

Menomonee Falls at 125

Recollections on How Today's Village Came to Be



The following historical narratives were collected during March and April of 2017 by Village of Menomonee Falls staff. The motivation for this collection came when a gap in the historical record was discovered during a review of the published historical accounts and local history resources. Several sources had documented Menomonee Falls' history from early settlement to the early 20th century, but the Village's history from the 1940s & 1950s forward had not been comprehensively compiled. Staff determined that it would be valuable to seek out individuals that had demonstrated long-term commitments to the community in recent decades in order to better understand this era of Village history. The perspectives gathered below have informed the historical timeline and narrative presented on the Village's history webpage and will be retained for their historical value and as a public resource for future generations.

These recollections confirm that an enormous amount of change has occurred in the Village since the middle of the 20th century. Contributors to this project include representatives from the business community, school districts, churches, development groups, community organizations and the Village of Menomonee Falls. The narratives vary in length and are written in the words of these contributors (an exception is two of the narratives written by Village staff for individuals that preferred to be interviewed rather than provide a written account). They are arranged in alphabetical order of participants' last names. Details in the accounts range from personal memories to documented events and generalized historical trends. Each perspective provides an invaluable lens through which we can better understand how our Village has taken shape. Initial participants for this project were first identified through a staff brainstorming session in March of 2017. The Village hopes to keep adding narratives to this document throughout the year to broaden our collective understanding of the past.

If you or someone you know would like to share your perspective on how the Village has changed over the years please contact Tyler Zwagerman at tzwagerman@menomonee-falls.org

A Lifelong Journey in the Best and Largest Village in Wisconsin

By Dick Becker

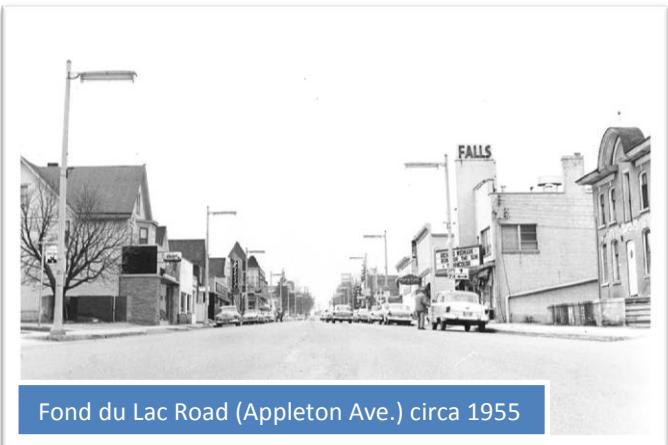
I am a lifelong resident of Menomonee Falls as were my mother and father. In fact, the Becker family, and my grandmother's family, the Umhoefers, were designated "Early Settlers of Menomonee Falls" by the Falls Centennial Committee in 1992. As you can see, my family roots in the Falls are very deep. The purpose of this essay is to record my memories of life growing up in the Falls and my subsequent years as a banker and community volunteer. This is not meant to be a biography but rather a documentation of life in Menomonee Falls from the 1950's to 2017 as seen through the eyes of a long time resident. There will be many events, places and things missing from this essay but time and space limit the volume of information presented. I apologize in advance for mistakes but if I do make any, please consider it a test to see if the viewer is paying attention.

I have fond memories of growing up in the Falls. The first five years of my life were spent on the Becker farm on highway 145, now the site of the Froedtert Health Integrated Service Center. My dad grew up on the farm and my mom lived in the Nightingale Ballroom down the road, a popular dance hall. Yes, the neighbors married each other. My family moved into what was then the heart of the village in 1956 and our address was 220 East Third Street. I believe it was the next year the village changed the addresses and my new address became N90 W16247 Roosevelt Dr. Quite a change for a six year old trying to remember so many things including how to tie his own shoes.

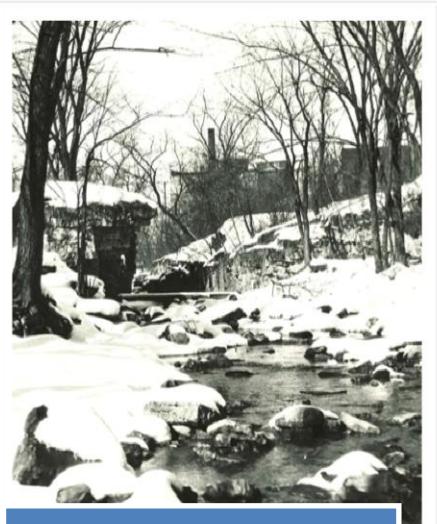
The neighborhood I grew up in was special in many ways, but primarily for the enduring friendships between the neighbors that included parents and the kids. In our neighborhood there were at least 60 kids making it easy to play any number of games and of course, watch out for each other.

The Newmans, Schyrers, Erdmans, Oztelbergers, Lexs, Isches, Moeschs, Olens, Becks, Shanleys, Roskopfs and Beckers were all part of the neighborhood. We celebrated a lot together, but the Fourth of July backyard parties, with patriotism in full display, may have been the best times. Jarts was a constant source of fun.

One of the attractions of the neighborhood was the proximity to the Menomonee River. In summer, we would venture down to the river to fish or catch frogs often going down to the "Little Falls" at Lime Kiln Park. In winter, we would walk down to the river to begin endless hours of ice skating moving back and forth from the big dam on Main Street and the Roosevelt Dr. bridge. On occasion, we would skate up the river to what is now the Neu's Hardware store. People from all over the village would come to skate on the river.



Fond du Lac Road (Appleton Ave.) circa 1955



Lime Kiln Park, old stack in view

The heart, but not the center, of the village in the 1950's and 1960's was the "Four Corners". This was the intersection of Main Street and Appleton Avenue. While there were many four corner intersections in the Falls, residents knew exactly what you meant when you said the Four Corners. Local establishments that come to mind that were located near the downtown area include Lohmillers, Gesserts, Kruegers Falls Lanes, A&W Root Beer, Dutchland Dairy, Semons, 31 Flavors, Wittlin's Service station, and Strom Drugs. In addition, the Falls Theater, Aliotos, Dan's Tog Shop, Tieman's Bakery and Glausens come to mind. I remember the Gambles store would eventually become Country Craft Furniture and subsequently Dan's Tog Shop and Robin's Nest. The Falls was unique in that it had two outdoor movie establishments, the Starlight and the Victory Drive Ins. I am sure many people remember those theaters. In the mid 60's a major development occurred as McDonald's opened its first store on Appleton avenue. You guessed correct, the hamburgers were fifteen cents. Elmer Schneider's tavern became the Honey Bucket and Heebie Jeebies which was owned and operated by the Hebrbring family, great advocates of the Falls.

Kohl's had a combination grocery and department store on the corner of Menomonee and Appleton Avenues. When you walked in the front door, you went left for groceries or right for clothes. The company eventually went out of the grocery business and established its headquarters in the Falls. Dog and Suds was on the corner of Pilgrim Road and Menomonee Avenue. Maxwell Street Days was always a great time to look for bargains on the streets of the village.

The village had explosive growth in the 1960's, moving from a population of 18,276 in 1960 to 31,697 in 1970. This strong growth led the School District to open a second high school, Falls East, in September 1969. I graduated from

Menomonee Falls High School in June 1969 (that became Falls North) in the largest class ever to receive diplomas. I had about 525 classmates and the total school population in June 1969 was around 2,200. All of the students were housed at what is now North Middle school and some classes were held at Lincoln School which was later razed. North and East High School merged back together in 1983.

There were many notable events in the Falls over the years. The Silver Jubilee was held in 1967 and I remember many men growing their beards and men and woman wearing 1892 era costumes. A week-long festival was held highlighted by a big parade and fireworks. The Jubilee published a comprehensive book and I recommend anyone interested in the first 75 years of the village to find a copy and browse through it. The Maude Shunk library in the Falls has copies.

In 1971, the Vince Lombardi Golf Classic started at North Hills Country Club and it would become the largest running two day charity golf event in the country. In the beginning, participants included many of the Packers from the glory years of the 1960's including Bart Starr, Jim Taylor, Jerry Kramer and crowd favorite Ray Nitschke. Celebrities included President Gerald Ford, Bob Hope, Lee Majors, George C. Scott and Leslie Nielsen. There may



Menomonee Falls High School circa 1955

have been 5,000 or more spectators watching the golfers and proceeds went to the Vince Lombardi Cancer Foundation. The Golf Classic is still held at North Hills every June.

