

ALWAYS ONWARD

Chapter Eight - 1950 - 1959

THE GOLDEN YEARS

During the post-war period, Barnum, as well as the rest of the nation, was once again living in an affluent society. For some, the decade of the '50's would be known as the "Golden Years."

Consumer spending skyrocketed with the increasing accessibility of products. Having come out from under rationing and limited production, citizens were investing more of their spending dollar in luxury items. Increased inflation jumped prices on all commodities from 14 to 15%.

A new spirit of youthful rebelliousness was taking hold. By the mid-50's, hoards of young people were idolizing James Dean who made famous the philosophy, "Live fast—die young and leave a good looking corpse, " which is exactly what Dean did in 1955.

Fear of Communistic activities in the U.S. had been escalated thanks to Senator James McCarthy's antiSoviet campaign, issuing charges of un-American activities on private citizens.

In a Looking Ahead column, the Herald made note of Communism's apparent undermining of the United States as a nation:

In this post-war period when guards have been dropped these propagonists and their dupes have sought to convince us that elsewhere the Socialist State is fulfilling its promises of "Full employment, " fair shares and life-time security. The actual facts shout down this siren-song. They nevertheless are trying to either lure our people away from a healthy confidence in the American way of life or stampede us into politically operated programs that would bankrupt our Nation and lay us wide open for a government based on the principal of force.

The ravages of war slowly faded as the village continued to progress. Harry Fralich assumed ownership of the Barber Shop when Mr. Bijold retired in 1950. Fralich's motto was, "Don't worry about our shaving you — the Doc's across the street. " Manton Thompson became the new owner and operator of the Thompson Motor Service and Pure Oil Gas Station that same year. 400 locals attended Thompson's Grand Opening. Robert Clough was appointed the Barnum agent for Standard Oil.

Promoting both business and community spirit, the Commercial Club and local merchants co-sponsored a Barnum Family Day. Approximately 700 visitors to the town were well entertained that day. Rudebeck Motor presented free movies, gave away ten gallons of gas to the family coming the greatest distance and offered free lunch to everyone. The Carlton Feed Company

offered 25 baby chicks per family, just for stepping into the store. A penny guessing game was held at the State Bank of Barnum. A glass jar of pennies was placed in the Bank's window; whoever guessed closest to the amount in the jar won a \$5.00 Savings Account. The Marshall-Wells Store offered a free gift to everyone. Mrs. George Ruby gave free flowers to all the ladies visiting the Red Owl. Goodell Variety had a "mystery man" roaming about town, giving away prizes to unsuspecting visitors.

A school re-organization plan had been proposed to local districts by the Legislature in the hope of reorganizing the many small districts into one larger district. For the plan to go into effect a majority of voters from both the present Barnum District and other rural districts would have to agree with the plan. Mr. Lundblad, who was Superintendent of the Barnum School System, became involved in the plan. "A group of people called Friends of the Rural Schools traveled a// over the state trying to help keep the small schools open. " Lundblad once commented, "They would go out in the rural areas and talk to people, getting them worked up more than they already were. "

At the first election the Barnum District voted 58 for and 18 against the plan. The rural districts voted 104 for and 136 against the proposal. That fall another re-organization plan committee meeting was held. Those in attendance voiced opposition to the plan as they believed that changes unfavorable to rural students were being planned. The group obviously did not have a change of heart for at the next election the plan lost 179 to 127.

By 1951 the plan had gained approval and the Barnum School District was reorganized. The Central, Munson and Sandy Lake schools joined Beehive, Watson and Park Lake schools which had already merged with Barnum. At the end of the consolidation process, the Barnum High School housed 284 students and the Elementary section 246.

On June 27, 1950 American Army and Naval forces were ordered to assist the South Korean army against invaders. General Douglas McArthur was appointed to command the U.N. forces. By 1951 the world was hovering close to WWII when Chinese troops entered the conflict. The U.S. administration took a firm stand and supported the U.N.'s decision not to attack the invaders on their home ground, a move McArthur promoted. The action averted a major war. In late 1951 General Dwight D. Eisenhower replaced McArthur as Commander of the U.S. and U.N. troops.

