

2000-to 2009, Plus Miscellaneous

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So, when should
you celebrate

THE

1127

MILLENNIUM?

Well, which side are you on? Do you believe that the coming Jan. 1, 2000 is the beginning of a new millennium? Or, do you believe that we have to live out the year 2000 before the last millennium has been completed?

Spokesmen for the latter interpretation point out the following: When you complete your 19th birthday, you have completed 19 years of life and are working on your 20th year. Only after you have spent 365 days as a 19-year-old can you say you are 20, having *completed* 20 years. Then and only then can you say you are entering a new decade.

Is it the same with a new century? Must you complete all of the 365 days of 1999, and then reach the last day of 2000, before you have completed the century?

Well, there wasn't much argument on Dec. 31, 1899. They did not feel that they had completed a new century until the year 1900 was completed on Dec. 31, 1900. Are we jumping the gun by celebrating the end of the 1900 series of years in 1999? Must we wait until we have completed 2000 years before starting another?

The question rages today, though by general consensus and because of the influence of the Y2K publicity, most people will celebrate this on New Year's Eve. But back in Dec. 31, 1899, it was hardly

considered as an option. The Baraboo Daily News of December 1899 showed no discussion of a new century beginning, being more concerned with the possibility that the local post office might begin home delivery in the coming year.

They did note, however, one good thing. If you were using Roman numerals for any good reason, you no longer would have to write MDCC-CLXXXVIII for 1899, because 1900 would be only MCM.

We get it even easier, for the year 2000 would be MM. Actually the Roman numerals were part of the problem, for a Pope in 1582 had wrongly decreed Jesus' birth as being on the first day of the year 1 instead of the year 0, the Roman numerals having no symbol for zero.

Accordingly, the new century and millennium would have to begin on Jan. 1, 2001.

Dec. 31, 1899

Of interest that week in the Evening News were the after-Christmas "clearings" at the Stanley Co. and at Clavadatscher's store. The latter reported having had the busiest Christmas season ever. Not open, however, was the downtown Turkish Bath and Medical Institute, located possibly where the Cornerstone Gallery is now. Apparently there wasn't much call for their services between the holidays.

There had been parties at the Warren House and elsewhere after Christmas, with "snowy linen, china and silver" on the tables. An unidentified group from the Ringling Shows was the entertainment, but no Ringlings or Gollmars or Moellers were on the guest list, published in full in the newspaper.

On the national scene, Irish nationalists in Boston were threatening to invade Canada, or at least sink a Canadian ship. The latter were heading to South Africa at the time to aid in the Boer War. The Spanish American war fever was subsiding, and a man named Theodore Roosevelt had gained prominence with his Rough Riders group. President McKinley, soon to be assassinated, had appeared in newly acquired Cuba where the New Year, but not a new century, was to be celebrated. And yes, there were those who said the world would end on the stroke of midnight. And Jules Verne had predicted a trip to the moon, of all things!

Dec. 31, 1900

So, if the new century was not celebrated on Dec. 31, 1899, comparable to our Dec. 31, 1999, when was it celebrated? By general agreement, it was celebrated on

Dec. 31, 1900.

Locally, the Methodists were having a watch meeting in their new building, and the News reported it was "largely attended." There were several addresses "appropriate to the close of the old century," and communion was served at midnight.

It apparently was a midnight clear, as the Christmas hymn goes, for the mercury dropped to 22 degrees below zero at 2 a.m., and only rose to seven above on the first day of the new century on Jan. 1, 1901.

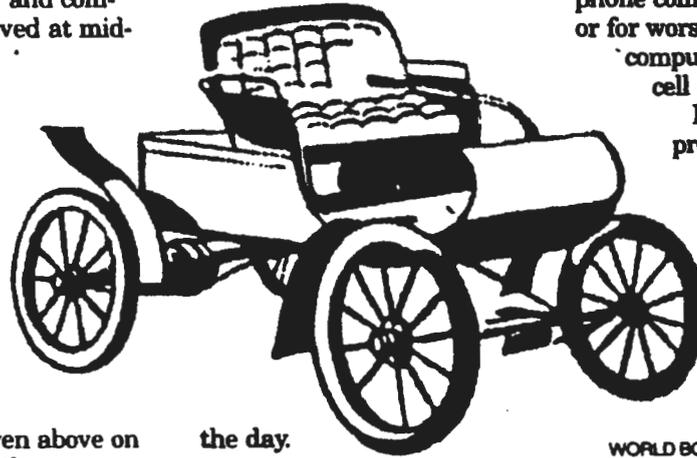
A new courthouse?

On the local scene in 1900, there was talk of the need for a new courthouse. Indeed, within three or four years the decades-old building did burn down, but in 1901 Reedsburg activists were trying again, as they had in the past, to have the county seat moved to their environs.

The Evening News opined that "while there was no doubt that the voters of Sauk County would sit down heavily on such a scheme, at the same time the action of Reedsburg is interesting."

Theatre in World War II, denied the severity of the hazing.

Pretty close to the mark was the prediction made by the Ladies Home Journal, a leading magazine of



the day.

WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA

According to the Strong (Co.) Investor, they predicted "wireless phone calls from Chicago to China, photographs sent by telegraph and reproduced in color," and a prescient image of the advent of television: "persons and things of all kinds will be brought within focus of cameras connected electronically with screens at opposite ends of circuits. Americans will view the coronation of kings in Europe and the progress of battles in the Orient."

1969 Americans walked on the moon. What a century for travel.

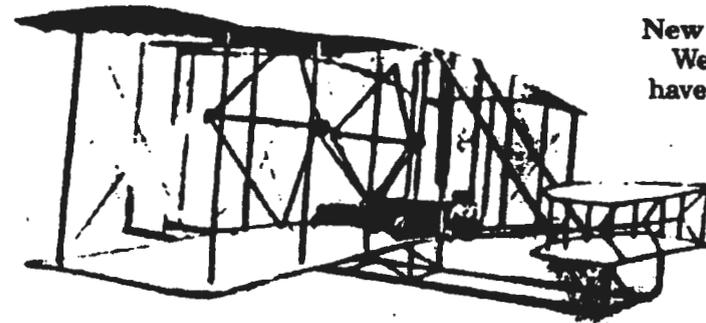
How about communication? The folks then did have the telegraph, but now we have radio, television, and a confusing myriad of telephone companies (for better or for worse), not to mention computers, the Internet, cell phones, etc.

Even harder to predict were the

The first real production of automobiles began in 1900, and a couple were even built in Baraboo. Man would not fly until 1903. Now we fly to the moon.

The world population problem is staggering. For thousands of years the human population hovered at about 300,000. At the time of Columbus there were perhaps 500,000 humans, and it took 400 years to reach a world population of 1 billion in 1804. It took 123 years for this to double to 2 billion in 1927. Since then we humans are off the charts. Just this year we reached 6 billion.

Will we soon stand shoulder-to-shoulder on a devastated planet? On any given day, 370,000 babies are born, more than the entire population of the earth before Columbus, yet birth control is resisted by many. There are those that believe that gross overpopulation growth will be the principal problem of our new century.



New Year's Day Well, they didn't have to worry

much about all that in 1899-1900. The great social

event of New Year's Day in

Baraboo on Jan. 1, 1901 was a gentlemen's party, given by three women. In effect, they announced that they would be "at home" from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., when the men were invited to call. There were tasty hors d'oeuvres, and the

atomic and neutron bombs, the miniskirt, long-haired youths, the success of Women's Suffrage, penicillin, gene mapping, the failure to eliminate discretionary drinking with Prohibition — the list goes on and on.

NOTE: TO COMPLETE EACH COLUMN, PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE.

The Reedsburg paper retorted that "Baraboo is big enough already and would not miss the courthouse very much, while its location in Reedsburg would do that place a lot of good." The Baraboo paper analyzed the movement as simply a scheme to prevent building a new courthouse any place, and that Baraboo was more the center of population anyway. Unknown to both papers was that fire would soon raze the building, making a new one necessary.

One other note on the national news. There was great distress over the matter of the hazing of cadets at the West Point Academy. According to news dispatches, one Douglas McArthur was thrown into convulsions. However, the plucky cadet who later gained fame as commander in the Pacific

Then and now

As we approach a new millennium (either this year or next, your choice), it is well to reflect on the times at the end of the 19th century. In transportation, for example, the newly invented automobile only counted 8,000 vehicles nationwide in 1900.

Horses and trains ruled the transportation scene.

Not only did man not fly, but Wilbur Wright himself would say in 1901, "Not within a thousand years will man ever fly." In two years, however, he and his brother did fly — not far, but they flew. By 1939 the Germans flew a jet engine, in 1947 the sound barrier was broken, and in 1957 the Soviets put their Sputnik into space. In

The century has also had its down times, two World Wars plus Vietnam, Korea, Somalia, Iraq and the Balkans — this list goes on and on, too. Watergate and Iran-Contra are blots on our usually bright government reputation, and environmental problems continue to trouble our conscience.

Overpopulation

There's another growing problem in the century. The U.S. began the new century with fewer than 90 million souls, and now we are over 360 million in population. That's a 400 percent increase, though it is partly due to immigration — some 8.8 million immigrated here in the first decade alone. Everyone wants to come here, it seems.

men could then retire to the library for a fragrant cigar.

Just to show that things haven't all changed that much, there were organizations then which still exist today, such as Inter Se and the Fortnightly Literary Club. Also, there was the somewhat obscure Koshawago men's group.

Well, when will you celebrate the new millennium, this year or next? As Americans, we have that wonderful privilege, the freedom of choice. Make your own choice. Or better still, let's celebrate both years, with a nation at peace and unprecedented prosperity for most persons. And, instead of worrying about a new courthouse, we can worry about a new jail.

YESTERYEAR REVISITED, 2001
(THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S ARTICLES IN REVIEW)

1130

It is that time of the year when many publications prepare their review of the news of the past year. It is a look back at what was important in the headlines. Usually the stories are rated in the order of importance to the community.

Perhaps, then, it is time also for a review of the Yesteryear Revisited Column, to see if what we submitted for publication during the past year was relevant.

In the past four years, this writer has written for publication a total of about 160 articles on events of the past in Baraboo and Sauk County. It is only the last 37 articles, those published in the year 2001, that will be considered here. There is no judging panel--this is just the writer's opinion. Perhaps the listing will remind readers of some story they liked, or disliked!

MOST INTERESTING ARTICLE:
The discovery that there are at least ten American families with the last name Baraboo, several being in Wisconsin. We arranged a day in the city for the Eugene Baraboo's of Rothschild, Wisconsin, including a tour of the Al. Ringling and complimentary tickets to the Circus World Museum. Four grandchildren accompanied the Baraboos, and the family stated that the day made them proud to carry the same name as our city.

MOST APPRECIATED ARTICLE:
There more feedback from the recent history of the

Baraboo Theatre Guild than from any other story, though the Beryl Newman (Medal of Honor) and Harold Thomas (Organist at the AL.) stories have gotten out of town replies as well as local.

BEST RESEARCHED ARTICLES:
Probably the stories about Mable and Emily, the very different wives of John Ringling. A Sarasota correspondent was very helpful in supplying material hard to research, some of which may never have been published before.

BEST SAUK COUNTY ARTICLE:
The 1948 Centennial Pageant, followed by stories about the Man Mound, the Bus in the River, The Morris Hotel, and the Baraboo River oxbows.

ARTICLES WITH LOTS OF RESPONSE: The story about the mysterious Ringling-Kelly-Potter property, and two associated stories about John Kelly, founder of the Circus World Museum. Several people visited the property, and the auction was well attended also.

MOST FUN ARTICLE TO WRITE AND READ: The story titled "Are You Going to the Baraboo Full Moon Party?" This story told in detail how the unusual name, Baraboo, has been used for a supper club in Florida, a beer and steak house in Michigan, a fictional space ship, and as the name of a schooner that sank near New Zealand. It also led to the theatrical phrase "I lost it on the Baraboo".

HISTORICAL CENSUS GROWTH RECORDS

YEAR	SAUK COUNTY	BARABOO	REEDSBURG	DELTON	W BARABOO
1840	102				
1850	4372				
1860	18963		461		
1870	23868	1528	547		
1880		3266	1331		
1890	30575	4605	1737		
1900	33006	5751	2225		
1910	32896	6324	2615		
1920	32512	5538	2997		
1930	32030	5545	2967		
1940	33700	6415	3608		
1950	38120	7264	4072		
1960	36179	7660	4371	714	613
1970	39057	7931	4585	1059	563
1980	43469	8081	5038	1158	846
1990	46423	9203	5834	1470	1021
2000	55225	10711	7827	1982	1248

GREATEST OMISSION IN 2001: This chart was left out of a story on population growth in the city and county.

The 2001 articles will be reformatted and bound into booklets around the first of the year, with additional pictures, and some corrections and additions of information. Copies may be ordered by calling 356-3791.

As for 2002---perhaps a story on life in Baraboo in 1890, plus an article on the city's relationship with the Blue Spaders. Beyond that, no plans. Thanks to those who have expressed interest in one story or another.

MOST SIGNIFICANT ARTICLES:

Four stories analyzing the growth of Baraboo, and its position as a good steward of its property and a good neighbor to its Sauk County fellow citizens. Parts of one article were challenged, proof that someone reads this stuff. The census story was timely.

CITY HISTORY SERIES:

These included downtown photos from the 1880's, especially Fourth Street and Avenue, plus a story on the High Bridge, and Christmas in Baraboo, 1901.

CURRENTLY TOPICAL STORIES:

We attempted to compare the recent Twin Tower and Pentagon attacks to the reaction in 1941 to the Pearl Harbor attack. There was also an article on newspaper headlines during each of those events.

BEST STORY ON VETERANS:

A story reminded us of Sauk County's only Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, Beryl Newman. In addition, it was interesting to write that our county contains the remains of two of Napoleon's soldiers who served in his ill-fated Moscow campaign. Also buried in the county is a Revolutionary War veteran, and also the first county casualty in the Civil War.

ONLY STORY ON BADGER:

We do not write much about the Badger plant, since other historians are tackling that story in depth. We did find an interesting period about 30 years ago, with pictures of currently prominent men as they appeared then.

