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## **The J. E. Hamilton Community House, Two Rivers: 1931-1981. Monograph 46 1982**

Asplund, Arvid; Baer, Marcie

Manitowoc, Wisconsin: Manitowoc County Historical Society, 1982

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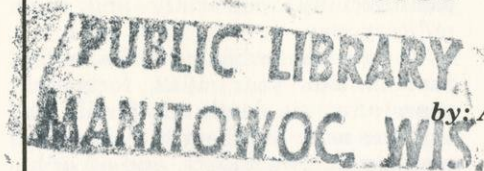
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MANITOWOC COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OCCUPATIONAL  
MONOGRAPH 46

1982 Series

THE J.E. HAMILTON COMMUNITY HOUSE  
TWO RIVERS  
1931 — 1981



MAR 16 1982

by: Arvid Asplund and Marcie Baer

Editor's note: *Special thanks go to Arvid Asplund who spent many hours gathering the material used in this monograph. Included were newspaper articles from the Two Rivers Reporter-Chronicle and the Herald-Times-Reporter; plus the dedication booklet from 1931 and excerpts from Falge's History of Manitowoc County.*

*Marcie Baer then took these materials, edited it and wrote the manuscript preparatory to printing and publishing of the monograph. The Manitowoc County Historical Society is grateful to these members for their efforts in providing this history of an important institution in Two Rivers.*

*The materials that Mr. Asplund had gathered were so voluminous that one wondered where one should begin to write the story of this institution. After perusing the many materials Miss Baer concluded, "There is no better place than to start at the beginning. That beginning would be the foresight of James Edward Hamilton. This foresight is recognized in the Hamilton Community House which is a vital part of Two Rivers life fifty years later.*

*It was in 1980 that the "American Hamilton Industries" became the title of Occupational Monograph 42 in the 1980 series. We would refer you to this monograph for a discussion of the contributions made by J.E. Hamilton to this Manitowoc County community, in addition to the Two Rivers Community House.*

*The following tribute was published in the Two Rivers Reporter-Chronical in 1931.*

### PRIDE

"Two Rivers for a century to come will be proud of the magnificent J.E. Hamilton Community House opened today."

"We shall be proud, and our children after us, because the building is a monument to a son of Two Rivers whose great material achievements were crowned by a noble generosity to his native place.

"Many men have made fortunes, but too often in careers they have lost 'the common touch'. Immersed in great affairs, they have ended in spiritual isolation from their fellows. The donor of the Community House, however, has endeared himself to his neighbors by his staunch devotion to the town no less than by his continual contributions to its welfare.

"We knew him when . . . men say of those who have sought the wider field.

"In behalf of the employees and executives of the Hamilton Mfg. Co., the undersigned wish to add their tribute to the community's acknowledgement of the Hamilton Community House, latest of the many contributions of J.E. Hamilton to the progress and well-being of Two Rivers.

"Most of us, and many of those for whom we speak, have been co-workers with Mr. Hamilton for many years. Perhaps better than most citizens of this community we are able to attest the depth and sincerity of his

attachment to Two Rivers, so often demonstrated in the half-century since he laid the first small foundation upon which has been raised the edifice of the present Hamilton Company. The Hamilton Community House is the climax of years of generosity and solicitude which the founder of this concern has ever demonstrated for his native place, often in ways not conspicuous nor public. No son of Two Rivers has done more, perhaps none so much, to foster human welfare and further every enterprise in this city that might add to its prosperity or be of service to its people.

"In the dedication of the Community House, Mr. Hamilton sets the capstone upon a half-century of effort, in which the advancement of Two Rivers was always foremost in his thinking, a purpose which infused and directed every step taken by himself personally or by the institution of which he was the guiding intelligence. Though Two Rivers in the beginning was far from the markets in which the company's products were sold, and from the sources of the materials used in their manufacture, his pride and loyalty would not permit him to consider leaving the city of his birth. No matter what obstacles of distance or transportation intervened, he was determined that Two Rivers should remain the headquarters and center of

all his operations, and he brought back to his community as trophies of his industrial campaigns, the business of competitors from many states, with every addition increasing the opportunities and prosperity of his friends and neighbors.

"It may truly be said of J.E. Hamilton, as of few other men, that he found his native place a village, and made it a city. And his faith in the future of Two Rivers is more eloquently asserted than by many words in the magnificent Community House which is dedicated today. It stands unique in size, in scope — in facilities, among similar institutions in towns of comparable size. Its massive walls, its spacious apartments, its perfect appointments declare the confidence of the builder in a greater Two Rivers that shall be. It is a token and a symbol of the donor's aspiration for his home town, a prophesy in stone and steel, the expression of a profound affection and unwavering assurance in the destiny of Two Rivers — the forerunner of a dream city that could he have his greatest wish, should be in all points as perfect as this home he has built for the Community Spirit.

"We say these things because we know them to be true. They are implicit in the life and works of J.E. Hamilton, although his quiet modesty leaves them unsaid. We, his co-workers and lieutenants for many years in his business activities, have felt that upon this day, which crowns a busy and successful life with the great happiness of a great gift, it is fitting that something of the vision which Mr. Hamilton has imparted to us, in occasional glimpses of his aspirations for his native city, should be given to his fellow-citizens — that they may be inspired, as we have been by the faith and hope for Two Rivers which has for more than half a century guided him in thought and deed.

"The Hamilton Community House is, superficially, a monument to a successful life. Like that life, it is as useful as it is unique. But we who know J.E. Hamilton best realize that to him its purpose is not the perpetuation of his name but the inspiration of his vision for Two Rivers — its meaning is not commemorative, but exemplary. It

is not to call attention to what J.E. Hamilton carved into the history of Two Rivers, but to point the way of achievement to those who came afterward, that they too, may build in this community worthily and well.

