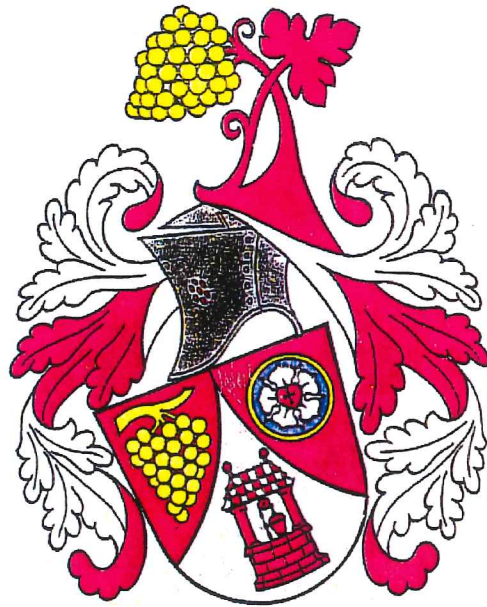
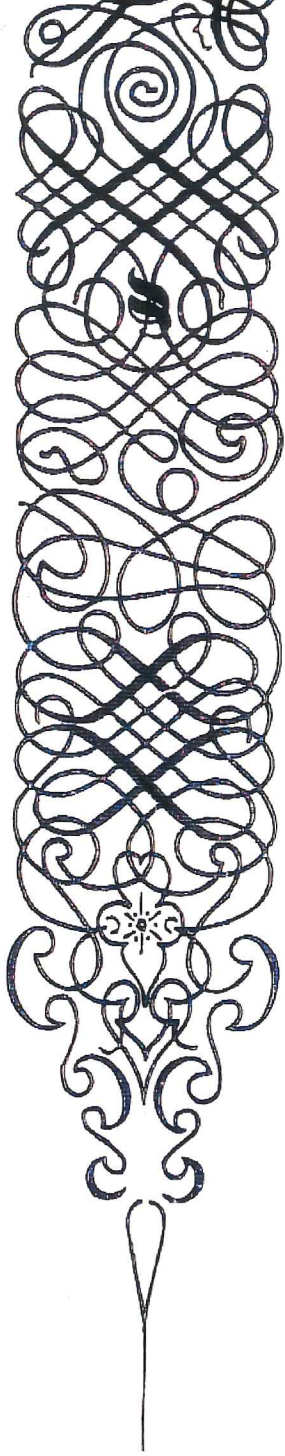


The  
**Wehrwein**  
**Web**



SECOND EDITION

## The Crest On the Covers

The coat-of-arms—or perhaps more modestly, “crest”—that graces the covers was designed in 1993 by Alfred Wehrwein of Wiesenbronn and registered (No. 018/5664) in Der Munchner Herold Wappenrolle. He was unable to find an older, historic coat-of-arms. He has offered the following explanation of his creation to his American relatives (slightly edited for style only):

*The grapes evoke the Family name, indicating wine-grape growing which I have carried on till this day.*

*The stylized rose on the shield is the “Luther rose,” a traditional religious symbol that bespeaks the Wehrwein ancestors’ Protestant faith.*

*The waterwell (on the bottom of the shield) replicates one on the coat-of-arms of Wiesenbronn, the village where our ancestors lived and where Wehrweins still live.*

*The helmet belongs to every coat-of-arms and in connection with the vine and the grapes the helmet stands for “Wehr” (defend) and the vine stands for “Wein.” The feathers around the helmet symbolize the colors of Franken, the region in Bavaria from which our ancestors came.*

# The Wehrwein Web

*A Sketch of the family from Schönaich to St. Paul*

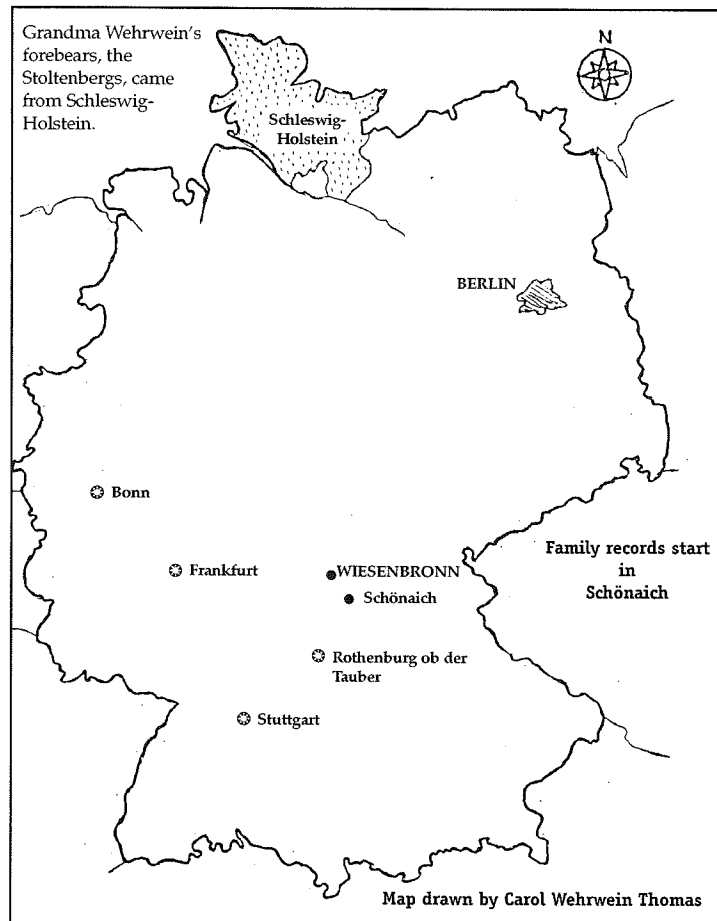
*by Austin C. Wehrwein*

SECOND EDITION

THIS IS A "SECOND EDITION" OF THESE WEHRWEIN FAMILY SKETCHES, FIRST PUBLISHED IN MARCH, 2000. IN IT, MINOR ERRORS ARE CORRECTED AND ADDITIONAL MATERIAL IS ADDED.

—A.C.W., JULY 2001

*Dedicated to  
my beloved wife, Judy,  
on her 70th Birthday,  
March 22, 2000*



## Foreword

This family sketch—it's neither focused nor inclusive enough to be called a history—was put together to recapture some of my recollections and to pass on to my children and grandchildren Wehrwein kinship lore that would be forgotten—or harder to retrieve—by the time younger Wehrweins grow up and collective memories fade.

The fact that the name itself is unusual—as the opening explains—made the project even more imperative. The background of that could be a window to a broad survey. But by choice as much as necessity at age 84 I have assembled the essays—mine unless otherwise credited to others—with an eye to my own particular blood line. I have not, as you can see, tried to climb all over the family tree. And while I hope my cousins and their families might find the sketch

interesting they won't, alas, find much about themselves in it.

Lastly, I call the collection the Wehrwein Web. I hasten to add that I use the word in its pre-internet sense to suggest a spread-out but *interlaced pattern* of facts, events, references and kinship, as opposed to a ladder-like chronicle. In all candor, the alliterative second "W" is a happy coincidence.

Despite the narrowed focus on my immediate family's interests, I must acknowledge the generous help I got from Alfred Wehrwein, a distant relation in Wiesenbronn, Germany, and my cousins, Carol Wehrwein Thomas of Bethesda, Maryland; Winston Wehrwein of Phoenix, Arizona; and Lester Wehrwein of New Ulm, Minnesota.

*Auf Wiedersehen!*

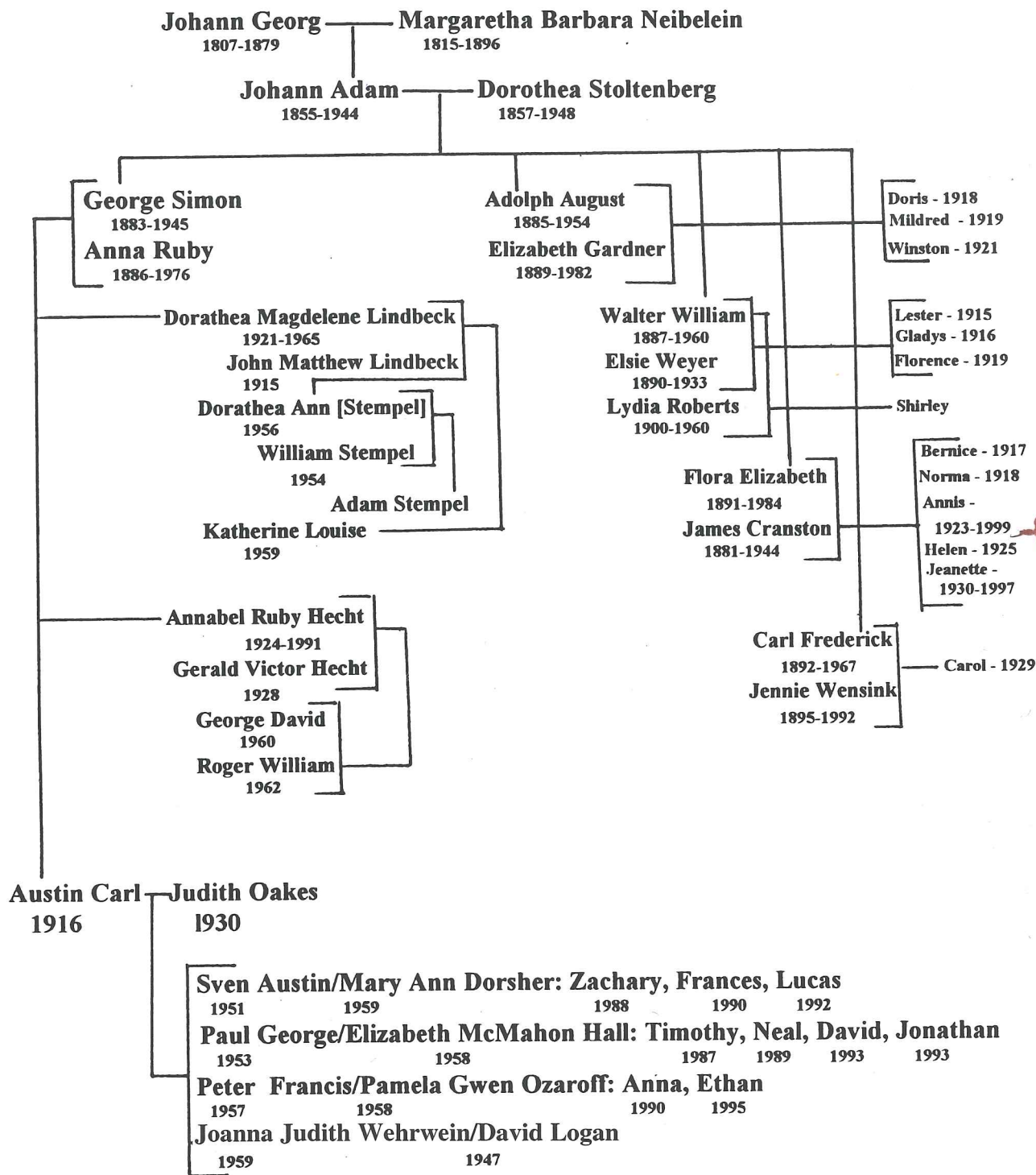
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For more information about other strands of "the Wehrwein Web," contact the following helpful kinfolk:  
 Alfred Wehrwein, Kleinlangheimer Str. 11, 97355 Wiesenbronn, Germany;  
 Winston Wehrwein, 3701 W. Frier Dr., Phoenix, AZ 85051, and  
 Mrs. Carol Thomas, P.O.Box 1080, Bethesda, MD 20827, a good source for more family tree information.  
 Bev Amling, 1530 E. Northwest Hy. #1C, Arlington Hts, IL 60004, has also prepared a comprehensive family tree.  
 Austin C. Wehrwein's address is 2309 Carter Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108; Telephone: 651-645-9894.

# WEHRWEIN FAMILY

## *The Georg-Adam-George Line*



Prepared by Carol Thomas

## CHAPTER I: IN THE BEGINNING, THE WORD

The name Wehrwein—pronounced Vehrvein, auf Deutsch—is unusual, indeed, unique in its way, so it's an odds-on bet that all those bearing it are related or connected wherever they may be. A 1999 search of U.S. telephone directories by my son, Sven, turned up 64 listings in 19 states. German sources have found even fewer in a similar search. Alfred Wehrwein of Wiesenbronn, who has an avid interest in Wehrwein lore, has estimated that there are 150 all over. That seems low. But even if the actual number is double, triple or, say, tenfold, that sum, it would be tiny in a German population of 82 million, even more so in a USA population of more than 270 million, of which an amazing 58 million described themselves to 1990 census-takers as being more or less of German descent. Of these, 39 percent are Midwesterners.

At all events, the American clan (or tribe, or whatever else the Wehrwein web could be called) has deep roots in Bavaria, an ancient state in Southeastern Germany. Kurt Wehrwein of Rothenburg traced the line back to Paulus in Oberhöchstadt, a widower whose birth date is unknown but who is known to have taken his second wife, Barbara Koch, in 1662.

The line, as we shall see, becomes clearer after 1662 but the name itself—which is often awkward for English speakers—has a mysterious wrapping. It does not appear in any of the dictionaries of German names at the University of

Minnesota library nor is it found in the authoritative Dictionary of German Names published by the University of Wisconsin's Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies. Still, peering into the mists of ancient etymology for traces of the name's origins is as intriguing as it is frustrating. Although prima facie it means more or less protect (Wehr) the wine or vineyards (Wein), the derivation may not be that pat.

Thus, from Alfred of Wiesenbronn we have a document (see pages 9 and 10) that says the name resulted from a melding of Wer and Weyne, names that go back respectively to 1361 and 1420. The document says Wer is like Wehr but theorizes that the old Weyne may not equate with the wein of today. That is, Wein is a corruption of the original Weyne. On his own, Alfred added that the first known "Wehrwein" is Paulus, who lived in the mid-1660s at Oberhöchstadt, which is in an area where many families bear the name, "Wehr." He said that is perhaps evidence that the doublebarreled "Wehrwein" was indeed "built" through a marriage of a "Wehr" and a "Wein." Plausible, and consistent with a Fourteenth Century combination theory.

Before rushing under a nostalgic spell to restore the 480-year-old Werweyne, it would be well to consider the scholarly if no less tentative interpretation of the document by Dr. Joseph Salmons, director of the Max Kade Institute, who finds the document "linguistically naive."



In a Sept. 28, 1999, letter he implies that the name could come out as Werrawayne or "Werrafriend."

More precisely, he said that although Wer fits with today's meaning of "defense" and similar terms, German names often have geographical connections. "There is," he explained, "a river Werre in the North from which many personal names have come. With a family from Bavaria, I wonder if Werra in Thuringia might be in here..." The river Werra (with an A) is not that far north of Bavaria, he explained.

What about the "wein"? Dr. Salmons noted that the document goes back to the Old High German spoken in 800 to about 1050 to find the link to "Weyne"—meaning "friend" as well as being a place.

Well, what is the answer? Combine the two parts and come up with Weyneguard, Werrafriend, even Buddyprotector or, at the end of the day, plain old Wehrwein which connects to the safeguarding of the wine produced from the grapes in the vineyards where our ancestors toiled. As Dr. Salmons concluded, "Sorry not to have a nice clean answer for you."

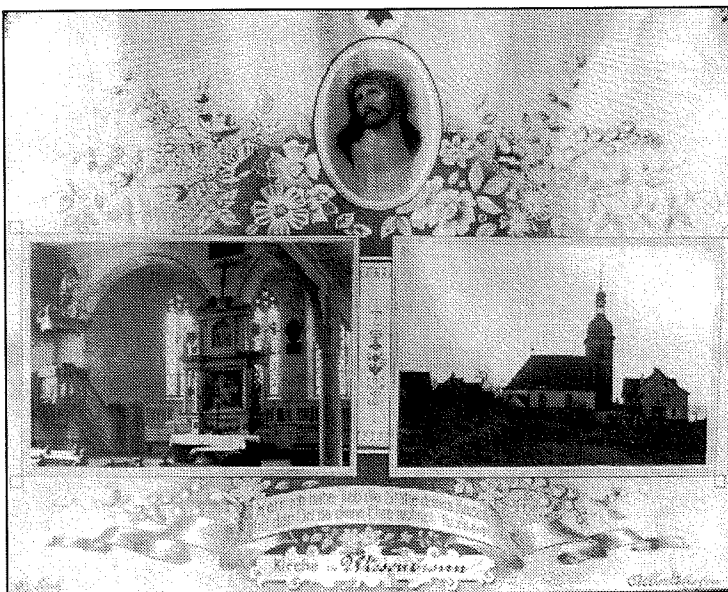
**Footnote:** "Weyne" does not appear on the maps at the German National Tourist Office in New York, a prime source of geographic data. A researcher there said the closest place names she could find were "Weyafn" and "Weyhern"—which aren't very close at that. She did not, however, rule out a place called "Weyne" several centuries ago. In short, *"Nicht jedes Wort auf die Goldwaager legen."* In broad translation, "Take all this (name stuff) with a pinch of salt."

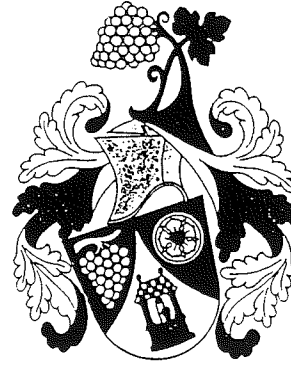
## ANCESTORS OF JOHANN GEORG WEHRWEIN

Johann Georg Andreas Wehrwein (known as Georg) was the first of his family to emigrate from Schönaich, Germany. His ancestry in Germany has been traced by Kurt Wehrwein of Rothenburg, Germany, establishing his descent from:

1. Paulus Wehrwein  
m. 1662 Barbara Koch
2. Johann Wehrwein—farmer
3. Johann Adam Wehrwein—farmer  
b. 1/5/1698 Wiesenbronn, Germany  
m. 1726, Sophia Dorothea Deer
4. Johann Adam Wehrwein—farmer  
b. 3/29/1727 Wiesenbronn, Germany  
m. Anna Maria Bayer  
d. 2/1/1794 Schönaich, Germany
5. Andreas Johann Wehrwein—farmer  
b. 4/26/1761, Germany  
m. 5/20/1794 Katherina Barbara Sauter  
d. 5/10/1820
6. Johann Georg Andreas Wehrwein  
b. Schönaich, Germany 12/10/1807  
m. 10/15/1837 Margaretha Nieberlein  
d. 1/17/1896

Heilig Kreuz Kirche zu  
Wiesenbronn where  
Johann Adam Wehrwein  
was married in 1726





Wehrwein  
aus Wiesenbronn  
Reg.-Nr. 018/5664

Blasonierung: Schild: In Rot eine eingeschweifte silberne Spitze mit rotem Brunnen; vorne eine goldene Traube hinten eine Lutherrose

Auf dem Helm mit rot-silbernen Decken ein roter Weinstock mit goldener Traube

# Wehrwein

## Die altertümlichsten Persönlichkeiten deines Familiengeschlechts

Ruf Wer und Egkehard Weyne werden in Schriftstücken und in den Archiven von Araldis als erste Träger dieser Namen genannt. Im Laufe geschichtlicher Ereignisse von kleinerer und größerer Tragweite konnte dies zu einer Verschmelzung der beiden Familiennamen führen.

### Bibliographische Quellen

Es liegen Urkunden vor, wie zum Beispiel Urkundenbuch der Stadt Ehlingen, Bearb. von Ad. Diehl, Stuttgart 1899 f., 2 Bde \* Diözesan-Archiv für Schwaben (später Schwäb. Archiv), hgg. von P. Beck, Stuttgart 1907 ff \*, in denen wir die Familiennamen Wehrwein in ihren Urformen Wer - Weyne aufgeführt finden, die beim Familiennamen Wer auf das Jahr 1361 und beim Familiennamen Weyne auf das Jahr 1420 zurückgehen

### Etymologie von Wehr

Die Bedeutung des Familiennamens Wehr: Wie die mehrfachen "von der Wehr" zeigen, meist gleich Wehrmann. Auch oberdeutsch ist Wehr gleich Dorfwehr (Zaun mit Graben). Zum anderen Vermischung mit Werre. Übrigens gehört das mittelhochdeutsche werre in die germanische Sippe, aus der französische guerre erflossen ist (englische war, das noch mittlenglische werre lautet)

### Etymologie von Wein

Die Bedeutung des Familiennamens Wein: althochdeutsche Kurzform Wino (aus Vollformen wie Winifrid, Winihart, Winimar). Die Längung des ursprünglichen kurzen "i" erfolgt, zum Teil unter Einwirkung von win (gleich vinum), vor der Wirkung des Quantitätsgesetzes, so daß Diphthongierung unbehindert eintritt. Diese Bezeichnungsform findet ihren Ursprung in der einstigen Gewohnheit, die Namen nicht nach der korrekten Rechtschreibung zu schreiben, sondern, wegen der mangelnden Kultur, nach dialektalen Richtlinien auszusprechen und niederzuschreiben. Diese Formen verdarben oft den eigentlichen Namen und veränderten seine ursprüngliche Bedeutung.

### Entstehung von Wehrwein

Seitdem der Gebrauch des Familiennamens zur besseren Kennzeichnung einer Person üblich wurde, haben viele Traditionen und Gebräuche den Namenwert einer Familie festgelegt. Wir können daran erinnern, daß unsere Vorfahren manchmal den christlichen Namen mit dem heidnischen Namen verbanden, bei der Firmung ihren Namen änderten, um ihn dann wieder anzunehmen, ihren ursprünglichen Namen mit ihrer Berufsbezeichnung vereinigten, oder, was in den letzten Jahrhunderten sehr verbreitet war, den eigenen mit dem Namen der Ehefrau verbanden. Diese Verbindungen bestärkten auch durch die Verschmelzung der Namen den Bund zwischen zwei Familien, wodurch sie an Bedeutung und Stärke gewannen. In diesem Fall können wir annehmen, daß es sich um die Verbindung der Namen Wehr und Wein handelt

From Alfred Wehrwein, Wiesenbronn, Germany

# Wehrwein

## The oldest persons representing your family name

Ruf **Wer** and **Egkehard Weyne** are reported in documents and in the archives of **Araldis** as the first holders of these names. In the course of historical events of lesser or larger importance a fusion of the two family names occurred.

## Bibliographic sources

Documents exist, such as the:[1] Book of Acts of the town of Eßlingen, edited by Adam Diehl, Stuttgart, 1899 and following, 2 volumes;[2] Archives of the Diocese of Swabia (later the Archives of Swabia), published by P. Beck, Stuttgart, 1907 and following years, in which we find records of the family names **Wehrwein** and their original form **Wer-Weyne**. These go back to the year 1361 for the surname **Wer**, and to the year 1420 for the surname **Weyne**.

## Etymology of Wehr

Meaning of the family name **Wehr**: as shown by the repeated occurrence of "*von der Wehr*" most often this signifies "*Wehrmann*" (defender, protector). Also, in high German *Wehr* signifies "*Dorfwehr*" (Defense of a Village, wall and moat). Second, there is an intermingling with *Werre*. Furthermore the middle high German *wërre* belongs to the Germanic language family, from which the French "*guerre*" has been derived (English *war*, which in middle English is still *werre*)

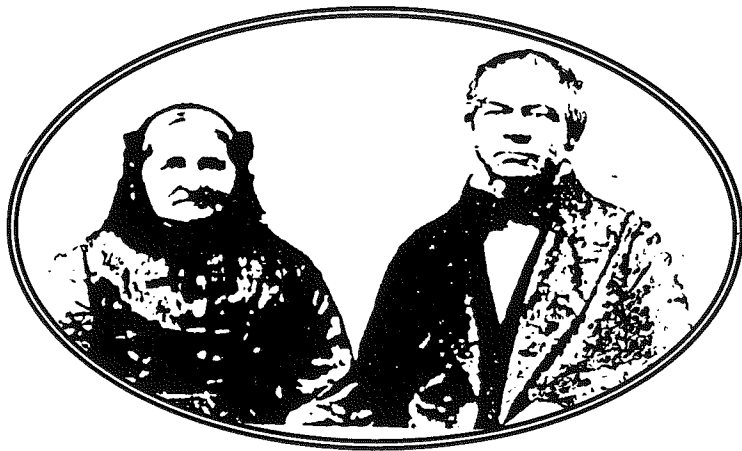
## Etymology of Wein

Meaning of the family name **Wein**: old German short form of *Wino* (from complete forms like *Winifrid*, *Winhart*, *Winimar*). The elongation of the originally short "i" follows in part under the influence of *win* (equals *vinum*), before the effects of the "Quantitätsgesetz" [law of quantities in etymology and linguistics], hence there is unhindered formation of diphthongs. This form of naming originates from the erstwhile custom to record names not according to the correct spelling, but to pronounce and spell them according to local dialects, because of inadequate levels of literacy. This practice often bowdlerized the original name and changed its original meaning.

## Origins of Wehrwein

Since the use of family names became more common to identify a person, many traditions and customs have determined the value of a family's name. We remind you that our forefathers sometimes combined their Christian names with their heathen names, changed their name at confirmation, reestablishing it later, merged their original name with a trade name, or who combined their name with the name of their wife, which was especially common in the last century. Combining of names by melding of family names reinforced the bonds between two families, whereby they gained in strength and importance. In your case we can assume that the names **Wehr** and **Wein** were combined.

