


Volume 43

Number 3 & 4



Chips and Sawdust

A quarterly newsletter from the

**Forest History
Association of Wisconsin, Inc.**

P.O. Box 424
Two Rivers, WI 54241-0424

Fall 2018 — Winter 2019

Officers and Directors 2019—2021

Don Schnitzler ⁽²⁰²⁰⁾

President

301 S. Cedar Avenue
Marshfield, WI 54449
(715) 387-4044

Schnitzler.donald@gmail.com

Bob Walkner ⁽²⁰²⁰⁾

Treasurer

3103 Maplewood Road
Two Rivers, WI 54241
(920) 793-4010

anvils@charter.net

John Grosman ⁽²⁰²⁰⁾

8857 Abbylyn CT
Woodruff, WI 54568
(715) 358-0038

greenfire42@gmail.com

Arno Helm ⁽²⁰¹⁹⁾

167 Church Street
Merrimac, WI 53561
(920) 986-4044

Michael Sohasky ⁽²⁰¹⁹⁾

Vice-president

1435 Neva Road
Antigo, WI 54409
(715) 627-4025

sohasky@frontier.com

Bridget O'Brien ⁽²⁰²¹⁾

Secretary

1116 Ridge Road
Marshfield, WI 54449
715-387-8897

bridgetaobrien@frontier.com

Ed Forrester ⁽²⁰²¹⁾

2484 11¼ Street
Cumberland, WI 54829
715-822-4940

ed@theforresters.net

Robert Brisson ⁽²⁰²¹⁾

N529 River Drive
Menominee, MI 49858-9402
(906) 863-6850

rbrisson@new.rr.com

George Shinnors ⁽²⁰¹⁹⁾

Antigo, WI 54409

georgeshinnors217@gmail.com

**Visit the
Forest History Association
of Wisconsin website at:**

foresthistoriyassociationwi.com

Forest History Association of Wisconsin members interested in serving as a member of the FHW Board of Directors should submit their name, a brief biographical sketch, and contact information to:

FHW Nominating Committee Chairman, John Grosman
greenfire42@gmail.com

Chips and Sawdust

Volume 43, Number 3 & 4

Table of Contents

From the President's Desk.....	4 - 5
George Shiners to Fill Board Position	5
Three Board Members Re-elected.....	5
Wisconsin Rapids Host 43rd Annual Meeting.....	6 - 7
Fixmer, Connor and President's Awards.....	8
Kretz Lumber, Employee Owned, Quality Focused.....	9 - 11
New FHAW Website Released.....	11
From the Newspaper Archive.....	12 - 22
Early Mills in this Section Were Erected in 1815.....	12 - 14
State Owes Debt to Gebhardts for Undertaking Reforestation	14 - 16
Black River Falls Is Swept Away by Great Flood.....	16 - 18
Running Rafts on Black River Was Dangerous Type of Work.....	19 - 22
Are You Receiving the Monthly FHAW Woodchips.....	22
Honorable William Thompson Price.....	23 - 24
Basswood – from Timber and Wood Working Machinery	25
Membership Form	26
Board Members and Committee Members.....	2 and 27
44th Annual Meeting, Black River Falls Lodging Information.....	27



From The President's Chair



Dear friends,

Once again too much time has passed since I sat here penning a message to you. Typical for me though, the days, weeks and months have just flown by since we met last fall at Wisconsin Rapids for our annual meeting.

Since then, I have heard more than once, that the Rapids gathering was a great meeting with interesting tours and presentations, along with good company. I have to agree, it was just an all-around great meeting. On behalf of the Association, I extend our appreciation to local events coordinators, Arno Helm and John Berg. Together they did a wonderful job coordinating our visit and assuring that everything, the tours, presentations and meals, all happened just as planned. Thank you both for a job well done!

Based on feedback gathered at the annual meeting the board has since been working on several initiatives for the Association. First, Dan Giese, Bob Walkner and John Grosman working with Sami Bchini from Northeast Wisconsin Technical College have created, and now launched, a new website for the Association. Thanks Dan, Bob, John and Sami for modernizing the look, feel, and usefulness of the website. Details about the website will be found inside this newsletter. Be sure to check those out, as well as, the website and please provide comments and suggestions to our webmaster, Dan Giese. Second, John Grosman is leading an effort to expand the Association's role in education by renewing or establishing relationships among members of the Wisconsin County Forests Association and the County Historical Societies in the same counties. That effort is being met with interest and enthusiasm among our potential "partners." Lastly, work is progressing on the Proceedings for our 43rd annual meeting at Wisconsin Rapids. The draft copy should be ready for distribution to the speakers sometime this month for their review and approval. Once we have that approval or make requested changes it will be ready for a final board review; probably at the next board of directors meeting in late April or early May, and then off to be printed.

While board members have been busy, the board met face-to-face only once since meeting in Wisconsin Rapids. Several attempts to plan our winter's board meeting met interference with family matters and Old Man Winter, or both. Postponing the meeting until Spring arrived seemed prudent, and we are looking at dates shortly after Easter.

Discussion at that meeting will likely be lively as we continue to work to advance the FHAW's strategic planning efforts. There will be time for regular business as well. First and foremost on the list is the election of new officers. In an effort to better match talents and plan for succession, there will be some changes made among the current office holders. I have decided not to take another term as president, so let me

thank you now for the support afforded me while serving as Association president these past few years. I look forward to working with our new president, other board members and all of you as I continue in the Association as your newsletter editor.

An organization like the FHAW depends on volunteers with a willingness to roll up their sleeves and pitch in to get things done. If you're someone willing to do that, let me know and we will find tasks that match your interest and talents.

Details for the 44th FHAW Annual Meeting are being finalized now. Until they are finalized and released, please mark your calendar and plan to join us in Black River Falls, October 10th -12th for the 44th Annual Meeting. I hope to see there as we learn about the Forest History of Jackson County.

Best regards,

-- Don "Schnitz" Schnitzler

George Shiners To Fill Unexpired Term on Board

George Shiners, of Antigo, to fill the unexpired vacant board position remaining unfilled at the close of the general membership meeting in October.

George Shiners is an entrepreneur with business interests as diverse as an international concrete-breaking firm, a 3,000-cow dairy farm and a neon sign company.

Shiners, a Green Bay native, graduated with a UW-Madison psychology degree in 1961 and earned a master's in industrial relations in 1964.

Shiners is involved in a number of civic activities, including the Nature Conservancy, the College of Letters and Science Board of Visitors and the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Welcome George!

Three Board Members Re-elected to Three Year Term

During the October general membership meeting board members, Bridget O'Brien, Ed Forrester, and Robert Brisson were re-elected to serve an additional term on the FHAW Board of Directors. Their three-year terms will end in 2021.

