

The Red Caboose

2009

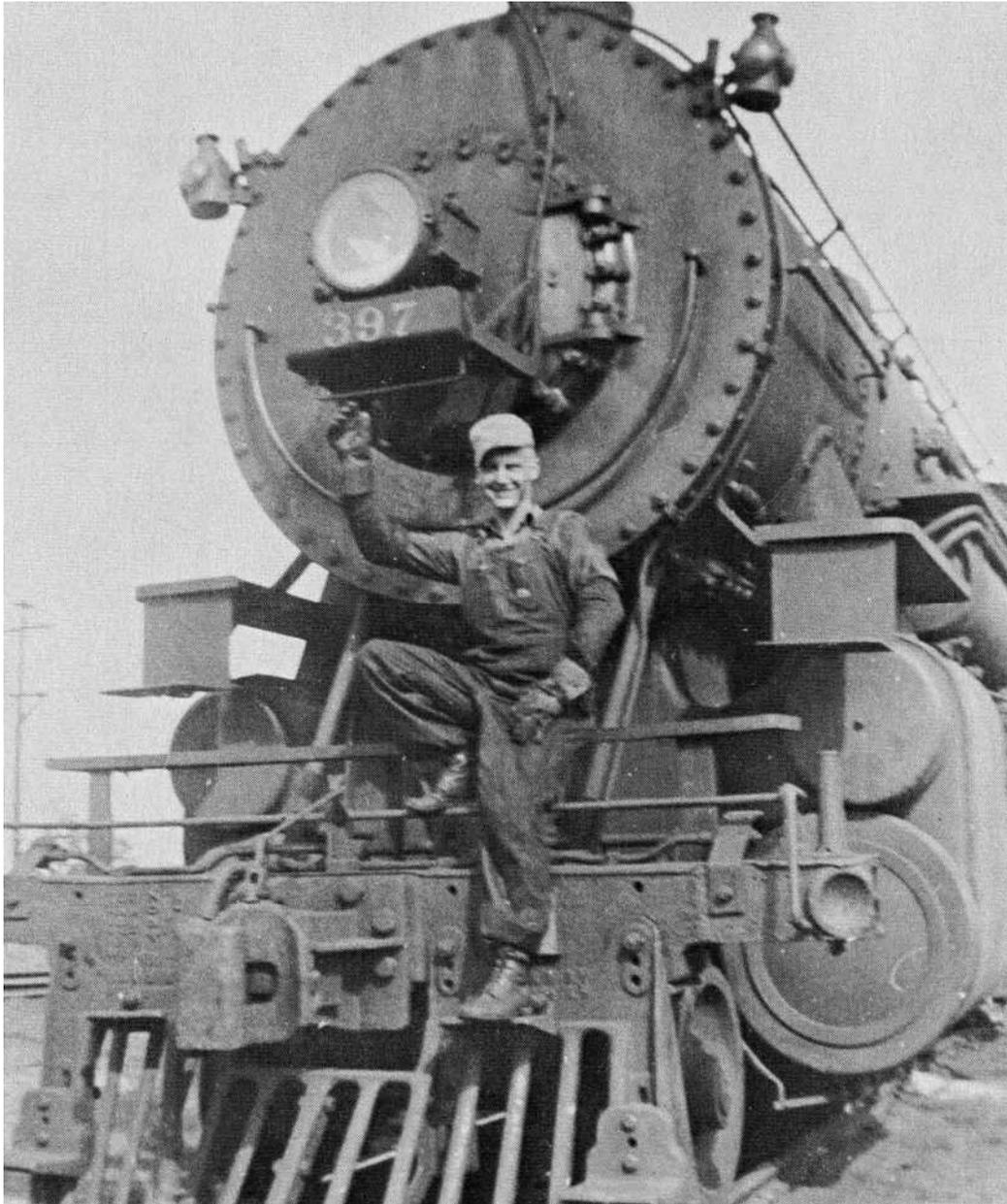
A Collection of Altoona, Wisconsin Memories

Jack E. Blackburn
Roger Rasmussen
John R. Thurston

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2009

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Roger Rasmussen
John R. Thurston**

This publication is dedicated to

Laura Semisch-Christy
A lady with deep roots in Altoona, Wisconsin

Acknowledgements

Without the cooperation, support, and encouragement of the following individuals, this book could not have been published in its present form: James Crandall, Harold Harris, Marvel Schilling-Newton and, Herb Ruscin,

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Leader Telegram, Eau Claire, WI
February 19, 2010
By Christena O'Brien

Tales of the everyman -- Altoona's stories featured in a book

People interested in purchasing a copy of "The Red Caboose" can contact

Jack Blackburn at 514-0713. The cost is \$21.

The Red Caboose is the work of UW-Eau Claire professor John Thurston,
Roger Rasmussen and Jack Blackburn

John Thurston, a UW-Eau Claire professor emeritus in psychology, has become a bit of a memory keeper for his hometown of Altoona.

"Memories need not die," Thurston told me in 2008 when he and fellow Altoona native Herb Ruscin were collecting memories of students who attended the former Altoona Public School, which was destroyed by fire in 1951. "They are a form of history and should be accorded respect on that ground."

Their collection was published that same year, as was another piece Thurston penned on Jesse Jensen, a former Altoona teacher, principal and coach who touched his life.

An avid writer, Thurston soon set off on yet another project aimed at preserving more of his beloved hometown's history, enlisting the help Altoona native Roger Rasmussen, who now lives in Maplewood, Minn., and Jack Blackburn, who moved to Altoona in 2006 from St. Paul.

Their 458-page publication — "The Red Caboose" — features stories about life in Altoona.

"These are mostly true stories about people, places, things and in between," Rasmussen said via e-mail. The book also includes humor, lots of old photos, poetry and a reconstructed map of Altoona in 1935 with the names and addresses of many homeowners and other landmarks.

"The publication of some 400 pages was a test of our skills, knowledge and memories," said Rasmussen, who I met in 2006 when he hosted a reunion for the Altoona Class of 1954. (I attended as a reporter, not a member of that class. I graduated from Altoona High School in June 1989.) "We are proud of the work of those who contributed to this historical coverage."

Looking back

Here is a sampling of the people and stories included in "The Red Caboose":

During World War II, Camp Eau Claire — a camp for German prisoners of war — was built at the Altoona fairgrounds. It was one of 38 such camps across the state, according to Betty Cowley, a retired Altoona high school history and social studies teacher and author of "Stalag Wisconsin: Inside

WWII Prisoner of War Camps."

"Originally planned for Mt. Simon, Camp Eau Claire was moved to the Altoona fairgrounds after an outcry of protest: from (Mt.) Simon area residents.

"While some local residents were fearful of these captured Nazis, most were unaware of who they were. Other folks walked or drove to the fairgrounds in the evening to watch these men bounce balls off their heads in an unfamiliar soccer game or listen to their harmonious music or visit across the fence with the POWs seeking information about German relatives or communities."

Laura Semisch-Christy is one of three celebrated ladies from Altoona featured in Chapter Three. The others are Grace Sorenson- Eick, who played on the Altoona girls basketball team, and Clara "Toots" Becker-Griese, Altoona's first cheerleader in 1922.

Semisch-Christy's mother was in the strawberry patch the day she was born in 1920. Eighteen years later, Semisch-Christy graduated from high school as valedictorian.

Her father, Otto Semisch, one of seven children, lost a sister, Clara, when lightning struck their home in Altoona in 1895. One of his brothers, Henry, who Semisch-Christy called a "good uncle" was a conductor on the railroad, but lost a leg in an accident.

The late Harold Semisch, Semisch-Christy's brother, served in World War II, worked as a timekeeper at the U.S. Rubber Co. and became Altoona's everlasting scorekeeper at sporting events until he died in 1996.

The Altoona Equity Cooperative Livestock Auction Market, established in 1945, was located on four acres north of the Eau Claire County shops, adjacent to the railroad tracks. Harold "Hank" Harris, who had been brought up in Altoona, managed the market.

On a hot Aug. 12, 1971, a fire broke out at the market during a cattle sale, according to a Leader-Telegram article included in the publication. About 100 head of cattle and 300 head of calves were lost in the fire, and the only building saved was a structure housing the cafeteria. Four firemen were treated for smoke inhalation and minor injuries.

The market later was rebuilt at a different location.

Finding value

While "The Red Caboose" is different than traditional books on history that consist of dated deeds, Thurston believes its contents has value.

"Common folk traditionally leave few, if any, footprints in the 'sands of time,'" Thurston wrote. "We find this ... a situation in need of remedy."

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Chapter One

History

It Happens Everyday, Everywhere, and Involves Everyone

Far too many people believe that history consists solely of important dated deeds by important people in important, faraway places very long ago. That kind of history, replete with its many, many dates, is what historians traditionally write about and teach. But we believe that history can be far more comprehensive, inclusive, down-to-earth, and personal than that.

The history of the historians characteristically omits any mention, let alone celebration, of the common man and woman, the “Joe Six Packs” of our societies. Their deeds and accomplishments, while very significant to the individuals involved, usually go unrecorded. Although there may be exceptions, common folk typically leave few, if any, footprints in the “sands of time.” We find this to be regrettable. Sad to relate, too many people may have come to believe that they have accomplished nothing in their lives worthy of record, and that they themselves are insignificant because of this lack of accomplishment. We found this to be lamentable; a situation in need of remedy.

Perhaps you’ve been in an antique store and seen a large pile of old photographs for sale. Often, these portray stiffly-costumed, stern-looking men, women, and their children while assuming awkward poses as they stare at the camera. The pictured people had obviously gone to considerable efforts to be remembered. Their discarded pictures indicate that they didn’t succeed. They are rarely accorded even a bare-boned identification with names, a location, or a date. Similarly, tombstones tell precious little about the buried person and the life that he or she had

led. Genealogists and descendants would kill for a hundred or a thousand words that would tell them who the individual really was, his or her experiences, work, religion, hopes, fears, and dreams. These are the historical words that “**The Red Caboose, A Collection of Memories**” sought to gather and report. The citizens of Altoona, both current and from the past, were given an opportunity to provide them.

Incidentally, the title is a take-off on the name of Marian Potter’s children’s book, “The Little Red Caboose.” “The Red Caboose” is an off-beat title that ties together Altoona’s very distant railroading past with the light-hearted fun of writing, recording, and reading Altoona’s memories – the purpose of the venture.

Other efforts have been made to record Altoona’s history. Gerald A. Hagen’s fine book, “**A History of Altoona,**” (1989) remains a definitive source of such information. Altoonians have already contributed personal memories to “**The Old Altoona Public School, A Collection of Memories,**” (Thurston, 2008), a book containing the recollections of students who attended that school prior to its destruction by fire in 1951. A booklet, “**Jesse Jensen, Principal, Coach, and Teacher, Altoona (WI) Public School, 1921-1943,**” (Hoyt and Thurston, 2008) concentrated on the life of the man who was of vital importance to that school system for a very long time.

The small community of Altoona, Wisconsin was once again targeted. A call went out for the memories of its residents (See “**The Red Caboose: Collecting Altoona’s Memories**” in the Appendix). Every effort was made to contact all residents of all ages. Current significant memories were considered every bit as important as those based on events of long ago. All of these remembrances warranted recording, recognition, and sharing. Such was our belief as we embarked on this venture.

As in the case of the two previous volumes, “**The Red Caboose, A Collection of Memories**” assumed that each of the contributors is both unique and important. The late E. Lynn Harris, in his memoir “**What**

Becomes of the Brokenhearted ?“ said it simply and accurately: “Every life is a story worth telling.“ By soliciting and recording memories, we were “celebrating the uncelebrated;“ by telling a bit of his or her story, we were attempting to honor the individual and the role each had played in our society.

It has been said, with some regret, that “the best time to record important personal events, thoughts, and feelings may have been forty or fifty years ago when they happened. **The next best time is now.**” As we have indicated previously, each individual was believed to have something that was worthy of recording and sharing. In the “sands of time,” even a poorly-drawn memory is better than no memory at all. Whether or not the general populace of Altoona could be convinced of this need and its basic premise was a matter of conjecture. From our standpoint, the opportunity we presented was a “no brainer,” a relatively non-demanding sharing with a tangible reward, the appearance of one’s writing in an Altoona history book.

On February 16, 2009, on the basis of our confidence in a reasonable response, we cast our net out upon the citizenry of Altoona. October 15, 2009 was established as the deadline. In the intervening months, we found our “catch” to be both interesting and rewarding. As expected, we found a considerable diversity in the nature and content of the contributed memories.

Could and should the resulting volume have been more comprehensive and inclusive? Certainly! There could have been more, much more if there had been a greater response by Altoona’s citizenry. However, “One goes with what one’s got.“ There were probably as many reasons for non-participation as there were unresponsive people. Some of their excuses may have been reasonable. However, while it’s very sad to contemplate, a substantial number indicated that their lives failed to contain a story worth the telling. Apathy, illness, inability to write, being “too busy,” and “I’ve better things to do” were common excuses.

We found that younger citizens and “newcomers” were especially reluctant to share memories with us. To what extent did they fail to identify with any Altoona experience? The “Old Altoona” of the 1930’s-1940’s had been both unified and unique. Its citizens were railroaders and proud of it. Everyone knew everyone else. Our day in, day out experiences were the stuff of important memories. The Great Depression and World War II contributed to many of these. Without really understanding what was going on, people came to rely upon one another. “Things” may be very different now. Important questions should be raised: What, if anything, differentiates living in present day Altoona from living in the nearby countrified Town of Washington? Is it possible, that Altoona, Cinder City, exists in name only? Are Altoona citizens now so diffuse and specialized in their life styles that little community cohesiveness exists? Might Altoona just as well be called East Eau Claire again? If one truly believes that important, indeed essential, personal roots are to be found in one’s community, these questions are worthy of considerable consideration.

It isn’t without reason that Andy Griffith’s “Mayberry” comedy series continues to run on current TV. Could it possibly be that a great many people, consciously or unconsciously, yearn for the simplicity, friendliness, kindness, gentleness, personal closeness, unity, and laid-back atmosphere of a small town? Altoona could provide elements of just such an atmosphere.

The Red Caboose is a collection of memories. It is more “seed catalog” than story book. There is no narrative thread uniting its contents. Editing has been minimal. Many of the contributions were printed exactly as they were submitted. Readers may choose to leaf through this volume, finding some parts to be of interest while ignoring others. It is our hope that every contribution will be read and appreciated by someone. After all, by our definition, each of these shared memories has a special value that can and should be acknowledged both now and in the future.

John R. Thurston 10-14-2009

Chapter Two

Maps of the City of Altoona, Wisconsin Circa 1935

Early on, it was decided to go way back over seventy years and reconstruct a map of the Altoona of that era. Residents of the city in 1935 were contacted to provide information and advice. Prominent among these were Roger Rasmussen, Marvel Schilling Newton, Laura Semisch Christy and John R. Thurston. It was an exercise that made great demands upon the memories of these “historians.” Contradictions in the information provided were identified and reconciled. Eventually, detailed maps were constructed that showed both locations and the names of the people residing in each of them at that time. A relative newcomer to the Altoona scene, Jack Blackburn, utilized his considerable computer skills in their construction.

For clarity, it must be emphasized that John Thurston originally conceived the idea of an historical map and was subsequently joined by Jack Blackburn and Roger Rasmussen to create a map especially for The Red Caboose – this is not something unearthed from a dusty City Hall archive.

This segment is thought to be of special interest to surviving old timers as well as to those people making genealogical investigations in years to come.

As part of this, there was a studied effort to recall any and all memories/information about each dwelling and the people who lived in each of them. Even fragmented recollections are better than none at all.

It is best that the maps, their accompanying informational data base, and “The Red Caboose” are viewed as a “work in-progress.” This work may never be completed. Feedback from anyone and everyone will be appreciated at any time.

Additions and corrections regarding the map’s accuracy and accompanying narrative information are welcomed and appreciated. All will be considered fully and integrated into any future map whenever appropriate.

Map Location	Street Name	Street Number	Surname	Comments
Start of Surname Sort				
23F	Hayden Ave	1212	Ackerman	Robert Ackerman - Railroader, Haunted by Mae McGrouary's Parrot
24B	Lynn Ave	1119	Anderson	Anderson, I remember a mean little white dog that nipped at heels.
35F	Garfield Ave	1312	Anding	A daughter Veralia
50K	01st St E	519	Aske	Eddy Aske - Railroader, one son
22D	01st St E	210	Auditorium	Auditorium and Fire Truck Enclosure
62K	01st St E	613	Babcock	William Babcock - Railroader
61C	Bartlett Ave	1403	Babington	Bill Babington - Bright daughters Alice and Betty, Railroad Worker and Roundhouse Mechanic - Ruscins lived in apartment
64E	Daniels Ave	1028	Beach	Beach - John, Lois and Audrey
32D	Hayden Ave	1603	Beach	'Shorty' Beach - CNW Worker, daughter Hazel was a year older than I.
08F	Lynn Ave	1720	Becker	Becker's - Bud Griese's grandparents. Mr. Becker had been a mayor and councilman of Altoona. Son Norm and grandson Bud lived with them.
37B	Hayden Ave		Bellesbach	William Bellesbach -- Railroader, I recall kids, Richard, Mary, Anne, John and Shirley.
47D	Garfield Ave	1503	Berg	Mable Berg - a son Robert (a pilot), took in Roomers
21D	Lynn Ave	1401	Berg	Berg's Store and Dairy Bar - Apartments Above and next door west is Cheney Meat Market
32H	Garfield Ave	1628	Bieloh	Bieloh's - A mixed memory here because I remember them living a block to the east as well. Son Jack and I would spend endless hours constructing un-flyable model airplanes. When his father died unexpectedly, this shook all us kids. Fathers weren't supposed to die. The remaining family moved to Spooner. All contacts then ceased. I believe that he eventually had his own insurance agency in Spooner.
12G	Lynn Ave	1312	Bilderback	Bilderback - son Leo lived with his Mom.
22E	Division St	327	Blackroots	Blackroots, Railroader
24A	Lynn Ave	1127	Blake	Blake - A couple with no children - This is the site of the Altoona Rooming house which burned in 1918. The family moved to Map Location 73K in 1956.
60C	Bartlett Ave	1503	Board	Board - Donald and Burrell, Burrell was a highly competitive athlete, a fast runner. He used to fish with us at the base of the Altoona dam.
44C	Garfield Ave	1805	Boettcher	Clarence Boettcher - Railroad Worker, his son Cadwell was a bit older than me. He excelled at ping pong to the extent that no one, including me, wanted to play with him. He had his own table in the basement. They also had a daughter named Betty.
31A	Hayden Ave	1727	Bonnell	Harry Bonnell - Railroad Worker, Nice House, Bachelor

69C	Daniels Ave	1511	Bonnie	Louis and Ethel Bonie's home early on. The son, Louis, was ill-coordinated as a lad. He was always the last one chosen for the teams playing in the sandlot between our homes. He went on to become a minor league football All-American at a Dakota college. The father was a milkman at one time. At Halloween, the Bonie outhouse was a special target. Retired from its original use, it was the depository of the storm windows. Father Louis would sit guard inside this "doniker" on Halloween night to prevent damage to these windows. However, a quick move on the part of the "bad kids" secured the door and trapped Louis inside. Then the outhouse was overturned with Louis tumbling around inside to the sound of splintering glass. Mrs. Bonie had an unusual means of exercising control over her husband. He was deathly afraid of chicken heads. On rare occasions, the neighbors would delight in seeing her, chicken head in hand, chase Louis out the door and around the yard. Eventually they moved out (to Map Location 69C in the 1940's) and Loren Schilling moved in.
31G	Garfield Ave	1704	Botsford	William Botsford house (rental) -- Rented by Walkers/Rasmussen (1939-46)
32A	Hayden Ave	1627	Botsford	Roy Botsford - his son (the first baby born in Altoona) Milton became a High School Principal.
34B	Hayden Ave	1419	Bowman	John Bowman - Railroader, daughter Beverly (nicknamed 'Beattles')
49A	Garfield Ave	1327	Brandstedter	John Brandstedter - Railroad Worker, Owned many homes in town
54F	Bartlett Ave	800	Bredesen	Edward Bredeson - son Bob (eventually became the Altoona School Superintendent), Jerry and Betty. See also the School Memory Book by John R. Thurston.
50H	Bartlett Ave	1204	Bresina	Bresina brothers - never married. They were Uncles to Frank, Gerald, and George Bresina. They were Big Men.
25H	Hayden Ave	928	Bresina	Gerald and Marion Bresina - Gerald was a neat guy, a quiet hard worker on CNW - Children Jackie, Geraldine and Tonie
38D	Hayden Ave	1003	Bresina	Frank and Lucy Bresina - Coal Shed Worker, children: Eugene, Richard and Lavern. (House burned in 1943 or 44)
42L	06th St W	510	Brown	Ted Brown - Great Fisherman
61S	Bartlett Ave	1827	Brown	Fred/Ted Brown
30A	Hayden Ave	1827	Brown	Ted Brown's Mother
10G	Lynn Ave	1510	Buckholtz	Robert Buckholtz - Railroader
61E	01st St W	600	Bundt	The Bundt residence - Daniel, Laura, Barbara, Bev, Frank and Edward
62E	Daniels Ave	625	Burkhart	Burkhart - Railroad, Pioneers and Good Citizens, Son named Billy
47B	Garfield Ave	1509	Cole	John Cole - Quiet people, railroad worker, son Jack - Class of 1946
10H	01st St W	228	Connell	Connell - Took in Roomers
33B	Hayden Ave	1519	Connell	Art Connell - Railroader, children; Jerry, Ginger and Patricia
36F	Garfield Ave	1220	Coss	Earl Coss - Railroad, Daughter Colleen.
50A	Garfield Ave	1219	Crowley	Dan Crowley - Railroader, daughter married a Hotkiss
01B	Spooner Ave		CSTPM&O	CSTPM&O Storage - 'A building' filled with what was said to be paper. Between tracks and current County Highway shops. In very bad shape. It burned and was never replaced.
02C	Spooner Ave		Depot	Depot: Waiting Room, Operating Room and Baggage
51J	02nd St E	519	Doolittle	Doolittle - Railroader
18D	Lynn Ave	1703	Dugan	Dugan, son Jack was an Ace Pilot in WW II, Killed in Action.

16L	Hayden Ave	1904	Dull	Russell Dull - he was an occasional playmate, son Johnny and daughter Virginia. This house burned some time during this time period.
23E	Hayden Ave	1214	Edgehill	Lucille Edgell-Buegeran - Lucille worked at the Post Office for many years. Two brothers also lived there; Bill and Fritz. Many Roomers and Large Gardens.
27H	Garfield Ave	2028	Ely	Bill Ely's original dwelling.
11B	Spooner Ave	1411	Ely	Ely's Tavern
43D	Garfield Ave	1911	Emmanuel	William Emmanuel - He ran the general store, children named Nora and William Jr. They later moved to Bloomer where he ran a resort.
22A	Lynn Ave	1403	Emmanuel	Emmanuel
39J	04th St E	403	Ensign	Ralph Ensign - His wife, Ruth (maiden name is Thurston). Had two daughters and moved to Oregon.
20L	01st St W	300	Episcopal	Old -and unused-Episcopal Church
37E	Garfield Ave	1128	Epp	Rudy Epp - Refrigerator Repairman, daughter Barbara
02E	Spooner Ave	1512	Evert	Evert's City Fuel - Supplied coal
09D	Spooner Ave	1609	Evert	Felix Evert - Owned Evert's City Fuel, one daughter
46D	Garfield Ave	1603	Finstad	Finstad - Railroader, one daughter
63G	Daniels Ave	1124	Fisher	Jack Fisher - lived with his sister and he had a chow dog that was dangerous. Jack was a simple soul who never bothered anyone, yet people were afraid of him and his dog. He walked the streets everyday doing nothing. Looking!
21L	Division St	200	Fowler	Fowler's Barbershop (eventually Mayer's Dairy Bar)
61H	01st St E	628	Fraiser	Fraiser
44D	Garfield Ave	1803	Fry	Floyd Fry - children Kay, Ray and Roger
10E	Lynn Ave	1524	Fuley	Fuley - Jeanette eventually married Bobby Knoble.
48E	01st St E	527	Garber	Earl Garber - Railroader, son Elmer (track star)
39E	Garfield Ave	928	Gilbert	Walter and Stella Gilbert - children Howard, Elmer, Garold and Betty.
25G	Hayden Ave	1000	Gilbert	Dick and Elsie Gilbert. Sons Forest and Glen (House burned in 1940)
59C	Bartlett Ave	1617	Gilligan	Junior Gilligan
23A	Lynn Ave	1227	Glassbrenner	William and Eva Glassbrenner - Constable and Railroader, children Waldemar, Freda and young Bill.
70A	Daniels Ave	1327	Gloede	William Gloede - Railroad Engineer, one son named David and a brother named Fred (Mayor of Altoona). Nice people, gentle to kids, a neat house with a big yard.
22J	Division St	319	Gloede	David and Marion Gloede - Electrician Gillette, children; David and Lavonne.
47A	Garfield Ave	1511	Gloede	Fred Gloede's - He was a railroad engineer and longtime mayor. In the latter capacity, he often played the part of the city's policeman. One time, I had dashed down the hill from the school on my bicycle and had run into one of the Sveen girls. A complaint was registered and Gloede showed up at my home. It didn't amount to much. Fred was Mayor of Altoona (1936 - 1950 and 1952 - 1961) and Mrs. Gloede ran The City and made decisions when Fred was away on the train -- this happened often. No Children. Original residence moved to Map Location 19E in about 1944
19E	Hayden Ave	1628	Gloede	Original residence moved to Map Location 19E in about 1944
51E	02nd St E	511	Gongle	Robert Gongle - Railroad Worker, City Council
09G	Lynn Ave	1612	Gorbek	Leo Gorbek
34C	Hayden Ave	1411	Grasby	Martin Grasby's Store. An ad at the time lists the following enterprises. Diamonds bought and sold, Swiss and American R.R. Watches, Watch Repair. Fire, Storm and Tornado Insurance. City Property, Improved Farms and Wild Lands.

69A	Daniels Ave	1611	Green	Green - Pioneers, Railroad Worker, an adopted son Thomas
19B	Lynn Ave	1611	Greice	Lloyd and Clara Griese - In addition to Bud
45A	Garfield Ave	1711	Grunions	Gaylord Grunions - US Rubber
33F	Garfield Ave	1520	Haas	Haas - Railroad, one son Leonard (Chancellor UWEC)
15A	Lynn Ave	2027	Hahn	Jap Hahn - Worked for CNW railroad, had a son named Irving. Short people, nice.
23B	Lynn Ave	1219	Hardies	Irv Hardies - Depot agent, Alderman and Constable. Daughter Karen, later moved to Map Location 68H
32B	Hayden Ave	1619	Harms	Harry and Luella Harms - Railroader, Daughter named Donna Lou. Outstanding trout fisherman, made play things for young kids, sold used watches, loaned money to needy people and collected old cars.
15D	06th St W	300	Harris	Henry and Hazel Harris - with four kids, Kenneth, Fern, Harold, and Joyce. Mrs. always threw birthday parties for the kids. They were always fun events. Harold 'Hank', some three years younger, was my boyhood friend with a lot of hanging around together, neighborhood games, fishing, adventures, such as walking along Otter Creek from Highway 12 to Spooner Avenue. He became the manager of Equity Livestock eventually - a good talker. He ran unsuccessfully for the state legislature. He used combs as a publicity gimmick at that time----Hair-is. Joyce was a live wire. Talkative and fun to be around. She could never remember the punch line of a joke. She had a boyfriend named Ziegenweid. Henry worked on the County Hiway Dept. and was Roger Rasmussen's boss. He drove the truck and Roger patched the holes in in the roads. Good guy, easy to like -- but The Boss.
43B	Garfield Ave	1919	Harris	John Harris - a son named John Jr., John Jr. married Virginia Walters
08H	Lynn Ave	1716	Hayden	Claude Hayden - worked at the Depot and was very helpful to me during my brief stint (1942) as a baggageman. City Council, Pioneers, compassionate, two of Altoona's finest Citizens.
08G	Spooner Ave	1719	Heideman	Charles Heideman
26A	10th St W	400	Heins	Heins- One Daughter
69F	Daniels Ave	1419	Henning	Alfred Henning - Railroad, his mother worked at the Post Office part time, One daughter named Ione (married Bob Johnson), she played piano and was a TV personality in La Crosse.
69E	Daniels Ave	1427	Henning	Ferd Henning - Railroad Engineer, One son named Robert
69L	Division St	710	Henning	Arthur Henning - Railroad, owned the Golden Spike Tavern and was active in the Democratic Party. Jean (his wife) was Postmistress. Daughter, Betty (Hagen) was also Postmistress. Son, Ray; Postal worker, City Council and County Board. Mark Hagen (Betty's Son-in-law) is Postmaster.
02D			Henning	Rink Henning - Lived in a cave and worked at the Sand house - CNW
68D	02nd St W	703	Heuer	Herman and Yerma Heuer - with children Jeanetta and Herman, Jr. This was a regular stop on the rounds that my father made as he visited relatives. Pioneers, Railroad Worker, Lutheran Church Leaders. Herman and Yerma Heuer had lived at Map Location 18A before moving here -- at one time my father could have purchased the 18A dwelling for \$600.
34G	Garfield Ave	1417	Heuer	Frank and Rose Heuer - no children, quiet couple. This home was actually built later -- in the 1940's.
26X	10th St W	428	Hines	Grandpa Hines - one daughter, farmers, nice people.
51A	02nd St E	503	Holden	Frank Holden - Railroader
38G	Garfield Ave	1012	Horsewell	Horsewell - two daughters, Alice and Gladys

48B	Garfield Ave	1419	Howard	The Howards - Anne was a beauty -- she had many children later on. Cletus became a lawyer.
26X	10th St W	528	Huggins	Huggins - children Ralph, Jackie and Loretta. Roger Rasmussen lived here 1952-54.
12H	Lynn Ave	1304	Hultberg	Henry Hultberg - Railroader, daughter Viola married Larry Lampman and this couple, with sons Garold and Robert, also lived at this address.
01A			Ice	Ice House
68H	02nd St W	612	Isaacson	Buddy Isaacson. - 'Ing' was the school janitor. A beautiful daughter, Jeanne had a steady boyfriend throughout high school. Sad to say, they made her unavailable.
44D	Garfield Ave	1803	Ives	Ms. Ives - Daughter was Helen (Floyd) Fry. She lived in an upper apartment, gentle lady, kind.
69S	Daniels Ave	1415	Jackson	Stanley Jackson - his wife's madden name was Henning, she managed the Greyhound Depot in Eau Claire.
46E	Bartlett Ave	1628	Jacobson	Cy Jacobson - Railroader, wealthy, had the best apples in their yard, his wife was beautiful and nice too.
11L	Division St	230	Jacobson	Two houses between taverns -- the one in back owned by Ruth Jacobson, front was barbershop owned by Darold Jarosch (see also Map Location 12J).
42H	Bartlett Ave	512	Jamieson	Joe Jamieson - He was a railroad engineer. The son was regarded as something of an electrical genius. He could invent and repair "things" that were beyond our understanding. I have a vague recollection that the parents moved to Florida where Mr. Jamieson died in a train wreck.
12J	Division St		Jarosch	Red's (Jarosch) Barbershop and Pool hall (see also Map Location 11L)
11L	Division St	230	Jarosch	Two houses between taverns -- the one in back owned by Ruth Jacobson, front was barbershop owned by Darold Jarosch (see also Map Location 12J).
37A	Hayden Ave	1111	Jensen	Jesse Jensen - Long time Principal, coach, and teacher. See also the Jesse Jenson book by John R. Thurston.
61B	Bartlett Ave	1419	Johnson	Olaf and Julia Johnson - Deserted/Haunted House
34C	Hayden Ave	1411	Johnson	Maurice Johnson (moved to this address after the death of Martin Grasby) - railroader, son Bob
20D	Lynn Ave	1511	Johnson	David 'Sally' Johnson - He eventually became a member of the Eau Claire County Board, later he moved to Wilson Drive and Spooner Ave.
61D	Bartlett Ave	604	Jones	Frank Jones - He worked for the Railroad, his wife was a teacher, one daughter.
18A	Lynn Ave	1727	Juno	George Juno - Railroader, children; Tom, Georgia, Patricia
09A	Spooner Ave	1627	Kallis	Ben Kallis - he owned the 400 Cafe in the 1950's
32F	Garfield Ave	1620	Kemory	Kemorys - Railroad, One daughter married Zetsman from Fall Creek
11L	Division St	230	Kensmoe	Kensmoe Barbershop - then Jarosch's
32E	Garfield Ave	1628	Kensmoe	Kensmoe - A barber.
44F	Bartlett Ave	1820	Kersten	William Kersten - Childen Deloris, Dan, Dick and Bill
15K	Hayden Ave	2028	Kersten	Ham Kersten - Railroader, three sons, Gordon, Roger and Bill. I never knew Gordon. Roger, one year older than I, was an occasional friend; we usually walked to school together. We were involved in one great event, the introduction of the game of Monopoly to our neighborhood. We did nothing else one summer but play Monopoly at the Kirsten's. His mother had a peculiarly loud, penetrating, and wavering call for him----'Roger-rrrrr-err---er.' He was a soldier during WW II and was severely wounded.

32G	Garfield Ave	1612	Kewins	Ray Kewins - railroader, no children, moved to Map Location 45G in 1950
35H	Garfield Ave	1304	Kielty	Pat Kielty - Father was a postmaster at one time. Son Jack was a paperboy. One night he was rescued from the cold by my family and brought into thaw out.
12F	Lynn Ave	1320	Killen	Marshall Killen - Railroader, children Wally, Glen, LaVern and Shirley
60H	Daniels Ave	1500	Klemstein	August Klemstein - Herb Ruscin's Grandfather
59A	Bartlett Ave	1627	Klingbeil	Herman Klingbeil - Railroader, children; Bob and Lorain
32C	Hayden Ave	1611	Klingbeil	William and Selma Klingbeil - Son James (became a Teacher) and Daughter Mary. William worked at Gillette Tires and Selma created dolls and accessories. Good Sports Fans.
17L	05th St W	320	Klohs	Ted Klohs - Father of Arthur, Railroader, children; Emma (Leland), Alfreda (Miller).
45H	Bartlett Ave	1704	Klohs	Otto Klohs - Railroader, son Otto Jr. (also a Railroader)
69B	Daniels Ave	1519	Klohs	Arthur Klohs - Railroader, children ; Jean Rosemary and Art Jr.
33C	Hayden Ave	1507	Kluth	Alvin Kluth - Railroader, son Alvin Jr.
67X	10th St W		Kneck	Vernon Kneck - three children - this address is outside the City Limits
34E	01st St E	427	Knoble	Pete Knoble - several sons and one of them was Bob
45C	Garfield Ave	1719	Kolkind	Art Kolkind - Railroader, children Charles and Evelyn
31E	Garfield Ave	1728	Koppen	Robert Koppen -- Daughter Betty
09H	Lynn Ave	1604	LaLronics	Peter LaLronics
35E	Garfield Ave	1314	Lang	John Lang - Railroad Engineer, one daughter
21H	Hayden Ave	1404	LaPage	Grace LaPage - Editor of the Paper
46A	Garfield Ave	1617	Larson	George Larson - Railroad, his wife is related to Jacobsons at Map Location 46E. One daughter named Marion (her husband drowned in a lake).
36A	Hayden Ave	1207	Larson	Joe Larson - Railroader, City Council, four children Vance, Danny, Marion and ?
12E	Lynn Ave	1324	Larson	Orville and Emily Larson - City Cop, children Orville Jr. and Carol
11C	Division St	220	Lawrence	Richard and Margaret Lawrence
66D	Bartlett Ave	503	Leland	William and Emma Leland - worked as janitor at the Altoona school, six children: Paul, Elaine, Arlene, Joan, Judy and Louise
49D	Garfield Ave	1303	Leland	William and Emma Leland, son Bernie Leland - Musician (organ player) - moved to this address in 1954
09B	Spooner Ave	1619	Livermore	Bill and Kate Livermore - Railroader, stepdaughter Rose Ann
21B	Lynn Ave	1419	Looby	Looby Meat Market - Roger's Boss 1951-54
47E	Bartlett Ave	1610	Lutheran	Lutheran Church. Now a mosque.
17D	Hayden Ave	1828	Martin	Major Martin - Railroader, one son Major Jr.
24E	Hayden Ave	1112	Martinson	Harry Martinson, a car tapper, maybe not as early as 1935.
20F	Hayden Ave	1520	Marvin	Jerry Marvin - Railroad Worker, Baseball Scout
28A	Hayden Ave	2027	Matysik	Clarence Matysik - a section worker who laid and maintained railroad tracks. Two daughters and 2 sons named Aloyius and Clancy. None of this family had anything to do with anyone in the neighborhood.
22H	Hayden Ave	1312	McDonald	Delos McDonald - Gillette, child; Ronnie, their house burned down.
08E	Lynn Ave	1728	McDonald	'H.P.' or 'Horsepower' McDonald - A railroad engineer, one daughter that became a Librarian and Teacher
12F	Lynn Ave	1320	McGovern	Cy and Maggie McGovern - Railroad Worker, two daughters and one son Jerry.
11H	Division St	304	McGrouary	McGrouary's Tavern - An apartment upstairs, now The Golden Spike
23C	Lynn Ave	1211	McGrouary	Tom and Emma McGrouary - Emma worked at the grocery store, daughters Katherine and Rosemary.
20B	Lynn Ave	1519	McGrouary	McGrouary

46B	Garfield Ave	1611	McGuire	Richard McGuire - Railroader, Son Richard was a classmate of mine.
10D	01st St E	224	McKeith	Dolly Cedaberg-McKeith, Concrete Block Home, waitress at Altoona Restaurant
34D	Division St	428	McKeith	Margaret McKeith - Character, Bartender, two daughters Neva and Delores
48A	Garfield Ave	1427	McLaughlin	Jess McLaughlin
38B	Hayden Ave	1011	Metcalf	Jess and Delia Metcalf - lived in half of a Duplex.
38C	Hayden Ave	1013	Metcalf	Richard and Mable Metcalf - lived in half of a Duplex.
33H	Garfield Ave	1504	Methodist	The Methodist Church
28L	06th St W	406	Miller	Jesse Miller - They had horses during the early 1930's that were used for his ice and coal business, road grading, and snowplowing. They had a small barn. The Millers shared a telephone party line with the Thurstons and others. Eavesdropping was the norm. After Pearl Harbor, Mrs. Miller was overheard asking what she should do now with the Japanese Morning Glory seeds she had harvested the previous fall.
42D	06th St W	504	Miller	Harry and Isla Miller's. - Jesse Miller's son. They had a daughter named Jane.
02G	Spooner Ave	1519	Miller	Ice and Fuel Company, Jess and Harry Miller - Owners
31C	Hayden Ave	1703	Milne	Howare Miline, Railroader, moved to Map Location 31D in 1950
11A	Spooner Ave	1425	Mooney	Mooney's Restaurant -- Altoona Restaurant -- "The Greasy Spoon"
61A	Bartlett Ave	1427	Musolf	Emil Musolf - Railroad, wife was on the School Board. Two sons: Gene (Professor at UW-Wausau), Jack (Retired Military), daughter Mary.
12K	Division St	213	Neill	Dike Neill's Garage (old Altoona Bank)
37D	Hayden Ave	1103	Neuers	George Neuers, daughter Marjory
30F	Garfield Ave	1828	Newell	Pettis Newell, house built in the 1950's
36G	Garfield Ave	1204	Nollie	Art Nollie - Railroad. Eau Claire County board, Altoona Mayor and City Council (very influential politician). This house burned down and rebuilt (current resident is Jeanette Zachau.
23G	Hayden Ave	1404	Olsen	Carl (Cornfed) Olsen - two daughters (Carla and Tubbie) and one son (Michael).
20E	Hayden Ave	1528	Olseth	Josephine and Olaf Olseth - Railroad, moved to Map Location 23F in 1950's
19D	Lynn Ave	1603	Patterson	Nel Patterson - daughter (Teacher/Librarian)
18C	Lynn Ave	1707	Paulsrude	Paulsrude - daughter lone was a beauty.
31B	Hayden Ave	1720	Peterson	Ed Peterson - Railroader, wife was a Nurse, no children
69D	Daniels Ave	1505	Pettis	Pettis - Railroader, wife (Lillian) worked at the Post Office, Sons Lowell and Newell
21C	Lynn Ave	1413	Post	Post Office - later moved to Map Location 21E then to 12E
38F	Garfield Ave	1020	Preston	George Preston - wife (Doris Dodge), Son Clayton

50D	Garfield Ave	1203	Radiswitz	Martin Radiswitz worked at the roundhouse and was responsible for tooting the whistle to indicate shift changes and lunch breaks. Members of the community would set their watches by Martin's toots. Four long toots signified a train wreck. He also worked at the sand house and was custodian of the Altoona Auditorium. Five sons: Lawrence, Danny, Richard, Robert and Martin. He was known to befriend young men who wanted to play basketball during off-hours in the auditorium. One of the nicest men and hardest workers. Lawrence 'Huntz' was my best friend for a long time. We spent many winter nights at my home playing ping pong on our round dining room table. All this pinging and ponging must have driven my mother mad as she was in the very next room. We would occasionally adjourn to the empty upstairs where we would construct un-flyable model airplanes. After hanging out at the pool hall most nights at a later period, we would walk home, spending hours talking at the Finstad corner before going our separate ways. The family moved to Map Location 50D in the 1940's.
19G	Hayden Ave	1612	Rask	Rask
31G	Garfield Ave	1704	Rasmussen	Percy and Alfreda (Glassbrenner) Rasmussen - 9 kids living in a duplex. Railroader, Barber, Carpenter, City Worker. Children: Charles, Yvonne, Roger, Joan, Dorothy, Sharon, Connie, Susan and Robert.
35A	Hayden Ave	1327	Rau	John Rau - Railroad, one child. Duplex with Darrell and Kate Woodington in the upper unit.
30H	Garfield Ave	1812	Ray	Beryl Ray - Foundry in Menomonie, children; Beryl and Rita.
35H	Garfield Ave	1304	Redman	George Redman, (occupied this residence after Pat Kielty moved out), had pet black squirrels.
38H	Garfield Ave	1004	Reidel	George Reidel - Uniroyal, Four sons; Maynard, Delbert, David and ? A very religious family.
63E	Daniels Ave	1128	Reiters	Hank Reiters - Electrician, Son Dennis and Daughter Fay. The family lived in various locations.
32E	Garfield Ave	1628	Rieck	Elmer Rieck - Railroad, one daughter named Eleanor.
61L	01st St E	612	Rock	George Rock - Railroad, One daughter (married Glen Gilbert). Family moved to Map Location 61L in 1938.
19A	Lynn Ave	619	Rock	George Rock - Railroad, One daughter (married Glen Gilbert). Family moved to Map Location 61L in 1938.
67X	10th St W	& Hwy 12	Rockwood	Rockwood, sons Gene and Bob.
10A	Spooner Ave	1527	Rooming H	Rooming House in the 1930's, A new house built here in 1949 by Ken Babbitt
02B			Round	Round House
16J	06th St W	311	Rudolphson	Ted and 'Gustie' Rudolphson - Ted was blind. Reason unknown. He had been a railroad worker. He made knick-knacks and tended to his chickens and garden. Occasionally, he would leave to attend the school for the blind in Janesville. For a time, the Gus Anklam's lived in the north end of this small house. It may have been a railroad box car initially. Son Ken, ill-coordinated early on, eventually became a prize winning ballroom dancer. Alvina became a nurse. Ione was a diabetic. She became a teacher and died while teaching her elementary class at the Barlett School on Farwell Street in Eau Claire. 'Gustie', a talented woman, became Altoona's City Treasurer later on. Ted, Ken, and I spent a summer digging out a basement out from under the established house.
34H	Division St	428	Russel	Hugh Russell - worked at Shute's general store and was one of Roger's mentors and friend. Son Harold went into the Air Force and became something of a superstar, flying the largest of the bombers. He was shot down and spent time as a German POW.

06D	Spooner Ave	1903	Sauer	Henry Sauer - their home was a duplex/rooming house. Daughter Betty. Son Bobby hung out with us. He had something of a romantic attachment to Lois Bonin whose family lived on the second floor. The Sauers had what they considered to be a "swimming" pool on the west side of this house. It was tiny, more suited to water lilies than swimmers. One might wade in it, or sit in it, but one could never swim in it. If one ventured in, there was every danger of contracting all manner of dermatological diseases. Both the Sauer and Wittren houses were of the same general concrete block construction.
70J	Division St	811	Schilling	Ella Schilling -- Daughter of Clyde
69H	Division St	814	Schilling	Clyde Schilling - three daughters; Margaret (McKeeth), Marge (Nadler) and Ella -- raised berries and goats. Two sons; Loren(Fire chief) and LeRoy (Railroad). These people built Altoona and kept it going, they were so kind to all. Margaret was Roger's Godmother.
13A	Lynn Ave	227	Schilling	Leroy and Lula Schilling - Railroader, Mechanic. Children Marvel, Robert, Gary, Vickie, Leroy and Ace.
04D	Spooner Ave	2103	Schilling	Grandpa Schilling - Brother to Herman and Clyde, Uncle to LeRoy, Claude and Coon Schilling. I remember little about them. They planted corn west of 7th Street West from their house on Spooner to Hayden. I remember one painful event when I got caught barefoot in the hot and burning sand of their cornfield. I could not escape this sizzling Hell.
61F	Bartlett Ave		School	The Old Altoona Public School
10F	Lynn Ave	1520	Schroeder	Tony Schroeder - Presto
60B	Bartlett Ave	1519	Schwartz	Ben Schwartz - Railroader, son Warren was an Ace Pilot in Korea.
46B	Garfield Ave	1619	Seigel	Louis and Marvel Seigel - Railroad Brakeman, one daughter
53E	Bartlett Ave	928	Semisch	Otto Semisch - Worked for Eau Claire County Highway Dept. Two sons; Harold and Arnold and one daughter; Laura.
52M	Bartlett Ave		Semisch	Semisch Farm and Barn built by Julius and Auguste Semisch
51D	Garfield Ave	1111	Semisch	Julius and Auguste Semisch (Laura's Grandparents), daughter Anne also lived here.
38E	Garfield Ave	1028	Shafer	Shafer - Sons Glen, William and ? Daughters Betty, Mona, Peggy
35B	Hayden Ave	1307	Shute	Frank Shute - owner of Shute's Store
34C	Hayden Ave	1504	Shute	Shute's General Store and Shed. Roger's first job at age 11- grass and snow.
59D	Bartlett Ave	1601	Sires	Lee and Lydia Sires - Lee, 'Huntz' Radisewitz, and I used to buddy together on occasion. Lee was a year older than I. He played forward on the unremarkable 1940-41 basketball team. He had a great left hand shot.
46H	Bartlett Ave	1604	Sires	Skippy Sires, Brother of Lee - sons Richard and Robert
29F			Skating	The skating rink in an entirely empty block. The lot's soil was plowed up and fashioned into banks which contained the water which became ice. Although near at hand, I never enjoyed the experience of going there -- icy cold, rough ice, no shelter, clamp on skates that always fell off, weak ankles. It was used as an athletic practice field in spring and fall.
21A	Lynn Ave	1421	Smith	Smith's Rooming House
32H	Garfield Ave	1604	Sorenson	Sorenson's -- later Bill Leland, then Roger Rasmussen, then Rick Thurston. When Roger bought this neat cottage it brought back great memories.
47C	Garfield Ave	1525	Squire	Squires- two sons named LaVern and Bernie. Later owned by Vince Beach.

17C	Lynn Ave	1804	St. Mary	St. Mary's Church Rectory - Father Noonan (a Protestant's best friend).
07B			St. Mary	St. Mary's Catholic School. This became the St. Benedict's School for Boys in 1938.
17B			St. Mary	St. Mary's Church
44B	Garfield Ave	1813	Stahl	John Stahl - He was an ardent fan of Altoona basketball. At times, when he went with us on 'away' games, he would pay for a meal for us. In those days, such generosity was unusual; our meager feasting brought us pleasure beyond any current day belief. He had three daughters.
16D	Lynn Ave	1903	Stanley	George Stanley - He used to walk with a cane. He ran 'Stanley's,' now the '400 Club'. Two children, Lloyd and ?
59B	Bartlett Ave	1619	Steinke	Emil Steinke (on corner) - no house there now, great Lutheran Church supporters.
13B	Lynn Ave	1220	Stephanie	Josie Stephanie - single lady
50B	Garfield Ave	1217	Steuding	Walter Steuding - Railroader, two sons James and Charles. Charles 'Chuck' Steuding, AHS Class of 1947. One of our 1946 'gang.' Later on, he became the school custodian.
37A	Hayden Ave	1111	Steuding	Roy Steuding (occupied this home after Jesse Jensen moved out) - Railroader, children Tom and Mary Jane.
25A	03rd St E	300	Stewart	Lawrence and Inez (Sturz) Stewart -- her sister, Helen, married Owen Stewart (sisters married brothers). They had a small house by the tracks that burned.
62D	Bartlett Ave	1203	Stewart	Owens Stewart - two or three children.
25A	Lynn Ave	303	Stewart	Lawrence and Inez Stewart (her maiden name is Sturz) - children; Bob, Darlene and Donna.
19H	Hayden Ave	1604	Stoeffel	Stoeffel - Railroader, Rooming House. Daughter Jeanette was a year younger than I.
16F	Hayden Ave	1928	Stolp	Olgie Stolp - He was called 'Oye-she.' Railroad worker, Klingbeil family connection. He and a renter worked for the section crew. Neither would have anything to do with neighbor Matysik, a member of that crew nor each other. Each walked to work alone. The Mrs. wanted to give me a mutt for a pet, but my mother would not hear of it. Their many dogs would dig holes in the dusty ground and crawl in to get some respite from the heat.
48G	Bartlett Ave	1412	Strauch	Edward Strauch - Railroader
27F	Garfield Ave	2136	Strong	Dean Strong - Butcher at Kopplin's Grocery Store.
68ABJ	03rd St W	703	Sturz	Elton Sturz - Ice House, children; Michael, Larry, Duane and Susie
60A	Bartlett Ave	1611	Sturz	William Sturz - Railroader, daughter Mary Jane
45E	Bartlett Ave	1708	Sturz	Norman, Bernie Sturz
25K			Sturz	Sturz - Robert (played forward on Altoona's 1939 Championship team and afterwards, he entered CCCs), Inez, Ida Mae, and Helen.
01H	Spooner Ave		Sund	Gutrum Sund (off map-upper left) - Lived at what is now the northwest corner of Spooner and 10th Street West. City Engineer for 30 years. Children were George and Phyliss.
33A	Hayden Ave	1527	Sveen	Sveen
19F	Hayden Ave	1620	Taylor	Roy and May Taylor - Railroader, good friends and fellow party-ers with the Griese's.
72X	03rd St E	810	Thompson	LuLa Thompson - raised goats, sheep, cows, apples and berries. She owned most of the land known as the Shale Pits (in the water tower area). A Pioneer and social commentator.
48D	Division St	504	Thompson	Neils and Lois Thompson - she worked at the Post Office, two children; Judy and Jim.

49B	Garfield Ave	1319	Thompson	Clarence 'C.B.' Thompson's - Six daughters (the youngest was Doris) and one son, Bill. He was a classmate of mine from K through graduation. Air Force in WW II. Uniroyal engineer. Lived on Hayden west of 7th street for years and then moved to 927 East 5th.
33D	Hayden Ave	1503	Thompson	Gunder Thompson -children; Bob, Betty, Snooks and Tommy.
15M	06th St W	328	Thurston	John H. and Mary A. Thurston - two sons, John R. (born 1924) and Richard G. (born 1934). There is nothing special about this house or these persons in 1935. But 328 West Sixth Street was the starting point of my 1991 reminiscing and the center of my universe during the time period of 1928-1942. The adjacent empty lot and its basket was the site of a lot of basketeering on the part of neighborhood kids.
15J	07th St W	319	Thurston	Frederick 'Fritz' and Nettie Thurston - aunt and uncle of mine. Fritz was with me at Luther Hospital when my father died. This listing is an exception: in 1935, his home site was an empty lot.
44A	Garfield Ave	1827	Thurston	Uncle George and Aunt Marie Thurston plus two daughters named Alice and Eleanor. He was a railroad clerk and Altoona city clerk for years. He unexpectedly won election as mayor with write-in votes. He served only one term. Long time incumbent mayor Fred Gloede was very unhappy and demanded a recount.
39A	Hayden Ave	927	Thurston	Thurstons - Charles 'Big Chuck' and Marie. Home of Frederick 'Fuzzy.' Also, Dorothy, Ruth, Jane, Bob and James.
02A			Track	Rip" or Rep" Track
60G	Daniels Ave	1504	Underwood	Underwood - William 'Moose' and Fritz were sons.
70D	Daniels Ave	1305	Underwood	Charlie Underwood - Railroad. His son James became a banker.
62A	01st St E	603	Valske	Howard Valske Jr - Railroad Engineer, son Bob (Bob's wife Madlyn worked at the Post Office).
31F	Garfield Ave	1712	Valske	Howard Valske - Railroad, Had one son named Howard Jr.
13C	Lynn Ave	1212	Vindal	Vindal's - oldest was Orville, then Kenneth (my classmate) and Arthur (who had a knack for giving nick-names).
47H	Bartlett Ave	1504	Volkmann	Volkmann - railroader, became blind later in life.
59H	02nd St W	628	Wagner	John Wagner - children; Tony, Jim, John and Mary
64A	03rd St E	703	Walker	Cecil Walker - Worked at grocery stores. Three Daughters Joyce, Elaine, Darlene.
31G	Garfield Ave	1704 1/2	Walker	George Walker - children; Loren, LaVone and LaVere -- a duplex (lower)
34A	Hayden Ave	1427	Walker	Bernie Walker - worked at the Ice House, three children
49C	Garfield Ave	1311	Walters	John Walters - Railroader, son Frederick was a good friend and fishing partner. He died later of a brain tumor. I had a date of two with his sister Virginia who worked at the grocery store and much later as a respiratory therapist at Sacred Heart Hospital.
18F	Lynn Ave	1715	Westberg	John Westberg - Engineer CNW
21S	Lynn Ave	1407	Whitwahn	Chinnie's (Whitwahn) Meat Market
05E	Lynn Ave	2028	Whitwam	Chinnie Whitwam ran a meat market downtown. Later Bill and Mae Ely lived here. Ralph Ely, three years older, was my boyhood idol. He was the captain of the 1939 Altoona basketball team that won the State Class C championship.
36D	Hayden Ave	1203	Wilcox	Wilcox - three sons, Catholic Schools in Eau Claire
35D	Hayden Ave	1303	Wilcox	Charlie Wilcox - Dignified, good citizen, crippled later in life.
45A	Garfield Ave	1711	Willman	Mary Willman (occupied this home after Gaylord Grunions moved out) - took in roomers.
26 LM	10th St W	826	Wilman	Lois Wilman - tree farmer

06A	Spooner Ave		Wittren	Henry Wittren - Railroader, wife managed Eau Claire newspaper. Children; Dorothy Donnie, Jerry and Lloyd. Lloyd was one of the gang who went fishing with us, hung out at the pool hall, and played basketball in the nearby Thurston empty lot.
58EFGH	Bartlett Ave		Woodington	Clyde Woodington lived here for awhile before moving to 7th West His first marriage produced Darrel who ran the downtown Altoona service station. Donald achieved an Ed D and assumed a position of prominence in Colorado. Margaret had nickname of 'Mugs.' Second marriage produced Neil, George, and James. George and I took a course in Introductory Sociology together at the University of Wisconsin in Madison after the war. He went on to become an M.D. Neil was a brilliant student and a reserve on our 1942 basketball team. He and I flashed on and off each other's radar for a long time. When I returned to Madison in 1947 to attend the U. of Wisconsin after a year at Michigan State College, I had difficulty in finding lodging. The barracks out at the airport were noisy and far away from the campus. Neil was very helpful and soon I was living in the same house as he did at 39 South Randall Street, near the University Fieldhouse and football stadium. We had a great year. He was attending law school along with Duke Herrick. Eau Claire's John Gallagher lived at the same place. All of us would study hard and then adjourn to a nearby tavern for beer and conversation. I moved, but saw Neil regularly as we rode to and from Altoona in a Chrysler driven by Osseo's Bob Leassum. Bob charged us each a dollar for the door to door ride. He became an M.D., following in his father's footsteps by maintaining a practice in Osseo. My next brief contact with Neil was in 1953 when I returned from Iowa City to begin work as a clinical psychologist at the Veterans Administration Hospital. He helped my get into some housing that he owned near the Capitol. This time it was most unsatisfactory. He was a partner in a Menard-like business called Bradwood. He was active in the Democratic party and perhaps because of this, he got into serious legal problems. The last time I saw him was out at Eau Claire's Fuzzy Thurston's Left Guard Restaurant. He had some involvement in that enterprise.
11E	Lynn Ave	1420	Woodington	Darrel Woodington Gas Station
18B	Lynn Ave	1725	Wright	George Wright - railroader, children Diane and James.
05H	Lynn Ave		Zell	The Zell house. Darlene my first girlfriend with first kiss and all that. A relatively new house. For years, the Ely/Whitwam house had been the only one on this entire block.
End of Surname Sort				

Start of Map Number Sort				
Map Location	Street Name	Street Number	Surname	Comments
01A			Ice	Ice House
01B	Spooner Ave		CSTPM&O	CSTPM&O Storage - 'A building' filled with what was said to be paper. Between tracks and current County Highway shops. In very bad shape. It burned and was never replaced.
01H	Spooner Ave		Sund	Gutrum Sund (off map-upper left) - Lived at what is now the northwest corner of Spooner and 10th Street West. City Engineer for 30 years. Children were George and Phylliss.
02A				Rip" or Rep" Track
02B			Round	Round House
02C	Spooner Ave		Depot	Depot: Waiting Room, Operating Room and Baggage
02D			Henning	Rink Henning - Lived in a cave and worked at the Sand house - CNW
02E	Spooner Ave	1512	Evert	Evert's City Fuel - Supplied coal
02G	Spooner Ave	1519	Miller	Ice and Fuel Company, Jess and Harry Miller - Owners
04D	Spooner Ave	2103	Schilling	Grandpa Schilling - Brother to Herman and Clyde, Uncle to LeRoy, Claude and Coon Schilling. I remember little about them. They planted corn west of 7th Street West from their house on Spooner to Hayden. I remember one painful event when I got caught barefoot in the hot and burning sand of their cornfield. I could not escape this sizzling Hell.
05E	Lynn Ave	2028	Whitwam	Chinnie Whitwam ran a meat market downtown. Later Bill and Mae Ely lived here. Ralph Ely, three years older, was my boyhood idol. He was the captain of the 1939 Altoona basketball team that won the State Class C championship.
05H	Lynn Ave		Zell	The Zell house. Darlene my first girlfriend with first kiss and all that. A relatively new house. For years, the Ely/Whitwam house had been the only one on this entire block.
06A	Spooner Ave		Wittren	Henry Wittren - Railroader, wife managed Eau Claire newspaper. Children; Dorothy Donnie, Jerry and Lloyd. Lloyd was one of the gang who went fishing with us, hung out at the pool hall, and played basketball in the nearby Thurston empty lot.
06D	Spooner Ave	1903	Sauer	Henry Sauer - their home was a duplex/rooming house. Daughter Betty. Son Bobby hung out with us. He had something of a romantic attachment to Lois Bonin whose family lived on the second floor. The Sauers had what they considered to be a "swimming" pool on the west side of this house. It was tiny, more suited to water lilies than swimmers. One might wade in it, or sit in it, but one could never swim in it. If one ventured in, there was every danger of contracting all manner of dermatological diseases. Both the Sauer and Wittren houses were of the same general concrete block construction.
07B			St. Mary	St. Mary's Catholic School. This became the St. Benedict's School for Boys in 1938.
08E	Lynn Ave	1728	McDonald	'H.P.' or 'Horsepower' McDonald - A railroad engineer, one daughter that became a Librarian and Teacher

08F	Lynn Ave	1720	Becker	Becker's - Bud Griese's grandparents. Mr. Becker had been a mayor and councilman of Altoona. Son Norm and grandson Bud lived with them.
08G	Spooner Ave	1719	Heideman	Charles Heideman
08H	Lynn Ave	1716	Hayden	Claude Hayden - worked at the Depot and was very helpful to me during my brief stint (1942) as a baggageman. City Council, Pioneers, compassionate, two of Altoona's finest Citizens.
09A	Spooner Ave	1627	Kallis	Ben Kallis - he owned the 400 Cafe in the 1950's
09B	Spooner Ave	1619	Livermore	Bill and Kate Livermore - Railroader, stepdaughter Rose Ann
09D	Spooner Ave	1609	Evert	Felix Evert - Owned Evert's City Fuel, one daughter
09G	Lynn Ave	1612	Gorbek	Leo Gorbek
09H	Lynn Ave	1604	LaLonics	Peter LaLonics
10A	Spooner Ave	1527	Rooming H	Rooming House in the 1930's, A new house built here in 1949 by Ken Babbitt
10D	01st St E	224	McKeith	Dolly Cedaberg-McKeith, Concrete Block Home, waitress at Altoona Restaurant
10E	Lynn Ave	1524	Fuley	Fuley - Jeanette eventually married Bobby Knoble.
10F	Lynn Ave	1520	Schroeder	Tony Schroeder - Presto
10G	Lynn Ave	1510	Buckholtz	Robert Buckholtz - Railroader
10H	01st St W	228	Connell	Connell - Took in Roomers
11A	Spooner Ave	1425	Mooney	Mooney's Restaurant -- Altoona Restaurant -- "The Greasy Spoon"
11B	Spooner Ave	1411	Ely	Ely's Tavern
11C	Division St	220	Lawrence	Richard and Margaret Lawrence
11E	Lynn Ave	1420	Woodington	Darrel Woodington Gas Station
11H	Division St	304	McGrouary	McGrouary's Tavern - An apartment upstairs, now The Golden Spike
11L	Division St	230	Jacobson	Two houses between taverns -- the one in back owned by Ruth Jacobson, front was barbershop owned by Darold Jarosch (see also Map Location 12J).
11L	Division St	230	Jarosch	Two houses between taverns -- the one in back owned by Ruth Jacobson, front was barbershop owned by Darold Jarosch (see also Map Location 12J).
11L	Division St	230	Kensmoe	Kensmoe Barbershop - then Jarosch's
12E	Lynn Ave	1324	Larson	Orville and Emily Larson - City Cop, children Orville Jr. and Carol
12F	Lynn Ave	1320	Killen	Marshall Killen - Railroader, children Wally, Glen, LaVern and Shirley
12F	Lynn Ave	1320	McGovern	Cy and Maggie McGovern - Railroad Worker, two daughters and one son Jerry.
12G	Lynn Ave	1312	Bilderback	Bilderback - son Leo lived with his Mom.
12H	Lynn Ave	1304	Hultberg	Henry Hultberg - Railroader, daughter Viola married Larry Lampman and this couple, with sons Garold and Robert, also lived at this address.
12J	Division St		Jarosch	Red's (Jarosch) Barbershop and Pool hall (see also Map Location 11L)
12K	Division St	213	Neill	Dike Neill's Garage (old Altoona Bank)
13A	Lynn Ave	227	Schilling	Leroy and Lula Schilling - Railroader, Mechanic. Children Marvel, Robert, Gary, Vickie, Leroy and Ace.
13B	Lynn Ave	1220	Stephanie	Josie Stephanie - single lady
13C	Lynn Ave	1212	Vindal	Vindal's - oldest was Orville, then Kenneth (my classmate) and Arthur (who had a knack for giving nick-names).

15A	Lynn Ave	2027	Hahn	Jap Hahn - Worked for CNW railroad, had a son named Irving. Short people, nice.
15D	06th St W	300	Harris	Henry and Hazel Harris - with four kids, Kenneth, Fern, Harold, and Joyce. Mrs. always threw birthday parties for the kids. They were always fun events. Harold 'Hank', some three years younger, was my boyhood friend with a lot of hanging around together, neighborhood games, fishing, adventures, such as walking along Otter Creek from Highway 12 to Spooner Avenue. He became the manager of Equity Livestock eventually - a good talker. He ran unsuccessfully for the state legislature. He used combs as a publicity gimmick at that time----Hair-is. Joyce was a live wire. Talkative and fun to be around. She could never remember the punch line of a joke. She had a boyfriend named Ziegenweid. Henry worked on the County Hiway Dept. and was Roger Rasmussen's boss. He drove the truck and Roger patched the holes in in the roads. Good guy, easy to like -- but The Boss.
15J	07th St W	319	Thurston	Frederick 'Fritz' and Nettie Thurston - aunt and uncle of mine. Fritz was with me at Luther Hospital when my father died. This listing is an exception: in 1935, his home site was an empty lot.
15K	Hayden Ave	2028	Kersten	Ham Kersten - Railroader, three sons, Gordon, Roger and Bill. I never knew Gordon. Roger, one year older than I, was an occasional friend; we usually walked to school together. We were involved in one great event, the introduction of the game of Monopoly to our neighborhood. We did nothing else one summer but play Monopoly at the Kirsten's. His mother had a peculiarly loud, penetrating, and wavering call for him----'Roger-rrrrr-err---er.' He was a soldier during WW II and was severely wounded.
15M	06th St W	328	Thurston	John H. and Mary A. Thurston - two sons, John R. (born 1924) and Richard G. (born 1934). There is nothing special about this house or these persons in 1935. But 328 West Sixth Street was the starting point of my 1991 reminiscing and the center of my universe during the time period of 1928-1942. The adjacent empty lot and its basket was the site of a lot of basketeering on the part of neighborhood kids.
16D	Lynn Ave	1903	Stanley	George Stanley - He used to walk with a cane. He ran 'Stanley's,' now the '400 Club'. Two children, Lloyd and ?
16F	Hayden Ave	1928	Stolp	Olgie Stolp - He was called 'Oye-she.' Railroad worker, Klingbeil family connection. He and a renter worked for the section crew. Neither would have anything to do with neighbor Matysik, a member of that crew nor each other. Each walked to work alone. The Mrs. wanted to give me a mutt for a pet, but my mother would not hear of it. Their many dogs would dig holes in the dusty ground and crawl in to get some respite from the heat.

16J	06th St W	311	Rudolphson	Ted and 'Gustie' Rudolphson - Ted was blind. Reason unknown. He had been a railroad worker. He made knick-knacks and tended to his chickens and garden. Occasionally, he would leave to attend the school for the blind in Janesville. For a time, the Gus Anklam's lived in the north end of this small house. It may have been a railroad box car initially. Son Ken, ill-coordinated early on, eventually became a prize winning ballroom dancer. Alvina became a nurse. Ione was a diabetic. She became a teacher and died while teaching her elementary class at the Barlett School on Farwell Street in Eau Claire. 'Gustie', a talented woman, became Altoona's City Treasurer later on. Ted, Ken, and I spent a summer digging out a basement out from under the established house.
16L	Hayden Ave	1904	Dull	Russell Dull - he was an occasional playmate, son Johnny and daughter Virginia. This house burned some time during this time period.
17B			St. Mary	St. Mary's Church
17C	Lynn Ave	1804	St. Mary	St. Mary's Church Rectory - Father Noonan (a Protestant's best friend).
17D	Hayden Ave	1828	Martin	Major Martin - Railroader, one son Major Jr.
17L	05th St W	320	Klohs	Ted Klohs - Father of Arthur, Railroader, children; Emma (Leland), Alfreda (Miller).
18A	Lynn Ave	1727	Juno	George Juno - Railroader, children; Tom, Georgia, Patricia
18B	Lynn Ave	1725	Wright	George Wright - railroader, children Diane and James.
18C	Lynn Ave	1707	Paulsrude	Paulsrude - daughter Ione was a beauty.
18D	Lynn Ave	1703	Dugan	Dugan, son Jack was an Ace Pilot in WW II, Killed in Action.
18F	Lynn Ave	1715	Westberg	John Westberg - Engineer CNW
19A	Lynn Ave	619	Rock	George Rock - Railroad, One daughter (married Glen Gilbert). Family moved to Map Location 61L in 1938.
19B	Lynn Ave	1611	Greice	Lloyd and Clara Griese - In addition to Bud
19D	Lynn Ave	1603	Patterson	Nel Patterson - daughter (Teacher/Librarian)
19E	Hayden Ave	1628	Gloede	Original residence moved to Map Location 19E in about 1944
19F	Hayden Ave	1620	Taylor	Roy and May Taylor - Railroader, good friends and fellow party-ers with the Griese's.
19G	Hayden Ave	1612	Rask	Rask
19H	Hayden Ave	1604	Stoeffel	Stoeffel - Railroader, Rooming House. Daughter Jeanette was a year younger than I.
20B	Lynn Ave	1519	McGrouary	McGrouary
20D	Lynn Ave	1511	Johnson	David 'Sally' Johnson - He eventually became a member of the Eau Claire County Board, later he moved to Wilson Drive and Spooner Ave.
20E	Hayden Ave	1528	Olseth	Josephine and Olaf Olseth - Railroad, moved to Map Location 23F in 1950's
20F	Hayden Ave	1520	Marvin	Jerry Marvin - Railroad Worker, Baseball Scout
20L	01st St W	300	Episcopal	Old -and unused-Episcopal Church
21A	Lynn Ave	1421	Smith	Smith's Rooming House
21B	Lynn Ave	1419	Looby	Looby Meat Market - Roger's Boss 1951-54
21C	Lynn Ave	1413	Post	Post Office - later moved to Map Location 21E then to 12E
21D	Lynn Ave	1401	Berg	Berg's Store and Dairy Bar - Apartments Above and next door west is Cheney Meat Market
21H	Hayden Ave	1404	LaPage	Grace LaPage - Editor of the Paper
21L	Division St	200	Fowler	Fowler's Barbershop (eventually Mayer's Dairy Bar)
21S	Lynn Ave	1407	Whitwahn	Chinnie's (Whitwahn) Meat Market

22A	Lynn Ave	1403	Emmanuel	Emmanuel
22D	01st St E	210	Auditorium	Auditorium and Fire Truck Enclosure
22E	Division St	327	Blackroots	Blackroots, Railroader
22H	Hayden Ave	1312	McDonald	Delos McDonald - Gillette, child; Ronnie, their house burned down.
22J	Division St	319	Gloede	David and Marion Gloede - Electrician Gillette, children; David and Lavonne.
23A	Lynn Ave	1227	Glassbrenner	William and Eva Glassbrenner - Constable and Railroader, children Waldemar, Freda and young Bill.
23B	Lynn Ave	1219	Hardies	Irv Hardies - Depot agent, Alderman and Constable. Daughter Karen, later moved to Map Location 68H
23C	Lynn Ave	1211	McGrouary	Tom and Emma McGrouary - Emma worked at the grocery store, daughters Katherine and Rosemary.
23E	Hayden Ave	1214	Edgehill	Lucille Edgell-Buegeran - Lucille worked at the Post Office for many years. Two brothers also lived there; Bill and Fritz. Many Roomers and Large Gardens.
23F	Hayden Ave	1212	Ackerman	Robert Ackerman - Railroader, Haunted by Mae McGrouary's Parrot
23G	Hayden Ave	1404	Olsen	Carl (Cornfed) Olsen - two daughters (Carla and Tubbie) and one son (Michael).
24A	Lynn Ave	1127	Blake	Blake - A couple with no children - This is the site of the Altoona Rooming house which burned in 1918. The family moved to Map Location 73K in 1956.
24B	Lynn Ave	1119	Anderson	Anderson, I remember a mean little white dog that nipped at heels.
24E	Hayden Ave	1112	Martinson	Harry Martinson, a car tapper, maybe not as early as 1935.
25A	03rd St E	300	Stewart	Lawrence and Inez (Sturz) Stewart -- her sister, Helen, married Owen Stewart (sisters married brothers). They had a small house by the tracks that burned.
25A	Lynn Ave	303	Stewart	Lawrence and Inez Stewart (her maiden name is Sturz) - children; Bob, Darlene and Donna.
25G	Hayden Ave	1000	Gilbert	Dick and Elsie Gilbert. Sons Forest and Glen (House burned in 1940)
25H	Hayden Ave	928	Bresina	Gerald and Marion Bresina - Gerald was a neat guy, a quiet hard worker on CNW - Children Jackie, Geraldine and Tonie
25K			Sturz	Sturz - Robert (played forward on Altoona's 1939 Championship team and afterwards, he entered CCCs), Inez, Ida Mae, and Helen.
26 LM	10th St W	826	Wilman	Lois Wilman - tree farmer
26A	10th St W	400	Heins	Heins- One Daughter
26X	10th St W	428	Hines	Grandpa Hines - one daughter, farmers, nice people.
26X	10th St W	528	Huggins	Huggins - children Ralph, Jackie and Loretta. Roger Rasmussen lived here 1952-54.
27F	Garfield Ave	2136	Strong	Dean Strong - Butcher at Kopplin's Grocery Store.
27H	Garfield Ave	2028	Ely	Bill Ely's original dwelling.
28A	Hayden Ave	2027	Matysik	Clarence Matysik - a section worker who laid and maintained railroad tracks. Two daughters and 2 sons named Aloyius and Clancy. None of this family had anything to do with anyone in the neighborhood.

28L	06th St W	406	Miller	Jesse Miller - They had horses during the early 1930's that were used for his ice and coal business, road grading, and snowplowing. They had a small barn. The Millers shared a telephone party line with the Thurstons and others. Eavesdropping was the norm. After Pearl Harbor, Mrs. Miller was overheard asking what she should do now with the Japanese Morning Glory seeds she had harvested the previous fall.
29F			Skating	The skating rink in an entirely empty block. The lot's soil was plowed up and fashioned into banks which contained the water which became ice. Although near at hand, I never enjoyed the experience of going there -- icy cold, rough ice, no shelter, clamp on skates that always fell off, weak ankles. It was used as an athletic practice field in spring and fall.
30A	Hayden Ave	1827	Brown	Ted Brown's Mother
30F	Garfield Ave	1828	Newell	Pettis Newell, house built in the 1950's
30H	Garfield Ave	1812	Ray	Beryl Ray - Foundry in Menomonie, children; Bertyl and Rita.
31A	Hayden Ave	1727	Bonnell	Harry Bonnell - Railroad Worker, Nice House, Bachelor
31B	Hayden Ave	1720	Peterson	Ed Peterson - Railroader, wife was a Nurse, no children
31C	Hayden Ave	1703	Milne	Howare Miline, Railroader, moved to Map Location 31D in 1950
31E	Garfield Ave	1728	Koppen	Robert Koppen -- Daughter Betty
31F	Garfield Ave	1712	Valske	Howard Valske - Railroad, Had one son named Howard Jr.
31G	Garfield Ave	1704	Botsford	William Botsford house (rental) -- Rented by Walkers/Rasmussen (1939-46)
31G	Garfield Ave	1704	Rasmussen	Percy and Alfreda (Glassbrenner) Rasmussen - 9 kids living in a duplex. Railroader, Barber, Carpenter, City Worker. Children: Charles, Yvonne, Roger, Joan, Dorothy, Sharon, Connie, Susan and Robert.
31G	Garfield Ave	1704 1/2	Walker	George Walker - children; Loren, LaVone and LaVere -- a duplex (lower)
32A	Hayden Ave	1627	Botsford	Roy Botsford - his son (the first baby born in Altoona) Milton became a High School Principal.
32B	Hayden Ave	1619	Harms	Harry and Luella Harms - Railroader, Daughter named Donna Lou. Outstanding trout fisherman, made play things for young kids, sold used watches, loaned money to needy people and collected old cars.
32C	Hayden Ave	1611	Klingbeil	William and Selma Klingbeil - Son James (became a Teacher) and Daughter Mary. William worked at Gillette Tires and Selma created dolls and accessories. Good Sports Fans.
32D	Hayden Ave	1603	Beach	'Shorty' Beach - CNW Worker, daughter Hazel was a year older than I.
32E	Garfield Ave	1628	Kensmoe	Kensmoe - A barber.
32E	Garfield Ave	1628	Rieck	Elmer Rieck - Railroad, one daughter named Eleanor.
32F	Garfield Ave	1620	Kemory	Kemorys - Railroad, One daughter married Zetsman from Fall Creek
32G	Garfield Ave	1612	Kewins	Ray Kewins - railroader, no children, moved to Map Location 45G in 1950

32H	Garfield Ave	1628	Bieloh	Bieloh's - A mixed memory here because I remember them living a block to the east as well. Son Jack and I would spend endless hours constructing un-flyable model airplanes. When his father died unexpectedly, this shook all us kids. Fathers weren't supposed to die. The remaining family moved to Spooner. All contacts then ceased. I believe that he eventually had his own insurance agency in Spooner.
32H	Garfield Ave	1604	Sorenson	Sorenson's -- later Bill Leland, then Roger Rasmussen, then Rick Thurston. When Roger bought this neat cottage it brought back great memories.
33A	Hayden Ave	1527	Sveen	Sveen
33B	Hayden Ave	1519	Connell	Art Connell - Railroader, children; Jerry, Ginger and Patricia
33C	Hayden Ave	1507	Kluth	Alvin Kluth - Railroader, son Alvin Jr.
33D	Hayden Ave	1503	Thompson	Gunder Thompson -children; Bob, Betty, Snooks and Tommy.
33F	Garfield Ave	1520	Haas	Haas - Railroad, one son Leonard (Chancellor UWEC)
33H	Garfield Ave	1504	Methodist	The Methodist Church
34A	Hayden Ave	1427	Walker	Bernie Walker - worked at the Ice House, three children
34B	Hayden Ave	1419	Bowman	John Bowman - Railroader, daughter Beverly (nicknamed 'Beattles')
34C	Hayden Ave	1411	Grasby	Martin Grasby's Store. An ad at the time lists the following enterprises. Diamonds bought and sold, Swiss and American R.R. Watches, Watch Repair. Fire, Storm and Tornado Insurance. City Property, Improved Farms and Wild Lands.
34C	Hayden Ave	1411	Johnson	Maurice Johnson (moved to this address after the death of Martin Grasby) - railroader, son Bob
34C	Hayden Ave	1504	Shute	Shute's General Store and Shed. Roger's first job at age 11- grass and snow.
34D	Division St	428	McKeith	Margaret McKeith - Character, Bartender, two daughters Neva and Delores
34E	01st St E	427	Knoble	Pete Knoble - several sons and one of them was Bob
34G	Garfield Ave	1417	Heuer	Frank and Rose Heuer - no children, quiet couple. This home was actually built later -- in the 1940's.
34H	Division St	428	Russel	Hugh Russell - worked at Shute's general store and was one of Roger's mentors and friend. Son Harold went into the Air Force and became something of a superstar, flying the largest of the bombers. He was shot down and spent time as a German POW.
35A	Hayden Ave	1327	Rau	John Rau - Railroad, one child. Duplex with Darrell and Kate Woodington in the upper unit.
35B	Hayden Ave	1307	Shute	Frank Shute - owner of Shute's Store
35D	Hayden Ave	1303	Wilcox	Charlie Wilcox - Dignified, good citizen, crippled later in life.
35E	Garfield Ave	1314	Lang	John Lang - Railroad Engineer, one daughter
35F	Garfield Ave	1312	Anding	A daughter Veralia
35H	Garfield Ave	1304	Kielty	Pat Kielty - Father was a postmaster at one time. Son Jack was a paperboy. One night he was rescued from the cold by my family and brought into thaw out.
35H	Garfield Ave	1304	Redman	George Redman, (occupied this residence after Pat Kielty moved out), had pet black squirrels.
36A	Hayden Ave	1207	Larson	Joe Larson - Railroader, City Council, four children Vance, Danny, Marion and ?
36D	Hayden Ave	1203	Wilcox	Wilcox - three sons, Catholic Schools in Eau Claire

36F	Garfield Ave	1220	Coss	Earl Coss - Railroad, Daughter Colleen.
36G	Garfield Ave	1204	Nollie	Art Nollie - Railroad. Eau Claire County board, Altoona Mayor and City Council (very influential politician). This house burned down and rebuilt (current resident is Jeanette Zachau.
37A	Hayden Ave	1111	Jensen	Jesse Jensen - Long time Principal, coach, and teacher. See also the Jesse Jenson book by John R. Thurston.
37A	Hayden Ave	1111	Steuding	Roy Steuding (occupied this home after Jesse Jensen moved out) - Railroader, children Tom and Mary Jane.
37B	Hayden Ave		Bellesbach	William Bellesbach -- Railroader, I recall kids, Richard, Mary, Anne, John and Shirley.
37D	Hayden Ave	1103	Neuers	George Neuers, daughter Marjory
37E	Garfield Ave	1128	Epp	Rudy Epp - Refrigerator Repairman, daughter Barbara
38B	Hayden Ave	1011	Metcalf	Jess and Delia Metcalf - lived in half of a Duplex.
38C	Hayden Ave	1013	Metcalf	Richard and Mable Metcalf - lived in half of a Duplex.
38D	Hayden Ave	1003	Bresina	Frank and Lucy Bresina - Coal Shed Worker, children: Eugene, Richard and Lavern. (House burned in 1943 or 44)
38E	Garfield Ave	1028	Shafer	Shafer - Sons Glen, William and ? Daughters Betty, Mona, Peggy
38F	Garfield Ave	1020	Preston	George Preston - wife (Doris Dodge), Son Clayton
38G	Garfield Ave	1012	Horsewell	Horsewell - two daughters, Alice and Gladys
38H	Garfield Ave	1004	Reidel	George Reidel - Uniroyal, Four sons; Maynard, Delbert, David and ? A very religious family.
39A	Hayden Ave	927	Thurston	Thurstons - Charles 'Big Chuck' and Marie. Home of Frederick 'Fuzzy.' Also, Dorothy, Ruth, Jane, Bob and James.
39E	Garfield Ave	928	Gilbert	Walter and Stella Gilbert - children Howard, Elmer, Garold and Betty.
39J	04th St E	403	Ensign	Ralph Ensign - His wife, Ruth (maiden name is Thurston). Had two daughters and moved to Oregon.
42D	06th St W	504	Miller	Harry and Isla Miller's. - Jesse Miller's son. They had a daughter named Jane.
42H	Bartlett Ave	512	Jamieson	Joe Jamieson - He was a railroad engineer. The son was regarded as something of an electrical genius. He could invent and repair "things" that were beyond our understanding. I have a vague recollection that the parents moved to Florida where Mr. Jamieson died in a train wreck.
42L	06th St W	510	Brown	Ted Brown - Great Fisherman
43B	Garfield Ave	1919	Harris	John Harris - a son named John Jr., John Jr. married Virginia Walters
43D	Garfield Ave	1911	Emmanuel	William Emmanuel - He ran the general store, children named Nora and William Jr. They later moved to Bloomer where he ran a resort.
44A	Garfield Ave	1827	Thurston	Uncle George and Aunt Marie Thurston plus two daughters named Alice and Eleanor. He was a railroad clerk and Altoona city clerk for years. He unexpectedly won election as mayor with write-in votes. He served only one term. Long time incumbent mayor Fred Gloede was very unhappy and demanded a recount.
44B	Garfield Ave	1813	Stahl	John Stahl - He was an ardent fan of Altoona basketball. At times, when he went with us on 'away' games, he would pay for a meal for us. In those days, such generosity was unusual; our meager feasting brought us pleasure beyond any current day belief. He had three daughters.

44C	Garfield Ave	1805	Boettcher	Clarence Boettcher - Railroad Worker, his son Cadwell was a bit older than me. He excelled at ping pong to the extent that no one, including me, wanted to play with him. He had his own table in the basement. They also had a daughter named Betty.
44D	Garfield Ave	1803	Fry	Floyd Fry - children Kay, Ray and Roger
44D	Garfield Ave	1803	Ives	Ms. Ives - Daughter was Helen (Floyd) Fry. She lived in an upper apartment, gentle lady, kind.
44F	Bartlett Ave	1820	Kersten	William Kersten - Children Deloris, Dan, Dick and Bill
45A	Garfield Ave	1711	Grunions	Gaylord Grunions - US Rubber
45A	Garfield Ave	1711	Willman	Mary Willman (occupied this home after Gaylord Grunions moved out) - took in roomers.
45C	Garfield Ave	1719	Kolkind	Art Kolkind - Railroader, children Charles and Evelyn
45E	Bartlett Ave	1708	Sturz	Norman, Bernie Sturz
45H	Bartlett Ave	1704	Klohs	Otto Klohs - Railroader, son Otto Jr. (also a Railroader)
46A	Garfield Ave	1617	Larson	George Larson - Railroader, his wife is related to Jacobsons at Map Location 46E. One daughter named Marion (her husband drowned in a lake).
46B	Garfield Ave	1611	McGuire	Richard McGuire - Railroader, Son Richard was a classmate of mine.
46B	Garfield Ave	1619	Seigel	Louis and Marvel Seigel - Railroad Brakeman, one daughter
46D	Garfield Ave	1603	Finstad	Finstad - Railroader, one daughter
46E	Bartlett Ave	1628	Jacobson	Cy Jacobson - Railroader, wealthy, had the best apples in their yard, his wife was beautiful and nice too.
46H	Bartlett Ave	1604	Sires	Skippy Sires, Brother of Lee - sons Richard and Robert
47A	Garfield Ave	1511	Gloede	Fred Gloede's - He was a railroad engineer and longtime mayor. In the latter capacity, he often played the part of the city's policeman. One time, I had dashed down the hill from the school on my bicycle and had run into one of the Sveen girls. A complaint was registered and Gloede showed up at my home. It didn't amount to much. Fred was Mayor of Altoona (1936 - 1950 and 1952 - 1961) and Mrs. Gloede ran The City and made decisions when Fred was away on the train -- this happened often. No Children. Original residence moved to Map Location 19E in about 1944
47B	Garfield Ave	1509	Cole	John Cole - Quiet people, railroad worker, son Jack - Class of 1946
47C	Garfield Ave	1525	Squire	Squires- two sons named LaVern and Bernie. Later owned by Vince Beach.
47D	Garfield Ave	1503	Berg	Mable Berg - a son Robert (a pilot), took in Roomers
47E	Bartlett Ave	1610	Lutheran	Lutheran Church. Now a mosque.
47H	Bartlett Ave	1504	Volkman	Volkman - railroader, became blind later in life.
48A	Garfield Ave	1427	McLaughlin	Jess McLaughlin
48B	Garfield Ave	1419	Howard	The Howards - Anne was a beauty -- she had many children later on. Cletus became a lawyer.
48D	Division St	504	Thompson	Neils and Lois Thompson - she worked at the Post Office, two children; Judy and Jim.
48E	01st St E	527	Garber	Earl Garber - Railroader, son Elmer (track star)
48G	Bartlett Ave	1412	Strauch	Edward Strauch - Railroader
49A	Garfield Ave	1327	Brandstedter	John Brandstedter - Railroad Worker, Owned many homes in town

49B	Garfield Ave	1319	Thompson	Clarence 'C.B.' Thompson's - Six daughters (the youngest was Doris) and one son, Bill. He was a classmate of mine from K through graduation. Air Force in WW II. Uniroyal engineer. Lived on Hayden west of 7th street for years and then moved to 927 East 5th.
49C	Garfield Ave	1311	Walters	John Walters - Railroader, son Frederick was a good friend and fishing partner. He died later of a brain tumor. I had a date of two with his sister Virginia who worked at the grocery store and much later as a respiratory therapist at Sacred Heart Hospital.
49D	Garfield Ave	1303	Leland	William and Emma Leland, son Bernie Leland - Musician (organ player) - moved to this address in 1954
50A	Garfield Ave	1219	Crowley	Dan Crowley - Railroader, daughter married a Hotskiss
50B	Garfield Ave	1217	Steuding	Walter Steuding - Railroader, two sons James and Charles. Charles 'Chuck' Steuding, AHS Class of 1947. One of our 1946 'gang.' Later on, he became the school custodian.
50D	Garfield Ave	1203	Radiswitz	Martin Radiswitz worked at the roundhouse and was responsible for tooting the whistle to indicate shift changes and lunch breaks. Members of the community would set their watches by Martin's toots. Four long toots signified a train wreck. He also worked at the sand house and was custodian of the Altoona Auditorium. Five sons: Lawrence, Danny, Richard, Robert and Martin. He was known to befriend young men who wanted to play basketball during off-hours in the auditorium. One of the nicest men and hardest workers. Lawrence 'Huntz' was my best friend for a long time. We spent many winter nights at my home playing ping pong on our round dining room table. All this ping ponging and ponging must have driven my mother mad as she was in the very next room. We would occasionally adjourn to the empty upstairs where we would construct un-flyable model airplanes. After hanging out at the pool hall most nights at a later period, we would walk home, spending hours talking at the Finstad corner before going our separate ways. The family moved to Map Location 50D in the 1940's.
50H	Bartlett Ave	1204	Bresina	Bresina brothers - never married. They were Uncles to Frank, Gerald, and George Bresina. They were Big Men.
50K	01st St E	519	Aske	Eddy Aske - Railroader, one son
51A	02nd St E	503	Holden	Frank Holden - Railroader
51D	Garfield Ave	1111	Semisch	Julius and Auguste Semisch (Laura's Grandparents), daughter Anne also lived here.
51E	02nd St E	511	Gongle	Robert Gongle - Railroad Worker, City Council
51J	02nd St E	519	Doolittle	Doolittle - Railroader
52M	Bartlett Ave		Semisch	Semisch Farm and Barn built by Julius and Auguste Semisch
53E	Bartlett Ave	928	Semisch	Otto Semisch - Worked for Eau Claire County Highway Dept. Two sons; Harold and Arnold and one daughter; Laura.
54F	Bartlett Ave	800	Bredesen	Edward Bredeson - son Bob (eventually became the Altoona School Superintendent), Jerry and Betty. See also the School Memory Book by John R. Thurston.

