

The 1990's

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Note: I do not usually write about current events, so this file is small

THE GROWTH OF BARABOO IN POPULATION AND AREA

Yesteryear Revisited 2001

By Bob Dewel

During the summer of 2000 we presented a four-part series of articles on the industrial revitalization of Baraboo which began about mid-century.

The remarkable re-awakening of Baraboo, after the WWII munitions workers left, was due to heroic efforts by local citizens. They recognized the innate potential of Baraboo and hoped to see it thrive and grow with the state and the nation.

In every generation there is resistance to change from "the way it used to be", or even from "the way it is today". There was resistance then, and there has been some espousing of that point of view recently.

In order to address the matter, as a follow-up to the industrial expansion articles, we present today two maps, and they are described as follows:

MAP NUMBER ONE

Map number one is a recent map of Baraboo. The lightly shaded areas constitute land within the city limits today. An exception to that rule is the white or very lightly shaded area east (to the right on the map) of Manchester street, which is not in the city limits.

Within the city limits, the darkly shaded areas represent parks, the golf course, the fairgrounds, and the hospital area. Also somewhat shaded are the Jr. and Sr. High areas and the UW Baraboo-Sauk County campus, all within the city limits.

Superimposed on the map, in black lines, are the city limits of Baraboo as they existed in about 1953, from a map of that time. The city of that time is virtually square, except for jogs in the Manchester Street area. Lightly shaded areas outside those black lines, therefore, represent expansion of the city since 1953.

Housing developments outside the city limits, such as Glacier View, Pine Acres, Burnam Woods and Wynsong, plus many less organized groupings of homes, are located in the townships, not the city limits, and are not shown as in the city, of course. This is not a reflection on those good folks, many of whom are prominent in Baraboo area affairs and good Baraboo boosters. Gateway Gardens and Park Ridge are included, however, for they lie within the city limits.

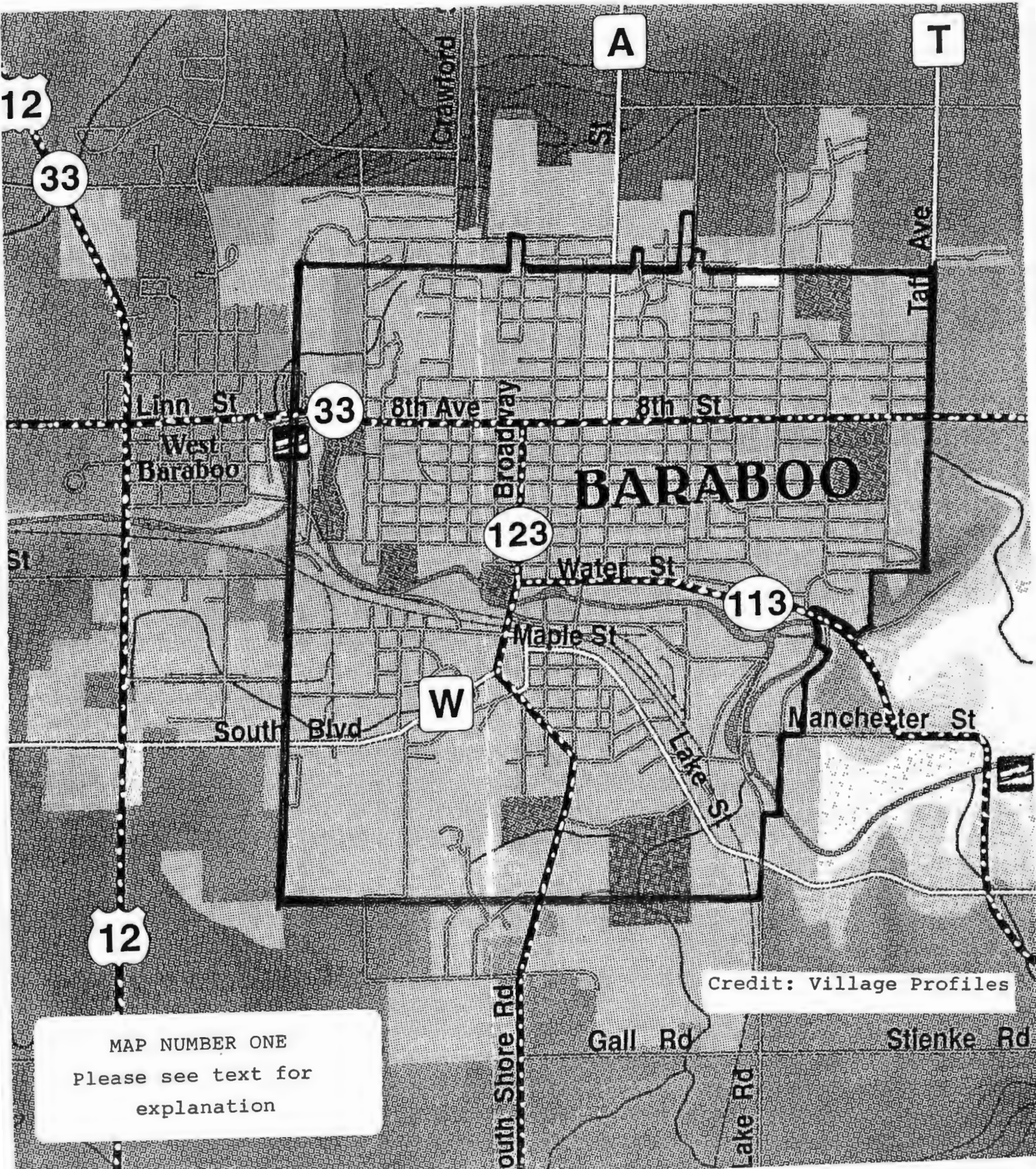
MAP NUMBER TWO

In map number two, the 1953 city limits are shown as before. Those lightly shaded areas of the previous year 2000 map, now in the city limits, have been snipped off with scissors and assembled and pasted onto map number two, as if they were parts of a jigsaw puzzle. So that they would contrast, the pieces were assembled upside down.

This, in a simple way, shows that in 47 years the area of land covered within the city limits has increased only a little over 40%

This is interesting, since the population of the city has grown from 7264 in 1950 to an estimated 10537*

*It was 10,711



A

T

12

33

Linn St

West Baraboo

33

8th Ave

Broadway

8th St

BARABOO

123

Water St

W

Maple St

113

South Blvd

Lake St

Manchester St

12

South Shore Rd

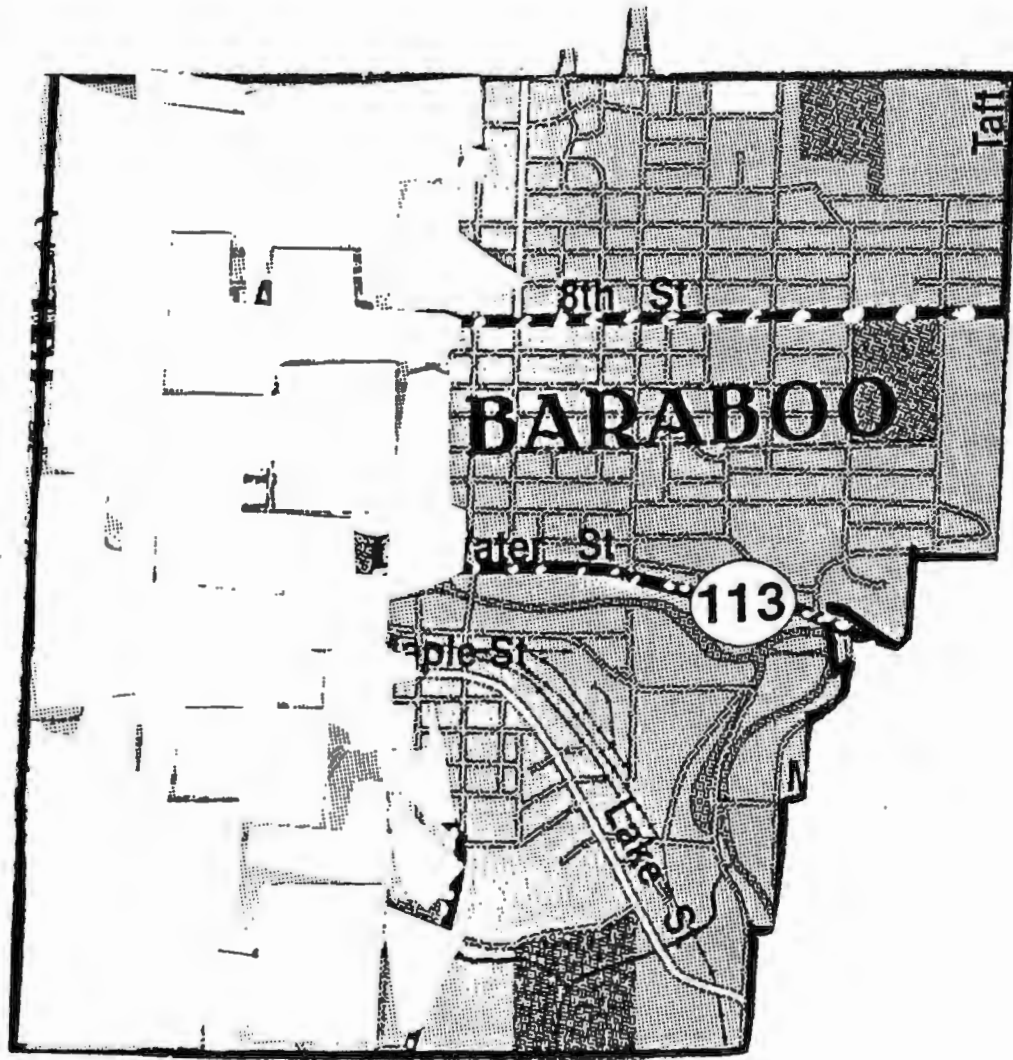
Gall Rd

Credit: Village Profiles

Stienke Rd

Lake Rd

MAP NUMBER ONE
 Please see text for
 explanation



MAP NUMBER TWO

Please see text for
explanation

in the year 2000, an increase of 45.06%. Meantime the county has grown from 38,120 in 1950 to an estimated 53,356 today, a 39.97% increase.