In 1992, the village held its Centennial and had a year- long celebration of the rich history of the Falls. The Centennial was highlighted by a week- long festival that featured a large parade and fireworks. Don Schneider was president of the Centennial Corporation and I was treasurer and after the year was over the Centennial organizers were able to donate about \$50,000. to local non- profit organizations. The next year began the run of Falls Fest, an annual event filled with music, good food, family friendly activities and a softball tournament. The village will be celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. The celebration will begin with the Falls MemorialFest activities on May 27, 2017.

The village has experienced remarkable growth in its commercial and industrial base over the years. The biggest employer, Kohl's Corporation, is headquartered in the Falls. Froedtert Health, Harley Davidson, FIS, Arandell, Actuant, Wacker Neuson, Alto Shaam, Wells Fargo and Bradley Corporation are major employers with a significant physical presence. Who could forget Ernie Von Schledorn as he made the village famous selling cars on "Main Street in Menomonee Falls"? Strong Capital Management was a financial service company that was located on the former Burkwald's driving range and other properties and built a world class headquarter building. Strong's was very supportive of the Falls community and eventually was sold to Wells Fargo in 2004.



One of the Village's many major businesses

The banking industry in the Falls has experienced many changes the past thirty years. As in many communities, mergers and acquisitions have changed the names on the front doors of the financial institutions. Farmers and Merchant Bank, founded in 1908, had a long and distinguished history before merging with Associated Bank in 1992. American Menomonee Falls Bank, established in 1962, was acquired by Heritage Bank in 1978. Heritage was acquired by M&I Bank in 1985. Great American Savings and Loan merged with Valley Bank in 1991 and was merged with M&I Bank in 1994. Freedom Savings and Loan merged with Federated Bank in 1986 and merged with First Wisconsin National Bank in 1992 which eventually became US Bank. Security Bank merged with M&I Bank in 1997. The M&I Bank in Menomonee Falls, founded in 1974, was acquired by BMO to form BMO Harris Bank in 2011. The M&I was very active in the community and I had the privilege of being president of the Bank for many years. That is quite a list and I suspect I missed a few but you get the feel for the changing environment for Banking.

One of the major jewels in the Menomonee Falls crown is Community Memorial Hospital, a member of the Froedtert and Medical College of Wisconsin Health Care Network. CMH was organized by local citizens and opened for patients in 1964. CMH is an award winning hospital recognized for outstanding patient care. Recent hospital advancements included expansion of the heart, cancer and emergency departments. The founders of CMH would be very proud of the hospital they started. I was fortunate to be a member of the board of directors of CMH for many years.

As this essay is written in 2017, economic activity in the Falls is very strong. Many residents will remember the old Stolper Steel site on the corner of Roosevelt Dr. and Pilgrim Road. It stood empty for many years. Today the area has changed dramatically for the good. The Wisconsin Athletic Club and Froedtert Health have moved into impressive locations on the site.

Nearby, at White Stone Station, retail stores and restaurants are opening up and Junction Apartments are nearly complete. In the downtown area, Fresh Thyme is scheduled to open their new store in Colonial Plaza in May 2017 and the Riverwalk on the Falls project is being built on the former site of Associated Bank and is scheduled to be completed in 2018. These projects are especially impressive when you look at the before and after pictures of the properties that were redeveloped.

Menomonee Falls is also fortunate to have strong civic clubs and organizations including the Greater Menomonee Falls Foundation, Community League, and the Optimist, Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions clubs. These organizations donate significant time and money in support of the community. The Falls has one of the biggest Little Leagues in the State. It all adds up to one great village.

I have been lucky to live in Menomonee Falls my entire life. It is my hope this little essay brings back good memories and smiles for people who live or have lived in the Falls. The history of our village is full of great stories and the future is very promising. My journey has been full of wonderful memories and yes, the best is yet to come.

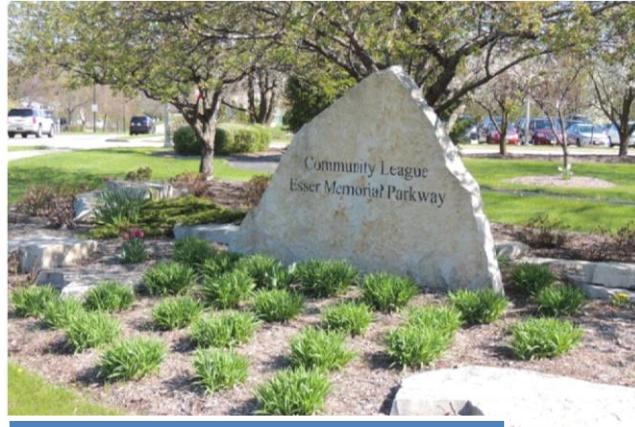
Memories from Pam Biersack

By Nancy Greifenhagen

Pam was a member of the Community League of Menomonee Falls, a woman based non-profit organization since 1960 dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in our Village, State and Nation through philanthropic gifts and community service, while promoting fellowship among our members. The Community League was responsible for starting the beautification gardening projects in Menomonee Falls including the Esser Memorial parkway garden area in front of Village Hall. There is a copper statue that was also erected in 1992 for the Centennial Celebration in the garden in front of Village Hall by the artist Charles A. Kraus which represents femininity. Each year the Community League would raise funds for the garden and would maintain the gardens until a date in which it was too difficult for them to do so.

Pam was also involved in the Greater Menomonee Falls Committee which combined efforts of businesses, government entities, social clubs and citizens to beautify Menomonee Falls. They did such efforts as Adopt a Plot program where garden plots were installed along Appleton Ave including the plot in the Triangle of Appleton Ave., Pilgrim Road and Menomonee Ave. They also installed whiskey barrels in the Village downtown area full of flowers. Efforts for other aesthetic improvements in Menomonee Falls involved the screening of dumpsters and a property maintenance enforcement program.

Pam was also on the Menomonee Falls Centennial Planning Committee in 1992. They had to huge ball rooms at Davian's for the celebration and gave out champagne flutes engraved with the 100 year Anniversary. The Centennial Celebration started the 25-year long annual event called Falls Fest.



Garden and landscape beds at Village Hall

Recollections on the Village's growth from 1960 to 1990

By Clarence Dittmar

My recollections concern major issues that occurred in Menomonee Falls Wisconsin from the years 1960-1990. Our community went through a dramatic change during this period. A major part of this is a result of having available additional sewage and water capacity. This spawned major residential development, primarily based upon the original square acreage, (about 5 square miles to presently about 36 square miles).

This development took place among 5 local builders in our community. Home prices began at \$15,990 including lot. (These homes resale today (when available) at approximately \$200,000 (with the addition of a garage). This included hundreds of homes being built around the old central business district. (Main Street and Appleton Avenue).

Many of these homes were purchased by persons who were able to obtain a VA and FHA Loans at low interest rates due to being veterans of WWII and the Korean War. As this development took place it also expanded many other services available to our residents. This included building of a much need hospital in this area, which opened around 1964 with 65 hospital beds increasing to over 200 beds today, becoming a major player in the metropolitan region. This hospital was a result of local citizens banding together under difficult challenges to accomplish this much needed healthcare facility. Simultaneously, this includes a substantial expansion of doctors especially in local clinics within the immediate range of Community Memorial.

At the same time with the expansion of our population, the need for additional banking and home financing was needed. As a result the expansion of the former F & M Bank along with the building of other major financial facilities such as the M & I Bank being major players along with other financial services being made available. (Both banks have changed ownership).

This expansion would not occur without its own complications. The process of obtaining the necessary zoning for marketable homes within the Village of Menomonee Falls became a real challenge. Thanks to the leadership of many individuals who served on the Village Board and the Planning Commission, this necessary rezoning was granted in most cases.

Following the expansion of single family homes came the need for construction of multifamily apartments to house individuals and families who could not afford immediately to buy a new home. This involved numerous objections within the community but many reasonable sized developments were built.

Next came the expansion of commercial facilities that also faced many challenges. As an example, one larger shopping center was proposed to include an enclosed mall for 35 various retail businesses. From a major food chain to other retail services, clothing for men, woman and children's stores, beauty salon, travel agency, book store, liquor store, dry cleaning, among many others. Also included on an adjacent site was a major discount department store and free standing bank. A proposal such as these generated objections from immediate



1950s era home in Menomonee Falls

surrounding residences. As a result, this led to legal challenges that were finally decided by the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

As our village grew, so did the educational needs resulting in large free standing grade school, high school along with adjacent athletic facilities such as baseball, football, tennis etc. We also began to experience expansion of cultural facilities such as churches and an opening of a large new community library. Along with the building of a new library, came the necessary expansion of a new Village Hall that services our entire community.