58EFGH	Bartlett Ave		Woodington	<p>Clyde Woodington lived here for awhile before moving to 7th West His first marriage produced Darrel who ran the downtown Altoona service station. Donald achieved an Ed D and assumed a position of prominence in Colorado. Margaret had nickname of 'Mugs.' Second marriage produced Neil, George, and James. George and I took a course in Introductory Sociology together at the University of Wisconsin in Madison after the war. He went on to become an M.D. Neil was a brilliant student and a reserve on our 1942 basketball team. He and I flashed on and off each other's radar for a long time. When I returned to Madison in 1947 to attend the U. of Wisconsin after a year at Michigan State College, I had difficulty in finding lodging. The barracks out at the airport were noisy and far away from the campus. Neil was very helpful and soon I was living in the same house as he did at 39 South Randall Street, near the University Fieldhouse and football stadium. We had a great year. He was attending law school along with Duke Herrick. Eau Claire's John Gallagher lived at the same place. All of us would study hard and then adjourn to a nearby tavern for beer and conversation. I moved, but saw Neil regularly as we rode to and from Altoona in a Chrysler driven by Osseo's Bob Leassum. Bob charged us each a dollar for the door to door ride. He became an M.D., following in his father's footsteps by maintaining a practice in Osseo. My next brief contact with Neil was in 1953 when I returned from Iowa City to begin work as a clinical psychologist at the Veterans Administration Hospital. He helped my get into some housing that he owned near the Capitol. This time it was most unsatisfactory. He was a partner in a Menard-like business called Bradwood. He was active in the Democratic party and perhaps because of this, he got into serious legal problems. The last time I saw him was out at Eau Claire's Fuzzy Thurston's Left Guard Restaurant. He had some involvement in that enterprise.</p>
59A	Bartlett Ave	1627	Klingbeil	Herman Klingbeil - Railroader, children; Bob and Lorain
59B	Bartlett Ave	1619	Steinke	Emil Steinke (on corner) - no house there now, great Lutheran Church supporters.
59C	Bartlett Ave	1617	Gilligan	Junior Gilligan
59D	Bartlett Ave	1601	Sires	Lee and Lydia Sires - Lee, 'Huntz' Radisewitz, and I used to buddy together on occasion. Lee was a year older than I. He played forward on the unremarkable 1940-41 basketball team. He had a great left hand shot.
59H	02nd St W	628	Wagner	John Wagner - children; Tony, Jim, John and Mary
60A	Bartlett Ave	1611	Sturz	William Sturz - Railroader, daughter Mary Jane
60B	Bartlett Ave	1519	Schwartz	Ben Schwartz - Railroader, son Warren was an Ace Pilot in Korea.
60C	Bartlett Ave	1503	Board	Board - Donald and Burrell, Burrell was a highly competitive athlete, a fast runner. He used to fish with us at the base of the Altoona dam.
60G	Daniels Ave	1504	Underwood	Underwood - William 'Moose' and Fritz were sons.
60H	Daniels Ave	1500	Klemstein	August Klemstein - Herb Ruscin's Grandfather
61A	Bartlett Ave	1427	Musolf	Emil Musolf - Railroad, wife was on the School Board. Two sons: Gene (Professor at UW-Wausau), Jack (Retired Military), daughter Mary.

61B	Bartlett Ave	1419	Johnson	Olaf and Julia Johnson - Deserted/Haunted House
61C	Bartlett Ave	1403	Babington	Bill Babington - Bright daughters Alice and Betty, Railroad Worker and Roundhouse Mechanic - Ruscins lived in apartment
61D	Bartlett Ave	604	Jones	Frank Jones - He worked for the Railroad, his wife was a teacher, one daughter.
61E	01st St W	600	Bundt	The Bundt residence - Daniel, Laura, Barbara, Bev, Frank and Edward
61F	Bartlett Ave		School	The Old Altoona Public School
61H	01st St E	628	Fraiser	Fraiser
61L	01st St E	612	Rock	George Rock - Railroad, One daughter (married Glen Gilbert). Family moved to Map Location 61L in 1938.
61S	Bartlett Ave	1827	Brown	Fred/Ted Brown
62A	01st St E	603	Valske	Howard Valske Jr - Railroad Engineer, son Bob (Bob's wife Madlyn worked at the Post Office).
62D	Bartlett Ave	1203	Stewart	Owens Stewart - two or three children.
62E	Daniels Ave	625	Burkhart	Burkhart - Railroad, Pioneers and Good Citizens, Son named Billy
62K	01st St E	613	Babcock	William Babcock - Railroader
63E	Daniels Ave	1128	Reiters	Hank Reiters - Electrician, Son Dennis and Daughter Fay. The family lived in various locations.
63G	Daniels Ave	1124	Fisher	Jack Fisher - lived with his sister and he had a chow dog that was dangerous. Jack was a simple soul who never bothered anyone , yet people were afraid of him and his dog. He walked the streets everyday doing nothing. Looking!
64A	03rd St E	703	Walker	Cecil Walker - Worked at grocery stores. Three Daughters Joyce, Elaine, Darlene.
64E	Daniels Ave	1028	Beach	Beach - John, Lois and Audrey
66D	Bartlett Ave	503	Leland	William and Emma Leland - worked as janitor at the Altoona school, six children: Paul, Elaine, Arlene, Joan, Judy and Louise
67X	10th St W		Kneck	Vernon Kneck - three children - this address is outside the City Limits
67X	10th St W	& Hwy 12	Rockwood	Rockwood, sons Gene and Bob.
68ABJ	03rd St W	703	Sturz	Elton Sturz - Ice House, children; Michael, Larry, Duane and Susie
68D	02nd St W	703	Heuer	Herman and Yerma Heuer - with children Jeanetta and Herman, Jr. This was a regular stop on the rounds that my father made as he visited relatives. Pioneers, Railroad Worker, Lutheran Church Leaders. Herman and Yerma Heuer had lived at Map Location 18A before moving here -- at one time my father could have purchased the 18A dwelling for \$600.
68H	02nd St W	612	Isaacson	Buddy Isaacson. - 'Ing' was the school janitor. A beautiful daughter, Jeanne had a steady boyfriend throughout high school. Sad to say, they made her unavailable.
69A	Daniels Ave	1611	Green	Green - Pioneers, Railroad Worker, an adopted son Thomas
69B	Daniels Ave	1519	Klohs	Arthur Klohs - Railroader, children ; Jean Rosemary and Art Jr.

69C	Daniels Ave	1511	Bonnie	Louis and Ethel Bonie's home early on. The son, Louis, was ill-coordinated as a lad. He was always the last one chosen for the teams playing in the sandlot between our homes. He went on to become a minor league football All-American at a Dakota college. The father was a milkman at one time. At Halloween, the Bonie outhouse was a special target. Retired from its original use, it was the depository of the storm windows. Father Louis would sit guard inside this "doniker" on Halloween night to prevent damage to these windows. However, a quick move on the part of the "bad kids" secured the door and trapped Louis inside. Then the outhouse was overturned with Louis tumbling around inside to the sound of splintering glass. Mrs. Bonie had an unusual means of exercising control over her husband. He was deathly afraid of chicken heads. On rare occasions, the neighbors would delight in seeing her, chicken head in hand, chase Louis out the door and around the yard. Eventually they moved out (to Map Location 69C in the 1940's) and Loren Schilling moved in.
69D	Daniels Ave	1505	Pettis	Pettis - Railroader, wife (Lillian) worked at the Post Office, Sons Lowell and Newell
69E	Daniels Ave	1427	Henning	Ferd Henning - Railroad Engineer, One son named Robert
69F	Daniels Ave	1419	Henning	Alfred Henning - Railroad, his mother worked at the Post Office part time, One daughter named lone (married Bob Johnson), she played piano and was a TV personality in La Crosse.
69H	Division St	814	Schilling	Clyde Schilling - three daughters; Margaret (McKeeth), Marge (Nadler) and Ella -- raised berries and goats. Two sons; Loren(Fire chief) and LeRoy (Railroad). These people built Altoona and kept it going, they were so kind to all. Margaret was Roger's Godmother.
69L	Division St	710	Henning	Arthur Henning - Railroad, owned the Golden Spike Tavern and was active in the Democratic Party. Jean (his wife) was Postmistress. Daughter, Betty (Hagen) was also Postmistress. Son, Ray; Postal worker, City Council and County Board. Mark Hagen (Betty's Son-in-law) is Postmaster.
69S	Daniels Ave	1415	Jackson	Stanley Jackson - his wife's madden name was Henning, she managed the Greyhound Depot in Eau Claire.
70A	Daniels Ave	1327	Gloede	William Gloede - Railroad Engineer, one son named David and a brother named Fred (Mayor of Altoona). Nice people, gentle to kids, a neat house with a big yard.
70D	Daniels Ave	1305	Underwood	Charlie Underwood - Railroad. His son James became a banker.
70J	Division St	811	Schilling	Ella Schilling -- Daughter of Clyde
72X	03rd St E	810	Thompson	LuLa Thompson - raised goats, sheep, cows, apples and berries. She owned most of the land known as the Shale Pits (in the water tower area). A Pioneer and social commentator.
End of Map Number Sort				

Start of Street Address Sort				
Map Location	Street Name	Street Number	Surname	Comments
22D	01st St E	210	Auditorium	Auditorium and Fire Truck Enclosure
10D	01st St E	224	McKeith	Dolly Cedaberg-McKeith, Concrete Block Home, waitress at Altoona Restaurant
34E	01st St E	427	Knoble	Pete Knoble - several sons and one of them was Bob
50K	01st St E	519	Aske	Eddy Aske - Railroader, one son
48E	01st St E	527	Garber	Earl Garber - Railroader, son Elmer (track star)
62A	01st St E	603	Valske	Howard Valske Jr - Railroad Engineer, son Bob (Bob's wife Madlyn worked at the Post Office).
61L	01st St E	612	Rock	George Rock - Railroad, One daughter (married Glen Gilbert). Family moved to Map Location 61L in 1938.
62K	01st St E	613	Babcock	William Babcock - Railroader
61H	01st St E	628	Fraiser	Fraiser
10H	01st St W	228	Connell	Connell - Took in Roomers
20L	01st St W	300	Episcopal	Old -and unused-Episcopal Church
61E	01st St W	600	Bundt	The Bundt residence - Daniel, Laura, Barbara, Bev, Frank and Edward
51A	02nd St E	503	Holden	Frank Holden - Railroader
51E	02nd St E	511	Gongle	Robert Gongle - Railroad Worker, City Council
51J	02nd St E	519	Doolittle	Doolittle - Railroader
68H	02nd St W	612	Isaacson	Buddy Isaacson. - 'Ing' was the school janitor. A beautiful daughter, Jeanne had a steady boyfriend throughout high school. Sad to say, they made her unavailable.
59H	02nd St W	628	Wagner	John Wagner - children; Tony, Jim, John and Mary
68D	02nd St W	703	Heuer	Herman and Yerma Heuer - with children Jeanetta and Herman, Jr. This was a regular stop on the rounds that my father made as he visited relatives. Pioneers, Railroad Worker, Lutheran Church Leaders. Herman and Yerma Heuer had lived at Map Location 18A before moving here -- at one time my father could have purchased the 18A dwelling for \$600.
25A	03rd St E	300	Stewart	Lawrence and Inez (Sturz) Stewart -- her sister, Helen, married Owen Stewart (sisters married brothers). They had a small house by the tracks that burned.
64A	03rd St E	703	Walker	Cecil Walker - Worked at grocery stores. Three Daughters Joyce, Elaine, Darlene.
72X	03rd St E	810	Thompson	LuLa Thompson - raised goats, sheep, cows, apples and berries. She owned most of the land known as the Shale Pits (in the water tower area). A Pioneer and social commentator.
68ABJ	03rd St W	703	Sturz	Elton Sturz - Ice House, children; Michael, Larry, Duane and Susie
39J	04th St E	403	Ensign	Ralph Ensign - His wife, Ruth (maiden name is Thurston). Had two daughters and moved to Oregon.
17L	05th St W	320	Klohs	Ted Klohs - Father of Arthur, Railroader, children; Emma (Leland), Alfreda (Miller).
42L	06th St W	510	Brown	Ted Brown - Great Fisherman

15D	06th St W	300	Harris	Henry and Hazel Harris - with four kids, Kenneth, Fern, Harold, and Joyce. Mrs. always threw birthday parties for the kids. They were always fun events. Harold 'Hank', some three years younger, was my boyhood friend with a lot of hanging around together, neighborhood games, fishing, adventures, such as walking along Otter Creek from Highway 12 to Spooner Avenue. He became the manager of Equity Livestock eventually - a good talker. He ran unsuccessfully for the state legislature. He used combs as a publicity gimmick at that time---Hair-is. Joyce was a live wire. Talkative and fun to be around. She could never remember the punch line of a joke. She had a boyfriend named Ziegenweid. Henry worked on the County Hiway Dept. and was Roger Rasmussen's boss. He drove the truck and Roger patched the holes in in the roads. Good guy, easy to like -- but The Boss.
16J	06th St W	311	Rudolphson	Ted and 'Gustie' Rudolphson - Ted was blind. Reason unknown. He had been a railroad worker. He made knick-knacks and tended to his chickens and garden. Occasionally, he would leave to attend the school for the blind in Janesville. For a time, the Gus Anklam's lived in the north end of this small house. It may have been a railroad box car initially. Son Ken, ill-coordinated early on, eventually became a prize winning ballroom dancer. Alvina became a nurse. Ione was a diabetic. She became a teacher and died while teaching her elementary class at the Barlett School on Farwell Street in Eau Claire. 'Gustie', a talented woman, became Altoona's City Treasurer later on. Ted, Ken, and I spent a summer digging out a basement out from under the established house.
15M	06th St W	328	Thurston	John H. and Mary A. Thurston - two sons, John R. (born 1924) and Richard G. (born 1934). There is nothing special about this house or these persons in 1935. But 328 West Sixth Street was the starting point of my 1991 reminiscing and the center of my universe during the time period of 1928-1942. The adjacent empty lot and its basket was the site of a lot of basketeering on the part of neighborhood kids.
28L	06th St W	406	Miller	Jesse Miller - They had horses during the early 1930's that were used for his ice and coal business, road grading, and snowplowing. They had a small barn. The Millers shared a telephone party line with the Thurstons and others. Eavesdropping was the norm. After Pearl Harbor, Mrs. Miller was overheard asking what she should do now with the Japanese Morning Glory seeds she had harvested the previous fall.
42D	06th St W	504	Miller	Harry and Isla Miller's. - Jesse Miller's son. They had a daughter named Jane.
15J	07th St W	319	Thurston	Frederick 'Fritz' and Nettie Thurston - aunt and uncle of mine. Fritz was with me at Luther Hospital when my father died. This listing is an exception: in 1935, his home site was an empty lot.
67X	10th St W	& Hwy 12	Rockwood	Rockwood, sons Gene and Bob.
26A	10th St W	400	Heins	Heins- One Daughter
26X	10th St W	428	Hines	Grandpa Hines - one daughter, farmers, nice people.
26X	10th St W	528	Huggins	Huggins - children Ralph, Jackie and Loretta. Roger Rasmussen lived here 1952-54.
26 LM	10th St W	826	Wilman	Lois Wilman - tree farmer
67X	10th St W		Kneck	Vernon Kneck - three children - this address is outside the City Limits

66D	Bartlett Ave	503	Leland	William and Emma Leland - worked as janitor at the Altoona school, six children: Paul, Elaine, Arlene, Joan, Judy and Louise
42H	Bartlett Ave	512	Jamieson	Joe Jamieson - He was a railroad engineer. The son was regarded as something of an electrical genius. He could invent and repair "things" that were beyond our understanding. I have a vague recollection that the parents moved to Florida where Mr. Jamieson died in a train wreck.
61D	Bartlett Ave	604	Jones	Frank Jones - He worked for the Railroad, his wife was a teacher, one daughter.
54F	Bartlett Ave	800	Bredesen	Edward Bredeson - son Bob (eventually became the Altoona School Superintendent), Jerry and Betty. See also the School Memory Book by John R. Thurston.
53E	Bartlett Ave	928	Semisch	Otto Semisch - Worked for Eau Claire County Highway Dept. Two sons; Harold and Arnold and one daughter; Laura.
62D	Bartlett Ave	1203	Stewart	Owens Stewart - two or three children.
50H	Bartlett Ave	1204	Bresina	Bresina brothers - never married. They were Uncles to Frank, Gerald, and George Bresina. They were Big Men.
61C	Bartlett Ave	1403	Babington	Bill Babington - Bright daughters Alice and Betty, Railroad Worker and Roundhouse Mechanic - Ruscins lived in apartment
48G	Bartlett Ave	1412	Strauch	Edward Strauch - Railroader
61B	Bartlett Ave	1419	Johnson	Olaf and Julia Johnson - Deserted/Haunted House
61A	Bartlett Ave	1427	Musolf	Emil Musolf - Railroad, wife was on the School Board. Two sons: Gene (Professor at UW-Wausau), Jack (Retired Military), daughter Mary.
60C	Bartlett Ave	1503	Board	Board - Donald and Burrell, Burrell was a highly competitive athlete, a fast runner. He used to fish with us at the base of the Altoona dam.
47H	Bartlett Ave	1504	Volkmann	Volkmann - railroader, became blind later in life.
60B	Bartlett Ave	1519	Schwartz	Ben Schwartz - Railroader, son Warren was an Ace Pilot in Korea.
59D	Bartlett Ave	1601	Sires	Lee and Lydia Sires - Lee, 'Huntz' Radisewitz, and I used to buddy together on occasion. Lee was a year older than I. He played forward on the unremarkable 1940-41 basketball team. He had a great left hand shot.
46H	Bartlett Ave	1604	Sires	Skippy Sires, Brother of Lee - sons Richard and Robert
47E	Bartlett Ave	1610	Lutheran	Lutheran Church. Now a mosque.
60A	Bartlett Ave	1611	Sturz	William Sturz - Railroader, daughter Mary Jane
59C	Bartlett Ave	1617	Gilligan	Junior Gilligan
59B	Bartlett Ave	1619	Steinke	Emil Steinke (on corner) - no house there now, great Lutheran Church supporters.
59A	Bartlett Ave	1627	Klingbeil	Herman Klingbeil - Railroader, children; Bob and Lorain
46E	Bartlett Ave	1628	Jacobson	Cy Jacobson - Railroader, wealthy, had the best apples in their yard, his wife was beautiful and nice too.
45H	Bartlett Ave	1704	Klohs	Otto Klohs - Railroader, son Otto Jr. (also a Railroader)
45E	Bartlett Ave	1708	Sturz	Norman, Bernie Sturz
44F	Bartlett Ave	1820	Kersten	William Kersten - Childen Deloris, Dan, Dick and Bill
61S	Bartlett Ave	1827	Brown	Fred/Ted Brown

58EFGH	Bartlett Ave		Woodington	Clyde Woodington lived here for awhile before moving to 7th West His first marriage produced Darrel who ran the downtown Altoona service station. Donald achieved an Ed D and assumed a position of prominence in Colorado. Margaret had nickname of 'Mugs.' Second marriage produced Neil, George, and James. George and I took a course in Introductory Sociology together at the University of Wisconsin in Madison after the war. He went on to become an M.D. Neil was a brilliant student and a reserve on our 1942 basketball team. He and I flashed on and off each other's radar for a long time. When I returned to Madison in 1947 to attend the U. of Wisconsin after a year at Michigan State College, I had difficulty in finding lodging. The barracks out at the airport were noisy and far away from the campus. Neil was very helpful and soon I was living in the same house as he did at 39 South Randall Street, near the University Fieldhouse and football stadium. We had a great year. He was attending law school along with Duke Herrick. Eau Claire's John Gallagher lived at the same place. All of us would study hard and then adjourn to a nearby tavern for beer and conversation. I moved, but saw Neil regularly as we rode to and from Altoona in a Chrysler driven by Osseo's Bob Leassum. Bob charged us each a dollar for the door to door ride. He became an M.D., following in his father's footsteps by maintaining a practice in Osseo. My next brief contact with Neil was in 1953 when I returned from Iowa City to begin work as a clinical psychologist at the Veterans Administration Hospital. He helped my get into some housing that he owned near the Capitol. This time it was most unsatisfactory. He was a partner in a Menard-like business called Bradwood. He was active in the Democratic party and perhaps because of this, he got into serious legal problems. The last time I saw him was out at Eau Claire's Fuzzy Thurston's Left Guard Restaurant. He had some involvement in that enterprise.
52M	Bartlett Ave		Semisch	Semisch Farm and Barn built by Julius and Auguste Semisch
61F	Bartlett Ave		School	The Old Altoona Public School
62E	Daniels Ave	625	Burkhart	Burkhart - Railroad, Pioneers and Good Citizens, Son named Billy
64E	Daniels Ave	1028	Beach	Beach - John, Lois and Audrey
63G	Daniels Ave	1124	Fisher	Jack Fisher - lived with his sister and he had a chow dog that was dangerous. Jack was a simple soul who never bothered anyone, yet people were afraid of him and his dog. He walked the streets everyday doing nothing. Looking!
63E	Daniels Ave	1128	Reiters	Hank Reiters - Electrician, Son Dennis and Daughter Fay. The family lived in various locations.
70D	Daniels Ave	1305	Underwood	Charlie Underwood - Railroad. His son James became a banker.
70A	Daniels Ave	1327	Gloede	William Gloede - Railroad Engineer, one son named David and a brother named Fred (Mayor of Altoona). Nice people, gentle to kids, a neat house with a big yard.
69S	Daniels Ave	1415	Jackson	Stanley Jackson - his wife's madden name was Henning, she managed the Greyhound Depot in Eau Claire.
69F	Daniels Ave	1419	Henning	Alfred Henning - Railroad, his mother worked at the Post Office part time, One daughter named Lone (married Bob Johnson), she played piano and was a TV personality in La Crosse.
69E	Daniels Ave	1427	Henning	Ferd Henning - Railroad Engineer, One son named Robert
60H	Daniels Ave	1500	Klemstein	August Klemstein - Herb Ruscin's Grandfather
60G	Daniels Ave	1504	Underwood	Underwood - William 'Moose' and Fritz were sons.

69D	Daniels Ave	1505	Pettis	Pettis - Railroader, wife (Lillian) worked at the Post Office, Sons Lowell and Newell
69C	Daniels Ave	1511	Bonnie	Louis and Ethel Bonie's home early on. The son, Louis, was ill-coordinated as a lad. He was always the last one chosen for the teams playing in the sandlot between our homes. He went on to become a minor league football All-American at a Dakota college. The father was a milkman at one time. At Halloween, the Bonie outhouse was a special target. Retired from its original use, it was the depository of the storm windows. Father Louis would sit guard inside this "doniker" on Halloween night to prevent damage to these windows. However, a quick move on the part of the "bad kids" secured the door and trapped Louis inside. Then the outhouse was overturned with Louis tumbling around inside to the sound of splintering glass. Mrs. Bonie had an unusual means of exercising control over her husband. He was deathly afraid of chicken heads. On rare occasions, the neighbors would delight in seeing her, chicken head in hand, chase Louis out the door and around the yard. Eventually they moved out (to Map Location 69C in the 1940's) and Loren Schilling moved in.
69B	Daniels Ave	1519	Klohs	Arthur Klohs - Railroader, children ; Jean Rosemary and Art Jr.
69A	Daniels Ave	1611	Green	Green - Pioneers, Railroad Worker, an adopted son Thomas
21L	Division St	200	Fowler	Fowler's Barbershop (eventually Mayer's Dairy Bar)
12K	Division St	213	Neill	Dike Neill's Garage (old Altoona Bank)
11H	Division St	304	McGrouary	McGrouary's Tavern - An apartment upstairs, now The Golden Spike
22J	Division St	319	Gloede	David and Marion Gloede - Electrician Gillette, children; David and Lavonne.
22E	Division St	327	Blackroots	Blackroots, Railroader
34D	Division St	428	McKeith	Margaret McKeith - Character, Bartender, two daughters Neva and Delores
34H	Division St	428	Russel	Hugh Russell - worked at Shute's general store and was one of Roger's mentors and friend. Son Harold went into the Air Force and became something of a superstar, flying the largest of the bombers. He was shot down and spent time as a German POW.
48D	Division St	504	Thompson	Neils and Lois Thompson - she worked at the Post Office, two children; Judy and Jim.
69L	Division St	710	Henning	Arthur Henning - Railroad, owned the Golden Spike Tavern and was active in the Democratic Party. Jean (his wife) was Postmistress. Daughter, Betty (Hagen) was also Postmistress. Son, Ray; Postal worker, City Council and County Board. Mark Hagen (Betty's Son-in-law) is Postmaster.
70J	Division St	811	Schilling	Ella Schilling -- Daughter of Clyde
69H	Division St	814	Schilling	Clyde Schilling - three daughters; Margaret (McKeith), Marge (Nadler) and Ella -- raised berries and goats. Two sons; Loren (Fire chief) and LeRoy (Railroad). These people built Altoona and kept it going, they were so kind to all. Margaret was Roger's Godmother.
12J	Division St		Jarosch	Red's (Jarosch) Barbershop and Pool hall (see also Map Location 11L)
11C	Division St	220	Lawrence	Richard and Margaret Lawrence
11L	Division St	230	Jacobson	Two houses between taverns -- the one in back owned by Ruth Jacobson, front was barbershop owned by Darold Jarosch (see also Map Location 12J).

11L	Division St	230	Jarosch	Two houses between taverns -- the one in back owned by Ruth Jacobson, front was barbershop owned by Darold Jarosch (see also Map Location 12J).
11L	Division St	230	Kensmoe	Kensmoe Barbershop - then Jarosch's
32H	Garfield Ave	1628	Bieloh	Bieloh's - A mixed memory here because I remember them living a block to the east as well. Son Jack and I would spend endless hours constructing un-flyable model airplanes. When his father died unexpectedly, this shook all us kids. Fathers weren't supposed to die. The remaining family moved to Spooner. All contacts then ceased. I believe that he eventually had his own insurance agency in Spooner.
39E	Garfield Ave	928	Gilbert	Walter and Stella Gilbert - children Howard, Elmer, Garold and Betty.
38H	Garfield Ave	1004	Reidel	George Reidel - Uniroyal, Four sons; Maynard, Delbert, David and ? A very religious family.
38G	Garfield Ave	1012	Horsewell	Horsewell - two daughters, Alice and Gladys
38F	Garfield Ave	1020	Preston	George Preston - wife (Doris Dodge), Son Clayton
38E	Garfield Ave	1028	Shafer	Shafer - Sons Glen, William and ? Daughters Betty, Mona, Peggy
51D	Garfield Ave	1111	Semisch	Julius and Auguste Semisch (Laura's Grandparents), daughter Anne also lived here.
37E	Garfield Ave	1128	Epp	Rudy Epp - Refrigerator Repairman, daughter Barbara
50D	Garfield Ave	1203	Radiswitz	Martin Radiswitz worked at the roundhouse and was responsible for tooting the whistle to indicate shift changes and lunch breaks. Members of the community would set their watches by Martin's toots. Four long toots signified a train wreck. He also worked at the sand house and was custodian of the Altoona Auditorium. Five sons: Lawrence, Danny, Richard, Robert and Martin. He was known to befriend young men who wanted to play basketball during off-hours in the auditorium. One of the nicest men and hardest workers. Lawrence 'Huntz' was my best friend for a long time. We spent many winter nights at my home playing ping pong on our round dining room table. All this pinging and ponging must have driven my mother mad as she was in the very next room. We would occasionally adjourn to the empty upstairs where we would construct un-flyable model airplanes. After hanging out at the pool hall most nights at a later period, we would walk home, spending hours talking at the Finstad corner before going our separate ways. The family moved to Map Location 50D in the 1940's.
36G	Garfield Ave	1204	Nollie	Art Nollie - Railroad. Eau Claire County board, Altoona Mayor and City Council (very influential politician). This house burned down and rebuilt (current resident is Jeanette Zachau.
50B	Garfield Ave	1217	Steuding	Walter Steuding - Railroader, two sons James and Charles. Charles 'Chuck' Steuding, AHS Class of 1947. One of our 1946 'gang.' Later on, he became the school custodian.
50A	Garfield Ave	1219	Crowley	Dan Crowley - Railroader, daughter married a Hotskiss
36F	Garfield Ave	1220	Coss	Earl Coss - Railroad, Daughter Colleen.
49D	Garfield Ave	1303	Leland	William and Emma Leland, son Bernie Leland - Musician (organ player) - moved to this address in 1954
35H	Garfield Ave	1304	Kielty	Pat Kielty - Father was a postmaster at one time. Son Jack was a paperboy. One night he was rescued from the cold by my family and brought into thaw out.
35H	Garfield Ave	1304	Redman	George Redman, (occupied this residence after Pat Kielty moved out), had pet black squirrels.

49C	Garfield Ave	1311	Walters	John Walters - Railroader, son Frederick was a good friend and fishing partner. He died later of a brain tumor. I had a date of two with his sister Virginia who worked at the grocery store and much later as a respiratory therapist at Sacred Heart Hospital.
35F	Garfield Ave	1312	Anding	A daughter Veralia
35E	Garfield Ave	1314	Lang	John Lang - Railroad Engineer, one daughter
49B	Garfield Ave	1319	Thompson	Clarence 'C.B.' Thompson's - Six daughters (the youngest was Doris) and one son, Bill. He was a classmate of mine from K through graduation. Air Force in WW II. Uniroyal engineer. Lived on Hayden west of 7th street for years and then moved to 927 East 5th.
49A	Garfield Ave	1327	Brandstedter	John Brandstedter - Railroad Worker, Owned many homes in town
34G	Garfield Ave	1417	Heuer	Frank and Rose Heuer - no children, quiet couple. This home was actually built later -- in the 1940's.
48B	Garfield Ave	1419	Howard	The Howards - Anne was a beauty -- she had many children later on. Cletus became a lawyer.
48A	Garfield Ave	1427	McLaughlin	Jess McLaughlin
47D	Garfield Ave	1503	Berg	Mable Berg - a son Robert (a pilot), took in Roomers
33H	Garfield Ave	1504	Methodist	The Methodist Church
47B	Garfield Ave	1509	Cole	John Cole - Quiet people, railroad worker, son Jack - Class of 1946
47A	Garfield Ave	1511	Gloede	Fred Gloede's - He was a railroad engineer and longtime mayor. In the latter capacity, he often played the part of the city's policeman. One time, I had dashed down the hill from the school on my bicycle and had run into one of the Sveen girls. A complaint was registered and Gloede showed up at my home. It didn't amount to much. Fred was Mayor of Altoona (1936 - 1950 and 1952 - 1961) and Mrs. Gloede ran The City and made decisions when Fred was away on the train -- this happened often. No Children. Original residence moved to Map Location 19E in about 1944
33F	Garfield Ave	1520	Haas	Haas - Railroad, one son Leonard (Chancellor UWEC)
47C	Garfield Ave	1525	Squire	Squires- two sons named LaVern and Bernie. Later owned by Vince Beach.
46D	Garfield Ave	1603	Finstad	Finstad - Railroader, one daughter
32H	Garfield Ave	1604	Sorenson	Sorenson's -- later Bill Leland, then Roger Rasmussen, then Rick Thurston. When Roger bought this neat cottage it brought back great memories.
46B	Garfield Ave	1611	McGuire	Richard McGuire - Railroader, Son Richard was a classmate of mine.
32G	Garfield Ave	1612	Kewins	Ray Kewins - railroader, no children, moved to Map Location 45G in 1950
46A	Garfield Ave	1617	Larson	George Larson - Railroad, his wife is related to Jacobsons at Map Location 46E. One daughter named Marion (her husband drowned in a lake).
46B	Garfield Ave	1619	Seigel	Louis and Marvel Seigel - Railroad Brakeman, one daughter
32F	Garfield Ave	1620	Kemory	Kemorys - Railroad, One daughter married Zetsman from Fall Creek
32E	Garfield Ave	1628	Kensmoe	Kensmoe - A barber.
32E	Garfield Ave	1628	Rieck	Elmer Rieck - Railroad, one daughter named Eleanor.
31G	Garfield Ave	1704	Botsford	William Botsford house (rental) -- Rented by Walkers/Rasmussen (1939-46)

31G	Garfield Ave	1704	Rasmussen	Percy and Alfreda (Glassbrenner) Rasmussen - 9 kids living in a duplex. Railroader, Barber, Carpenter, City Worker. Children: Charles, Yvonne, Roger, Joan, Dorothy, Sharon, Connie, Susan and Robert.
31G	Garfield Ave	1704 1/2	Walker	George Walker - children; Loren, LaVone and LaVere -- a duplex (lower)
45A	Garfield Ave	1711	Grunions	Gaylord Grunions - US Rubber
45A	Garfield Ave	1711	Willman	Mary Willman (occupied this home after Gaylord Grunions moved out) - took in roomers.
31F	Garfield Ave	1712	Valske	Howard Valske - Railroad, Had one son named Howard Jr.
45C	Garfield Ave	1719	Kolkind	Art Kolkind - Railroader, children Charles and Evelyn
31E	Garfield Ave	1728	Koppen	Robert Koppen -- Daughter Betty
44D	Garfield Ave	1803	Fry	Floyd Fry - children Kay, Ray and Roger
44D	Garfield Ave	1803	Ives	Ms. Ives - Daughter was Helen (Floyd) Fry. She lived in an upper apartment, gentle lady, kind.
44C	Garfield Ave	1805	Boettcher	Clarence Boettcher - Railroad Worker, his son Cadwell was a bit older than me. He excelled at ping pong to the extent that no one, including me, wanted to play with him. He had his own table in the basement. They also had a daughter named Betty.
30H	Garfield Ave	1812	Ray	Beryl Ray - Foundry in Menomonie, children; Bertyl and Rita.
44B	Garfield Ave	1813	Stahl	John Stahl - He was an ardent fan of Altoona basketball. At times, when he went with us on 'away' games, he would pay for a meal for us. In those days, such generosity was unusual; our meager feasting brought us pleasure beyond any current day belief. He had three daughters.
44A	Garfield Ave	1827	Thurston	Uncle George and Aunt Marie Thurston plus two daughters named Alice and Eleanor. He was a railroad clerk and Altoona city clerk for years. He unexpectedly won election as mayor with write-in votes. He served only one term. Long time incumbent mayor Fred Gloede was very unhappy and demanded a recount.
30F	Garfield Ave	1828	Newell	Pettis Newell, house built in the 1950's
43D	Garfield Ave	1911	Emmanuel	William Emmanuel - He ran the general store, children named Nora and William Jr. They later moved to Bloomer where he ran a resort.
43B	Garfield Ave	1919	Harris	John Harris - a son named John Jr., John Jr. married Virginia Walters
27H	Garfield Ave	2028	Ely	Bill Ely's original dwelling.
27F	Garfield Ave	2136	Strong	Dean Strong - Butcher at Kopplin's Grocery Store.
39A	Hayden Ave	927	Thurston	Thurstons - Charles 'Big Chuck' and Marie. Home of Frederick 'Fuzzy.' Also, Dorothy, Ruth, Jane, Bob and James.
25H	Hayden Ave	928	Bresina	Gerald and Marion Bresina - Gerald was a neat guy, a quiet hard worker on CNW - Children Jackie, Geraldine and Tonie
25G	Hayden Ave	1000	Gilbert	Dick and Elsie Gilbert. Sons Forest and Glen (House burned in 1940)
38D	Hayden Ave	1003	Bresina	Frank and Lucy Bresina - Coal Shed Worker, children: Eugene, Richard and Lavern. (House burned in 1943 or 44)
38B	Hayden Ave	1011	Metcalfe	Jess and Delia Metcalfe - lived in half of a Duplex.
38C	Hayden Ave	1013	Metcalfe	Richard and Mable Metcalfe - lived in half of a Duplex.
37D	Hayden Ave	1103	Neuers	George Neuers, daughter Marjory
37A	Hayden Ave	1111	Jensen	Jesse Jensen - Long time Principal, coach, and teacher. See also the Jesse Jenson book by John R. Thurston.
37A	Hayden Ave	1111	Steuding	Roy Steuding (occupied this home after Jesse Jensen moved out) - Railroader, children Tom and Mary Jane.
24E	Hayden Ave	1112	Martinson	Harry Martinson, a car tapper, maybe not as early as 1935.
36D	Hayden Ave	1203	Wilcox	Wilcox - three sons, Catholic Schools in Eau Claire

36A	Hayden Ave	1207	Larson	Joe Larson - Railroader, City Council, four children Vance, Danny, Marion and ?
23F	Hayden Ave	1212	Ackerman	Robert Ackerman - Railroader, Haunted by Mae McGrouary's Parrot
23E	Hayden Ave	1214	Edgehill	Lucille Edgell-Buegeran - Lucille worked at the Post Office for many years. Two brothers also lived there; Bill and Fritz. Many Roomers and Large Gardens.
35D	Hayden Ave	1303	Wilcox	Charlie Wilcox - Dignified, good citizen, crippled later in life.
35B	Hayden Ave	1307	Shute	Frank Shute - owner of Shute's Store
22H	Hayden Ave	1312	McDonald	Delos McDonald - Gillette, child; Ronnie, their house burned down.
35A	Hayden Ave	1327	Rau	John Rau - Railroad, one child. Duplex with Darrell and Kate Woodington in the upper unit.
21H	Hayden Ave	1404	LaPage	Grace LaPage - Editor of the Paper
23G	Hayden Ave	1404	Olsen	Carl (Cornfed) Olsen - two daughters (Carla and Tubbie) and one son (Michael).
34C	Hayden Ave	1411	Grasby	Martin Grasby's Store. An ad at the time lists the following enterprises. Diamonds bought and sold, Swiss and American R.R. Watches, Watch Repair. Fire, Storm and Tornado Insurance. City Property, Improved Farms and Wild Lands.
34C	Hayden Ave	1411	Johnson	Maurice Johnson (moved to this address after the death of Martin Grasby) - railroader, son Bob
34B	Hayden Ave	1419	Bowman	John Bowman - Railroader, daughter Beverly (nicknamed 'Beattles')
34A	Hayden Ave	1427	Walker	Bernie Walker - worked at the Ice House, three children
33D	Hayden Ave	1503	Thompson	Gunder Thompson -children; Bob, Betty, Snooks and Tommy.
34C	Hayden Ave	1504	Shute	Shute's General Store and Shed. Roger's first job at age 11- grass and snow.
33C	Hayden Ave	1507	Kluth	Alvin Kluth - Railroader, son Alvin Jr.
33B	Hayden Ave	1519	Connell	Art Connell - Railroader, children; Jerry, Ginger and Patricia
20F	Hayden Ave	1520	Marvin	Jerry Marvin - Railroad Worker, Baseball Scout
33A	Hayden Ave	1527	Sveen	Sveen
20E	Hayden Ave	1528	Olseth	Josephine and Olaf Olseth - Railroad, moved to Map Location 23F in 1950's
32D	Hayden Ave	1603	Beach	'Shorty' Beach - CNW Worker, daughter Hazel was a year older than I.
19H	Hayden Ave	1604	Stoeffel	Stoeffel - Railroader, Rooming House. Daughter Jeanette was a year younger than I.
32C	Hayden Ave	1611	Klingbeil	William and Selma Klingbeil - Son James (became a Teacher) and Daughter Mary. William worked at Gillette Tires and Selma created dolls and accessories. Good Sports Fans.
19G	Hayden Ave	1612	Rask	Rask
32B	Hayden Ave	1619	Harms	Harry and Luella Harms - Railroader, Daughter named Donna Lou. Outstanding trout fisherman, made play things for young kids, sold used watches, loaned money to needy people and collected old cars.
19F	Hayden Ave	1620	Taylor	Roy and May Taylor - Railroader, good friends and fellow party-ers with the Griese's.
32A	Hayden Ave	1627	Botsford	Roy Botsford - his son (the first baby born in Altoona) Milton became a High School Principal.
19E	Hayden Ave	1628	Gloede	Original residence moved to Map Location 19E in about 1944
31C	Hayden Ave	1703	Milne	Howare Miline, Railroader, moved to Map Location 31D in 1950
31B	Hayden Ave	1720	Peterson	Ed Peterson - Railroader, wife was a Nurse, no children
31A	Hayden Ave	1727	Bonnell	Harry Bonnell - Railroad Worker, Nice House, Bachelor
30A	Hayden Ave	1827	Brown	Ted Brown's Mother
17D	Hayden Ave	1828	Martin	Major Martin - Railroader, one son Major Jr.

16L	Hayden Ave	1904	Dull	Russell Dull - he was an occasional playmate, son Johnny and daughter Virginia. This house burned some time during this time period.
16F	Hayden Ave	1928	Stolp	Olgie Stolp - He was called 'Oye-she.' Railroad worker, Klingbeil family connection. He and a renter worked for the section crew. Neither would have anything to do with neighbor Matysik, a member of that crew nor each other. Each walked to work alone. The Mrs. wanted to give me a mutt for a pet, but my mother would not hear of it. Their many dogs would dig holes in the dusty ground and crawl in to get some respite from the heat.
28A	Hayden Ave	2027	Matysik	Clarence Matysik - a section worker who laid and maintained railroad tracks. Two daughters and 2 sons named Aloyius and Clancy. None of this family had anything to do with anyone in the neighborhood.
15K	Hayden Ave	2028	Kersten	Ham Kersten - Railroader, three sons, Gordon, Roger and Bill. I never knew Gordon. Roger, one year older than I, was an occasional friend; we usually walked to school together. We were involved in one great event, the introduction of the game of Monopoly to our neighborhood. We did nothing else one summer but play Monopoly at the Kirsten's. His mother had a peculiarly loud, penetrating, and wavering call for him----'Roger-rrrrr-err---er.' He was a soldier during WW II and was severely wounded.
37B	Hayden Ave		Bellesbach	William Bellesbach -- Railroader, I recall kids, Richard, Mary, Anne, John and Shirley.
13A	Lynn Ave	227	Schilling	Leroy and Lula Schilling - Railroader, Mechanic. Children Marvel, Robert, Gary, Vickie, Leroy and Ace.
25A	Lynn Ave	303	Stewart	Lawrence and Inez Stewart (her maiden name is Sturz) - children; Bob, Darlene and Donna.
19A	Lynn Ave	619	Rock	George Rock - Railroad, One daughter (married Glen Gilbert). Family moved to Map Location 61L in 1938.
24B	Lynn Ave	1119	Anderson	Anderson, I remember a mean little white dog that nipped at heels.
24A	Lynn Ave	1127	Blake	Blake - A couple with no children - This is the site of the Altoona Rooming house which burned in 1918. The family moved to Map Location 73K in 1956.
23C	Lynn Ave	1211	McGrouary	Tom and Emma McGrouary - Emma worked at the grocery store, daughters Katherine and Rosemary.
13C	Lynn Ave	1212	Vindal	Vindal's - oldest was Orville, then Kenneth (my classmate) and Arthur (who had a knack for giving nick-names).
23B	Lynn Ave	1219	Hardies	Irv Hardies - Depot agent, Alderman and Constable. Daughter Karen, later moved to Map Location 68H
13B	Lynn Ave	1220	Stephanie	Josie Stephanie - single lady
23A	Lynn Ave	1227	Glassbrenner	William and Eva Glassbrenner - Constable and Railroader, children Waldemar, Freda and young Bill.
12H	Lynn Ave	1304	Hultberg	Henry Hultberg - Railroader, daughter Viola married Larry Lampman and this couple, with sons Garold and Robert, also lived at this address.
12G	Lynn Ave	1312	Bilderback	Bilderback - son Leo lived with his Mom.
12F	Lynn Ave	1320	Killen	Marshall Killen - Railroader, children Wally, Glen, LaVern and Shirley
12F	Lynn Ave	1320	McGovern	Cy and Maggie McGovern - Railroad Worker, two daughters and one son Jerry.
12E	Lynn Ave	1324	Larson	Orville and Emily Larson - City Cop, children Orville Jr. and Carol

21D	Lynn Ave	1401	Berg	Berg's Store and Dairy Bar - Apartments Above and next door west is Cheney Meat Market
22A	Lynn Ave	1403	Emmanuel	Emmanuel
21S	Lynn Ave	1407	Whitwahn	Chinnie's (Whitwahn) Meat Market
21C	Lynn Ave	1413	Post	Post Office - later moved to Map Location 21E then to 12E
21B	Lynn Ave	1419	Looby	Looby Meat Market - Roger's Boss 1951-54
11E	Lynn Ave	1420	Woodington	Darrel Woodington Gas Station
21A	Lynn Ave	1421	Smith	Smith's Rooming House
10G	Lynn Ave	1510	Buckholtz	Robert Buckholtz - Railroader
20D	Lynn Ave	1511	Johnson	David 'Sally' Johnson - He eventually became a member of the Eau Claire County Board, later he moved to Wilson Drive and Spooner Ave.
20B	Lynn Ave	1519	McGrouary	McGrouary
10F	Lynn Ave	1520	Schroeder	Tony Schroeder - Presto
10E	Lynn Ave	1524	Fuley	Fuley - Jeanette eventually married Bobby Knoble.
19D	Lynn Ave	1603	Patterson	Nel Patterson - daughter (Teacher/Librarian)
09H	Lynn Ave	1604	LaLonics	Peter LaLonics
19B	Lynn Ave	1611	Greice	Lloyd and Clara Griese - In addition to Bud
09G	Lynn Ave	1612	Gorbek	Leo Gorbek
18D	Lynn Ave	1703	Dugan	Dugan, son Jack was an Ace Pilot in WW II, Killed in Action.
18C	Lynn Ave	1707	Paulsrude	Paulsrude - daughter lone was a beauty.
18F	Lynn Ave	1715	Westberg	John Westberg - Engineer CNW
08H	Lynn Ave	1716	Hayden	Claude Hayden - worked at the Depot and was very helpful to me during my brief stint (1942) as a baggageman. City Council, Pioneers, compassionate, two of Altoona's finest Citizens.
08F	Lynn Ave	1720	Becker	Becker's - Bud Griese's grandparents. Mr. Becker had been a mayor and councilman of Altoona. Son Norm and grandson Bud lived with them.
18B	Lynn Ave	1725	Wright	George Wright - railroader, children Diane and James.
18A	Lynn Ave	1727	Juno	George Juno - Railroader, children; Tom, Georgia, Patricia
08E	Lynn Ave	1728	McDonald	'H.P.' or 'Horsepower' McDonald - A railroad engineer, one daughter that became a Librarian and Teacher
17C	Lynn Ave	1804	St. Mary	St. Mary's Church Rectory - Father Noonan (a Protestant's best friend).
16D	Lynn Ave	1903	Stanley	George Stanley - He used to walk with a cane. He ran 'Stanley's,' now the '400 Club'. Two children, Lloyd and ?
15A	Lynn Ave	2027	Hahn	Jap Hahn - Worked for CNW railroad, had a son named Irving. Short people, nice.
05E	Lynn Ave	2028	Whitwam	Chinnie Whitwam ran a meat market downtown. Later Bill and Mae Ely lived here. Ralph Ely, three years older, was my boyhood idol. He was the captain of the 1939 Altoona basketball team that won the State Class C championship.
05H	Lynn Ave		Zell	The Zell house. Darlene my first girlfriend with first kiss and all that. A relatively new house. For years, the Ely/Whitwam house had been the only one on this entire block.
11B	Spooner Ave	1411	Ely	Ely's Tavern
11A	Spooner Ave	1425	Mooney	Mooney's Restaurant -- Altoona Restaurant -- "The Greasy Spoon"
02E	Spooner Ave	1512	Evert	Evert's City Fuel - Supplied coal
02G	Spooner Ave	1519	Miller	Ice and Fuel Company, Jess and Harry Miller - Owners
10A	Spooner Ave	1527	Rooming H	Rooming House in the 1930's, A new house built here in 1949 by Ken Babbitt
09D	Spooner Ave	1609	Evert	Felix Evert - Owned Evert's City Fuel, one daughter
09B	Spooner Ave	1619	Livermore	Bill and Kate Livermore - Railroader, stepdaughter Rose Ann
09A	Spooner Ave	1627	Kallis	Ben Kallis - he owned the 400 Cafe in the 1950's
08G	Spooner Ave	1719	Heideman	Charles Heideman

06D	Spooner Ave	1903	Sauer	Henry Sauer - their home was a duplex/rooming house. Daughter Betty. Son Bobby hung out with us. He had something of a romantic attachment to Lois Bonin whose family lived on the second floor. The Sauers had what they considered to be a "swimming" pool on the west side of this house. It was tiny, more suited to water lilies than swimmers. One might wade in it, or sit in it, but one could never swim in it. If one ventured in, there was every danger of contracting all manner of dermatological diseases. Both the Sauer and Wittren houses were of the same general concrete block construction.
04D	Spooner Ave	2103	Schilling	Grandpa Schilling - Brother to Herman and Clyde, Uncle to LeRoy, Claude and Coon Schilling. I remember little about them. They planted corn west of 7th Street West from their house on Spooner to Hayden. I remember one painful event when I got caught barefoot in the hot and burning sand of their cornfield. I could not escape this sizzling Hell.
01B	Spooner Ave		CSTPM&O	CSTPM&O Storage - 'A building' filled with what was said to be paper. Between tracks and current County Highway shops. In very bad shape. It burned and was never replaced.
01H	Spooner Ave		Sund	Gutrum Sund (off map-upper left) - Lived at what is now the northwest corner of Spooner and 10th Street West. City Engineer for 30 years. Children were George and Phylliss.
02C	Spooner Ave		Depot	Depot: Waiting Room, Operating Room and Baggage
06A	Spooner Ave		Wittren	Henry Wittren - Railroader, wife managed Eau Claire newspaper. Children; Dorothy Donnie, Jerry and Lloyd. Lloyd was one of the gang who went fishing with us, hung out at the pool hall, and played basketball in the nearby Thurston empty lot.
01A			Ice	Ice House
02A				Rip" or Rep" Track
02B			Round	Round House
02D			Henning	Rink Henning - Lived in a cave and worked at the Sand house - CNW
07B			St. Mary	St. Mary's Catholic School. This became the St. Benedict's School for Boys in 1938.
17B			St. Mary	St. Mary's Church
25K			Sturz	Sturz - Robert (played forward on Altoona's 1939 Championship team and afterwards, he entered CCCs), Inez, Ida Mae, and Helen.
29F			Skating	The skating rink in an entirely empty block. The lot's soil was plowed up and fashioned into banks which contained the water which became ice. Although near at hand, I never enjoyed the experience of going there -- icy cold, rough ice, no shelter, clamp on skates that always fell off, weak ankles. It was used as an athletic practice field in spring and fall.
End of Street Address Sort				

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Greater Downtown Altoona, Wis., circa 1935

By John R. Thurston – 02.24.09

Let's take a stroll through the downtown area of Altoona about the time when I was in the 5th or 6th grade .

I'll begin by heading north, toward the railroad yards, on Division Street, from a point half way in the block between Hayden and Lynn Avenues.

To my near right (east), one would see a shed (1), part of Frank Shute's general store (2) on the corner. As a springtime ritual, with the help of Cecil Walker, a store clerk, I'd acquire a brand new bamboo fishing pole from a shed directly behind it. In my late adolescence, I would make small daily purchases from Virginia Walters, a clerk there who was the sister of my good friend, Frederick. Much later on, this then deserted store was considered as a possible Altoona Museum. Instead it was demolished. Its site is now a parking lot.

East of Shute's store, after skipping a large empty lot, one would find the Altoona Auditorium (4) with housing for the fire truck behind it.

To my left, there would have been George "Spexy" Fowler's barber shop (3), to be torn down in 1936. He wore his glasses or spectacles with a strange flare. I have hazy recollections of a Maybelle Fowler as a near classmate.

See map next page.

14

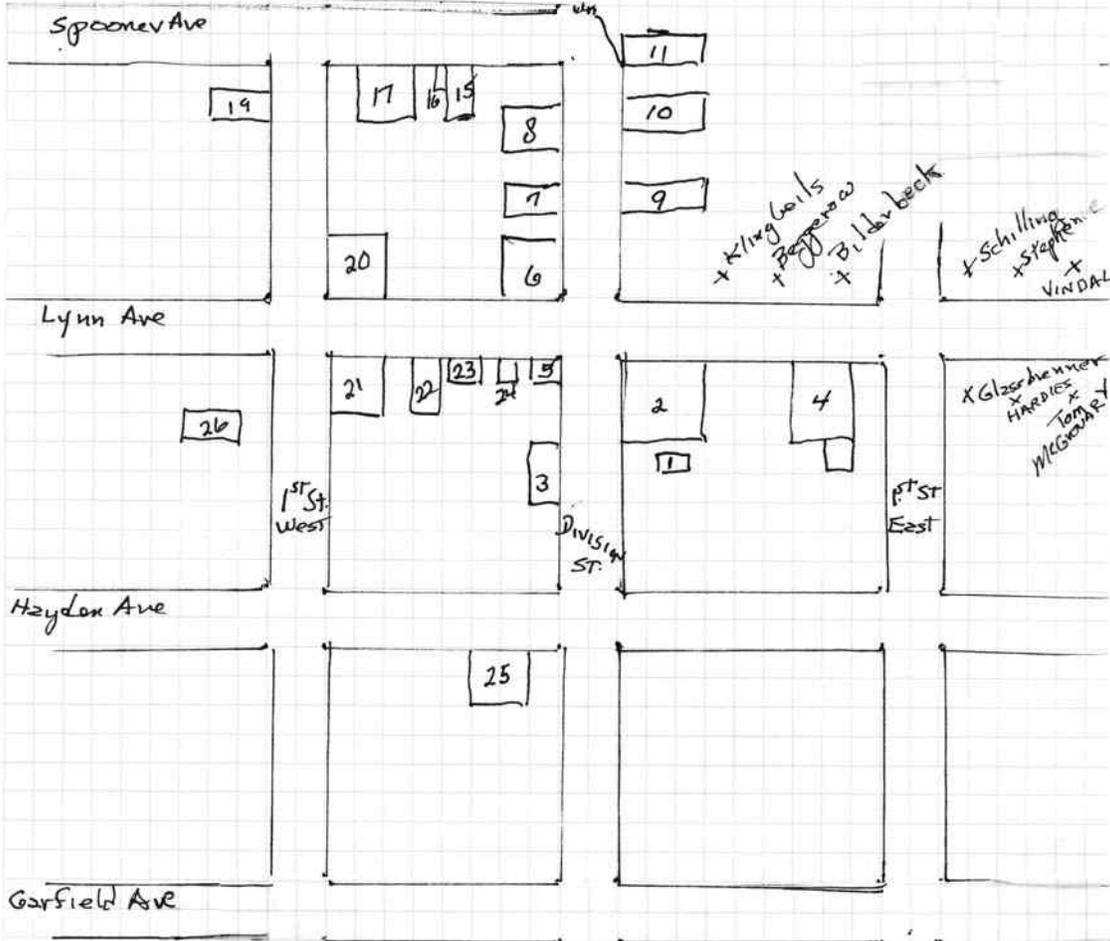
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12

North
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c 18 & a

Main
LW



Downtown
Altoona
Wis
Circa 1935

John R. Thurston
03.02.09

To my near left, at the intersection Division Street and Lynn Avenue, one would find a concrete brick structure that I recall as being the Berg Store (5). In it, one could buy all manner of cheap, penny/nickel knick-knacks, most of which came from Japan. A favorite was a tiny wax bottle filled with a sweet liquid. One would bite off the top of this bottle and ingest the contents. God only knows from whence this liquid came. My memory fails me as I attempt to identify other items available for purchase. Perhaps a punch board provided an opportunity to win an additional piece of chocolate.

On my far left at the intersections would be McGrouary's tavern (6), named the Link and Fin, or maybe Pin. I never entered this den of iniquity. Now, it is called the Golden Spike Bar and Grill.

Continuing north on the left, one would find the Kensmoe Barber Shop (7) and then Ely's Tavern (8). The barber shop operated on a "first come, first served" basis; one could wait for a very long time. Kensmoe suffered from cancer and eventually committed suicide. On one occasion, I was having my haircut even though Kensmoe was in pain. My father was waiting to take him over to Luther Hospital to get some relief. Kensmoe insisted on finishing my hair cut before he would leave.

Ely's Tavern was very popular amongst the unemployed men during the Great Depression. They would play endless games of "shatzka" or "sheepshead," routinely adjourning on week nights well before then o'clock to return home to listen to "Amos and Andy." A Billy Wolgast and his guitar often appeared for Saturday night dances. These were held in a former restaurant room to the south that was accessed through the barroom at Ely's.

On the right from the Division/Lynn intersection, continuing north beyond the empty lot on the corner, one would find a stuccoed former bank building containing Dwight “Dike” Neill’s Garage (9)----and a concrete block building (10) which eventually became the Red Jarosch’s Pool Hall and Barber Shop. North of this, adjacent to the railroad yard, there would be a storage shed (11). Some provision for seating was made next to it. Some of us boys would gather there regularly of an evening to talk and wait for a passenger train to go by.

Division Street ended at its intersection with Spooner Avenue. A piped railing, suitable for sitting, marked this juncture (See picture next page). From this point, one could look north across the two tracks of the main railroad line and see in the distance the switching yards (12), round house (13), and “rip” or “rep” track (14) where railroad cars would be repaired.



George Sund and John Robert “Bobby” Sauer, 1939.
Railroad tracks, railroad roundhouse
and repair shops in the background.
Corner of Spooner and Divisions Streets
Altoona Wisconsin.

After moving by a large vacant lot left of the corner there would be Stanley’s Tavern (15), its small lunch counter (16) adjacent to it, then the larger Altoona Restaurant (17) known locally as “The Greasy Spoon.” The lot on the next corner was vacant.

The Chicago and Northwestern Depot (18) would be on the right, immediately across from the restaurant. It contained a waiting room (a), the operation room (b), and the baggage department (c) on the western end.

Turning left (south) at the intersection of Spooner and West 1st Street, one would see a cement block building on the right

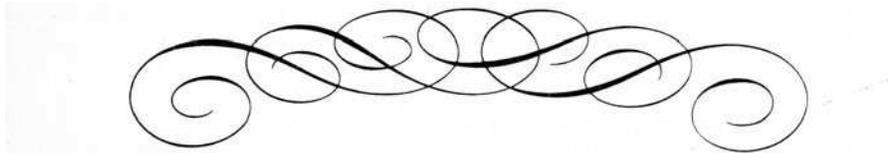
(19). This was the home of Dolly McKeeth, the rambunctious lady who ran the Altoona Restaurant.

Now, we are at the intersection of Lynn Avenue and West 1st Street. To the near left, at the intersection of Lynn Avenue and West 1st Street one would find Veryl and George Wright's gas station (20), a hangout for young males.

Across Lynn Avenue, at the intersection's far left, one would find the Smith House (21), a lodging place for transients and a few regulars.

Turning left onto Lynn, . On the right, heading east after the Smith House, one would encounter Leo Looby's Meat Market (22) next to the Smith House, then the U.S. Post Office (23), a tiny Cheney Whitwam Meat Market (24) and then the Berg Store (5). Off the beaten track on Hayden Avenue, one would find the store of Martin Grasby (25). In it were sold candy, sundries, and cheap watches. He may have run a pawn shop of sorts. An ad in a period publication indicated the following enterprises – Diamonds bought and sold; Swiss and American R.R. Watches; Watch Repair; Fire, Storm, and Tornado Ins., City Property, Improved Farms and Wild Lands.

Another structure, located on 1st. West (26), had been used both as a church and primary school.



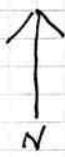
The Intersection of Fairfax St. and Highland/Spooner Avenues Circa 1935

The accompanying map shows three plots of land in this area that merit special attention.

These were near or part of a “new Altoona” that was being developed in the midst of the Great Depression. Its boundaries were roughly old Highway 53, Fairfax Street, Otter Creek, and a line just a bit north of Spooner Avenue. It was referred informally to as “The Third Ward” or “The Annex” or “Gopher Town.” All these names had an element of derogation to them. Eau Claire’s Third Ward was the epitome of elegance at the time, Altoona’s Third Ward was anything but that. “The Annex” clearly suggested an apartheid character to this part of Altoona. “Gopher Town” got its name from the uncompleted nature of its dwellings; the inhabitants lived in basements while developing the finances necessary to complete the structure. The children were transported to the Altoona Public School in a single bus. On board was a Daniel Fenner who eventually became a classmate and teammate of mine. His parents operated the tiny Fenner Grocery Store at the corner of Laurel and Fairfax.

1. The lot is the site of the Eau Claire County Highway Shops on the southwest corner of this intersection, technically in Eau Claire just west of Fairfax. . These were destroyed by fire in 1938. On that occasion, the residents of Altoona were treated to a sight that dominated the western sky for hours, replete with fire, smoke, and exploding gasoline cans. These shops were the rebuilt on Spooner Avenue in Altoona later that same year.

A large indoor roller skating rink was erected on the old site. Sometime later the building was remodeled into the Co-op Store and still later (1983) into the Mega grocery store. It now (2009) houses numerous offices, shops, and a restaurant (The Secret Garden). It is called the Eastridge Center.



U.S. Cavalry Barracks - 1935
 (Hoff's Produce - Chickens, eggs)
 (Word of Life Bible Church, Amer. Red Cross,
 Lil' Mouse Playhouse, Steve's Alternator)

Highland Ave.

Spooner Ave.

E.C. Co. Highway Shop
 -1935
 (roller rink)
 CO-OP, than Mega Store 1983
 (Eastridge Center)

Empty 13 acres - 1935

{ E.C. Co. 4-11 Fairgrounds }
 { P.O.W. Camp }
 { (Citizens Community Fed.) }
 219 Fairfax
 { Large parking lot }

(Eastridge
 Estates
 3504 Hoover)

FAIRFAX
 St.

Hoover Ave

FENNER
 Grocery Store

"Gopher
 Town"

Fenwick Ave

Ezu Claire

Altoona

2. The large and empty 13 acres on the southeast corner was the site for the occasional visits of large carnivals. These were the cause of great celebration on the part of children and adolescents in Altoona. The carnival's midway back---from Altoona and spend the evening walking aimlessly up and down this midway, gawking at everything while spending virtually nothing. Although it seems very unreasonable, it is my hazy recollection that there were six Ferris Wheels. Such are the distortions of memory, propelled by fond recollections of a very special event and a very special time.

In 1941 Eau Claire County built a new "Fairgrounds" on this property – with the support of the WPA (Works Progress Administration) of FDR's "New Deal." The land was prepared and five large wooden buildings were erected. It was referred to as the "4-H campgrounds." This included an administrative building, two stock barns, and dormitories for boys and girls. The first event, the Eau Claire County Junior Fair, was held August 12-14, 1941.

During WW II, this land and its buildings were fenced when it became the site of a German P.O.W. stockade (see article entitled Camp Eau Claire at Altoona). The prisoners worked at the Libby Canning Factory on Menomonie Street in Eau Claire.

After the war, the site was used for many years as a fairground. In 1972, the fairground complex was moved to a site south of I-94 in the town of Washington.

This acreage is now (2009) the site of the Citizens Community Federal (on the corner, 219 Fairfax), a very large parking lot, and Eastridge Estates, a large housing building at 3504 Hoover Avenue on the far east edge. One dilapidated shed marked "G" remains in the middle, possibly the one that had been used by a local curling club for a time.

3. The U.S. Cavalry barns were on the north side of this intersection, extending down the hill. I never visited the barns nor its horses. I don't know the time line as to the barn's demolition or its replacement by a variety of businesses. At one time it became a chicken and/or egg establishment called Hoff's Produce Company, owned by a Mr. Hoff. Currently (2009), the site is occupied by Word of Life Bible Church, the Chippewa Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross, Lil' Mouse Playhouse, and Steve's Alternator and Starting Service. John R. Thurston
04.12.09

Camp Eau Claire at Altoona By Betty Cowley

Shirley Hoff was late for work. Her excuse was the unexpected walk through the fairgrounds to avoid a long deep trench that this morning cut across Enterprise Street and into the park.

Her father, owner of Hoff Produce, Poultry and Eggs, explained that the city of Eau Claire was running a water main into the 4-H Fairgrounds to accommodate some workers scheduled to stay there.

Progress on the water ditch offered a distraction for a few days. Then after a couple weeks without activity, Shirley was very surprised by the changes across the street from the factory. As she left her egg candling job heading for home she passed several military trucks parked in the center of the grounds, a large tent standing next to the concession building, and another tent over the animal washing station and a fence already half enclosing the area.

Camp Eau Claire was here in Altoona. The remaining fencing was in place before nightfall. Two guard towers went up the next day. From mid June to mid September, 1945 Shirley enjoyed her daily walk to and from work. With 178 young men stationed at the camp she often walked across the street on lunch break or stopped there on her way home to flirt with the guards. She even knew one, Sgt. Edward Ludwikoski, who graduated from Eau Claire High a couple of years earlier.

From Ludwikoski and the others she learned that Camp Eau Claire was one of the smallest of 38 such camps across the state. The 143 prisoners held in Altoona were German soldiers captured in the Battle of Tunisia. Guarded and supervised by 35 GIs including Commander Capt. Jack Hodges, these men worked for Lange Canning Company either in the cannery on Oxford Avenue or on farms harvesting the crops contracted to the company.

Originally planned for Mt. Simon, Camp Eau Claire was moved to the Altoona fairgrounds after an outcry of protests from Simon area neighbors. While some local residents were fearful of these captured Nazis most were unaware of who they were. Other folks walked or drove to the fairgrounds in the evening to watch these men bounce balls off their heads in an unfamiliar soccer game or listen to their harmonious music or visit across the fence with the POWs seeking information about German relatives or communities. Each morning most prisoners were trucked to the canning factory, area pea viners or farms for duty. The few remaining tended to the cooking, laundry and other camp chores. All returned for their evening meal and relaxation before lights out. Removed long enough for the annual County Junior Fair to be held, the POWs quickly returned for the corn pack. During their stay in Altoona these prisoners put in almost 17,000 hours of labor and earned about \$9,000 for the U.S. Treasury.

While a lone POW was arrested wandering down town Eau Claire one evening, no other problem was reported. After the war some prisoners even maintained correspondence with area farmers they worked for that year. The eleven autographs Shirley collected from her favorite guards and Capt. Hodges are reminders of her very interesting summer of 1945.

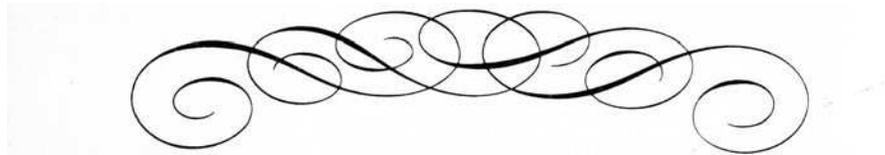
Background information on Betty Cowley.

Born and raised in Portage, WI, Betty Cowley is a UW - Eau Claire Alumnus, having graduated

in 1964 with her B.A. and received her M.S.T. in 1971. (She considers “STALAG WISCONSIN” her PH -D without a University.) Since graduation, her career was in the classroom. She and husband Tom have resided in the Eau Claire area since their marriage in 1962

Nationally recognized four times for her classroom activities, Betty Cowley retired in 1999 after teaching high school history and social studies at Altoona WI. for 35 years. (During that time she also taught part time at the Chippewa Valley Technical College for ten years and two Semesters at the UW - Eau Claire.) Since her retirement Betty devoted full time to completing her research and writing her book, STALAG WISCONSIN: Inside WWII Prisoner of War Camps, published in 2002 by Badger Books, Inc. Since publication, much of her time has been spent traveling the state talking about and promoting the book.

On August 2, 2003, the UW-Eau Claire Alumni Association recognized Betty “for her outstanding career in the classroom and continued contributions to the teaching of history” by presenting her with the Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award.



Chapter Three

Three Celebrated Ladies From Altoona

Laura Semisch-Christy

Grace Sorenson-Eick

“Toots” Clara Becker-Griese



Laura (Semisch) Christy at Home -- Near Eau Claire, WI
June 22, 2009

I (Jack Blackburn) took this photo during my first visit with Laura. She gave me an armload of treasures from the past. Photos of her and her family (they are included within the pages of this book), and old newspaper clippings that were of interest to her; and, it turns out, of interest to me. And Laura talked... Sentences would come to mind and she would give them to me. Then another thought and another short story. Always in a quiet voice that was clear as a bell. And she was clear about what she was telling me too – details from a family historian. These were stories to warm the heart one moment and with gut wrenching agony the next – ‘twas not always an easy life for Laura and her family.

Laura would notice when I was writing something down in my notebook and she would pause. When I would look up at her she would start again, just where she left off – sometimes in the middle of a sentence. Laura noticed many things, including my habit of taking off my glasses when I want to examine the details of something close up. It prompted her to tell me “I had eye surgery and now I can thread a needle without glasses.”

What follow is a series of short stories that seemed “noteworthy” at the time – literally so, as I wrote them down in my note book. I would add details during subsequent visits with Laura or during our phone calls. Some are simply “one liners” while others are a little longer. Then there is a series of photographs and I have added comments made by Laura as we looked at them together.

My mother’s youngest sister (she was about my age)... When my Aunt Esther married Charley

Christy... I met Donald at their wedding.

At Garfield and 4th is a big white house. This building was the St. Mary's Church Rectory and it was moved to this location when the church was torn down.

Bernice Wuff (sp?) owned the store in town. Meats, dry goods and school supplies. It was called Shute's Store and it was located South of the Post Office – where the present Library parking lot is.

Laura was born in 1920... June 8th. My mother was in the strawberry patch the day I was born (almost prematurely).

Gust Sund: His daughter, Phyllis Boetcher, is in the Mega Pick n Save picture. Her brother was killed in the service.

My Grandparents had 7 children (4 boys and 3 girls). They lived in Altoona – a home and a barn. Lightning struck the house – killed their daughter and burned the house down. They built another house across the street and moved in there with their family.

Ida (1875 -1905) The lightning did affect her too – she had seizures later in life.

Clara (1876 -1895) was killed when the lightning struck the house – she was sewing her wedding dress when it happened.

Otto (1878 -1969) worked for the railroad and the county.

Anna (1889 -1967) never married – always stayed home; to feed the men and do the dairy work.

Henry (1881 -1957) was a conductor – got his leg cut off in a railroad accident – a “good uncle.” In the Milk House he would keep a bunch of Baby Ruth candy bars all lined up on the windowsill – then he would tell us when we could go in and get one. And he would take us to confirmation – Wednesday at 3:30 (and Saturday mornings) he would pick us up at school and drive us to Eau Claire. He would go to the Pool Hall until we were finished and drive us back home again. Uncle Henry wasn't a farmer – he was a railroader and he got his leg cut off below the knee. He couldn't work much after that. He did take care of the fish pond at the Rod and Gun Club east of Altoona – at 6 mile creek. He would get cut up liver and we would go with him down a bunch of steps to the 6 mile creek and throw the liver in for the fish to eat. Often, he would go to the Pool Hall in Altoona and play cards with the Railroaders.

Julius (1883 -1961) he farmed.

Edward (1886 -1964) got hurt when the lightning struck – after that he could remember everything.

Harriet Ask drowned in Lake Altoona – after that we never went down there again... us kids were afraid to. We all knew Harriet, she was in school with us [you can see her in some of the photos]. Before that Aunt Annie would go down there with us and we would get in the water... we didn't have any bathtubs back then. [*Editor's note: I believe she drowned in the Eau Claire River – before there was a lake.*]

I worked at Uniroyal for \$60 a month... and I saved money too... I did work a lot of overtime though.



Julius Auguste S.

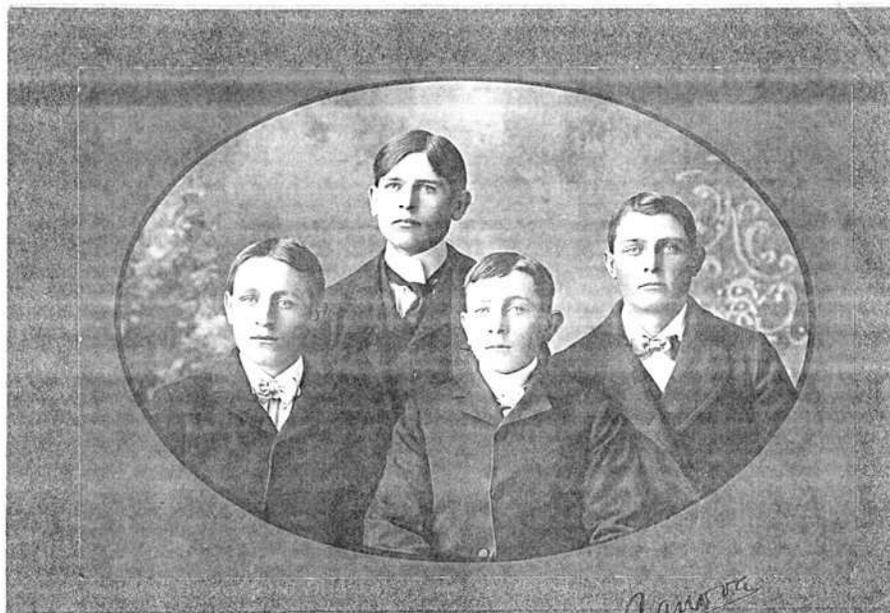
Laura's Grandparents – Aguste (Martin) and Julius Semisch



Anna

Anna Semisch

Anna is a sister of Otto. She never married – always stayed home; to feed the men and do the dairy work.

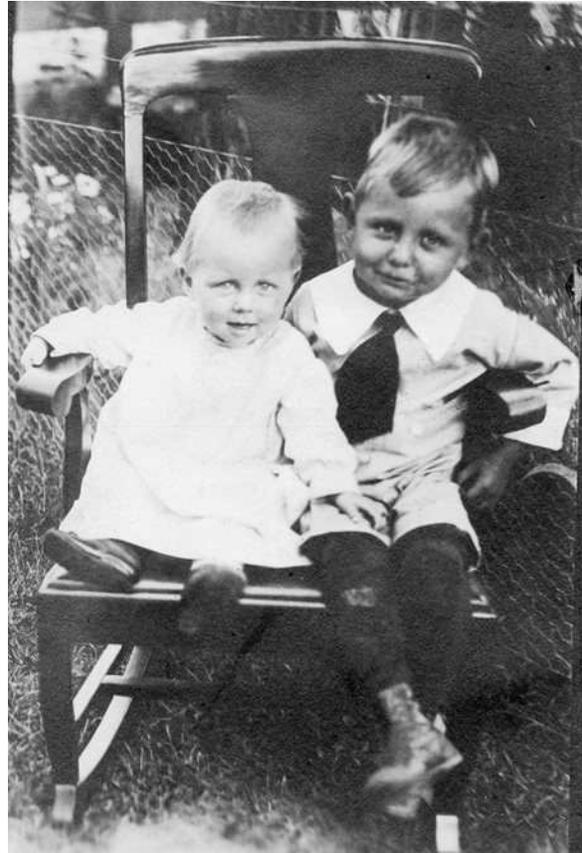


Otto, Henry, Julius and Edward Semisch

Otto is Laura's father and the other three never married.

This is a picture of myself and my older brother in a rocking chair on my Grandmother's front porch. I am about 1 year old and Harold about 2.

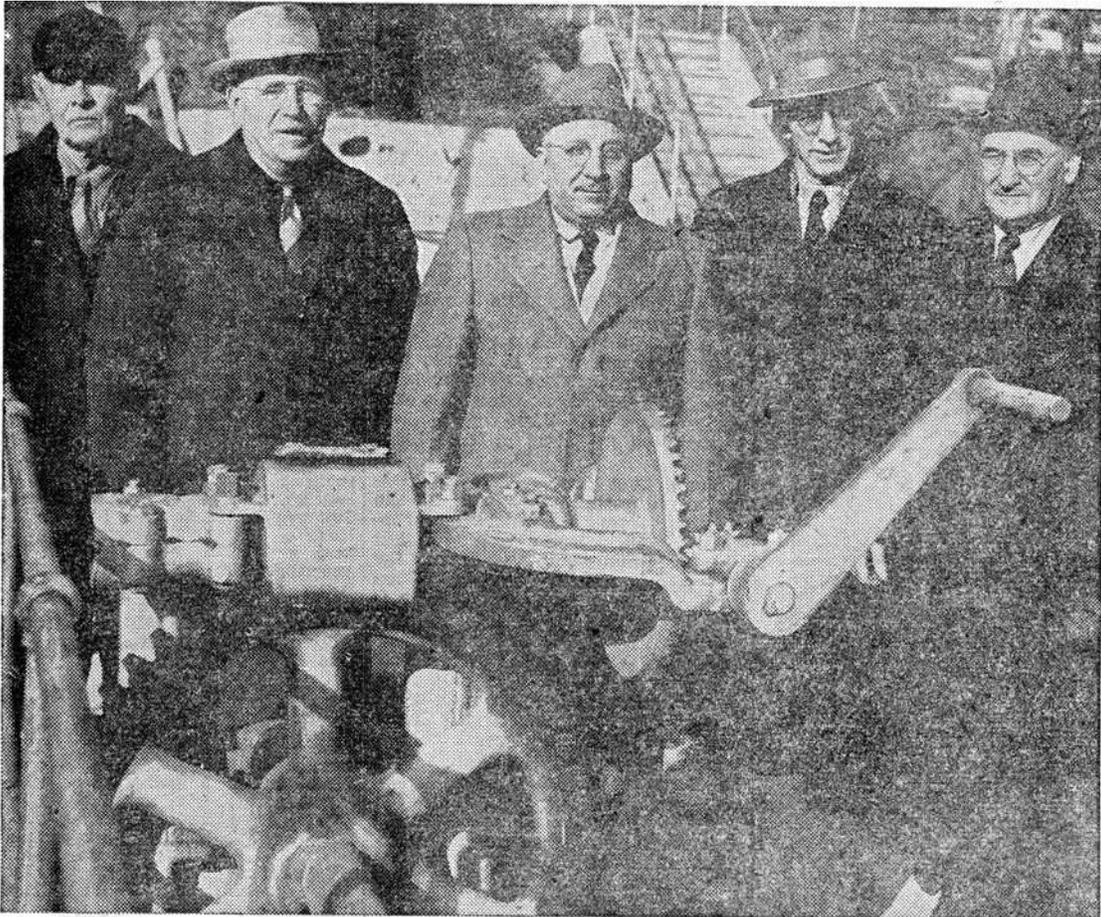
I only weighed 3 pounds at (a premature) birth – they always said I could fit in a shoebox.



Arnold, Harold and Laura Semisch
Laura is 5 or 6 years old –
Harold is one year older and
Arnold 2 years younger.



Laura's Father, Otto Semisch



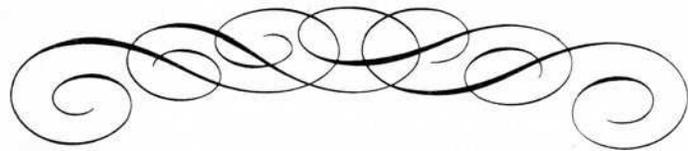
PARK BOARD MEMBERS INSPECT NEW APRON.—Members of the Eau Claire county park board met at the Altoona dam Wednesday afternoon to inspect the new catch basin and apron constructed by Alex Tilseth of Menomonie. They are, left to right, Otto Semisch of Altoona, H. E. Horel of Augusta, George Zetzman of Fall Creek, chairman of the county board, James C. Brown of Eau Claire, and Gay Osborn, Eau Claire. Two members of the board were absent, Supervisors William N. Miller, ill at Sacred Heart hospital, and Henry Bollinger, town of Clear Creek.



Laura (Semisch) and Donald Christy
On their Wedding Day
May 27, 1944



Don and Laura
1975





1990

Front Row: Ruth Hale – 4th & 5th grade teacher
Amy Jerome-Eggen – 6th & 7th grade teacher
Vernon Eggen – Amy’s husband

Second Row Laura Semisch-Christy
Gene Pernot

Back Row Cadwel Boettcher
Forrest Gilbert
Fritz Underwood

Laura Semisch Christy “Bio.” Poetica Grandma-tica. 2009-2010 *

I was born just east of Altoona, Wisconsin, in 1920, in a place now known as “Otto’s Acres.” With Jesse Jensen as my principal, I attended Altoona Public Schools for twelve years, graduating in 1938 as valedictorian.

After waitressing at the Hillcrest Golf Club, I attended Eau Claire Vocational School for a year, and then became employed by U.S. Rubber Co. as an accountant. In 1942, this factory began transitioning from tires to artillery shells for WW II. For a time, I worked a new plant’s office in the town of Hallie, halfway between Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls. Upon returning to the Eau Claire factory, We received a governmental award for the excellence of our war work.

After five years of office work, I resigned to marry Donald Christy, an ambitious farmer from Fall Creek. He and his father had purchased a 200 acre farm in Pleasant Valley township south of Eau Claire. In a time before nursing homes became available, my husband’s parents lived with us for 22 years. We had two sons, the first dying at birth.

Over the years. I’ve worked hard on the farm and with church groups, kept family records, did plastic craft and embroidery. I cooked and baked for the many relatives and friends who visited my husband’s parents and us. I cooked and froze many vegetables from our large garden. I baked and decorated cakes and cookies for confirmations, birthdays, anniversaries, graduation, and Christmas.

My husband died after 57 years of marriage. Now, at the age of 89, with the help of my son, Darrell, and his wife, Lynne, I’m still living in the same farmhouse. Although I am slowing down a bit, I continue to feed birds and outdoor cats and send get-well cards to hospitalized members of my church.

God has richly blessed me.

* Printed with permission of the editors of Poetica Grandma-tica - Nancy Clark-Scobie and Judy Bredeson.

Laura Semisch Christy -Text- Poetica Grandma-tica 2009-2010 *

My thoughtful, giving, Christian grandmother, Auguste Martin, was born of German descent in Zachernkow, Russia. She first came to Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and then moved to a farm northwest of Fall Creek. She was married in 1873 to a veteran of the Civil War, Julius Semisch, who had enlisted when he was 18 and incurred gunshot wounds to the face with the accompanying loss of sight in his right eye.

They had seven children. They homesteaded a farm east of Altoona, part of which came to be known as “Otto’s Acres.” Their life style was hardscrabble as they lived off the produce of this farm. In a block bordered by Garfield Avenue, 3rd Street East, and 4th Street East, they had pigs, chickens, cows along with a large vegetable and flower garden – the latter included vines that provided wine-producing grapes. Milk production was an important part of their operation. Attached to their home, a milk house allowed them to separate the cream from the milk. The cream was picked up every other day by the Washington Creamery. The family subsisted on un-Pasteurized whole milk. Other Altoona families would come to my grandparents to get free skim milk. In later years, people would come forward and acknowledge that they couldn’t have gotten by without it.

Tragedy struck in 1895. Lightning killed a 19-year-old daughter, Clara, and started a fire that destroyed the home. The house was re-built away from the barn and stands today.

Grandma Semisch was devoted to her remaining daughter and three sons. Only my father, Otto, married.

On our many visits to her, she would read Bible stories in English while insisting that we learn a bit of German as well. I still repeat my night time prayers in the German that she taught us.

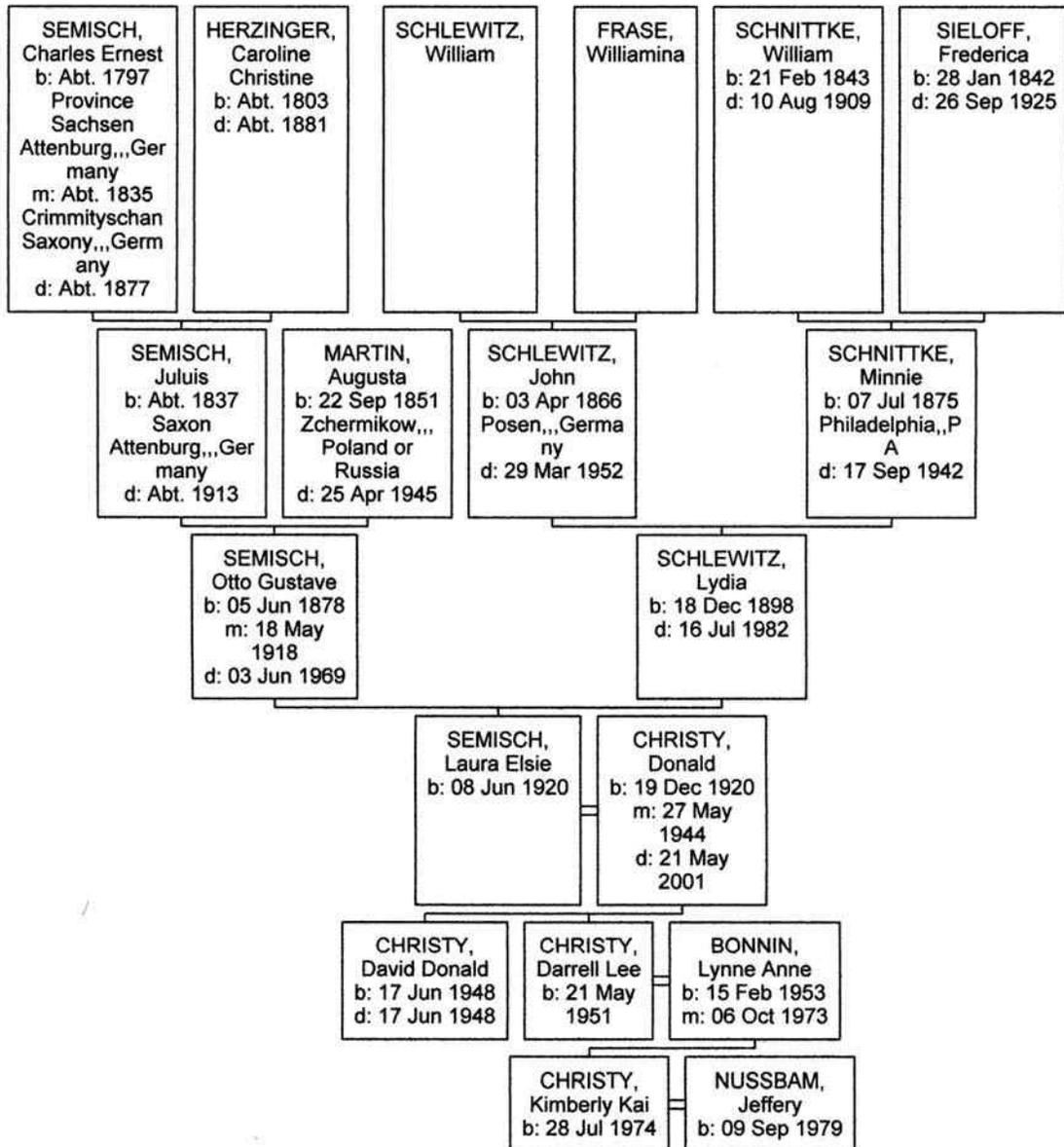
An incredibly hard worker, I never knew her to do anything for enjoyment or entertainment. Occasionally, she would visit a sister in the vicinity of Fall Creek near the Eau Claire River. On religious holidays, she would go to church with us in Eau Claire.

I would stop in to visit her when I came home from school. She'd always be cleaning vegetables, chicken, or something else as she prepared the meals. Laundry had to be done for her family and the railroad workers who lived in with them as boarders. They had a water pump in the yard and a big clothesline where many sheets would often be blowing in the wind. Some of these sheets were made by sewing flour sacks together. She would also fashion handkerchiefs from sugar sacks that, with pennies tied in the corner, would be given to us grandchildren as presents. She did live to see Donald, the man whom I married. On that occasion, she remarked "Oh, that's Laurie's man."

Grandma Semisch lived a long, simple, hard life. I never heard her complain, get sick, or go to the doctor or dentist. She lived for others, for her family, and for those relatives who continued to reside in Germany. If these others were content, she was well-satisfied.

* Printed with permission of the editors of Poetica Grandma-tica - Nancy Clark-Scobie and Judy Bredeson.

Hourglass Tree of Laura Elsie Semisch





My son Darrell, his wife Lynne and their daughter Kimberly.



Darrell was a good 4H member.
I love to bake – Coffee Cakes, Decorated Cakes and Cookies.



A cake that my granddaughter Kimberly Nussbaum and I made.



My granddaughter Kimberly and decorated cookies.



My husband used to be Santa Claus at school and would also visit some of the homes in the neighborhood.



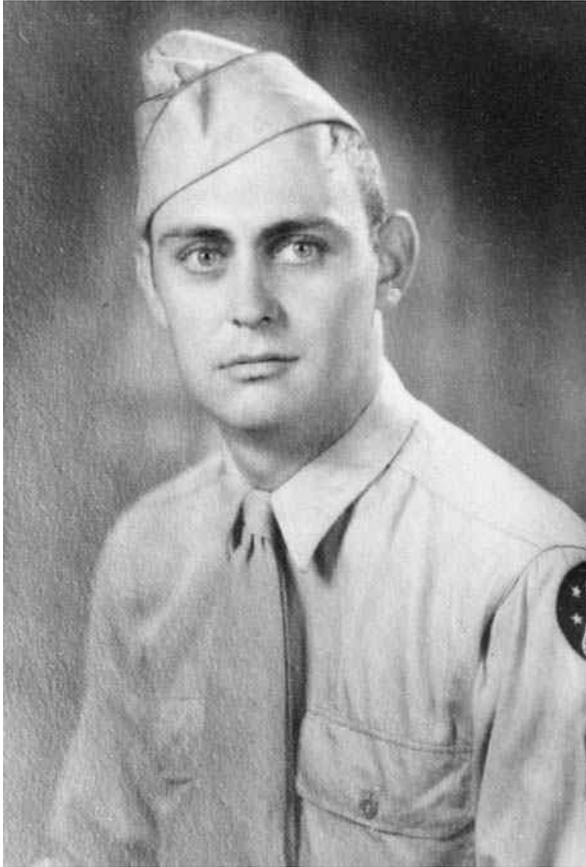


Grandma Semisch's home in Altoona
(3rd St East and Garfield – on the West side of the street).

The Milk House is located on the left end of the building.
Laura's nephew Mark is standing to the left of her brother Harold.

July 1967

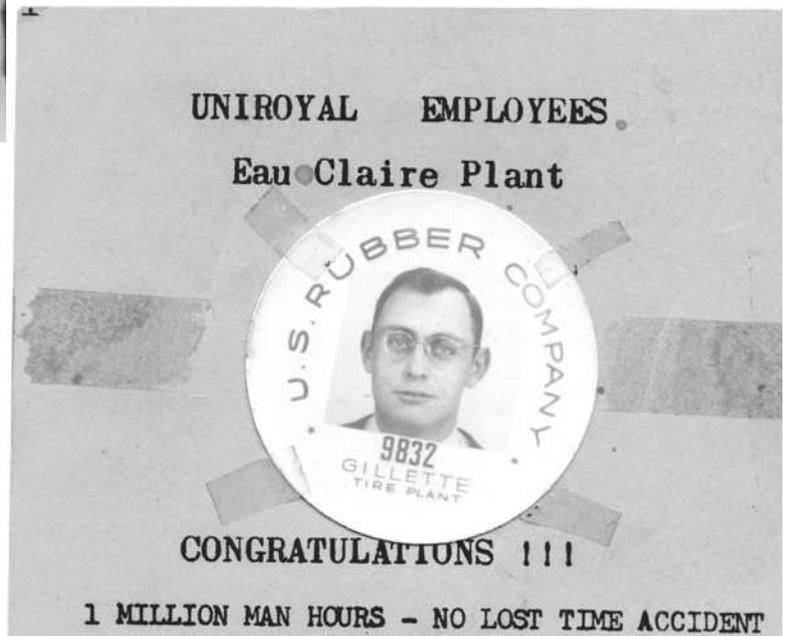
My Brother, Harold



Harold joined the Army Air Corps and he went to The Air Force Technical Training School at Ft. Logan (Denver Colorado). He trained to be an Administrative Clerk and he served in World War II in that capacity (with minimal combat responsibilities) in New Guinea, The Philippines and Australia.

After the war he joined U. S. Rubber Company and worked there for many years as a Timekeeper.

It becomes clear now how this background and training so uniquely equipped him to be the Altoona High School Railroaders' **Scorekeeper** – football, basketball and baseball for more than 55 years.



One Wondrous Day

John R. Thurston

An event took place on a late Sunday in the summer of 1942.

My partner was Harold Semisch, a brother of Laura (Semisch) Christy. Before this happening, I had known him primarily as a 1930's star athlete at Altoona High School. Later on, when I got around to playing basketball, he had accompanied our team as a scorekeeper. He never missed a game.

