

T.B. Scott Free Library
H.V. Kaltenborn Book Endowment Established



Mrs. Max Van Hecke, secretary of the Board of Trustees, of the T.B. Scott Free Library in this city is pictured receiving a check for \$2,000 from Norman Chilsen, board member. The money was a gift from H.V. Kaltenborn, noted radio commentator and former Merrill resident. Seated are, left, Mrs. W.H. Bayer, board member, and Mrs. Nathalie H. Scribner, librarian. Standing are, (left to right) Charles B. Walden, vice president, C.R. Livingston and Arden Mielke, members of the board. Other board members not shown are Dr. J.W. Peroutky, president, Rev. W.H. Kohn, Dr. R.H. Kleutz and Mrs. A.T. Curtis. The money has been turned into government bonds and the interest of approximately \$50 a year will be used to purchase books for youngsters through High school age. Money is being advanced from the contingent fund so that immediate purchase of about 40 books can be made. Books secured through Mr. Kaltenborn's gift will bear the imprint "This Book Made Possible Through the H.V. Kaltenborn Endowment Fund" and will be available about the first of the year.

Kaltenborn Gives Check To Create Library Book Fund

Former Merrill Resident, Famed Radio Commentator, Recalls Library Books and Benefits Derived

Norman Chilsen, a member of the board of trustees of the T.B. Scott Free Library in this city, announced today that H.V. Kaltenborn, famous radio commentator and former Merrill resident, had donated \$2,000 to the library for the creation of a book fund.

In his letter to Mr. Chilsen, Mr. Kaltenborn mentioned how as a youngster he profited much from the books he was able to get out of the library, and expressed the desire to help others enjoy the same advantage.

Mr. Kaltenborn's words recall that he spent the formative years of his life in this community.

Hans, as he was known to all, came to Merrill with his family in 1891, when he was 13 years old. It was during the "Golden Age" of lumbering. The settlers of the prairie lands to the west were clamoring for the boards that saws were ripping from the virgin pine logs that floated down the Wisconsin and Prairie rivers. Merrill was a lively place when Rudolph von Kaltenborn established his paint, oil and glass business here, and Hans entered the Merrill High school. (Continued)

(Continuing)

The gangling youth who was to become a broad-shouldered, nearly six-footer was a good student. History intrigued him and records show that his best marks -- all in the 90's -- were for United States General and English history, tho he was no slouch in the nine other subjects he studied during his two years at High school.

After school hours Hans worked for his father repairing broken windows, painting sash, unloading brick and selling paint. He was paid \$3.00 a week and he spent most of his wages on his hobby--bicycling.

He found time for fun despite his busy days. He spent hours in the basement of his home learning to juggle. Not having any Indian clubs he used Rhine wine bottles for his persistent practicing. They had the right shape but were more fragile. The fact that the floor was of sand cut down the breakage. When the young lads of the town --The Merry Merrill Minstrels put on a show at Berard's Opera House, one of the star acts on the program was "Will o' Wisp, Indian of Lighted Torches, by H.V. Kaltenborn."

In the late nineties the future journalist got his first whiff of printer's ink, a smell that was to be a familiar one through several decades. He did some reporting for the Merrill News and the Merrill Advocate.

Cycling was all the rage and Hans was in the thick of it. He was the Merrill Consul for the League of American Wheelman and on May 17, 1898 wrote a letter to the Advocate protesting an ordinance that would rule all cyclists off the city sidewalks.

The war with Spain, threatening for months, had become a reality. Hans enrolled in Merrill's Company F, 4th Wisconsin volunteer Infantry and served at Camp Douglas, Wis. and Anniston, Ala. He became first sergeant of his company, though its youngest member. He was perhaps the only man who covered the Spanish-American war in two languages. He augmented his Army pay by serving as war correspondent for the Milwaukee Journal, the Lincoln County Anzeiger and the Merrill Advocate.

He mustered out of the service on February 28, 1899 and started to see a little of the country before returning home. He went to New Orleans via Montgomery, Mobile and Pensacola. From New Orleans he took a river packet up the Mississippi and Ohio rivers to Cincinnati. From there he came home by way of Indianapolis and Chicago. He wrote long and often to the Advocate and his writings make fine reading today despite their long rest in dusty files.

Hans was back home and broke in May, 1899, and immediately upon his return he took the post of city editor with the Advocate.

Young Kaltenborn stuck to the city desk that summer, but with the arrival of fall he decided that living in a lumber town, he'd better get some first hand experience as a lumberjack. He signed up with a logging company and was off to winter camp on the Wisconsin river. Here he was placed in charge of the "wanigan," the store where supplies and clothing were kept. He continued to act as correspondent for the Advocate.

One night at camp, one of the owners, attracted by a light burning in the wanigan, decided to find out why valuable coal oil was being consumed at such a late hour. He stuck his head in the door and found Hans deeply engrossed in one of Shakespeare's plays, his lanky form draped over a pile of empty potato sacks. "Damn it all, Kaltenborn," he yelled, "if you'd read less and pay more attention to picking up potato sacks you might amount to something some day."