To carry the comparison further, Wisconsin has grown from 3,434,575 persons in 1950 to 5,363,675 in the 2000 census, an increase of 56.17%

On the national level, the 1950 population was 151,325,798, and the 2000 census has counted (some say under-counted) 281.4 million persons a whopping 85.95% increase.

Thus, give or take a few percentage points, Baraboo's growth in population has pretty much paralleled that of the county. With regard to the state and the nation, it is significantly less than their growth.

In Baraboo, it amounts to 3273 additional persons in the city. Their place of abode, and their place of employment, has required that the city expand its land mass somewhat, in this case about 40%.

Since that land mass includes plots of land for the new hospital, the University Center, the new Jr. and Sr. High campuses, the new Pierce and Attridge and northeast parks, and the golf course, plus a network of streets, it follows that the actual acreage acquired just for industries and new homes is considerably less than the 40% expansion in city land.

DISCUSSION

At mid-century, in the doldrums following the on-again, off-again departure of the munitions workers, city leaders had to choose between withering on the vine or a re-awakening. Industries were carefully chosen for quality of life and environment, and to provide a good mix rather than domination by one huge industry.

This brought a boom in citizenry, for it is said that "if you build it, they will come", and come they did. Baraboo, and especially its satellite, West Baraboo, thrived in many ways. Churches built or remodeled, business and retail establishments sprang up, city facilities were improved or replaced, a university center was established, and Baraboo failed to wither on the vine as expected.

Hundreds of American small cities must wish they had followed Baraboo's example.

BARABOO IS A GOOD STEWARD OF ITS LAND

Yesteryear Revisited 2001

By Bob Dewel

Is Baraboo a good steward of the land it occupies? Has the adjacent land it annexed since 1950 been put to good use? This article ponders these questions.

On January 20, 2001 an article was published in regard to population increases in Baraboo since 1950, as compared to the land annexation in that period. It demonstrated that while Baraboo has indeed increased its population by 45%, the land acquired only increased Baraboo's area by about 40%

Moreover, that land acquisition since 1950 includes not just land for single or multi-family homes. It also includes land for the UW Baraboo-Sauk County campus, the golf course, and the Pierce, Attridge, and new northwest parks. The hospital also occupied significant acreage.

Thus only a part of the increased acreage in the city went for housing or industry. Indeed, some land is still available for housing, but virtually none that remains is suitable for industrial requirements.

Comparable figures for other Sauk County cities and villages have not been pursued, but similar annexations of land are readily seen in Lake Delton, Sauk City, Prairie du Sac, Plain, and the rapidly expanding borders of Reedsburg, so Baraboo is not alone

The figures from the first article showed a county growth of 39% since 1950,

and this represents a growth mainly in the above-named villages and cities, for the farm population has declined. In addition, many citizens live adjacent to but outside the city limits of each city and village. Within two miles of Baraboo the homes outside the city limits must contain a population well into four figures.

The article also showed that Wisconsin population increased by 56%, and the nation increased by 86% since 1950. Sauk County and Baraboo actually lagged behind the state and national growth!

Township Housing

Now some people seem to be advocates of zero population growth, whether locally, nationally, or internationally--though not the Bush Administration, which on January 22 abolished federal aid to International Planned Parenthood. In Sauk County and Baraboo the population has indeed increased, though not as much as in the state and nation.

What has been the result of this comparatively modest growth? We can only supply figures for Baraboo, but a strong case can be made that Baraboo has a good record when it comes to land acquisition compared to its population increase.

A recent study, called "Comparison of Living Units Per Acre of Subdivision", contains information obtained from the Sauk County Treasurer's office and from the City of Baraboo plats and Building Inspector records.

In all cases, the subdivision acreage figures include outlets, road right of way, and parks.

The first example given is on the Bent Tree area, formerly a Luther farm property. This data includes not only the original plat but three additions over the years. The study shows that the total area of the Bent Tree subdivision is 156.93 acres. Recent data showed that there are 90 living units. Thus the average land space occupied per unit is 1.74 acres in this development in the Town of Fairfield.

Wynsong, in the Town of Baraboo also had an original plat and three additions. The total acreage is 53.53 acres, with 54 living units. Thus each unit averages 0.99 acre.

South of Baraboo, off Gall road, the Glacier Valley subdivision has a more modest 0.76 acre per living unit. In the town of Greenfield, however, the Cedar Ridge subdivision of 17 lots on 30.35 acres averages out to 1.79 acres per living unit.

The Baraboo Data

Baraboo, with its great population increase since 1950, has increased its total area about 40%. Where do these people reside, and how much land do they occupy per living Unit?

To answer these questions, the study mentioned above considered housing in Baraboo in two ways. One was for single family subdivisions, comparable to the out-of-the-city subdivisions mentioned above. The other part of the study considered multi-family subdivisions, such as apartment groupings.

Four such single family subdivisions within the city limits were studied. The City of Baraboo subdivisions listed here in the single family group occupied a total of 48.76 acres with 136 living units; each of which occupied only 0.36 acre.

The study also considered multiple family living units, 368 in all. They occupied only 61.65 acres, or a ratio of only 0.17 acre per unit!

If one combines the City of Baraboo single family and multiple family subdivisions, the 504 living units occupy 110.41 acres, with a ratio of 0.22 acre per living unit. Comparing back to Bent Tree with 1.74 acres per living unit and Cedar Ridge with 1.79 acre per unit, it appears that Baraboo uses far less land per family unit with which to house its citizens.

To be sure, there are a few exceptions in town, where a living unit occupies an acre or more. It would be improper to refer, in any case, to "urban sprawl" or "rural sprawl" when considering these figures. In this great country we have considerable freedom of choice as to where we choose to live.

Moreover, many of those who live outside the city limits of a city or village are as good if not better city and community leaders and doers for the Baraboo area than some of those who dwell within the city limits. Many of them are also good stewards of the land entrusted to them, with minimal invasion of forested areas and good erosion control.

When it comes to erosion and runoff, both urban and rural areas have problems,



A Partial View of Baraboo, Wisconsin.
Looking North across railroad tracks
1870's

Baraboo in later years would be designated as as Tree City,
but there were few trees in this '1870's drawing.

though the city storm system and seeded lawns are good solutions. An exception is the Hein-Warner flooding problem on Lake Street, and similar fears across County W from the new Walmart store.

Only six wells pierce the aquifer to supply Baraboo's nearly 10,500 people, as compared to hundreds of wells in the townships. The city has for several years won the title of "Tree City" for its attention to oxygen-producing shrubs and trees. Early pictures of the village show it originally was bereft of such foliage.

The city fathers over the years, with the help of service clubs, have remedied that, helping to make the city a generally good steward of the land it occupies in this beautiful valley.

The next article will consider Baraboo as a good citizen-neighbor of Sauk County.



BUSINESS DISTRICT BARABOO WIS. M 126

EXAMINING BARABOO'S ROLE AS A GOOD NEIGHBOR

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

2001

This is the third and, hopefully, the final article examining the relation of the City of Baraboo to its surrounding townships and to Sauk County.

In the first article, Baraboo's growth of population of 45% since 1950 related favorably to the annexations of land to the city during that period, which was about 40%. The county's population growth was 39.9%, but both the city and county lagged behind the state's population growth of 56% and the national explosion of 85%

The second article demonstrated that when land use for the housing of citizens is considered, the city was more efficient in conserving the use of land than were some developments in the townships outside the city limits. The combined city units studied averaged .22 acres of space per living unit, but rural housing developments used 1.74 acres per living unit in one development, and 1.79 acres in another.

Both articles appear to place Baraboo in a favorable light with regard to efficient land use for the housing of families. The question which now arises is whether Baraboo has been a good neighbor to its neighboring townships and to the county.

UW Baraboo-Sauk County

A case for Baraboo as a remarkably good neighbor can be made in the matter

of the UW Baraboo-Sauk County institution of higher learning. A previous article reported that in 1967 the original cost of the campus buildings, \$1,600,000, was financed equally, half and half, by the city and the county.