During WW II, I began to correspond with him after he had joined the army. When he returned on a leave, we decided to travel out of Lake Altoona and up the Eau Claire River to Big Falls on a fishing expedition. We lucked out as we chose what turned out to be a perfectly gorgeous, warm, and sunny day. Along with his fishing equipment, Harold brought along a radio and a large basketful of food. With my tiny 1.8 hp Evinrude motor powering my heavy barge/boat, we started out. It took a very long time for us to get out of the lake and into the river channel. This was high adventure. We had never done this before.

But then, sad to relate, after a couple of hours, we began to encounter an abundance of sand bars. We came to realize that we were never going to make it to Big Falls. We simply ran out of water. No amount of pushing and tugging would get my low draft barge/boat over the sandbars of the increasingly shallow river. We had to give up.

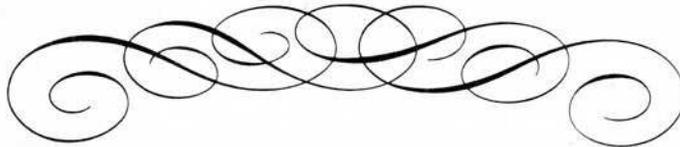
It was then that a truly wondrous journey really began. We simply floated slowly downstream. Our speed was dictated by the river's quiet current. We were completely alone on the river. Deep in our own thoughts, we didn't talk. WW II and the world were very far away from us. An occasional deer would continue to drink as we drifted by. It was absolutely silent save for the whirr of our reels, the splash of our baits, and the occasional rippling of the river. We leisurely consumed some refreshments. We cast endlessly and caught nothing. And that didn't

matter. This went on for several hours as we drifted homeward.

Afterwards, as we got closer to civilization, we listened to the end of a Chicago Cubs game as we finished off the contents of the Semisch luncheon basket. It had been a very special day.

Harold and I parted company shortly thereafter. I never saw him again. He eventually ended up fighting in the South Pacific. As a navy signalman, I landed on the weather deck of a destroyer operating in the frigid and storm-tossed waters in the Northern Pacific/Aleutian area.

While on that ship, there were many times that I relived in detail the seemingly innocuous events of that peaceful day on the river. This memory provided me with a respite and momentary escape from my own special 24/7 Hell on the wet, slippery, and cold bridge of a wildly- gyrating destroyer. I kept reminding myself that maybe, just maybe, that one day I would be as happy and content as I had been that river trip. That hope both comforted and sustained me for a very long time. John R. Thurston 04.11.09



In Dedication to a Friend of Altoona



Harold Semisch was a friend to the students, especially the athletes, of Altoona High School. An Altoona resident for all of his 77 years, Harold was a scorekeeper and fan of the Railroaders for more than 60 years. Harold was the scorekeeper for football, basketball, and baseball for more than 55 years. In fact, other than during his service in World War II, he only missed a couple of games.

During his high school athletic career, Harold participated in track and basketball. He was a four year letter winner in track, participated in the state track meet for four years where he placed in two events as a junior and two events as a senior, and was a member of the 1933-34 state track championship team.

Harold was a three year letter winner in basketball, captain of the 1936-37 team, leading scorer as a senior, and scored 22 points in WIAA Regional game against Boyd to tie the school record for a single game.

Harold graduated in 1937. As a lifelong resident of Altoona and an high school alumnus, Harold was a true "Railroader" and will be greatly missed.



1997 Headlight Dedication Page -- Altoona Education Foundation member Dina Sewell and School Board member Cheri Meyer assist Arnold Semisch and Helen* Laura Christy at the dedication of the Harold E. Semisch Memorial Track and Field. *Note: The original Headlight page is in error. Helen is Arnold's wife – she was there that day but does not appear in these photos.* Arnold Semisch and Helen* Laura Christy cut the ribbon at the naming and dedication of the Harold Semisch Track.



Harold worked at the Rubber Company and he won this car. He had never driven a car before so he learned and then he drove it.



Harold in a parade – September 24, 1994



Harold died on April 17, 1996



My brother Harold lived in the Homestead with my mother until she died then he lived there alone – Laura baked the cake he is holding.

My Brother, Arnold

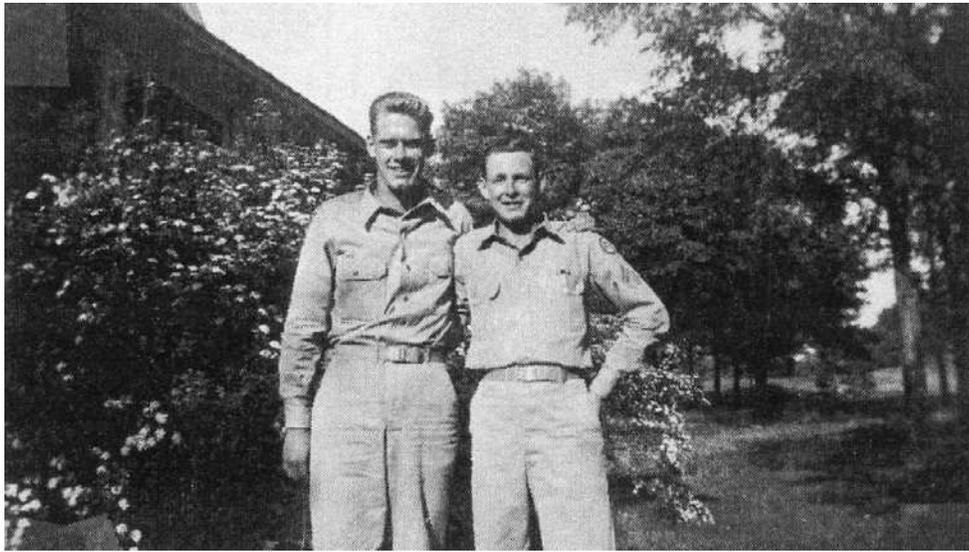


Arnie Bundt and Arnold Semisch in a field between Grandma's place and our place in Altoona.



Arnold Semisch

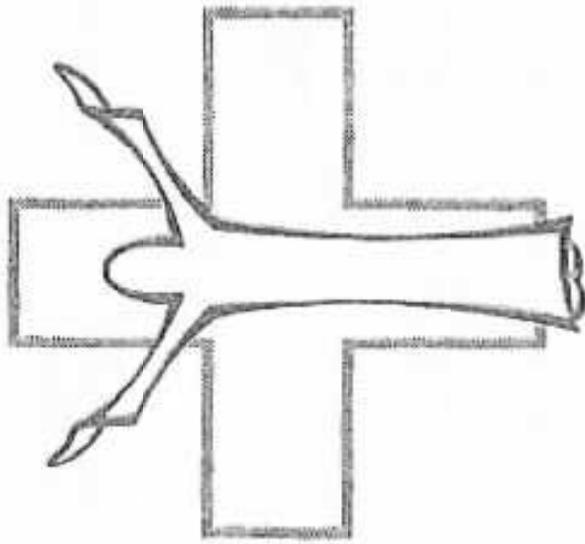
Note the stacks of grain in the background (probably oats). They would cut the grain then stack the bundles. Later they came with a Threshing Machine and threshed the grain. This means the photo was taken in late summer of that year.



Bill Thompson and Arnold Semisch
Home on leave in Altoona – 1944



Arnold Semisch



CHRISTIAN FUNERAL SERVICE FOR LAURA CHRISTY

SEPTEMBER 7, 2011
11:00 A.M.

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
CLEGHORN, WI

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

The pastor leads the casket and the bereaved into the church.

INVOCATION

The sign of the cross + may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

- P** In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
A Amen

Matthew 28:19b

REMEMBRANCE OF BAPTISM

The casket is covered with a funeral pall.

- P** In Holy Baptism we were clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness that covered all our sin. St. Paul says: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?"
- A** We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. *Romans 6:3-5*

KYRIE *spoken*

- P** Lord, have mercy upon us.
A Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT

- P** The Lord be with you.
A And also with you.
P Let us pray.
O God of grace and mercy, we give thanks for Your loving-kindness to all Your servants who, having finished their course in faith, now rest from their labors. Grant that we also may be faithful unto death and receive the crown of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

A Amen

Be Seated

THE PSALM Versification of Psalm 23



- 1 The Lord's my Shep-herd, I'll not want; He makes me down to lie
- 2 My soul He doth re-store a-gain And me to walk doth make
- 3 Yea, tho' I walk in death's dark vale, Yet will I fear no ill;
- 4 My ta-ble Thou hast fur-nish-ed In pres-ence of my foes;
- 5 Good-ness and mer-cy, all my life, Shall sure-ly fol-low me;



In pas-tures green; He lead-eth me The qui-et wa-ters by.
With - in the paths of righ-teous-ness, E'en for His own name's sake.
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod And staff me com-fort still.
My head Thou dost with oil a-noint, And my cup ov-er-er-flows.
And in God's house for-ev-er-more My dwell-ing place shall be.

THE FIRST READING Revelation 7:9-17

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

"Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

After the reading:

- ☩ This is the Word of the Lord.
- ☩ Thanks be to God.

THE SECOND READING Matthew 11:28-30

At that time Jesus said... "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

After the reading the pastor says:

- ☩ This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- ☩ Praise to you, O Christ.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

☩ God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

☩ I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy Christian Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen

A HYMN *My Faith Looks Up to Thee* Lutheran Service Book 702

THE SERMON "I Sure Have Been Blessed" Matthew 11:25

Please Stand

THE PRAYERS

- ✠ Let us pray.
- Almighty God, You have knit Your chosen people together into one communion in the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Give to Your whole Church in heaven and on earth Your light and Your peace.
- ☩ **Hear us, O Lord.**
- ✠ Grant that all who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection may die to sin and rise to newness of life and so pass with Him through the gate of death and the grave to our joyful resurrection.
- ☩ **Hear us, O Lord.**
- ✠ Grant to us who are still in our pilgrimage, and who walk as yet by faith, Your Holy Spirit that He may lead us in holiness and righteousness all our days.
- ☩ **Hear us, O Lord.**
- ✠ Grant to all who mourn a sure confidence in your loving care that, casting all their sorrow on You, they may know the consolation of Your love.
- ☩ **Hear us, O Lord.**
- ✠ Give courage and faith to the bereaved that they may have strength to meet the days ahead in the assurance of a holy and certain hope, in the communion of Your Church, and in the joyful expectation of eternal life with those they love who have departed in the faith.
- ☩ **Hear us, O Lord.**
- ✠ Help us, we pray, in the midst of things we cannot understand, to believe and find comfort in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
- ☩ **Hear us, O Lord.**
- ✠ God of all grace, we thank You that You have given Laura a long life of grace and pray that You would grant that we, too, may die in peace and receive the crown of everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- ☩ **Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

- ✠ Taught by our Lord and trusting in His promises, we are bold to pray:
- ☩ **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen**

THE NUNC DIMITTIS

- ✠ "I am the resurrection and the life," says the Lord. "He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die." *John 11:25-26*
- ☩ **Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled.**
- My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people Israel.** *Luke 2:29-32*
- Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen**
- ✠ "I am the resurrection and the life," says the Lord. "He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die."

FINAL COLLECT

- ✠ The Lord be with you.
- ☩ **And also with you.**
- ✠ Let us pray.
- Lord God, our shepherd, You gather the lambs of Your flock into the arms of Your mercy and bring them home. Comfort us with the certain hope of the resurrection to everlasting life and a joyful reunion with those we love who have died in the faith; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- ☩ **Amen.**

BENEDICAMUS and BENEDICTION

- ✠ Let us bless the Lord.
- ✠ **Thanks be to God.**
- ✠ The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.
- ✠ Amen

DEPARTING HYMN *Abide with Me*

1. A - bide with me! Fast falls the e - ven - tide;
2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's lit - tle day;
3. I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
4. Hold Thou Thy cross be - fore my clos - ing eyes,

The dark - ness deep - ens;
Earth's joys grow dim, its
ills have no weight and
Shine through the gloom, and
Lord, with me a - bide.
glo - ries pass a - way;
tears no bit - ter - ness.
point me to the skies;

When oth - er help - ers fail and com - forts flee,
Change and de - cay in all a - round I see;
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy vic - to - ry?
Heav'n's morn - ing breaks, and earth's vain shad - ows flee;

Help of the help-less, oh, a - bide with me.
O Thou, who chang - est not, a - bide with me.
I tri - umph still if Thou a - bide with me!
In life, in death, O Lord, a - bide with me.

Text and music: Public domain

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The service concludes with the Committal at Oak Grove Cemetery in Eau Claire. A lunch will be served in the church fellowship hall after the Committal. You are invited to partake of the meal and meet with the family.

LAURA CHRISTY

JUNE 8, 1920 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2011

Our Savior Jesus Christ has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Let us remember with thanksgiving what God has done through His servant Laura.

Laura (Semisch) Christy was given life by her Creator and was born on June 8, 1920, the child of Otto and Lydia Semisch in the town of Washington, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin. On August 22, 1920, she received the gift of Holy Baptism and became a child of God. On April 9, 1933 she publicly confessed her faith and was confirmed in the Christian faith and was fed the life-giving body and blood of Jesus. She was united in holy marriage to Donald Christy on May 27, 1944 and blessed with 56 years of married life together. God also blessed them with the gift of children. God blessed Laura's life with many special people as she served God in her vocations at home, church, work, and in the community. Finally, on September 1, 2011, at the age of 91 years, Laura fell asleep in Jesus. She is survived by a son, Darrell (Lynne) Christy; granddaughter, Kim (Jeffrey) Nussbaum; brother, Arnold (Helen) Semisch; nephews, Norman (Pam) Semisch and Mark Semisch. She is predeceased by her parents; husband, Donald; infant son, David; and brother, Harold. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

The Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord. We give thanks to God our Father through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for our sister Laura.



Pastor: Rev. Timothy Moe
Organist: Dorothy Nelson

Grace Sorenson Eick (1909-2008)

Grace Sorenson, a 1929 Altoona High School graduate, was the daughter of Altoona railroader Howie Sorenson. With Jesse Jensen as her coach, she truly enjoyed playing basketball. However, her participation was restricted to her freshman year (1926); the WIAA banned girls' interscholastic competition in that year. But that brief experience was so important to her that she kept this team shirt with her for the rest of her life.

After graduating from cosmetology school in Minneapolis, she worked briefly in Eau Claire and then moved to Menomonie where she owned and operated the Vanity Beauty Shop.

She married an established Menomonie barber named William "Bud" Eick. He was elected and then re-elected many times as the mayor of that city.

Grace lived in her own home until she was 96. After residing for several years in Menomonie's "Autumn Village," she died on November 27, 2008 at the age of 99. Her Altoona basketball shirt was in her possession at the time of her passing. She had kept it with her for more than 82 years. (John R. Thurston 04.02.09)



Woman's special jersey finds place in Altoona



Patti Stangel, an Eau Claire photographer, is going to encase in a shadowbox this jersey that the late Grace Sorenson Eick wore in 1926 during her freshman year at Altoona High School.

Staff photo by Shane Opatz

By Christena O'Brien – Leader-Telegram staff – 3/22/09

More than 80 years ago, Grace Sorenson Eick played on the Altoona girls basketball team, which had been started four years earlier in 1922-23.

The freshman played one season, and then the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association prohibited girls interscholastic competition, according to the late Gerald Hagen's "A History of Altoona."

While her participation was restricted, that brief experience was an important one for Grace, who for the next eight decades tucked away her gold-and-black jersey with a hand-cut circled "A" and number sewn on it.

That jersey - soon to be encased in a shadow box, along with brief biography of Grace and a photo of her team - which was coached by Jesse Jensen - will return to Altoona High School on April 2 during the girls' basketball banquet.

Unfortunately, Grace - who remained a sports fan throughout her life - won't be there. She died Nov. 27 at the age of 99 at the American Lutheran Home in Menomonie.

Upon her death her treasured basketball jersey found its way into the hands of John Thurston, who included Grace in his 2008 publication, "The Old Altoona Public School: A Collection of Memories," and alerted Altoona school officials to the jersey's existence.

"It must have been a prize to her to keep something like that for so long," said Scott Harmon, Altoona's outgoing

girls basketball coach.

Love of the game

Grace Sorenson, the daughter of Alfred and Helen Sorenson, was born in Eau Claire and raised in Altoona, where she graduated from high school in 1929. Three years earlier, she played on what would be the school's last girls' basketball team for decades.

After graduating, Grace attended the Brady School of Cosmetology in Minneapolis. She married William "Bud" Eick, who would go on to become Menomonie's mayor, in 1938 in Eau Claire. That same year, she started a beauty salon - The Charm Shop - in the Hotel Marion in Menomonie, which she operated until 1945, according to her obituary.

Throughout her life, Grace was a sports fan, watching Green Bay Packer games and listening to high school basketball games on the radio, said Mary Lemke, a longtime family friend.

"I think she'd be tickled," Lemke said of the excitement over Grace's old jersey. "She always talked about when she played basketball for Altoona."

Her obituary, which ran in the Nov. 29 Leader-Telegram, noted that "she herself played on one of the first girls basketball teams in the state of Wisconsin."

Return to Altoona

Seeing Grace's basketball jersey, Thurston, a 1942 graduate of Altoona High School, decided it was something worth preserving and sharing.

"It must of have had such a great personal meaning to her," said Thurston, who was surprised that Grace had kept the jersey all those years and was outraged at the WIAA's prohibition. "Many young ladies missed out on a great opportunity for fun, recognition and the status of interscholastic competition," he said.

WIAA officials couldn't be reached for comment.

O'Brien can be reached at 830-5838, 800-236-7077 or christena.obrien@ecpc.com.

Grace lived in her own home until she was 96. She then moved to Menomonie's "Autumn Village."

Grace was an avid sports fan, watching the Green Bay Packers, the Menomonie Indians, and basketball games.



The 1926 Altoona Girls Basketball Team Grace Sorenson, far left, front row Jesse Jensen, Coach

Presentation Address by Nancy Clark Scobie*
Altoona Girls' Basketball Banquet
April 2, 2009 Altoona (WI) High School

Given as part of the presentation to AHS of Grace Sorenson Eick's 1926 basketball jersey.

I'm here tonight because a friend of mine, Dr. John Thurston, showed me a very old picture of a girls' 1926 basketball team. In addition, he handed me a very old team jersey. Then, he told me a story—a remarkable story— about Grace Sorenson Eick who had died just last year at the age of 99. I was spellbound then and even now as I speak on this special evening, Her story is the stuff from which legends are made. I know this intuitively.

Now for the story. Amazing as it may sound, Grace played interscholastic high school basketball on a team representing Altoona in 1926. This team had been established in 1922 near the beginning of "the Roaring Twenties. At that time, your school colors were black and gold. It was her freshman year. Sad to relate, it was also her last year as a player. But that experience was so important to her that for 82 years, she kept the team jersey that she had worn.

You may wonder a bit about the significance of this.

First of all, the jersey survived. It is a symbol of her individual significance and her skill as an athlete, this piece of fabric with its hand-cut letter "A" and number "8." Grace preserved it. She kept it safe with her until she died.

I don't know about you, but I haven't been able to do this with things that I have held special. Things that I have loved and cherished disappear over the years. They may have been mislaid or tossed out. In my world, the survival of Grace's Jersey for over eighty years is a miracle.

Secondly, it seems clear that Grace saved this precious piece of her personal identity in remembrance of the BEST of TIMES for her. She was young; she was talented; she was poised on the threshold of her life. Part of this was her love of basketball. In the picture of her 1926 team, one can observe her seated in the lower left as she poses with her coach and team. There are 7 other girls and Jesse Jensen, her coach and a man destined to become an Altoona icon. She is blonde with sparkling blue eyes. Her hair is cut in the fashionable "bob" of the time. She appears happy; the slight smile on her face tells us so. She is a member of a group of confident, talented, intelligent, dedicated, passionate, powerful, competitive varsity basketball players who existed way back then and in the comparable group I see before me tonight. How wonderful!

While it was the best of times for Grace, it also became the worst of times for

her. In 1926, with three years of eligibility remaining for her, the WIAA chose to ban interscholastic competition for women. Unfair and unforgivable. It takes my breath away. Couldn't you just cry? Me, too. And it stayed that way throughout Wisconsin for nearly 40 years. Altoona didn't resume interscholastic competition until 1970, some 44 years later. It's enough to make you stomp your feet and throw a hissy fit.

One can only surmise the sadness experienced by Grace and her teammates. She very probably had dreamed of 3 more years of varsity play. I'm sure that many hot tears were shed. However, Grace did what she could. She saved her team jersey as a symbol and reminder of that one great year. She saved it for herself, and as it turns out, she saved it for us.

The jersey now reminds that 83 years ago, a group of women from a small school in Wisconsin played varsity basketball. And they played it well. They were deeply connected to one another and to their coach. Together, they experienced the court, the ball, the whistle, a basket made, the tears associated with thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. They were together—running, hot, sweating, jumping, dribbling, passing, tossing, catching, colliding. There was rhythm in their movements and the staccato bouncing of the ball. They had dreams that will never be known to us. Only those who have played the game at this level will understand these truths that I have just revealed. The game—always reaching beyond to catch and hold my heart.

In conclusion, it gives me great pleasure on behalf of Grace to present this framed gift of memorabilia to Altoona High School and especially to the women's varsity basketball team.

Grace and I present you with a legend and a legacy. Take good care of them for us and for yourselves.

*Ms. Scobie. A graduate of Augusta (WI) High School, was one of the thousands upon thousands of Wisconsin young women who were prohibited by the WIAA from enjoying the experience of interscholastic competition between 1926 and 1964.



April 2, 2009 -- Altoona (WI) High School
Dr. John R. Thurston, Monica Rasmussen,
Brittany Gregorich, Nancy Clark-Scobie

Woman's Basketball Jersey "Retired" 83 Years After the WIAA Said Girls Couldn't Play

Posted: 10:27 PM Apr 2, 2009
Reporter: Mary Rinzel WEAU 13

As they celebrated their season, one girl's basketball team also celebrated the simple fact that they get to play ball with a little history of the "girls" game.

In 1926 girls varsity basketball was only in its fourth year in Altoona. That's when the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletics Association, or WIAA, refused to sponsor women's athletics for more than four decades until the early 70's. Thursday night, the Lady Rails received a very special gift from a very varsity lady.

White jerseys streak up and down the hardwood, ponytails flying behind them, shooting and scoring on their minds. But, once upon a time in Altoona the game wasn't so simple; back when the jerseys were yellow. "Grace Sorenson Eick was a student at Altoona High School and played varsity girls basketball, it was called interscholastic, in 1925 and 1926," Nancy Clark Scobie tells us. Grace only got to play one season before girls were sent to the sidelines for the next 40 years. "With just that one year of participation in the sport, Grace decided to and made the effort to save her jersey which she saved for over 80 years," Clark Scobie says.

Clark Scobie never got to meet the woman she speaks so kindly of. Grace was 99 years old when she died last year. She also never got to play basketball outside of gym class and weekly scrimmages with the other girls in her school.

"There are as many important stories out there as there are people," says John Thurston. Thurston has been chronicling the stories of Altoona students for years. He knew Grace's was special and he knew just where her jersey belonged. So, Thursday, with the younger versions of herself looking on, Grace's jersey was handed over to her adopted team—a team with a new found gratitude for the game.

"Knowing someone didn't get the chance to play makes you be very grateful and appreciate what you have and what we can do nowadays with basketball," says Brittany Gregorich who played basketball all four years at Altoona. "It kind of makes me sad that just because she's a girl, she couldn't play," adds her teammate, Bethany Reyzer. "With how things were back then, I'm very fortunate to be living now."

"I'm just hoping they can walk for a little while in her tennis shoes," Clark Scobie says. "She saved this jersey not only for herself because it was something she wanted to cherish, but she saved it as it turns out for all of us."

We called the WIAA to find out exactly why girls sports were banned for all those years. A spokesman says it's hard to say—just that it was a different time back then. But, he says we're all fortunate that decision was reversed and everyone is now able to play.

Photographic *memories*

An image sent in by an Eau Claire woman helped the Christian Science Monitor celebrate the century of the automobile.

By Susan Barber
Leader-Telegram staff

At the close of the century, the Christian Science Monitor is taking a walk — or in this case a drive — down memory lane.

And Cecelia Loken of Eau Claire gave the newspaper a little help. Loken submitted this photograph, which was featured in the Monitor's July 12 addition.

The Monitor's "Snapshots of the Century" series salutes the camera, which took visual legacies out of the hands of the wealthy and made everyone his or her own historian. The Monitor asked for photo submissions from readers and now is publishing them in themes. Cecelia's was included with other automobile pictures.

In this photo from about 1928, Hugh Raymond is spanking Rudy Botsford in fun for his 21st birthday. The women, left to right, are Ruth Muenchow, Frances Larson and Grace Sorenson. Barely visible inside the Studebaker is Bud Loken, Cecelia's husband.

"They were a fun bunch," Cecelia Loken said. "We used to go to dances together." The photo was taken at Frances' home in Altoona. She later married Hugh. Both are deceased now, as are Ruth and Bud.

Rudy, a retired teacher, lives in Wausau. Grace lives in Menomonie.

Interestingly, the Monitor auto package also included a 1914 photo from Merrill that showed two farmers getting into their new Fords being delivered by horse-drawn sleds — the only way possible in a Wisconsin winter on Highway 107.

Other photos featured 18 Towson State College students from Baltimore crammed into a Volkswagen Beetle convertible. The year? You guessed it, 1972.

Another was a 1915 portrait of a Coney Island, N.Y., family in a car, which was a prop. Soon thereafter the family bought a Ford, and one of the daughters remembered her father being stopped by a police officer on a horse for driving too slowly.

Progress?

While the Monitor might have been looking at Cecelia's submission for the car, Cecelia and Grace enjoyed seeing the fashions. Grace liked the hat she's wearing; Cecelia noted the women aren't wearing stockings.

And for those of you who don't remember the '20s, Cecelia said stockings usually weren't silk but cotton, kept up with garter belts.

Nylon hosiery wouldn't come on the market until 1939.

Barber can be reached at 833-9213, (800) 236-7077 or susan.barber @ ecpc.com



In 1928 running boards could serve as a seat for a group of friends having fun in the Chippewa Valley. From left are Hugh Raymond, spanking Rudy Botsford for his 21st birthday, Ruth Muenchow, Frances Larson and Grace Sorenson. Bud Loken is in the car.

“Toots” Griese, a.k.a Clara Becker-Griese

Eileen Griese and John R. Thurston

One of my prime objectives when I embarked on this Red Caboose venture was to pay a special, well-deserved, celebration of “Toots” Griese. I could never attain that goal because there is so much to tell about her. In light of the limited materials made available to me, I’ll have to settle for this snapshot. Perhaps this brief account will encourage other, more knowledgeable individuals, those closer to her, to fashion a more extended tribute. She was one very exceptional lady.

Her son, Lloyd “Bud” Griese, was my best friend for most of our late childhood and adolescence. Although he and I were inseparable, he lived with his grandparents, the Beckers, and I had little contact with her, husband Lloyd, or the twins, Tom and Jim, who came onto the scene a bit later on.



Bud Griese and his brothers

Early on, what little I knew about her was gained through my talks with Bud. She and her husband Lloyd regularly enjoyed nights on the town, usual in the company of the Roy Taylors, nearby Altoona neighbors. "Toots" had a richly-deserved reputation as a person who could enter a room and light it up immediately. It was said that if there were a piano around, she would pounce on it, play it with the greatest of vigor, and the place would rock.

In 1942-43, when I began to visit bars, I would occasionally encounter her briefly at Stanley's. This bar may have become the "400 Bar" about then or shortly thereafter. Initially, it was a bit uncomfortable to be drinking in the company of Bud's parents. Any such uneasiness soon vanished and I looked forward to these meetings. She would listen to me and my companions as we rambled on endlessly about our activities, problems, fears, and plans for the future. Such listeners, both then and now, are hard to come by.

In the summer of 1946, as I recuperated from my years of wartime service in the navy, Bud and I would encounter "Toots" and Lloyd frequently as we made the rounds of local bars. We thoroughly enjoyed each other's company. We talked with them about the same things that I mentioned previously. But I was an adult now and I listened and learned from them as they talked about their dealings with such matters.

In one of these conversations, I must have expressed a need to develop some typing skills. I was about to go to college and thought that I should know how to type. She had a beat-up typewriter and offered to loan it to me. I accepted and spent day after day learning how to type. I subjected myself to a rigorous, boring, 4-5 hour training schedule every day including Sundays. I learned to type. While I didn't end up with the skills of an accomplished typist, I could type well enough to get the job done. I can't tell you how important this capacity was for me throughout my education and ever since. I think of "Toots" now as I type this paragraph.

While I was at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1947-50, I was well on my way to becoming a clinical psychologist. As part of my training, I was required to learn how to administer the basic intelligence test of the day, the Wechsler-Bellevue.

To accomplish this, I had to give the Wechsler-Bellevue to twenty-five adults. And, on my occasional visits to Altoona, I turned to my friends and asked them to volunteer to take this test. At the time, I wasn't fully aware of how much of an imposition and invasion of their privacy this was. But my friends were friends and they complied with my requests. "Toots" was among them. And although I was not yet a professional clinical psychologist, I believe that the results of this testing were valid. Subsequently, during the course of my career, I have given thousands of these tests as part of my regular psychological/psychiatric examination. Of these, only one other person scored as high on this test as "Toots." That is truly remarkable. She was a very, very intelligent woman. Such a statement would probably come as no surprise to anyone who knew her. They may just not have known how exceptionally smart she really was. In her later years, she turned to writing poetry for her own pleasure or to commemorate special events.

As time went on, she and Bud went their ways: I went mine. I ran into her occasionally during my increasingly rare visits home from Iowa University in the early 1950's. But what had been a strong relationship remained broken when I returned to live in Eau Claire in the late 1950's. I had only minimal contact with her during the rest of her life. I would occasionally hear something about her, e.g. that she was instrumental in founding Cinder City Day, and may even have been named Centennial Queen.

"Toots" had been Altoona High School's first cheerleader in 1922. One of the following pictures shows the cheerleader uniform that she wore at that time. (It is hoped that one day, it might join Grace Sorenson Eick's 1926 basketball jersey currently on display in the Commons of AHS).

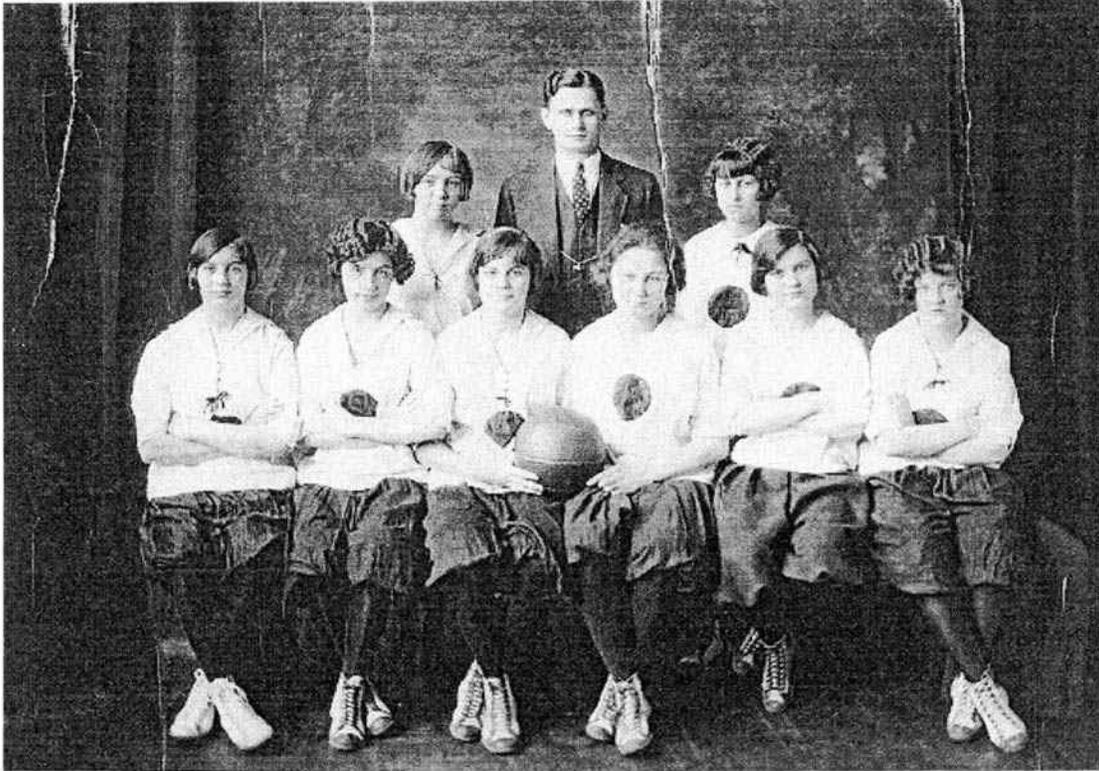
"Toots" represented Altoona High School on the basketball court as well. The other picture shows her, along with Jesse Jensen and her teammates, on the 1924-25 AHS basketball team. She, then Clara Becker, is standing on the far right in the back row next to "Jess."



Altoona High School Cheerleader Uniform

Worn by Toots in 1922

Altoona, WI High School Girls Basketball Team 1924-1925



Left to right (back row) Marvel Koppen, Coach Jess Jensen, Clara Becker
Left to right (front row) Elsie Gorell, Dolores Kemery, Agnes Gorell, Minnie Wiese, Floretta
McKeeth, Marjorie Fitzgerald

The following pictures were supplied by her daughter-in-law **Eileen Griese**. Two of them show “Toots” at her 75th birthday party. The others show that she was still in full swing during her later years. She died in 1995 at the age of 87.

75th Birthday Party



Eileen, “Toots”, and Bud Griese



Jim, “Toots”, Bud, and Tom Griese



“Toots”
With Stomp Fiddle
Christmas Party 1979
At Golden Spike
Altoona, Wisconsin



“Toots”
with Stomp Fiddle
Hayward, Wis,
1979



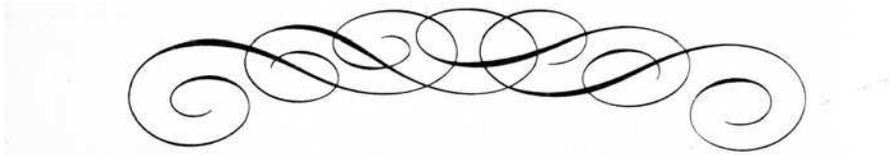
“Toots”
Altoona’s “400 Club”
1982



“Toots”
Phoenix, Arizona,
1994

Chapter Four

Roger Rasmussen Reminisces



If

By Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you.
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream — and not make dreams your master;
If you can think — and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings — nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run —
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And — which is more — you'll be a Man, my son!

WHAT THE MIND CAN PERCEIVE, IT MIGHT BELIEVE

By Roger Rasmussen, The "old" re-tired Professor

Memories, like ice cream, soon melt away unless they are nurtured periodically by repetition. Without retelling or recalling old memories may begin to fade from our memory bank. One of the problems with our memories is they can play games with each other and with us. We may twist two old pleasurable thoughts together into one and thus the original thoughts can be confused or lost. We can become mixed-up so to speak. I too, do "remember things that never occurred or existed." In fact, I can remember them perfectly; perfectly wrong.

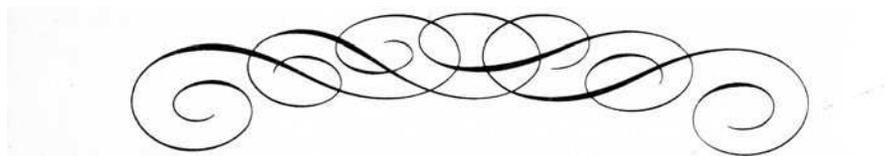
So too do some of people who write in the memory sections of newspapers. While they think they have their story right, those about whom they write have different memories and differing versions. I've notice that some writers write about things that happened and yet their age does not justify their memory of it happening. They were much too young, or not old enough, to have lived when an event occurred to be able to first-hand recall the event. It's hard to understand how a 50 year old person could remember the exact event that happened 54 years ago. With a vivid imagination, or photographs and duplicated copies of the event, a person might approximate an event, but they could not relive the event.

As an observer of the history of Altoona for the past 65 years, I've had my fill of small and large events; major and minor may be a more accurate description. Many individuals remember some of the events of the 1951 fire at the high school but in actual fact, fewer than 40 people were present during most of the fire; fewer yet, during the first hour and fewer yet days later. Events of this magnitude are often magnified beyond the imagination. I was 15 years old at that time and I remember specifically that I walked from 10th Street West along Bartlett Avenue to Division Street and looked-up at the old school with fire coming from the roof and the upper windows. The trophy case which housed some 40 plus memories of athletic achievements was aglow; golden hues, like angels wings, radiated from the general assembly room. It was a sight to behold and my memory of that event sticks like gorilla glue in my mind. Yet, I didn't live on 10th Street West until 1952. I lived on 1st Street East on land owned by my Grand-mother Eva Thurston-Glassbrenner. So how

could I be wrong?

The mind is a marvelous machine- a computer in a sense- far greater than the best Cray Computers ever built. Sometimes it seems to give me answers to questions I don't even ask. More often it gives me questions to which I lack clear answers. As a teacher for more than 40 years, I now have more answers and questions than I am able to handle. I recall teaching a graduate class composed of some 20 students from Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Among the members were several monks, a few college administrators and teachers, yet mostly younger men and women who aspired to be college teachers. Much wiser than their teacher, the monks had a habit of asking tough questions; most often these questions centered on perception and misperception. How do we know what we see is true? Could our eyes lie to the brain? Is it possible that what we see is not accurately registered with the brain? Or, could the brain run amuck and not encode the visual or verbal event accurately? Well, yes, I've learned some 20 years later, the brain is capable of doing whatever it wants to do.

So too, as we consider the news in print, it is easy to be a poor reader and a poor visualizer. The mind's eye perceives most of what is stored in the mind. My mentor and friend, Darrell Woodington, a Railroader at heart, who influenced the lives of dozens of young men during the "wonder years" of the 40's and 50's, said, "Just as the body has two eyes, the heart has one and the mind too. They are capable of confusion and delusion. So as you read the Eau Claire Leader, or the WSJ, know too that what you are reading may, or may not be, accurate or the truth. I too remember things that never happened! Yes "my heart has a mind of its own" and, yes, "I recall accurately SOME of the events of my youth"; however, there are some events that even Herb, Roger, and Dr. John may not accurately recall. What does it mean to be human? We learn by and through our errors of perception and visualization (I hope)! Who said, "You can't teach an old teacher anything new?" I stand corrected! Thanks Darrell!



Introduction to the History of Altoona's Celebrities

By Roger Rasmussen

"Someone said it couldn't be done but he with a simple reply-I don't know and I don't care-but give me a chance to try." At 73 and still trying, I have seen plenty of evidence that age is not a barrier to success. Be that barrier, wealth, health, education, genes, family history or status, size, weight, gender, race, nationality, home of origin, or birth order. Nothing, no nothing, can stand in the way of success unless you decide to not try.

I was educated as a history, political science, sociology, psychology, geography, and economics teacher. Through most of the past 45 years I have taught using the best information, technology and techniques I could muster. Fortunately or unfortunately as it may be for the thousands of students I encountered, I cross -fertilized the information from these subject areas to make learning more interesting, meaningful and hopefully retained. A teacher's success is seldom known immediately; tests are seldom more than immediate recall. The true test of success is more often measured years later by the changes in human behavior and productivity resulting from your menial efforts combined and enhanced by those significant others who added to, challenged, or changed that which you taught. Add to this equation the behavioral and mental changes experienced by the learner during those intervening years and it becomes questionable how valuable your contribution was in the total scheme of events. Regardless, there are people places, events, experiences, and inherent human changes that impact on one's perceptions of, understanding of, insights into, recall of, and evaluation of these phenomena that paint the picture of your life during each of the various phases of growth-child-youth-young adult-adult- and senior citizen. Reflecting on the past is colored by the events of the present and so with a clearer mind today than a month ago, with sun shining brightly, with the beautiful yellows of Fall gracing my office window, with the scenes of a dozen of my aging friends and neighbors engaging in botchy ball, may I give you my movie of the history of the past 60 years of Altoona as seen through the eyes of a high school teacher turned college professor/administrator who for the past 45 years has engaged thousands of teachers, principals, superintendents and other college faculty and administrator in dialog and dissention.

Altoona has been a bedroom community for most of my life. The larger Eau Claire community has provided for most needs. In 1950 Altoona had three grocery stores that provided food, fuel, clothing, and hardware; it also had three taverns, two full-service restaurants, and two full-service gas stations.

The population was near 1300. Nearly 60 years later it is totally dependent on the larger Eau Claire community. With a population of near 7,000 residents, Altoona has no grocery stores, four taverns, two convenience gas stations, and two auto repair shops. Additionally we have one chiropractor and one dentist. I don't recall Altoona ever having a medical doctor practicing within the city limits. The railroad that once provided employment to hundreds of residents exists, barely. Of course, a city is more than shops, stores, businesses, and personnel. My observation is that for many years Altoona has been "asleep." Thus, the reference to a bedroom community.

I base part of my evaluation on the continued death of a business center. At best it is like an omelet as compared to scrambled eggs. There is wholeness to an omelet! So too is there a wholeness to a

community whether it be a village or a city. I see, finally, a vision of a new "Prairie development" that would further separate the differing business locations and thus further segment the city. My engagement with people from the Eau Claire area and the many friends I have brought to the Altoona area seem to always result in the final comment, "yes, but Roger, where is the City of Altoona?" "I've heard you talk for years about this youthful paradise you called 'Altoona', but I only see houses no unity."

They and I must have myopic astigmatism of the left and right bilateral! Regardless of my concern that the heart of the city has been missing for many years, and regardless of my concern that the "Prairie development" is off the beaten pathway and that it destroyed my favorite blueberry patches, and "lovers' lanes", and resulted in another distraction from rebuilding the deserted and shambled downtown, I contend, "if you don't know where you're going, then any place will do", or – "If you don't know where you're going, then you're lost." Sometimes I think we are.

During my adult years I have lived in the following locations: Altoona, Eau Claire, Racine, Kenosha, Milwaukee, West Allis, Bemidji, MN, White Bear Lake, MN, and North St. Paul, MN. Maplewood, MN. Cave Creek, AZ, Phoenix, AZ., Croix Chapeau, France, and three military locations. I have watched towns literally die; I have watched rebirths, and I have watched abortions. It is possible to destroy the essence of a town without destroying the buildings. Where is the heart - beat the soul of a town?

In the past 60 years, since I have been a visitor not a permanent resident of Altoona, I have made a monthly trek back to Altoona to visit my family. Always I spend an hour driving up and down the streets and not just in "my old town" but in the shale pits of my youth, the hills, valleys and creeks, the railroad tracks where I tried my best to walk a block without fall, at the I beach where I worked part-time as a life guard, near the taverns of my youth, by the restaurants that no longer exist, at the grocery stores where I worked and stole cookies, by the gas stations where I pumped gas into the lucky owners of cars in the 1950's, and past the dozen or so homes where I baby-sat during my teen years. At one time I counted more than 40 different kids I had baby-sat including Herb and several of his siblings. I drove by the churches where my friends were confirmed by the old Lutheran Church where I kissed my first girl-Nancy, by the woods in back of the old post office/Lobby's/Dairy Bar where I climbed trees, played Tarzan with Gerald, Orville, La Vern, Gary, and Billy Gloede, or dug forts to play cowboys and Indians.

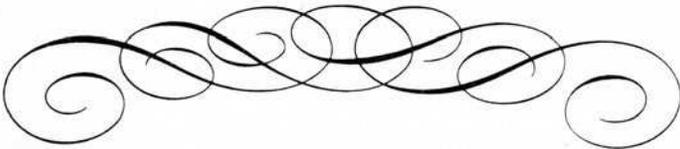
My friend, I have walked every street, walked through every yard, been in most homes built before 1960, robbed almost every apple tree and garden, taken cookies from most stores without permission, shoveled the snow or raked the yards of half of the older homes, and I have walked every mile of every railroad track that existed in Altoona. I have been inside every church in Altoona, including my home church Bethlehem Lutheran, and at one time some many years ago, I had talked with more than a dozen former mayors including my great-uncle George Thurston who single-handedly, and elected by a single vote, was able to rebuilt the Altoona schools after the 1951 fire. Just as a city government needs wise leadership .money, and direction, it needs an educated, informed, and interested citizenry. The City Council cannot do it alone! You the citizens should not

trust them enough to do it alone. Democracy requires active participation by all- not just the few. My opening sentence is a call to action.

So too, your interest in your own governance ought to elicit an interest in your own history – that is the history of Altoona. The essence of this book is the essence of your history- the history of Altoona. Through our my eyes and through the lives of the many people, hundreds to be truthful, who touch my life and Herb's life during our youth, may we take you behind the scenes and into the lives of the people who made a difference yet seldom realized their impact nor did they ever ask for reciprocity. You may find fault with what we wrote, who we wrote about, how we wrote it, and our observations. If you find some humor laugh; if you find a tear falling-let it; and, if we touch a primal cord in your heart or mind, we will feel this effort was worth it. For all of those who added to our storehouse of experiences, to our special teachers, Sister I and Mary M, we thank you for pushing us just beyond our complacency and encouraged us both to pursue higher levels of education and worldly experiences. We are human and humane so we ask your forgiveness for faulty memories, misspelled names, and inaccurate information. We tried ! Enjoy!"

Roger Rasmussen, Altoona High School -class of 1954;.....Senior Class-President

Retired Professor and Academic Dean; 2009Senior-Class-Citizen



An Early History of Altoona, Wisconsin; A Work in Process
A Draft Term Paper by Roger Rasmussen (assisted by Ed Semisch)
Cir 1960-1963

On the east banks of the Eau Claire River and Lake Altoona, lies a small community which in 1887 was distinguished by the title, "the smallest city in the United States."

This is the City of Altoona, population today, in 1962, of 2,050 — still small by modern standards and not even qualifying as an urban community under the classifications of the United States Census Bureau.

Altoona's

western boundary line is shared by the much larger City of Eau Claire (population 39,000) but Altoona is not a "suburb" of Eau Claire! The community is a proud and separate community, fiercely independent and throughout her history steadfastly defying any thought of losing her entity and becoming absorbed as part of the City of Eau Claire. Yet, she might have been. . . .

Early County records refer to the original village site here as "East Eau Claire". Eau Claire surveyed and platted the village in 1881. Altoona completely owes its existence to Eau Claire business interests. The early East Eau Claire village was only four miles from the heart of the much larger Eau Claire community — as the crow flies; but because of the very waters that contributed to Altoona's subsequent value and use, the community was completely separated from its mother city. Otter Creek, now a part of Altoona, separated the east village to the south and the Eau Claire River bordered, and cut off, the area to the west. To go to this east village, Eau Claire officials and businessmen had to travel by a circuitous route around Otter Creek adding many miles to the crow's four, and on dubiously acceptable roads. This separateness which was continued even after the "village of East Eau Claire" became quickly populated was a main reason why the community became a city in its own right.

Altoona exists because the railroad came to Eau Claire! To understand these developments, let us go back into the history of West Central area of the State.

The Territory of Wisconsin was organized in the year 1836 and comprised the present states of Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and parts of North Dakota and Michigan. This entire area, including what is now Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls, became a part of Crawford County in the original Wisconsin Territory.

In 1845, Chippewa County was set off from Crawford County, although the county government was not wholly perfected until 1854. In the meantime, in 1848, the Territory of Wisconsin was admitted into the Union

as a state, its area having been reduced from time to time since 1836 until it reached its present limits. Chippewa County, as originally formed, was a vast area of land and included the counties which are now Eau Claire, Buffalo, Pepin, Clark, Dunn, Barren, Burnett, Washburn, Sawyer, Gates, Rusk, and parts of Taylor and Price.

By the time Wisconsin became a state, the threat of Indians had been subdued. From 1825 on the territorial government had engaged in a series of negotiations and peace treaties with various tribes, the Chippewa and Winnebago in the West Central area, so that when the land was opened for settlement, except for trifling quarrels mostly between those Indians that remained, any settlers moving in could expect a steady peace.

On July 27, 1885, the county board of supervisors of Chippewa County divided the County into three towns, the southernmost of these identical in area with the present Eau Claire County and named Clearwater. The next town north was set off as the Town of Chippewa Falls, and the northernmost town as the Town of Eagle Point.

Up to this time the name "Eau Claire" had not appeared on any official records. Then two names began appearing together: "Eau Claire" and "Clear-water", both referring to the same place. Quite plausibly, the explanation for this double identity came about because of the book written by an English mapmaker, Jonathan Carver, who in 1767 traversed the Chippewa River from its mouth northward and in this book mentions coming upon "a river of clear water — eau claire" at the junction on the Chippewa. He briefly describes traveling on this "clear water". For a long time this was the only written description of Wisconsin in the English language and it was widely read both in England and in the United States.

Finally the name "Clearwater" was dropped from county records and only the name "Eau Claire" was used. In 1855, the area of Eau Claire was set off as a legal county and the Village of Eau Claire, being the only organized town government in the new county, was charged with the responsibility of performing the functions of a county board until a county organization could be completed. The village undertook its responsibility immediately and proceeded to canvass the county for officers. The first election took place on December 30, 1856.

The Eau Claire town board continued to perform the functions of a county board until a sufficient number of towns should be formed to allow the supervisors of such towns to comprise a county board in the usual manner. Immediately, on January 1, 1857, the newly elected Town Board of Eau Claire acting as a county

board began setting off the area into townships. By April of that year three new towns along with Eau Claire held their first county election. By November of the year, the Town Board of Eau Claire ceased to perform the functions of the county board.

Eau Claire village was designated as the county seat. From here, organization of the area continued, beginning in 1857 and continuing to 1882 when the county finally had divided the area into its present townships.

The Town of Washington, where the City of Altoona is located, was designated in January 1868.

In the early records of county proceedings, the name of this township is glaringly absent. To understand this, we must know something of the land itself.

Here was virtual flat wasteland comprised of sand, shale, Jack Pines, Sand Burrs, and Underbrush. This was the poorest of land for farming purposes. Only the outermost edges of the township far removed from the Eau Claire River and Otter Creek beds were rich soils. Only few farmers ventured to homestead on this barren ground and those who did nurtured their land and sold shale to bolster their economy. One of the first settlers here was Henry Thompson who came in 1854, but he took care to see that some of his land contained rich, producing soil. Then, this township was separated from easy access to Eau Claire, for bridges over the creek were almost non-existent. The land was good for hunting of squirrels and small game and for fishing in the adjacent waters.

Eau Claire, on the other side of Otter Creek, in 1868 was still a village, but a fast-growing community with promise of greater and speedy growth for the fever of the railroad had fallen upon the area. It had more than just "fallen"; it had taken over the community completely. The first settlers had come there in 1838, two Vermonters who hunted on the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers and adjacent territories. They returned to Vermont with glowing tales of the vast new country and the rich timberlands and returned shortly thereafter with their families to settle. Easy access to rivers and a plentiful supply of trees for lumber attracted enterprising men and in 1846 the first sawmill was established soon followed by a second sawmill in 1848. By the standards of that period, these were "mammoth institutions." Lumbering continued to gradually increase but there was no communication with the outside world except by water or private conveyance until 1850 when a mail route was ordered by Congress to extend to Prairie du Chien. Shortly thereafter a post office was established in Eau Claire village. This was an event of vast importance here because now there was communication established with the outside world, and this gave great impetus to the village's progress.

Then rumors of the coming of a railroad through this area began and a boom to develop the territory

was on. The rumor was not unfounded. In 1856, Congress passed an act donating all the alternate sections of land embraced within certain parallels along the lines of proposed railroads in trust to the State of Wisconsin. Ten years was the time fixed within which such a railway line was to be completed. The valley had to be crossed at some point and speculators were everywhere on the alert to try to learn where this particular point was to be. Eau Claire was a very likely place. Some of the wildest and most visionary schemes ever generated in the minds of man owed their birth to this land grant and speculation here became high pitched. Existing mills were repaired, remodeled and provided with the latest improved sawmill machinery. Businessmen invested liberally in pine lands on the streams tributary to Eau Claire. General stores, clothing stores, all variety of businesses and those rendering services began to move in or prepare to move in. The population at this time was only 100, and the whole volume of capital invested here did not exceed \$20,000, but by 1856 the new village, proud of its position, began to show unmistakable signs of prosperity. New settlers came and there was a general movement forward.

The County of Eau Claire was created; Eau Claire Village was selected as the county seat. Eau Claire was selected as the point where the railroad line would pass through, and it came, finally in August, 1870. This now directly connected the area with the east and the day when the first train whistle was heard here was made "an occasion of such rejoicing as has never been equaled in Eau Claire."

Eau Claire was not yet a chartered city. Shortly following, in March 1872, the separate villages of Eau Claire, Eau Claire village proper and North Eau Claire were incorporated as a city. East Eau Claire — four miles removed and just an empty wasteland was not included in this charter.

With a railroad now running to Eau Claire and through this wasteland from Fall Creek to Eau Claire, in 1874 a telegraph station was established in a location where Altoona now is. Then in 1880, railroad officials deemed it essential to locate a division point at some place equidistant between St. Paul and Elroy. They were urged to make that point in Eau Claire, but this, the officials claimed, they could not do as it would make the eastern division much longer than the western. Already, land had been purchased at Fall Creek for this purpose and preliminary plans for repair shops and other buildings had been prepared for this location, but citizens of Eau Claire realized that this would be detrimental their property. The mayor, then W.F. Bailey, was urged, pressured into taking the matter up with the president of the road. The latter agreed that if a suitable place having a half mile of level track could be located nearer to Eau Claire, and if other conditions were suitable, then he and the railroad would consider a proposition to locate the division more favorable to Eau Claire.

The railroad president, the company's engineer, and the mayor of Eau Claire went over the line on foot between Eau Claire and Fall Creek, and after considerable investigation, the place where Altoona is now located was found suitable. If an abundance of suitable water could be found and if the city of Eau Claire

would grade the yard, the railroad president agreed to locate there. Water, good water, in great abundance was found, Eau Claire paying for the well-drilling. The land was surveyed and platted as a village in September, 1881, and given the name East Eau Claire. Construction of railroad yards was commenced immediately and in a short six months, by the following spring, the area was a bustling, hustling community. There were only two houses in "East Eau Claire" when the Chicago, St. Raul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railroad selected it for a site for its machine shops and roundhouse. By winter, at least a dozen habitations had been erected. Workers flocked from everywhere, first those engaged in construction. Then as buildings were fit for use, men were employed in innumerable jobs. Buildings erected included a roundhouse which, is a place for repairing and sheltering locomotives while undergoing repair, a depot, an ice house to provide refrigeration for box cars, coal sheds, offices, and ten pairs of switch tracks. These were constructed over a long period of time but an opportunity for employment was always probable. Later a building and grounds to hold livestock was erected and a saw mill.

The presence of the railroad attracted other industries and many smaller business enterprises. Hotels, at one time five in operation, was a continuing enterprise. Eating houses, the first erected by the railroad company itself, and soon others came into existence. Saloons or taverns, general stores selling a whole range of hardware as well as food and clothing, livery stables, a blacksmith shop, shoe repair shops, a number of barber shops all followed on the heels of the railroad. Houses were built; lumber for building was easily accessible. Railroad employees moved their families here. The village quickly took on and steadily advanced in taking on the functions of an urban area.

The railroad provided passenger service to Eau Claire. This was the Village's first connection with the outside world. In 1883, a short two years after it came into existence, a post office was established here. Though the village was referred to as East Eau Claire on the county record books, the name "Altoona" was fast becoming applied to it. This name became synonymous with "railroad exchange" after the already-famous Altoona, Pennsylvania railroad yards of the vast Pennsylvania Line, in the east. The nick-name became common usage.

In 1887, Altoona applied for and was granted a city charter by the State Legislature. This was a day of great jubilation. Here now this community, this RAILROAD community, was destined for greatness. Nothing could hold it back! In April of that year, the first election for city officials was held. The mayor-alderman from of government had been chosen and proper officials were elected. (At that time there were two wards but since then, in 1922 with the development of city property on the other side of Otter Creek towards Eau Claire in what is today known as Altoona Addition, another ward was designated.)

By 1900 Altoona's resident population reached the 800 mark.

One of the first orders of business of the new City Council was the establishment of a volunteer fire department, so important to the community in the era of kerosene and coal-burning stoves which heated the homes. A one-room public school, under village auspices, had been started in 1862, a year after the village was platted so large had the population become and, so important the concern of parents for the education of their children. But now, with a City Council, plans were laid for better school buildings.

By 1892, the city built a three-room structure, each room containing three classes. In successive years, because of the increase in the city's population, two additional buildings were used for classrooms from kindergarten through eighth grade. In 1911 a new brick building was constructed housing all grades from kindergarten through high school. Prior to this time, pupils wishing to go on to secondary school attended the Washington Town High School. Enrollment increased; in 1912 an addition was added. Athletics was added to the school curriculum, and high school basketball teams from Altoona, the "Railroaders" began a long and distinctive record of high achievement in this intramural sport. In 1950, this brick structure was completely destroyed in a Halloween night fire. School classes were held in rooms in the City Hall, churches, and empty store buildings until the all of 1952 when the present modern combined elementary and high school building was opened. Since that time, again because of increased enrollments, the school has been expanded three times, the most recent completed in the fall of 1961. Today there are over 600 pupils enrolled in the combined grade and high school.

Back in 1881, one of the first operations completed here, perhaps the first, was the digging of a community city well. Townspeople would bring their pails or other containers and from a 90-foot well, they secured water for their daily use and needs. Soon as homes were built, residents dug their own wells, dug their own cesspools. In 1919 the city installed a water system to serve the entire community. The purity and taste of this water, which is regularly tested, was judged the "second best water in the State of Wisconsin" and has always been a distinction of the City. In 1929, the City dug a sewage system to accommodate the town, continuing improvements through the years and then in 1953 erecting a new completely modern disposal plant near Otter Creek.

By 1882, church services were held in the town, first in a wooden structure and available to any denominational representative. The Baptist Church later moved to another structure conducting well-attended mission services. The Methodist Church, first called the Union Church, was the first permanently established church beginning in late 1886. The Episcopal Church soon followed holding services in their own building. In 1906, the Bethlehem Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) began services here, and in 1916, a Catholic Church — St. Mary's — was erected. A Catholic parochial school also was opened the following year, holding eight grades in one building. A high school was also opened but this was a private school. In later years, a large wood frame

school building was constructed with residence quarters for students on the upper floors; the school, for quite a number of years, became a private school for Catholic boys with pupils attending from six surrounding states. Today, the Catholic school is again a local parochial school serving grades two to eight for local residents.

Early in Altoona's history, after passenger service was available by railroad, county roads were constructed connecting the City with Eau Claire and other parts. The first roads were crude; but, stagecoach service, providing more frequent conveyance than the railroad, was established between Altoona and Eau Claire. In 1914, an interurban street car line was opened between the two cities, and in 1932 these conveyances were replaced by buses.

Altoona had a weekly newspaper at one time, the first, the "Altoona Headlight" started in 1896. It continued for many years. There was no paper for a time then the "Altoona Tribune" was published here for a number of years, finally discontinuing in 1947. Since that time, the City has not enjoyed a local paper. The morning and evening newspapers of the Eau Claire Press Company are in largest circulation here; in fact by recent survey, about 92 per cent of the population subscribe to this newspaper.

In 1903, up until then, kerosene lamps were used for illumination, but that year gas light was made available to the residents. In 1911 electricity came to the community. Telephone service was established early in the 1900's.

Altoona began "greatly". It was a boom town, and for years through the early 1900's it enjoyed prosperity and growth. Then as roads were constructed and as closer-quicker contact was established with the neighboring big City of Eau Claire, people found a wider choice of products, found employment, were able to secure a greater variety of services, more and more they patronized business places in Eau Claire. As the years passed, it became more hazardous to open a business in Altoona for small businesses here had to compete with the larger and more selective businesses in Eau Claire. Today there is but one large grocery store (and one additional which has been there for years and does very little business). There is but one barber shop. A dentist has an office here, but has only been here for three or four years. For a long time the business district — a crossroads of four or five city blocks — was dilapidated and run-down in appearance. It appeared only the town's three taverns were flourishing. Gradually through the years the railroad employed less and less men. The coming of the diesel engines — the first in 1946 — brought a new era and less machinists and toolmen were needed. Over the years, more and more of the town's residents were employed in jobs other than railroad-related. Today perhaps less than a fourth, perhaps less than that, are railway employees. For many years Altoona was virtually in a "slump".

But today there is a new spirit in this city! Perhaps the greatest factor that implemented this spirit, and which may not be readily recognized by the citizens, was the fire in 1950

which completely destroyed the school building. Here in one great catastrophe, the people were drawn together in a crisis. A new structure was needed; it was imperative. The people were forced to think and plan, and in so doing, new objectives in the light of modern methods, modern ways of education were considered. A fine new building was

constructed. The new building attracted new residences. Then, because there was (and still is) much open land in the city, a home construction firm cooperating with the city, undertook a huge home-building program. In the past ten years, over fifty new homes have been constructed in Altoona. Three times since 1952 has the school board been forced to expand the school.

In 1960, the Lutheran Church constructed a new church building. The Methodist Church, some years prior, remodeled and modernized its church structure. A new post office, an attractive building, has been erected. Buildings in the few downtown blocks (including the taverns) have undergone remodeling, painting, face-lifting.

A broad recreation program for boys has been undertaken, sponsored by an active Business Men's League and for the past five or six years, a little league baseball team keeps youngsters actively occupied.

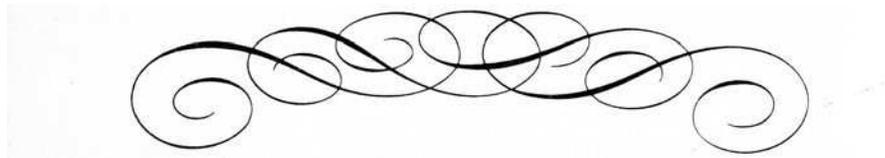
The Woman's Club is active in promoting beautification of the city's park, neglected for so long through all these years. An active Lion's Club, recently organized, promotes community projects. The city is growing after a sleep of many years. There is much that needs to be done. There is no recreation program for girls. Both Methodist and Lutheran churches are always in need of dedicated, alert leadership. The city streets need improving; the city needs to completely overhaul its sewage system to take care of water runoff and street puddles after storms. The curriculum of the grade and high school both need broadening and expansion--Altoona could have one of the finest public schools in the state if men and women with vision would explore the needs of today's children in the light of the expectations they will face in adulthood.

The City is blessed with the nearness of one of the finest recreational areas in this part of the state — the Altoona park and beach. This is a man-made lake, created by C.C.C. during the Roosevelt Administration following the Great Depression. Fishing, boating, swimming, all the attractive aspects of summer recreation are available here, and in the winter, the popular ice-fishing. At present a bridge about three miles away from Altoona overpasses the railway tracks. This bridge will soon be rebuilt. The nearer this bridge could be brought to the center of the town, the more it would contribute to the business interests of the town. Today, as in years passed, Eau Claire residents and others use the wonderful facilities of this beach (including an excellent large beach house equipped with cooking quarters and picnic benches). Visitors to the beach "pass through" Altoona. There is no attraction to stop them.

In the 1960 Census, Altoona enjoyed a 35% increase in her population over the census of 1950. This trend may well continue, as the City faces and becomes fully aware of its potentialities.

Comment by Roger in 2009

I can't recall the purpose for which I wrote this article. It was during my college years and I think it was Dr. Blackorby's Wisconsin History course. I doubt that I plagiarized the whole content, but the words seem beyond my writing ability at that time in my life.



The Brotherhood Association of Railroad Employees

By Roger Rasmussen

This picture (shown 2 pages forward) was taken around 1927-30 at a location nearest the dead end of 1st St. West and Daniels Av. against the shale stone wall below the high hill that eventually held the first municipal water tank. The signs are of the annual summer picnic held by the Brotherhood Association of Railroad Employees known as the B.A.R.E.. This association represented most of the employees who worked for the railroad known as the CStPM&O Railroad a.k.a. the CNW or the Omaha. The letters stand for the Chicago St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railroad. Each summer, sometime during July, the Association would hold a free summer picnic for the workers and their families. Games were played as evidenced by the bats and balls, softball, and races were held too. Bingo was a common activity. Most picnics were held at Lake Altoona Beach so families could have their weekly bath, have fun, eat, drink, and win prizes. I recall in 1948 winning a 5 # paper bag of sugar. While walking up the hill from the beach to cross the railroad tracks for home, I slipped on the wet path and punctured a hole in the paper bag. By the time I reached home, most of the sugar was on the ground.

Note some specifics about the picture: Men and women alike were well dressed- some with hats and suit coats plus ties. Children were neatly dressed too and well mannered. They knew that ill manners would mean no candy at the end of the activity. It is doubtful that cars were readily available and so in this picture most in attendance walked to the site. When held at Lake Altoona most attendees would walk across the railroad tracks by the Depot to the Roundhouse, between the Sand House and Coal Shed down the path to the beach. Walking down was mildly easy; the walk up, was difficult- and when wet, the dirt path was impassable. Given the size of some of the men and women, this venture was difficult, even if the food and drinks were free.

For certain the bald gentleman located in the fourth row (second to the right of the first sign on the left side of the picture) is my Great Uncle Herman Heuer. I believe the gentleman to his right is my Great Uncle John Thurston. The two younger gentlemen in the back row (left side with hair parted in the middle) are the Jamieson brothers. None of the adults would be alive today; some of the children would be in their 80's.

Note too, the lack of smiles on their faces. The depression was present and work was unavailable. Men often rode the rails to bigger cities like Minneapolis, Milwaukee or Chicago to find work; they were anxious for work and without money were forced to ride the rails- most often in box cars or hidden in coal cars with their deep

hoppers. While poverty and hunger were ever-present they were proud people; yet their faces revealed a sadness – even children knew and felt the pain of hunger. Sternness and straightness of posture were common place. For the children, this may have been the first time they were photographed. Notice the hill where rows were staggered so as to include everyone. A good job of photography!

Notice too the cave-like background and the men hiding in the back bushes. While attendance was limited to the employee and his family, as a youngster I attended too even though my father Percy Rasmussen was not a full-time employee during my youth – eventually working on the Section Crew, beginning full-time in 1950. I recall saying I was the son of William Glassbrenner, my grandfather, if anyone asked me. My Uncle Bill was two years older than I, but about the same size – skinny as a twig, so I often used his name. Many of my friends attended too even though their fathers worked elsewhere. Free food and candy could bring out the worst in a kid!

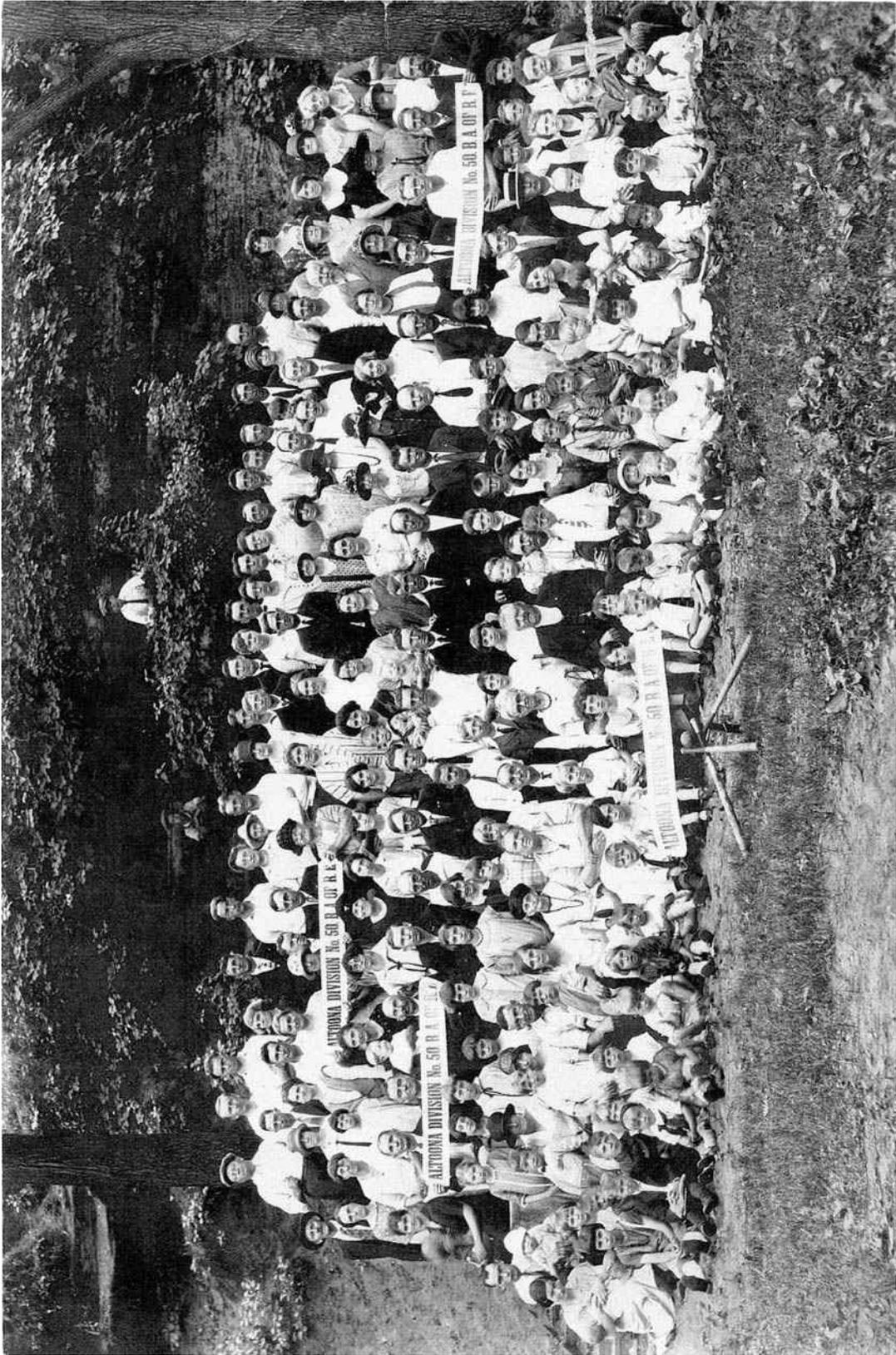
At Christmas the B.A. of R. E. had a party for all kids under age 13. No teenagers were permitted. Each kid received a size 8 paper bag filled with hard candy, a popcorn ball, an apple, and several suckers. I traded my apple and popcorn for a Hollaway sucker. That sucker could last me all day. Cake was served along with cool-aid. Most often we were dressed in our best clothes; dress pants, a white shirt, and a bow tie for boys – girls always wore dresses or skirts.

The Association continued these two activities into the 1950's but with the advent of unionism; engineers, conductors, and brakemen organized individual unions.

And, so, that's the way it was in Altoona during the first half of the 1900's. Thanks to the B.A.R. E. our lives were not too bare.

Roger Rasmussen, Hostler's Helper for the CNW-1954

Photo of The **Brotherhood Association of Railroad Employees** is shown on the next page.



A Gift of Love from Laura

The following four photographs are enlargements of four quadrants of the large group BARE photo. I sat down with Laura Semisch-Christy one summer day in 2009 and we went over this photo. Laura identified many of the individuals in the photo and would often share the memories that the photo was bringing to her mind as we went along. I took notes and made a numbering key. The following photos represent my attempt to convey to you what Laura told me that day.

Laura noted that this photo was taken in about 1924 because she was born in 1920 and she felt that she appeared to be about four years old in the photo and Arnold was about two. Look for Laura in the fourth photo – she’s #1.

Jack Blackburn 2009



Numbered Detail of Lower Left Quadrant

- 56 Mabel Stafford (Jack’s Wife, Jack is # 55) with a baby
(children named Florence and Sammy)
- 22 Schilling (her sister is #15)
- 21 Agnes Gorell
- 19 Margaret Schilling-McKeith
- 8A & 9A...Carmens or Loken (see # 8 & 9)
- 7 ? Beach
- 6.....Janetta Heuer-Zachau



Numbered Detail of Upper Left Quadrant

- 39.....Schilling
- 48.....Mrs. Leland
- 40.....Ella Schilling-Israel (her son's name is Kerbell and he is in Laura's grade)
- 41.....Mr. Wright
- 49.....Sires (also 3rd person to the right)
- 34.....Dorothy Beach (Wife of John Beach)
- 23.....Janetta's Dad, Herman Heuer



Numbered Detail of Upper Right Quadrant

- 42.....Yerm Thurston-Heuer (Janetta’s Mother)
- 43.....Gertrude Thurston-Heuer (Janetta’s Aunt)
- 50.....Mrs. Ben Swartz
- 51.....Mrs. Mary Deischel
- 52.....Mr. Saures
- 53.....Mrs. Saures (she played the accordion)
- 54.....Mr. Deischel (Norman’s Dad)
- 55.....Jack Stafford (his wife is # 56)
- 44.....Ben Schwartz
- 45.....“Grandpa” Albert Johnson – “Preacher” at the Methodist Church
- 46.....His wife Clara
- 47.....Mrs. Louis Bonie
- 28.....Hugh Connell (married to Amanda Fischer)
- 29.....?
- 27.....? Johnson
- 30.....Tony Wagner’s Mother
- 31.....Ludia Schelwitz
- 32.....Eva Glassbrenner
- 33.....Mrs. Askl
- 26.....O. D. Ask
- 25.....Adolph Heuer
- 24.....John Beach



Numbered Detail of Lower Right Quadrant

- 8 & 9Carmens or Loken (see # 8A & 9A)
- 3.....Otto Semisch
- 4.....Harold Semisch
- 18.....George Wright
- 17.....John Aske
- 10.....Amanda-Fischer Connell
- 11.....Lavern Fischer
- 16.....Tony Wagner

- 12.....These 3 women are related – Olseth (son Olaf)
- 13.....These 3 women are related – Olseth or Butler (Son James?)
- 14.....These 3 women are related – Olseth or Butler (Son James?)
- 15.....Leland Schilling
- 1.....Laura Semisch
- 2.....Arnold Semisch
- 5.....Harriet Aske
- 36.....Norman Deischel (he is in one of my school pictures)
- 35.....Elvin Kluth (son of Mr. & Mrs. Albert Kluth)



These kids were coming from the B.A.R.E. (Brotherhood of Railroad Employees) Christmas Party hosted by the wives of CNW workers. This was Christmas 1947 and the kids are standing outside of the old Auditorium facing north with the Delos McDonald home in the background. The look on their faces would not note the joy that was to follow as they received their Christmas gift pack and treats.

Front Row:

?, Gloria Winrich, Donald Winrich, Georgia Juno and Tommy Juno.

Other Rows:

Bob Sires, Junior Gilligan, David Klohs, and to his right (with the hood) is Roger Rasmussen. To the right of Roger are his sisters (JoAnn front and Yvonne back). Ted Winrich, John Wagner, and Billy Gloede.

These sons, daughters and grandsons and daughters of railroad workers would add their names to the ledger of youngsters who prospered during the good years of the 40's and 50's.

The Altoona Veterans' Memorial
at
Forest Hill Cemetery in Eau Claire
By Roger Rasmussen

If necessity is the handmaiden of invention, that is if it takes some essential need to be fulfilled before someone will conceive a way of fulfilling that need, then the need for a veterans' memorial honoring the hundreds of men and women from Altoona who have served their country and county in some form of military service was long over due as we moved into the year 2000. While Y2K monopolized the minds and monies of too many corporations and individuals in 1999, thoughts beyond a computer crash were ever-present too.

Born as WW II was birthed, and maturing while young Altoona men were being sent off to defeat the enemies of democracy, I knew the homes where soldiers once resided since a small cloth flag with a golden star adorned either the front window or the door. During the early 1940's teenagers walked the streets for entertainment or distraction; at age 17 one was sufficiently old to enlist in one of the military branches. Few enlistees were ever rejected. Altoona offered its fair share of young men who would sacrifice their youth to keep the rest of us safe. It was no accident that I came to know well those families who had lost sons to the war and those who still served; incidentally, I am unaware of any women from Altoona having lost their lives in the war. The look in a mother's eye told the story; yet, seldom did I ever hear a complaint.

Sometime during the early 1940's, approximately 1943-44, Altoona decided to honor those who were serving and those who had previously served. A large billboard, approximately 20 feet by 12 feet was built to the East of Emanuel's Store, now part of the City Hall Parking Lot. Listed on the large billboard were the names, first and last, of hundreds of soldiers from Altoona. As a youngster that empty lot was my playground; football, kitten ball, ice skating, free outdoor movies, and plain loitering took place near the Veterans' Memorial. Emanuel's was the largest grocery store and the post office was across the street; thus, most residents passed by the memorial when shopping or obtaining their mail. Mail delivery to homes was started in the 1950's - long after the Memorial was built and then removed.

I don't know who decided to remove the Memorial. In the 1950's Kenny Harris had a portable root beer stand on the exact location. I don't remember the year someone decided to tear-down the Memorial or who gave the word. I was in high school and walked by that Memorial most every day. I didn't see it removed nor do I remember anyone complaining about its removal. Someone should have!

Sometime after my graduation from high school in 1954 a VFW Chapter was organized in Altoona. I never belonged since I was never classified as a veteran of foreign wars even though I served in the Army Medical Corp in France. I never complained that I missed the Korean G.I. Bill by several months. I too never complained when I realized

the Memorial was missing. Someone should have!

Death of someone significant often forces personal inspection and reflection on a former life now quiet. After burying both parents, two siblings, and two aunts, within a few years, one becomes more aware of life and death and the thin line that separates. The loss of a too young a spouse or a child smashes your sense of reality and you realize there are no monuments to large or beautiful that can replace those losses. While visiting Forest Hill Cemetery to plant, water, prune or reflect – I realized an absence of flags on some military graves. Missing too was a memorial honoring veterans from Altoona. No monument existed any place in Altoona and of course Altoona had no cemetery and the prospects of that were remote.

As I prepared to bury my spouse, the "handmaiden mentality" idea sprouted and I realized the monument I was preparing for my family plot had a potential for serving multiple purposes. From the center of my tombstone I would remove a section that could be used to create a monument for Altoona's veterans. Inquiry with the City of Eau Claire Parks and Recreation Department resulted in their approval to locate a veteran's memorial area near the West Entrance to the Cemetery. A monument, bench, flag and plantings occupy the northwest corner of the entrance. No dedication ceremony with cameras or press was held. With several family members present, I raised the flag, planted trees, placed a park bench so visitors could sit and read the inscription on the black marble stone from Denmark. I said a short prayer and read the inscription I personally created in memory of all veterans, but especially for those who served from Altoona. After some nine years the trees have withered, I've replaced the tattered flag three times each year, the concrete bench replaced the metal one, and the once small flag has been replaced by a 16 foot pole and larger flag.

It is quiet at the 20 by 30 foot memorial site on the west-side of Forest Hill Cemetery. During my monthly visit these past nine years, I have notice several senior citizens sit on the bench and reflect. Youngsters run and bike through-out the cemetery; they see the monument but most lack an understanding of the significance it serves. We build monuments to millionaires, baseball stars, movie stars, and politicians. Seldom do we create lasting monuments to teachers, ministers, or those people who do the "dirty work" that allow the rest of us to live the easy life. I am impressed with the roadside monument on Interstate 90 near Osseo honoring a member of the State Highway Patrol and the monument nearer Black River Falls honoring a highway worker. If you want to see beautiful monuments and parks honoring soldiers, visit the Veterans' Memorial on Hwy 10 near Neillsville, the Veterans' Memorial in Mondovi, and the Memorial Park in Winona, Minnesota. They have done it right!

Talk is cheap; action expensive – or so it seems. The Veterans' Memorial at Forest Hill Cemetery is in Eau Claire. It cost nothing to create; the stone was donated as was the inscription. The bench, flag pole and plantings were gifts too. The grass is periodically cut and the site maintained by volunteers. New flags are gifted by family and friends.

As a teenager growing-up in Altoona I recall Hugh Russell, a clerk at the Emanuel/Kopplin Grocery Store for some 40 years, commenting on his Son who was an ace pilot during WW II and the Korean War. Hugh said, "If you tell me how a city honors its soldiers I'll tell you what the city stands for. If it won't stand-up for its soldiers, it will fall for everything and anything." That thought has stuck in my mind for some 55 years. Is it time for Altoona to stand-up and build a memorial to honor all soldiers who served in peace and in war? What better location than at a city park or near City Hall. WW II and the Korean War have been over for some 50 years and the City still awaits a memorial. Bicycle and walking paths we have; how about less talk and more action! Remember the old adage, "after all is said and done, more is said than done." Will that be our legacy?



Roger Rasmussen.Pfc. U.S. Army, 1955-57

I was one of many young men and women who, during war or peace, volunteered for the draft or enlisted to serve the cause of freedom.

For the mistreatment of people to continue good citizens needed to do nothing."
Silence and inaction are essential for the death of democracy.

As the Marine Corp ads convey, "We need a few good women and men"! I would add -
"to bring peace and wellness to a troubled world."

I was 18 years old when this picture was taken. We had just been awarded a plaque for our success as a platoon at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri in June of 1955. The Korean

War had ended six months earlier and the world was more peaceful. Most of the 300 men who had completed basic training had expected to be involved with maintaining peace after the war. Most never went overseas. Lucky for me, I served in a French Hospital for the remainder of my two years and saw the remains of WW II in the fields around La Rochelle, France. Ten years after WW II the destructive remains were still evident and a constant reminder to me that "due diligence" is essential if society is to keep power seeking leaders from destroying civilization.



Altoona's Veteran Memorial at Forest Hill Cemetery in Eau Claire – pictured is a monument in memory of soldiers who served in peace and war-time from Altoona.



The inscription says it all.

I am unaware of a memorial honoring Altoona residents who served their country.

I know of a plaque at Bethlehem Lutheran noting two names of church members who served. I am aware of a wooden plaque at the City Hall with a few names noted, but I am at a loss as to why the City of Altoona has not erected a memorial – given the 100's of men and women who have served.

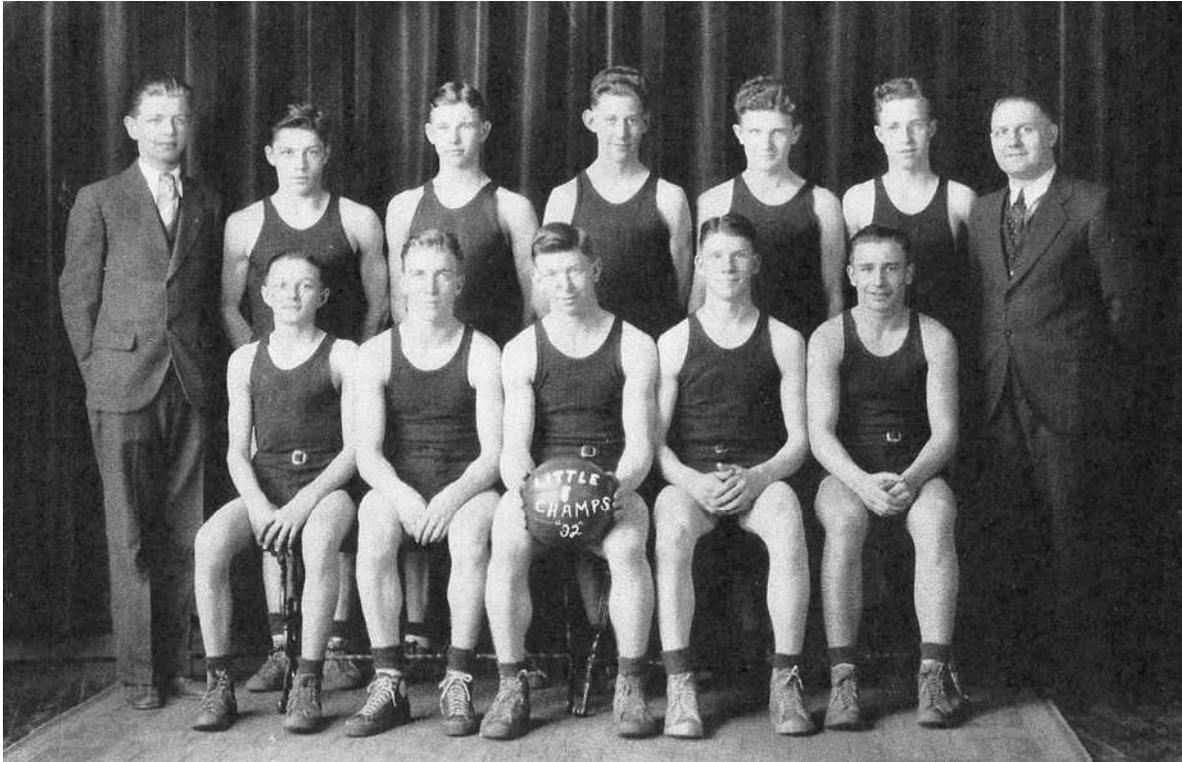
As I prepared a family headstone, I decided to use part of the imported stone for a monument to be placed at the west entrance to Forest Hill Cemetery. My family and Lifetime Memorials created this site with permission from the Eau Claire Parks and Recreation Department, which manages the cemetery. It includes the memorial, a flag pole, a sitting bench, flowers and shrubs.

Someday I hope a more elaborate memorial including the names of all who served, similar to that in Mondovi, might be built in Altoona.

Little Champs – 1932

By Roger Rasmussen

The 1932 Altoona Railroaders were crowned the "Little Champions" after winning the State Championship for small schools. A child, brother, nephew, and cousin of some of these team members would represent Altoona at Madison again some 20 years later.



Pictured **back row** from left to right is Verlyn Anding, Bill Kersten (father of Don Kersten –1952 picture), Ted Brown, Dale Sires, Art Nadler. **Front row** left to right is Sam Gorell, John Stanley, Ken Sturz, Alton Sturz, and Waldemore Glassbrenner (brother to Bill, cousin to Richard Thurston, and uncle to Charles Rasmussen – all from the 1952 team).

Who says history doesn't repeat itself? Who says dreams don't come true? The 1932 team lost some games but they were never beaten! All of these team members are now deceased, but like the 1952 team, for a few short weeks, they kindled a spirit that continues to exist whenever an Altoona athletic team, boy or girl, football, wrestling, hockey, or basketball takes center stage. This spirit may ebb and flow through the years, but it is never far from the heart and mind of those who lived during these times. Once a railroader, always!

Most members of the 1932 team went to work on the railroad; they never lost their spirit or their roots. Only one member of the 1952 team worked for the CNW his whole career; times change, we must adapt to them. In 1932 more than half of the adult male residents in Altoona worked on the CNW Railroad; in 1952 that number had declined to less than 35 per cent. Today, fewer than two dozen residents work on the CNW. From hundreds to a handful, from an all-railroad town to a commuter suburb of Eau Claire – the population increased from 800 in 1932 to 1200 in 1952 and in 2002 to about 7,000. What we lacked in numbers we compensated by our spirit. It is not the years in your life, but rather the life in your years. Those were some mighty good years. Onward Railroaders!

Pictured below are family members of the 1932 and 1952 teams wearing typical railroader gear and waiting for the 2007 team to play in the sectional tournament. Win some-lose some! You can't win if you don't try. But if you try and don't win, don't cry!

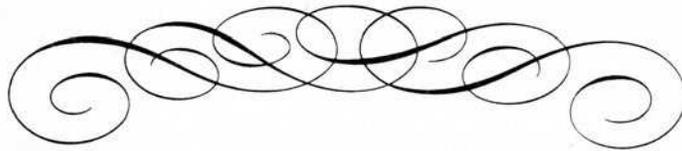


RAILROADERS IN DISGUISE

Rasmussen Family: Bob in front; then Susan, JoAnn and Dorothy

Don't be fooled by their dress, their smiles, their age, or their enthusiasm for the game of basketball; these oldies, this quartet of wannabes, are all decked-out for the 2006 regional, sectional, and Madison bound basketball tournaments. The son and daughters, grandson and granddaughters, and nieces and nephew of a dozen former railroad workers, with combined years of service on the CNW Railroad of more

than 200 years, they eagerly await the game, pondering who will win, how the current team compares to that of 1952, 54, 57, or 1963, wondering too whether anyone will recognize them in their disguised railroad uniforms. These desperados, these true railroaders, these senior citizens of the basketball court, these avid basketball fans, these Altoona alumni, these followers of lost causes, old fire trucks and squad cars, these believers in "outdoor movie theatres", these "pronto pup", "ice cold drinkers of Rochester Root beer" at Harris' Root Beer Stand, these frequenters of the "good life of the 1950-60's" and these guardians of Altoona past – wait patiently for another Altoona basketball team to march unto victory. I give you the "Rasmussen Quartet": Dorothy, Jo Ann, Susan and Robert. Never beaten; but always amazed, bothered and bewildered – by the miracles of life. Brother would you lend me a dime?



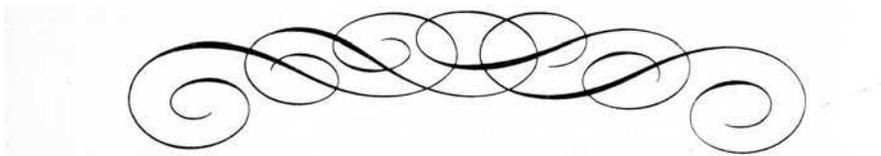
The Dream Team is A Steam Engine: Lookout World Here We Come!

By Roger Rasmussen, Altoona
Historian Retired Professor/Dean

1952 was the year; the photograph (see next page) reveals a cheerful group of young men, railroaders by name, fame, and birth. The excitement is a trip to the 1952 Wisconsin State Basketball Tournament. As kids they played sandlot basketball at Sleepy Thurston's during the day and Lampman's at night – thanks to the spot light from the CNW Railroad. Eight of the ten attended 12 years of school together. They would comprise the heart and soul of their teams from grades 6 - 12. From top right on the engine by the light is Charles Rasmussen (captain, all-district, regional, state, and All-American). Moving left and down the steam engine is Dennis Weeks, Don Kersten, Ron Babbit, William Glassbrenner (all-sectional and uncle to Charles), Richard Radiswitz, Glen Shafer, Robert Thompson, Richard Thurston (all-sectional, cousin to Bill and Charles), Coach Tom Lehman, and James Underwood. They did not bring home a trophy; however, "they cared enough to give their very best."

The total school enrollments in each of the two schools that defeated Altoona exceeded the total population of Altoona. We were proud of their victories and their successes. There is no record noting that three members of the same family had ever made an all-sectional team the same year – same tournament. Sleepy, Bill, and Chuck did! Charles Rasmussen held the life-time scoring record for some 10 years, and some 57 years later still ranks as the second greatest scorer in Altoona history. There is no record of a substitute player ever coming off the bench and making an all-sectional team; William Glassbrenner did. His brother, Waldemore played on the Altoona team that went to the Wisconsin State Tournament in 1932. Dreams do come true! Remember your dreams!

Footnote: One of the team members was able to convince the depot agent to have a train stationed on a spur-track so this picture could be taken. Thanks to their classmate Karen, the agent (Mr. H) obliged.





Bruce Smith Drawings
By Roger Rasmussen

The following are two copied drawings of trains that were used on the CNW Railroad before the advent of the diesel locomotive. To my best memory, these were drawn from other drawings by Bruce Smith, a resident of Altoona during the 1950-60's for certain, and perhaps into the 1970s. He left the CNW and took a position with another railroad; I believe it was the Duluth and Mesabi Line. While a resident of Altoona, he served as a senior- traveling engineer and his knowledge of railroads in general and the CNW specifically was second only to Edward Semisch. Bruce knew trains while Edward knew the happenings of events that occurred such as wrecks, odd situations, schedules, etc.

