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Smith, Mariam

[Wisconsin]: [s.n.], [1976]

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The  
History  
of  
Omoo  
Volume 1

Compiled by  
Miss Mariam Smith

SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS

1. O.H. - Omro Herald.
2. N.W. - Oshkosh Daily Northwestern
3. M & O - Mitchell & Osborne - Oshkosh historians
4. W.B. - Warren Brooks
5. N.G. - Norman Gerard - historian
6. E. Hist - by Early Settler whose name might be Johnson?
7. Sherm B. - Sherm Barnard
8. M.B. - Marie Barnard
9. W.H. or W. hist. - P.M. Wright history
9. Maude S. - Maude Stearns
10. P.P.P. - Prairie, Pines & People - J. Metz book.
11. Emma J. - Emma Jaeck history
12. Emma S. - Emma Stanley
13. C.B.R. - C.B. Root letter
14. S. Wm. - Sharon Williams history
15. M.J.S. - Mariam J. Smith
16. Sbk. - Scrapbook

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General Index at back - pages 1 thru 9.

Omro personages - Index pages 6 and 10 thru 28.

# CARTER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

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Omro, WI 54963  
Phone: 685 - 5693

A copy of a written history of Omro by Miss Mariam Smith was received by this library in November of 1977.

Started compiling and researching Omro History in March of 1970.  
Finished the manuscript in October of 1976.

*Mariam J. Smith*

## OMRO HISTORY

### Preface

Although this history of Omro may interest only a handful of persons, it is for the few that these following facts have been gathered together and recorded. Mrs. Ethel Bishop has collaborated with many written phases of Omro history.

No doubt much of the earliest history of Omro by local writers was based on the "Winnebago County Statistical Work" by Martin Mitchell and Joseph H. Osborn, published in Oshkosh in 1856; and Richard J. Harney's "History of Winnebago County, Wisconsin & the Northwest" published in 1880. Excerpts from these works have been found in the accounts written by former Omro historians whose newspaper articles, mostly from the Omro Herald and the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, have been preserved, mostly in scrap books. The sources just mentioned, and in addition, the accounts of "Omro History" by An Early Settler (whoever he may have been), Norman Gerard (pioneer settler of Omro, born in 1824 in N.Y. State), "History of Omro" compiled in 1876 by P.M. Wright (Editor of Omro Journal), "Omro School History" by Luthera Adams (of an Omro pioneer family), and Dr. Emma G. Jaeck, (a later resident and writer of many historical articles) have served as the authentic basis for this undertaking. However, after these many years, individuals have not always agreed on the exact dates, happenings or details.

The rest of the facts and stories about Omro as told to me have been recollections of individuals, or have been tales related to them by their forefathers who witnessed or had a part in the daily and yearly shaping of the community from the wilderness. Credit for the following history goes to many persons for information that proves the history of Omro to be both varied, interesting, and truly typically American; they shall be given individual recognition at the close of this compilation. pg. 263

This history of Omro has been correlated by Mariam Smith. 1970-1976

INTRODUCTION

To obtain a more comprehensive history of Omro, it may be well to become acquainted with the area, the happenings that took place, the natives, and the reasons that led to its early beginning. To this end a much larger territory and a longer history should be reviewed.

1901 Blue Book  
by Rankin & Thwaites,  
Sec. of State  
Hist. Society  
Chen. P. 115 &  
117.

Bk. I pg. 77 - Milw. Journal Green Sheet - 1946 by H. Russell Austin

By virtue of the early explorations by the Spainards on the North American continent, from 1512 to 1634 this immense territory was claimed by Spain. Yet no Spainard nor other white man to anyone's knowledge ever touched foot on the soil.

The first recorded account of a white man entering the area was in 1634. It was then that Jean Nicolet, a Frenchman, landed just below the mouth of the Fox river at the head of Green Bay. Here he found an Indian village of Winnebagos, supposedly the earliest Indians in Wisconsin.

Nicolet then proceeded up the Fox river to the present site of Berlin where there was a palisaded village of Mascoutins.

Thus Jean Nicolet was the first whiteman to look upon the future site of Omro. He doubtless never dreamed that nearly 350 years later the locale would appear as it does now. Indeed, in Omro today he would search in vain for a palisaded village, a birch bark canoe or even a full blooded Indian.

The next whitemen to travel the same Fox river route of Nicolet were Louis Joliet and Father Jacques Marquette, in 1673. They found the river channel difficult to follow (the same condition as now, if it were not for the buoys that mark the main channel). In many places the tall marsh grasses and extensive rice beds that grew in the swampy areas along the river made canoe traveling confusing.

Ethel Bishop, 469 Madison Ave., Omro, besides loaning me many historical articles on early Omro and vicinity, has composed a verse to commemorate Father Marquette's efforts here with the Indians--

A blackrobed Friar  
Father Marquette  
Beached his canoe  
    On the shores of the Fox  
From his bulging knapsack  
Girdled at his side  
Performed the Blessed Sacrament  
With water, bread, and wine.  
  
In holy hush the Chieftans stared  
With arrows ready poised  
At this paleface man in long  
    black robe  
Who prayed in foreign tongue.  
Then stood tall with outstretched  
    palm  
Saluted all the tribe.  
Assured them all that they were friends  
Of sun and moon and stars.

These noted French explorers, Joliet and Marquette, having also passed by the site of future Omro likewise never gave a thought that one day years later their names would be linked with the Omro area history. Yet, in 1973, in commemoration of the 300th anniversary of their historic exploration of 1673, a group of voyageurs traveled the same route; they started out with two canoes from St. Ignace, Michigan, paddled along the shore of Green Bay, up the Fox river, stopping a short while in Omro, and on to Portage. There they portaged over to the Wisconsin and on to the Mississippi river.

Nicolas Perrot and others, perhaps Sieur de LaSalle, Louis Hennepin, Henry de Tonti, Father Rene Menard, Daniel Grayson du L'Hut (Duluth) may also have paddled by the Omro site traveling the same route to cross the state. Through the explorations of these men, and because of Frenchmen who settled in this area, Wisconsin came under the jurisdiction of France from 1634 to 1763.

Any of these Frenchmen would be amazed at the change that has taken place in the area that is now Omro. If they paddled through the city today the buildings they might accept having known cities, but what would certainly puzzle them would be the cars, trucks, motor boats, semis, and snowmobiles roaring, humming, and sputtering about. And above all they might be dumbfounded at the manner in which the people are dressed!

(ca. 12/11/30) - Years later the Fox river was used, not by explorers, but, by the militia. During 1827 quite a large force of Americans went through here on their way to Fort Winnebago at the Portage. That same year a treaty was made with the Menominees at Butte des Morts.

(ca. 12/11/23) - In 1828 the 5th U.S. Infantry came through here from St. Louis on their way to Fort Howard. The water at Portage was so high they floated their barges from the Wisconsin into the Fox without unloading. Thus, in the early years the river was a notable water highway.

*Sk. IV p. 76 (Bell Johnson slip)*

FIRST SETTLER

In 1745 Chas. Langlade, a half-breed married to a French woman, settled at Green Bay to become the first permanent white settler in Wisconsin. The French claim in this country was designated "New France".

In the treaty of 1763, because of British victories in Canada, this same territory passed from French to British Canadian domination. Later, in 1796 and for the next 40 years, Wisconsin was a part of the Northwest Territory. However, Wisconsin still remained distinctly French long after British occupation. Next it was Wisconsin Territory until on May 20, 1848 when Wisconsin was admitted to the Union as the 30th state.

*E. West. (Daily N.W. 6/21/37)*  
GRIGNON FAMILY

The Augustin Grignon (pronounced Green'-yo) family had much to do with the early history and settlement of our state.

*Mr. O.P. 62*

Augustin was the first white man to settle in Winnebago County. It was at Butte des Morts in 1818. He built and managed a Trading Post in company with James Polier of Green Bay. Grignon lived there until his death in 1860. *P.V. Larson - Bk II p. 32*

*Mr. O.P. 69*

The Grignon influence was also felt in our area, particularly the Robert Grignon Trading Post which was located where the settlement of Rivermoor is now.

*June 21 1837  
N.W.*

"About 1826, Robert Grignon, a nephew of old Augustin Grignon, became permanent agent at the Grand Butte. In 1830 he desired to set up business for himself. He operated a trading post on what is now the Benanger farm (1934?), a few miles above the Oshkosh cemetery. Robert united with his mercantile operations the practice of the Agricultural arts, in the crude style of the times. His venture did not prove profitable, and he never forgave himself for leaving his salaried position.

*Bk II p. 68  
N.W. 6/21/37*

"About 1826 the federal government had established a mail route between Fort Winnebago (Portage) and Fort Howard (Green Bay). The trail crossed the Wolf near the Grignon trading post, where a scow was kept for the transportation of the carrier and such other equestrian as passed that way. The charges were 25 cents for ferrying a man and horse, in the season, and 50 cents when ice had to be broken.

*Bk II p. 32  
P.V. Larson*

"In those days the marshes opposite Butte des Morts were capable of bearing up a horse and rider and coming up the Fox valley from the southwest, travelers along the trail rode to the very edge of the Wolf river, within easy hailing distance of the post. (Bogs have floated out since, leaving areas of open water. *Bk II p. 1*

*Bk III p. 1*  
In 1908 between 60 and 70 acres floated from Hay Bend area.) In 1833 another mail route was laid out by the government, crossing what is now called Coon's point in Oshkosh. (Rainbow Park now.) *P.P.P. p. 132  
Mr. Chas. C. Hoff*

*see*

- Bk II p. 32 - P.V. Larson*
- Bk III p. 1 bog floated out. - Daily N.W. Apr. 3, 1902.*



*June 21-1937  
N.W.*

"An impression exists that the old fur traders waxed rich, but an erroneous one it is. A universal scheme of credit existed among the earlier traders, whose tenure to the land on which they located was dependent on the goodwill of the savages. After loading down his squaws with blankets, provisions and trinkets, the Indian would most invariably say: 'No money now, no furs. We pay you when hunt is over', and turning on his heel, would set up the line of march through the door. Coming back in a few moments, he would assume a sorrowful face: 'How can we pay you when we have no gun, no traps, no kettle. And my son and my brother and my father and my grandfather have no gun or traps. So lend me some'.

"His demands were generally obeyed. The fellow might die from accident or disease that winter, or never come back to see the trader again and he would always lose some of the articles lent him and return the rest in a wretched condition."

*136 III p. 60  
N.W. 10/17/34*

"On the knoll near where the Robert Grignon Trading Post was located (Rivermoor) is a clump of lilacs. Inside this clump are tombstones marking the graves of Mary Grignon, wife of Robert and their child. The grave of Robert Grignon is believed to be near that of his wife. Tradition has it that the burial ground of the two Grignons is never to be disturbed, although this fact has not been definitely established." (1934 by Nile Behnke)

In fact there are families of Grignons in the county to this day. They may well be proud of their family's influence in shaping Wisconsin history.

TERRITORY

Later, in 1836, the state as we know it now, became, and was designated Wisconsin Territory. This was accomplished through the help and influence of Judge James Doty, former Federal Judge, and later the second Territorial Governor. His log cabin is preserved in Doty Park at Neenah.

*"Indian Land" punched*

*P.P. p. 296  
when known*

In 1836, at the Treaty of Cedars, near Kimberly, 4,000,000 acres of land lying north of the Fox river and west of the Wolf river was ceded by the Menominees to the U.S. Government for 18¢ per acre. This area was opened for settlement in 1840. The first permanent settlements in Winnebago County date from 1839. They were in Winnebago (now Oshkosh) and Butte des Morts (now Omro).

Immigration began in earnest about this time because of the Erie Canal in N.Y. State, built in 1825, which waterway opened up an immense territory for immigrants to travel west by boat, and particularly to the newly opened Indian Lands in Wisconsin.

Lead mining in the southwestern section of the state brought in many immigrants in the 1820s. The first manufactured product ever to be shipped from what is now Wisconsin was a wagon load of bullets! Later the Black Hawk war in the spring of 1832--the last and most colorful of the Indian uprisings on Wisconsin soil--served further to spread reports of the richness, fertility, and beauties of Wisconsin.

*1. BK II p. 166. - Omro Herald - 1938*

HOMESTEADING

*Mitchell & Co. v. ...  
P. 42*

"As a general rule the settlers in Wisconsin were poor, but industrious, men of large hearts and aspirations. They had a stern determination of 'I will conquer' ".

*4-11-39  
S. 122*

*M.S.*

Our earliest picture of the Omro area is one of trees, marsh land, Indians, and good fertile soil. The last item was the greatest drawing card for settlers. Always one had to eat, and only the good earth could grow lush crops. No doubt the trees, marsh, and Indians were the "flies in the ointment". However, these harassments did not deter the adventurers from settling on the land. This area was hunting grounds for 4 powerful Indian tribes-- Winnebagoes, Menominees, Chippewas, and Pottawattomies. They held possession of all the country from the Wolf river on the east and to the Mississippi on the west.

The Fox river was the Indians main hunting grounds, as it was alive with wild fowl and fish. The settlers shot great numbers of fowl to protect their grain fields; many were fed to the hogs as the families could not eat all of them.

*M.S. P. 127*

*First County Ag. Society acted upon March 1, 1858. Held a Fair in 1856. - M.S. P. 70.*

It could be of interest to note the first census of Winnebago County. This was taken in 1840-- 135 residents, 78 males and 57 females. No deaf, dumb, blind, insane or idiots, and no free colored persons or slaves. 44 men engaged in agriculture.

*M.S. P. 122*

Samuel Irwin busied himself with navigation. The Jourdain brothers, noted for their wrought iron work were listed in manufacturing and trade.

*M.S. P. 122*

16 students were attending schools at public charge in 1840, their expenses being paid by such noted pioneers of this area as Chas. and Augustin Grignon, the latter's son, and by James Knaggs, Oshkosh, and Wm. Powell (also an influence in Omro history).

40 children of 10 years or less and record showed also 1 man and 1 woman in the 70 to 80 range.

Ten years later the 1850 county census showed a total of 1,625 persons. 888 white males, 732 white females, 3 colored males and 2 colored females.

*1820-1855 - M.S. P. 14*

Information asked of each; Names, age, sex, color, profession, occupation, or trade of each over 15 years of age, value of real estate, place of birth, marriage within the year (there were 21), number of persons attending school during the year (237 children), number of persons over 20 who could not read or write (48), convicts (2), deaf person (1), other states and foreign nations: England 20, Maine 28, Pennsylvania 23, Vermont 18, 10 born in Germany.

All settlers were allowed to take out a 40 acre homestead. Many purchased more additional land for more acreage. The nearest land office in the earlier days was located at Green Bay, so journeying to claim, register, and purchase land was somewhat of an undertaking. One could get there either by traveling on foot, by boat, on horseback, or with a team of oxen. Few came with any other means of transportation than that of "shank's mares".

## WORDS, WIT AND WISDOM

*Hitchhiker Johnson*

By William and Mary Morris

Some weeks ago, commenting on the word "hitchhike," we noted that it is of fairly recent vintage. Some sources, we said, used it in reference to a means of travel whereby two people would use a single horse in this fashion: one would ride for a fair distance while the other proceeded afoot. The first would then dismount, tie up the horse, and start walking. The second traveler, when he reached the horse, would mount and ride until he caught up with his partner, when the process would be repeated. We indicated some skepticism about this story, so Prof. Thomas F. Adams of the University of Toledo very properly takes us to task.

"I was surprised that our own best lexicographer should so forget his Johnson as to treat with disbelief the ancient and honorable method by which two poor men and one horse could proceed to London from the country. As far as the term 'hitchhike' is concerned, your logic is impeccable; the word has nothing to do with this practice. The proper expression for this traditional, but neither fabulous nor legendary, mode of travel is 'riding and tying.'

"It is not a fable we may believe if we wish; it is the way by which, as the actor David Garrick told Boswell, Samuel Johnson and David Garrick traveled to London from Lichfield on March 2, 1737 . . . It was common then to cast doubt on the extremity of Johnson's poverty, and Boswell casts doubt on the tale here. But you will note that he casts no doubt on the existence of the practice.

"I don't wish to ride you for this, but I was almost fit to be tied when you scoffed at the authenticity of this attractive piece of literary history."

Few settlers had horses to ride. If one was so fortunate and another man was traveling with him for one reason or another, a "pioneer mode was to 'ride and tie'. One rode a couple of miles or so, tied his horse to a blazed tree, started walking along the trail until he was overtaken and passed by the other. He would afterward come up with the horse tied by the friend, waiting for him to mount. This was not a social way of journeying, and often the party overtaken would trot along beside his mounted friend to get a few minutes 'chat'." (From "Family Tree of Columbia County" by A.J. Turner. Loaned by Ethel Bishop.)

GALLUP TREK

*more about Gallup in Mitchell  
& Osborne 709.13 - of Box II*

The early day trail between Green Bay and Oshkosh, used by all early settlers to record land purchases, was through the wilderness. An account written by Henry Gallup, a founder of Oshkosh, gives one an idea of this long and tedious trip. *m. + O. p. 65*

In 1836 Henry and his brother started from Green Bay traveling over this trail with Lake Winnebago as their goal. Henry Gallup's experience was printed in the 1878 Oshkosh city directory by Richard J. Harney, historian. Mr. Gallup's narrative of his adventures, although the account contains much about Oshkosh, is an interesting one. The article was preserved in a scrap book. *Osh. Weekly N.W.  
July, 1953  
issue  
BRIS p. 28*

"When we left Ohio, our destination was Lake Winnebago, and leaving our father, and mother, and sister in good quarters, myself and brother started for that particular locality without making inquiries, except as to the direction and distance.

"We started on foot (from Green Bay), our course being up the Fox River. A sandy road of five miles, thickly settled by French and half-breeds, with quaint looking houses, many of them surrounded by palisades and the windows secured by shutters, brought us to De Pere, a rival of Green Bay. Here we found quite a number of houses and extensive preparation for building more.

"We were told it was necessary to cross the river, and were accordingly ferried over in a skiff; an Indian trail was pointed out to us to follow, and we were told it was 10 miles to the first house. Five miles carried us beyond civilization. We expected to find a new country, but were quite unprepared to find it entirely unsettled, and a foot path 10 miles in length struck me as remarkable.

Avoided Deep Ravine

"Our trail led us directly along the river. Some times we were on the top of a hill, and then our path would wind down to the very water's edge to avoid some deep ravine, as nature seldom makes bridges. The scenery was beautiful, the side of the river we were upon was quite open, while the other side was heavily timbered.

"The waters of the broad river undisturbed, except by an occasional Indian canoe, which seemed to float so beautifully, we were sorry we had not adopted that mode of travel.

"Our trail would sometimes pass through a grove of wild plum and crab apple trees with scarcely room enough for a person to pass which suggested to us ambuscades, and we were always glad when we were through them. Indian file was the mode of traveling in those days.

"Our 10 miles were soon over; when we came down upon a low natural prairie covered with a luxuriant growth of grass, the river had quite an expansion, and in it were several little grass islands.

"This was Petit Kackalin, and here was the house spoken of; a log house with the usual layout of buildings, and surrounded by a dozen Indian wigwams. This was the residence of Eleazer Williams, the veritable Dauphin of France; but he was as ignorant of the fact at that time as we were ourselves.

"As we approached the house, we were beset by an army of Indian dogs, and their bark was as intelligible to us as anything we heard on the premises. The Indians looked their astonishment at seeing two Kick-e-ma-ka-man boys in their encampment. We made many inquiries of them, but got laughed at for our pains.

"As none of Williams' family could be found, it seemed like seeking information under difficulties; and finding the trail that led up the river, we pushed on feeling satisfied that if we had gained no information, we had not imparted any, so the Indians and we were even.

#### Land Was Beautiful

"Our next point, we had been told, was Grand Kack-a-lin, which for some reason--perhaps the name--we supposed was quite a place. About sundown, we came down from the high bank upon which our trail had been, upon the most beautiful flat land I ever saw, covered with a tuft of short grass and dotted all over with little groves of crab-apple and plum trees. The flat contained perhaps a hundred acres, the hill enclosing it in shape of a crescent, and the boiling rapid river in front, which here is more than half a mile in width. Here we found several large springs, very strongly impregnated with sulphur, at which we drank.

"Upon this flat we discovered a large pile of buildings which consisted of a large dwelling house and trading post, with the necessary out buildings, and belonging to Mr. Grignon, an Indian trader. This was the Grand Kack-a-lin, but the name is applied to the rapids in the river.

"Our greeting here was still more cordial than at our last place of calling as there were more dogs. (In 1839 the present Grignon House was known as "The Mansion in the Woods".) At this house, we applied for food and lodgings, but without success. Things began to have rather an unpleasant look, and we began to think we were too far from home--20 miles from Green Bay and 15 miles from anyplace.

"On looking about the premises, we discovered for the first time that day after crossing the river, something that wore pantaloon; and on accosting him, found that he could speak English. He was half Negro, and the balance Stockbridge Indian. He informed us that Mr. Grignon was not at home, and there would be no use trying to get accommodations in his absence. That he lived directly on the opposite side of the river--that his canoe would not carry us--but he would get an Indian to take us over, and that we should be his guest over night.

"To all these propositions we readily consented, and procuring an Indian to take us across, we got into a log canoe, when our ferryman, an old Indian of perhaps 80 or 90 years, taking his position in the stern with a shoving pole, shoved us safely through the boiling waters. Passing the night under the hospitable roof of our mixed friend, we hailed our native ferryman, and were again soon upon our march.

#### Indian Knelt in Prayer

"Passing rapidly along, we came past upon an Indian in a kneeling posture beside the trail and at the foot of a tall post, upon the top of which was a gilded rooster, while in a side box set in the post was the infant Jesus. We were quite startled, but Mr. Indian maintained a perfect gravity, and we left him at his morning orisons.

"At a point five miles from the Grand Kack-a-lin, called Little Chute, we found a Catholic Mission in course of erection, to which Nym Crinkle gives a very ancient origin. The manner of the building was a curious one, which was by setting up posts about eight feet apart, and then filling up between with small logs and pinning through the posts into the end of the logs. There were one or two men at work upon it.

"It was afterwards occupied by a Catholic priest, who was also a physician, and administered to one band of Menominee Indians, both bodily and spiritually, with very beneficial results.

"Five miles further brought us to the Grand Chute, now Appleton. Here was a perpendicular fall in the river of seven feet, but close to the shore, the rock had worn away so that a boat could take the plunge in going down and be led up by ropes if quite light.

"Here the Durham boats, which did all the freighting at that time up and down the river, were obliged to discharge their freight and roll it along under the bank on poles to above the falls. The boats were then lifted and dragged up by a large party of Indians and reloaded above. The amount of freighting was then considerable. All the government supplies for Fort Winnebago were passed up this way and detachments of soldiers often passed in the same manner.

"Nothing could exceed the grandeur of the scenery at this point, everything at that time being in its wild and natural state, and no habitation within miles. Just below the falls at the mouth of a little ravine was a little plat of grass turf

among a grove of plum and forest trees, entwined with wild grape vines, which was the favorite camping ground, and a more enchanting spot was never found.

### Heaven Was Canopy

"I had the pleasure of camping here two nights that same fall, in the month of November under most unfavorable circumstances-- a crew of drunken Indians with nothing but the canopy of Heaven above us. But still the place had attractions for me.

"Following the bank of the river a short distance above, our trail suddenly diverged from the river. We found ourselves floundering through the woods and mud of Mud Creek. This was the first place we had found but what had some attraction. This was dismal enough.

"A few miles and we emerged into another enchanting spot of ground known as Little Butte des Morts, or the Mounds of the Dead. Here on a rising piece of ground are several large mounds where the dead of some Indian battle had been buried. An expansion in the river here is called Little Butte des Morts Lake, at the upper end of which appears to be quite a village. This was Winnebago Rapids, (now Neenah). Here the government had built a grist mill and had commenced the building of a large number of small log houses for the Menominee Indians which were in different stages of completion, when the work was stopped by the Indians consenting to sell the land to the government.

"Some of the houses the Indians had taken possession of by tearing out floors and pitching their tents on the ground inside the walls. They were also furnished with four farmers to instruct the Indians in farming, at a salary of \$800 per annum, which the Indians paid. These farmers were the only inhabitants of the place, at the house of one of whom, Clark Dickinson, we were welcomed and furnished with our dinner. We could make but a short stay, as we still had 16 miles to travel without a habitation. m. & O. p. 69

"Our trail now ran across the country through prairies and openings, to Knagg's Ferry, now in the Fifth Ward of the City of Oshkosh, (now 16th Ward--1953) and just above Algoma Bridge. I do not suppose I could, at this time, trace that trail through all the highly cultivated fields between these two points. But at that time, it was a lonesome journey indeed; all the low ground was covered with water a foot deep, and grass up to our arms, and in the whole distance, we did not see a living thing, with the exception of a few prairie chickens.

*James Knaggs Owned Ferry* m. & O. p. 65

"Arriving at the river at the point mentioned, we found a log house belonging to Mr. Knaggs. He was a half-breed, and owner of the ferry, but which was then run by Webster Stanley. Stanley lived on the opposite side of the river in a board shanty, and who, in answer to our call, came over for us. m. & O. p. 65

"We were once more among friends. Mr. Stanley had, about two years before, left Ohio and went to Green Bay and then to Winnebago

Rapids (Neenah), and had, within 30 days previous to our arrival at the ferry, moved to this point. We now learned that our journey from where we had crossed the river five miles from Green Bay had all been through Indian territory, and that we were now for the first time on government land.

"We had at last arrived at our journey's end, and our next object was to bring up the family. There were just two ways to do it. One way was on horseback by land, the other by water. We adopted the latter, and procuring a large bark canoe and an Indian, we started. Passing down the river, we stopped at an Indian encampment on what is now Jackson's Point, and procured another Indian, which was thought to be sufficient crew--respectively named No-to-kee-sleek and Kish-a-quom. These two fellows who were full of fun and frolic, and who, if we could have talked with them, would, no doubt, have been very companionable.

"We then saw for the first time the spot on which the City of Oshkosh now stands.

"Our Indians worked with a will and we very soon passed through Lake Winnebago, and were in the rapid waters of the Lower Fox. Here the Indians laid aside their paddles and taking long poles confined themselves entirely to steering the boat clear of rocks, the sharp points of many of which were above water.

"We were leisurely enjoying the beautiful scenery of the river when we were startled by the sudden velocity of our canoe and the wild whoop of our Indians. On looking about us, we found ourselves on the very brink of the falls. The Indians had from a listless manner and sitting posture suddenly sprung to their feet, one in the bow and the other in the stern, and every nerve was strung for their energies were to be tried to the utmost. Their manner was really terrifying. We had hardly time to notice so much before we had taken the fearful leap and were in the terrible breakers below. One false set with the steering pole, and we were surely lost.

#### Stove Hole in Boat

"I watched the Indians closely--they were as pale and stern as marble statues. The bow of our canoe when we descended into the breakers, struck a rock, which stove considerable of a hole through it, when our leeward Indian, with the quickness of thought, had his blanket over the hole and his foot upon it. We were going with the speed of a race horse. About a mile below the falls, we were enabled to make a landing and repair damages.

"We again encountered very rapid and rough water at the Kack-a-lin, but the Indians were masters of the situation, and we passed through in safety and arrived at Green Bay towards night of the same day.

"Taking the family and a few necessary articles into our frail craft, the next day, we started on our return which we accomplished in two days; the Indians using paddles in still water, poles in moderately swift water, and walking and leading the canoe when it was very rapid.



"The appearance of the country on the west shore of Lake Winnebago from Neenah up was beautiful to look upon from our canoe--heavily timbered from Neenah to Garlic Island and the balance of the way openings.

"We had now arrived at the point started for when we left Ohio--the veritable Lake Winnebago. Now the questions to decide were: Where to locate? Who to buy of? Should we buy? The country from Oshkosh to Neenah then belonged to the government. Then came the Brothertown Indians' land, fronting six miles on the lake; adjoining them north, the Stockbridge Indians with the same amount of frontage; the government owning the balance of the territory around to Menasha.

"We now decided to make a circuit of the lake, so as to better understand the situation. This trip we accomplished in about a week's time, using a pack-horse to carry our baggage. We encountered one white family in the round trip, which was Mr. Pier, who had just built a log house on the Fond du Lac Creek.

#### White Families Few

"After getting back and comparing notes, the following was the summing up of all we had seen and heard: First from Green Bay to this point of our sojournment on the west side of the river and lake belonged to the Indians, and but three white families the entire distance of 50 miles. There was but one family between us and Fort Winnebago (now Portage City) and Mr. Pier's the only house between here and Milwaukee or Sheboygan.

"Being better pleased with the west side of the lake than any other place we had seen and learning that the government intended trying to purchase it from the Indians the coming fall, we decided to await the issue, in the meantime amusing ourselves with hunting and fishing and exploration.

"In September, I had the pleasure of ferrying Gov. Dodge and suite over the river myself--the ferryman being absent--who was on his way to the annual Indian payment then held at Cedar Rapids, near the Grand Chute (now Appleton). The entire party (six I think) were on horseback, the governor armed to the teeth. He had two pairs of pistols, and a bowie knife on his person, and a brace of large horse pistols in his saddle holsters. I suppose to impress upon the Menominees what he told the Winnebagoes a few years before--that he was as brave as Julius Caesar.

"At this payment then held, the treaty was formed, ceding to the government the territory from here to Green Bay, and although the treaty could not be ratified by Congress until December, we did not choose to wait--never doubting but what the old veteran governor knew what he was about. Accordingly, in the month of October, 1836, we commenced the erection of two log houses on ground now within the City of Oshkosh.

"The Indians were quite plenty here at that time and manifested some curiosity as to what we were doing but were perfectly friendly.

"Webster Stanley was the owner and occupant of the other

house. It was about the first of November, but we had to make another trip to Green Bay for our goods. We hired a boat called a lighter this time, of about six tons capacity, and with a crew of 10 or 11 Indians. We made the trip up in seven days, arriving at home on the evening of the 16th of November.

#### Lake Froze Over

"Camping out and cooking rations for that trip was anything but pleasant at that season of the year. It was the last day that a boat could have passed through, the lake freezing entirely over that night.

"Although liking the excitement of a new country, I must confess that that first winter was rather tedious. Our two families were the only ones nearer than Neenah or Fond du Lac with no roads but the lake and surrounded by Indians, not less than 500 wintering within what is now the City of Oshkosh.

"The next summer was passed rather more pleasantly, the monotony being relieved by an occasional Durham boat passing up the river with supplies for Fort Winnebago, and frequently a company of United States soldiers.

"We had made some little progress in the way of farming, and in the fall of 1837 had raised some few crops and sowed the first acre of winter wheat ever sowed in Wisconsin, and only to have the most of it stolen by the Indians the next summer, as soon as harvested. They carrying it off in the sheaf in their canoes.

"In the winter of 1837, we had the first accession to our population by the arrival of two more families. Messrs. Evans and Wright, and from that time the country began to settle slowly on both sides of the Fox river--that upon the north side not coming into market until 1840.

"We had given this point (the mouth of the river) the name of 'Athens', and goods were so marked at Green Bay destined for this place. But at a meeting of the inhabitants, called for the purpose of choosing a name for this particular locality, which was held at the house of George Wright, and which was attended by all the French and half-breeds from as far up the river as Butte des Morts, and who, in fact, had no interest in the place or its name, it was decided by an even vote that the place or locality should be known hereafter and forever as 'Oshkosh.' But it came nearer to universal suffrage than any election I ever attended. Smoking was participated in to the extent that you could not recognize a person across the room, the smoke was so dense--plug tobacco and kinnikinnick (the bark of a bush by that name), mixed in about equal quantities. Such was the christening of Oshkosh."

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This very same trail just described was used by countless land-buying pioneers in those early days.

To better comprehend the population increase, the following report is accurate. It is from the Wisconsin Blue Book of 1901.

## POPULATION

of Winnebago County according to  
BLUE BOOK - WISCONSIN - 1901

18.491

1840 - 135  
1842 - 143  
1846 - 732  
1847 - 2,747  
1850 - 10,167  
1855 - 17,430  
1860 - 23,770  
1865 - 29,767  
1870 - 37,279  
1875 - 45,033  
1880 - 42,740  
1885 - 50,395  
1890 - 50,007  
1895 - 57,627  
1900 - 58,225

This shows the population growth within a span of sixty years.

## THE TOWNSHIP

It took first the settling of the township before a settlement of a village (Omro) could materialize or be possible. So the following facts of Omro Township will be noted.

In the spring of 1846 Edw. West purchased over 500 acres of land. The exact description being Township 18, north of Range 17 East. 4 center 40s of Section 23. He, West, marked and cut a wagon road from Rosendale in Fond du Lac county to his land in Butte des Morts (now Omro). He had to do this to move his family here. The nearest settlement at that time was Fond du Lac and the Fourierite (Ripon). This had a block house and a few families.

Fourierite was erected in 1844. A circuit rider was repelled by the "free love and wife swapping" indulged in at the long house, and by complaining to state legislature he had them legally expelled. The building is still used as a housing unit (1975), and may become a National Preserved building.

Edw. West commented in 1846, "Mr. Stanley offered to sell his claim (Oshkosh) for a small sum to me, but Omro looked more inviting."

West built two log houses, one of them near Section 23 of what is now the Township of Omro, Winnebago County. (Map pg. 21) Winnebago County being set off from Brown County in 1840. The first Post Office was established near the center of the town in 1847 and was discontinued in 1852.

"In March of year 1846 came a big flood. Mr. John S. Johnson had just settled in the town and had built a shanty on section 30. On the 14th of that month a heavy snow continued for four days and nights. Then it cleared up a short time and again it started to rain. This lasted for 48 hours and converted the snow into water and the streams ran in torrents. The country was so flooded that half of its surface was covered with water. Large portions of Omro, Rushford, Algoma, Oshkosh, Nekimi and Black Wolf were under water. Old Chief Oshkosh said he never saw anything like it, and an old squaw, Mother Rabbit, over 80 years of age, who had lived near Omro, said she never remembered anything like that. A number of settlers abandoned their claims, but in a short time the water disappeared except on the low land and the marshes. Then the settlers returned to their shanties."

*Wright history  
Omro Herald  
12/11/30.*

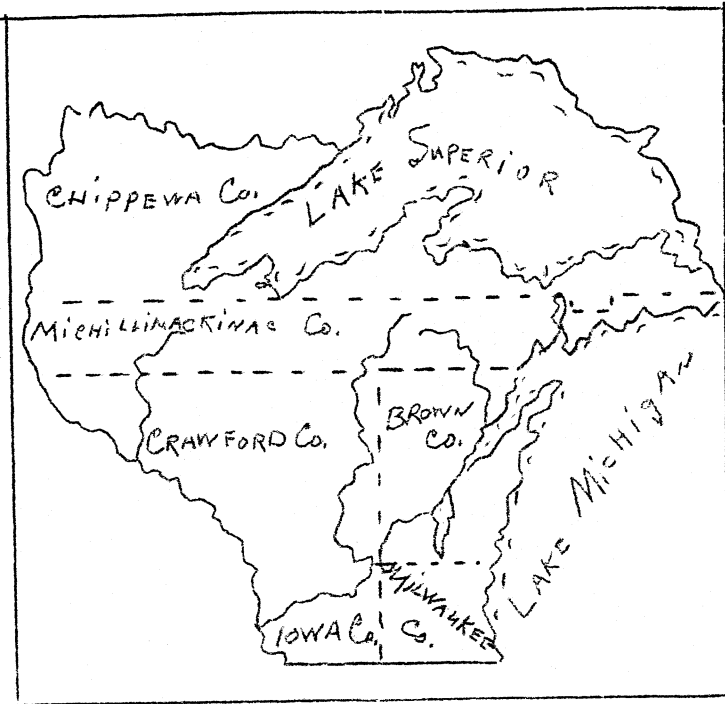
*E.B.*

*Omro Journal  
1846  
(O.H. May 21, 1853)*

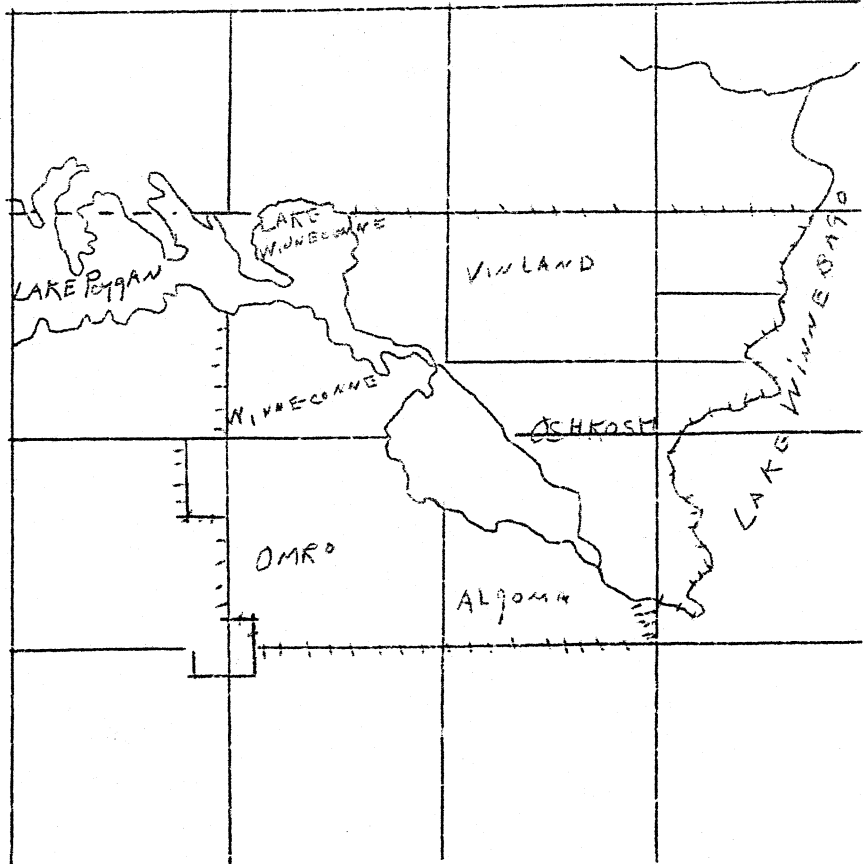
*E. Hill  
H. 11/30/57*

Bl. III p. 67  
M.W. name of  
6/25/36.

Wisconsin Counties in 1836.



1839 - Part of Brown County set off as Winnebago County - 1840.



Territorial legislature created the county. An act of 1843 approved the organization of said county.

By Legislative Act of--  
1847 - Town organized as  
Butte des Morts,  
from Winnebago as  
indicated by |||||

1849 - It became Bloomingdale.

1852 - Named Omro.

This according to  
Emma Jaeck.

(Bl. I p. 100)

## SETTLERS AND RESIDENCE

*E. West*  
*Q. H. 11/2/59*

Some of the next settlers who came in 1846 after Edw. West were Abram Quick, Hezekiah Gifford, John Munroe, R.M. Buck, John R. Padleford and John S. Johnson.

*H. 7/27/55*  
*Munroe B.*  
*Q. H. 6/25/10*  
*Q. H. 4x5*

In the summer of the same year, 1846, also came Barna Haskell, Myron Howe, Leuman Scott, Walter Stewart, Nelson Olin, Frederick Tice, Gilman Lowd, Smith Jones, Musgrove, Isaac Germain and A. Beals. C.W. Beals came later, perhaps before 1860.

Omro was first settled by a hardy class of men and women, mostly from the New England states.

Anyone interested in knowing the very early settlers of Omro 'Ca. 1840's' Township and where they lived may read the following as found in "Early Settler's" account: *Township section map pg. 21.* *50x2*

*Frederick*  
*Simon*  
*Q. H.*  
*12/7/39*

Arnold & Morton, sec. 8, 120 acres;  
 Abner Brush, sec. 7, 40 acres;  
 J. Abernethy, sec. 14, 160 acres;  
 F. Brandy, sec. 24, 80 acres;  
 George Bunker, sec. 12, 80 acres;  
 S. Atwood, sec. 28, 80 acres;  
 O. Babcock, sec. 18, 40 acres;  
 L.C. Booth, sec. 15, 85 acres;  
 J.S. Baker, sec. 26, 40 acres;  
 George Booth, sec. 15, 85 acres;  
 Henry Baker, sec. 28, 80 acres;  
 Albert Bernschien, sec. 3, 125 acres;  
 J. Banks, sec. 17, 50 acres;  
 Trangott Bornschien, sec. 2, 100 acres;  
 T.J. Bartow, sec. 9, 50 acres;  
 F.B. Bunker, sec. 18, 45 acres;  
 Thomas Baily, sec. 18, 12 acres;  
 N. Busam, sec. 35, 40 acres;  
 J.F. Barnett, sec. 22, 110 acres;  
 R.M. Buck, sec. 25, 80 acres;  
 Warren Bates, sec. 35, 60 acres;  
 J.B. Cain, sec. 34, 80 acres;  
 S.D. Bartlett, sec. 30, 36 acres;  
 Mason Campbell, sec. 26, 160 acres;  
 S.T. Barnard, sec. 18, 40 acres;  
 T.H. Cheeny, sec. 23, 180 acres;  
 E.R. Bennett, sec. 6 9, 124 acres;  
 Dennis Childs, sec. 17, 51 acres;  
 Albert Bennett, sec. 36, acres;  
 H. Chamberlain, sec. 1, 51 acres;  
 G.W. Beckwith, sec. 7, 80 acres;  
 Sam Challoner, sec. 13, 48 acres;  
 Mrs. E. Betts, sec. 27, 80 acres;  
 L.S. Chase, sec. 12, 80 acres;  
 Philo Beals, sec. 24, 80 acres;  
 W.H. Chase, sec. 36, 80 acres;  
 O.F. Berkley, sec. 8, 40 acres;  
 Mrs. A. Charin, sec. 1, 80 acres;  
 Mrs. S.C. Bills, sec. 29, 100 acres;  
 Hiram Cooley, sec. 36, 60 acres;  
 Austin Clark, sec. 1, 80 acres;

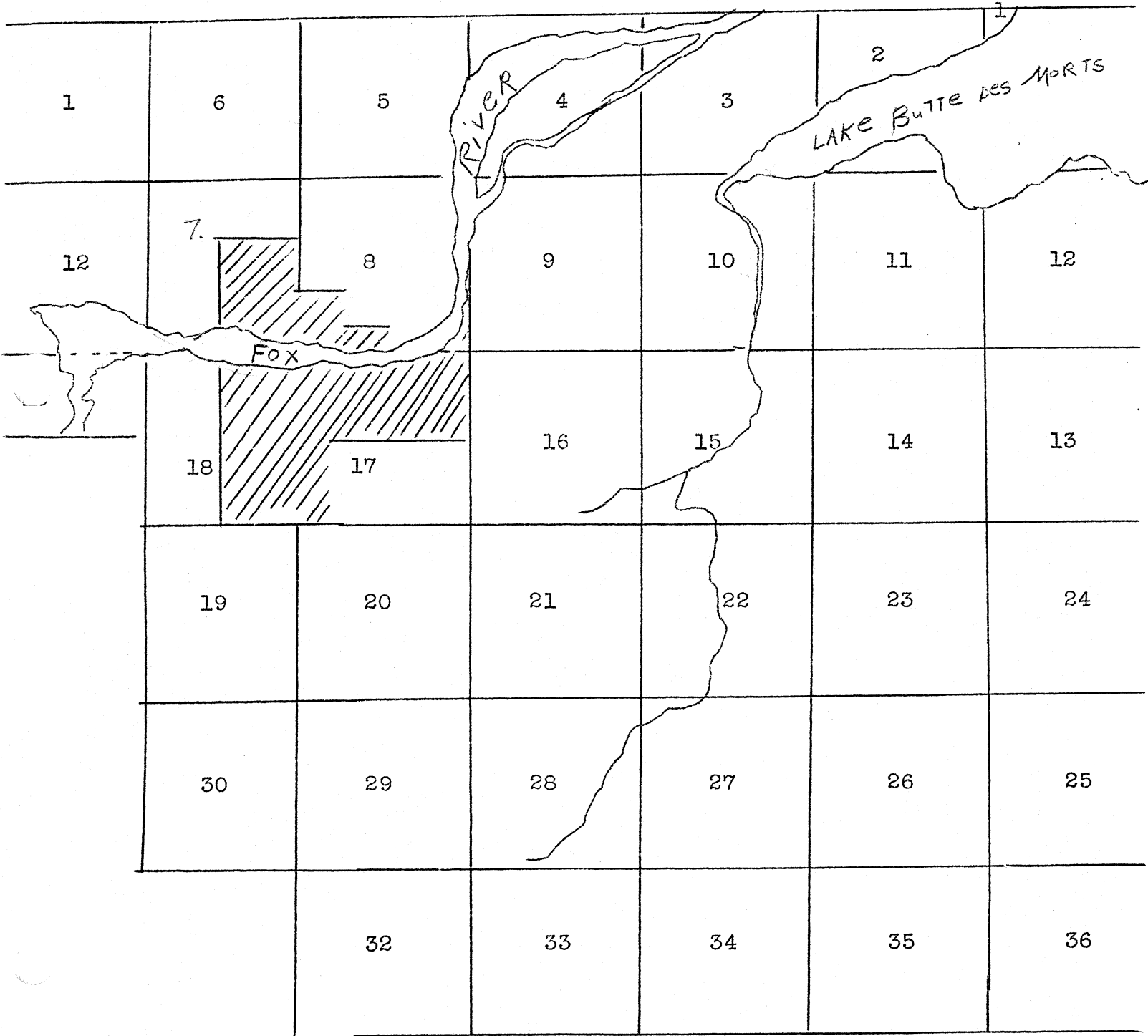
Wm. Blackburn, sec. 20, 80 acres;  
 J.G. Bloomer, sec. 20, 80 acres;  
 John Crozier, sec. 25, 80 acres;  
 J.L. Bloomer, sec. 16, 40 acres;  
 A.A. Cross, sec. 24, 90 acres;  
 Isaac Bradley, sec. 1, 90 acres;  
 A.W. Cross, sec. 3, 82 acres;  
*also -* C. Cope, sec. 17, 15 acres;  
 D. Culver, sec. zwl, 10 acres;  
 C. Cussick, sec. 5, 56 acres;  
 E.C. Dake, sec. 30, 60 acres;  
 J.W. Dake, sec. 30, 25 acres;  
 J.C. Dake, sec. 30, 45 acres;  
 O.A. Day, sec. 14, 89 acres;  
 A.K. Brush, sec. 4 & 9, 185 acres;  
 H.J. Davis, sec. 12, 160 acres;  
 G. Darby, sec. 13, 100 acres;  
 W. Drake, sec. 6, 160 acres;  
 Pat Dunn, sec. 7, 60 acres;  
 Charles Ehlert, sec. 26, 40 acres;  
 Joe Elliot, sec. 18, 40 acres;  
 Peter Fisher, sec. 12, 80 acres;  
 B.W. Forbes, sec. 11, 70 acres;  
 D. Feller, sec. 26, 5 acres;  
 Mrs. W. Gardinier, sec. 19, 77 acres;  
 Joe Garda, sec. 33, 80 acres;  
 G.W. Goodwin, sec. 35, 40 acres;  
 James Goggins, sec. 6, 90 acres;  
 John Goggins, sec. 6, 90 acres;  
 C.W. Goss, sec. 10, 40 acres;  
 James Grier, sec. 33, 39 acres;  
 H.C. Gustavus, sec. 24, 40 acres;  
 Polly Griswold, sec. 10, 40 acres;  
 C.A. Hale, sec. 18, 158 acres;  
 James Hallen, sec. 17, 10 acres;  
 J.P. Hallen, sec. 17, 10 acres;  
~~Ham~~ David, sec. 20, 99 acres;  
 G.H. Hatch, sec. 27, 119 acres;  
 James Hayward, sec. 29, 40 acres;  
*John -* J.D. Haigh, sec. 32, 40 acres;  
 J. Haigh, sec. 32, 240 acres;  
 Isaac Hedges, sec. 16, 60 acres;  
 S.V. Hennes, sec. 19, 100 acres;  
 H. Hinchliff, sec. 29, 120 acres;  
 Hildebrant, sec. 27, 41 acres;  
 J.N. Hoaglin, sec. 13, 157 acres;  
 Myron Howe, sec. 9, 100 acres;  
 Joe Hotchkiss, sec. 9, 64 acres;  
*lander -* L. Hough, sec. 5, 40 acres;  
 J. Houston, sec. 4, 88 acres;  
 M. Huntington, sec. 1, 27 acres;  
 Sam Hubbel, sec. 7, 31 acres;  
 Albert Humphrey, sec. 26, 40 acres;  
 E. Humphrey, sec. 23, 135 acres;  
 B. Jackson, sec. 30, 20 acres;  
 August Joachiem, sec. 12, 80 acres;  
 Sam Johnson, sec. 7, 66 acres;  
 Luther Johnson, sec. 7, 40 acres;  
 Mrs. S. Johnson, sec. 18, 40 acres;

John S. Johnson, sec. 20, 40 acres;  
 Hiram C. Johnson, sec. 20, 40 acres;  
 Hiram C. Johnson, sec. 36, 80 acres;  
 Joe Johnson, sec. 34, 35 acres;  
 Smith Jones, sec. 14, 2 acres;  
 C. Judson, sec. 32, 130 acres;  
 Hiram Kanoff, sec. 16, 80 acres;  
 E.D. Knapp, sec. 22, 180 acres;  
 John King, sec. 1, 59 acres;  
 Wm. Knight, sec. 30, 76 acres;  
 B. Koberstein, sec. 12, 40 acres;  
 Martin Korlaskie, sec. 12, 40 acres;  
 Joe Kopletz, sec. 11, 40 acres;  
 Gordon Kanoff, sec. 17, 78 acres;  
*Edna* - Mrs. A. Laiten, sec. 20, 90 acres;  
 L. Laiten, sec. 20, 42 acres;  
 Z.D. Lewis, sec. 15, 160 acres;  
 L.B. Lewis, sec. 20, 80 acres;  
 J.E. Lewis, sec. 12, 79 acres;  
 P. Lindenstruth, sec. 12, 80 acres;  
 D.W. Loop, sec. 29, 60 acres;  
 Wm. Lowd, sec. 24, 80 acres;  
 Ed. Marhar, sec. 30, 17 acres;  
 Pat Mahoney, sec. 30, 75 acres;  
 C.H. Marshall, sec. 19, 59 acres;  
 Ed. Marshall, sec. 10, 53 acres;  
 E.R. Martin, sec. 10, 70 acres;  
 Jay Martin, sec. 12, 160 acres;  
 Pat McMahaon, sec. 7, 8 acres;  
 John McCabe, sec. 30, 20 acres;  
*David* - D. McGuire, sec. 18, 60 acres;  
 Tom McNeary, sec. 10, 80 acres;  
 G. McKean, sec. 33, 40 acres;  
 L. McKenzie, sec. 8, 40 acres;  
 John McLean, sec. 1, 80 acres;  
 James McLean, sec. 1, 119 acres;  
 Wm. McQuay, sec. 1, 72 acres;  
 W.W. & P.H. Merrill, sec. 11, 160 acres;  
 George Miller, sec. 3, 99 acres;  
 Wm. Miller, sec. 3, 99 acres;  
 G.W. Minkler, sec. 25, 161 acres;  
 David Minkler, sec. 36, 157 acres;  
 M. Morris, sec. 24, 40 acres;  
 Henry Murphy, sec. 11, 80 acres;  
 C. Murphy, sec. 5, 90 acres;  
 E.R. Nelson, sec. 30, 180 acres;  
*Melissa* - N. Olin, sec. 19, 77 acres;  
 Mrs. Z. Olin, sec. 19, 3 acres;  
 N. Parks, sec. 34, 160 acres;  
*Edna* - S.D. Paddleford, sec. 10, 240 acres;  
 Wm. Parker, Sec. 18, 124 acres;  
 J.R. Paddleford, sec. 14, 240 acres;  
 Sam Payton, sec. 19, 34 acres;  
 Tom Palfrey, sec. 34, 34 acres;  
 W.N. Peaslee, sec. 9, 99 acres;  
 George Pingry, sec. 21, 50 acres;  
 John Pingry, sec. 21, 245 acres;  
*Carissa* - D.E. Pingry, sec. 16, 40 acres;  
 F.W. Place, sec. 16, 40 acres;



J.D. Williams, sec. 27, 140 acres;  
 Henry Stearns, sec. 9, 86 acres;  
 Francis Pew, sec. 35, 240 acres;  
 Peter Price, sec. 1, 49, acres;  
 H.M. Rice, sec. 27, 40 acres;  
 John Reynolds, sec. 27, 160 acres;  
 D.W. Reed, sec. 20, 40 acres;  
 Sam Robbins, sec. 11, 40 acres;  
 Wm. Robbins, sec. 11, 80 acres;  
 Alfred Robbins, sec. 16, 100 acres;  
 A. Rogers, sec. 24, 40 acres;  
 Jude Rogers, sec. 35, 100 acres;  
 F.T. Rogers, sec. 35, 80 acres;  
 John Ross, sec. 19, 58 acres;  
 A. & H. Ross, sec. 28, 80 acres;  
 Reubin Ross, sec. 29, 160 acres;  
 Elisha Root, sec. 32, 160 acres;  
 J.P. Rumsey, sec. 13, 60 acres;  
 George Rumsey, sec. 5, 95 acres;  
 Richard Rumsey, sec. 5, 95 acres;  
 Mrs. O. Rumsey, sec. 8, 25 acres;  
*Winnell* - J.T. Russel, sec. 7, 49 acres;  
 James Rush, sec. 33, 79 acres;  
 H.E. Stanton, sec. 19, 55 acres;  
 J. Stanton, sec. 20, 40 acres;  
 John Starr, sec. 32, 80 acres;  
 Joseph Starr, sec. 32, 80 acres;  
 Sam Stancliff, sec. 20, 60 acres;  
 Frank Seeber, sec. 11, 10 acres;  
 W.W. Simpson, sec. 21, 110 acres;  
 L.J. Silverthorne, sec. 19, 70 acres;  
 J. Stever, sec. 36, 40 acres;  
 Wm. Stevens, sec. 34, 160 acres;  
*Fred* - F. Stipp, sec. 4, 5 acres;  
*Ernest* - E.T. Sheldon, sec. 17, 49 acres;  
 R. Slocum, sec. 27, 60 acres;  
 P.O. Sullivan, sec. 6, 80 acres;  
 Tradden Stone, sec. 34, 80 acres;  
 T. Spauling, sec. 10, 120 acres;  
 J.R. Taylor, sec. 10, 79 acres;  
 S.R. Taylor, sec. 21, 70 acres;  
*Richard* - R. Tanner, sec. 22, 70 acres;  
 J.K. Terrell, sec. 12, 90 acres;  
 N. Thorpe, sec. 7, 20 acres;  
*Thomas* - T.J. Thompson, sec. 9 & 10, 110 acres;  
 Wm. Thrall, sec. 15, 80 acres;  
 Tom Thomas, sec. 26, 89 acres;  
 Hiram Tripp, sec. 5, 67 acres;  
 Joe Treleven, sec. 16, 160 acres;  
 Robert Vessey, sec. 22, 160 acres;  
 S.M. Wagstaff, sec. 16, 80 acres;  
 O. Williams, sec. 23, 80 acres;  
 W. Wilmarth, sec. 33, 80 acres;  
 Mrs. E. Wilmarth, sec. 33, 80 acres;  
 A. Wilson, sec. 7, 110 acres;  
 E. Winchester, sec. 12, 80 acres;  
 Frank Wells, sec. 34, 80 acres;  
 Joe Whitehead, sec. 28, 80 acres;  
 A. Whitemarsh, sec. 14, 59 acres;  
 Levi Whitemarsh, sec. 13, 160 acres;  
 H.W. Wright, sec. 17, 15 acres;  
*Henry* - H. Young, sec. 5, 67 acres;  
 M. Whitemarsh, sec. 23, 140 acres.

OMRO TOWNSHIP MAP



## GILMAN LOWD

Each settler who came "west" had stories that were similar in many respects, yet each one was distinctive from the others. An account of Gilman Lowd's trek to Wisconsin and his life here could serve as a typical example of pioneer life. Mr. Lowd's experiences were written by his daughter, Mrs. Geo. Gilkey in 1911 for a meeting of the Early Settlers Reunion at Omro.

*BR IV p. 9 dit.*  
*2/22/11*  
*9/12/11*  
 "Mr. Lowd was born in Weare, N. H. in 1820. When he was 26 years old he decided the opportunities for a young man were better in the west, and accordingly in 1846 he started for Wisconsin, going by rail to Albany, N.Y., and then by packet boat on the Erie canal to Buffalo. From there he came by the Great Lakes to Milwaukee, and from Milwaukee to Watertown by stage. From this point he proceeded on foot to look for a desirable location.

"From Ceresco (Ripon) he walked on along an Indian trail to Waukau. He spent the night there, cut across the creek--'As he was obliged to ford this stream he disrobed, bundled his clothing to hold over his head while wading across'. The first settlers he found were the John Haigh family. The next, the family of Frederick Tice who had only been there 2 weeks. Altho this family was sleeping on marsh hay piled in their wagon, he stopped there over night! Mr. Tice took him the next forenoon to look over some land. He borrowed a grub hoe to examine the subsoil which surprised Mr. Tice by its fertility. When they found a desirable location with good soil, Mr. Lowd blazed some trees and cut out the words 'Pre-emptied' with the date. 1846

"He selected a half section of land in the southern part of the present town of Omro, 200 acres of which he continued to own as long as he lived.

*ER.* "Then Mr. Tice told him to go to Green Bay to file his claim at the Government Agency. He spent that night with Edward West, then walked to Oshkosh. After he crossed the river on the ferry he followed the Indian trail to Wrightstown where he crossed a ferry again. Finally he arrived at Green Bay, took out pre-emption papers for 160 acres and another 80 acres was deeded. This 80 acres was where he built him a log cabin and later buildings on a knoll back from the road. Later he had to walk to Watertown to buy a cow and calf. He had to build a brush fence as there was no other kind available to confine his stock.

"He began to clear some land, began batching it by hiring a neighbor woman to bake some bread. It only cost him about 60 or 70 cents a week. He lived this way for about 15 months, saved expense of board which would have been \$2.00 a week.

"At one time as Mr. Lowd worked some distance from his cabin he saw two Indians alight from their ponies to go toward his cabin which door they found locked. Then they tried to pry off the cleats. Just then Mr. Lowd called 'Palakachee' over and over which frightened the Indians enough to jump on their ponies and flee.

"In the fall of 1848 Mr. Lowd returned to Manchester, N.H. to marry his boyhood sweetheart, Nancy McKeen. They returned over the same route of Mr. Lowd's earlier one, except now they landed at

Sheboygan. The stage coach seemed like a jiggling go-cart to the young bride. When they arrived at Fond du Lac they hired a man and team to take them to their farm where they had to live with a neighbor for a few weeks until their larger log cabin was being built. When finished Gilman had to drive back to Sheboygan to bring their household goods.

"His new wife asked him to please buy some chairs as she wasn't going to get along with leveled slabs of wood. But when Gilman could find none to purchase in Sheboygan, he stopped at Fond du Lac where he finally found 4 chairs. Imagine his chagrin when his wife called these her "Moonlight Chairs" as she knew they must have been made by moonlight. They were so crude and rough. Gilman and a carpenter neighbor made other furniture during the winter months".

The Gilman family attended Methodist church services at the home of Myron Howe which was before 1855.

"Five children were born to the Lowd's. The oldest son Selwin A. Lowd was buried from Mrs. Gilkey's home last December, 1910, and another son died while a young man. Three daughters survive, Mrs. George F. Gilkey of Oshkosh, Mrs. R.E. Root and Mrs. C.W. Root of Wichita, Kan. In 1883 Mr. Lowd rented his farm and bought a home in the village of Omro (140 E. Scott), where he had resided until his death, he then being over 90 years of age. He had been in good health until the last few months, never having spent a day of his life in bed."

#### OTHER SETTLERS

*E.B.*  
*930*  
 Another early settler just east of the present site of the Junction schoolhouse, one of the earliest pioneer homes was that of a Frenchman named Simmoni. "The discomforts of a new country as well as the adventures were fully experienced by this French family as by all pioneer families. The nearest drinking water available was more than 2 miles distant. Over the long trail that zig-zaged across the hills, Mrs. Simmoni was seen daily with a pail in either hand and one on her head, bringing the family's supply of water."

"Mr. Simmoni was the first to die in this newly settled region. He was buried in the cool green woods on the hill. Later his body was removed to the burial ground opened in 1854, now called the Omro Union Cemetery."

In 1847 the town received the following new-comers. Some still have descendants in this area. M.C. Bushnell, A.C. Pease, Nelson Beckwith, Richard Reed, James Reed, Thomas Palfrey, David Minkler, John Pingry, Isaac Hammers, James Hoaglin, F.B. Bunker, Austin Clark, William Remington, John I. Bidwell, John Perry, Sumner Wilson, Jude F. Rogers, William Thrall, Calvin Bigelow, James M. Olin, Lafayette Lamb, G.W. Beckwith, Isaac Germain, George Stokes, Nathan Wolverton, Alvin Beals, Nelson Tice and N.J. Forbes.

The first election in 1842 was held with no authority. However, it met with legislative approval in March of 1843. Votes cast numbered 23 in the town of Butte des Morts which then comprised the whole county.

EDWARD WEST

In 1846 it was the township of Butte des Morts when Edw. West took out his claim. Many others soon followed him for, according to records, at the spring election of April 6, 1847, the number of votes cast was 19. This did not indicate the population of the township at that time as many living there were not legal voters. Nelson Olin was chosen Moderator; Nathan Wolverton, Secretary.

*E. West  
2.H. 11/9/37*

At this election the following officers were elected--Edw. West, Chairman; John Monroe and Frederick Tice, supervisors; Nelson Olin, Clerk; Barna Haskell, Assessor; Isaac Germain, Justice; John Perry, Treasure; Alvin Beals, Collector; Nelson Olin, Gilman Lowd, and Geo. Stokes, Commissioners of Highways; Edw. West, Barna Haskell and Nathan Wolverton, Commissioners of Schools; Alvin Beals, Constable; Abram Quick, Sealer; Isaac Hammers, N.J. Forbes and Myron Howe, Fence Viewers.

It may be interesting to note that a "Sealer" was the tester of weights and measures. A "Fence Viewer" decided who builds his half of a line fence on two adjoining pieces of property. This was (and still is) done by the Viewer standing on the man's property who complained as to which half he had to fence, with the Viewer facing the property of the neighbor. The right hand half of the line fence from the Viewer is to be built by the complainer, the left half by the neighbor.

*Summary  
Aug. 1917  
D.H.*

Going back to the 1847 election, "One obligation of the officers newly elected was to raise the sum of Twenty Five dollars to defray expenses for the town. Subsequent Chairmen of the Board of Supervisors were: 1850 W.W. Nelson; 1851 S.L. Carpenter; 1852 G.W. Beckwith; 1853 L.F. Arnold; 1854-55-56 W.P. McAllister."

*M.H.*

In 1856 there were 250 votes cast, which proved that settlers were arriving rapidly. Most of them were still from the New England states, New York in particular.

*Daily N.W.  
Summary  
2.H. Aug. 1917*

An old newspaper in the possession of Mary Milford, Menasha, gives this account--"In 1840 a Post Office, the first in Winnebago County was established by the board of supervisors, and a tax of \$50 for county expenses was levied. The first mail from this county was done up in a piece of brown paper and carried by Chester Ford, mail carrier, in his vest pocket." also - m.t. p. 70. John P. Hallup Postmaster.

*Daily N.W.  
Oct. 2, 1913  
SBK m.  
Pg. 46*

*Summary  
p. 45B*

In 1842 the county was organized and there were then 500 people within its limits.

*Summary  
10/2/13*

"Omro town had a Post Office in 1847. In 1850 W.P. Wheeler was postmaster. He was removed by the administration and the Post Office discontinued in 1852. Mail service later was 3 times a week."

Presumably the first birth in the township was in the West family.

*Summary  
O. Steneli  
Aug. 1917*

"The years of 1848 and 1849 were extremely wet--many became discouraged and moved away, but those who remained prospered." Norman Gerard had this to say in 1850 when he came to Wisconsin by steam boat, stage coach and a-foot--"After having walked about 3

miles, overtook Edward West with two yoke of oxen and a wagon with about 500 feet of lumber on. His wagon was stuck fast in the mud and he was not in a very good humor. I helped him unload and get out of the mudhole, and loaded on again and went as far as West's Corners with him. He had a two story house and 500 or 600 acres of land; apparently one of the best farms in town at that date."

*Edward J. p. 1  
29 Howard  
May - 47*

Edward West did not think the locality presented "A very inviting field or prospect for farming on an extensive scale," "as the general appearance of the country was low and wet, and of a very spongy nature."

West moved soon to Appleton, probably shortly after 1850. However, not until after acquiring two "firsts" in Omro history. His family was the first to settle here and the first birth in the town occurred in his family.

*M. Gerard  
right list  
Lucas  
Nov 74  
12/12/30*

Gerard was informed by West at that chance meeting that there was the Bloomingdale Post Office not far from West's Corners, so Gerard mailed a letter home to New York. The Postmaster's name was Germana, and he informed Gerard that a mile north lived a man named Tritt who was building a house, and he thought that Gerard might get a job there. He went and found Hiram and Ruth Tritt, his old neighbors in New York state! The Tritts were as anxious to hire him, as he was to get the job as he was a mason by trade. He did not tell them that the only money he had was less than \$1. Gerard claims to have built the first brick house in Omro, the one south of the former Henry Winslow home.

(The Allenville Post Office closed officially April 1, 1955.

*Hazel Smith -  
Mrs. Chester  
Smith*

Hazel Smith, Post Mistress, it was located in her and Chester's General Store in Allenville.)

847.  
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Pew came from St. Lawrence County, N.Y. to Green Bay. They were some of the early settlers, coming from there to Omro. Mrs. Pew at the age of nine years passed up the Fox river and down the Wisconsin in a birch bark canoe, paddled by Indians, one of them named We-au-we-ya, from Prairie de Chine. She went to New Orleans and from that place to Alexandria on the Red River. Her father was then connected with the troops stationed on the frontier. Mr. Frank Pew drove the first wagon that ever passed down the west side of the river from Neenah to the Oneida settlement.

-----

E.W.  
Date 11/15/37

SETTLERS

E.B.

Other early settlers in the township of Omro were Hiram Webster near Spring Brook. Giddings settled on the Winneconne road as did Louis Arnold. Mr. Arnold was a pioneer settler of Milwaukee in 1836. He became prominent as a contractor and builder. He moved to Omro in 1852, where he engaged in the lumber business and operated a large stock farm, where Henry Bartelt now lives. He had 2 children, Miss Sarah A. and Elizabeth (Mrs. Geo. Morton). Arnold's farm was later owned by Geo. Morton, a son-in-law of Arnold. Geo. Samson and John Challoner settled in the western part of the township; they were skilled mechanics; Sedate Paddleford in Spring Brook area. Also Nelson Olin and family came to Omro in 1845. The daughter Lois married Calvin C. Morton, local industrialist. Calvin died in December of 1914.

Augustus Stone, too, located on the Waukau road. Stone had a span of big Belgian horses, and he used to haul wheat to Milwaukee in the early day and bring back supplies for the town people that they could not get at home. Mr. Stone was a drayman.

July 5, 1974

Then there was Joseph Treleven who settled in the southeast part near the village. Joseph, and his 4 brothers, Michael, John, Daniel and Dennis, sisters Ann, Elizabeth and Thamazine, migrated from "Steele Farm", Week St. Mary, Cornwall, England in the early 1830s, settling in Omro and Fond du Lac. Joseph homesteaded where Ed Brooks now lives. He purchased in addition enough land for each of his sons. These family names have been used and used throughout the years, "creating difficulties to know who's who."

The 50th Treleven family reunion was held June of 1974 at New London; the first one was held at Fond du Lac in 1924. Joe Treleven, grandson of the first Joseph Treleven, has held the office of Assessor of the City of Omro for several years. A great-grandson is presently a member of the City Council. (David J.)

E.B.

John Pingry came to Omro Township in the spring of 1846, took up 160 acres southeast of the village. He was born in N.H. in 1824. The first winter in Wisconsin he lived on bran pudding; he had no flour. He cut his timber in the winter without mittens; he did get sore and frosted hands. Sennett Pingry was his son. (more on back of page)

Omro Herald July 24, 1930

A man who distinguished himself came during this year. He was Milo C. Bushnell. Mr. Bushnell was 22 when he left Vermont in 1846 to seek his fortune in the Territory of Wisconsin. He was among the earliest pioneers of Omro Township and became a prominent citizen of Winnebago County. He took up land for \$1.25 an acre then built his log home. This land lies south of Omro City near the Omro Cemetery.

When the new settlement first needed a cemetery both Mr. Bushnell and his neighbor to the south, Nelson Olin, each set aside 2 acres for such a purpose. The central driveway of the cemetery marks the boundary line between these old farms.

Mr. Bushnell held offices of trust, as serving on the County Board for 15 years, Township Treasurer for 5 years, schoolboard member for 27 years, Chairman of Township, and Supervisor. He was elected to the State Legislature in 1867, and reelected for a second term, as Assemblyman. Norman Gerard notes that "Milo was a standing administrator for a good many estates." (more on back of page)

many years.



In 1853 Sennett Pingry married Ann Whitehead who was from England. He was 83 years old when he died, she was still living on the farm in 1931.

Mr. Bushnell and his family are buried in the family lot in the Omfo cemetery which was originally a part of the land taken up by him in the 1846.

(E.B.) Adda Laiten Pingry lived one year on what is now the Immisch farm. Later on a farm south of town. Adda, Cora Goodwin Washington, and Janie Lowd were of the class to graduate from Omro High School in 1878, 8 years after Omro High School was organized. Adda's husband was Sennett Pingry. She was active in the Horticulture Society and wrote many papers.

(E.B.) Alonzo Bishop came to Wisconsin in 1854. He bought the Kellogg farm to the southeast part of the village. Paul Bishop still owns the land except for the home site on Scott St. which Lyle Jackson bought. Mr. Bishop was prominent in village affairs, member of village and county Boards, and Assessor, too.

(E.B.) Another pioneer woman was Emeline Packard. Ethel Bishop has this to tell about her--"From the east came my tiny great-grandmother Emeline Packard who traveled by covered wagon with her 6 sons and 4 daughters after my great-grandfather had died from typhoid fever. He had returned from purchasing farmland south of the village of Waukau. Emeline settled on the farm and with her children worked the acres and brought up her family."

(m.j.) A branch of the original Polier family of early Wisconsin lived in the Omro township. The name was incorrectly pronounced Per'-le-o by the neighbors. The Poliers were so hardy and sturdy that the youngsters would run around in the snow with bare feet and be scantily clad. The baby of the family did this even while having the measles with no disastrous results. During the 1890s they lived about one mile north of the village on the Winneconne-Omro road where Willis Young resided for many years. (2000 Jan 1900)

(E.B.) John Sumner was an early new-comer. In 1848 he sold all of his property and traveled to Winnebago County in Wisconsin where he took up Indian land, near the Omro-Winneconne township line. Mr. Sumner and his older boys cut down the great trees from their forests, trimmed the brush, which his wife and younger children gathered into great piles to burn at night. Midnight often found some of the busy family tending these brush fires. Their living was simple. As there was no wheat the first year, the family ate corn bread made palatable with milk gravy. He had purchased a cow when he first took up his claim. No dainties relieved the monotony of diet because sugar was a luxury to be used only at Christmas when 4 pounds were bought to provide coveted sweets. Their second year they raised wheat for flour and had pigs for pork. (Sumner Blake a descendant.)  
Mrs. Janes Sumner ditto N. BR IV p. 31. (Julia)

III  
When Caleb Blake took up land on both sides of the Omro-Winneconne town line on the Preacher's Bend road it was thickly forested. He came from Bangor, Maine in 1857. His daughter Eva remained in the East. Son Charles born 1836 went to sea as cabin boy at 14 years. He had received a good fundamental education and was prepared to benefit from sea going experiences. Later he came west, went to work on Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul R.R. as fireman. Charles enlisted in the Northern Union Army, served during the last year of the Civil War. After his mother's death in 1857, he moved to his father's farm and from that time on lived near the Winneconne road. Chas. Blake, Sr. died March 30, 1909.

When Wm. Williams, north of the former Pingry School, bought land which Caleb Blake had taken up from the Government, Charles bought 60 acres from Rev. Reynolds a pioneer Baptist minister of that locality, after whom Preacher's Bend was named. The new Blake

farm was virgin woodland which required clearing and arduous sod breaking. This land is still called the Blake farm although it passed out of family hands. In later life Mr. Chas. Blake, Jr., retired to his son's farm on the south side of the river road in the town of Omro. Sumner C. Blake now resides there with his son Alvin and wife. Charles, Jr. married Nellie Sumner. Sumner recalls being told that his grandfather would take wheat to the Waukau mill to be ground into flour. He would load the wheat onto a stone-boat drawn by a team of oxen.

Henry Freeman Young was born in Lincolnshire, England in 1844. His father was a shepherd. His mother, a skilled needle woman, took in fine sewing to help their family along. In this busy household each child learned to work. As the boys outnumbered the girls, Henry often had to help his mother with housework.

Henry was still a young boy when one of his sisters (Mrs. Matthews) sailed to America. As her glowing accounts of the new country appealed strongly to Henry, he too sailed for this new country. He came from the Atlantic shores to newer lands in Wisconsin Territory. Anxious to be able to buy a farm some day he believed that the opening of new Indian lands near Beckwithtown, Winnebago County would provide the greatest opportunity.

He worked at any and all odd jobs in Omro village until he had saved enough to purchase a team of horses with which he started a drayage business. He toted produce or products from Omro's north side to the south side of the Fox, and carrying such to Oshkosh for hire.

Then came the excitement of building a railroad during 1860. Henry had the job of hauling railroad ties for the tracks of the Ripon & Wolf River R.R., later the C. M. & St. Paul.

His farm was on the northern edge of Omro township near Preacher's Bend. He married Sarah Ann Brogden of Poygan in 1868. He lived for about 50 years on this farm until his death in August of 1915. There are several descendants living in Omro area.

These early settlers in the Omro township are but a few who came and did their part in the development of the area. Others had as colorful a history as these, no doubt. However, unless they are on record or in scrap book clippings, one does not know their descendants, who perhaps could tell of their history, problems or unusual experiences. For, indeed, their day to day lives experienced a variety of pleasures, woes, work and "make-do." These accounts give a comprehensive view of pioneer experiences.

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The house where Jerrold Johnson lives (Old Treleven homestead southeast of Omro City limits) was built before the Civil War. The walls are filled with mortar, discovered when Walter Johnson had the house wired for electricity. A date was noted on the cellarway at one time. (As told by Erwin Treleven.)

Also, these pioneers had a variety of trials and tribulations. As an example, and only mentioning two--mice and rats! These little critters had destructive eating habits and their population seemed to explode.

Mr. Jones  
H. 12/18/30

In the fall of 1846, a gentleman by the name of Jones happened to discover that there was a scarcity of cats in the town, and he immediately proceeded to remedy this alarming state of affairs. He went to Illinois and gathering up a dozen or more of the coveted felines, he placed them in a box and started back.

The traveling was then exclusively by team, and Mr. Jones was obliged to put up at the taverns along the road. At one of these places the hostler heard a wonderful noise in Mr. Jones' box, and he had the curiosity to investigate a little. He lifted the cover very softly, and holding his lantern up to the aperture, he stuck his head down to peep in. About that time the cats had made up their minds to take a short recess, and they poured out of that box so fast that they knocked over the lantern before the hostler could see what sort of animal he had been fooling with. That gave him such a fright that he scooted for the door as though the last trump had blown. He only gave one look behind him, which frightened him worse than ever and then rushed into the tavern and told Mr. Jones that there were fourteen pairs of glistening eyes on every beam in the barn, besides about a dozen on every rafter. Of course Mr. Jones knew that meant cats, and he spent the rest of the night gathering them in.

Nothing further happened until he got to Watertown, and there the imported felines all froze to death!

OBLIGATIONS

Omro, 12/25/30  
W. hist. file and  
Ellist P-23 (2)

Church organization was an obligation of the early settler's. In the township, the first religious meeting was held in the winter of 1847-48 in a shanty on Section 27. Only one or two meetings were held here however. Mr. Richard Reed had put up a log house 18 x 22 and services were held in that. Mr. Reed's house was known as the "big house" for some time, which will give a good idea of the size of the others then in the town.

Omro, 11/16/39  
Ellist P-23 (2)

In 1872 Mr. Reed moved into the village. He was justice of the peace for 9 years. Uncle Dick as he was called by all, was noted for his kindness to all. On his 80th birthday the neighbors all gave him a surprise party. They gave him many presents, and he was to kiss all the ladies present. He was somewhat awkward at first, but soon became used to it. Then he went ahead in a spirited manner.

minutes number 2  
EVB

In the Junction area, the first determined church movement among the settlers took place, according to records in an old book with yellowed pages but with writing undimmed by the years, as follows--

"Agreeable to appointment several individual members of the Baptist Church met at the Reed Schoolhouse in the Town of Bloomingtondale and aforesaid, February 12th, 1850, to take into consideration the propriety of forming a Church. After a discussion it was voted to form such a body. Accordingly twelve brethren and sisters gave their assent to a body of articles of faith and practice."

The school house mentioned is the West School in what was for a time called Cheeney District (Busse farm). It is referred to in this old record as the "Reed School" undoubtedly because of the name of its teacher, Luther Reed.

Omro  
Nov. 7/2/12  
P. O. M.

Luther A. Reed apparently came to Omro in the 1850s. He later taught school in the village of Omro. In later years he engaged in farming. He died in 1883. His widow, Zibiah Littlefield, niece of Arthur Blackburn, came to Winnebago County with her uncle in 1848, settling in Bloomingtondale, now the city of Omro. Two years later she married Luther Reed. She died in 1912 at the age of 84, at the home of the daughter, Mrs. Emmet R. Hicks, wife of an Oshkosh Attorney. Hicks was an Omro native, and one time Attorney General of Wisconsin, at least in 1901.

N.W. 4/2/12  
M. S. B.

For a year this little Baptist church continued its meetings in this schoolhouse. Then the minutes record an increase. "During the month of March, 1851, God in His gracious mercy was pleased to give to relieve His work at Omro in the above named town, quite a large number who were either revived or converted. About this time the church had agreed to hold its next monthly meeting at Omro. Therefore, April 5, 1851, the church assembled at the schoolhouse in the above named village."

Among the names that appear as first members of this pioneer church are family names now inscribed in stone in the beautiful cemeteries at Junction--Paddleford, Tanner, Hoyt, Jones, Bunker, Littlefield, Cusick, Griswold. Others as, Remington, Ham, Stone,

Pillsbury, Pettingale, Blanchard, are names found on old monuments in the Omro cemetery. -----

The Baptist church organized by these sturdy pioneers is now the First Baptist Church of Omro. It celebrated its centennial anniversary in 1950, and its 125th in 1975, Rev. Jack Frohn, Pastor. *Closed it down in Jan of 1980*

During the period of 1847 to 1850, another thing brought to the attention of the settlement was a school for the education of their children. In 1848, during the absence of Mr. Myron Howe from his home northeast of Omro, his bachelor quarters were taken possession of, and a school opened with Mrs. Abram Quick as teacher. Also in the same year Mrs. George Beckwith taught school in her own house. Then a private school was taught by Hannah Olin in the Gilman Lowd neighborhood. The schoolhouse was built by subscription. These were the first schools opened in the township. *daughter Mary R. part of family m.w. 2/25/16*

*W. Lutz  
D.H. 12/18/30  
M. 11/1/39  
E. Hest.*

Wood was the fuel used to heat the school rooms. Many such stoves had a long round horizontal fire-box to accomodate wood 3 feet or so in length. Fire had to be kindled each morning as no one was present during the night to "put another log on the fire."

The warmest place in the room was always near the stove; the fringe areas were just about as cold as the outdoors. Dinner pail contents would be frozen hard unless placed near the stove.

Insulation was an unknown building material in those days. But there was plenty of wood to burn. -----

From 1909-10 County atlas by Daily Northwestern and loaned by Warren Brooks.

Board of Supervisors

- Omro Township -- Thos. F. Broderick, R.D. 23, Omro.
- " Village -- C.H. Larrabee, Omro.
- Poygan -- James Heffron, Jr. Omro R.D. 22.
- Rushford -- T.E. Loope, Eureka.
- Winneconne -- F.G. Cross, Winneconne R.D. 19.
- " Village -- M.F. White, Winneconne

Clerks

- Omro Township -- W.P. Bussey, Omro R.D. 24.
- " Village -- J.S. Shelp, Omro.
- Poygan -- M.P. Broderick, Omro R.D. 22.
- Rushford -- H.E. Bareis, Eureka.
- Winneconne Township -- H. Doughty, Winneconne R.D. 19.
- " Village -- L. Lund, Winneconne.

Treasurers

- Omro Township -- Geo. F. Lewis, Omro R.D. 25.
- " Village -- L.W. Sowles, Omro.
- Poygan -- Chas. Marin, Winneconne R.D. 20.
- Rushford -- Chas Radde, Eureka.
- Winneconne Township -- G.V. Beiser, Winneconne R.D. 19.
- " Village -- C.J. Borchardt, Winneconne.

(Continued on back of page)

Assessor

Omro Township -- Eugene Humphrey, R.D. 21

" Village -- T.J. Thompson, Omro.

Poygan -- P.E. Dolan, Winneconne, R.D. 20.

Rushford -- Dennis Hart, Eureka.

Winneconne Township -- John Broderick, Omro R.D. 22.

" Village -- C.A. Russell, Winneconne.

According to the farm pictures shown in the atlas there were no silos before 1911--My father (C.I. Smith) built his cement silo in 1912. He obtained the forms used from the State Agriculture Dept. thru the cooperation of Mr. Briggs of Winnebago County Agriculture school at Winneconne.

## OTHER SETTLERS

*OH. 1/21/32.*  
 About this same time another early settler was Seth Smith. The trials of his in-laws demonstrate the fortitude of pioneer women. Seth Smith was a third generation blacksmith from New York state. He married Julia Ferguson in New York in 1840. In the 1850s they came to Omro. *Omro's Bk.*

*OH. 2/5/32.*  
 Seth's mother-in-law was Charlotte Brundridge who was widowed with 3 children. Later on she married Jacob Ferguson, and had a daughter Julia, Seth's wife, and also a son Jacob, Jr.

Again widowed, Charlotte came to reside with her oldest daughter Mariah Mathews who lived 3 miles south of Omro, and her daughter Julia Ferguson Smith. At age 70 Grandma Charlotte Ferguson walked from Matthews farm to Plainfield to visit daughter Julia--40 miles distance.

*OH. 2/18/32.*  
 Mariah Ferguson, Seth's sister-in-law, who had married Lusett Matthews who moved to Omro, pre-empted a quarter section 3 miles south of Omro, built a log cabin for his family, then he died. Mariah, his wife, however, and some of her 10 children worked the farm. Some girls had married and some sons had gone to California gold rush in 1849.

She lived on her farm when the railroad was built. Then some of the farmers were induced to give mortgages on their farms as collateral in borrowing money for this project. Farmers understood that these mortgages would be cancelled but later these mortgages were sold, and when they came due the purchaser foreclosed. In this way Mrs. Matthews lost half of her farm.

One of her family was Julia Ann who married Philetus Cross. Much later her daughter Sarah Cross married Ephream Benjamin in early days of the war. Mr. Benjamin enlisted in a Wisconsin Regiment and took wife Sarah with him to camp. Her son Horatio was born. As so many soldiers wanted the baby named after them, his name became Horatio VanClive Nelson Dickerson Ephream Stillman Gillman Benjamin! When the regiment was ordered to the front, Mrs. Benjamin had to return to Omro. Sadly, Mr. Benjamin was killed after which Sarah married Roswell Laiten. Horatio became his son and was called H. Laiten. Although seriously crippled young Horatio became a professional musician at a Michigan theater.

Another Matthews daughter, Margaret, married Laurence Nuttall. Then he owned and operated a sawmill at Waukau, after that, one in Eureka. Later they moved to Manistee, Michigan where they became well to do in the lumber business. So it seems that at least one in the family had less ups and downs. Julia Ferguson Smith died in 1907; Seth Smith died in 1916. Two of their 10 children survived, L.A. Smith of Omro and Norman Smith of Michigan.

The pioneers had troubles and sadness. They also had determination and an objective for which to work--a betterment of family life.

*Interview with Arthur Challoner*  
 Another early settler of Omro township was Samson Challoner who purchased a farm about a mile west of the village on the river road bend. He started to build the house that is still standing before he left for military service during the Civil War. After being mustered out of the army he returned home and finished building the Challoner



home. This house is unique; it is octagonal; every room has an outside wall. Every room except the kitchen, has no square corner; each is either acute or obtuse. *1852 (O.H. - 9/7/33.)*

This farm has been in the Challoner family since 1850, first Samson, then his son Jesse, then Ira (Ira died in 1959), Ira's children and grandchildren are of this present era. These facts were verified by Esther, Ira's widow in 1974. Esther died March 26, 1975. *Jan 24,*

Another interesting feature in regard to the farm is the lotus bed in the Fox river at the back on which the acreage borders. The only other bed of recent years is one on the west edge of Lake Winnebago.

*D.N. 11/9/39  
E. Hunt p. 3  
11/9/39  
E. Hunt p. 3*

According to an election held in 1842 what is now Omro was called Winnebago; then later it was Butte des Morts. By act of the County Board in 1849 it was changed to Bloomington.

In 1850, the south half of section 31 of the town was attached to Rushford and in 1856 the north half of the same attached. Then the section 1-12 and north half were attached to Omro leaving the Town of Omro with its present boundaries.

Finally in 1852 the various township's lines were more stabilized when the name "Omro" was selected, and by act of the County Board it was so designated. How the name "Omro" was decided on is controversial.

OMRO NAMED

*11/9/39  
E. Hunt p. 10*

Luther Adams, an early resident of Omro, had this to say about the naming of Omro. "I have been told that there was much discussion by the people of the village in regard to the new name and that many names were suggested. Two young business men, Joel Taylor and E.B. Dean, decided that the name must be short and easy to pronounce. They wrote several letters of the alphabet on slips of paper, one letter on each slip, and put these slips into a hat, shook them up and then drew out 4 slips and arranged the letters so as to form the word "Omro." (How it ever happened that there were 2 vowels and 2 consonants, instead of 2 Qs or 2 Ps in place of 2 Os is anyone's guess.) *put in 1974 in local weekly newspaper.*

*Emma J. p. 1*

Another terse version of how "Omro" was chosen is mentioned in Dr. Emma Jaeck's history of Omro.--"In 1847 the town was organized as Butte des Morts. Two years later it became Bloomington. In 1852 it was named Omro from the blacksmith and trader, Chas. Amereau." "Omro" no doubt being the Anglicized spelling of the French Amereau. Two distinctly different accounts from which one may choose.

*Mrs.*

Yet another version might be suggested--from a clipping about the "First Cemetery". This cemetery was located at the junction between Omro and Algoma and was on the wooded hill south of where the schoolhouse now stands. At that time the Town of Omro was called Bloomington, and the Village of Bloomfield. The present Village of Omro was then but a trading post known as "Kero". Why not a compromise of opinions--the last two letters of Bloom and the last two letters of Kero, and form the name "Omro"? Could be possible. That procedure might have satisfied those who favored not changing it from

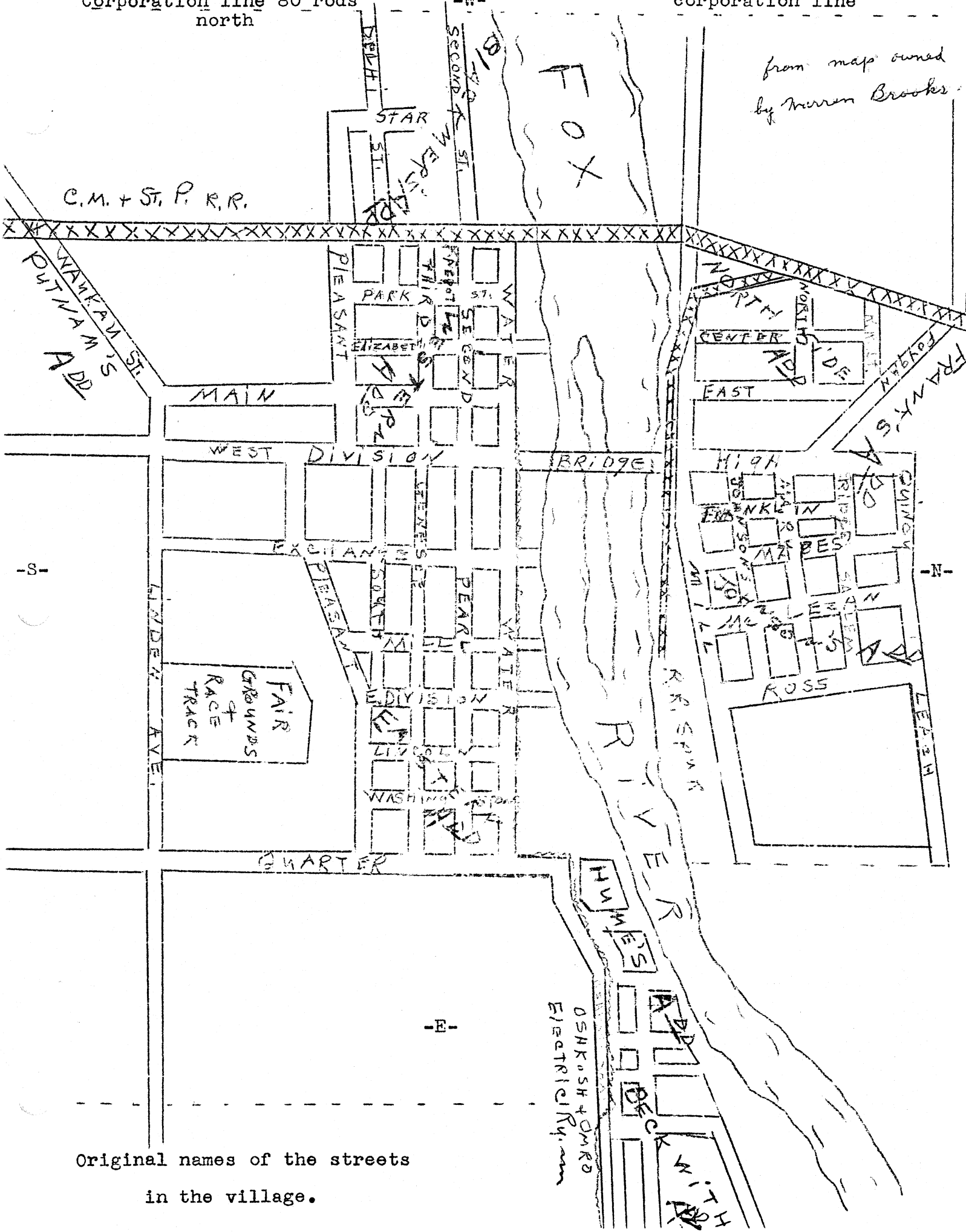
Bloomington, those who still favored Kero, and the young men who insisted on a short name. It appears quite a logical surmise.

Many trivial incidents connected with Omro, its people, and its developments are included in this writing, not because of their historical value, but rather as an insight into the everyday lives of our early settlers. These incidents are to serve as the stepping stones taken during the years from the first permanent settlement to our present mode of life in the city of Omro. Some phases that may be dull for some may possibly be of interest to others.

Many names of people and families that are mentioned on these pages have descendants still living in the area. They may recognize them and will have the opportunity to mull over the accomplishments and trials of their forefathers.

Now with a better understanding of Omro Township history, next will come the growth of the Village.

from map owned by Murren Brooks



Original names of the streets in the village.

DAVID HUME

The majority of early settlers were agricultural minded. Some, however, were interested in industry; such a one was David Hume. At the time of Hume's arrival in Omro there was but one family in the immediate locality, that of Calvin Bigelow. Bigelow gave shelter to Hume's family until their own log house could be erected--in close proximity.

*At E. Hist. exp. 1. Thomas Hume dit - N.W. 1/29/08*

Humes was the first and most prominent settler in what is now the City of Omro. In 1845 or 1846 he passed through this region. He thought the site of Omro was a suitable location, and decided to return. Prevented by illness, he was unable to come before the spring of 1847. *also (O.H. - 2/9/39.) Emma J.*

"Hume was a man of vision and action. His ambition was to build a thriving town. He staked a claim on a portion of Section 16, later called Beckwithtown. He is credited of being the first man to record a land claim on the village site; that was in 1848. Hume also bought land along the Fox river. Here he built a log cabin, the first structure in the village of Omro.

*Omro Journal 7 1853*

*Emma J.* "Many scoffs and jeers were directed at him for scouting the idea of ever building a town on what they considered a mud hole. Mr. Hume paid no attention to them; he had a plan of his own and in the following spring he proceeded to carry it out." Humes proved his point and lived the rest of his lifetime in Omro.

David Hume invented and built the "growser" (grauser) or upright anchor boat for towing large rafts of logs against the current and around bends of the river. As an example, at "Preacher's Bend", 3 miles down river from Omro, it was impossible to negotiate that sharp bend until the growser was invented, without dividing a raft.

The tug, freed of the raft, but with tow rope unreeling and lengthening, would anchor up in the bayou. The horses, on board, hitched to a sweep, would reel the tow rope in and pull the raft around the bend. The tug would then back out of the bayou, connect close to the raft again and proceed to the mills at Omro. The boat was called "Hume's Horse Boat".

Humes knew that an abundance of logs would bring sawmills and give rise to a city. His dream became a reality. He was the real founder of Omro village. He built it up, too. Indirectly by his invention he brought about the formation of other river towns in the vicinity. Many people profited by his invention, as Hume did not try to get a patent until too late.

David Hume's son, Aaron, had his father's inventive mind. Instead of horse-power, he substituted steam. He called his boat the "Swan". Soon he sold it to Neenah people and started a little store in Beckwithtown at what is now 215 Beckwith Street.

In the book "Prairie, Pines and People" a description of a "grouser" is given. It is an oak timber which had a cast-iron tip weighing over 500 pounds. *(P.P.P.P. p. 292 - Jan. 4 to Bartels Alderson.)*

A grouser tip is on display in the Omro Museum. Donated by Rex Cady.

LUMBERING INDUSTRY

Daily N.W.  
7/27/72  
Box I 76  
476B

When the lumbering industry became more advanced, small villages began to appear in the northern woods. Otherwise a camp was isolated from purchasing centers.

The difficulty of getting supplies into the early camps was one of the principal problems that had to be overcome. Agricultural settlement had not yet come, and thus there was no local market to obtain food. Keel boats had to carry goods from the outside over difficult routes, and because of the cost and risk involved, prices were extremely high. Between 1853 and 1857, pork cost from \$25 to \$35 per barrel and wheat sold for from \$6 to \$9 per barrel.

The meals were simple and consisted of dried pork, beans, bread, and molasses. Dried apples, tea and butter were luxury items.

Other necessities, including clothing, dry goods, iron work, and mill machinery had to travel the same long and hard route as the food supplies.

During bad or lean years, suppliers outside the pinery refused to sell food and goods to the lumber settlements on credit. For this reason, lumber companies often entered the freight and transportation business. Later, company stores were also started.

The workers in the northern woods devised a system for division of labor which allowed each man to become an expert in his own field. There were blacksmiths, cooks, axmen, sawers, teamsters, scalers, and many other minor working divisions.

Felling of trees demanded expert skill. The axmen took over when the tree was down, and chopped the limbs to get a smooth, round log. A skidway was constructed, allowing the logs to be "skidded" or slid to a spot where they would be loaded when the snow came.

The logs were scaled, or measured, and the size recorded in a book. A man with a stamping hammer was also at hand, putting the owner's mark on both ends of each log.

The lumber was fastened on a crib, 16x32 feet. A grub pin was firmly wedged, then released, and the crib glided into the water. Seven cribs made a string, and four of these strings were then joined to make a raft. The rafts were guided downstream by skilled and able raftsmen.

The final rafts were designed so that each crib could be separated when passing falls or rapids. After passing the most dangerous spots, they were rejoined and continued to float down the river.

In 1899 Wisconsin reached its goal of becoming first in the nation among the lumber producers. The record cut for that year was 3,389,166,000 feet.

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FIRST MILL

As soon as logs could be rafted up the Fox river easily with the grauser boat, steps were taken to erect a saw mill. Nelson Beckwith, son-in-law of David Hume offered to build a mill providing his father-in-law would give him 10 acres on the river bank. The request was granted, and a mill was located north of what was later Tommie Thompson's house, now 215 Beckwith Street, on the corner of Beckwith and Erie streets. This was the first steam-powered saw mill in the settlement. The mason work for it was done by Norman Gerard. At this time Gerard also did the mason work on a large boarding house that Beckwith built.

H. W. 11/23/39  
E. Hist.

Between 1847 and 1849 the most important newcomers were Col. Tuttle, Dr. McAllister, Andrew Wilson, John A. Corfee, D.C.E. Lanning, William Hammond and James Peck.

H. W. 11/23/39  
E. Hist.  
P. 22

Beckwithtown, the site of Nelson's mill, was laid out in 1847. It is understood that a Trading Post was located near by on the high point to the west of the mill. This trading post was the first business place on the site which is now the city of Omro. It was a small "jack-knife" trading post established before 1845 for trade with the Menominee tribe by Charles Carron, Jed Smalley, and Captain Wm. Powell. Chas. Amereau had a blacksmith shop there, also. A trading post in Omro about 1836 according to Gard & Reetz in "Trail of the Serpent."

(C. 72)  
H. W. 2/19/39

The trading post near the mill was called "Smalley's Post", or "Smalley's Landing," and no doubt is the one mentioned above. There was also a trading post at one time located about where the Standard Oil Station is now, in the area of E. Main and Madison streets. Powell had in 1846 established a trading post at Delhi, also. Chas. Carron bought by pre-emption the present Wards 1 and 2 of Omro.

11/4/39 P. 62 - Powell an Englishman.

Powell, a half-breed, served as interpreter between the Indians and Government Officials. Also, as interpreter in the famous "Partridge Case" of 1850.

Emma J.

At this same time "Elisha Dean, too, made a similar proposition to Hume for a mill site, but too late. So Elder Theodore Pillsbury who owned land along the river, gave Dean 40 acres for that purpose which was just west of Beckwithtown. Here was built a mill where the old woolen mill stands, now Geo. Daggett & Son establishment.

"Col. Tuttle purchased 70 acres of land on the south side of the Fox river, Section 7 starting with lot 1 and west of Beckwithtown, west and south of the site of the old Exchange Hotel. To the west was an Indian camping grounds. In the section called Western Addition, were 13 Indian mounds. On the north side of the river, called 'Indian Land', were other tumuli or mounds."

Emma J. P. 1

In 1847 and 1848 the chairman of the board of supervisors of Omro Township was Edw. West; in 1849 Nelson Olin; in 1850 W.W. Nelson; in 1851 S.L. Carpenter; in 1852 G.W. Beckwith; in 1853 L.F. Arnold; and in 1854-55-56 W.P. McAllister. This change in chairmanship shows that there was keen interest in the leadership of the running of local affairs, with many taking active part. Also, the area was becoming populated rather rapidly.

H. W. 1/18/31  
W. Hist. P. 10

Two years after the first settlement in 1847 the original plat of Omro was laid out by Joel V. Taylor, Elisha Dean and Nelson Beckwith. In 1850 was made the plot of the Western Addition. 7 years later, in

Clayton Stearns resigned as Omro Mayor in 1960 after 27 years of service. Died July 24, 1993, age 89 yrs.

1857, Omro was incorporated as a village.

(O.H. 4/6/44.) & (O.H. 5/25/44.)

Omro became a fourth class city and a charter to that status was granted May 19, 1944 with Clayton W. Stearns as the first City Mayor. He had been Village President from 1932 until becoming City Mayor. The charter was issued by Secretary of the State Fred Zimmermann. From the first settler in 1847 to a city in 1944, less than a century, was fast work for little old Omro.

in possession of the former village charter, retained by him according to Oakbrook northwestern of May 24, 1944. Rodney Bledsoe, Att. came

WATER SUPPLY

(E.B.)

The Omro site was blessed with many flowing fountains especially on the south side of the river. Some were in the basements of homes.

Many years later artesian wells for the Omro Butter & Cheese Co. needs apparently tapped the streams for nearly all of the fountains dried up. There is one still flowing at 245 E. Ontario. (1976)

To Andrew Loring (F. Cross p. 225 E.)

"The Old Exchange Tavern was near the Indian Camp Grounds on the north side. A fountain drilled in the middle of four corners to supply the Tavern with water, gushed with such violence that the first owner sold out as he swore that the whole village lay above an underground lake. This fountain became one of the town pumps. It had a long water trough for horses and oxen. Another fountain with a town pump was somewhere along North Main Street, (now Jefferson Avenue)."

w. Kelly  
Cross  
p. 225 E

Yr. Brooks

A fountain of interest was the one located on the west portion of Cad Clark's Island. This fountain was very sensitive. It must have been connected to the same underground stream that supplied water for the Diamond Match Company in Oshkosh on High Street, for when standing by it a click could be heard that corresponded exactly to the throb of the Match factory's motor for pumping their water supply. Later years this fountain on Clark's island would cease flowing during the day but flow again at night.

Alman B.

The fountain that supplied man and beast with pure water mentioned in Luthera Adams' "School History" was located near the Main street sidewalk where the Bowling Alley is now located. A trough street-side held the water piped from the fountain further back from the street.

In an 1897 issue of the local paper, the Editor complained about the ice that had formed around the fountain on Water Street. It should be cleared away for the safety of pedestrians and horses alike.

(O.H.)

The first well dug in the village was by William Parker and Alex Allen near the old Compound building. W. Hist. p. 10 Omro Herald - 1/2/31.

TOWN PUMP

m.j.s.

The town pump of Omro's north side became a well remembered land mark. Near the middle of the street at the intersection of Oak and Walnut streets stood this pump. It was of metal with a wooden platform on which it was bolted. Perhaps when the well was first dug (the one of 1850 perhaps) it might have been a wooden pump as were all of the earliest ones.

This town pump was used by nearly all of the neighbors living in the area. When in need of a new leather or repairs of any kind the neighbors chipped in and paid for them.

Ed Cronk who lived in the neighborhood on the corner of E. River Drive and Oak (now 133) was a pump repair man so no doubt he was the man called upon to do the work.

*Omro Herald  
1930* In the spring election of 1930 the voters of Omro village turned down the water works and sewer proposition. However, in the late summer a case of typhoid fever in the village caused a scare of an epidemic. Many, perhaps those in favor of city water and sewage system, had samples of water from their wells and pumps tested at Madison for purity. Among those unfit for drinking included the water from the old Town Pump on the north side!

*M.B.* After the city did install water works the old pump was used less and less by the families. Finally in the 1940s the old town pump was removed--progress took over at last.



## INDIAN TO-DO

The north side of the Fox river was referred to as "Indian Land." For this reason all dwellings and mills at first were built on the south bank of the river which was government land.

With many Indians living in the area there are interesting tales of their encounters with the new settlers.

*2. H. 11/30/39*  
*E. H. P. 9*  
The Early Settler recalls the old Indian scrimmage that happened at Omro years ago in the summer of 1844 as it was told to him. "Captain Wm. Powell (a half-breed) was in his trading post. The Winnebago Indians--200 strong under Old Yellow Thunder were camped near the outlet of Rush Lake. Yellow Thunder's son and 11 other bucks came to Powell's post to rob him of whiskey and just have a spree. At the time Jed Smalley, Leb Dickerson and Charley Carron, a Menominee half-breed, were in the place and they helped Powell. The struggle started with fists and clubs.

*3. H. 11/30/39*  
*V. Lawson*  
*1880*  
*history of*  
*Winnebago*  
*County*  
"Capt. Powell had his arm broken and it was getting rather rough, just as Doctor Linde came in from Eureka. The Doctor threw down his pack, cocked both barrels of his gun, and went into the fight. They proceeded very vigorously and the doctor had no time to think, till he discovered that 12 Indians had been laid out. Then those hurt were attended to.

"Powell's arm was set by the doctor, and the rest of the bucks given one drink of fire water. They that were alive journeyed home. When Old Yellow Thunder heard their story and saw their plight, he laughed at them. After that Dr. Linde was a great friend among the Indians. Later Dr. Linde bought 200 acres where the Northern Hospital now stands."

Powell, an old man in 1878, spent his last years near or at Shawano, as did a Mr. LeFevre of this area. *Fred Holmes article E.B.*

*2. H. 11/30/39*  
*E. H. P. 3 + E.B.*  
Changes were taking place rapidly and the settlers were forging ahead. On March 11th, 1848, Winneconne was set off, taking from the town of Butte des Morts the fraction of the southeast corner of town 19. By act of March 15th, 1849, the following were elected for the town of Bloomingdale: Nelson Olin, Chairman; Jude F. Rogers and John Nelson, supervisors; J.M. Olin, Clerk; John Paddleford, Treasurer and C. C. Bigelow, Justice.

It has been recorded that in the 1847 census there were registered 21 souls. These people resided in Beckwithtown which was laid out that year.

True, there were not many residents at that time, but by 1855 the population had exploded to 1,602, even larger than Oshkosh, by Cracky! One report was that in 1880 the census numbered 3,000. Another report suggested 3,500! People do get carried away, for this was in the boom era of Omro. *1875-3,312.*

The year 1890 showed a decline, the census numbered only 1,358 souls. In 1896 the population was about 1,200. The boom had really "flatted out". 1920 numbered 1,042; 1930 it increased to 1,255. Population in 1960 was 1,991, and in 1970, census was 2,341. *1980-2,700.*

*archie 10*

Even though the population in the late 1840s was small, a nucleus of a settlement was formed. Beckwithtown then had a saw mill, store and hotel. The later building was where T.J. Thompson lived years later at what is now 215 Beckwith Street.

*Ed. Hunt p. 7  
D.H. 11/23/34*  
A boat factory stood on the property now owned by Ernest Hellwig. In this same vicinity there stood a long low-built house surrounded by trees. An old lady by the name of Mrs. Williams used to weave carpets there with an old fashioned loom. According to the Early Settler, "I remember when my mother went there to see Mrs. Williams about some weaving. I was dressed in a white waist and while they were talking I had to crawl behind the old loom to see those shuttles work and when I came out, you can imagine what my mother did to me. I was dirt and cob webs!

"Later the saw mill was sold to a man named Tours and he erected a slaughter house there. He also built a large frame house on the river bank."

#### MORE INDIAN TALES

*Carrie Cullen*  
An Omroite now living (1972) recalls tales her Grandmother told.-- One day an Indian and his boys came to her Grandmother's. He was poor as most of the Indians were; he begged for bread. She cut a slice apiece and was about to spread them with butter when the Indian spoke up, "No bupper, Squaw. No bupper!" He did not want the boys to get a taste of bread with butter on it. He thought, no doubt that "Ignorance is bliss", at least cheaper.

*C.C.*  
Another account from a clipping in an early newspaper told of the following incident of years ago in Omro. When the local patches of corn were pushing through the soil, the inhabitants of Omro were surprised to see Indians appear and congregate at a spot where Dr. Doll's home was located, 130 W. Huron. They came in from all directions which frightened the townspeople, not knowing what to expect. They boarded up their windows and loaded their shot guns preparing to fight a battle. They watched and waited.

Nothing of violence happened. To their amazement and relief the Indians began to dance. Finally venturing from their homes the people learned that the Indians had come to celebrate their traditional "Corn Dance" for a bountiful fall harvest.

That certain spot where they congregated was the one in which they traditionally gathered for that purpose. There was relief and satisfaction for both whites and Indians. No battle--and, a traditional rite performed without interference.

*W. W. Hunt p. 7  
M. 12/27/35*  
In the spring of 1852 a similar occurrence was reported to have happened on the north side of the river. Only this was a "Sugar Dance" (maple), but the villagers mistook it for a war dance. They caused quite a commotion gathering up shot guns and spare pitchforks and preparing for defense. Some inhabitants simply packed up and left town. The Redskins noticed the hurry and scurry on the south side of the river, and being ignorant of the white man's dance, likewise became uneasy and at last hurriedly adjourned the frolic. Terpsichorean ignorance on both sides of the river is what it was!

*W. Brooks*

Another experience with early Indians and their begging habit has been related by another Omroite. His mother told of Indians wearing breechcloths coming to the door begging for food. She would place food on a dish, and set it outside the door for the Indians to pick up. This she did either from fear of them, or embarrassment at their near nakedness.

*also - Family p. 35 + 38*

Families were frequently annoyed by drunken or unfriendly Indians. On one occasion while the husband was away, a loud knock startled the wife into opening the door a tiny crack. Immediately a buckskin-clad leg was thrust into the aperture, and a guttural voice exclaimed, "Where you man? Me want to trade ponies." A violent push opened the door wide enough to disclose a half-drunken Indian framed in the blackness of the night. As he stood peering through rings made with his thumbs and fore-fingers to illustrate his meaning, he continued, "My pony got white eyes. What you man give for my pony?" The wife was alone with the children, but with quickness of wit she stepped to an inner door and called her husband's name. The effect was immediate. The Indian vanished as abruptly as he had appeared. (An experience of Mrs. L. Arnold.)

*2/2/32*

Then again, Indians were committing depredations on the settlers of that locality. During the absence of the husband who was on military duty, a band of Indians came to the dwelling. Finding the wife and two young sons alone, they pillaged the place of whatever they fancied, set the house on fire, and drove the wife and two boys off as prisoners.

As it was in the dead of winter with much snow on the ground, the wife became exhausted and could go no farther; whereupon the Indians stripped them of most of their clothing and left them, as they undoubtedly supposed, to perish. But the two boys by their wonderful efforts, succeeded in getting their mother to the cabin of another settler where she recovered.

*P.P. 37  
by Zimmerman*

After the Indians were relegated to reservations by the mid-1850s, for years afterward many small groups roamed throughout the state during warm months of the year.

*m.s.d.* A group of Indians came annually to a camp in William's woods near Preacher's Bend in the 1870s, 80s, and 90s. They stayed the summers and treked south for the winters.

CALVIN BIGELOW

Another man who did much to promote the welfare and growth of Omro and the surrounding area was Calvin Bigelow. He and his family were the first to settle in the area that is now the City of Omro. He could be considered a promoter in the truest sense of the word. We find that he had his fingers in many a local pie.

According to the Early Settler, "Records show that C. Bigelow and N. Frank came up the river on the steamer Badger. It was the first real steamer up the Fox that far. At this time Col. Tuttle's float bridge was not finished. The freight was unloaded at the end of the bridge in the north channel. The south channel at that time was very low water. A plank was laid down to get the freight across to the south shore.

"Mr. Frank and others later put a yoke of oxen to a scraper and dug it out. The current of the river made the main channel where it is now. They did a good job for it is straight."

However since the building of the new bridge (1971) a new channel has been dredged so that it is bowed now at the bridge site, the channel now cutting across the west end of what was Cad Clark's island.

Dredging of the Fox river was being done as early as the late 1840s. In a newspaper clipping is this report--"Dredging was constantly necessary to keep the river open. As far back as 1850, the River Times noted: The Fox is already navigable from Green Bay to 'the portage' for small boats and soon will be for the largest class. The dredge is within 20 miles of there."

Government dredges were in operation on the Fox until 1927. Commercial shipping by river boats ceased in 1922. Then the only duty for a dredge on the upper Fox was possible repair and maintenance of the lock and dam at Eureka.

A pioneer boatman of Omro was Captain Louis A. Smith. He was Master of Fox and Wolf river boats for nearly half a century. Capt. Smith's life was closely allied with the history of construction and maintenance of locks and channels in waterways of central Wisconsin. He entered government service with the corps of engineers in 1877. In 1880 he was promoted to the position as master of a dredge and held that post for 40 years. He served as Captain aboard three government craft. His last boat was named "Omro" because of his long service with the corps of engineers and his lengthy residence here.

Captain Smith was believed to be the oldest member of the National Federation of Federal Employes. In 1948 he was presented with a 30 year emblem for continuous membership in the NFFE.

Mr. Smith was born in 1853 and came to Omro with his family when 11 years old. A daughter is Mrs. Carrie Bell (Earl) Calhoon, Sr. Dale Smith of Omro, no relation, was appointed Manager of the dredge "Omro" after Capt. Smith's retirement. By that time the title of Captain was discontinued. Louis died in Feb of 1951. *Q.H. 2/22/51.*

The ox-powered scraper of Mr. Frank's did not begin to compare with a government dredge such as Lewis Smith's, but it helped Mother Nature dig a satisfactory south channel to the Fox at Omro.

*E. H. H. 11/23/39*

*304 II p. 1 (2A)  
7/26/43*

*Miss  
I-104B  
Daily 7/10  
2/22/51*

*Omro Journal 1153*  
 The Fox river is said to be geologically the oldest river on this continent. The river was named about 1632 at the same time as ~~was~~ Lake Winnebago (Lac des Puans) which were the earliest of all natural objects in Wisconsin to be named by white men.

Back to early Omro we find that Mr. Bigelow and Mr. Frank built a store. This was the first store in Omro. The Early Settler noted<sup>2.1</sup> that "business was not so good at that time. As an example, a farmer came in with a load of wood and tried to sell it. He failed to make a sale and was about to dump it in the river by the bridge. Mr. Terwilliger, manager of the store, saw this, and gave him a pint of whiskey for a load."

We find later that the store was listed as Frank & Terwilliger. There were frequent changes of ownership and management of stores and mills alike in the early settlement days.

About this same time Mr. Bigelow built the Goodwin House, lot 97 and 98 in the Western Division. During the same year the Larrabee House was built; it is now the Hotel Omro. Also the same year the old Exchange Hotel was erected. It was the Exchange Tavern on the north side. So at that period Omro had 3 hotels. One wonders if business that was "not so good", must have picked up.

*Hist. p. 30*  
 Again in reference to the Fox river, in October of 1872 the waterway project was sold to the Federal Government. The Fox river was made a national charge in 1876, and the work of improving it, in connection with the Wisconsin river, and making a navigable channel across the state from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi, was already far advanced at that time. The U.S. Corps of Engineers thus had charge of the river until freight navigation ceased and the upper Fox was of no interest to the Federal Government.

Arden Sheldon has related that the water in the Fox River used to rise so high that in the spring he would paddle a skiff from where the Omro Park now is, south-west to Huron St, southwest to Ontario, to Larrabee to north of Waukau road, then northwest to the river again west of town.

A high wooden sidewalk was across the Park lot south of the highway. From this sidewalk he speared fish. The interurban street car tracks from Omro to Oshkosh were laid north of what is now Hwy 21. When water was over the tracks another street car took passengers from the terminal near the Hotel Omro to what is now Geo. Dagget & Son warehouse. Then passengers were taken by boat to higher ground east on Main (then Water) Street to another waiting interurban to continue to Oshkosh. The same procedure at what is now Oshkosh Ave (then West Algoma) near the Golf links to Algoma bridge where another street car conveyed passengers down town to the street car terminal on Main St. Also because of high water on route.

The Pelton Store had competition at least in the candy department. An early Omro resident now in her 80s (1982) tells this story:

*Ma Stanley* "When I was a little girl my mother and I went into the dry goods part of the Pelton Store. I kept teasing my mother for a penny with which to buy candy. Finally she gave me the penny and we went through the big door that connected the dry goods and the grocery departments. I went straight to the candy case, studied the display, and pointing to a certain kind asked the clerk how many pieces I could get for a penny. On being told, I promptly informed him that I could get more pieces at Ferrises, and then and there marched right out of the store to my mother's intense embarrassment!"

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Mrs. Chas. Pelton (nee Margaret Shepard) was born in Courtland, N.Y. April 30, 1947, and came to Wisconsin when 2 years old. She died September 10, 1937.

In her obituary Mr. Pelton's death is noted as in 1924.

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ALFRED PELTON

*Edith Bishop*

An early and progressive merchant of the village was Alfred Pelton who descended from a long line of men successful in business affairs. "He left his native New York State to travel to Chicago and Green Bay. While there the business possibilities in the new growing river settlement along the upper Fox river attracted him; within a short time his endeavors and know-how helped him become a pioneer merchant in Omro saw mill town. This was in 1867.

"Mr. Pelton's first store in Omro was built on the north side of Water street (now Main) near the present Gamble Store. At that time, he carried a general line of merchandise as well as a merchant tailor department.

"At first it seemed likely that Omro main street would be built up on the north side of the river. In 1851 Hiram Johnson and Roy Bump built a saw mill at the east end of Mill Street (now River Drive). Five years later Andrew Wilson erected another sawmill on Mill street, west of Division street (now Poygan Ave.). So Mr. Pelton built a store on the north side where Mrs. Anna Kitchen's house now stands.

"Shortly after, Alfred Pelton, sensing that boat traffic and industry was increasing, built 4 stores. The first one was at the end of the float bridge. Because of this location on the south river bank, Mr. Pelton put into it the best material and workmanship available. After a century of time, this substantial little building stands intact, annually resisting the spring flood waters of the river." *(1939) E. B. Root*

*Mr. Brezee* Much later the Pelton Store on the north side burned. The remains stood for a long time until Elmer Brezee tore it down about 1914 or so and built the house that is now 321 N. Webster.

*E. B.* "Elisha Root first rented this building built by Mr. Pelton for a hardware store. Then between this store and the corner Mr. Pelton built two more stores. Before this he had erected a two story brick building on the corner. Here he opened up a large general store on the lower floor while his family occupied the upstairs apartments.

"When the business center of Omro seemed to be flourishing more across the river on the south side, Mr. Pelton moved to the brick block facing the river on the south side. It was here that for three generations his name and trade principles characterized the business.

"The Pelton homestead built upon Piety Hill, at 224 E. Scott St., stretched hospitable length in the midst of green lawns, colorful flower gardens, and ancient gnarled oak trees which typified the spirit of a New England entrepreneur. Here Alfred with his family of 4 daughters and son lived with great dignity and quiet. When his youngest daughter was age seven, his son Charles was born, which marked a red letter day in that family.

"Although Charles was only nineteen his father allowed him to enlist in the Great Conflict of Civil strife, when along with a Sunday school class of thirteen boys, together they all enlisted at the same time. Charles served in the 32nd Wisconsin Regiment.

"Fortunately Charles survived the war and returned to succeed his father in business and spent his mature years promoting civic

interests with generosity and benevolence along with his business enterprises." Alfred Pelton died March 15, 1875. The Pelton Store continued on in business for years. (*Frankie diary*)

*W. B. B. S.* The obituary of Chas. Pelton states that, "Charles Pelton was born in Green Bay, March 24, 1844; he came to Omro with his parents in 1867. He married Miss Margaret Shephard, a school teacher, in 1872. Charles was in business with his father for years on the north side of the river. The firm being known as Pelton & Co. After the death of his father, H.B. Winslow became a member of the firm, and in 1914 Mr. Pelton retired from business, selling his interest to B.V. Gummer who was in the employ of Mr. Pelton for 38 years."

Charles Pelton was an Omro businessman for over 50 years. He was a member of the gun club at Lake Poygan. Mr. and Mrs. Pelton spent winters in Florida beginning in 1894, at Lake Helen, Miami, and later years in St. Petersburg. He died March 17, 1925 at St. Petersburg. *1925*

*W. B. B. S.* After Charles Pelton died the store continued with Henry Winslow as manager. In the early 1900s the clerks were Henry Winslow, Bert Gummer, Charles Kramer, and Frank Bremer in the grocery and men's clothing department. In the dry goods and wallpaper departments were, *Lonnie Brown* Ann Smith, Bonnie (Luscombe) Gummer, Esther (Albright), Hellwig, and Emma (Frank) Kellett. With both departments it was indeed a general store. (*more opposite pg.*)

Pelton Store received much of the farmer's trade. "Due Bills" were issued to customers who brought in eggs and did not trade out the amount coming to them. These "Due Bills" could apply to future purchases.

*ibk IV* Charles Pelton was a descendant of the famous Dr. Wm. Beaumont, U.S. Army surgeon, who had the opportunity of learning the secrets of man's digestive system. This process he observed through an open wound in the abdomen of an 18 year old Canadian voyageur who had been shot. This was at Green Bay in 1822. *34*

*P. 66 journal* First the Doctor saved the young man's life and nursed him back to health. Then he experimented through the open hole that would not heal, and to which he fitted a lid. Dr. Beaumont's 51 conclusions from 238 experiments are the basis of man's digestive system that Doctors and Nurses still study while in training. *7/16/54*

*W. B. B. S.* The Beaumont family tree hangs in the Military Hospital at Green Bay with Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Pelton's names included. (*more opposite pg.*)

*W. B. B. S.* When Manager Henry Winslow retired, B.V. Gummer, a partner, bought Winslow's share and became sole owner. In April of 1935 the grocery and men's department was disposed of. It was taken over by Chas. Chase as a grocery store. Gummer then dealt only in dry goods, notions, women's apparel and wall paper. About 1936 Gummer sold out, and the long-time, well-known establishment of Pelton & Co. of Omro ceased after 70 years or so of serving the public. For all but a year or so of that time it was a general store in the truest sense of the word. *W. B. B. S.*

*and 3 generations.*



## BRIDGES

With the settling of "Indian Land" on the north side, the bridges of Omro were of interest and concern. The earliest crossing was a ferry at N. Maplewood on the south shore over to S. Hawthorne on the north shore. In 1849 a ferry at the neighboring village of Delhi was also in operation for a river crossing at that point.

