

The Three Worlds  
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When I was five years old my family moved to a place that I could only describe as "the middle of nowhere"-- that place was Waukesha, WI. Though Waukesha has never been confused with the rugged Alaskan wilderness, to a small boy who had grown accustomed to the lights and noise associated with a portion of Milwaukee's Highway 100 known as "the strip", Waukesha was as remote as anything in the Brooks Range. The road that led to my new home was narrow and wound through some of the largest stands of trees I had even seen in my young life, and my driveway itself was nothing more than a quarter mile strip of gravel. That gravel strip however divided three very different worlds that would each capture my attention and become a part of my day to day life.

The first world was a wooded area dominated by oaks, maples, and hickory along with thorn apples, huckleberry, black raspberries, and "Piss elms" that I now recognize as species common to edge habitats. The second world could be characterized as a prairie filled with grasses and weeds like bull thistles and Queen Anne's lace. The last world separated by my gravel driveway consisted of a fairly large pond and its associated cattails and rushes. As a result of such ecological diversity and the small number of people in the area, my new home was also home to a wide variety of animals including frogs, toads, squirrels, rabbits, raccoons, skunks, deer, and birds of every sort imaginable from gold finches and cardinals to owls and red tail hawks. Although our land was unique in its possession of a number of distinct habitats, many of the outlying areas in Waukesha possessed similar characteristics all combining to give the town a rural feeling despite the new development that was occurring.

What factors made the land of my "three worlds" look as they did in 1978? Who were the people who lived there and what did they do that required such different ecosystems in close proximity to one another? The land itself hints to the answers to these questions and with a little background research it becomes clear why the land of my youth closely resembles the Waukesha of the late nineteenth century rather than the concrete and steel Waukesha of today.

At the time of the arrival of Europeans to the continent of North America, the land that is now Waukesha was occupied by several Native American tribes. As Euroamericans began to

Is it not familiar with this? is it a wild place in Alaska?

Good descriptive observations

Good transition to the focus of the paper

spread west however, the majority of the area's tribes were either pushed across the Mississippi River onto the plains or subjugated by force. In any event, southeastern Wisconsin was quickly opened to settlement and soon became dominated by the farming communities of German and Scandinavian immigrants. Although several stone arrowheads were unearthed on my prairie in Waukesha, there is no real evidence to indicate the presence of an Indian village. On the other hand, clues in the land and in historical documents point with certainty to the presence of a farming community where my home now stands.

What do  
you mean  
by "real  
evidence"?

The three unique habitats of our family's property in Waukesha along with old plot maps and insurance and real estate records that the area's farming centered around the dairy industry. The individual farms were too small in size to support extensive ranching efforts and the heavily wooded areas that mark the landscape, even today, would have made large scale grazing economically unfavorable. Dairy cattle however, require fewer acres per animal than beef cattle and could have been accommodated at a reasonable cost by clearing certain areas of the forest for pastures.

General  
Speculation  
not fact

In 1873 two German dairy men, Ludwig Bichart and John Lindner, owned the property that composed my three worlds of 1978. Bichart's land holdings totaled 180 acres valued in excess of \$18,900 while Lindner controlled approximately 60 acres with an estimated value of \$3000. These figures provide a sense of the size of each man's operation and suggest a fair measure of prosperity for both. The insurance policies taken out by the two farmers between 1874 and 1879 however, paint a clear picture of success. Bichart's policy totaled \$4,450 and covered everything from his three barns (\$400, \$700, \$100) and livestock (cattle- \$400, Horses- \$500) to his dwelling (\$1000), furniture (\$200), and wearing apparel (\$100). Lindner's \$1,550 policy was almost identical to Bichart's, only on a somewhat reduced scale. For men of that period to insure their clothing must mean that they owned some high quality apparel and that their dairy farms were providing them with enough extra income to indulge in such finery.