The village in 1960 also expanded its planning, zoning, and engineering facilities in order to have control over commercial and residential buildings. This included the formation of an architectural board which reviewed all residential condominiums, commercial and industrial facilities. Along with this came the much needed expansion of our police and fire stations. Financial availability started to become difficult and very challenging beginning in the early 1980's that restrained development, until resuming in the 1990's.

There are so many numerous local persons responsible for this rapid growth that there are too many to mention individually. We owe our debt of thanks to many persons including past village presidents, zoning and planning departments, who voluntarily gave their time to our respectable growth of our community.



Three Important Events for the Development of Menomonee Falls

By Richard A. Farrenkopf

In 1967 (the Village's Diamond Jubilee year) the future of the Village was described as "growing". That's exactly what happened in the 50 years since then and that "growing" appears to be continuing into the future.

Several very important events occurred in those 50 years that have ensured the past Village growth and its continuation into the future. Those events were:

- Connection to the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District
- The Village entered into an agreement with the City of Milwaukee to purchase Lake Michigan water from the Milwaukee water utility to service that are of the Village lying in the Lake Michigan watershed
- The Village Board approved of utilizing Tax Increment Financing Districts for the purpose of aiding in community industrial development and downtown redevelopment

The following is a short explanation of each event:

MMSD Connection

Prior to 1958, the Village of Menomonee Falls was encircled by the Town of Menomonee. The Village was approximately 1 ½ square miles in area, but when the Town and Village merged in 1958, the new Village of Menomonee Falls became 33 square miles in area. As the Village grew in population and business development, several additions were made to the Village sewage treatment plant. However, it was becoming increasingly clear that adding small treatment plants in Menomonee Falls and other growing Milwaukee suburbs was not as efficient as expanding the MMSD system – especially as environmental protection laws tightened. Consequently, Menomonee Falls joined the MMSD and the first physical connection was completed in 1975.



1972 Aerial looking southeast



Village staff & bookkeeping machine, 1964

Agreement to Purchase Drinking Water from the Milwaukee Water Utility

Menomonee Falls' water supply early on was derived from deep wells located in the eastern half of the Village (that area east of the sub-continental divide which runs through the middle of the Village). As the years went by, our wells began having the same problem as Waukesha's have – radium. In addition, each year the water levels in

the wells dropped, increasing maintenance and operation costs. It was decided to request water service from the City of Milwaukee. Initially, Milwaukee was not interested, viewing Menomonee Falls as a major threat to their industrial development. However, the ice was broken when Ambrosia Chocolate Company purchased land in Menomonee Falls to build their new plant. Ambrosia insisted on a Milwaukee address, which resulted in Milwaukee asking Menomonee Falls to detach that parcel of land for annexation by Milwaukee. The Village's request for Milwaukee water immediately became part of the negotiation. The annexation was achieved after Milwaukee agreed to continue discussion on water supply. After more negotiation sessions and several years, Milwaukee agreed to supply water to Menomonee Falls for the part of the Village east of the sub-continental divide and in the Lake Michigan Basin. Menomonee Falls homes and businesses received their first drop of Lake Michigan water in 1999.

Utilizing Tax Incremental Financing Districts

In the 1960s, industrial development companies created industrial subdivisions by buying land, installing streets and utilities and marketing and selling lots to clients. In 1974, the world changed. The state legislature created the tax incremental financing law. Suddenly, municipalities and developers found themselves becoming very close partners in economic development.

In 1988, the Village created its first TIF District. The Village entered into a public/private partnership with Mooney-Le Sage & Associates Ltd. to develop an industrial park on property located at the northeast corner of Lilly Road and Hampton Road. Under the agreement, Mooney-Le Sage purchased the property and the Village provided streets, the water system and the sewer system using a TIF District. The funding for these investments came from County, School District, WCTC and Village property taxes levied on land and new buildings erected in the development. The agreement was executed in 1988. The entire Village investment was paid off in 1996.



Since that TIF District was formed the Village has created several other TIFs including the development in which Kohl's corporate offices are located, the development around Wells Fargo, the central business district, and the WAC development to name a few. To date the Village has created 12 TIF Districts of which 3 have paid off and 9 are still active.

Since the 1958 merger of the Town and Village, Menomonee Falls has become a vibrant, popular community. We've enjoyed high quality residential, commercial and industrial growth. The economic future of the Falls appears bright. However, had any one of the three events discussed above not happened, it is highly doubtful that the Village would have enjoyed the quantity or quality of the residential and business development we have today.

Sewer Wars

By Joe Greco

Sewer Wars really started in the 60's and 70's when the State of Wisconsin DNR condemned many of the suburban sewer disposal plants and confirmed that the Milwaukee River subsidiaries and creeks were polluted. The Menomonee Falls plant was located east of Lilly Road and South of Fond du Lac Avenue. A collection point was located where the ball park is now located...

Consequently, the Deep Tunnel plan was put in place. This was a deep tunnel constructed from the suburban communities down to the plant known as the Metropolitan Milwaukee Sewage District (MMSD). The suburban communities were told that they would be charged via water usage

believing that a person would discharge as much water as went into the home... However, in the late 80's these same communities would be charged on property value regardless of how much their water usage was. However, those communities would not be charged for any storm water projects outside of their watershed. Consequently, the suburban communities joined together and FLOW (Fair Liquidation of Waste) was born. Those communities were Menomonee Falls, Brookfield, Butler, Elm Grove, New Berlin, Mequon, Muskego, and Cedarburg. Germantown and Thiensville had paid their bill and were not part of Flow. I came on the board in 1981 and in 1982 FLOW was born.

For the next 12 years the battle continued. Thousands of dollars were spent on consultants and attorneys. When the Legislature was all Republicans we thought for sure legislation would be passed to accommodate us and we would be billed on usage and not property values. That did not happen. Even Governor Tommy Thompson would not support us. He wanted to stay out of it. No one would talk to each otherif you saw someone from Wauwatosa, for example, you would turn your head and not acknowledge them. That actually happened to me.

I don't remember the year but there was a proposal to settle and everyone was ready to settle but the numbers were not acceptable to the FLOW communities. In 1993 I ran for the office of Village President and my opponent was Ron Berteri. At the debate forum he said, "It is unconscionable that Sewer Wars has continued" A light went off in my head and I said, "He's right".

When elected my first move was to meet Ald. Tom Nardelli as his district abutted Menomonee Falls. I told him we must end Sewer Wars and he agreed. I then met with Mayor John Norquist and he agreed saying, "it is a black cloud hanging over us." Time went on for another 3 years and losing twice in the Wisconsin Supreme Court, Mayor Mary Claire Cera of New Berlin and I agreed that it must end and we need to negotiate an agreement and settle it. We each met with our council/board in closed session advising them of what we intended on doing.



Menomonee River Parkway Sewage Disposal in 1956

MMSD Deep Tunnel System



Mary Clair's council told her no....our Village Board...even though it was not unanimous, said yes. As the other FLOW communities saw us breaking away they also agreed to settle. Our next step was to make an offer.

Attorney Peter Peshick met with Bill Mielke and they prepared the proposal. We met with the MMSD administration and their lobbyist and we were treated miserably. We walked out of the meeting and I was so angry I went right down to Mayor John Norquist's office - Keep in mind that the Mayor of Milwaukee appoints 7 of the 11 commissioners so in reality he ran MMSD and we knew that. I went down to his office and walked in and told the receptionist I wanted to see the Mayor. She said, "He is not in"....I said, "I will wait". Ald. Nardelli saw me and came into the waiting room and he said "what's up" (as he was straightening my tie, he could see I was upset) I told him what happened, and he told the receptionist get someone to talk to me. One of the mayors staffers came out (don't remember her name) and I told her what had happened. She said she would tell the Mayor. The next morning as I was helping my wife clean house the phone rang and the voice on the other end was the lobbyist for MMSD asking me, "do you really want to settle" I told him, "yes, and if you find we are not sincere I will walk naked down Wisconsin Avenue at high noon". He said ok.....obviously the Mayor got the message and he called MMSD and told them to settle.

