



# The AKEY BrAKEY News

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now a tri - annual newsletter from the Richland County Historical Society

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January, 2023 Volume #15 – Issue # 1 – promoting and supporting the History of Richland County and Southwestern Wisconsin

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## THE SAGA OF RICHLAND CITY

By Jerry Bower

*Part 1 of 2 – concluding in the April 2023 issue of the AKEY BrAKEY News*

NOTE TO READERS: My major source for this little essay has been Professor Richard Durbin, *The Wisconsin River: An Odyssey Through Time and Space, 1997.*

**Richland City, located at the confluence of the Wisconsin and Pine Rivers, was first settled by Isaac Wallace in 1847, the year before Wisconsin entered the Union. Its location on a large, sandy terrace thirty feet above the two streams must have seemed ideal. The cool breezes from the Wisconsin may have kept some of the mosquitos away, in addition to cooling the settlements residents.**

**Two years later, in 1849, Garwood Greene platted an ambitious settlement of thirty-three blocks. Greene even included a “Railroad Avenue” among his streets in anticipation that the railroad being built west from Madison would run through Richland City. The rapid growth of the community in the early 1850s proved that Greene’s optimism was justified.**

**The rapid growth resulted from Richland City’s excellent location. The Pine River brought the produce of Richland County to the steamboats that plied the waters of the Wisconsin. Logs from the tall white pines, for which the stream is named, were floated to Richland City to be processed in one of its sawmills or tied into a large raft and floated down the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers to a large urban market, like St. Louis.**

**In the 1850s Wisconsin’s pristine farmland made her one of the leading wheat-producing states in the Union. Wheat was the favorite crop of the pioneers because it could be planted among stumps on newly cleared acres, it grew readily, and required and received very little care until harvest. Richland County’s farmers usually shipped their wheat down the Pine to Richland City which, in the mid-1850s, had the largest flour mill in the entire state! Once milled, the flour was generally shipped east via railroad to Madison or Milwaukee. From there the flour would be distributed to the state’s fast growing urban centers or even shipped to Europe. Flour generally was not shipped South on the Mississippi because the storage facilities along the great river were not as well developed as those in the North. Besides, the warm temperature and humidity of the South reduced the quality and price of the product.**

**The rapid growth in the business community and of the population spurred Greene to add twenty-five blocks to his plat in 1854. That same year the federal government awarded Richland City a post office, a sure sign that the community had achieved permanence. That year also brought the construction of a school house to educate the numerous children. The following year, 1855, Richland City reached its peak population; between 500 and 600 people lived there. No one knew it, of course, but in thirty years, the community would disappear. We will next consider the factors that caused the bustling settlement’s demise.**

*Continued on Page 7*

Although blessed with two rivers, the businessmen of Richland City and Richland County constantly sought ways to expand their trade and profits. For example they needed a safe and quick way to take their wares across the Wisconsin River to Sand Prairie (now Avoca) where they could access the railroad. A wagon road had already been constructed from Sand Prairie to Dodgeville by the lead miners, who shipped out their pig iron by steamboat on the Wisconsin and Mississippi. The lead miners also received supplies over this road and that is what interested the Richland City merchants.

Consequently, in 1850, the Richland County Board approved James Wallace's request for a charter to operate a ferry between Richland City and Sand Prairie. The Board set the rates that Wallace could charge: 50 cents for two horses and a wagon, 25 cents for a horse and carriage, 10 cents for cattle and foot passengers, and 3 cents for each hog or sheep. Wallace proudly advertised his outfit as "the best and most convenient ferry boat on the Wisconsin. ( Durbin 180)

However, despite Wallace's claim, there was an important problem with his ferry. A huge Wisconsin River sandbar blocked direct passage from Richland City to Sand Prairie. Much to their annoyance, all passengers, animals, and conveyances had to be unloaded on the sandbar, moved across the island and loaded on a second barge for the rest of the trip to Sand Prairie. So, in the late 1850s, Richland City's residents subscribed \$13,000.00 for the stock of the Richland City Bridge Company, which proposed to span the Wisconsin in two stages—one span from Richland City to the sandy island and the other from the island to Sand Prairie. Sand Prairie's name was changed to Avoca in 1857, when the railroad reached the little community. But no construction ever occurred! I assume that most of the stockholders' money was returned as I did not find evidence of an uproar over the folding of the bridge company. A later effort to build a bridge across the Wisconsin also evaporated without any construction. (In this era, no DNR permits were required to build a bridge or a wing dam in the river.)

It surprises one, when you realize that the booming population of between 500 and 600 in 1855 would shrink to just 77 in thirty years. What is the explanation? A major factor was the decision by the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad to cross the Wisconsin at Lone Rock and construct its tracks along the south bank. This decision left Richland City and Orion and other communities on the north bank without this important link to nationwide commerce. As often is the case, these settlements loss was gain for the communities on the south bank of the Wisconsin, such as Avoca, Muscoda, and Boscobel. The railroad attracted business to their stores, shops, and mills. It also set off an era of bridge building because those who lived on the wrong side of the river wanted convenient access to the trains. Both Muscoda and Boscobel gained bridges as a result, but Avoca did not.

