Remembering Adams, 1930s

As Told To Virginia "Toots" Voboril

After running the Adams Hotel for a few years, Amos Briscoe bought the Blue Pool Hall, where cards were also played. I am very sure he was a very active participant in both activities. I used to make spending money being a "pool hustler". That was ok with Dad but not Mother, so Amos bought me 100 pounds of popcorn and a beautiful popcorn machine, looked like a Circus Wagon, thus set me up in my first business. Sometimes the popcorn machine would appear outside the pool hall, all the guys (railroaders waiting for runs) on the seats in front of the Pool Hall would purchase popcorn. Sometimes, well four nights a week that movies were shown in the Opera House, it was a huge success and caused Mrs. Nowachek a great deal of trouble with the younger generation during and before the movies. We not only ate and spilled the popcorn we had "popcorn fights". This of course meant it had to be cleaned up—she patrolled the aisle and woe to anyone she caught with popcorn.

Another favorite pastime was to purchase popcorn; then since it was during the Big Depression, there was not money enough left to go to the movies. Someone, I don't remember who it was found out that if we sat on the back steps of the building next door (north) we could see the movie for free. It sure took them a long time to find out what we were doing. They did of course and very promptly put shades on the windows facing the steps and kept them pulled down. That spoiled our fun—but it was great while it lasted.

When there was a ball game or a band concert in the park we popped corn there, but to cover the crowd and sell it I needed helpers. Woody Voboril and Julian Albee sold it to the people. Now this was a lively business until I ran out of the first 100 pounds of popcorn. Amos would not buy more for me. We had spent the money for things only kids would understand. Finally Amos did buy more popcorn; but I had to repay him for that. My first hard lesson in business.

In 1930 Amos and Corrine moved to Milwaukee to operate a restaurant. Duane stayed in Adams. During this time I lived with Charles Cavanaugh through the first year of high school. The arrangement was to sleep and eat breakfast with Cavanaugh's. Lunch and dinner were at the Hotel with a meal ticket provided by my parents, cost $5.50 a week. When that ticket was used up they would send me more money for another meal ticket. The ticket was punched each time I used it according to what was ordered. I left in 1931 to live in Milwaukee with my parents. However that first year in high school was great, playing basketball and did whatever else was interesting. Max Walther was the principal the first two years. We marched to and from classes singing and anyone who got out of line had a problem. Finally near the end of that first year we had a high school dance, not a prom, just a dance. Of course we all went, I had my eye on an import from Easton, very pretty and very popular. Finally I got my dance with Miss Easton only to have good ole Max come out on the floor and tell me I had to hold Miss Easton 14 inches away from my body while trying to dance. I told him; "My arms are not long enough to do that". We were banished from the dance floor. After that year "Bud" Loken became principal and things took a turn for the better.

The Briscoes lived on Pine Street. At that time there was a hill there called Briscoe's Hill. It was used by many for sledding. What fun. We could get permission to go to Briscoe's Hill when it was dark; but not Werner's Hill which was our place during the day. At Werner's Hill we roasted "Mickey's", swapped sleds
and just in general had fun. Now both “hills” are gone—or is it just that as we grew up we saw them the way they always were? However, none of us will ever forget those nights sliding on our Flexible Flyers (if you were lucky you had one), if not you used what you had and frequently piled on top of each other to go down on a favorite sled. A good “run” was across the road and ending up in front of Desmond’s house. A long trek back; but no ever complained.

