

Liberty School News

Volume 15, Number 3

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Liberty School News is edited by Michael and Toni Meier and is published by **German Settlement History, Inc.**, an organization dedicated to the preservation and development of historic artifacts in the Town of Spirit, Southeast Price County, including “**Our Yesterday House**” built in 1885, **Liberty School**, built in 1919 and “**The Machine Shed**” housing logging and farming tools and equipment from 1880 to 1950. You may contact us at N894 S. German Settlement Road, Ogema, WI 54459. (715)564-3299 or gshinc@centurylink.net. Check out our web site at www.germansettlementhistory.org GSHI is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit tax exempt organization. **You are welcome to visit us at any time, but call ahead to make sure we are home to show you around.**

**GSHI Annual Meeting. Sunday, January 19, 2014
12:30 potluck lunch followed by the meeting**

All are welcome to attend and listen as the Board of Directors makes plans for the year ahead. Your input will be valuable for the board. Bring your ideas and come!

Please put these dates on your calendar:

Annual Barn Dance, Sunday, May 25, 7:00 p.m.

**Friends of German Settlement History Picnic,
Saturday, July 26, 11:00 – 3:00**

[A special note to our readers:

In every issue we include an annual membership form. It may be that you already signed up for the year so please don't be offended that we included the form in your copy of LSN, we include the form in every copy.

Please also note that you don't have to be a member or contribute to stay on our mailing list. We are glad to have you as our friend and we appreciate your encouragement.

Our next issue should appear in May, 2014.

Now, here's a question for you—would you like to receive LSN electronically? We are now able to do that. Just send your email address to us at gshinc@centurylink.net and request that we take you off the snail-mail list and put you on the email list]

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Nutzo Hunter by Michael Meier

I was fascinated with deer season from the time I was five when, a few days before hunting season, I told the man drilling our well that “My Dad already has his buck, but it was too big to bring home so he left it hanging in the woods.” Mr. Brunner had fun teasing my dad about the pre-season buck.

In those days most people had pre-season bucks, or does. Our resources were quite basic. We weren't poor, but we surely depended on a lot of venison in our diet, as did most of our neighbors. Along with most of our neighbors, though, we had a dim view of “violators” who were not local. Hunting your own fields and forest was one thing. Driving around shining deer with a spotlight and shooting them on somebody else's field was another. Even worse were those who were reputed to be engaging in “market hunting”—that is shooting deer to ship down to Chicago or Milwaukee for sale to certain wholesalers or restaurants.

Deer season was a nine-day event that began on the Friday before Thanksgiving and ended on the Sunday after. It was always bucks only, except in 1949 or 1950 when it was does only and my Dad shot a beautiful 13-point buck. He hid the antlers in the woods and before we retrieved them in spring the porcupines had gnawed the rack and inflicted a lot of damage on it. (Porkies crave the salt that is in the antlers.) That year Dad shot three other deer. One of them was legal.

In those days you could not get a license until you were 12 years old. And, in our family, you were not invited to go along until you had a license. In those days it was against the law to feed deer or to have deer stands. I don't believe you were allowed to stand on a high stump, even.

Few people practiced “still hunting.” Most families had a traditional gang of family members and certain neighbors. Some were assigned to stand at a certain place. They were “posted.” Others were “drivers” who ranged through the woods toward the posted ones. The goal was to chase deer out to those who were standing. Sometimes that worked.

A great deal of time was taken waiting for everybody to get together after a drive. Then there would be a long discussion by the senior members of the group about what drive to do next. Memories of previous years and successful as well as unsuccessful efforts were discussed in detail. Small people (12-year olds) stood around getting colder by the minute and becoming more and more confused about where exactly the next drive would take them. The cold was memorable, in part, because we did not have any of the modern attire that is light-weight and warm. I remember wearing the same clothing I wore when we were cutting pulpwood in the winter—warm enough if you were working, but not warm enough if you were supposed to stand perfectly still. And, we **were** supposed to stand perfectly still. One hung one's head in shame when a driver reported that he had a deer headed right to you and then it spooked “because you must have moved or made some noise.”

Youngsters were not allowed to “drive” because, we were told, “you'll get lost in the swamps.” My Dad always drove. He also shot many deer as they were lying in a bed. I think that was in part because of his blue-green color blindness (During World War II sailors with blue-green color blindness were often used as spotters on ships because they were better at detecting the true outlines of a camouflaged ship.) My Dad could see the shape of a deer hidden in the brush better than most. I recall one occasion when I was a senior in high school and he and I were hunting alone. There was snow on the ground, a few inches of snow, and I was posted while he was [page 2]

driving. He came out to me and told me he wanted to show me something. He told me to follow him a hundred yards or so back into the brush. Then he pointed to a spot some 75 feet away and asked me what I saw. I saw raspberry bushes. He told me to look again. I looked and looked and suddenly I saw what he had been seeing all along—a nice fat doe lying perfectly still. Once I saw it I could not believe that I hadn't seen it—it was as visible as if it had neon lights. No, we didn't shoot it. My Dad said that he thought we walked by hundreds of deer and did not see them.

I so wanted to go hunting and getting to be twelve years old took a good long time—years! Finally I was old enough. I began hunting using a Marlin .25-20 pump gun that belonged to the extended family. I guess you could kill a deer with that. I never had a clear shot so I don't know. Then I graduated to my brother's JC Higgins bolt action 20 gauge shotgun with rifled slugs. That was lethal enough. My brother used it successfully before I got to use it.

Finally, when I was a senior in high school in the fall of 1957 the guys at the Coast-to-Coast hardware store in Rib Lake had a used gun that I could buy for \$15.00. It was a Winchester Model 1892 lever action (a little smoother and lighter action than the later 1894 lever action). It was a .38-40 and had a nice size slug. It was only rated at about 705 foot pounds at muzzle and was very slow, something like 1350 feet per second at muzzle. But, it was a genuine deer-slayer. I got permission to take it home on the school bus (in a card board box) so I could try it out. My dad was very, very skeptical about its value. He said it would have a worn bore and the bullets would “keyhole.” So, I took a chunk of cedar stump and tacked a piece of white cardboard to it and took it up in the field to the east of the barn and shot a couple rounds and it did not appear to have a tumbling bullet that made a keyhole mark. So, I begged to be able to use the \$15.00 I had earned from my prize money at the 4-H fairs and reluctantly I was allowed to buy it. (Earlier that fall I had already spent \$15.00 on a fiber-glass forty pound bow—bow hunting was just beginning to be popular and the bow season for deer was much longer than the gun season.)

Well, I shot a nice buck with that .38-40. Dad and I were hunting alone as my older brothers were away serving in the Army. He chased a buck out from below the back fields near the pond and it ran up a little valley below where I was posted. I missed it six times running, but fortunately it did not figure out where I was standing and ended up circling around behind me. It stopped and looked directly away from me. It was about 150 feet from me. I shot it in the back of the head, my adrenalin now all pumped out of me so I was as steady as a rock. It was dead and down just like that.

The thing I haven't mentioned yet is that I was really so nutzo (see the title of this piece) about deer hunting that I could never sleep the night before the opening day. I would be so wired that I would toss and turn all night. Then the next day I would be really tired. And, I also suffered from aching legs. I have always had aching legs. Well, lack of sleep and that slow sauntering walk that one often uses when hunting would combine so my legs were throbbing with pain—especially again at night.