Geo. S. Hamilton, Pres.

H. Gowran, Vice Pres.

T.W. Suddard, Secretary

E.P. Hamilton, Treasurer

### DEEP COMMUNITY ROOTS

To better understand J.E. Hamilton's feelings for Two Rivers, it might be well to include this bit of family background as found in Falge's history.

His father, Henry Carter Hamilton, was born at Clarendon, Orleans County, New York in 1827. He arrived in Two Rivers in 1849 and was head of the H.C. Hamilton and Company, who built the first pail factory in the year 1857. In addition he was also involved in other business, social and political affairs of Two Rivers.

H.C. Hamilton was married to Dianta Jane Smith, of Two Rivers, daughter of Hezekiah Huntington Smith, on December 23, 1849. "They started housekeeping in a little log house which stood on the site now occupied by the Berners property near the corner of Jefferson and Sixteenth Streets."

Four children were born of the union: James Edward; Laura Adelia; George Dann; and Henry Pierpont Hamilton.

H.C. Hamilton died during the civil war and was brought back to Two Rivers for burial.

"With his life cut short at the early age of thirty-seven and only sixteen years after he had left his home in the east and his removal to the west, he left his impress in the community, socially, commercially, politically and in a military way.

"It is a somewhat remarkable fact that in this year, 1912, forty-eight years after his death, his family still survives as he left them, his widow still residing at Two Rivers, and all of his children living. His children and grandchildren are now engaged in the manufacturing business at Two Rivers, a work he undertook when he first came west sixty-four years ago."

J.E. Hamilton did more than just survive.

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### The following pages are taken from the J.E. HAMILTON COMMUNITY HOUSE PROGRAM

April 15, 1931

A High-Light Biography

J.E. Hamilton

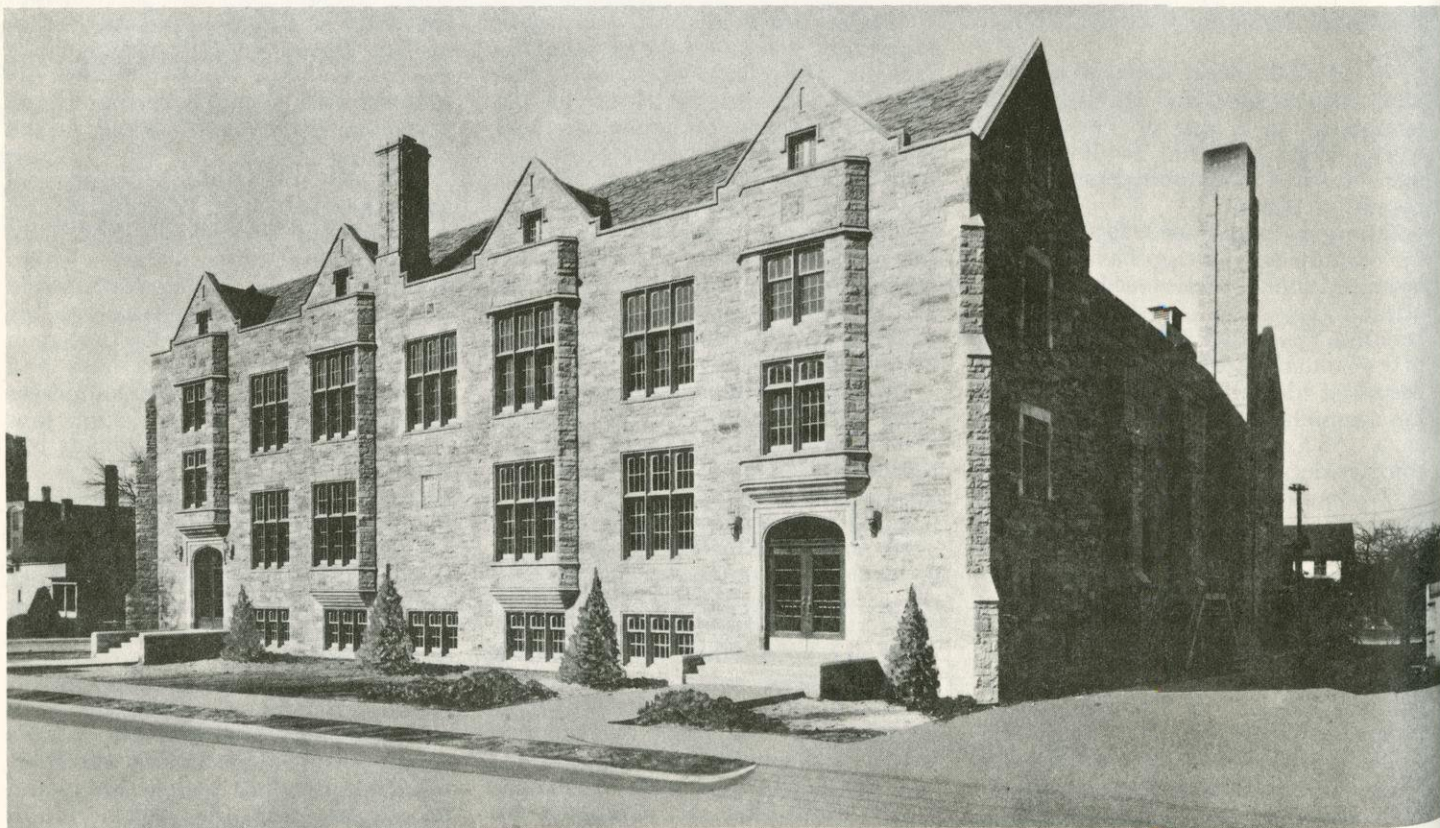
"Two Rivers in the fifties of the last century . . . a lumber town with saw-mills screeching, rivers full of logs from the surrounding pine forest . . . lumber-jacks, Indians, French-Canadian fishermen . . . schooners at the long wharves jutting out into the lake at the

foot of Washington Street . . . ox teams and breaking-plows . . . shrieks of mill-whistles and saws . . .

