



History

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Explanation of Future
Data Collection and
Volunteers Needed

Contributions to our history
can be sent to:

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Wausaukee Area History Page 4

Touch a picture for an enlarged view.

Touch underlined text for expanded document.

Beginnings of the Fire Department



The Independent - Wausaukee 6/2/1902: Town of Wausaukee Fire Fighters were given a new Waterous Gasoline Fire Engine to enhance the volunteer fire fighters ability. One large 12 x 20 foot well dug to a depth of 10 feet has been completed to supply water to the engine. The engine did very well on the test, throwing a stream of water though 500 feet of hose and over the high pole in front of J.C. Hubbard's Saloon. The fire engine house is located south of the town hall and shelters the engine, hose cart and other equipment. A second well is scheduled to be dug south in the Village. There is no established fire department at this time and calls were made to form one now that they had the equipment.

Norm Smith remembers the first fire engine and recalls the unit didn't always work so when they got to the house there was a good chance it would burn down due to the unreliability of the fire unit. He said they replaced the water unit with a chemical firefighting unit and that wasn't much better.

[Wausaukee School Fire of 1913](#)

1908 street view with an unidentified boy on a horse, newspaper clipping identifies location of multiple buildings in the downtown area. Who is the boy?



Bird & Wells to Shut Down



View of the Village of Wausaukee in 1908 overlooking the Bird & Wells Lumber Mill. The Village appears to be prosperous but the lumber era was starting to wind down as the cost to ship product became more expensive.

In 1910 it was announced that Bird & Wells Lumber Company will be merged with the J. W. Wells Lumber Company of Menominee Michigan.

Because of freight costs and economy of producing the product in a larger Menominee market, the Wausaukee plant will be shut down and all employees will be offered better jobs at the new plant when it is finished. This led to the realization that farming and dairy cattle would be the main source of work in the area.

Businesses over the years that were created include, pickling station, blueberry production, curtain hanger extension maker, sheep farming, bakery, broom factory, land sales, potato crops, theatre, soda pop production, a distillery, cigar factory, black smith.

Miscellaneous Businesses



Underwoods Log Cabin Saloon 1913



Underwood Saloon Clients



Original Pickle Factory 1917



Former GG's Restaurant



Laun's Cement Warehouse

Underwoods Log cabin and saloon was one of many Saloons serving a thriving business. In 1901, 3,282 barrels of beer were shipped to the village via rail and on some occasions the supply simply ran out. The building was renovated by the Rollo's and then expanded by the current owner as Newingham's Supper Club.

Patrons at the Underwood saloon include: Left of the chain handler is Henry DeGroot, wearing the bow tie is Adam Pleckinger, to Pleckinger's right is Anton J. Edlebeck, extreme right is Barney DeGroot, Carl Degroot has moustache and brimmed hat.

In 1917 the McNeil and Libby pickling station stood where the current Ranger Pharmacy is located today. Ownership passed to the Bond Pickle Company of Oconto and the last known owner was a local named John Alsteen. There were five or six big wooden vats filled with brine. The vats were two stories tall and went into the basement with about two feet exposed above the ground floor. The cucumbers picked in the fall were stored in the brine until they could be trucked out to be processed at the main plant in Green Bay. The factory was only in use for a month during the cucumber harvest when Joe Alsteen weighed in the gunny sacks full of cukes and gave the farmers a receipt. Joe Alsteen's shoe repair shop was located on the property south of the old telephone exchange building on Main street. It is represented by the empty lot adjacent to Marquis Style Shop.

The former GG's Restaurant was the original site of the Bond Pickling Station. This building was originally built by a family that operated GG's Italian Restaurant. It was then sold to Kelli Zeutzuis who ran it as a local restaurant but later sold it to Rich Wainwright for his Tile and flooring showroom. It was sold in 2009 to the Crivitz Pharmacy and is currently

vacant.

Directly behind the pickle factory across the railroad siding was the cement Warehouse. It had been an old country school that had been purchased by HG and moved to this location primarily to store cement and wallboard. One end of the building was shored up with 4 by 4's on concrete pads.

Next to it was the Coal Shed also owned by HG that had a concrete floor with several bins for storing different types of coal (anthracite-hard coal, soft coal in chunks, briquettes, or stoker size). Al Huempfner shoveled the coal onto the delivery truck, then weighed the truck on a big truck scale built into the concrete floor to determine the charge to the customer. At the customer's location, Al hand shoveled the coal off the truck into the customer's coal bin.