I knew Bruce because his spare time was spent at the Shell Service Station located on Spooner Avenue and 1st St. West. The owner was Glen Barton, but Billy Gloede and I tended to the gas pumps and performed minor tire repairs and lube-oil-and filter changes. Bruce was a brilliant man; in retrospect, he may have been the most intelligent man I ever met. His grasp of mechanics, mathematics, physics, engineering, both from the driving of a train and the functioning-operation of a train, exceed that of any person I have met. While I'm uncertain if he attended college, his writing skills, verbal communication skills, and his analytical skills exceeded that of most of my colleagues who were university professors or industrial engineers; I have know more than several hundred combined in these two categories.

I received these drawings but I am uncertain if they are copies of the originals or the originals. They were a gift from my Uncle, William Glassbrenner, and he can't remember if they were originals. Bill worked with Bruce for some 20 years. I knew Bruce well, and I knew he possessed the mechanical skills to complete these drawings.

The first picture with 1878 printed on it is of The Cumberland and was built by the Pittsburgh Locomotive Company for Jacob Humbird, a stockholder in the West Wisconsin Railroad and originator of the North Wisconsin Railroad. This train was destined for Bayfield Wisconsin. This 10 wheeler left Hudson Wisconsin in the 1870's and served the West Wisconsin Line until it merged with the North Wisconsin Line in 1880.to form the Chicago, St. Paul, and Minneapolis Railroad Company, which eventually became the C,St.P. M & O Railroad or the CNW – known as the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad.

It is thought this train was involved in a major accident and was scrapped in the 1920's. This train was the number 1 hauler of goods during the early decades of the 1900's. This picture shows no number on the train, but it was known as No. 1 even though the name Cumberland is shown. It was unusual for a train to have a name rather than a number. Note the N. W Ry. Logo – Northern Wisconsin not Northwestern Railroad.

Note the smoke stack had a billow on top to spread the smoke and ashes so they did not go directly into the engine compartment. While the compartment had glass type windows, most engineers seldom closed them so as to allow fresh cool air to pass through the hot compartment. Years later, when I worked on the railroad as a hostler's helper, my job would have been to take the remaining hot or cold (dead) coals and remove them from the firebox. This would entail using a small maul to break the partially burned coals into smaller ashes which could then be grated from the firebox. To generate steam to move the engine and boxcars required a heat level exceeding 212 degrees; thus, the engineer and firemen worked in a most inhospitable environment.

Besides the heat, smoke, ashes, and soot, the working quarters would not meet OSHA standards today.

As a young child I often wondered why the engineers and firemen seldom were friendly toward each other when they were away from work. Even when they ate together at the 400 Club Restaurant they seldom talked; perhaps too much togetherness is not so good!

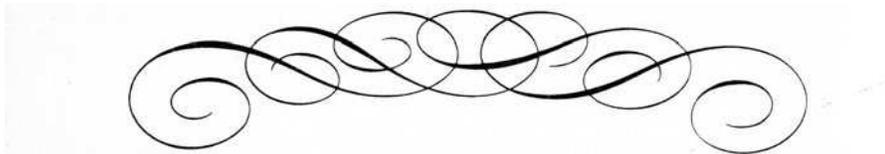
It is thought that Jacob Humbird was instrumental in the founding and development of the Village of Humbird located some 40 miles south and east of Altoona, also known as a railroad town.

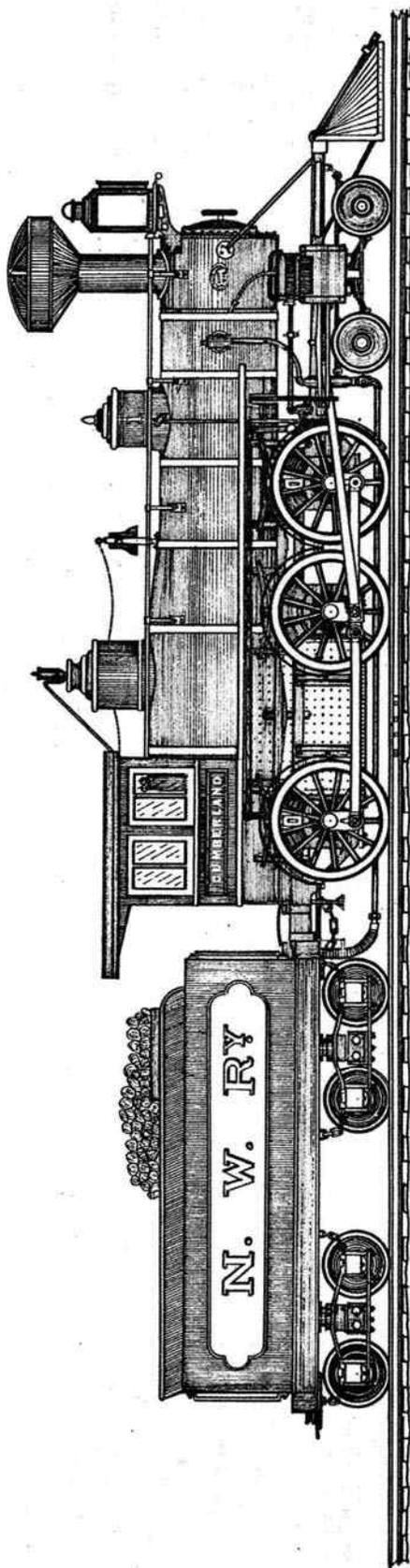
Picture number 2, dated 1870, shows Train No. 10 – also named the DA Baldwin, after the President of the West Wisconsin Railroad, was used to haul small pulls of less than 100 cars, but was later used as a switching engine. No. 10, along with No.'s 11, 12 and 14 were all delivered to the round house in 1881 at Eau Claire Wisconsin after the merger of the West Wisconsin Railroad, The Northern Wisconsin, The St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad and the CNW. Note the cow catcher at the front of the train, the light just above it, and the billowed smoke stack just to the back of the light. Note too the lack of weight support wheels – two sets of two wheels rather than three sets of two wheels when comparing the 1870 train with the 1878. This smaller train served shorter service areas while the larger train was longer haul and may have been used to haul iron ore and large timber from northern Wisconsin or northern Minnesota. The exact whereabouts of this train is not known, but it is thought to be housed in a railroad museum in Wisconsin.

The round house was located in Eau Claire because Altoona, then known as East Eau Claire, had not yet developed into a railroad center. The Eau Claire Round House was vacated and the larger Altoona Round House with 15 stalls, later enlarged to 21 stalls, became the repair and replacement center for the CNW. In the early 2000's, the Altoona Center was reduced to ashes to the consternation of many railroad buffs.

For additional information on steam engines, go to Google.com and type in "Steam engines-Historical Society" and enter. For additional information on Bruce Smith, go to "Duluth, Mesabi, and Iron Range Railroad", since he retired from there in the 1980's.

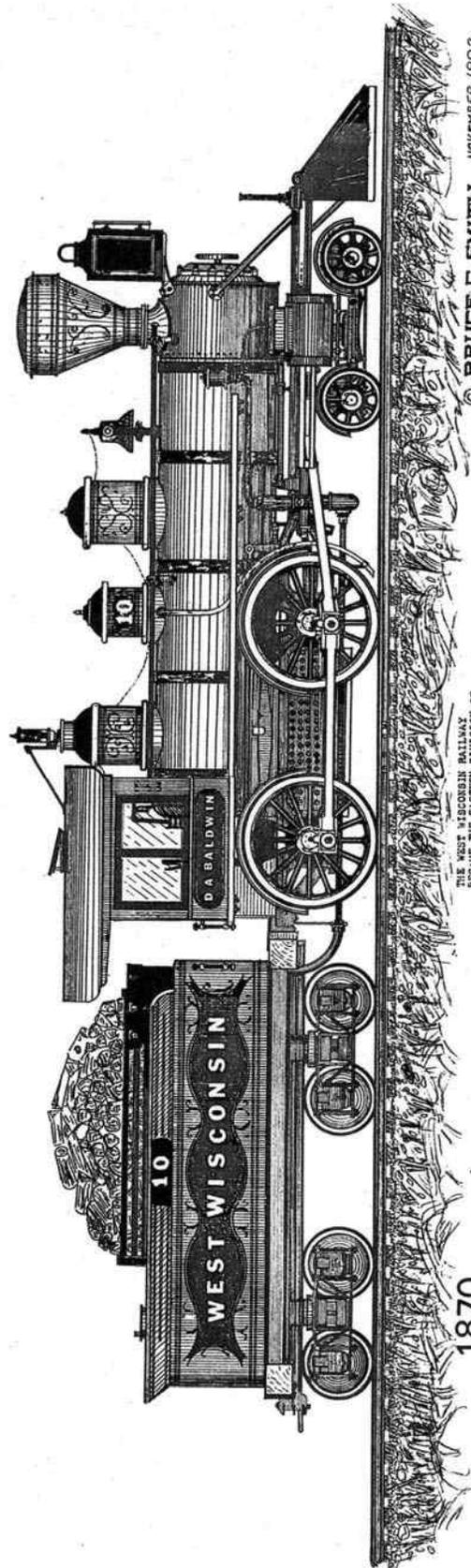
Thanks to Bruce Smith for passing these prints to William Glassbrenner for Roger Rasmussen. More prints and information will be made available in future publications.





The drawing by J. G. Smith is a reproduction of the original drawing of the locomotive and passenger car of the Northern Pacific Railroad, which was produced by the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1870. The locomotive was built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the passenger car was built by the Pullman Palace Car Company in Chicago, Illinois.

1878 © 1984 BRUCE G. SMITH
3137 Miller Trunk Rd.



1870 © BRUCE G. SMITH NOVEMBER 1982

THE WEST WISCONSIN RAILWAY BECAME THE EASTERN DIVISION OF THE CHICAGO ST. PAUL & MINNEAPOLIS RAILWAY IN 1870. THE RAILWAY WAS CONSOLIDATED WITH THE NORTH WISCONSIN AND THE ST. PAUL & MINNEAPOLIS RAILWAY.

FRANK BRESINA - THE MAN BEHIND THE COAL DUST

By Roger Rasmussen - CNW worker (1954)

Frank Bresina was one of the mysterious men in my life because I never knew him; Frank was covered with coal dust from his job as the manager of the coal shed. The shed was the refueling station for the steam engines that moved the box cars on the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad; the Railroad was the heart of Altoona. Most of our fathers worked there. Frank's job was to unload the coal from the freight cars that hauled coal from the mines to the railroad yards. There Frank would open the bottom doors and let the coal drop into a hopper (a grated sieve) thence a conveyor belt system would carry it to the storage container much like a water tank. When a train needed refueling Frank would hop-atop the backend of the train, pull a chute down, pull a lever and...wow... chunks of coal the size of a basketball would come sliding down into a storage area about 10' by 20'. With that accomplished the train was ready for a 150 mile journey or simply switching of cars in the main railroad yard.

Frank Bresina was a mysterious man because he was covered with black coal dust. Now, to a 6 year old boy, seeing Frank walk through our yard from the "shed" to his house, across the street from where I lived, was no great feat. However, I seldom saw him go to work in the morning; he started work a might earlier than I arose. I saw him come home after a busy day; a busy day might include unloading four coal cars, approximately 100 ton of coal into the coal shed. Then he might unload that same amount into 10 trains during a typical day - about 10 ton per train. Of course, during this process, with coal sliding down a chute or into the underground storage area, lots of coal dust could be seen floating in the air. As you might guess, some of it fell on Franks clothing, hair, face, and other body parts. After a steady day of this he would look like a black man. Thus, I thought Frank was a black man – or in those days we called them negro.

Surprisingly, one morning I noticed Frank crossing our yard going across the railroad tracks to the coal shed; he was white – clean as fresh fallen snow. My small mind said, "how can this black man now be white?" It took me a few more times seeing Frank nice and clean before I asked my neighbor, Glen-"Gibb" Gilbert- he was about 10 years older than I and so I thought this wise old man would know something I didn't know; I believe he was 18 years old and a senior in high school. He explained how the clean man in the morning got dirty during the day. Frank's son, Richard, was my neighbor and best friend, and I spent lots of playtime in their yard; however, this was during the day and so I never saw his Dad at home during the day. So I didn't know that Frank would wash the coal dust off.

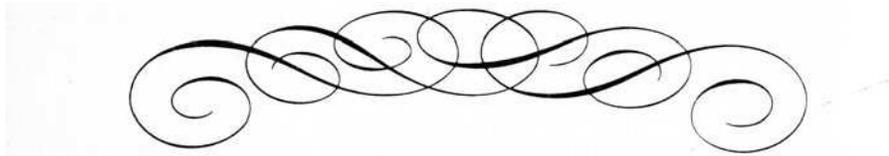
For a while this mysterious man seemed to have two suits of skin; black in the afternoon yet white when he went to work during the morning. How could this guy change his skin so easily? I wondered if I might too be able to pull this off. Years later, while sitting in a tavern in Altoona, I

must have been all of 10 years of age, "Scorchy Green " had a chameleon, a lizard, that was able to change its skin color to match that of the surroundings, a sort of camouflage, to protect itself. My mind went back to Frank, and I thought, "gosh" the world is an odd place.

Why was Frank Bresina so important in my life? He created a situation, his black and white demeanor, that forced me to look at the world in "black and white" terms. Not racial terms, but in absolutes; some things were true and some things were not as they seemed. Mr. Bresina seldom said much, sort of one of those "in family" traits; his sons were quiet too. When Frank spoke, it often was "good afternoon" but seldom "good morning" since he was in a hurry to get to work. Frank was quiet, but frankly speaking, adults seldom addressed kids in those days. His few words taught me early that a person was more than what he said.

I learned in a few years that without Frank and his coal, nothing moved in the railroad yards. His job was critical to the success of all the other workers on the railroad. No fuel, no movement! Too bad Frank didn't realize his power position because he could have demanded much higher wages. This gentle, simple, unassuming, quiet, huge man had an awesome power position far greater than my Dad, Percy, who loaded ice into box cars so as to keep fruit, vegetables, and meat from spoiling; however, that's another story, and Frank Bresina's job description, while not etched in marble, was etched in my youthful mind using coal dust as the artist's medium. Coal- the fuel that moved a nation in the early part of the 20th Century, now produces much of the energy that lights our homes. Frank Bresina was my first contact with a coal miner; his black and white nature opened my undeveloped mind to a world that doesn't exist today. Oh, to see those giant steam engines, to hear the sorrowful cry of that whistle, to seem that old coal shed and Frank walking gently through my yard with his black then white skin-what a picture to remember.

Frank Bresina -thanks! You never knew how important you were to my simple world in the 1940's. Whatever happened to our black and white, right and wrong, world? I'm too old to change!



DARRELL WOODINGTON-A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS AND REASONS

By Roger Rasmussen

Besides my Father, Percy, Darrell Woodington was the most significant man in my life. He was a significant other who opened my mind, heart and soul to a world I never anticipated and one for which I was ill-prepared. Thank you "Pud" for making the difference. Darrell was an ordinary guy with extraordinary insights, experiences, and ambitions; especially so, did he have ambitions for young men in Altoona. He could be called the catalyst for career development. How so you ask?

Darrell owned and operated Woodington's Gas Station. He was not a licensed teacher, yet he taught more young men the "ins and outs" of car care better than most industrial education teachers I've known. He was a master of his trade and he challenged most young men who hung around the station to learn how to take care of cars; in the process he taught us how to take care of ourselves too. His hands were seldom greasy or dirty, yet he was a grease monkey and a mechanic. His clothes were never dirty, yet I recall him working on a "creeper" and under dirty cars. Neatness and orderliness were important in managing a station and he thought this would carry-over into everyday life. We didn't just "hang" around the gas station, he expected everyone to learn how to...

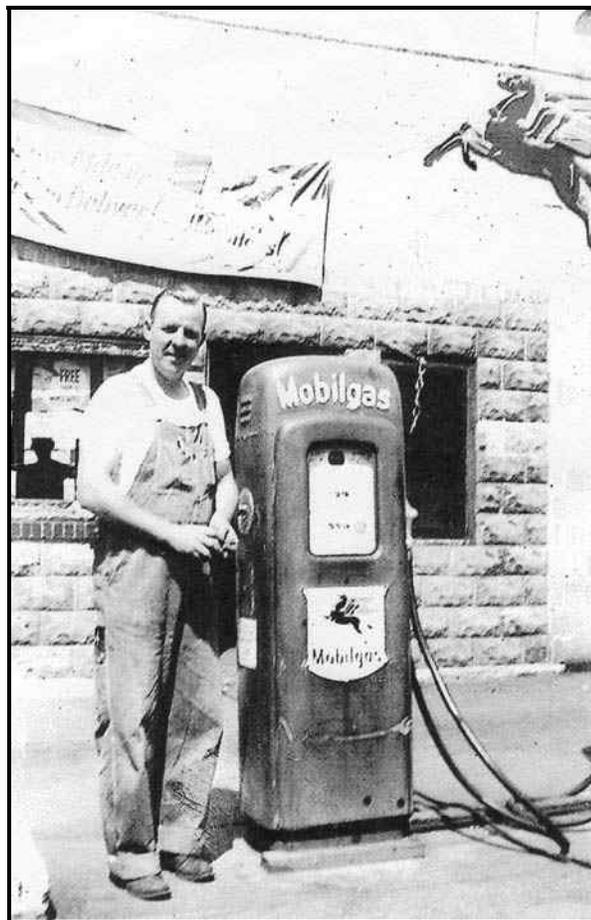
Learning how to pump gas, remove and repair a tire, lubricate and change the oil on a car, add air to tires, check the oil, fan belt, hoses, and other automobile accessories were part of the hands-on school that he taught every day. Learning the names and uses of dozens of tools and the parts and operation of the automobile would come in handy – so Darrell thought. Dozens of young men each year, for more than the 10 years I was a constant observer and participant, learned by the hands-on method. Not lots of talk – a simple explanation, several chances to demonstrate that you knew how to – and then you were on your own. Perhaps a dozen young men standing around the pot belly stove on a cold Saturday morning, bragging about the nite-before basketball game, and Darrell would say, "Ok Roger it's your turn to pump the gas in Irv Hardies' car" or.... " Eddy Schmidt, it's time you learned how to lubricate and change the oil on Fid's car." Besides the skills learned, you soon realized the importance of kindness toward the customer. Respect for people, places, things, and especially pride in your hometown and school were constantly reiterated. Most "gashouse gang members" understood the importance of "be a job big or small- do it well or not at all."

The rite of passage at Darrell's Place depended on your age and whether or not you had a brother who had belonged to the "gashouse gang." My rite of passage was to recite the names of each of the states and their capitol. It took me three times to pass. While no membership cards were given, you knew who belonged. No one was excluded who wanted just to hang; however, to pump gas, and do other trivial tasks was not a chore given to "just anyone." I was 13 years of age when I felt like I belonged. Darrell Woodington was my "father in absentia." For several years my Dad worked out-of-town building the Holcomb Dam. I was quite independent and so I spent most non-school days away from home; almost always at "the Station." November 1, 1951 was a "day of infamy." The night before, Friday, October 31, the Altoona Elementary/High School burned completely. The fire was not extinguished until early on Saturday morning. I walked the two miles into town and watched the school burn. By 8:00 a.m. I was cold and exhausted and so I ran to Darrell's Place to get warm. Eating and sleeping were out of the question; we had lost our "second home" – the school. Now Pud's Place would be my second home. By noon most of the

"gang" were at Darrell's and the major discussion – where would be now go to school? At Noon, Leo Looby, owner of the Meat Market, walked over and talked to Darrell. A few minutes later, Darrell called me to their conversation. Darrell said, "I told Leo that if he wanted the best worker around to help him in the grocery store, you were it." From that day on, until I graduated from high school, I had a job and I had money – two things most kids my age lacked. Thanks to Pud, my first job became a stepping stone to other jobs. Since 1951, I have never been unemployed. Many older "gang" members wanted that job; he chose me!

Years later, when I graduated from college as a teacher, Darrell, then School Board President, wanted me to return to Altoona High School as a teacher and prospective principal. I asked Him, "Why did you ever pick me for Leo's job "? His reply, "I knew you were hungry.–you had a passion for doing whatever you had to do, whether shoving snow, cutting grass, or raking." "Be a job, great or small, do it well or not at all"?

Years later when I was in a position to hire a teacher, professor, or college administrator, my first criteria beyond the legal licensure requirements was passion. Unless one has a burning desire to do something beyond "good", I deferred to the one who had the passion. Darrell Woodington was to become my mentor through two college degrees and my first several professional positions. His advice served me well. He was like a second father to me and one of the "great men in my life." At age 73 and counting, I still have that passion – that desire to strive for excellence. We could use a "few good men like Darrell Woodington" today.



Ed the Red Engineer – A Most Unforgettable Character

By Roger Rasmussen

Edward Semisch was a character not easy to forget. Why so? First, his appearance indicated a real lack of concern for what people saw or thought. He was his own worst enemy because he was vulnerable and because he didn't care too much what people thought of or about him; therefore, he was perceived as defenseless and in some ways helpless.

Secondly, Ed was a character because of his demeanor. He walked with laziness indicative of a bum- a hobo- one of Ed's colleagues of unemployed or underemployed railroad vagabonds. Ed would have been a world class hobo because he admired their free-living style; his living style. "Don't worry about tomorrow because tomorrow might not come." Even if it did come, what difference would it really make in the whole scheme of life? One way or the other Ed Semisch didn't much care what tomorrow would bring because he would continue to do his own thing regardless.

Thirdly, Ed Semisch was a character because of his capacity to remember and recall in detail most every historical event and person in Altoona from 1920 until his death in the 1970's. He knew more useless and useful information than anyone I had ever met. What was Ed's secret to a great mind? Most every day the Altoona taverns were open, Ed would make a daily trek downtown to gossip and learn the news firsthand. While at each of the three taverns, he might partake of the alcoholic drinks of different patrons, without their consent. " Don't leave a drink unattended or it would be gone." Of course, this resulted in some insults and conversation. Thence, without too much fanfare, Ed would depart to the next bar and repeat these actions. Eventually Ed would end his trek at one of the two restaurants before his final journey to the Depot. At either the 400 Club Restaurant, or Mooney's Restaurant Ed would find the Leader Telegram, Milwaukee Journal or one of the Twin Cities newspapers and read it/them from cover- to -cover while printing notes on the news that involved the railroad or people living in the area of Altoona. Patiently and diligently Ed would meticulously print significant information. While writing he would memorize; I suspect he had a photographic mind. His secret for a good memory – use all of your senses; common being the most important.

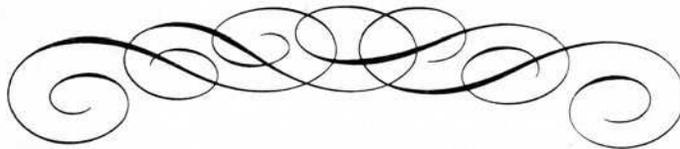
Eventually, after some two-three hours of movement and writing, Ed would find home; the CNW Depot. His home away from the farm home! There upon he would engage as many as would listen in conversation about the railroad, workers, and residents. This angular, overweight, coverall-wearing, somewhat sloppy, unshaven, gangly haired creature created unwarranted fear in the hearts and minds of some youngsters. Teenage girls would walk across the street to avoid Ed. Young guys would tease him to see if he could remember their names, birthdates, or something unusual about Altoona. For those who knew the real Ed Semisch he was a treat; a treat because Ed was a reservoir of knowledge about the world. He was our World Bank of information. Because most of us lacked access to TV and perhaps because we were lazy readers of newspapers, it was easy to rely on Ed to tell us. We feasted on Ed's vulnerability. He was most eager to tell us, even if we didn't want to hear.

Some 45 years after I last saw Ed Semisch, I still consider him one of my mentors. Thanks to Ed's encouragement I attended college and earned a few degrees. His grasp of useful and practical knowledge encouraged me to become somewhat like him. While I don't copy down the news, I have been a vociferous reader and listener of the news that becomes the history of a town, vicinity, valley, or state; maybe even Altoona's History!

I referred to Edward Semisch as a hobo; most readers would equate mat to a bum. Ed was not a bum of a guy. Like the town crier of earlier centuries, he was the master of news; on a par with Jack Parr or Chet Huntley. I doubt that Ed finished 8th grade, for such was not expected of a farmer such as Ed or his brother Julius. As a teacher for more than 45 years I have encountered thousands of colleagues and friends with advanced degrees, so called "educated"; however, my friend and colleague Ed the Red Semisch still ranks as smarter than most of them.

Finally, the one masterful quality possessed by this smart man was his dedication to knowing more about the CNW Railroad than any living soul. While the computer has made information gathering much easier, Ed Semisch took the time to read and record the early history of the CNW and share it. He irregularly wrote a column in the Altoona newspapers on local news, but he never failed to share the railroad news or local gossip to the younger generation. He could remember the smallest details on every train, train crash, most railroad workers, and he was seldom in error. Ed never actually worked on the railroad; he was our local fanner- news commentator. However, he spent 70 years as Mr. CNW riving, writing, and talking about life on the rails... A ledger and a legend of our Altoona History and an engineer of my career, Ed remains one of the great characters of my young life in Altoona. Thanks Mr. Ed!

Roger Rasmussen is an irregular purveyor of useless and useful information related to characters who walked the streets and talked Toonerville talk during the 1940-50-60's, and he was a contributor to the Altoona Star. Still teaching after 45 years, he continues to foster interest in Altoona History. With his cousin Dr. John Thurston and friend Jack Blackburn, they provide useless and useful insights on Altoona.



I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THE RAILROAD

By William Glassbrenner & Nephew Roger Rasmussen
Altoona Railroaders

As the words to the above song go, my grandfather worked for the Northwestern Railroad for 30 years, my father William Glassbrenner Sr. for 40 years, my brother Waldemore for 35 years, and I for 43 years. If you added my three uncles and my brother-in-law Percy, combined we've been railroaders for more than 200 years. No members of my family now work on the railroad.

By first job with the CSt.P M & O Railroad, now known as the Union Pacific, was as a call-boy. Not a call-girl, but a call-boy; my job was to alert engineers, brakeman, and conductors when they were scheduled to work by calling them via phone but more often by walking to their home or where they roomed and knocking on the door or yelling loud and clear. I waited for their response so I knew they heard correctly; some had hearing problems, and some fell back to sleep. However, for this story, I'll drop the call-boy job and relay the life of a common laborer who worked at the roundhouse in Altoona after high school graduation in 1952. My first full-time job began on June 25th of 1952. Most of my buddies enlisted in the Korean War; I enlisted on the railroad.

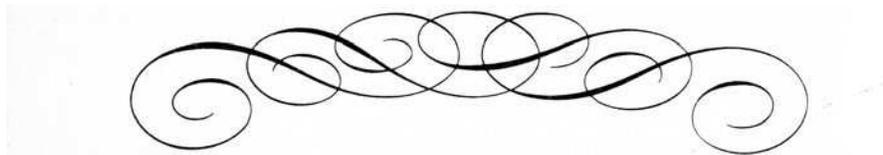
I started fires! That is, I was responsible for getting the steam engines ready for work by starting the fire to heat the water, to create the steam that would move the 4,000 ton engine and the 100+ boxcars or Pullman cars (passenger carriers) and I needed to start this fire a minimum of two hours before the train was to be pushed or pulled (driven). Now starting a fire sounds simple; shovel a hundred pounds of coal into a firebox (stove), soak some old cloth or paper with kerosene, light the materials and throw it all into the firebox. Pray a blaze would start so the water in the boiler would get hot enough to create steam without exploding. Luck meant a quick start; bad-luck meant repeated attempts-sometimes three to four tries. Prior to 1960, most food, lumber, ice, and people traveled by rail not semis or air. America's means of transportation was the railroad; America was fed by food moved by the steam engine.

In an average eight hour shift, eight steam engines (called trains) might needed to be fueled with coal, the boiler tank filled with water, and the sand hopper filled with clean sugar sand. Sand was used to help move the train during initial start, or to help brake a train during an emergency stop. Both internal and external blowers (fans) might be used to encourage a blaze. Poor quality, cheap, coal made the laborer's job difficult. Cold weather didn't help. Hot weather and a hot firebox made for a sweaty job. Each engine had to be inspected at the end of its run and repairs made before starting a new run. At the end of a run, the hot coals would need to be extinguished and flushed from the firebox; likewise, the pent-up steam would need to be

released but not before the engine was placed in the roundhouse for inspection and maintenance; safety was a must!

The work of a common laborer was demanding, tiring, and timing was essential. As one small common worker, 5' 10" and 130 pounds, in the whole chain of railroad workers, my first job with the Northwestern Railroad was demanding and lasted just four years, yet it prepared me for new positions that culminated in a 43 year career. Today there is no roundhouse, no steam engines, and where once 200 men worked in Altoona maintaining a great fleet of trains, now a few diesel engines and a dozen workers handle a fraction of the train traffic that birthed a small town called Altoona into a growing city. Where once 20 or more freight teams left the City each day today perhaps five leave. Where once four to five passenger trains, including the 400, carried travelers to unseen sights, there is silence. The 400 ceased passing thru Altoona in the 1960's.

The giant steam engines were the workhorses for moving food and materials to a growing nation. As youngsters in Altoona schools, we learned early the song, "I've Been Working on the Railroad." Young men followed their grandfathers, fathers, brothers and uncles by becoming railroad workers too. I retired in 1995 after 43 years with the Northwestern (Union Pacific) Railroad. My pension is a reminder of how lucky Altoona was to have such a rich heritage; I was proud to be a part of the process that helped move the food, supplies, returning veterans, and citizens during an era when the steam engine was king of the rails. What a great ride and what a great life; I know, I was a railroader!



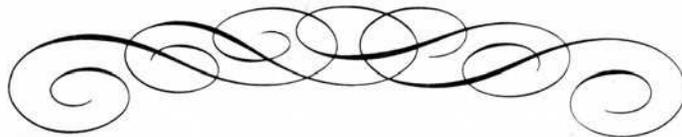
Which Am I?

I watched them tear a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town.
With a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell,
They swung a beam and a side wall fell.
I asked the foreman, "Are these men skilled,
the kind you'd hire if you had to build?"
The foreman laughed and said, "No. indeed!
unskilled labor is ail I need."
These men can wreck in a day or two,
What it would take a builder a year to do.
I asked myself as I went on my way,
"Which of these roles have I chosen to play?"
Am I a builder with a loving care,
who measures life with a rule and square?
Am I a builder with a plan,
who does the very best I can?
Or am I a wrecker who walks the town,
content with the job of tearing down?"

~Author Unknown

The source of this poem is unknown by the presenter. I believe it was typed on a manual typewriter sometime in the 1930's by my Mother Alfreda Rasmussen from some source and later retyped by my Wife Dixie using an IBM Selectric Typewriter. The essence of the poem – one way or the other; we are either builders, wreckers, or users. One of our efforts in this publication is to help you become the first and the last – not the middle With an emphasis on the first.

Roger Rasmussen, Constructionist.



The Babysifter

By Roger Rasmussen

I did it for what seems forever, but there was a time that I couldn't do it because I was too young, so mom and dad actually had to pay someone to sit with us when they went out on a Friday's night. I can always remember waiting with anticipation to see who I would luck out with as someone to be awed with my cuteness. But in all honesty, the first babysitter that we had that I can remember was a guy, Roger Rasmussen . And that was for a very good reason, molla.

I recently helped out with a project that was devoted to the old Altoona High School that burned down 58 years ago this weekend. I obtained a list of graduates and then took on the task of calling them and trying to get input on their memories of the old school. I was surprised with one memory that was from one of my first babysitters. She ran into me a couple days after the fire and asked me what had happened. I then went into a recounting of dad coming into my room to tell me we had to leave the comfort of our bedrooms because of the fear of a wind change and the Babbington house catching fire. This requested story proved that Roger wasn't the first baby sitter I had, but rather the first I remember.

I was not and still am not a real pro when it comes to words, so that is the explanation of the title of this memory. When I was young my favorite activity was to help mom bake, bake cookies, pies, cakes, and my favorite, doughnuts. And whenever there was a task involving sifting of flower, THAT WAS MY JOB. So, being the not an expert on words person that I was, when baby sitting was brought up, and I thought there would be some sifting involved, so babysifting it was. I just thought I would throw that in, as later in life when mom would whip up a baked treat, she would use my invented word and say let's do some babysifting.

So what made Roger so special that I can go back some 55 years plus to remember what a great job he did? Let's just say that Roger understood the value of a nickel, and that fact is proven by the story of where he came from, and where he has ended up. If he wasn't babysitting, he would be working for Leo Lobby as a marketer or Darold Woodington as a prospective grease monkey. But as he learned the trade he also learned the shortcuts, to make his job easier to accomplish, using his brain as opposed to his brawn.

Mom tells me I was a handful when I was young. If I inherited her intelligence I also inherited dad's propensity for raising hell and causing mischief. But Roger used my curiosity to curb my enthusiasm, in other words, he bribed me.

Dad had several war trophies from his Navy days in the Pacific, and one was what we thought at the time very practical. In the early days of television, someone, somewhere, somehow came up with the wild idea that if you were watching TV you had to have a TV light on top of the set shining towards the wall that the back of the TV faced. I never did get the explanation of why this was, but it was. When you turned on the TV you also turned on the light sitting atop the set. Dad had constructed our TV light out of an oversized clam shell he had brought back from the South Pacific. It was oval shaped and about the size of a small dinner plate. He had taken one half that was the stand laying face down and then bolted on the other half on edge on top of the laying down half. He then electrified it with a bulb holder and cord, and that was our TV lamp as long as dad was around and we were watching TV.

We were at Andy and Blanches having just returned from Washington State when Roger was our sitter for the night. It didn't take him long to go into his "special" for the evening. If I was to behave myself, and do everything that he requested, without the slightest of an attitude, there would be a reward for my efforts, to be collected the next morning, after I had jumped the hardest hurdle, going to bed. I would be able to collect that reward if I looked, if I looked... under the TV lamp.

So I broke all protocol, resisted all my temptations, and I think even smiled when I didn't really feel like it. I was the model 5 year old, the kid they pictured in Life magazine; the I'm going to go to Heaven Kid. And sure enough, good to his word, there under the TV light was a big shiny nickel. And I think even Roger will admit that he didn't have a problem with me afterwards, as long as the nickel held out.

But Roger was at the juncture in his life that he had bigger fish to fry than babysitting, so after he left high school, new babysitters were in the cards. I can't remember any after Roger till Diana Connell came to sit with us after mom and dad bought the Spooner Avenue house in Altoona. I had always had this thing for blondes, so I think Dianna got my best attention and behavior, and it didn't cost her a nickel. And at 61 years old, Dianna is still my babysitter. I guess I can't say "my" sitter, as the last few years that we have went on vacation, Dianna has been kind enough to come over and spend some times with our two cats Slinky and Stinky. She was a good neighbor when we lived a couple of blocks apart in Altoona, and is still a good neighbor living a couple of blocks apart in Eau Claire.

I hope Roger's head didn't get too big from all the nice things I said about him earlier, as

he might not like what I am about to relate, the worse of all babysitters we ever had. I guess that is unfair to say, or suggest that she wasn't a good baby sitter. It is what she did to us Saturday night that came back to bite, or rather not allow to bite Sunday after dinner. What would you think of someone that ate the whole half gallon of ice cream that had been planned for dessert after Sunday's chicken dinner? She wasn't popular with us kids, and even so less popular with dad, who had to run to the store to get a replacement of the ice cream. I can now state that it was Rogers sister Dort that polished off our once a week treat. But all is forgiven, but Dort never sat for us again after that.

We are now pushing my age to the limit and it wasn't long after Dorothy that I took over the reigns of baby sitting. I was probably around 11 when I first sat, but dad tried me out with other kids first. The Heidemann's lived next door to us, and they had an upstairs apartment, which at the time was rented out by Bill and Tooty Glassbrenner. One Friday night Bill came over to see if I could sit with their daughter Evetta, as the sitter they had set up petered out on them. I could see the wheels turning in dad's head, but after all, I was just a short jog away from help, and I would probably fall asleep anyway, which I did. So I got my first babysitting job and must have proved to dad that I had what it took. I did make some money, I did fall asleep, and I also found one on Bill's girly magazines before I nodded off. Maybe that's why Bill never asked me back again, the nap or maybe the girly magazine. Or maybe it was because I was busy taking care of the Ruscin kids.

I did have one incident that I still wonder about till this day. You could say it was one of those incidents that slipped through the crack. We had a dog, one of our first of many, and he would eat just about anything that "fell" off the table. One the night we had liver he could barely walk by the time we were all done "eating". One of the first nights that I baby sat I had made a trip to Woolworth's with mom and somehow talked her into parting with .59 to buy a turtle. A turtle is meant to live his or her life in a bowl with a rock and a plastic palm tree to be fed fly's and worms. But I was a hands on kind of turtle owner, so I had to take the turtle out of his bowl and put him on the floor. I put my arms in a circle to mark his boundary, but then, just like at Bill's, I fell to sleep. When I woke up, Tommy the turtle had vanished, and I searched the house high and low for him, with no results. But Hunts the Weiner dog just lay there with what I swear was the same smile we saw on the nights we had liver.

"All-Aboard" for Chicago, Madison, Milwaukee, Elroy, or Eau Claire
By Roger Rasmussen



William Glassbrenner Jr in 1936

Who would think this shy young child would become a CNW Railroad worker for some 30 plus years? Bill, as he is known, or Omar for those who know him well, began working as a call-boy in his early teens, held a variety of positions in the round house and eventually spent the bulk of his career as a clerk in the depot. While shy as a teen, Bill learned early that the noisy life of a railroad worker, especially those working near trains, required keen hearing and a loud voice. Following in the footsteps of his father, Bill Sr., his brother, Waldemore, and several uncles, Bill became a loud-mouth; that is, he learned early that he needed to shout to be heard. At age 75, he thinks he's still working on the railroad. The thunder of a Big-H, , a blast of steam, the echoes of a lonely train whistle in the distance, the slow methodical climb of a 100 car train pulled by twin diesels, and you have life on the railroad. The railroad has died a slow quiet death, but those aged 60 or more will recall, faintly I am sorry to say, when the life-blood of Altoona was the sound of trains, whistles, steam, brakes, and men screaming to the tops of their lungs- "all-aboard" for Chicago, Madison, Milwaukee, Elroy, or Eau Claire. To be a part of that time was to be awakend at 2:00 a.m. with all of the noise and fury of a railroad and the loud crash of two box cars meeting from opposite directions at five miles per hour.

Chapter Five

Herb Ruscin: My Altoona

THE MEN WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE IN MY/OUR LIVES

By Herb Ruscin and Roger Rasmussen
With photos and comments from friends and strangers

As the poem "IF" by Rudyard Kipling notes, it is possible for one person to make a difference in the world! Such is the case with the men who are described, memorialized, explained, and dissected in this section of our publication. Most often they were simple in their demeanor, plain in their daily living, colorful in their character, yet they added a meaningfulness to the life of a railroad town that would be unknown to the reader except for the memories, photos, and documents still existing in the hidden drawers, minds, and photo albums of those who lived during the 1940-1970 era. Thanks to Herb Ruscin, Bill Glassbrenner, Bob Thompson, and others unknown or forgotten who added their flare to this memory book.

Some men made a difference in our lives; some men were the difference! From Darold Woodington, Frank Bresina, Percy Rasmussen- my Father, Leo Looby, Robert Ruscin-Herb's Father, Darold Jarosh, Issac Hickock, to Alton Sturz, these men performed duties, task if you would, that most of us never understood, or gave little credence to. These are some of the unsung heroes of our day who did the little things called "dirty work"; yet, without their efforts, the trains would never have left the station; the food would never have been delivered; the mail with good and bad news would never have graced the eyes of the receivers; peace and security would never have prevailed on the streets of Altoona; hungry stomachs would never have been filled; and, our cars would have sat in the yards or garages of our residence. Herb and I would not be the same without them. Thanks men!

It is not enough "for man to live by bread alone" or so the statement goes; but out of the "mouths of our once youth comes the words that best describe the lives of the men who walked quietly, although at times they were heard, and their words of wisdom and kind acts linger yet, yet their paths helped lead a wondering and wandering town called Altoona toward a way of life mostly lost in America today. These were the men who made a difference and they were the men who were the difference. I knew each of them personally, interacted with them in many different ways, believed in what they did to earn a living, at times hero worshipped them, but more importantly, I remember as did those other worshippers such as Herb Ruscin. Together we have retraced the footprints of these pioneers, and while many other deserving individuals have not been mentioned, for this initial publication called the "Red Caboose", we give you Herb's and Roger's Medal of Honor winners. Those unknown, not included for any reason, and those awaiting the pen of other writers, we leave to a future publication.

The Overhead Herb Ruscin

There is an old adage that states it's not what you know, but who you know. After close to 50 years in the profession called work, I guess I would have to agree with that old saying. It was probably invented by someone who was not as close to Cleopatra as they wished to be, so I can see where it would apply in certain circumstances. . . but not all.

Between my junior and senior years of high school I met a young lovely, two years my junior, who came from St. Pats and was of Norwegian and Irish decent.. We went together during my senior year of high school, and corresponded for a year or so after I joined the Navy. We had a transient relationship, after all, when you are sixteen and eighteen, who knows what life holds in store for you. I got along fabulously with her parents, and like to think that I was the kind of guy that they wanted their daughter to marry, as that would be the ultimate compliment. I used to say that after I went into the Navy that I got along better with her parents than I did with her. But I don't mean to talk about our going together, but rather because of knowing her I would be able to put 2 and 2 together and come up with a conclusion. . . even if it was much later in my life.

Her name was Kathy (the same as my wives name) and her dad was a very gregarious Norwegian named Jim. He had complete trust in me, as gentlemen with his daughter and the physical condition of his 1954 red and white Ford station wagon. He proved that trust one summer evening by loaning me the use of the station wagon one Friday night. He didn't lend the car to take his daughter out, but rather run home to get a good night sleep. A good night's sleep required so I could get up early to pick up him and his daughter, and drive up to Lake Menomin for a day of fishing, and bragging rites. The bragging rites belonged to Kathy, as Jim and I got skunked while she bagged three, two of which were decent fish. I am sure now that although he has been gone for ten years now that Jims trust in me with his car, and his daughter was well founded.

Kathy's mom Kitty was a sparkly Irish lass, and with her quick wit and devilish smile, a pleasure to be with. The family lived down by Carson Park on Union Street, and Kathy 's grandma lived almost directly behind her on Congress Street. While dating Kathy we made many trips over to her grandma's house and I believe she liked me almost as much as her parents did. Kathy had a couple of uncles, one of which was a commercial artist and worked for the St. Paul Pioneer Press as an artist. One time while visiting her grandma she got out some of Pat's

drawings and painting to show us how talented he was. I remember in particular one painting of a B-24 bomber that Pat had done that really impressed me, I was a WW2 fan and anything to do with the war impressed me. I think Pat must have been a member of a bomber crew as I could not imagine doing such an extraordinary job of capturing a bomber in formation unless he had drawn it as they were flying the tediously long flight on a bombing mission. His nickname was Pat, but his birth name was Marshall, the same as his dad, who was a railroad engineer.

Now fast forward 40 years to middle aged man who suddenly became enthralled to what happened in his home town long before he was born. Even though I never went to Altoona, except for a couple of months of Kindergarten, I will always be a Railroader at heart; even if my high school ring has the mark of a Rambler. I lived right next to the railroad tracks and after joining the Navy found out how hard it was to go to sleep in the barracks without the sing song of the switch engines making up their trains:

So when I started going back to my roots and the roots of my roots, it was natural that I would look into the history of the railroad and its influence on Altoona. Looking for something you don't know much about? Go to the library for the answers you seek, because it is all there. I learned about the photography of O.W Link who back in the 50' s photographed one of the last operating steam engine railroads, The Norfolk and Western. He photographed the pictures of the soon to be extinct steam engines at night using flash to give the two books of his photos a hauntingly eerie effect. He photographed all aspects of railroad life, even including a process that occurred every five years to a steam engine. It was called wheeling and included the complete replacement of the boiler assembly from the drive train of the engine. If I have peaked you interest, the two books of his photos are titled "The Last Railroad in America' and "Steam, Steel & Stars" and the Eau Claire library has a copy for your approval.

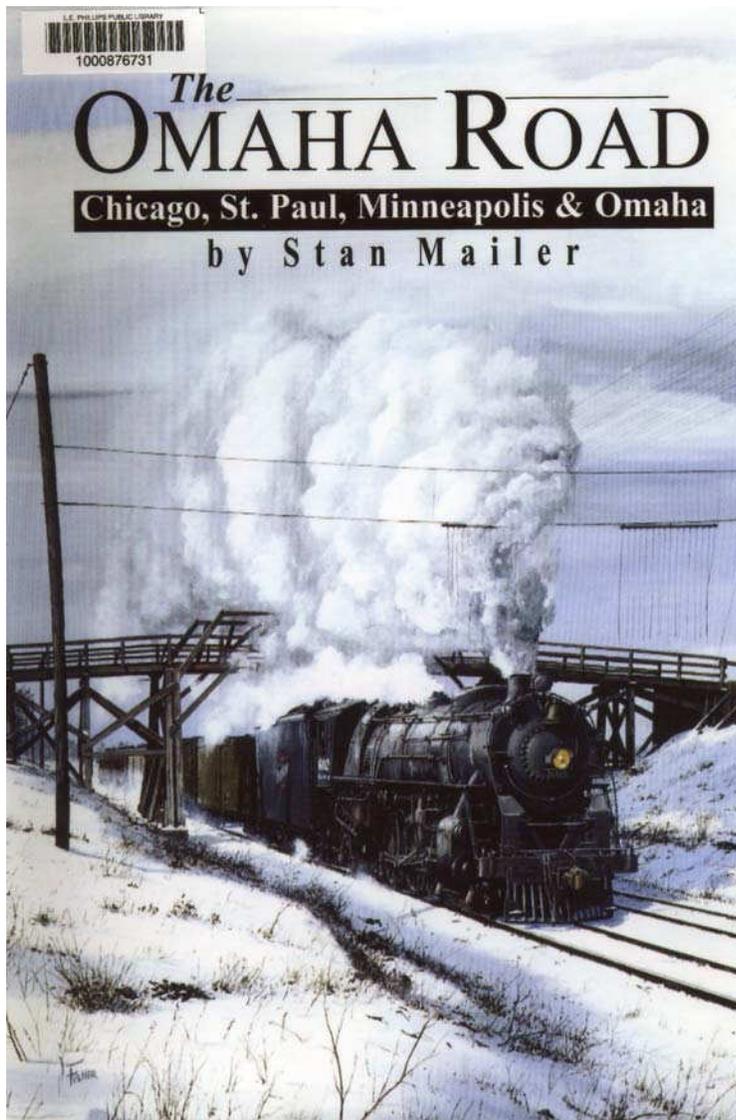
Although these are interesting or more importantly a necessity to a real train enthusiast, it was another book that peaked my interest. I was so eager to open it up when I saw the Omaha Road on the front cover that I by passed a second look at that cover, although it would haunt me later. The Omaha Road was the original railroad in Altoona, and surely this was the book I needed to get my history of the Altoona railroad history. I would learn why I think Altoona was called Cinder City and why Altoona was such a big railroad town. But as I went through and looked at the hundreds

of black and white pictures I would slowly see a pattern, and that pattern pointed to Altoona even though the book covers all of the Omaha Road, from Elroy to St. Paul.

As I read the captions under the pictures I began to find a lot of pictures taken in Altoona and the surrounding area. Most of these pictures were taken by a M.P. McMahon, and when I got to page 205 of the book I saw a familiar picture, although I couldn't pinpoint where I had seen it before. There was no location under the photo, just that it was an east bound Viking and that the Omaha Road operated right-handed on double track territory, photo by M.P. Mc Mahon. Something said I had drunk enough from the information fountain, as I shut the book I saw that photo again, only it was colored and had been made into a painting with more of the bridge that the train was passing under included in the painting.

Then the wheels begin to turn, couldn't M.P. Mc Mahon stand for Marshall Patrick Mc Mahon, who was my old girlfriend's uncle? Hadn't his dad been an engineer and wouldn't Pat know his schedule so he could be standing in the right position when the east bound Viking was heading out of Altoona and passing under the overhead? I went right back to page 205 to take a second look, and then I went one page further and I knew the answer was yes.

Page 206 showed an east bound Train 508 speeding along between Hudson and St. Paul in the 1950's. And with the caption is: "Photographer Pat Mc Mahon's father was an Omaha railroader and young Pat nearly followed suit, but settled for an art career instead." M.P. Mc Mahon in italics. I would think that proves that the cover picture on the book *The Omaha Road-Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha* by Stan Mailer is the old Altoona overhead. That plus the fact that everyone that I have shown that cover to thinks the same as me; what do you think?



From correspondence – Roger Rasmussen to Jack Blackburn – July 2009:

Herb [Ruscin] called me [Roger Rasmussen] a few days ago; I baby sat him and two other siblings during my teen years. Knew his Mom and Dad plus uncle very well. He and I have collaborated on several ideas before. We've talked a little about the format for the 1935 and possible 65 maps. We are somewhat in same ballpark. His family- Mom's -Klemstein (sp) are grassroots. His Grandpa was a significant person in Altoona's early history. The Ruscin family came to Altoona in the 40's. His Grandpa Ruscin and I worked together for EC County Highway. He was one of my work mentors. We rode and worked together about once per week. I as the kid and he the boss.

Herb is very interested in Altoona History.

Altoona Clinker City Days

Herb Ruscin

Somehow it just doesn't roll off the tongue like Altoona Cinder City Days, but then if you go to the dictionary and look up the definition of each, they really are fairly similar:

Cinder: Any matter, as coal or wood, burned but not reduced to ashes.

Clinker: A hard mass of fused stony matter formed in a furnace, as from impurities in the coal.

According to the Leland (nee) girls, Arlene and Jo, their mother won a contest for naming the annual Altoona celebration, but Altoona was called Cinder city a long time before 1968, and I wondered why. So I started asking around, trying to find out specifically why Altoona had that moniker.

Mr. Altoona, Ralph Ely thought it was because the streets and driveways of Altoona residence were paved with the material, and that seemed to make sense, but then one wonders why Altoona had so many ciders that they could pave their street with them.

Hank Harris and John Thurston were of the same opinion, mainly that there were a lot of cinders in Altoona, and when things are in abundance (and free) people tend to find a use for them, but again, why the abundance.

I have been going to the library a lot lately, checking out the books they have there on railroad, trying to glean any information I can on Altoona's glory days during the steam era. It is ironic when you run upon something that you aren't looking for, and I think I have hit the jackpot (twice) by checking out a book titled The Omaha Road -Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha. If you are a railroad enthusiast, this book is one that has to be added to your collection, if it hasn't been already. It has the complete history of the railroad that used to run Altoona, which was later bought up by the Chicago Northwestern. It is chalk full up pictures of just about every engine that was ever run by the Omaha, the changes in cab numbers, and even when it was scrapped. I put it on my Christmas list, and I wilt make sure I don't release this story till I have my copy in my tight little fists, as alas, the book is out of print. If Kathy can't find a copy on ebay, I am seriously thinking of stealing the library copy, as I haven't finished reading it yet, three weeks wasn't enough time.

According to a plot map dated 1927 that I borrowed from Bob Wagner about 1.0 years

ago, the cinder pit was located about a hundred yards east of the roundhouse. Three tracks entered from the east so three engines could purge their fireboxes at the same time. You might think, so what, Altoona had a place for the engines to clean their fireboxes, didn't every depot have such a place? The answer is no, and that is because of design.

If you happen to have a fireplace or a wood furnace in you home, you know that for maximum output of heat that you have to clean out the firebox frequently, otherwise you will not get the heat that you desire. The more debris in the firebox, the less room for fuel and the needed oxygen mix for a hot burning fire. The same goes for the firebox of a steam engine, only the less heat you have, the less horsepower is produced.

So go back about 80 years ago and you are a fireman on a K or I class steam engine. You are headed east going either east toward Oregon, or hanging a right at the Mississippi and heading towards Duluth and Superior. You stop at the base of the Knapp hill to take on water to enable you to make the energy-sapping climb up the steepest hill on the line. As knowledgeable firemen, you know that this is also the spot to purge you firebox of the unwanted clinkers, cinders, and ash. But the taking on of water is a short time event, so as time is of importance, you just dump you waste next to the tracks, so as to finish before the water replenishment is complete. And that is what most firemen did, just dump their waste along the tracks. Now back to the cinder definition.

Definition Number 4. A coal that is still burning, but not flaming. So if you take the cinder out of the firebox, and expose it to the air, you are helping the coal to complete its burn, and that's what happened, thanks to a lot of firemen, they enabled the cinder to finish burning, but not in a firebox. More specifically, they were setting the railroad ties on fire, at the cost of \$140.00 annually. Not only was the cost of replacing the ties upsetting to the Omaha execs, but the lost track use time due to repairs.

When the east and west Omaha's merged, Altoona turned out to be almost exactly half way between St. Paul and Elroy, the two main depots of both lines. So if they were going to have a designated spot for the official cleaning of the fireboxes, Altoona was the spot. So the edict was adopted that Altoona would be the only designated spot for engine purging. To make sure the Altoona tracks would not suffer the burns that occurred in Knapp, a special spay system was adopted to extinguish the cinders when the air revived them.

The pit was established in the mid 20's and was 149.5 feet long by 30 feet wide, and was

used till the last steam engine left Altoona in 1957. The pit was covered over in the late 50's.

Barb Duszynski knew why Altoona was called cinder city, because of the pits. But I found it interesting why the pits were in Altoona, and I hope you have found it interesting also. But I found it ironic that I was looking for one thing but found the answer to something else.

Dedication



ISSAAC J. HICKOK

In appreciation of your untiring interest and efforts in behalf of the Youth of our Community, we the graduating class of 1958 affectionately dedicate our book to you.

Your understanding and guidance in making our Youth Center a reality exemplifies your willingness to contribute to and cooperate with the young people of our Community.

This token of our esteem is our way of saying, 'Thanks to you, Ike!'

Ike

By Herb Ruscin

Dodge city had its cop called Wild Bill Hickock, Altoona had its own Hickok, but his name was Ike. He might not have been famous like Wild Bill, but he will always be remembered for the way he performed his job, and by the way he treated the young people of Altoona who were in their teens during his watch. I don't think he had a deputy while he was chief, but then that was back during the 50's when Altoona didn't have a bank, and the law breaking was done mostly by teens who weren't aware yet of the lines between right and wrong. He carried a gun, but I can't remember noticing it like the cannons the police wear now. I doubt that he ever used it because I can't remember a lot of law breaking when he was chief.

He drove a 1954 Buick two tone, light blue over just a little darker blue. It had a siren on the front driver's side fender that was shaped like an elongated acorn. That was the extent of the markings that would tell you that it was a police car. I am sure it was his own private vehicle, as it was always at his residence at 628 1st Street East in Altoona. But when he was leading the fire truck on a fire run that elongated acorn seemed to make twice the noise of the siren on the fire truck. And Ike was always leading the way, and that was probably because of the communications web. The fire call would go into the railroad depot because of their radio system. They could call Ike on their radio and I believe they started the fire alarm

also. Everything seemed to revolve around the depot because they could get a hold of Ike, and he in turn would meet the truck and tell them where they were going.

The first time I had personal contact with Ike was through little league. We were having a Saturday practice at the little league field and Ike drove by slow and pulled over. It didn't raise a lot of eyebrows at the time, maybe none of us had anything to feel guilty about. We were practicing bunting this Saturday morning, and not having a good time of it. A few of the guys had gotten hit on the fingers when they stuck the bat out to bunt the ball. Ike stood their for a while watching, and as the line shortened to my turn he walked up to the plate. I was up next, and not relishing the fact that my fingers might end up smashed trying to bunt the ball. He came up, took the bat out of my hand, and commenced to show me how to draw my fingers up the bat after bending my fingers behind the bat before I moved them up the bat into a batting stance. I guess I thought at the time that maybe Babe Ruth showed him how to bunt. But then maybe he did because our team got real good at the bunt, and when ever I thought of using that trick to get on base I would remember him showing me how to do it, and I usually laid a good bunt and got on first.

I only had one official run in with Ike. It started out innocently enough, a bunch of guys behind the Methodist Church located one 1st Street West. A Saturday afternoon with a fresh snow, we were looking for some excitement, or more clearly stated, something to throw the fresh packed snow at. Someone mentioned that none in the group could possibly hit the round stained glass

window high up in the back of the church. I learned a lesson about dares that day. When you are the biggest kid in the group (I was with the Squire boys and a couple Larson boys, all younger than me) maybe you should remember you might be able to do something they know they can't accomplish. I guess maybe I thought I couldn't reach that high with my snow ball, so I packed one and let it fly. There was a round circle in the middle of the round window, and that is right where my snowball went through the stained glass. I stood there looking at the window that was now just a hole in the building. I turned to say something on the order that I didn't think I could do what I had just done. But I was talking to myself as everyone had scattered, no one was left to admire my handy work. So I just walked slowly home.

I kind of figured that wasn't the end of it. The Squires lived right across from the church, and the Larson's were only a block away. It was Saturday, so church would be happening the next day. I guess I knew I would get busted, and I did. It didn't happen that day, and I even made it through Sunday, and then Monday, and by Tuesday night I thought I might have just pulled it off. But after supper Tuesday as I was doing the dishes there was a knock at the door. I went and answered it, and there stood Ike. He asked me if he could come in, I told him yes. He asked me if I had thrown a snowball through the Methodist church stained glass window, and I told him yes. He then said something that made my blood run cold, he told me to get my coat as I had to come with him. As I got my coat, I couldn't believe I was going to jail, I was only 11. We headed for the city auditorium where his office was, but we took a

turn on 1st and headed for the Methodist church. The lights were on and there were a half dozen cars parked in front of the church. When I realized what was going on I think I would have preferred 20 years in the slammer.

We walked into the church and up to the front. There was a table set up right under where the stained glass window used to be, and there were four men and three women sitting at the table. The hole was covered with a sheet of plywood to keep out the cold. I just stared at that plywood and waited for the hammer to fall. They asked me questions on the order of how much did I think that window was worth, and how was I going to pay for it. After they answered their own question and told me how much a new window would cost I realized I could answer a question they didn't ask, how long would it take me to pay them back, the age 40 or 50 came to mind.

I was pretty close to tears when they stated that they had a solution to the problem. They realized that my family couldn't afford to purchase a new stained glass window, and that it would take me a long time to earn the money to do so. But they believed that I was at fault and should do a penance for not coming forward and admitting to what I had done, even though it was accidental. Because the snow had caused the damage, they figured that the snow would be my mode of penance. If I agreed that it was a fair solution, they would forgive my dept if I would shovel their sidewalk every time an inch or more of snow fell on it. It should be mentioned that the Methodist church is on a corner lot, so I had a lot of shoveling to do, not only because of the length of the sidewalk, but I don't remember getting as much snow as that year. But I

did hold up my end of the bargain, and was grateful that was all the penalty I had to pay. I somehow think that Ike had a lot to do with working out that arraignment. He knew I didn't break that window on purpose, but I did need a lesson in accountability, and I did learn from that experience, and to this day I am ready to stand up to anything that I must be accountable for.

The story goes that Ike was counting out fine change one evening when his heart gave out. I didn't go to the funeral even though it was at St Mary's. But I sat out in our garage and listened to the music from the church, and cried. I had already lost a grandpa by this stage of my life, and I hadn't cried then. I guess I figured grandpa was old and that the eventual wasn't far off, so when it happened, it wasn't a shock. I guess what bothered me about Ike was the fact that it was so unexpected and when he died a lot of good passed with him.

I never thought I would see a cop like Ike again. The men that replaced him were good men, but not like Ike. I was proven wrong right after I got out of the Navy in 1970. The newest chief of the Altoona police department stopped to say hi one sunny July day when I was putting a coat of wax on my Mustang, and his name was Dave.

10/27/03

ISAAC HICKOCK- THE LAWMAN WITHOUT A GUN

By Roger Rasmussen

Wild Bill Cody was famous for shooting! He was a great marksman! He was also known as Wild Bill Hickcock. Altoona had its own sheriff, cop if you must, and I seldom saw Ike with a gun or a club. He didn't need one. His quiet demeanor, his soothing words, his capacity to unnerve the most difficult situations, including a few where I was involved as a teenager, his unswerving commitment to never arresting a person unless there was no resolution, and his dedication to the daily personal life of each resident, especially teenagers, rests in my mind as his greatest accomplishments. He was our peace officer; while he wore a badge and uniform, as a youth I thought of Ike as one of my dearest friends. I gave him lots of reasons for not being my friend too!

I agree with Herb's documentation on Ike and I would add that 100's of other youth, now senior citizens, would second our thoughts, feelings, and appreciations on this giant of a man who quietly but with assuredness patrolled the streets of Altoona during some difficult times.

Drunkenness was not an unknown attribute near the taverns on Spooner and 1st Street East nor in the railroad yards of the CNW Railroad. It was common knowledge, and my eyes and memory will attest to the frequency with which I encountered men, but periodically women too, who were intoxicated. Altoona did not have more than its share of these-Fall Creek, Augusta, Fairchild, almost every railroad town, had their share too. Since I spent most of my teen years walking the streets of Altoona, between the Dairy Bar, D.L's Gas Station, Looby's, the Auditorium, and one of the two restaurants, Mooney's or the 400 Club, it was easy to encounter those men who enjoyed the bottle. Times could be tough, especially during WWII, and those frequent lay-offs where unemployed men had little to do but wander and wonder. It was during those frequent lay-off times, the early 1950's that Ike and his "Barney Fife" sidekick George Hoff, kept peace in Altoona.

Ike was not one to give tickets for speeding, drinking, or bad behavior even though many of my relatives deserved such. George, on the other hand, didn't mind giving a speeding ticket now and then. I heard once that he threatened to give his Dad a ticket, but I never confirmed it. I knew these men because they allowed me, and others too, to ride with them during their duty tour. This was especially true with George who worked weekends while Ike was off duty or on vacation; on that point, I don't remember Ike ever taking a vacation. I suppose he did! George, on the other hand, worked most weekends during the early 1950's. I enjoyed riding with him on Saturday nights for it was then that we patrolled "lover's lane" - Wilson Drive and Lake Altoona area. George loved to catch "lovers"; we would both have flashlights and we would drive slowly, without lights on, until we saw the car. Quietly we would sneak-up and with one movement shine the lights into the car. Most of the people in the car I knew; they were not young people always. Some were my friends. Once viewed, they became either my friends or they avoided me. I wondered, years later, why some people shunned me!

Well, it seems as though some members of my family enjoyed the fruit of the vine and so Ike periodically made a trip to my home; sometimes he brought a member home who couldn't walk straight, and some time he came to check on me- why I had bothered to try and steal watermelon from Mr. Peterson's garden; of course, I was guilty, along with six of my buddies. Paying the \$15 fine to Ike, who gave it to Bruce, wasn't nearly as bad as the fact that we failed to get even one melon. Hurting more was the fact that we had to wade through two swamps upto our waist to avoid being caught. Ike

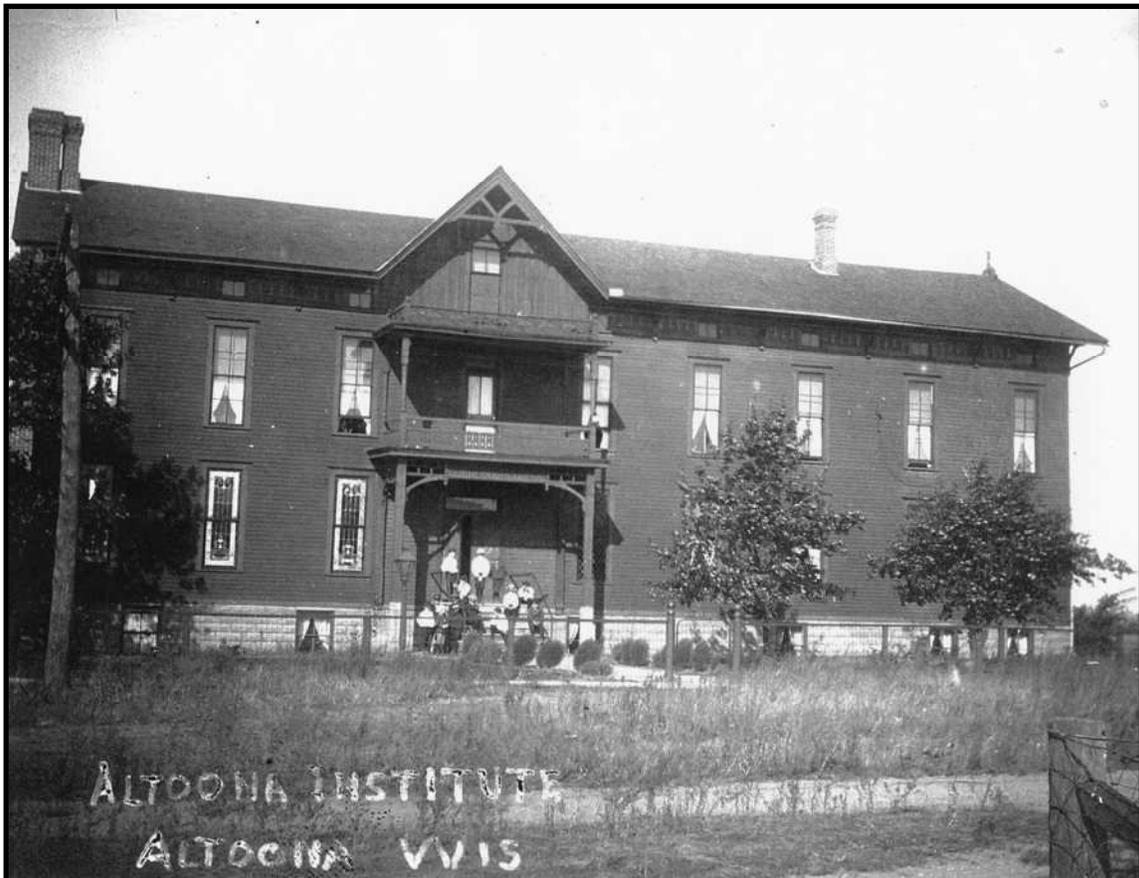
only asked once: "Roger were you at...and he never had to finish the sentence—YES! " I was guilty more than once. I paid only once!.

Ike Hickock was no lawman; he was a peace -keeper whether that involved what we now call "family disturbances" or if it meant helping teenagers keep out of trouble. Ike believed the job of a cop was prevention first and punishment only when nothing else would work. I never saw Ike arrest a person during my many nights with him. He never arrested a member of my immediate or wider-family, even though there were many times he should have. Altoona never got rich off of Ike's arrests.

Ike Hickock, as Herb Ruscin notes, made a difference in the lives of youth in Altoona, and as the picture notes, his dedication to their welfare was so richly known and expressed by the simple statement in the school annual of 1958—" your understanding and guidance" ! I would add- " your acceptance of us as young kids and your commitment to our well-being" to his monument, for as Herb would say, "what could we have done to deserve such a friend"? The peace trees planted in Ike's memory ,by school kids, have grown into strong towering signs of the healthy nature of a small town called Altoona, just as we, the youth of the 1950's, have grown into healthy citizens of our respective communities. Thanks to guys like Ike Hickock, his dream for us has been fulfilled because he helped us develop into worthy citizens." Everything good that goes around comes around in future generations." We thank you Ike for making the difference and being the difference in our lives. Every generation and every town is blessed with quiet disciples: "The Lord has a way of matching the needy with the givers." Ike was a giver!

The Principal's Office
By Herb Ruscin

In The Seventh Annual Year Book for St. Mary's Academy and High School there is a picture of the old railroad hotel as it looked in the 1914-15 school year as a boarding school for girls. If you remember the old school when it was St. Benedict's Boy School you will remember how imposing it was with the double wide 7 step entranceway with the double library type doors opening into the grand foyer which used to be the foyer when it was a railroad hotel in the late 19th century. You may also remember the part of the building that jutted out over the steps that was the principal's office and general typing office area. This office and typing room was only an outdoor porch over the entranceway in the 1914-15 yearbook picture. The Benedictine nuns purchased the school in 1915 and had the porch enclosed and the roof raised to enhance the third floor as part of the building renovations. It was said that by 1936 St. Mary's was one of the most attractive buildings in Altoona.



As imposing as the entrance was it was the overhang that worried me, as I had visions of that part of the building that hung out over the steps falling down and squishing me like a bug just when I was under it. I had unrealistic fears like that when I was young, maybe because of an overactive imagination. When we lived in Washington State at Bremerton, my dad worked at the Navy shipyards. He worked on the aircraft carrier USS Shangri-La, and when the flight deck alterations were complete the yards had a family day. All the yard workers could bring their family on board the Shangri-La for the family members to see the ship. I was five at the time and terrified to walk up the gang way to board the ship. There were small gaps between the wooden slats and I was afraid that I would slip through into the water. If that wasn't bad enough when the rest of the family walked over to the edge of the flight deck to see how high the ship sat out of the water, I got on my belly to crawl the last six feet, afraid that I would fall off the edge of the ship.

Now combine my fear of the building falling on me with the fact that it is the first day of school (for me) and I am starting in a different school in the first grade in October. I had attended Altoona's Kindergarten the year before, but then in October we moved to Eau Claire's west side, where Kindergarten wasn't offered, so I sat out the rest of the year. Then I started first grade at St. James only to be pulled out when dad bought the house across the street from St. Bens. Three schools in 14 months and I wasn't even half way through first grade yet, could things get any worse?

Why yes they could if you really want to know. We had made it through the front door without the front part of the building falling on mom and me. But then I took in the hugeness of the grand foyer and another set of double steps leading to the second floor. There was a landing 3/4 of the way up the stairs, and on that landing sat the biggest grandfather clock I had even seen, probably the only grandfather clock I had seen. Surely that clock could fall over as I ascended the stairs, and squish me like a bug, it just wasn't my day. But we made it up the long staircase past the clock, up the steps from the landing, and all my fears dissipated, I was safe, nothing to worry about, right? Wrong.

We had to get to the principal's office for mom to register me, and I somehow thought that front office of the principal hung out over the steps. Ah, that part of the building hadn't fallen because it had waited till I was in it, so I could fall with it. Mom had to drag me across the threshold of the office and if she hadn't had a hold of my hand I am sure I would have bolted for

home. I was momentarily safe, until I met eyes with the principal of St. Benedicts Boy School!

Do any of you remember Sister Ildephonse? When you are only in first grade, six feet is a long way up, and Sister Ildephonse was as close to six feet if not taller. Add the extra height of the wimple she wore and she looked closer to 7 feet tall. But she reassured me by coming up and shaking my hand and mom's too. We sat down and she welcomed us to the school, the parish, and the city. She was gentle spoken and I think I took my first breath in ten minutes. As we sat in the two chairs she offered us she began to relate to mom the requirements of the parents that were enrolling their children at St. Ben's; tuition, lunch and daily milk prices, PTA, and etc. As I sat there getting bored my eyes and mind wondered about the room. I could see by the lack of windows in the part of the office we were in and that my fears of the building breaking off with me in it were unfounded. The part of the office we were sitting in was definitely over solid ground and it encompassed a desk that Sister Ildephonse was sitting at, placed to the right of the room to allow passage to the dangerous part of the office, that hung out over nothingness. There were two chairs that mom and I sat on, and a small china closet between the chairs and the library doors, and the china closet omitted a slight odor that wasn't entirely unpleasant. To our left on the wall was a large picture of St. Benedict who I was unfamiliar with, but would get to know very well after 8 years at St. Ben's. I could see in the back part of the room which was surrounded by windows that was the area that things got done in. Papers and a typewriter and what looked like a million red pencils (for marking purposes I marked) were arranged to delve out A's, B's, C's, and hopefully not D's and F's. This area might determine if I would progress from one grade to another, but my mind wasn't on that thought, not really. What was that smell, that wonderful smell, the one associated with education? And it was at about that time that I left my thoughts and joined in on what the Sister was talking about; the china closet, and what it contained: any tool needed to get a good education, and at a small nominal price, just over the price purchased price from the vendor. I would learn the contents of that cabinet in depth over the next 8 years, and I really do think it was my favorite part of St. Bens; except for the front door when summer vacation arrived.

Let's take a mental inventory to see if my memory serves me right. You couldn't express you thoughts or take a pop quiz (on a half piece of paper torn diagonally in half as not to waste paper- shown to you by Sister Mary Jane-the proper way to fold the paper and crease it before making the tear) unless you had a Big Chief tablet, of the thick line variety. It was easily

identified because of the bright red cover with the line drawing of a very brave looking Indian chief, cost, 25 cents. I always saved the picture of the chief when the tablet was used up, and although I didn't know what to do with them also save the stiff card board backing.

Although the paper was one of the contributing smells of the china closet, the next two were the strongest of the combined smell. The Pink Pearl eraser was probably the strongest odor in the closet, price 5 cents. I was always careful to just use the sharp edge of the eraser and try and keep the edge on the edge. But I was a mistake maker, so in my career as a grade schooler, went through many erasers, probably two or three dollars worth. One can not keep an edge on the edge when the frustration factor is mixed in with the urgency of getting it right.

I could dictate a novel on the next most aromatic tool enclosed in the closet. Besides being the most colorful of useful tools they also dictated your family's monetary standing, the more money your family had the bigger the box of Crayolas you could afford. I came from a box of 12 priced size family, just your basic colors plus a couple of combinations of said basics. I do remember advancing to the 24 count variety box with double the color combinations, but I think that bonanza came from some birthday money that was wisely diverted from the penny candy counter down at Kopliens. I never did graduate to the 48 color box, the box that always sat proudly on Georgeann Becker's desk. She had finesse when using her many colors, she didn't press hard like I did to get the darkest and brightest colors out of the crayons. And I always appreciated the fact that the sisters never did offer the 64 crayon box with the built in sharpener. Surely that was the mark of decadence and waste, and I am glad no one had the chance to wipe those adjectives in our faces.

Running next in the odor race was the number 2 and number 3 unsharpened pencils and I think that attributed to the wooded shaft that the lead was incased in, although I do have to admit to the lead having its own unique smell, and taste also. They sold for two cents and were probably my most purchased product out of the office china closet. I almost felt a tinge of sadness when mom bought me a ten pack of pencils at Woolworth's as that package cut down on my trips to the office.

My trips to the office were many during my years in the first and second grade on the second floor. But when I graduated to the third grade and went down stairs to the corner room that faced the railroad tracks, I found my supplies trip to the office grow less frequent, I guess I had turned a corner and become more dependent on quantity buying at the dime stores.

The enrollment visit was the only formal sit-down I had at the office. It was always a threat if Sister Mary Jane or Sister Claries couldn't handle you. That never happened though, as those two ladies were good at what they did, and by the time you were past their tutelage you were a pretty good student, or had transferred to Altoona public school (sorry Terry-no offense).

In later years I would sweep the principal's office and empty the waste basket, and somehow the room had shrunk in size. I would gaze out the windows at our back yard and notice how close it seemed. That was the area of the yard where I had learned the saltier language I was never suppose to acknowledge that I knew. And as I remember as I watched my little brothers playing how every word they spoke could be heard in the office. Now I realize what those frowns that Sister Ildophonse had cast my way on Monday mornings when going to class on the second floor. Remembering some of the words it was surprising that she didn't grab me and run me into the bathroom for a good tongue washing. I guess I should be thankful that I wasn't on her turf when those words were spoken.

Sister "I" was the principal of principal's; she was a princess - a noblewoman of the highest magnitude. Normally, the noun principal referred to a masculine leader of a school. Sister I was an important woman in my life. Thanks my sister!

The Train Barn

By Herb Ruscin

I had never been in the building before, but it seemed vaguely familiar, and I couldn't figure out why. The height of the ceiling seemed to be part of the answer, as the different niches varied in height seeming to draw the eye to heaven. I guess that was an architectural trick to accent the building. I had never been in a cathedral before unless you could consider the one in La Crosse one. But this was Barcelona Spain and the huge structure that reached towards the heavens was probably three hundred years old. It was Easter Sunday in 1969 and we had been on the Mediterranean cruise since November. We hadn't been to church a lot even though we had spent more than half the cruise time in port. But after ten or twelve days at sea church was the last place we wanted to visit. A building that contained alcohol and young ladies was more favorable to a church. But then it was Easter, and we had missed going to church at Christmas, so church was chosen as the place we wanted to be, if only for an hour. The bars would be open after church had let out.

We usually went on liberty in a group, mostly made up of the same guys we worked with on the ship, operations in our case. Only a couple guys were Catholic, but that didn't seem to matter as shown on the faces of my friends as they gawked at the tremendous size of the structure. They too had probably not been in a building that covered that much ground and enclosed that much space. But I struggled with the feeling of recognition and it began to bother me, as *deja vu* was a new word to me, but I knew I had never been there before.

Then came the answer to my question sparked by the noise of a pigeon flapping his wings to move from one perch to another in the upper reaches of the highest tower of the church. When I heard the flapping I was transposed to the inside of the Altoona railroad roundhouse and remembered that echoed sound of the pigeons there flying away from us as we caused them to seek refuge in the rafters. We cut through the round house often on our trek to Altoona beach. The old building offered a spot of shade during our journey and often we could see furry critter scurrying towards a spot of safe haven. It smelled of odors that were exotic and strange, smells we hadn't smelled before and in some cases would take years of experience to identify. Spilt oil soaked into the cement, remnants of coal and soot, and the bleached scent of steam baked brick.

At that point in my young life in was the biggest building I had ever been in, and we were traveling through what amounted to be just a third of the total size. That part was the southeast corner that was actually the newest part of the structure. It was separated by tracks that ran between the

smaller part of the roundhouse (which was no longer in use) and the larger section which still was being used. We would enter a door on the southwest end of the building and enter into a section that had 7 bays for steam engines that entered through huge doors that accessed the round table set in the middle of the complex, or could enter from the end opposite the turntable if the engine was too long for the turn table... Each bay had a pit that extended between the tracks and was almost the whole length of the bay. These trenches allowed workers easy access to the workings under the engines. They were deep enough for a person to stand in them and I think if some of the smaller boys had been put in the trench they wouldn't have been able to get out without help. But we must have been pretty good big brothers as we never did that to the younger ones.

The huge doors to the entrance facing the round table sported many windows to allow natural lighting in enable light for working on the steam engines. There was an elevated section of the roof in the middle of the roof that followed the radius of the building. This elevated section was also almost solid glass to allow more lighting for the interior of the building. The abundant part of the roundhouse was about 17,000 square feet and the newest part of the building, being added to the 1930's. It was necessitated because the older part of the complex could not handle the new "H" and "I" class steam engine. These larger engines were meant to travel longer distances and haul heavier loads which helped destine them to the scrap heap when the diesel came into its own and could to a better job in both departments at a smaller size that used less fuel.

The whole round house took up 257,477 square feet, 76,524 of the footage being enclosed. The oldest section covered over 48,000 feet, the new section 17,000 as mentioned before. The machine shop used for fabricating new part for the variety of engines took up 9800 square feet, and there was over 1500 feet of office space. The center open section sported a 90 foot long turn table and when engines grew to over that length they had to be brought into the 5 new bays built to accommodate them from the outside of the building complex. The tracks leading into the roundhouse featured a sand pit for the traction tubes used on the engines for traction, a cinder pit for purging the cinders and clickers in the engine boilers, and a water tower to take on water while the clinkers were being cleaned out of the boilers.

The oldest part of the roundhouse was completed in December 1881 and had 20 stalls that could accommodate steam engines up to 75 feet in length. Two of those bays were separate of the rest of the building to allow engines to access the turn table. In 1910 the roundhouse was renovated and five larger stalls were added to accommodate the larger engines that had to be serviced. These

stalls were erected on the south eastern part of the building and attached to the two stalls that were separate of the main structure. In 1855 the American Type engine was only a little over 52 feet long and weighed in at 90,000 pounds. By 1942 the T1 class was 122 feet long and weighed in at 954,000 pounds. The giant strides in size and different models led to many inconsistencies when repairs were needed. With so many different types and sizes of engines there was no consistency in parts required for repairs. Most parts had to be fabricated by hand, and this led to long turnover times when repairs were necessary.

The first diesel came to Altoona in 1946 and was used as a switch engine to make up trains in the yard. But the steam engines days were numbered as the diesels were perfected and beefed up to haul larger loads with less fuel... And by 1956 the last steam engine left Altoona and was completely replaced by the diesel engine. Shortly after the seven stalls numbered 19 through 25 that were separate from the older complex were torn down, this being the section we used to walk through- In 1966 number 9 through 20 were torn down leaving the last section of the roundhouse that was dismantled along with the turn table in the early part of this decade.

I have heard different versions of how many round houses remain, some say 2, other 3. But the bottom line is that number is one less by the Altoona round house being ripped down. Instead of jumping in you car and driving to Lake Road in Altoona, you will now have to drive out to northeastern Pennsylvania to Scranton. People with vision had Congress establish Steamtown National Historic Site back in 1986. There is a working turn table and 31 stalls that have been refurbished and exhibit cars and engines put on display.

I have that story on this historic site in a three ring binder. I might make the trip out there some day to walk through their roundhouse and climb on their engines and through their passenger car displays. After that story in my three ring binder is a picture of an artist rendition of what the Altoona roundhouse could look like, complete with a familiar green and yellow 400 train parked along side. Even though that site should only be about 3 miles from where I live it doesn't exist, only on paper. Maybe like the old H and I class steam engines, I too am a dinosaur that has seen its better days. But I can remember a couple of nephews that used to go bananas whenever a train went by. And like the dinosaurs, when the trains are all gone, maybe then they will be lamented for their absence.

On Bended Knees

By Herb Ruscin

It is hard to believe that it was almost 50 years ago since it happened, but in fact it is 49 years to that date, June 3, 1960. It was the last day of school and although he was only 4, he was as happy as all the others that school was out for the summer. They were celebrating their new found freedom by racing around the yard, and Tommy was doing his best to keep up with the bigger boys. Nellie Brost was over and she and mom had settled into seats at the kitchen table to share the gossip of the neighborhood.

I was only 12 years old, but somewhere along the line, mom had let me sit in on the coffee clutches she had with her friends, Nellie, and Barb Olson. I picked up on a lot of things that guys shouldn't do in regard to women, so maybe these sessions are one of the reasons I have been married so long. As I sat down at the end of the kitchen table facing Spooner Avenue, I had a view of the traffic as it headed towards Eau Claire. I was a car hound when I was a teenager, and pretty much knew who everyone was by the kind car they were driving. I also had an eye for the newer cars and always looked forward to the unveiling of the new year model that came out in September of the year before that of the car.

I had listened to mom and Nellie for about a half hour when I noticed one of those new models that Dodge had put out called a Dart. The rounded off fins on the back of the car kind of made it look like a dart, and it had the new double headlights in the front that had come out hi 1958 on some cars. A young guy who lived at Kenny Babbits, on the corner of 2nd street West and Spooner owned it and had pulled up to the stop sign to turn onto Spooner. The Dart was a metallic green two door hard top, a pretty sharp looking car. I had noticed in a couple of times but only in passing, so I kept looking at it as he came up Spooner. As I mentioned, he was a young guy, probably his first new car, and he like to motivate up Spooner Ave.

Bruce was at the front door no more than five seconds after we heard the screeching of rubber tires. The boy's rambunctiousness had spilled out across Spooner, and the boys were making then- way back to the yard when they crossed the street in the path of the Dart. Tommy was the last one across, and a step or two behind the other guys. He almost stayed and waited for the car to pass, but then changed his mind and went for it.

When we all got out on the street, Tommy was lying in front of the Dart and wasn't moving or conscious. The driver was kneeling over him, and the other boys looked on. Grandpa Rucsin was

about a block away running at full speed with his lunch box in his grasp. We all just stood there, not knowing whether we should move him or not, his left leg was bent at an awkward position. For being almost 62 years old, grandpa made it to us in a heartbeat that seemed to last forever. He kept saying "I knew this was going to happen" over and over as he took off his jacket and carefully put it under Tommy head. The older guys suspected they were in trouble for not looking after their little brother, and a couple of them were crying. Nellie had stayed back to call an ambulance when she saw what had happened, and Ike was there almost immediately. He told us not to move him and wait for the ambulance.

As we all stood there in silence I wished the ambulance would hurry, and looked around to give my mind something else to think about. As I looked at the car, I noticed a dent in the hood that was pretty close to the passengers side of the windshield. It looked like someone had taken a cantaloupe and pounded it into the hood to cause a melon sized indentation. This was 1960 and there were no plastic parts on this tank. The steel was all steel and I thought I was going to get sick as I thought of how much force caused the dent. Mom must have noticed the concern on our faces and as the ambulance got there and put Tommy on a gurney and into the ambulance she told us all the go into the living room.

Once we all were together, mom told us to all get on our knees and pray to God that Tommy would not die. She then went out and rode to the hospital with Ike. We were all pretty much crying by then, and I remember Pat starting to say an Our Father, and we all joined in. As I knelt there paying out loud I couldn't imagine life without that happy little guy.

We weren't out of the woods till Sunday, as Tommy was in a coma and had a broken leg. When he finally did come to we were allowed to go up and see him, one at a time. It was scary to see such a small guy in this big bed and his leg was in traction. He ended up being in the hospital most of the summer, and I know it sounds like it wouldn't be that way, but the house was kind of empty without him, even though there were seven of us at the time.

When he finally did get out of the hospital he came home with his leg in a cast that reached up around his waist and down onto the upper part of his other leg. There was a stick that connected the two legs together which enable someone to pick him up using the stick as a type of handle to carry the cast and his other leg, with an arm around his back. This enabled me, Pat, and Rob to carry him to the bathroom and move him around the house being he couldn't walk. This repeated task over the 12 weeks he had the cast on probably led to his knick name "Fat Ass".

It should be mentioned at this point, that when Tommy came home he wasn't the same as before he was hit by the car. Where he had been quiet and shy, now he was boisterous and bossy. He had had a lot of attention at the hospital and brought home more toys than all the rest of us had put together. We were glad we didn't lose him, but got a little tired of him still wanting all the attention. Where there were seven of us and he had just been one of the many, now he wanted top banana billing, and it got kind of old.

So we started to think of ways to get him off his high horse, and you would have to admit, we had the upper hand when it came to that. If he needed to go to the toilet, no problem, we could hardly deny him that necessity. But when he was done, that didn't mean we had to be Johnny on the spot to go in and take him back to where he was before the call of nature. What better way to get him off his high horse than let him sit on the toilet an extra, 5, 10, 15 or even 20 minutes. This retaliation didn't work real well when mom or dad were around. But we really made him squirm when they were gone. And his retort would always be: "If you don't do what I want, I'm going to take my toys and go back to the hospital!" And I think my siblings would agree with the fact that after a while we thought that wouldn't be a bad thing.

When Tommy was up and walking again one leg was a bit shorter than the other, something the doctor said he would outgrow. But so he didn't limp they made up a special shoe for him that was a bit higher than the other. It was just some thickness added to the sole and it enabled him to walk normally. I remember the next year at Easter time Tommy was all dressed up with a shirt and tie, and maybe even a suit coat. He was coming from the living room and between that room and the kitchen there was a crack in the door stoop. As he approached the doorway a tiny luckless mouse struck his head up through the crack. Tommy smashed that mouse good.

I think it is Pat that is always saying it (I don't want to misquote anyone), but he always remarks about at the ages of 48 to 60 how lucky we are, being there are so many of us, that we are still all here. Some day that won't be a fact, and I am not looking forward to that day, no matter which one of us is first to join mom and dad and Andy and Blanche. But no matter what, I am glad the fact that we are all still together wasn't denied us 49 years ago June 3rd.

Who was the man who answered your prayers that day? Jesus; my mentor! (RR)

Too Big For My Britches By Herb Ruscin

When you are a rookie, the world is a scary place, as the unknown can be intimidating and a hard road to travel till you get the information you need; to be cool. Little League was like that for me, and having not played too much baseball I was reluctant to go to tryouts. We didn't play a lot of organized baseball when going to St. Ben's, and dad was on the road a lot, and I didn't have an older brother to teach me. But mom wouldn't hear any of it, after all, weren't all my friends all going out for the newly formed Altoona Little League? Didn't they have some land that would be the new field just for little leaguers? And didn't I know some of the coaches, Mr. Karpe, Mr. Ely, and Mr. Crandell? She would hear none of it, I was going to the tryouts, and she got the signup form herself. I was assigned a number, which I made myself, and if I did as good a job at the tryouts as I did making the number I was to wear, surely I would make the team.

But my inexperience showed, and when the names came out for the teams, my name wasn't there. With more practice, maybe next year was what mom told me, but to myself I thought I couldn't endure the embarrassment, and there would be no next year for me, I would never be good enough, so why even try. All of this I kept to myself, as I knew what mom would say if I verbalized my thoughts, and I was in no mood to hear it. She hadn't been there when I had missed the pop fly's hit to me. She wasn't present when my arm strength, or lack of it was proven from right field. And she never witnessed my fanning the pitches thrown for me to swing at. She just didn't know how bad I was, but then again, she was my mom.

But my guardian angel was watching out for me; him and Ralph Ely. I don't know if it was the same day that the names came out for the teams, I think it was the next day. Mom came to tell me that Ralph had called to ask if I would like to be the bat boy for the team he was coaching. I was embarrassed, but not enough to turn down the position, even if it was just picking up the bat after Al Duszynski or Larry Johnson had smacked one over the fence. But what they didn't tell me was that I would get in some practice time with other kids, time to get better at what I needed to do to tryout for a team the next year.

Catching the returned practice fly's to the out field and tossing the ball to the coach hitting the fly's helped. Filling in for players that were late for practice gave me experience, and probably the best experience was catching for a pitcher who was warming up to be put in as a replacement.

Later I would be a catcher, and this practice made it possible. But the success isn't what I want to talk about, but rather the big head it caused, and the lesson I learned about being too cocky.

I acquired a nickname, not really a good one, as it made fun of something I had never done, hit a homerun; I was known as Homerun Herbie. But by the time I was 12, going on 13 I was the big kid on the block, no longer a rookie, but a seasoned veteran, I even hit a homerun; sooner or later I had to, as I was one of the biggest kids on the team. They called us the Harris Dairy Half Pints, but I thought of myself as a full pint, maybe even a quart, something I would never say out loud. Where I had taken the jokes of the older kids, the snickering and barbs that older kids always dish out, now I was handing them out, and although I was never mean, (or so I thought) it was fun to be giving on the giving end instead of the receiving end of the game.

I came home from a game one night after we had won against a team that wasn't very good, and I was feeling pretty full of myself, I should have known I was in for a come upance, but I didn't see it coming. Mom was sitting at the table when I got home, almost like she was waiting for me, which she was. But I didn't see it; my head was too high in the clouds. She asked me who won, and if I would have a seat, there was something she wanted to talk about; I knew I was in trouble, but didn't know why. She sat there for the longest time, like she had something to say, but didn't know how to word it, it was uncomfortable. She finally asked me to name all the players that were on the Half pints team; and that knocked me for a loop, why did she want to know that?