"A barefooted, wiry boy in the dust of its streets . . . friend of lumberjack, Indian and fisherman, expert at running logs in the river, a pest around the mills for his eager curiosity — Sixty One and Lincoln's call for volunteers . . . the boy's father in army blue recruiting a company . . . a telegram from the south, a weeping mother and a terrified little family . . .

"A long trip east to new and strange relatives in Lockport (New York) . . . unfamiliar family burdens on the boy . . . watercarrier in a quarry, cash-boy, newsboy hawking the extra telling of Lincoln's assassination — Back to Two Rivers again, a slim youth of seventeen at a clothes-pin lathe, helping his mother keep the rest of the children in school . . . playing the new game of baseball with the Centennials . . . engineer of a brick factory . . . pile-driver engineer on the lake . . . home again to work in the pail factory . . .

"Gold in the Black Hills and a returned prospector with nugget and tall stories . . . the flames of youthful hunger for adventure . . . borrowing money to seek a fortune in the mines . . . in the west with two-gun men and hostile Indians . . . disappointed . . . salt beef, potatoes and pick-and-shovel labor in Deadwood Gulch . . . no gold, no get away stake . . . back to civilization on foot with a wagon train . . . back to Two Rivers, broke and in debt . . .



*The J.E. Hamilton Community House.*

*Dedicated April 15, 1931. The photo above was taken in 1933.*

determination to seek the end of the rainbow in the old home town . . .

"Back to Two Rivers and the pail factory . . . the extra money in the evenings, pumping away at a scroll-saw in a room off the kitchen . . . brackets, picture frames . . . an emergency job for a local printer, sawing poster-type on the scroll-saw . . . the first glimpse of a great idea . . .

"More scroll-saw type . . . samples to printers over the state . . . an order, another order, a third . . . the great idea grows clearer . . . decision to launch into business . . . quits the pail factory . . . marriage and new responsibility . . . days and nights on the scroll-saw . . . the one-man business . . . selling, book-keeping, shipping, feverish work at the saw in the backroom shop . . . work, worry, pinch of inadequate financing . . . sticking to it, planning, hoping . . .

"The first real shop . . . whole plant moved in a goatwagon . . . a partner and a bit of capital to expand . . . designing laborsaving machinery . . . keeping prices down, improving methods and quality . . . another partner and a bit more capital . . . a new and larger shop . . . the great idea produces a new shoot . . . printer's furniture as well as type . . .

"The mass-production idea in its infancy . . . economics triumph over rivals . . . competitors sell out, unable to stand against driving force of vigorous

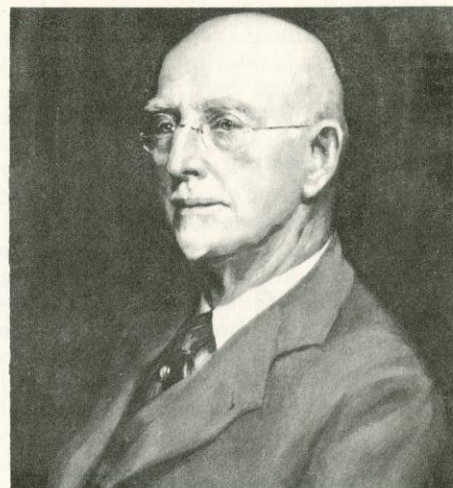
new rival . . . line expands to include cabinets, tables, complete print-shop equipment . . . more competitors, out-flanked . . . dominant position achieved in industry . . .

"Expansion, new lines . . . dental furniture . . . vision of steel supplanting wood . . . first steel plant in industry . . . more competitors capitulate . . . building, building, building . . .

"Constant public as well as private interest . . . mayor . . . promoter of concrete lakeshore road . . . father of water system . . . first head of water and light commission . . . fighter for Two Rivers . . .

Aluminum, new discovery, magic metal . . . hospitality to inventor with an idea . . . corner in the plant for experiment . . . combs, pin trays, novelties . . . seed of a giant new industry planted . . . problems of metal-working machinery solved . . . trial, failure, success . . . a new industry for the old town . . .

"Growing interest in social service . . . boys' work . . . backing every civic improvement . . . gift of a swimming pool to round out and complete new high school . . . backing church building funds, Catholic and Protestant . . . helping young folks through college . . . backing municipal hospital . . . Community House . . . dedication to sons of Two Rivers who have won honor for service to public . . ."



*J.E. Hamilton*

monument to his vision, a thing of beauty which can well be a source of pride to the community as well as to the donor and to its architects.

"The building with its age enduring stone walls, solid foundation on deep-driven piles, reinforced steel and concrete interior structure, enduring and sanitary tile and glazed brick wall treatment and modern ventilating system, is one that will serve both the generations of today as well as those of tomorrow.

"The building is truly not only an asset to the City of Two Rivers but an opportunity as well, and the hope has often been expressed by Mr. Hamilton that not only will it be of great benefit to the citizens of Two Rivers, but an example to other communities of what such a building can accomplish for a community, which will lead to many other undertakings of a similar nature elsewhere.