Congratulations Bridget, Ed and Bob.



FHAW Board Members, left to right: John Grosman, Arno Helm, Ed Forrester, Dan Giese, Bob Walkner, Don Schnitzler and Bridget O'Brien. Missing: Mike Sohasky and Bob Brisson. October 2018

Wisconsin Rapids Area Hosts FHAW 43rd Annual Meeting



FHAW members dining at the Alexander House, Port Edwards.

Wisconsin Rapids, located along the beautiful Wisconsin River in the heart of cranberry country welcomed Forest History Association of Wisconsin members proving that this was the perfect place for our meeting.

The first local stop was the Alexander House, a Center for Art and History. Board members, joined by Nancy Turyk, UW-Madison, Division on Extension-Wood County, Nicole Filizetti, UW-Stevens

Point, LEAF program, and Scott Bowe, Kemp Natural Resources Station met here ahead of the scheduled activities to continue SWOT analysis discussions. When those closed, FHAW members and meeting attendees joined in to view the displayed artwork and historical artifacts, which emphasize local lumbering and papermaking exhibits. The House also served as the setting for our general membership meeting and dinner.



Philip Brown highlights early history of Wood County at the South Wood County Museum.



Spyros Heniadis, provides a guided tour of the Wisconsin River Valley Papermaking Museum.

South Wood County Historical Museum, housed in the former home built for Isaac Witter in 1907. The 23 room house since 1972 has served as an area museum. A basement display room featuring the logging, sawmill, and rafting history on the Wisconsin River was of special interest to our members.

A short drive took the group to the 100-year old

mansion that houses the Wisconsin River Valley Paper-making Museum as well as photos and history of the development of the dam on the Wisconsin River at Grand Rapids/Centralia and the beginnings of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Company.

Then off to Golden Eagle Log and Timber Homes, Inc. to view their model home, the show room, and different manufacturing areas. A factory area provided our lunch venue too; and an opportunity for a presentation on the history and products of the Golden Eagle Log Homes.



Chris Stitche, Golden Eagle Log Homes highlights customized items in the company showroom.



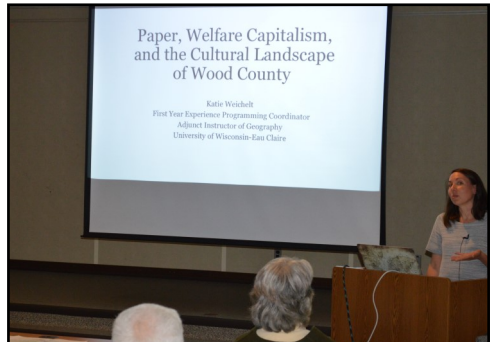
John Berg provides an overview to members before forming small groups facilitating more intimate experiences while touring each Point Basse building.

The afternoon was spent at Historic Point Basse where attendees experienced the only living history site on the Wisconsin River! Robert Wakely's settlement at Point Basse was at the beginning of the navigable Wisconsin River. Point Basse reenactors brought the preserved 1850s site back to life in the restored Wakely house, trading post, blacksmith shop and schoolhouse.

Friday evening's banquet and awards presentation was held at the Hotel Meade.

Saturday morning the conference continued with a line-up of four presentations at the McMillan Memorial Library. Phillip Brown, J Marshal Buehler, John Berg and Katie Weichelt each provided interesting stories about the historic transformation of the Wisconsin Rapids area.

The Associations visit to Wisconsin Rapids provided us a memorable 43rd annual meeting. Tours, presentations and socials provided for a fun, engaging and best of all, enjoyable experience for all.



Katie Weichelt, giving the keynote presentation, Paper, Welfare Capitalism, and the Cultural Landscape of Wood County.



2018 Fixmer Award Recipients, John Berg (left) and J Marshall Buehler (right).

Two Recognized with Fixmer Distinguished Service Award

J. Marshall Buehler received the first Fixmer award in recognition of his effort preserving and archiving of the records, documents, photographs, and artifacts of the individuals and their companies that transformed the forests of the Wisconsin River Valley.

John L. Berg also received a Fixmer award recognizing his effort researching and preserving Wisconsin's logging and railroad history, and ongoing support of local historical projects, societies and organizations in Central and North Central Wisconsin.

Connor Award Presented to Historic Pointe Basse Nekoosa, Wisconsin

To recognize past efforts developing this living history site as an important interpretive center documenting the transition from the dominance of the native Americans and the fur trade through birth of the logging and lumber industry in the Wisconsin River Valley.



Ron Harris accepted the Connor Award on behalf of the Historic Pointe Basse, Board of Directors.



Don Schnitzler presenting the President's Award to Bob Walkner during the 43rd Annual Meeting.

President's Award Presented to Bob Walkner

FHW president, Don Schnitzler, recognized Bob Walkner with a new award this year. As an expression of the Association's appreciation, the first President's Award was given to Bob for his many contributions to the FHW as Treasurer, Membership Chair, Speaker, and as a positive example of FHW member dedication.

Thanks for all you do Bob!

Kretz Lumber Employee Owned, Quality Focused

By Deborah Prescott
Great Lakes Logging, September 2018
Reprinted with permission

The Kretz Lumber Company, Inc. started in Antigo, Wisconsin, as a dairy farm with hemlock trees growing on the land. In 1929, the Great Depression was just starting and the Kretz family had to find ways to get by. A tannery close to the farm used hemlock bark and the Kretz family had found an opportunity: cut the hemlock, strip the bark, and sell it to the tannery.

"The Kretz family had to be frugal and instead of letting the hemlock go to waste after the bark was peeled off, they bought a portable sawmill from a farmer down the road," said Al Koepfel, Kretz head forester. "They used this mill to saw the hemlock cut on their property to repair the dairy barn. Other farmers did this and hauled their logs to the Kretz Farm to have their logs custom sawn for their own utilization."

Dan Kretz, third generation sawmill owner, obtained a forestry degree from Michigan Technical University before becoming owner of the lumber company.



The Kretz Lumber Company, Inc. is owned entirely by the employees that work there. In November 2003 a full management transition to the employee-owned structure began, and the company has been managed under complete employee control since 2006.

To increase the production of the small company, Kretz decided to add a second shift.

"He needed more logs for the added mill production, so he had to procure more timber for the sawmill," said Troy Brown, current president of Kretz Lumber Company.

"As far as my knowledge, that is when Kretz Lumber entered the timber business on a serious scale," noted Brown. In 2000 Kretz decided to

Because each person who works for Kretz Lumber is a part-owner, employees of the company take pride in their work.