DEVIL'S LAKE: Like Badger, other historians have studied and written extensively about the lake. We did put together two articles, one on legends of the lake, and also one about Shadow Town and also about the ill-fated Palisades Development. Had it succeeded, the lake and park would be a very commercial and very different place than it is today.

MISCELLANEOUS.

We prepared histories of the Barbershoppers and of the Elks Club, plus a review of the history of the Rodwell-Seufzer 1906 Cadillac.

THE AL. RINGLING BARTON ORGAN. Only about seven theatres in Wisconsin have pipe organs, and the Al. is the only one that rises from the orchestra pit. Soon the facade will be finished, and restoration can proceed on more spectacular features of this most unusual city treasure.

As can be seen, the articles range over a wide variety of subjects, and are written with no over-all plan in mind. Each article develops as material on a subject becomes available and is of interest to the writer.

There was a picture with just about every article, BEST PICTURES were probably those of the Eugene Baraboo family, Babe Ruth on the bull, the Morris Hotel, and Harold Thomas at the console of the Barton organ in the 1940's. The census chart did not get published with the article, and is hopefully published with this story.

My new computer doesn't like me. I guess the feeling is mutual, though some pundits suggest it is just a smart machine operated by a dummy.

Actually, the whole thing is the fault of a guy from yesteryear, name not readily available, but who invented the typewriter in the late 1800's. Without his mechanical substitute for his poor penmanship, the computer would not be possible.

My first hint of trouble came on January 14. I had finally taken the mouse by the ears, so to speak, and ordered the apparatus on Friday January 11. The ever so courteous salesperson on the phone informed me that delivery would take perhaps two weeks. I replied that this was just fine, as I wanted to get at least three articles written ahead for the News-Republic, plus a Kiwanis speech, so as to have plenty of time to learn to operate the new electronic wonder when it did arrive.

Guess what? Bright and early on the following Monday, first working day after ordering it, here was the express man at the door with two big and heavy boxes. There was a weird smile on his face as he said "You're getting a Dell." At least it was not that goofy kid on T V that made the delivery!

I didn't even bother to open the boxes for three days, hurriedly doing the three Yesteryear Revisited articles for the paper on my trusty old Brother word processor. The speech would have to wait.

On Thursday, after rearranging my room which I call the study (others call it junky), I opened and installed the big computer, the monitor, and the printer. As far as I could see, there were no directions, and I'd been assured that all the cables were color-coded—they weren't. What later proved to be directions for assembly were not labeled directions, but rather were labeled start. I had interpreted this to mean turn on the darn thing.

How wrong I was. There were absolutely no directions as to how to operate a computer, even to this day. There was a booklet of solutions to problems, but no explanation of what I've learned to call icons, or how to activate them. Computer guru John said to double click Works, and thanks to my word processing knowledge, I proceeded to type out and copy a couple of letters.

O.K., I can do this, I thought, and typed out my seven page Kiwanis speech. All was fine until I went to review it, and only two pages were viewable—where were the rest? Gone to Document Heaven? A person very close to me suggested that the computer felt my speech was too long, and ate the last five pages.

It was time to try the printer. Lo and behold, all seven pages printed, though to this day only two pages can be viewed. I'd not made corrections before the printing, and

could not do so now. so ended up retyping the whole thing. I should know that speech by memory.

By now the computer was reluctant to even display the first two pages—perhaps it decided it didn't like that part of the speech either. Thanks to professional computer expert Bryant, I was shown another way, via Word, to access everything, except the five pages.

An internet cable connection was scheduled for January 23, so John offered to come over and “set me up” for Yahoo. In my youth, when a woman entered another woman's house, they shrilled out “YOOHOO”. I figured that time had corrupted that time-honored custom to Yahoo. We'll see.

Well, John doesn't know how it happened, but my beautiful Lexmark 83 printer, scanner, faxer, and tire rotater etc., suddenly coughed, choked, and refused to operate. The little window said “carriage stalled, press power”, which I did. WHAM! The carriage flew left at 97 miles per hour and threatened to knock the side out of the bright new printer. Both ink cartridges were knocked loose by the impact. John couldn't find the problem, and was merrily showing me all the stuff he'd put in the computer in anticipation of internet connection. I was busy mourning my new printer, and kept saying “John, this is overload, I can't handle any more information”.

John left somewhat disappointed in my lack of enthusiasm. I spent the evening contemplating the printer, which rewarded me with a WHAM every time I pushed power. The next day John agreed to come and remove all the stuff he'd put in the computer. Behold, the printer made a few grateful squeaks and whirrs, and was back in business. My accompanying yells were of delight and relief.

I cautiously selected games-solitaire, and learned you cannot cheat. The card returns to its previous spot if your move is incorrect! This, however, was the same day that my newly-restored printer threw up on me. There was no obvious reason—perhaps I'd frowned at some eccentricity on the screen, but the printer suddenly started spewing out page after page. Soon its regurgitation threatened to turn the floor white with various documents it didn't care to digest. The only thing that did not emerge was the missing five pages of my speech. Pressing “stop-printing” did not help, so to end the mayhem, I pulled the plug on the printer! This, I am told, is the ultimate way to attain dominance over a printer or computer—pull the plug. Relenting later, I found a complaisant machine ready to do my bidding.

Came the 23rd, cable installation day. A pleasant young man from Rio or Lodi arrived on time. I'd already moved the printer and other furniture out of the corner where the outlet was to be. He stared at the corner for a moment, and then asked if there was a TV outlet in the room. When I said no, he said he had to have an outlet. I said fine, put one in. Oh, he replied, we don't do that, you have to get an electrician! Now they tell me! He left, forgetting his \$1500 tester.

To tell the truth, I was somewhat relieved, for I needed more time to commune with this new beast in our home, before beginning combat with the internet, whatever that is.

I'd purchased a CD called "So you want to be a Millionaire?" I decided to access it. Somehow it installed as Buena Vista Publications, which doesn't sound at all like Regis Philbin. Once installed, I called it up and show my wife how much progress I'd made. A lot of dumb questions appeared, one of which made me wonder if I had to get permission from Regis to go to the bathroom. Another I interpreted to mean that unless I answered correctly, terrible things might happen—would I have to give up one of my daughters to Regis?

Sensing that I was in over my head, I opted for cancel. Not only did I get cancel, my screen went totally blue, with no little arrow and nothing to point at. No welcome Robert, no start to click on, no place to stop the computer. I was helpless. But wait, it worked to pull the plug on the printer, why not on the computer itself. There seemed to be no other choice, since pressing the button did not even work. Pulling the computer out so I could reach the back, and with a glint of determination in my eyes, I did it—I pulled the plug. I gloated as the whirring ceased. Gleefully I had imposed my dominance on this haughty intruder in my home. But had he taken full leave? Like with the printer, I soon relented and plugged life back into the black box. Soon there it was, subservient, greeting me with Welcome Robert, and a green start button to activate.

I'd won a major round, and now it was time to try Regis again. But Regis was not to be had. He implored, then demanded that I indicate if I was one or two players, but supplied no little arrow. After more urging, he became irritated, and cut me off, ending the program.

So that's where it stands. I know how to end the haughty attitudes of the machines by pulling the plug, but still have Regis to deal with. Also, where are those missing five pages? I hope the computer doesn't get indigestion like the printer did. As for the Milwaukee guy who invented the typewriter, you know he was a nerd from the way the keys are arranged on the keyboard.

Yesteryear Revisits Sauk
County Politics
Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel Yahoo: Dr
Bob Dewel

Several years ago this writer attended a Kiwanis program which featured one of the members as the speaker. The topic of his presentation has been forgotten, but at one point during his speech the speaker found occasion to look at this audience, smile as if repeating a well-established fact, and say "We're all Republicans here."

He was wrong in two respects. Kiwanis does not allow political programs unless both sides, and both candidates, are present. In addition, he was incorrect, for not all members present were Republicans.

But what about Sauk County? Was he simply repeating the conventional wisdom that this is Republican territory? And is that a true bit of wisdom? An examination of voting records for the past 16 years presents a different story indeed, especially in the presidential races.

Sauk Presidential Vote

In 1988, it appears that the conventional wisdom was correct. Republican George Bush the first defeated Michael Dukakis by a vote of 10,225 to 8324. Early in the campaign, Dukakis had a wide lead, but suffered from a hatchet job by Bush adherents involving the infamous Willie Horton, a non-issue if there ever was one, and having no national importance. Unfortunately, dirty politics often works.

1992 was a different matter. Democrat Bill Clinton prevailed over President Bush in Sauk County by 9128 to 8886. The faltering post-Reagan economy was a major factor, with Clinton adherents successfully promoting the slogan "It's the economy, stupid," a more pertinent national concern than

the Willie Horton "issue" of the previous election.

Democrats prevailed in the county again in 1996, when local voters preferred the soft southern dialect of Clinton to the acid Kansas twang of Robert Dole, 9889 to 7448. Times were good, the stock market was up, jobs were plentiful, and the incumbent was popular.

Electoral College

That brings us to the hotly contested election of 2000, between George W. Bush and Al Gore. In the national vote, Gore got half a million more votes than Bush, but lost by a couple votes in the antiquated Electoral College vote, thanks to a split decision by the Supreme Court. Most states have a rule of winner takes all of the states electoral votes, In the Florida vote only a tiny percentage of votes allocated to Bush meant that all of that state's Electoral Votes went to Bush. Thousands of Floridians claimed to have been disenfranchised.

There is some movement in some states now to allocate the Electoral College votes according to the popular vote percentage in each state. The Founding Fathers had a different scenario in mind, for they intended that each state would select its best citizens, who would gather in a national meeting and in their wisdom would select the best person to be President.

They had no inkling of the political process we have developed, in which the electoral vote does not represent the popular vote, as in the year 2000. Gore won the popular vote by half a million votes, but Bush, aided by the Supreme Court decision, won the Electoral vote. Gore graciously accepted the anomaly.

In the year 2000, Sauk County followed the national and state trend, with 13,035 votes for Democrat Gore over 11,586 votes for Republican Bush. The Wisconsin state vote was very close, and we are considered a swing state in

the current election. The vote could go either way it is said.

The state vote

It appears therefore that in the past four presidential elections, Democrats have prevailed over Republicans three out of four times in the county vote tabulations, disputing the conventional wisdom idea the county is Republican for the most part. In all four cases listed above the county vote was comparable to the state vote. It is true that our state representatives and senators are often Republican, but they represent other areas as well as Sauk.

In statewide statistics, Dukakis lost to Bush in 1988 by 1,126,794 to 1,047,499. Democrat Clinton, however, prevailed over Bush in the following election in 1992 by 1,041 to 950,855. He did even better over Republican Dole 1,071,971 to 845,029. Even in 2000, the state voted for Gore over Bush, 1,242,987 to 1,237,279. So, the state selected the Democratic Party nominee three times out of four in recent elections.

You have to go back to the Reagan years to find Wisconsin favoring the Republican nominee. Before Reagan, however, Democrat Carter beat Republican Ford handily. In each case, Wisconsin echoed the national trend.

So what will 2004 bring? So far, only shameful character assassinations designed to divert our attention from the real issues! A well-financed group has challenged Kerry's stellar service (three purple hearts, bronze stars, and the coveted Silver Star) in Viet Nam, where he volunteered. During the same time frame, Bush's murky Air National Guard service records appear wanting, amid charges that political influence allowed him into the Guard. Cheney's time in that era is said to consist of five draft deferments—and so on. The real issues are on the back burner.

On the Local Scene

Anyway, so much for the 'Conventional Wisdom' that the area is

Republican territory. But, you might say, all of the county offices are occupied by persons who ran on the Republican ticket, often without opposing candidates from the Democratic Party! How can this be? We don't know why the Democratic Party has not been more aggressive in Sauk County, but perhaps there is an explanation. Also we're not suggesting that there are "closet" Democrats in our county offices, but it is an interesting situation.

Sauk County will be host on Sept. 18 to the "Fighting Bob Fest" at the fairgrounds. Although it is reminiscent of Republican Bob LaFollette at the turn of the century, it is more a magnet for Democrats and Independents. Political parties and their objectives change, and people are sometimes heard to say "I didn't leave the Party, it left me."

It appears, also, that since the county has gone Democratic in three of the last four presidential elections, conventional wisdom that Sauk is Republican territory is not always the correct wisdom.

Why is Baraboo so A-political?

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

What is it with Baraboo? Why, within the city limits, has this large city in south-central Wisconsin failed to produce a single State Senator in the last 75 years or more? That goes for State Assemblymen also, for it is at least that long since such a representative hailed from within the city limits.

Yes, it is true that there was a Senator, Walter Terry, with a Baraboo address, but he did not live within the city limits. He also served as Assemblyman for a time, again not a city dweller. And yes, there was Assemblyman, Oscar Laper, again not a citizen of the city. Also remembered is Leroy Litscher, also with a Baraboo address but not a town person. Why has this city, numbering 6000 persons decades ago, and growing now to about 12,000 souls, not produced a Senator or Assemblyman?

Furthermore, who among us can name even half of the County Board members with a Baraboo mailing address, city or township? Do they vigorously represent the city, or are some single issue members? Even more, how many councilmen are there and who can name them all, and what is their political agenda?

The 1991-92 Blue Book

Our information was obtained from the 1991-92 Blue Book, a state publication. In that particular issue were published the names and home addresses of all the senators and assemblymen who have served since the state was founded. There are at least 2500 names in the lists, all in very tiny print which the tired eyes of this writer painfully pursued name by name and address. We readily admit we may have missed one or two. Consultation with a couple of politically savvy old

timers failed to produce any additional local names with Baraboo addresses however.

So what did the Blue Book tell us? My statements in the first few paragraphs above were limited to the past 75 years. It is a different story when you look back to the first five decades is the state's history, from 1846 to about 1900. We have no way of knowing whether those listed were city or rural addresses, but even so, the area was rife with names of both senators and assemblymen from our area. Why so much interest in politics then, and so little now?

Why do we tolerate being Gerrymandered into a remote corner of the senatorial district, with a retiring Senator from Red Granite, miles away. The Baraboo area also suffers the indignity of being divided into two Assembly districts. One of our Assemblymen is listed as from Reedsburg, but the other is from-----this writer does not know from where! His opponent is from Portage.