Mr. Floods, editor of the Herald, was called into active duty early in the conflict. He placed the business up for sale and informed villagers that, unless the establishment was either leased or sold prior to his departure, the Herald would be suspended. His departure message read:

THE BARNUM HERALD GOES TO WAR-AN EDITORIAL

For the second time in a decade the Barnum Herald and the civilian life of its editor are being suspended by a war emergency. Each time bidding farewell to loved ones becomes more difficult.

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It is no less difficult to say goodbye to our many friends in Barnum and leave behind us that what we saved and worked for.

Our first issue was a community project when many townspeople turned out to help launch our enterprise and wish us well. Ever since that night in October, 1948, hundreds of hours have been spent by many friends helping us when we needed it.

God willing we'll do our mite to help return the world to an even keel and lay aside our rifle and bayonet and take up again our pen.

Laurence Rudebeck was one of the many Barnum boys who was called to serve in the long drawn out, bloody conflict. He reported the emotional harassment, often times more painful than the actual combat, the Chinese inflicted upon American G.I.'s:

About every night the Chinese would send over a plane which the G. I. 's would call "Bed Check Charlie. " It would fly over camps about bed time, playing sad songs from home and over a loud speaker would say things like, "Go home, Yankees. Quit fighting this useless war, " that your wives and girlfriends were out with other fellows, or anything pertaining to females to try to get to the US. G. I. 's.

Dr. Richard Steiner assumed the dental practice which Dr. Frankel was forced to abandon when he was called into the armed service in 1950. As young men entered the service, job vacancies in Barnum were created and, unlike WWII, the work force was not depleted thus the openings were filled almost immediately.

Letters from tired, home and heart sick G.I.'s began to slowly filter through the fighting lines to home. Unlike other conflicts, the soldiers were not stationed in one area for lengthy periods of time. This, combined with the hostile Korea offered, made writing home difficult, as was noted by Gerald Little:

I haven't much time to write and the rain doesn't help us when we have no place to sleep. We are working on a new line. We sure broke our backs ripping bunkers and filling trenches before we could leave the line and now we start all over building some more. I will write again soon, but if I don't it's because it's just too hard to write around here.

While Barnum citizens were concerned with the Korean War's effects on the United States they were handed a new concern. The French were soliciting U.S. aide in maintaining their forces in Viet Nam. The political situation in that country was less than stable and the expressed opinion of Barnum residents expressed through letters to the Herald prior to its suspension were, "It would be fool hardy for the United States to make financial sacrifices to establish the French in Viet Nam. " By 1955 U.S. foreign aide was being pumped into Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos; a prelude to another conflict hovering on the horizon.

The Korean Conflict created a significant boost to prosperity at home, but by 1952 inflation had become a harsh reality. "it seems," one resident stated, "that every time we shop, prices have gone up again." Another citizen tied inflation to Communism and wrote to the Herald in the summer of 1952:

Inflation can be as destructive as defeat in war. Lenin, the Father of International Communism said, "in its full runaway stage, inflation creates panic and sometimes anarchy results; but in its first insidious stages it is not likely to generate alarm among people. " Are we then being eased into that system?

The Barnum Herald had gone into suspended animation at the end of 1950. On March 27, 1952, fourteen months later, arrangements were completed for the transfer of ownership to Wayne T. Evans of St. Paul. The entire center section of the Herald was given over to a "Welcome Back" message to the Herald signed by 31 Barnum businessmen, pledged the town's cooperation, goodwill and support to the new editor. "We have missed, " the greeting stated, "the spirit a home-town newspaper can instill in community events. "

Late in March, 1950, a severe snowstorm created a 17 hour power shortage in the village. Barnum was covered with five inches of heavy, wet snow. Streams swelled to a five foot-decade high. Near Ed Bell's farm on Highway 61, was covered by a foot of swirling, icy water. Carlton Avenue, between the Sherman Lord and William Felgen homes, was completely submerged. Mr. Lord offered free row boat transportation to his neighbors. Farmers in out laying areas, determined not to miss a cream day, were forced into transporting their milk cans to town via boat. The storm was a mere taste of a deluge the town would experience two years later.