I could tell you more nutzo hunting experiences—like the time the night before opening day when I thought I would clean my Dad's Winchester .32 Special and I got a cleaning rag stuck in it and we had to take a piece of strong copper wire (copper would not harm the rifling) to force the rag out without harming the gun. I think most families have someone who is so very intense and wired about one or more things that they make life quite trying for the saner members of the family. Their behavior weighs on everyone else. Their relentless attention to some particular thing is very tiring. I was that one. Nutzo. Absolutely nutzo. Enough already! Enough! [Page 3]

Oswald Scheller, Pioneer Photographer

by Bill Hoffman

I never knew my Great Uncle Oswald Scheller. He died many years before I was born.

My mother's Uncle Oswald, was born in 1869 in Leisnig, Saxony, Germany.



The only thing I remember my mother Bernice Scheller Hoffman, telling about Uncle Oswald was about a trip to Seattle, with him in 1926 to see his sister Alma Scheller Schmidt and family.

<<< Oswald & Bernice Scheller, Seattle, Washington, 1926

During the late 1980's I made several trips to Saxony, East Germany, in search of my Scheller family roots. That was before the Berlin Wall fell and traveling behind the Iron Curtain was an adventure.

It is always exciting when one discovers the key to one's family tree in a foreign country. And I was fortunate to begin a correspondence with the English-speaking Lutheran preacher in the heart of Scheller country in Germany. He invited me to stay with him and his family in country and took me around to all the relevant churches. At that time in East Germany, vital statistics and records were maintained in all the parish churches. To find information on a person one merely went to the church in the town that the person was from and looked thru the registers stored on the shelves. The records generally went back as far as the last time the church burned. The records were generally in good condition indicating that the paper was of high quality and acid free. The Germans maintained good records. By going around to all the towns and churches we were able to trace the Scheller's back to Hans who died in Schonerstadt, in 1600. Schonerstadt is a very small and very old village. The oldest part of the church dated from 1200.



Oswald's sister
Mary Emma Scheller
Born 09 Dec 1882



Oswald's sister & brother
Rosena Ella Scheller, Born 30 Jan 1878
Carl George Scheller, Born 19 Mar 1881



Oswald's brother, Max Otto Scheller, Born 08 Oct 1873
(All 3 of these photos by Oswald are courtesy of
Jeannie Scheller Glenzer)

Carl August Scheller was born in 1840 in Kieselbach, Saxony, Germany. In 1869 he married Ernestine Augusta Naumann in Seifersdorf. They moved to Leisnig where he worked as a stuhlbauer (chairmaker). He also made cabinets. In Leisnig, their first five children including Oswald, were born.

The Scheller family emigrated to the United States and landed at the port of New York in April or May 1882. From New York, they traveled to Milwaukee, where they lived until the spring of 1884 when the family moved to the town of Brannan, in Price County, where they acquired a homestead on [May 6, 1884](#) under the Homestead Act. That summer they constructed a log house.

On [July 3, 1908](#) Julius Koehler, a gentleman from Phillips, went on a visit to the town of Brannan. In the [July 16, 1908](#) issue of THE BEE, published in Phillips, he wrote:

“Carl Scheller, one of the oldest settlers in the southeasterly part of Brannan has about finished the finest silo in the county. The same is 14 feet wide inside by 25 feet in height and will hold about 67 tons of silage. It stands about 6 feet under ground and stone and cement reaches about 4 feet above. The Schellers are progressive farmers; their windmill operates a threshing machine, grist mill and hay cutter and for the silo they intend to put in a gasoline engine. They must have from 60 to 80 acres clear; have quite a number of acres of corn which stands splendid. They have a blacksmith shop on the place and are able to do most all of their carpenter and blacksmith, as well as mason work.”

For several years Oswald Scheller helped to create the farm on the homestead. And since there is a lack of personal family history on Oswald the remaining history has been obtained from research of public records.

The great Phillips fire occurred on [July 27, 1894](#).

THE BEE reported on [September 26, 1894](#) that:

“Oswald Scheller bought the Murray lot on Avon Avenue (currently 165 S. Avon where Price County Telephone Company is located), would at once commence the erection of a photographic gallery and when finished in about two weeks those wishing photos will do well to call on him.”

In the [October 24, 1894](#) issue of THE BEE Oswald placed the following notice:

“PHOTOGRAPHY

“I wish to announce to the people of Phillips and the surrounding country, that I am now prepared to do all kinds of photograph work. Good work, reasonable prices and satisfaction guaranteed. Call at my gallery on Avon Avenue.
Oswald Scheller”

It is not known where Oswald learned photography.

In the [December 12, 1894](#) issue of THE BEE Oswald placed the following notice:

“Babies Day

“Saturday, [December 15th](#) will be babies day at Oswald Scheller’s photography gallery, on Avon Avenue, and on that day he will make pictures of your babies for \$2 per dozen. Bring the babies in.”

Oswald took photos of buildings used in THE BEE's special on [April 1, 1895](#). It was reported that he "took interesting views of the celebration in Phillips during the summer of 1895."

The following notice appeared in the [October 9, 1895](#) issue of THE BEE:

"For the next two weeks, from [Oct 10th](#) to 24th, fine Cabinet photos, will be made by Oswald Scheller for only \$2 per doz. Only first class work done and satisfaction guaranteed. Studio on Avon Avenue."

In the [February 26, 1896](#) issue of THE BEE it was reported that "Mr. Oswald Scheller our photographer has returned from his trip through the logging camps where he has been taking views, and is ready again at his gallery for business. He is doing good work, give him a call."

Oswald accepted the agency for the Musical Keyograph and placed the following advertisement in the [July 27, 1898](#) issue of THE BEE:

"The Musical Keyograph may be used on either the organ or piano. It enables the student to acquire rapidly a knowledge of a major and minor chords. It's simplicity easily makes it clear in a short time what would otherwise be difficult and obtained by long study. For further particulars enquire of Oswald Scheller."

Oswald would go out on the road to other cities and towns including Ashland to sell the Keyograph. It was reported in the [September 21, 1898](#) issue of THE BEE that "Oswald T. Scheller leaves this week for Ironwood where he intends to open up a photography gallery soon."

Oswald returned to Phillips, for a visit in [November 1898](#) and that was the final accounting by THE BEE of his presence and activities in Phillips.

While residing in Phillips, Oswald invented a new and useful improvement in upright-piano actions having less friction and fewer pieces to get out of order than any action in use at that time. He filed an application with the United States Patent Office for a patent on [August 9, 1897](#) and was awarded a patent on the Piano-Action on [March 15, 1898](#).

Here is a portion of his patent application and award:

