

CHAPTER XXII

PORT EDWARDS AND NEKOOSA

Port Edwards is a village on the Wisconsin River in Port Edwards Township, and on the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, the Chicago & Northwestern, and the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railways; also on the electric railway connecting Wisconsin Rapids and Nekoosa. It is four miles southwest of Wisconsin Rapids, which is the nearest banking point. It has telegraph, express and telephone connections, two general mercantile stores, a restaurant, and a good hotel, and it is here that the offices and a part of the plant of the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co. are located. The village has a state graded school, teaching ten grades, and a large auditorium which is used as a gymnasium by the school. The population, according to the U. S. census of 1920, is 755.

The history of Port Edwards began as early as 1840, when John Edwards, Sr., in partnership with Henry Clinton, built a sawmill here for the manufacture of white pine lumber. The place was then and for a number of years afterward known as Frenchtown, and the mill property subsequently passed through various stages of development, the main facts of which are contained in the article on the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Company, included in this chapter.

The mill established by John Edwards, Sr., and his partner, Mr. Clinton, was the nucleus around which the village grew. Mrs. Frances J. Edwards, now deceased, who came to the place in 1858, and who in January, 1861, married John Edwards, having in the meanwhile taught school in Centralia, some time before her death described the appearance of the village as it was at the time of her marriage, from which description the following facts are taken, related for the most part in her own language:

"Our town was small, having one dry goods and mercantile store, a large boarding-house, sleeping-house, blacksmith shop, schoolhouse, and a sufficient number of homes for its inhabitants. Edwards & Clinton's sawmill was the principal engine that moved the place, and it was a marvelous thing, one with its saws whose teeth of iron with wonderful power converted logs into boards; and I can see the everlasting fires burning day and night to remove the refuse, which was transported over a relay track by car. With the passing of the logging and lumber business and the opening up of the farm and new industries, the migratory lumberjack either followed the call of the camp to other parts of the country, or took unto himself a wife and settled down to adapt himself to the new industries. The Indians, who were then numerous, and who, among various ways of getting a living, used to pick and sell blueberries to the settlers, belonged to the real nomadic tribes, moving from place to place and existing mostly by hunting and fishing."

The development of the present village of Port Edwards, a fine and in many respects model community, is due to the establishment and expansion of the paper industry as embodied in the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co.'s mills. The name of the village was changed from Frenchtown to Port Edwards in 1869. Its site was

surveyed by R. O. Riard, by the direction of the John Edwards Manufacturing Co., and was recorded Jan. 14, 1897. This survey included Government Lots 2 and 3, Section 36, Town 22 north, Range 5 east. It contained the right of way of the Marshfield and Southeastern Railway. In 1902 the village was incorporated. The post office was established in the middle forties and is now an office of the third class, the present postmaster being Frank S. Brazeau. The electric light, waterworks and sewerage system are operated by the Nekoosa-Edwards Light & Power Co. There is a public library, which is a branch of the Wisconsin Rapids library. All the residences in the village save one or two are painted white. The Methodist Episcopal denomination has a church here, of which the present pastor is Rev. James Churn, and there is a Social and Recreation Club with a good membership.

Nekoosa is an incorporated village on the Wisconsin River in Port Edwards Township. It is on the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, the Chicago & Northwestern, and the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie railways, and has a population of about 1,700, many of whom are in the employ of the large pulp and paper mills for which the place is noted. This location was known in pioneer days as *Pointe Basse*.

The village is eight and a half miles southwest of Wisconsin Rapids, with which it is connected by interurban electric railway. It began its real history with the establishment of the paper mills in 1893 and was incorporated as a village in 1907. It has Catholic, Congregational and Lutheran churches, a bank, theatre, lumber yard, seven general stores, two hardware stores, a drug store, two farm machinery salesrooms, a large Ford service and parts station, two garages, a shoe store, a bakery, three hotels, two restaurants, two confectionery stores, three barber shops, an electrical supply shop, two shoe repair shops, two meat markets, a clothing store, three billiard and pool rooms, a bowling alley, a Heinz pickling station, a Standard oil station, a coal and wood yard and a flour and feed store, besides a flour mill, iron works and motor and machine company, and the great mills of the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co. There are also two physicians and two attorneys practicing in the village. The U. S. census of 1920 assigned Nekoosa a population of 1,639, but this was taken during labor troubles which took a great many out of the village. The population today is probably nearer 2,000.

The first village plat bearing the name of Nekoosa was laid out by S. J. Carpenter, the location being at Swallow Rock, across the river from the present village of the name. There were nine streets running north and south and eight running east and west, and a public square was laid out somewhat west of the center of the plat. This location, however, was never settled, and though a map is preserved in the register of deeds' office, there is no surveyor's certificate or acknowledgment on the record.

The original plat of the present village of Nekoosa was recorded May 23, 1893. It was surveyed and platted by B. C. Gowen, civil engineer, and described as "a piece of land located on Section 10, Town 21 north, Range 5 east of the fourth principal meridian," and as owned by the Nekoosa Paper Co., and made by order of T. E. Nash, president, and L. M. Alexander, secretary, of the said company, on behalf of the directors of the said company. In 1899 an extensive addition was made to the north and west of the original plat (recorded Aug. 8) by E. I.