The network of relationships Kretz Lumber Company, Inc. has helps the staff to get timber and logs hauled quickly. Upper-grade lumber is shipped all around the world, whereas lower-grade lumber is sent off to paper mills, bolt mills and veneer mills.

sell the company to his employees. After the completion of the sale, an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) was formed. Kretz remained president of the company until 2003. Since 2006, Kretz Lumber Company, Inc., has been under the control of its employees.

“In November of 2003, a full management transition to the employee-owned structure began,” Brown said. That’s when Brown became president of the lumber company.

“The company has been managed under complete employee control since 2006,” he added.

The Kretz Lumber Company, Inc., employs 83 people.

“We supply kiln-dried upper-grade hardwood to companies that manufacture molded trim for housing, cabinets, floors, window blinds and furniture,” Brown said.

Kretz Lumber manages timber and buys logs east of Escanaba, Michigan, up through the heart of the Upper Peninsula and into the northern and central areas of Wisconsin.

“For the most part, (we buy) where the glacier line is and north. This is where some of the highest quality hardwood in the United States grows, and we saw all the northern hardwood species that grow in this region,” Brown said.

The sawmill saws ten million board feet of logs into lumber. Once cut, the upper grade lumber is kiln-dried to a moisture content between six and eight percent. After the lumber has the desired moisture content, it goes through the planer and is shipped to the customer.

Wood remaining from forestry operations is sold to paper mills, bolt mills and veneer mills. Remaining wood from sawmill production is low-grade or residual product.

Residual products include bark sold to landscape companies, chips to paper mills and sawdust used for wood flour and smoked for food flavoring. Kretz Lumber Company sells the products to local markets.

“Right now, we run our sawmill 46 hours per week. Our stacker line and planer line run 40 hours per week,” said Brown.

With the many sawmills located within a 100-mile radius from the plant, Brown says the key to keeping ahead of the competition is relationships.

“We have a forestry staff that has carved a niche of helping private and public landowners manage their timberland,” says Brown.

The foresters at Kretz Lumber Company have forestry degrees and many

years of experience helping landowners achieve their objectives and improve the quality of their timber stands. They have exceptional relationships with loggers and haulers. This network, accumulated through the years, allows the staff to get timber cut and logs hauled in a timely manner.

Brown has seen changes in the industry from the days he piled and sorted lumber in 1986. The timber industry is affected this year by proposed tariffs.

“Prior to the existing tariff plan, 25 percent of the grade lumber produced in the United States was sold to China,” said Brown.

“With the tariffs outlined to be enforced at the beginning of October, things have gotten pretty quiet in the China market.”



Cants, boards sawn into dimensions thicker than three inches by standard width, enter Kretz's pallet factory. Lumber not kiln-dried is shipped to pallet and railroad tie manufactures.

New FHW Website Released

The Association's old website was put in place in 2004. Our webmaster, Dan Giese, did a remarkable job keeping posts current on that site, but outdated technologies and software were quickly rendering the site less user friendly for visitors and more difficult to maintain. As such, the decision was made to construct a new website.

Specification for the new site included:

- Move FHW content from the original Dream Weaver software and reconstruct the website in Word Press,
- Website friendly to users searching with mobile devices,
- Enable data collection on visitors and types of "use,"

- A new domain name more accurately reflecting "who we are,"
- Fresh visual appearance, appropriate Wisconsin Forestry photos,
- Additional drop down links,
- Ability to host images of historic logging and forestry scenes,
- Ability to register for meetings On-line,
- Capability to collect payments for membership dues, meeting registration, and possibly sales.

Check Out The New Site:

foresthistoryassociationwi.com

Send your comments/suggestions to:

Dan Giese, FHW Webmaster

dgiese8028@aol.com



From the Newspaper Archive

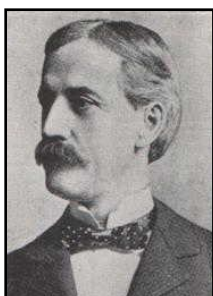


Early Mills in this Section Were Erected in 1815 and Steadily Expanded

Historical Paper by John M. Holley

*From the La Crosse Tribune and Leader Press, La Crosse, Wisconsin
8 January 1922, page 9.*

The important part that the lumbering industry played in the development of LaCrosse and the western part of Wisconsin is pictured in interesting style in an historical resume of logging and lumbering written by the late John M. Holley.



*John M. Holley,
1845-1914*

The early records indicate that as early as 1820 there was a small sawmill on the Wisconsin River and that another was established in 1835. When Jefferson Davis, later head of the confederacy, was a lieutenant at Portage, then Fort Winnebago, he did some lumbering along the Wisconsin River.

"About 1845 however, the business began to expand," wrote Mr. Holley, "and soon the excellent quality lumber and strong demand for it on the part of the growing settlements below, caused the occupation of nearly every available point, and the erection of more than a score of mills. Consequently upon the building of these, numerous settlements sprang up, several of which grew into prosperous

and handsome cities, such as Grand Rapids, Stevens Point, Wausau and Merrill.

Rafted Down Mississippi

"A striking feature of the work on the Wisconsin River was that practically all logs cut were sawed at the river bank. This was owing to the fact that the nature of the channel was such as to render the driving of logs very difficult. It is related, however, that in 1810 Abraham Wood and David Rowan built a mill at Baraboo, from which point they rafted their manufactured product, down the Wisconsin to the Mississippi, and thence to the ready markets on that river. This would indicate that some logs were run from the river above. In 1839, Henry Merrill took a raft of lumber from Portage to St. Louis, which was probably the first large enterprise of this sort attempted, in that region, though small rafts were occasionally run between local points. A careful estimate made by Mr. Clarke, who has been familiar with the river and its product for sixty years, places the total output of the Wisconsin and tributaries at 7,000,000,000 feet valued at \$70,000,000.

"The method of logging on the Black River differed materially from

that in vogue upon the Wisconsin. While on the latter mills were built near, the places of cutting, on the Black, owing to the facility with which logs could be driven, by far the greater portion of the cut was floated to the mouth of the river at La Crosse.

"From that point such as were not sawed in the local mills were run in rafts to points in Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri where, were located many of the largest and most flourishing mills in the Mississippi valley. Considerable uncertainty exists as to the exact date when lumbering on the Black began. It is claimed by one chronicler that in 1818 a French trader named Rolette built and for a time operated a small mill near the present site of Black River Falls, but nothing definite seems to be known of him or his work; the earliest pioneers of the region found no trace of his operations.

