himmel oenen

1917-1998

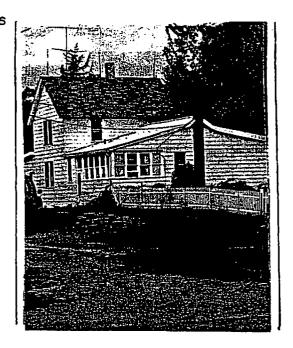
Wendelin Voseph Coenen "Shimmel"

THE LIFE OF WENDELIN JOSEPH COENEN "SHIMMEL"

Wendelin Joseph Coenen was born the second son of of Moritz Coenen and Clara Catherine Uselman Coenen on August 24, 1917, on a little farm north of Roxbury near Crystal Lake. Shimmel's grandparents, on his father's side of the family, were Frank Coenen and Veronica Ganser Coenen, who were also farmers near Crystal Lake. Roxbury was a Roman Catholic community and life was built around the church, family and the farm.

Shimmel was a little tow-head which means 'white horse' in German. He had an older brother, Sylvester, who was born on the last day of December of 1913, the day of the Catholic Saint, Sylvester. Sylvester was given the nick name, "Doc." The nick names of the Coenen brothers stuck with them for their life times.

There were few communications with the outside world in 1917 and life on the farm was somewhat isolated. However neighbors helped neighbors with the harvests. The family garden provided much of the food. Shimmel was just a toddler during his days on the rented farm, so he remembered little about that time. However, he was proud that he was born in Roxbury.



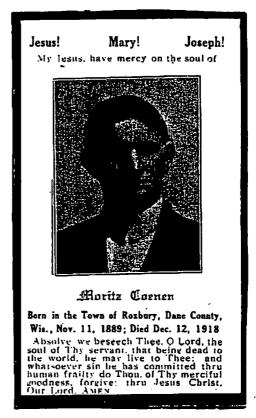
Shimmel and his family moved into this farm home when he was two years old.

When the rent was raised on Moritz Coenen's little farm, he bought a farm near Roxbury. The family moved to the new farm on what is now Inama Road when Shimmel was about two years old. Today, 1999, the farm is owned by Louis Breunig.

Shimmel spent time alone on the farm when his big brother was in school. Then, an unfortunate event occured. The black plague struck Roxbury and Moritz Coenen was one of the casualities.

Left alone without a father for her boys, Clara moved to Sauk City. She bought a house next to Rich Becker, who worked at the canning factory in Sauk City.

"My mother was an attractive young widow of 24 years of age, and a bright person.



She didn't know the ways of the 'City people.' She met Ray Brilliot, a man much older than she was. His father owned the Home Hotel, next to the Sauk City Fire Station on Madison Street. Ray had double jointed knees."

No doubt the older gentleman was security for the young woman just off of the farm. Shimmel didn't take a fancy to Ray. In fact, Ray irritated Shimmel. Shimmel remembered very little about his mother's marriage to Ray Brilliot in 1927 except seeing her come down an open stairway in the hotel, in a long gown, to greet her husband, to be, who was waiting at the bottom of the stairs.



SYLVESTER "DOC" and WENDELIN "SHIMMEL" COENEN

"My mother and Ray Brilliot bought the, what we'll call the Burrow Tavern." I'm not sure if that was the real name or if it is a ficticious name that Shimmel created.

The tavern, which Clara and Ray named the Du Drop Inn, was located on the corner of Main Street and Jackson Street. Clara was involved with her husband in their new business. Doc was much older than Shimmel and had his own circle of friends. That left Shimmel to shift for himself much of the time. He and a friend tried raising chickens for awhile. Shimmel had a pal he could count on, Jiggs, his bull dog, who was with him "Night and day."



The Du Drop Inn- a picture taken in later yearsappeared basically the same as it was in 1927. Art Schumacher owned the little building on the left which served as a place for a shoe repair business for Bill Schutz, among other businesses, through the years. The building was demolished in the mid 80 s. There was no plumbing at the time. The family slept upstairs and ate in the restaurant downstairs, which was adjacent to the tavern. Shimmel was amused by the customers and being an alert young lad picked up the stories and language of the tavern at an early age. He acquired his formal education in the Sauk City Catholic School and the Baraboo and Sauk City high schools.



Jiggs'- Art Schumacher Shimmel

Shimmel never really grew to accept his step father and

the idiocyncracy of his double jointed knees. "One time I knocked him down and he jumped up and ran after me."

Of course, Shimmel scampered away and escaped by the skin of his teeth. Fortunately no one was physically hurt.

The freedom and action of the Wisconsin River was intriguing



Wisconsin River-Sauk City-1999

to the boys in town. Shimmel and his buddies would row up and down the river in summertime in the style of Tom Sawyer.

"I made a Robinson Crusoe raft out of willow trees and whipped them together with saplings. One time Doc was being swept down the river. He hollered. With my raft and pole I managed to get him out. We would go to Otto's Island. Otto Hedeson was employed at the Up to Date Auto Company in Sauk City, just north of the bridge on Main Street. In addition to his home on Jackson Street, he had a home on an island known as Otto's Island. Otto repaired cars and he tinkered around and made a house boat about 12 feet long with a motor in the back. He'd go up and down the river. One time he said his island was washing away and he told me and my friend to get some little willow trees to transplant on his island so they would grow and his island wouldn't wash away.

Otto invented a way to take the steam off of car windows. He had a way to hook the manifold to the windshield. He didn't want a patent. He invented that defroster at the same time Decco invented the fire siren. We went swimming on bare ass beach behind where the Ace Hardware Store is located today.

My mother thought I might get into trouble so she sent me out to Grandpa Uselman's farm for several months during the summer. My grandparents on my mother's side were Joseph Uselman and Kattie Schachte Uselman. I went out there for two summers. That was great. I could run around with my BB gun and shoot at things.

Back at the Du Drop Inn, Shimmel began tending bar and making beer when he was 12 years old. Lest we be judgmental, remember times were hard in prohibition days (1920-1933) and many people were involved in

bootlegging, a way of making money. Many people wanted spirited drinks and a SPEAK EASY was the place to find them.

"My mother obtained malt and hops and poured the malt into vats and put them in half gallon barrels to ferment. People from town would come to the back door and get a bottle. There was always a fear of raiders."

"My mother was a kind person and had lots of energy and she was a good cook. She invited the Sauk City football team to have free dinners. People thought it was a good idea and that was the beginning of school athletic banquets. One of the young men who came to dinner was special, Art Schumacher, who became a high school drop out. My mother encouraged him to go back to school and at the age of 22 he received his high school diploma."

Shimmel's mother and step dad, who imbibed heavily in alcohol, drifted apart, and the marriage ended in a divorce.

"My mother and Ray Brilliot had one daughter, Delores, who had a hard time growing up. She was left in the care of three aunts, Josie, Mamie and Irene, after the divorce. Josie became the wife of Fred Schaefer, who ran a flower shop in Sauk City."

Mother was a happy person with a good sense of humor. She had the old German ambition to be in the bootlegging business. She was forward but not bold.

I tended bar with no bar tenders license. I drove a Chevie coop and needed no driver's license. There was a constant tension of being raided by Federal inspectors. I picked up pure alcohol from bootleggers from Madison at night.

They came out in a big, black buick, and we had a meeting place on Highway Y. The bootleggers from Madison all wore hats and long, black blazers. I had a four door sedan to pick up the liquor. When I met the black buick I would blink my lights three times. If the black buick blinked back we had a connection. The buick would stop at the side of the road and I would go on and make a U turn and pull up parallel beside the supply car. There was a quick transference of 25 gallons of pure alcohol without words. Some time later the supplier would come to the tavern with a password and receive his pay.

Mother knew different ways to outsmart the raiders. One way was to put sealed liquor bottles at the bottom of a pail in a commode, add brown coloring, toilet paper, and break up some candy bars and put them on top and then put the lid on. When the raiders came and opened the lid they were overcome by an odor that wasn't there."

"Many times we were raided but never caught. I rocked kegs of beer in the basement to carbonate it. One time I was rocking beer in the basement with my friend, Joe Casper, watching. The raiders came down the cellar steps with flashlights. They carried flashlights instead of guns. Joe, who didn't know what was going on, said, 'You got your flashlight on.' I got up and walked away."

After the third time of Federal inspection, Clara was forced out of business and she then moved to Baraboo. The new home for Shimmel, his mother and Art Schumacher was on Lynn Street on the south side of Baraboo across from the railroad tracks. With her fortitude and ambition, Clara again went into the bootlegging business. This time she had 12 wholesale customers.

"The house on Lynn Street was a traditional, frame house with an open stairway. There was a kitchen and bedroom

and living room downstairs, and three bedrooms upstairs and a bath. It was 1930 and I was a freshman in high school. I enjoyed dressing up. I wore a suit and tie when I went to school, hand me downs from Art's friends. My friend, Pat Wagner, liked to dress up, too.

We made beer on Saturday and delivered it during the week. I had a black buick with side curtains when I delivered. Sometimes I used my mother's studebaker. We delivered in wind and rain. People snuck around. I carried a little 25 automatic hand gun for protection. Effinger Beer, on the hill, was flourishing in a big scale. Whitey Herzog hauled for Effinger and got murdered delivering beer in Iowa. His truck was hijacked.

The train depot was right across the street from where I was making beer. Herbert Hoover, who was campaigning for president, had a whistle stop. I didn't even go out to listen to him. He was campaigning on the Republican ticket and I was a Democrat.

Red Wyatt, the Sauk County police officer, who would strut the street with his chest out, told me to go to the court house and get a driver's licence for 25c. I neglected to get a driver's license. Then, one evening I was taking my buddies to a football game at Evan's field. Who should be directing traffic, but Red Wyatt. I stepped on the accelerator and didn't stop until I got to Sauk City. I was arrested and had to appear before the judge in Baraboo. One night I was studying by the dining room table and there was a knock at the door. It was the judge. The judge was never married but he took out a bunch of girls who giggled and laughed and smoked cigerettes. He called them queenies.

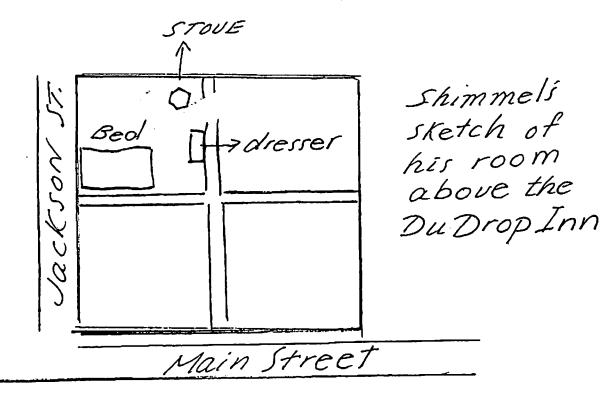
He wanted some beer. I told him I didn't have any. We had some kegs of beer but we didn't bottle it until Saturday. The judge said he would help me. So, the judge and I went into the basement and started bottling beer. Then, he only wanted one case, so I had to forget about my history lesson and bottle ll more cases of beer to save it.

It was in the spring of 1932 when I came home from school and all of my mother's equipment was on the front porch being smashed with sledge hammers and axes by about ten men. We were picked up and arrested. They took my mother away. She was tall and thin, about 5' 7" with straight brown hair and brown eyes. I don't recall seeing her around. I don't recall being asked to go and see her. She was just gone. First they put her in the county jail and then took her to Alderson, West Virginia, a federal prison. Art was put in the county jail and then the state prison for supporting mother.