Bill Mielke, our representative and Mark Kaminski of MMSD determined how much the FLOW communities had to pay because throughout all these years MMSD was billing us and none of the communities had paid. I believe it was \$140.7 million. I know there were interest charges. In October we met at the Betty Bryn Museum. Attorney Mike McCabe walked in with the document wrapped with a red ribbon and Sewer Wars ended. On June 20, 1997 I received the Certificate of Appreciation from the American Society for Public Administration for my efforts in settling Sewer Wars.

From the Beginning

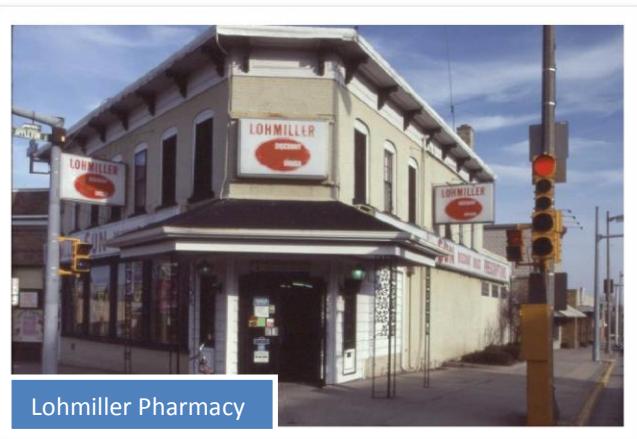
By Cathy Hazzard

I've given this a lot of thought and realize there are many years that I was so wrapped up in building my business and working on many committees that I can't pinpoint years. Or for that matter, my "file drawers" in my brain are full and really can't remember simple things like where I grocery shopped when we were first married! So I decided to start from the beginning and would put my money on Lew Tietz remembering more!!

My parents built their house off Town Hall Rd between Main Street and Menomonee Avenue between 1965 and 1966. We moved into the house the summer of '66 and I started school in the Fall as a 5th grader. Valley View wasn't finished yet, so my first semester I attended Lincoln. Children in my subdivision were divided between Lincoln and Shady Lane. I can say that I was "the first graduating class" from Valley View! I then went to TJ as my middle school, and then on to North High School. CMH was above us on the hill when we moved to the house with no other houses going up the hill, so we truly were surrounded by open fields. The house that everyone loved on the walk to Valley View was the Lohmiller "red" farm house. Lohmiller's, where Nino's is today was our pharmacy and local sundries shop. There wasn't any busing from our area to TJ or the high school, so I walked. (ha, pretty flat so I can't say "uphill both ways in the snow"!) There were homes along Menomonee Avenue, but no YMCA or any of the development that's there today. My library was the Maude Shunk above the fire station and Village Park was our playground.

Not long after we were in our house I remember my mother and the neighbor ladies designing and sewing costumes for us to attend the Diamond Jubilee. The men in our neighborhood grew beards and we all dressed up and attended the festivities. My father worked second shift at Briggs, my mother didn't work and we only had one car. If we couldn't walk somewhere, we didn't go, or we waited until the weekend when my dad could take us.

The Colonial Plaza shopping center originally had the A&P grocery store. We also had a Kohl's where Rogans shoes is today. While my parents were building the house we ate many a meal at Dutchland Dairy which is where Pepino's is today. Gesserts was our hardware store located next to Robin's Nest. We also spent time at the A&W on Main Street. I don't remember when A&P left, but Walgreens went in next door and that was my first job as a junior. I walked past Kenny's bakery for donuts on the way to work after school! My senior year I worked at Foodville which was on Main Street, next to what was the A&W and today houses the dance studio.



Sometime while at home the Village Green apartments went up on Town Hall Rd. I remember several of my friends in high school lived there, so it had to be early 70's. I graduated in '74 and took a job at the American Menomonee Falls Bank which was housed in now the Professional Building were Dr. Verre is on Appleton Avenue. The bank was building a new building where US Bank is today. I worked there while going to college at WCTC. It seemed like they were always working on Main Street and Appleton, but there was a point where Main Street was widened and the Village Bowl was built. In the same parking lot as the new bank on Appleton was the Market Square Mall to the right as you're facing the building and to the left was Kmart. East high school was built in '69, so the school was across the street. When I graduated from WCTC, I went to work for an attorney's office downtown. Drinking age was 18 then, so I remember going to Betsy's, Honey Bucket, Trysting Place and Satani/Peppermill. Carrie Nations (Falls Plaza 1) was where the teachers hung out, so that wasn't our spot! I sound like I am alcoholic....these were just meeting places for me....I worked a lot back then too!

The Holiday Inn must have been built in the 70's because several of my high school friends worked there senior year. Other buildings I remember were Stark Oldsmobile on Appleton across from McDonalds; the clinic we went to was either where McDonalds is or was the other side of Total Health. Total Health was the Kinney's shoe store.

In 1976 I started my career in the travel business. I worked for Falls Travel which was located in the Market Square Mall. Jim and I married in 1981 and bought our home on Denice where we reside today. Jim was involved in the fundraising and startup of the YMCA, chamber, hospital, Lombardi and many other committees during our early years. In 1986 I decided to start my own agency. The mall that "caved in" was just being added on to. I'm thinking that means that the portions that were there were built in 84 or 85? I had nothing but studs to work with so I could build out my unit. In 1989 I started the Menomonee Falls Scholarship Foundation with Dick Woosencraft. I worked on several committees with the chamber and the schools as a past graduate and business owner. I don't remember when the Market Square Mall came down, but as it stands today, it was rebuilt and became a store front mall. Early 90's? Appleton Avenue was also widened I believe in the 90's which was a huge project while I still had Classic Travel. People wanted to avoid our area at all costs.

I became involved in the chamber in the early 90's as a board member and was president from 1995 to 1997. The chamber was housed in the basement of the Colonial Plaza shopping center which had been failing for years. The revitalization of the downtown had begun with our first TID. My only involvement was as a chamber member attending focus meetings on what we thought was important to our downtown. We started conversation of moving the chamber into the Zahn House and whether we wanted that building and many others listed on the historic registry. As we see today with restrictions, we struggled then with the advantages of credits and dollars versus letting someone have free will. I signed the first lease for the chamber after an extensive renovation which saved cream city brick from other buildings in our downtown area. Robin Turtenwald became our BID manager and businesses started coming back into the Falls, working on restoring our older buildings and creating new jobs.

There are several plans in the basement of the Village Hall that we worked on as "Master Plans" and wish list plans that we had for the downtown extending down Main Street to the corridor. I worked on many of those committees. Our focus was to create a "healthy Main Street" which we still feel is important today.

I think I started with the CDA in 1997 and became the chair shortly after. I was still on the chamber board and we were trying to get tourism funding for projects in the Falls. Other communities were using their tax revenue from hotels. At the time we had three hotels to pull from and our tax rate was at 7.5%. I was able to get the tax

designated for tourism and the committee put several projects into play for the downtown Village Center. Here is where I am fuzzy. We spent so many years working on the Main Street redevelopment that I don't remember what other TID's we worked on or other projects in between. Main Street businesses in the Pilgrim Shopping Center area were failing; Ernie's buildings were deteriorating and the entrance to our community was an eye sore. We separated TID 6 to create TID8 so we developed the Stopler Steel building which was in my mind the biggest accomplishment in moving forward with Main Street. Kohls was already a huge success and development along Silver Spring was well under way.

The crash of 2008 put everything on hold and we spent the next five years waiting for our recovery. I sold my business in 2007 and promised to work for 2 years with Travel Leaders. Well, that was 10 years ago and I forgot to stop working! We moved from my office location to Falls Plaza 1 where none of the original businesses that started in these plazas reside today and yet. They are not as full as in years past, but still serve the community. If I went into the archives of our agendas and minutes, I am sure I would be able to jog my memory more, but hopefully this is a good start. If there's ever an opportunity to go through some of those archives, I would like to do it!

Richard P. Klug

By Jeffrey R. Klug

Richard Paul Klug was born September 13, 1934, and passed away November 20, 1993, of complications of Pancreatic Cancer. He lived 59 years, 2 months and 7 days. It was a very full and active life. He believed that his main objective of this life was to help other people. He was a Boy Scout and followed their oath to the very end of his days.

My first memory of Menomonee Falls was the year we moved into the Falls, I think I was 4 or 5 years old. It was a warm early winter and my father was working on the Christmas Parade. My father and I were at the Pilgrim Shopping Center (Main Street and Pilgrim) for Santa Claus to arrive for the parade. He arrived in a different fashion; he came from the sky. He parachuted in, landing in the field just north of the shopping center. Once he had arrived there was a lot of commotion going on: it seems that Santa broke his leg on landing. It was hidden from most of the kids that were there, and I don't really remember how they fixed it, but that was how I celebrated my first Christmas in Menomonee Falls. This was the start of his involvement with the Chamber of Commerce, which he became president of in 1962 and was awarded the Chamber of Commerce Industrial Appreciation Award in 1971.