In July of 1952 the most violent rain storm in the village's history hit with a vengeance. When the storm abated twenty-four hours later, 7.3 inches of rain had been received, resulting in the worst flood in the memory of older residents. Overnight the Moose Horn River raised from normal to flood stage; covering the park to a depth of four feet and backing up onto village streets. Private dwelling's basements were flooded, causing concern over the structures' stability. Joe Putzke's home was covered with water four inches deep on the floor. The Fred Theilings were forced to evacuate when flood waters inside their home raised to 1.8 inches. When a semi-going out of town on the Brown Road, created a miniature tidal wave the Donald Eller's basement flooded. The on-rushing water smashed the windows in the cellar, sending a torrent of water cascading into the lowest section of their home and filling it to the floor joists. Families

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watched as their neighbors' wood piles and cars floated by. Other vehicles were stalled in the streets. In other sections of town there was no proof that streets existed.

Roads were washed out or weakened by the force of the rushing water, making travel on them impossible. Scores of people were marooned in their homes. Sherman Lord once again became the main source of rescue and transported residents to safety. Highway 61, south to Moose Lake, closed when a section of road bed washed away. Train tracks were bent or totally submerged, forcing any train service to a grinding halt. Country roads literally disappeared. Barnum, for a short time, became the Venice of northern Minnesota.

The 1952 Flood. Right - looking West towards downtown. Left - looking West from the Bank corner, Don & Esther Eller's home, which was flooded at the end of the block.

The estimated damage to roads alone was given at between \$25,000 to \$35,000. Barnum's Volunteer Fire Department was called upon to assist in pumping out innumerable private citizens' basements.

In June of 1950 the old Barnum Methodist Church was dismantled to make way for a new structure. Parishioners met at various locations until the new structure was completed, much as their fore fathers had done awaiting completion of the first church. Swan Naslund built a scale model of the new church which was placed on display to enable the congregation to visualize what they were working toward. Hours of labor and pots of coffee were donated in the building of the new church. "Timber Bees," gatherings where men of the church would cut, saw and plane lumber for the building, were held. \$6,500 was borrowed to finish the structure. On the first Sunday of December, 1950, the first service was held in the new place of worship. There would be no smoking, dancing, card playing nor bingo within the church's walls.

Roy Harrington served as Barnum's full-time law enforcement officer during the fifties. The job often proved to be a thankless task, as Harrington discovered in 1950 when he was attacked by a man he had apprehended speeding down Main Street. Harrington suffered cuts, bruises and a broken wrist, much to the outrage of the townspeople. The culprit was sought out, placed under arrest, fined \$100 and sentenced to four months in jail. The villagers both liked and respected Harrington and did not take lightly to his abuse. The Officer did; however, receive good humored teasing by the younger people in the village. In the cold months, Harrington was known to "bundle up." A member of the younger set would intentionally loiter or commit some other minor offense, merely to watch the Constable search out his badge among his volumes of clothing.

1952 was known as the year of flying saucers dotting the night skies. Rocky Marciano became the new heavyweight boxing champ. Across the nation, juvenile crime and delinquency was rapidly becoming a problem. When outraged parents began casting about for the root of their teenagers' problems the "monotonous primitive beat" of Rock and Roll came under attack. Both Rock and Roll and the new dance that accompanied it known as Jitterbug came under the scrutiny of the town. The P.T.A. voiced its concern over school-sponsored dances, and dancing at any social function. The group believed that immoral behavior was a direct result of dancing. One villager wrote to the Herald:

It is not the question of the dance as an exercise, but from the moral side, the way it leads many souls to destruction. An ex-dancing master, T.A. Faulkner, gives his deliberate conviction that, "two-thirds of the girls who are ruined fall through the influence of dancing." A matron of a home for fallen women in California some years ago declares that, "seven-tenths of the girls received here have fallen thru dancing and its influence.

To divert the youth's attention away from the new form of dancing the villagers sought out other means of entertainment.

During 1950 The Top Notes, Leland Ballou and Glen Thompson, were heard weekly on WKLK Radio. Thure Nelson, owner and operator of the Carlton County Feed Company, sponsored the

boys' appearance. Later, Ballou joined forces with two Moose Lake men, Howie Larson and Louie Dahlmeier, and formed a musical trio which was also heard weekly on WKLK.

The old Methodist Church was dismantled in 1950. The original structure was constructed In the late 1800's.

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The singers weren't the only radio personalities in Barnum. Mrs. Naamen Hall and Mrs. Earl W. Carlson were interviewed by the County Home Agent, Miss Mary Bistsianes, on WKLK's show Leaders of Extension Home Groups.