"The design and plans for the building are the work of Childs & Smith, architects, of Chicago, the excellence of whose work speaks for itself in the building. The Immel Construction Co. of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin were the general contractors for the building. The exquisite masonry of the walls is a tribute to their special ability along these lines, and the general excellence of the workmanship throughout every part of the building is due to their honesty and ability as builders of buildings to endure. The exterior is of stone furnished by the Lannon Quarries Corporation of Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. Heating and ventilating system was installed by G.H. Kallies & Son, of Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The Anderson Electric Company of Manitowoc, Wisconsin installed all the electrical equipment. The plumbing installation is the work of Wm. Elliott Plumbing Co., of Two Rivers, Wisconsin. The terrazzo floors were laid by the U.F. Durner Co. of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The slate roof and all sheet metal work was done by R.G. Suettinger of Two Rivers, Wisconsin. The stairs and ornamental iron work was furnished

## J.E. HAMILTON COMMUNITY HOUSE

"In the summer of 1929 after a number of preliminary talks on the subject, Mr. Hamilton talked to the officials of the Recreation Board of the City of Two Rivers, with the idea of providing an outdoor swimming pool in Lakeshore Park, so that the boys and girls and men and women of the city might enjoy swimming both summer and winter regardless of weather. After some discussion, it was decided that experts on community recreation be consulted. Accordingly, a survey of the city was made, and the conclusion was reached that something more in the nature of a general recreation and community building would be more suitable for the needs of the community. Whereupon, steps were taken to study community buildings located in other cities, as to the type of building and program, location in community and kind of facilities needed.

"After a complete survey the architectural firm of Childs and Smith at Chicago who had devoted a great deal of their attention to projects of this nature, were employed to make a preliminary plan and estimate of the cost of the building. The original plan contemplated an expenditure of

\$100,000, and on this basis, Mr. Hamilton offered to supply to the city of Two Rivers such a building on property to be furnished by the City. After considerable negotiation, suitable property was selected and tentative drawings of the proposed building were commenced.

"A more careful study, however, of the requirements of the community, and the desire on Mr. Hamilton's part constantly expressed, that the building be something besides a monument — that is a building that would really provide recreational facilities for every citizen as well as a meeting place, — for activities, programs and entertainment, which could not well be provided elsewhere — the scope of the building enlarged to a point where the cost ran considerably over double the amount originally planned by Mr. Hamilton.

"The need being so apparent and the ideals of Mr. Hamilton so high and his determination to do the thing which the city needed so strong that everything that was shown to be needed was finally incorporated in the plans, regardless of the cost to Mr. Hamilton personally, — with the result that the building finally erected, (Which is more fully described in this book) is a

and installed by the Globe Wire & Iron Works of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The lathing and plastering is the work of Manion Bros. of Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The decorating was done by T. Spetz & Son of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. All finished hardware was furnished by the J.J. Stangel Hdwe. Co., of Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

"The Community spirit that has been shown by the donor in making this magnificent gift to the community, has been reflected in the work of all those that played a part in the erection of the building. All contractors have shown a spirit of cooperation and have been anxious to do more than was necessary to make the building truly meet the needs of the community. The building represents the best that the artisans had to give.

"The beauty of the exterior of the building is also present throughout the interior, but a feeling of simplicity of design prevails in every department. As you peruse the following pages, always keep in mind the spirit that motivated the donor and the democratic method of administering the activities of the building. Picture if you will the efforts of the builders to arrange the facilities so they might meet the many and various types of demands that a community such as ours might make.

"The building is to be operated by the Municipal Department of Recreation. The administrating body consists of a group of seven citizens, appointed by the city manager. The group determines the policies of the building, fixes the rental fee for the use of the various facilities, and selects employees."

"A brief description of the building and its facilities follow:

### THE LOUNGE

"The spirit in which this building was given and the spirit in which it is to be operated is best expressed by the atmosphere that prevails throughout the spacious lounge, which might better be called the 'Community parlor'. The two main entrances to the building lead to the lounge, which is wainscoted throughout in Colonial fashion, in knotty white pine. A large Colonial fireplace dominates the center of the room. The room is completely furnished with Early American furniture to harmonize. Two large panels depicting a French Artist's conception of Boston Harbor and New York Bay in 1840 lend further atmosphere to the room. A large portrait of the donor occupies the space above the fireplace. The portrait was presented to the building by fellow citizens in appreciation of this latest expression of the donor's interest in the community. All departments of the building are reached directly from the lounge. The lounge will be open for the use of the general public at all hours of

the day, and furnish the ideal place for finding companionship, meeting friends, or whiling away an idle hour. The office of the manager of the Community House will be in the lobby. All engagements for the use of any of the facilities of the J.E. Hamilton Community House can be made there."

### THE STAGE

"The stage is twenty-one feet deep and sixty-eight feet wide with a proscenium arch that is fifteen feet high and forty-two feet wide. The gridiron is thirty-two feet above the stage floor. The stage is equipped with a cyclorama setting that is suitable for any stage production. Three batteries of stage lights together with two spots make it possible to get almost any desirable lighting effect. The stage is equipped with an outside door and a hoist for handling stage properties. There are two exits from the stage, each leading to a conveniently located dressing room completely furnished with dressing tables and mirrors. The stage is further equipped with a motion picture screen and a large fireproof booth for motion picture purposes is furnished. This stage is available to any organization in the community desiring to sponsor stage productions. The completeness of the equipment should be a stimulation to the development of local dramatic talent. A perfect setting exists for the organization and promotion of a dramatic club. The fee for the use of the stage and auditorium will be reasonable to that it will stimulate rather than stifle amateur dramatics. All organizations are encouraged to use this facility not only for money raising activities but for entertainment as well."