In the 75 years between the state's founding and 1921, the Blue Book shows eight senators with a Baraboo post office address. There are only two since 1921! In the Assembly of those early days, there were 20 Assemblymen with Baraboo post office addresses, compared to only three since 1921.

Is it apathy? Complaisance? Satisfaction with government? How is it that active participation in government changed from high representation in early years to almost a rarity in the past 8 decades?

Well, we don't have the answers, but it is interesting that both of the recent senators and two of the three Assemblymen were Republicans. However, none of them ran during the past three or four Presidential elections, when Democrats took the state and the county.

Now, all of the above is correct as far as we have been able to determine, but there is a bright spot

among the apathy and complacency. For a brief period, from 1915 through 1917, the Lieutenant Governor of the state was from the city of Baraboo, Attorney Edward Dithmar. Not only that, but Governor Phillip was from Sauk County, namely Sumpter Township. He spoke from the Governor's box on the opening night of the Al Ringling Theatre in November, 1915.

Baraboo is a great place in which to live, partly because of its beautiful location on the banks of the Baraboo, with Devil's Lake and dozens of other natural and beautiful areas in which to take pleasure. Our unique downtown, almost like a Norman Rockwell painting, is attractive in its own way, and we have a significant institutions such as the Ringling Theatre, the Circus World Museum, the International Crane Foundation, and the University center, to name a few. Do we have it so good that we don't really care?

It is too late for this election, but come on, you rock-rigid Republicans! Come on, you laid back closet Democrats! Start planning now. Let's have local representation in Madison!



Downtown Baraboo About 2003

2005, a Year of Many
Anniversaries
Yesteryear Revisited
By Bob Dewel

Is there something about years that end in the number five? So it seems, for in this year of 2005, Baraboo and Sauk County citizens will be celebrating a number of anniversaries, dated 1855, 1905, and 1915, for example. This writer knows of several, as listed below, and perhaps there are others. Consider the following events, many of which will have public observances:

THE NEWS-REPUBLIC (1855): This newspaper was first published, as just the Republic, in 1855. It was not the first newspaper in the struggling settlement, but it is the only one that has lasted. Its first offices were in the old but by then abandoned log or frame structure that had served as an early courthouse. The location was about that of the present Al Ringling Theatre. The Republic merged with the News in the early 1920's, and is surely one of the oldest newspapers in the state. It is located in a large frame building, away from the business district, on First Street.

THE SAUK COUNTY FAIR (1855): This institution was formed and incorporated on February 22, 1855, as the Sauk County Agricultural Society, and featured a small exhibit. One account says that the fair was in the old wood courthouse on the north side of Fourth Avenue. Another account places it in Taylor Hall, the well-used meeting place of the village, located on the SE corner of Third Avenue and Broadway.

After meeting in several locations, the present land in the east part of Baraboo was purchased in 1879 for \$1540. For various reasons, the 150th anniversary of the Fair was observed last year, and the celebration will surely extend into this year, 2005. Over the years the ample grounds have been

rented out to a large number of different organizations, including the annual Boy Scout tent-out. The Fair has served the county well.

THE COURTHOUSE (1905): This imposing structure replaced an older red brick structure which had been built in 1855. It burned beyond rebuilding on Dec. 27, 1904, though the fire did not destroy the legal records. Because construction of the new and present edifice was not completed until 1906, the 100th anniversary will be celebrated both in 2005 and 2006.

Watch for announcements of the opening of the cornerstone at a Concert on the Square on July 21, complete with free ice cream! The corner stone contents will be displayed then, and other items added before resealing it for posterity. Other events in both 2005 and 2006 will be announced later

THE SAUK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (1905): This prestigious organization met in June, 1905 at the home of Editor H.E. Cole, and collection of artifacts began immediately. Housed originally in the courthouse, the Society purchased the Van Orden Mansion in 1938. The home was constructed in 1904 at 531 Fourth Avenue and now serves as a museum and headquarters.

Events will feature a showcasing of early artifacts on May 13, and a Founders Day picnic on June 2. Also this summer will be the Great Sauk County History Hunt, a tour of historic locations in the county.

THE AL RINGLING HOME (1905): Speaking of mansions, Construction of the Al Ringling home on Broadway and Fifth Avenue began on August 2, 1905. Perhaps because of its size and location, this brownstone mansion was long recognized at the finest home in the county, though it barely risked being demolished in 1927.

Since 1936 it has served as home of the Elks club, with ongoing restoration of the structure and decorations.. A similar mansion, built by Al's Brother

Charles, is still a family home for Ringling descendants at Eighth Street and Ash, and was built at about the same time.

THE AL RINGLING THEATRE (1915):

This magnificent Baraboo landmark was constructed in seven months in 1915, and its 90th birthday will be marked with a recreation of the many events leading up to and including its opening on November 17, 1915. That gala night brought friends from all over the country to salute Al on his wonderful gift to the city, and is said to have been white tie and tails affair.

Other events during the construction will be recreated to mark the 90th birthday of the theatre, constructed in a year ending with the number five, as were so many other city and county landmarks.

OTHER EVENTS: The Baraboo SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE was formed in 1975, for example, and our search has not ended for "year 5" events. Aldo Leopold was first shown the Fairfield property and the shack in 1935, and so the list goes on. It should not be inferred from this article, however, that all important events occur or will occur in years ending with the number five, but the coincidence is of interest. Soon to be observed will the 150th anniversary of the Baraboo National Bank in 2007, for example, and the Corner Drug Store must have a date of interest in coming years.

Granddaddy of all the events, however, is the formation of the MASONIC LODGE, perhaps the oldest organization in the county. The Lodge has had a continuous and ongoing presence in the city since its Charter was granted in 1852. The 150th anniversary was celebrated in 2002. We hope we have not overlooked other "year 5" anniversaries, or that it will not be until 2015 that new and significant organizations or buildings will occur.



James Adams Collection
Looking West on Third Avenue. Courthouse on Right. Perhaps 1920



High on the Courthouse.
Lex means Law



The 1906 Courthouse before the 1915 cupola was added

Although this article concluded the previous two volume set titled "Yesteryear Revisited", (ending in December 2005), it actually was printed in the newspaper in 2006 and belongs in this book. It provides a link to the previous volumes in a special way.

At that time, due to delays and misunderstandings, my relationship with the News-Republic was clouded, and I resolved to discontinue the previous series of 304 articles printed under the title "Yesteryear Revisited". A new series, under the title "Tales from Earlier Days" was envisioned. This is hinted at in the final paragraph, but the article was poorly written. Several persons were kind enough to suggest that I continue writing, so a more definite arrangement was worked out with the newspaper and two years of stories are included in this volume.

Yesteryear Revisited Bids Farewell

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

This is my 305th article in the Yesteryear Revisited series in the News-Republic. It also will be the final article under that name. With two thousand major entries and thousands of page references, the index has become too large to manage.

Other historians, like Canfield and Mueller, wrote under different titles, so I guess I can do so also. To those who have expressed appreciation for the stories, I express, in return, my thanks for your support. I also thank the editors and publishers, who gave me nearly free reign to write what I pleased, when I pleased, for eight years.

The first few articles began in 1997 in the now defunct Baraboo Sun, and have continued until now with the News-Republic. Although my subject matter ranged all over Sauk County, the main emphasis is on Baraboo history. Being the County Seat, most things seem to have happened in Baraboo, or at least more records were kept.

My Books

Frequently over the years people would say "why don't you put your stories in book form?" The answer is that I did so. There now are eight volumes, each containing 30 to 40 of the stories plus more pictures than were shown in the newspaper, and sometimes additional information also. The eighth volume was published this past December and is available at the Corner on Wisconsin and also at the Booksmith book store. They may have some of the earlier volumes also.

The fact is, however, that the books didn't seem to sell worth a hoot! For those who may be interested, the volumes may be read, but not checked out, at the Baraboo and Reedsburg libraries and at the Historical Society. A few kind souls were generous enough to buy the books, and their volumes are rare, since each edition consisted of only about 40 copies printed. A few years ago I also did some small booklets on certain specific subjects, and some may still be around. Otherwise, my book publishing career has been a flop.

The first seven books covered much of what I wrote in the years up to 2005. Only two full sets of the eight books remain for sale at the time of this writing, but if I can get several orders for full sets I'll print more. It is pretty much a one man operation, and also is expensive to make so few copies, when the demand is so low. No grant money or honoraria ever came my way, and I am not an experienced publisher. Nor am I free of occasional error, as future historians may well note. But perhaps I presented in a popular fashion a lot of local history that had never before been chronicled.

The Articles

As newspaper articles, each story had to speak for its self, so there is occasional repetition. Some of the related stories were written years apart. There are many typos, and some of the old pictures did not reproduce well. I did not always have access to a good copy machine. But the words are there.

Some stories required extensive research, for which I give thanks to the Sauk County Historical Society, the library, the Circus World Museum archives, the public schools, Devil's lake archives, UW Baraboo-Sauk County, and many many individuals for their knowledge or for the use of their pictures and postcard collections.

Of which articles am I most proud? It is hard to say. Three subjects required a total of four stories each. They were Baraboo's Industrial Expansion and Wisconsin's greatest manhunt, plus the essays on Baraboo as a good neighbor. Many stories dealt with the Civil War and other conflicts. At least six articles dealt in depth with the palatial and opulent homes of the Ringlings, both in Baraboo and in Sarasota, and elsewhere. Are there errors and omissions—yes! Is there more material for future historians—yes!

Fun stories were the discovery that several American families have the surname Baraboo! The name of our fair city has been used on a steamship in New Zealand and in restaurants in Florida and Michigan. I wrote about Boo U, the Circus, Devils Lake, and of course the jewel in our crown, the Al. Ringling Theatre. I regret I did not do more specific stories on the International Crane Foundation, the Circus World Museum, and the Mid-Continent Railway Museum, but each has its own publicity department. There were two stories and many other references to the arrival of the railroad in Baraboo. There are dozens of other stories which could yet be written.

Background

So why was a dentist, now retired over 20 years, writing about local history? As a boy in a small town newspaper family I was expected to write about the Boy Scouts and other activities in which I participated. However, it was obvious that as boy number five in the family, there was no more room for another son on the weekly newspaper, so I was sent off to dental school—no "time to yourself" then.

A 1942 dental graduate, I became the property of Uncle Sam for three and a half years. I was perhaps the youngest and greenest dentist in the European Theatre of WWII operations. My service was mainly in the 57th Field Hospital (later they were called M.A.S.H. hospitals), and also with a Texas Combat Engineer outfit. In private practice after military service, I occasionally wrote publicity news articles for organizations I belonged to.

I did, however, avidly pursue the local history books at the library. I retired from dentistry in 1985, and am thankful for twenty years of retirement so far. At first, after retirement, I did a little writing for a history of the Baraboo National Bank, and also a history of the First United Methodist Church.

Yesteryear

From my study of local history, I felt strongly that public benefactors like Prescott Brigham and W.W. Warner had been unfairly forgotten. When the Baraboo Sun newspaper was established, I offered to write about those two gentlemen, and the articles were not only accepted, but I was actually paid for them by the genial editor, Mike O'Connell! More stories followed, and when the Sun was abruptly acquired and abolished by South Central Wisconsin Newspapers, the News-Republic editor then, the amiable Ben Bromley, offered to accept future articles. Now, 293 stories later, it is time for a change.

Special thanks and appreciation goes to my faithful proof reader, my wife of 62 years. After I had an article "perfect", Helen would read and often expose errors in spelling and punctuation, which the word processor and I had missed. She was patient with me, as she has always been since our marriage 63 years ago, on August 30, 1942, at the Little Brown Church in the Vale in Nashua, Iowa. Sadly, she passed away in February of 2005, sorely missed.

There are dozens of potential stories in my files which are yet to be told, but they must for now be deferred. And now my quota of words for this article is exhausted, but this may not be my final article after all. There is still a little printers ink in my veins, so, the News-Republic willing, there might be an occasional story or two in the months to come, but not under the title Yesteryear Revisited. Just maybe I will write my views in an article on the future of Baraboo, this Gem City on the Baraboo River, in the Baraboo Bluffs.

And a final reminder: All too quickly today becomes yesteryear.

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

They're at it again, doing what they do best. And what the Baraboo Theatre Guild does very well indeed is humor, drama, pathos---you name it, they've done it---on the venerable stage of the Al. Ringling Theatre. It is called, in theatre parlance, "breaking a leg". And what a history they have!

This year's musical presentation, the well-remembered "State Fair", will appear for eight performances at the Al. beginning November 8. Tickets will go fast for this one, and traditionally many nights are sellouts. More on the show later.

Statistics

What does the Baraboo Theatre Guild mean to the theatre, to the community, and yes, to the entire South Central Wisconsin area? Consider: An examination of the records shows that the Guild, in its 54 year history, has presented about 270 afternoon or evening performances of various plays and musicals. That's enough to occupy the stage of the Al. for almost a full year at five performances a week!

That includes just those shows given at the Al. They've also done dozens of plays at dinner theatres and elsewhere in those 54 years. While we're on statistics, consider the following. Records are not complete to date, but as of 1993, 8 years ago, 2092 persons had acted in various roles, with a supporting crew backstage and elsewhere of 3668, and

musicians in the orchestra pit totaling 355.

There is significant area-wide participation. Actors include individuals whose normal occupations were doctor, factory workers, lawyers, housewives, ministers, students, kids, farmers, waitresses, store clerks, bankers, and teachers, to name a few. Tryouts are announced in the newspaper, and are open to anyone. Aspiring actors come from a 50 mile radius of Baraboo.

Some productions in the past called for a large cast, such as 94 persons in Showboat (1977) and 128 in The King and I (1987). There have been some 52 directors, some doing as many as 10 shows. Presentations at the Al. have been given under the ownership of Henry Ringling, various Milwaukee owners, and currently the non-profit Al. Ringling Theatre Friends.

History

It is all said to have begun, in Art. Gilbert's Baraboo Junior High School social studies class in 1947. The students were discussing the need for a community center, and thought a series of plays could be used to raise money. The idea was taken up by the AAUW, which organized a meeting on March 2, 1947 in the rooms on the third floor of the Berkley Garage on Third Avenue.

The result later in 1947 was the first production, January Thaw. The Guild has presented at least one play or musical in every year since then. It would be hard to

name a Broadway production of any prominence that has not been presented at the Al. to local audiences in the half century since then.