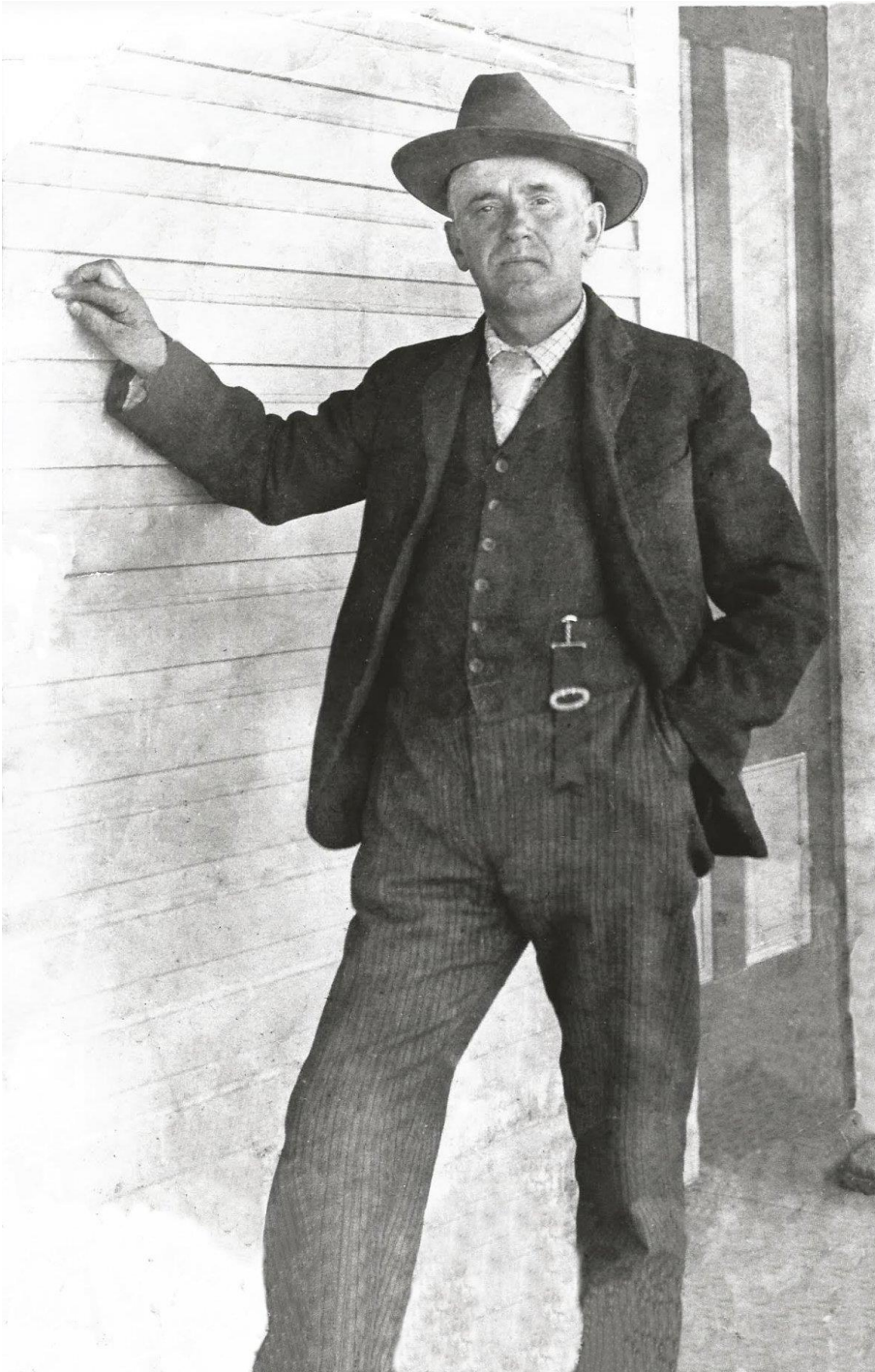
SHELLER PIANO ACTION. No. 600,680. Patented Mar.15,1898. UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE OSWALD SCHELLER, OF PHILLIPS, .WISCONSIN. PIANO-ACTION.

To whom it may concern.- Be it known that I, OSWALD SCHELLER, of Phillips, Price county, Wisconsin, have invented a new and useful improvement in up right-piano actions having less friction and fewer pieces to get out of order than any action now in use, which is fully set forth in the following specification and drawings. My invention relates to an improved piano action particularly for upright pianos.

It has for its object, among other things, to reduce friction to the minimum and to greatly simplify the construction and lessen the number of parts; also, to secure positive and responsive action of the hammer and to certainly or effectively guide the several parts in their movements. To these ends the invention consists of the sundry combinations of parts, including their construction and arrangement, all substantially as hereinafter more fully disclosed, and specifically pointed out in the claims.

In the accompanying drawings, illustrating the preferred form of carrying out my invention, Figure 1 is a side elevation thereof with the hammer in its initial position. Fig. 2 is a similar view, the key being still depressed, with the hammer in position for producing an immediately repeating stroke. Latitude is allowed herein as to details, as these may be changed without departing from the spirit or principles of my invention.

[The application and award goes on in detail. If you are interested in seeing the illustrations and reading the whole document simply Google “Scheller Piano Action”



From Ironwood, Michigan, Oswald went to Alaska to prospect for gold. On [June 19, 1907](#) he sent a picture postcard of himself from Tawana, Alaska, to his sister Sena, asking her to write.

<<<<<<

Some time later Oswald moved to Seattle, Washington. He died in Seattle, on [November 22, 1935](#).

His death certificate listed his occupation as carpenter. His remains were cremated and the cremains were buried in Hillcrest Cemetery in Spirit, where the remains of many of the other Schellers who preceded him in death rest in peace.

In [September 2013](#), I became aware of Bruce Cox, a historian from Wakefield, Michigan, who has been doing research on the pioneer photographers of the Gogebic Range who were doing business there from 1885 to 1920. He stated that he found a brief report in an old Ironwood newspaper about Oswald Scheller and Ralph Green traveling from Skagway to Dawson with two dog teams and sleighs loaded with steam fittings. Oswald was only in business for about eight or nine

months in Ironwood. His cabinet cards are hard to find.

“Dear Terry” by Gloria Brietzke

[Gloria asked us to please print this letter that she wrote to her nephew who left us two years ago.]

October 6th, 2013, Rice Lake, WI

Dear Terry,

Well here it is—Oct. 6th, 2013—two years have passed since you went to be with Jesus. Free of pain and worry. I wasn't there as you know I hadn't been to Richland Center very much after your folks spent summers at Willow Lake, near Tripoli, but I talked to your mother, and she told me you passed on peacefully with the minister, your wife Pam, your Mom & Dad and brother Rod by your side. And if I know you like I think I did, you probably thought they were making too much of a fuss, even if you were in a coma. But it made me feel good as your Godmother, that you didn't pass on alone. And also were at your own home at Lone Rock, Wisconsin, which I always thought was a suburb of Richland Center (ha,ha). And I bet by now you have told more hunting and fishing stories to who would even listen to you up there and talking about your dog Drover who, by the way, is giving Pam a hard time once in a while. I always remember when I did come down for Christmas your Mom would call you and Rod's family and say Glory just got here and you say “Hey, Mabe, did you bring me some soap on a rope for a Christmas present?” But anyway before this letter gets too long I want to tell you the best fun and good memory I had about you. I had come up to the lake just about every weekend in the summer, mostly to fish and there usually was something special going on at the fire hall or Tomahawk or something. And before I left Rice Lake I went to the hardware store and got a bobber for my rod and reel and the clerk said you have to wait until it gets dark before you can see how that one works and how pretty it gets. Well I didn't think too much about it as I needed one and bought it because I lost mine. Well to make a long story short, when I got to the lake that particular weekend, you and Pam also came up north. So I was telling you about the green bobber I bought, but it had to be dark before it would lite up and before I got the words out of my mouth you said lets go try it out. If I remember right Pam said well that's up to no good Terry and maybe going on the lake three hours before it gets dark. Well anyway we went out. We fished some and went West a quite a way out to waste time for darkness. It sure wasn't getting dark fast enough for me. As we got to shore you put that bobber on the rod and threw it out quite a ways and tied it to the boat and we went to shore and sat on the bank and you lit up a cigarette so the mosquitos stayed away from you but they were having lunch & supper on me. And you kept saying you must have patience, Mabe, it's almost dark and I didn't think it would every get dark. Well it finally happened it bobbed on the water like a top. I never seen a more beautiful green, even the bugs stopped biting for those few minutes.

Thanks for the memory Terry, I love you. Your Godmother & Aunt, Gloria “Mabe”

[Thanks to you, Gloria, for sharing this memory!]