### THE AUDITORIUM

"The main auditorium on the first floor is sixty feet wide and eighty-six feet long. It is so arranged that it may be used both as an auditorium and a gymnasium. Beautiful brick veneer walls form two sides of the auditorium with stage and fixed balcony forming the other two sides. A basketball court fifty feet by seventy-five feet occupies the center portion of the arena. The fixed balcony containing two hundred and fifty opera seats serve for both stage productions and floor events. Temporary bleachers are provided making the total seating capacity for floor productions slightly over seven hundred. The main floor is equipped with five hundred movable chairs which makes the normal seating capacity of the auditorium for stage productions seven hundred and fifty. The auditorium is reached by two corridors leading directly from the spacious lounge. A service room has been provided immediately adjacent to the auditorium with elevator service from the kitchen in the basement thereby making it possible to handle

large banquets with ease. Toilet facilities, drinking fountains, and check rooms are conveniently located. This auditorium has been planned to meet the needs of the community, and is open to all community organizations desiring the use of it at a fair price."

### THE BOWLING ALLEYS

"Bowling alleys are situated in the center of the basement floor and are reached directly from the outside or from the lounge. The room is of brick veneer in its entirety, the lower half of the walls being of red brick and the upper half of the gray brick making a very pleasant room. There are no pillars in the room thereby providing a clear view of all alleys at all times. The ceiling has been especially soundproofed. The equipment consists of six standard Brunswick alleys including the most modern pinsetters operated by compressed air. Table score boards are provided for each alley. Besides the players benches a spectators gallery accomodating fifty spectators has been provided. These alleys are for the use of the general public and may be used by both open and league bowling. Regular commercial rates will be charged. The alleys will be open for ladies bowling at any time and special days will be set aside for ladies bowling exclusively. A special exit has been provided so that bowlers can go directly from the alleys to the shower and locker rooms. Local leagues are especially encouraged to make these alleys their headquarters. The manager of the alleys will be glad to assist any organization in making plans for entertaining and sponsoring tournaments."

### THE BILLIARD HALL

"The billiard hall is adjacent to the bowling alleys and is housed in a room finished in red veneer brick. The equipment consists of three, four and one-half by nine foot pocket billiard tables, and one four and one-half by nine billiard table. Complete equipment is furnished for playing all the standard types of billiards. The lighting fixtures are all of old iron which adds to the appearance of the room. The billiard hall will be operated together with the bowling alleys as a unit of the building. The charge for the use of the tables will be the usual commercial rate. A refreshment counter is located between the billiard hall and the bowling alleys which is equipped to furnish the light refreshments that are usually in demand. This entire unit of the building has been so planned that it is accessible at all times without the necessity of opening the other departments of the building. The entire proceeds of this department will be used to meet the expenses of the operation of the building and will not be leased out to consessionaires. This policy will be carried out throughout

every department of the building. The management of this department is anxious that the maximum service possible is rendered. For this reason any constructive criticism will be welcomed to increase its use."

### THE MEETING ROOMS

"A series of three rooms planned so that they may be used for meetings, card parties, or dances, occupy the entire second floor. The rooms are separated by sliding doors so that one large room can be made into three. These rooms are reached directly from the outside or from the lobby. The rooms are equipped with chairs and tables for meetings, card tables for card parties, and a piano. They provide an ideal place for the organization without a home, for the hostess who wishes to entertain a larger group than her home can accommodate, for committee meetings of all civic organizations, and for a small dancing party. They are available on request at a small rental charge. Lodge organizations without permanent quarters but having fixed regular meetings are encouraged to use these facilities. Elevator service from the kitchen in the basement is provided for all these meeting rooms, which makes it possible to serve banquets or light refreshments. Other equipment which

the building has makes it possible to arrange and provide for almost any kind of a meeting any organization would like to hold. The manager of the Community House will be glad to aid and assist all organizations in planning their programs which involve these facilities and will do so on request."

### THE BANQUET ROOM

"A room for banquet purposes is twenty-five feet wide and fifty-six feet long. It is equipped so that two hundred may be served at one time. The room is finished in red veneer brick and is decorated by a row of mastic tile insets around the entire room. The room is reached directly from the lounge and has its own small waiting room and check room. The facilities of this room are available to any individual or group any time at a moderate rental fee. The room is equally adaptable for party luncheons, large banquets and for serving light refreshments. Banquets and luncheons will be served by the house on request. The room will also be available for private parties or organizations."

### ENTRANCES

"The north entrance serves the lobby, the balcony of the auditorium, the meeting rooms, the billiard hall

and the bowling alleys. The south entrance is identical in construction but leads to other parts of the building. However, both entrances lead to the lobby."

### THE KITCHEN

"The kitchen is in the basement and adjoins the banquet room. The kitchen has facilities for serving from five hundred to seven hundred people. An outside entrance to the kitchen makes delivery of provisions very easy. The equipment consists of a ten-burner, two oven gas range, a steam table, a two hundred cup percolator, a complete line of cooking utensils, and ample cupboard space. A complete china and silver service is furnished for serving two hundred and forty plates. This service includes glassware and centerpieces and is complete with the exception of the linens. Elevator service is provided for serving luncheons or banquets on the first and second floors of the building."

### SHOWER ROOMS

"The ladies shower room can be reached from the south-east entrance. The men's shower room is reached from the north-west entrance and has a handball court in connection wherein different forms of gymnastics may be held besides handball and volleyball."

## *The Dedication Exercises*

Musical selections were presented by the Hamilton Band directed by Lorenz F. Lueck; the Brotherhood "quartette" with Harvey Gesell - 1st tenor, Gordon Barner - 2nd tenor, W.G. Dickson - baritone, and Milton Zuehl - bass, and Mrs. Geo. C. Brown, accompanist; and the High School Mixed Chorus directed by Miss Mareta Furtney.