Why did the managers of the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad decide to shift to the south bank at Lone Rock? Professor Durban's extensive research turned up three reasons. First, so-called speculators, who owned large tracts on the north bank, between Lone Rock and Richland City, jacked up their asking price when approached by the railroad agents about acquiring a right-of-way. We have no way of knowing how true this allegation is, but railroad records do show that Edward Brodhead, the chief engineer of the railroad construction, often paid just one dollar for a 100 foot right-of-way to property owners on the south bank. Obviously, the land owners were so eager to have the railroad that they were willing to sell a right-of-way for a pittance, expecting that their future income would increase due to the access to the railroad.

Speaking of speculators, we do know that Edward Brodhead was one. Records reveal that he owned many acres in and around Avoca and that the depot was built on his land. Brodhead had also made extensive investments in Middleton, Mazomanie, Muscoda and Boscobel. Naturally, Brodhead had invested heavily in the area where a village was named after him after the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad built a branch line to Janesville through his land. After the tracks reached Prairie du Chien in 1858, Brodhead was named president of the railroad. However, he resigned after just one year to "devote more time to his real estate ventures." (Durbin 185)

*Part 2 of this article concludes in the April 2023 issue of the AKEY BRAKEY News*

A Warm WELCOME to those with NEW Memberships to the RICHLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY for the start of 2023.

- |                            |                             |                                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| * Robert & Maureen Smith   | #Floyd & Barb Blackmore     | *Dawn Dahms & Avoca Guest House |
| # Alice Meyer              | * Catherine & Canada Killam | * Doug & Jill Sommer            |
| # Van & Marie Nelson       | # Judy Barnicle             | * Larry & Mary Engel            |
| # Keith & Dottie Behling   | * Doug & Theresa Wagner     | # Howard & Helen Nelson         |
| * Lisa & Brian Tennant     | * Freeman Transport LLC     | # Diana Siefkas                 |
| * Shirley Steiner          | * Dale & Rachel Schultz     | Gary & Karen Hardy              |
| John Storer                | # Tom & Martha Shields      | *Mike & Nancy McNair            |
| * Bruce & Mary Lou Tessmer | # Larry & Susan Hallett     |                                 |

Also a sincere THANK YOU to all those that continue to RE - new their memberships as well as those with their LIFETIME memberships.

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FIFTY YEARS AGO

in downtown Richland Center ...



<https://content.mpl.org/digital/collection/rchr/id/3094/rec/411>  
 Newspaper clipping only. Published in the Richland Observer – 4th of January, 1973  
 Description: Picture of a woman crossing the street with an umbrella. Bank thermometer in background notes temperature of 50 degrees. Lots of automobiles parked along the street. Christmas decorations are up along the street. Picture is taken from the intersection of Central Avenue with Court Street looking southwest down Court Street.

Print/Writing:

“The Way It was on Saturday. Weather was a chief concern during the week after Christmas, when temperatures were abnormally high and the precipitation came in the form of 1.18 inches of rain rather than about 11 inches of snow. The snow cover melted away from the 12 inches earlier in the month to about three inches at the City’s official weather reporting station at the Sewerage Treatment Plant. Just for the record, the temperature hit 50 degrees on the Richland County Bank thermometer on Saturday afternoon, December 30th, and umbrellas were needed more than heavy coats and overshoes.”

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PRESIDENT’S CORNER

by Ken Thiede

Membership is growing and – THANK SO MUCH ! for your continued support of our mission to promote the history of the Richland County Area. Now NEW for 2023 will be the inclusion of “History Moments” in the Richland Observer as we are excited for that partnership just as much as with WRCO Radio. We are optimistically looking forward to even more historical advancements for this coming year.

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Check out our website for recent changes and the upgrades with the link to WRCO Broadcasts that has MP3 excerpts from previous ‘History Moments’ in 2022. Those 2022 ‘History Moments’ will appear in the Richland Observer this coming year. ‘History Moments’ 2023 are broadcasted on 100.9 FM WRCO both Thursday & Sunday on the ‘News at Noon’

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### Boaz Booster Band In 1922-24

REPUBLICAN OBSERVER  
Richland Center, Wis.  
Thursday, May 5, 1960  
Page 16

The Boaz Booster Band of 1922-24 pictured here, standing: left to right; Gifford Kidd, Floyd Olson, Harry LaQue, Ted Bailey, Floyd Johnson, Herb Deiter, Otis Kidd, Myron Kidd, Harvey Robbins, Ed Surrem.

Front row: left to right; Oscar Redfield, George

Ewing, Felix LeMoine, Virgil Sheafor, Clyde Rawson, Martin Schricker, and Ernest Koch.

The drum that was used in this band was one that had been carried through the Civil War. There was one bullet hole through one of the drum-heads.

This picture was furnished to us by Frances Thoenes.

