



MERRILL

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YOUNG

We join with the other business firms of Merrill in extending our congratulations to our city on its 100th anniversary. We are proud to be a part of this fine city and hope that we may serve her citizens for many years to come.

ROTHLISBERGS

SCHENZEL'S
STANDARD
SERVICE

YOU ARE CORDIALLY
INVITED TO HAVE YOUR
AUTO SERVICED HERE
WHEN IN TOWN TO
HELP MERRILL
CELEBRATE ITS

100th
Birthday

GAS
OIL
GREASE JOBS
AUTO WASHING
and
AUTO ACCESSORIES

CABINS

SCHENZEL'S
STANDARD
SERVICE

(Next to Holy Cross hospital
on Highway 51)

This is the first deluxe bus that operated in Merrill after the discontinuance of the Electric Street Railway. The driver of the bus is Henry Neuman. The lady about to board the bus is Miss Lydia Kirchhoefer.



View of the sales room and office of the Wisconsin Public Service Corporation taken in 1916. Those in the picture from left to right are: Art Sullivan, Nick Knudson, Grant Ford, Marion McClurg, and "Porky" Evjue.

Ward. This part of the campaign doubtless had its effect because shortly after, service was extended to this part of town by means of the first trackless trolley in the United States. It was felt that this part of the city could not be served by street cars with rails because the wooden bridges were not strong nor wide enough to stand the burden of the equipment. About this time Mr. King came back from a trip to Chicago full of enthusiasm for a new type of bus, operated by storage batteries, that he had seen in use between Carson, Pirie Scott & Company store and the depots. Mr. King persuaded Mr. S. D. Field, an associate of Edison's, prominent in the early street railway developments, to make a similar bus to be operated by a 500 v motor instead of the low voltage storage batteries. Lines had all been strung by the time the bus arrived. Mr. King was not satisfied with the bus. It didn't seem to be as nice to as good looking as the one he had seen in Chicago, but he accepted it and it was placed in operation in the Sixth Ward.

The spectacle of a street car leaving the center of the street and pulling up to the curb to receive and discharge passengers was a sight to awe its beholders. The bus was operated by a single individual on a pay-as-you-enter basis. It weighed three tons and had long flat springs and solid rubber tires. The latter two pieces of equipment were intended to add to the passenger's comfort but the competition with rough cobblestone roadway was too much for the bus and its passengers and after a few months' trial, the project was abandoned. The bus was sold to the Boston Railway Company and was placed into service there. Trolley buses today have been refined and improved but are essentially the same in principle and are a tribute to the pioneering instinct that created the first one in the country at Merrill.

In addition to providing the citizens of Merrill, with a means of cheap convenient transportation and serving as a snow plow in winter the street cars were put to still another

use. The cow catchers served a double purpose. A wooden barrel was mounted on the catcher, filled with water, a pail of salt was thrown in and two electrodes immersed in the salt water. The street car was driven to the front of the residence or building reporting a frozen water service and stopped. The serviceman grabbed a coil of wire, inserted one end in the barrel and ran into the house with the other end. With current secured from the trolley, the barrel acted as a rheostat for the wire run into buildings. Current was regulated by moving the electrodes.

The operation of street cars was abandoned in 1919 at the expiration of the original 30 year charter and bus service was substituted. Merrill once more pioneered in transportation developments. It was one of the first cities to substitute buses thru-out its entire transportation system. Three buses now serve Merrill giving 15 minute service.

A portion of the Street car rails were taken up two years later and used to build a narrow gauge railway in 1924 during the construction of Alexander Dam and the balance removed in 1940.

The first rural extension out of Merrill was the 20 mile 6600 volt line built to the Fromm Farms in 1926. Since that time additional lines have been built until today approximately 75% of the farms around Merrill are electrified.

In addition to the Merrill hydro plant two other major hydro electric plants have been built in the vicinity. Alexander Dam and plant were finished in 1925. The dam is built on solid rock with a 24 foot operating head. Three generators give the plant an installed capacity of 4200 kw. Original installations included automatic equipment making this plant the first full automatic hydro plant in Wisconsin.

The Council ground, park, adjoining the dam was donated by Public Service to the City of Merrill which later deeded the site to the state of Wisconsin.

The value of the lower Grandfather

or Bull faces as a power site was early recognized. Newspaper accounts as early as 1857 predicted enough power there to turn the world. A series of 3 logging dams were built by S. A. Sherman for the Wisconsin River Improvement Company in 1870. A dam and hydro electric generating plant was constructed at the Upper Falls in 1906 by the Grandfather Falls Paper Company of Merrill. Power was generated at 15,500 volts in 20 cycles and transmitted 12 miles to Merrill in a day when transmission of electric current over any distance was in its infancy. This plant became part of Public Service in 1935 and is now a part of the Grandfather Falls development.

As early as 1916, Public Service began acquiring land, water rights and flowage land for the development of the Lower Falls. Actual construction of the project began in 1936. It was dedicated by Gov. J. P. Hall, January 4, 1939. Full effectiveness of the 94 foot drop in the River is obtained by means of a 1315 foot double pipeline. The penstocks carry the water from the intake boxes at the end of a 2000 foot canal and 1200 foot channel to the lower plant. Two huge surge tanks dampen the surge of the river during starting, stopping and shifting load periods, protecting the equipment from serious damage. Two turbo-generators, one of 6210 kw capacity and the other of 11,000 kw, bring the plant's installed capacity to 17,240 kw. A 66,000 volt transmission line runs from the plant to Wausau 32 miles distant. The plant, largest of Public Service hydro developments, is completely automatic.

The Wisconsin Public Service Corporation has been operating the Merrill electric and bus utilities since the consolidation on June 5, 1933 of that company with the Wisconsin Valley Electric Company. Thru a network of high power transmission lines the three hydro electric developments in the vicinity of Merrill are connected with the Corporation's other generating plants. Unlimited amounts of current thus made available assure Merrill citizen of any amount of current they desire at any time, they want or need it.