Traveling actors and musicians continued to provide entertainment at the Village Hall. One of the more popular groups to be seen on the Hall's stage was Ollie 1. Skratthult and His Scandinavian Show. The performance was billed in the Herald, "Ollie made the great song Nikolina famous and there are thousands of Victor Records still played a// over the U.S.A. " The Hall was kept busy with bingo games, roller skating and "old fashioned" dances. The 1953 Fireman's Ball proved to be a gala event with the Benny Larson Trio providing the music, which was a far cry from Rock and Roll. It was noted in the Herald that, "The crowd wasn't the Sit Around the Sides Kind, it was the Let's Dance Every Dance Kind. "

Home entertainment continued to be centered around the radio in the early '50's. Families tuned into Break The Bank, The Edge of Night, Gunsmoke and Inner Sanctum along with keeping up on world breaking news with Edward G. Marrow.

Large community events proved to be a favorite means of relaxation and a way to promote a feeling of unification among villagers. A Swedish Mid-Summer Day's Picnic held in the Village Park was one such gathering. Those attending furnished picnic lunches, cups and eating utensils while the Commercial Club provided coffee, ice cream and pop. Between 500-600 enjoyed the festivities of games, speeches and, "other unusual entertainment." R.S. Goodell served as Master of Ceremonies that day and Arne Rundgren was featured as the "Swedish Comedian."

The canine members of the community were not forgotten by citizens, and periodically one of the animals would be noted in the Herald. Those recognized in the paper were Butch, who faithfully protected Mrs. Blaha's grocery; Mittens, the capable escort of Dr. and Mrs. Siemer; Tippy and Dutchess, who resided at Goodell's Variety and Eddie Stevens' companion Axehandle Pete.

Local organizations abounded in the '50's. Among them were the Girl Scouts, Friendly Club, Garden/ Flower Club, the Legion and Auxiliary, The Firebells, Commercial Club and both the Modern and Jr. Woodsmen. The Boy Scout Troop Number 169, which had been disbanded for some time, was reorganized in 1952 under the sponsorship of the P.T.A. The Commercial Club's top priority appeared to be instilling pride in the town of its citizens. In December of 1952 the Club, aided by local merchants, decorated the trees in the Village Park for the upcoming holiday season. The skating rink's warming house was improved with the installation of a new stove, floor and door at the same time.

The County Fair remained a high point in the village's fall season. The 1952 Fair featured Rooley and Looley, comedian and ventriloquist; the Chippewa Valley Girls Choir and Art LaFleur, Human Top and Aerial Artist. At that time general admission to the Grand Stand was 60 cents, children under 12 were admitted free. There were "8 BIG rides on the modern midway." One of the more entertaining games of skill that year was the "strong Man's Contest" where a young man could show off his amazing strength. The Herald noted:

Yes, the Strong Man Contest. Where you swing a heavy mallet, and try to ring the bell up on the top of a slide. Bob Dahlin, a well-developed young man, was attempting to show the

younger boys that he could accomplish the feat easily, so he put all he had into the first blow, evidently using every muscle. At the instant he struck, he heard a loud rip and felt ventilated on the part of the anatomy most useful to a truck driver. He beat a hasty retreat.

The 1952 Presidential elections created a stir in all quarters of the town. Dwight D. Eisenhower had returned from Korea and ran on the Republican Ticket, opposing Stevenson. As was usual, villagers chose sides and promoted their favorite through rallies and letters to the Herald's editor. A new group's interest was sparked during the '52 campaign and Barnum High School students became passionately involved in the Presidential race. Campaign rallies were organized and eye-catching signs crying, "I LIKE IKE, " or "VOTE FOR STEVENSON" adorned the blackboards, fluttered on classroom doors or were plastered on the school's walls. In the largest turnout of voters in the history of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower was swept into the Presidency of the United States. The Republican party claimed a majority of Minnesota State Offices. The support thrown behind Eisenhower in Barnum was the first time since 1926 that the town had overwhelmingly gone Republican.

Following the elections, Barnum citizens waited anxiously for the Korean Conflict to draw to a close. Weekly, the list of Barnum men deployed to the remote country grew. The community's concern for the welfare of "their boys" grew along with the lists. When Leland Ballou, who had been forced to abandon his budding career as a musician and enter Uncle Sam's employment, was seen on a television broadcast made in Korea, his family and friends breathed a sigh of relief. On July 17, 1953, the Korean Conflict ended and the split country entered into an uneasy peace agreement.

