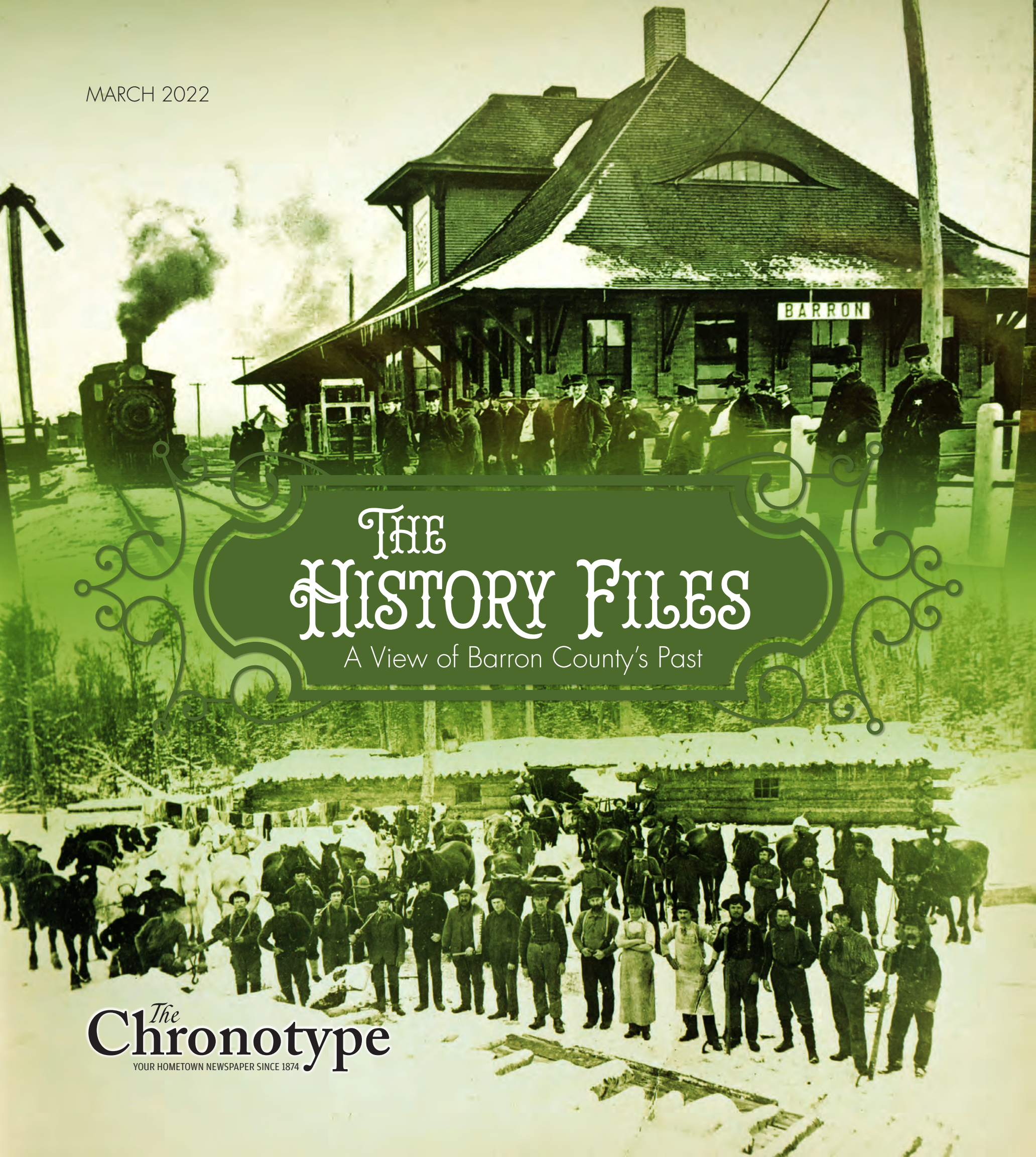


MARCH 2022



# THE HISTORY FILES

A View of Barron County's Past

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A typical logging camp in the late 1800s in Barron County, where the beginnings of government began.

## THE MAKING OF A COUNTY

— from lumber camps to villages and cities

**W**hat we know of as Barron County, made up of a perfect 30 square miles with its 25 townships each 6 square miles, was created in 1859. Its boundaries were changed many times until 1874, when it settled on a square comprised of five townships horizontally and vertically. It took 70 years — until 1929 — to finally establish the current 25 townships, and their locations.

“Pine and hardwood trees covered most of the county, and some of the pine trees were so large that the lumber from one tree would be enough for the building of a large house,” notes the late Vernon Oliphant in his book “I Was There.” “The early surveyors had their problems establishing town and section lines through dense timber and many swamps.”

The first county meetings were held at lumber camps — first at Sam Barker’s lumber camp south of Rice Lake, in what is now the town of Stanley, and after November 1872 at the lumber camp of John Quaderer, in what was then the village of Barron.

In addition to its shape, Barron County is unique to the state of Wisconsin for having had two names and four designated county seats — once under the jurisdiction of Crawford, St. Croix, Chippewa and Polk counties, according to The Chronotype’s Centennial Edition published in 1987.



The first Barron  
County Courthouse in  
1888.

In 1859 the state legislature passed a bill detaching the area including six townships and four ranges from Polk County, named for the 11th president of the United States, James K. Polk. The detached area took on the name of Polk's vice president, George W. Dallas and was known as Dallas County from 1859-1869. Portions of the territory also belonged to Dunn County and was formed into a township in 1862 also named Dallas.

In 1869, Dallas County took on the name Barron County in honor of Henry D. Barron, a resident who had gained recognition as an editor, lawyer, assemblyman, senator and circuit judge of the 11th Judicial Court.

There are many versions of the tug-of-war for the county seat with Knapp, Stout & Co. strongly favoring it be permanently located at Rice Lake Mills, while John Quaderer led the charge to have the county seat at Barron, even donating the block later called courthouse square for the purpose in February 1876. The fight for that coveted county seat rose all the way to the state supreme court in October 1891, where it ruled the list of petitioners did not contain two-fifths of the poll list and therefore could not be overruled. The county seat would remain at Barron.

In the midst of the county's formation, settlements all over the area were becoming established due to the expansion of the lumbering industry. These included Prairie Farm, Turtle Lake, Dallas, Almena, Barron, Chetek, Cameron, Rice Lake, Haugen and Cumberland.

Read about their beginnings and how they got their names. Read *The History Files: A View of Barron County's Past* about the formation of the county portion of the state highway system that connected them.

Barron County's two oldest churches that are still open — New Scandinavia Lutheran Church that formed in 1875 and Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church that was established in 1876 — tell the story of immigrants from France, Germany, Ireland and the Scandinavian countries who settled in, farmed and built houses of worship.

The Rice Lake Chronotype is the oldest newspaper in the county, having been established in 1874. It was followed by the Barron [County] News-Shield in 1876, the Cumberland Advocate in 1881 and the Chetek Alert in 1882. Many of the other communities had newspapers as well — such as the Prairie Farm Breeze.

Cameron made several attempts at providing local news with the Independent, Review, Record and Echo. Haugen made unsuccessful attempts with the Haugen Chronotype and later the Haugen Press. Both were short-lived. Even Almena had The Cloverland Star. Read about them in each community's story.

Three communities in the county have museums that aim to keep their local history alive. Read about the past treasures that can be found at the Turtle Lake Museum, the Haugen Area Historical



Museum and the Chetek Area Museum.

The History Files: A View of Barron County's Past is filled with determined pioneers and stories of their perseverance, joys and struggles as they transformed pine-dense wilderness into settlements — some that died out and others that continue to grow to this day. Some of the first settlers were fur traders but most were employees of the Knapp, Stout & Co. who lived during the decades when dense forests were stripped down, paving the way for farming, with the county's soil and climate well-suited to many forms of agriculture and its many freshwater lakes, streams and brooks a fishing attraction.



The second courthouse, built in 1901, on "Courthouse Square" on land donated by John Quarderer.



The third courthouse, now called the Barron County Government Center, built in 1964, also on "Courthouse Square."



Early scene of the dam in downtown Rice Lake.

Named after the memory of

## WHAT ONCE GREW ABUNDANTLY

Perhaps Timber Lake may have been a more appropriate name. However, city forefathers chose Rice Lake as the name for the settlement that formed 150 years ago when they replaced rice with logs in the Red Cedar River on which a dam was formed to carry the volume downstream during the Knapp, Stout & Co. era.

According to the late Robert Heffner's book, "Rice Lake: Gem of the Red Cedar Valley," "The city of Rice Lake, as we know it now, was conceived in the womb of a vast forest that years ago covered the Red Cedar River Basin. It was given birth by the subsequent construction of sawmills and lumbering operations. The city has since grown to see logging change to agriculture and sawmills to a variety of industries, though not surprisingly, some of those industries are still associated with the forest."

Heffner wrote, "The city snuggles peacefully beside the lake created by the dam and along the Red Cedar River that bends and twists its way relentlessly southward toward Menomonie, 50 miles downstream."

As noted in the village of Prairie Farm story, Knapp, Stout & Co. made its entrance into Barron County there in 1848, then in the 1850s spread to Turtle Lake to the west and the Cameron area to the east, setting up a lumber camp in 1858 at Louseburg, six miles south of what is now Rice Lake. Over the objections of Indians at both locations, dams were erected at Chetek and Rice Lake in 1863-1864, leading to what they feared most, the destruction of their rich rice

beds, which was a main source of their survival. The first sawmill was built at what would become Rice Lake in 1871 by Knapp-Stout, when most of their operations were moved north from Louseburg. The sawmill was followed by a store, hotel and blacksmith shop.

In 1874, a newspaper was established called The Chronotype with C.W. Carpenter as editor. It remains the oldest, continually operated newspaper in Barron County. That same year brought regular mail service and the first school established in a Knapp-Stout building.

In 1875, Knapp-Stout had roadways platted under the direction of surveyor J.W. Remington, which included a wider than normal thoroughfare which remains Main Street today. Not surprisingly, many of the names given to those platted streets are names associated with the logging company and its employees, along with some early pioneers.

Some of these streets include Allen, Barker, Bracklin, Carson, Chamberlain, Charles, Coleman, Evans, Gates, Hartel, Humbird, Knapp, Lee, Marshall, Messenger, Newton, Putnam, Sawyer, Slocum, Stout as well as John and Schneider — two streets named after one man.

Avenues named after lumber company crew and early settlers include Bone (former Chronotype editor and mayor), Barwise, Bundy, Cornell, Couture, Craite, Hammond, Hatten, Macauley, Noble, Nunn, Phipps, Poskin, Reuter, Rose, Tainter and Wilson.