Philleo, the certificate being signed by the surveyor and by T. E. Nash and L. M. Alexander for the company.

Probably no one knows the history of Nekoosa better than George N. Wood, who for many years has made careful and extensive researches into the general history of the county, and has preserved the history thus obtained in note book, manuscript or printed form. Some six years ago he was requested by J. E. Brazeau of Nekoosa to furnish the data for a history of Nekoosa that the students of the Nekoosa High School were about to prepare, and in response thereto he supplied the following information, which, to enhance the interest of the account, is given substantially in his own words, omitting only a few preliminary remarks relating to the county generally as they are elsewhere given in this volume. The letter is dated at Grand Rapids, March 13, 1916.

"In 1829 Mr. and Mrs. Amable Grignon of Green Bay, Wis., came up the Fox River to Portage City, and then up the Wisconsin River by boat, and located at Grignon Bend just below the bayou, now in Adams County, on the left bank of the river. Several years later high water in the river washed the Grignon home away and the family located farther up the river, on the right bank near the mouth of the McLean slough. They had two sons: Enoch, born in 1830, who died in Necedah in 1914, and John, born in 1837, who died in Grand Rapids in 1910.

"I have been unable to learn just when Daniel Whitney of Green Bay built the first sawmill that was built on the Wisconsin River. It was about 1831. In a history of Brown County, Wisconsin, I find that Daniel Whitney was born in Gilham, N. H., in 1795 and settled in Green Bay, Wis., in 1819. From 1825 to 1830 Whitney was up and down the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers, where he built sawmills at various points.

"Ira Purdy, the millwright of this city, who will be 97 years of age May 6, 1916, came to Grand Rapids on April 1, 1846, informs me that when he first came here he stopped at the Wakeley Tavern at Pointe Basse. Mr. Wakeley informed him that the Whitney mill had been abandoned for many years and that the mill looked to him (Purdy) as if it was at least 15 years old, and it was his impression that it had been built about 1830 or 1831. This mill was on Government Lot 1, Section 10, Town 21, Range 5, at the foot of the nine-acre island on the left bank of the river, just about where the upper ferry landed on the east side. Whitney built a dam diagonally across the river from the north end of the nine-acre island to the right or west side. This nine-acre island is now mostly covered with back water from the 20-foot dam of the Nekoosa Paper Co. I have a map drawn by William L. DeWitt, civil engineer employed by the state of Wisconsin in 1851 to make a survey of the upper Wisconsin River which has marked 'Whitney's Old Mill' at the foot of the nine-acre island, and there are two wing dams 400 to 800 feet above the head of the nine-acre island marked 'old dam.'

"The contract for the first survey of lands in this territory was let by the United States Government to Joshua Hathaway in February, 1839, and the maps and field notes of the survey were returned to the Government Land office in May, 1840, the same month in which the survey was made. This survey only included a strip of land six miles wide, three miles on either side of the river, extending from Pointe Basse up to Wausau. The first survey was only township lines, and the

sub-divisions were made in 1851. The Government Lots 2 3, 4, 5 and 6 of Section 10, Town 21, Range 5 of 233 85-100 acres were entered by Levi Sterling and Chas. F. Legade on Nov. 30, 1852, and Government Lot 7, Section 10 was entered by Hugh McFarland and Caleb Crosswell, Nov. 24, 1852. Government Lot 1, Section 10, where the old Whitney mill was, was entered by Caleb Crosswell on Nov. 28, 1852. The Nekoosa Paper Mill is on Government Lot 5, Section 10, and Market Street is on Government Lot 6 and in the southeast of the northwest quarter of Section 10.

"Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wakeley came to Pointe Basse in June, 1837, from the state of New York. They came down the Susquehanna River on a raft of lumber. Wakeley sold his lumber at Cincinnati, Ohio, from which place they went by steam to Prairie du Chien and then to Portage, Wis., by boat. They poled up the Wisconsin from Portage to Pointe Basse in a keel boat owned by Daniel Whitney. Mr. Wakeley told me that the Whitney mill at Pointe Basse was built four or five years before he arrived. In the winter of 1839 he went to Wausau with George Kline and a Mr. Draper and he moved back to Pointe Basse in 1840 or '41 and had lived there ever since. Robert Wakeley was born April 15, 1808 and died Feb. 18, 1893. His wife Mary was born April 4, 1812, and died Dec. 24, 1887.

"The Government plat by Hathaway, the surveyor, shows the Wakeley Tavern near the center of Section 15, just above where the lower ferry lands on the left bank or east side. The plat also shows the town marked Pointe Basse. The only means of crossing the river at Pointe Basse by team was on the ice or by fording the river at low water.

"I presume that many residents of Nekoosa are not aware that Pointe Basse was at a very early date the rendezvous of many Indians. In those early days deer were very plentiful. There were many fur bearing animals such as mink, martin, beaver, skunk, racoon and wolves. Fish were very plentiful, especially on the rapids. Bass, pike, pickerel, sturgeon and 'muskie' were in abundance. Along the banks grew large quantities of blueberries, wintergreen and cranberries.