The list is staggering, and ranges from musicals and light operettas to both humorous and deadly serious plays. Recent musicals such as Camelot and Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat were hits on Broadway not too long before being seen here. Old favorites like Showboat, Oklahoma, and Anything Goes were also seen.

Thanks to the arrival of the University Center in 1968, as well as the superb area high school music departments, it has been possible to have quality musical accompaniment from the orchestra pit. The local University Center also produces its own dramas at it's R.G. Brown Theatre. This complements the many presentations throughout the year at the Al. thus enhancing the cultural advantages of living in Baraboo.

The non-profit Guild not only rents from the theatre, but over the years has made significant contributions, such as scrims (curtains), new ropes, cable, lighting, music stands, and chairs, plus some rehabilitation of the stage and dressing room areas. In addition, the Guild had given scholarships every year since 1971 to area high school students, and given benefit performances for various local projects. Also, at least five couples who met in the Guild have married!

Anecdotes

Among the actors over

the years was Joyce Dreyfus (1949), later to become Wisconsin's First Lady. Also appearing was local writer-made-good Stuart Palmer. In 1949 for Life With Father, all redheads were admitted free and were seated in the first three rows. In the Man Who Came to Dinner Harlan Kelly, who in real life was blind and wheel-chair bound, was able to navigate the stage after careful planning and placement of props.

Like all stage presentations, there have been glitches and mishaps---lamps that won't light, a critical but missing stage prop, or a prop that suddenly collapses even when no one happens to be on stage. There was the cat that wet on Peter Bildsten's light blue sweater (Diary of Ann Frank, 1968), and the goat that wouldn't lick Doug Hanson's face (Teahouse of the August Moon, 1975).

When it comes to musical accompaniment, it is hard to believe now that the Guild performed for its first eleven years without an orchestra. Apparently piano and the Mighty Barton organ were used. The first orchestra, led by Hal Edwards, was for Stalag 17 in 1957. It was 1965, however, before the second orchestra, led by Dick Temple, accompanied The Male Animal. After that, with the advent of the University Center and improved high school music leadership, superb musical accompaniment became the norm.

Cultural events come with a price, but what could be more reasonable in 1950 than seeing Blithe Spirit for seventy-nine cents, thirty five cents for children--reserved seats only.



1978

CONTRIBUTED

Members of the Baraboo Theatre Guild hope to "break a leg" for area residents, as they go on stage for "Li'l Abner." The Guild has been staging performances for 54 years.

Even in 1969 the admission fee was only \$2.00, but inflation and performance rights have boosted the fee to \$12, which would still be a big bargain on Broadway.

State Fair

Well, will one of this fall's aspiring female thespians in State Fair go on to be Wisconsin's First Lady? Will another become a famous author? We'll have to wait and see, but in the meantime we can see State Fair on November 8, 9, 10, or 15, 16, 17, at 7:30 in the evening, or Nov. 11 or 18 matinees at 2 P.M. Ticket sales are handled by Corner Drug Store, Phillips in Reedsburg, Eulbergs in Portage, or Showtime Video in Wisconsin Dells. The performance is dedicated to the memory of composer Richard Rodgers, born a century ago.

And what would Al. Ringling think of this charming presentation in his 1915 theatre? We have to think he would be proud indeed. Baraboo had been without a theatre for ten years when he built, the old opera house having burned in 1905. The demand for culture was so great that a purse of \$5000, a significant sum in 1906, had been raised to entice a builder. Al. didn't take the money, of course, and built a theatre in 1915 well beyond the hopes and dreams of the local population.

The first stage play was Lady Luxury, direct from Broadway. It is said that we have the script, but that it would not be sophisticated enough for the modern audience. Recently the script for a play written by Charles Ringling's daughter Hester

was given to the Circus World Museum research library by this writer. It was performed several times in Sarasota, being the life story of famous aerialist Lillian Leitzel. So there are, after all, some plays that the Theatre Guild has not done-but mighty few!

Meantime, as Shakespeare says, The Play's the Thing.

'Lady Luxury' opens tonight

1150



NEWS REPUBLIC

"Lady Luxury" will be performed at the Al. Ringling Theatre starting tonight.

ABOVE: Actors make sure they have their lines just right as work continues on the stage. "Lady Luxury" was the first show to open the Al. Ringling Theatre on Nov. 17, 1915 and is being performed again on the 90th anniversary of the opening.

RIGHT: Members of the Baraboo community band and others practice for "Lady Luxury."



Lady Luxury's Triumphant Return to Baraboo

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

She's not a young chick anymore, fresh from New York as in the old days, and although she has nearly reached the century mark, she still has the sparkle and zing of her youth. What's more, this time it isn't a one night stand, for she is going to stick around for four performances! Welcome back, Lady Luxury!

It's hard to believe, but it has been 90 years since the new Al Ringling theatre dazzled the area and indeed the entire state on opening night. Nothing like this had been seen in Wisconsin, nor was there a movie palace in the entire country to match it. No wonder it was called "America's Prettiest Playhouse", with the slogan "Nothing is Too Good for Baraboo.

The Production Staff

Lady Luxury, of course, is the musical comedy from Broadway, being re-created for Ringling audiences on November 17 and 18 at 7:30 and on November 19 and 20 at 2 P.M. Staged in cooperation with the UW Baraboo-Sauk County, a speaking and singing cast plus a chorus of 18 and dancers from Bravo Center will perform under the direction of J.J. Hickey, noted New York director.

Set design is by Desma Murphy of California, currently working with Warner Brothers in a revival of the movie Poseidon Adventure. Rounding out the production staff are Marjorie Cutting on costuming, musical directors Jerry Stich, Sue Lappin, and Gretchen Roltgen, plus orchestra conductor Claude Calliet.

The object of this all star staff is to re-create an authentic event in Baraboo's history, transporting the audience back to opening night. Don't be surprised if Governor Phillip's speech of 1915 is re-enacted, praising Al. Ringling for his gift to not only Baraboo but the state and the nation. To add authenticity, theatre goers are invited to dress in period attire and prizes will be given.

The Plot

So what is the play Lady Luxury all about? The original 1915 script sums up the play in the following manner: "EDWARD VAN CUYLER, a common sense man, sir, without frills, ma'am, whose home and ideals are a generation old, as is his butler, HARPER, who, however, adores his young mistress, ELOISE, an American Heiress, whose fortune has been held in trust until the day the play opens, although her brother JIMMY, has been spending his share and is just home from abroad on the same boat with MRS DRAPER-COWLES, an English Chaperone, who comes in to assume charge of Eloise's social campaign, accompanied by MAUDE DRAPER-COWLES, her daughter, destined for a rich marriage, but secretly in love with a different type of man, SAM WARREN, from Texas, not used to modern girls, but anxious to learn from ELOUISE, who"---well, there are still more characters, but we don't want to give away any more of the plot.

Needless to say, there are enough diverse characters there for an entire evening of laughter, intrigue, music, and misunderstanding. Adding to the scene will be dancers and a chorus, accompanied by the orchestra. Although the original production involved New York actors of that day, the excellent and dedicated talent in the Baraboo area promises an even more sparkling event.

An examination of the properties list is of interest. Why, for example, is there a wedding ring, and for which young lady? Why are there 6 Kewpies and a pair of suspenders, plus handcuffs? Properties also call for "modern (1915) gilt furniture, and up to date hangings", which today would be considered period furnishings. There is, however, a decanter of Scotch whiskey—some things never change!

Historical notes

Much credit should go to Nita Dippel, a long time participant in Baraboo theatre venues, both acting and directing. It is she, assisted by husband Al Dippel, who for some time has acted as the spark plug promoting the return of Lady Luxury. Nita envisioned a community event, a Happy 90th Birthday to the Al. Ringling Theatre, and many years ago obtained a rare copy of the script.

A complicated series of searches involved a librarian in Madison, the Library of Congress, The University of Wisconsin, Syracuse and Princeton Universities, and the New York City Library, as reported previously by the News Republic. The incomplete musical score was expanded by Professor Claude Calliet. It is said that only two persons showed up for the orchestra in 1915, but the orchestra pit will be full this time for Lady Luxury.

The Newspaper of the day had little to say about the play, being more preoccupied with the magnificence of the theatre and the prominence of the out of town guests who attended. The paper spoke of the production as a "comic opera...all members of the cast were clever...there was plenty of mirth...the costumes were fine...just the sort of play as one might desire to open a new playhouse"

Mrs. Dippel's inspiration and tenacity will reward all of us on opening night, when the production is expected to far exceed the original appearance of Lady Luxury in 1915. You can be sure that Nita will be there enjoying the play she first began searching for some 15 years ago. It will be a grand birthday celebration, and who knows, perhaps the audience will spontaneously sing HAPPY BIRTHDAY RINGLING THEATRE!





*Elouise in her
Dressing Room*

*LADY LUXURY as photo-
graphed in New York
in 1915*

*SAM AND Elouise
Dancing*





*SAM and ELOUISE
dancing*

*LADY LUXURY AS PHOTO-
GRAPHED IN New York
in 1915*



*SAM, with Uncle
emerging from
picture*

"Oliver!" Marks BTG's 58th Year at Al. Ringling
November is Theatre Month in Baraboo
Yesteryear Revisited
 By Bob Dewel

When "Oliver!" begins its run at the Al Ringling Theatre on November 3, another year of remarkable Baraboo Theatre Guild history will be added to an illustrious past for the organization.

Smashing performances of this popular musical are expected on November 3, 4 and 5 at 7:30, and on Sunday the 5th at 2 P.M. The following week the show will be repeated on Nov. 10, 11, and 12 at 7:30, with a final Sunday performance on November 13 at 2 P.M. Adult tickets are only \$12—you'd pay double or triple that in Madison! Seniors and students get a break at \$10 per ticket

Beginning in 1947, the Guild has presented some 85 plays or musicals at the Al. Ringling Theatre alone, involving well over three hundred performances. There also have been dozens of shows in and out of Sauk County. Excellent photos of many of the musical performances are already on display on easels at the Corner on Wisconsin. Each evening of the eight performances, from 6 to 7:30, light refreshments will be featured at the Corner on Wisconsin also. Theatre-goers can stop and reminisce, whether attending that evening's performance or not.

November is Theatre Month

More on Oliver and the Theatre Guild in a moment, but the reader is invited to take note that November is Theatre Month in Baraboo! Not only will "Oliver!" show in eight performances, but an artifact display at the nearby Stage III building will help celebrate the 90th birthday of the Ringling Theatre.

That anniversary will be marked with the remarkable return of "Lady Luxury", the Broadway musical comedy of 1915 which opened the dazzling Theatre on November 17, 1915. This musical, with a very elaborate set, will play on November 17 and 18, at 7:30, plus matinee performances on Saturday and Sunday, November 19 and 20, at 2 P.M. Other associated events will soon be announced. Culminating the events of November will be a stage appearance and discussion of the Ringling family by expert Ringling historian Jerry Epps on November 22.

Barton Organ Brown Bag

That's not all. Beginning on November 1, the Barton Brown Bag Lunch program will start, and anyone can bring their lunch and enjoy music from the Mighty Barton pipe organ for about an hour. The organists will not be distracted by conversation, simply supplying background music in a unique setting. It is not every day that you can lunch in Baraboo in a Pre-revolutionary French atmosphere, with the dulcet, (and sometimes commanding) tones of a pipe organ as the musical background!

It is shaping up to be a grand theatre month, with plenty of other performances coming during the winter. Let no one say that Baraboo is lacking in cultural attractions! The Circus World Museum will still be open, and the Railroad Museum will be running special trains too, Cranes will be doing their thing at the International Crane Foundation, and campers will brave the fall weather at Devil's Lake. This is an interesting city in which to live!

More on "OLIVER"

"Oliver!" is of course a musical, but is based on the famous story of Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens. It depicts the ruthless mistreatment of orphan children in Britain in the Nineteenth Century during the Industrial Revolution. When presented as a musical,



JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAM COAT
November 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 1998



SERENADE
AU PETIT TRIANON

MARK TULLY PHOTO

The fire screen at the Al Ringling Theatre

however, it also brings out the eventual goodness of humankind in a charming and enjoyable way.

This will be the first appearance of "Oliver!" in Baraboo, though the Guild has on occasion repeated two or three other musicals after a lapse of a few years. Each of several previous musicals will be depicted on easels in several photos in a display at the Corner on Wisconsin, and will bring back good memories of this illustrious organization's shows.

Formed in 1947, the Guild was chaired first by Attorney Clyde Cross, with Kathryn Page as Secretary, and Ernest Isenberg, Joe Dunne Sally Willson, Rev. Schiffmeyer, Mrs. Harold Allen, and Arthur Gillett on the Board of Directors.

The Theatre Guild

The first performance was a play, January Thaw, followed by Arsenic and Old Lace, both classics being directed by Esther Brannon. Subsequent members and directors are a panoply of prominent Sauk County citizens, far too long to list here, though it is hard to find more loyal and consistent members than Avy Schilling and Inez Stewart.

It is also difficult to find a Broadway musical which the guild has not performed, complete with elaborate sets and a competent orchestra. Memorable to this writer were Music Man, Showboat, Pirates of Penzance, Mikado, Joseph, Camelot, Anything Goes—well, there just isn't room to list all of our favorites. Needless to say, "Oliver" will join our memorable list, an appropriate production in this, the 90th Year of the AI, Ringling.

A side note: Baraboo area residents have for 90 years been spared the expense of erecting and maintaining a civic auditorium, a private venue called the AI. Ringling Theatre providing for our needs. Many of our neighboring cities now are spending millions to develop auditoriums which are modern but quite Spartan compared to the elegance of the Ringling.

One would do well to remember, during the upcoming theatre restoration campaign, the taxes which we and those who went before us have been spared by the existence of the AI Ringling Theatre this past 90 years.



Al Ringling Theatre is an art gallery

Tales of Other Days

By Bob Dewel

The Al Ringling Theatre is an art gallery, a fact often overlooked because of the theater's overall grandeur. Yet it contains two major paintings, one a very large mural and the other a large ceiling painting. In addition there are seventeen paintings that are surprisingly large if you were to bring them to ground level.