Records indicate that before 1850 the river at Omro was crossed by the ferry. According to Emma Jaeck, before the team of oxen and scraper went to work, the Fox river at that time was scarcely more than a brook!

That same year, 1850, Col. Tuttle, a progressive and energetic citizen, planned to build a float bridge across the stream at Main St. (now Jefferson Ave.). The people of the original division wanted the bridge at the foot of Exchange St. (now Madison Ave.). Because of the controversy Col. Tuttle rode on horseback to Madison and won his point.

However, the disagreement continued. Finally, the two factions compromised and Tuttle built his toll bridge about half-way between. The south landing was near Hayward & Thompson Carriage Works--near a point where Judd's Arco Station is now located. This was the line between the two sections of the village.

On the north shore at the foot of the new bridge Mr. Nathaniel Frank built a dock. Later he and Calvin Bigelow built the store near the dock.

This bridge was privately owned until 1856. At that time the town purchased and repaired it.

In 1861 the village bought a bridge structure from a private party for \$800 on condition the Bridge Co. repair it. The village would maintain and keep it in repair. This bridge was free to the people.

*W. Feb. 19-1931* The draw bridge of 1864 or 1868 was a steel structured span. The draw section could be opened for boats to pass up and down the river. A pedestrian walk was along the east side of the bridge. This was at the Webster Street location. William Deviney was the first regular bridge tender after the purchase.

When a boat would signal for a bridge opening (3 even blasts or toots) the bridge tender would close the gates at each end of the draw. Then he would carry a huge T shaped key from the bridge house to the center of the draw. This key was placed in the floor gears. With the cross bar nearly waist high, he pushed it round and round to swing the draw section parallel with the channel. After the boat had passed through, he would push the key in the opposite direction to close the bridge. He then would replace the key in the house and open the gates for road traffic.

There was posted over the traffic lane a warning--"\$5 FINE for crossing this bridge faster than a walk".--For horses of course! No cars until later on. Apparently it was the Marshall's duty to ticket old Dobbin, and believe it or not, there were complaints voiced of speeders.

The float bridge was opened and closed with a winding chain.

*P.P.P. p. 66  
Kate Anderson*

Harold Phillips  
(1973)

Harold Phillips

A little 5 year old lad who is now in his 70s (1973) still recalls an experience in connection with the old draw bridge. He lived on the south side of the Fox river in Omro, and was on the way to his Grandfather's home on the north side. Upon reaching the bridge a boat apparently had signaled for a bridge opening. The little lad reached the middle of the draw when the bridge-tender began to turn the key and the bridge began to open.

The little fellow found himself unable to reach either side of the river as the draw turned parallel with the boat that was passing through. He had to stay put until the bridge was again swung back into position before he could continue on his way to Grandpa's. The lad (Harold Phillips) has lived for many years in New York state, but the Omro draw bridge is one of his early memories of the village.

Emme  
Aug 1947

In 349 the first death by drowning occurred. It was a son of Wm. Parker on May 10; the first of many tragedies of which the old Fox has been guilty.

M. V. P. 38  
N.W. 6/26/14.

A near tragedy occurred in June of 1914. The 7 year old son of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Steib while at the railroad bridge fell in; he could not swim and called for help. Rob Lanning who was with a group of young men on the railroad bridge heard the boy cry, jumped in fully clothed, and rescued the lad. The railroad bridge has its interesting tales, also.

Now back to bridges. A lift bridge was the next, built in 1916 by state and county commissioners. It replaced the draw bridge. Traffic was routed over a float bridge constructed to the west in close proximity.

A huge concrete weight or counterbalance rested up above the south end of the bridge. (It was anything but beautiful!) In addition, in July of 1932 a week old heat wave took effect on the bridge so that it could not be opened for a boat. Despite the fact that the fire engine was brought on the scene and a stream of water turned on the bridge for about an hour to cool it, open it would not! Mechanism when set in motion lowered the huge weight which caused the draw section to rise to an upright position. Boats could then pass through the channel. A gate at the north end and a chain at the south end of the draw section kept vehicles and pedestrians from plunging into the river. George Shepherd was the last to hold the position of bridge tender. This bridge was referred to as a Bascule bridge.

In (C.H. - 7/21/32.)

Oct 21, 71

The new bridge, built in 1971 has no draw or opening section and is located at N. Adams Street. It crosses over to W. River Drive on the north side of the Fox river. Dedicated Oct 11, 1971

Oct 11, 71  
N.W.  
7/16/76

This bridge caused a "deep" problem. The island was left without an access route to the city. Two residents, one owning and operating the Island Sport Shop, and the other owning property and some buildings on the east end of the island refused to sell their holdings and vacate.

Finally at great expense, over \$31,500 or so, the city built a foot bridge from the south bank of the Fox river to the north bank, again connecting south and north Webster Ave., for pedestrian travel only.

This new bridge at Adams St. was dedicated in October of 1971 by Archie Daggett, Mayor of Omro, and Assemblyman, Jack Steinhilber of Oshkosh.

NORTH SIDE

*mjs.*  
 Now back again to earlier years and an earlier river crossing. Even though the first settlers built on the south shore which was Government Territory, and although the north side was "Indian Land", the ferry proved that people liked the looks of the north side. In later years it was referred to as "Over in Canady", and those who were not Indians were "Canuks."

*E. Hart: 11/30/39  
 C.H.*

In 1851 Hiram Johnson built a mill on the north side of the river. This mill burned in 1866. But that first venture led to other north side industries.

The year of 1851 was regarded as a poor year for the village but they struggled through it. One has to believe that in those days money was scarce. For instance, Mr. C.S. Murphy informed the Omro Journal Editor during his research, that his cash receipts during the year of 1851 were just 100 cents, sometimes called a dollar!

*W. Hart p. 12  
 Omro Herald  
 1/15/31*

It is stated that not many new arrivals came in 1851. There were only L.O. Manning, the Wilsons, the Wilcoxes, Lucas Andrews, J. Waterman and the Pattersons.

INDIAN RESERVATION

*N.H. 12/14/39  
 E. Hart 12/12/39*  
 After this area of "Indian Land" was opened for settlement in 1840, a so-called "Indian Reservation" was established--or just happened. The Early Settler wrote this about it: "Many can recall the old Grignon Reservation, later called Blackbird Island. (Now the settlement of Rivermoor.)

*6/2/37  
 N.H. 12/14/39*  
 "The road that leads from Highway 21 to Rivermoor has a history. It is still the same old Indian Trail, that is why it is so crooked. Robert Grignon was the government overseer of this area and, also, he lived here at one time. He married a woman named Mary."

"His wife when very old always smoked her pipe. Some boys for a joke, put powder in her pipe which she lit. Her clothes caught afire and she burned to death. Later her husband while trapping froze to death. They found him along the bank of the river below the point called Preacher's Bend.! The Grignons are both buried near Rivermoor. Old Chief Kity-Wa-Poo, who lived his later years with the Grignon's, is buried there, also. At that time it was a reservation, later, after Grignon died, they sent the rest of the Indians up on the reservation at Keshena."

"Years ago the river was loaded with Indian canoes going back and forth from this reservation to Omro. Also along the road you would see them on their ponies or lying aside of the road--too much fire-water."

"The Grignon girls were very proud and good-looking. They would walk to Omro carrying their slippers and stockings in their hands. When they reached the first sidewalk, which was at that time in the far eastern part of the village, they would sit down, put them on and come to town in style. On returning home they would take shoes and stockings off at the end of the sidewalk and walk home bare-footed."

*W. Brink*

MEANIES

Tricks were played on others besides Indians in the village. Many years later, probably in the late 1890s Omro had what were called "bullies". They were young men who took delight in bedeviling the more weaker of mankind.

These 3 or 4 hoodlum characters in particular chose as one victim for their pranks a man whom we shall call "Georgie". Being small in stature and rather timid in nature perhaps, he at this particular time was the "goat".

The bullies grabbed Georgie as he was nearing a certain meat market on the south side of the Wilson or Putnam block. They walked him back of the market where there was a fountain, and blind-folded him. They (not meaning it of course) threatened to "cut his throat". One dribbled water on him to feel like blood and another sawed back and forth on his throat with a piece of stick.

Poor Georgie was so frightened that he passed out completely. He was in that unconscious state for so long that the boys became very frightened. Georgie finally did regain consciousness, and found that they had not murdered him after all.

One of the same bullies at another time climbed on top of Mahar's meat market roof with a pail of water. He waited until a victim came along walking on the sidewalk below him. We shall call this one Asie; the bully dumped the pail of water down on the unsuspecting victim.

So every generation has its share of meanies. Now back to the earlier days again.

MORE BUILDING

*O. N. 11/23/39*  
*E. H. 11/23/39*

In 1850 there was reportedly quite an increase in population. That was the year Col. Tuttle built the float bridge across the river to where later Thompson & Hayward's carriage works were located. The population increase warranted the building of 3 hotels, the Larrabee House now Hotel Omro, and the old Exchange Hotel. The Exchange was located where the Masonic Hall is now on Madison Ave. and E. Main. then called Exchange and Water streets. The Goodwin House was built later on lot 97 and 98 in the Western Division in the block east of the old Opera House. In later years Minnie Goodwin lived there. Also at this time, a new public school building was constructed.

NEWSPAPERS

This same year, 1850, the first newspaper was printed. It was the "Omro Republican", published by Wheeler & Walker.

Another newspaper was the "Omro Union". This one was first published in 1865 with E.R. Moore as editor. Later Seward Cady was printer. The office was located on the corner of Huron and S. Webster where the W.R.C. Hall stood later on.

Supposedly the "Omro Journal" came into existence before 1870, perhaps as early as 1865 or before. An Omro Directory of that year lists that periodical with Platt Wright as editor and printer. A Mr. Gibbs was the former editor. The first office of Wright's was where the W.R.C Hall stood as late as 1874. This building burned down. Then the office was located where Lyle Johnson & Son's TV shop now stands, on W. Main St. Elizabeth Smith Knoll was the typesetter.

Later years Moltke S. Gram III was editor and re-activated the Journal. His office was in a part of the Ford Garage. Gram was here only a year or so.

Later on, in 1881, "The Stalwart" was published by Carter & Hilton. A particular issue, the one of March 5, was printed on wall paper, not because of necessity, but as an "advertising stunt". It was for Leighton & Gilman, whose front page ad announced this method of placing samples of their beautiful stock of wall paper before the public.

The paper, apparently, depended on reprint news, as indicated in the apologetic note: "The snow blockade this week cutting off the mails, and we are not receiving our regular editions of the Oshkosh Times & Standard, must be excused for not being as newsy as usual."

"The Omro Herald" was established about 1885 by Cyrus H. Slocum. In 1897 a subscription to the paper was \$1.25 if paid in advance. This printing office was down near the bridge at first. Later, it was located across the street from the "Omro Journal" office. This was in a part of the Wilson building on the corner of Jefferson and W. Main. Much later Mr. Weingarten, garageman, tore this part of the building down for filling station gasoline pumps.

It was back in 1906 that Mr. Slocum moved to a building on the east side of S. Webster. He became a veteran editor and printer, and claimed to hold the record of having conducted a paper in the state of Minnesota when that commonwealth was still a territory.

Mr. Slocum retired in 1916 at the age of 80 years. He sold his printing business at that time to Mrs. Mary Howe and son Russel of Ripon, the E.L. Howe Printing Co. They in turn sold to F.A. Siebensohn in November of 1918.

In 1954 Mr. Siebensohn on retiring sold to Paul Kimble at the same location of S. Webster next door south of the former Co-op Store where Mr. Slocum moved to years before. This building burned in the spring of 1963. That ended the publication of a weekly in Omro. The Bicking Printing Co. of Berlin took over and carries on from that city, still as the "Omro Herald". Mr. Siebensohn died May 29, 1964.

*S. W. Moore p. 13  
H. W. Moore p. 13  
H. W. Moore p. 13  
E. H. Moore p. 11  
H. W. Moore p. 11*

*Mr. West p. 16  
Omro Herald  
1/22/31.*

*etc  
Oct. N.W. 2/5/4*

*SBK I p. 99  
Emma Jacob  
1947  
Omro Herald*

*1913  
Emma J. p. 3  
H. W. Moore p. 13*

*H. W. Moore  
2/29/16  
Emma J. p. 3*

*1857  
SBK IV p. 64B  
Missy N.W. 3/10/13.*

*M. J. N.W. 2/29/16  
P. 7  
(O. H. - 11/27/32)*

M. 2 BK I p. 39 B  
5/12/1887 - Winneconne Local

EDITOR'S VOICE of 1894

Cyrus Slocum, editor of the Omro Herald and Platt Wright of the Omro Journal, editors of the two local weeklies, were competitors in earnest--and appeared to thoroughly enjoy it. Apparently they diligently searched each others papers for possible typographical errors--and sometimes found one as the following editorial indicates. It was printed in the Omro Herald by C. Slocum and needles P. Wright in this fashion--

"Brother Wright, of the JOURNAL spells dedication, "didication." That accounts for his swallowing that bottle of ink. People should keep their ink bottles, as they do their chickens, locked up, then, perhaps, we can get one of the "i's" knocked our of "didication."  
(Then he continues his editorial.)

"Chase has a fine assortment of jewelry and silver ware, suitable for Christmas gifts. We notice some beautiful silver knives and forks, pearl handled, silver cups and saucers, orange spoons, gold rings, neck chains, and silver hair pins for ladies. Go and make your selection.

"One of the needed improvements of which Omro ought to be able to boast is to have the names of the streets painted on boards and posted on street corners. What's the use of naming streets if they are not so pointed out that strangers can tell 'where they are at'. Perhaps this suggestion to our village Board will be sufficient to cause this blessing to fall upon us. A person in Oshkosh asked an Omro lady the other day what was her street number. She said she couldn't tell as they had neither streets nor numbers in Omro."

There was not only rivalry between Omro Newspaper Editors, but also between Omro and Winneconne newspaper men as well. The method of sparring is taken from a clipping of May 12, 1887 issue of the Winneconne Local. It is entitled "SOME POETRY."  
*Winneconne Local 5/12/1887. BK I p. 39 B*

"For several months there has appeared in The Omro Doings a series of letters signed "Jenkins", of which The Local (of Winneconne) has several times made mention. Last week "Joe Jenkins" gives it to us in rhyme as follows:

O, little Winneconne man, stand up and tell us if you can,  
Why so fierce for blood and slaughter?  
Why stick your nose where you hadn't oughter?  
Why should you scold and cut such a caper  
Because the Jenkinses write for the paper?  
Suppose they are silly, or foolish, or dull;  
Why should you let it worry your skull?  
You're so cralled and cross, you sure must be ill  
I suggest you swallow a big liver pill;  
Or a dose of vermifuge pour down your throat,  
And let us alone while you paddle your own boat.

The Winneconne Local came back with this jab--

"O, funny man of Omro,  
Why try to hurt our felling so?  
Why do you still drule out your spewings  
Upon the readers of The Doings?  
Why upon foolishness do you still hammer.  
Corrupting our spelling and English Grammar?  
That you're a DOCTOR all can see,  
And this, perhaps, the scheme may be;  
Your writing "letters" is a trick,  
To try to make the people sick;  
But pills can't cure such mental pain,  
Nor vermifuge make them well again.  
From your advice I'll try to learn,  
But this, I'll give you in return:  
For literary honors stop your reaching,  
And just confine yourself to PREACHING. Ed. Local."

Orig. 6/25/10.  
by M. Gerard

NORMAN GERARD

1850 was also the year that Norman Gerard came to Omro. He wrote an interesting history of the village in later years. Gerard was born in 1824. This is his report of the reason for coming to Wisconsin--"I had read a great deal about Wisconsin and the great ship canal being made from Green Bay up the Fox river, through to the Mississippi river. At this time Fond du Lac was the head of navigation on Lake Winnebago. Also, I heard about the great Indian reservation north of the Fox river, which was soon to come on to market.

"In the spring of 1850 I took a steamer from Port Stanley for Cleveland and there took a larger steamer for Sheboygan; then the stage for Fond du Lac, about 40 miles distance. Most of the way being through the woods, I walked.

"I remained in Fond du Lac about a week looking for work but could not find anything to do. I was a mason by trade. There were too many like myself looking for work. Not being discouraged I took a small steamer for Oshkosh, then started west." He eventually found work in the Omro area as mentioned earlier.

He noted, too,--"My wife and baby came by boat to Sheboygan about September 1, and I hired John Paddleford's team and went to Sheboygan after them. It took about a week to make the trip. We set up house keeping in Hiram Tritt's old log house."

It is interesting to note that the first real steamer, the "Badger", docked in Omro in 1850 at Tuttle's bridge, not yet finished. It brought freight and passengers, including N. Frank and C. Bigelow. The freight was unloaded on the end of the bridge in the north channel, then a plank was laid on the end of the bridge to the south shore. At that time the south channel was so shallow that many people thought it was not navigable. The ox-drawn scraper changed that, however.

Emma J. P. 1  
interviewed  
Mrs. Ella Stanley

"In an issue of the Omro Herald was this notice of a 'daily boat service from Oshkosh to Neenah and Fond du Lac, also from Oshkosh to New London on the Wolf, and to Portage on the upper Fox.' In 1856 there was similar service between Oshkosh and Berlin."



FIRES  
&  
FIRE FIGHTING

Hiram Johnson was one of the early settlers who experienced a disastrous fire on the north side of the river when his mill burned. Later more mills, stores and dwellings being built of wood caught fire and burned. There was no fire fighting apparatus or fire department.

For fighting fire in those early days, leather waterbuckets were used. The system was called the "bucket brigade", and was used in towns and villages alike. When anyone heard the cry "Fire!" everyone grabbed his bucket, filled it with water and ran to the blaze. A line of people would form from a water source to the fire. The one nearest the water supply filled the bucket, handed it to the next one and was passed on in like manner until it reached the fire. The empty buckets were passed back to be re-filled along the same line in the same person-to-person procedure. Later a hand-drawn apparatus was purchased. This was in the 1880s over some objections. This fire-fighter was affectionately called the "Queen", and was housed in an annex to the jail.

*C.B.R.P. 2  
Q.H. 6/2/39.*

*M.J.* The horse-drawn fire engine of Omro's is still preserved. In local parades it is drawn by a team of beautiful light bay draft horses owned and driven by Lyle Coats.

*E. Hunt comp. AB  
Omro History  
1916*

One newspaper clipping of 1916 stated that "Kemper C. Goss was chosen Marshall and Engineer (of the Fire Department) at the last regular meeting of the Village Board. Also, chosen was C.E. Bennett, Street Commissioner, and Dr. Q.H. Danforth, health officer."

*Q.H.*

*E. Hunt P. 17  
J.H. 11/23/39*

In the early years of the village, with Beckwithtown flourishing in the eastern part of the village, somewhat later the beginning of Bloomingdale just to the west took place. The location would be now in the area of the old Edick home. A house was built near the river's edge, which was formally an Indian Trading Post. Later Mr. James Bartow built this up, filled in the old bayou and made a beautiful home there, now 711 Maplewood Road.

*Omro Journal  
P. Wright History  
H.P. 5/31  
Ev. Tulliver*

Fires again plagued the village. The fall of 1871 was exceedingly dry. Fires were all around us, and the very air was so filled with smoke that times it was difficult to breathe. Many began to fear that the "last day" was at hand, but fortunately the village of Omro escaped, and our people lived to respond nobly to the calls for help from Peshtigo, and other towns scourged by fire. So wrote Platt Wright in his History of Omro. P. 27

The media looked for the sensational. An Omro hotel burned. Headline read--"Thousand of Lives Lost!--Bedbugs!!"

## CHURCHES

*m. J. 2*  
 On the heels of establishing the necessities for a new settlement, it came time to turn to the spiritual.

Our country's concepts were founded on divine faith; it followed that the settlers in new localities organized and built churches of their particular denominations.

In the early days there were no church structures in Omro, but that did not mean there were no religious services. Visiting Catholic Priests dating back to the 1600s held masses and were referred to as Missionary Fathers. The Protestants in later years had Circuit Riders who came on horseback to hold services in the homes with more or less regularity. Traveling Elders would be away *E. B.* from their homes for as long as 3 months at a time, riding from one settlement to another.

Elders of the Methodist and Baptist churches were the first ones to come, then the Presbyterians and Congregationalists. These were followed shortly by leaders of other denominations.

There was an Elder Theodore Pillsbury of Pickett who was a Methodist circuit rider. The first Baptist minister was Rev. G.L. Pillsbury, 1850-51. Could they have been related?

Money was a meager commodity. During the time a visiting elder spent with his flock, little could be given him other than his room and board, and hay and oats for his horse. After a short stay he would ride on to his next group of parishioners.

Dedicated laymen were often called to the pulpit. Receiving but little in money they made a living by engaging in another vocation in addition to the preaching duties. For example, Elder Theodore Pillsbury, a Methodist pastor, was the builder of a mill on the old Woolen mill site.

*E. B.* Usually these groups of followers would form the nucleus for future church organizations. To help out financially, "Donation or Pound Parties" were held to raise money for the services of these dedicated church leaders.

*M. B. P. 2*  
*N. 4/25/10*  
 A Rev. Kevil, Pickett, of the Liberty Prairie area had a peculiar eccentricity. He would remove his coat before starting to preach the sermon. For that, he was dubbed "A Breaking Plow".

## BAPTIST CHURCH

The Baptist Church congregation mentioned before was in the Omro township, and was organized in 1850. For a year they met in a school house, and the next 3 years in Bloomingdale village (Omro) in private homes and school rooms.

In 1854 or 55 they erected a small church building in the same village. Lumber and labor was furnished by the small group. More joined the congregation and the building soon became too small for the growing membership; it was rebuilt. A third, the present edifice on Jefferson Avenue, was built in 1901. Rev. Abram LeGrand was Pastor at the time.

*Baptist Church of 1912 M. B. IV p. 28. Omro Herald - 10/18/12.*

*Omro Herald*  
A Lyceum Circuit in the early 1900s brought evening programs during the winter months at least one year. Another year, 1914-15, Lecture Courses were presented monthly from November to March. Both the auditorium and the "lecture room" to the back would be filled to capacity.

*Omro Herald 6/14/32*  
On January 14, 1932 the Baptist church bell was dedicated. It was given by Mr. Redlin and the business men of Omro.

*M. J. S.*  
In 1950 the church celebrated its Centennial year. Shortly after the observance the Rev. Robert Wiegner received a letter. Contents of the missive greatly surprised the Pastor. The post-mark on the envelope was of a western coastal city in California, and it was addressed to him personally. To his knowledge he was not acquainted with anyone in that city.

On opening the letter he discovered the message contained an unusual request and a confession. It was from an elderly man. Why he should have sent it to this particular pastor was mystifying unless the wide circulation of the Omro Herald was the reason. This particular minister was the pastor of a church that was observing its Centennial and published accounts were printed in the newspaper whose subscribers were in all sections of the United States. This man may have had access to an issue.

The letter contained a startling story. About 50 years earlier the writer, then a young man, a farmer's hired man, living a few miles from Omro, was the possessor of a \$10 Confederate bill. In this Yankee country as elsewhere in or about 1900, such a thing was of no value financially.

Coming to town on a Saturday evening, the young man discovered a group of church ladies holding an ice cream social. Thinking he could outwit the women and cash in on his bogus bill, he bought a glass of lemonade for 5¢. He tendered his Confederate bill, and in good faith the cashier returned to him \$9.95. The women had been successfully hoodwinked.

Shortly after this incident had happened the young man went west. Now he was an old man, and had "acquired religion", using his words. His misdeed toward this church was weighing on his mind and conscience. His desire was to put his house in order before meeting his Maker.

(More on back of page).

BAPTIST CHURCH--

Minnie Treleven Morton researched and had published in a local newspaper much about early Omro. The following is credited to her.

*At the Bishop*  
An Old Book with covers worn and pages yellowed, in writing undimmed by years, records of the first church movement among the settlers of the Junction of the Towns of Omro and Algoma. The following is an extract written 77 years ago.

"Agreeable to appointment several individual members of the Baptist Church met at the Reed School House in the Town of Bloomingdale and aforesaid, February 12th, 1850, to take into consideration the propriety of forming a Church. After a discussion it was voted to form such a body. Accordingly twelve brethren and sisters gave their assent to a body of articles of faith and practice."

The school house mentioned is the West School in what was for a time called Cheeney District. It is referred to in this old record as the "Reed School" undoubtedly because of the name of its teacher, Luther Reed.

For a year this little church continued its meetings in this schoolhouse. Then the minutes record an increase. "During the month of March, 1851, God in His gracious mercy was pleased to give to relieve His work at Omro in the above named town, quite a large number who were either revived or converted. About this time the church had agreed to hold its next monthly meeting at Omro. Therefore, April 5, 1851, the church assembled at the schoolhouse in the above named village."

Among the names that appear as first members of this pioneer church are family names now inscribed in stone in the beautiful cemeteries at the Junction--Paddleford, Tanner, Hoyt, Jones, Bunker, Littlefield, Cusick, Griswold. Others, as, Remington, Ham, Stone, Pillsbury, Pettingale, Blanchard, are names found on old monuments in the Omro cemetery.

The church organized by these sturdy pioneers celebrated its 75th Anniversary two years ago. (Therefore this article was published in 1927.)

-----  
Baptist church.

*D. H. 1/15/31*  
*Wright*  
"Soon after the upper room of the school building was completed, it was rented to the Presbyterian Society as a place of worship on the Sabbath, and was occupied by them for several years."

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*Clerk's record book in Omro Area Museum.*

*according to Karen Davis Butkiewicz.*

*First Baptist church of Omro disbanded Jan. 27, 1980.*

He requested that this young Pastor be so kind as to mail him the names of all the churches and Ministers in the village. He desired to make retribution for the wrong he had done to one church, the denomination of which he could not remember. By sending to each a \$10 bill, the church he had cheated would surely be recompensed.

The young Pastor willingly complied to the request and eventually a check was sent back to each minister in Omro. These remittances with the unusual story behind them the Pastor distributed to the several astonished Ministers of the various local denominational churches.

On September 12, 1930 a member of the First Baptist Church, Daniel Miller, was ordained and served as a Minister of the Gospel. His parents were Irwin and Edna Miller of Rushford. Daniel retired in the late 1960s, but not before serving as a church Pastor in Thailand for a short while.

A foreign Missionary, Marie Hankey Bothwell, a former member, daughter of Carl and Eva Bussey Hankey, with her husband have served many years as missionaries in the Belgian Congo--up until it became an independent nation and ousted all Christian missionaries. The Bothwells are now stationed in Senegal, Africa. (1976) Marie months. died Nov. 19, 1979 in Colorado. Having retired from missions only a few

Another member of the First Baptist church who became a foreign missionary was Edward Tritt. After serving in the Marine Corps for 6 years during W W II in the South Pacific at Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal and Okinawa he studied for missionary work.

In March of 1952 he was sent by the Interdenominational Evangelical Alliance Mission Board to Dutch New Guinea. On October 23 of the same year his body and the body of his companion were found. They had been slain by the natives.

Ist Baptist Church of Omro ceased to exist in 1979. Bldg razed in 1980.

Following closely after the Baptists, Omro Presbyterians organized; the history was researched and written by Ethel Bishop.

#### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH by Ethel Bishop

A Circuit Rider Rev. Cutting Marsh met with a group after riding horseback from Waupaca. They met at the float bridge toll house. The eleven pioneers included Chauncey Bigelow and wife, Laura; Squire N. Frank and wife, Lydia; Mrs. Aura Hickox and Mr. Martin Potter, all from Towanda, N.Y. Presbyterian church; Mrs. Harriett Adams, Mrs. Laura Gross, Clark C. Cody, Lewis Patterson and Mrs. Clarissa Tuttle, wife of floatbridge owner-operator. After much discussion, they agreed that their organization should be Presbyterian. However, it wasn't until 1856 that their group of 25 members incorporated as "The First Presbyterian Society of Omro."

They first met above Squire Frank's store, then crossed the river for services above Bigelow's store; later they returned to the south side's new Red Brick School until they could build their own house of worship.

Although Mr. Frank had given land in 1854, a committee appointed to plan the erection of their Meeting House, and the lumber was sawed and piled up after so many of the young men entered service

during the Civil War, causing a long delay in construction. In the meantime the women organized their Ladies Aid Society to feed the carpenters, to make hospital supplies, and to help stricken families bear their losses. This Society also held homemade ice cream and maple syrup socials and chicken pie suppers in their unfinished church to help pay the building expenses.

In 1866 before the interior was finished and when they were assigned Fall Presbytery, the generous Baptists came to their rescue by offering the use of their church in true neighborly manner.

One interesting event occurred in 1867 when villagers joined the Presbyterians and their Rev. Mr. Brown to subscribe funds for a one-ton church bell for the Bell Tower at a cost of nearly \$500. This would serve a dual purpose--it would be used for a much needed fire alarm for the entire community, as well as a church bell. About this time the pastor's son, Paul Brown, was ordained into Christian Ministry. A second pastor's son, Charles Campbell, who was ordained in 1893 was killed while a missionary in Mexico. Later his parents presented an art glass window to this church, which still adorns the rear of the sanctuary, as a memorial to their son. In 1914, our local Doctor Howard's eldest son united with this church and was later ordained to the ministry. A fourth young man, also a pastor's son, Paul Johnson became a candidate for Christian Ministry and was ordained in 1917.

In 1886 two sons of Mary Larrabee, Charles X. and brother Ed, who united with the church in 1852, replaced their old home on the hill with an up-to-date charming manse-parsonage which they deeded to the Presbyterian Church in memory of their mother who is buried there. An unusual stipulation provides that each autumn the Session should place seven symbolic kernels of corn on the gravesite and care for the plot each year. Mary, the mother's grave was amid a large clump of evergreen trees and marked with a large monument. The Presbyterian Manse was on the hilltop of what is now 1031 S. Webster Avenue, the beautiful spacious house on Piety Hill. It is now the residence of Mrs. Sue Marquart, it having been sold to the Marquart family in 1970. A new minister's home was built just to the south of the former manse.

Several substantial endowments have been given by friends or members, Hiram Webster, Luthera Adams, Mrs. Albert Ross and Mrs. Platt Wright. As proved in their original bequests, these trusts still provide financial aid to the church. In more recent years several memorial gifts supplied funds to build the new manse after the former parsonage and land tract were sold.

The twentieth century marked the observance of their Golden Anniversary, at which time, in 1901, many improvements were completed, the most welcome were the electric lights. In October 1915 twenty-seven members of the dissolved Congregational Church united with this church and participated in the sacraments.

One unfortunate experience was the diptheria epidemic in Omro which quarantined all public meeting places. Then in 1918 many can recall that distressing epidemic of influenza when again all public assemblies were cancelled.

In 1926 came another milestone, the Diamond Anniversary of the

Church, That year also marked the long planned merger with our fellow Methodist church, after which the Rev. North and his wife brought with them fifty Methodist members whose official reception followed in September 1928. This union of two churches has been one of complete harmony.

As a history of a church is a history of its people, may we recall those loyal Ladies Aiders who inspired friendly fellowship as they shared preparations in that first narrow kitchen with smoky coal range, copper boiler for coffee, two Perfection oilstoves with tin ovens, heavy iron kettles, large tin dishpans and pail after pail of water carried from the outside pump; no conveniences which we take for granted--yet they experienced an enviable comaraderie as they prepared meals for receptions and banquets or oyster, chicken pie or baked bean suppers.

The greatest change in physical improvements came after the arrival of the Rev. Frank Harris in preparation for the church centennial in 1951. An extensive building program which added so much floor space with this two-story complex brought many modern facilities. One focal feature was the beautiful art glass window, a memorial to Mr. Hiram Webster, which had adorned the sanctuary of the former Episcopal Church, presented by Clayton and Grace Stearns and still graces the chancel.

Highlights of the next decade included many inspiring cantatas, oratorios and youth orchestra directed by talented Mrs. Ruby and her violin; a colorful Rainbow Tea in the church parlors; a May Festival style show of wedding gowns modeled by three generations of brides; annual June Strawberry Breakfast on the spacious shaded lawn of the Manse; the Westminster Fellowship youth loading up in a station wagon to spend a week of spiritual study, swimming and good fellowship at Camp Onaway; the younger children's Sabbath School program; or the unforgettable incident when a young son of the Rev. Ronald McDuffie scurried down the center aisle to clasp his daddy while sister Becky hurried after her protesting brother to bring him back to their pew. Their mom had just finished directing the choir and was on her way to sit with her children.

A passage of more than a century from President Fillmore to President Ford; from the humble beginnings of eleven pioneers who met with a Circuit Rider at a float bridge toll house in 1851. Next year (1976) this same established church will celebrate it's one-hundred twenty fifth anniversary with its twenty seventh pastor, the Rev. Harvey Reh.

#### SPIRITUALIST CHURCH

The Spiritualist Church history is given in connection with the Opera House on another page. The story is told by a native of the village that during the heyday of this church the evening services would be attended by the public.

## METHODIST CHURCH

About the time that Omro population was increasing in 1855 the Methodists organized. Ethel Bishop supplies its history--

OMRO METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
by Mrs. Ethel Bishop

Although all that remains of that white clapboarded M.E. church on W. Division Street across from the new Red Brick School are assorted doves that once inhabited this square shuttered belfry, they flew across the street to a new abode in the Middle School arched belfry. It was in 1927 that this church dedicated to God's work faced such financial difficulties and decreased membership that they reluctantly closed their doors.

After Methodism was formally organized in 1784 in our country, more preachers moved into our savage wilderness. Devout Circuit Riders, preachers on horseback with saddle bags containing Bible, Books, clothing and food kept moving farther west to recruit new sawmill towns.

One of these, Elder Theodore Pillsbury, in 1846 came to this Fox river valley where he decided to put down roots in this section of Butte des Morts. As soon as he had built a log house in a north corner of the large tract of land which he purchased, he held worship services and evening prayer meetings in his cabin (His name is the second name on my property abstract dated 1847). The following year after Milo C. Bushnell had built his large frame farm house south of our Cemetery, he asked Elder Pillsbury to conduct Methodist services in his home for his neighbor farm families which included the Gilman Lowds. Also met in an old building on or near the site of Ben Barnard house.

With increased interest the Elder organized a Methodist Society and sought subscriptions to build a small church on land which he gave on the south corner of Pearl and Lincoln (now E. Huron and Jackson) one block from the park. An early map of Omro shows this small church. Later in 1855 this Society voted to erect a larger church to accomodate their growing membership. The site they chose was the location of a Christian Church according to this early Omro map. (As we found no information regarding this early church we concluded that it burned down.) The members started to build in 1855, stoned up a basement wall foundation and covered this with rough flooring. But with growing civil unrest over slavery, the declaration of war between our states all further construction was delayed. Members held services across the street in the Red Brick School until after the war. The church sanctuary with its stained glass memorial windows and shuttered square belfry was eventually completed, perhaps a cornerstone laid. From an old Omro Herald dated 1897 we learn that the Rev. Mr. Frank Sherwin was then pastor who held worship services and Sabbath School on Sunday mornings, Junior League at 3:P.M., Epsworth League at 6:30 P.M. and Evening Services at 7:30 P.M.

W. Hist  
p. 13  
O.H. 1/15/31

How different were those Sundays when most parents heeded biblical admonitions to keep the Sabbath day holy; when weekly prayer meetings were attended by the families; when children were willing to walk several miles to attend Sabbath school class; when daily devotions and grace before meals became a part of family worship; and families drove their team of horses with bobsleigh



through deep snowdrifts to attend divine services during cold winter months.

Some winters, inspired evangelists held evening meeting for a week or more as they exhorted and admonished children and young people not to indulge in card playing, dancing, flirtation or the use of alcoholic beverages. They usually organized a new youth society for temperance.

This temperance movement which became more prevalent after the Civil War, resulted in an organization of 30 Omro war veterans who formed the Good Templar Society. The interesting records of this society reveal many familiar family names and that sobriety was also accepted by many other church denominations. The hall which they built for their meetings later became the W.R.C. hall which was torn down a few years ago at the corner of South Webster and E. Huron.

As early settlers rarely had much money they provided a home for their minister but not much pecuniary compensation. My grandmother told me about their early "Donation or Pound Parties" for their preacher and family, which were held after harvest. They brought gifts of what they had, a side of bacon or ham; root vegetables; dried fruits and corn; sacks of meal and flour; blankets, bedding or home made clothing; a warm overcoat for their pastor, hand loomed carpeting; hand made furniture; loads of wood; and oats and hay for their preacher's horse.

Yet hospitality, sociability and music were a way of life for these church members who made everyone welcome with their warm hearty hand clasp. With so many transplanted Yankees trained in instrumental and vocal music, their choral groups and orchestra and trained directors soon stimulated a love of good music. Here and in neighbor churches and schools one Methodist conductor Mr. George Drew (Grandfather of Emma Stanley) taught young and old how to read notes from use of "Father Kemps Singing Book" at choir rehearsals and Singing Schools. Other conductors of Singing Schools and Church Choirs included Cyrus Bradish with his "bull fiddle" and pitch pipe or a quartette of his four sons and daughter Mary as accompanist. James Russell, the local Scottish balladeer, harness maker, (Grandfather of the Root sisters). S.N. Bridge who sold melodeons and musical instruments, and "Doc" Sheerar another later music conductor. Census reports of 1870 placed 79 melodeons in Omro at a value of \$3,455, while in Oshkosh only 17 were valued at \$815, from which report we can see how important music has always been to our Omro Citizens.

This Methodist Church always gave much consideration to its youth, as their Sabbath School classes held contests, presented tableaux and plays; prepared elaborate holiday programs; held skating, sleighride and coasting parties during winter months. In the summertime their families chartered steamboat excursions across Lake Winnebago; held both Junior and Epworth League parties and picnics. Groups of youth or families drove with horse and buggy to attend meetings at Camp Byron south of Fond du Lac. Here they were joined by members from the Zion, Koro, Clemansville, Eureka and Waukau Methodist churches.

In the early 1900s when the debonair Rev. Daniel Woodward began to "stump" for a political candidate he caused much church dissension as many oldsters believed literally in separation of church and state. The outcome was that this more worldly minister left with many followers to organize a Congregational church which later on purchased the vacant Spiritualist church. Unfortunately this cleavage within this Methodist church hung like a blight over the remaining congregation who soon faced financial problems.

In 1927 soon after the arrival of the Rev. and Mrs. Thomas North, Methodist officers, Cary Bishop Sr., Jack LeFevre, Emerson Bronson and Fred Bennett held many conferences with the session of the Presbyterian Church as they endeavored to finalize some agreement for a merger. Finally their decision favorable to both churches was reached and the Rev. Mr. North accepted the pastorate of this united church. In September of 1928 over fifty Methodists became members of the Presbyterian Church. This union of the two denominations has continued to be one of mutual satisfaction and harmony. Later the Methodist trustees sold their church property to Emerson Bronson, owner of a funeral home. Later after his death, this church property was again sold to be demolished and make way for an apartment dwelling, built by Don Rausch.

Nostalgia brings salutary memories of our hard working spiritually minded Methodist pioneers who humbly recognized that they could prosper only with God's daily guidance.

Supposition is that in 1870 a Christian Church was built in the village. So far no one recalls the church or location. It is suggested that it was on the corner of E. Main and Quincey Streets at one time.

An item is on record stating that the Methodist congregation, when looking for a site on which to build their church, purchased a lot from the Christian Church. If so, then the Christian Church might have been here before 1870, and located on S. Webster.

#### EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The first meeting place of the Episcopalians in the village was held in rooms over Shattuck's Shoe Shop on the north side of the river in the 1870s. Early records show a baptismal certificate dated March of 1878 signed by Rector Rev. Berry. He served both St. Paul's Mission in Rushford and St. John's Mission in Omro where they then held meetings in Frank's Hall (over Fink's Restaurant and Curtis' Dry Goods now). No doubt the membership warranted a larger meeting place by then.

In 1882 or 84 a Berlin Rector came who started a fund-raising project for a church building. The 4 members appointed on a committee to raise the fund were R. Tanner, Sr. Warden; S. Hubbell, Jr. Warden; F. Wheeler, Sec; and A.J. Farr, Treas.

The new building, designated St. John's conformed to the old English church interiors; high groined arched ceiling; dark wood in altar and pews. Mrs. Robert Ames presented a fine embroidered cutwork linen altar cloth while Mrs. Nellie Lipsky provided a garden of old-fashioned flowers around the outside and to the rear.

The most distinguished window over the altar was given by Mrs. Hiram Webster. Later this window was removed when Clayton Stearns bought the church building to remodel into a home, and he presented it to the First Presbyterian church of Omro.

ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

St. Mary's Catholic church history was researched and written by Ethel Bishop as follows:

Many families of the Catholic faith who had fled the potato famine in Ireland and others from eastern states who came to this new state of Wisconsin became pioneer farmers and small tradesmen. At first whenever an area priest could come to celebrate Mass neighboring Catholic families met at their private homes. Before long they petitioned for a centrally located church large enough for their growing number of worshippers.

So it was in 1867 that the Milwaukee Diocese erected their present edifice, St. Mary's Church of Omro. Without a rectory for a resident priest our Catholic church was assigned as a Mission parish of Poygan St. Thomas Church when their rectory was built in 1870.

Their resident priests then came to St. Mary's to celebrate Masses on alternate Sunday afternoons. Five of these priests preceded Father Honeyman who was assigned elsewhere in 1884. That same year our St. Mary's Church was transferred to Winneconne as a Mission Parish when Father Holzknicht became their new resident priest in a remodeled home rectory.

However, late in 1886 when Father Gallagher became Poygan's resident priest our St. Mary's church again became a Poygan Mission parish. Father Gallagher was succeeded by four other resident priests, Fathers Kelleher, Tully, Linder and Luby, who all continued to serve the Omro church.

In 1905 the Bishop of the Milwaukee Diocese announced a welcome transfer of the Omro St. Mary's church property to the Green Bay Diocese. In 1906, after Father Luby came to Poygan and their church denied his request for a new rectory, he was re-assigned to Winneconne St. Mary's and the Poygan St. Thomas, and Omro churches became Mission parishes of the Winneconne Catholic Church until a petition by regretful Poygan parishioners was granted by their Bishop to construct a new modern rectory. Father Husslein was sent in 1916 to supervise construction and become their resident pastor.

That same year 1918 when Father Luby left Winneconne to enter World War I as a chaplain, he was replaced by a former army chaplain, Father William Grace. When he was reassigned, Father Victor Kaudy came to Winneconne where he remained until 1949 and served both Winneconne St. Mary's Church and Omro St. Mary's Church.

About 1935 the bishop of Green Bay Diocese approved a remodeling committee to make changes and repairs at the Omro church.

And then 1947 marked a great milestone in Omro's St. Mary's when the Bishop announced that this church would now become a resident parish.

Father Loehr, who followed Father Kaudy, became the first resident priest. He lived in a rented home on Jefferson Ave. while he and his committees began the construction of their own rectory. Before the rectory was completed, Father Loehr was granted a leave of absence to enter military service as a chaplain. The interim priest, Father Van Driese then supervised the completion of the new red brick rectory. The furnishings chairman, Mrs. Owen Egan and her committee succeeded in making this a charming comfortable home for successive priests. In 1950 Father Loehr returned from service and became the resident priest in this completed modern rectory. A few years later Father Francart was transferred to St. Mary's, Omro, and remained here as the resident priest until 1969 when he retired. He was followed by "Father Allen" Jerikovic, who innovated many changes, including women participation in Ecumenical services locally, promoted ecumenical youth singing groups, and provided more youth activities. Father Allen also supervised the remodeling and modernizing of the sanctuary and sacristy which presented a fresh new look to its interior. The basement rooms, the kitchen, dining room and entrance ways were also painted and new drapes added.

After his resignation in 1973, "Father Jerry" (Gerald) Bouressa was transferred from Oshkosh Lourdes High School (Lourdes Academy) faculty to become Omro's resident priest. He too has instituted new programs, including senior citizens dinners once a month, adult Bible classes on Tuesday mornings and evenings, religious classes for pre-schoolers, and youth programs.

The Ladies of St. Mary's Altar Society take an active part in parish programs.

OTHER CHURCHES

A Seventh Day Adventist Church was built across from Scott Park on the corner of E. Main and Quincy. No one seems to know how long the church was in existence. Evidently not for long.

About 1903 the German Methodist Church members purchased the North Side schoolhouse with Rev. <sup>John T.</sup> Brandt as pastor. They held services there for about 12 years. Later Frank Peterson bought the building, tore it down to build his home at 635 Elm. The church, however, faced north on Birch Street.

St. Luke's German Lutheran church history has been researched and written by Mrs. Ethel Bishop.

In the summer of 1909 a group of men and women of German descent decided to raise funds for their own Lutheran Church, affiliated with the American Lutheran Conference, where they could have sermons in their own language. Among these were Louise Shelp and her mother, Mrs. Wilhemina Hellwig, Mr. and Mrs. Kundy, Mr. and Mrs. Bitters and Mr. and Mrs. Reinke.

They sought the aid from the Rev. Mr. Weng pastor of such a church in Oshkosh who helped them to organize and raise money for this church. Thus the Rev. Mr. Weng became the first pastor of this mission church on the corner of Adams and W. Huron streets where they dedicated it on Feb. 14, 1910. The dedication dinner was served in the Good Templars Hall. About 150 members of Rev. Weng's Oshkosh congregation came with him to the dedication.

*M. Stark I p. 109B*  
*Omro Herald 1951*  
*Women Broth. Hist. of Omro*  
*St. Luke*  
*St. W.*  
*2/14/10*  
*Stark III*  
*2/14/14*  
*2/12/14*

Mrs. Shelp organized their Women's Society which helped with finances and missions. Mrs. Weng served as organist. Later they were able to meet in summer months, when as before, their services were held in the afternoon.

A Luther League of St. Luke's Church was organized Feb. 15, 1931. A constitution was adopted and committees appointed. This was a well attended meeting when the following officers were elected: Rev. G.M. Weng, president; Geo. Groh, first vice president; Paul Reinert, second vice president; Verona Franz, Sec., and Emelie Bleuer, treasurer. The committees appointed included welcome, membership, entertainment, visitation and sick.

Sunday School children were treated to a sack of pink popcorn as a valentine gift from Louise Shelp. The grades Sunday School began classes at 1:15 P.M. on Sunday. The pastor Rev. Weng was superintendent, while his wife taught a large class.

The Ladies Aid met at the home of Mrs. Rudy Reinert on Feb. 11, according to a news item in the Omro Herald in 1931. After an old fashioned quilting bee the hostess served refreshments. At the same meeting the ladies made plans to redecorate their church in the summer. The news item concluded with the report that the next meeting would be held with Mrs. Norman Ihrke.

After membership became smaller, their church closed. Esther Hellwig noted that the Rev. Weng and Rev. Schneider held services here for many years before the church officers sold the building to the Omro VFW Post. The church was of the American Synod.

*5/4/11. was a real paper*  
 In 1911 the Congregational church was organized and its history is given in connection with the Opera House. At the time of purchase it was surmised that school, patriotic organizations, and religious gatherings would be allowed to hold meetings in the building as they had done previously. They did. The congregation disbanded about 1921, the members uniting with other local denominations.

*Sanctity Book*  
 Holy Rollers met in the house north of 313 Jefferson Ave. in 1927 and 1928. They held very noisy services it is reported. Youngsters delighted in sitting on the sidewalk outside and listening to the goings on.

Grace Lutheran Church, a segment from St. Luke's Lutheran, at first held an organizational service in the G.A.R. Hall. Then they held services in the Episcopal Church. They built their first church in 1937 at 324 S. Webster. As the congregation grew in numbers a new church was built at S. Jackson Ave. in 1962.

The beautiful little church they left is now (1975) converted into a residence by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Seckar. Their two daughters have won many baton twirling honors and medals, local, state and nation-wise.

The parsonage of the first little Grace Lutheran church for awhile was the house next door to the south. Later they purchased the former Henry Winslow home, 607 Jefferson and in time sold it, too.

*m.j.s.* Now to the newest church body in Omro, that of the Assembly of God. According to Mrs. E. Lindquist, "Rev. and Mrs. Emil Lindquist came to Omro as Pioneer workers in June of 1953. Prayer meetings were held in homes during the summer and on September 20th the V.F.W. Hall was rented. A Sunday School was started with 22 present the first Sunday.

In September of 1954 the present church building was purchased from the V.F.W. by the Assembly of God congregation. Dedication services were held with neighboring assembly of God churches participating.

"Rev. Lindquist, organizer of the church passed away June 16th, 1972. The parsonage is at 323 Washington Avenue. Mrs. Lindquist resides at 315 W. Huron St." (1975)

The Rev. Orin Babler was called to serve the church following the retirement of Rev. Lindquist in 1957. Other pastors serving the church were Rev. Paul Bickett, and Rev. Neil Noack. The present pastor is Rev. John Thomas who came to Omro in the spring of 1975.

An intriguing fact in connection with Omro church services is as follows: One Sabbath morning, Feb. 9, 1936, the church bells of the village of Omro did not ring. It was an exceptionally rare omission. A mammoth blizzard with a huge accumulation of snow stopped all traffic afoot or otherwise. No church services were held that Sunday so no church bells rang.

It is thought that once before the bells did not call the worshippers to services. Could it have been the Sunday after the devastating sleet storm of Feb. 22, 1922? That happening was on a Wednesday, but the thick coating of ice may not have melted by Sunday and, if so, it could have prevented the bell clappers from swinging.

*other church items pg. 302*

## GLASS FACTORY

Getting back to village industry; of much interest was the Glass Factory. It was located in the area near the present Omro Lumber Co. It functioned during the 1850-60 and 70s. It made window glass in great rolls to be sent east, there to be reheated and rolled flat.

This description was in the Oshkosh Democrat of Dec. 17, 1852: "Three miles from Omro a superior quality of glass sand has been found. Samples of it have been taken to the Lancaster factory in Erie county, N.Y., tried and found to be of very superior quality.

"A company has been formed, styled the Omro Glass Company, for the erection of the factory at that place. The capital stock of the company is \$7,000 and it is all taken by responsible men who will push the project thoroughly. C. Bigelow, recently of the Omro firm of Patterson & Company (hardware) is the treasurer.

"The factory is to be built and ready for operation by the first of June, 1853. Already timbers and materials are being prepared. The location on the Fox river, navigable to Green Bay and Lake Michigan and to the Wisconsin river and thence to the Mississippi will enable the produce to be easily exported."

Records show that the factory operated until 1877 when it went into bankruptcy. Many of the glass products of the Omro factory are in the Oshkosh Public Museum--among them, glass canes, and queerly shaped spoons. The canes are hollow, some straight, some twisted, and filled with colored water; some of them 48 inches in length and others like normal walking canes. Sometimes the canes were filled with wine and given to friends. These oddities were made by glass factory workers during their lunch hour or when the men had a bit of extra time. Windows with many small panes would contain one with a "bull's eye", a sort of a thick blob, a curio from the factory's output. *ladder,*

Mr. Edward Noyes of Oshkosh has researched a history of the glass factory and has written of his findings. *(Coster memorial Library has a copy.)*

The quality glass sand used by the factory was found on the Lucas Craig farm in the town of Nepeuskun. *P. P. P. p. 332 - Chap. XXIX Ruth Hopper. Prairie, Pines & People.*

Blown glass can be detected by waves in the glass. Presumably there is some of the Omro product in the Geo. Daggett & Son warehouse windows. Fragments of the glass are still found on the site of the glass factory. One product of the factory is on display at the Omro Museum. It is a glass object shaped like a huge light bulb.

Other later gleanings disclose the company went into bankruptcy because of labor trouble. It burned down in the fall of 1878.

*Omro Herald  
3/7/30/31  
E. Hist. p. 13*

*E. Hist.  
O. H. - 11/30/39*

## BLACKSMITHS

*m.j.s.* An essential trade needed by a growing community was that of a blacksmith. There were horses and oxen to be shod, machinery to be repaired, and utensils and tools to be fashioned as the needs arose. In pioneer days nothing was discarded that could possibly be mended. Many necessities were fashioned from "scratch" at the blacksmith's forge and anvil.

To walk by a blacksmith shop was an experience of which few now can boast. One could smell the odor of the soft coal smoke used in the forge; see the smith pumping the huge bellows which caused the flames to leap. At the same time he would poke more coal over the embers in which the metal he was working on was buried. In the burning coal it would be heated to "red hot".

One would hear the whang of the smith's hammer, as, holding the red hot metal with long handled tongs to the anvil, he would shape it with deft hammer blows. Then hear the hiss and see the blob of steam as he plunged the object into the bucket of water to harden and temper it.

A necessary utensil for horse or ox shoeing in the summer time was a switch made of either real horse tail hair or of twine. This was used to shoo away the flies to prevent the horse from stamping around. Handling the tail-like switch was the duty of a young lad eager to earn a few pennies--just chasing flies.

*list p. 44*  
*H. 5/7/31*  
In 1854 Washington Ames from Vermont purchased Royal Reed's farm south of the village. He was a blacksmith and a skilled gunsmith. The village school had a classroom in his shop for one year. Washington Ames has the distinction of being the first blacksmith of the Omro area. In the village his shop was located south of the present Post Office. Later A.F. Stone had a blacksmith shop where Kubasta's shop is located on W. Main. At another time, same location, was a Mr. Pine. In 1876 was T.W. Leighton & Rasmussen on the south side of Main. In 1894 A. Strauss had his shop in Omro. He advertised "Practical Horse-Shoeing. Located two doors west of Larrabee's Hotel on Water St."

*Schools of Omro by 23 C. Hubbard 1911*  
*W. Division + America Sts.*  
*(O.H. 2/16/39)*  
*(O.H. - 2/16/39)*

Geo. Putnam was a blacksmith and repairman. N.A. Safford, a blacksmith, hired McCarty of Oshkosh to assist him. McCarty was a "crack-jack" at horse shoeing.

Richard A. Snider, an uncle of Ethel Bishop's was a blacksmith in Omro in the 1890s. Seth Smith was another early Omro smithy.

The several carriage works usually did blacksmithing.

In the early 1900s the John Crego smithy was located east of Austria's Flour mill across from the former City Hall on E. Main. John Ryan's shop was east of the Wisconsin Power and Light Company's office where the Fire Department is now located.

*list p. 44*  
*H. 5/7/31*  
On the north side of the river where the dwelling at 105 W. River Drive now stands, was the early blacksmith shop of Wm. Cundy. Later years it was operated by his son Tom Cundy. Tom was born in England in 1869 and came to America with his parents. He took over the shop after his father perhaps in the late 1800s.

*(O.H. 12/4/30)*



E. Hint P. 23 (2)  
W. Hint P. 44  
O.H. 5/1/31

Chas. Bushnell and brother Milo's shop was under Bushnell Hall on E. Water across from the Masonic Hall.

Chas. Bradley was a village smithy in Omro at one time.

(G.H. - 11/8/34.)

Carl Jensen's smithy was in the former Crego shop.

Reilly N.W.  
7/1976  
1/29/72  
7/28/73

Then there was Chris Peterson. His first shop was located at 211 E. Main. Later, across from the Masonic Hall. "Mr. Peterson was born in September of 1872 in Vojle, Denmark, a mile from the sea. When a boy of 16, in 1888, he sailed with his mother and 9 year old sister from Denmark to America to seek freedom from oppression.

M.V. No. 3/24/16 moved to Omro.

"It took them 19 days to cross the Atlantic. He was impressed by the Statue of Liberty and felt the inscription was meant just for him. Their passage cost less than \$100 each."

The family arrived in Oshkosh where Chris followed the blacksmith trade. After cars replaced horses he with his family moved to Omro where he opened up his shop here. Chris died June 2, 1975 at Bethel Home, Oshkosh at the age of 102.

J.H. - 1/21/44

The last blacksmith to occupy the above mentioned shop was Mr. Henry F. Hoelt who came to Omro in September of 1944 to do blacksmithing and wood-working. He retired about 1970. Mr. Hoelt was the last of Omro's blacksmiths. The old building was later burned by the Fire Department.

E. Hint P. 44  
M. Hint P. 44

Hans Hansen who was born in 1847 and died in 1922 was an Omro blacksmith at one time. His shop was located on the north side of River Drive and near the river. He was the grandfather of Les Lincoln. Hans' wife was Christine.

minutes journal

An elderly blacksmith in the state at an interview in December of 1976 remarked that "I really loved horseshoeing. I used to make the shoes and put them on for \$1.60 a horse, or if the old shoes just needed resetting, I got 80 cents. Now blacksmiths get \$16 a horse."

"Heritage of Beautiful Green Lake, Wis."  
by R. & E. Heipala - 1976-77. P. 274

## LIVERY STABLES

*m.j.b.*  
 During the years B.C. (before cars) it was necessary to own or to rent a horse and buggy with which to travel about. In winter especially, Doctors would sometimes hire a liveryman to take him on a country call in the night if the weather or roads were bad.

On cold wintry or rainy days or nights anyone driving to Omro for meetings or to take the interurban street car to Oshkosh and did not wish to let a beast stand out tied to a street hitching post, there were livery stables.

These stables were buildings large enough to hold the buggies or cutters, and with stalls for the horses. Hay was stored in the loft. The livery man looked after the unharnessing, harnessing and feeding of the animal, usually for a charge of 25¢, hay included. If grain feeding was desired the owner had to furnish it.

*E.B.*  
 The first livery stable was at the American House, formerly Exchange Hotel. It was owned by Andrew Lansing. (Masonic Hall site.)

In the late 1860s or early 1870s Joe Fillion had a livery and sales stable. Mr. Simeon Barnard had his livery stable across the street from the Old City Hall location having bought Eliel Hueston's interest in it in 1888. (*Omro Journal 4/16/53.*)

Joe Lyons livery stable was across from the Masonic hall area in 1877. The one across from the Masonic Hall burned down Apr. 10, 1915.

*W.H. 6/8/39*  
 Later A.L. Gibson owned a livery and sales stable <sup>burned Apr 10 - 1915.</sup> on the north side of Main across from the Masonic Hall. He sold to Geo. Pratt, who operated it for many years. Mr. Pratt at one time owned also *E.B.* the livery stable across from the Omro Hotel. He was a horse racing enthusiast and owned a pacer that won races at the Winnebago County race track.

*m.j.b.*  
 One well remembered livery stable was located on the corner of W. Main and Jefferson across from the Omro Hotel. The small waiting room was heated by a pot-bellied stove for winter comfort while the customer's horses were being harnessed and hitched to cutters for the drive home. Benches around the sides were for customers to sit on while waiting for the Omro-Oshkosh interurban car, also.

*Harvey Tulliver*  
 The end of the interurban line was in front of the Larrabee Hotel, now Omro Hotel. Here the conductor, after arriving at Omro and awaiting the run back to Oshkosh, would flip the backs of the seats so the riders would be facing front, for the car was not turned around. He would then get out and pull the arm with the shoe down from the trolley cable that ran up above the tracks, and swing it around to connect again with the cable at the back of the car. It was the trailing arm that carried the current from the cable that furnished the motive power.

*Brandman Jerry*  
 The interurban line from Oshkosh to Omro was begun in 1901 and ready for service in 1902. At the Omro end of the line was a double track in the shape of a Y to accomodate two interurban cars so either one could leave before the other. From the terminal at the hotel the tracks were in the middle of the street until they reached a point in front of 320 E. Main where they took a left turn

*P.P.P.-P. 331  
 Chap. XXIX  
 Ruth Hopper*

and then ran on the north side of the main road. They turned north onto Maplewood Road, then east again. They continued thus until east of Omro where they crossed and ran south of the highway. Near the farm of Lloyd Jones was a by-pass so one car could turn onto it and meet another one coming from the opposite direction.

The last run was, according to the daily paper, on May 31, 1930; however, some natives are of the opinion that the last run was in 1926 when the concrete highway was laid which is now Highway 21. At that time the interurban cars were used to carry supplies and materials for the road paving.

*Memo* B. The livery stable near the interurban terminal mentioned above was built in 1898 by Mr. Truman Bullis, Marie Barnard's grandfather. Lester Barnes managed it for him. Mr. Bullis also operated a stage coach line between Omro and Oshkosh.

Other early liverymen not mentioned before were Mr. Lynn Percy, and H.E. Stanton. The later ran an advertisement--"Livery and Feed." *19. p 3 C.* During the horse and buggy days the livery stable was indeed a flourishing business. Only old-timers are able to recall the sweet smell of hay mixed with the rank odor of horse when entering one.

*Bailey n.w. 4/13/12.*

*Be IV 20 - M.* In 1905 or 1906 Joe Lanning, who sold farm machinery on W. Main, bought the Bullis livery stable. In April of 1912 he rebuilt it into a new feed barn 120 feet long and 36 feet wide with a cement floor. Cement at that time being a new innovation. This building accomodated 2 rows of horse stalls, and a front room for his office. He installed an electric generator for his own electric use, and drilled a fountain on the southeast corner of the building inside the sidewalk. It was surmised that it might dry up the fountains of his competitors, and others living near, it produced a heavy flow of water, but it did not. Ironically, 4 or 5 years later cars came into use and the livery stable trade began to dwindle. Finally Lanning sold the livery stable to Will Cady who started the Ford garage. Sherm Barnard and Bill Flanagan serviced cars in the back part of the building.

About 1920 or 1930 Albert Ihrke bought the building, Cady opening a garage at another location. Ihrke was the local Ford dealer for many years. In 1930 he built a home, now 215 Jefferson Avenue. A February ad of 1939 states a New Ford Sedan was priced at \$430 to \$630, F.O.B., Detroit, plus freight and delivery. *(G.H. - 8/7/30. 7/15/31. G.H. - 2/12/31.)*

*W.C. 9/6/45.* W.C. Cady sold his garage to Vern Collins of Prairie du Sac in September of 1945. In October of 1945 Mr. Cady opened the Deep Rock Filling Station. *(G.H. - 10/4/45)*

*Copy P 30* Back to livery stables--Dr. O.H. Eliason, D.V., had a livery stable west of the Hotel Omro. Tom Young was the manager at one time, and later was the owner. The story is told of a brick on the front above the stable fell down and hit a man on the head as he was walking by. He sued Dr. Eliason. At the trial Att. Hurlbut represented Dr. Eliason. He won the case for him. The brick victim had sued the wrong man--Dr. Daniels, owner of the building was the man who should have been named instead of Dr. Eliason. This building burned in April of 1931. It was a two story frame brick veneered front livery stable, with dwelling rooms above. At that time it was referred to as an old landmark. *(G.H. - 4/23/31. W. Brooks)*

M. 1/13/12 P. 17B  
Daily 1/14/12  
Warren Brothers

Dr. Eliason later became a State Veterinarian. He fought hard for the eradication of T.B. in cattle, and won. About 1903 he drove into Omro with a Model T. Ford Roadster, which was quite an attraction. It had no top and the tires were very small.

W.B.

While on the subject of Veterinarians, others of Omro could be named here. There was Dr. A.B. Niven. In 1897 he had his office over Race's Hardware Store. At another time he was located over Percy's Livery Stable.

In 1914 - SBR IV

M.

SBR IV  
P.G.  
1/16/14  
O.H. - 1/18/1934

Dr. M.H. Lambrecht--In addition to practicing his profession he also built a two story flat on W. Main. It is still used as such, now owned by Mrs. Dora Neary. Clarence Lambrecht, a son of Dr. Lambrecht, died in 1981.

Dr. Ernest Rosenthal, a veterinary surgeon, lived at 215 Jackson. He practiced here 20 years, until his death in October of 1934. At a farm treating an ailing animal, Doc Rosenthal would sit down in the barn and explain to the farmer what caused the sickness, and what to do or not to do to prevent the same thing from happening again.

Dr. Rosenthal was a native of Vinland. He was a graduate of Oshkosh High School, the Oshkosh State Teachers College and the U. of Wisconsin. He was also a graduate of the Chicago Veterinarian college and a member of Alpha Phi Psi fraternity, Gamma chapter. While attending the university at Madison he was a member of the football team and also of the university rowing squad. He also held an office on the local village board and Fire department.

2/27/34

Dr. E.C. Jasperson was an Omro D.V. at least in 1935 and for several years. *mom's diary + O.H. 3/7/35*

H. 11/25/37

Dr. H. Lent lived on W. Larrabee next west of the railroad tracks. He was in Omro during the 1920s at least.

Dr. James Tomasek presently has his office and Animal Hospital at 323 Jefferson Ave. He came here about 1950.

Today's Veterinarians now have few dairy cattle or draft horses to care for during these last few years. Their main services now are for pets. So the old-fashioned "horse doctor" has more or less passed out of the picture.

## HARNESS SHOP

*W.B. p. 6*  
*E. Hart. p. 10-14*  
*O.H. 11/30/39*

It is quite evident that in years past the horse was the power behind the "Giddie-ep!" As such, it needed a harness. That meant harness shops. One such shop was owned by Wm. Chapman. Another one, James Russell, was located east of where the Bowling Alley now stands. Mr. Russell did photography in a room on the second floor of the harness shop. He took pictures of returning Civil War soldiers. These no doubt were daguerreotypes. When the veterans were unable to pay, he had them help clear trees from a tract of land that he owned on the north side of the river in payment for the pictures he took of them.

*W.B.* This building of Russell's burned in 1916. Then Geo. Brooks used the area in which it stood to store used machinery. He also used the area east of Paul's Sport Shop for the same purpose. Mr. Brooks was a dealer in farm machinery, feed and seeds.

*W.B. p. 4* Another harness maker later than Russell was Oliver Wm. Barlow. He came to Omro in 1887 or 88. His shop was purchased from Wm. Chapman. It was in the east part of the new Winnebago County Bank building. He resided at 530 E. Main. Mr. Barlow worked at his trade until his retirement in 1920. *(C. H. - 3/15/45)*

*z/32* Mr. Barlow's son, Leslie, was a deaf-mute, but well educated. His talents were directed toward auto mechanics and he could usually be seen at garages and filling stations. In June of 1932 he purchased a new V8 Delux Ford Sedan. Leslie was well liked by Omro people.

*incl. to the index* One day a car refused to run. Garagemen were trying to locate the trouble. Leslie watched for some time. Then he tapped the mechanic on the shoulder to get his attention, grunted, and tapped the gasoline tank. The trouble? Empty gas tank!

The business men all had lock boxes at the Post Office. Any one of them could send Leslie to get their mail. He had no trouble in opening their boxes, nor did he bother the Postal employees. He could remember the combination of everyone's lock once he had received it.

*W. Hart p. 40*  
*2.11.5/16* Platt Wright mentions Russel & Walker as being in the harness making business. *31*

CORDWAINER--a leather worker - harness maker, shoe maker, etc.

## DRAYMEN

*M.S.*  
 Omro's boom years were busy ones. Many supplies came in and products went out by rail. This, too, was B.C. (before cars) so the transporting need was done by Draymen. With their horse-drawn wagons they would haul freight daily to and from boat dock or railroad depot for merchants, factories or individuals. This, too, was during the era of buying from Mail Order Catalogues, particularly Montgomery Ward & Co. and Sears, Roebuck and Co. M.G. Bradt was agent for the American Express for service to the south. Joseph Elliott ran a team-powered express line to and from Oshkosh.

*H. G. 12/25/10*  
*N. B. 2*  
 However, before the railroad was built, Augustus Stone would haul wheat to Milwaukee for the farmers with team and wagon and bring back supplies that people could not obtain locally. This was during the 1850s.--Ernest Bridge drove freight wagon between Omro and Oshkosh and one time nearly froze to death. *M.V. N.W. 12/16/16*

*E. H. 12/17/31*  
 One well-known and well admired Drayman was mentioned by the Early Settler--"Old timers can remember Pat Smith, the dray man, the one that always was ready with a song and a dance. When he was an old man he drove Scott's mules that hauled lumber in this city until they were both very old."

"John LeRoy was the other drayman, he who used to be head sawyer at Scott's mill during the summer months. LeRoy later sold out to Percy Cope, son of Charles, the gardener, and Mary Jane Cope. Percy continued the horse-drawn dray business until he finally used a gas truck of the four wheeled type."

*M.S.*  
 This truck of Cope's was purchased from the Four-wheeled-Drive Company of Clintonville, Wisconsin. Percy also used this same truck in the army during the Mexican War with Poncho Villa. His home in Omro was at 304 Van Buren Street. *He died in Jan. 7/1952. (O.H. 2/22/51.)*

In the early 1900s there was also Harley Miller who lived on Harrison St., and with his horse and wagon delivered goods and supplies for and to the Omro merchants. By this time there was but little industry left in Omro.

*M.S.*  
 Another Drayman for many years during this same era was Bill Dunham who lived on the north side of the river. He had a one-horse democrat wagon for his use. One day while on a delivery a harness tug broke and the faithful old horse stopped. Not until Bill saw the broken tug which caused the horse to halt did he get around to say "Whoa!" to a horse that was standing "stock still" at the time.

*W.B. note*  
 In later years Harley Miller, Bill Dunham, and a Mr. Heidenrich were more accurately identified as 10¢ parcel deliverymen. There was no longer industry in Omro for heavy lumber or glass products to be shipped by rail or boat.

The trucking industry, gasoline powered, finally did away with the need for local Draymen. They became the victims of progress as did harness makers and wainwrights.

## WAINWRIGHTS

In 1856 Perry Glines who came here from N.Y. State was a wagon maker, perhaps the first in Omro. Ruth Bennett recalls he, in later years, repaired shoes in shop at north end of the bridge.

An item from a local newspaper of 1926 contains historical facts about the carriage industry. The man written about was George W. Drew, another early wainwright.

"A few months ago, the oldest signpost in Omro was taken down when the wagon shop to which it gave publicity was replaced by a modern Standard Oil filling station. Sixty-five years ago, the sign held aloft by this old post read, 'Carriages and Repairing, George W. Drew.'

"When Mr. Drew opened his carriage and repair shop in Omro in 1861, heavy-wheeled, oxen-drawn wagons frequented the village streets. Buggies and wagons, also bob-sleds built by him in these early days, are in use today. In the Genealogy of the Drew Family these words refer to George W. Drew: 'His reputation for good workmanship was high among the people of the country. In his day, motor-driven machinery was unknown. Every job, even to working the bellows of the forge, was done by hand'.

"George W. Drew was born in Vermont in 1823. His maternal grandfather, William Cotton Warren, was a soldier in the Revolutionary War, which fact undoubtedly influenced his mother in her choice of names for her third son, George Washington Drew. He was especially fond of music, and as Mr. Drew grew to manhood he became a very good vocalist and spent much time in organizing choirs and music associations. Previous to the Civil War his contribution to the great Anti-Slavery campaign was his stirring chorus work.

"The work of this association extended over a period of years and accounts in large measure for the reputation Omro has always sustained of being a music-loving community.

Omro at one time had five carriage and repair shops. The first shop in which George W. Drew was interested was located where the Deep Rock Filling Station (Judd's) now stands. When Thompson and Hayward opened their large factory east of the Gould House (Hotel Omro) Mr. Drew entered their employ as foreman.

The Thompson and Hayward factory burned, and Mr. Drew went into partnership with Albert B. Hall. Their shop was opposite the Great Western Compound Company built in 1868 which occupied a brick veneer building across Madison Ave. east of the present Masonic Hall site. When this brick building burned, Mr. Drew bought the lot and moved his first shop across the street. This was the building recently torn down to make room for the Standard Oil Company. Here Mr. Drew built up a large and profitable business. His integrity and thoroughness commanded the respect of his fellow citizens who showed their confidence by making him President of the Village Board.

"Mr. Drew's shop was headquarters for his varied interests. It was the gathering place for his friends of all ages. Here conferences on public affairs were held; musical organizations were planned; young people came for kindly counsel; even little children came to make their first boats."

*M.J.S.*

Asa Wiles was another wainwright. His shop was on the present residential site of 211 E. Main. His home was at 120 Madison Avenue. Asie was one of Omro's musicians. He played the violin. He had two daughters, Libby and Mrs. Gertie Cundy, and a son Jay. *Asa died June 8, 1928 (Moms diary)*

*S.H. 4/30/31  
O.H. 2/19/31  
Wright hind.*

*W. hist. p. 43*

Lindsey, Coe & Darrow were located at the south end of the bridge. They did much wagon making, but confined themselves more particularly to heavy work. They also did a general blacksmithing business.

*W. hist. p. 24  
Omro Herald  
2/17/31*

Omro being an industrial village surrounded by farm lands, one wonders about an account that refers to an Omro Agricultural and Mechanical Ass'n grounds. The grounds of which were fitted up and enclosed during the summer and fall of 1866. A fair was held there. The location is not mentioned. The Omro Fair Grounds in the south-east section of the village were not established at that time.

STANDARD OIL

*M.J.S.*

In reference to Standard Oil Company mentioned above--beginning in 1915 the representative here was Leo Marshall. Frank Kellett worked with him. There were no gasoline filling stations then; another product was kerosene.

I recall that during the winter months the two men would drive a team of heavy light-bay draft horses on a huge bob-sled carrying the gasoline and oil tank to supply Winneconne needs. The team plodded along the snow-filled road as the load was heavy.

The horses' harnesses were trimmed with fancy colored wooden rings and a red tassel on their foreheads which hung from the bridles. The hair around their noses would be coated with frost from their breath. They were a beautiful matched pair of horses.

Roads were never plowed out, so they followed the rut all winter long. The seat on the bobs had a buggy top to help protect the men from the frigid wind and weather. They wore fur coats, fur caps, and fur mittens, with a fur lap robe over their knees. They would make their weekly or bi-weekly trip to Winneconne regardless of what the weather might be. We would see them as we were on our way to our one-room country school. It seemed that in those years the winters were more bitterly cold, with higher snow-banks. Those were the days!

*C. Markert*

*(O.H. - 12/21/44)*

Upon Leo Marshall's retirement in December of 1944, Reuben Schultz took over management of Standard Oil. Mr. Alsberger was next, and Clair Markert took over in 1945. He was the Standard Oil representative until retirement on January 29, 1974. Then the bulk tanks were removed from Omro, and Clair's patrons are now served from Oshkosh, Berlin and Poy Sippi.

*(O.H. - 3/10/38)*

In 1938 Harold Bierman of the Standard Oil filling station had to remove the top from over the gasoline pumps. The new gasoline delivery trucks were built too high to drive under the cover.

*(O.H. - 3/10/38)*

In 1953 H. Bierman was proprietor of The Omro Sport Shop on the bridge. Now Bierman's son-in-law, Larry Barth is the operator of the Standard Station.

*Omro Journal  
4/9/53*

In 1953 Shertz Service Station was located on E. Main at Beckwith.



GERARD'S INTERESTS  
and  
RAILROAD

In pioneer days hard work and difficulties were endured as a way of life by the settlers. However, public entertainments were scheduled for those who sought such, and for the benefit of those who provided it. For example, Norman Gerard has this to offer: "In the summer of 1853 Luke Andrews, proprietor of the Fox River Hotel (where the Masonic Hall now stands) died very suddenly of black eyrsipelas and I rented the house from the widow for one year. I had a good run of customers. There was a ball room in the house and the young people in those days were very fond of dancing. I will give you a copy of one of the tickets for a Cotillion party at the Fox River hotel:

*11. 6/25/10  
11-11/23/39*

COTILLION PARTY  
at the  
FOX RIVER HOTEL  
N. Gerard, Proprietor

.....

Sir----

Yourself and lady are respectfully invited to attend a Cotillion Party at the Fox River Hotel, in Omro on

FRIDAY EVENING, SEPT, 1, 1854

MANAGERS

- A. Wilson,
- C. Carpenter,
- E.B. Dean, Room Manager.
- B. Larrabee,
- R. Crawford,

Music by J.B. Carpenter's Band  
Tickets.....\$2.00

"After my year expired I found the work too hard for my wife, and I gave up the business and bought a house just south of the hotel.

"In 1855 I bought the Johnson saw mill in company with Martin Eley, a wealthy farmer near Ripon. He soon got sick of his deal and sold to Dr. Gibbs, who had no capital and no knowledge of the business. Later I sold my interest to Nathan Johnson and bought Challoner & Thompson's shingle mill. Up to this date we had no outlet for lumber or produce."

*11.1/22/38  
11.1/22/38  
11.1/22/38  
11.1/22/38*

As the Early Settler noted, "during this period the project of a railroad was brought up and \$900 was pledged in cash and bonds to be paid by the village."

Norman Gerard's account continues: "Chauncey Bigelow and myself and several others went over to Ripon and with the aid of Captain Mapes, formed a company to build the Ripon and Wolf River Railroad. This was in 1857 and we had several meetings. Mr. Bigelow was president and I was one of the directors. Captain Mapes was another and I do not remember the rest of the company."

*11.1/25/10*

Captain D.P. Mapes was born in 1798 at Cocksackee, N.Y. He was a member of the Legislature in 1831. Mapes came to Wisconsin in

1844, and founded the city of Ripon, became interested in Ripon College in 1850. He helped secure the railroad through Omro, and, to Winneconne. *Reaching Winneconne 6 years after reaching Omro. P.P. # 275 Adv. E. Hayes.*

Mr. Gerard continues--"I took \$2,000 in stock and the road was finally completed in 1861. Nearly all the business men in town took stock. The road was mortgaged to get the iron rails and in a few years the mortgage was foreclosed. Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Company bid it in. That was the end of our railroad stock.

*11. 11/13/31  
E. Hayes  
1/22/31  
1/22/31  
1/22/31  
1/22/31*

"The first depot was built by private subscriptions. It was located on the river bank, on the west side of the tracks. The track laying was started in 1860. That winter the steel was laid as far as Waukau. On a Sunday and on New Years in 1861 the rails were laid to the river bank in Omro."

"As soon as the last rail was laid, C. Bigelow, a director of the Ripon & Wolf River railroad, granted to the village the privilege of hand car service. A hand car, with Seward Cady as engineer, conductor and mail agent, was sent to the junction (Rush Lake) every night for mail. When regular train service came later, this practice was discontinued."

That hand car also was used not only for mail but for passenger service. At times from 2 to 4 persons coming to Omro would with loose change for their fare, help far toward keeping up the spirits of those who manned the brakes.

Because of factory and mill output on the north side, a railroad spur lead from the main Omro-Winneconne line just south of what in now Highway 21 and 116. It extended to the last mill on the east of what is now E. River Drive. The year the spur was laid out is not recorded. C.I. Smith as a lad recalls seeing the spur and trains running on it. This was as late as the 1870s as he was born in 1872. The spur was constructed to accomodate the various industries on the north side when the line was first laid out no doubt.

Railroad activities were in the area of W. Main and two blocks south of Washington St. East of the tracks on Huron was the second and last depot. Coal, stock, and lumber yards were near by on both sides of the track. Years ago a Hay factory and the Glass factory were in this same area. Later the Omro Co-Op Shipping Ass'n had weigh scales adjacent to their warehouse located just south of the depot, and their coal bins to the south across W. Ontario. Omro Butter & Cheese Co. factory at the west end of Main St. had coal shipped in by rail and delivered west of the factory.

It used to be a busy time at the Depot when freight, express and passenger service was a popular means of transportation. Inside the Depot one could hear the chattering did-dit-dat of the telegraph instrument.

A local newspaper clipping of an 1897 time table of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul line was as follows:

North to Winneconne 7:32 P.M.

South to Milwaukee, Chicago, etc. 6:30 A.M.

*m.j.s.* In the early 1900s, however, the train left for and from Winneconne later in the day. I recall that while attending country school in the Pingry District that at recess or during the noon hour the pupils would wave to the engineer and fireman as the train chugged by. Even the conductor on the passenger coach would sometimes join in the arm waving.

*Sielaff* Later depot agents were John G. Howell, and Edw Hawtrey. Hawtrey was here for several years, at least 1914-20. Bernard Sielaff came in 1926 and served until the freight and passenger service was discontinued by the C. M. & St. Paul Company, 42 years of service in Omro. The depot was sold and removed in 1966.

*m.j.s.* The depot was an interesting building. The first room entered was heated by a big pot-bellied stove. Around two sides at least were plank benches attached to the walls on which waiting passengers could sit. The office window opened from the room on the south wall for ticket purchasing. Back of the office to the south was the express and freight room. This room had an east door that opened onto a loading platform. All freight and express parcels were loaded on to dray or wagon from this platform. A west door next to the tracks was for goods to be removed from freight or box cars and stored in the freight room for later delivery or pick up. The telegraph machine was in the office room, chattering now and then and sometimes oftener.

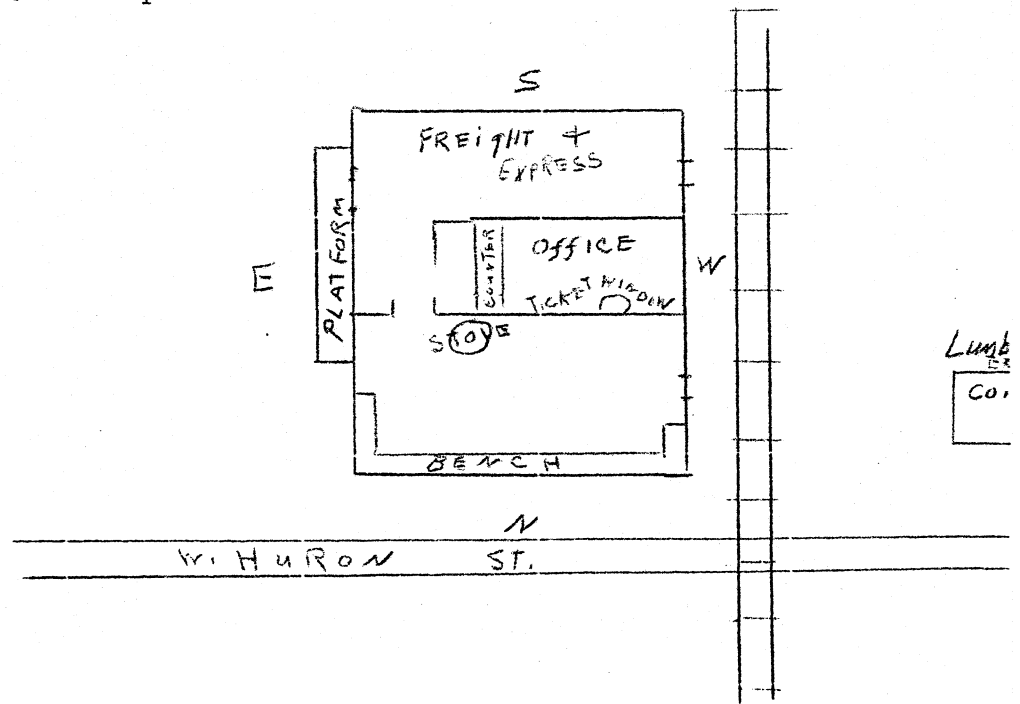
Incoming freight or express for rural residences before telephones were notified by post card. They came to the depot themselves to pick up their goods.

*Sielaff* The last train to pass through Omro was on June 10, 1973. Now some Omro industries are sorry train service has been terminated.

All ties and rails were removed early in 1974.

*m.j.s.* Diagram of the last Omro Depot.

*Bittinger* Omro Depot torn down and removed in 1966 by Ed coumbe to build a cabin in Poysippi.



The railroad project as written by Platt Wright in his History of Omro may have added information--

"The project of a railroad to Omro was first brought into definite shape during the year of 1857. In the spring and summer, the stock was all taken, \$90,000 in cash and bonds being the amount which the Town and Village of Omro pledged or paid. The first Directors of the company were C. Bigelow, D.F. Mapes, Mr. Bowen, Mr. Lyman, of Ripon, and Mr. McLaren. Mr. Bigelow was President of the company nearly all the time until the road was sold. The first Secretary of the Company was a Mr. French, but the position was filled the principal part of the time until the sale, by M.G. Bradt. The company was known as the Ripon & Wolf River Railroad Company.

"Track laying for the railroad commenced in 1860, in the early part of the winter of that year the iron was laid as far as Waukau, and on Sunday, the first day of January, 1861, the last rail was laid at the bank of the river in Omro. The completion of the railroad was a very important event for Omro, and although regular trains were not put on until June, 1863 it was a benefit to the village which but few have estimated at its true value. Too many have looked only at the cost of the road, forgetting that it doubled the population and business of the place, created a better market for farm produce, and placed many advantages within reach, which without it would have been absolutely unattainable. Among these, and not the least, we may mention the superior mail facilities.

"Instead of a tri-weekly mail and stale news at that, a daily mail was received, and newspapers printed in Chicago and Milwaukee in the morning and at noon were received here at night, with the latest intelligence. This was very important during the war times, and the crowd that gathered at the office at the arrival of every mail, showed that it was appreciated."

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Bernard Sielaff rounded out 44 years of railroad work. He died March 29, 1980 at 77 years of age.

## HAY PLANT

*Q. H. 9/28/11  
E. Hist. p. 19  
p. 13  
9/28/11.*

In a newspaper clipping dated September 28, 1911, reference was made to the "Hay Plant". This plant had been in operation long years before then. It was located where the Daggett Grist Mill now stands which was east of and near the railroad tracks on W. Huron. This plant was generally called "Punghaw Plant." Punghaw being the Indian name for marsh hay--the wild wiry harsh hay that grew in low marshy areas, and still does.

Originally this building in which to store the hay was an earlier day planing mill. After the lumber business dwindled here in Omro the new industry of shipping marsh hay followed. Around this area were acres of marshland.

Late in the summer when the water level was usually low, farmers could get on the marsh and harvest the punghaw. They would haul it to the plant; the sale of it added to their regular farm income. Hay was shipped from Omro by rail to all parts of the country. The Punghaw Plant was in charge of Carl Steiger of Oshkosh who was with the Deltox Co. also of that city. Deltox, as well as other Hay Companies, leased lands for the harvesting of punghaw.

Deltox manufactured a kind of twine and grass matting rugs from the marsh hay. They are no longer in business in Oshkosh. (1973) They made all sizes of rugs both square and rectangular. In our farm dining room was a 9 X 12 rug; the border was a brown painted design. The wearing quality of such a rug was excellent. In this constantly used farm dining room it lasted for years.

Deltox Company horses, and others no doubt, that drew the mowing machines, rakes, and hayrack wagons were shod with "swamp shoes" for the harvesting of the punghaw. In many places the ground would be swampy and spongy.

After the Deltox Company withdrew from the Omro plant, a portion of the building was moved across the river in the winter and remodeled into a house. This was on the farm owned by Ed King on Hwy 21, second farm west of the railroad tracks.

## POST OFFICE

Another necessity for a growing community was that of Postal service. The township of Omro boasted of a Post Office early in its existence which was located east of Beckwithtown and mentioned before.

*2. H. 11/30/37*  
An old Post Office, possibly the first one in the village, was located on Jefferson Avenue in the south end of the former Putnam building. Later, it was moved to S. Webster south of the former Co-operative Store. Afterwards the post office took up quarters on E. Main, and remained there for many years. The Omro Herald then occupied the vacated building on S. Webster, and it too, was located there for many years, in fact, until it burned down.

*M.S.*  
When on Main Street, the Post Office was located in what was known as the Challoner building, built in the early 1880s. Pelton Store occupied the east part. This entire building was razed in 1971 to make way for the addition to the Winnebago County Bank, formerly the Farmers Bank of Omro.

In 1960 the present Post Office was erected on the corner of Huron and S. Webster where the former Northwestern Hotel stood. It is across the street from the New City Hall. Each day our nation's flag waves from both buildings; they appear to be saluting one another.

*(Emma Stanley)*  
In 1871 A. J. White was Postmaster; E.D. Henry was the Postmaster in 1880. Mr. Waite was appointed to that position in 1897. Some others of the many to serve in that capacity were Oliver W. Babcock during McKinley's term; J.W. Samphier, O.W. Ballard, Geo. Shafer, Madge Shafer Ford, Frank J. Mahar for 12 years, Frank Stanley, and Sherm Barnard. Others were Meridan (Punk) Anderson in the 1930s, Ralph Lemke, Florian Mukurat of Berlin for a short while. Presently Mr. Treu, formerly from Pine River post office. S. Barnard a WWI veteran, and R. Lemke a WWII Coast Guard Veteran.

*2. H. 11/27/54*  
In this motorized age it is not easy to realize that in 1897 C.B. Wright carried mail by stage coach. He owned the line, and daily drove from his headquarters at Bullis livery to a hotel in Oshkosh and back, picking up mail and passengers enroute, both going and coming back from Oshkosh.

*2. H. 12/27/54*  
*1917*  
*(O.H. 4/26/45)*  
*(O.H. 1/31/4)*  
Rural Free Delivery was established out of Omro in 1903. Prior to that time rural families picked up their mail at the Post Office when in town. The villagers went to the Post office daily for their mail. Frank Sullivan had the rural route north and east of town, and George Stevens had the route west and south of Omro. They were the first rural carriers. Other early rural carriers were Frank and John Sheerar, Lewis Morton, Ed Bennett, Vernon Rilling, Robert Stellmacher to name a few. Norman Ihrke was on the mail route between Omro and Oshkosh. (*O.H. - 2/12/32*)

*M.S.*  
For many years the rural carriers drove horse and buggy or cutter to deliver the mail. Later, automobiles were used in summer, but old Dobbin still took over in winter as the side roads were not plowed out for auto traffic, not until many years later.

*M.J.S.*

Many people in the village rented lock boxes that could be opened even though the General Delivery window would be closed. Others received their mail from the Postmaster or employee who handed it out from the General Delivery window.

*Monday N.W.  
5/22/14.  
M. J. S. V.P. 3*

Frank Mahar was an accommodating Postmaster. He served during the era when Saturday evening was week-end shopping night for both village and farm families. In 1914 a Rural Window was installed. Saturday evenings Mr. Mahar kept the postoffice open so that any farmer could call for his mail, and it was cheerfully handed to him from the Rural window. Thus the farmer could leisurely read the Daily newspaper on Sunday. It would otherwise have been delivered on Monday by the rural mail carrier.

*M.J.S.*

Delivery of mail to the houses was instituted on Oct. 13, 1962. Ralph Lemke was Postmaster at that time. Joe Rosplochowski and Warren Doughty were two of the city mail carriers. Later both took over a rural route.

*(Warren died in 1974.)*

### ICE HOUSES

*E.Hist. P. 40. H. 12/1/39*

Another industry of interest and necessity was the ice business. Electric refrigerators were not popular until after 1920 or so. Instead people had "ice boxes". They were usually 24" X 46" X 52" high or therabouts. The hinged top would lift up to insert chunks of ice in a top compartment. As it melted the water ran down into a drip pan near the floor. Shelves for food were in the larger lower compartment.

*metal lined*

To keep the ice boxes supplied were the icemen. To keep the ice men supplied with ice were their ice houses. One such a house was located near the river west of the Lumber yard area. This ice house was originally owned by C.G. Thompson. Nearing its last days the old building finally collapsed. Cakes of ice went floating merrily down the river. No doubt they were sawdust coated, cooling the catfish and frightening the sunning turtles as the released cakes bobbed along down stream.

*Sherrin B.*

Another ice house was on the west edge of the present Scott Park. At one time these two were owned by the Early Settler's Uncle. He noted that his Uncle "Had one large horse that pulled one large wagon alone. He tended to the saloons' and the Butter Factory's ice needs." He further commented that "He used to drink a large pail of beer each day." It figures! How about a swig of buttermilk, too?

In January of 1916 a newspaper report stated that "The Omro Ice Company finished their harvest of ice. It was taken from the north channel east of the bridge. The ice was of a desirable thickness, about 18 inches thick and the quality perfect as no thawing and melting had hurt it."

*1/21/16  
news 4. N.*

The usual ice harvest called for ice cakes 2' X 4' X 24 inches thick, the thickness sometimes more or less depending on the weather. If the ice was snow covered, it would be cleared. Horse-drawn plows cut along straight lines in one direction, and then along the crossing lines. The blocks of ice were separated by saws and picks or ice chisels and lifted with big tongs onto the waiting horse-drawn drays and hauled to the empty icehouse. Here they were packed in layers, each layer heavily covered with sawdust for insulation. Extra sawdust was packed on the top layer, so that the ice would keep for summer use.

This ice house of 1916 just mentioned was located near the river bank east of the Kitchen Garage. It was built by Mr. Hart. Willis Young owned it at one time.

The same 1916 newspaper article mentioned that "Sleighting was fine. Farmers were bringing in logs on bob-sleds to be worked up at the Cady-Neuschafer mill." This mill was located on land now owned by Earl Tice at the west end of Michigan Avenue. (*Frederick Neuschafer.*)

*2/24, 7/26, 1931* Earl Tice also operated an ice business. He built a new ice house in November of 1931 near the Lumber yard. In 1932 he advertised "Ice for 6 months \$15. Single month \$3.00." *Niel Dodson* helped deliver the ice. In 1939 Tice sold out to Doemal of Oshkosh. (*D.H. 3/31/32*)  
(*D.H. - 5/4/39.*)

It is on record that Aaron Tice in addition to his meat market was also in the ice business. He died in 1937. *P. 247 (H.T.) (1/2/16 New N.W.?)*  
*2/2/37*

*some cheese* Some icemen inadvertently would drip water over kitchen floors when delivering ice to icebox. After he left the housewife would have to grab a mop and sop up the water drips.

*hardly in Oshkosh*  
*1/16 2/1/37* In 1906 the average wage for a ten-hour work day on the ice harvest was \$1.50 (a day). Ice harvesting flourished until 1916 when the first electric home refrigerator was developed. From then on this profitable business was doomed.

Ice by the pound, ca 1930's, a 75 pound block of ice cost 45¢, and a 25 pound block cost 10¢. --NW. - Feb 14, 1988 by Mrs. June Doemel Janke.



...and it was not until the new year was well advanced that  
...the situation was still...  
...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...

...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...

...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...

...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...

Later Rev. Woodward moved to Montana. The National  
Headquarters of the Prison Reform and Crime Prevention at  
Butte, Montana named him to replace the out-going President of  
that institution.

*Ray W. 1912*

...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...

...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...

...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...

...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...  
...the year 1912...

MOVIES

*E. Hunt, sup 4-4-13  
Emma J. P. 3*

*Handwritten diary*

Now let us turn our minds from work-a-day thoughts to movies. An early motion picture mentioned was Basel's Moving Picture shown on September 11, 1902, perhaps in Bushnell or Putnam Hall. A few night's stand, then they traveled on to the next town.

*E. Hunt, sup 3*

The first movie house in Omro was the Gem located on S. Webster just north of Fred Charlesworth's furniture store. It was owned by O.W. Babcock.

*36 IV 23B  
7. w.  
9/13/12*

An item of September 1912 states, "The moving picture show opened its doors Wednesday for the first entertainment. There was a steady flow of patrons all the evening to witness the 3 shows. The pictures and singing are very well spoken of, comparing favorably with the five and ten cent shows in larger cities."

*(N.W. 3/13/14.) M. Spk IV last pg. N.W. 3/12/14*

In March of 1914 Albion (Ben) Reid purchased the theatre from Babcock. The next manager and owner was John Bennett, Omro tailor. During 1914 and through 1919 he showed serials on Wednesday nights. One was entitled "The House of Hate", starring Pearl White. It was a mystery thriller and drew the school students in particular.

*Handwritten initials*

These were silent movies and Mrs. Pearl Rosenthal and Mrs. Bonnie Flanagan provided mood music on the piano during the film showing. The piano was in the "orchestra pit" down in front of the screen. Several times during the show there would be a 3 minute intermission for a change of reel. At the beginning of the show Mr. Bennett would welcome the patrons and announce future films.

*Handwritten note: O.W. 4/23(31.)*

In June of 1930 Bennett sold the Gem Theatre to Donald Jones, a projector technician who renamed it Omro Theatre. The opening was January 28, 1931 with Joe Cook in "Rain or Shine." Other early day star actors were Wm. Haine, Joan Crawford, Ramon Novarro, Chas. Rogers, Jack Okie, Ruth Chatterton, Mary Pickford, Greta Garbo, Norma Sheerer, Richard Arlen and Gary Cooper to mention a few.

*Handwritten note: 1/29/31*

With the introduction of talking films, about 1927, or 1921 as some recall, mood music was no longer necessary. The projector booth then had to be glassed in. The seats padded and upholstered, the lobby and foyer carpeted to improve sound.

Later J.P. Plansky purchased the movie house to make more room in connection with his furniture store. Then movies were shown for a time in the now Middle school annex.

*Handwritten note: 4/24/37*

The New Omro Theatre was built by the Omro Businessmen's Ass'n with WPA workers (now the New City Hall) in 1936 and 1937. David Voeltner's father was foreman of the construction project. It was a fine movie house. Many good films were shown. Clayton Stearns was interested in its success and was responsible for the fine quality of movies shown. The opening was held April of 1937. May 6, 1937. George Shepard was another movie projector technician for the OBA. Art Sullivan, too was substitute technician at the theatre. 11/30/39.

Then came the era of the TV and movie-going no longer was a popular amusement. It no longer paid the OBA to run it; the theatre closed.

History had repeated--read on.

OPERA HOUSE

*Shorn. B.*  
The 1850s, 60s, and 70s were booming years for the village, noticeably in the erection of new buildings, mills and factories.

Not many a public building can boast of so many and varied uses as one erected in Omro about 1870, and some say earlier. It was built on the corner of W. Main and N. Adams. It is still in use but is in a rather seedy condition. (1975) Originally it was built for the Spiritualist church members who lived in and around the Omro area. They met in the homes at first for their sessions.

Eventually the Spiritualists hired a contractor to build a hall for them. The plans resembled a house of entertainment, but it met the approval of the Spiritualists, however, and was built accordingly. At a cost of \$2,500.--"Trail of the Serpent" by Gard and Reetz.

*M. J. S.*  
The rostrum or stage to this building was wide and deep with doors leading off from it to the right and to the left back stage rooms. At the back of the auditorium was an upper balcony with tiers of seats leading back and up to the "peanut gallery". Balcony wings reached a third or half way from the upper gallery along each side wall; in these balcony wings were box seats.

*M. J. S.*  
It was well suited to the needs of the Spiritualists. Several doors that led onto the stage were ideal from which the "spirits" could emerge during the meetings. The spirits were clothed in filmy white habits as spirits would be. Reports are that the hall would be packed with people at each evening meeting to which the public was invited. Some of their beliefs shocked the populus no end; such as the custom of a wife being free to leave husband and family to live with another man. And it was done! The same goings on occurred at the Fourierite in Ripon. *Grand S.*

*M. J. S.*  
In Omro boys then were the same as now. They were curious and decided to investigate. One night as the spirits emerged from the doors, they, sitting in the front pews, charged! They found that the spirits were only human beings as they had surmised. (An Omroite recalls her Uncle's account of the happening.)

This revealing discovery may have been the congregation's undoing for they abandoned the building. It was afterwards used for other purposes.

Another group, the theatrical minded segment of Omro, later became interested in the Spiritualist Hall. It was an ideal building for a theatre. Many villages and all cities in that era boasted of an Opera House. So being vacated by the Spiritualists, it became Omro's Opera House.

*Shorn. B.*  
One Omroite recalls that as a young man he would apply for the job of scene shifter for dramas and plays that were performed in the Opera House. It must have been an inspiration for plus a natural talent he later acted in many Home Talent plays, Minstrel shows, and other local entertainments.

At the front of the rostrum was a small door for entering the space under the stage in the old theater. Stock Companies would come to the Opera House on their circuits, sometimes remaining for several days. A free ticket would be given an individual for delivering hand bills about town to advertise the performances.

*Sherm B.*

One outstanding play presented was "The Sinking of the Maine," with its realistic background scenery and props. Sound effects added to the presentation.

*W. B. Brooks*

Another Omroite recalls having enjoyed "Uncle Tom's Cabin", "Face on the Barroom Floor" and "Ten Nights in a Barroom". These dramas were performed by traveling theatrical troupes.

Another event held in the old Opera House was the 50th Alumni anniversary of the first graduating class of Omro High in 1926. The High School course being instituted in 1876. However, according to an Omro native, a high school course was offered before that year.

With the advent of motion pictures (silent films) Opera companies found it unprofitable to visit but only the large cities. Consequently the villagers saw few professional stage plays in their own house. Winniger Brothers troupe came to the Oshkosh Grand Opera House for a week or two yearly with a different stage play each night and matinees each afternoon except Saturday. This was possibly in the 1920s after autos became more numerous for traveling to Oshkosh.

*3/4/11  
Omro High School  
H. S. 23B*

But the Omro Opera House was not vacant for long; it was again used for soul redeeming. The Congregational Church with Rev. Daniel Woodward as Minister, was formed after a split in the Methodist Congregation. Rev. Woodward having stumped the state for a political nominee, McGovern for Governor, was accused by some of his congregation of not adhering to the separation of church and state. Later he left the ministry and was given the post of Warden at the State Prison at Waupun for his party efforts *about 1912. S/B K IV p. 23B*

*7/13/12.  
1911  
G.H. 2/6/15*

*W. W.  
J 21-1915*

A news item noted that a Daniel Woodward was the Grand Dragon of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan who signed an agreement April of 1926 between Fuller Goodman Company and the Klan for materials to build a Tabernacle in Oshkosh. *(more opposite pg.)*

Regardless of his political affiliations, many Methodist members followed Rev. Woodward in the institution of the Congregational Church. After meeting temporarily in the Masonic Hall, the former Opera House was chosen and purchased as their permanent house of worship. Dedication of the church was held December 5, 1911, afternoon and evening. First service held on March 4, 1941.

During this time, and perhaps from the year of its erection, this building was used for public gatherings. A part of every Memorial Day service (then referred to as Decoration Day) was held in this building. Other pleasant recollections included High School Class plays, Class Days, and Graduation exercises that were held in the church. This would have been from the early 1900s if not before and until the later 1920s at least.

*Sherm B.  
Omro Herald*

It has been recalled that Robert "Fighting Bob" LaFollette spoke in Omro more than once while campaigning for Governor on the Progressive ticket. His speeches were delivered in the former Opera House. The house was always packed as LaFollette was a first rate, plus a fiery orator. One such speech was delivered in October of 1902.

*Reply B.*  
 The Congregational Church finally disbanded about 1921, the members uniting with other denominations in the village. The mortgage on the old Opera House was held by a businessman who was also a Congregationalist. *Bruce Carter*

*Item B.* Later the (David) Bradley-(Rex) Loker American Legion Post was in need of a meeting place, so in 1924 the mortgager sold the building to the American Legion Post for the sum of \$1.00.

*Item B.* After being vacated by the Congregational Church, the building had been set afire, damaging the roof quite badly. Also, something had damaged a front corner of the wall. So, although the American Legion had paid only \$1 for the building it cost them \$3,500 for repairs and refurbishing.

From church, to entertainment, to church; it again came back to entertainment as well as a meeting place under the Legion ownership.

*2.H.-12/31/33*  
*2.H.-12/31/33*  
 Activities outside of the hall of the American Legion were the setting of little Christmas trees in green and red baskets on the business streets for seasonal decorations at least in 1933. And providing a skating rink west of the hall for the public's pleasure. They conducted an annual Poppy Sale in May; they awarded prizes to the school oratorical contest winners on Class Day for a number of years. On Memorial Day they placed flags and markers on Veterans' graves, and assisted in Memorial Day programs.

*2.H.-12/31/37*  
 In collaboration with the OBA, delegates were sent to Badger Boys for several years. The Legion sponsored Roadside tables in 1937. The first one placed near O.H. Wagner and Roger Williams corner, just beyond the Omro cemetery. Another table was placed at Koro.

With the Lions Club the Legion paid toward outfitting the school band with uniforms in the 1930s. (*O.H. - 10/26/32*)

Inside the hall during this time the place was jumping with activities. Home talent plays were produced on the stage. Besides the Legion and Auxilliary meetings, the Post sponsored public dances, roller skating, and basketball in the auditorium. And in 1932 Indoor baseball was attempted between the Legion and the City. The result:--City team won by a score of 25 to 19! (*O.H. - 2/11/32*)

The High School Gymnasium in the Webster Manual Training building was condemned in the later 1920s as being unsafe for sports or crowds. Because of high school basketball the Hall balcony wings were removed. (*O.H. - 2/11/32*)

*Miss B.* The Legion Auxilliary served noon dinners at the Hall each Memorial Day, and also public dinners on Armistice Day, November 11 (now Veterans' Day). They also sponsored card parties and bake sales.

2/2/08 Family Scrapbook III - 8.

Mrs. J.F. Sawyer obit printed in a local newspaper of 1908 and found in a family scrapbook. Mrs. Sawyer was 78 years old Feb. 26, 1908. Nancy E. Whitehill was born in Ryegate, Caladonia County, Vermont, and married J.F. Sawyer Sept. 20, 1852. Her parents moved to N.Y. State, and later to Wisconsin where they located and lived for a time in Manitowoc. Mr. Sawyer moved to Brillion, Calumet County Here he took a land claim. When the war broke out, before starting for the front he brought the family to Omro and settled them here. They lived in the same house 44 years. Miss Helen Sawyer was their only child. Helen lived to be in her 70s or 80s. (M. III p. 8.)

GRAND ARMY of the REPUBLIC  
G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic.)

At the north end of the old Omro bridge on the west side of the street stands the former G.A.R. Hall, J.F. Sawyer Post. (Civil War Veterans). J.F. Sawyer, for whom it was named, enlisted in a Brillion Company at Green Bay. Before leaving for the front he settled his family here in Omro. They lived in the same house for 44 years. At 204 E. Huron.

Sawyer and his wife Nancy had one child, Miss Helen Sawyer. The G.A.R. Post was named after Mr. Sawyer because he was very active in its organization just prior to his death in 1880. In November of 1894 their Hall at the end of the bridge was completed.

While Sherm Barnard was Postmaster he wrote letters for the old Civil War veterans regarding pension, etc. He saw to it that many widows could be cared for at King, Wis. When the last two of 3 local remaining G.A.R. members knew the Post would soon be no longer needed, they desired that the building should go to the American Legion. They, therefore, representing the G.A.R. Post, signed a petition, and the property was transferred on April 28, 1934 to the Bradley-Loker Post of the American Legion.

The last National G.A.R. Encampment was held in 1956.

The vacating of the former Opera House by the Legion left the building vacant. The Omro Co-operative Butter and Cheese Company across the street finally used it as a store room for factory supplies. The Kraft Milk Co. that bought out the Butter and Cheese factory continued to use the building as a warehouse. When Kraft Company decided to shut down the Omro unit, it left the Opera House empty once again.

The old building was still needed, however. This time for the manufacturing of Aluminum combination storm windows and doors with Roland Cady and Lyle Lewis as proprietors. The business is still continuing (1975) with Cady alone. Cady closed his business in the spring of 1978.

So the years passed. Those Spiritualists who sponsored the building in the 1800s might not recognize their hall today after its 100 or so years of existence. It has satisfied the spiritual desires, the amusement longings, patriotic fervors, fun and sports, besides supplying and manufacturing the needs of man. What next? Time alone will tell.--But once upon a time it stood either as Omro's proud church, Civic Center or Opera House. *Turn down in 1978 or 79.*

In 1978 the former Opera House was razed. A low-income 30 or 35 apartment-house was erected, the "Fox View Manor."

In 1932 on Memorial Day there were 4 Civil War Veterans left in Omro - Floyd Cross, W.M Hampton, Paul Vande Plashe, and Aaron Tice.

*O.H. 4/19/34*

*(O.H. - 11/16/33.)*

*Floyd Cross  
Aaron Tice*

*(O.H. - 4/19/34.)*

*was J.F. Sawyer  
Post - O.H.*

*E.B.*

*E.B.*

## EARLY TRANSPORTATION

*m.j.d.* In the early days of Omro, boat service was the most popular way of getting to and from Omro to other neighboring villages and cities. One could travel either by steamboat, excursion boat, freighter or rowboat.

*Emma D.* In Ada Moran's comments about Omro history she states, "Another way to travel was by stage coach. At one time two daily stages went to Oshkosh summer and winter. One came through Berlin and the other from Waukau; both were owned by an Omro man." Besides those mentioned before was Mr. C.B. Wright a stage man in Omro. Also, Joseph Elliott in the 1870s. No doubt there were many others but not noted in any available records.

*m.j.d.* In the 1910s and 20s Mrs. Ben (Julia) Hinderman carried on an extensive taxi service. She was issued a special license for that purpose. She took people to and from Oshkosh and other neighboring towns with her faithful Ford, even though there were bus lines that would occasionally start up, they would in time quit.

Julia would take her riders to their exact destinations, differing from the bus service in that respect. In later years Julia had a successful Greeting Card trade covering a large area in and around Omro.

*Emma J. Aug 1919 Omro Herald*  
One of the first bus lines between Omro and Oshkosh was owned and run by Ed Cope a former Omroite then living in Oshkosh. Other bus lines served Omro off and on with little stick-to-it-iveness.

## MORE INDUSTRY

*W. Pitt 11/15/31*  
During the year of 1856 another important undertaking boosted Omro's economy. It was the construction of a grist mill by a Mr. McLaren. This was sometimes called a Roller mill. Mr. McLaren brought considerable trade to the town. That same year another new saw mill on the north side was built by Andrew Wilson.

*Emma J. Mrs. Andrew Wilson ditto in N.W. 2/9/16 2011*  
In addition to the grist mill, the 1856 Omro village had 1 flour mill, 4 steam sawmills, 1 planing mill, 6 dry goods stores, 3 shoe stores, 1 drug and book store, 1 harness shop, 1 cabinet shop, 5 blacksmith shops, 1 machine shop, 2 hotels, 1 union school house, 3 church congregations with pastors; Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist.



EDUCATIONALLY--

Also C.J. Gadbaw's "Omro Schools" thesis researched in 1935, a copy in Carter Memorial Library and one in the Omro Museum.

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS\*--

Later years Ida May Bower served as County Supt. of Schools until her resignation in June of 1953. Ida died Aug 20, 1977.

*10/14/6/50*  
*Franklin, Gammell -*  
*Richard Lewis*  
*W. H. H. H.*

## EDUCATIONALLY

*← O.H. Cong 47  
Emma J. P. 2*

The first public school teacher in the village was Henry Purdy in the winter of 1850-51. He received \$22 a month and board. G.W. Beckwith was Town Superintendent of Schools.

*← O.H. Cong 47  
Emma J. P. 5*

Another item of interest was in February of 1856. At that time the Winnebago County Education Association was organized in Omro. The first Teachers Institute was held on the third week in April. Before 1856 there had been 6 County Superintendents. Three were residents of Omro. (*more opposite pg.*) *O.H. Cong 47*

*← O.H. Cong 47  
Emma J. P. 5*

A history of the Omro Schools "Centenary Omro Schools 1849-1949" by Miss Luthera H. Adams was read at the Old Red Brick Ass'n. meeting June 21, 1911. It was also printed in pamphlet form in 1949 and is as follows: *O.H. 11 | 16 / 23 / 39.*

"The first school in what is now the village of Omro, was a private school taught by Mr. Geo. Herrick during the winter of 1849 and 1850. Mr. Herrick was a graduate of a Massachusetts Normal school and was a man of culture and refinement. He had taken up land, a few miles down the river, and having no particular work for the winter, came into the village and solicited pupils. The only place he could secure for a school was a room in a rough unfinished building that stood somewhere near the present post office. (Now Winnebago County Bank location.)

"Desks were made for the larger pupils by nailing boards to the walls of two sides of the room. Benches without backs made of rough planks were placed in front of these desks. The pupils climbed over these and sat with their faces to the wall and backs to the center of the room. A similar bench occupied the center of the room upon which the younger pupils sat. I was one of the youngest and this bench was my seat. The clearest personal remembrance I have of this school is that of my uncomfortable seat.

"The teacher boarded at my home and I remember that during the long winter evenings he drilled me in Colburn's Mental arithmetic and gave me lessons in drawing.

"I have learned that this was the fifth district to organize within the present political township of Omro, then known as Bloomingdale. The township was originally a part of the township of Butte des Morts. The name of the township was changed from Bloomingdale to Omro in 1852. The name, Omro, instead of Bloomingdale appears in the records for the first time September 27, 1852.

"The original record book of this school is in existence, but the records are meager and incomplete. The first district meeting was May 7, 1850, at the home of George Gallutia, until recently the home of Mrs. M.E. Stone on Water Street. (Across Adams St. east of R. Cady's Aluminum storm window and door shop.)

*(Marian E. Stone.)*

The call was issued by G.W. Beckwith, Town superintendent of Bloomingdale. The number of legal officers elected at this meeting were three.

Director--Dr. Wm. McAllister; Clerk--W.W. Wilcox; Treasurer--James Peck.

"The meeting adjourned to meet at the same place May 8, for the purpose of selecting a site for a school house and other business. This meeting was held at the appointed time and a site for a school house was selected. The site chosen was one of the lots upon which the old Red Brick school house was afterward built and is now a part of the boy's playground.

"Names of voters, May, 1850: E.H. Dane, James Peck, N.P. Tuttle, Mr. Brazee, Elijah Clark, A. Stewart, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Daniels, R. Tuttle, M. Adams, Walter Stewart, Mr. St. John, Mr. Kendall, C. Caffects, Latham Stone, C. Bigelow, Joel Taylor, Marcus Terwilliger, Mr. Bryant, Geo. Gallutia, Mr. Phillips, Geo. Tippling, Mr. Calhoun, Doty Tubbs, Wm. Bent, H. Rogers, M.F. Beckwith, Aaron Humes, Wm. McKinnon, W. Markham, Wm. Beckwith, Mr. Allen, E.R. Dean, E.P. Dean, A Trillam, D. Fairchilds, Caleb Rogers, Geo. Hollingworth, W.Wilson, S. Charlesworth, John Challoner, Geo. Kenyon, W. Brown, Wm. Smith, Dr. Wm. McAllister, John Whitman, W.W. Wilcox. Also John Chapman, Joel Chapman, Mr. Colby, J.Wilson, Sumner Wilson, Mr. Meaghers, A. Bronson and C. Jeneron.

"At this meeting it was voted to raise \$200 for the purpose of building a school house.

"The records show that at a meeting held in September, 1850, the sum of \$80 was voted to be raised by tax for the purpose of finishing the school house and furnishing it for winter use. In October it was voted to employ a male teacher for the winter. Mr. Henry Purdee was hired for four months at \$22 per month and board.

"The district officers for this year were: Director--Samuel Charlesworth; Clerk--Daniel Sneed; Treasurer--Marcus Terwilliger.

"It appears from the records that a school was taught somewhere in the village during the previous summer--the summer of 1850. At a meeting held March 29, 1851, the business was to vote a tax to defray the expense of the winter school, pay the balance due in finishing, and in furnishing the school house and also in the words of the record--'to take into consideration the propriety of voting a tax to pay the lady teacher who taught the summer school in said district, the summer of 1850'. It was voted to raise by tax \$28 to pay this teacher. The name of this lady, the first teacher in the public schools of Omro, who waited a year for her pay is not recorded and I cannot find anyone who remembers it. It was voted at this meeting that Martin Adams be authorized to present immediately the tax list to the voters of the district for the collection of a tax to meet these expenses.

"Miss Phoebe Pettingel was the teacher of the summer of 1851. Her wages were \$2 per week and to board at the residence of the pupils. She 'boarded around'.

"September, 1851 a school meeting was called to consider the propriety of paying this teacher, Miss Pettingel, \$32. Miss Sarah Marsh, who built the house where Dr. Sheerar now lives, (304 S.

Webster) taught the school the winter of 1851 and 1852, and also the following summer.

"About this time Miss Maria Peabody afterward Mrs. Leander Hough, taught a private school in the room over Mr. Bigelow's store at the north end of the bridge. (Mrs. Hough lived on the Omro-Winneconne road across from the Clow farm.)

"It may be interesting to note that the fuel for the winter school was 15 cords for stove wood, two feet long, delivered at the school house for 68 cents per cord, total cost, \$10.20. The expense for the same amount of fuel the second winter was \$9.30.

"November, 1852, a special school meeting was called. At this meeting it was voted that in consequence of the addition of sections 7 and 8 on the Indian Land to school district No. 5 in the town of Omro, the board of said district be authorized to divide the school into two departments, hire two teachers, and rent an additional room. The land situated on the north side of Fox river was called the 'Indian Land' in those days. In consequence of this division of the school, a part of the pupils, the older ones, were taught in the room over Mr. Bigelow's store at the north end of the bridge.

"In the spring, when the ice went out the river over-flowed its banks and also often carried away a part of the bridge. The pupils were then taken over the river in boats. Afterward the more advanced pupils were taught in the upper room of the house now occupied by Mrs. Bullis, on Main Street. (Now 131 Jefferson.) This room was reached by stairs on the outside of the building on the north side. The teachers in these rooms as I remember them were, Mrs. John Ross and Mr. Cooley on north side; Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Luther Reed on the south side. Very few of the names of the teachers of the younger pupils in the school house were recorded.

"In these early schools we were taught reading, writing, spelling, English grammar, U.S. history, mental and written arithmetic and algebra. Written arithmetic, as it was called, was not taught in classes until Mr. Cooley came as teacher. Each solved his examples at his seat, asking needed help from the teacher at the time set apart for this help. I remember being startled and then greatly amused, one day when a great awkward boy, waving his hand called out, 'Say, teacher, I have kivered my slate all over with this here sum and what shall I du now?' The boy years after, did good service in the war of the rebellion as Union Scout.

"In these school rooms, the boys sat on one side and the girls sat on the other. Communication between the two sides in school hours was forbidden, but boys and girls were much the same in those days as they are now.

"The longer desks and seats were obliged to accommodate three pupils. I remember that one day a note thrown from the other side fell upon the desk where I sat with two other girls. The oldest girl took it up, read, 'What is your name?' She wrote back on the note, 'None of your business', and threw it back. The writer of the note was watching for soon another note came and read this time--'I do not mean you--but the girl in the blue dress.' Several years later the boy who wrote these notes won for his wife, after much opposition, the girl who wore the blue dress that day, and as

far as we know that little romance ended as old romances used to end, 'They lived happy ever after'.

"The district officers, at this period, seemed to fully realize the responsibility of their work. It is recorded that March 28, 1854, notice for a special meeting was duly given by posting four notices calling upon all qualified electors within the jurisdiction of district No. 5 town of Omro, to meet in solemn conclave for the purpose of transacting the following described business, which is namely considering the indebtedness, and also additional room for the school. At the annual meeting September 24, 1854, ten dollars was voted for a globe and outline maps for the school. This was the first money voted by the district for teacher's help in the school room. At the annual meeting, September 24, 1855, it was voted to raise a tax to pay the wages of the two teachers and the incidental expenses of the two departments as follows:

Teacher's wages.....	\$360.00
Fuel.....	20.00
Room rent.....	32.00
Incidentals.....	20.00
Total.....	\$432.00

"It was then voted that a tax of \$600 be raised to be used in building a new school house in district No. 5, Omro. The school board was authorized to sell the present school house to the highest bidder and use the proceeds, in part, for the purchase of another lot adjoining the present school lot, and to use the remainder towards defraying the expenses of building the new school house. The board was authorized to present a plan for the new school house at the next meeting in two weeks. The plan was presented and accepted.

"March 3, 1856, the contract for the new school house, the old Red Brick, was let to Geo. Stokes for \$2,170. (The cost ran *Sherrin B.* higher than expected so actual cost was about \$2,600.) This sum did not prove sufficient to finish the building and more money was voted later. The first school house was moved to a lot opposite David Grossman's place (now 440 or 456 Madison) and was occupied as a dwelling house many years, by Mrs. Young. Afterward John Grossman purchased it and remodeled it for a home. The old Red Brick was finished and occupied in December, 1856. This building had three departments, primary, intermediate and high school. Mr. Henry Raymond of Oshkosh, a most excellent Christian gentleman, was the first principal, with a salary of \$50 per month.

"Mrs. T. Bunker who had taught a private school some months in the village taught the intermediate and Miss Jennie Huie the primary departments. Mrs. Bunker gave up her work as teacher at the close of the winter term and Luthera H. Adams, a pupil in the high school during the winter was employed to finish the year in that department. The building was full to overflowing the first year, other branches of study were introduced and an assistant employed.

"Omro was a growing town at that time. Various rooms around the village were used for the overflow of pupils until a wooden building suitable for a school house was built west of the Red

Brick. (Later it became the Methodist Parsonage, now a 2 family apartment. Located on the corner directly across the street north of Middle School Annex.) The pupils assigned to that building thought it was something of a disgrace to be obliged to attend school in the "wood house."

"The Presbyterians used the high school room for their Sunday services as they had previously the other rooms used by the school, until their church was ready for use in 1867.

"In 1870 the north side school house was built and in 1876 the east side, each having two rooms for the two departments, primary and intermediate. *570 Van Buren, east side school.*

"The principals who followed Mr. Raymond until 1876 were Mr. Dean, Mr. Purmot, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Munger, Mr. Bright, Mr. McStay, Mr. Funk and Mr. W.T. Williams. I may not have the names of these teachers in the right order, but this is the order that some of my old schoolmates remember.

"There are many who remember the tragic death of Mr. McStay April 7, 1871. The names of Mr. Shaw and Mr. Bright are well remembered. Mr. Munger was the first county superintendent and when he gave up that office, Mr. Shaw was elected County Superintendent and Mr. Munger became principal of the Omro schools.

"The high school was organized in 1876. Before this time a course of study had been arranged and three classes had graduated.