"In 1870 during my stay at Whitney Rapids picking cranberries in what is now the village of Nekoosa, I first inspected the Indian line of earth breastworks, extending from the Wood road as far as the Mans farm. At that time the works were from two to three feet high of earth and were about a mile in length and back from the river from 70 to 80 rods.

"Moses M. Strong, now deceased, was a well known lawyer of Mineral Point, Wis., and in an early day was interested in numerous water powers along the Wisconsin River. Mr. Strong became interested in the Whitney Rapids water power in Section 10, just above Pointe Basse, about 1853. In December, 1854, he purchased a one-half interest in the Whitney Rapids power from Daniel Whitney, and in August, 1857, he bought the other half from Whitney. On Jan. 25, 1858, Strong sold the power for \$40,000 to the Nekoosa Lumbering Company, a corporation created by an act of the legislature of Wisconsin and approved March 28, 1858. This lumber company was capitalized at \$500,000. The company built a dam across the river a short distance above where the present dam is located. Shortly after the dam was built and before the mill was erected high water took out a part of the dam. This was about 1860 or '61 and soon thereafter the company became bankrupt and nothing more was done with this valuable water power

until March, 1893. After the company failed Strong secured control of the property and at that time refused to sell the power for \$10,000 and held it for 30 years, and only received a few barrels of cranberries as dividends from the marshes that were in what is now the village of Nekoosa.

"On June 28, 1887, Strong gave me a six months' option on the power and the 1,000 acres of land for \$5,500. On Dec. 31, 1887, I bought the whole property for \$4,500 in the name of my brother Frank and myself. On Nov. 17, 1888, we sold the property to the Hon. Thomas E. Nash for \$8,000, and on March 3, 1893, Nash transferred the property to the \$350,000 Nekoosa Paper Co. for \$50,000 worth of capital stock of said company.

"An exceptionally good map or plat of a town site marked Nekoosa is on file in the office of the register of deeds of Wood County. The plat covers the land on the east side from Swallow Rock south and east in Government Lot 2, Sections 10, 11, 14 and 15. (See 'Old Plat of Nekoosa the First,') Saratoga Township, Standard Atlas of Wood County, Wis., by Geo. A. Ogle & Co., Chicago, 1909." Note.—This first plat was not settled.

"The Pointe Basse Cemetery was located on the bluff just east of the upper ferry landing. The lumbermen of the Wisconsin River organized a company known as the Wisconsin River Improvement Company for the purpose of building wing dams in the river to facilitate the running of lumber through the rapids with more safety for the lumber and the lives of the raftsmen. The Improvement Company collected toll; the fee was on a graduated scale and was by the 1,000 feet according to the distance. There were a number of these wing dams on the Whitney Rapids, one near the mouth of Moccasin Creek, one near the east end of Market Street, one opposite Swallow Rock, one near where the mill now is and one near the foot of the island below the dam. The most of these wing dams were constructed about 1870. There is about a 23-foot fall in the Whitney Rapids. John Rablin, now deceased, who came to Grand Rapids in 1856, built a steam shingle mill on the east side, near the first island below the ferry landing in Section 15, and also a line of piers in the river extending up the river from the mill to the west bank near Mrs. Lytle's home. This mill was only operated two or three summers.

"About 1871 my father (Joseph Wood) and an attorney, Levi P. Powers of this city, now deceased, commenced to cultivate the wild cranberry marshes running from the Wood road and west of the Lutheran church northwest to Lynn Creek. They built a house and dug a ditch from the river where the paper mill now is up to Lynn Creek and built a dam across the creek to turn the water down the ditch. Powers and Wood leased a part of the marsh of Mr. Strong. This cranberry venture was not a success, as fire destroyed the marsh and buildings and the venture was finally given up.

"I do not know the year that the two steamboats operated on the Wisconsin between Pointe Basse and Prairie du Chien. Beavers made their homes in the vicinity. In 1871 when we began operations to build the cranberry marsh we found a very substantial beaver dam 60 to 70 rods long near the west end of where the railroad loop in the village now is. Nearly all the land in the extensive wood yard of the Paper company and west of the Lutheran church was where we picked our cranberries. Most of the freight for Grand Rapids and vicinity from 1857 to

1872 was hauled from New Lisbon 44 miles through the sand by four-horse teams on two-inch tire wagons, one of the Lisbon roads passing through what is now Nekoosa. The Green Bay and Lake Pepin, now Green Bay and Western, was completed to Grand Rapids in November, 1872, and the Wisconsin Valley Railroad, now the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, was built in June, 1873. William C. Trahern, now deceased, hauled lumber from his sawmill at Elm Lake on sleighs across country to the Wisconsin River and piled it on the right bank just below the tail race of the paper mill. This was about 1870. After the failure of the Nekoosa Lumber Company the town was dead and the leading store building at Pointe Basse was torn down and made into a raft and run down the river to Lone Rock, Wis., and made into a hotel.