The ceiling painting is in the outer foyer, a Renaissance style scene with a Baraboo twist, for it depicts the Ringling children as cherubs. I am told that the same or similar painting exists on the ceiling the Hotel Danielle in Venice, Italy. Take a look up next time you pass through the foyer at the theatre. This is classic Renaissance-Baroque!

The seventeen paintings are positioned over each of the mezzanine boxes. Though all are different, they follow the same theme of angels sitting on clouds, with cherubs above them. An experienced tour guide will tell you more about the local significance of these paintings, one especially.

The most visible and perhaps the most interesting art work is the very large mural on what is called the fire curtain. Every early theatre had such a curtain, and it served as advertising for local places of business, such as Jake's barber shop, Bill's livery stable, the Acme bank, etc. It is our good fortune that in 1915 Ringling did not need the rental income, and our curtain is a masterpiece of art uncluttered with advertising.

Moreover, the curtain is appropriate, since it follows the pre-Revolutionary theme of the auditorium. We used to say, incorrectly, that the theatre was a one-third scale model of the Opera in the Palace in Versailles, France. Actually, though it incorporates many features from that opera house, it also has features from a theatre in Bordeaux, France, and features unique to the Ringling structure alone.

The painting depicts a French scene before the Revolution, featuring a view on the palace grounds near a lake, with boaters and musicians heartily serenading the Queen. She is standing on the veranda of a building on the castle grounds, accepting the accolades of the boaters. No one knew that in short years to come she would face the guillotine in the French Revolutions. Fortunately, our theater's theme is Pre-Revolutionary France, so we don't have to see the grisly execution.

There is much detail in the painting, and its colors have survived well over the past 90 years, but there is a man-made blemish. Note the smudged area in the water in the lower left aspect of the painting. Also, note the boat on your right side of the picture. All the weight is in the front, yet the boat remains fairly level, and a large area in the rear is strangely empty. And why is there a barn in the picture? Explanations for all of these aberrations are given on the Theatre tours.

Like Schubert's Unfinished Symphony, history records other unfinished but famous artistic creations. One is a painting of the British-American peace conference after the Revolutionary War. Ben Franklin, Adams, and other American delegates are shown, but the haughty British refused to sit, so their side of the table is empty. The unfinished Ringling painting is in good company!

There are other things of interest in the painting, and of course the entire theater is a work of architectural art and decor. Some 1000 persons, most from out of town, took the tour this summer. With this article you have heard perhaps three minutes of the 45 minute tour! Regular tours ended on Labor Day, but local docents will do tours by reservation if requested.



The fire curtain at the Al. Ringling Theatre.

Photo by Mark Tully

Al Ringling gave us not only a theatre, but an art gallery. His gift has saved the taxpayers 91 years of taxes which would have been needed to support a civic auditorium!

PICTURE , sent separately, is of the fire screen in the theater. I'm sending two copies, take your choice. Article is incomplete without a picture.

CAPTION: The fire curtain at the Ringling Theatre measures about 30' by 18', and is one of the largest paintings in the state. Features are explained by docents when a tour is given.



Near the Ceiling are seventeen large paintings, but they are dwarfed by the huge Fire screen painting of the French Queen and her courtiers



Photo by Jeff Weiland

It is hard to believe but it has been nearly 50 years since the Juliar Theatre closed, on Oct 20, 1959. Henry Ringling II opened in on Feb. 20, 1939

COMMENT T'APPELEZ-VOUS? BARBEAU OU BERIBAUT?

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

We've all heard the story. According to myth and legend, the Baraboo river supposedly got its name from a French fur trader at a post at the mouth of the Baraboo River.

His name was said to be Barbeau. Or was it Beribault? How about Berribeau, or Beribeau, or Baribo. Even Barebeauy. Mon Dieu!

All those names, and more, have been used, but is the story true? And if so, had the British not won the French and Indian war, would we be speaking French today? This article would be titled Comment t'appelez-vous, Barbeau ou Beribault? and we'd be living in Beribault, n'est pas?

Moreover, suppose you were introduced to a man or woman and learned that their last name was actually Baraboo? There are those with such a family name, we find, but more on that later. All we can be sure of is that the city got its name from the name of the river--Baraboo. But how did the river get its name?

Early Attempts

There have been many attempts in the past to solve this puzzle. If you consult the Sauk County Historical Society records, you are confronted with a 19 page single space typewritten dissertation on the matter, parts of which quote the Wisconsin and Missouri State Historical Societies.

The paper begins with a quotation from Baraboo News editor Cole in 1912. After considerable investigation,

he concluded "It is doubtful if the mystery (of the name) will ever be cleared up". After wading through all 19 pages, its author concludes "I go back with new appreciation of Mr. Cole's statement, "It is very doubtful if the mystery will ever be cleared up."

Well, this writer waded through all 19 pages too, and who are we to dispute the conclusion, or lack of it, by the State Historical Society?

Two Claimants

Very briefly, there are two claimants listed, both French traders, one a Pierre (later Peter) Barbeau of Sault St. Marie, and the other a Pierre Beribault of St. Louis. Each is purported to have had a trading post at the mouth of the Baraboo, but there is little conclusive evidence that either man was there.

Pierre Barbeau of Sault St. Marie, was supposedly at the post when Doty, later Governor of Wisconsin, stopped there in the early 1800's, though Doty does not name him or the post, only its location. Later Barbeau was interviewed by Experience (yes, Experience) Estabrook. Barbeau's daughter Flavia married Philander (yes, Philander) Pendill, and his grandson came to Baraboo in 1951 to establish the family claim.

Unfortunately, they claim Barbeau founded the city and lived here, which is preposterous--early historian Cole would certainly have

known him, and made considerable mention of it had he been here.

The story of Pierre Beribault of St. Louis was verified in the 1870's by two Missouri pioneers, who say that he lived at the county seat of Sauk County, which did not even exist during his lifetime. He does have this in his favor--Beribault is like Baraboo, a three syllable word, while Barbeau of Sault St. Marie is only a two syllable word.

Nevertheless, the Fur company records do not mention either man. Chief DeKaury, said in 1877 that he had no remembrance of either man being at a trading post at the mouth of the river.

So, where are we? I learned recently that Mark Tully is on the trail of a Frenchman with a similar name who may have been here in the 1700's, well before the two above claimants. There is also evidence that the river had its similar French name before the two claimants were even born!

Names and Maps

If you want more names and maps, the essay could be consulted at the Historical Society Museum. In addition, a 1766 map gives the river the name Barbux. Some different names for the river are also found on maps, such as Mahonek and Belle Chase.

Unbelievably, Champlain's very early map in 1680 calls it Barnabeau, and in 1833 Juliet Kinsey of the Indian Agency spoke of the river as the Baribault. Not until 1844 does a surveyor's map spell it as we do today. Meantime, the Indians called

it Ocoochery, or "good place to fish".

The Baraboo family

Thanks to a scrapbook kept by Mrs. Wayne Hatz, we have an interesting source of information, namely that in 1830 a mill at the mouth of the Baraboo is mentioned. The two brothers who ran it are said to have had a fight, their name being Baribeau, and one changed his name to Baraboo.

Mrs. Hatz' scrapbook had a news item, undated but apparently published in the 1950's, about a man who wrote the Baraboo city clerk about the name of the city of Baraboo, stating that his last name was Baraboo!

His full name was Staff Sgt. Charles T. Baraboo, great grandson of that brother at the trading post who changed his name. Charles stated that his brother Eugene was a teacher at Glidden, and that brother Emery was in California and brother Arthur was in Milwaukee. Did any of us know this?

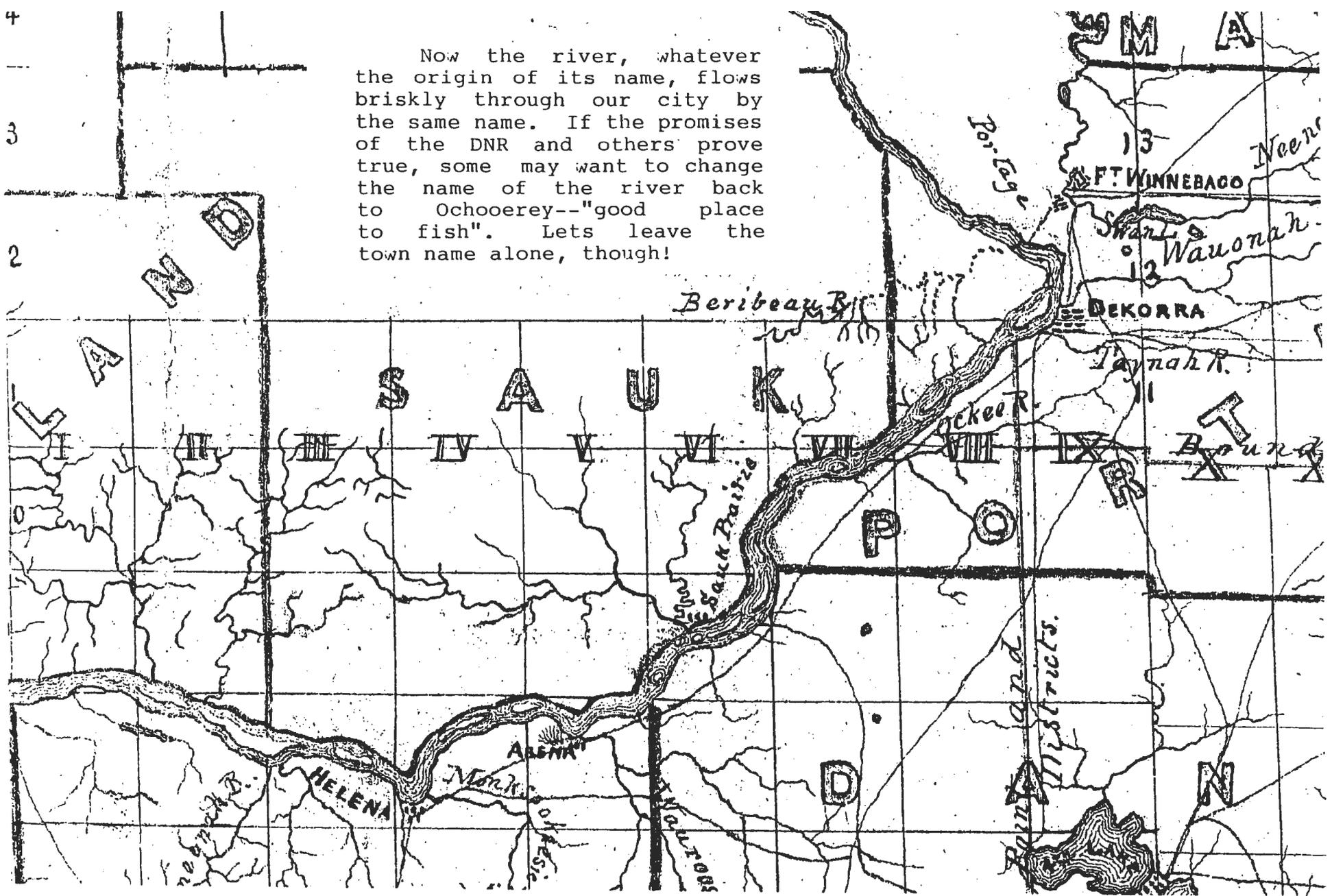
On a whim, we asked internet guru John Imray to search Yahoo for the family name Baraboo. Sure enough, there are ten Americans today whose last name is Baraboo, according to the telephone book. Three of them live in Wisconsin, namely in Sturgeon Bay, Rothschild, and Racine. We intend to contact these folks with such a distinguished name, so stay tuned!

We who live here or nearby like the name, and the name is so unusual that, like Waunakee, we must be the only Baraboo in the world. Notice, though, that there is a Barbeau in Michigan.

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Now the river, whatever the origin of its name, flows briskly through our city by the same name. If the promises of the DNR and others prove true, some may want to change the name of the river back to Ochooerey--"good place to fish". Lets leave the town name alone, though!



Map Courtesy of Mark Tully
 This 1844 map shows a psltry Beribeau river only a coupl miles long.
 Not shown is Baraboo, then said to have a population of 1003

BARABOO, MEET MR. AND MRS. EUGENE BARABOO

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

Yes, there are families whose last name is Baraboo, spelled as our city spells it! Moreover, there are five households in Wisconsin with that prestigious surname, and six such families elsewhere in the country.

Baraboos visit Baraboo

On Tuesday, August 21, Eugene and Marge Baraboo of Rothschild, near Wausau, and four of their grandchildren were guests in the city. They were first greeted, at the suggestion of this writer, by City Administrator Karl Franz and Chamber of Commerce Secretary Gene Dahlhof. At the city hall they received greetings, lapel pins, and fountain pens with Baraboo insignia on them.

This was followed by being guests of an Al. Ringling theatre tour given by historian Paul Wolter, with Dr. Bob Dewel demonstrating the Barton pipe organ. The Baraboo's then went to the Circus World Museum for the afternoon, with complimentary tickets supplied by the Museum and the Mayors office jointly.

Other Wisconsin residents with the Baraboo name include their son James and his wife, of Wausau, whose two children Karna, 7, and David, 4, accompanied their grandparents to the city. Two other grandchildren were also in attendance, Luke Zinkowich, 10, and Danielle Zinkowich, 16, they being the children of the Baraboo's daughter Jeannie, of Rothschild. The well-behaved children were pleased with the theatre and

the organ, as well as the circus, attractions in the city which bears the Baraboo name.

An additional Wisconsin resident is Alice M. Baraboo of Sturgeon Bay, whose husband Emery was an uncle of Eugene. And living in Milwaukee is Stephen, son of Uncle Arthur and thus a cousin to Eugene. The internet shows six other Baraboo families in the United States, but they did not respond to two letters which were sent by this writer.

Family Tree

Our letter to the eleven known Baraboo families included the fact that a Staff Sgt. Charles T. Baraboo, Eugene's brother, had in the early 1950's contacted the city. He related that in his tradition two French brothers named Baribeau ran a trading post at the mouth of the river.

Following a fraternal dispute, one brother changed the spelling of the name to Baraboo. Sgt. Charles Baraboo said he was a great grandson of that brother. Moreover Charles wrote then that he had a brother Eugene who was a teacher at Glidden, and an uncle Emery in California and another uncle, Arthur, in Milwaukee!

This story from the 1950's is what inspired us to search the internet, and the visit from Eugene Baraboo and family was the result.