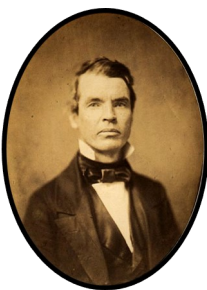
First Mill Built

"Black River Falls was for many years the only place on that river above La Crosse that attained to any degree of importance as a lumbering point. Many of the parties most interested in timber lands, though resident here, preferred to run their logs to La Crosse rather than saw at home and run the manufactured product to market. It was in the neighborhood of Black River Falls that between 1830 and 1840 a company of Mormons did some lumbering for material with which to build their temple at Nauvoo, Illinois. In 1839 Jacob Spaulding built, at Black River Falls, the first sawmill of which we have definite record, and inaugurated an industry which later grew to considerable importance.

"Increase A. Lapham, writing in 1846 of Wisconsin and her resources, said of the Black River, 'at the Falls about three million feet of lumber are

cut annually;' and John Warren Hunt, in 1853, made the statement that 'Wisconsin's four great tributaries to the Mississippi produced 122 million feet of lumber annually of which the Black furnished

15 million feet of lumber, or thereabout.' Forest J. Smith, for many years connected with the office of Black River Improvement Company at La Crosse, in 1897 made a careful investigation of the records of that office and found that the total output of the river, passing through the company's boom between 1853 and 1897 was 4,920,811,340 board feet. Adding to this 10 per cent, or 492,000,000 feet, for excess lumber scale over log scale; for logs cut before and after, record was kept. 250 million feet, for logs cut and used above La Crosse, 400 million and we have a grand total of 6,042,811,340 feet, the value of which may fairly be estimated at \$60,000,000.



*Increase A. Lapham
1811-1875*

Industry Hit by Panic

"Concerning logging and lumbering on the Chippewa, it has been difficult to obtain anything like a full account, but from such authorities, as were available, the following facts have been gleaned. Logging began in 1836 and continued in a small way until 1850, since which date the amount has ranged from 30,000,000 to over 1,000,000,000 feet annually. Many mills were built and operated with varying success at points on this river and its tributaries in Buffalo, Dunn, Chippewa, Eau Claire, Price and Pepin counties; and many flourishing

cities and towns sprang up whose beginnings were attributable directly to the lumber interests. Prominent among these are Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls and Menomonie. A large quantity of lumber was manufactured at the mills and no inconsiderable number of logs was run down the river prior to 1867.

"The panic of 1867 caused serious depression in the lumber trade as it did in so many of the important business interests of the country. A revival

soon came, however. Many sawmill men of the lower river had become interested in, the timber of the Chippewa country. The total output of this river and its tributaries is estimated at not less than 16,000,000,000 feet, having a value of at least \$160,000,000. and the territory producing these results had become one of the notably prosperous sections of the state.

State Owes Debt To Gebhardts For Undertaking Reforestation

by Mrs. Lewis Epstein

*From the La Crosse Tribune, La Crosse, Wisconsin
4 Jun 1950, page 17.*

Planted Trees Near Millston Consider Project Memorial To Pair

Because two young men refused to believe the old saying, logging will never play out on the Black River, Wisconsin owes a debt of gratitude to

George and Herman Gebhardt, who are among the first men in the state to undertake reforestation as an individual enterprise. As they were born and reared in Black River Falls, the Gebhardt boys saw the Black River carry millions of pine logs to the mills.

Coming into maturity and shrewdly considering conditions, these Gebhardts felt that some day the county would be stripped of its timber.

Recalls Runs

I have seen 50 million feet of logs rush past the town of Black River Falls in three hours on their way to the La Crosse mills, Herman Gebhardt now reminisces. No one believes that the Jackson county forests would ever be stripped; but on ac-



Reforestation Of Land near Millston about 25 years ago has resulted in beautiful timber areas today. Photo shows the drive through the original planting of trees made in 1904. This is at the George Gebhardt marsh, now known as the Treat-Harker Marsh at Millston.

count of the slashing of the wood for timber and the uncontrolled forest fires, the last log run occurred in about 1897.

When George Gebhardt bought a site of land for a cranberry marsh three miles southeast of Millston in Jackson county, he resolved to plant some pine trees to reforest his badly stripped land.

The first sizable tree planting in the state was made in 1904 when

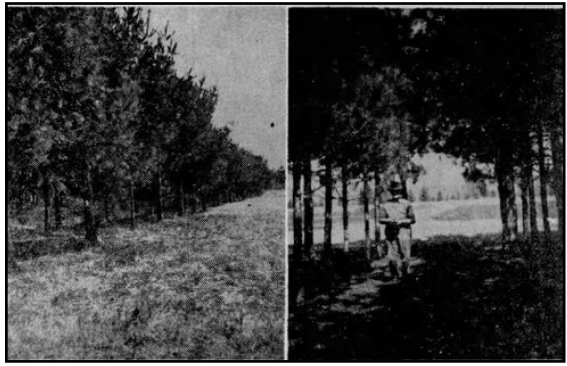
George and Herman Gebhardt planted 267 white pine trees at the Millston marsh. They dug up trees around the marsh site about two-feet in size, and planted them in rows six-feet apart. Only three trees did not survive the transplanting. This original planting has grown to a height of more than 50 feet.

Additional plantings were made by this far-sighted landholder in 1911, 1914, 1919, and 1924, making a total of more than 38,000 trees planted in an 80-acre tract. With the exception of the original planting, these Norway and white pine trees were purchased from the state nurseries at a cost of \$2 and \$3 per thousand.

Now A Memorial

George Gebhardt died 25 years ago, but his pine trees stand as a living memorial to a man who was recommended for honorable recognition as the first man in the state who had undertaken reforestation as a private individual.

The marsh and plantation are now owned by Clark R. Treat and William J. Harkner of Millston who purchased the land in 1932. The original plantation remains untouched. The unusual



Left is the Herman Gebhardt Marsh at Black River Falls. At lower right, Herman Gebhardt stands among his 25 year old Norway pines.

beauty of the forest is reason enough to let it stand as it was planted.

When Herman Gebhardt purchased his present cranberry marsh site in 1900, he, too, started to plant trees. Transplanting the trees from the intended cranberry marsh location, he made the first white pine planting in 1914. It now stands at a height of 40 feet.

Forest Drive

These trees are spaced 10 feet apart. By this arrangement, they enable a car to drive through the lovely Forest Drive. It is a sight that Jackson county summer visitors delight in seeing. The marsh is located three miles southeast of Black River Falls. There are between 25,000 and 30,000 trees in this plantation.

Gebhardt still takes the time and has the ambition to plant and tend his trees. He strongly advocates planting, not only for the pleasure of watching the trees grow and beautify the country, but also as a financial investment.

"If a parent planted a few acres of trees for each child when it was born," theorizes Mr. Gebhardt, they would materialize into enough timber to build a home for the child when he was grown.

