

You Created Your Own Entertainment In The Early Days

The brothers Gus and Herman Lemke, 505 and 506 Wisconsin street, respectively, came to Merrill in 1882 with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Lemke, and the other children of the family. They lived first on what is now East street. Gus, born in 1873, was nine years old and Herman, born in 1876, was six years old at that time. The family came to America from Germany in 1878 and lived near Watertown, Wis., before coming to Merrill.

While the senior Lemke went to work for Wrights, and later for Stange, the children went to the old Fifth Ward school, then a wooden structure, now the modern Franklin school. After about a year they attended St. John's parochial school where classes were held at the church about three blocks west of the fair grounds, with the minister as teacher.

When he was 13 years old, Gus started working for Wrights, taking away from a tip law. The next summer he went to Stange's, the latter having bought Mithill's, located where the Wisconsin Window Unit plant now stands. He worked on a flat saw in the billed department and got 40 cents a day for an 11-hour day. Gus worked for Stange for many years, with a brief interlude when he was with the Central Manufacturing Co., located at the present site of the High school. The sawmill shut down, but he continued until after the first World War, in charge of the planer. He then went to Ohioffs for about a year and following this was with the Lincoln Box until the factory burned down. He took a position as janitor at the T. B. Scott Free Library at that time, a post which he still holds.

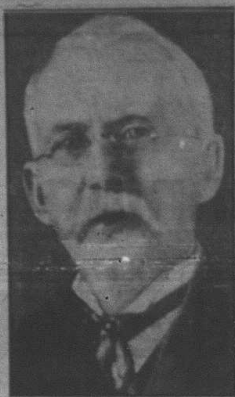
Herman, too, started out at an early age as a handy man in the mills, going to Stange's when he was 11 years old and later working at Anson's. The senior Lemke bought a farm in Pine River and Herman stayed there until he was 20 years old, when he went into the woods, working for six years sawing logs, driving team, fencing, landing and loading. In the summers he worked at Anson's. Herman then started doing carpenter work and is still at it, as he has been for 40 years.

Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Lemke were married in this city in 1896 and observed their golden wedding anniversary last year. Mrs. Lemke is the former Marie Pophal.

Mr. and Mrs. Herman Lemke were married in Merrill in 1903. Mrs. Lemke, who was born in the Town of Scott, is the former Martha Voels. The Lemkes recall the times when the sawmills worked day and night and the men worked 12, and later 11 and 10 hours, a day. At one time the senior Herman got 85 cents a day and there were nine in the family to sit down at the table.

There were times when men were willing to work in the woods for just their board and a few words clothes. However, slab wood and shingle blocks could be bought for as low as 25 cents a load of two to three cords; the butcher would throw in a side bone, all the liver you wanted, and some meat for the dog—all for nothing.

Despite the hard work, the Lemkes found time in those early days for fun. Out in the country they would gather at a friend's house; some one would produce a harmonica, a scordian violin; the furniture would be pushed to one side—and the dance was on. The young bloods thought nothing of walking a few miles to their girl's home, a few more miles to the social gathering, more miles to take the girl back home, and some



R. G. Kingsley, one of Merrill's early merchants and an extensive logging operator. He was the father of Mrs. E. D. Mahon.

final miles to get home themselves. With their home-made bob sleds they would coast from the top of Hathaway hill down to the old ice house, where the city garage is now located. There was a toboggan slide at Snake hill. Skating was popular and bands would play at the rinks on the river. The pier back of Stanges was a good diving platform and swimming was a favorite sport. There were sleigh rides and such games as duck-on-the-rook, snap-the-whip, pull-away and shimmy, to say nothing of the ever popular tag and hide-and-seek.

There was plenty of work in the early days, but plenty of fun, too, the Lemkes agree; only, of course, you had to create your own entertainment.

Glorious Fourth In Sixth Ward

Fourth of July celebrations in the Sixth Ward when sawmills were the mainstay in the life of Merrill, are well remembered by the men and women who were teen-agers 50 or more years ago.

On the mornings of every Independence Day, the boys from the Sixth Ward "borrowed" the horses and wagons from several mills—Gilkey & Anson, Merrill Lumber Co., Big Mill, etc.—transplanted a barber shop, men's store, and other types of "replicas" on the wagons and then had the fun of "showing off" to the people on many Merrill streets.

In the afternoon the people gathered in back of the Emerich & Staats store, where they had fun. There was the greased pole which many people tried to climb for prizes, the greased pig; and numerous other "honest-to-goodness" stunts, all of which pleased the thousands.

Dancing was enjoyed in the "bowery" in the afternoon and evening.

"Easy Money"

About the first money we ever made was carrying wood upstairs over Peterman's store to the offices of Phinney and Rubastu Insurance agents and Flett and Porter, attorneys. We'd earn as high as twenty-five cents for carrying a load of Anson-Hixon's kindling wood. It would take a good many trips upstairs with a bushel basket.



You Have But One Chance Every 100 Years, So Enjoy MERRILL'S CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

KING'S BAR

Jenny Village Of Less Than 1,000 Persons In 1874

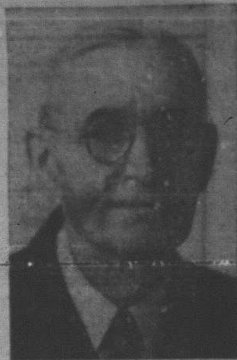
By Charles McCord

In the fall of 1874 I accompanied my father, Myron W. McCord, to Jenny, now Merrill. Father's mission was to establish a weekly newspaper, which, when born, was known as the Lincoln County Advocate, and now known as the Merrill Daily Herald.

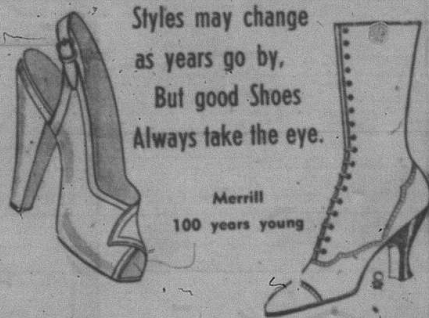
The first edition of the Advocate was published February 6, 1875 under the able management of Gus Griggs, who constituted the whole reportorial force. If I remember rightly there was no active editorial department, that being an unnecessary adjunct at that time and place.

Upon our arrival at Jenny we stopped at the Eagle House, situated on the Northwest corner of Main and Court streets, and operated by Z. Space and his good wife.

Jenny at that time contained less than one thousand inhabitants, probably seven or eight hundred permanent residents.



George Gibson, one of the most widely-known men in Northern Wisconsin. He was a logger and for many years operated a farm just a half mile east of the Lincoln County Home.



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Fred Runge, who for many years is in the mercantile business with his father.