PROTECTORS, PROVIDERS AND PROMOTERS

The "life blood" of a town is not made of corpusles and cells, or facts and dates, but rather the stream of people that flow in and out of the community from it's birth down the years of it's existence.

Perhaps the smaller the community the more it is aware of the exceptional people instrumental in keeping the "life blood" coursing. Some such personalities will have risen to national and international awareness, while others are known statewide. Then there are the majority - those village patrons, church leaders, town benefactors, concerned citizens.

The following articles reflect, in part, some of the personalities that have infused life-giving sustenance into the corner of the world they graced.

David Houston

One of five members in a Cambria family that came to Wisconsin from Scotland in 1850, David Houston was an inventor of varied talents.

His most illustrious inventions were connected with photography. These ideas were formulated during the 1850's and 1860's. As the tale is revealed, when the Cambria photographer, Robert J. Lloyd, vacated his building, his equipment was left behind. This was sold at an auction and subsequently purchased by Peter Houston, older brother of David. While operating his equipment, Peter complained to his younger brother of the awkward weight connected with his photographic mechanisms.
Eventually, Mr. Houston developed twenty-two different parts for the camera, some here in Cambria and others in Hunter, North Dakota, where he moved at the turn of the century. One of the very influential inventions of Mr. Houston’s was the roll film, which became the basis for the modern movie industry.

David sold his mechanisms to Mr. Eastman for $5,000 and $175 per month for his lifetime. However, even though Mr. Eastman commented that, “Mr. Houston was a genius”, he never gave the inventor full credit, and hence the name Kodak - letters from the state Dakota - for the place of his last residence.

Finally, in 1906, Mr. David Houston, inventor and believer in a spirit world, passed away in Hunter, North Dakota.
Behnke, David — 1899-1953. Pioneer pilot. Learned to fly in San Diego at 15. In 1915 joined the Army Aviation Corps. WW1 test pilot, established the Checkerboard Field in Chicago. Taught flying and parachute jumping. Earned AP rating, highest award in Army flying. 1927 was one of first 3 pilots hired by Northwestern Airline. 1931 flew for United Airlines. Organized Air Lines Pilot Association and was its President. Stressed flight safety.


William R. Davies — President of University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire at the turn of the century. Evans, Dr. Silas — 1876-1959. Educator and President of Ripon College during the 1930’s and 1940’s.
Baillies, John (Jack) — 1886-1965. Member of Fire Department 35 years.


Cottam, Tom — Meat market over 30 years.

Davies, William C. — born 1876. His mother named the C. for Centennial, the year he was born. Band coronetist, with D. R. Williams in elevator.


Evans, Dr. Curtis — Pioneer in thyroid surgery. Chief of Staff at Milwaukee Luthern Hospital. Organized base hospitals at the front during WWI and was recognized by Gen. Pershing for exceptional behavior.

Evans, Dr. Silas — 1876-1959. Educator and President of Ripon College during the 1930's and 1940's.

Hook, Miss Lydia — Cambria Grade School teacher for many years.

Treptow, Mrs. Al Hopkins — 1882-1960. Special interests were the park and the W.C.T.U. which flourished in Cambria for many years.
Gilmore, Howard and May Donna — Mr. Gilmore prominent in area square dancing. Great Grandson of Catherine Foulks who began Blaen-y-cae chain of Welsh Churches.

Griffeth, Tom — 1890-1972. 40 years with Columbia Canning Company.


Hughes, Mrs. J. — Instructress of HB class and charter leader of that organization in 1909.

Hughes, Mrs. B. W. Mabel — 1881-1932. Publisher, writer, Editor Cambria News.

Hughes, Byron W. — Harness maker, Editor and Publisher Cambria News.

Jones, Raymond — Worked for Columbia Canning Co. for 35 years.

Koepppe, D. H. — Served as Administrator of Cambria Schools for 20 years.