Translated by Prof. Hans-Olaf Pfannkuch, St. Paul, Minnesota



This is the only known picture of Georg and Margaretha Wehrwein. It is a photocopy of a now missing photograph taken after they settled in Wisconsin. [Courtesy of Sandra Lutz of Oshkosh, self-styled "cousin down the line," descended from these "crossing ancestors."]

## CHAPTER II: THE WAY THEY WERE

**J**ohann Georg Wehrwein, known always as Georg, a 46-year-old Schönaich farmer, uprooted his family in 1854 and became the first in the Wehrwein web to settle in the New World. Their destination was Wisconsin. They were part of the first major migration (1845-55) to the United States: in the parade were 939,149 people of all ages from Bavaria and six other regions.

Not much is known about Georg. He was the ninth of 11 children, seven of whom survived. He had five children. A daughter died two months before they arrived in America. Johann Adam was born in Newton on Nov. 18, 1855. He is our grandfather. Inquiries turned up no "first family" personal records. Nor is there any firsthand explanation as to Georg's reasons for packing up in September of 1854 at what was then a ripe senior citizen age. But the consensus in Germany now is that he probably joined the exodus with the advice and support of friends and family in the common quest for a better material life. Although these Wehrweins came from Franken, a Lutheran sector in a Bavaria that was otherwise 70 percent Roman Catholic, there's no evidence that religious, or political or ideological motives played a role. But looking back at what the New World settlers left behind provides insights that justify the conclusion that they yearned for freedom as well as almost free land.

The Wehrweins who had roots in the Bavarian hamlets of Frakenfeld, Wiesenbronn and Schönaich were vassals of the Earl of Castell for a long time, according to Susanne Wehrwein of

### The Pioneer Party

**Georg, age 46, a farmer**

**Margaretha, 41, his wife**

**Margaretha, 16, his daughter**

**Simon, 14, his son**

**Anna, 4, his daughter**

**They arrived Oct. 9, 1854, in New York City from Bremen.**

*(For more on Simon see page 20)*

Rothenburg. What was to become in 1871 a unified German nation was just emerging from feudalism and the guild system. A mighty industrial revolution was still in its infancy.

The idealistic revolution of 1848 to set up a republic was a failure; the average person, particularly the poor peasant in a rigid class society, had no guaranteed personal rights. The growing movement for unification of the 30 different political entities, of which the loose Confederation was an example, held little promise of freedom, American style. Living in the German Empire under William I of Prussia—created by Otto von Bismarck in 1871—was to be life without freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and very little freedom of speech. The penalty for criticizing the emperor ever so slightly was jail.

Political repression aside, the economic outlook at mid-century for Bavarian farmers was grim. In his book, "Germans in Wisconsin," published by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Richard H. Zeitlin said that calamity was a certainty for small, inefficient, overpopulat-



## Old Roots Still Grow Here



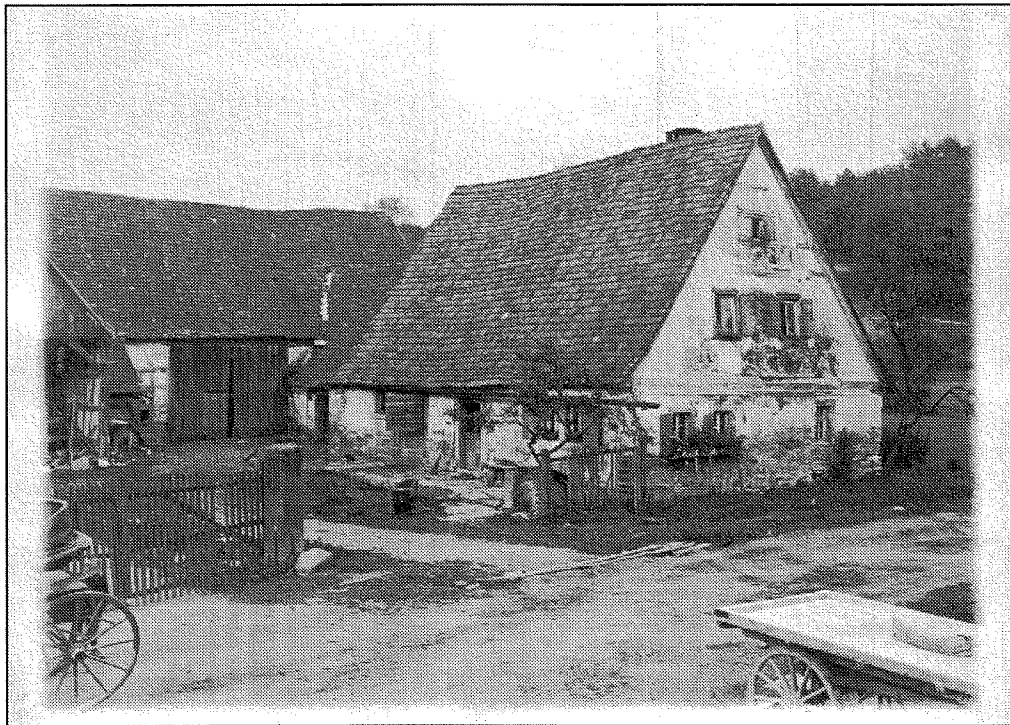
Two views of modern Wiesenbronn. (pop., 935) Here Johann Adam Wehrwein was born in 1698, the third Wehrwein in recorded history and the first about whom much is known. Wiesenbronn is the only village with both ancient family roots and present Wehrwein residents, according to Alfred Wehrwein, who lives there.



## *The Homestead Georg Left Behind . . .*



This picture (apparently taken in 1925) was the Schönaich home of Johann George (known as Georg) Wehrwein. With his family he departed for America in 1854 and is the father of my Wisconsin-born grandfather, Adam.



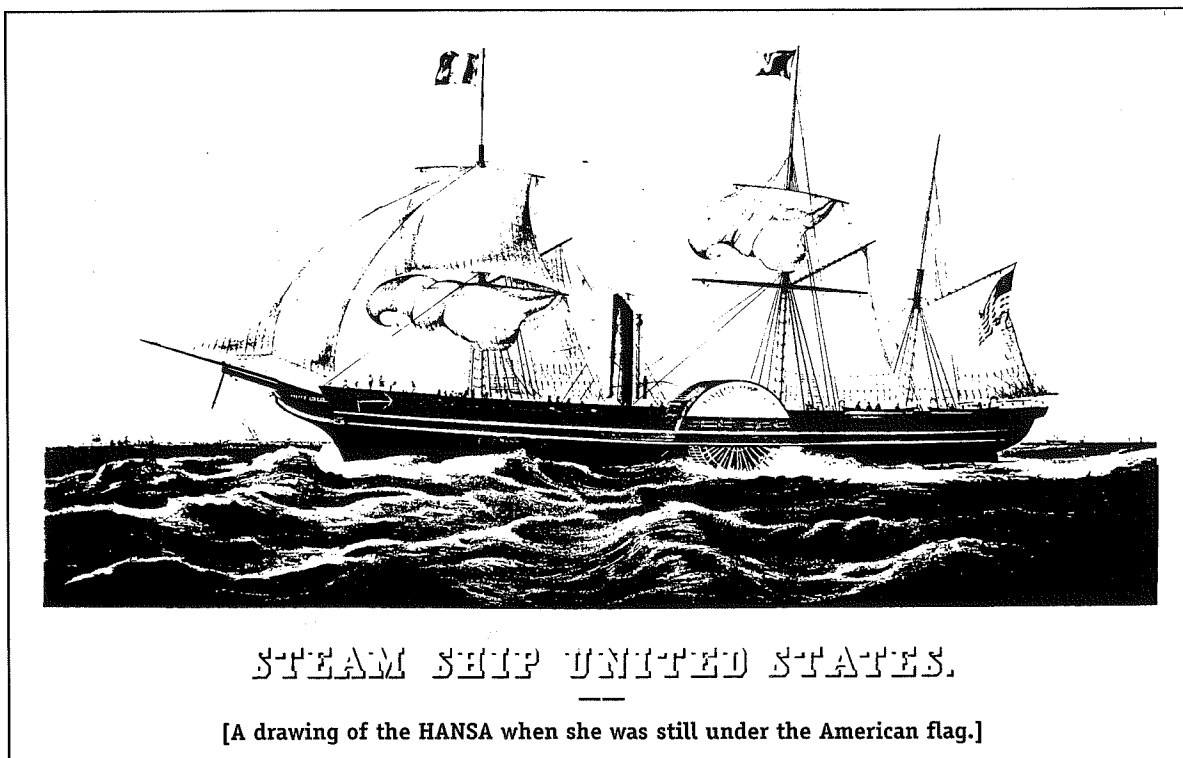
Here is another part of the Georg Wehrwein property in Schönaich. The photograph (also apparently dating to 1925) shows the building that appears at the right side of the photograph above.

## *Looks Much the Same Today*



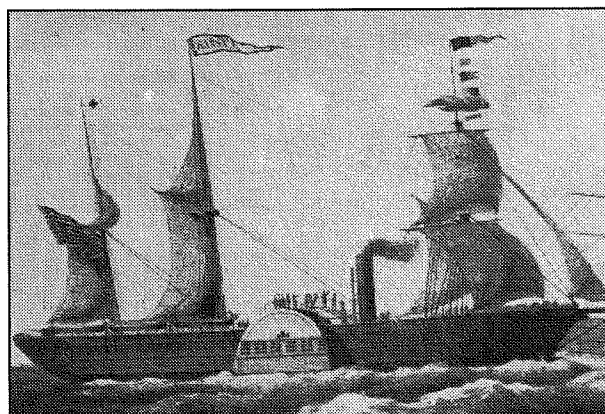
Here is modern Schönaich—the name translates to “beautiful oak”—the top being the entrance and the bottom the equivalent of Main Street, if a hamlet of only seven families can boast a main street. The house at the left in the top picture is the original Georg Wehrwein homestead. At bottom right, the modern version of Georg’s other building. (See old photo at bottom of opposite page supplied by Carol Thomas; Alfred Wehrwein supplied the modern ones on pages 13 and 15.)





## VOYAGE ON THE HANSA

The Georg-Margarethe Wehrwein party that founded the Wisconsin branch of the family arrived in New York from Bremen October 9, 1854 on a ship named the HANSA, whose choppy history is worth noting because she was a pioneer in the development of trans-Atlantic steam navigation. A schooner-bark wooden paddle steamer, she made her maiden voyage in 1848 as the American-built UNITED STATES. This was just ten years after the first steamer, the SIRIUS, heralded the dawn of regular steam navigation across the Atlantic. In 1849 the UNITED STATES was sold to the loosely-organized German Confederation and became a warship. She was then renamed the HANSA, and in 1853 she was sold, again, to a Bremen firm, Fritze & Lehmkuhl, which still exists. The Wehrwein party's 1854 Bremen-New York voyage with 769 other passengers was her last scheduled trans-Atlantic passenger ship run. Never profitable on any trade route, she passed from owner to owner and in 1862 she burned to the waterline in the Thames.



A "heroic" painting of the HANSA as a German warship.

### A SHIP'S LIFETIME LOG

*UNITED STATES 1848-49; HANSA 1849-56; INDIAN EMPIRE 1856-62*

**Builder:** William H. Webb, New York, N. Y.

**Machinery:** T. F. Secor Co., New York, N.Y.

**Hull:** Wood 244'7 x 40' x 35'10; 1,875 Tons.

**Engine:** Side-lever engine.

**Cylinder:** 72" x 10' stroke.

From "Early American Steamers", Heyle

**Owners:** Marshall & Co., New York, N.Y., 1848-49; German Confederate States Navy, 1849-53; W. A. Fritze & Lehmkuhl Co., Bremen, 1853-56; Bayley & Ridley Co., London, 1856-62, renamed INDIAN EMPIRE, she did a stint as a British troop-ship; Z.C. Pearson, Hull, 1862.

## CHAPTER III: BRINGING OLD WAYS TO THE NEW WORLD

**T**he Georg Wehrwein family's voyage appears to have taken a month or less. We know when they landed—October 9, 1854—but not when they embarked. They came on the paddle steamer HANSA, one of the first steam-and-sail ships which cut sail travel time by as much as 50 per cent. Still, from others' accounts, spending weeks at sea on any ship meant living in close vomit-making quarters in utter boredom.

The misery was alleviated by the fact that at mid-century migration was less of a reckless personal adventure than well-organized commerce. Steamship companies, land speculators and American States promoting settlement, as well as friends and family who had gone before—all had helpful hints galore.

**For the trip:** Bring dried meat, vegetables and fruit, zwieback and vinegar to cut the taste of stinking ship's water. And tack leather soles onto wooden shoes to avoid slips and falls on wet, sloping decks.

**For your dream home in unspoiled Wisconsin:** Bring a stake of \$300—a real piece of change back then—and basic survival supplies like carpenter tools and shovels as well as household goods such as feather beds and a coffee mill.

Georg probably followed such savvy advice. He also brought a Bible, a muzzle-loading gun and a sword. The decorative engraving on the

sword blade suggests that it was part of a uniform worn by foresters in the service of the Bavarian State or of a rich and titled landlord. The Bible has gone astray but the gun and sword are still around.

Alfred Wehrwein threw some more reliable light on a forestry culture. In one of several letters from Wiesenbronn in the summer of 1999, he said, *inter alia*:

"The connection of our ancestors to forestry resulted from the positions of their hometowns. They all had been farmers and their towns were located around *The Steigerwald*. Every farmer had...(both) fields and a piece of forest. Specific to Wiesenbronn they had, in addition, *viniculture*." As he has indicated in an earlier reference to his Wehrwein crest, viniculture lies at the heart of the legend of the unique name.

Wisconsin-bound Germans found that the way out of New York City's crowded streets westward to the raw land led to variations on a well-traveled route: Up the Hudson River on what seemed sumptuous steam boats to Albany, then by rail or the Erie Canal to Buffalo, thence through the Great Lakes by sail or steamboat (the fare was \$6 a head) to a Wisconsin port, Milwaukee, Sheboygan or Manitowoc. (Rail service from New York to Chicago via Detroit was also coming in during the 1850's.)

One way or the other, the trip could apparently be accomplished in a month or less. By one account, it took ten days. Even allowing for

the traffic holdups, frolics and detours that can stretch out the travel time, the Wisconsin-bound Wehrweins were slowpokes indeed. Arriving in October of 1854, they did not close the deal for the farm in Newton Township of Manitowoc County until May 12, 1855, eight months after setting foot on American soil. This lends credence to a story our grandparents told my cousin, Lester: that they tarried in Ohio for some reason, presumably having detoured there by way of Detroit. One more minor "Georgian" mystery, alas.

Georg *et al* arrived in Newton (as locals always call the township) just seven years after Wisconsin entered the Union in 1848. (Newton was not, as I assumed, named for Newton, Mass., which today is an upscale Boston suburb. According to conflicting old reference books at the Manitowoc County Historical Society, Newton was named in 1850 for one Sgt. John—or maybe Jasper—Newton, a "Revolutionary War hero from South Carolina." Why? The records don't explain and South Carolina historical records show three Revolutionary War Sgt. Newtons, none a hero. A minor mystery.) This eastern sector of the state bounded by Lake Michigan was hardly terra incognita; a 1851 German map like those available to immigrants shows towns as far west as Oshkosh. Indeed the sector had been opened up to European exploitation in 1634 by the French voyageur Jean Nicolet when he paddled into Green Bay, about 50 miles north of the site of the future Manitowoc. By the time Georg *et al* arrived, the last Indian uprising had been crushed in the 1832 Black Hawk War and an influx of English-speaking settlers from New York and other eastern States was already underway, just ahead of the Germans who soon comprised 50 per cent of Wisconsin's population.

But by Old World standards Georg had entered a scary untamed wilderness. This is evident from an account in the Manitowoc Historical society archives that was discovered by Cousin Winston Wehrwein. It is the story told by Mrs. Christina (Groelle) Schimtz, a native of Saxony, who arrived in 1847 in Newton at age 18 with her parents and five siblings—a family into which Simon Wehrwein was later to marry. This family made it

from New York State to Milwaukee, then boarded a small schooner for Manitowoc, which was just a collection of shanties. The story continues,

After landing they remained in a little shed for about a week and then the father went into the country and made selection of eighty acres of land. They brought with them a stove and all their bedding and this they carried out by hand. There were no roads save the old Indian trails and, thus carrying their possessions, they at length traversed two miles of the Lake Michigan beach and then struck out over the trail through the timber, finally reaching their home about seven miles south of the present city of Manitowoc. When they reached their land there was no house upon it, so they cut off the branches of trees and set them in a circle, leaving a space for a door, which they covered with a blanket. Then they cut down small trees and began to build a house of logs. Because they could not get lumber for the roof, they made the rafters and covered them with wild grass. The floor was made of bass wood, split and cut by hand. In that primitive cabin the family lived for about four years.

On the 18th of April, on which day Mrs. Schmitz was nineteen years of age, there arose a great wind storm, which blew down a mammoth maple tree that smashed the corner of the house, very nearly killing the whole family. They bore all of the usual experiences and hardships of frontier life. Wolves were plentiful, and deer and all sorts of wild game could easily be obtained. The Indians also frequently visited the homes of the settlers and even the most farsighted could not have dreamed of the wonderful changes which would occur, making this region one of the attractive centers of civilization. On the 31st of January, 1849, Christina Groelle gave her hand in marriage to Carl Schmitz, who came to this country in 1847 from the province of Westphalia...They became the parents of nine children, three sons and six daughters...Schmitz was a locksmith by trade...He also had a natural love for and skill in music. After coming to

America he filled some local offices; serving as town clerk for 14 years and justice of the peace for 30 years...While he followed farming most of his life he was also one of the organizers of the Farmers Mutual Insurance Company and was one of its officers. He was also leader of singing societies and a director of a band and was very prominent in musical circles. His political allegiance was given to the Democratic party and his religious faith was that of the Reformed church. Mr. Schmitz died June 15, 1885.

The 79-acre Wehrwein homestead—one acre had been donated to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in whose graveyard Georg and Margaretha lie although the church was razed in 1948—has an origin typical of the time in this country. The land passed from the United States, which had taken it from the Indians, to a total of four owners before Georg.

The first two and perhaps a third were "Yankees," (a generic term for non-Germans). They were presumably land speculators rather than farmers. Edgard A. Beardsley is the first in line. According to the real estate abstract, on June 9, 1848, his prize was a "certificate of

entry" for the open federal government land. Seven months later, on January 1, 1849, John Fitzgerald gets a federal "patent" on this land. At the time this usually cost about \$1 or \$1.25 an acre but the abstract is silent as to price so it could have been free.

The abstract is ambiguous but it seems that Fitzgerald then sold to Conrad Seemann on July 24, 1849, for \$100, which could have been a clear profit. Not to be outdone in this mad, mad real estate boom, Seemann sold to Jacob Laubanheimer in November, 1849, for \$145, a tidy profit of \$45 in five months. Jacob, clearly a German, does even better when he closes a deal for the property with our Georg Wehrwein for \$480 in May of 1855, more than tripling his investment.

The Wehrwein Newton farm remained in family hands until 1952, a total of 97 years. Leaving Laubanheimer and maybe Seemann aside as exceptions to the rule, the history of the Wehrwein farm does more or less fit the Salamon thesis that Germans felt they were trustees for farm land whereas Yankees treated it as a commodity. Still, one can't ignore Jacob's windfall while no Wehrwein ever got rich on the place.

## PRIVATE SIMON'S CIVIL WAR

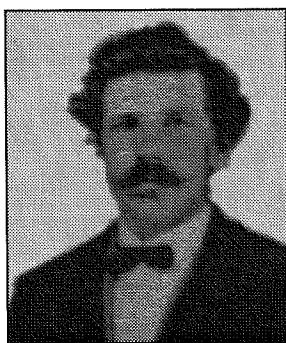
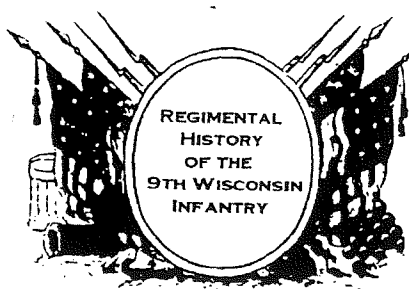
If the family legend that the original male settlers—Georg, age 46, and Simon, age 14—left Bavaria to avoid some sort of conscription is true, it's ironic that only seven years after landing, when he was age 21, and 18 years before he was naturalized, Simon donned a uniform in the 1861-1865 Civil War, or "War of the Rebellion," as old documents about his service called it. Two purely German infantry regiments—the 9th and the 26th—were organized in Wisconsin early on.

The growing German population was, however, divided, according to Richard H. Zeitlin, author of "Germans in Wisconsin." By his account many German Catholics actively opposed the new Republican party (which was born in Ripon, Wis.) and disliked political reform including the anti-slavery movement and therefore opposed fighting for the North. But generally German Protestants, many politically liberal or radical, including Turners, Free Thinkers and partisans of the brief 1848 democratic revolt in the Old Country, rallied around the Union. But some enlisted just because other Wisconsin German Lutherans were doing so. That, rather than a strictly ideological motive, probably inspired Simon. In any case, there's no record that the family was politically active.

On Sept. 16, 1861, Simon enlisted for three years in Company B of the 9th Regiment of Wisconsin Infantry Volunteers and was mustered into service Oct. 9, 1861, in Milwaukee.

Army records describe Private Wehrwein as a single farmer, 5 feet 10 inches tall, with blue eyes, light hair and a light complexion.

For the next three years Private Wehrwein moved on foot and by train around Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas, as well as making expeditions into Indian Country in pursuit of what were officially described as "rebel Indians." He was in



Simon, at age 35

action at Newtonia, Mo.; Terre Noire, Ark.; Prairie D'Ann, Ark., and Poison Springs, Ark. He was wounded in action on April 30, 1864, in the Battle of Jenkin's Ferry on the Saline River where Private Wehrwein was part of a division protecting a river crossing that was a crucial link in the route to

Little Rock. His outfit drove back the Confederate attack with "obstinate gallantry" and an army destined for Little Rock crossed the river safely.

Simon suffered a gunshot wound in his right side, leaving him with a fracture of "the crest of the right ilium [bone]" and torn muscles. He was in Little Rock's General Hospital during May and June, 1864, after which he was sent back to active duty. His three-year volunteer term having expired, he was mustered out Dec. 3, 1864. U.S. government documents have Simon leaving as he entered in the rank of private but according to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin he was "brevetted" captain as of April 30, the very day he was wounded. "Brevetted" means a temporary rank with no increase in pay or authority, a consolation prize for being wounded. According to a Certificate of Service in the Historical Society, the brevet commission was actually awarded Feb. 23, 1867; it cited his "conspicuous bravery" at Jenkin's Ferry "when though wounded severely he did not leave the

field but remained with his company fighting manfully to the end." He began drawing a pension of \$12 a month in 1890 and died June 11, 1905, at age 65, survived by his wife, Augusta Groelle Wehrwein, and eight children.

Over all, the 9th regiment lost 191 enlisted men—more (114) to disease than the 77 killed by gunshot or cannon ball.

This was a microcosm of a war in which far more died of disease than from wounds.

# Newton celebrates 150th birthday this weekend

By TOM BOWENS  
Herald Times Reporter

Happy 150th anniversary, town of Newton!

This weekend residents of the town, along with the adjacent burghs of Osman and Schopol Hill, will take time out from commerce to help celebrate the sesquicentennial.

To this day the Newton area for the most part remains predominantly agricultural, with a smattering of business and industry.

According to a book titled the "History of Manitowoc County Wisconsin" the town was organized in 1850 and was named after Sergeant Jasper Newton, a Revolutionary War hero.

The first true settler in the area was believed to have been F. Truettner, who located there in the spring of 1848.

Earliest settlers were of Eastern European, Irish and Polish decent.

Early commerce revolved around the lumber industry, and the growth of the Newton area was hastened by virtue of its location along the Green Bay Road - which was originally a military road that ran from Milwaukee to Fort Howard in Green Bay.

Newton began to make a transition from lumbering to an agrarian-based economy with the influx of a large contingent of German immigrants.

These people were predominantly farm laborers and craftsmen who left Germany because of the harsh economic and religious conditions that prevailed in the homeland. They were well-suited for the rigors of pioneer life.

Following them were a number of professionals like lawyers, doctors and teachers who also left Germany because of the political turmoil.

As dairy farming expanded in the area, a number of butter and cheese factories were

started, including Groelle's and Duebner's cheese factories and Schultz's, Weier's and Strothoff's butter factories.

A paper that was presented to the Manitowoc County Historical Society in 1910 by George Wehrwein titled "Glimpses of the History of the Settlement of Newton" describes in rather poetic terms what the early days were like:

*"In the real pioneer days of Manitowoc County things looked quite different than they do nowadays. The mighty trees of the virgin forests spread their boughs over the earth, undisturbed by the desecrating hand of civilization, and in their shadowy depths and solitudes the pioneers builded their roughly hewn log cabins."*

The following is a list of events that will be taking place August 18 through August 20 in conjunction with the town of Newton's Sesquicentennial at Newton Fireman Park:

■ Friday: Fish plate dinner starting at 5 p.m. Music by After Dark from 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Volleyball tournaments all weekend.