"In 1872 the school district purchased from Martin Adams the north end of the Adams place for a site for a new high school building. This land was used as a public park and playground until 1893, when the high school building was built. The old Red Brick was sold and taken away in 1896. Mr. C. Morton who bought the brick sold many of them as souvenirs. Since that time the ground this building occupied has been the boys' playground. (The last Principal of (W.H. - 6/16/32) ORB was H.W. Rood.) The east and north side school buildings were abandoned in 1895 and all the pupils since that date have been accommodated in the new high school building. (More on souvenir bricks

pg. 95A)

"The Webster Manual Training school building was erected in 1906. The money that built and equipped this school was left to the district by the will of Hiram Webster for the purpose of establishing such a school. The annex to the high school building (north wing) was built in 1909. The wildest imagination in the pioneer days could not have called up a picture of such rooms as the pupils in our present school buildings occupy or such books and other helps as they now enjoy.

"Notwithstanding their early limitations on educational matters, many of the children of the pioneers of Omro and vicinity have taken honorable positions in the world's work. There are lawyers, doctors and many teachers; a few ministers and many successful business men and women. Perhaps there are not many so-called rich men among them. I believe we claim two millionaires--the Larrabee brothers. In their prosperity they did not forget their old home and its interests.

*more on schools pg. 303 thru 311*

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

"This History of the Omro Schools was written by Luthera H. Adams who occupied one of those "uncomfortable" seats in Mr. Herrick's first village school. Later Miss Adams taught at Ripon College.

"When she returned to Omro, she became a private instructor at her home. Miss Adams was a consistent Christian and an outstanding influence in the community for culture and education. She was beloved and revered by her pupils and friends."---Madge S. Ford. As presented at Centennial Open House during National Education Week of November 7-13, 1949. Superintendent of School, Russell Mosely.

*2. B. 4M. Bk IV p. 1 B July 11. 6/2/10*

*minute book, p. 44 of "Old Red" Black organization in Omro Museum*

Miss Luthera Adams was a member and the first girl of the first graduating class of Ripon College. Later she was a member of the faculty there for many years.

Madge Ford was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. G.W. Shafer. She was born in Omro and attended elementary school here. Later she attended Manning Accounting House Commercial School in Omro and college at Danville, Ill. She succeeded her father as postmaster and later worked in the local Farmers Bank for 20 years.

Madge was married to Dr. J.S. Ford, M.D., who died in 1905. Mrs. Ford served on the park board when the site for Scott Park was cleared and leveled. (O.H. 2/26/53.)

*Sharon B.* It is interesting to realize that the Oshkosh Normal school "came within one" of being located in Omro, but such was the case. It was to have been located on the former Fair grounds site, later called Fairmont Heights.

The village board had voted in favor of such a move as had the state school committee members. However, when the village representatives were to meet with the school officials in Oshkosh they insisted that the village pay their expenses to Oshkosh and while there. The board refused; the representatives did not go to the meeting; consequently the Normal was built in Oshkosh instead. Neenah was also interested in bidding for it.

*Mr. Bk II p. 1-4/3 of Winneconne local*  
The villages of Omro and Winneconne years later had a school tiff. The state had allowed Winnebago County to establish an Agricultural School. It was stipulated that the county confine the location to one of the small towns which would be required to furnish a suitable building and at least 10 acres of land.

*1/1/07 Winneconne local*  
Omro offered the site of the present Middle School athletic field. However, the County Board choose the Winneconne location. The new school of Agriculture and Domestic Science was built, and dedicated in February of 1908.

Omro tried but as someone remarked, "No wonder they didn't fetch that school here--Omro wanted to give them a frog mudhole!" However, it was political influence that clinched the choice of location. Winneconne had a resident who happened to be a State Senator at Madison, Mr. Merrit White.

GYM or ANNEX of High School.

From March 15, 1934 issue of Omro Herald.

Gymnasium Bond Issue approved by State March 12, 1934.

Corner Stone Laying July 1, 1934.

Architect - Edward Tough of Madison.

Mr. Nelson - contractor.

Contents of Corner Stone-- All the documents pertaining to the school, together with numerous pieces of coins, also the names of the Village officials were placed in a copper box sealed and placed in the cornerstone.



## REVIEW ON OMRO SCHOOLS

1st--where later the Red Brick stood, 1851.  
 2nd--near the Carter barn. Possibly in the area of Middle School.  
 3rd--Old Red Brick, 1856 or 57. Sold in 1896.  
 4th--North side school, 1870.  
 5th--East side school, 1876. North and East abandoned in 1895.  
 6th--High School (now Middle), 1893.  
 7th--Webster Manual Training, 1906.  
 8th--north wing of High School, 1909.  
 Band building (former Boys' building, memorial to Chas. Larrabee,) 1916, <sup>built</sup> turned over to school system in 1933.  
 Agriculture building--in the 1920s.  
 ← The gym or Annex to the high school, 1934.  
 H.B. Patch Elementary, Tyler Ave., 1954. Addition in 1958.  
 New High School--north side on Leach Street, 1964.  
 First bus transportation, 1940.

Early Janitors were A.P. Howard; Leon Hoover; Art Blakesley, <sup>(O.H. - 9/21/44.)</sup> who retired in September of 1944 after 35 years as caretaker and maintenance man of Omro schools and grounds. Lewis Gadbow also was school janitor at one time <sup>from 1934 to 1943. (O.H. - 12/17/44.)</sup>

B. In 1897 one teacher's salary was \$20 per month and that particular teacher was overjoyed with her wages.

The Athletic field completed in 1934.

Mr. August C. Birkholz was president of School board from 1952 to 1960.

In the early years there was a Students Counting House which was a commercial school, and a L.E. Manning-Daggett Commercial School. Both were privately owned. In 1887 a Rodman Manning School was mentioned by a former student, possibly the same school. This school was located at the north end of the bridge. <sup>(O.H. - Aug 31, 1939) (1/26/39.)</sup>

Other comments by various persons relative to Omro Schools will be observed: Emma Jaeck--"The first school in the town of Omro was held in the Edward West home, a private affair. The first public school teacher in the village was Henry Purdy in the winter of 1850-51. He received \$22 a month and board. G.W. Beckwith was Town Superintendent of Schools. In 1855 Omro town had 1605 inhabitants, with 510 pupils in 8 schools."

Sharon Williams--"The first school in Omro was a private school taught by Mr. George Herrick during the winter 1849-50. The building he used for a school was a rough, unfinished building that stood somewhere near the present landromat on East Main Street." Now a part of Winnebago County Bank.

For years after the North side, East side and Red Brick school houses were closed, the only school house in Omro was the Omro High-Webster Manual Training, now (Middle School). This school served all--Kindergarten, grades, and high school students.

In 1916 there was a Farm School at Omro with University of Wisconsin Experts to assist in the work. State College of Agriculture representatives were instructors on the program at a meeting on soils, farm management, and poultry. The 4 day meeting was held in the Masonic Hall. Emil Rauchenstein, local Ag teacher, was in charge.

Back now to school notes for the month ending January 29, 1897--

	<u>Pupils registered</u>	<u>average daily attendance</u>	<u>tardy</u>
High	82	74	12
Grammar	50	45	10
Intermediate	44	37	7
East Primary	39	20	0
South Primary	41	33	6
North Primary	59	47	11
Totals	315	236	46

*H. 11/23/31  
E. West P. 8*

The Early Settler has this to say about schools--"The first public school teacher in the village taught in the first school house built in the village, now about where the H. Carter barn stands, (located near Middle School.) but this has been torn down a long time ago. This was in the year of 1850. Later a school was built on the north side about where Kitchen's Service Station is now. They held a school meeting, Mr. G.W. Beckwith was town Superintendent. They raised two hundred dollars for a new school at that meeting.

*also P. Wright  
Omro Herald  
11/31*

"In 1855 the district voted to have another new school and raised \$600 for the purpose. Mr. Matoon was to do the work, but he was released later and George Stokes agreed to build it of brick for \$2,140. The school was built in 1857." On the site where later the famed "Red Brick School" stood, now Middle School parking lot.

*M. 11/23/31*

One of the early school teachers previously mentioned was Luther A. Reed, who came to Winnebago County in 1848.

*Early n.w. - 4/2/12 Mrs. Whit*

*E. West P. 8  
H. 11/23/31*

"In 1857 we find newcomers arrived, namely: Dr. McCall, W. Ames, Dr. Gibbs, Benjamin Sadyu and W. Larrabee. The village expenses that year were \$234.21."

More school notes are as follows:

*J. 11/23/31  
class 7/19/76  
annual meet.*

At the close of the 1925-26 school year, the Teacher's Training course was discontinued. Also, that was the year the graduates (1926 class) first wore caps and gowns for graduation.

*E.B.*

Beginning in September of 1975, school children were allowed school time to attend religious classes at their church every Wednesday P.M. of each school week for spiritual instructions. Not all churches took advantage of the opportunity.

The first County Superintendent of schools was John E. Munger of Omro. He was elected in 1861 and served the better part of a decade. (P. 134 P. 195 - Rev. Edw. Taylor.)

*H. 6/28/34*

At an Old Red Brick Association meeting it was noted that Dr. McAllister gave land on which the Red Brick school house was built.



## BOATS

*Emerson J. p. 3 & 5  
O. H. Cady 4/7*

This same year, 1857, the first newspaper was the "Omro Republican" published by Wheeler and Walker. In it, No. 2, Vol. 1, date August 6, 1857 is this item: "Departure.--Leaves her dock below Division Street bridge at 2 p.m. the fast sailing upper cabin Horse-Boat "Pioneer", for Taycheedah, stopping at Butte des Morts, Oshkosh, and other important points. For passage apply to the driver or first cook." Note--Fond du Lac was not yet settled, the settlement was first at Taycheedah with stores, homes and business houses.

*M.F. 11/17/14*  
The names of some boats serving Omro's early day freight and passenger needs besides the "Badger" and "Swan" mentioned earlier were, as recalled by Warren Brooks: "The Albatross, owned by Dan Cady; the Fashion; Red Bird; tugs D.L. Cady, and H.C. Scott. Later on the boats Thistle, and Leander Choat." *(O.H. 7/2/38.) B.R. Cady originally the H.C. Scott.*

*m.j.s.* To mention the "Thistle" brings memories of the 10¢ round trip excursions to Oshkosh and back in the early 1900s.

The boat started from Berlin with freight and passengers and about 8 or 8:30 reached Omro. It docked at a pier north of the Larrabee Hotel. A whistle blast announced its arrival. With Omro passengers on board, the gang plank pulled back on deck, mooring ropes re-coiled; 3 ear-splitting blasts that made the boat vibrate, were blown for the bridge opening. By the time the boat reached the current at mid-stream and gained momentum, the bridge-tender would have answered the opening signal. *(more opposite pg.)*

It was a leisurely trip down the Fox. On nearing Butte des Morts, if any passengers were standing on the pier to board the boat, it stopped there. Otherwise it steamed on across Lake Butte des Morts to the Fox river again at Oshkosh. It continued on as far as the Main Street bridge when again 3 blasts caused hands-over-ears cringing. The boat would tie up at the little park pier at the foot of N. Main Street, immediately east of the bridge where benches were provided for passengers awaiting the trip home. We would carry a lunch to be eaten on landing or on board before embarking.

Passengers would then have about 3 or so hours to shop or transact business. Then back to the "Thistle" again about 4 P.M. for Omro and home.

Other boats were the Hutchinson, Evelyn, Crawford, and Paul L. The tugs Boscobel and Garrow.

*Ray King*  
Dan Cady anchored the Albatross at a dock just west of the railroad bridge. Besides being a boatman, Mr. Cady also repaired barges and boats both mechanically and carpenter-wise. Coal-fueled steam engines would need repairs and water did rot wood of which these boats were built. To repair barge or boat, Mr. Cady would if necessary skid it up on land in order to replace wooden or mechanical parts. Mr. Cady died May 11, 1926. *(family diary - 1926)*

*Wek I p. 120*  
The Paul L. was named for Captain Paul LeFevre, a Fox and Wolf river Captain of the Clark & LeFevre Company of Oshkosh. *or his son. -- Grand & Ratz*  
Another excursion boat was the Brooklyn. *5/11/1926*  
*Winnacome local 5/9/02.*  
*(over)*

"BERLIN CITY"--

George Clark while fishing clams pulled up the whistle of the "Berlin City" that blew up in 1857. It was given to the Oshkosh Museum. -- According to Gard & Reetz in "Trail of the Serpent"

BOATING

According to the Daily Northwestern issue of Nov. 20, 1912, E.C. Jones of the Omro Lumber Co. remarked today, that this was the first time, that the last boatload of lumber for a season, had been unloaded in fine weather, sleety and snowy weather being the rule for this late in the boating season.

MSB IV p. 13 - Copy 21.000 7/28/11

An Omro boatman, Walter Kitchen, signed on the government steamer, "Wolf", as fireman in September of 1911.

*E.B.* Daniel Cronk of Omro was Captain of the Mayflower, Jr. from Omro to Oshkosh in 1906.

*E.P.* Other boats passing through Omro, were of the smaller steamers from Berlin and Montello, for instance, the Montello, Ellen Hardy and Chittendon. The City of Berlin was an excursion boat, later named the Fashion. There was also Lady Jane, Eureka and Laura May.

Following the Durham boats of earliest navigation, there appeared in 1844 the little Manchester built of native woods on the east side of Lake Winnebago. It was launched scaring the Indians with its stack belching forth smoke and fire.

Government locks on the lower Fox were constructed in 1850 or 56. There being 16 at the most, each raising or lowering the water level 10 feet. Prior to 1850 the larger boats were taken apart and portaged around the rapids piece by piece and put together again, usually at Menasha.

*E.B.* In regard to boat signals, 4 whistles were for the Eureka locks; 6 whistles was the distress signal. The most tragic occurrences were the fires that destroyed so many of the boats on the Fox river valley waterways.

The last steamboat up the Fox to Portage was in 1902.

*E.B.* There were coal barges, rafting tugs, and sand barges. There were pile-drivers needed for the building of docks and piers. One pile driver had an interesting history. "Captain Booth of Oshkosh discovered an old hull that he converted into a pile-driver boat, the Lone Star. For about 15 years he had a steady job, season after season, driving piles for boom companies at Bay Boom. He got \$1 a pile, and he is said to have been careful not to drive them in too deep. Consequently the ice lifted them every winter and the work had to be done over in the spring. Finally his hot temper caused help to leave him until there was only his wife to work with him."

*E.P.* The larger boats carried lumber, lime, coal and groceries. The later almost always packed in barrels. There would be huge casks of brown sugar, salt, vinegar, kerosene, soap, molasses and crackers.

*E.B.* The river boats provided inexpensive transportation and were the life-line of the rugged sector inhabited by Indians and two-fisted settlers. (more back of pg. 101 about steamboats.)

There were "behavior" boats to contend with. As an example, one, the O.B. Reed, was built too narrow. It would tilt badly after getting up headway. The traveling public finally refused to trust their safety to it.

The Paul L. once tipped over in Oshkosh at the Main Street dock, and had to be righted. Boats had troubles otherwise. The steamer Carter came up river an evening in August of 1894 with about 50,000 more brick for the new Odd Fellows block. She got around just below the bend and had to unload some 16,000 brick near Bartow's boat house before she could get off a sand bar.

EB. Several of the Neff family of Oshkosh were boat builders. It is told that Abel Neff somehow came into possession of a cabin door, and to make use of it he built a steamboat to put it in. One day, when used for an excursion, several men were kept busy rolling casks of water back and forth to keep her on an even keel.

EB. A humorous incident that happened was during a family excursion on the schooner "Everready". One in the family had his fiddle and furnished music for dancing. It was the day of hoop-skirts, one of which was worn by a woman dancer. It chanced that when the boat left the dock one of the guards was not replaced. The consequence was that the dancer with the hoop-skirt was whirled off into the lake. There, instead of sinking, she was buoyed up like a cork by the air under her hoop-skirt. The schooner was quickly hove to, a small boat lowered and the woman rescued unharmed--but you guessed it--damp.

1 Sk. V p. 1  
On a later date, April of 1914, it was announced in a local newspaper that "The Launch 'Siskeewit' owned by Walter Kitchen has started regular trips on the Berlin-Omro water line."

11/4/15/14 p. 1  
Also, an April 15, 1914 news clipping announced that the "steel barges enroute from Green Bay to the gulf passed through the village Tuesday morning. At night they experienced some difficulty on the sand bars in the river in the eastern part of the village."

11/6/15/15  
Government boats were the side-wheelers "Fox" and "Wolf". They were used by the Army Corps of Engineers in the maintenance of the river navigation on the Fox and Wolf rivers. Occasionally the "Wolf" would have an errand on the Fox river but the boat more often seen on the Fox river was the "Fox". The boat was somewhat smaller than the "Thistle" or "Paul L.". It had two paddle wheels, one on each side, differing from other boats that had one rear paddle wheel. The Wolf was identical to the Fox.

m. 8. The side wheels left the rear of the boat free for couplings needed for a towing service. It towed the government dredges to keep locks, coffer-dams, and piers in repair. It towed barges, some for dredge supplies, food, coal for the dredge, and the boat needs with which they were powered. Shallow sections and sand bars were also dredged from the main channel for safer and better boat navigation.

Buoys were placed along the river channel in marshy areas in the spring before the navigation season opened officially. The more marshy area was beyond the Grignon Gun Club in going down stream from Omro; up stream from Omro it was beyond Berlin. The buoys were picked up in the fall as soon as navigation closed officially, the later part of November. (at 11/26/39.)

m. 8. The river course was inspected periodically, and soundings taken. Mile posts were placed along the entire navigable route. From Omro to the Wolf river confluence they were placed mostly on the right side at water's edge facing down stream. The mile stakes usually were three feet above water level when the water was low. They were about 2 or 3 inches by 6 inches wide. They were painted white with black numbers. By the 1930s or so, mile posts were a thing of the past as was commercial navigation on the Fox river. The Fox was the last steamboat to ply the upper Fox. Its duty was to inspect and repair the Eureka lock and dam.

(back of page)

PPP 17-295-18. address

The last of the river boats was the Leander Choate which was renamed "Valley Queen". It was used as a floating dance hall when it burned in 1922. There were 250 river boats that plied the Fox river waterway from the Manchester which steamed out into Lake Winnebago in 1844 until the Valley Queen's flaming demise.

Steamboats traveled about 10 miles per hour. It took a crew of 5 to operate--1. Capt. 2. Fireman 3. Engineer 4 and 5. Deckhands.



SIDEWALKS

Oct. 11/23/39  
E. Hunt p. 8

(O.N. - 1/22/31)

It was about the same time that Omro began to boom, in 1857, that wooden sidewalks were constructed. The Early Settler "remembers the old plank sidewalks in town in the logging days, chewed up with spiked shoes." And wooden sidewalks were the only kind built in Omro prior to 1920 or so.

11. 09/25/39  
E. Hunt p. 2  
Hunt 14  
11. 1/22/31

The first walks mentioned noted that there were 457 rods of sidewalk built of wood at a cost of \$1,108.75. The dimensions were, 2 by 6 inch boards, actually 1-3/4 by 6 inch, and 8 feet long in the business area. In the residential part of the village they were 4 feet long. All were built up from the ground on posts; in lower areas as high as 3 feet, to be above water level in times of high water. The boards were nailed a quarter inch apart for drainage to help prevent rotting from moisture.

Alman B.

The day after Halloween often found some of the boards torn up. It was a good time to settle a grudge against a property owner. Otherwise it was done just for the satisfaction of doing some deviltry. Same thing today!

Alman B.  
P.O. 79

A corduroy road in Omro? Yes. According to Sherm Barnard it was laid from the depot east on Huron Street to S. Webster (then Second to Division). Beneath the present road surface lies the old plank road itself. It is made of 4 by 8 oak planks, perhaps 18 feet long. No doubt many a heavy load of products and supplies traversed this street in the early days, at least as far as S. Webster Ave. The construction of this corduroy road was let for 90¢ a thousand feet at \$2,500.

11. 11/22/39

To ship products by boat to Milwaukee, Chicago or other points in that area, took much longer a time than by freight service with the railroad. So the corduroy road was almost a necessity when all roads, even in the rural districts would be mud from fence to fence, especially in the spring or after a heavy or continued rainy spell. The corduroy road held up and horses did not have to wallow in the mire. Otherwise wagons and buggies would sink into mud up to their axles. As an example, Thomas E. Parker was an early pioneer born in England. He came to Omro from Kentucky with his horse and dog in the fall of 1855, traveled as far as Berlin by train. From there he rode his horse to Omro and out on the Poygan road he found the road so muddy that he had to walk the rail fence and lead his horse. The horse in fact was the first in this section of the country. Later years Mr. Parker was a teamster during the first period of the Civil War.

Alman B.

The first village sewers were made of wood, also. They were located on Jefferson (then Main) and several were across Water Street. They all led to the river. The drainage ditches in various parts of the village were dug and they ran under the sidewalks.

A cement sidewalk was built in front of the Post Office and the Pelton store in September of 1912. No doubt the first one to be laid in the village. *Railly N.W. 9/26/12.*

E.B.  
GEORGE SHAFER

An enterprising individual came to Omro in the 1858 period. "Among the foremost of public spirited civic minded businessmen was George W. Shafer who came from New York State in 1858. Soon after his arrival, with his brother Peter, they purchased the property at the corner of Water and West Division streets, where the former Co-op building stands.

"Here in a large two story building these Shafer brothers built up an extensive business in drugs and groceries. Their two sisters conducted a millinery and dress making establishment in rooms on the second floor. This same building was later moved by Peter Shafer to the west side of W. Division as a grocery store. Much later it became the jewelry store of Charles Chase.

(O. H. 2/10/39.) (one record 570)

2, 21, -  
8/10/39.)  
"George Shafer then in 1865 built another three story brick building, one of the finest in the county. The first floor was for his Drug Store facing Water Street, the grocery store at the rear faced W. Division. On the second floor were suites of rooms for dentists, doctors and lawyers' offices, as well as John Everts barber shop. The third floor was occupied by the Masonic Orders for lodge and chapter rooms. When this fine structure was destroyed by fire in 1880 the village lost its then a substantial and prosperous business block.

"When Peter moved the original Shafer store building across the street there remained only one building on the east side, this was occupied by the Omro Herald until its destruction by fire in 1963.

"Before this building's use by Seward H. Cady to print the Omro Union newspaper, Wm. Brookman kept a dry goods store on the farther corner where the Women's Relief Corps hall stood (now empty lot).

"Mr. Shafer built a large two story frame building with rooms reserved for his sisters who lived on the second floor. They carried on a business of their own on the first floor including their dress-making and their millinery shop. There is on record an Ephriam Shafer."

LUCAS ANDREWS

2. B.  
"This same year, 1858, Lucas Andrews, another prominent businessman of Omro during this era, ran one of the first hotels in the village. Mr. Lucas Andrews who purchased it from Mr. Woodward was a gentleman of faultless manners and attire, who maintained a dignified reserve among his more boisterous guests as persistently as he wore his silk hat on Omro's sawdust streets. A few of the recently deceased elders of Omro (E.B's Aunt Kate) remembered the hotel as Temperance House. During Mr. Andrews proprietorship many lumbermen and sawmill owners were registered as permanent lodgers and boarders. After his death the property was sold which finally became the Larrabee House.

"During the lumber boom several public hostels were built. The hotel at the north end of Main Street known at different times as Gould House, Larrabee Hotel and Hotel Omro, and the old Exchange Tavern near the Indian Camp grounds across the river were built in 1850."

Several hotels have been mentioned previously. Some were the same buildings but during the years were renamed.

The following is a list of hotels as mentioned by various historians:

Exchange Hotel--was built in 1850 where the Masonic Temple is now. Madison Avenue was then Exchange Street.

Goodwin House--was on lot 97 and 98. In the block east of the old Opera House.

*Robert P. H. 5/17/31*  
Larrabee Hotel--now Hotel Omro. Prop., A.B. Larrabee. The proprietor used to meet every arriving train with a stage coach to pick up all passengers who needed lodging. His daughter Anna taught the Pingry School at one time. She had a brother Ed. *(Paddy)* *Catherine Heffron*  
These three hotels were built about the same year. *(Wm. Heffron)*  
was landlord of Omro Hotel in 1858, and continued as such for over 30 years. Mrs. Chatterton was his cook for many of those *(O.H. 4/24/37.)* years.

Larrabee Hotel--on Masonic Hall corner. "Bige" Larrabee was the Proprietor. *1850. (L.A.B. 7/10/39.)*

The Exchange Tavern was located on the north side at one time, too.

Hotel Chatterton--Rob Chatterton and his mother, Ada, were Proprietors in 1908 to 1910 at least. Before that, it was the Larrabee (Hotel Omro now). Mrs. Frances Miskey managed it in the 1940s.

*(P.H.)* Fountain Inn--corner of S. Webster and W. Main, now Liquor Store. *189-also.*  
Mrs. Alma Lambrecht, Proprietor. Many school teachers boarded and roomed there in 1914-20 at least. *Clarence, a son.*

Central Hotel--located where the new Post Office now stands on S. Webster. Also called--

*Robert P. H. 5/17/31*  
Northwestern Hotel at one time. Mr. Werner, Proprietor of Central also Mr. Nash and Mr. Martin.

American House--located on south side of Putnam Block which was between S. Webster and Jefferson.

Fox River Hotel--while Norman Gerard was Proprietor, Masonic Hall site.

Andrews Hotel--on Masonic Hall corner. Apparently a popular location for a hotel.

Gould House--at one time where Hotel Omro is located.

*Erwin Johnson*  
A hotel--across from the Masonic Hall to the north burned down.

Headline in paper--"Thousands of Lives Lost!--Bedbugs!!"

The last blacksmith shop in Omro, and operated by Henry Hoeft, was supposedly erected on the hotel foundation.

Larabee Hotel first named Fox River House then the Larabees fought it and changed to Larabee Hotel. Years later to the Omro Hotel. --- By-Norman Gerard in a letter of Apr. 29, 1931 to W. G. Wagstaff in Dick Crane's historical collection.

Warren Brooks

Winnebago County

March 17-1964

Amos 1973

1592  
592  
2484

Warren Brooks doodling at a meeting while serving on County Board at Oshkosh,

HON. HIRAM WEBSTER

An early Omro industrialist and civic minded pioneer was Hon. Hiram Webster. He has an interesting background.

"The donor of the Webster Manual Training School, was born January 10, 1824, in Hampton, New York. He was the youngest of five children. His boyhood was spent on his father's farm, and his primary education was received from the neighborhood school. After a course of study at Troy Conference Academy, Poultney, Vermont, Mr. Webster taught school for five years in his native village.

"At the age of twenty-three, having saved a few hundred dollars, he came to the new state of Wisconsin and in 1848 took up a number of tracts of land. Mr. Webster became interested in the real estate business.

"He bought a shingle mill which proved a loss, and later, a steam lumber mill which he operated successfully for fifteen years employing around forty men.

"Mr. Webster's public career was exemplary in every way. He was elected to many village, county, and state offices, and served as Assemblyman from his local district during 1879-80.

"Mr. Webster died while visiting in California in 1884." More about his lumbering career later.

*W.B.P.* At the time the Webster Training School was built, in 1906, Warren Brooks and his friend Monte Brockway unloaded all of the brick for the building as it was delivered to the site. For that work they received 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢ an hour! (*more about Webster on pg - 105A.*)

*E.B.* Not all new-comers were industrialists, yet they add to the history of the area. *E.B.* The Campbell family came to Omro about 1861. Originally they were from eastern Maine. After landing at Sheboygan they boarded a springless stage coach to jolt over rough terrain and the old Plank Road to Fond du Lac, where they were taken to a steamer to cross Lake Winnebago for Oshkosh. At Oshkosh they had to find a team which took them to Omro where they built a house. A daughter, Katherine Campbell Robbins, recalled Putnam Hall "where traveling troupes staged plays and amateur plays, and where other local talent programs took place." Her high school graduation class of 1881 held its exercises there.

*E.B.* She remembered Mr. George Putnam well. "How the youngsters must have annoyed him as he pattered around, filling the many glass kerosene lamps--those squat flat bottomed ones ranged along the front of the stage. "Old Put" as the hall was affectionately referred to way back then, was used by traveling entertainers. One of an audience recalled hearing the "Swiss Bell Ringers" and seeing "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in 1880. Mrs. Robbins's first teacher was Jennie Allen who taught in Washington Ames blacksmith shop. Ames home was south of what is now Ann's Antique Shop.

*Mc III  
G. H. - 1936  
H.A.*

*H. 5/25/37*

*1942*  
FLAGPOLE

*E. Hunt*  
In Luthera Adams article she mentions "a flag pole east of a fountain, and from it on all important days and occasions our U.S. flag waved. It was great sport for the boys to help raise that flag." She wondered what ever became of flag and pole.

Sherm Barnard recently explained, "That flag pole was called 'Liberty pole'. The fountain mentioned was in the street at Huron and Jefferson. The pole was a block east of the fountain and east of where the new City Hall is now. When the street was dug up at one time for utilities, the stump of that pole was found and removed."

BALL PARK

Life in Omro was not all hustle, bustle and milling. Occasionally a bit of sports came to town even way back when the village was new.

*(G. J. Smith)*  
*m. J. S.* Years ago in the 1880s my father, as a lad, recalls that the Paige Wire Company had an unbeatable negro baseball team that played local teams. One year they came to Oshkosh and to Omro. They were a comical-acting team and produced much merriment and laughter. In Omro one of the Paige team was knocked down or pretended to be. Another team mate carried him off the grounds on his back, dumped him down and started to return to the game only to have the knocked-out jump up and chase him back onto the field.

The Omro team, perhaps by intent, came nearer beating them than did the mighty Oshkosh team. The Paige players always won, however. (Were they by chance a fore-runner of the concept for the Harlem Globe Trotters?)

*mabel Nielsen*  
The Omro Ball Park located near the corner of E. Main and Harrison Streets, is an old institution. In 1926 Henry Meilahn built a roof over the bleachers for the rooters' comfort, he having purchased the property. Later he sold the Park to the O.B.A. for the same price he paid for it, namely \$900.

*m. J. S.* The roof over the bleachers has long been gone. In 1971 the Jaycees of Omro erected and painted various local firm's advertisings, on a high fence around the field. It is still used for recreational ball games.

*m. J. S.*  
*18-12-11/09*  
*M. J. S. copy book of C. G. Sullivan - School of Omro, Wis. pp. 77*  
A bright future was in store for a sports-minded young man of Omro in 1909. Thomas Coates was then left fielder on the Oshkosh team of the Wisconsin-Illinois league, and was drafted by the Philadelphia American league team for the following season. But tragedy took over.

In October of 1909 Coates and Mike Place were out in a skiff duck hunting in Spring Brook marsh. Coates drew his gun toward him and the weapon discharged. The shot penetrated one of his eyes, and he died.

Coates was one of the five best batters in the league and a bright future was predicted for him as a major leaguer.

## GARDENERS

Getting back to the practical, in the years before refrigerator cars the only vegetables and fruits obtainable were home grown. Families practically lived on garden produce raised and sold locally. Gardeners survived by holding down secondary jobs in the winter.

The Early Settler tells about one such gardener. "I remember Mr. Ferris. He was the Justice of the Peace and also had a store on the south end of the bridge. They say that he moved here in his sail boat up the river. He used to live west of the Thompson property now a vacant lot (now Erie St.). Mr. Ferris had many hot-beds for garden produce.

"I remember that one day a bad wind came up in the north. Those canvas frames went up in the air so far they looked like white leaves. They found the most of them later way south of the village in different farmers' fields."

*m.j.s.* Chas. Cope lived on S. Webster, east side of the street at the foot of Piety Hill. He raised and sold vegetables and small fruits. The family also kept a cow and chickens. No doubt they sold milk and eggs that were not used by the family. On retirement he owned and lived at 415 Adams Ave.

*m.j.s.* Another gardener of many years ago was Samuel G. (Sammie) Reed, a bachelor. He came to Omro with his parents from N. Y. when a youth. In spite of an asthmatic ailment he was an exceptionally successful gardener. He lived in the W. Larrabee Street neighborhood. Mr. Reed would make the rounds from house to house with a wheelbarrow filled with vegetables to sell to the stores and house-wives. Mr. Reed died in 1914 at the age of 65 years. *Book IV p. 613 + m.j.s.*

*Book IV p. 613*  
*130/114 m.j.s.* Geo. Dearstine, 240 E. Larrabee raised Ginseng. The beds were southwest of the house. The high frames were covered over with a roof of lath and cloth to protect the plants from the direct rays of the sun.

(O.A. 9/14/39.)

Geo. Mettam erected a green house in October of 1939 when he lived in the first house north of the Catholic Church on Madison Avenue. It is now the Catholic church parking lot.

North side gardeners were--Aaron Fink who lived at 625 Cedar. He sold his produce on the G.A.R. Hall corner.

Also Albert (Reddy) Wills lived on the corner of Ash and Walnut. He hawked berries and garden produce to the townspeople.

E. Hellwigs on E. Main had a roadside stand where they sold produce for many years. Later years they sold Christmas trees each season until retirement about 1970.

Mr. and Mrs. Everett Mulder maintained a greenhouse on E. Main for several years, at least during the 1950s and 60s.

Mr. and Mrs. John Burchard, 510 Harrison Ave. have raised and marketed garden produce since coming to Omro in 1961. *John died in 1978 or 79.*

## MILKMEN

About 1896 Omro was quite a village with a population of about 1,200. Many were retired farmers; a number of them kept a cow staked out on a vacant lot or the roadside. Also, many kept a few pigs or a flock of chickens.

As late as in the 1930s some villagers still kept a cow or chickens or both. Keeping chickens during these years posed a problem as found in a local newspaper. "A NOTICE TO CHICKEN OWNERS. Numerous complaints have been lodged with the Village Board concerning the unrestrained running at large of chickens within the village limits. Considerable damage has been caused thereby. All owners of chickens are hereby notified to keep all chickens and fowls fenced or locked up under penalty of fine.--By order of The Village Board." (G. H. 4/21/32)

Milk and eggs over and above the needs of the family would be sold to neighbors. As an example of local milk product sales, a *Manda S.* housewife on the north side made delectable cottage cheese. First, son Leon would deliver the pints or quarts to her customers. Later years son Don did the same chore for his mother. They kept one cow.

Years ago milk delivery was quite an uncomplicated business. The milk was placed in a large container supplied with a spigot. The container placed on a horse-drawn cart that threaded its way about town. Customers would place pitchers out for the milkman to fill. Maybe a stray leaf, a dust mote, or a bug did fall into it accidentally. So what?

*M. V. p. 1 B*  
*5/1/14* A May 1914 news item states--"The village is without a regular milk man for the first time in years. As a result milk is kept by the stores and restaurants to supply the demand."

Later years, in the 1930s and on, there were 2 local dairymen. Milk bottles were a necessity then, with sanitary laws to keep milk clean. There was Ernie Hellwig's "Elder Row Dairy" on E. Main at the edge of town, later managed by son Gerald. In April of 1932 (G. H. 4/26/32.) Hellwig Dairy installed a milk pasteurizing machine. But assured patrons that unpasteurized milk was available if preferred.

The other milkman was Van Jackson on Poygan Avenue, the "Hickory Knoll Guernsey Milk Dairy". Later son Ray was manager. These two dairies both delivered not only milk but other dairy products as well. Both went out of business in the late 1960s.

Van Jackson served on the County Board for several years. He was also an Alderman from the north side on the City Council of *Omro.*



H.C. SCOTT

A prominent lumberman of Omro was Henry Courtney Scott. Omro citizens are still enjoying with pleasure and pride the benefit derived from his bequest to the village.

*Hist. sup. p. 94*

"H.C. Scott was born in N.Y. State in 1843. He came to Vinland township with his father in 1849. When 19 years old he enlisted in the service of his country. He participated in all engagements in which his company fought. This included Terryville and Chickamauga. He was captured by the rebels and for 13 months endured the horrors of southern prisons, among them Libby and Andersonville.

"Finally Scott escaped by obtaining a Confederate uniform. He returned here, (Omro apparently) in 1865, and married Mary Rogers in 1866. He then entered the lumber business. His second marriage was in 1892 to Miss Carrie Larzelere."

*E. Hist. p. 9  
H. 11/20/39*

"The first mill that Scott built was in 1866; it was near where the Geo. Daggett & Son Warehouse now stands. This mill burned down and was never built up again.

*W.B. 11/30/39*

"Scott then became the owner of a saw mill and a lumber yard. This was about 1867 and was located near the F. Butkiewicz & Sons shop. After it burned he located near the present Lumber yard." It was here that Warren Brooks recalls the yard. "It had a track about 8 feet high on which workmen moved the lumber to stack into piles 16 to 20 feet high. This mill worked about 6 weeks every winter for a number of years." (More about the mill later.)

*E. H. 11/30/39  
Hist. p. 9*

The rafts of logs towed by tug boats came down the Wolf to Bay Boom and on u the Fox to Omro. No doubt other mills in Omro used the same methods of obtaining logs and stacking their lumber supply.

*mjs.*

Scott built a beautiful 3 story home of the finest lumber on the hilltop at the corner of E. Leach and N. Hawthorn where Joe Williams's log cabin and buildings now stand. Scott also owned the woods west of the lot which is now a nature and environmental study area in connection with the new Omro High School.

*It burned down in the 1950s*

In Mr. Scott's old age he would order bushels of hickory nuts to feed the squirrels in his woods west of the house. Evidently there were but few nut trees in the grove and he enjoyed the squirrels. He died May 26, 1912.

*CS. Smith*

His bequest to the city mentioned above was the property in connection with the saw mill location, and later was made into the H.C. Scott Park; the beautiful and well known Park for which Omro is noted.

## WAR 1861

The same year that train service came to Omro, 1861, so did news of war. Company A of the 48th Wis. Regiment in the Civil War was composed of all Omro men. In addition, "Company C. of the 14th Infantry was recruited in Omro and mustered into the U.S. service. Also Company F of the 18th Regiment was from Omro, besides the 21st Company. All gave their contributions of valor and life. It was during the winter of 1863 that the draft took many Omro residents.

"In the beginning of the next year there was a town meeting to discuss a 'soldiers' bounty'. Unmarried men received a total of \$100 when he registered, and married men received \$10 a month. Dishonesty prevailed as some men re-enlisted in order to get the extra money.

"The 14th Regiment was under fire and also Company A, nearly all from Omro, from the time they reached the front till they were mustered out." David Hinman was the first soldier killed in the Civil War from Omro.

To honor the men who fought to preserve the Union, Memorial Day was observed by those who returned. This annual event began, no doubt, after the local Civil War Veterans organized and built the G.A.R. Hall about 1880, now owned by the American Legion Post. Members of the J.F. Sawyer Post were prominent participants of all Memorial Day exercises.

As W. Brooks has noted, "It was marvelous to see the soldiers of the Grand Army of the Republic march across the bridge to some church service, then out to the cemetery to give honor to their soldier dead."

Memorial Day "exercises" were held in the old Opera House-Congregational church. There was always a main speaker and a program besides. One of the early main speakers was Jim Sharpe. "He always started his speeches with the joke about his proposal to his wife. He asked her 'Wilt thou?' and 'She wilted'! He often served as emcee for the programs, also."

Other speakers were J.N. Tittlemore, one time State Marshall and a resident of Poygan; Rev. Daniel Woodward; Emmett R. Hicks, an Oshkosh Attorney; Rev. Blakemore; H.B. Patch, then County Superintendent of Schools; Att. Frank B. Keefe, Congressman, and there were other speakers, too. Later years, in 1930 John B. Hurlbut; 1934 Rev. Harold Schlink; Dr. Emma G. Jaeck in 1937. *Further W.J. Luby in V.M.W. 5/27/14.*

Newspaper accounts of the Memorial Day programs are interesting, such as: 1910 "Memorial day was observed in the village in an appropriate manner. Business places were closed and the day was not characterized by ball games or other sports.

"The morning was taken with decorating the old soldiers' graves. In the afternoon the parade started from the G.A.R. hall, headed by the local band. About thirty old soldiers, the W.R.C. and the Logan Circle, and a bevy of school children dressed in flag costumes formed the parade which marched to the Opera house. The Opera house was packed to its utmost.

"The program was as follows: Music by the band. The meeting was then called to order by Chairman J.H. Sharpe, followed by a prayer by the Rev. J.C. MacFarlane, a patriotic song was next by the audience to the tune of America. Reading by Mrs. J.H. Sharpe; a one act play entitled 'On the Tennessee', the cast, J.H. Sharp, Miss Zella Thomas, and Willie Edick. Song by Misses Leona Hertzberg, Bessie Shelp and Emma Hiddle. Miss Gertrude Danforth, vocal solo. Miss Marjorie Booth 'I'm Only a Soldier Boy'. Mertie Davis 'Grand Army Boys'. James King, 'The Perfect Tribute'.

"Song by the M.E. Choir, 'Red, White and Blue', the audience singing on the chorus. Address, Rev. Daniel Woodward. The meeting was closed with 'America'. The entertainment was well given and well enjoyed by an appreciated audience."

*bk IV p. 9*  
Memorial services of May 31, 1911 show the ecumenical spirit observed. "A union Memorial service was held in the Baptist church at 11 o'clock last Sunday morning in conformity to a custom that has been observed for more than a quarter of a century by the Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal and Baptist churches of Omro. All available space of the church was occupied, fully 500 persons present. There were present 21 old soldiers of the Civil War, also 22 members of the W.R. C. and a number of members of the Logan Circle."

*bk IV p. 9*  
This 1911 "Memorial Day was appropriately recognized in the village. The business places were closed and the day was given over to commemorating the nation's dead. The graves in the various cemeteries were decorated in the vicinity in the morning. A dinner was served in the G.A.R. Hall. *Op # 4*

"At 1:30 o'clock in the afternoon the school children under the direction of Prof. M.W. Vittum and the patriotic organizations met at the G.A.R. Hall and formed a line which was conducted by Dr. I.H. Sheerar and the Omro Band, and marched to the Congregational Church where a program was rendered, the following persons taking part; Supt. H.B. Patch, Attorney F.B. Keefe, Rev. Daniel Woodward, Dr. I.H. Sheerar, A.A. Wiles, J.S. Shelp, Misses Grace Carter, Edna Davidson, and Esther Jones, Walter Davis, and Herbert Bradley. S.Z. Carver was master of ceremonies. County Superintendent of Schools delivered the address of the day, Henry B. Patch."

*bk IV p. 26*  
*5/23/13*  
Memorial Day exercises in Omro in 1913--"Dr. Sheerar's quartet sang. F.B. Keefe read Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Rev. F.P. Blakemore gave the oration." *In Congregational Church.*

*mg. 8.*  
Going back several years earlier, from a family diary was this entry of October 7, 1904, "A Soldier's Monument was unveiled." Explanation by Sherm Barnard, it was "a shaft at the Omro Cemetery placed there by the G.A.R. Sawyer Post, W.R.C. and Logan Circle on lots reserved for War Veterans who would otherwise be buried in the 'Potter's Field'."

*Marie B.*  
It is interesting to note that Mrs. Marie Bullis Barnard's father, Truman Bullis, was the youngest drummer boy that served during the Civil War.

"One returning veteran became dissatisfied with Omro. Joel Andrews of the first generation born here, was but 7 years old when his father Lucas died. When 20 years of age Joel enlisted in the

Civil War where he served for two years. He then returned to Omro where he bought a farm south of the Cemetery Corners and built a house. Plagued by ill health, he moved to Iowa with his family where he took up a claim of 160 acres and preempted 80 more acres.

"He reached his new farm in Iowa in time to break up sod for next years crops. That following summer there were prospects of a good harvest but on July 12, a great scourge of grasshoppers descended until within 3 hours no living green was left anywhere. The day seemed like night, the hens even went to roost, within these few hours his month's labor was for naught.

"After a few years he became discouraged and returned to Omro where he spent the rest of his life."

In 1914, "The Memorial Day observance was to be as usual. A detachment from the G.A.R. will place flags and flowers on the graves of former comrades. A program has been planned to be held in the Congregational church in the P.M. Patriotic societies and other organizations will attend. The meeting will be opened with prayer by Rev. F.P. Blakemore, followed by a song by Dr. Sheerar's quintet; a patriotic recitation by Miss Marion Bradley; an anthem by the choir; Lincoln's Gettysburg address, Charles Marsh; another song by the quintet; the oration by Rev. W.J. Luby and closing with 'America' by the audience." So read an item from the May 27, 1914 issue of the Daily Northwestern.

Q. N. 5/19/32) The 1932 Memorial Day services were high-lighted by a fife and drum corps, composed of Austin Doughty of Winneconne, a Civil War Veteran, Geo. Hawksworth and Steve Hanson of Larson, Wm. Staeger and Rex Cady of Omro for the parade from the G.A.R. Hall to Scott Park.

(1932)  
Only 5 Civil War veterans still lived in Omro. There were 278 graves of Civil War veterans to be decorated and 11 cemeteries were visited that year by the orders placing flowers on the graves.

## MILLS, FACTORIES, AND SHOPS

Now to the reviewing of the industrial progress as witnessed in Omro. Many mills and factories were erected during the boom years of the 1850s, 60s, and 70s. There was considerable buying and selling. Some men were promoters and frequently sold an establishment soon after the building and initial operation. Owners frequently changed partners in business. Historians do not always agree on dates of a business nor the exact locations.

The following is a partial directory of the businesses and the probable year in which they were in operation or were erected:

*W.H. 11/23/39  
E. Hunt p. 7  
D.H. 6/23/12*  
1847-Nelson Beckwith in Beckwithtown, built and operated the first lumber mill. Norman Gerard writes that "Beckwith built a small steam saw mill in Beckwithtown, but this mill did not prove a financial success, and later moved the machinery near the Wisconsin river."

*W.H. 11/23/39  
E. Hunt p. 8*  
1847-Elisha Dean built a lumber plant on the present woolen mill site.

1851-Hiram Johnson, "Johnson's" saw and planing mill was located on the north side of the river east of the cooper's factory.

1851-Hiram Johnson & Roy Bump owned another saw mill on the north side, on what is now E. River Drive. This mill was located where the first sewage plant stands. In 1866 the mill burned down, but was rebuilt immediately.

*W.H. 1960  
S. W. 200  
p. 14*  
1855-Norman Gerard bought the Johnson mill "in company with Martin Eley, a wealthy farmer near Ripon. He was soon sick of his deal and sold to Dr. Gibbs, who had no capital and no knowledge of the business." This indicates that some people were "plungers" in those early days, too. Later Gerard sold his interest to Nathan Johnson.

*W.H. 2/5/31  
W. Hunt p. 19-22  
W.H. 2/11/31*  
1856-Wilson's and Johnson's saw mills were run both day and night. When they closed down in the fall there was but little lumber left in their yards. There was so much building taking place in the area around that material sold rapidly.

1856-57-Andrew Wilson. The mill was located where the G.A.R. Hall stands, now American Legion hall.

*W.H. 1960  
S. W. 200  
p. 14*  
1856-McLaren grist mill. This operation brought considerable trade to the town. Ground corn and wheat were a necessity for the settlers, used extensively in making breads, puddings, and in other baking. Thus a mill near by was a blessing. These mills were also referred to as roller mills. Later Mr. McLaren moved to Waukau.

*W.H. 5/10/31  
W. Hunt p. 91*  
1856-Challoner & Thompson. They operated a saw mill built on the present I.O.O.F. hall site.

*W.H. 11/23/39  
E. Hunt p. 7  
W.H. 1960  
S. W. 200  
p. 14*  
1859 or 60-E.A. Buck & Co. were boat builders. Their factory was perhaps the one located near the present home of Ernie Hellwig.

1860-Lewis & Thompson. Their shingle mill ran day and night. No. 1 shingles sold at \$5.00 a thousand. *W. Hunt p. 22  
W.H. 2/19/31*

*W.H. 11/23/39  
E. Hunt p. 8  
W.H. 9/30/37*  
1860-Utter & Goodenough operated a spoke and hub factory for several years near the Omro Lumber Co. site. These hubs were used for wagon and carriage wheels.

*W.H. 11/23/39  
E. Hunt p. 8  
W.H. 2/5/31*  
1863-Geo. Challoner built a shingle mill later occupied by Thompson & Hayward. He put in a shingle machine of his own invention, and did a good business.

*W.H. 2/5/31  
E. Hunt p. 9  
W.H. 11/23/39  
W. Hunt p. 7*  
1863-Calvin C. (Cab) Morton operated a wood-working factory south of the depot. An 1894 ad reads, "Manufacturer and Dealer in Sash Doors, Blinds, Moldings and Berry Boxes. Tanks and Cisterns made to order." Apparently in business a long time, 20 or 30 years.

*N. H. Gerard  
P. 3  
O.H. 6/25/10*

1863-Challoner & Thompson saw mill was sold to Norman Gerard.

1864-Mr. Drake operated a lumber mill. *W. Hunt p. 19*

1864-Charlesworth Bros. ran a planing mill. Thomas Charlesworth & *W. Hunt p. 19  
G.H. 2/5/31*

Ellis Thompson were interested in a mill with others, also L.B.

- Lewis. It appears that men pooled their resources, built mills or factories, or operated them, or sold to operators.

*W. Hunt p. 4  
H. 2/5/31*

1865-Geo. Challoner owned and operated a coffin factory located north of the depot. This was in addition to his shingle mill. *C.B.R. p. 1  
G.H. 6/2/39*

1865-Mr. Woodward ran a small planing mill on the Lansing livery site, west of the Hotel location.

*W. Hunt p. 19  
H. 2/5/31*

1865 or so-Almond Gray owned and operated a Cooper factory on the north side, east of Pelton's store. He employed a number of people. He did first class work and there was a ready market for his products.

*W. Hunt p. 43  
H. 2/5/31*

1866-Sheldon & Allen managed a Broom Handle Factory. It was in operation for only a short time. This building was located near the Lansing barn site.

*W. Hunt p. 23  
H. 2/19/31*

1866-H.C. (Henry Courtney) Scott. His lumber and shingle mill was built near the present Geo. Daggett & Son Warehouse as noted before. It ran for awhile but burned down and was not rebuilt. He chose a different site, near the present Lumber yard. Mr. Sam Carver was Mr. Scott's Secretary.

*E. Hunt p. 9  
H. 2/11/39  
W. Hunt p. 23  
H. 2/19/31*

1866-Geo. Challoner according to Mr. Wright was a person who planned ahead for expansion of his many business interests. He first put up a building for a machine shop on the site of the shingle mill as far back as 1855 but did not use it as intended. However, in the spring of 1866 he started up work in a building opposite Putnam's Block. But during the summer put up a large shop on the site of the present foundry and machine shop situated on the south bank of the Fox on Water Street.

*W. Hunt p. 22  
G.H. 2/12/31*

"The main buildings of brick, 36 by 270 feet, took the place of a wooden building which was destroyed by fire a few years before. The machine shop was supplied with all the modern iron working machinery necessary for doing the work, and was very complete. Connected with the shop, was the foundry. Nearly all the castings used were made here, under the personal supervision of Mr. Challoner. The wood-working shop was a building 40 by 50, separate from the main building, but the power to run it was taken from the large shop. The pattern shop was 30 by 40. Several other buildings for storage, etc., stood on different parts of the ground.

"The principal part of the work done here was the manufacture of Challoner's Patent Shingle and Mill Machinery. These machines were the invention of the proprietor of the works, and were in use in nearly every lumber manufacturing state in the Union. Wherever introduced, they proved their superiority, and other machines gave place to them. A year or so prior to 1867, several large orders were received from California, all of which Mr. Challoner filled promptly. Besides these specialties, a line of general work was done, steam engines and steam pumps comprising no inconsiderable portion of the business.

"This was a busy place, and it was an interesting sight to see the heavy machines being loaded to the deck of the steamer 'Fashion' to be taken to Oshkosh, and from there re-shipped to all parts of the country. When the last machine was loaded, a short blast of the whistle was heard, the lines were cast off, and the steamer moved gracefully out into the stream.

*H. 2/12/31  
W. Hunt p. 41*

"Between thirty and forty hands were employed varying somewhat with the season. In 1867 the full force of hands was not

at work, the general depression all over the country had affected Mr. Challoner's business somewhat; but as spring approached the demand for machinery necessitated the employment of all hands that could be worked to advantage.

"The opening of the spring of 1866 witnessed a general increase of business in Omro. The soldiers had nearly all returned to peaceful pursuits, the feeling of joy that the Rebellion had at last been crushed, seemed to encourage everybody. Improvements were commenced, new enterprises talked of and started, and the busy hum of industry was heard from one end of the village to the other. All who wanted work found plenty of it, and at good wages and prompt pay; and workmen from other places flocked here for work, the reputation of Omro as a live, growing town, having gone abroad." Later Challoner Works moved the business to Oshkosh.

1866-Elder Theodore Pillsbury & Nelson Beckwith ran a mill on the Woolen mill site. On some abstracts of today's Omro property owners is borne the name of Elder Pillsbury and also that of Chas. Carron. They being the original purchasers of the properties.

1867-Hiram Webster. His shingle mill was near the railroad depot with a capacity of 50,000 feet of shingles. Lath and pickets were also cut. Hours for starting work and for closing were announced by whistle blows, 6 A.M. and 6 P.M. daily. Mill and yard men worked 11 hours per day. Many of them were paid \$1.50 per day. My grandfather worked for Webster's in the early 1870s. Webster was considered a leading industrialist in the village.

1867-Drew & Hicks operated a carriage shop, a part of the Thompson & Hayward works.

1868-Morton, Arnold & Morton operated a wood-working mill in the Charlesworth Bros. building. It consisted of a Planing mill and Sash and Door factory. The location was on the south bank of the river, on Water street, and was a very complete establishment for one of its size. They also made blinds, mouldings, flooring, siding, and dressed lumber of all kinds were turned out at these works. There was also a custom trade, which in ordinary times amounted to a large sum yearly. A steam drying house of large capacity was connected with the mill, and there were sheds for seasoned lumber. (1850)

1869-Someone recalled that there was a shingle mill on the bank of the river back of where the I.O.O.F. hall now stands which burned before 1882. (Challoner & Thompson p. 114.)

1869-Thompson & Hayward Carriage Works were east of where Judd's Arco Service Station stands. As time passed the firm bought and built on other sites for expansion of their business. They purchased Hollister's store (where Charlie's Tavern is located). They also had 2 shops east of the Hotel Omro from the sidewalk to the river. In addition, 3 floors of the woolen mill, then a new building, was occupied by the company. One of their locations was the Frank building at the south end of the bridge and was used exclusively as a paint shop for the vehicles.

Thompson & Hayward were among the most extensive carriage manufacturers in the West. They turned out nearly everything in the way of wheeled work, but their specialty was the finer grades of carriages. Their work met with a ready sale, and they had probably disposed of more open and top buggies, phaetons and light wagons during the season than any other

E. Hunt p. 9  
O.H. 11/23/39.

H. 11/20/39  
E. Hunt p. 9  
W. Hunt p. 43  
O.H. 7/30/31

H. 11/20/39  
W. Hunt p. 41  
O.H. 4/30/31  
W. Hunt p. 42  
O.H. 4/30/31

O.H. 4/30/31  
W. Hunt p. 42  
E. Hunt p. 7  
O.H. 1/23/39

W. Hunt  
O.H. 5/12/31

E.B

O.H. 2/27/31

O.H. 2/16/39

makers in the State. The quality of their work was first-class. In cutter making they took the lead, turning out more than any other manufacturer in Wisconsin. They built all the latest styles, and their trade extended into Iowa and Minnesota. Between forty and fifty hands were kept constantly employed in and about their factories.

1869-David Blish operated a planing mill on the north side, either on the site of the G.A.R. Hall or the one where later Mrs. (O.H.-1/14/32.) Oatman's house stood. Blish came to Omro the same year.

? -Dean & Taylor operated a saw mill in the early days. (Omro Journal 1953.)

(Albert B. Hall)  
 1880-A.B. Hall operated a Carriage Factory on E. Main in the Standard Oil station area on the south side of the street. Edgar Hall, his son, was a teacher in the Omro school, one of his pupils was the Early Settler who wrote a history of early Omro.

In the Omro of the 1880s there were no automobiles, motor boats, electric lights, telephones or movies, and the flying machine was unheard of. There were many strange and interesting things that happened, however, such as on the day young "Hi" Kimball rode all the way from Oshkosh on a queer contraption called a "bicycle." The front wheel was about six feet in diameter and had a little wheel trailing along behind. The news spread, and soon nearly all the boys of the town were gathered in front of F.A. Cole's Dry Goods Store while "Hi" explained the working of the wonderful machine!

1880-Fred G. Root built and operated a Coffin Factory in a building at the south end of the bridge. (O.H.-4/30/54.)

1886-Drew & Hicks apparently terminated with the Thompson & Hayward establishment and went into the carriage business by themselves.

(W.B. number)  
 The early saw, planing and lumber mills have long been torn down, but occasionally tell-tale signs appear. In 1916 workmen while digging found sawdust at the north end, west side, of the old bridge where one of the mills had been located. Also when the Odd Fellows built the bakery addition to the I.O.O.F. Hall, sawdust was found there while digging for the foundation, on the south side of the river this time.

Then again, according to Sumner Blake, while helping to build the first disposal plant on the river bank south of E. River Drive, there were found remains of planks from an old saw mill that years before had been located on that spot.

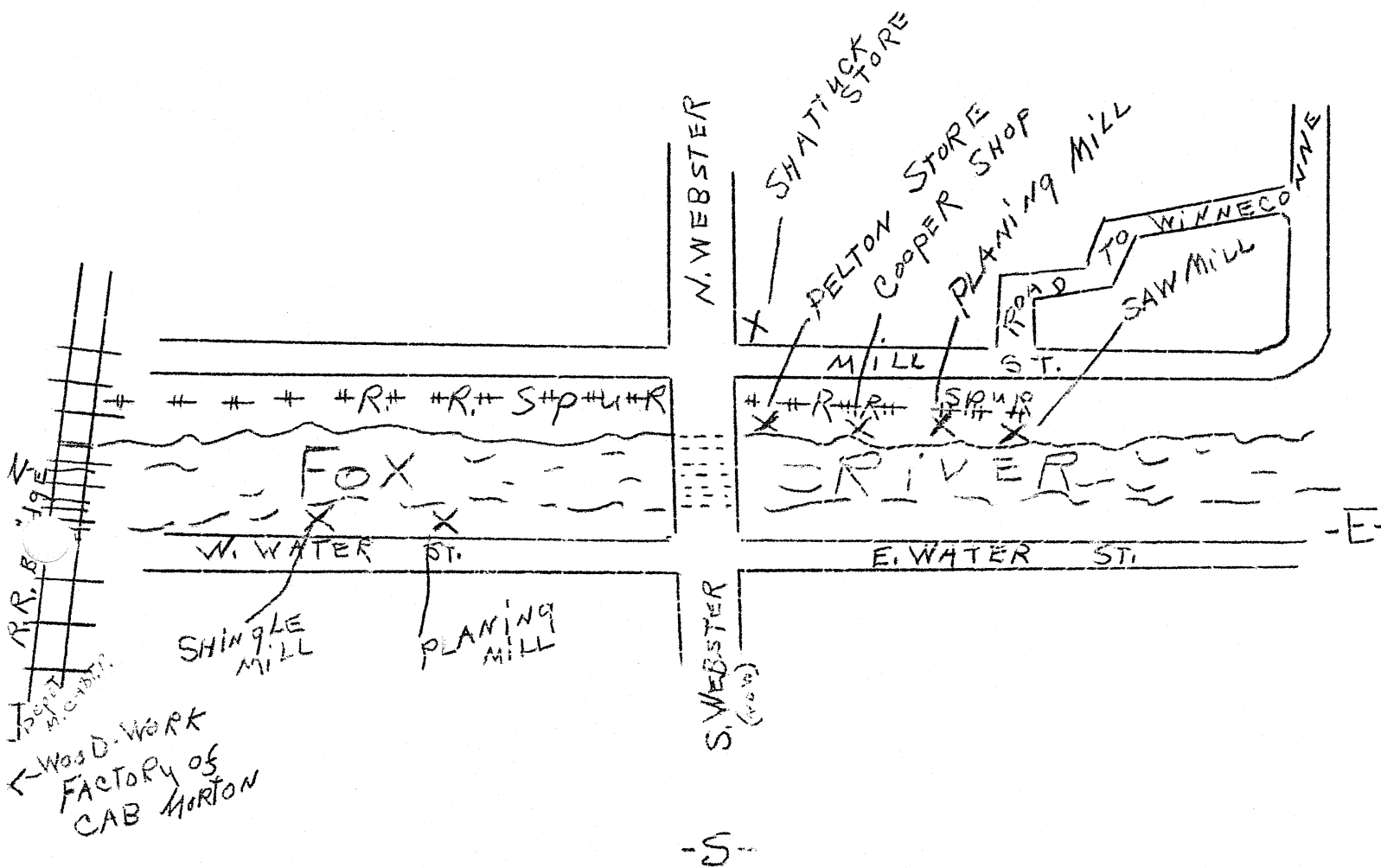
187\_-Sheldon & Co. produced a product, a "Chinese Foot Powder," the container carrying the persuasion, "It makes the feet glow." (In Prairie, Pine & People by Dr. Edw. Noyes pg. 255).

(W. Edw. Noyes)  
 Chap XXI  
 p. 255  
 Prairie, Pine & People



An 1880s Map of North Side Omro  
as recalled by C.I. Smith

-N-



## WOOD WORKING TOOLS

*E. Hart.*

The lumbering and wood industry used tools that to us in this plastic and synthetic day and age are alien to our current speech. For example, a "frow" is used in coopering (barrel making): It was a cleaving tool for riving staves, shingles, or clapboards from the balk, billet, or juggle. It has a sharp edge, wedge-shaped blade, and a handle set in the plane of the blade but at right angles to its length. It is driven by a mallet.

Further explanation is needed for a

"balk", a beam, joist or rafter,

"billet", a small log or faggot of wood for firing.

"Firkin", a wooden container, round in shape as a pail, for supplies such as sugar, tallow, butter, etc., usually it held one-quarter of a bushel. A wooden cover fitted over the top. Some had metal or wooden bails, some not.

Wood was the fuel used for steam-driven mill, railroad engines, the heating of homes, schools, stores, churches, and places of business. Farmers in clearing their land were glad to be rid of the surplus wood other than burning it up in the fields to get it off their hands. There was a market for cord wood.

So it was that many of the earlier mills, factories and shops, manufactured products in connection with the lumbering industry. However, other products were manufactured here in order to supply the needs of the growing population. The following list continues with more of Omro's business establishments.

(more on pg. 313)

*Show to the* VARIOUS OTHER MILLS

1852-A tannery was located on the north side, now 114 E. River Drive. Its output of leather was used for shoes, boots, harnesses, trunk handles, utility bags, knapsacks, bucket straps, on hand husking-pegs, and for many other utilities. One recalls that shoe repairmen and blacksmiths wore leather aprons. The front of the apron was slashed up several inches; thongs to tie around the legs kept the apron close to the body while bending over, for example, while shoeing a horse.

About 1856-A brick yard was located south of the Henry Winslow home (next house south of the Baptist church). The clay found there was ideal for brick making. The "brick pond" as it was called was located back of 707 Jefferson Ave. This brick pond area was used as a skating rink in the early days. It was very deep, quite dangerous, and was fed by a fountain. In plowing that field several years ago Warren Brooks found many brick throughout the area.

Mr. Geo. Stokes was brick maker at one time, perhaps the only one. No doubt the brick from this yard was used to build the Red Brick schoolhouse. The Hotel Omro and some residences were built of brick from the Omro yard.

1870s or 80s-All local industries were not conducted on a large scale. Mr. Thompson's shop was for sharpening tools. A notice in an 1894 newspaper stated--"Notice--I am in my shop again to sharpen saws, shears, skates, knives and all small edged tools. C.G. Thompson." Mr. Thompson came to Omro in 1863. He died December of 1911, at the age of 81 years.

1876-Hamilton & Chase Feed and Flour Mill on the north side was in business.

1886-Geo. H. Hatch Flour Mill. He advertised his wares in a local paper as--"Best set of rollers in state and guarantee satisfaction. Custom work a Specialty. Mill Feed Always on hand. Bring grain to grind I will return best flour." *also E.C. Woodworth, flour mill #*

1887-Carrie Geharty purchased a flour mill. She hired J.S. Taylor of Oshkosh to operate it. *J.E. Fuller*

1897-Towers bought the Pillsbury mill and turned it into a slaughter house. *He donated \$100 to Scott Park Board in 6/29/16. Oak. N. Western*

1897-Birch & Barnett or Beck & Barnett, or perhaps a change of partners, advertised their wares that year.

About this time-George McKenzie, operated a machine shop east of the old Woolen Mill where the Butkiewicz Shop is now located.

1894-Omro Granite & Marble Monuments, Nick Becker, Prop.-

"Manufacturer and dealer in All Kinds of Granite & Marble Monuments, Headstones, Marble Iron Vases & Iron Fencing. I also sell the White Bronze Monuments & Headstones. Prices & Designs on application." So read an advertisement of that year. There is no record of when they came or how long they were in business here. Their business was located west of *(Arden Sheldon)* the Ford Garage site at first. Later they moved to Poygan Avenue near the railroad tracks on the north side of the road.

Late 1890s-A business that was in operation for many years was The Omro Butter & Cheese Company. It was organized in the late 1890s and was operated by farmers who owned shares in the company. This factory gave the farmers an opportunity to easily market all of their milk the year around. Otherwise they had to haul milk to a cheese factory for little profit or churn their own butter and find a market for it. Grocery stores or village families were the only butter and milk outlet available. If the farmers could not sell all of it, there

*W.B. ...*

*E. Hatch ...*

*W.H. 1/15/31 ...*

*W.H. 5/7/31 ...*

*W.H. 1/1/39 ...*

*W.H. 1/1/39 ...*

*W.H. 1/1/39 ...*

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*W.H. 1/1/39 ...*

*Eugene Phillips*

Eugene Phillips, Sr. was the first patron to deliver his milk to the  
.new factory.

was no means of storing the product to prevent spoilage.

With regular delivery of milk to the factory it gave these rural residents an opportunity to stop at the Post Office and pick up their mail more often. At that time there was no rural delivery, not until several years after the butter factory was in operation. *Engene Phillips was the first patron to deliver his milk to the new factory.*

*W.C.* The first officers of the organization were Joseph Treleven, President, and Richard Treleven, Secretary. The Butter & Cheese Company continued in business until 1944, over 50 years.

*W.C.* When the company was first organized the farmers brought their whole milk in by horse and wagon or buck-board, and waited while it was run through a cream separator. Then each would receive their skim milk from the other side of the factory. A metal weight indicated the pounds of milk to which each patron was entitled. The skim milk taken home was added to pig "swill" and thus it was not wasted. Not even the thick curd-like formation left as residue in the bottom of the cream separator was entirely wasted--strips of the leathery stuff made excellent catfish bait! Some of the employees kept lines out on the river bank almost daily.

Later years farmers had their own individual cream separators and thus sold only the cream which the factory churned into butter. Then milk haulers drove from farm to farm to collect the cream.

Butter makers through the years were *10940. (S.H. - 5/4/50.)* John Berray, Chas. Wilson for 20 years, Chas. Ream, Ralph Peterson, and Irv Hanson. *(Irv died March 1976 age 84.)* They were all excellent butter makers, having won annual awards at dairy shows about the state and at National Dairy Exhibitions as well.

A new creamery building was erected at the same location, at the west end of W. Main about 1916. Butter was the only product marketed until later years when a drier was installed to powder skim milk. Then farmers could obtain whey from the butter after it was churned, to feed hogs. The haulers would deliver the whey to the farmers who desired it.

Later on the whey was separated and what butterfat escaped from churning was made into "whey butter". So, little by little by-products were made saleable on the dairy market.

*W.H.* In the 1900s Presidents of the Butter & Cheese Co. board of Directors were Hugh Roberts, followed by C.I. Smith who was elected to the Board of Directors in 1923. Secretary after Harry Brooks, Sr. was Cliff Grota. Then Bernice Jenkins in 1933. In 1939 she resig. to attend the U. of Minnesota. *(S.H. - 7/13/39.)* The next to take over as Secretary was Olive Young. She later *(S.H. - 4/6/33.)* resigned to join the W.A.C. branch of Army service during WW II. Erna Mitchell took over next and was Secretary until the factory was sold to the Kraft Company.

*S.H. - 1/29/31*  
An example of the factory output is the report at the January 1930 annual meeting of the stock holders. It noted that the company did almost a half-million dollar business (\$500,000.) in 1930, through the sale of butter, powdered skim milk and butter milk. They manufactured over 1,000,000 pounds of butter, 1,400,000 pounds of powdered skim and butter milk. Their 450 patrons were paid almost \$400,000.00 for milk and cream purchased. The officers that year were:

President, C.I. Smith  
1st Vice President - H.G. Roberts  
2nd Vice President - Frank Fry  
3rd Vice President - W.S. Stewart  
Secretary and Manager - C.A. Grota  
Treasurer - E.D. Pingry.

*Family Line*  
 In 1933 an occurrence of tense apprehension gripped the rural population. At that time "rural" invariably meant dairymen.

On Saturday, May 13, 1933, a state-wide milk strike lead by Walter M. Singler of Shiocton took effect at one minute after midnight. No milk products were to be marketed. Farmers churned butter from the cream and made cottage cheese from the skim milk, they couldn't even give it all away. Pigs lived high on the surplus milk the farmers could not use for themselves, sell or bestow. In some parts of the state violence occurred.

The embargo on milk was lifted May 17th for Winnebago County. On May 19th the ban was lifted for the state. Then all milk products could be sold and marketed without the possibility of milk trucks being damaged or the drivers being beaten up or shot at.

*J.H. - 9/23/43.  
(G.H. - 11/16/44.)*  
 The factory was finally sold on January 1, 1944 to Kraft Company with Harold Joss as Manager. It was sold with no loss to the Butter & Cheese Company stock holders. Government regulations were becoming so stringent that by continuing as a cooperative it would prove unprofitable and a loss to the stock holders. However, for years the Butter & Cheese was the only industry in the village of Omro, with the possible exception of the Lumber Company. There were 50 or 60 employees in the Butter factory.

There were several haulers, first for cream and later for whole milk. Of the first cream haulers, Frank Appley was one. He used a team of horses and wagon, bob-sled in the winter. To endure the cold a cab was built in front with a small stove in it for warmth and comfort. Later, some of the haulers were Dave Morgan, and Joe Treleven, Chas. Lowry for Joe.

The Kraft Company withdrew its processing unit from Omro in 1962 and sold the building to the city of Omro. It was purchased by the city because of the artesian well which Omro may need for future water supply. It is now leased to and occupied by the Omro Gear & Machine Inc.

Near the turn of the century, during the first years of the Butter factory operation, newspaper advertisements of products were far different from those of the 1970s. As examples, the following items were advertised in an 1894 Omro Herald:

Hood's Sarsaparilla Cures "for that tired feeling". Hood's Pills are effecient and gentle 25¢.

Royal Baking Powder. Absolutely Pure.

The Rising Sun Stove Polish. "For Durability, Economy and for General Blacking is Unequaled. Has an Annual Sale of 3,000 tons. We also manufacture the Sun Paste Stove Polish for an after dinner shine, or to touch up spots with a cloth. Makes no dust, in 5 & 10 cent tin boxes. The only Perfect Paste. Morse, Prop's. Canton, Mass."

Dr. Kilmer's Swamp Root - "Kidney, Liver & Bladder cure. Dissolves gravel, For Bright's Disease, Liver Complaint, Catarrh of the Bladder. At Druggists 50¢ and \$1.00 size."

Kennedy's Medical Discovery - Has discovered in one of our common weeds a remedy that cures every kind of Humor, from the worst Scrofula down to a common Pimple. Sold by All Druggists.

World's Fairs Highest Award! "Superior Nutrition--the Life."  
 IMPERIAL GRANUM - The GREAT Medial FOOD. The SALVATOR for

Invalids and The Aged. Growth and Protection of Infants and Children. Sold by Druggists.

Mason & Hamlin Organ, has won Highest Honors at all important World's Fairs, since that of Paris 1867 including Chicago, 1893 and is absolutely Unrivaled. Mason & Hamlin Organ & Piano Co. Boston, N.Y., Chicago, Kansas City.

St. Jacobs Oil for Sprains & Neuralgia. Positive Cure.

The Youth's Companion, Boston, Mass. \$1.75 a Year. Comes Every Week. For all the Family. Illustrated. Popular Articles for 1895--Queen Victoria as a Mother; What Can be Done for Consumptives; Charles Dickens as His Children Knew Him; The Story of My First Voyage. (a Sea Story.); A Visit to Korean Cloisters; How Uncle Sam Collects the Tariff.

#### OTHER INDUSTRIES

Continuing with Omro industry--

*M. V. 1.2*  
*5/2/14* → The Robert Chatterton Cigar Factory of the early 1900s was east of Mahar Meat Market on E. Water St. It burned down in May 8, 1914. *Wm. Russel cigar shop earlier - O.H. 11/30/39*

*W. Brinker* ← 1904--Albert H. Austria started a small feed-grinding establishment in the south half of a building where the new City Hall now stands. About 1903 the feed mill on E. Main across from the old City Hall and owned by Otto H. Prehn burned down. The fire did much damage to the City Hall. Mr. Austria purchased the *1908* East side schoolhouse and moved it onto the foundation of Prehn's former feed mill, built on an addition to the east, and Al Austria went into the business of grinding feed and flour. He was in business over 40 years in Omro. Mr. Austria was born in Oakfield in 1875. He died in August of 1945.

After Mr. Austria became ill, Carl Frederickson carried on until it was sold to Geo. Daggett & Son in 1943. *(S.H. 8/17/77. dit.)*

*(E. B. 1904)* 1911--A newspaper item mentioned the A.J. (Andrew) Goggins Bottling Works. No doubt it was in connection with his saloon.

1920s--Bruce Carter and Geo. Turner operated a machine shop where the Friendly Tavern is located. They were in business for several years until 1930.

*Box II p. 160*  
*N.W. - 2/22/75.* 1915--F. Butkiewicz--A metal-working shop of long standing is that of F. Butkiewicz & Sons Co. at 331 E. Main. This establishment has the distinction of being in the manufacturing business the longest number of years of any in Omro, under the same name, and under the management of members of the same family. Sons of the founder, Stanley, George and Robert are presently carrying on the business.

On this same site was the former Geo. McKenzie Machine shop. Felix Butkiewicz started in business in 1915 after purchasing the building from McKenzie. An ad in a 1922 newspaper read-- "F. Butkiewicz Garage--Battery charging and Automobile Repairs." However, metal machine work was the main occupation.

An addition to the shop was built in 1955 which doubled the shop's capacity. Another addition in 1965 almost doubled it again.

The shop, a custom production machine work shop, accomodates mostly within a 50 mile radius, altho reaching farther afield. A third generation of the Butkiewicz family works at the shop besides other employees, in 1975 they numbered 13.

ms

The fall of 1979 the Butkiewicz Company moved in the eastern Industrial area on Harrison St. Expansion for their growing business was needed.

At one time a customer complained to Felix Butkiewicz about the price charged to mend an aluminum kettle. This was when light weight aluminum utensils were new on the market. The charge was \$1.00. Mr. Butkiewicz answered, "Five cents for material and ninety-five cents for knowing how to use it."



Prices found in the Butkiewicz records make interesting comparison with today's prices. These are some costs and wages-- In 1916, 5 gallons of gas was \$1.10; in 1917, 5 gallons of gas was \$1.20; in 1918, the same was \$1.35.

machine work was 60¢ per hour for auto repairing. A 6 hour repair job on a car was \$3.60. Now machine work is about \$5 per hour. And gasoline? 54¢ to 59¢ per gallon of Regular in 1975.

*H-11/17/32* During 1932 Felix Butkiewicz sold 4 or 5 small tractors which he had built. They were by-products of Model T chassis'. They embodied a regular Chevrolet Transmission with other safety special features. Mr. Butkiewicz was an inventor. As an example, a local paper item read: "F. Butkiewicz & Sons was granted a patent in *(O.H. 12/7/39)* December of 1939 for a cast removal cutter. The patent grant was for a period of 17 years."

*H-12/6/33* The passing of years tend to dim the memory of local events, and as a rule new-comers never hear of them. As an example, in December of 1933 George Butkiewicz rescued two local youths who broke through the ice near the park. They would have drowned but for George who was watching them play and heard the ice crack. He crept towards the open hole and extended a fish pole which the boys grasped. They were thus pulled to safety over the treacherously thin ice. George saved their lives.

*C.H. 12/3/44* Another item of interest was that in the 1940s Omro entered whole-heartedly to further the WW II effort. Many young men and women from here joined the various military branches. However, more was needed besides military man-power. The F. Butkiewicz & Sons helped with that need. The company subcontracted to supply spare parts for the Four Wheel Drive Truck Co. of Clintonville, Wis. who had government orders for their trucks.

*H-5/18/44* During this time, according to The (Clintonville) Drive News, of May 9, 1944, Mr. Butkiewicz himself worked 725 days straight out of 730 to supply the FWD orders. *(more back of this pg. + pg. 122-123.)*

*small picture in Omro Journal 9/17/53.*

*B. B. 1/13/44* 1928-George Daggett & Son is another company of many years standing. This company is located in the old Woolen Mill which has an interesting history. Back in 1872 or '75 a structure to process wool was erected at 251 E. Main and was always referred to as the "Woolen Mill". It is possible that one day it will be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. *(O.H. 4/5/31)*

The site was marshy so long solid oak logs were laid and sunk into the muck. On top of these timbers the foundation was laid; the walls were thick and solid. Beams in the building are of pine, some 20 feet in length. The mill was built of cream colored Milwaukee brick from which Milwaukee received its nickname of the "Cream City". John Grossman, worked for and drove a farmer's team, the farmer living south of Omro and having contracted to haul the brick for the building. It was rumored however, that because of financial difficulties the building was never used for the purpose originally intended. *Sold Apr 25, 1987 at auction.*

In later years a shoe company occupied the mill for some time; parts needed in the making of shoes were manufactured. In 1907 it was referred to as Omro Felt Works. Then the North American Hosiery Knitting Company occupied the mill for awhile.

*(more back of pg)*

215 1/2 page 123

Afterwards the building stood vacant for several years except for the Women's Civic League Fall Fairs which were held there for a number of years. Finally Geo. Daggett rented the building for storing feeds. Prior to that time Daggett's feed was unloaded to customers directly from the cars at the railroad tracks.

With a car and trailer Mr. Daggett had begun the business of buying and picking up eggs and live poultry from farmers and marketing them. He did this while still on his farm in Rushford.

Finally the one who had charge of the Att. Hurlbut estate induced Mr. Daggett to purchase the Woolen Mill which he did in 1928. With the storing of feed in the building the enterprise rapidly grew into a large business. Soon as many as 5 or 6 Geo. Daggett & Son delivery trucks were on the roads transporting produce to market and supplies to retail establishments. These trucks covered a large territory of a 30 mile radius. Eggs and poultry were trucked as far as to the Chicago markets.

987  
1928  
59

In this Warehouse on E. Main, are stocked all manner of food supplies such as various brands of flour, sugar, salt and baking mixes. They also carry a line of farm supplies such as farm hardware, barn equipment, steel roofing. Also commercial poultry and stock feeds and supplements, commercial fertelizers, binder twine, seed corn and grains, fencing materials of various kinds. Small items such as shovels, pitchforks, hoes, etc. These are only a few of the items available at the warehouse.

Geo. Daggett & Son is still in business after nearly 50 years of service. The average for continued existence of companies is that of 40 years.

It was rumored that during WW I the Navy would have liked the pine timbers from the building for ship's spars.

Daggett's have in past years filled in with soil all around the mill, and the grounds now are high, level, and in summer beautifully green.

in Aug 1944 (2.11.2/11/44)

Archie D.

1943-Geo. Daggett & Son purchased the A. Austria feed mill. Here they continued business until 1964 when they bought a grist mill at 427 W. Huron Street. This building was erected where the former Hay Plant had stood years before. However, this mill was never used by L. Kafer as planned. After it stood idle for a year and a half it was purchased by Archie Daggett and Lawrence Borchardt. Feed mill sold to Olsen's Mill, Inc. 2/2/81.

(Country Outlook Feb 3-28 11)  
UR. XXXIX p. 1

In 1970 their former mill, the old East Side schoolhouse, across from the old City Hall, was vacated and torn down. And, too, seed grains were cleaned in the seed house on E. Main directly across the street from the Masonic Hall by Daggett and Borchardt. The building is now torn down.

M.J.S.  
STORES

Mills and factories meant that there were both owners and workers who would need supplies of different sorts. Therefore, there were grocery stores. Also needed were dry goods stores for in the early days there were few ready-to-wear garments. Yard goods had to be store-bought and clothing home-sewed. So one bought laces, braids, beads, bangles, and buttons for accessories. However, socks, stockings, mittens, neck scarfs, and stocking caps were nearly always knitted in the homes. Quite often the yarn would be spun from wool sheared from their own sheep.

In addition, there were crockery, hardware, and drug stores. There were meat markets supplied with livestock purchased locally and butchered at the local slaughter houses. One such house was located on the Poygan road beyond the edge of town until after the turn of the century. Frank Mahar was one butcher who used it.

There were shops where shoes, boots, and harnesses were made and repaired. Blacksmith, gunsmith, and millinery shops, restaurants, and boarding houses were in demand to satisfy the wants of the inhabitants. Omro had all of them, from a jewelry store down to book stores and grog shops.

A general store in those early days was an adventure in sights and smells. As Warren Brooks has noted, "It was not unusual to step into a store and see wash tubs and boilers hanging from the ceiling; lanterns, lamps, and crockery on the shelves; and a coffee grinder mounted on the end of the counter. There was an ice box in which to keep the butter and other perishable foods. Oyster crackers, cookies, pickles and peanuts came in barrels, or large boxes. Kerosene, vinegar and molasses came in barrels and were kept on racks at the back of the store."

Another pleasing sight in a grocery store was a big round cheese at least 18 inches in diameter and 8 inches high which was kept under a glass dome. A huge slicing knife was attached some way near the middle and above so that it could be raised by the handle, placed on top of the cheese, then pulled down to cut off the pie-shaped slab a customer asked for. If a pound or whatever weight was desired, the clerks knew almost exactly how much to cut off. Those cheeses were so rich in butter fat content that they were shiny, oozy, and dripping with richness.

Tea was a favorite beverage of the pioneers, especially for the majority with their English tea-drinking background. Two favorites were Cambric Tea and Gun Powder Tea, the latter in a powder form. One could assume it was the sifted small bits from the tea leaves and perhaps cost less; money for commodities in the pioneering days was hard to come by. In 1894 Japan Tea sold for 20¢ and Oolong for 15¢.

The first factory-made cookies stocked in stores came in bulk quantities. The two I recall were large round light brown ginger seasoned cookies with a white frosting. The other type was the fig bars just the same as on the market today. Later Johnson Cookies of various kinds came in metal boxes of several pounds capacity. Glass in the hinged doors allowed the customer to see which kind of cookie to choose. Several of these boxes were placed in an upright rack.

At one end of a store's purchasing counter was an upright rack holding rolls of wrapping paper of at least two widths for wrapping articles. Attached to the rack was a huge spool of string for tying bundles and the tops of paper bags. Sugar, salt, spices, seeds, and many other groceries that came in bulk quantities were scooped out into the smaller quantities desired by the customers. Boxes of shoes, boots, and all dry goods purchases were paper-wrapped and string-tied. This was before the pre-packaging and the self-service era.

Clerks used long handled tongs or pincers to grab objects on high shelves without using a stepladder. These articles were light weight as boxes of cereal, shoes or bandanas. If one accidentally fell and conked a clerk on the head it would be less apt to knock him out.

To purchase kerosene a customer brought a one and a half or two gallon metal or glass can. The spout of which, if the screw-on cap was lost, was stopped with a potato stuck on it, or a part of a corn cob, or a hard-rolled paper plugged in it, to keep the kerosene from slopping out.

For molasses the container was usually an earthen jug with a handle that was taken to be filled. A cork was used to close the bung-hole.

There were other by-gone practises not used today. Bananas came in the bunch, and were hung up by the stem. As customers would buy them, the grocer would cut off the ones chosen with a sharp curved banana hook.

Grocery store clerks in the early days had no supply of large paper bags for grocery packing. A customer, therefore, went to the store with a market basket in which to put the purchased items. A farmer usually had eggs to sell or trade for groceries.

Eggs, if not taken to the store loose in a basket, were packed in a square wooden-slatted card-board partitioned twelve dozen egg crate. Groceries were in turn placed in the crate in lieu of a basket in which to pack their purchases for the cardboard partition was collapsible. Rural customers usually spoke of going to town to "trade" instead of to "shop".

Clerks did the foot work before the advent of the wire grocery carts. The grocery list was given to the clerk, item by item. He in turn would write them down on a sales slip, asking details. Then the clerk would pick out and gather up the articles while the customer waited.

A male clerk usually wore black armllets over his shirt sleeves to keep them clean. Elastic at the above-elbow end kept them in place. Some wore white "butcher aprons" with a pocket in which to keep the sales-slip book. A pencil was tucked over an ear, a convenient place from which to grab it when needed. A convenience found in some stores, particularly those handling shoes or crockery, was a ladder. The ladder was hung on a trolley and with wheels at the top and bottom could be rolled along a shelf edge to reach boxes of shoes or other articles placed on high shelves.

*M.J.S.* A woman clerk, usually in dry goods, wore a fancy tea apron with a pocket for the sales-slip book. A large safety pin was above a pocket or at the belt; it held a pair of scissors slipped in it, used to snip the salvage of cloth material for tearing off the required length. Her pencil was poked in her pug of hair, no short hair on a woman until the 1920s.

Figuring the cost of materials or other items and adding to obtain the total of purchases was all head work--no adding machines in those days. On reaching home, and with the sales slip to refer to, a customer could check. A clerk simply had to know how to divide, multiply, add and subtract correctly or he or she would be "called on the carpet".

In the meat markets, quarters and sections of beef and pork, and dressed poultry hung from huge hooks around the shop. A customer's choice would be taken down and placed on the huge chopping block. The desired amount and cut of meat would be sawed off, or chopped off with a cleaver, weighed and wrapped. Soup bones and hunks of suet were given away to anyone asking for them.

The shop temperature was always cool, so the butcher would wear heavy woolen clothes, his butcher apron over a warm sweater and a cap on his head. The floor would be strewn with sawdust. The butcher kept the knives keen by stroking them rapidly and expertly on his steel. In the 1910s or 20s for instance, one could buy a large ring of the best bologna at Frank Mahar's market for twenty-five cents!

During the many years of Omro's existence there have been so many store owners that it would be next to impossible to recall all of them. Many have been mentioned in historical articles or in old newspapers.

The following list names stores and owners. Some were of short duration and others were in business many years. These business houses are not necessarily given in chronological order, nor is it a complete list by any means. Also, after studying and deliberating, the years in which these firms were established are assumed to be about the years that are noted.

As mentioned previously, the first store was built in 1850. Prior to this venture of N. "Squire" Frank and C. Bigelow's, the trading posts must have been the only source of supply where the needs of the settlers could have been purchased.

## OMRO STORES

Stores were--

1850-N. Frank & C. Bigelow. On the north bank of the river at the end of the bridge. Frank erected the building and built a dock. Then he and Bigelow put in a stock of merchandise. This was the first real store. *(more back of this pg.)*

1858-Jones & Morris owned and operated a Drug Store. - *W. Hist. p. 36*

1856-Robert Webb first operated a tailor shop. He left the place for a time. After 20 years he returned and went into business as a grocer. Often in the early days business firms changed commodities for one reason or another. Mr. Webb was a Great Uncle of Ethel Bishop's.

1858-George W. Shafer dealt in Drugs and Groceries.

1858-Wm. Larrabee operated a grocery store next to the Post Office.

1858-Brown General Store. Dry goods, Groceries, Hardware, etc.

1858-Benedict General Store.

1858-Patterson & Co. dealt in Stoves & Hardware.

During this time C. Bigelow built a store at the north end of the bridge. Apparently another of his ventures. At one time he was in business with a Mr. Sneed, merchant.

185?-N. Frank & Mark Terwilliger were in business at one time.

1865-E.H. Demmon at one time advertised wall paper for 3¢ up to \$1.25 per roll. *(6/9/53 Omro Herald)*

1865-Mrs. M.M. Newton Millinery. A long established firm, although the name changed, Mrs. Jones going out. The location was on W. Division Street. *in 1858,*

1865-John Everts, Barber. Born in Germany, he came to Wisconsin in 1854. He enlisted in Co. K. Wisconsin. Was in the Cavalry for 3 years. He married Jane Kingsbury at Ripon who was from *Co. H. 4/24/32.* County Kent in England. They resided in Omro over 50 years, *Family Hist. 54* coming to Omro about 1865.

1866-L.B. Lewis & Ellis Thompson. They erected the first brick store building. It was where the Lumber Company is located. Ellis was also a photographer.

1866-J.D. Treleven & Co. was in tailoring and gents' furnishing goods. It was the oldest tailor shop in Omro. Their business assumed larger proportions than any other establishment of the kind ever kept in Omro. A large force was constantly kept on custom work, and the sales footed up to a large figure every year. Besides their store on Water street, they had a branch at Winneconne, presided over by J.T. Orchard, one of the firm. At another time the firm was Treleven Bros. *W.A.S. sup. 36*

1866-W.C. Hollister Grocery. Charlie's Tavern location. Thompson & Hayward bought him out for the expansion of their business. *(O.H.-2/16/31)*

1866-E. Gummer on Water St. was a dealer in boots and shoes. He handled some factory made stock, but the principal part of his business was custom work.

1866-or before James T. Russell opened a harness shop in Omro. It was located where later Clint Tice had his meat market. At one time it was Russell & Walker in the business.

1867-Silas N. Bridge sold musical instruments and supplies.

1869-James H. Shattuck was an early merchant who came to Omro. He occupied the building at the corner of N. Webster and E. River Drive which he used for a boot and shoe store at first. He lived in rooms over the store. Later he turned the shop into a grocery store and was in business for many years. Shattuck was born in Boston, Mass. in 1836. He came to Wisconsin about 1860, and to Omro about 1869. First wife was Miss Ella Perry. 2nd wife was Mrs. Emma Smith of Fond du Lac.

*Omro Herald  
O.H. 4/9/31  
W. Hist. p. 37  
O.H. 4/12/31  
W. Hist. p. 35  
O.H. 4/12/31*

*N.B. p. 2  
O.H. 6/25/10*

*E.B.*

*W. Hist. p. 40  
O.H. 4/16/31*

*W. Hist. p. 40  
O.H. 4/16/31*

*W. Hist. p. 38  
O.H. 4/9/31*

*W. Hist. p. 39  
O.H. 4/16/31*

*W. Hist. p. 40  
O.H. 4/16/31*

*W. Hist. p. 18  
O.H. 2/20/16*

1869-P. Samphier & Bro. were dealers in boots and shoes. They were located on the south side of Water street, and in connection with their sales room, did considerable manufacturing.

1870-Treleven & Orchard had a dry goods and clothing store. They were in business many years, and reported to have been most successful.

1867 or 70-Wm. Brockman & Co. on Division street, W.R.C. hall site, they sold Dry Goods and Notions.

1870-Demmon Bros. in Race's block, the brothers carried on the boot and shoe business. They also made up considerable stock.

1870-E.A. Demmon made and sold boots and shoes. A Mr. Demming located in the present bank area years ago may have been the same person and one of the brothers. The spelling of names was not always consistent.

1870-W.W. Race Hardware occupied a brick block erected by himself on the north side of Water street. In the rear of the sales room he had a workshop, also of brick, and the basement was used as a storage room. He had a larger and better assorted stock than many similar establishments in larger cities.

At another time it was W.W. Race & Son Hardware Store, built on the south side of Water street in the Putnam block. They represented Universal Stoves and Ranges. An ad in a local paper of 1894 was for gasoline at 8¢ per gallon! (C.M. 8/17/33.)

1870-B. Whitman Boots and Shoes. Located on W. Division street he confined himself exclusively to sales, having no workshop connected with his establishment.

1872-Kaime & Wright Books and Stationery, with a general assortment of goods in their line. They were located on W. Division street. They also dealt in pianos, organs and musical merchandise, and furnished all the newspapers and periodicals.

1872-G.H. Charlesworth were early dealers in furniture in Omro. They kept a large stock at their establishment on the south side of Water street.

1872-W.D. Chapman Harness Shop did business in a building of his own, adjoining Russell & Walker's.

1873-Root & (Frederick) Bunker-A hardware store on the north side of Water street. Besides carrying a stock of hardware they also did some manufacturing. Later, Bunker by himself for years.

1874-Peter Cole Dry Goods Store. The first in the village, located in the Putnam Block. He kept a general assortment in his line, and also carried a small stock in groceries.

1874-W.H. Hilton Photography-He was well established by 1876. His studio was on the corner of Water and W. Division streets, one of the best locations in town, and having the entire trade, did a good business.

1872-Richard Reed Grocery. Mentioned about this time.

1875-Henry & Carter Grocery. They opened up business on the south side of Water street soon after the close of the war. They kept a full stock of staple goods, and dealt quite extensively in fruits in their season.

1875-H.J. Davis Grocery, later Henry Davis alone. R. Reed, Jr. partner.

1875-P.V. Shafer Grocery across the street from his brother whom he was formerly in business with, the same building. It was moved across the street to make way for the brick building George Shafer erected.

1875-J.C. Hilton - jeweler, Am. item, etc. p. 45 B

Omro Market, Chauncey Bigelow. Prices--Butter 18¢; Cheese 14¢;  
Hams 15¢; Eggs 10¢; Lard 16¢; White flour \$4 a Bbl.;  
Corn 50¢; Winter wheat 65¢.



*Warren Bunker*

*W. Hunt  
O.H. 4/2/31  
W. Hunt  
4/25/10*

*W. Hunt  
O.H. 4/2/31*

*W. Hunt  
O.H. 4/9/31*

*W. Hunt  
O.H. 4/2/31*

*W. Hunt  
O.H. 4/9/31*

*W. Hunt  
O.H. 4/16/31*

*W. Hunt  
O.H. 4/9/31*

*W. Hunt  
O.H. 4/23/31*

*W. Hunt  
O.H. 11/30/31*

*W. Hunt  
O.H. 11/30/31*

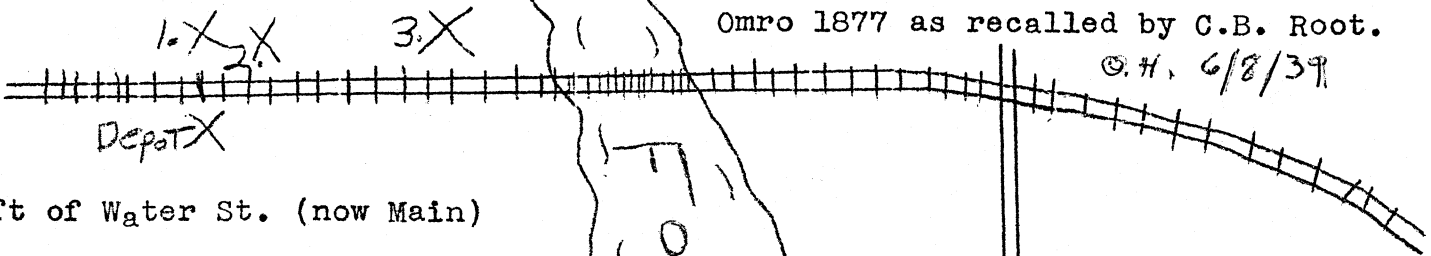
*Rob died  
11/27/58*

- 1875-Henry Waite, Grocer. He also sold crockery. The store was located on the corner where later on the Fountain Inn stood. Mr. Waite was Omro Postmaster in 1897. He died in 1910.
- 1876-S. Leighton & Co. Groceries and feed. They kept a full stock of groceries, provisions, crockery, glassware, and dealt extensively in flour and feed of all kinds. The store was located on W. Division street.
- 1876-R. Reed, Jr., on the south side of Water street was formerly in business with H.J. Davis. Reed dealt in groceries, provisions, crockery and glassware.
- 1876-L. Kelly, tailor. His tailoring shop was a few doors east of Treleven & Co. Kelly confined himself exclusively to custom work.
- 1876-C.S. Douty Drugs, owner and proprietor. His store was located on the south side of Water street. Later he moved to the opposite side of the street. At one time it was Henry & Douty Drugs.
- 1876-Joseph Simmons Grocery and Feed. He was located near the bridge.
- 1876-S.N. Bridge & Son started out with a small stock of books. They located in a part of the drug store of Jones & Morris, on Water street. They also were agents for pianos and organs. They dealt in instrumental supplies of various musical instruments.
- 1876-O.F. Berkley Dry Goods store on Water street. He closed out the end of the year, no record of how long he was in business before that. He took over the agency for Wind Mills that were beginning to be used by farmers for pumping the water supply for livestock. *Also, at one time it was Berkeley & Co. Dry Goods.*
- 1876-Hudson & Barnes Millinery establishment. It was located in Putnam's Block.
- 1877-Fannie McAllister store. Dry Goods and Notions. 1880 it was burned by arson. W.R.C. Hall site.
- 187?-A.E. Tice was a butcher. Perhaps he was a descendant of the 1847 Nelson Tice. This may have been the first meat market. At one time it was Welby & Tice and located on the south side of Water street.
- 187?-Alexander Gadbaw dealt in farm machinery.
- 187?-Larrabee & Son Drugs.
- 187?-Larrabee Grocery. There were Larrabee brothers who were in various businesses in Omro, including hotels. Their sons also carried on various enterprises.
- 187?-Frank Bunker Grocery.
- 187?-Chas. Chase Jewelry Store. He located first in part of the Gamble Store building, across from the Bank on E. Water street. Later he moved to S. Webster. His son Robert took over after his death. Rob's widow, Addie, carried on until the building was razed in 1969 or 1970 to make way for Sherm's Super Market parking lot.
- 187?-Treleven Brothers, Clothiers. Boots & Shoes. Gent's Furnishing Store.
- 187?-C.C. Covey Grocery Store.
- 187?-S.D. White Grocery.
- 1880-Andrew Wilson built and managed a grocery store. He and Hiram Webster (lumberman) were considered the leading men of the village at that time according to the Early Settler.

The following maps may be of interest: (next page)

- 1877- Beebe meat market-
- 1878- Kelly & Sons meat market-
- 1882- Charity Restaurant -

O.H. 6/8/39

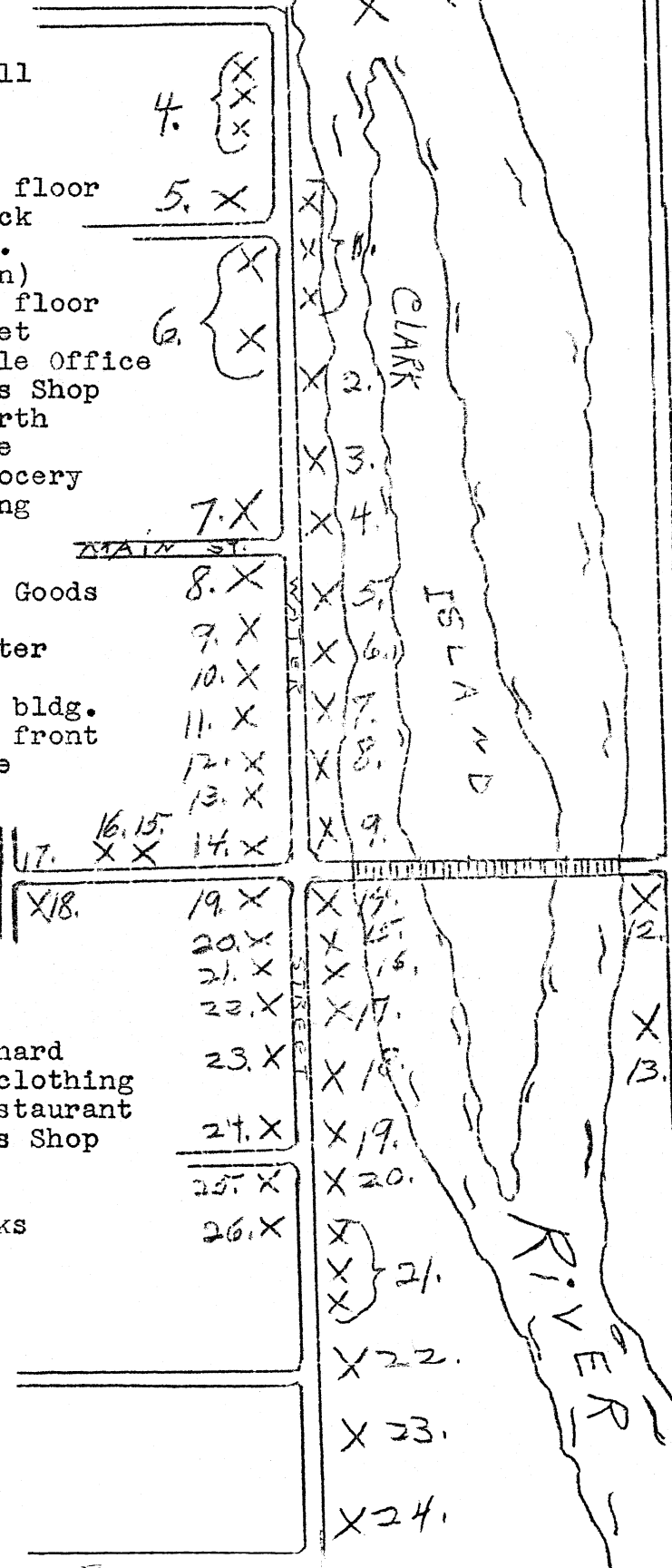


Left of Water St. (now Main)

1. Coffin Factory
2. Lumber Yard
3. Glass factory
4. 3 dwellings
5. Spiritualist Hall
6. 2 dwellings
7. Stage barn
8. Putnam Hall
- 3 stores on 1st floor
- P. O. across back facing Main St. (now Jefferson)
- Putnam Hall 2nd floor
9. Beebe Meat Market
10. Stone Mercantile Office
11. Russell Harness Shop
12. Geo. Charlesworth Furniture
13. Waite Bros. Grocery
14. 2 story building
15. Demon Book and Shoe store
16. Frank Cole Dry Goods
17. Flag Pole
18. Fannie McAllister Store
19. Shafer-3 story bldg.
  - a. Shafer Store front
  - b. Samphier Shoe and Boot
  - c. 2nd floor
    1. Everett barber in north end
    2. Pool Hall south end
  - d. 3rd floor Masonic Order
20. Treleven & Orchard Dry Goods and clothing
21. Mrs. Gerity restaurant
22. Chapman Harness Shop
23. Saloon
24. Larrabee Hotel
25. Drew Wagon Works
26. Jail

Right of Water St.

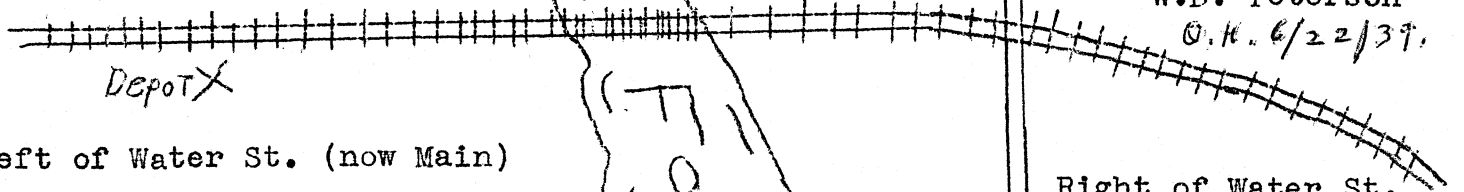
1. Several bldgs.
2. Blacksmith Shop
3. Lansing Livery
4. Hotel
5. Thompson & Hayward Carriage Works
6. Morton & Arnold Planing Mill
7. Bank
8. Wm. Wheeler Meats
9. Fred Bunker Hdwe
10. Wm. Cundy Blacksmith and Wagon shop
11. Shattuck Grocery
12. A. Pelton Store
13. Johnson Mill
14. 2 story bldg.
15. W.W. Race Hdwe
16. Lang Douty Drugs
17. Chas. Chase Jewelry
18. Grist Mill
19. Chas. Bushnell Blacksmith Shop Hall 2nd floor
- X 10.
- X 11.
20. Joe Lyon Livery
21. Several other businesses
22. Woolen Mill
23. Ice House
24. Challoner Works.



Omro in

1880 as recalled by  
W.D. Peterson

O.H. 6/22/39.

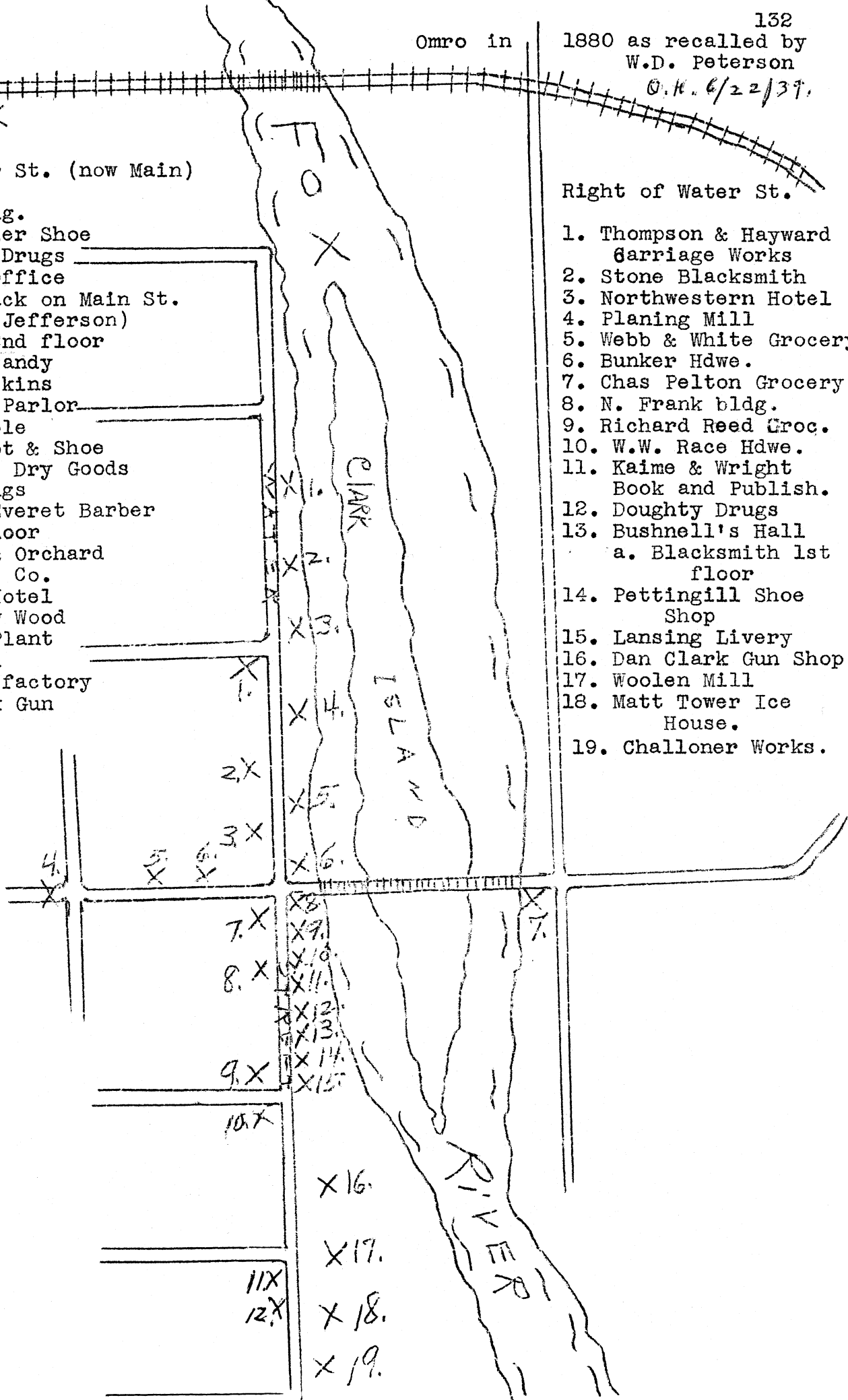


Left of Water St. (now Main)

1. Putnam bldg.
  - a. Samphier Shoe
  - b. Henry Drugs
  - c. Post Office  
at back on Main St.  
(now Jefferson)
  - d. Hall 2nd floor
2. Clifford Candy
3. "Stub" Watkins  
Billard Parlor
4. Liberty Pole
5. Demmon Boot & Shoe
6. Frank Cole Dry Goods
7. Shafer Drugs
  - a. John Everet Barber  
2nd floor
8. Treleven & Orchard  
Dry Goods Co.
9. Larrabee Hotel
10. Geo. Drew Wood  
Working Plant
11. A.B. Hall  
Carriage factory
12. Dan Clark Gun  
Shop

Right of Water St.

1. Thompson & Hayward  
Carriage Works
2. Stone Blacksmith
3. Northwestern Hotel
4. Planing Mill
5. Webb & White Grocery
6. Bunker Hdwe.
7. Chas Pelton Grocery
8. N. Frank bldg.
9. Richard Reed Groc.
10. W.W. Race Hdwe.
11. Kaime & Wright  
Book and Publish.
12. Doughty Drugs
13. Bushnell's Hall
  - a. Blacksmith 1st  
floor
14. Pettingill Shoe  
Shop
15. Lansing Livery
16. Dan Clark Gun Shop
17. Woolen Mill
18. Matt Tower Ice  
House.
19. Challoner Works.



C. B. Root  
138B  
6/8/39

In reference to the maps, in June of 1939 two letters were written to the Old Red Brick Ass'n. President. One was from C.B. Root enumerating as he recalled them, the business firms of Omro in 1877 when he came here to live.

W.D. Peterson  
6/22/39

The other letter was from W.D. Peterson a former native of the village. His recollection of the Omro firms was of 1880. Both men no doubt did not recall all of the business houses, yet both agree on many of them, and the locations. Also businesses could have changed hands during the three years.

Continuing with Omro Stores--

1880-Wm. Russel managed a Cigar Shop.

1881-Mr. C. Olin has been mentioned as operating a meat business in the village. (Cyrus)

1886-Alfred Pelton Grocery. His first store was built on the south side of the river. As the north side expanded he built and moved there. Later he returned to the south side location as that was the side that eventually gained in trade and population. More about the Pelton Store later.

E. Hunt  
10

1890-E.P. Ferris--A crockery store at the south end of the bridge, an alley way now. He sold other articles, too. A newspaper ad lists--Fruits, vegetables, confectionary, school supplies, Socks, Gloves, Mittens.

1890-Earle & McGuire Grocery--where Henry Siefert later bought. W.B.P. #4

1890-James (Jim) Sharp --A general store, in business for many years. Mr. Sharp was a well remembered and popular Omro merchant. This was during the 1800s and early 1900s.

W.B.P. #4  
N. Brooks  
12/19/11

At one time Sharp's General Store was in the south half of what is now Charlie's Tavern. Another person recalled that his store was north of the W.R.C. Hall. Later on he located in the I.O.O.F. building where the Variety Store is now. Geo. Brooks, whose feed and seed store was to the west of Sharp's had purchased an awning for his store front. His sons Warren and Harry installed it. Mr. Sharp also had bought a similar awning for his store front and asked the boys if they would put his up for him. They agreed, did the work, and refused any pay as they were glad to do it for him.

Some time later Mr. Sharp approached Warren, told him that he realized that Harry was the brains of the awning job, so would Warren hand him this dollar bill. Warren accepted the bill and went in search of Harry. When found, Harry pulled a dollar bill from his pocket, handed it toward Warren saying that Mr. Sharp said he realized that Warren was the brains of the awning job and he should have a dollar. So they each received a dollar through Mr. Sharp's shrewdness.

Mr. Sharp was called "Peanut" Sharp because he was in the habit of offering peanuts to youngsters.

W.B.P. #4  
C. D. Smith  
1939

One time my father was in Sharp's store and a woman customer came in with a box of kitchen matches that she was returning. All of the heads had ignited in the box and were blackened. (This actually happens sometimes!) Mr. Sharp cheerfully exchanged the box for one with good matches, and jovially explained what he would have to do to keep them from being a total loss--whittle them to a point at each end and sell them for toothpicks! Loosing in one sale he could gain on another one. Jim advertised a sale on shirts--2 for 50¢. After buying and examining, one customer in particular found

The P.N.G. (Past Noble Grand) Circle of the Calista Rebekah Lodge was organized Jan. 24, 1934. It consisted of 13 charter members. Still functioning in 1987

them to have very stiff fronts and they buttoned in the back! They should have looked first. Right?

Jim also sold hot peanuts at celebrations of all kinds-- 4th of July, Memorial Day, whenever a crowd was in town. All of this besides occasionally acting as speaker or Master of Ceremonies at Memorial Day exercises. More about Mr. Sharp under Omro Personages.

1894-T.R. Taylor & Co. Grocery--An early ad reads--"Also keep Lime, Cement, and Salt of all kinds. Plastering Hair, Mortar. Pays cash for Hides, Pelts, Furs, Old Rubber, Tallow, etc. I have just removed from the north side to Leighton's Block."

189?-Carroll H. (Connie) Larrabee--Book and Crockery Store on the north side of W. Main where the V.F.W. Hall is now. He was Winnebago County Treasurer for many years. Also a member of the Omro Village school board. He handled all of the school text books for students at his store. Connie's father was Jack (Bige) Larrabee, the proprietor of the hotel on Masonic Hall corner. His mother, Sophonra. They came to Omro in 1854. My Aunt Marietta waited on tables here before her marriage in 1877. Connie married Mary Hurley March 4, 1884.

1894-Day & Larrabee--"Groceries, Crockery, Glass Ware. Boots, Shoes, Rubbers, Overalls and Jackets. Men's shirts, Underwear, Hosiery. 5¢ & 10¢ counter; biggest kind of articles." So read an ad in an old local newspaper of 1894. One "block" in the village was referred to as Day's. (Where?)

1894-H.E. Robinson--Advertised as follows: "Bargains in Ladie's Shoes, 200 pr. worth from \$2.50 to \$3.50. Your choice for \$2.00. 100 pr. Ladie's Shoes, worth from \$1.75 to \$2.25. Your choice for \$1.25. 200 pr. Boy's and Misses Shoes worth from \$1.25 to \$1.75. Your choice for \$1.00. A full line of Gents' Underwear, Collars, Neckties, Mackinaws, Jackets, Kersey Pants, Lumberman's Socks and Rubbers. Hats and Caps all styles and prices. Stock of Groceries is full and complete. Butter and Eggs taken in exchange for Goods."

1894-Imig & McNulty--They advertised Ranges in a local newspaper. Evidently a hardware store.

The previous stores of 1894 may have been in business several years before the advertising in a local paper of that date. Dates of the following businesses are not available, at least in old newspapers.

? -C.E. Bowman Drugs--He was according to an advertisement of a local paper, "Sole agent in Omro for H. Hirschberg non-changeable Spectacles and Eye Glasses. Also, Begg's Cherry Cough Syrup." Another ad printed in 1894 read--"Perfumes at Less than Cost. Commencing Friday October 26 I will sell Lundbord's, Lazelle's and other perfumes at 25¢ per ounce, former price 40¢. A 35¢ bottle for 15¢ and 10¢ size 5¢. This great offer will be open for a few days only. C.D. Bowman Drugs."

Mr. Bowman also made loans several years later. A 1922 ad noted--one of \$1300 - 6½% - 7 years - value of security \$3,400.00. One of \$600 - 7 years - value of second, \$3,500.

C.D. Bowman built the beautiful home at 629 Madison Ave. He had fallen heir to considerable wealth from a relative. Then he drove an open car, a Reo. He also owned a farm near Rush Lake, where Joe Blackburn lives now. His first wife was Alma Lloyd who died. Later he married Mildred Clark of Fort Atkinson. They spent winters in Florida. They lost most of their money speculating. She made and sold donuts in Florida. Later years, after her husband died, she sold and rented real estate in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Sturm B.  
W. Brinker


early n.w. 2/19/16.  
IV p. 64  
I r. 35  
early n.w. 3/4/87

W. Brinker

E. Hill p. 21  
1/12/22

This is an interesting observation told by an Omroite about Frank and Belle Cole:

Frank had a troublesome cough. When he as clerk would sell an article of merchandise he would call out, "9¢, or whatever the price, (cough) do it up, Belle" (cough). The purchaser would take the article or articles to Belle to be wrapped up and there to pay her for the purchase. Incidentally, the Coles retired, sold out in Omro, and moved to Atascadero, California. At that time it was a new development area, now a city of 7,000 according to the 1970 census.



Other early year druggists, no dates recorded, were:

Allie Lasher, druggist, as well as George Lasher. (*Lin B 7/13/50*)  
Wm. Doughty, druggist.

Chas. Campbell was an Omro druggist. As son entered the ministry. He died or was killed in Central America while serving there as a Missionary. A window bearing his name on it is in the Omro Presbyterian church and is dedicated in his honor.

Mr. Damon's Book Store & News stand--Located south of the present Zweiger Hardware store. "Mr. Damon sold books, such as those *W.B.* of Frank Merrywell, Fred Fearnot, Dick Tracy, and Diamond Dick. The school, and even our parents, objected to our reading such stuff. A Cafe next to the store. Later the book store burned down." So states an Omroite.

### PRICES

It is interesting to scan commodity prices of the 1890s. Omro merchants paid 7¢ per quart for raspberries, oats sold at 18¢ per bushel, potatoes for 25¢ per bushel. In turn they sold kerosene at 10¢ a gallon in 1895 and 70¢ per 5 gallons in 1898.

*Brooks* CURRENT OMRO PRICES--in November 23, 1894 issue of Omro Herald--

Potatoes	-	-	-	.60
Beans	-	-	1.30	1.75
Butter	-	-	-	.22
Eggs	-	-	-	.12
Flour per barrel	-	-	-	3.50
Oat Meal per lb.	-	-	-	.05
Sugar granulated, per lb.	-	-	-	.05 $\frac{1}{2}$
Standard A	-	-	-	.05 $\frac{1}{4}$
White Extra C.	-	-	-	.05 $\frac{1}{2}$
Yellow	-	-	-	.05
Molasses common, per gal.	-	-	-	.25
Porto Rico	-	-	-	.60
New Orleans	-	-	.50@	.60
Vinegar, cider	-	-	-	.20
Kerosene, W. L. test	-	-	.10¢	.12
Headlight oil	-	-	-	.14
Tea, Japan	-	-	.20¢	.80
Oolong	-	-	-	.15
Coffee, Rio	-	-	.25¢	.30
Cheese	-	-	-	.15
Blackberries	-	-	-	.10

More stores at the turn of the century are as follows:

*W.B. Brooks* Albion Reid--Had an implement store in a part of the building where A. Austria had his first mill on the corner of Huron and S. Webster. 1900-Root Bros. Hardware--They built the store and Schuler & Hay managed it for two years, then Abercrombie before selling to G.W. Brooks. It was located on the north side of Main, west of the I.O.O.F. Hall.

*C.E. Root* Frank Cole Dry Goods--Owned and managed by Frank and his wife, Belle, no doubt they took over the former Peter Cole Store. Mrs. Cole *(Belle)* was a tiny woman, and she would sit on a high platform in the center of the room so that she could see what was going on all around the store. They advertised in 1894--"Special Gifts-- Stationery, Christmas, Gents Neck Scarfs, Silkaline, Madras for *(O.H. 12/28/36)*



drapes, etc. White goods 45 inches wide at 10¢ per yard. Fine block lawn 45 inches wide hemstitched on side for aprons, 14¢ per yard." Cole died in April of 1934 in Atascadero, Calif. *(C.H. 5/3/34.)*

L.R. Barnett, Watchmaker, Engraver and Optician. Dealer in watches, clocks, Jewelry and Silverware. Eyes tested free of charge. Located opposite Post Office on Main. (Married Minnie Treleven Morton's sister Elizabeth. Later moved to Missoula, Montana. *on Feb. 15 (Minnie diary)*)

Shattuck store--After Mr. Shattuck died in 1912, the store on the corner of E. River Drive and N. Webster on the north side continued with other owners.

Fred and Mame Bennett owned and operated it to at least 1919. Then Walter and Liona Smith were the proprietors for a few years. They sold to James Morariety.

Charles and Hannah Wilson were the next owners. They bought the store in 1934. Mrs. Wilson put in a line of house dresses in addition to the groceries. Mr. Wilson was born in Kentucky in 1872, and died in 1957. He retired in 1947. Wilsons on retiring in turn sold to Max Loewan. *C.H. 5/4/60*

Earl Behm was the owner when the building burned down in September of 1969. This old Shattuck store building was a landmark of the North Side.

#### MORE STORES

Stores of the 1900s were:

*1902 - Loyd's Drug Store. (family (med) diary)*

John Becker Drug Store. Location was the west half of the present Drug Store. He was in business from early 1900s to at least 1925 or so. At that time the store occupied only half of the floor space now used, the other half was another place of business. Clayton Stearns, a later pharmacist, removed the partition between the two stores when he took over as Rexall Druggist.

*M.V. 7/19/16*  
*V.I.V. 7/19/16*

A somewhat exciting incident took place at Omro on July of 1916. "The big plate glass front of Becker's pharmacy was damaged one night. Someone threw a stone, about half as large as an egg, at about 10 o'clock in the evening. When the stone hit the glass several people in the store rushed out but the one who did the deed was nowhere to be seen. It is believed that the stone was thrown by accident."