But I started to think about how I would arrive at a list and not miss anyone, so I started with us older guys, the ones that were playing their last year; me, Vince Wagner, Denny Connell, Mark Ely; then on to the next older guys La Mont Squires, Melvin Pinkert, Dan Ely, Jim Larson, Steve Erickson, Beaver Johnsonand as soon as I said Beaver I knew what this was all about, and I quit reciting the team member names, busted I was. And mom just sat there looking at me as if to say that I had answered the questions showing in my eyes.

She didn't say anything for a long time, she let me stew in my own juices, and she was good at that. And then she finally asked me some questions. She asked how I had felt the day I came home after learning I hadn't made the team. She asked how I had liked taking a kidding from the other players that I was just a batboy, one that didn't even have a number on my uniform. How had I liked shagging every foul ball that had been hit out of the park during

practice, or homeruns retrieved during the games? Even though I had finally hit a homerun (but just one) how did I like the name Homerun Herbie when it meant that I had never hit one. And then she asked how I would like being called Beaver just because my teeth stuck out a little, and then she looked at me for the answers to her questions.

She knew what all my answers would be, so I never did say anything. I felt ashamed for having done what had me feel so bad when others had done it to me. I never did call Doug Beaver again, and I guess I even went so far as to tell some of the other kids to not use that nickname; at least I hope I did. But I learned something from that, and it has stuck with me for all my life; and that would be not to think more of myself than others. It took me a while to figure out how mom found out about the nickname. But more importantly; how did she find out that it was offensive to Doug, but then only a mother could tell you that.

Doug's mother, Barbara Johnson died the second of June this year, and it did take me a while to figure out that Barb had called mom to tell her about it. And of course Doug's mom did know the pain it caused Doug, so she sought out the help of a friend, mom. Barb and mom were friends from childhood and lived close to each other on the east side of Altoona, and their friendship lasted right up till mom left us two and a half years ago. See Barb used to volunteer down at Oakwood, and I remember her telling me about the remembrances of two ladies who used to be little girls. Thanks Barb and thank you mom for all the lessons that you taught me.

Women; hard to live with them and hard to live without them. What would my life had been if I had not had the guidance, support, and comfort of my Mom and her friends-especially Barbara Johnson. It is worth noting that men are the back-half of women; we are often the bud of our own demise. Thank the world for moms- WO/men! (RR)

The Mailman Ladies Daughter

By Herb Ruscin and Roger Rasmussen

When you are young, things should be as they seem, and I was always questioning things that didn't seem to be, as they should. One of the first conundrums I had was when I went to the post office with grandpa Klemstien. I couldn't figure out why when we were going to see the mailman, that the mailman wasn't a man, but rather a woman. Grandpa shot back that she was a mailman lady, and that answered the question, problem solved. The mailman lady of course was Jean Henning, and in my early post office runs she treated me real good. Mom would send me to the post office with a letter in my pocket, only to be taken out by Jean, and four pennies in my mittens, not to be taken off before I got to the post office. Jean would remove the letter, dump the pennies on the counter, and give me a four-cent stamp I could lick that she would stamp. I didn't think there could be a better mailman lady, but then Betty hadn't helped me yet.

When I joined the Navy I became a mailman and worked at a terminal post office in Viet Nam, and later ran a shipboard post office, doing everything that the mailman lady would do in Altoona, maybe even a little more. One of the things I picked up while working in the post office was stamp collecting and its varied collector's collectible habits.

While in the Navy I could satisfy my own stamp needs through the post office I worked out of. It was after I got out of the Navy that I first met Betty and sought her aid it getting the stamps I needed. I collected plate blocks which are a block of four stamps that include a plate block sheet number that identifies the stamp for ordering purposes. Each sheet is actually only 1/4th of the printed sheet, as the sheets are cut into quarters after printing. So each sheet will have four plate block numbers located top right, top left, bottom right, bottom left for each printing. This is called plate block

number location collecting, and even I must admit that it sounds kind of anal, but that's what I was into. When a post office orders a certain number of sheets of a certain stamp, more than likely all those sheets will have the plate block in the same location. So as a collector you have to go to different post offices to find your four different positions, that is why they are so hard to obtain.

When I started to explain this to Betty I thought I would get the same reaction that I had gotten from the postal clerks in other post offices, order what you want, and give the person behind you their turn. But I was telling Betty something that she hadn't known before, and she was sincerely curious and interested. She even went so far as to tell her what positions I needed for different stamps, when she dealt with other post offices she would ask if they had those positions for the different stamps that I needed. Every once in a while I would get a call from Betty telling me that if I wanted to drive to Osseo or Eleva or Fall Creek I could fill a position I needed. I think she enjoyed the hunt almost as much as I did.

So I only dealt with Betty when it came to purchasing stamps for my hobby. I would even let other people go a head of me so I could spend more time talking with her and sharing her sunny personality. Besides stamps she was always asking about my mom, as when Betty was growing up she was a neighbor to the Klemsteins, Elys, Bundts, and Pettiss up on the hill by the water tower. I find it ironic that her and mom's obituaries were in the same issue of the Altoona Star, neighbors till the end.

After Betty retired I hung it up as far as seriously being into collecting stamp, it just wasn't as much fun anymore. You could always anticipate the first day of issue, where the stamp was having its first cancelling, what the stamp commemorated, but when you got down to actually buying, it wasn't as enjoyable. Every once in a while I will buy a sheet that catches me eye when I am standing in line, but that's about it.

Did you notice that all stamps have a sticky back to them, no more little boys able to lick the gum. The post office has also made it impossible to collect block

numbers, as there is no way to tear off four stamp that are self sticking. As I walk through the autumn years of my life I notice how we have lost a lot of the good things that made life enjoyable, and we have really lost something precious with the loss of Betty.

Herb- 12/11/06

Roger's Reply: October 5, 2009

I knew Jean Henning as the ' lady, and I mean LADY, who controlled the mail in Altoona. In the 1940's and 50's mail was not delivered it was retrieved at the post office. Jean either took it out of the general delivery box or, if you were rich enough to afford a mail box, you used your key or combination to secure you own mail. Mail was most often delivered to Altoona twice a day and so twice a day you could make the trip to see Jean. I fell in love with her as a youth. Well, not so much in love, as I admired her business-like demeanor, the fact that she could always remember my name, but more importantly I admired the speed with which she could type on that old Underwood typewriter. I understood that she entered typing competitions and at one time could type over 100 words a minute; correct words that is- once called CWP. Oh how she could type. I knew I would try and master that feat. It took me until age 35 to accomplish it-but I used an IBM Selectric; oh what a difference electricity made.

I was fascinated by Jeans capacity to type, her attention to details, but more importantly the professional manner in which she conducted her work and herself. She was a beautiful person who upheld all of those virtuous qualities we so admire in people who are dedicated to their work and to the service of people. Her kindness was ever-present; I never saw her get mad; firm yes, but not mad. She had many reasons to display anger by our actions and our casual comments. We were youngsters and able to

get our parents' mail; what a thrill, privilege, and honor. We carried it with pride.

Wow, to get a personal letter and to have Jean say, "a letter for you, Roger" was almost heavenly. She served Altoona for more than 20 years and was an example of a professional's professional; she gave beyond the call of duty, and she often took "crap" from people who complained that their mail should have been there by now, and why in &*%\$# couldn't Jean find it? Most often these people had just crossed the street from a liquor refreshment facility and were not in a strong state of mind or a strong physical presence. Needless to say, during my youth, from 5-18, I saw and heard many a drunk give hell to the postal clerks, store clerks, city clerks, barbers, and the cops. Thankfully there were people who appreciated the efforts of clerks like Jean Henning, Hugh Russell, Virginia Walters-Harris, Dean Strong, Cecil Walker, Mrs. Rudolphson, Mrs. Valski, Mrs. Thompson, and dozens of other daily servants who made our life more pleasing and fulfilling.

Jean was succeeded by her Daughter Betty Henning-Hagen who was replaced by her Son Mark. I didn't know Mark, but I knew his parents and especially his Mom Betty. She was two years old than I in school and she was my pal. She and Rosemary Klohs were pals and so I became a sort of male protector of both. It is about Betty that I wish to write because she made a difference in my life in many special ways, but two still stick in my aging mind.

Betty Henning was a Will Rogers; "She never met a person she didn't like, and I never met a person who didn't like her." Well, perhaps there were a few basketball referees where some mutual admiration was adrift. Betty was not her Mom. She was professional and kind, but beneath her surface was a person who was awash with gentleness, sweetness, kindness, and friendliness; beyond anyone person I have ever met. She was not the town beauty; but she was gorgeous! My senior year I was the senior prom king and until the last minute I had not select a queen. I had asked Shirley but she had accepted another invitation. In desperation I asked Mr. Pederson if I could

ask Betty; she had been out of school almost two years by then. He smiled and said, "Roger you need to select from someone now in school." Betty would have been my choice regardless. I once told her that story and I thought she would cry; she did!

For survival and fulfillment of the necessary task required to keep a city functioning effectively, dedicated people are necessary; however, dedication is only one of the essential qualities. Equally important is compassion and understanding for those less fortunate, less able, less qualified, economically poor, and physically needy. Betty Jean and her Mom Jean Henning were anchors in my home town, Altoona. They did their job without fanfare, little recognition, and they did it with a gentleness not often found in civil servants today. Life was easy, simple, fun, entertaining, meaningful, exciting, and thanks to people like Jean Henning, Betty Henning-Hagen, and Mrs. Rudolphson, Altoona City Clerk for several decades, the youth of Altoona were treated with respect, learned how to give respect, and those of us fortunate to be touched by these women, are much the better because they "cared enough to give their very best" even when we didn't reciprocate.

Thanks Ladies! Your secret admirer!

For a Nickel I Would

Herb Ruscin and Roger Rasmussen

It got so I didn't want to answer the phone for fear that it would be her wanting immediate servicing. It seemed to happen at the most inopportune times, I would just be getting ready to go somewhere, or it was time to eat, or watch my favorite show on TV. I felt sorry for her, so I never told her I wouldn't do it. I guess I thought maybe I was the last person she could count on, and that seemed rather sad to me. I guess I could have pawned her off on Pat or Rob, but then that didn't seem fair, to her or them. So when she called, I responded to her wishes, no matter what the weather might be. Maybe I thought this my way of earning a get out of jail free card, or better yet, go directly to heaven, pass goal and collect \$200.00.

The fact that she called with only 15 or 20 minute left before the store closed made it a do it now task. If I was eating, I couldn't finish because of the time factor. I had to leave, go to her house and get the list, and then get to the store before Leo the Lip closed, and he was always punctual about closing. If I got there and he was outside the building, I was out of luck, and so was H.P., no pork chops for her that evening. And you know whose fault it was, mine.

When I first started doing this task for her, I had tried to talk her into letting me do her grocery shopping at Koplin's. Everything looked fresher at this store than at Looby's. But apparently H.P. thought different, that Leo had fresher meat and produce. Maybe that was true, but there was something about Leo that didn't set well with me. Maybe he didn't like me and that was the reason that he was never very friendly towards me, or maybe that's just the way he treated everyone. I can't ever remember seeing him smile, and

he seemed to say as little as possible as if each word he said cost him. He was a big man, over six feet tall, but he was also physically large, maybe he had to eat the food he didn't sell that day rather than see it go bad. Even though I had a list, Leo seemed to know what was on it. He would usually be cutting the center cut pork chops when I walked in the door, and center cut pork chops were always on H.P.'s list. Maybe she called him in case I lost the list, and maybe she gave me the list to make sure Leo didn't forget anything. I guess between the two of us we always got it right, as I never had to make a second trip to the store to correct a mistake. I would hand him the note, he would hardly glance at it though, and start putting the items on the list on his counter. When he had completed the list he made out a bill on a little pad that required a piece of carbon paper. Before he stuck the carbon paper between the two sheets of the pad, he did something that caused me to call him Leo the Lip. He would wet his thumb so he could separate the two sheets of the pad to insert the carbon paper. And he wet his thumb by striking it on his thick lower lip, hence Leo the Lip. He would then write down all the items he had place on the counter top, total the price, and have me sign it. He then tore off the original and place it in a bag with the items he had gathered and handed me the paper bags.

There was something that struck me about Leo, although he was a big man, his voice didn't match his phisyque. It was a high pitched whine, almost that of a woman. And now that I think about it, maybe he wasn't real proud of that high voice, so he didn't use it any more than he had to. And then again, maybe he didn't think I would be interested in anything he had to say. When I think about it a little further, I am probably the same age Leo was when this story took place, and I guess young people aren't that interested in what I have to say today either.

I said that I never refused to go to the store for H.P., but I came pretty close one Christmas Eve, and of course she called right at the last minute. But it was Christmas Eve, and I didn't want to be a Scrooge, so I went. There were a lot of items on the list, and I ended up with two bags almost full. When I left the store, Leo wished me a Merry Christmas with that high pitched voice of his, and I swear he gave me a little smile. When I got to H.P.'s, she hurriedly looked in the bags and stated that Leo had messed up her order. She then gave me the nickel she always gave me for the errand, and then picked up the two bags of groceries and handed them to me, and told me to take them home and give them to mom. She would deal with Leo after Christmas. Those two bags of groceries ensured a nice Christmas for the Ruscin family that year as if my memory serves me right, this was the first Christmas we spent without dad.

The next year I graduated from eighth grade. I learned that I had a scholarship for Regis. I know that this not because of my grade point average, but rather because I couldn't afford to pay the tuition. I never asked her, but I am almost certain that H.P. put up that scholarship. And if it was her, I guess maybe I owe any success in life to her, just because I didn't say no to a lonely old lady.

10/11/03

Roger's Commentary: October 1, 2009

Having now read Herb's comments, story, about Leo and Horse Power- for that is what the HP stood for - I am sitting in the Atlantis Casino in Reno awaiting the train that will take three Altoonites to Sacramento and then back to Reno. We made the trip to Reno not so much for the chances, but to enjoy

the beautiful 120 mile trip aboard the AMTRAK and because we grew-up the children or grandchildren of railroad workers. Evelyn Kolkind-Lampman's Dad was a mechanic on the CNW and worked for more than 20 years. Garold Lampman's Grandfather worked on the CNW, and I'm sure somewhere along the line Garold's Dad Lawrence may have worked there too. Regardless, Garold's family lived closer to the railroad tracks than any other family. During our teen years we played basketball at Lampmans until midnight using the spotlights from the CNW. Somehow, someone, seemed to refocus those lights just right so that when it got dark-those spotlights lite-up Garold's back yard. For 10 teenage boys, those lights were a god sent-especially when we were not able to convince Martin to let us into the old auditorium.

My connection with the CNW goes beyond my Father Percy who worked for the CNW off and on for some 25 years, either as a track repairman, working in the Ice House or Coal Shed, both of which were on CNW property but managed by Shipley Company. My Uncle Bill held three different jobs on the CNW for more than 35 years starting at age 16 as a Call Boy and ending in 1993 as a clerk. My Uncle Waldemore worked for some 30 years and held similar jobs as his Brother Bill. Their father and my Grandfather William Glassbrenner was a "car toad", checking the physical condition of box cars and assisting with switching of cars to create a tram. Four great-uncles, Herman and Adolph Heuer, George Thurston. John, and Fred Thurston all spent their careers on the CNW. By my estimate my Rasmussen-Thurston-Heuer family dedicated more than 200 years of service to the CNW. So when I say " I am a railroader-I am a RAILROADER in the truest sense of the word. Now with all of that said, let me get back to Leo Looby, the focus of this story.

The morning after, Saturday, November 1, 1951, the great Altoona High School fire, I was lamenting the loss at Woodington's Gas Station when Leo

crossed the street and engaged DL in a conversation. I knew Leo as that giant of a man who managed/owned the meat market- one of three grocery stores on the same street-Lynn Avenue-all within a block of each other. We shopped at Emanuels/Kopplins not Looby's- well that is unless they would give my Dad no further credit and then we would turn to Leo's for help. The outcome of their conversation was the start of my first real part-time job. I started working at 12:00 that day for Leo. My wages were 25 cents per hour; I could eat anything I wanted at anytime and that included the noon lunch that Leo's wife brought everyday. Her tastefully prepared lunch, it always included tidbits of herring in cream sauce, meant she came to check the receipts and income and to total all individual accounts. It also meant she would take a \$20 bill to use for her card games in the afternoon. I'm not certain we made a profit of \$20 everyday, but she would take that 20 regardless. She would be dressed to kill- precise, predictable- and pretty. She was not huge like Leo, but she made me feel and look small.

Leo was another story; he neither took lip from anyone, and few ever gave him lip, but he had an answer for most of what was wrong with the world. My nickname was "alibi Ike", especially when I found excuses for not wanting to work. Leo disliked President Eisenhower, Ike as we was called, because he was a Republican, but more importantly because Ike found excuses for doing nothing. Right or wrong, I learned early at age 15 not to look for excuses to cover my laziness. He taught me a work ethic that I still maintain today. It is 4:00 a.m. in the morning and I am writing this story. I'm 73 and I could easily rest longer; John and Jack are demanding this article be finished by October 15,2009, and I am one week away from my deadline.

Leo taught me a work ethic, but he equally taught me that the customer may be wrong, but always right; that is, if you lose the customer over a few

pennies, you've lost them for the many dollars too. To Leo each penny was precious. As the chewing gum maker Wrigley wrote, "made my millions one penny at a time" so too Leo would say, "each dollar is little more than 100 pennies." Leo created my savings attitude. Retired for some 16 years now, thanks to Leo, I earn more each year than he earned in his lifetime.

Some Altoona residents avoided Leo because he lived in Eau Claire and not Altoona. By hiring me, Leo tried to be connected to Altoona beyond his store. My large family, all 11 of us, ate lots of food; Leo wasn't dumb, he could use our business rather than his competitors. Our agreement; for 25 cents per hour and all I could eat, he would give me all of the beef roast still standing, actually sitting, in the meat counter at the end of the workday on Saturday, actually 5:00 when we closed. That meant that each Saturday I could take home what was left in the meat counter. Well, Leo wasn't dumb- he wasn't going to leave 20 pounds of meat there. In meat markets then, a few small roasts were displayed, but larger roasts were always cut fresh from the bigger cuts of beef. Pork and chicken were something else. During my several years with Leo I never missed a Saturday of work for I knew I could help feed my family with the meat Leo gave freely. He taught me a real lesson- "never judge a person just by the sound of their voice, or their words." His squeaky voice, his size, his demanding demeanor, his quickness of response to my excuses, or the complaints of customers, these were covers for a kind heart that few Altoona people ever knew.

Leo had no children; the residents of Altoona were children. By the time of the fire, Leo knew my family was poor and my Dad worked hard to make ends meet. Darold knew this even better- he was my mentor-my soul mate. So they made a pack that gave me the job over many older and more qualified boys- Leo and DL eventually admitted this to me when I finished my

first graduate degree. By then they both had retired and it was to be our last real visit. I thanked them for the concern, their kindness, and their compassion; not just for myself, but for the whole City of Altoona.

Both men left their jobs, one a mechanic the other a butcher, with customers owing them thousands of dollars. Leo forgave so many debts that I could buy a nice car today; in 1960- \$7,000 was a lot of money. The same with DL- he once said " I still have more than \$4,000 outstanding-that I'll never collect. Neither of these men ever fathered children of their own. Together they helped raise a community of boys in Altoona by giving them jobs, teaching them a set of values that would guide them for the rest of their lives. No monuments stand recognizing their efforts or successes; they were the foundation upon which a community is build and a citizenry learns that" you receive back in equal portion to that which you give." Darold and Leo were big men, big dreams for us kids, big hearted, yet they were simple, kind, compassionate, and forgiving even when we were stupid; more importantly they both taught me "it is not just what you stand for- it is just as important to know what you stand against." They were pillars of my hometown Altoona, Wisconsin, and I speak for those hundreds of you boys and their families who were fed by Leo and their automobiles serviced and fueled by DL, when I say, "everytown in America could use a few more Leo's and DL's today." How lucky we were and how proud I am for their kindness and guidance. Roger, one of their disciples, and "thanks Herb for your story on Leo", for you too were touched by his giant hands and soft heart.

He Was the Egg Man

By Herb Ruscin and Roger Rasmussen

Even though this is to be the Christmas issue, it is difficult to get in the Christmas spirit when it is only the first week of November. Halloween is gone; Thanksgiving is still a few weeks off, so it is kind of a no man's land as far as finding a theme. Ah, but not so fast e-bay boy, if I remember right, didn't I order a couple of Christmas presents (while the hints were fresh in my mind) just last week? Ah, Christmas shopping season (if you are smart) is upon us, so on with the recollections, which have nothing to do with Christmas, but rather shopping.

Shopping wasn't such a big deal back in the 50's and 60's. If you needed a new pair of shoes, over to the Co-op you went, and away with new shoes you walked. Need a gallon of paint and a brush, off to the Coop you went to get what you needed to color your world, whatever color it might be. The big word in shopping back then was need, if you needed something, you went and bought it.

I don't go to the mall much, unless it is just before closing and I never go on the weekends. People don't go shopping because of a need for anything these days. They go shopping because they need to shop. Oh, maybe they have a trigger thought to get them motivated, "A new pair of shoes would be good." But I don't think most people shop for things they need. It is their way of paying themselves for working hard all week, waiting on other peoples needs, now it is their turn to be waited on, and they have the capital to do it from their weekly labor. And I guess that's not really a bad thing (as opposed to " that's a good thing", from our favorite jailhouse do good lady now dressed in prison blue).

The Home Shopping Network is not a uniquely new idea. Although they didn't do it through the TV, people still came into our living room (the kitchen in our case) to sell us their goods, and this is about a few of them that I will always remember.

His name was Ed Messerschmidt, and he was the egg man. Every Friday he would drive up in his 1961 light green pickup and make his way to the kitchen door. We hardly ever used the front door of the house as the side door was more personable and user friendly. If you weren't going to let the person into the house (mom and dad had strict instructions about not letting a hobo into the house) you could at least talk to the person you weren't going to let in without yelling over the traffic on Spooner Avenue. It was ironic that the hobos always came to the front door, and usually one of us would guard the front door while another of us went and made a peanut butter and jelly sandwich to appease the hobo's empty stomach.

Ed would usually be dressed in gray striped suspender overalls with a matching striped railroad hat. He was a big man who usually needed a shave, and his speech had a heavy German accent. If mom wasn't there to do the ordering, I usually would put in the weekly order. We ate a lot of eggs when we were growing up. The word cholesterol hadn't been invented yet, and I think all of us could fry an egg by the time we were 9 or 10. So 4 or 5 dozen wasn't an unusual order for the week, and at .25 cents a dozen the price was right, if the price went up, it was usually by a nickel a dozen. We always paid for the eggs at the beginning of the month, so Ed would enter our order into a small spiral notebook he kept in his shirt pocket. He would always tell me what the charge was, and I would mark it on the calendar by the phone. So that is where I got that from, I write everything on our calendar on our bulletin board. I guess I don't have to tell you I have all our calendars going back to 1975, you knew that, right? (Challenge me on that! Give me a date, and if I have the calendar for that year ((Kathy did throw a few away.)) I will tell you what we were doing the closest weekend to that date) If Ed didn't have enough eggs to fill our order, he would give us what he had (which makes me think we were the last clients on his route) and promised to deliver the remaining order the next day. I guess you can squeeze a chicken only so many ways to get an egg out of her. We never ate a bad egg, and I always enjoyed my

dealings with Ed.

Oscar Franson was our Jewel Tea Man who would visit us less frequently than Ed did. Oscar came every month if the memory serves me right. He dealt in products more interesting than a dozen eggs, although most of the items he was hawking you couldn't eat. He was a user friendly person, and even though his son and I had a falling out about a \$5.00 bicycle I bought from Bob, he never let on to being bothered by the fact that dad took Oscar to task about having a cheat for a son. The small bike would loose its chain with EVERY revolution of the pedals. Oscar would enter the kitchen with a custom made carrying case with a heavy duty handle. In that case was everything any 10 year old boy could ever want, and Oscar did well just before Christmas. Mom would let all us kids into the kitchen, and even though I know she didn't know short hand, all of us would score a stocking stuffer thanks to Oscar's case come Christmas time.

I remember one gift I got through Oscar. It was a 20's era model -T plastic police car, and the policemen who had grooves where their feet would be fit onto different spots on the car that had slots to accommodate their feet slots. It was a take off on the Key Stone Cops, and the younger kids would always steal the cops and hide them on me. Kathy and I are avid antiquer's, and that police car is at the top of my wish list because I remember it so well, but so far, not even close, can't even find a cop. Unlike Ed, I didn't have the authority to order anything from Oscar, so if mom was gone, Oscar usually had to come back. But he was always kind enough to show us what was in his case, and we could get a head start on our wish list. A shrewd businessman, and a very likable gentleman!

I saved the very best for last. Kenny Harris was our milkman and he came into our home twice a week, Saturday and Wednesday. I was a self-conscious person when I was young (I guess I still am, but try not to make a big deal of it). On Saturdays Kenny usually came in the middle of Saturday morning cartoons, and the kitchen table had a

cereal disaster movie theme to it. Spilled sugar, milk, cereal, crumbs from toast, spilled jelly, half empty bowls of cereal, and an occasional half eaten wiener? (Must have been Pat, he loved hot dogs, even if they were raw). He had a few kids himself, so it was like letting your dad into the kitchen, except you couldn't get in trouble. Ken was such an accommodating and laid back person I felt completely at ease with him, and when ever I got in trouble with my dad, I yearned for Ken to be his replacement. He had an air of happiness to him and I will admit to looking forward to Saturdays and seeing him.

Then one Saturday a stranger came to the door carrying the milk carrying case. His name was Jimmy Joe Mac Laughlin, and I knew him from St. Ben's, but he wasn't Kenny. Apparently Kenny was smart enough to realize working wasn't the only thing in life, hopefully he was doing well enough so he didn't have to work six days a week. I still saw him on Wednesday, so it wasn't a complete loss. Plus, after a while I realized that Jimmy Joe was even more laid back than Kenny. By this time in my life I didn't need a father image to imprint too, but Jimmy Joe seemed more like Kenny than Kenny.

We were just getting adjusted to Jimmy Joe when one Saturday Jimmy Joe didn't show up. I had known Bob Kerbell since I was a little tyke. When I think about the three of them. Kenny, Jimmy Joe, and Bob I can almost sit in on the interview that Kenny did. Job requirements were to be the very best you could be, personality wise, and the younger you were, the better it got.. Bob is only a year older than me, but I have to say that I always looked up to the three milkmen we had during those informative years.

Kenny did more than deliver our milk and cottage cheese. The last year I played little league I wore a Harris Dairy Half Pints uniform, and was proud to do so. I know he was into Little League for more than that one year I played for him.

On a collector note, milk bottles are a big item on collector's wish list. And I

cannot pass a display of milk bottles without hoping to find a half gallon Harris Dairy milk jug. Again, no luck in that category. If Kenny had kept the milk jugs he had used, Kendine would have been able to retire many years ago. (If you know where one is, ask me how much I will pay for it)

Kenny will always be in my mind when I think about when I was young, he was so Mister Altoona. We lost him before we should have left us, but he left nothing but good memories. Kenny was a collector too, and I remember one time I ran into him at an auction and I went over to talk to him. He was there because the auction list included Edison Gold Moulded phonograph records. These aren't disks, but rather cylinders that mount on the first record player invented by Thomas Edison. The cylinder is made from wax and comes in a cardboard container the size of a 8 ounce V-8 juice can.

Kenny had bought the whole lot that was for sale, and I went over to talk to him when he was surveying his buy. I had never seen the cylinders before, and he was more than willing to tell me all about his hobby. As he went through the box, he came across one that had a nick on the leading edge. He told me that it was still playable, but because his haul was in such good condition, and he was the kid that had just grabbed the golden ring on the merry-go-round, he gave me the cylinder with the imperfection in it. He told me that collecting was his passion, and that maybe I would get into it as much as he was.

I know I have said that I have possession that I wouldn't trade time or money for, and Kenny's present is one of them . I only have one of the Edison Records, but if you want so see what Kenny started, come over to 642 Putnam Street, and let me tell you about my passions. Thanks Kenny!

11/09/04

Roger's comments

Mr. Messerschmidt was a stranger to me because I was away from home during his visits. Uncle Sam kept me busy at a military hospital in France. Mr. M as we called him, that long German name was hard to pronounce. For those who could afford his eggs, he was a god-sent; my Mom and Dad could not afford those prices and so we bought cracked eggs at Hoff s located on the top of Otter Creek Hill by the Co-op Shopping Center; or, if we had transportation, we went to Fairview Meadows Hatchery located where the K-mart now sits.

Regardless of the source of the eggs, eggs, fried, pouched, hard-boiled or, as some drinkers preferred, raw, they were a steady diet. Without eggs, noodles, corn flakes, oat meal, and bread, I'm not certain we would have survived. Men like Mr. M, a Fall Creek/Brunswick farmer, were a life-line for families on limited budgets; of course, which families didn't fit that mold?

Kenny Harris may have been a milkman, but Herman Klingbeil was his mentor. Herman, and his son Herman Junior were everykids' friend since year around they had ice to keep their milk cool. A chip here and there helped you make it through a hot summer day. Kenny assumed the route when Herman retired and his son became a milk hauler. I had one of Kenny's daughters in my social studies class and she was bright; so was Kenny. Before and during his milk delivery days, Kenny also had a portable hot-dog stand located today where the Altoona Library now stands. Kenny would open it when milk delivery was finished and keep it open until dark or until the free movies were finished. It was located exactly in the same spot as the billboard noting the names of every Altoona serviceman who served in WWI or II. That beautiful shrine was torn down for some unknown reason. Kenny parked his root beer stand in that spot- next door to the store that was owned by Emanuel's, Kopplin's, and Wolfs. In 1950 Altoona had a population of less than 1200 but had three stores. Today with a population of 7,000 it has no stores. Something seems wrong when a city of

7,000 can't support one store but can support three taverns. Did we stop eating? Oh how sweet that cold root beer tasted on a hot and dry Sunday at the free-outdoor movies. Kenny never knew how much we enjoyed his stand. He sold Rochester Rootbeer; it has vanished much as have the small stands that once dominated every little town. The towns are vanishing too!

Shorty Franson was a salesman to be admired. He sold every kind of small home appliance, every type of rug, every kind of coffee and tea, and for kickers, he could find almost anything you wanted. My Mom ran a credit account with Shorty and it was too easy for her to charge another set of throw-rugs (perhaps as many as six sets a year) so she could have a gift to take when visiting my Sister JoAnne in Beloit. I thought Mom felt an obligation to buy from Shorty rather than at a reduced price from the Co-op. Cash she did not have; credit worthiness was her name. Her annual bill often exceeded our annual food bill. Without my Mom and Herb's Mom, I'm not certain Shorty could have survived. My Dad paid dearly for my Mom's spendthriftiness.

Shorty had time for everyone; he was a friend for everyone. Counselor, minister, educator, purveyor of good and spicy news, he would take a minute or an hour; his time was your time. His work day should have been from 8-5:00; most often he could be seen knocking on doors at 9:00 p.m.. I know my Mom often fixed soup for Shorty at noon; this was especially true on Fridays because it was soup day at our house.

Without Shorty Franson, we might have missed Christmas or Easter for what my Mom ordered seemed to arrive at our house just the day before Gift-day. One Christmas morning Shorty delivered to our house two gifts that he had forgotten to deliver. I was 14 at the time and my Mom had ordered me a hat and mittens. Shorty made the cold Christmas morning trip out to our ranch at 525 West 10th Street warmer for me. He seldom made more than a basic living wage but he gave to his customers a

level of service beyond the comprehension of most people; more importantly, he was the epitome of that statement coined by Hallmark, "Care enough to give the very best." Shorty was our life-line of credit when no one possessed a credit card. What was a credit card in 1950? Who was that small strange man knocking on all the doors in Altoona? Shorty Franson, a man bigger than a blocking guard; a man with a heart, soul, and a kindness so missing in the everyday life of a young man in the 1950's! Merci Mr. Franson!

To The Dump, To the Dump, To the Dumpity Bump Dump **(Wampum)**

By Herb Ruscin and Roger Rasmussen

There were seven days to the week when I was young, and therefore there were seven different things to do each week, squared. Each day had its importance for what day of the week it was. Being Catholic, Friday was the day we ate fish or more conveniently, if no fish was bought macaroni and cheese. Sunday was church day (mandatory if you were Catholic) and if you wanted to divest your guilt to enable you to go to Communion on Sunday, Saturday was the day of confession. So as you can see, in the 50's and 60's, we were less diverse (I hate that word, they should combine it with the word abnormal, and state what it really means, not what you are used to, you do the math). Anyway, back (way back) when you could know what to expect, you went to school at 8, got off at 20 after three, and supper was at five. The only penalty you could expect was if you weren't home by five, you wouldn't get any supper, and oh yes, Mac's wasn't an alternative, hungry till breakfast is what you got in fact, and real time.

With habit there is normalcy, you know what is expected of you, and if you don't follow the plan, egg is on your face, and the extra time wasted is your fault, re embarrassment. Young people don't seem to know what embarrassment means anymore, everything wrong, is somebody else's fault, but I don't want to get into negativity. But I will personally tell anyone who wants to listen about my last run in with a "younger" consumer out at Wal-Mart who got upset because I didn't hear her say "get out of the way".

If Sunday was Mass day, and Friday fish day, Saturday was, to my dad, the last day of the week. It was the day that the trash was taken out, the last chance to get the old week over with, and on to the new week, it was garbage day, the day we went to the dump. Being raised with a large family, there really wasn't a lot to throw away at the end of the week. Except for Thursday's, when we had liver, there were never left over's. Mom seemed to know how much food it took to bide us over till breakfast, and she was pretty accurate. If we didn't get enough, you could make up for it by being the first one to the table the next morning.

No, the Saturday garbage run was a ruse, it was a reason to fill the station wagon with two garbage cans, that contained less than one half of one garbage can worth the garbage to make a run that was one more of a pickup than a delivery. Let me explain.

Dad came from Ludington, a child of the depression, coming from a time when money was hard to come by. And when you don't have money, you revert back to what people did before money, back to the day of the Indian, back to what Indians used for money, it was called wampum. This was the first foreign word I would learn, although it was actually more American than I was. It's a good word, meaning (in my mind) a deed or product in exchange for a pay back deed or product or in other words a substitute for currency. It is what man did before money was invented; it was a deed for a deed, as opposed to a promise of a deed to be repaid in a promise of a deed (money). It is a word that should be learned by the young, as if our money system fails, wampum with return, with a vengeance.

Percy Rasmussen was the gatekeeper; he had the keys to the chain that locked up the dump to all Altoona users, except for Saturday mornings, and Wednesday if my memory serves me right. Percy was the boss when it came to what discarded product went where. You can almost see the entrance to the old dump; it is located on the West End of the building that houses Finley Engineering these days. If you look real hard, you can see where the tree line has a smaller height where the road to the dump used to be. It ran south for about a quarter of a mile, if not less, and then turned to the left, and almost right away you spotted the huge hole in the ground where Altoona used to discard its garbage.

Percy dictated where everything was to be dumped. They had a spot for "garbage" garbage, stuff to be buried. There was also a spot for items that could be burned, which was done weekly, and then there was the recyclable area, where metal items and maybe salvageable items could be placed. This area is where dad always parked; he lined up to that spot, and didn't seem to have any hurry about dumping anything till Percy came over to see what he had. Dad always had one can with garbage in it, but the other held items that weren't for dumping, but rather wampum to be used for barter for what Percy had acquired for the week.

Dad specialized in electric motors. As a vacuum cleaner salesman, he was also a repairman of the same. He always said that an electric motor never gave out, unless abused, it was always the "brushes" that failed. And dad knew how to replace them, so he was always on the lookout for used electric motors that he could breathe new life into. And 400 Club barstool mate, Percy, was more than happy to keep an eye out for discarded motors for dad. I can't tell you what dad gave Percy in exchange. All I can say is that one-day I came home from school, and there was a Maytag washing machine next to the garage. The next day when I came home from school the

Maytag was gone, and there was a rabbit coop with a rabbit in it, and a nameplate above the rabbit that read, Maytag. Dad was a horse trader, and although we never, ever had a horse in our garage, if I had all the items that went through that garage, I would be a millionaire today. Going to the garage was like going to a museum, one that changed exhibits frequently. It is where I first saw a stuffed moose sitting next to a Piper cub airplane propeller.

So it was a marriage made in heaven. Dad on the road all week, taking in almost anything in as a down payment on a new purchase of a Kirby, and then him trading some of the items to Percy for rebuildable electric motors. A side bar says I should say something about the 12 dozen eggs dad brought home one time as a down payment on a Kirby, and that we had baby chickens running around before we could eat all those eggs. One of my brothers retells the story that those eggs weren't fertile, and that the chicks came from another down payment from a different Kirby purchaser. I like the first version better, but as Joe Friday used to say; "Just the facts Ma'am, just the facts", and that's how I will tell it.

Dad and Percy were pretty good friends, and I can say that with assurance as I can remember two of his children babysitting us, Roger and Dorthy, but that is another story. But one day I noticed that dad had a shiner, and I had never seen him on the short end of the stick, although I knew that he "mixed" it up every once in a while after a night at the "gin mill". I didn't have the audacity to ask him what happened, but mom was curious, so she wrangled it out of him.

For you who never knew Percy, he wasn't a big guy, but neither was my dad, bandy roosters would be my description of both of them. But neither would back down when confronted. It was comical to hear, but apparently Percy was having problems at home, and he was commiserating with dad about the fact. Dad was a good listener, and trying to make Percy feel better was relating to his problems in the same area at home with mom. Apparently an over abundance of suds and Percy thinking that dad was talking about Percy's wife, and not dads. He told dad he couldn't talk about his wife that way and socked him in the eye. That was about the extent of the story, but I can tell you that black eye didn't stop us from going to the dump on that bumpity dirt road, and it didn't stop Percy and dad from continuing their horse trading, and more importantly, it didn't end their friendship. Because when all is said and done, after we are gone, who have we got left to remember us besides family and more importantly, friends?

1/17/08 1516

Roger's Comments: October 6, 2009

Percy the garbage (Dump) man was my Father. Like so many men and some women who work in menial jobs, the public's view of these workers is not positive; this was especially true back in the 1950-60- and 70's, Why would any reasonably strong and mildly intelligent man want to dig sewer ditches to unclog a neighbor's sewer or repair a water pipe? Why would that person plow the streets, cut the grass, repair the potholes, flush the fire hydrants, or salt the icy streets? For gosh sakes why would an able-bodied adult male work in a dump? The answer my friends, as the old song goes, "is blowing in the wind" - for someone must do it or the inner city becomes a disaster area; a dump.

I never thought too much of my Dad's job as the care keeper of the dump. My early contact with the dump, the Washington County Dump, located not in Altoona then, but now, involved the shooting of rats and crows with Garold Lampman. We were early teenagers and he had a 22 single-shot J.C. Higgen's rifle. He would let me shoot it periodically. Shooting rats was a challenge. They would poke their heads up from the garbage and if you were quick- you got one, I seldom hit one; Garold was a much better shot. In the early 1950's no one person tended the dump. When the gates were open, one could drive in and dump. No questions !

After my Dad's railroad accident, he was unable to continue in his work position and so he sought other employment. He worked at the Ice House, for Mr. Sturz, and it was killer work; almost inhuman endurance was required to move 200 pound cakes of ice. He did this work on and off during the 1940-and 50's , but by 1956, the work was beyond his small physical ability. With two fingers missing on one hand and a thumb on the other, he needed another type of work. Gus Sund came to the rescue. My Dad became a "city worker"- a dirty word at the time. I'm not sure Gus felt that way, but mostly people worked part-time for the City when they were unable to locate other work. High school boys often helped in the summer but "real" men were needed to plow the streets and tend the dump.

And so it came to pass that this small adult man called Percy became the tender of garbage. He could direct people to places to unload their garbage and he could deny non-residents the privilege of dumping. The reader might be surprised at the number of big business who tried to

dump their "toxic junk" at the dump. A check of that area today, where some beautiful homes are now located, might reveal some large vents sufficient to remove "something" from the buried refuse.

And so out of people bringing garbage and very often taking someone's garbage (unwanted items) home, developed a working relationship between my Dad and those who dumped. Over the years I heard of many stories of how my Dad took two different broken bikes and created a new one for some needy kids. Where was he when I wanted a bike at age 15? Percy was the guy who befriended a fellow Lutheran named Roger by giving his son a puppy someone had purposely dumped in a box. He was the guy who hauled unwanted furniture to needy people so they had a place to sit or sleep. \

My Father once said, "I could make a good living by salvaging the throw-aways I got each week." Well he did salvage many things, but mostly he gave them away to people who were not necessarily as needy as he. Hard to find people like that today. He never earned much more than \$100 a week in his life; he never attended school beyond the 8th grade; he never owned a home; he never owned a car until he was 40 years old and that was a gift from my Uncle Bill. He never asked for praise or reward-just kindness and recognition that he was doing a job for the City that needed doing. He displayed a work ethic I've never seen again; he often walked two to three miles to work and back in the coldest of winters and I never heard him complain. I never heard him complain when the "rich ones" came to the dump and asked him to dump their garbage. Like so many-many men of his generation he rose above the demands and complaints to do his job. Never asking for more than a fair wage and a good week's work. Quitting time was not a set time nor was starting. When he got to work, which was always early, he started; ending was often when the work was done, but never early. No overtime pay; but lots of overtime work. That generation is mostly gone; they would be more than 90 years old.

What lessons did they teach me? One major lesson: "Be a job big or small- do it well or not at all." Secondly: "If you cannot do the job, move aside and let someone who can -do it." Thirdly: "Few people ever die from overwork; at best they develop keen minds and lean bodies." Fourth: "Regardless of your vocation- try to find some joy and try to bring some joy to another person's daily life." Finally: "Humbleness is a virtue not a weakness." My Dad , Percy Rasmussen, taught me these lessons.

Today, at age 73 and still working after two retirements and still enjoying the "good life", I can still see my Dad standing like a shepherd at the City Dump directing people where to dump their garbage. He might have been an orchestra conductor rather than a dump director; he loved music. Which job is more important in our daily life? There are no plaques nor parks or football fields named after guys like Gus Sund, Eddy Duzynski, Percy Rasmussen, or the dozens of other men who performed the dirty work that kept Altoona clean and alive. So why did they work for so little yet give so much? The answer my friend "is blowing in the wind." Someone must or...they did!

A Thankful son



Percy Rasmussen

Keeper of the keys to the Altoona Dump
a.k.a. the Washington County Dump

My dad, Percy, tended the Dump when the City and County realized it was unsafe to have the dump open without some supervision. As teenagers we practiced shooting rats at the dump. Often fires burned unattended for days, often requiring calls to the Fire Department. Companies dropped waste materials that later were considered hazardous, while many people walked carelessly on top of garbage trying to salvage scrap metal and other useful objects. One resident, name not mentioned, salvaged canned goods and other food products dumped by residents and non-residents. It may have been the large influx of non-residents that resulted in a need to gate the dump and provide some supervision. Percy received hundreds of useful items from dumpers and gave these items away to individuals who put them to good use. My daughter Amy was rocked as a baby in a cradle left at the Altoona Dump. It was used by six other family members, eventually finding a home at the Salvation Army in Eau Claire. Who knows where that old maple cradle is today!

Chapter Six

The Altoona Memories of John R. Thurston

A-Walkin' and A-Talkin'

John R. Thurston

During the Great Depression, we didn't drive to various destinations. We walked. And as we walked, we talked. The content of our conversations was undoubtedly unremarkable. But as we talked, we got to know each other—and ourselves—a bit better. After all, there is only so much trivia that one can tolerate, we would eventually get into discussions of relationships, personal concerns, and what was to become of us. We listened to one another; adolescents of that era were to be seen and not heard. And the very fact that someone was listening to us was ego-bolstering for budding adolescents.

Some of these regular walks will be described. All began or ended at my home at 328 West Sixth Street in Altoona, the house at the northwest corner of W. 6th Street and Hayden Avenue.

Walk # 1

To and from school. From the home base, I and assorted others (Roger Kersten, Hank and/or Fern Harris) would begin by crossing the largely vacant block to the southeast of the intersection, ending up on Garfield Avenue. My uncle George lived southeast of the Garfield and W. 5th Street intersection. We would walk by the Stahls and the Boettchers, turning right (south) for a half block on 3rd Street West to cut through the back yard of the Lutheran Church onto Bartlett and on to the school.

Walk #2

While it was still dark, on very early, cool spring mornings, I would shoulder my Evinrude outboard motor, gather my fishing gear, and set sail for the depot area. While I usually wandered down Lynn Avenue to meet Bud Griese, there was no set pattern. We would cross the main lines and the switchyards, pass by the working roundhouse with its fires and muted roar, and trudge down the hill's sandy pathway to Lake Altoona and my boat. The return trip, Evinrude on my shoulder, was arduous to say the least.

Walk # 3

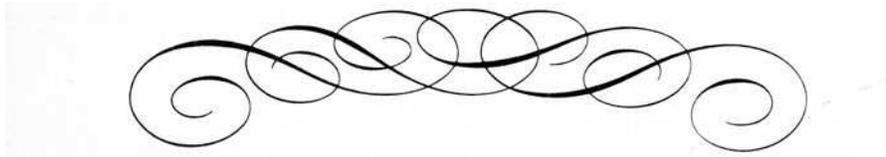
On virtually every Wednesday night in Fall and Winter, we would walk from Altoona to Eau Claire's YMCA, then located in the 200 block of S. Farwell. We would get seats on the balcony of its tiny gym to spend 3-4 hours watching various "Y" basketball teams play. We would then walk back. During especially cold nights or inclement weather, we might take the bus. It cost 12 cents.

Walk # 4

Walk north from intersection of 7th Street West and Spooner across an expanse of empty field. Then head across the two-line mainline railroad track and switchyards, and follow the path to the brink of what is now called Moonlight Bay. Continue on a very rough trail until one reached a point of land where the Eau Claire River escaped the basin, there was no lake at this time. Head down the slope to a fishing place at the outlet of a series of abandoned beaver dams and their backed up water, known locally as "The Backwater." This was our pre-dam destination. After the dam was completed in 1938, our fishing place was flooded and we would then end this walk at the dam site.

Walk # 5

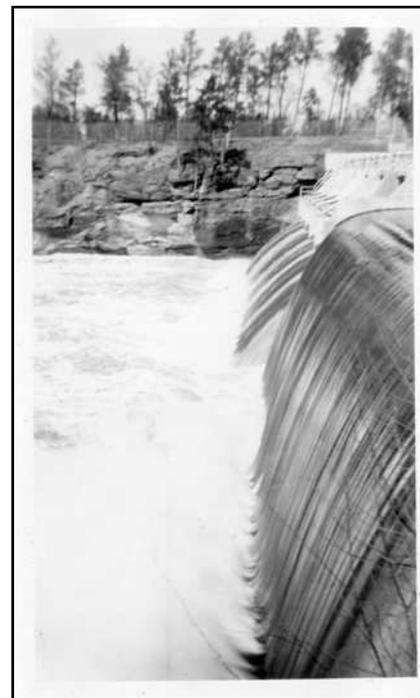
Almost every night for years, a walk home from Red Jarosch's Pool Hall with Lawrence "Huntz" Radisewitz. We parted company near Finstad's home at the intersection of Garfield and 2nd Street West. But, so engrossed were we in our conversation that we often tarried there for an hour or two. Eventually, he would head south to his home at the intersection of Daniels and 2nd Street, and I would head west on Garfield.



Dam-nation

By John Thurston

In the summer of 1946, it became apparent that the Altoona Dam was in serious structural trouble. A huge whirlpool, immediately below the locks of the dam, had been there since the dam was constructed in 1938. The part of the dam affected was the concrete shelf that extended downstream from its base across its entire width, including the spillway. Over the years, a giant whirlpool had undermined this. The accompanying pictures of the dam at the time of a full flood provide testimony of the power of this water as it churned over and ultimately under this concrete in the form of a gigantic whirlpool. The resulting damage put the dam in some peril and had to be addressed and remedied.



In preparation, during the summer of 1946, all the locks were opened so as to allow for an emptying of Lake Altoona. The drained lake's basin thus became a huge catchment for the large amount of the water that had to be contained during the repair of the dam.

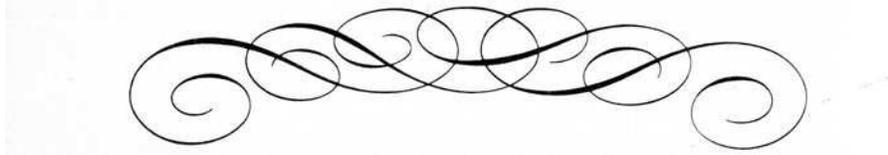


Lake Altoona Draw Down - Sept 20, 1946



John R. Thurston: On ridge overlooking Moonlight Bay – 1946
Note the drawn-down lake.

When the catchment was complete, all of the locks of the dam were closed. As a consequence, the water below the dam drained away. It was anything but a dry field. The water remaining in the area carved out by the whirlpool had to be pumped into the downstream of the Eau Claire River. Many fish had been trapped in this pool. The following newspaper account describes how they were rescued.



Fish Rescue at the Altoona Dam (1946) *

Hank Harris and John R. Thurston

The Altoona Dam was built in 1938, resulting in the creation of a beautiful 840 acre Lake Altoona.

However, sad to relate, in 1945-46, within a mere 7-8 years, it became apparent that the dam was in serious trouble. The apron, a wide, flat concrete surface immediately downstream of it, was designed to bear the brunt of water flowing over and through the dam. While it largely remained intact, a large whirlpool, created by the dam's flow, had seriously undermined it. The Altoona Dam was in jeopardy and in need of immediate repair.

In 1946, as stage one of this repair, Lake Altoona was "drawn down," or emptied drastically. This was accomplished by opening all locks and channels in the dam. This "draw down" caused problems for lake people because their boats were left high and dry. Access to the markedly diminished lake was not easy for anyone. In addition, some lake fish were swept through the dam during this drainage.

The next stage involved a complete closing of the dam with a consequent blockage of the Eau Claire River. Lake Altoona would absorb its entire flow for as long as it took to get the repair job done on the dam. As an end result of this process, the undermined apron would be exposed and available for repair. However, this operation caused a huge problem for the estimated 5000 fish caught in the large undermined hole where the major whirlpool had been. Other fish were imprisoned in smaller waterholes. They could get neither upstream nor downstream. That many fish could not survive in the relatively amount of water available to them.

Altoona rode to their rescue. While it never had a formal name, "Operation Fish Rescue" would have been appropriate. Volunteers

included Altoona High School students, and Altoona citizens having special interests in fish and fishing. Chris Bergen, Lloyd “Bud” Griese, and the two of us became volunteers along with many others.

The captive fish were hand-netted or seined from each of the pools and placed in large metal containers. They then went into sacks and were quickly hoisted up to the top of the dam’s spillway where they were released into Lake Altoona. The rescued fish included wall-eye pike, northern pike, crappies, sunfish, bass, and one 18-pound musky.

This rescue effort took two days. The largest pool was pumped dry after the mission was completed. Highly-necessary repairs were then undertaken and the Altoona Dam was saved.

* Published initially in
The Old Altoona School, A Collection of Memories
Thurston – 2009

Eau Claire Wisconsin
Saturday morning, September 21, 1946

See Photos on the Next Page

The scene below the Altoona Lake dam Thursday as thousands of fish were removed is shown in these Leader and Telegram photos. A general view of the pool is shown at the top, while in the lower picture volunteers are shown helping clean the pool of fish. Left to right, they are Harold H. Harris, John R. Thurston of Altoona, Chris Bergen of Altoona Lake, and Bud Grice of Altoona.

Nearly 5,000 fish, trapped when the gates on the Altoona dam were closed to permit construction of a new apron, were removed from pools below the dam Thursday, and seining operation were to continue today. Walter Zelinske, of Eau Claire, state conservation warden, was in charge of the fish rescue work, aided by three conservation department men from Spooner, Bob Wilder, Jack Plummer and Mike Mc-Quade.

The three conservation department men were injured on their way from Altoona to Spooner late Thursday when their truck collided with a car near Chippewa Falls. All three sustained serious injuries, but are expected to recover.

A wide variety of fish were removed from the pool directly below the dam, placed in a sack and pulled to the top of the dam, and then released in the lake. Included in the catch were wall-eyed pike, northern pike, crappies, sun fish, bass, and one 18-pound muskie. Dogfish, carp and suckers taken in the nets were killed.

Thousands of fish which swam upstream when the dam was opened to lower the lake level before start of construction were trapped in pools left when the dam gates were closed. Conservationists, aided by students of the Altoona high school, worked all of the pools possible with both hand nets and seines Thursday and Friday to rescue as many fish as possible before they died. The largest pool, directly below the dam, will be pumped dry after the rescue operations are completed.



Freezin' Season

John R. Thurston

The winters of my childhood may or may not have been unusually cold. But back then, we suffered infinitely more than the people of today. In the "Freezin Season," **from November through March**, we were almost always uncomfortably cold, cold, cold.

As an economy measure during the Great Depression of the 1930's, household fires were allowed to die out during the night. I had to re-ignite ours when I awakened. A single stove, a Heatrola, was supposed to provided heat for our large house. I would alight from my bed, light the fire, get my cereal, and dive back under the blankets to eat it as the house warmed a bit. Our house was never warm. But next to the Heatrola, it was unbearably hot.

Then, even as a tad, there was my 8-9 block frigid walk to school, a trip that would be repeated three more times each day. Lunch was eaten at home. Deep snow and unplowed roads would introduce further complications. Our bulky clothing was ineffective. It wasn't warm at school either, despite the diligent efforts of "Ing" Isaacson, our janitor.

We had a skating rink of sorts in the area north of Garfield between West 5-6th. There was no warming house. My skates, clamped on my regular shoes, would often fall off, necessitating removal of gloves to get them on again. The extreme cold, together with an uneven ice surface, made this skating very unpleasant.

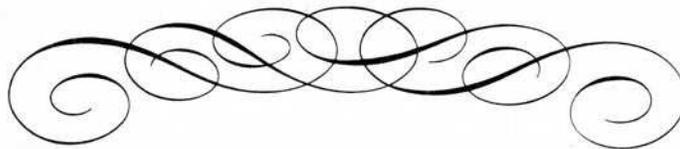
Red's Pool Hall was an exception, an oasis of warmth. He must

have spent a fortune providing heat for us. We hung out there a lot.

As high school basketeers, we might work up a sweat practicing in the drafty Auditorium. If lucky, and first in line, we might get a warm shower to clean up a bit. That worked out well; most of us didn't have a shower at home. But then, warmed by the water, we would dry off and dress, and head for a long walk home in sub-zero weather. The contrast made the frigid temperatures seem all the colder and the frigid walk all the longer.

For the entirety of the very long "Freezin season," we were very "cool kids" in the saddest sense of those words.

John R. Thurston 04.10.09



Distant memories of Bill Klingbeil and a Cement Car

John R. Thurston

(The following was compiled in response to a 2008 request by Bill's son, Jim Klingbeil, for some feedback regarding mutual activities of his father and me.)

As Lake Altoona formed, Bill and I each had a boat (1939-41). These were tied up in the region of what was known as the Becker Boathouse-----on the lake directly down from the Altoona railroad roundhouse. My boat, merely tethered to a tree on an unprotected, completely undeveloped shoreline, repeatedly sustained significant damage from the wind and waves. Various parts of this boat would be worn away from worn away by its repeated rubbing up against a tree, a rock, or something else on the shoreline.

Similarly unprotected, Bill's boat and the Becker Boathouse, had these and other problems. Both were vandalized on several occasions. One time, as I recall, someone had painted a large swastika on the floor of Bill's newly-painted boat. To say that he was irate is the understatement of the century.

Despite our boating on Lake Altoona, we didn't really do much together. Age differences probably accounted for this. We frequented the same fishing areas, i.e. as many as 10-15 boats might be found in early morning, bobbing around in what was called "5 Mile Creek," near the Seymour shoreline directly north across the lake from Becker's boathouse. During the 1939-40 time period, Northern Pike were targeted. As the lake was just developing, these were few in number and small in size. Later on, crappies became very numerous and were caught in large

numbers.

Later, I believe in the summer of 1943, Bill and I were employed by Fox Valley and Weitz. This firm as were involved in the construction of “Area One” and “Area Two” sites of a munitions factory designed to produce shells for the military. “Area One” was the Uniroyal tire plant in Eau Claire, the current (2009) Banbury Place---maybe it still went by the name of Gillette Tires; it became Uniroyal after the war. Although many tires were needed in the war effort it had to be converted from tire-making to shell-making. (The call letters of the old “Gillette” Eau Claire radio station WTAQ, supposedly stood for “where tires are quality.”).

I sought employment at the old Labor Temple near the 2009 location of “Stella Blues” on East Madison Street, Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Initially, we were supposed to join a union and pay a fee of 20 dollars, but that was eventually overlooked in light of the shortage of laborers. I was hired and assigned to the concrete gang of the ”Area Two” operation, a large construction site halfway between Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls on Highway 63. The going rate was 65 cents an hour. I assume that Bill went through the same rigmarole when he was hired.

Getting to the job was the responsibility of the individual worker. A relative of sorts, Ralph Ensign----or was it “Stub” Gilbert?----- and I worked out a deal. (Both were married to Thurstons, sisters of Fuzzy). My memory on this count is very fuzzy. He and I would meet at 4:00 a.m. at the corner of Spooner and Sixth Street West in Altoona each working morning. We would then walk over through the Otter Creek hollow to the

corner of Fairfax and Spooner/Highland where we would be picked up by car for transport to “Area Two.” Our driver charged us each one dollar a week for a daily to and fro delivery. We would return in the same vehicle. Again, my memory is fuzzy, but I believe that he dropped us off in Altoona*. Our shift ran from 5:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. As a new worker, I remember how very cool, dark, and unpleasant it was on these early mornings.

My initiation into the concrete work force was harsh. One of my early tasks was that of a “spacer remover.” Small wooden “spacers, ” about 1 x 1 x 6 inches, held the wooden forms apart as the concrete was poured into them. These forms had been constructed by carpenters. It was my task to stand on top of these forms---sometimes 8-10 feet in the air, armed with a long stick with a nail on its end. I was to spear and remove the “spacers” before they became inundated with the concrete as it was poured into the forms. This was a tricky operation, particularly when the “spacers” were way down at the bottom of the forms. It required balancing high in the air on these narrow forms as I sought to impale the many spacers. When the concrete dried the forms were then removed----and voila, a concrete wall was in place. After I fell off one time, I was assigned to another task.

My new assignment required wading boots which extended well up over the knee. I then “puddled.” Puddling or “settling” was required to eliminate all air pockets in some of the more massive, deeper pourings of concrete. A huge mechanical vibrator was used for that purpose as well. I was required to march around in knee high concrete pour for hours on end---

until the concrete began to harden. Lifting one's feet again and again in this concrete quagmire was demanding, to say the very least. Suction was involved and fought the lifting of each leg each and every time.

Then I was assigned to the cement car, a railroad boxcar filled with bags of cement. In light of my previous work experience on the concrete crew, I felt as though I was in Nirvana.

Fellow Altoonians, (Ralph Ensign/ Stub Gilbert)** and Bill Klingbeil, joined me and three other workers. I'm not sure where they had worked previously. I became part of a two team operation. Each team had three men. We were to supply the cement to the sand and gravel. These three ingredients, mixed together with water, produced concrete.

A sizeable "batch truck" would pull up to the cement car. Its box was divided into two compartments, each filled with the proper amount of sand and gravel, i.e. enough for two "batches" of concrete. One member of each team would jump onto a pile of sand and gravel, two people on each truck. Another member of each team would toss six 50 lb sacks of concrete onto the truck. The team member on the truck would then open and empty the six sacks of cement onto the sand and gravel that he was standing on. He would then jump back into the cement car as the truck drove off toward the concrete mixer. (The third member of each team was responsible for dragging six more bags up to the door for the next loading). We exchanged positions from time to time.

That was the way we spent our summer. In retrospect, it was

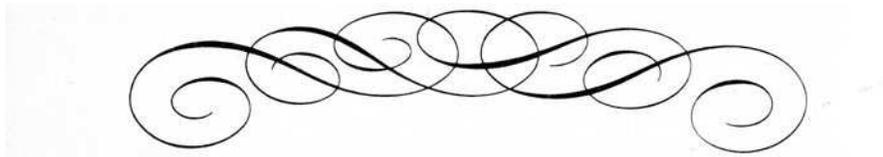
hazardous, very unpleasant work for 65 cents an hour. It was always hot and dusty. In addition to the sun beating down on the box car, the cement itself seemed to produce heat. We had no respirators. Toward the end of the summer, we found ourselves coughing up tiny slivers of concrete. If we sweat later on after work, as we went out on a night on the town, we would find that our skin would turn gray as the concrete dust, imbedded in our skin, surfaced. It was dirty work. Of necessity, the person on the truck dumping cement, dumped it on his shoes, his socks, and his pants. We purchased gloves to contain the damage to our hands as we tossed and opened the rough sacks. These wore out in short order. There was no compensation for this damage to us, our clothing, or our efforts to contain it. We must have consumed gallons of water. I fail to remember from whence they came. The source was not in the cement car. We used flimsy, disposable paper cups---the ones that were pointed at the bottom.

But there was great compensation for our discomfort in the form of comradery. There was rarely a steady stream of batch trucks. As the company was working on a cost plus basis, none of our supervisors were concerned that we were hard at work. Accordingly, we had a lot of time to sit around on the cement sacks and shoot the breeze. A lot of it was man talk with its full measure of Altoona, sports, sex, and braggadocio. Bill always seemed to be smiling and in good humor. He really seemed to enjoy what we were doing. He found great fun in knowing that I kept at detailed account, down to the penny, of my income and expenditures. I carried around a tiny notebook for that very purpose.

Our manly talk would go on endlessly. We were never at a loss for words. We came to like one another and enjoy each other's company. But, in light of our age and interest differences, we never socialized after work hours. On very rare occasions, perhaps a day-long downpour, the entire "Area 2" operation would close down. All of us from the cement box car might then end up at a pool hall on Barstow Street in Eau Claire. There was a special delight in escaping work, playing pool, and enjoying a very cold glass of beer.

*Missing in the story is the manner in how Bill got to and from work. I never knew.

** If forced to make a choice, I believe the man to be Ralph Ensign.



Halloween in Altoona, Wisconsin

Circa 1935

John R. Thurston

To the children of the 1930's, in the midst of the "Great Depression," Halloween was a simple event, a break in our humdrum lives. It hadn't been hyped for weeks in advance by commercial interests vying for our dollar. We had no money.

In school, we created paper pumpkins, skeletons, and black cats for classroom decorations. On Halloween day, a scary story might be read. Radio might provide modest renditions featuring Poe's "The Raven" or the music of "A Night on Bald Mountain." Without TV, we were spared endless Halloween marathons of films featuring mayhem, butchery, and gore.

There were no lavish costumes. A mask, old clothes, or some make-up would suffice. Paper sack in hand, our rounds were limited to a few houses in our immediate neighborhoods. It wasn't scary; it was fun. We'd gather a bit of candy, an orange or apple, maybe a penny or two. We then returned to our homes to savor our tiny collections. There was no need for parents to ride shotgun and protect us from evil-doers.

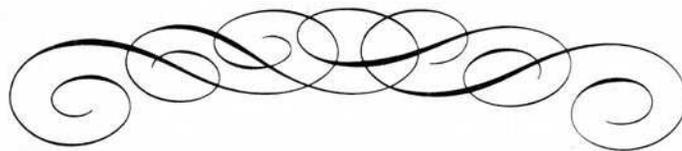
This is not to suggest that our Halloweens were completely innocuous and innocent events. Dark forces took the form of small bands of adolescents and men that emerged later on in the evening. Their targets were called outhouses, privies, "donikers" or by names that, while explicitly descriptive, cannot be used in a family newspaper. Up to the mid-1930's, each Altoona home had one out in back to deal with our eliminative functions. They

could be “one seaters” or companionable “two seaters.” The goal of the “perps” was to tip these over, to make them unavailable to their owners whose needs for them were great and recurrent. Modern day readers should consider how truly serious the consequences of this mischief could be.

The tradition lingered on even after the installation of an Altoona sewer system in the mid-1930’s. Sometimes, outhouses were used for storage of “storm windows.” These were installed each fall over regular windows to ward off winter’s icy blasts. They were then removed in spring. The Hell-raising “perps” would get an extra measure of satisfaction to hear the tinkle of broken glass as an outhouse hit the ground.

All things considered, it was an innocent time. Even the anti-social “privy tipping,” stealing pumpkins to smash all over downtown Altoona or soaping/waxing windows had a somewhat humorous, non-violent tone. Those responsible were readily apprehended by Principal Jesse Jensen or Mayor Fred Gloede because they would invariably brag about their “crimes.” Their penance usually required no more than righting the offended outhouses or cleaning up the mess downtown.

People then moved on. Halloween had served its purpose. Children had enjoyed it. We then returned to the state of enduring despair and fear that was our lot during the “Great Depression.” A meager Thanksgiving would be next on our list of distractions.



The Ice Slide of the Old Altoona Public School

Circa 1930's

John R. Thurston

As we currently continue to slide toward a deepening economic depression, it might be useful to consider another kind of slide, one that provided an abundance of pleasure and exercise for the children suffering through "The Great Depression" of the 1930's.

We children and our families were dirt poor during that decade. We had none of the abundant means by which the children of today day can be amused. We did with what little we had. We'd routinely be forced to create our own diversions and sources of fun.

As soon as each winter and its deep freeze descended upon us, we began to think about constructing an ice slide. There were concrete steps/sidewalk that provided access up to the school which sat on top of a hill. (This area is now a block in Division Street, between Bartlett and Daniels Avenues). Our slide was traditionally positioned on the ground to the east of this walkway.

First, there would be the gouging of a 3-4 feet wide trough in the snow. Water, provided in buckets by our custodian **Ing Isaacson**, then was intermittently poured onto this trench at various places. Some energetic stamping around in the resulting slush would smooth it out and give shape and substance to the developing slide. It ran downhill for about a half a block at maybe a 30-35 degree angle. In the bitter cold, the slide would freeze almost immediately. It became glare ice.

How did one slide? The more adventurous students would take a run at the top and would then slide down on the soles of their shoes while standing erect. Their acceleration had them speeding rapidly at the end. Once committed to the slide, there was no turning back. The more timid souls would slide down on shovels or the seat of their pants or skirts.

Some would acquire cardboard from Shute's Store and slide down on that. Each slider would end up in the snow and slush at the bottom. Although **Ruth Thompson** reports having used a "Flexible Flyer" sled to go as far down as Garfield Avenue," I have no recollection of any such usage. Repeated walks up the hill provided a lot of healthy exercise.

Doris (Thompson) Rulien, Charles W. Bassett, Barbara (Bundt) Duszynski, Charles "Chuck" Steuding, and Larry Sturz recalled their delights with this slide in the Altoona memory book, "The Old Altoona Public School: A Collection of Memories."

The "Giant Strides" device in the school's playground provided similar amusement and exercise in the non-winter months. **Ralph Ely** recalls this as consisting of "a steel pole with a swivel on the top that was attached to a number of chains with wooden handles. We would grab hold of these and run as fast as we could. In addition to getting good exercise, it was exciting to be airborne on occasion."

It should be pointed out that today's insurance considerations would probably rule out any ice slide construction. It was an inherently dangerous operation. "Giant Strides" had its own special hazards. Organized "phy ed" courses now take the place of these activities, but not really. There was something very special about having fun and freedom of "doing our own thing" in the absence of structure and instruction.

How A-boat This?

John R. Thurston

When is a boat not a boat? It's when your boat is a barge. One must dial back to 1939 or so when Lake Altoona was just beginning to take shape. My parents knew of my great interest in fishing and went out of their way to accommodate me. Ever indulging, they spent a lot of their hard-earned money to provide me with a boat, a place to keep it, and a motor to power it. The location was relatively easy. For five dollars a year, they leased an undeveloped, 50 foot, lake-level lot on the southern shore of Lake Altoona. It was about 500 feet east of the old Becker's Boathouse, in the vicinity of the current park at the base of the hill leading up the old dirt pathway to the old, now non-existent, roundhouse.

The boat proved to be much more problematic. It cost \$20. Mercifully, the name of its builder shall remain unknown. He managed to avoid every common sense consideration in its construction. It weighed a ton. It had the floatability of sodden railroad ties. Getting this hulk trailered to and launched into the developing Lake Altoona took some doing. I marveled when it failed to sink after it finally was put in the lake. When not in use, it was simply chained to a tree.

The boat was powered by an 1.8 horsepower Evinrude motor. That is not a misprint. 1.8 horse power. Bear in mind also that this motor had to be transported on my shoulder, gas can in hand, to and fro my residence at 328 West Sixth Street. That was at least four miles transport for every day I used the boat.

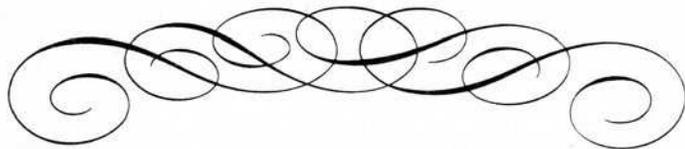
When the motor was finally affixed to the stern of my barge, it was hard to start. But after much priming and pulling, it would stutter into action. Its impact upon the boat was hard to discern.

With motor going, minutes would elapse before the boat would begin to move, albeit it imperceptibly, out into the lake. If there had been any surfing snails, they would have been well ahead of us.

But the boat eventually did move. We fishermen, Bud Griese, Hank Harris, Ed Geitz, Joe Wittren, and I slowly got into and around the developing lake and upstream into the Eau Claire River. And, aside from our wondrous companionship for several years, we were able to catch a lot offish, mostly crappies. These were truly great moments in our lives although none of us realized it fully at the time.

Nothing is forever. While I was in the Navy in WWII, both boat and motor were sold for a pittance. The lease on the lot was allowed to lapse.

However, there are still times, in my memory, when I take that walk once more in the very early morning. It is cool and quiet, save for the incessant noise of the switch engines. We get the boat in the water; we get the Evinrude started. And off we go again to fulfill our dreams.



July 4th Observance in Altoona

Circa 1930's

John R. Thurston

During this time of the Great Depression, there were a few traditional, pretentious speeches about liberty and the fight for independence. But we youngsters were mercifully shielded from them. In the company of our parents, we might journey to Eau Claire for the traditional 4th of July parade. Eau Claire High School would provide the only marching band with its blaring music. Be-medaled World War veterans would proudly march along in their ill-fitting uniforms . We didn't notice that there were fewer and fewer marching each year. And we would never have believed that there would be a time, like now, when there is only one survivor of the millions and millions who served in the World War. (They were not called WWI veterans until WWII came along two decades later.)

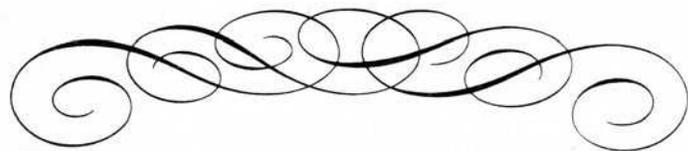
To us children, formal ceremonies and recognitions aside, the 4th of July was really fireworks, fireworks, fireworks. As there were no municipal displays of fireworks in those days, each of us was pretty much on his own. Dirt poor, we were severely restricted in what we could afford. But all things considered, I had a rather full arsenal. It included a fountain (a cone-shaped device with incandescence and smoke erupting from its top), sky rockets, sparklers, some snakes (tubes that when ignited would produce squirming and twisting ooze), cap pistols and caps (insert the cap, pull the trigger, and it would explode with a "bang"), a ball cup (a small rubber ball would be placed in a metal cup to be propelled high into the air by the explosion of a

firecracker underneath) and, of course, large and small firecrackers. And one absolutely needed "punk," dry gunk on a stick that when ignited would provide a constant glowing source of fire for the explosive elements in one's arsenal.

Our fireworks were assembled and reviewed on a daily basis in anticipation of their detonation on the 4th. A few of the smaller firecrackers might be ignited in the days leading up to the celebration, but the big event would take place on the night of the 4th. Children of today would have difficulty understanding the joy of that prolonged anticipation.

The event then took place in our own backyards. The children of the neighborhood might pool their arsenals. And it was over before it began. "This won't take long, did it?" It invariably failed to live up to our expectations. Looking at the smelly burned-out remains the next morning was downright depressing.

But the extended joy of anticipation was not forgotten. Joyful events were rare in those days. And we would be able to do it all over again next year. It could be even better next time. Hope did spring eternal, especially in the young. In the 1930's, hope was in very short supply.



Marbles

John R. Thurston

In the Altoona of the 1930's, we truly enjoyed the advent of spring. After the long "Freezin Season," we would be warm again. It was the time of our basketball tournaments. Torrents of melted water would course down the streets from the south hill. Invariably, they would produce a large pond that inundated the street at the corner of Hayden and 2nd Street West. And, most importantly, the boys knew that they would soon be able to engage in their own "Rite of Spring," the playing of the game of marbles.

With the melting of the snow, we would look hard to find patches of bare earth on which to play this game. A 10' x 20' area would be sufficient. We would first carve a three foot circle in the damp ground. This was "the pot." We would then use the toes of our shoes to dig out a straight, three foot long "lag line" fifteen feet away. With marbles and "shooters" from last year, we were ready to play.

Each of would "ante up," i.e scatter an agreed-upon number of marbles in the pot. These marbles would usually be clay, round, and maybe 3/8 of an inch in diameter. The more treasured "Glassies" were rarely used. If they were, they would substitute for maybe ten of the clay marbles in the pot. While the glass in "Glassies" would usually be clear or tinted; some contained beautifully colored swirls.

The shooters were usually shiny steel ball bearings (maybe 1.5 inches in diameter) surreptitiously provided to us by railroad machinists or local auto mechanics.

The players would stand by the pot and, in turn, toss their shooters toward the lag line. Closeness to it determined the

order of play. Standing behind the lag line, the first player would hurl his shooter at the marbles in the pot. The marbles that he knocked out of the pot were then his. Each of the players would get his shot in turn. Then the rotation would start over again, with the play now being very close to the pot.. Purists would have had us flick the shooter with our thumbs. At Altoona, we were content with forceful tosses. Allowing the shooter to come to rest inside the pot was a no-no. I can't recall the penalty.

Then, there was the game of "Chase." This was usually played when going to and from school. The "shooters" for this were much larger than those used in marbles. Sometimes these were the steel heads sawed off from truck gear shifts. Some were almost shot put size. The rules were simple. The first player hurled his shooter up the road in the direction of the school. The second player then tried to hit that shooter with his. He would hurl his with great force so that it would not end up close to the first shooter; being too close meant an easy shot for the first player when it was his turn again. Hitting the opponent's shooter was worth a negotiated number of marbles or their glassy equivalent. The players took turns doing this all the way to school and back.

Marbles and "glassies" were the coin of this realm. The more of these one had, the richer he was. At the end of each day, these would be counted. Special draw-string cloth or leather purses were used as containers.

These marble games couldn't have been simpler. But our enjoyment in playing them couldn't have been greater.

Published in Reminisce Extra-January 2009

Home is the Warrior, Home from the Sea

John R. Thurston

While sailing up the Columbia and Willamette Rivers to Portland, Oregon in July of 1945, we sailors were accorded an undeserved hero's welcome. Bridges had to be lifted to accommodate our passage. Crowds of people applauded us wildly on each of these occasions. They very probably thought that the sad, battered state of our ship, the U.S.S. Porter, a destroyer, resulted from the savagery of a Japanese Kamikaze attack. In truth, our damage clearly caused by incompetence. Our ship had collided with another ship in broad daylight in the harbor at Adak in the Aleutian Islands. We were forced to return to Stateside for repairs. But we accepted the plaudits of the crowd with enthusiasm, waving back at the people while attempting to maintain what we thought was the posture of very proud, truly heroic sailors.

Once docked at the Portland shipyards, we first learned that we could go home on leave. And then, the U.S.A. dropped the atomic bombs. Our war was over. There was finally a glorious light at the end of our tunnel.

We could even fly home if we so desired. I had never been up in a plane before, but I thought that this was a great idea. I elected to do so and was treated to one of the most truly marvelous experiences of my life. It was August 1945.

The jaundiced air traveler of today cannot fully appreciate how wonderful my flight home really was. Here I was, a hick from Altoona, Wisconsin, flying cross-country. And I was treated as though I was somebody special. There was nothing of the current cattle car, "pack 'em in" atmosphere of flying today. No security checks. A passenger had only to wander up to the appropriate gate, show his ticket, and hop on board.

The stewardess of that era was genuinely helpful and caring, not the impersonal, smiling professional that is the current flight attendant. And this personal, unexpected attention was most appreciated. After all, tender, loving care of any sort simply did not exist in my extended wartime experience in the Aleutians and North Pacific.

And the boxed lunches they served on the plane were far different from our customary navy bill of fare. The food was excellent and there was so much of it. Real milk and fresh fruit were special. And like a bonus, special circumstances enabled me to eat and eat and eat.

The first leg of the flight was very bumpy-----and consequently thrilling –

from Portland to Seattle, Washington. Three soldier passengers ("doggies") became violently airsick. And I did not!!! This seemed strange to me inasmuch as I was seasick all the time the U.S.S. Porter was at sea. The soldiers were disinclined to open their box lunches. And the stewardess offered them to me. I opened them one by one. And I ate and ate and ate. I was in a very special Seventh Heaven.

Picture my elated state of mind at that time: No more war, no more seasickness, en route to getting out of the navy, going home, having a future that I could begin to realize, a country bumpkin on his first flight being treated with respect and compassion he had never known before. I never had it so good. I have rarely experienced a comparable high since.

I, John R. Thurston, served for two years (1944-45) aboard a wildly-gyrating destroyer in the waters adjacent to Alaska's Aleutian Islands. The horror that was that experience has been documented elsewhere.

These desolate islands have a richly-deserved reputation for eternal fog, cold, rain, and williwaws, 100 mph plus winds that erupt frequently and unpredictably. In this arena, if a serviceman became "mad," he was said to have become "Asiatic" or "Aleutian."

I have just read an excellent book about the Aleutians: "The Thousand Mile War-World War II in Alaska and the Aleutians" by Brian Garfield (1969) In it, I found this.

A sailor stood at the Pearly Gate;
His face was wan and old.
He gently asked the man of fate
Admission to the fold.
'What have you done,' St. Peter asked,
'To gain admission here?'
'I've been in the Aleutians
For nigh unto a year.'
Then the gates swung open sharply
As St. Peter tolled the bell,
'Come right in,' said he, 'and take a harp.
You've had your share of Hell.'

The Old Altoona Public School Fire Altoona, Wisconsin

Flames consumed the 38-year-old Altoona Public School building on Halloween night of 1951. The remains were bulldozed and hauled away. This school had been located on a hill. Its former site is now merely a paved block in Division Street between Daniels and Bartlett Avenues (see pictures at the conclusion of this Introduction).

As a consequence of this fire, an enormous amount of Altoona history was lost. Valuable records, pictures, trophies, furniture, and memorabilia were destroyed along with the building. These cannot be replaced; reconstituting them in any meaningful sense is next to impossible.

Something else was —and is —in danger of being lost. This involves the memories of all the happenings which took place in that building during the many years of its existence. There has always been the danger that these could be lost even if there had been no fire. The building was a mere shell that was brought to life by its students and teachers. They deserve to be remembered.

Memories die. They die along with the person who had had the memory. Forgetfulness will kill or distort them, perhaps beyond all recognition. Memories need not die. If they are recorded—and properly safeguarded—they will never die. They are a form of history and should be accorded respect on that ground.

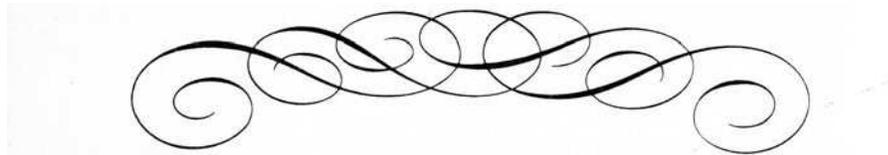
Generations of our posterity to follow, interested in genealogy, may find such memories a treasure trove that will help them understand their predecessors and the times in which they lived.

It was a simpler time. Poverty was our common denominator. While we had contacts few people, we came to know them over prolonged periods of time.

We felt that we know them well. We knew who we could and could not trust. This awareness promoted a cohesiveness amongst us that was both reassuring and somewhat restrictive at the same time. Nowadays, people in an affluent society may become acquainted with a great many people but fail to know any of them very well. It has become politically-incorrect to ask and answer personal questions. "Don't ask, don't tell" has become something of a policy for many people. As a result, we now operate in a society of semi-isolated strangers with superficialities making up the bulk of our conversations. A memory project such as this might remind the readers that it wasn't always that way.

Without an awareness of our past, we are rootless. To those so afflicted, look around; there is history and there are roots.

John R. Thurston 10-24-2009



Poetica Grandma-tica Memories About Grandmothers

In 2004., **Nancy Clark Scobie** and I began a new enterprise, the publication of a book designed to honor and celebrate the grandmothers of Wisconsin's Chippewa Valley. It would be entitled "**Poetica Grandma-tica.**" Ms. **Scobie** and Altoona's own **Judy Bredeson** became its editors. The contents were to be supplied by these grandmothers or those who would write about them.

The subject matter could be personal memories, families, vexations, stories of the past, poetry, a sketch of a significant other, etc. In short, anything and everything which would acknowledge the importance of these very special women, grandmothers.

In November, 2008, "Poetica Grandma-tica. 2008-2009," the fifth book in the series, was published. Over 100 contributors are represented in this edition. Five of these have strong connections to Altoona. Excerpts from their offerings will follow.

Judy Bredeson, a grandmother of eight, chose to tell about a profound religious experience of her father. **Paul Myszka** had seen the Virgin Mary, and in Judy's words, felt "compelled to tell his story, to share it with others, to witness to God in his life." Judy helped him do just that.

Marvel Schilling Newton, a grandmother of seven, addressed the topic of prejudice, its many forms, origins, and negative implications. She is guardedly optimistic about its current status. "Through five generations, it seems like there is a better acceptance of all people."

Roger Rasmussen writes glowingly about his grandmother, **Eva Marie**

Thurston Glassbrenner, and how much she meant to him. He closes his contribution by saying that "America seems to have forgotten the valuable role played by grandmothers. It is true: 'the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.' I thank God for Grandma Eva!"

Doris (Thompson) Rulien, a grandmother of Kyle **Bareis**, engages in a conversation that she wishes she had had with her grandmother, **Brita (Bertha) Iverson Thompson**. "I really want to sit down and talk to you, Grandma. You knew so much about everything." In closing, Doris said that "only now, when I'm pushing eighty, do I fully realize what a difficult life you must have led."

As I have done in the previous four books, I wrote about my sainted grandmother, **Gertrude McKilligan McCluskey**, and the powerful impact she had upon me and the course of my life.

There will be a sixth edition next year, Poetica **Grandma-tica** 2009-2010. Contributions are currently being accepted. There is no cost for participation; any proceeds will be divided equally between two charities. Previous contributors have been very pleased with the experience. An even greater participation by Altoona residents would be welcomed. If interested, feel very free to contact me (715.832.0034) for further information and encouragement. John R. Thurston 04.07.09

Running Hot and Cold

John R. Thurston

During my childhood in the 1930's, the winters were bone-chilling cold and the summers were blazing hot. And we personally experienced these extremes day-in and day-out for months on end. Our brief respites from this suffering were few and far between. But their rarity made them all the more important and memorable to us. The two articles to follow relate to this time and to our experiences

A Hot Time in the Old Town

The mid -1930's were especially torrid times. For weeks on end, the temperature would be in the 90-100 plus degree range in daytime and retreat into the high 80's or 90's come nightfall. We would sit outside and pray for a bit of breeze. If the wind stirred just a little bit, it was a Godsend. We were truly desperate; there was no air conditioning in our homes and we had few alternatives.

However, by way of relief, a glass of lemonade might be served with ice slivers chipped off the huge block in the ice box.

Maybe once a week, there could be a very special ride to the A and W. Root Beer stand at the corner of Madison and Hobart Streets in Eau Claire. Nothing in this or any other world can ever compare with the intensely cold, frosted mug of their root beer. Every single sip and swallow was savored. Dirt poor, each of us could afford only one mug. After all, it did cost 5 cents.

A leisurely drive through Eau Claire's Putnam Park

might cool our fevered brows for fifteen minutes or so.

And then, wonder of wonders, Eau Claire's State Theater introduced air-conditioning sometime during this time period. For ten cents, one could bask in its coolness while watching the same movie twice.

Otherwise, we had no respite for days and nights on end; we sat back and sweated, sweltered, and roasted. We had no place to go. These were not "the good old days."

Nowadays, there is an abundance of oases of coolness. There are municipal and private swimming pools. Trips to northern lakes or even Argentina are within the range of many people. Cold drinks are readily available. Air-conditioning is everywhere in cars, homes, restaurants, malls, etc. People move from one cool spot to another. They don't have a clue as to how good they have it. On the hottest of days now, we may even hear people complain about being cold because the air-conditioner has been set wrong.

Freezin' Season

The winters of my childhood may or may not have been unusually cold. But back then, we suffered infinitely more than the people of today. In the "Freezin Season," from November through March, we were almost always uncomfortably cold, cold, cold.

As an economy measure during the Great Depression of the 1930's, household fires were allowed to die out during the night. I had to re-ignite ours when I awakened. A single stove, a Heatrola, was supposed to provide heat for our large house. I would alight from my bed, light the fire, get my cereal, and dive back under the blankets to eat it as the house

warmed a bit. Our house was never warm. But next to the Heatrola, it was unbearably hot.

Then, even as a tad, there was my 8-9 block frigid walk to school, a trip that would be repeated three more times each day. Lunch was eaten at home. Deep snow and unplowed roads would introduce further complications. Our bulky clothing was ineffective. It wasn't warm at school either, despite the diligent efforts of "Ing" Isaacson, our janitor.

We had a skating rink of sorts in the area north of the Garfield between West 5-6th. There was no warming house. My skates, clamped on my regular shoes, would often fall off, necessitating removal of gloves to get them on again. The extreme cold, together with an uneven ice surface, made this skating very unpleasant.

Red's Pool Hall was an exception, an oasis of warmth. He must have spent a fortune providing heat for us. We hung out there a lot.

As high school basketeters, we might work up a sweat practicing in the drafty Auditorium. If lucky, and first in line, we might get a warm shower to clean up a bit. That worked out well; most of us didn't have a shower at home. But then, warmed by the water, we would dry off and dress, and head for a long walk home in sub-zero weather. The contrast made the frigid temperatures seem all the colder and the frigid walk all the longer.

For the entirety of the very long "Freezin season," we were very "cool kids" in the saddest sense of those words.

Scholarship/Achievement Night

05.13.09

Altoona High School Auditorium Altoona, Wisconsin

By way of introduction, my name is **John Thurston**. I go back a long way in Altoona history. Your fair city was crawling with Thurstons during the 1930s and 1940s.

I graduated from Altoona High School in 1942 in a class of 14 or so. If I have my math right, that's about 67 years ago.

With my Altoona background, I was able to survive World War II – and my academic wars that followed it as well. I emerged with bachelor and masters degrees from the University of Wisconsin and a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Iowa. Over the years I became a practicing clinical psychologist, a research psychologist, a university professor, and an author.

I am indebted to Altoona and to the Altoona school system for the part each played in whatever personal or professional success I have achieved.

How was I to repay that debt? With a scholarship of course. With it, I could 1) honor the high achievement and potential of this very current generation of Altoona students and 2) express my gratitude to the Altoona of my generation.

This scholarship is established in the memory of Mary A. and John H. Thurston, my parents, as representatives of the old time, hardcore Altoona railroad working class – the common folk of Altoona, Wisconsin. While enduring and surviving the incredible hardships of the Great Depression of the 1930's they, and their fellow townfolk, provided for the educational and intellectual stimulation of their children.

Thompson, Underwood, Schilling, Harris, Semisch, Griese, Sires, Radawitz, Bundt, Steuding, and many others, are just names to you. But to me, they're very real people. By today's standards, what they contributed might not be considered much. But it was their best shot. And that's all one could have hoped for. They should be remembered for what they did. Both you and I are the beneficiaries of what they have done. It is to them, and what they represented, that this Mary A. and John H. Thurston Scholarship is dedicated.

This is the third awarding of this scholarship.



Mary and John R. Thurston – 1924



John H. Thurston – 1944

Today Decides Tomorrow*

Dear friends, faculty, and parents:

You have gathered here tonight to take part in a rather commonplace event, the Commencement exercises of a graduating high school class. This happens every year at this school and thousands of others. Speakers speak, prayers are given, and diplomas are handed out. Last year at this event, we spoke for, hoped for, and prayed for peace.

This year, it is different, for we are at war with Germany, Italy, and Japan, formidable enemies now in control of many conquered countries.

We graduates now face a new world, a world we have never known before, a world gone mad. Each of us has greater responsibilities and more unknown challenges than anyone in any generation before us. Albeit reluctantly, we, the youth of America, now appear to hold the destiny of the world in our hands.

Up until now, we have led sheltered lives. Are we prepared to take on the challenges imposed upon us? Our teachers have armed us, and armed us well, with the strongest armor that the world has ever known. That armor is knowledge. It's a knowledge that is free from prejudices and the harm that they produce. All our institutions, ideas, and faiths will rise or fall depending on the outcome of this conflict. Abraham Lincoln, confronted with the incredibly divisive Civil War, repeatedly stated his belief that all men are created equal. We must remember this now as never before. An American is an American whether he is black or white, Catholic, Protestant, or Jew. As Americans, we must remain united with a common resolve if we are to win this war.

The poor and oppressed from all over the world look to our nation for leadership, a fighting force, and material aid. Our flag, emblematic of our heritage, is now a symbol for freedom throughout the world. It has become a beacon of hope that keeps tired men working and brave men fighting even when their causes may seem lost.

When the war is over, if we have fought and worked hard enough, we shall be able to dictate the peace. After World War I, it was said that we had won the war but lost the peace. This must not happen this time. We, the people, must make that peace a firm and lasting one. If we fail, it seems inevitable that death and destruction will once again sweep across the world. We have a chance to prevent this, an opportunity that we may never have again. We must not let it slip through our fingers.

When we students leave our hallowed halls of learning, each of us will enter into this conflict at some level. We must aid our country. Some of us will enter the armed services; others will join the work force. All will aid in an all-out war effort. Our futures and those of our posterity will depend on the quality of our performances.

Our course lies clear. We cannot fail.

Succeed, we can; succeed, we must!