"The plat of the first survey shows that Amable Grignon had a sawmill on Ten Mile Creek near Lyman Hammond's on SW-SE, Section 26, 21, 5. Ten Mile Creek is marked on the plat as 'Iron Creek.' The first lumber sawed at Port Edwards was in 1837. The Barnum sawmill on the Wisconsin in Adams County sawed its last lumber in 1876 and was burned in November the same year.

"When the Nekoosa Paper Company began to build its paper mill, the dam and a town, in March, 1893, there was not an acre of ground improved, or a building on the west side of the river between Moccasin Creek and the Manz farm at the lower ferry, a distance of two and a half miles. Mr. Strong told me the Indians called the Whitney Rapids Nekoosa, meaning 'Swift Running Water.' To show you the price of lands in that territory before the mill was built the following are some of the prices: On Nov. 21 I bought part of Lot 7, and the SW-NW and the NW-SW all in Section 15-21-5 for \$500. On Nov. 1, 1890 I bought the NW-SE and the S half of the SE Section 9 for \$200, and on Jan. 3, 1893 I bought the whole of the SW half of Section 9 for \$250. and on April 10, 1897 the whole of the NE half of Section ? for \$600. On Oct. 7, 1897, my brother Frank and I bought 50 forties of land at \$1.25 an acre. Thirty-three of these forties were near Nekoosa (Nekoosa is in Sections 3, 4, 9, 10, 15 and 16). Two of these forties were in Section 3, three of them in Section 4, four of them in Section 8, three of them in Section 9, 13 of them in Section 16 and eight of them in Section 17, all in 21-5. On May 20, 1886, I took a tax deed on NE-SE 9-21-5 for \$25. On May 12, 1897, the SE-NW 9-21-5 sold for \$100.

"In March, 1893, I built the first dwelling house in Nekoosa, on the Wood road about 100 rods west of the paper mill, and it was occupied by my nephew, Joseph Balderstone, and in the spring of 1894 I let a contract to Mike and Pat McDonald to clear and break a strip of land nearly one mile long of 60 acres at \$8 per acre on what is known as the Wood farm, which they did in a short time, using a 22-inch plow with eight horses, four of them abreast, and the same summer Louis Wakeley and Frank Ross built a fence for me around the whole tract, which was the south half of Section 9, 320 acres. The same summer I sowed the whole 60 acres to rutabagas, and I had some "beggies" too. I shipped most of them to Minneapolis and they netted me 25 cents per bushel on board cars at Nekoosa.

"The only wagon roads into Nekoosa at that time from the west were, by the Lynn road or around Moccasin Creek. The winter of 1894-5 I opened up the road through the swamp and the hill now known as Wood Hill at my own expense and the town of Port Edwards was very liberal (?) with me in giving me \$250 for a

mile and a quarter of right of way through my farm and all the work I had done in filling the swamp and grading the hill. On May 6, 1893, I sold to the Nekoosa Paper Company the SE of the NW of 10-21-5 for \$1,500. The Loop District and the depots are on this 40."

Mr. Wood's letter contained a few lines more, referring, however, chiefly to errors he had discovered in some previously published statements.

The first editor of the newspaper here was P. O. Winther, who about 1904 became proprietor of the Yellow River Pilot and Wood County Times, which had been previously published in Pittsville. Mr. Winther merged the two papers into one and after publishing it in Nekoosa under the double title until 1906, or thereabouts, sold out to L. A. Good & Son, from Rosedale, Ind. They in turn about two years later sold to L. G. Schaar, at which time the name of the paper was changed to the Nekoosa Tribune. On July 1, 1922, Mr. Schaar sold out to William F. Huffman of Wisconsin Rapids, publisher of the Wisconsin Rapids Tribune.

The Nekoosa State Bank was organized Dec. 13, 1913, by F. J. Wood, Guy O. Babcock and Henry E. Fitch, with a capital of \$20,000.00 and a surplus of \$5,000.00. Guy O. Babcock was president, L. M. Alexander vice president, and H. H. Helke cashier. The two first mentioned are still serving in their respective offices, Mr. Babcock having also been chairman of the board of directors since the organization. Mr. Helke held the office of cashier until Jan. 18, 1919, when W. A. Radke was appointed and is still serving as such. The bank owns its own building, a red brick structure, hot water heated, and provided with safe deposit boxes, which was erected at or before the time of organization, having been started in May, 1913. The capitalization of the institution has remained at \$20,000.00, but the surplus has been increased to \$10,000.00. A general banking business is done and the deposits amount to about \$250,000.00. The present board of directors (August, 1922) consists of Guy O. Babcock, L. M. Alexander, F. J. McGarigle, J. P. Nash, F. J. Wood and J. E. Brazeau. H. E. Fitch, now deceased, was formerly a member of the board.