I lived alone in the bootlegging house in Baraboo for three months. I don't know where Doc was. I had no plans to go any place. I didn't have much money so I hitch hiked a lot. Everyone knew that little 115 pound vagrant. I tried to make some wine - thought I could sell it, but it turned sour. I went to Devil's Lake every day and went swimming with my friends. I had planned to go to Baraboo High School, but apparently there was no Wendelin J. Coenen on the tax role for me to do that. I had no place to go. Aunt Natalia said, "Why don't you come here and go to school in Sauk City?" My Aunt Natalia lived south of the Catholic School on 914 Monroe Street.



My brother and I lived in the Du Drop Inn upstairs and Aunt Natalia ran the restaurant downstairs. I had a dresser, a bed and a stove. The stove was about four feet high. I just took my socks and my underwear and moved into my home in the Du Drop Inn.



I had a dream about a man who came to town and thought no one knew or liked him. He made up his mind to do good things and be accepted. He helped families and had a good business and became the president of the town. That man in my dream was myself.

I moved from the den of inequity to become a star football player. We only had 20 kids out for football. I played quarterback. I was a skinny 120 pounds. One time we were playing Spring Green and I intercepted a pass and ran forty yards and almost made a touch down. John Hahn and John Hausladen were on the team. John Hausladen's father ran the Sauk City Hotel. I want to add that John

Hahn was in Pearl Harbor when the Arizona went down by the Japanese. He wasn't a victim. Hausladen became quite famous. He was quarterback for three years. We were an average team but won the regional tournament championship. We had a good coach, Coach Christ. We had a gym for basketball. In Spring Green we played above the jail. In Black Earth and Waunakee we played in dance Halls.

I played in the band a short time. I was the drum major in high school for two years. One year we went to Wausau to the state tournament on the train. We had bananas for lunch. One businessman brought a whole bunch of bananas and said, 'Fuel for victory.' I was the class president and led the class down the aisle for graduation.

After high school we had a baseball team. Jack Hammerly was a baseball enthusiast. He was our manager. Art Reiser was our pitcher Rob Hutter played. Stub Lang and I went around putting up bills. We had a league with different teams in the state. We set up schedules and meetings.

We had flooding problems in town. The water came up behind the Up-To- Date Garage. The railroad tracks were filled in. Bud Leinenkugel drove his bicycle over the wall of the riverbank and fell in the river.

I worked in the Sauk City Canning Factory for three summers for fifteen cents an hour. Bill Schorer was at the head of the canning company. He was a go getter. Augie Derleth worked in the brine room with Hugo Schwenker. I put corn through the cutter. We worked ten hours a day during the harvest seasons. Jerry Laughnan worked in the line where cans of corn went into the cooker. Miss Pohlman and my grandmother Uselman sat there with little bonnets and picked up the bugs on the belt. Grandma Uselman fell off of her box and broke her arm."

We had an hour off for lunch. They blew the whistle two minutes early. Sixty people worked there so that meant the company got 12 hours of free work time."

After high school graduation Shimmel went to work for Rudy Kratchowill in the IGA Store. Once again, Shimmel had an opportunity to meet Herbert Hoover. "Someone came in the store and said, "President Hoover is eating in Tollie's Restaurant. (Aunt Natalia) I rolled up my apron, in those days we wore big, white aprons, I went down the street to peer in the window. Just then the door opened. There was President Hoover. I said, "Hello, Mr. President,' and extended my hand. And he said, "Hello, son,' and he and his wife and another couple went into Ziemke's Jewelry Store.

In the fall of 1937 Don Worth and Don Blum and I got on the bus and went to Alabama for an entry at the Alabama University with the intention of playing football. We went one semester and the other two guys decided to stop. I was intending to continue my education in the fall at Marquette. So, I went back to my old job at the IGA Store to earn money for school. For a time I thought of becoming a dentist. Dr. Ziemke told me he would have a place for me."

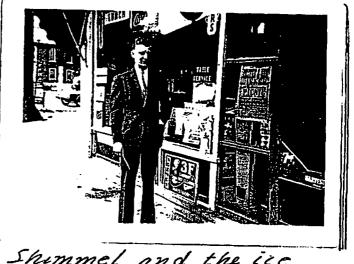
"Buff VonWald, who had been running the ice cream shop on the corner of Phillips Boulevard and Main Street had just been appointed post master of Sauk City, and gave me the opportunity to buy the ice cream shop. I had no money. I was adventurous. I was getting \$25.00 a week and I wanted to move forward. I could see the light at the end of the depression. I asked my brother to go into business with me. Pete Blankenheim ran a barber shop, Pauline and Romie Blankenheim started a grocery store, The Royal Blue, which later became Krogers. Romie's

mother was a brother to Ernie Kirschner who owned the Kirschner, Greiber and Esser Meat Market. Hahn and Deman brought their relatives in and started a hardware store. I saw a new era of business coming in."



Kahn Buggy Celo Bottling Spellman Home Engle Hotel * Du Drop Inn Cunradi Drug Store State Bank IGA Hall's Drug Store Formers and Ctizens Mieses Bakery Hahn-Deman Hardware Store Post Office Royal Blue Meng-Ziemke Petes Barber Sewelry * Coenen's Ice Tollie's Restaurant Cream Shop up-to-Date Auto city Business to Spellman TO Modison land marks -Granite

The Coenen brothers
purchased Buff Von
Wald's Ice Cream Shop.
They were charismatic and
ambitious. They made
their own ice cream.
Business was soon booming.
"My brother and I divided
the hours. We paid
\$45.00 a month for rent.
The high school kids
swarmed to the restaurant



Shimmel and the ice cream shop

at noon. Rootbeer was a nickel. Hamburgers were ten cents. Augie Derleth, my friend, was a daily customer. We served breakfast at five in the morning and we were open until eleven at night.

My brother and I both got married. I married a high shoool friend, Cleo Lindemer in April of 1942 and Doc married Lucille Diehl from Black Hawk, a peppy, efficient, little waitress in the ice cream shop. Our daughter Joan was born April 13, 1944 and Jeanne was born October 9, 1946

Augie Derleth was the first to want me to run for the village board. I ran for the village board and I won. At that time I was the youngest village board member in the state of Wisconsin."

Life was going well for the Coenen brothers and their business. Then, the news of the breaking out of WW II swept the town. The inevitable happened. Shimmel received his message from Uncle Sam. He had been drafted and was sent to serve in the U.S. Army in Hawaii. Cleo, with the help of her parents, Jo and Ed Lindemer, kept the ice cream shop going while Shimmel was gone.



Honolulu -Hawaii February - 1945

In 1946 Shimmel was back home from the service and again at work in the restaurant and serving on the village board. He was proud to be invited to join the American Legion, Kuoni-Reuter Post # 167, and organization he had admired since he was ten years old. The American Legion had been organized in 1919 after WWI. Shimmel became affiliated with another military organization, the VFW. The VFW included only Shimmel didn't give the impression that his experience in the army was particularly rewarding. About all he had to say was, "When we got a week end pass everyone else on the streets was a soldier except the shop keepers."

Doc was also drafted and served as a corporal in the U.S. Army in London, England.



Back Home Shimmel (left) Doc (right)

veterans of the military who had served overseas. According to Shimmel, the organization began in the ice cream shop where he and Charlie Henning took a survey to learn if veterans who served overseas would be interested in such an organization. Later, July 25, 1946, the post was installed as the Lachmund-Cramer Post # 7694.

"My card is # 2." Since the 70 s the VFW has had a resurgence of enthusiasm, they built a new club house on the Wisconsin River, and cleaned up a junk yard and created a park to sponsor community activities.

Shimmel belonged to the Army Reserve Baraboo Unit when the Korean Conflict arose in 1950. The Baraboo Unit was called to service and was to be sent to Colorado.

The girls, Joan and Jeanne, would miss their father. They have fond memories of their childhood. Joan recalled, "Our family took many vacations. One time we lived several weeks on Lake Wisconsin, while dad went back and forth to Sauk City to work every day. We even went gambling with him at Turtle Lake at Nekoosa. Dad was a good listener but also, disciplined us. Our activities were influenced by dad. We enjoyed going to games and sports events. We even used the monument truck for a homecoming float in the parade one time. I worked for my dad when I was in high school and also later when mom took care of my boys while I worked."

Jeanne was a little girl who had been begging for a kitten. When Shimmel realized he was going to be gone again he decided that Jeanne should have her kitten. Jeanne was happy with the surprise of getting her little kitten, but she didn't think it would take the place of her dad, as he seemed to imply. Jeanne named her kitten Smokey. Smokey became an important part of the Coenen household. She recalled, "Smokey was with us for a long time. She moved with us from our home on Madison Street



The Coenen home at 905 Madison Street, Sauk City, Wisconsin.





"1950"

Jeanne. Shimmel-Cleo-Joan

to our new home dad and mom built in 1957 on 111 Washington Street, Sauk City. (Sold in 1969)



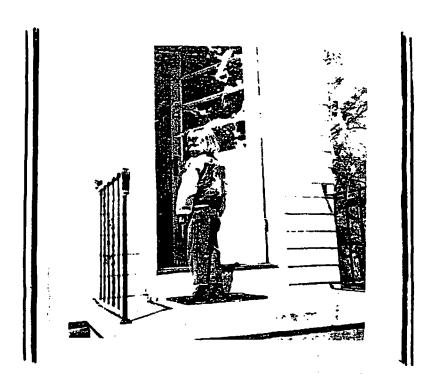
Speaking of houses, below is the home of Grandpa Art and Grandma Clara Schumacher at 1001 Washington Avenue, Sauk City. Art and Clara were married in 1935 after she returned from Alderson Federal Prison. What love! What bonding! What loyalty! The grand daughters enjoyed Grandma Schumacher. She called them unusual names in German and made faces to amuse them. Grandma Schumacher lived in this house until she died in 1963. Clara: Born July 17, 1885- Passed away August 21, 1963. Art: Born September 10, 1902- Passed away September 9, 1989



Shimmel was given the rank of Battalion Sgt. Major and sent from Colorado on to Korea. "We were decorated by Sygnmun Rhee, president of South Korea for the work we did for the Korean Army. We built the Rock Army Camp and the Rock Army Hospital. We managed to get three battalion battle stars. I was decorated by the Secretary of the Army, Frank Pace. I found Korea to be quite interesting. We were there when Seoul was in rubbles. It's unbelievable the progress they made with the U.S. dollar. I returned from Korea in 1952. It was most impressive when our ship went under the Golden Gate Bridge. There was a band playing and celebrities were singing.



Joan (1) and Jeanne while dad was in Korea.



Jeanne was proud of her new "dragon jacket" from Korea.



A soldier - a girl scout (L) Voan and a brownie - Jeanne



12 years 14/2 years

Jeanne (4) Joan (R)



The Coenens had creative ideas for Christmas cards. Here they are "Up on the house top!"

