You can find it at Westphal's

By Tracy Gento

It's Saturday night back in 1915, and downtown Fort Atkinson is open for business. McMillen Brothers' meat market is advertising Jones' Little Pig Sausages and Haumerseon Hardware's got a sale on square-headed nails. The smell of fresh baked goods draws some shoppers to Hiltbrand's Bakery for cookies and maybe even a chocolate ice cream soda.

But you don't need sausage, and you've already munched an apple at Frank Wickes' grocery store. What you do need are hair ribbons to wear to Sunday's church social, so you stop to see Harriet at Westphal's Dry Goods.

"The girls wore great big bows in their hair in the teens, great big ones, and my dad fixed a counter and a cash box and I tended to the ribbons," Harriet Westphal Vance, now 83, reminisced. "I felt awfully important."

Harriet was 14 or 15 when she starting clerking at the shop, located on South Main Street where the Body Image building stood recently, now vacant after going out of business. A pretty teen-ager, she, too, wore her own hair "pretzled" in braids with two large bows on either side.

Owned by her father, John Westphal, the dry goods store featured ladies' ready-to-wear suits, coats, dresses and yard goods.

"I was five years old when my father bought the store," Harriet recalled. "He had worked before on this side of the river at The Fair Store," said Harriet from her Sherman Avenue home.

"He spent maybe a year or more remodeling the store," she recalled, noting that the building had housed a hardware store. "He had a dress shop upstairs and the office was on the half-way level. There were high ceilings in the store, and an open office that went around and you could see down on the floor."

Harriet got started in the business early, stopping in at the store after coming home from Caswell Elementary School.

"I used to go down after school, I put baked potatoes in the furnace on the open door; it was a wood and coal burning furnace and we would put potatoes in there for dinner at night," Harriet said.

Harriet also helped out at the was about 17 in high school, we used to roll skates in the store. After school and before the high school in the morning, we would get out at five of noon before the whistle blew for lunch and then we would roll skates in the spring and fall; you could go faster.

"Some of the girls I went to school with lived on Adams Street, and they are way north and they had to walk. We swallowed our food fast."

Harriet continued: "Lots of times I would stop at the store and my dad would be ready to go home for dinner or lunch, and we would go along together."

She described her father as a "wonderful, wonderful man," adding that he would travel to New York and Chicago to purchase lines of clothing for the store.

"He would generally go for two or three weeks at a time, but one year he came home after being gone for only a week. He claimed of not feeling well and never gained back his health," Harriet noted.

John Vance came down with pernicious anemia. His ill health forced him to sell his store in 1921 to a Whitewater merchant.

Harriet has many other recollections about Fort Atkinson some 80 years ago. At the turn of the century, Fort Atkinson elementary and high school students attended school from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. And teachers were much more strict.

Believe me, we learned," said Harriet. "We couldn't fool around much. We spent a good many hours in school."

Students had recess, as they do today: "We used to jump rope and play jacks," she said. "Crotchet was another popular game; we didn't play it at school but at home we would play until we were just about blue in the face."

Harriet, whose blonde braids have turned a striking silver gray during the past eight decades, looks back at her childhood with fondness. She said children in those days had to use their imagination to create entertainment for themselves and their friends.

We would make paper dolls by the hundreds and we would sew for our dolls, too. We created our own toys," Harriet said.

Few children skip the stage of wanting to run away and join the circus, though, she noted. Perhaps venturing into space is a close second, but the circus still remains tantalizing. And that hasn't changed over the years.

"Our neighbors had a trampoline and other equipment," according to Harriet. "We would put on a circus show and charge kids pins, regular sewing pins, to see the show. We (Continued on page 62)"
Main Street still remembers

By Christine Blumer

The face of Fort Atkinson’s business district changes with the wind; ask 10 longtime residents which store was where when, and you’ll get 10 different answers, maybe more.

There are at least eight non-industrial businesses that were founded more than 45 years ago and that today continue under the same name or that are operated by the same family.

Two of them, Jensen & Jones, which was founded in 1914, and Roy Peterson’s barbershop, begun more than a half-century ago, are featured in separate stories in this section. The others are included in the following retail roundup:

Lorman Iron & Metal

The sign painted on the side of the barn-like building on South Main Street read in big letters, “Louis Lorman, Dealer in Junk.” Plain and simple. No advertising hype. After all, what more could one say about the product?

But one man’s trash was Louis Lorman’s treasure, one that helped build a business that continues as a success 73 years later.

Lorman, a Russian immigrant, in 1913 arrived in Fort Atkinson, where his aunt lived. His aunt’s daughter had married a man who was in the scrap metal business, and Lorman tried his hand at it, too.

He borrowed $28 from a cousin, bought a horse and wagon and started canvassing the area, knocking on doors, seeking to purchase old iron pieces. Sometimes he traded cloth scraps or small iron for a broom or spools of thread, though most business was carried out on a cash-and-carry basis.

Soon Lorman bought a barn in which to store the accumulated junk.