Let's start at the beginning. My father was a Menomonee Falls High School Graduate of 1952 and was on the Football, Basketball and Baseball teams, which were the 4C Champions during some of those years. While in athletics he also played the trombone. I remember him talking about half time: he would rush from the field to get his trombone and play in the half time break, then go back and play football again. In January 1954, once out of school, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He served in Korea as a PFC and was in the military police. He returned home and went to Elmhurst College to become a minister. After deciding that wasn't for him, he dropped out of school and worked at various jobs: used car salesman, repo person, and also at the downtown YMCA working the switchboard. At the Y, he met my mother Arleen. They were later married in 1958. I remember my mother had said she would not marry a used car salesman. That is when he started work repossessing cars for Household Finance. This started his interest in financial matters, and in 1960, he started working at Farmers and Merchants Bank as the assistant cashier. From what I was told that meant bringing the books out for the cashier. He slowly worked his way up the ladder to become Chairman and CEO of the bank. I was lucky; I got to spend a lot of time with my father while he worked and I saw him in action. In those days all you needed to get a loan was a handshake. He believed in the character of the person. If he saw that they had a good work ethic and they had a good plan, he would trust them enough to give them a loan. He was usually right and most loans were paid back as agreed upon.



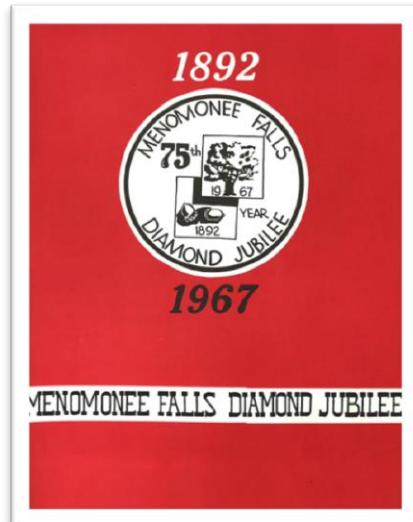
Farmers & Merchants Bank, 1980s

Working at the bank was not the only thing that kept him busy. He became involved with the Kiwanis Club, Rotary, and the Chamber of Commerce, working on all the different projects that they were involved in. He was also very active in the YMCA. He worked on the building fund along with his mother, Theodora, to help build the building the Y is in today. Before that building was built, the Y was on Good Hope just west of Pilgrim in a group of

buildings owned by the Village Menomonee Falls. It had an area for football and baseball. My father also coached the Y Youth program, which my sister and I were involved in. My father coached us both and it was a way to be involved in our lives. I can remember many Saturdays helping my team win a game, and if we lost, he would say there was always next week. For him the main thing was that we gave our all and had a fun time. Watching him coach kept me involved as well. I joined the Junior Leaders. We helped the coaches and we also refereed the younger kids' games when we were older. We were taught how to help the younger kids; it was my start in volunteering and I continued Junior Leaders till I was too old for the group. It was a very educational experience. My father believed in the Y and worked with them for many years with the building campaigns and anything else that they needed. In fact, the athletic field at the Menomonee Falls Y is named in honor of him.

In 1964 my father was appointed to the Police and Fire Commission. I believe this was one of his favorite positions in Menomonee Falls. I can remember as I was growing up being taken to one of the schools and watching the physical fitness testing or the written testing of the officers for the MFPD. I got to meet a lot of the police officers that worked in the Falls, and I still have a fondness for them. At that time the department was small, maybe only 3 or 4 squads, not like today. That is why I still do the retirement photos of the MFPD officers. I don't think there are any left from the day I watched them go through their testing, but I will always remember and respect our police officers and the department. Another memory I have is with the MF Fire Department: my father would take me to a lot of the buildings they used for training. I was starting to get interested in photography, so I would go and take photos of the MFFD burning down an old building. I got to meet a lot of the fireman and they got to know me as well. Later on when I chased fires, they knew me and let me get closer to get those shots no one else could. I in turn gave them copies of all my images. It was a great learning experience for me. Unfortunately when we moved out of the Falls he had to retire as a Police and Fire Commissioner, something that he regretted having to do once he left the village. His heart and our family's hearts will always be in the Falls.

One major project he worked on was the Menomonee Falls Diamond Jubilee in 1967. I was only 9 at the time and don't remember a lot of the details, but I do remember the parades. We had a 1966 Mustang convertible, and our family would dress in attire from the late 1800's and ride in parades from town to town promoting the Diamond Jubilee. I was given papers to hand out to people along the parade routes. We met a lot of interesting people throughout the whole year. After a year of a lot of different activities, we had a final week of celebration. It seemed that the whole village was involved with the final celebration. I remember that my father worked day and night for most of the year. It was one of his biggest accomplishments to run something so large in scale, and I think it helped prepare him for running F & M Bank later on.



My father was involved in many groups, both civic and government organizations. He worked on a variety of causes: from helping to raise money for a worthwhile cause to helping improve the educational opportunities for the children in Menomonee Falls. Whatever the cause, he would give 100%. I usually tagged along and was the official photographer for the event. I went to countless meetings, keeping a photo diary which would be used later on for publicity. He was involved in the Vince Lombardi Memorial Golf Classic for a number of years. He also was Chairman for 1991 and 1992 United Cerebral Palsy

Telethons. He was a United Way Fund Worker, a board member for the Menomonee Falls Youth Center, president of the Potawatomi Area Boy Scouts, on the board of director for WCTI, fund-raiser and on the board of directors for the United Performing Arts Foundation, and was the 1992 Jack Birchhill awardee. He also was trustee of Lakeland College in Manitowoc, and on the board of directors for Waukesha County Mental Health.

One of my father's last projects was the Cancer Care Center. He spearheaded the campaign to raise \$2.5 million dollars for the Cancer Care Center at Community Memorial Hospital in Menomonee Falls. It opened in 1993 and he was one of the first patients to use the center. He was there until he died in November of that year. It is nice to know that he help start that center and I have used it as a Renal Cancer survivor and so has my mother, who also died of cancer in 2016. Every time I step into the Cancer Care Center I think of my father and how he felt it was so important that Menomonee Falls have this facility.

My father stayed busy until his death. His cancer did not prevent him from volunteering; he never said no to anyone if they needed help. Any organization could depend on him to help them out whatever way he could, yet he still had time for our family and his apple orchard. He also was a board member of St Paul's United Church of Christ, a Master Mason at the Lincoln Masonic Lodge #183, and a Shriner of Tripoli Temple. There are many groups or people that I don't even know about, every now and then I will run into someone that tells me my father helped them or helped this group or that group. He taught me how to work hard and to volunteer whenever I can. I don't have the record my father had, but I do what I can when I can. I do work with our local camera club in teaching photography, and I was a planning commissioner for the Village of Richfield for 17 years, and I do volunteer work for many groups in the area. Hopefully I can live up to my father's legacy.

Greater Menomonee Falls Committee & Foundation

By Jo Ellen Mulder

A Better Falls – Make It Happen was the rallying cry of a community development initiative that began in the early 1980's. It was a time of declining population and lax residential and commercial development - a time to revitalize and purposefully plan for the future.

Spearheaded by Richard Klug, then President of F&M Bank, along with two dozen leaders representing broad sectors of the Village, the Greater Menomonee Falls Committee formed to mobilize the community. The process began with a community wide survey, asking residents to identify needs. The results of the survey were widely distributed and volunteers were recruited to serve on 15 task forces covering water and waste, roads and traffic, industrial development, retail planning, zoning and housing, education, transportation, environmental planning, parks and recreation, the arts, communication, youth services, aesthetics and beautification, elderly needs and government structure.