Once again Shimmel was back home enjoying the people and assuming community responsibilities. He was an active member of the Sauk City Men's Club, the oldest of the organizations in the village. The Men's Club promoted and sponsored many community projects including band concerts, the building of the high school gymnasium, had Easter egg hunts for the children, promoted bowling teams, sponsored a yearly banquet for high school athletes and awarded scholarships for high school students. They supported the hospital project in the 50s as well as the building of the new bridge. Most spectacular of the fund raisers was reviving the train transportation from Sauk City and organizing a trip to Milwaukee to see the braves. Everyone came out. Everyone knew everyone on the train and teetered from car to car to socialize.

The Coenens sold the restaurant to Stub Lang in 1950. Shimmel became an employee of the Sauk City Post Office when Maurie Schaefer was acting post master. He was contemplating a position as rural mail carrier when another opportunity knocked at the door. "Mr. Bill Spellman was aware of the fact that I was looking for a business. He lived across the street from the Celo Bottling Company and he would be on his front porch and watch me go to Celo evenings, about three times a week, looking for a business. He approached me about buying the monument business. People asked what I knew about the monument business and I said that I I had been there and looked around and I knew red granites from grey granites and grey from brown. When I went to the first monument convention people thought that I had purchased the business from an aunt or uncle because no one in 1954 just purchased a monument business." With his enthusiasm and acquired knowledge Shimmel became successful in the / monument

business. The business had been founded by three Spellman brothers from Portage, William, Harry and John in 1915 under the name of Spellman Brothers Granite Works. The company was incorporated under the name of Spellman Monument Company, Inc. on July 1, 1978 with W.J. Coenen as president. Shimmel continued his interest in community affairs. He was again elected to the Sauk City Village Board in 1956 and to the presidency in 1957.

"We had no village office. So, here was the village, a million dollar business, without an office so I would go down and see Hugh Heiney, the village clerk, at work about problems. He was a butcher in the Bee Zee store, located in what is now part of Hall's Drug Store. He'd roll up his apron and we'd go to the side of the store and talk. Hugh's boss would give us dirty looks. He was paid by the hour. This went on and on and I got very tired of it. One time I asked Hugh Heiney, 'Why can't we take your office as village clerk, the office of village treasure and village assessor and combine them and have one office on a full time basis.' At the next village board meeting we brought it up. We had an excellent village board. From this came the first village administrator in the State of Wisconsin. From there it grew. It started with Hugh Heiney and myself."

The monument business was going well for Shimmel. He loved life! He loved people in general! He loved women! Augie Derleth, who had met his fame as an author, continued to be in Shimmel's life.

A few years prior to the time, Augie was proud to flaunt about at social events with his petite, charming teen age beauty on his arm and she enjoyed the protective feeling of the burly chested, well known author, over thirty years her senior. They caused a great deal of attention wherever they went, with the press following all of the way, through their courtship, their marriage and the birth of two lively

youngsters, April and Waldon, and their life at the Place of Hawks portraying Augie as a family man. As time went by the excitement and happiness at the Place of Hawks began to fade. It was difficult for Augie to conform to being a family man and keep up the pace and quality of his writings. However sweet the patter of little feet were in his study, the situation got on his nerves and his blood pressure sky rocketed. Sandy, felt as though she had missed out on much of the teen age phase of life began to become spunky about following Augie's rules for her life. Tension grew and Augie develped a mistrust, until he felt it was necessary to ground Sandy when he went off to give lectures. Part of Augie's strategy was to disconnect the telephone and keep the doors locked when he was gone. Shimmel heard the news and, being compassionate, went to Sandy's rescue. At that point the friendship of the two gentlemen became somewhat of a rivalry. When Augie discovered a secretly connected telephone hidden in a hat box in the closet and several extra house keys that had recently been ground, he felt as though he had been outfoxed. Eventually, there was a divorce and Sandy left and faded into oblivion from the lives of her lovers and Sauk City in general.

Shimmel seemed to have a resurgence of his adventurous life of his youth. As luck would have it, he met an enticing, well endowed blonde who was about thirty years his junior, who had a fascination for Shimmel as Shimmel did for her.

As for Cleo, her life had been changed. The shenanigans were a great upset in the Coenen household. She had been brought up an only child with security and in a well protected home and this situation wasn't conducive to

family life. The Coenens were divorced in 1969 after 27 years of marriage.

Shimmel carried a new bride over the threshold in 1970 to live happily ever after. Only, it didn't work out that way. During this marriage time Shimmel lived in Prairie du Sac on the scenic Wisconsin River. He continued to be involved in community affairs and became elected village president. He was the only person who could boast of holding the office of president in both Sauk City and Prairie du Sac.

When Shimmel and his bride of several years parted, he became an eligible bachelor. Once again, he became involved with an attractive lady, who had been the wife of a well known Sauk City doctor. According to Jeanne, she was basically a good person, when she wasn't imbibling in alcohol. Once again, there was a marriage. This time life would surely be ideal, living in a secluded area on the Wisconsin River. Then, one time, after Shimmel had been taking care of a summertime duty of mowing the lawn, he came back into their cottage to find his wife, dead, on the floor. She had had an aneurism and had fallen over to her death in 1983. Shimmel was saddened and alone. He revived from his trauma and renewed his zest for life and continued to address women

As luck, or by now fate would have it, Shimmel met yet another attractive lady, who was self centered, knew how to dress well and loved social life. Shimmel was fascinated with his new friend and loved to go to Madison and play bridge with her and her society friends.

in general as dear or dearie.

By this time Shimmel decided he could have a good life without marriage. However, he continued to enjoy the bridge club.

About 1986, Shimmel's life style caught up with him and he developed heart problems. He had clodded arteries that needed an operation. He had exploritory surgery and it was discovered his liver was in bad shape and he had a benign tumor which resulted in the removal of a third of his left lung. The doctor gave Shimmel an ultimatum, "Either you change your life style or you will be dead in six months."

Jeanne remembers that, following that episode, Shimmel stood in the doorway at Spellman's and proclaimed "Hello World: I'm going to change my life style! I'm going to quit drinking and smoking because I like it here!" From that time on he had a different life style.

With a dependable crew at the Monument Company, Shimmel became somewhat retired in his later years. He continued his interest in historical projects and enjoyed Myrtle Cushing and reviewing historical stories of Sauk City. Jeanne recalled that he loved to take trips to Las Vagas. He enjoyed his Bucky Badger football teams. He was proud of being a season ticket holder for the games for 50 consecutive years. He followed the Badgers to many bowl games including Syacruse, N. Y., Tampa, Florida and the Rose Bowl in 1994 in California.

Back at the Monument company: "We were once a complete manufacturing company. There had been a railroad side track installed that ran into the building that was high enough to accomodate a hoist that was needed to lift the granite off of the railroad flat car. We had a railroad switch across the street from us. We got the stones direct from the quarries. We sit on a river bed channel here. When they built the railroad they followed the river bed to what is now the railroad mall.

We had a water problem. When I was in high school the basement gym was flooded with water. Eventually the slough was filled in.

The companies show room has a history. That building we use as a show room was standing where the library is now in Sauk City. Kahn used it for a show room for his buggies. I guess it became obsolete for buggies. The Spellman's moved it down main street on rollers with horses and a block and tackle.

When I first came in the business Joe Nolden was here,
Ray Reuter and Bill Spellman. Joe was the polishing,
engraving and sand blasting man. Robert Walsh and Glenn
Dickerson sawed off the stones. That was the way to go back
then.

Things didn't change much until after WW II. Now, everything is trucked in. We get granite from all over the United States. We have some beautiful granite from foreign countries, African black and a Swedish blue pearl. We have a granite from the legendary Mt. Rushmore, where the presidents are carved. This granite is called Dakota mahogany granite. Our local Wausau granite is still the prettiest of all the red granites.

We have increased business. We are now considered the largest monument firm in Southern Wisconsin. We're considered one of the top ten in the state of Wisconsin. We have branch offices in Reedsburg and Richland Center. We have a good organization and we keep our men trained in modern methods of industry. We have at least 100 different types of monuments on the floor. It makes a nice place for people to get ideas.

We are personalizing monuments. We are putting a man on a tractor, a little telegraph for a telegraph operator and so on. The other day a lady asked me, 'Can I have a dachshund for my husband and a collie for me?" I said, "Certainly,'

The stencil is made by a Minnesota Mining Company. It is soft enough to cut with a little stencil knife, but when we blast it we have a hundred pounds of pressure, so the carbon is blasted into it and it doesn't hurt the rubber stencil. We double process everything here. It is more costly but the completed job cannot be beaten, the beauty of it, the nice letters.

Also, fairly new is etching on granite, done with a dremel drill and dentist bits. The artist we have is Dick Cowan from Stoughton, Wisconsin. When etching on granite fine details are the results, even down to the eye lashes on a person's portrait."

Shimmel had a special treasure on display at his business, a miniature steam engine patterned after the old threshing steam engines. "When I was a child, Nick Knechtes made that steam engine and would bring it over to the house and would get it going with some canned heat. He had taken a malted milk mixer and made a motor. Forty years later, when Nick was living in a trailer by the canning factory, he passed away. I called the attorney and told him I would trade a marker for a lot on the cemetery for the steam engine. No one could find it. Then, they sold the trailer and one day I got a call from the attorney. They had found the steam engine behind walls of newspaper in the trailer.

Today my daughter, Jeanne, runs the office and is considered to be the boss. My son-in-law, Paul Miller, and grandson, Jason Miller, do the designing on the stencil and sand blasting. The foundation installation is done by Al Hellem and Wayne Schulz. My son-in-law, Calvin Traver, is the sales representative for Madison, Cross Plains, Black Earth and Lodi area. We have five sales representatives in other areas, also."



Inside the plant



The display room





Spellman Monument Company

The Office -Jeanne Miller





Once again Shimmel was faced with health problems. June 23, 1998 a tumor was found on his right lung. This time it was malignant. He lived with faith and courage hoping to have a quality life as opposed to quantity. He finally decided to undergo treatments which turned out to be devastatingly hard on him.

Shimmel continued his interest in the community, the VFW and the American Legion. He continued to address women with endearing terms and going to Madison to pursue his game of bridge. He was fortunate to meet a lady, Ella Paholke, after the death of her husband in 1985. Ella is a genuine person with a special understanding. They found pleasures in every day activities in life. Shimmel remembered his cooking skills from the restaurant and cooked evening dinners for two at his Madison Street home. Several months later he decided to start working on his biography. Little did we know that he had no longer time on this earth after October 23, 1998.

Shimmel made arrangement so that he might spend his last weeks and days at his home on 905 Madison Street, which had been the home of the Coenens, where his daughters had spent the first years of their lives. Slender and weak, Shimmel sat on his davenport in the living room, appearing as neat in his soft blue pajamas as he had previously looked in his suits. Friends like Stub Lang and Paul Meyer came to call and he had excellent care from Ella and the family. He enjoyed Sunday afternoon rides with the family and Ella. Jeanne took him on his last ride when he insisted on seeing the new Highway 60, though it wasn't ready for public transportation. Jeanne took a chance on getting a ticket to fulfill her dad's desire. She said, "He always wanted to learn."

Shimmel's family //// carries on_



Paul Miller and Jeanne Coenen Miller



Cal Traver and Joan Coenen Traver

Shimmel was proud of his daughters, Joan and Jeanne and his five grandsons, who looked up to him, fascinated with the stories of his life, which he told them openly and candidly.