The business of farming was entering a new era and was apparent to all in the Barnum area. An editorial written by Harold S. Olson to the Herald aptly described the agricultural community's concerns during the '50's:

Why is it only a few of the boys raised on farms today want to stay home and milk cows after they graduate from High School? Many have only a short time before they are drafted and many are lured away by the high wages of industry. Then, many are disgusted because the milk checks are too small for the simple reason that the cows on the farm are not worth milking. The conditions under which farmers try to make a living are often repelling. It's only human nature that all of us would want to shiney new tractor to work with and a nice, beautiful car in the garage; but farmers should first get acquainted with a good herd of cows.

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There were some Barnum farmers who remained "acquainted" with their cattle. In 1950 Carl Hanson made a State Champion Record with one of his registered Guernsey cows. That year the Minnesota Guernsey Breeders Association honored H.C. Hanson for his work with the Guernsey breed over the years. In 1950, H.C. Hanson was honored by Skelly Oil Company via Chicago Radio Station. Nationwide, Mr. Hanson's praises were sung and he was referred to as, "The Farmer-Banker of the United States. "

Levi Larson owned the top herd in the Carlton County Cow Testing Association in 1950. Barnum Artificial Breeders members Harry Finifrock, Ed Simpson, Bill Joskari and Harvey Coughlin were interviewed on WKLK Radio's Farm and Home Parade that same year.

Barnum Butter continued to gain wide-spread popularity. In 1950 Hanson received an order for three drums of butter from Sacramento, California. When informed of the costs involved in transporting the merchandise that far the purchasers informed Hanson that the outrageous transportation price was no problem, "That's O. K., " the letter said, "we're a bunch of crazy Swedes who want to taste some good butter for a change. "

In 1950 the Carlton County Guernsey Breeders Association held a consignment sale at the Fairgrounds with over 300 perspective buyers in attendance. An average of \$338 was paid for the stock with the top bid, \$800, going for H.C. Hanson's Clover Glen Prediction.

Disaster threatened farmers in 1952 when fifty-two herd of cattle in Carlton County were found to be infected with Bongs Disease. The disease threatened farmers with possible loss of their State Accredited Status. The Livestock Sanitary Board came to the farmers' assistance and ran combination testing for Bongs Disease and T.B. That testing helped rectify the situation and the herds were once again Accredited.

The change in the agricultural community was becoming increasingly more apparent. In 1952 Andersons sold the Maplewood Poultry Hatchery to Herman Christenson. Christenson maintained the hatchery for four years and then, in 1956, turned the business over to Mr. and Mrs. Lenord Arduser and Lenord's brother Charles. At that time Maplewood was the only large poultry business left in the Barnum village. The Hatchery no longer raised pullets for sale. The old incubators remained intact, but the high cost of their use coupled with the increasing cost of feed, made raising chicks impractical. Six poultry houses, holding 10,000 White Leghorns each, remained in operation. That was a drastic reduction from the time when Maplewood's chicken coops covered an area from the grounds to one mile south of town. Even though the number of hens raised had been greatly reduced, three full-time and two part-time employees were required to work at washing, canceling and casing the eggs six days a week. Maplewood eggs were shipped to the Anderson Egg Company in Moose Lake, the Anderson Dairy in Mahtowa and various locations in the Twin Cities. Frequently, chickens that were a year old were sold to the Campbell Soup Company.

In July of 1953 H.C. Hanson's famous Clover Glenn Guernsey herd of registered cattle were dispersed with buyers from Iowa, Montana, Wisconsin, Nebraska and various sections of Minnesota bidding on the choice animals during an auction held at Hanson's farm. A crowd estimated at better than 500 persons attended the sale, paying top prices for the fabled animals. The highest bid for a single animal was \$1,050 for a registered bull, the next highest was on Clover Glen Whitey. \$800 was paid for the five-year old cow.

Farmers were facing a problem of decreased profit. Between 1948 and 1956 the prices on, farm commodities had dropped 33% due to enormous surpluses in basic staples. The federal government became involved in the farmers' dilemma and, in 1958, farmers were anxiously awaiting Washington D.C.'s decision on surplus supplies. If Congress chose to remove the surplus milk, farmers would see an increase in their profits while none of the increase would be passed on to consumers. If the government opted not to remove the surplus, farming communities would see cuts in their profits while the surplus would continue to increase. The agricultural community could illafford to have political officials decide not to remove the surplus as they were already receiving only 4.1% of the nation's net income.

