

**BRIEF SKETCHES OF EARLY PIONEERS
AND RETIRED INDIVIDUALS WHO GUIDED THE POWER COMPANY
THROUGH THE YEARS**

JERIMIAH (JERE) D. WITTER --A Pioneer of many talents. Born on Sept. 18, 1855 in New York. Eventually came to Waushara County and taught school, also spent a year at Milton College. Later entered into a Law Office with his Brother-in-law, W.C. Webb, at Wautoma, Wisconsin. In 1859 he came to Grand Rapids, Wisconsin. He was a great believer that the Wisconsin River could be utilized for industrial expansion just like the Fox was at Appleton. He established the first Pulp Mill at Grand Rapids, founded the First National Bank of Grand Rapids and organized the Bank of Centralia. He was involved in almost all of the early businesses in this area. One year after the Consolidation of the Water Powers in this area he purchased the Stock issued to the Bensley Estate. In 1896 he became a director of the early Consolidated Water Power Company. One of his four children was Isaac Witter who would continue to be active in the Paper and Power Companies. Another child was Ruth Witter who was to marry George W. Mead I. Jere Witter continued his active interest in industry until in 1902 he became seriously ill and he called on his son-in-law, living in Rockford, Illinois, to carry on his dreams.

ISAAC WITTER -- Isaac was born in this city on May 11, 1873. He graduated from Howe School, then furthered his education at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and also studied one year in Germany. He returned to Grand Rapids and became active in the Bank of Grand Rapids and eventually became President of the Board. He also had financial interests in the Grand Rapids Milling Company, Adahwagam Paper Co, Johnson Hills and was an officer and director of Oneida Paper Co., Oneida Power Co. and Consolidated Water Power Company. During the period of 1916 - 1920 he was the State Senator from the 24th District. In 1919 he was elected president of Consolidated Water Power & Paper Company.

GEORGE W. MEAD -- George was born in Chicago, Illinois on Feb. 22, 1871. He was a graduate of Rockford High School in 1888, attended Beloit College and graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1894. George had a keen business instinct. Shortly after graduation he visited his college friends, Joseph and Arsene Arpin in this area. The Wisconsin River was in flood stage and as he stood on the bank watching the raging water rush downstream, he dreamed of how this great river could be harnessed. He returned to Rockford and was active in the furniture business. In 1902 he received a call from his ailing Father-in-Law, Jere Witter, who asked him to come to Grand Rapids and help him follow through on his industrial dreams. George agreed to come here on a temporary basis. Jere passed away as did his partner Nels Johnson and George was left to solve the remaining problems and carry on with the business ventures. George Mead's accomplishments in the Paper and Power industry in this area were great and were

nationally recognized. George had a quick perception of character and had a keen insight as to what was necessary and what was good. He demanded full attendance to duties and had little patience for carelessness and inefficiency. Besides being a giant in the development of the Paper Industry, he kept close watch on his first love, the Wisconsin River.

E. B. REDFORD -- Born in Oshkosh, Wisconsin on July 20, 1878, he came to Grand Rapids in 1916. He was Vice President of the First National Bank, director of Preway and active in local business progress and civic activities. His skills complimented the Paper and Power industry as it continued to grow. In 1919 he was elected as an officer of Oneida Power Company and then Consolidated Water Power Company and continued to fill these offices until 1942.

STANTON W. MEAD -- Stanton was an officer of the Power Company for 38 years and during this time kept the dreams of the early pioneers of Water Power alive. He also expanded the role of Water Power into the modern day era, despite the evolution of much stricter State and Federal regulations. Like his Father, he loved the nostalgic challenge of harnessing the Wisconsin River and carried out this role in fine fashion. Stanton also became very much involved in the Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company and guided this company through many tough periods. His longevity record as a director and officer of the W.V.I.C. will probably not ever be equaled.

WILLIAM F. (BILL) THIELE -- Thiele came to Consolidated from the General Electric Company, in 1928 and became Chief Engineer. As G.W. Mead was the dreamer of harnessing the Wisconsin, Bill Thiele was the one who could carry these dreams to reality. He worked through a maze of political and financial problems. During his watch, we would see the working head of water increased at Wisconsin Rapids, Biron and St. Point, the Big Eau Pleine reservoir would be constructed, the DuBay dam and powerhouse would be built and finally Bill would see the plans for Petenwell and Castle Rock come to fruition. During this period bill was Chief Engineer for the Paper Company and accomplished a great deal in this field. Bill ended his career as President of the newly formed Wisconsin River Power Company.