■ Saturday: Garden tractor pull, including super modified, beginning at 4 p.m. Music by Road Trip from 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

■ Sunday: A parade begins at 11:30 a.m. at Stock's Dinner Club and proceeds to the Fireman Park. The parade will include the Roncalli High School Band, Kingman Polka Band, Bob Kuether Band, town official float, 4-H float, Brain Foundation float, Fire Department float, local businesses floats and the dairy princess.

Music by Entertainment Specialist from 1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. A farm tractor pull begins at 2 p.m.

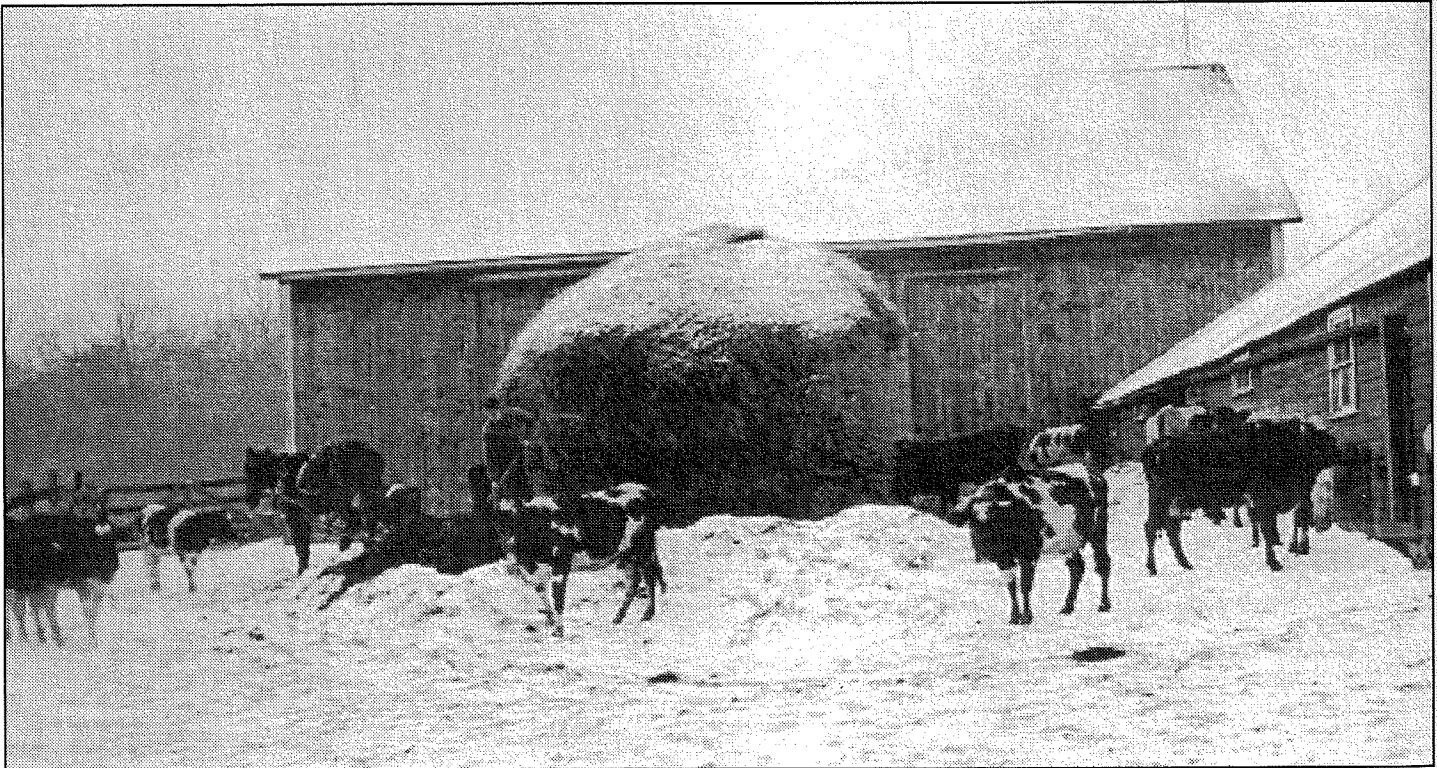
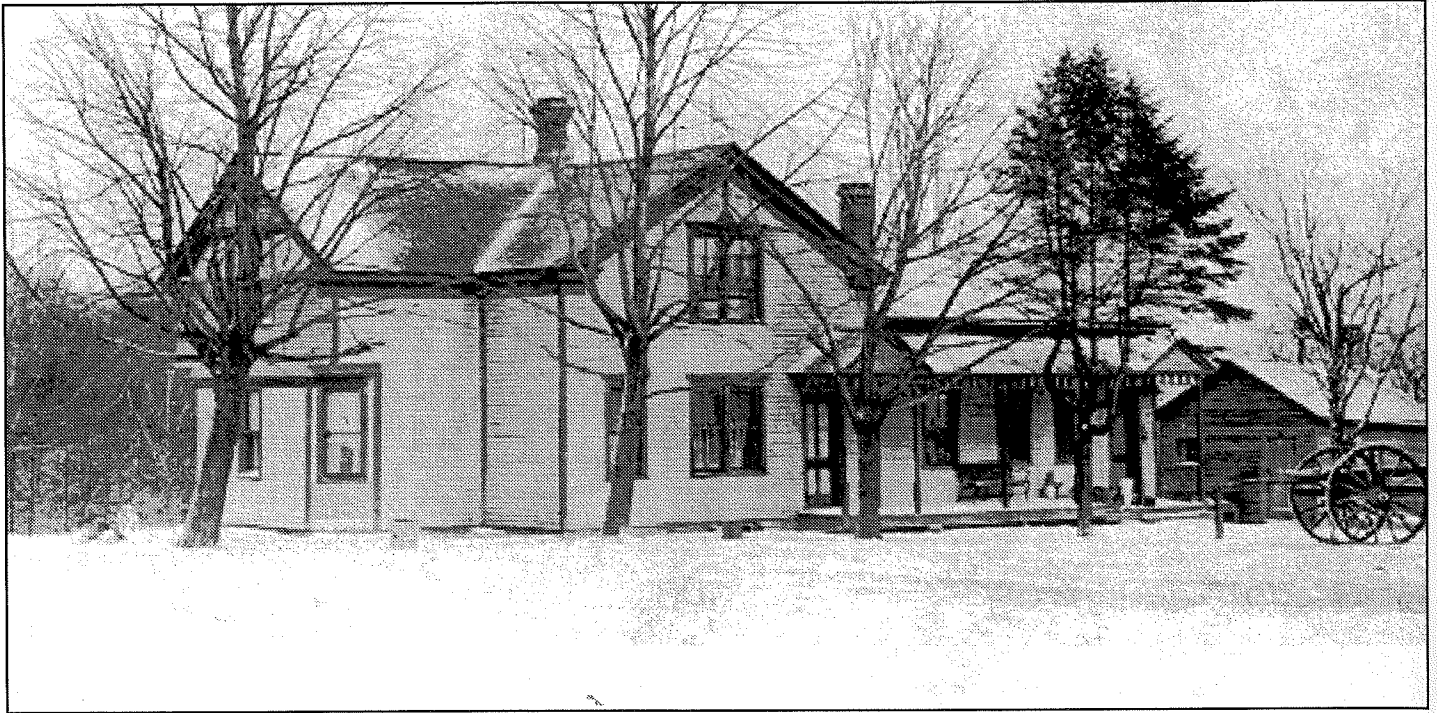
There will be a town of Newton history and memorabilia tent at the park. Sen. Jim Baumgart and Rep. Bob Ziegelbauer also will be in attendance.

The following appears on page 328 of "The History of Manitowoc County," vol. 1, published in 1911:

At its January meeting of the year 1910, the Manitowoc County Historical Society was treated to a passing glimpse of Newton's early days. George Wehrwein, now a student of the State University, was the medium of intelligence. His subject before the society was entitled "Glimpses of the History of the Settlement of Newton," and speaking most interestingly from notes he mentioned the following facts pertaining to his theme: "In the real pioneer days of Manitowoc county things looked quite different than they do nowadays. The mighty trees of the virgin forests spread their boughs over the earth, undisturbed by the desecrating hand of civilization, and in their shadowy depths and solitudes the pioneers builded their roughly hewn log cabins. Those were the days of real equality and brotherliness among the men who lived so widely apart. Rough pathways led from the humble home from one neighbor to that of the other and thence to the highway, a primitive affair."

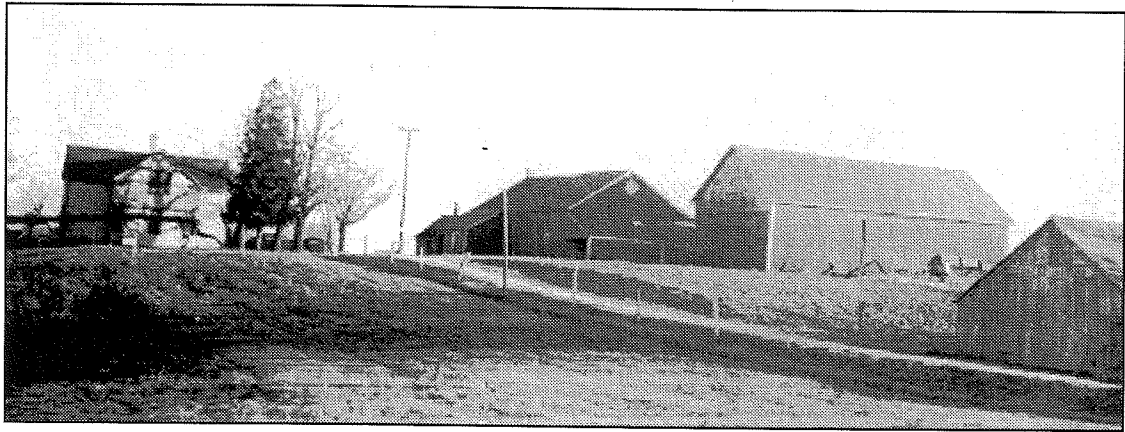
The number of settlers increased one by one and in due time settlements grew up, of which Newton was one. Nothing is known of Indians having lived in this community but off and on they were met with in troops passing to and fro.

—Manitowoc Herald-Times, August 15, 2000



The family farm homestead and a corner of the barnyard in the winter of 1912.

(All farm photos in Chapter IV by George S. Wehrwein.)



## CHAPTER IV: DOWN ON THE NEWTON FARM

Although none of the Wehrweins of my generation or their children is now a farmer, the Newton family farm was for many years a unifying influence, and, too, a wellspring of mixed memories of times long past. The land has been in other hands for nearly half a century but those memories cast a nostalgic spell on the grandchildren of Johann Adam (known as Adam) and Dorothea Stoltenberg Wehrwein. Both were first generation Americans. He was born in Newton in 1855. She was born in Centerville Township in 1857. Her parents also emigrated in 1854, but from Schleswig-Holstein (now part of Denmark) rather than from Bavaria.

By the time the year 2000 rolled around our line had been on American soil for 146 years. A long time by Middle Western measure. That's a heritage of which we can be proud. But from another vantage, the heritage is relatively brief. After all, the grandchildren of Adam and Dorothea grew up knowing forebears who were part of the very first New World settlement. We, "the cousins," span the "century gap." We are the bridge to the past.

In the early years ownership of the farm followed a roundabout path that involved transactions between Georg and his son, Simon. But by 1879 Grandfather Adam has title. In 1919 his son, Walter, takes over. What can be called the modern era begins. Walter's son, Cousin Lester, farmed the ancestral acres from 1938 to 1952. He first rented it from his father and then bought it from him in 1944.

The most interesting time on the farm from my perspective—and I assume for most of my cousins—was during the Walter years. Visiting our grandparents, who by then lived in a separate house on an adjacent 40 acres, was an annual summer ritual, and it fell to Lester and his sisters, Gladys and Florence, to play host to a succession of city cousins. This was probably a common experience for city relatives when America was still largely rural in character. Farming has gone through a cataclysmic transformation; memories that reach back to an environment more like 1900 than 2000 evoke a history worth recording.

I can recall a farm without electricity or indoor plumbing, riding in a horse-drawn buggy or an automobile without roll-up glass windows. The small herd was milked by hand, dogs and chickens ran free, meat from hogs slaughtered on the premises was smoked in a small shed, our grandmother tended what seemed a vast vegetable garden along with all her other chores. She toiled endlessly in a kitchen dominated by a large wood stove. Kerosene lamps lit the evening hours. The grandparents understood basic household English but German was really their first and only language. This had a pervasive influence on the Newton farm. My father learned German before English, for example.

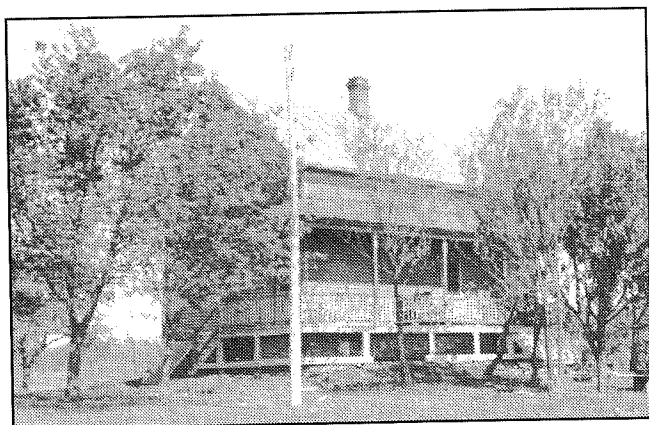
One might well digress to speculate whether the Georg and Adam families' material life was really that much better than that for contemporary



Bavarian farmers. Obviously they had more personal, political and economic freedom here but they lived on a small holding in a "German clan," loyal to their ancestral language. While they had cut ties to the Old World they did not plunge into the mainstream of the New World. Unlike many other emigrant groups they did not chase the American dream, panting to become Americanized and assimilated into the English-speaking market place of money and power. There were, of course, many other inward-looking "clannish" communities loyal to various languages and customs, but one can wonder where all the various descendants of our first settlers would have ended up if the forebears had climbed up the American Dream ladder faster and higher and from a base of richer soil.

Old American doctrine is that poor is good: the Puritanical tenet that nothing is more wholesome than the back-breaking struggle to survive on a poor family farm. As family farms disappear, the myth that they are guaranteed sanctuaries of pure joy and robust work ethic has grown apace. That fact is that the children on family farms of those olden days very often got off the land as fast as they could. So much for romanticization. For the hard day-to-day realities of Newton life I turned to my cousin Lester for his firsthand details of things past.

The grandparents house on the lower 40 acres—half swamp and wood lot—had five or six rooms. The big frame house on the real family homestead had nine and was probably meant for two families. Upstairs there were two



The "Granny House" on the lower 40 in 1919.

finished and two unfinished bedrooms, and off the downstairs dining room there was another bedroom, special because it was warmed by a potbellied stove. Lester slept in one of the unfinished and unheated upstairs bedrooms. "It froze in there in the winter," he recalls.

Rural—and many urban—families have "lived in the kitchen." That was true in the

Long after city people had indoor plumbing, farmers made do with privies and pumps. Thirsty? Go to the water pail in the kitchen with its dipper from which everyone drank. The pail at the homestead was supplied by child labor, when available, from a shallow well pump, the one at the granny house was filled from a natural spring encased in a steel drum that might have been part of a steam boiler. "It was the most delicious-tasting water one could find," Lester recalls. As do I.

"granny house" but in the homestead most of the time was spent in the dining room and the adjacent "sitting room." The "parlor" with its horsehair sofa was for really special occasions, such as a birthday party.

Even by the relatively modest standards of the time this *was* a small holding with only 55 acres of tillable land plus 20 acres of poor pasture on the lower 40.

Said Lester: "We always did seem to be short of money, so I am sort of amazed that my father could afford a Fordson tractor when most farmers didn't have one."

The livestock typically included two horses, ten cows, about 40 chickens, three pigs, a dog (called Shep) and up to six cats. The crops were hay, oats, barley, corn for silage and peas, the

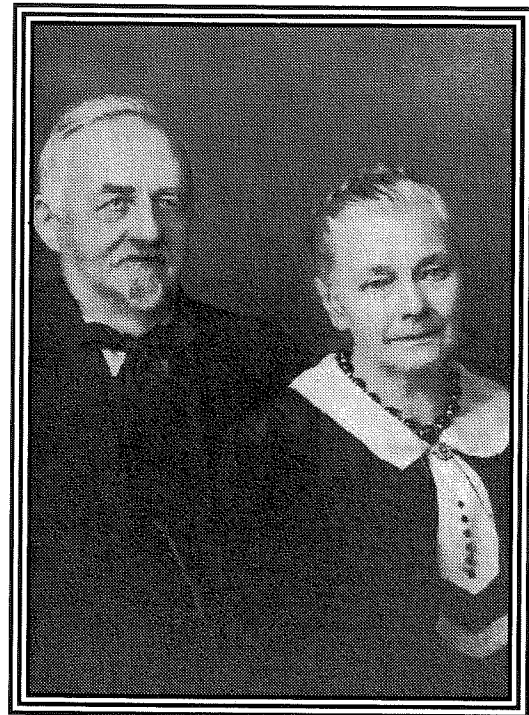
Grandma was a very good cook. She made delicious chicken, for example, and such things as pies and cookies.

In the fall when the grapes were ripe Grandma made all the wine, gallons and gallons of it. She also made a lot of sauerkraut and, of course, did a lot of canning.

She had a good-sized strawberry patch, and she canned lots of them, some pears, lots of peaches (which we had to buy of course), tomatoes, lots of apple sauce, and some plums and cherries. She also raised poppy seed, caraway seed, and of course the standard garden vegetables. We also raised enough potatoes for our own use. Grandpa



**On Oct. 11, 1881, a pensive Dorothea Stoltenberg and a nonchalant Adam Wehrwein posed for their wedding picture. They posed again in 1931 for their Golden Wedding Anniversary, grandma still pensive.**



had about a half a dozen bee hives, and in the spring he would tap the maple trees in the woods, collect the sap, and make maple syrup, so we always had plenty of honey and maple syrup on hand. The butchering and sausage making was done by a neighbor who went around and did that for those who did not do it themselves. But we all chipped in (except Grandpa and Gladys and Florence). I remember turning the hand-powered sausage grinder for hours on end. Grandma boiled the blood and liver sausage. The hams, bacons, and summer sausage were hung in the smoke house and smoked for about three weeks.

Getting electricity finally meant, of course, that we no longer had to light the lamps and that we could see much better whatever we were doing—eating, reading, playing games, going down to the basement to get up some potatoes or whatever, going to bed and getting up, you name it. The barn was not wired until a number of years after the house was.

As soon as I was big enough (probably around 10 years old or so) I had to help milk, and also feed the calves, chickens, and pigs. In winter most of this was done by the light of a kerosene lantern, and it was no fun.

**M**eanwhile, what was Grandpa doing? Not much.

There developed in my generation a compelling impulse to contrast our grandparents, much to the detriment of Adam Wehrwein. But while it's hard to imagine anyone being more indolent, in his defense it might be said that he just wasn't cut out to be a farmer and in a later time he might have gone to town and succeeded as a mechanic or carpenter or at least as a handyman. Still, his liking for beer and schnapps did nothing to enhance his productivity.

Neither he nor she had much schooling, even in German. But he was a faithful reader of things like German-language newspapers and was well versed in history. As Lester said, "He was no dumbbell." He added:

She was a very hard-working person. He was in many ways lazy. Uncle Carl said to me once that he was spoiled as a kid. He was the youngest and I believe it. He never helped with the farm work, though he would have been able to (until he got too old). I was told that even when he was younger, when their children were growing up, he didn't do any more than he had to, and that Grandma even had to clean out the barn. What he did like to do was go in the woods to chop and burn brush, dig ditches, etc. And he was good at

sharpening the scythe, the axes, etc.

I had to help him with that, when I got big enough, by turning the handle on the emery wheel (there were no electric motors), which I detested because it was so boring. His favorite pastime was sitting on his bench and smoking his pipe. I vividly remember him sitting on that bench on the porch and watching Grandma and me throwing wood chunks off of a wagon into the basement through a window. It didn't occur to him to offer to take Grandma's place. She would look at him sideways and mutter contemptuously, "Was ein Mann!" (What a man!)

Most of the time when he'd come back from a couple of hours of chopping brush or digging mud out of the creek, Grandma had to get up some wine from the basement for him. I often wondered why he couldn't have gone down himself to get it.

He was a sort of an outdoorsman. Once he had a live raccoon locked in the smoke house (I don't know how he caught it). He fattened it up with corn and we had it for Thanksgiving. It was delicious! Another time he had a skunk cooped up! I have no idea what he had planned to do with that, but one fine morning it was dead...

Our grade school was a white, one-room building. It was about 1 3/4 miles away following the road, but probably only a little

over a mile by cutting across the fields, which we did most of the time. Yes, we walked it year around, except when it was raining, when Pa would take us or get us. I don't remember, but when the weather was too severe in winter we probably stayed home. As for Manitowoc high school, we walked almost 3/4 miles, to the corner near the cheese factory, and there we were picked up by students who drove their parents' cars to school. We had to pay them of course but I don't remember exactly how much.

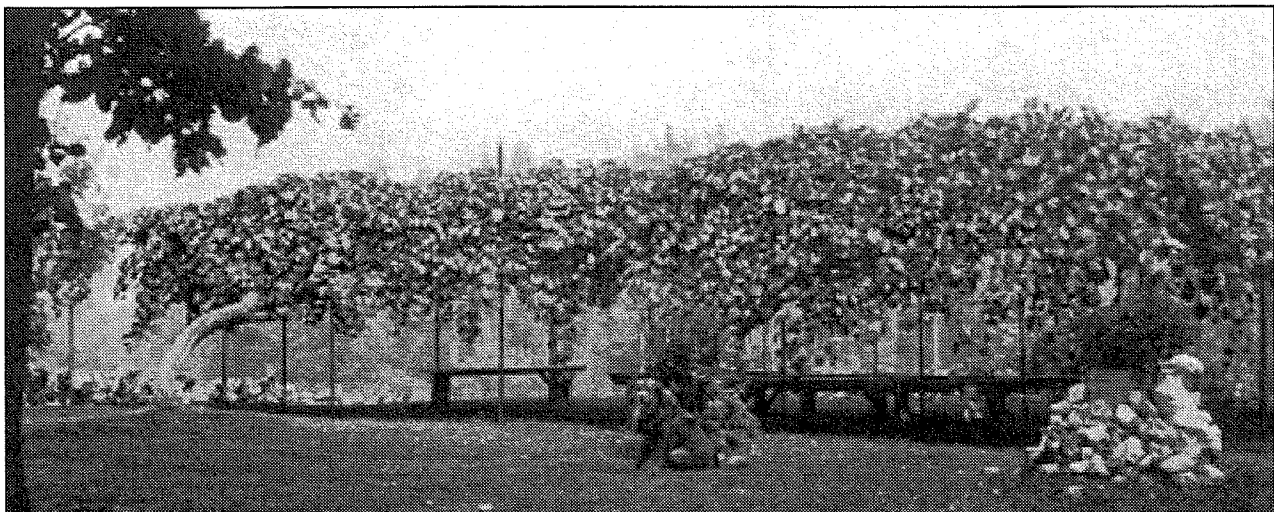
In winter, wherever we went we went by horse and sleigh—hauling the milk to the cheese factory, going to birthday parties, etc. And in winter the chief fun for us kids (when it wasn't too cold) was to go sliding down the hills on our sleds together with our cousins, the Weyers...

Another memory that comes back is the fun we had on the 4th of July. Pa would buy a supply of fireworks—firecrackers, sparklers, Roman candles, rockets, etc.—they were not forbidden in those days and were cheap—and we'd enjoy it immensely. The sparklers and rockets were of course lit after dark. And the next day or maybe the same day or the day before, we'd get together with the Weyer cousins and shoot some more firecrackers. It was great sport.

In many ways life was hard, but in some ways I really believe those days can be rightfully called "the good old days"....



"Shep"

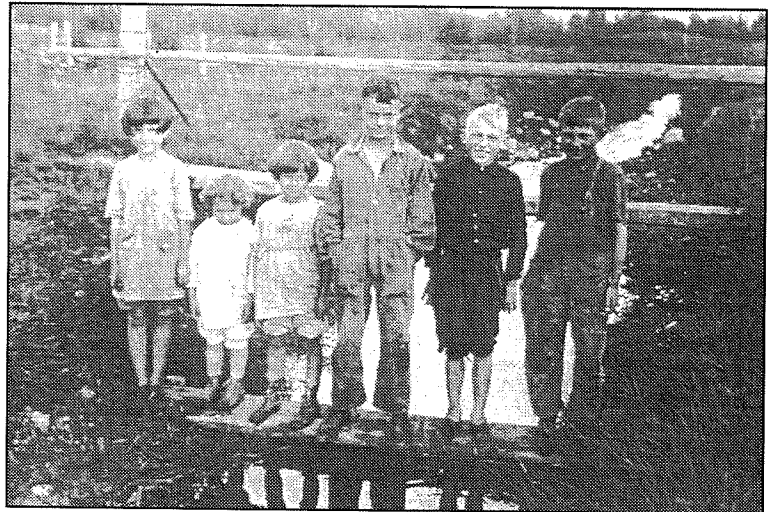


Grape arbor, August, 1913. Beneath this spreading grape arbor the family gathered frequently. Under the leafy ceiling Gladys Wehrwein married Vilas (Matt) Matthias in September, 1939.