In 1958 the Carlton County Welfare Board received the go-ahead to distribute surplus cheese, dried milk, butter, rice and corn meal to low income families. That move aided the families

as well as resolved the problem of surplus dairy products for farmers. By 1959 the milk surplus had dramatically declined and the Board removed cheese and butter from the distribution list. A few months later the entire program was dropped.

The Barnum business district was in a state of flux as well as the agricultural district. In the fall of 1953 Bob

The starting gates at the Carlton County Fair were built by Tiny Oswell in 1958.

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Holsworth, who had been employed at the Herald since May of that year, assumed management of the paper. Evans moved on and bid goodbye to Barnum in an editorial:

Publishing the Herald has been an enlightening experience for both my wife and me. I honestly believe that no other newspaper in the state enjoys the full-hearted support and corporation that is given the Herald by its local people.

In 1952 Dr. W.A. Stadler, Optometrist, opened his practice in Barnum. That same year Thure Nelson sold his interest in the Carlton County Feed Mill to Kenneth Brown and the establishment became known as Brown's Feed.

Rudebeck's Motor Company remodeled the building's interior in December of 1952. The improvements were necessary to accommodate the business' growing inventory and to enlarge the showroom. The garage was filling orders for cars to such exotic areas as Guatemala, South America and Syria. Melvin Rudebeck arranged a special viewing of the 1953 Chevrolet passenger cars and trucks which boasted "the most far reaching improvements in the history of Chevrolet," and offered free coffee and doughnuts to all who stopped in to view, and dream about, the gleaming new vehicles. Eventually, the business grew to such purportation that a new quanset building was erected to use as a warehouse.

Thure Nelson and Robert Clough became partners in a new business venture, the C. and N. Oil Company, in 1953. A new service station was erected on the northern edge of town on Highway 61. In 1955 Nelson bought out Clough's interests and christened the business Nelco Gas and Fuel, Inc. Nelson's youngest son, Richard, became employed by his father in 1954. Another son, Harold, joined the family business in 1959.

The Barnum Concrete and Block Company's success and reputation continued growing during the '50's. Blocks were being turned out at a rate of 900 a day; the production was sold out for weeks in advance.

The Rubys purchased a vacated building and moved the Red Owl onto its site in 1956. The couple employed several town's people, among them Ruth Dahlberg, Esther Hammitt, Cora Ballou, Lu Johnson and Marilyn Bill. The Red Owl sponsored a "Win A Philco Freezer" contest that year. Ten 12-cubic foot freezers and five 8-cubic foot freezers were given away to fifteen fortunate Barnumites.

Felgen's began giving away the famous "Green Stamps" with any purchase which families eagerly saved. Hours would be invested licking and pasting the sticky stamps into coupon redemption books. Equally as many hours were spent studying the coupon catalogue which held the tantalizing promise of "hundreds of valuable prizes."

Misunderstandings in the business world were not uncommon. Clements Hanson reported that a "couple of fellows" stopped by the creamery and requested one dozen hard boiled eggs. When informed that the creamery did not sell eggs in that manner the men became very "put out" and drove off in a huff. In 1952 a minor labor dispute arose in the establishment. The disagreement involved a technicality in a contract entered into between the Creamery and Local 32 of the Milk Drivers and Dairy Employees Union. The dispute was settled without a long term interruption in the business. The egg department of the creamery soon followed suit and demanded that the employees receive union wage scale. Shortly after the labor disagreements, Clements sold the business to a Mr. Hall from Foley, Minnesota. A year later Mr. Hall accidentally shot himself while hunting. With no one available to assume management of the egg business, the operation once again fell into Clements' hands. In 1954 H.C. Hanson sold the creamery to Old Homes Creameries of Minneapolis and Bill Atkins served as the creamery's manager.