It remained at the South Main Street site until 1947, when he moved Lorman Iron & Metal to its present site across from Ralph Park on the city’s north side.

Louis Lorman died in the early 1970s, and the business was taken over by his son, Milton, who also was a state representative. Since Milton’s unexpected death at age 52 in November 1979, the firm has been headed by his widow, Barbara, who herself is a state senator.

Tuttle’s Pharmacy

For more than a century, there has always been a pharmacy located in the 100 block of South Main Street. It was E.E. Sheldon who founded a drug store there in the 1870s. That was purchased by Judd W. Gates, who operated Gates Drug Store for 36 years.

In the meantime, a Clinton man named Harold W. Tuttle was taking a short course in pharmacy at Marquette University in Milwaukee. After five years of apprenticeship, he passed his pharmacy exam.

Starting at a pharmacy in Solon, Ohio, Tuttle moved to Monroe. He later sold the business to a 50-store chain, but was not content managing and not owning his own business.

He bought a 50% interest in the drug store in Fort Atkinson on Oct. 26, 1931, and it has been in the family ever since.

Tuttle’s Pharmacy today is owned by Harold’s son, Jim, who graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1944 and went into partnership with his father. He became sole owner in 1962.

Also following in both his father’s and grandfather’s footsteps was Jim’s son, Jon, a 1965 Fort Atkinson High School graduate who received his pharmacy degree from UW-Madison in 1971 and became a registered pharmacist six months later.

Meanwhile, Trudy Tuttle manages Tuttle’s Hallmark Cards & Gifts, adjacent to the pharmacy. The shop, which opened its doors in 1973, moved to that site five years later.

Although there’s been only a few owners, the drug store has seen lots of changes in the years. Tuttle’s has served meals, and it had a soda fountain until 1951. There have been several remodeling projects.

Kent’s Ice Cream

Kent’s Ice Cream has been a favorite gathering place on hot summer days for the past 45 years.

In 1941, Oscar Vauboy opened Kent’s Ice Cream shop on Madison Avenue, naming it after his four-year-old son.

Vauboy, who was earning $16 per week making ice cream mixes at Carnation Co., said he figured he could make another $18 by opening his own business on the site. His wife, Mildred, took care of the shop during the day.

The Vauboys started with an $800 building, $300 worth of freezers and a $400 ice cream maker. When he finally sold his business to Art Nelson, Fort Atkinson In 1965, Vauboy had sold 10,000 gallons of ice cream every six months.

Nelson sold the business to Walter Ohlan, who operated the shop from 1964 until August 1980, when he in turn sold it to Jim Pfeifer.

Pfeifer, who in recent years moved Kent’s west to the former A&W, has made Kent’s known at fairs and events throughout the Midwest for his Ca-Calo Bars, giant ice cream treats.

Harriet’s

When Charlotte Hevey opened a millinery shop in 1924, she had no idea it still would be going strong 82 years later.

Charlotte, affectionately nicknamed Aunt Lotty by family and friends, was a woman with a good understanding of the business world. As owner of The Hat Shop, she was the first female member of the Fort Atkinson Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors in the 1940s.

Located for one year on Main Street where Milton’s now stands, The Hat Shop then moved (Continued on page 63)

Tailoring and dressmaking upstairs at Westphal’s.

Harriet: times change

(Continued from page 61) would use my bear and put it into a cage and a rabbit, a stuffed one I had. They weren’t real of course but they were our animals.

“We would get up on a bar and swing around and then hang and swing around. Oh it was fun, and everyone would come and watch. It cost more pins to see the animals,” Harriet recalled.

Another thing she remembers very clearly is a story told to her as a youngster by her mother, Lizzie.

“My mother had a very good friend by the name of Hattie and their window faces each other; they were real close. In those days, you had to take your sheets and hang them out your window so they would be fresh,” Harriet recalled.

“My mother would always beat Hattie, so Hattie would take her sheets and hang them out before she went to bed. My mother would wake up and Hattie’s sheets were already out, so she started trying to get up earlier each day to beat her. It took a long time before she figured it out.”

Main Street has changed a lot since Harriet’s days clerking in Westphal’s Dry Goods. A mental stroll downtown during the teens brings to Harriet’s mind Grandma Bowens.

“She used to sit and rock out in front of the old wooden hotel; Bowen’s Hotel, had a porch on it on Water Street. It was located where the municipal court building is now.

“She was called Grandma Bowens because she acted old and dressed old. She would sit under that porch (in the summer shade and rock and rock and rock and her daughter ran the kitchen part,” Harriet chuckled.

Harriet Westphal Vance

North down the street was the grave digger, Joe Kozner, she said, and “he had an old shack in the back where he would make these gravestones, great big ones, and leave them sitting around right up next to the sidewalk and he would chip away.

“He was very eccentric,” Harriet continued. “He had a cane and he walked the streets and people were a little bit shy of him and he was a little bit bashful. Joe was quite a character in town.”