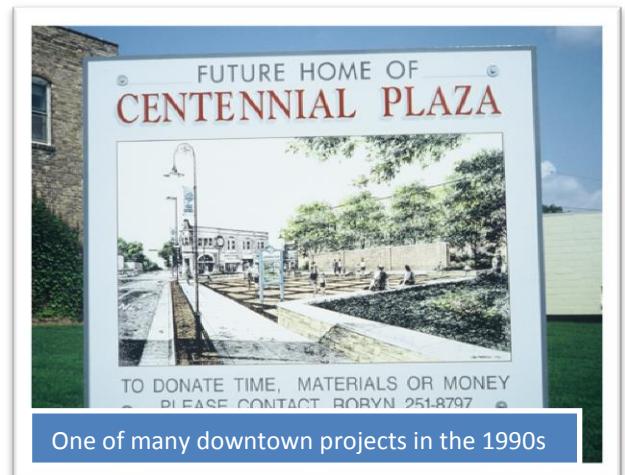


Lime Kiln Park after trail installation, circa 1990

The task forces were charged with studying the problems, searching for answers, setting goals and developing action plans. The citizen-driven effort resulted in a host of initiatives and improvements. Among them, increased economic development programs by the Village and the Chamber of Commerce, downtown and riverfront rehabilitation, a new identifying logo and signage, a day care center for the elderly, planting and clean-up days, and the establishment of a community charitable trust. Through the united efforts of committed volunteers, government, business & industry, health & education sectors and community organizations, a better Falls did happen. By the end of the decade, a revitalized community welcomed a new era of growth.

An outgrowth of the Greater Menomonee Falls Committee's community development initiative, the Greater Menomonee Falls Foundation was organized in 1991 to provide a long term sustainable resource for meeting community needs now and into the future. The Foundation is a tax-exempt public trust that offers donors a variety of easy and cost effective ways to invest in the community through current donations or via their estates. Within the administrative framework of the Foundation, large donors may create their own designated or named legacy fund. Smaller donations are pooled for maximum impact on areas of need.

Through an annual grant process, a portion of the Foundation's investment gains are distributed to area non-profit organizations who are working to keep the Village strong and vibrant. For more information on the Foundation and grant recipients, visit info@fallsfoundation.org.



One of many downtown projects in the 1990s

My Memories Living in Menomonee Falls

By Sandra Nelson Liebau

In 1951 my folks rented a farmhouse where the present landfill is located. That was in the Town of Menomonee at that time. Eventually, the Town became part of the Village too.

Bonnie Lane was walking distance from the farmhouse and at the end of the lane was a steep hill that went down to Lilly Road and made a sledding and tobogganing area on winter nights after school for all to enjoy. The long walk up the hill was not as enjoyable as going down.

Bailey School was located where the firehouse is across the street from St. Mary's Cemetery and across from where the Nightingale Ballroom was.

Stores were never open on Sundays – Sundays were set aside for church, visiting relatives or going to special activities.

The best Christmas was when Santa made a visit to our house on Christmas Eve with his “Ho Ho Ho!” on arrival. Mom opened the door, gave us each a gift from his big red bag and quickly left with a shake of his hand to each. Years later we found out Santa was our Aunt who lived on Town Hall Road.

Usually we went to the grocery store once a week on Saturdays. We had Borden’s Milk Company deliver our milk. Mother said he (the milk man) had to leave right away to go to the next house – we couldn’t even see him drive away.

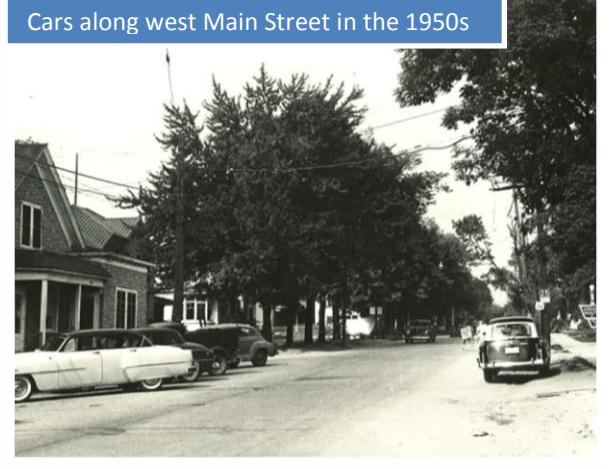
It was common for gas stations to give out free glasses and other items for a certain amount of gas sales. Some had stamped tigers on the glasses and also had matching water pitchers. The cost for filling up the gas tank was around \$3.00 as a gallon cost about 25 cents.

National Food Store was near the movie house on Appleton Avenue and also had different free items you could get with a certain dollar amount of groceries – each week was a different free item. These items included a flower vase, butter dishes, saucers, cake plates all of the same design, so if you shopped each week and got the free item you could have a matching set.

Ray’s Milk Jug was a popular place for some to hang out and socialize and get malts and hamburgers. It was located about where the music store is today. Farmers and Merchants Bank was located by the water falls where the apartments are being constructed. They used to give out a free ash tray with their name on it. I think it was for a certain anniversary for the bank. Across the street from the bank was Frank’s Meat Market and Strom’s Drug Store. Kahn’s clothing store was in the shopping center near where Pop’s is.

These are some of my memories living all these years in Menomonee Falls. I do hope to write more memories when the Village celebrates its 150th anniversary.

Cars along west Main Street in the 1950s



A Historical Perspective

By Rick Rechlicz

This narrative is my personal perspective of certain developments and community events in Menomonee Falls stemming from my involvement in various municipal and private Boards and Committees. This perspective is based upon my starting a law practice on the corner of Water Street and Main Street in 1980, my involvement in Village government which started with my appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals by then Village Board President Robert Steliga in 1984 and ending 24 years later after serving the second of two (2) terms as President of the Village Board of Trustees and my involvement with the Menomonee Falls Scholarship & Educational Foundation, Inc. from 1989 to 2007.

My family and I moved to Menomonee Falls in 1978. In 1980, I started a law practice at the corner of Water Street and Main Street in a building then owned by Peter Stolz. At that time, the tenants in the building were John Morgan, The Ranch, a business established by Vic Hellman, more affectionately known as "Farmer Vic" benefitting mentally challenged persons; Peter Stolz's accounting business and Scofield Souvenirs. A year later I added a partner to form the firm of Ladewig & Rechlicz. The firm is now known as Rechlicz & Hanson, LLP and is located at N88 W15125 Main Street. I have been told that the building our law firm currently occupies at N88 W15125 Main Street was moved to its current location from its original site across from Village Hall. People referred to the building across from Village Hall as the "Harry Hart Building." When Main Street Partnership bought the property on Main Street in 1983, we referred to the building as the "Main Street Partnership Property."

At the time the law practice was opened in the building owned by Peter Stolz on the corner of Water Street and Main Street, across Water Street to the East was a very popular pub and restaurant known as The Honey Bucket and Heebie Jeebies. The businesses were run primarily by two of the Hebring brothers, Don and Larry. During its operation, The Honey Bucket sponsored a fund raising event for The Ranch known as the Winter Carnival. The Winter Carnival was a hugely successful and well attended event each year during its run. The Honey Bucket building was destroyed by fire in February, 1991 and was never rebuilt.

Across the street to the South of the Peter Stolz building was a retail furniture business known as "Country Craft Furniture" owned and operated by James Hampton and Richard Dall. While the building still stands today, after Country Craft Furniture, the building was then occupied by Dan's Tog Shop and Robin's Nest and is now occupied only by Robin's Nest.

To the West of the then Country Craft Furniture store on Main Street was a business run by Alfred Wickesberg known as "Server Products." His son, Paul Wickesberg, succeeded him as the owner of the business. The business subsequently moved out of Menomonee Falls. Alfred Wickesberg and Paul Wickesberg developed The



The corner of Main Street and Water Street, 1970s



Country Craft Furniture, 1980s

Dalles and The Dalles II residential condominium projects. The building owned by Peter Stolz was razed in 1994 and now is the site of The Dalles II condominium high rise.

In 1989 I was approached by Richard Woosencraft, then Principal of Menomonee Falls High School, and Cathy Hazzard (nee Tarantino), a graduate of Menomonee Falls High School, to help form and be a member of a committee to raise funds primarily for the purpose of defraying the costs of post-high school education for seniors graduating from Menomonee Falls High School. The committee was formed as the Menomonee Falls Scholarship and Educational Foundation, Inc. Two of the major fund raising events of the Scholarship Foundation in which I was involved were the "Scholarship Telethon" and the "Scholarship House."

The Scholarship Telethon was a fund raising event similar to the Jerry Lewis MD Telethon. Various dignitaries in Menomonee Falls and senior high school students manned a bank of telephones while various music and choir departments of both public and private schools located in Menomonee Falls staged acts for the entertainment of the viewing audience on Cable Access Channel 14 and for the live audience in the auditorium at Menomonee Falls High School where the Telethon took place. The initial Emcees of the Telethon were Robb Edwards and Beth Harwood Raymonds. Harry Stoetzel, founder of Stoetzel Productions and Falls Cable Access, along with Paul Wickesberg, handled all of the audio and visual aspects of televising the four hour event on live television. The Telethon took place every other year with the first telethon in March, 1997 and the last Telethon in 2001. To my best recollection, each Telethon raised approximately \$30,000.00.