The Nekoosa post office was started about 1893, with William H. Hooper as postmaster, and was in the building still owned by his widow, the lower floor being rented to Abel & Mullen, clothiers. Mr. Hooper's successor as postmaster was A. E. Lapham, who conducted the office in what is now the drug store of S. A. Denis. Miss Caroline Fitch succeeded Mr. Lapham, and during her management of the office it was raised from fourth to third class. After Miss Fitch left, S. A. Denis was acting postmaster, and was followed by Miss Mildred Nash, who also was an "acting," not an appointed official. Then Leon G. Schaar was appointed, who conducted it in the building that was the home of the Nekoosa Tribune. He resigned Feb. 18, 1921, when Mrs. Mary G. Helke took charge as acting postmistress until she was regularly appointed, Nov. 24, 1921, and she still continues to serve. On May 1, 1922, the office was moved to its present location on Market Street, in a building devoted exclusively to its uses.

A library was opened in Nekoosa as a branch of the T. B. Scott Public Library of Wisconsin Rapids, and when it had been well established, it was taken over by the club women of the village. It is now operated under the State Library Commission and the village makes an annual appropriation for its maintenance.

The Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church in Nekoosa was organized in

1893 by the Rev. Julius Bittner of Wisconsin Rapids, with about 15 members; Rev. Bittner served the congregation in addition to his regular Wisconsin Rapids church until 1901, when the first resident pastor, Rev. F. Selle, was called. He was succeeded in 1904 by Rev. Carl Krotke; in 1907 Rev. George Fierke came, and was followed in 1915 by Rev. Max Schliebe, who remained until his death in 1919. For about one year after this the congregation was served by the pastor from the Wisconsin Rapids church, and in 1920 the present pastor, Rev. Walter C. Meyer, was called.

The present church edifice was erected about 25 years ago, services before that time having been conducted in the residences of the members of the congregation. The building housing the parochial school, which is taught by the pastor and has about 20 pupils, was erected in 1902, and the parsonage in 1908.

The congregation now numbers 285 souls, with 190 communicant members. The Sunday school is flourishing, having about 50 members, with three teachers. There is also a Ladies' Aid Society, with 25 members.

The first Congregational services were held in Nekoosa by the Rev. William Kilburne of Wisconsin Rapids, and a church was erected which was dedicated Dec. 17, 1893. There were 19 charter members. The succession of pastors has been as follows: William Kilburne, May 21, 1893 to June 3, 1894; Abraham L. McClelland, June 9, 1894 to Sept. 4, 1898; Benjamin E. Ray, Sept. 4, 1898 to April 12, 1903; C. W. Pinckney, June 7, 1903 to March, 1906; William Short, June, 1906 to Sept., 1907; Arthur Cook, Dec. 1, 1907 to 1909; S. S. Forest, June 25, 1909 to Sept., 1910; G. A. Hood, May 24, 1911 to May 19, 1912; Edward S. Guilbert, July 7, 1912 to Sept. 2, 1914; Charles A. O'Neill, April 5, 1915 to the present time (Sept., 1922). In 1901, under the pastorate of Rev. Benjamin E. Ray, the parsonage was erected. In 1918 a basement was put under the church, and in 1922 one was put under the parsonage. The present membership of the church is 116. There is a Ladies' Aid Society of two circles numbering 75 members and the church school enrollment is 125.

The school in Nekoosa, known as the Alexander High School, with a thoroughly modern two story, 18 room, brick school building and employing 17 teachers, provides the village with exceptional school facilities. The eight common-school grades, kindergarten, and the four years of high school are taught. The building was erected in 1913 at a cost of \$52,000, the previous frame building, which was operated as a state graded school, being totally inadequate. An athletic field was added in 1920, the school board buying the three houses on the site and the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Company donating an amount of land equal to that purchased by the board. Playground apparatus has been installed, and, with the excellent gymnasium in the school building, the athletic facilities leave little to be desired. There are about 260 pupils in the grades and 120 in the high school. Manual training and commercial courses are offered in addition to the regular academic work.

The Nekoosa Chamber of Commerce was formed in May, 1921, the first regular meeting being held in June of that year. There are now 70 members, and the Chamber is active in everything pertaining to the welfare of the village. The present officers are: F. X. Grode, president; Frank McGarigle, vice president; Elbert C. Kellogg, secretary; and C. E. Treleven, treasurer.

In the center of the village is a beautiful park, which adds considerably to its attractiveness. In the park is a swimming pool, municipally owned, and which was constructed in 1921 through the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce. An automobile park, started in 1921 and opened to tourists in 1922, is adjacent to this park, and is said to be one of the finest in the state.

Nekoosa Camp No. 2376 of the Modern Woodmen of America was organized under a charter dated May 13, 1902. There were eleven charter members as follows: James A. Brooks, Thomas Brooker, John Buchanan, William H. Cook, Jacob Kuter, George McGregor, John Niscol, Louis Peno, George Preston, Albert E. Ray, and Walter Vannatter. The camp now has 84 members.

Nekoosa Lodge No. 295 of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows was started with six charter members, under charter dated June 5, 1895. The charter members were: H. E. Davis, Ross Lovelace, George Pratt, W. H. Cook, E. Casper, and Irvin Dunaven. The lodge now has 72 members.

Swallow Rock Lodge No. 39 of the Rebekah Lodge of the Odd Fellows was organized under charter dated June 7, 1900, with six charter members, as follows: William H. Cook, John Buchanan, S. L. Stevens, M. H. Lynn, Ada Buchanan, and Mary E. Cook.