Across the street was the Odd Fellows Hall, where Faith Community Church’s parking lot is today located. Upstairs was the dance floor where Harriet took lessons when “I was only so high,” she said, (Continued on page 66)
Businesses still going strong

A hundred guests turned out Nov. 19, 1915, for a testimonial dinner opening the Blackhawk Tavern. Hoard and Curtis sold the business in 1929 to Wisconsin Hotel Co., and on Aug. 9 of that year the Fort Hotel on the corner was razed to make room for a new east addition to the Black Hawk Tavern.

The renovated Black Hawk, which carried a $75,000 project price tag, was dedicated March 7, 1930. Information on the owners in the next 53 years is sketchy, however, the most recent included Rio Achilli, who purchased it in 1972, and the current owners, Jackson L. Logan, who with his brother, Jay, and their wives, have operated the Blackhawk Restaurant & Lounge since September 1993.

Frank Wicke's grocery store about 1900.

J.C. Penney
The first J.C. Penney store in Fort Atkinson opened its doors on March 26, 1922 on the west side of South Main Street next to the bridge.

It was just 6,500 square feet, small when compared to the 11,300 square feet of space in its location nearby today. Eleven managers have passed through the store since the first, William Steffins.

In the early years, clerks had to wade through stockrooms due to high water and flooding in the basement.

Penney's remained at the South Main location until a 1965 disaster left the store in ashes. Fire ravaged the recently redecorated building, gutting the interior.

It looked like the end of J.C. Penney in Fort Atkinson because headquarters had decided not to rebuild. According to the current manager, Jerry Helliger, Fort Atkinson spirit came to the rescue. The Fort Atkinson Area Chamber of Commerce and numerous residents circulated petitions and made phone calls to place pressure on the company.

Their perseverance worked.

Since it re-opened March 11, 1970, J.C. Penney has been located at 41 S. Water Street.

Standard Oil
When George Jones took over the Standard Oil station, now Jones Standard Service at 303 S. Main Street, gas was just 20 cents per gallon. That was back in 1903.

Michael Newcomb, who owned the station for a couple of years before Jones, said that in those days "rarely did they say 'fill it up.'"

Explained Will Krenz, an earlier owner of the station, "There wasn't that kind of money, only out-of-towners, those generally traveling to Chicago, would fill their tanks."

In the 1940s, Fort Atkinson residents went to the neighborhood station and got five gallons for a dollar. Self-serve stations were uncommon then, said Newcomb.

"For a dollar, we checked the oil, the water, the battery and washed the windshields," he said. In addition, the tires were checked for the proper amount of air and "We'd sweep the floors of the car if it needed it."

Other owners of the station have included Jim Vosburg and Bud Martin.

The station has been remodeled since Jones took over in 1903. It has grown from two pumps in the 1940s to nine pumps today. The station used to face Third Street and be a two-bay facility.

July 16, 1986
Lucien Caswell started banks

A bank is a place where the community begins to grow. The bank is the place to which you bring your hopes and your dreams and you leave with your hopes realized. The bank is the place to lay your money safely and regularly for 'the rainy day,' for retirement, a home, an education or the beginning of marriage. The bank is a great place to go and to know.

By Tracy Gents

"Everyone now on earth would have to live 500 years and work every second of both day and night and count $21 a second, just to count what $1 would amount to if put in the bank at 10 percent compound interest for 500 years."

So read an advertisement 60 years ago for The Fort Atkinson Savings Bank, one of the city's earliest financial institutions.

Unfortunately, no one was able to take advantage of such financial genius, for the earliest of Fort Atkinson's banks traces back only 129 years. Still, it was the third-oldest in Wisconsin and one of the first 50 banks established nationwide.

It was in 1887 that Lucien B. Caswell organized Fort Atkinson's first two banks: The First National Bank of Fort Atkinson and Koshkonong Bank, the latter of which failed due to the Civil War.

Caswell, an attorney, organized a syndicate: "I occurred to us that we ought to have a regular bank of issue under the state law. We filed with the comptroller of the currency, we filed the proper papers and procured a plate for the currency," Caswell wrote in the unpublished "Autobiography of L.B. Caswell," which is today located at the Hoard Historical Museum.

The design of Fort Atkinson's first paper money reflected not a president but rather, two Indians in a canoe gathering wild rice on Lake Koshkonong. A fitting name, for the bank circulating those notes was Koshkonong Bank.

It wasn't until June 3, 1864, that the National Bank Act created a uniform currency which stabilized the nation's economy. Until that time, banks issued their own notes while the government minted coins only. In fact, in 1860, there were 2,000 banks with individual notes.

"They issued $25,000 from that plate and with that bought $25,000 of South Carolina State Bonds," according to Caswell's writings concerning Koshkonong Bank. "For nearly two years we did a fine business with the bank. But early in 1863, Fort directors withdrew and Koshkonong Bank was moved to Jefferson."