*W.C. 11/11/11*  
*W.C. 11/11/11*  
*W.C. 11/11/11*

John Becker as a pharmacist did have his apprehensive moments. Not only a crashed window but a sale that led to tragedy. In 1911 Becker sold some carbolic acid to a certain man (J.G.). At that time the acid was used in many home remedies and sold by Druggists without questioning the use of it. *Jay Gabel*  
*W.C. 11/11/11*  
*W.C. 11/11/11*

However, this man used it as a suicide poison! Other persons having to exercise their official duties in connection with the happening were: E.C. Bills, constable; E.D. Bardwell, Justice of the Peace; and G.H. and F.H. Charlesworth, undertakers.

In connection with undertakers--other morticians and furniture dealers either remembered or on record were few compared with the change-over of other retail businesses.

George Charlesworth Furniture and Undertaking--

*MSB IV p. 19  
 3/26/12*  
 According to Norman Gerard's history of Omro, a "Mr. Geo. Charlesworth and wife Mary of a London, suburb, came to Omro from England in 1850. They had a small farm in the western part of the town. His son George, Jr. has a furniture store in Omro and is one of the leading men in that line." George, Jr. started in the furniture and undertaking business in 1872. He married Anna Dell Potter in 1868.

*Retired in 1913. died in 1930/13.*

*1913* George's son Fred joined him in the business and on George's retirement Fred took over the business. The store was located on the corner of S. Webster and W. Huron where Sherm's Supermarket parking lot is now. Fred continued in business until his retirement in 1922.

*in 1922*  
 E.C. Heuer--Heuer bought the Charlesworth business and was in business for several years.

Emerson Bronson, an Omro native, was an Omro Undertaker for many years. His first place of business was near the Chase Jewelry Store, but only for a short time. His Funeral Home was in a part of his residence at 425 Jefferson Ave.

*MSB*, During these earlier years funeral customs were somewhat different than now. There were no funeral "parlors" or "Homes". Funeral services were conducted mostly in the residences of the deceased. If a church service was held the corpse still would lay in state at the home until time of the church service. Always two neighbors would sit up each night in the house where a corpse lay until the day of the funeral.

When a corpse lay in state it was customary for the mortician to hang on or near the front door of the home a wreath with black ribbon streamers for an adult, white ribbons for a child.

A corpse brought to the village for burial in Omro would lay in state in the "morgue" as it was called; the building was west of the Charlesworth furniture store which also held a choice of coffins.

Women in mourning always dressed in black with a heavy black veil draped over or around the edge of the black hat. Men oftentimes wore a black arm-band.

Letters mailed to relatives and friends telling of a death in a family were placed in envelopes edged in black. There was a popular song of years ago entitled "The Letter Edged in Black"; it was a real tear-jerker.

Funeral directors as a rule, and other firms as well, used to supply the churches with hand fans of cardboard with wooden handles for hot weather use. A pretty picture or scene on the front with "Compliments" of such and such a firm printed beneath was for advertising purposes.

Arthur Birch attended Whitewater Normal. *M.V. 71. 11/27/15.*

Emil E. Henry was a druggist in 1888. *(Sent. C. 17 B) State*

*Aug 8* J.P. Plansky--He bought out E.C. Heuer who moved away from Omro. Mr. Plansky came to Omro with his family on March 17, 1925. The Plansky home was first at 221 E. Huron. Later at 131 Madison Ave. They had the Funeral Parlors in the front part of the residence. Their furniture store was on the corner of W. Huron and S. Webster.

Roy Plansky eventually took over his father's business. After Emerson Bronson's death Roy purchased his home, at 425 Jefferson which was Emerson's residence and Funeral Home combined. Now the Plansky Funeral Home is at that address. The furniture store was torn down about 1968 to make way for the Supermarket parking lot. At that time Roy went out of the furniture and floor covering business. Roy sold to Siefert of Oshkosh in 1978. Roy was 9 years of age when the family moved to Omro. Now back to Omro druggists again--

Minor Lloyd was another druggist, about 1902, wife Gloria. A.M. Hrubesky came later.

Clayton Stearns--took over the drug store in 1925 and continued in business until 1972 upon retiring. Mr. Schmitt of Merrill, Wis. purchased the business in 1972. Then sold to Draize in 1976. He sold.

Above the drug store was the office of Att. Hurlbut, and later Rodney Alder. Then Arthur Birch with accounting after Rodney's health forced him to retire from his law practice. Now the office is occupied by Att. James Marquardt.

The other rooms at one time were occupied by Dr. Russell as his office. And later by Dr. Quincy Danforth. It is now a family apartment.

*1888. E. and E. Henry*  
J. & S. Drug Store.--Opened in Feb of 1939. Owners Oswald Johns and Dr. Schoenbechler. The location was where Pelton & Co. had their grocery department. In October of 1944 B.W. Gris (*D.M. 10/26/44*) wold, Ph. R., took over management. He had the distinction of being issued the first certificate in Wisconsin under the Pharmacy Act in 1882. A laundromat occupied the store after J & S. went out of business.

So Druggists and Doctors dispensed pills, patent panaceas and prescriptions; yet back in the good old days they had competition.

*m.j.s.* A most celebrated and amusing non-human resident of Omro was found in the drug store of Clayton Stearns. It was a caged Mina bird by the name of "Stearnsie". He would occasionally send out a resounding wolf whistle to one entering the store or croak out a "Hello". On occasion he would admonish a customer to "Don't just stand there-- buy something"! Then again one would hear a raucous "Shed up!" Besides other amusing expressions, Stearnsie could give forth a laugh which was an imitation of its owner. More often he would remain as silent as a tomb. Stearnsie's admirers were many in number while he occupied his niche in the store. Stearnsie would also inquire, "Are you up for all day?" and send forth perfect "wolf whistles."  
*Good morning*

## MEDICINE SHOWS

Medicine shows were popular for many years. The troupes would travel from town to town. Liniments, cough syrups, health tonics, corn remedies, snake oils, and elixirs seemed to be the most popular sales pitch.

One medicine show in particular that came to Omro featured an unusual attraction. On Saturday night, to the man with the biggest feet, a pair of shoes was given free. During the week the men with large feet were registered as to name and a foot measurement recorded.

When Saturday night arrived, size 12 foot won and the winner was admitted free of charge. At the close of the show he received his pair of shoes free. He was compelled to open the box on stage. In the box was a pair of--baby shoes!

*My S.* At one time a Pony and Dog show was held after the turn of the century, in the vacant lots south of E. River Drive across the street from 313. This was about 1915. To attract passersby a "Punch and Judy" puppet show was performed in a narrow booth standing half way between the roadway and tent. With hand puppets and raucous voices Punch with his club and Judy dodging it, kept up a continual to-do and come-hither performance.

*Mrs. Stearns* Entertainments at the Opera House also had interesting stunts. For example, some tickets purchased bore lucky numbers. One holding the lucky number was entitled to have a tooth extracted free of charge. And, furthermore, the tooth pulling was performed on stage before the entire audience!

*Mrs. S.* Another Medicine show featured Kickapoo Indian remedies. This was held in Bushnell Hall. A contest was held to select the prettiest girl in Omro. The winner was Bonnie Hoover (later Mrs. Willis Rhoda), and the prize was a gold watch.

*Mrs. S.* Another exciting event in connection with the show was the fact that H.C. Scott's daughter Susie married the show manager and left Omro. However, the love-at-first-sight marriage turned out to be a happy one as was proven years later. Susie's sister Amy Scott married Del Livingston, the local depot agent. H.C. Scott had a son, Russell.

HATS

Time was when a woman never left the house without donning a hat. In fact, she would "as live be caught dead" as bareheaded. So there were Millinery Shops.

One of the earliest was in 1858, and was operated by the Shafer sisters. Their shop was on the second floor of their brother George's store on the corner of Division and Water streets.

*at list - p. 40  
11/16/31  
Edel Binkley*

*Shop over  
7.7 Frank stn.  
The Omro  
Republican.  
Vol. # 40  
May 1858*

Mrs. M.M. Newton on West Division has been mentioned.

Mary Burrows, another milliner advertised hats in an 1858 newspaper, Hudson & Barnes in the Putnam Elock sold hats.

Mrs. Edw. Jones, another milliner sold hats in her home. This was later the home of Julia Hinderman on the northeast corner of Ontario and Michigan. Mrs. Jones made all of the hats herself according to her customers desires. In August of 1894 she sold her stock of hats to Mrs. Fred Bunker. (O.H. 9/3/33)

*at list - p. 43  
11/16/31*

A Mrs. C.W. Jones is listed as a milliner in an 1880 Omro Directory.

Mrs. Waite was in the millinery business in 1897, but no location is mentioned.

Mrs. Belle Hoover and daughter Bonnie (Mrs. Will Rhoda) were well known milliners during the 1890s and early 1900s. They had a shop on the west side of S. Webster, in the first block from Main Street. It was a small shop next door south of the Chase Jewelry Store. Some recall they sold candy there, too, at one time.

Mame (Mrs. James) Everts had her shop where Mrs. Hoover was formerly located. Then later she moved her hats into her home on the corner of Ontario and Jefferson streets. In 1930 she added a line of coats and porch frocks. Mame's shop was the last millinery store in the village. (O.H. - 5/5/30)

Alta Malnory sold hats in connection with her beauty parlor at 548 E. Main in the 1960s.

The "Dime Store" had a small supply also until hats went out of style in the late 1960s.

DRESSMAKERS

*m.s.*

There were dressmakers in Omro for ready-made garments were a rarity. Very little of that occupation has been recorded. The first ones may have been the Shafer sisters in connection with their hat shop in the 1890s.

Mrs. Emma Allen was a seamstress who lived at what is now 420 S. Webster.

Mrs. O. Barlow on E. Main and Mrs. Blanchard who lived where the Bennett brothers resided on Madison Avenue, now torn down, were dressmakers.

Mrs. James (Etta) White on E. Huron did dressmaking in the early 1900s.

Mrs. Maude Evans in the 1930s and also, (O.H. - 2/23/33)

Mrs. Hattie Zager in the 1960s.

Mrs. Grace Bennett also worked at the trade while in Omro.

*Hazel Hoyer*

Hazel Hoyer's mother, Mrs. Libby Luscombe, was a dress maker and in the turn of the century era hired 3 to help with the sewing. She recalled 2 of them, Mrs. Emmett (Florence) Sheldon, who lived near by on E. Main, then Water St. and Eliza Sullivan who lived on the north side. The other Hazel thought was a Jane Denison.

## BARBERS

More of the earlier barbers of Omro besides John Everts were--  
 Mr. Loomis, with his shop near the Telephone Exchange.  
 W.R. Dake advertised his barber trade in a 1910 newspaper.  
 James Everts, son of John, was also a well known barber here. Jim  
 and Mame had one son, Clair. At one time Everts shop was on  
 W. Main, then he moved to S. Webster.  
 Chas. X. Fowler worked with Jim Everts at the barber trade. And at  
 one time was in partnership with Clyde Mitchell.  
 Herb Challoner had a shop in the same place in later years.  
 Clyde Mitchell had his barber shop on the north side of W. Main  
 in the Mitchell building that was formerly his father Frank  
 Mitchell's. He carried on the barber trade until his death  
 in November of 1972. Clyde was the agent for the King Laundry,  
 Oshkosh for many years with pick-up headquarters in his barber  
 shop. (Omro Journal 4/23/53.)

24-11/17/32) In December of 1932 the barbers of Omro decided on new low  
 prices at all shops. They were as follows: Hair cuts, 25¢; Shave,  
 15¢; Tonic, 15¢; Shampoo, 25¢; Massage, 35¢. This was during the  
 depression days.

A price adjustment later in the month suggested that either  
 the barbers were losing money at those prices or else the trade  
 was exceptionally good. The price of a hair cut was raised to  
 35¢ and a shave to 20¢. (O.M. 12/15/32.)

Adolph (Al) Kraft, barber, came here in 1969. He retired in the  
 early 1970s.

## INSURANCE AGENTS AND ATTORNEYS

Several Insurance agents and Attorneys have been mentioned  
 previously. Others well known in early days were--  
 Geo. E. Morton, Att., who was also a Conveyancer and Notary Public.  
 A Conveyancer is a person who does drawing of deeds and other  
 writing for conveyance of Property.

E.D. Shipman was another Conveyancer and Justice of the Peace.  
 Also, "All pension business promptly attended to," as adver-  
 tised in a local paper.

(more back of this pg. 141.)

24-11/17/44) - Insurance business was a flourishing vocation in Omro as early  
 as 1865. As an example, The Phoenix Insurance Company had a repre-  
 sentative in Omro beginning in 1865. Mr. S.H. Cady was the first  
 agent, exact date not available. The successors following were--

S.W. Race - Oct 13, 1865  
 C.E. Phelps - Apr 19, 1867  
 Phelps & Hayward - March 19, 1868  
 Frank Hayward - July 21, 1868  
 Hayward & Foster - Dec 1, 1876  
 Geo. E. Banks - Dec 20, 1877  
 Jno. T. Orchard - Apr 17, 1888  
 John D. Treleven - May 15, 1905  
 J.S. Shelp - Feb 27, 1919

1876 - G. Carter, att. according to P. Wright - att. 5/7/31.  
 J.T. Orchard--About 1900 he carried on a Fire, Life & Accident  
 Insurance Agency with that of Justice of the Peace, Notary  
 Public and Conveyancer. Later he located at 110 E. Main.

24-11/17/44) - 1/21/12 - 1/1/30

*more pg. 171.*

Abner K. Brush carried Wisconsin Farmer's Insurance Co. insurance.  
His advertisement--We offer good fire protection on your farm  
buildings. Ca. 1870's.



Here a platform scale was in front of his office where the public could weigh a load of produce. John T. Orchard was born in England in 1849. He came to Omro as a young man. In company with John D. Treleven he engaged in the clothing and tailoring business. Later he disposed of the clothing business and opened an Insurance office. He also served on the County board. Mr. Orchard was also Clerk of Omro board of Education. He died February 4, 1912. His home was at 406 E. Ontario.

Emmett T. Sheldon in earlier years was a Collection and Real Estate Agent. "Real Estate bought and sold, houses to rent, collections made at reasonable rates, and money to loan on good security. Office at residence on Water Street." So ran an ad in an 1894 newspaper.

Willis Wheeler--Real Estate, Fire, Life Accident & Tornado Insurance Agent. His office was opposite Omro Bank at least in 1894.

Parker (W.P.) Bussey had his Insurance Agency in the building at 110 E. Main, possibly during 1919 to 1945 at least. (O.H. - 11/2/44.)

Frank B. Keefe, Attorney hung out his shingle in later years. His office was over the Post Office on Main St. in rooms that Dr. Doll occupied afterwards. Keefe eventually went to Oshkosh to continue his law practice. While in Omro he lived in a new home built by L. Williams at 130 W. Huron. Frank was the son of Tom Keefe. He became state Congressman from the 6th District for 12 successive years; he was President of Omro village in 1912. In 1926 Frank Keefe was Winnebago County District Attorney. He was a forceful speaker. (O.H. - 2/7/52.)

George B. Davidson--Insurance Agent in the 1920s and 30s.

Tony Kolbus and Son (Leonard), Real Estate and Insurance Agency is located at 110 E. Main. Has been in business since 1932.

John B. Sheerar --He entered the Insurance business in Omro after retiring from the post of Rural Mail Carrier. He represented the Sullivan Agency of Oshkosh in 1937. George "Cy" Sullivan of the firm was an Omro native, the son of Frank Sullivan. Cy died in October of 1975.

Covey & Lounry--Insurance agents. Office over Stearns & Calhoon Grocery on the corner of N. Webster and E. Main. (O.H. - 3/12/30.)  
1930 to 1960--Harold Patri, Northwestern Life Insurance Co. Agent. (O.H. - 1/26/33.)  
1934--R.A.Doms sold his Insurance Agency to Sherm Barnard. (O.H. - 4/17/34.)  
1953--Crane Agency--Richard Crane Insurance agent.

AUCTIONEERS

- Local auctioneers were: W.S. (Will) Stewart for over 30 years. + Presently, Tony Kolbus and Freund Brothers.

(O.H. - 4/17/34.)  
(O.H. - 8/25/32.)

dit  
AK IV P. 17  
1/30/12  
15B

AK IV P. 15B  
17  
1/30/12

daily n.w. 8/3/14.  
AK IV P. 13

AK IV P. 31  
daily n.w. 1912

O.H. - 9/12/37

AK IV P. 31  
daily n.w. 12/13/12

## STORES

More stores in the early 1900s were--

Gensch Bros. Hardware, Ernst and Fred. They were located where the Gamble Store is now. The brothers and their father started in business here in 1910. The brothers continued, in all, 34 years. In 1930 it is apparent that horses were still a popular means for travel and for farm work. Gensch Hardware Co. ran this ad--  
 Brass trimmed harness - \$75. - nickel trimmed - \$75.  
 Black, Iron Hames - \$65. - Plain Trim Wood Hames - \$60.  
 Collars - \$3.00 to \$8.50 - Sweat Pads - 75¢ to \$1.25.  
 Gensch Bros. went out of business after filing bankruptcy in June of 1937. (C.#. - 6/24/37.)

Omro Co-operative Shipping Ass'n.--It was organized by area farmers June 15, 1920, the stock was purchased by the area farmers. A.C. Birkholz of Tigerton was hired as Manager and held that position until the store was sold in 1966. For the general store a building on the north side of W. Main was rented, one part for groceries (Treleven Electric now) and the other part (Now Banner Variety Store) for dry goods and men's wear. A wide door was between the two departments.

A warehouse for feeds, fencing, salt, twine, in other words farmers supplies was built directly south of the C.M. & St. Paul depot. A weigh scale was immediately east of the east warehouse doors. Coal bins to the south of the warehouse across w. Ontario. Stock yards west of the railroad tracks. In the late 1920s the shipping of livestock was fazed out. So was the buying of bran and feeds in carload lots ordered by the stockholders.

In 1923 the Henry Siefert grocery store on the corner of E. Main and S. Webster was purchased by the Co-op. After natural gas line was run through Omro in the mid 1960s the wood and coal trade ended. Mr. Oscar Swisher was manager of the Co-op coal yards for many years. In fact, until he was 85 years old. The organization was at 100 E. Main until Oct. 12, 1966 when the store went out of business. The building was sold to Leonard Kratz. The warehouse was sold to Potratz.

L. Kratz stocked the former Co-op store as a Variety Store and was in business but a short while when he sold to Shertz Knitting Goods. After a year or so Shertz moved his stock to Oshkosh. The building was left vacant. The first of April 1975 marked the re-opening of the former Co-op by the Gary Shettle Furniture Store. October of the same year he went out of business. A dentist of Crandon, Dr. M.L. O'Brien purchased it and opened up for practice February of 1976.

The following pages show the business houses about 1914 to 1920.

m.g.s.

BUSINESS PLACES 1914-1920

W. Water (W. Main)

- W -

dw.

dw.

dw.

dw.

cong. church

dw.

LIVERY STABLE

MAIN ST.

dw.

dw.

Weingarten

TIRES

SALON BATTERIES

SALOON

LAMBRECH FLAT

MORQUE

GLINES SALOON

HPWC.

JEVERET BARBER

BOWLING ALLEY  
O. JOHNSON

Cole Dry Goods

HOOVER HATS

CHASE JEWELRY

Telephone Exchange

Gem Theatre

CHARLESWORTH FURNITURE

E. BRANSON SHOE REPAIR

PRATT LIVERY

LARRABEE HOTEL

J. BENNETT TAILOR

G. BROOKS SEED, FEED & MEAT

POOL HALL

MITCHELL BARBER

OMRO BAKERY

CO-OP

STORE

O. LARRABEE STORE

BERRY & SCHMIDT GROC.

RESTAURANT  
FOUNTAIN INN

W. WATER ST.

FOX RIVER

CAD CLARK ISLAND

G.A.R. HALL

W. DIVISION ST.

H. SIEFERT GROC.

PRINTING OFFICE  
EARELE GARAGE  
PARTS  
W.R.E HALL

STEARNS & CALHOON GROC.

PAULIMES Office

MILL

BENNETT GROC.

East Water Street (E. Main) continued

HODGKINSON PHOTO GALLERY

ATKINS IMPROVEMENTS

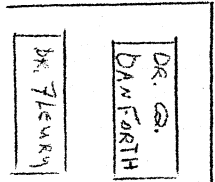
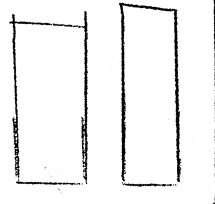
DR. G. DANFORTH

DR. G. DANFORTH

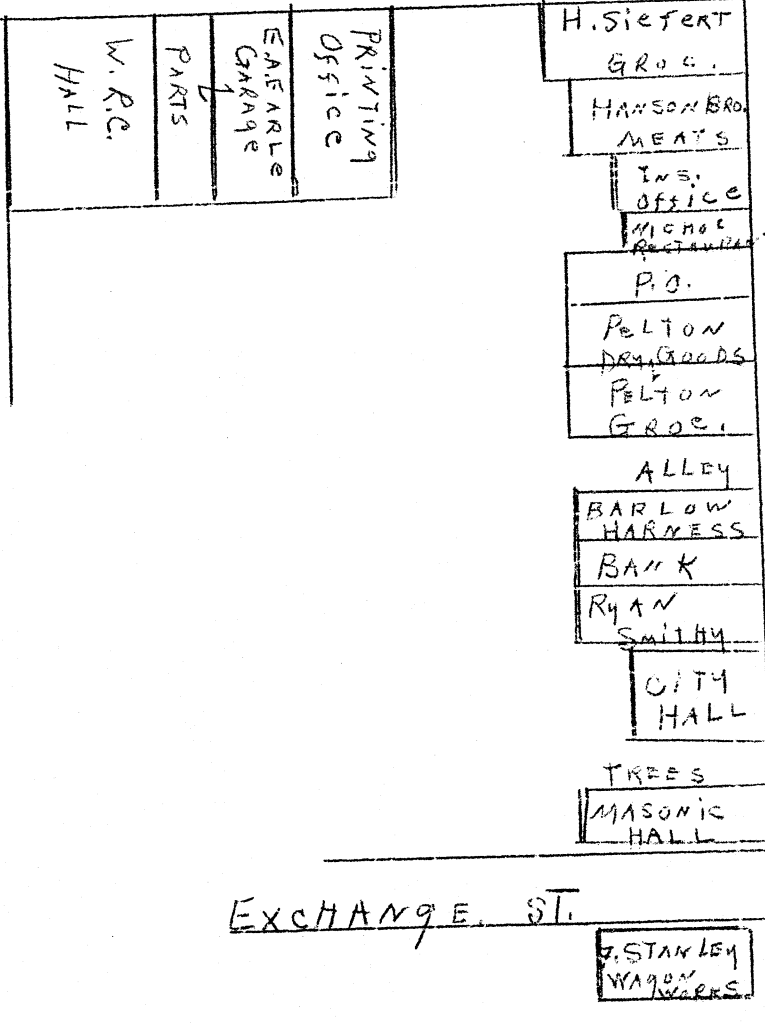
m.s.

BUSINESS PLACES 1914-1920

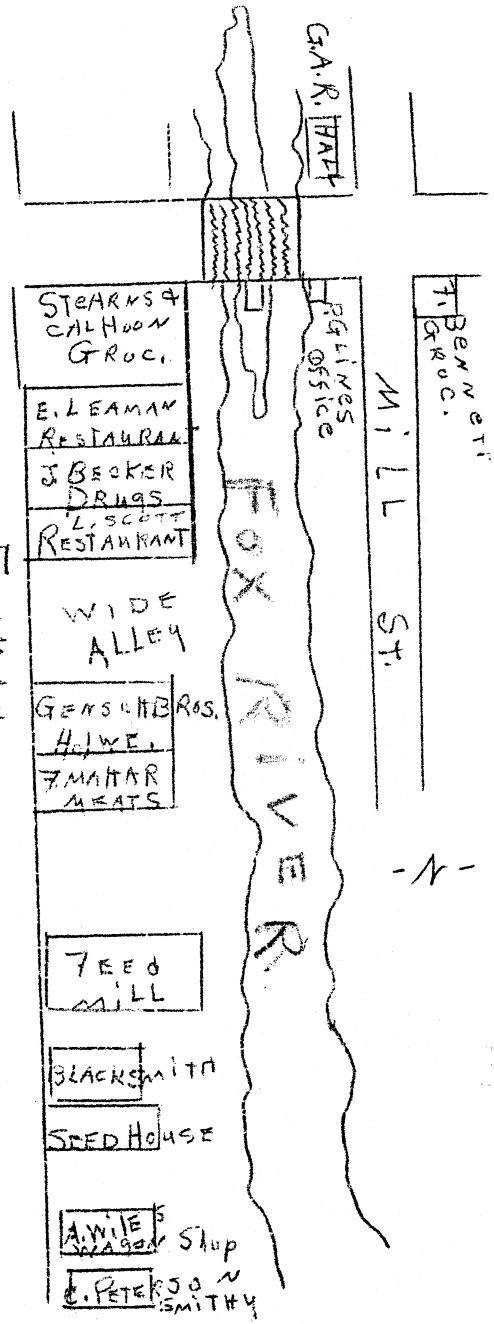
E. Water street (E. Main)



W. Division ST.



EXCHANGE ST.



E. WATER ST.

-5-

-4-

-E-

Other stores of the early 1900s were--

*Walter Burgeon  
died Sept 13, 1963*  
Calkins Hardware--Where Peter's Plumbing is now. Articles of incorporation of the Calkins Hardware company of Omro were filed in August of 1930. Incorporators were LaFayette A. Calkins (O.H. - Aug 7, '30) Leslie C. Goss and Frank B. Keefe. Later they moved to the Zweiger Hdwe. location. *Calkins came to Omro in 1925. (O.H. - 8/3/23.)*

*O.H. - 4/9/31*  
An ad in a local April 1931 paper was for oilstoves. What a blessing were the kerosene oil stoves, especially in the summer! No more roaring wood burning range to make a kitchen as hot as the oven itself. The most popular make and the one advertised was the Perfection Oil Stove. Calkins prices were: 3 burner cabinet, complete - \$30.00. 4 burner cabinet, complete - \$37.75. 5 burner, built in oven, full porcelain enamel - \$85.00. Separate ovens, for 1 burner, \$1.39. Separate ovens for 2 burners - \$5.00 to \$5.75.

*Super market built Aug - 1961*  
Stearns & Calhoun Grocery--Russell Sullivan bought them out in Feb of 1945. Sherm Kautza Grocery was located there until he moved in the former Kroger Store building, now the Liquor Store. *Kautza came in 1949. died Aug 12, 1967. (O.H. - 9/22/32)*

*W. Broder*  
E.A. Earle--His store was north of the W.R.C. Hall. Sold milking machines and parts. He had a coal yard, and grain elevator. Earle was a dealer in agricultural implements, grain, hay, and coal. Eugene (Gene) Earle came to Omro in 1864. He operated grain elevators in Waukau, Fisk, Allenville, and Larson, with grain, wood and coal elevators in Omro.

*O.H. - 9/8/32*  
Bruce Carter worked for Earle and in 1932 took over the business. This included ice, coal, farm implements and garage. Also to haul freight and express. The Early Settler recalls that "E.A. Earle had the first gas buggy in town and in those times driving horse and buggy one would turn out, clear in the ditch." (Illinois drivers were always referred to as "road hogs." They were the first out-of-state cars on our highways. They really acted as though they owned the roads.)

*O.H. - 4/10/30*  
Earle was an Oldsmobile auto agent. In 1930 he advertised a 2 door Sedan for \$895., f.o.b., Lansing, Mich. spare tire and bumpers extra. *Geo. Turner was another employee.*

*Coal built the home at 353 Jefferson ave. in 1922 (O.H. 1/10/22.)*  
Other coal dealers were:

*O.H. - 11/1/34*  
Chas. H. Stevens, for 43 years until his death in October of 1934.

*O.H. - 9/13/34*  
The Co-operative Shipping Ass'n.

Earl Baldry in the 1930s.

Chas. Gilbert, at the former Stevens yard was the last local dealer of coal in Omro.

#### MORE BUSINESS HOUSES

John Berry Grocery--was located on the north side of W. Main. Henry Siefert & Son (Robert)--at 100 E. Main. A Grocery store. Mr. Siefert left Omro in 1923. *(O.H. - 8/24/33.)*

*Walter D.P. 4/7/31*  
John Bennett--Tailor. Moved his fixtures from his Oshkosh tailor shop to Omro in 1914. Mr. Bennett was born in Southwick, England in 1871. He came to America when 18 years of age. *(O.H. - 12/19/21) & 2/12/31*  
His shop was located where Lyle Johnson & Son TV and Radio shop was located. Bennett also was owner and manager of the Gem Theatre at one time. He died in February of 1931.

*O.H. - 4/26/31*  
Mrs. Carrie Wiles in 1931 was at the Tailor Shop to do cleaning, pressing and all kinds of repair. This was after Mr. Bennett died, she having worked for him in his shop.

*O.H. - 2/26/31*

(O.H. - 4/26/34.)  
K. Brunk

John Gomer Howell purchased the F. Cole Dry Goods Store in 1911. He was in business here 4 years. His wife was the former Mary Morton who died in March of 1975 at an advanced age.  
Frank Mahar & Geo. Clark Grocery--in a part of the I.O.O.F. building in 1924.

(O.H. - 4/26/34.)

H. - 4/26/45.  
" 8/27/31.)

Frank Mahar Grocery store--in 1929 after retiring as Postmaster, located in the I.O.O.F. building in 1938. He was also an Insurance Agent and was City Assessor for 2 years.

H. - 1/1/22.  
O.H. - 1/1/22.

Rob Schmidt Grocery--He and wife Pansy (Berry) were located on the north side of W. Main about 1922. "When my father would buy groceries in Rob's store after he went in business by himself, Dad paid cash (which he did in every store) and as a reward for cash Rob always included a small sack of candy. Other stores were in the habit of giving a candy reward for a big order which was more often than not put on the books. In those days cash was preferred to credit. *Rob was in business with his father - in-law, John Berry at one time.*

H. - 2/1/51.  
W. Brunk

Fred Blumenberg Food Market--in the late 1930s. Stearns, Sullivan & Calhoon were in the grocery business about 1919.

" Casey

Cornelius Andringa, who bought out Fred Blumenberg (O.H. - 11/3/38.)

O.H. - 12/23/51.)

O.H. - 5/21/31.)

Chas. & Rowena Chase, at first in a part of Pelton's former grocery. Then in 1937 they bought the People's Bank building. Later they sold to George Brown of Milwaukee. (O.H. - 3/2/33.)

Bertholdt Koenemann, north side of W. Main. Bought out Rob Schmidt in May 1931. *Sold to Geo. W. Brown of Milwaukee in Sept 1932. (O.H. - 9/2/32.)*

Irv & Sherm Stiller at one time where the V.F.W. Hall is now. Later Sherm and Helen Stiller ran it. Mr. Dobbs bought out Stillers during the 1960s.

Dave Morgan operated a Freezer Locker Plant where the Friendly Tavern is now. He was in business for several years.

Hansen's Food Market in the 1930s. (O.H. - 10/8/36.) *Left Omro Feb 4 1938 (O.H. - 2/10/38.)*

Dora Posorske Neary and Polly Beck had a dress shop, the Polly-Dora Shop in 1936. It was in the other part of Pelton's, too. It closed in late October of 1938. (O.H. - 10/13/38.) *about 1936 at least.*

Lorenz 5 & Dime Store--the first Dime Store in Omro. Joseph Lorenz sold to John and Mona Zack. Now it is the Banner Store, Verna Hanson, Mgr.

H. - 5/27/45.

Gordon Moran's Radio Service, was between the Co-op Store and The Omro Herald office. Later it was occupied by Ted Zentgraft who had a repair shop. The building burned down.

H.W. Koehn, did electrical wiring.

(O.H. - 7/2/31.)

M.H. Hertzberg advertised as proprietor of an Electric Shop in 1931.

W. Brunk

Kroger Grocery--on the corner of Webster and Main, former Fountain Inn. Mr. and Mrs. Otto Meyer were managers. This was during the 1920, 30s, and 40s.

P. 36A

*Rob Schmidt's father-in-law John Berry (Rob married Pansy Berry.)  
Lyle Johnson's son Radio 4 TV Shop, sold as a residence by son Chas. about 1970.*  
RESTAURANTS

O.H. - 1/1/32.)

Restaurants at one time or another and not mentioned before were--

Mrs. Benedict Restaurant, east of the old City Hall in the 1860s. She was Chas. Cope's sister.

W. Brunk  
Page 35

E.A. Leaman--Palace Restaurant on Water Street, in 1894 where the Variety Store is now, later in the east part of the present Drug Store. Then at another time in the front half of what is now Charley's Tavern. *In 1894 in Variety Store location. (now Charley's Tavern)*

O.H. - 5/1/44.)

Schwartz Restaurant in the 1940s and 50s. It was on the corner of W. Main and S. Webster. (Charley's Tavern site)

Bob Ames, where Mrs. Hoover had her hat shop. He sold to Bob Chatterton.

bought from Scott.

(O.H. - 9/18/30.)

W.G. Ransom operated an ice cream and soft drink parlor in the 1930s.  
Allie Leaman, managed a restaurant next to drug store. Died 12/30/5.. He died  
Lyman (Tige) Scott's restaurant former Ceramic shop. Died. (O.H. - 1/3/52.)

Lillie Lockwood  
4/23/32 (1912)

Will Nichol and his brother Clayton had a candy shop and ice cream parlor west of the old Post Office on E. Main during the early 1900s. His daughter Hazel graduated from O.H.S. in 1915. Mr. Nichol sold to S. Leighton in 1914. MSBK 6/4/18, 2/3B MSBK IV last p. (M.V. 6/4/18)  
Fred and Lillie Lockwood had a restaurant for many years. It was in the I.O.O.F. building, next to the Bakery. Lockwoods opened their restaurant early in 1922. The devastating sleet storm of February 22nd was a boon for their new enterprise, also that of the hotel. Servicemen galore came to the area to repair damages. All lines were down so that electricians and telephone servicemen were called in. It took months before the storm damage was finally repaired. So the restaurant became a thriving business, and the hotel had its rooms filled to capacity for the duration. It's an ill wind----they say. (M.V. 3/27/18)

2/24/31  
2/25/32

Thompson Restaurant was in a part of the Fountain Inn, west section, in 1931.

George Herrick also had a well publicized restaurant in connection with his saloon. Located where Charlie's Tavern is now. He was in Omro 11 years. He died in 1939. (O.H. - 7/27/39. obit)

Hugo E. Schmidt--His was the Universal Grill. He went into bankruptcy. In June of 1930 he sold to W. Arnold. The location was the east half of the present Drug Store. (O.H. - 6/24/30.) (O.H. - 10/16/30.) 1930 the Bell family "The Bakery"

Pool Hall--For many years it was located in the west half of the Frank Mitchell building with Mitchell, proprietor.

Ed Leaman  
(O.H. - 3/8/34.)

Ed Leaman was supposedly the first pool hall manager. Louis Worthman was during the 1930s. Later years Jerome "Jerry" Beck was manager. Now it is a Piazza Shop. The first managers were Wayne Zimmer and his brother-in-law.

Richard Crane purchased the pool Hall from Lewis Worthman in November of 1935.

11/21/35

1953--Mrs. Peterson closed the Dairy Bar due to illness. (Omro Journal 4/30/53.)

1967--Jerry and Sue Fink--have a restaurant on the corner of E. Main and N. Webster. Sold Sept 1980 to Allen Van Dyke.

? --Kozel's--The Family Restaurant on E. Main near the intersection of Maple Drive and E. Main. It was formerly A & W. Root Beer Stand, managed by Francis and Ruth (Chamberlain) Anderson. Sold 1978 to Mike

1953-1950--Craig North Side Grocery Store--now 111 W. River Drive.

1953-1953--Raff's Grocery Store. A general store. Also did upholstery. Site of Peters Plumbing.

1953--Skogmos Ready-Made wear for the family. Rose & Dennis LaHaie, proprietors. (Omro Journal 4/4/53.)

1949--Sherm's Grocery (Kautza)--First located where Fink's Restaurant is now. Then he moved across the street where the Liquor store is located, before building a Supermarket on Huron and S. Webster about 1968. In 1969 Sherm's Store was robbed of \$3,850.

store dedicated opened Nov 7-1968.

## MEAT MARKETS

Other meat markets not mentioned before are--

- W. Wheeler, 40 W. Main St. 11/16/31.*  
 Wm. E. Wheeler--operated a meat market in 1894 on the north side of Water Street.
- W. Quinlan, 40 W. Main St. 11/16/31.*  
 W. Quinlan was another early meat man located near the bridge. *W. Quinlan, 11/16/31.*
- W. Condon, 40 W. Main St. 11/16/31.*  
 T. Condon, his shop was on Water Street. *W. Condon, 11/16/31.*
- Frank Mahar--his meat market was where Gamble's show room is now, Mr. Mahar was also a cattle buyer. He had a slaughter house on the Poygan road. One time he bought a shipment of hogs from my father for shipment and quoted the price per cwt that he would give for them. The next time Mr. Mahar saw my father, he handed him a bonus check. The hog market had paid better on shipment, and he had passed on to Dad the benefit of the higher price instead of pocketing it himself.
- Clint Tice, 4/25/31.*  
 Clint Tice--his meat market where part of the Bowling Alley is now. He sold to Harry Stevens in June of 1931. *Clint died July 23, 1958.*
- Louis and Otto Hoger--had their market after Frank Mahar became Omro Postmaster. Called Hoger Bros. Market.
- Hanson Bros. (Irv and Harry)--had their meat market between the former Co-op Store building and Kolbus Agency. It later burned down before World War I. Then they located where Clint Tice had formerly had his market. *Irv bought out Harry (M. V. N. W. 10/21/16.)*
- Albert Stiller--operated a meat market in the 1930s in Mahar's former location. In 1933 he sold to H.W. Krause.
- Anton Bang, 12/10/36.*  
 Anton Bang Meat Market--He came to Omro in 1917 and built the cement block market east of the Drug Store in 1927. Since then the building has been a restaurant at one time and another since Mr. Bang retired in 1936.
- Harry Stevens--In September of 1931 he was located in the market where Clint Tice had his shop on the south side of W. Main. After 6 years, in May of 1939, Mr. Stevens moved across the street in what is now the V.F.W. Hall by buying out Chas. Chase Grocery formerly the Peoples Bank. He moved in one Sunday morning, the O.B.A. members helping him move. *(O. H. 4/13/39.)*
- 1932--K. Ellis had a meat market in Omro. *(Bought out Al Stiller)*
- 1933--Herman Krause market at former Mahar location until 1951. *Buy N. W. 1951*
- G.H. Barr, 4/23/53.*  
 1953--G.H. Barr--Omro Meat Market, Proprietor. Prices advertised *(O. H. 12/14/33)* per lb. as follows: Club steak, 49¢; Sirloin, 59¢; ground beef, 39¢; beef chuck roast, 45¢; slab bacon, 60¢; sliced bacon, 65¢. Rather startling prices compared with those of the mid 1970s.

## LUMBER YARD

*E. Bishop, 9/23/43.*  
 Omro Lumber Co.--Located at 520 W. Huron--The lumber yard at its present location was originally owned by H.C. Scott. It was purchased by Ed Jones from Scott's widow or the estate shortly after the turn of the century. At the death of Mr. Jones, his son, Charles took over the lumber yard business. Charles, after being in the lumber business for over forty years, sold to W.E. Calkins in September of 1943. Calkins in turn sold to I. Munding. Now the Omro Lumber Co. is managed by Mrs. Earl Miller (nee Sally Munding). *(O. H. 2/15/51)*



## SHOE REPAIR SHOPS

1900--Elmer Bronson--He was Emerson's father, and had a shoe repair shop on S. Webster.

1909--Severt Jensen, had a shoe and general repair shop. Mr. Jensen was born in February of 1856 in Copenhagen, Denmark and came to Wisconsin when 17 years of age. He came to Omro in 1909. His first shop was located north of Perry Glines's Justice of the Peace office at the north end of the bridge. Later he located on the south side, east of where the Gear and Machine shop is now located. Mr. Jensen was a favorite of youngsters for bicycle repairing. He was an efficient repairman. He died in April of 1935. (O.H. 4/18/35)

Oscar Johnson had a shoe repair shop on S. Webster in the former Hoover Hat shop next to the Chase Jewelry store. (O.H. 1934 + 1/26/33.)

Valentine Kloster--A shoe repair man in a small shop south of Charlie's Saloon. The shop was built by Willis Calkins.

Ernest Schafer--Shoe repairing, harness, and furniture upholstery.

First started business where Mrs. Hoover had her hat shop by buying out Oscar Johnson's Repair shop in February of 1934. (O.H. 3/1/34 ad.) Later he moved to W. Main, north side of the street in the building east of the V.F.W. Hall where the former People's Bank and Chase Grocery was located.

Liston Toms--Shoe repairing at first on the island in the former Dan Clark boat factory building. Later he worked in his home on Ontario, across the street from Mabel's Beauty Shop.

Pete Anderson--Shoe repair where Schafer had his shop on W. Main.

Perry Glines - Ruth Bennett recalls he repaired shoes in his shop at the north end of the bridge.

CORDWAINER - a leather worker - shoe maker, harness maker, etc.  
MORE BUSINESS HOUSES

Paul Edminster--Started his Sport Shop in the V. Kloster building after selling Paul's Garage. Later Paul moved to W. Main where his brother, Vinton Edminster had Vint's Body Shop west of the Loker Flat, in the east part of Paul's Garage. Paul, on retiring sold the business to D. & B. Sport Shop. The proprietors, David Daggett and Bill Stiller.

Frank Peters Plumbing. He bought out Omro Sheet Metal in August of 1937. Frank died 9/19/78.

1925--Mark Hinderman was manager of the first Gamble Store where E.C. Bronson was first located, on S. Webster. (O.H. 3/16/37. 14<sup>th</sup> Ann.)

1937--Wilbur Pratt bought out the Gamble Store in August of 1938. (O.H. 2/19/37.)

He moved into the former Gensch Hdwe Store. Pratt sold to Mr. Behnke. The Snowbergs are present Gamble store proprietors (X below)

Harvey Treleven--Treleven Electric Service. In June of 1945 Harvey, a descendant of an early Omro pioneer family, opened his electric shop where the Stiller Bros. were formerly located in the I.O.O.F. building. He presently handles appliances, does plumbing, wiring, installing and serviceing. Sold to King in 1977.

1953--Fix-It Shop was located on the corner of E. Main and Monroe after Dewey Hanson moved out of the building. Proprietors were Donovan Cundy and Marvin Axel. Besides repairing they did wall papering, painting, floors, and floor covering.

1953--Tony Switlick--Handled Berg barn equipment, cement steps, etc. His home and business is located on Poygan Ave.

X The Gamble store (former Gensch Hdwe.) burned down July 18, 1977. Judd Frees had an Auto Parts store in the east half.

Timothy S. Sheldon - 1815-1876

S.J. Sheldon (wife?) 1887-1906

on tombstone in Omro Cemetery.

In 1953 these notices appeared in the local paper: Lawrence (Bill) Domke, Village sanitation department announced that rates were raised 50¢ per month for collecting trash and garbage. Clarence Rankin, another collector ran a similar notice with the same raise. (*Omro Journal 4/30/53*) (Clarence died Apr 17, 1973.)

In early Omro not every home owner was blessed with a fountain on his premises, numerous as they were in the village and the surrounding area. Some needed wells for water supply. Other well drillers besides Parker and Allen were:

Dan Winchester who was an early Omro well driller.

John Martin, who lived on Pine St. was a well driller for many years.

Prior to this work he sold farm machinery where Ben Reid was later located. This was where the new City Hall stands.

*Wm. Burke*

### CARPENTERS

Houses and barns were needed for the incoming families settling in the village. So carpentering became a necessary trade.

*← Ruby B.*  
Timothy Sheldon, Emmett's father, was an early settler in the village. He built a house at 710 E. Main. When the road that is now E. Main was laid out he refused to move his house back out of the way from where the officers wished to build the road. The commissioners therefore curved the road to the north in order to by-pass it--as the house stands to this day--showing typical early Yankee independence! Timothy S. was born 1815, died in 1876. Wife S.J. was born in 1827 and died in 1908. (*On tombstone in Omro Cemetery*)

*one town meeting into house 1828*  
*DKI 12-18*  
*2/2/92*  
One exceptional carpenter and contractor was Levi Williams. (*O.H. - 9/29/32*) His father was Wm. Williams. Levi was born in 1848 and grew up on the farm north of the former Pingry School north of Omro on Hwy. 116. He became a carpenter and settled in Omro. He built houses on E. Main numbers 548, 540, 530, 520, 504, 304, and the farm house on the former W. Treleven farm now owned by Ed. Brooks, and others in this area. Also 130 W. Huron, 512 E. Main, he remodeled 245 E. Larrabee from a former school house. The home at 548 E. Main was built for him and his large family. Later years he lived at 304 E. Main. He was one of 11 children. Levi died in 1932. *9/22/32 O.H.*

Other carpenters were Alva Shepherd who lived on Scott Street east of the Catholic Church; Fred Root, lived on Piety Hill, southwest corner of Scott and S. Webster; Ephriam P. Stanton, 321 Jefferson Ave. Mr. Stanton was a charter member of the Omro Volunteer Fire Department. After serving nearly 40 years he was made an honorary member of the department. He died in January of 1939. (*O.H. - 1/19/39*)

Orley Mills who lived on Madison Ave. was a carpenter. Also Cal Root, Carl Hellwig, Frank Ginnow, and no doubt many others worked at the trade. Later year carpenters were Cary Bishop, Cleve Young, and Sherm Stiller, Howard Steineke.

## PAINTERS &amp; PAPER HANGERS

New houses and barns meant work for Painters and Paper Hangers. Their service is still in demand, as is that of carpentering.

Milo Bushnell had the first painted house in Omro. The color was put on by Geo. Wrightson, therefore he was the first house painter of the village. *W. Hist p. 3* and *(E. Hist p. 53.)*  
*(O.H. - 12/18/30)* and *(E.H. 11/16/37.)*

Early painters were Isaac (Ikie) Hammers who was a sign and house painter in the 1880s. James White was another one. Later he kept books for E.A. Earle. Harry Sheldon, 236 E. Main, was also an early photographer. Oscar Knolls, and later Geo. Shepherd both worked for Harry Sheldon. Jim Chamberlain on Waukau St. was a painter and paper hanger, his son Sheldon helped him. "Chick" Liddle worked at the trade, too. While painting on a house he would chirp like a chicken when children were passing by. It amused him to see them look for chickens near the house. He was a ventriloquist. One time in Siefert's grocery store after he had bought groceries, while walking to the door with his market basket, for in those days everyone took a market basket to a store for packages, he would chirp, and everyone would look in the basket expecting to see some chicks; the sound appeared to come from it.

Lewis Lindermer did painting and paper hanging in the 1930s.

In 1923 a paper hanger charged 50¢ per hour for his labor. *(Family History June 11, 1923)*

*W. Brooks*  
Bakery--The Odd Fellows in 1912 built an addition to their hall on the west side. Mr. Chas. Beer rented the first floor room and started a bakery, the first in Omro apparently. Later he sold it to Magnus Bartels. Then a son-in-law of E.P. Ferris, *M. Hist IV p. 63*  
*Family H. Nov. 2/3/14*  
Norman, ran it for awhile at least in 1916. After that Roy Shelp was Omro's baker for a number of years. Shelp in turn sold the business to Max Bieber in 1921. His son, Norman, is still running the Omro Bakery. *Sold to David Walker Apr 1, 1979.*

*Box III p. 7*  
Mr. Williams, a former teacher mentions, that in 1914 a Mr. Grout was the baker. The bakery location was not given. Mr. Grout, however, was a cheese maker by trade; he was born in 1858 in Poygan. He died February of 1945 at the age of 87 years.

*H. 5/7/3*  
*E. Hist.*  
*G. H. 11/30/39*  
Cheese Factories--

*E. Hist*  
*1914*  
Dave Grossman had his cheese factory on the corner of Madison and E. Larrabee where the house 456 Madison is now, his home was at 440 Madison. This was from 1870 or so until the early 1900s. Dave Grossman was born at Conrad, N.Y. in October of 1843. He came to Omro in 1871, and operated a cheese factory for 30 years. He died in 1932. *(O.H. - 4/27/32.)*

Euclid (Euch) Tritt's factory was in the building west of F. Butkiewixz shop. His next cheese factory was on Hwy. 116 between Omro and Winneconne. *N. V. Nov. 3/10/16*

## Photographers--

Records show that in 1876 W.H. Hilton dealt in photography. Also, Ellis Thompson was a photographer, and had a Photograph Gallery in 1880.

Harry Sheldon had a studio where later Ben Hinderman's was located. Ben Hinderman had his studio where the Telephone Co. Sub-station now stands. The studio was on the second floor, family living quarters on the first floor. Mr. Hinderman had a reed chair of elaborate design with ornate drapes for a background as props that he used for all of his photographs. He was in business from perhaps the late 1890s until in the 1930s. Mr. Hinderman died March of 1932. (O.H. 3/10/32.)

1953--Kenneth Raff advertised his Omro Art Upholstery department.

## Laundermat--

In the 1960s a laundermat was installed in the east part of the former Pelton Store, where the J & S Drug Store had been. Before the advent of commercial laundries women in the village could send their soiled clothes to a washer woman. One woman, a Mrs. Little, in town did a family wash for \$1.00. One would assume that that was the going price.

When the first laundermat, located in the old Pelton building left town, a new one was built later on in the eastern part of the city at 120 Harrison Ave. It is The Omro Fabricare Dry Cleaning & Laundry. Leo and Wanda Jess, Proprietors.

Beauty Parlors were a later innovation. Beauticians were--

Marjorie Deerstein Angell was one of the first, her shop in the back of Dora Loker's dress shop and later in a part of the present Drug Store, the east part.

Flora Baronowski of Oshkosh had her Cara Nome Beauty Parlor in a part of the Drug Store, Lucille Randall worked for her.

Alta Malnory was at 548 E. Main.

Judy Hanson bought Alta's shop about 1962, now Judy's Beauty Salon.

Mabel Kolbus Bartels at 145 E. Ontario, Mabel's Beauty Parlor. *Discontinued business in 3/21/80.*

Joyce Bradley Roberts at 412 E. Huron.

*Barbara Jeske?*

Former beauticians were Bob White, and another, Barbara Jeskey.

NURSING HOMES

*W.P.S.*

Mr. and Mrs. E.W. Griswold who had bought the C.D. Bowman house at 629 Madison Avenue, sold to Mr. and Mrs. James Davies of Berlin in September of 1953 as a Nursing Home. They cared for elderly men and women. After the death of Mr. Davies, Mabel, his wife, cared for elderly ladies only, until August of 1968, when she sold the house to an Oshkosh family.

Mrs. Evelyn Tice, R.N. after the death of her husband, Roy, established the Tice Memorial Home at her residence on E. Larrabee. She was left with three young sons to rear and educate. This Home she maintained for many years. She also cared for foster children until her retirement. Evelyn died Dec. 15, 1978.

Sophia Yorty, another R.N., after years of hospital duty at Baraboo, Wisconsin established a nursing home at her residence on S. Webster, mostly maternity cases. She continued nursing until her retirement. Sophia died in June of 1977.

Another nursing home of Omro for elderly persons was the one managed by Mrs. Emma Williams Relien in her home on S. Webster Ave. Emma died in the early 1970s.

*W.W. 6/16/38*

Still another home for the elderly was at 323 Jefferson. It was the house built by Eugene Earle, and sold to Mr. and Mrs. Geo. O. Seipp. Mrs. Seipp used it as a nursing home for a few years. *now Dr. Gray Clinic*

*M.V.*

Hattie Ginnow Hoover (Mrs. Leon) was an area R.N., capped in 1916.

*W.W. 6/28/16*

Mrs. W.H. Nourse was another Omro nurse.

*M.V. W.W. 3/7/16*

## ARTISTS

From practicality let us turn to artistry.

Many persons were talented with oils and water colors. A long ago instructor in oil painting was Mrs. Addie Ponds. My mother took lessons of her in the early 1890s. She had a studio in Omro. Lennie Bushnell painted Old Red Brick schoolhouse on souvenir bricks. She a cousin of Emma Stanley's mother.

Mrs. Brewer H. (nee Annie Reed) Bending was an artist in oils and chalk, and also an instructor. Her charge per lesson was 25¢. At that time she and her husband lived on the farm west of Omro now owned by James Quigley on the Waukau Road. In the 1920 era she sold many of her chalk paintings to persons in and around Omro for about \$5.00 a picture. She had pictures from calendars, or magazines as samples to choose from. She would then paint the chosen picture. A favorite was "Moonlight on the Lake". Others were "The Hunter's Cabin", and "The Sugar Bush". These were the favorites. Many are still hanging on the walls of older Omro homes. Mrs. Bending was born in N.Y. in 1860 and died in November of 1934. (O.H. 11/29/34.)

In the foyer of the Omro Theatre built by the O.B.A. there hung a large oil painting "Early Omro Trading Post". The work was done by Chris Olsen. During the WPA in depression era, he learned the fine points of the art. He was then a young man.

Chris Olsen was born April of 1905 in Oshkosh. Later, at different times he lived in Eureka, Omro and Berlin. His first painting given wide showing was "Covered Wagon." "The First House Built in Oshkosh" and "A Street in Oshkosh" appeared later. Other early pictures were "Spring Brook Road", "Yellow and Green", and "From Our Back Door."

"Omro Trading Post" now hangs in the Beckwith Room of the New City Hall because of the effort of Grace Stearns to save it from oblivion. Olsen went on to become a talented artist, particularly of "stills". Many of his works now hang in ABA buildings at Green Lake Baptist Assembly grounds. He attended the Baptist church while living in Omro as did his wife, daughter, mother and father.

Grace Stearns (Mrs. C.W.) is a present Omro artist. Some of her canvases hang in the Beckwith room of the New City Hall.

Lucy Stevens (Mrs. Harry) is another Omro artist who paints in oils. Lucy died January of 1975.

The Paint Pushers, a local art club, held public art shows in June since the early 1970s. Some have been held in the Omro Ball Park, and others in Scott Park. The exhibits included not only paintings but all manner of art crafts.

Another art, that of wood carving, is a hobby of Chet P. Pomeroy of the Winnebago County Bank, now retired. He has fashioned many interesting pieces of carving. His home is on E. Larrabee.

Also Gordon Stiller does beautiful wood carving.

O.H. - 7/24/30.)  
 (O.H. - 5/22/30.)

One who gained prominence as a cartoonist was Paul J. Clark in the 1930s. He was the son of Pettice Clark, and a graduate of the local schools. Paul became a popular entertainer with his chalk cartoons and clever lines of "patter" while sketching them.

Paul is on the staff of the Wisconsin Historical Society as is Dale Treleven, son of Harvey and Evalyn Treleven, oral history. (Dale to California in 1983.)

#### SARGEANT

Another early and familiar name in Omro was that of Sargeant. The following item was written by his daughter, Jennie Sargeant.

Edith Bishop "Edward Sargeant came to Wisconsin in 1856. He taught school at Lake, Milwaukee County for 2 years. He lived with an Uncle at Waukesha. Here he met Martha Austen, one of his pupils, also a native of Vermont. She came to Milwaukee when 6 years of age.

"Sargeant spent a year in Fairbault, Minnesota. He learned the cabinet-makers trade. He married Martha in 1863. They returned to Vermont for 3 years, where a daughter Marian was born. Then they came back to Wisconsin where he taught school and farmed in Winnebago County. This was about 1862.

"Hiram Johnson, a cousin of Martha's, had a lumber and shingle mill on the north side of the river in Omro. He offered employment to Sargeant. Martha's people bought land around here and her father gave her the house where Jennie Sargeant lived north of the river on the northeast corner of E. River Drive and Oak. They had 6 children in all, 5 born in Omro.

"Mr. Sargeant turned to farming as lumbering business declined and bought farms where his 2 sons worked and raised many sheep.

"He was ever interested in education. His children attended Ripon College, U. of Wisconsin and Harvard. He was on the school board 12 years, an executor of H. Webster's estate, was Treasurer of the Manual Training School board. Was in charge of equipment, etc. He was prominent in county affairs, financial condition of the village, interests, bonds. An intelligent citizen. He died January of 1918. He was at one time the Bank President."

"As saw mills closed and river rafts of logs disappeared, many saw the wealth of products of fertile fields.



"Mr. Sargeant who worked for H. Johnson at his sawmill saw the productiveness of the Fox river fields--so far in excess of his uptilted farm in Vermont.

"His memories of the Vermont home farm remained with him. A hospitable kitchen door to welcome guests. The door to the cool dark milk house. The jars and crocks of butter, milk and cream."

Sixty or so years ago, about 1913, Mr. Sargeant owned several lots at the corner of E. River Drive and Oak Street. He kept a cow as did many home owners, and retired farmers in particular. This was for their own supply of milk, cream, and butter. Very often they sold to neighbors, too. Mr. Sargeant had an orchard north and east of the house. With a scythe he would mow the June grass that grew among the trees for hay to feed the cow. There was also a green pickling pear tree in the orchard besides many apple trees. He also owned a small aced plot across the road and reaching to the river front or bayou. Occasionally this plot of ground was really an exciting place! also "Family Histories" p. 11 - O.H. 4/23/31.

#### CIRCUS

*April 26/30*  
What is more fun than a circus? Another circus of course. Omro had them back in the early days.

At least one circus was held in the vacant lots on the south side of E. River Drive, owned by Mr. Sargeant at that time. The lots are still vacant. An Omroite recalls the circus animals were led to the river's edge to water them.

*April 26/30*  
Other circuses pitched their tents in what is now, and was then, the Omro Ball Park. Circuses that came to Omro were Sells-Floto; Barnum & Bailey; Ringling Bros.; Hagenbeck and Wallace. In May of 1930 Sells-Sterling circus came to Omro, pitched their tents in the ball park. Admission was 25¢ and 50¢. (O.H. - 5/15/30.)

Later years when cars afforded transportation to Oshkosh, circuses set up tents there and Omro was left out of the picture.

*m.j.*  
Whoa up! Just a minute! At long last, in July of 1973 Omro again had a circus that came to town after a lapse of 40 or so years. The local Jaycees sponsored the King Circus Troupe. They set up their tents in the field at the intersection of S. Harrison and E. Scott streets. It was not as large, showy, or classy perhaps as the big tops but it was a circus with all the bally-ho, come-thithers, and clowns. It was a nostalgic experience for the oldsters. It was fun for the youngsters.

(over)

The Wadell home was on the east side of the street on the corner of Superior and Quincy, south of 310 E. Ontario where Myrtle Steineke now lives. A woman by the name of Flynn last lived in the Wadell house before it was torn down. East of Myrtle Steineke's lived Ida Grimes in a small house that has been torn down.

## THE 1860s

Directing our thoughts again to the early times, the 1860s were interesting as well as booming years for the village. In 1867 mastadon bones were found on Mill Street, now Monroe; another writer recalls the year as 1871.

The Early Settler and P.M. Wright have both recorded the find. In September of that year, some workmen digging a cellar drain for the residence of John Wilson found the bones of a mastadon!

*Wright quotes from "The Omro Times" - C.H. 2/26/31.*

"The tusks were the first portions exhumed. They were mistaken for petrified wood and the end of one which projected into the ditch was consequently struck off with a spade; soon, however, their true character was discovered, and by a little further digging two enormous molar teeth were thrown out. Subsequently the two huge tusks were removed from the soil, getting somewhat mutilated however by rough handling. They were of the enormous length of ten feet each, and one, eight inches in diameter. The teeth, of which four in all have been found are of immense size and in a perfect state of preservation, the enamel looking as hard and as bright as if but yesterday they were taken from their sockets. They measure on the crown nine inches in length and five in width, and nine inches from the crown to the ends of the fangs. They weigh eight pounds each. The teeth of this animal show that it belonged purely to the herbivorous species. They have the peculiar mastoid or nipple-like elevations on their grinding surface, from which the animal takes its name.

"The location of Wilson's home was near the old Wadell place on south up Mill street from the old woolen mill."

"The bones were placed in charge of C.W. Bushnell, and they were visited by hundreds. They were afterward exhibited in different places throughout the state, and were known as the Omro Mastodon." No one seems to know now what eventually happened to those findings. Could it be that there are still more bones in that area? *Some have heard that the bones are in the Milwaukee Museum? (more on pg. 314.)*

## HORSE AND BUGGY DAYS

*M.S. record  
C.H. 6/25/10*  
In the days of the horse and buggy, team and wagon, every place of business and nearly every residence had a "hitching post". Whether the "post" was lamp post, tree, fence post, or iron post it had an iron ring attached or a hole bored through it for the "tie strap" on the horses bridle.

Any post of wood was very apt to loose its shape for some horses were nibblers. They were either nervous, impatient, or just tired of standing. About the only thing a horse could do to relieve its feelings, besides pawing the ground with a fore foot, was with its teeth, and wood could be gnawed. Then again a horse found that a post owner wound it with wire which put a crimp in the nibbling.

Some iron posts had fancy ornaments on top such as a horse's head with the ring hung from the mouth, or a jockey holding the ring, and so on. In cold or rainy weather an owner would put a horse blanket on the horse to protect it from the elements.

## FRATERNAL ORDERS

Fraternal Orders were popular for sociability, entertainment, fellowship, a specific goal or in some instances, financial benefits. The earliest Fraternal organization recorded was in 1856 and started by Mr. Larrabee. It was the "Light Infantry". Dues were 25¢. They wore uniforms. Did it have to do with slavery and the eventual Civil War? One can surmise.

W. Brooks has noted that the Independent Order of Good Templars Hall was located north across the street from the new post office. They had a large membership and did much good.

*W. Brooks* This following information is from the I.O.G.T. record book of 1864. "There were 71 Charter members. The Bradish name was prominent. Also several Dagle sisters (Myrtie Bussey was one) were members. It was 'Fox River Temple' Omro Lodge #48, and was organized in 1864. The organization attacked liquor, and published records in the Omro Union paper. The members met first in Frank's Hall, above what is now Fink's Restaurant. They built their own hall later the same year."

An article about the same order is as follows-- *Omro Herald 3/20/30.*

In the decade following the Civil War, it was a popular thing in Omro to belong to the Fox River Temple of Good Templars. At the end of the first two months, the enrollment had grown from 71 Charter Members, to 124 in good standing. The membership was largely adult, including most of the business and professional men and their wives; but to the records of January 22, 1864, we find the motion was made and carried that "No person be received in this Lodge under 14 years of age."

From the weekly reports, the Order appears to have been prosperous financially. The receipts of the evening often reached \$20.00 although the dues were only .25 for each member a quarter. The bills allowed in the course of their business proceedings are interesting in comparison with present-day prices. One from Hollister and Co. for \$12.50 included  $\frac{1}{2}$  dozen tumblers, 1 pitcher, 2 hanging lamps, 1 can filled with kerosene, 1 side lamp, and 2 table lamps. \$6.55 to S. Hunter was for 2 tables and 5 chairs. D.J. Bardwell presented his bill for \$12.00 for a stove, pipe and zinc. \$3.00 paid for a cord of wood and the sawing of the same, while \$6.25 paid for three months rent of Frank's Hall. (A zinc was a large metal mat on which a stove rested. This caught possible hot embers that might accidentally fall from the stove to the floor otherwise setting fire to floor or carpet.)

"For 30 years the organization stood for the best in the village. Their loyalty and varied talents showed pride in their lodge. Names of many Veterans of War are on their records. In 1865 their Roll of Honor bore 35 names who had served their country."

*W. H. G. 26/30* As Fox River Temple of Good Templars was organized during the last years of the Civil War, the names of many veterans of that war appear upon its roster. In March, 1865, the following Roll of Honor was prepared and spread upon the minutes:

NAME	Company and Regiment		Remarks
R.C. Ames	C	41	Discharged
S.H.W. Cady	C	41	"
Peter Samphier			"
W.W. Race	C	41	"
F.R. Swain	C	41	"
W.J. Worden			Died in service.
David Lake	A	48	Discharged
Emmett Sheldon	C	41	"
M.M. George	A	48	Disch'd, Re-en.
G.C. Bradish	I	21	Discharged
Ezra Lake			"
Julius Hatch	A	48	"
M. McCall	A	48	"
<i>grus.</i> C.R. Olin	A	48	"
Wm. Kimball			"
Henry Wilcox	C	41, 48	"
J.W. Eaton	A	48	"
G.H. Clark	A	48	Disch'd Re-en.
H. Castle	C	41	Discharged
Walter Bishop	A	48	"
Wm. Soper			"
Chas. Remington	A	48	"
A. Corfee	C	41	"
W.A. Gidding			"
S.S. Gillam			"
T.S. Henderson	A	48	"
M. Silverthorn	A	48	"
W.W. Calhoun	A	48	"
Miles Knapp	A	48	"
C.T. Thompson	A	48	"
Sylvester A. Harter			"
T.F. Allen	A	48	Chaplain
L. Luther	A	48	Discharged
H.B. Chase	A	48	"
Ethan Bradish	A	48	"

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In 1868, the Fox River Temple of Good Templars considered the question of surrendering their charter to the Grand Lodge. When the motion was lost, "some voting both in favor and negatively" 46 members asked for withdrawal cards, thus forcing the surrender of the charter. The lodge immediately reorganized as the "Star of the West Lodge." Their meetings were held in Bushnell's Hall. Later the organization became "Omro Lodge." In 1898 they finally surrendered their charter to the Grand Lodge.

The I.O.G.T. building was used as the Omro Grange Hall as long as that organization existed. Meetings of many other groups also were held there, even after the W.R.C. bought the hall in March of 1925. For instance, the Omro Butter & Cheese Co. and the Omro Co-op Shipping Ass'n held their annual meetings in the hall.

The W.R.C. finally sold the building in the 1960s to Dorothy Fleming of the Friendly Tavern who had it <sup>town</sup> down.

*History of 32nd Division - Ask IV<sup>(town)</sup> p. 25 & 26  
at Ashkosh.*

Warren Brooks noted other Fraternal Orders that were popular during this era.

" The Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge #125 (I.O.O.F.) was instituted April 6, 1867. For quite some time they rented room for meetings. The first two-story building they were about to purchase burned down in 1881. They finally bought the vacated M.E. church building that stood at what is now 204 Jackson from N. Frank and moved it on their lot. They made it into two story building. This building burned in March of 1874. After renting the G.A.R. Hall they finally purchased a lot in 1890. In 1894 after much tribulation (a.N. - 8/3/33) they built the present brick building that now houses the Treleven Electric Service, and the Banner Store. In 1912 they added on what is now the Bakery. The upstairs rooms are the ones presently used by the Odd Fellow and Rebekah Lodges. Calista Rebekah Lodge #14 was instituted in February of 1872. *Pat Donegan of Poygan was the mason who built the I.O.O.F. brick hall. P.N.G. to left - opposite page.*

"Modern Woodman of America, Camp No. 1376, and the Auxiliary, Royal Neighbors of America, Silver Leaf #1412, met in rooms over what is now Fink's Restaurant and Sullivan's Dry Goods, known as Frank's Hall. It was an Insurance and Fraternal Organization. A large lodge, it did much good in the community. Our local lodge folded in 1933.

"Equitable and Fraternal Union, (E.F.U.) with the home office in Neenah. Also the Fraternal Reserve Association (F.R.A.) which later merged with the E.F.U., and now is the E.R.A. with offices in Neenah. They, too, were Insurance and Fraternal orders.

"Omro Masonic Lodge, No. 168, A.F. and A.M. was instituted about 1867. They and Palm Chapter, No. 43, Order of Eastern Star meeting in their own Hall at the corner of E. Main and Madison Ave. are active lodges."

*m.j.f.* An outstanding social event occurred October 2, 1948. Mary Jane Truman, O.E.S. member of Missouri, sister of Pres. Harry S. Truman, was the honored guest at an O.E.S. banquet in the local Masonic Hall. Everyone present had the opportunity of meeting Miss Truman. The dining room was filled to capacity with Palm Chapter members and guests.

Later years the O.E.S. has held annually a "Friendship Tea", honoring a certain member, members, or old-timers. They were delightful events.

*m.j.f.* In 1876 there was also a Musical Association, which did very well, having a membership of about 125, and out of debt, with money in the treasury, all during the same year. Few towns the size of Omro had as much musical talent, and the benefit of practice and instruction given by this organization proved itself in a marked degree.

*m.j.f.* Knights of Honor (K. of H.) No. 1355. All that is mentioned of them is that O.W. Babcock, was Dictator, and M.G. Bradt, Financial Representative. No one seems to know anything about this order.

A branch of the I.O.G.T. Lodge was the Hope Juvenile Temple, No. 30. It met afternoons at 4:15 each Wednesday, evidently for children.

Omro Grange was instituted March 11, 1910. Meetings were held in the W.R.C. Hall. It functioned for many years.

The American Legion of Omro has been mentioned previously.

*AM-9/13/34* - The Fox River Valley Post No. 3088 Veterans of Foreign Wars was instituted in Omro September of 1934. The meeting was held in the Methodist church. The first Commander was Dr. Frank D. Fleury, a veteran of the Spanish-American War.

The Auxiliary was organized in October of 1934. Mrs. Daisy Von Rembow was the first President.

The Fox River Valley Post consisted of Spanish War veterans, Mexican war, and some saw service in China and Siberia, with a great number of those in the World War I.

V.F.W., nationwide, was instituted September 16, 1899.

*Louis Kubasta* Fox River Valley Veterans of Foreign Wars was re-juvenated in 1946, following the close of W W II. A building committee consisting of Louis Kubasta, Ralph Lemke, and Lloyd Bronson engineered the purchase of the former Episcopal Church on Jefferson Ave. They were authorized to offer \$900 for the building to the Episcopalian diocese officials at Fond du Lac. However, the diocese set the price at \$1,500. At the next V.F.W. meeting the committee was further instructed to pay \$1,100 and no more; this offer was accepted.

The Government gave the Veteran's organization authority which allowed them to enter the real estate business; sell real estate for profit. In 1948 they bought the house at 435 N. Webster. The cost of remodeling for a Club house according to state regulations would be too costly. They then sold it and bought a lot from Archie Daggett at 310 E. Ontario on which to build a meeting place. However the land being low and springy they sold it to Howard Steineke, a member who built his own home on the lot. The organization looked elsewhere for a location. Meanwhile the Episcopal church was sold by them through Tony Kolbus to Clayton Stearns. Clayton remodeled it by turning the building one-quarter way around, adding to it, and making it into a charming residence.

About this time the St. Luke's Lutheran church at Adams Ave. was for sale with Leon and Louise Shelp in charge of selling it. This the V.F.W. purchased. They held their meetings in it. Later they used the basement for meetings and rented the upstairs to the Assembly of God congregation for their services for \$10. In the 1950s the V.F.W. sold the church building on Adams Street to the Assembly of God congregation.

The V.F.W. also bought lots on the north side near Craig's Store which they sold later for profit.

Geo. and Marge Luker had bought the vacant store building on W. Main; this they in turn sold to the V.F.W. as their Hall for

\$5,500.--(These facts given by Louis Kabasta of the V.F.W. with permission to use the information.) (omro pg. 314)

*B.O.D. - Business Improvement District*

O.B.A.

An organization that has been of much service in furthering the development of Omro is the Omro Businessmen's Association. According to a newspaper account of 1894 this group was functioning as Omro Business Men's Ass'n. Prior to then, in the 1870s was a flourishing institution, the Omro Board of Trade. However, the OBA of the 1890s must have been fazed out and was again re-organized in 1931 with Willis Calkins as the President. He was then the proprietor of a hardware store, the one formerly owned and operated by his parents.

*Emma Staley 1871 p. 2*

The OBA has put forth a concerted effort to advertise Omro's businesses and has sponsored civic improvements.

Accomplishments since the Association's beginning have been varied and noteworthy. The following list of some of their endeavors are examples, and they are not necessarily given in chronological order--

In the 1930s, during the depression years, August Fall Festivals were held, accompanied by street parades and dancing. Water carnivals featured boat races held after the parades. The racing course extended as far east as Geo. Daggett & Son warehouse where it turned back toward the bridge.

The Omro Theater was built with WPA workmen, sponsored by OBA. This was the money making project that made the many civic efforts possible. Drawing of names was held every Saturday afternoons. Lucky ones could see a movie for 10 cents. Also, lucky draws entitled persons to prizes of merchandise from the various business houses.

Dredging in Scott Park for east end filling was a project with which the Ass'n helped the Park Board financially to accomplish. WPA (Work Projects Administration) helped with the labor.

A White Bass Festival was held in 1936. Purchases from the various business houses entitled the purchaser to vote for a White Bass Queen. Betty Rosenthal won that title. Phyllis Sielaff and Betty Jones were train bearers for the Queen. Wm. Doll carried the crown and scepter.

Max Bieber was the OBA President that year, and took the part of Chief Yellow Thunder. The ceremony was spiced to give an atmosphere of Indian pagentry. Mrs. Margaret Killilen sang "By the Waters of Minnetonka" and "The Indian Love Song." Hundreds of people, visiting fishermen among them, watched the ceremony.

Farm Market Days were held where farm produce and livestock were sold. This market place was located in the block of S. Webster at Main. These "Days" were held in the 1930s and 40s.

New street lights were installed, and in June of 1952 the OBA contributed \$250. toward the cost of them. Then before the end of the year, OBA paid \$750 more toward them. (O.N. - 6/3-52)

*1970's Clayton S.*

*Wm. Kalkins*

*B. S. Salloff Clayton S.*

*Bernard S.*

*Feb 22/32 3/32*

*Bernard S.*

*Ok III p. 66 5/16/36 N.W.*

*Tommy K.*



*Bernard Sieleff*  
Lights for the football field of what is now Middle School were financed by OBA.

*Tommy K.* The Ass'n also bought suits for the High School Band members when a band was first introduced in the school music department.

When the Agriculture building was erected in the southwest corner of the Athletic field on the corner of S. Webster and E. Larrabee, the OBA donated money to purchase needed appliances and supplies for it.

*Henry Meilahn*  
Henry Meilahn had purchased the Ball Park in the eastern part of town about 1926. Later the OBA bought it from him.

*H. G. 6/16/51*  
The OBA sponsored the planting of 10,000 three to six inch long pickerel fingerlings in the Park Lagoon in 1938. Also black bass, pike, and others. They also applied for 250 day old pheasants for distribution. Until they were a few weeks old they were supervised by John Sheerar. The brooder pens were in the lumberyard on the east side of the Tice ice house. Gun clubs then took over and later released them.

*Tommy K.*  
After the Omro Theater closed, the OBA leveled the floor for the Speed Queen Washing Machine factory for its operation during W W II. Later the Speed Queen built on Michigan Ave. The theater building was empty for a short time.

Then a ladder factory moved in. However, tanks of inflammable fluid used in the ladder manufacturing caused the insurance to become too high for the OBA to pay and break even financially. Again the building was left vacant.

*Archie D.*  
Farmer's Seed and Feed, Farmer's Institute, Farm-City, or Farmers Day, as it was variously called, was held each March in the Masonic Hall. These meetings were sponsored by County Agricultural Agent, Vernon Peroutky, who came to the County in 1956 or 57. *(@. H. - 8/23/45.)* These meetings were in conjunction with the State Agricultural Department. The OBA furnished a noon lunch, at first of coffee and donuts; it gradually mushroomed into what now is a real "feed". In 1975 nearly 100 people attended; OBA also awarded 5 prizes.

*B. Sieleff*  
About 1959 the OBA purchased a development area south of the Ball Park. They erected, by subscription, a factory building at 206 Harrison Ave. The Appleton Fencing Co. leased it at first. Now it is occupied by the Wisconsin Screw Co. OBA still plans and works for progress in the city. *(More on page 168.)*  
*Co-operative as its title. OBA changed to Omro Promotional*  
Omro Fire, also, Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 are both mentioned in an 1894 newspaper clipping.

*my*  
Omro Study Club--First named the Minerva Club was organized in 1896. Several years later the name was changed to Omro Study Club. The membership is restricted to 20 members. Meetings are held in the homes, meeting twice a month except for June, July, and August. Topics presented are of an educational character. Politics, religion and controversial subjects are avoided.

*11/30*  
-Lion's Club of Omro was organized November 10, 1930. Officers were F.A. Siebensohn, Pres; Rodney Alder, 1st V. Pres; J.P. Plansky,

2nd V. Pres; C.W. Stearns, Sec; A.J. Marble, Treas; R.B. Locke, Tail Twister.

The Women's Civic League has been reviewed previously.

*Daily N.W. 2/10/78*

The present Women's Service League was organized in <sup>December 1</sup> ~~September~~ of 1959. Mrs. Inez Munding organizer and first President.

Omro Garden Club has organized and re-organized down through the years.

*7/23/88* Jaycees of Omro organized in the 1950s. They sponsored the re-activated Boy Scouts; erected the ball park fence, painted it, and installed 2 sets of lights at the ball park. They built the ball-stop and rebuilt the bleachers.

*#. - May 1934*

Boy Scouts observed their 25th anniversary in 1975. There must have been a lapse in the Scout movement for a local Newspaper account mentions a Boy Scout meeting in 1916 when Scouting was organized here in Omro. It continued through the 1930s at least. *MSSB V 1916*

*#. 5/12/44*

Girl Scouts organized in May of 1944 with 29 girls present. There is no such group presently.

Campfire Girls organized in perhaps the late 1930s. Their main project is a Christmas Party in December for Senior Citizens given in the Beckwith Room of City Hall. An entertainment by the girls is presented. A lunch of cookies, coffee and punch is served followed by a Bingo game. A visit from Santa Claus closes the afternoon party. *Last meeting was Oct. 21, 1938. (O.N. - 10/27/38.)*

Kiwanis Club was organized in the 1960s. Their main money-making projects are a chicken dinner in July and a pancake supper in the winter.

A reactivated Lion's Club was organized February 24, 1975. New officers were Pres., Earl Mester; First V. Pres., Frank Seckar; 2nd V. Pres., Roger Foust; 3rd V. Pres., Jim Broman; Sec., Jack Schroeder; Treas., Jerry Ruedinger.

Not a fraternal order, but the Omro Board of Education in 1894 had as officers: Monroe Phillips, director; J.T. Orchard, Clerk; F.T. Tucker, Treas. Teachers--E.E. Shelton, A.B., principal; Miss Grace Athern, assistant; Edgar Hall, grammar; Minnie B. Treleven, intermediate; Ada Morrison, South primary; Mildred Taylor, East primary; Anna Hurley, North primary. *Shelton*

An item in reference to the Omro Rifle and Pistol Club was printed in January of 1932. Despite depression, the annual dues were left at \$2. New officers were--President, Percy Knoll; V. President, John Sheerar; Secretary, R. Kloehn; Treasurer, Frank Diley; Range Officer, m. Staeger. *(O.N. - 1/12/32.)*

organized in 1914. *MSSB IV p. 63*

*Daily N.W. 2/2/14*

A "Big Brother" organization was functioning in 1916.

## RECOLLECTIONS

The Early Settler's recollections of the era about 1876 are of interest.

"I remember Mr. E.P. Ferris, he was a Justice of the Peace and also had a crockery store on the south side of the bridge where the alley driveway is now. He was a fine man. It is said that he moved here in his sail boat from up the river, and used to live west of the old Chas. G. Thompson property in the eastern part of the village.

"I also remember when us boys used to gather sweet corn and potatoes, and nights we would paddle down the river to what was called 'Baby Island.' It was about 2 miles down stream from the village. The island was so named because some Indians once found a dead white baby that had floated ashore there. To get on with my story, we would build a fire and roast the corn and potatoes, eat them and then put on an Indian dance, and so on.

"I remember one morning my Aunt showed me my pillow cases-- the way they looked! When I came home I forgot to wash my face, and I was told some things!

"A Mr. James V. Bartow, let us swim in the river back of his residence, (on Maple Drive) and also gave us a long cedar plank for a spring board. The girls used to swim there, too, and they held his beautiful boat house for their dressing tent.

"In the winter (1880s) we iced the hill just west of Mr. Bartow's house (later Edick) and used to slide there evenings until late. You could hear the merry voices ringing through the cold air almost every evening all winter.

"The first Christmas tree I ever saw was in the new house built by Harley Wilson (now at 627 E. Main). It was in the front window, the first large window I ever saw put in a house. The tree was all lighted up with candles, and with the snow on the ground, and the ice hanging on the eaves,--it was a beautiful sight. It was the first lighted tree in town (about 1876).

"Also I can remember that the town cleaned the snow off from the north channel of the river in the winter just east of the bridge. We used to build a fire there and skate, play "Pull-a-way" and "Snap the Whip". At that time T.J. Thompson was classed the best trick skater and Bonny Hoover (Mrs. Will Rhoda who was born July 30, 1874, and married in 1924. She died in 1972 aged nearly 100 years,) and Georgia Larrabee the best lady skaters.

"I remember in the summer when that same channel was so full of logs, one could walk across on them."

8/17/33 - An article in the Winneconne Local and printed in the August 17, 1933 issue of the Omro Herald of thirty-nine years ago tells of lumbering in 1894. The tug D.A. Cady passed here (Winneconne) last Saturday with a raft in tow for Courtney Scott, of Omro, that contained more pine logs than ever passed here in a single raft. There were 1,900 logs in the raft, but the logs were mostly small.

ms. An old settler tells of fishing. Sturgeon being vegetarians were not lured by hook and line with bait, but by gently raising

and lowering the line slightly. The sturgeon glide along near the bottom of the stream. Fishermen used a 5 pronged gaff hook on a stout cord or rope. The sturgeon sliding over the hook could be detected and the line jerked up, the prongs entering the sturgeon's belly. Thus was the fish snagged. Presently there is only a short season for sturgeon fishing, that of spearing them through the ice and then only from some of the local lakes.

The Early Settler noted that, "Each night A.B. Russell used to get the mail from the depot and deliver it at the old Post Office which used to stand near where the printing office is now. (Next north of Friendly Tavern, now an empty space.) We boys used to run off with the wheelbarrow he used for toting the mail bags and at those times the mail was late.

"We used to pick on the old Chinaman who ran the laundry. He used to chase us through the streets until the marshall, Mr. Emmett Sheldon put a stop to that."

A few of the village Marshalls were Frank Stanley, Grant Cage, Fred Gehrke, Leon Hoover, Hiram Coats, Kemper Goss and Max Bower. *Andrew White 1881.* *(O.H. - 8/31/33.)* *M.V.N.W. 5/12/16.*

The Early Settler continued, "At one time I attended the east side school, and now I see my name carved by the door of the A. Austria feed mill (later Geo. Daggett and Son, and now torn down). I think of the days I had to stay in for that fancy job of carving.

"When I lived in the Western Addition where Mr. Cal Root used to live (on W. Larrabee) we used to go swimming in the old brick pond. I think you will find those ponds still there, just back of where Mr. Henry Winslow now lives (on Jefferson, first house south of Baptist Church). (The ponds were on what is presently the W. Brooks property.)

"Another experience was when I lived on the hill where Mr. Arthur Marble now resides (at 220 E. Larrabee), Leslie Leighton and Mard Gummer and I used to sail little boats along down the side of the road past the Dave Grossman cheese factory. They would float east, then north, and came out by the river at the west end of the Park now, at that time the Foundry (now Butkiewicz Shop)."  
*Ches-*

Arden Sheldon recalls that during high water he could paddle a skiff from a spot on the river above the Lumber Yard to the area south of the Warren Brooks residence and through the Middle school athletic field. He could cross Madison and in a northeasterly direction reach the Fox river again east of the Butkiewicz Shop.

Omro's first Marshall was Andrew White. In 1864 he was Winnebago County Sheriff.

*(1914)* Max Bower, Chief of Police since 1942, retired. Been our city's police force for 28 years, serving as deputy and village marshall before taking the chief of police job. (July 14, 1960 Northwestern issue.)

*mjs.* The Fox river has fascinated many Omro inhabitants today as well as in the past, and especially when the stream was used for river traffic. Spring break-up of ice meant that industry would benefit, and spring was on the way. Ice-outs were looked forward to as a special day, and the dates were noted. Not so many years ago the Boy Scouts stirred up enthusiasm by holding a contest for several years with prizes offered the person who guessed the nearest day and time.

"We read from a copy of the Omro Journal of April 7, 1888, loaned to the Editor by Mrs. Mattie Fink of Omro, a clipping from the Journal of her parents Mr. and Mrs. Rob Hunter. It is a record from the year 1872, and includes the month and the day the ice moved out of the Fox River. Also the name and the date of the first boat passing through Omro after the ice left the river."

#### ICE OUTS & BOAT PASSINGS

##### Ice went out

1872 - April 8  
 1873 - March 19  
 1874 - March 24  
 1875 - April 4  
 1876 - April 4  
 1877 - March 21  
 1878 - Feb. 20  
 1879 - March 13  
 1880 - March 22  
 1881 - April 13  
 1882 - Feb. 28  
 1883 - April 6  
 1884 - March 25  
 1885 - April 5  
 1886 - March 26  
 1887 - March 27  
 1888 - April 7

##### First Boat

Diamond, April 20  
 Diamond, April 16  
 Diamond, April 21  
 Diamond, May 4  
 Isabelle, April 22  
 O.B. Reed, April 15  
 O.B. Reed, March 13  
 Gussy Girdon, April 8  
 Gussy Girdon, April 5  
 Weston, May 2  
 Fashion, April 4  
 Fashion, April 16  
 Fashion, April 8  
 Fashion, April 20  
 Fashion, April 19  
 Fashion, April 18

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#### OMRO BUSINESSMEN'S ASSOCIATION

*Omro Book*  
 In 1978 OBA reorganized under the name of Omro Promotion Corporation and in 1988 still functioning as such. This organization included not only businessmen of Omro but others interested in the welfare of the City. In 1987 as a branch of the OPC, the business men organized the Omro Businessmen's Associates as a branch of the OPC, working under the same charter.

## TRAMP !TRAMP !Tramp !

«Exclusive of your publication  
6/2/75  
Box II  
R. 182

*m.j.s.*  
The Railroad and tracks brought to Omro that which certainly was not always supplies! 'Twas Hoboes and Tramps. When the weather warmed, the first leg of a journey for them was to "grab a rattler"--hop a freight train. The "side car Pullman" was the familiar box-car. The early 1900s marked the hey-day of the Hobo with the rapid spread of railroad net-works across the continent. After WW I a study estimated the number of tramps in the U.S. as 500,000.

*Evening found them "Jungling up" their way of saying "pitching" a campsite.*  
*Shawn B.* Tramps were a common sight. Their "Jungle" here in Omro was located back of the present lumber yards. They would camp there. They would cook their "Slumgullian stew", coffee, or whatever, over a camp fire. Sometimes one would steal a "gump" (chicken) to mix with "hoppins" (vegetables) or a mess of fish to make a good meal washed down with java in a tomato can. An overturned iron kettle was left in their open-air cook-out kitchen for the next one to use.

*Shawn B.* The "Jungle" was near the Railroad tracks and Depot, located about where the stockyards are at present. (1972)

*Shawn B.* The tramps had a unique marking system to alert each other as to favorable food hand-outs and sleeping quarters. An X on a tree, pole, porch or post meant to all "here you get good results." A zero or 0 meant "no luck, keep going."

*Q.B.* An interesting bill presented to the Village Board meeting of November 23, 1894 was to Monroe Phillips--"Expense on tramps - \$1.50". For what use was not given. Then at another time 6 tramps were sent to the "work house" by Judge Ferris. Presumably the "work house" was in Oshkosh, near the former Court House. They made little stones from big ones.

*m.j.s.* Tramps began coming north in the spring, some of them walking the tracks, others by road. As wood was the fuel used for warmth and cooking, there was a wood pile in all back yards. When tramps would beg for a hand-out, they were nearly always invited first to split some wood for their eats. Some would comply; others would go on, to try and find a kinder hearted target, or to find an easier means of getting a lunch.

Another influx of transients that occasionally visited the village were bands of Gypsies. In 1934 some stopped by and attempted to tell fortunes. (O.H. - 1/15/34)

## PIONEER MEMORIES

Perhaps a begging tramp did interrupt the serenity of a family now and then, but as a rule the hectic hustle and hurry we live with today was lacking. Ethel Bishop has written about these early pioneer times, a vivid word picture.

*E. Bishop*  
 "What pleasant happy times, friendly rivalry of hand or brain in simple quilting, spelling, elocution or singing bees, weird stories beside flickering hearth fire, shuffling feet in rythm with merry fiddles, jolly feasting. These were lighter hours that balanced heavy toil of pioneering.

"As trails through Indian lands were deeply rutted and filled with half buried stumps, short journeys to neighbor cabins were taken only when there was ample time to visit. For discussions, exchange of recipes and remedies. Never idle they knit, stitched, and visited. Contented to wear simple calico prints they kept a best dress for funerals or weddings. One young lady attended a quilting bee dressed in moire. She was upbraided by her neighbors, she burst into tears, 'It's my poverty, not my pride that made me wear this dress.'

"One queenly lady dressed in silk rode safely along a trail until clumsy oxen scrambled for a footing, pitched the cart, lady, and her finery into waist deep mud. But limitations didn't prevent quilting and spelling bees, donation parties, apple bees or corn huskings." *Omro Herald 3/26/31.*

*E.B.*  
 Before the invention of the sewing machine, and before its general use, hand sewing was the method used for even the tailoring of men's woolen suits and coats. A back hand stitch was used to make the sewing of seams more tight and durable. The result would resemble the sewing machine stitching. No doubt linen thread was used in preference to cotton as it was a much stouter thread.

*M.J.*  
 Sun protection was another must in the good old days. For every woman, young and old alike, it was popular and proper to keep the neck, face and arms especially, for that was all the skin one ever saw, a pearly white.

For women who worked out of doors the sunbonnet was worn to shade the face and neck from the sun's rays. To keep arms and hands white, long stockings with holes cut for the fingers to go through were worn.

To help keep the skin white one popular bleach was sour milk or buttermilk smeared on face, arms, and hands. Freckles were considered an abomination. Some remedies that were home prescribed or patented and tried, not only took the freckles off but the skin as well!

Parasols to keep the sun from faces were popular accessories. Some were daintily tinted, some lace trimmed, and all were smaller than the rain-shedding black umbrellas.

MORE DATA of the PAST

Back to the early years again. We find that many industries were thriving in the 1800s and the population was growing in and around the village. Changes were taking place. We find, too, that there were money lenders in Omro. In 1870 my grandfather borrowed money from Mr. A.K. Brush to pay for his farm; the interest rate was 12%. Later he borrowed from another man who charged 10%.

*Handwritten notes:*  
- West p. 18  
- West p. 45  
- West p. 31  
- West p. 18

According to Grandmother's diary some commodity costs in March of 1872 were "bought 300 pounds flour @ \$3.33 cwt., and bought a rocking chair, \$4.50, and a dollar's worth of sugar." Earlier, in 1858, ham cost 14¢ per lb. and butter 16¢. *a lb. cost for \$2.00*

In 1856 "The Legislature of our state fixed the rate of interest by contract at 12 per cent. (Q. & A. p. 41.)"

FIRES AGAIN

*Handwritten notes:*  
- West p. 98  
- West p. 100  
- West p. 100  
- Local

A newspaper clipping notes a fire in 1874. "Omro had a big blaze last Saturday evening during the heavy gale and was fortunate in not being entirely laid in ashes. The fire broke out under a stairway in the Odd Fellow's building and is supposed to have been the work of an incendiary, as two other fires were discovered during the evening in unoccupied buildings. The stores burned were Larrabee and Son Drugs, Taylor and Co. groceries, and J.F. Lindsay groceries, S.D. White, groceries, and the Odd Fellow, Pelton, and Wilson buildings. The loss approximates from \$10,000 to \$15,000, on which there was insurance amounting to nearly \$8,000, according to the best information at hand." In later years improved methods of fighting fires were used.

*Handwritten notes:*  
- West p. 33

- We find that on August 9, 1894 that "our sister village of Winneconne was badly scorched on a Wednesday evening by fire, and one business block and six fine residences, three barns and the Baptist church entirely burned. More than a dozen families were homeless, and most of them destitute of household goods, or what they had so badly damaged as to be of little value.

"At about 8 o'clock in the evening fire was discovered in a small room in the rear of the Nesbitt's furniture store.

"The alarm was at once given, and the fire department, consisting of one chemical and water hand engine was put to work and did efficient service for a short time. But the water in the tanks soon gave out, and the hose was not long enough to reach the river, hence the flames soon got beyond control.

"A telephone message was at once sent to Mr. Jones, President of the Omro village board for assistance, The fire company with its steam engine and 1,200 feet of hose, was ordered to be in readiness, and as soon as an order could be received from railroad headquarters, an engine came from Winneconne, the fire engine was loaded on a flat car, and in ten minutes thereafter the Omro boys were on the ground. The engine was placed on the bridge that spans the river, and in a short time two streams of water were plying through 1,100 feet of hose.



"Oshkosh was also telephoned to for help, and about 2 a.m., a train came in via Ripon, having on board one engine and hose cart with 800 feet of hose, and fifty firemen. But the Omro boys had the fire under control, and the Oshkosh engine was not unloaded, but returned at 4 o'clock.

"The Omro engine did splendid work, under the skillful control of Engineer C.A. Peterson, and the pipemen never flagged an instant in their work. For three hours at one time, the engine threw two streams of water without a stop. The boys covered themselves all over with glory, and the Oshkosh company admitted that Omro had a splendid engine, and working force."

## 1880 DIRECTORY

The following Omro Directory of the village was incorporated in the Early Settler's history for the year 1880:

*E. Hart  
A. 11/30/31*

Attorney -- F.F. Wheeler.  
 Agriculture Machinery -- Alexander Gadbow.  
 Barrel Factory -- Almond Grey.  
 Boots and Shoes -- C.C. Covey & Co., Leighton and Gillman, P. Samphier & Bro. Peter, Whitman.  
 Blacksmiths -- C.W. Bushnell, C.A. Coe, William Cundy and E.T. Sheldon, Monrean, Bushnell Hall was on the second floor of Bushnell's.  
 Collecting Agent -- Alex Gadbow.  
 Clothing -- Treleven and Orchard.  
 Commercial School -- S.R. Manning. *Brockman*  
 Dry Goods -- Brockman & Co., Peter Cole and Pelton & Hutchins.  
 Drug Stores -- George W. Shafer, C.S. Douty and Henry & Charlesworth.  
 Dentist -- I.H. Sheerar.  
 Express Agent -- M.G. Bradt.  
 Foundry & Machine Shop -- George Challoner.  
 Flour Mill -- E.C. Woodworth.  
 Flour & Feed retail -- F.C. Fuller.  
 Flour & Feed retail -- F.C. Fuller.  
 Furniture -- George H. Charlesworth.  
 Groceries -- Richard Reed, Jr., Leighton & Gilman, C.C. Covey & Co., Robert Webb, H.L. Waite, John W. Rice, Thompson & Hayward, Mrs. Gerrity.  
 Hardware -- W.W. Race, Fred Bunker.  
 Harness Shops -- J.R. Russell, and W.B. Chapman, C. Crocker.  
 Hotels -- Larrabee House and Northwestern.  
 Insurance Agent -- J.H. Caswell.  
 Jewelry -- Chas. Chase.  
 Lumber Products -- H.W. Webster  
 Lawyers -- D.W. McLeod, A.K. Brush, and J.A. Banks. *Q. H. 5/7/31  
W. Hart p. 75*  
 Livery Stables -- Andrew Lansing, Joseph Lyons and A.B. Larrabee.  
 Meat Markets -- Aaron B. Tice, and W.E. Wheeler.  
 Millinery -- Mrs. C.W. Jones.  
 News Paper -- Omro Journal, Platt Wright.  
 Physicians -- J. Gibbs, R.L. Cook, P.H. Patten, C.C. Green, J.S. Daniels, and W.A. Reed.  
 Painter -- Smith Bros.  
 Postmaster -- E.D. Henry.  
 Photograph Gallery -- Ellis Thompson.  
 Depot Agent -- C.W. Jones.  
 Restaurants -- Mrs. Ann Martin and W.A. Clifford.

Sash & Door Factory -- Morton & Small.  
 Shoemakers -- E. Gummer, Demmond Bros., W.H. Shattuck, and W.R. Pettingill.  
 Saloons -- George Mitchler, H.L. Jasscen, and Baxter Logan.  
 Wagon and Carriage Shops -- Thompson & Hayward, G.W. Drew, J.E. Lindley, and A.B. Hall.  
 Watches, Clocks and Jewelry -- Charles Chase.  
 Variety Store -- Fanny McAllister.  
 Veterinarian -- J. Hoover.

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When George and Marge Luker sold to the V.F.W. the building for their hall for \$5,500 there were several tons of coal left in the basement for which Luker wanted pay. The Vets did not care to pay for it. They told the man that he could come and get it. This he did not do. It would have had to be brought up skuttlefull by skuttlefull as coal was delivered to the stores by using a chute from the delivery truck on Main street leading through a small basement opening to a coal bin. (As related by Louis Kubasta.)

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The Fox River Valley V.F.W. Auxilliary was organized and is still functioning. The Hall was also rented as a dance studio by an Oshkosh dance instructor for several years until in 1973. The Hall was sold in 1976 to an Insurance firm.

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*Emma Stanley*  
 The discovery of the Mastadon bones caused much excitement in the village. Mrs. Frank Stanley's Sunday School class the following Sabbath after the bones were found were so excited about them that the topic took over more time discussing it than did the Sabbath lesson.

*Ethel Bishop*  
 Mrs. Stanley taught Sunday School at the old Methodist Church for 65 years. She died in October of 1955 at the age of 95 years. She remembered of Indians camping in the eastern part of town. Her father was George Drew.

*Emma S.*  
 Milo Bushnell, Uncle of Emma Stanley, set out an apple orchard as did nearly every pioneer on their land. The most productive year netted him \$600 from his orchard which was an extremely profitable sum. He sold his apples mostly to the hotels and stores in the Omro village.

The Drew family home was at what is now 319 Jackson Ave. (*Ella Drew Stanley*)

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*Ethel Bishop*  
 Another Omro pioneer was Mrs. Kate Bishop. From a 1961 issue of the Daily Northwestern it stated that Mrs. Kate Van der Plasche Bishop, widow of Cary Bishop was 96 years old when she died.

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## MUSIC CENTER

*Ethel B.* Music was one of the arts enjoyed by the settlers to the fullest extent. Perhaps church choirs were the nucleus for the many groups of singers. Omro was a music center during the 1870s through the 1890s. Reference of a Musical Ass'n of 1876 has been made. There were singing schools. Two of the vocal directors were Mr. Cyrus Bradish and Mr. Bradt. Mr. Bradish also played the cello.

Some of the very earliest choir directors were James Russell in particular. Another was George Drew who taught boys and girls to sing by holding songfests for them in his carriage shop.

*Marion B.* There was also music for dancing. Bushnell Hall was near by across from the old City Hall. Putnam Hall was not in that area but it was smaller in size. Dances were held on the second floor of Bushnell Hall. Mr. Barnard trained one of his horses to climb the stairs to the dance floor! Or so the story goes. You would never guess what for--to drag a large round grind stone around to smooth and polish the floor for the next night of dancing! Then "Dobbin" would hump himself down the stairs to terra firma--until after the next few dances.

*Marie B.* Lewis H. Bullis, father of Marie Barnard was another Omro choir director. Not of one church choir exclusively for he lead the local Catholic church choir as well. Mr. Bullis had a fine singing voice and often sang duets with Mrs. Frank Stanley another popular vocalist. His day to day work was that of an implement dealer and manager of a stage coach line. However, in another capacity, musically also, Mr. Bullis acted as "caller" for dances such as the ever popular "square dance" with its ala-man-lefts and do-si-dos, also the circle two-step. In addition there was the regular waltz, Rye waltz, Redewa, Mazurka and Polkas that people enjoyed. The Virginia Reel was a lively dance, too.

"Pop Goes the Weasel", "Farmer in the Dell", "Skip to Maloo", "The Needle's Eye", each with an accompanying song sung by the participants for choosing a new partner, were popular. The song for "Jolly is the Miller" to the tune of "Turkey in the Straw" with the couples skipping in a circle was:

"Jolly is the Miller who lives by the Mill,  
The wheel goes round with a right good will,  
One hand in the hopper and the other in the sack,

The right steps forward and the left steps back." And the ditty was repeated with a new partner for everyone. These song frolickings were allowed at church Young People's parties, but dancing was frowned upon.

*C. J. Smith* C.E. Leslie of Chicago, a famous chorus director, conducted a singing class for a few weeks in the 1880s. The class was held in either Bushnell or Putnam Hall. It was during the winter. Leslie admonished the singers that after the singing session on their way home to be careful to breath through their nose rather than the mouth as the cold air would be harmful to the larynx. In the male section, Charlie Cope, a tall near 300 pounder, was the largest man, and Ikie Hammers the smallest. Cope ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> bass and Ikie tenor. Leslie referred to them as "the long and the short of my male section." Eva Treleven was the ~~piano~~ <sup>piano</sup> accompanist, and a fine one. For one number the ~~organ~~ <sup>organ</sup>

accompaniment was very difficult. Leslie turned to Eva and said, "If you play this perfectly, you're a darling." Ikie immediately responded in his squeaky voice, "She is anyway." Ikie was sort of a lay preacher and belonged to the M.E. church. He was an ardent temperance man, and a member of the Good Templars Lodge. (G.H. 7/27/39.)

Frequently while singing a song at Leslie's singing school, the singers marched around the hall counterwise in two large circles. Then a vocalist would meet a section singing tenor, then those singing alto, then soprano, and so on.

The last night or nights they gave a public performance. The "Whipoorwill" song was a popular one with the group. A Wilcox girl had the ideal voice for the obligato of "Whip-poor-will". Another girl thought that she should have had it, she did have a fine singing voice, but Leslie knew the voice he wanted. Mr. Leslie could listen to the entire group while they were singing and be able to pick out the exact voice he wished for certain solo parts. This information was according to C.I. Smith, who with his father William, and two older brothers George and Frank, sang in C.E. Leslie's class.

2.44-7/3/30.) The programs given for the "Good of the Order" in Fox River Temple of Good Templars were varied and interesting, according to the records of that organization in 1864. Music, from the institution of the lodge was an important feature, although readings, recitations, dialogues, speeches, and the lodge paper were frequently mentioned. Chorus singing was evidently an enjoyable part of these programs, for the words "singing by the singers" often occur in the earliest records. The names of George Bradish, George Drew, H.E. Beale, and many others who are well remembered as musicians of merit, are prominent.

The chorus in time seems to have developed into a regular choir, for reference is repeatedly made to "our choir." Later a number of the singers appear to have organized into a group called "The Continental Vocalists." The work of this group was especially pleasing for they entertained the Lodge every week over a long period of time. Another organization that often came to entertain the Lodge by request was George Drew's Chorus of Juvenile Singers.

Two years after the Fox River Temple of Good Templars was organized, the members undertook to buy a musical instrument. The following is taken from the minutes:

The committee appointed on music reported:  
1st, That a musical instrument be purchased. 2nd, That in case sufficient amount of funds can be procured, such instrument be one of Smith's Cabinet Organs, five octaves, with two sets of reeds, containing diapason principal and tremolo, in black walnut, oil polish, extra painted; the price of which is \$200., but which your committee have made arrangements to procure for \$150.

Stock was issued to raise funds for this organ, the members paying \$1.00 a share.

A permanent music attraction was the Omro Cornet Band which was formed prior to 1879. It consisted of a 14 piece aggregation. The group made three consecutive trips to the state exhibition at Milwaukee, each time taking first place honors. Under the skillful direction of their leader, Mr. Covey, and the manager-ship of Dr. (M.W. 6/26/56.)

Frank Ford, the group of talented instrumentalists played at regular local stands and at surrounding area spots. In addition to the local appointments, the band made boat and excursion trips to Berlin, Green Bay, New London and Freemont as well as appearances at political and church affairs. "The band must have looked real spiffy with their grey uniforms trimmed with red, and with a drum major wearing a big bear-skin hat." This was a tribute paid them by the Berlin Journal after they had played and paraded there on one particular occasion.

At times the band would increase in number to 22 members with the able assistance of outside professional players. In addition to the busy schedule required of the band, 6 members formed a square dance orchestra, of which Mr. Bert Gummer played alto horn. A.C. Wiles, violinist, was the leader of the orchestra.

*E. Hunt  
Lily  
5/20/56  
S.C. Gummer*

A weekly stand at Fisk Park, a boat dock 2 miles up the river from Omro, provided the only recreation for many of the fun-loving folk of the area. Following were the original members of the band: Dr. I.H. Sheerar, Fred L. Simmons, Frank McGuire, J.B. Covey, Ephraim Stanton, Elmer Fisk and J. Wiles, Jack Bradey, B.V. Gummer, Harry Cooley, Dr. Frank Ford, Archie Race, Tommy Cundy and Martin J. Gummer. (From a newspaper interview with Bert Gummer in 1956.)

Another musician was Pat Smith, the drayman of Omro. Patrick Smith was born in Queens County, Ireland in 1835. When in his teens he came to Omro. He had six daughters. Ann, who clerked for the Pelton Store in the dry goods department; Mrs. Nellie Cameron of Oshkosh; Kathryn Carole, an elocutionist in Chicago; Julia, a clerk in an Oshkosh Department Store (Heyman Co.--Henderson-Hoyt); Mrs. Harriett (Mark) Hinderman, (Jim's mother); and Mrs. Elizabeth (Jesse) Knoll, printer's typesetter, and later telephone operator. She is still living (1975). The sisters were all good vocalists and were popular entertainers of Omro. Sometimes they sang as a sextet, but more often as the "Smith Sister's" quartet. They were also noted for their readings.

According to reports, Pat liked to sing and jig. The Pat Smith family was well known in the Omro area. Their home was on Michigan Avenue just west of the railroad tracks.

*M.J.S.* "Doc" Sheerar led many groups from choruses to male quartets. He was also an instrumental director. He led many an Omro marching band in parades, on Memorial Day, Fourth of July celebrations, or anytime that the band marched which was on every special occasion scheduled during the year. On his head he wore his famous "shako". Minnie Morton inherited his baton while she was teaching music in the Omro schools, the first music teacher in the school system. Later she in turn presented the baton to a grandson of Doc's, Lewis Sheerar, son of Frank Sheerar.

John Becker, druggist, could play nearly any instrument. He was not a music "teacher", but he was willing and anxious to help anyone to learn the rudiments of music. Then to help a person to play the instrument in which he was interested.

*Ann  
1938*

Another popular musician of Omro was Mrs. Minnie Treleven Morton. She directed many choruses and church choirs and various vocal and instrumental groups. For several years during the 1930s at least, she was the first Omro school music instructor. Minnie directed

*Book IV p. 4  
12/12/10  
obit.*

many school musicals. At times she traveled to the larger cities to study authentic costuming of the characters.

*m.j.b.* At one time Minnie conducted a community orchestra. Lewis Morton, her husband, was a bass singer, and also played the bass viol (bull fiddle). At one time Minnie was instructor at the Oshkosh Business College. Later she also taught the business or commercial course at Omro High. Her commercial course graduates were known to be the best, and were hired sight unseen without interviews.

Minnie was a Civic Worker having much to do with the successful development of Scott Park through the Women's Civic League efforts. She either took part or directed many Home Talent plays and other local entertainments.

Lively verse, another talent of hers was this one written for a Palm Chapter #43 O.E.S. program of about 1911. It is entitled--

#### ODE TO OMRO

*Family Skk.*  
On the map of Wisconsin, they tell me it's true  
If you look you can see like as not,  
On the winding Fox River,  
With its turns and its twists,  
Is a wee little, small little dot.

They say its a town with churches and spires,  
And houses and people a lot--  
But that's nonsense, I see,  
For how could there be  
All that in one tiny wee dot!

They say they have Chapters and lodges, a few,  
And candidates round them to trot,  
But if that is true,  
They're a peculiar crew,  
In one little ORDER-ly dot.

They have influenza, they say, and grip, too,  
And doctors and no telling what,  
But I'll leave it to you,  
If that seems quite true,  
In one little, FAINT little dot.

They say they have parties and socials and games,  
And picnics, too, when it is hot--  
But it seems queer to me.  
That such things could be  
In one little FRISKY small dot.

They say they go motoring,  
Take launch rides and trips,  
And have a park ready to plot--  
If these things are true,  
It's a great how-di-do,  
In one little, SPORTY old dot.

That men are industrious, they're  
Wives stay at home,

And much more of the same kind of rot--  
That such things can be,  
You can't stuff down me  
In one little, stupid old dot.

But one thing is certain, I'll tell it to you  
You may think so, of course, or may not,  
But the one who can tell  
Such BIG WHOPPERS as these,  
Couldn't get in that HONEST old dot.

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*Bonnie Flanagan*  
A "Hayseed Orchestra" of the early 1900s was composed of Bonnie Mills (Flanagan), pianist, before she had even reached her teens; her brother Orley, violinist; John Sheerar, trombone; Art Peterson, brother of Henry and Ernie, coronet; and John Ginnow on the washboard at first, later he acquired drums. At that time all but Sheerar were of rural Omro but later years all were residents of the village. *Bonnie died June 25, 1979.*

Some popular vocal soloists of several years ago were Hazel Luscombe Hoger, Mary Sheerar, Roy Shelp, Ethel Bishop, B. Koenemann, Dorothy Treleven Gadbaw, *Leigh Blossmer*.

Outstanding pianists were Jennie Safford Danforth (wife of Dr. Quincey); Frances Kleiber Carter; Bonnie Mills Flanagan, Sarah Albright. The later two played for broadcasts over the Clayton Stearns and Alvin Gensch Omro Radio Station, W J B R, Neil Tilkins,

*N-12/12/29.)* In December of 1929 there was a new orchestra in the vicinity called the Oriental Dance Orchestra. It was composed of Miss Irene Wentzel, piano, her two brothers on saxophone and violin. These three from Winneconne. From Omro were Marshall Bennett, banjo, Donald Shelp, Tenor sax, and Rex Cady, drums.

Another local dance orchestra was Lester Straub's in 1932. *(A.H. 9/22/32.)*

Omro had several music instructors, especially before music was taught in the schools. Some of them recalled were Etta Carver who taught piano in the early years. Mrs. Kathryn (Clint) Tice, also Mrs. Frances Kleiber Carter. Mrs. Lucille Tice Shepard later on and up to the time she and husband George moved to Florida in 1973.

Another music instructor was Mrs. Carrie Himbaugh (Leo) Marshall. For many years she taught, first the mandolin and guitar, then in later years the violin, also. At one time she had a mandolin playing group, a dozen or so in number. Some of the members were her sister Herma Coats Fahrman, the two Glines girls, nieces of Fred Glines, and Sophia Yorty.

Years later, in the 1930s and 40s Carrie's violin pupils formed a Junior Violin Club. They met and practiced together at the homes of the pupils. Fathers and mothers also attended; the mothers to enjoy listening to the efforts of their offspring, and the fathers to retire to the kitchen and enjoy a lively game of "Schaskopf."

Carrie also played the banjo and German zither, the latter a very difficult instrument to master.

<sup>Bradley</sup> Ann Morton led an orchestra while teaching in Omro High during 1918, 19, or 20. This was before music was taught in schools. As Ann recalls, some of the members were Frederick Bennett, sax; Chas. Marsh, clarinet; Frederick Kleiber, drums; Agnes Flanagan, piano; and John Edick was also a member. It was a combo evolving from a Minstrel show number.

At this same time and in some High School group, Marie Arno, and Fred Gensch played violins, also directed by Ann.

Donald Jones taught Modern Harmony in the 1930s. (O.H. - 2/23/32.)

Miss Nonah Cole was a violin and piano instructor in the 1930s, and directed an orchestra in the Presbyterian church.

<sup>ing.</sup> Many more Omroites were musical "listeners". They who owned a gramophone would listen to such records as; Washington Post March, Wedding of the Winds Waltz, Lights Out March, Harry Lauder's Scottish solos, John McCormick, Irish tenor, Alma Gluck, opera star, and Uncle Josh, with his renowned comic monologues, to mention a few.

<sup>O.H. - 9/10/53.)</sup> Mrs. Rex Cady (nee Consuella Lockwood) has entertained with dance numbers in the past. She has and still instructs in dance, having opened her studio in 1950. Annual Reviews were performed in all types of the dance.

#### POETS and WRITERS

<sup>E.B. Clark</sup> Poets of Omro who have had their works published are Ida Clark Clark, (Mrs. Cad Clark); Kathryn Tice (Mrs. Clint Tice), and Mrs. Cary Bishop. Mrs. Dewey (Helen) Hanson and daughter Phyllis Lahti have also received notices for their work as writers.

<sup>O.H. - 12/30/37.)</sup> - Ida Clark Clark wrote her first poems in 1928 and was encouraged by Zona Gale, famous Portage, Wisconsin fiction and play writer and Pulitzer Prize winner. Mrs. Clark went on to write many accepted poems and songs which she composed. *note on pg. 334.*

Warren Reed, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Reed who lived at 604 E. Main, a 1913 graduate of OHS was an author. "She Rode a Yellow Stallion" was a book he wrote that brought him fame. (O.H. - 11/23/50.)

<sup>Mrs. Reed,</sup> Elizabeth Fowler Clark, (sister-in-law of Ida Clark Clark) was also an Omro poet and song writer of distinction. (O.H. - 12/22/32.)



## PASTIMES and ACTIVITIES

Life was not all scratching for a livelihood in those early days. They enjoyed an occasional relaxation period. However, it was not spent listening to a radio or watching television, nor even listening to a talking machine. These inventions were unknown at that time. In those days people participated.

*Earl Calhoon*  
The Grignon Gun Club for instance. This was and still is a closed corporation of 12 shares. Earl Calhoon is the current President (1974). The club was first organized in 1890 or 95. Members were local village trigger-happy enthusiasts. Duck hunting was their specialty. In December of 1915 newly elected officers were President, W.W. Noble; secretary, F.W. Stanley; treasurer, E. Gensch; trustee, George Clark. The club voted to build a large screened-in porch for their club house for use during the summer months. Other members at one time or another were E.D. Calhoon, H.B. Patch, John Sheerar, Leon Shelp, A.J. Marble, Fred Charlesworth, George Stearns, Dr. Doll *(O.N. 7/17/31)*

The club house is located about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles down the Fox river from Omro on the west bank and across from what now is the settlement of Rivermoor. At Rivermoor was located the former early trading post of Robert Grignon. The Grignon family burying grounds are located near Rivermoor which undoubtedly influenced the choice in the naming of the club. The Gun Club tract contains 106 or so acres of mostly marshland. It is located in the township of Winneconne, with a small portion in the town of Omro.

Omro Rifle and Pistol Club was in existence during the 1930s. Club meetings were noted in the local paper. *(O.N. 6/21/34)*; also pg. 333.

Card Clubs of all kinds were popular pastimes. Meetings were held either afternoons or evenings. Games played were Bridge, 500, Sheephead or Schafskopf, Flinch, Smear, Bunco, Rook, Whist--you name it. The clubs went by various names, supposedly one was the Tuesday Bridge Club; it met on Thursday! *There was a "Squaw Club" in 1916. In 1916 a "Help one another club" O.N. 11/17/16.* *(O.N. 3/26/14)*

To belong to a club must have been the "in" thing, for 1933 was blessed with them. Alphabetically they were:

*O.N. 1/19/33*  
Bide-A-While club; Get-to-Gether card club; Laf-A-Lot bridge club; Leisure Hour Club; Merry-Go-Round club; Mysterious Birthday club; apparently there were all kinds. To continue there was the Pinochle club; Pleasure club; Priscilla Bridge club; Smile-A-While 500 club; Sunshine Club which is still functioning. There was the Teachers Bridge club; T.O.U. bridge club; Tuesday P.M. Bridge club; Widow's club; T and T club, and at the end of the year, 1935, naturally, a Depression club! Poker? at least no newspaper clipping mentioned it. But--there was gambling in the village? Shades of Caesar!--Apparently. An incident of such goings-on of many years ago is supposed to have happened. A young Attorney liked to indulge in the pastime. One time in the back room of one of the local business places 24 were arrested for gambling! However, it was never aired in public--believe it, an Attorney is of help on occasions. That was one.

*O.N. 7/17/30*  
Chatauquas were held during the summers for a number of years. A huge tent was erected in the athletic field east of the High School, now Middle. Usually there would be matinees and evening programs

of plays, such as "Life With Father", an orchestra, a band such as Castalucie and his men, vocal choruses, or a magician's act. Also, operettas, as Madam Butterfly, or parts of Operas. Musical groups from Hawaii and the South Sea Islands, Swiss Bell Ringers, and the best of the popular stage plays were presented. Always an excellent lecturer spoke with each of the above mentioned headliners. Chatauquas were held here during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s to capacity audiences. It was an entertainment eagerly awaited by scores of families. *In July of 1922, 1000 people attended Chatauquas. (mom's diary.)*

*M.J.S.* Wednesday evenings during the summer months the Omro Band played out of doors on Main St. "Doc" Sheerar directed. Some of the band members recalled to mind were Jim Everet, drums; Eph Stanton, bass horn; John Becker, coronet; Milo Becker, (John's brother) clarinet; Frank Sheerar, coronet; John Sheerar, trombone; Cary Bishop, Sr.; Burt Gummer, alto horn; Oscar Hertzberg, trombone; Leonard Hertzberg, coronet; Harold Mills, coronet; Ralph Edick

The streets would be lined with people. They sat on the ledges in front of the store buildings, the edges of the sidewalks, and otherwise stood or walked up and down the sidewalks, promanading. Sticks with "punk" on the ends were burned to chase mosquitoes away with the smoke. A few summers, Eli Rice, a negro from Oshkosh, a tenor, sang with the band.

The platform on which the musicians sat and played was referred to as the band wagon. It was built on a wagon bed and enclosed with screen to keep mosquitoes and bugs from pestering the musicians. The band wagon was placed on the south side of Main Street near the sidewalk. One Wednesday it was east of the intersection of Main and Webster, and the next Wednesday west of the intersection. The Main Street merchants wanted it so, for there was a slight trace of contention between the east Main business houses and those to the west on Main. Band concerts were popular between the 1910s and 1920s at least. In November of 1916 Eli Rice and Pauline E. Lee gave a musical program in the Gem Theatre. *(in spk V)*

In later years Pavement Dances were held on Wednesday evenings. A dance band from out of town was usually hired. A section of W. Main was roped off for a dancing area.

*E. B. Bishop*  
Home Talent plays were popular forms of entertainment. Never a year passed with none given. Even to a "Womanless Wedding" presented in 1929 by local men. Ed. Haedt was the bride; Bernard Sielaff, the prima donna, Earl Tice was a bridesmaid, Cary Bishop, Jr. best man, both went to Zion dance afterwards for more hilarity. All in the large cast were men. Some home talent plays were held in the Opera House; some in the Masonic Hall, first floor.

A Bowling alley was located in the corner building now Charlie's Tavern. Al Austria was the first operator. Elmer Bronson took over from Austria. This was in the 1914-15s and perhaps longer.

*There was a Johnson Bowling Alley, same location? in S.W. 3/6/16.*

*J.H. - 5/16/36.*  
A White Bass Festival was held May 16, 1936. Hundreds witnessed the crowning of Miss Betty Rosenthal, daughter of Dr. Ernst and Mrs. Rosenthal, as Queen of the Omro White Bass Festival. The event was sponsored by the Omro Business Men's Association. Max Bieber was O.B.A. President that year.

As an example of talent shown in an entertainment, the following report in the April 26, 1916 issue of the Northwestern reads as follows--"The large audience that attended the recital in the Presbyterian church was delighted with the music and readings. Vocal solos by Mrs. John B. Sheerar, Ira Lee, Emil Rauchenstein, Gordon Bennett, Miss Marie Bronson, Miss Ruth White, Miss Thomas. Readings by Misses Mary Hurlbut and Marion Bradley.

"A comic sketch was given by A.J. Marble. The opening number was a chorus "Calvary" by the choir. David Webster contributed a violin solo and there was one duet by Misses Wilma Thomas and Grace Van de Plasche.

"The last number was the playlet "Josiah's Secret" given by Miss Bernice Silverthorn and William Kleiber. Mrs. J.A. Becker and Mrs. H.B. Winslow accompanied the soloists on the piano. The singing numbers were given by pupils of Ira Lee. Each number was enthusiastically encored and the evening's entertainment was a thorough success."

Fair weather out-door amusements always came to an end with autumn. Winters were cold and snowy. There were no heated autos to ride in, and most cars were put up on blocks for the winter. However, the livery stables had horse and cutter to rent, and many home owners had a horse in their barn. On crisp moonlight nights the bells on a strap that encircled the horse, and were attached to the harness belly-band, jingled as the horse trotted along. Some cutters had 3 or 4 bells fastened to each thill top that accorded the same merry tinkling.

In the winter of 1918 or 19, an OHS student took his petite History instructor for such a ride. Unfortunately they tipped over in a snow bank, and "teacher" received a broken leg. Fortunately, however, "teacher" had a sister in Oshkosh who could and did substitute for her until she could hobble back to her classroom and again take over.

Youngsters would slide down the school hill on S. Webster on their sleds. There was skating on the river and ponds.

*W-1/18/34.)* - Max Bower as Marshall, convinced the city fathers in the 1930s *(G.N. 1/18/34.)* to block travel on Exchange Street, now Madison, in the winter from the top of the hill for 3 blocks, down to Genesee, now Ontario, on week ends. This left the hill for children to slide down. The most of them had sleds, but a few had toboggans. This procedure was done for several seasons and was thoroughly enjoyed by the youngsters and those not so young. Their excuse was to safeguard their offspring! Later years after the park was developed, there was skating on the Park lagoon.