# FROM COUSIN LESTER'S PHOTO ALBUM:



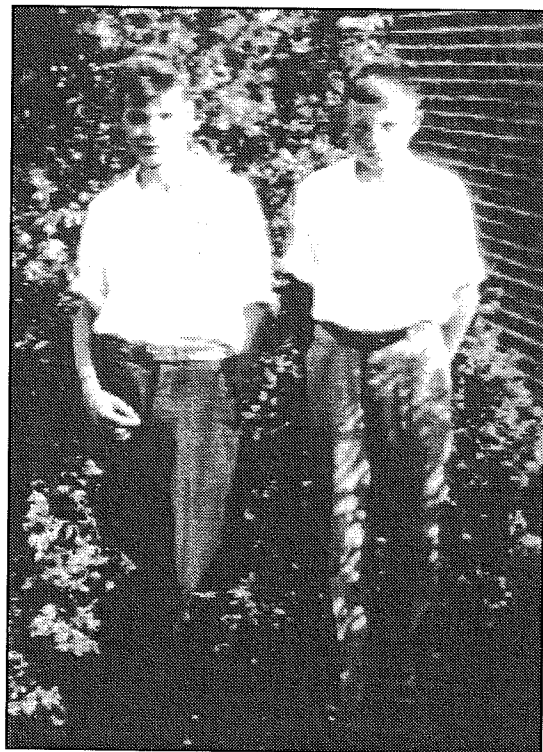
Lester and Grandma



Gladys, Dorothea, Florence, Austin, Fritz Weyer, Lester



Florence, Gladys, Lester



Austin and Lester

Lester's firm convictions about the way things were are matched by his beliefs on the way they are and, as well, as the way they ought to be.

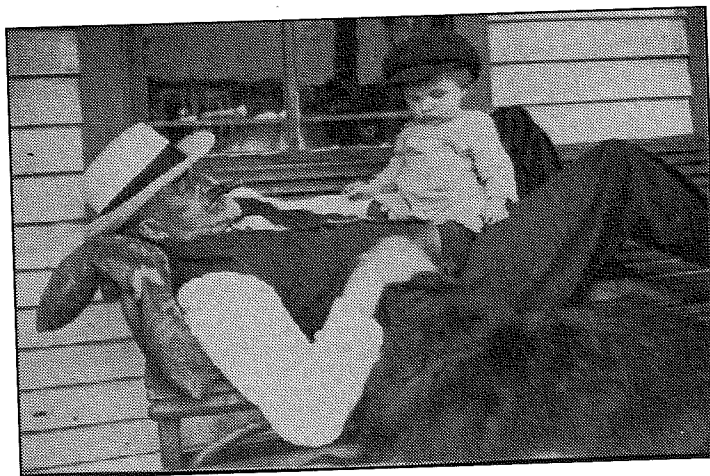
Nostalgia for the good in the good old days softens some of his painful memories, all the more so when he contemplates contemporary society's flaws. Some of his social criticism comes through in his reflection on my questions bearing on the texture—"flavor," as it were—of the environment during his youth in Newton.

People were more neighborly. Farmers helped each other in many ways—building barns, shingling roofs, threshing, filling the silo, sawing firewood, butchering, etc. And at threshing and filling silo neighbor women would come and help feed the men and wash the dishes, etc....

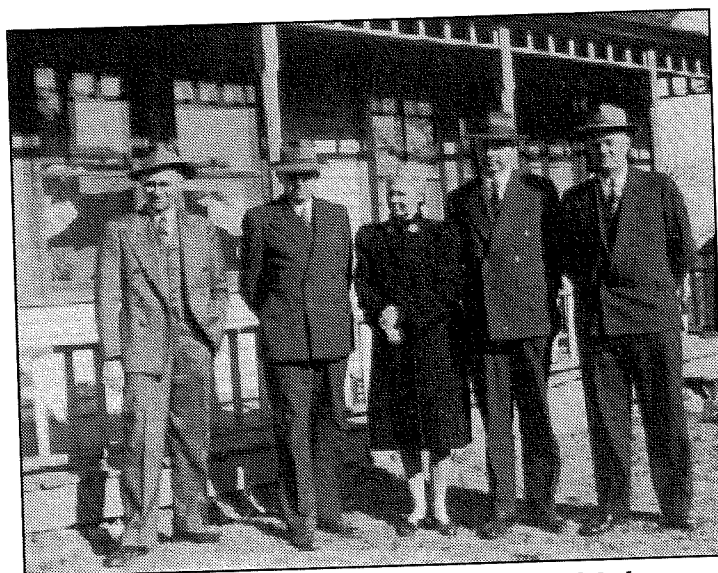
It seems life was more relaxed and easy-going. People weren't rushing around from morning to night and often way into the night doing this and that and the other thing, the way they do now. When farmers working on the fields happened to meet each other at the line fence, they would spend 15 or 20 minutes "chewing the fat." It took half an hour to an hour to take the day's milk by horse and wagon to the corner cheese factory, and nobody thought anything of it.

Even Grandma, with all her work, had time frequently to spend half a day chatting with a relative or a woman friend who had been brought to our house for a visit.

We kids *learned* something in school. We mastered the 3 Rs and learned how to behave properly (with the help of the parents). There was discipline. When the teacher spanked a child for misbehaving, there was no social worker having a policeman haul him or her before a judge on charges of child abuse. *All* the children learned how to read—even the "dumbest" ones—usually by the end of the first grade. Drugs, guns, and knives were unheard of. Compare that with today, when many students even of high school age are unable to read (for the simple reason that the teaching



Baby Lester with Grandpa Wehrwein, shown in his favorite posture: reclining.

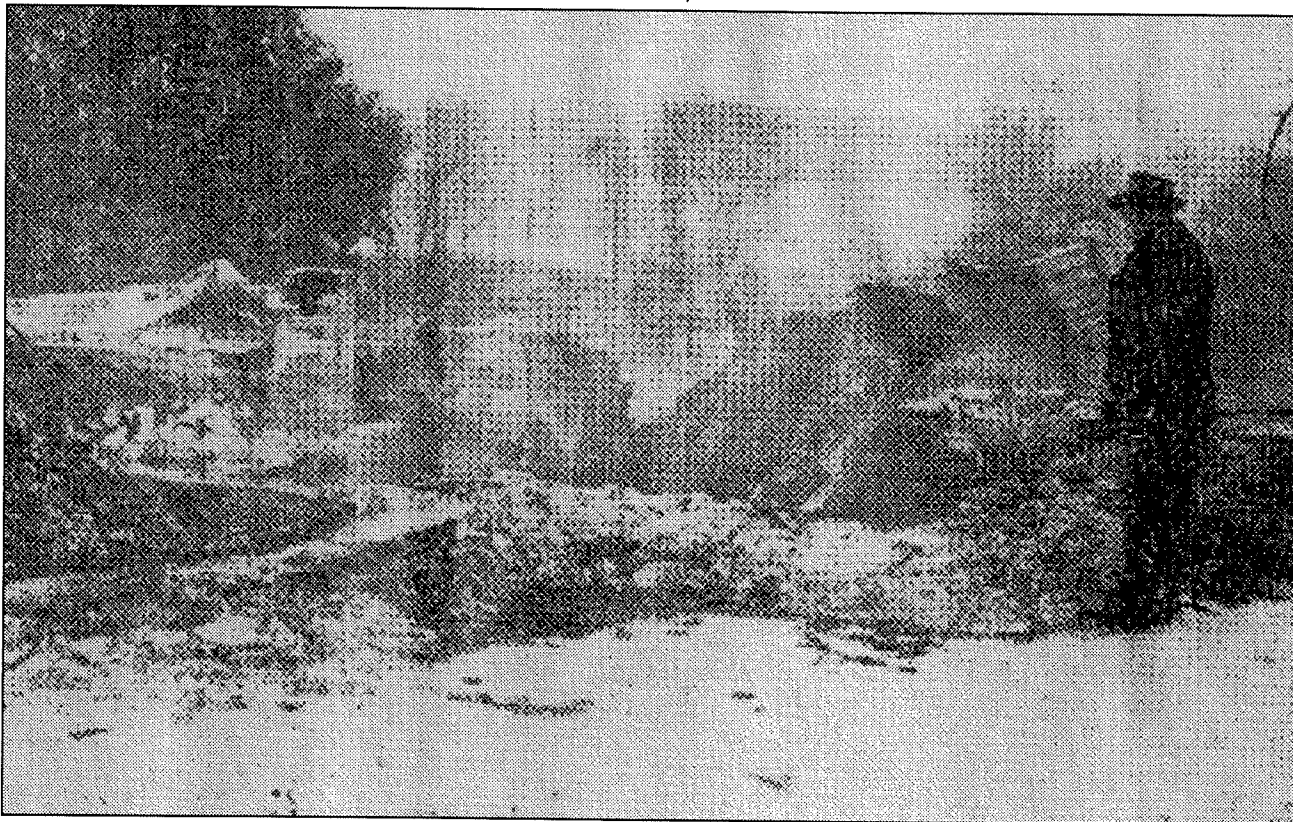


Brothers (l to r), Walter, Adolph, George and Carl; sister, Flora, center. At farm, 1944.

of phonics was abolished or at least severely restricted), the teaching of right and wrong is prohibited. . .

Farmers could do as they wanted on their own land. There was no such thing as a farmer being fined for filling in a pothole because some bureaucrat in Washington had determined that it was a "wetland".... Farmers could raise what they wanted, and no questions asked. Except for the very rich, there were no income tax forms to fill out. And we didn't even need a driver's license. In short, people were free to run their own lives.

## The Death of the Abandoned Homestead (R.I.P.)



A fire that broke out Wednesday morning (Jan. 20) at an unoccupied farm home near Clover, in the town of Newton, leveled the eight room home. —Manitowoc Herald-Times, January 20, 1954

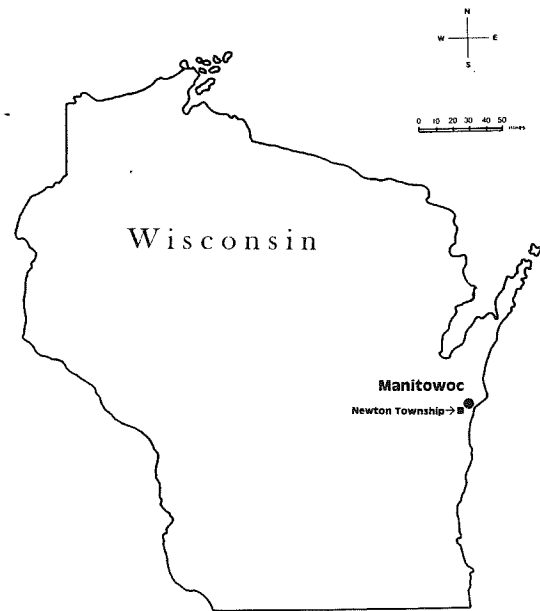
## To Find the Site

The site of the Newton farm can be reached by driving about a mile southwest from Manitowoc on Highway 151, then south on County Trunk CR for about 2 3/4 miles to Clover Road, then west on Clover Road 1 mile to Gass Lake Road, then north for not quite 1/2 mile, where there is a fairly new home about a block to the east. The site of the farmstead, which has long since burned down, is almost 1/4 mile in from the road, and the old gravel driveway leading to it is probably partly overgrown with weeds.

The site of St. Paul's Lutheran Church is at the corner of Clover Road and Gass Lake Road, and the graveyard is located north of the site on Gass Lake Road. Here are the graves of Johann Georg and Margaretha.

The "granny" farm is just two blocks or so north on Gass Lake Road. The old house has been remodeled and enlarged and there is a beautiful man-made pond, fed by the spring.

—Lester Wehrwein, 1121 E. Jefferson St., New Ulm, Minn. 56073



## CHAPTER V: MY PARENTS

### *Anna and George*

**M**y mother, Anna, was born in 1886 in Cooperstown, Wis., midway between Manitowoc and Green Bay. Her parents separated and presumably divorced long before my time. After normal school training for teaching primary grades, she got a job in the



Mishicot "graded school" in Manitowoc County where my father was principal from 1908 to 1910. In 1914 they were married in a Lutheran ceremony at Stevens Point, a year after my father got his first degree from the University of Wisconsin.

In 1976 my mother died at age 90 in Silver Spring, Maryland, where she was living with my sister, Annabel. She outlived my father by 31 years. She died a painful death from pneumonia after breaking her hip. To the end she was, as she would say, a fighter. Her admirable instinct for survival led, alas, to many a battle for lost or phantom causes and ultimately to a bitter estrangement from her parental family. She came out of poverty from a dysfunctional working class family. The hardships she endured—although probably not anything like starvation—left psychological scars. And strength. Thus while she could be extraordinarily generous (*she gave me an unsolicited \$10,000 to buy our Evanston (Ill.) house*) she was paranoid



about money in small sums. It is probably not so paradoxical that such penurious traits made her resolutely self-reliant during her long widowhood...

But her personality was far from that of Scrooge. At heart she was, like her mother

before her, as merry as she could be. And this poses some basic contrasts with my father. She would bubble over if those around her were enjoying light-hearted fun whereas my father, for all his kindly spirit, was ill at ease, even inhibited, in the presence of revelry especially the rowdy kind. But he was steady while she had mood-swings that made her harshly—often irrationally—judgmental. My father's instinct on the other hand was to avoid anything like open confrontation.

She was, on the surface, more emotional than my father. Both were shy. He had an intellectual but rarely expressed appreciation for all the arts. She was carried away by the dance and never missed the opportunity to see Nijinsky and Pavlova who owned ballet when it was synonymous with Russian companies. She respected classical music, but all but swooned over light opera and waltz tunes. In all candor, she wasn't well educated by Madison standards but she was inordinately proud of any intellec-



George S. Wehrwein

## SCALING THE ACADEMIC RANGE

I have had no high school education, but went directly from the rural school to the Oshkosh Normal School which, at that time, admitted students of this type to a four year course. It was necessary to do some preparatory work which, with much of the first two years, constituted a substitute for high school preparation. I attended the Normal School for three quarters, 1900-1901, and then taught a rural school in Manitowoc County for three years. I finished at Oshkosh Normal in 1908, and was Principal of the Mishicot Graded School (Manitowoc County) 1908-1910.

I attended the University of Wisconsin from 1910 to 1913; part of 1912 I was not in attendance, but with W. A. Schoenfeld assisted Professor H. C. Taylor in making a study of the marketing of cheese, which was published as Wisconsin Experiment Bulletin #231. During this time I published a booklet on "Local Government" privately. I graduated with a degree of B.S. in Agriculture in 1913, and was appointed extension specialist in marketing and cooperation at the University of Texas.

In 1914 Charles B. Austin and I published University of Texas Bulletin #355, "Cooperation in Agriculture, Marketing and Rural Credit." Our work then gradually shifted to studies in land tenure, and in 1915 our Division published Bulletin 1915:21, "Study of Farm Tenancy in Texas." In 1916 Dr. L.H. Haney of the University faculty and our extension division jointly undertook a social and economic survey of southern Travis County, the results of which were published in a bulletin by that title, #1916:65. In 1917 I was appointed head of the Visual Instruction Division, and was joint author of Texas Bulletin #1730, "Visual Instruction through Lantern Slides and Motion Pictures."

*This resume in my father's own words takes him up only to the midpoint of his career but it serves to illustrate his tenacious nature.*

In the fall of 1917 I became extension specialist in marketing in the Office of Farm Markets of the State of Washington of which Mr. Asher Hobson was director. We cooperated with the State College of Washington in our work, our office being located at Pullman. As part of my work I conducted a survey of the public markets of the state, and published the

results in the Office of Farm Markets Bulletin #1, "The Public Markets of the State of Washington."

In 1918-1919 I was assistant professor of Rural Economics in Pennsylvania State College. Here my work was largely teaching, but we made a rural survey of a township which was not published. In 1919 I returned to the University of Wisconsin to complete my graduate work. I assisted Professors Hibbard and Macklin the first year, and then joined Dr. Ely in his work in land economics in the Institute for Research in Land Economics and Public Utilities, which was formally organized in 1920. I was appointed Research Associate in Land Economics, and also held the rank of assistant professor in the University of Wisconsin from 1924 to 1925.



G.S.W., on the go. (Here, catching the train in Madison.)

In 1922 we published *Outlines of Land Economics* (Edwards Brothers, Ann Arbor, Michigan), a joint work of Dr. Ely, Dr. Shine and myself. (Later republished with only Ely and Wehrwein as authors, 1928 and 1931.)

I received the M.S. in 1920 and Ph.D. in 1922, majoring in Land Economics. My thesis was "Land Ownership and Tenure in the United States."

In 1925 the Institute was removed to Northwestern University where I retained the title of Research Associate, and was also appointed professor of economics at the University. My research there was largely in general land economics, recreational land, land utilization, and especially in agricultural land tenure. In line with the last activity we completed rural surveys in three townships in Illinois and Wisconsin, the results of which were published in the *Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics*.

In 1927-28 the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and Markets began the Land Economic Inventory of northern Wisconsin in Bayfield County. I was in charge of the economic aspects of this survey published in Bulletin #100 of this Department. In 1928 I rejoined the staff of the University of Wisconsin, because I felt that here I could work more closely with actual land problems. Our first piece of research was a study of recreation as a land use, published as Wisconsin bulletin #422 (1932); also had charge of the tax delinquency and financial sections of the publications "Making the Most of Oneida County Land," and the others in this series, with the exception of Marinette County. In 1931 we began a cooperative study with the U.S. Department of Agriculture of the question of tax reduction through changes in administrative area and forms and functions of local governments, especially in relation to land utilization. This work was continued in 1932-33, completed this summer. A preliminary stencil bulletin has been issued by the Wisconsin College of Agriculture covering the first part of the study.

In this same year, a University research project was undertaken to study and map land values and land utilization in the city of Madison.

In 1932 a study of land utilization was begun in a typical township of the central Wisconsin

sandy area, with special reference to the land policies and zoning that might be attempted to control land uses and public expenditures in this "marginal region." This work has been extended in 1933 to a typical section of the non-glaciated erosion area of Wisconsin.

Langlade County was surveyed 1932-33 under a joint arrangement sponsored by the Governor's Land Use Committee. Geological Soil and Forest Cover surveys were made by departments of the University and the State Department of Agriculture and Markets. Our part of the work included a very detailed study of tax delinquency, land values and public finances as related to soils and natural areas of the county. The bulletin is now in the press. (July, 1933).

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*In due course, G.S.W. moved on and upward, as the tributes in this section testify. Among other milestones, he was president of the American Farm Economics Association. In 1940 he published what was supposed to be a crown achievement, his book, Land Economics, (Macmillan Company). But, alas, it was a commercial failure, due in large part to restrictions forced by the oncoming war. Richard T. Ely, who had been his mentor, was listed as co-author but it was really G.S.W.'s work. Because of advancing age, Ely contributed little other than his name, which compounded the tragic disappointment.*

## A Large Intellectual Debt

"My schooling was disrupted by the shortage of labor during World War I. It meant foregoing high school. Then, late in 1921, I entered upon a short course in agriculture at South Dakota State College. I managed to enter college in 1924 and I was permitted to complete my college work in three years. The unorthodox economics of the University of Wisconsin during those years appealed to me. Despite my lack of proper credentials I was accepted by the graduate school. My intellectual debt to Professors Commons, Hibbard, Perlman and Wehrwein is large."

—Theodore W. Schultz, writing in his autobiography. In 1979, after he had retired from the University of Chicago, Dr. Schultz won the Nobel Prize for Economics.

The New York Times



PROF. GEORGE S. WEHRWEIN  
Associated Press, 1934

## GEORGE WEHRWEIN, A FARM ECONOMIST

University of Wisconsin Staff  
Member, an Expert on Land  
Use and Zoning, Is Dead

MADISON, Wis., Jan. 11 (AP)—Prof. George S. Wehrwein, University of Wisconsin agricultural economist and nationally recognized authority on land use and zoning, died of a heart ailment last night at the Wisconsin General Hospital. He had been ill since Christmas Eve. His age was 61.

Professor Wehrwein, who had served on the faculty since 1928, was formerly extension lecturer at the University of Texas, extension specialist in the Washington State office of farm markets, a member of the faculty at Penn State and research associate for the Institute for Research in Land and Economics and Public Utilities. He was co-author of two land economics textbooks.

Professor Wehrwein was Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Wisconsin in 1924-25, Professor of Economics at Northwestern University from 1925 to 1928 and Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Wisconsin since 1928.

Born in Newton, Manitowoc County, Wis., the son of Adam and Dorothea Stoltenberg Wehrwein, Professor Wehrwein was graduated from the State Normal School in Oshkosh, Wis., in 1908, and received a B.S. in 1913, an M.S. in 1920 and a Ph.D. in 1922 from the University of Wisconsin.

He was president of the American Farm Economics Association in 1942 and a member of the Wisconsin State Planning Board in 1935. He belonged to the Alpha Zeta fraternity and several professional societies.

In 1914 he married Anna Ruby. The couple had a son, Austin C., and two daughters, Dorothea M. and Annabel R.

## THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL

# G.S. Wehrwein of U.W. Dies

### Noted Land Economist

Journal Special Correspondence  
Madison, Wis.—Prof. George S. Wehrwein, University of Wisconsin agricultural economist and nationally recognized authority on land use and zoning, died Wednesday of a heart ailment at Wisconsin General hospital. He would have been 62 on Jan. 31.

Prof. Wehrwein's work as a member of the state planning board since 1935 and the midwest regional planning commission of the national resources planning board since February, 1943, had won wide recognition. He worked on various surveys covering both the recreational and economic use of land in Wisconsin. Prof. Wehrwein was also a member of the educational board of the National Association of Real Estate Boards.

#### Native of Newton

A native of Newton in Manitowoc county, Prof. Wehrwein was graduated from Oshkosh State Teachers college in 1908 and then enrolled at the University of Wisconsin. He received his first degree there in 1913 and his Ph. D. in 1922.

Prof. Wehrwein was an associate professor of economics at the university during 1924-'25 and then accepted a professorship at Northwestern university. He returned to the University of Wisconsin as professor of agricultural economics in 1928. Prof. Wehrwein also served as extension lecturer at the University of Texas, extension specialist for the Washington state office of farm markets, research associate for the Institute for Research in Land Economics and Public Utilities and taught at state college Pennsylvania.

In collaboration with Prof. Richard T. Ely he wrote "Outlines of Land Economics" and "Land Economics."

#### Survivors Are Listed

He is survived by his wife, one son, Sgt. Austin C., now at Maxwell field, Alabama; two daughters, Dorothea of Washington, D. C., and Annabel at home; his 88 year old mother, Mrs. Dorothea S. Wehrwein of Manitowoc; three brothers, Adolph of Milwaukee, Walter on a farm near Newton and Carl of Washington, D. C., and a sister, Mrs. James Cranston of Beloit. Funeral arrangements have not been completed.

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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College of Agricultural, Food,  
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July 9, 1998

My acquaintance with Dr. George S. Wehrwein dates from September, 1939, when I arrived at the University of Wisconsin as a new Research Assistant in the Department of Agricultural Economics. To my great good fortune, I was assigned to a research project that he supervised and that ultimately focused on the inventory and management of county-owned "cut-over land" in northern Wisconsin, acquired through tax forfeiture.

My first and most lasting impression was of his professional commitment to resource protection. This grew out of his conviction that "cut-over" land, then almost worthless (counties were offering large tracts at \$0.50 to \$1.00 per acre), was a valuable resource that should be conserved, and for which management plans should be developed, pending ultimate resale. He was determined that these lands should be protected.

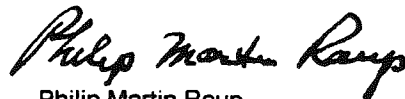
This philosophy infused his teaching, and gave a specific content to an often unfocused popular interest in resource conservation. He made it topical, and showed how conservation could be transformed into a policy guide.

His effectiveness owed much to his personal qualities. He was a kindly man, and a gifted and patient teacher, who inspired confidence and loyalty in his students. There was about him a touch of the 19<sup>th</sup> century image of a German "father professor", but completely free of any autocratic tinge. He was "long-sighted", and enriched his teaching and counseling with historical references, reflecting his wide knowledge of literature outside his chosen field.

....

My graduate student experience was thus an amalgam of exposure to some of the finest scholars in agricultural and land economics in their generations. But the finest of those was George S. Wehrwein, who in a metaphoric sense was the father of us all.