Shimmel & Grandsons

TON COMMIN

John D, Mabbott- born 8-23-62 one day before Shimmel's 45th birthday-

James D. Mabbott II - born 9-15-63

Joseph D. Mabbott - born 6-6-67

Bradley P. Miller born 8-22-68 two days before Shimmel's 51st birthday -

Jason G. Miller - born 8-23-72 just one day before Shimmel's 55th birthday-

Before his passing he was also blessed with two great grandsons.

John D. Mabbott III - 3-30-1989

Auston J. Mabbott - 11-16-1994

4 months after Shimmel's death a third grandson was born to Bradley and Debbie Miller

Cole B. Miller 2-8-99

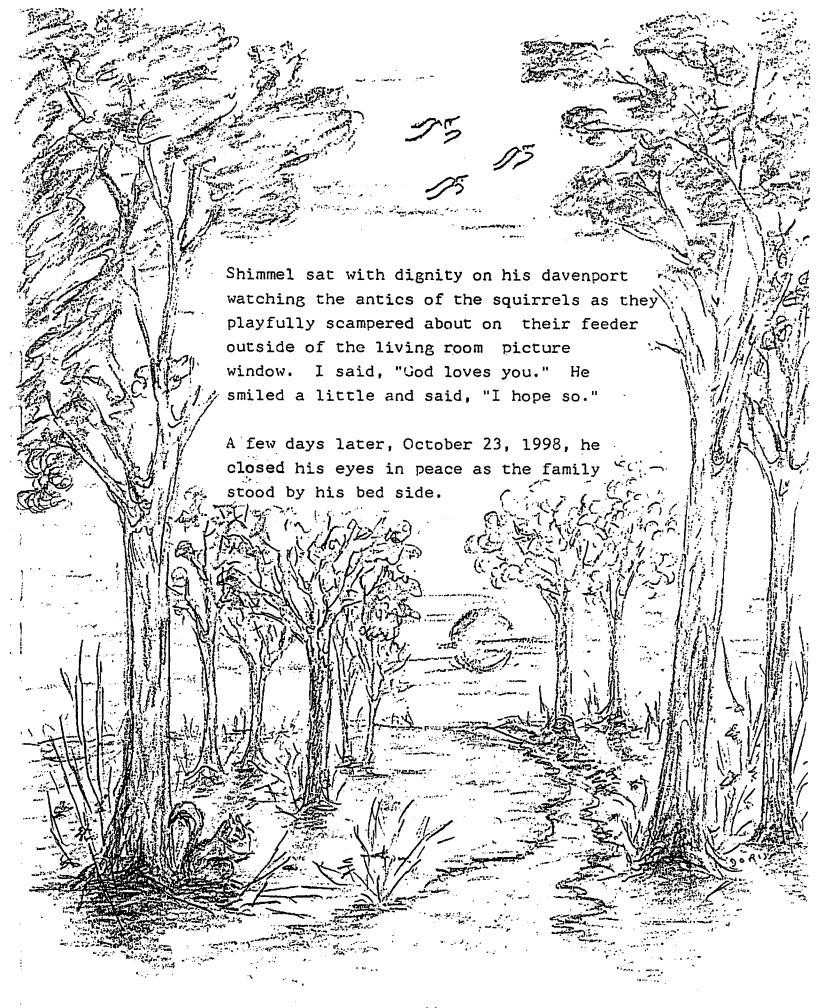


1998

Surrounded by his grandsons (L to R)

Jason Miller- Joseph Mabbot- Bradley

Miller- Johnny Mabbor- Jimmy Mabbot



OBITUARIES

Sunday, October 25, 1998



Coenen. Wendelin I. "Shimmel"



Wendelin SAUK CITY Shimmel" Coenen, age 81, of Sauk City, passed away on Friday, October 23, 1998 at his home surrounded by his loving family. He was born on August 24, 1917 on a farm just outside of Roxbury, the second child of Moritz and Clara (Machan). Compan. "Shimmel" at-(Uselman) Coenen. "Shimmel" al-lended St. Aloysius Catholic School and Baraboo and Sauk City High Schools, graduating in 1936. In 1939, at the age of 21, "Shimmel" and his brother, "Doc", purchased the Von Wald Ice Cream Shop, selling it to "Stub" Lang in 1950. He was united in marriage to Cleo H. Lindemer on April 24, 1942. In August of 1942 he was drafted into the U.S. Army, serving for three and a half years during World War II. Following his discharge he enlisted in the Reserve and was called back to duly during the Korean Conflict in 1950, serving one and a half years, and was promoted to BN/SCJT/MAJOR. After serving in Korea he was employed at the U.S. Post Office in Sauk City. In 1954 he purchased Spellman Monument Company and remained active in the business until his death. "Shimmel" loved playing bridge and was an avid UW Badger Football fan, holding season tickets for 51 teams. He was involved in many years. He was involved in many area organizations including the Sauk City Fire Department, Lachmund-Cramer V.F.W. Post #7694. Mund-Cramer V.F.W. Post #7094. Kuoni-Reuter American Legion Post #167, Sauk City Men's Club and the Knights of Columbus. He was the Mayor of Sauk City in 1957 and 1958, a Sauk City Village Board

member in 1961 and 1962, Prairie du Sac Village President in 1973. 1974 and 1975, and past President of Wisconsin Monument Builders. He was a member and usher at St. Aloysius Catholic Church. "Shimmel" will be dearly missed and remembered by all for his love Catholic of life and passion for friendships. He is survived by two daughters, Joan (Calvin) Traver of Mazomanie and Jeanne (Paul) Miller of Sauk City; five grandsons, whom he was very proud and supportive of, John (Nanette) Mabbott II, James Mabbott, Joseph (Kim) Mabbott, Bradley (Debbie) Miller and Jason (Heather) Miller; two grand-grandsons, John Mabbott III and Austin Mabbott; a sister-in-law Lucille Coenen of Sauk City: three nieces, Sharon, Linda and Bonita; and many friends. He was preceded in death by his father and mother, Moritz Coenen in 1918 and Clara Coenen in 1963; his step-father, Arthur Schumacher in 1989; and his brother, Sylvester "Doc" Coenen in 1991. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at ST. ALOYSIUS CATHOLIC CHURCH, Sauk City at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, October 26, 1998 with Father Delbert Schmelzer officiating. Burial, with military rites conducted by Lachmund-Cramer V.F.W. Post #7694, will be in St. Aloysius Cemetery. Friends may call from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 25, 1998 at GNEWIKOW-HOOVERSON FU-NERAL HOME, Sauk City, and also at church on Monday after 9:30 a.m. Our warmest thanks to all the special angels that helped make flad's final days peaceful.

£3 £23

IN CELEBRATION AND LOVING MEMORY OF Wendelin Joseph "Shimmel" Coenen

BORN August 24, 1917, Roxbury, Wisconsin

ENTERED INTO REST October 23, 1998, Sauk City, Wisconsin

MASS OF CHRISTIAN BURIAL Monday, October 26, 1998 at 10:30 AM St. Aloysius Catholic Church Sauk City, Wisconsin

PRESIDING: Father Delbert Schmelzer

INTERMENT
St. Aloysius Catholic Cemetery
Sauk City, Wisconsin

PALLBEARERS
John Mabbott II, James Mabbott, Joseph Mabbott
Bradley Miller, Jason Miller, David Uselman

For those I love, and for those who love me.

When I am gone, release me, let me go. I have so many things to see and do, You mustn't tie yourself to me with tears, Be happy that we had so many years. I gave you my love, you can only guess how much you gave me in happiness. I thank you for the love you each have shown. but now it's time to travel alone. So grieve a while for me, if grieve you must, then let your grief be comforted by trust. It's only for a while that we must part, so bless the memories that lie within your heart. I won't be far away, for life goes on, but if you need me, call me and I will come... though you can't see or touch me, I will be near. And if you listen with your heart, you'll hear all of my love around you, soft and clear... and then... when you must come this way alone... I'll greet you with a smile and say "Welcome Home."



The Coenen Family

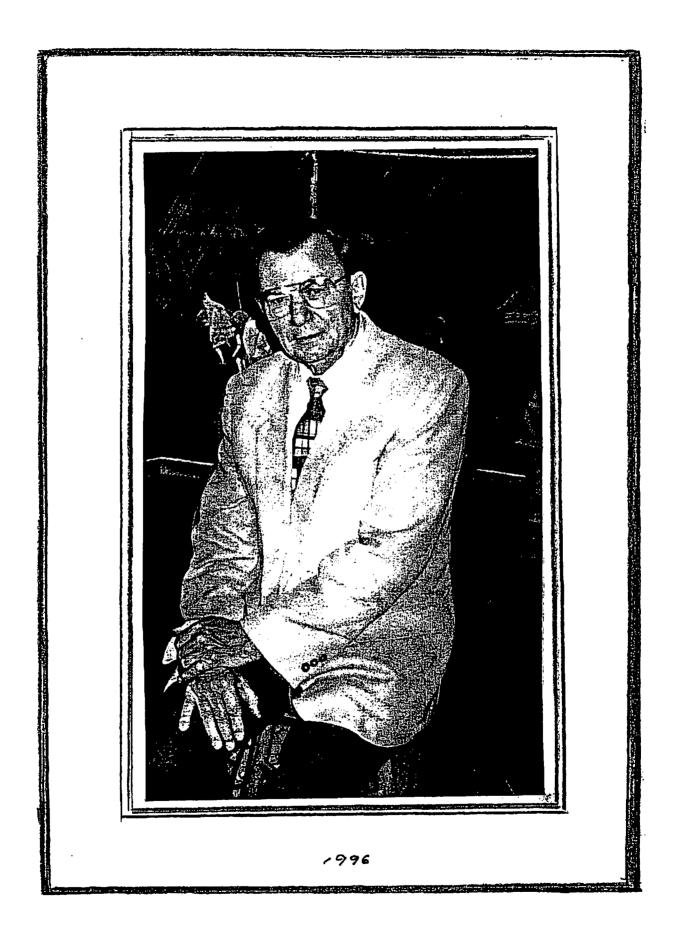


Happy birthday!



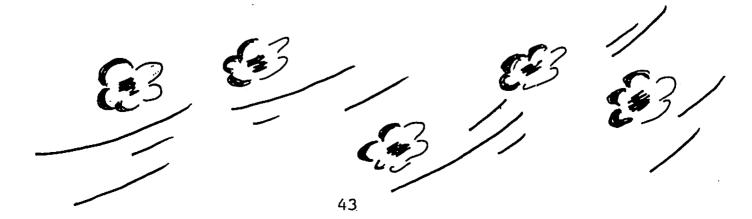
August 24 - 1999

"Behold. I Make All Things New" Revelation 21:5



More About Shimmel Sauk Prairie Star Stories

45 --- Home From Korea
46 --- Participation in
Military Celebrations
48 --- Presidential Talks
50 --- Sauk City Men's Club
53 --- Days of the
Johnson Rag
56 --- Lost Buddy Found
57 --- Historical Film
58 --- Founding of the VFW
59 --- Story of a Murder
in Sauk City 1856
60 --- History of the
American Legion

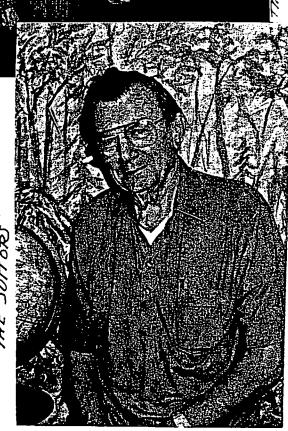




Men's Club-Lochner- Coenen Wyttenbach - Ochsner 1995



with



Biography



to the home

from Korea



Just a year ago this week that a weary warrior returned home from Korea, finishing his second call to duty in a short span of years, called from civilian pursuits to serve his country. His army service totals five years of active duty, and the only veteran, as far as we have been able to determine, in the Sauk-Prairie area that has served overseas in these two campaigns, World War II and in Korea. With the peace in Korea just upon us and the prisoner exchange in progress, we called on past Master Sgt. W. J. Shimmel Coenen to give us his views.