Max Bauer was Marshall for many years. He retired as Police Chief Sept. 1960, the same year that Clayton Stearns retired as Mayor of Omro. Max died in 1965.

## FAIR GROUNDS

Omro village once could boast of Fair Grounds; they were laid out in 1886. The grounds were located on the south-eastern edge of the village.

*E. Bishop*  
An account of the first fairs show them to have been much more simple from those of later years. There were no exhibition buildings, no carnivals, no concession stands. Exhibitors brought their produce, livestock, handiwork or other exhibits in wagons, carts or wheelbarrows. The grandmother of Cary Bishop, Mrs. Dutcher, who lived at the corner of E. Larrabee and Jackson related the above to him.

*W. N. 11/30/37*  
*W. N.*  
The early Fair grounds of Omro, according to Sherm Barnard, were planned originally with the intention of becoming the County Fair grounds. The area was fenced in; the race track was ideal for horse racing. The fair was held for 3 or 4 days, and admission was charged. Judges selected prize winning exhibits. Small temporary shacks were constructed in which to house some of the exhibits. When the fair was over the shacks were dismantled and taken away.

The rest of the year in favorable weather, Leon Hoover trained race horses on the fair ground race track. However, the County Fair idea was given up as Oshkosh had a much stronger pull, not only in the case of fair grounds, but of industry as well. Omro was gradually becoming less booming.

*E. Bishop*  
Even the race track of the Fair Grounds was made use of after no more horses were raced there. Mr. Dutcher who lived on the corner of Jackson and E. Larrabee dealt in marsh hay. The stacks of "punghaw" were stored in the race track area after harvesting and before shipping. The track was of a half mile length lap.

*E. B.*  
Whoa up! Hold on! The old race track was used for something else. Romance? Indeed! The story goes that the local high school had a "field day". This was back in 1897, and it was a doubly exciting one. For two persons at least.

A student who lived south of Omro and biked in to school each day gave this account of it. There were contests for both boys and girls in the high jump, low jump, running dash and long running race. Afterward baseball games were played.

Another student of the opposite sex who lived north of Omro and also biked to school was smitten by the southsider. He induced her to go bike riding with him, and he suggested--where?--the race track in the old Fair grounds. So bikes also made the laps around the track that formerly horses had raced over. A real field day.

## TORCHES and OIL

Politics played an important part among local voters. C.I.S. <sup>Smith</sup> recalls that his oldest brother would march in "Torchlight Parades". The G.O.P. and Democrats would hold them before an election day. A group would march around the villages during the evenings to stir up enthusiasm for their party and candidate. This was in the 1870s and 80s. Omro was one of the villages in which they marched.

Each marcher carried a can with a bail. Inside of each can was a tin tube fastened to the bottom of it to hold a wick. Kerosene in the can was the fuel for the flame. The can in turn hung on the end of a forked pole, thus the can hung upright and the pole could be shouldered at any angle with the torch up above the parader's head.

On the subject of kerosene, all lighting of homes and business places was by lamps and lanterns. They caused a daily or certainly a weekly chore. They had to be kept in good burning order. In the home all were taken to the kitchen. Usually 5 or 6 lamps at least, one for each room. Using the wash dish in the sink the chimneys were washed in soapy water, rinsed and wiped dry. Each lamp was filled with kerosene from the kerosene can by screwing off the wick and holder from the bowl part. Screwed back on, the wick was then turned up and the black charred part on top snipped off even with a pair of shears. The chimneys were then put back on the lamp and each lamp returned to its accustomed place. The ones for up-stairs bedrooms were left on the kitchen shelf until bedtime to light the way up to bed.

Our brightest lamp was for the living room, a Rayo Lamp. It had a delicate mantle in the tall narrow chimney. As I recall, it had to have air pumped in the kerosene container with a small pencil-shaped pump for a brighter light. This was used in the early 1900s, an improvement on the usual lamp. Another type of lamp could be set in a bracket screwed to the wall. An adjustable concave reflector could be turned to direct more light toward a certain part of the room. A hanging lamp that would be lowered or raised hung over the dining room table. Our lamp was not fancy with crystal pendants as were so many.

Occasionally the lanterns from the cellar, barn, or wherever were brought to the house for chimney cleaning and wick trimming. It was a tiresome chore. Hurrah for the invention of carbide and electric lights!

## VILLAGE LIGHTS

As Omro grew in industry and culture the streets were lighted. By what method? Kerosene lamps of course! They were atop 10 foot poles. The globes looked much like modern home-yard gas lights.

*Wm B. Hazel Hogan*  
 Who cared for them? A man by the name of Wm. McDonald, a cripple of small stature who lived at 305 W. River Drive. He was the village Lamplighter. Mr. McDonald drove a two-wheeled gig on his job of caring for the lights. Kerosene containers hung on each side of the gig seat. In the gig were cleaning cloths, shears for trimming the wicks, supplies needed at different times, and a short ladder to reach the lamps on top of the lamp posts. Mr. McDonald lighted the lamps late each afternoon. Early the next morning he would go to each lamp and extinguish the flame. He would proceed to clean and to refill each lamp with kerosene. They would be ready to light in the late afternoon again.

*Sharon K.*  
 It has been related that Mr. McDonald had a son, Jimmie, who was small for his age. However, he was a match for the school Principal, Mr. Shelton. Jimmie did something that caused the teacher of the north side school, where Jimmie went, to complain to Shelton who was very strict. He came to the school room to punish the boy. He always punished culprits in front of the school class as a demonstration of what happened when punishment was meted out. Shelton started whaleing Jimmie with a stick. Jimmie, crying with tears running down his face, grabbed the Principal by the thumbs and bending them back while hanging onto them with all of his might, he forced the Principal to his knees. That of all things mightily impressed the rest of the pupils--the boys especially, that little Jimmie would fight back successfully! A hero in their eyes! He was a little fighting cock, apparently.

*unpapered Early Hist clipping*  
 At a meeting of the Village board of November 16, 1894, a bill was audited and allowed to W. McDonald for care of Street Lamps of \$28. Very likely a monthly salary.

*Another bill to Jno. Herley for painting the lamp posts - \$2.70.*

BY ADA MORAN

Near the close of the 1800s, Ada Moran, 326 Poygan Road, Luella Darrow's mother left for us her interesting and revealing account of those days. With the consent of a granddaughter, Mary Darrow Bennett, to include it, the newspaper article printed in 1938 and written by Mrs. Moran is as follows:

## OMRO FIFTY YEARS AGO

By Ada Moran

Fifty years ago, Omro had five churches, three schools, one on the northside of the river, one in the east end of the village and the high school, the "Old Red Brick" just north of the present building; two dry goods stores, one jewelry store, two drug stores, two tailor shops, one barber shop, seven groceries, one millinery store, one furniture store and one undertaking establishment, two hardware stores, one harness shop, three blacksmith shops, one flour and feed store, two meat markets, two hotels, two restaurants, one lumber and shingle mill, one planing mill, one carriage shop, one wagon and paint shop and only one saloon. Two doctors and two practical nurses cared for the sick.

The village was lighted by kerosene lamps on posts set at intervals along the principal streets. Every morning a man with a little horse-drawn cart stopped at each one and with a short ladder climbed up and filled and cleaned the lamps, and at the close of day he made the trip to light each one.

There was no fire department, but every man grabbed a bucket and rushed out at the first alarm of "Fire!"

The milk was brought to the door in a covered wagon drawn by a spirited horse, a large can with a faucet stood in the front of the wagon. The tickets were used over and over again, milk was six cents a quart.

We had a tiny daily paper called "The Daily Doings" but we got most of our news from the milkman or the errand boy who sometimes delivered the groceries.

Every one used wood for the cook stoves, and very few used coal for heating.

Oh yes, we had a weekly paper, the Omro Journal and a very good paper it was too. We had also, a news room where one could obtain all the latest periodicals, rent a few books, buy books, and have books rebound.

Two daily stages went to Oshkosh summer and winter, one came through Berlin and the other from Waukau, both were owned by an Omro man.

And the Post Office, that was the place where the young people met when the evening mail came from the south by train. Many a mild flirtation was carried on while waiting for the post to be distributed. The mail was carried from Omro to Oshkosh and Berlin by stage. The stage driver also did most of the errands at those cities for the Omroites. The bread, cookies and other baking was brought to the restaurant by stage as we had no bakery in town. Bread was five and ten cents a loaf, cookies and doughnuts ten cents a dozen. Here is a sample order for one day, ten loaves of white bread, four loaves of graham, two loaves of rye, three dozen white cookies, three dozen fruit cookies and three dozen ginger cookies, those were the big, fat cookies baked by the Zinn Bakers of Oshkosh.

In summer a steam boat plied between Berlin and Oshkosh halting at Omro.

When the churches or other societies wished to take an outing a boat was chartered from Oshkosh.

The different societies, Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Honor and Good Templars held their meetings in rooms over the stores; there were two public halls over business places where dances were enjoyed and stock companies put on plays, the old time medicine shows were very popular about this time.

Wages were low, but every one had a chance to work and earn a living; men received from \$1.25 to \$2.50 a day for general labor, women who sewed by the day received 50¢ and 75¢ a day. Girls doing house work received \$1.50 to \$2.00 a week with board and room. Men working on farms received \$16 to \$20 a week with board and room.

Styles were about the same as now, hoops and chignons had passed out and spike heels had not appeared, otherwise dress was about the same, long trains and low necks for evening, and high necks and long sleeves for street wear. The dresses were made longer and sometimes as many as six yards of braid was used for the bottoms of the skirts. They brushed the old wooden walks merrily carrying dust, if not held up properly.

It was a beautiful sight on a Sunday morning to see the people from every direction wending their way to the various places of worship. Every one walked even if they lived a mile or two from town.

Many people kept a cow, a pig, and some chickens, and sold some of their produce to the neighbors, some of the good housewives made wonderful hop yeast which was sold for two cents for a large cup. A woman came from the country one day with twelve dozen eggs and had a hard time selling them at 15¢ a dozen, butter, good butter was at a premium and often on a Saturday night one could not get a pound at the store. It sold at 18¢ and 20¢ a pound, cheese was 16¢ a pound. We had neither butter nor cheese factories in town, and people had not yet learned the value of cheese in the diet.

Women met to do fancy work, such as knitting or crocheting lace, or embroidering beautiful sofa pillows and crazy quilts, also trade recipes for baking all without the help of the government. Most of the winter socks and stockings were knitted at home, also the mittens and scarfs. Very little card playing went on at this time. A quiet game of Whist was indulged in by the good old English families now and then, but card parties for prizes were unheard of. Many church socials were enjoyed by old and young with games and programs, and home made ice cream and cake in summer and cake and coffee in winter.

Pages could be written of the changes which have taken place in the past fifty years. Are times better or not? that is for you to say.

(A granddaughter of Ada Moran, Mrs. Mary Darrow Bennett of Oshkosh, has verified the era about which her grandmother wrote as the late 1880s. The above article was printed in The Omro Herald of May 12, 1938, as was the following one.)



## OMRO 25 YEARS AGO

Sums up a little with Mrs. Ada Moran's story.

Twenty-five years ago I was a girl of sweet sixteen. I remember the old Pelton's store, the post-office near it, the drug store across the street, a saloon, and a barber shop. At that time all of us girls took it as a sin to look into a barber shop or a saloon window. But look how times have changed now.

I remember they had a few laws at that time also. There were some more stores and buildings, but no filling stations. There must have been a constable also--I remember my sister and I drove down to Omro one stormy day in spring. We tied the old gray mare to a hitching post, put a blanket on her and went about our shopping. When we were ready to go home, Lo! and behold! our horse was gone--we being just a couple of kids, in a big town did not know what to do, we walked around town looking for the horse and could not find her.

We were cold and wet, so we went back to C. Pelton's store and told him our story. He told us that maybe the Constable put it into a livery stable, and told us where we could find the stable. He said there was a law against letting horses stand out in the storm over a set time.

We went to the stable and there was our old Daisy horse. Then we were happy to start for home. I remember we used to be afraid to drive past the Slaughter Houses, or the Mahar Bros. just west of Omro. There was a street car then and for a few years after that.

I remember the old parrot of Mrs. Moran's, how that old buzzard frightened me the first time I saw it. An uncle of mine had a saloon where Hereick's Tavern is now. Then the Krenz boys had a Little Hill Billy band of their own. And how H.B. Patch was superintendent of rural schools and used to visit the school. I attended the White School at Poygan. Oh! were we kids afraid of him, he had such big eyes.

Who am I? I am Mr. and Mrs. Joe Jungwirth's daughter Anna of Poygan, now Mrs. L.G. Brunner of Milwaukee, Wis.

(Printed in the Omro Herald issue of May 19, 1938. Mr. Patch became principal of Omro High School.)

(Anna Brunner died Aug. 13, 1982 - aged 87 years.)

## SALOONS

*W. Brunker*  
 Heap plenty Firewater has been and is still of plentiful supply in Omro when legally permitted. In 1894 Buckalow & Winchester had what was called a Sample Room. They advertised "Wines, Liquors, and Choice Cigars." The location was Water Street.

*W. Brunker*  
 According to an Omroite, "In 1900 there were 6 saloons. All of them were on the south side of Water St. (between Jefferson and S. Webster). And, Mercy Me! No woman ever found herself walking by them on that side of the street. IF she did by chance, she was in danger of being ostracized from society!

"Elmer Brazee had a saloon where Charlie's is now. Fred Glines, Will Oatman, Frank Oatman, Euclid Tritt were bartenders. Frank Case was located where Frank Peters Plumbing shop is now.

"A part of the building west of the vacant lot now housing the Bowling Alley was built by Elmer Brazee for a bottling plant and later was Clint Tice's Meat Market. Back of this plant was one of Omro's many fountains. The water was piped to a steel watering tank at the street walk where folks could water their horses." Quite a building it was; water in front; hard stuff inside; fountain in back!

"The Saloonkeepers paid a license fee of \$500 a year, and later years was raised to \$750. The public had a right to vote the saloons closed, which they did much of the time. (O.H. - 3/15/34.) *Earlier years, liquor license fee was \$1000 beer license \$100, a total of \$200. (O.H. - 3/15/34.)*

*Robin Sheldon*  
 Andrew J. Goggins was a saloon keeper at one time, where Charley's is now.

"Fred Glines obtained special permission to open a saloon north across the corner from where Charley's tavern is now, with the provision that he would start a hotel there. This venture lasted only a short time before the saloons were voted out. *Mountain View Hotel - 104*

"The Wilson Building was composed of 3 stores, the east section was a saloon run by Frank Case and Frank Oatman. Geo. Herrick was located on the Charley Tavern corner at one time and had a restaurant in connection with it."

*Bill P. H.*  
*July 7, 1914*  
*6/16/14*  
 In June of 1914 "the village board at its meeting that week of the 6th, passed an ordinance compelling the removal in saloons of screens and obstructions in the front of chairs, tables and setees."

*on Keweenaw*  
 And drunks? Omro had 'em, has 'em, and no doubt always will have 'em. An interesting confession of one who had at times indulged too freely, has been related by a former Omroite. He was a certain grocery deliveryman in the early 1900s. This customer's neighbor had had an experience with a drunken husband and was discussing the situation with the delivery man.

The deliveryman, we will call him Frank, declared that that man knew what he was doing regardless of the old pretext that a drunk did not. Frank himself had experienced it--only on rare occasions mind you, but he declared that he still knew what he was doing, so he figured all other drunks did, too.

GABE BOUCK--

It is on record that Gabe Bouck, an Oshkosh Attorney, politically was a Democrat. Yet popular in Omro a strongly Republican stronghold, used to say that he got more praise as a lawyer, and fewer votes as a Democrat than in any other place in the county.

Mr. Otto Schlagle had a bottling works for soft drinks on Poygan Avenue.

In the 1930s J.A. Dailey owned a saloon. He sold "cigars, cigs, candy, and soft drinks," also. It was formerly owned by Curtis. (O.H. 2/8/32.) + (O.H. 12/24/31.) + (O.H. 4/6/33.)

About this time there was a Keely liquor cure for alcoholics referred to as the "Keely Kure." Some tried it. (O.H. 7/10/30.)

Geo. Herrick Tavern on the corner of W. Main and S. Webster in 1934 conducted a Schaskopf Tournament. (O.H. 3/15/34.)

*Santa C. Bk p. 16B - same as above. Supplying*

HUIE TRIAL

The village had some exciting events recorded such as the one that occurred in the 1890s. A newspaper item mentioned a "Jubilee at Omro" on the outcome of the "Huie Trial."

"One evening after the verdict, the boys of Omro gave a demonstration of joy at the result of the Huie trial. Mrs. Huie sued the village for \$10,000 for injuries sustained by reason of a defective sidewalk; but the defense proved that the injury occurred at a roller skating rink! E.R. Hicks was attorney for the plaintiff, and Gabe Bouck of Oshkosh for the village.

"The brass band serenaded the members of the village board; a large bonfire was built on Main street, and the firing of anvils called a large crowd. Three rousing cheers were given for Col. Bouck, and then an image of a man labeled "Huie" was placed on the fire and burned." "The cost to the village tax payers was \$1,000 to be paid without a murmur!" *Santa C. Bk p. 16B as above.*

*Santa C. Bk p. 17  
W. Main corner  
Local  
June 1923*

Merchants in the 1890s were concerned about the ads merchants of Oshkosh published in newspapers. Local merchants hoped to induce the populace from buying outside the village by scolding them in the local Weekly.

"A great many people in the village believe that by going down to the city they can buy goods cheaper than can be done at home, and the traders down there have a scheme of 'pulling the wool' in a way to strengthen the belief.

"An instance recently occurred where a person from this vicinity visited the city to purchase five rolls of wall paper and twenty-one yards of border to 'slick up' a room. The paper was purchased for two cents a roll, a big discount from the ten cent local price, and the border was secured for five cents per yard--very cheap--and the purchaser returned home well satisfied with this outlay:

5 rolls paper @ 2 cents.....	10	
21 yds. border @ 5 cents.....	1.05	
Total		\$1.15

But on inquiry the cost of the same amount and quality at home was:

5 rolls paper @ 10 cents.....50  
 21 yds border @ 2 cents.....42  
 Total .92

"Making a difference of twenty-three cents on the wrong side of the balance sheet, to say nothing about fifty cents paid for passenger fare. This is merely one instance out of scores. But still, the average local dealer is as far behind his city brethren, in the science of advertising as Noah's times are behind the present. While the home dealers appear to wait for customers the city men pull them in by advertising new 'bargains' and other inducements, and when the customer comes it is perfectly legitimate to rig up a plan to make him call again by managing the sale so he will believe he has made a cheap purchase."

Perhaps the Local paper was in fact advertising its own wares, angling for more local advertising. At this time Oshkosh was booming, and Omro was doing just the opposite.

*Omro Herald  
Apr. 1931*  
 From The Omro Herald issue these are the Omro businessmen who advertised in April of 1931. 45 years later show but 4 or 5 still in existence.--

Stearns & Calhoon	R. Schmidt Grocery
A.G. Ransom	Peoples Bank
Stearns Drug Store	Universal Grocery
A.M. Bang	Co-Operative Store
Gensch Hdwe Co.	C. Pelton & Co.
A.D. Stiller	Gordon Moran
<u>L. Werthman</u>	A. Austria Feed Mill
<u>R. Spadtke</u>	E. Butt Garage
C. Tice	Farmers Bank
L. Calkins Hdwe	H. Bierman Gas Station
A. Ihrke	Omro Herald
Omro Home Bakery	<u>V. Curtis</u>
F. Mahar	J.P. Plansky
G. Herrick	R. Chase
Thompson Restaurant	Rodney Alder
F. Lockwood	D.D. Hanson
J. Everts	Wis. Power & Light Co.
C. Mitchell	
Omro Lumber Co.	

*See Norton  
letter*  
 -----  
 It is on record that Gabe Bouck an Oshkosh Attorney, yet popular in Omro, used to say that he got more praise as a lawyer, and fewer votes as a Democrat in Omro than in any other place in the county.

## BANKS

Omro was past its boom years when the first reference of a Bank was recorded. A good question is this--where did the industrialists keep their money before banks? Apparently before that, the Oshkosh banks were used. A trusted employee of a business house carried money to Oshkosh to deposit it, and from Oshkosh to meet the pay roll.

A reference to the first bank in Omro was by Wm. Wagstaff. "Mr. Munger, school principal started and managed the first bank in 1868." (O.H. - 6/28/34. in Part II p. 193.)

According to C.B. Root, a bank was located on W. Water, north side of the street about where the VFW Hall is now in 1877. He remembered it as the one that held the woolen mill fund that disappeared when the cashier left town! (O.H. - 6/5/39.)  
*C.B. Root  
 H. 6/8/39.*  
*Citizens Bank - 1903 - C. Bidlaw "Omro Schools" pg. 33.*

In 1892 the Bank of Omro was organized as a State Charter Bank. Officers were W.W. Race, the first President; Sherm Leighton, Vice-President; P.A. Wheeler, cashier.

In 1894 Bank draft rates as found in a newspaper ad were:  
 For sums less than \$10. - - - - .05  
 For sums over \$10 and less than \$100 - - .10  
 Larger sums 10¢ per \$100. 60¢ per \$1,000.

Osborn and Mitchell's "Winnebago County" states that in 1856 "The Legislature of our State have fixed the rate of interest by contract at 12 per cent, and have repealed all laws forfeiting the principal if interest beyond this sum be agreed on. Our laws now, whilst fixing the rate at 12 per cent, require a tender of the principal, before a suit can be brought to recover any excess, giving a freedom to the value of money, unknown in any other State in the Union. We doubt not this will bring the surplus capital of other States to ours, and will aid in developing our valuable resources."

1895 to 1899 the President of the State Charter Bank was S. Leighton. In the year 1900 it was converted to a National Bank. The name was changed to "National Bank." A new banking house was built where presently (1972) is the office of the Wisconsin Power & Light Company office.

Dr. P.A. Wheeler was named President in 1899 to 1903.

Wm. Wakeman President 1903 to 1909. In 1905 the assets of the Citizens Bank of Omro were purchased. This Bank was located south of the former Co-op Store where the Omro Herald had its shop for years. In 1906 the Citizens Bank was merged and capitol stock was increased to \$30,000 and called "First National Bank."

1909 it was re-organized under a state charter again and the name changed to "Farmers Bank of Omro."

R.H. Hackett, a son-in-law of Wm. Wakeman succeeded Wakeman as President in 1909 to 1915.

Banking can be an exciting venture; it was in the nineteen hundreds especially.

## BANK HOLDUP

*SBK IV p. 55  
Dec 2, 1913 issue of  
Daily Commonwealth*

The village of Omro was thrown into a panic shortly after 10 o'clock on the morning of December 2, 1913. A report in a Daily paper told of the attempt to rob the Farmer's bank. "The robber, armed to the teeth and well stocked with bullets for a 44-caliber revolver, supposed to be insane, went through the motions of a real desperado in the most approved fashion and that there was no bloodshed is considered to be extremely fortunate.

"On entering the bank the stranger who gave the name of Peck approached the teller's window and covering cashier A.J. Marble with a revolver, informed him that he owned the bank and demanded all the money. Marble decided the man was insane and while he engaged him in conversation the bookkeeper slipped out and turned in both police and fire alarms. The madman resisted capture and only the timely arrival of the fire department, which for a moment diverted his attention and gave several men chance to pounce on him, saved blood shed.

"When searched by the village marshal, the discovery was made that Peck was loaded up like an arsenal. Bullets were found in nearly every pocket. He also carried over \$100 in money and a number of papers such as might be expected to be found on the person of the average man." *add -*

*Brooks  
diary* Yet another version of the hold up exists. There was more than one person in on the plan according to a report. Geo. Wescott, while enjoying an outing in the woods above Waupaca, saw two men. He recognized them as two of the group who held up the Omro Bank. He immediately reported his discovery to officials. Were those men in on the plan? Who knows now. *(They were taken into custody & found to be guilty.)*

After that event, in 1915 Ernest Sargeant was elected President and served to 1918. Other officers were--John D. Treleven, Vice President; A.J. Marble, cashier, and Leon Shelp Assistant cashier. Leon began work in the bank in 1905 as bookkeeper. *(at 2/8/40)*

*supper* It is interesting to note that "At the annual meeting the meeting was held in the lower room of the Masonic Hall. A banquet at 6:30 o'clock was served by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Glines of the Fountain Inn (now Liquor Store) to about 140 which included stockholders and their wives. After this part of the program, R.H. Hackett presided as toastmaster and responses were given by J.N. Tittmore, W.P. Bussey, C.H. Larrabee, Louis Schriber, and E. Sargeant."

*2/7/30* H.B. Winslow of Pelton & Co. was elected President 1918 to 1940. In 1930 a new modern banking house was built next west of the Wisconsin Power & Light Company office. Other officers at that time were James Heffron, Vice President; A.J. Marble, Cashier, and Leon E. Shelp Assistant Cashier.

*Smith* During the time of the Bank Moratorium of the depression years, the run-on-banks by their depositors caused many institutions to collapse. To help bolster the confidence of depositors in the local bank, merchants and stock holders stood loyal and would deposit rather than withdraw. Mr. Joseph Dempsey, Sr. of Oshkosh, a director of the Farmers Bank, came and talked to depositors like a Dutch Uncle--in German which was a surprise coming from an Irishman. But it proved

effective. Many depositors were of German descent and were scared that they would lose their life savings. They had come to withdraw their deposits. Dempsy's convincing arguments and the assurance shown by the business men convinced a majority of "doubting Thomases" that their money was safe.

Those who had withdrawn their savings in spite of assurances soon re-deposited when the bank did not go busted as many banks had. They were also convinced that the uneasy mattress and sugar bowl repositories made them more nervous. The Farmers Bank weathered the depression.

From 1940 to 1963 the President was A.J. Marble. Mr. Marble was born October 13, 1880 at Winneconne. He began his 63 year tenure in the Omro bank in 1903 as bookkeeper. Mr. Marble died January 3, 1966, a millionaire. His home was at 220 E. Larrabee Street. (O.H. 2/8/40.)

Mr. A.J. Marble ended 60 year career of banking in 1963. (O.H. 10/31/63.)

John E. Dempsey of Oshkosh succeeded Mr. Marble as President from 1964 to 1970.

In 1970 Chet P. Pomerening was elected President. The Challoner building was purchased by the banking house and torn down to make way for a beautiful roomy addition to the former unit. The name was changed to Winnebago County Bank. A large parking lot and a drive-up window were added for further conveniences for the bank patrons. *also a night repository.*

Open house was held October 14, 1972 in the afternoon with nearly a thousand well-wishers in attendance. Complimentary souvenirs as a key ring, 1972 penny, and a pocket mirror were presented to each, with balloons for the youngsters. A lunch was served.

Less than two years later Pomerening was honored. From an issue of the Omro Herald of February 28, 1974--

"C.P. Pomerening, President of the Winnebago County Bank, was honored at a retirement party Thursday at Robbins Restaurant, Oshkosh. Pomerening retired as an active officer of the bank on February 1, 1974. Pomerening started his banking career in 1936 in the book-keeping department of the Winnebago County Bank, then known as Farmers Bank of Omro. He has acted as assistant cashier, cashier, vice president, and in 1970 was elected president of the bank. He remained



on the Board of Directors as bank President.

"During World War II he was granted a leave of absence from his bank duties and served with the Seabees on Okinawa."

*Winn Bank*  
Additional information in regard to the bank robbery indicates that Daniel Crook, of this village, said that Peck hails from Ashland and that he has been treated at the Northern Hospital for the insane. Crook says Peck is an monomaniac and that his delusion is that he is immensely rich, but that large sums of money have been taken from him. Aside from this delusion, he is said to be a sober, industrious man, well connected and very well thought of where people know him and his affliction.

A very frustrating occurrence took place in February of 1961. The Oshkosh Northwestern states that "The Farmers bank of Omro has asked the Winnebago county sheriff to be on the lookout for a man who "sold" it about \$70 in steel washers.

" The bank reported to Sheriff Richard Lowell that the man had discovered a set of washers that were the same size as half dollars and quarters.

" The man exchanged three rolls of half dollars and one roll of quarters Tuesday at the Winneconne branch of the bank, and two rolls of half dollars and a roll of quarters at Omro.

"After he left both banks, the washers were discovered."

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*X B...  
ad. O.H. 12/12/29.)*  
*(O.H. 1/26/33.)*  
The Peoples Bank functioned in Omro from 1915 until January of 1933 when it closed its doors. This was during the depression. The bank was located on the north side of W. Main which is now Pete's Shoe Repair Shop. In 1922 the Directors were H. Siefert, W.W. Noble, Fred Loker, H.G. Roberts, Charles Voelkner, A.L. King, Henry Fisher and Emmerson Safford. Mr. Doms was cashier as was Fred Loker at one time.

*saye Loker* - Fred Loker's father came to Wis. in 1848.

## ORGANIZATIONS OF 1894.

Omro inhabitants were "joiners" by all accounts, and they still are! Today's newer organizations, however, have changed in aims and purposes from the old standbys.

Herewith are Societies and Organizations of Omro in 1894 as noted in an issue of the Omro Herald. Some of the names of the officers may be familiar to some now or may even be their forefathers:

- Omro Masonic Lodge, No. 168, A.F. and A.M.; J.T. Orchard, W.M.;  
E.C. Jones, Sec. - 2nd and 4th Mondays.
- Winnebago Chapter, No. 43. R.A.M. Regular communications 1st and 3rd Mondays. E.C. Jones, H.P.; W.W. Race, Sec.
- Palm Chapter, No. 43, Order Eastern Star; Catherine Waite, W.M.;  
Josephine Sheerar, Sec.
- Omro Lodge, No. 125, I.O.O.F., J. Shelp, N.G.; S. Carver, Rec. Sec.
- Calista Rebekah Lodge, No. 14, Daughters of Rebekah. Nancy Cady, N.G.;  
Nora Barnes, Sec.
- Knights of Honor, No. 1355, Babcock, Dictator, M.G. Bradt, Financial Representative.
- see p. 100 32* J.F. Sawyer Post 7, G.A.R.; Cyrus Barnes, Commander; C.B. Cope, Adjt.
- J.F. Sawyer, No. 94, W.R.C; Fanny A. McAllister, Pres.; Helen Sawyer,  
 Sec. (Womans Relief Corps #94, the Auxilliary, organized in 1889.) *(O.F. 3/18/32.)*
- Omro Lodge No. 48, I.O.G.T.; Frank McAllister, C.T.; Ella Ramsey,  
 Recording Sec. (Independant Order of Good Templars) *(O.F. 1/16/39)*  
 1874
- Hope Juvenile Temple, No. 30; Meet every Wed. P.M. 4:15 in Good Templar's Hall. Mrs. C.T. Everett, Supt.
- Modern Woodmen, Camp No. 1376; meet in Good Templars Hall. W.H. Leaman, Counsel; Geo. E. Morton, Camp Clerk.
- Omro Business Men's Association; meets 1st Thur. evening of each month; at 8:30 in summer, 8:00 in winter. J.T. Orchard, Sec.; Frank Tucker, Pres.
- Omro Fire and Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1--Meets 2nd and 4th Fri. evening each month in rooms over post office. F.U. Day, Foreman; C.A. Peterson, Engineer.
- Omro Board of Education--Monroe Phillips, director; J.T. Orchard, Clerk; F.T. Tucker, Treas. Teachers--E.E. Shelton, A.B., principal; Miss Grace Athearn, assistant; Edgar Hall, grammar; Minnie B. Treleven, intermediate; Ada Morrison, South Primary; Mildred Taylor, East primary; Anna Hurley, North primary.
- W.C.T.U. meets every alternate Friday P.M. at 2:30. Miss Jessie NicholSEN, Pres.; Mrs. Phoebe Guerin, Cor. Sec.; Mrs. Milo Bushnell, Treas.; Mrs. H.E. Robinson, Rec. Sec. (Women's Christian Temperance Union)
- R.N.A. (Royal Neighbors of America) Selver Leaf Camp #1412. Auxilliary of Modern Woodmen *(O.F. 11/19/32.)*

REUNIONS

At one time there was in the village an "Omro Pioneer Society". And in the County a "County Pioneer Ass'n." How long they functioned is not clear.

6/21/10 Daily n.w. 9/13/11. M. Bk IV p. 13 on 2 and 21 P. 12 Daily n.w. 6/12/12

W. 9/13/31 Bk IV p. 3

In a June 1912 issue of the Daily paper the local pioneer society met in the Omro Presbyterian church for the annual meeting. The question arose as to merging this society with the County Ass'n.

Those on the program at this meeting were Norman Gerard, vocal soloist, 88 years of age. Short talks by Mrs. Wm. Tritt, and Mrs. Robert Davidson, and a piano solo by Mrs. Ina Morton Cronk.

New officers elected were Pres., Joseph Mathews; Secretary, P.M. Wright, Omro Journal editor; Treasurer, E.B. Thrall, brother of Julia Thrall Hinderman; Chorister, Mrs. James Brooks; Chaplain, Rev. J. McFarlane.

No further clippings stated whether the two societies did or did not unite. Very likely not, as a nucleus of the "Red Brick Ass'n" was organized in 1901. Letters to The Omro Herald written by Ella Drew Stanley in 1939 tell of the formation of the association; later reports tell of its growth and development. For the most renowned school of Omro was this "Old Red Brick."

W. 9/13/31 Bk IV p. 30

Ella stated that in August of 1901 a number of Red Brickers and their spouses, 19 in number, met to recall their school days. They called themselves "Boys and Girls Club". It was an enjoyable affair; they planned to meet again the next year, 1902. Emmett Hicks was named President, and Elma Gilkey, Secretary. Again it was a success so decided to meet again in January of 1903. This winter meeting was not well attended, so they returned to summer biennial get-togethers. With each meeting attendance mounted; in 1910 three hundred persons registered. It was at the 1914 meeting that the "Red Brick Ass'n" was formerly organized. It drew old school mates back to Omro from coast to coast. Apparently with the new organization, meetings were held annually for the daily paper of June, 25, 1910 reported that "Schoolmates of long ago (names omitted here) assembled on the Omro High School grounds. The program was in charge of E.R. Hicks, President and Mrs. G.F. Gilkey, Sec. and Treas. The principal speaker was O.T. Bright who taught in the old brick in 1868-69 and 70. In speaking he recalled the saw-dust paved streets of 40 years ago, the little treeless lot with the small red brick building, woodshed, pump and woodpile where he taught so many of the men and women present. He said had anyone ever imagined the beautiful town Omro now is; its streets with stately trees, its more than excellent schools with their fine buildings, they would have considered it the wildest of dreams.

Bk IV p. 10 Daily n.w. 6/21/16

Again, a report of a meeting stated that "On June 29, 1916 the Old Red Brick annual reunion of former pupils and teachers was held at the Omro High. About 300 persons, almost all of whom were formerly connected with the school, were in attendance. At noon an elaborate lunch was served by the members of the Woman's Relief Corps in the manual training building."

"A very interesting speaker was Miss Luther Adams. Miss Ada Johnson and Miss Katherine Smith, an elocution teacher in Chicago, then gave some very good readings." (O. H. - 6/29/16.)

(O. H. - 10/16/50)

A description of the Old Red Brick intermediate room is given in a letter by Myrtle Morrison McLeod who moved to Omro as a 12 year old in 1886: "It was not a large room. There were just four windows, two on each side, with no shades. We needed all the sunlight. The teacher's desk was on a raised platform and a blackboard was behind the desk. There was a long blackboard in the back of the room and a raised platform below it. The desks were double. They were well marred and carved with the initials of those who had gone before. There were two doors at the front which opened into closets, each containing a window. These closets had several uses. One, a place to banish some mischievous child. When the teacher thought the imp had had time to repent, she would open the door only to find her culprit had escaped through the open window." (O.H. 6/28/34.)

Still another description by Jennie Lowd Root tells of the same Old Red Brick interior: "There were only two rooms--the main room and the recitation room, in the high school part. We did not have even a cloak room but hung our wraps on hooks on the wall, the girls on the north and the boys on the south wall. We had no use for a library room as our library consisted of one Webster's Unabridged Dictionary when I was a pupil there, but they added to that in later years. There were single seats along the north and south walls and the remainder were double. In the recitation room there were long benches with backs to them, and that was where the assistant teacher had her classes recite while the Principal used the main room. He was Mr. Lewis." (O.H. - 8/10/39.)

A verse read at one of the O.R.B. meetings was as follows:  
 "Old friends are truest, True friends are fewest,  
 That's why we treasure them, More than the newest." (O.H. - 11/9/30.)

*Hosia - C. Colburn pg. 91*  
 The O.R.B. Ass'n honored a former principal of Omro schools, from 1878 to 1886, H.W. Rood, by dedicating a beautiful basswood tree in the Cushing Memorial Park at Delafield in June of 1933. Mr. Rood was prominent in G.A.R. circles. The Ass'n was glad to embrace the opportunity of honoring Mr. Rood while he was living, in appreciation of his splendid work in the Omro schools during the two periods of his term of office. (O.H. - 6/29/33.)

The last Old Red Brick Reunion was held ~~about 1964 or 1966.~~ <sup>June 30, 1962,</sup>  
*according to Minute Book of the organization,*  
*turned over to the Omro Area Historical Society*

(over)

The Cronk sisters, Grace, Bessie and Maude manned the first telephone exchange. Information given by two Omro residents, according to Eddie Chase + Ruth Bennett.

## TELEPHONES

May 1, 1953, M. S. Bram, publisher.

According to an old Omro Journal a Telephone Exchange was installed in Omro village during the summer of 1895. H.E. Tompson was one of the first Managers. The first office was located over the present Drug Store then moved again before being permanently located in a building on S. Webster, first block from Main, between the Gem Theatre and Chase Jewelry. The building has since been razed for the Supermarket parking lot.

4-12/15/42  
 Bernard C. "Ben" Nelezen was a later manager. He came in August of 1908, and kept that post until 1948, being with the Omro telephone system 40 years. He was an accomodating representative of the Telephone Company. Ben married Mabel LaBorde, a local girl, and secretary to Att. Hurlbut. During his first years here Ben set poles, strung the wires, installed the telephones, and made repairs. However, a lineman was sent in from time to time to help him. Later on, a full time helper was furnished. Solicitors would come from time to time to drum up new subscribers; Keenitz was one. Adolph Janssen was another lineman. In a scrapbook of happenings in the Omro Exchange shared by Louisa Schafer was the following item taken from the "Bell News", October 1922 issue:

Louisa Schafer  
 "The Telephone Exchange which started some 20 years ago (Bell Telephone) with a nucleus of 20 or 30 telephones and one operator, now boasts 675 stations, 280 being rural subscribers located in 6 different townships and given excellent service under the management of B.C. Nelezen and his Chief Operator Edith Pohl." By "station" is meant house or location. Some business establishments had extensions. The 6 townships were undoubtedly Omro, Poygan, Rushford, Winneconne, Algoma and Utica.

The early phones were bolted to the wall. One had to stand up to talk over them. They had 2 dry cell batteries that had to be replaced by the manager from time to time. One knew when the batteries were weak by other people complaining that they could barely hear one's voice. Luella Darrow's father and mother were among the first subscribers after the exchange was installed in Omro. And Luella was employed by the local exchange in one capacity or another for many years.

Irma Zellmer  
 The Operators, sometimes referred to as "Central" or "Hello-girls" would answer a one ring call. A small crank on the right side of the phone box when turned would cause a metal bead to vibrate between 2 bells, causing the ring. Central would ask "Number, please". On duty were usually 2 day-operators; one answered local calls, the other the toll calls. There was always a night operator.

M. S. Bram  
 On each line in the country there were from 8 to 10 patrons. The rings would be combinations of even rings, short rings and long rings. There were even rings of 2 rings, 3 rings, 4 rings, 5 rings. Or 2 longs and a short, a short and 2 longs, a long and a short and a long, a long and 2 shorts, 3 shorts and a long, and so on. One had to learn their neighbor's combination in order to ring for them. (And never believe there was no "rubbering" or "listening in" on conversations not one's own. On one rural line

in particular a subscriber was talking with her sister in Polish. Finally a listen-er could stand it no longer she demanded "talk United States!"

A manager had his problems. In the early 1900s with a country line full of about 10 subscribers, a dead phone greeted everyone on the line north of Omro that reached half way or so to Winneconne. "Line out of order" was the cry! The manager was notified. He searched--and searched--for the cause. Up and down the road and the by-road, wires were fine. In each subscriber's home, batteries were all up to snuff, and nothing wrong with the wires leading in to the phones. The trouble eluded him. Poor Ben was stumped and about ready to give up. One more try. Examining each phone again, at my Uncle's he reached up to the little shelf near the top of the phone. There he discovered my Uncle's steel framed reading glasses resting against a metal part of the phone. The glasses were the culprit. They caused a short that threw the entire country line out of whack!

The first charge was \$1.25 per month. A promise that when more patrons subscribed the charge would be less. (Oh, Yes? ) Telephone rent has climbed continually since the first one was installed way back in the early days--almost. At least once we find that the (W. H. - 7/19/32.) Wisconsin public service commission ordered a 12½% reduction in telephone rates. This happened in July of 1932.

The operators were dedicated to their duties. Whenever the fire whistle blew, all off duty operators hurried to the telephone office to take care of the flurry of calls.

Many times Doctors would phone in to tell the operator where they were going and where they could be contacted in case of an emergency. Emerson Bronson did likewise because of his undertaking business. One could phone "central" for the correct time of day.

The telephone girls had their fun, also. When one had a birthday a cake or lunch was in order. Occasionally the day operators would order a fish dinner from Geo. Herrick's Restaurant and the night operator alerted to pick up the order for the 3 of them on her way to the office. One lineman would sometimes treat the girls to ice cream cones. Answering calls and slurping ice cream cones at the same time was something that took concentration and dexterity.

Some of the telephone girls down through the years were: Mrs. Miller, Lillian Peterson, Hazel Hoger, Luella Darrow, Leona Little, Ella Little, Elizabeth Smith, Bonnie Flanagan, Effie Oaks, Neva Haines, Forest LaBorde, Edith Pohl, Verna Larson, Helen Moriearty, Doris Challoner, Irene Zellmer, Muriel Moriearty, Ruth Laiten, Fern Laiten. Also Louisa Reid, Berdina Coats, Laura Peterson, Myrtle Clark. No doubt there were others, too. At least one man served as "Hello-girl". He was night operator Harvey Tice in 1910, the only recorded male to man the Omro switchboard. Herma Humbaugh Coats was a long distance operator.

Here is a story related by a former "hello-girl".--(next page)

Sora Hartsen Marble was an early local telephone operator or "central" as possibly Mabel Marshall, Bernice Cundy and Edna Thompson.

TRIALS OF CENTRALS

One day shortly after 1914 was ushered in the night operators went to Oshkosh for the day. A rip-roaring snow storm took place while they were there. When they were ready to start back to Omro the snow was so deep the interurban did not attempt the run.

The girls phoned the Omro telephone manager and he agreed to send a man with a team and bobsleds to get them. In the meantime the girls decided not to wait for the bobsled but instead took a south bound Northwestern train for Milwaukee where they then changed to the C. M. & St. Paul train bound for Omro.

As night approached and no night operator showed up, the two day-operators came to the realization that one of them would have to work the night shift, also; so they both stayed. In one corner of the telephone office was a cot for the convenience of the night operator. But for two it was uncomfortable to say the least. When one had to answer a call the other one had to scramble to keep on deck as the cot would tilt.

Getting back to the girls in Oshkosh--their plan worked fine except that the train became snow-bound at Ripon and the girls had to stay there over night.

The next day the local lineman suggested that he and the off duty operators view the tracks between Waukau Avenue and the depot as that stretch was so filled in with snow it had to be shoveled out by hand. But alas, lineman and girls also got stuck on their way there from down town.

It was a blizzardy experience for all involved--the manager, team, operators, lineman and train crew.

Progress in Omro continued, but only for a few years did the girls enjoy indoor plumbing. They had their tribulations out doors what with bumblebees in summer and rats in the winter! And, too, Halloween would find the "can" tipped over. One year the manager's son was in on it, and the son, was obliged to tip it back up all by himself!

The Telephone Directory of 1898 is an interesting one. The following is a list of subscribers of the Omro telephone exchange of the Little Wolf River Telephone company dated July, 1898. Of the 28 subscribers listed at that time only one person in Omro is listed in the present directory of about 1944, that being the name of Mrs. Ford. The present telephone directory lists 480 names. The Herald was indebted to Mrs. A.H. Shepard for this list.

No. 11 Bowman, C.D., drug store	--2 rings
Bowman, C.D., residence	--4 rings
Lasher, G.C., residence	--1 long, 1 short
Ford, Dr. J.F., residence	--3 rings
No. 12 Lindsey, J.E., grocery	--4 rings
Pratt, George, residence	--3 rings
Pratt & Gibson, livery	-- 2 rings
Niven, Dr. A.B., office	-- 2 rings
Niven, Dr. A.B., residence	-- 1 long, 1 short
No. 14 Charlesworth, G.H., furniture	-- 2 rings



	Charlesworth, G.H. residence	--	3 rings
	Taylor, Mrs. T.R., residence	--	1 long, 1 short
No. 15	Cole, F.A., dry goods	--	2 rings
	Daniels & Petty, drug store	--	3 rings
No. 16	Slocum, C.H., office	--	4 rings
	Snider, R.A., office	--	2 rings
	<u>Nash, George</u> , Central House	--	3 rings
No. 17	Earle, E.A., store	--	2 rings
	Earle, E.A., residence	--	3 rings
	<u>Elliot, D.B.</u> , grocery	--	1 long, 1 short
	<u>Elevator</u>	--	4 rings
No. 18	Oatman & Bresee, sample room	--	2 rings
	Russell & Everts, barber shop	--	3 rings
No. 19	Tritt, E.H., sample room	--	1 ring
No. 20	Morton, C.C., residence	--	3 rings
	<u>Percy, Lynn</u> , livery	--	2 rings
	<u>Scott, H.C.</u> , office	--	4 rings

*S.H. 5/11/44*) In May of 1944 Luella Darrow received a 30 year Service award from the Wisconsin Telephone Co. for continual service. The award consisted of a diamond pin with 1 star; the diamond for 25 years of service and the star for 5 additional years as cashier in the local office.

*6/15/44*) - "Lutie"; as she was affectionately known, started working for the telephone company May 9, 1914 as switchboard operator. Then she was assigned as clerk and chief operator. On May 1, 1929 she was promoted as cashier of the Commercial department, continuing until the exchange at Omro was phased out.

*Base News  
L.S. Ref* On June 3 of 1948 the Omro Exchange was terminated and dial system took over. The girls were absorbed into the Oshkosh office, and a sub-station building was erected on S. Webster. Salary at that time was \$33 per week.

*(13)  
S.H. 6/13/53*) Since 1940 the "phone girls" of the past have held an annual picnic at Scott Park. One member, Louisa Reid Schafer, had kept a scrap book of phone happenings through the years that the exchange was in Omro.

The first dial phone was installed in the City Hall; now referred to as "Old City Hall" on Main Street. Clayton Stearns was Mayor of Omro at the time. Now, 1975, monthly rate just raised is \$6.72 for a phone rent on a 2 party line. A far cry from \$1.25 in the early 1900s!

Extended phone service began June 10, 1954 for Omro-Oshkosh-Winneconne.

## SPECIAL MEETING

Why not see what went on at a Special Meeting of the Village Board of November 16, 1894? It may contain familiar names.

Members were--

Trustees, E.C. Jones, Pres; S. Leighton, D.D. Treleven, C.H. Larrabee,  
Chas. A. Peterson, E.A. Earle, Monroe Phillips.  
M.G. Brady - - Clerk  
Chas. Chase - - Treasurer  
J.T. Orchard - - Supervisor  
D.E. Sloan - - Constable  
E.B. Thrall - - Justice of the Peace  
J.T. Orchard - - Police Justice  
E.D. Shipman - - Justice of the Peace  
A.B. Tice - - Street Commissioner  
Dr. P.M. Campbell - Health Officer

At this special meeting of the board that was held November 16, all members were present except Trustee Peterson. Minutes of last regular and special sessions read and approved.

Attorney Morton presented an opinion relating a license for vending liquor for a time less than one-half year, his opinion being that the payments must be made for a full year.

The clerk was directed to correspond with the Attorney General and obtain his official opinion.

The following bills were audited and allowed.

*What says newspaper clipping?*

<u>H.C. Scott</u> , plank and material-----	\$135.53
<u>H.C. Scott</u> , fuel Mrs. Pratt-----	1.63
<u>H.C. Scott</u> , fuel Jno. Elliott-----	1.75
<u>A.B. Tice</u> , street commission-----	44.90
<u>W. McDonald</u> care Street lamps-----	28.00
<u>J.E. Kitchen</u> care engine (fire)-----	21.00
<u>D.E. Sloan</u> , Marshall and Watchman-----	20.00
<u>A.W. Cleveland</u> , labor-----	10.88
<u>C.J. Fox</u> , removing weeds-----	8.00
<u>Louis Tice</u> , labor-----	7.88
<u>Willis Wheeler</u> , Insurance engine house-----	7.00
<u>Seth Smith</u> , filing saws-----	4.98
<u>Jno Hurley</u> , painting lamp posts-----	2.70
<u>Fire Co.</u> filling tanks-----	2.00
<u>Day &amp; Larrabee</u> supplies for lock-up-----	.97
<u>Day &amp; Larrabee</u> for Jno Elliott-----	7.00
<u>Day &amp; Larrabee</u> supplies for Mrs. Hall-----	.70
<u>M. Phillips</u> , expense on tramps-----	1.50

306.42

On motion adjourned.

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AN ORIENTAL

11/11/30/39  
2/11/10  
Ruby B. - William Fowler

Omro's first Chinaman ran a laundry. His establishment was west of the Masonic Hall or the old City Hall, and he lived in the back of the building. This was during the 1890s. He had the Oriental slanting eyes, he wore a queue, and a black skull cap. He also sold Chinese candy, which my Aunt insisted tasted like toe jam, but her daughter liked it and would buy it to eat. He would treat the kids with nuts from China. As recalled, his name was Mr. Ling. A second Chinaman took over the laundry business which was in the early 1900s. Apparently he did not stay in business for very long.

Another laundry man at another time was Moyer, located east of the Mahar Meat Market. How long he was in business is uncertain.

LOCAL SLEUTH

W. B. Brooks

Another story is recalled that happened in the early 1900s. Charlie M., a resident living near Omro, drove his horse and buggy down town. It was cool so he needed his lap robe to be comfortably warm. He tied his horse to a hitching post and went to the store for supplies. When ready to go home he discovered that his lap robe was missing. Someone had swiped it. He was a persevering man, so he kept a constant lookout for the missing article. It was of a design or pattern that he would readily recognize, and besides he had it marked.

His patience paid off. One day he saw his robe in another man's buggy. With spectators around he accused the man of theft. Of course the man denied it. Charlie told him and the crowd that if it was his robe, (and he was sure that it was) by ripping the lining from a certain corner they would find his name inscribed therein. It was. The robe was his. The evidence proved it. He got his robe back.

M. B. B. I. 1208  
Winneconne Local  
5/16/02.

Rivalry of villages was apparent in the early years. A newspaper clipping from a Winneconne Local of May 1902 noted a trifling contention between Omro and Winneconne. "Ed Luscomb and Jno Campfield, Jr., two young fellows from Omro, arrived here last Saturday in their house-boat 'Imp of the Fox', and tied up below the bridge. Proof reached Dr. G.M. Wright, village health officer, that the boat had recently been occupied by a case of small-pox and was badly infected. After consulting via telephone with Dr. D.B. Wingate of Milwaukee, secretary of the state board of health, he placed a strict quarantine on the boat and its occupants. Tuesday deputy sheriff Barlow came up from Oshkosh and arrested the two young men on a charge of forgery and took them to the county jail, leaving the boat unoccupied. Next day Dr. Hulbert, health officer of Omro, came to the village and disinfected the boat, but Wednesday night the craft was stolen by unknown parties and taken to parts unknown regardless of its being under quarantine."

17 B  
5/19/02  
5/16/02

Another house-boat owner was Mr. Williamson of Chicago. He and his wife spent a few summers here with the boat anchored west of the old bridge at Cad Clark's pier. This was during the 1910s and 20s. Two north-side youngsters, both named Donald, were good friends of the Williamsons so one time they wished to treat the boys to a dinner. Restaurant eating was a new venture for both lads. When the waitress placed the many pieces of silverware at

one of the boy's place he thought it was for all of them so began to dole out forks and spoons until Mr. Williamson assured the boy they were all for his own use. Afterwards when the boy told his mother about his blunder she was shocked and embarrassed! He thought it funny.

## DOCTORS

An old saying "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" proved that in the early days as well as now, either there were not enough apples to go around; they were not eaten; or there is no truth what so ever in the old adage. Why? Because always there have been a goodly number of doctors in Omro down through the years.--Until in the 1970s.

A partial list of M.Ds. recorded in early writings and not previously mentioned are as follows:

Back to the 1850s again--according to several historians Dr. McAllister was an old-timer in Omro. He came originally to this country from Scotland to New Hampshire. Then on to Omro and arrived about the same time as did Col. Tuttle. Dr. McAllister was one of the leading doctors here for many years. He was also prominent in civic works. In 1857-58 he served as State Assemblyman from the district. One old timer recalled that Cora McAllister, his daughter, was a teacher in the "Old Red Brick" school.

In 1876 members of the medical fraternity in Omro were: Drs. McCall, Gibbs, they were in Omro the longest time. Cook, Wescott, and Pierce followed in the order named. They were all men of experience. Dr. McCall was also a regularly educated surgeon.

Dr. J.C. Petty who lived at 144 E. Huron years ago. <sup>MSB IV p. 5</sup>  
Dr. James Scott Daniels was a Homeopath, and lived at 113 E. Huron.

He and Levi Williams, local carpenter, owned in partnership a farm directly north of the former Pingry School on the Omro-Winneconne road. Dr. Daniels never married. He was hard of hearing, and carried a hearing aid, a long hose-like instrument. The small end he inserted in his ear, and a mouth-piece somewhat like the early telephone mouth-piece, for a person to talk into. This hearing aid was also referred to as an "ear trumpet." However, in a 1902 issue of Sears, Roebuck and Co. catalogue they were listed as "conversation tubes". One could choose from 3 grades, the most costly was silk (black) covered and priced at \$1.89 each. These tubes were perhaps 24 or 30 inches long, and Dr. Daniels carried his looped around his neck or coiled in his coat pocket. Daniels was a member of the Homeopathic Association with headquarters in Chicago. Their remedies were in general those ingredients most often found about the home.

Dr. P.M. Campbell, M.D.--Physician and Surgeon. Office at F.R. Downs residence at the corner of Main and Second streets. In the 1894 era.

Dr. J. Franklin Ford, M.D.--Office and residence on W. Division, first house south of present P.O., 230 S. Webster. He died in 1905 of diabetes. He came to Omro in 1887, married Madge Shafer <sup>P.P. 332</sup>

Dr. Frederick Tice, M.D.--Physician and Surgeon. A native of Omro area, born in 1871. He practised with Dr. Ford. Later, he became a famous surgeon and chest specialist. He practised in Chicago for over 50 years. He was the author of several medical text books. <sup>Ruth Hyman</sup>

*O.H. 5/7/31  
Kit p. 46*  
Dr. I.H. Sheerar, D.D.S.--Office in the old P.O. building, second floor. Also at another time his office was east of the Masonic Hall.

Dr. Hulbert, M.D.--Health officer of Omro in 1902 at least.

Dr. Frank Brockway in 1897--Located at corner of Prospect and Exchange streets.

Dr. Jasper Lockhart, M.D.--Practised several years around 1911 before moving to Oshkosh where he continued for many years until his retirement.

Dr. Frank Russell, M.D.--Practised medicine in Omro at the same time as did Dr. Lockhart. His office and residence was at 131 Madison street. He also fitted glasses. In 1912 he built a house at the south end of Madison street on E. Scott, *204 E. Scott.*

G.A. Russell, brother of the Doctor was a plant chemist in *Dept. IV, 1913* the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. He leased *daily n.w. 4/13/12* the Kellogg farm for the culture of medicinal plants, one being Wormwood. The farm was at the corner of E. Scott and S. Harrison.

Later Doctors were:

Dr. Frank D. Fleury, M.D. He was one of Omro's Spanish-American War Veterans. He was born October of 1876 in Kansas. He entered the Spanish-American War by enlisting after graduation from High School and serving 3 years in the Philippine Islands. Fleury then studied to become a Doctor, the 8th member of his family to take up medicine.

*Grace born in 1878.*  
Dr. Fleury came to Omro in 1915. He married Mrs. Grace *Winnchester* Stearns in 1911. He practised in Omro for 21 years until his death in June of 1936. *(O.H. - 6/16/36.) (6/4/36.) Grace died 12/29/79 100 yrs. old.*

*O.H. 5/8/30*  
Only "old-timers" will understand the following: Dr. F.D. Fleury was village Health Officer and this notice appeared in the local paper during 1930--"Notice is hereby given to all property owners and tenants: that all outhouses located in the Village of Omro must be cleaned. Failure on the part of anyone neglecting to have outhouse cleaned, the same will be cleaned and charged to the taxes. By order of the Board of Health." !

Dr. Mason, M.D.

Dr. Jamil T. LaHam in the 1930s. Office over Universal Store. *(O.H. - 2/7/30)*

*4/7/30*  
Dr. Fred Purdy, M.D. Later moved to Winneconne.

Dr. J.T. Stephenson in the late 1930s. Left Omro June of 1930. *(O.H. - 6/1/30)*

Dr. K. W. Davis, M.D. Office in former Dr. Fleury location on S. Webster. He left in 1939.

Dr. Quincy Danforth, M.D., with office first over the Drug store, then in the Central House, residence and office. Later at 131 Madison street until moving to Oshkosh and practising there until his death. He was a native son of Omro.

Dr. J.K. Espelding came in 1939. Office next to Stearns Drug Store. He then lived in Pearl Rosenthal house. He soon moved to 230 S. Webster. *(O.H. - 9/7/39.)*

F. Herbert was the first Chiropractor in Omro about 1935. His office was next door to Chase Jewelry Store.

Dr. Frank Kimple was another Chiropractor who had his office in his home at 225 E. Main. This was during the 1930s.

Rev. O.P. Lovik was also a trained Chiropractor; while Pastor of the First Baptist church he did little practising here. Later, moving to Winneconne he opened an office in his home.

- Dr. William Matthew Doll, D.D.--Office was over the old P.O. for 45 years or more before being forced to retire because of the building being town down. He came here in 1912. He was an entertainer of note, musically, dramatically, and specializing in comedy. He died April 18, 1974. (Retired in 1971.)
- Dr. Archie W. Dockstader, D.D.--He occupied the former Dr. Fleury office vacated by Dr. Springer, in December of 1945. (O.H. - 12/27/45.)
- Dr. R. Zernzack, D. D. came to Omro in 1953. Later moved his office to Winneconne.
- Dr. L.J. Schoenbechler, M.D.--Office and residence for many years at 211 E. Main. He came to Omro in 1930 as a young man and worked with Dr. Fleury until April of 1936 when he opened an office across from the printing office on S. Webster. Later he moved to E. Main in 1931; the house built by Gus Witt. A local Nursing Home under construction (1973) is named "Schoenbechler Villa" in honor of him. He died suddenly April 8, 1974, at the age of 69.

O.H. - 4/2/36.)  
 O.H. - 7/27/30.)

Tribute--"He Will Be Missed"--in the April 18, 1974 issue of the Omro Herald--"Omro has sustained a great loss with the passing of Dr. Schoenbechler. To many it seemed that as Doc went about visiting the sick, and as he spent long hours in his office on Main Street, that he would always be here to serve the people of our community. And serve he surely did, until he was called from his labors.

"He was truly a family physician who would travel many miles in all kinds of weather to visit patients who were too sick to leave their homes. And we will never know how many times he cared for individuals who were unable to pay for his services.

"Jesus said that true greatness is measured by the service that one renders to his fellow men. Dr. Schoenbechler deserves to be remembered as having achieved this rare distinction."

Dr. V.G. Springer was here in the 1940s to December of 1945. Then he moved to Winneconne.

Dr. Donald D. Peck, M.D.--His clinic at 215 Jackson St. He came to Omro about 1948 and resided at 225 W. Huron. In February of 1950 he purchased the R. Stellmacher, formerly Dr. Rosenthal residence and opened his office. His office and clinic was built later at 215 Jackson Avenue next door to his residence. He died aged 56 yrs Feb. 16, 1979. Clinic dedicated 8/20/66.

Jan 1950  
 O.H. 2/2/50

(O.H. - 2/2/50)  
 (O.H. - 2/2/51.)  
 built in 1965  
 started as 110  
 1966

NURSES

Mrs. W.S. Finch, an R.N. advertised her services in the 1920s, hourly, daily, or weekly. (O.H. - 12/12/29.)

Some of Omro's early practical nurses were:

- Mrs. Emmett Sheldon, (Florence); Miss Carrie Nichol; Mrs. Frank Newman (Ida); Miss Eva Davis; Miss Bertha Knapwurst; Mrs. Carl Harvey, a resident of the north side. Mrs Tillie Parsons; Mrs. E. Jones; Mrs. Minnie Hellwig in the 1930s. Dr. Frank Strayer, a retired medical doctor also did some caring for patients. Mrs. Josephine (Will) Tenant cared for foster children in her home at 548 E. Main. Evelyn Lise also kept foster children at one time.

6-11/30/33.)  
 -1934)  
 9/13/34.)

(O.H. - 8/25/38.)  
 died 6/17/43  
 O.H. 6/23/43

In March of 1911 a Diptheria epidemic raged in Omro. Schools and all meetings were cancelled.

An epidemic of Spanish Influenza striking in October of 1918 and raging for weeks took many lives in and around Omro. Dr. Fleury

became nearly exhausted many times from his duties of treating the sick and dying. County Nurse, Miss Dorothy Erdmann, visited and cared for families who were all or nearly all down with the sickness. All schools and places of entertainment were closed. All organizational meetings and church services were cancelled for the duration of the epidemic.

In September of 1931 an Infantile Paralysis scare closed schools, churches, and meetings. One case in the school was diagnosed as the disease. Dr. Fleury was health officer at the time. (O.H. 9/10/31.)

#### HOME REMEDIES

Many families called a Doctor as a last resort. First they would try a home remedy; or perhaps several. If none helped, then they called in a doctor. Some home remedies were:  
Bruised plantain leaves to prevent infection of wounds.  
Mashed mallow discs to draw a boil to a head or to draw a sliver out.  
Bonset tea for gas on the stomach.  
For sore or festered eyes, bathe with liquid of dried willow bark steamed in water.

Diphtheria: Burn 2 tablespoons of liquid tar and 2 tablespoons of turpentine. The black smoke relieves the difficult breathing.

Flour and water for diarrhea.

Bleeding from cattle dehorning--bind on puffballs.

Nose bleed: Snuff finely powdered alum up nose plentifully. Or wear a red yarn tied around the neck to lessen the attacks. Place a wad of paper under the upper lip.

Colds: The best home remedy for breaking up a cold and take it when you first notice symptoms of a cold is to put 3 drops of spirit of camphor in a tablespoon of cold water. Repeat the dose every hour or oftener till you are relieved. Or, some wore woolen chest protectors, and some wore discs of asafetida, both to ward off colds.

Ringworm was cured by kerosene, almost in no time after being used.

For poison ivy, Doc Lambrecht, the veterinarian's cure was to rub on buttermilk, let it dry on so the air did not reach the itching area.

Sulphur and molasses in the spring to thin the blood!

If you get a sideache while walking, spit under a stone to cure it!

Skin rash: Soak in the following  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour each day; in bathtub of warm water, place 1 pkg. of starch and 1 pkg. of baking soda. Soak in this,  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour each day.

High blood pressure: garlic either raw, salt, or tablets.

Consumption, blood vessels, and blood: Dried young and old mullein, steeped strongly and sweetened with coffee sugar and drink freely.

Test for drinking water: Fill a pint bottle  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of water. Dissolve in it  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of the best white sugar. Set it away in a warm place for 48 hours. If the water becomes cloudy it is unfit to drink.

Flesh worms: 1 yeast cake, 1 teaspoon flour and 2 teaspoons sugar in  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of water. Let stand 3 hours or over night. Then take warm water and wet the skin with your hand on the breast and across the back and shoulders. On top of the arms, on the forehead and in front of the ears. Keep the preparation warm and rub hard, not up and down, but around. After awhile the worms will appear and come part way out but keep on rubbing and they will come all the way out. Repeat in 2 days.

Colds warded off: Some wore woolen chest protectors, and some wore discs of asafetida, both for same purpose.

Head lice: dip a fine-toothed comb in kerosene and comb through the hair. It will kill the pesky critters and the nits, too.

Worms or Croup: sugar with a few drops of kerosene or turpentine.

Ants: to discourage ants, strew Tansy leaves in cupboards and on floor.

*W. B. Drake*

Back in 1901 when Willis B. was a year old he was taken ill. His body was jerking and his eyes were rolling. Dr. Ford was called. He could do nothing, said it was too late. A brother hitched the horse to the buggy and went after Doc Daniels (their family Doctor). He arrived, fastest buggy ride he ever had according to him. He took one look at Willis and called for hot water, put a drop or 2 of turpentine in it, had Willis swallow it. He wrapped Willis's wrists in wet cloths. Very soon he was acting much better. He had a bad case of worms. Dr. Ford looked on amazed at the fast results.



ELECTRICITY

Electricity came to Omro in the form of a local power generator in 1906. The power plant was located on the south bank of the Fox river and west of the Omro Hotel. Power was generated each night. I recall that during the 1914 to 1920s (my high school days) of hearing the lulling throb of the gasoline engine used in generating the electricity each evening before falling asleep. I boarded with my Uncle and Aunt who lived on the north side in the block across the river from the power plant, at 533 Spruce St. The plant was manned by Orley Mills and Will Cady. Orley also worked as a carpenter, and Cady as filling station operator.

As a rule, one bare light bulb hung down in the middle of a room to furnish light; the same in places of business.

Years later the electric plant was torn down and a public boat ramp was built on the site. It was removed when the new bridge was built in 1971.

Electricity users had their gripes during the early years of the electric lighting. From a February 19, 1914 newspaper is found that "twenty persons went to meet with the Railroad Commission to get all night or a day and night lighting service." Then on February 21, 1914, "Friday afternoon a representative of the Wisconsin Railway commission conducted a hearing in the village hall upon the application made by a body of citizens for lower rates and longer service from the Omro Electric Light Company. Attorney W.E. Hurlbut represented the petitioners and F.B. Keefe the light company. The hearing was adjourned at 6 o'clock to be resumed at some future date. The light company claims that it cannot give additional service without an increase in rates, on account of the heavy cost of additional equipment, the size of the village and the comparatively small number of subscribers who use the light after 12 o'clock. There are no manufacturers to use electricity in the day time. The witnesses for the petitioners testify that they want all night or all night and all day service and that they believe it can be done without material change in rates." There was no clipping regarding the outcome of the complaint.

Eventually Wisconsin Power & Light Company took over the village electric needs. It was in January of 1931 that the company bought the vacated Farmers Bank building and remodeled it. It was to house the office, display room, and also to be the depot for the bus line that was serving Omro at that time.

- July 1931 sale prices of Wisconsin Power and Light Company appliances as compared with today's prices may be interesting:  
 No. 80--Radiola (Sephetrodine) \$119.50; No. 35--Federal Vacuum Cleaner \$22.50; No. 10--Federal Table Ironer \$59.50; No. 15D--Monarch Electric Range \$129.50; M4--Sunbeam Food Mixer (less cabinet) \$19.50.

## CAD CLARK

Cad and George Clark developed the island spanned by the old bridge; Fred Clark was another brother. They were trappers, did river dredging, but mainly they were boat builders. Their father, Dan Clark, owned, and they lived in, the building off the bridge to the east, on the island, and now a Sport Shop. Boat building was carried on by the Clarks in the shop on the lower floor.

Cadwell Austin "Cad" Clark was a familiar figure in Omro, usually wearing hip boots doubled down, a hunting jacket and cap. He was an outdoor man, as was his brother George. Cad leased the island of the government for 99 years, in the early 1870s. He and George dredged to shape and fill in the island edges. Later, when Cad married, he built his house west of the bridge. Steps led from the island up onto the bridge, the only land access to his property. This house was removed in 1971.

Cad was also a successful trapper; he spent the ratting season snaring muskrat chiefly, occasionally mink and skunk. The mink were rather scarce and the skunk not as desirable a pelt, but they would get in a trap now and then. Cad's trapping ability may have earned for him the nickname of "River Rat."

In the 1800s a prime muskrat pelt would bring from 8 to 10 cents apiece. No law governed the trapping season for rats nor the method used to obtain them. Later on it was unlawful to spear them while they were in their houses, and, too, a season for trapping was established later by state law.

Musk rats have a peculiar habit in the winter of the females driving some of the males out. This usually occurs during a "soft spell" just before a snow storm. The ousted male or runner leaves the marshland and heads inland leaving a distinctive trail in the snow easily recognized. Centered between his foot prints will be the tell-tale line made by the dragging of his smooth long tail. Families living near a waterway were usually on the lookout for "runners", and the muskrats seldom were able to get very far from the marsh.

Some years later fur buyers could by law buy only from licensed "Rat Farmers". Then their non-marsh-owner neighbor who captured "runners" would have his licensed neighbor sell the pelts for him. In those days neighbors were accommodated neighbors! And the "runners" always met death by starvation if not caught anyhow. In 1910 a pelt brought 11¢, sometimes 15¢.

In January of 1913 a rat pelt was worth 48¢. During World War I a prime muskrat hide brought from \$4.50 to \$5.00, World War II some over \$5.00 but mostly \$3.60. In the fall of 1955 medium pelts brought \$1.25, and in 1972, \$1.00. Supply and demand set the price.

Several years ago, perhaps in the 1940s, a disease nearly wiped out the muskrat population in this area.

Sometime around 1917, two northside boys, in their early teens, were on friendly terms with Cad and they often watched him skin and stretch muskrat hides. One time while discussing wild life in general with Cad, the boys wondered how muskrat meat would taste. The result was that they each took home several "hams" (the hind legs). At

least the mother of one dutifully fried her sons share in butter. After all in the family (6) had sampled them, it was decided they tasted as good as squirrel or rabbit. Why not? Muskrats are vegetarians, too.

*Bk V p. 13*  
*11/17/14*  
In April of 1914 Mr. Clark erected two summer cottages on the island west of his residence. The article from which this was taken also mentioned that the south approach to the local wagon bridge is now protected by chains which are fastened across each time the bridge is opened.

Mr. George Johnson was a fur buyer in Omro, coming here in the early 1930s. His shop was west of the I.O.O.F. Hall. It burned down in the 1940s.

### CLAMMING

A peculiar industry that thrived for several years beginning in the early 1920s and continuing through the 1930s, was "clamming" in the Fox and adjacent rivers. The clam shells were taken to the Button Factory at Freemont, Wisconsin to be manufactured into "pearl" buttons.

Clammers drifted down the rivers in flat bottomed boats or scows with crow-foot bars on each side that they lowered into the water. These bars had wires or fine chains each bearing prongs at the ends. The clams that lie on the river bottom with shells open, clamp shut on the prongs or anything when it is dragged over them. From these prongs the clams were removed and buckets filled. On shore the clams were cooked so that the meat could be removed. The meat was examined for pearls. Shells were then washed, ready for the factory.

During the 1920s one clammer camped on the river bank near town. He had his boiling-kettle set on top of large stones. A fire beneath kept the water hot. Ecologists might squirm had they seen the discarded clam meat dumped back into the river.

In Rob Chase's Jewelry Store one summer he showed some of the pearls the clammers had brought in. One was a dark pink, two or three were white and were perfectly formed as they would roll around on the showcase like a drop of quicksilver. They were more valuable than others. All were beautifully colored from white to shades of cream and pink. Imperfect ones were somewhat elongated in shape, very few of the pearls found were perfect.

*copy in 11/22/70*  
The bivalve shell-fish is nearly extinct. Now hardly a clam can be found, even after years of being undisturbed. *Box I p. 70B*

## PRICES

Buying and selling prices of the early 1900s may be of interest in comparison with today's costs and charges.

1902--lard 14¢ per lb.

1903--eggs sold for 25¢ per doz. in Jan.

March--straws sold for \$6. per ton.

" --hogs sold for \$6.50 per cwt.

April--Baby's shoes cost 50¢.

May--Potatoes brought 30¢ per bu. at Stearns.

July--Hogs sold for \$4.90 per cwt.

Nov.--Hens sold for 9¢ at Mahar's.

1904

March--Eggs brought 20¢ per doz.

" --Sugar cost \$4.90 per cwt.

June--Coffee 15¢ per lb.

August--Young roosters a shilling a lb.

Sept.--Kerosene, 5 gal. 70¢.

1910 --Eggs sold for 30¢ per doz.

1911--Mahar paid 9¢ per lb. for year old hens in August.

Nov.--Hogs sold for \$6.25

1912--In Nov. Calf sold for \$8. per cwt.

1914--

Dec.--eggs sold for 36¢ per doz.

April-- " " " 16¢ per doz.

1916--March--Navy beans sold for \$4.00 per cwt.

Sept.--Hogs sold for \$10 per cwt.

1917--Jan. - sold wheat \$1.85 per bu.

March--pigs sold for \$13.25 per cwt.

1918

April--Hogs sold @ 16¢ and cows 7-3/4¢ per lb.

" --wheat sold for \$2.20 per bu.

" --Eggs sold for 42¢ per doz.

1919--Nov. eggs sold for 54¢ per doz.

1920

May--eggs sold for 35¢ per doz.

Oct.-- " " " 50¢ " "

Nov.-- " " " 58¢ " "

1921--

April--Eggs sold for 21¢ per doz.

August--lug of peaches cost \$1.75.

1931--January prices were--

Sugar - 5 lbs - 27¢

Brown sugar - 4 lbs - 25¢

Powdered sugar - 3 lbs - 22¢

Coffee, French, the best - 19¢

Rice - 5 lbs - 25¢

Guaranteed popcorn - 2 lbs - 19¢

Assorted cookies - 2 lbs - 25¢

Homstor Coffee - 3 lbs - 67¢

Long Horn Cheese - per lb - 19¢

Salmon No. 2 1/2 can - 10¢

Queen Olives qt. - 27¢

SB Peanut Butter - 21¢

Dried Peaches 2 lbs 27¢

Toilet paper 4 lg. rolls - 25¢

Calumet Baking Powder 1 lb can - 29¢

Dried Peaches 2 lbs. - 27¢

1933 a house in Quito rented for \$5 per month for a period of 6 months only. (O.H. 11/16/33)

branches  
ready

can  
be  
used  
1/20/33

## STOCKYARDS

Originally, according to an old-timer, "The city stock yards were located where the Omro Co-op warehouse is now. Shortly thereafter the stock yards were moved to the present location. Omro was once one of the largest livestock shipping stations in Wisconsin. The local shippers were Tom Heffron, James Heffron, Ed Reed, Gus Witt who was born in 1875, came to Omro in 1904. He bought and sold cattle for 26 years. Other livestock dealers were Jess Knoll, Omro Co-op Shipping Ass'n, Fred Loker, John Haigh, G.W. Brooks, Frank Mahar, and Jim Tritt, Sr. Also, Milton (Jake) Gruzinski a present buyer." (G.H. - 8/16/36)

*W. Brooks* "Many herds of cattle were driven from Pine River, Poy Sippi and points west by Sherman Barnard, Bing Hurlbut, John Morton and others. It was not uncommon for 8 or 10 carloads to be shipped weekly to Milwaukee or Chicago via C. M. & St. Paul railroad.

"These stock cars had to be lined with red resin paper in cold weather, and double-decked for calves, with bedding, and ear corn for hogs."

## RURAL DEPENDENCE

*W. Brooks* The early 1900s found the village practically devoid of any industry except the Butter factory and that was farmer instituted. Merchants had to depend on rural trade for the most part for their existence. Many villagers were retired farmers, and those in business catered to rural needs for the most part, such as grocers, bankers, stock buyers, blacksmiths, veterinarianians, grist mills, and farm machinery dealers to name a few.

*W. Brooks* A comprehensive account of building methods and farm progress in the early 1900s has been recorded by Warren Brooks. His father, George Brooks, was a dealer in farm machinery, seeds, and feeds at that time.

"In building foundations for homes or barns it was customary to have a 'bee' to haul stone for the foundations. The stone masons would mix the sand and lime to cement them together. They would find a seam or crack in a large stone, raise their stone-hammers, take aim and strike. The stone usually would break. They would proceed with the building of the wall, fitting the shattered stones to the best advantage.

"Early in 1900 there were stories of a new powder that could be mixed with sand and water that would harden to make blocks, a floor, or sidewalk as hard as stone. It was Portland cement of our day."

*Sept 12* No doubt Portland Cement became popular for building purposes about 1912. An item in the Daily newspaper stated that "A cement sidewalk is being built in front of the Post Office and the Pelton Store." This was during September of that year; perhaps the first to replace the old wooden walkways.

*Sept 25* "The day of the silos was dawning. At first they were of

tamarack lumber. These would shrink and twist and were soon replaced by cypress staves. Then later the silos were made of cement.

"In 1900 most area farmers raised Durham cattle. Durhams were considered a dual breed, providing both milk and meat.

"Farm crops were mostly corn and grain, with timothy, alsike, and red clover for hay. Alfalfa was not grown until about 1916. Soy beans came later.

"Farmers planned to winter the stock on hay and corn stalks, and milk them during the grass season. Many farmers sowed rye early in the fall. In the spring after it had grown 5 or 6 inches, they would turn the cows in to feed on it which increased the milk flow.

"The following summer when they harvested the rye it was run through a threshing machine. A man fed the bundles crosswise into a thresher, the stalks came out tied in bundles. A man with 2 half-bushel baskets took care of the grain. They did not have 'baggers' at that time. The rye straw was taken to Oshkosh where a man named Schneider ran it through a crimper for use in the packing of various products for shipping.

"During these same years there was much talk about 'internal combustion' engine. Eventually one evening (stores were open evenings then) a salesman came into our store (Geo. Brooks') and we ordered a 2 horse power engine. When it arrived the freight bill was for a 700 lb. weight. Later it was predicted that one would be perfected that was small enough for a man to carry about.

"Shortly after the above mentioned engine came on the market, Mr. J.G. Haigh ordered a 20th Century manure spreader. There was much doubt about its efficiency, but it proved to be a great success. (And what a boon to the hard-working farmer!) These machines were probably new on the market about 1908.

"Another new machine was ordered by Timothy Haley from the Brooks Store. It was a David Bradley check-row corn planter. He checked-in his corn that year and was greatly pleased with it.

"Then, too, Minor Rolph ordered a C.B.Q. side-delivery rake. This rake kicked the hay up like a tedder and left the hay or straw in a windrow. This farmer was pleased with the new machine, too. Geo. Morton ordered a cylinder side-delivery rake. When it was hauled down the street many people stood along the way to watch it go by, while in gear of course! (Free advertising!)

"About 1910 there were many traveling men. They were called 'drummers', and were considered well posted on world affairs. One day one of these men told us that soon all our groceries would come wrapped, that there was a tough paper-like substance that would resist water. It was clear and tear resistant. This material was to be used for wrapping. This prediction proved to be true."

(And how! with mountains of throw-away wrappings to 1970s ecologists' dismay.)

*W. J. W. 12/5/11  
p. 15*

In reference to "drummers"--theirs would seem to be a lonely life. In December of 1911 a stranger died in Omro. He was W. J. Franklin, a traveling salesman who had been in the village for some time. He was taken ill. Several days he was ailing and died at the Larrabee hotel. It was discovered that he was an Odd Fellow and during his illness his wants were attended to by the local lodge members.

Efforts were made to discover his home. It was in Massachusetts, and he was a nursery salesman, and at one time he was interested in the ginseng business. It was found that he spent several years in Berlin a few years before, and was in Eureka a short time the summer before.

*Warren Brooks*

Mr. George Brooks saw to it that his family was notified, by telegrams being sent to places he had mentioned during his stay here, and finally located them. The man was 70 years of age.

Omro's recorded history has been enriched by Warren Brooks's early recollections. It is of interest to note, also, that in 1949 Warren was elected to a post on the Winnebago County Board of Super-visors. He served conscientiously and well in the interests of his constituents from his election until 1967.

Warren relates that "The County Board at the November 1919 session was petitioned to start cementing Hwy. 21 from Omro to Oshkosh as far as \$65,000 would build. Later the bonds were taken for this amount.

"At a Special Session in May 1921 it was decided to proceed forthwith to construct an 18 foot roadway during the 1921 and 1922 seasons, beginning where the concrete ends and proceeding east as far as \$125,000 would go. Construction to be by the County under direction of the Road & Bridge Committee, making a total of \$200,000.

"The Omro-Oshkosh crew did the work at a cost of \$30,000 per mile. Earl Tice of the crew says that he worked on this road for 40 cents an hour, 10 hours a day."

It would seem that road builders did their work very well back in the twenties. Hwy. 21 surely has held up well from over 50 years of all sorts of traffic use and abuse, and the natural elements.

#### STREET SPRINKLER

*m.j.s.*

Dusty roads and streets were the usual thing before concrete pavements became a reality. Any breeze would blow up a cloud to settle over and into and onto everything. To keep the main streets more or less free from the grey covering the village used a "street sprinkler". This machine was a round wooden cylindrical tank mounted on a wagon bed drawn by a team of horses. At the back slightly below the tank level was a long tube as wide as the wagon with small holes all along it. The pressure of the water forced it out in tiny streams like a spray. It was driven up one side of the street and down the other to spray the road between the stores and lay the dust at least for quite some time.

## GARAGES

W.B. 25-42  
 About this same time automobiles were becoming more numerous. Garages were springing up to care for mechanical repairs and adjustments. The garage on the corner of West Main and Jefferson was occupied at one time by Will Cady. Sherm Barnard and Bill Flanagan were the auto repairmen at that location at another time. Then Mr. Albert Ihrke bought in with Sherm Barnard. Ihrke took over the Ford Agency and was in business for years selling and having cars serviced and repaired in the west part of the building.

After Mr. Ihrke retired Chas. McConnell and Phil Monahan took over for awhile. The building burned in 1968, and the site is still a vacant lot.

W.B. 25-42  
 Tritt Auto Co. was located in the building west of F. Butkiewicz Shop. They had the Reo Agency and did auto repairing. Later Walter F. Bangs, the meatman's son, was in the same building as an Auto Repair Garage. He was a Pontiac agent. (O.H. - 6/-/38.) & (O.H. - 2/18/32.)

W.B. 25-42  
 In 1910 Ray Pratt went to Milwaukee to bring back a new Brush automobile. And in 1914 he purchased the interest of O. Johnston in the garage and shoe hospital. M.V. N.W. 5/13/14.

W.B. 25-42  
 E.W. Butt & Son were proprietors of the Modern Service Garage (O.H. 5/4/39.) in the late 1920s located next to the city hall. In 1930 they sold to Omro Tire & Battery Shop, Whiting-Riggs, proprietors. The location was in the Wilson block, corner with 3 store fronts. (O.H. - 7/24/30.)  
 Another time he was located next to the City Hall on Main. (O.H. - 3/4/39.)

W.B. 25-42  
 Blackert Motor Sales, Geo. L. Blackert & F.K. Davidson were local dealers in Chrysler and Plymouth cars. This was during the early 1930s.

W.B. 25-42  
 Dewey Hanson had his first garage where Bang's had been in business. He was agent for Hudson-Essex cars. In May of 1924 he bought and built on the east half of Harry Sheldon's lot. Jack Broderick had the body and paint shop in the same building in the 1970s, after Dewey moved to the building now housing the Fire Dept. (O.H. 5/24/37.)

W.B. 25-42  
 In 1911 George Pratt built between the old City Hall and what is now Hanson's Tavern. Dewey later moved his garage business there and son, Dick, joined him. Geo. Pratt obit M.V. N.W. 8/11/16.

W.B. 25-42  
 Olin Covey was proprietor of the North Side Service Station & Garage on Poygan Avenue in the 1930s. He also drove a school bus. May 1945 he sold to Dick Cole. (O.H. - 5/31/45.)

W.B. 25-42  
 Alvin L. Weingarten had his tire and battery shop on the corner of W. Main and Jefferson and installed gasoline pumps. He came to Omro in 1928. The next to run it was Dick Cole. Sold to Paul, Ken & Vint Edminster.

W.B. 25-42  
 Kitchens Service Station was established in 1930 by Walter Kitchen. In August of 1939 he became a Texaco gasoline dealer. (O.H. - 8/10/39.)  
Art Kitchen took over the garage and filling station business after Walter's death.

Dean Auto Service on the east side of Harrison St. sold second hand cars and auto parts since 1953 at least. (Omro Journal 4/30/53.)  
 reprinted in O.H.



## RAGS &amp; IRON TODAY?

Today there are old abandoned automobile grave yards. Before these eye-sores, there were scrap iron dealers, as now, to pick up waste metal. They never paid much for it, however.

*M.J.S.  
C. Sheldon  
Duby Brawl*

Mr. J.W. Weinstein was a dealer in scrap about the turn of the century, buying metal, rags, rubber, glass and paper. In fact, these men were the first to be aware of the possibility of recycling, but for a different reason--for profit. Mr. Weinstein and wife had a daughter Freda and a son Jackie (Jacob?). The son was "as smart as a whip" in school. He was in Arden Sheldon's class. Freda was older, but when it came time for her to enter High School her father, who could very well afford to send her, refused to do so. Apparently he did not believe that girls needed an education. Freda was a brilliant scholar, and a local businessman and his wife saw to it that she did attend High by providing and financing her needs. She graduated as Valedictorian of her class in 1911. She then went to Chicago, and no one ever heard from her after that. When her class observed their 50th graduating anniversary in 1961 they were unable to find anyone who knew where she was or what had become of her. A newspaper item noted that her mother, Mrs. Weinstein died during 1911 in Chicago at a Jewish Hospital. *MRK IV p. 11*

*O.H. - 2/27/33*

Max Fishman was a dealer in scrap iron, paper, rags, etc. during the 1930s, the 40s and 50s. He lived in the first house west of the old Ford Garage on W. Main. Max was short, blond and Jewish. He was a member of the local I.O.O.F. and Rebekah lodges. He tried to induce his wife to move to Omro from Milwaukee after first arriving in town, but she steadfastly refused to come. During all the years that Max lived in Omro he had to go to Milwaukee to see his family. Occasionally in the summer a son or grandson would be with him on his rounds.

*M.J.S.*

Max never met me on the street without inquiring, "How is your mudder and your fadder." He, like others in the early 1900s never over-paid customers for their scrap--2¢ for a pound of rags, 3¢ per pound for rubbers, papers hardly worth saving for him. But the kids had a few cents of spending money after he left. His scales were the long narrow ones. A ring at the top to hang onto, and a hook at the bottom to snag a bag of rags, bundle of tied-up rubbers, or a pack of papers.

*M. - 8/3/33*

Later years prices were somewhat higher. An ad in a 1933 newspaper stated that Max would pay--for rags, 1/2¢ per lb; paper 35¢ per cwt; and magazines, 50¢ per cwt.

Then again in 1939 Max advertised for cow, horse, and calf hides. Also junk, rags, iron, paper, magazines, metals of all kinds, copper, brass, aluminum, lead and old batteries. Also wool and chickens. *(O.H. - 2/23/39.)*

*O.H. - 2/23/35*

In February of 1935 Max Fishman became an American citizen.

*M.J.S.*

In years past these dealers were rather uncouthly referred to as "rag pickers" or "sheenies". Some of them went about the area selling fruit. Even Max Fishman sold apples occasionally. Max was a real Omro personage.

(More of Max on back of page.)

Another distinctive characteristic of Max Fishman was that he apparently took his religion seriously. It was reported that while wearing his prayer scarf, sitting at the table, he was offering the prayer before eating. At the same time his helper was in the yard sorting their day's load of scrap metal into piles of copper or iron. Max sat so that he could keep an eye on the sorting. During the prayer he would take time out to instruct the boy to put certain pieces in "de udder pile."

One time a converted Jew to Christianity spoke at a local church, and a member invited Max to attend. The visitor conveyed the idea that he was, as well as all Jews, born with the knowledge of the Hebrew language. He then asked Max how he learned his knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and Max replied very simply, "From my mudder." Max was the master of his own soul. In August of 1950 Max sold his scrap iron business to Clarence Rankin. *C. H. 8/24/50*

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SCOTT PARK--more information.

*Daily N.W. 6/29/16* In 1916 Matt Towers, a former village businessman, donated \$100 to the Park Board.

*2/24/16* Immediate work on the Park was the planning of a fountain.

Later a foot bridge was erected over the lagoon where the present one exists. Several years later, in 1936, the first one becoming rickety, Ida May Bower donated the cost of material and labor to build a replica of the first bridge dedicated as a memorial to her husband Max Bower who was Chief of Police of Omro Village for many years.

According to the Dec 6, 1938 issue of the Daily Northwestern, "A stone bridge in Scott Park was built. Some of the uses for the \$28,220 grant for Scott Park at Omro which had been approved by the Work Program Administration will be the construction of a stone bridge at the entrance, rebuilding of the rustic bridge in the eastern addition."

A history of Scott Park by Mrs. Margaret Chase can be found in the Carter Memorial Library of Omro.

SCOTT PARK

*E. Hist. Soc. N.W. 4/25/11.D*

*N.W. 4/25/11. M. W. IV p. 8*

Ah, the exciting news--Omro is to have a park! As noted previously, H.C. (Henry Courtney) Scott gave the village a plot of ground for that purpose. It was in the area where his first lumber mill had stood years ago.

The park location is on the south bank of the Fox river and facing on Water Street. That spot? People scoffed! "It is mostly a marshy frog pond with cattails, and it has been a dumping place for tin cans and other rubbish!"

*M. W. IV p. 7 B 4/25/11 N.W.*

But, yes. At the April 1911 meeting of the Men's League the park scheme was promoted. "They will give a banquet in the parlors of the Presbyterian Church and the proceeds go toward beautifying the park.

"The plans include leveling and filling the grounds, planting new trees, and dredging a lagoon through the lower lands. Providing a bathing beach on the water front, and planting flowers and ornamental shrubs were included in the plans." "They looked forward to an attractive spot to soon be enjoyed and noted that the community owed a debt of gratitude to Mr. Scott, and to the Men's League for their active interest."

*M. W. IV p. 7 B 4/25/11 N.W.*

But alas and alack! The men's worthy ambition and high intentions soon petered out. Or the expenses loomed too big or something. For in October of 1912 the energetic members of the Women's Civic League took over the project of an Industrial Fair to help develop the Park. In fact, it was at a meeting of the Omro Study Club that members who were also Civic Leaguers suggested undertaking the project of park development. Tell a woman a thing can't be done, and that's exactly the thing she will do! Now from newspaper clippings--

*Omro Journal 5/21/13*

*Immediate work on park, a fountain planned. M. W. IV N.W. 2/26/16.*

"The old woolen mill is the exposition building and a small electric lighting system has been installed and lights are arranged in dazzling effects over the whole building. There are candy, grocery, furniture, hardware, dry goods, jewelry, automobile supply booths, manual training exhibits of tables, dressers, paddles, taborets, chairs, hand carvings in wood and brass. There are domestic science exhibits of needle work, laces, dresses, tatting and almost every product of the needle. There are alcoves for lunches and ice-cream, a dining room where meals will be served, a rummage counter, fortune tellers, exhibits of garden and farm produce, flowers, painting, canned fruits, preserves and baking. The booths are done in all colors and are works of art in themselves. Evergreens and colored ribbons make the old common place looking mill a scene of color and with the enthusiasm of people of the village and vicinity in this work and of the energetic members of the Woman's league, the occasion is one of keen enjoyment."

*M. W. IV p. 7 B 5/11/12 6/3/12 1913 1915*

Then a later report continues, "The fair is holding the attention of the village and vicinity at present and large numbers of Oshkosh, Neenah, Winneconne, Waukau and Eureka people. G.H.

"The first day the ladies in charge announce themselves well pleased with receipts of nearly \$300. The exhibits include tasty booths not only of the Omro merchants but of several Oshkosh firms.

"The fortune tellers are on deck in their picturesque clothing and mysterious tools of magic. The sale booths are well patronized.

"The exhibits of fine arts, old bric-a-brac are too numerous to mention, but prove of intense interest to lovers of such things. Edward Hawtrey has a large exhibit of old English silverware, ivory pieces, original editions of several well known authors which are of special interest. Mrs. Madge Ford has a large exhibit of paintings and hand painted china that is a fine collection, of her own hand work.

"There are many articles of fine clothing, kitchenware, bed warmers, and all kinds of household utensils useful and ornamental which were brought in single pieces and in small collections that bear dates of a century and over ago.

"The ladies who belong to the Women's League and their friends have worked with unfailing energy for the success of this fair. This means handing over a snug sum to the Scott park fund, about \$500."

In 1913 the Women's Industrial Fair netted about \$750. It was held in the former Woolen Mill as previously.

During the years other money raising projects were held, such as bake sales and bazaars. In March of 1930 a musical comedy was presented--50¢ for an admission ticket. (C.O. 11. - 3/20/30.) (APP IV p. 52-1913)

#### PARK PLANNING

The Women's Civic League raised the money for Scott Park development and beautification. The Women's Civic Improvement administered the use of the money to the best advantage. This committee consisted of Rose Shelp, Madge Ford, Mildred Bowman, Hattie Wood, Minnie Morton, Iona Winslow, and Mary Larrabee.

Apparently the Industrial Fair continued as a yearly project, for in May 1916 "An English Comedy 'Our Boys' was presented in the Congregational Church to a near capacity audience. Those taking part were: Edward Hawtrey, Dr. W.M. Doll, A.J. Marble, L.C. Raymond, Robert Lannin, Mrs. E.D. Calhoon, Mrs. J.S. Becker, Mrs. Madge Ford, Mrs. L.A. Hoyer. The play was in 3 acts, and abounded in ludicrous situations which kept the audience in an uproar. Mrs. H.E. Flanagan, J.A. Becker, J.B. Sheerar, and Francis Kelly gave several orchestral numbers. The play was given to assist in defraying the printing of the premium books for the Omro Fair and was entirely successful from this standpoint, nearly \$70 being received at the door."

*a former resident of the area, Mat Lowers donated \$100 to the Park Fund. M.V. Nov. 6/29/16*

At the Women's Civic League November 1916 meeting "It was decided to give their annual fair next year. The fair has proved a popular enterprise each year and has always netted a neat sum. It was the source of funds creating Scott Park, but on account of the amount of work connected with it many members of the league favored discontinuing the sponsorship of the fair and taking some new means of keeping up the work for the park. When put to a vote, however, the fair for 1917 proved to be the choice." One was held in 1923 according to a family diary.

The 1923 fair may have been the last one. The Park goal was accomplished. Out-of-towners when Omro is mentioned respond with,

"You mean the village with the beautiful little Park and the Town Clock in the City Hall tower?"

Natural changes through the years may have helped to make the park site less difficult to construct by the water level gradually lowering as in the following example.

*W. B. B...*

The area beyond the end of W. Larrabee was at one time and until the early 1900s a peat bog with 3 or 4 fountains. It was an ideal place to bury a dead horse! Saw a rectangular hole through the sod with a hay knife, remove the slab of boggy turf and there was the grave! The strips of peat when dried made good fuel to burn, only it was a bit crumbly and therefore messy in the house. To the south of W. Larrabee, even east of the railroad tracks was a floating pasture about the same time, and earlier it was a bayou. These facts go to show that the water level of this area in particular has lowered drastically within 60 years or so. For this area just mentioned is now tillable land. However, during high water the park lagoon still overflows.

Mrs. Edna Doll was a park board member and the Secretary of it for many years and was a member at the time of her death in May of 1974.

The present Park custodian (1974) is Ed Hoppe who took over the duties in 1961 with Wallace Hess assisting him. After Wallie retired, Hugo Stein was hired as helper.

*4/17/30* Prior park caretakers were Frank Stanley in 1930. In 1934-1943 it was Lewis Gadbow, then Walter Bohn with Wm. Lehman as assistant. *also from 1943 to 1944 (O.H. - 12/14/44) Al. Stiller hired in 1935.*

The lagoon boat dock can accomodate several boats; as many as 20 or more have been anchored along the deeper water area at one time.

*Swimming Pool - 225*

SCOTT PARK CANNON

*M. J. S. Stamm B.*

How many recall that at one time Scott Park boasted an honest-to-goodness War cannon? Old-timers can tell you that it did. The cannon was obtained through the efforts of the local American Legion Post; it was a World War I relic. Picknicking groups would pose on and around the cannon for snapshots. It was a formidable looking piece of artillery. Then along came World War II. The government required that the cannon be dismantled to be melted down into weapons of more modern warfare. It was reclaimed with the assurance from the government that another cannon would replace it after the close of the war. The Legion is still waiting for it--they are still working on it--they are hopefully looking forward to the replacement--someday.

Now replacements uppermost in the minds of the Park board are for trees to take the place of the many beautiful and stately elms that were set out when the park was first landscaped. Many have now succumbed to the devastating Dutch Elm disease that has taken its toll throughout the park, and city, also.

After World War II, 6 or 7 elm trees were planted near the southeast corner of the park. Each tree was dedicated in memory of a veteran who had lost his life in the service of his country. A small round bronze marker noted the rank and name of the service

man so honored. To date (1974) there remains but one tree with a marker, that of Edward J. Treleven at its base.

### CRO

*W. 4/11/75  
set II  
1/80*

The Community Recycling Organization (CRO) of Omro started in April of 1972, has agreed to purchase some shade trees for Scott Park. On June 1, 1974, accordingly, pin oak, honey locust and sweaver maple were planted. So our flattened tin cans and discarded glass containers are helping the park needs. The CRO's "nest" was at first a semi-trailer truck on the Post Office parking lot. The location later was in the former coal bins of Chas. Gilbert, west of the railroad tracks. Volunteers care for and truck the collections to points of recycling. Proceeds from scrap paper go to the local Boy Scout movement and church young people's groups. Discarded glass containers and plastics are also collected and recycled from the CRO's nest. The fall of 1974 finds 2 additional trees set out in the Park by CRO, one a Cordova Linden.

*Omro Herald  
1975*

1975 leaves the CRO with no nest. The coal bins are being torn down. A future home is being considered.

*Omro Herald  
1975*

In April of 1975 CRO celebrated its 3rd birthday. Besides tree planting, 2 nature magazines, "National Wildlife" and "Audubon" have been purchased for the Junior and Senior High schools, and money has been donated for the summer recreation program at Omro.

*Omro Herald  
1975*

On May 29, 1975 the Fifth Grade Camp Fire Girls, A-Cha-Wa-Ka, planted a Maple tree in the Park to replace a tree lost through Dutch Elm disease. Those girls taking part in the planting were Pam Braasch, Diane Olson, Brenda Braasch, Pam Grunske, Tori Hanson, Martina Zernzach and Michele Hanson.

*M. S. B. IV pp. 39B, 40* *MIN. W. 6/3/13*  
*8/1/13* JULY EVENTS

There was a big time in Omro on the evening of July 3, 1913, when the three VanGilder sisters, all teachers and all three Omro High and Oshkosh Normal graduates, were married at a treble marriage ceremony. The event took place at their parents home at 305 Jackson Avenue. Mabel was wedded to E. Grant Smith, Bessie to Guy H. Billings, and Lulu to Harry Wentzel. Their brother Earl "Rip" Van Gilder, an instructor in Manual Arts of Sacramento, California was on hand to witness his sisters' wedding.

A serious mix-up was averted at the start, when the minister, Rev. F.P. Blakemore proceeded to give one of the brides to the wrong husband. But it didn't take long to get the right man in the right place and the half-dozen were paired off for life according to arrangements previously made and recorded in the marriage licenses.

Previous puzzlement did appear at the County Clerk's office when three swains approached asking for a license to marry Miss Van Gilder. The first one appeared routine. As the second one appeared for a license he was surprised, but at the third he was certain some mistake was being made! However, the prospective grooms were able to straighten the clerk out, and all was well.

## JULY 4TH

*M. J. S.* Old-fashioned Fourth of July celebrations in Omro were noisy ones. And Omro always had a celebration every year. Noise-makers made one winch, especially the cane with the charge placed in the bottom, and then whammed onto the sidewalk to discharge it. Cap pistols were popular with the small fry. A little square paper with a round powder charge in the center was used as ammunition. Fire crackers of different sizes cracked and banged from morning until night.

*C. J. Smith* July 4th usually consisted, besides noise-makers, of a parade with "Rag-O-Muffins" dressed in out-landish clothes, and horse-back riders.

Tommy Thompson was a stilt-walker. The stilts he used were tall ones; he would get on them from the second floor or porch roof of the house on the corner of E. Main and Maplewood, now 651 E. Main. At every parade he was around.

*C. J. S.* Old soldiers would fire guns at daybreak. For an extra loud noise, two anvils would be placed one on top of the other. A charge would be placed in a small hallow of one, powder sprinkled along to the edge, the second anvil placed on top of the first one. Then a red-hot rod set fire to the powder; when it reached the charge-- Bang!!!

*M. S. B. V p. 33*  
*W. 6/26/14* A pageant entitled "Omro Rediscovered" was presented the morning of July 4, 1914. The Indians and their chief, Oinskentcha, camped on the school grounds. Nicolet with his retinue paddled up stream from the eastern part of town, passed under the bridge and landed at the Larrabee dock. Couriers carried the news of the white men to the Indians who were camped on the High School grounds. A reproduction of their meeting took place. The costumes that they wore were secured for each scene. It really was an impressive pageant. The afternoon was

given over to games, and noisemaking as usual.

Noisy 4ths finally fell out of popularity in the 1920s. In later years noise-makers were prohibited by law, too many people being injured or burned with the exploding powder.

### FAIRMONT HEIGHTS

The old abandoned Fair Grounds in the southeastern part of the village finally took on new life in 1916 after no one knows how many years no fairs were held there.

The area "became a separate addition to the village under the name of "Fairmont Heights." The plat which is divided into 65 lots, each 60 by 120, with the exception of two, was formally adopted by the village board in April, upon application of W.C. Schilling, Pres. of Buckholz, Schilling Realty Corporation of Green Bay.

"The tract is bounded on the south by Linden Avenue, an extension of Waukau Street and is entered from Pleasant Avenue on the north by a short street. It contains two streets running north and south."

"This addition will increase the village area. It was improved by grading the streets, and by the setting out of attractive rows of trees."

When the lots were sold to individuals, the sale created considerable attention. Few houses were built, but owners did use the lots for gardens and berry patches. Not until in the 1960s did the fair grounds come alive again with building and developing in the area with residences and the Grace Lutheran Church. About this same time, 1916, another Civic project besides that of Fairmont Heights, was in the planning stage.

### BOYS' BUILDING

A descendant of a well known Omro pioneer family became a wealthy man. He was Charles X. Larrabee, and he bequeathed to the city the sum of \$10,000 for a memorial. M.V. N.W. 7/6/16.

A board of three Trustees was appointed, two of them local men, Carroll H. Larrabee, and Rev. C.P. Andrews. They deliberated long and earnestly.

The townspeople must have been approached in the matter of their views, and a Boys' Building apparently was considered the best choice. It is on record in a news item that in December of 1915 the Women's Civic League at their meeting voted the sum of \$200 toward maintenance of the Boys' Building and \$100 was given toward the athletic field. A League committee was appointed to make arrangements if possible to meet with the "Big Brothers", the organization pushing the project, to have a second floor added to the building for the girls. Leave it to the women!

It was announced in July of 1916 by the Trustees that to erect "a public building for the use of the village was their choice of

*Handwritten:* E.H. King 11/23/39

*Handwritten:* M.V. N.W. 4/28/16  
4/26/16  
M.V. 2/29/16  
Realty N.W.

*Handwritten:* M.V. N.W. 1/14/16  
(M.V. 5/6/16) M.V.

*Handwritten:* M.V. N.W. 2/2/14  
M.V. N.W. 1915

*Handwritten:* 7/6/16  
M.V. N.W.



a memorial to the late Mr. Larrabee." This meant purchasing a lot plus building material and labor.

The final decision was for a Boys' Building and plans were submitted. In May of 1916 the Boys' Building that had "hung fire" for so long was in the process of construction according to the wishes of Chas. Larrabee, the donor.

*J.H.W.  
5/6/16*

"The contract was let to J.G. Root. The building to be 30 by 50 feet, a basement of cement blocks, the second floor of stucco. It will be built bungalow style, with a porch on the west end.

"Pool tables and reading rooms will occupy the basement and the east end will have a small extension to give the proper length of a bowling alley if one should be installed later.

"The second floor is to be in one room and will be fitted for a gymnasium and basketball room. The building will be located on the grounds recently purchased by the Big Brothers, across the street from the High School just south of the Methodist Church.

*Big Brothers - M.B.B. IV p. 63. N.W. 7/2/14*

"There are plans for two tennis courts, made in the most approved style, they are to be a part of the improvements of the grounds, with a basketball and football field."

Omro Boy Scouts were organized about this same time. The building is still standing, now with clapboard siding (1974). It has been used as a school band building and a class room. Also, the basement is used for maintenance supplies.

## WORLD WAR I

*M.J.S.* The picture changes from tranquil times to tenseness and patriotic fervor. June 5, 1917 was Conscription or Enrollment Day (draft notice from the Government). On September 12 of the same year was Registration Day. All males 18 to 45 years of age inclusive registered for military service.

It was during W W I of 1917 that mothers and girl friends knitted scarfs, socks, sweaters, and gloves for the "boys over there." In many a front window was proudly hung a banner on which was sewed a blue star for each son, brother or husband in the armed forces. Some had several blue stars. Occasionally there would be a gold star that denoted one had given his life for his country. *The "dough-boys" of WWI*

A number of songs with themes of love, farewell, and patriotism were copyrighted during those years, "Over There", "Good-bye, Broadway, Hello France!", "For Me and My Gal", "When We Wind Up the Watch on the Rhine", "It's a Long Way to Tipperary", and many more, along with "Oh Johnny, Oh Johnny, Oh!", "That Wonderful Mother of Mine," "K-K-K-Katy," and "Keep the Home Fires Burning".

*H. L. ...* The men of the OHS graduating class of 1917 enlisted for Military Service almost en masse after receiving their sheepskins. At the terminal by the Omro Hotel to take the interurban car for Oshkosh to "join up" was gathered a crowd of students, parents, and well-wishers. It was an exuberant and excited crowd. The big burly blond curly-haired motor-man was fearful that the mob would lift the street car from the tracks--they didn't, but they could have!

*M.J.S.* The business Men of Omro, to show the world their esteem for and pride in the men of this area who entered the Armed forces, erected an "Honor Roll". This was a huge board placed on the lot between the Co-operative Store and Tony Kolbus Office building. Many, many names were printed on that roll. The majority had blue stars after the name, but there were gold ones too. This Honor Roll stood for many years. However, it was torn down in 1929 or 1930.

There was rationing of sugar and flour at least, during W W I. Many farmers in the locality raised sugar beets to help alleviate the need for sugar which was used in the manufacture of some explosives. Those families were then entitled to more sugar than others. One sugar beet refining plant was at Menominee Falls where beets from Omro were shipped. The use of sugar substitutes was encouraged, that of molasses, sorghum and honey.

The Royal Baking Powder Co. for one, prepared a booklet as suggested by them and encouraged by a letter from the U.S. Food Administration, Wash. D.C. of August 1, 1917 which read in part: "The use of baking powder breads made of corn and other coarse flours instead of patent wheat flour is recommended by the Conservation Division of the Food Administration. The wheat needed for export is thus conserved, and at the same time healthful food for our own people is provided. Signed, R.L. Wilbur."

Following up the letter the booklet contained recipes using corn meal, oatmeal, barley, buckwheat, potato, rice, rye, and hominy instead of wheat flour. Some of the recipes were eggless, sugarless, milkless, or butterless. Most of the results were good--very good. Some were--Yeck!

## INDUSTRY AGAIN &amp; W.P.A.

In the Depression year of November of 1933 Omro was to receive "\$9961 on Relief Work from the federal general public works money. There were four projects as follows: Swimming Pool \$1812.00; Athletic Field \$995.00; Village Street \$3431.00; Park \$3624.00." (O.H. - 11/23/33.)

An item the following week noted that "It is expected that Omro will have men who have been on the relief list put to work under the federal public works program within a short time."

"Later an additional amount of \$2557.70 was secured for the Village. These were referred to as P.W.A. (Public Works Administration) projects.

Omro Water Works were planned and then built in 1933 by W.P.A. (Work Projects Administration) labor. This was during the depression. H.B. Patch was President of the Village Board at the time of planning. Sherm Barnard was one of the board members. The two of them were to pin-point the location of the sewage disposal plant on the north side between the river and E. River Drive. Donning hip boots for water was high and the location was low, they marked the spot. Requirements were such that the building had to be so many feet from the nearest residence. It took much filling to raise the ground level to the necessary height for the plant. Donohue of Sheboygan was hired to draft plans. The installing of the Sewage Plant was finished during the first year or so after Clayton Stearns became Village President in 1932. The disposal plant was started in August of 1938. (O.H. - 8/25/38.) *more on pg. 333*

In the depression years about 1933, W. P. A. labor also built the bath house and swimming pool in Scott Park, one of the first to be constructed in the state. The size of the pool was 28 by 58 feet, running from 3 feet in depth to 8 feet, holding a capacity of 55,000 gallons of water. Location of both the pool and bath house was west of where the new A.J. Marble Swimming pool is now. For this new pool much more filling was hauled in to raise the pool and bath house to the present height.

In regard to the first pool, about one-fourth of the west end was roped off for very small children to play in. Space left was not sufficient for the older children so businessmen and willing town people donated to build a small pool just for little tots a short distance to the west of the main pool. In 1953 major repair and refurbishing was done on the pool. Even to adding sparklers in the cement that made it glitter!

Indeed, much appreciated and used by the young people of Omro is the A.J. Marble swimming pool built in 1968; it replaced the old one of the 1930s. This pool was made possible through a legacy left to the city of Omro for the benefit of Omro citizens according to the will of Arthur J. Marble. *more info in Margaret Chase's "Scott Park: a Community Project. Research - 1909 - 1939." also next page.* *1969*

Another recreational facility for the horse-shoe pitching enthusiasts are the 6 courts in the pool area. One can hear the clanging click of the shoes on striking the steel stakes as the pitchers attempt to make ringers. *or pits*

(O.H.R. - 6/1/44)  
 Omro began to draw industry here, when in June of 1944 the McGraw-Edison Co. Speed Queen Division, then Barlow-Selig Company of Ripon, announced that they would start a branch here in the basement of the old Theatre now Beckwith room of the New City Hall for the manufacture of Speed Queen washing machines. Later the company built at 430 Michigan Avenue.

After Speed Queen vacated the building, a Ladder factory occupied the basement for awhile.

#### LOCALITIES

North side "Canada" was not the only area of the village that boasted a special name of distinction.

*Sherm Bowmans*  
 "Piety Hill" so often spoken of in former years was christened when the Charles Bowmans built the big house up on 629 Madison Avenue. The Sherm Leightons lived on the same street near 507 Madison. In the area, too, were the Sheerars, Peltons, Bishops, Fowlers, Sowles, and Shepherd families to name a few, who were very interested in and participated in church work. It was they who conceived the title of "Piety Hill" and applied it to that part of the village.

An incident that happened years ago on what was later referred to as Piety Hill proves that "accidents will happen" without warning. This occurred back when wells were "dug" by hand rather than "drilled" with a well-driller. Or perhaps in this instance was thought to be more economical. Mr. Thrall who owned and lived north of the Catholic Church, (now the Catholic Church parking lot) hired Ed Cronk to dig a well for him. Working down several feet in the hole a stone from higher up fell and hit Mr. Cronk on the head. He was going to sue Mr. Thrall for sure!--but he didn't.

Omro on becoming a city in 1944, the residents found that the original names of the streets were changed to what they are today.

#### SCOTT PARK REPOST 1981.

A trust fund established in 1967, value of \$337,671.00. Balance in 1981 of \$409,669. Used for beautification of Omro Parks in particular. From the 6/7/81 issue of the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern.

CITY HALL--LANDMARK

Suppose an old-timer was to return to Omro after 75 years and walk down Main Street. What would be the one landmark he would recognize most decidedly? The old City Hall with the clock in the tower!

*Box I p. 62 N.W. 4/18/70. Gary Lee (Kern B.)*

The Hall's history began in this wise: "President G.H. Hatch's Village Board in 1895 voted to build a 3-story structure, and that in the fall of 1896--with bricks shipped in from Berlin (at \$6. a thousand) the present monument to Omro's past was standing erect and proud.

"Still in use today is the four-faced Seth Thomas clock, wound by a metal crank every seven days." Charles Chase, the jeweler, was the first clock-tender after its installation. Then his son, Rob Chase, former jewelry store owner took over for a number of years. When he was unable to care for it his son Charles looked after it. Jim Hinderman also had a turn at caring for it. Kenneth Cady, city water works manager, does the honor of climbing and winding now. He took over the responsibility on May 19, 1967.

*Rob died Nov 29, 1958.*

*M.J.S.*

*(Mrs. Lillian Lockwood)*

*Interviewed Ken*

*(He was willing to take anyone up in the clock tower.)*

An interesting account of the weekly ritual was told by Kenneth's grandmother who was visiting in Omro from California this summer (1974). Accepting an invitation to witness the procedure, she found the stairway very steep and very narrow. She watched the cranking which wound the timepiece, and noted that the clock and its housing were both shining clean as if brand new. Also, the scene from the tower, looking out over the city, was worth the steep climb.

(To neighboring visitors, Omro is noted particularly for two outstanding possessions, the beautiful little park and the clock on the former City Hall.)

Following are excerpts from a newspaper article: *(The rickety bldg. --- once embraced ---)*

*by Charlie House Daily N.W. Jan 25-1967*

"This building embraced a variety of duties--village government, clerk's office on the second floor; the jail; village fire wagon, and a meeting hall.

*7 I p. 55*

"In earlier days this building rang with debates about such things as nude bathing in the Fox river. So an ordinance was passed calling for a \$1. fine for anyone caught in their one button suit.

*House interviewed 6/25/67*

"Another required saloons to close at a sensible hour--10:15 p.m. so that honest folks could get to bed. Opening hours were set at 5 a.m., perhaps on the assumption that by that time of the day everybody had been up long enough to deserve a drink.

"Another edict proclaimed that no pigs or cows or other live-stock would be permitted to roam at large, with the clear exception of the family milk cow which had to wear a necklace with a bell on it.

"The cow was restricted to certain hours of roaming, however. It was okay for her to go nibbling around town in the daylight, but she had to be confined between 9 p. m. and 4 a. m.

"City fathers apparently reckoned that 4 a. m. was a suitable time to turn the cow loose because just about everybody was up by then.

"Omro village fathers worried about the breakneck speed of those wild scorchers in their gas buggies. An ordinance was passed in 1903 to check those maniacs. It specified that straightaway speed in Omro could not exceed 10 miles per hour. Turning corners must be done no swifter than 7 miles an hour."

The early city fathers would hardly consider the thought of a person hired especially to deter speeders. But in April of 1952 Omro hired its first speed cop. He was Olin Covey who clocked and nabbed them with his faithful motorcycle. (O.H. 4/17/52.)

Continuing with the newspaper article, "Horses had to have good manners, too. One year the village ordered that no horse could be tied to a shade or ornamental tree without permission of the tree's owner. The danged horses ate the leaves, that's what they did.

"When the village hall was 11 years old, a great four day fire-- Omro's worst--broke out and raged directly across Main street from the village hall. It destroyed the old Prehn grist mill and it scarred forever the village hall.

"A room on the second floor on the west side of the building housed the city clerk's office, from John Shelp to his later day counterparts.

(The bell in the old city hall clock tower has an interesting history. It is about 30 inches wide and about 30 inches high, weighing 550 pounds. The lower edge is very thin, progressively thicker higher up. The bell is made of brass with bell metal alloy; in it is a repaired crack.

Those who were of the opinion that the crack occurred while ringing for W W I Armistice of November 11, 1918 were mistaken. Communications at that time were far different from those of today. In 1918 the erroneous word came in May that the war was over, and the glorious news was received with wild celebration. That is the time the bell cracked. Proof? The Butkiewicz brothers, Stanley, George and Robert have the information; they having had photostatic copies made to share in this account.

In 1918 Felix Butkiewicz who operated a machine shop, was hired by the village to repair the crack in the bell. Stanley Butkiewicz, one of the sons still carrying on the metal-work business has graciously shared the proof of the May date and other items in regard to the repair.

From Mr. Butkiewicz's journal is the following entry--

Village of Omro--	5/9/18	Fixing tools for the repair		
		2 hrs - Saw	-	2.00
	5/10	2 hr "		2.00
		1 dozen hack saws		1.00
	5/11	3 hr labor	-	3.00
		1 dozen hack saws		1.00
				9.00
	5/8	Making tools		3.00
		total amt		\$12.00
				Paid F. Butkiewicz

A frame built for the saw blades was required. A hole at the end of the crack had to be drilled to insert the blades for sawing. The afore mentioned preparations; the metal sawing to enlarge the crack; and the replacing of new metal was all done by hand. A picture of the repaired bell shows that the crack extended up nearly half way of the bell.

As one news reporter has commented, "Butkiewicz must have done a good job for the bell still rings out the hours." The bell not only served both the clock hourly striking, but for several years before the installation of a fire siren, the bell was the only fire alarm of which the village could boast. Even after the siren was purchased, the bell ringing in addition to the siren meant that the fire was in a rural district rather than in the village.

Interesting comments by Stanley Butkiewicz is that, in 1935 he "tried to make a ring from the metal that was removed from the bell. This was so brittle that it broke when I tried to machine it." Also, "Dad told me, many times, of the difficulty in cutting this material. He made a deep hack saw frame and used many hack saw blades."

When this bell was installed in 1896 it cost \$450. The machine itself is in the tower and 4 rods connect it with the 4 clock faces. It runs on 450 pounds of weight, and the bell that strikes the hour has a weight cord of 1,700 pounds.

Once a week the clock tender climbs a series of narrow stairways and ladders and with a crank larger than one for an old time automobile, he winds the clock. It takes both hands to accomplish the winding.

Twice a year the clock gets an oiling, and when ice or snow piles up on the clock faces and the mechanism shuts itself off automatically to prevent serious damage to the clock, it means an hour-long chore of getting it going again and re-setting all eight hands. To do this a helper stands on the ground to tell when the hands are set correctly.

The bell that chimes the hours is on a small porch above the clock. Local pigeons appreciate it very much! This porch, also, was installed in 1896, at a cost of \$202.

Omro residents agree that for \$652 the time device has been a real bargain. People living as far away as 3 miles from town are able to hear the clock strike the hour if wind and atmosphere are favorable.

The newspaper article continues, "Busy within the walls of the old City Hall were the Omro volunteer fire department and the village marshall. When the big bell sounded the alarm, things happened. The livery stable from across the street would rush over two horses, which were hooked up to the steam boiler pumper. Two men manned the horse-drawn pumper, one driving the team of horses, the other operating the pumper. Two hose carts drawn by "human" horses also rushed to the scene of the fire."

*Butkiewicz  
Sawing  
12/17/59*

*FT 12/17/59*

*(Gary Lee article 7/18/70 N.W.)*

*m.j.s.*

"Older firemen still have tasty memories of the oyster stews served in the early days of the City Hall on the second floor. The late Max Bower, longtime police chief, did the honors.

"The use of the first floor of the City Hall as a fire station was granted when the building was dedicated. The second floor was used by the volunteer firemen.

"The village marshall's job used to be bid for, paying anywhere from \$10-\$30 a month, with the low bidder getting the job.

"In 1966 the old theatre building was remodeled at a cost of \$100,000. as a new City Hall. "Twas said the old one was getting rickety.

"In the spring election of 1967 a referendum was put to the voters, either to tear the vacated City Hall down or not. The result of their vote was that the people of Omro still wanted the old Hall to remain intact.

"There is \$2,500 in Omro's 1970 budget for refurbishing the old City Hall." Since then sanding has brought out the original beautiful pink tint of the original brick.

Now the old warrior stands waiting for a chance to be of benefit to the city again. It is an ideal landmark for a tourist attraction. In what way, is for someone smart enough to come up with a gimmick to inspire that which will whet the curiosity, admiration, *m.j.s.* and desire for people to come, see, and enjoy the old brick relic. *Omro Area Historical Society acquired the bldg. for a museum in 1980.*

#### ATTAINMENTS

Buildings show a village's individuality, so do the cultural accomplishments of its inhabitants. As an example:

*Winneconne Local 1890-2003* Declamatory contests between High schools have been held for many years. One in 1902 or 1903 between contestants of Omro and Winneconne schools resulted as follows; in a victory for Omro--Edith Root, Omro, who recited "How he saved St. Michael's", first place; Edw. Treleven, Omro, "The Black horse and its Rider", second; Fronie Markert, Winneconne, "The Red Jacket", third; Claudia Gottsleben, Winneconne, "Searching for the Slain", fourth; Bertha Chase, Omro, "The Country Justice", fifth; Arthur Marble, Winneconne, "The Dream of Eugene Aram", sixth.