Early street scene in downtown Rice Lake.



Logs take the place of rice after the arrival of Knapp, Stout & Company.



Logs are slid into the lake to be run 50 miles downstream on Red Cedar River to Menomonie.

According to "The History of Barron County," "The settlement became a city in 1887. There are some historical references to Rice Lake as a village but no records have been found to denote any such official designation. In the spring of 1887 the bill to incorporate Rice Lake as a city passed unanimously in both the state Assembly and Senate. That led to an election on April 9, 1887, to elect two aldermen, a supervisor and constable from each of the four wards as well as a mayor, clerk, treasurer, attorney, assessor and two justices of peace."

Just 55 years after their arrival in Rice Lake, Knapp, Stout & Co.'s logging operations ceased and company mills went silent as the supply of virgin pine was exhausted. In that half century, the look of all of Barron County and the northern half of Dunn County was changed forever. The once vast forest gave way to agriculture after stump-removal efforts. Hay, corn, potatoes and pickles were among the top crops grown in the Rice Lake area, which also boosted the largest pea canning factory in the area. As dairy farming emerged into the rural scene, so did creameries with almost every community having at least one. The Rice Lake Creamery and Cheese Co. was incorporated in 1896; cheese making was later discontinued at the site.

While the company ended its local operations in 1901, logging and lumbering continued for another 30 years with the Rice Lake Lumber Co. as successor and Edward Hines Lumber Co. of Chicago purchasing the mill in 1919. It was destroyed by fire in 1934, ending the city's logging history while starting the growth of industry, commerce, healthcare and tourism.

In addition to churches and schools, social activities took place at the opera house, theater, Carnegie library, city hall and other halls for the Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Columbus and Foresters, and the women's Fortnightly Club.

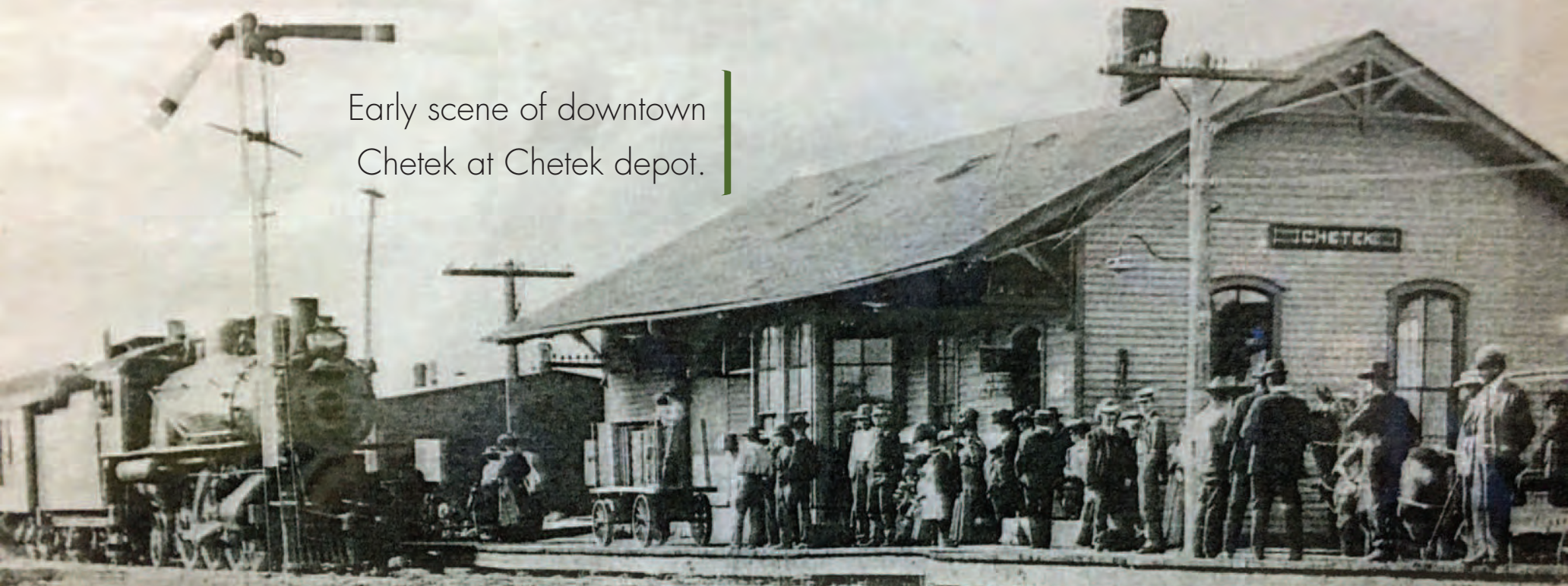
In spring 1922, Rice Lake became the headquarters of the Barron County Telephone Co., which began in 1896. Operator-assisted calls ended on Feb. 19, 1978, when digital electronic call-switching doomed the jobs of 42 operators, four management, three clerks and three service assistants.

While the earliest school buildings in the city have come and gone, most memorable are the former Washington High School, built in 1906; the former Barron County Normal School, which started in 1907; the former Lincoln and Jefferson [now the District Administration Building] elementary schools, built in 1927; the former Franklin Elementary School, built in 1937; the present Rice Lake High School, which opened in 1955; the former Barron County Teachers College (on Ann Street) which opened in 1961; the present Rice Lake Middle School, which was built in 1963; the UW-Barron County campus (now UW-EC — BC), which began in 1967; the adjoining vocational school (WITI, WITC and now Northwood Technical College), which was developed in 1977; and the present Tainter and Haugen elementary schools, built in 1994.

Knapp Stout's Lady of the Lake steamer was used to move logs through the water.



Early scene of downtown  
Chetek at Chetek depot.



City had many early variations,  
**BUT THE NAME CHETEK PREVAILED**

**F**rom Hazel Calhoun's "Pages from the Past: An Early History of Chetek and Surrounding Communities" comes the name of the city that was settled in 1875. She reports that early pioneers say the name of the city came from what Ojibwe Indians called "sheettak," which means little pelican. The first postmaster's cancelling stamp spelled it "Sheteack," with the current spelling derived after several variations.

According to Calhoun, Charley Moore, who is often referred to as "the father of Chetek," was instrumental in getting a city charter while he was serving as a district assemblyman. She notes that the area now known as Chetek was at one time covered with virgin white pine timber. As the development of Wisconsin pushed northward, logging companies were formed and large tracts of timber purchased from the government at \$1.25 per acre. In addition, 1,000 acres were purchased each by Cornell University and the Northwestern and Omaha Railroads. Knapp, Stout & Co. was the largest timber corporation in the world, owning 115,000 acres

of white pine land along the Chippewa and Menomonie/Red Cedar rivers.

The historian reported, "In Barron County, Knapp, Stout & Company's first operations were at Prairie Farm in 1847, and the following year Captain Tainter started logging about eight miles north of Turtle Lake with four ox teams and a few helpers. A camp

was established in Barron in 1860, at Rice Lake in 1868, and on the present site of Chetek in 1872. The first dam was built by the K, S & Co. in the early 60s and then rebuilt in 1872, of much better construction than the first with flood gates for the sluicing of logs."

Calhoun, who with her father visited her brothers William and Alva at the lumber camps, described them as such: "The logging camps were of rough logs rolled up and a split-log roof. They included the bunk houses, cook shanties and stables

for the horses and oxen." She said they awoke before daylight, had a breakfast of tea, bread and molasses, salt pork and beans, and



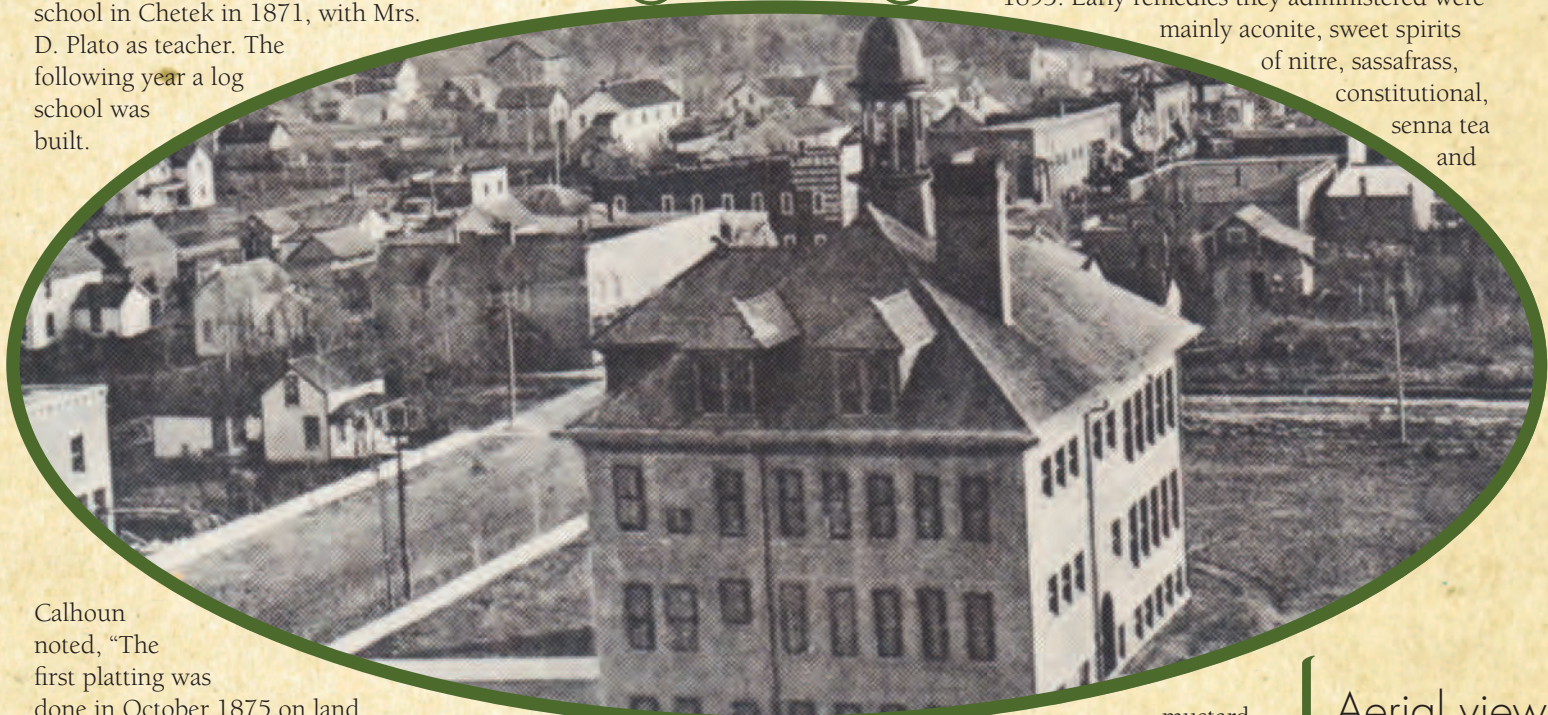
walked to their work site, where a similar dinner was brought to them.