"I know I speak for the other Korean Veterans in this area as I do for myself when I say it is, a wonderful thing that peace has come to Korea. We will no longer have to watch the casualty lists week after

week in that dread fear that we will find a comrade listed. I do not feel it is a secure peace, the same wave of emotion was missing that we felt just eight years ago last August 14th, on V.J. Day.

VJ Day.
"I think it has been a great achievement for President Eisenhower as he has carried out one of his campaign promises, though we must keep prodifting armament and preparedness must be our ever watchword, a lesson we should remember after World War II. South Korean President Syngmun Rhec's statement to keep fighting was a noble gesture but their government could not last a month without our aid in war materials. South Korea is an agricultural region while the north Korean or Communist held section is the industrial part of the country. My hope is that the South Korean government will maintain the facilities constructed for them by the United Nations and keep their military strength up so they will not be easily vulnerable. We must continue to give aid to the people, as much as the peace pact allows; they are a strong-hearted people and in considerable need."

Mr. Coenen who held the rank of Master Sgt. in his past service was decorated by the Secretary of the Army, Frank Pace, for his outstanding duty while in Korea, and the unit in which he served was personally decorated by President Syngmun Rhee for their achievements. Since Mr. Coenen's return home he has been employed in the local postoffice and is now seeking an appointment for rural carrier service.

☆ ☆ ☆

1952

Top:
The Legionnaires marched
in the annual Witwen
4th of July parades
attired in white helmets,
belts and spatz. Shimmel
is on the for left.

The Sauk-Prairie Legion post is planning the formation of a drill team for parades and other special events and Legionnaires and ex-servicemen interested in joining the team are asked to contact Shimmel Coenen.

*** * ***

Bottom: Annual Memorial Day Celebrations

Sauk-Prairie residents paused Monday morning to honor those who gave their life in service to their country as traditional Memorial Day services were held at the Sauk City cemelery. In the above picture, members of the color guard and firing squad present arms in respect to fallen comrades as the flag raising ceremony opened the services. The Memorial Day services were conducted by Kuoni-Reuter American Legion post. The address of the

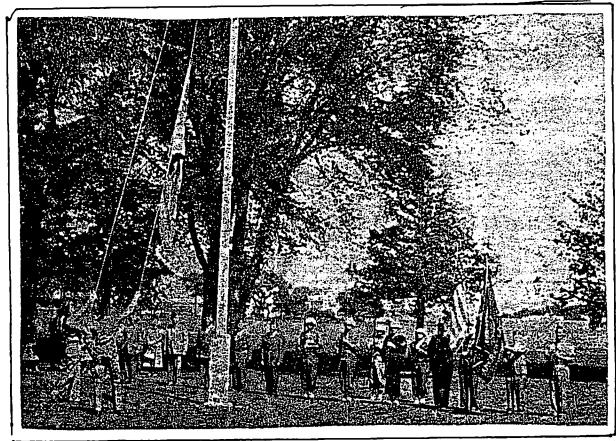
day, was given by Rev. Sylvester Van Berkel of St. Aloysius Catholic church.

Memorial Day passed quietly in the Sauk-Prairie area. Four minor accidents were reported over the holiday weekend by local police officers, two occuring in Sauk and two in Prairie. Across the nation, over 350 persons lost their lives in accidents.

(Photo by John Gruber)

1955





Presidential talks - W.J. "Shimmel" Coenen

by Dorls -Litscher Gasser

W. J. Coenen, better known as Shimmel, served on the Sauk City Village Board as president from 1957 to 1958. His business today is Spellman Monument Company on Phillips Blvd., a company which was founded in 1915. (Three Spellman brothers, who came from Portage, founded the Spellman Brothers Granite Works, William Spellman became the sole owner in 1938 and the business became the Spellman Granite Works. W. J. Coenen purchased the business

July, 1954.)
W. J. Coenen was born in Roxbury. He said, "I'm always proud of that, of course." His father, Maurice Coenen, died when Shimmel was very young and his mother moved to Sauk City and operated the Du Drop Inn on the corner of Water and Jackson. Shimmel has an older brother, Sylvester, known as Doc. a retired electrician.

. Shimmel recalled, "I was five years old at the time we moved to Sauk and my life was with people, I mingled with the elders and got to know all of the words and everything. I worked from the time I could. In those days there was no such thing as a bartender's license. I don't think we had a driver's license. When I was in eighth grade

we bought a car, an old Model T. But, my love for business was love for people. I like to be around peo-

Shimmel went to school in Sauk City, and graduated from the Sauk City. High. School. When asked what inspired him at school he replied, "football, basketball, baseball." He attended the University of Alabama for a year, then transferred to Marquette. He re-. called, "I was going to be a dentist. Doc Ziemke said he'd have a place for me, I worked for Rudy Kratchowill's IGA store for a year before I went to college. When Icame back from college for the summer I was working for Rudy and it was the same time Buff VonWald had been appointed postmaster. Buff ran a restaurant called Von-Wald's Ice Cream Shop on the corner of Main and Phillips Boulevard. The post office and the IGA store were side by side and I would go over and needle Buff and say You can't run the post office and the ice cream shop. One day when I was shooting my mouth off, he said, Do you really think you want to buy the ice cream shop?' I said, 'I'm sure I want to buy the ice cream shop'. He said, 'O.K. meet me at the

ice cream shop tonight'. I remember Carl Pulvermacher was there. Hewas the foot patrol cop. We sat there and talked. Buff asked, 'How much money can you get together'. He told me he'd have to have \$3000. In '39 that was a lot of money. I had just bought a second. hand Chevrolet for \$600. Just prior to my 21st birthday we made a deal. Then, my brother Doc came home from Milwaukee. He had been studying engineering for two years.3 It was just the edge of Depression and I was getting 15¢ an hour at IGA. The IGA store was where the Dance School is now, south of that was Lang and Leinenkugel's Burber Shop and next to that the post office. The ice cream shop was across the street, where the Soap Opera now stands, next to the Standard Station, I asked Doc to come in with me. We ran the restaurant known as Coenen Brothers.

"As for special people I met, when I was working at the IGA store someone came in and said. 'Say, Herbert Hoover is having dinner, at. Tollies restaurant, (Now the Penguin) I said 'Really?' I rolled up my apron, in those days we wore those big white aprons, and walked down the street to peer in the window. Just then the door opened." There was Herbert Hoover, I said, Hello, Mr. President' and extended my hand and he said. 'Hello, son', Then, his wife came out and another couple and they went next door to look in Ziemke's jewelry store window. That was before they had to have 10 body guards."

The Coenen brothers took over the ice cream shop at the onset of the following school term. They were young and energetic and the high school kids were attracted to their charismatic nature. Shimmel described the situation. "After football games or basketball games they came en masse both from Prairie and Sauk, Maybe a hundred kids would come down. We put the booths away and put the juke box back and widened the place out. It was really something else. Coke was a nickel. Root beer was a nickel, hamburgers 10¢. We had good, clean fun. They'd get a little bois-terous once in a while and break a showcase or something. It is interesting. Just the other day a man came here jo my office. We called him a graduate of the Coenen Ice Cream Shop. I hadn't seen him for 40 years. His name was Tubby Penticrast. His family came here during the war. Another man stopped who I hadn't seen for 30 years, Joe Ragatz, to reminisce, the days of the

was qualified for the village board, bought a monument company 35.

Even though he did not live in the years ago.

village, he promoted my candida. "Now, my younger daughter and

cream shop and the board duties, the top ten in the state of Wisconabout the service. He was in the infantry and moved around the states and to Scattle and from there was. We have at least 200 different types shipped to Hawaii. He reiterated, "When we got a weekend pass everyone else was a soldier except the shop keepers. I was in the army three years, four months and 21 days. While I was in the service the restaurant was maintained by my wife, Cleo, with the good help of her mother and father, Jo and Ed Lindemer.

"In 1946 I served on the board came along. The Army Reserve Baraboo Unit was called. We went. to Colorado. Then, I got called to-Korea and became Battalion Sgt., Major. We were decorated by Sigmun Rhee, present of South Korea, for the work we did for the Korean Army. We built the Rock Army Camp and the Rock Army Hospital. We managed to get three battalion battle stars. I was decorated by the Secretary of the Army, Frank Pace. I found Korea to be quite interesting. We were there when Seoul was subbles. It's unbelievable the progress they made - with the U.S. dollar. I returned from Korea in 1952. It was most impressive when our ship went under the Golden Gale Bridge and there was a band playing and celebrities singing."

Coenens sold the restaurant to Stub Lang and Shimmel got a job with the post office when Maurie Schaefer was acting post master. He then purchised the granite business

from Bill Spellman.
Shimmel explained, "It's interesting how I got started. Mr. Bill esting how I got started, Mr. Bill is trucked in. We get granite from Spellman became aware of the fact I 'all over the United States. We have was looking for a business. He some beautiful granite from foreign lived across the street from the countries. Celo Bottling Company and he African black, a Swedish blue pearl. would be on his front porch and One of the legendary granites is watch me going to Celo evenings, from Milbank, South Dakota,

me about going into the monument business. People asked me what I knew about the business and I said. I was there and looked around'. One thing I did know was the red granites from the grey granites and the Coenen shop. It was really their greys from the brown. When I went second home. Oh, August Derleth? to my first monument convention i He was a daily customer. We weren they thought I had purchased the really good friends. It was August' monument business from an uncle Derleth, really, who first thought I or an aunt because no one just

cies for the village board. At that son-in-law, Jeanne and Paul Miller, time I was the youngest board are with me. We have increased member in the state of Wisconsin, business. We are now considered That was before the voting age was the largest monument firm in 18."

Southern Wisconsin including Shimmel enjoyed life in the ice; Milwaukee, We're considered one of However, he was drafted into the sin. We have branch offices in army in 1942. There was nothing Madison, Richland Center and particularly, impressive to him Reedsburg, We have a good organization and we keep our men trained in modern methods of the industry. of monuments on the floor, it. makes a nice place for people to get ideas. We were once a complete. manufacturing company. There had been a railroad side track installed which ran into the building which was high enough to accommodate a hoist that was needed to lift the granite off of the railroad flat car. We had a railroad switch across the street from us. We got the stones again. Then, the Korean Conflict direct from the quarries. We sit on a riverbed channel here. When they built the railroad company they followed the old riverbed to Kirchsteins years ago. In my high school days the basement gym

> Eventually the slough got filled'in. The (company's) showroom has a history. That building we use as our showroom was standing up where the library is now in Sauk City. When the Spellman's came here. Kahn used it as a showroom for buggies. I guess it got obsolete for buggies and in 1915 the Spellman's moved it to the present location intact. They dragged it down Main Street on rollers with horses and a block and tackle system.

floor was covered with water.