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Dear Readers: you might want to note the following as you plan for next summer:

Spirit-Hill-Ogema 4-H Fair

August 8-10, 2014 at the Spirit Town Hall

Visit website: <https://sites.google.com/site/spirithillogema4hfair/>

On Facebook: www/facebook.com/spirithillogema4hfair

Trapping Tales from the Memoirs of Carl Meier

I had one of my best years trapping the fall of 1941. Up until then I had trapped some but never made much at it. Now I had bought some new traps and my brother Ed gave me some good #1 ½ traps that he found after the Spring Valley flood. Of course, I was doing some logging and a lot of trapping was done mornings and evenings. The beaver season opened March 1-31 with a limit of 10; the license cost \$2.50 plus a \$1 tag on each pelt. I had tried trapping the year before and learned a little about it. Now I went at it in earnest.

I had three ponds I intended to trap: across from Rhody's on the creek there; on the long pond on the Rocky Creek; and at Camp 13 on the Newwood. Beaver traps are heavy and I wanted to get an early start on the first as I expected competition on these ponds from other trappers. So I decided to carry my traps out for the pond at Camp 13 the day before season and hide them. Then I could take my traps for the long pond and set them early on the 1st and then just cut across to Camp 13 and set those traps and be home by noon. Which worked out OK.

However, when I got to the pond at 13, I saw there was some open water by the beaver house and someone had been over there as there were man tracks close to the open water. I didn't go too close for two reasons: I was afraid to go too close to open water because I knew it was quite deep and besides, by law traps could not be set closer than 15 feet from the house or the dam and I didn't want to be guilty of getting too close.

I hid my traps in a big hollow pine stump and went directly home at a good fast walk. When I came in the yard, there sat John Marcon, the game warden. He said, "Do you know who set that trap under that beaver house." I replied, "What trap under what beaver house?" He said, "You know—that pond where you hid your traps." I said, "Well, I didn't see any trap there, but I did notice that someone had been monkeying around by the beaver house." He said, "I was watching you. If you don't know who owns that trap, I'm going home and get my sleeping bag and come back and watch that trap until they come to check it. I expect they will be there early tomorrow morning."

That pond was about two miles from home and I walked fast and yet he beat me home. He had also watched me without me being aware of it, which made me respect his ability. Now he hiked back those two miles with his sleeping bag and spent the night out in freezing weather.

The first trapper that came to the pond at daylight was Joe Kauer, who was planning on setting some traps there. But when he saw my traps and the tracks by the beaver house he got suspicious and left without setting any traps. Then Clarence (Jerry) Meyer and his brother-in-law came; they were no doubt the owners of the trap under the beaver house. They hadn't caught anything but when they lifted the trap out, John Marcon arrested them, charging them with setting beaver traps before season and too close to a beaver house. Their plea was not guilty and when the trial came up, they won. They both claimed they knew nothing about a trap by the beaver house and since they were two against John Marcon alone they won the case.

In the beginning the Meyer brothers boasted that they would chase John Marcon back where he came from and Vic, who was a big, surly man, said if he ever caught Marcon without his uniform, he would beat him to a pulp. Marcon, however, was a good-sized man and a semi-pro boxer. Once when Marcon stopped him when he had some illegal game in his car and some of his friends with him, he tackled Marcon. He hit him once and Marcon came back with a one-two and Vic [page 9]

was knocked out, the fight only lasted about five seconds. Vic sued Marcon for beating him up for no reason but Marcon, acting as his own attorney, won the case by getting the witnesses confused and each one giving a different story about the confrontation,. Although Marcon never did quite succeed in getting the Meyer brothers to become law-abiding citizens, they did really have to go to work to make a living.

Marcon really did a good job of getting people to respect the game laws in his own way. At that time about 90% of the local people did not believe that game laws should apply to residents. Game wardens were hated because up until the time of Marcon, the professional violators never seemed to be apprehended while every now and then some local resident would be picked up for some minor offense.

Marcon set his own standards of law enforcement, which were frowned upon by his superiors, but, under the circumstances, they worked. He never arrested minors, for one thing, but gave them a lecture if he caught them violating game laws and also told their parents they should see that they never broke any more laws. He also overlooked some small violations, such as carrying a rifle during closed season, a habit that a lot people had, including me. We had gotten used to it and justified it saying, "you never know when you will get a chance to shoot a coyote and collect a \$20 bounty," though that rarely happened. Anyway, Marcon ran into me in the woods when I was carrying a rifle and just ignored it. There were other minor violations, which he overlooked also, thereby making friends with most to the settlers, while still getting most everyone to take game laws seriously.

I think it was a case of the right man in the right place at the right time. Anyway he became one of my heroes and for the first time in my life I started to obey the game laws. It took quite a few years before I obeyed them completely but I made a start and I'm sure there were many more like me in the area.

Back to my trap setting. On the morning of opening day of beaver season, as soon as I finished chores and took the kids to school, I started for the long pond with my traps. Arriving there I saw Joe Kauer had been there ahead of me and had taken what looked like the best spots for sets, but I found what I thought might be good spots and set my traps. It was a hard place to set traps as the house was right up by the edge of the pond with the only deep water on one side.

I usually liked to set my traps in deep water, baiting with popple about two or three inches in diameter at depths of two to three feet. I would take off my coat and shirt and lying on the ice, reach into the cold water and set my traps on the bottom at the proper distance from the popple I had stuck into the mud. After a year or so of trapping I made a long-handled wooden tongs that I could use to set my traps in deep water, since putting an arm into the cold water up to the shoulders got pretty uncomfortable on a cold, windy day. In real deep water I sometimes used a chair set; a dead pole four to six inches in diameter with a shelf built onto it and a bunch of popple twigs tied to the pole above the shelf with the trap sitting on the shelf. A lot of trappers figured those were best sets but I had my best luck with bottom sets.

After I set my traps at the long pond I went over to 13 and, to my surprise, there were no traps set there. Marcon had apprehended Clarence Meyer there early in the morning. Joe Kauer and some other trappers had been there but because of the game warden and so many tracks, evidently the other trappers didn't want to get involved, so I had no competition. So I got six beaver out of this pond before the season was over.

By the time I had my sets made and hiked home and ate a late dinner, it was time to get the kids from school. Then I milked the cows and went down to the pond on the creek across from Rhody's. A couple of trappers were ahead of me there but I still made a few sets, which I figured were pretty good. I got two of the six beavers in that pond before the season ended and both of them were "blankets," which I guess was pure luck.

Beaver hides at that time were size-graded to about six different sizes: blanket, extra large, large, medium, small and kits. The pelts were stretched in an oval—almost round, and the buyer would measure the length and width of each pelt, add the two figures and that determined the size. So a pelt that measured 40" x 32" would be a 72" pelt which, if I remember right would be a blanket. That year blankets were worth \$50 each, I think, and kits only \$5. I never caught a kit in all the trapping I did. Most young beaver would either be a small or medium. If I remember right I caught five blankets that year, one extra large, two large & two mediums. As far as I know there were only six blankets taken from those three ponds and I was lucky enough to get five of them.

The first time I went to look at my traps at the long pond I saw a third trapper had made some sets there after I had left. I also could tell that Joe Kauer had caught at least one beaver and I think he caught most of the beaver in that pond. But I did get one blanket and a medium.

Each time I would look at my traps I could see this third trapper had moved some of his traps. I really couldn't see what they had in mind but I never let it bother me until one day as I came to check my traps, a man stepped from behind a big stub with a pistol aimed at me. After the first shock I recognized him as Pete Kauer. I said, "What's wrong Pete?" and then I think he first recognized me. Anyway after a bit he put his gun down and said, "Lawrence Van Hecker and I set some traps here and Lawrence has been looking at them and now I came to look at them and someone has stolen a couple of them; I was laying hidden here to catch him."