A man by the name of Dr. Van Norstand wanted to purchase the Koshkonong Bank and did so, despite warnings by Caswell and his associates that the South Carolina bonds would depreciate quickly due to the Civil War. Norstand, who was convinced the war would be over quickly, insisted; he was wrong, however, and was forced to liquidate, causing heavy losses to depositors and stockholders.

The second bank organized by Caswell in Fort Atkinson, First National Bank, is the third-oldest bank in Wisconsin, having been founded in 1863. It also was one of the first 50 organized nationwide.

First National, which actually opened its doors in 1864, began by pooling $50,000 in holdings by 22 spirited citizens who petitioned the comptroller of currency for one of the first national bank charters in America. Early officers included L.B. Caswell, president; H.O. Caswell, vice president; L.B. Caswell Jr., cashier, and J.F. Schreiner, assistant cashier.

The bank was first located at 116 N. Main St. and then moved to 100 S. Main St., and eventually to its present site at 310 N. Main St.

It became First American Bank & Trust Co. in December of 1973.

During the early days, banks were open long hours due to the difficulty of traveling for depositors. Banks and merchants alike opened their doors at 6 a.m., remaining so until 9 p.m. And this was six days a week.

There was no "trot-up window," but banking services did offer the basics: regular banking, receiving deposits, making loans, advising farms and providing insurance.

According to early records, the bank's officers were cautious and for the first 15 years of its history did not lose even one dollar due to bad loans or investments.

First American today is among the top 5 percent of Wisconsin banks.

L.B. Caswell Sr., having had great success in the banking business, encouraged one of his sons, Chester A. Caswell, to found a state bank. He was also the first city attorney.

Citizens State Bank emerged in July 1884 with a state charter and capital totaling $25,000. Again L.B. Caswell had a hand in the forming of this bank. He encouraged C.A. Caswell to undertake the venture. C.A. Caswell became cashier and L.B. Caswell was on the board of directors. At this time loans were plentiful with an acre of land selling for a mere $20 to $40.

In 1937, Citizens State Bank, located on Main Street, was re-modeled and capital stock rose to $50,000 shortly thereafter. On Jan. 26, 1970, the doors of a new bank on Milwaukee Avenue, one block west of the original site. Today the bank is the second largest in Fort Atkinson.


"During the last half of the century there have been phenomenal changes in the banking business. We used to make real estate loans without requiring monthly or semi-annual payments on the principal.

The interest on the one loan which ran for 20 years without any payments amounted to more than the principal. Now very few real estate loans (Continued on page 80)
All things change but barbers

By Mark Ferguson

"All things change except barbers, the ways of barbers, and the surroundings of barbers. These never change."

Mark Twain penned those words in 1871, but they could just as well have been written by Roy Peterson today in summing up his almost 60 years as a Fort Atkinson barber.

Roy's Barber Shop, a permanent fixture at 232 Main St. since 1931, has stayed much the same as the day it opened, with its big front window and old-fashioned barber pole. Even the barber chair with its leather strap for sharpening razors remains.

"This barber chair was real old when I got it, but it still works," said 86-year-old Peterson, whose shop is Fort Atkinson's oldest continuing business.

Hairstyles have come and gone the way of the fads that brought them and Fort Atkinson has nearly doubled in size, but the clip-clip of the barber's scissors and the soothing coolness of talcum powder have never changed.

The soft-spoken and bespectacled barber will not venture to guess how many heads he's gotten to know in his long career, and the conversations that accompanied them, but he probably knows the hair — as well as opinions of Fort Atkinson residents — better than anyone.

"I've lived at a good time because I've seen a lot of changes," he said.

Peterson likes to describe these changes in terms of the avid sportsman he has been since he was a youngsters fishing the Rock River.

"There used to be thousands of acres of ducks out on the lake (Koshkonong) and now you don't see them at all," he lamented. "Those were the days when you could leave your gun and decoys in the blind, come back the next day and they'd still be there. Where K mart is now, I shot up to 500 bobcats and rabbits. It was nothing to catch fish in those days. And people did a lot of clamming, looking for pearls and selling the shells as buttons.

The walls of Roy's Barber Shop, jammed with fishing and hunting trophies, attest to Peterson's sporting skills.

"I've always said that there's been more fish caught and deer killed in here than in any other barber shop," he said.

Fishing and hunting stories or the latest headlines are often the topic of conversation among Peterson's customers, even when they do not need a haircut.

"It was the biggest fish I've ever seen," said one man who stopped by to recount a recent fishing trip to northern Wisconsin. "The big ones always get away."

"Some of those stories can get a little fishy," Peterson replied.

The passage of time is also noted at Roy's by the photographs of heavy flooding or deep snow.

"The 1929 flooding is the worst I remember," says Peterson, referring to photographs he has of high water along State Highway 29 on the city's north side and at the Bark River Bridge. That year the ice from Lake Koshkonong piled up on shore and wiped out a lot of cottages.

Peterson decided to become a barber in 1920 after short stints as a farmhand and trucker.

"I always wanted to be a barber," he recalled. "I would stand in front of a barbershop in Jefferson and thought, 'That's what I want to do.'"