*Valedictory Address delivered by John R. Thurston at the 1942 graduation ceremonies of Altoona High School. Altoona Auditorium, Altoona, Wisconsin, May 28, 1942 (this was delivered in the very dark days of WW II about seven months after Pearl Harbor and America's entry into that conflict)

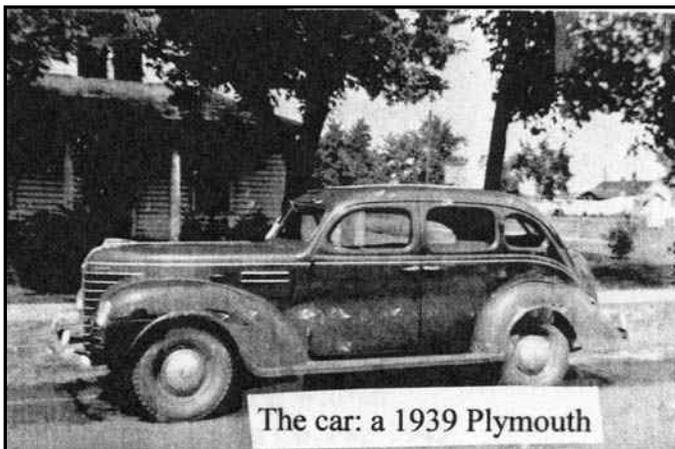
*Valedictory Address delivered by John R. Thurston at the 1942 graduation ceremonies of Altoona High School. Altoona Auditorium, Altoona, Wisconsin, May 28, 1942 (this was delivered in the very dark days of WW II about seven months after Pearl Harbor and America's entry into that conflict)

Wheels

John R. Thurston

In days gone by, an auto played a far different role than it does in our current society. Not everyone had a car in the 1920's and 1930's.

We had one. It was a 1928 Pontiac, purchased just in time for the Great Depression. While the price was well under \$1000, it undoubtedly posed substantial financial problems for my family. My father, a railroad brakeman, could go for a year without making "a run," a 100 mile trip, the equivalent of an eight hour day. There was no unemployment compensation available then. If one didn't work, there was no meat on the table. Much later, after Franklin Delano Roosevelt's plans were enacted, my father worked for the W.P.A., the Works Progress Administration. He shoveled snow and built roads for 25 cents an hour. My mother returned to work for a short time as a telephone operator in Eau Claire. With an annual income close to zero, a car was clearly an unaffordable luxury. But we hung on to it, probably because no one could afford to buy it. During the winter months, the car's radiator was drained and it was "put up on blocks" to save tire wear and avoid winter driving. Roads were rarely plowed in those days. Besides, there was no place to go. Going to Minneapolis was an adventure, and an expensive one at that, even though gas cost only 25 cents a gallon.



The fate of the Pontiac escapes me. But in 1939, a Plymouth was purchased and came to play a very large part in my life. I learned how to drive with it. As a high school student, I had access to it. This was most unusual although I didn't fully realize it at the time. Many first time

experiences, unique unto late adolescence, were undertaken in it, e.g.

first kiss and associated pleasures.

In 1942, I was in a car accident with a car owned by someone else. I broke my leg in the process. The Nash, driven by Lawrence Radisewitz, collided head on with another at the corner of Brackett and Rudolph Road in Eau Claire. In a perverse sort of way, this proved to be a fortuitous event for my extended convalescence postponed my entry into the Navy by about a year. Who knows what might have become of me had I entered service at the age of 18?



The 1939 Plymouth loomed large in my leaves at home while in the Navy. In the 1940's, my father worked the "Mondovi route." The following picture was taken in Mondovi – maybe 1944. My father, John Henry Thurston, is the one in overalls. The Mondovi Line went from Mondovi to Marshfield one day and returned to Mondovi the next. This photo brought back no end of memories for me – my 1944-45 driving the train crew down there on a Monday, Wednesday and/or Friday – and then picking them up on a Tuesday, Thursday and/or Saturday – when I was on leave from the navy and desperately needed a car to use on my wild nights on the town.

I remember waiting endlessly for the train to come in, for the engine to be turned around on the turntable, and for the crew to assemble for the ride back to Altoona. The job and travel had special advantages: Extra gas ration coupons and an opportunity to shop in Mondovi for hard to get butter and toilet paper. – John R. Thurston

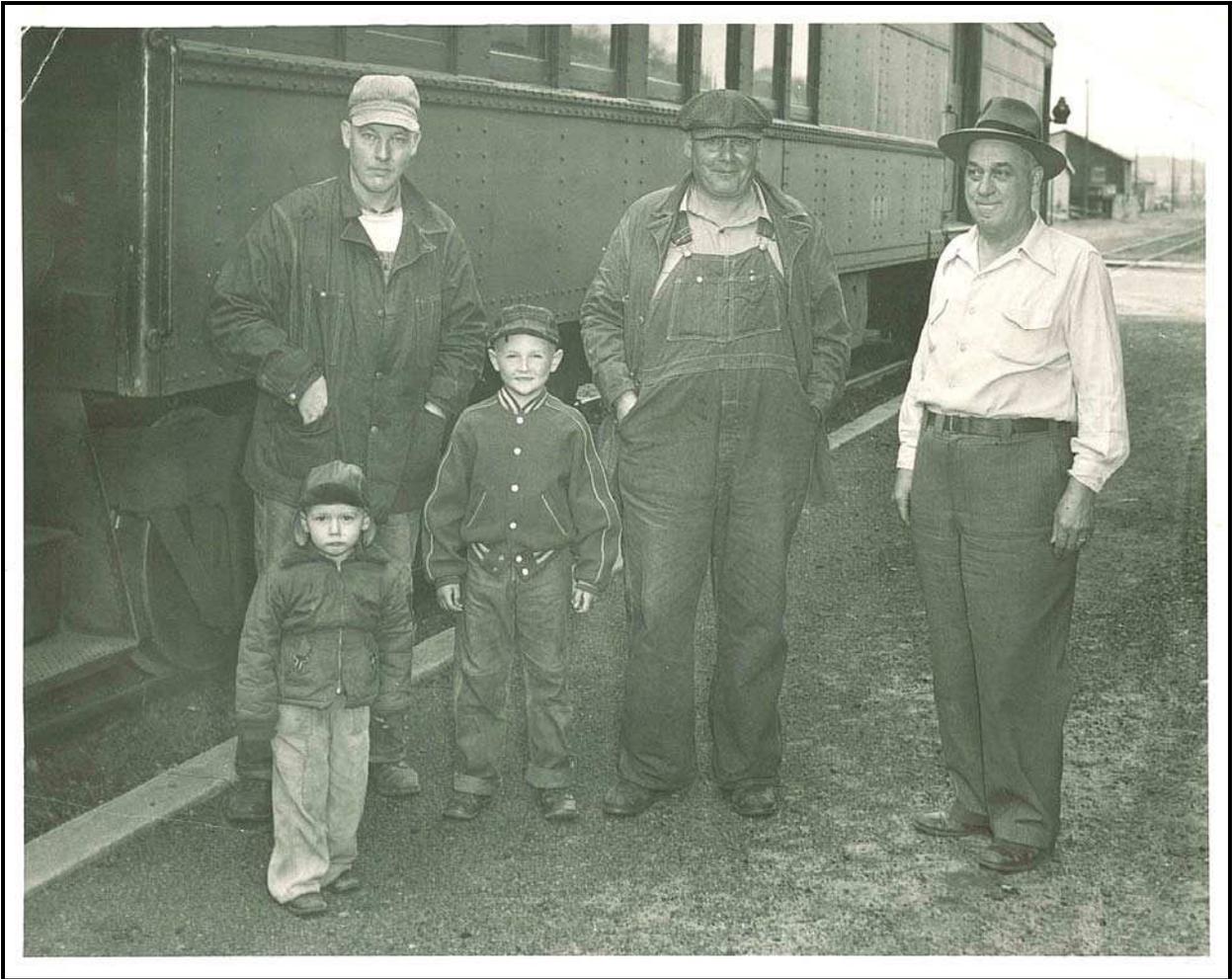
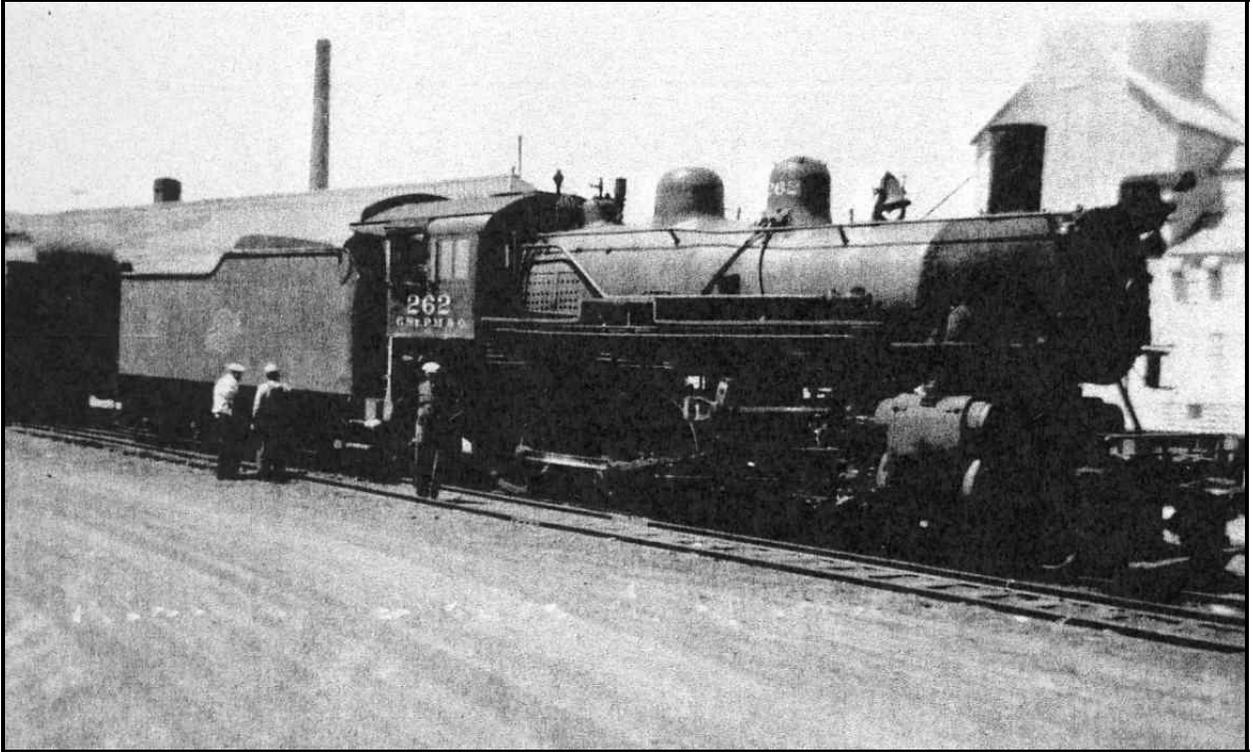


Photo provided by Arlyn Colby

Left: Axel Volkman (age 26)

Center: John H. Thurston (about age 46)



John H. Thurston, Mondovi, Wisconsin – 1945

But let us return to my experiences involving the Plymouth. When I was home on leave from the Navy, I had an absolute need for this car, especially on a Saturday night. To get it, I had to drive to Mondovi, pick up the crew, and drive home with them. It was only then, that I would have the Plymouth to myself. I could then go wherever I pleased within the constraints imposed by gas rationing. There were always complications. I would drive to Mondovi and sit for what seemed to be endless hours waiting for the train to pull in. Then, the engine had to be turned around by hand on a turntable so as to be ready for next day's return trip to Marshfield. Time hung heavy on my hands. It seemed to take them forever to do this before we were able to take off, finally for the long, long trip (really only about 22 miles) to Altoona. Some nights, the Plymouth and I weren't emancipated until after 10 o'clock. Precious time, incredibly precious to a sailor home on leave, had been wasted.



The Switching Hour

John R. Thurston

At one time or another, almost everyone has seen long freight trains rumbling over our prairies, through our mountain ranges, and snaking into our cities. Few, however, have ever considered how these trains are composed or “made up,” how or why each boxcar came to occupy a special place up front, to the rear, or somewhere in between others on the train. If an inquiry were ever made, the questioner would find the answers to be far from simple ones.

Most railroads had---and still have---distribution points. The rail yard at Altoona was a very important one throughout the first half of the 20th century. Freight trains would arrive in Altoona to be disassembled, and then re-assembled as part of other trains outward bound for other local, regional, or more distant destinations. How was this accomplished?

Enter “Switching.” This involved the fate of each boxcar on every train that entered Altoona and one of its two “switchyards.” These East and West Switchyards were where “switching” took place. These were full of “switches,” movable sections of railroad track that when moved would allow boxcars to be shunted from one track to another. A switch was “thrown” by a switchman to accomplish this. He actually moved tracks by seizing a large ball-like handle at the end of a lever and throwing it over toward the ground. The leverage caused the tracks to move.

Each car was “switched,” i.e. taken from the incoming train and eventually assigned to a special place on another train or railroad siding. Who was responsible for this? “Switchmen” They would employ “switches” to accomplish this sorting. And these switchmen would use “switch engines” – small workhorse engines, to move the boxcars.

Switching was---and continues to be---a very complicated process. Some

have likened it to what happens when you are handed a deck of cards and told to deal them out to individuals playing cards with you. This may be helpful in understanding what goes on as long as the reader understands that the dealer must regularly deal proper cards to the fellow players from the top and bottom of the deck as well as from all points in between.

How was a box car, loaded with a special cargo, taken from the incoming train or gathered elsewhere and assigned to a new and proper position on a new outgoing train? That position was eventually determined, of course, by its ultimate destination. This held true for empty boxcars as well. An incoming train would leave the two track main line and come to rest in the vicinity of the switchyards. Its engine would detach and proceed to be serviced. Switchyards were composed of tracks, patterned in a manner that resembled a hand. The wrist was the shorter feeder track, the fingers were the longer tracks on which a new train to be formed or “made up.” The switches were at the juncture point of these two sets of track.

The switch engine would couple with a string of maybe 10-15 boxcars from an incoming train and back off with them toward the switchyards. Once there, on the feeder track, this engine would push these cars with some speed in the direction of a switch juncture point. At the appropriate time, the switch engine would slow down and stop. Maybe one, two, or more boxcars, now uncoupled by the switchmen, would continue on, cascading onto the correct track where they would slam into and couple with the other boxcars of a train that was a-building. Switchmen would “throw” the switch at the juncture point again and again to insure that every boxcar would go onto the proper track. The process was fun to watch. The loud crash of boxcars into those already there was something to anticipate and enjoy repeatedly. Then, the switch engine would back up, switches would be thrown at the juncture point, and the process would be repeated until all the boxcars were distributed on the several tracks. Then, the switch engine would latch on to some more cars from the incoming train, haul them back into the

switch yards and repeat the maneuver. This would be repeated again and again, switch engine busily chugging along, backing up and going forward, gathering boxcars and distributing them to form new trains with the help of switchmen throwing switches. At times, it would be necessary to retrieve and join the boxcars from two or more of the “fingers.”

Eventually, an engine and its tender would be coupled onto the front end of the assembled cars, the cabooses would be coupled onto the tail end, and a new train would be ready to depart. If I had to guess, I would say that the trains were made up of between 50 and 80 boxcars in those days.

All of the above was far more complicated than this simple mixing would suggest. Some incoming boxcars in the mix might have to be diverted to the “rip” or “rep” track for repairs; refrigerator cars had to be iced at the ice house at a scheduled time; others were switched to local tracks for unloading. And boxcars from trains that had come in the day before had to be integrated into these newly-formed outgoing trains. “Making up” such trains was a very complex, ongoing 24/7 operation. The switch engines involved in this never seemed to stop. They undoubtedly accounted for most of the smell of coal smoke and the incessant noise that was part and parcel of Altoona’s atmosphere during this early time period. The cessation of train traffic during the Great Depression led to an alleviation of these problems.

After the newly-constituted train would leave and get to that next stop, some of its cars would be disconnected from the train. They would then be “switched” around as they were distributed to various destinations on the local scene. New cars might then be switched onto the train which would then proceed to the next station.

This complex process is now computerized, a la UPS. The destination and route of each box car is determined early on, its location at any point in time can be observed on the computer screen.

Switch engines are no longer needed to provide the momentum that drives the boxcars onto individual tracks to produce individual trains. Now, they are more likely to rely upon gravity to accomplish this purpose. The switch engine or some propelling device now pushes a line of cars up an incline on the feeder line. At the top of this would be automated switches which would direct the boxcars to the appropriate track of a developing train. At the top of the incline, a single boxcar or several are uncoupled electronically, and gravity sends it to its destination on the track of a new and developing train. A computer now provides the switching as it continuously opens and closes the switches which determine access to the various tracks.

As is obvious, this complex switching operation has always been challenging, getting cars in proper order on a new train takes some doing. And the process was intensely interesting to the dedicated railroad workers of the time. Contemplation of this operation would result in seemingly endless conversations amongst them whenever two or more railroaders met. This activity was called “talking railroad” or “railroading.” On many an occasion, my father would dominate our telephone “party line” as he talked for hours with other railroaders about mistakes that were made and ways for improvement. They were very proud and involved in what they did. After all, they were “railroaders.”

A Star-Crossed Venture
Contributions to the Altoona Star
Altoona, Wisconsin
2007-2009
By John R. Thurston

ALTOONA STAR

a local non-profit newspaper

In mid-2007, I began to make written contributions to The Altoona Star, a tiny, weekly newspaper serving the small community of Altoona, Wis.

Initially, these took the form of "Pithograms," a term of my own devising ("**Purposeful Pithograms**," Thurston, 2002). Pithograms are short, substantive written expressions relating to the people or events that I had encountered or read about in my everyday life. Some refer to them as "sayings" or idioms. Over the years of their development, my Pithograms have become progressively longer.

After contributing Pithograms for awhile, I switched and began to provide my memories of Altoona. Re-visiting those olden days was both intriguing and rewarding. Readers of The Altoona Star appeared to enjoy these articles which described happenings in Altoona's distant past, circa the 1930s and 1940s. Some were eventually included in two books: "**The Old Altoona Public School, A Collection of Memories**," Thurston, 2008 and "**Jesse Jensen, Principal, Teacher, and Coach, Altoona Public School, (1921-1943)**," Hoyt and Thurston, 2008.

However, sad to relate, it appeared to me and many others that from very early on, The Altoona Star was truly "star-crossed," i.e. destined to experience an unhappy fate.

The paper's staff had been unduly optimistic about the community's support of their enterprise. As in the "Field of Dreams," they seemed to operate with the expectation that "we will build a paper and they shall come." They, the citizens and businesses of Altoona, failed to show up. Without substantial, continuing, and effective community backing, subscriptions and advertising couldn't generate sufficient income to keep this uniquely Altoona operation afloat. Such support was not forthcoming. The Altoona Star folded. The last issue was published on January 16, 2009.

Some readers were saddened by this closing, saying that The Altoona Star provided a rallying point for a badly-needed sense of community cohesiveness and uniqueness. Other nay-sayers disparaged the paper, saying that they were better off without it.

By way of commentary, it would seem to me that the current residents of Altoona have been relatively nonchalant in their interest in their city and its history. The railroad's old roundhouse and St. Mary's Church vanished without any real expression of concern. The site of a proposed museum is now a parking lot.

The community of "Old Altoona" had been both cohesive and unique. It was far more than a mere eastward extension of Eau Claire. We were railroaders. Everyone knew everyone else. Without really understanding what was going on, we came to rely upon each other. Things seem very different now. An important question might be raised: What, if anything, differentiates living in "New Altoona" from residing in the Town of Washington, Fall Creek, Fairchild, Augusta, or any other nearby community? It seems possible that current day Altoona, with its citizens having very diffuse special interests, exists in name only. It might just as well be called East Eau Claire again.

Our past history is important. If we don't know where we've been, we are denied an understanding of where we are and where we might be headed. While our current Depression has not yet assumed the depth and devastation of The Great Depression of the 1930's, a great many people have already been forced to adopt new and drastically simplified life styles. Enforced change is in the air. Now, as in The Great Depression, we may feel threatened and fearful in the face of unforeseen challenges. But in the process, we can learn a great deal about ourselves and our highly-complex, personal dependencies upon others. A new sensitivity to our personal and collective histories can help us through these perilous times. We shall eventually overcome our difficulties and prevail. And, as history tells us, there is the distinct possibility that we'll be improved by the experience.

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February 2009

Dr. Leonard Haas

By JOHN THURSTON | Contributor



-Photograph submitted.

Altoona Alumnus, Dr. Leonard Haas while Chancellor of UW-Eau Claire.

Few current Altoona residents have ever heard of Leonard Haas, let alone his monumental accomplishments. The son of a railroad engineer, he grew up in Altoona, graduating from Altoona High School in 1932. Little has been recorded about his early years.

He earned a Bachelor's degree (1935) at the teachers' college that eventually became UW-Eau Claire (UWEC). This was followed by a Master's degree (UW-Madison, 1938) and ultimately, a Ph.D. (University of Minnesota, 1954).

After working as a high school teacher (1935-1941), he returned to his Eau Claire college where he served as a UWEC educator, administrator, and Chancellor (22 years) until 1980. During his long tenure, he was instrumental in UWEC's complicated rise from a small teachers' college (600 students) to a prominent, multi-

disciplined university (11,000 students). In addition, throughout his life, he assumed many important local civic responsibilities.

Chit-chat was never part of his style. At a ceremony honoring him, a toastmaster remarked, "I'm supposed to introduce some levity into these proceedings, but in truth, there's very little that is light about Leonard." Haas was a very serious and dedicated leader. His commitment to the university and his community was total.

He died in 1998 at the age of 83. He was survived by his wife Dorellen (now deceased), two daughters, Karen and Kristine, and many grandchildren.

The UWEC Fine Arts building has been named to honor him and his wife. This Altoona native and his many achievements will long be remembered.

THE ALTOONA STAR

Wisconsin

Friday, August 24, 2007
Volume 3 Number 43

Pithograms

By JOHN THURSTON | Columnist

Pithophobia

The intense, irrational fear that people develop in the presence of a Pithogrammer, i.e. a person who might observe them, actually listen to what they are saying, and create a publishable Pithogram to memorialize the event.

Navy Slang

"Up your nose with a rubber hose" was probably not unique to sailors. Nor was "Up your oola with a ten inch roola." Among other things, the latter might suggest what is involved in a colonoscopy.

As a colon cancer veteran (1986), I have undergone many colonoscopies. I have been "privy" to changes in the sophistication of this procedure and its discomfort. It used to be a truly daunting procedure. Some ten to 20 years ago, a nurse was assigned to do what was necessary to make sure that the colon was properly clear and clean for the procedure. Repeated enemas were the way to go. Rumor had it that this nurse was called "The Rear Admiral" by her professional colleagues.

Mr John R Thurston
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Senior Moments

“The Trip”: Altoona students venture to Badger football game during Great Depression

By JOHN THURSTON | Contributor

In the late 1930s, the onset of one football season was especially important to Altoona school kids. And one might wonder why. There was no high school football team. The Packers were then on par with the Chippewa Falls Marines, a local semi-pro team that commanded little attention. Wisconsin's football team was traditionally mediocre.

The answer lay in “The Trip” to Madison for a Badger football game. I cannot remember the exact year that Altoona students were accorded an opportunity to buy tickets for a game at fifty cents apiece. These would get one into Camp Randall Stadium and a chance to stand on a small, uneven hillside located at the southwest end of the field near the University Fieldhouse. (This hillside has long been buried under expensive, limited-vision end zone seats.)

The game had little appeal. It was the “going” that made “The Trip” so incredibly exciting for us. Bear in mind, our life experiences and horizons were extraordinarily limited. With the Great Depression upon us, we had no money to do much of anything. A trip to Minneapolis was something to plan and talk about. We would be going

to Madison by railroad. As railroad workers had travel passes, each of their family members were entitled to free passport anywhere in the U.S., including Madison. Bear in mind that many of our fathers worked for the railroad. Many of us kids used, maybe abused, this same privilege as we journeyed free on a passenger train from Altoona to Eau Claire in the spring to watch the basketball tournaments. A bus ride cost 12 cents in those days.

On the weekend of our adventure, we went sleepless on Friday night. The train left sometime after midnight. Lawrence “Huntz” Radisewitz and I passed this time away playing cards at my home. We gathered up some food and then walked downtown for the “all aboard.” And the 40-50 of us had our own dilapidated, but serviceable, railroad car. We occupied this car as it sat on a siding. It was then switched into the regular passenger train during its Altoona stop. This arrangement had more to do with our containment than comfort. It kept us from bothering the paying customers in the other cars. But by today's standards, we were a very docile group. We were content with a lot of loud talking, gossip-

ing, fooling around, and trying to impress one's current romantic interest. But a sleeping student, a rarity, would sometimes become a target for group fun. He, rarely she, would have water-filled paper cups placed strategically about his person. One could then wait for the jostling movement of the train to spill one of these. Or, a paper bag might be tossed at him. The end result was the same each time. All of the cups spilled, producing a sleepy-eyed, water-logged, humiliated, and very annoyed fellow student. Who could ask for more?

We were turned loose in Madison at maybe 5 a.m. We sat around the depot until the city awakened. Splitting up into groups, we then trudged up to the Capitol building, some four or five blocks away. We spent a lot of time there, bothering the employees, gathering state government “freebies,” following tour groups around, negotiating the frightening walkway inside the dome. (This has been closed to the public for decades.) We then walked up State Street, ascended Bascom Hill, explored the University campus, and eventually went out on the football field. None of us ever gave a thought that we might

someday attend this university.

We were never very interested in the game itself. It was but a minor part of our “great adventure,” an event that we created by ourselves. For a couple of days, we were emancipated and special, doing something very special for ourselves. After the game, we drifted back downtown to await our departure. Would that we could have afforded a pedometer! The number of miles we walked during this venture was bound to be impressive. Note also how little money we spent during this venture. We bought virtually nothing. But we did splurge on one occasion. For a single dime, each of us could kill hours while keeping warm at the Majestic Theater. We watched a double feature and two serials while enjoying a complimentary soft drink.

At about 10 or so, we ambled down to the depot to board our special car. Now a very subdued and tired group, we passed the time more or less sleepily until we ended up in Altoona very early on Sunday morning. And our lives went on very much as they had before.

THE ALTOONA STAR

★ ★ a local non-profit newspaper ★ ★

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Resident John Thurston preserves local memories

By EMILY HINKER • emilyh@altoonastar.org
 As a regular contributor to the "Memories of Altoona" section of the *Altoona Star*, John Thurston often shares his adolescent experiences with readers of the Star. Thanks to a six-month-long effort to collect even more memories, however, people from all over the Chippewa Valley will soon be able to share recollections of growing up in Altoona with many more people. A collection of memories from various Altoona alumni will soon be published in a spiral-bound book titled "The Old Altoona Public School: A Collection of Memories."

After attending the old Altoona Public School from kindergarten through graduation, Thurston served in the U.S. Navy during World War I. He went on to college at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he graduated with a degree in psychology, then a master's and doctorate

MEMORIES CONTINUES ON PAGE 4



Photo submitted by JOHN THURSTON
 From left to right: Altoona alumni Hank Harris, John Thurston, Joe Wittren, and Bud Griese. Dunn County Fair, 1945.

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Memories / Publication dedicated to Beulah Turney



From left to right: Altoona alumni Hank Harris, Norm Becker, Charles Steuding, Bud Griese, Joe Wittren, and John Thurston hang out near Fairchild in 1945.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
 in psychology. He returned to Eau Claire and taught at the university for over 30 years.

After his retirement in 1987, Thurston self-published many books based on his childhood and adolescent

experiences in Altoona, his service in the U.S. Navy, his professional experiences as a psychologist, and his many travel experiences. For his own pleasure, Thurston revisits his memories of all these experiences.

"For my own amusement and amazement, I reconstruct my experiences through memories," said Thurston. His memory is sharpened by these exercises and he is able to recall memories with exquisite detail.

Thurston's exercise of writing about his childhood experiences in Altoona has extended to collecting memoir contributions of varying length from former students and faculty of the old Altoona school. Destroyed by a fire on Halloween night in 1951, the school lost priceless trophies, pictures, memorabilia, and records. Thurston hopes his and others' efforts will help restore a part of Altoona's lost history.

"I've been compiling my own memories of those days for a while. Then I thought, why not have other people join in and share memories?" explained Thurston.

"Others can help fill in the gaps and we can recall great memories together." He has been asking for and receiving contributions since November 2007, using the media, letters, and word-of-mouth communication to inform

people about the project.

"The deadline for all contributions is May 1. So far I have 16 contributors, though I'd like to have 20," said Thurston. Contributors are asked to include their name, when they graduated or attended school, and any memories regarding school experiences as well as photographs from their school days. Thurston hopes to have the collection ready for publication by June 2008.

Contributors have written about specific teachers, old hangouts, and everything in between.

"I clearly remember my eighth-grade teacher, **Beulah Turney**. Teaching was her whole world," Thurston recalls. "She had a big impact on my education, and I'm dedicating the publication to her," he added.

"Writing about my school days - it's a journey to a very important part of my life," said Thurston. Though the publication will not be distributed for sale, it will serve as a medium for the families of former students and faculty to learn about and remember Altoona's history.

More information about John Thurston's publication, "The Old Altoona Public School: A Collection of Memories," can be found by contacting John via email at thurstjr@charter.net.

ALTOONA STAR

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2008

Memories of Altoona: Jesse Soren Buch Jensen (1900-1977)

By JOHN THURSTON • Local Contributor



JESSE JENSEN

Jesse Jensen, an Altoona icon, is virtually unknown to current residents of this community. The scholastic pattern that he established continues to have consequence to all students now enrolled in Altoona public schools. Without "Jess," there is a great likelihood that there would be no such system.

"Jess" was a teacher, coach, and principal in the Altoona public school system for well over two decades, from the very early 1920s to 1943 or so.

Prior to his arrival, the school system was in shambles; it was in desperate need of a strong disciplinarian who could develop excellent educational and athletic programs. "Jess" was that man.

Altoona residents became justifiably proud of their school over the many years of his tenure. The quality education enabled students to set and achieve important personal, vocational, and academic goals. The athletic

teams could hold their own with anyone.

This pride was tested after the fire of 1951 destroyed the school. It would have been far more "cost-effective" for Altoona to have avoided re-building and become a part of the Eau Claire School District. Principal Einar Pedersen, with strong community backing, insisted on building a new school. Altoona citizens overwhelmingly approved the necessary bond issue 618-159. The fine reputation of "Jess" Jensen's school system was the backbone of that support.

Current Altoona residents, faculty, and students might contemplate the consequences if that new school had not been built. For starters, there would be no Railroader athletic teams; Altoona "starters" of today would have had to compete for varsity status with many players from a much broader community. An important source of pride, a local and independent school system, would not exist. The list of benefits is a very long one.

There isn't even a plaque, let alone a school building named after him, that would acknowledge and honor Jesse Jensen and the crucial contributions he made to Altoona. "Jess" Jensen richly deserves both remembrance and some tangible expression of community gratitude.

An Election of the Distant Past

While I was very much alive long before the "Election of 1940," I choose to reminisce about that event.

Our nation had been crushed by the Wall Street "Crash of 1929." President Hoover couldn't handle this economic disaster. As he began to deal with our decade-long "Great Depression," Franklin Delano Roosevelt or "FDR," the 1932 Democratic Presidential candidate, exuded the confidence and hope that we so desperately needed. His words, "the only thing we have to fear, is fear itself," resonated with us. He was elected that year and in 1936. He did things. Some worked. Some-didn't. But under his administrations, we dealt with the Depression and were well on our way to economic recovery by 1940. He tried for an unprecedented third term in that year. The clouds of World War II were gathering. Before the election, in October, 1940, a draft call went out for all men 21-31 years of age. FDR clearly saw the writing on the wall.

His 1940 opponent was Wendell Wilkie, a likeable Republican from Indiana. Despite big time financial experience, Wilkie liked to portray himself as one of us common folk. Opponents used to characterize him sarcastically as "the bare foot boy from Wall Street."

There were great differences between the current election campaign and those of yore. In the past, campaigns were mercifully much shorter. Their costs were within the bounds of

reason. There was no TV and its "talking heads" that babble pointlessly, albeit authoritatively, about everything the candidates do or say. There were no TV or sound bites, cherry-picked by the candidate to put himself in the most favorable light. Voters weren't targeted or ignored because of their past voting records. There were no harassing "Robo-calls" or savagely negative, misleading radio and TV ads. An opponent wasn't characterized as the embodiment of evil. There were no exit polls or statistical-weightings of poll results. There were no computer-based vote projections and illustrations of red and blue states.

In 1940, voters talked to one another about the candidates, often in the barber shop or pool hall or at the kitchen table. Laid-back, extended discussions such as these often determined the votes of the participants. Voters back then may have been fully-informed in very important ways. The Madison Avenue glitz gets in the way of anyone searching for the truth nowadays.

On election night, all of us listened to the radio. We felt as though we were truly involved participants. We heard first about how things were going on the East Coast and discussed amongst ourselves what that really meant. We would lean forward in our chairs in anticipation of the next returns. There was no opportunity, nor any need, to hurry and find out the final result. FDR eventually won in a landslide with an electoral vote of 449-82.

On November 4, 2008, it seems likely that the winner will be established early and the rest of the night will involve

formalities. It is unlikely that there will be any suspense. If you watch, it'll be a lot like reading a mystery novel after you've read the last pages. NBC or CNN will probably make an announcement early on that "they" have adjudged whomsoever to be the winner. "They" will make it sound as though they, not the voters, have made that decision. I find myself now to be more spectator than participant. And that saddens me. There is no doubt that things have changed. But sometimes change is anything but progress.

Submitted to the Altoona Star by John R. Thurston 10.27.08

Chapter Seven

The Altoona Memories of Several Contributors

All Things Altoona

By Robert Bredesen

About the Author – presently living at 1935 Schultz Road, Fall Creek, WI 54742

1. Born and raised in Altoona.
2. 904 Bartlett Avenue was my home during my grade school and high school years.
3. Graduated from Altoona High School in 1946.
4. Graduated from University of Wisconsin/Eau Claire (BAS-Science).
5. Graduated from University of Wisconsin/Madison (Masters-Science).
6. Graduated from University of Wisconsin Stout (Masters Counseling and Guidance).
7. Alumna of University of Wisconsin Superior (School Administrator).
8. Employment: Eleva Strum High School teacher 1950-51.
9. United States Marine Corps 1951-1953 (Korean war 1952-1953)
10. 1953-1954 Teacher Elk Mound High School.
11. Altoona Public Schools 1954-1990, Teacher, Coach, Athletic Director, Elementary Principal, High School Principal, Superintendent of Schools for 15 years.

EMANUELS GROCERY STORE THE HUB OF DOWNTOWN ALTOONA

In the early 1940's Bill and Rose Emanuel came to Altoona and established Emanuel's store on the Southeast corner of Division Street and Lynn Avenue. At the present time that location is the Altoona Library parking lot across from the Post Office.

The store building was one story, a concrete block structure with a full basement. A wooden shed was south of the main building where hay bales and kerosene were stored until delivered to customers. Also there was one gas pump located in front of the store; it may have been Altoona's first gas station.

The front door of the store was located on Lynn Avenue where customers entered to the front counter that ran across the front of the store. A large file stood upright on the counter. In those days, railroaders bought groceries between paydays on credit with the slips recording the debt being placed in the register file so the customer's account could be kept. Railroad payday was at the end of the month and on that day the customers would come to the store and cash their checks and pay their grocery bills.

Each Friday the Eau Claire paper would run a huge ad listing the weekend grocery specials, those papers were delivered around town on Saturday morning. At that time the housewives would develop their grocery lists for the week and call the store to place their orders, usually to Hugh Russell a mainstay at the store who knew all the answers.

With the arrival of the grocery orders duplicate slips were made, one for the credit file and one to be placed in a box where the groceries would be prepared for delivery. Putting up orders was a process done by Hugh Russell, Cecil Walker, Virginia Walters and myself. Once the cardboard box was filled as per the slip, it would be placed in

an area of the store for the morning delivery and another area for the afternoon delivery.

Cecil Walker was the man in charge of the delivery routes, he was in charge of a ¾ ton Chevy van which he and his helper loaded with boxes to be delivered first in the morning delivery and then back to the store for the afternoon delivery. It should be noted that hay bales were sometimes delivered for animal feed as well as five gallon kerosene cans to customers who had kerosene stoves to cook or heat with.

Every Friday a farmer would bring a truckload of potatoes to the back of the store, place a slide to a bin in the basement and slide his potatoes into the bin. Every Saturday morning a bagger would fill paper sacks with potatoes, each sack holding about a peck of spuds. These were for the Saturday deliveries.

One of the rewards of being the bagger was passing through the hall to the basement where there was a big wooden barrel full of sauerkraut; it had a wooden cover on it which we could lift and sample the kraut which was sold to the customers.

On some Saturdays Nora Emanuel (Bill's daughter) would drive the delivery truck. When Nora drove there was always a package of sweet rolls to eat as we worked. Nora always was in a hurry hence she had a heavy foot on the gas pedal.

Fresh meat was always available from the meat counter at the back of the store and the large cooler near by it. Dean Strong was the butcher in charge of the area, he taught me that once around a pound of hamburger was enough string, it didn't need three times around and when you make an ice cream cone, roll it into the scoop as it looks bigger and sets higher on the cone.

Rose Emanuel was the business manager of the store. Her desk was in the back corner of the store; she checked the invoices, paid the bills and watched the line of credit of the customers.

My first day on the job Bill called Mike Dagleman, a county patrol officer, to get me a drivers license. Mike came to the store, and in about ten minutes I had my license and was driving the delivery truck the next day.

World was II was underway during the early 40's – most of the seventeen year olds on up were gone to war so, as a 15 year old, jobs were easy to find. Harold Russell, Hugh's son, was a fighter pilot at the time. Every now and then he would come flying over the water tank and the school, down Division Street, over the store and depot and off into the sky. He usually was several hundred feet in the air, which created a huge roar. Everybody knew Harold was in town.

One last reflection is to honor the memory of Bill and Rose Emanuel. As a young man I could not have found a better group of people to work with. They treated their employees' right. I'll always remember they gave us a bonus every Christmas to reward us for the work we had done throughout the year.

THE ICEHOUSE

In the early 1940's freight trains passed through Altoona on a regular basis. Many boxcars carried products that required cooling but the cars had no refrigerator units. The answer to the problem was to insulate boxcars and build a compartment in each end of the car with a trap door on the ceiling that could be opened so blocks of ice could be dropped down from the top to fill the compartment. Thus, the boxcar would be cool in its interior and a variety of fruits and vegetables could be transported from station to station.

This new method developed the need for an Icehouse to supply the ice hence the Altoona Icehouse was built near the tracks north of the present county shop building. A company called Shipley was formed and ran the icehouse business for the railroad. The Icehouse itself was about as high as a three story building and several hundred feet long. It was filled with sawdust, which acted as an insulator to keep the ice from melting. There was a long deck on the south side of the building high enough so ice could be brought from inside the building to the deck, slid out to a chute leading to the top of the boxcar door and dumped into the boxcar. When the compartment was filled, the top door was shut and the boxcar was ready to go to the next station. Fid Sturz was the director of the

Icehouse operation and he was directly responsible to the Shipley Corporation headquarters in the Twin Cities. Fid had to assemble a crew of workers during the winter months to harvest ice from some of the nearby lakes. They would cut ice into blocks and haul them to the Icehouse until it was full. Sawdust was placed over the ice to keep it from melting. Once it was full, the ice was ready for the warm season. The summer crew was hired by Fid. They usually consisted of six footers with large shoulders and muscular arms as moving the blocks of ice from the lower levels of the Icehouse to the top required pushing the blocks on skids by putting an ice pick in the block and pushing. The chore was not hard on the level, but an uphill angle required strength. Fid was strong as a bull as were Darrell Sturz (just home from the Army), 6'3" with broad shoulders – I would say a perfect build. Ernie Walker and Norm and Bernie Sturz made up Fids' crew. Although he hired me for one summer even though I was 5'6" and 125 pounds – not a heavy duty guy. He knew I would be reliable and knew that was a quality needed at the Icehouse.

Fid was a great boss. He always worked right along with the rest of us and with his easygoing disposition he made everyone feel at home.

Time passed and boxcars had built in air conditioners – thus the need for the Icehouse disappeared... as did the jobs that were associated with it.

THE OMAHA RAILROAD AND ALTOONA

As a young boy back in the early 1940's I lived about two blocks from the railroad tracks where I could listen and see the passenger and freight trains coming into and out of the railroad yards. In the late spring and early summer we saw many unemployed men we called bums or hobos because they had no homes and traveled from the South, where they had spent the winter, to the West for the summer where they could work some seasonal jobs.

My Grandmother, Clara Johnson, lived in a home near the tracks where the same bums would stop on the way through Altoona to get a handout. She always gave them something to eat and they usually stopped on the way to the West and on their return trip to the South where they would spend the winter. The practice continued with my Mother, Ruth Bredeson, giving them handouts after our family moved into my Grandma's house. In many cases they would split wood or other tasks if she had any for them to do. We had a pump in the back yard where fresh cold water would flow if you had the energy to pump the handle. This pump was an attraction for the bums as they had been riding the boxcars for a number of hours and were thirsty when they arrived in town. They all knew where they could get cold water.

Things were tough economically in those days. Depression days were still evident and many a time men could be seen with a sack on their back coming from the railroad yards carrying it full of coal to keep their homes warm. The coal came from coal cars passing through town. Men could be seen carrying grain doors from the tracks to their homes to use in building their homes or their sheds. The grain doors were the size of a normal door and were used by the railroad to nail across the sliding doors of boxcars. They were laid sideways to cover the open space and then the boxcar was filled with grain or wheat from the West and hauled to the East where the wheat was emptied. Hence the return back through Altoona where the boxcars were empty with the main doors open and many grain doors laying inside. It has been said that many of the smaller houses in East Altoona, along the track, were partially built with grain doors.

My Grandfather, Albert Johnson, nicknamed "Preacher" because he was a minister in his spare time, but his main job was in the railroad where he worked as a car tapper. His duties consisted of waiting for a freight train to come in and then he had to walk the length of the train checking the wheat and axels of the boxcars to see that the grease around the axels was adequate, if not he carried grease to fill the space provided to take the boxcar to the next service area in Minneapolis to the West and Marshfield to the East. He also had to haul coal in his wheelbarrow to the east end of the railroad yard where there was a small shanty with a potbelly stove which he had to keep going in the wintertime as it was a warming house for section men and switchmen when needed. One of my friends told me a story about Grandpa that characterized him. It went like this... Grandpa kept a wheelbarrow full of coal by the warming house so when he was in the area he could put some coal in the potbelly stove. One night he came to the warming shack to rebuild the fire and the coal and the wheelbarrow were gone. He knew my friend had taken it and when he saw him he said "Chuck, I don't care if you steal the coal but do you have to take my wheelbarrow?"

My classmate, Bob Klingbeils', dad was the section foreman in Altoona yards and every Summer the railroad had extra help to work on the section so Bob and I were lucky enough to get a job there when we were 16 years old. There was a section house that we reported to every morning about 8 a.m. We did various jobs, from using big sickles for cutting grass to replacing worn out creosote ties. Replacing the ties required removing steel plates by pulling out spikes on each side of the rail then removing the old tie from under the rail, dropping large gravel stones in the hole around the new tie and using a spade to tamp rocks under the tie to ensure that it was tight against the rail then driving the spikes through the steel plates to hold the rail in place. We usually worked in hot, sunny weather in groups of men, many who chewed snuff requiring spitting often. We had one water jug to drink out of, the non-chewers and the snuff chewers. I vowed I would not drink out of the same jug as the chewers but the heat got to me and I did.

Al Klingbeil was our boss (a great guy) and one of the old time workers was Bill Hempelman...who smoked a pipe that was always in his mouth and after some years of use it made flat groves in his lips. The Fall Creek section crew came up to Altoona one hot July day to remove the corn from a boxcar that had broken down and we were pressed into service to help do the job. The door to the broken down car was open with grain doors nailed across the door to about six feet high. A metal chute was placed from the broken down car to the open door of the good boxcar door across several grain doors about three feet high. The foreman from Fall Creek, named Wilhelm, gave us scoop shovels and we climbed into the cars with the corn and started shoveling corn out and down the chute. Of course our foreman, knowing we were young and inexperienced informed us that the speed record for a boxcar transfer was four hours, hence we had something to shoot for even though it was 90degrees in the top of the corn loaded car. We got the job done, but no record.

THE ROUNDHOUSE

In the late 1940's I was able to gain employment at the Roundhouse, which was a huge round building located between the Depot and Lake Road on the north side of the tracks. The main purpose of the building was to house steam engines that came from Minneapolis in the West through Spooner or Superior or from Marshfield, Adams or Elroy in the East. Once they arrived in Altoona, they left the main rail yard and came down a spur track, first coming to a cinder pit area where the hot coals and clinkers were removed from the firebox area of the engine. Rheinhold Schlewitz was in charge of the area and I had the privilege to help him on many occasions. When the engine was stopped with the firebox over the cinder pit we used a huge lever to fit on a rod that shook the grates so the fire and clinkers fell out into the cinder pit below the firebox. There was always an engineer on duty called a "hostler" and his job was to run the engine back to a round table located like the hub of a wheel in the center space of the Roundhouse. The hostler helper lined up the round table tracks with the tracks the engine was on and the hostler backed the engine onto the round table where it was balanced on a pivot point in the middle. The helper then moved the round table around to the spur where the engine would go to be serviced before ordering it back out on a run again. The table was run by an electric motor and worked nicely when the engine was balanced. When lined up the engine was moved into the spur and stopped when the smoke stack was lined up with the smoke stack in the Roundhouse roof so any smoke from the engine would rise or be blown out of the round house into the air.

On several occasions the engine was not stopped in time and hit the back of the Roundhouse wall causing the brick wall to collapse.

The day hostler for years was Mayor Fred Gloede the Altoona Mayor for many years and as nice a gentleman as you could ever meet.

MACHINIST AND BOILERMAKER

The engine's boiler was now inspected to see that no leaks were in the boiler walls. Al Boetcher worked the night shift for years, going inside the boiler through the firebox door to check for leaks and then to the pit under the engine to look up and inspect the underside of the firebox and boiler for leaks. Once he was satisfied, he gave the okay for its release to go on the road again.

At the same time the boiler was being inspected, the mechanics were greasing and adjusting moving parts of the wheels and power rods from the steam cylinders to the wheels. When all appeared to meet inspection, the engine was off for service again. Newell Peltier, Ernie Steuding and others worked the 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. shift for many years at the mechanics job. Any abnormalities noticed by the engine crew that brought the engine in off its

run were always reported to the Roundhouse foreman.

Steam engines were easy to fire up again after the boiler had been inspected and released for service. I say easy if the engine still had steam pressure in the boiler. So that the fire up jack could run the stoker, a wormlike device running from the coal car to the firebox of the engine. When turned on the worm (auger) turned in a spiral manner bringing ground coal to the firebox spraying it all over the grates of the boiler. Because of the heat from the boiler area the coal quickly dried and would ignite easily when the fire up jack brought his cart (which was filled with fuel oil). Next to the engine a long hose from the tank was placed in the firebox. The tank was hooked up to an air pressure system and that pressure sprayed a film of fuel oil over the coal. The engine's blower was turned on to blow air across the bed of coal and up the smoke stack. The fire up jack lit a piece of waste and threw it into the firebox setting the coal ablaze very quickly. The smoke would move out the smoke stack of the engine and through the chimney of the Roundhouse where the engine had been spotted. The engine quickly built steam pressure in the boiler. The pressure could be read on the gauge in the engine. The engine had a water tank attached to it and a pump that pumped water into the boiler around the firebox heating it up. When the engine had enough steam the blower was shut down to slow down the burning of coal hence lowering the amount of heat to convert water in the boiler into steam. Sometimes the steam gauge rose too high so, to prevent damage to the boiler, a blow off valve was opened to blow off steam from the engine's boiler.

A small office was located in the Roundhouse it was called the "bull pen" because that was the place where the engine crews (fireman and engineer) reported for work at the beginning of the run or at the end of their run. Many stories were told here, hence the name "bull pen". There was a large chalkboard on the south wall. This board listed all of the outgoing trains and incoming trains. Some were on regular schedules and some were extras ordered because there were enough boxcars in the yard to send to cities such as Elroy, Marshfield, Adams, Spooner or Minneapolis.

There were passenger trains, freight trains and switch engines for the Altoona yard. The dispatcher at the Altoona depot would be notified if crews were needed and he in turn called the "bull pen" where the Roundhouse foreman on duty would mark the needed train on the board. The callboy on duty would then notify the crew who was on line to work the train. Many of the crew's members lived in hotels in town or private homes in town. The callboy had to go to these rooms and wake them up and advise them when they had to be at work. They usually stopped at the restaurant to get coffee and a bite to eat. The waitress was Dolly Cedarberg who was on the night shift at the restaurant for years.

The train crews came to the Roundhouse spur track to the main yard. Here they picked up their engine and started on their way, stopping at the water tank and filling up the water tank in their engine tender (car hooked onto the engine containing water and coal.) Next stop was at the sand house operated by Rink Henning who had burners in the sand house which dried sand to be blown out pipes to a sand compartment at the top of the engine, about even with the front wheels. In slippery weather the engineer could open a valve and release sand to land in front of the power wheels of his engine providing traction so the engine could pull its load without the wheels slipping.

The engine is now ready to go to the alt yard to hook up to its train and once hooked up, blasts its whistle and proceeds out of town.

ROUNDHOUSE FOREMAN
BILL LANEYAR

When the word Altoona Roundhouse comes up you have to think of one man in particular, his name was Bill Laneyar and he was an Irishman through and through with a no nonsense approach to his job. He was the headman in charge of everyone who worked in the Roundhouse. I think of his work ethic to this day and respect the tremendous job that he did. The beginning of the end of the Roundhouse era came with the invention of the diesel engine for rail transportation. The steam engine gradually disappeared along with the many jobs that it created – hence the Roundhouses around the country vanished along with the steam engine.

Dolly McKeith
A Jewel in Altoona's Crown!

By Ralph Ely

About the Author – Ralph Ely was born in Manitowoc, Wisconsin on July 8, 1921 to Bill and May Ely. After moving to Alma Center in 1922, the family settled in Altoona in 1925. Bill had purchased a soft drink parlor where "The 400 Bar" stands today. For years, he operated a tavern on the site of the now-destroyed Railhaven on Division Street.

Ralph lays claim to the distinction of being "one of a kind" as captain of the basketball team that won the State Class C Championship in 1939. He graduated in that same year. All of his four children and four of his grandchildren have gone through the Altoona Public Schools.

He operated a furniture store on the site of the current VFW building. He has been active in the VFW and in community affairs. He was on the Altoona City Council from 1992-2002.

Dolly McKeith was a jewel in Altoona's crown! She was a long-time cook and waitress in Altoona's big restaurant across the street from the railroad depot, known as the "beanery". She drew fans from all over the railroad line and especially from the citizens of Altoona itself.

Her husband worked on the railroad, but wasn't with her very much. This didn't bother Dolly, and she made a name for herself with her "potty-mouth"! She could swear like a pirate whenever she wanted to, and could be very lady-like when called for.

Railroad men knew her and loved her for the icon that she was. Railroad big-shots came to Altoona to check on the operations, but they never left before going to the "Beanery" for a sample of Dolly's cooking, and her colorful language!

Dolly worked for a series of restaurant owners. In the 1920s and '30s she worked for Mae Ely, and Mrs. Flyte. Years later, she

had a house built on the corner of First Street West and Spooner Avenue. She would get all dressed up in nice clothes and a fur collared coat and high heels, grab the bus, and go shopping in Eau Claire.

After Dolly retired, she went over to the depot every day for coffee and conversation with her buddies working in the office. She may have had a "potty-mouth" at times, but she had a heart as big as the sky, and would do anything for any body. When she died, she was dearly missed by all who ever knew her!

MEMORIES OF ALTOONA

By Esther Gilbert-Metcalf

Born 9-5-1914

WE MOVED FROM CORNELL TO ALTOONA AFTER SCHOOL WAS OUT 1924. WE MOVED IN A HOUSE OF PLANERT'S OUT BY THE OVER HEAD BRIDGE. A SHY LITTLE BOY, DAVID PLANERT, HANDED ME A SACK FULL OF RADISHES THEY HAD JUST GOT OUT OF THEIR GARDEN. THEY SHARED THEIR GARDEN ALL SUMMER. AGNES PLANERT WAS A HARD WORKER AND A WONDERFUL PERSON.

MY GRANDMA GILBERT CAME TO SEE US AND THOUGHT THAT WAS TOO FAR FOR US TO WALK TO SCHOOL. SHE GAVE MY MOTHER \$500 TO GET A PLACE IN TOWN. MY DAD WAS A CARPENTER SO SOON HAD THE PLACE COMFORTABLE. LATER A KITCHEN WAS ADDED.

THE CITY STILL DIDN'T HAVE WATER AND ELECTRICITY IN THAT END OF TOWN. THERE WAS AT OUTSIDE TOILET, WAS COLD TO RUN OUT THERE IN THE WINTER. EVERY ONE DUG A HOLE AND MADE A COVER FOR IT TO PUT OUR GARBAGE IN. WHEN IT GOT NEAR THE TOP THEY FILLED IT WITH DIRT AND DUG ANOTHER ONE. WE ALWAYS HAD A LOT OF FLIES. I REMEMBER THEY USED TO CUT PAPER IN STRIPS AND TACK ACROSS THE TOP OF THE SCREEN DOOR TO SHOO THE FLIES AWAY WHEN WE WENT IN AND OUT.

AARONS LIVED IN THE NEXT BLOCK AND THEY HAD A GOOD WELL AND PUMP. MY BROTHER, ELMER, AND I HAD THE JOB OF PACKING WATER FOR HOUSE USE, WASHING AND BATHS. WE TOOK OUR BATHS IN THE BEDROOM IN A LAUNDRY TUB. THE PUMP HANDLE WAS HOT IN THE SUMMER AND MIGHTY COLD IN THE WINTER. MY MOTHER WOULD SIT AND SHAVE UP BARS OF FELS NAPHTHA SOAP TO WASH CLOTHES. THE WATER WOULD HEAT IN A BOILER ON THE WOOD STOVE. THEN IT WAS PUT IN A WASHER THAT US KIDS HAD TO PULL A HANDLE BACK AND FORTH TO TURN THE DASHER. THE CLOTHES ALWAYS GOT CLEAN. THEN THE CLOTHES WERE WRUNG OUT INTO RINSE WATER, WRUNG OUT AGAIN AND THEN HUNG OUTSIDE ON LINE TO DRY. THEN THEY WERE IRONED WITH IRONS HEATED ON THE STOVE. MANY A SQUABBLE WE HAD OVER WHO DID THE MOST.

IN THE SUMMER WE DID A LOT OF SWIMMING. WE ALWAYS HAD TO FIND AN OLDER PERSON TO GO WITH US. WE HAD TO WALK ACROSS THE RAIL ROAD TRACKS AND THEN DOWN A HILL. WE HAD A CERTAIN PLACE TO SWIM. WE HAD A LOT OF SOFT BALL GAMES AND A LOT OF OTHER GAMES WE PLAYED.

THERE WAS A LOT OF KIDS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD. MY MOTHER WAS EITHER AUNT STELL OR GRANDMA STELL TO ALL OF THEM. SHE ALWAYS HAD SUGAR COOKIES FOR THEM.

SOMEWHERE IN THERE THE CITY GOT ELECTRICITY AND WATER IN OUR END OF TOWN. AS SOON AS IT FROZE THEY FLOODED THE VACANT LOT ACROSS THE ROAD FROM OUR PLACE -- IT MAY HAVE BEEN ON OTTO SEMIISCH'S LAND. THEY HAD A STREET LIGHT ON THE CORNER SO WE COULD SKATE AT NIGHT. MY MOTHER COULD SIT BY THE WINDOW AND WATCH US SO I GOT TO SKATE EVERY NIGHT. LOTS OF NIGHTS SHE HAD HOT CHOCALATE AND COOKIES FOR US. SOMETIMES WE HAD A BON FIRE AND HOT DOGS AND MARSHMELLOWS.

THE CITY BLOCKED OFF THE STREET FROM THE WATER TOWER DOWN TOWN AND ICED IT. IT WAS A GREAT RIDE GOING DOWN, BUT QUITE A WALK GOING BACK UP.

I DID A LOT OF BABY SITTINGS WE USUALLY GOT TEN CENTS NO MATTER HOW LONG IT WAS.

IF THEY HAD DIRTY DISHES THEY EXPECTED US TO DO THEM TOO.

DURING THE DEPRESSION THERE WAS A LOT OF HOBOS, SINCE ALTOONA WAS A RAIL-ROAD TOWN THERE WAS ALWAYS SOME ONE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO EAT. I REMEMBER ONE IN PARTICULAR. A BIG BLACK MAN CAME TO THE DOOR AND ASKED FOR SOMETHING TO EAT, JUST ANYTHING AS I'M SO HUNGRY. MOM HAD JUST TAKEN BREAD OUT OF THE OVEN SO SHE GAVE HIM SOME BAKED FISH AND BREAD. WHEN HE GOT THROUGH HE GOT UP AND RUBBED HIS BELLY AND SAID, LAWSY MAM THAT'S THE BEST FOOD I EVER TASTED.

ANOTHER SIDE OF BEAULAH TURNEY.

EVERY FALL WHEN SCHOOL STARTED SHE WOULD ASK US TO TELL WHERE WE WENT ON OUR SUMMER VACATION. SOME HAD WENT TO THE COAST, MOST TO VISIT RELATIVES. SHE KEPT THREE OF US AFTER SCHOOL. WE JUST KNEW WE WERE IN TROUBLE, BUT SHE NOTICED WE NEVER SEEMED TO GET TO DO MUCH AND WOULD WE LIKE TO GO TO THE FAIR IF OUR FOLKS WOULD LET US. SHE AND HER FRIEND TOOK EAUHICE PLANERT, BEAULAH SCHILLING AND I AND SPENT THE DAY.SHE SHOWED US A FUN DAY.

LEONARD HASS AND I ALWAYS COMPETED FOR GRADES. WE GOT CHOSEN TO GO TO EAU CLAIRE COUNTY SPELLING BEE. WE BOTH PLACED AND THEY HAD A PICNIC AFTERWARDS.

WE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO THROW SNOW BALLS TO AND FROM SCHOOL. BILLY CONNELL KEPT TRYING TO WASH MY FACE IN SNOW. I GOT MAD AND TOOK HIM DOWN

AND WAS REALLY SCRUBBING HIS FACE WHEN I NOTICED THESE TWO BIG FEET. MR. JENSEN JUST SAID,"GOOD JOB" ESTHER, NOW BOTH OF YOU GET UP AND GO HOME. WE DIDN'T DO THAT AGAIN BECAUSE IT WOULDN'T BE THAT EASY ANOTHER TIME.

SINCE THE GIRLS COULD NO LONGER PLAY INTERSCHOLASTIC COMPETITION BASKET BALL MR. JENSEN PICKED TWO TEAMS AND THE GIRLS PLAYED A GAME BEFORE THE BOY'S HOME GAME. I PLAYED BETTER THAN USUAL ONE NIGHT AND THE GIRLS GAVE ME A BAD TIME, SAYING IT WAS BECAUSE MY BOY FRIEND WAS THERE. WHEN MR. JENSEN GAVE US OUR LETTERS AND MY CAPTAIN STAR HE SAID HE WISHED HE COULD PUT ME ON THE BOY'S TEAM. INSTEAD OF BEING' PROUD I WAS EMBARRASSED. WHEN I WAS BACK TO WISCONSIN FOR A CLASS REUNION IN 1975 ELAINE DELMORE CAME ACROSS THE FLOOR, "THERE IS ESTHER GILBERT, I NEVER COULD BEAT HER THROWING FREE SHOTS."

IN THE SUMMER OF 1931 THEY BLACK TOPPED THE ROAD FROM ALTOONA TO FALL CREEK. I GOT A JOB HELPING THE COOK TO COOK FOR THE CREW. I THINK IT WAS IN THE SMITH HOUSE.

WHEN THEY GOT ABOUT HALF WAY THE BOSS COOKED FOR SOME AT FALL CREEK AND SHE LEFT ME TO COOK PART OF THEM. SCHOOL STARTED AND MR. JENSEN SAID I COULD FINISH THE JOB AND I COULD MAKE UP MY WORK AND HE WOULD TALK TO OTHER TEACHERS. AT THAT TIME THERE WAS SCHUTTES STORE, BERGS DRUG STORE, LOOBIE'S AND WHITWAMS MEAT MARKET ON MAIN STREET.

I QUIT SCHOOL AND GOT MARRIED TO HOWARD METCALF. HE WORKED IN THE ICE HOUSE. PEOPLE HAD ICE BOXES THEN. THE ICE MAN BROUGHT BLOCKS OF ICE AND PUT IN TOP. WHEN IT MELTED THE WATER RAN DOWN IN A PAN. IF YOU DIDN'T WATCH AND EMPTY IT YOU HAD TO MOP THE FLOOR.

WHEN HOWARD AND I GOT MARRIED THE LITTLE KIDS SHIVAREED US AND WE GAVE THEM CANDY BARS. THE OLDER PEOPLE GAVE US A SHOWER. THE SHOWERS WERE A LOT DIFFERENT THEN. PEOPLE COULD ONLY GIVE TEN AND TWENTY CENT GIFTS. WE GOT A LOT OF PINK DEPRESSION DISHES. WE GOT TWO EIGHT BY TEN PICTURES. ONE WAS A COLLIE WATCHING OVER A LAMB THE OTHER A LITTLE GIRL SITTING ON A BENCH WATCHING A ROBIN. MY DAUGHTER HAS THESE UP IN HER FRONT ROOM.

WE HAD TWO CHILDREN IN ALTOONA, A BOY AND A GIRL AND ANOTHER GIRL IN OREGON.

ONE OF MY TRIPS BACK TO ALTOONA I SPENT TIME WITH MY DAD AT THE PHEASANT FARM. HE EXPLAINED THE WHOLE PROCESS TO ME. HE REALLY LOVED THAT JOB, BUT SAID HE HATED TO TURN THEM OUT TO GET SHOT.

I FORGOT TO MENTION HOW WE GOT OUR MILK THEN. WE HAD A MILK MAN

DELIVER IT, WHICH WAS HERMAN KLINGBIEL AT THAT TIME. WE WOULD SET EMPTY MILK BOTTLES OUT FOR WHAT WE WANTED AND HE WOULD LEAVE FULL ONES.

LAST TIME I WAS BACK TO ALTOONA I WALKED TO THE HOUSE WHERE I GREW UP. PEOPLE ARE STILL LIVING IN IT.

I WON'T BE GOING BACK AGAIN AS I WILL SOON BE NINETY FIVE, BUT I'LL STILL HAVE MEMORIES.

Comments by Marvel(Schilling) Newton – July 2009

Esther Mae Gilbert was born in Cornell, WI in 1914, daughter of Walter & Estella Gilbert. She grew up in Altoona. They lived a block north (toward the Railroad tracks) of the Semisch home. She didn't graduate from Altoona, quitting school to marry Howard Metcalf.

She stated in my letter that the school colors changed to Red & Black between 1927 and 1931 (I wonder when it was first called the Scarlet & the Black). Aunt Esther specified the years 1927-1931, so I assume that was the time period she was active in school activities.

I could not find any record of the date of her wedding.

She was in school the fall of 1931- per her cooking stint for the road crews blacktopping the Altoona to Fall Creek road (see page 2 of her writing).

That about takes care of any useful thing I can tell you at this point.

LeVon Hazelton-Walker

Background: I was born LeVon Hazelton in Lewiston, Minnesota in 1936. My Dad was an engineer for a CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps), one of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's efforts to deal with the Great Depression of the 1930's) project. My mother was a great cook. I was the youngest child. My oldest brother, Jim, now deceased, became a Captain for American Airlines out of Chicago. My sister Shirley, born in 1928, also deceased, had six children. Brother Dick, now 77, still plays trumpet in various bands and plays taps for the American Legion.

I have loved music all my life. At the age of 4, my mother started me playing the piano. I played by ear until college where I learned to read music. One summer, when I was only 12, Eau Claire's Meyer Music had a bidding sale. I was able to win a clarinet for \$100. But I hadn't told my Dad. When the clarinet arrived I assembled it and proceeded to play "Put Another Nickel in, in the Nickelodeon." Upon questioning by Mr. Meyer, I told him that I had never played a clarinet before. He was impressed. So was my father: he paid for it right then and there. I played clarinet throughout my Altoona school experience and for 4 years in college. I enjoyed singing, acting, and school generally; there were no drugs and excessive drinking in those days.

In 1958, I married Loren Walker, another graduate of Altoona High School. We had two children, Carol and Dan, and three grandchildren. We lived in Kenosha for 30 years and came back to Altoona to retire.

I remember my first day at the Altoona Public School as I had entered the sixth grade in 1947. I can't remember the teacher's name, but she was strict. I had great need to go to the restroom, but she denied me that opportunity. I was holding on reasonably well until she selected me to give a report up front. I then proceeded to answer Nature's call in front of God and everybody. That was dreadfully humiliating. Obviously too late, the teacher then allowed me to go to the restroom. I spent the rest of the day contending with wet underwear. I'll never forget the humiliation. When my mother found out about it, she was furious. She went to the school and taught that teacher a lesson she'd not soon forget.

As I've mentioned in a previous book, the 1951 fire was devastating to me. It is still vivid to me. I stood there crying with the other girls as we watched the fire consume our school, reducing it to a shell. I especially remember the destruction of the trophy case as it fell from the top floor into the basement.

While I had had a perfect attendance record for many years, on one occasion I and some others decided to take a morning off. My companions included Mary Ann Upthall, Dorothy Heike, Art Fenner, and Chuck Olson. After a great morning in the sun down by the lake, we decided to return to school for the afternoon. Our history teacher, Mary Martin spotted us and alerted Einar Pedersen. As he greeted us, he said to me "Well, LeVon, I could expect this of everyone else, but not you." I was devastated. With the exception of Art, we had to stand in front of our lockers all afternoon. He had been in a terrible car accident the previous year and was confined to a wheelchair. Our 1954 Annual was dedicated to Lamoine Anderson who had been killed in that crash. I experienced a bit of guilt when I was awarded a perfect attendance certificate that year. I knew that I didn't deserve it.

I maintain contact with my old buddies. Faye Reiter, Judy Hendrickson, Patsy Werlein, Mary Ann Upthall, Dorothy Heike, and Carol Larson are still going strong. We meet once a month at the Altoona Restaurant to reminisce about our lives at school and the fun we had.

Now, 55 years later, our grandson will be graduating from Altoona High School, just as we did.

One Hundred and Twenty-five Years in Altoona
The Lenz Family History
By Judy Lenz-Adams

In 1856, Conrad and Heinricha Lenz emigrated with their family of nine children to America from Baden, Germany. They settled in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Their fifth child, Michael Lenz (1849-1903) was working in the Otter Creek Brick Yard south of Altoona when a large brick order came in for the construction of buildings in the Altoona railroad yard. Believing a saloon located across the street from those railroad yards would be a good business that would comfortably provide for his wife Rosa (1852-1937) and their family, he moved to Altoona in 1883. He built the first saloon in Altoona. Mike Lenz's Saloon opened in 1884 and was located where the "400 Club" stands today.

Michael and Rosa Lenz reared five children in Altoona: Nellie (1875-1963); Edward (1879-1946); Ida (1883-1963); Otto (1887-1966); and Hazel (1891-1972). Nellie married Joseph Farrel and moved to Spooner, Wisconsin, in 1898. Ida married Samuel Menzies and moved to Spooner, Wisconsin, in 1901. Hazel married Maurice Johnson in 1921.

All three sisters married railroad employees. Hazel and Maurice remained in Altoona where they reared two sons, David and Robert Johnson. Hazel lived in Altoona until her death in 1972.

Edward Lenz was a rail car inspector and lived in Altoona with his wife Emma and their three daughters, Rosemarie, Dorothy, and Shirley. Edward was an Altoona resident until his death in 1946. Otto Lenz married Blanche Brown in 1913. They reared five children in Altoona: Irene Lenz Zimmerman (1915-2006); Erwin F. Lenz (1916); Lloyd G. Lenz (1918-1991); Lucille Lenz Adams (1920); and Beatrice Lenz Cooper (1922). Otto Lenz was employed by the railroad in Altoona from 1908 until 1957.

Irene, Erwin, Lucille, and Beatrice were graduated from Altoona High School. Irene, Lucille and Beatrice obtained college degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and pursued teaching careers outside of Altoona. Erwin was graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 1943, he entered the United States Navy as an Ensign and served in the African and South European Theaters and later

in the Pacific Theater as a Lieutenant Senior Grade until 1947. Erwin married Wanda Witt; they currently reside in Egg Harbor, Wisconsin, and Sun City, Arizona. Lucille lives in Houston, Texas, and Beatrice is a resident of Sun City, Arizona.

Lloyd remained in Altoona with the exception of his military service with the United States Army Air Force from 1941 to 1945. He married Kathryn Miller in 1945 and they reared four children in Altoona: Judith Lenz Adams; Michael P. Lenz; William H. Lenz; and Paul J. Lenz. Judy and Mike are currently Altoona residents. Bill remained a life-long resident of Altoona until his death in 2003. Paul lives in Eau Claire and is an Eau Claire County Circuit Court Judge.

The descendants of Michael and Rosa Lenz represent three generations of railroad engineers in Altoona. Their son, Otto Lenz, was hired as a roundhouse employee in 1908. He became a fireman in 1911 and an engineer in 1920. After working for forty-nine years, he retired from the Chicago Northwestern Railroad in

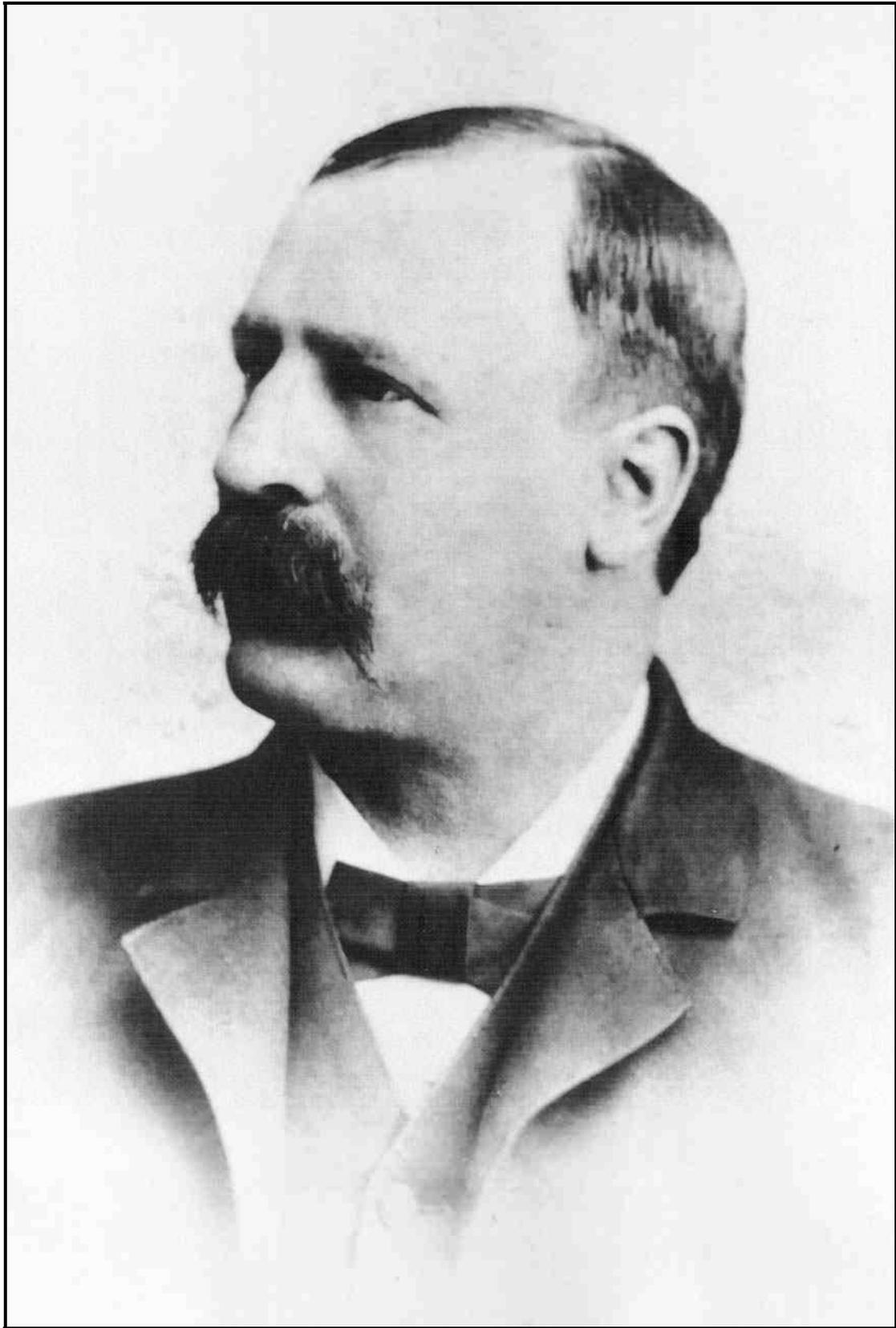
1957.

Lloyd Lenz, Otto's son, hired out as a roundhouse employee in 1937. He became a fireman for the Chicago Northwestern in 1946 and an engineer in 1948. After forty-four years of service, he retired in 1981.

Michael P. Lenz, Lloyd's son, worked for the Chicago Northwestern/Union Pacific Railroad for thirty years. He became a fireman in 1966 and an engineer in 1968. Due to health problems, he discontinued working for the railroad in 1996.

From my home I can hear the train cars switching in the yards. To me it is the most comforting sound in the whole world!

Judy (Lenz) Adams 2009



Michael Lenz 1889

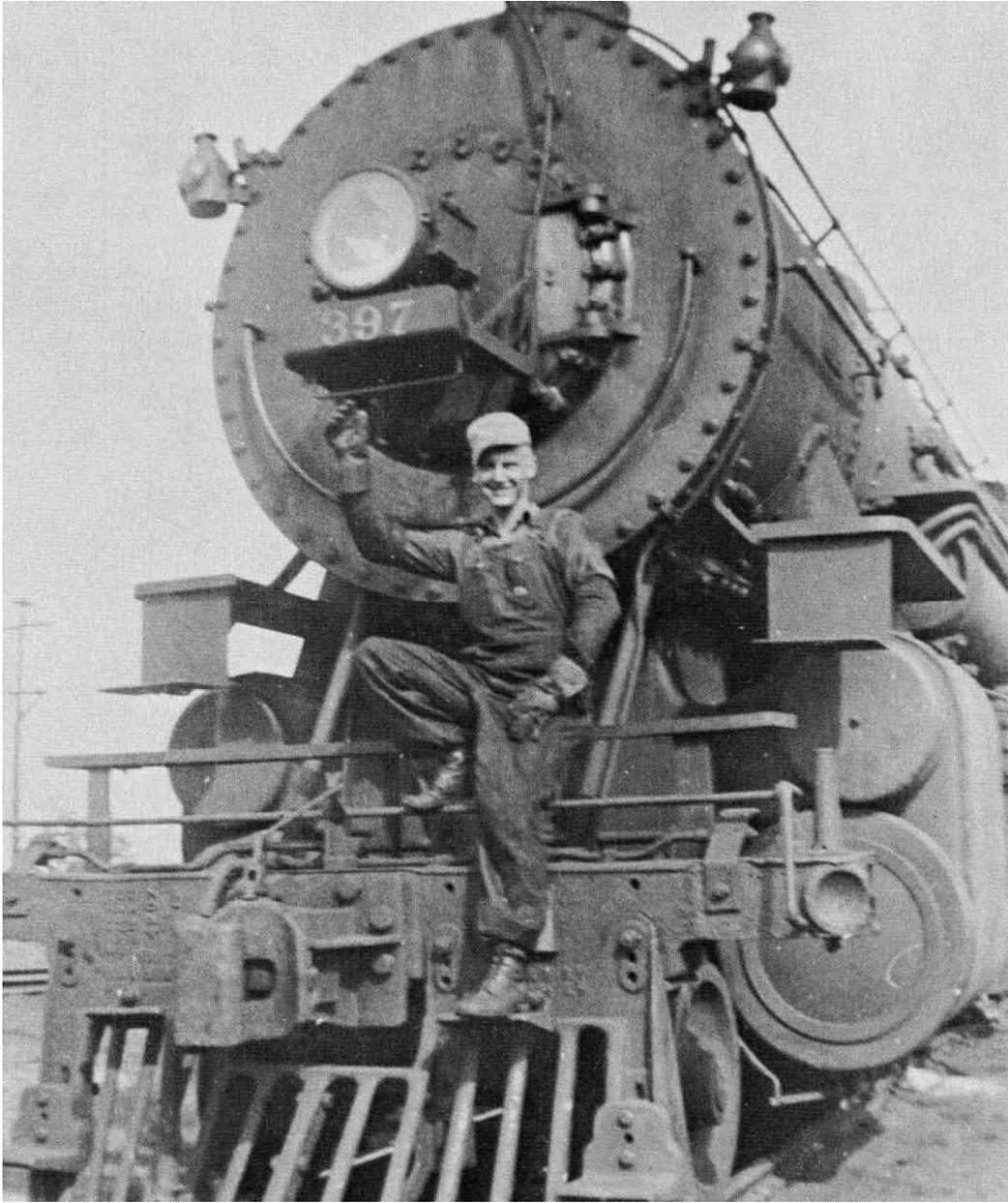


Rosa Lenz 1889



Mike Lenz's Saloon – 1884

Located on the same foundation as the present 400 Club



Locomotive Engine - Lloyd G. Lenz -- 1939
Photo Courtesy of the Chippewa Valley Museum

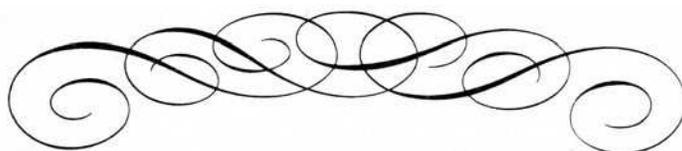


Front Center: Blanche and Otto Lenz

Back Row: Their Family

Beatrice Lenz Cooper
Irene Lenz Zimmerman
Erwin Lenz
Lloyd Lenz
Lucille Lenz Adams

Autumn 1943



Harvest Time

By Marvel Schilling-Newton

Altoona has long been known for its sandy soil and abundance of sand burrs or cockle burrs. The burrs were often referred to as porcupine eggs. To avoid briars in your fingers, it was well to wet your finger tips thoroughly before trying to pull off the burrs clinging to your shoe strings. Ouch! My Grandpa's farm had plenty of them.

Grandpa Schilling's "Sand Burr Acres" was the last place on the left side of Spooner Ave. when heading to Eau Claire. Gus Sund's home was the last place on the right-hand side of the road, and Rockwood's farm abutted Grandpa's land and extended out to highway 12. The two farms were mainly worked in corn and string beans.

The two landlords of the sand burr patches sometimes contracted to raise either corn or green or wax beans for the canning factory. One year the beans didn't ripen at the time the cannery needed them. I don't know the financial repercussions of the event but the beans did not go to the cannery. There was a huge amount of beans canned in Altoona that year. My brother Bob and I peddled beans all over Altoona to help pay for the cost of the seeds. We ate a lot of beans that fall and believe it or not, string beans are still my favorite vegetable.

Mrs. Rockwood had a very big kitchen and come harvest time, a group of about six women arrived early in the day ready for lots of canning. Most had copper boilers filled with empty fruit jars to fill and all the necessary items to make it a productive venture. Everybody had a job, and did they ever bustle about their chores. The kids old enough to be helpers accompanied their moms. We washed jars, snipped beans or husked the corn, and were an able group of "gofers". You know, go for this and go for that. At day's end, everyone was extremely tired from the August heat and the kitchen heat, but pleased with the results of jars full of good food for the winter.

On a much smaller scale, Mom had the canners going at our house, canning produce from her garden, Cousin Fritz's farm, and the local berry patches. My brother Bob and I always had to hull and wash the strawberries. No matter how hard I tried, I never could get enough fill of those luscious berries while cleaning them to last me through the winter. To me, canning strawberries and having them in a cooked state from the canning process was the ruination of good fruit.

Aunt Emma and Uncle Will Horton had a small farm where Uncle Will raised some beef cattle, and each fall, he would butcher meat for the winter. Aunt Emma would brown down hunks of beef and pack them tightly in Mason jars with a piece of suet in each jar. She then put them in the kitchen range oven and processed them. All I know about the procedure was that it took a long time before they were done.

A visit to their home almost always ended up with a meal of her most delicious canned beef and homemade bread – I don't recall what else was on the table. Having fresh bread and the delicious beef was a meal fit for a king.

Today's canning instructions put out by the County Extension and others are very different from the methods used during my youth. It makes me wonder how well the old canning methods worked. However, I don't know anybody who ever got sick from eating home canned food. In fact, we all thrived on it.

War Time

By Marvel Schilling-Newton

Another group of soldiers are leaving this area to train for a year at war in Iraq. The group that will gather to send them on their journey will be friends, family, and some veterans.

When the Red Arrow Division left Eau Claire to fight in World War II, nearly the whole town turned out to wish them well.

Patriotism was at a high pitch. We were fed propaganda through radio, posters, and whatever means the media could find to use.

Every able bodied man had to register for the draft. This was to find the future men to make our fighting men. When their draft number was called, it required reporting and having a physical exam and doing paperwork that would decide if they would pass and go to camp for training. The ratings given were based from A-F. A1 being the best of the able bodied men, and 4F meant not being fit for military service. Future evaluation took into consideration the size of family, occupation, and value to keeping the home front going.

In Altoona, our High School Graduation class of 1945 had eight graduates. All the young men had enlisted to serve their country.

Most farmers stayed home to produce the countries food.

Most of the men in Altoona stayed home to run the railroad. The rails were a vital part of moving men and equipment across the country.

The women made little victory gardens out of any little plot of land. My Mother's little plot along the side of the house produced a surprising amount of vegetables.

Our home was about a city block away from the railroad depot in Altoona. Sleep regulations of the working railroader were basically thrown out the window. When a train load of equipment or men pulled into the Altoona station, crews were changed, water was taken on, car tappers checked all the train's wheels for hot boxes and repacked those that needed it. This happened perhaps within an hour. My Dad spent very little time at home during those days. He was close and could be ready to go in a few minutes. As a result, it was sometimes weeks that I didn't see him. He would come home, sleep awhile, and be called when the next train came through, always unannounced. This affected nearly all the railroad men in town.

Ordnance Plants that made shells were running in Presto Industries and Uniroyal buildings and many women who had never worked away from home worked shifts at this employment during the war years.

High school girls did a lot of babysitting for these mothers. Sometimes we worked at babysitting for just a couple of hours when the man of the house changed shifts. He maybe worked the 7a.m. to 3p.m. shift and his wife went in on the 3p.m. to 11p.m. shift, so we filled the gap while they were traveling to and from work. Some places we covered full shifts.

It was certainly a busy time in everyone's life.

A Steam Contraption and a Woolen Snowsuit

By Marvel Schilling-Newton

One winter in the mid 1930s stands out in my memory. It was bitterly cold with an abundance of snow. The city workers were out in the road working with a steam genny trying to thaw out the city water mains. It was being done close to our house, the corner of Lynn Avenue and First Street East. My Dad was on the crew trying to get enough steam to do the job.

All I remember about the steam genny contraption was that it had a boiler, fired somehow, that produced steam. The steam pushed through a long steel-pipe affair that probed the ground to thaw the water main. How effective it was, I don't know, but it most likely was the only solution on hand.

Atop a snow bank that came half way up a telephone pole were the neighbor kids, fascinated by this big deal. Many warnings were shouted at us to stay back. All went well until we became bored and started playing King of the Mountain. This was push, climb, and shove to the very top of the pile of snow. The king then had to push everyone down so he could stay on top and remain king. We were kicked out of the area shortly thereafter and went elsewhere to play as long as we could.

For my November birthday, I had received a new, all-wool, brown snowsuit and a brown and orange stocking hat. In the 1930s, this was especially wonderful. My Grandmother Schilling had knitted me a pair of brown and orange mittens. She double knitted very tightly so they were very stiff when new. I think that was the warmest outfit a little girl could have, so I would play outside until my feet were numb from the cold. After I went in to thaw my feet and take off my snowsuit, it was the end of outdoor play until my snowsuit dried. Being made of wool, it was totally saturated when it warmed up. It was hung on a little clothes rack close to the kitchen range with a tub underneath to catch the drips. If the covering for tender feet could have been nearly as efficient as my snowsuit, I probably would have stayed outdoors most of the time.

When Johnny Comes Marching Home

By Marvel Schilling-Newton

The song, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," was written during the Civil War. It expressed the feelings of everybody to bring the men home safely. It was revived in 1943 by Morton Gould's classical arrangement, "American Salute". It was one of the many songs that became favorites during the World War II era.

At the end of the war, the feeling of jubilation filled our hearts as the soldiers began arriving home. Even though broken hearts filled many who had lost a soldier, they still helped spread the joy of the end of the war.

The railroad men of Altoona did not find their work days much different when the boys came home. The trains taking soldiers to Fort Snelling (near Minneapolis) made their last stop in Altoona before going to Fort Snelling to muster the men out of Uncle Sam's Army.

These trains, following the same rules for transporting soldiers as going to war, arrived unannounced any time of the day or night. In an hour or so, crews were changed and railroad cars were checked and the GI's were one stop closer to getting home.

The logistics of feeding a train load of hungry men still boggles my mind. The cooks had cooked their last meal for the train full of men and we were told that whatever food they had left when they reached Fort Snelling had to be checked in. This, of course meant a delay in their checking out of the service. The solution to that was to disperse it to the local Altoona kids who always met the trains.

I recall a huge carton of individual Rice Krispies, pancake mix, cans of roast beef in tins the shape of a 2# box of soda crackers, fresh fruit, mainly red delicious apples, canned tomatoes and potatoes. To my surprise, My Mom made delicious doughnuts out of the pancake mix that needed only water added. There were many other things in the list of food we enjoyed but these stand out in my mind.

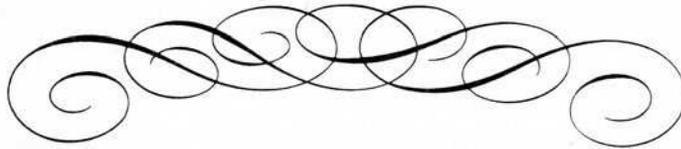
The restrictions to the soldiers were relaxed somewhat so they could get permission to run to the close by tavern (I think Ely ran it at that time) to get cigarettes in a 15 minute jaunt. I don't know, but with mustering out right on schedule, it probably made getting liquor not a wise choice.

The Navy issued Pea Coats for winter, made out of tightly woven wool. They were the best thing for warding off the cold and wind of our Wisconsin winters. They could not be purchased for any money, they were strictly G.I. issue. Every kid that had a brother in the Navy begged for him to get them a Pea Coat. It was not a task easily done. We were told that only one Pea Coat was issued per sailor and that was that.

My cousin, Art Jones, was in the Merchant Marines. It was run much differently than the US Navy. At best I had an all wool shirt that I wore as a jacket until it nearly fell

apart. I don't think they were even issued Pea Coats or I would have begged for one from Art. My two youngest brothers, Gary & Vic, 9 and 12 years younger than I was, took it upon themselves to get me a Pea Coat. They came home and got me and led me to one of the train cars and told this nice sailor that I was their sister, the one who wanted a Pea Coat. They had bargained with the sailor that he would give me his Pea Coat if I would give him a kiss. What do you do with two imps like that? ?

Yes, I gave the sailor his kiss....



Altoona

Altoona, the smallest city in the great USA

Tis always in the limelight, tho it has no great white way, Just a busy railroad center, showing progress and enterprise.

And handles far more currency, than cities twice its size,
The railroad company's deluxe trains, are elegant indeed,
And known throughout the country For their tremendous rate of speed.

When Altoona folk a journey take, Whether Paris or Rome,
They're always glad to wonder back
To their Altoona home.

Altoona churches are sublime, And all the services
divine,

Altoona schools are the very best, They put their scholars to
the test.

To gain credentials and the rest
It is here they teach the golden rule,

To fit each pupil for life's great school.

On Altoona sports-you have had good reports,

How they play their game with vim and snap, Back other teams right
off the map!

Altoona has a juvenile band,
Which will soon be heard throughout the land.

Altoona social set-good and fine,
Cards, dinners and dancers are their line.

The ladies Aids are busy as bees,
And their many patrons they always please.

The Women's Club is up to date,
This study club has not a moment to waste,
And shows good literary taste.

In a Community Drive or Charity Ball

Altoona is generous to all. Altoona has two great
essentials

Not often found elsewhere, One hundred percent pure
water

And good fresh country air! Altoona is a natural park,
Where sings the robin and meadow lark, And on the north side of
the hill,

Bloom the sweet arbutus and daffodil. The streams are filled with
speckled trout,

Pheasants and partridge fly about
Now if there is anything our city is without,

You will know this fact without a doubt:

We are loyal to Altoona! Altoona we salute thee!

Mrs. Joan M. Shute cir. 1926-30

(Continued next page)

Comment by Roger Rasmussen – July 2009

I took care of Mrs. Shute's yard and sidewalks from age 12-15. I didn't know her as Joan, but as Mrs. Shute. By then her husband had been long gone -- they owned one of the first stores in town. I last worked for her about 1948-49. I was 12-13. She was very kind, small and gentle. She was tight with money. I got 10-25 cents for cutting grass with a reel-type push lawn mower. I believe they were involved with the Methodist Church.

Altoona, the way it used to be in the 1940's

By Patricia Steuding-Kiefus

I was born to Walter & Marie Steuding in 1936. Attended Altoona grade school, St. Benedicts Catholic school for 7th & 8th grade as a day student of course, (it was actually a BOYS Catholic boarding school, run by the Benedictine nuns! But, the local priest ordered them to accept day student girls, so we could have a good Catholic education...ha ha), then I attended Altoona High School 1950-1954. After high school I worked at the old Co-op as a payroll clerk, then I worked at Eau Claire Sand & Gravel as an accounts receivable clerk till about 1958. In 1958 I moved to Chicago and worked for a branch of the Federal Government. Although I returned home to Altoona frequently, (the trains ran regularly from Chicago right into Altoona). I haven't actually LIVED in Altoona since about 1958. I married my husband, Jack, in Chicago in 1962, had one son in 1963, and moved to Florida in 1966. So I've been in Florida for about 42 years. I am in contact with all my brothers and sister in Wisconsin constantly.

Just in case no one else reminds you of the way Altoona used to be in the 1940's...I thought I would just mention to you a few of my own memories.

- Altoona had 2 stores Emanuel's grocery, and Lubees meat market. (check spelling?)
- Altoona had 3 taverns, and two restaurants. I think two restaurants were necessary to accommodate the railroad workers who came in on trains.
- Altoona had at least one rooming house called "The Smith House" that accommodated mostly out of town rail road men.
- Altoona had one gas station (a favorite hang out for the young men).
- Altoona had one small post office, a pool hall, and a barbershop.
- Altoona was a Railroad "hub" in those days. There was the depot where several trains stopped on a regular basis.
- There was the large Roundhouse where many of the men from town worked. This was where the repairs were made to engines and rail road cars.
- A great many Troop trains passed thru town during the war, and sometimes had to stop for some type of repairs.
- There was a whistle that sort of ruled our lives. I believe it blew to indicate the changes of shifts and lunch time on the railroad. It blew at 6am, 12 noon, and 6 pm, I think.
- And, of course the mighty 400 zoomed thru town each day, like clock work.
- Few people owned cars, and few had telephones. The railroad had an employee called a "Call Boy". This guy was responsible for going to the homes of men to call them into work. I don't know if these men were brakemen, engineers, yards workers or what, I only know the "call boy" let them know they were due at work.
- During the war years many of Altoona's railroad workers were called to work in other states building railroads. My Dad worked in Mississippi, New Mexico and Arizona at different times.
- Altoona had a beautiful beach area. We had to (carefully) cross the railroad yards and go down thru the woods to the beach in the summer. But nearly everybody's father worked on the railroad in some capacity and we'd all been taught at an early age, HOW to cross those railroad tracks safely.