Wausaukee Tire Shop



Jakes Dry Goods and Ladies Apparel Shop



Former Jakes Store, Silver Slipper Location 2009 Image



Site of the former Bucket of Blood Tavern 2009 Image



The Wausaukee Creamery

Wausaukee Tire Shop and adjacent building were located on the site where the Village Post Office and the Byron Marcusen home are currently. There were not many gas stations around at that time and the Ford dealership had a single pump outside the building. A Mr. Parsons owned the Ford Dealership in town.

Jake Freedman owned the Jake's Dry Goods store with an apartment above and the adjacent store was a Ladies Apparel shop. The store was located on the site where the former Silver Slipper bar and current We store is located.

Interesting story supplied by a local resident about Jake's Store which appears in the first Photo. Jake hired a sign painter from Marinette to paint the advertising on his store. Jake wanted it simple but the painter, being paid by the letter, wanted to add a lot of text. Jake made it very clear that on the front he wanted Jake's Store, that's all! And left for the day, hence the sign. The painter did not get paid but said it was worth it. Jake had an apartment above the store. Jake felt it was such a funny story, he left the sign the way it was.

During a conversation with one of his customers, Pete Marquis was discussing what may have been here on his lot before he purchased and built his shop. Things found in the dirt as they were excavating were bottles with Sinkey Soda clearly labeled. It was interesting to find intact bottles on the site. The customer also told Pete that at one time there was a bar called Bucket of Blood located on the site he was planning on building his shop. Alan Van Pae was the owner but no information is available about the bar and time frame it was open for business.

Tom Lubinski's Cheese Factory was a family operation with Tom and one of his four sons and one employee making cheese 7 days a week. The building was located on Fairgrounds road and Cedar Street. Each day the truck driver would pick up fresh milk from the local farmers, the cans would be weighed and the price was set for the farmer after testing for butterfat content. A by- product of cheese making was Whey, it was placed into a large tank, transferred to a truck and sold to the farmers as pig feed. No Photos are available.

Behind the Evergreen Park was located the Wausaukee Creamery locally

known as the "butter factory". It was run by Polly Polomis and was off limits to Kids. The photo above indicates the Wausauke Cooperative Creamery and is unknown as to location or information about the person in the photo.

Laun's General Merchandise Store



Laun Hardware
1920's



Launs Store Interior



Laun Store
Interior



Laun Bros Store
Destroyed by tornado
1958



Construction of
Brick Store

Henry G. Laun was manager of the Laun Brothers Sawmill, served as president. He was also director of the bank and was postmaster from 1899 until 1908. He owned and operated a large general store in the village, which was the largest store of its kind in any of the towns or villages in the county. The wooden Laun Brothers Store and Warehouse suffered a direct hit in the Tornado of May 21, 1958 and a new brick building was constructed as its replacement. The Laun Bros Store officially closed in 1967 ending an era in Dry Goods Stores in our area.

I was outside getting something from my freezer and it was very quiet. I looked up and saw the funnel cloud so I went back into the building to get shelter. I looked over to the Gamble building and saw the windows bulge out and break all over. Ferd Laun was across the street and had a kitchen set out and I saw his windows bulge and the chairs were picked up and then later found in Stephenson MI. I always wore a paper hat while cutting meat and the hat got blown off my head. After the storm, Ferd Laun came over and said I got something for you. A customer said she wanted a baby buggy so I went up to the shelf and went to grab it and your hat was up on the shelf. The wind had sucked up my hat and layed it on a shelf in the Laun store. *Rudy Messar*



Launs New Completed
Brick Store



Interior Laun Hardware



Laun's Closing 1967



Former Laun Bros,
Gamble Store,
Hardware Hank, Gocht
Suites 2009 Image

The building was purchased by Bob Bastian and run as the Gamble Store until Gambles went out of business. Bastian then changed franchise and the name changed to Bob's Hardware Hank Store until he closed the hardware store and created four suites and an apartment within the space. One of the suites run by Bastian was The Cone Corner Ice Cream stand which became hugely popular. Bastian sold the Cone Corner business equipment to Judy Engelmann and she created the Ice Cream Station at the south end of the village. Another hugely popular business serving sweet treats.

The former Laun building was sold to Ken Gocht, who was the adjoining building owner, he remodeled the interior into three business suites. The former apartment was remodeled to house the Wausauke Public Library's new location in November of 2009. Many improvements have been made to update the library's book capacity and technology which will now be central to the down town district.

History of the Wausaukee Schools



1903 - 1913
Wausaukee School



1913 Wausaukee
High School Students



1915 Wausaukee
School



1995 Wausaukee School
District Building K-12

The first Wausaukee Public School built in 1903 was at a cost of \$8,000, Furniture and equipment was \$2,000 and insurance and building contents was \$7,500. It burned down in 1913 in the early morning hours. Before **Fire** crews were called at 4:15 Am the flames had reached the roof and the fire was uncontrollable. All property including the donated 2000 library books were destroyed. Until the new school was built, St. Augustine's church allowed the 5th and 6th grade students to attend school in the parochial school building. Seventh and Eighth graders met in the Knights of Pythias building and high school met in the Bird & Wells store building.