Sincerely yours,



Philip Martin Raup  
Professor Emeritus

# A TRIBUTE TO WISCONSIN CONSERVATION LEADERS

By A. W. SCHROEGER, Past President, Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters

*Presented at the Memorial Union, Madison, Wisconsin, on Thursday evening, June 30, 1949, in connection with a University of Wisconsin Centennial Conference on Conservation of Wisconsin's Natural Resources.*

*Conservation is our attempt  
to put human ecology on a  
permanent footing.*

**George S. Wehrwein**  
1883-1945

The prophet Isaiah cried, "All flesh is grass." Here is an ancient fundamental principle in conservation. All social blessings stem from the land. George S. Wehrwein, in his brief life, proselytized for conservation of the soil. The land provides the prime essentials of life and its productivity controls the density of population. While a large number of the peoples of the earth live in hunger and die in squalor, our country has never known real want. This is a fortuitous circumstance. In point of time we but recently inherited a rich and virgin continent. As tenants we have done little to husband the productiveness of the soil.

He reiterated the catastrophic loss of the top soil formed by the slow weathering of the rocks over thousands of years. Particularly insidious was the sheet erosion on the more level lands since seldom noticed. The waters pouring down a hillside farmed without regard to contour formed gully after gully and converted the area into miniature "bad lands." At the present time two tons of earthy materials for each inhabitant go annually down our streams. Rivers once deep and clear are filled with sediment. Almost dry at one time, they are a raging flood at another. All the excellent top soil is as good as lost to humanity, penalty for its abuse, social ostracism.

Wehrwein deplored the reclamation of what have been called waste lands. Thousands of acres of marsh in central Wisconsin had been drained and thereby ruined. The land proved to be unsuitable for farming and fires destroyed the accumulation of humus to form a real sandy waste. Land, he pointed out, has more than agri-

cultural value. Far better would it have been in this case to have retained the areas for wildlife and recreation. Too often the result has been the creation of a sterile soil and a waste of human energy.

The time had passed when agricultural land should be mined. It was essential that the better soils be maintained in a high state of fertility by replacing the elements withdrawn by the crops. While leaching and erosion were great national problems, it was highly desirable to determine what could be accomplished by education and monetary grants before resorting to federal control. There was still hope in the individual.

Wehrwein's survey of the lands of northern Wisconsin showed that the best economy lay in a judicious mixture of farming, forestry, and recreation. He was keenly aware of the increasing urban use of the northern lands for relaxation, and rejuvenation of mind and body. Forest and lakes bring peace, and the sight of a deer for many produces a stimulation that is long-lasting. The highways leading north should be beautified with trees and shrubs, and farm homes and villages kept neat. All unnecessary signs, so out of keeping with the landscape, should be banned. The impression on the mind comes from the imprint on the eye.

Large areas in the state are fit only for the growth of trees, but the investment of money for half a century prior to an adequate return had been a great deterrent to private forestry. The Forest Crop Law had failed to arouse the interest anticipated by its proponents. Wehrwein made a careful study of this law to determine why private forestry still languished. With characteristic realism he stated that individuals had not yet reached that stage of altruism where they could be expected to be interested in distant and uncertain returns. This type of risk fell properly within the province of private corporations and government.

# GEORGE S. WEHRWEIN AND ALDO LEOPOLD ON PROPERTY RIGHTS, AND AMERICA'S FUTURE LAND USE AND CONSERVATION

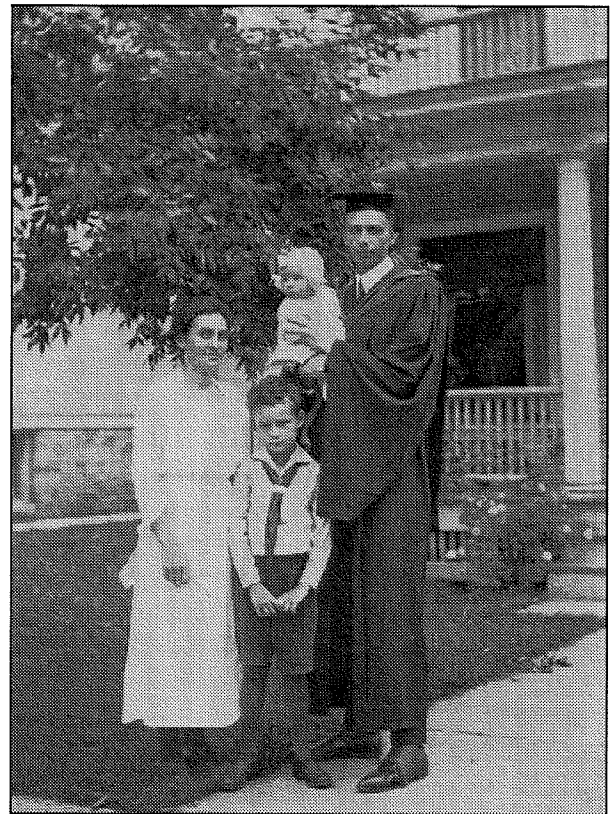
by Gerald F. Vaughn

University of Wisconsin professor George S. Wehrwein (1883-1945) perceived the need for a professional land economist to analyze the land economy of biblical times, especially as to its implications for our modern times and life. America's leading land economist after his mentor Richard T. Ely, and president of the American Farm Economic Association in 1942, Wehrwein was not a theologian. However, he was an active Congregationalist lay leader, Sunday School teacher, and Bible institute lecturer. In 1932 he gave a series of eight lectures titled "Bible Backgrounds of Agriculture" over radio in Wisconsin. In 1938 he authored *The Economic Background of the Old Testament*, from which my prefatory quotation is drawn. He continued to compile biblical reference and other relevant materials, apparently for the purpose of a larger study. The faculty memorial resolution adopted upon his passing states:

*He became an authority among the clergy for his excellent grasp of biblical history and the land economy of biblical times. There is little doubt that, had he lived, he would fairly soon have published an impressive volume on this topic.*

Wehrwein's understanding of the biblical background of land use and conservation became more significant as he was increasingly influential in the 1930s and 1940s in reorienting thought about America's land policies. His research and policy prescriptions focused on land problems including land tenure, land use in the rural-urban

fringe, rural planning and zoning, isolated settlement, forest taxation, soil and water conservation, recreational land use, and public land management. His policy making influence extended far beyond Wisconsin to various regional and nation-



**The newly-minted University of Wisconsin Ph.D., June 14, 1922, when getting a higher degree really meant scholarly achievement. Anna, at left; George at right, holding Doratheia and Austin, center. A solemn occasion, as our demeanors demonstrate.**

al bodies, including the Land Committee (of which he was a member) of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's National Resources Committee, later called the National Resources Planning Board.

Wehrwein helped to set the stage for his faculty colleague and close friend, the great ecologist and conservationist Aldo Leopold, whose classic book *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) did much to shape the philosophy of the modern environmental movement. Wehrwein illustrated the public interest in private land by quoting Leopold who wrote:

*The land owner whose boundaries happen to include an eagle's nest, or a heron rookery, or a patch of lady's slippers, or a remnant of prairie sod, or an historical oak, or a string of Indian mounds—such a land owner is the custodian of a public interest, to an equal or sometimes greater degree than one growing a forest, or one fighting a gully.*

Joseph J. Hickey, who was a graduate student under Leopold at Wisconsin in the early 1940s, observed that Wehrwein "had an ethical feeling for the land and was much admired by Leopold." He recalls Leopold's saying that Wehrwein "has a Christ-like mentality." Reflecting the Wehrwein influence, Leopold's writing contains the caution:

"Conservation is payed with good intentions which prove to be futile, or even dangerous, because they are devoid of critical understanding either of the land, or of economic land-use."

Wehrwein was therefore among the earliest and most eminent economists to join forces with ecologists. He wrote:

*Adam Smith stated the consoling doctrine that, in the main, whenever each person pursues his own self-interest he is automatically also acting in the best interests of society as a whole. The natural corollary follows that any restraint on the action of individuals not only is bad for the individual but also for society and the state. Whatever may have been the validity of this philosophy in commerce and industry it fails when applied to the conservational utilization of natural resources.*

He insisted:

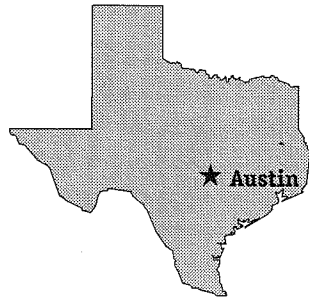
*The land economist must not only consider human institutions but also have some understanding of biotic, ecological relationships and the impact of man on his environment in so far as these affect the relationship of man to man in the efforts of men to live collectively.*

When colonial Americans rid themselves of oppressive feudal bonds, they established a system of land ownership and rights quite different from that of their forebears. They gave to private individuals more freedom to use their land than has ever been granted elsewhere. Wehrwein knew that this extreme freedom in property rights could not be sustained. Society has a bona fide interest in the wise use of private lands. How to legitimately assert society's interest in private lands, without causing undue and uncompensated loss of landowner equity and discouraging or destroying private initiative, is the question. This question will never be answered in a manner to satisfy all peoples at all times. It will be answered by each society in its own era.

Wehrwein and Leopold together tried to answer this question for their era and the indefinite future. Principally through his close association with Wehrwein, Leopold formed economic insights about land use. As a result Leopold became discouraged about market forces as the basis for better land use and conservation. He shared the view of Wehrwein, who observed:

*...the best examples of soil conservation, conservation of wood lots, wild life and forests seem to be independent of profit and loss considerations and be motivated by institutional, psychological and even irrational purposes when judged by the economic yardstick.*

**Excerpted from the Summer 1999 issue of *Semper Reformanda* published by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.**



## CHAPTER VI: PERSONAL HISTORY

I was born Jan. 12, 1916, in Austin, Texas. My father, who was then an agricultural extension specialist at the University of Texas, recorded my arrival in his mini pocket diary thus:

*Very Cold Norther*

*Went to hospital 1 AM. Baby born 5:40 PM*

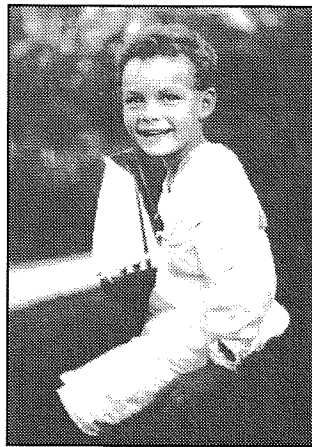
If that sounds cryptic I should explain that his two-by-four inch diary allowed but five lines per day, although being laconic was his style in all the diaries he kept until 20 days before he died. He always began with the weather—the Norther in my birth date entry is Texas talk for a cold wind out of the North. After his weather report, my father typically concentrated on mundane matters, even after he switched to diaries with larger pages. He was loath to record private matters or to spin out philosophy, more's the pity.

As for the name, I think it was the result of an uncharacteristic flight of whimsy. But I've never minded that I was named for the city of my birth because "Austin" has a nice ring to it. I tell anyone who kids me about it (e.g., "Lucky you weren't born in Oshkosh") that I was really named for Stephen F. Austin (1793-1836), the founding father of Texas. And why not? After all, the capital city was, in turn, named after him.

In the first of many moves dur-

ing my childhood, we were bound a year after I was born for Pullman, Washington. The next year we were at Penn State. There my memory of things past seems to start: I have thin recollections of our World War I Victory Garden and the fireworks that lit up the sky to celebrate the Nov. 11, 1918, Armistice. My more reliable, though still sketchy, impressions go back to the early 1920s after my father moved us again. This time returning to Madison for his Ph.D. at the university. He received it in 1922.

No place has shaped me more than my hometown of Madison. Despite suffocating congestion typical of a 200,000-population metro area, Madison still retains a liberating charm. But the old days there were really good. When I was coming up in pre-World War II, that lake-embraced city of 50,000 was a sylvan locale, easily explored by a small boy on foot. This "Athens of the Middle West" was effectively ruled from the State Capitol and the university just a mile away down State Street. Social science and politics interacted institutionally, nurturing the tolerant cultural and political liberalism of the LaFollette Progressive movement's golden era. We basked in a mixture of urban sophistication and rural goodness. Decades before "globalization" we were "cosmopolitan," positive that



Austin, about age 5,  
with toy boat



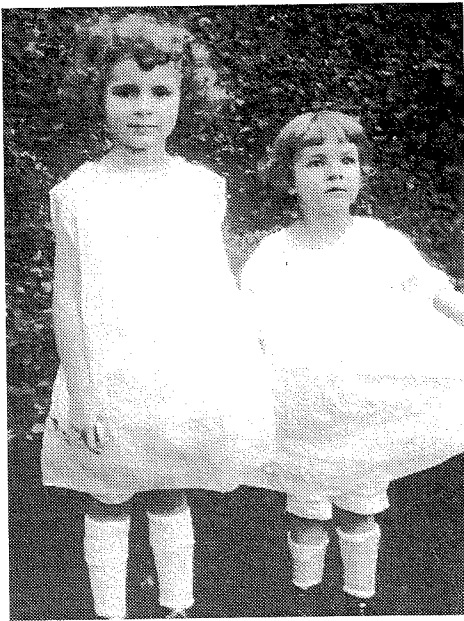
Wisconsin was the best state university, on a par with Harvard—which, indeed, picked off Wisconsin's distinguished scholars to our dismay. This claim to an "intelligentsia" life style fostered a tolerance for eccentricity that, as it happened, obscured flaws in our own household life style.

My father was still a struggling graduate student approaching age 40 when my older sister, Dorathea, was born in 1921. My second sister, Annabel, came along in 1924. For reasons I can't fathom we moved five times over ten years—seven, counting two during a three year sojourn in Evanston, Illinois. Then in 1930 we finally settled down in a spacious red brick, English-style house at 1809 Summit Ave., on the steepest hill in the University Heights neighbor-

hood. Overnight this became the family's focal point. Without being too pretentious one could say it defined us.

We were still far from affluent. Nor did we dwell on being in the hotbed of the academic elite. But in truth my father's reputation was blossoming and our perch on Summit Avenue proclaimed that we had arrived. From this point I can with some confidence retrace my life and many family relationships. Despite "Dr. Wehrwein's position" (as my mother would refer to my father in the third person, as wives would in those pre-feminist days) we really had no social life. His image as the intellectual so totally engrossed in his field was a common one in that culture. But, in truth, both my parents were socially inept loners. He had little small talk, she lacked conventional social skills. He had professional friends. They had no social friends in common.

My sisters, Dorathea and Annabel, at about five and three, and (below) Annabel, at left, Dorathea, right, as adults. Annabel died in 1991 at age 67 and Dorathea in 1965 at 44, both from breast cancer.



A burst of adolescent energy took hold as we made the Summit Avenue move. I roamed the nearby university farm and inhaled the pungent smells of its spacious barns. During one fall and early winter I rode a borrowed horse around the spread, which, sad to say, is now divided into sports fields and university building sites.

Like my father I was tall, skinny and uncoordinated but I had long legs good for long stretches of jogging. I spent hours on hot tennis courts and literally days on Lake Mendota swimming piers. We skated for miles on roller-skates attached to our shoes with key clamps. If all that seems to resemble a Norman Rockwell painting. . . well, in retrospect, it really did. I must add that although I wasn't very good at sports, I had a variety of tolerant friends, some of whom weren't much better. So I escaped the jock-versus-nerd hazing common today. Maybe high schools back then were simply more civilized. . . At any rate by the time I graduated from West High School all my energies had shifted to an obsession with newspapering. My course was set. My story can be told by listing the newspapers for which I worked or to which I contributed. As it happens it is a long list.

The *West High Times* leads the list. Our adviser, Esther Taft, who came from a newspaper family, inspired us with a light but deft discipline. We repaid her by producing a paper whose make-up met adult standards and whose prose was usually free of the excruciating floridity to which adolescent writers are prone. By the time I became editor and chief columnist I had the elements of standard newspaper style.

**M**y next stop after high school was the *Wisconsin State Journal*. I just walked in and told Roy Matson, the city editor, I wanted to work during vacations. And for two or three I did, mostly "grunt" routines like obituaries. I also got my first daily newspaper bylines on occasional feature pieces. The pay was car fare and experience.

At this point in my job record—we didn't have "careers"—a "sidebar" about the golden era of print journalism might provide some useful context. Yes, it was easier to get started in a city (that is, news) room. There were more newspapers, and they had scant competition from broadcasting. The pay was puny. Often hiring credentials were, too. Some very good reporters boasted they never went to college, let alone a pantywaist journalism school. So, naturally, turnover was high. Working for a string of newspapers could be something to boast about.

This attitude fostered a raffish—and self-destructive—romanticism that among other things tolerated rather than treated boozing while exploiting talent. High professional standards were enforced while personal irresponsibility was indulged. All of which made it easy for me to be a "job jumper" for some years.

I was infected with this reckless virus when I entered the University of Wisconsin in 1933. As soon as I finished registering I began working almost full time on the *Daily Cardinal*, then a—if not *the*—leading college paper. This seemed logical then but the experience (unpaid, by the way) was gained at the expense of the rich academic menu. Although I took courses from some world class professors, my education (with economics *not* journalism as my major) was uneven at best. In my self-defense I must add that I was part of the "intellectual crowd"—as opposed, for example, to the Langdon Street fraternity-and-sorority cabal.

My job history has been marked by risk-taking, offset by strokes of luck. A prime example of luck came after I lost my bid for the *Cardinal* editorship when the student selection board controlled by the frat boys picked one of their own. I expected that. What I hadn't expected was that I simultaneously landed the coveted post of *Milwaukee Journal* campus correspon-

## THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL ALUMNI

Former Members of the Editorial, Art and Photo Departments of The Milwaukee Journal

John H. Thompson, 505 E. Henry Clay St. #104, Milwaukee, WI 53217 Phone 414/332-2065

I well remember you, Austin, from your two stints on The Journal. I recall one incident in particular. I was state editor and you were our UW campus correspondent when the regents were picking a university president to succeed Glenn Frank, whom Phil LaFollette had axed. Close to deadline the Western Union man in our office started bringing in takes of a story on the selection of Clarence Dykstra. I pencilled in Craig Ralston's byline, assuming it was our bureau chief who had sent the story. But the final take was signed Wehrwein. Later I learned that you had hopped the train with the regents' committee and scooped everyone with your story wired from somewhere along the railroad line.

Again, when I was putting out the old Sunday Editorial Section, I believe I was the person who suggested that you talk to Lomoe about going to Canada for a series on Canada's postwar development. The rest is Pulitzer Prize history.

dent. That laid the foundation for what would now pass as a career.

A pillar of excellent regional journalism ranking with the *Kansas City Star* and the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, the *Journal* expected good—even “literary”—writing. The matching makeup was stately. And the dignified but relaxed city room was an exception to the raffish shops that were known to hire job jumpers off the street. So for almost two years I was privileged to

cover major stories on and off the campus; I was hired right out of college in the depths of the Great Depression. As I recall I was the only U.W. graduate the *Journal* hired that summer.

I might well have spent my working life in Milwaukee as many good journalists did. But at the end of the summer I quit to go to Columbia University Law School in New York City. I learned *some* law and how lawyers think.

THE TRUSTEES OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

TO ALL PERSONS TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS MAY COME GREETING  
BE IT KNOWN THAT

AUSTIN WEHRWEIN

HAS BEEN AWARDED

THE PULITZER PRIZE IN JOURNALISM FOR DISTINGUISHED  
REPORTING OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE STATUTES OF THE  
UNIVERSITY GOVERNING SUCH AWARD

IN WITNESS WHEREOF WE HAVE CAUSED THIS CERTIFICATE TO BE  
SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY AND OUR CORPORATE  
SEAL TO BE HERETO AFFIXED IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK ON THE  
FOURTH DAY OF MAY IN THE YEAR OF  
OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-THREE



PRESIDENT

*The way I got a Pulitzer Prize was, I must confess, as noteworthy as the fact that I got it at all.*

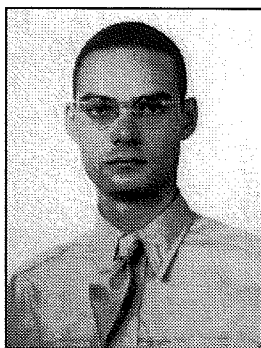
*In 1952 I suggested to Ross Dick, the *Journal* business page editor, a series on Canada. My old friend, Jack Thompson, recalls the idea as his. Either way, the bid was consistent with a generous assignment policy that had allowed me to nominate stories, including some on the road. So I got a blank check to go anywhere in Canada, coast to coast, writing what I pleased. Getting the Pulitzer for this effort was, literally, blind luck. And especially for Managing Editor Wally Lomoe, to whom I owed so much. The reason is that he didn't know I had entered the annual competition, the next winners of which would be revealed in May, 1953. It strains credulity, but I had simply bundled up my Canadian clips, mailed then to the committee on my own. Talk about chutzpah! Actually it was not so much a case of nerve but more a matter of naiveté. I simply didn't know that the protocol called for the news organization, not the writer, to package the entry with supporting documentation. I can only assume the Pulitzer committee judged my modest packet with indulgent smiles. Lamoe was not amused. There was no raise. No bonus. No promotion. No slice of shares in the employee stock ownership plan. I had the perception that a cordial relationship had turned sour. As luck would have it, *Time* magazine offered me a job in its Chicago bureau. Once again unto the breach.*

I did not and could not learn how to *be* a lawyer. I headed back to Madison and passed the Wisconsin bar exam on my second try just to prove to myself that I could. Meanwhile I got a job at the Associated Press Madison bureau where my main assignment was the State Senate. The job expired at the end of the legislative session and soon after the United States plunged into World War II I was in Washington at the slam-bang United Press bureau where I covered the Supreme Court after which I was assigned to an entry-level job on the UP Senate staff.

In 1943 I jumped again. This time into the Army Air Corps. At 27 I was older than the average draftee but I was single and felt uneasy with so many of my contemporaries in uniform. So I waived my "4-F" physical deferment which was based on indications of asthma brought on by chain smoking. (Ironically, the armed services encouraged smoking to boost morale.)

I volunteered on April 12, 1943, and was honorably discharged on March 18, 1946. During my desk-bound hitch I edited several humdrum newspapers at stateside bases but I am proud to say I wound up on the Shanghai, China, edition of the *Stars and Stripes*, the famous GI daily newspaper.

Out of uniform, I returned to the Washington Bureau of the UP, a feisty but struggling wire service competing valiantly but hopelessly with the Associated Press. The hard-pressed UP expected its young reporters to regard their low-paying jobs as a training school and then get out, to be replaced by new, cheaper hands. I took the hint and in 1948 enrolled in the London School of Economics with the aid of the GI Bill of Rights. I felt at home at LSE: it was the prime breeding ground for the Labor Party then in power and the atmosphere reminded me of Madison. But



Private, later Tech Sergeant, Wehrwein, Army Air Corps, serial number 36810714.

my real objective was a job. I soon found one as an information officer at the United Kingdom branch of the Marshall Plan, which was housed in the American Embassy. It was there that I met and soon married Judy Oakes, without doubt the brightest and best move I ever made. I was promoted to the Danish branch in Copenhagen. It was there that our first son was born. Hence his name—Sven. Eager to get back to my real world—in a city room—I rejected a career in government and asked the *Milwaukee Journal* to take me back. Managing Editor, Wallace Lomoe did. It was the first time the *Journal* had ever rehired a "defector."

By the time we landed in Milwaukee in 1951 my adult life was finally fitting a rational pattern, for which I could thank Judith's calm competence. I was, after all, at the crucial age of 35. Since I broke away from home for law school, I had done my time in the army. My father had died while I was in the service, and my sister, Dorathea had graduated with honors from Vassar College and was an economist with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome. Annabel, my younger sister, had finished Bryn Mawr and was on the track to a senior editorship at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.

We had taken that big middle class step: We bought a house in suburban White Fish Bay with the help of the GI Bill of Rights. To cap it all, Paul, our second son, was born.

Wally Lomoe's kindness—another example of my luck—had brought me back to the congenial city room where I was on the business news desk but with the opportunity to write at will for other sections of the paper. All seemed calm and bright. But fortune was reversed, thanks, ironically, to my big break. (See the Pulitzer Prize saga, at left.) I wasn't job-seeking but an offer from *Time* magazine to join its Chicago bureau at a substantially better salary coincided with my hunch that the Pulitzer caper would not be forgotten. So we left Germanic Milwaukee, not really Judith's cup of tea in any event. After renting in south suburban Park Forest, a new planned community for baby boom parents, we bought a

## *In the Din of JFK's Campaign*

Following is a passage on page 155, from *Johnny, We Hardly Knew Ye*, by Kenneth P. O'Donnell and Dave Powers (Little Brown), on an incident during John F. Kennedy's Wisconsin presidential primary campaign. "Dave" refers to Dave Powers, his lovable gofer and "Weirwein" is a reference to "Wehrwein" . . . of course.

Dave enjoys recalling another night in Oshkosh when Jack delivered a speech declaring that the nation needed a change in administration in 1960 after eight drab years of Eisenhower Republicanism as much as it yearned for the new dynamic drive of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal in 1933. Contrasting Herbert Hoover's "hesitant and moribund" outgoing administration of the Depression with the bold spirit brought to Washington by Roosevelt, Kennedy quoted from a poem written at the time by Robert E. Sherwood:

*Plodding feet  
Tramp—tramp  
The Grand Old Party's  
Breaking camp.  
Blare of bugles, din-din  
The New Deal is moving in.*

After the speech Jack stopped in the bar of the hotel where we were spending the night and talked with some of the newsmen who were covering the primary campaign. Austin Weirwein of the *New York Times* said to him, "You were a little off in that speech tonight."