She relates, "Their supper was of the same consistency, and then came the Copenhagen snuff or Swedish Condition powder, as it was called."

The late Chetek historian wrote, "Logs were usually skidded with oxen under the persuasion of a goad stick. Water was brought from a river or lake nearby to ice the roads for hauling. The logs were hauled by four or six horses on a 16-foot logging sleigh."

She continued, "I can still see the log drivers as they went to their work, wearing bright red or blue mackinaw jackets, woolen pants and high-topped boots, and heavy soles studded with calks and their peavies carried over their shoulders."

Calhoun wrote that eight pupils attended the first school in Chetek in 1871, with Mrs. D. Plato as teacher. The following year a log school was built.



Calhoun noted, "The first platting was done in October 1875 on land owned by K, S & Co. and E.M. Sexton. In 1877, all but two blocks of the original plat were vacated and replatted."

At the time of the first settlers, it had not yet been determined which side of the river would be the future business district of Chetek. That would be the west side, which became apparent with construction of a K, S & Co. general store. The company also built a house on either side of the general store — the house on the east side serving as residence for the company's miller and the house on the west side serving as residence for its store manager. The company also operated a large boarding house, which was located south of the store. In 1881, store building activities commenced in the north part of Chetek. This included general merchandise, gun cleaning and repairs, photography, hardware, confectionary, barber, shoe repair and blacksmith shops. The main business section eventually moved from Douglas Street to Knapp Street, where it remained for many years before shifting to Second Street.

The year 1882 marked the arrival of the Omaha Railway through Chetek. A. Bosshard was the first depot agent. The railway seemed to solidify the location of the business district. It was also the year the Chetek Alert newspaper was established, with Walter Speed as its first editor.

Early churches in the Chetek area ranged from the Presbyterian and Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran congregations in 1883 to St. Boniface Roman Catholic, the Methodist Episcopal Mite Society, Advent Christian and Latter Day Saint churches. The Free Methodist Church was first organized in Canton and in 1909 was brought to Chetek in sections.

Professions: Chetek's first physician, Dr. D.C. Strong, began a practice in 1881, making calls on horseback. Dr. Abel Bailey and Dr. L.H. Nichols, who lived in the country, also practiced medicine at the time. They were joined by Dr. W.G. Malcolm in 1893. Early remedies they administered were mainly aconite, sweet spirits of nitre, sassafrass, constitutional, senna tea and

mustard plasters. The first dentist was John Morrison of Bloomer, who visited Chetek each week. Dr. A.E. Capener was the first dentist to establish a residence in Chetek. Chetek's first justice of the peace was Bradford Lampman. W.R. Smith was the first lawyer in Chetek, with B.L. Eighmy doing legal advising in those early years.

For leisure, there were The Lyceum, a literary society which conducted fierce debate on topics of the day, and the Annias Club, a more informal gathering. Theatrical plays and minstrel shows added to fun in the young city. Between 1884 and 1911, many groups such as the GAR, American Legion and various lodges were established. To such an extent was the city's growth spurt that in 1890 it incorporated as a city. The rest is history.

Aerial view of Chetek in 1912 with St. Boniface Catholic Church in foreground.



The Cumberland Hotel was built in 1891 and stood until 1965.



## Lake of the Beavers circles **ISLAND CITY**

**T**he Island City as it has become known, Cumberland was incorporated as a city in 1885. The site which was entirely surrounded by Beaver Dam Lake, the “History of Barron County” writes, later had five bridges built giving access to the island as it continued to develop into the city today.

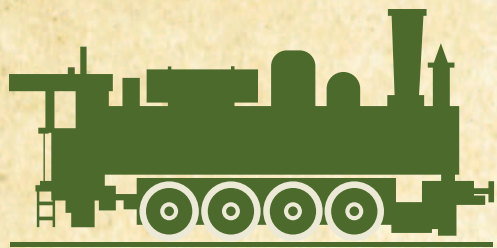
Before it became a city, the area of Cumberland was occupied by a tribe of Ojibwe Native Americans led by Chief Little Pipe. He went by his real name Opwaaganens, according to “Island City Memories” written by Mark Fuller. Little Pipe was feared and respected far and wide by Native Americans, was the best shot with a rifle in the state, and was viewed as a reliable and honest man of his word by early city residents, Fuller said.

Beaver Dam Lake comes from the Ojibwe name Way-ko-ne-ma-daw-wang-gog or Lake of the Beavers.

In fall 1874, Norwegian settlers O.A. Ritan and R.H. Clothier visited the area with intentions of building homesteads. They then changed their minds and were headed back to Hersey, in present day St. Croix County, when they met a group of surveyors and learned of the proposed North Wisconsin Railway that would likely run near their desired homesteads. Later that fall Ritan and Gunder O’ Dahlby filed on homesteads, and by December they were back to the site of Cumberland and began building the first log cabin on the island, near where the present day elementary school is.

In December 1875, the town of Lakeland was organized and contained what are now the towns of Cumberland, Crystal Lake, Almena and Maple Plain. In late 1875 or early 1876, a post office was established in Section 10, about three miles to the east of the site of Cumberland. At first the post office

A postcard from 1915 shows Cumberland's main street, Second Street.



The planned railroad that brought the first homesteaders to Cumberland was completed in 1878.

was called Lakeland but was renamed Cumberland in winter 1879 at the request of John Humbird from Cumberland, Maryland, who was the president of the railroad company.

The settlement grew, and in 1879 the village was platted by the North Wisconsin Railway Co.

Cumberland's first sawmill was built in spring 1880 across from what is now Louie's on the Lake. Four years later it was destroyed by fire but was later rebuilt. Other sawmills in the area popped up in the late 1870s and 80s with Rhude & Soule on the north end of Vermillion Lake, Bonnet on the south end of Cumberland, Larson on Granite Lake, Waterman on Sand Lake, Corbitt in Comstock, Grenquist in McKinley and Mattson on Horseshoe Lake.

The Cumberland Lumber Co. began in 1881 and became the most successful mill in the Cumberland area. It was built on "Mill Hill" and by 1887 had 125 workers and produced 23 million board feet of lumber, Fuller said. It was later named the Beaver Dam Lumber Company.



Other early buildings in Cumberland included the first general store, first called Miller Mercantile and then later Company store, which was built in 1879 and provided goods to the early lumbermen. The Cumberland Hotel, which stood until 1965, was built at the present day U.S. Bank in 1891 for a cost of \$15,000. Uecker Opera House was constructed in 1903 for \$12,000 with a lower floor for the land company and upstairs where weddings, dances, plays, grand balls, lectures and concerts were all held.



The Barron depot, now the Blueberry Line Coffeehouse.

## BARRON GOT THE CITY MONIKER

while Quaderer laid the groundwork

**T**he city of Barron could have, and maybe should have, been named the city of Quaderer. That is because in 1860 John Quaderer of the Stout Lumber Co. built a logging camp on the south bank of what is now known as Quaderer's Creek. In 1874 he built a small company store to supply his workers and a hotel for them to stay. The same year the first newspaper, the Barron County Gazette, was printed.

In 1876, the year the Barron County Shield began publication, Quaderer donated the block now called "Courthouse Square" for the location of the Barron County Courthouse. A county jail was later built across the street from it. He acquired land along the Yellow River and the creek that bears his name in early abstracts involving real estate. Yet that is the only landmark.

In 1877, the first schoolhouse was built on Division Avenue, but it was struck by lightning and burned down in 1881. A new school was soon built, and by 1895 the city also had a four-year high school course.

In 1880, Quaderer had the settlement surveyed and platted as a village. In 1881, a dam was built where the lower dam is now located across the Yellow River. This

gave sufficient water power to run the nearby flour mill and woolen mill. By 1884, the Soo Line railroad gave Barron rail connections to St. Paul, Minnesota, and Chicago. By 1908, the Soo Line Depot, which still stands along the track east of North Third Street, was built.

In 1887, the city of Barron was incorporated. By 1890, a volunteer fire department was established and a fire engine was purchased at Beloit for \$275. By 1891, three saw and stave mills were built. In 1896, a telephone company was started. In 1902, the Barron Cooperative Creamery was formed and became such a success that by 1920 it had expanded to 19 creameries and 44 cheese factories spread across the county.

Disaster struck the young city in 1908, when a fire that started at the Gordon Bakery destroyed 13 homes and five businesses, including the hotel. In 1909, a men's club established the first library, and in 1913 Andrew Carnegie gave the city \$6,500 to build a prairie-style brick building, which still stands at the corner of Third Street and Division Avenue.

Barron's largest industry was founded in 1922, thanks to Wallace Jerome's fascination with watching turkey

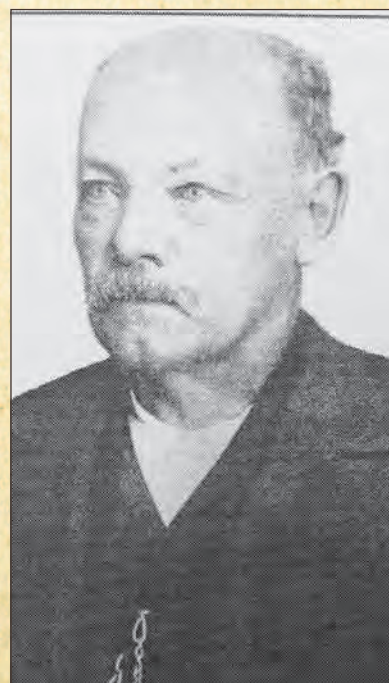


Barron's Division Street, looking east.

eggs hatch. Throughout his teenage years, his turkeys grew to a flock of 200. He then attended UW-Madison's Farm and Industry Short Course, and after completing it in 1928, became an egg inspector for the state's Department of Agriculture. He returned to college in the late 1930s and graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a degree in poultry husbandry in 1941. During this time, at the height of the Great Depression, Jerome purchased an abandoned pea cannery in Barron and turned it into a turkey processing plant, which became Jerome Foods, becoming the Jennie-O Turkey Store after it merged with Hormel Foods.

Barron founder John Quarderer and namesake Henry Barron.


The largest community project was undertaken in 1958 for the Barron Community Memorial Hospital, later named Luther Midelfort Northland and now Mayo Clinic Health System-Northland.