The state has been keeping a close check on the trees in the Gebhardt plantations. William G. Morris, state forester with the Wisconsin state department of agriculture, has been making periodic trips to the plantations to measure their growth in diameter and height.

Other Plantations

Besides the Gebhardt plantations, there are a number of pioneer forest plantations in Wisconsin which are recognized for the size, growth, age, appearance and origin, namely; The Nye-Hayes plantations at Wascott; Walter Ware plantation at Hancock;

Louis Frank plantation at Prescott; Nekoosa-Edwards plantings at Wisconsin Rapids; and the state plantations at Devils Lake, Wyalusing State Park and Star Lake.

Inasmuch as the Wisconsin Conservation commission has been planting trees for many years now to replenish the dwindling supply of lumber and pulp wood in many areas, the full-importance of the Gebhardt plantations and similar projects is plain to see. These pioneers really understood the love of nature, the beauty of a tree and its value to the people.

Black River Falls Is Swept Away by Great Flood

Fifty out of Sixty Business Blocks and Eighteen Residences Carried Away In Torrent Released by Bursting Dam

*No Lives Lost; Damage is Over \$1,500,000
Principal Business Streets Now Form New Channel of Black River
Supplies from Nearby Cities Relieves Food Famine
Engineers Blame Construction of City Power Plant for Disaster*

*From the Marshfield News, Marshfield, Wisconsin
12 October 1911, page 2.*

Black River Falls — Only nine business blocks out of sixty in the business district of this city of 2,000 population have been left standing by a flood, which swept down the Black River valley when that stream, swollen by heavy rains, broke its bounds with the washing out of the Dells Dam north of Hatfield and descended in a raging torrent. Eighteen residences were also carried away by the flood, leaving that number of families homeless. No lives are known to have been lost. The property damage is estimated to ex-

ceed \$1,500,000.

Main and Water streets, the two principal thoroughfares of this city, were soon submerged under twenty to thirty feet of water. With the big buildings also went great chunks of earth. A hill of considerable size 100 feet from the river was leveled even with the surrounding land. Two companies of state militia, from Mauston and Eau Claire, have arrived and are guarding the stricken city against looters who begun their work with the receding of the waters.

The following business buildings, not including about 18 wrecked homes, were swept away by the flood:

Jones Lumber Company
Freeman Hotel
Journal Publishing Company
John P. Harsh Dry Goods Company
People's Drug Store
First National Bank
A.F. Werner, general store
Moses Paquet, saloon
William Robinson, saloon
Antone Rulland, jewelry
Monse Bros., grocery
City building
Ben Olsen, saloon
Quinbach, tin shop
John Tideman, restaurant
F. H. Lyons, barber shop
John Best Packing Company
Johnson Bros., gents' furnishings
Bouveran Saloon
Vincent Millinery Store
C. E. More, grocery
F. B. Dell, farm implements
Peter P. Stai, saloon
T. H. Nichols, barber shop
Locken & Lillehamer, shoe store
S. C. Skow, undertaker
A. H. Hagen, dry goods
Alec Galeston, barber shop
J. S. Schnur, grocery
A.J. Roisland, photographer
Spech building
Nels Hanson's building
K. I. Hanson, tailor
Miss F. E. G. Harmon, millinery
Riels Wall Paper company
Olson's Boarding House
Jackson County Bank
I. S. Hollenbeck, livery
A.W. Cole, livery
Falls House, hotel
Homestead Lumber Company
Merchants' Hotel
City Hotel
Farmers' Home Hotel
German Reform Church

The first appearance of the disaster was manifested when a vast area of water released by the Dells reservoir swept over the Hatfield dam, six miles below,

and aided in volume by the heavy rain of the night before, struck Black River Falls with tremendous force. The power plant withstood the onslaught for a time, but finally capitulated. The north bank of the river at this point resisted the efforts of the flood to wear it down, but the west bank, having a less slope, soon gave way. Business men, seeing that a general demolition of their property was inevitable, gathered a few of their belongings and made for higher ground. One after another, in rapid succession, brick, stone and frame buildings were undermined by the water and slowly crept into the river. One of the first structures to go was the Fremont hotel, a three-story brick building, which collapsed and disappeared in the torrent, as did the post office and bank buildings. All the money in the latter institutions was saved and is stored in the court house.



Flood damage at Black River Falls, Wisconsin October 1911.



In rapid succession, brick, stone and frame buildings were undermined by the water and slowly crept into the river.

The bulk of the stocks of the stores could have been saved had their owners heeded the warning sent them when the water broke through at Hatfield, but they refused to believe that the situation was serious until the flood struck them. Then it was too late to save anything but their lives. Helpless while their property was being destroyed, men went frantic, and all about out of reach of the water, single and in groups, people fell upon their knees praying the Almighty to stay the work of destruction.

Almost every scrap of food in the city, except that in houses out of the reach of the flood, was destroyed. Every grocery store and meat market and other food depot in the city is gone. With the residents facing the immediate problem of subsistence, Mayor McGilivray sent messages to cities of the state asking for aid. Supplies of food and tents were immediately sent from La Crosse and Eau Claire, where money is also being raised for the relief of the homeless and penniless here.

The city can never be rebuilt in its present location. In the business streets it is not merely a question of the subsiding of the water the river is

running through them. The new channel occupied by the river "goes through the heart of the town, the river bed having been moved northward about 75 rods and westward 65 rods.

What remained of the small dam at Black River Falls was dynamited in an unsuccessful effort to turn the stream back from the business streets into its old channel.

Fear was entertained here for towns further down the

river, but telephone messages from Melrose, nineteen miles from here with a population of 200, and North Bend, twenty-five miles away with a population of 100 contained the information that both towns were safe.

The defective construction of the municipal power plant is held by engineers to be partly responsible for the disaster. The concrete dike of the city dam, just completed, was laid diagonally to the course of the river, instead of at right angles, throwing the flood waters toward the business section when the torrent was released. Had this protective dike been built straight across to the side bank, the eddy through which the flood got its first opening into the bank where the business section was located would not have existed.



The eroded riverbank after the flood and a lucky home that escaped the rushing waters

Running Rafts On Black River Was Dangerous Type of Work

by A.D. Polleys

*From the La Crosse Tribune and Leader Press, La Crosse, Wisconsin
27 Feb 1938, page 2.*

Up to 1850 the lumbering business on Black River was in the hands of men owning and operating mills from North Bend to a point above Greenwood, their market largely at Mississippi River points below La Crosse.

That necessitated the rafting of their product and running it to the mouth of Black River before being assembled into larger rafts. It seems almost incredible at this time that rafts were floated over the rapid waters of Weston Rapids, Mormon Riffles, The Angles, Black River Falls, and Lower Falls.