*1890-18916* In a declamatory and oratorical contest held in April of 1916 honors were divided between North Fond du Lac and Omro. Miss Loma Laiten of Omro received second with "Laddie". Kenyon Moyer won first for Omro boys with "War and Public Opinion". Students strive for such awards to this day.

*Winneconne Local 4/1/01* In 1901 Edward Treleven won second place with "Constantius and the Lion", tying with Miss Elva Patterson of Winneconne with "Tom Sawyer's Whitewashing." Geo. A. Maxon of Berlin won first place with "Hoss Trade" from David Harum. This was a contest with Omro, Berlin, and Winneconne High Schools held at Winneconne in their Opera House.



## AMUSEMENTS

Amusements and entertainments were generally found in the home as now. Only it was not television and radio. Remember the Stereoscope? One held the scope up to the eyes and looked through the goggle-like glasses. At the end of the 6 or 8 inch extension the picture card was placed in a wire holder, sliding it nearer or farther from the glasses to get the clearest much enlarged picture of the views. The views were scenes from all over the country and world. In a Sears, Roebuck Catalogue of 1902 one could purchase a Stereoscope, priced from 25¢ to \$4.87. The higher priced one no doubt had velvet padding around the goggle part that was held against the face and perhaps the glasses magnified the views to a much larger degree. And the views were 36¢ per dozen.

There was also the Talking Machine, sometimes referred to as a phonograph, graphophone or gramophone. The spring that ran it was hand cranked. The Victor machine had a small horn and the records were disk shaped as today. Steel needles had to be changed periodically. The Victor symbol was the terrior dog sitting by the machine with his earcocked toward the horn and with the wording, "His Master's Voice". The Edison machine had a big long horn, all of a yard or so, hung from a tripod. The records were cylinders. The needle was a diamond and needed no changing. The spring was also cranked by hand.

Then, too, there was the parlor or reed organ. Wind power for the reeds was supplied by pumping with foot pedals. Stops to pull out to vary tone and timbre were standard types. In a 1902 Sears, Roebuck catalogue they were priced at \$27.45. More elaborately trimmed ones with carvings or made of more choice wood cost more.

There were Autograph albums with fancy verses, Spencerian doodling, colored decals of flowers, birds or butterflies that decorated the pages of some individuals who signed the album. Nearly every young lady had one during the 1880s and early 1900s especially.

Church groups did their part to give zest to village entertainment, the following is an example:

## "DISTRICT SKULE" AT OMRO

Older Residents Duplicate Scenes of Childhood Days.  
(This was special to The Northwestern.)

Omro, Wis. April 26, 1912--The Congregational Church was a scene of merriment and fun Wednesday evening when the elderly people of the church entertained the younger folks with a "District Skule" of forty years ago. Some of the pupils were Mrs. and Mrs. Tom Elliott, Mr. and Mrs. George W. Brooks, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Jones, Ralph Darrow, James Stead, Mr. and Mrs. George Cleveland, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Coats, Mrs. Melvina Winchester, Mrs. H. Becker, Mrs. A. Carter, Mrs. Elizabeth Stead, Mrs. L.T. Marshall, Mrs. Thomas Parker, Mrs. W.R. Whittaker and E.G. Bills. The pupils went to school in the old fashioned way by twos and threes dressed in ludicrously youthful costumes, the ladies with their hair in curls and braids, and with sunbonnets, and laden with bouquets and apples for teacher, and arrived at the school house some crying and needing the teacher's comfort and others needing the birch-rod for fighting and pulling the "little" girls' "pig-tails." Mrs. S.J. Darrow was teacher and she called school with the old hand bell and called roll to which Imogenes, Samanthas, Rebeccahs, Betsies,

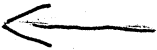
paper  
SERIV P. 19B  
P. 20  
W. 4/26/12

M. L. R. V. P. 52.

Daily N. W.  
11/18/13.

ENTERTAINMENT of November 18, 1913.

Women's Civic League held an Attic Social in the Masonic Hall. Over 200 attended. Most were decked out in old clothes and many ridiculous costumes. A short humorous program was carried out. The ladies' band under the directorship of Mrs. E.A. Reed was a hit. Mrs. L.A. Morton (Minnie) was the band's soloist. Dr. Sheerar's quartet gave several selections. Misses Ann and Elizabeth Smith gave a vocal duet. Herbert Bradley and Miss Myrtie Davis each gave readings, and Mrs. Emma Allen sang several old ballads. After the program those in costume joined in a grand march followed by serving of refreshments. The remainder of the evening was passed in games and music.



responded in perfect mimicry. This particular school day was the "last day" and the superintendent, Bruce Carter was there to give his opinion of the exhibition which he did with helpful hints to the young olive branches. The teacher adjured the pupils that as their "paws" and Maws were present, she expected them to do their best at the afternoon program. The way they did their best was a caution. Jimmie Stead received a dunce cap, George Washington Brooks started something with Ralph Darrow and a school scrap was narrowly averted. The pupils sang a new song, but recently published, "John Brown's Body" on which the teacher had been drilling them. Their rendition had lots of volume but time and tone were both slighted somewhat to bring out the feeling in this beautiful ballad. Everybody enjoyed the school farce immensely and the young folks will have to put up a good program to excel the "old school children" for fun and jollity.

*Example* Progress has a marked effect on the traffic over the side streets of the city. For instance, take E. Larrabee from S. Webster to Madison as an example. It has become so busy now that it is no longer used as a play ground. A play ground you say? Oh, yes. In the 1940s the street was a narrow rutted road with very little traffic of any kind. So it was ideal for the boys (girls weren't allowed) to play marbles on it. And they did, up and down the roadway. Girls jumped rope and played "Hop Scotch."

Maternal interest in the needs of their youngsters from Kindergarten through fourth grade resulted in a local Primary Mother's Club, organized in 1945. Miss Ruth Isaacson was the teacher. (O.H. - 9/10/53.)

The mothers raised money for school-room play equipment by candy and bake sales. They supplied Halloween, Christmas, Valentine treats, and other special day surprises for the youngsters to look forward to and enjoy.

This club functioned for several years. They held meetings in the Band building.

## TAXES

Early settlers had the ever present Taxes to pay on property they owned as they do now. No doubt they complained the same as we do. A newspaper clipping of December of 1912 states that the "Tax rate in Omro was announced as to be 2 mills. Taxes to be collected amount to \$14,104.20."

In 1916 the "Total amount to be raised in the village is \$18,548. The assessed valuation is \$903,946.00 which is approximately \$192,000 more than last year. The rate this year is 2 mills as against 2.35 last year. The amount raised in the village this year is about \$1,400 more than last year. This is more than accounted for by the fact that a \$500 bridge bond and \$150 interest on the bridge fund and also \$1,000 for state and county good roads." The village Treasurer was A. J. Schloerb.

The tax rate for the village printed December 30, 1930 was fixed at \$2.90 per each \$100, assessed valuation by the village board.

Distribution was as follows:

County tax	-	-	\$6,621.08
State "	-	-	884.14
School "	-	-	11,000.00
Village purposes	-	-	12,824.78
			<u>\$31,320.00</u>

The assessed valuation of the village for this year was \$1,080,000.

Taxes continued to rise during the interval until 1959 when the rate was 43.

Then the 1960 proposed tax rate was something different! "Omro's tax-payers will have a tax rate of only \$25 per \$1,000 evaluation compared to \$43 last year if the 1961 tentative budget is adopted (it was)--but the figures are misleading because of a property re-evaluation this year.

"The re-evaluation boosted the tax base from \$2,966,995 last year to \$6,014,040 this year, so the \$25 rate actually represents a raise in taxes.

"Biggest item in the budget, as usual, is education. Schools accounted for \$91,892.35 of this year's expenditures. In 1961 they are expected to total \$105,058.81.

"Outside of that, county and state taxes will be \$18,261.52, and repayment of loans and interest amounts to \$20,043."

Then followed again the continual rise to 53. paid in 1972. Another revaluation of property doubled and in some instances tripled the valuation of property. This reduced the rate to 25. but more than doubled city taxes. Local taxes keep climbing, and are nearing the school taxes which have been where the most of the tax money went heretofore.

E. Hunt p. 17  
Daily News, 12/19/12.

Hunt p. 3A  
Daily News, 12/17/16

D.A.  
10/30/30

See  
11/11/1960

m.v.  
No. 12/17/16

## WORLD WAR II

In the 1930s World War II called for rationing of certain foods and commodities. War Ration Books of stamps were issued by the Office of Price Administration. Numbers for books 1, 2, 3, 4 called for applications mailed to OPA Mailing Center, Chicago, Ill. Each applicant received an Identification stub, with a number. The local OPA board in Omro was No. 70-1. Marion Dohner was one member on the board. The slogan was "If you don't need it DON'T BUY IT."

11/23/43.) - Canning sugar was allowed some families. Other rationed articles were coffee (1 cup a day for each person 15 years or older), cheese, meat, canned goods, and perhaps some others. Also received were OPA (Office of Price Administration) points of 1 value. They were red cardboard disks about the size of a dime. Paper was scarce, too, and grocery stores were short of bags for groceries. Families were encouraged to bring paper sacks they had on hand to the store in which to put the purchased items. Many foods at that time did not come packaged as now, but were bought in bulk containers.

Gasoline, too, was rationed. The rationing was based on "priorities." If driving was not absolutely essential one received an "A" windshield sticker which meant about 3 gallons a week. An "essential need", a "B" and "C" sticker, meant more gas. A physician or clergyman or essential government employee and "X" sticker which meant an unlimited amount of gas--if available at the local filling station.

Tires for cars, trucks, and tractors were rationed, and anyone having extra tires on hand were supposed to declare them. Cigarettes were scarce, and women especially fairly fought to get even a pack. Officials warned against the "danger and silliness" of hoarding of which many were guilty. (Milwaukee) 11/22/75.)

Many from Omro entered the various branches of the military service, the "GI Joes" of WW II. Not all were men.

11/23/42.) - June 3, 1943 found Olive Young the first woman to join the Military service as a WAC (Woman's Army Corps). She was stationed in Massachusetts at first. From there she was sent to other stations until finally to Heidelberg, Germany.

Another young lady to join the service was Betty Rosenthal, R.N. who volunteered and served as a Red Cross nurse overseas in France. Other Omro nurses who served in the Armed Forces were Lucille Tenant in the South Pacific and Katherine Vonderloh.

Some of the songs popular during this War were "The White Cliffs of Dover", "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition", and "Coming In on a Wing and a Prayer."

9/21/33.) - N.R.A. (National Recovery Act) was instituted for economical purposes in the manufacturing of various goods, especially ready-made wearables.

As an example of a WW II rationing, this one appeared in the Ration Guide of the April 1943 issue of the Omro Herald.

MEATS--Red A, B, C and D stamps in Ration Book 2 valid through April 30 for purchase of meat, butter, cheese, edible fats (lard,

oleomargarine, shortenings) , oils, and canned fish. E stamps becomes valid Sunday.

PROCESSED FOODS--Blue D,E and F stamps in Ration Book 2 valid through Friday for purchase of canned, bottled and frozen foods. G,H, and J stamps valid through May 31.

SHOES--Stamp 17 in Ration Book 1, good for one pair until June 15.

SUGAR--Stamp No. 12 in Book 1 good for five pounds through May 31.

COFFEE--Stamp No. 26 in Book 1 good for one pound through Sunday. Stamp 23 good for one pound from Monday through May 30.

FUEL OIL--Coupons for Heating period 5, good for 11 gallons, valid through September 30.

GASOLINE--No. 5 stamps in basic. A book, each good for four gallons are valid through May 21. Each B and C sheet coupon also good for four gallons until expiration shown on individual book.

TIRES--Tires of A book holders must have second inspection by authorized inspection stations by October 1. Holders of B books must have another inspection by July 1 and C book and bulk coupon holders by June 1.

New stamp books were issued periodically.

An April 1943 issue of The Omro Herald noted the following--

Village of Omro workers in fund drive for Omro Chapter of the Red Cross were: Rodney Alder, Luella Darrow, Mrs. Herb Helgeson, Forest LaBorde, H.B. Patch, Mrs. C.J. Samphier, Mrs. Lucy Stevens, Irene Zellmer, Mrs. Willis Calkins, F.M. Gensch, Van E. Jackson, Mrs. Elizabeth Moran, J.P. Plansky, Mrs. Alva Shepard, Mrs. Bernice Tilken, Grace Carter, Mrs. Helen Hanson, Mrs. Marie Koenemann, Mrs. Marian Nelson, Mrs. Frank Peterson, Mrs. Lucile Shepard, and Hattie Ward. F.A. Siebensohn, was Chairman of the Omro branch.

#### WW II EFFORTS

*o.H. - 8/27/44* - The lowly milkweed came to the front as a factor in the war effort. The floss taken from pods was found to be an excellent material for life belts and aviator suits, needed by the armed forces. The fluff was gathered in onion bags to air-dry on fences or clothes lines. 8 collecting centers were located throughout Winnebago County. Future Farmers, 4-H Clubs, Boy Scouts and rural schools of the County were in the campaign. *Also used to dress wounds, some upholstering, artificial silk & substitute for cotton. From Wildcat Journal grass sheet - June 4 - 1944.*

*o.H. - 4/25/43* - For a larger food supply many went in for the planting of "Victory" gardens.

Local Boy Scouts collected tin cans for the war effort, in April of 1943. Again in November of the same year they collected flattened tin cans and old newspapers to be tied in bundles for them. The Government was seriously in need of paper. They also collected tin foil for recycling. *(o.H. - 11/11/43.)*

*25*  
An article of February 1943 noted that a former Omro man, James Gordon "Pep" Bennett was in India with the Red Cross to help organize Red Cross clubs and work in hospitals to bring aid and comfort to American troops on the fighting front.

*o.H. - 7/22/43* - In July of 1943 the O.B.A. erected an "Honor Roll" to show

their esteem and pride in the military services of their young men and women from Omro and vicinity.

*Omro Herald 7/26/43.*  
The Red Cross Drive especially in April of 1943 went over the top. Business houses and Village Clubs helped to accomplish it.

*Omro Herald 3/2/44.*  
During March of 1944, as an example, the fourth War Bond Drive with A.J. Marble as Chairman over-subscribed its quota of \$30,000. In the March 2, 1944 issue of The Omro Herald it had reached then the amount of \$30,531.25.

February of 1945 found the Boy Scouts still collecting tin cans for recycling.

*Omro Herald 7/26/45.*  
In July of 1945 the 7th War Loan quota was \$30,000 of which Omro went over the top with over \$55,000. Kraft Cheese Company contributed \$15,000 of it, the \$40,000 by Omro residents.

*Omro Herald 11/27/45.*  
The last Victory Loan drive during November, 1945 also went over the top. The quota was \$20,000. The December 8th closing of the drive found Omro had, through the Bank and Post Office subscribed \$24,779 and Kraft Cheese Company \$10,000.

*Omro Herald 5/8/45.*  
On Tuesday May 8, 1945 President Harry S. Truman announced "The end of the European war is proclaimed." The siren on the City Hall was turned on and the church bells began to ring out the glad tidings. All places of business and taverns locked their doors and remained closed until Wednesday morning. The school was also given a vacation for the day.

However, war officially ended August 14, 1945. *(Omro Herald - 8/16/45.)*

## LIBRARY

*Maude Stearns  
BBK.*

Until 1933 the village of Omro had no public library. It was then that Clayton Stearns, local Rexall Pharmacist, being a native-born civic-minded citizen, started the nucleus of a library. He placed a few books on a shelf in his Drug Store to lend to interested persons. This was during the W.P.A. and Depression years.

Soon other like-minded citizens donated enough more books to make it feasible for Clayton to offer the use of a back room in the store for a full-fledged library. The book donors were--C.D. Bowman, H.B. Patch, Leslie Leighton, Mrs. Edith Jones, Mrs. Grace Patri, Mrs. Helen Lemke, Mrs. A. Kelly (sister of Bertha McQuay), Mrs. Myrtle Bussey, Dr. Q. Danforth and T.G. Emerson. In addition, \$50 was donated by the towns of Omro and Rushford, and the village of Omro.

The first librarian was Mrs. Bonnie Gummer. Later librarians were Eileen King, Ella Oatman, Mrs. Minnie Morton, Miss Connie Keeber, Phyllis Siefert in the 1940s, and Mrs. Edith Pohl.

*H. H. 11/30/39*

Public interest in the library warranted efforts by civic-minded citizens to require a branch library in the fall of 1939 from the County library. A committee choose a room in Stearns Drug Store as the library. Mrs. Margaret Killilea was librarian at that time.

The next librarian was Mrs. Maude Stearns who served in that position for the next 10 years. The library then was moved to the room in the old City Hall on Main Street formerly used as the jail. (Now this room is used by "Senior Citizens") Mrs. E. Moran became the librarian at that time, and still is up to the present. (1976)

The old Theatre building was remodeled for the City Hall in 1966. A legacy left to the city by Grace Carter was used at that time to establish the present beautiful Grace Carter Memorial Library in a portion of the building. The Winnebago County Library furnishes books periodically for the local reading public. Titles of new books were published in the local paper for the benefit of the reading public.

*Archie Daggett*

The new City Hall and Library was dedicated in 1966, Sherm Barnard was Mayor at the time. Archie Daggett gave the address of Dedication. Archie served on the City Council for nearly a quarter of a century He was Mayor of the city for 2 terms. Besides these Civic duties Archie is presently a member of the County Board of Supervisors, and has served in that capacity for 27 years. He is Chairman of the Agricultural and Extension Education Committee which includes more than agricultural subjects. He is also a Trustee of the Fox River Valley Center at Menasha which encompasses Winnebago and Outagamie counties. Archie is Chairman of the Soil and Water Conservation District which is set up under State Statutes. (1975)

*Archie Barnard*

Sherm Barnard served as Postmaster from 1928 to 1936, on Village Board and City council as Mayor from 1960 to 1968 on County Board



## SYNOPSIS OF CARTER FUND

April 8, 1981

The Carter Fund was received by the City on May 2, 1958 in the amount of \$22,606.20.

The Fund was designated for charitable and educational use.

The amount from the Fund spent on Library addition to City Hall was \$18,917.37.

The value of the Fund today is \$32,830.00.

Will dated Aug 1948.

*mjs.*  
GRACE CARTER--LIBRARY

The public library of Omro had its beginning in 1933 as a shelf of his own books in Clayton Stearns Drug Store. Over 30 years later the library received momentum in its development from a civic-minded individual in the person of Miss Grace Carter. Grace was born in 1882 and died July 5, 1956. On her death it was learned that she had bequeathed to the City of Omro a sum of money amounting to \$22,606.20. This money was received by the city on May 2, 1958.

In the will it was specified that the money be used for educational and charitable purposes. Further stipulation was that it be designated as "Carter Memorial" in memory of herself and her brother, Bruce Carter.

The sum spent on the library addition at that time amounted to \$18,917.37. The value of the fund presently (April 8, 1981) is \$32,830.

Grace was the daughter of Amos and Mary Carter. They and her pioneer grandparents were farmers in the township of Poygan. The Carters had three sons, Stebbins, Carroll and Henry Bruce, two daughters, Alma who married Mr. George Mettam, and Grace.

On Mr. Carter's retirement from farming the family moved to a home on the north side of the river in Omro on Cedar Street. Grace graduated from Omro High School in 1902. It is not known if she had further schooling or not. She lived with and cared for her parents. She worked in The Omro Herald office as assistant to the editor for several years.

Mr. Carter was a Civil War Veteran, and a member of the local J.F. Sawyer Post of the G.A.R. organization. Grace was a member of the Logan Circle, an auxiliary of the local Post.

Grace was well known locally as a recitationist. One poem she would recite and recollect in particular was Oliver Wendell Holmes' "Grandmother's Story of the Bunker Hill Battle". She memorized and recited dozens of poems and readings in public. She also composed verse for special meetings and occasions.

As a member of the local Rebekah and Eastern Star Orders she participated in their various ceremonies and activities. Local projects received her support. To mention two, as a member of the Omro Chapter of the Red Cross she helped raise funds during World War I in particular. A noteworthy local project she helped with was the development of Scott Park. Womens organizations of the town and the women of the Civic League spent much time and effort to make the park from a rubbish filled swampy area to what it is today.

Grace was a cheerful person gifted with an abundance of dry humor. However, a twinkle in her eye followed by a chuckle dispersed stern connotations.

The Carters were a church-going family. Grace possessed a fine strong alto voice. She directed the choir of the First Baptist Church for several years.

(omro pg. 329)

## HALLS

In these 1970 years, townspeople refer to the various halls as the Masonic, on the corner of E. Main and Madison; I.O.O.F. on W. Main, and V.F.W. on W. Main. The American Legion Hall is located on the corner of N. Webster and W. River Drive, formerly the G.A.R. Hall. And until a few years ago, the W.R.C. Hall was on the corner of S. Webster and E. Huron.

*5/7/31*  
*Putnam p. 44*  
- Omro historians mention earlier Halls with which they were familiar. Putnam Hall was located on the corner of W. Main and Jefferson, the antique shop and where former gas pumps stood. This hall was used for lodge meetings, dramatic performances, and singing schools. At another time it was referred to as Wilson Hall.

*5/7/31*  
*Bushnell p. 44*  
- Bushnell Hall was on E. Main across from the Masonic Hall. Stage entertainments, medicine shows, home talent plays were held in it as well as public dances. Mr. Chas. W. Bushnell had his blacksmith shop on the first floor of the building. The Bushnell home was at 319 Jackson Avenue.

Frank's Hall was on the corner of S. Webster and E. Main, over what is now Fink's Restaurant and Curtis Dry Goods. It was used for about the same purposes as the other halls mentioned. The E.F.U. and Modern Woodman of America, both Fraternal and Insurance lodges held their meetings there. Before the W.R.C. organization built their hall on the corner of S. Webster and E. Huron they served public dinners in Frank's Hall. No doubt to raise money to build their own hall. *Edg sand - blasted in 1980, bricks now a beautiful cream color by Allen Van Kizel new p. 44.*

Benedict Hall--as yet no one recalls the location of Benedict Hall, yet it has been mentioned in old news items. The Benedict Restaurant in the 1860s could have been a two story building, very likely the Hall could have been on the second floor. A military order's organizational meeting was held in the Benedict Hall according to P.M. Wright. Mrs. Benedict's brother, Chas. Cope, was a Civil War Veteran, and could have been connected with the order. The restaurant was located in the area west of the Masonic Hall.

(O.H. - 12/17/36) / 36

OMRO BUSINESS DIRECTORY 1936

This is a more or less complete December 1936 Business Directory of Omro.

Alder, Rodney - Attorney  
 Annex Theatre  
 Austria, A.H. - grist and flour mill (A.H.)  
 Bronson Funeral Home - Emerson Bronson  
 Bussey, W.P. - Insurance Agency (W. Parkers.)  
 Cady and Loker Ford Garage - Will Cady  
 Cole & Rilling Motor Service  
 Calkins Hardware Co.  
 H.B. Carter, - Wood and Coal (H. Bruce.)  
 Chase Grocery Store, Chas.  
 Chase Jewelry Store, Robert  
 Crane Recreational Hall (Dick)  
 Geo. Daggett & Son  
 Joe A. Dailey Tavern  
 Davis, K.W., M.D.  
 Doll, Wm. M., D.D.  
 Doms, R.E. - Insurance and Notary Public  
 Farmers Bank of Omro  
 Gamble Store  
 Hansen's Food Mart - W.D. Hansen, Prop.  
 Hanson's Garage - Dewey and Dick  
 Herrick's Tavern and Restaurant  
 Hickory Knoll Guernsey Milk - Van Jackson  
 Hotel Omro and Tavern  
 Kitchen Service Station  
 Krause Meat Market  
 Kroger Store - Otto Meyer  
 Leaman's Restaurant - Allie  
 Lorenz 5¢ to \$1 Store (Joseph.)  
 Mahar Groceries and Meats (Frank)  
 Modern Service Station - E. Butt  
 North Side Grocery - Chas. Wilson  
 Omro Bakery - M. Bieber (Max)  
 Omro Co-Operative Butter & Cheese Co.  
 Omro Co-Operative Store - A.C. Birkholz, Max.  
 Omro Harness, Upholstery and Shoe Repair - Ernest Schafer  
 Omro Herald Publishing Co. - F.A. Siebensohn  
 Omro Lumber Co. - Chas Jones  
 Omro Sheet Metal  
 Plansky Furniture & Undertaking (Joseph P.)  
 Polly-Dora Shop - dress shop Polly Beck & Nora Roserke  
 Standard Oil - Harold Bierman  
 Stearns & Calhoon - Mrs. & Earl, So.  
 Stearns Drug - Clayton  
 Stevens Meat Market - Harry  
 Wisconsin Power & Light Co.

## A VILLAGE EXTRAVAGANZA

*Grace + Clayton S.*

The Omro Businessmen's Association sponsored Fall Festivals in their efforts to help Omro progress. Parades during the years of 1932-33-34-35 were the high-lights. These "doings" were unforgettable. In 1937 the OBA featured at the Fall Festival Heinie and his Grenaderes. They were a popular Milwaukee WTMJ radio band and they played for a pavement dance. The OBA Fall Festivals were noted for pageants, fairs, dances, and other forms of entertainment.

*O.H. - 7/28/38*

All of the efforts were noteworthy, but one in particular stood out above the others. It was held in late July of 1938, and it was a two day celebration. The boat races alone attracted many. Chicago's WLS radio Barn Dance talent was here to entertain. Midway rides were for the kiddies. Concession stands sold lunches and snacks.

*O.H. - 7/28/38*

The parade was outstanding. Bands from four neighboring high schools participated. The floats were beautifully trimmed and re-presented Mother Goose stories, fairyland characters, historical men, women and events. On reaching the business section the parade halted and Eva May Carpenter, chosen as Queen, was met by Frank B. Keefe who placed the crown on her head. He also presented her with a diamond ring from the OBA before the parade continued on its route.

*O.H. - 7/26/39*

These parades took place while Clayton Stearns was manager of the Omro Theatre and during the time that he was Village President, also. He and his wife, Grace, had much to do with the success of the festivals. They would travel to Hollywood, California for moving picture films and with this contact with the men who sent out the movie reels, they were able to obtain authentic gowns to be worn by them and many other Omro people especially in the 1938 parade. For instance, one costume, the queenly purple colored gown fringed in old lace worn by Norma Sheerar (famous movie actress) in the movie "Marie Antoinette" was loaned to the OBA by the Metro-Goldwyn Mayer studios. The \$1,000 costume was worn in the parade by Grace Stearns. Another gorgeous gown loaned, was made for the portrayal of Catherine the Great while Queen. *(O.H. - 1/26/39.)*

*O.H. - 7/26/39*

Other costumes for the parade were made by WPA in Milwaukee, and by the Omro seamstresses under the direction of Mrs. Margaret Killilea, WPA recreational leader. Walter Johnson on one float was dressed as Abe Lincoln, and really looked like him. Leon Shelp on another float was dressed as an American Indian. Punk Anderson was merry "Old King Cole." These are but a few who took part.

*O.H. - 7/26/38*

The crowd was placed at between 15,000 and 20,000 people, the likes of which Omro had never experienced before nor since.

After the parade a drawing for a Shetland pony took place and Truman Treleven was the winner. *(O.H. - 7/28/38.)*

Other entertainments were dancing and movie going.

So it was, that these festivals delighted the watching and participating spectators. At each annual parade, Omro was crowded with locals and visitors. One other year an estimated 10,000 spectators crowded the village to enjoy the excitement.

*Grace Stearns*

Again, at another time, while Grace Stearns was State Grand Matron of the Order of Eastern Star Lodge, Omro hosted another crowd. Grace gave a party for the state officers and helpers. It was held in the Gymnasium Annex about 1932, and was attended by 550 guests. One guest, however, must have made a very quick survey of the village. And was unimpressed. He came up with the observation that Omro was a "Cemetery with Lights!" Well, well.

Another delightful annual social gathering began in June of 1973. Members of the local O.E.S. Palm Chapter invited guests to an afternoon Get-Together Tea. Many friendships were renewed and greetings exchanged as the large crowd of people from far and near attended.

*2/14* An outstanding event occurred on October 2, 1948 at the Omro Masonic Hall. A banquet given by the local O.E.S. Chapter honored Mary Jane Truman of Missouri, sister of President Harry S. Truman. Mary Jane belonged to the Order in her home town.

The banquet was followed by a program. Eastern Star members and their guests had the opportunity of shaking hands with the guest of honor during the evening.

## OMRO PERSONAGES OF YESTERYEARS

Other individuals who had a hand in the development of or interest in Omro's progress might be mentioned, and more details of their life added.

*See Blue  
pg 1701*

G.W. Beckwith also served as State Assemblyman, the year of 1859, as did Frank Challoner in 1885-1887. Others serving as State Assemblymen were: Wm. P. McAllister, 1857-58; Milo C. Bushnell, 1867-68; Nelson F. Beckwith, 1872; Sidney A. Shufelt, 1876-77; Hiram W. Webster, 1879-80; Frank Challoner, 1885-87.

J.F. Sawyer. *also "Family Histories" pg. 45 - O.H. 6/9/32.*

*see Herald  
pg 1732*

James F. Sawyer, after whom the J.F. Sawyer Post of the G.A.R., and the Women's Relief Corps of this place are named, was born in Vermont in the year 1829. He belonged to a family of soldiers of whom each, in his own generation, served his country well. His grandfather, Ebenezer Sawyer, enlisted four times in the Revolutionary War, and fought in the Battle of Bunker Hill. He was given the rank of Corporal.

*James'*  
His father, Charles Sawyer, enlisted in the War of 1812, but did not get farther than Sackett's Harbor, N.Y. James and his brother Charles were both Civil War Veterans, and several of Charles's grandsons fought in the World War.

His Grandmother Sawyer was a cousin of John Greenleaf Whittier, making his only descendent, Miss Helen Sawyer of this place, a member of the Sawyer-Whittier Clan which met in 1932, on the last Friday in July, in Henderson, N.Y.

Mr. Sawyer was nineteen years old when he moved from Vermont. His wife, Nancy Whitehill Sawyer, was a Vermont girl from Ryegate. Their first home was in Henderson, N. Y. During these years Mr. Sawyer spent his summers on the Great Lakes, working mostly on the large lake freighters.

When the Sawyers came to Wisconsin, they took up land in the woods of Calumet County, and built their log cabin in Brillion. Mr. Sawyer went to work at once in the woods, while his wife cooked for the logging camps.

James and Nancy Sawyer lived in their log-house in Brillion until the beginning of the Civil War. On the 17th of April, 1859 their daughter Helen was born. When war was declared Mr. Sawyer enlisted in the 21st Wisconsin Regiment and, not wishing to leave his family on his new land in the woods, he moved them to Omro where he purchased the house that ever since has been the Sawyer home.

Mr. Sawyer's letters from the army have been carefully preserved by his family. Their pages written seventy years ago (1932) are legible and plain. In script as delicate as from a woman's hand, the daily happenings of a soldier's life in camp, on the march, behind the breast-works, on the battlefield, in the hospital are simply and vividly told by this young soldier to the wife waiting and praying through the years for her loved one's return.

Many of the letters were printed in the Omro Herald of 1932.

*Hiram Webster*  
Mrs. Hiram Webster.

Mrs. Hiram Webster, nee Louise M. Hulett, was born in Hampton, N.Y. in May of 1833, and died in 1924, past 91 years of age. She was educated in a Troy Conference Academy, Poultney, Vt., and in 1851 entered the seminary of Mrs. Emma Willard of Troy, N.Y. On graduating she taught French in the Castleton (N.Y.) seminary and during the years of 1855-56 filled the chair of preceptress of that institution.

In 1876 Miss Hulett was married to Hiram Wheat Webster of Omro. She lived in Oshkosh during her last years and in 1917 gave to Trinity Episcopal Church a beautiful and complete set of Meneely Chimes, one of the best in the state. The chimes were given as a memorial to her mother, Mrs. Abigail Hulett. Mrs. Webster is buried in the Omro Junction Cemetery.

*Charles B. Cope*  
Chas. B. Cope.

Charles B. Cope was born in Pennsylvania, November of 1844, of Quaker parentage. Having been left an orphan at the age of two years, he lived with an uncle until he was old enough to provide for himself. In his seventeenth year he enlisted in the 77th Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers. During the three years and three months of his enlistment, he took part in the following engagements:

Pittsburg Landing, April 6, 1862; Siege of Corinth, Mississippi, April 30 to May 30, 1862; Stone River, Tennessee, December 31, 1862; Liberty Gap, Tennessee, June 25, 1863; Chickamauga, Georgia, September 19-20, 1863; Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, November 24, 1863; Missionary Ridge, Tennessee, November 25, 1863; Rocky Fir Ridge, Georgia, May 5-9, 1864; Resaca, Georgia, May 13-16, 1864; Kennesaw, Georgia, June 9-30, 1864; Siege of Atlanta, Georgia, July 22, 1864; Jonesboro, Georgia, August 31, 1864; Franklin, Tennessee, November 30, 1864.

During the first year in the army Charles Cope drove a four mule team to haul munitions and supplies. As there was little to feed his mules except corn, they were unusually perverse in gnawing the wagon box, the harnesses, or anything within reach. Even their very own driver did not escape their teeth; for he was seized in the hip while bending over his work, and promptly robbed of his wallet by one of his long-eared charges. His enlistment papers and eighty dollars of government money were in the wallet but nothing was saved from the voracious appetite of the mule except the metal buckle and a mangled strap.

The protection of his equipment was often a heavy responsibility for a boy of sixteen. When his wagon became mired at the base of a ridge occupied by the enemy, he was panic stricken and ran to the nearby woods for shelter; but when he saw the futile efforts of the gunners to direct their fire down the slope he crept back to his wagon and saved the mules and his entire load of munitions under the bombardment that otherwise would have meant certain annihilation.

Comrade Cope was never taken prisoner although he narrowly escaped capture by following his commanding officer through the only remaining gap in an ambush. He was never seriously wounded. A bullet bruise on his foot was his only injury.



At the close of the Civil War, Charles Cope came to Omro to visit his sisters, Mrs. Kutchins and Mrs. Benedict. The Benedicts kept a restaurant in the building that was recently torn down, near the City Hall. Mr. Cope bought this restaurant when his sister's family moved West. He was also interested in the Benedict Cough Compound Company. *Harriet Cope married Cyrus Benedict. (Buried in Omro Cemetery)*

At one time Mr. Cope owned a farm between Omro and Winneconne. Later he bought the farm at the foot of the hill on West Division Street, on which he raised small fruits and vegetables.

During the winter evenings Mr. Cope found time to develop a hobby that gave him great pleasure and filled his home with many unique pieces of brick-a-brack. With his scroll-saw he designed beautiful brackets, paper-holders, and smaller articles. An elaborate clock made by him is used by his family. Several of the patterns he originated represent military scenes combined with army emblems. His inlaid work is carefully and artistically wrought in many varieties of woods. Charles died in 1902.

Mr. Cope was married in 1866 to Mary Jane Rollins. Mrs. Cope (nee Mary Jane Rollins) was born March of 1847, in the state of N.Y. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Rollins. They came to Omro when Mrs. Cope was 16 years old, where she has lived nearly her entire life. Mrs. Cope was a member of the John A. Logan circle here. She died January of 1932.

*Winnie M. Tice*  
James Russell.

James T. Russell came to America from Scotland with his parents and brothers in 1847. In Boston he worked at the saddle making trade. He and his wife came to Omro in 1853. He opened a harness shop where Clint Tice's meat market was later located, now part of the Bowling Alley.

In time, with his harness shop, picture taking as a side line, and his cultivated acres on the north side, Mr. Russell built a red brick house on his acreage located on Poygan Avenue. No doubt the house where Ed Godwin resides.

Mr. Russell was a choir director. In those pioneer days there was no melodion so a pitch pipe was used in singing. He was also noted for singing the many rollicking Scottish songs. His wife was a highly educated person and together they entered whole-heartedly into village life.

(O.H. - 1/12/39.)

Mrs. Platt Wright.

Mrs. Edie Wright was nearly 90 years of age when she died in January of 1939. She had been a resident of Omro for 61 years, a widow of the late P.M. Wright, publisher of the former Omro Journal. She was born Edie Archer, March of 1849 at Birch River, Jefferson County, N.Y. She married March of 1878, at Charlotte, Michigan to P.M. Wright, and came immediately to Omro. Mr. Wright died in August, 11, of 1921, *having lived in Omro for 60 years.*

12/11/30.

Minnie Wright.

Several years before her death, Minnie Wright, sister of P.M. Wright, mailed to the Editor of The Omro Herald an Early History of Omro compiled by her brother, P.M. Wright. This history was published in installments beginning December 11, 1930. It is an interesting account of Omro and vicinity, and to all appearances an accurate one. Much of the facts are included in this history of Omro.

Larrabee.

Another early Omro family that had much to do with the molding and the successful growth of village history by being interested in business ventures was that of Larrabee. Mention has been made of the Larrabee brothers presumably A.B. "Big" and George. There was at one time or another a Larrabee & Son Drugs; Larrabee Grocery; Day & Larrabee; Larrabee Hotel.

A.B. Larrabee had a son Carroll H. "Connie" and another son, Archie. A daughter Georgia married Minor Lloyd, a local druggist. The Lloyd's daughter, Jennie, also married to a druggist, lives upstate. Georgia Larrabee and Bonnie Hoover were the reigning belles of Omro in their younger days.

*originally in Larrabee  
M.V. 4/22/14*

George Larrabee's sons were Charles X. and S.E. "Eddie". A daughter Anna was a teacher at the Pingry rural school at one time. Charles and Eddie both went west to seek their fortunes and found them.

From an issue of a 1914 local paper is reported, "County Treasurer C.H. Larrabee's cousin, S.E. Larabie, who was better known in Winnebago County as "Eddie" Larrabee, was an early resident of Omro and with his brother and the father of W.W. Kimball went west in the early days when a prairie schooner drawn by oxen was the only means of conveyance. Mr. Larabie located in Montana and was associated with Senator Clark in the banking business, besides having extensive mining interests. At the time of his death he was a man of wealth and is survived by a wife and 7 children. His home was at Deer Lodge, Montana. The brother, Charles resides at Bellingham, Washington."

*W.P. B  
4/22/14*

The brothers, Charles and Ed, changed the spelling of their name from Larrabee to Larabie. The banking business and mining in the western states brought them much wealth. In fact, some designated one of them as a millionaire.

Another Larrabee by the name of Leo of Omro one evening went to Winneconne and registered for the night at the Lake View Hotel. Early the next morning he boarded the train for a city down the line. Apparently the train at that particular time did not make a stop at Omro for passengers on the early run. It must have been in 1868 or after as the railroad did not go to Winneconne until seven years after it came to Omro.

A Larrabee by the name of William was the founder of Horicon, Wisconsin, perhaps a relative of Omro's family. There were other Larrabee sons and daughters whose names are long forgotten or not mentioned in early notations. Archie was another of Chicago. One ~~(G.H. 5/29/31)~~ was an alcoholic and took what was called the Keely-Kure.

Aaron Tice.

*Mem. 11-9/12/37*  
The last Civil War Veteran in Omro was Aaron B. Tice who died at age 92 years. He was born in Ohio June of 1845. When 1 year old he moved with parents to a farm in the southeast section of the town of Omro. He enlisted in Co. C, 10th Iowa Infantry for a 3 year 3 month term. In 1865 he re-enlisted in the 36th Illinois Infantry. On being mustered out he returned to his grandfather's farm. He was a resident of Omro nearly 60 years, a machinist by trade in the Challoner Machine Shop. Also he engaged in the ice and meat business, besides, he was a stone cutter and a mason. A musician, in the original Omro band for many years. He was father-in-law of Mrs. ~~(Roz)~~ Evelyn Tice of Omro. Mr. Tice died August of 1937.

Melvina Winchester.

*5/1/31*  
Mrs. Melvina Winchester, died at age 81 years of age. Her ancestry can be traced back to pioneers coming to this country on the Mayflower in 1620 and 10 years later with Governor Winthrop of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. She was a life-long resident of Winnebago county.

Paternal ancestors of Mrs. Winchester were numbered among the Pilgrims who landed in 1620 at Plymouth and with Winthrop in 1630 were fore-fathers on her mother's side.

Records of the latter group still exist in the family. They contain letters written by Governor Winthrop to the original family in England, and the signatures of persons in each succeeding generation in America.

In 1775 Ezra Pond III enlisted with the colonists and fought during the Revolutionary War, who was of the fourth generation from the Governor Winthrop expedition.

Mrs. Winchester's father served in two great wars. In 1812 at the age of 13 and in 1861 at the age of 62 he passed as a man of lesser years because of his splendid physique, and served his country in the Civil War strife. In the World War, a grandson Glenn Winchester, made the supreme sacrifice in France.

Mrs. Winchester was born November of 1849. She lived in the village 35 years. Her husband, Perry Winchester was a veteran of the Civil War. Mrs. Winchester had a daughter, Mrs. Albert Widmer; four sons, Clarence, William, Daniel and Ward.

Cal Bennett.

Cal Bennett was born in 1858, his parents were Elmer and Kathryn Bennett. They came from Pennsylvania in 1852. Ed Bennett, a rural mail carrier of Omro was a son. Cal was a great grandson of the well known Rufus Bennett of Revolutionary War.

Albert Bennett.

About 1852, Albert Bennett, an early pioneer came to Omro with his parents. He was born in Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania. When war broke out he walked to Ripon to join a regiment there, but which he found had enlisted its full quota when he arrived. He then became a teamster in the army and served throughout the war.

Mr. Bennett and Miss Martha Shelp were married in 1872. They had three sons, A.J. "Jack" Bennett the father of Ruth Bennett, James Bennett and Harvey Bennett. Mr. Bennett had two sisters, Mrs. Marinda Fowler and Mrs. Francis Bray, three brothers, Fred, and C.E. Bennett of Omro and Rufus of International Falls, Minn. Albert died in October of 1916.

*Albert died in N.Y. Nov. 10/24/16.*

Fred Root.

Fred G. Root was a carpenter and cabinet maker. He was born in Glen Falls, N.Y., and came to Omro in 1874. *He died Apr 11, 1920 (Grand diary)*

His early life is interesting, when he was four years old his father died, leaving a large family of young children. At the age of eight years, he left home to take care of himself. His first venture was in a sugar camp where he gathered the sap from the trees and carried it to the kettles for boiling. As the lonesomeness of the great woods, and the hardships of the camp were too much for the eight-year old boy, he sought a new job in a near by town, where for three years he was choreboy to the superintendent of a lumber company. In his twelfth year, the prospects of steady work with good pay in Canada, led him to join a company of men and boys who were leaving for the lumber camps in the Canadian woods. On his arrival, he found no work, and as he was without funds to return to the States, he apprenticed himself to a cabinet maker, under whose training he became proficient in his life's occupation.

Mr. Root married Mary Russell, daughter of J.T. Russell of Omro, in 1877. About this time he spent a year at Berlin in order to learn details of casket making. He returned to Omro and built the Omro Casket Factory which later became the Buckstaff Company of Oshkosh. Mr. Root worked several years in the Challoner Machine Shop where he learned drafting to take over building contracts. His first building was the Pingry Schoolhouse on the Winneconne Road. He also built many fine homes both in Oshkosh and Omro, and several public buildings in the latter are of his construction.

At one time Mr. Root entered the employ of Geo. Charlesworth in the furniture making business. Later he had a shop of his own in a building that stood at the south end of the bridge on the east side of the street. His furniture was all manufactured by hand. The fine old set of chairs, altar and ballot box used in the Chapter room of the Masonic Hall are his handiwork.

James Sharp.

*E. Bishop*  
 Ethel Bishop has compiled an authentic history of Mr. Sharp:  
 "When my mother's grandmother Julia Ann West (Asop) of Platts-  
 burg on Lake Champlain, N.Y. came to Utica township, Winnebago County,  
 Wisconsin, her sister Ruth Parmenter Sharp (Abram) became so lonesome  
 for her sister that she came with her son James (then 13 years) for  
 a visit and liked this country so well that her husband joined them.

"My grandmother Mary Jane West Snider lies near her mother Julia  
 Ann Parmenter West in Pickett Cemetery. Her 2 brothers served in the  
 Civil War but the youngest, Bill, lived in Pickett.

"James Sharp's father, Abram, was a soldier of the War of 1812  
 according to his headstone.

"As Sharps lived next to Roots, those girls became close friends  
 of Florence. She had an unhappy married life and her only son died  
 suddenly when home on Christmas vacation from Ripon College. Then  
 she divorced Paul.

"Aunt Gertie was Sherm Barnard's Methodist Sunday School teacher,  
 a very sweet lady.

"James and Gertrude Sharp--In the news account of Gertie's death  
 the name is spelled SHARP.

"Ruth Parmenter and Abram Sharp had one son James born 1842,  
 died 1911. James attended a private academy and graduated at Falls  
 Glen, N.Y., their home. After the Civil War service throughout the  
 war, he saw Lincoln shot at Ford's theater. Later he went back to  
 Glen Falls, N.Y. to marry his childhood sweetheart Gertrude Mattson.

"Somehow they came to Omro to live. (His folks lived around  
 Utica.) They lost their two little sons, at age two and three months.  
 When daughter Mary came along (called Mamie) they were so careful  
 of her--but she caught some fever during an epidemic and died at  
 age eight years. Brokenhearted James finally convinced his wife to  
 adopt a little girl named Florence, whom they soon adored. (The first  
 three children are buried at Pickett Cemetery near Jim and Aunt  
 Gertie and other relatives.)"

*Vol. IV p. 15*  
*1877/19/13*  
*M. B.*  
 James Sharp came to Wisconsin in 1855. On reaching adulthood  
 he enlisted with the First Wisconsin Cavalry and re-enlisted after  
 3 years in the U.S. Veteran Infantry. He served until the war closed.

For the benefit of the pupils in the Chart Class of the Omro  
 school, Mr. Sharp would show the little students how he would use  
 his saber while in the Civil War. He would demonstrate the various  
 stances and the handling of the saber when in actual fighting. It  
 impressed the little beginners mightily.

Mr. Sharp's home in Omro was where George Beck lived on Piety  
 Hill next to the former home of Attorney Hurlbut.

*continued next page*

*Family  
 history*

There is another story about the James Sharp humor told by Emma Stanley. Jim would mention the fact that he would either have to buy a pair of glasses or a pair of tongs.

For to read the newspaper he increasingly had to hold it farther and farther away than arm's length in order to see the print.

The funeral of James Sharp was held on December 18, 1911. *W. 2/19/11*

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Hiram H. Webster.

On moving to Wisconsin Hiram Webster purchased a farm at Abernathy's Corners east of Omro. After a few years he moved into the village of Omro.

In 1868 Webster purchased a saw mill. According to his will dating Nov 28, 1883, after directing the disposal of his properties to his wife and other heirs contained the following provision:

"Fifteenth--It is my will, and I direct, that in case my estate exceeds the legacies mentioned in this, my will, that the surplus or remainder of my estate be appropriated and used by my executors in aid or encouragement of charitable purposes, and if in their judgement *there should* ~~there would~~ be used to establish a school in Omro or some place in Winnebago County, Wisconsin, for the education of young people in the domestic and useful arts; but in case there is not enough of my estate to meet the above legacies, that the deficit may be borne pro rata between the legatees, except my beloved wife Louise M."

The surplus amounted to approximately \$50,000.

(Above information from "The Schools of Omro, Wisconsin" by Coleman J. Gadbaw. Page 29-30. Researched 1943.)

*Emmett Hicks  
O.S. 6/25/10*

Emmett Hicks.

Emmett R. Hicks, son of Reuben Hicks, Omro pioneer, grew up in Omro and became an Attorney in Oshkosh. In 1901 he was State Attorney General.

Frank Stanley.

*W. 10/31/35*

Frank Stanley, wainwright, was village marshall at one time, perhaps about 1890. He was a strong husky man. It has been related that during disturbances in saloons he would take the offender by the collar and the seat of his pants and easily propel him to the door and--out the disturber would go! He also served on the County Board.

*C. J. Smith*

*Apr 6, 1912  
Frank Stanley*

*(1859)*

Frank Stanley was born in Winneconne December of 1857. In 1886 he married Ella Drew. Emma Stanley is their daughter. Frank was for 9 years a County Supervisor. He disposed of his wagon shop in the village when he was appointed village Postmaster in 1924. He was appointed Village President in 1912. *Frank died Sept. 1935.*

*13/1/10  
Frank T. Tucker*

Frank Tucker.

Frank T. Tucker an 1882 Omro High School graduate, an Attorney, was State Assistant Attorney General, at least in 1890. He was for 4 years State Law Examiner, also. "While Robert M. LaFollette was Governor, Frank was sent by the Governor to Hurley to investigate lawless conditions and remove from office the Sheriff and District Attorney. Governor Davidson also appointed Mr. Tucker to prosecute graft at Green Bay. In each mission, Mr. Tucker acquitted himself with honor and credit to himself." This account was printed in a 1910 newspaper. In 1889-90-91-92 he was the local O.H.S. Principal. Politically he was a Republican.

*1913  
Percy Bradt*

Percy Bradt.

A nationally famous personage was the champion checker player. He was one of the world's greatest. Born in 1866, at the age of 17 he came close to defeating the American Champion, C.D. Barker. A local expert beat him but once. Bradt was the author of many books on checkers that are regarded as standards.

*M.B.K. IV p. 57*

Checker players made regular pilgrimages to Omro to play with the master, and to be able to say they had played him. Percy Bradt even played a bunch of experts blindfolded, away from the board by having the squares numbered and the numbers called to him as they conferred and made moves. Bradt had the entire outfit of experts "sewed up". They could not beat him.

Besides being a phenomenal checker player, Bradt did some mental mathematical calculations that were really uncanny.

Bradt lived with his father in the house south of what was Dr. Doll's residence. At that time Bradt's home was surrounded by trees. Percy Bradt died at age 47.

It was in the back room of Demmon's Book & Shoe shop that checker players met. They all tried to be a "Percy Bradt", but never quite attained his skill.

STUDENT'S COUNTING HOUSE

OMRO

R. Manning  
C.D. Manning

NEENAH

Rev. Thos. T. Potter  
Miss Julia F. Holt

-----  
Announcement for the Academic Year,  
1879 - 80.

The school year will commence Aug \_\_\_ th. at Omro, and a week later  
at Neenah, and continue 40 weeks, exclusive of vacations.

-----  
RATES IF TUITION

1 month (4 weeks),	-	-	-	\$6.00
3 months (12 weeks),	-	-	-	15.00
4 months (16 weeks),	-	-	-	18.00
1 year (40 weeks),	-	-	-	30.00

A discount of one-third the above rates is made to those who omit  
Book-keeping.

-----  
Rev. Mr. Potter, of Neenah, will lecture daily at Omro during four  
weeks of the year, and will be assisted at his own Counting House at  
Neenah, three weeks in return. (advertisement in an Omro paper.)  
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*Elliott 17 of 11, 1844 IV p. 17, 22, 11/11/22/12 - 1844 John (Harrison) Elliott  
29 of 11, 11/3/12*

John Elliott.

The Elliott family, John's parents, lived second house east of Earl and Arolene Tice. Later they moved to the north side of the river at 229 E. River Drive. John wrote a history of Omro in long hand and presumably it is in the Oshkosh Museum. The Elliotts were an early pioneer family of Omro.

Henri Winslow.

*Family  
skk.*

Henri Barnett Winslow was a pioneer resident of Omro. He was born in October of 1861 in the state of New York and came with his parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. Gilford Winslow, to Princeton, Ill. Later the family moved to Wisconsin, settled first at Iron Ridge and when Henri was about 11 years old moved to a farm near Omro about 1872 or 75, and later to the village.

*J.N.*

Henri was educated in the Omro schools attending school in the Old Red Brick and also taking a course in the Student's Counting House a commercial school established here.

When a young man, Mr. Winslow was employed in the Charles Pelton general store on the north side, and, continuing with the firm, he became first a junior and then a senior member of Pelton & Company. The business enlarged to two stories, a grocery and a dry goods store, located in the center of the village.

For 28 years Mr. Winslow was a director in the Farmers Bank, and was elected president in 1918. He was a member of Omro Lodge No. 168 F. & A. M.; of Winnebago Chapter No. 43; of Palm Chapter No. 43 O.E.S. and of the Oshkosh Commandery No. 11, Knights Templar.

Mr. Winslow served on the board of education as director and on the death of Mr. Sargeant, was made treasurer of the Webster Manual Training school, by request of Mrs. Webster. A member of the Omro cemetery association, he held the office of administration.

Mr. Winslow was married to Miss Iona A. Ames, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Ames, September of 1891 at Omro. They had a son, Joseph C. Winslow. Henri Winslow died in 1940. He had a sister, Kate Winslow.

Hattie Bunker.

*Family  
skk.*

Mrs. Hattie Bunker, although handicapped in her later years, bravely carried on. Frank Bunker, a former groceryman in Omro, died and left Hattie and three daughters, Mae, Leona, and Myra, all elementary school teachers. First Leona died, then Mae died shortly afterward, as did Myra. This left the widow who was gradually losing her eyesight, alone. Shortly she was totally blind, but having been warned that there was no help to save her sight she planned and worked out a system so that when that day came she would manage.

Totally blind, Hattie lived by herself for twenty-three years. She did her own housework and cooking with her practised senses of touch, hearing and smell which helped her to manage very well.

*mjs.*  
 Hattie's home was in the house next east of the home of A.J. Marble on Pleasant Street, now E. Larrabee. Neighbors were alert and called on her frequently to offer a helping hand if necessary. One day she became confused as to whether a spool of thread was white or black for some mending that she was to do. She had to ask a neighbor who called on her which spool was which. Hattie (O.H. - 12/2/13.) Bunker was in her seventies when she died, December 2, 1943. She was born Hattie Young, parents were the Peter Youngs of Omro. She was married to Frank Bunker about 1887.

*may 13 1887  
O.H. 12/2/13*  
 D. and E. Hanson.

Dodson and Emma Danforth Hanson bought Hattie Bunker's home. Dodson was sexton of the Omro Cemetery for many years. Earle Tice then served as Cemetery caretaker until about 1969.

Leon Hoover.

*mjs.*  
 Some may remember Leon (Doc) Hoover as an official at the Winnebago County Fair race tracks. He started the sulky races. If advantage had been taken by any driver he would bang on the bell that hung in his high booth and they would have to start over. Occasionally they were forced to start several times before he was satisfied to shout "Go!" through his megaphone.

Leon's father was a Doctor of Veterinary in Omro, therefore the reason Leon acquired his nickname of "Doc." Leon was Marshall of the village at one time. Later he was janitor at the local school. In 1932 he painted automobiles. (O.H. - 5/9/32.)

*Archie Daggett*  
 An interesting story related by Archie Daggett deals with the time when a certain individual served as Village Marshall. It was during the horse and buggy era. A man at one time was driving his horse and buggy at a rapid clip right down the main street. The Marshall stopped the fellow and cautioned him about speeding in the village. He also warned him not to do it again. Shortly afterwards the same horse and carriage and driver were again racing down the main street lickety-split.--The Marshall promptly drew his gun-- and shot the man--right in the arm! Some say it was the horse he shot--take your choice.

*Archie Tice*  
 Besides Hoover there were other local horse racing enthusiasts, especially Gus Witt, and Wm. "Paddy" Heffron. Not only did they race summers but winters as well. Winter racing took place on the river, starting near the west end of the park then on east to a turn beyond what was known as the Edick house and back again. The wheels on the sulkeys were replaced with runners. No admittance could be charged as anyone could stand around and watch--no fence--no gate. So they would "pass the hat" among the large crowd that always gathered to watch the event. These races were a winter feature during 1912 to 1916 or so.

*Archie Tice*  
 For years Wm. Heffron was interested in horse racing. On a number of occasions he served as race starter at the Winnebago County Fair.

Dr. Emma Gertrude Jaeck.

Some may be interested in knowing more about Miss Jaeck whose history of Omro has added to this gathering of facts. She was born <sup>in Neenah</sup> and grew up on a sand farm in the Pearl Lake area of Waushara County. She had two sisters, Orvia, a teacher, and Mrs. Ethel Frosher, an R.N. and two brothers, <sup>Wallace</sup> John "Jack" and Leonard, a lumberman. They each received an excellent education. <sup>Ethel's family lived in Hinsdale, Ill. Her</sup> <sup>husband John Frosher was in the lumber business there. They had a son & 3 daughters.</sup>

Emma became a Doctor of Languages. She taught in a girl's finishing school among other institutions of higher learning. Emma was fluent in 7 languages--English, German, French, Latin, Spanish, Greek and Italian.

*N. 6/6/33* Emma was a world traveler and often took a sister or friend along with her. In April of 1933 she returned from a sea voyage of 26,500 nautical miles around the world. The trip included 14 countries in four different continents, North America, Europe, Asia and Africa. She visited 21 ports of call, from which excursions by auto or train were conducted.

The route was laid from New York to Cuba, canal zone, Central America, Mexico, California, Hawaiian Islands, Japan, China, Philippine Islands, Singapore, Ceylon, India, Suez Canal, Mediterranean Sea, Egypt, France and then returning to New York.

In 1933 Emma retired from teaching. She settled in what was her mother's home here in Omro where she lived until her death in the 1960s. The home was on the northeast corner of the Oak and <sup>207</sup> E. Walnut streets intersection. <sup>207 E. Walnut.</sup>

During her retirement Emma wrote many articles on Early Omro which were published in the Omro Herald. Also articles on Early Wisconsin history, and Wisconsin personages that were published in the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern. She was also a speaker and lecturer. Miss Jaeck was a doctor of philosophy. and for four years headed the romance language department at Russell Sage College at Troy, N.Y. She was of an admirably mixed descent--Welsh, German, Norwegian, and possibly Czecho-Slovakian included.

Dr. Jaeck was, in her day, an ardent worker for woman's suffrage and she prided herself on her association with Alice Paul. She had remarked to a reporter that all of her family had been passionately devoted to learning and added that the family name, in Czech, means "the little scholar."

*July 11/12/75*  
*Box IV*  
*P. 6*  
*N.W. 1/22/76*  
The Woman's Club of Neenah has paid tribute to Dr. Jaeck in July of 1975, as a very well educated person. "She was ahead of her times, independent, circling the globe alone twice without the approval of the U.S. State Department," the spokesman explained. "After her retirement from teaching she lived in Omro and wrote articles for the Daily Northwestern!"

Emma's mother was Rosina Jaeck Diesterhof by a second marriage in 1914. Leonard lived in Alberta, Canada, and "Jack's" name was Wallace, not John.

## Early Settler.

A history of Omro township and early Omro village was printed in the Omro Herald beginning with a November of 1939 issue as a weekly series. It concluded with a shorter history of other townships-- Poygan, Rushford, Nepeuskun, Utica, Winneconne, and perhaps others.

No one seems to recognize the "Early Settler" in spite of the many clues he has scattered throughout his writings. He apparently lived in the Omro vicinity all of his life.

The Early Settler's grandfather took up land in Section 9 and 10, 110 acres, in the Township of Omro. The Early Settler was born in Section 9. From there his folks moved to Poygan where he spent his barefoot days. His father's farm was just west of the Oak Hill Cemetery. His folks are all buried there, and a part of the cemetery is their old orchard. *Oak Hill Cemetery bought of Mr. J. Johnson (Memie's father) Poygan East. Wilbur in 1856. (Omro Herald)*

Later they moved to the village of Omro, in what was later the A.J. Marble home. His pals were Leslie Leighton and Mard Gummer. He attended the East Side school.

The Early Settler's uncle had the ice business, and owned two ice houses. One was on the new addition to Scott Park, the other west of the Omro Lumber Company. He mentioned angle irons used in a mill formerly located in what was Beckwithtown were still visible. At one time he lived in the Western Addition where Cal Root resided in the area west of the Baptist church. He wrote of swimming in the brick mill pond. One of his teachers in the old Red Brick school was Cora McAllister.

Another place of residence was on the north side on Poygan Avenue. He then attended the North Side school.

Whoever the Early Settler was, he left an interesting account of early Omro.

Henry B. Patch.

Mr. Patch was for many years Winnebago County Superintendent of Schools. One year prior to taking over as the Principal of O.H.S. Mr. Patch commented to a Daily Northwestern reporter on July 30, 1913, "The Omro Village school board is to be commended for the introduction of two new additional courses at the High School.--One is the teacher's training course. The other a new department, the Commercial Course. The fall term will open Sept. 8, 1913."

*11/23  
#6 IV  
41  
7/30/13  
11/18*

The Teacher's Training room was Room K in the Webster Manual Training school, first door to the right across the bridge. The Commercial room was on the ground floor, same building, northeast corner room. It was referred to as the "nether regions." It was a long route from the assembly room, across the bridge and down the two flights of stairs to the "commercial depths". The rest of the floor was for Manual Training and Forgery. The second floor besides Teacher's Training were the Science and Agriculture room, Domestic Science with the kitchen, dining room and sewing room.

Then there was the fracas with the skunk behind the piano in the "main room". The janitor, Art Blakesley, had the chore of shooting the defenseless little stinker! Phew! Art used all sorts of household deodorants and finally conquered the aroma. But not before 9 o'clock when school classes began.

*a.B.* The culprits were four Senior boys, plus a lower class member's pet polecat that they had "borrowed". What punishment did Mr. Patch mete out? That the Senior boys leave school without their diplomas at graduation--or--join a branch of the military service and come back for their sheepskins at Commencement. This was during W W I. They all joined up. Some were not able to be back for graduation to receive their diplomas, but eventually they all obtained them.

*H. 3/31/50* Mr. Patch became the much respected and loved Principal of O.H.S. beginning in 1914 and continuing in that capacity until he retired, that was in May of 1945. His home was east of the Catholic Church Rectory, at 305 E. Scott.

The new Elementary school on Tyler Avenue built in 1954 is named in his honor. He was happily present at the dedication. He died in 1957, *April 16..*

*m.f.s.* John Sheerar.

John Sheerar was the son of Dr. I.H. Sheerar. He was a rural mail carrier on Route 22 out of Omro. He was also mechanically minded. This note in a newspaper clipping of April 1914 stated that "he is using a motorcycle and side car attachment for the delivery of mail." He also tried removing the front wheels of his Model T car and attaching runners for winter mail delivery. It was not an entire success as side roads that his route covered were seldom cleared of deep snow. So old "Dobbin" had to take over. John also worked as an auto mechanic in Gene Earle's garage after his route was covered in the afternoon. At least until someone made a fuss. With a federal job and holding down another yet! Must have been another mechanic and a less competent one!

*Apr 15, 1914  
H.W. ...*

*1  
V.P.  
4/5/14*

EARLY NORTH-SIDERS

*M. J. S.*  
As recalled by one who lived there during 1915-1919.

The land on the north side of the Fox River in Omro was referred to in years past as "Canada". In fact the families living there were rather proud of the distinction of being called "Canucks".

The people, the men especially, would brag that they had nearly everything the south side had. In fact, one thing more--a more heterogeneous group of individuals and families.

The following persons are some of the "Canucks" who lived on the north side, more influential, or less so than the general run of families, either because of historical, humane, civic, or likeable qualities.

Billy Beckwith was an elderly man, tall, erect, with black hair and beard streaked with gray. He was a gentleman who was hard of hearing. Daily he would walk over to the south side across the bridge. His garb was always a long black overcoat, hat (black felt) in summer and a cap in the winter. Not being able to hear well, he never conversed with anyone that he might meet, nor did he give any one a chance to do so. Undoubtedly he was a descendant of the first settlers of Omro or rather Beckwithtown as it was called then. He apparently lived alone except in later years. His home was north of the Carter residence on Cedar Street.

Another person well known and liked by the north-siders was Georgie White, also elderly and he also lived alone. Daily he was here and there about the neighborhood, a cheerful, good-humored person. Georgie was as short and small as Billy Beckwith was tall and stately. Georgie had a fair complexion and light brown hair where the gray had not taken over. A sister, Mary J. Pierce, a widow, lived on the north side on the point where Cedar and Poygan Avenue meet. She, too, was small and birdlike, a very lovely lady. (O. H. 12/23/32.)

Tall, thin, slightly stoop-shouldered was Asie Buck. He had a slight limp and was somewhat bow-legged, and walked with a cane. He had a slim face, his hair and beard somewhat scraggly, his chin whiskers were often stained from tobacco juice. He was referred to as "having little of this world's goods", yet he always appeared contented. He did odd jobs about town. At one time he kept the streets swept clean of debris, as a village employee.

Rather late in life Asie married Levan<sup>X</sup>ie Lisenbee. She was a round-faced person of medium height, plump and short. She would unsmilingly trot along beside Asie as they walked down the street arm in arm. She always wore a small flat black hat perched on top of her head, and carried a black handbag.

When the couple were quite old the village fathers had them transferred to the County Poor Farm. To them it was not home; they walked all of the many miles back to their little old abode in Omro. Asie and Levanchie were an interesting couple.

Thomas and Mathilda Belfeuil family lived on the east side of Ash street in the house later occupied by Mr. Torrigan. The Belfeuil family was of French descent and they had several children, who contributed spice and zip to the neighborhood. The children's Grandmother was Mrs. Burnash.

*Carl* A resident who needed understanding because of tragedy was a Mrs. Jensen. She always wore a large shawl draped over head and shoulders whenever she had occasion to leave her house. The middle of the road was where she would walk rather than on the sidewalk.

When the Jensen children were quite young they all died about the same time of scarlet fever or some such contagious disease. From that time on Mrs. Jensen withdrew into a world of mourning. She traveled the middle of the road so that she would meet no one and so keep from catching a disease of any kind. The shock of losing all of her children by death in so short a time caused her peculiar action.

*Nov 12/11/30* - On what is now Ash Street on the east side, lived Bedros "Peter" Torrigan, who was born at Harput, Armenia, Asia Minor in 1856. His wife was Nellie Finch Torigian, and it was believed that she was of a wealthy and influential family from some distant city. She apparently had trouble or a problem, supposedly, which had caused her family to shun her. However, one sister would come to visit her once a year. The sister's rich silk and taffeta clothing and elegant accessories seemed to bear out the rumor of the wealthy family connection.

Pete was of slight build, thin, and with a slight limp. His hair and mustache were jet black, and his complexion was swarthy. Apparently they both liked cats, or one did and the other tolerated them, for neighbors claimed that there were as many as 18 or 20 at one time. These pets had the run of the house--and table sometimes!  
*Mrs. Torrigan did odd jobs about town for a living.*

Mrs. Torigian was slim, tall and stately in appearance. Apparently they had few close friends in Omro other than the neighbors.

In the Cleveland family there were several children of various ages. They were an unusual appearing family, and evidently had little to "do with". The yard was seldom mowed and the small house, was in need of paint. The children were usually towsled, but happily playing in the front yard or swinging on a rope swing attached to a front yard tree limb. During those days an auto tire swing was unheard of. Very often Mrs. Cleveland would be sitting in a chair or on the doorstep watching the children or traffic, usually with the youngest on her lap. The Mister was so seldom around nothing is remembered about him.

In a somewhat small dwelling south of the Cleveland home, and on Ash Street, lived either the father or some relative of Mrs. Cleveland by the name of Mr. Webster. He was always referred to as "Tarbucket" Webster. Why, one never heard. Tall, thin and slightly bowed, Webster was usually, when seen at all, pattering around his abode. He apparently did not live in Omro for long nor during cold weather.

Tom and Mary Wilcox Sullivan and children lived kitty-corner from the Clevelands. Ed and Lena Oatman east of the Sullivans. (8/17/39. @ N.)

Getting back to the "crooked road", it turned left onto Ash at Cleveland's corner, south to E. River Drive. Then right onto E. River Drive, on to N. Webster, turn left and over the old bridge to the main street, then known as Water Street. That was the "crooked" road.

In the early 1900s the Justice of the Peace was Mr. Perry Glines. His office was at the north end of the old bridge on the east side of the plank sidewalk; it was a small building. His residence was on Elm Street. Perry lived alone. Representing the law or not, he did not always appear as spruce as an official might. *recalls Perry as a shoe repairer.* *Luck Bennett*

On Poygan Avenue at Balsam Street lived Mrs. Gibson. Her parrot was an amusing bird. It would laugh and imitate one or more women so that a person passing by could well imagine that a group of women were having a high old time.

*Ruby Swell* Charles Stevens, Omro coal dealer for years lived near the end of N. Webster on the east side of the street.

Bill Lawler lived on either Spruce or Cedar with his mother. He was a good looking young man, but either from birth or accident he had to hold his head slightly tipped to one side. He was referred to as "Crook-neck" Lawler. Apparently he was talented musically for at Home Talent Shows he sang and accompanied himself on a guitar.

The Amos Carter family lived on Cedar Street first house on the west side from W. River Drive. They were a civic and church minded family. They had sons Stebbin, Carroll, <sup>Willa Perry</sup> and Bruce. Two daughters, Mrs. Alma Mettam, and Grace. Grace left a bequest to the city of Omro.

Will Hough and sister Etta lived in the red brick house on N. Webster. They were retired farmers of an Omro pioneer family. Wm. Hough was a life-long resident of Omro and vicinity. He was born in Meriden, Conn. in 1850. He came to Wisconsin when 1 year old. In 1871 he married Elizabeth Snowden of Omro. Will's father was Erastus Hough, and mother, Emeline, who lived on the farm later sold to Wm. Smith, <sup>then</sup> later owned by C.I. Smith. *Etta was a rural school teacher. (O.H. 5/8/52.)* *Douglas*

*Ipley* Mr. and Mrs. Seth Smith lived continuously at 437 Walnut for 35 years. Mr. Smith was a blacksmith by trade, and worked in a machine shop for 12 years. The Smith's son was Capt. Lewis Smith, father of Carrie Belle Calhoon, and another son, Norman. Capt. Lewis Smith and family lived at the same address in later years. *271.*

*Seth's obit is found in M.V.N.W. 6/13/16.*



John Dunn was retired from his farm which was a short distance west of town at the first turn in the highway. He was usually roughly clothed, with rubber boots, nondescript coat, and an old cap or hat. Very few people realized, however, of his compassion for the needy families, especially the ones on the north side of the river in Omro.

*W. Brooks* During W W I various commodities were to be declared. John had several sacks of flour in his storeroom. He saw to it that each needy family received a sack of the flour, rather than to return it to a store which was the alternative. Warren Brooks attests to this fact as he delivered the flour for him. In fact, Mr. Dunn kept several families supplied with the necessities of life while he lived. Few people were aware of his generosity and concern for the less fortunate, nor to the extent that he helped the poor.

After selling his farm Mr. Dunn took up part-time residence with Billie Beckwith, where he continued doing his good deeds during his life time. On his death in June of 1932 it was found that he willed his estate, amounting to several thousands of dollars, to be used for the needy poor of the village of Omro. Mr. Dunn's last will and testament read to the effect that he, formerly John O'Brian, adopted son of Patrick and Katherine Dunn, left his ~~left his~~ worldly goods to trustees in trust one-half, the other half to his brother, Ed. O'Brian and sister Mary O'Brian of Clinton, N.Y.

Mr. Dunn's bequest parallels that of another former resident of this village, Thomas Condon, who in the terms of his will left a large portion of his property to the Village of Omro on almost exactly the same conditions and for the same objective. *(O.H. 7/21/32.)*

John Dunn died in 1932. *(O.H. 6/23/32.)*

Bill Dunham, the drayman, was of medium height, stout, had a grizzly mustache, overly long hair and was roughly dressed. His work clothes were a well worn three-quarter length coat which was belted at the waist with either a leather strap or stout cord. He wore a nondescript cap and heavy boots. Bill died in 1932. *(O.H. 3/16/39.)*

Bill's wife, Flossie (Bussey) Dunham, was the opposite of her husband in looks. She was tiny, prim, and dressy with silk, satins, laces and feathers. She was blonde, powdered and rouged. With all of her elegance, Flossie would sit beside Bill on the seat of the dray and nonchalantly ride with him "over town" as the south side was called, to shop. They were an interesting pair of early Omroites. *(2/18/32.)*

*11/24/11*  
*W.W.*  
*11/11/11*  
*14*  
*W.W. 11/24/11*

Mrs. Adeline Burnash was Omro's Centenarian. She lived to reach the age of 102, her death was November 24, 1911. Mrs. Burnash's maiden name was Adeline Melchard. She was of French parentage and born in Canada July 15, 1809. Her early life was spent on the frontiers of Canada and when interviewed on her one hundredth birthday she took pleasure in telling of the hardships of those early days. Up to that great age she had never been seriously ill and was cheerful and happy upon the day marking her a centenarian at which time a family reunion was held and she conformed to an old French custom of dancing a jig on birthdays. Mrs. Tom Belfeuil was her daughter. Mr. and Mrs. Burnash lived where Irv Kamrath does now at N. Hawthorn and Leach streets.

*N.B. Webster*

Two houses on the north side were each referred to as "Peoples' House," meaning built with the people's money. How? Thusly--after Mr. Pelton's north side store burned it was vacated and the charred remains stood for a few years. Finally Elmer Brezee, a saloon-keeper, purchased the site and built what is now the residence at 321 N. Webster.

Fred Glines, a rival saloon-keeper, was not to be outdone. He purchased the kitty-corner lot where Tom Cundy's blacksmith shop was formerly located. He built the house that is now 105 W. River Drive. To top it off, the residence at 321 N. Webster was promptly rented and occupied by Rev. Woodward and family. Possibly that act lessened the stigma of the quaffed cup.

(Annie)

Mrs. S. Jennie (Tom) Parker and Mrs. Elmer Manuel, her twin sister, lived in the big white house at the corner of N. Webster and Birch. They were both widows of retired farmers. Their brother was Lancy Marshall, retired farmer who lived at 195 W. River Drive. They were originally of Vinland.

John Shelp who was Village Clerk for many years lived at 233 W. River Drive. His family was musical, especially fine vocalists. *His wife was Oona Winchester, children Inez, Corale, Lem, Roy, Ethel, Bebie, Elmer, Vera & Ronald.*

Ed. Coats who lived on the Poygan Avenue was a champion sheep shearer. He also was a popular fiddler for neighborhood dances. In earlier years he was a farmer. Then he took up house painting *and worked at it* until he was 82. (O.H. - 2/25/32..)

Others who resided on the north side in the early 1900s, also, were--Dr. Hickey, a retired doctor, Mrs. Scott, Lyman Scott's mother, Mrs. Turner and sons, Jesse and Warren, Mr. and Mrs. George Turner on Poygan Avenue. Mrs. Elliott, Mr. and Mrs. Rob Reid and daughter Louisa, Miss Jennie Sargeant, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Cronk and daughter Edna, Mrs. Rile Oatman, Hiram Coats, Jesse Bussey, Roy Shelp and family, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Smith, Mr. and Mrs. John Berry, Rob Schmidt, Mrs. Luella Darrow and mother, Mrs. Ada Moran, Carl Harvey and mother.

These are some of the people who lived in the area at that particular time, but there were many others. Mrs. Ida Safford, Levi Lake, Mr. Chesley, Albert Wills, Tom Parker,

died

Jesse Bussey died in 1943. Born Feb. 18, 1881 son of Geo. and Celia Bussey. A sister, Mrs. Olive Wyman and niece Ruby Wyman of Oshkosh.

Mark T. Bussey died May 6, 1939. Born May 12, 1878 in Omro. Brother of Jesse Bussey, Omro. Mrs. Olive Wyman a sister of Oshkosh and a niece Ruby Wyman.

OMRO CITY DIRECTORY

*mjs*

Omro, even though small in comparison with neighboring cities, is indeed a busy place. However, in 1974 the list of business places has multiplied considerably since the visit of Charlie House nearly 20 years ago, who found Omro a community of peace and contentment, but busy enough to be bustling.

Since the boom years of the 1800s the type of business houses has changed. No livery stables, hat shops, or photograph galleries will be found in the list that follows.

1974 DIRECTORY

- Ann's Antique Shop - Lawrence Kuhn
- Banner Store (Variety) - 113 W. Main. Verna Hanson, Manager.
- Basler Bond Co. - 414 W. Huron
- Bryers, Richard - Accountant - 156 E. Main
- Butkiewicz, F. and Sons Co. Inc. - 331 E. Main (began in 1915)
- Charlie's Tavern - 100 W. Main
- Club Omreau Lanes (Bowling) - 120 W. Main. Sanford and Vernie Vincent. *1976 sold to the Franken.*
- Community Recycling Organization (CRO) - 405 W. Huron St. (began 1972)
- Crane Agency - Real Estate (since 1953)
- Daggett, George & Son Co. (General Farm supplies) - 251 E. Main (1928)
- Domke, Bill & Sons (Excavating) - 530 Elm St.
- Emperor Auto Sales, Tony - 1414 E. Main (since 1966.)
- Family Restaurant - 720 E. Main - Mrs. June Kozel. *Sold in 1977, now "Mike's Home Rest."*
- Finks Restaurant, Jerry and Suzanne - 103 E. Main. (since 1967)
- Glass House II, Dennis Glass. Corner Huron & Quincy (formerly I&L. 1973.)
- Freund, John and Bob - Realtor & Auctioneers - 206 W. River Drive.
- Friendly Tavern - 122 S. Webster - Dorothy Fleming.
- Hanson Tavern - 130 E. Main (since 1971)
- Heft's Superette - 1110 E. Main (established in 1948 by Lee and Sophia Heft, now Jeff Kemp, owner.)
- Hitching Post - 1005 E. Main (snowmobiles) since 1969. Al Sedlachek.
- Hotel Omro - 207 W. Main (estab. over 100 years) Richard Bunke, prop.
- Island Sport Shop - 140 Webster Avenue - Spencer Huber.
- Jack's Auto Body Shop - 244 E. Main - Jack Broderick.
- Johnson, L.P. & Son (Chas) TV & Radio - W. Main (established 1947)
- Joss Construction - 223 Washington Ave.
- Joyce Beauty Salon - 412 E. Huron - Joyce Roberts, Mgr.
- Judd's Arco Service Station - 131 E. Main (since 1963) Gerald Frees.
- Judy's Beauty Salon - 548 E. Main - Judy Hanson, Mgr.
- Kitchen's Service Station (Texaco and Garage) - 310 N. Webster (estab. 1930) Art Kitchen, Prop.
- Kolbus Agency, Real Estate, Insurance & Auctioneer, Tony and son, Leonard - 110 E. Main (since 1932).
- Larry's Standard, Barth - Gas pumps - 204 E. Main (since 1955).
- Lee's Barber Shop - 127 W. Main. Lee Penzenstadler, barber.
- Lewis Electric, Lyle - 625 N. Webster.
- Mabel's Beauty Parlor - 145 E. Ontario. Mabel Kolbus Bartels, Prop.
- Moldenhauer Construction Co., Vernon - 453 Hickory St.
- Marquardt, Att, James - 111 E. Main.
- Moran TV -, Gordon - 320 Pougan Ave.
- Northern Propane Gas Co. - 525 W. Huron.
- Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co. - 156A, E. Main. Roger Foust, Agent.
- Nussbaumer Music Studio - 420 Hickory St. - Musical instruments and accessories and music lessons.

Omro Beverage Mart - 101 W. Main - R. Moreland (since 1972)  
 Omro Bowhunters - 123 E. Main  
 Omro City Fire Department - 136 E. Main  
 Omro Gear & Machine Inc. - 333 W. Main  
 Omro Herald (established 1896) Printed in Berlin since fire. *721*  
 Omro Home Bakery - 117 W. Main - Norman Bleber - (estab. in 1915 by Max *W. Bleber*)  
 Omro Fabricare - dry clean and laundry - 120 E. Harrison - L. Jess (1968 *Walker*)  
 Omro Lumber Co. - 520 W. Huron - Sally Miller, Mgr.  
 Omro Mobile Home - 1401 E. Main (since 1968)  
 Omro Motel - Jerry & Marge Hellwig - 1014 E. Main (since 1960)  
 Omro Police Department City Hall - 205 S. Webster  
 Omro Stockyards - W. Huron  
 Orv's Refrigeration - 233 Adams Avenue.  
 Paul's Garage, 132 W. Main - (since 1940) L. Kuhnz, was Edminster's.  
 Paul's Sport Shop, (Paul Edminster, Prop.) - 130 W. Main.  
 D.D. Peck, M.D. - 223 Jackson Avenue - Clinic 215 Jackson Ave.  
 Peter's Plumbing & Heating Co. - 106 W. Main (since 1936) Bob Peters, Prop.  
 P.C.S. Sales (Pre-cast cement). McKinley Ave. (Since 1967) R. Schroeder.  
 Printco, Inc. - 111 W. River Drive, Fred Sperling, Prop.  
 Plansky Funeral Home, Roy - 425 Jefferson Ave. (since 1925)  
 Post Office - 204 S. Webster  
 Production Credit - 1440 E. Main, G. Gilbertson, Mgr. (since 1963).  
 Rite-Way Builders - 530 Jackson Ave.  
 River Lane Mobile Village - 1401 E. Main.  
 Riverside Pizza - 123 W. Main - Wayne (Zeke) Zimmers and brother-in-law.  
 Riverside Yamaha Sales - 223 W. Main, Jerry Beck, owner (since 1966)  
 Schettl's Painting & House Maintenance (Richard) - 135 W. River Drive.  
 Schmitt's Pharmacy - 109 E. Main (since 1973)  
 Sherm's Food Mart - 125 W. Huron (estab. 1949) Katie and son, Pat Kautza.  
 Sielaff, Bernard - Insurance 120 Madison Ave. (former C.M. & St. Paul Depot agent).  
 Smith, G.M. - Real Estate Broker - 431 Cedar St.  
 Snowberg Gamble Store - 121 E. Main (established 1967) *Burned down July 18, 1977.*  
 Spanbauer Brunch House - 115 E. Main (lunches).  
 Speed Queen - Edison-McGraw Co. Div. - 430 Michigan Ave.  
 State Farm Insurance Companies - 127 E. Main. Chas (Chuck) Smith, Agent.  
 Strehlow, L.H. (Red) - Insurance Agency - 407 E. River Drive.  
 Sullivan Dept. Store (dry goods, shoes, etc.) - 105 E. Main. Muttarts, Prop.  
 Swipe Headquarters - 501 E. River Drive. (Soft drink depot).  
 Tomasek, Dr. James, D.V. (Animal hospital) - 323 Jefferson St.  
 Treleven Electric, Harvey - 111 W. Main - (established 1945).  
 Valley Pre-Cast Bunks, Inc. - 430 Poygan Road, Rony Switlick, Prop.  
 Wallace, John, & Nesbitt, Atts - 154 E. Main.  
 Wee Care Nursery School - 224 E. Scott St. - Mildred Turner, Mgr. (1974).  
 Winro Golf Course - 1200 E. Huron  
 Winnebago County Bank - 124 E. Main (since 1892).  
 Wirch, Jim - 525 E. River Drive - Insurance Consultant.  
 Wisconsin Power & Light Co. - 128 E. Main.  
 Wisconsin Screw Products, Corp. - 206 Harrison Ave. Ron Forslin, Mgr.  
 Zweiger Hardware, Walt and Addie - 115 S. Webster (since 1952).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Besides the sources of information previously mentioned, I am indebted to the following individuals who graciously shared their knowledge of Omro history--

Ethel Bishop who has loaned so much of her accumulated newspaper clippings and data, besides her own knowledge, her husband Cary, Jr., having been an Omro history buff. To Warren Brooks, having written and told much about early Omro as he remembered it to add to these facts. To Sherm and Marie Barnard with accounts and facts remembered of Omro's early history. Other information, stories, and specific recollections of persons and happenings of years ago are from Maude Stearns, Bonnie Flanagan, Hazel Hoger, Ruby Buell, Arden Sheldon, Carrie Calhoun, Luella Reinert, Sumner Blake, Mary Darrow Bennett, Archie Daggett, Earl Calhoun, Jr., Edith Pohl, Irene Zellmer, Lillie Lockwood, Clayton and Grace Stearns, Tony Kolbus, August Birkholz, Ken Cady, Butkiewicz Brothers, Ida May Bower, Bernard Sielaff, *Ruth Bennett*. Other individuals, also, have added a note here and there that have added interesting facts.

(O. H. - 7/10/30.)

And now we close and put aside all clippings, books, papers, stories and experiences that gave us glimpses of a pioneer Omro. As someone else had noted, "We see again the old lumber town in its beginning as well as during the last years of the Civil War and the reconstruction period that followed. In these ancient records, we have climbed the shadowy stair ways from Water Street to the second floors of old store buildings that have long been swept away by fires. We have entered kerosene lighted halls and gathered around great heaters filled with huge chunks of wood. We have leaned on the counters of grocery stores that dispensed at least 'three kinds of cider', and have noted the difference in the prices of commodities on the shelves. We have even peeked into the open saloons at the jovial card games and the accompanying 'flowing bowl'. We have admired the conscientious adherence to principles practiced by the men and women who have stood for all that was best in the village, even though we have smiled at their austerity. Their varied talents have been our pleasure and their loyalty, our pride. And as we close the covers, we are glad that through some fate that stored these old records among the dusty relics of other days, these accounts have been preserved to us."

Here are more facts about Omro people gleaned from old newspapers.---

*Emma J.  
H.  
Aug 1949*  
In the spring of 1847 David Hume loaded a light skiff into a wagon and drove to Marquette from Janesville where he was located. There he unloaded the skiff and proceeded by water to Omro. On section 16 he staked a claim and also bought land along the Fox river. After he had built a log house, he returned to Janesville to get his family. This part was later called Beckwith town from Nelson Beckwith, Hume's son-in-law.

*M. J. S.*  
Ben Hinderman was the professional photographer in Omro. His home and gallery were in a two story house that stood where the Wis. Telephone exchange building is now on S. Webster. His gallery was on the second floor. A woven reed chair was a prop used in nearly all pictures that were taken as were the drapes for the background. Only the people posing were different.

Another specialty of Ben's was a "stamp picture". These small pictures were supplied by the dozen in stamp size especially for gluing on the pages of autograph albums.

Autograph albums were in vogue for many years. Stamp size flowers, butterflies or "Forget-me-not" quotes were also used. Whatever it was that the autographer preferred to embellish the page on which his or her name was written was used. Some doodled beautiful Spencerian designs instead. Many wrote beautiful, sentimental or love verses on the page.

*W. Brooks*  
One time a neighbor's cows got into John Haigh's oat field and chewed the tops from the new growth. He was furious and was going sue the neighbor. Another neighbor advised him to wait until fall and see how the crop turned out--it was a bumper crop! Chewing off the new shoots caused each plant to stool out and bear more stalks than otherwise. After threshing, Mr. Haigh went to the peace making neighbor and shook his hand, and thanked him for advising him in the spring to hold his temper and wait.

*E. Bishop*  
Simon LeRoy and family who lived in Omro were of French Canadian descent. There was also a family of LeRoy's at Fort Winnebago. (LeRoi) Simon's children were Arthur, who died in May of 1914, Anton, Harvey, Vernon, Parel, Harold and Rachel. Rachel became Mrs. Irwin Kloehn, whose daughter Leatha Ehrenberg lived in Ripon.

In the John Elliott family, John's brothers were Frank, Tom, and sister Jane Elliott Flanagan (James). The family lived second house east of Earl and Arolene Tice. Later they moved to the north side of the river now 229 E. River Drive. *2025 2nd St.*

After the Central House was no longer used as a hotel it was occupied by George Pratt who lived there until his death. Dr. Dane *South*

forth lived there and had his office in the north portion.

Fred Loker and family lived there afterwards.

J.B. Tittlemore was the last one to live in it before being town down for the new Post Office. Tittlemore's speech as U.S. Marshall on Memorial Day in Omro is found in The Omro Herald issue of 5/26/32, and running for Governor of Wisconsin.

An obit in the February 22, 1951 issue of the Northwestern notes that Capt. Louis A. Smith, 97, who was master of Fox and Wolf river boats for nearly half a century, died that morning at the home of his daughter in Omro.

Captain Smith's life was closely allied with the history of construction and maintenance of locks and channels in waterways of central Wisconsin. He entered government service with the corps of engineers in 1877. In 1880 he was promoted to the position as master of a dredge and held that post for 40 years. He served as captain aboard three government crafts. He married Anna B. Frances of Stevens Point. Mr. Smith was a member of the Red Brick School society, and St. John's Episcopal church. He was senior warden and lay reader of the church. L.A. Smith had the distinction of being the last alumnus of the Old Red Brick school.

Added information reveals that Leon Hoover, a native of Omro, in Oct of 1916 left for Amarillo, Texas. There he had a position as an engineer and electrician. Later he returned to Omro.

Leon Hoover married Miss Hattie Ginnow. His father was Dr. J. Hoover, D.V. of Omro. His mother Belle, who with his sister, Bonnie Hoover Rhoda had the millinery store in Omro for years. (bottom of pg.)

1954 issue of Daily N.W. --Mrs. Ella Drew Stanley taught Sunday school at the old M.E. Church for 65 years. She died October of 1955 at the age of 95 years. She remembered of Indians camping in the eastern part of town.

From a 1961 issue of Daily N.W. --Mrs. Kate Van der Plasche Bishop, widow of Cary Bishop was 96 years old when she died.

Warren Reed, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Reed was the author of the book, "The Yellow Stallion". He was a 1913 OHS graduate. The Reed family lived at 604 E. Main. His sisters were Minnie, Hazel and Dorothy.

In 1916 Leon Hoover took up work in Texas as an Engineer. Later he returned to Omro.

*m.j.s.*  
 Another native son of Omro was James Hinderman. He was City Clerk-Treasurer from 1941 to 1974. During the years when Saturday night was popular for the week's shopping for both farmers and townspeople he operated a pop-corn machine. With a white cap and apron he was kept busy serving patrons. The nose-tickling fragrance was irresistible. At the Wednesday night band concerts and pavement dances, also, the fragrance of the popcorn wafted up and down Main Street, and lured customers. The popcorn stand was located west of Peter's Plumbing. Later a man in Oshkosh bought the machine and undoubtedly is still in use in that city. *Sylvia 94.*

The following item was published in the July 5, 1973 issue of the Omro Herald:

"James Hinderman, Omro City Clerk, has officially retired after 44 years of faithful service with the Omro Fire Department.

"He was elected fire chief on June 24, 1937, a position he held for 10 years. During his time as Chief they purchased the International Fire truck, and he went to St. Louis to pick it up. At the time he was Chief, the salary was \$50 per year.

"On June 24, 1948 he was elected Buttler and resigned July 22, 1948. On June 23, 1959, he was elected trustee, a position he held until June, 1968.

"On June 26, 1950, he was elected Assistant Fire Chief and on June 28, 1962, he was elected Secretary. He held this office until June of 1968. During his time as Secretary he was responsible for the by-laws being changed to make the office of secretary and treasurer one office.

"He was born February 4, 1908 (reportedly in a red sweater) and joined the Omro Department on March 28, 1929. His first committee assignment was the ice cream committee."

James Hinderman died the first of March 1975 after a lifetime of service for his native city.

*o.w. 5/22/30*  
 Another item about Louis Smith stated that he was initiated into Omro Masonic Lodge #168, Jan. 12, 1880. He held early every office in the Lodge. He became a member of Winnebago Chapter May, 1882 and served as High Priest of that Order for 10 years. Mr. Smith was regarded as an authority on ritualistic work. At a banquet in May 19, 1930 to honor his 50th year as a Mason a male quartet composed of Leon Shelp, Ralph Locke, Emerson Bronson and Lewis Morton was one number on the program.



An item in a 1972 issue of the Omro Herald gives an account pertaining to a well-known and highly respected Omroite.

OH, 1/18/72  
 "Clayton Stearns, owner and operator of Stearns Rexall Drug Store, 109 E. Main Street, for nearly 47 years, is retiring today. (January 18, 1972.)

"Stearns, who was an employ of the downtown store as early as 1917, took over operation of the business April 1, 1925. He graduated from the Marquette School of Pharmacy in 1923. In addition to operating the Omro store, Stearns has been active in many civic and political projects during the past years.

"He served as president of the Village of Omro from 1932 until Omro became a city in 1944, and served then as the mayor until 1960.

"During his nearly 30 years in public office, with the help of Council members and other progressive business leaders, many civic projects were completed. Included were the building of the swimming pool with WPA labor, one of the first to be constructed in the state; construction of an athletic field at the Middle School; an increase in the site of the city park, and later improvements in the pool and park, including construction of the bath-house.

"The first sanitary sewer system was also installed, along with the beginnings of the present water system, and the construction of the sewage disposal plant. The former Omro Theater, which now serves as the Omro City Hall, was also constructed during this time.

"In 1926 Stearns and the late Allen Gensch began operation of the Omro radio station, WJBR, which they operated for several years before it was sold to WHBY, Appleton.

"Stearns also served as worthy grand patron, Order of Eastern Star, State of Wisconsin, from 1953-54.

"Charles Schmitt, a native of Merrill, has purchased the store from Stearns." In 1978 Schmitt sold to an out-of-town firm.

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 From the Omro Herald issue of Nov. 5, 1931--Eugene Oatman received word from the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission that he had been awarded a bronze Medal and \$500 for saving Robert H. Craig from drowning in the Fox River on May 20, 1928.  
 -----

# Omro Civil War Veteran Closes Exciting Life at 97

## 1937 Floyd R. Cross Gave Early History of Omro Region

The death at Omro recently of Floyd R. Cross, 97, last member of the Eureka G.A.R., recalls an interview he gave 12 years ago in which was recited some of the more interesting episodes of a long and exciting life span.

At 85 years of age Mr. Cross was hale and hearty. At that time he took long walks daily, without aid of a cane. He disclosed then many incidents in pioneer life in Omro and vicinity that had never before been published.

Following is the full account of the interview 12 years ago:

L. F. Cross was the son of Philetus S. Cross who migrated from the east to Waukesha county in 1837 and, three years later, came to Omro, and lived in a house situated where the Lutheran church now stands. Here Mr. Cross was born Dec. 12, 1840, he being the third in a family of eleven children.

When he was 7—as Mr. Cross remembers—there came to Omro a Scotchman, named Keeley, who purchased a corner lot, with the intention of building a hotel. In the street, at the four corners, he dug a well, as the first necessity for a hostelry. The well proved to be an "overflow," and Mr. Keeley, believing this to be an indication of a lake underneath, abandoned the project, and sold the lot to Andrew Lansing.

### Boy Totes Mail

Mr. Lansing, not apprehensive of danger, went on and built the hotel, called the "Exchange," on the site where the residence of Orin Shufelt now stands. That was in 1850. He also purchased the land to the corner and erected two large barns and conducted a livery business in connection with the hotel.

When a boy in his ninth year, Mr. Cross was engaged to carry mail to Winneconne, six miles distant, on foot. Uncle Sam has made some strides in mail service since

the day an 8-year-old, whose playmates were Indian boys, trudged twelve miles over heavy roads, three times a week—rain or shine—for the government.

About this time his father and David Humes were poling a flat boat to Keshena, with merchandise to exchange with the Indians for furs. They were in the employ of Calvin Biglow and the three were the only white men who could talk with the Indians. Also they were the only white men who were allowed in "Indian land"—the territory north of the Fox river, before the treaty was signed in 1846. Mr. Humes came to Omro in 1847.

### For Railroad Bridge

Mr. Biglow had a general store and trading post, so close on the river bank that it was set up on piles. Mr. Cross relates how, as a lad of about 10 years, he assisted Mr. Humes in driving piles for the first railroad bridge across the Fox river at this point. They were driven by horse power on a scow.

Later he drove the team on a horse tug, towing logs. When the tug had proceeded as far as expedient, it was hitched to a tree or stump on the bank and the raft pulled up by horse power; in turn the raft was hitched to the tree, while the tug, propelled by horse power, went on. The same process was then repeated. This was the method used in towing logs upstream, until Mr. Humes invented the "grouser" or upright boat anchor. This invention was a great benefit and acted as an impetus to the lumber business.

### Boy Bound Out

At 11 years of age, the pioneer boy was bound out by his father to a farmer, who agreed to send him to school part of the time. This he did not do nor was the boy allowed to visit his people, Mr. Cross declares.

After enduring this kind of treatment for four or five years, the Cross boy ran away, walking fifty-five miles to the home of an uncle in Waukesha county. He next hired out to Tom Tustin (for whom Tustin was named) and worked for him in the northern woods, driving logs down the Wisconsin river when Wausau and Wisconsin Rapids were only lumber camps.

In 1862 Mr. Cross enlisted in the 16th Wis. vol-

1925

1840 from  
97 - approx  
1937 died

lumber, at Berlin, changing the order of his first two names, to read Floyd L. Cross—so that his initials might stand for "friendship, love, and charity." He served until honorably discharged in July 1865.

In this early day the main channel of the Fox river was north of the island, the river being much higher than now, and the float bridge, when swung open for boats, was also the dock for landing.

#### Fight On Bridge

On one occasion lumbermen, who were bringing their rafts down the river for the mills, to be met by boats from some of the lumber mills in Oshkosh and taken over, refused to deliver their logs until they were paid. This resulted in the "big fight" on the float bridge.

About twenty-five or thirty loggers and boatmen engaged in a lively battle, using poles, picks and "peevies" for weapons. The river men won out, received their pay—which was coming all the time—and both sides retired, nursing sore heads. Mr. Cross was not only a witness but also has a picture of the scrimmage.

After the civil war, Mr. Cross made two trips to the Superior country for Mr. Biglow, delivering men for work in the mines. On one of these trips he and Henry McCall went by team to Keshena, and then made the rest of the journey on foot over a military road, driving the oxen before them, through the present sites of Cranston and Eagles river on to their destination, carrying their "grub" on their backs and with the last stop only two miles north of Keshena.

#### Comes Back Alone

Mr. Cross made the return trip alone through this wild country, with only weapon a jackknife and carrying \$460 in his belt. On reaching Shawano, the snow being six inches deep, he purchased a

pair of moccasins, discarded his shoes and proceeded to walk the seventy-five miles to Omro. He reached Mr. Biglow's store, just at closing time, turned over the money and went home exhausted.

He was in bed the next morning, when Mr. Biglow called to pay him, adding a \$10 bonus as he did so, and also later sending a doctor.

For two subsequent winters Mr. Cross was engaged in logging in northern Wisconsin for the late Senator Philetus Sawyer. He plied the carpenters trade for years and then, his sight failing somewhat, he became associated with the late Dr. Loope in fruit growing at Eureka. He had been asked to broadcast over station WJBR, as he was an entertaining reader.

Mr. Cross resided with his daughter, Mrs. Arthur King at Omro.

On February 8, 1982 Mrs. Eileen Palecek gave this clipping to the Omro Historical Society. This clipping was published in a local paper in 1937. This clipping originally belonged to Mrs. Minnie Cross King. Mr. Floyd Cross was her father and Mrs. Palecek's grandfather.

Betty Yanko

2682

On Feb. 8, 1982, Mrs. Eileen King Palecek gave a clipping originally belonging to her mother, Mrs. Minnie Cross King (Art). This a copy of same.

FOR THIRTEEN YEARS

The following interesting record, kept by the late G.W. Drew, may be seen in the tool case, over his work bench, at the wagon shop of Drew & Stanley.

Feb. 8, 1875, 43' below zero.  
 Apr. 5, '75, ice went out of river.  
 May 1, '75, snowing all day, hard.  
 Dec. 9, '75, wind blowing a gale; 32' below zero. No snow.  
 Spring of '77; Ice went out of river Feb. 22 and April 1.  
 Dec 21, '77, 1 o'clock p.m., thermometer 60' above zero on north side of building. No snow, no ice in river air full of cobsebs and small flies; roads nearly impassible for mud; no sleighing up to date.  
 Jan. 1, '78 - No ice in river, no snow, very little frost in ground; no sleighing up to date, roads very \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Feb. 26, '78. \_\_\_\_\_ river; no sleighing to date; roads very bad.  
 Mch. 12, '78 - Steamer O.R. Reed commenced running between Oshkosh and Berlin.  
 Feb. 27, '79 - P. Samphier's house burned; mercury 32' below zero.  
 Mch. 7, '79 - Steamer Weston first boat down the river.  
 Mch. 23, '79 - Ice went out.  
 Oct. 1 to Oct 16, '79 - Mercury from 70 to 90' above.  
 Mch. 21, '80 - Ice went out of river in night .  
 Apr. 5, '80 - G\_\_\_\_\_urdon first boat of the season comm\_\_\_\_\_ ipss between Berlin and Oshkosh.  
 Apr. 16, '81 - Ice went out of river; snow from 10 to 12 inches deep in woods on level. Weather cold and spring backward to date.  
 Apr. 25, '81 - Commenced taking milk at cheese factory.  
 Apr. 29, '81 - O.B. Reed first boat up river.  
 May 2, '81 - Steamer Weston commenced running between Berlin and Oshkosh.  
 Mch. 2, '82 - Ice went out of river.  
 Mch. 1 & 2, '82 - 50' above zero.  
 Apr. 4, '82 - First steamer (Fashion) went down the Fox from Berlin.  
 June 1, '82, heavy frost.  
 Apr. 7, '83 - Ice went out of river.  
 Mch. 4, '84 - 20' below zero, 6 a.m.  
 Mch. 26, '84 - Ice went out of river.  
 Apr. 8, '84 - Steamer Fashion first boat down river.  
 Apr. 5, '85 - First boat down river, Steamer Fashion.  
 Apr. 5, '86 - Ice went out of river.  
 Apr. 19, '86 - Fashion first boat down river.  
 Mch. 26, '87 - Ice went out of river.  
 Apr. 18, '87 - T.S. Chittendon first boat down river.  
 Apr. 18, '87 - Fashion commenced running between Berlin and Oshkosh.  
 Saturday, Jan. 2, '88 - 48' below zero,  
 May 18, '85 - Ate a fine Perry Russett apple prewented by my friend, J. Seeley.

G. W. Drew, who kept the thirteen year log, was a wainwright.  
His shop was located where the Standard Oil Gas station is  
now situated. Stanley was his son-in-law.

Obituary of SHERMAN BARNARD, former Omro Mayor of Omro.  
From the Feb. 12, 1982 issue of The Northwestern.

OMRO--Sherman T. Barnard, 90, former mayor of Omro, died Thursday  
afternoon in Mercy Medical Center, Oshkosh.

He was born June 5, 1891, in Omro, the son of Simeon and Maria  
Lennerville Barnard. He married E. Marie Bullis, July 5, 1922, in  
Omro. She died July 31, 1976.

Mr. Barnard had lived in the Omro area his entire lifetime. A  
veteran of World War I, he was former Omro postmaster and served as  
a government inspector during World War II. He served as assistant  
to J.N. Tittermore, U.S. marshal, from 1928 to 1932.

He farmed in the town of Rushford until his retirement in 1960.  
He served as mayor of Omro from 1961 to 1968 and was a city alderman  
in 1971. Active in the Community Players for many years, Mr. Barnard  
was a recipient of the Omro Kiwanis' Outstanding Citizen's Award. He  
was a member of the Omro Odd Fellows Lodge No. 125, the American Legion  
Bradley-Loker Post No. 34, the Omro Cemetery Association. Omro Masonic  
Lodge No. 168. Winnebago Chapter No. 43 Royal Arch Masons, Oshkosh  
Commandery No. II Knights Templar, Palm Chapter No. 43 Order of Eastern  
Star, Bethel Shrine No. 2 Order of White Shrine of Jerusalem, Ancient  
Accepted Scottish Rite Bodies Valley of Green Bay 32nd Degree Masons,  
the Tripoli Temple Ancient Accepted Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine,  
and the Winnebagoland Shrine Club. *Also served on County Board.*

Surviving are two daughters, Mrs. Robert (Shirley) Brandt, Phoenix,  
Ariz., and Mrs. Lester (Beverly) Kallas, Omro; two sons, Charles,  
Baton Rouge, La., and David, San Francisco, Calif.; nine grandchildren  
and five great-grandchildren.

EARLY OMRO BUSINESSES

ADVERTISEMENTS.

A clipping donated by Eileen King Palecek has much local information, but unfortunately no date is found.

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TIME TABLE  
Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul R'y.  
Omro Station  
Trains arrive  
Going South for Milwaukee & Chicago 5:40 a.m.  
Going North for Winneconne 7:15 p.m.  
C.W. Jones, Agent --

-----

BERLIN & OSHKOSH Stage Line  
T.H. Bullis, Prop.

LEAVES Berlin at 5 o'clock a.m., stopping at  
Koro, Eureka and Omro.  
Arriving at Oshkosh at 11 a.m.  
RETURNING leaves Oshkosh at 1 p.m.  
Arriving at Berlin at 7 p.m.

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BUSINESS CARDS  
J.F. Ford, M.D.  
Physician and Surgeon  
Office Sheerar's block, with Dr. Sheerar.  
Office hours 7 to 9 a.m. and 1 to 2 and 7 to 9 p.m.  
Night calls promptly attended to.

-----

E.H. DEMMON  
Book Binder and  
dealer in Books, Stationery, Music and  
General Periodical Literature of the Day.  
Omro Wis.

-----

C.W. Jones,  
Proprietor

THE JONES HOUSE.

Headquarters for Commercial Travelers,  
Large barn with ample stables.

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(more on back of pg.)

E. GUMMER

Boot & Shoe Maker  
Shop over Nash's Meat Market.  
Repairing especialty. 22

---

T.H. BULLIS

HORSESHOEING

Having secured the services of a first class Horseshoer and Blacksmith, I would solicit the partronage of the public. Shop opposite the Northwestern.

---

C.C. MORTON & CO.

Berry Boxes  
and Crates  
Sash, Doors, Blinds,  
Mouldings, etc.  
Omro, Wisconsin

---

OMRO MARKETS

PRODUCE  
Wholesale Cash Price

Eggs	-----\$	.12
Butter	-----	.17
Potatoes	-----	.75
Beans	-----	2.00
Onions	-----	2.00

RETAIL

Flour, per bbl.	----4,00&	4.20
Feeds per 100-lbs	-----	1.10
Meal " "	-----	1.00
Middlings " "	-----	.85 to 1.00
Oats per bush.	-----	.58
Corn	-----	.55

HIDES

Wholesale

Green	-----	.4 $\frac{1}{4}$
Calfskins	-----	.70
Sheepskins	-----	.80 to 1.00

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Another item from Eileen's clipping.

OMRO

Omro is situated on Fox River, on a branch of the C.M. & St. Paul R. R., twelve miles west of Oshkosh. The largest part of the village is situated on the south side of the river, although some business is carried on on the north side and quite a number of our citizens are residents of "Canada" as it is sometimes called. The site of the village is higher than the surrounding country and is easily drained. The village is noted for the number of fountains, and for the excellency of the water. It has a good reputation for its schools, two of the school houses being situated on the south side and one on the north. There are also in active operation one cheese factory, saw mill, planing mill, barrel factory, flouing mill, book bindery, three carriage shops and other industries.

There are five churches, to wit:--the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal and Catholic. The village supports two hotels and two newspapers. Large quantities of lumber, grain and live stock are shipped from this point. The population is somewhere in the vicinity of 1500. There are regular stage and mail lines to all points east, south and west.

CHURCHES

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.--Services every Sunday at 10:30 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. Sunday-School immediately after morning services.

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.--Services every Sunday at 10:30 a. m. and 7:30 p.m. Sunday-School immediately after morning services.

I. S. Eldredge, Pastor.

BAPTIST CHURCH.--Services every Sunday at 10:30. and 7:30 p.m.  
(Rest of clipping missing.)

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

This Certificate of Agency is to certify that H. Howard has been duly empowered by us to act as our regular authorized Agent for the Real Pen-work Family, Real Pen-work Lord's Prayer, Baby and His Friend, Marriage Certificates, Our Perfect Writing inks of Five Colors, The Real Pen-work Company's Best Steel Pens, and the Correct Position Pen-holder.

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## J. F. SAWYER LETTERS

The letters written by Mr. Sawyer during the time he served in the Civil War were printed in The Omro Herald. The first installment was of June 9, 1932, and continued through the November 3 issue of the same year.

The following are extracts from his letters written in 1864:

From Green Bay, March 31, 1864 he writes concerning his captain, "He has the name of being a first-rate captain. He was the one who whipped the quarter master for stealing the men's rations." Camp Randall, April 8, 1864. "I have just come off guard. We have orders to leave for Dixey in about one hour." Nashville, Tennessee, April 11, 1864. "We left Camp Randall last Friday, and we got here last night. We are in a very large building that used to be a young ladies' seminary. I expect that we shall leave here today or tomorrow. I want to get to the regiment. There are about ten thousand troops stationed here. There is a crowd of soldiers passing through here all of the time. Kentucky shows the marks of war. It looks bad around Bowling Green."

In his letter of April 13, 1864, James F. Sawyer tells of his trip south and his arrival at Lookout Mountain. In that of the 17th encloses a pencil sketch of the mountain showing the location of nearby towns and roads, and of rebel trenches. He describes their own location as being 2700 feet above the level of the river, saying, "We can see four or five states from here. There was a man, the other day, showing how near he could stand on the edge of the rocks. He lost his balance and fell off." The impact from the fall crushed his body and burst his heart. Mr. Sawyer speaks of the "shebang" they had just finished as being comfortable for four soldiers, with a good fireplace in it to keep them warm.

On April 9, he writes about having his picture taken. "I will have mine taken soon and sent to you. They charge one dollar apiece for taking likenesses here. If I could have had a chance to get mine taken in Madison I could have gotten five for one dollar. Everything is very high; butter is 70¢, cheese 50¢ a pound, tobacco, \$2., other things according; but we have plenty to eat and good spring water." April 27. "We left our old camp ground yesterday morning and went farther south to establish a new picket line. We are in Georgia. We have a little cloth tent. You would laugh if you could see me at meal time with a cup of coffee by my side, a piece of pork on a picket stick, holding it over the fire to cook. The boys call the pork "sow-belly." We have a company cook when we are in camp.

In his letter from Lookout Mountain dated April 20, 1864, Mr. Sawyer continues: "Since I began this we have been out on a skirmish drill. It is lively business, I tell you; sometimes on a double quick; then a slow march; then a half; then behind a tree, stump, stone, or log, or flat on the ground. I like to drill first-rate. I like the officers well. Col. Hobert told us that if we wanted anything or had any questions concerning our rights and privileges to come to him as we would to our own fathers. Joseph Lacount is our Lieutenant. He is around with the boys in their tents. He was in my tent a little while ago. He is full of talk and I like him. Capt. Walker has not come to the Regiment yet." "We won't be troubled

with hot weather much if we stay on the mountain this summer. It is so high there is a little wind most all of the time. We have been cutting timber this afternoon for building here; so we shall have something to do for a while.

April 27, 1864. "I have some flowers for you and Helen. I picked them in Georgia, not for the beauty, but the name, and the different kind from in Wisconsin." "I bought me a portfolio. It is handy. I carry it in my knapsack. It keeps my paper and envelopes all smooth. I am writing with it on my knee now."

Mr. Sawyer's letter from Lookout Mountain, dated May 29, 1864, was written on stationery headed with a poem, "May hearts be trump." The sentiment of the poem is that expressed in every letter written by the soldier boy to his young wife and little girl. He often speaks of the comforts of his surroundings in comparison with those of other camps. In this letter he says, "We have plenty to eat,--pork and it is good, hard tack, soft bread, beans, first rate coffee, and good sugar. Our bedstead is rails. We spread our coats on them. I have a heavy woolen blanket and a rubber blanket and aplenty of clothes to wear. It was rather hard to sleep for a few nights, but now I can sleep like a horse."

"One of the Bible agents in Nashville gave me a Testament. I have commenced to read it through. I have just finished reading the Book of Luke. There are most 112 pages. I study it and pray that I may understand it. I hope and pray that we may be prepared for death when it comes. You cannot imagine what an amount of cursing and swearing there is in the army. You can hear it almost all of the time. It is a hard place for boys."

"I have heard that we have had orders to join the brigade. It is about eight miles from here. I do not know how it is you can hear almost anything; one day we are going to stay all summer and the next we are going away. I shall try to do my duty let me be where I will."

The extracts from letters written during the Civil War which are appearing in this column, were selected from those of James F. Sawyer after whom the local organizations of the Grand Army of the Republic and the Woman's Relief Corps are named. These letters are valuable because of their accuracy in depicting the daily routine of a soldier's life in the northern army, during the great War of the Rebellion.

After a span of seventy years, it is a privilage to read first hand Mr. Sawyer's comments on the character of his commanding officers and of his comrads, as well as his own reactions to conditions in which uncertainty and danger constantly prevailed.

Mr. Sawyer's faith in God and his determination to keep his life clean and fit for a noble citizenship on his return to private life are an inspiring example of true patriotism.

We print these letters by courtesy of Miss Helen M. Sawyer, his daughter, as a part of our series of Pioneer Stories of Men and Women Who Lie At Rest in the Historic Cemeteries of Winnebago County.

Emerson C. Bronson, Distinctive Funeral Service, Omro Wis.  
Compiled by Mrs. Minnie T. Morton.

From Gravesville, May 2, 1864, Mr. Sawyer writes, "I will write a few lines to let you know of our move. We left Lookout Mountain at about six o'clock this morning. The 78th Pennsylvania went with us. They have nine hundred and fifty men; we have three hundred and eighty with us now. It was a splendid sight to see us all marching down the mountain together. We got here about four o'clock. It is sixteen miles from the mountain. It has been a good cold day for marching, and I stood it first rate. We have to go six miles tomorrow to join our brigade. It looks as though there is work ahead for us."

Ringgold, Georgia, May 4th, 1864. "We got here yesterday all right. We may stay here four or five days, and then for the rebs! We are within about 12 miles of one of their strongholds. There will be a heavy battle if they stand. I do not know how many they have; we shall have about one hundred and fifty thousand in this line when they all get in. It is a sight to see the tents. I can sit here and see a number of thousand of them. Some think that we can flank the rebs without a very heavy fight. The weather is fine now. There was quite a hard frost yesterday morning. The days are warm and the nights cool, with very heavy dews. The country is not cleared up any more than Calumet County. Destruction goes with the army. A mile of rail fence did not last but a short time yesterday. It was used for boiling coffee, frying sowbelly, staking tents and for bunks to sleep on."

From Buzzard Roost, May 11, 1864, Mr. Sawyer wrote, "We left Ringgold Saturday morning,--we got marching orders Friday night. The boys had a great time. It was a dark still night, and when the roll was beaten, they put a candle on top of each tent and made bonfires. There were nine brigades camped together. They made a splendid sight. There is no name for the yells and hurrahs that were given. Saturday at about noon we fell into line of battle and have been so ever since. We have driven the Rebs about eleven miles into Rocky Face Gap. This is a strong place and our troops have given up charging it. I believe they are going to lay siege to it. We are ordered away tonight. I do not know where we are going. We have lain on our arms two nights, with the rebel shells flying over us day times. I can hear the crackling of the sharp shooter's guns while I am writing. It rained last night. It was rather nasty lying in line of battle without our tents."

Calhoun Station, May 16, 1864. "We left Buzzard Roost, or Rocky Face Gap, last Thursday, and got into Sneckers Gap that night. We drove the rebels out Friday. Saturday I was on the skirmish line. I got some pretty close calls. Our regiment was in front that day. Yesterday we lay behind the breastworks. Our battleline was ten miles long. They had a pretty hard battle here last night. The Rebs charged our breastworks and left six hundred on the field in one charge. I have heard that there are 200 killed and wounded here now, besides those they carried away.

During the long marches in the wake of Johnson's retreating army, Mr. Sawyer seized every opportunity to let his family in Omro know of his welfare. By the campfire at night, or during the short pauses at noon, he would write a few lines to tell them of his continued safety. Amid discomforts and hardwhips and dangers he wrote uncomplainingly of the good food--pork, potatoes, coffee with sugar, and hardtack; of the interesting country they were marching through, its ruggedness and beauty; of the flowers by the wayside, sometimes

of a vine overhanging the doorway of a settler's cabin. In the midst of a deadly campaign, he found time to read his testament and pray daily for the protection of his loved ones. His faith in the final triumph of the Northern Army was unwavering; it was only a matter of time.

In his letter of May 20, 1864, written in line of battle eight miles south of Kingston, he says, "We are following Johnson's army. He is running his best. When he left Calhoun, he burnt the railroad bridge, but we had them all right, for we had bridge timbers framed ready for all these bridges a long time ago. The bridge was burned the 16th of this month, and the cars crossed it last night. It was a long bridge. The Rebel Army must be pretty badly cut up. Our troops have taken a good many prisoners. Hooker took 800 last night. Kentucky and Tennessee troops have refused to fight with Johnson any more. The scouts say that Johnson keeps them guarded and drives them like sheep since they began to retreat.

On the March Through Georgia, May 26, 1864. "Everything is still this morning. Hooker had a brush last night and he cleaned them out. They have left again this morning. I do not know how many they lost."

Battlefield, May 27, 1864. "It is not so still this morning. We are lying in the rear. The "Bulldogs" are blazing away in earnest. I do not know what it is going to amount to, but I presume we shall find out before night. The right wing gained a good deal yesterday."

Behind the Breastworks, May 30, 1864. "The Johnnies undertook to make a charge on our skirmishers and drive them in; but they were mistaken for they left one wounded and five dead Johnnies inside of our line, besides a number of guns. Our breastworks are about one-half mile from the Johnnies' line. We have rifle pits in which we lie, and when a Johnny raises his head he finds plenty of music."

"I wish you would send me a half pound of tobacco. They say it costs about ten or fifteen cents postage. There is no fine-cut here at all, and poor plug sells at from \$1.50 to \$2 a pound."

Altoona Mountain, June 4, 1864. "I suppose it is thought that we have the Rebs in pretty close quarters now. We are swinging their left flank. They are trying to get into Atlanta. I heard today that our right wing had swung around so that they had taken prisoners within six miles of Atlanta. I hope that is so. I have not had my shoes off at night for about three weeks. We have to be ready to jump into harness at a minute's notice."

Sunday Noon, June 5, 1864. "We have just heard that the Rebs have skedaddled and left us again. They left last night, all but their skirmish line which kept up a firing so that their army could get away. They burned their train. I suppose we shall have to follow them again."

Camp near Marietta, Georgia, June 7, 1864. "I finished reading my Testament the 4th of June, and have commenced to read it again. So you see I study that book some." Concerning his wife's and little girl's photographs he wrote, "I have carried you and Helen through three battles. I broke the glass out of them and carry them in my Testament so that I see you every day."

For weeks during the campaign in Georgia the soldiers did not receive their pay. Consequently many of Mr. Sawyer's letters were written on pieces of old envelopes and bits of scrap paper. Rations, too, were short; but even this hardship brought no complaint from the writer. From Kennesaw Mountain, June 26, 1864, Mr. Sawyer wrote, "There was a while that our rations were short; but I did not write home about it for it would do us no good and would make it harder for you."

July 4, 1864, he wrote, "The batteries are shelling the Rebs pretty lively this morning. I would rather spend the day in Omro than here. I think I would enjoy the celebration fully as well."

July 5, 1864. "We had a narrow escape the 5th day of July. Our regiment and the 10th were sent out to connect with the line on the right. We got too far in advance, and were ahead of the Reb's rear guards. If they had seen us they might have surrounded us with a large force and taken us prisoners. We had to watch both sides as well as in front until Davidson's Division drove them past our right."

From camp near Marietta, Georgia, July 12, 1864, Mr. Sawyer wrote: "We have good tents to sleep in, rubber blankets and woolen blankets if we wish to carry them. Behind the breastworks when we are expecting a shelling from the Rebs, we do not pitch our tents, but make our beds on the ground, covering piles of leaves with our rubber blankets. When we are going to stay four or five days we get poles and raise our beds a foot or two from the ground."

"We have good pork to eat, hard tack, coffee, sugar, one day's rations of beans every three days, two days rations of pressed beef in three, salt, pepper and soup. We draw something for soup that is made in France. It is made of most everything, string beans, onions, tomatoes, peas, rice and cabbage and a good many things that I do not know. It is a good deal like Scotch broth, a little of everything cut up fine and dried and pressed into cakes about as hard as a dry oat cake. We draw one day's ration in three of potatoes. They are grated and dried hard like coarse Indian meal. We can stew them or fry them as we please."

Four miles from Atlanta. July 21, 1864. "Last night the Johnnies fell back across Peach Creek and burned the bridge. They thought they would charge Hooker's right before we could get across. But we were not long in building a bridge and our artillery were over a half hour before the charge began. When we were ordered to fall in, we crept to the brow of a hill and lay down. How the bullets did fly! The Rebs had three stands of colors planted on our breastworks. Then came the order to charge with fixed bayonets, and such a yell went up from the badgers that I guess the Rebs thought the woods were full of Yanks. Before we had gone fifty rods they were out of sight."

Two miles from Atlanta. July 24, 1864. "The Chaplain of the 10th Wisconsin preached us a good sermon this forenoon, the first I have heard since last April. It had been so long since I had heard any singing and preaching that I could not help shedding tears." "Colonel Hobart is going to have a sword presented to him at half past four this afternoon. The regiment bought it for him."

Behind the Breastworks, Georgia, August 11, 1864. "The Johnnies are pretty tame in our front, on the skirmish line. Our boys went out and traded coffee for tobacco this morning. The Rebs came half way. Col. Hobart, Major Fitch, and Capt. Walker had a long talk with them and made a bargain that there would be no firing from the picket lines; but they must have gotten different orders for they sent our boys back to their pits, and they went to theirs. Then after yelling, "Look out now, Yanks!" the firing started again."

Mr. Sawyer was placed on train guard at Atlanta. From there he wrote concerning the scurvy that broke out among the men, and the welcome change in diet to cure it; of the suffering of women and children in the city; and the propaganda against the "Rail Splitter" as the mal-contented in the army called Abraham Lincoln.