<https://content.mpl.org/digital/collection/rchr/id/5481/rec/6> Richland County History Room Digital Library

## DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN ? *I didn't know that ...*

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**John Coumbe is notably the first white settler in Richland County. Who was first inland? .... Robert Aiken. He was born in Alleghany County, Pennsylvania, on December 25, 1816. Aiken came to Grant County, Wisconsin in 1835, and moved to Richland County in 1845. He was the first white settler to make a home on the Pine River in Richland County.**



[www.google.com/search?q=wisconsinhistory.org%2FProperty%...IV4M](http://www.google.com/search?q=wisconsinhistory.org%2FProperty%...IV4M)

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM27779>

Check out our website for the past issues of the AKEY BraKEY News and "HISTORY MOMENTS" aired on WRCO Radio

→ [www.richlandcountyhistoricalsociety.weebly.com](http://www.richlandcountyhistoricalsociety.weebly.com)

**WHERE in Richland County is Bloom City located?**

*From the popular "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?" there are locations in Richland County that many are not aware of and only some have heard of. This ongoing series will highlight some spots of interest while covering the History of Richland County.*

According to Margaret Helen Scott's book The Place Names of Richland County, Wisconsin – *Bloom City is the only place in the county that had four names. From 1855 to 1883 the little post office was known as West Branch (meaning the west branch of the Pine River).*

*In 1883, the government changed the name to "Bon", which was never popular, especially with those who preferred Spring Valley because of the springs there.*

*In 1887 J. W. Renick was given the task of drawing up papers for the changing of the name. Spring Valley was not accepted by the government as there was another Spring Valley in Wisconsin. The government then accepted Bloom City.*

<http://www.usgenweb.info/wirichland/books/1906-13.htm>

The town of Bloom is one of the townships that was included in the town of Marshall when the latter was erected, and in the congressional survey it is described as town 12 north, of range 1 west. Bloom was organized in 1856

The town of Bloom enjoys the distinction of being one of the best agricultural towns in Richland county. Its soil is especially adapted to diversified farming, fruit growing and truck gardening, in which pursuits, combined with stock-raising, the intelligent and industrious farmers have met with phenomenal success.

<https://recollectionwisconsin.org/travel-back-in-time/bloom-city> **Travel Back in Time to Bloom City**

A 1906 history of Richland County tells us, "Bloom City, formerly called Spring Valley, is quite an important gathering place for the people of the town. There is perhaps nothing in its annals of any great historical importance, other than the fact of its existence, which statement is equally true of its business rival, West Lima, a few miles away. In each place there are several energetic and enterprising business establishments, and schools are carried on to a high degree of excellence." There's something about this description that's just so right about so many small towns and cities, villages and townships from a certain time, across the state. Enjoy these images of Bloom City as pictured on Page 5 which are from the digital records in the



**Bloom City** is located in the NW quarter of Richland County just South of 'W. Lima'

[Richland County History Room.](#)

The **town of Bloom** has the West Branch of the Pine River



Richland County History Room, 325 N Central Ave, Richland Center, WI 53581, richlandhistory@gmail.com, (608) 647-6033

*Bird's Eye View. Bloom City, Richland County, Wisconsin, ca. 1910.*



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*P. J. Shaffer's store interior, Bloom City, Wisconsin, ca. 1920.*



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*Bloom City, looking south, Richland County, Wisconsin, 1909.*



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*Truesdale store and Post Office, Bloom City, Bloom Township, Richland County, Wisc, 1909.*



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*Streetcar "photo-shopped" into Bloom City, Bloom Township, Richland County, ca. 1915.*



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*Bloom City, Bloom Township, Richland County, Wisconsin, ca. 1916*

<https://ci.richland-center.wi.us/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Pacific-Coast-Condensery-Carnation-2.pdf>

\*\* Catch a complete three page story using the **History** icon from the cities website listed above \*\*

## The former Pacific Coast Condensery Plant in Richland Center



[www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fci.richland-center.wi.us%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2014%2F03%2FPacific-Coast-Condensery-Carnation-2.pdf&psig=AOvVaw0reAGx9wQIEgPwt\\_dIzxo5&ust=1669939361016000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CBAQjhxqFwoTCNDOn4WP1sCFQAAAAAAdAAAAABAE](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fci.richland-center.wi.us%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2014%2F03%2FPacific-Coast-Condensery-Carnation-2.pdf&psig=AOvVaw0reAGx9wQIEgPwt_dIzxo5&ust=1669939361016000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CBAQjhxqFwoTCNDOn4WP1sCFQAAAAAAdAAAAABAE)

**Do YOU Remember ? ....** January 30, 1951, Lone Rock claimed dubious fame as the coldest spot in the nation when a minus 53-degree temperature was officially registered on a thermometer at the Tri-County Airport. Temperatures were so low that night that the official U.S. Weather Bureau thermometer couldn't handle the actual reading. The instrument was made to measure temperatures down to a balmy minus 47



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### Carnation Discontinues Receiving Milk at Plant

The Carnation company announced suddenly Monday about noon that it would discontinue receiving milk at the local plant and the receiving station operations here would be closed down on Tuesday.