No history of Adams would be complete without something in it about Bud Goggin. He finished at the University of Wisconsin, came to Adams and in time purchased the drugstore from Mr. Andrea. What a friend Bud was. He filled our cameras (Brownies) with film for us, sold us root beer floats, and sold Penny Dreadful Valentines at the correct time of year. He also employed a number of us to do various things, payment was usually a hot fudge sundae or a malted. No need in those days to add milk to an ordered malted, that was understood and they were thick and yummy. So were the root beer floats, Bud and I kept up our friendship until he died. He was a person well worth knowing. He also in later years did much to improve Adams, including establishing several scholarships that are still helping Adams County high school students to go on to better things. Bud was raised by his uncle Jim Madden, who was a railroader. Jim wanted better things than that for his nephew and saw to it that he went to college. Bud and Lil have left wonderful memories and concrete things, like buildings, a better fire department, which along with Finky Voboit they founded in the early 1920’s. It was fitting that his body was carried to Mt. Repose Cemetery on “Old Jenny” the first fire truck in Adams.

**Previous Page:** Andreae’s Drug Store, which opened in the old Strauss Saloon building in 1925. Two years later, Ronald “Bud” Goggin hired on as pharmacist and in 1928, the drug store moved next door to the ground floor of the Adams Hotel. **Above:** The Picus Store, on the northwest corner of Main and Grove, was destroyed by a fire in December 1930, that threatened the entire business district. The ill-prepared Adams and Friendship fire departments could not cope with it. The disaster prompted Goggin and others to create an well-equipped, trained fire department that became the model for other departments in the county. **Below:** Bud Goggin.
Remembering Adams, 1939
Ralph Klinefelter

Adams.
Looking back on the year 1939, it seems as though the city of Adams remains very much as other years. However, the year will probably be one long remembered by citizens of the city who are interested in Adams affairs. The average citizen when asked the most important happening in Adams in 1939 will reply either the closing of a large part of the C&NW Round House and Rip Track or the City vs the Wisconsin Power and Light Company purchase suit.

The former event necessitated some of the residents of Adams moving their families to find work elsewhere. And from this a hearing was held before the state public service commission, testing whether a law, which states that large companies cannot discontinue or close large shops without due notice and a reimbursement for values of workmen’s homes, etc. is valid.

The other event holding the interest of most of the people is the City vs the Power Company suit. Since nine years ago, the citizens voted to acquire the light company property by purchase, the city council has most of the year held that for their goal.

As in a case of this kind where every legal technicality is used either to retard or gain ground according to which side the use is on, the fight has been long and mixed up to the average citizen. However, a more than usual spirit of good will has been continued throughout the suit.

Although the city council has been balked at every turn by citizens or the company, they have been usually tolerant, believing that the townspeople whether on one side or another are there because of what they honestly believe is the best for the city and not because of personal grudges against either side.

New Store The most noticeable improvement on Main Street is the new store, Adams Super Market, under the management of Nye Picus. The building owned by B.J. McBride was during the summer “The Circle Bar” which lasted only a short time. A week ago The Super Market, a cash and carry store opened.

The Clover Farm Store formerly owned by Nye Picus is still operated in the same place and is being run by John Seipp.

The IGA Store has a new front step and new refrigerator for handling frozen foods. The Corner Grocery has added new cases and a large stock.

Unused Building Now Occupied Another new business on the street which took a vacant building, is the A-F Beauty Salon which now occupies the building occupied last by a knitting shop. The building next to the A-F Beauty Salon has been refinished inside and is now being used as a recreation hall and kindergarten by WPA leaders.

New Professional Men In January, Dr. R.E. O’Shea of Portage who had formerly practiced dentistry in Adams reopened an office in the Lynn Burgdorff suite and is there part of each week.

Garage Changes Hands The Hudson garage operated by Ray Russell was sold to I.L. Stowell of Friendship in October when Mr. Russell was called back to work on the C&NW railroad and moved to Chicago.

The Ward Oil Company and station which now is occupying temporary quarters has prospects of a new home soon. The new two-story building of cinder block is up and the windows

After selling Fords and Ramblers, Follett Auto switched to Chevrolets.
in the partly-finished inside. A new pump block has been installed and it is expected that the temporary quarters will not be needed for long.

The garage of the Adams Auto Company has considerably improved by a new door that lifts overhead to permit cars to enter. A new service door at the south with a cement walk to it considerably dresses up the alley way between the two buildings.