The fifth of 11 children, Peterson was born Oct. 13, 1899, on a 130-acre farm about one-quarter mile from where he lives now along County Highway K between Fort Atkinson and Jefferson.

"I was kicked out of the nest when I turned 18," he said. "My dad said I'd better get a job on a farm and I did, but I think that was the biggest mistake I ever made. The farmer would get me up at 4:30 a.m. and I worked until 7 p.m. Then I had to milk the cows.

"I worked in a farm about three months and I got $1 a day. I said, 'there's got to be a better way to make a living than this.'"

Peterson and a friend, Al Bienfang, went to Milwaukee in search of a better job and found it in driving truck.

"I was making good money, but there wasn't much that we couldn'tjust go to a dance or a show, so most my money went into the West Allis Bank," Peterson said. "That's when I decided to be a barber."

Peterson and Bienfang quit their jobs and went to the Wisconsin Barber School. Bienfang was hired by a Rhinelander barbershop and Peterson ended up in Fort Atkinson.

"A friend told me they were looking for a barber in Fort," he said. "I started doing some work in the barber shop in what is today the Black Hawk Restaurant and Lounge. There were three of us working there. We had quite a business at that time."

"I'd get one-half day a week off and worked four nights a week in addition to days. We come to work at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday and start shaving and still be shaving on Sunday morning at 1 a.m. Saturday was considered a full day. The whole shop would be full."

He continued: "The elite group got a shave everyday and everybody else got a shave. Two, they wore it short. It was 60 cents — 40 cents for a haircut and 20 cents for a shave."

"I charged the cost of a haircut at Roy's $4. Few customers ask for a shave anymore, though."

Peterson took over his own shop in 1931. He now buys his supplies from Frank Wiman's Grocery at South Main and Third streets. Then Marachowsky's Grocery took over and he had to find a new wholesaler.

Roy's Barbershop found its final home in part of a bake shop at 232 S. Main St.

"I've been here ever since," he said. "It has been a good 60 years. In the summer we get a lot of business."

"I've had about five barbers work for me over the years. Bob Langer was the last one and has opened Langer's Trim and Styie on Whitewater Avenue. I've been alone for six or seven years now."

Peterson said that while he is not as quick with the clippers as he used to be, he still has a steady hand and

7 Union style different today

(Continued from page 66)

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(Continued from page 95)
writing, and one of her first jobs was as a serial scriptwriter for WCLD in Janesville. She also worked for the Chicago Daily News and United Press International. She also began a lifelong addiction to alcohol.
She eventually turned to writing about crime and mysteries. Her first book, "Eight Faces at Three," was published in 1939 and was an immediate success. It was followed by more than 20 others, a magazine called the "Craig Rice Crime Digest," several screen plays and film adaptations of two of her novels.
One of her books, "Trial by Jury" was set in a fictional Wisconsin town that was a thinly disguised Jefferson. The main locale of the plot was the courthouse. Craig used the old Jefferson County Courthouse as a model which she copied faithfully right down to a description of the secret staircase which lead to the circuit court chambers on the top floor.
In 1946 she was honored with a cover story by Time magazine. Time noted that her literary specialty was the detective farce. It wrote that Craig "invents unholy living and heinous dying with a high atmosphere of mixed excitement and amusement. The excitement is provided by a realism of a sort and is set to dialogue of the Hemingway type..."
Some of her books have such pleasant titles as "The Corpse Steps Out," "The Big Midget Murders," "Having a Wonderful Crime," "Home, Sweet Homicide" and "My Kingdom for a Hearsa." Several of these were published under the pen names of either Daphne Sanders or Michael Venning.
Her personal life matched that of her novels for garishness. She had three children from five marriages. Her alcoholism, chronic arthritis and the loss of one eye were all factors leading to her early death at the age of 48 in Los Angeles.

Barber Roy Peterson on the left.

People more sophisticated: Harriet

(Continued from page 62) gesturing with her hand.
Sundays were spent doing her grandparents' for supper or, on special occasions, to the Green Mountain House, where the Black Hawk Restaurant and Lounge is now located.
"We would go to the livery stable and rent a horse and buggy," Harriet commented. "It was really fun. It would take an hour to go six miles. Grandma and grandpa lived on Hebron Road. We would go there for Sunday dinner occasionally."
On Friday nights, Fort Atkinson gathered along Main Street to hear the city band play from a band shell situated over the Main Street bridge. "People gathered to listen," Harriet said.
Persons wanting to visit other cities could go down to the depot and catch the train, which stopped three times daily. Chicago and Janesville were within reach; those leaving early enough in the morning could go shopping in Chicago and be home by 7:30 that night.
Hardly a soul would shop outside Fort Atkinson during Christmas-time, if they were smart, Harriet said. "Everyone used to decorate the town up fine. All the store windows were all decorated up and everything. It was always such a thrill to wake up and find that beautiful tree all decorated with neat things. And the presents underneath; we had a lot," Harriet said smiling.
Christmas in Fort Atkinson was truly special, she recalled. The Vances would "go to my aunt and uncle's house for oyster stew the night before. It was so good."
Times have changed somewhat, Harriet said. A member of First Congregational United Church of Christ, Harriet said she can hardly name half the parishioners.
And although the townpeople still are good people, she said, "people have grown more sophisticated now. They aren't quite as friendly. In a small town, everybody knew everybody."
Fort Atkinson can never recapture that small-town charm again, but just like people, the face of a community weather and changes. Fort Atkinson, after 150 years, has an altered look, Harriet said. It's not better or worse, just different.