The Beaver Reserve Fund Fraternity, Nekoosa Colony No. 444, was organized May 16, 1905, with 11 charter members, as follows: W. H. Mogg, F. A. Fischer, O. F. Law, O. L. Berger, W. E. Beadle, Percy George, E. C. Marshall, S. L. Stevens, M. Mollen, F. A. Richmond, and W. C. Hicks. They now have about 260 members. There is also a Junior Beavers branch with 96 members.

Nekoosa Homestead No. 3690 of the Brotherhood of American Yeomen was established with 23 charter members, May 12, 1912. There are now 60 members.

Court No. 1458 of the Catholic Order of Foresters, at Nekoosa, was organized Dec. 19, 1903, with 24 charter members; they now have 70 members.

There are two camps of the Royal Neighbors of America at Nekoosa; the older, Riverside Camp No. 1977, was instituted Nov. 23, 1905, and was granted a charter Dec. 7 of the same year. They had 22 charter members. Loyalty Camp No. 8868 was instituted Feb. 27, 1921, with charter dated March 16, 1921; their charter membership numbered 75.

Moccasin Park Lodge No. 296 of the Mystic Workers of the World was organized with charter dated June 11, 1900. The first master of the lodge was John M. Georges, vice master Fred G. Gahl, and secretary H. E. Reed.

There are also lodges of the Woodmen of the World and of the Equitable Fraternal Union, but meetings of these have been suspended for the time.

The bridge over the Wisconsin River at Nekoosa, carrying State Highway No. 13, is a steel and concrete structure 900 feet in length, and was built in 1915 and 1916. Previous to its construction transportation across the river was by ferry only. There are now three miles of concrete pavement in the village, all 15 feet wide except on the main street, where the width is 56 feet. The water supply is excellent; it is furnished by leased springs located at some distance from the village and is pumped to a large reservoir within the village limits by electric pumps with "remote control" apparatus operated from the village. Electric current is furnished by the Nekoosa-Edwards Light and Power Co., a branch of the Nekoosa-

Edwards Paper Co., with power house, electrically connected, located at Nekoosa, Port Edwards, and at the dam just south of Wisconsin Rapids.

Nekoosa has a volunteer fire department of 20 members, with a remarkable record for efficiency in extinguishing fires. It was organized Sept. 14, 1900, the first regular meeting being held Sept. 17 of the same year. The present officers are: Louis Koehn, chief; Martin Brandt, assistant chief; E. C. Kellogg, secretary; and J. J. Mlsna.

The Beppler Roller Mill, a 50-barrel flour mill, was established by Robert Beppler in 1919 as a stock corporation. Mr. Beppler is still associated with the mill. F. J. McGarigle is now president.

The Nekoosa Iron Works was organized as a stock corporation in 1918 by Henry E. Fitch, now deceased, and M. J. Power, to manufacture paper-mill machinery. Their product is gaining an international reputation and is marketed in Europe as well as in all parts of the United States. M. J. Power is now president and treasurer, Mrs. M. J. Power vice president, and Miss Ursel Power secretary.

The Nekoosa Motor and Machine Co. was also organized by Power and Fitch, but as a partnership, and not a stock organization. It does machine work, largely in connection with the Nekoosa Iron Works.

The company of Grode and Nash, a paper-converting company, was organized in 1918.

The Beppler Roller Mills.—This concern, with a capacity of 50 barrels of flour daily, originated in 1909 when Robert Beppler started a small ten horse-power mill, operated by a gas engine, in an old barn. A year later he moved his plant to the vicinity of the St. Paul tracks and made some improvements in the grinding machinery. In 1919 the concern was incorporated as the Beppler Roller Mills, with a capital of \$25,000, and the mills have since continued in operation, grinding all kinds of flour and feed. Electric power is now used and there are four sets of rollers. The incorporators of the concern were Henry E. Fitch, Frank McGarigle and Robert Beppler. Mr. Beppler is still connected with it, and Frank McGarigle is now president.

The Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Company, one of the largest producers of pulp and paper in the Middle West, had its origin about 32 years ago. The production of pulp and paper, now the most important one in central Wisconsin, and especially in Wood County, is one of which the pioneer lumberman never dreamed. In early days great quantities of pulpwood were burned or destroyed because of no apparent use, and the work of destruction went on for many years. At last a few men familiar with the paper-making industry saw the neglected opportunity, and in 1887, at a point now known as South Centralia, was established the first mill on the Wisconsin River for grinding pulp, the company being known as the Centralia Pulp & Water Power Co. A part of the old mill is still standing, and standing beside it is a magnificent and highly modern hydro-electric power plant—an instructive contrast between the old and the new. To the left of this splendid power-plant lie the ruins of the first paper mill erected on the Wisconsin River. This paper mill was a very important factor in the paper industry, but was burned in 1912. Modern methods have supplanted the old pulp mill, which still stands, seemingly conscious of its good coat of paint, content to rest because of its record

of having produced its thousands upon thousands of tons of ground wood pulp.