John Quarderer



Henry Barron




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## HAUGEN AREA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

is preserving the past

The Haugen Area Historical Museum opened in 2002 in the former Haugen Elementary (State Graded) School and includes memorabilia from not just Haugen but also Bear Lake, Brill, Sarona, Tuscobia and Dobie.

According to Judy Juza, who with her husband, Bob, has volunteered there since it opened, the two rooms in the upper level feature uniforms and clothing from military and ethnic groups, mostly Czech but also some Norwegian and Swedish items. There are also items from schools, churches and former businesses in the Haugen area. The upper level is not handicap accessible.

The lower level features a hospitality room, where coffee is served and visitors can browse a library of information including family histories, church directories, school yearbooks and other such information.

The historical museum operates under the “umbrella” of the Ceska Opera Foundation, where Judy Juza serves as secretary and her husband, Bob, as president.

Like everything else, the pandemic changed normal hours of operation and volunteers are hoping the museum can get back to being open the second and fourth Saturdays of June, July and August from noon to 4 p.m. If volunteers are available, they also try to open the museum on the Saturday of Haugen Fun Days from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. All dates and times are subject to change. Look for updates in The Chronotype as the dates get closer. Or for more information, the public is always welcome to contact the Juzas at 715-234-5600.



The Haugen Area Museum is located in the former Haugen School. Shown are photos as it looked then as a school and now as a museum.





# CHETEK AREA MUSEUM is keeping history alive and well

The Chetek Area Museum at 28 Second St., Chetek, has many references to learn more in-depth about the Chetek area and Barron County history. Its rooms are dedicated to Native American and early settlers, lumber industry and farming, resorts and tourism, local business and industry, local military service, Chetek heritage and local heroes.

The Chetek Area Historical Society was founded in 1979 for the sole purpose of supporting the Chetek Area Museum. Its first director was local historian and Barron County schools Superintendent Hazel Calhoun. The Chetek Area Museum opened in a room in the library with local artifacts and mementos. When the library needed room to expand, the museum moved to the local senior center, and when the center needed the space back, a small store was rented on Knapp Street. In 2013, the museum received a gift from the estate of Nevin Taylor, and the board voted to use the gift for a down payment on the former Nelson Real Estate building and opened there the summer of 2014. The building had started as a gas station and was Denny's Wine and Cheese Shop.

The museum, which is handicap accessible, has a research room with volumes of the Chetek Alert along with photos and files of local history as well as a gift shop.



The Cheek Area Museum is located at 28 Second St., Chetek.



Inside the museum are displays and artifacts on Native Americans and early settlers, lumbering and farming, resorts and tourism, business, industry and those in military service.

Examples of archives include bound volumes of the Chetek Alert, Cemetery Lot information, Chetek High School yearbooks from 1900-1965, Bulldog Bark newspaper collection, CHS Alumni Directory from 1899-1952, CHS graduation class pictures from 1920-present, historical photographs and local family history books.

Reference books include "Pages from the Past" by Hazel M. Calhoun and "History of Barron County, Wisconsin," edited by Newton S. Gordon in 1922.

The museum is closed January through March. Its spring and fall hours (April and May, September and October) are Thursday, Friday and Saturday from noon to 3 p.m. Its summer hours (June, July and August) are Tuesday through Saturday from noon to 4 p.m. Other visits possible by appointment by contacting executive director Robin Fossum at 715-642-2414. Volunteers operate the museum, and admission is free.

The museum operates solely on membership dues and donations, overseen by a nine-member board of directors and an ex-officio executive director. The museum collects items of interest from the Chetek area only, which includes Dallas, New Auburn and Sand Creek. The Acquisition Committee will review the item prior to the donation. All donations should be appraised by the donor, who will receive a descriptive receipt without a cash value and a thank you for helping grow the museum. The museum is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.



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# TURTLE LAKE MUSEUM

Treasures Times Gone By for Nearly a Decade

The Turtle Lake Museum is located in the old Lampert's Lumber Yard at 232 Willow St. in downtown Turtle Lake. It is part of the original sawmill/lumber yard established by the Richardson brothers who came to the area from Maine with the intention of establishing a logging company. The lumber yard operated continuously from the late 1800s until Lampert's closed its doors in 2012. It was then sold to the village.

The Greater Turtle Lake Area Association made it into a museum to preserve the history of the Turtle Lake area. It officially opened its door to the public in summer 2015. The museum displays historic artifacts, photographs, Turtle Lake school memorabilia, logging and railroad items, military uniforms and equipment, collections of past businesses, farm equipment and machinery, old medical instruments and much more. Full-sized dioramas

help explain life as it existed in earlier times. The museum, along with the Turtle Lake Public Library, is also a resource for those doing genealogical research.

The museum is run by the GTLAA volunteers. It is open the second and third weekends of each month from June through September. The hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It may also be open for special events by request such as school class reunions and family reunions. Admission is free, but donations are greatly appreciated to help fund needed projects. The museum is an educational, family-friendly experience that everyone can enjoy.

The Turtle Lake Museum was established in 2015 at 232 Willow St. in downtown Turtle Lake in what was a sawmill in 1879, Olcoff Lumber Co. in 1909 and Lampert's Lumber Yard in 1967.



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**N**ew Scandinavia Lutheran Church of Maple Grove Township, three miles north of Dallas, which opened in 1875, is one of the two oldest churches in Barron County that still have regularly scheduled services. (The other is Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church of Dobie, which was established in 1876.)

According to its "History 1875-2013" booklet, the original Norwegian name of the church was Ny Skandinavia Evengelisk Lutherske Menighet. It became part of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in 1890.

"Organizer" in 1875 was the Rev. H.F. Haakenson, but before him from 1869 to 1875, the Rev. A. Johnson from Eau Claire, the Rev. C.J. Helsem from Running Valley and the Rev. H. Haakenson from Sand Creek served the spiritual needs of the pioneer settlers. They conducted services in homes and later at the North Pine Creek School.

Other early pastors and their years of service included: The Rev. P. Dietrickson from 1878-1880, the Rev. J. Waage from 1880-1883, the Rev. L.S. Guttboe from 1884-1887; and the Rev. H.J. Helsem from 1888-1889.

It was through the efforts of the Rev. A.J. Oerke, a graduate of Augsburg Seminary who arrived in 1889, that membership grew. The parish at this time consisted of Nye Scandinavia, Chetek, Dovre and Faaberg, and the pastor resident in Chetek. It was through his efforts that the congregation at Dallas Lutheran was organized. In 1895, he resigned and moved away.

The church's next pastor, the Rev. Helmer Lund, served both Nye Scandinavia and Dallas for 18 years (1895-1913) during which time, in 1902, a parsonage was erected in Dallas. Filling the sister parishes next was the Rev. O.L. Kirkeberg, who served from 1913-1919, which was a difficult time when there was much demand for a change to the English language and equally determined opposition against it. The last of the early pastors was the Rev. A.O. Running, who served from 1919-1938 and was instrumental in establishing Luther Park Bible Camp.

After 10 more pastors came and went, the Rev. Robert Friese was installed in 2006 and saw the congregation through the heartrending time of seeing their iconic structure destroyed by fire on Dec. 10, 2010, and the rebuilding of a new church, which had the first service in the new building on May 19, 2013.



New Scandinavia Lutheran Church, with adjacent cemetery, before it was destroyed by fire on Dec. 10, 2010.

# OUR LADY OF LOURDES

was first Catholic church in Barron County

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church of Dobie, which was established in 1876, is one of the two oldest churches in Barron County that still have regularly scheduled services. (The other is New Scandinavia Lutheran Church of Maple Grove Township, three miles north of Dallas, which opened in 1875.)

The Statue of Liberty was not the only gift from France in 1876, reports the centennial book (1876-1976) from Our Lady of Lourdes of Dobie. Another gift was a native son, Father Joseph Dole, who made his way from France to New York State to the wilderness of Wisconsin, his mission to the Catholic immigrants who were arriving in increasing numbers in search of opportunities and freedom to pursue them. In 1875, Louis Roberge, who was settled on a 160-acre homestead, donated a plot of land for a church site and cemetery, as it remains today. Father Dole, who was sent by the Bishop of La Crosse, formed a Christian community in 1876 in Dobie, an unincorporated settlement north of Rice Lake. As the first Catholic church in Barron County, it was known as St. Mary's of Lourdes, Stanfold. (Interestingly, the early Stanfold — covering the present Oak Grove, Rice Lake, Cedar Lake and Doyle townships — did not embrace any of the present Stanfold township west of Rice Lake.) The first documentary evidence of the parish known as Our Lady of Lourdes was in 1878, a title that did not become official until July 20, 1955, as an amendment to the Articles of Incorporation. A bell tower was added to the church in 1879, rung for the first time in a Sept. 21 celebration.

The year 1879 is also memorable for its decision to build a Catholic school. Father Dole began negotiations to procure land. Construction began in 1880, and it was ready for occupancy in 1881. About 50 children attended on the first day, increasing to 70 by the following week. Most were of French nationality.