Since the citizen of Baraboo pays not only his city property taxes but also his county property taxes to support the campus, the fifty-fifty agreement resulted in Baraboo citizens paying about 63% of the cost of the buildings. For the last three decades, the maintenance of the institution's buildings facility was also financed fifty-fifty, resulting in Baraboo cheerfully paying 63% of the maintenance costs.

In 1998, when the three million dollar upgrading was undertaken, the same fifty-fifty formula was employed, so again Baraboo pays about 63% of that cost, which was over a million and a half dollars each, city and county. In addition, the Wills of two Baraboo couples added well over four million dollars more to the expansion.

No other city or village, even West Baraboo, participates in the sharing of costs, paying only their part of the county share. True, the facility is more convenient to Baraboo citizens than to the rest of the citizens of the county, even though Baraboo citizens have to go through West Baraboo to reach the campus. Interestingly, the West Baraboo business section is

more convenient for student purchases of gasoline, food, and supplies than is downtown Baraboo

In any event, the Baraboo campus has served thousands of county and out-of-county students, saving them and their parents thousands of dollars in dormitory and dining expenses in Madison or elsewhere. With Baraboo footing some 63% of the bill for buildings and maintenance, it would appear that Baraboo is indeed a good neighbor to the rest of the county in this matter.

There is a new and remarkable development in this service, for it is now possible for a student to get a four year degree in Hospitality/Tourism without ever leaving the Baraboo campus! This is done by arrangement with the Stout campus, and similar arrangements in other majors may be developed later.

The Airport

Our local airport is financed not only by Baraboo but by Lake Delton, Wisconsin Dells, and the township of Delton. Baraboo has been generous in its support of this facility.

For example, it is astonishing but true that Lake Delton, even before recent growth, had an equalized valuation of \$412,947,200 which is nearly the same as Baraboo's, \$419,459,600! Yet Baraboo (but not West Baraboo) has been paying 55%, or \$32,197, of the cost of the airport while Lake Delton has been paying only 13%, or \$7610.20. Wis. Dells pays 26%, and the Township of Delton pays 6%. The discrepancies are obvious.

The percentages of participation in the cost were agreed upon years ago when Lake Delton and West Baraboo had not begun their massive expansions. Negotiations are going on at this time to correct the irregularity. For several decades, however, Baraboo has been more generous than its relative affluence required.

The Baraboo Library

Although this example is more complicated, Baraboo can be proud of its cultural contribution to the county in the local library. Up to perhaps 10 years ago the library was largely financed by the City of Baraboo, with comparatively little financial help from the county. In the last decade the county has participated to a larger degree.

Presently the budget of the Baraboo library for 2001 is \$570,000, which includes salaries of all personnel plus building upkeep and maintenance.

The county now contributes \$128,000 per year, since the library is now a part of the South Central Wisconsin library group. Recent state legislation established the county contribution using a complicated formula. All citizens of the 7 county area have free use of the library.

The Baraboo library is owned by the city. In 1981 the city alone paid \$617,564 for a large addition, with the library's trust fund supplying an additional \$100,000 for the project. It can be seen that the city has been generous in maintaining and financing the essential area-wide facility, the history of which

begins well before the end of the Nineteenth Century.

Also contributing to the cultural enhancement of Sauk County citizens has been the Concerts on the the Square, financed largely by the City of Baraboo and the Chamber of Commerce, plus voluntary contributions, and free to all citizens of the area.

Law Enforcement

Another example of good neighborliness can be mentioned, and this applies to all the cities and some of the villages in the county. As is well known, the county maintains law enforcement services as represented by the office of sheriff, and all county property owners support this important and necessary service. All of the cities and some of the villages also maintain their own law enforcement agencies, the police departments.

Thus the city dweller pays not only for his police department and for the law enforcement therein, but for a significant portion of the cost of enforcement in the townships.

Some villages, such as West Baraboo, depend entirely on the sheriff's department for the peace and security of law enforcement, rather than maintaining their own police department. No one disputes this arrangement, but perhaps the cities and villages which do maintain their own police force deserve some recognition in the matter as good neighbors.

Similar Matters

Like the overlapping agencies in law enforcement, there are overlapping agencies in street and road maintenance.

Baraboo has 72 miles of roads, but received no tax aid from the county. On the other hand, Baraboo, as do the other city and village citizens of the county, pays its share of taxes to maintain the county roads. This is probably as it should be, but it is only fair to recognize the facts.

To be fair, there are a couple areas where the city and its environs share expenses. The fire department is a shared expense, with the exception of the ladder truck, which is Baraboo's alone, though it has been used in West Baraboo. Another vital shared expense is the ambulance and EMT service.

Growth

In the beginning, as far as the eastern settler was concerned, there was nothing on the banks of the Baraboo river except an Indian village. Soon dam builders arrived, producing mills for the grinding of grain and the milling of lumber. Only then were villages formed on each side of the river, eventually merging into a settlement called Baraboo, and occupying considerably less than a section of land.

As the decades have passed, more and more people have chosen Baraboo as their spot in the world, adjacent land was occasionally attached, and the area occupied by the city grew. These articles have chronicled that growth in population and land area since 1950, and the implication is that growth will continue, albeit less vigorously than in the state and the nation.

There has been growth in the townships also, though figures are more difficult to obtain--perhaps the new



The City of Baraboo paid about \$600,000 for this large addition to the library, more than doubling its size.

census will be of some help. Some prefer the safety and amenities of the city, while others prefer the quiet and solitude of the hills and forests. Although some restrictions apply, it is a free country and both areas will no doubt grow.

Although Baraboo has cheerfully contributed the above amenities to our area citizens, it has not been without consequences to the city. Several major needs have been postponed, such as streets, garage and police

and fire department expansions, relief of crowding at the city hall, and Al Ringling Theatre restoration. Some want a senior center developed, and an expanded youth center.

Baraboo does not claim to be a saint in its relations with the county, but an examination of the record, as we have done above, seems to indicate an admirable and significant contribution to the betterment of all concerned.

NEW CENSUS FIGURES ARE REVEALING

Yesterday Revisited

By Bob Dewel

The long awaited census figures for Baraboo and Sauk County are in, and invite an historical review of the trends they reveal. As expected, most townships, villages, and cities show a healthy and significant increase in population, though two of the villages and four of the townships show decreases.

One city, that very small portion of Wisconsin Dells which exists over the county line into Sauk County, shows a loss of 30 persons, this being a 22% decrease in population. Other cities and villages show increases, sometimes significant.

This is the 17th federal census for Sauk County, the first being in 1840 when the grand total of 102 settlers were tallied. Most of these persons were in the Sauk-Prairie area, with a smattering in Baraboo Rapids and a farm or two on the prairie.

Thanks to the research of Michael Goc, author of the recent and excellent history of Sauk County called "Many a Fine Harvest", we have a good running record of population growth both for the county and for Baraboo and Reedsburg, indeed for nearly every township and village and city. Goc's book is still available for sale at the Sauk County Historical Museum.

Sauk County figures

Talk about population increase! The 1840 population of 102 swelled to 4372 in

the ten year period ending in 1850. Thus for every person in 1840 there were now 43 souls, not unusual growth for a frontier area. This was nothing, however, for in just 5 years, 1855 found 13,614 persons according to Goc, and 1860 upped the ante to 18,963 citizens. Despite the Civil War, 1870 found 23,868 persons in the County.

Goc does not give an 1880 figure, but the climb continued, for in 1890 there were 30,575 persons. By 1900 there were 33,006, a more modest increase. The frontier was long forgotten, with Baraboo starting telephone service in 1895. Reedsburg followed in 1898. Wisconsin's first paved highway, between Baraboo and Lake Delton, was completed shortly after the turn of the century. A landmark of the early days, the Bassett mill, burned in 1902.

The new century showed a change, for the 1910 census actually showed a drop in county population, to 32,896, and it was reported that there were more cows than people in the county. The 1855 courthouse burned in 1904, and 1906 saw the start of work on the Dells hydro-electric plant.

Baraboo's two circuses were at their prime until about 1918, but their departure brought on a further drop in county population in 1920, to 32,512. The trend continued with a drop in 1930 to 32,030.

These were dark depression days for Baraboo and Sauk County, though there was

actually an increase to 33,700 by 1940. Little did they know that the sudden arrival of the Badger Army Ammunition Plant in 1942 would bring prosperity, and then a let down after World War II.

Munitions workers must have liked Sauk County and stayed, for with a little help from the baby boom the county population rose to 38,120 in 1950. Strangely, 1960 saw a drop to 36,179 residents, with a modest increase in 1970 to 39,057, perhaps a result of industrial expansion efforts in Baraboo and elsewhere.

Increases to 43,469 in 1980 and 46,423 in 1990 were perhaps harbingers of things to come, for the county has now soared by 8250 persons to a present total of 55,225 in last year's census. There are counties in Wisconsin and Iowa full of envy at this measure of prosperity.

The Baraboo figures

Michael Goc's book is a must for every serious Sauk County personal library. Not only do we get the county census figures, as an aside to the text, but we get the population by decades in most if not all townships, villages, and cities. This can be very revealing as will be seen.