"A little off?" Kennedy said.

"That line of verse," Weirwein said. "'The blare of bugles, din-din, the New Deal is moving in,' There should be another 'din' in there. 'The blare of bugles, din-din-din.'"

Jack stared at him for a moment, without saying anything, and went upstairs to bed. The next morning when he was shaving, he said to Dave, "Haven't we got enough troubles without that Weirwein complaining because he thinks there ought to be another din? What am I supposed to do? Put it to music and play it for him?"

big, old house at 2714 Thayer Street in well-established Evanston, just north of Chicago. By then Peter had been born in a Harvey, Illinois, hospital near Park Forest.

The nomadic life style was getting stale but it seemed to be a cul-de-sac to which I was destined. I wasn't cut out for the Henry Luce journalism that then shaped *Time*. Recklessly, I quit. With luck I caught on at the *Chicago Sun-Times* where I wrote a well-received business news column, and, as financial editor, I was for the first and only time a successful executive.

In 1957 I achieved a life-long ambition when I moved over to the position of chief of the Chicago bureau of the *New York Times*, which called for coverage not only of Chicago but of the Midwest. In the meantime, we had moved to Evanston, where Joanna was born. The benign 1950s culture contributed to some of the best days of our family life.

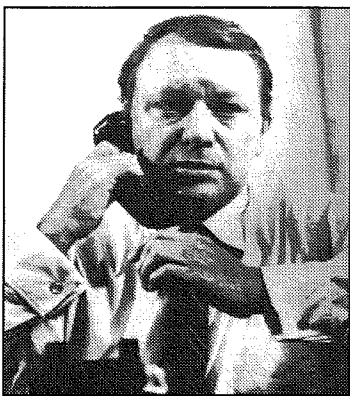
And, of course, the nine years as the *Times'* Chicago bureau chief with responsibility for regional coverage took me to the top of the professional mountain. It was inevitable that I would cross paths with many news-makers of the time and became well-acquainted with some. To engage in some shameless name-dropping I could mention Cabinet-member George Shultz, then a University of Chicago business school dean, Nelson Rockefeller, Harry Truman, Richard Nixon, Adlai Stevenson, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the leaders of the ascendant Minnesota Democratic Farmer Labor party from Hubert Humphrey on down and the Kennedy clan—Jack, Jackie, Bobby, the very young Ted, *et al.* The Wisconsin presidential primary in April, 1960, in which JFK beat HHH and thereby cleared the first hurdle afforded me the chance to get to know the future president rather well at the outset of his rise. On a number of occasions at the outset I was the only reporter—or one of a few reporters—traveling with his vanguard.

## AT THE SCARY END OF JFK'S CAMPAIGN:

The following is from James (Scotty) Reston's autobiography, "Deadline" at page 288:

**W**e were ready by the time the polls closed in New York for everything except what happened. All the so-called B-matter had been set in type; that is to say, editorials had been written in advance to celebrate the victory of either Kennedy or Nixon; we had biographies of both, and of their parents and wives and children, accounts of their childish sayings, school records—ten whole pages of everything but their love affairs—all waiting for the single fact of who won....

By midnight quite a few papers were announcing that Kennedy had won, but we were still hypnotized on the *Times* by that grinning picture of Harry Truman holding up the front page of the *Chicago Tribune* announcing that Governor Dewey had won the election of 1948. Our charts showed Kennedy two electoral votes short of the winning 269, so we still held back. The headline of the second edition,



The New York Times Washington bureau chief

which rolled at 12:36 A.M., said KENNEDY HOLDS WIDE LEAD. At 1:03, however, Austin Wehrwein, the *Times*' Chicago correspondent, called to say that Illinois was in the bag for Kennedy and a few minutes later, Larry Davies, our man in San Francisco, assured us that California was "safe" for Kennedy, so [Managing Editor] Catledge came over to me and said, "Let's go." So out came the big type for the late city final at 3:18—KENNEDY ELECTED—with front-page pictures of Kennedy and Johnson, the editorial proclaiming Kennedy's youth and other virtues—page after page of background boilerplate, all sounding as if we had been sure all along.

All we needed was Nixon's concession, but it didn't come and it didn't come, though we had 485,000 papers on the streets saying it was all over. Before long Wehrwein was calling back saying he was not so sure about Illinois and Davies was saying, sorry, California was running dead even. That's when I felt sure of the heart attack. [Publisher] Orvil Dryfoos, Catledge, and I retreated into Catledge's office, and at 4:47 Catledge stopped the presses. All ten pages were made over; Charlie Merz, the editorial page editor, withdrew his congratulations of Kennedy, and it wasn't until 7:17 A.M. that the extra edition came out with the banner: KENNEDY IS APPARENT VICTOR; LEAD CUT IN TWO KEY STATES.

I staggered home to Sally and told her it was the worst night



The New York Times Chicago correspondent

since my wrong flash at the Grand National Steeplechase in England, but she said no great damage was done. I wasn't so sure. All the old immigrant doubts and fears I had long since forgotten returned for a few days, but when I got back to Washington, Kennedy laughed at me. "If you were scared at the *Times*, you should have seen me," he said.

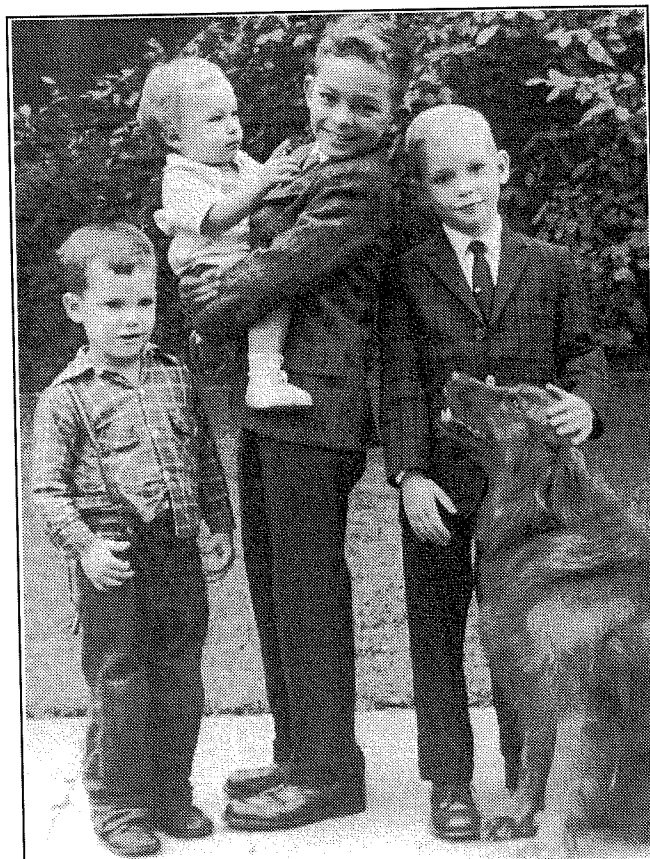
*Although the 1960 election, which Kennedy won by only 118,574 popular votes, was often cited during the 2000 contest in which Bush prevailed, the two outcomes were quite different. Nixon did not ask for any recounts and despite Reston's gut-tearing angst (not to speak of my brush with sheer terror as I clung to my call for JFK). Nixon would have lost even if he had won Illinois's 26 electoral votes: The final tally was 303 for Kennedy to 219 for Nixon. Reston was Washington bureau chief in 1960 and in 1968 was named executive editor of the Times. He died in 1995 at age 86.*

Although we were hardly bosom buddies during that most crucial campaign I (like others) fell into easy-going familiarity. He was, after all, just my age. He had a certain dignity but wasn't stuffy. He had, as he'd put it, "class." Turning on Irish charm—with an edge—came naturally. JFK knew major newspapers from the provincial press: I was aware that I had for a brief time a kidding-around access to JFK and his tight

inner circle because I was the *New York Times*, not because I was Austin C. Wehrwein.

My next and last move was either the most foolhardy professionally or the most fortunate for our family. It happened because I expected a sudden change dictated by the national desk in New York. I was 50. The irregular hours and out-of-town travel were taking their toll. I was slowing down. Rather than risk a transfer to an anonymous job in the huge New York city room—a form of exile—I took an offer to write editorials for the afternoon *Minneapolis Star*, a Cowles family newspaper that was absorbed into their morning *Tribune* just as I retired 17 years later. I had become enamored with Minnesota during my travels whereas I recoiled at even a remote prospect of moving our young family to New York. At all events, the change ended my ramble and forever defined a growing kinship as basically Minnesotan.

Compared to the *Times'* driving pace, writing editorials for the *Star* was a leisurely occupation, enhanced by a liberal policy that allowed members of the editorial-writing staff to cover events outside the office. I took full advantage of this freedom. Because I also brought to the job 35 years of experience in writing fast and accurately under pressure, there came a time when I was writing—in addition to editorials—a weekly column on the law (thanks to Columbia law school!) and another weekly column on media practices and ethics. In my free time I recycled, so to speak, some stuff done originally for the *Star* for outside publications. (An old journalistic game.) During my time at the *Star* and for some years after I retired I served as a "contributor" or "correspondent" (which are fancy titles for stringers) for ten publications. (See list on page 49.) Not, of course, for all at once but for many on a regular basis. Indeed, I did some of the best work of my life for the *Washington Post*, where I often placed major articles throughout the paper including the editorial page. I wrote off and on for the *Economist* of London for an amazing 40 years, right up to 1999.



During the halcyon days in Evanston, from left, Peter, Joanna, Sven and Paul, along with golden retriever, Candy. See cottage group picture for the siblings as adults.

### The Sibling Scorecard

Sven, b. 1951, Copenhagen, Denmark

Paul, b. 1953, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Peter, b. 1957, Harvey, Illinois

Joanna, b. 1959, Evanston, Illinois



**"Reporters meet so many interesting people"— At left, with Ronald Reagan in his pre-politics phase (others unidentified); at right, Chief Justice Warren Burger, congratulates the winner of a Silver Gavel Award at the 1971 American Bar Association convention.**

Judy and "the siblings" have touched on various aspects of our transition into Minnesotans. I can add that after living in the Minneapolis suburb of Edina—a conclave of C.E.O.s—where all our offspring graduated from high school, Judy and I found at last our dream house at 2309 Carter Avenue in St. Paul's St. Anthony Park, an assembly of academics and professionals that reminds me of Madison. There we enjoy both our retirement years and there Judith has developed a garden that's won national honors.

A closing line or two about the "boomers": Sven, with an MBA from M.I.T.'s Sloan School of Management is a financier in Minneapolis. Paul, who lives in St. Paul, and who attended Macalester College and the University of Minnesota, works for the Minneapolis United Way. Peter, who graduated from Yale, where he was a track star, edits the Harvard Medical School Health Letter and lives in Newton, (of all places!) Massachusetts, and Joanna, who attended the University of Minnesota, became a successful plumbing contractor in Seattle. To the grandchildren—Zachary, Frances, Lucas, Timothy, Neal, David, Jonathan, Anna and Ethan—for whom this Wehrwein family sketch

is primarily intended, I can best add what Hubert Humphrey once told me: "Don't worry about the past, the past will take care of itself." Like all bits of wisdom, that's ambiguous, but so is life.

**Following are the major publications for which I was a stringer or to which I contributed during the latter part of my life as a reporter:**

- The Economist of London* [from 1959 to 1999]
- The Times of London* "Letter from America"  
[The pre-Murdoch Times]
- The Christian Science Monitor* [the old full-sized newspaper]
- The Washington Post*
- The Boston Globe*
- The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- Education Week*
- The National Law Journal*
- The Progressive magazine*
- The Collier's Encyclopedia Year Book*

Other connections and awards, Pulitzer '53; University of Wisconsin Distinguished Service to Journalism, '63; American Bar Association Silver Gavel award, '69 and '71; Steering Committee, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press; and board of directors, American Judicature Society during the 1970's.



## CHAPTER VII: THE ENGLISH CONNECTION

*By Judy Oakes Wehrwein*

I was born on March 22, 1930 in Chesham, Buckinghamshire, England, to Edward and Dorothy Oakes, the fourth child of five and the only girl. My brothers are Norman, Tommy, George and Roger.

Because of a family financial crisis, I first lived away from my parents at age six. I was seven when I first went to boarding school, a type of educational institution far more common in England than the U.S.

Except for a brief period in 1940, my education continued at various boarding schools. These schools were privately owned, co-educational and "progressive." For my parents, the progressive designation was important because the philosophy of the owners and teachers reflected their own adherence to what might be called social democratic ideals. My mother, particularly, felt strongly about the unfairness of the class-bound, conservative political and social mores of the day. But also these schools were comparatively inexpensive and my parents had little money.

We lived in a rented duplex in Hatch End, Middlesex (a suburb of London) from 1937-45. Mother grew flowers there and Pa grew vegetables on an "allotment," a plot rented from the local government. The produce became really important to the family during the World War II

years when so much food was rationed.

Norman and Tommy both served in the armed forces during the war but we younger ones were not really adversely affected by the conflict. We were aware of houses being bombed in the neighborhood but I remember feeling "protected" by the anti-aircraft guns booming overhead. We were evacuated to a school in Cornwall but were already used to living away from home.

But, of course, the war, both during and after, had a wrenching and dramatic effect on the whole country.

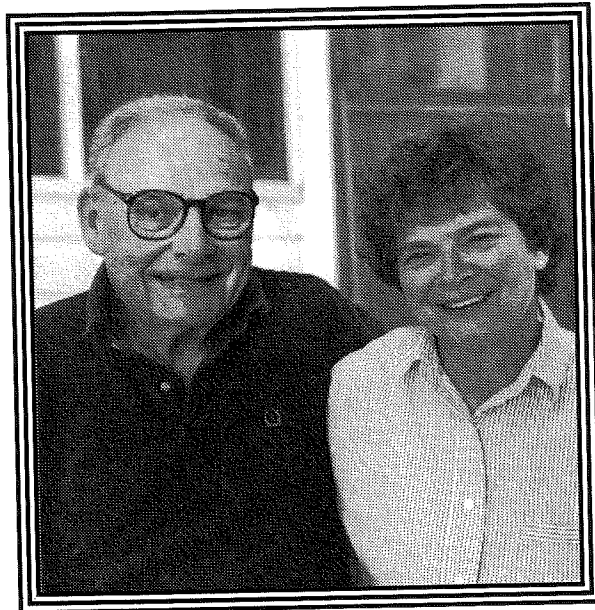
Post-war, Britain yielded its empire, the rigid class system became more elastic and influxes from former colonies forever changed the make-up of the population.



Judy, age 6, at beach



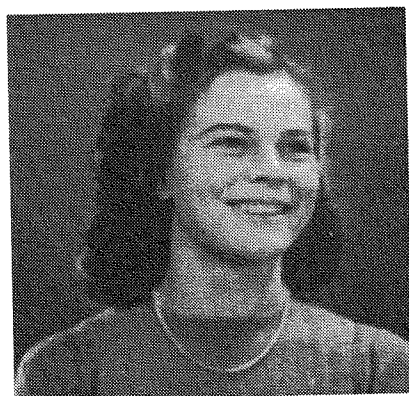
The Oakes family in 1956, at Marsworth Avenue, Pinner, England. From left, standing, Judy, Norman, Tommy, George and Roger; seated, Edward and Dorothy, parents.



Austin and Judy in Grosvenor Square, London, at time of 1950 wedding and, at right, fifty years on in St. Anthony Park, St. Paul, Minnesota.

At sixteen, I took the school-leaving exam then standard throughout England and passed with flying colors. Tommy financed a nine-month course at a secretarial school for me.

My first job was in London at a women's



Judy, London working woman

magazine as assistant to the Beauty Editor. I ran errands, typed a bit, and answered pathetic letters from middle-aged women worrying how to keep attractive enough to hold onto

errant husbands or from teenage girls panicked about blackheads! I was paid £2.10.0 a week, of which I gave Mother 30 shillings for my keep.

Next, I worked at the British Film Academy, again as a secretary and general go-fer. I thought the free movie screenings were a terrific bonus. Before getting married at age 20, I also worked briefly at the American Embassy in London.

Austin entered my life as the co-host of a party given by his colleague, Kumari Allot, a former teacher of mine (when I was 12), who had also been instrumental in getting me the Film Academy job.

We were married in July 1950 and left almost immediately to live in Denmark (Austin was transferred there from his London position with the Marshall Plan administration.)

For the next 24 years, I was the typical 50's style woman (well, almost!) Taking care of Sven (born '51), Paul ('53), Peter ('57) and Joanna ('59). Following along with my husband as he changed jobs. We lived in Milwaukee, Wis. ('51), Park Forest, Ill. ('53), Evanston, Ill. ('58) and Edina, Minn. ('66). Joining the PTA and the League of Women Voters. Mixing with the neighbors for various activities. I usually had some sort of garden and undertook most of the house maintenance, including painting inside and out.

Living in Park Forest, a community of young marrieds, helped me the most to adapt to living in the U.S. There were many young mothers facing the same day-to-day problems as I was and we kaffee-klatched our way through them together.

In 1974, I got a job with J.C. Penney as a

customer service representative, mostly dealing with problems related to the purchase and delivery of big ticket items. In 1976, my mother-in-law died and left Austin a small inheritance. This was partly "invested" in a two-year course in paralegal studies for me at the University of Minnesota. I received an Associate Degree after achieving a 4.0 GPA. Being a mature student with some knowledge of the world was a tremendous advantage.

In 1979 I got a job as a legal assistant with the Minnesota Attorney General's office and worked there for 15 1/2 years, first with the Administration and Finance Division and then with Human Services. I liked the work, which gave me some autonomy but not crushing responsibility, and admired the professionalism of my colleagues, attorneys and support staff alike. I retired in 1995.

Since retirement, I have had a luxurious amount of time to devote to my passionate hobby, gardening. I have played host to many garden tours and have received recognition for my efforts in a number of national and local publications. I volunteer with several horticulture-related organizations and am an active member of two garden clubs. I value the friends I have made through being a gardener.

Starting in 1956, I have been very fortunate in being able to return frequently to England, many times with the children, and to have English family members visit us here. I do have a sense that my childhood experiences

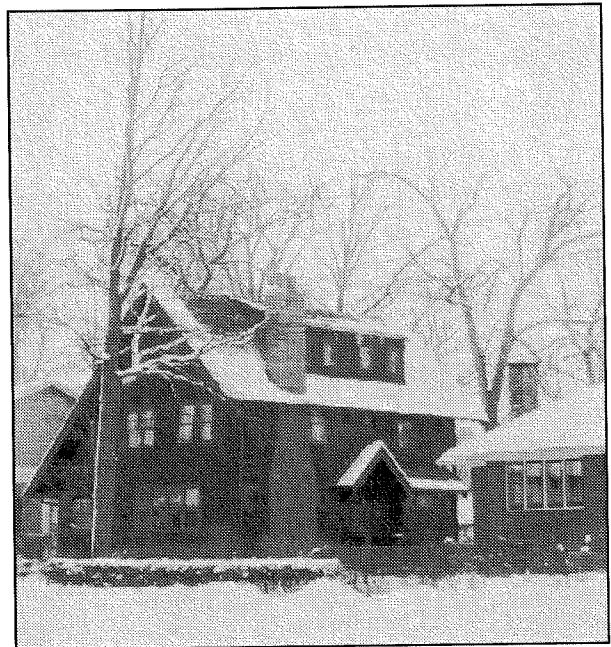
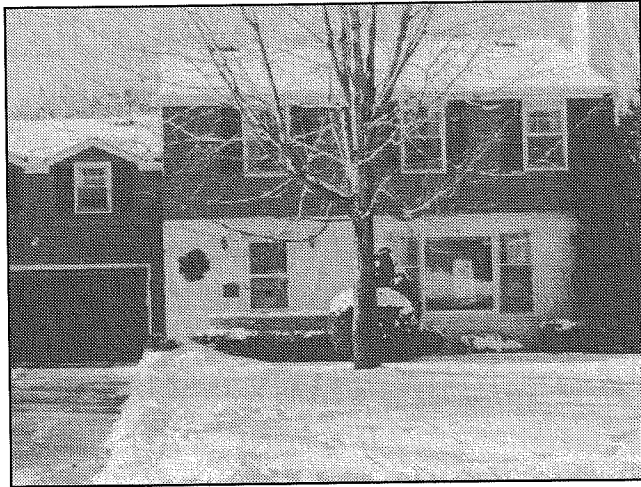
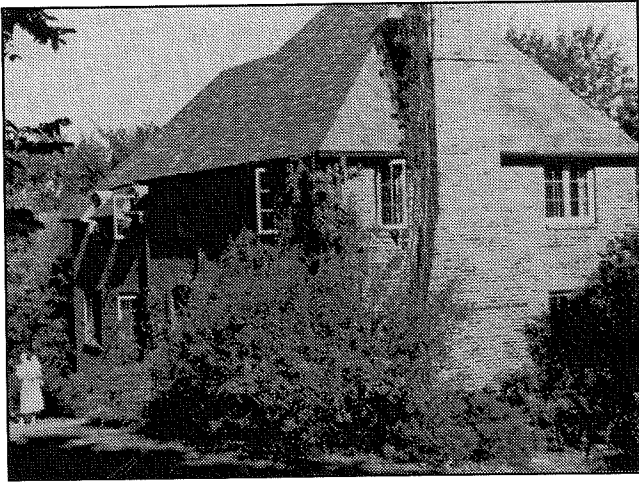
were a good preparation for life as an immigrant. Living away from parents necessarily made one self-reliant and adaptable. Which is not to say that I have ever felt completely "American." I did not have the common experience of grade and high school, young college days or the religiosity of most Americans' upbringing. Often, I've felt alien from aspects of American life the "natives" take for granted or at least understand. Nevertheless, living in the U.S. has given me the good life. I can't complain!



**Judy working in the garden. She glories in—and glorifies—her garden. She and it have been featured on TV garden shows and in local and national magazines, including *Midwest Home and Garden* (published by *Minnesota Monthly*, Aug.-Sept., 1999). She is also the subject of a chapter in *Growing Home* by Susan Davis Price (University of Minnesota Press).**

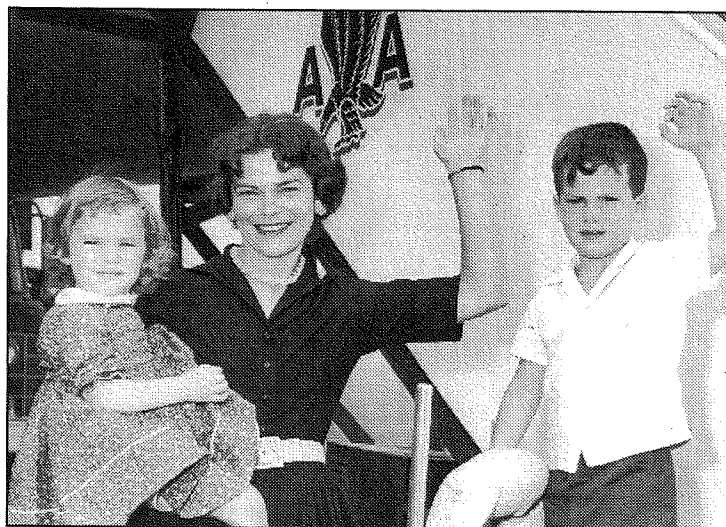
## OUR PARADE OF HOMES

There's no place like home,  
really....Here, top left, 1809 Summit  
Avenue, Madison; top right, 2714  
Thayer Street, Evanston; lower left,  
6208 Wyman Avenue, Edina and at  
lower right, 2309 Carter Avenue, St.  
Paul, Minnesota.



## CHAPTER VIII: BEEN THERE, DONE THAT *On the Road Again . . . And Again*

*By Sven A. Wehrwein*



Joanna, Judy and Peter board airplane from Chicago to Cape Cod, 1961.

**T**he funny thing is, it all began with travel. If Austin Wehrwein had not found his way to London in the late '40s, there would be no thought of, or reason for, this essay.

Most probably, the first big journey was memorable to only one person—the former Judy Oakes. What must it have been like to travel across the Atlantic in 1951 to a place called Milwaukee with a six-month old baby. To boot, it was a one-way ticket. The Midwest was now home.

Out of this initial journey, however, came something marvelous: The Wehrwein family always had roots in two places. Yes, Milwaukee, and later Park Forest, Evanston, and Edina were primary residences, the places where the kids grew up, if you will. But there was always this second identity, one that reached beyond the boundaries of the Midwest. Because Judy was English, and still spoke with that unmistakable accent, there was an incredibly strong link to another place, England.

So, over the years, early on using the train to the boat, and later the plane, Wehrweins in various configurations and numbers made the

regular journey back to the old country. An early visit included just Paul and Sven. Later visits to Devon just Joanna and Judy. In between was the wonderful summer of 1962 when Judy and Austin took Paul and Sven for a month-long grand tour of the continent. Bumping from place to place, we saw all the major sights, and a bunch of the minor ones. This was a not plush tour. Sleeping accommodations fell below even the one star level, most particularly in Venice and the Black Forest. But it didn't matter. Taking the tour was the point.