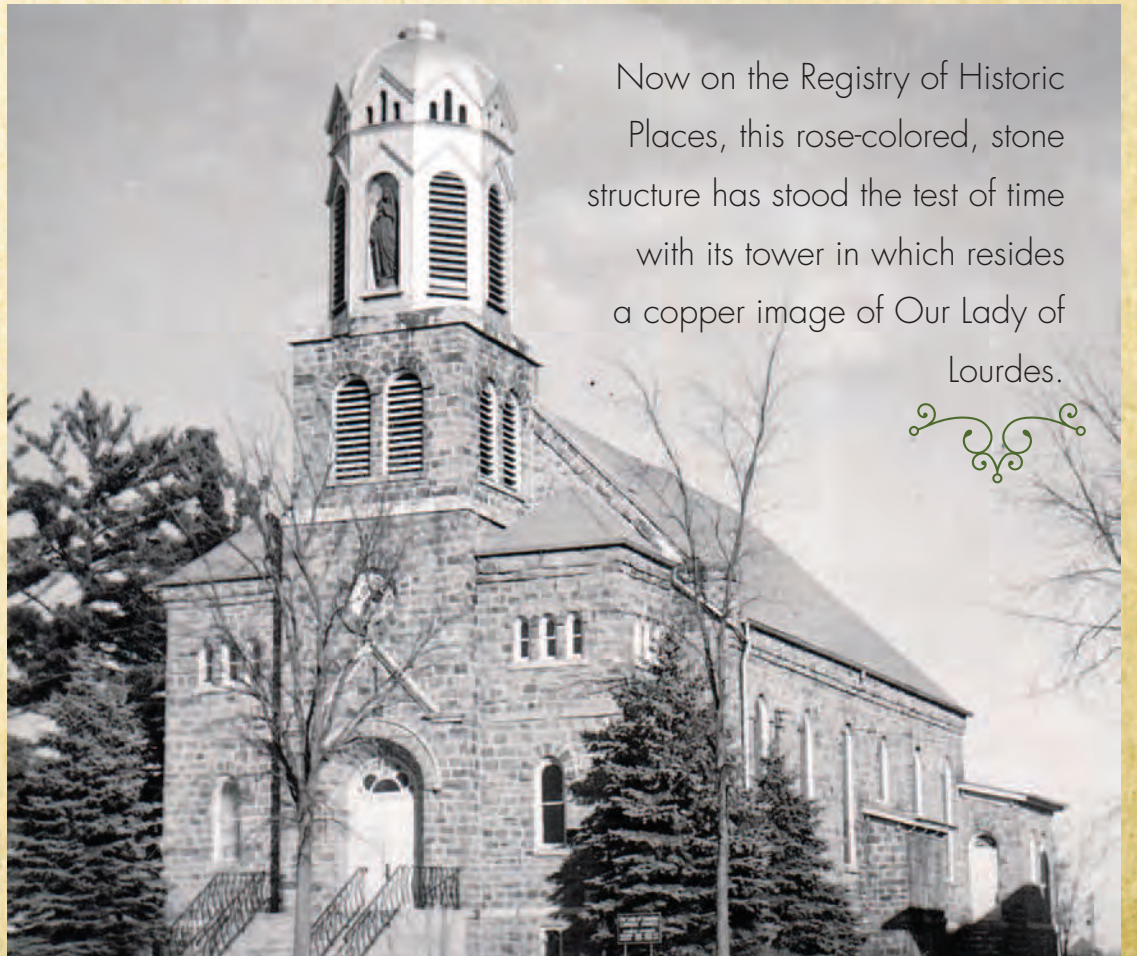
The church edifice — now on the Registry of Historic Places — reflects the creative and artistic genius of its builders. Its simple model lines, made of native stone, have withstood the test of time. “Its rose-colored, carefully hewn stone, its walls, its entrance and its majestic tower are beautiful to behold” notes the centennial book.

“In short, it is a continuous homily preached by the builders, who in their designing and executing, give witness to their fidelity to the admonition of the psalmists ‘Unless the Lord builds the house, he labors in vain who builds it.’ It added, “There is good reason to hope the edifice, which under the watchful eye of Our Lady of Lourdes, whose copper image adorns its tower, will continue to speak

in silent dignity to all who pass this way in ensuing years.” Yet its interior was humble. At the start, rough, wooden benches were placed straight across the width of the church, leaving an aisle on each end. There were no lights nor heat. At some point Father Dole himself built the altars — a high one in front and one on each side.

Hitching posts were placed in front of the church and south along the road as far as the corner. Each parishioner had his own post. It was said that for someone to sit in another man's pew could be forgiven but to use his hitching post was not to be tolerated. In the early years, its members came from two distinct ethnicities — Irish and French Canadians. When parish dinners were served, there was a French table and an Irish table. Each group had a baseball team, with games played on church grounds. Over the years the ethnic lines were crossed as marriages took place between the two nationalities.

At first the cemetery was a piece of wilderness, cleared by parishioners and consecrated by one of the missionaries who made periodic visits to the area. In those early days, graves were often marked with plain wooden cross markers, which have decayed over the years leaving no trace, and since there are no church records before 1881, their identities are unknown.



Now on the Registry of Historic Places, this rose-colored, stone structure has stood the test of time with its tower in which resides a copper image of Our Lady of Lourdes.





# Village changed name from Sylan Springs to **DALLAS**



The Ridgeland to Reserve Branch of the Soo Line was locally known as The Blueberry Line, known for the wild blueberries that grew along the tracks.

The flood of 1912 in the village of Dallas.



**G**eorge M. Dallas, a distinguished vice president of the United States, not only had a county named after him in northwest Wisconsin, but a township and village as well. For its first 10 years, the county went by the name Dallas, changing to Barron in 1869 in honor of Henry D. Barron, a legislator and circuit court judge.

According to "The History of Barron County," the village now called Dallas was called Sylan Springs when William Hufnail opened a post office on his farm in the early 1870s. In spring 1877, William S. Foster opened a store and the post office was moved there, which is when its name was changed to Dallas.

Early settlers, who bought up most of the acreage, were Ole Knutson, Knute Espeseth and Nelse Toliffson. In 1878, James A. Anderson arrived on scene, purchased land from Toliffson and Knutson and started a dam on Little (Upper) Pine Creek and a grist mill — later expanding to a sawmill with planning and shingle departments. His persuasion led to moving the store and post office across from the mill, all on the west side of the creek, which through the creation of a dam,

had created a lake. On the east side of the creek was Espeseth's general store. Soon after appeared a blacksmith shop, hardware store, harness and repair shop, cabinet shop, shoe shop and other stores.

About 1889 or 1890, a frame schoolhouse was built just west of the railway station. It continued in use until a larger, two-story structure was built in 1903. It housed nine grades. Before that, the Pitts School District in Dallas Township was one of the oldest schools in the county, organized in 1871.

In 1900, the Rice Lake, Dallas and Menomonie Railroad was built from Ridgeland to Rice Lake through Dallas, bringing new life to the hamlet in the southern part of the county. After the railroad came through, Anderson built a hotel and other businesses took off, including woodworking, steam and flour mills; pickling station; confectionary, drug and jewelry stores; and a barbershop. Fire protection was furnished by a voluntary department.

Both the village of Dallas and the Bank of Dallas were incorporated in 1903. Also that year the Dallas Creamery Association formed, but the enterprise as a cooperative movement failed to achieve success and the creamery, supplies and equipment were sold in 1919. The Farmers Store Co. opened in 1914 and began "a prosperous establishment" for years to follow.



The oldest settlement in Barron County was this Knapp, Stout & Co. farm.

They needed a place to pasture their horses, mules, oxen and cattle and water to power its mill to saw lumber needed for buildings. The farm included barns, granaries, a double corn crib, machine shed, farmhouse and blacksmith shop.

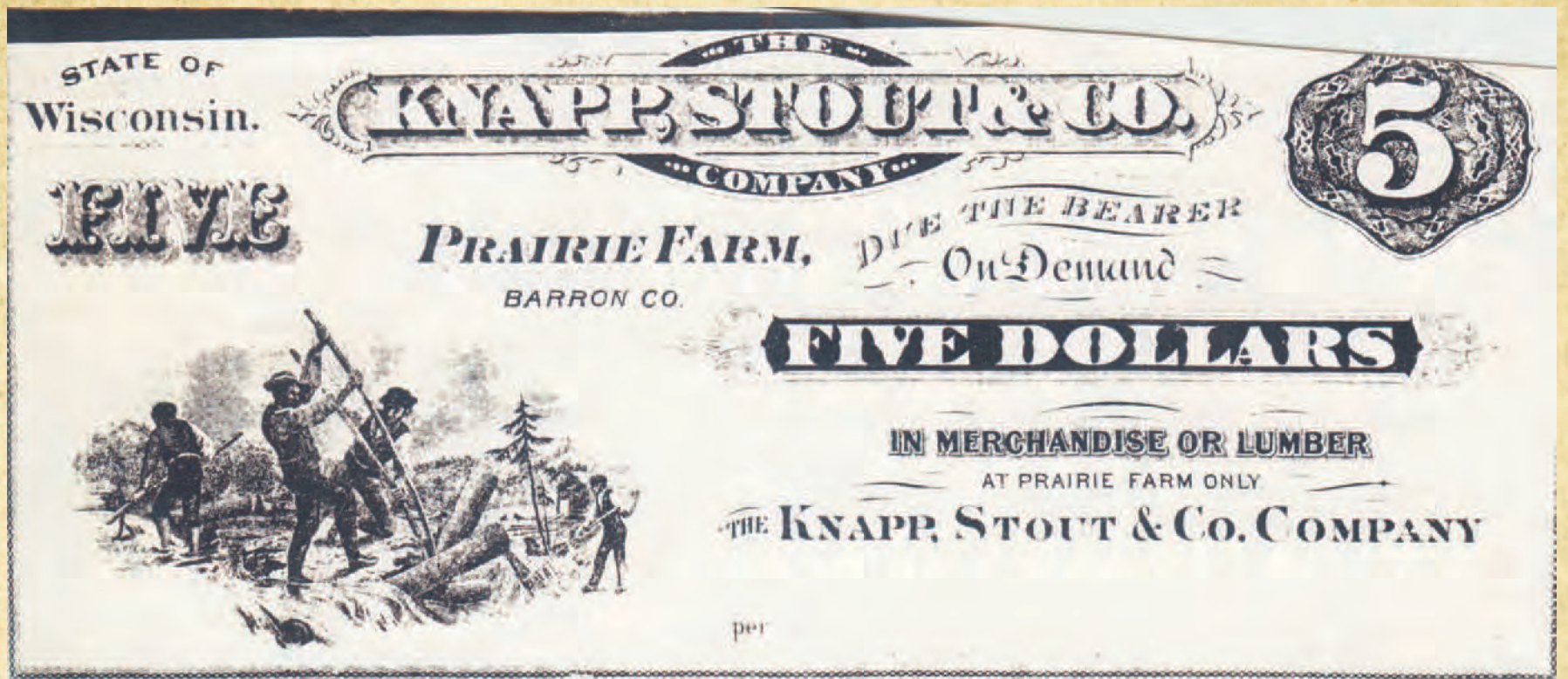
## Barron County's first and oldest settlement: **PRAIRIE FARM**

Earning bragging rights as the oldest settlement in Barron County is the village of Prairie Farm, which got its start in 1848. Knapp, Stout & Co. found what it was looking for in its search for a new headquarters as its operations had extended too far north from Menomonie.

According to Prairie Farm's Sesquicentennial Celebration book, published in 1998, in 1847 Capt. Wilson with two other men went on an exploratory trip in search for a proper location for their new headquarters. They needed a place where they could pasture their horses, mules, oxen and cattle, and water to power a mill to saw the lumber needed for buildings.

As Wilson reached the top of a 200-foot bluff and saw the scene below, he was aware that the area fulfilled every requirement: a fast-flowing river into which emptied many small creeks flowing through heavily wooded areas, a sufficient drop to afford ample water power, and fertile land for pasture, grain, hay and vegetables. The gentle rolling hills to the northeast and east and the widening prairie to the south caused the captain to exclaim "prairie farm" — and that is what this area has been called ever since.