"When I first came into the business Joe Nolden was here. Ray Reutter and Bill Spellman, Joe was the polishing man, Robert Walsh and Glenn Dickerson sawed off the stones and polished them. It was the way to go back then.

"Things didn't change much until after World War II. Now everything about three times a week looking where the presidents were carred on for a business. He came and asked

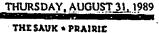
Shimmel Coeness

<u>Valter Doll Tapes</u> Presidential talks

Mt. Rushmore. That granite is called Dakota Mahogany granite. Our local Wausau red is still the prettiest of all for a red granite.

Two men, Paul Miller and Dale Neuman, do the designing on the stencil. The foundation and installation is done by Al Hellem and Wayne Schulz, My grandson, Brad Miller, does the sandblasting during the summer. Jeanne, my daughter, runs the office and is considered the 'boss'. The stencil is rubber, made by a Minnesota Mining Company. It is soft enough to cut with a little stencil knife, but when we blast it we have a hundred pounds of pressure. So, the carbide is blasted into it and it doesn't hurt the rubber. We double process everything here. It is more costly but the completed job cannot be beat, the beauty of it, the nice letters. We're personalizing monuments. We're putting a man on a tractor, a little telegraph for a telegraph operator. The other day a lady asked, 'Can I have a dachshund for my husband and a collie for me?" I said, 'Certainly."

Shimmel was again elected to the village board in 1956 and to village presidency in 1957. Coenen explained, "We had no village oflice. So, here was the village, a million dollar business, without an office. So, I would go down and see Hugh Heiney about a problem. He was a butcher at Bee Zee, which is now a part of Hall's Drug Store. He'd roll up his apton and we'd go to the side of the store and talk. well, I know Hugh's boss would give us some dirty looks. He was paid by the hour. And this went on and on and'I got very tired of it. I esked Hugh, "Why can't we take your office as village clerk, the office of village assessor and the office of village treasurer and combine them and have one office on a full time basis. At the next meeting we brought it up. Fortunately, we had an excellent board. Out of this came the first village administrator in the state of Wisconsin. From there it grew. It started with Hugh Heiney and myself.







"When we first started village administration it was in the old Village Hall across from the bowling alley. One day I was in the cemetery doing some work and J saw smoke coming up and heard the fire siren. I dashed to town and here the library was on fire. What about the books? I called Bill Leahy at the high school and said, Bill, the village hall is on fire and the books are in danger, we need manpower'. it would have done your heart good. In two minutes I looked up the street and one after another, here were all the boys coming from the high school. We started a book brigade." Shimmel hailed a man in a pickup to hall the books away. More pickups joined the cause and they saved every book.

After the village hall burned, the office moved to the location of the present Chamber of Commerce, then to the old bank building, the present location.

For a time, Shimmel lived in Prairie du Sac. He said, "I bought a home up there on Water Street. One of the trustees resigned and they asked me if I would take the position. I did and was re-elected. I am the only, one I know who served on both the village board of Prairie du Sac and Sauk City."

Shimmel has a special treasure on display at his business. It is a miniature steam engine patterned after the old threshing steam engines. He explained, "When I was a child, Nick Knechtes made that steam engine and would bring it over to the house and would get it going with some canned heat. He had taken a malted milk mixer and made a motor. He had belts on it and then strung up Christmas tree lights. Forty years later, when Nick was living in a trailer by the canning factory, he passed away, I called the attorney and told him I would trade a marker for his lot on the cemetery for the steam engine. No one could find it. Then, they. sold the trailer one day and I got 2 call from the attorney. They had. found the little steam engine behind walls of newspaper in the trailer."

Shimmel enjoys his work, the people. He likes to play bridge and he concluded with. "My feeling is that we used to have parades and band concerts and people were doing things for people. We should revive that spirit. I'm happy you could record this part of my life. I'm no doubt the only Shimmel Coenen who will ever live in Sauk City."

Men's Club 60, and going strong

by Dorls Litscher Gasser

The oldest men's association in Sauk City is a civic minded group who were first organized as the Men's Club about 60 years ago. Four members gathered at the Sauk City Library to peruse through records and to recall stories of their history. They are Franz Wyttenbach, Shimmel Coenen, Vic Lochner and Bob Ochsner, all who have served as officers and given leadership to the group through the years.

The organization was completely independent and began as a businessman's group who were interested in the welfare of Sauk City with projects and social events stemming around town beautification, concern for young people and promotion of business.

Shimmel, president of the Spellman Monument Company, began, "I joined the club in 1939. At that time I had bought the ice cream shop and I was 21 years old. I bought out VonWalds. Stub Lang took over after I had owned it. It was located next to the Standard Oil Station of the corner of Water Street and Phillips Boulevard. It's a laundry now.

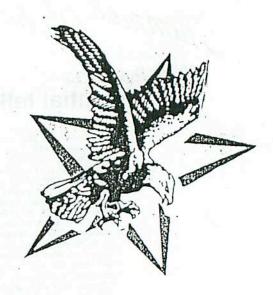
"Serving the farmers was a big issue for businessmen through the years. In the early years the stores were open Wednesday nights until 9 p.m. and Saturday nights until 11 p.m. I worked for the IGA store on Water Street in 1937 and 1938. When it was closing time and we started to turn the lights out in the store, those farmers, who came to the Midway Tavern across the street, looked over and said, 'My Gosh, I've got my wife's shopping list in my pocket,' and they'd hurry

over to do their grocery shopping. It was a big night. Discussions of business hours were important. There was a great deal of emotion on the part of some when the issue came up as to whether or not they could change shopping night for farmers from Saturday to Friday. Shopping night was a time for farmers to combine their social life with business. There was no Chamber of Commerce or Lions Club. We were the only club in Sauk City and we were not affiliated with any national or state organization. We could keep our money at home."

Franz Wyttenbach had not yet reached the age of 21 when he started his dairy business. He recalled, "I wasn't a charter member but I was one of the early members. The ones I recall as charter members were Frank Littel, George Marzolf, and Henry Dresen. Bill Leahy might have been. The Men's Club started in '36 or '37. We can't find the early records. (Maybe there were none.)

"Saturday nights, when the stores were open, were cruising nights for young guys. We'd cruise up down main street in our automobiles." They were just cruising for the fun of cruising. He went on, "After dances the young guys would stop at Jack Heids. We could get a hamburger, hotdog, soda or coffee. Everything cost a nickel."

Shimmel interjected: "We sold ice cream cones for a nickel, double deckers." Franz went on: "Jack's place was a small frame building where Hondo's is now located. He sold out to Romie Reuter, champion of the pro Joe McCarthy



group. The McCarthy recall group, organized as the "Joe Must Go" club was spearheaded by the then Editor of the Star, Leroy Gore. The 'Joe Must Go' club caused a lot of excitement and put Sauk City in the national news. The Men's Club didn't enter into politics. Jack Heidwas one of the characters Sauk City had through the years. He started business with \$15. After he bought six stools and a grill he had \$2 left to buy groceries. He knew that I delivered milk and the people left their 8¢ in an empty quart milk bottle on their front steps to pay for the next quart of milk. So he told me about life in Chicago when he was glad to find coins in an empty milk bottle in lean times."

Franz bought the Twin City Dairy in 1936 from Loranz Tarnutzer which was located on the corner of Bates and Maple Streets. He renamed it West Side Dairy and later bought the Hussel and Meyer Wagon Shop, a charming old block building, and converted it into a diary, and restaurant. It is now a restaurant owned and operated by Leystras.

The third member of the group, Vic Lochner, retired from Ace Hardware. Vic explained, "I was associated with Ace Hardware when it was located on downtown Water. Street. I was there for 35 years and managed the heating and air conditioning aspect of the business. This had been the location of the Hahn and Deman Hardware Store and is now Donna's Floor Covering. We would meet across the street where Marty Roos' place was and is now the Penguin. Although we did move around. Sometimes we met at Jack's Riverside (now Green Acres) Jack Voll's (now Marquardt Agency)."

Shimmel continued. We'd have dinner and a speaker and a business meeting. In the beginning we held our meetings at the old City Hall south of the Water Street stop light. The boy scouts met downstairs and the library was on the south side of the building. Local women's church groups and others such as the American Legion Auxiliary, Royal Neighbors and Modern Woodman did the cooking. They were all good cooks. One time

Carl Ganzlin was crowded between the wall and the table and someone spilled a whole tray of coffee on his back. I never saw anyone jump up and take off his jacket so fast! Later in 1956, when the Curtis Hotel (City Hall) burned down a new library was constructed."

Franz recalled, "We used to meet out at Gaukel's at Fish Lake. That was before it was a resort. It was more or less a private cottage. Sometimes we ate at Pearl's Garden."

Shimmel added, "There was Pete's Bar and Pearl's Sarden. There was about an eight foot drop into the river east of the garden. There was a fire place and there's an interesting animal down there with a frog on its back. A guy from Michigan brought it from the Chicago 1932 World's Fair and sold it to Pete Sprecher. It had an interesting story and he was going to tell me. about it until he found out I was gong to write about it in the paper. It must have been stolen or something. After 1954, when the Leland Rod and Gun Club had created a park by the pond and we had expanded to include area farmers, we had picnics out there.

"On a different subject, we used to promote band concerts with the Sauk City High School kids. We had Saturday night concerts on Jackson Street between the Du Drop, Inn (now Jimmy's Bar) and the State Bank. (Now the Star Office)

"We had a discussion about creating an ice skating rink. We flooded an area behind the old high school. We made plans for a tennis court, promoted by Al Kahn, located behind the old Catholic Church, where the community center is to-day.".

It was time to hear from Bob Ochsner, the youngest member of the group. He recalled, "My father, Hank Ochsner, became a member of the club when they had country cousin's night. As a boy. I remember him getting ready to go to the meetings. There was another reason

I was encouraged to join. A young man, who was manager of Hardee's, Rick Carlson, who has since been killed in a tragic sky diving accident, was the president of the Men's Club about ten years ago. He put an article in the Star explaining the

purpose and activities of the Men's Club

"I called him, went to the meet ing as his guest and became a member. Bob recalled a story that one of the old timers had told him. "In the days when the club had their meetings at the Blaze, a popular place with a circular bar on the street side and a dining room in back by the riverside. Armand Bauer left his jacket on the coat rack in the bar and went in to dinner. His jacket started smoking. The tobacco in his pipe pocket was still alive and the Blaze became ablaze."

Shimmel continued, "The Men's Club discussed building a new gymnasium and that was the start of the community building today. That was a community project. We had a committee appointed to represent the Men's Club in 1940 and it didn't get started until the '50s."

Franz recalled, "Before that we had Turner's Hospital, one of the oldest buildings in Sauk City on the corner of Water and Polk Street, where children earne to have their tonsils taken out. We had friends south of Arena with a large family. As each one became nine years old they'd come in to have their tonsils taken out. Then, they'd stay at our place all night. It was a two day deal."

In the early '40s, the U. S. government decided that the rich farmland in Sumpter was the chosen site for the powder defense plant. Shimmel commented: "The Men's Club was contacted to discuss this issue. We were between the farmers who didn't want to lose their farms and businessmen who would have a booming business. We voted in favor of it but we probably had little to say about the government's decision."