In addition to the call-in pledges and those made in person at the High School Auditorium, there were 8 local businesses sponsoring a one half-hour segment of the telethon for the donation of \$1,000.00. These sponsors included Johnson Bus, Community Memorial Hospital, Country Craft Furniture, M&I Bank of Menomonee Falls, Server Products, Tri-City Bank, Associated Insurance Services (AIS) and Medical Associates.

The Scholarship House was another highly successful fund raising project developed by the Scholarship Foundation. The plan was to acquire a lot in Menomonee Falls on which to construct a residence built primarily through the donations of material and time by various contractors and suppliers within the community, with all proceeds of the sale of the residence going to the Foundation. The lot was donated at cost to the Scholarship Foundation by PJ Burbach. Project construction was financed by M&I Bank of Menomonee Falls. Richard Becker, then President of that branch and Kent Eliason, one of its loan officers, were primarily involved. Kent Eliason handled the day-to-day aspects of the disbursement of construction funds. Herb Gross acted as the General Contractor of the project. Services and materials were either donated or sold at cost. Some of the business involved were, among others, Al Klever of Quick & Klever, Inc. (rough carpentry), Marty Schallock of Malkins Carpets (carpeting and flooring), Ladewig and Rechlicz (legal services) and Terri Newman of Shorewest Realtors (real estate brokerage services). The Scholarship Foundation received approximately \$160,000.00 upon the sale which was utilized to fund the Foundation's endowment account. I remember the "Scholarship House" was covered by both the local Milwaukee television and radio media.

A secondary purpose of the Scholarship House was to act as a classroom for the students of Menomonee Falls High School. The high school students, especially those in industrial arts, had a "hands-on" experience by being exposed to the real estate transaction from the financing and construction of the home to its eventual sale.

I became a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals in 1984 and served on that committee for about 5 years. I was then appointed to the Plan Commission by Village Board President Robert Steliga in 1990. I served on that committee until withdrawal from Village government in April, 2009. During that time, I served two (2) terms (2005 to 2009) as President of the Village Board of Trustees. The political climate was somewhat contentious at the time of my first election as Village Board President in 2005.

During that time, the greatest focus was on the Main Street Redevelopment corridor from Pilgrim Road East to the Highway 41/45 interchange on Main Street. That development ultimately saw the construction of the Radisson Hotel and the RGB Restaurant. The site was formerly a Holiday Inn and a Denny's Restaurant. That development was the first foray of the Village of Menomonee Falls into lending money to a private developer. While the process proved to be difficult and often divisive among tax payers, the end result was the demolishing of an outdated hotel with the construction of a successful Radisson Hotel and RGB Restaurant. The shopping center on the corner of Main Street and Pilgrim Road was then occupied by a Red Owl Food Store, McDonald's Dry Cleaners, the original Menomonee Falls Theatre operated then by Walter Blaney and Pool Park owned and operated by Norm Burkholz. The center was redeveloped through partial razing and reconstruction of some existing buildings and the construction new free-standing buildings which were occupied by a WalMart, Ottos' Beverage Center, Friends of Nature Pet Supplies Store, Topper's Pizza, Hibachi Sushi Restaurant and an Associated Bank branch office. Pool Park subsequently moved across the street to its current location on Main Street.



Main Street Redevelopment Corridor, 2016

The long-standing Jay's Sporting Goods store which was located on the South side of Main Street was demolished. The lot is currently vacant. The property located on the Southeast corner of Pilgrim and Main Street which was formerly owned by Ernie Von Schledorn, has been developed as a Kwik Trip Convenience Store and a new commercial/retail building which, at this time, is seeking tenants.

While serving as a Member of the Plan Commission and Village Board of Trustees, the Village of Menomonee Falls became the corporate headquarters for Strong Financial Services on the site located on the Northeast side of the Appleton Avenue and Good Hope intersection; Kohl's Corporate Center on Silver Spring, the construction of a Pick 'n' Save food store on Appleton Avenue across from the high school in the building formerly occupied by K-Mart. Development in the Falls at that time also included the construction of the Marcus Theaters, Uno's, Applebee's, Home Depot in the vicinity of County Line Road and Appleton Avenue and the construction of a Steinhafel's and Best Buy on the frontage road near Neu's Hardware. During my term as Village Board President, there was interest in the area West of Pilgrim Road formerly owned by Stolper Steel and Roskopf's RV by Bass Pro, Nordstroms and Van Maur. The site was ultimately acquired and the development principally driven by Scott Yauck as a mixed commercial and multi-family residential development. The multi-family residential development consists of 318 apartment units known as The Junction Apartments. Some of the businesses now located within the development are the Wisconsin Athletic Club, Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin Orthopedic, Sports and Spine Center, Firehouse Subs, Mr. Brews Taphouse, TCJ Max, Costco and Home Goods.

In my opinion, the developments of the Appleton Avenue and Good Hope corridor, the Main Street corridor and the corridor West of Pilgrim Road and the 41/45 interchange would not have been possible without them being placed in Tax Incremental Districts.

Chief Anna Ruzinski

By Nancy Greifenhagen

On October 1, 2007, Anna Ruzinski became the first female police chief of the Menomonee Falls Police Department. Coming from over 26 years with the Milwaukee Police Department, she was not only coming from outside the department, but was a female in a predominantly male profession. She has been in the position for almost 10 years and continues to serve. In 2012, another first was reached when Chief Ruzinski became the first Director of Protective Services to also give her administrative oversight of the Menomonee Falls Fire Department as well. There have been many accomplishments over the years to include starting the first police K-9 unit, Police Citizens Academy, and the start of Paramedics in the Village.



Chief Ruzinski

In regards to being the first female chief and Director of Protective Services she offered, "I knew coming to Menomonee Falls would be a great opportunity. Being a female in the profession is not the challenge it may have been years ago. I was welcomed to a great professional police department. I probably faced more scrutiny coming from outside the agency. But, my past experience and the acceptance by members of the department and the Village have made this a great experience. Being female and in law enforcement and given oversight of the fire department took more acceptance. However, as we all grow together it shows the community just how progressive this community is. We all work hard to continue to show newcomers what a safe and welcoming community we are."

Menomonee Falls Public Library

By Jane Schall

In April of 1958 my parents, sisters and I moved to Menomonee Falls. At that time the library was on the second floor of the fire station on Appleton Ave.

Ms. Virginia Kahl was the director of the library at that time. I had never been in a library before but started using it to help with school work and discovered the pleasure of reading for leisure. Virginia Kahl hired me in September of 1967 to be a shelver. The library at that time had moved into its new building on Pilgrim Rd. next to the Village Hall. When I started working at the library I heard the story of how one day while Ms. Kahl was driving to work on Hwy 41 she saw a large plastic bag laying on the side of the road. As she approached the bag she saw it move. She stopped to investigate and found kittens inside the bag. She took the bag with all the kittens and placed in her car and brought them to the library above the fire station. The kittens resided at the library until they were all adopted by either staff or patrons.

Ms. Virginia Kahl was a children's author. The library has copies of her works in the Maude Shunk Local History Room. As you enter the children's library you will find four framed prints from her books. When she left the library in 1968 she moved to Alexandria, VA.

One very important piece of furniture in the library is the grandfather clock that is on the second floor of the current building. In 1935 the clock was donated to the library by Mrs. Stella Nehs Dousman. The clock was built in Summertown, Pennsylvania around 1800. It was brought by Frederick Nehs and his son Jesse to Menomonee Falls by covered wagon in 1844. In order to fit the clock into their home the Nehs had to remove the feet from the bottom of the clock. In 2001 an anonymous donor gave money to the library to have the clock refurbished. The Deller Conservation Group, LTD researched the history of the clock and its maker, Daniel Scheift. They determined that when the clock was constructed it had a different top above the clock face. They restored the top of the clock back to its original design and put the correct feet on the bottom. The clock cabinet is composed of cherry, black walnut and maple wood. The keyhole on the large door is made of carved bone. The face of the clock tells the phases of the moon, days of the month and time of day. The clock was placed in the current library on January 29, 2003. The staff takes great care of this antique timepiece.



Maude Shunk at 50 years of service, 1956



Maude Shunk Library, 1980s

Wittlin's Service Station

By John Wittlin

Wittlin's Service has been in business in Menomonee Falls since 1907. In those 110 years the business has seen many changes. It was the first car dealership in Menomonee Falls, selling Fords and Buicks.