Prairie Farm became a typical lumber camp with a horse pasture in the center of it. Barns, two granaries, a double corn crib, machine shed, farmhouse and blacksmith shop were all built on the east side of the river at the foot of the bluff. "The History of Barron County" reports activity picked up around the dam and spread with the addition of saw and grist mills, lath and cheese box factory, power plant, lumber yard, livery stables, garages, stores, hotels, bank, cafes, restaurants and a cooperative creamery.



K, S & Co. script, or money printed by the company, was used by their employees at the company store.

With such rapid growth in the 1900s arose the need to chronicle the events of the community and further boost its growth, thus came the creation of The Prairie Farm Breeze, a newspaper that was published from 1909 to 1920, which then sold its subscriptions to the Barron County News-Shield.

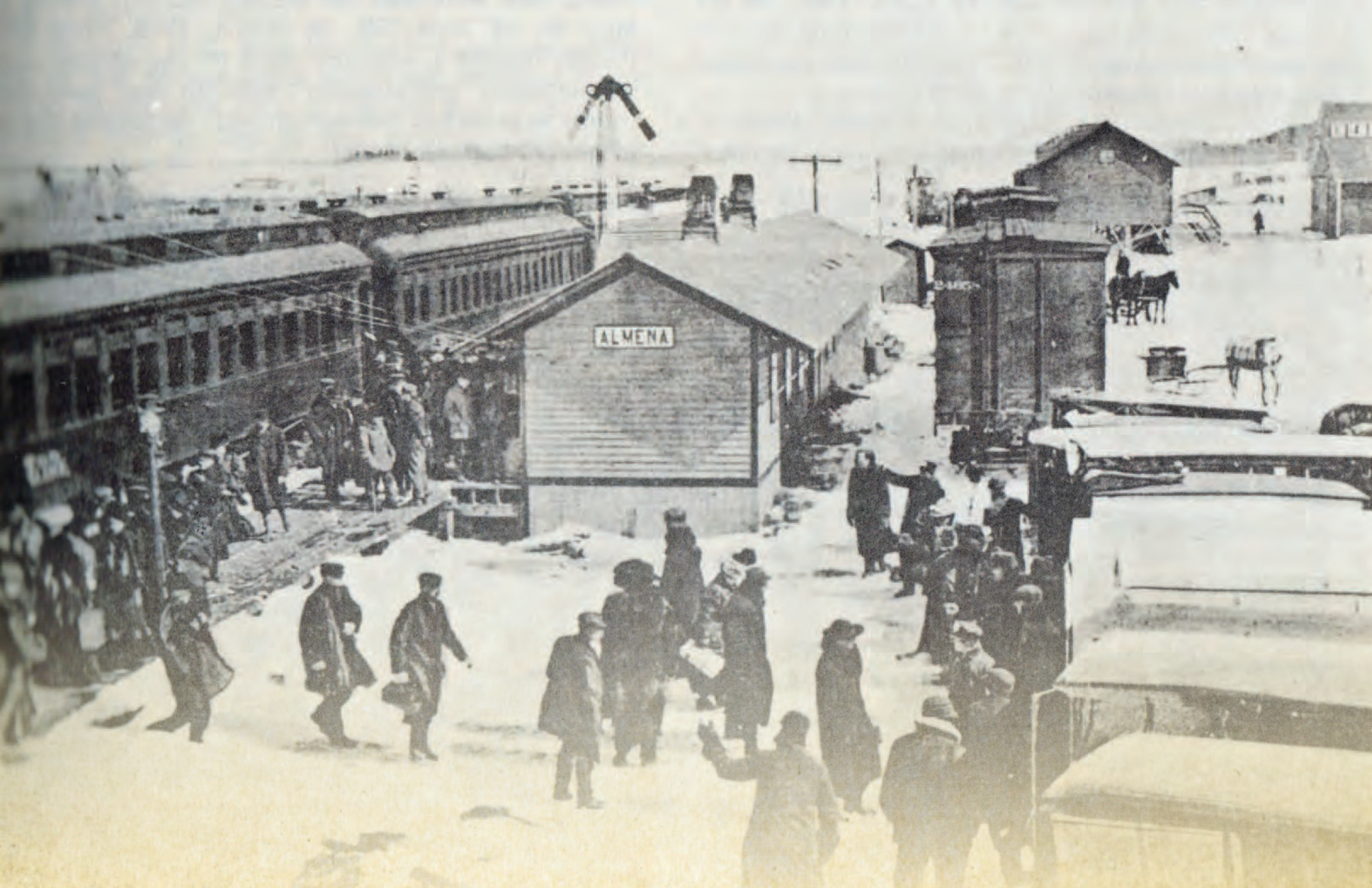
In 1866, The Company Store opened and was managed by Issac Sprague while his wife was the first company cook. Workers could buy all their supplies at The Company Store with script or money printed by the company. After Mr. Sprague built his own store, G.E. Scott became manager of The Company Store while making plans for his own store, called the big Home Store. Erected in 1901 with no limit on the cost, the three-story brick architectural design trimmed with stone and an edifice with its massive arches easily earned it the acclaim as "the most beautiful store in the world." It opened in 1902 with goods hauled in from Wheeler and Barron. The Farmers Store of Bloomer bought the store from the Scott estate in 1917 and operated it for 30 more years before it burned to the ground on May 8, 1948.

As people needed a place to baptize children, pray for the sick and strengthen their faith, the spires of churches began pointing toward the heavens — the Akers Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1887, Zion Lutheran Church in 1893 (which dissolved in 1959) and the Solum Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church (which later became First Lutheran Church) in 1894. Even later, in 1947,

Akers and First Lutheran consolidated into United Lutheran Church of Prairie Farm.

Other denominations also took hold, such as the Ebenezer Methodist Episcopal Church, which organized in 1876, and two Evangelical United Brethren churches, Emmanuel and Zion, merged to form Faith United Methodist.





The Almena depot was the village's grand central station.

## ALMENA named for Albert and Wilhelmena Kohler

**T**he village of Almena has its beginning in 1887, according to the book "The Almena 100: 1887-1987." It reports that on July 17, 1887, the two men, Mr. [S.W.] Sparlin and Mr. [John] Retrum, alighted from the Soo train at a spur in the railroad where Almena is now located. The new arrivals found lumber at Perley, a small community three miles west, ordered two cars of lumber and had it shipped to what was informally called Lightning City, named for nearby Lightning Creek. On Aug. 1, 1887, the two men returned and started clearing the land.

In an application for a U.S. Post Office, the department proposed dropping City from the proposed, after which the applicants chose a different local connection. They combined two names into one — Albert H. Kohler, who was to become the first postmaster, and his wife,

Wilhelmena — thus Almena was christened and was given a stamp of approval by the U.S. Post Office.

According to the 1922 "History of Barron County," the village was platted Nov. 23, 1891, by Homer H. Hoyt and George A. Plummer. Soon farmers began to clear land surrounding the hamlet. Surnames such as Swansen, Miller, Wohlk, Curt, Fisher and Windolf were found among the early settlers. In 1890, Koser and Soltau came into the area, as well as others, thus establishing roots for the future of this area.

The centennial book notes, "In the 100 years of Almena history, the village has continued to serve the rural area surrounding the village. The churches have been a binding force to the citizens. The Soo Railroad was an important factor to the community. The trains traveling



An early look at Soo Avenue in Almena.

from St. Paul, Minnesota, to the east were a contributing factor to the village economy." It added, "The days of pre-prohibition, prior to 1920, also saw the railroad busy. Old-timers recall Almena as the last town to go dry in Wisconsin, and some say even the last in the United States. Customers came by rail with prospects of filling their jugs."

Earliest school records date back to September 1894 with courses including reading, arithmetic, spelling, history, geography, language, physiology and writing. The wood frame schoolhouse was built on the site of the present St. Matthew Lutheran Church, and was replaced in 1912 by a brick structure on Lulu Avenue.

Tragedy struck the new and growing village in September 1898 when a forest fire swept through the west end of the hamlet, destroying the first Almena depot and more than 75 farms south and west of the village. Mercifully a rain came up about midnight and the village was saved. Undaunted by the disaster, a new depot was built, and up to four passenger trains ran daily, and local stores received their merchandise, packed in barrels and crates, by train.

In those days, there were seven taverns in the immediate area with several also serving food. In addition, there were at least three hotels and a variety of businesses, some of which included a hardware store, general store, grocer and dry goods store, café, the Franzen Building — offering horseshoeing, general repairing and the manufacturing of sleighs and wagons — a drug store, ice cream parlor, livery stable, bank, jail, butcher shop, The Cloverland Star newspaper and Swansen Manufacturing, makers of the Eskimobile and Snowcat.



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Old Cameron picked up stakes and became **NORTH CAMERON** at site of Soo Line Railroad juncture

Sand bags help hold back floodwaters in this photo of the village from the 1930s.

**T**he village of Cameron was named in honor of Hon. Angus Cameron, a U.S. senator from Wisconsin for many years. The tombstones in the Sumner, Faaberg and Pine Grove cemeteries tell the silent story of the earliest village settlers who arrived in a land of timber and lakes and settled at a location known as Holmen's Crossing.

According to the Cameron Centennial book (1879-1979), the settlement arose after a Chicago and Northwestern Railroad line was completed in 1882, passing through Old Cameron en route to Rice Lake. A post office and rail station was opened that year with R.A. Burton as the depot agent. Soon to follow were the openings of two general stores, hotel, blacksmith shop, saloon and butcher shop.

The largest industry of "Old Cameron" was a flour and grist mill, operated by steam power. Water was supplied for the village from a spring, and many people obtained their water from there until their wells were dug.

With disappointment it was learned in 1884 that the Soo Line Railroad would juncture a mile north; thus began "a tremendous task" to move the settlement to the site, called North Cameron. After the depot, the Cameron Hotel was the second building moved to the new location.

It was not until November 1894, nine years after the village up and moved to its new location, that settlers decided it was "high time to incorporate the village to provide a local government which could maintain order." It was unanimously approved, and just like that they became villagers.

In 1895, Thomas R. Hawkins, M.D., arrived in Cameron and opened a doctor's office at his home at 505 Main St.

He practiced until 1924. In 1896, Emmett Ward arrived in Cameron and set up a livery business, which flourished before the days of automobiles.

In 1899, he and his brother J.M. opened a hardware, implement and machinery store. Restaurateur N.F. Thompson opened his eating place just east of the livery stable, and it immediately became a favorite place of travelers.

In 1901, The Bank of Cameron was established. It was also the year that Gustavus Jensen, M.D., arrived in Cameron and purchased half interest in O.S. Hurlbert's drug store, out of which he served as both druggist and physician.