The running of rafts was fraught with many dangers, as it could not be done over those waters only when at high stage with swift current. Only skilled men, cool and courageous, were entrusted to perform that work. Probably the most experienced and efficient among them was a man called "Black Yank", a nickname, brought about, no doubt, on account of his swarthy complexion.

He was little known, in the latter part of his life, at least, by any other name, and at this date is difficult to identify. It has been established, however, that his name was James McLaughlin, and that he came onto the



Black River rapids located between Black River Falls and Neillsville known as the Mormon Riffles. Credit: <http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wisconsin-pineries-the-black-river/>

river before 1849. He had an interest in a sawmill in Clark County in an early day, besides owning land in Clark County.

At the election of 1864 he received votes for register of deeds in Clark County. At one time he owned land near Nichols Park in the town of Irving, Jackson County. Probably his last business venture was a sawmill in Morrison Creek, a few miles above the falls.

That mill was running as late as the late 70s. He was one of the best and most fearless raft pilots on the river. He would pilot rafts over the Falls with as little concern as he would walk the streets.

Rafts after passing over the lower Falls, were assembled into larger ones to go on down the river. The sawmill of McLaughlin, or "Black



Lumber rafts on the Chippewa River. Undated.
Credit: <https://www.steamboattimes.com/rafts.html>

Yank", was made valueless by the Black River Improvement Company.

Although a retiring man, he was elected chairman of the Town of Albia, but through failing health, was compelled to resign. At the community fair held in Melrose in 1937, there was an ox-yoke on display, some of his handiwork. He had no relatives, and was cared for by the Levis family before his death.

Piloting below the falls was an easy matter, compared with going over the falls. Numerous men operated below the falls, among them being one Goodenough. Being an excitable man, he would go to pieces sometimes before his raft did. On occasions, when his raft would get out of control and begin going head on into the banks, he would shout to his men, "Throw the line, save the blankets, we are all gone to ____!"

That expression was used by rivermen on all occasions, serious or otherwise, for many years.

The sawmill men had a serious setback by the great flood in June, 1847. Some of the mills were swept away, together with their stock of logs and sawed lumber. Myrick's

description of it is given in History of La Crosse County, 1891. pp. 564-5.

"When O. H. Dibble returned from Black River in 1845, he reported to me that he had found a good mill site on the west fork of Black River (now Wedges Creek), about a mile up and persuaded us to go in partnership and put up a sawmill.

"I went to St. Louis and purchased the machinery and irons for it,

and sent men and supplies up, and Mr. Dibble went up in charge of the outfit. A double sash sawmill was built, and got running in the summer of 1846.

"In the fall of 1845 myself and wife went East, and spent the winter with friends, returning to La Crosse the following April. . . .

"While absent, the erection of the sawmill on Black River, under the supervision of Mr. Dibble, progressed very slowly and soon after my return I went up to the mill to see how they were getting along, as there was some dissatisfaction in the manner in which the work was being done.

"Mr. Dibble drew out of the concern. I paid him for his services and he left the country. In two or three months the mill was completed, and commenced sawing lumber. The river being low, no lumber was run out that season.

"In the spring the mill was started to sawing; about 300 feet of lumber was rafted, but there was not sufficient rise of water to run it out of the then unimproved river, and it lay tied up to the bank a little way below the mill.

"In the latter part of June I went up to the mill on horseback to see how things were getting along. I found lumber rafted as above stated, and between 300 and 400 thousand feet piled up 15 or 20 feet high along the banks of the river, and everything was going along satisfactorily.

"After remaining three or four days, I started back to La Crosse. The river was very low at that time, and one could, in places above the forks, cross the river by stepping from one stone to another. The first night I stayed at Mr. Nichol's mill, several miles below the Falls. I noticed that evening a dark cloud up the river, and there was a light rain there that night.

"The next morning was clear and bright, and I resumed my journey to La Crosse, and arrived there that evening. The next afternoon a man came down from Black River on horseback, and reported to me that there had been a very heavy freshet and carried away nearly everything on Black River, and that he was sent down to have me take men and go up to the mouth of the river above Black River Lake (later Rice Lake) and boom the river, to stop the logs and lumber from running into the lake.

"Doubting, I finally concluded to do as requested, got tools, rope, etc. and some men; paddled up in a canoe above the head of the lake into the river a little way, and found to my satisfaction that the report was too true, as the river had boomed itself with logs, lumber, shingles and mill timber for a distance of nearly 18 miles.

"It was reported that there must have been a cloudburst with the storm on the upper river, as in a few hours there was an 18-foot rise on the swift rapids where one mill was located, and was much higher in other places. There was not a boom on the river that withstood the raging waters, not a mill,

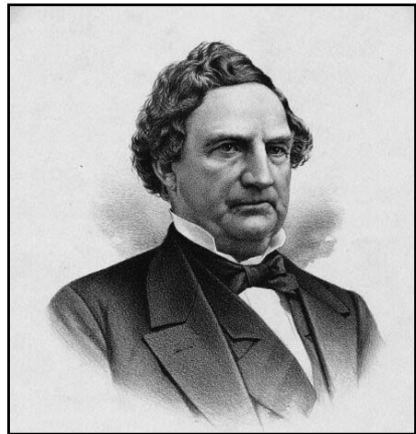
but what was more or less damaged. .

. .

"Jacob Spaulding's mill at the Falls was taken out, but the dam stood the test. In three or four days there were about 100 men at work, breaking the jam, and each owner of logs getting them out and separating them, according to their marks. When we got through, Myrick and Miller had three Mississippi rafts and Mr. Spaulding, seven. Mr. Spaulding went to St. Louis and hired about 100 men to come up and man the rafts to run them down the river."

The above is proof that the river was not boomed at the mouth in 1847, and was boomed first in 1848, as has been stated before. The above is also evidence that the first large consignment of logs to go out of Black River was the one brought about by a great catastrophe. It is not unlikely, however, that Myrick and Miller, general traders, might have bought up small parcels of logs from time to time. Such a conclusion is supported by the History of Northern Wisconsin (1881) p. 461, which says:

"The first Raft. In the fall of 1844,



Jacob Spaulding, founder of Black River Falls, Wisconsin. 1810-1876.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/91969088/jacob-david-spaulding>

the limited number of settlers were somewhat surprised at the venture of Myrick and Miller in floating, a raft of logs from La Crosse to St. Louis.

"Other early logging operations were described in History of Clark County (1918) pp. 112-13.

"The first loggers were the Mormons, who, in the forties got out timber for their temple at Nauvoo, and were afterward employed by Nathan Myrick, a La Crosse lumberman. The heavy loggers of the forties in this county were Nathan Myrick of La Crosse, and Jacob Spaulding, Andrew Shepard. Amos Elliot and William T. Price of Black River Falls.