THOMAS UTEGAARD -- As Thiele played the role of Electrical Engineer, politician and G.W.Mead's right hand man, so was his partner Thom Utegaard the Civil Engineer genius who put together the initial plans of concrete and steel for these improvements on the Wisconsin. Bill and Thom put together the Wisconsin River Hydro Authority which was heralded in its day as the TVA of Wisconsin. While parts of this grandiose plan were eventually shot down by the political climate of the times, never the less, more than half of these dreams of the 1930's were realized.

KENNETH HUBBARD -- Ken was a man who loved the out of doors and the

challenge of hunting and fishing. During his youth, he attended Plainfield High School and played on their basketball team. His love of the out of doors first lead Hubbard to a job with the Telephone Company in Wisconsin. In 1928, he was hired as a lineman for Consolidated Water Power Company. The line crew was soon expanded and Hubbard became the foreman. Ken's trademark was his working uniform. He wore the trousers, spats and boots that he was accustomed to wearing in the Marines during World War I. Hubbard's crew built the DuBay Transmission line, the wish bone like cross arms were part of his idea. His most challenging project was to build the 115,000 volt Transmission line from Petenwell to Whiting, during this project his crew, at times, was as large as 50 workers. Ken retired in 1964.

ERNIE BELTER -- While there were others before Ernie, who helped coordinate the hydro power and river flows and electrical power, it was Ernie Belter who finally became known as the Boss of the River between DuBay and the outflow at Castle Rock. Ernie came on board in about 1926. Scheduling of the river flows at each dam during drought, floods and normal flow and taking care of the electrical power coordination for the mills was a job that Ernie cherished. It was George W. Mead who dreamed of these projects and it was Thiele and Utegaard among others who made these dreams come true and then it was up to Ernie Belter to coordinate their use. In his later years, Ernie dreamed of a vacation to California, he started out on this long overdue trip, but passed away enroute.

WARD ANDERSON -- Ward's family operated a small hydro utility in Scandinavia, Wisconsin and this is where Ward learned his trade. Later he would work for 15 years with Wisconsin Power & Light Company. When Du Bay was completed they needed some competent operators so in 1942 Ward was hired. In 1954 he left DuBay and become head of the working force at Wisconsin River Power Company. In 1961, after Ernie Belter passed away, Ward would move again and take his place as Boss of the River at Wisconsin Rapids. Ward lived through many changes and like others before him, his love for the Wisconsin was always paramount. Ward retired in 1971.

LOUIS PILSNER -- Louis worked his way up through the ranks from operator, recorder to dispatcher and the when Ward retired, Louis became the new boss of the River, along with many other jobs. During this period came a fast expanding mill load, upgrading of old and building of new transmission lines, new rules and regulations imposed by the Federal Government and then the sophistication of a practical and efficient way of automating hydro stations accompanied by the flow of electronic data to safely run the system. Along with this came the need for an efficient and low cost way of purchasing electrical power for the expanding mill load. Louis dedicated his working life to these ends and when his tenure was completed it was easy to say that the job had been well done.

GAYLORD (SLIM) EKELIN -- When Hubbard retired in 1964, "Slim" took over the High Line Crew, first as a working foreman and then as the salaried chief. Slim had been a lineman, knew the system well and was extremely qualified for this position. Slim modernized the high line crew operation with bucket trucks and better equipment. When the automated hydro stations came along, it was Slim's crew that took care of inspecting these plants, the dikes, land and doing the flood gate operations during flood stage. Upgrading the transmission and the distribution systems were some of the many chores we added to this crew. The High Line Crew no doubt has the most dangerous vocation at Consolidated and the highest demands are always during the times when the climatic conditions are at their worst. Our transmission lines are the life lines of the company and Slim saw to it that these were always in good and safe condition.

M.V.MOLSBERRY -- When Bill Thiele died, Molsberry relinquished his job as Chief Engineer and headed up the Power Companies. Molsberry was extremely talented and was always looking for new ways of doing things. It was under his watch that Biron, DuBay and St. Point were automated and became unattended stations. At Wisconsin River Division, he decided that a new modern adjustable blade hydro unit should be installed. The unit was installed and affectionately took on the name of the "Moose". Molsberry also became interested in the land development possibilities at Petenwell and Castle Rock and laid the ground work for some of the activities that have since taken place.