Masons began in 1863

Billings Lodge No. 139, Free and Accepted Masons, has been a part of Fort Atkinson history for 123 years, tracing its roots back to 1863.
The lodge, located at 211 S. Water St. East, is named after Henry M. Billings, who died just four months before the lodge was formed. Billings was instrumental in bringing Freemasonry to Fort Atkinson.
Two other Masonic organizations were chartered later, including Fort Atkinson Chapter No. 29 on Feb. 7, 1884, and Fort Atkinson Council No. 16 on Feb. 24, 1881.
The Order of Eastern Star, a Masonic organization for men and women, was brought to Fort Atkinson on Feb. 6, 1895, when Martha Chapter No. 66 was chartered.
Fort Atkinson has also had active Masonic youth groups. Chapter No. 586 of the Order of DeMolay for Boys was instituted on April 21, 1923, and Fort Atkinson Assembly No. 3 of the Order of Rainbow for Girls began Sept. 10, 1938.
Fort Atkinson Freemasons began meeting at Good Templars Hall, a building which stood on the corner of South Main and Third streets. The lodge was moved to the second floor of the Perry Building in 1901.
The rent at that time was just $200 per year for the second floor of the building. The lodge met at this building until 1936, when the Fort Atkinson Club was purchased on Water Street, where the organization still meets today.

Veteran barber

(Continued from page 55) gets plenty of business.
"If my legs hold out, I'm going to keep working," said Peterson, who works 3½ days and is at home with his wife, Regina, the other ½ day a week. "I like people and I like what I'm doing. I never got up in the morning and hated to go to work."
Main Street might be paved and the hitching posts that once dotted the curbs in his younger days are long gone, but Peterson's love for his job as well as fishing, hunting and the tall tales that go along with them—these never change.

Standard Oil station in early 1900s.
Chamber promotes business

By Betty Bullock

The earliest record of a business association in Fort Atkinson goes back to its incorporation with Secretary of State William B. Froelich on Oct. 6, 1889, when a group of local business people organized the Fort Atkinson Improvement Association.

Headed by N.F. Hopkins and H.P. Pettit, its primary purpose was "to foster and promote the business interests of Fort Atkinson." That premise still underlies the objectives of its successor, the Fort Atkinson Area Chamber of Commerce, which in 1986 is headed by Gerald A. Mortimer, executive vice president of Nasco.

Goals have broadened and concerned themselves with a variety of aspects impacting Fort Atkinson's quality of life today ... which all directly relate to the promotion of business interests, such as good educational facilities, reliable and competent city services, cultural and recreational opportunities, good health care services, and of course, the physical and financial opportunities for businesses and services to grow and prosper.

The Fort Atkinson Area Chamber of Commerce has undergone numerous reorganizations and revitalizations throughout its history. Shortly after the advent of that historic threat to downtown — the automobile — we have been told the local organization called itself the Fort Atkinson Automobile Association and made Sunday at the neighboring communities in the interest of telling the advantages of doing business with Fort Atkinson merchants and service folk.

Documentation points to the official organization under the name of the Fort Atkinson Chamber of Commerce, early in 1924 under the leadership of President J.W. Meyer and directors J.G. Westphal, L.C. Gillion, L.F. Papike, George Rankin, C.A. Aspinwall and W.D. Leonard. Membership dues were $10 (pledged for no less than a two-year period) and the organization's motto was "The City of Quality."

The first printed newsletter of the organization, dated Feb. 14, 1924, told high school students to "carry with you into the life of this city, the general truths, guiding principles and ideals and habit of thinking that will make it possible for you to apply these principles and ideals to your daily problems to begin to pay a debt you owe to your school, your home and your city."

"You will also be ready to think with others for the general good of all, whether civic and social organizations you may join after leaving school and when you reach the age of the youngest men in the Chamber of Commerce, if you join that organization, you will be ready to help it teach the public to think straight and in a big, unselfish way. A modern Chamber of Commerce is the clearinghouse for all civic and commercial problems which the people must solve. With a thought of what the city should be in 10 years hence, a thought only of what will contribute to the beauty, health, education and industry of the city, the truly concerned Chamber of Commerce plans without political, sectarian or other interest."

Today's chamber continues to encourage future leadership through their business awareness classes and their annual Senior Class Economic Seminar, as well as providing funding for Business World scholarships.