In 1840, when there was nothing to speak of at Grand Rapids or Centralia, John Edwards, Sr., with his associate, Henry Clinton, put up a sawmill at Frenchtown and began to make a record as its operators. This was the second sawmill for sawing white pine lumber to be erected on the Wisconsin River, and the third in the state, the first having been located at Whitney Rapids between Port Edwards and Nekoosa. The second sawmill for sawing lumber that was erected in the state of Wisconsin was located on the Black River, and was built by Jefferson Davis, later president of the Southern Confederacy. John Edwards, Sr., owing to the untimely death of his associate, turned the management of the property over to his son, John Edwards, Jr., in 1859, who continued in active control of operations in Port Edwards until his death in March, 1891.

In 1849 John Edwards joined the rush of gold seekers to California, where he spent nine years. In 1885, accompanied by his family, he revisited some of the old scenes of his mining-camp days. On this trip he met Lewis M. Alexander, a California banker, and through this meeting the only daughter of Mr. Edwards became the wife of Mr. Alexander. Mr. Edwards was much impressed with the ability of the young Mr. Alexander, which had been demonstrated in the organization of a successful bank, and a few years later he urged the young banker to join him in his operations in Wisconsin, which the latter did in 1890.

On Oct. 15, 1890, a corporation was organized known as the John Edwards Manufacturing Company, of which John Edwards was elected president and Lewis M. Alexander secretary. That fall Mr. Edwards was elected to the legislature of the state of Wisconsin and died in Madison, March 11, 1891. Mr. Alexander took immediate charge of the business. During that year he became associated with Franklin J. Wood, Frank Garrison and Thomas E. Nash, and others, in the organization of the Wood County National Bank at Grand Rapids. Mr. Alexander was elected its first vice president and has continued in that office to this day. The result of that organization was the association of the men above mentioned in the erection of paper mills in connection with the pulp mill at South Centralia; and in 1893 a complete paper mill was erected at Nekoosa. This was under the very able management of Thomas E. Nash, who was its president and general manager from that date until 1908.

In the meanwhile two very strong men from the Fox River Valley were taken into the organization, A. W. Patten and John McNaughton, and another, Col. William F. Vilas of Madison, former Postmaster General and later U. S. senator. In 1896 practically this same group of men built what is known as the John Edwards Paper Mill. All these plants continued in successful operation until 1908, when a new corporation was formed and all the properties of these three plants, together with the Nash Lumber Company's timber holdings, located in Ashland and Sawyer Counties, Wisconsin, were bought outright, and Thomas E. Nash was its first president and L. M. Alexander the first vice president. Owing to Mr. Nash's declining health, L. M. Alexander was elected to the presidency and general management in 1911. It is hard to tell which of these plants was the most successful.

The business ability and acumen of the Hon. Thomas E. Nash in connection with that of his son, James B. Nash, now connected with the Nekoosa-Edwards

Paper Company in its active management, has not been excelled by anyone in connection with the paper industry and stands out strongly in the splendid village of Nekoosa, which was Mr. Nash's pet and pride, and to which he contributed practically the sum of a human life to establish. What is true of Thomas E. Nash is also true of Frank Garrison, of the Centralia Pulp and Water Power Company.

Sound business principles and a high regard for discharging their obligations promptly, with a record of over 50 years of discounting their bills for merchandise or other material from the John Edwards end to the present, has made the growth of the industry seem like a fairy tale. From a payment of a few hundred dollars a year to a payroll of two millions of dollars for the year 1920, and from a force of 25 men to an industry working 1,200 people, has made the industry now controlled by the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Company historical.

Since the first operations were started in 1842 by John Edwards, Sr., a period of 80 years, there has been a record of nearly unbroken progress. Never has an honest debt been repudiated, and today the word of the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Company is as good as its bond.

In 1900 more of the Nash ability, and strength from another family, was introduced into the affairs of this industry. Probably Lawrence E. Nash is without a peer as a distributor among jobbers of paper. His reputation has reached every part of this country, and he has charge of the sales department of the product. The character of his dealings has been such that the integrity of the selling end is on a par with the financial end. His word is as good as a contract, and the Nekoosa-Edwards Company have never disregarded a pledge made by the sales department. In this work he has been ably seconded by his brother, William E. Nash, both of whom will soon round out their 25 years in the selling of the products.

For length of service and trustworthiness, the secretary of the company, Clarence A. Jasperson, has grown into the accounting and cost work, and is general manager of all the details of that part of the work. His steadfastness and ability have caused the utmost confidence to be reposed in him, not only by the management but also by the employees. He has been many times elected to positions of trust, such as president of the village, and is one of the most valuable aids in the conduct of the Company's affairs in the official family.

Judson C. Rosebush, of Appleton, Wis., widely known as a lecturer on political economy, and a man of affairs throughout the state, was the worthy successor of John McNaughton. He is vice president of the Company and is held in high regard by the entire official family.