A volunteer fire department was organized in 1902. Also that year, a water supply system was installed, consisting of a well, tank, mains and hydrants with pumping power furnished by a gasoline engine, switching to an electrically-powered pump in 1912.

The Cameron Farmers Store Company opened in 1905 at the corner of Main and Tenth with a line of dry goods, notions, clothing and groceries. Other lines were added in later years, including vehicles, farm implements and machinery and a full line of harnesses. A fire in 1961 destroyed the longtime business.

Also by 1905, an estimated 500 barrels of cranberries were grown at Bennett Cranberry Marsh, west of the creamery. The large swamp, with a creek running into it from the north, was ideal for a cranberry marsh. A dam was built at the south end of the swamp. During harvest time in October, as many as 200 Chippewa Indians from Couderay

An estimated 500 barrels of cranberries were grown in a marsh, west of the creamery, in the early 1900s. During harvest time, as many as 200 Chippewa Indians from Couderay would come by train to pick the berries, which were loaded onto boxcars to be shipped to various destinations.

The former Cameron train depot.



would come by train to pick the berries, which were loaded onto boxcars to be shipped to various destinations. The dam went out in the spring of 1920, releasing the water from the marsh. It was never rebuilt, and Cameron's cranberry industry came to an end.

An elegant, octagonal bandstand was constructed in the center of the village in 1916 with local musicians becoming the Cameron concert band. Other recreation was found in traveling tent shows or portable theaters as well as at dance halls and establishments for bowling and billiards, baseball fields and the swimming hole. In 1917, the state started numbering trunk highways. That was when the east/west highway became 14 and the north/south highway became 11, which were eventually changed to 8 and 53 respectively. "Cameron became doubly important, being at the junction of two railroads and two highways," the centennial book stated.

Although not a doctor with a degree, "Doc" Topp, who came to Cameron in 1918, was believed to have psychic powers and dispensed of "cures" such as juniper berries for yellow jaundice, or an olive oil/grape juice tonic. He "practiced" in Cameron until 1930. In 1919, M.M. Sargent came to Cameron to open a dental practice. Also that year Emmett Ward took over management of the Cameron Pickle Packing Company, which was located behind the old East Hotel.

As the village was growing, so were the number of churches — Faaberg Norwegian Lutheran Congregation on Pokegama Prairie in 1871, the Cameron Methodist Church and the Evangelical German Lutheran Church (later St. Johns) both in 1883, the Cameron Norwegian Lutheran Church (later Faith Lutheran) in 1908 and the Mission of St. Peter in 1908.

In 1922, Abbott's Dairies of Philadelphia, Penn., opened a creamery in Cameron. Guy Spiers was president of the plant in Cameron, and now has a park in the village named after him. When it opened, it had 65 employees who earned \$3 a day. The company changed hands several times prior to its closing in 1960.



In 1929, Charles F. Cronk, M.D., arrived in Cameron, with his home and office at 501 Main St. He later became chief of staff at Lakeside Methodist Hospital in Rice Lake. Also arriving in 1929 — to a site where birch trees grew and both rail lines and highway routes were established — was Henry Ebner, who started the Ebner Box Factory. By January 1930, the factory was in full swing making fruit boxes and continued operating for many years by sons Jim, Bob and Bud, all now in their 90s.

Cameron's first newspaper, the Independent, was established in 1887 with S.S. Hull as editor. A year later he moved it to Barron. In 1897, Amos Babcock established a newspaper called the Cameron Review, which continued under a variety of editors and publishers until 1916. Then George C. Elwood launched the Cameron Record, but after a few months sold the subscriptions to the Barron County Shield. Next came Walter Erickson, who started the Cameron Echo. He, his wife and family lived above the print shop and continued to print it into the late 40s, with other publishers, Paul Albrecht and Gordon Regenauer, keeping it going into the 50s and 60s.

Several floods, including devastating ones in 1913 and again in 1934, occurred during spring thaws before storm sewers were installed. The latter one is remembered for occurring on April 4, 1934, the day of spring elections, requiring residents to "done hip boots or get drenched" just to cast their ballots.

# Village named after congressman NILS P. HAUGEN



An early scene of Main Street in Haugen.

Passengers come and go from the train depot at Haugen.

The history of Haugen, as drafted by Robert Heinze for the Haugen Centennial Book, is filled with highlights of the first 100 years of the village. Topics include dams, streets and railroads, bridges, electricity, fire protection, government, post office, schools, churches, cemeteries, celebrations, organizations, dance halls, Ceska Opera House, businesses, baseball, mills, restaurants and cafes, creamery/cheese factory, saloons and taverns.

Named after a popular member of Congress, Nils P. Haugen, the new post office at Bear Creek will be named Haugen, reported the Rice Lake Chronotype on Dec. 5, 1889.

In his "Pioneer and Political Reminiscences" written before leaving Congress in 1895, Haugen wrote, "There were many applications for establishment of post offices in my district, and it was often left to me to suggest to the department names for them. I selected those that seemed to be in harmony with the population of the neighborhood, calling one in Burnett County, Freya; one

in Pierce, Viking. But when I suggested Finland for a Finnish community in Douglas County, some of the Native Americans objected, deeming the name too chilly, and it was called Poplar at their suggestion. George Smith had moved from Eau Galle in Dunn County, and started a country store in Barron County, some 10 miles north of Rice Lake on the Omaha Railroad. An application came to me for a post office at Smith's store. I took it to the department and, as no preference had been indicated by the petitioners, I suggested Smithville or Smithfield. But there were too many Smiths already represented by post offices. I stated my objection to my correspondents and was informed in due time that they had agreed on the name Haugen."

## Highlights of the village's beginnings include the following:

### 1800s

**1883:** The Chippewa Falls & Northern Railway Co., later the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha, was completed through the village in the spring.

**1889:** The U.S. Postal Service appointed Oliver Stokes as the first postmaster at the new location named Haugen. It was located inside the general store.

**1890:** John G. Walter set up a sawmill on the south end of the village near Bear Creek, while Oliver Stokes established another lumber yard and mill work business.

**1891:** Passenger train service began. Prior to this, it was only a flag station, meaning one could hang a red flag at the loading platform to stop a train and ride in a freight car.

**1893:** The first town road in the village was laid out and



## A Decoration Day parade in the village of Haugen in 1910.

approved by the town of Oak Grove supervisors on Oct. 12.

**1894:** The first bridge over Bear Creek, on Main Street, was a wood truss structure.

**1895:** The village was platted on March 26, 1895, by Karl Rosholt of Eau Claire, an agent for Knapp, Stout & Co., after which streets were built to accommodate businesses and residents.

**1896:** F. Grant was the village's first blacksmith.

**1897:** The first public school was a 24-by-50-foot wooden structure that housed 53 students. Prior to this students attended the Macak School northeast of Haugen. Also in 1897 the Haugen Creamery Co. was formed by Frank Koukl and Frank Urbanek and began operation. Yet another development in 1897 was the donation of 3 acres of land to be divided equally for the creation of two cemeteries — Bohemian National and Holy Trinity Catholic.

**1899:** The first depot was finished and dedicated in November with Frank Wright as first agent.

### 1900s

**1901:** Holy Trinity Catholic Church, located at the northwest corner of Fourth Street and Raymond Avenue, was dedicated after a several years long construction project that began in 1897.

**1905:** On July 4 the school board voted unanimously to build a four-room brick schoolhouse at the same location.

**1907:** The Macak School closed and pupils were transported to the new Haugen School.

**1908:** The village published a newspaper called the Haugen Chronotype. Otto Paul was the editor. The enterprise was short lived.

**1915:** Joseph Pastika began making Joe's Best Cigars at his factory east of the dam on the east side of Bear Creek.

**1916:** The Wisconsin-Minnesota Light and Power Co. completed wiring the village with electric lights lighting up the village for the first time. Built on the southeast corner of Fifth Street and Norvin Avenue, Haugen Evangelical Lutheran Church was built; it consolidated with Grace Lutheran of Brill in 1928.

**1917:** Two years of high school, Grades 9 and 10, were offered at the Haugen State Graded School. A second attempt was made at starting a newspaper, this time called The Haugen Press. It lasted only one year.

**1918:** On April 1, the village became incorporated with its own governing board and no longer under the jurisdiction of Oak Grove Township. Joseph Vanek operated a garage and repair shop on Main Street across from the depot.

**1919:** Ernest L. Brunette established a box factory, called the Haugen Box and Crafting Company, which was destroyed by fire in 1923, when it relocated to Rice Lake and started over.



### The 20s and beyond

**1920:** The first village hall was built on village park property. In July, the village purchased its first fire engineer for \$575.

**1924:** In July the village purchased a jail cell from E.T. Barnum Iron Works for \$162.98. It is presently on display at the Haugen Area Historical Museum.

**1925:** Edward Kinnick built the first gas station on the southwest corner of Main and Third streets, called the Kinnick Oil Co.

**1927:** Holy Trinity Catholic School opened for Grades 1-8, with students taught by Benedictine sisters from Lisle, Ill.

**1928:** The village built a new hall at the south end of Broadway Avenue and sold the village park hall. It purchased an electric siren and installed it on top of the Haugen State Bank, until it was removed in the 1990s and donated to the Haugen Area Historical Museum.

**1939:** The Village Hall was moved to the southeast corner of Third Street and Raymond Avenue.

**1959:** The village purchased the Zapadni Cesko-Bratska Jednota (ZCBJ) Hall for \$1.

**1961:** The last passenger train passed through the village on May 4, 1961, ending 70 years of passenger service.

**1971:** The train depot was razed.

**1978:** The first, to become annual, Haugen Fun Days celebration took place, and the phrase "Mushroom and Kolache Capital" was born.

**1984:** The Ceska Opera House Foundation was created as a new, independent entity to take over ownership of the Ceska Opera House, which was listed on the National Registry of Historic Places a year later.

**1988:** After 62 years of providing religious education, Holy Trinity Catholic School closed.

**1994:** The Ceska Opera Foundation purchased the old Haugen State Graded School building from the Rice Lake Area School District for \$1 and converted it into the Haugen Area Historical Museum. It is filled with reminders of the early pioneers, railroaders, loggers and farmers who settled and developed the area.



An early scene of downtown Turtle Lake with horses and oxen tied to hitching posts.

## From Skowhegan to **TURTLE LAKE**

According to village historian David Skrupky, the village of Turtle Lake began like most other northern Wisconsin towns. The Federal Government opened up the Wisconsin Territory to development by granting large tracts of land to the railroads. In 1878 the Omaha Railroad laid north to south tracks through what would become Turtle Lake. This made it possible for the logging industry to move in and harvest the mostly white pine forests.