To amass such wealth, Bichart and Lindner had to have a market where their goods like milk, cheese, and butter could be sold in volume. Judging by the plot map of 1873, the farmers

Great!  
(1st 2nd  
integration  
of course  
materials)

had not just one market, but several. Although the road system in Waukesha was largely underdeveloped at the time, <sup>a</sup> major railway, the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad, ran just north west of the two farms. Its existence and the introduction of the refrigerated boxcar between 1866 and 1877 meant that farmers in the Waukesha area could sell dairy products not only in Minneapolis and Milwaukee, but eventually in Chicago as well. Entrance into these three markets, in addition to the local markets in Waukesha, guaranteed men like Bichart and Lindner profits for their labor.<sup>1</sup>

By 1930 the plot map of the same area in Waukesha shows some interesting and important changes that allowed the continued prosperity of the local dairy farms. The Bichart farm had been sold to the Kind family presumably for a sizable amount, while the Lindner farm had nearly doubled in size. The map also shows the appearance of a relatively elaborate county highway system which clearly designated roads : Y, F, X, I. More importantly, the map reveals ✓ the presence of two new rail systems the Soo Line running north-south, and the Milwaukee Electric Railroad and Lake Co. which connected Watertown and East Troy with Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha. The introduction of these rail systems had two important consequences for Waukesha and the property on which my home stands today. First, it depicts the growing importance of intrastate ✓ commerce for the area's dairy industry. Such expansion allowed farms like the Kind's and the Lindner's to remain prosperous into the twentieth century utilizing the same lands that had been successful for the last fifty years. Second, the increasing intrastate connections, especially those between Milwaukee and Waukesha, suggest increased movement of individuals from city to country ✓ and the subsequent division of the countryside. This movement may in fact be part of a larger national trend at that time to view rural areas as places to escape the city and recapture what Teddy Roosevelt termed "rugged individualism." ✓

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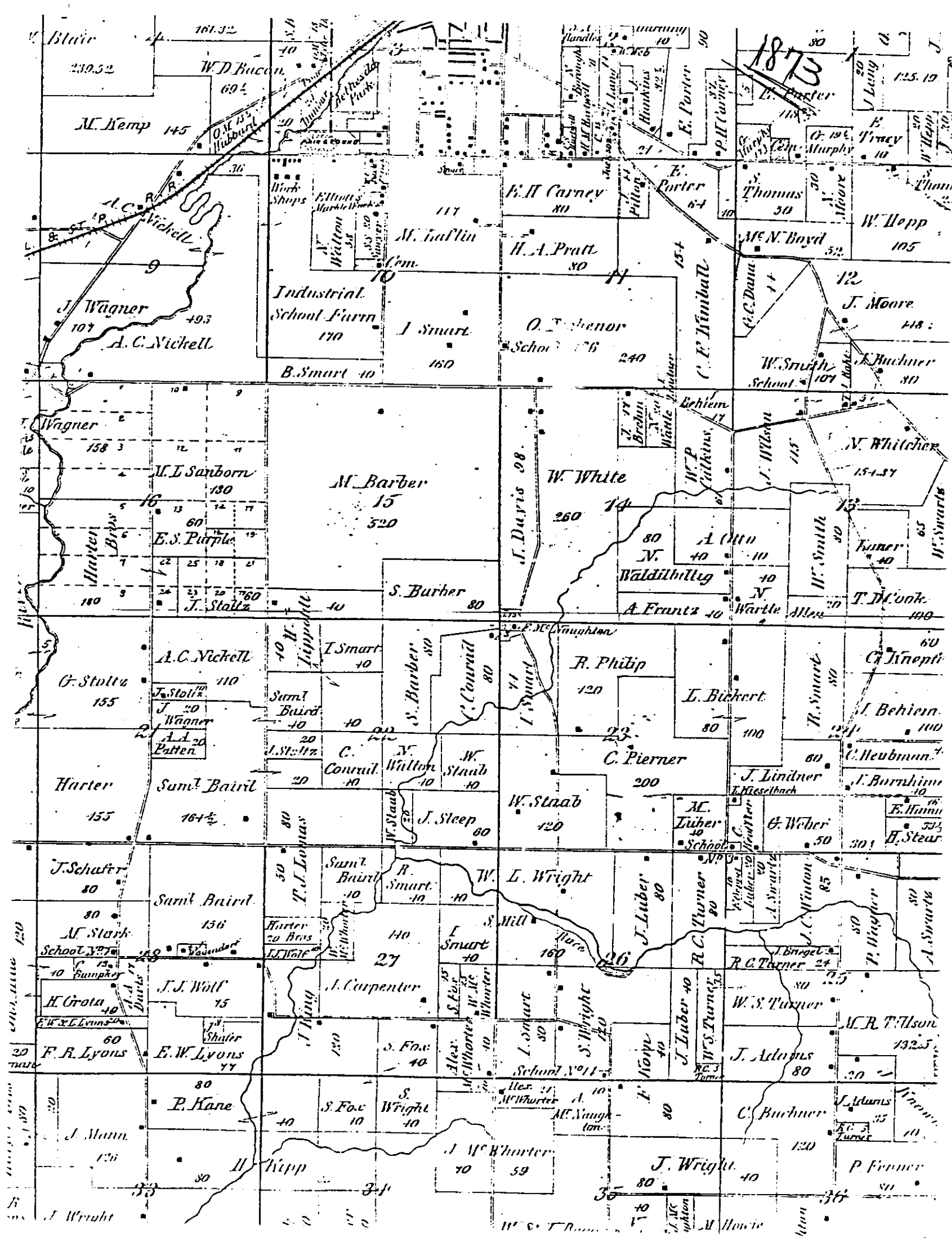
<sup>1</sup>The local market in Waukesha was greatly stimulated at the turn of the century by a growing tourist industry based on the healing properties of the town's spring water. A gazebo spring house in the center of downtown Waukesha now serves as a monument to the past fame of ✓ Waukesha water.