Plant Superintendent Floyd C. Alexander, who made the announcement, said he received the first word on the company's order about 11 o'clock Monday morning.

In a prepared release, Supt. Alexander, who served several years as mayor of the city in the late 1950's and early 1960's, said that "about 20 employees" would be affected by the ceasing of operations here.

The plant had been receiving approximately 185,000 pounds of milk from nearly 300 farmer-patrons in the area.

Several local haulers have been under contract to truck milk to the plant.

Arrangements were made as quickly as possible after the announcement for the milk to be hauled to the Wisconsin Dairies Cooperative plant here to protect both the haulers and the patrons for a market of the total supply of milk.

Gordon Dull, plant manager of the Wisconsin Dairies here, said Tuesday that commitments, contracts, and assignments that the Carnation company had made with producers and haulers would be assumed by the Wisconsin Dairies.

A period of 60 days has been allowed for haulers, under Public Service Commission authority, to haul the milk to the Wisconsin Dairies plant.

Mr. Dull said that it will take some time to arrange routes and re-align patrons.

"There probably will be some shifting of haulers," he said, "because some have already indicated that they wanted to get out of the business."

The rapid change-over here was handled smoothly Tuesday, he said, and followed the pattern and the experience that had been gained when the Carnation company closed down its receiving station at Hillsboro last October.

Ben Leu, who has served as fieldman for the Carnation company, will be maintained as fieldman to continue to serve the patrons on the former Carnation routes. He will be employed by Wisconsin Dairies, Mr. Dull advised.

"A large percentage of the patrons shipped their milk into Wisconsin Dairies Tuesday," Mr. Dull added.

The cooperative plant has been receiving approximately 400,000 pounds of milk daily. The outside purchases over the regular patrons which have built up the volume to that figure will be sent to the Union Center plant now.

All of the milk that has been received at Carnation has been Grade B milk. By shipping to Wisconsin Dairies, patrons who are interested may be able to go on to the Grade A market.

Mr. Alexander stated that the economic factors in receiving and handling the milk were responsible for the decision to discontinue the operations at the Carnation plant.

The plant here has been in operation here since 1911, and at that time it was reported to be the largest Carnation plant in the world. It has been one of the last milk plants operated by the company in the Midwest.

Nearly five years ago, in the fall of 1962, the company re-modeled the local plant extensively. It is estimated that approximately a half million dollars was spent then.



In appreciation for the support given to the Richland County Historical Society and for the promotion of history in the Richland County area.

Thank you!

**Ron & Beth Fruit**  
11-21-22

Posted information on the home page of our website provides information about the 'Morning Show' aired 11-21-22 & the plaque that was presented to Ron Fruit. On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Richland County Historical Society **All the Best** in retirement.

Check out our website for WRCO History Moments & AKEY BraKEY News issues

[www.richlandcountyhistoricalsociety.weebly.com](http://www.richlandcountyhistoricalsociety.weebly.com)

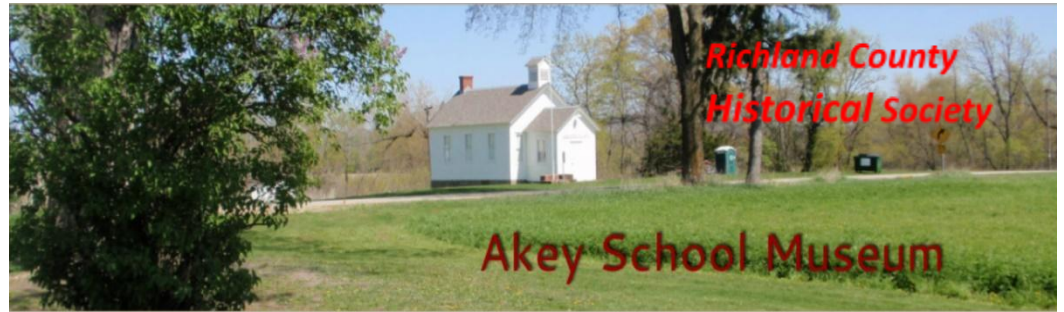


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**... Would you → pass this newsletter on to a FRIEND?**

Please renew your membership annually by July 1<sup>st</sup>—consider the following options:

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 for individual / family membership
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 for a business to support the historical society
- \_\_\_\_\_ additional DONATION to support the historical society
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 for a LIFETIME individual / family membership



**Donations** are always WELCOME

Member Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mail registration to:

C/o Richland County Historical Society  
213 S Central AVE Apt.#1  
Richland Center WI 53581



**1-** This is the eighth installment of an insert page for the AKEY BrAKEY newsletter with a Special Thanks for this JANUARY issue to 'Chip' Parduhn and the story information collected by his son Chris & grandson Addison. Also to those from this past year 2022 issues; Jean Birkett, Mike McNair, and Dion Kempthorne as well as all of those that have provided materials for past inserts.