In 1879 Steven and Joel Richardson, loggers from Skowhegan, Maine, arrived here and established a sawmill on the banks of a small pond, which is still known as the Millpond. They named the area after their hometown. This area of Wisconsin has many lakes and most of them had sawmills. Two such lakes to the east were named for the many turtles found there. The U.S. Post Office would send mail to this region addressed to the sawmill on Turtle Lake. Eventually the village of Skowhegan changed its name to Turtle Lake.

Logging occurred in the winter months when the snow and ice made it easier for oxen and horses to pull heavy loads of logs on sleds out of the woods and onto lakes or rivers. In the spring the logs were floated to sawmills and turned into lumber. The lumber was then transported south by train and was used for the construction of houses, barns and other buildings.

In five short years the white pines were mostly gone. The surrounding lands were sold to immigrants who wanted

to establish farms and raise families. In 1884 the Soo Line railroad laid east to west tracks to begin hauling farm produce to the large flour mills located along the Mississippi River to what is now the Twin Cities.

Having two railroad crossings in Turtle Lake gave the village a significant advantage to its survival. The village of Turtle Lake was plotted in 1885 and it was incorporated in 1898. Over the next 80 years, Turtle Lake was known mostly as a farming community supported by creameries.

The first school was a log cabin built in 1880 to serve the children of the loggers. Over the years a number of larger buildings were constructed to handle the growing population. Each building was repurposed as new schools were built. One served as a town hall, another as a combination fire station and jail, another as a hospital. A brick, two-story school built in 1918 was destroyed by fire the same year. A new fireproof brick building was constructed in 1919 on the same spot and housed both elementary and high school students. It was added onto multiple times as the student population grew and the rural schools consolidated. It was used until 1995. Turtle Lake built a new high school complete with swimming pool in 1964, and a new elementary school in 1995.

Investor land developers saw the vacation potential of the beautiful area with its many lakes, and promoted it as "Turtle Lake Home of Fine Fishing." In 1907 one

An early street scene in downtown  
Turtle Lake.



Main Street in the village of Turtle  
Lake as it looked in 1911.



Earlier, simpler times in Turtle Lake.



such developer printed a brochure which was widely distributed in the Chicago area that touted "A person could get on a train in Chicago in the evening, enjoy a good meal in the dining car, have a good night's rest in the sleeper car, wake up refreshed, and arrive in Turtle Lake in the morning. They could then fish in the well-stocked lakes and catch an impressive stringer of fish. They could then take the evening train back to Chicago, have another good night's sleep and arrive home with a fresh meal of fish for breakfast."

Turtle Lake has seen many changes over the years, moving from logging to farming, to light manufacturing and tourism. It had a lot to offer at its inception and continues to attract new residents and visitors. It has an excellent school, a new library, restful parks, good restaurants, a well-stocked grocery store, various services, hotels and a casino. It also has a wonderful museum that explores the evolution of a small Wisconsin village. And let's not forget about the "fine fishing."





Men and women both at work in the Chronotype's composing room in 1906.

Scene from the press room in 1906 when housed in a downtown location.

## RICE LAKE CHRONOTYPE: The County's Oldest Newspaper

**T**he Rice Lake Chronotype — your hometown paper since 1874 — remains the oldest and longest continually published newspaper in Barron County. Now in its 148th year, the first edition rolled off a press of some sort in September 1874 and was called the Barron County Chronotype. C.W. Carpenter was the first editor and proprietor, and the annual subscription rate was \$2. His stint as editor lasted only a year, until 1875.

After Carpenter, other editors followed in rather fast succession — one year each for Alva Dewey in 1876 and Charles Nunn in 1877, Ferdinand “Fred” Peachman for just six months after which Charles F. Bone took the helm until 1885, when he left to publish a rival Rice Lake Times. It lasted until 1923, when The Times merged with The Chronotype. Bone's successor was D.M. Monteith, followed by William P. Swift, who sold it to his brother Col. P.H. Swift, who established another rival, the Rice Lake Leader, in 1899. It merged with The Chronotype in 1909. Next came H.M. Hilliker from 1894-1896, then E.N. Bowers was editor from 1896-1905 followed by E.C. McClelland from 1905-1923.

For the next 96 years, three generations of the Leary-Dorrance family kept the presses rolling. Newsmen Warren Leary Sr. and August Ender





In this 1914 photo, Chronotype owner E.C. McClelland sits in the driver's seat of the first prize in the newspaper's circulation contest. In the rear seat is the auto salesman. In front is McClelland's son, Harold. No word on who won the automobile.



The Chronotype office stood at the southeast corner of Main and Messenger streets from 1909-1959. For the next 60 years, 28 S. Main St. was the site of The Chronotype office.



partnered in the business for 14 years, with Ender selling his share in 1937. Second-generation Warren Leary Jr. filled in as a temporary editor in 1948 but never returned to his job at The Milwaukee Journal and became publisher after his father died in 1959, a post he held until his retirement in 1985. It was all in the family for awhile. Warren's sister and brother-in-law Kay and Bob Antennae and their son Gerry all had roles in the business. Warren's sister Mary Dorrance was proofreader for a time and her husband, Jim, and sons Jim III, Warren and Bob, and daughter Peg all had a hand in the business and continued the family legacy until selling the business to Adams Publishing Group on Aug. 1, 2014. Some stayed on even after the change of ownership until the last of the Dorrances left the business in 2019.

Serving as news editors during those years were Alvah Axtell, Robert Heffner, Samuel Finazzo and Ryan Urban. The Chronotype's

first female editor, Michelle Jensen, assumed the post October 2020. The sports editor baton was passed from Robert Heffner to Dave Greschner, who after a 45-year run, handed it off to Travis Nyhus in July 2020. Also on the news staff is Ruth Erickson, a hometown reporter since 1987.

For its first 30-some years, The Chronotype office was housed in various downtown locations, settling into a building at the southeast corner of Main and Messenger streets, which it occupied for 50 years, from 1909-1959. For the next 60 years, The Chronotype operated from 28 S. Main St., across from the Rice Lake Chamber of Commerce. In January 2021, The Chronotype handed the building's keys over to Joel Jacobson, who converted it into an Ace Hardware store. Meanwhile the newspaper's staff settled into Suite 102 in the business strip to the north of Marketplace Foods at 326 S. Main St., Rice Lake.



# COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

has come a long ways — from crews in bunkhouses to a \$25M facility in the making

**T**he Barron County Highway Department, which broke ground on May 3, 2021, for a \$25 million facilities upgrade, has come a long ways since the days its crews slept in bunkhouses on wheels and the cook line shack was managed by a man named Slim. “That was then, this is now” is the title of the chapter about Barron County in the book “Wisconsin County Highway Association: 100 Years of Commitment to Wisconsin.”

In the book is a state map showing the 29 counties that existed when Wisconsin’s Statehood was recognized in 1848. Among them is Chippewa County, called “the Mother County” for giving birth to 10 other counties — Barron, Buffalo, Burnett, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Price, Rusk, Sawyer and Taylor. The home to Dakota and Ojibwa Indians, fur traders and trappers, loggers, farmers and city builders, in the lumbering days, Chippewa County was considered one of the largest in the state.

Eventually, in 1859 Dallas County was formed, which in 1869 became Barron County. It was another 40-plus years later that the Barron County Highway Department came to be.

Highway commissioners, and the years they served, include the following: 1912-1923, Robert Reese; 1913-1917, Simon Berg; 1917-1931, Ed Gleason; 1931-1937, J.B. Stearns; 1937-1953, Elmer Rogers; 1954-1969, Orval Larson; 1970-1989, Walter Knutson; 1990-2001, Duane Schueller; 2002-2008, Brian Mattison; 2002-2008; and Mark Servi, 2008-present.

According to the above mentioned book, “By 1940, the Barron County Highway Department had already paved 60 miles of road. Having as many as 80 trucks and autos, 29



tractors and 15 graders by 1962, the department was spread out in 11 locations throughout Barron County.”

It went on to state, “In the early 1970s, the Commissioner was given a mandate to reduce the size of the highway crew, which had reached 93 field crew. In 2010, crew size was 36 full-time employees, six seasonal employees and college student help as needed. Crews worked out of three permanent locations and rented space in four locations for the winter season.”

At the time the book was published a dozen years ago, it reported, “The Barron County Highway Department maintains 292 miles on the county highway system and 423 lane miles of state highway. There are 60 bridges on the county highway system.”

Highway Commissioner Mark Servi confirmed that the number of miles and bridges is still the same. He said there are also 188 bridges (city, town and village) in the local system in Barron County.

Get a final look at the longtime Barron County Highway Shop that is scheduled for demolition the spring of 2022.

A Barron County Highway Department crew in 1918 with dump trucks that say Jiffy Dump on the end gate.



# Amundson's APPLIANCE

5 Locations: Hayward, Rice Lake,  
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New! Amundsons Outlet Center in Rice Lake



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**RICE LAKE**  
WEIGHING SYSTEMS

# The Legend of the Ammo Box



In the days when Rice Lake Weighing Systems was known as Rice Lake Bearing, Inc., co-founder Donald B. Johnson had a unique vision to grow the business. Since Rice Lake was a rural community with a modest customer base, he decided the best option to reach a larger population was through the mail.

The company purchased empty WWII 30-caliber ammunition boxes and sent them to addresses he had collected over the years. He included a note: "Send us your used pivots and bearings. We'll refurbish them for a fraction of the cost of new, and we'll do it in record time!"

The ammo boxes served as ideal shipping containers for pivots and bearings, and the offer quickly became a popular service for the scale industry. Scale parts flooded into Rice Lake as new customers across the country took advantage of mail-order refurbishing.

Rice Lake Weighing Systems quickly developed a reputation for quick service, quality products and legendary customer support. Don's innovation and dedication to the customer became the company's guiding philosophy.

**"Take care of the customer and the rest of the business will take care of itself."**

Donald B. Johnson, Co-founder



With initiatives like the ammo boxes, our business has grown to serve customers far beyond the Rice Lake area. Today, Rice Lake Weighing Systems is recognized as a leading manufacturer and technology innovator, providing weight-based solutions for virtually every industry imaginable. What began as a scale service shop in northwestern Wisconsin is now an international corporation with 16 locations around the world, headquartered right here in Rice Lake.

Through 75 years, three generations of family ownership and global growth, our company remains committed to the community of Rice Lake and to our founder's guiding principle: "Take care of the customer and the rest of the business will take care of itself."

Thank you to all our customers and employees who make our business possible.

Learn more about our history and our future:

800-472-6703  
[www.ricelake.com](http://www.ricelake.com)



**We are proud to be a part of the Rice Lake community for the past 75 years. Our roots will forever be planted here.**