The Baraboo figures begin in 1870, before the railroad, with 1528 persons. The dams and mills had been the lifeblood of the community, with furniture factories, barrel factories, and a variety of other things needed by what was still frontier style life.

The arrival of the railroad in 1871 was significant, as can be seen from the 1880 population jump

of about 1700 persons, to 3246. Baraboo became a railroad town, and an important one, with the roundhouse and division headquarters here. 1890 brought 1400 more souls, and by the turn of the century Baraboo had a healthy population of 5751.

The two circuses, Ringling and Gollmar, were now significant reasons for growth, which continued through 1910 to a population of 6324.

This decade had seen the courthouse burn and be replaced, another fire which destroyed the high school, and saw construction begin on the Wis Dells Hydroelectric dam. Baraboo was indeed thriving, and by 1913 Frank Lloyd Wright was designing a dam for the Woolen Mill between Baraboo and West Baraboo--dams and river power were still important.

In 1914 the Prairie duSac dam was completed, and Al. Ringling dazzled the state with his Al. Ringling theatre. Without warning, however, the Gollmar circus was sold and moved, and the Ringling Bros Barnum and Bailey operation, largest in the world, failed to return to its Baraboo home in 1918. The Depression is said to have begun in Baraboo that fateful fall, and the 1920 census showed it, for population dropped by some 800 persons to 5538.

The 1920's have been called the doldrums in Baraboo, though a real hospital opened in the Alf. T. Ringling home, the Colsac I ferry began operation, and the Baraboo Republic and Evening News merged. The year 1930 saw a gain of only 7 person since 1920s, to 5545.

Things didn't look so good for Baraboo, as it was standing still and infrastructure was about to suffer. A return of the Ringling circus in 1933 brightened things for a one day, with remembrances of the good old days. The repeal of prohibition that year allowed the Ruhland and Effinger breweries to resume operations, but 1932 found 11% of the population not just out of work, but on county relief, such as it was.

Still, a savings and loan was organized, and Aldo Leopold first arrived at Fairfield township. Somehow the Baraboo population rose by about 900 persons in 1940, the beginning of modest but sustained population gains to 7264 in 1950, 7660 in 1960, 7931 in 1970, and 8081 in 1980. Modest is right--a gain of only 817 persons in 40 years.

The strong trend began in 1990, with a population total of 9215. The latest census figure, for 2000, is 10,711.

Discussion

That latest figure, 10,711, seems like a lot to small city people, until you reflect that during the period from 1950 to 2000 the state grew at a rate of 56% and the county grew at a rate of about 40%. Compared to that, Baraboo's growth from 1950 on is about 45%, respectable but surely not as much as might be expected in view of the state figure. Incidentally, the world population, which reached 2 billion in 1927, will reach 6 billion this year, so our efforts are modest indeed.

Compare the 1990-2000

growth of Baraboo to that of the neighboring townships. Greenfield has increased by 20%, Fairfield by 24 %, and town of Baraboo by 22%. The city of Baraboo rate of increase is 16%, the least of all. Interesting!

To the west, Reedsburg has had a growth spurt in the past decade, adding 1993 persons while Baraboo added 1508. It is not known whether residents in the townships surrounding Reedsburg are concerned about its territorial expansion, but the township of Reedsburg has lost 131 persons, perhaps by annexation to the city, while Winfield and Ironton and Excelsior Townships have had just modest gains, not comparable to those of the townships surrounding Baraboo.

Reedsburg's growth is to be expected, but it is interesting to note that in 1950 Baraboo had 3192 more residents than Reedsburg. Despite the latter's growth spurt, Baraboo still has 2884 more residents in the year 2000, a difference of only about 300. Lake Delton, on the other hand, has gone from 714 in 1960 to 1982 in 2000, a whopping gain of 1268 persons, well over 200%

The distribution of population is not even. If one adds up the population figures for the highway 12 corridor and its adjacent cities and villages and townships, you get a population of 29298, well over half of the population of Sauk County. Yet the territory covered is hardly one fourth of the county land acreage. In other words, a majority of us live in the eastern fourth of the county!

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

So what can be learned from the census? First, we can be glad that our county and most of its cities and villages are attractive places to live, attractive not only in natural beauty, but offering attractive work opportunities. The modest growth, though somewhat less than of the state, means not only more services and entertainment venues, but more persons to share in the tax or other costs which follow. No one would really want to go back to the somewhat backward Baraboo of 1948, or to the Sauk County of limited services and inadequate police and patrol personell.

Perhaps future historians will say the same of us in the year 2050, but for now, Sauk County and Baraboo seem great places to live, though we are not without problems, such as flood control to name one, to challenge us.

Additional comment: Sauk County's two cities, Baraboo and Reedsburg, present interesting statistics. On the surface, Baraboo with 10711 has 2884 more citizens than Reedsburg. However, if you add in our contiguous junior partner, West Baraboo, the Baraboo area population becomes 11959, or 4162 more citizens than Reedsburg.

In addition, Baraboo seems surrounded by developments such as Glacier View, Wynsong Estates, Bent Tree, and others which exist outside the Baraboo population limits, so the figure for "Metro Baraboo" may reach 14,000. Whether buying and maintaining your own roads, wells, septic systems, and travel expenses is best is a choice each family must make. Fortunately, many of those living outside the city limits are significant civic leaders, for the benefit of the entire Baraboo area.

DOES BARABOO HAVE A GEORGIA TWIN ?

Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

There was a little flurry of civic pride a few years ago when Baraboo was rated among the 100 best cities in America. Our rating was 64th, not too bad considering that there were thousands of small cities from which to choose. Elko, Nevada was number one.

There is a town in Georgia named Tifton which rated number 54, slightly better than Baraboo. Thanks to their Chamber of Commerce, we were given an assortment of city, county, and chamber brochures with regard to Tifton for comparison with Baraboo, since both are award-winning cities.

From an historical standpoint, it is of interest that Confederate President Jefferson Davis was captured near Tifton after the War Between the States, as it is called in the South. Moreover, the capture was made by Wisconsin soldiers. The military unit is not identified, but one can speculate that Baraboo and Sauk County soldiers might have been among Davis' captors.

Actually, Tifton did not exist then. It was founded in 1872 by a Connecticut Yankee, William Harding Tift (not Taft). Was Tift a carpetbagger? The literature does not say, but he seems to be well regarded there. Like Baraboo, the first business was a sawmill, but Tifton's railroad was already there. Baraboo had to wait 30 years for a railroad.

Why were Baraboo and Tifton chosen to be among the top 100 best cities? Dean Aural Umhoefer of U.W. Baraboo-Sauk County points out that one requirement was an institution of higher learning. Two recent articles in this column chronicled the establishment of Baraboo's University of Wisconsin branch campus in 1967.

Tifton has a similar but larger institution, the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, with some 2500 Jr. College students. They offer both football and bull riding, neither of which are available at our "BooU". However, there's not much skiing or sailing or snowmobiling or water skiing in hill-less and virtually lake-less Tift County. Tifton also has a new Tech college.

Tifton

Tifton is located directly on I-75, which passes within a few blocks of the old business section. Like Baraboo and U.S. 12, motels and fast food emporiums smother the I-75 exits. The difference is that Tifton has some 1200 hotel rooms and 80 restaurants, counting fast food. If we include similar facilities in nearby Lake Delton on I-90-94, we can match that and more.

Approaching Tifton, one sees billboards proclaiming it as an American best city, America's cleanest city, Reading capitol of the world, and as Turf capitol of the world--turf for stadiums and golf courses.



Dewel

early archives

The 1937 Art Deco Tift Theatre seats 650. The much earlier Pre-Revolutionary French Al Ringling Theatre seats 800. No mention of a pipe organ was made for the Tift Theatre, but the Ringling still features the 3 manual 9 rank Mighty Barton.

but Tifton has an added city-county tax of 2%, and there seems to be an added 1.62% motel tax, for a total of 7.62%. We in Sauk County are meekly considering adding a $\frac{1}{4}$ % tax to the existing 5.5%, so that tourists can help us maintain services for them--including jails. Florida is even more brazen, the motel tax being about 8.5%

As indicated, there are many similarities between Baraboo and Tifton. Both have the two-year institutes of higher learning, a proclivity toward the arts and humanities and history, small town ambiance, and justifiable local pride. In a major point of difference, Tifton County is dry, except for beer sales.

County Center

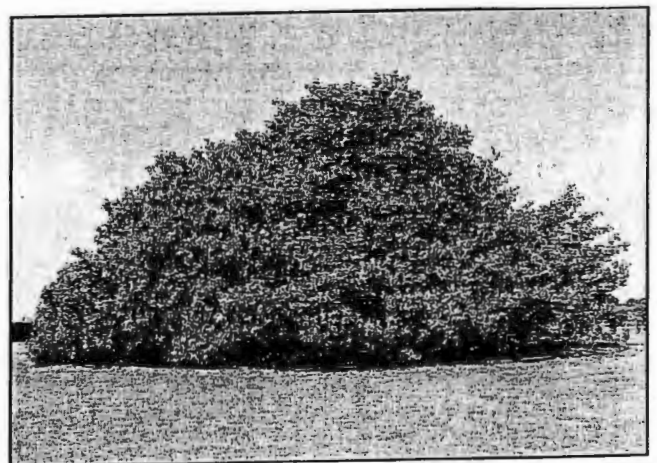
Tifton has a great advantage as the only population center in Tift County, resulting in considerable concentration of medical, educational, industrial, governmental, and all the other advantages of semi-rural America. Even the Chamber of Commerce is county-wide. Conversely in Sauk County, Baraboo is challenged to greater excellence by smaller but significant cities like Reedsburg and Sauk-Prairie, plus several village. There are advantages and disadvantages to the situation of both Tifton and Baraboo.