Maybe you can glean a few things from my own memories?

Bob Thompson
Class of 1952

Background: While attending the Altoona Public School for twelve years I was active in music, school plays, and of course, basketball. I was on the yearbook staff and vice-president of my senior class.

My wife and I will celebrate our 55th anniversary in January 2010. We have a son, daughter, and three grandchildren. I spent nearly 40 years in the printing industry. We're spending our retirement years enjoying our family, traveling, reading, listening to music, and golfing. Sometimes I fix breakfast.

DOGS IN ALTOONA

I read a book about a place where everyone knew the name of their neighbor's dog. I thought, "that's exactly like Altoona used to be at one time". We knew all of the neighbors, their kids' names, and all of the dogs names.

Most of the dogs were not tied up. They ran through the neighborhoods, chased the cars, went swimming in Otter creek, chased the sleds down the hills in the winter, and played endless games with the kids until the street lights came on; that's when all of the kids had to head for home. Of course, the dogs didn't and very few of them were of one pedigree.

The Babbitts did have a pedigree boxer though (Duchess). They were very proud of her pedigree. It was a beautiful dog with cropped ears, bobbed tail, and a wonderful disposition. The plan was to breed her to another pedigree boxer. Good plan.

One day everyone went shopping and Grandpa was in charge. Duchess wanted to go out so rather than follow her around the yard, until she did her thing, Grandpa just tied her to the clothes line so she wouldn't run away. She was in heat. Very convenient for Zorro – A black lab mixture from a few blocks away.

Duchess gave birth to a litter of mixed black lab and boxer pups. We got one of the pups for my Mother in law and it was a wonderful dog.

Lenzs had a dog named Spike. Spike fathered an untold number of dogs. I always remember Spike as the dog that would just lie down and go to sleep, right in the middle of the street, regardless of the traffic. I guess fathering all of those dogs just made him tired.

The Hennings used to own the Golden Spike bar. They had a dog named Benjii. He would lay on the back step of the Golden Spike bar and refuse to go home until the bar closed. If someone took him home early, he would sneak out and go back to the bar, until it closed for the night.

One of the more famous dogs, Oscar, was "Tiger" Daly's companion. When "Tiger" traveled, Oscar traveled with him. One night "Tiger's" car was driven right through the front window of a restaurant, located next to a bar, across the street from the depot. Luckily, no one was injured and until his dying day "Tiger" insisted that Oscar was driving the car.

Nearly every family had a dog and so did we at that time. Our dog was Toby. The best way to describe him would be as an energetic, undisciplined, free spirit. When we first got him he chewed a hole in our new davenport – which meant that he would spend the rest of his life out side in a dog house.

He just refused to stay in the yard or to come when I called him. When I would go to work he would chase the car until I would finally stop and bring him back home. One night we were playing cards at some friends and when we left to go home it was just pouring rain. There sat Toby; soaking wet, waiting for us to go home.

His worst habit was following the kids to the A&B Superette. He would cause complete havoc. Running up and down the aisles as fast as he could and before they could get him out the door he would leave his mark – as dogs like to do. As you can imagine he spent a good deal of time tied up by his dog house. But he had an uncanny ability to slip out of his collar, break ropes, and actually break some chains. If only he had been a little more restrained, we both would have had a much easier time.

NELS LEROM TAKES HIS OWN LIFE AT ALTOONA IS FOUND HANGING BY HIS NECK

Submitted by Bob Thompson

Nels Lerom, aged 30 years, a tobacco grower, formerly of Madison, and for a year past a resident of Altoona, left his home about 7 o'clock yesterday morning, after eating a hearty breakfast.

About 10 o'clock a man named Fisher was passing an old building on land owned by Thompson, the barber. He opened the door and was horrified to see the body of a man hanging by a clothes line from a rafter. He at once notified Mr. Thompson and then sent word to the authorities. A jury was at once summoned and an inquest was held.

The evidence showed that the deceased breakfasted at Mr. Thompson's and had gone to the barn to attend to the chores. This was last seen of him alive. He had fastened a clothes line to a rafter and after adjusting it to his neck launched himself into eternity, casting himself out into space by jumping from the feed box in the manger. No cause can be assigned for the rash act. He seemed to have no cares, nor did he exhibit any signs of despondency. He had, however, been drinking considerably and this may have led him to destroy himself. He was 30 years of age and was single. He was formerly a resident of Madison and came to Altoona to help put in a large field of tobacco for Mr. Thompson, the barber. The crop was a good one. Every one who saw it, said there could be no better. Several of the leaves were sent to the Leader office and were put on exhibition. He had recently made a trip to Madison near which city his parents reside, and appeared quite cheerful, so that no cause can be assigned for the fatal step unless it be liquor, as stated. The jury brought in a verdict in accordance with the facts.

It is not certain what disposition will be made of the body. His parents have been communicated with, and it is likely that it will be sent to Madison for burial.

Some further particulars have come to light in regards to the tragedy at Altoona. It seems that the deceased communicated to a friend that he was much worried and that troubles had driven him to drink. Of course, this excuse is often given by those who indulge in intoxicants, and it may have been so in this case. But no matter what his troubles were, nothing would warrant his violating that command of the Almighty which inhibits self-slaughter. A man is forbidden to take his own life as well as the lives of others. The language is to the point. "Thou shalt not kill". He lived when at Altoona with his aunt, Mrs. Thompson and both worked on the tobacco crop. Mrs. Thompson being a most industrious woman.

Published in the Eau Claire Leader. Wed. May 6, 1903

My Grandma Thurston

By Amy E. Thurston

From the time I was a baby until I was in my mid-twenties, I made regular visits to Altoona to see my paternal grandmother, Mary Ann Daley McCluskey Thurston. In the opinion of my father, I was clearly the apple of her eye.

In the summer, we would spend a lot of time together on her front porch at 328 W. 6th Street. We also watched the television while devouring endless numbers of vanilla wafers and Fritos. Occasionally, I would play outside in an empty lot or by the garage, but never far from her view. I remember that a dog had dug a deep hole in a neighbor's yard and that its head would be barely visible as it lay in it to escape the sweltering summer heat. There was no air-conditioning.

In the late 1960s, there was an ice cream truck that would drive up and down the Altoona streets while playing a lively tune. It was a special treat when Grandma would buy a cone for me. It cost a nickel.

Milk was delivered in glass bottles in those days. Grandma would put some money in an empty bottle and place it on the front step. Lo and behold, a full bottle would appear. I thought it was magical at the time.

In the winter, we would occupy ourselves with card games. Wahoo was a favorite. These were quiet times; we'd rarely venture outside. Early on, I would watch cartoons. Viewing American Bandstand would come later. She occupied a great deal of her time with daily newspaper crossword puzzles.

Each homeowner had a special identifying ring on the telephone party line, e.g. two longs and a short. I often listened in on other people's conversations. The talk was usually dull, often about such mundane matters as warts and health issues.

When she moved to a retirement home in Golden Acres (Altoona), my father, his dogs, and I would visit her every Saturday. We would have lunch which consisted of hamburgers from Wendy's, Strawberry Revel ice cream, and Twinkies. I often did her grocery shopping.

As I entered my twenties, our conversations deepened. I was very comfortable speaking with my grandmother. In fact, there were few subjects that we avoided. I would call her every day and we would speak for at least a half an hour.

One day in 1984, she didn't answer. I lost not only a grandmother that day, but a valued friend as well.



Amy Thurston and Grandmother Mary Thurston
Golden Acres – Altoona, WI
1983

We'd Never Heard of Altoona

By Ed Wegwerth

The way I found out about the train being hopped there – I used to go to Hazel Park Jr. High School [on St. Paul's east side, in Minnesota]. We had to walk to school and we had to cross the railroad tracks by the Jr. High School there. I saw somebody hop a train there one day which gave me the idea, and I was only in the 9th grade. But then later, when we were Seniors in High School, we started doing it ourselves. We had another buddy that lived in the area and he told us about a trip that he and another guy took. So he had been jumping it too, but not with us. So there were a few of us jumping it – from time to time hopping the train down to Hudson. Or some of them would even catch it down by Johnson Parkway and take it from there up to the Hazel Park School area – a mile or two, or what ever. So there were some guys doing that. So it wasn't as though as we were the only ones. So, nothing doing on a Friday or Saturday night and we would hop a train.

I would go with a couple of other guys I hung around with. And we would hop it and take it through Lake Elmo and down into the north of Hudson [Wisconsin]. We wouldn't get off in Hudson – we'd get off on the Minnesota side just before the Swing Bridge. And I don't know what our thinking was – well one thing was there was a big yard over there where the train slowed down... we thought there might be some railroad police or workers – that would get us. But what we did was jump off just before the Swing Bridge and then we would walk across the Swing Bridge – except there was one problem. There was a guy that controlled the Swing Bridge, whose job it was to keep it open when the boat traffic had to go. And he wouldn't let us pass through; so he kicked us off. But we had to get to the other side because our buddies were waiting for us to pick us up. Up by Black's market (up there at the Clark's Station, actually) – up on highway 12.

So we'd have to wait for him to go back and have his coffee, read a paper or whatever he was doing. Then we would run like hell across the bridge and get over to the small railroad yard over there and make it through from North Hudson, and down through Hudson, across the Highway 12 bridge over the St. Croix and on up to the Clark Station on the hill across from Black's Market. And there our friends would be waiting for us and give us a ride back home again. I don't know why we had our buddies wait way the heck up on Highway 12. I mean that was miles and miles of walking – from North Hudson where the railroad tracks are.

So we did that three or four times. When a couple of other guys heard about it they wanted to go. They wanted to go on a longer trip because one of our other buddies had been on a long trip – down to Eau Claire. "It's easy," he said, "the train slows down by the Rubber Company and you can jump off there." And the thing is, he got caught by the police – him and another guy. And they got hauled in for vagrancy – they had no money and no ID on them and... Anyway, they told us about their trip so we wanted to try it even though they got caught.

And so, I believe it was a Friday night in August, in 1959. We had planned to catch the train – 10:30 at night was the usual time it went by. Earlier that evening we were at a Teen Dance at the Hazel Park Commercial Club on the east side of St. Paul. And the railroad tracks where we were to catch it were only half a mile away, or something like that. So we were down there at 10:30. Two of the guys that were supposed to go were pretty danged drunk. One of the guys was so drunk that he passed out and didn't make the train. The other guy was drunk and it was a wonder how he ever got on it because you have to run pretty fast and pull yourself up on these trains – the guy eventually got on. And, as far as I know, it might have been the first train ride for these two guys.

But I'm getting a little ahead of myself. The train was supposed to be there at 10:30 and our buddies were supposed to pick us up in Eau Claire at the Bus Depot – we figured we'd be there at Midnight. And so they left at 10:30 to drive down there, assuming we were going to get on the train at 10:30. And it turned out that the train didn't come till Midnight. We waited and waited, and we had the choice of hopping the train or driving down there and telling them we weren't coming. So we hopped the train anyway, at Midnight.

There were three of us (me and Kurt and Gordy). Usually we would hop it on a Boxcar and climb up to the top of the Boxcar and get on the narrow catwalk up there – not more than a foot and a half wide. We'd get up there just in time for the train to get rolling. The reason it was a good place to catch it was it was a straight shot but it was kind of a steep grade for a train coming out of St. Paul. It climbed up to the higher side of the east side of St. Paul – so the trains were kind of struggling there so they were easy to jump on. But once they got going we were rolling pretty good – we were going through Lake Elmo, laying on the catwalk. The trains are swaying back and forth and seams in the track are bumping kind of hard and your hip is getting pounded laying up there. We hung on up there until we got down to like the Bayport area where it goes down a steep hill to cross the river and it slows way down because it's going to go into the train yard on the other side of the river. As we were going across the Swing Bridge the train was going real slow and that's when we started to get down from the top of the boxcar. We were going over a bridge that crosses over Wisconsin Highway 35 and this guy named Gordy was drunk (half snapped, yet) he walked off the side of the catwalk instead of walking straight ahead to where we were going. He veered off to the side – half drunk and if Kurt hadn't grabbed him by the belt he would have walked right off the side of the boxcar. He could have wound up down there on Highway 35; at least he would have wound up down there on the tracks. So we got him back on track and then we got down into this Gondola [like a boxcar with no top on it], a car that they would put telephone poles or scrap iron and the like into.

And it starts picking up speed going up through the country and every once in a while the sky would be lit up a bit and we would pop our head up and we'd see a sign for Roberts and Hammond and Baldwin. All the little towns along the way there. Woodville Knapp... and we were watching to see – watching for Eau Claire. So we're ready to jump off when we get to Eau Claire – before it slows down because we didn't want to get caught by any cops so we wanted to be ready. It was warm enough, we didn't have

much more on than a short sleeved shirt (maybe a tee shirt on underneath it) – we didn't have jackets or anything. And it was comfortable – the stars were out all night. So it was a nice ride other than it was pretty rough though. And we didn't think much about dirt back then, but probably we got pretty dirty sitting in the gondolas and lying on the top of those things. When we figured we were getting close to Eau Claire we climbed back up on top of a Boxcar. And we each had our own little railing (one on each end of the car and one on the next car). And we were all ready to jump off when it slowed down. Well, the dang thing slowed down half speed but it was still chugging along way too fast. Here we're going by, I think it was U. S. Royal at the time. The tire company, the rubber company – the people were sitting out on the loading dock (it must have been a train siding for them) but we were pretty close to them. They were sitting there with their lunch buckets and eating lunch or having a break. We could see all of them sitting there and it said "Eau Claire branch of U. S. Royal" or something like that.



The U. S. Rubber Plant in Eau Claire, WI – 1944 (Photo source: Chippewa Valley Museum)

We knew we were in Eau Claire, but...

The train started picking up speed... and we said Whoa! We get back into the gondola again and we said Wow! We figured we were going to Milwaukee or Chicago, one of the two. And that's the time we figured... well, how are we going to let anybody know where we're at – how are we going to get home? And how much money? And Kurt didn't have any money and Gordy didn't have any and I had a nickel and a dime. That

was it – 15 cents for the three of us. Probably a phone call was only a dime back then, but not long distance.

So anyway, we settled down – figured we were going to Milwaukee or Chicago. And a few minutes later... you know you hear it slowing down; how they clunk together. Clunk, clunk, clunk slowing down. And we scampered up and got on the railing and we looked up and we see a sign – **Altoona**. Big yards – you could see all kinds of... it was dark but our night eyes were kind of accustomed, and you could see a lot of railroad tracks and everything there. And we said “That’s alright, we’re getting off here – anyway.” And so it slowed down enough, and we jumped off.

And, uh, now... we didn’t know where the hell we were. We’d never heard of Altoona. All we knew was that we were east of Eau Claire and we were heading east, so the side we jumped off on would’ve been south – the south side of the tracks. So we were walking, first to get away from the yard and any railroad cops. And we could hear a little din in the distance – some highway noise (the Semi’s on Highway 12 heading for Chicago, or back and forth). And we could see the lighting, like there was a city... kind of southwesterly. And so we started walking over that way, figuring we’d hitchhike into Eau Claire from where we were. Well, as it turned out, we must have not been too far from the outskirts of Eau Claire because (I don’t know how far we walked) but we got into some neighborhood and we kept heading westerly toward what we thought was the center of town. And we found this kid’s bike lying in this person’s yard. So we could see the city, a downtown type area ahead of us – not that far. I grabbed the bicycle and had one guy sit on the handlebars and one guy on the crossbar. And the three of us... I pedaled a little ways, but most of it was down hill. Then there was this steep hill and we just coasted down that thing at a pretty dang good clip and got down to the bottom of it. And we were in the business district, or the fringes of it anyway. And there were buildings, not houses now. And we left the bike there at the bottom of the hill (I hope the kid got his bike back).

So anyway, we made our way over to the bus depot – and I don’t know how we knew where to go, if we saw somebody and asked... ’cause it had to be 2 or 3 in the morning. I walked everywhere back then, before I had a car; so 3, 4 or 5 miles from Altoona to Eau Claire wasn’t a big deal. But we found the Bus Depot – and there was a Cop Car sitting across the street. We saw our buddy’s car was still there on the other side of the street. So we went in, got them guys and they told us that the Cops had been watching them the whole time they’d been there... since midnight – and it was now pushing 3 o’clock. The Cops had been watching them pretty much the whole time, but they didn’t say anything to them. And we hopped in our buddy’s car and headed back home – to our cars. And so I don’t know what time it was that we got home then – Eau Claire was more than an hour away.

I do not remember taking another train after that. Nuff said – Ed.

Over the River and Through the Woods Memories of Hazel Harris

Written by Barbara J. Ziegenweide, youngest granddaughter of Henry and Hazel Harris, now residing in Park City, Illinois

When our family would make our frequent weekend visits to our Grandparents, Henry and Hazel Harris, in Altoona, Wisconsin, in the mid-sixties, my siblings and I had a choice whether we wanted to drive the “old” or the “new” way over to Altoona from our home in Loyal (Clark County). Many times we would squeal that we wanted to go the “old” way. The old route exited Loyal on Hwy. 98, connecting with Hwy. 73 going into Greenwood and then by way of several county trunks, travelling around Mead Lake and going through the Town of Butler to wind our way over to Altoona (Eau Claire County) on a most scenic route. This route of travel through the Clark County Forest brought us over a one-lane metal bridge over a small creek and on gravel roads for a portion of the trip. How could a child’s mind not travel back to times gone past, either real or imagined, on a route such as this? The “new” way, or our alternate choice, exited Loyal on Hwy. 98, connecting with Hwy. 73 going into Neillsville and then connected with Hwy. 10/12, ending up in Altoona via Hwy. 12.

This choice of the old-fashioned route over to Altoona always resulted in old-fashioned family goodness at the end of the route at 304 Sixth Street West, Altoona, Wisconsin – the home of Henry and Hazel Harris. The Harris home was always a warm place of profound family enjoyment in the simple things of life: Visiting, picnicking, playing cards, fishing together, hunting

together, or telling great stories of the latter two.

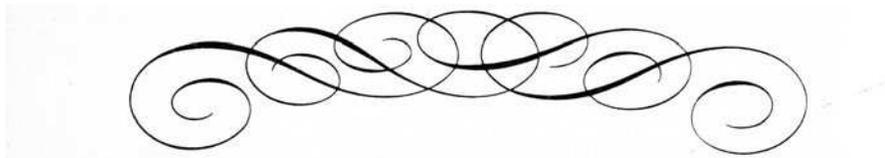
Hazel, the great Matriarch, was responsible for getting the family together, usually every summer, for the annual Harris family picnic. This picnic was either held at Irvine Park in Chippewa Falls or at Lake Altoona County Park. Either setting was a great location for these family get-togethers. Irvine Park boasted, not only its incredible beauty but also a band shell and zoo exhibits which included animals native to Wisconsin, exotic birds, barnyard animals, and a bear den. Lake Altoona had its beautiful lake setting with a nice, sandy swimming beach.

Hazel is also greatly remembered for the birthday parties that she threw in the Great Depression for her four children: Kenneth, Fern, Harold, and Joyce. The parties always consisted of group snapshots of many relatives, friends, and neighbors; homemade bread; presents; and a big birthday cake and ice cream, both homemade.

Hazel took a keen interest in everyone she knew and made everyone in the family feel special. When we visited at their home, she was always willing to play the “Kings Corners” card game or help with homework. We will always remember the homespun goodness at the Harris home and Grandma Hazel’s memory will live on in our hearts and minds forever.



Pictured are Henry and Hazel Harris with their youngest grandchild, Barbara Ziegenweide. The picture was taken in Loyal, Wisconsin, in December, 1958, when Barbara was one month old. Barbara is the youngest child of Charles and Joyce (Harris) Ziegeweid. (Please note that Barbara's last name spelling reflects the German vernacular of the paternal surname.)



Requiem to Popple Lake

Written by Barbara J. Ziegenweide,
youngest granddaughter of Henry and Hazel Harris,
now residing in Park City, Illinois

Imagine a small, hand-built cabin on a small, serene lake – the lake so small, in fact, that it encompasses a mere 90 acres and has a maximum depth of 27 ft. Now imagine going back and trying to find that cabin 67 years later.

Joyce (Harris) McKenna and daughter, Barbara Ziegenweide, did just that over Memorial Day weekend, 2009. My Mother had talked for many years about the cabin that my Grandfather, Henry Harris, had built with help from his friend, Burl Ray. We were both anxious to see if the cabin, in fact, still existed.

The Harris cabin and the neighboring cabin owned by Burl and Rita Ray were born by a labor of love between good friends, Henry and Burl. As many good friends do, Henry and Burl constructed their cabins together as buddies, working side by side. As you will see in the pictures that follow, the Ray cabin, coincidentally, resembles the Harris home at 304 6th Street West in Altoona in the gray exterior color, as well as the style of construction. As they say now in the 21st Century, go figure.

As my mother, Joyce, and I turned onto County Y off Hwy. 124 in Chippewa County to drive over to Popple Lake near Jim Falls, it became suddenly very apparent to Joyce that the surroundings looked familiar. This cognizant recognition of the surrounding countryside continued until we were in the vicinity of Popple Lake. It was great to see this reawakening in my Mother as she was reacquainted with the surroundings of days gone by.

Joyce remembered that the location of the Harris cottage was directly across the street from the Popple Lake School. There is

no longer a school in existence on the site; so I had to stop and ask questions from some of the present-day neighbors. The adjacent neighbor to what we believed was the old cottage confirmed, indeed, that the Popple Lake School had sat across the road on property in between what is now occupied by one home and one mobile home. This realization of the former landmark location of Popple Lake School and the still ever-present large stone foundation of the Harris cottage were the dead giveaways that we had, in fact, located the Harris cottage.

Although I am told that there is a sign that designates Popple Lake to local travelers, we did not see any signage. I, therefore, came to the conclusion that Popple Lake is a very well-kept secret in Chippewa County and in the State of Wisconsin – and seeing this wonderful little lake with my own eyes, I can fully understand why.

I was awestruck by the fact that I could peer in any direction and see the other side of the lake. The small size of the lake makes it very quaint and gives the impression of a hideaway location.

Today, Popple Lake is known for the northern pike and bluegill that can be caught by a hopeful angler. Walleye, crappie, and largemouth bass are also plentiful in its waters.

The search for the Harris cottage at Popple Lake was a reacquaintance for my mother, Joyce, as well as a discovery of family roots for myself. I am so glad that we took the time to go on this search – this oral tradition can now be passed on to present and future generations of the Harris Family.

The following pictures will compare the original cottage structure to the present cottage.



Harris cottage at Popple Lake – photo take in 1942.
Notice the large, vertical stone foundation.



Harris cottage as it looks in 2009.
That unique stone foundation gave its location away!



Side view of Harris cottage – taken between Harris and Ray cottages
Photo taken in 2009.



View of Harris cottage to the right and Ray cottage to the left – photo taken in 2009.
Notice the resemblance of the style and gray color of the Ray cottage (above, left) to the Harris home at 304 6th Street West in Altoona (See photo below.). Both the cottages have, subsequently, changed hands through the years with various buyers.



Harris home at 304 6th Street West in Altoona. Harold (Hank) Harris, youngest son of Henry and Hazel Harris, related that Henry constructed their home at this location, using scrap lumber from the rail yards in Altoona.



Photo of Joyce Harris taken in 1942 when she was 12 years old. Joyce is seen here enjoying the neighbor's puppies.



The back of this photo states that these two were thought to be sisters. Actually, pictured here are Hazel (Wilbur) Harris and daughter, Joyce Elaine Harris, at age 12. The photo was taken in 1942.



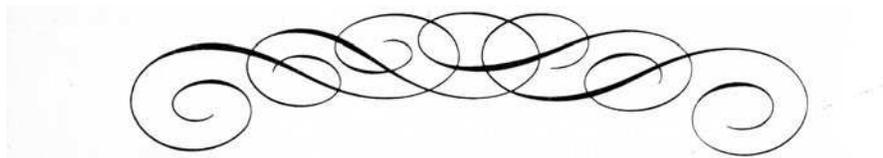
Last, but surely not least, pictured here is Henry Harris cleaning a catch of fish at Popple Lake in 1942. It was Henry's vision, thriftiness, and hard work that made the construction of the cottage at Popple Lake a reality for the enjoyment of their family and friends. The cottage was, undoubtedly, a calm respite from the daily cares of post-Depression Era living.

Personal enjoyment of life in the 1940's was usually of the homemade kind: Visiting with family and friends, fishing, hunting, playing cards and/or board games, singing and/or playing musical instruments, etc. Time spent at the cottage was pretty much the same. Joyce relayed that many times the family would play bingo at the Steinmetz' cottage to the east or do much the same at the

cottage of Burl and Rita Ray to the west.
Henry and Hazel Harris and Burl and Rita Ray had it right in the 1940's – family and friends are still the greatest blessing we have in our lives, thereby passing on to the ensuing generations of family great chords of harmony with which to live by.
Crescendo complete.



Barbara Ziegenweide (left) and Joyce (Harris) McKenna (right) pictured at the new bear exhibit in Irvine Park in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin – Memorial Day weekend, 2009.
The school bell from the old Popple Lake School is on display in Irvine Park.



Chapter Eight

Trains



Chicago and North Western Railway's Locomotive 1385.
C and NW's Ten Wheeler (4-6-0), built in Schenectady,
New York in 1907 – shown in Altoona, WI on May 20, 1986.

This chapter is dedicated to my father,
John H. Thurston,
Railroad Brakeman

– John R. Thurston –



John H. Thurston

The "400"

By John R. Thurston

It is difficult, if not impossible, for people of the modern era to revert to the 1930's when Altoona was a railroad town deeply mired in the Great Depression. But something like this has to happen if they are to thoroughly appreciate "The 400" and its impact upon Altoona residents.

At that time, virtually all of our fathers and other relatives were railroaders. They talked endlessly about "deadheading," switching strategies, "doubling-up on Knapp Hill," and other railroad topics. It was their life. It became ours. We breathed coal smoke. There were always harsh, hissing, clanging sounds coming from the switchyards or passing trains. We spent hours watching the switchmen make up new freight trains. When Martin Radisewitz blew the roundhouse whistle for shift changes, townsfolk would check and set their watches. Four long, ominous blasts on it signified disaster in the form of a wreck. Train work was often unbearably hot or cold, demanding, and inherently dangerous. Decrepit railroad boxcars were repaired on the "rip track." The railroad's ice house provided saw-dusted chips to get us through the endless hot days of summer. The bolts that fell off the railroad cars became the sinkers for our fish lines. Altoona was railroad, railroad, railroad.

The worldwide Great Depression of the 1930's was devastating to Altoona. Proud railroaders considered themselves lucky if they were able to work two or three days a year! My brakeman father worked for the federal W.P.A. for twenty-five cents an hour to put food on the table. This involved snow-shoveling, driving a horse-drawn shale wagon to construct city roads, and performing other menial tasks. A single egg or a bowl of soup often constituted an entire meal. While we children were generally protected by our ignorance, this Great Depression exacted an incredible toll upon our parents and relatives. Railroaders came to feel lost and worthless. Railroading had been their life. No one ever talked about his personal situation, but feelings of depression, anxiety, and fear were inevitable. Some never fully recovered even after war preparations and FDR's policies kick-started the economy later on.

During those very "hard times," a favorite pastime of Bud Griese, Hank Harris, Joe Wittren, and I took the form of watching passenger trains go high-balling through Altoona. We had no TV, computer games, joy rides, or trips to Cancun. Putting pennies on the rails to be flattened was as exciting as it got. As young adolescents, we would gather together for hours near the depot to talk and enjoy our camaraderie as we waited. Those were truly "Golden Times" for us although we did not realize it then.

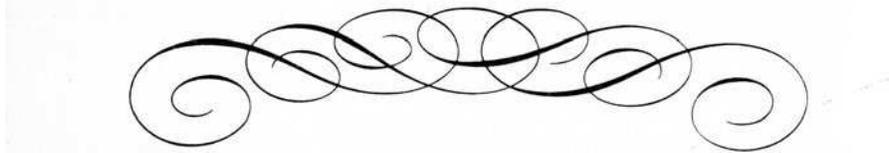
Imagine the excitement we experienced when we heard about "The 400," a new super-train reputed to be far better than the famous Burlington Zephyr. And, wonder of wonders, this yellow and green world-class streamliner would be running through

Altoona every single day. We talked about little else for months. In making its first run in 1937, "The 400" far exceeded our high expectations. After standing around for hours in anticipation, we finally heard its horn in the distance and then stood entranced as it thundered by. All this took less than a minute. And this spectacle would be repeated again and again! This was incredibly exciting for everyone.

It would have taken a rare emergency or mechanical difficulty to occasion a stop by "The 400" in Altoona.. But, in the midst of our impoverishment, it came to be a source of local pride. It was "railroad," and we were railroaders. We desperately needed a morale booster in those days. Its daily appearance gave us something that we could anticipate and enjoy. Its well-heeled, well-groomed passengers were going somewhere. So why couldn't we? We came to believe that things would improve. And they did.

After about two decades of wonderful performance, "The 400" began to go downhill. Both the train and its service became increasingly shoddy and unreliable. Local opinion held that this downgrading was deliberately orchestrated by a railroad company hell-bent on discouraging passengers. Fewer and fewer riders would then become part of the argument to discontinue a service that lost money. Cost-effectiveness ruled. Little or no consideration was extended to the importance of railroad passenger service or loyalty/obligation to lifelong railroaders.

With the final run of "The 400" in 1963, an important era came to an end. It saddens me now to think that while people refer to Altoona as "Cinder City" to honor the past, its identity as a bustling railroad town now exists only in the form of distant and fading memories.



Engines, Trains, and Rolling Stock

John R. Thurston

In light of the importance of railroading to Altoona, it was surprising how difficult our search for local railroad pictures became. The reasons for this are manifold. Perhaps, we just weren't sufficiently diligent in our efforts; we just didn't look in the right places. There was a tepid response to feelers that we put out to various groups that remain very interested in railroads and railroading. In the hey-day of Altoona railroading, up to the late 1940's, there were very few cameras in use; early on we couldn't afford them, in WWII film was virtually impossible to come by. Maybe people assumed that trains, engines, rolling stock, and cabooses were unremarkable, permanent fixtures in our community – that they would always be there. If so, there would have been no compelling need to take pictures of them.

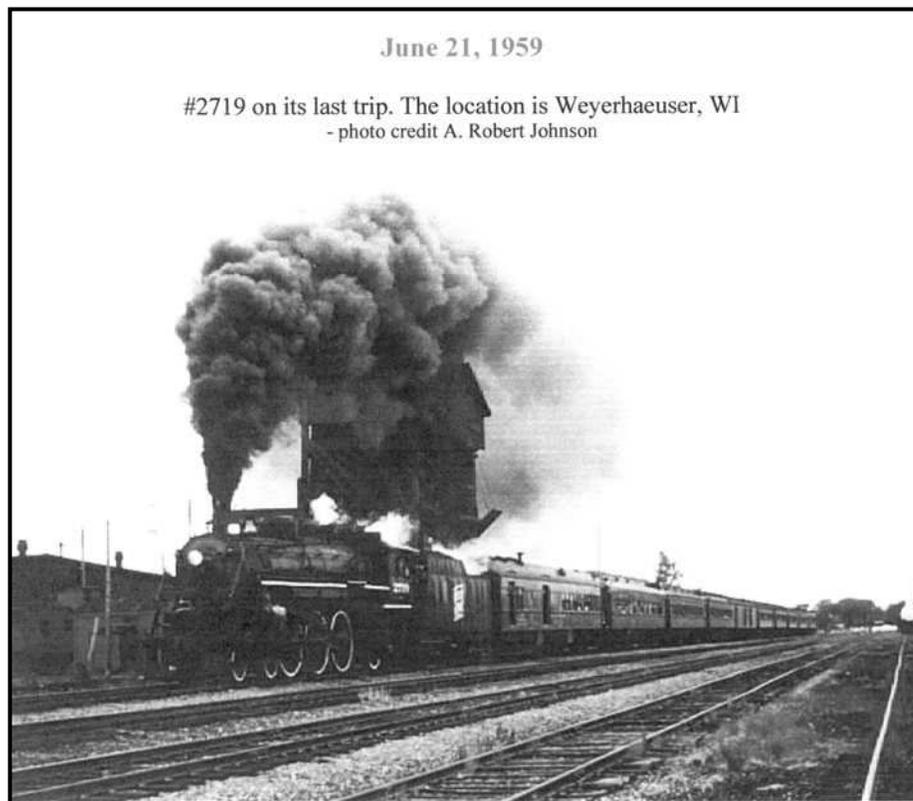
We did manage to corral a few. The cover of this book shows a working engine and its engineer, Lloyd Lenz. And it was not our purpose to tell anything approaching a complete history of the railroad's rolling stock or the several railroad companies that operated in Altoona at different times. Books have been written about these richly-deserving subjects; there remains much to be said. Eau Claire's Chippewa Valley Museum contains a treasure trove of such information.

Our efforts were concentrated on railroaders, their work, their families, and their community. But it's mandatory that readers have at least some idea of what a railroad engine of that early time period looked like. The story of one such engine, with an important Altoona connection, is well worth telling.

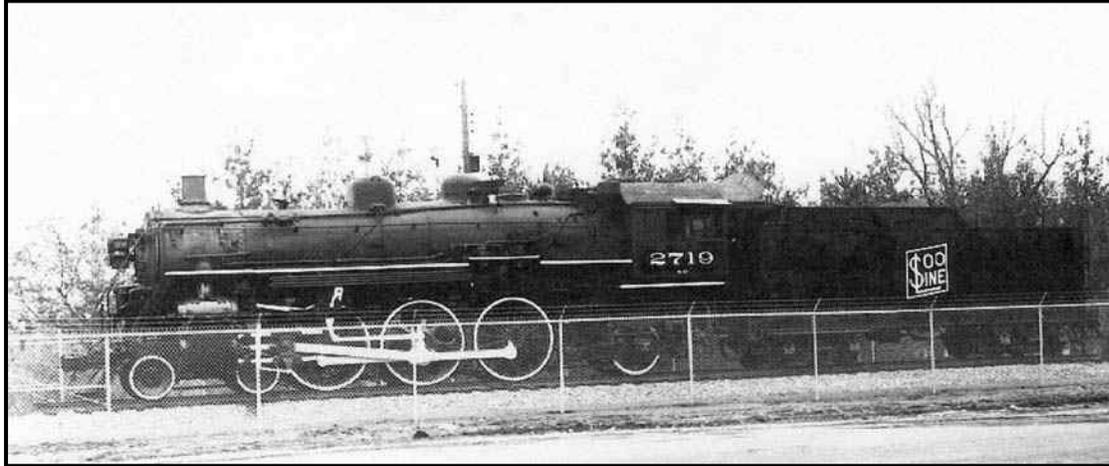
For the purposes of this chapter, we have chosen to

concentrate on the pictures we gleaned from the Internet. Soo Line Engines 2719 and 1003 have received a full measure of attention on the website entitled Soo Line #2719 Photo Gallery. 2719 and 1003 were representative of working engines of the first half of the Twentieth Century. We are deeply indebted to those who developed that website and wish to accord them a full measure of recognition for their efforts. A. Robert Johnson and David G. Peterson recorded several of the pictures that are to follow.

Built in 1923 in Schenectady, New York, 2719, a 4-6-2 steam locomotive, was retired as working freight engine on June 21, 1959 after logging an estimated three million miles.



It was moved the Eau Claire's Carson Park in the following year. It remained in a protected enclosure in the vicinity of the baseball park for many years.

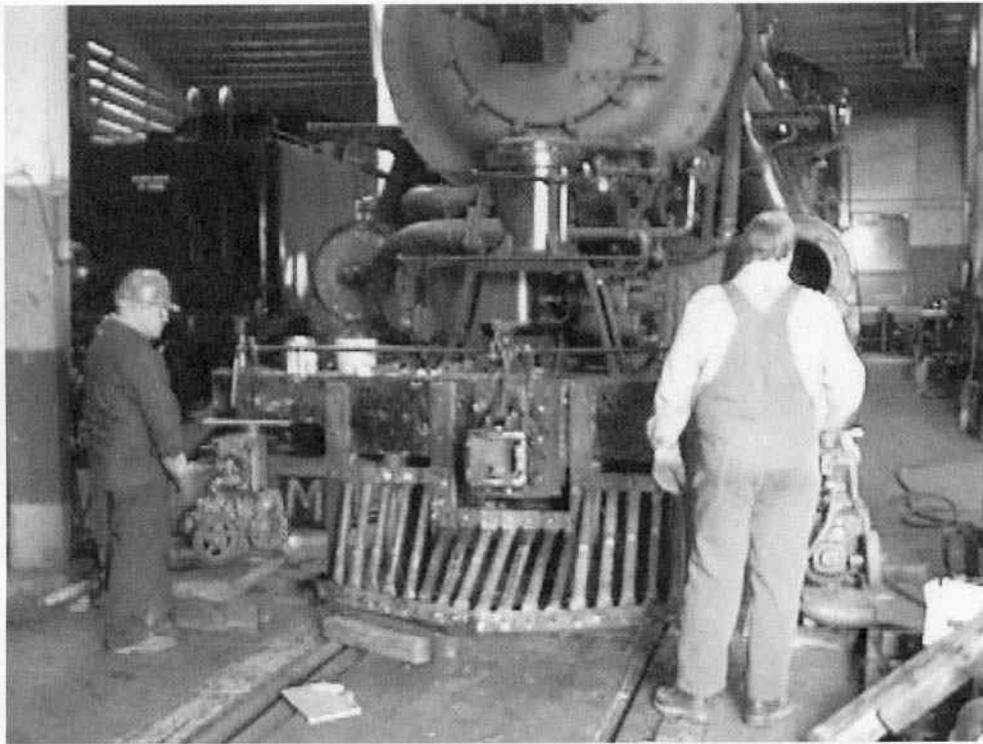


In the 1990's, it was returned to the Altoona Roundhouse to be restored and maintained by a dedicated group of volunteers belonging to the Locomotive and Tower Restoration Fund, Ltd.

Altoona Work - April 2000

The action in the Altoona Roundhouse reached a fevered pitch in April. Many projects had to be completed to allow other tasks to proceed.

Lee and Gary prepare to lift the front of the locomotive with the 150-Ton jacks.
photo credit David G. Peterson

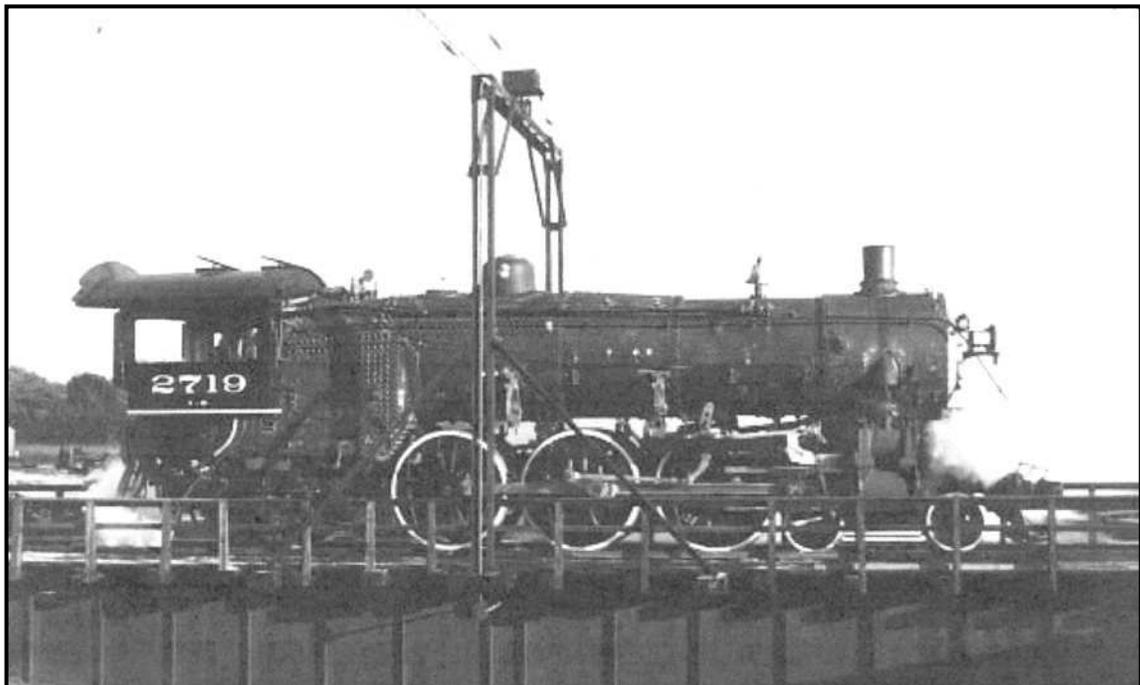
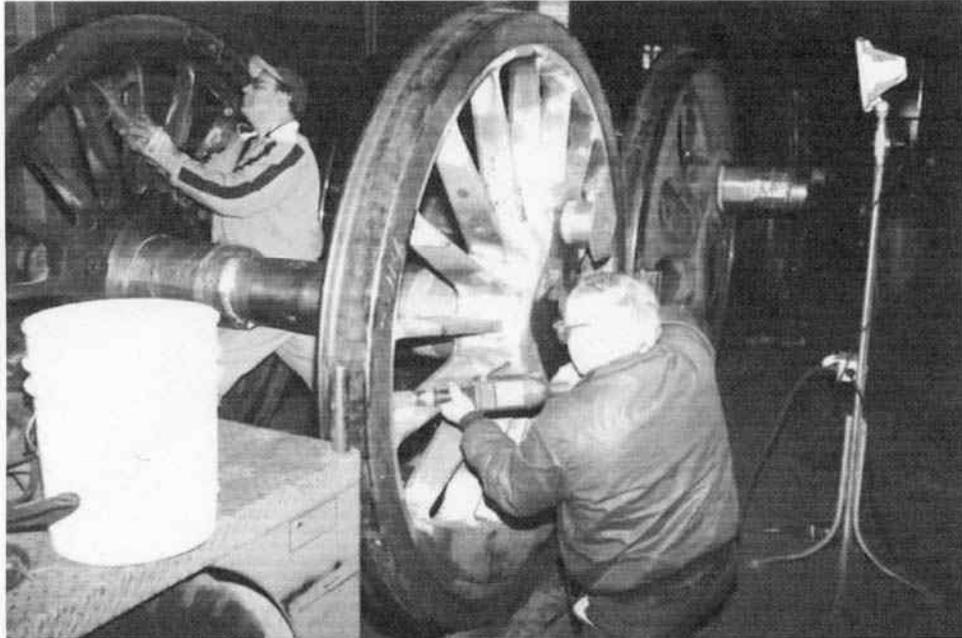


The jacks will raise the locomotive about 13 inches in one stroke. Lee and Gary watch to see that the lift remains level and one jack does not outpace the other.
photo credit David G. Peterson

Altoona Preparations For Driver Replacement

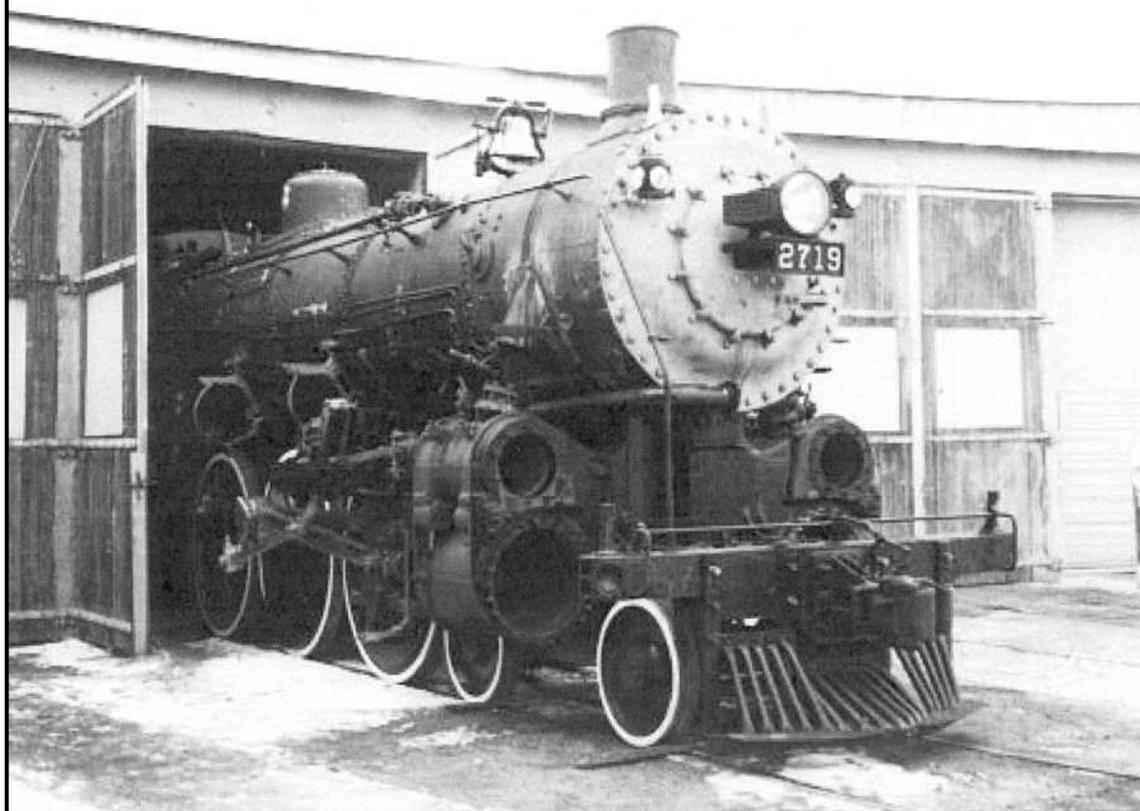
The drivers returned to Altoona, WI in December of 1999. Some preparatory work was required before the locomotive lifting company returned. The newly cast L3 driver center is also featured on this page.

Dick and Lee clean up the rough spots on the #1 driver assembly.
photo credit David G. Peterson



November 23, 1997

Sunday morning, no one is around to get in the way of photos. #2719 is still hanging in there. Some leaks were fixed during the night, but the final section of pipe going to the blower needs replacing - photo credit Randy Lambertus



It began a series of excursions on different railroads in Wisconsin's northlands on September 19, 1998.

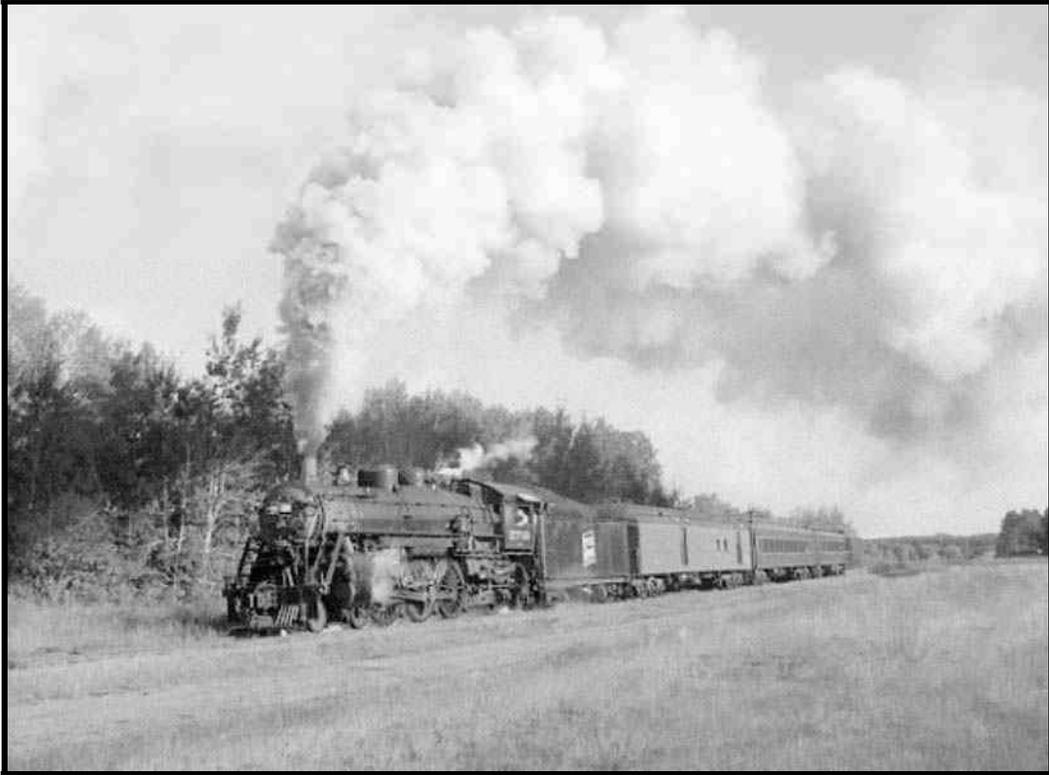
It moved to the Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad in Spooner, Wisconsin in June, 2000 where it provided excursions until 2003.



SOO Line #2719 in 1998



Gary confidently handling the controls of #1003 – Photo by David G. Peterson



2719 invariably returned to Altoona to spend every winter in the Altoona Roundhouse. However, Altoona, without a whimper of protest, allowed its shelter, the roundhouse, to be razed in June 2004. Deprived of protection, 2719's future was bleak. It was forced to sit outside in the open, exposed to the elements, until December, 2006. It was then moved to the Lake Superior Railroad Museum in Duluth, Minnesota. After extensive repairs, it began a series of summer excursions in 2007 that continue to this day. 2719 is still owned by the Locomotive and Tower Fund, Ltd.

The fate of 1003 is unknown to me.



PHOTOS FROM STAR-OBSERVER PHOTO ARCHIVE

THE 400 HIGHSPEED TRAIN

This postcard shows the "400" high-speed train that traveled through Hudson in the 1930s and 1940s. The train could make the trip to Chicago from St. Paul's Union Depot in 400 minutes (about 6.5 hours), reaching speeds of over 100 mph. The train traveled on C&NW train tracks. A ticket on the 400 was \$15.10 for coach, \$1785 for first class. The lady waving in the foreground looks happy, but the two fellows sitting on the track in front of the train look oddly out of place.



The last eastbound 400 stopped in Eau Claire July 23, 1963. This photo appeared in the next day's edition of the Eau Claire Leader.

File photo

Chapter Nine - The Roundhouse

This chapter is dedicated to
Martin Radisewitz
Altoona's Timekeeper
When he blew the Roundhouse whistle
the people of Altoona set their watches.
John R. Thurston



Rip
1887 - 2004

The Altoona Roundhouse

John R. Thurston

A railroad roundhouse is a series of large stalls designed to hold locomotives and other railroad cars. It is built around a central turntable, basically a bridge that rotates from a center point. An engine moves, or is moved, onto the tracks of a turntable which then may be rotated until the tracks are in line with those of the intended stall. It can then be provided with necessary repairs or maintenance.

To those of us growing up in the Altoona of the 1930's, our roundhouse was far more than that described in the preceding paragraph. It was a vibrant, living, breathing entity, a centerpiece of our community. It operated 24/7, glowing and rumbling throughout the night. It emitted smoke and steam along with no end of clanging as the men worked on the engines. The railroaders, working, coming and going, added to its identity and its liveliness. We kept time by the roundhouse's whistle. It signaled the change of shifts, the onset and end of eating breaks, and outbreak of an Altoona fire in need of volunteer firefighters. The rare sound of four long whistles was ominous, it stood for a railroad wreck. People set their watches by this whistle. One couldn't have imagined Altoona without its roundhouse.

The original roundhouse was built in 1887, just eight years after some land had been designated for a railroad center in "East Eau Claire." The old West Wisconsin Railroad needed a place for a rail yard, a depot, and a roundhouse. The large plot of land was about three miles east of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. This

development, of course, later became Altoona. The roundhouse was expanded in 1913 and 1947. More than 400 Altoona people worked for the railroad in 1941.

Gradually, however, the roundhouse and most of the Altoona rail yard succumbed to obsolescence, finally becoming obsolete and of no use to the railroad. Larger locomotives, diesel engines, and changing demands contributed to its demise. Its turntable was no longer big enough to accommodate the larger engines.

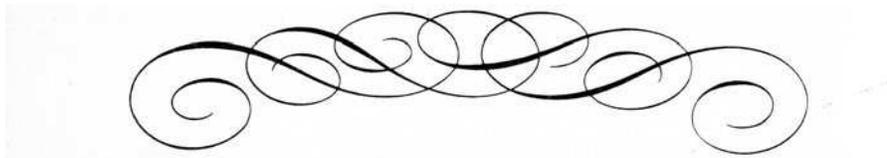
In this later time period, in order to turn larger locomotives around and head them in a different direction, the railroad came to rely upon what came to be known as a "Y." It was a large set of tracks shaped as a "Y" with a track across the top. An example of its operation will spell out its usage. A westward-headed engine would pull onto the track on the top of the "Y," e.g, facing west. It would then back down north onto the right or western track of the "Y," stopping at the bottom. It would then be switched onto the track on the eastern or left side of the "Y" and would move south up to and on to the original track, the one on top of the "Y." It would now be facing east.

For several years, this essentially deserted roundhouse was used to rehabilitate a railroad engine (Soo Line #2719) and a few railroad cars. This work was undertaken by a dedicated group of volunteers.

However without compelling use for it by the Union Pacific, the roundhouse was destined for destruction. Some final efforts were made in 1997 to save it. It was thought that it could be renovated and transformed into a tourist attraction called the Altoona

Roundhouse. Locomotives and railroad memorabilia could be put on display in an interpretive center within it. Excursion trains could use it as gathering point. Downtown Altoona businesses might profit from its presence. The success of this plan was dependent on substantial, sustained, and energetic community support. This wasn't forthcoming and the roundhouse surrendered to the wrecking ball in early 2004. There is now only a cluttered 7-acre tract of sand where the roundhouse once so proudly stood.

These following pictures show this roundhouse at various times in its history.



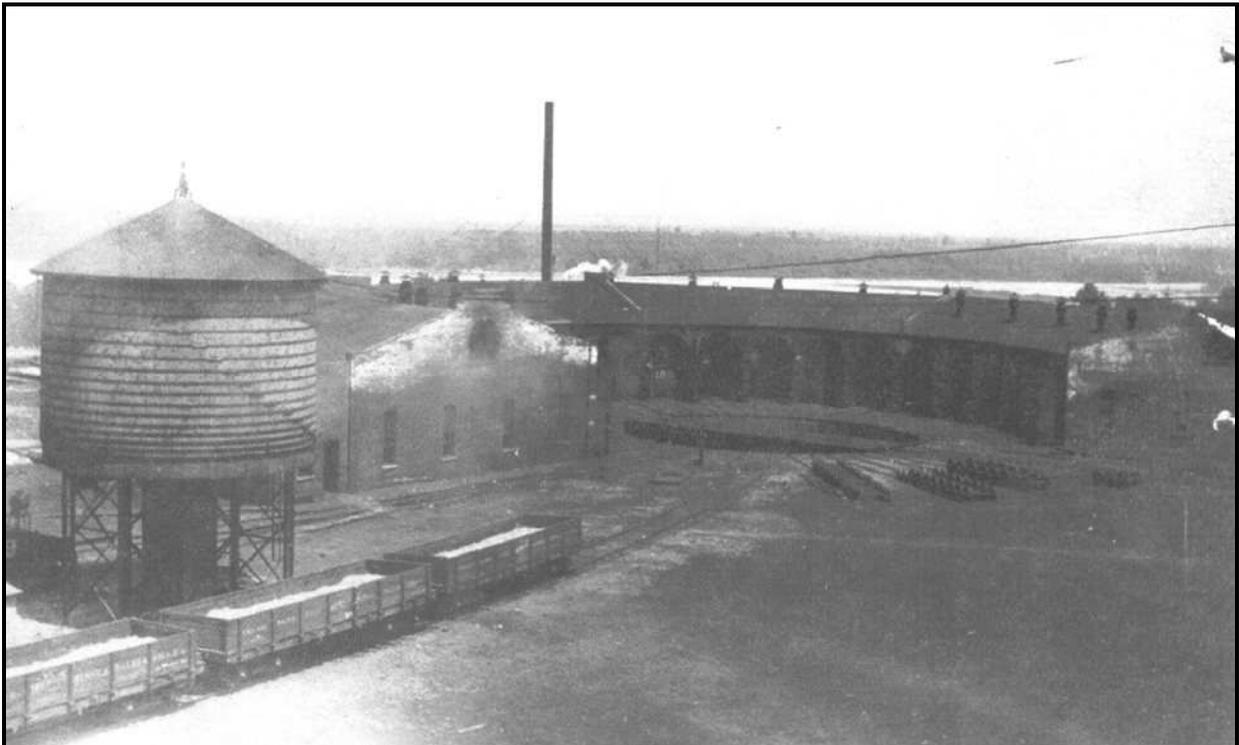
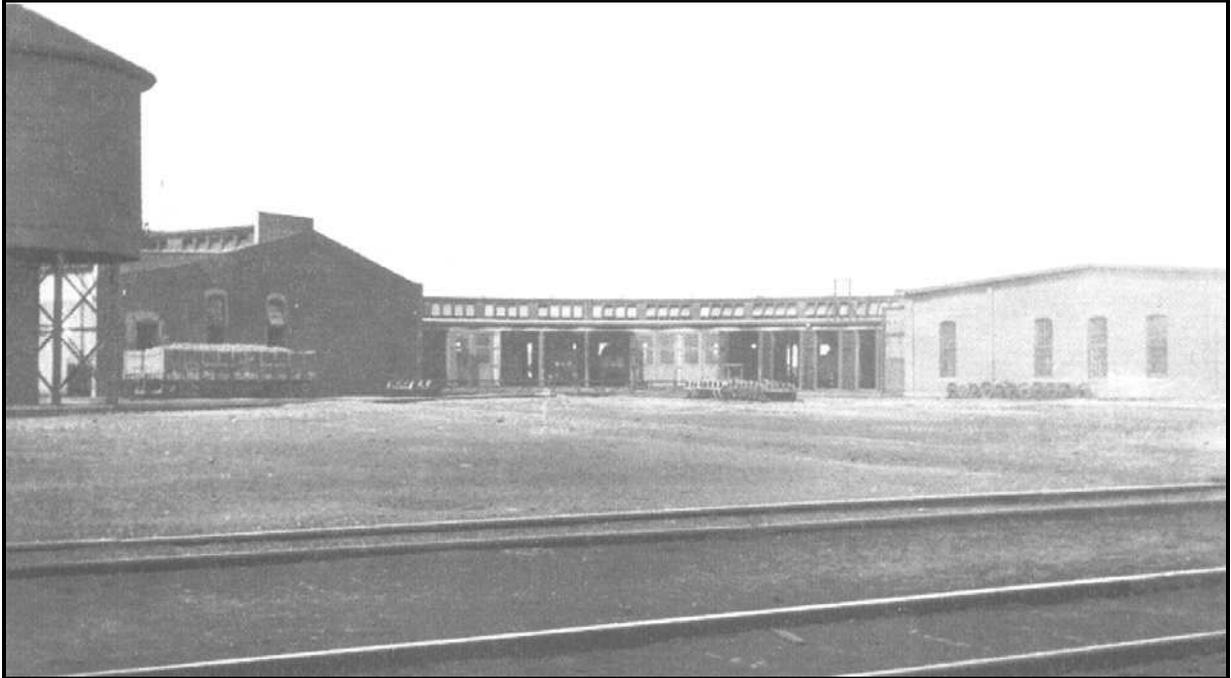


The Altoona Coal Chute and Water Tower (Roundhouse on the left).

Cars filled with coal were pushed to the top of the chute. Gondola doors then opened to fill the engines driven underneath.

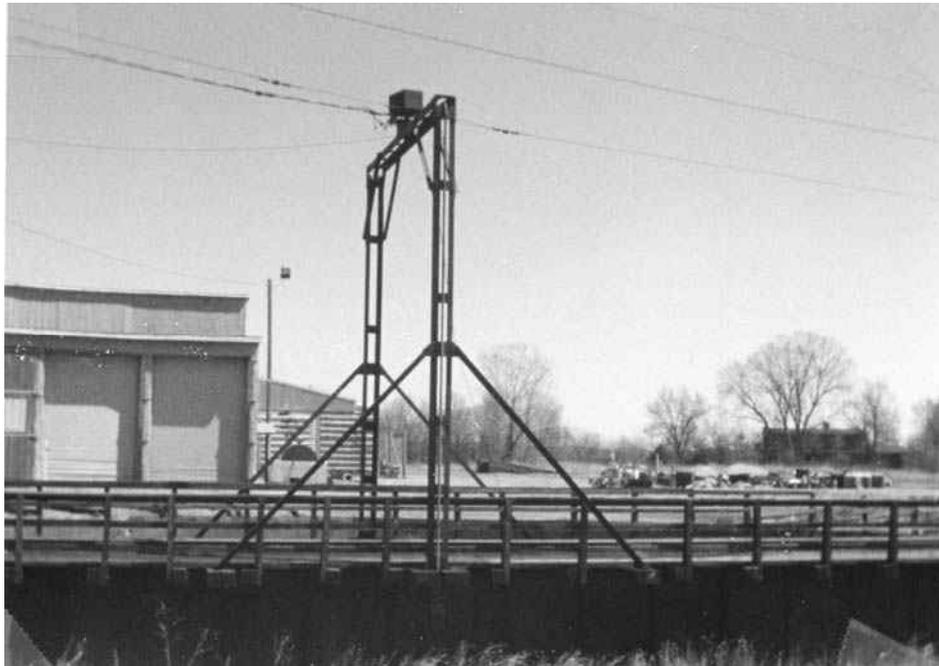
Photo circa 1913

Photos of the Altoona Roundhouse built in 1913



The Roundhouse was built in 1882 and enlarged in 1911. That burned in 1912 and a new one was built in 1913. Cement block Depot was also built in 1913. The Roundhouse was closed in the mid-1970's.

By Judy Lenz-Adams.



Turntable at Altoona's Roundhouse
John R. Thurston
1994



By Dan Lyksett

Leader-Telegram staff

Photos by David Jones

ALTOONA — There still are cinders under foot, and the oily diesel smell of hardworking steel and iron machines permeates the air. Sharp eyes spot peeling paint and pin-holes in the roof, but visionary eyes see a renovated, lively, functioning tourist draw called the Altoona Roundhouse.

"We think there's a tremendous amount of potential here, the chance to preserve something that's really special," says Charlie Schaaf of Altoona, one of the railroad-enthusiasts hoping to build a future for this historic building.

"There's a railway museum in Green Bay, and the Duluth (Minn.) transportation museum, but we have something they don't have: An operating roundhouse next to a functioning rail line and right in a railway town."

That the Altoona Roundhouse is in the city is no surprise. The oldest part of the structure was built in the early 1880s, making it one of the oldest buildings still standing in Altoona.

Altoona grew up around the railroad, originally platted as East Eau Claire in 1881 because the old West Wisconsin Railway needed land for their rail yard, depot and roundhouse, according to Gerald Hagen's book "A History of Altoona."

There's still a functioning switching yard and main line running through town, not to mention two taverns with railroad themes — the 400 Club, Rollie's Coach Club and the Rail Haven — and a high school bearing the nick-name Railroaders,

"Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls and Menomonie had the timber industry — Altoona has the railroad," Schaaf said.

The roundhouse might have a bright future because enough people in the city rose up to stop its destruction.

Its current owner, the Union Pacific Railroad, had previously announced that the structure was to be demolished. The City Council set up an ad hoc committee to work with the railroad on other options, with the result that ownership of the building and about seven acres of land surrounding it will be transferred to the city sometime late this year or early next year.

The next step will be determined by how much of that enthusiasm continues.

"We were really hustling to meet the deadline to stop that wrecking ball," said Dan Jones, a City Councilman and a member of the ad hoc committee. "The next step is to get some sort of organization going that can take control, begin raising and receiving funds, and develop a plan and a vision for what they'd like to see out here. As a city we're pretty much operating from a position of limited funds, so it's going to take that group to turn this into something that could end up being pretty awesome."

The first items on the agenda for that future group are relatively modest — a new roof, some cleaning up around the site, possibly a coat of paint.

But as Schaaf and Jones tour the facility, with its still-functioning turntable and the locomotive stalls with their rails radiating out from the center, they present a grander vision.

"You start with maybe just some static displays, the 2719 (a Soo Line steam locomotive being renovated in the roundhouse) and maybe another locomotive here," Jones said. "But you go out to the high end and you can see a whole interpretive center, a rail center, with excursion trains originating here and a pedestrian walk going from here over function tracks to downtown. That could help turn a pretty minor business district into a pretty nice niche shopping area, with restaurants, train-related memorabilia, things like that.

"It's pretty far down the line, but there's real potential there."

Now that the title to the building seems secure, Schaaf said the next step will be finding the

people who want to help develop the project.

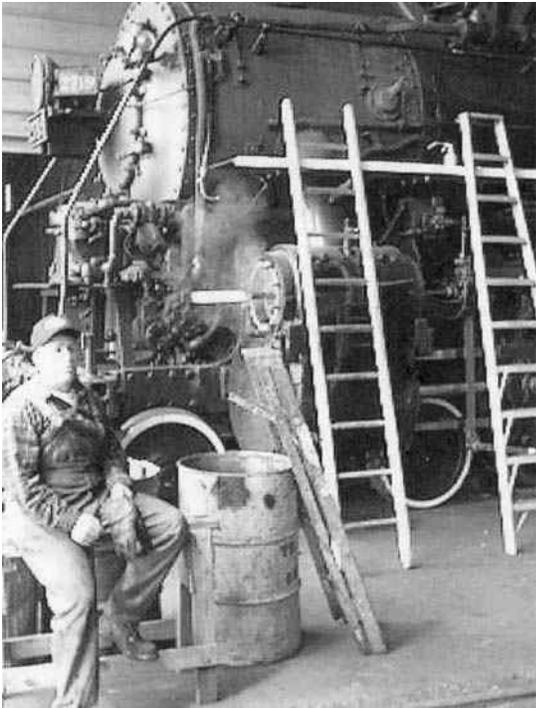
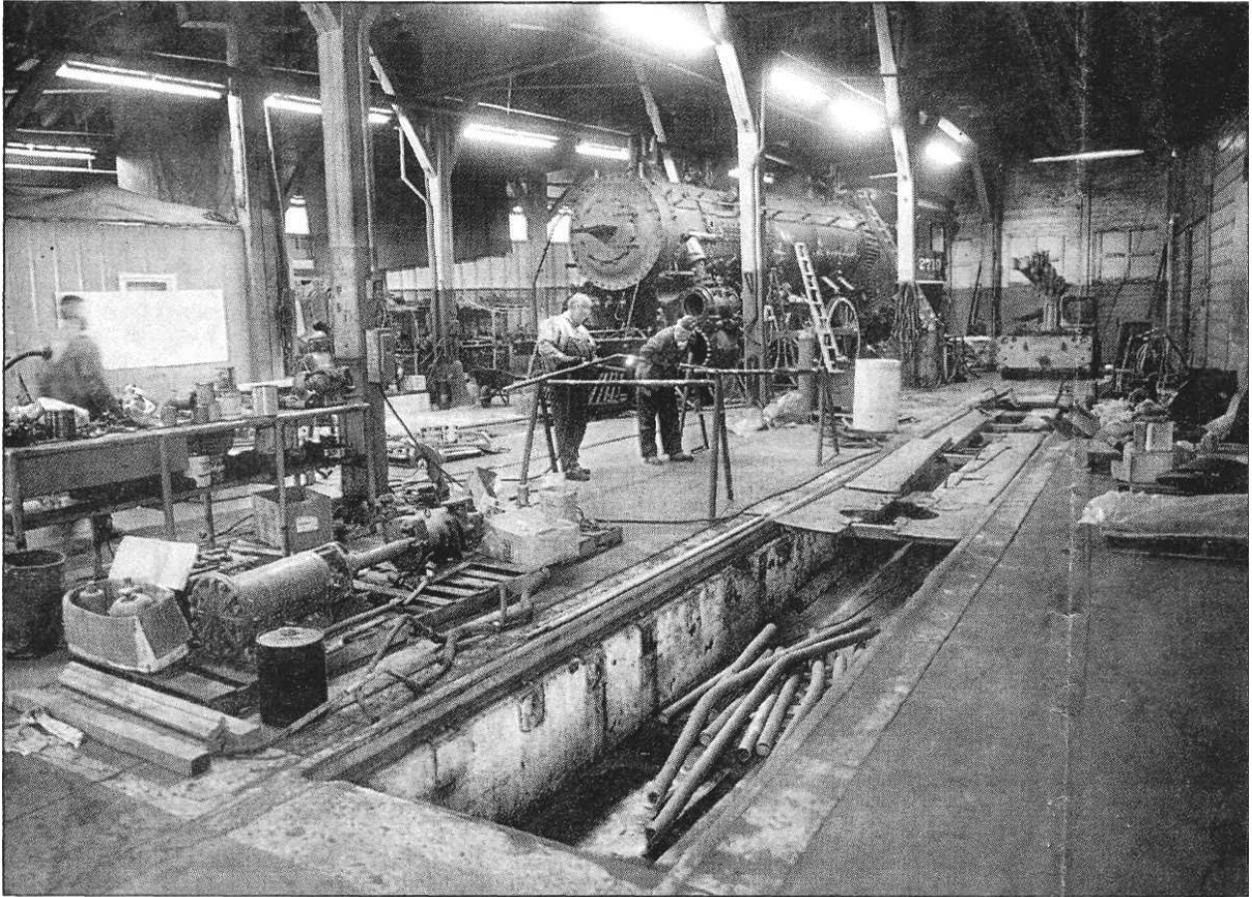
"Railroad enthusiasts are a very enthusiastic, very tightly-knit group, and I can't-think of another group that could pull this off," he said. "They're going to be people who offer time, money and expertise. It's just a matter of helping that group get going and helping define the vision." *Lyksett can be reached at 830-5840 or (800) 236-7077.*

- Work on the oldest section of the Altoona Roundhouse began in the early 1880s, with a major expansion built in 1913 and a third built in 1947. It is one of the oldest roundhouses in the country that has been in continual use for its original purpose.
- A roundhouse contains a series of stalls that hold locomotives and other railroad cars. It is built in an arc around a central "turntable," basically a bridge that rotates from a center point. A car is pulled onto the turntable, which in turn rotates until the tracks line up with the intended stall.
- In 1941 more than 400 people worked at the Altoona Railroad yards.

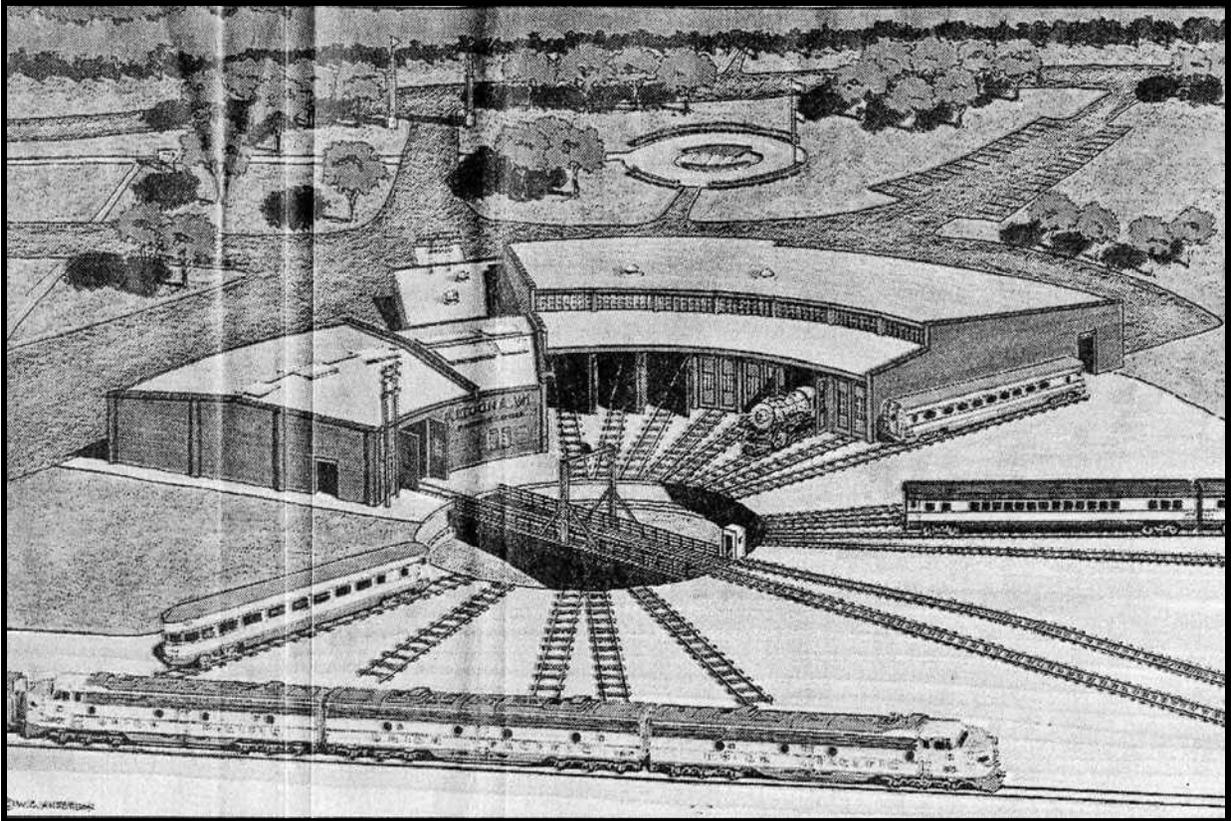


Above: Looking from the roundhouse window, the turntable is visible. **Right:** This is how Altoona Railway Center backers envision their completed restoration project.

Now that the Altoona Roundhouse has been spared the wrecking ball, it's up to a group of volunteers to see that the dream of developing it stays on track.



Railroad repairmen work inside the Altoona Roundhouse, with historic Soo Line Locomotive No. 2719 in the background.



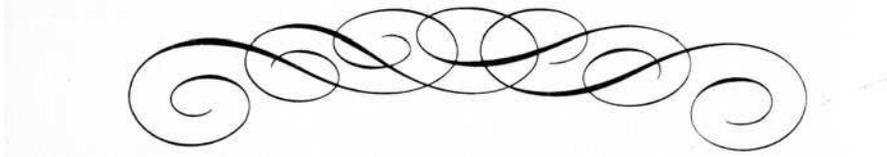
Proposed Roundhouse Museum in 1997 – Roundhouse was Razed in 2004



Altoona Roundhouse as it Appears in 2009 – 14 Acres of Sand

Chapter Ten

Altoona VFW Post 10405





VFW Post 10405

1419 Lynn Avenue Altoona, Wisconsin

By John R. Thurston

Note the flagpole in the above photo.

There is a plaque at the base that reads as follows:

*“In memory of
RANDALL K. NAUERTZ.*

U. S. Marine Corps

Born - Oct. 26, 1948

Died - Dec. 2, 1968

Altoona Graduate of 1966.

Donated by an anonymous Ex-Marine formerly of Altoona.

All the members of Altoona's VFW Post 10405 have served their country in time of war as soldiers, sailors, marines, or members of the Coast Guard. Although the various branches differ in experiences and demands, there is something important that all these servicemen have in

common. It is wartime service. This sets them apart from others, the people who haven't "been there." Those who haven't experienced the anxiety and stress of war can't really know what it was like.

It was this common bond of service that caused Altoona servicemen to band together in 1974 to establish VFW Post 10405. The Post provided a place where they could get together, socialize, and enjoy the comradery of a "band of brothers."

Aside from providing a meeting place, there was another very important purpose for their banding together. As VFW members, they have almost a sacred obligation to initiate and support programs to honor and assist all others who have served in the country's armed forces.

In the past, in the lulls between our many wars, servicemen have been too easily forgotten. Without constant reminders by organizations such as the VFW, it's as though these warriors never served and the wartime events never happened. Servicemen should be accorded "**Veterans Propers**" throughout the course of their lives. "Propers," a term originating in urban ghettos, can be used to express a veteran's right, i.e. veterans should routinely accorded special respect, deference, and assistance by a grateful nation and its citizenry. {The Memorial Day (May 24, 2009) speech that follows in this section describes both the comradery of servicemen as well as some of these "propers" and how they may be bestowed.} Perhaps a unique expression such as "**Veterans Propers**" should be used as the term that routinely defines and draws attention to the Nation's special obligations to its servicemen. In addition, VFW Post 10405 is an important community asset, an organization that takes pride in Altoona and serves its citizens in a great many ways.

The following material was gleaned from the informal records kept by the VFW Post 10405 Historian. It tells a tiny bit about this Post and some of its history. With minimal editing, these tidbits are submitted for general information.



New V.F.W. Post

Art Schultz, Ninth District V.F.W. Commander, recently installed officers of the newly instituted Post 10405 at Altoona.

From left are Schultz, Harvey Johnson – Commander; and Keith Grilley – Quartermaster; and Thomas Griese – Senior vice-commander.

Other officers are Donald Foss, Junior vice-commander; Aloysius Rohn.– Chaplain; Newell Pettis, Dean Olson and Dennis Meyer – Trustees; Norm Gutsch – Surgeon; Doug Johnson – Officer of the day and Jerome McDonald – Adjutant.

The post has over 50 members.
10-20-1974

Harvey Johnson served as its First Commander with Tom Griese, the Vice Commander; Keith Grilley, the Quartermaster; and Jim Crandall, the Adjutant.

The first Post Flag was donated by Ms. Lois Crandall in honor of her deceased husband, Robert J. Crandall.

The Altoona Post's Life Member Club was formed at the very beginning. Charter members were Harvey Johnson, Tom Griese, John Brown, Vance Larson, Albert Radcliffe, Anthony Wagner, Rodger Thompson, Percy Hugdahl, and Art Hagmann.

The Post had no clubhouse initially. The first meeting took place in the small, old café of the 400 Club. The group also met at the Golden Spike tavern. For three years, the meetings took place in the Altoona Bank. In addition, meetings were held for about a year in the basement of Altoona's St. Mary's Church and after that, in the new St. Mary's Civic Center. By then, the group had grown from 38 members to 107.

The Post notes indicate that in 1974, Jerald Steinberg became the first member of the Post to die.

An anonymous VFW member wrote "We had one member, now deceased who was a member of World War I and II – he being Robert Curtis. He was one of the most interesting and finest men I have ever known."

Over the years, the VFW Post has been very involved in local civic affairs. It is important that the Post "gives back something" to the Altoona community for its continuing support. Early on, it sponsored such educational events as "Safety Poster Contests."

Jim Crandall was born in Menomonie, Wisconsin on December 5, 1946 and he married Sharon Kummer on May 9, 1970. From this union came

two daughters, Angela and Paulette. He served in the Army from September 1966 to September 1968 -- a decorated veteran of the Viet Nam War. His past and present activities include the Altoona Recreation Committee, Altoona Little League, Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council and the Altoona VFW Post number 10405.

Additional undated items: "The Bar is open every Friday night. Rick Hoffman is the bartender. We have karaoke every Friday night. Jim Crandall runs the Deer Hunter's Ball which is one of the main fundraisers. Jim also runs 'Spring Flings' and 'Indoor Fishing.'"

Other undated items: "Breakfast held 2nd Sunday of the month. Going to try 4th Sunday." There was a need for the money that was to be generated. "We have two local relief funds. We have bills to pay and a mortgage. We usually spend more money that we make."

"April 27, 1989, Jim Crandall and Lowell Odegard Try to get Amish to tear down the building for materials. Put on lots of miles. Ode walked way in the field. Stopped carriage." April 28, 1989. "Amish call Jim Crandell at 7:30 a.m. Amish come into Altoona and looked at building. Met with Ode." April 29, 1989 "Jim and Ode talk with Eli Miller. 4 men would tear down and put in dumpster for \$1000." April 30, 1989 "Called Bob Devney about bulldozing the building." May 1, 1989 "Called private party. He thought I was nuts."

May 6, 1989. On this date, a familiar Altoona landmark, the old Looby's Meat Market at 1419 Lynn Avenue was bulldozed by Devney to make way for a new VFW clubhouse. The resulting rubble was trucked away to a dumpsite on Hemingway's land. Don Everson, Ralph Ely, Carl Johnson, and Arnie Longen were among the interested onlookers.



Looby's Meat Market



Demolition 1



Demolition 2



The New Club House

After the new building was constructed, the VFW held their regular meetings there. In addition, it was made it available to the general public. Early on, Lions' meals were served. It could be rented for birthdays, weddings, showers, anniversaries, retirement parties, and dinners. These events were booked throughout the year. In addition, the building was made available at no charge for meetings of the Booster Club, Little League, Lions, Hockey Club, and Altoona Recreation.

Flags

Flags have long been important to our nation as symbols of love of country and reminders of those who have served. Some of the history of Post 10406 can be told by its displaying and honoring our flag. At one time, they installed an "Avenue of Flags" on Spooner Avenue. Also, they provided and installed the flag that is permanently displayed at the Cinder City Park (Photos on next page).



Above:

Altoona VFW Post 10405 – In remembrance of those who served. 1978
VFW Flag and Plaque at Cinder City Park – Jim Crandall, Dan Johnson and Ralph Ely

Below:

VFW Avenue of Flags on Spooner Avenue
Altoona, Wisconsin – 1987



Altoona VFW Post 10405 Officers
2009/2010

Commander: Alan Olkives

Sr. Vice Commander: Lowell Odegard

Jr. Vice Commander: Terry Carr

Quartermaster: Ralph Ely

Chaplain: Tim Sexton

Judge Advocate: Robert Pierce

Surgeon: Harvey Wick

Officer of the Day: Reuben Valencia

Three yr. Trustee: David Winkler

Two yr. Trustee: Glenn Felix

Adjutant: David Winkler

Asst. Quartermaster: Tom Burgmeier

Altoona VFW Ladies Auxiliary

The Altoona VFW Ladies Auxiliary was instituted August 3rd, 2003 at VFW Post 10405 – 1419 Lynn Avenue, Altoona, WI.

Department President, Shirley Anderson performed the institution with the aide of Department Chief of Staff, Rusty Garbacz and organizer Carolyn Olkives as conductress. The Department VFW Commander, Al Kochenderfer spoke and welcomed the ladies to the new Altoona VFW Auxiliary.

Charter Members: Linda Anderson, Marci Biermann, Paulette Brown, Mildred Brugmeier, Caroline Connor, Lynne Connor, Sharon Crandall, Mary Ann Cullen, Judith Davenport, Angela Dehnke, Barbara Duszynski, Helen Ely, Marlene Felix, Fiona Garcia, Rita Garcia Rindahl, Bea Hancock, Genevieve Jensen, Sharon Leppert, Kathi Michelson, Carolyn Olkives, Colleen Pierce, Paula Podwys, Ashley Rindahl, April Roberts, Tamera Smeltzer, Linda Sunde, Susan Talbitz, Faith Thompson, Kathy Grant.

The Traveling Vietnam Wall was brought to Eau Claire September 24-28th, 2003 by the Altoona VFW Post and the ladies were called to help in their first large project. We also joined in on the Buddy Poppy Promotion for Veterans Relief in the same year.

The current officers are President' Colleen Pierce; Sr. Vice Pres., Marlene Felix; Jr. Vice Pres., Patti Brott; Secretary, Carolyn Olkives; Treasurer, Sharon Leppert; Chaplain, Barbara Duszynski; Conductress, Barbara Stobb and Bea Hancock, ; Guard Deborah Carr; Trustees, Barbara Duszynski, Marlene Felix and Tamera Smeltzer; Historian, Ann Kosmosky.

The Ladies Auxiliary has several projects; Veterans & Family Support, Americanism, Buddy Poppy – (Veterans Relief), Cancer Aide & Research, Community Service, Emergency & Disaster, Hospital, Junior Girls, Legislation/ Political Action, Membership, Patriot's Pen (Middle School Competition), Scholarships, Voice of Democracy (High School Competition), and Youth Activities.

See Photo Next Page.



Back row: Left to Right
Bea Hancock; Asst. Conductress
Barbara Duszynski, Chaplain & 1st Trustee
Carolyn Olkives, Secretary
Sharon Leppert, Treasurer
Patti Brott, 9th Dist. Auxiliary President & Altoona's Jr. Vice President

Front row: Left to Right
Colleen Pierce, AUX President
Marlene Felix, Sr. Vice President & 2nd Trustee

Absent:
Barbara Stobb, Conductress
Deb Carr, Guard
Tamera Smeltzer, 3rd Trustee
Ann Kosmosky, Historian



Breakfasts at Altoona's VFW Post 10405
An "All You Can Eat" Event

1409 Lynn Avenue, Altoona, Wisconsin 54701
9 a.m.-12 noon.

The second Sunday of every month
Currently, \$7.00 for adults; \$4.00 for children (4-10)

One of Altoona's more important traditions takes the form of a monthly breakfast provided by VFW Post 10405. Alan Olkives, James Crandall, Lowell Odegard, Thomas Burgmeier, and Les Zimmerman established this event which first took place on May 1, 2007 and continues to this day.

While this monthly breakfast raises funds in support of the Altoona VFW Post, it has become a regular event for the substantial numbers of Altoona residents, servicemen and others alike. People enjoy the warm, friendly atmosphere while being treated to a wondrous meal.



It's a full breakfast; one may go back for as many re-fills as he or she wishes. The breakfast provides a wide assortment of delicious, tastefully presented foods including blueberry and regular pancakes, bacon, eggs (scrambled, or fried), sausage links, biscuits and gravy, cereal, toast, orange juice, coffee and milk.



The Post has come to rely upon Alan and Carolyn Olkives, Thomas Burgmeier, James Crandall, Jim Gordon, Les Zimmerman, Lowell Odegard and Terry Carr as the “Chief cooks and bottle washers” who provide this excellent bill of fare. Jim Crandall is really the Chief Cook. Over the years, Ron Black, Merlin Kosmosky and Harvey Wick have helped out as well.



Tom Burgmeier



Terry Carr, Les Zimmerman and Jim Crandall



Jim Gordon

Although a fair share of the attendees at these breakfasts are veterans and their family members, others in the community are more than welcome to come in and enjoy the fellowship. Everyone, young and old, may walk in, eat, and walk out or linger to "shoot the breeze" with others in a leisurely fashion as in the days of old. The topics might include inconsequential chit-chat, sports events, the Green Bay Packers, Brett Favre, war stories, local gossip, or the affairs of the nation and the world.

Come join the folks for a breakfast at VFW Post 10405. You'll be more than likely to make it a habit.

John R. Thurston (08.29.09)



"Leave none of them behind"

Memorial Day Address: 1:15 p.m., Sunday, May 24, 2009

Bruce Valley Church, Strum, Wisconsin

John R. Thurston

I have chosen to entitle this address **"Leave none of them behind."** This expression and the tradition it represents were born on the battlefields of old. Soldiers felt an intense sense of oneness with their fallen comrades. Recovering their bodies was an obligation. None of their comrades were ever to be abandoned; none of them was ever to be left behind.

The tradition continues to this day. In addition, it should become a metaphor for the respect and obligation that our society, you and I, must hold for all of our veterans, both living and dead. We must never forget them. We must **"leave none of them behind."**

I'm a World War II veteran who spent two very long years of my life frozen and seasick on the weather-deck of a wildly-gyrating destroyer in the frigid waters off Alaska's Aleutian Islands. Our navy task force of three cruisers and nine destroyers would periodically cross the northern Pacific to destroy military installations on the northernmost islands of Japan. That was my special Hell. Every warrior has his own individual Hell. All things considered, mine was a lot softer than many others.

During World War II, I, and virtually all Americans, were deeply and personally involved in the war effort that lasted nearly four years. Since then, our wars have become increasingly depersonalized and more drawn out. They have been fought by a relatively few servicemen. But there is nothing impersonal to the servicemen who were fighting and dying in them. They and their families pay a very high price for our protection. There is a strange "disconnect" in this matter as most of us continue to live our lives pretty much as usual. While it hasn't been intentional, we have come to leave the heavy-lifting of war and the dying to a few others. Our society allows us to keep our dead out of our consciousness and consciences in a variety of ways. For example, under the Bush administration, no one could photograph or videotape the dead bodies being lifted from the planes that brought them back from Afghanistan and Iraq. Now, grieving families have options and are able to make the final decisions about the circumstances surrounding their beloved one's homecoming.

Few take time to consider fully the death of a serviceman and its impact upon his family. If asked about this, people might say that they are too busy. To them, Memorial Day means Memorial Day Sales or it's a day when no mail is delivered. These sales are a desecration, a dancing on the grave of our fallen servicemen.

Too often, historians emphasize the dates of battles and the large numbers of dead and wounded. The individual warrior is lost in this shuffle. He or she becomes a mere statistic, one amongst many. The deaths in our current wars are now between 4 and 5 thousand.

On this day—and all days, let us remember that these 4000 plus servicemen were individuals, —to paraphrase a World I poem—that each arose on the day of their death, probably appreciating the wonder of the dawn, that each of them had loved and were loved, and that each bled as they fell in our behalf.*

To the extent that we fail to remember our dead as individuals, to that extent, we dishonor them: we have **"left them behind."**

I'll now talk about WWI for a moment. What do you know about that war of long ago? Could you name even one of its battles? If you can't, you are not alone.

The death of one soldier in WW I, Ross McCluskey, continues to loom very large in my life. For a few special moments in 1991, I knelt beside the cross that identified his grave in the large and beautiful American Meuse-Argonne Military Cemetery in France. He had fought and died in the quagmire of a battlefield around Ypers about a month before the 1918 Armistice brought an end to that war. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Although I bear his name, Ross, I never knew him. But I knew his mother, my grandmother. I also knew that her life ended in many ways upon the notification of his death. A medal, some pictures, and memories were all that she had left of him. His death and the resulting void remain deeply personal to me. I think of Ross, my grandmother, and her family on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and on other occasions in between. Every fallen serviceman deserves some such personal remembrance.

Our servicemen must never be far from our thoughts and our deeds. Memorial Day is dedicated to all the servicemen who have died in our

wars. You are honoring them here today with your attendance at this ceremony.

We should continue our search for those veterans who are still listed as "Missing In Action," locating their remains and consigning them to a proper and respectful burial on site or returning them home for this purpose.

Some of our citizenry have chosen to honor our fallen heroes by erecting monuments and building museums.

Some confine their expression of "Remembrance and Respect" to Memorial Day or Veterans Day, pausing for a moment of silence and contemplation, perhaps as they listen to "Taps."

Others routinely display flags, bumper stickers, or lapel pins on all those many days that are not special occasions.

Still others may seek out a serviceman or veteran, shake his hand, and thank him for what he has done for them.