The next major reorganization took place in March of 1939 under a committee composed of Fred Hadinger, Harry Neel, Pearson Gebhardt, John Haciak and Everett Hein. The bylaws of 1924 were used as guidelines for the group, which delayed actual formation until a goal of 100 members was reached. New articles of incorporation were filed on June 8, 1939, with E.S. Engen serving as president, Richard Bish, second vice president, E.E. Hein, secretary and Ed Hedberg, treasurer.

Due structure and by-laws were reviewed and amended under Harry Hoffman Jr. in 1964 and will face their next major revision later this year.

In the early days, the chamber operated with volunteer leadership. Following the 1939 reorganization, E.R. Parker was elected on a part-time basis as chamber "secretary" and chamber offices were housed on the second floor of the Weidemann building, which was located just north of First American Bank and Trust.

Eugene Meyer and Woody Bienfang enjoy chamber's Farm-City Days.

Farm-City Days was a successful event originated by Ebbott, who had the honor of chairing the chamber's 50th anniversary in 1949.

Ebbott retired in the early 1980s and Dick Depper was hired as chamber manager. Under Depper's leadership, programs and membership increased and the need for larger quarters found the organization moving to 8 S. Water St., East, in Harriet and Don Chvala's building. When Depper moved to a larger chamber in Wauwatosa, Ed Halin was brought from Iowa to guide Fort Atkinson's growing organization.

Betty Bullock became the first woman to head the Fort Atkinson chamber in 1971, and was one of three women chamber executive in Wisconsin since one of 13 in her U.S. chamber organizational management class at the University of Colorado in 1973.

Today, the classes are 55 percent to 60 percent female and chambers throughout the United States have women providing creative and effective leadership for their organizations.

Bullock has seen the membership increase from 161 to 225, representing industry, retail, professional and service businesses. The chamber moved into spacious quarters at 89 N. Main St. in December 1984 to accommodate its increasing activities.

Throughout its existence, with its various name changes and locations, the Fort Atkinson Chamber of Commerce has played an effective leadership role in this community. It has concerned itself with a broad spectrum of public interest which has included industrial expansion and job creation; supporting and assisting in fund-raising for the hospital, swimming pool, schools and library, and worked to improve shopping convenience by addressing parking needs, store hours and product availability, as well as the amenities of trees, flowers and seating benches in shopping areas, Christmas decorations and Santa Claus. That's not to mention the countless contributions of prizes and financial support from members for the endless worthwhile projects promoted by the city's active civic and social organizations.

The chamber has a long record of working to achieve effective and safe traffic patterns throughout the city, encouraging the development of the local airport facility and sponsoring a variety of educational programs for businesspersons, youth, farmers and area residents. It has taken courageous stands on numerous legislative issues affecting both business and the public good.

Many of its members have been honored at the local, state and national level for their business achievements and contributions. In 1985, Ted Batten, president of Spacesaver Corp., won the coveted Wisconsin Small Business Person of Wisconsin title and tied for second place nationally. This year, William D. Knox, president of W.D. Hoard & Sons Co., which publishes Hoard's Dairyman magazine and the Daily Jefferson County Union newspaper, was selected as Wisconsin Agri-Business Advocate.

A modernized "fort" still serves as the chamber logo and the present motto, "Fort Atkinson: Where Tradition Meets Progress," is a fitting slogan to carry the Fort Atkinson business community forward into the next century.

July 16, 1986
Fort chamber of commerce-sponsored Christmas decorations.

**Fort celebrated armistace**


Those were the front-page headlines in the Jefferson County Union, Friday, November 15, 1918.

Fort Atkinson was like any other city big or small, celebrating the end of the war. "Enthusiasm ... swept over Fort Atkinson Monday morning when word was received long before daylight that Germany had signed the armistice terms, which represent a complete surrender," said the paper.

"By 6:30 o'clock Main Street contained several hundred cheering, shouting, jumping men, boys, women and girls. From that time until nearly 11 o'clock ... every noise making device that could be brought into play. Automobiles going at break-neck speed, darted about the city, their owners tooting their horns continually to arouse the slow or drowsy," continued the story.

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A classic Fort Atkinson landmark, built by Capt. S. Francis Drake in the early 1860's, occupied by former Gov. W. D. Hoard in the 1890's.

Since 1955 this home at 604 South Main Street has been known as the Dunlap Memorial Home. Perfectly suited to serve the families of Fort Atkinson.

Tim Dunlap and Ken Claussen, Funeral Directors
Tradition tailor-made for Fort

By Tracy Gentz

It was back in August 1914 when two young men started a merchandising business, creating a shopping tradition that continues on today, 72 years later.

As Fort Atkinson's Ben Jones founded Jensen & Jones clothing store at 225 S. Main St. Today located only a few blocks away, at 218 Washington St., it is carried on by a handful of Fort Atkin-

There was a great deal of emphasis placed on the selection of basics — long underwear with short sleeves, long underwear with long sleeves, lightweight long underwear with short sleeves, heavy long underwear with long sleeves — while when it came to a suit, you'd be talking about either a black one, a blue one or a gray one.