October 2, 1864, from White Hall, where they had been withdrawn for a time from active campaigning, he wrote about their clothing. "We are allowed forty-two dollars worth of clothes per year. If we draw more than that, it is taken out of our wages."

From Savannah, Mr. Sawyer wrote describing the raid that destroyed Atlanta and the surrounding country. "December 18, 1864. It looked rather hard to cut our own communications; we burned villages, farm buildings, all of the cotton gins, and a great deal of cotton. Atlanta is in ashes. One man in the city offered \$3000 if they would save his house. The officers put up \$300 reward for anyone caught setting fires, but the whole city burned."

"Our army moved on three different roads, with the cavalry on the flanks destroying everything in their path. We could see fires in all directions, as the country is level around here. I never saw finer buildings and lawns in any city than there were on some of the plantations. These will be destroyed too. There has been a great deal of hidden gold and silver found by the soldiers. One man discovered \$100,000 Confederate money in a clock. I could have bought \$100 of it for \$1.00. The Southerners think the Yankees have some kind of instrument for finding things. It has been a hard raid. We have swept a strip of country over forty miles wide."

Savannah, Georgia, December 25, 1864. "I wish you could have seen the darkies when our troops came into Savannah. There are a great many of them in this place. They stood in crowds on every corner welcoming us with such exclamations as, 'Woh! how I like to see 'um!' The poor creatures endure almost anything for liberty's sake. Some of them came with us, marching over one hundred and fifty miles. Many were little children who walked the fifteen or twenty miles daily without whining or complaining. Some mothers carried heavy babies in their arms all the way."

"Our Division had a grand revue before General Sherman. It gave us a good chance to see the city." "Savannah has gone over to the Union. The people seem well pleased under the 'Old Flag.'"

Savannah, Georgia, January 1, 1865. "The price of everything is very high here. I went into the city the other day and found flour selling at 35¢ a pound, and sugar at a dollar a pound. Apples were a dollar for four or five, cheese a dollar a pound, and bread a dollar a loaf. I returned to my hard tack and coffee without buy-

ing anything extra for my New Year's supper."

Savannah, Georgia, January 6, 1865. "I saw by the papers that Sherman's last campaign is counted as one of the greatest known in war. It is an honor to have served under this great man. To see him riding along, you would think he was some old codger with his head bent a little to one side, and in his mouth the stub of a cigar that appears as if it had not been lighted all summer. He looks as if he never thought of laughing. But all the boys have confidence in him, and I am proud to belong to his army."

January 27, 1865. "We started on another campaign, and were eight miles from Savannah when I was wounded and sent back to the city. Last Tuesday I had eaten my dinner and stood smoking my pipe before the fire when a spent ball struck me in the back of my neck cutting a gash an inch and a half deep. It did not hurt much but made me numb all over as if I had been hit on top of the head. The doctor dug out the ball and I have it in my pocket. He would not let me go on with the regiment, so I walked back the eight miles to Savannah and carried all my load except my gun and accoutrements."

Camp Sherman, Blair's Landing, March 18, 1865. "Our Corps Hospital in Savannah is broken up. Some of the boys were sent here and others were taken North. I think there are men in camp from every regiment in Sherman's Army. This is the third time I have left Savannah, and I have no desire to see that city again. We are on an island. It is a lonesome place with nothing here but two empty buildings."

Goldsboro, North Carolina, April 18, 1865. "News came that Richmond is taken, and you never heard such cheerings and shouting as there has been throughout the army ever since." "The boys are certainly feeling fine. One of the Reb papers said, 'Sherman's Army has eaten so many hens, geese and turkeys on this campaign that they have feathered out up to the knees.'"

Raleigh, N. C. , April 14, 1865. "The Rebs burned the depot and a good deal of corn. They robbed the citizens of nearly everything they had of value. They hung one man three times to make him tell where his money was hidden. They got about five thousand dollars in gold and silver from him. People say they were treated worse by their own army than they were by ours."

Camp in the Woods, N.C., April 27, 1865. "We received good news yesterday. The Johnnies have surrendered and peace is declared! We have left Cape Fear River and are on our way to Richmond. This morning we were ordered to throw away all but five of our cartridges; some different from carrying sixty rounds."

Richmond, Virginia, May 7, 1865. "I am tired tonight. We left our camp near Raleigh one week ago today. We were within two miles of Richmond at 8 o'clock this morning, having traveled two hundred miles in six and one-half days. Fifteen miles in twenty-four hours is called a forced march in the army, yet we covered thirty-eight miles, day before yesterday. Sherman gave us two weeks in which to reach Richmond. It is reported that because of a bet of \$2000 between two officers as to whether our corps or the twentieth would

arrive first, we were forced on these exhausting marches. We came into Richmond two days ahead of the twentieth corps.

May 9, 1865. "We are camped on an old plantation. The owner died in 1799. Since then a great pine forest has grown up, covering the fields without effacing the old cotton and corn hills."

Camp Alexandria, Va., May 22, 1865. "I have traveled over 560 miles and carried my load since I left Wilmington, N.C., about the 1st of April. We all look pretty well dragged out. Sherman's 'greasers' as the Potomac boys call us are a rough looking set compared with those who saw less fighting."

May 28, 1865. "Last Tuesday, at the Grand Review in Washington, Sherman's Army received a great welcome. Flags and handkerchiefs waved from doors and windows, and there were cheers and clapping of hands all around. We marched under a large banner on which were the words, 'All Hail To Our Western Heroes!'"

When the 21st Wisconsin was mustered out of service, Mr. Sawyer was transferred to the 3rd Wisconsin. This regiment was sent down the Ohio River to Louisville, Kentucky. On board the Nevada Mr. Sawyer wrote, "Flags are flying from almost every house along the river banks. All ages from white-haired old men and women to little children under three years old are out to greet the boat. They are pleased to see the soldiers going home."

After being honorably discharged at Louisville, Mr. Sawyer returned to his family at Omro. His soldier equipment is now in the museum at Oshkosh.



## MORE ABOUT THE CIVIL WAR

Mr. Platt Wright also recorded his account of the Civil War. His research was published in 1876.

*W. Statler p. 16  
# 1/22/31*

The Spring of 1861 was ushered in with the first dread notes of War. Sumter had fallen, and the people of Omro in common with those of every other northern town, were too much occupied with the momentous duties which the Rebellion forced upon them, to think of anything else. War was something new and strange, and those who did not take an active part in the field, had their hands full at home, therefore, we have no new enterprises nor any great change to note in Omro during the year. Events of importance were transpiring, however, which are worthy of note. The President had called for troops to put down the Rebellion, and Wisconsin's quota must be furnished. Omro was not behind, and her war record she may well be proud of. Company C, of the Fourteenth Infantry, was recruited in Omro in the Fall of 1861, mustered into the United States service January 30th, 1862, and left the State on the 8th of March. W.W. Wilcox was Captain of the company, but did not go into the field with it, Colin Miller, 1st Lieutenant, and A. S. Smith, 2nd Lieutenant. A. Corfee was afterward commissioned Lieutenant. We have not the company roll at hand, but we call to mind the following men who were members from Omro: A.S. Childs, J.K. Bishop, David Hinman, John Reed, G.T. Crafts, J. McMahon, W. Anderson, L. Cady, P. Gallagher, R. Hunter, G. Perkins, B.F. Smith, J.S. Johnson, Richard and Royal Reed, O. Johnson, Sol Statler, J. Statler, J.E. Williamson and Mr. Benton.

*W. Statler p. 17  
# 1/29/31*

David Hinman, a son of J.L. Hinman, now residing in the village, was the first soldier from Omro who was killed.

The Fourteenth was under fire from the time it reached the front until it was mustered out. On the 5th of April 1862, not a month from the time they left the State, the boys took part in the battle of Pittsburg Landing. In the official list of the killed in that action, we find the name of James Alley, of Company C; the wounded from the same company were Lieutenant Smith, William Ditley, A.B. Miller, Sol. Statler, James Statler, J.K. Bishop and James E. Williamson.

In the following July, the regiment was in the battle of Corinth. The Brigade Commander, Col. Oliver speaking of the regiment, gives it the following noble tribute:

"The Fourteenth Wisconsin Infantry was always steady, cool and vigorous, and the one to rely upon in any emergency. Though suffering more loss than any other regiment in the command, they maintained their lines and delivered their fire with the precision and coolness which would have been maintained on parade."

The official list of killed in Company C. at that battle was R. Putnam, G. Clark and Ellery Porter; wounded, J. Dean, D. Maxon, W. Anderson, J. Dewrose, L. Cady, T. Fitzgerald, P. Gallagher, R. Hunter, G. Perkins and B.F. Smith.

*W. Statler p. 18  
# 1/29/31*

In January following the regiment embarked for Vicksburg and took part in the siege of that stronghold. In the terrible charge

of the 22nd, the Fourteenth penetrated considerably beyond any other regiment of the brigade, and attained a position in front of the enemy's works, where no other regiment was near them. When the city was finally surrendered on the 4th of July, the Fourteenth was assigned the position of honor on the right, and ordered by General Ransom to take the advance in the triumphal entry of our victorious army into the city, the General complimenting them with the remark that "every man and officer of the Fourteenth was a hero."

The list of killed in Company C during the siege is given in the report as follows: Killed, Colin Miller, J.P. Wells, and G.S. Noyes; wounded G.T. Crafts, B.F. Hoy, D. Howe, C.M. Johnson, J. McMahon and B. Smith. A Board of Honor, of which General McPherson was President, awarded silver medals of honor to several members of the regiment, for gallant services, among which was one to A.S. Childs, of Company C. Sergeant Childs was afterwards promoted to the Captaincy.

More than two-thirds of the regiment re-enlisted on the 11th of December, constituting a veteran regiment. The regiment was conspicuous in many other engagements, always doing good service and on the 9th of October, 1865 were mustered out, and the remnant of the Omro boys who went out with it, returned home.

The Third Cavalry, which was recruited in 1861, and mustered into service in January, 1862, also contained many prominent citizens of Omro. Among those most prominent in mind were P. Samphier, John Rice, Alonzo Kimball, D.C. Phelps, John Havens, M. Baker and Frank Knapp. The regiment was mustered out in 1865, having done good service in the southwest and west, and probably ranged over a greater extent of country than any other regiment.

The Eighteenth Regiment also had one company from Omro, Company F. We can call to mind but a few of the members who belonged to it. J.W. Roberts was Captain, and Geo. Stokes 1st Lieutenant. James Samphier, Andrew Robbins, Nelson Hoaglin and Charles E. Johnson were on the company roll. The regiment took part in the battles of Pittsburg Landing and Corinth, the Siege of Vicksburg and the battles of Allatoona and Huntsville. At the last mentioned engagement, C.R. Johnson, of Company F, was killed, and J.W. Samphier and A.J. Robbins were taken prisoners.

There were also in the Twenty-first Regiment several men from Omro, whose names we have not at hand. Hiram H. Gibbs, the father of our predecessor on the Journal, was Captain of Company E, of this regiment, and was wounded at the battle of Perryville, and died soon afterward, from the effects of the wound.

Business in Omro during the first three years of the war was dull. Very few improvements were going on, and no new enterprises talked up. In the way of manufacturing, there were three saw mills, Wilson's, Johnson's and the Drake mill, but the two latter named ones were run semi-occasionally. There was a small planing mill, run by Mr. Woodward, on the site of Lansing's livery stable, formerly run by F.R. Downs, we believe. The grist mill was also in full

W. R. Hunt p. 19  
H. 2/5/31

operation. It was during the year 1863 that Mr. George Challoner built the shingle mill now occupied by Thompson & Hayward. He put in a shingle machine of his own invention, and did a good business. Ellis Thompson and Thomas Charlesworth were associated with him at one time. Also L.B. Lewis, we believe.

*H. Hist p. 19  
H. 2/5/31*  
The Soldiers' Bounty Question came up early in the year of 1863. The draft during the winter had taken off quite a number of the citizens, and it was thought best to offer some inducement for enlisting rather than allow another draft. At a special town meeting in January, it was voted to pay \$100 bounty to every unmarried man who enlisted and credited to the town, and \$10 per month to the families of married men.

*H. Hist p. 20  
H. 2/5/31*  
At the annual town meeting in April \$4,000 was voted for bounties to soldiers. At a special meeting in August, it was voted to raise \$8,000 more, and at a special meeting on the 14th of January, 1865, \$10,000 more was voted to be raised, and the bounty raised to \$200. This amount was afterwards increased to \$300. In the spring of 1864, the 100 day troops were called for, and Omro furnished her proportion. Seward Cady, the original proprietor of the Omro Union, went with the company. We think the most of the men who went from here, returned; but Mr. J. Clemons, whom many of our readers will remember, died soon after reaching home.

Very late in the autumn of 1864, the President called for 300,000 more men and Omro promptly responded. Company A of the Forty-eighth infantry was recruited here, and was composed almost solely of Omro men. C.W. Felker, now of the firm of Felker & Weisbrod, Oshkosh, was then practicing law here, and recruited a company, of which he was commissioned Captain.

Henry Felker his brother, was first Lieutenant of Company A, of the forty-eighth infantry. The regiment was mustered into the service, and left the State in March 1865, for St. Louis. From there the Forty-eighth went west into Kansas and out on the plains. The war proved to be near its close, and the boys had no fighting to do, which was their gain. Among those who went from Omro, two died, Raymond at Camp Washburn, Milwaukee, and David Lake, at Fort Scott. The regiment was mustered out at Fort Leavenworth, on the 30th of December, 1865.

*H. Hist p. 21  
H. 2/12/31*  
Mr. Wright continues, "In the May 6, 1858 issue of the Omro Republican, the night before at Benedict's Hall in Omro, an independent Military Company was organized. The company was organized under the name of the Omro Light Infantry Life Guards, with the following list of officers: Captain, Joel V. Taylor; First Lieutenant, A. Schermerhorn; Second Lieutenant, A.B. Larrabee; Orderly Sergeant, Daniel Douty; Second Sergeant, H.M. Howe; Third Sergeant, C.H. Larrabee; Fourth Sergeant, Geo. Pingrey; First Corporal, A. Corfee; Second Corporal, H.C. Hollister; Third Corporal, John Barrit; Fourth Corporal, James Richardson. It was decided that the uniform be cockadehats, dark blue broadcloth for coats and light blue broadcloth for pants, trimmed with red. W.B. Holcomb was appointed Treasurer of the company. We do not know what became of the organization, but some of the members have since that time trained in the military company that had more stern reality about it than fun.

W. H. ... 2/18/21  
O. N. ... 2/12/31

"Leaving the gleanings from the old "Republican", we return to the Omro Union. S.H. Cady was the founder of this small paper. He commenced in a very small way at first. We remember the first copy. It was sent to some member of the Forty-eighth Wisconsin Infantry, while stationed in Kansas, and there was not an Omro boy there who did not read every word and line of it. It was very small, the size of a sheet of letter paper, yet very creditable in appearance. The local items are not very numerous, but we find that the publishers had just purchased a new press and promised a larger paper. There is a list of the persons doing business in the village at that date, which has sixty names, twenty of which are still here. (1876) According to the Union, the census taken that year showed the population of the village to be 975, but the return of soldiers immediately afterward increased it to over 1000."

A "sutler" store was one that sold supplies to military personell. Omro had no need of one, they were as a rule near military camps.

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VETERAN'S RECORDS  
Civil War

Send to:

Military Service Records  
(NNCC)

National Archives (G.S.A.)  
Washington, D.C. 20408

Ask for form G.S.A. 671 or latest revision.

For Wars I & II

Send to:

National Personnel Records Service G.S.A.  
(Military Personnel Records)  
9700 Page Blvd.  
St. Louis, Mo. 63132.

For both they send you a form to fill out. You give them as much information on the form as you can. They will bill you. The price is subject to change.

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## W.R.C. MONUMENT

*mjs.*  
 A monument was presented to the Omro Scott Park by the local Woman's Relief Corps organization shortly after completion of the park area. This monument was to commemorate and honor all servicemen. It was placed in the west end of the park. It was an upright rectangular stone on the top of which was a sun dial with the inscription, "Light follows darkness." The pointer or gnomon, however, has been missing for many years. Vandals would destroy the pin as fast as a new one was attached.

Carved on the front face of the monument are these words, "HONORING ALL WHO SERVED AND DEDICATED TO THE EVERLASTING MEMORY OF THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN OUR WARS FOR THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM." Carved above the tribute is a majestic bald eagle wreathed with stars.

On the west panel one reads, "TIME WILL NOT DIM THE GLORY OF THEIR DEEDS." The east panel denotes the donor of the monument, "ERECTED BY THE WOMAN'S RELIEF CORPS OF OMRO." Mrs. Libby Luscombe was president of the Corps at the time of the presentation which took place in the early 1920s.

A flag pole to the back complimented the monument. The stars and stripes fluttered atop the pole each day during the summer months until the A.J. Marble Pool was built and dedicated. At that time a new flag pole was established at pool side.

A semicircular trimmed hedge nearly surrounded the monument and flag pole. The unused pole was removed early in 1976, and a short while later the monument was placed in another area of the park.

From the time the monument was erected, Memorial Day services were held in the park near the present shelter house area by the G.A.R. and W.R.C. members. After World War I the American Legion took an active part in the traditional Memorial Day services each year, as did the V.F.W. organization.

In 1976 only 10 members remain in the Corps so the plan is to terminate the order and disband in the fall of this same year. So, after 87 years of service to such institutions as the Veteran's Home at King, Wisconsin, and to veterans of all wars, the local W.R.C. organization will cease to be.

The Corps also donated to the Tomah and Wood Veteran hospitals.

*(OHG/ST/77)*  
 (The J.F. Sawyer Women's Relief Corps #94 of Omro disbanded June 24, 1977 at the close of their final meeting. At the time, Mrs. Verona Haedt was President, and Mrs. Ruby Buell Secretary.)

Further bits of information about Omro business houses are as follows:

*C.H. 7/7/38.* Henry C. Hollister and his father Cornelius, operated a general store on the principal corner of early Omro. Henry's sons were Wm. C., Frank, and Ed. Oren Lester Huie was the general manager after the civil War, in the 1860s and 70s. (*C.H. 7/7/38.*)

About 1870 Sheldon & Co. produced a product, a "Chinese Foot Powder", the container carrying the persuasion, "It makes the feet glow". (*P.P. + P pp. 255 - Dr. Edw. Noyes.*) Emmett Sheldon died mar 8, 1927. (*family diary*)

In November of 1913 George Stearns bought interest of Rob Schmidt in the grocery firm of Berray and Schmidt. (*Daily N.W. 11/14/13.*)

Calkins Hardware ad in the April 23, 1931 Omro Herald was for an electric Speed Queen washing machine for \$69.50. Also, a gas engine Speed Queen washing machine for \$97.50.

Omro Home Bakery advertised special for \$ days in January 1931-- ginger cookies - 12¢ per dozen; plain cinnamon rolls - 14¢ per dozen; Jelly rolls (regular size), 10¢ per dozen; sandwich buns - per dozen 12¢. Phone 186-R-2. (*C.H. - 1/15/31.*)

The Ford Agency advertised the new Ford Tudor Sedan for \$430 to \$630. F.O.B., Detroit, plus freight and delivery! (*C.H. - 2/12/31.*)

Tony and Pearl Kolbus at one time owned where Schafer vacated on S. Webster. Ennli's had a snackery there for awhile.

Russell Sullivan purchased the former Stearns & Calhoon grocery at 103 E. Main in 1945. (*C.H. 2/1/45.*)

Harvey Treleven sold his Electric Shop to Wayne and Gloria King October 1, 1976. *Harvey died June, 4, 1978.*

*C.H. 7/14/60* Max Bower, former Police Chief was Chief of Police since 1942. He had been on the city's police force for 28 years, serving as deputy and village marshall before taking the chief of police job. He retired in July of 1960.

The following is a letter written by C.B. Root and sent to Mr. George E. Morton of the Red Brick School Association. This is a copy of the letter printed in the June 8, 1939 issue of the Omro Herald.

Mr. George E. Morton  
Milwaukee, Wis.

Dear Sir and Friend

Some time ago you wrote me about the old red brick school house and as I knew very little about it, it got me to thinking about Omro as I first knew it.

The first time I was in Omro was in June, 1877. At that time it was a thriving and industrious village. Beginning at the east end was the Challoner Machine plant, then the ice house, woolen mill building and several others. Then Joe Lyons livery stable, Chas. Bushnell's blacksmith shop with hall above, the old grist mill, Chas. Chase's jewelry store, Lang Douty's drug store, W.W. Race hardware store.

On the corner was a double store building the same as now. Across the street, Fred Bunker hardware store, Wm. Wheeler meat market and next was the bank building that held the woolen mill fund that disappeared when the cashier left town. The next was the Morton and Arnold planing mill, then was Thompson and Hayward carriage factory and the hotel. Then the Lansing livery barn, a blacksmith shop and several other buildings, across the street were three dwellings, then the Spiritualist hall, then two dwellings, the stage barn.

Across the street from the Larrabee Hotel was the Putnam building with three stores facing north and the post office across the back end facing west and the second floor was one large hall called Putnam's hall with a stage and dressing rooms. It was a wonderful hall for a village the size of Omro.

Then to the east the Beebie meat market, Stone mercantile office, Russell harness store, George Charlesworth furniture, Waite Bros. grocery, and a two-story building on the corner. On the other corner the Shafer three story building occupied by Mr. Shafer the north end, the south end by the Samphier Bros., second floor north end Mr. J. Everts barber shop and pool hall on the south end.

The third floor was used by the Masonic order, then the Treleven and Orchard building, then Mrs. Garity restaurant, Chapman harness shop and a saloon next the Masonic corner. Connie Larrabee's father's hotel managed by Bige Larrabee, then Mr. Drews' wagon shop and the jail.

South of the Shafer building was the one the Herald has now and the store on the corner run by Fannie McAlister, across from the Herald office was the place used by a Mr. Demon and the Frank Cole building.

Across the river was the Charles Pelton store and Mr. Shattuck's store, also Wm. Cundy's blacksmith and wagon shop. Some years before there were three saw mills only two now (1877), the Johnson mill down the river on the north side and the Webster mill on the south side west of the railroad tracks and a glass factory west of the lumber yard. There was also a coffin factory north of the depot. How many remember the flag pole that stood in the middle of the street one

block south of the bridge after the fire of 1881-2? I expect I have left out some very important items that some others may remember.

Now what happened to Omro? In October 1877 the glass factory shut down never to operate again and some time later was destroyed by fire. In 1878 or 1879 the Larrabee Hotel went up in smoke. Then in November 1879 the Shafer building caught afire in the Masonic room and that was the last of it and no fire protection.

In 1880 some one broke a window in the McAllister store and threw a bundle of rags or waste saturated with oil and afire. The building was soon a firey furnace so another business place was gone. Then in February 1881 the same thing happened to the Reed store on the corner, which cleaned up the double store next to W.W. Race hardware, then jumped across the street to the west and wiped out that whole block to the hotel. And still nothing to fight it with only pails.

The northeast corner was replaced with the one there now. Henry Waite purchased the other corner and put up a one story two building and moved across. The Odd Fellows purchased the Morton and Arnold land, then bought the Old Methodist church that stood where Leon Shelp's house now stands and moved it onto it and made two stores with the hall above and some one built in between it and the Waite building.

Mr. White put up a frame covered with iron farther west for a grocery. Mr. Morton purchased the coffin factory and made it into a sash, door and planing mill. Some time during this period the Challoners moved to Oshkosh and there were many changes in location of business with some smaller fires. In the late 1880's there was another fire that burned all the south side of Water St. including the Putnam building. About that time the village board decided it was time to have a fire engine and took steps to purchase one. Although there were some objections to getting one, the village board won out and the queen arrived and was housed in an annex to the jail.

The first time it was called out to show its ability as a fire fighter it was a cold night, 20 below zero, to put out a fire in the Central house. It did a wonderful job with much credit to the boys, all being new firemen.

From that time on there were several fires that were quickly controlled and put out until March 8th, 1894. On a Saturday night a fire started in the outside stairway of the Odd Fellow Hall which increased very fast and the fire engine was placed on the bridge and began throwing water, but stopped short as something went wrong with the engine. That gave the fire a free hand to go both ways and it did. It cleaned the block again except the Waite building, that being solid brick. That summer the Odd Fellows put up the solid brick that stands there now. MR.

Mr. Larrabee filled in between the Odd Fellow hall and the Waite building. P.M. Wright put up the one John Bennett had lately for his tailor shop. It slipped my mind to say how the south side of Water street was replaced. Mr. Monroe Phillips and Fred Day built the east corner and the Wilsons of Oshkosh the west end and between a lot of changes. The city hall was put up in the middle 1890's, and the Masonic hall several years before. What has been done since there are many in Omro that know more than I do.

C.B.Root.



This is a letter written by W.D. Peterson and issued in the June 22, 1939 issue of the Omro Herald. As he remembered Omro in 1880. *His grandfather was David Hummel first settler in Omro.*

On the bank of the Fox River, in the eastern part of the village was located the Challoner Foundry & Machine Shop. This was a busy place, and it was an interesting sight to see the heavy machines being loaded to the deck of the steamer "Fashion" to be taken to Oshkosh, and from there re-shipped to all parts of the country. When the last machine was loaded, a short blast of the whistle was heard, the lines were cast off, and the steamer moved gracefully out into the stream. We started on our way "up town" passing the Matt Towers Ice House and the Woolen Mill, in which was located the Thompson Carriage Factory.

In the next block we find Dan Clark's Gun Shop--the A.B. Hall Carriage Factory and Mr. Drew's Wood-working plant.

Crossing the street we came to Lansing's Livery Stable, Mr. Pettingill's Shoe Shop, Bushnell's Hall, "Lang" Doughty's Drug Store, Kalme & Wright's (Book Store & Publishers), W.W. Race Hardware, Richard Reed's Grocery and the N. Frank building which completed this block to Division Street.

Looking north on Division street one saw the "Draw Bridge" and in the distance Charles Pelton Store. In the block south on Division were the Frank Cole Dry Goods Store and Demmon's Book & Shoe Shop, and it was there in the back room that the checker players met, all trying to be as good as "Percy Bradt", but never quite attaining his skill.

The Liberty Pole stood in the center of Division and Pearl Streets, directly in front of where the "Movie" now stands, and it was here the Fourth of July celebration started each year by "shooting Anvils."

Still farther west on Water Street we found Bunker's Hardware, the Webb & White Grocery, the Planing Mill, and the Northwestern Hotel (Mrs. Schriber Proprietor), then Stone Blacksmith Shop, and Thompson & Hayward's Carriage Factory.

Across the street from the Northwestern Hotel stood the Putnam Building. Located in this building were Samphier's Shoe Store, the Henry Drug Store, the Post Office, (on the side street, Captain Henry, Post-master) and Putnam's Hall.

Retrieving our steps and traveling eastward we came to Clifford's Candy Store, "Stub" Watkins Billiard Parlor, and across Division Street on the corner, Shafer's Drug Store, with a striped pole protruding from the second story window, locating the John Everts Barber Shop. The Shafer building was considered the best building in town. The next place of business was the Treleven & Orchard Dry Goods Co.

The Larrabee House was on the corner where the Masonic Building now stands. This was a large three story wooden structure, with a yard, and had a Livery Stable in connection. Near the front of the hotel stood the "Town Pump" and it was there that "Toby" would bring the horses for water.

In the Omro of those days, we had no automobiles, motor boats, electric lights, telephones or movies, and the flying machine was unheard of. There were many strange and interesting things that happened, however, such as on the day young "Hi" Kimball rode all the way from Oshkosh on a queer contraption called a "bicycle". The front wheel was about six feet in diameter and had a little wheel trailing along behind. The news spread, and soon nearly all the boys of the town were gathered in front of F.A. Cole's Dry Goods Store while "Hi" explained the working of this wonderful machine.

Alexander Graham Bell, Will E. Clifford and myself were experimenting with the telephone at about that time, and Will and I had a "phone" made with two "Cove Oyster" cans and a piece of wire that reached from the wood-shed to the back of the lot, and it worked when we shouted loud enough. Mr. Bell I believe continued with his experiments until the phone could be used at a much greater distance, when you were fortunate enough to get the right number.

---W.D. Peterson,  
Room 344 Commerce Bldg.,  
744 N. 4th St.  
Milwaukee, Wis.

*Minnie Martin + Della Pingry*  
 (EB)

Another family whose farm bordered the Omro-Winneconne line was that of Wm. F. Pingry.

Mr. Pingry was born in 1819 at Danbury, N.Y. When 19 years his parents moved to McHenry County, Illinois, and remained there 12 years. William married Adelia Prouty in 1849 and moved to Winnebago County. About this time the Government opened up Indian land north of the Fox river. William and a brother John bought homestead rights to land where a homesteader Pierce had slashed out 5 acres of timber, near Pottawatomie Point. William moved into the log cabin that stood on a knoll where at present the R.R. crosses the Winneconne road.

William began to plant patches of corn and wheat in this clearing, working with oxen. He had bought two or three cows, a few pigs and chickens. By tireless labor he and his sons after him have produced one of the finest farms, stocked with valuable herds of cattle and well equipped.

A treasured family relic--an old sickle and a frow used to split shingles from straight grained pine which he hauled from north shore of Lake Poygan to roof his barn.

When William moved near Pottawatomie Point the red men far outnumbered the whites. The large Indian Camp on the north river bank was quiet except for carousals. (Fox river). Their reluctance to give up hunting grounds according to the treaty with the Government made them ornery and restless and they molested and pestered the pioneers.

Mrs. William Pingry, alert, keeneyed, and determined, met hardships of pioneer life with resolute fortitude. Her courage was sorely tested when she would be surrounded by blanket clad redskins whose moccasined feet didn't give any warning. One two braves seized a whet stone and sharpened their knives. A neighbor's child near their home ran for her father. Another day, she saw Indians bending over her baby outside, she calmly entered this group and clasped her child, "Did you want him?" Disappointed they left.

Another time Mrs. Pingry and children were driving a horse and buck-board to Neenah to visit relatives. On reaching the foot of Vredenburg Hill east of Winneconne, the horse became frightened at the sudden appearance of a long line of Indians each on horseback cresting the top of the hill riding towards them (those years the hill was much steeper than now). Immediately Mrs. Pingry reined the horse to the side of the road with its head plunged into the brush. The leading Indian, on realizing her horse was frightened at them, turned his horse away from the road and made a wide circle around the Pingry's. Each Indian, following the one ahead, did likewise. Far back of Mrs. Pingry the Indians again turned back to the road and went on their way. Likewise, Mrs. Pingry backed her horse out of the bushes and continued her journey to Neenah.

Three years after the Pingrys came here, seventeen voters who resided within the new District No. 5 of Town of Winneconne met at the home of Mr. McColley to organize a school. From school record book we find they voted \$20 as tax to pay a teacher for 3 month term. They let the boarding of the teacher to the lowest bidder. E.G. Perkins received the contract to board her for \$1.50 per week or 50¢ of wheat, 25¢ of corn, 18¢ of oats per bushel. They voted

\$18 for the teacher's board for the 3 months.

During the next winter they gave the teacher \$12 for 3 months and board, and fuel for the schoolroom was portioned among the scholars' parents.

The first school was in a private home. Then William Pingry donated one-half acre for a school. Nearly 80 years later, his son Arthur gave another one-half acre to meet larger demands for a school yard. Since school consolidation, now it is a private home.

The first annual school report in 1854 showed 10 children. Their textbooks were: Spellers, Webster and Sanders; Reader, McGuffey; Geography, Mitchell and Smith; Arithmetic, Colburn and Ray, and Grammar, Pinneo.

In 1855 the District was enlarged, and called Joint District #5, Omro and Winneconne. That year there was raised \$100 for a new school house, with a high board fence on two sides at a cost of \$17.30, and paint for the building. Later the school house was replaced by a larger one, now known as the Pingry School. The valuation in 1855 \$4960 assessed valuation as a District. In 1930 the valuation was \$424,000.

Marketing was difficult for pioneers. At first William drove an ox team to Milwaukee for supplies. There were only Indian trails to Omro and Winneconne. Mrs. Pingry would walk to Omro to sell butter and eggs--10¢ a pound, and 8¢ a dozen.

When the railroad was built, William Pingry received \$400 for a right of way which meant tearing down the log cabin and building a new frame house.

In 1857 revival meetings of Freewill Baptists were held in the school house. The Pingrys were converted and they joined the Winneconne church as Charter Members. William helped hew the timbers by hand to build the new church. Arthur's son, Clarence still (1977) lives on the Arthur Pingry farm, but not the homestead which joins it to the south. William's children were Delbert, Eva, Ernest, Della, and Arthur. Arthur was one of triplets, the only one that survived at birth.

5. H. - 4/13/37) More about the early Polier family reveals that Louis Polier was born December 15, 1872 in the town of Rushford and lived in the vicinity of Omro all of his life. He had four brothers--Joseph, Ross, David, Jesse and one sister, Mary. Louis died April 13, 1937.

2. # - 10/29/31. #  
15/31. More information about Lewis F. Arnold is another example of the pioneering spirit that was apparent in the East. Mr. Arnold was born in the state of N. Y. in November of 1811. He was left an orphan at an early age and was taken into the farm home of Mr. and Mrs. Wells, a childless couple, and cared for as their own son.

Lewis Arnold chose carpentry and cabinet making as his trade. His hand-made tool chest lined with mahogany and butternut, and equipped with all sorts of molding planes and other tools for fine handwork, was kept intact for over a hundred years.

In 1836 Mr. Arnold became interested in the Territory of Wisconsin. He made his first journey to the midwest at that time. In 1840 he returned to N. Y. and married Emily Hempstead Brown, a descendant of the Hempsteads of Revolutionary fame. A few years later he returned to Wisconsin with his wife and 4 children. This journey, made by way of the Great Lakes, was a trying one. Constant winds tossed the small boat upon which they had taken passage, until all the family suffered from severe seasickness. The port at Milwaukee was a welcome one after the tedious weeks spent on board the storm driven lakeboat.

The first land owned by Mr. Arnold in Wisconsin was a farm located in what is now the heart of Milwaukee. When property in Milwaukee began to increase he sold and bought a farm in Wauwautosa. Later he sold this farm and moved to Omro, where he took up a claim in Indian Land, a short distance north of Omro village on the Omro-Winneconne road.

The long, slow journey from Wauwautosa by ox-team was only a beginning of the hardships endured by the Arnold family. To prove up on his land, Mr. Arnold was obliged to walk to Green Bay. The cabin occupied by his family was not weather-proof; snow sifting through the dilapidated roof often lay in drifts on the beds in the loft. A journey for supplies was made to Milwaukee at least once each year. During Mr. Arnold's absence the family frequently were annoyed by drunken or unfriendly Indians on their way to Pottawatomie Point.

Lewis F. Arnold owned three farms in the same neighborhood. Having sold a part of the land he had taken from the government to R.C. Richardson, he built a new house north of the old cabin and lived there many years. Later he sold this farm to Oscar Berkley and with his son-in-law George O. Morton, bought the W.O. Giddings property on the opposite side of the road. For over half a century the Richardson, Berkley, and Arnold and Morton farms were well-known landmarks in this part of the country.

At different times Mr. Arnold was interested in business in Omro. He owned one of the first cabinet shops in the village. Several pieces of furniture made by him are still in use. (1931). Later he was a partner in the firm that owned and operated the Omro planing mill.

During a long life-time, Mr. Arnold was active in the civic, educational and religious interests of the community. As a trustee in the Presbyterian Church he helped to promote the buying of the church bell. This was an expensive project for those days and the whole community contributed to its purchase. For many years the voice

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of this bell summoned the community to worship in all the churches; to attend weddings, funerals, fires and Fourth of July celebrations.

Mr. Arnold lived to be 89 years old. He was one of the last of the early pioneers to be laid at rest in the Omro cemetery.

191. 12/4/31. ) Another early pioneer was Oscar F. Berkley who was born in Lisbon, N. H., in 1830. At the age of 4 years he moved with his parents to Redford, N.Y. where his father was engaged in the lumber business. As Mr. Berkley employed many French-Canadians in his saw-mill at Redford Oscar's boyhood was spent in the rough-and-tumble of this environment. The school he attended was unruly with its sessions spasmodic. No teacher remained long, and some had retired ignominiously through windows amidst the derisively shouts of their rebellious pupils.

Conditions in the district had reached a crisis when a long, lank, gangling stranger appeared at the saw-mill asking for work. "What can you do?" inquired Oscar Berkley's father. "Almost anything," answered the stranger. "I can plough a field, saw lumber, or teach school." "You're the man we need," replied Mr. Berkley, and school was opened the following day.

At the sound of the bell, every boy in the district responded with alacrity, eager to "size up" the new master. Reckless and daring, they waited in suspense for some evidence that the stranger could "teach school." Sedately the teacher sat at his desk, unmoved by any mischievous prank. When no reprimand was forthcoming, the verdict was that "teacher was an easy one," and that they would "run him out" the next day. But morning brought surprise and bewilderment to the plotters; for the man who could "plough a field, saw lumber, or teach school" met each unwary rascal with a birch rod which he wielded with an unsparing hand until 6 smarting culprits bent in humble submission. Oscar Berkley's father was as good a judge of pedagogues as he was of lumber.

At one time Oscar Berkley operated a store in Omro. Later he was agent for a Windmill Company. Bee-keeping was another of his occupations, and selling honey, and bee-keeping supplies.

Of Oscar's several children, son Robert, who was born in Redford, N.Y. in 1859, came here with his parents at the age of 15 years. Robert continued to live on the Berkley homestead after his marriage to Miss Myra Smith. They had 2 sons, Arthur and Fred.

Oscar and Eliza Willey Berkley's other children besides Robert were John Wesley (Wes), who married Levi Williams' sister Hulda; Demming (Dem) Berkley; Ida who married Christian Dick of Manawa. Dick's daughter is Grace, Mrs. Roger Bigford of Oshkosh. And the youngest, son Eli Berkley who married Florence Lord. At one time Eli taught Manuel Arts at the County Agricultural School in Winneconne.

(H. 10/1/30.)  
 In seventy-five years, the assessed valuation of the farm lands included in Joint District No. 5, Towns of Winneconne and Omro, increased one hundred per cent. This is true of most of the farm lands of this community. Much of this increase is due to the labor expended on a naturally fertile soil. The pioneers contributed a large part of this labor, cutting forests, clearing lands, draining and fencing fields, erecting buildings and constructing highways. But added to the beginnings of this hardy and venturesome class of farmers, had been the persistent and unremitting toil of those who succeeded them in the ownership of these lands.

John K. Smith was one of these farmers. He bought his land at the close of the Civil War, and from that time labored unceasingly for its betterment. Both he and his wife Jane Eliza (Rugar) Smith were born in Clinton County, N.Y. (Always referred to as "York State". Mr. Smith was a farmer and a carpenter in his native state, but coming from Illinois in 1865, he worked land near Butte des Morts where the old military trail from Green Bay to Portage crossed the Fox River. Not being fully convinced of the advantage of this move, Mr. Smith went back for a time to Illinois. In 1866 he returned to Wisconsin, and became a permanent resident of Winnebago County. In 1882 he purchased the Emmett Sheldon farm on the Winneconne road, a mile north of Omro, where he lived until his death in 1898.

(H. 3/20/30.)  
 Angel Bartlett Frees was another early town of Omro resident. He lived in Winnebago county all of his life, and at various times was a holder of county offices. He died March 17, 1930. He was born June 6, 1858, in the town of Utica, the son of Retire W. and Clara J. Frees, and had attained the age of 71 years.

Mr. Frees lived in the town of Utica until his marriage in Oct. of 1879 to Miss Jura Pingry, daughter of John and Ann Pingry. Since then he lived in and around Omro. In Omro he belonged to the Congregational church. He was also affiliated with the Masonic order.

4/9/31.)  
 In 1887 another pioneer family, Julius Lenz and his wife Ernestine Bauers Lenz purchased the farm that has since borne their name. Mr. and Mrs. Lenz were both born in Germany. Mrs. Lenz came to America with her parents when she was ten years old. Because of the Civil War the voyage was greatly prolonged. To Ernestine and her sisters it seemed endless. West Bloomfield, Wisconsin was the destination of the Bauers family; and here Ernestine spent her childhood.

Julius Lenz was the son of a German shepherd. As a boy he helped tend his father's flocks. After serving several years in the German Army, he came to America and settled in Oshkosh where he met and wed Ernestine Bauers.

Mr. and Mrs. Lenz spent the first fourteen years of their married life in Oshkosh. They belonged to a group of substantial German-American citizens who had much to do with the development of the South Side. The German Club of which they were members was composed of a number of families who met regularly in a social capacity, in order that they might enjoy with their children the friendships that had been of long standing. It was their custom to rent a hall and there dance, or play games, or sing the good old German songs they had known from childhood.

In 1887, Mr. and Mrs. Lenz moved to the farm east of Omro, where they lived the remainder of their lives.

#### EARLY RESIDENTS OF VILLAGE AND TOWN HOMES.

Howe home - east of Omro, brick house where Paul Miller lives.

Lowd - on K where McSchooler farm is located.

Olin - near Omro cemetery.

Sennett Pingry - later the Percy King farm.

Ham farm - Eileen and Ruben Palechek.

Eliel Hueston farm adjoining village cemetery on the south (1888).

Duane Mills farm east of Omro on Fox River, just before Preacher's

Bend. His father was William, mother was Emily, sisters, Mrs. J.

Petty (Rex Cady's grandmother), Mrs. Alma McCord, and brother

Dr. Harry Mills, of Antigo. After retiring to Omro southwest corner of Jackson and Huron streets he did saw filing, etc.

Hollister home - now 411 S. Webster

Archie Race - 429 S. Webster.

Helen Sawyer - s.e. corner E. Huron and Madison.

Geo Shafer - Adams St. west side.

Geo Draw - Chas Retzlaff 319 Jackson Ave.

Aaron Tice - brick house on S. Harrison.

Luthera Adams - 735 S. Webster Ave.

Hiram Webster - S. Webster

James Sharp - 837 S. Webster.

Frank Keefe - former Dr. Doll home.

Dr. Gibbs - 1108 S. Webster Ave.



## SOAP MAKING

Much of the pioneer's time was spent in tedious occupations. For example soap making. Animal fats, mostly pork and chicken, and meat drippings were saved for soap making. My mother made soft soap, not in the bar. The same method was used but hard soap was a more complicated process.

m.s. The first step was to leach potash lye from wood ashes, preferably hard wood. A wooden barrel was placed on a wooden stand. Near the bottom a half or three quarters of an inch hole was bored.

In the bottom of the barrel a thick layer of straw was placed. The rest of the barrel was filled half full with wood ashes. There were plenty of ashes for this purpose from the wood-burning kitchen range used for all of the cooking and baking.

The board on which the barrel sat had a groove under the barrel hole leading to the edge of the board. Under the edge was placed a pail. Each day boiling water was poured on the top of the ashes. It would seep through the ashes, dissolving the lye and the liquid would leach out through the bung-hole in the barrel, run down the groove, and into the pail or container. As the ashes settled, more were added. This lye liquid was the color of strong coffee, a deep dark brown. Lye that would float a fresh egg was standard strength for soap-making.

After enough lye was procured, the fats and grease were boiled up to remove excess moisture and residue. The lye was stirred into the grease, preferably hot and the result was soft soap. The color was a creamy brown or dirty tannish gray. It was slimy and the consistency of honey.

I recall that my mother kept her soft soap in a butter churn earthen crock perhaps a one gallon size. The crock was kept in the sink cupboard. The sink was of galvanized tin and the drain pipe lead outdoors through the kitchen wall.

Dish water was never poured in the sink but rather in the pail of pig swill which in summer always sat on the back porch. In winter it was kept in the kitchen so that it would not freeze. Likewise all peelings from vegetables and fruits were scraped into the swill pail.

m.j.s.  
Summer pests of the pioneers were, and still are, the house flies! There were ways to deal with the buzzers and ticklers, although some of the methods were not very effective. People tried.

In the early 1900s ten pounds of sugar would be bagged in purple colored paper sacks from an opened 100 pound sugar barrel at the grocery store. When emptied, these sacks would be put to good use. They were cut in inch or so strips, cutting from the open end nearly to the bottom of the sack. The bottom was then wrapped around the end of a two foot long stick and firmly tacked to it. This made a good switch to chase flies from the house. To accomplish this the window curtains (always dark green) were pulled down to exclude the light. The flies would then congregate on a screen door where it was light. Pushing the door open and flapping the paper switch would cause nearly all of the flies to escape to the out doors. How many times those same flies found their way back into the house and were chased out again is any one's guess.

The first fly exterminators were heavy sheets of sticky fly paper about the size of typing paper. They would be laid out on a table or shelf where flies were apt to congregate. Someone or some thing was forever getting stuck to them besides flies. Two sheets came with sticky sides together. They had to be separated before using. I believe they were called "Tanglefoot".

The next inovation was a flat metal can about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  by 4 by  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch, with an absorbent cork in the center of a daisy pictured on the top of the tin. Water was poured into the tin where some sort of poison mixed with it. Flies liked the liquid that seeped up into the cork, and after feasting on the poison, would keel over and die.

The sticky fly paper later was cut in long spirals and hung from a hanging lamp, shelf, or whatever. Flies liked to light on anything up high. These spirals came in a small paper tube and were wound up tight. To open, the top with a cord and thumb tack on it was pulled from the tube which unwound the spiral. It was then ready to hang up or tack up out of the way.

Reprinted in O.H. which  
beginning with  
12/1/30 issue

These are Omro Township "Firsts" as recorded in "Early History of Omro and Vicinity" compiled and commented on in 1876 by Platt Wright, Omro Journal Editor:

Isaac Germaine was the first Postmaster. He had the office in his house on what is now the Origin Williams farm (1876). p. 3

Mr. George Beckwith was the first School Superintendent in the town. p. 3

Mr. Geo. Beckwith built the first frame house of any size-- the building now occupied by Grego, near the Junction (1876). There were one or two board "shanties" in the town at the time, but nothing that could be called a frame house previous to the building of Mr. Beckwith's. p. 3

About this same time Mr. Joseph Whitehead built a frame house on Section 33. Some claim that it was the first one, but the majority were with Beckwith. p. 3

Milo Bushnell had the first painted house in Omro on what is now known as the Hatch place. The color was put on by Geo. Wrightson. p. 3

The first collector was Mr. Hayward, who lived on Section 13, just east of the former Good Templar Hall. p. 4

The first white child was the daughter of Leuman Scott. The other settlers felt so pleased with the fruitfulness of the climate, that they "chipped in" and bought the girl a dress. p. 4

(Recall that the other so-called first baby born was that of Edw. West. There was a lack of communication in those days remember, and one part of a township did not always know what was happening a few miles away!)

The first frame barn in the township was built by David Minkler, on the Richard Tanner place. This was built in 1849. p. 4

The earliest records of the town now (1876) obtainable are dated April 6th, 1847. The meeting was held at the home of Edw. West and Nelson Olin was chosen Moderator. Among the resolutions adopted at that meeting, we find the following: p. 4

"That the town officers for their compensation, shall receive 75 cents per day. p. 5

"That we raise the sum of twenty-five dollars to defray the necessary expenses of the town." p. 5

p. 5 "Also there were polled at the same election on the Constitution--suffrage to colored persons, twenty-one votes, five of which were in the affirmative, and sixteen in the negative. Also on the Constitution there were twenty-one votes polled, seven for the Constitution and seventeen opposed to it. Also there were eleven votes cast on the license question--against granting license."

We see by this that even at that early day the license question was brought up, and it has not been lost sight of to the present time.

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FIRST CEMETERY

At the junction between Omro and Algoma was on the wooded hill south of where the schoolhouse now stands was the first cemetery in the township of Omro. At that time the town was called Bloomingdale, and the Village of Bloomfield; the present Village of Omro, was but a trading post known as Kero. Just east of the present site of the Junction schoolhouse, one of the earliest pioneer homes was a Frenchman named Simmoni. The discomforts of a new country as well as the adventures were fully experienced by this French family. The nearest drinking water available was more than two miles distant. Over the long trail that zigzagged across the hills, Mrs. Simmoni was seen daily with a pail in either hand and one on her head, bringing the family's supply of water.

Mr. Simmoni was one of the first to die in this newly settled region. He was buried in the cool green woods on the hill. Later his body was removed to the burial ground opened in 1854, now called the Omro Union Cemetery.

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JUNCTION SCHOOL

On Fourth Street (corrected)

Near the old Cheeney Corners the first Junction school was taught by Miss Angeline Germaine. This was a private school held in her own house. Only the children old enough to walk the long distances to the scattered pioneer homes were able to attend.

The first public school building was erected on the present site of the Junction school. It was a small two roomed frame building which in later years proved inadequate for the increasing number of settlers. It was replaced by the school house now in use.

The boys and girls who attended these early schools performed their part in developing the new state. On the roll were the names of those who fought for their country in the sixties, whose graves in the Union and Junction cemeteries are now marked with the little flags.

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(The above two articles are attributed to research by Minnie Treleven Morton and published in the local paper.)

*Prairie, Pine & People  
by J. Metz*

Additional information about the Grignon family tells that old Augustin Grignon who built at Kaukauna had a son Charles, and a brother Charles. *P.P.P. p. 131 - Rev. Chas. P. Goff.*

Robert Grignon was a nephew of old Augustine, and a nephew of Charles. Old Augustine had a son Augustine. *P.P.P. p. 132 - Rev. Goff.*

James Knaggs who had the ferry in Oshkosh was a Pottawattomie half-breed according to Dr. Chas. Goff in the book "Prairie, Pines, and People." *P. 132.*

Misses Ursule and Elizabeth Grignon were daughters of Louis Grignon. Their mother was a Menominee Indian. *L. B. P. p. 72 - Polly Zimmerman*

Amable Grignon; Paul Grignon - pg. 197 "The History of Wisconsin" Vol. I.  
 Pierre, Sr. Grignon - pg. 76 - 78 - 112 - 577 " by Alice E. Smith  
 Pierre, Jr. " pg. 165 "  
 Ursula M. " pg. 577 - same source as above - studied and  
 taught at Seminary of St. Mary, Somerset, Ohio.

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Other church items of interest are these.--

On January 14, 1932 the Baptist church bell was dedicated. It was given to the church by Mr. Ira Redlin, a member, and the businessmen of Omro. It is undecided if there was an original bell before this one or not. Or if there was, what ever happened to it? *The bell of Jan 1932 was the first bell according to Harold Davis, a member.*

No doubt the ladies of the church were the Ladies Aid until during the turn of the century when Mrs. Emma (Lewis) Sowles persuaded the name be changed to "Social Workers". And so the women's society was called until in the 1950s when "Social Workers" took on an entirely different meaning through the government branch of social welfare. It was then changed to Baptist Womens Missionary Society.

A Spiritual Disagreement--For years Mr. and Mrs. C. would not attend church together on Sunday. This is what happened. During the service on a particular Sunday the good Father asked those to stand who would rather watch a horse race than attend church service. Mr. C., the only one in the congregation, and to his wife's embarassment and mortification, stood up.

After leaving the service she angrily asked him why he did such a horrible thing! He answered her by saying that he would rather watch a horse race, and, he was at least honest enough to admit it when questioned. And furthermore, he was not a hypocrite like some of the others whom he knew would rather, too.

That Sunday confession of Mr. C's caused his wife so much shame that she allowed several Sundays to go by without getting up nerve enough to again attend church and face the congregation and the good Priest. When she finally ventured forth she let Mr. C., and in no uncertain terms, to understand that if she attended early mass, he would attend late mass, and vice versa.

And that is the way it was for the rest of their church-going lives. They never attended a Sunday service together again. Not as long as they lived.

According to material of Ethel Bishop, wages of some of the High School teachers in 1945 were as follows:

\$2,650. for a year, Mr. Patch  
 2,610. R.B. Locke  
 2,170. T. Emmerson  
 1,760. C. Gadbar  
 1,700. M. Dohner  
 1,610. Music

Old Red Brick school--

*Emma Stanley* Many who bought a souvenir brick from Cal Morton had a picture of the Red Brick schoolhouse painted on it. The artist who did the painting was Miss Lennie Bushnell. She was a cousin of Mrs. Frank Stanley (nee Ella Bushnell). Mrs. Ella Stanley was mother of Miss Emma Stanley. It was Emma who had the knowledge of Lennie as an artist of oil painting. In Coleman J. Gadbar's "Schools of Omro, Wisconsin", he mentions Mrs. L. Bushnell having painted a replica of the school on many of them. Page 25 of his mms.

One such brick is in the Omro Museum, donated by Richard Crane.

The Minute Book of the Old Red Brick Organization from its beginning has been turned over by Roy Treleven to the Omro Area Historical Society, and has been placed in the Omro Historical Museum.

*Esther Bishop*

Near the old Cheaney Corners the first Junction school was taught by Miss Angeline Germaine. This was a private school held in her own house. Only the children old enough to walk the long distances to the scattered pioneer homes were able to attend.

The first public school building was erected on the present site of the Junction school. It was a small two roomed frame building which in later years proved inadequate for the increasing number of settlers. It was replaced by the school house now in use. (1930s?).

The boys and girls who attended these early schools performed their part in developing the new state. On the roll were the names of those who fought for their country in the sixties, whose graves in the Union and Junction cemeteries are now marked with the little flags.

*E.B.* At the time the Junction cemetery was established, the Town of Omro was called Bloomingdale, and the Village of Bloomfield; the present Village of Omro was but a trading post known as "Kero".

*H. Hoger* Hazel Hoger recalled attending the East Side school, located where Walter and Ruth Lanphear lived on Van Buren Street. Two of her teachers were Annie Hurley and Winifred Root. It was a two story building. The first floor for the lower grades, the upper grades on the second floor.

*H. N. 1/15/31* Platt Wright's history of Omro includes more school information. "In 1851 it was voted not to allow nonresidents to attend school in the district. At a school meeting the same year, it was resolved that the Board be authorized to furnish fifteen cords of 'good two-foot wood,' for the use of the school during the winter, and the contract to furnish the same was let to E. Dame, at sixty-eight cents per cord, delivered. The following year the contract for furnishing fifteen cords of hard wood was let to the lowest bidder, D.B. Sneed, at sixty-two cents per cord, delivered. In 1852, sections 7 and 8--the "Indian Land", as it was then called, were added to School District No. 5, and it was voted to hire additional school room, make two departments and secure another teacher.

"During those early days, school meetings were very numerous. From 1850 to 1854 there were from five to eight adjourned and special school meetings and judging from the records there seemed to be business enough for the whole of them though it must be admitted that all that was done at some of these meetings was to rescind the action of the previous meeting.

"In 1854, the sum of \$200 was voted for teacher's wages, \$10 for purchasing a globe, and \$5. for a District Library.

"In 1855, the 5th District voted to have a new school house, the old one not being large enough to meet the demands, and \$600 was appropriated for the purpose. At a special meeting held December 15, 1855, a proposal of B.C. Matoon for building the house was accepted, and the price being \$1,500. At a subsequent meeting, March 3, 1856, Mr. Matoon was released from his contract, and a proposal to build the school house of brick from Geo. Stokes, was accepted, the price to be \$2,140. The building was put up the same season, but was not finished until the following summer. The brick used in the house were made by Mr. Stokes, on what is now known as the old brick yard, south of the Baptist church.



From 2/9/39 issue of The Omro Herald.

Letter from W.D. Peterson to Red Brick School Ass'n.

Mr. George E. Morton  
Milwaukee, Wis.

Dear Sir:

Among my souvenirs I found the following clipping from an Omro paper:

ROLL OF HONOR  
West Side Intermediate.

Pupils neither absent nor tardy during the month ending Jan. 30th.

Lena Bradish

Henry Bloomer

Fred Glines

Freddie Howard

Bertha Hale

Archie Kimball

Aggie Maguire

Frank Maguire

Julia Smith

Arthur Small

Lillie Taylor

Lizzie Treleven

Willie Peterson

Carroll Larrabee

Ella Bloomer

Lizzie C. Peaslee--Teacher.

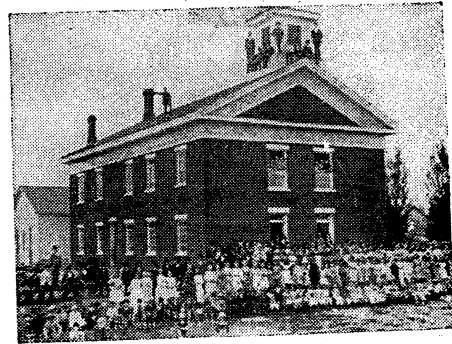
As this is probably the only time that my name appeared on the Roll of Honor, I naturally feel proud of the achievement. This record was made in my first year in the Omro school and I must have pointed to this many times afterward when my standing was not so high.

In a former letter I stated that my first teacher was Miss Lizzie Peaslee, that was an error, my first teacher was Miss McPeck. There must be some magic about Omro, once having lived there and attended the "Old Red Brick" school one never forgets even the trifling things that happened in those days, and the Old Town has always seemed like home to me regardless of what part of the U.S.A. I may have been living in at the time.

Old Memories--One day while walking down River street I was stopped by a Gentleman (?) who asked me if I would like to earn a dollar. As I had never had a whole dollar at one time, I told him that I was ready for anything to get that amount of money, so he explained that all I had to do to earn that amount was to go out on the Winneconne road about two miles get a cow and deliver said cow to Wm. Wakeman's Market in Oshkosh. This looked so simple that I immediately agreed, and started at once on this adventure. Well, I found the cow and started for Oshkosh. This cow was not very gentle and sometimes I had to drag the cow and sometimes she dragged me, but at last we arrived in Oshkosh, and I tied the animal in front of Mr. Wakeman's shop, not caring what became of her, and collected my dollar from Mr. Wakeman.

Being free then and a little money in my pocket, I decided to see the City. I had heard that there was a Chinese Laundry on the South side and as I had never seen a Chinaman, I went to South Main St. and flattened my face against the laundry window, and instead of one Chinaman there were two, both busily ironing shirts and sure enough they both had "pigtails", just as they were pictured in my Geography.

After this adventure I went to a restaurant where I paid twenty-five cents for lunch. It was about time for the "Fashion" to leave, so I went aboard, and if I remember correctly the fare to Omro was 50¢ and just as we were approaching Omro I overheard two gentlemen talking, and one said that it had been reported that President Garfield had been shot that day. (July 2, 1881.)



A Little History--My grandfather, David Humes (according to Mr. Richard Harney in his history of Winnebago County) was "the first white settler to locate permanently within the boundaries of the village of Omro." This was in 1847. Before this time the town was known as "Smalley's Landing" but in 1847 I believe it was called "Bloomingdale" and it was not until 1852 that the name Omro appeared on the records.

When I open my Omro Herald the first page to which I turn is the one "Set aside for letters from members of the Red Brick Ass'n." I am sorry to say that sometimes I find this part of the paper filled with unimportant matter such as what is going on in Europe or some other trivia. I know that I have been greatly interested in the few letters that have been published even though some of them were written by comparative strangers, persons whom I only knew by sight in the old school days.

Here's hoping to see a letter from each of our schoolmates of the "Old Red Brick."

Yours truly, W. C. Peterson, Room 344  
Commerce Bldg. Milwaukee

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Old Red Brick High school--

The first graduating class was in 1870. It consisted of:

Masters I. McCall

Frank Challoner

Fred. Backus

H. Washburn

L.A. Smith and

Mesdames Hattie Hicks

Elma Lowd

Josie Howard.

From "Schools of Omro, Wisconsin" by Coleman J. Gadbaw MS form. -1943.,  
pg. 55.

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"Old Red Brick" - 1922 invitations to 10th Biennial Reunion...550 former students on our mailing list. Last reunion about 300 attended, and we expect more this year...dinner and luncheon will be served Friday at the Presbyterian church; dinner 50¢, lunch 35¢. Saturday there will be a basket picnic at the park. If entertainment is desired, write Pres. Cary Bishop, Omro...Mary Challoner Boyd, Oshkosh, Sec....Vice-Pres. Rev. Frank L. Smith, Oshkosh. (From invitation in historical material of Ethel Bishop's in Omro Museum.)

## OMRO SYSTEM SCHOOL BUDGET 1974-75

After making minor changes in the proposed budget for 1974-75 the Omro Board of Education Wednesday night approved the proposed budget of \$1,677,492.00. Last year's budget was set at \$1,484,429 which is about \$93,063 less than the proposed budget for 1974-75.

The changes brought the mill rate up from 14.01 to 14.09. The tax rate for 1974 was 11.78 mills.

The board felt they underestimated the amount allocated for operation of plant and agreed to increase this category.

The district will receive \$811,904 in state aids this year as compared to \$749,329 last year. The amount to be raised through property tax is set at \$760,316 as compared to \$635,626 for 1974, an increase of \$112,703.

Last year's budget was set at \$1,484,627 which is about \$193,063 less than this year's.

The equalized valuation in the district went up from \$48,936,100 in 1972 to \$53,973,100 in 1973.

The board approved the proposed budget which will be voted on by the electorate at the annual meeting July 22.

In other business the board approved contracts for Supt. Lewis Drobnick and Principal James Herman. Drobnick was awarded a three year contract with salary of \$19,950 for this year, an increase of \$1,350 over his salary of \$18,200 last year. Herman was awarded a one-year contract with a salary of \$16,680 over his salary of \$15,800 for last year. An increase of \$880.

The board agreed to meet with Fred and Leonard Garvens, bus operators for the school district, to negotiate a settlement for transportation for the 1974-75 year. Garvens had appeared before the board in June and requested \$103,000 for the transportation of students K-12. The request is \$14,500 more than they received last year and they cited substantial increases in gas and oil costs as the reason for the increase.

The Garvens also requested \$3.25 per hour for driver time while on extra curricular trips for school sponsored events, which is 24 cents more than last year. They also asked for a penny raise per mile for the extra curricular trips, from 34 cents to 35 cents.

The transportation committee will meet with the Garvens to negotiate a settlement.

The board also agreed to offer a contract to Spanbauer Bros., Oshkosh, for carpeting of a classroom at a cost of \$362 and \$179 for labor.

The board voted to offer a contract to Ross Tucker of Oshkosh for roofing the Omro Junction School for a total cost of \$719.

## AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

To 1978 Omro High School graduates--		
Dennis Krause Memorial Award	--	\$100.
Women's Service League Scholarship	--	100.
Ray Hoeft	--	200.
Enli Memorial	--	100.
Harvey Treleven	--	100.
Doll Memorial	--	200.
Hurlbut Memorial	--	500.
Mehirter Memorial	--	100.
Oshkosh Foundation	--	300.
Brian Lee Memorial	--	100.
Harry and Lucy Stevens Memorial	--	100.
Schoenbechler Memorial	--	450.
Earl Morral Scholarship	--	700.
Oscar Neilson Scholarship	--	50.
Omro High School Alumni Scholarship	--	100.
Alice Jones Memorial	--	450.

# ALUMNI BANQUET



MAY 29, 1982



Scholarship Committee

Ray Hoeft      Sally Hildebrand  
                 Ellen Morgan

Acknowledgements

Mrs. Arleen Fritz	Food Preparation
&	
High School Girls	Serving
Mr. Donald Lillie	Invitations
	Programs

Omro Board of Education and Administration	School Facilities
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Auditing Committee

Larry Schuster  
and Committee



## OMRO SCHOOLS

Excerpts from "The Schools of Omro, Wisconsin" by Coleman J. Gadbaw. Mss. researched in 1943.

The first real high school course of study issued by the school board was for the year 1877, and is indicative of the scope of the offerings of that time:

## COURSE OF STUDY

## First year

- 1st Term: Arithmetic, English Grammer, Descriptive Geography.  
 2nd Term: Repeated.  
 3rd Term: Arithmetic, English Grammer and Analysis, U.S. History.

## Second Year

- 1st Term: ~~ELEMENTARY ALGEBRA, U.S. HISTORY, PHYSIOLOGY~~ Arithmetic, Sentential Analysis, U.S. History.  
 2nd Term: Elementary Algebra, U.S. History, ~~PHYSIOLOGY~~, Physiology.  
 3rd Term: Elementary Algebra, Physical Geography, and Physiology.

## Third Year

- 1st Term: Elementary Algebra, Physical Geography, Natural Philosophy.  
 2nd Term: Algebra, Physical Geography, Natural Philosophy.  
 3rd Term: Plane Geometry, Natural Philosophy, Rhetoric.

## Fourth Year

- 1st Term: Plane Geometry, Science of Government, German or Bookkeeping.  
 2nd Term: Solid Geometry, Botany, German or History of England.  
 3rd Term: Chemistry, Botany, English Literature.

## Fifth Year

- 1st Term: ~~CHEMISTRY, BOTANY, ENGLISH LITERATURE~~ Astronomy, Ancient History or Zoology, Mental Science.  
 2nd Term: Astronomy, Ancient History or Geology, General Review.  
 3rd Term: Political Economy, Moral Science, General Review. 1.

1. School District Number Five, Op. Cit., p. 27

Exercises in Spelling, Reading, Declamation and Composition throughout the course.

## Requirements of Admission

Pupils must pass examinations in the following branches:

- Reading: Through the Fourth Reader.  
 Spelling: The ordinary words in the same.  
 Writing: A fair, legible hand.  
 Arithmetic: Fundamental Rules, Common and Decimal Fractions.  
 Geography: Through the United States.  
 English Grammar: To Syntax.

All above from pg. 57-58.

(more back of pg. 1)

From pg. 75.

COURSE OF STUDY  
1942-1943

Required	First Year	Elective
English	Agriculture	
Citizenship	Home Economics	
General Science	General Shop	
Physical Education	Algebra	
Library Lectures	Band	
	Chorus	
	Second Year	
English	Agriculture	Band
World History	Home Economics	Chorus
Physical Education	General Shop	Typing
	Algebra	Biology
	Third Year	
English	Agriculture	Band
American History	Home Economics	Chorus
	General Shop	Typing
	Algebra	Shorthand
	Geometry	
	Bookkeeping	
	Physics or Chemistry	
	Fourth Year	
Social Problems	Any of the above electives.	
	English	
	General Mathematics	
	Advanced Algebra	
	Trigonometry	

Latin is omitted for the first time in many years due to no demand.

From pg. 77:

1914 "The Winnebago Chief" a quarterly by the pupils. Discontinued after the War.

1927 "The Review" supervised by C.J. Gadbaw. Mimeographed. Next year under guidance of Marian Dohner and name changed to "Nuntius".

From pg. 80.

The year before the Red Brick school was built the Budget in 1855 was:

Teacher's wages	- -	\$360.00
Fuel	- -	20.00
Room Rent	- -	32.00
Incidentals	- -	20.00
		<u>432.00</u>

From pg. 95.

## PRINCIPALS OF OMRO SCHOOLS

## Red Brick

1856	Mr. H. Raymond	1856-1857
1857	Mr. D. P. Dean	1857-1859
	Mr. Purmot	1859-1860
1860	Mr. Samuel Shaw	1860-1867
	Mr. Edwards and	
	Mr. J.E. Munger	1867-1868
	Mr. Orville T. Bright	1867-1870
	Mr. Charles McStay	1870-1871
	Mr. M. Reed	1871-1872
	Mr. Lewis Funk	1872-1873
	Mr. W. Williams	1873-1875
	Mr. O.A. Parks	1875-1876
	Mr. C.H. Lewis	1876-1878
	Mr. A. A. Spencer	1878-1879
	Mr. H.W. Rood	1879-1882
	Mr. J. B. Babcock	1886-1888
	Mr. F. Tucker	1888-1892
	Mr. F.H. Miller	1892-1893

## Present High School

	Mr. A. H. Kreiling	1893-1894
	Mr. E. E. Sheldon	1894-1908
	Mr. M. W. Vittum	1908-1911
	Mr. C. H. Eldred	1911-1913
	Mr. C. O. Marsh	1913-1915
	Mr. H. B. Patch	1915-

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 (more back of pg.)

From pg. 17. Town Superintendents of Common Schools for Town of Omro.<sup>1.</sup>  
 1. Op. Cit. compiled from the election results recorded by the clerks.

George Beckwith	-	-	1849-1850.	Luther A. Reed	-	-	1856
Edward West	-	-	1851.	H. Raymond)	"	-	
Hiram W. Webster	-	-	1852.	C.W. Watson)B	-	-	1857
Chas. W. Wilson	-	-	1853	D.P. Dean	-	-	18581860
G.B. Cooley	-	-	1854	C.H. Marshall)			
Loren Robbins)	-	-		J.N. Hoaglin) C	-	-	1861
Luther A. Reed)A	-	-	1855				

A. Luther Reed was appointed to office because incumbent was absent too much.

B. C.W. Watson was appointed when H. Raymond resigned.

C. Tie vote of 178 votes apiece, with C.H. Marshall winning by lot.

From pg. 80-81. School Expenditures of 1877. (Summary)<sup>1.</sup>

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditures</u>	
Balance 1876	- 1839.24	Teacher's Wages	- - 2343.50
State Tax	- 259.53	Janitor's Wages	- - 142.80
District Tax	- 3500.00	New Schoolhouse	- - 1500.00
County Tax	- 330.75	All other items	- - 898.41
Tuition	- 130.85	Cash on Hand	- - 1175.66
	<u>6060.37</u>		<u>6060.37</u>

1. School District #5, 1867-1883, Op. Cit. pg. 34.

From pa. 82. Clerk's Annual Report for 1897-1898. (Summary).<sup>1.</sup>

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenditures</u>	
June 1897 Balance	- - 1263.74	Principal	- - 810.00
State Income Fund	- - 117.02	Assistant	- - 360.00
High School Fund	- - 260.00	Other teachers	- 1314.00
School Tax	- - 2400.00	Janitors	- - 297.00
County Money	- - 432.51	Clerk	- - 75.00
H. S. Insurance	- - 4.80	Fuel	- - 455.17
County School money	- 26.80	Apparatus	- - 31.54
State Income Fund	- - 306.98	Supplies and Ins.	- 340.23
Tuition	- - <u>543.70</u>		<u>3682.99</u>
	<u>5355.65</u>	Cash on Hand	- 1672.66
			<u>5355.65</u>

1. "School Meeting", O. H. July 6, 1898.

MAYOR BARNARD QUILTS  
PUBLIC LIFE IN OMRO

*Oct. 1968 - April 19, 1968*

Mayor Sherm Barnard, who declined to seek another term as mayor of the City of Omro in the April election, has terminated a 46-year varied career in public life.

His service in city government began in 1922 when he was elected trustee of the Village of Omro. He held this office until 1923 when he was appointed postmaster of the Omro Post Office, and served in this capacity for eight years.

In 1941 he was again elected a trustee on the Village Board and later resigned when called to work for the war department.

C.W. Stearns, acting mayor in 1960, announced then that he would not run for the office of mayor in the City of Omro. Barnard was elected mayor by a write-in vote, and held the office until this spring.

Recalling the events of the past years, Barnard noted the expansion and changes that have taken place in the city, and said, "The City of Omro has much to offer, much more than some municipalities of equal size."

Mention was made of the quality of the schools, churches, the beautiful city park, and industries. Cited was Omro Gear and Machine Co., a company which Barnard feels has added much to the city's prosperity. He said, "This company started out as a shoestring operation, employing two or three people, now it employs 40 people most of whom live in the surrounding area." He also listed Precast Concrete Sales Inc.; Screw Machine Co., Omro's newest company; Chrysler Outboard Co., and the recently purchased property for a proposed supermarket.

The former mayor said he did everything possible while in office to encourage industrial development, which he considers fundamental for the tax base, not relying on real estate alone.

"The citizens have been very cooperative" he continued. "The city purchased the Omro Theater building and remodeled it." The building now houses city offices, voting booths, a library and features a community meeting room and kitchen.

The city also bought the Kraft Creamery where the Omro Gear and Machine Co. is presently located. The city leases this property to the company and receives a monthly rent. Barnard said "the rent they pay has more than made up for the loss the city suffered when the Kraft Co. pulled out."

Barnard is a graduate of Omro High School, the Oshkosh Normal School, La Salle law courses and engineering courses under the "GI" Bill from the University of Wisconsin. He is a veteran of World War I, and has been active in the Republican Party, American Legion, and all branches of the Masonic Lodges.

He has been married for 45 years, and has four children. They are Mrs. Beverly Kallas, Omro; Mrs. Shirley Brandt, Phoenix, Ariz.; Charles, Oshkosh, and David, San Francisco, Calif. There are eight grandchildren.

-----From April 19, 1968 issue of Daily Northwestern.

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301 Chap XXVI  
 But first,  
 "Whipsaw" used for boards.

Up until the early 1840s, demand for lumber to put up houses was met by local sawyers using oak and basswood along with pine. Logs were usually cut near the building site and squared into timbers with a broadaxe or, a little later, by two men using a whipsaw much like those used by the Romans twenty centuries earlier. Boards could also be cut with a whipsaw.

First they dug a long pit six feet deep and four feet wide and rigged several cross timbers over the top. One man jumped down into the pit. A log was rolled onto the timbers and another man climbed on top of the log and lowered one end of a seven foot rip saw to the man below. At a signal they began to pull the saw back and forth. As it bit into the log, other men pushed it forward. The work was heavy and hot, and sawdust poured down into the eyes and stuck to the sweaty skin of the man in the pit. Moreover, the work was terribly slow.

Carpenters began with this rough-sawed lumber. They dressed and fitted the timbers, erecting a framework of posts and beams mortised and held together with wooden pegs. They notched the beams to take floor joists made of planks set on edge. With moulding planes they fashioned window sash, panelled doors, stairways and trim. Boards were used for siding and floors. Hand split shingles, preferably of cedar, made the roof. Since there was no inside plumbing nor kitchen as we know it today, plastering the ceiling and walls finished the job. Heat was provided by fireplaces and, later, iron stoves.

In the early 1830s the lumber produced by hand could barely fill the needs of local housebuilders. As more people moved into the area and demand grew, other sources had to be found. Something better than the hand-operated pit saw was needed. It was a slow muley saw, really a refined version of the old whipsaw, and operated by water power.

This information on the whipsaw was by John Kuony in the book "Prairie, Pines, and People." p. 305

R.305 same as above

It was also stated that Lumberjacks wage about \$26 a month was a rough average. The later half of the 19th century men working in mills received \$11. a day, 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. 6 days a week. Prior to this time they earned a dollar a day. R.329  
 p. 114

About this same time men's suits cost \$5. A shawl \$1. Flour was \$7. a barrel; sugar 10¢ per lb.; butter 25¢; eggs 13¢ per dozen. same as above.

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"Headings" were also manufactured, they being the tops and bottoms for barrels, kegs, pails, and cheeseboxes. Basswood was most often used for that purpose. This information from "Historic Lake Poygan" by Chas. H. Velte.

DRAGGIN' YOUR FROG OVER THE ROCKS  
 (With apologies to Riley)  
 by Pep Bennett, Alaska 1959.  
 (Gordon Bennett, class of 1917 OHS)

The day was real hot and sticky,  
 On Main Street, there wasn't a soul,  
 For all the young fry in Omro  
 Were down at the "Ole Swimmin' Hole."

There were Turk Root, Ed Edick and Esaw,  
 Dave Marshall, Fred Pemble and Ross. *Frank*  
 Peg Reed, the Hellwigs and the Howletts  
 Hindermans, Genschs and Goss. *Lydia*

Connie Lockwood was learning a step step,  
 Rodney Alder was practicing law  
 Bing Hurlbut and Pep Bennett were a 'froggin',  
 Harvey Bennett was sassin his maw.

T'was down at the corner we'd gather,  
 Where Leon Davidson would roll us some cigs,  
 Or up in the school yard we'd gamble  
 At mumbly peg or the migs.

Speaking of Marbles, we had Arthur,  
 And Shelps, a couple of Tings. *Leon Davidson*  
 The Winslows, the Gummers, the LeRoys,  
 The Crowleys, O'Keefe's and the Kings.

Eldrid and Marsh were our masters,  
 As principals of the school had no match.  
 In the second decade of this century,  
 And then--the best--Henry Patch.

For Gus Witt and Ed Reed, we'd drive cattle,  
 To the yards where Punk Anderson sold coal  
 And after the trek from Poy Sippi  
 To the bridge and the "Ole Swimmin Hole."

Then after the swim came rotation,  
 At Fritz Clark's Emporium of Sin,  
 Where Tack Mitchell and Herb clipped the public.  
 When you needed a shave or a trim.

Then up to the bayou named Bennett's  
 Or along the banks of the Fox  
 You jump in your row boat with motor,  
 To drag your frog over the rocks.

At nightfall you put-put back homeward  
 And strut down Main Street just to flirt,  
 Or sit on the corner by Barry's  
 For the Wednesday night weekly concert.

Maybe you would drop into Lockwoods,  
 For a hamburger and a bottle of pop.  
 Or stand in front of the City Hall  
 To talk with Cad Clark, Omro's Cop.

Dewey Hanson, Charlie Marshall and Icy Atwater  
 With George Herrick, Becker and Loker  
 Could be found in Bill Lee's solitarying  
 Or messed up in a good game of poker.

As we wander back through the ages,  
 And think now of the fun long gone by.  
 T'would be a mortal sin inexcusable,  
 To forget old Choppy's homemade pie.

You surely remember Miss Benyas,  
 Rachenstine, Bandoline and Miss King, *Elizabeth*  
 Who tried to pound sense into our thick skulls  
 When ere that old school bell would ring.

Then Lloyd Raymond, our basketball tutor,  
 When we played Berlin High in our gym,  
 And the game ended up in a melee,  
 As our championship chance became dim.

Asa Buck swept our streets in the village,  
 His tenure of office now done,  
 And the boys from up on the store roofs,  
 Would yell at poor Asa, "You missed one."

I can still see the town team in action,  
 Nibbs in center, Fred Ross on the mound,  
 Harold Patri holding down first base,  
 Phil Lee chasing flies all around.

In the grandstand, Doc and Edna *shall* were seated,  
 A shoe box of lunch on their knees,  
 "Come on Nibbs, knock one out of the ball park  
 We need one more run, if you please."

You oldsters think back a half century,  
 To the kid with the freckles and smiles,  
 At horseshoes out in Marshalls barnyard, *Dave*  
 With a ringer each toss--Boozel Miles.

Many miles have we paddles the paddlers,  
 Tied to the shore by the mill,  
 Then tired of acting the pirate  
 Some Indians we would set out to kill.

Those glorious days of youth are now ancient  
 And the years as they go, take their toll.  
 How can anyone having lived in Omro,  
 Forget our old "Swimmin Hole."



M. J. S.

The marshes, rivers, and creeks of Winnebago County were noted for the quality and quantity of its mink and muskrat furs.

The method of skinning a fur bearing animal was as follows: With a sharp knife a slit was made in the skin from the back feet to the tail. Then cut around the tail, turn the fur back inside out and loosen the fur from around the back feet. Pull the fur inside out down from the body, ending at the ears, eyes and nose and freeing them with short careful strokes of the knife. Lastly pull to the front feet, and after cutting fur from them the pelt was freed from the carcass.

Various sized stretching boards, pelt shaped, were used on which the fur was stretched and tacked by the tail ends. Then with the knife were "fleshed" or "meated", meaning that all tissue, fat, and flesh removed (without cutting through the pelt) so that only skin and fur remained. The board was then hung up on a nail for the drying process. When dried the pelt was ready for market.

Another entertainment in October of 1912 was given two evenings by the Men's League with a Carrol College director of a 3 act western comedy-drama, "The Stubborn Motor Car." The characters were: Mrs. Reed, the "Widder"; Walter Noble, the irritable old man; C. Bishop, the sheriff; C. Eldred, the "Dutchman mit lots of medals"; A. Marble, is some Englishman; Roy Shelp is "Samee, honest Chinaman"; Mrs. F. Charlesworth is the Indian maid; Guy Treleven is the heavy villan; Miss Olive Hawtrey is the pretty girl from New York; Dorothy Stocking the cutest 10 year old little prairie girl in 10 states and L. Shelp is the cowboy.

Again, in November of 1913 an "Attic Social" was given by the Womens Civic League in the Masonic Hall. It was attended by over 200 people. Most of those present were decked out in old clothes, and many ridiculous customs were in evidence. The short program of humorous selections was well carried out and each number vigorously applauded. The ladies' band under the directorship of Mrs. E.A. Reed was a hit. Mrs. L.A. Morton was the "bands" soloist. Dr. Sheerar's quartet gave several selections. Misses Ann and Elizabeth Smith gave a vocal duet. Herbert Bradley and Miss Myrtle Davis each gave a reading, and Mrs. Emma Allensang several old ballads. After the program, those in costume joined in a grand march, followed by refreshments.

A 1909-10 County Atlas published by the Daily Northwestern contains names of township and village officials well known in that era. This atlas was loaned by Warren Brooks.

#### Board of Supervisors

Omro Township -- Thos. F. Broderick, R.D. 23, Omro.  
 Omro Village -- C.H. Larrabee, Omro.  
 Poygan -- James Heffron, Jr., Omro R.D. 22.  
 Rushford -- T.E. Loope, Eureka.  
 Winneconne -- F.G. Cross, Winneconne R.D. 19.  
 Winneconne Village -- M.F. White, Winneconne.

#### Clerks

Omro Township -- W.P. Bussey, Omro R.D. 24.  
 Omro Village -- J.S. Shelp, Omro.  
 Poygan -- M.P. Broderick, Omro R.D. 22.  
 Rushford -- H.E. Bareis, Eureka.  
 Winneconne Township -- H. Doughty, Winneconne R.D. 19.  
 Winneconne Village -- L. Lund, Winneconne.

#### Treasurers

Omro Township -- Geo. F. Lewis, Omro R.D. 25.  
 Omro Village -- L.W. Sowles, Omro.  
 Poygan -- Chas. Marin, Winneconne R.D. 20.  
 Rushford -- Chas. Radde, Eureka.  
 Winneconne Township -- G.V. Beiser, Winneconne R.D. 19.  
 Winneconne Village -- C.J. Borchardt, Winneconne.

#### Assessor

Omro Township -- Eugene Humphrey, R.D. 21.  
 Omro Village -- T.J. Thompson, Omro.  
 Poygan -- P.E. Dolan, Winneconne R.D. 20.  
 Rushford -- Dennis Hart, Eureka.  
 Winneconne Township -- John Broderick, Omro R.D. 22.  
 Winneconne Village -- C.A. Russell, Winneconne.

According to the farm pictures <sup>C.A. Smith</sup> shown in the atlas there were no silos before 1911.. My father built his cement silo in 1912. He obtained the forms for the concrete sections from the State Agriculture Department through the cooperation of Mr. Briggs of the County Agriculture School at Winneconne.

m.f.s.  
PLACE NAMES

The reason for place names and why so named are always an interesting study. Omro and vicinity had them. "Indian Land" on the north side of the river was mentioned previously as was "Piety Hill", and Omro's "Hobo Jungle". Also, "Fisk Park" a short distance west of Omro up river.

Traveling east from Omro down the Fox river about 3 miles, and located near the west bank, is "Baby Island". This island was so named, because "some Indians once found a dead white baby that had floated ashore there."

Another locale, and one that has kept its identity down through the years is that of "Preachers Bend". It is located three miles down the Fox river from Omro, and at the end of what used to be known as the "Town Line Road". This is a dead-end road running east to the Fox river from the present Hwy. 116 between Omro and Winneconne townships.

Preachers Bend, according to P.V. Lawson in his "History of Winnebago County", was "the site of a mixed village of Potawatomie and Winnebago Indians". Later years the Indians camped during the summers in what was formerly Williams woods, about a quarter of a mile from the bend, near a spring at the edge of the marsh. (The encounters of the settlers with the Indians are interesting tales.) Lawson refers to the crook in the river as "Preach" bend. Apparently he never met the person for whom it was named, and no doubt he dismissed the idea that it could be named because of a preacher.

However, when this writer's grandfather moved to the farm close by in 1870, it had long been known as "Preachers Bend". Their neighbors, Josiah and Sarah Kellogg, whose farm bordered the actual bend, had living with them Mrs. Kellogg's father, Elder Edward Reynolds. It is for him the bend was named. He was an interesting and well-liked gentleman in the community.

Elder Reynolds, as Pastors were referred to in those days, came to this place in 1849. He became well known in this part of the county as he lived here for over 30 years. (It is now the Kamrath farm since about 1899.)

Elder Reynolds was a Freewill Baptist and at different times preached at Omro, Winneconne, Omro Junction and other more distant churches. He performed the marriage ceremony of this writer's Aunt and Uncle in 1877.

In 1880 Elder Reynolds moved with his family to Rowland, Alabama where he died in 1892.

Preachers Bend in the Fox river is a sharp one. And until David Hume, one of the first settlers of Omro village, invented the "grauser", rafts of logs had to be divided in order to be tugged around this elbow-shaped river bend.

In addition to rafts of logs, in years past Preachers Bend saw freight moved by river boats; excursion boats steam by and sometimes run aground on the curve; fishermen and duck hunters drift by in row boats or skiffs. In late summer "Punghaw" (marsh hay) was harvested

and the loads hauled out from the marshes over the road at the bend. In the winter muskrat trappers would trudge daily over the frozen bank to their fur farms, and skaters would glide by on the ice. That crook in the river would be the first spot to melt and open up in the spring.

Government dredges, the Federal Government having taken over river upkeep in 1872, would scoop up silt and deposit it on the opposite bank until in 1927, at which time the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers no longer had charge of the Upper Fox.

Later years motor boats would run amuck on a sand bar or a rocky ledge near by and, perhaps, shear off a propeller blade.

A tragic happening took place at Preachers Bend in the evening of July 4, 1928. Leon Gustin of Milwaukee, his wife, formerly of Omro, and their little son were in a small skiff enroute from the boat landing to the cottage on the south bank of the bend when either the boat was leaking or took on water; it sank. Gustin who was a good swimmer was wearing rubber boots and was unable to keep above water; he drowned. His wife who could not swim fortunately was a natural floater, and holding the child on her chest, called for help. John Ginnow, in the cottage on the north bank, heard her cries and saved the two of them. Dr. Fleury of Omro was called, but the body had been in the water too long before dragging operations located it; the doctor was unable to revive Mr. Gustin.

So it is that some place names fade, but Preachers Bend has had its tragedies, triumphs and the same name for nearly 130 years. (1979)

To anyone interested in physical geography, an oxbow loop is located about one-eighth mile north of Preachers Bend. The loop resembles a large crescent-shaped pond. This indicates that the Fox at one time flowed that far north before the action of nature cut off a portion of the river and formed a new bend to the south. With the passing of the years Preachers Bend is slowly working its way to the north again. However, the recent rip-rapping by marsh and river-front owners may halt its progress.

Another island is of interest. Past the second bend beyond Baby Island and on the east side of the river is "Blackbird Island". Here was located the trading post of Robert Grignon established in the early 1800s. It was here many Indians gathered and was referred to as "Grignon Reservation". After the trading post became a thing of the past, the area was known as the Martin farm. It is now the settlement of "Rivermoor". The Grignon cemetery is to the south of the settlement in a field on a knoll and surrounded by lilac bushes.

Across the river from Rivermoor is the Grignon Gun Club house. This club was organized in 1890 or 1895 by Omro men and is still functioning. It is a closed cooperation of twelve shares. The club owns an area of slightly over 100 acres. The club house stands near the river bank amid a clump of trees.

Further on from what is now Rivermoor was "Hay Bend". Originally it was a part of the Benedict Marsh. In 1826 the Government laid out a mail route from Fort Howard to Fort Winnebago. This route ran thru Butte des Morts and crossed the river. A scow was used to ferry passengers from Butte des Morts to Hay Bend. At that time the marsh

was capable of holding up horse and rider. The charge for crossing was 25¢, 50¢ when there was ice to contend with. Coming from the southwest one came within hailing distance of Butte des Morts for the ferry. In 1908 sixty or seventy acres of the marsh floated away from Hay Bend. At intervals since then sections of six and seven acres have been reported to have been washed away. The result is that Hay Bend now is open water with scattered islands.

Because of marsh and river bank erosion rip-rapping has been done by property owners, starting at Preachers Bend. The winter of 1972 was ideal for the project. The ice froze thick. Each truck (Courtney & Plummer's) carried a weight of twenty-two or twenty-three tons of rock. Much rip-rapping was accomplished along the Fox and Wolf rivers.

The "Fox River Gun Club" has their club house built on one of the islands in what was Hay Bend. The "Wolf River Gun Club" had their club house located on the south bank of the Wolf River in a northwesterly direction from Preachers Bend on the Fox.

"Potawattomie Point" is located one mile south of Winneconne on the west bank of the Wolf river. It overlooks a thousand acres or so of water and marsh. Many years but three families lived on the dead end road leading to it from the present Hwy. 116. They were the Quigley, Lange, and Wiesner families. Quigleys new farm house (early 1900s) while digging the basement, many Indian artifacts and bones were found. In those days a team on a scraper and men wielding shovels dug basements so that even beads were readily discovered.

"Lasley's Point" on the east shore of Lake Winneconne was named for the first family to settle there, the Lasleys. It is still known by that name, but no Lasleys live there at present.

"Bay Boom" in Wolf River Township connected with Lake Poygan figured in the logs floated down the Wolf River. At the Boom logs were sorted out, as each Company's mark was stamped at both ends of the logs. Here they were made into rafts and towed to Winneconne, Oshkosh and Omro sawmills.

In the village of Winneconne or at its northwestern edge was "Pye Town". This was an early settlement of Indians. There were also the Moons and Duskeys, but apparently the Pye family predominated.

The ancient "Poygan Mission of St. Mark" was located in Sec. 16, township of Poygan near the south shore of Lake Poygan. This was also an Indian settlement and Trading Post. Father Claud Allouez recited the first mass in 1670. The chapel was built in 1673. This Mission was used until 1721.

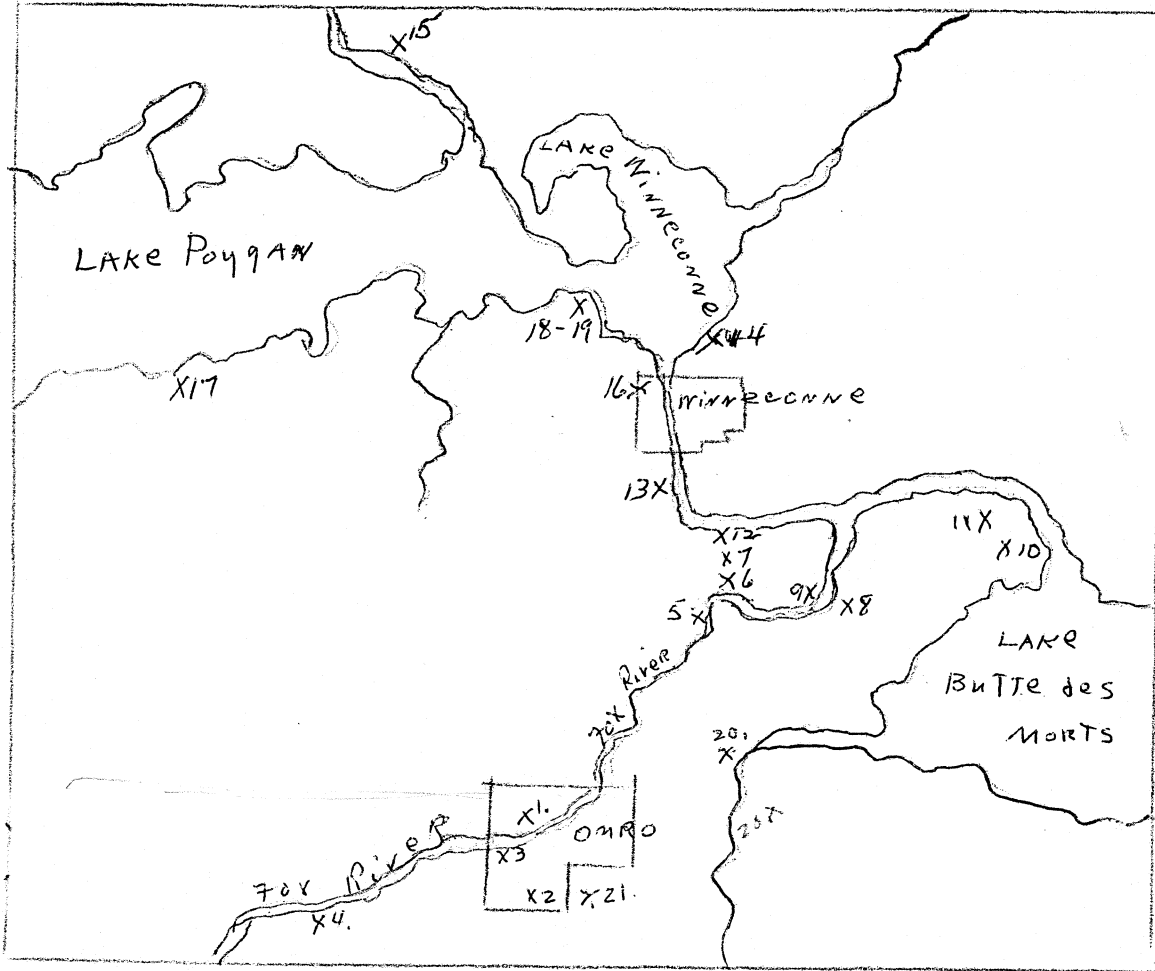
The "Poygan Paygrounds" was a 90 acre plot in Winneconne Township, Section 18. Here the Government made annual payments for 20 years. Payment occurred in October for 10 days. The Government Agency set up office with soldiers from Fort Howard to protect Indians while being paid. Indians had to come to the office even though it was difficult for some to make it. Once off the Paygrounds they were disgracefully relieved of their payment by scallawags laying in wait for them.

A plaque commemorating the Paygrounds was dedicated by the County Historical Society in 1956 near the site. At roadside on the farm of Russell Grignon the plaque was placed. The flag of 30 stars that was flown at the dedication was presented to Russell Grignon after the ceremony.

(Map of Place Names next page.)

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Map of Place Names.



1. Indian Land
2. Piety Hill
3. Hobo Jungle
4. Fisk Park
5. Baby Island
6. Preachers Bend
7. Oxbow loop
8. Blackbird Island
9. Grignon Gun Club
10. Hay Bend

11. Fox River Gun Club
12. Wolf River Gun Club
13. Potawattomie Point
14. Lasley's Point
15. Bay Boom
16. Pye Town
17. Poygan Mission
18. Poygan Payground
19. Grignon farm.
20. Spring Brook
21. Junction of Wolf River

.....AND PREACHER'S BEND  
by Mariam Smith

The passing of time has a tendency to obliterate the peculiar, obvious, or romantic reason for naming a certain place or area. Some such significant names persist down through the years; others do not.

Omro area has some of both. For example, across the Fox river, the north side of the village used to be referred to as "Canadie" and the north-siders as "Canucks".

Then again, the hill on which the Omro water tower is now located was known for many years as "Piety Hill". It was so named when C.D. Bowman built the big house at 629 Madison Avenue. Because of the many families living in that area of the village who were church members and diligent church workers, the residents decided to call it "Piety Hill". Some of the families who lived in the area were the Leightons, Sheerars, Pelton, Bishops, Fowlers, Sowles, and Shepards to name a few.

*Handwritten note:* ...

*Handwritten note:* Fisk Park

Near Omro a once-popular site, but one seldom mentioned nowadays, was "Fisk Park". It was on the land owned by Mr. John Fisk. The park was a boat dock built by Mr. Fisk. It was located 2 miles up the river from the village on the south shore near a spring of cool water. A lane from what was at that time called "Kinderhook Road" led to it also. The Knights of Honor, an Omro organization, developed the park, built an open-air dance hall, and laid out a baseball diamond. The park was a place for picnics and other forms of amusements.

*Handwritten note:* back of page

*Handwritten note:* Vol IV p. 12  
1926-36

The Omro Cornet Band played at Fisk Park weekly. This was no doubt in the 1890's as the band was organized in 1884. Fourth of July celebrations took place there, too. The park as such was perhaps in existence until as late as the 1920's. It provided a place of entertainment for fun-loving folk of the area. Now it is nearly forgotten.

*Handwritten note:* Vol IV p. 10  
11/20/39

"Baby Island", according to the Early Settler in his History of Omro, was about two miles down the Fox river from Omro. This island was so named, because "some Indians once found a dead white baby that had floated ashore there".

*Handwritten note:* Vol. 12/17/39

Also, another island is of interest. "Blackbird Island", about three and one quarter miles down the Fox river from Omro, was known by that name for many years, and now recognized as such by only a few old-timers. In the early years Robert Grignon had a trading post there. Supposedly, later on, the island was used as an Indian Reservation, about 1840. According to the Early Settler it was sometimes referred to as Grignon Reservation. It was a community composed mostly of Indians, at least up until they were forced by the Government to move and locate on the Menominee Reservation.

*Handwritten note:* Vol IV p. 12  
12/14/39

Now the settlement of Rivermoor is located on what was called "Blackbird Island", and it is near the site of the former trading post. The graves of Robert Grignon, his wife and daughter, and presumably, other Indians are buried near by.

Another locale, and one that has kept its identity down through the years is that of "Preacher's Bend". It is located three miles down the Fox river from Omro, and at the end of what used to be known



as the "Town Line Road". This is a dead-end road running east to the Fox river from the present Hwy. 116 between Omro and Winneconne townships.

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*Omro Junction  
Dist 1872  
to the village  
42*  
Elder Reynolds, as Pastors were referred to in those days, came to this place in 1849. He became well known in this part of the county as he lived here for over 30 years. (It is now the Kamrath farm since about 1899.)

Elder Reynolds was a Freewill Baptist and at different times preached at Omro, Winneconne, Omro Junction and other more distant churches. He performed the marriage ceremony of this writer's Aunt and Uncle in 1877. *Reynolds B.*

In 1880 Elder Reynolds moved with his family to Rowland, Alabama where he died in 1892.

Preacher's bend in the Fox river is a sharp one. And until David Hume, one of the first settlers of Omro village, invented the "grauser", rafts of logs had to be divided in order to be tugged around this elbow-shaped river bend.

In addition to rafts of logs, in years past Preacher's Bend saw freight moved by river boats; excursion boats steam by and sometimes run aground on the curve; fishermen and duck hunters drift by in row boats or skiffs. In late summer "Punghaw" (marsh hay) was harvested and the loads hauled out from the marshes over the road at the bend. In the winter muskrat trappers would trudge daily over the frozen bank to their fur farms, and skaters would glide by on the ice. That crook in the river would be the first spot to melt and open up in the spring.

*Nov 2/23/51  
my list I  
1048*  
(*Ill. III p. 698 - Index Journal Apr. 1956.*)  
Government dredges, the Federal Government having taken over river upkeep in 1872, would scoop up silt and deposit it on the opposite bank until in 1927, at which time the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers no longer had charge of the Upper Fox.

*II 1-(24) M.W. Daily 1903*  
Later years motor boats would run amuck on a sand bar or a rocky ledge near by and, perhaps, shear off a propeller blade.

A tragic happening took place at Preacher's Bend in the evening of July 4, 1928. Leon Gustin of Milwaukee, his wife, formerly of

*Matt's Hill...*

Omro, and their little son were in a small skiff enroute from the boat landing to the cottage on the south bank of the bend when either the boat was leaking or took on water; it sank. Gustin who was a good swimmer was wearing rubber boots and was unable to keep above water; he drowned. His wife who could not swim fortunately was a natural floater, and holding the child on her chest, called for help. John Ginnow, in the cottage on the north bank, heard her cries and saved the two of them. Dr. Fleury of Omro was called, but the body had been in the water too long before dragging operations located it; the doctor was unable to revive Mr. Gustin.

So it is that some place names fade, but Preacher's Bend has had its tragedies, triumphs and the same name for nearly 130 years. (1976)  
And many of us who lived in this area are sentimental about referring to our birthplace as "Preacher's Bend".

More interesting facts about Dr. William P. McAllister is as follows:

2H. 7/16/31.) Inheriting some of the pioneer spirit that prompted his ancestors to leave England about the time that the Pilgrims did, to try their fortune in a new country, Dr. McAllister left his native state of New Hampshire in 1840, to settle in the West. After some years in Illinois, he came to Omro in 1850 and platted the Western Addition to the village. He was prominently identified in the early history of the town and county, filling many positions of honor and trust.

Dr. McAllister was the first postmaster of Omro village post-office, President of the first village board, Pres. of the first school board, and twice represented his district in the state legislature.

2H. 6/28/34.) The land upon which the "Red Brick" school house was built, was the gift of Dr. McAllister. He was our first practicing physician and his conscientious and earnest devotion to the sick who came to him for relief made him hosts of friends. An instance related by one who was a small boy when it occurred, is characteristic of his amiable disposition and kindly feeling. A family under his care had considerable sickness, and one day when calling on them, he asked for a large basket which he carried out to his sleigh, filled it with fresh meat and bringing it into the house, said "my medicine does not seem to help you much, let us see what some good fresh beef will do."

Dr. McAllister was esteemed as a counselor and adviser in matters pertaining to education, moral and political interests of the Town and Village. He passed away in 1868 and his widow and daughters, Fannie, Clara and Cora, were for many years active in education and patriotic circles. Nina Huie was a granddaughter of Dr. McAllister.

(O.N. - 6/28/34.)

2H. 10/16/30.) The following has been recorded of daughter Cora--  
Mrs. Cora McAllister Evans died October 11, 1930. She was born at Omro in 1868, 72 years ago. Her father was a pioneer physician of this community, and one of the first settlers. He was active in educational matters and was a director on the school board before Omro was village. In 1857 when the charter was granted, he was elected the first president of the village.

Mrs. Evans was educated in the village schools and later took a course in music at Northwestern University at Evanston, Illinois, and became a teacher in the schools at Omro, both as grade instructor and teacher of music.

Mrs. Evans was one of the charter members and active workers in "The Old Red Brick" school organization of Omro and attended the first meeting in 1901. She was present at nearly all of the reunions and in 1926 was elected its president and presided at the biennial session held in 1928. She had two sons, John, of Green Bay and Bryant of Seattle.

*E.B. Burnham*  
*John D. Treleven*  
 John D. Treleven was the second son of Michael Treleven's sons to leave England for America. John had learned the tailor trade and at 21 wanted to join his brother Joseph in the middle west. He made a large chest to hold all his belongings. Now a family keepsake.

His voyage across the ocean was long and unpleasant, storms delayed the ship; it was weeks before he arrived in the U.S. He came to Oshkosh where he found work and was soon transferred to a branch store at Omro. Soon he went into business for himself with J.T. Orchard. They bought a building where the old Post Office stood (S. Webster now), and opened up a Clothing Store. After this burned they built a brick block. After Orchard's retirement for another occupation, brother Dennis Treleven joined him.

John Treleven was progressive, public spirited, two times was President of the Village Board, had a Fire Insurance Agency, he was a stockholder and Director of the Farmers Bank and Vice President of it at his death in August of 1916.

John D. Treleven married Annie Ruth Root, niece of E.B. Burnham, in June of 1868. Originally she was from Vermont. Annie was musical. She sang in chorus work, in singing schools of Mr. Bradish, Geo. Drew, S. Bridge, and Dr. Sheerar. She also sang with Mary Bushnell, the Drew sisters, the Lowd sisters and others. Omro at that time had much music for everyone, not just students. The John Trelevens were parents of Minnie T. Morton, Eva Treleven, and Edward John Treleven.

*John's sister was found in N.Y. Nov. 8/29/16.*

Items of other Omro people might include the following--

*H. 3/27/30*  
 Mrs. Julie M. Murphy was a pioneer in the town of Omro. Her maiden name was Paddleford, a member of one of the earliest families. She died in May of 1930.

*H. 4/26/45*  
Frank Mahar was born July 20, 1869 in the village of Omro. He owned and operated a meat market for many years. For 12 years he was the Omro Postmaster. When he retired from that position he opened a grocery store. He was also an Insurance agent, and for 2 years he was city Assessor.

*H. 2/8/45*  
Euclid Tritt when he died in February of 1945 was 87 years old. He was born in Poygan. He was a cheese maker by trade.

*H. 5/8/52*  
Etta Hough died at age 91. Parents were Erastus Ripley Hough and Emeline Douglas Hough. Etta was born on the former C.I. "Irv" Smith farm, June of 1860. She was a rural school teacher. Wm. Smith, father of Irv Smith purchased the farm from Etta's parents in 1870.

*H. 5/29/52*  
Chas. X. Fowler was born in October of 1885 and operated a barber shop for many years. His wife was Lillian and the children were Louise Fowler Gunther, Robert, and Phoebe.

*2/7/52*  
Frank B. Keefe died February 5, 1952.

#-10/3/37) Floyd L. Cross was born in Omro Dec. 12, 1840. He lived where the Seckar family now reside, 324 S. Webster. He was a Civil War veteran, serving all through the war in the Wisconsin Infantry Co. A and H. Mrs. Art (Minnie) King was his daughter as was Mrs. Orley (Florence) Mills. Mr. Cross and A.B. Tice were the last two Civil War veterans in this community. Mr. Cross died May 28, 1937.

(e.H.-5/7/31.) The Bishop family--Strange happenings often separate families and stranger ones as often reunite them. Several years ago, Cary Bishop experienced the surprise and satisfaction of such a reunion when his cousin Jerome W. Bishop of Wyandotte, Michigan sent his daughter to Omro to learn if any of the Alonzo Bishop family were living in this place. Jerome Bishop's father was a brother of Alonzo Bishop and his mother was a sister of Alonzo Bishop's wife.

Sometime later, a reunion of over 120 members of the Bishop family was held at the home of Cary Bishop, Alonzo Bishop's son. To the younger generation present, the adventurous past of their ancestors and their part in the early settlement of this country, as disclosed at this gathering, came as a revelation.

Three members of the Bishop family came to Salem, Mass., with Gov. Endicott in 1628. They were a part of that little group of 60 men who, with John Endicott as a leader, sailed to the shores of New England in order that the Puritan owners of the grant for this vast territory might have the argument of actual possession in their favor. They landed one summer day on the bleak shore of Naumkeag, where a hapless group, at odds with the Colony at Plymouth had attempted a new settlement.

After some discussion with the leader of this company, a peaceful adjustment was made, in celebration of which, the name of the place was changed from Naumkeag, to Salem, the Hebrew word for "peace." Richard Bishop of Ipswich, England, the forefather of the Bishops in this community was one of the three of this name who landed that summer day with John Endicott at Salem.

This account of the Bishop family was printed in the Omro Herald issue of May 7, 1931.

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It may be of interest that Mrs. Anna Lowd Root of Wichita, Kansas presented the High School library with "An Early History of the Fox River Valley", in April of 1953. The book belonged to her father, Mr. Gilman Lowd, who was an early settler in this vicinity, coming to Winnebago County in 1846. Mrs. Root, who graduated from Omro High School in 1879, remarks that the library of her day consisted of Webster's dictionary and a set of encyclopedias.

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Getting back to the Carter Memorial Library, it was dedicated August 20, 1966. At that time Sherm Barnard was Mayor of the City of Omro, and the Dedication Address was given by Archie Daggett.

The patronage of the library continues to grow in numbers. A reading public and Omro citizens should be grateful to the memory of Grace Carter as her generosity met a need back in 1958, and continues to supply it. Noreen Zouski is presently the librarian with Connie Whitehill as assistant librarian. (1981)

An oil painting of Grace done by Warren Anderson of California was donated to the library by Mr. and Mrs. Anderson. Mrs. Anderson was formerly Kathryn Golden whom Grace cared for from the time she was ten years of age. The portrait was publicly dedicated and unveiled on May 11, 1981. Irene Daggett, president of the library board, unveiled the painting. Mariam Smith presented a brief personal biography of Miss Carter and provisions of the bequest. Vivian Crane related events leading up to and relative to the painting of the portrait.

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EARLY LIBRARIANS

2/11/9/80  
1981 bits of interest in connection with some of the former librarians--Bonnie Gummer, the first public librarian, was a native of Omro. She was the daughter of Chas. and Elizabeth (Libby) Barnard Luscombe. She lived to be 92 years old. She died November 9, 1980 in San Antonio, Texas where she lived the last few years to be near her son Charles Gummer. A sister of Bonnie's is Hazel Luscombe Hoyer and a brother is John Luscombe of Texas.

77  
11/2  
Maude Stearns, a native Omroite, lived to be 100 years old, born Sept 5, 1877, and died November 1, 1977. She was the daughter of Daniel and Ann Winchester. Much of the library history was obtained from clippings in Maude's scrapbook which she willingly shared. Her sister was Mrs. Grace Fleury, also a centenarian who died December 29, 1979.

Mrs. Elizabeth Moran resigned her post as librarian in May of 1977. Kim Smick was then hired as librarian and resigned in July of 1979. Noreen Zouski then took over and is the present librarian. Because of increased patronage, since November of 1980 Connie Whitehill is assistant librarian.

It has been discovered that several years before the beginning of the shelf of books in the Drug Store, an early public library had been located in the office of the Village Clerk in the old City Hall now the Museum.

Mrs. Blanche Cady Alder remembers seeing the books there as a little girl when accompanying her father Will Cady to the Clerk's office while he transacted business with that official. The Clerk apparently served as librarian also.

Blanche has no knowledge of what happened to the books nor when they were removed from the Clerk's office.

5/2/80  
Another reference has also been made by another person of the library in the old city hall Clerk's office.

*Effort.  
7:4 A  
2/11/16/39  
Early Settler*

The Early Settler gives another bits of information, and another version of the first white child born in Omro. It was George Johnson, son of John B. Johnson, born June 2nd 1846. The second white child born in this town was Maria Scott, daughter of Leuman Scott born in October of that year. The third was Jane A. Olin, daughter of Nelson Olin, born the 23rd of March in 1847.

The first marriage was that of Albert Hall to Miss Julia Jones in April, 1848. The writer remembers Mr. Albert Hall, he taught me to be a wagon painter. Mrs. Hall died the following July. So she was the first death, which was in 1848. The next marriage was on the 4th of July 1848, that of Daniel Ingalls to Miss Elizabeth Jones and the same year Asa Kennedy and Mrs. Harriett Dinning were united.

The second death was that of William Parker, May 10th, 1849. He was drowned in the Fox river.

The first services were held in the Richard Reed House. This was a log house called the big house. It was 18 x 22 feet and the first sermon was preached by Elder Pillsbury.

*2/11/16/39  
E. Harney  
The Early Settler*

The writer (Early Settler) gets these dates from the valuable history of Omro, written by Richard J. Harney in 1880. Other dates, *the dates on* I have picked up here and there through the years from the old settlers and their experiences. I also want to note that Mr. Edgar Hall was one of my teachers in the Omro High in the grammar room and Miss Nell Saxon was another and both wonderful teachers. Edgar Hall was the son of Albert Hall about whom I just wrote.

The Early Settler continues noting that Myron Howe, one of our first settlers, built a log house in July of 1848 in section 9 and kept "batch". I guess women were scarce around here, more than they are at present. As nearly all men kept batch. Myron's nearest neighbor was two miles away or the nearest one lived in the village. In 1870 he built a frame house which did stand in the center of the farm now owned by William Miller, two miles east of Omro and the cross road at that time ran through the middle of this farm and came out on the river road near the Harvey Loper farm now. The writer later bought these buildings and tore them down for the lumber. (The Early Settler published his Omro History in the Omro Herald, the first installment in November of 1939.)

In 1846 Mr. Milo Bushnell came from Vermont and settled in the north western section 27. In 1847 in company with A.H. Pease, he built a shanty and they also kept batch. In 1849 he built on his own place a frame building 16 x 24 which was the fourth frame house built here. Mr. Bushnell was elected chairman of the town in 1851. He also was assistant assessor from 1862 until 1868. Mr. Charles Bushnell and Milo Bushnell were my bondsmen after my parents died and until I was 21 years of age. Wonderful men and very good blacksmiths were they.

In the fall of 1847 Richard Reed and family consisting of wife and five sons and one daughter settled in section 22. In 1872 he moved into the village. Mr. Reed was justice of the peace for nine years.

SCOTT PARK: History researched by Mrs. Margaret Chase can be found in the Carter Memorial Library of Omro, entitled "Community Project."

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A.J. MARBLE SWIMMING POOL DEDICATION:

*Opened Jan 1, 1949  
Sprung a leak July 29, 1969.*

A.J. Marble Pool Dedication was held Aug. 6, 1969. A brief program was held at 6 P.M. followed by an Open House and tour of the new facilities.

Included in the program was the invocation, a flag raising ceremony, introduction of guests, brief talks by Mayor Elmer Wagner and Archie Daggett, President of the City Council, and the ribbon cutting ceremony by Mrs. Nellie Marble, widow of the late A.J. Marble.

Architects of the pool were Krueger-Shutter & Associates of Madison. Plans called for an Olympic size pool, a kiddie pool and a building to house bathhouse and other facilities. The cost estimated at approximately \$150,000.

85 year old Marble died Jan 1966.

--From Omro Herald issue of July 31, 1969. Vol. 75 #31.

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*Mrs. Nellie Dodson Marble, 2nd wife of A. J. Marble,  
died Oct 23, 1973.*  
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## PREVIEW OF HISTORY OF OMRO LIBRARY

From Ethel Bishop's clippings. (no dates)

A year after Mrs. Mae Marsh closed a library in a room of her home in 1938, a library meeting was held in a room of Stearns Drug Store for the election of officers, the meeting was called by Miss Elizabeth King.

Miss King was elected President of the board and Mrs. Elizabeth Moran Secretary and Treasurer. A room in the Drug Store was to be our library. Books available were moved to the room in 1939. The library was supported by the Village of Omro, Omro Business Men, Township of Omro, Study Club, Garden Club, Omro Homemakers, American Legion Auxiliary, W.R.C. and others. Several young ladies were librarians.

In 1956, Stearns needed the room to expand, and the former jail in 1958 was remodeled for a library, and housed 4,000 books and served in that capacity until June 23, 1965. The city of Omro purchased the former theatre and remodeled the interior for a new City Hall and Carter Memorial Library. Open house was held on Friday evening June 10, 1966.

The new library board was appointed and Mrs. Inez Munding as president. On June 22, 1966, the Carter Memorial Library was open for service in the new quarters.

Library hours: Mon, Wed and Sat afternoons 1 to 5. Friday evening 7 to 9. Closed on holidays. The Extension Library of Oshkosh supplies new books each month for young and adults also many magazines. A loan service of books to patrons through a teletype communications with public libraries in 5 major cities, and state reference loan service in Madison.

Mrs. Moran reports at least 5,000 books of all categories, and information are here. A report on books loaned from Carter Memorial Library are from 300 to 500 a month. A monthly bulletin board is kept with displays. Mrs. E. Moran has been the librarian for 14 years.

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## A.J. MARBLE BANK CAREER

A.J. Marble ended a 60-year career at The Farmer's Bank of Omro. He joined the bank as bookkeeper and worked in that capacity for 3 years. Then he was elevated to cashier until 1940. At that time he was elected President of the Board of Directors.

The Bank and Masonic order were his two loves. In the Masonic Lodge he has served as commander of Oshkosh Commandery; illustrious Master of the Oshkosh Council and esteemed member of KTCH. Past Master of Omro Lodge F and A.M.; a high priest of Winnebago Chapter #143; and a past Noble Grand of the Odd Fellow Lodge here. He has been affiliated with the Presbyterian church down through the years, a past member of the board of trustees of that organization. Also an active member of the Omro Independent Businessmen's Association.

---From the October 31, 1963 issue of Omro Herald.

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OMRO GUN CLUB

The Omro Gun Club house is located on Lone Willow Point on lake Poygan. It is situated 7 miles north and west from Omro, and 15 miles from Oshkosh. The original building was erected in 1895.

Present officers are--Pres., A.W. Ballard; Vice Pres., C. Pelton; Sec'y - Willis Wheeler; Treas. - Sherm Leighton; Trustees - Jno. D. Treleven, George Dearstine and Henry Searles.

Other members are--Hiram Coates, Theodore Korn, Isaac Bradley, C.D. Bowman, John F. Weir, H.H. Nolte, C. Bishop, E.E. Hicks, George Dyer and R.E. Root.

----From The Omro Herald Feb 13, 1897 -  
C.H. Slocum, Editor.

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SEWER PROJECT

W.P.A. sewer project was approved on Nov 14, 1935 by Federal Office at Wash. D.C. Work was started Nov 21, 1935 on Lincoln Street.

----From an Omro Herald of that date.

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## MRS. IDA CLARK CLARK

From the Omro Herald issue of Dec 30, 1937 Vol. 43 - No. 46.

POETRY ACCEPTED BY CROWN ANTHOLOGY  
OF VERSE

It will be of interest to readers of the Omro Herald to learn that Ida C. Clark of Omro, Wis., has had the following poetry accepted for publication in the Crown Anthology of Verse, a standard compilation of contemporary poetry: "Despair."

The inclusion of the poetry is a result of the author's participation in the \$250.00 prize poetry contest sponsored by Crown Publications. This volume will contain the representative work of the country's eminent contemporary poets. The inclusion of the author's work is a distinct sign of literary recognition. The Crown Anthology of Verse will be on the market early in 1938 at which time the prize winners will be announced.

The author's literary efforts have already achieved publication in the following periodicals: Spring Anthology 1932, (world library book) London, Eng., Contemporary American Woman Poets, 1935. The Book of American Verse 1935, The Year Book of Contemporary Poetry, 1936, American Voices, 1936, The Paebur Anthology of Verse 1937, The Oshkosh Northwestern, The Milwaukee Journal, The Omro Herald, The Winneconne News, (newspapers), Poetry Out of Wisconsin, 1937, Christmas Lyrics of 1937, Principal Poets of the World, 1937 and others.

The following is a brief biographic sketch of the author:

Ida C. Clark was born in Wyckoff, Minn., daughter of Ira G. and Caroline Clark. She was educated in the public schools of Minn., S. Dakota, and Omro, Wis., where she now resides. Wrote her first poems in 1928 and has the distinction of having been enthusiastically encouraged by Zona Gale, famous fiction writer and Pulitzer prize winner. Holds an honorary degree given by the Eugene Field Society, national organization of Composers, authors, and journalists. Received high praise from the General Federation of Womans Clubs, Washington D.C., through the Chairman of the poetry committee on a poem submitted in a national contest and one of her poems published in a local paper helped to win a Carnegie medal for a home boy, 13, who saved another lad from drowning. General character of writing; lyrics, poems, essays: Hobbies? art, wild flowers, pea-fowl.

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OMRO WOMAN'S POEM CARRIES OFF HONORS

Mrs. Ida C. Clark of Omro, whose poems frequently have appeared in the Oshkosh Northwestern, was honored recently when a poem she submitted in a national contest sponsored by the Olympics of the N.Y. World's Fair. received fourth place. Only four prizes were given nationally, Mrs. Clark receiving third prize with her poem, although many received honorable mention.

Mrs. Clark's poem is included in a book put up by the sponsoring group and now on display at the world's fair. Invited to New York to receive her reward personally, Mrs. Clark was unable to make the trip at this time. A copy of the book in which her poem appears was sent to her. She is the only Wisconsin poet or poetess to receive recognition in the contest.

----From the Aug. 24, 1939 issue of The Omro Herald Vol. 44 No. 28.  
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## THE VOICE ON THE BRIDGE

In the 1870's, the village of Omro, west of Oshkosh, was the center of Spiritualist activity in the state. Here the First Spiritualist's Society hosted eminent spiritualists and mediums from all over the United States--(the Davenport brothers, Moses Hull of Boston, Benjamin Todd of Michigan, Susan Johnson of California, and many others.) Seances multiplied and spirits materialized, but, with peculiar irony, the combined efforts of local and visiting mediums failed to solve the murder of a local citizen.

It was about 1877 that John Sullivan, a local farmer, was mysteriously slain. Sometime between 9 and 10 o'clock at night, he left the village where he had spent the day trading. It had been a long, weary day, and his thoughts were no doubt on home and bed as he trudged over the bridge spanning the Fox River.

Suddenly a cry of alarm rang out, followed by the discharge of a gun. A short time later Sullivan was found dead at the side of the bridge. There were no witnesses, no known motives, no suspects. Law enforcement officials were baffled. Who killed John Sullivan? Seances buzzed with the question as candles flickered late into the night in the homes of the psychics. But there was never an answer.

Then one night a Mr. Wilson was crossing the bridge where the farmer had met his death. Out of the darkness, he noticed a man just ahead of him shouldering a gun. A voice whispered into Mr. Wilson's ear, "That is the gun that killed John Sullivan." A terror-filled scream, then a loud report rent the air, and the apparation vanished.

Wilson fled to the village to relate his experience, swearing that he would recognize the murder weapon if he ever saw it again. Later he claimed that he had seen it. Who owned it? Wilson would not say. The spirits weren't talking either, and to this day Sullivan's murder remains a mystery.

----From "Haunted Wisconsin" page 162 by Beth Scott and Michael Norman - Stanton & Lee Publishers, Inc. First printing Oct. 1980.

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## WALTER K. ZWEIGER OBIT.

Walter K. Zweiger, 66, Omro, died this morning in Mercy Medical Center, Oshkosh. He was born April 24, 1917, in Ripon, the son of Herman and Martha Riebe Zweiger. He married Adeline Swattnick, June 15, 1946, in Ripon.

Mr. Zweiger served in the U.S. Army 32nd Red Arrow Division from 1940-45. He was a member of First Presbyterian Church, Omro, and had owned and operated Zweiger Hardware, Omro, which he purchased in 1952. It was then changed to Hardware Hank 15 years ago. He was a 30-year member of the Retail Hardware Association, a former member of the Omro Businessmen's Association and the Odd Fellows Lodge, and a charter member of the Omro Kiwanis Club.