We are seeking more materials for future inserts. If you have pictures and/or stories that You'd be willing to share Please do get in touch with RCHS President Ken Thiede or mail contact information to:

213 S. Central AVE Apt.#1  
 Richland Center, WI 53581  
 % Richland County Historical Society

We would welcome pictures and stories which would be great; even better letters & memorabilia that provide a historical look into our past.

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**Charles W. 'Chip' Parduhn has lent his Paul Seifert painting of the farm that his ancestors lived on in 1904 to the Richland County History Room at the Brewer Library. This farm is located on Rohn Hollow Road just off Highway 14 southeast of Sextonville.**



**Come in and see this excellent example of Paul Seifert's folk artistry in the Richland County History Room 2nd floor of the Brewer Library.**

Albert, Otto, Eda and Elsie Parduhn were the children of Charles & Bertha Parduhn. Fred & Edward were not born yet at the time this was painted.

Charles Parduhn moved from this farm to the present location (about 3 miles away) around 1906-1908 near Twin Bluffs.

"Uncle Ed Parduhn told me that Grandpa (Charles Parduhn) loaned Mr. Seifert a small amount of money and when he repaid it, he also painted this painting in appreciation. I have no way of knowing if this is so." states Charles W. 'Chip' Parduhn

Characters pictured below in painting:

Man on the white horse: Charles Parduhn

Man on the fence: August Rohn

(Charles Parduhn's brother-in-law & brother of Bertha Parduhn.)

Riders on horses: Albert & Otto Parduhn

On the porch: Bertha Parduhn (Charles' wife) and children, Eda & Elsie Parduhn.

<https://ne-np.facebook.com/165783326324/posts/charles-w-chip-parduhn-has-lent-us-his-paul-seifert-painting-of-the-farm-that-hi/10159041502976325/>



**Paul Seifert painting, 1904 of the Charles & Bertha Parduhn farm on Rohn Hollow Road near Gotham, Wisconsin On loan from Charles W. Parduhn, 2 Sep 2022.**

**Paul Seifert painting, 1904 of the Charles & Bertha Parduhn farm on Rohn Hollow Road near Gotham, Wisconsin**  
 On loan from Charles W. Parduhn, 2 Sep 2022.

Characters in painting:  
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 (Charles Parduhn's brother-in-law & brother of Bertha Parduhn.)  
 Riders on horses: Albert & Otto Parduhn  
 On porch: Bertha Parduhn (Charles' wife) and children, Eda & Elsie Parduhn.

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\*The farm in the painting is on Rohn Hollow Road (near Gotham, Wisconsin).

***3— This story and the following account of what life was like in Twin Bluffs was told by Charles “Chip” Parduhn, the grandson of Charles Parduhn who lived on Rohn Hollow Road receiving the picture of that farm from a Paul Seifert painting in 1904.***

My grandpa came to this country when he was 17 years old. He had family members who were here earlier; some stopped in Ohio and some went as far west as South Dakota. He purchased the farm where I now live in 1906 – I think! In 1928 the house burned – a big home, 14 rooms and 2 porches. The house I now live in was built in 1928. I still sleep in the room I was born in.



***Pictured at the current farm sign just south of Twin Bluffs on County Highway TB where he still lives present day is Charles “Chip” Parduhn, his grandson Addison and son Chris***

Somehow my Grandpa Charlie got acquainted with a couple **- 4** of Ringling Brothers as he and my Grandma Bertha would go to towns where they were performing, usually by train. He also sold hay to them and loaded the hay into boxcars at Twin Bluffs for the hay eating animals. Grandpa and a friend from Spring Green, Ike Evans, also did some purchasing of culling cattle for Frank Lloyd Wright. Mr. Wright always wanted to take part in the sale.

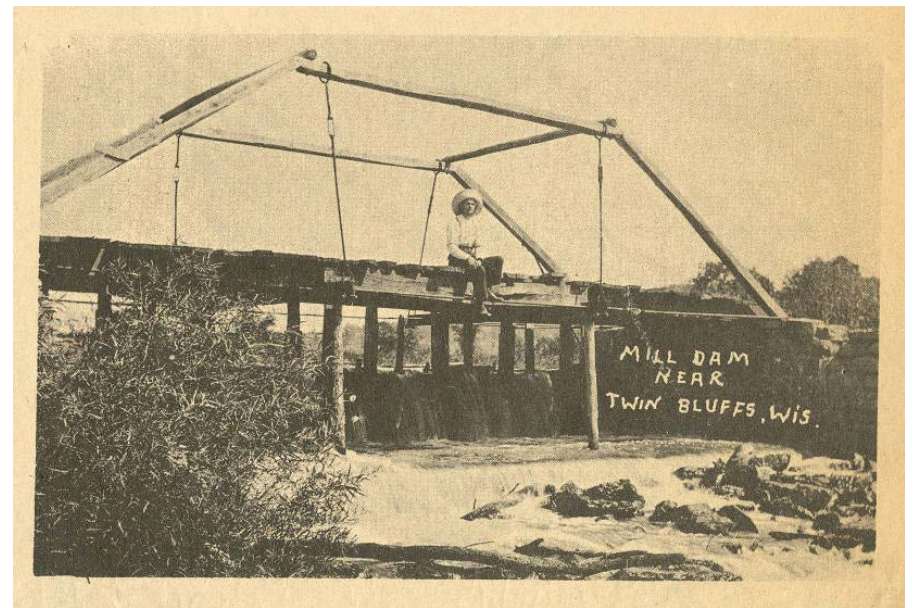
***Chip’s son Chris Parduhn, who is a member of the Richland County Historical Society, provides a follow up. According to Chris, the farm at Rohn Hollow Road was nearby to Paul Seifert and he borrowed money from the Parduhn’s; then in turn painted the watercolor picture of their farm on Rohn Hollow Road for them just as he did for several others in this area.***