—Chuck Frandson of Jensen & Jones

This emphasis on dress and modesty meant more business in those days, but Jensen & Jones has lasted all these years because of its strong start and ability to adapt. "It comes from making more right decisions than wrong ones," Frandson said modestly.

When Frandson first started in the 1960s, the store carried Arrow shirts, white shirts, "We used to carry seven different kinds. Every neck and sleeve length from 14 to 17 1/2, sleeve lengths 32 to 36 because that was men's draywear, that's what a specialty store was sup-


This "1914" ad suggested that men might want to bring their women along when shopping because "their opinion is important, too."

"They ran ads regularly and most

Jensen & Jones. When Frandson started at the store in the 1960s, Jensen & Jones was still carrying nine varieties.

"There was a great deal of emphasis placed on the selection of basics — long underwear with short sleeves, long underwear with long sleeves, light-weight long underwear with short sleeves, heavy long underwear with long sleeves — while when it came to a suit, you'd be talking about either a black one, a blue one or a gray one," Frandson said with a smile.

Frandson said that customers were demanding and would never back down when it came to purchasing underwear.

"If you didn't have the right one, if a guy said, 'I want the heavy-weight short sleeve, I don't want the medium-weight short sleeve,' he wouldn't compromise, no way," Frandson said. "He'd wait until you got them in and then he would come back."

There was a good chance he would return, as Jensen & Jones had only one main competitor, and that was Hopkins, which turned into a ready-to-wear store.

Frandson said that most customers had "their schedules as far as renewing their wardrobe. There were some guys who bought a suit every year in the fall or right before Christmas. Harry Kohler could just about call it. He would say, 'Well, we ought to be seeing so and so in the next week,' and that guy would show up."

The Jensen & Jones partnership was comparable to the 'Odd Couple' of today: Jensen was known as Mr. Business, while his partner was a footloose kind of guy, a "party type," Frandson said.

Jensen & Jones was "kind of a

(Continued on page 70)
Charge of the Broom Brigade?

What? You never have heard of the charge that was made
By the fearless Fort Atkinson Broom Brigade, in year eighty-three?
When a score of batteries were rushed in a breath,
And victory was snatched from the jaws of Death?

—

By Thomas Beebe

Fort Atkinson had many famous military units, one
of the best known being Hoard's Rifles, whose members
distinguished themselves in the Civil War and the
Spanish-American War. However, how many have heard about the Rifles' auxiliary, the Star Broom Brigade?

Nineteenth century middle class women, according to "Koshkonong Country Revisited, Vol. 2." spent a great deal of time imitating the martial activities of their male relatives. In Fort Atkinson, this manifested itself in the Star Broom Brigade. It was later called the Marestial Niel Ladies Military Company, the unofficial auxiliary to Hoard's Rifles.

The women first performed in 1883 in city hall. Their performance was viewed for a 25-cent admission, and was labeled as "about the plumpest 25-cent entertainment Fort Atkinson has seen in many a day."

The group's opening performance was spectacular. "When the handsome drop curtain first rolled up, the large stage was filled with our unrivaled band. They gave one of their choicest selections, and were vigorously applauded by the 300 people present.

The next event was a tableau of several ladies positioned, with brooms, and was announced as the original Broom Brigade. Responding to a deafening encore, they swept the floor and prodded the air for imaginary cobwebs.

"We ceased wishing we were the cornet to admire
the uniform of the company, which was formed
by Sergeant 'Hop,' and then Capt. John Foote, looking like

a West Point masher, and began the long anticipated broom brigade drill.
"The captain commanded the company well, and
confidentially challenge any similar organization for
proficiency and general military display. Cheer after
tools greeted their soldier-like management of the
broom and we were proud of them.
"An intermission followed, when his honor, Mayor
Dr. Horace Willard, appeared on stage and read his
original poem on "The Charge of the Broom Brigade,
"which was greeted with rounds of applause. The band
discouraged enchanting music again, and then Mrs.
C apt. Charles Learned marshaled the Fan Brigade in
to line on the rear of the stage. They came majestically
to the front in couples, an ordinary fan at each end, and made a sweeping salute, returning to their places, to be followed by others.

"Then came in unison at the captain's call with
military precision, the bashful, saluting, fliriting,
inviting, surrender, recover fans, etc.
"When the curtain dropped, a vigorous encore
brought them to the stage, and once more to the
measured music of the organist, Miss Ida Clapp, they
gave the closing evolution of the fan drill.
At the end, "there was a rustle of uniforms and
the melodious revelry brought the dear musketoes
trooping to the center of the hall where their brooms were stacked."

—-

"With only a sign have I pondered and wondered
At the glorious charge of the gallant 660 and Russia's defense,
But I kept when I learned that the charge that was made
By the gallant Fort Atkinson Broom Brigade was 25 cents.

"The quotations at the beginning and end are from
his honor Mayor Dr. Horace Willard's original poem,
"The Charge of the Broom Brigade."