MAX O. ANDRAE -- Andrae began his career in the Central Engineering Department as a Civil Engineer. When Bill Thiele passed away he became involved in river flow coordination, dam maintenance and inspections, many left over lawsuits involving seepage claims at Petenwell & Castle Rock. When Molsberry retired, he headed up the Power Companies. Land Development at Petenwell and Castle Rock began to take place. He had to deal with re-licensing of the Hydro Projects via the Federal Government and along with this came an explosion of new rules and regulations to follow. A new Purchase Power contract, along with all of his legal and financial problems, had to be fashioned. Petenwell and Castle Rock were to be automated and new transmission lines had to be constructed. Andrae would be the first one to admit that none of these projects could have been accomplished without the expertise of those he chose to assist him. After 36 years, Andrae retired in January of 1988.

RALPH COLE -- When E. B. Redford died in 1942, Ralph Cole was elected to take his place as an officer for both the Paper Company and the Power Company. Ralph was a no-nonsense expediter and knew how to get things done and done right. He was a real asset to both G.W.Mead and Bill Thiele during the latter years of the Water Power expansion on the Wisconsin.

FRANK HUSTING -- When Ralph Cole passed away, Frank took over as an

officer of the Power Companies. By this time the company was into the regulatory maze era and Frank was a persistent believer in details which was so necessary at this time. Frank enjoyed this type of work and later also became an officer of Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company.

JACK RAPRAGER -- Jack's Father, Bert, was one of the pioneers in paper making in the Wisconsin and Fox Valley areas. Jack was Frank Husting's right hand man and when Andrae became the guy in charge, it was Raprager who made sure that the details did not fall through the cracks. Jack lived through the era of re-licensing, new power rate structures and brought with him a continuity of how to properly put the old ways and the new ways in proper perspective.

LEON VYTLACIL -- Leon worked in the accounting department for many years but always was interested in the Power Company activities. Leon would move in with the Power Company group and would lend a devotion to duty and details that was absolutely necessary during this changing era. It was Leon who led the Power Company into the age of computerized information. A new rate structure was fed into the computer which allowed changes to be made in a matter of a few minutes rather than weeks of re-computing the figures. Leon was not content only to work with financial figures and was always willing to get completely involved in any task we would ask of him. Land development, a new purchase power contract, adhering to DNR and FERC rules, deeds and deed files - Leon was always the one we would turn to for help.

HENRY GUMZ -- Henry came to the company in 1933. In 1936 he became an operator at Biron, in 1940 he was transferred to Wisconsin Rapids as substation operator. There he made his home for many years. Henry tested meters, relays, breakers etc., mostly with equipment that he had developed by himself. His expertise in this field was acknowledged by many of the large Wisconsin Utilities. For many years Hank held down this most important job by himself. During his era he knew the whole Consolidated electrical system better than any one else.

RALPH HURRISH -- Ralph transferred to the Power Company from the Corporate Planning Department. Later he became an officer of CWPCo. and WRPCo. One of his duties was following the never ending rule changes made by both the State and Federal Regulatory agencies. Ralph was also involved in the Power Purchase Contract with Wisconsin Public Service Corporation and later as an officer in the several Property Owner's Associations that were formed during the land development era at Petenwell and Castle Rock.

WILLARD RAVENSCROFT -- Before Willard came to Wisconsin River Power Company as an operator at Petenwell, he worked in the steam department at Badger Ordnance. When Ward Anderson moved to his new position at Wisconsin Rapids, Willard took his place as head of the working group at Petenwell and

Castle Rock. During Willard's tenure, land development was beginning to take shape at both of the flowages and old problems of debris, dike maintenance and underwater tree removal had to be taken care of. Along with that, began the era of Federal inspectors and the cleaning up of a lot of details left over from the past.

DONALD VAN ASTEN -- Don came into the Power Company as a helper under Henry Gumz. Henry retired in the late 1970,s. A completely new testing program was put in place about this time, which was to be done by the Power Company, under the guidance of Corporate Engineering. This was in addition to the regular duties of maintaining and installing electrical equipment for the Power Company. Don was put in charge of the newly formed Power Electric Shop and over the years several electricians were added. When Don retired, staffing of that crew was 7 electricians.