Others may listen compassionately—and sometimes at length—to a serviceman if he feels the need to talk.

Or they might, in the course of casual conversation, ask a family member about their serviceman and what he or she is doing, how things are going.

Individuals or communities may extend help to that family if it is encountering special problems.

Some include our warriors in their prayers.

"Remembrance and Respect" should take other forms. We must become personally involved in national decision-making. Our military forces must be sent into battle only when their mission is clear; its justification must be open, honest, and compelling.

Americans must make sure that our Congress continues to enact legislation that will benefit our warriors. They and their families might be easily forgotten and ignored. Every year, we must pressure our Congressmen to do whatever is necessary to provide servicemen and their families with anything and everything they need—hospitalization, rehabilitation, counseling, financial support, whatever. Servicemen have always been there

for us. We must always be there for them.

Let each of us adopt a firm resolve as of this day. We must personally support our servicemen and their families in every way possible. Mere words are insufficient.

It is only by our deeds that our warriors may come to believe that America will always respect and remember them, that all of us Americans are one with them, that we will **"leave none of them behind."**
Optional ending which may or may not be presented in place of or after the closing paragraph above.

I'll close with a short, classic poem written by a Canadian Colonel, John McRae, during WW I. It speaks for the dead who are buried in a tiny military cemetery in Belgium called Flanders Fields.

***In Flanders Fields**

In Flanders Fields, the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago We lived,
felt dawn, saw sunset glow, Loved, and
were loved, and now we lie In Flanders
Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch: be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.

John R. Thurston
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Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701
(715.832.0034) E-mail: thurstjr@charter.net

Chapter Eleven

Altoona Equity Co-op Fire

Hank Harris and the Altoona Equity Co-op Fire

By John R. Thurston

Harold "Hank" Harris had been brought up in Altoona. His home was located on Sixth Street West in the same block as my own. He and I have been friends for a very long time. He graduated from Altoona High School in 1945 and went on to serve in the Navy in 1946-47. One tour of duty had him taking part in an extended mission to the Antarctic in Task Force 68 that was led by the renowned Admiral Richard E. Byrd. This historic Antarctica expedition was entitled Operation Highjump. It was the largest Antarctic exploration ever. Its broad goals involved consolidation and extension of U.S. sovereignty over the Antarctic, investigation of possible base sites, and extending scientific knowledge in general. Participation in such a world class endeavor must have been the experience of a lifetime for Hank

Upon discharge from the navy, Hank returned to Altoona and went to work at the Altoona Equity Co-op. In so doing, he joined some of his boyhood friends as a fellow worker: Bud Griese, Lloyd Wittren, and Chuck Steuding. They had many stories about their work and would tell them at the drop of a hat. Over the years, these friends would move on to other kinds of employment, but Hank hung in there with the Equity Co-op. Over the years, he advanced and eventually became its manager. As manager, he was fully responsible for the entire operation of this very complex facility.





The Equity Co-op in 1962

The Altoona Equity Cooperative Livestock Auction Market had been established in 1945. It was located on four acres just north of the Eau Claire County Shops, adjacent to the railroad tracks. That location had been selected because, at that time, Equity Co-op relied heavily on railroad transportation of the livestock that it handled. It had its own spur track to facilitate this aspect of its operation. This stockyard served a broad scale region of northwest Wisconsin. The livestock sold included cows, calves, sheep, and hogs.

August 12, 1971 had been a day like all others at the Equity Co-op. On this Thursday afternoon, about 150 regular livestock buyers and sellers were participating in an auction conducted in temperatures in excess of the 90 degrees. In his capacity as manager, Hank made regular rounds make sure that everything was being done correctly and efficiently. Some twenty-one workers conducted their usual business. Then, about halfway through the

auction, something happened suddenly that was both unusual and frighteningly dangerous.

Out of the blue, Randy Wilkinson from Augusta had seen some flames and yelled "Fire." And all Hell broke loose.

The fire apparently started in a large supply of dry hay and straw. Fueled by this and the creosote-laden wood of the stockyard, the fire quickly exploded into the barn, arena, and office, devouring anything and everything in its path.

Upon hearing the cry of "fire," the frightened people at the auction bolted from the arena. Although their actions bordered on panic for a time, all of them were evacuated in short order. Only minor injuries were reported. As Hank checked to make sure that everyone was safe, he was confronted by a man frantically running down the stairs from a second floor to escape the fire. The memory of the panic-stricken look in this man's eyes was something that Hank would never forget. Massive confusion prevailed.

Efforts were undertaken immediately to save the livestock. A number had been freed from their enclosure and were forced out into a fenced area adjacent to it. But some panicked and ran back inside where they were consumed by the flames. In all, approximately 100 cattle and 300 calves died in this catastrophe.

The flames were fanned by winds up to 23 mph. Some employees had attempted early on to use fire extinguishers, but to no avail. In all, four units from the Altoona Fire Department and twelve from the Town of Washington answered the alarm

Two railroad box cars that were on tracks adjacent to the blaze were damaged. The fire's heat was so intense that it twisted the spur's railroad tracks into grotesque snake-like forms. Huge billowing clouds of black smoke rose high into the skies. They could be seen from miles around. They contained flaming materials, some of which were blown all the way across Lake Altoona to the Town of Seymour where they set some five small brush fires.

The responding firemen fought the flames valiantly, but it was obvious almost from the outset that this was a lost cause. Their efforts were directed at containing the blaze and eventually extinguishing it. Four firemen were injured. Chuck Brost and John Bresina were treated at Sacred heart Hospital for smoke inhalation; Tully Stolts and Father Wilger has lacerations of the elbow and finger, respectively.

Afterwards, there was considerable discussion about the fire's cause. This led to speculations that highlighted some problems that had existed between farmers and stockyards across the nation. Some minor nearby grass fires were ruled out as a cause by Altoona Police Chief Dave O'Donahoe. The cause of the fire was never determined.

One can only imagine the mess in the aftermath. The only building left standing was the one housing the cafeteria. This was transformed into a temporary office. Many important records were lost, all of the dead cattle had to be buried in a limed pit some miles away, the area reeked of the smell of charred wood and the flesh of burned animals, an incredible amount of debris had to be cleaned up, the employees were shaken and potentially jobless, and on and on. In the next few days, an abundance of bureaucratic stumbling blocks interfered with the clean-up.

Immediately after the fire, Hank told the consignors that they would be paid in full for any livestock they had lost. There was full insurance coverage for any such losses. Luckily, in the midst of all this turmoil, a woman employee had the presence of mind to gather and remove some important records from the path of the fire. Later on, these were used in providing proper compensation to some owners for the livestock they had lost in the fire.

Several hundred head of surviving cattle were transferred to the Equity Market in Sparta, Wisconsin.

One small bright spot was noted in the midst of this tragedy. It involved the compensation accorded owners of some of the livestock for which there were no records. Hank placed a notice in the Eau Claire's Leader Telegram inviting such owners to come to his improvised office for a settlement. Hank would then ask the owner about the size and quality of his

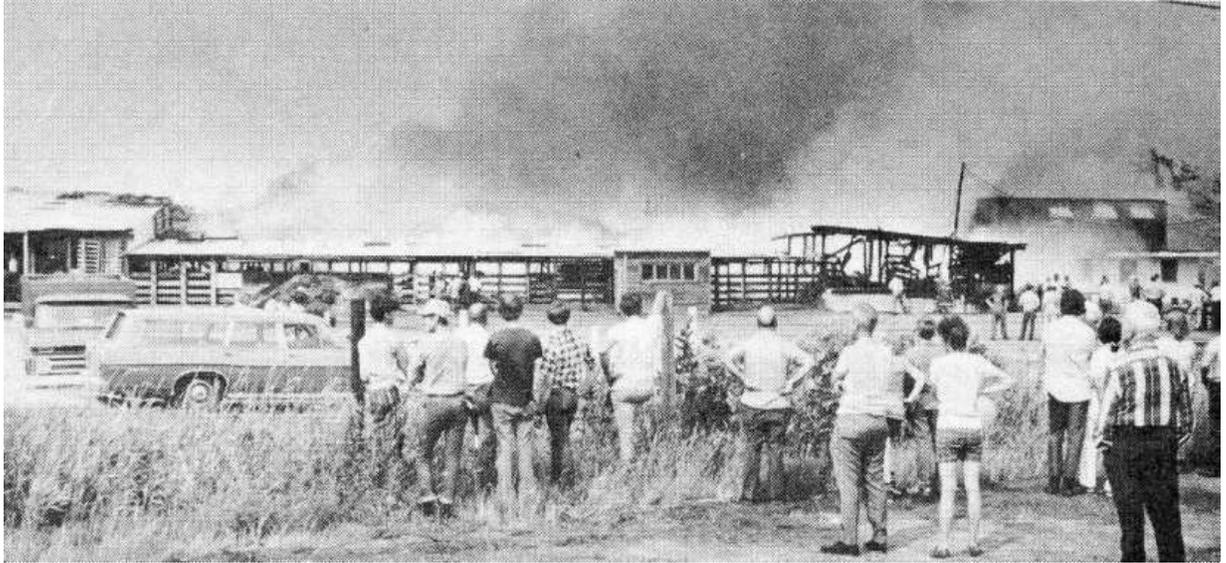
animals in order to determine their worth. Trust prevailed. The owner's word was accepted as Gospel and he was paid accordingly. One might wonder as to whether such a practice would prevail today.

(This fire joined the Altoona Public School fire of 1951 as one of the two largest Altoona fires. Details of the 1951 fire may be found in "The Old Altoona Public School Altoona Wisconsin: A Collection of Memories," Thurston 2008)

Later on, when the rebuilding of the Equity-Co-op was considered, it was decided to build at a different location. The Altoona site was now considered to be too small. The proximity to the railroad was no longer an important factor; by this time, all livestock were transported by truck. Although some people still refer to it as the Altoona Stockyards, Equity Co-op was rebuilt southeast of Eau Claire, Wisconsin on Highway 53 in the Town of Washington

The pictures on the following pages show the Equity Co-op and its destruction on this fateful day.

EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN FRIDAY, AUGUST 13, 1971



LIVESTOCK MARKET BURNS – Firemen from the Altoona and Township Fire Departments fought a raging fire at the Altoona Equity Livestock Market Thursday afternoon that sent smoke billowing hundreds of feet into the sky. A large crowd of spectators was drawn to the scene as firemen fought the blaze for more than four hours. Four firemen were treated at Sacred Heart Hospital for smoke inhalation and minor injuries. (Staff Photo)

Livestock Market Burns, Four Hurt

By BILL GHARRITY

Four firemen were treated for smoke inhalation and minor injuries Thursday afternoon fighting a fire that destroyed the barn, sales arena and office of the Altoona Equity Co-operative Livestock Auction Market.

The blaze was discovered during a cattle sale and employees and buyers were able to evacuate the livestock arena before the fire literally exploded into the premises.

Harold Harris, manager of the market, said at noon today that they were able to

determine that about 100 head of cattle and 300 head of calves were lost in the blaze. He said that all consignors of livestock lost in the fire will be paid in full. The livestock was fully covered by insurance he reported, and said they hope to be able to get an accurate estimate of the loss later in the day.

The only building saved was a frame building housing the cafeteria. It has been made into a temporary office where employees today are sorting through charred records salvaged from the office.

The cause of the blaze has not been determined and officials are investigating today. Altoona Police Chief Dave O'Donahoe reported there was a grass fire about a half hour earlier in an area west of the livestock market but he did not know if this had a bearing on the cause.

Car Destroyed

He reported a car owned by Anton Phillips, 1608 Piedmont Road, was destroyed by the fire and paint was scorched on a second auto owned by Myron Watnke, Rt. 1, Fall Creek.

Harris said the several hundred head of cattle saved from the burning barn have been transferred to Sparta where they will be sold at the Equity Market there on Monday. The regular Tuesday auction held here will now be held at the Equity markets in Sparta and Strantford, Harris reported. The fire broke out in a hay and straw storage shed at the southeast corner of the barn. It was discovered by Randy Wilkinson of Augusta who gave the alarm.

Other employees said that the fire literally exploded over the stored hay and straw into the barn and connecting livestock arena and office.

The flames were fanned by winds 18 to 23 miles an hour and raced through the structures. Four units from the Altoona Fire Department and 12 from the township answered the alarm.

Sale in Progress

Harris reported that the sale was about half completed when the alarm was given and those in attendance had to run from the building to escape the flames. He reported 150 bales of hay were put into the storage shed Wednesday and that flames roared out of the shed and into the arena and office in the connecting concrete block building.

Francis Werlein, an auctioneer from Mondovi, reported he had just walked into the

area when Wilkinson, an Augusta livestock dealer, gave the alarm.

"I came out and moved my car and spotted a squad car and told the officer about the fire," Werlein said. "I saw a little smoke at the corner of the shed but it suddenly turned into an inferno and the wind blew the flames right through the pens and barn."

George Reiter of 3370 Blakeley Ave., an employee, reported the flames came right over the top of the hay like someone pushed it. "When the wind hit it, it went right through the buildings and there was nothing we could do, he said.

He reported a couple of the boys grabbed fire extinguishers but it was useless.

Injured fighting the blaze and taken to Sacred Heart Hospital for treatment by the Prock and City County Ambulances were : Charles Brest, 27, of 326 1/2 N., Dewey St., smoke inhalation; Tully Stolts, 33, of 311 1/2 Dodge St., laceration to the right elbow; the Rev. Norbert Wilger, 41, of 1827 Lynn Ave., finger laceration; and John Bresina, 27, of 1111 Garfield Ave., smoke inhalation.

Firemen stayed at the scene for more than four hours with the last unit clearing at 7:36 p.m. Roger Frye, a member of the Altoona Fire Department, reported he was returning from Bloomer on CTH F when he and his brother spotted the : smoke high in the sky. "We i knew someone was getting it but we didn't realize it was here," Frye said. He returned in time to aid in fighting the blaze.

The tremendous heat generated by the blaze buckled a railroad spur track immediately behind the buildings and burned down overhead wires. It reportedly damaged two boxcars standing on the siding.

Note:

The photos on the next two pages were taken by Claude Schilling of Schilling Photo and in 1971 the business address was 1604 Lynn Ave in Altoona – phone 834 7208.

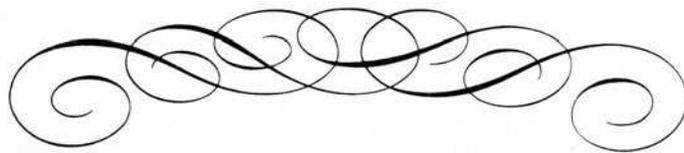




Chapter Twelve

The Heartbeat of Altoona

By John R. Thurston



There are increasing signs that Altoonians have come to regard their city as a truly special place. “Cinder City Days” has long been a rallying point for them. This three-day annual event held in June is centered at the Altoona City Park and the Altoona Hobbs Sports building. It provides entertainment, a carnival, parade, and miscellaneous activities to celebrate Altoona’s railroading past.

The Altoona VFW Post 10405, provides monthly breakfasts where Altoonians and others may gather to eat, talk, and linger as they enjoy good fellowship with one another. There were also some signs of a re-awakening of the Post’s interest in establishing a long-delayed veteran’s park .– this time in the new River Prairie area..

In the summer of 2009, there were additional indicators that Altoonians want to make their city special.

Family Ties-Altoona, a grassroots organization, has become actively interested in the construction of a community center. The group, initially consisting of ten parents, sought to “promote a stronger, more unified sense of community in a clean and safe environment.” In their view, there was a lack of recreational opportunities outside of those provided by the school.

Out of the woodwork, they came in June 2009. 10 parents of children who attend Altoona Schools (Maurice McIntyre, Tammy McIntyre, Jason Jones, Andrea Jones, Bhaskar Gaddam, Udaya Gaddam, Yee Ngan, Julie Tobias, Neil Bauer, and Cora Overboe). They are ethnically, socially, politically, and economically diverse with the desire to encourage the Altoona Community to "embrace diversity through experience". Where little or no activities existed on a regular basis that were friendly for all ages, Family Ties decided to open a Community Center that serves all people in Altoona that is a chill cafe for adults and an arts club for students. Fund-raising activities for the non-profit organization include an annual Taste of Harmony Fest held around July at the Altoona City

10th St. Park. A variety of foods are served such as American, Asian, Jamaican, Indian, and Vegetarian. Local bands play all day and children's activities include inflatables. Other fund-raising activities include "Flick Nites" (movies), "Band Jams", and "Dance-offs". Regular activities at the "Fisch Haus Center" include homework help, stand-up poetry, painting and drawing workshops, singing and acting talent shows, a place for young bands to practice, adult cafe with live music and patio accommodations, as well as parent workshops and collaborations. Family Ties is making a difference!



Family Ties at the Active and Alive Healthy Hobby Fair held at Hobbs

The **Second WHYS Bluegrass Festival** was held at the Lake Altoona County Park on August 22, 2009.

A very successful **“Back to School Ice Cream Social”** took place at the Altoona City Park on August 26, 2009 to celebrate the beginning of the new school year. Over a thousand cones were provided at this event.

The **2nd Annual Wellness Health Hobby Fair** was held on September 13, 2009 at the Hobbs Altoona Sports Complex. With free parking/admission, great food, and prizes awarded throughout the day, there was something for everyone. A collaborative community-focused committee, Active and Alive in Altoona, is responsible for this fair. Earlier in 2009, this same group had partnered with Health4Life in a weight-reduction effort entitled Losin' It In Altoona Challenge. A similar collaborative effort, a series of "rain or shine" walks took place in September/October, 2009.

The History of Active & Alive in Altoona

In 2008 Karen Ostenso wrote and received a grant to boost the Altoona School District wellness efforts. Karen contacted Colleen Weber an elected official on the Altoona City Council and after some discussion the city employees joined the school employees and the two groups combined their efforts to increase wellness in Altoona. A partnership with a class from UW-Eau Claire helped the group assess wellness plans that were in place or sort through different ideas that could be implemented to get employees more involved in leading healthy lifestyles. A joint committee of the school and city eventually led to health evaluations, recipe ideas with healthier ingredients were published with pay stubs and a competitive kickball game between City and School District employees was scheduled! Just for the historical value, the School District teams won three out of four games on a sunny afternoon in May 2008.

While working on their next project - a wellness fair, the committee continued to expand their horizons. The first ever, Wellness/Healthy Hobby Fair was held at the Hobbs Sports Arena on a Sunday afternoon in September 2008. With 80+ exhibitors representing nonprofit groups, clubs, and wellness-related businesses, the free event attracted around 500 visitors.

In October 2008, the committee could have taken a well-deserved break, but instead, the group began planning another first – a three month wellness challenge open to any and all adults in

and around Altoona.

Active and Alive's three month wellness challenge started on February 1, 2009 with 65 registered participants. Participants could earn points toward the grand prize – a one-year fitness center membership, in a variety of ways including wearing their seat belt, drinking water, eating vegetables, or by attending wellness workshops and activities especially designed by the committee. Ninety-percent of participants responding to the program survey said they would participate again in 2010.

Committee membership expanded yet again into the community, the committee met diligently, and the 2nd Annual Wellness/Healthy Hobby Fair was held on September 13, 2009.

A city employee, Ann Lien served as the first official chair of Active and Alive in Altoona until October 2008. Active and Alive is currently chaired by Joyce Orth, an employee of the School District of Altoona. Other officers include Sheila Lehnen, treasurer, and Debra Goldbach, secretary.

The committee's efforts continue to be supported and improved upon through the generous contributions of many sponsors in and around the Chippewa Valley.





Nick, Madelyn and Liliana enjoying the AHS Dance Team performance



Pictured (center) is Joyce Orth, Chair, Active & Alive in Altoona
Website: <http://www.activeandalive.com>

The **10th Annual Clearwater Beer Festival** was held on September 12, 2009 at a new location, the Altoona Hobbs Sports Center, 2300 Spooner Avenue, Altoona Wisconsin. It featured over 100 craft beers from Wisconsin breweries and beyond. Fest-goers received commemorative glasses, beer samples, great food, music, and door prizes.

Music in the Park. An informal music fest held every Tuesday night in the Altoona City Park. This event was sponsored by Steve and Doris Szydel with Jack Blackburn pitching in to help. . The last night in the 2009 series, September 8, provided an opportunity to picnic and get acquainted with others. Plans are already underway for 2010.

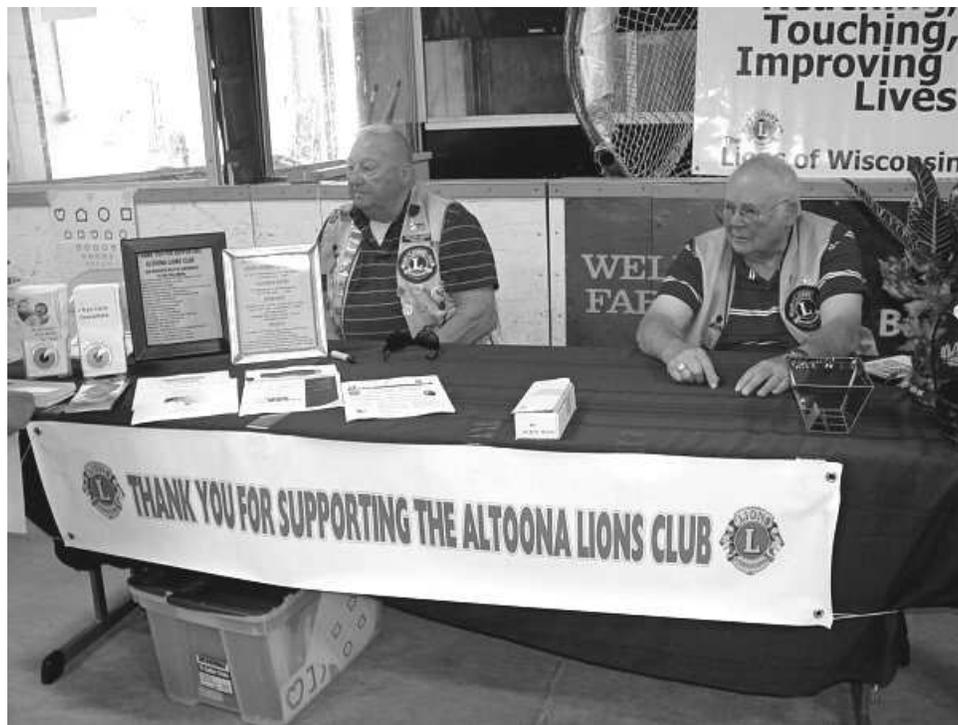


Steve and Doris – this time at the Active and Alive Healthy Hobby Fair held at Hobbs

The **Ski Sprites Water Ski Show** is an organization now located in Altoona, Wisconsin. They perform at 6:30 on Wednesday and Sundays from June through Labor Day at their Lake Altoona location in Eau Claire County Park. They have been entertaining the Chippewa Valley since 1960.

The **Altoona Athletic Booster Club** sponsored a trip on September 12, 2009 to Madison to see the Wisconsin Badgers play Fresno State. This group hosted “Brat Feed” after the Homecoming parade and before the football game on September

The **Altoona Lions Club** is truly “The Heartbeat of Altoona.” The activities and influence of this club are too numerous to mention – if you have ever been to **Cinder City Days** then you know about the Lions Club. BRAVO, from all of us in Altoona!



The Altoona Lions Club – this time at the Active and Alive Healthy Hobby Fair held at Hobbs

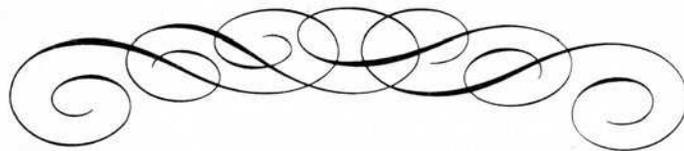
While the emergence of these organizations and their events are encouraging signs of a unique Altoona identity, their success will depend upon the interest, involvement, and support of all citizens of Altoona. Important memories may be formed and shared through participation in these programs and in the interpersonal relationships developing within them. Such events and the resulting memories, perhaps innocuous and seemingly insignificant at the time, are important elements in the stuff that is Altoona history. Attendance by outsiders is solicited. However, without Altoona support for new initiatives, such as those reported above, they may wane and wither on the vine.

Appendix

The following is a potpourri or hodgepodge of miscellaneous bits and pieces of Altoona lore that didn't easily fit into the previous sections of this book. There isn't any narrative that links them together. Sometimes dates are missing. Sad to relate, but newspaper accounts often will give the day and month and omit the year. We didn't believe that the extensive research necessary to make such determinations would have been time well-spent. Your guess as to the time frame may be as good, if not better, than ours.

We would beseech readers to identify their photographs and memories in the future. If they are worth saving, they should be accompanied by a date, the names of the principal parties, the location, and the activity involved. That which is obvious to people as they take pictures or write stories may be anything but that to the generations that are to follow.

The reader is encouraged to leaf through the assembled material at a leisurely pace. We believe that anyone with even a passing interest in Altoona history will find something of value.



Invitation to Participate in Red Caboose Project

The Red Caboose Collecting Altoona's Memories

John R. Thurston

I invite you to join with me and others in an adventure. It's so new that it doesn't even have a firm and final name. For the time being, I've taken off on the name of Marian Potter's children book, "The Little Red Caboose." and called it "The Red Caboose." This prosaic, off-beat title ties together Altoona's very distant railroading past with the light-hearted fun of writing and recording "Altoona's Memories," the purpose of this venture.

When contributing memories to our "Caboose," one is said to be "Caboosing." Come "Ride Wit" us as you "Caboose" with us. Your involvement in this venture can and should be a source of enjoyment and personal reward. It is fun to see one's name and writings in print.

Other efforts have been made to record Altoona memories. Gerald A. Hagen's fine book, "A History of Altoona."(1989) is the definitive source of such information. Altoonians have already contributed to "The Old Altoona Public School: A Collection of Memories" (Thurston, 2008), a compilation of the recollections of students attending that school prior to its destruction by fire in 1951. A booklet, "Jesse Jensen, Principal, Teacher, and Coach, Altoona (WI) Public School 1921-1943" (Hoyt and Thurston, 2008) concentrated on the life of the man who was of vital importance to the Altoona Public School system for a very long time.

Only the surface of a vast reservoir of Altoona memories has been scratched. What other memorable, personal Altoona-related events occurred prior to the "1951 Fire" or later on in the 1950's, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s? I'm making a special appeal to younger members in our Altoona population, those who have not been contacted previously, i. e. ages 15-60+. What memories do you have that were uniquely associated with an aspect of Altoona at any point in that considerable time period? What is happening currently that is special and memorable about the experience of living in Altoona? How large a part does Altoona now play in your lives?

While not making too much out of it, there is a serious side to this venture. Following in the tradition of Studs Terkel, the eminent author who

died just last year, we are "celebrating the uncelebrated," "the 'Joe Six Packs' of the world." Your memories are celebrating you, your life, your family/friends/community, and your importance as a representative of "the common man." You and your memories matter.

Right up front, it should be pointed out that there will be absolutely no cost to participants as they "Caboose" in this undertaking. All profits, if any, from any sales of the resulting book will be donated to a scholarship fund at Altoona High School.

What do I want?

You have only to contribute your Altoona memories. I encourage you to do just that. The more memories, the merrier. The success of this venture will be determined by your response and support. You should not be unduly concerned with proper grammar, punctuation, and the like. In selecting Altoona-related memories for publication, I am more concerned with the content of your memories than style. You, and only you, can supply your memories. If a memory is important to you, it's important to us fellow "Caboosers." If your memories aren't recorded, they may very well be lost forever. Within the constraints imposed upon me, I will publish as many memories as possible.

It would be helpful if you would contact other Altoonians who might join us in our "Caboose" or provide me with their names and addresses so that I may contact them.

What form will your contribution take?

While typed copy is preferred, provision will be made for those contributors who cannot supply typed memories. It would be helpful if you would use large type (old eyes will be grateful). As any editing of your contribution will be minimal, it should be submitted in what you consider to be a "final form," the way that you would like to see your memories in print.

Your contribution should include:

1. A brief biography (250 words or fewer) to acquaint readers with who you are. Married ladies should include a maiden name.

2. Your memories (500 words each, more or less). For each of these, be sure to include year and location of event, the names of the people involved. You are encouraged to contribute several memories.

3. Photographs: Optional although encouraged: These should illustrate the memories that you have provided. Each should be accompanied by the date, location, circumstance, and names of the people pictured.

4. Each contributed memory should begin on a separate page.

Send your contributions to John R. Thurston
3752 Cummings Street
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701

Those wishing to submit their contributions electronically should send them, as attachments, to thurstjr@charter.net

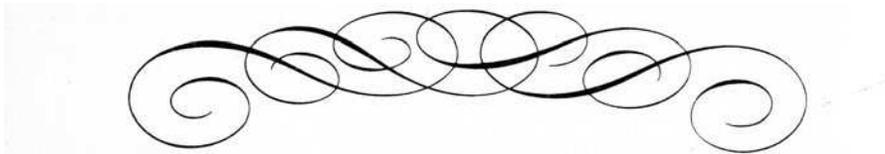
Deadline for contributions is **October 15, 2009**. The tentative publication date is late November, 2009. At about that time, each published contributor will be invited to join in a special celebration where he/she may become acquainted with fellow contributors, sign/purchase books, and have a good time. Refreshments will be provided.

If you have any questions or inquiries, please feel very free to contact me at 715.832.0034

Please remember that the best time to record memories is when they happened a long or even a short time ago. **The next best time is now.**

John R. Thurston

02.16.09



Ball to kick off Altoona celebration

By Dan Holtz
Leader-Telegram staff

ALTOONA Plans for Altoona's centennial celebration next year are rapidly taking shape and the months-long schedule of events will begin with a Winter Centennial Ball Feb. 21.

The city's main celebration is scheduled for June 12 through 21.

Altoona's centennial committee, chaired by Betty Passon, has planned one event each month leading up to the activities in June.

The centennial ball will be held at St. Mary's Community Center. The 32-member Altoona High School Swing Choir will begin the evening with a half-hour performance of music from the 1887 era. The "Nice Guys" of Altoona will perform for the remainder of the ball.

Ball patrons will be encouraged to dress in costumes from the 1887 era. For a short time during the

event, Passon said, refreshments will be sold at 1887 prices.

March's activities will be a curling tournament at the Eau Claire County Junior Fairground barns in Altoona and a hockey tournament at the Altoona Hobbs Sports Center.

On April 1, tentatively scheduled at Altoona High School, the city will celebrate its official birthday. Invitations to the event will be sent to state and local elected officials. Railroad industry officials are also expected to attend, Passon said. Speeches will be delivered and keys to the city will be presented, she said.

May's centennial activity hasn't been confirmed, Passon said, but plans call for Altoona school children to sell helium balloons at a nominal fee to city residents. The names and addresses of the people who make the purchases would be placed inside the balloons. The balloons would be released at the

same time and the owner of the balloon traveling the farthest would receive a prize.

June's 10-day celebration will begin on June 12 with a Civil War group, dressed in authentic costume, shooting off a cannon behind the Altoona Hobbs Sports Center in Cinder City Park.

Opening day activities will include the crowning of a junior queen, centennial queen and senior queen, and a teen dance.

Other activities scheduled for the main celebration, Passon said, include a local-celebrity golf tournament, tennis tournament, street dance, community picnic, an adult dance, ice cream social, outdoor concert, and the burial of a time capsule.

The celebration's second weekend, June 19 through 21, will be run in conjunction with the Altoona Lions Club's annual Cinder City Days activities.

Events on the final day of the

celebration will include a large parade and the judging of a beard growing contest and era attire.

The centennial committee is still seeking suggestions for the celebration and needs the help of non-profit organizations to supervise some of the events, Passon said.

Committee members are also planning to put together a booklet on Altoona's history. They are seeking information from anyone on recent or past history of the city or city residents, Passon said. Photos are also being sought for the booklet, she said.

Committee members are requesting all materials for the booklet by Jan. 15, she said.

Centennial committee members include Passon, Russ Brennan, Ray Henning, Dave O'Donahoe, Gerald Hagen, Paul Lenz and Lois Gardow.

The Altoona Centennial Committee and the Altoona City Council wishes to thank the following people and organizations for helping to make this Mayor's Proclamation a success:

The Altoona Women's Club
Cub Scouts Pack #90
Girl Scouts Troops #410, 162, 332, 70, 208
Mothers of the Girl Scouts
Boy Scouts Troop #90
Eau Claire Area Convention and Tourism Bureau
Flowers by Phyllis
Altoona High School Band
Barry Baker
Locomotion
Donald Crane
Centennial Queen Committee
The Judges for the Queen's Contest
Pat Leland
Ed Ristow
Bob Bredeesen
Altoona High School
F.H.A. Members
Gayle Carlson
Altoona City Employees
Jack Kaiser
Teachers at the Altoona Schools
Altoona Lion's Club
Altoona Jaycees
Altoona Hockey Association
Altoona Baseball League
Altoona Printing, Inc.
Drag's II Restaurant & Roman Lounge
The Golden Spike

WELCOME TO OUR



MAYOR'S PROCLAMATION APRIL 1, 1987 ALTOONA HIGH SCHOOL GYM

MAYOR'S PROCLAMATION
APRIL 1, 1987 7 P.M.
ALTOONA HIGH SCHOOL GYM

PROGRAM

Presentation of Colors Boy Scouts-Troop #90
Pledge of Allegiance Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts
Led by Kelly Lamarr, Tory Buchholtz
Star Spangle Banner Altoona High School Band
Directed by Barry Baker
Welcome Ed Ristow, Master of Ceremony
Mayor's Proclamation Mayor Gary Neill
PRESENTATION OF KEYS TO THE CITY
Senator Rodney Moen 31st Senate District
(Presented by Betty Passon)
State Representative Richard Shoemaker 29th Assembly
(Presented by Richard Larrabee)
State Representative Mark Lewis 93rd Assembly
(Presented by Gordon Gutsch)
Former State Representative Louis Mato Retired
(Presented by Mark Brazzale)
Letters of Congratulations Ed Ristow
Altoona High School Band Under Direction of Barry Baker
Irish Washerwoman By Le Roy Anderson
Liberty Bell March By John Phillip Sousa
James Zito Senior Vice President-Operations
With Chicago Northwestern Transportation
(Presented by Richard Larrabee)
John L. Bradshaw Assistant Vice President
and Division Manager of The Northern District
of Chicago Northwestern Transportation Company
(Presented by Richard Larrabee)
Leonard Haas. Graduate of Altoona High School
(Presented by Dorothy Finstad)
Einar Pedersen Former Principal of Altoona High School
(Presented by Dorothy Finstad)

Introduction of Special Guests Ed Ristow
Dean Nelson Chairman of Town of Seymour
(Presented by Gordon Gutsch)
Dale Southard, Sr Chairman of Town of Washington
(Presented by Linda Dekan)

Clifford Chatterson Chairman of Eau Claire County Board
(Presented by Linda Dekan)
"Locomotion" Altoona Swing Choir
(Under Direction of Donald Crane)

SPECIAL HONORED GUEST

The Honorable David L. Janetta Mayor of Altoona, Pennsylvania
(Presented by Mark Brazzale)
Brian Johnson Altoona Lion's Club
Cheryl Bevins Altoona Jaycees
George McFadden Altoona Hockey Association
Jerry Coenen Altoona Baseball Association
Eric Anderson City Manager of Eau Claire
(Presented by Betty Passon)
Lighting of the Birthday Cake Altoona Women's Club
"Happy Birthday" Altoona High School Band
Closing Ed Ristow

Mayor — Gary Neill
President of City Council — Betty Passon
Council Members — Mark Brazzale
Linda Dekan
Dorothy Finstad
Gordon Gutsch
Richard Larrabee



**WINTER
CENTENNIAL BALL**

Sat., Feb. 21, 1987
8:00 P.M.

No. _____

Altoona Swing Choir will perform at 7:30 P.M.
ST. MARY'S COMMUNITY CENTER

\$5.00 For One
\$8.00 Per Couple

*Refreshments
Available*



**WINTER
CENTENNIAL BALL**

Sat., Feb. 21, 1987
8:00 P.M.

No. _____

Altoona Swing Choir will perform at 7:30 P.M.
ST. MARY'S COMMUNITY CENTER

\$5.00 For One
\$8.00 Per Couple

*Refreshments
Available*

1887 ALTOONA, WI 1987
**ATTENTION
RESIDENTS & ALUMNI**

We need help to tell everyone about our Centennial Celebration this year June 12-21. Please contact former classmates, friends, neighbors, relatives and enemies to help us let everyone know we are 100 years old.

- Family Funs Starts June 12
- Altoona Cinder City Days, June 18
- Parade, June 21, 12 Noon

For info call Betty Passon 835-3068 or Golden Spike 832-5411



Staff photo by Dan Reiland
Altoona, Pa., Mayor David Jannetta, right, presents Altoona, Wis., Mayor Gary Neill with a citation Wednesday night congratulating the Wisconsin community on its centennial as a city.

Birthday bash

Altoona basks in glow of 100th anniversary

By Dan Holtz

Leader-Telegram staff

The Pennsylvania city, which has a population of 57,000, got its name from the Indian word "Alia-

ALTOONA — Happy Birthday Altoona!

Several hundred city residents turned out at Altoona High School Wednesday night to listen to presentations, speeches and music honoring Altoona's 100th anniversary of its city charter.

Keys to the city were given to state legislators, railroad luminaries, former residents and officials from nearby municipalities.

But the star of the event, billed as the Altoona Centennial Mayor's Proclamation, was David L. Jannetta, mayor of Altoona, Pa.

Altoona, Wis., was named after the Pennsylvania city.

Jannetta came loaded with gifts, including citations from himself and Pennsylvania Gov. Robert Casey, keys to the city in the shape of railroad spikes, a Nittany Lion statuette from Penn State University and a supply of Boyer Mallo Cups, which are produced in Altoona, Pa.

Jannetta said Altoona, Pa., which received its city charter status on April 3, 1868, "was built from ground zero by the Pennsylvania Railroad. It was the premiere railroad town in the world before World War II."

In 1940, 17,000 people worked for the railroad in Altoona, Pa., Jannetta said. "Three out of every four wage earners worked for the railroad."

toona," which means "high land of great worth," Jannetta said. Altoona, Pa., lies on the eastern edge of the Allegheny mountains.

Jannetta explained that his city also is a "great sports town." The Altoona, Pa., High School Mountain Lions girl's basketball team won the state championship in the 1985-86 season and that same year was rated as the best girl's basketball team in the nation by USA Today. The team was runner-up in the state tourney this year, he said.

Jannetta arrived in western Wisconsin Tuesday night and spent Wednesday touring the Altoona and Eau Claire areas. He delighted Wednesday night's gathering when he announced that, "if I couldn't live in Altoona, Pa., after being here for 24 hours, I'd sure like to live in Altoona, Wis."

Another highlight of the ceremony was when Betty Passon, who is president of the Altoona City Council and chairman of the city's Centennial Committee, surprised Eau Claire City Manager Eric Anderson with a special presentation.

Passon gave Anderson a council resolution declaring that Eau Claire has been annexed to Altoona and has been renamed "West Altoona." She also gave him with a centennial T-shirt with the message, "City Manager of West Altoona," displayed on the back.

Jannetta, Anderson and Altoona, Wis., Mayor Gary Neill culminated the event by blowing out 100 candles on the centennial birthday cake.

Altoona's main centennial celebration will be held June 12 through 21.



Row 1 - Front	Row 2	Row 3	Row 4 – Back
Edward Gorell	Teacher – Mildred Hagstrum	Evelyn Dobrenz	Jack Duganne ?
Harold Semisch	Virginia Walters-Harris	?	Alfred Volkman
?	Carol Larson	Dorothy Sahr	? Fitzgerald ?
Don Woodington	Arvis Erickson	Evelyn Connell	Edgar ? Sires
? Sires	Geneva Bucholtz	Margaret Klingbeil	Walter Mooney
Joe Anderson	Margaret Sahr	? Underwood ?	Harriet Ash
	Jeanetta Heuer	Mary Stahl	Lloyd Lenz
	Katherine Whitwam	Marion Larson	Josephine Connell
	Harvey Beach	Bernice Klingbeil	
	Harold Rusell	Leona Liberty-? Aaron	
	Gerald Bersina		

*The above student identifications were made by Laura Shemisch-Christy in August of 2009. She stated that “This photo is of two classes together and my brother Harold is about 8 years old.” Hence, this photo is of two **Altoona** Grade School classes in about 1928.*



1927 Freshman Class - Altoona High School

Front Row

?
Bud Loken
?
Isabelle McDonald

Middle Row

?
?
Vernon Green
Howard Metcalf
Emery Wilcox

Back Row

?
Liz Henning
?
?
?
?
?



Circa 1927

Front Row

Emery Wilcox
Howard Metcalf

Middle Row

?
?
?
?
?

Isabelle McDonald
Liz Henning

Back Row

Marie Heideman
Bud Locken
?
Vernon Green
?



1930 Basketball Team – Altoona High School

Altoona won First Place in Tournament (Chippewa Second and Eau Claire Third)

Coach: Mr. Jensen
Manager: Clifford Turner
Captain: Elmer Garber
Center: Bob McGrouary
Forward: Ted Steinke
Forward: Howard Turner
Guard: Elmer Garber
John Stanley
Verland Anding
Kenneth Sturz
Wash Sahr
Pud Woodington
Cheer Leaders: Art and Liz Burkhart



1936 Graduating Class - Altoona High School

Front Row

Evelyn Connell
 Mary Stahl
 Evelyn Dobreny

Leola Underwood
 Kathryn Whitwam
 Florine Butler

Marion Larson
 Virginia Walters

Georgine Delmore
 Geneva Buckholz

Middle Row

Harvey Beach
 Carol Larson
 Ellsworth Coss

Alfred Radiswitz
 Don Woodington
 John Harris

Billy Burkhardt
 Bruce Peterson

Harriet Ask

Back Row

Carl Beggerow
 Bob Williamson

Eddie Gorell
 Lyle Cowley

James McGovern Alfred Volekman
 Class Advisor: Eugene McGovern (Absent)

Front Row - Evelyn Cornell, Leola Underwood, Marion Larson, Georgine Delmore, Mary Stahl, Kathryn Whitman, Virginia Walters, Geneva Buckholz, Evelyn Pobony, Florine Butler,

Second Row - Harvey Beach, Alfred Radewitz, Billy Burkhardt, Harriet Ash, Carol Larson, Don Woodington, Bruce Peterson, Ellsworth Coos, John Harris

Back Row - Carl Beggerow, Eddie Sorell, James McGovern, Alfred Volkman, Bob Williamson, Lyle Cowley; Class Advisor Eugene McGovern - (absent)

Geneva Buckholz
John Harris

Gene McGovern

Bill Burkhardt

Georgine Delmore

Lyle "Top" Cowley

Eddie Stahl

Harriet Ash

HARVEY BEACH

1936

AANES STUDIO
Quality Photographs
708 So. Farwell St.
EAU CLAIRE, - WIS.



1937 Graduating Class - Altoona High School

Front Row

Beth Stewart
 Lucille Lenz
 Jeanette Heuer

Enva Berg
 Bev McLaughlin
 Lorraine Underwood

Dorothy Sahr
 Bernice Klingbeil

Kathryn Holen
 Rosemary Lang

Middle Row

Walter Williamson
 Mae Tompson

Clarence Fischer
 Harold Russell

Marion Tompson
 Gerald Bresina

Lloyd Lenz

Back Row

Harold Semisch

Joe Anderson

Edgar Sires

Lt to - Back row
Harold Semisch
Joe Anderson
Edgar Sires

2nd row Lt to R
Walter Williamson
Clarence Fischer
Marion Thompson
Lloyd Lenz
Mae Thompson
Harold Russell
Gerald Bresina

3rd row Lt to R
Beth Stewart
Enva Berg
Dorothy Sahr
Kathryn Holen
Lucille Lenz
Bev. Mc Laughlin
Bernice Klingbeil
Rosemary Lange
Jeannette Steuer
Lorraine Underwood

AANES STUDIO
Quality Photographs
708 So. Farwell St.
EAU CLAIRE, - WIS.

1937 H. Semisch



Circa 1929

Front Row

Esther Steinke
Lorraine Willman

Mildred Berg
Frances Whitwam

Esther Gilbert
Marjorie Neurer

Alene Stahl

Back Row

Irene Lenz
Jessie Jensen
Jane Delmore

Ila Fleck
Marion Glode

Elaine Delmore
Eunice Coss

Lois Rock
Marie Gorell



Altoona High School Girls Basketball

Marie Garell
Margaret Schilling
Elaine Delmore
Lorraine Willman
Eunice Coss
Marion Glode
Alene Stahl
Ila Flick



Circa 1929

Girls Basketball – Altoona High School

Irene Lenz
Esther Steinke
Esther Gilbert
Katherine McGrouary
Mildred Berg
Marjorie Neuer
Francis Whitwam
Lucile Whitwam

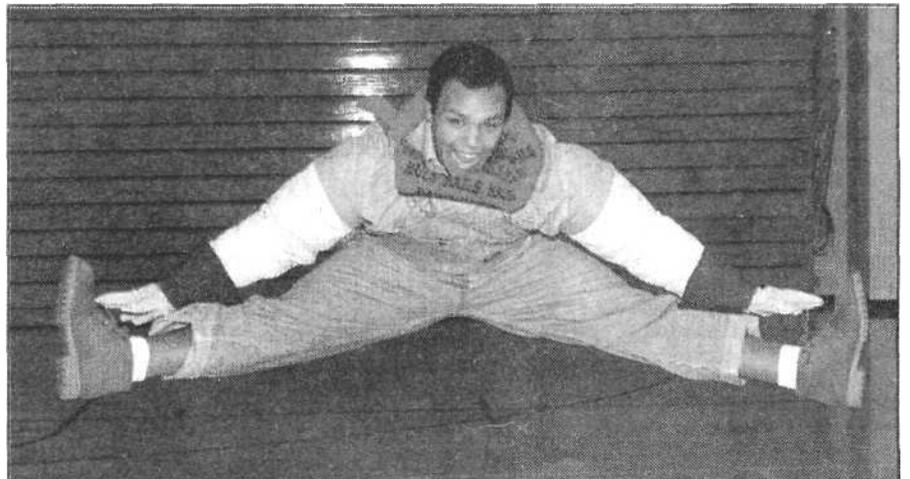


See Spike, see Spike cheer

Above: "Spike," the new Railroader mascot at Altoona High School, checked out his costume in the school weight room last week before the pep rally at which he was introduced.

Right: Nick Dickerson, the student inside the costume, showed the Altoona cheerleaders that "Spike" is capable of copying a few of their moves. He'll be showing off those moves at 7:30 tonight when the Altoona girls' basketball team is host to McDonell Central High School.

Staff photos by Steve Kinderman



Tribute that rocks

Garden at Altoona Middle School to give heroes their due

ALTOONA — Billie Jo Trachsel showed up in cool temperatures Monday at Altoona Middle School ready to dig in — literally.

In front of the school, Trachsel and more than a dozen other students and adults attempted to remove roots and stumps in an area that eventually will become a crushed granite path.

"It's only one day," said Joanna Rasmussen, another student digging diligently at a root system next to Trachsel, "and this is pretty important."

Rasmussen was referring to the planned AMS Community Heroes Rock Garden, a project that, once completed, will pay tribute to the victims of the Sept. 11 tragedy as well as honor heroes in the local community.

"I see this as a way to say thanks," said Jack Wagener, dean of students, counselor and acting middle school principal. "A lot of times we take for granted the people who are our heroes."

The rock garden, as envisioned by Altoona staff and students, spans the front of the middle school and will create more of a park like look and feel.

Design plans on display at the middle school show benches, picnic tables, an outside chess table and a covered classroom surrounded by a variety of plantings. In addition, a new flagpole and red, white and blue eagle sculpture are part of the mix being overseen by Stargazen Woodland Nursery of



Christena T. O'Brien



• **Funds for the AMS Community Heroes Rock Garden are being raised by selling engraved bricks for \$25. Donations also can be made to the project. No district funds are being used for the project.**

For more information call Kathy Marko at 839-6033 or send an e-mail to lwatt@altoona.k12.wi.us.

rural Augusta.

"If anything, it's going to beautify the school," Wagener said.

Middle school students started tossing around the idea of a rock garden a few years ago, he said. However, the project didn't seem to take shape until terrorists hijacked four planes Sept. 11, crashing two into the twin towers of the World Trade Center, one into the Pentagon and a fourth in a Pennsylvania field.

Seventh-grade geography teacher

Teri Hanson allowed students to watch part of the news coverage of the event on that horrific day and discussed its impact.

"I think a lot of students were frightened that day, and they had a lot of questions about what was happening there and what would happen here," she recalled.

Once some of that fright subsided, students wanted to do something to help. One of their efforts included creating a banner depicting a human flag, a flag made up by fifth- through eighth-grade students dressed in red, white or blue, sitting in school bleachers, representing either the stars or stripes. The other consisted of a fund-raiser.

The school board gave its blessing to both, said Ed Bohn, board president, Altoona alumnus and project contributor.

"We thought it was a great idea," he said. "Everyone was hurt by Sept. 11, and people were looking for a way to express themselves and help others."

The fund-raiser generated \$1,700, said Kola Xiong, outgoing president of the Student Council. Of that, \$850 was sent to two schools near the World Trade Center and another close to the Pentagon. The remaining funds were put toward the rock garden, estimated to cost \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Organizers are hoping to raise the funds through corporate gifts, donations and the sale of reddish-brown bricks purchased by

See GARDEN, Page 3B



Staff photo by Andi Stempniak

Kola Xiong, left, Jake Stirmel, Chaslynn Rada and Lizzy Keller, all 14, dig in front of Altoona Middle School Monday. The work is part of the preparation for the planned AMS Community Heroes Rock Garden, which organizers hope to dedicate on Sept. 11.



Staff photo by And! Stemplak

Mega Pick'n Save East employee Jackie Brown, known as Sis, helped Phyllis Boettcher, 82, of Altoona get groceries Sept. 8. The store has offered assisted shopping for 5 years.

Editors Note:

Phyllis Boettcher, now deceased, was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gustrom "Gus" Sund who lived for many years at the northwest corner of the intersection of 10th Street West and Spooner Avenue. Phyllis graduated from Altoona High School in 1942. Her brother, George died in the Philippines during World War II.

– John R. Thurston

Willing to help

Stores assist customers with shopping needs

By Jennifer Schmidt

Leader-Telegram staff

One by one Phyllis Boettcher crossed off the items noted on her grocery list. Cheerios? Check. Vitamins? Check.

Macaroni salad?

Check.

The only thing remotely atypical about the Altoona woman's weekly grocery run was that someone else was doing the shopping.

"Need anything here?"

asked Jackie Brown of Mega Pick'n Save East as she wheeled Boettcher past the health and beauty aisle.

"No," the 82-year-old replied. "OK, then we'll head over to produce," Brown said before bagging six peaches for

• Anyone who wants help shopping should call 836-8700 for an appointment. Times are available from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays.

her regular customer. Over the years, Brown has gotten to know the woman's shopping patterns.

Boettcher got turned on to the assisted shopping program after receiving one of Brown's business cards, which invites patrons to "Let me assist you with your shopping." Cards are posted near the main entrance by the grocery carts.

"I like being with people. I've had a good experience," said Brown, who joined Mega eight years ago as a bagger. She does a mixture of jobs now, though the biggest part of her work involves shopping for people. She fills Internet orders as well.

Jenny Rathke, customer service manager, said the store offers assisted shopping as

a service to their elderly and disabled clientele. The program also helps people maintain their independence, she said.

"There's just a need for it," Rathke said.

Boettcher, who uses a walker, opted to use the program because of mobility issues.

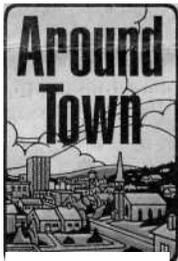
"I'm not supposed to be walking on tile floor ... so I have to have help," said Boettcher, wearing a bandage on her right shin from a May fall. She also had hip surgery.

The assisted shopping program and Brown's helpful hands fill a great need, she said.

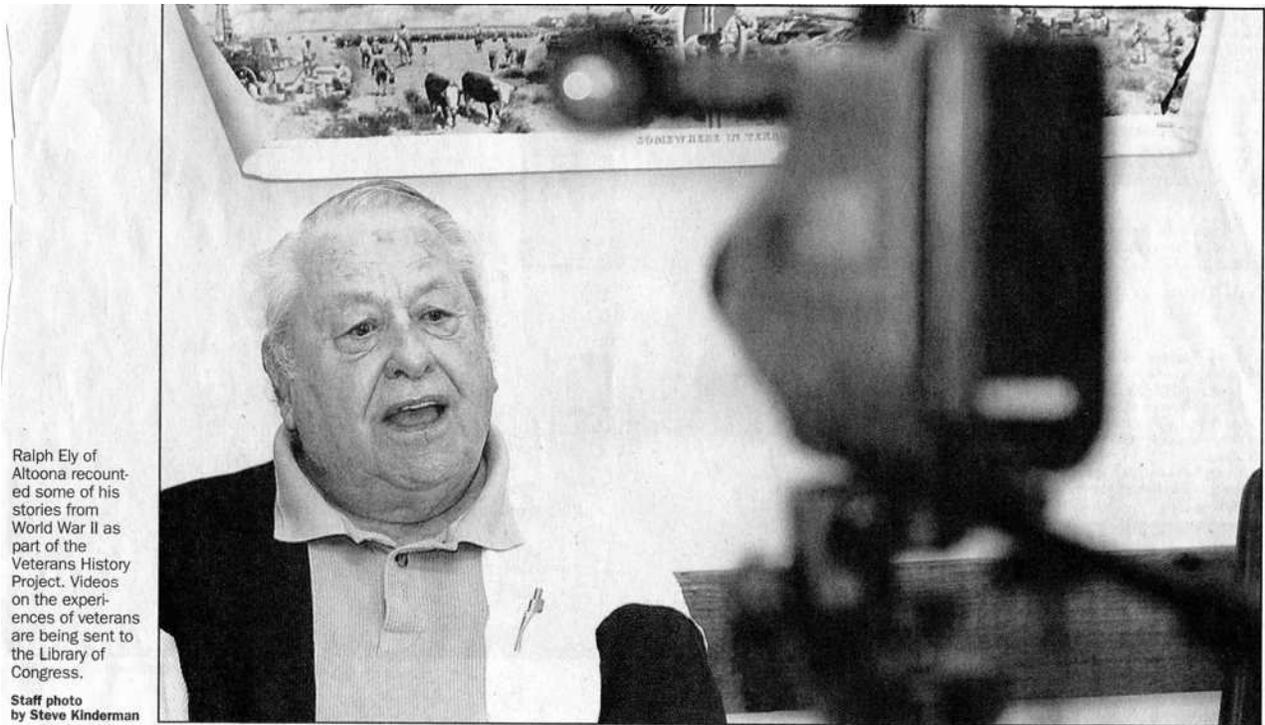
"I don't know how I'd get groceries if I couldn't come here and have her do it," said Boettcher, noting that her husband, Helmuth, is in a nursing home.

Other Eau Claire grocery stores, including Copp's Food Center and Festival Foods, also offer assisted shopping.

Schmidt can be reached at 830-5840 or jennifer.schmidt@ecpc.com.



Eau Claire



Ralph Ely of Altoona recounted some of his stories from World War II as part of the Veterans History Project. Videos of the experiences of veterans are being sent to the Library of Congress.



Staff photos by Steve Kinderman

Above: Kyle Kraemer revisited the Altoona neighborhood Monday where he piloted this airplane to an emergency landing the previous evening. "It's amazing we didn't crash into something," Kraemer said. "I'm grateful just to be alive." **Below:** Workers Monday afternoon helped guide the airplane onto a

trailer after the aircraft was removed from the front yard of Gary and LouAnn Best Sunday. The plane was transported to Menomonie Aviation, where Federal Aviation Administration officials will study it to determine why the air-plane lost power.

Passenger says skills, luck led to safe landing

By Jennifer Schmidt and Julian Emerson
Leader-Telegram staff

ALTOONA — Kyle Kraemer's mind raced as fast as the 1962 Piper he was flying was descending toward the ground after losing power Sunday night.

"At that point I knew we were in real trouble," said Kraemer, a 20-year-old UW-Stout student who obtained his pilot's license in February. "It was scary. I realized it might not be pretty."

As the plane neared Altoona; it lost altitude quickly. It barely cleared a wooded hill just south of Altoona public schools before missing a light pole along the football field. It then snapped one set of power lines, dipped below another and clipped bushes and trees before sliding to a halt just a few feet from a house at the corner of Fourth Street and Hayden Avenue.



Kraemer

Miraculously, Kraemer and his passenger, boyhood friend and UW-Eau Claire student Jeremiah Radel, walked away from the landing unharmed.

"I tried to use the streetlights as a guide," Kraemer said of his

about 7:15 p.m. "I was praying there was nothing in the way."

Radel said two factors helped the friends cheat death: good luck and good flying.

"I give Kyle a lot of credit," the UW-Eau Claire junior said of his best friend.

The 2002 graduates of River Valley High School in Spring Green left Lone Rock for Eau Claire around 6 p.m.



"It was surreal," the 20-year-old Radel, a Spring Green native, said of the last few moments before the plane dropped. "It was like you were watching a movie or something."

Kraemer, a 20-year-old from Plain, admitted he was nervous as the crisis unfolded.

"I think I did pretty well. You kind of practice this stuff in training," said

Kraemer, who started flying on his 19th birthday.

Kraemer knew he and Radel were in trouble when the airplane lost power about five miles south of its destination, the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport. Landing at the airport was no longer an option.

See CRASH, Page 3B

NOTICE

public places in the City of Altoona, at night, after the hour of 9 o'clock p. m., from April 1st to October 31st, inclusive of each year, and from November 1st to March 31st, inclusive of each year,

CITY OF ALTOONA, WIS.

An ordinance prohibiting persons under sixteen years of age from being on the streets, alleys or after the hour of 8 o'clock p. m. The Common Council of the City of Altoona, Wis., do ordain as follows:

Section 1. It is hereby made unlawful for any persons under sixteen years of age to be or remain in or upon any of the streets, alleys or public places in the City of Altoona, at night, after the hour of 9 o'clock p. m. from April 1 to October 31, inclusive of each year, and from November 1 to March 31, inclusive of each year, after the hour of 8 o'clock p. m., unless such person is accompanied by parent, guardian or other person having legal custody of such minor person.

Section 2. It is hereby made unlawful for any parent, guardian or other person, having legal care and custody of any person, under sixteen years of age, to allow or permit any such child, ward or other person under such age, while in such legal custody, to go or be in or upon any of the streets, alleys or public places in said city within the time prohibited in section one (1) of this ordinance, unless there exists a reasonable necessity therefor. Any person violating the provisions of this section shall, on conviction, be fined any sum not exceeding twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) and stand committed until such fine and costs are paid.

Section 3. Each member of the police force, while on duty, is hereby authorized and instructed to arrest without warrant, any person willfully violating the provisions of section one (1) of this ordinance.

The person or persons so arrested shall, for a first violation of this ordinance be taken or sent by the officer to their homes, and their parents or guardians, notified of such violation of this ordinance; upon a subsequent violation of the provisions of this ordinance, the person or persons so arrested shall be taken or sent home by the officer and the parents or guardians served with subpoenas to appear in court with the person or persons so arrested and show cause why the ordinance has been a second time violated. If no sufficient excuse therefore is offered, the parents or guardians shall be fined according to the provisions of section two (2). It shall be the duty of any police officer arresting such child or minor person, if the said child or minor person either has no home or address of such home or guardian to give to the police officer, to place such child or minor person in the care of the sheriff of the County of Eau Claire. All due diligence shall be used by the officer so arresting such person, liable under this ordinance, to find parents or guardians responsible for such minor persons. Pending necessary investigations, such minor charges shall not be detained in custody by the sheriff more than ten (10) days.

Section 4. It shall be the duty of the Justice of the Peace, upon the arrest of any child or minor person for violating the provisions of section one (1) of this ordinance, to inquire into the facts of said arrest and the conditions and circumstances of such child or minor person, and if it shall appear that such child or minor person for want of proper parental care is growing up in mendicancy and vagrancy and is incorrigible, cause the proper proceedings to be had and taken as authorized and provided by law in such cases.

Section 5. It shall be the duty of the city council to arrange, designate and provide for the regular sounding at the hours mentioned in section one (1) hereof of such signals as shall be necessary to fully warn the children upon the streets and different parts of the city, to depart to their homes.

Section 6. This ordinance shall become effective and in force on and after its passage and publication, as provided by law.

Passed July 1, 1924.

Ordinance approved July 1, 1924.

EDW. PETERSON,

Mayor. Attest:

LUKE HAYDEN, JR., City Clerk.

Thurston Wins Praise at Dinner

"Nice work, Fuzzy."

That was the tribute paid by Altoona boosters and Green Bay Packer fans to Fred (Fuzzy) Thurston at an appreciation dinner at Scott's Supper Club Sunday night.

The former Altoona High athlete, now a 255 - pound all-National Football League offensive guard for the champion Packers, received lavish praise and a set of golf clubs from his well - wishers.

He was also presented the first Altoona High football letter sweater (size 52) by a school which has never had a grid team. His wife, Sue, received an Altoona cheerleader sweater.

ALTOONA MAY have a football team in the not-too-distant future, it was indicated at the dinner.

Harold Harris, president of the Altoona Businessmen's Assn., said that the school is considering a football program. Small enrollment, now only 139 students, has precluded a football team in the past.

Harris proposed that the site for Altoona's future football team be named Fuzzy Thurston Field. He reported after the dinner that several hundred dollars had been pledged to develop the field.

Einar Pederson, Altoona High principal, served as

toastmaster. He was Thurston's coach as a sophomore.

Mayor Sherman Paudson of Altoona spoke of Thurston as a wonderful example of a person who reached the goal he had set for himself.

Art Henning, New March of Dimes chairman, praised Thurston's effort in the fund-raising telethon last weekend. Thurston and three Packer teammates, Bart Starr, Lew Carpenter, and Gary Knafelc, took part.

BOB BREDESEN, Altoona High coach, presented the letter sweaters to Thurston and his wife. She is the former Sue Eggleston.

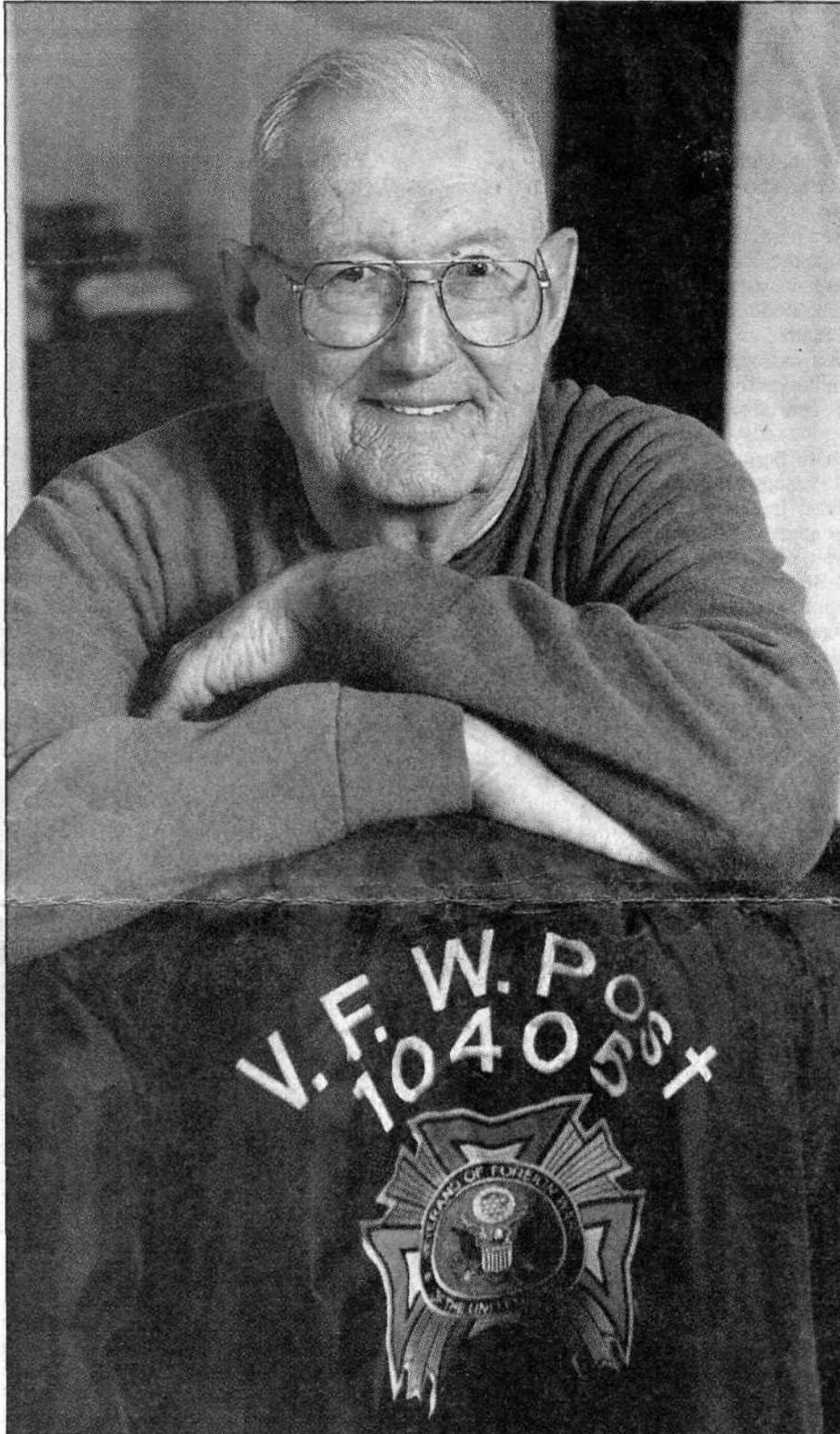
Tom Lehman, who coached Thurston in basketball as a junior and senior, called him the best football player from the whole state of Wisconsin.

Other speakers included former teammates and friends Neil Woodington, Dennis Reiter, Jack Musolf, Gene Musolf and Harold Semisch. Darrell Woodington presented the set of golf clubs.

Thurston thanked the many Altoona friends who had helped him along the way to stardom in college and professional football ranks.

"You can do anything if you have the desire," said the burly former-Railroader.

Thurston said he believes the Packers will be champions for a long time to come.



Staff photo by Dan Reiland

Bill Underwood of Altoona knows the reality of war. In 1943 he was drafted into service, leaving behind his family and an apprenticeship as a railroad machinist. In those days war seemed to matter more to people, said Underwood. But today the interest in over-seas conflicts just doesn't seem to be as intense, he said.

Veterans notice attitude change in modern "war"

By **Christena T. O'Brien** Leader-Telegram staff

ALTOONA — Bill Underwood has made an effort to keep up on news of the fighting in Yugoslavia.

He tunes into television reports.

He listens to the radio.

And he reads the newspaper.

For him, those accounts bring back the sights, sounds and smells of more than 50 years ago when he fought in World War II.

But Underwood doesn't believe people are as interested in the war in Yugoslavia and other overseas conflicts in recent years as they were in World War II and Vietnam.

"We felt once the (Japanese) struck Pearl Harbor, we had to protect our country," said Underwood, a 75-year-old veteran who fought with the 1,877th Company A Aviation Battalion in World War II.

"People now just don't seem to be interested," he said. "I think they're fed up with all these little scrimmages."

NATO began airstrikes on Yugoslavia Wednesday. The war between ethnic Albanians and Yugoslav forces has been going on for a year in the Eastern European region of Kosovo.

Like Underwood, Paulis Lazda, a history professor at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, said the attitudes among Americans on this and

other recent conflicts is different today.

"There is very little passion there," said Lazda, who has taught for 30 years. "For most people it is somewhat surreal."

Lazda partially attributes a lack of realism in the United States to a lack of understanding on the part of Americans.

"Many people do not understand what the war in Kosovo is about," said Lazda, a native of Latvia. "I can assure you it is real. It is a source of pain and suffering."

He said knowing the United States has professional soldiers who are trained for battle also takes away from the realism of recent conflicts.

That hasn't always been the case.

In 1943 Underwood was drafted, about a year after graduating from Altoona High School.

He wasn't alone. Husbands, sons, brothers, cousins and uncles were drafted to fight in the war credited by historians with destroying more property and killing more people than any other war in history.

But those who were left behind at home didn't have it easy.



Staff photo by Steve Kinderman

Rites of spring

Fred Underwood, 1816 Valmont Ave., applies fertilizer to the lawn of a neighbor on Monday. Like most people, Underwood said he is hoping for a good soaking rain to help things green up.



Women Bowling Champs— Members of the Prock & Sons team of the Classic Ladies league which won the Eau Claire Women's Bowling association tournament team title are (left to right) Doris Thompson, Vera Kilboten, Gerda Rogstad, Alta Woodford, Della Pettit.

“Cinder City” Rode The Rails to Prosperity

The Community Times – Monday, August 19, 1985

by Jane Hieb

Nearly 10,000 people were on hand to welcome the first train to Eau Claire County. Beginning in 1856 rumors of rails and prosperity had circulated widely; throughout Northwestern Wisconsin, but it wasn't until 1870 that the rumors became fact.

The coming of the; railroads played an important role in the development of many small towns in Wisconsin.

In 1881 two houses were all that marked a small settlement on the sand prairie east of the tough little lumber hamlet of Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Named East Eau Claire originally, the area blossomed rapidly when the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad (Chicago and Northwestern) established a machine shop and roundhouse there.

In the next year another ten houses appeared and the name of the thriving settlement was changed to Altoona, presumably after a railroad town in Pennsylvania.

The “baby city” as the town was often referred to, continued to grow. By 1887 the founding fathers were granted a charter to form a city government. Shortly after, a mayor and four city Councilmen were elected. ↓

At one time both passenger and freight trains traveled the rails through Altoona.

Gerald Hagen, former mayor of Altoona, and state director for the United Transportation Union, has studied the history of the railroads for many years.

"In the 'hey day' of the railroads the Chicago-St. Paul-Minneapolis-Omaha had over 19,000 miles of track, today there are 6,000 miles." Hagen explained.

"By 1914 there was also a street car connecting Altoona with Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls. Altoona had 2 hotels, 5 saloons, a grocery and dry goods store, three churches, and a school system," Hagen said.

Much of the growth the city of Altoona experienced during those early years centered around the railroad, according to Hagen.

Today with over 5,000 residents, Altoona is still growing. By the year 2000 city planners are expecting nearly 10,000 residents.

"We have lots of raw land and better proximity to the major shopping area's in Eau Claire than many families who live on the other edges of Eau Claire," Hagen said.

Altoona residents are especially proud of their school system.

"In my 11 years here in Altoona, I've been constantly impressed with the excellent community support shown for the academic and extra-curriculum activities of the school," Ed Ristow, Altoona's High School Principal said.

"I believe we're one of the only two schools in the state with a long range curriculum plan from kindergarten to the 12th grade to go with our computer program." Ristow explained.

At one time, many years ago, there was some consideration given to consolidating the Altoona School System with Eau Claire. But according to both Hagen and Ristow that will never happen.

"The people here are fiercely protective and very dedicated to the Altoona High School System, Hagen said. And Hagen believes the people in Altoona seem also dedicated to protecting and presserving the "small town U.S.A."; atmosphere.

"We're a bedroom community, with no large industries, but there's a lot of city pride here in Altoona, it's a good place to live!"



Bring in the wrecking ball

Left: Terry Werlein, a firefighter with the Chippewa Fire Protection District, lowered a cross from the roof of the old St. Mary's church in Altoona Saturday morning as firefighters prepared to burn the church. High winds confined work to the basement; the church was being demolished this morning.

Below: Paul Schlewitz, 80-year-old Altoona resident and a 54-year member of the church, watched firefighters work from the new church lobby.

Staff photos ⁶⁹
by Dan Relland





GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY — Mr. and Mrs. William Gloede, Altoona, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with an open house at their home Sunday, Oct. 19. About 150 guests attended the event. The couple was married Oct. 17, 1908, in St. John's Lutheran Church in the Town of Lincoln and have resided in Altoona since their marriage. Gloede was a locomotive engineer for the C.N.W. Railroad until his retirement two years ago. The Gloedes have two children, David, of Altoona, and Mrs. Paul Marshall, of Fort Dodge, Iowa, and three grandchildren.

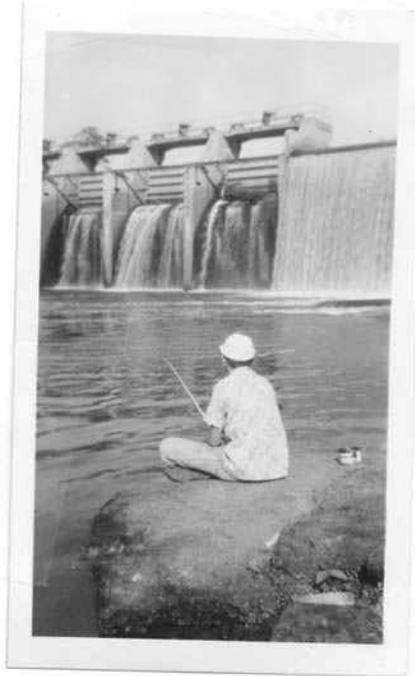
Miscellaneous shots of Altoona, featuring Richard Gilbert Thurston, a.k.a. "Sleepy" and "Dick."



Dick Thurston,

Altoona Dam,

1945

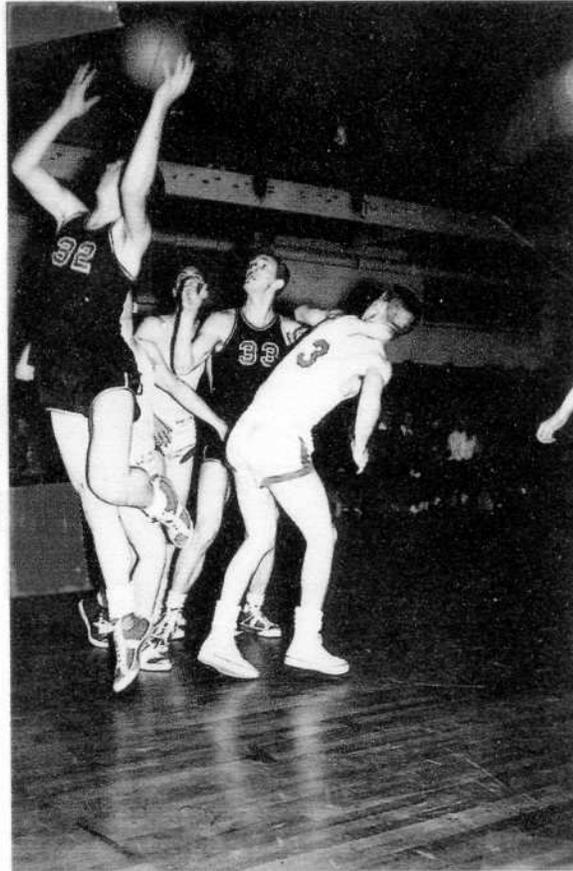


In the "Main Room" of the old Altoona Public School. Louise Leland is giving Einar Pedersen a shave during freshman initiation. Glen Shafer is looking on.



Dick Thurston laying up an easy left-hander.

1952



Dick Thurston driving to the basket with Chuck Rasmussen looking on.

Altoona school and basketball photos supplied by courtesy of Robert Thompson

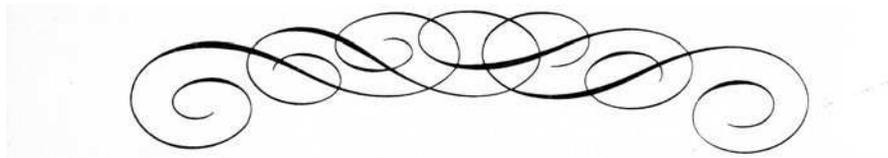
Know Your Authors



Roger Rasmussen

John Thurston

Jack Blackburn



Resume of John R. Thurston

Education: Graduated Altoona High School (Altoona, Wisconsin), 1942; Bachelor of Arts degree (Psychology) Phi Beta Kappa, U of Wisconsin-Madison 1949; Master of Arts degree in Psychology, U of Wisconsin-Madison 1950; Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology) U. of Iowa 1953)

Military Service World War II, U.S. Navy 1943-46 Signalman
Mostly destroyer duty in the N. Pacific (Alaska, Aleutian Islands, Russia's Sea of Okhotsk, Japanese Kurile Islands) One battle star

Professional Experience Full time

Clinical Psychologist, Veterans Admin Hosp. Madison, Wis
1953-57

Chief Psychologist Eau Claire Co. Guidance Clinic Eau Claire, Wis
1957-58 Assistant to Full Professor of Psychology University of Wis.-Eau Claire 1958-87 (Retired)
Part-time Principal Investigator, Eau Claire Youth Study (Eau Claire) 1958-1972; Principal Investigator, Nursing Education Research (Eau Claire) 1959-71; Clinical Psychologist Northwest Psychiatric Clinic (Eau Claire) 1973-1984; Clinical Psychologist Private Practice 1984-1990

Writings and Publications www.selfpubpress.com

More than 60 research articles, pamphlets, and books of professional nature (1953-1977)

Horse Racing Psychology Book 1987. Co-author Betty J. Thurston
Muses, Music, and More Book 1998. Co-author Nancy Clark Scobie
Primarily Poetry, Pithograms, and Pictures... But a Little Bit More Book 1999. Co-author Nancy Clark Scobie

Meandering With Mariah Book 2000. Co-author Nancy Clark Scobie
A Provocative Potpourri of Poetry, Pithograms, Prose, and Pretty Pictures Book 2000. Co-author Nancy Clark Scobie.

Purposeful Pithograms Book. 2002

Sharpening Shadows Book 2002, Co-author Nancy Clark Scobie

Sides Seldom Seen: A Novella Book 2004. Co-author Nancy Clark Scobie

A Very Full Circle A compilation of Thurston's writings. 2004

Contributions to Poetica Grandma-tica 2004, Poetica Grandma-tica 2005, Poetica Grandma-tica 2006-2007, Poetica Grandma-tica 2007-2008, Poetica Grandma-tica 2008-2009, Poetica Grandma-tica, 2009-2010. Editors: Bredeson and Scobie.

It Took Two To Tangle: A Rape Explored Book 2005

Nuts and Bolts 2006: Mostly Nuts A compilation of Thurston's 2006 writings.

The Way of a Reluctant Warrior in WW II A review of wartime navy career of Thurston. 2006

Nuts and Bolts 2007: Mostly Nuts A compilation of 2007 writings by Thurston

The Way of a Reluctant Warrior in WW II: An Addendum Additional material regarding Thurston's wartime navy career 2007

The Old Altoona Public School: A Collection of Memories Book 2008 Memories of those attending this school before 1951 fire

Grandma Had Her "Say" -----and She Said a Lot Booklet 2008

Jesse Jensen, Principal, Coach, Teacher, Altoona Public School, 1921-1943 Booklet Hoyt and Thurston 2008

A Star-crossed Venture: Contributions to The Altoona Star, Altoona, Wisconsin 2007-2009 Booklet 2009

The Red Caboose, A Collection of Altoona, Wisconsin Memories Blackburn, Rasmussen, and Thurston Book 2009

Miscellaneous writings: Booklets: Ago-ing (how to write memoirs), Expressions of Gertrude McCluskey (a tribute to Thurston's grandmother), Naval World War II Slang; Past Imperfect, The First 50 Years (an unpublished autobiography), newspaper columns (St. Paul Pioneer Press; The Altoona Star), letters to editors, thousands of Pithograms ('thoughts and matters of substance in written form').

Recreational pursuits:

Writing, landscape art (a geoglyph of an angel called "Angelhazel," "Alex, the Wonder Underdog" These could only be seen from air), stock car track ownership, dog/horse racing, travel (I have visited 48 National Parks, Africa 4 times, China twice and 6 of the 7 continents), tree farms, baby seals and polar bears, humane societies, speeches, preservation of historical sites, excessive recreational TV viewing, exploring the Internet, research into patient attitudes and doctor/patient relationships, and memories.

John R. Thurston, Ph.D. Clinical Psychologist Professor Emeritus of Psychology (U. Of Wisconsin-Eau Claire) 3752 Cummings Street, Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701

(715.832.34)

E-mail:thurstjr@charter.net Up-dated 10.04.09

Biography of Roger Rasmussen

Roger was born June 18, 1936, the 2nd son, 3rd child of Alfreda and Percy Rasmussen. Moving frequently within Altoona as the family increased in size, he lived in 7 different homes before age 18; thus, his familiarity with the geography, backyards, garden spots, apple trees, and homes of so many residents is an outgrowth of his root-less-ness.

His siblings all attended k-12 at Altoona schools. His father Percy held more than a dozen different jobs and his mother Alfreda worked as a cook/waitress at five different restaurants. He remembers the names and particulars of every one of his elementary, high school and college teachers; they, along with some significant Altoona residents helped develop a philosophy of living and teaching that has contributed to his continued active involvement in education and community service. Currently he serves on three foundation boards/commissions/committees and for the past 45 years has been actively engaged in some aspect of teacher development, most recently, and for the past 14 years, since his second retirement, he works at UW-River Falls supervising student teachers. Both his late wife Dixie and daughter Amy Canniff were his students and both have had 25 year teaching careers. When not traveling with his three teenage grandsons on the railroad, or attending athletic events, he is a hospice/bereavement volunteer for Health Partners of Minnesota. Roger has written for professional publications, written poetry for more than 30 years, contributed articles to the late Altoona Star, provided articles for publications by his second cousin Dr. John Thurston, and Roger has served as a board member and president of professional educational organizations in Minnesota. He attributes his zest for living, learning, and writing to his mentors Mary Martin, Darrell Woodington, Edward Semisch, and Emma Leland.

The stories included in this publication for which Roger takes sole credit are a composite of his perceptions, contributions and stories made by 100's of Altoona residents, and from his own 73 years of experience as an interactive participant in effective daily living. While the "Serenity Prayer" has guided his daily life, "The Beatitudes" have helped him become..... He is especially interested in developing an Altoona Historical Society.



At age 73 and counting, the writer was poised and posed after having visited the Chippewa Valley Historical Museum at Carson Park in Eau Claire and after serving as a chauffeur for a friend who was about to celebrate the 60th class reunion of Eau Claire Memorial High School class of 1949. Driving through the streets of Altoona, Eau Claire, and the town of Seymour brought a renewed awakening of how wonderful it was to live during an era when the sight of an airplane was rare and awesome and the sound of a steam engine with whistle and steam grunting itself up the steep incline from Drummonds Meat Packing to Altoona quickened your heartbeat. Too, it removed all doubt about the good-life as a railroader, and helped you better to understand the value of silence as cure for a teenager's troubled emotions prior to entering the adult world. In reflection, the journey was well worth the troubles, trials, tribulations, wrinkles and receding hairline. I felt at peace at this moment.

Biographical Sketch Jack Blackburn

What I am attempting to do here is to present a snapshot of my background as it was in 2002. After some thought, I have decided to do this in a rather “conversational style” rather than a strict chronological ordering of events. Chronological order is nigh unto impossible anyway, as so many things happened more or less simultaneously; and as is so common to all of us, my memory fails me at times. At the end of the “2002 snapshot” I will add some more information that will bring us up to 2009 – The Red Caboose publication date.

I was born in Denver, Colorado on April 24, 1941 and in a few years I moved with my family to the great plains of Northeastern Colorado. This rural area was, and is, sparsely populated and isolated. My early years (under the tutelage of my father) gave me patience, persistence and the ability to deal with adversity. Over time I gained the confidence to undertake tough problems and not quit until the job is done.

After graduating with a BS Degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Wyoming in 1963; I took a job at Collins Radio Co. in Cedar Rapids, Iowa for about two years before starting my career at 3M Company in 1965. Twenty-four years later, in the fall of 1989, I resigned my position at 3M. The early part of my career at 3M was as a Technical Service Engineer in what was then known as the Magnetic Products Division. This involved working with various companies that were developing new magnetic recording devices in order for 3M to supply the magnetic media necessary to make the systems work.

A few years later I was privileged to find myself doing early development work on the Philips Compact Audio Cassette which came to be known simply as a “Cassette”. Today we all have a bunch of them -- in shoe boxes, in our cars, or lost in some dark, out of the way place. What a wonderful invention -- what joy and beautiful music was made available; even in the most unlikely places. And, oh yes, the same cassettes have driven boom boxes and car stereos that we often find in the hands of the teen-

agers that live in the house next door.

While all this was going on I was also starting a family. I married Joan in 1966, and to this union was born a daughter named Kathy the following year; and a son, Larry in 1971. This marriage officially came to an end in 1994 although, as is usually the case, it was over long before then. The intervening years, none the less, were eventful. Years later my son asked me, "Dad, what did you do every night after work when Kathy and I were growing up? You never went out bowling or out drinking with the guys from work. You came home every night, just like clock-work; what did you do?" After some thought, I told him that most of my evenings were spent in the basement work-shop; repairing the "collateral damage" of the day. These things might include: removing a toy that got stuck in the toaster, straightening the wheel of a tricycle that he had bent that day by running it full speed into the concrete-block wall of the basement (just to see what would happen) -- his mother had already taken care of bandaging the scrape on his forehead and the busted knuckles of his right hand. Then there were Kathy's dolls that could never stand the strain of daily living with her. I got the first hint of one particularly traumatic incident as Kathy met me in the garage when I got home from work. It was the day after Christmas and her new doll had lost its head -- literally! She was near hysterics, and could only be calmed by the words that "I could fix it." I reminded Larry that his laughter at the sight of the headless doll did not help matters. That night I tried every adhesive that 3M had ever manufactured in an attempt to keep the head on that doll. The doll was made of a material that was supposed to feel "just like a baby's skin" and nothing would adhere to it. After several failed attempts at trying to persuade my daughter that this doll might need to be put on the shelf and admired, rather than played with -- I took the brute force approach. Two sheet metal screws, one stove bolt with nut and washers and several short pieces of wire rendered the head and the body inseparable. It wasn't pretty but it got the job done. This, by the way, could also be said about much of the work I did as an Engineer at 3M.

Early in the year of 1979 another "opportunity" came into my life and our family. This was a little girl named Debby; three and a half years old. Up until then she had seen

nothing but trouble and we made a choice to do what we could to improve her lot in life. Kathy and Larry taught her the ropes as only older siblings can do while my wife and I did everything that was necessary to add stability and consistent love to her home-life. We had the honor of seeing her graduate from High School and successfully go out into the world and make her own way in life.

My resume states that from 1973 to 1982 I was a Senior Product and Process Engineer. It was during these years that I found myself working on one, and possibly more, projects with Bob Bancroft. I believe that during 24 years at 3M Bob was the only person that I was able to work with over an extended period of time without having a major disagreement.

From 1982 to 1987 I was a Process Development Specialist in 3M's ES&T Laboratory. This is an Engineering Lab that gets primarily involved in Process Research and Development for all of the company's divisions. It was here that I found myself involved with such things as Computer Integrated Manufacturing, Industrial Robotics and Artificial Intelligence. I had an intense personal desire to see Artificial Intelligence make a major industry wide impact because I hadn't been doing exceptionally well with the natural kind.

I spent the last two years of my career in the Industrial Abrasives Division. I guess one could say that as I departed 3M in the fall of 1989 I was an "abrasive engineer."

I spent the next year and a half settling my parent's estate (they had both died in 1988) and catching up on the many things I never seemed to have time to do when I was working a full time job. It was only then that I began to grieve the loss of my parents -- I found that it was possible to postpone it and it was not possible to never grieve at all.

I now owned my family's agribusiness in Colorado and I leased it to my uncle who farmed it along with his own sizeable operation. I began spending several weeks each summer in Colorado driving a huge combine as we harvested acres and acres of wheat.

The temperatures were always over 100 degrees out in those fields, so after all the wheat was cut I would leave the air-conditioned comfort of the combine cab and head for the high country of the Colorado Rockies to cool off a little bit. I loved the mountains and the fishing and hiking and the pure joy of spending my children's inheritance.

In the spring of 1994 I joined a team of about 50 North Americans as we traveled to Romania. This was with the International School Project and this project is involved with conducting four-day Teacher Training Convocations in Russia and other countries that were part of the former Soviet Union. During these convocations the Romanian teachers learned how to use a curriculum entitled "Christian Ethics and Morality: A Foundation for Society." We did the conference once in Bucharest then moved on to Craiova the next week and repeated it there. The next spring, 1995, I went again -- this time to Chishinev, Moldova. I cannot begin to tell you what these trips did to me, for me and in me -- part of my heart is still there.

On December 12, 1995 I met Sandy for the first time. We had been referred to each other through a dating service called "Together"; which is now defunct, although I don't think we in anyway caused that. I picked her up for lunch in the lobby of the law office where she worked. It wasn't until a few minutes later, when we were seated across a table from one another, that I began to take in what was before me. She was wearing this dark green Notre Dame sweatshirt, her hair was rather short and really cute, and the depth of her brilliant blue eyes seemed to have no end. We were married in October of 1996 and I still look into her eyes every chance I get. Try it yourself some time, then you will know what I'm talking about. Sandy spent her early years on the east side of St. Paul, across the street from the old Harding High School -- most of her adult years in and around Stillwater.

We have lived in Little Canada about two years and our children are scattering all over the world. My daughter Kathy, husband Carl, and 5 children under 11 years of age, live in Poland and are actively involved in missionary work there. My son Larry works at Intel near Sacramento, CA and was married to Brookes in January of this year. As an

added bonus, two children (ages 5 and 6) also came into our family with this marriage. Sandy's youngest daughter, Courtney, is finishing up a degree in Elementary Education at Winona State. Her son Mike and his wife Teri have three young and growing boys and live near Lake Elmo, Minnesota. Sandy's daughter Yvette and her husband (who's name is also Mike) have three children and are expecting another. Sandy's oldest daughter, Bridgette, lives in the Netherlands with her husband, Arjen. So if you are doing the math right, here are some of the statistics.

Sandy and I have 7 children living on 2 continents. At last count there are 13 grandchildren. We have 3 adults and 5 children that are trying to learn to speak either Dutch or Polish.

And the Adventure goes on...

Sandy and I moved to Altoona from St. Paul, Minnesota in April of 2006. We were both retiring and could have lived anywhere in the world. We spent more than a year looking at homes in the areas of the Twin Cities, Menomonie and Eau Claire. As time went on we came up with a rather specific, although brief, "recipe" of what we were looking for. The ingredients were woods, water and a college town (for the culture and coffee shops). Our home at 911 N Moonlight Drive met those requirements. We are grateful to Joe and Shirley Rossano for building the house 40 years before we even heard of Altoona and the lake of the same name. And thank God (literally) every day for the privilege of living here.

Also, since the "2002 snapshot" Mike and Yvette added a child to their family in 2002 and our family living in the Netherlands grew by one in 2004. Courtney moved to Colorado Springs and our family living in Poland moved to the Twin Cities for about a year then moved to Hong Kong late in 2009 (except their oldest son – now a freshman at the University of Minnesota).

So, doing the math one more time: Sandy and I have 7 children living on 3 continents. At last count there are 15 grandchildren. We have 3 adults and 5 children that have learned to speak either Dutch or Polish. And, oh yes, everybody speaks English in Hong Kong.