Family traditions

The family tradition of both Alice and Eugene Baraboo is that an ancestor actually lived in Baraboo for a time in the early 1840's,



One of the Wisconsin families with the Baraboo name visited the city on August 21. From left are Luke Zinkowich, Danielle Zinkowich, Karna Baraboo, David Baraboo, Marge Baraboo, and Eugene Baraboo. The children are Marge and Eugene's grandchildren.

and that the town, which eventually became a city, was named after him.

We have already written articles about the city name Baraboo coming from the name of the river, with frequent mention in various legends of a Beribeau (spelled many ways) trader at the mouth of the river in the late 1700's or early 1800's. All of the stories seemed to lack verification.

The present day Baraboo family tradition also seems clouded, for the pre-eminent Baraboo historian, William Canfield, who lived in and around Baraboo from the early 1840's until his death after 1900, never mentions a resident by the name of Baraboo.

Canfield is generous in mentioning local inhabitants of the day, and even reports the tradition of a trader named Beribeau at the mouth of the river. It would seem he would prominently mention that a man by the name of Baraboo lived in the city and that it was named after him.

Eugene Baraboo does trace his lineage to the Beribeau families of Quebec, and a great grandfather Andrew Beribeau. Lineage is confusing for it is said that the government paid citizens to have large families in Quebec.

Andrew died in about 1854 and his wife died soon after, leaving a son Levi, age 13. Levi worked in a

brick yard, in lumbering, and then meat cutting, before operating a hotel in Egg Harbor, Door County. He lived from June 15, 1841 to August 8, 1932.

Levi's son Theodore was the father of Emery, whose widow Alice sent us a nice letter from Sturgeon Bay. Another son was Lawrence, father of Eugene. Eugene and his brother Charles were raised by the Stanley and Mabel Kahl family of Baron County, as their father, Lawrence, had gone to California and their mother died when Eugene was 6.

Stay tuned for some new developments on the origin of and present day usage of the name of the river and the city. The Baraboo's of Rothschild are fine people, and all who contacted them agreed that it was great to share the name Baraboo with them and the city.

Alice Baraboo says of her father-in-law Theodore "you can be proud it (Baraboo) was named after such a fine man." The dates of his life don't jibe with local history, but we are glad to share the name with the Wisconsin Baraboo clan in any event.



Eugene and Marge Baraboo and four grandchildren are dwarfed by the massive marquee of the Al. Ringling Theatre. Photo by Robert C. Dewel.

From White Tops Magazine

Baraboo Folks Meet Mr. and Mrs. Baraboo

By Robert C. Dewel

Baraboo, Wisconsin, is justly proud of its circus heritage. Among its famous circuses are the Ringling Brothers, The Gollmar Circus, and John Kelly's Fun on the Farm Circus.

Baraboo citizens were surprised recently, however, to learn that at least eleven family households in the United States carry the surname Baraboo. Following an intense internet search, all of the families were contacted, and on August 20, 2001, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Baraboo were guests of the city and the Circus World Museum.

According to family tradition, two French brothers named Beribeau operated an Indian trading post at the mouth of the Baraboo river. Following a dispute, one brother changed the spelling of his name to Baraboo. The river, and eventually the town, were named after him. No one named Baraboo ever lived in the city, however.

Highlights of the visit to Baraboo began with a tour and pipe organ demonstration at the palatial Al. Ringling Theatre, with its pre-revolutionary French decor. Constructed in 1915 by Al. Ringling, the theatre is recognized by the Theatre Historical Society of America as the first of the opulent theme motion picture theatres to be built in the United States.

The highlight of the afternoon, was a three hour visit to the Circus World Museum. Four of the Baraboo grandchildren accompanied the Eugene Baraboo, and Mrs. Baraboo reported that "the children acted like it was Christmas, and of course want to return for another visit.

With regard to sharing the Baraboo name with the city of Baraboo, she stated "What a day we had, such hospitality. I think we all walked a little taller with pride for having the name Baraboo.

"Mr. Baraboo" Comes To Town To Look Over His Namesake

Mr. Baraboo came to town yesterday. Mr. Theo. J. Baraboo—just to see the town which bears his name or which name he bears, which ever you want to figure it. For over many years Baraboo people in Door county by Egg Harbor have been interested to see the man "Baraboo Hardware" of Egg Harbor establishment, and not a few have stopped to talk to Mr. Baraboo and to tell him about the south central city which has the same unusual name as his.

1945

After 34 years in business in Egg Harbor, Mr. Baraboo has sold his hardware business and is now making his home in Sawyer, Wis., and he was enroute to Iowa on a vacation trip when he detoured around this way to take a look at Baraboo.

Mr. Baraboo comes from French-Canadian stock, which is in keeping with the oft related story that Baraboo city took its name from a French-Canadian explorer or voyageur by the name of Barbeau whose name became affixed to some of the early maps of this region leading to the city name.

Family Goes by Baraboo Name Tales of Earlier Days By Bob Dewel

The success of Mark Tully's book, "A Man Called Baraboo", has now produced a verification of his proposition regarding the Barbeau family of old Quebec. As his readers know, Tully concludes in his book that there was indeed a Francois Barbeau, whose fur trading station gave his name, slightly altered, to the Baraboo River. Barbeau was soon pronounced "Baraboo" and the river and then the village adopted the name for themselves.

This writer has for some years kept in contact with a family in Rothschild, Wisconsin whose last name is Baraboo. Gene and Marge Baraboo were our guests in the city a few years ago. Sharp readers will remember my invitation to them to visit Baraboo, and how we obtained tickets to local attractions, plus my newspaper article. The Baraboos' of Rothschild will be making a return trip next week on Jan 31, as a guest of the Sauk County Historical Society. Mark Tully will be the evening speaker, centered on his research on the subject.

The search

Remembering that visit, I purchased and sent a copy of the Tully book to Eugene and Marge Baraboo. For some time that family has been trying to trace their ancestry to see if there is a connection to the Baraboo

River and City. When they received the book, they contacted the local Booksmith and purchased six additional books for family members. One of their people was capable of doing serious research on the family genealogy with the Tully book in mind,

The results were remarkable. While their line is not direct to Tully's Francois Barbeau, one of their ancestors, Gabriel, was a brother to Francois. Of course the brothers had the same parents, the same as those identified in Tully's book. The most significant result of our work, however is that it shows that the Barbeau name could be and was Anglicized to "Baraboo". It occurred somewhere in the ancestry of Eugene Baraboo, and possibly also in the descendants of Francois Baraboo, hence the Baraboo River name.

Others named Baraboo

We also learned that the Baraboo family name is well preserved and is continued in their son, and also in his two sons. Moreover, Gene's brother in Mississippi has two sons and a grandson, all with the surname Baraboo! It gets better! A modest search on the computer found five deceased residents of Wisconsin, all with the surname Baraboo. Since living members, including Eugene and his descendants, were not listed in my Internet search, there may be even more American families with the same surname.

We're not done with the search, however. Since the original French-Canadian name appears to have been Barbeau, we did a statewide search for that surname, and the computer came up with 20 Barbeau names just in Wisconsin! Are they descendants of Francois, or of other formerly French-Canadian families with that name? Perhaps Mr. Tully will do additional research on the descendants of Francois Barbeau.

For genealogist who may be interested, the Baraboo-Barbeau family tree, as presented by Eugene, appears as follows: Jean Baptist Barbeau and

Marie Denoyon numbered among their children two brothers, Francois and Gabriel. Gabriel fathered Jean - Baptiste, who fathered Rene-Pascal, who fathered Andre, who fathered Levi, who fathered Theodore, who fathered Lawrence, who fathered our Eugene as featured in this article. (Ladies, we were not supplied with the names of the women who participated fully in this endeavor.) When the name was Anglicized to Baraboo is not known. Some descendants married into the Menard Family.

For the record, there have been people named Baraboo in Oregon, Colorado, Californian, and Eugene's brother and family in Mississippi. After the Eugene Baraboo family visited here a few years ago, they wrote back to say they were proud to carry the name of such a fine city. When local people meet the Baraboo's on the 31st, I know that we in Baraboo will be proud that our name is being shared throughout the nation by such fine people.

Gene and Marge Baraboo visit Baraboo

THE Sauk County Historical Society hosted Gene and Marge Baraboo at a special event on January 31 at the Van Orden mansion. The occasion was a talk by local author and historian, Mark Tully, who wrote the book *A Man Called Baraboo, The Life and Times of an 18th-century Voyager*. The Baraboo family, from Rothschild, WI, were special guests of the Society, having been invited through the efforts of local historian, Bob Dewel. Tully, dressed as an 18th-century voyager, held the rapt attention of an audience of more than 80 people who came to learn where the Baraboo River got its name. According to Tully's research, Gene and Marge are direct descendants of Gabriel Barbeau, who was the older brother of François Barbeau, a French Canadian fur trader who had a trading post in the area in the mid-1700s. Through the centuries, the family name was Anglicized to Baraboo, and the name was applied to the river, city and picturesque bluffs surrounding them. Tully also presented the Baraboo's with a large color illustration of their ancestor that he had done for his book.



Local Trio Serving in Disaster Area

By Bob Dewel

Three local citizens are now in their second week of service, aiding victims of the recent Louisiana hurricane. They are Donna Counsell, Roberto Chavez, and Aaron Gagnon.

Only casual acquaintances, the three discovered they had a common interest in aiding the hurricane victims, and departed with no fanfare at 8P.M. Saturday, September 3 in Mrs. Counsell's van, loaded with bedding and clothing and other supplies. Only Mrs. Chavez and this writer were there to see them off.

Communication has been difficult, even between Roberto and his wife, for telephone service is restricted. However, she reports that Roberto has found work in his profession as a ~~Certified Nursing Aide, working in an~~ improvised tent ward in Covington LA, just north of Lake Pontchartrain. Donna is involved in emergency food service in the area.

Aaron Gagnon is actually a Michigan resident who was working in the Baraboo area at the time, including tree removal services for Mrs. Counsell. He is separated from the other two, and has found some difficulty in negotiating the red tape and government regulations in providing his expertise, though there are many downed trees in the area.

Neighbors always help neighbors in times of emergency, but there is one time in local history when Baraboo people had to travel over 100 miles to help other Baraboo people! This was in 1899, and the local Gollmar circus was playing in New Richmond, Wisconsin. That was the fateful day when a tornado struck the small town of 2500, producing the worst tornado by far ever to strike in Wisconsin. This little known event was rated an F5 storm, with an astounding 117 deaths attributed to it.

By chance the usual circus lot was not available and the Gollmars had set up elsewhere in the city. This fact saved the circus from annihilation, for the original lot was in the center of the area of destruction, while the circus, in its substitute location, had relatively little destruction, though one employee died in the city. The near miss was also fortunate in that a direct hit would have added the circus' many loose but wild animals to the misery of the town.

Upon receipt of the news, probably by telegraph, several local citizens took the first train north to aid in the recovery, including two sisters of the Gollmar men. Of course the circus did not play that day, aiding in the recovery effort instead.

Thus the tradition of helping those in distress is alive and well, and there are probably other local persons aiding in this recovery effort. It is known that local persons aided the effort after the 9/11 attack in New York by Saudi nationals also.

Don Atkinson's Baraboo Book Tales of Earlier Days By Bob Dewel

This writer does not usually review the work of another writer. Today is an exception, for reasons that will become apparent. This is the story of Don Atkinson, another of many Baraboo graduates who made good, despite unfortunate obstacles. Don not only made good, but is giving back to the community of his youth, even in death. This story is also a tribute to his memory.

Actually I only met Don Atkinson once, and that was after an Al. Ringling Theatre tour I gave last summer, in 2007. It was his final visit to his beloved home town, knowing that pancreatic cancer would claim him in just a few months. We hit it off right away, and he and his wife and guests lingered for a while after the tour, followed by coffee at the Corner on Wisconsin.

I never saw Don again, though my computer file shows 28 emails following our brief meeting last summer. I was privileged last December, with the help of Bill Shuette and the Historical Society, to help Don with pictures and proofing of his book. He succumbed to his cancer on January 11, only three or four weeks later.

Don's book is simply titled "Baraboo, A Selected History", though it could easily have been named "A Detailed View of the Baraboo Area, both its Natural and Man-made Attributes". There are chapter after chapter of scholarly references with emphasis on such varying features as the Baraboo Bluffs and Devils Lake, the Ringling saga, Al Ringling's stunning theatre, Ho Chunk, the international Cane Foundation, the Great Manhunt of 1961—well, just an amazing amount of information on a city and area he loved

but left in 1958. More about the book in a moment, but first, who was Don Atkinson?

Don Atkinson, a Baraboo Youth.

Take yourself back to 1958, and graduation time at the Baraboo High School. Among the eager graduates was a popular student, Don Atkinson, with good grades. He was Captain of the track team, and had been out for football the previous fall. Don's parents had moved elsewhere, and Don was tired of their nomadic lifestyle. He'd lived in five different towns by this time. Don chose to remain in Baraboo living with his friend Eddie Miller at the Neil and Vi Miller home at 217 10th Street.

Like all other students, his time came for a conference with the school guidance counselor, but what a downer it was. For reasons unknown today, the counselor made it plan that he didn't think Don was college or university material. The inference must have been that Don was too poor to go on to college, and perhaps the counselor thought he was doing Don a favor.

Not to be stopped by this road block, Don enlisted in the Navy, and put in his two years, becoming eligible for the G.I. Bill. This is one of the best things our government has done in recent decades, and Don's rise to prominence in his field is a perfect example of the importance of the program. Despite the educational demands of college, he managed to work three jobs in graduate school. Mornings he supervised a playground, afternoons he was a lifeguard, and evenings he sometimes attended bar,

Getting his Masters in math and counseling, he taught in 1968 at the Junior High. Significantly, he also acted as a counselor for the local schools. After attending college in La Crosse, he obtained his doctorate in Multicultural Counseling Psychology in Madison in 1970. Twelve years of work and education paid off, for by 2002 he had earned the title of Professor Emeritus at the U of California Santa Barbara. After

Baraboo

A Selected History



Don Atkinson

a long and brilliant career, he turned from publishing scientific tracts to writing a book about his beloved hometown.