#### **TWIN BLUFFS WISC.: The old days !**

Twin Bluffs is a small country village in the driftless area of southwestern Wisconsin located on the lower Pine River about four miles north of its junction with the Wisconsin River.

Good Fishing; especially for young boys like me who spent many – and I do mean plenty of hours along its banks.

[www.google.com/search?q=twin+bluffs+rsrf+ichland+county+wi&sx](http://www.google.com/search?q=twin+bluffs+rsrf+ichland+county+wi&sx)



5 A cane fish pole, a can of worms and my dog and look out fish, here I come! Catfish, trout, an occasional walleye, bull heads and lots of frogs, some big enough to have frog legs to eat. A Huck Finn life!



In the 1920's, Twin Bluffs had 2 'general stores' across the road from each other. Also, there was a blacksmith shop, a stockyard which bought stock every Monday and shipped them out by truck and rails.

Sometimes 6 to 10 stock cars.

Railroad cars were used for hauling cattle & hogs.

The Chicago, Milwaukee-St. Paul Railroad owned and ran the train owned the 'right of way' and took care of the maintenance. The train was a spur line from Lone Rock and went as far north as Richland Center - about 15 miles.

Lone Rock & Richland Centre RR "Richland Centre" at Twin Bluffs, WI, 1876

Stuart Kurth Collection



<https://www.google.com/search?q=twin+bluffs+richland+county+wi&sxsrf>

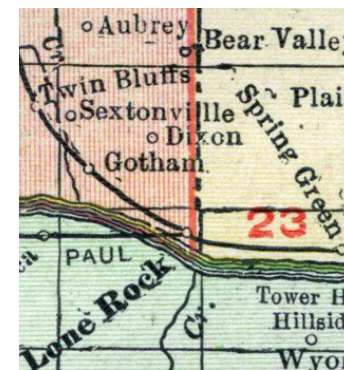
Sometimes the train would stop at Twin Bluffs and let 6 passengers out for a while if there were any. There were sidings adjacent to the tracks to load the box cars and would be parked there until they were needed.

Also, in fall and winter months box cars loaded with coal would be parked there. Lyle Miller was the "Coal Broker". All those had to be unloaded with a shovel. I'm very familiar with that. Lyle hired George Burnham to help unload coal cars and I'd help George. Sometimes when it would snow and freeze then we'd have to pick the coal loose to throw it out. So, that meant handling it twice and Lyle had to load it into his pickup and unload it at the customer's home.

Another thing about the train was that it brought hobos. I remember them going to homes in Twin Bluffs and asking for food. My Grandmother always fed them. Some of them were willing to do jobs, especially in the summer and fall. I remember one guy who came at corn picking time and he stayed for a week or more until we were done. He said he was from Sioux City, Iowa and could he pick corn! He told my Dad he had picked corn from daylight to dark for days.

Another thing about the "old days" is that most small towns had a baseball team. There was a team from the towns of Sextonville and Twin Bluffs that had the "Schoonover 9". The whole team was Schoonover's; cousins, dads, uncles, brothers. There was a makeshift ball diamond on the west side of Highway 14 before it was relocated. You would never guess now that a ball diamond was there. I remember going to a couple of games there with my Dad. Quite a few people would come. This would have been about 1939 or 1940.

I remember one thing about it – most of the bases were "Cow Chips". There was always a ready supply. "K" Cockroft, who lived in Sextonville, was nearly always the umpire. He'd umpire from behind the pitcher calling balls & strikes and base running plays.



## Midwestern Master: Paul Seifert

When one looks at idyllic farm scenes like this piece, one almost always thinks of an artist peacefully whiling away his time in the countryside making these images for interested people found along the way. That's only partly true. Paul Seifert, the artist of this beautiful watercolor of the farm of Mr. E. R. Jones had a fascinating life that led him from the chaos of mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century Germany to the American frontier.



According to his granddaughter, Seifert was born in Germany in 1846, and probably saw a lot of upheaval in his early years, including the revolutions of 1848. He studied engineering at the University of Leipzig but fled Germany in 1866 to avoid being conscripted into military service during the Austro-Prussian war. He came to New York and took the Erie Canal westward, arriving in Milwaukee in 1867. From there the journey got really interesting.