In the 1920s the business moved from its location near the Four Corners to its current location. It offered gas, service and cabin rentals. Appleton Avenue (Highway 41) was a popular route used for traveling to Wisconsin's Northwoods. Many of these travelers stopped overnight at Wittlin's Cabins.

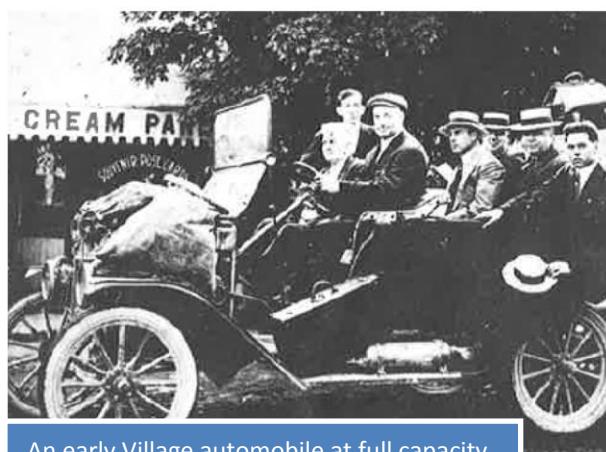
The cabins rented for \$1 a night and included "running water". The "running water" was Ed and Ivan Wittlin, then young boys, running with buckets of water to each cabin!

Wittlin's Service was the first self service station in the area. It is also one of the oldest Firestone dealerships in the United States. Wittlin's celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2007. Mario Andretti, a spokesperson for Bridgestone, was here to help celebrate the milestone anniversary.

Today Max Wittlin is the 4th generation to run Wittlin's Service Center and Convenience Store.



Wittlin's downtown garage and sales center



An early Village automobile at full capacity

The School District of Menomonee Falls from 1969-2004

by Richard P. Woosencraft

I am writing this document from my personal perspective and beliefs. Dates and school locations will be accurate. Enrollment of staff and students will be approximate. As to my history in the school district, I started as an elementary physical education teacher at Shady Lane Elementary School in the fall of 1969. From 1971 to 1973, I taught physical education half time at Shady Lane and half at North High School. During the 1974-1975 school year, I worked with special needs students in the area of physical education at all of the elementary schools in the Menomonee Falls school district. From 1975 to 1984, I worked as an assistant principal at North High School. In the fall of 1984, North High School and East High School merged, and I remained as an assistant principal. In the year 1986, I was named principal of Menomonee Falls High School, where I remained until my retirement in 2004.

The Menomonee Falls School District in 1969 was booming. Student enrollment was over 10,000. This was the year that a second high school, Menomonee Falls East High School, was opened. During the previous year, North High School was bursting at the seams. Students had to go between North and the old Lincoln building which was located near North High School. Lincoln was located on Main Street across the back parking lot of North High School (eventually, it was torn down and is now a soccer field). High school students of that era had three students to a single locker. Because of the overcrowding and continued population growth, Menomonee Falls grew from a village with one high school to two, and there were plans in place for a possible third high school in the future, which would be called Menomonee Falls South High School. The land designated for this third high school is now the location of the present Little League Complex on Mill Road.

In the of 1969, the following was a list of the public schools in Menomonee Falls:

SCHOOL	LOCATION
Menomonee Falls North High School	Garfield Avenue
Menomonee Falls East High School	Merrimac Drive
Thomas Jefferson Middle School	Lavergne Avenue
Ben Franklin Middle School	Franklin Drive
Shady Lane Elementary School	Shady Lane
Valley View Elementary School	Town Hall Road
Riverside Elementary School	Margaret Road
Hiawatha Elementary School (closed 1983)	Menomonee Avenue
North Hills Elementary School (closed 1970)	Lilly Road
Oakwood Elementary School (closed 1969)	Lilly Road
Lincoln Elementary School (closed 1976)	Main Street
Bailey Elementary School (closed 1970)	Main Street



New residential subdivision, 1950s

As can be seen from the above list, the Menomonee Falls School District, which had been the fastest growing school district in the nation, was rapidly declining. One contributing factor was that the DNR had put a stop to putting wells and septic systems so close together. This affected the number of new homes that could be built. In 1978 there was only one new home built in the district.

The school superintendent at the time, Dr. Jack Magnuson (1969-1986), had watched the growth of the district as the district's business manager during the 1950's up to his promotion to superintendent in 1969. He then led the district during its decline. He often commented, "It is far easier to build schools than close them."

North Hills became the central office for the district in the 1970's. It is now a fire station. Bailey also eventually became a fire station in the 1990's. Oakwood property was sold to a private business. In the 1980's, Hiawatha closed and became the new central office. In the 1970's, Lincoln closed and ultimately was razed.

All of these moves and closures were significant. However, the most significant change took place in the fall of 1984 when the two high schools merged into one due to the declining enrollment. There had been a strong rivalry between the North, the original high school, and East the newer high school. They were both highly rated high schools. Academics, music, art and athletics were equally strong in both buildings. To deal with the problems of combining the two schools, Dr. Magnuson had two student groups. The East High group was led by Sid Truckenbrod and the North High group was led by Dick Woosencraft. Their mission was to choose a new mascot and colors. After much deliberation, a compromise was reached. Because the East High students got to keep their building, it was agreed upon that the mascot should be the Indians, which had been North high's mascot (East's had been the Titans). It was also decided that the school colors be changed from North's purple and white and East's blue and gold to burgundy and gray. The two student groups felt that the new colors would be unifying, which proved to be true.

The merged high school, now known as Menomonee Falls High School, opened in the former East High building in the fall of 1984. The student enrollment was over 1500 students. Although crowded, the merger of the two high schools went quite smoothly. Menomonee Falls High School became a strong, comprehensive high school, excelling in academics, athletics, art and music.

In 1983, following the enactment of the Wisconsin Chapter 220 program in 1976 which encouraged school integration in Milwaukee and its surrounding suburbs, Dr. Magnuson spearheaded implementation of this



Benjamin Franklin Elementary School



Menomonee Falls East High School

voluntary transfer program in Waukesha County. Dr. Magnuson felt strongly about this program and wanted to implement it in Menomonee Falls before his retirement in 1986.

In the fall of 1986, Dr. Tom Joynt was hired as the next superintendent. During his superintendency, Dr. Joynt and the school board decided to raze the Lincoln building. They also reopened Thomas Jefferson and alter the grade levels in order to ease overcrowding at some schools. Thomas Jefferson became a grade 6-7 building, North became a grade 8-9 building and the high school housed grades 10-12. This configuration lasted four years.

In 1989, Dr. Joynt left the school district, and Dr. Jim Shaw was hired as the next superintendent. Dr. Shaw brought the district to an even higher level of achievement. During his time as superintendent, Dr. Shaw was named Wisconsin Superintendent of the year. Dr. Shaw, along with the school board, also decided to move the 9th grade back to the high school, which was a very popular decision.

In 1994, enrollment had reached enrollment of students had reached a low, with a graduating class of under 300. By 2001, enrollment was increasing with a graduating class of 350. This upward trend in enrollment continued (in 2016, the graduating class was 450 students).

In 2002, Dr. Shaw retired, and longtime assistant superintendent, Dr. Keith Marty was hired as the new superintendent of the Menomonee Falls School District. During his time, the school district continued to excel, and was growing. North Middle School (grades 6-8) was renovated, Thomas Jefferson was closed, and the high school underwent some renovations, which included a new gym and additional classrooms. It became a vibrant building again.

In 2011, Dr. Marty retired and the district hired Dr. Patricia Greco. She remains the current superintendent of the Menomonee Falls School District. Dr. Greco had earlier leadership roles in the district in the late 1980's, first as an assistant principal of North Middle School and later as the principal of Ben Franklin Elementary School. Like her predecessors, Dr. Greco has led Menomonee Falls School District to becoming one of the top-rated school districts in the state. She and her school board have been responsible for proposing two referendums, which would improve the school district as a whole.

Menomonee Falls School District, from the early 1960's to the present, has been recognized as an outstanding school district. It went from being one of the fastest growing districts to the fastest declining, with all the challenges that ensued. During it all, the district's mission to provide its students with a high quality education never faltered. A village is only as good as its people, and this is also true for a school district. Menomonee Falls School District employs great people, and this is why it continues to enjoy its high standing in the world of education. Great schools make great communities!