The replacement school building was brought up in a special election with 221 residents voting to bond the town \$20,000 for its construction. The 1915 school, also made of brick and was built on a lower elevation location. The original central building was built at a cost of \$24,000 and in later years, to accommodate growth, expanded with two additional permanent buildings and several temporary school rooms.

In 1995 the former school was sold at auction by the Wausaukee School District to the highest bidder. The property was not maintained by the absentee owner. During the ensuing years the structures central roof failed and collapsed, the adjacent building roofs leaked and suffered severe water/mold damage, all buildings suffered from vandalism and eventually all the building became unsafe. All structures on the site of the former Wausaukee School were demolished and cleared in 2010 for future development by the Village using a Newcap stimulus package grant. Much of the steel, cement and brick of the former school has been set aside to be recycled. The wooden gymnasium wall/ceiling beams were reclaimed for another building. The foundation was filled and surface prepared for the next buildings foundation. The adjacent former Shepard Hotel was also removed during the demolition. Two double occupancy townhouses were constructed to replace the Shepard Hotel as a part of the Newcap Grant. The former school land will be deeded over to the Village of Wausaukee for future development.

The current school is located in the town of Wausaukee on a new site built at a cost of \$7.5 million. It was designed as a one story building housing Elementary and High School classrooms. The building is unique with its bermed outside walls to assist with energy conservation. The Elementary & High School student bodies are divided by the large gymnasium, cafeteria, auditorium and Multi Media Library Center. This directly separates the two school groups yet allows all students to share the common facilities. Surrounding outside areas offer multiple baseball diamonds, football stadium, parking on three sides and the elementary playground. Two interior gymnasiums accommodate Elementary and High School Physical Ed and sports programs. A recent addition to the school was a fully functional Green House located just outside the North East corner of the school.

Located within the Wausaukee High School, the NWTC Northwoods Regional Learning Lab is a sign of the growing partnership between rural school districts and their communities and NWTC. Northwoods Regional Learning Lab offers courses in automotive, welding, nursing assistant, and practical nursing programs. All courses can be applied to a degree program within the NWTC System. Additional programs are being added to the curriculum as the need arises. Development of these programs are helping to fill positions in the shortage of people available and trained in the trades.

Recreation Building and Pond



Recreation Building



Wausaukee Recreation Hall



Recreation building over looking pond



Wausaukee Pond Swimming Beach



Ever green Plaza location at site of former Recreation Bldg. 2009 Image

The [Wausaukee Recreation Building](#) was constructed in 1929 and housed a 4 lane bowling alley, basket ball court, banquet facility and unfinished hotel room areas on the second floor. The owner/developer, Ed Kunke, ran into financial troubles and could not complete the hotel portion. This was the second identical building for this developer and the first building was located in the Chicago area. The building was used for proms, parties, and weddings. The Wausaukee Fair also used the interior and exterior grounds for their yearly County Fair until the permanent location was established on Fairgrounds road.

Several people leased and ran the complex but it was later sold to a group called the Albertian Brothers who wanted to run a sanitarium under the auspices of the Catholic Church. The Brothers were not recognized as a religious arm of the Church and the plan failed to materialize. The building was torn down in 1967 to make way for the Evergreen Plaza apartment complex.

Village/Town Campground



Campgrounds is situated on the Town/Village North line and is funded by both entities.



Laun Family Donation of Pond Memorial Stone



Wausaukee Pond Swimming Beach

In 1901, H.P. Bird donated to the village the site that is now occupied by its public campground. The former pavilion and band stand were the gift of the Woman's Club of Wausaukee. The campground offers RV/tent camping w/hookups, Volley ball, basket ball, tennis, 3 picnic pavilions, playground equipment and a toilet pavilion. The [Evergreen Campgrounds](#) is currently co owned and financially operated by the Town and Village of Wausaukee. See Village / Town for details and additional photos. Upgrades to the park facilities have been donated by local non profit organizations.

The former Bird & Wells log pond north of the Recreation Building served as the Village of Wausaukee beach and swimming area. When the mill closed, H.G. Laun purchased the site and in 1927 donated it to the Village. The beach area was equipped with sand, low and high diving boards. During the winter the pond also was used for ice skating. There is a newer

dam built in 1930 on the outlet portion of the pond operated and maintained by the village. The pond's dam contains a fish chute to allow native fish to pass the dam and continue on thru the Wausaukee River which is the ponds water source and a Class 2 Trout Stream.

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