Capping off that journey was the return to 52 Marsworth Av. in Pinner where Joanna and

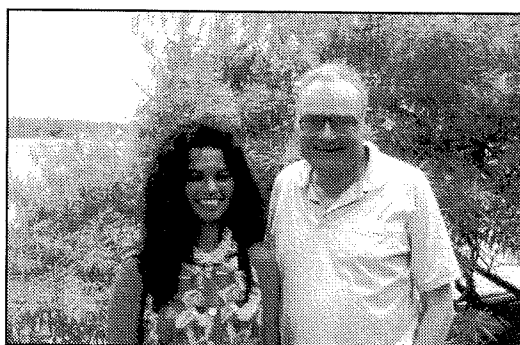
Peter had hung out with Grandma Oakes.

Memorably, Joanna did not recognize us upon our return.

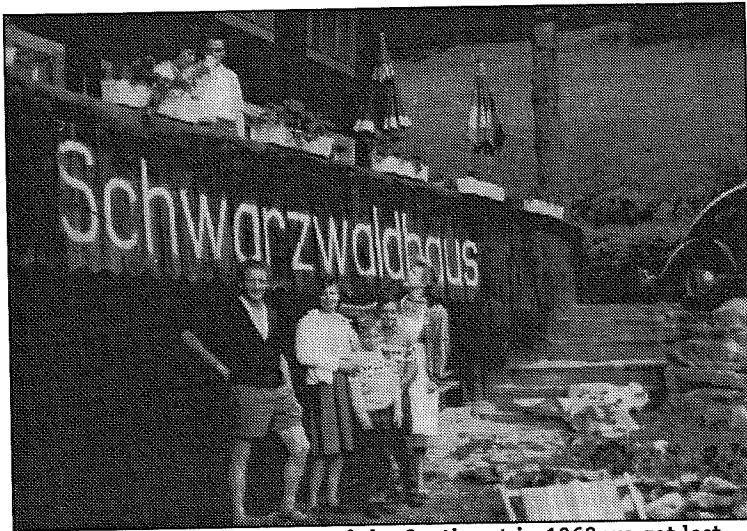
Family in the U.S also inspired travel. During two memorable summers, the clan of six made the trip to Boston (Lexington, really), the home of the Lindbecks, and then on to Cape Cod.

Who can forget the charm of

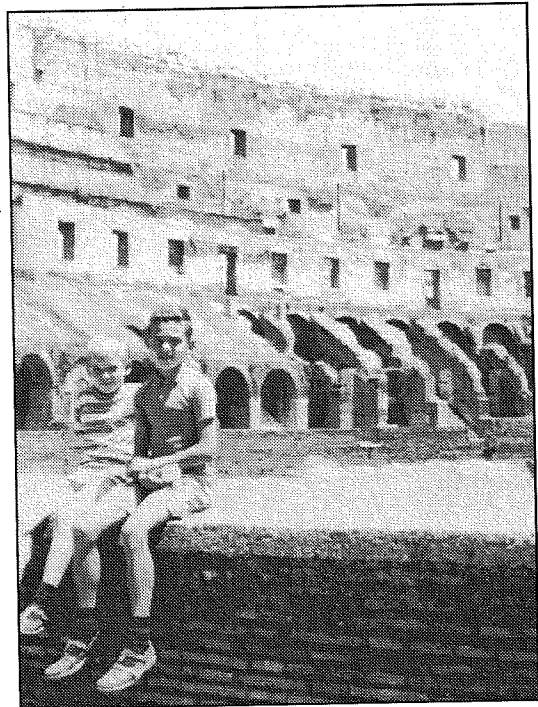
Wellfleet, the wonderful setting of Duck Pond, and the magnificent ocean-side beaches with their humungous dunes and rolling surf. For midwesterners, it's hard to overstate the excite-



**En route to Australia and New Zealand solo in 1987, I stopped over in Tahiti where this friendly guide greeted me, leaving no doubt that she was a direct descendant of a Gauguin model.**



On a rambling tour of the Continent in 1962 we got lost in the Black Forest but found hospitality. At right, Paul and Sven in the Roman Coliseum.



ment of that first taste of salt water.

Seeking the simpler pleasures of a Wisconsin resort, family vacations brought us to Lake Namekagon, near Cable. For five summers, the gang piled into the station wagon for the trek north. Each time it was for two weeks in the Wisconsin woods, complete with fishing, swimming, ice cream bars after dinner, and rides on Mr. Anderson's pick-up.

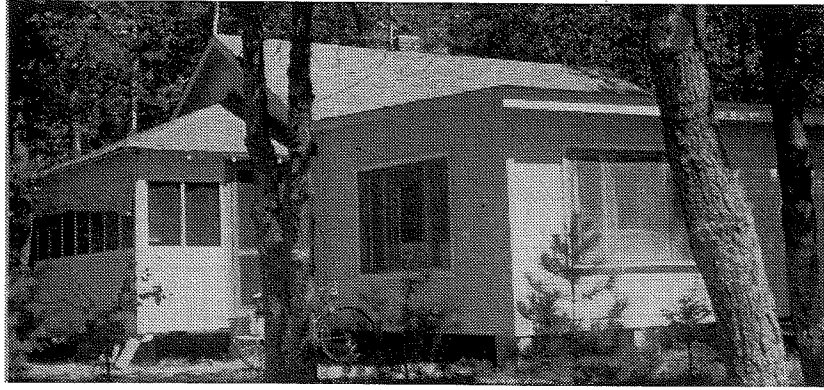
It was travel of a different sort after 1966. Post the move to Minnesota and the purchase of the family cabin on North Sand Lake, trips took on more of an individual identity. Sven began the journey back to Evanston, on his way to Camp Echo, and eventually all the siblings followed. College, in between college, and the hell-with-college experiences took us to various corners of the country. Sometimes with a thumb, sometimes with two wheels, and sometimes in cars that barely ran, the journeys were ones of discovery, adventure, and escape. Paul spent a day in jail after getting busted for hitchhiking on the interstate in Wisconsin; Peter smashed an elbow in a construction accident out west; Joanna rode a bicycle across America (with Paul), and then came close to doing it again on a motorcycle; and Sven swung back and forth on the road between Chicago and Minneapolis more times than he can count. Somehow, after all this, everyone emerged reasonably intact.

On the march to middle age, Wehrwein travel entered a new phase in the '90s. Now it was family time. Paul and company explored the grandeur of the West. Peter and the Boston crew navigated their way to Cape Cod and Florida. Joanna and Dave discovered the charm of the U.K. and the beauty of Hawaii, not to speak of the wonders of the Pacific Northwest seen from Dave's sailboat. Sven and team saw a little of Mexico, and a lot of France. And everybody found their way back to the cabin where the clear waters of North Sand Lake beckon.

Judy and Austin didn't forget how to use their passports, either. Austin trekked off on his own to the land down under. In 1989, Judy and Austin traveled for a fortnight through Russia. Trips to Bermuda, Bequi in the Caribbean, Santa Barbara, and San Diego broke up the Minnesota winters. And, of course, there were the regular visits to England.

It's hard to put a coda on all this. Why travel? The Wehrweins have hit the road for all the right reasons: family and friends, discovery and exploration, pleasure and work. The best thing we can do is hope that it continues for a long time to come!

We're not there yet!



## CHAPTER IX: THE COTTAGE I

### *Some Personal Reflections*

*By Paul Wehrwein*

For me, over the years, the cottage has been a place to play, a place to retreat, a place to gather with friends and family. An accumulation of experiences. A feeling I soak in. Activity and relaxation sometimes wrestle, sometimes go hand in hand. "Projects" offer challenges and satisfactions—helping keep things up, augmenting Mom and Dad's (years of) constant labor and thoughtful organization. Tradition sustains, can weigh heavy. Might be good to let go of things a little. On the surface, a simple little place. Pretty basic. But everywhere an album, a gallery, a feast—knotty pine parlor, wacky momentos and risqué clippings, shimmery sunset reflections, twin tall pines out the back window. A drop-off teaming with life. Late night loon cries pierce the air. Impressions sink in. Moments get added to a long string of memories.

President's Day reminds me of two special things—son Neal, born on 2/22, and a couple winter retreats with college friends. Hauling

stuff in through the deep snow. Feeding the old Franklin stove a good hour or more to take the chill off every board and object (temporarily blanketing off the living room helped). A feisty game of Rail Baron. Skiing in shirts all the way to the Yellow River through that wild area across Thompson Road. The onrush of warmth and brilliant sunshine..., my unfolding love for Betsy Hall—I tingled with surprise and energy.

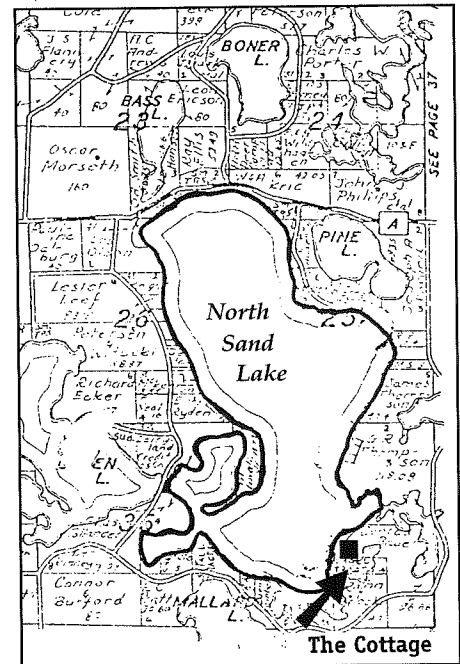
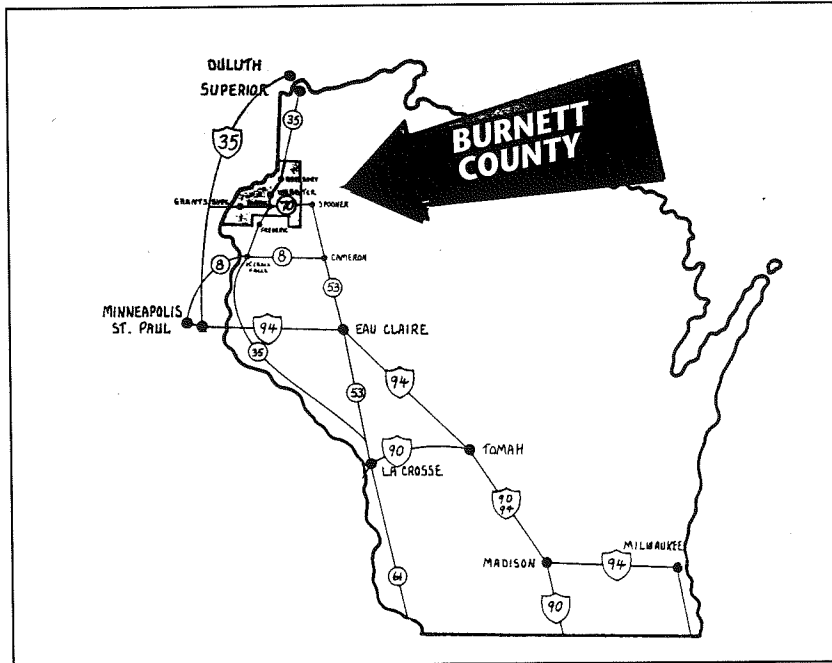
Another winter/spring memory: sneaking into the Deer Farm with a friend and "swinging on birches" (Watch out, parents, poetry can be dangerous to your children's health!). Shimmy to the thin top, swing out a little, body dangling, big arc, white rushing up, slowing, easy, "Ground Floor!" Quick, there's another one!

Ah, the "projects". Laying the privy down with rope and tackle to reveal extensive rot (did I really expect anything else?!), and a delicious and onerous restoration challenge. Bye, Paul. Worth the time, money, marital strain? Who's

#### *Our Happy Haven*

The bright yellow, rustic cottage at 3530 Thompson Road in Burnett County, 11 miles east of Webster, Wis., on North Sand Lake, has been a magnet for our family, a happy haven for many jolly gatherings. We bought it in 1967 for \$8,500. The three-bed room cabin on the bluff and the funky boat house on our 267-foot long shoreline have aged with little change. But the

properties ringing the clear, spring-fed lake have. The cut-over countryside wasn't exactly a wilderness when we settled in, but it was still thinly-populated open space that seemed wild to us. Now, thanks to the national lake-shore real estate boom, our forested enclave is in the midst of looming suburban "CEO homes," many worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.



to say? Can't help but see the cottage smile though, as, in the words of friend Bruce White, things stay more the same the more they change.

Adventures! Exploring! Imagination run amok! Sending smoke bombs through the culvert on log boats. Doing Lewis and Clark from dock to Yellow River by paddle and portage. Riding bikes up to the cottage in a day. Starting the pump down in the hole under the cottage. Letting love of construction turn a sand pile into reservoirs, rivers and towers. Getting towed underwater behind the fishing boat. The real fun: imagining what it would be like, and devising the handheld steering rig.

Sailing is the elixir. Now what micro-drafts might inhabit the space above the mirror-like surface? Whitecaps up! Surging forward, centerboard vibrating, as a gust practically picks the boat up off the waves. Balance. A need to respond instantly to ever changing blasts and lulls, always driving for optimal efficiency, always optimistic for another "good one." Sassy minscow. Once the upstart, now getting to be a cottage regular, part of tradition. Penguin, creaky classic, cheery in color and logo, patiently waiting to be hoisted into the water but always ready to transmit natural forces through rope and wood. And bygone

beloved Firebird. Grandma Oakes (then age 76!) joined me for a moonlit sail. The balmy breeze propelled us over the obsidian deep.

People gather, josh, spend time with each other. Chats on the pontoon. Long conversations into the night in the living room . . . just visiting, plain visiting. Shared shovel, saw or brush work. Loud chicken fights in the water, spinning sputtering fireworks illuminating American and English faces, children chasing round and round and round in the summer darkness. And the feasts of waffles, bacon, fruit, juice and real maple syrup, served up with generous portions of friendship.

Nature's always ready to absorb stress, draw curiosity, or inspire awe. A sky studded beyond comprehension with stars, blazing trees, misty beige carpet of swamp grass, fat large-mouths cruising the reeds, regal eagles on patrol, pterodactyl heron pumping and gliding off into space. Behold the building storm, a showcase of lightning, waves crested by the racing, chilling front. Wind whips your hair back. Invincible gray curtain of rain marches across the lake. Retreat to the cottage! Torrents smack the picture window. What if it gives way in a scatter of glass? Will that rocking tree come crashing down on us? Safe from the city, but closer to raw forces. Lying on the springy bed



in the pine forest, a friend and I, with our kids, once gazed at the treetops against the blue sky, boughs swaying and needles whispering with each passing breeze. Another, and another, and another...past and future fade amid such beauty.

The forest, gateway to the cottage. Tire sounds soften, light falls. Wind among pine, poplar, oaks and browse, come up over rise and down again—yay! blackberries are ripe! squeeze between swamps past birches. Round the curve to catch a glimpse of friendly yellow! (the big deal now, though, is getting to “drive” the car—eyes peering over the dashboard, little hands controlling a lot of creeping horsepower!)

OK, time to get ya-yas out. Tramp, tramp, grab a stick, and whack, whack!!! dead branches go flying hither and yon. Stand back, slimy dragon! Watch out, evil lord! Off with your arm, whoever you are!

What can be more peaceful than North Sand Lake on a still summer morning? Crystal view of expansive sand bottom, fish lazing their way around. Boats lie at rest. Distant bed of rich green dotted with color being warmed and woken by early rays. Gulls and loons flutter and stretch. Silence. Eventually broken by a splashy shout or clanky pot.

Yes, for me, our family’s cottage offers moments, sometimes comforting *deja vus*, that add to my treasure of memories. It is a place to be with those I love. To observe and share the curiosity, joy and exuberance of my children. When I arrive there, I’m enveloped by a feeling, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, which dissolves residues of disappointment and worry. The Cottage renews me and helps make my life a pleasure.

## A TOAST TO THE SEATTLE SAILORS

Following is the toast—edited slightly for style—proposed by Austin C. Wehrwein, father of the bride, at the wedding on August 10, 1997, of Joanna Wehrwein and Dave Logan, in Seattle, Washington:

*Please join me in a toast:*

*To Dave and Joanna, in whom we celebrate a perfect union. A miracle, indeed!*

*So here’s to Dave—who has never met a wee space he didn’t love, or an old Volvo he couldn’t fix. A blue water sailor who would rather crack on a new set of sails than shine up brass or polish old teak.*

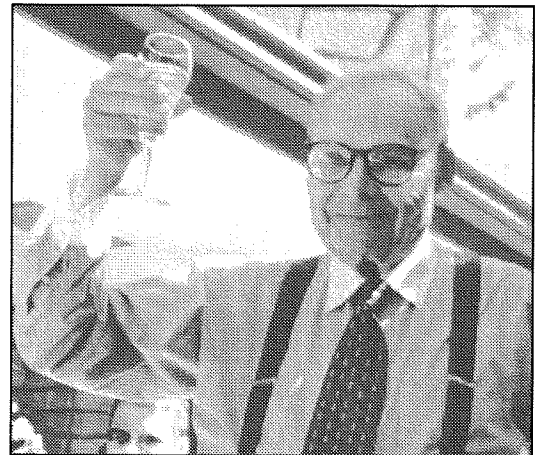
*A master craftsman. Patient and tactful. Always a gentleman and a gentle man.*

*Turning now to Joanna, our congenial, charming daughter, sister, cousin, and friend:*

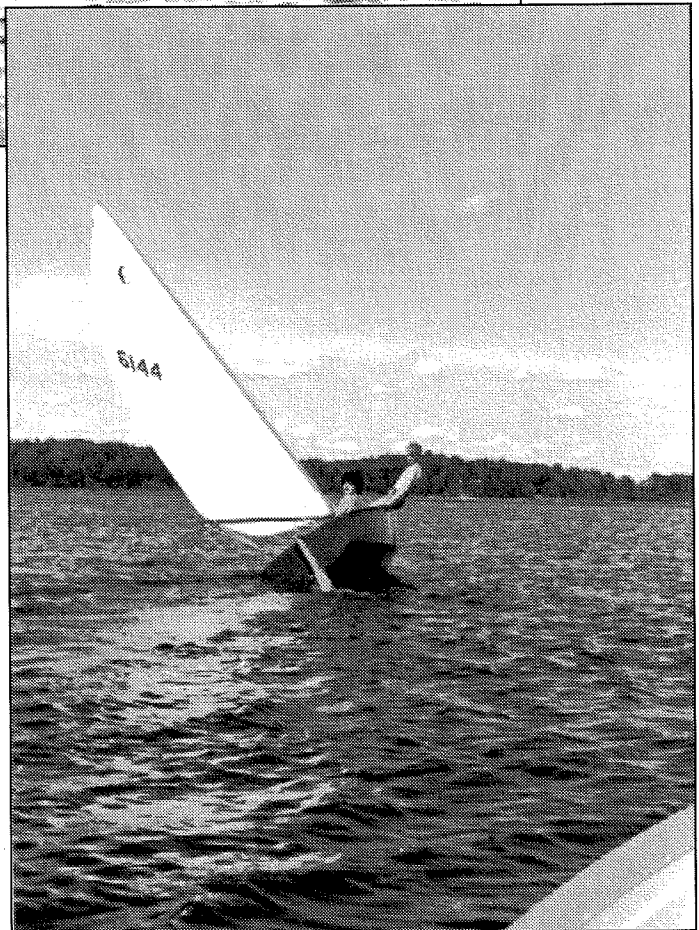
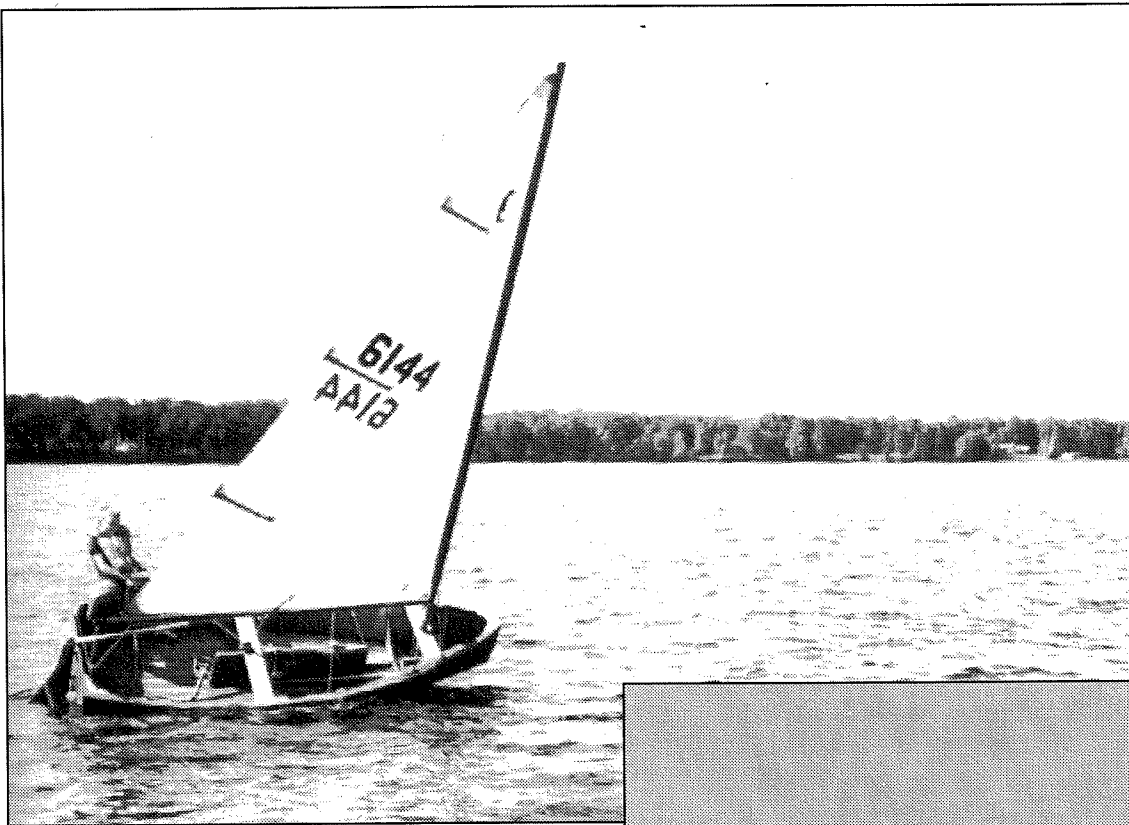
*She has, as it were, been there and done a lot of it: European rambler, cross-country cyclist, a pace-setting rower, opera patron, Seattle’s “plumber to the stars”—and, now, a landlord and a wife.*

*Speaking for myself, if I may for a moment, Joanna has taught me to share her love of opera even though I can never master the plots. She has taught us to tolerate the high cost of plumbing, at least hers! And she has taught us to be cheerleaders for women in the trades, a movement in which she has been a tough-minded pioneer, leading by superb, on-the-job perfectionism.*

*So let us raise a glass to Dave’s new crew—and Joanna’s new in-house handy man!*




# "Breezing Up"



## CHAPTER X: THE COTTAGE II: *A Beautiful Little Red Wooden Boat*

*By Peter Wehrwein*

 You'd think that this story would start with Dad at the tiller of a boat tacking across Lake Mendota, the largish lake that squeezes Madison, Wisconsin, his beloved hometown, onto its isthmus. But it doesn't, which is why it's always a good idea not to make assumptions and to ask questions, especially when it comes to your parents. Dad sailed a couple of times as a boy, including a couple of rides on iceboats. But sailing and boats in general were not as popular then as they are today.

Where this story really starts is in the imagination of Dad's father, George S. Wehrwein. A professor of land economics and a son of the soil of the poor Wisconsin variety, my grandfather was about as far removed from seafaring as a person can be. But he was a 19th century-style polymath, a man whose public gentleness (I am told) obscured an ambitious mind that was interested in just about everything. Boats and ships were one of those interests. Dad says his father wasn't very handy, but I suspect that was only by the tougher standards of the day because he made Dad a couple of wooden toy boats, including one that Dad remembers was called the *Seagull*, and an impressive dollhouse that ended up in the barn at the Lindbeck "farm" in New Fairfield, Connecticut. Dad also remembers his father taking him to see replicas of the *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria* on Lake Michigan when the family was living in Evanston and

George was teaching at Northwestern.

As it turned out, Dad and Mom moved to Evanston in 1957 into a large, three-story brown house at 2714 Thayer Street. Skokie was the next town over and the home of Skokie Lagoon, an artificial lake. I haven't seen the lagoon since I was a young boy, but in my memory it's tree-lined, pinched in the middle, and midway between pond and proper lake size. The water was an unhealthy green and very hard to see through—a very direct memory based on the time when I was three or four, fell off the dock into water above my head, and had to be saved from drowning. But we have Skokie Lagoon to thank for the Penguin because Dad says he was inspired to buy the boat when he was driving by it one day and spotted people sailing Penguins.

Although he knew very little about boats or sailing, Dad had good instincts and had picked a classy little boat. The Penguin was designed by a famous yacht designer, Philip Rhodes, who also designed Dave Logan's 32-foot "Chesapeake" boat (a sign that Joanna had good instincts and married a classy guy). (Incidentally, Dave learned to sail in a Penguin when he was about ten.)