An address and presentations were made by Frank A. Childs (Childs & Smith, architects); Robert Johnson

(Immel Const. Co., Builders); and J.R. Batchlor, Rep. of Natl. Recreation Assn.

Presentation of the building was made by J.E. Hamilton with Wm. R. Kahlenberg accepting the building for the city. An address: "The Citizen and the Community", was given by W.J. Hamilton.

The program concluded with the singing of America by everyone present.

## FIFTY YEARS LATER

In 1981 the Hamilton Community House celebrated its 50th anniversary. The following are excerpts from the February 22, 1981 Herald Times-Reporter which fill in some of what has happened during those fifty years.

## HAMILTON HOUSE DESIGNED TO TWO RIVER'S NEEDS

"It was built 50 years ago in Two Rivers and, at the time, it was acclaimed as one of the finest facilities of its kind in the country.

"The scene of numerous events, social, religious, cultural and athletic, the structure cost about \$240,000 to construct, including the original furnishings, and was paid for by J.E. Hamilton, the founder of American Hamilton, then known as the Hamilton Manufacturing Co.

"A donation of property just off of Washington Street by the Sophia Kirst family and the purchase of several

parcels of land by the city provided a place for the building . . .

"Up until 25 years ago it was still considered by the National Recreation Association as one of the finest recreation centers in the country, and prior to that time, memorable events, particularly in sports were almost commonplace.

"The Community House served as a wrestling arena for world famous grapplers; the training headquarters for professional football teams such as the Pittsburgh Steelers, Philadelphia Eagles, Columbus Bullies and the

former Chicago Rockets of the old All-America Conference; the site of numerous basketball tournaments; and the performance of some of bowling's greats, such as Andy Varipappa and Ned Day . . .

"In the middle 1950's it housed the Youth Center, and was used as a meeting place for many clubs and organizations. The fast-expanding Golden Agers Club met there, as did the Robert E. Burns Post 165, the Girl Scouts, and the Two Rivers Shrine Club among others. The retired persons of the community used it just for a gathering spot, and the Wisconsin Employment Service had its offices on the second floor.

"And, of course, the recreation

programs, most notably basketball, occupied the auditorium which also served as an instruction area for activities such as golf and archery.

### STILL SERVING THE COMMUNITY

"Today things have not really changed all that much. The Community House is still serving the needs of most of the citizens and is, in essence, the hub of activities in the city. Its location just to the west of Central Memorial Park makes it an ideal focal point for the residents of Two Rivers.

"The Recreation Department, along with the Senior Citizens Center and the Youth Center are the most extensive users of the Community House, and a variety of annual and special events, sponsored by civic, fraternal, and religious organizations, are scheduled throughout the year.

"Of the many activities, the following is just an example of some of the goings-on at this busy place.

"The Recreation Department, under the direction of Howard Perry, has its offices located in the facility and schedules many of its programs for the Community House.

"The gymnasium, for instance, is used for the volleyball and basketball programs, as well as special events sponsored by the TRRD, such as a dartball tournament.

"There is also a weight room, raquetball/handball court and six bowling alleys open for use by the public.

"The TRRD also sponsors an annual city-wide bowling tournament in its own alleys, and a dance revue, given by the Lori Marit dancers. The revue usually takes place in June following three, 10-week instructional sessions, in ballet, tap and jazz dance for youth and children. The instruction, led by Marit, takes place also in the Community House and is part of the TRRD's extensive programming...

"The Senior Citizen Center was formulated to improve the quality of life for all persons 55 years of age and over, so states it purpose.

"An if numbers are any indication of how successful the center has been in meeting its purpose, than it is extremely successful.

"The center, which was built as an addition to the Community House a little more than five years ago, has a membership of about 1400, and is officially designated as a multi-purpose center.

"By definition it is a community center, a service center, a nutrition center, an education center, a health center and a recreational center. All areas offer programs designed to offer that 'improved quality of life'.

"The hot lunch and the Meals-on-Wheels program are two of the most popular offered by the nutrition center,

# 1981 — TWO RIVERS RECREATION DEPARTMENT — 1982 FALL AND WINTER PROGRAMS (PLEASE CLIP AND SAVE)

## ARCHERY

Youth & Children  
Starts Mon., Jan. 11, 1982  
G.A.A.  
Starts Wed., Jan. 13, 1982  
Adults  
Starts Wed., Jan. 13, 1982

## BASKETBALL PROGRAM

Grade School Boys' & Girls'  
Grades 5 thru 8  
Starts Sat., Jan. 9, 1982

## BASKETBALL LEAGUES

Men's  
Starts Dec., 1981  
Young men's  
Starts Jan., 1982

## BOWLING

Grade Instructional  
Announced thru Schools  
Starts Oct. 19, 1981  
Holiday House  
Fri. 9:30-11:30 a.m.  
Open Bowling  
Sat. 1-6 p.m.  
Sun. Noon-5:30 p.m., 8-10 p.m.  
Ladies' League  
Tues. & Thurs. Evenings  
Couples League  
Fri. & Sat. Evenings  
Senior Citizens  
Thurs. 9:30-Noon  
Mon. & Thurs. 1-3 p.m.  
Wed. 9:30-Noon  
Men's League  
Mon. & Wed. Evenings  
Youth Center  
Sun. 5:30-8 p.m.

## DANCE INSTRUCTIONS

Children & Youth  
Ballet, Tap & Jazz  
Starts Sept. 25, 1981  
3 ten week sessions,  
followed by a Revue

## LADIES' DANCE & EXERCISE

Starts Mon., Oct. 19, 1981  
Mon., Jan. 4, 1982  
Mon., Mar. 1, 1982  
Classes at 7-8 p.m. & 8-9 p.m.