The Tifton Regional Hospital is larger, with 190 beds serving seven or more counties, while Sauk County alone has three hospitals, with another three large hospitals an hour distant in Madison. However, the Baraboo hospital appears to

offer many of the services of the Tifton Regional hospital.

Interestingly, the latter receives no local tax funds, according to one publication and a telephone interview, nor does it have major fund drives for funds! The literature states that revenues are sufficient to cover operating expenses, and that their charges have been some 12% below the state average, despite costs of charity services. They employ 950 persons. A \$35 million dollar expansion is in the works, but a fund drive is not planned.

In conclusion, are Baraboo and Tifton Twin cities? They certainly are not identical twins. However, it is apparent, from the literature and progressive heritage of both communities, that each has a pride in its location and history and in the accomplishment of it's people. Perhaps both communities should have a new title, America's Best Cities, each number one!



Tifton, Georgia
The Magnolia Tree

Were Baraboo to erect similar billboards, we could proclaim not only a best city status, but Baraboo as home of the world center of circus research and memorabilia and summer circus. Also we'd advertise Baraboo as home of the International Crane Foundation, Devil's Lake, our zoo, and the Al. Ringling Theatre, "America's Prettiest Playhouse". Also the nearby Mid-continent Railway museum and train could be mentioned.

One thing especially lacking in Tifton is lakes of any size. Baraboo has four lakes within minutes: Devil's Lake, Mirror Lake, Lake Delton, and Lake Wisconsin. Also different is the topography, for Baraboo has the Baraboo Range with 500 foot cliffs at Devil's Lake, and heavily forested bluffs for miles. Baraboo's idyllic setting between the bluffs of the Baraboo river valley offers many home sites with distant views, unlike Tifton, which is relatively flat, more like Reedsburg.

Attractions

We did not enter the Art Deco Tift Theatre, which seats 650, but doubt if it could compare to the historic pre-revolutionary French magnificence of the Al. Ringling, first in the nation of the palatial movie theatres, and possibly America's longest continuously running motion picture theatre. The Al. also has 50 or more stage productions per year, and seats over 800.

Both cities, but Tifton more especially, promote the arts, with a turn of the century Methodist Church building serving as the art museum there. The nearby Tift

Magnolia Tree, 400 years old, is said to be the second largest magnolia in America, with a limb spread of 105 feet. Weddings take place in an open area in the center.

The only other tourist attraction seems to be the Agrigama, an extensive exhibition of 19th century life, with some restored homes and businesses, and costumed guides.

Statistics

Tifton is the only city in Tift County, which is shaped very much like Sauk County. Other than Tifton, there are only two small villages, Titi (pronounced tie-tie) and Omega. Unlike Baraboo with its orderly grid of streets oriented mostly to the magnetic north, Tifton has many sections of town with every compass orientation imaginable.

The school system is county-wide, with some 7500 students, whereas our Sauk County has all or parts of seven school systems. Tift County has some 40,000 persons, while Sauk now has 55,000 residents. Tifton has 13,783 citizens, while Baraboo-West Baraboo totals about 12,500. As in Baraboo there is a TV station and an assortment of nearby golf courses. Neither city has Amtrack service, though Baraboo has the nearby Dells and Portage stations for Amtrack.

It was 75 degrees when we registered at a motel in Tifton on Feb. 27, but the following weekend they had freezing temperatures and a daily high in the 50's. Baraboo got up to 45 degrees that same weekend, its high for the winter however.

The state of Georgia only charges 4% sales tax,

IT WAS THE FLOOD OF THE CENTURY, WE HOPE YESTERYEAR REVISITED

By Bob Dewel

(1993)

It has only been nine years since the great 100 year cloudburst and floods of 1993, but it doesn't take a nuclear scientist to see that it could happen again. Devil's Lake is nearly full, and the ground in the Baraboo Range is pretty well saturated with water. If we get another 8 inch (some say it was 12 inch) rain, put on your waders and call the National Guard.

Yes, the National Guard was here in 1993, some 240 men from as far away as Hayward and Prairie du Chein. There also were 90 Wisconsin Conservation Corp workers, plus Red Cross, Salvation Army, and all available City and County personnel. So what happened?

They say that the rain began at about 9 P.M. on Saturday, July 17, and that it ended about 12:30 A.M. The following morning was bright and sunny, so a lot of rain fell in a short time. The nice morning belied the seriousness of the emergency, with the death of a young boy, half a mile of Highway 133 washed out, and four bridges gone in the Town of Baraboo alone. Many roads were closed.

The Lake

The dangerously overfull Devil's Lake had overflowed, with walls of water ripping up railroad tracks near the North Shore, and threatening the patrons of the Devi Bara annex. They had to form a human chain to escape the sudden onrush of water from the lake, and their cars were piled up like cordwood against the trees.

The creek from there to the golf course was so full that Jim Astle, not realizing that the Gail Road bridge was out, found his car floating in the melee and his life in danger. The Baraboo Golf

Course suffered thousands of dollars in damages, and a wall of the Hein Warner plant collapsed into the rushing water, which was heading toward the nearby railroad culvert and into the Baraboo River.

East and West

Slightly to the East, dry stream beds and draws became torrential streams, ripping out parts of Highway 113. It was here that Ryan Long of Woodstock Illinois was trapped in the family car and drowned. Other family members had been able to escape.

Well to the West, on highway 12, the occupants of the Willow Run Motel had to climb to the roof of the building to escape the whirling water until rescued by one of the Wisconsin Dells Ducks. At Wheeler's Campground on Highway 159, campers climbed to the roof of the restroom building to await rescue.

In Baraboo, manhole covers popped out in several areas, some being carried 250 feet by the water. The sewage disposal plant had to fight to keep operating, and two of the city's four wells were thought to have been contaminated. In several areas, drivers had to climb onto the roof of their car.

As early as 11 P.M. travel had come to a halt in the inundated areas, and shelters had been set up in the high school. Despite the deluge, the Baraboo river and its dams were able to contain the water through most of the city. The Circus World Museum grounds were threatened but escaped flooding

The Danger

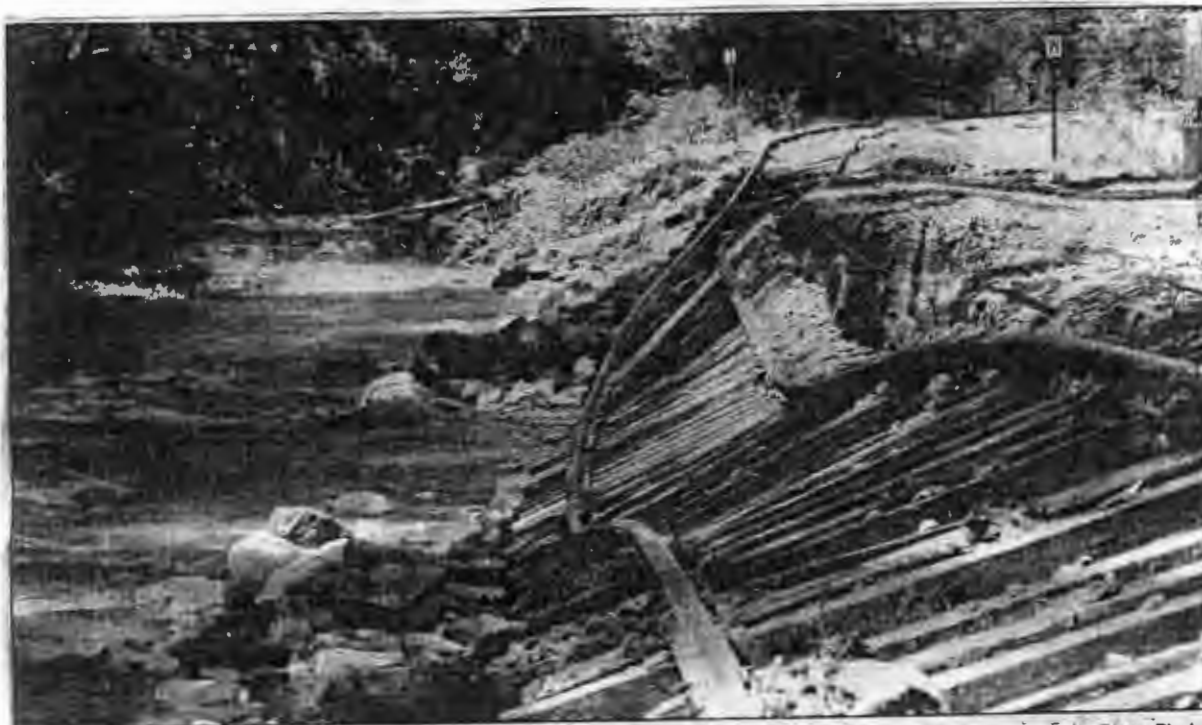
The disaster was real, and could be repeated. Few persons realize that the water level of the lake is about the same elevation as the top of the courthouse, though the water would never reach downtown Baraboo. The railroad tracks descend slightly from the lake to the Baraboo freight yards also.