The Follett Company, which functioned last year under the management of James Jesse with Reuben Lanke as Chevrolet salesman, Harvey Wagner as mechanic and S.A. Jerdee as machinery salesman, is operating this year as two separate units. Mr. Lanke is manager of the car sales and washing machines while Mr. Wagner has own garage and repair department in the same location as he was before.

Tavern Moves The Walslager Tavern which was formerly in the Chris Olson building moved to the Nowachek building on the same side of the street a few doors south and runs a tavern and an eating house.

Mr. and Mrs. Leo Gonzagowski now operate the Charleston Cafe.

The Chris Olsen building occupied formerly by the Walslager Tavern was greatly improved by the owner.

New Church Formed A Bible Chautauqua Tent under Seventh Day Adventists was set up near the high school in June and gained enough members so that they now hold regular services in the Post Office Hall and have at present a regular resident pastor, Reverend Erling Calkins.

Several New Clubs A number of new social clubs were formed during the year and old ones enjoyed a delightful season. A new club which takes in a large group of young matrons is the Firemen’s Auxiliary, a social organization to help the Adams City firemen.

County Gets R E A Rural electrification, which began in 1938, blossomed forth in Adams and Marquette counties this year. The headquarters were set up in Friendship to be near Fulton Collipp, the corporation attorney, and because the substations are north of town. Lines were set and strung by gangs of light men and before Christmas many rural customers were enjoying electricity for light and power. The company is being directed by Mr. James Joyce, Sr., who has cooperated so well with the signers that the work has gone along without a hitch.

C& NW Gets New Power The first part of December the C& NW round house and property was supplied by electricity by the Wisconsin Power and Light company. Heretofore, they manufactured their own power and used direct current. The new power, being alternating, and of different voltage required the addition of several thousand dollars worth of equipment. A special wire was run from the company plant at Friendship to take care of the demand.

New “400” An improvement Adams is proud of is the streamlining of the two “400” trains that meet there at about 6:15 p.m. These trains manned usually by Adams men or men well known here, are famous the country over and each evening draw a group of spectators to see them come in.

If pleasantness is composed of little things well done, then surely the work of the city dads in maintaining a street commissioner who so nicely looks after the streets and does numerous extra tasks should not be overlooked. The city also provides free periodical pick up of rubbish which is the delight of those who like to maintain a neat appearing yard. The council also provided labor and material to make the city beautiful at Christmas time.

And so another year vanishes into history.

In the 1930s, the Clover Farm Store sold hardware, groceries and gas and the Charleston Café had "we never sleep" service.
Remembering Adams, 1959

Virgil Tobin

The Grand Opening this week of the Coles and Crogan Red Owl super market in Adams (1959) set us to thinking the other day about the changes and improvements that have taken place in the business section of Adams and Friendship during the nearly five years that we have lived here. And, by gosh, you know you can come up with a very impressive list of changes, and almost without exception those changes have been improvements. Let’s run up and down the streets and see what we can come up with.

Let’s start with Adams. Although we mentioned it above, we should add that the new building of the Coles and Crogan super market gives them one of the most modern stores in this area, a real nicely arranged and clean appearing grocery store which is a real asset to the business section of Adams.

Just to the south of them, Floyd Beeman has considerably enlarged the area of his Auto Body Shop, giving him a well equipped and modern building. Additions to the Nor-Land boat factory during the past several years have greatly enlarged the working area there, and just last week we printed a lengthy article dealing with proposed construction there which will give them an additional 4,800 square feet of floor space for a total of 36,800 square feet.

Going back up the street north we find the Adams-Follett corporation now in the former Lanke garage, with their occupancy of the building a few months ago being accompanied by a remodeling job which greatly improved the appearance of that property.

At Gillingham’s Shell Service a complete new facing to the front was installed a couple of years ago, a real improvement to that property, and a building was erected for the storage and sale of block ice and cubes, a convenience for local residents and tourists.