No matter what reasons people had for coming to Waukesha, the census and the continued expansion of the street/highway system indicates they came in large numbers. The increased development that accompanies increased population growth brings us back to 1978 and my "three worlds in the middle of nowhere." Annie Kind and Earl Lander, a relative of the Lindner family, had sold the last of their farms to a contracting firm in 1976, but the impact of their families' 100 years of work was clearly visible on the land of my new home. The existence of edge species indicated the burnings that had been used to hold back the forest and rejuvenate the grasses consumed by grazing animals. The stone pile and the coiled reams of barbed wire that ran parallel with the tree line suggested the partitions often associated with a pasture; and the rubbish found on the property--old glass electrical insulators and iron tractor seats--demarcated the positions of possible outbuildings or tool sheds. The pond, probably a cattle watering hole, also showed signs of the dairy farms of the past as the rapid eutrophication commonly associated with manure and the nitrogen/phosphates of fertilizers was already underway.

Great  
Use of  
Evidence

The forces of intrastate commerce that permitted Waukesha's dairy industry to remain competitive well into the 20th century were also the same forces that drove it west and north by 1980 in search of cheaper land. Waukesha is now a thriving city of over 50,000 individuals with strip malls and apartment complexes where farms once stood; yet, "the three worlds" of my youth have remained largely unchanged. Sure the gravel strip that originally separated prairie and pond is now blacktop and a two story colonial sits back in the woods, but for the most part, pond, prairie, forest and fenceline appear as they did in 1978, and as they might have in 1873. My family and I have chosen to alter the ecosystem we inhabit in an attempt to retain some of the past. This choice means burning and clearing and a great deal of other chores but it also means that I can still see red tail hawks looking for a meal and I can still hear the chirping of frogs on a warm July evening. These sights and sounds remind me that I am not so far removed from men like Ludwig Bichart and John Lindner, and that I am a part of this landscape just as it is a part of me.