This year may be different. We can credit the Park Manager, Dick Evans, for repeatedly alerting the State DNR to the serious and dangerous level



NewsRepublic photo by Marcia Schlottmann

The bath house at Devils Lake State Park is underwater two days after flood waters tore through the park.



NewsRepublic photo by Steve Riggles

These railroad tracks between Baraboo and North Freedom twist and turn from storm damage July 17. The tracks were under repair for more than week with the help of Wisconsin Conservation Corps members, the National Guard and Mid-Continent Railway Museum volunteers.



1110

In BARABOO
THE RIVER STAYED
WITHIN ITS BANKS

of the lake. Now, at last, a pipeline is being installed to let gravity take its course when the lake reaches an optimum level. It is simple Isaac Newton logic.

The lake was not always such a problem, The North Shore has no beach today, but old timers recall some 30 to 40 feet of beach between the Chateau and the water line at times. In the 1970's, boats had to be walked over a sandbar to get to the lake from the North boat launch.

After several days work, the guardsmen and other helpers were entertained with a dinner at the Circus World Museum, follow by a special show in their honor. Hastily organized, it featured generous helpings of food donated by local businesses. Special music was provided by the national Circus Windjammers band, which itself had been flooded in their camp area at the fairgrounds.

The lake was not the only cause of the flash flooding, but today it is nearly full and a potential hazard. Let's get those overflow pipes in fast!



By Bob Dewel

I never would have predicted it! In fact, I could hardly believe it was happening!

Here I was, last Saturday morning at 8 A.M., with the Kiwanis keyboard and Gorilla amplifier before me, belting out "Cleaning up the River", a local version of the old song "Cruising Down the River". I had been invited to come to Haskins Park by some organizers of the clean-up day for the Baraboo river.

Now, I certainly believe in cleaning up the river. I remember well being a participant in such an effort some 30 years ago. The Kiwanis Club, prodded by Mike Mossman, then a high school student, had such a day then. This, incidentally, was before many of the workers this past Saturday morning had been born.

What I couldn't believe was the irony of it. After all, I had been a strong and vocal opponent of removing the dams on the river, yet here was I, surrounded by some 90 individuals who undoubtedly felt the other way regarding the dams. Had they known, who knows--they might have kicked in my Gorilla amplifier or worse yet, spilled coffee on my keyboard. At least they might have pulled the electrical cord!

Notice that I say "had been". More on my present attitude later.

Recent History

The trouble began for me some ten years ago, when a former Kiwanis member, knowing my liking of the placid dam

backwaters, began seriously advocating dam removal, sometimes to irritate me a little. He did not even live in the city, nor did some of the other dam-busters, as we called them.

I was annoyed that they wanted to destroy "our" dams in Baraboo, not as a safety measure but as a favor to the fish. The favor would also extend to the canoeists who, it was said would be swarming the river and provide an economic boost to the city when the dams were destroyed.

Dire predictions had also been made as to the terrible cost of repairing the dam near the Circus World Museum, though those cost estimates seemed to come from the DNR and others who wanted the dam out, so the figures seemed suspect. Fears were expressed about danger should the dam break, but it had proudly withstood the infamous 14 inch deluge and flood we had one night in 1993.

I had not accepted those arguments, yet here I was playing songs with a river theme to some of the same individuals! At least one took a picture of me at the keyboard.

Dam History

Baraboo owes its existence to dams on the river. Without the some 60 foot drop in water level from Hasking Park to the bridge on highway 113, water power would not have been possible. Baraboo's location in those early roadless days would not have



been attractive to developers, as was learned in 1860 when the railroad bypassed them to the north. It took a large "gift" to the rail tycoons ten years later to get them to make the difficult passage through the Baraboo bluffs and bring rail service to the village.

The early dam builders--Wood, Rowen, Peck, Maxwell, and others laid the groundwork for what became a city in a beautiful setting within the bluffs, but only because the river offered power in those days of no electricity. Eventually, of course, those dams were utilized at the turn of the century to provide electric power to light Baraboo's streets, and provided pollution-free power faithfully until last year. Baraboo's woolen mill, largest west of the eastern mountains at one time, also depended on water power for some 100 years. So, we should not condemn the dams too quickly. Baraboo owes a lot to its river namesake.

For many, the placid waters which backed up behind the dams were more attractive than unattended river banks, especially during August droughts. Those smooth waters were also more convenient for the less serious canoeists than shooting the rapids might be. Boaters could motor slowly all the way to North Freedom in the backwaters of the dam in West Baraboo inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright, but now gone some 25 years.

The River Today

Today, only the McArthur dam by highway 113 East of town remains, and is slated for early removal. The river vaguely resembles its state in some undetermined date in the past, though rip-rap here and there is hardly representative of the past state of the river banks.

The one great saving value is the fact that the Baraboo river falls some 60 feet, as mentioned above, from its west entry to its east exit from the city. As a result we don't have a sluggish stream



reluctantly meandering through the city, with pools of stagnant water, but a rushing stream. This was a better flow than I had expected. Other cities and villages on the river do not have the advantage of a good altitude drop.

This offers an opportunity for civic improvement which the Kiwanis Club has already taken advantage of with its river walk in lower Ochsner Park. True, the river never was dammed at that point anyway, but the walk demonstrates what can be done from that point east, and also west into West Baraboo by Hasking Park.

There is already a riverwalk from the circus to its parking lot, and at one time the popular Effinger Park stood on the banks of the Baraboo river near there. Effinger Drive has the potential to be cleared and landscaped, and the island opposite it has great possibilities.

One selling point for taking out the dams must be challenged. It was sometimes, argued that we could be like San Antonio, Texas, famous

for its river walk lined with shops and restaurants and attractions. Any chance for that died when the Oak Street dam was removed last fall, because the San Antonio success depended entirely on a dam! It kept the water level for the people barges which transported you from point to point. No Oak Street dam, no river transportation except for canoes!

There's one other thing that troubled me about the fish. I'm not a fisherman, but I've always heard that the upper Dell Creek was great fishing. Now, that creek was first dammed in about 1855, and two dams separate it from the Wisconsin river. Why do dams on the Baraboo river deter the fish, but not on Dell Creek? I guess the question is moot now.

Saturday Morning

All of which takes us back to Saturday morning, with this dam and mill pond admirer associating with some of the dam busters. Why did I agree to be there?



When you are dealt a lemon, you make lemonade, they say. For better or worse, the dams are almost all gone. There are no reports yet as to whether the fish are happy or not, but a lot of people are happy with the new riverwalk so far. If we can't have dams and mill ponds, lets have a river that we, as well as the fish, can enjoy.

I do not advocate blacktopping on disputed though timeworn paths, but time and a demonstration of the beauty of a river walk will surely prevail in the long run. Baraboo won't rival San Antonio, but there is potential for an interesting river development.

So, on Saturday morning, I happily played "Cleaning up the River" as the troops fanned out on their beauty treatment project. If you can't lick 'em, join 'em, I guess.

THE RIVERWALK AND DELLONA TOWNSHIP Yesteryear Revisited

By Bob Dewel

What does Baraboo's new and attractive River Walk project have in common with the town of Dellona, specifically 40 landlocked acres in that township? It's the new river walk!

The New River Walk

This ongoing project of the Kiwanis Club, the City, and the State of Wisconsin will hopefully, in the future, link the Highway 12 bridge in West Baraboo with the Highway 113 bridge on the east, some three or four miles. The finished part extends presently from the west city limits to the Second Avenue bridge, and it is seeing more and more use as the public learns of it.

After a short jog on Second Street, it takes up again in Mary Rountree Park. Here the blacktop approaches the river in a wide sweep, and follows the river bank to the eastern edge of the Park. At that point the blacktop ends, to be taken up again for a short distance in the Broadway Park. The Walk reappears again just east of the Circus World Museum Feld Building, and in a year or so may follow the rebuilt Effinger Road along the river.

In the master plan, the walk should someday be continuous, as noted above, from highway 12 on the west to highway 113 on the east. From an historical standpoint, this probably was the first trail in the area, going in 1840 from the Rowan and Wood dam on the west to the Maxwell dam on the east. The principal traffic then would have been lumber or grain wagons, pulled by oxen or mules.

Baraboo's location on the river is most fortunate. Basically a slow-flowing stream, only in Baraboo does a significant drop in river level occur. The some 50 foot fall from the old Woolen Mill bridge to the city waterworks allows for a briskly moving stream, hurrying over

a rocky bottom in many cases. This is much more attractive than having a slow moving flat stream. This fortunate circumstance makes Baraboo a prime location for a River Walk.