## FOOTBALL

Men's Touch Football  
Starts Thurs., Sept. 17, 1981  
Tackle Football  
Junior Ramblers (Contact Don Butth)

## LADIES' PHYSICAL FITNESS

Starts Oct. 20, 1981  
Jan. 12, 1982  
Mar. 16, 1982  
6:30-8 p.m. & 8-9:30 p.m.

## OPEN GYM

Youth 5th thru 12th Grades  
Starts Sat., Jan. 23, 1982  
Tickets at door  
High School Phy. Ed. Unit 1-4 p.m.

## GOLF

Youth & Adults  
Monday or Thursday Evenings  
Starts March 18, 1982

## HALLOWEEN PARTIES

Saturday, Oct. 31, 1981  
7th & 8th Graders 6:30-9:30 p.m.  
Youth Center, 7-10:30 p.m.

## ICE SKATING

Walsh, Washington, Magee, Koenig,  
and Vets Rinks, during season

## KARATE

Watch for announcement  
Start approximately Nov. 16, 1981

## RIFLERY

Youth 12 and older  
Starts Mon., Jan. 11, 1982  
G.A.A.  
Starts Tues., Jan. 12, 1982  
Hunter's Safety  
Starts Sept. 10, 1981 &  
Mar. 23, 1982

## SENIOR CITIZENS

Adults 55 and older  
Meetings Mon. & Wed., at 7 p.m.  
Community House Senior Center

## SWIM

Children & Youth Instructional  
Sat. mornings: 10:30-11:15 a.m. &  
11:15-Noon  
Starts Oct. 5, 1981 & Jan. 16, 1982  
Ladies' (Instructional & Recreation)  
Thursdays, 7:45-8:45 p.m.  
Starts Jan. 14, 1982  
Family & Adult Swim  
Thursdays, 6:15-7:45 p.m.  
Tickets at door  
Child 60¢, Adults \$1.35  
Starts Jan. 14, 1982  
Sunday Open Swim  
2:30-4:30 p.m., Tickets at door  
Child 60¢, Adults \$1.35  
Starts Jan. 10, 1982

## VOLLEYBALL LEAGUES

Organizational meetings  
Sept. 3, 1981  
Ladies', Men's, and Couples  
Leagues, Starts early  
October, 1981

## WRESTLING

Grades 3 thru 8th Tues & Thurs.  
Starts Feb. 2, 1982  
Youth Center  
Grades 9 thru 12  
Wed., Fri., Sat. Evenings  
Community House Lobby Upstairs

## YOUTH SOCIAL CENTER

7th & 8th Graders  
Watch for special notices

**GENERAL INFORMATION:** All registrations must be made at the Community House Office, unless otherwise specified. Office is located on south side of the new addition, off of 17th St. No registrations by phone. Office hours weekdays 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturdays 8 a.m. to noon and 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Non-residents accepted at an added fee. For further information phone the Recreation Office 793-1338, Bowling Alleys 793-1339, Senior Center 793-1330, or after office hours 794-1513. Bldg. schedulings and recreation program information available only at 793-1338. Also, please watch and listen for special releases concerning programs.

which last year numbered more than 25,000 participants.

"Many more take part in the recreational programs offered at the Community House, the musical programs, the physical fitness classes, the card parties, the trips and the numerous counseling services on all manner of subjects. Health care and educational programs are set up to encourage seniors to continue to be independent and to learn.

"There are many, many more activities and programs available to the seniors through the center, which is supported through the recreation department.

"Marilyn Quirk is the leader of the Senior Citizen Center, which last year had a total participation of more than 75,000 in all its programs. The center is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

"The Youth Center is on the other end of the spectrum from the Senior Center in location and in those it serves.

"Located in the lobby area of the Community House, the Youth Center, too, is supported through the recreation department, and as such, has available to it all the TRRD facilities in the Community House.

"Under the leadership of Lou Ann Wojta, the center actually serves as a meeting place for the youth of Two Rivers in grades nine through 12. It is open daily from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. and the membership is \$1.00 per year.

"Last year nearly 300 youths held memberships and took advantage of the center's program.

"In addition to the TRRD facilities, the center also has pool tables, pinball machines, foosball, bumper pool and a jukebox to enjoy.

"Along with Wojta, a youth council is responsible for the governing of the actions of the youth of the center and for the planning of special events.

"Monthly dances, an adult dance every spring, an appreciation banquet in the summer, a pool tournament and a yearbook autographing session are some of the events sponsored by the center.

"Last year also, the center agreed to take over the Cerebral Palsy Telethon for the city . . .

"Special events and annual affairs make up a large part of the Community House schedule each year.

"The Lion's smelt fry held in March is among the most popular events, and the Kiwanis stage show, and the Police and Fire Association Programs, too, draw a great deal of interest. And the Rotary Club hosts an annual anniversary party for the Senior Center.

"A variety of musical groups will perform at the Community House from time to time, and the Municipal Band practices there (in the senior center), as well as the Hamilton Choir during the

Christmas season.

"An of course it is still utilized as a meeting place for such groups as the Jaycees and the Hamilton and Paragon Goodfellowship Clubs, who incidently also have annual Thanksgiving and Christmas parties in the facility.

"While not what it once was in terms of modern facilities, the Community House, with its rich tradition, continues to serve the people in Two Rivers in many ways . . ."

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The following were listed in the October 1981 Senior Center newsletter: Committee on Aging: Alex Flemal - chairperson, Ruth Roemer, Arlene LaMarsh, Hilary Short, Harris Gibeault, Doug Lesperance, Leona Doerfler, Marcella Shiman and Harvey Holschbach.