"Baraboo, A Selected History"

Don's book is subtitled "A Selected History". It is selected in that he concentrates on only a few local attributes as listed above. He also includes the Al. Ringling Theatre, and Man Mound. Particularly detailed are stories of the Great Manhunt of 1961, in which he played a part. Each of the historical entities are discussed in depth, but intermingled in them are stories of his youth. He relates youthful adventures at the lake, at a dance hall, and at the Lodi Canning Factory, for example.

Included are references to many local friends, with whom he kept up an active acquaintance during the past 50 years. He returned frequently to Baraboo, and his love for the city and environs is evident throughout out the book. I was astonished to learn that in the mid-1960's he lived just a little over a block from my home at the time. Moreover, one of my daughters baby sat his first child for a time. I wish our paths had crossed.

Book Sales

Don's book, simply titled Baraboo, a Selected History, is or will soon be available at the Booksmith, the Historical Society, and Book World. His wife, Carol has indicated that the profits will go to the Al. Ringling Theatre. She plans to visit Baraboo in mid-October, seeing old friends. Don's book should be in the stores soon. I recommend it, not just to his friends but to all local citizens who appreciate, as did Don, the beauty and amazing diversity of our unique Baraboo Area.



DONALD ATKINSON

"Don"

"A personality that gains a friend, Don retains them to the end."

1958 Annual

An Outsiders
View of our
Culture
**Tales of Earlier
Days**
By Bob Dewel

How many of you readers have grown children or old friends, living and thriving elsewhere, who have a rather disdainful view of this small city in which they were raised? Perhaps they decry the quality of their education (though they seem to be doing quite well, thank you). Perhaps they smilingly tolerate the obligatory tour of the city and the changes in Baraboo or Reedsburg or whatever things we locals consider to be progress.

Well Don Atkinson is an exception. In his book, "Baraboo, A Selected History" reviewed in the previous column, he readily confesses his love for the area and its advantages in living and in raising children. The first order of his book is already sold out, but more are coming—try at the Historical Society and the Booksmith.

The title of this article may be a bit misleading, for we are writing of Atkinson, who would not consider himself an outsider. He does, however, present an educated and perceptive view of our local culture and mores, even though he has not lived here for 50 years except for one year as a teacher. As an observer, with many return visits since his youth, he sees us as we have evolved from a somewhat ordinary small town in the 1950's to a significant city with varied educational and cultural organizations today. Let's read what he says in the preface to his book,

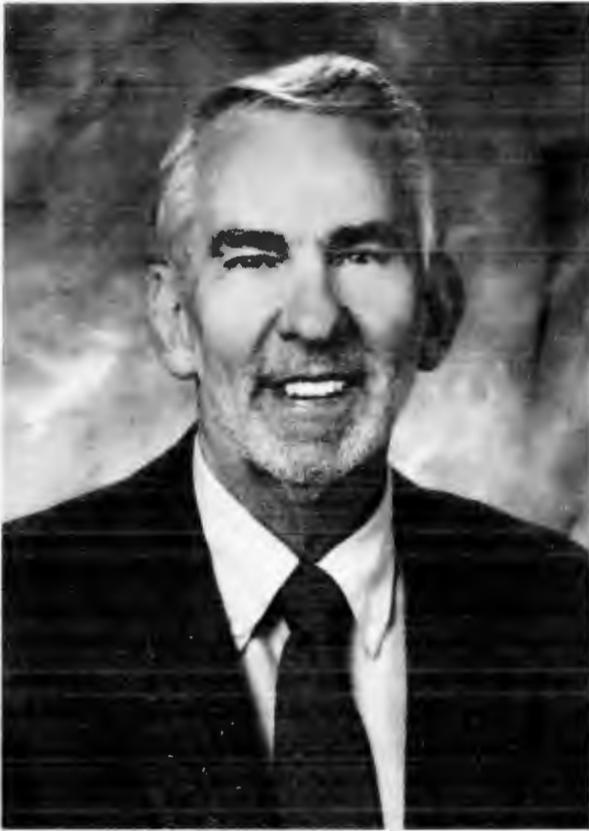
"Baraboo, a Selected History". Here are excerpts from that Preface:

"Despite the bi-coastal view that the states west of the Alleghenies and East of the Sierras form a cultural wasteland, I have yet to meet someone of my generation and originally from the Midwest, who doesn't think his or her hometown was a great place to grow up. (There is) a growing appreciation for the unique and exceptional history of our hometowns and the surrounding region. This is exactly how I felt about Baraboo."

After discussing the uniqueness of the word Baraboo, he continues: "But unusual as it is, the name is not what makes Baraboo and the surrounding area distinctive. What really makes the Baraboo region so unique is the per capita impact it had had on Wisconsin, the United States, and yes, the world."

"For most of the second half of the twentieth century, the population of the City of Baraboo remained around eight thousand people (less that that really—Ed). By the beginning of the twenty-first century the number of residents had increased to 10,890 (about 12,000 in 2008—Ed). But its small size belies the fact that, among other things, Baraboo is the birthplace of the world's largest traveling circus, the site of what was at one time the world's largest munitions powder plant, the county seat of the largest manhunt in Wisconsin history."

"Also Baraboo and the surrounding have a legacy in environmental preservation that few regions anywhere in the world can match. In addition to being the birthplace and home of the International Cane Foundation, environmental pioneer Aldo Leopold wrote his masterpiece on land ethics in a converted chicken coop ten miles northeast of Baraboo, and a farm a few miles east of the Baraboo Bluffs is the teenage home of the naturalist John Muir."



Donald Ray Atkinson, PhD

Donald Ray Atkinson, Ph.D., passed away on January 11, 2008 at home after a long and courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. Don was born on February 10, 1940 in Union City, Indiana to Ernest and Onda Atkinson. Don spent most of his childhood years in Baraboo, Wisconsin. He revisited Baraboo throughout his adult life, caring for his parents and visiting close friends. Recently, Don completed a book about Baraboo entitled, "Baraboo, A Selected History."

Don graduated from Baraboo High School in 1958, after which he served in the Navy for two years. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics from Wisconsin State College, La Crosse in 1964, where he was a member of the Phi Sigma Epsilon Fraternity and was awarded a varsity letter in gymnastics. He earned a masters in Counseling Psychology from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee in 1966, and earned his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1970. He worked as a high school math teacher and guidance counselor before being hired in 1972 by the University of California, Santa Barbara as a Professor of Counseling Psychology in the Graduate School of Education. Don served as Assistant Dean of the Department of Education from 1975 to 1979, and he was the Director of Training for the Counseling Psychology Program from 1979 until 1989, when he stepped down because of his dedication to teaching, mentoring, and conducting research. He was given the title Professor Emeritus when he retired from UCSB in 2002.

Don was a pioneer in the area of multicultural counseling psychology. He pursued scholarship in multicultural counseling psychology before it was mandatory or fashionable, and he mentored a large number of doctoral students from underrepresented groups into the field of counseling psychology. His students were his greatest pride in his life's work. Far beyond his individual accomplishments, which were many, Don viewed his own success through the achievements of his students.

Don is the author of "Counseling American Minorities," now in its sixth edition and considered a classic in the field, "Counseling Diverse Populations," now in its third edition, and "Counseling Across the Lifespan." He published over 100 journal articles.

Don's notable and numerous contributions in the field of multicultural counseling garnered considerable professional recognition, including Fellow status in the American Psychological Association (1990), the University of Wisconsin, Madison Alumni Achievement Award (1993), the Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues Distinguished Career Contributions to Research Award (2001), an APA Presidential Citation and recognition as an honored Elder at the National Multicultural Conference and Summit (2005). Also in 2005, he received the Leona Tyler Award, the highest form of recognition by the Society of Counseling Psychology for his "fearless dedication" and devotion to the field of multicultural counseling.

Atkinson is not done with the accolades, and wonders about the Baraboo Bluffs as an influence on the inhabitants. He notes the wide breadth of occupational and cultural achievements attained by such local citizens as Aldo Leopold, Joann Jones, Mike Spencer, Jerry Coughlin, the Ringlings, Ron Sauey and George Archibald. What motivated these and so many other residents to attain more than the usual number of small town achievers? In previous articles we have chronicled many others from our area with outstanding records

He continues: "Initially I thought I was writing about the geological and social history of the City of Baraboo; soon after getting into the project, however, I realized I was really writing about the personal histories of the residents who exercised considerable influence over regional, national and international values" As a psychologist by training and a student of human nature by behavior, he wonders why the region produced so many luminaries such as those mentioned in the paragraph above.

After confessing his inadequacy to explain the rise of unusual and motivated persons such as those he mentions, he concludes: "Perhaps it takes someone who has lived there during his or her formative years but moved away in adulthood to truly appreciate the special place that (Sauk County) is, and to appreciate the special people who have contribute to its uniqueness."

Atkinson can be faulted for one thing. He does not include another person in his roster of significant persons who have come out of our culture. We would include a PhD from California, once advised that he was not college material, who overcame family and financial obstacles and rose to eminence in his profession. His name is Don Atkinson.

Less than three weeks before his death from pancreatic cancer, Don was

still putting the finishing touches on his book. We can be grateful that he thought so much of us.



The KKK in Madison, 1920's
We've come a long way
Now, in 2008, a black man
is running for President

Baraboo Famous on Land, Sea, Air, and Space

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

You have to admit that the word Baraboo is a rather strange and unusual name for a city and a river. Yet there is a fascination in the word that has led to its use as the name for a steamship, a B-29 Bomber, two restaurants in other states, and yes, in an intergalactic space ship! Read on!

To begin with, there is no other Baraboo in the world, though we do find Barabia, Indonesia, Barabinsk, Russia, and Baricalda, Spain. Such mundane names as Reedsburg and Portage are found elsewhere, but not Baraboo. To add to the usage, we wrote two years ago of several families with the surname Baraboo, some of whom live in Wisconsin. Someone has also told me that there is an auto license plate in New York which reads Baraboo.

Apparently there is something attractive about the alliteration of the b's and vowels of the word. True, you sometimes get a "Bara-what?" when giving the name of our city to a stranger over the telephone. And what do we call ourselves anyway? Barabooers, Baraboobians, Barabooans, Barabooites, Baraboomers, or what?

The Good Ship Baraboo

Despite the confusion, the name Baraboo has been used to name things on the land, in the sea, in the air, and even in outer space. Let's start with its use on the sea. According to a newspaper clipping in a scrapbook contributed to the Historical Society, a steam or sailing ship foundered near New Zealand sometime in the 1800's. Named the Baraboo, it carried a theatrical group, all of whom survived, but whose acting accouterments went down to Davy Jones' Locker.

For years, according to the clipping, it became a common theatrical expression whenever something was lost or missing in a theatrical move, for the owner to say "I lost it on the Baraboo."

Two Restaurants

Only one Baraboo summer restaurant, and no tavern, uses Baraboo in its title, but both Michigan and Florida have Baraboo restaurants! Long time readers will remember our story about the Great Baraboo Brewing Company, located somewhere outside of Detroit, Michigan. The theme of the restaurant and bar is based on the whiskey ladies of Baraboo, who on an early morning in 1854 stormed the local taverns, releasing great quantities of alcoholic beverages onto the dirt streets of the city. The Michigan menu tells of this event, and several menu items carry the Baraboo name.

Then there is the Baraboo Restaurant at 7300 Ocean Terrace, Miami, Florida. The restaurant is of Argentine ownership, and features entertainment including Brazilian dancers and music. Included in one promotion was a drum procession to the beach, where a Baraboo Full Moon Party was held.

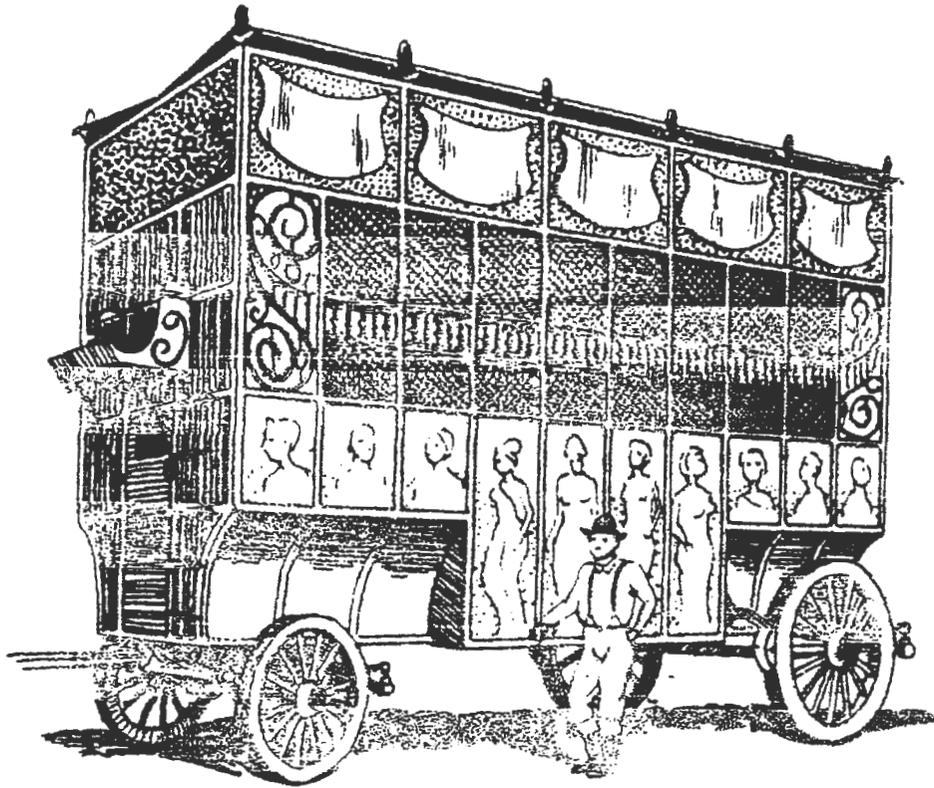
When questioned as to the name, they replied that "Baraboo is Baraboo...inspired by the magic, dreams, and fantasy of the circus...Baraboo is as sophisticated as a kid's fantasy...Baraboo is U and us, having fun on a warm summer night...Baraboo surprises you."