The Town of Dellona

Grading and blacktop cost money, and where would the Kiwanis Club get such funds, even though they only subsidize part of the cost? This is where Kiwanians of circa 1954 and the Town of Dellona come in. Centered in a section in that township is 40 acres which the club members of the 1950's purchased for \$250. The stalwart members of the club half a century ago had in mind the raising of Christmas trees for a modest profit for the organization.

After some planting by hand, John Geoghagen was hired. John invented a planting device and planted some 10,000 trees one day for a fee of \$100. Little was done over the years except for occasional trimming, plus the addition of a groundwater pond thanks to funds willed to the club by Harold Thompson. The club did meet at the site a few times.

By 1990 the club realized that it had a pine forest with monetary value, the harvesting of which began a flow of funds into the club treasury. At first a donation of the funds to local charities was considered, but other members felt that there was a need for a hands on project for the city in the name of Kiwanis. After several sessions, and a host of ideas, the River Walk project was selected and found good reception on the part of the city.

The first part of the project was completed in 1998. Kiwanis members supplied some \$16,000 of support, in either cash or in countless hours of "sweat equity", usually on Wednesday nights after work. In addition to the blacktop surfacing, many benches have been installed, some being memorials to parents or friends



Even the ducks have deserted this mess of buns and bread crumbs by a bench at the riverwalk. The parks department strongly discourages feeding the ducks.

Don't feed the ducks!

The Baraboo river has always provided a natural shelter and habitat for ducks, and they thrived very well indeed before humans came along and decided they needed feeding. Now, well-intentioned people can be seen breaking up bread or other foods in the mistaken belief that they are helping the ducks survive.

The Parks Department says bread and other man-made products are not normal food for ducks. Their natural food is found in the waters of the river. Moreover, though it is not presently against the law in Baraboo, the Parks Department strongly urges that the ducks not be fed. Their droppings are easily picked up on your shoes,



or in the spaces between the toes of your dog.

Children, who touch and feel everything, carry droppings from their hands to their mouths. Your own shoes carry parts of the droppings into your home or automobile. In addition, the droppings attract insects, making the river walk less attractive for yourself and others.

In Madison the problem is so great that the city council is considering legislation to ban feeding, for the sake of the ducks as well as for the health of the public. Surely this will not be necessary in Baraboo, when citizens realize that human food is not good for the ducks, nor are their droppings good for humans.

A Letter to the Editor 6-24-05

It was good news when the News-Republic reported last week that the city, with the aid of the Kiwanis Club, has now acquired all but two of the Second Avenue riverfront areas. It brings the time closer when the current but ancient dirt path can be hard surfaced. Then this part of the Riverwalk can accommodate baby strollers and wheel chairs and similar conveyances, as well as the regular foot traffic it receives now.

This has been a cooperative effort between the DNR, the City, and the Baraboo Kiwanis Club. That club has raised well over \$28,000 for their share of the cost, plus hundreds of hours of personal "sweat equity."

Completion of the Second Avenue phase will mean that one could start from the western city limits and follow the river to and under the new Broadway Bridge. Next year it is planned to extend the walk a few hundred feet east from that bridge, connecting to a sidewalk on a redesigned and repaved Water Street.

Is the Riverwalk used? In only one hour on Saturday, June 18, I observed many uses. Besides the usual strollers and men with their dogs, I saw a man playing kick-the ball with his seven year old girl, and boys at batting practice at the Mary Roundtree Evans Park segment of the walk.

The principal attraction, however, was the arrival of not one but two

Wedding parties, there to enjoy the grounds following the wedding ceremony. Both brides came in full wedding attire, each with four bridesmaids in flowing gowns.

There was an assortment of grooms, best men, and other attendants, all in tuxedos and no doubt glad to get outside, as there was a

breeze, however slight. Each wedding party had an official photographer, posing the couple and attendants and parents in various areas with the river as a background. Both parties enjoyed the iron footbridge, formerly the Manchester Street Bridge. Both groups were still lingering there when I left.

It took this writer back nearly 63 years, to a similar summer day in 1942. It was wartime then, and wedding were small. Our entire planned wedding consisted of ourselves and four friends, at the Little Brown Church in the Vale. No stretch limousine, and the car was borrowed.

My bride made her own dress, fancy but usable in the future, and I wore my best (and only?) sport coat. I had all of \$100 in my pocket, but a guaranteed job with Uncle Sam that was to last three and a half years. Times are better now, and times and customs change, but I believe these couples will remember their pleasant afternoon at the Baraboo Riverwalk.

An added touch: At least 6 inflatable rafts or canoes passed by, surprised to see the wedding parties, and all too soon they quickly floated away in the rather swift current. Both the Riverwalk and the river rafts are gaining in use, and they are a great asset to the city.

**Dreams Came
 True on the Riverwalk
 Tales of Earlier Days
 By Bob Dewel**

It has taken over ten years, but some of the plans and dreams of a local group, and especially of one of its founding members, have come true. Actually, the fulfillment of the dream is not only surprising, but so are early sketches. They were made by one man as he thought about what might come to be—and it pretty much has! A little background:

The Dream in 1946

In a way the dream began back in 1946, as we wrote recently, when Secretary of Commerce Treasurer George Weber reported on plans to develop a river corridor along the Baraboo River in Lower Ochsner Park. Indeed some citizens can remember a muddy trail then along the river, sometimes traversed by autos. There also is some stonework near the Broadway end of the trail, but heavily obscured by underbrush. The 1945 plan was forward looking, but failed due to the commitment of obtaining title to the strips of land needed.

A generation or two of citizens came and went, and in the early 1990's young men and women with vision came together with a dream for restoration and improvement of the Baraboo River and its riverbanks. Without destroying the ecology, dams were to be removed and the banks were to remain open and accessible to the public, with a Riverwalk accessible to all.

Civic groups working together

This ad hoc group, the Citizens for Waterfront Revitalization (CWR), along with the Baraboo Kiwanis Club, partnered with the Baraboo Parks Department and the DNR on the

Riverwalk project. There were many facets to the program, but notable this past year was the extension of the Riverwalk under the Broadway Bridge and east to the former Oak Street Dam area. A special feature is the new Gazebo, made possible by work and materials contributed by Tom and Sue Holmes, many other workers, and Kiwanis.

This brings us to the remarkable dream of the early 90's, and its fulfillment today. Look at the two sketches which accompany this article. They were done at that time, well over a decade ago, by Bill Guerin, local architect, on the basis of the dreams of the CWR, of which he was a member. Someone must have suggested that a Gazebo would be a nice addition, and that the street could be reworked, involving major services by the City and the Parks Department and the Parks Department.

Could it ever come to pass?
 They dared to think so. Guerin took the dreams

and Ideas and hopefully put them on paper. Somehow this writer saved his copies,

Note that each sketch has explanations and remarks in the captions under the pictures

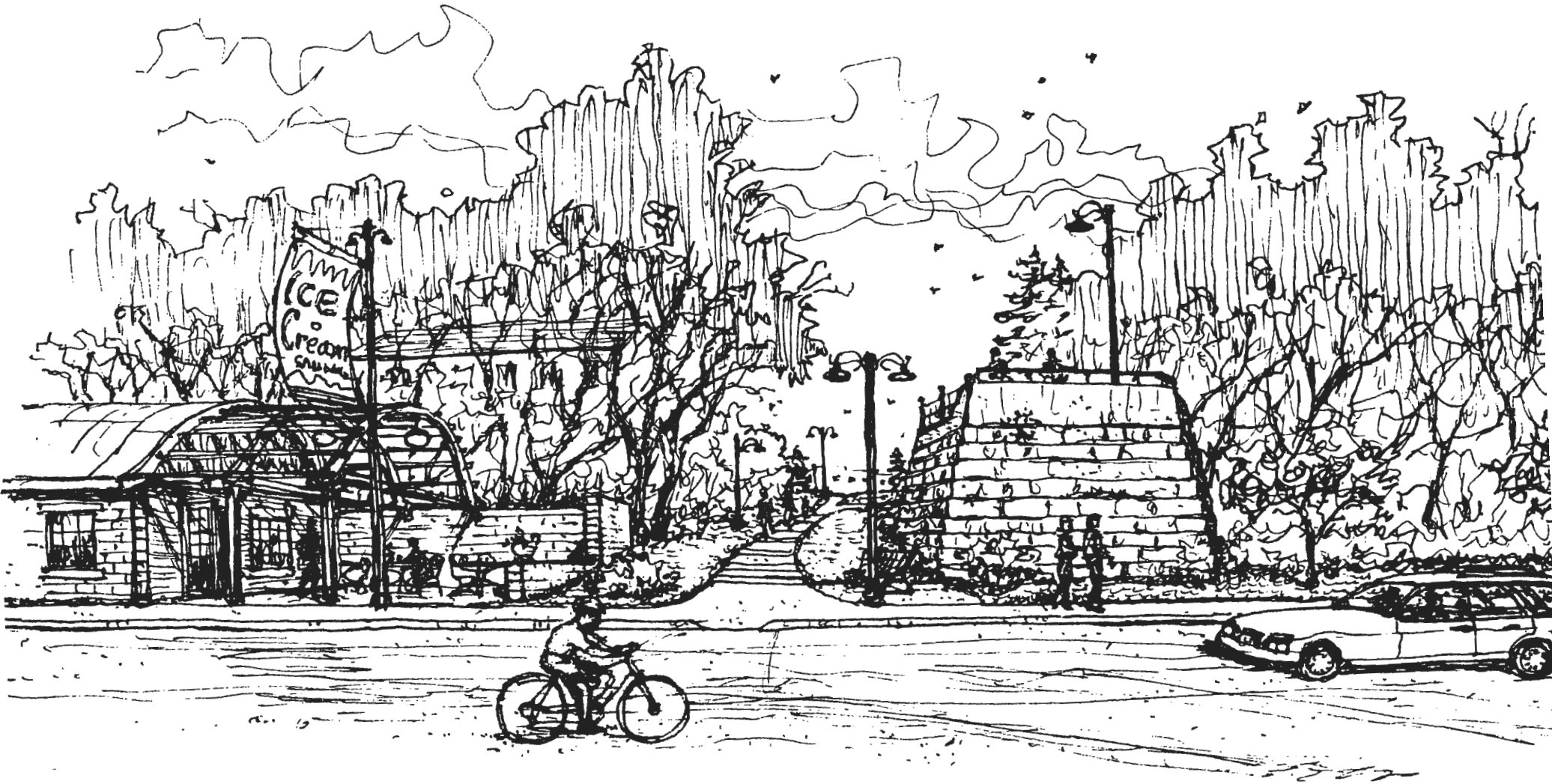
The entry of the Kiwanis Club into the dream in 1994 provided public participation

