

# I Remember When —

By Joe A. Chilson

Fifty years doesn't seem so long to one who has lived many years longer, but to me it is a long time and many changes have taken place in Merrill and many things have happened. It is fun to just sit and think of the changes and happenings.

How the kids used to go to the saw-dust pile at Scott's Planing Mill and haul sled load after sled load of shavings for bedding for the cows and horses for the winter. I remember when the crew of men worked many weeks moving the old warehouse sheds of the Scott Lumber Co. on to the present property of the ARSON Gilkey Co. I remember when they built the paper mill and made the concrete blocks right at the mill. I remember when Pete Lysen lived in the Scott Mansion and Laura Lysen (Mrs. Champ Hein) gave us music lessons. I remember when the National Bank building burned and we took the job of cleaning mortar off the bricks at 35c a thousand and earned about 70c a week from the wrecking company. We also took this contract to take out all the old paper in the basement and made the mistake of not knowing where to sell it and after we had it all out found out there was no market for it. I remember when the third grade at the Third Ward School was held in the old wood shed (this was done for years because of the overcrowded condition of the school, and we might add that the same condition exists in some of the Merrill schools today). I remember the old Kollock residence and the one story stone foundation adjoining it on the south, which stood for many years just west of the Second Ward school, and Fried's Livery Stable joined it on the west. I can just remember the familiar figure "Nigger George," about the only negro who was a resident of Merrill for any length of time. I remember many pleasant visits with "Pop-corn Dan," who went down on the Titanic. I remember when Harry Krom first came to Merrill and opened the store under the name of Krom Bros. I remember the big wind storm on the 4th of July when the frame building that stood next to where the Crystal restaurant now stands, was blown down. I remember when Charlie Fehrmann, nightwatchman at the Brewery, told us of McKinley's assassination. I remember when August Stange would come down to the County Fair and

would buy the admissions for the hundred or more kids congregated at the gate. I remember when Otto Zipp ran the Lake View Resort and had a howling alley out on the lawn. I remember when we used to hitch up the horse and drive up to Ripley Creek, (where the CCC camp was later located) starting out early in the morning, coming home late at night, and run in the Wisconsin river.

I remember the first trip we took up to Bloomville with virgin timber on each side of the road and only about two clearings between Barnes Creek and Bloomville. I remember Gottlieb Schroeder, Sr. when he used to sit out in front of what is now Greene's hotel. I remember Dan Kline, George Sturdevant, John Woodlock and John Sullivan (father of Bill, Gene, Art and Jim). I remember when Mrs. Willard had the Novelty store on the southwest corner of the Court House Square and the Green House was just east of it. I remember when the Merrill Manufacturing Co. plant burned and stood where the High School now stands. I remember when the street car ran off the bridge into the Prairie River and Harry Allen was in it. I remember when the Stack family lived for many years on the railroad right of way, where the Ringer Warehouse now is. I remember when the Indians made their annual trek through Merrill, all riding on ponies and carrying their cooking utensils, bedding and papooses. I remember when John Roche rented the land south of the Fair Grounds and I husked corn for him. I remember Mrs. George Daering telling about the forest fire in the town of Pine River, how she lay in the creek to save her life and that of her baby, only a few weeks old, and how she told of never having had a ride on a railroad train.

I remember when Mayor Rose ran for Governor and came up here to make a speech at the Grand Opera House and I remember the Uncle Tom Cabin show parades. I remember when I peddled the special edition for the Merrill Advocate and kid-like tried to get rid of some extra papers in a farmer's wagon, the wind was blowing strong and the papers were scattered all over West Main street. Fred Wright was mayor and he made me pick them all up. I remember when John and Pat Cotter came to school one day with vests (the first I had ever seen on young boys) and I remember how I

envied them. I remember when there was a hotel in the building which now houses the Kadake Hardware Store and for a while there was a Keeley Cure Institute there. I remember when we would go up to the butcher and buy a pound of round steak for 8c and get a chunk of liver thrown in, besides getting all the bones that we wanted for the dog.