"Amos Elliot, in a paper prepared in 1907, tells something of the operations in those days. In his narrative he states that he was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1822, and came to Black River Falls in 1845. Myrick was logging with Jacob Spaulding, on the river above Neillsville.

"Mr. Elliot hired out as an ox teamster to Myrick, who furnished four yoke of cattle, and board for men and teams, and paid 50 cents a thousand for the work.

"He left Black River Falls in September 1845, and went through where Neillsville now is, and found Henry O'Neill, brother of James O'Neill, Sr. building a shanty on the creek. Elliot logged the winter of 1845-46 on the

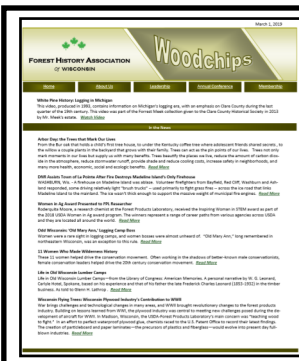
east side of Black River, above Cawley Creek, and the same winter William T. Price logged below him on the west side of the river, having his camp on the river bank.

"The winter of 1846-47, Mr. Elliot states that he went up the river from the Falls with Tom Wilson, an old Quaker from Pennsylvania, and put in logs for one, Grover, just opposite the mouth of Cunningham Creek; they stayed there all winter, without a letter, paper or communication whatever with the outside world. They had no stoves in those days, and all the cooking was done in the fireplace.

"In the fall of 1848, Mr. Elliot formed a partnership with William T. Price, which continued for several years. The winter of 1848-49, Elliot ran a camp for the partnership, putting in logs on the west side of the river, four miles above Cawley Creek. These logs were put in for Colonel B. F. Johnson.

"The winter of 1849-50, according to Mr. Elliot, the snow throughout Clark County was very deep, deeper, in his opinion, than it was some years later in 1856-57, a winter that has since been known as 'the winter of the deep snow'.

"In the fall of 1850 Mr. Elliot took a logging job from Andrew Sheppard on the east side of Black River two or three miles below what is now Greenwood."



ARE YOU RECEIVING THE MONTHLY FHW ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER WOODCHIPS?

Delivered by email to your inbox, on or about the first of each month.

To subscribe: send your email address to thefhaw@gmail.com

Honorable William Thompson Price

An excerpt from the *History of Northern Wisconsin 1881*, page 413

<https://ia800204.us.archive.org/3/items/historyofnorther00west/historyofnorther00west.pdf>



William T Price
1824—1886

To no single individual, perhaps in Jackson County more indebted for the development of its resources and the establishment of its most important industries than to him who is the subject of this sketch. He is emphatically a representative man of the county, the State and the Northwest.

Senator Price was born in Barre Township, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania June 17, 1824, where he received the limited educational advantages afforded by the common schools of those early days. When he had run the gamut of the scholastic curriculum accessible at home, he journeyed to Hollidaysburg in the vicinity, where he entered the service of a merchant in a clerical capacity, passing his evenings in the study of the law.

In the Spring of 1845, Price emigrated to the West and cast anchor at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. His stay here was too short for the fever and ague to deplete his energies, for in the succeeding Fall he removed to Black River Falls, where he laid the foundation of a flourishing business and a successful career. Immediately upon reaching the Falls he became a partner in a lumbering camp, six miles above Neillsville, and that year with seven men and one yoke of cattle obtained 700,000 feet of lumber in the rough as the results of their season's labor. In 1846, he entered the service of Jacob Spaulding at the Falls, as business manager, and in 1847, ran a logging camp on Hall's Creek in conjunction with Samuel Crawley, the latter with the assistance of two men "chopping," Price serving as driver and cook. An invoice of assets at the close of the season showed that the company had cut 1,000,000 feet of logs. In 1848, he retired from Mr. Spaulding's employ and became associated with Amos Elliot in a lumber camp in Clark County, where Price & Whipple erected a mill during the following year. Upon the dissolution of the firm Mr. Price engaged in speculations, hauled cordwood, contracted, etc., with profit, and in 1853, united with F.M. Rublee of La Crosse, in logging on Black River. The next year he removed to LaCrosse, where in addition to his engagements with Rublee, he opened a livery stable and established a stage line between that city and Black River Falls. The same year he returned to the Falls where he has since resided, constantly occupied in the business of logging, banking, speculation and politics. In 1856, he furnished means to establish the Jackson County Banner, the first paper in the county, since merged into the Badger State Banner, and was on the highway to personal and financial prosperity when the panic of 1857, took him at its flood and he was left as was supposed, hopelessly bankrupt, with liabilities aggregating \$50,000, and no available assets. But unawed by the outlook, he resumed the contest with fate as he had begun it years before, without capital and by the

greatest diligence, careful economy and adherence to principle, he was able seven years later to liquidate every claim held against him, dollar for dollar, with ten percent interest, an evidence of integrity characteristic of the man. In 1860, Mr. Price carried on the Albion Mills at the Falls with D.J. Spaulding, and upon his release from the toils of debt, resumed the business of logging, gradually extending his field of operations until today he is the most extensive individual operator in the Northwest. His logging camps are located on Chippewa, Black and Yellow rivers and their tributaries, where during the season of 1880-81, he employed a force of 500 men at an expense of \$100,000, for the season, and laid by a crop of 100,000,000 feet of old and new logs.

In politics Senator Price was a worshiper at the Democratic altar until 1854. During that year he in company with others who became disgusted with the squatter sovereignty doctrine of Douglas, and insisted upon an enforcement of the provisions contained in the Wilmot Proviso, left the Locofoco Lodge, and advocated the election of Moses S. Gibson, a Free-Soiler, to the State Senate in place of W.J. Gibson, the regular Democratic nominee. And here it might be observed that this was the first movement in Northwestern Wisconsin at least, if not in the State, looking to the organization of the Republican party, with which party he has since been closely identified, honored and honoring. Almost from the day of his arrival in Jackson County he has been made the recipient of official confidence, having served in the capacity of Deputy Sheriff in 1849 and 1855; member of the Assembly in 1851; County Judge in 1853-4; and a member of the State Senate at the sessions of 1857, '70 and '71, '78 and '79, and '80 and '81, and Presidential in 1868. During the session of 1879, he introduced a joint resolution providing for an amendment to the constitution of the State prohibiting the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors in Wisconsin except strictly for use in the arts and as medicine. The matter was referred to a select committee, and Senator Price submitted the majority report, supplementing the same with an exhaustive and unanswerable argument in support of his position, which was considered the clearest exposition of the subject ever presented in the Legislature of this State. In addition to these political preferments Senator Price was Collector of Internal Revenue from 1863 to 1865; and president of the Jackson County Agricultural Society for many years. He has been president of the Jackson County Bank since its organization, and president of the Black River Improvement Company, to which position he has been re-elected for sixteen consecutive years. In person Senator Price is below the medium height, with strong individuality expressed in the lines of his countenance, which is full of expression and indicates his capacity to invest what ever he narrates with a charm that is magnetic. He is a delightful conversationalist, full of reminiscences and stories that sparkle as a beaker of wine, and possessing a wonderful capacity to interest an audience, is considered one of the ablest debaters in the Legislature of Wisconsin. A man of decided convictions, he holds to that which he believes to be right, does that which he believes to be right and does it like a man. All who know him speak of Senator Price as the most faithful of friends, the most generous of foes, as a man whose integrity is as unchangeable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, and one who has done what he could to make the world purer, clearer and brighter, and to lift up the erring, the fallen or the weak and place him upon the platform of an independent manhood. Senator Price was married July 10, 1851, to Miss Julia Campbell, of Grant County, by whom he has two children surviving, a son and daughter.