Franz added, "The war was interfering with a lot of people's lives. Men were called to service."

There was a great influx of people into the area. Business places, especially taverns and restaurants were open round the clock to accommodate the shift workers. At the changing of the shifts there was bumper to bumper traffic from the Badger Ordinance gate to Prairie du Sac and Sauk City. The mode suddenly changed from a friendly

community, where everyone knew everyone, into a place of unusual peeple, energy and activity. Business establishments extended west on Phillips Boulevard and the dual highway on 12 was constructed.

Shimmel remembered "Sauk City refused to allow people to have house trailers in their yards or for the village to establish a trailer camp."

Vic recalled, "Johnnie Beinvogel built the Riverview Ballroom behind his bar which had been the old Eagle House Hotel." Shimmel added, "That was built 20 feet into the river at the time. The DNR wouldn't allow them to do that today." Franz went on, "The guy who was building it was putting up the rafters and hadn't braced them very well. He was one of those guys who was sure of himself and he said, "They'll stay there." One night we had a great, big storm and every rafter blew down. Johnnie made him put them all back up on his own time."Franz continued: The Riverview Ballroom attracted big name bands and crowds of friendly people during the late forties and fifties. We promoted bowling teams, too. We had bowling teams in the Men's Club and I had a team of my own."

Shimmel added, "I was still bowling when I had my heart attack in '85 and Bruno Slotty is still bowling with the team."

The Men's Club sponsored a yearly banquet for many years honoring high school athletes. In 1948 the basketball team was honored as being Tri County League champions and again in the '60s there was another paramount banquet with 270 people present honoring the Sauk City athletes of 1917.

Franz recalled, "We didn't forget our wives. Every year we had a special banquet and each lady was given a rose."

During the 1950s the club resumed an interest in supporting the hospital project. Shimmel reviewed, 'The club voted to pledge \$3,000 to the hospital. We decided to have the nurses station as our memorial unit. Bill Spellman offered to underwrite the pledge if the club couldn't pay.

The Sauk City Men's Club was also instrumental in promoting the new bridge and moving it to the present location in 1966. They were also involved in the dedication ceremonies.

Men's Club has rich history here



Looking over old Sauk City Men's Club records are, left to right: Vic Lochner, Bob Ochsner, Franz Wyttenbach and W.J. Shimmel Coenen.

Referring to fund raisers, Bob found an item on the sale of light bulbs and Earl Hall was concerned that their light bulb sale might interfere with local business.

The most fantastic fund raiser was the trip planned to the Milwaukee Braves game in the '50s. People from towns and the country side boarded the passenger train from the Sauk City depot early one Sunday morning and headed for Milwaukee. the passenger train hadn't run from Sauk City for many years and it was a jiggledy ride. There was a food car and two bar cars, being one of the bar tenders. Shimmel remembers that well. The game was a double header and there

was a weary train load of people pulling into Sauk City late that night.

Vic reminded: "We had an Easter egg hunt for many years. We'd boil and color 90 dozen eggs. At first that was a high school home economics project and was done later upstairs at the Riverview. Franz and other men would help.

Franz reiterated, "We'd get up at five in the morning and hide eggs in different places, around the Riverview, Steidmenn's or Earl Hall's home or the lot near Kirchsteins where the manor is now. That's the same place the cavalry with horses used to camp when they were traveling from Illinois to Camp McCoy. There'd be several hundred men at camp and the general would strut around like a turkey."

Back to the Easter egg hunt; it was reported by Jim McGuine and Joe Bernard that it was a big success except that the older children were out early and got the eggs before the little ones had a chance.

Shimmel went on to a more serious subject: "We discussed the beginning of an ambulance service. In 1969 the ambulance service began for the two villages and six townships." Franz added, "Before that we" used privately owned station wagons and Zimmerman, the local undertaker, had a Ford Sedan delivery with a stretcher in it."

The Sauk City Men's Club has been a great asset to the community throughout the years, contributing to many activities and beneficial causes. They placed high priority on scholarships. The original scholarships were given in honor of educators, Jim McGuine, Bill Leahy and Carl Simonson.

Bob Adank, treasurer of the club, reports that the club has given over \$25,000 toward their causes over the past five years.

Bob Ochsner explained, "Our activities have changed through the years. Recently we have had fund raisers. Christmas raffles, concessions for baseball tournaments. We have contributed to safety patrols. hockey teams, baseball teams, jump rope competitions, the literary council and scholarships, to name a few. We have monthly meetings with a speaker or entertainment. We have summertime picnics and a special Christmas dinner and annual dues of \$10. Right now we are in a situation where we could use more members. Ladies are welcome to join."

The entire group agreed that ladies are welcome to join. If you enjoy communicating with genuine, taking people who find gratification in helping the community as well as the pleasure of social get togethers, contact the Sauk City Men's Club. New ideas are welcome!

(Contact Franz, Shimmel, Vic or Bob, President, Dan Duchrow, Treasurer, Bob Adank or any other member of the club.)

Days of Days of recalled Johnson Rag' recalled



Showing that he still has that musical talent that led to the popularity of the "Johnson Rag" at the Riverview Ballroom is Bob Erhardt, on bass, flanked by Shimmel Coenen, a fan of that era. Photo by Dorls Litscher Gasser

by Doris Litscher Gasser

"Ho! Ho! It's the Johnson Rag! Hep! Hep! hear it - The Johnson Rag!".

Bob Ehrhardt and Shimmel Coenen reminisced about post WWII good times at the Sauk City Riverview when the Jack Teter Trio, was poluplar, Bob began taking

violin

lessons at the age of eight and roegan his musical career at the age of 14. Bob recalled: "We started in the Milwaukee Bars when "Beer came back" in 1933

There were three in our group on the violin, accordion and saxophone. We played waltzes and the two step and were paid \$3.00 a night a piece."

From there Uncle Sam called Bob to join the Navy and he was stationed At Great Lakes, Farrugut, Idaho and Corvallis, Oregon. Through his studies in Farrugut, Bob became a medical corpsman. However upon his arrival in Corvallis he was drafted to play bass with the navy orchestra which played at the USO, the Officer's Club, and

staff dances. After a year and a half, in 1945, the war ended and Bob went back to Milwaukee.

After a few jobs through the National Federation of Musicians, Bob received a phone call form Jack Teter from Memphis, Missouri, who was on tour in Milwaukee. He explained, "Teter was on the guitar and Bob Prouty from Burlington, Wisconsin was on the piano. They had just lost their bass player. The first place in Milwaukee that we played was an Italian place, Tutz's. We travelled mostly throughout the

Midwest and sang individually and as a trio. We had one night stands at various TV stations in Madison. We were at the Deva Bara in Baraboo many nights and WIBU, Poynette, and got to the Riverview when our agent, contacted Fran Conway, the owner."

The Riverview, considered by many to be a white elephant :about to be swallowed by the Wisconsin River when Johnny Beinvogl built it in 1942, was sold to Fran Conway in 1950 and began flourishing with the big bands under his ownership and auspices. Fran was a Sauk City native who was an up and coming gentleman, a promoter, who liked people and music and got them together in the spirit of the post war era at his ballroom. Box recalled: "Fran was an easy-going good fellow."

. The big bands in the romantic ballroom with a moonlight view over the Wisconsin River, were an attraction to people from a broad area around Sauk City on Saturday nights. There they could swing and sway to the tunes of the day, including the Johnson Rag. There was excitement even: in the anticipation of entering the ballroom as Cap Kahn, the dance inspector, commonly and 'affectionately called the bouncer, wandered around the entrance. In his own steady unruffled way, he gave the impression that he knew how to handle things.

Snummel, an avid supporter of the bands, recalled some of them that kept the Riverview Ballroom alive on Saturday nights: "Eddie Howard, Tiny Hill, Lionel Hampton and Lawrence Welk,"

Bob remembered, "Lawrence Welk told us he was going to California We told him to forget it. He would get lost. Now, he is the only one who is still on television even though he is deceased.

Shimmel continued, "When the big bands rested Jack Teter's Trio look over to keep the party going. They played in Sauk City the entire summer."

The dance floor would be hopping to the Johnson Rag at its peak energy and then the music softened and dwindled in a sleepy, dead silence and suddenly the musicians would tear back into another round of "Hoy! Hoy! It's the Johnson Rag," and the dance hall would come back to life. Then, the whole thing would start all over again.

Shimmol remembered: The overflowing drowds were milling in the streets and straining to hear the music of the famous bands throughout the evening."

Bob went on: "The Johnson Rag was writter by Hall and Kleinkauf. Some of the big bands played it but Teter sang along and that's how it became number two in the National Hit Parade. To top off the reminiscence of the Johnson Rag and the Riverview Ballroom in the 50s, and add a





Members of the Jack Teter Trio Included, left to right: Jack Teter on guitar, Bob Prouty on plano and Bob Erhardt on bass. They often played at the Riverview in Sauk City.

little spice to the day the two genial gentleman relived the happy times in song:

"Hip! Hip! Hear it- The Johnson Rag

Hoy! Hoy! There goes the latest shag

Ho! Ho! it isn't a gag.

Hip! Hip! there goes the Johnson Rag!"

Bob Ehrhardt, the only living member of the Teter Trio, is now retired with his wife, Iris, in their home in Baraboo, Bob continues to play with a trio. However, they just lost their piano player. If you are an interested pianist, look up Bob!

Today the Riverview is owned and operated by Doug and Karen-Shinker. The frontage of the Riverview on Water Street was built in 1888 by Math Huerth, as a hotel, restaurant and bar. The Shinkers are caring people interested in preserving the historical aspects of the building. with the upstairs bar, "The Water Street Saloon" The Waterfront Restaurant, with good home style cooking of American food, and 'Hi! Hi! Hip! Hip!" periodic; dances in the Riverview with music for all ages in 1997 style

Sauk Prairie Stan

Lost buddy found

by Doris Litscher Gasser

A weary, stocky built, balding Columbia University Professor stopped in at the Spellman Granite Office in Sauk City to meet Shinimel Coenen late one afternoon in the spring. Shimmel wound up his meeting with a customer and greeted his new guest who seemed quite apprehensive. The professor had become exhausted from having searched for years for a long, lost buddy from Sauk City who had been killed in Iwa Jima.

The professor's name was William
A. Corpe, professor Emeritus,
Biological Science, Columbia
University, City of New York, who we
will refer to as Bill, as he signs his
name.

Bill came to know this dead Marine Comrade on the SS Dark in January 1945, en route to Iwa Jima. This lost friend from Sauk, and a man named Don Allen, would meet frequently to discuss a subject they had in common—the writings of August Derleth. Bill was reading "Wind Over Wisconsin" when they met and his Sauk City friend was carrying "Still is the Summer." The three enjoyed Derleth as a story teller and his familiarity of the natural history of the Wisconsin River.

The missing comrade was a Marine paratrooper who had participated in action in Bourgainville and Vella Vella in 1943 and now he was facing action in Iwa Jima. He died in battle. Bill Corpe and Don Allen visited their, friend's grave in Iwa Jima at the end of the war before they headed back for the United States.

Strangely enough Bill had forgotten; the name of his buddy who had been so dear to him. Nevertheless he never gave up searching for him. He and his wife had made a previous visit to Sauk

City. Everyone was sympathetic to the cause. They contacted people they met on the street. They went to the VFW Post at Prairie du Sac, where they were given a list of 9,000 names from the third, fourth and fifth Marine divisions of the dead in the Iwa Jima cemetery.