The Baraboo Spaceship

On the internet in part, and perhaps still in the Baraboo Library, is a science fiction book by Barry B. Longyear, about The City of Baraboo, a white and gold space ship. It seems that in the future year 2144 the O'Hara Greater Shows, a broken down circus, traveled by space ship to distant galaxies to play before alien audiences. Curiously, they still had the traditional red circus wagons.



I am adding the attached picture to my collection of unique ways in which the unusual name Baraboo is used around the world. The license plate can be found in Western Australia. The owner is Kathy Sims, who has been in Baraboo as the guest of the Gordon Caflish family. It is said that she talked so much about Baraboo that at her husband arranged for the plate.



The year 2144 space ship "City of Baraboo" still used circus wagons in its show. Perhaps to be authentic they reproduced the Appollonicon, one of the earliest of circus wagons.

During the third season, while approaching the Planet Pencia, the space ship named the City of Baraboo crashed, with many animals and personnel killed. One chapter pursues the relationship of the remaining crew with a Pencian clerk in the Bureau of Regret" named Diwan-Schen Tho. The circus still operated in a canvass tent. The story is too complex and fantasy-laden to repeat here, but it seems that the circus was at one time stranded for 200 years on an unoccupied planet.

If there is an explanation for selection of the name City of Baraboo for the spaceship, I missed it. Perhaps it was simply recognition of Baraboo as Circus City USA. But there is another City of Baraboo, a B-29 bomber that flew shotgun, so to speak for the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. That is a story in itself, in this series on the use of the name Baraboo, and will appear in the next article.

Civil War Youth in War, Peace

Tales From Earlier Days

By Bob Dewel

We have written extensively in the past, and also recently, about the experiences of a Baraboo youth in the Civil War. A prolific writer, Howard Huntington of Baraboo was on occasion a sort of war correspondent for the new Baraboo Republic newspaper. His colorful diary of the war is studded with his struggles with the sudden manhood of a soldier's life, and later with his physical attractiveness to women as a returned veteran.

Perhaps we should be reminded as to how we have such personal papers. It seems that a large old roll-top desk was auctioned off a few years ago, probably in Green Bay, and the new owner, while exploring the cracks and crevices common to those old pieces, discovered several packets of personal papers and diaries apparently hidden there by Judge Howard Huntington of Green Bay in the late 1800's. Huntington is well known to have been a Baraboo youth in Company A, and man about town for a time after returning from the Civil War in the 1860's

Enter Gary Miller of Joplin, Mo., who bought the documents on e-bay because of his interest in the Civil War. To his astonishment, the papers were exceptionally well written accounts of not only the war, but of Huntington's life in college and also the wooing of his first wife. Because of the Baraboo connection, Miller has kindly shared many of the documents with us.

Huntington's chosen College of Law was Ann Arbor MI in the 1860's, but he made frequent visits home to Baraboo, mostly for the purpose of visiting his sweetheart, Clara Noyes. She was the daughter of the editor of the newly issued Republic newspaper, and many of Huntington's dispatches from the war were published in that paper. They can be seen yet today. Col. Noyes also had the finest home in Baraboo, pictured in a previous article.

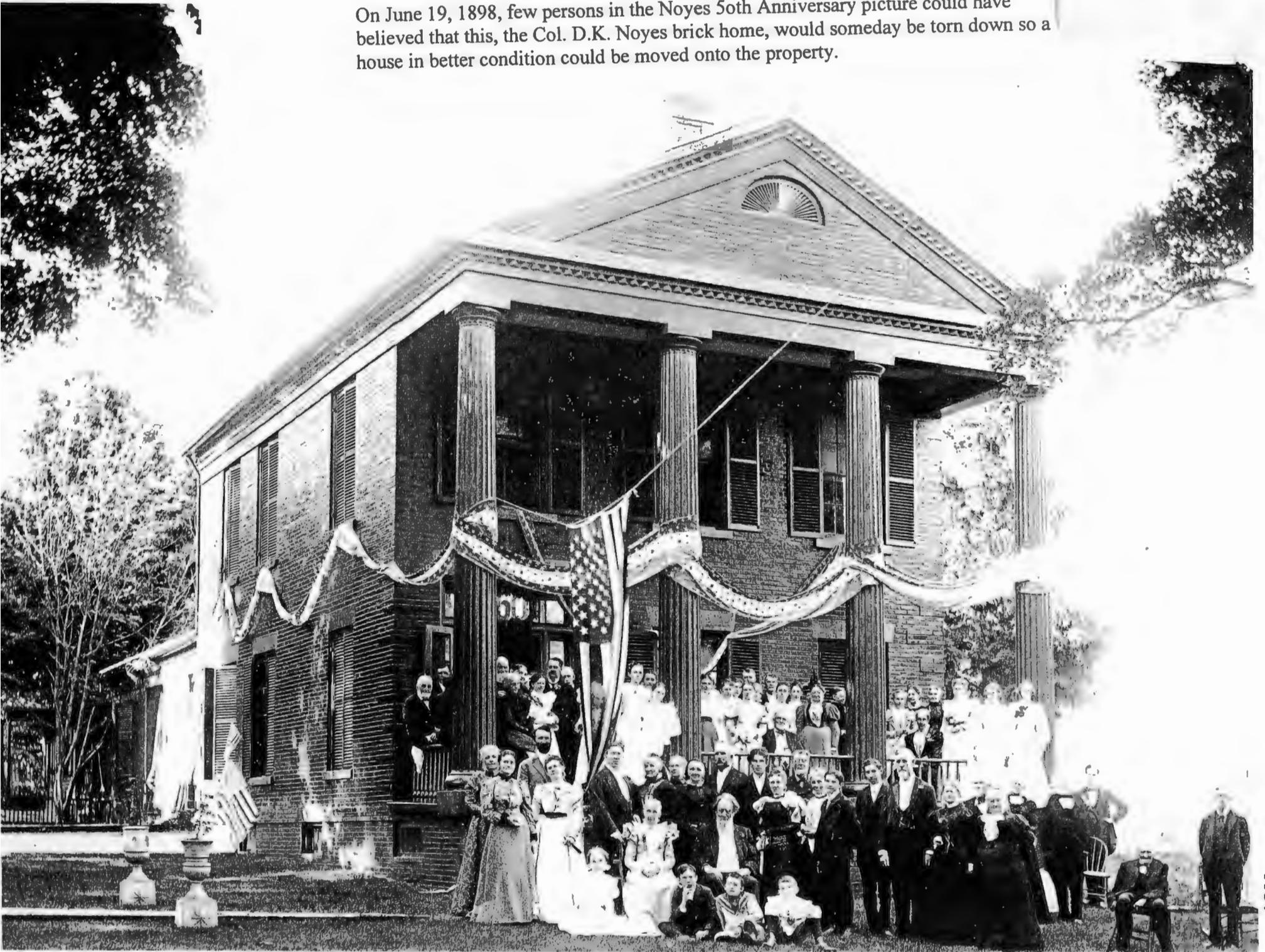
It is hard to realize how brutal the Civil War was. Out of a national population of only about 31 million, 600,000 men perished on one side or the other of the struggle. This compares with the 500,000 servicemen we lost in WWII from a population of 120 million. With many others maimed and hospitalized, there was a genuine shortage of eligible males of that generation. This was not good for the demographics of the country, and devastating for the female population of the age for marrying.

Thus it was that young Huntington found himself popular beyond belief among the young ladies of Ann Arbor, sometimes dealing with Mothers aggressively presenting their daughters to him. All of this was detailed in a previous article. Huntington, however, seems amused and agreeable but disinterested in such entanglements, preferring frequent returns to Baraboo for the purpose of wooing young Clara Noyes.

She was, incidentally, only 16 years old when the courting began. There is nothing to indicate that this cultured young man was anything but proper in his relations with the opposite sex. The son of a minister, he apparently did, on one occasion during the war, hint that he wrestled with some aspect of sin, the nature of which we have no clue.

Postwar Baraboo was no exception when it came to a shortage of young available males. Despite his allegiance to Clara Noyes, he was frequently involved in the social activities of the day, and was particularly desired by one young lady. Though he gives us clues as to her interest in him, he gallantly fails to disclose her name, only referring to her as Mxx. We have seen no other written reference as to who she might have been.

On June 19, 1898, few persons in the Noyes 50th Anniversary picture could have believed that this, the Col. D.K. Noyes brick home, would someday be torn down so a house in better condition could be moved onto the property.



Since there is a paucity of information about Mxx, we will simply repeat Huntington's entries in a diary as sent to us by Mr. Miller. One can read, even within his diary entries, the hurt and embarrassment she must have endured:

1864: "I was elected President, Lee was elected editor, and Mxx editress. Went home with Mxx tonight and told her that I did not love her as much as I used to but had a higher regard for her than ever."

"Class in Literature recited after school (in the Baraboo Institute, a small college) and after that stayed and had a talk with Mxx and Sara. We said goodbye but it was a scene in which I hope I will never be re-enacted. I have a high appreciation of her but I cannot marry her. Went to the Society"

"Mxx looked sad, may God bless her and pardon me if I have acted wrongly.""

"Spent the afternoon and evening with Clara. At Miss Martin's request I called to see her this evening and after exacting a promise of me to keep sacred what she should say she began on our love affair, Mxx and I. I requested her to talk on some other subject, but she persisted. She said Mxx was dying by inches. She asked if I could not leave town and said Mxx was going to leave. I thought it a pity for Mxx to leave before she had finished school. I ate ice cream with Clara"

"Mxx was in school for a few minutes but we did not speak."

"Mxx took the stage for Madison this morning I believe."

Well, that is all we have. Youth heals well, and we trust Mxx either found that there was life without men, or perhaps found another man in that fated generation. The excerpts are from Huntington's diary, of course, so he could not destroy them without tearing up the diary.

His feelings had been consistent for Clara Noyes over the recent years, and they soon married. In a few years she died, and he returned to Baraboo for his second wife, presumably not Mxx, but who knows? Maybe?

Only three or four of Bob Dewel's recent book, Tales of Earlier Days, remain for sale by the author or retail sellers. Christmas or birthday present?

Gold in Coffee Sacks in Reedsburg

1186

Tales of Earlier Days

By Bob Dewel

We've all heard of con men, those unscrupulous vultures who cheat honest men out of their money. The letters from Nigeria are common these days, as are the fake messages from a distant relative in Canada in need of immediate cash to avoid kidnapping or whatever. Perhaps it is an investment advisor touting a worthless stock.

We are told to think these schemes are a byproduct of our modern civilization, with its "loose morals" and money-centered capitalistic vultures. Surely this did not happen in the good old days, with its pioneer spirit, religion, and "one for all, all for one" attitude of sharing?

Well, think again! One of the most complicated and ingenious con schemes happened right here in Sauk County, in Reedsburg. It occurred in 1856 and is chronicled in The "History of Reedsburg and the Upper Baraboo Valley". The story is long and difficult to condense, but worth listing as an historical event in the saga of Sauk County,

Our story really begins in Beaver Dam, when a banker named Wells found a bundle of papers on the roadside by his home, supposedly lost by a traveler headed for Reedsburg, but actually a plant. Within the bundle were letters from a man named Burleigh, an admitted robber, and written to a Mr. Burton in Cincinnati. Fearing detection and loss of his life, Burleigh was confiding in Burton, to whom he owed a favor. The bundle contained maps showing where, in Reedsburg, Burleigh had supposedly buried \$50,000 in gold many years ago. It specified that the gold was in coffee sacks,

The letter was inviting Burton to join Burleigh, but of course the letter was now in the hands of Banker Wells of Beaver Dam, who had found the bundle of letters. Proceeding to Reedsburg, Wells confirmed by a hotel register that Burton of Cincinnati was in town, supposedly also seeking the treasure but without the map. Needing local guidance, banker Wells sought the advice of Judge Wheeler, who was delighted to share in the booty in exchange for his advice and participation. Several others were allowed to join the search, including a Beaver Dam man named Burchard.

They knew from the letters that the "burial site" was on the property of a Reedsburg resident, L. Gay Sperry, who supposedly did not realize that. They approached him regarding a purchase, but he replied that he was considering an offer of \$3000 for the property, an outlandish offer in those pioneer days. The property was *probably worth only three hundred dollars. It would appear to Wells that Burton, in the hotel, had made the offer.* In his greedy state, Wells now offered Sperry a larger sum, to which he reluctantly agreed. Sperry had few possessions in his cabin and quickly moved on, giving Wells and Wheeler immediate possession of the lot and cabin.

Here we quote, somewhat condensed, from the History of Reedsburg book: "That night at the stroke of midnight, the conspirators sallied forth with their spades and several coffee sacks (which they left at the gate)...and the digging began with hearty good will and with an energy that would have discouraged Satan, had he been trying to prevent the finding of gold at that site. "

"Be careful (cautioned Judge Wheeler), not to strike the bags with the spade. You might scatter the gold". However only a short time sufficed the two who had the spades that there was no gold there, for they had struck a stratum of earth nearly allied with stone. As the two paused from sheer despair, another of the conspirators leaned over the hole: "Should I go get the coffee sacks now?' The Judge's reply is not on



Early Reedsburg sketch

Sauk County Historical Society

record, from the fact that it would not look good in print", remarked the author of the story.

Like all good mysteries, this leaves us hanging a bit. Was there really a Burton of Cincinnati during all of this, or, was it all the concoction of Sperry? Incredibly, Sperry quickly departed with the money, going to Beaver Dam, home of the swindled men! Sperry does not appear to have had the brains to work out such a scheme.

The angry Beaver Dam men returned to that city and discovered and collared Sperry, taking him to a room where a stormy interview ensued. Sperry is said to have been trembling in his boots. The men "persuaded" him, so the story goes, to return the greater part of the money that had been paid him, and take back the property. It is said that Sperry spent a minimum time back in Reedsburg, quickly abandoning the property for back taxes.

As for Burton of Cincinnati, (If he existed), we assume that he left his hotel and abandoned his search. The gaping hole in the ground which the morning light revealed must have aroused small town speculation, and when Burton learned that others had preceded, and perhaps even found gold, he was left holding the sack so to speak. On the other hand, perhaps he did only exist in the mind and scheme of Sperry.

As for the good old days, it appears that men were greedy then too, despite our idyllic view of those supposedly halcyon days. Justice was quick, though erratic, and sometimes unjust. We sort of think Sperry had it coming, though.