Rhodes got involved in designing small boats in the 1930s when "frostbite sailing," racing small boats during the winter, became popular on Lake Washington in Seattle and elsewhere. He designed a smaller, 10-foot boat

called the Dyer Dink before coming up with the 11-1/2-foot Penguin. According to one account, Rhodes designed the Penguin in 1933 after Bill Dyer, a Providence, Rhode Island, boat builder for whom the Dyer Dink is named, asked him to draw up plans for a simple frostbite racer. But *The International Penguin Class Dinghy Association Handbook* dates the little boat's beginnings from a 1938-39 request by Potomac and Chesapeake Bay sailors for Rhodes to design a dinghy that "could be easily built by an amateur." Regardless of this discrepancy in accounts of its genesis, the Penguin's popularity took off in May 1940 when *Yachting* magazine published the specifications of Rhodes's design. Having a big-name yacht designer almost certainly gave the Penguin some cachet back when sailing was still very much a clubby, elitist hobby. But the marvelous design also spoke for itself. As one commentator has written, here was a little boat that you sailed "in" rather than "on."

Neither Mom nor Dad can remember exactly when they bought our Penguin, but they think it was in 1962 or 1963. They don't think they paid much more than \$500, including the makeshift trailer that the boat still sits on in the North Sand Lake boathouse. They bought the boat from the official-sounding East Fork Boat Works in Glenview, Illinois, but East Fork Boat Works was really nothing more than a guy operating a small business out of his garage. Dad recalls Jerry Hibbs, a Thayer Street neighbor at the time who owned a Star boat, helping him out with some advice. The number 6144 stitched on the boat's sail signifies that our Penguin was the 6144th Penguin made—or more precisely, made according to official specifications. The International Penguin Class Dinghy Association recently told me that there are now about 9,000 such boats in existence, so you can see that the Penguin's popularity peaked some time ago.

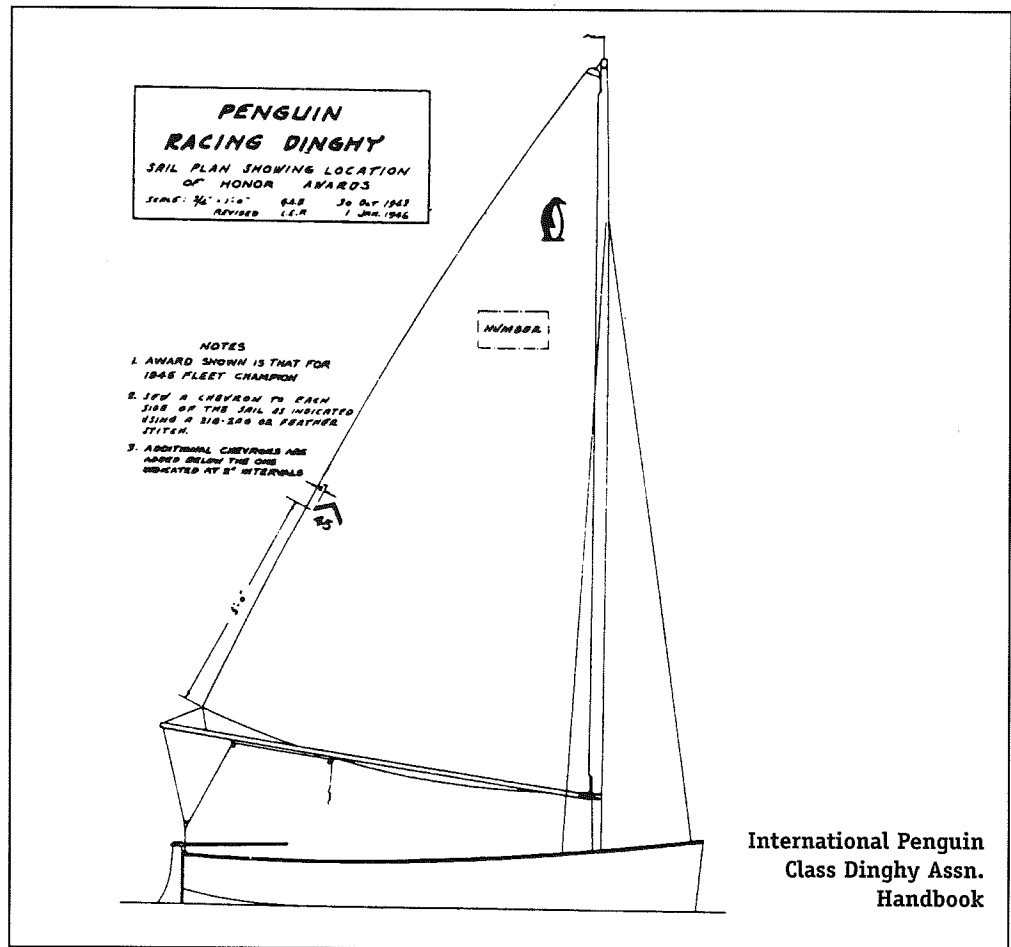
Now that he owned a boat, Dad had to learn to sail it. Unfortunately for him, the Skokie Lagoon Penguin fleet was infected with the snobby attitude endemic to many hobbyists who take themselves and their hobbies too seriously.

It may fester with special virulence in sailing circles. But Dad muddled on through some of those lagoon races—coming about, jibing, and getting in and out of irons, on his way to finishing near the back or middle of the pack. Middle seems pretty good to me for a guy who was just learning his halyard from his outhaul. I have a very dim recollection of seeing Dad and the Penguin's speck of red bobbing at the far end of the lagoon. I may also have been a passenger on the occasional boat ride on the lagoon, though that memory is dimmer still.

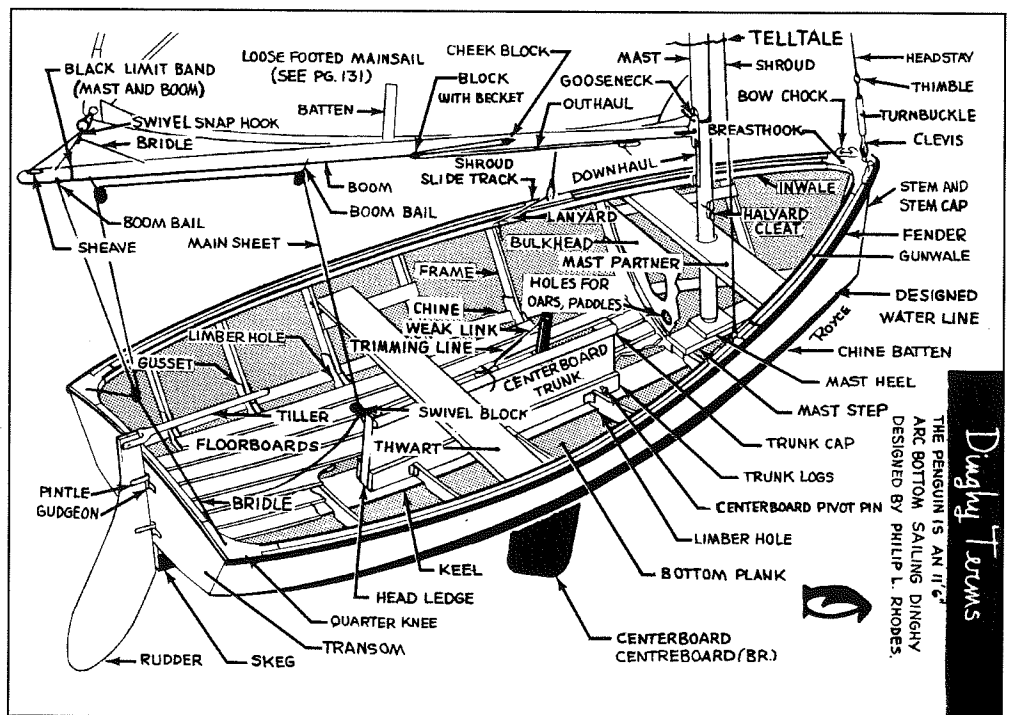
The Penguin really became the family boat on the summer vacations we took at resorts on Lake Namekagon, outside of Cable, Wisconsin. It bumped along on the makeshift trailer towed by one of those hulking family station wagons, stuffed to the gills with four kids and Candy, the first of a succession of family golden retrievers. The beautiful 19-foot wooden mast rested in a cradle on top of the boat with a red rag tied ceremoniously to the end that jutted out past the transom. Dad says that away from the Skokie Lagoon snobs, he finally got the hang of the boat on those vacations. Sven and Paul had taken sailing lessons on Lake Michigan and now had a chance to apply what they had learned to the Penguin on a lake that is pretty large by northwest Wisconsin standards. One of the joys of sailing the Penguin is the way it heels on a beat in even a moderate wind, hiking out and challenging the water to spill over the leeward gunwale, and Dad remembers Sven heeling her up on Lake Namekagon. Now that must have been a marvelous sight! I think the family photo albums will also show that those Cable vacations were the beginning of Dad's well-intentioned career as a taker of sailing pictures. Who knows, posterity may be a kinder judge of the results.

We moved to Edina in the fall of 1966 and bought the cottage on North Sand Lake in Burnett County in the spring of 1967. The Penguin has lived in the cottage boathouse and never ventured from North Sand Lake ever since. I think time has shown that Dad was, indeed, a powerful father-figure in this family, but he certainly didn't fit the ball-playing, Little

League-coaching mold. Except when it came to sailing. As I remember it, he set out to teach me to sail in a very deliberate, father-to-son way. By filial osmosis I absorbed plenty from Dad (probably too much, in some ways), but this is one area where I self-consciously learned from him. He was a little edgy at times ("Peter, let out the mainsheet! Let out the mainsheet!") but somehow conveyed his pond sailor's version of "a love of the game." I think I was drawn in partly by all that oh-so-nautical nomenclature: the beat, the reach, the run, and coming about, hard to lee. Master the lingo and it seems as if you know what you're doing. Dad talked over and over again about knowing where the wind is coming from and keeping your eye on the tell-tales, which were little wires with feather attached that wrapped around the wire shrouds that held up the mast. Turn your head windward, he said, and you can hear the wind blowing into your ear. He also got

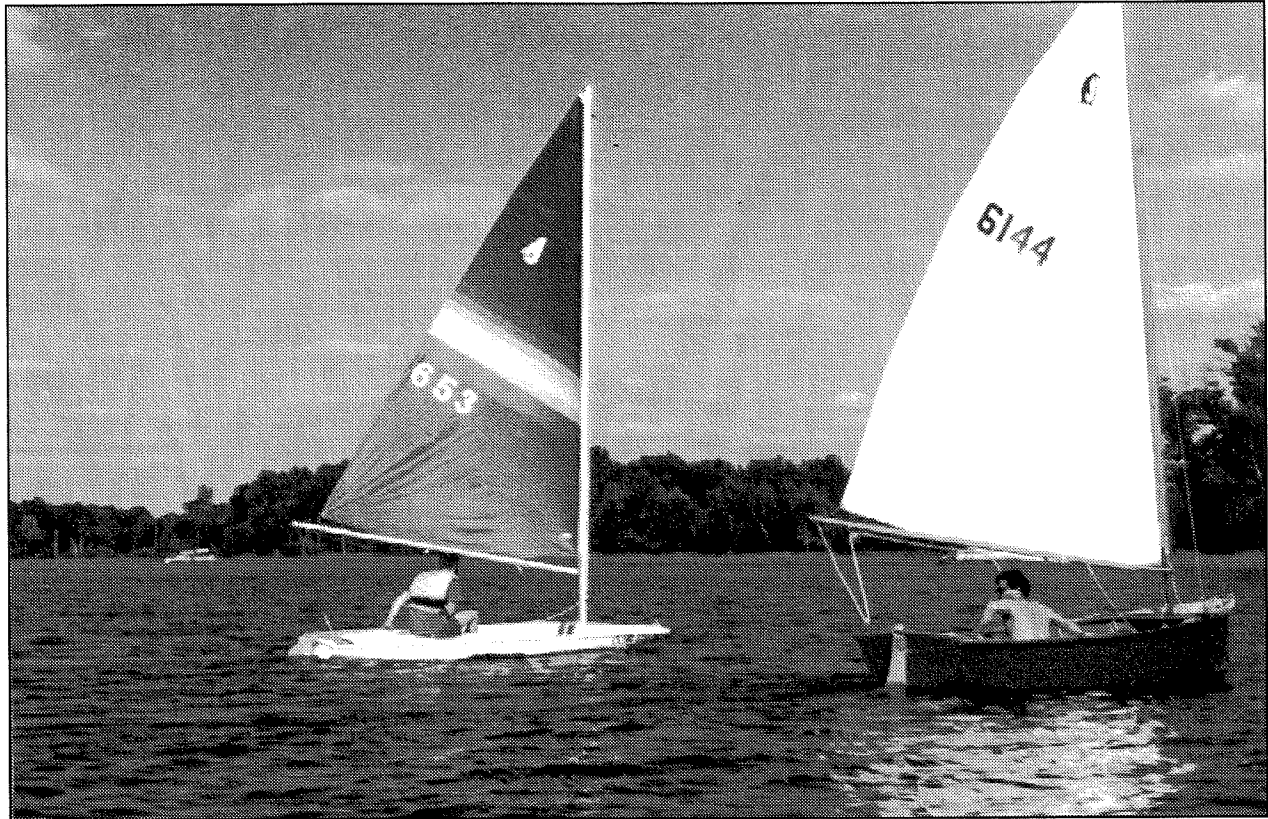


International Penguin Class Dinghy Assn. Handbook



"Sailing Illustrated," Royce, p. 9

Dinghy Terms



The "little boat that could"—and did—at work. Paul sails her to victory over the Johnson Mini-Scow, much to Peter's chagrin.

across the interplay between the tiller and the mainsheet and that you should always keep your eye on the sail ("You're luffing, Peter, pull in the sail!"). I don't remember reading much, if anything, about sailing as I was learning the Penguin, pretty much ignoring Dad's admonitions to "read up" on the sport

So Dad got me started, but I think it was when I began to do it on my own that I really fell in love with sailing in general and the Penguin in particular. Sorry, Dad, but let the truth be told: the Penguin can be a damn uncomfortable boat for passengers because of the high centerboard trunk, the oars (in the old days), and the ominous threat of the boom swinging overhead as you scramble over the trunk when the boat comes about. I don't know whether you can ever really enjoy the Penguin unless you take it out on your own and enjoy the roomy stern. When I was ten or eleven, we'd spend two, sometimes three weeks, at the cottage for our summer vacation. Mid-after-

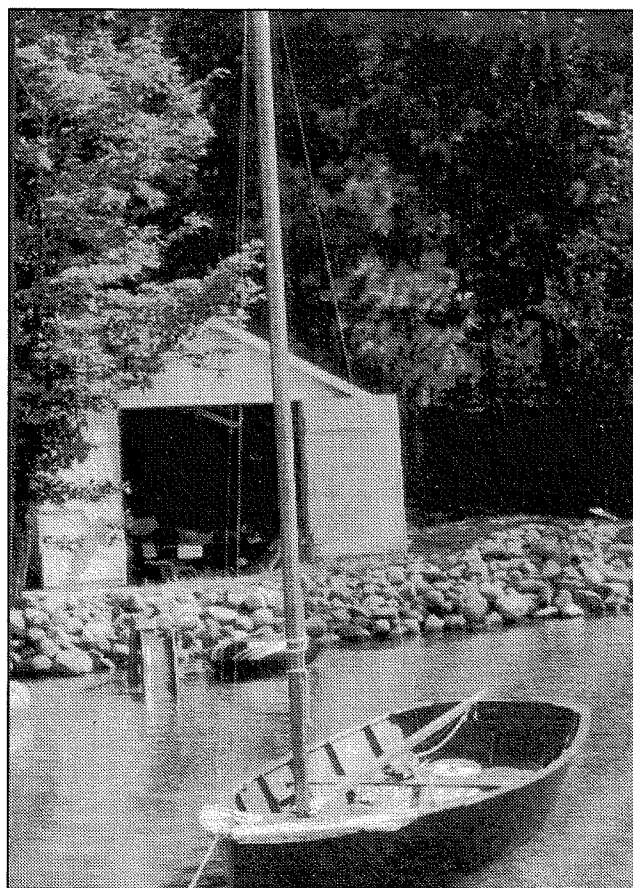
noon, with the wind usually coming down the lake from the north-northwest, I'd make myself a late lunch or afternoon treat of 7-Up and some Oreos. I'd tack up to the north end of the lake, sitting on the gunwale most of the time, hiking out while balancing myself with a foot under the thwart or the floorboard, imagining myself as being very daring indeed. I'd slurp down the 7-Up and eat the Oreos on the long run way home with the centerboard up. I think Paul started the nighttime sailing (he once took me on an outrageously wild night sail at Camp Echo), which I quickly imitated. A nighttime sail with my daughter Anna a couple of years ago is a memory prematurely cherished.

Because the water level of North Sand Lake was much lower in those days, getting going in the Penguin was tricky. You had to hop into the boat and then, once the water was deep enough, maneuver the rudder's pintles into the gudgeons as you were sailing. On the way in, it was the same basic maneuver in reverse. Sailing

anywhere near shore, I was constantly worried that I would run aground and snap the centerboard. But the shallow water also gave us a little beach, which I groomed quite a bit during one summer. I remember thinking how picturesque the Penguin looked pulled up on the sand. Here I am in my middle age, and in my mind's eye there is still something sublime about the combination of North Sand Lake's blue water on a cloud-blotted summer day and the red- and honey-colored boat bobbing under that towering, worse-for-wear white sail. And one of those quintessential cottage sounds is the wire halyard slapping the wooden mast, a backbeat to the loons, to the bugs, and to the bit of breeze that escapes off the lake and into the pines and poplars.

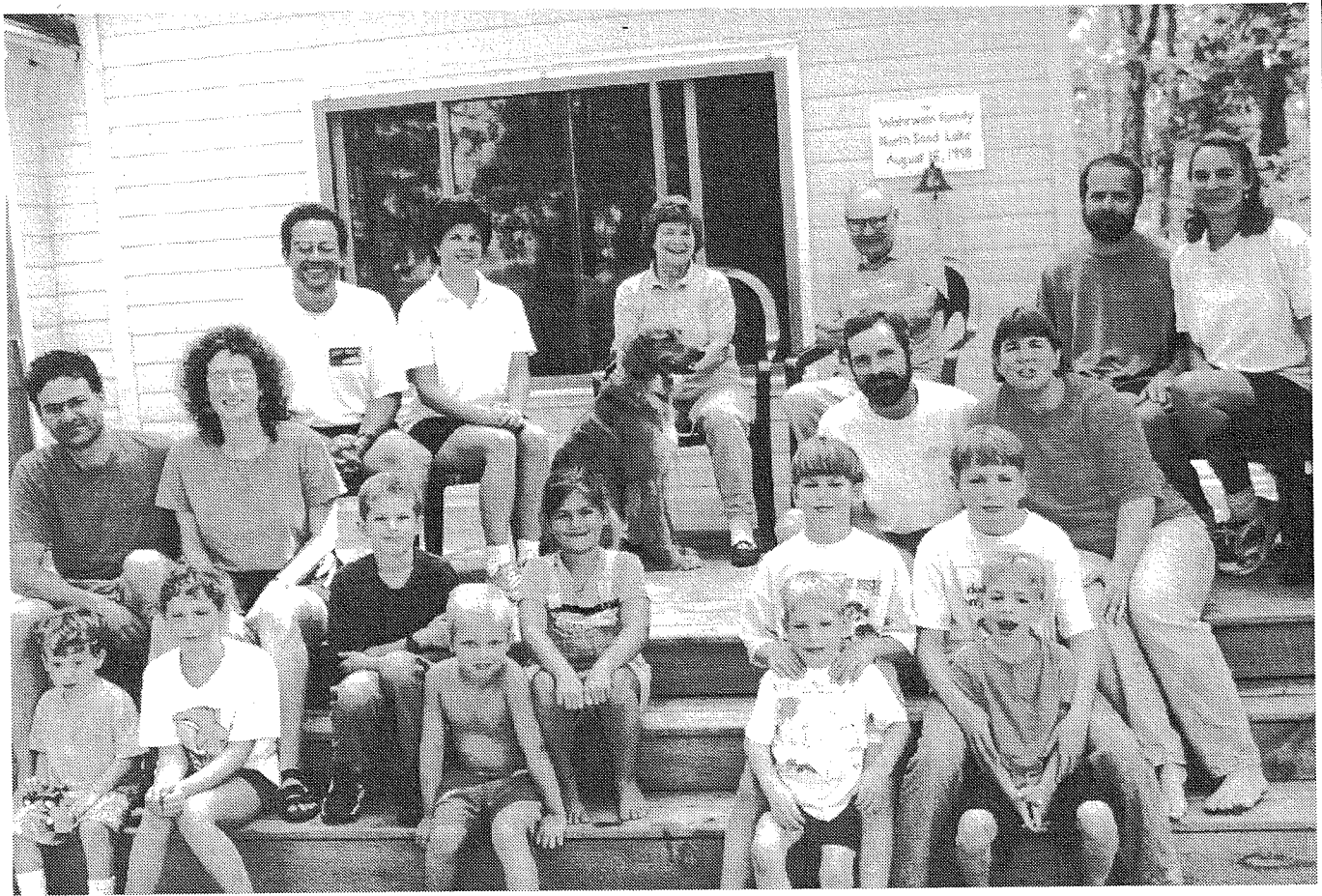
**N**ow for some fractious memories. Dad reminded me recently that I was responsible for one of the few major injuries to the boat. As a young teen, I cracked the mast partner, the wooden piece with the hole in the middle that holds up the mast, while apparently losing control of the mast as I was trying to put it up. Dad tracked down a replacement (the wood is slightly blonder than the rest of the boat) that Dad and, I think, Paul installed. The moral of the story is always hold the Penguin tightly against the dock as you're putting up the mast. I've also had a couple of miserable experiences racing the Penguin against Paul sailing the Firebird and now the Mini-Scow (shades of Skokie Lagoon?). I had the better boat, but Paul is the better sailor and the better sport. Dad and I also talked recently about the time he swamped the boat in North Sand Lake. When capsized, the Penguin just takes in water like a cup and doesn't turn turtle. Clinging to the rigging and probably mortified, Dad waited for what seemed like an eternity for Mom to come out in the motorboat and tow him in. When she explained that she hadn't been aware of his plight because she was busy refinishing a cottage kitchen cabinet (Mom was at the zenith of her the-only-good-paint-is-no-paint days), Dad saltily cursed "that damn box." Dad won't dare, but Mom still calls the cabinet "the damn box."

The Penguin gets sailed less and less these days. It's hard to get it out of the boathouse because the rising water level has required Mom and Dad to put in a massive, Druid-worthy stone wall between the boathouse and the lake. The sportier Mini-Scow with its nifty trailer is much easier to take in and out of the water and then to rig. And if you just want to get out on the water, it is impossible to argue with the roomy convenience of the patio-on-water, the pontoon boat. But as an adult, when I've gone to the cottage it's usually for a couple of weeks at a time because Pam and I have flown in from Brooklyn, Albany, and now Newton. So for me, the trouble is worth it. She is, after all, a beautiful little red wooden boat. And on a summer day when there is a fair breeze from the north-northwest and not too much to do, is there anything better to hope for than to be sailing in a little boat on a medium-sized lake with a 7-Up, Oreos, and fond memories?



**She rides alone at anchor:  
a role she has too often these days.**

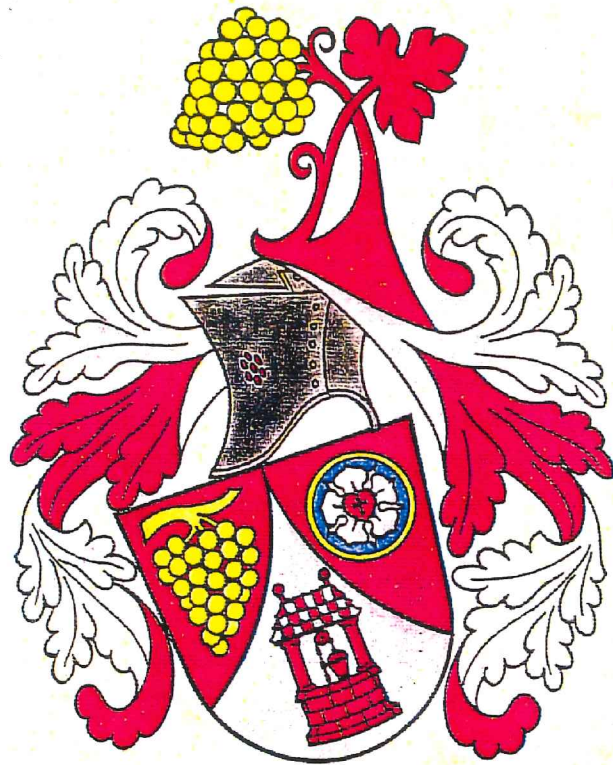
## We Gather at the Cottage



The rowdy crew assembled: **Top**, from left; Sven, Mary Ann, Judy, Austin, Dave and Joanna. **Next down**; Peter, Pam, Annie Dog, Paul and Betsy. **Lower**; Ethan, Anna, Zachary, Lucas, Frances, Neal, and Tim—with Jonathan and David in front of them.



**Design and typography: Arlene West, St. Paul, Minnesota  
phone: 651.649.0481**



Wehrwein