"How many traps did you have set?" I said, "I'll help you check them out and see how many are missing." So we checked them out and found they were all there. Lawrence had moved a couple and forgotten where he had set them. I guess Pete was satisfied that I had nothing to do with his traps but he was still upset when I left him that day, but I guess he forgot about it afterwards because he was always friendly to me ever since. It was a kind of scary feeling to have a man point a pistol at me from twenty feet away.

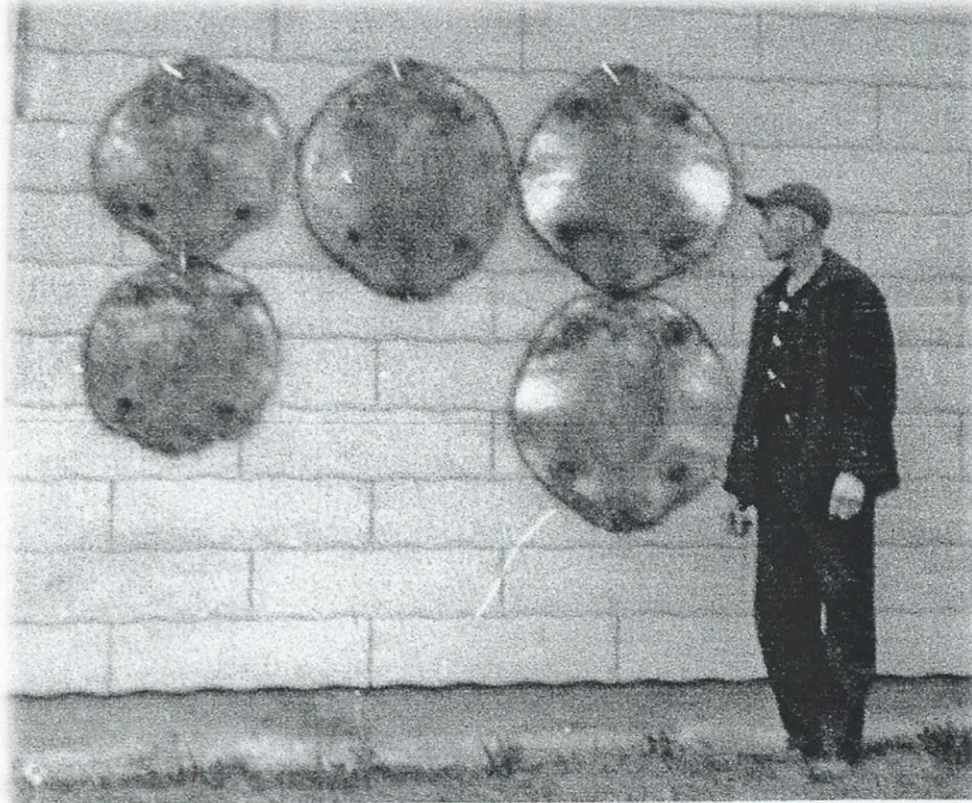
Once before I had a rifle aimed at me at a much greater distance, but it still made a chill go down my spine. This happened a few years before when I was still-hunting deer near the edge of the timber. I was tracking a deer through quite thick balsams and as I stepped out in the open I saw a man about 100 feet away with his rifle aimed right at me. I froze right where I was and after what seemed like a long while, the man slowly lowered his gun and called to me. It was ____; he was watching for deer and had seen a movement off and on between the balsam trees. Expecting it to be a deer he kept his gun aimed where he expected it to show up. He thought nothing of it because he wasn't going to shoot unless he was sure it was a deer and he wanted to be sure he got it if it was a deer.

Being on the other end of the rifle made me see it quite differently. I didn't say anything to him about it but I made up my mind to never aim until I was sure, since all it would take is the slightest movement of one finger to kill someone. I know of quite a few accidental shootings

that were done by experienced hunters, who were just doing what they always had done, “being the first to shoot,” which had made them successful hunters.

The beaver trapping earned me more money than I expected although it was hard work and long days. I rarely skinned a beaver until I got it home, once or twice, however, I did skin one on a day when I caught two, which made quite a heavy pack. I did the skinning and stretching at night in the basement. I saved many of the carcasses for John Marcon and Gust Brietzke, who claimed they were the best meat in the world. These beaver all drowned while they were caught so the blood all stayed in them. They would soak them in cold water quite some time to get the blood out. Then they trimmed away all of the fat which must have been quite a job as beaver are covered with a layer of fat just under the skin. I never was tempted to try eating them because I didn't like the smell when I was skinning them and I knew Olga wouldn't eat them.

I never was very fast at skinning beaver—or any other fur-bearers, for that matter—although I didn't mind the work. In order to do a good job of stretching a beaver hide you had to fasten the hide with nails about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inches apart and stretch them as tight and as near round as possible. This was time consuming so I rarely got to bed until 11 or 12, and once in a while, later. But my beaver hides always brought top price and more than once my buyer, Reuben Blomberg, showed other trappers my pelts and told them “that's the way you should stretch them.” I am certain that most trappers lost at least \$10 per pelt just by failing to stretch them to their full size.



Carl with beaver pelts, 1950's

By the middle of March I saw I was going to be able to buy oak flooring for our living room, so I went to Phillips and bought #2 flooring from Ole Peterson, who had a flooring mill there. By the time I got to use it I could see we could cover the whole downstairs. Some of this #2 flooring had a few knots so I decided to use the poorer stuff in the kitchen and bedroom and get enough #1 flooring to go along with the best of the #2 flooring to cover the living room floor. Floyd helped me lay the floor and I also had him figure out our stairway, which we had built at a mill at Hawkins (Floyd's idea). If I

remember right the material for the stairway made to our specifications cost \$100, which seemed like a lot of money at the time. Anyway, the beaver paid for the oak floors and stairway. (Olga sometimes referred to the living room flooring as the “beaver floor.”)

Some Comments from a Game Warden, Edited by Michael Meier

[Last year I was privileged to meet and talk with Mr. Rolland E. Lee, a retired Game Warden who lives in Black River Falls. I asked him about my Dad's account of John Marcon watching him at the beaver pond (see Carl Meier Memoirs, previous pages.) Mr. Lee responded with a lot of information that I think would be of interest to the readers of Liberty School News:]

“Early Wisconsin Conversation Wardens did indeed “lay” on illegal game or devices for considerable periods of time. Understand that courts seemed to insist that ‘outlaws’ be caught with the goods, so to speak. Today, interviews and interrogations shorten the length of time that “lay jobs” are performed. I suppose, every new warden when they first begin believe that they are witnessing the end of an era. I ‘specialied’ (deputy) when I was in college my senior year, but had rode with the Portage County game warden on many occasions before that experience. He related to me that he layed on a beaver trap in January for three days, the temperature never got above minus 20. Likely, this ordeal was from before first light until well after dark. He knew who the trapper was and finally went to the trapper’s home and found him in bed with the flu. He obtained a confession and the trapper was prosecuted.”

...

“In 1968 I was appointed to ‘office’ as a Wisconsin Conservation Warden. At that time the ten new wardens received a whole two weeks of training. It was understood that you were to make your own way, figure it out yourself or ask old time wardens...Eventually, I was stationed at Oshkosh which at the time was one of five major headquarters. A warden superior there had been critically injured in an automobile accident and could not walk, after a couple years he was reassigned to a non-enforcement position. Also, a warden pilot was headquartered there. They were old sages and three things I recall were: a warden worth his salt and a special can accomplish anything; and, A warden can lay on a fish trap for three days and nights; and further, it is easier to hide one warden than it is two. You get the point. Do it yourself. Eastern Wisconsin protection of spawning walleyes and sturgeon were high priority work efforts and the days were long. The department was going through reorganization from the old Wisconsin Conservation Department to the new Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Wardens under the old structure worked seven days a week with no time off, except some time for perhaps summer vacation. After reorganization, department leadership took a dim view of wardens working all those hours, even though they were simply paid a salary. Slowly, change caught on in the warden force. Laying on fish traps and snag lines, for sturgeon, for three days and nights faded away.”