and financial impetus to the project. In view of that Club's financial commitment

(\$59,800 so far with \$25,000 more anticipated)), plus Kiwanis "sweat equity", the little park east of Broadway has been named Kiwanis Park.

So dreams can come true in Baraboo if you work on them!
 The CWR

Organization, DNR, Kiwanis and the city's Economic Development Committee and others remain actively involved in the city's riverfront program, as well as the Parks Department. Stay tuned!

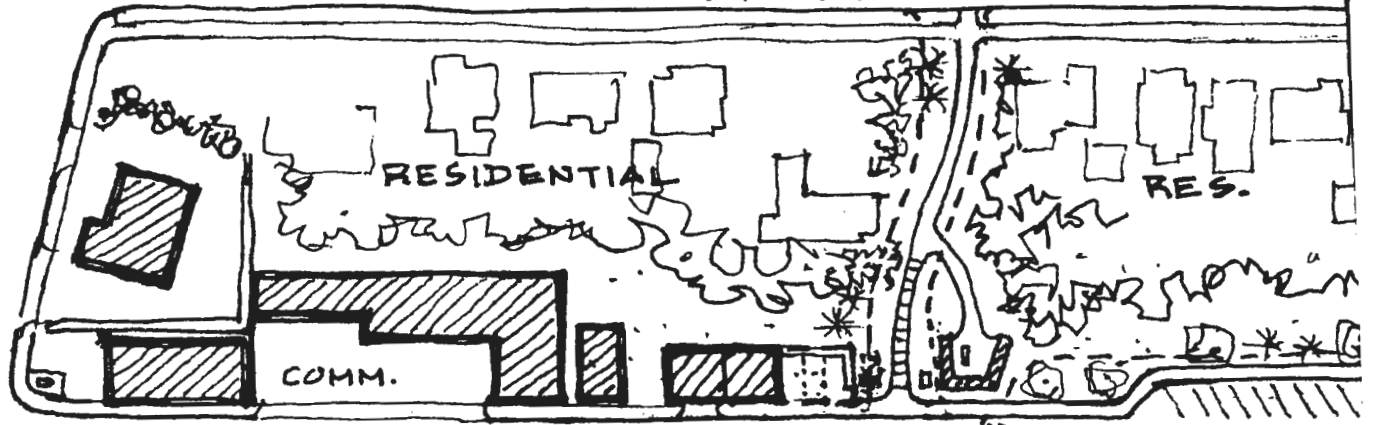


Here the artist anticipates work to be done in 2008. Oak Street has already been closed from First Street South, and a stairway or path is planned. The old High Bridge abutment is now an observation point. Can the windows of a hotel be seen through the trees? Perhaps an ice cream shop in the old building?

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BROADWAY PARK

WATER STREET

3 2 4



BARABOO RIVER

VINE ST.

With remarkable prescience, Mr. Guerin correctly predicted the improved Broadway-Water Street intersection, the newly paved Water street, the anticipated Oak Street walkway and observation point, and the removal of the dam. Also shown is the new addition to the Riverwalk, complete now to item 4 on the map. Also predicted was the Gazebo, but it is located where the word "Park" is printed. Dreams can come true!

Quilts, A Ringling Church, and Railroads

Tales From Earlier Days

By Bob Dewel

A Ringling Church? More on that in a moment, but first an introduction.

This column frequently generates comments, pictures, and additional information from our readers. Unfortunately, space restrictions do not permit acknowledgement of every contribution, however appreciative we may be. Some things do demand publicity, however, and this article acknowledges some of the recent contribut

Quilts

A faithful reader, Nancy Schmid, is an avid quilter, and writes to tell of the achievement of a fellow quilter, former well-known resident Catherine Rinkob. Nancy describes an exhibit Catherine had at the Library of Quilts. One quilt was made by her Mother at the turn of the century

Nancy writes, "Catherine was honored at an Historical Society Quilt School up in Cable, WI, where Catherine now resides with her family." She estimates that Catherine may now be well advanced into the senior citizen, bracket, but remains an active quilt enthusiast.

The quilt collection dates from 1902 when Catherine's Mother, Prudence Wood, made a quilt documented recently by the Wisconsin Quilt History Project in 1998. Catherine says she originally resisted her Mother's efforts to interest her in quilting, but in 1955 she finished some quilting her Mother had started.

Ringling Church

It sometimes seems that the Ringling name is everywhere, not a small achievement for a poor family which once lived above their harness show in downtown Baraboo. Older readers will remember that the local hospital, from 1922 or so until 1962 was called the St. Mary-Ringling Hospital. Its home, the original frame Alf T. Ringling home, has been gone for a decade or so, it was enlarged in 1947 with an L-shaped brick addition which is being considered at the time of this writing for conversion to an assisted living facility.

Ringling names were attached to many things over the years. Sarasota, Florida is rife with streets, buildings, and institutions bearing the Ringling name. Baraboo has the magnificent Al Ringling theatre. But a town named Ringling—and a Ringling Catholic Church? Ringling, Montana, is hardly a speck on the map anymore, and the church was long since vacated. The old church building and a tavern are all that remain of the Montana village which once claimed a population of 2000 persons.

Now owned by SKY Center, Inc., a Montana non-profit corporation, the church restoration effort appears to be slow but steady. Two women, Andrea Carlson and Shirle Norquist are spearheading the restoration effort to convert the structure into a community center for what is now a tiny sprinkling of residents, a shadow of the original town named Ringling..

Not mentioned in articles about the restoration is the connection to the Ringling family. John Ringling had considerable interest in the railroad industry, and Alf T's son Richard, born in Baraboo, actually lived and operated a ranch in the Montana village which was established. The ranch is said to have covered 100,000 acres, and was of course named after John .

At present, the entire county is said to have only 1770 citizens now. A fire in 1931 began the end for the village. I have written in a previous article (Vol. II, 63-65) of Taylor Gordon, a Ringling resident who became the porter for the Ringling private rail car, the Wisconsin. He wrote in his book of bringing the rail car to Baraboo to pick up Al Ringling.

Though it does not mention the Ringling family or John Ringling, the promotional material on the internet speaks of Ringling Montana, as 'The Historic Ringling Brothers Circus Headquarters', which is a bit of a surprise to Baraboo and Sarasota!

CO H article

Following our story of Baraboo's CO H, 128th Infantry, in WWII, Dolores Lane wrote of her Mother-in-Law. She had all five of her sons in the war at the same time. Her young men served in both the Pacific and European fronts. Later, federal legislation prohibited more than two siblings from a family to serve. Fortunately for the Lane family, all five men survived. Mrs. Lane's husband, John, was returned to the reserves after contracting permanent lung damage while on maneuvers in Louisiana, and served in that capacity during the war.

Train Station Restrooms

Finally, the ever-resourceful Joe Ward supplied us with a plethora of information about the railroad in Baraboo. We incorporated some materials in our recent article on the railroads, reserving most of the material for Joe to include in his up-coming and anticipated book on Baraboo.

We couldn't resist, however, his information from a newspaper in December 1873. It reads; "A shock was sent through the community when it was learned that the men's waiting room at the depot was closed, and sub-divided into offices. The men would have to share the ladies waiting room, which was then considered an inconvenience and there was hope that it would be temporary." How shocking!

Other items have been contributed to this column, and will be mentioned in a future article.



The Ringling, Montana Church



Cather.



Documenting the
Family Quilts of
Prudence Wood
Catherine Rinkob