In 1920 a radical departure was made in connection with the official operating force to better the economies and efficiencies of the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co. There had been a chemical laboratory indifferently operated for several years. During this year John E. Alexander, son of L. M. Alexander, had just graduated from the Armour Institute of Technology, having become proficient in electrical, mechanical and especially chemical engineering. He immediately organized a force for going thoroughly into the subject of the values of various woods suitable for pulp, and especially with reference to the use of hemlock which was more or less decayed. The result of this has been to reduce loss and wastes to a minimum to the corresponding benefit of the paper industry, and he is not only a member of, but a valuable contributor to the economies through the Technical Association of

the pulp and paper manufacturers of the country, through exchanges of valuable features developed by him. He is an inventor of considerable ability and has developed a revolutionary system of drying of paper by electricity in place of steam, as well as economies for recovering the heat in paper-machine rooms, and also the drying of paper by a vacuum process. He is a director of the company and takes an active interest in all its affairs.

The main offices of the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Company are located at Port Edwards, and include L. M. Alexander's office, the Accounting Department, Sales Department, Wood Department, Purchasing Department and Traffic Department. In 1920 a new building was erected known as the Mill Office, in which are established the Department of Industrial Relations, the Time Keeper's Office and the First Aid Room, occupying the first floor, and the second floor being occupied by the Engineering Department and the Chemical Laboratory. Mr. E. P. Gleason, at the head of the Engineering Department, is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and has acquired great ability in electrical and mechanical construction, and while having complete charge of the power department, has been of great assistance in developing the hydraulic and hydro-electric power of the Wisconsin River.

At Nekoosa are located the Nekoosa Paper Mill and the Nekoosa Sulphite and Sulphate mills, the main office being situated in a beautiful park, which is available to the public during the summer. Located between the paper mill and the sulphite mill are the wet machine rooms, the sulphate wet machine on the sulphate side, and the sulphite wet machine on the sulphite side. The office of the superintendent of the paper mill adjoins the Hydro-Electric Power Plant, and next to the latter is the wood room. The pulp mill, through which the visitor is next shown, produced enough ground wood to operate the Nekoosa Paper Mill. Next comes the beater room, into which nearly 100 tons of stock go every day, a considerable share of which requires handling by hand. Leaving the beater room, the visitor enters the paper machine room, which is the great production part of the mill, after which comes the finishing room. A large part of the products of the Nekoosa Paper Mills is shipped out in cut sheets, and the cutting, counting, folding and wrapping operations keep the crew in this room exceedingly busy. No matter how well the paper is made, good stock is used, and no matter how skillfully the machine crews put the paper over the machines, if it does not receive the proper attention in this department the Company suffers when the paper reaches the consumer. Such complaints, however, are rare, and when received, the wrong methods are corrected at once. On leaving the finishing room the paper goes to the shipping room, where it is labeled and prepared for shipment in accordance with the orders received.

At Nekoosa there are, as there are at Port Edwards, certain departments that play an important part in the production of paper, and yet do not handle the paper themselves, nor the product, nor the raw material of finishing. Among them is the Chain Gang and the Engineering Department. The task of the Chain Gang is to move any material that is needed from one part of the paper mill to another. The Engineering Department is responsible for the power used in the various mills. It has supervision over the hydro-electric power plants, the dams, and the steam power plants. In addition to this there is a large construction crew which looks

after the installation of large machines, the construction of new buildings, and large alteration operations. Like all other departments of the mills, it is thoroughly systematized, being divided into smaller crews, such as the mason crews, safety crew, pipe fitters' crew, carpenter crew and electrical crew.

Among the adjuncts of the Port Edwards mills are the Blacksmith's Shop and the Warehouse, the latter being called the Port Edwards Warehouse to distinguish it from the store at Nekoosa. It often handles over \$50,000 worth of material in a month.

The incoming and outgoing freight of an institution the size of the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Company is a very large item, and the expeditious handling of these commodities, the raw materials coming in and the finished product going out are handled mainly by the Yard Departments, each of which requires a crew under a capable superintendent.

At Port Edwards are operated two dining-rooms, at one of which alone are served nearly 700 meals every day of the month. The outside crew, under charge of foreman, Mr. Ernest Eichsteadt, has a wide variety of duties; among other things the farm operations that are a part of the community work, and which includes sowing and planting in the spring, cultivating during the summer, and the harvesting operations. As a phase of the farming operations is the work done in the community gardens each year, all the land in Port Edwards, Nekoosa and the South Side that is not otherwise used being set aside for the gardens of the employees, much of the vegetable products raised being taken by the hotels. The outside crew also has to look after and keep in repair the houses, of which the Company owns about 80 in Port Edwards and Wisconsin Rapids.

The Department of Industrial Relations, under Franz H. Rosebush and G. M. Hafenbrack, is primarily an employment bureau, but it is also more than that. It not only hires the men to fill vacancies, but keeps full records of their subsequent progress, their physical condition, transfers from one department to another, changes in rates of pay, and even such matters as accidents. If a man does not like the work he is doing, the head of the department takes the matter up with the man's foreman and superintendent, and if, after consultation, a transfer can be made to another department where he will find the work more agreeable, or where he can do better, the transfer is made.

The foregoing facts have been taken from the "Nepco Bulletin," a paper published in the interests of the employees of the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Co., the account being condensed from the Souvenir Edition, published December, 1920.