Seifert wanted to continue westward, so he jumped on a lumber raft (see my previous post on Linton Park and the lumber rafts of Pennsylvania) for a 100-mile ride down the Wisconsin River. No pleasure cruise, I'm sure. As the raft approached Richland City

(later named GOTHAM), near the confluence of the Wisconsin and Pine Rivers, he must have seen something he liked. He dove off the raft into the river and swam ashore. Sitting on the shore was a group of young girls (maybe the reason for the dive?) that included a 16-year-old Elizabeth Craft. She later recalled Seifert struggling onto the bank looking like "a drowned rat." They were married the following year.



Paul and Elizabeth built a log cabin on the banks of the river and worked very hard to create an 80-acre truck garden, from which they sold vegetables to people in Gotham, two miles away. Seifert "trucked" the produce there by wheelbarrow. He earned extra money as a taxidermist and craftsman to help support their growing family of four daughters.

In 1875, Seifert decided to try his hand at painting. He packed his bags with paper and paints and went on the road in search of farmers who would be willing to pay \$2.50 for a view of their farm.



The paper was large, often 21 x 27 inches, so the resulting image made quite an impression. Over the course of the next decade he made about 100 of these drawings, mostly in Richland, Grant, Sauk, and Iowa Counties in southwestern Wisconsin. Seifert died at the age of 80 in 1925, and his artwork didn't receive any accolades until it was discovered by Jean Lipman in the 1940s.

July 1, 1925

# Twin Bluffs and Sextonville Progressive County Communities

## Democrat Reporter Finds Much of Historical Interest and Present Thrift to Interest Readers. School an Important Factor in Community.

(By Allen Strang)

It was 'way back in '71, when prosperous Richland Center business men were subscribing fabulous amounts to have the branch line of railroad run to Richland Center, that Sextonville passed perhaps the biggest opportunity that it has ever known. The right of way had been surveyed to pass the old Thomas-McCorkle mill, situated near the present Mill creek bridge this side of Sextonville. The depot was to be on the site of the Jones barn which is on the very outskirts of the village. When all the residents of the village were set to have the line built, the right-of-way was suddenly switched to the bottom lands west of Pine River, at Twin Bluffs, where the railroad was constructed and where it passes to this day. Some say that it was because of the amount of stock asked of Sextonville residents; others avow some sort of secret deals. Which of these is the fact is not known, but the loss to Sextonville is certain.

The village of Sextonville is one of the oldest communities in the county, being settled in 1847 and platted three years later by E. M. Sexton, after whom the village was named. It was in 1851 that J. L. R. McCollum came with his parents and family from LaFayette county. Mr. McCollum is one of the oldest living settlers of Sextonville. He lives at present in Twin Bluffs, where he moved shortly after the railroad was built in 1875. This old resident knows more about the old settlers of that vicinity and the history of the community since the early fifties than anyone living. He is over eighty years old and is as spry as many at fifty.

The population of that vicinity today is divided between the villages of Twin Bluffs and Sextonville, though the larger business district is in Sextonville. At present the brick store on the corner is being run by Harry Crumbecker. There is a grocery and soda fountain owned by Walter O'Mealy and a hotel conducted by David Fry. Harry Gastin owns the Sextonville garage and does a big business in buying for people all over the state. Miss Connie DeVoe is the present postmistress, with the office located across from the brick store.

### COUNTY COMMUNITIES

#### TO BE MENTIONED

The Richland Democrat has secured for the summer the services of Allen Strang, who will visit the different communities of the county and review their history and tell of their present achievements. The article below is his first, and other communities of the county will be visited, one a week, during the summer. Mr. Strang completed the Richland Center high school this month, where he was a strong student, and contemplates a course in journalism at the University. In high school he was editor-in-chief of the 1924 Annual, Pine Needles, and during the past year was editor of the School Booster column appearing weekly in the Democrat. Watch for the news of Richland County communities in the Democrat, for Mr. Strang in

\* his opening story gets to the \*  
\* heart of community news and \*  
\* interests and your neighbor- \*  
\* hood may be next. \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

The Editor.

At Twin Bluffs there is one general store run by Walter Pronold. Mr. Pronold has one of the most complete stocks of goods in that section. J. C. Rockwell does general blacksmithing at his shop east of the tracks. The Twin Bluffs post office is run by Elmer McCollum, son of the pioneer settler. Mrs. Ida Calloway is express agent at the depot. One of the worthwhile organizations in that community is the Twin Bluffs Shipping Association which has as members farmers from that locality who ship cattle almost every week.