A new cement block building built a year or so ago on the former location of the Van Alstine Dairy Bar, now is the home of Sather’s Variety Store, well stocked with a variety of merchandise usually associated with a store of this nature.

Two doors north of Sather’s, a new front is now being installed on the building used for display and storage by Johnson’s Dry Goods store across the street. The old front was completely torn out.

Considerably new and modern equipment added in the Adams theater during the past five years gives theater-goers one of the most modern and comfortable theaters in this area.

Floor space of the Adams County State Bank was almost doubled by acquiring the building between it and the theater, and an almost complete remodeling job provides considerably more convenience for customers and employees. Incidentally, personnel of the bank has shown almost a complete turnover during the past five years, with Cashier and Vice-President Fred Veeher the only full time employee who had the same status five years ago; Mrs. Ray Phillips, (now deceased) was a full time employee five years ago.

Across the street north, Louie Kotlowski completely remodeled the interior of the grocery store which he purchased from Del Wickus and Louie’s IGA now easily ranks as one of the most conveniently arranged, well stocked and most attractive stores of this area.

At McBride’s a complete remodeling of the front half of the building a couple of years ago greatly improved the appearance of their location. At the same time they added the Firestone

In 1959, Jerry Cole and Joe Crogan closed their Clover Farm Store and opened Adams’ first “supermart,” the Red Owl, across the street.
dealership to the other lines they represented, giving them a well diversified operation.

Norbert Hanson's operation of the A-F Bakery has meant a major uplift in the business atmosphere of Adams. It's a business we needed and the quality of products he turns out has been the source of continual favorable comment. About three years ago a completely new front was installed in the Legion building which is occupied by the A-F Bakery.

Following his purchase of the jewelry store from Norbert Fike, Steve Grubba greatly enlarged the stock of items for sale, and at the present time Grubba's Jewelry doesn't have to take a "back seat" to any jewelry store in the area.

The acquisition by the City of Adams of the former Anderson garage now gives the city a convenient location for the library, city hall and city garage.

Improvements at the Roche-a-Cri Clinic have been multitudinous, and have been outlined several times in the columns of this paper. There is no question but what it is the best equipped and most modern clinic in the state - truly a major improvement if you ever saw one. Add to the physical improvements the quality of the two doctors who staff it, and you come up with something we can all be proud of - and we are!

Going north from the south end of Adams on the east side, we find Bessie Spinner now operating the 400 Cafe. During the past five years considerable remodeling has taken place there to provide an inviting dining atmosphere.

Mr. and Mrs. Hoelzer, who bought the drive-in from Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Janney several years ago, completed a remodeling program there which added to the attractiveness of the building and business.

Five years ago, in the space just one door south of the Adams County Consumers Co-op Store, Harry Orth operated a school supplies and miscellaneous store, attended by Mrs. Bruce Gibson. At that location Orie Coller now has his sheet metal and furnace sales and service business.

The new Mobil station of Steve Baumgartner replaces the former bakery building resulting in a considerable improvement to the appearance of that corner.

Within recent weeks a completely new front built principally of light colored bricks and new plate glass has been installed at Goggin's Drug Store, giving a pleasingly new and modern appearance to that place of business. Right next door, at Johnson's Dry Goods, a face-lifting operation a couple of years ago added considerably to the appearance.

At Bredeson's Hardware, remodeling is now in progress to extend the store area to the back of the building, eliminating the apartment which has been there, and the added space will mean a greatly expanded display area.

The Adams County ASC office now occupies the former telephone office which was vacated when the dial system was installed nearly two years ago, and a new brick building to house dial equipment was built just to the north by the telephone company.

Being completed just a couple of months ago, the Barnes Sinclair station now occupies the two lots just north of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, which lots had been vacant.

Just north of the Sinclair Station, within the last four years, a new building was built which now is occupied by Fritz's Drive-Inn, which lots had been vacant.

Opened in 1931, William Ward's unusual adobe-looking Shell station at Grove and Main attracted travelers for many years.