

# It is Time to Clear the Writers Desk

*Tales of Earlier Days*

By Bob Dewel 2011

Other than the computer desk, most of the stories we produce come from another desk, really just a card table in my little office. That table is as catch-all for ideas and letters. Often story ideas arrive with too little information to qualify for a column, yet enough interest to keep them out of the circular file on the floor. It is time to clear the deck.

## The Bike Shop

The most recent item is a photo and inquiry left at the News-Republic and turned over to me. Mr. Eric Jenson, not from this area, wanted to know about a bike shop on Fourth Avenue, because he has purchased a bike with a shiny quality sticker on it reading "Bike Shop...114 Fourth Street, Baraboo, Wis." This is near the present location of Ardyth's Sewing, listed as 116 Fourth Street. This writer has a faint recollection of a bike shop there in perhaps the 1970's, but even Baraboo's diligent Downtown Historian, Joe Ward, has no listing for it. Anyone recall this shop or owner? Was there a small building at 114 Fourth Avenue?

## North Freedom

Lorraine Erickson has called my attention to a history of North Freedom titled "They led us to Today", published a few years ago with her help. Joe Ward has also published a book on his home town. These community histories are important to

future historians looking for ancestor information. They also help to bind a small community together.

Founded nearly ten years after Baraboo, the village also became a railroad town. The village name has ranged from Hackett's Corners to Bloom and Bessemer, the latter during its time as an iron mining center. The North Freedom name identifies itself as being on the north border of the Town of Freedom, rather than being a patriotic statement. A high school was operated from the 1880's to 1945. I believe the booklet is in the library.

## Busy Times at the Al. Ringling

What a busy place the theatre has become. Following the great evening of organ and silent movie (Phantom of the Opera, 1924), we had Vince Lombardi portrayed perfectly in a one-man show. Then came Heidi after school for children on Wednesday Oct. 5. The Driftless Film Festival plays on Oct 7 through 9, followed by Monroe Crossing on October 14. Stay tuned, great shows just keep coming!

## James Poole and the GAR

Jean Smith, tireless volunteer at the Historical Society, thought some folks might be interested to know of the James Pooles, James being a Civil War veteran who apparently was about a century old at the time of his death. He was prominent in the local Grand Army of the Potomac, and died in Baraboo in 1945.

That once-prominent local veteran's organization is long gone, and we too often forget the leadership of those in our past. The excellent granite Civil War Soldier Memorial on the Courthouse Square was a part of their activity. Of interest also is that Mrs. Poole, who preceded James in death on

Jan 9, 1930, was a niece of a great statesman of our early nation, John Calhoun.

#### John Hehenberger Sr.

Tom (LaVerne) Luck recently brought us a remarkable multi-page document prepared by John Hehenberger Sr., chronicling his life in Sauk County. Someone apparently got John to write out his story. Perhaps they supplied the high quality paper, and perhaps gave him a good pen, for the story is written out in a very clear but not textbook penmanship.

Hehenberger tells his story in a forthright manner without frills, but with some occasional philosophical comments. Early years were spent in Irish Valley, and when his father became disabled, 16 year old John and a brother took over the farm. John sold out to his brother at age 25 and went to work for the county, later returning to farming. The story is detailed and good reading for others who farmed before, during, and after the Depression years. It will be in the Hehenberger file at the Historical Society.

#### Berning-Luck

A note from the News-Republic tells me that Tom Brooks came in with the suggestion that I write about the Berning-Luck enterprises in the middle to late 20<sup>th</sup> Century. I frequently have coffee with a group of men including Tom Luck, and I'll question him about it. I once bought an outboard motor from Tom, and I'll use that as a conversation starter. Meantime it is now the end of the page and the end of this article, and there still is a pile of miscellaneous information on my desk! Maybe more items this winter.