...

“Earlier, I described ‘lay jobs.’ Staying warm was at times a struggle. In those early years the department issued Woods Arctic Three Star sleeping bags. If you look on the internet they still are available for sale at about \$700.00 The Five Star bag is only about \$50.00 more. I recall a RCMP officer describing that on long winter treks via dog sled he also took animal hides, furs, to wrap around the sleeping bag. I think the sled contained primarily dog food and he shot his food on the trail. From a very young age, I had been interested in the life of a Mountie. I have since met many and most of their police work is not much different than you might expect in the U.S. However, I can see myself in my warden work in a book that you would enjoy. It is: ‘Mrs. Mike: The Story of Katherine Mary Flannigan.’ By Benedict and Nancy Freedman, copyright 1947. Rather than going into detail on some of my field experiences, I would encourage you to read a couple books that former Wisconsin wardens authored. Author Jim Chizek wrote two books. One is ‘Protectors of the Outdoors.’ James L. Palmer wrote ‘Game Wardens vs. Poachers,’ in 1993. Both books are an easy read. John Marcon also wrote a book, ‘The Brush Cop.’ [page 13]

While it doesn't capture the Wisconsin flavor, you might be interested in the book written by a Chaplain to the Maine Warden Service, it is: 'Here If You Need Me,' by Kate Braestrup, copyright 2007..." [All these books are available on line. mm]

Mr. Lee graduated from UW Stevens Point, served in the Navy three years on and off of Viet Nam including during tropical storms when the ship rolled 55 degrees to one side, followed by 55 degrees to the other. He attended the FBI Academy and was an agent for a number of years. He returned to Wisconsin and served at Black River Falls as a Warden Supervisor for four counties. Then he was promoted to District Warden for fourteen counties including the waters of Green Bay and the upper half of Lake Michigan. He was deeply involved in investigations of illegal activities by commercial fishermen. Later he was promoted to Deputy Chief Warden with an office in the Central Office at Madison for the last 14 years of his career. "The Chippewa rights case consumed a great deal of time as I was the lead department enforcement person in the Command Post at Woodruff in April and early May for four years, coordinating county, local, state and federal response during those tempestuous years, moving an average of over 500 enforcement officers nightly for a month each spring the northern third of Wisconsin. Two years I spoke with Governor Thompson four to six times a day on the phone. State and national news organizations flooded the area and at one point, I recall, walking outside the command post for a moment and looked in wonder at all the satellite TV truck in the parking lot. Those were commonly eighteen hour days." Mr. Lee also worked on some huge multi-year investigations of environmental crimes involving hazardous waste and toxic wastewater. We thank him for his helpful descriptions of the work of a Game Warden.

The "Flying Bull"

In the late 1940's some local dairy farmers who didn't want to keep a bull or walk a cow in heat over to a neighbor's bull, began using the services of Badger Breeders in Shawano, Wisconsin. They provided artificial insemination (AI) services for dairy farmers and had stocks of semen from high quality bulls. Heifers from those registered bulls generally performed better as dairy cows than heifers produced by local "grade" bulls. Milk and butterfat production and overall herd health improved dramatically through the use of AI.

At our farm when we observed a cow in heat we called "Central" with one long ring on the wall-mounted crank telephone and asked for Badger Breeders. The operator took down our note "Farm #80, heat noticed this morning." The AI technician would call "Central" periodically throughout the day to get updates on which farms needed AI service. Of course, this was long before the days of cell phones, so how did he make connection with "Central?" He had a radio-telephone in his car that used a whip antenna that must have been eight feet long! Because of that, some folks not familiar with the AI technician or Badger Breeders thought it was really a game warden car with a two-way radio! When they saw that car zooming down the gravel road they made a point of not being seen!

But it wasn't the Game Warden. No need to worry. It was just the guy we school kids called "The Flying Bull." Why? Well, he drove very fast! And he was on a bull's mission. "Flying Bull!"

There was a neighbor man who was pretty small, but who drove like a maniac just like the AI tech. Him we called "The Flying Chipmunk!"

Assorted Photos

STONE LAKE SCHOOL 1938



Back Row: Phil Johnson, Buddy Blomberg, Donald Tripp, Douglas Ames
Herb Magnuson Teacher: Ruth Heyda
Front Row: Doris Fryklynd, Aileen Magnuson, Lorraine Andreae, Dewey Ames

Stone Lake School picture
courtesy of Herb Magnuson

Photo of Ron Meier in baseball
uniform—1940's? Courtesy of
Marilyn Erickson & Dawn
Meier



Bill Hoffman found this photo on eBay and he says: "This is a photo taken by the Mars Carstudio of Spirit and addressed to Miss Alice Dahlgren at Spirit Falls. Do you know anything about her?" Kathy Meier replies: "According to a census on Ancestry, when Alice Dahlgren lived in Spirit they were in the area of 102 & D, so maybe they were some of the Swedish Methodists who lived in that area. It's a great picture, though. Thanks for the good quality scan."

This photo is marked as - 1980 Rib Lake Softball Tournament - 2nd Place.



Back row: Charlie Severson, Sue Eskola, Tammy Severson, Lilian Lammi, Doreen Johnson, Dawn Meier, Jean Severson, Sue Severson, Linda Nelson, Beth (Nyberg) Block, Rodger Nyberg
Front row: Shelly (Nyberg) Kahle, Luann Lind, Shirley Severson, Roxy Evans, Donna Nelson.

“As a side note of all the names listed, I know that the two Nyberg sisters are married with new names as indicated. The Severson sisters (Tammy, Jean, and Sue) may have new names - but I have not stayed in touch with them to know. Roxy was a Severson, but was already married to John Evans at that time. All other last names should be current.” Dawn Meier

Update on Books

Enclosed in this issue of Liberty School News is an order form for books that have been written by folks right here in The German Settlement. We have had several volumes reprinted and/or rebound and now have a sufficient supply of each of these titles. We think these books give an accurate flavor of life and the people here from 1880-1950. You can order them from us or stop by and pick up the copies you want. They include:

- The entire “Never Miss a Sunset” series by Jeanette Gilge
- The “Saga of Spirit Valley” series by Carl Rhody
- “Spirit Falls Logging Boomtown” by Carl Rhody
- “The Pleasure of the Sorrow” by James (Jim) Rhody

For those of you who have asked, we are exploring the possibility of reprinting Jim Rhody’s beloved novel, “Brant’s Bear.” Drop us a line if you’d like to see this classic reprinted.

From Logging to Raising Christmas Trees

by Norma Swan

My husband, David Swan, was born to Swedish parents in Aurora, Illinois, in 1909 and moved to north central Wisconsin at the age of four. His arrival into his family was followed, over the next 20 years, by six brothers and five sisters. Needless to say, life was not easy, with none of the modern conveniences that we are so accustomed to these days. Dave's dad worked for a road construction company in their township. Of course, like everyone else he milked a few cows, raised a few pigs and had enough chickens to provide eggs for the family. As those seven boys grew, it seemed only natural that they should take up axes and cross cut saws and head for the woods to cut necessary firewood. As time passed, the two older boys, Dave and Clifford, became experienced lumberjacks.