Surviving are his widow, one daughter, Mrs. Edward (Christine) Movall, Thiensville; one brother, Karl, Green Lake; one sister, Mrs. Robert (Dorothy) Gneiser, Green Lake; and two grandchildren.

Services will be at 2 P.M. Thursday in First Presbyterian Church, Omro, the Rev. William Bowen officiating. Burial will be in Omro Cemetery.

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PERCY KNOLL -- Given a party to honor his 90th birthday and as custodian of Omro City Hall since 1962. (Daily Northwestern 2/22/71.)

Mr. Richard Reed settled in the town with his family in 1848, and Mr. Frank Pew in 1847.

The first school was established in 1848, in the house of Mr. Myron Howe, by Mrs. Abram Quick, the first teacher. The same year Mrs. George Beckwith taught school in her own house, and a private school was taught the same year by Mannah Olin in the Gilman Lowd neighborhood, in a school house built by subscription. Rev. Sampson held services in the grove near the West home in the summer of 1847. In the winter meetings were held in a shanty on section 27. In 1848 meetings were held in the house of Mr. Richard Reed.

The fur trader has been mentioned as stopping at various locations along the river, and this much of a letter from Mr. Hiram H.G. Bradt, of Eureka, will be of interest on the subject: "In 1885 I was in Green Bay, sick, and one day there came into my brother's office a lady patient, to whom I was introduced as a Miss Grignon, of Depere, and learning where I resided, she asked about the LaBordes, LeFevre's, Dousmans, and Louis Beauprey. The latter, a brother-in-law of Luke LaBorde, and stated that when she was a girl, he paddled her in a canoe to St. Paul to bring down furs gathered at the different stations on the rivers, and that she had in her possession a map upon which all the trading stations were marked. Well, in our town there was one situated between Delhi and Omro, which was still doing business when I reached town in 1849 though it was operated by 'an alien crowd' of lawless creatures, the principal of whom was George Roberts, of Whitewater, Wis. His den, which was eliminated through prosecution by David LeFevre, was on a piece of land owned by a Mr. Pesan, who lived in a log house near the river, which house was on the site of another, the ruins of which he hound under ground. Miss Grignon informed me that Robert Grignon, a pensioner of the Black Hawk war, and then living below Omro, above the mouth of the Wolf, likewise handled furs, though she did not speak of his having a station.

#### VILLAGE OF OMRO

The main part of the village of Omro is located on the south side of the Fox river, connected by a swing bridge with the opposite bank. It is a handsome village, and noted for its thrift and general air of prosperity and neatness. It contains a population of 1,358, of whom 783 were born in this state, 23 in Canada, 34 in England, 23 in Germany, and 13 in Ireland. There are a large number of well stocked stores of the usual classes of merchandise carried for a lively country traffic, also livery stables and grain and produce warehouses. The First National Bank has a capital stock of \$30,000. The place has the advantage of electric lights. The Union Felt Company manufacture felt goods, and there are wagon and blacksmith shops. Mr. C.H. Larabee conducts a large grocery store. The village has a two-story brick public hall for its fire engines, and meetings of the village board. The village library is located in the building, under the care of the village clerk.

The public schools, which have long been under the intelligent care of Mr. E.E. Shelton, are the pride of the place. A recent article in the Oshkosh "Northwestern" has this to say of her schools: "Principal E.E. Shelton has received the report of the inspection of the High School by the university inspector, and among other things the inspector reports that the committee recommends that the Omro High School be continued on the accredited list. The equipment of the library and the laboratory was reported good. The manual training building impressed the inspector most favorably in all respects. It was well arranged and well equipped. The organization, management and general condition of the schools were found to be very creditable indeed. Some time ago the state inspector reported as follows on the library is excellent.

E. Shelton  
1907-1908

Probably there is no better school library in any town of the size of Omro in the state, and there are few better in any place, regardless of size." The library has been carefully card-catalogued by Miss Lucy Thatcher, of the English department, and is in constant use by the students. The teachers have made every effort to enlarge the library as reference books right at hand are very valuable. The library has over 500 volumes of magazines, including complete sets of the World's Work, the Review of Reviews, McClure's and Scribner's and nearly complete sets of the Forum, Harper's, Century, St. Nicholas, Technical World and other standard magazines. Poole's Index and the Readers Guide make easy reference to magazine articles. There are special libraries in the department of domestic science and in the department of manual training. The girls in the first year High School class in domestic science are preparing meals to which their parents are invited. The girls, in groups of four, serve dinner. They are required to prepare and serve a meal for ten people at an expense not to exceed \$1.25. There are forty girls in the class, and each section strives to make the best record. The members of the second year German class recently finished reading a short play, and were then required by the teacher, Miss Abel to translate the play into English, after which four members of the class presented it before the High School literary society."

The manual training school was the gift of Mr. H.W. Webster, a pioneer, and for many years one of the leading business men. His sawmill formerly cut 5,000,000 feet of lumber each season. Hon. Hiram Wheat Webster was a native of New York State, of New England parents, and a graduate of Troy Academy in Vermont. He entered his lands in the town of Omro in 1848, where he lived until he moved into the village and commenced the manufacture of lumber. Mr. Webster died May 14, 1884.

The earliest occupation of the site of the village of Omro was by Charles Omro, Charles Carron, Jed Smalley and Captain William Powell, all of whom at times before 1845 maintained temporary or jackknife trading posts at this point for traffic with the Menominee Indians. The site was occupied by them possibly as early as 1836. It was known in the early settlement day as Smalley's Landing, or trading post, Mr. Edward West had moved into the town of Omro in 1845; but the first to locate on the site of the future village was Mr. David Humes.

He embarked in a skiff on Fox river at Marquette, in the spring of 1848, and paddled down the willow lined river to the present site of Omro, where he landed and located for a residence a part of section sixteen. This place was afterward known as "Beckwith Town." Here he erected a log cabin. It was Mr. Hume's ambition to build up a thriving town. He settled here for this purpose, and laid plans to accomplish this end. He supposed if he could devise means to tow logs up the Fox river that the sawmills would be built and their operation attract people to the place for trade and commerce and a town would grow up about the mills. To accomplish this he devised the grouser boat. This was a great invention, which for many years afterward was successfully operated in handling the great fleets across Lakes Winneconne, Butte des Morts and Winnebago. It made the handling of the millions of feet of pine timber that was run down the Wolf river comparatively easy and safe over the wide expanse of inland seas, and much of the success of the great lumber industry of Fond du Lac, Menasha, Neenah and Oshkosh was and is due to the grouser tow boat, invented by Mr. David Hume, the first settler of Omro

The grouser boat consists now of a (strong steam tow boat, just large enough to contain powerful boiler and engines. It has near its bow end, through a tight housing, a tall, powerful oak timber which is raised up or let down by a ratchet and pinion. When let down and forced into the bottom of the river, it acts as a grouser or powerful anchor, to hold the boat fast to the spot. A windlass on the stern of the boat run by steam then draws the fleet of logs up to the boat. The grouser is raised and the boat runs out, a distance ahead and downs grouser again, and the fleet of logs is windlassed up to the boat again. The boat alone could deaw behind only a few thousand feet of logs; but by the grouser device the boat is able to draw over the water several million feet of logs in one fleet.) Thus it will be understood that this invention was worth a great deal to the lumber interests, and has been in use ever since it was first devised, not only on the waters of the Fox and Wolf rivers, but in othersparts of the world.

The first grouser towboat built was a cheap affair, and the logs were towed up by horses, four horses on a sweep, and was known as Hume's Horse boat. Mr. Aaron Humes, a son of the inventor, built the first steam winch grouser boat. It was named the "Swan", Mr. Humes operated it s shart time, then sold it to parties in Neenah. As soon as it was demonstrated that the grouser boat was a success, Mr. Nelson Beckwith, son-in-law of David Humes, and Mr. W.C. Dean commenced the erection of a sawmill. Mr. Beckwith withdrew and built another mill in 1849. Among the newcomers of the period were Colonel Tuttle, Dr. McAllister, Andrew Wilson, L.O.E. Maning, A. Crofee, William Hammond. The original plat of the village was laid out in 1849, (by Joel V. Taylor, Elisha Dean and Nelson Beckwith.) The river was crossed by a ferry boat; but in 1850 Colonel Tuttle built a float bridge over the river at the foot of Main street. The steamer Badger is said to have been the first boat to come up river. It appeared in 1850 bringing severap people to join the settlement. The first store opened in the twon was by Mr. N. Frank, and Mr. C. Bigelow, who put up a building at the end of the bridge for the purpose. Of the extent of business operations in town at that time, it is related that a load of wood was brought to town for sale. Late in the day, finding no purchaser, the farmer started for the river to throw it away, rather than draw it home; but some one came out and offered him a pint of whisky for the load, which he accepted. The first hotel was erected in 1850, on the site of the present Larrabee House. There was a sawmill erected on the north side of the river in 1851, by Hiram Johnson. It was burned in 1866; but restored at once, and operated for many years afterward. The schools were instituted in 1850-51. Mr. Henry Purdy was the teacher, and the building was located near the present High School building. The Methodist church was erected in 1855, the Baptist church in 1866 and the Catholic church the same year. Mr. Andrew Wilson erected his saw mill on the north side of the river in 1856. The same year the great event for the village was the erection of a flour mill, by Mr. McLaren. This was the means of drawing considerable trade to the town. The village charter was granted in 1857, and at the first village election Mr. W.P. McAllister was elected president. The project of a railroad was pushed, and during the summer of 1857 the town and village took stock to the extent of \$90,000, which was pledged and paid, insuring the coming of the railroad essential to the improvement and advance of any village.



The last rail was laid January 1, 1861. The villagers paid for the depot. The float bridge was purchased by the town of Omro for \$800, the village agreeing to keep it in repair. It was now opened free to the public. Mr. George Challoner built a shingle mill in 1863. This was afterward used by Thompson & Hayward for a carriage factory. The "Omro Union," the first newspaper, was established in May, 1865. The machine shop of George Challoner was built in 1866. Mr. Challoner had invented a shingle mill which afterward became famous, and the leading machine in America for the manufacture of shingles. A number of years ago the shop which was built of stone, was moved on barges down river and set up in Oshkosh. The ten block shingle mills made by the Challoner Sons, became the leading mill used for the manufacture of shingles. A spoke factory was put up by Goodenough & Utter in 1866. Sheldon & Allen built a broom handle factory. Scott's shingle mill was built the same season. Hon. Hiram W. Webster built his fine sawmill in 1866.

The Omro Journal has been published by the veteran editor, Mr. Platt M. Wright, since 1876. It was established in May, 1865 as the "Omro Union" by Kaine & Wright. Mr. Wright has been sole proprietor since April 1, 1877. He was born in Wrightstown on the Fox river, Wisconsin, son of Hoel S. Wright, who settled in Brown county in 1833, and gave his name to Wrightstown. Mr. C.H. Slocum publishes the "Omro Herald." The hotels are the Larrabee House and Northwestern Hotel.

The Baptist Church was erected in 1866. The first pastor was Elder Theodore Pillsbury. The membership increased to 125. Elder O.W. Babcock, of Neenah was in charge in 1881. The Methodist Episcopal church was erected in 1859, but not completed until 1866. The pastor in 1881 was Rev. Jesse Cole.

The Presbyterian Church was organized in May 10, 1851, by Rev. L. Robbins. Their church, erected in 1867, cost \$3,500, but has since been improved and enlarged. Rev. F.Z. Rossiter was pastor in 1881. The Episcopal mission was in charge of Rev. Charles T. Susan, rector, in 1881. The Catholic church, St. Joseph, was built in 1866. In 1881 it was in charge of Father Mazzeaud, as a mission attached to Berlin; but in 1896 it was in charge of Rev. M. Kelleher, as a mission of the Poygan church.

Hon. Milo C. Bushnell, so long a prominent citizen of the town and village of Omro, and so often representing them away from home that he becomes a part of their history. He came from Vermont, where he was born in 1824, to the town of Omro in 1846, among the earliest pioneers of the town and county, and took up lands at \$1.25 an acre, on which he erected a log house. In a few years he moved into the village taking an active interest in civic and moral affairs. He was a member of the county board for fifteen years, treasurer of the township five years, and on the school board twenty-seven years. Several terms chairman of the township and supervisor for a good many years. He was elected to the Legislature in 1867, and re-elected. It can be honestly said of him that he was an esteemed citizen.

In the Civil War the village and town was well represented by stalwart sons. The companies mostly recruited from Omro were Company C of the Fourteenth; A, of the Forty-eighth, and F, of the Eighteenth regiment, as well as members of the Third Cavalry. Company C was recruited in the fall of 1861, mustered into the United States service January 30, 1862, and left the state March 27. David Hinman was the first of the Omro contingent to be killed. William W. Wilcox, commissioned October 8, 1861, was captain, and resigned March 16, 1862, giving place to Absolom S. Smith, commissioned March 17, 1862, Captain, and afterwards promoted to Colonel. Lieutenant Colin Miller died May 23, 1863, from a mortal wound received in the assault upon the works of Vicksburg the day before.

Asel Childs took his place under commission December 9, 1864. The Fourteenth Regiment was divided in 1864, the non-veterans being transferred to the army under General Sherman, the veterans re-enlisted were assigned to the Seventeenth Army Corps before Vicksburg, and then on the Red river expedition. In the western campaign they marched on ten days rations 324 miles in nineteen days, building two bridges and fording two rivers.

Company F, of the Eighteenth Regiment Infantry, Colonel James S. Alban, were mustered in January 20, 1862, at Camp Washburn, and departed from the state March 27, 1862. Captain Joseph H. Roberts, commissioned January 13, 1862. Lieutenant George Stokes was taken prisoner at the battle of Shiloh, Tenn., April 6, 1862, but was afterward promoted to Chaplain. William A. Pope, who took his place in April 1, 1864, was reported missing in action October 5, 1864. George A. Topliff was Second Lieutenant, succeeded by Francis M. Carter, July 4, 1862. This regiment participated in Sherman's movements for the relief of Chattanooga, and with the Army of the Cumberland helped make a thrilling page in the history of the civil war.

The Third Cavalry, partly recruited at Omro, and contained a large number of men from this place, was commanded by ex-Governor Colonel William A. Barstow. It was mustered into the service from November 3, to January 31, 1862, at Camp Barstow, and left the state March 25, 1862. In reading over a list of the commissioned officers of this regiment of cavalry, there appears the names of many men who have distinguished themselves in the civic and business life of the state. In Kansas, Colonel Barstow was appointed provost marshal general of Kansas, and the command was given over to Major Henning. They were in the campaign west of the Mississippi river, with the army, doing scout duty and engaging in many of the numerous battles, some of them with Quantrell's famous band of so-called guerillas, who gave no quarter, killing their prisoners. At one battle the guerillas captured the whole regimental band, who were non-combatants, and killed all of them, even burning their bodies, so the official report records. During the last of the war Company A of the Forty-eighth Regiment was recruited in Omro, composed almost entirely of men from Omro town and village.

TOWNSHIP HISTORY (con't)

The town of Omro contains a population of 1,111, of whom 811 were born in this state, 101 in Germany, 15 in Canada and 17 in England. There is a total of 20,000 acres of land with 15,500 acres improved, valued at \$1,265,000. The sales show the average value per acre of \$90. The productions include 91,000 bushels oats, 3000 barley, 33,000 corn, 14,000 potatoes, 7,000 apples, 8,000 pounds honey. There are 754 horses, 2,600 cattle and 3,4000 hogs. The 1,800 milch cows produce 34,000 pounds of butter and 10,000 fowls lay 50,000 dozen eggs.

The town was settled at the site of the future village of Omro, some years before the real settlement of the town by the location of the trading posts of Mr. Charles Omro, Charles Carron, Jed Smalley and Captain William Powell, who at different times maintained trading posts at this point for traffic with the Menominee Indians and at a very early day the place was known as Smalley's Landing, or trading post. Mr. Edward West made the first permanent settlement in the town, by the purchase of 500 acres and erection of log cabins, in the spring of 1845, near section 23. Before he could move his family, he marked out and cut, where it was necessary, a wagon road from Rosendale in Fond du Lac county, to this land in Omro, then known as the town of Butte des Morts. His nearest neighbors was Oshkosh and Ceresco. He says: "There was an old block house a short distance above the site of the village of Omro, and a few families were trading with the Indians and farming a little on the site of Oshkosh. The balance of the surrounding country was uninhabited, except by Indians. Mr. Stanley offered to sell his claim for a small sum. Neither Oshkosh nor Omro were inviting places. Game was scarce because of the Indians. Wolves and prairie hens were abundant, as the Indians, because of superstitious belief, did not molest them. Prairie hens were so numerous I was obliged to shoot them to save my grain, and fed them to the hogs. Strangers calling were feasted on the birds." Mr. West was a pioneer in Wisconsin, arriving in 1836. The first year in Winnebago county he put in a large crop of fall wheat, which sold for \$1 a bushel on the farm, to new settlers, as soon as threshed. After seven years' farming on this land, he leased it in 1852, and moved to Appleton, where he became a prominent citizen and constructed the West canal for power purposes. Other settlers came in at once and very soon they were thickly scattered throughout the town. At the town of Butte des Morts an election was held at the house of Edward West on April 6, 1847, and he was made chairman. There were seven votes in favor of the state constitution, and fourteen against it. Five votes to give colored persons the right to vote, and sixteen against it. Eleven votes cast against the sale of liquor, which was all the votes cast on the subject. After many changes of territory and name, the name was finally changed to Omro by the county board in 1852. Nelson Olin moved into the town in 1846, and Mr. Gilman Lowd came the same year. About the same time Mr. Myron Howe moved in and built a log shanty on his land. Mr. Milow C. Bushnell came from Vermont into the town in 1846, and the next year erected a log shanty in company with Mr. A.H. Pease. He was a prominent man in the county for many years, and a member of the assembly.

ORGANIZATION OF TOWNS

Omro. As previously explained, all the earlier towns of Winnebago county were absorbed by act of the territorial legislature of April 1, 1843, expanding the town of Butte des Morts into the town of Winnebago, embracing the whole territory of the county, and thus it remained until the act of February 11, 1847, which provided for organizing of five towns within the county---- Winnebago, Butte des Morts, Brighton, Neenah and Rushford.

The town of Butte des Morts, comprised the part of the present town of Omro and part of Winneconne, south of the Fox river, composed of the area as stated, "All of townships 18 and 19 in range 15, lying south of Fox river." An election was held at the house of Edward West on April 6, 1847, at which nineteen votes were polled. The corner of township 19 was set off to Winneconne, March 11, 1848, and the name of the town of Butte des Morts was changed to Bloomingdale by act of the legislature, April 3, 1849, and by an act of the county board in 1852 the name was changed to Omro. In 1850 the south half of section 31 was attached to Rushford, and in 1856 the north half of the same attached to Rushford. Section 1 and 2 and the north half of 13 in Rushford were attached to Omro, completing the present boundaries of that town.

TOWN OF OMRO

Town of Omro is one of the finest agricultural regions in the state. It lays high, with rolling rich soil. Originally it contained oak openings and hardwoods, now all cleared except a few wood lots. The Fox river runs through the town, bringing it into direct steam-boat connections with the whole of this historic valley. The few gravel beds afford good roads material. There is a belt of artesian fountain or flowing wells strata through the town, reached by boring fifteen to thirty feet. Stephen Johnson in 1847 had excavated a well on section thirty-six, some thirty feet without getting water. During the night the water broke through, and in the morning the well was flowing over, and had flooded the garden all about the house. Mr. Nelson Olin, in January, 1848, was excavating a well on his place, when at thirty-three feet down the pick broke through the containing water wall, when the air and water burst through with great force, compelling a hasty retreat of operators. The water raised over the surface has been running ever since. Many other artesian wells have been sunk. The fountain belt is said to be about two miles wide.

The C.M. & St. P. Railway runs through the town with station at the village of Omro. The town contains eleven school houses and a number of churches. The post office is at the village of Omro, and there is rural mail delivery.

THE VOICE ON THE BRIDGE

In the 1870's, the village of Omro, west of Oshkosh, was the center of Spiritualist activity in the state. Here the First Spiritualist's Society hosted eminent spiritualists and mediums from all over the United States-- the Davenport brothers, Moses Hull of Boston, Benjamin Todd of Michigan, Susan Johnson of California, and many others. Seances multiplied and spirits materialized, but, with peculiar irony, the combined efforts of local and visiting mediums failed to solve the murder of a local citizen.

It was about 1877 that John Sullivan, a local farmer, was mysteriously slain. Sometime between 9 and 10 o'clock at night, he left the village where he had spent the day trading. It had been a long, weary day, and his thoughts were no doubt on home and bed as he trudged over the bridge spanning the Fox River.

Suddenly a cry of alarm rang out, followed by the discharge of a gun. A short time later Sullivan was found dead at the side of the bridge. There were no witnesses, no known motives, no suspects. Law enforcement officials were baffled. Who killed John Sullivan? Seances buzzed with the question as candles flickered late into the night in the homes of the psychics. But there was never an answer.

Then one night a Mr. Wilson was crossing the bridge where the farmer had met his death. Out of the darkness, he noticed a man just ahead of him shouldering a gun. A voice whispered into Mr. Wilson's ear, "That is the gun that killed John Sullivan." A terror-filled scream, then a loud report rent the air, and the apparation vanished.

Wilson fled to the village to relate his experience, swearing that he would recognize the murder weapon if he ever saw it again. Later he claimed that he had seen it. Who owned it? Wilson would not say. The spirits weren't talking either, and to this day Sullivan's murder remains a mystery.

-----From "Haunted Wisconsin" page 162 by Beth Scott and Michael Norman - Stanton & Lee Publishers, Inc. First printing Oct. 1980.

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CLUES to Early Settler

1. Was born in township of Omro - barefoot days in Poygan.
2. Uncle had the ice business (2 ice houses) - one on new addition of Scott Park, other west of Omro Lumber Co. One large horse, driven by beer drinker supplies saloons and the butter factory.
3. With mother to carpet weaver where Hellwig's live now. (Ernie). Mentioned angle irons of Nelson Beckwith's saw mill still in place (T. Thompson's).
4. One of his teachers was Cora McAllister in Red Brick.
5. My Aunt scolded him for not washing up at night--pillow slip was dirty.
6. Attended East Side school- initials carved on door.
7. Attended North side school while living on Poygan Ave.
8. Lived, too, in West Addition where Cal Root used to live.
9. Lived near Catholic Church where Nellie Marble lives.
10. Les Leighton and Mard Gummer and he floated toy boats from Grossman's cheese factory to the river.
11. C.G. Thompson the ice dealers. Father passed away a few days after Mr. Sawyer of the G.A.R. Post.
12. Grandfather took up land in sec. 9 and 10.
13. Early Settler was born in Sec. 9. - then to Poygan - later on to the Village of Omro.
14. Father's farm was just west of the Oak Hill cemetery. Folks all buried there. Part of the cemetery was folkss old orchard.
15. Oak Hill Cemetery bought from Wm. Johnson.  
(Old Settler a Johnson? Possibly an orphan?)

TROXELL FAMILY

*with Busse's house*

The Troxell family of which Grace was a daughter lived just west of Grace Fleury's house on the corner of Madison and Larrabee. Father was Henry Reuben Troxell. Granddaughter was Jane Troxell Mauritz, Oshkosh.

Eva Roth and Anna Hurley early Omro school teachers.

Tim Haley lived kitty-corner from Joyce Roberts. His wife died leaving four little boys and a baby. Relatives cared for the baby. Dudley's lived there later. The house burned down.

*with Busse's house*

P.A. Wheeler's daughter Mabel gave lessons on the piano. She married Dr. Wilbert Hurlbert. Wheeler had a farm on the Zion road off 9th St. road. A Busse family now lives on it.

LIBRARY

Surprising information from a native Omroite is that when a small girl there was a library in the Clerk's office in the old City Hall. At the time John Shelp was the village clerk. She would go with her father when he had occasion to visit the city hall. This was back in the 1915 to 20s. She did not know when the library was discontinued nor what happened to the books. (Recall reading same in some article).

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An Omro area resident recalls interesting bits of humorous incidents. The house where Dorothy Dailey now lives was built in line with both E. Main and Harrison. On Saturday nights the lady living there never went to bed until well after midnight. The heads of 3 influential families lived on the river road. They all went to town, frequented the saloons, and on driving home with their horse and buggies they would race up Main Street. She was so frightened that they would fail to turn up what is now Maple Drive, instead run smack into her house, that she never went to bed until those men had successfully driven their steeds past her home safely.

The family living at this intersection often invited a family from the country to dinner. They lived south out on the Harrison St. road. In those early days dinner meant 12 o'clock noon. The Mr. would sit at the window and watch down the street. Always at 9 A.M. he would say, "Here they come!"

This same Omroite recalls the after effect of one iceman in particular. He would bring in chunks of ice to replenish the ice-box; this was long before electric refrigerators. After he left the Missus had to get out the floor mop and sop up the water that he would have dripped all over the kitchen floor!

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INDEX

A

Acknowledgements - 263  
 Activities - 180-187  
 " of winter - 182  
 Ad, scolding - 190-270-1  
 ADs (1894) - 121-122-270  
 Adams, Luthera - 33-96  
 Agr. school tiff - 96  
 American Legion & Aux. - 88A-89  
 Amusements - 231-317-  
 Andrews, Lucas - 103  
 Artists - 155  
 Assembly of God church - 67  
 Attorneys - 141  
 Authors & Poets - 179  
 Auctioneers - 142  
 Automobile, 1st in Omro - 146  
 Assemblymen - 243  
 Autograph Album - 264.

B

Baby Island - 319-323-(map) 322  
 Badger steamer - 54  
 Bakery - 152-  
 Ball Park - 106  
 Band Building - 232-  
 Band Concerts - 181  
 Band wagon - 181  
 Banks - 192-1st mentioned - 192-336  
 " 1877 fund gone - 192.  
 " Holdup - 193 - washers - 194A-  
 " Moratorium - 193  
 " People's - 194A-  
 " draft rates 1894 - 192  
 Baptist Church - 30 - 31-302-339  
 " " history - 57  
 " early members - 30  
 " letter to Rev. - 57  
 Barbers - 141  
 Barges, steel - 101  
 Barlow, Leslie - 74  
 Barrel factory - 114  
 Baton of "Doc's" - 176  
 Beauty Parlors - 153  
 Beckwith, Nelson - 37  
 Beckwithtown - 36-37-40 - 55-337-  
 Bennett, Cal - 248  
 Bennett, Albert - 248  
 Bicycle - 116 - 290  
 Bigelow, 1st settler - 36-43  
 Birth, 1st in County - 25  
 Bishop, Alonzo - 27  
 Bishop, Ethel - 2  
 Blacksmith Shops - 69-70-  
 Big Brothers - 222  
 Bay Boom - 321.

B con't'd

Blackbird Island - 323  
 Blake, Caleb - 27  
 Bloomingdale - 33-55-57  
 " P.O. - 25  
 Board meeting (Special) - 202  
 Boats - 54-99-100-101-  
 Boat factory - 41-209  
 Boats, Gov't - 101-  
 " " signals - 100- - manner - 336-337  
 Boat "Swan" - 36  
 " trip to Oshkosh on Thistle - 99  
 Body Shop - 150  
 Bogs in Lake Butte des Morts - 4  
 Bogy land W. Larrabee - 219  
 Bookstore - 29  
 Boots & Shoes - 129  
 Bottling Works - 122-189-190  
 Boys Building (Band) - 222-223  
 Boy Scouts - 165-223  
 " " War effort - 235-236  
 Bowling - 181  
 Bradt, Percy - 250  
 Brick Pond - 167  
 Brickyard - 119  
 Bridges - 47-336 Foot bridge - 48-343  
 Bridge dedication (1971) - 48  
 " experience - 48  
 " Float - 47  
 " Problem - 48  
 Broom Handle factory - 114  
 Burnash, Adeline - 259  
 Bullies - 50  
 Bunker, Hattie - 251  
 Bushnell, Milo - 26  
 Butkiewicz Shop (hist.) - 122-123  
 Butte des Morts township - 23  
 " " " Marsh - 4  
 Butter Factory history - 79-89-119-  
 120-121  
 Bounty, soldiers - 283

175.



Compound, Great Western - 76  
C con't'd

Cemetery - <sup>C</sup>26-300  
 Cady-Neuschafer mill - 85  
 Calico dresses - 170  
 Campbell family - 105  
 Campfire Girls - 165-220  
 Canady - 49-226-323-  
 Cannon in Park - 219  
 Card games - 180  
 Card Clubs - 180  
 Carpenters - 151  
 Carriage Shops - 76  
 Carter family (Amos) - 258  
 Carter Memorial Library - 237-237A-  
 Cat Scarcity - 29  
 Catholic Church - 64-339-  
 Cattle buyers - 212  
 Cement, 1st used - 72-102-<sup>214 Nov. 21</sup> 11/2/39  
 Census, 1st - 6-<sup>1875 866-3,312</sup>  
 " of Omro 1847-1855-1890-1896-  
 1920-30-60-70 -14-40-341  
 Cents, 100 - 49  
 Challoner, Geo. enterprises - 114  
 Challoner, family - 26-32  
 Channel dug - 43  
 Charlie's robe - 203  
 Chautauquas - 180  
 C.M. & St. Paul - 79  
 Chinamen's laundry - 167-203-<sup>205</sup>  
 Checker Champion - 250  
 Checker players at Demmon's - 250  
 Cheese factories - 152  
 Cheese in stores - 125  
 Chiropractors - 205  
 Christian church - 61  
 Church, 1st movement - 30  
 Church meeting, 1st (Baptist) - 30  
 Church movements - 56-  
 Churches, histories - 56-339-272-  
 Church bells did not ring - 67  
 Church going (Ada M.) - 187-271-  
 Cigar factory - 122  
 Circuit Riders - 56  
 Circus - 157  
 City chartered (1944) - 38  
 City Hall (new) (1966) - 230-237  
 City Hall Clock & Caretakers - 227  
 City Hall (Old) history - 227-<sup>1898</sup>  
 " " bell cracked - 228-<sup>1896</sup>  
 Clamming - 210  
 Clark, Cad - 209  
 Clubs of 1933 - 180  
 Coal dealers - 146  
 Coffin factory - 114  
 Concrete sidewalk - 212  
 Confederate Bill - 57  
 Congregational Church (1911) {63-66  
 Conveyancers - 141 {88A-231-  
 Cookies, 1st in stores - 125  
 Civil War letters - 273 thru 280  
 Civil War facts - 160-247-281- thru 284-339-340-

Coon's Point - 143  
 Co-op Store - 143  
 Cope, Chas. - 244  
 Corduroy road - 102  
 Coronet Band - 175  
 CRO's nest - 220  
 Crooked Road from Winneconne - 257  
 County Pioneer Ass'n - 196  
 " Supt. of schools - 91  
 " Agr. school tiff - 96  
 Crafts - 151-152-153  
 County Agr Society (1st) 1855 - 6-

D

Daggett & Son enterprise - 123-124  
 Dance instructor - 179  
 Dance Orchestra - 178  
 Dancing - 78-174  
 Dean, Elisha - 37  
 Declamatory contests - 230  
 Dentists - 206  
 Depots - 79-81  
 Depot Agents - 81  
 " diagram - 81  
 Depression years - 225  
 " Relief for city - 225  
 Deltox Co. - 82  
 Dime Store - 147  
 Diptheria epidemic - 59-206  
 Directory (1880) - 172  
 " partial 1931 - 191  
 " (1936) - 240  
 " (1974) - 261  
 Disposal Plant - 225  
 Districk Skule - 231  
 Dock built by Frank - 47  
 Doctors - 204 thru 206  
 Dollar (100) cents - 49  
 Draymen - 75  
 Dredging river - 43-320-324-  
 Dressmakers - 140  
 Dress Shop (D & P) - 147  
 Drew, Geo. - 76  
 Drug Store, window broken - 136  
 Druggists - 134-136-138  
 Dry Goods Stores - 129-130-135-138  
 Drowning, 1st in Omro - 48  
 Drowning, near, boy rescued - 48  
 Drowning, Geo. B. saved 2 - 123  
 Drummers - 213-214  
 Drunks - 189  
 Dunn, John - 259  
 Drug Stores - 130-134-136-287-289-

will  
 star  
 letter  
 273 to  
 281

E

"Early Settler" - 254-167-330-344-  
 "Early Settler's" recollections - 166  
 Editor's rivalry - 52-53  
 Education-wise - 91  
 Education Ass'n - 91  
 Education board 1894 - 165  
 Election, 1st (1842), tnship - 23  
 " 1847 officers - 24  
 " " village officers - 37  
 Electricity - 208 *generator*  
 Electricity gripes - 208  
 Electric Service - 147  
 Electric Shops - 147-150-  
 Elliott, John - 251  
 Elm Tree Circle in Park - 219  
 Ending - 263  
 Epidemics - 206-207  
 Episcopal church - 63-339-  
 Erie Canal 1825 - 5  
 Exchange Hotel 1850 - 37-44-50-  
 Exchange Tavern - 103  
 Express lines - 75  
 Extravaganza of 1930's - 241  
 Entertainment - 232-317-

F

Filling Stations - 215-  
 Fall Festivals - 241-  
 Fair, Civic League work - 217-  
 Factories, mills & shops - 113  
 Fair Grounds 1886 - 183  
 Fair, Omro Agr. Mech. Ass'n - 77  
 Fairmont Heights - 222  
 Farm Implements - 213  
 Farm School - 97  
 Felt Works - 123  
 Fence Viewer - 24  
 Ferry boat - 47  
 Fire (I.O.O.F.) - 171  
 Fire Department, none, Ada M. - 186  
 Fire engine, 1st, late 1880's - 55  
 Fire Fighting, early days - 55-228  
 Fire, Prehn Mill - 228  
 Fire at Winneconne - 171  
 Fisk Park - 176-319-323-  
 Flag Pole "Liberty" - 106  
 Float Bridge - 47  
 Float Bridge - 47  
 Flood 1846 - 15  
 Flour mills - 119-122  
 Flu epidemic 1918 - 206  
 Fly Chasing - 298.

F con't'd

Ford Auto dealer - 72  
 Ford, Madge - 96  
 Fountains - 38-342-  
 Fourierite House - 15  
 Fox River, oldest - 3-44-320-316-319  
 Fox River channel - 43-167  
 " " used by militia - 3  
 Fraternal Orders 1894 - 195  
 Fraternal Order, 1st 1856 - 159  
 Fraternal Orders - 161 thru 165  
 Funeral Customs - 137  
 Funeral Morgue - 137  
 Fur buyers - 201  
 Fur trader - 5

G

Gamble Store - (121)-150-  
 Gallop Trek from Green Bay - 7  
 Gambling - 180  
 G.A.R. Hall history - 89  
 G.A.R. members of I.O.G.T. - 160  
 G.A.R. organization - 89-110  
 Garages - 215-286-  
 Garden Club - 165  
 Gardeners - 107  
 Gasoline engines - 213  
 Gerard, Norman arrival - 24-54  
 Gerard's Hotel - 78  
 Gerard mill - 113  
 German Lutheran church, St. Luke's - 65  
 German M.E. church - 65  
 Girl Scouts - 165  
 Glass Factory - 68  
 Good Templar Lodge - 159  
 Goodwin House - 44-50  
 Grace Lutheran Church - 67  
 Gramophone - 179  
 Grange, Omro - 162  
 Grauser of Humes - 36-337-338-  
 Great Western Compound - 76  
 Green Bay to Oshkosh of Gallop's - 7  
 Green Houses - 107  
 Grignon Family - 4-301-  
 Grignon girls - 49-301-  
 Grignon graves - 5-49  
 Grignon Gun Club - 180-320-map 322-  
 Grignon Mansion - 8  
 Grignon, Robert - 4-301-320  
 Grist Mill, 1st - 90  
 Grocery stores - 125-128 thru 140  
 Growser (grauser) of Humes - 36-337-338  
 Gummer, B.V. - 46  
 Gun Clubs - 180-320-321-333-  
 "Grignon Reservation" - 320

H

Hand car - 79  
 Halls - 239  
   Benedict - 239-283-  
   Bushnell - 174-239-289-  
   Frank - 63-239-289-  
   I.O.O.F. - 161  
   Masonic - ~~12~~ 161-  
   Putnam - ~~14~~ 105-239-289-83  
   Wilson - 189  
   Woman's Relief Corps - 51-160  
 Hardware stores - 143-146  
 Harness Shops - 74  
 Hat Shops - 140  
 Hay crops - 213  
 Hay Plant - 82-320-4-  
 Hitching Posts - 158  
 Hobo Jungle - 169-319-  
 Holy Rollers - 66  
 Homesteading - 6  
 Home Remedies - 207  
 Honor Roll WW I - 224  
   " " WW II - 235  
 Horse racing enthusiasts - 252  
 Horse Racing on Ice - 252  
 Horse Shoe Courts in Park - 225  
 Hotels - 44-50-78-103-104-189-290-  
 Hotels, list - 103-104-339-  
 House boats - 203  
 Hub & Spoke factory - 113  
 Huie Trial - 190  
 Hume, David - 36  
 Humes Horse Boat - 36  
 Hwy 21, cemented - 72-214  
 Homes, early families - 296  
 High water of Fox - 44

I

Ice Harvest - 84-85  
 Ice Houses - 84-345-  
 Ice Outs, 1800's, Fox river - 168  
 Immigration west - 5  
 "Imp of the Fox" (house boat) - 203  
 Indian farming - 11  
 Indian Land - 40-49-318-5 (purchase in 1836-184 per acre)  
 Indian Mounds - 37  
 Indian Reservation - 49-323-  
 Indian Scare - 41  
 Indian Scrimmage - 40  
 Indian Tales - 41-42  
 Indian Tribes - 6  
 Industries - 113 to 124-225  
 Industry 1856 - 90  
 Industry again (W.P.A. 1930) - 225- ads of - 260 B  
 Industrial Fairs - 217

I con't'd

Insurance Agents - 141-142  
 Insurance, Phoenix Co. - 141  
 Interest rates - 171-192 (1900)  
 Interurban - 71  
 Interurban terminal - 71  
 Introduction - 2  
 I.O.O.F., 1st bldg. 1877 - 161  
   " brick by boat - 100  
   " hall of brick - 161  
   " " burned - 161-171  
 I.O.G.T. - 159

J

J & S. Drug store - 138  
 Jaeck, Emma G. - 33-253  
 Janitors - 97  
 Jaycees (circus) - 157  
 Jaycees organization - 165-106  
 Jewelry Stores - 130-136  
 July 4ths - 221  
   " " shooting anvils - 221-289-  
   " " pageant 1914 - 221  
 Junk dealers - 216  
 Junction school and Cemetery - 300

K

Keely Kure - 190-247.  
 Kerosene lamps - 184  
 Kiwanian Organization - 165  
 Ku-Klux-Klan - 88  
 Knagg's Ferry - 10-301-  
 Kraft Co. - 89-121-236  
 Kero - 300  
 Kinderhook Road - 323-

Letters about Early Omro by  
W.D. Peterson - 287-305  
C.B. Root - 287

L

- Ladder Factory - 164
- LaFollette, "Bob" - 88
- Lambrecht Flat - 73
- Lamp cleaning - 184
- Lamps, kerosene - 184
- Lamps, Village - 185
- Langlade, Chas. - 4
- Larrabee family - 246
- Larrabee House - 44-50-103
- Laundromat - 153
- Lead Mining - 5
- Library - 237-237A-238-332-345-329
- Lion's Club - 88A-164
- Livery Stables - 71-290
- Locality names - 226
- Locker plant - 147
- Logan Circle of G.A.R. - 110-111
- Logs in river - 166
- Lowd, Gilman's experiences - 22
- Lumber Company - 149
- Lutheran Church, Grace - 67
- " St. Luke's - 65
- Laslies Point - 321
- Liberty Pole - 106-289
- Lumbering Industry - 313

- Men's League - 217-317
- Mapes, Capt. - 110-111-112
- Memorial Days - 110-111
- Memorial Day speakers - 110-111
- Milk & eggs, - 107
- Milk delivery - 186
- Milkmen - 108
- Mill, 1st in Omro - 37
- Mills, factories & shops - 85-113-114-115-116-119-120
- Milkweed, War effort - 235
- Millinery Shops - 140
- Money lenders - 171
- Monument, 1904 (G.A.R.) - 111
- Moran, Ada, Omro history - 185-186-187
- Morgue - 137
- Morticians - 136-137-138
- Mother's Club (Primary) - 232
- Movies - 86
- Music - 174 thru 179
- Music instructors - 178-179
- Music vocal recital 1916 - 182
- Musicians - 176 thru 179
- Musical Ass'n 1867 - 174
- Musical " - 161
- Muskrat furs - 209-316
- Murder by Omro bridge - 343

Mapes, Capt M - 78

- Men's League - 217-317
- Machinery, new farm - 213
- Machine Shops, - 114-122
- Mail delivery, hand car - 79
- Mail delivery to Omro - 79
- Mail Route 1826 - 4 (R.S.O. 4/15/03.) 83-
- Mailman, 1st in County - 24
- Map 1836 - 16 - Wis.
- " 1839-40 - 16 - County
- " 1877 - 131 (Omro village) Root
- " 1880 (C.I.S.) - 117
- " 1880 - 132 (Omro village) Peterson
- " 1909 - 35 early streets (names)
- " 1914-20 W. Water St. - 144
- " 1914-20 E. Water St. - 145
- " Omro Township - 21 - early homesteaders
- Marble shooting on road - 232
- Marble & Granite Works - 119
- Marquette & Joliet - 2
- Marshalls, village - 167
- Marshall's job - 230
- Masons - 164 - 181
- Mastadon bones - 158-173-
- Meanies - 50
- M.E. Church - 61-339
- M.E. parsonage - 95
- M.E. German - 65
- Medicine Shows - 139
- Meatmarkets - 149

319  
Place  
names  
(322  
map)

- Men's League - 317N after general index
- Names of Omro People
- Navigation closed - 101
- Newspapers - 51-242-339.
- " rivalry 1887 - 52
- Nicolet, Jean - 2
- Normal School almost - 96
- North Side, Omro - 49
- North-siders - 256 thru 260
- N.R.A. WW II - 234
- Nurses - (RN) - 154-234
- Nurses, practical - 206
- Nursing Homes - 154

O

P

Omro Businessmen Ass'n - 163 (Q3A)-168  
 OBA Fall festivals - 86-181-241  
 " history - 163  
 Ode to Omro - 177  
 Order Eastern Star - 161-195-242  
 Officers 1847-48-49 - 24-37-40-318  
 Old Red Brick - 196  
 Old Red Brick Ass'n - 196  
 Omro, 1876 era, Early Settler - 166  
 Omro Agr. & Mechan. Ass'n - 77  
 Omro Board of Trade (1871) - 163 + 06  
 " Butter & Cheese Co. - 79-89-119-120  
 " City chartered (1944) - 38  
 " Co-op Shipping Ass'n - 79-143-212  
 " 1880 Directory - 172  
 " Felt Works - 123 (1st) 299-300  
 " Herald - 51  
 " Village hist. begins - 36-272-336  
 " History, Ada M. - 186  
 " " Anna Brunner - 188  
 " Journal - 51-186  
 " Lumber Co. - 149  
 " Name changed - 33-91  
 " Ode - 177  
 " Opera House - 87  
 " notes - Elmer Stunts - 139 268-269-270  
 " -Oshkosh Hwy - 214  
 " Personages - 243 thru 255  
 " Pioneer Society - 196  
 " Platted 1849 - 37-38  
 " Rifle Club - 180  
 " Study Club - 164 341-342 police  
 " Theatre built - 86-341-342  
 " Township - 15-336, firsts 299-300 318-341  
 " Families - 26-27-28  
 " Union Cemetery - 23  
 " Village incorporated 1857 - 38  
 " Village history begins - 36-336 thru 341-342  
 Opera House - 87  
 Orchestra - 178  
 Organs, reed - 231  
 Organizations, Frat. of 1894 - 195  
 Oshkosh Normal - 96

Packard, Emeline - 27  
 Painters & Paper Hangers - 152  
 Parades, 1930's - 241  
 Park, Scott - 217  
 Park Planning Committee - 218  
 Park Caretakers - 219  
 Pastimes - 180  
 Patch, H.B. - 254  
 Pavement Dances - 181  
 Pelts, muskrat - 209  
 Pelton, Alfred - 45  
 Pelton, Chas. - 45-46  
 Pelton Stores - 45-133  
 Personages of Omro - 243 thru 260  
 Peterson, Chris - 70  
 Photographers - 153  
 Phoenix Ins. Co. - 141  
 Pianists - 178  
 Piety Hill - 226-323-  
 Pingry, Adda - 27  
 Pingry, John - 26  
 Pioneer memories - 170  
 Pioneer Organizations - 196, 22-319  
 Plat, original 1850 - 37  
 Plat,, Western add. - 37  
 Plays, home talent - 181  
 Play equip, Mother's Club - 232  
 Plumbers - 150  
 Poem, Marquette & Joliet, (E.B.) - 2  
 Poets & Writers - 179, 169-  
 Polier family - 27  
 Political Torch Parades - 184 Township  
 Pool Hall - 148 Journ 341  
 Population of County 1840 to 1900 - 14  
 Populations of Omro village - 40-50-336  
 Post Office in Township - 15  
 " " 1st 1840 in County - 24  
 Post Office Omro - 83 - 186-239-  
 " " Bloomingdale - 25  
 Postal, house delivery - 84 (R.F.D. 4/15/03)  
 Postmasters - 83-289-326-83  
 Postman, 1st in County - 24 323-  
 Powell, Capt. Wm. - 37-40 320-321-  
 Preacher's Bend - 36-49-27-42-319-  
 Preface - 1  
 Presbyterian Church - 58-95-339-  
 " Manse - 59  
 Prices - 1872 - 171  
 1894 - 135  
 1898 - 135  
 1902 thru 1931 - 211-  
 Prices, barbers - 141  
 " 1931 Wis. Power & Light - 208  
 Pump, town - 38-39  
 Punghaw harvesting - 82-324-319  
 Putnam, Geo. - 105

Index of more names page 10 thru 28.

Omro firsts

Place names

Tragedy 313

Place Names - 319 thru 321  
 Place Names map - 322  
 Poygan Mission - 321  
 Poygan Pay Grounds - 321  
 Pottawattomi Point - 321  
 Poygan Church mission (St. Joseph) - 339  
 Pye Town (Winneconne) - 321

Township pop. 341

Journ 341

336

(R.F.D. 4/15/03) -83

323-

320-321-

339-

211-

208

319

319



S cont'd

- Settlers - first - 4-17-23-28-  
     32-34-37-49.  
   " in tnship - 26-  
   " names - 98-  
   " residence & section S 17  
     in tnship - 17-18-19-20-  
             23-  
 Seventh Day Adventist church - 65-  
 Sewers, wooden - 102 - (W.P.A. - 333)  
 Sewing - 170-  
 Shafer, Geo. - 103-  
 Sharp, James - 133-249-  
 Shoe repairmen - 150-  
 Shops, mills & factories - 113-  
 Sidewalks - 102-  
 Silo - 212-318-  
 Simmoni family - 23-  
 Skaters, early - 166-  
 Skule Districk - 231-  
 Skunk fracas - 255-  
 Slaughter house - 41-  
 Sleet storm Feb 1922 - 148-  
 Slocum, Cyrus - 51-  
 Smalley's Landing - 37-337-  
 Smith, Capt. Lewis - 43-  
   " Seth - 36-  
 Soap making - 298-  
 Soldier's Bounty - 110-  
 Soldier Monument - 111- (Omro Cemetery)  
 Soloists (vocal) - 178-  
 Speed Cop - 228-  
 Speed Queen - 226-  
 Spiritualist Church - 60-87-  
 Spoke & Hub factory - 113-  
 St. Luke's German Lutheran  
   Church - 65-  
 St. Mary's church - 64-302-  
 Stage coach - 90-~~176~~-  
 Standard Oil - 77-  
 Steel barges - 101-  
 Stereoscope - 231-  
 Stockyards - 212-  
 Stock buyers - 212-  
 Stone, August - 26-  
 Store - Beckwithtown - 36-  
 Store - first in Omro - 44-  
 Stores of Omro - 128 thru 138-  
     143 thru 151- 286-  
   " of brick - 45-103-129-  
 Store clerks - 126-  
   " general description - 125-126-127-  
 Storm - sleet of Feb 1922 - 148-  
 Stranger dies - 214-  
 Street lights - early - 163-185-  
   " " later - cost by OBA. - 163-  
   " names changed - 1942 - 226-  
 Street sprinkler - 214-  
 Study Club - 164-  
 Surgeon fishing - 166-  
 Styles of 1880 - Ada M. - 187-  
 Suffrage - colored persons - 299-  
 Suicide - 136-  
 Sumner, John - 27-  
 Sun protection - early - 170-  
 "Sutler" - 284-  
 "Swan" boat - 36-  
 Swimming Pool - first - 225- (W.P.A.)  
   " " A.J. Marble - 225-331 (1969)

T

- Tailor Shops - 128-146-  
 Tannery 1852 - 119-  
 Taxes - 24-233-  
 Tea - 125-  
 Telephones - 198-  
   " Directory 1898 - 200-201-  
   " "girls" - 199-  
   " rent reduction early - 199-  
 Territory - Wisconsin - 5-  
 Theatre Omro - 86-  
   " Gem - 86-  
 "Thistle" excursions - 99-  
 Thompson & Hayward - 115-  
 Tice, Aaron - 85-247-  
 Tice, Freckerick - 22-  
 Torchlight - political parade - 184-  
 Town Officers - under Officers -  
   " organization - 342-  
   " pump - north side - 38-39-290-  
 Township - Omro - 15-336-341-342-  
 Trading Post - 4-37-336-337-341-  
 Tramps - 169-  
 Transportation, early - 90-  
 Transportation -  
 Treaty of 1763 - 4-  
 Treaty of Cedars 1836 - 5-  
 Treble Wedding 1913 - 221-  
 Treleven, Joseph - 26-  
 Truman, Mary Jane - 242-  
 Tucker, Frank - 250-  
 Tuttle, Col. - 37-

U

Undertakers - 136-137-  
 U.S. Corps of Engineers - 44-

V

Verse - "Draggin Frog on Rock" - 314-315-  
 " "Fra Marquette" - 2-  
 " "Ode to Omro" - 77-  
 Veterinarians - 72-73-  
 V.F.W. - 162-173-66-  
 Victory gardens WW II - 235-  
 Victory Loans - 236-  
 Village Board, special meet  
 1894 - 202-  
 " charter - 338-  
 " Election - first - 37-  
 " incorporated 1857 - 38-  
 " history begins - 36-  
 " Industries - 90-106 to 124-  
 " Lights - 163-185-  
 " livestock and chickens - 108-  
 " Officials (1909) - 10-~~34~~-326  
 " platted 1849 -  
 " Voters - school 1850 -  
 Veterans - Civil War - 231 thru 284-  
 A. Tice last one - 247-  
 From Good Templar Lodge - 160-  
 Village Marshalls - 167

W

Wages 1880 - Ada M. - 187-  
 Wainwrights - 76-77-  
 War 1861 - 110-  
 " Black Hawk War - 336-  
 " Civil War - 339-340-  
 War Bond Drive - 236-  
 Water level lowered - 219-  
 Water supply - 38-  
 Water Works - 225-  
 " " turned down - 39-  
 Webster, Hiram - 105-115-  
 Webster Manual Training school - 95-105-  
 Well dug, first - 38-226-  
 Well diggers and drillers - 38-151-226-  
 West, Edw. - first township settler - 15-24-25-  
 Western Addition - 37-

White Bass Festival - 181-  
 Williams, Eleazer - 8-  
 Winchester, Melvina - 247-  
 Window drug store broken - 136-  
 Winslow, Henri - 46-251-  
 Winter Activities - 182-  
 Wis. Power & Light - 208-  
 Women's Civic League - 217-  
 Women's Service League - 165-182A-  
 Wood for whiskey - 44-  
 Wood working tools - 118-313-  
 Woolen Mill - 123-217-  
 Wood carving - 155-  
 Work House - 169-  
 W.P.A. labor - 225-  
 W.R.C. organization - 111-160-195-  
 W.R.C., Monument in Park - 285-  
 Wright, Platt M. - 51-  
 WW I - 224-  
 WW II - 234-  
 WW II end - 236-

Y

Yellow Thunder - 40-  
 Young, Henry - 28-



INDEX - OMRO PERSONAGES

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>
Abercrombie - 135-	Babcock, Mr. - 195-
Abernethy, J. - 17-	Babcock, O.W. - 17-83-86-161-
Adams, Luthera - 33-38-59-91-	Backus, Fred - 306-
94-96-106-196-296-	Baily, Thomas - 17-
Adams, Martin - 92-95-	Baker, Henry - 17-
Alban, James S. - 340-	Baker, J.S. - 17-
Albright, Sarah (Sally) - 178-	Baker, M. - 282-
Alder, Blanche Cady - 329-	Baldry, Earl - 146-
Alder, Rodney - 38-138-164-	Ballard, A.W. - 333-
191-235-	Bang, Anton - 149-191-
Allen, Emma - 140-317-	Bang, Walter F. - 215-
Allen, Jennie - 105-	Banks, J. (Att.) - 17-172-
Allen, T.F. - 160-	Bardwell, E.D. - 136-
Alley, James - 281-	Barlow, O.W. - 74-
Amereau, Chas. - 33-37-337-	Barlow, Mrs. O. - 140-
Ames, Robert - 147-160-	Barlow, Leslie - 74-
Ames, R.C. - 160-	Barnard, Ben - 61-
Ames, Mrs. R.C. - 63-	Barnard, Sherman - 72-83-89-102-106-
Ames, Washington - 69-98-105-	111-212-215-225-237-269Bdit
Anderson, Francis & Ruth - 148-	-312-329-
Anderson, Meridan - 83-241-	Barnard, Simeon - 17-71-
Anderson, Pete - 150-	Barnes, Cyrus - 195-
Anderson, W. - 281-	Barnes, Lester - 72-
Andrews, Rev. G.P. - 222-	Barnes, Nora - 195-
Andrews, Joel - 111-	Barnett, J.F. - 17-
Andrews, Luke (Lucas) - 49-78-103-	Barnett, Lyman R. - 136-
Andringa, Cornelius - 147-	Barr, G.H. - 149-
Angel, Marjorie Deerstein - 153-	Barrit, John - 283-
Appley, Frank - 121-	Bartels, Magnus - 152-
Arno, Juanita Marie (Mrs. Emil	Bartels, Mabel - 153-
Siefert) - 179-	Barth, Larry - 77-
Arnold, Louis - 17-26-37-293-	Bartlett, S.D. - 17-
Arnold, L.F. - 24-	Bartow, James V. - 55-166-
Arnold & Morton - 17-115-	Bartow, T.J. - 17-
Athens, (Oshkosh) - 13-	Bates, Warren - 17-
Athern, Grace - 165-195-	Beale, H.E. - 175-
Atwood, S. - 17-	Beals, A. - 17-
Austria, Al - 122-123-167-181-	Beals, Alvin - 17-23-24-
191-	Beals, C.W. - 17-
	Beals, Philo - 17-
	Beaumont, Dr. Wm. - 46-
	Beauprey, Louis - 336-
	Beck & Barnett - 119-
	Beck, Jerry - 148-
	Beck, Polly - 148-
	Becker, Mrs. H. - 231-
	Becker, Mrs. John S. - 218-
	Becker, J.A. - 218-
	Becker, John - 136-176-181-218-
	Becker, Mrs. John - 182-
	Becker, Milo - 181-
	Becker, Nick - 119-
	Beckwith, Geo. W. - 17-23-24-37-91-
	97-98-243-299-
	Beckwith, Mrs. Geo. - 31-92-336-

Beckwith, Nelson F. - 23-37-  
 113-243-264-338-  
 Beckwith, Wm. - 256-259-  
 Beebe Meat Market - 130-  
 Beer, Chas. - 152-  
 Behm, Earl - 136-  
 Behnke, Mr. - 150-  
 Belfieul family - 157-  
 Bending, Annie - 155-  
 Benedict General store - 128-  
 Benedict, Mrs. - restaurant - 147-239-  
 Bennett, Albert - 17-248-  
 Bennett, Cal - 55-248-  
 Bennett, E.R. - 17-  
 Bennett, Fred & Mame - 136-  
 Bennett, Frederick - 179-  
 Bennett, Gordon "Pep" - 182-235-314-  
 Bennett, Grace (Mrs. Ed) - 140-315-  
 Bennett, John (taylor) - 86-146-  
 Bennett, Mrs. Mary Darrow - 185-  
 Bennett, Marshall - 178-  
 Bennett, Ruth - 197B-  
 Benton, Mr. - 281-  
 Berkley & Cain - 130-  
 Berkley, O.F. - 17-130-294-  
 Bernschien, Albert - 17-  
 Berry, John - 120-146-260-  
 Betts, Mrs. E. - 17-  
 Bidwell, John I. - 23-  
 Bieber, Max - 152-143-181-  
 Bierman, Harold. - 77-191-  
 Bigelow, Calvin - 23-36-43-44-  
 47-54-58-68-78-79-93-  
 128-268-338-  
 Benjamin, Horatio V.N.D.E.S.G. - 32-  
 Bills, E.C. - 136-  
 Bills, Mrs. S.C. - 17-  
 Birch, Arthur - 138-  
 Birch & Barnett - 119-  
 Birkholz, A.C. - 97-143-  
 Bishop, Alonzo - 27-328-  
 Bishop, Cary, Sr. - 63-  
 Bishop, Cary, (nephew) - 151-181-183-  
 Bishop, Ethel - 2-27-58-61-64-  
 65-170-178-179-  
 Bishop family - 328-  
 Bishop, Jerome family - 328-  
 Bishop, J.K. - 281-  
 Bishop, Kate (Mrs. Cary Sr.) - 103-  
 173-265-  
 Bishop, Paul (son Cary Sr.) - 27-  
 Bishop, Walter - 160-  
 Blackburn, Wm. - 18-  
 Blackert, Geo & Francis Davidson -  
 215-  
 Blake family - 27-28-  
 Blake Caleb - 27-  
 Blake, Chas. - 27-28-  
 Blake, Sumner "Jack" - 28-116-  
 Blakemore, Rev. F.P. - 110-111-112-  
 Blakesley, Art - 47-255-  
 Blanchard, Mrs. - 140-  
 Blish, David - 116-  
 Bloomer, Ella - 305-  
 Bloomer, Henry - 305-  
 Bloomer, J.G. - 18-  
 Bloomer, J.L. - 18-  
 Bloomer, Leigh - 178-  
 Blumenberg, Fred - 147-  
 Bohn, Walter - 219-  
 Booth, Geo. - 17-  
 Booth, L.C. - 17-  
 Borchardt, Lawrence - 124-  
 Bornschien, Trangott - 17-  
 Bothwell, Marie Hankey - 58-  
 Bouck, Col. Gabe - 190-191-  
 Bower, Max - 167-182-230-286-  
 Bower, Ida May (Mrs. Max) - 91-  
 Bowman Chas. D. - 134-200-235-237-  
 Bowman, Mrs. C.D. (Mildred) - 218-  
 Boyd, Mary Challoner - 306-  
 Braasch, Brenda - 220-  
 Braasch, Pam - 220-  
 Bradish, Cyrus - 62-174-175-327-  
 Bradish, E.A. - 160-  
 Bradish, Geo. - 175-  
 Bradish, G.C. - 160-  
 Bradish, Lena - 305-  
 Bradley, Chas. - 70-  
 Bradley, Ann Morton (Mrs. Frank) - 179-  
 Bradley, Herbert - 111-2318-317-  
 Bradley, Isaac - 18-  
 Bradley, Jack - 176-  
 Bradley, Marian (Mrs. A. Birch) - 182-  
 Bradt, M.G. - 161-  
 Bradt, Percy - 250-1380-289-  
 Bradt, Hiram G. - 174-336-  
 Bradt, M.J. - 75-172-195-  
 Brady, M.G. - 202-  
 Brandt, Rev. - 65-  
 Brandy, F. - 17-  
 Brezee, Elmer - 45-189-260-  
 Bridge, Silas N. - 128-327-  
 Bridge, S.N. & Son - 62-130-  
 Brockman, Wm. - 103-129-172-  
 Brockway, Dr. Frank - 205-  
 Brockway, Monte - 105-  
 Broderick, Jack - 215-  
 Broman, Jim - 165-  
 Bronson, Elmer - 150-181-  
 Bronson, Emerson - 63-137-266-273-  
 Bronson, Lloyd - 162-  
 Bronson, Marie - 182-  
 Brooks, Geo. W. - 74-212-213-214-  
 231-232-  
 Brooks, Harry - 120-133-  
 Brooks, Mrs. James - 196-  
 Brooks, Jennie (Mrs. Wm. Staeger) - 199-

Brooks, Warren <sup>(99-105-109-110-</sup> 133-159-167-212-  
 Brown, Geo. - 128-135-  
 Brown, Paul - 59-  
 Brunner, Anna - 188-  
 Brush, A.K., (Att.) - 18-171-172-  
 Brush, Abner - 17-  
 Buck, Asie - 256-  
 Buck, E.A. & Co. - 113-  
 Buck, R.M. - 17-  
 Buckelow & Winchester - 139-  
 Buell, Mrs. Ruby Sheldon - 285-  
 Bullis, Estelle - 193-  
 Bullis, Lewis H. - 174-  
 Bullis, Truman - 72-111-  
 Bump, Roy & Johnson - 113-  
 Bunker, Fred, - 129-172-289-  
 Bunker, Mrs. Fred (hats) - 140-  
 Bunker, F.B. - 23-  
 Bunker, Frank - 17-23-130-  
 Bunker, Geo. - 17-  
 Bunker, Mrs. Hattie - 251-  
 Burchardt, John - 107-  
 Burnash, Adeline - 259-  
 Burrows, Mary (hats) - 140-  
 Busam, N. - 17-  
 Bushnell, Chas. - 70-158-172-239-  
 Bushnell, Lennie - 155-303-  
 Bushnell, Milo C. - 23-26-61-70-  
     152-173-243-299-339-  
     341-330-  
 Bushnell, Mrs. Milo - 195-  
 Bussey, Jesse - 260-  
 Bussey, Mark - 260-  
 Bussey, Parker - 31-142-193-  
 Bussey, Myrtle (Mrs. Sam) - 237-  
 Butkiewicz, Felix - 122-123-228-  
 Butkiewicz, Geo. - 123-  
 Butkiewicz, Stanley - 228-229-  
 Butt, E.W. & Son - 191-215-

C

Cady, Consuella - 179-  
 Cady, Dan - 99-166-  
 Cady, Kenneth - 227-  
 Cady, L. - 281-  
 Cady, Nancy - 195-  
 Cady, Roland - 89-  
 Cady, Rexford - 112-178-  
 Cady, S.H.W. - 160-284-  
 Cady, Seward - 51-79-103-141-160-283-  
 Cady, Will - 72-208-215- -284-  
 Cady & Neuschafer mill - 85-  
 Cage, Grant - 167-  
 Cain, J.B. - 17-  
 Calhoun, Earl - 180-  
 Calhoun, Carribell Smith (Mrs. Earl) - 41-  
     43-218-  
 Calhoun, W.W. - 160-  
 Calkins, Lafayette & Daisy - 146-  
 Calkins, Willis - 149-150-163-191-235-286  
 Campbell, Chas. son martyred - 59-135-  
 Campbell Dr. P.M. - 202-204-  
 Campbell family - 105-  
 Campbell, Mason - 17-  
 Carpenter, Eva May - 241-  
 Carpenter, S.L. - 37-24-  
 Carron, Chas. - 37-40-  
 Carron, Smally & Powell - 37-337-341-  
 Carter, Mrs. A. - 231-  
 Carter barn (school) - 98-  
 Carter, Bruce - 146-232-  
 Carter, Bruce & Geo Turner - 122-  
 Carter family - 238-258-  
 Carter, Frances Kleiber (Mrs. Bruce) -  
 Carter, Francis M. - 340- 1178-340-  
 Carter, G. (Att. 1876) - 141-  
 Carter, Grace - 111-235-238-258-237-  
 Carter, H. - 98- -329-  
 Carter & Hilton (paper) - 51-  
 Carver, S.Z. - 111-195-  
 Case, Frank - 189-  
 Castle, H. - 160-  
 Caswell, J.H. - 172-  
 Challoner, Doris - 199-  
 Challoner, Frank - 243-306-  
 Challoner, Geo. - 113-114-172-339-  
 Challoner, Herb - 141-  
 Challoner, John - 26-  
 Challoner, Samson - 17-32-33-  
 Challoner & Thompson - 78-113-114-  
 Chamberlain, James - 152-  
 Chamberlain, H. - 17-  
 Chapman, W.D. - 74-129-172-  
 Charin, Mrs. A. - 17-  
 Charlesworth Bros. mill - 114-  
 Charlesworth, Fred - 86-136-137-180-  
 Charlesworth, Mrs. F. - 317-  
 Charlesworth, Geo. H. - 129-136-137-172-

Charlesworth, G.H. & Bro. - 129-  
 Charlesworth, Thomas - 114-283-  
 Chase, Bertha - 230-  
 Chase, Chas. - 138-172-173-202-227-  
 Chase, Chas. & Rowena - 147-227-  
 Chase, H.B. - 160-  
 Chase, L.S. - 17-  
 Chase, Mrs. Margaret (Gordon) - 225-331-  
 Chase, Robert - 130-191-210-227-  
 Chase, Mrs. Robert (Addie) - 197B-  
 Chase, W.H. - 17-  
 Chatterton, Ada - 104-  
 Chatterton, Robt. - 104-122-147-  
 Cheeny, T.H. - 17-  
 Chesley, Mr. - 260-  
 Childs, Asel S. - 281-282-340-  
 Childs, Dennis - 17-  
 Clark, Austin - 17-23-  
 Clark, Cadwell "Cad" A. - 38-209-210-  
 Clark, C.H. - 160-  
 Clark, Dan (1880) - 209-289-  
 Clark, Geo. - 99B-180-181-209-  
 Clark, Mrs. Geo. (Elizabeth) - 179-  
 Clark, Ida Clark (Mrs. Cad) - 179-334-  
 Clark, Mrs. Ed (Myrtle) - 199-  
 Clark, Paul - 156-  
 Clemons, J. - 283-  
 Cleveland, A.W. - 202-  
 Cleveland family - 257-  
 Cleveland, Mrs. Geo. - 231-  
 Clifford, W.A. - 172-  
 Clifford, Will E. - 289-  
 Clifford's Candy store - 289-  
 Coats, Ed. - 206-  
 Coats, Mrs. Ed. (Berdina) - 199-  
 Coats, Edw. - 231-  
 Coats, Hiram - 167-260-  
 Coats, Lyle - 55-  
 Coats, Thomas - 106-  
 Cole, Dick - 215-  
 Cole, Frank - ~~116~~-135-289-290-  
 Cole, Nonah (Mrs. R. Wertch) - 179-  
 Cole, Peter (1876) - 129-172-  
 Condon, T. - 149-  
 Cook, Dr.<sup>34</sup> (1876) - 172-204-  
 Cooley, Harry - 176-  
 Cooley, Hiram - 17-  
 Cope, Chas. - 17-75-107-174-  
 195-239-244-  
 Cope, Ed. - 90-  
 Cope, Mrs. Chas. (Mary Jane) - 245-  
 Cope, Percy - 75-  
 Corfee, A. - 160-281-283-  
 Corfee, John A. - 37-

Covey, Mr. - 175- 13.  
 Covey, C.C. - 130-172-175-  
 Covey, J.B. - 176-  
 Covey & Lowry Ins. - 142-  
 Covey, Olin - 215-228-  
 Crafts, G.T. - 281-282-  
 Craig, R.H. - 148-267-  
 Craig, Robt. H. - 267-  
 Crane, Richard - 142-148-  
 Crego, John - 69-  
 Crocker, C. - 172-  
 Cronk, Ed. - 39-226-260-  
 Cronk, Daniel - 100-  
 Cronk, Edna (Mrs. Otto Hoger) - 260-  
 Cronk, Ina Morton - 196-  
 Cronk sisters - Grace, Bessie,  
 Maude - 197B-  
 Cross, A.A. - 18-  
 Cross, A.W. - 18-  
 Cross, Floyd L. - 268-328-  
 Crozier, John - 18-  
 Culver, D. - 18-  
 Cundy, Tom - 69-176-  
 Cundy, Wm. (1876) - 69-172-287-  
 Curtis, V. - 191-  
 Cussick, C. - 18-

D

Daggett, Archie - 33-48-237-252-329-  
 Daggett, David - 150-  
 Daggett, Geo. & Son - 123-124-  
 Daggett Grist mill - 82-  
 Daggett, Mrs. A. (Irene Drake) - 329-  
 Dailey, J.A. - 190-  
 Dake, E.C. - 18-  
 Dake, J.C. - 18-  
 Dake, J.W. - 18-  
 Dake, W.R. - 141-  
 Damon, Mr. - 135-  
 Danforth, Jennie Safford (Mrs. Q.) - 178-  
 Danforth, Dr. Quincy - 55-138-205-  
                   237-264-265-  
 Daniels, Dr. J.S. - 72-172-209-  
 Darby, G. - 18-  
 Darrow, Luella - 185-198-200-201-235-  
 Darrow, Mary (Bennett) - 185-  
 Darrow, Ralph - 231-232-  
 Darrow, Mrs. S.J. - 231-  
 David, Sam - 18-  
 Davidson, F.K. - 215-256-  
 Davidson, Geo. B. - 142-  
 Davidson, Mrs. Robt. - 196-  
 Davies, James & Mabel - 154-  
 Davis, Eva - 206-  
 Davis, H.J. - 18-129-  
 Davis, Dr. K.W. - 205-  
 Davis, Myrtie - 231B-317-  
 Davis, Walter, - 111-  
 Day, Fred - 134-196-288-  
 Day, O.A. - 18-  
 Day & Larrabee - 134-  
 Dean Auto Parts - 215-  
 Dean, Elisha - 37-113-  
 Dean, E.B. - 37-113-  
 Dean, J. - 281-  
 Dean & Taylor - 116-  
 Dean, W.C. - 338-  
 Deerstein, Geo. - 107-333-  
 Demmon Bros. Boots - 129-173-289-  
 Demmon, E.A. boots - 129-250-  
 Demon, E.H. boots - 128-  
 Devinney, Wm. - 47-  
 Dewrose, J. - 281-  
 Dickenson, Clark - 10-  
 Dickenson, Leb - 40-  
 Diley, Frank - 165-  
 Ditley, Wm. - 281-  
 Dobbs, grocery - 147-  
 Dockstetter, Dr. Archie W. - 206-  
 Dodge, Gov. - 12-  
 Dohner, Marion - 234-  
 Doll, Dr. Wm. M. - 41-206-218-162-180-  
 Doll, Mrs. Wm. (Edna D.) - 111-219-  
 Domke, "Bill" Lawrence - 151-  
 Doms, R.A. - 142-194A-

Donegan, Pat - 161-  
 Doty, James - 5-  
 Dousman - 336  
 Douty, C.S. Drugs - 130-134-172-289-  
 Douty, Daniel - 283-  
 Downs, F.R. - 282-  
 Drake, W. - 18-  
 Drew, G.W. - 269B-  
 Drew, Geo. - 62-76-173-174-175-  
                   269-290-296-  
 Drew & Hicks - 115-116-  
 Dunham, Bill - 75-259-  
 Dunham, Mrs. Bill (Flossie) - 259-  
 Dunn, John - 259-  
 Dunn, Pat - 18-  
 Dutcher, Mr. - 183-

E

Earle & McGuire - 133-  
 Earle, E.A. - 146-  
 Early settlers recollections - 17-41-  
                   44-49-107-158-167-254-330-  
 "Early Settler's" clues - 254-  
 Eaton, J.W. - 160-  
 Edick, John - 179-  
 Edick, Ralph - 181-  
 Edminster, Geo. - 215-  
 Edminster, Paul - 74-150-215-  
 Edminster, Vinton - 150-215-  
 Ehlert, Chas. - 18-  
 Eldred, C. - 317-  
 Eldredge, I.S. - 272-  
 Eliason, Dr. O.H. (D.V.) - 72-  
 Ellis, K. - 149-  
 Elliott, D.B. - 201-  
 Elliott, John - 251-264-  
 Elliott, Joseph - 18-75-90-  
 Elliott, Tom - 231-  
 Emerson, T.G. - 237-  
 Espelding, Dr. J.K. - 205-  
 Evans & Geo. Wright, Oshkosh -  
 Evans, Maude - 140-  
 Everett, Mrs. C.T. - 195-  
 Everet, John - 128-289-  
 Everet, James - 141-181-191-  
 Everet, Mame (Mrs. James) - 140-  
 Evans, Cora Mcallister - 326-  
                   - 326

F

Felker, C.W. - 283-  
 Felker, Henry - 283-  
 Feller, D. - 18-  
 Ferguson, Grandma & family - 32-  
 Ferguson, Julia - 32-  
 Ferris, E.P. - 107-133-152-166-169-  
 Fillion, Joe - 71-  
 Finch, Mrs. W.S. - 206-  
 Fink, Aaron - 107-  
 Fink, Mrs. Aaron (Mattie) - 168-  
 Fink, Jerry & Sue - 148-  
 Fisher, Henry - 194A-  
 Fisher, J.F. -  
 Fisher, Peter - 18-  
 Fishman, Max - 216-  
 Fisk, Elmer - 176-  
 Fitzgerald, T. - 281-  
 Flanagan, Agnes - 179-  
 Flanagan, Bill - 215-  
 Flanagan, Bonnie - 86-178-198-218-  
 Flanagan, Mrs. James (Jane) - 264-  
 Flanagan, Wm. - 215-  
 Fleming, Dorothy - 160-  
 Fleury, Dr. Frank - 162-205-207.325-  
 Forbes, B.W. - 18-  
 Forbes, N.J. - 23-24-  
 Ford, Chester - 1st mailman - 24-  
 Ford, Dr. Jasper Franklin - 96-176-  
                                   200-204-  
 Ford, Mrs. J. F. (Madge Shafer) - 83-96-  
 Foust, Roger - 165-  
 Fowler, Chas. X. - 141-327-  
 Fox, C.J. - 202-  
 Frank, & Terwilliger - 44 - 128-  
 Frank, & Bigelow - 127-128-338-  
 Frank, Nathaniel "Squire" - 43-44-54-  
 Franklin, W.J. - 214-  
                                   58-47-  
 Frederickson, Carl - 122-  
 Frees, Angel Bartlett - 295-  
 Frohn, Rev. Jack - 31-  
 Fry, Frank - 120-

G

Gadshaw, Alex - 130-172-  
 Gadshaw, Coleman J. - 249A-310B-  
 Gadshaw, Dorothy Treleven - 178-  
 Gadshaw, Lewis - 97-219-  
 Gallagher, P. - 281-  
 Gallop, Henry - (trek) - 7 thru 13-  
 Gallop, John - 1st P.O. - 24-  
 Garda, Joe - 18-  
 Gardinier, Mrs. Wm. - 18-  
 Garity, Mrs. - 130-287-  
 Gehrke, Fred - 147-  
 Gensch, Alan - 267-  
 Gensch Bros. - 143-235-  
 Gensch, Ernst - 180-  
 Gensch, Fred M. - 235-  
     " Fred, Jr. - 179-  
 George, M.M. - 160-  
 Gerard, Norman - 24-25-37-54-78-  
 Germaine, Isaac - 17-23-24-104-113-  
 Germana, Mr. - 25-  
                                   299-  
 Gerrity, Carrie (1897 mill) - 119-172-  
 Gibbs, Dr. J. - 78-98-113-172-  
                                   204-296-  
 Gibbs, Hiram - 51-282-  
 Gibson, A.L. - 71-  
 Gibson, Mrs. - 258-  
 Giddings, Wm. A. - 26-160-  
 Gifford, Hezekiah - 17-  
 Gilbert, Chas. - 146-220-  
 Gilkey, Elma - 196-  
 Gilkey, Mrs. Geo. - 22-  
 Gilkey, Mrs. G.F. - 194-  
 Gillam, S.S. - 160-  
 Ginnow, Frank - 151-  
 Ginnow, Hattie, (Hoover) - 265-  
 Ginnow, John - 178-320-  
 Glines, Fred - 189-193-260-305-  
 Glines, Perry - 76-150-258-  
 Goggins, Andrew - 122-189-  
 Goggins, James - 18-  
 Goggins, John - 18-  
 Goodenough & Utter - 113-  
 Goodwin, G.W. - 18-  
 Goss, C.W. - 18-  
 Goss, Kemper - 55-167-  
 Gram, Moltke S. III - 51-  
 Gray's barrel factory - 114-  
 Gray, Almond - 114-172-  
 Green, Dr. C.C. - 172-  
 Grier, James - 18-  
 Grignon, Augustine - 4-6-8-301-  
 Grignon, Chas. - 301-  
 Grignon, Elizabeth - 301-  
 Grignon, family - 4-6-301-

Grignon girls - 49-301-334-  
 Grignon, Mary - 5-49-  
 Grignon, Robt. - 4-5-49-301-320-  
 Grignon, Russell - 321- -323-  
 Grignon, Ursule - 301-  
 Griswold, E.W. - 138-154-  
 Griswold, Polly - 18-  
 Grossman, Dave - 94-152-167-  
 Grossman, John - 123-  
 Grout, Mr. (baker) - 152-  
 Gruerin, Mrs. Phoebe - 195-  
 Grunski, Pam - 220-  
 Gruzinski, Milton "Jake" - 212-  
 Gummer, Bert - 46-176-181-  
 Gummer, Bonnie Luscombe - 237-329-  
 Gummer, E. (boots) - 128-173-  
 Gummer, Mard - 167-176-  
 Gustin, Leon (drowned) - 320-324-  
 Gustin, Mrs. Leon. (Mattie Kitchen) - 324-  
 Gustavus, H.C. - 18-

H

Hackett, R.H. - 192-193-  
 Haedt, Ed. - 81-  
 Haedt, Mrs. Steve (Verona) - 285-  
 Haigh, John - 18-22-212-213-264-  
 Haines, Neva - 199-  
 Hale, Bertha - 305-  
 Hale, C.A. - 18-  
 Haley, Tim - 213-344-  
 Hall, Albert B. - 76-116-173-289-330-  
 Hall, Edgar - 116-165-195-330-  
 Hallen, James P. - 18-  
 Hallen, J. P. - 18-  
 Hamilton & Chase mill - 119-  
 Hammers, Isaac "Ikie" - 23-24-152-174-  
 Hammond, Wm. - 37-338-  
 Hankey, Carl & Eva Bussey - 58-  
 Hansen, Hans - 70-  
 Hanson Bros. (meats) - 149-  
 Hanson, Dewey - 191-215-  
 Hanson, Mrs. Dewey (Helen) - 179-235-  
 Hanson, Dick - 215-  
 Hanson, Dodson - 252-  
 Hanson, Mrs. Don (Verna) - 147-  
 Hanson, Irv - 120-  
 Hanson, Mrs. Lonnie (Judy) - 153-  
 Hanson, Michelle - 220-  
 Hanson, Tori - 220-  
 Harney, Richard J. - 1-330-  
 Harris, Rev. Frank - 60-  
 Harter, Sylvester A. - 160-  
 Harvey, Carl - 260-  
 Harvey, Mrs. Carl - 206-  
 Haskell, Barna - 17-24-  
 Hatch, Geo. - 18-119-  
 Hatch, Julius - 160-  
 Havens, John - 282-  
 Hawtrey, Olive - 317-  
 Hawtrey, Edw. - 81-218-  
 Hayward, Mr. - 18-299-  
 Hayward, James - 18-  
 Hayward & Thompson collection - 47-  
 Hedges, Isaac - 18-  
 Heffron, James - 31-193-212-  
 Heffron, Tom - 212-  
 Heffron, Wm. - 104-252-  
 Helgeson, Mrs. Herb - 235-  
 Hellwig, Carl - 151-  
 Hellwig, Ernest - 107-108-  
 Hellwig, Gerald & Marj. - 262-  
 Hellwig, Mrs. M. - 65-206-  
 Henderson, T.S. - 160-  
 Hennepin, Louis - 3-  
 Hennes, S.V. - 18-

Hertzberg, Leonard - 181-  
 Hertzberg, Oscar - 181-  
 Henry & Carter grocery - 129-  
 Henry & Charlesworth - 172-  
 Henry & Doughty drugs - 130-  
 Henry Drugs - 289-  
 Henry, Emil - 138-172-  
 Herbert, Dr. F. (Chiro) - 205-  
 Herrick, Geo. (restaurant) - 148-189-190-  
 Herrick, Geo. (teacher) - 91-97-191-  
 Hertzberg, M.H. (elec.) - 147-  
 Hess, Wallace - 219-  
 Heuer, E.C. - 137-  
 Hickey, Dr. - 260-  
 Hicks, Emmett R. - 30-110-190-196-250-  
 Hicks, Hattie - 306-  
 Hildebrandt, Mr. - 18-  
 Hilton, W.H. (photo) - 129-153-  
 Hilton, J.C. (jewelry) - 129-  
 Himbaugh, Herma (H. Coats) - 199-  
 Hinchliff, H. - 18-  
 Hinderman, Ben - 153-264-  
 Hinderman, James - 266-  
 Hinderman, Mrs. Julia - 90-196-  
 Hinderman, Mark - 150-  
 Hinman, David - 110-281-339-  
 Hinman, J.L. - 281-  
 Hoaglin, Nelson - 282-  
 Hoaglin, James - 23-  
 Hoaglin, J.N. - 18-  
 Hoeft, Henry - 70-104-  
 Hoger Bros. (Louis & Otto) - 149-  
 Hoger, Mrs. Louis, (Hazel Luscombe) -  
 178-198-218-  
 Holcomb, W.B. - 283-  
 Hollister, Cornelius - 286-  
 Hollister, Frank & Ed. - 286-  
 Hollister, Henry C. - 286-283-  
 Hollister, Henry's sons - 286-  
 Hollister, W. C. - 128-  
 Holtzknecht, Fra. - 64-  
 Hoover, Belle C. (Mrs. J.) - 140-  
 Hoover, Bonnie (Mrs. W. Rhoda) - 140-166-246-  
 Hoover, Mrs. Leon (Hattie G.) - 154-  
 Hoover, Dr. J. (D.V.) - 173-  
 Hoover, Leon - 97-167-183-252-265-  
 Hoppe, Ed. - 219-  
 Hotchkiss, Joe - 18-  
 Hough, Erastus - 258-  
 Hough, L. - 18-  
 Hough, Mrs. Leander - 93-  
 Hough, Will & Etta - 258-327-  
 Houston, J. - 18-  
 Howard, A.P. - 97-  
 Howard, Freddie - 305-  
 Howard, H. - 272-  
 Howard, Josie - 306-  
 Howe, D. - 282-  
 Howe, H.M. - 283-  
 Howe, Mary & Russell - 51-  
 Howe, Myron - 17-18-23-24-31-  
 -330-336-341-  
 Howell, John G. - 81-147-  
 Hoy, B.F. - 282-  
 Hrubesky druggist - 138-  
 Hubbel, Sam - 18-  
 Hudson & Barnes (1876 hats) - 130-140-  
 Hueston, Eliel - 71-  
 Huie, Nina - 326-  
 Huie trial (1856) - 190-  
 Hume, Aaron - 36-337-  
 Hume, David - 36-~~98A~~-264-268-  
 -~~289~~-306-~~319~~-337-  
 Humphrey, Albert - 18-  
 Humphrey, E. - 18-  
 Hunter, Robt. - 168-  
 Hunter, R. - 281-  
 Huntington, M. - 18-  
 Hurlbert, Dr. (health officer) - 205-  
 Hurlbut, Bingham "Bing" - 212-  
 Hurlbut estate - 124-  
 Hurlbut, John - 110-  
 Hurlbut, Mary - 182-  
 Hurlbut, Wilbur (Att.) - 72-208-  
 Hurley, Anna - 165-195-344-  
 Hurley, John - 185-202-  
 Home, Char. - 227-  
 IV (C6)



I

Ihrke, Albert - 72-215-191-  
 Ihrke, Norman - 83-  
 Imig & McNulty - 134-  
 Ingalls, Daniel - 330-  
 Irwin, Samuel - 6-

J

Jaeck, Dr. Emma - 16-33-47-97-  
 110-253-  
 Jackson, Van E. - 108-235-  
 Jackson, B. - 18-  
 Janssen, Adolph - 198-  
 Jasperson, Dr. (D.V.) - 73-  
 Jasseen, H.R. - 173-  
 Jenkins, Bernice (Mrs. Samuels) - 120-  
 Jensen, Carl - 70-  
 Jensen, Mrs. Carl - 257-  
 Jensen, Severt - 150-  
 Jesky, Barbara - 153-  
 Joachim, August - 18-  
 Johnson, Ada - 196-  
 Johnson, Geo. - 210-  
 Johnson, Chas. E. - 282-  
 Johnson, C.M. - 282-  
 Johnson, Hiram - 19-45-49-55-113-  
 156-157-338-  
 Johnson, John B. - 330-  
 Johnson, John S. - 19-281-  
 Johnson, J.S. - 281-  
 Johnson, Joe - 19-  
 Johnson, Luther - 18-  
 Johnson, Lyle & Son - 146-  
 Johnson, Nathan - 78-113-  
 Johnson, Oscar - 150-215-281-  
 Johnson, Sam - 18-  
 Johnson, Mrs. S. - 18-  
 Joliet, Louis - 2-  
 Jones, Mr. - 29-  
 Jones, Mrs. (hats) - 140-  
 Jones, Betty - 163-  
 Jones, C.W. (depot agt) - 172-  
 Jones, Chas. - 149-  
 Jones, Mrs. Chas. - 172-  
 Jones, Mrs. C.W. (hats) - 140-  
 Jones, Donald - 86-179-  
 Jones, Ed. - 149-171-231-

Jones, Mrs. E. - 140-206-  
 Jones, E.C. - 99B-195-202-  
 Jones, Mrs. Edith - 237-  
 Jones, Esther - 111-  
 Jones & Morris Drugs - 128-  
 Jones, Smith - 19-29-  
 Joss, Harold - 121-  
 Joss, Leo & Wanda laundry - 153-  
 Jourdain Bros - 6-  
 Judson, C. - 19-

K

Kaime & Wright Books, etc. - 129-289-  
 Kanoff, Gordon - 19-  
 Kanoff, Hiram - 19-  
 Kautza, Sherm - 146-  
 Keeber, Connie - 237-  
 Keefe, Frank - 110-111-142-146-  
 208-241-296-327-  
 Keefe, F.B. - 208-  
 Keefe, Tom - 142-  
 Keeley Kure - 190-  
 Kellett, Frank - 77-  
 Kelly, Francis - 218-  
 Kelly, Mrs. A. - 237-  
 Kelly, L. (tailor) - 130-  
 Kennedy, Asa - 330-  
 Kevill, Elder - 56-  
 Killilan, Margaret - 163-237-241-  
 Kimball, Alonzo - 282-  
 Kimball, Archie - 305-  
 Kimball, "Hi" & bicycle - 116-289-  
 Kimball, Wm. - 160-  
 Kimball, W.W. - 246-  
 Kimble, Paul - 51-  
 Kimple, Dr. Frank (Chirop) - 205-  
 King, Almon L. - 194A-  
 King, Ed. - 82-  
 King, Eileen (Mrs. Palecek) - 237-  
 King, Elizabeth - 332-  
 King, John - 19-  
 Kitchen, Art - 215-  
 Kitchen, J.E. - 202-  
 Kitchen, Mattie (Mrs. Gustin) - 324-  
 Kitchen, Walter - 100-101-215-  
 Kleiber, Frances (Mrs. B. Carter) - 178-  
 Kleiber, Frederick - 179-  
 Kleiber, Wm. - 182-  
 Kloehn, R. - 165-  
 Kloster, Valentine - 150-  
 Knagg's Ferry - 301-  
 Knaggs, James - 4-10-301-  
 Knapp, Frank - 282-  
 Knapp, E.D. - 19-

Knapp, Miles - 160 -  
 Knapwurst, Bertha - 206 -  
 Knight, Wm. - 19 -  
 Knoll, Mrs. Jesse (Elizabeth Smith) -  
     51-199 -  
 Knoll, Jesse - 212 -  
 Knoll, Oscar - 152 -  
 Knoll, Percy - 165-335 -  
 Koberstein, B. - 19 -  
 Koehn, H.W. (elec) - 147 -  
 Koenemann, B. - 147-178 -  
 Koenemann, Mrs. C. (Marie Witt) - 235 -  
 Kolbus, Anton - 142-162-286 -  
 Kopletz, Joe - 19 -  
 Korlaskie, Martin - 19 -  
 Kozell, restaurant - 148 -  
 Kraft, Al - 141 -  
 Kramer, Chas. - 46 -  
 Kratz, Leonard - 143 -  
 Krause, H.W. - 149 -  
 Krenz brothers (John, Ed) - 188 -  
 Kubasta, Louis - 162 -

L.

LaBorde, Forest - 199-235 -  
 LaBorde, Luke - 336 -  
 LaBorde, Mabel (Mrs. Nelzen) - 198 -  
 LaFollette, Robt. "Bob" - 88 -  
 LaHam, Dr. Jamil - 205 -  
 Lahti, Phyllis Hanson - 179 -  
 Laiten, Mrs. A. - 19 -  
 Laiten, L. - 19 -  
 Laiten, Loma (Mrs. Vonderloh) - 230 -  
 Laiten, Ruth - 199 -  
 Lake, David - 160-283 -  
 Lake, Ezra - 160 -  
 Lake, Levi - 260 -  
 Lamb, Lafayette - 23 -  
 Lambrecht, Alma (Mrs. M.H.) - 104 -  
 Lambrecht, Dr. M.H. (D.V.) - 73 -  
 Langlade, Chas. - 4 -  
 Lanning, D.C.E. - 37 -  
 Lanning, Joe - 72 -  
 Lanning, Robt. - 48-218 -  
 Lansing, Andrew - 71-172-268-289 -  
 Lansing livery (Andrew) - 71 -  
 Larrabee, A.B. - 104-172-246-283 -  
 Larrabee, Archie - 247 -  
 Larrabee, Bige (Jack) - 104-289 -  
 Larrabee, C.H. - 193-202-283-318 -  
 Larrabee, Mrs. C.H. (Mary Hurley) -  
     218 -  
 Larrabee, Carroll H. "Connie" - 134 -  
     246-202-222-305-336 -  
 Larrabee, Chas. - 222 -  
 Larrabee, Chas. & Ed. - 59-95-193 -  
 Larrabee drugs - 130-171 - 222 -  
 Larrabee, Ed - 104 -  
 Larrabee family -(lot & manse) - 59 -  
     246 -  
 Larrabee, Geo. - 246 -  
 Larrabee, Georgia (Mrs. M. Lloyd) -  
     246-166 -  
 Larrabee grocery - ~~128~~-128-130 -  
 Larrabee, Leo - 247 -  
 Larrabee, Mary - 59 -  
 Larrabee, S.E. "Eddie" - 246 -  
 Larrabee, Wm. (Horicon) - 247-128 -  
 Larson, Verna - 199 -  
 LaSalle, Sieur de - 3 -  
 Lasher, Allie - 135 -  
 Lasher, C.C. - 200 -  
 L'Hut, Daniel - 3 -  
 Lawler, Bill - 258 -  
 Lee, Ira - 182 -  
 Leaman, Allie - 148 -  
 Leaman, Ed. A. - 147-148 -  
 LeFevre, Paul - 99-336 -  
 LeGrand, Rev. Abram - 57 -  
 Lee, Mary - old city mill - 227 - 204 1/2

Lehman, Wm. - 219-  
 Leighton, Leslie - 167-237-  
 Leighton, Sherm - 333-  
 Leighton, S. - 130-172-202-  
 Leighton, T.W. - 51-69-  
 Leman, W.H. - 195-  
 Lemke, Ralph - 83-84-162-  
 Lemke, Mrs. Ralph (Helen) - 237-  
 Lent, Dr. (D.V.) - 73-  
 Lenz family - 296-  
 Lenz, Julius family - 296-  
 LeRoy, John - 75-  
 LeRoy, Simon - children - 264-  
 Leslie, C.E. - (music) - 174-  
 Lewis, L.B. (1865) - 19-283-  
 Lewis, Lyle - 89-  
 Lewis, J.E. - 19-  
 Lewis & Thompson - 113-128-  
 Lewis, Z.D. - 19-  
 Liddle, "Chick" - 152-  
 Linde, Dr. - 40-  
 Lindenstruth, P. - 19-  
 Lindermer, Lewis - 152-  
 Lindley, J.E. - 173-200-  
 Lindsey, Coe & Darrow - 77-  
 Lindsey, J.F. - 171-  
 Lindquist, Rev. Emil - 67-  
 Lipsky, Mrs. Nellie - 63-  
 Little, Mrs. (laundry) - 153-  
 Little, Ella - 199-  
 Little, Leona - 199-  
 Lizenby, Lavanchie - 256-  
 Lloyd, Minor - 138-246-  
 Locke, Ralph B. - 165-266-  
 Lockwood, Fred & Lillie - 148-191-227-  
 Lockhart, Dr. Jasper - 205-  
 Logan, Baxter - 173-  
 Loker, Dora Posorske - 147-  
 Loker, Fred - 194A-212-265-  
 Loewan, Max - 136-  
 Loomis, Mr. - 141-  
 Loop, D.W. - 19-  
 Lorenz, Joseph - 147-  
 Lovik, Rev & Dr. O.P. - 205-  
 Lowd, Elma - 306-  
 Lowd, Gilman - 17-22-24-61-328-341-  
 Lowd, Jennie (Root) - 197-328-  
 Lowd, Wm. - 19-  
 Lowry, Chas. - 121-  
 Luby, Rev. W.J. - 64-112-  
 Luker, Geo. & Marge - 162-173-  
 Luscombe, Edw. - 203-  
 Luscombe, Mrs. Elizabeth "Libby" - 140-  
 285-329-  
 Luther, -L. - 160-

Lynn, Joe - 71-172-  
 Lynn, Percy - 201-  
 Lyons, Joe - 71-287-

M

Mahar & Clark Groc. - 147-149-  
 Mahar, Ed - 19-188-  
 Mahar, Frank G. - 83-84-147-191-<sup>149</sup>  
 Mahoney, Pat - 19-  
 Malnory, Alta - 140-153-  
 Manning, L.O. - 49-  
 Mapes, Capt. - 78-  
 Marble, A.J. - 165-167-180-182-193-  
 194-218-225-230-236-  
 317-333-  
 Marble, Mrs. A.J. (Nellie) - 331-  
 Markert, Clair - 77-  
 Marquardt, James - 138-  
 Marquette, Fra. - 2-3-  
 Marquette & Joliet - 2-  
 Marsh, Mrs. C.O. (Mae Barnette) - 332-  
 Marsh, Chas. - 112-179-  
 Marshall, C.H. - 19-  
 Marshall, Ed - 19-  
 Marshall, Leo - 77-  
 Marshall, Mrs. Leo (Carrie  
 Himbaugh) - 178-  
 Marshall, Mrs. L.T. (Lizzie) - 231-  
 Martin, Ann - 172-  
 Martin, E.R. - 19-  
 Martin, Jay - 19-  
 Martin, John - 151-  
 Martin & Nash - 104-  
 Mason, Dr. - 205-  
 Matoon, B.C. - 18-304-  
 Matthews, Joseph - 196-  
 Maxon, D. - 281-  
 McAllister, Cora - 204-326-  
 McAllister family - 326-338-  
 McAllister, Fannie - 130-173-287-  
 McAllister, Frank - 195-  
 McAllister, Dr. Wm. P. - 24-37-98-  
 204-243-326-338-  
 McAllister W.P. - 338-  
 McCabe, John - 19-  
 McCall, Dr. (1876) - 98-(1857)-204  
 McCall, M. - 160-  
 McConnell, Chas. - 215-  
 McConnell & Monahan - 215-

McDonald, Jimmie - 185-  
 McDonald, Wm. - 185-202-  
 McFarlane, Rev. J. - 196-  
 McGuire & Earle - 133-  
 McGuire, Aggie - 305-  
 McGuire, D. - 19-  
 McGuire, Frank - 305-  
 McKean, G. - 19-  
 McKenzie, Geo. - 119-122-  
 McKenzie, L. - 19-  
 McLaren, Mr. - 90-113-338-  
 McLean, James - 19-  
 McLean, John - 19-  
 McLeod, D.W. - 172-  
 McLeod, Mrs. Myrtle Morrison - 197-  
 McMahan, J. - 281-  
 McMahan, Pat - 19-  
 McNeary, Tom - 19-  
 McNutly, Mr. -  
 McQuay, Wm. - 19-  
 Meilahn, Henry - 106-164-  
 Menard, Rene - 3-  
 Merrill, P.H. - 19-  
 Merrill, W.W. - 19-  
 Mester, Earl - 165-  
 Mettam, Geo. - 107-  
 Meyer, Otto - 147-  
 Milford, Mary - 24-  
 Miller, Mrs. - 199-  
 Miller, A.B. - 281-  
 Miller, Colin - 281-282-339-  
 Miller, Rev. Daniel - 58-  
 Miller, Geo. - 19-  
 Miller, Harley - 75-  
 Miller, Sally - 149-  
 Miller, Wm. - 19-  
 Mills, Duane - 296-  
 Mills, Harold - 181-  
 Mills, Orley - 151-178-208-  
 Minkler, David - 19-23-299-  
 Minkler, G.W. - 19-  
 Mitchell, Clyde - 141-191-  
 Mitchell, Mrs. Clyde (Erna) - 120-  
 Mitchell, Frank - 148-  
 Mitchler, Geo. - 173-  
 Monahan, Phil - 215-  
 Monroe, John - 24-  
 Moore, E.L. - 51-  
 Moran, Ada - 90-185-260-  
 Moran, Elizabeth Jungwirth - 235-237-  
 Moran, Gordon, Sr. - 147-191-329-  
 Morariety, Jim - 136-  
 Moriearty, Helen - 199-  
 Moriearty, Muriel - 199-  
 Morgan, Dave - 121-147-  
 Morris, M. - 19-

Morrison, Ada - 165-195-  
 Morton, Ann (Mrs. F. Bradley) - 179-  
 Morton, Calvin C. - 26-95-113-  
 Morton, Geo. - 17-26-141-195-213-  
 Morton, John - 212-  
 Morton, Lewis A. - 83-177-266-  
 Morton, Mrs. Lewis (Minnie T.) - 57-  
 165-176-177-218-232-237-317-327-  
 Morton & Arnold mill - 115-  
 Morton & Small - 172-  
 Mosley, Russell, Supt. - 96-  
 Moyer, Kenyon - 230-  
 Munding, Irvin - 149-  
 Munding, Inez - 165-332-  
 Mukurat, Florian - 83-  
 Mulder, Everett - 107-  
 Munger, John C. (1st Bank) - 98-192-  
 Munroe, John - 17-  
 Murphy, C.S. - 19-49-  
 Murphy, Henry - 19-  
 Murphy, Mrs. Julie - 327-  
 Musgrove, Mr. - 17-

N

Nash, Geo. - 201-  
 Nash & Martin hotel - 104-  
 Nelson, E. R. - 19-  
 Nelson, Mrs. Geo. (Marian Kellett) -  
 235-  
 Nelson, W.W. - 37-24-  
 Nelzen, Ben - 198-  
 Neuschafer, Frederick - 85-  
 Newman, Mrs. Frank (Ida) - 206-  
 Newton, Mrs. M.M. (hats) - 128-140-  
 Nichol, Carrie - 206-  
 Nichol, Will - 148-  
 Nichol, Jessie - 195-  
 Nicolet, Jean - 2-  
 Niven, Dr. A.B. (D.V.) - 73-200-  
 Nobel, Walter W. - 180-194A-317-  
 Norman, Leon - 152-  
 North, Rev. Thomas - 60-63-65-  
 Noyes, Prof. Edw. - 68-  
 Nourse, Mrs. W.H. - 154-



Posorske, Dora - 73-  
 Powell, Capt. Wm. - 6-37-40-89-  
 Pratt, Geo. - 71-200-264-  
 Pratt, Ray - 215-  
 Pratt, Wilbur - 150-  
 Prefs, Otto - 122-  
 Price, Peter - 20-  
 Purdy, Dr. Frederick - 205-  
 Purdy, Henry - 91-92-338-  
 Putnam, Geo. - 69-105-  
 Putnam, R. - 281-

Q

Quick, Abram - 17-24-  
 Quick, Mrs. Abram - 31-336-  
 Quinlan, W. (1867) - 149-

R

Race, Archie - 176-296-  
 Race, W.W. - 129-160-172-192-195-289-  
 Raff groc. & upholst. - 148-153-  
 Ramsey, Ella - 195-  
 Rankin, Clarence - 151-  
 Ransom, A.G. - 191-  
 Ransom, W.G. - 148-191-  
 Rasmussen, P. (1876) -  
 Rauchenstein, Emil - 182-  
 Rausch, Don - 63-  
 Raymond, L.C. - 218-  
 Ream, Chas. - 120-  
 Redlin, Ira - 57-302-  
 Reed, D.W. - 20-  
 Reed, E.A. - 231-  
 Reed, Ed. - 212-  
 Reed, James - 23-  
 Reed, John - 281-  
 Reed, Luther - 30-93-98-  
 Reed, Mrs. Luther (Zibiah) - 30-  
 Reed, Richard - 281-289-  
 Reed, Richard, Sr. - 23-30-129-330-336-  
 Reed, Richard, Jr. - 130-172-  
 Reed, Royal - 281-  
 Reed, Samuel G. - 107-  
 Reed, Warren - 179-265-  
 Reed, Dr. W.A. - 172-  
 Reid, Ben - 86-135-

Reid, Louisa (Mrs. Schafer) - 198-  
 -199-  
 Reid, Robert - 260-  
 Relien, Emma - 154-  
 Remington, Chas. - 160-  
 Remington, Wm. - 23-  
 Reynolds, Elder Edw. - 27-319-324-  
 Reynolds, John - 20-  
 Rhoda, Mrs. Bonnie Hoover - 166-  
 Rice, Eli - 281-  
 Rice, H.M. - 20-  
 Rice, John W. - 172-282-  
 Richardson, James - 283-  
 Robbins, Alfred - 20-  
 Robbins, Andrew - 282-  
 Robbins, Katherine Campbell - 105-  
 Robbins, Sam - 20-  
 Robbins, Wm. - 20-  
 Roberts, Hugh G. - 120-194A-  
 Roberts, Joseph H. - 340-  
 Roberts, Joyce - 153-  
 Robinson, Alfred -  
 Robinson, H.E. - 134-  
 Robinson, Mrs. H.E. - 195-  
 Rogers, A. - 20-  
 Rogers, F.T. - 20-  
 Rogers, Jude F. - 20-23-40-  
 Rood, H.W. - 95-197-  
 Root, Anne Lowd - 327-328-  
 Root Bros. - 135-  
 Root & Bunker Hdwe. - 129-  
 Root, C.B. "Cal" - 131-151-167-  
 192-287-289-  
 Root, Edith - 230-  
 Root, Elisha - 20-45-  
 Root, Fred - 116-151-248-  
 Root, J.G. - 223-  
 Root, Jennie Lowd - 197-  
 Rosenthal, Betty - 163-181-234-  
 Rosenthal, Dr. Ernst (D.V.) - 73-  
 Rosenthal, Mrs. Ernst (Pearl) - 86-  
 Ross, A. - 20-  
 Ross, H. - 20-  
 Ross, John - 20-  
 Ross, Reubin - 20-  
 Roth, Eva - 344-  
 Ruedinger, Jerry - 165-  
 Rumsey, Geo. - 20-  
 Rumsey, James - 20-  
 Rumsey, J.P. - 20-  
 Rumsey, Mrs. O. - 20-  
 Rumsey, Richard - 20-  
 Russell, A.B. - 167-  
 Russell, Dr. Frank - 138-205-  
 Russell, G.A. - 205-  
 Russell, James - 62-74-128-172-  
 Rush, James - 20. -174-245-

Russell, Wm. - 133-  
 Russell, J.T. - 20-  
 Russell & Walker - 74-129-  
 Ryan, John - 69-

S

Sadya, Benjamin - 98-  
 Safford, Emmerson - 194A-  
 Safford, Mrs. - 260- (Ida) -  
 Safford, N.A. - 69-98-  
 Samphier, Mrs. C.J. - 235-  
 Samphier, James - 282-  
 Samphier, J.W. - 83-  
 Samphier, P. - 282-  
 Samphier, P. & Bro. - 129-160-172-289-  
 Samson, Geo. - 26-  
 Sargeant, Jennie - 260-  
 Sargeant, Edw. - 156-193-  
 Sawyer, J.F. - 89-243-244-  
 Sawyer, J.F. war letters - 273 thru  
 280-  
 Sawyer family hist - 143-  
 Schafer, E. - 150-  
 Schafer, Mrs. E. (Louisa Reid) - 198-  
 199-201-  
 Schemerhorn, A. - 283-  
 Schettle, Gary - 143-  
 Schlagel, Otto - 190-  
 Schlink, Rev. Harold - 110-  
 Schmidt, Chas. - 267-  
 Schmidt, Hugo E. - 148-  
 Schmidt, Robt. - 147-191-260-  
 Schmidt & Berry - 147-  
 Schmitt Drugs - 138-267-  
 Schoenbeckler, Dr. L.P. - 206-  
 Schriber, Mrs. hotel -  
 Schroeder, Jack - 165-  
 Schwartz, Mr. restaurant - 147-  
 Scott, H.C. - 109-114-139-200-  
 202-217-  
 Scott, H.C. daughter - 139-  
 Scott, Leuman - 17-299-330-  
 Scott, Lyman "Tige" - 148-260-  
 Searles, Henry - 333-  
 Seckar, Frank - 165-  
 Seeber, Frank - 20-  
 Seip, Mrs. - 154-  
 Shafer, Geo. W. - 83-103-128-172-  
 289-296-  
 Shafer, Peter V. - 103-129-  
 Shafer sisters - 140-  
 Sharp, James - 110-111-133-249-296-  
 Shattuck, Henry - 63-

Shattuck, James - 128-136-173-  
 Sheerar, Frank - 176-181-  
 Sheerar, Dr. I.H. (D.D.) - 62-111-  
 112-172-176-181-205-218-  
 Sheerar, John B. - 83-142-164-165-  
 178-180-181-255-  
 Sheerar, Mrs. John (Mary) - 178-182-  
 Sheerar, Mrs. I.H. (Josephine) - 195-  
 Sheerar, Lewis - 176-  
 Sheldon & Allen - 114-  
 Sheldon, Arden - 44-167-  
 Sheldon, E.T. - 20-142-160-172-  
 Sheldon, Emmett T. - 142-167-172-286-  
 Sheldon, Mrs. Emmett (Florence) - 206-  
 Sheldon, Harry - 152-153-  
 Sheldon, Timothy - 151-  
 Shelp, Donald - 173-  
 Shelp, J.S. - 318-  
 Shelp, John S. - 31-111-195-228-260-  
 Shelp, Leon - 162-180-193-241-266-  
 Shelp, Mrs. Leon (Rose) - 218-317-  
 Shelp, Mrs. Leon (Louise Hellwig) -  
 65-66-162-  
 Shelp, Roy - 152-178-260-317-  
 Shelton, E.E. - 165-185-195-336-  
 Shepard, Alva - 151-200-  
 Shepard, Mrs. Alva (Belle) - 235-  
 Shepard, Geo. - 48-86-152-  
 Shepard, Lucille - 178-235-  
 Shermis Grocery (Sherm Kautza) - 148-  
 Shertz Knitting - 143-  
 Shertz Service Station - 77-  
 Sherwin, Rev. Frank - 61-  
 Shipman, E.D. - 141-202-  
 Shufelt, Sidney - 243-  
 Siebensohn, F.A. - 51-164-235-  
 Siefert, Henry & Son Bob - 143-146-194-  
 Siefert, Mrs. Emil (Marie Juanita  
 Arno - 179-  
 Sielaff, Bernard - 81-181-  
 Sielaff, Phyllis - 163-237-  
 Silverthorn, Bernice - 182-  
 Silverthorn, L.J. - 20-  
 Silverthorn, M. - 160-  
 Simmoni family - 23-  
 Simmoni, Mr. - 300-  
 Simmons, Fred L. - 176-  
 Simmons, Joseph - 130-  
 Simpson, W.W. - 20-  
 Singler, Walter M. - 121-  
 Sloan, D.E. - 202-  
 Slocum, Cyrus - 51-52-200-339-  
 Slocum, R. - 20-  
 Small, Arthur - 305-  
 Smalley, Jed - 37-40-  
 Smick, Kim - 329-  
 Smith, Absolom S. - 339-

Smith, Ann - 317 -  
 Smith, A.S. - 281 -  
 Smith Bros. (painters) - 172 -  
 Smith, B.F. - 281-282 -  
 Smith, C.I. "Irv" - 318-79-106-117 -  
 120-133-184-258-327-175 -  
 Smith, Mrs. Jesse Knoll (Elizabeth) -  
 51-198-232-317 -  
 Smith, John K. - 295 -  
 Smith, Julia - 305 -  
 Smith, Kathryn - 196 -  
 Smith, Louis (Capt) - 43-258-265 -  
 266-306 -  
 Smith, Mariam J. - 1-323-329 -  
 Smith, Pat - 75-176 -  
 Smith, Seth - 32-69-202-258 -  
 Smith sisters (Pat's) - 176 -  
 Smith, Walter & Liona - 136 -  
 Smith, Wm. A. - 327-175 -  
 Sneed, Mr. - 128 -  
 Snider, Richard A. - 69-200 -  
 Snowberg, J.E. - 150 -  
 Soper, Wm. - 160 -  
 Sowles, Louis W. - 318 -  
 Spadtke, R. - 191 -  
 Spaulding, T. - 20 -  
 Springer, Dr. V.G. - 206 -  
 Staeger, Wm. - 112-165 -  
 Stancliff, Sam - 20 -  
 Stanley, Frank - 83-167-180-219-250 -  
 Stanley, Mrs. Frank (Ella) - 173-176 -  
 Stanley, Webster - 10-12-15 - 265 -  
 Stanton, Ephriam - 151-176-181 -  
 Stanton, H.E. - 20-72 -  
 Stanton, J. - 20 -  
 Star, Joseph - 20 -  
 Starr, John - 20 -  
 Statler, James - 281 -  
 Statler, Sol - 281 -  
 Stead, Elizabeth - 231 -  
 Stead, Henry - 20 -  
 Stead, James - 231-232 -  
 Stearns & Calhoun - 146-147-191 -  
 Stearns, Clayton - 38-60-86-138-162 -  
 165-178-191-201-225-237-241 -  
 267-269 - (267 handwritten)  
 Stearns, Mrs. Clayton (Grace) - 60-155 -  
 160-241-242-286-337 -  
 Stearns, Geo - 146-180-286 -  
 Stearns, Henry - 20 -  
 Stearns, Mrs. Geo. (Maude) - 237-329 -  
 Steib, Benjamin - 48 -  
 Steiger, Carl - 82 -  
 Stein, Hugo - 219 -  
 Stephenson, Dr. J.T. - 205 -  
 Stevens, Chas. H. - 146-258 -  
 Stevens, Mrs. Harry (Lucy) - 155-235 -  
 Stevens, Harry - 149-235 -  
 Stevens, Wm. - 20 -  
 Stevens, Wm. - 20 -  
 Stever, J. - 20 -  
 Stewart, Walter - 17 -  
 Stewart, Wm. S. - 120-142 -  
 Stiller, Albert - 149-191 -  
 Stiller, Gordon - 155 -  
 Stiller, Sherm & Helen - 147 -  
 Stiller, Sherm & Irv. - 147-151 -  
 Stipp, Fred - 20 -  
 Stocking, Dorothy - 317 -  
 Stokes, Geo. - 23-24-94-98-119 -  
 282-340 - (282 handwritten)  
 Stone, A.F. - 26-69 -  
 Stone, Augustus - 26-75 -  
 Stone, Mrs. M.E. - 91 -  
 Stone, Traddon - 20 -  
 Straub, Lester - 178 -  
 Strauss, Mr. - 69 -  
 Strayer, Dr. Frank - 206 -  
 Sullivan, Art - 86-343 -  
 Sullivan, Frank - 83 -  
 Sullivan, Geo "Cy" - 142 -  
 Sullivan, John - 343 - (343 handwritten)  
 Sullivan, P.O. - 20 -  
 Sullivan, Russell - 286 -  
 Sullivan, Tom - 258 -  
 Sumner, John - 27 -  
 Swain, F.R. - 160 -  
 Swisher, Oscar - 143 -  
 Switlick, Anton (Tony) - 150 -



T

Tanner, Richard, Sr. - 20-299-  
 Taylor, Dean & Beckwith (1847) -  
     platted village - 37-338-  
 Taylor, J.R. - 20-  
 Taylor, Joel - 37-283-  
 Taylor, Lillie - 305-  
 Taylor, Mildred (Mrs. F. Charlesworth) -  
     165-195-  
 Taylor & Son Grocery - 171-  
 Taylor, S.R. - 20-  
 Taylor, T.R. - 134-  
 Taylor, Mrs. T.R. - 200-  
 Tenant, Josephine (Mrs. Will) - 206-  
 Tenant, Lucile (Mrs. G. Oaks) - 234-  
 Terrell, J.K. - 20-  
 Terwilliger, Wm. - 44-  
 Thatcher, Lucy - 337-  
     Thomas, Tom - 20-  
 Thomas, Wilma - 182-  
 Thompson, C.G. - 84-119-166-  
 Thompson, C.T. - 160-  
 Thompson, Ellis - 114-153-172-283-  
 Thompson & Hayward - 50-76-115-  
     -172-173-239-  
 Thompson restaurant - 148-  
 Thompson, T.J. - 20-318-318-14-  
 Thompson, Thomas - 37-41-166-221-  
 Thorpe, N. - 20-  
 Thrall, E.B. - 196-202-  
 Thrall, Wm. - 20-23-26-  
 Tice, A.B. - 85-130-172-247<sup>bit</sup>2202-  
 Tice, Clint - 149-191-252-  
 Tice, Mrs. Clint (Kathryn) - 178-179-  
 Tice, Earl - 85-180-214-252-  
 Tice, Evelyn, (Mrs. Roy) - 154-206-  
 Tice, Frederick, Sr. - 17-22-(1878)-24-  
 Tice, Dr. Frederick - 204-  
 Tice, Harvey - 199-  
 Tice, Louis - 202-  
 Tice, Nelson - 23-  
 Tilkens, Bernice Cole - 235-  
 Tittmore, J.N. - 110-193-265-  
 Tomasek, Dr. J. (D.V.) - 73-  
 Toms, Liston - 150-  
 Tonti, Henry D. - 3-  
 Topliff, Geo. A. - 340-  
 Torrigan, Bedros "Pete" - 257-  
 Towers, Matt - 119-  
 Treleven Bros. - 130-  
 Treleven, Dale - 156-  
 Treleven, Dennis - 202-327-  
 Treleven, Edw. J. - 219-230-327-  
 Treleven, Elizabeth (Lizzie) - 305-  
 Treleven, Eva - 174-  
 Treleven family - 26-

Treleven, Guy - 317-  
 Treleven, Harvey - 150-286-  
 Treleven, Joseph - 20-26-28-120-  
 Treleven, Joseph "Joe" - 121-  
 Treleven, John D. - 128-193-327-  
 Treleven, Minnie B. (Mrs. L. Morton) -  
     165-  
 Treleven & Orchard - 129-172-289-  
 Treleven, Richard - 120-  
 Treleven, Truman - 241-  
 Tritt Auto Co. - 215-  
 Tritt, Edw. - 58-  
 Tritt, Euclid - 152-189-327-  
 Tritt, Hiram & Ruth - 25-  
 Troxell family - 344-  
 Troxell, Grace - 344-  
 Troxell, Henry Reuben - 344-  
 Truman, Mary Jane - 161-242-  
 Tucker, Frank - 165-195-250-  
 Turner, Geo. - 146-260-  
 Turner, Jesse, Geo., Warren - 260-  
 Tuttle, Colonel - 37-47-50-338-

U

Utter & Co. - 113-  
 Utter & Goodenough - 113-

V

Van De Plasch, Kate - 265-  
 VanGilder sisters wedding - 221-  
 Vessey, Robt. - 20-  
 Vittum, M.W. (principal) - 111-  
 Voelkner, Chas. - 194A-  
 Vonderloh, Katherine - 234-  
 Von Rembow, Mrs. Daisy - 162-

W

Wadell home - 157B-  
 Wagstaff, S.M. - 20-  
 Wagstaff, Wm. - 192-  
 Waite, Catherine - 195-  
 Waite, Henry - 83-130-172-  
 Waite, Mrs. (hats) - 140-  
 Wakeman, Wm. - 192-  
 Ward, Hattie - 235-  
 Washburn, H. - 306-  
 Washington, Cora Goodwin -  
 Waterman, J. - 49-  
 Watkins, "Stub" - billards - 289-  
 Webb, Robt. - 128-172-189-  
 Webster, Mrs. N. - 64-244-  
 Webster, Hon. Hiram - 26-59-60-105-  
 115-172-243-249A-337-339-  
 Webster mill - 115-  
 Webster, "Tarbucket" - 257-  
 Weingarten, Alvin - 51-215-  
 Weinstein, Freda - 216-  
 Weinstein, J.W. - 216-  
 Welby & Tice (1876) - 130-  
 Wells, Frank - 20-  
 Wells, J.R. - 282-  
 Weng, Rev. G.M. - 65-  
 Werner, Mr. - 104-  
 Werthman, L. - 191-  
 Wescott, Dr. - 204-  
 West, Edw. - 15-17-24-25-37-  
 229-337-341-  
 Wheeler, F.F. - 172-  
 Wheeler, Mabel - 344-  
 Wheeler, P.A. - 192-344-  
 Wheeler & Walker (paper) - 51-99-  
 Wheeler, Wm. P. - 24-149-287-  
 Wheeler, Willis E. - 142-172-202-333-  
 White, Andrew - 167-  
 White, Bob - 153-  
 White, Geo. - 50-256-  
 White, James - 152-  
 White, Mrs. James, (Etta) - 140-  
 White, Ruth - 182-  
 White, S.D. - 130-171-  
 Whitehead, Joseph - 20-299-  
 Whiteman, B. - 129-172-  
 Whitemarsh, A. - 20-  
 Whitemarsh, Levi - 20-  
 Whitemarsh, M. - 20-  
 Whittier, Mrs. W.R. - 23-  
 Widmer, Mrs. Albert - 247-  
 Wiegner, Rev. Robt. - 57-  
 Wiles, Asa - 77-111-176-  
 Wiles, Mrs. Carrie - 146-  
 Wilcox, Henry - 160-  
 Wilcox, Mr. - 49-  
 Wilcox, Miss - 175-  
 Wilcox, Tom & Mary - 258-  
 Wilcox, Wm. W. - 281-339-  
 Wiles, J. - 176-  
 Williams, Eleazer - 8-  
 Williams, Emma (Relien) - 154-  
 Williams, J.D. - 20-  
 Williams, Levi - 142-151-204-  
 Williams, O. - 20-  
 Williams, Sharon - 97-  
 Williams, Wm. - 27-  
 Williamson, Mr. & Mrs. - 203-  
 Williamson, James E. - 281-  
 Wills, Albert "Reddie" - 107-260-  
 Wilmarth, Mrs. E. - 20-  
 Wilmarth, W. - 20-  
 Wilson, A. - 20-  
 Wilson, Andrew - 20-37-49-90-  
 113-130-338-  
 Wilson, Chas. - 120-  
 Wilson, Chas. & Hannah - 136-  
 Wilson Harley - 166-  
 Wilson, John - 158-  
 Wilson & Johnson - 113-  
 Wilson, Sumner - 23-  
 Winchester bros. - 247-  
 Winchester, Dan - 151-  
 Winchester, E. - 20-  
 Winchester, Melvina - 231-247-  
 Winchester, Perry - 247-  
 Winslow, Henri B. - 44-67-167-193-  
 Winslow, Mrs. H.B. - 182- (251-  
 Winslow, Mrs. Iona - 218-  
 Witt, Gus - 212-252-  
 Wolverton, Nathan - 23-24-  
 Wood, Hattie - 218-  
 Woodmen of America - 195-  
 Woodward, Rev. Daniel - 63-88-110-111  
 Woodward, E.C. - 119-172-  
 Worden, W.J. - 160-  
 Worthman, Louis - 148-  
 Wright, C.B. - 83-90-  
 Wright, H.W. - 20-  
 Wright, Miss Minnie - 246-  
 Wright, Platt M. - 51-52-55-158-  
 172-246-281-299-304-339-  
 Wright, Mrs. P.M. (Edie) - 59-246-  
 Wrightson, Geo. - 152-

Y

Yellow Thunder - 40 -  
Yorty, Sophie - 154 -  
Young, Cleve - 151 -  
Young, Henry - 20-28 -  
Young, Olive - 120-234 -  
Young, Levi Thomas - 72 -  
Young, Willis - 85 -

Z

Zack, John & Mona - 149 -  
Zager, Hattie - 140 -  
Zellmer, Irene - 199-235 -  
Zernzack, Martina - 220 -  
Zernzack, Dr. R. (D.D.) - 206 -  
Zimmer, Wayne "Zeke" - 148 -  
Zouski, Noreen - 329 -  
Zweiger, Walter - 146-335 -