The advisory committee includes; Henry Greenwood, Eva Domnitz, Joseph Siebold, Erwin Waskow, Harold Bruechert, Rev. Robert

## *Community House Rededication is Saturday in Two Rivers*

"... Hamilton had originally planned to donate \$100,000 for a swimming pool but then upped the donation to \$150,000 provided the city obtain a suitable site, centrally located, and then maintain the building (Community Center) once complete.

"The city did eventually acquire the property needed, in the vicinity of Central Park but not before second thoughts about the need for such a facility and the acquisition of a site came up in City Council sessions in the fall of 1929, forcing Hamilton to withdraw his offer because of the bickering among councilmen, and the delays caused.

"When obstructionists step in to hold up progress in regard to acquiring a site, and have tied the matter up so that it is at a standstill, that is a little too much for me to tolerate," said Hamilton on November 4, 1929. "They have gotten into an argument over the proposed building and I feel that it is no use to go any further.

"However, when the city is in shape to offer a site, and I am still alive, I might reconsider the offer."

"Hamilton did reconsider once the property was acquired but by the time the project was complete, the price tag had risen to more than two times his original donation . . ."

### **FIVE OTHERS HONORED**

"J.E. Hamilton was the 'man of the hour' during dedication ceremonies . . . on April 15, 1931 . . . But Hamilton, himself honored found time to honor

Sullivan and Hilary Rath.

Monday Club officers are: Leona Doerfler, Betty Wachtel, Henry Greenwood, Betty Schnorr and Mildred Stickney.

Wednesday Club officers are: Marcella Schiman, Ella Brunner, Clarence Hovie and Eugenie LaFond.

Sunshine Committee: Eva Domnitz, Erv and Ruth Waskow, Myrtle Lodi and Dorothy Malkowski.

Instructors: Needle Club - Emma Shavlik; Bingo callers - Alex and Adeline Flemal; Creative Writing - Dick Hurlbut.

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In the Thursday, September 17, 1981 issue of the Herald Times-Reporter, staff writer, John Rooney, wrote about the upcoming rededication ceremony held September 19, 1981.

Much of what is included in that article was stated in previous articles so we will include here only a few excerpts which will provide additional background.

five distinguished natives of Two Rivers.

"A bronze plaque, inscribed with the names of the five was donated by Hamilton and hung in the entrance way to the building. It still hangs there today.

"The five men were Thomas J. Walsh, United States Senator, Montana; Louis A. Kahlenberg, Professor of Chemistry, University of Wisconsin; Herman Schlundt, Professor of Chemistry, University of Missouri; Solomon Huebner, Professor of Economics, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania; and H.E. Pierpont, vice president, Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway.

"The five were all born in Two Rivers between 1859 and 1882.

"Hamilton donated the plaque as an inspiration to youth, emphasizing the hard work ethic as the means to success.

"The plaque reads: 'This tablet is erected in honor of the distinguished sons of Two Rivers, whose names are engraved below. May their service to mankind be an inspiration to our young people for coming generations . . .

"The young man who fits himself for leadership, will have responsibility thrust upon him, and become a leader in his chosen profession.

"Hard work, and a determination to succeed, is the only sure road to success."

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**J.E. Hamilton  
Community House  
A Tribute  
Yesterday and  
Today**

Much has been written about James Edward "J.E." Hamilton from his birth on May 19, 1852 to his death on July 10, 1940. His name as the Herald Times article stated, "will live on forever in Two Rivers".

And while the stories talk about his exciting early years and his creations which began with wood and which lead to the development and growth of a company known far and wide, it is the Community House built of Stone and Steel which over the years has provided a continuing living tribute to his foresight.

Perhaps it can best be summed up with the concluding words on the rededication article in with the writer states, "Oh, for the vision of J.E. Hamilton."

# PRIDE

Two Rivers for a century to come will be proud of the magnificent J.E. Hamilton Community House, opened today.

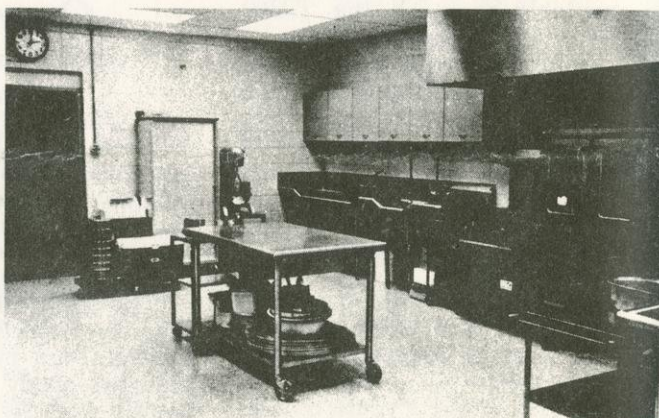
We shall be proud, and our children after us, because the building is a monument to a son of Two Rivers whose great material achievements were crowned by a noble generosity to his native place.

Many men have made fortunes, but too often in their careers they have lost "the common touch." Immersed in great affairs, they have ended in spiritual isolation from their fellows. The donor of the Community House, however, has endeared himself to his neighbors by his staunch devotion to the town no less than by his continual contributions to its welfare.

"We knew him when . . ." men say of those who have sought the wider field.



*The original lounge.*



*The new addition kitchen.*

### Recreation Directors

Art Eckley .....	1935-1945
Pat Lynaugh .....	1945-1946
C. C. Case .....	1946-1957
Fred Reich .....	1957-0000
C. C. Case .....	1957-1960
Robert Hazard .....	1960-1970
Howard Perry .....	1970-0000

### MANITOWOC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Address of Communications To:

**NEWSLETTER  
1115 North 18th Street  
Manitowoc, Wisconsin 54220**

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