The district high school is at Sextonville and is one of the oldest in southwestern Wisconsin. The enrollment in the high school last year was over fifty besides those who attended in the grades which are taught in the lower rooms of the building. This school was organized as far back as 1850 and it became the educational center for Buena Vista, Ithaca and Richland townships. The old high school building was constructed in 1882 under the supervision of John Lamson and stood until 1919 when the present school was built. Miss Ada Lamson was the first graduate from the high school in 1882 and she was directly admitted to the medical college of the University. Many well known people have been graduated from the Sextonville high school and from the grade school before it. The late Dr. Bertram Sippy and brother, Dr. A. F. Sippy, are both alumni. Nathan Boggs, a successful doctor in Montana; Burke R. Lawton, who went to Korea as a missionary; the present Judge Chester Fowler, of Fond du Lac; Emma Hanko, a noted dietitian in New York; Jacob Carter, an advanced teacher in Minnesota; and Samuel McCorkle, a doctor in Milwaukee, are all alumni of the Sextonville high school. Among the old graduates familiar to Richland Center people are: Miss Belle McNurlin, Mrs. Fred Higgins, Thomas Nee, Mr. and Mrs. Emery Oldenburg, Leslie Lawton, Mrs. Homer Breeden, Mrs. Charles Venard, Mrs. Dr. Kermott, Mrs. Dr. Bowen, Mrs. E. Ostrander, Miss Carrie McCorkle, Henry Brace, W. S. McCorkle, Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Martin, B. C. Davis, Mrs. Paul Weitzel, Miss Margaret McNurlin, Burns Nolan and Lyle Hatch. Each year the

twenty-five year graduates return to Sextonville for an alumni banquet and reunion. This spring over half of the graduating class of 1900 was present at the banquet. Some of the familiar principals of the high school since its organization are J. G. Lamberson, E. E. Fowler, J. F. Gile, J. B. Logue, Kirk L. Hatch, E. G. Doudna, Thomas A. Nee and J. I. Carter.

The Methodist Episcopal church was organized shortly after the educational system, being 69 years old. The church has had a large congregation since its organization and great interest has been shown in its activities. Rev. Elmo Keller is the present pastor of the church.

Alert Hall, used for many years as a meeting place and dance hall, was built through the efforts of the women's club in 1905. The hall burned to the ground three years ago and since that time there has been only the Odd Fellows hall for meetings.

The Sextonville Ladies Aid Society has also been organized and goes farther than most of its kind in making quilts to order. This society has taken orders for quilts from Superior to the Gulf, and is even at present doing some work for a woman in Chicago.

There is an Odd Fellow and a Rebekah lodge in Sextonville, both with good memberships. The Odd Fellow lodge was chartered in 1857 and has as its two oldest members, J. L. R. McCollum and Joe Warner. The present officers are: Noble Grand, Charles Barnett; Vice Noble Grand, Edward Russell; Recording Secretary, Fred Reeves; Financial Secretary, Smith Hole; Treasurer, E. W. McCorkle. The Rekekah lodge chartered in 1905 has as officers: Mrs. Lydia Nolan, Noble Grand; Mrs. Carrie Lutes, Vice Noble Grand; Lyda McCorkle, Recording Secretary; Mrs. Frank A. Hole, Treasurer. At a district convention of the two lodges held in Sextonville this spring, the largest attendance the district has ever known was recorded. Rev. Stanley Jones, of Muscoda, who was originally a member of the Sextonville lodge, received the degree of Past Grand Master, the highest honor which the lodge can confer.

The old Post farm east of Sextonville is remarkable in that it has not passed from the hands of the Post family since it was bought from the government. The Posts were one of the first families to settle in Sexton-

Known for: Itinerant folk-art painter, local scenery

*FARM LANDSCAPE* Art images copyright© of artist or assignee

Paul Seifert, destined many years after his death to be recognized among the nation's leading itinerant folk artists with work akin to that of Grandma Moses, was active in Richland County in southwestern Wisconsin in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The file about him in the Richland Center Library, when found by author William Stark, was labeled "Southwestern Wisconsin's own folk painter---Paul Seifert".

Folk-art scholar Jean Lipman wrote that "Paul Seifert's simple farm scenes are filled with anecdotal detail---people, animals, the orchards, the farmer painter had laid out---that must have pleased and interested his customers; but, from our critical point of view, they are much more than this.

[https://www.askart.com/artist/Paul\\_A\\_Seifert/29676/Paul\\_A\\_Seifert.aspx](https://www.askart.com/artist/Paul_A_Seifert/29676/Paul_A_Seifert.aspx)

### Facts about Paul Seifert

Paul Seifert Born: 1846 - Dresden, Germany Died: 1921



Selected information about Paul Seifert appears in two AKEY BRAKEY News editions:

Art exhibit in 2014

River of Mystery the Dan Bomkamp book collaboration

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Paul A. Seifert, and unidentified woman seated indoors. He lived in Richland Center, now known as Gotham, Wisconsin. He was a taxidermist and curio collector. Paul A. Seifert was born June 11, 1846, and died August 18, 1921. A folk artist, Paul Seifert painted a number of Wisconsin farms in and around Richland County, circa 1885.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM75711>

[https://mkifriends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/mki\\_newsletter\\_winter\\_2013-2014-1.pdf](https://mkifriends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/mki_newsletter_winter_2013-2014-1.pdf)

- Wife Elizabeth and should be Richland City
- Pages 1, 8 & 9

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/Wisconsin\\_in\\_Watercolor/vLp2DwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=paul+seifert+75711&pg=PT45&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Wisconsin_in_Watercolor/vLp2DwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=paul+seifert+75711&pg=PT45&printsec=frontcover)