Jones, Montford — 1881-1954. Professor of Finance in the School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh where joined faculty in 1915. Director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. During the summers, taught at Rutgers University.
Lewis — The first Cambria lamplighter, a small man who made the rounds with his kerosene can and stepladder before the gas light days.

Lloyd, Baldwin O. — Lamplighter for gas street lights when gas plant was built in 1903. They had to lit and put out every evening. A pipe was driven into the ground next to the lamp post and used as a step for tall Baldwin but shorter men carried a ladder.


Lloyd, John H. — 1908-1972. 16 years on School Board, farmer. Active in many civic local and county projects.


Morris, Robert D. — 1868-1948. General Merchandise with Frank Scharf, Singer, Chair Director.

Owens, Owen — Carpenter. Casket maker. Evan O. Jones ordered one made to his liking and kept it stored until it was ready to be used.

Owen, Richard C. (Dick) — 1860-1911. Produce business many years, potatoes, cabbage etc. Cambria Canning Co. with Henry Schemmel and later, Temp Slinger.

Parry, Rev. J. O. — Welsh Calvenistic Methodist Minister in Cambria for 35 years, beginning in 1899. Served as moderator and as stated clerk of the church. Was honorarily given Doctor of Divinity degree from Carroll College.


Rowlands, Gena
Hollywood actress, shown here with her daughter Zoe.

Dr. Prees

Roberts, J. E. — Half-a-century as a druggist.

Roberts, Thomas W. — One of the early rural route mail carriers. Began career in 1906 and continued through 1931.

Rowlands, Catherine — Local Reporter, writer, leader in clubs, church, civic projects.

Rowlands, Evan A. (Eve) — 1886-1957. Managed Cambria Lumber Co. for 36 years.


Slinger, John Sr. — 1847-1928. Stock buyer for many years.

Thomas, Joe — Church and Masonic leader.
Thomas, Will — Leading Undertaker.

Tarrant, Mr. and Mrs. Robert (Jane Morgan Tarrant) — Special interests: The Park, The Band, Library, Chapel at the Cemetery. Mrs. Tarrant instrumental in starting Gwmanfa Ganu in Cambria in 1944.

Williams, Marie — Milliner for many years.
Williams, Perry — Welsh Sunday School teacher for forty years.
Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Bob D. — in 1885


Williams, Daniel L. (Glyn) — Hardware. Known for his wit and humor. President Park Board for many years.

Williams, Hugh (Jeff) — On Fire Dept. for 52 years. Was sexton of the cemetery for many years.

Williams, Peter — 1831-1910. Lawyer, Tailor for 50 years.

Williams, Thomas E. (Buckhill) — Cambria poet.


Williams, Owen J. (Owen Glynn) — 1857-1948. Williams Hardware with his brother Dan in about 1890. Still run by Dan’s daughter Mary Enerson.

Schemmel, H. F. — Cambria banker and businessman.

Dr. Williams — The first doctor in Cambria, 1860-1880. Was a Civil War veteran. First doctor in Cambria village.
This 1912 composite picture is a visual record of the Cambria men who became doctors. Front row, left to right — Drs. David J. Evans, Griffith Jones, Wm. E. Williams, Wm. E. Owen. Back row, left to right — Drs. Richard Jones, Hugh Evans, Sanford McCall, Curtis Evans.

The John Slinger family. Mr. John Slinger was an early stock buyer (4th from the left). An interesting story relates now, before the advent of checks, this gentleman slept with $1,800.00 receipts and a pistol under his pillow.
Men About Town in the Gay Ninties. Front row, left to right — Owen I. Jones, Richard C. Owen. Back row, left to right — Will Davies (Coxie), Ed. Schliesman (Kelly), Byron Hughes.

The Morgan Girls. Left to right — Charlotte, Myfanwy, Jane (Mrs. Robert Tarrant), Elizabeth, Marie, Blodwyn, Olwyn, Arvon, Gwendolyn.