In Spring Hans came out of the woods, went to work for newly established paint and oil concern, and plunged into the activities of the Lake View Cycle Club, an organization that included most of the cyclists in Merrill. He was moving the spirit behind most of the events sponsored by the club. It was at this time that he completed a "Century Run," covering the distance between Merrill, Wausau, Antigo, Dudley and back to Merrill in ten and a half hours.

Hans suffered another attack of wanderlust. He didn't like the paint and oil business nor the work of a glazier. He realized the limitations of a small town; wanted to learn more about other places and their inhabitants. Stories of the great Paris Exposition fired his imagination; he wanted to see it before it closed--so he prepared himself for a cycling tour of Europe.

He studied French and pored over maps, guide books and itineraries.

Then he went to New York, making a fast trip to Niagara Falls en route. He hung around the docks in New York, when he wasn't taking in the sights and writing about them for the Advocate, and finally landed a berth as a nursemaid to a bunch of cows headed for England.

He made his bicycle tour of England and continued it through France, Belgium and Corsica. He worked his way and continued writing extremely interesting articles on famous people and places and of his many experiences.

Nineteen months after landed in England from the cattle boat, he landed back in Merrill, C.N. Johnson, the editor of the Advocate, recording that his European correspondent had returned on June 3, 1902.

A few days later, convinced that he could make good in the newspaper field, Hans took up some courses in typing and shorthand. In October of that year he headed for New York and fame--as a lecturer, journalist, author and radio commentator--eleven years after his coming to Merrill.

NORMAN CHILSEN

Loans and Insurance

TELEPHONE 625-W 214 SCOTT STREET
MERRILL, WISCONSIN

Nov., 23rd, 1945.

H. V. Kaltenborn,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Kaltenborn:-

I received your letter, enclosing check for \$2,000.00, for which I thank you on behalf of the T. B. Scott Free Library Board of Trustees, and also personally. Our Meeting date was just past, so I called a Special Meeting of the Board, which was held the 20th, and the endowment formally accepted. The Librarian, Mrs. N. Scribner will mail you a copy of the Resolutions.

Everyone was thrilled with your donation, and I ^{am} sure nothing you ever did was more gratefully received and appreciated. This morning I met with the Finance Committee, and we invested the money in Government Bonds. We are advancing the interest on this Bonds out of our Contingent fund, and by January should have approximately fifty Kaltenborn Books on our shelves. Each book will have a sticker attached, stating that this book was made possible through the Kaltenborn Endowment. This will mean that every year from now on there will be about forty to fifty books added to the Children's and Youth's Department, and in a short time it means several hundred books.

I had a picture taken of the presentation of the Check to our Secretary, Mrs. Pearl D. VanHecke (formerly Pearl Dudley, a daughter of old Henry Dudley). Under separate cover, I am mailing you one of these pictures, with a slip attached giving the names of the Members of the Board present at this meeting.

I noticed an autographed picture of you in Walt's office, and I wonder if I may presume to ask you for one of the same, to put in our Library. Sincerely trust you will favor us with your picture.

#2.

Walt is running an article on this to-day or tomorrow, depending on whether or not he gets the cut to-day, and he will send you copies of the write up.

Again personally thanking you for your generosity, I am

Sincerely,

Norman Chilsen

H. V. KALTENBORN
167 EAST 84TH STREET
NEW YORK 21, N. Y.
REGENT 4-3344

November 26, 1945

Mr Norman Chilsen
214 Scott Street
Merrill, Wisconsin

Dear Norman:

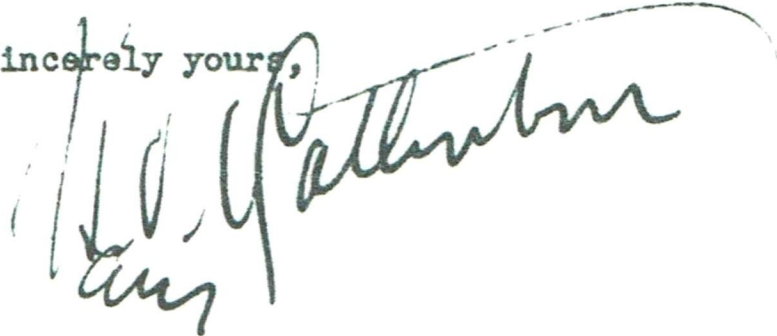
Many thanks for the prompt and efficient way in which you have taken care of my donation to the Merrill Library. I will acknowledge the resolution and the clipping when they reach me.

It gives me great pleasure to send a dedicated copy of my photograph for the library.

There is something very pleasant in the thought of being personally represented in a library whose books gave me so much pleasure more than half a century ago.

With every good wish.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "H. V. Kaltenborn". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "H. V. Kaltenborn".