I, on the other hand, was being raised in a small town adjacent to one of the world's largest seaports and ship building areas, Norfolk, Virginia. Eventually WWII came along and a chain of events brought David to be stationed in my home town and we met, fell in love and married.

At the end of the war, we moved with our three month old son to an old timber camp in Wisconsin by Bass Lake in the Town of Hill. We actually transformed that old logging camp into a very livable home with the first bathroom known in that part of the country. Mind you, I had lived all my life in the city and I never thought for a minute that there were people anywhere in the whole United States that did not have indoor bathroom facilities with hot and cold running water.

Dave, after living with my family in Virginia for three years, had become accustomed to these luxuries, so even though it was not possible for us to have electricity, he set about to build us a very nice bathroom in that logging crew quarters. He moved a cattle water tank into the attic, cut two holes in the roof, one for the pipe where the water would come in and another for an overflow so when the tank was full we could see the water coming out from where we stood, pumping water by hand. Gravity took care of the rest to bring the water down to the kitchen and the bathroom, which also housed a gasoline operated washing machine. All we had to do was turn on a faucet.

We thought we had a great little love nest and I still look back on those days as some of the happiest and most rewarding of our life together. I can't tell you how an experience like this sharpens one's senses of appreciation for the simple things in life.

For 30, of the 50 years that we were married, Dave got up each morning and, together with Clifford, milked 20 to 45 cows before heading to the woods to get their traditional ten cords of hardwood or pulpwood on the drays before they quit to come home and milk those cows again. They put in some long hard days, but were making an honest living.

Dave was an avid reader and while in service had read some interesting articles on growing Christmas trees and this haunting desire to raise Christmas trees was always in the back of his mind.

Finally, he sat down with pencil and paper to figure just what their hourly wage would be for all the work with the cows. It was then they made a firm commitment to drive to New Hampshire

and pick up 10,000 of those balsam transplants that he had seen advertised for \$10/1000. This was definitely a turning point in our lives.

In 1964, the year our first grandchild was born, we began to decrease the number of livestock and started at the farthestmost acre from the house and turned crop land into evenly spaced checkrows of balsam Christmas trees.

The neighbors thought for sure we had lost our senses!! To think how hard it had been to clear this land of trees and there we were putting trees back on good growing alfalfa acres. Every year we planted another 10,000 transplants and carefully, by hand, we learned to shear. Finally on August 5, 1970, we received a check for \$400 as a down payment on our first harvest of Christmas trees. I still have that first check. The buyer returned it to us after it had been processed to keep as a memento.

By 1980, we were harvesting 12,000 trees per year and never had enough trees to meet the demand. I wish that was the problem today, but things have changed. Now there are more than enough quality trees being grown and marketing is our greatest challenge.

There are vital environmental concerns for the Christmas tree industry, but like others of you in the logging business, we are striving to solve these problems in a way that will not only let us continue to make a living, but will also insure a safe and beautiful environment for our children and grandchildren to enjoy for generations to come.

[Thanks to Norma for this article. It was first printed in the *Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association Anniversary Album—July, 2004*. We invite our readers to plan to attend the Christmas Tree Festival in Ogema the last weekend in September.]

News

We are sorry to announce that David Rhody passed away in October. A memorial service is planned for August 9, 2014 at the home of Michael and Annette Cullen on Wildwood Avenue in the Town of Spirit. We hope to print more information in our next issue.

Larry Andrae, who attended Liberty School, sent us a clipping from the Marshfield News Herald, August 10, 2013 issue:

“75 YEARS AGO: ‘Lefty’ Meier hurled a five hit shutout for Rib Lake in play here, the team’s fourth victory this season in the Central Association. Wisconsin Rapids Dogers were the victims of the 4 to 0 score.”

Letter from Nancy & Gary Snell (Mt. Prospect, IL)

“We received the August edition of Liberty School News and enjoyed it cover-to-cover as always. Please put us on the email list. We can read it online as well as from hardcopy. We’d rather have German Settlement History keep cost of mailing to us.” **[Thanks Nancy and Gary, always great to hear from old friends and colleagues! mm]**

Story from Stone Lake, by Herb Magnuson

Whenever I had a chance as a young kid I would ask fellows to tell me war stories. There were a lot of fellows around Stone Lake who were in World War 1. The biggest thing I recall hearing about was the stories of wrist watches. Before that time all working men wore a pocket watch. It was a great thing for a young man to get a wrist watch. The old stories of the soldiers hunkering down in trenches and when the command came down to "Fix Bayonets" they were expected to go "Over the Top." The officer would look at his wrist watch for an appointed hour and would holler "Do you want to live forever" and then would blow their whistle and the battle was on. One other command that was often given was "Draw a fine bead." That was to the riflemen so they would hit what they were shooting at.

World War 1 was fought in trenches and holes in the ground. That changed in the 1930's in the depth of the depression as there was no money for the army and it was in a sad state of affairs. They even had to use broom handles for make believe guns to march and train the men.

One of the "Believe it or Not" stories I like was about fellows from Wisconsin who had worked on fox farms and joined the army during the depression. Fox farms had come into prominence during the 1920's. Foxes were raised in big pens that were about 37 feet square and had an 8 foot high wire side with an overhang. Foxes could not climb out as the wire came in a few feet around and was usually dug down into the ground about a foot. One thing foxes do a lot of is dig and they were always trying to get out of these pens. The pens usually had two boxes in the center and the holes the foxes would dig were usually near the center. The caretakers would go into the pens and smash down the fox holes or throw stones into them to discourage the foxes from digging.

Soldiers trained at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri and the sergeants in their mean old way would have the men dig holes to keep them busy. The holes were big enough to hide in. The Wisconsin boys called them "fox holes" and as the world went to war the name stuck.

Letter from David & Gloria Baker, (Penn Valley, California), Sept. 1, 2013

"Thank you, you two, for the latest issue, Volume 15, Number 2, of the **Liberty School News** that we received a couple of days ago. While I obviously do not know a soul who's written about there, or who writes in it...(except for you, Michael)...I always enjoy reading it, nevertheless, as it brings back lots of, if not identical, at least somewhat comparable experiences from my own growing-up days in Minnesota, not too far away, and this time was no exception."

"I always look for your byline first, and make sure I read that, at least. This issue I did not have to look far for that, since it was on page 2, "**4-H Nights by Michael Meier.**" What a great way, not only to rekindle memories for others of our age, but also to let younger readers know what life was like in those days now gone by. I'm sure your other readers must agree as they, too, read and write about their own experiences from the past and transform them into the present. So, thank you again...and keep up the good work."

"We leave for Sweden Thursday afternoon this week...I'm leading an Augustana Heritage Association 2-week **Sweden Heritage Tour** with 25 people, visiting the places from which the founders of the Augustana Synod came to North America over 150 years ago, as well as meeting with many of the leaders of the Church of Sweden, including the Archbishop and others, to learn about what is happening in the Church of Sweden today." [**Thanks David & Gloria!** mm][page 19]

The Old Sawmill by Don Rhody

I have always been intrigued by old machinery. Perhaps it is partially because I grew up on a farm where we still used much of these machines of yester-year, and maybe it is partially because I can understand how they work. There are no electroplated circuits involved and no memory chips. Just gears and levers. It is not easy for me to let this era die. Don Rhody



The old sawmill stood, a bit stooped over, on the north bank of the Spirit River. She had ripped her way through many giant pine and hemlock logs from the great forests of Northern Wisconsin. It was these forests that built Chicago, and when the city burned late in the 19th century they built it again.