I remember when Hone's Laundry stood at the corner of West Main and Grand Avenue, about where Park Way begins. I remember clearly the night of Ringling Bros. Circus unloading near our house, heading for the Fair Grounds where the tents were set up in the quarter stretch and preparations made for the noon-day parade. I remember when John Roche had a cable stretched across the river to the Braatz park and carried passengers over in wannigans. But of all the things I remember, probably none will linger longer than the memory of the log drivers coming down the river every spring with the drive, and pitching their tents for a few days across the street from our house—how the boys in the neighborhood never failed to eat at least one meal a day with the river "bogs."

## Facts Of Interest On Courthouse

Height of flag pole, thirty-four feet. Height of tower proper, from grade, 156 feet.

Height over all from grade, 192 feet.

Dimensions of tower above roof, twenty-two feet.

9,000 cubic feet concrete footings was used to support foundation walls.

25,000 cubic feet of rubble stone used in the foundation.

10,000 cubic feet of cut stone used in the building.

1,000,000 bricks were used in the building.

Striking apparatus of clock, 45-inch bell, weighing one ton.

Height of rotunda from floor to the roof is fifty feet.

The centerpiece of the rotunda floor has a diameter of eighteen feet.

Cost of the metallic furniture in the building, \$5,000.

Broke ground for building May 4, 1901.



Larry Alberts, one of this community's early farmers.



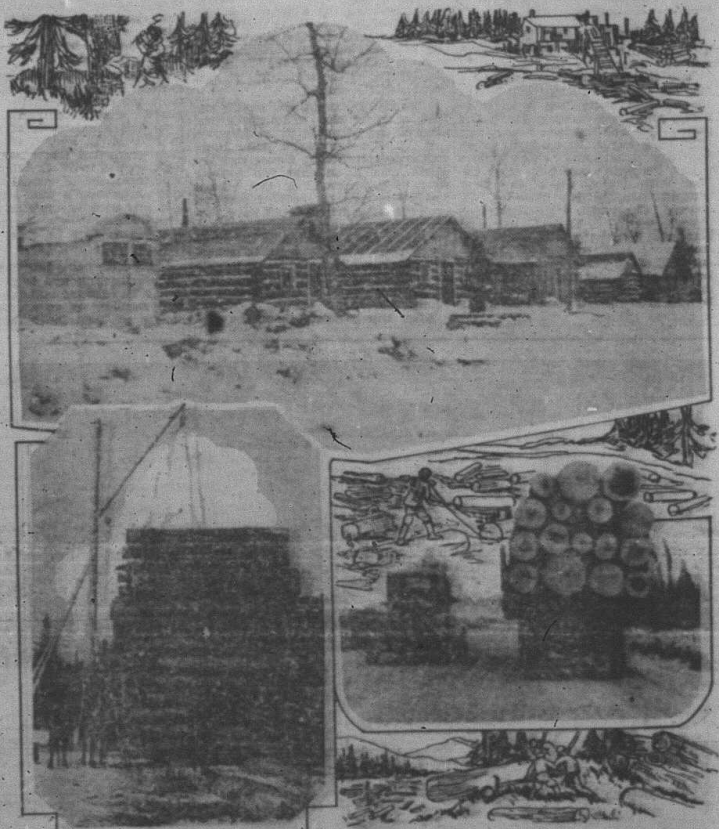
A. H. Schram, who came here from Plymouth in 1908 and entered the furniture and undertaking businesses.



J. N. Cotter, one of the early pioneers and prominent in the business life of Merrill up to the time of his death on July 9th, 1932.



Richard Drew, one of the earliest settlers at Bloomville. The name of Drew was closely associated with the development of the Town of Russell.



These are scenes of modern logging as compared with the operations of fifty or sixty years ago. Logs are now hauled to the mills on huge trucks over paved highways.