Comments & Grade on  
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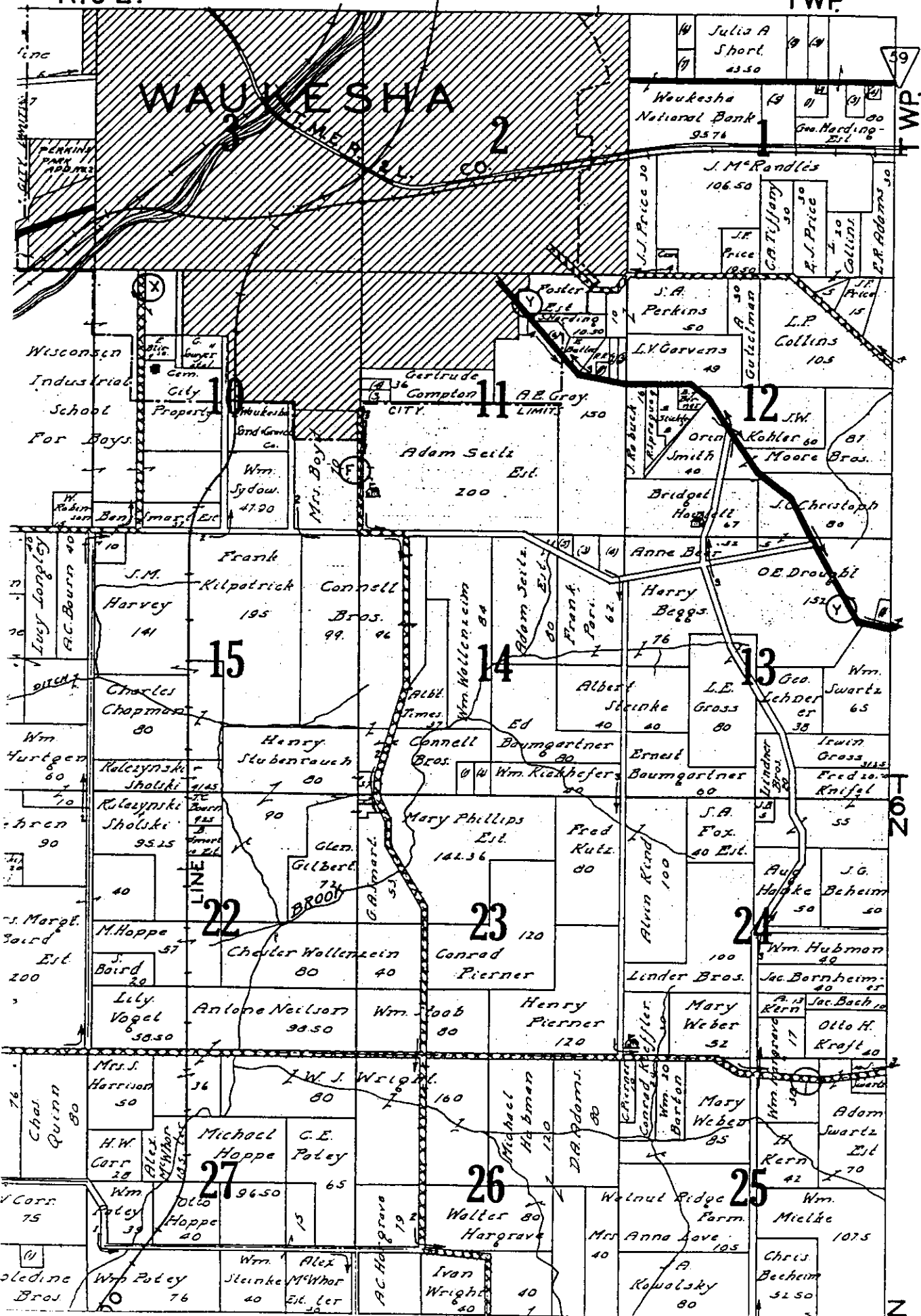


1930

R19E.

TWP

WAUKESHA







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### Bibliography

1. All maps, and numerical information regarding land values and insurance policies were obtained from the Waukesha County Historical Museum and their files from the Risk Insurance Company.
2. Background information regarding the TMER and L Co. was obtained through a phone conversation with Mr. Robert L. Thomas, an employee of the company in the 1930's.