Basswood

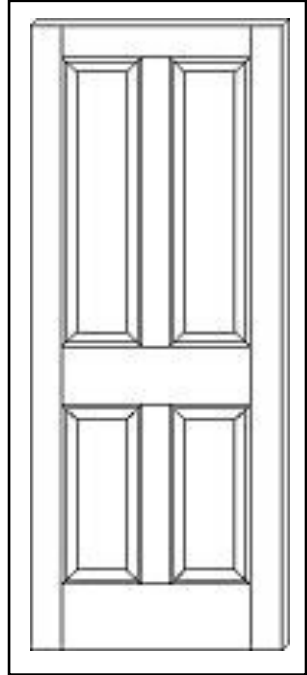
*From the Timber and Wood Working Machinery (a weekly Journal)
Volume X, December 28, 1889, Page 838*

Basswood is commonly ranked among woods as a scalawag. It is not so much of a scalawag, however, as some people think it is. For certain uses it is admirable. For organ keys, trunks, several kinds of small boxes, carriage bodies, woodenware, paper pulp, and for many articles which are turned, it is just the thing. In some sections of the country, as a matter of economy, it figures as a building wood, but when used on the outside of a structure, the builder in due time discovers that it is false economy.

A Wisconsin manufacture is making basswood doors which he sells as a No. 3, and calls them Linn, another name for basswood. Basswood is also known as linden, and in some sections, it is called the bee tree, from the fact, undoubtedly, that its flower is a favorite with the honey bee.

There is a curious story current in Wisconsin sash, door and blind circles that is worth repeating. A manufacturing concern shipped a Western customer a car or so of doors with basswood panels. It was probably an experiment to the extent that the doors were sent out as a feeler to ascertain if the average retail dealer in the "rowdy west" could tell a basswood from a pine panel. In this case he knew it wasn't pine, for on receipt of the doors he wrote the Wisconsin men asking them what they took him for? They didn't tell him what they took him for, but presumably before the letter was received a representative of the house started for the Western customer, and before the customer had time to make any complaint, the representative informed him that his house had made a mistake. It had made to order for an Eastern man a lot of doors with apple wood panels; by mistake these doors were shipped to this Western customer; the doors were expensive; the representative trusted that the customer would at once see the point, and so far, as he would correct the mistake of the house. The customer saw the "point," and promised to pay an extra price for the doors, and is probably dealing them out to builders as an extra choice article.

If the story is founded on fact it is a decidedly rich one. The worthlessness of basswood for some purposes and its value for others shows simply that it was intended that man should go around with his eyes open. If he puts basswood in a weight-bearing position, or makes a hand-spike of it, he will get left. But it is a necessary cog in the wheel, and if rightly used in the right place, the machinery runs along without a hitch. — *North Western Lumberman*.



Forest History Association of Wisconsin, Inc.

Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member and participant in the Association's program of developing the educational and historical aspects of Wisconsin's forestry and logging industry. Attached is payment for:

- _____ Student Membership (\$10.00)
- _____ Individual Membership (\$20.00)
- _____ Family Membership (\$30.00)
- _____ Non Profit Organization Membership (\$30.00)
- _____ Corporate Membership (\$55.00)
- _____ Individual Life Membership (\$250.00)

Other Contributions:

- \$ _____ Student Awards
- \$ _____ Capital Fund
- \$ _____ Operations



Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

Detach and mail this application with payment to:

Forest History Association of Wisconsin, Inc.

P.O. Box 424

Two Rivers, WI 54241-0424

44th Annual Conference

Committee

Don Schnitzler

Membership

Bob Walkner

3103 Maplewood Road

Two Rivers, WI 54241

(920) 793-4010

anvils@charter.net

Scholarship & Distinguished Service

Awards

Michael Sohasky

1435 Neva Road

Antigo, WI 54409

(715) 627-1025

sohasky@frontier.com

Newsletter

Don Schnitzler

301 S. Cedar Avenue

Marshfield, WI 54449

schnitzler.donald@charter.net

Nomination Committee

John Grosman

8857 Abbylyn CT

Woodruff, WI 54568

(715) 358-0038

greenfire42@gmail.com

FHAW Website

Dan Giese

976 Coppens Road

Green Bay, WI 54303-3865

(920) 497-8236

dgiese8028@aol.com

Annual Proceedings Editor

Don Schnitzler

Forestry Hall of Fame

Representative

Troy Brown

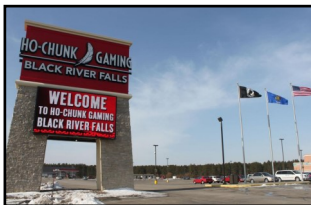
Troy.Brown@kretzlumber.com

Exhibits

Don Schnitzler

Lodging

Ho Chunk Casino and Hotel
W9010 State Highway 54
Black River Falls, Wisconsin



[www.ho-chungaming.com/
blackriverfalls/](http://www.ho-chungaming.com/blackriverfalls/)

Rooms are:

Standard Double ~ \$58.10/
Thursday

Standard Double ~ \$76.10/
Friday-Saturday

To make your reservation:

call the hotel directly at

1-800-657-4621

Ext: 66000

Mention

Forest History Association of
Wisconsin, Block ID 756

Guest Rewards

\$10 "Stay n Play" for each adult

\$5 food coupon for each adult

**44th FHAW
Annual Meeting**
Black River Falls, WI

October 10—12, 2019

Hope To See You There!



Forest History
Association of Wisconsin, Inc.
P.O. Box 424
Two Rivers, WI 54241-0424