Bill and his wife continued their quest and went to the Sauk City Library and again were greeted kindly, but to no avail. They found no information after scouting through the obituaries on microfilm. Mary kindly suggested that Bill contact Pete Blum, who had worked with August on writings in his earlier years.

Pete in turn referred Bill to Shimmel Coenen. Upon entering Shimmel's office, Bill had just completed hours of walking up and down among tombstones in the Sauk City Cemetery looking for military markers and examining the writings. No tombstone fit the criteria of his lost, buddy.

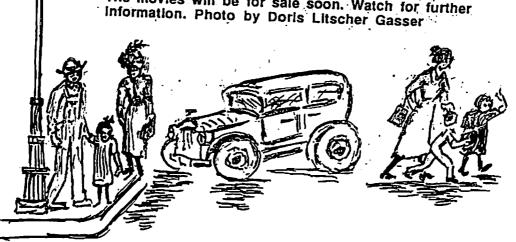
No wonder Bill was exhausted, when he told Shimmel his story. It: was a story that brought tears to Shimmel's eyes. The lights went on and with a snap of the finger Shimmel said, "Bill Ritchie'. And his brother lives in town."

Happy his search was over, in aboutno time at all Bill was visiting with
Chuck Ritchie in his home in Sauk
City. What an emotional time for Bill
Corpe and Chuck Ritchie, to share the
happy memories of Bill Ritchie and
the sorrow of his not returning.

In a recent letter to Shimmel, Professor Corpe wrote: "I want to thank the people of Sauk City and Prairie du Sac for their hospitality."



Characters of Sauk City and Prairie in 1938
Characters of Sauk City and Prairie du Sac are hopping all over the screen in a series of 1938 silent movies. Shimmel Coenen (left) and Jim Kirchstein are shown as they edit and add sound tracks to the films. It is believed that Dr. Leo Hudson was primarily responsible for the original production. A group of historically-minded citizens are having a series of meetings at the Sauk City Library to Identify the people in the movies. They are Lois Koenig, Janice Bender, Marjorle Oneson, Betty Luetscher, Lyman Waffenschmidt, Bob McFarlane, Bill Kirschner and Carl Lachmund. The movies will be for sale soon. Watch for further information. Photo by Doris Litscher Gasser



VFW's 50th

Founding of local VFW told

by Doris Litscher Gasser

The Sauk Prairie VFW was organized over a soda fountain, according to Shimmel Coenen, one of the original members.

Shimmel, as a young Sauk City man was drafted into the army in WWII and was stationed in Hawaii.

He recalled: "I was drafted in 1942 and was in service three years, four months and 21 days. I got out on New Year's Day January 1, 1946. I had an ice cream shop, which was run by my wife during that time. The ice cream shop was a hang-out for high school kids after school. During the day time we had a lot of coke and coffee drinkers. Charlie Henning would always come in during the day and talk about organizing a VFW while I was serving people over the soda fountain."

As the veterans came into the ice cream shop to have their afternoon coffee Shimmel and Charlie took a survey to learn whether or not there would be an interest in a VFW organization. The American Legion had already been established since WW I and they were doing a great job of leading patriotic events in the community. Nevertheless Shimmel put an ad in the Sauk City Pioneer Press and the first meeting was held in the Sauk City Village. Hall May 23, 1946. Wendelin Coenen served as temporary commander and Roy Ratcliff as Ouartermaster.

Shimmel reviewed: "Later on, July 25, 1946 the post was installed as the Lachmund Cramer VFW Post #7694. We got our pins and hats and cards. My card was #2 and it still is."



The elected officers on July 25, 1946 were Orlo Koenig-Commander (deceased). Orlo had been a captured German prisoner. Sr. Vice President - Wendelin Coenen, Jr. Vice President - Linford LeMoine, Chaplain - Edward Neumier, Judge Advocate - Charles Henning (deceased). Trustees - Donald Hosig, Merle Keller, (deceased) and Maurice Neumaier. Merle Keller was written up in the papers as having been killed. It was later a great shock

when he appeared.

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"Charlie and I were both surprised at the big turn out we had. There were approximately 50 veterans who turned out. The organization kept growing. We had good meetings and promoted activities."

One time we had a circus come to town to raise money."

When the U.S. entered the Korean War Shimmel, who had been in the army reserve, was one of those men who was called back to duty. This time his destination was Scoul, Korea, where he served as a Sergeant Major.

Shimmel remembered: "When the ships came in with replacements I saw Toby Thistle's name on the manifest and requested that he be in our company." Interest in the VFW dwindled during the Korean War.

Shimmel went on, "Charlie Henning should get all of the credit for holding the VFW together. He had a VFW bumper sticker on his car. He attended all of the state conventions. He was the represen-

tative at the regional conventions. He'd go around to different VFW Posts. He was a one man VFW Post. He'd call meetings in makeshift places, few if any vets would come. Sometimes he had meetings in his car. As Quarter Master he'd fill out all of the quarterly reports and bring them. over to me to sign. I kept all of the records. Then, one day John Heiney came to me and asked, 'Do you have the VFW records?' A younger group of veterans was interested in reviving the VFW organization."

Since the seventies there has been a resurgence of enthusiasm among the veterans. They built a club house, cleaned up a junk yard on the Wisconsin River, created a park and sponsor community activities all in the spirit of 'Honoring the dead by helping the living.'

A murder in Sauk City in

1856

by W.J. "Shimmel" Coenen

The saloons in Sauk did a big business when the steamers and rafts of lumber and logs tied up for the night. A local man, Hunter Davis, west of Honey Creek, enjoyed the saloons, too. He was known for being a sharp shooter with a hunting rifle. The Davises were quite close acquaintances with Millard, who ran a livery stable in Sauk, and his wife. Millard was a strong rugged man.

One day Mrs. Davis came to town frightened and went to visit the Millards and told them she was afraid of her husband. He would come home drunk every night and abuse her and even threatened to kill her. But, instead he killed the cat. She pleaded with the Millards to come home with her for the night. They complied with her request, meaning to be helpful.

When Hunter Davis came home and saw the Millards he was infuriated. The next day he appeared in Sauk with a rifle threatening to shoot Millard on sight. Millard appealed to the Sauk officials to take care of Davis

but they did nothing about it. The next day Davis came to town and brought his boy with him with a double barreled shot gun. Millard decided that if the law wouldn't protect him he had better do it himself.

Davis was looking for Millard in Sauk and was told Millard went to upper Sauk. In the meantime, Millard had escaped to upper Sauk and was hiding on the second floor of the Gilmore warehouse, where he viewed Davis and his boy from a window coming after him. He took his gun and aimed it at Davis and shot him.

A few days later Millard was taken to Baraboo handcuffed with the sheriff in a horse and buggy—followed by three guards on horses. He was given a five year sentence in prison, but was pardoned after two years. When he was released he and his people left Sauk, never to return.

(There is an ongoing research into the murder by Keith Millard of Swisher, lowa.)

Sauk Prairie Star August 28-1998

History of Legion told by Coenen



Back from WW II

Shown in front of Coenen's Ice Cream Shop at the northwest corner of Phillips Blvd and Water St. are left to right, Shimmel (Wendelin) and brother Doc (Sylvester) Coenen. Photo courtesy of Jeanne Miller

by Doris Litscher Gasser

Note: The interview with Shimmel was taken shortly before he passed away on October 23, 1998. Shimmel (Wendelin served in the army in WW II and in the Korean conflict in 1950 as a Sgt. Major in Korea. Doc (Sylvester) served as a corporal in WW II stationed in London, England.

There'll be a biography of Shimmel coming up a little later. He passed away in the middle of our writing, we hadn't planned for that.

Shimmel Coenen was a lad of ten in 1927 when he was highly impressed with the activities and prestige of the veterans in the American Legion. Years later, after his own service to the country he was proud to become a member of the Kuoni-Reuter Post #167.

The American Legion was a flourishing, active organization in the 20s and 30s.

Shimmel remembered: "There were Legion dances in Accola's Hall above what is now the Pizza Place next to Hondo's. There were Fourth of July celebrations. There were parades and band concerts on Saturday nights. Automobiles had to dodge the band stand, which was set up in the middle of Main Street in Sauk City. The stage was set for a happy evening as citizens of all ages milled around and socialized at an ice cream social to the tune of John Phillip Sousa's marches.

"Armistice Day was a big day! No one went to work. Most of the stores were closed. The Legionnaires went to Denzer to Markerts and had a celebration and played cards and had a pig

"Memorial Day was another important time. The Legionnaires would gather on Main Street and march to the cemetery. The Legionnaires would be marching! I The Boy Scouts would be marching! The Legion Auxiliary would be marching! I can picture the enthusiasm of Mrs. Steidtmann, Helen Hall and Erna Spellman. There was the Legion band and the high

Sank Prairie Star

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school band."

Shimmel was the service officer for, many years. He took men to the veteran's hospital in Madison. He took care of funeral arrangements and ha the honor of presenting the flag to the widow of the deceased.

He recalled: "One time I was taking a patient to the hospital We were just on the other side of Spring Field Corners and we saw a car making a big round on the corner, wy passenger, Eddie Somerau, said, 'That guy ain't gonna make it.' So the guy goes off the road and hits a post and flips up-side-down. I went over to help him outh of the car. I said, 'Are you alright?' He said, 'Yep, I'm alright.' It was eight o'clock in the morning and he had over imbibid. Just then a pick up came along with a farmer in it. The farmer took over and we left for the hospital.

There were at least a hundred people in the Legion when I joined. A few I remember are George Gieck, Donald Waydick, LaVerne Mueller and Romie Reuter. Oscar Buerke came here from Black Earth. He did a lot for the Legion. There are some people who never got credit for what they did in Sauk City.

"Rollie Steuber and Bill Spellman were baseball enthusiasts and supported our team. I was on the team. We were good. We had a band and a firing squad.

"I think Romie Reuter ran for State Commander one time. Gordie Roseleip from Darlington, was a State Senator and a State Commander at one time. He was a guy who didn't seem to know cheese from butter but he was our friend.

"Our first meetings were in the Sauk City Village Hall. We had a club house for awhile on Jackson Street across from Koenig's bird house. Then, the Legion got a little out of hand. It sort of fell apart. We lost our club house and started losing members. The Legion is doing better today but we still do not have a club house."

The VFW have kindly been sharing their Club House on the Wisconsin River for the American Legionnaires to hold their meetings.

Giegerich Sons Prairie du Sac. Wi 1999

Shimmel Coenen has had a childhood like no one else I have known. How generous of him to choose to share it with us. Though he had it in mind that he wanted his biography written a few years back, it wasn't until July, 1998 that we began to write now and then, slowly, slowly. Little did we realize that October 23, 1998 would be his last day on earth. Unfortunately, he passed away before we were finished. I promised I would complete the story, and Jeanne was great about taking over to assure that her dad's desire was fulfilled. I made no attempt to embellish on Shimmel's story. to create a great writing. I simply wrote what he told and tried to incorporate some of his thoughts and feelings. I was happy to have an opportunity to get to know his family and friend. of our lives have been enriched because of Shimmel's story.

Onis

Doris Litscher Gasser

