and in the off-Broadway musical "The Music Man."

There also is a female group named Surefire. Female groups have their own organization, called "Sweet Adelines" and usually bring down the house also. Julie

Gussel Keller of Wisconsin Dells will open the show.

This presentation is sponsored by the Concerned Citizens of Newport, with proceeds dedicated to protection of Wisconsin spring water and wetlands. As is customary, there will be an After-Glo at the Opera House, when groups of men will "woodshed"--get a group together and try their skills at quartet singing.

With such talent, the rafters of the Al. will surely ring again as of old. Advance tickets are being sold at Kinnamon's, the Village Booksmith, and Thunder Valley in Wisconsin Dells.

PICTURE IDENTIFICATION

A committee of old-time barbershoppers can recognize faces but not all names, and request your help in identification.. Names that are known are as follows:

Front row: Director Elwin Fels, Willis Koch, Wesley Roher, Joe Wright, Templin, unremembered, Frank Bass.

Second Row: Clinton Platt, Ernie Heiman, Dick Leuth, John Luce, Tom Morse, unremembered, Templin.

Back row: Augie Schuettler, Royce Cushman, unremembered, Bob Dewel, Gerald Scott, unremembered, Bob Carlson.

Ray Stinhorst



This attractive fountain scene in the lobby of the Al Ringling Theatre was replaced with the popcorn and candy counter in 1953 when Henry Ringling sold the theatre.



*The organ console rises nearly
six feet out of the orchestra pit*