But that was when the sawmill was in her prime. It was when every metal part glistened from constant use and from care. It was when she watched as the logs came floating down the river next to where she sat, and she anticipated the fine lumber that would be made. Men would gather every day to discuss the happenings of the new community while they tended and cared for her. They then start up her snorting engine to begin the day's sawing.

It was a different age back then. Today's sawmills were of a new generation. The new saws had computerized laser tracking and even x-ray scanners to get the most usable lumber out of each log. The old sawmill admired them. She once prided herself in her accuracy, but she knew that even at her best she would have been no match for the precision and speed of her younger sisters.

Now, many of the sawmill's parts were worn from years of use. Her once gleaming steel had been invaded by rust, like gray hair on a once youthful head. The track that her log carriage rode on was not quite level, as the frost from many winters had shifted the ground under her. The beams of the roof were sagging and the sawmill felt that she had lost her girlish charm. The old sawmill stood abandoned for most of the year.



But every spring something happened. The old sawmill by the river dreamed about it all winter as she lay sleeping under her deep white blanket of snow. When the sun began to find his strength again and draw the sawmill's blanket back, and when the river that had also been lying, sleeping silently all winter, began to gurgle and spill over its banks, she remembered the days of her youth.

The old sawmill once again began to hear the voices of men. She would again feel their hands as they put grease into her creaking joints and shim up her track that had sagged a bit more this year. She felt like a young girl again as these suitors came to tend her. It was for these days she waited all year.

Although she had been sleeping, the men of the community had been busy all winter. Most of the men were farmers now instead of lumberjacks. Oh, there were some that were still loggers, but others had employment in town. However, all of these men who came to tend her had had some time during the winter to fell a few chosen trees from their own forest and bring the logs to her rollway. All the men needed lumber for some building project they had or for repairs around their farms. The sawmill was old but she was still needed and loved.

There was one of these men who knew her best. He was the old head sawyer. His age did not match hers but he, too, had seen his days of prime melt away like the snow. He walked a bit

hunched over and with careful and measured steps. Some of the old sawyer's fingers were missing from an agony of the past. It still grieved the sawmill to remember the day. The haste of youth sometimes causes carelessness. The sawyer's hand had come too close to her whirring teeth and a knot of wood had caused his hand to slip. The sawmill also had been too hasty. All she knew was to cut whatever



was given to her, and when she felt his hand in her teeth it was already too late. But the grievous deed seemed to have not diminished the sawyer's love for her. There are some days of hurt that come from any love relationship, and the sawyer had forgiven the sawmill. Now, after their many years together, it was the head sawyer who knew just where the old sawmill needed a shim to level up her track. It was he who knew exactly the right angle to run the file over her blade to bring the sharpness back to her teeth. He seemed to hold no bitterness as he stroked the very teeth that had cut him.

The other men followed the head sawyer's instructions. They were younger and eager to get their lumber sawed so they could get on with their affairs, but she and the old sawyer could not be rushed. Both of them lacked the precision of their movements of past years. Now each



motion had to be measured carefully. Each cut had to be performed with deliberate care. The old sawyer told the men how to prepare the sawmill for her task.

The old sawmill by the river felt like a queen as her subjects were tending to her every need. She felt like a lover as she sensed their caressing hands upon her. She felt like a young athlete whose trainers were getting her ready for a championship event. She felt needed.

She *was* needed. Perhaps not in

the same way as she was in the past, but in many ways her role was even greater today.

Certainly, these men who had put their logs on her rollway had a need for the lumber that she would saw in the spring. That need remained unchanged. But she noticed a deeper need.

The community had changed. Each of these men was busy all year with their own personal affairs. They each had many responsibilities that occupied their time. Each had, in many ways, become self-sufficient.

They had their own employment and their own resources. Not all of these changes were bad, but she knew that one must never lose the sense of community. The old sawmill happily began to see that same community spirit come to life again each year as the men came together to work with one another to cooperate on their common objective.



The antiquated sawmill had none of the automation of the newer generation of sawmills. With her, the heavy logs had to be moved and positioned by hand. The men grunted and sweated side by side as they tried to put a burdensome log in just the right position onto the carriage that moved the log past her teeth. She giggled to herself as she saw their clumsy efforts. They were not used to this type of work. Sometimes what one man was doing on one end of the

log was exactly countered by the man on the other end. Then there always were two or three of the men present who seemed to think they could best help out by watching and yelling instructions. The sawmill thought she heard the old sawyer chuckle, too.

Finally the log did come to rest in its place. The dog clamps of her carriage came down to hold the log firmly so that it could be sawed. Above the noise of her ripping blade the sawyer signaled instructions to each man, as each had a role in sawing this log into lumber. The men were unskilled at the tasks and tools that their fathers knew well, but working together they finally were able to saw good boards from the trees they had brought to the sawmill during the winter. A deep satisfaction came over the old sawmill as she saw these men work together. She was more than a queen. She was more than an athlete. What she accomplished each spring was to remind each man that they needed one another. She could see something come to life in *them* as well. They could not exist isolated from one another and still live a contented life.

When the last log of the spring had been transformed into lumber the men shut off her engine and she lay there silent. She was tired! When she was younger, she felt she could work straight through the night. But no more. The men once again cared and tended her so she would sleep well. They put grease in her old joints so the rust would not steal more of her movement during the year. Then they loaded their fresh smelling boards onto their trucks and bid each other farewell. The old sawyer was always the last to leave. He made her as comfortable as he could before he left her to rest.

The muscles of the old sawmill were tired and she looked forward to a long sleep. She began to close her eyes and grow drowsy. She had relived her youth for a few short days and it was enough for another year.



The sawmill by the river knew she could not match the precision of her younger sisters with all of their advanced technology, but she felt as if they would never know the joy that she lives again every spring. The sawmill had relived her youth but she had also brought to the men a reliving of an age of yesteryear, and they were made the richer for it. She began to close her eyes until the following spring. May all rest well.

“Johnson’s Mill” on the Spirit River by County Highway YY sawed logs with Dick Kring as Head Sawyer for the last time in the spring of 1980. Thanks to Don and Vivian Rhody for this memory and photos of the last sawing. (In a later year, Gene Meier sawed a few logs without a whole crew. He used a tractor power take-off right on the saw shaft. It worked.)



[page 24]

Attention!

If you signed up to get LSN electronically, but you are still getting it on paper, we apologize. Some of your requests got lost in the stacks.

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Here is an order form for books that have been written by folks right here in The German Settlement. We have had several volumes reprinted and/or rebound and now have a sufficient supply of each of these titles. We think these books give an accurate flavor of life and people here from 1880-1950. You can order them from us or stop by and pick them up. They include:

- The entire "Never Miss a Sunset" series by Jeanette Gilge
- The "Saga of Spirit Valley" series by Carl Rhody
- "Spirit Falls Logging Boomtown" by Carl Rhody
- "The Pleasure of the Sorrow" by James (Jim) Rhody

For those of you who have asked, we are exploring the possibility of reprinting Jim Rhody's beloved novel, "Brant's Bear." Drop us a line if you'd like to see this classic reprinted.

German Settlement History, Inc. Membership/Gift Form

You are invited to become a member of GSHI. German Settlement History, Inc is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization whose mission is to protect, conserve and display buildings, artifacts and documents of historical value for educational purposes. Members are persons who contribute \$25.00 or more at any time during the year. Membership continues through the month of January the following year. As a member of GSHI you will be contributing to our mission, receive the Liberty School News and will be eligible to vote in person or by absentee ballot at the GSHI January Annual Meeting.

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German Settlement History, Inc.
N894 S. German Settlement Road
Ogema, WI 54459

Telephone: 715-564-3299

Email: gshinc@centurylink.net

Web: germansettlementhistory.org

Thank You for your generous gift!