In 1958 John and Louise Staxrude fell victim to "The Great Hotel Robbery" which came to be known about town as, "Who Done Took The Blankets?" The Staxrudes felt no kindness toward the unknown parties who entered their hotel and made off with several blankets and other small items. John made a "blanket" statement to the press regarding the robbery, "They sure pulled the wool over our eyes. "

The Staxrude's Barnum Hotel may not have been the largest or most elegant quarters in the area, but well known people stopped there just the same. One such guest was "Johnny, the Midget of Call for Phillip Morris fame. "

Serving as Postmaster could prove to be a tedious job, unless one was gifted with a sense of humor. Eddie Stevens, Barnum's Postmaster, apparently had that quality, plus a streak of the jokester, hidden in his nature. The Herald's editor made note of this:

Eddie Stevens is really on the ball when it comes to Postmastering. A newspaper printed in Japanese came to the Post Office last week and Eddie promptly put it in Bill Landin's mailbox. He claims it's addressed to Bill, and Bill, not being able to read the language, can hardly dispute him.

Businesses crowded Barnum's Main Street during the '50's. Jeffers' Tavern and Pool Hall, which barely escaped burning in 1950, was located just south of town. Goodell Variety continued to do a thriving business. Ma's Coffee Shop was "A Friendly Place To Eat. " Ruby's Red Owl, the Co-op and Blaha's Quality Meats and Groceries kept the villagers well supplied with the staples. The Marshall-Wells store offered everything from nuts and bolts to washing machines and radios.

In 1953 the Bank celebrated its 50th Anniversary, a landmark victory considering the challenges it had overcome and rise

above. In 1954 the Bank underwent renovation. An addition was constructed with rooms for the Post Office and a doctor's office on the ground floor and room for a dental clinic and law office on the upper level. Dr. Munson moved his practice

into
the new doctor's quarters and Dr. Kolosky utilized the dental clinic above.

Andy Anderson opened an automobile over-hauling and machine shop in town in 1954. The M.P.&L. opened a larger district office in the Felgen Building that same year.

During the fifties experienced workers, as store clerks and gas station attendants, were earning \$200 to \$300 monthly.

Burglaries plagued the town as the crimes had for decades. In 1950 thieves walked off with 100 feet of 3/4 inch hose,

Inside the State Bank of Barnum in the late 1950's.

used for fighting grass fires, from the Volunteer Fire Department. On another occasion Felgen's Garage was broken into by what appeared to be adolescents. After the thieves ransacked every drawer in the establishment, only \$10 was taken. Vandalism was also on the rise. On a Friday night in the spring of 1952 fifteen street lights were shot out by a group of local boys welding B.B. guns. By 1958 the juvenile offenses had become almost unmanageable.

In the fall of that year fifteen Barnum and Mahtowa youths were held by the Sheriff's Department on charges of breaking and entering. Their arrest- cleared up a mysterious plague of burglaries. The youths confessed to 44 separate escapades of breaking into rural homes, churches, schools and railroad carhouses within a six-month time span. The amount of cash the young thieves acquired ranged from 12 cents to \$50 per episode.

A plan to widen Highway 61 through the village was presented to the Village Council in 1953. The improved highway would be widened to 44 feet from curb to curb. Shortly after construction began, a wage dispute arose causing work on the project to come to a grinding halt. The issue in question was whether the job was classified as being in a "metropolitan" area or a "rural" area. The wage scale for a metro area was 20 cents an hour higher than for a rural area. The workmen who had stated they would resume work when the situation was "cleaned up" did so after the project was classified "rural."

In view of the highway expansion and resurfacing, the Commercial Club brought its recommendation that the village purchase new street lights to the Council. The old lights, which had been removed during construction, would have proven insufficient in reflecting light off the new, deep black surface of the highway. New lights were installed upon the project's completion.

The school, like the Creamery and highway construction, was put under siege with its own strike. In early 1952 a disagreement arose between the Board of Education and the school's custodians. While the Board offered one salary, the custodians were bargaining for higher wages. In May, the issue was tabled until June. With that decision, the custodians left their keys on Superintendent Lunblad's desk and went home to "wait for further developments." The Board, concluding that the employees' action was contrary to a state ordinance forbidding strike by public employees, declared vacancies to exist for those positions. Elmer Rusher, a former custodian, was contacted and hired 'to assume the Head Janitor position. The striking custodians were insistent that they had not received dismissal notices and publicly called the Board's action illegal. It made little

difference, custodian wages remained as the Board had decreed.

On Monday, March 24, 1952, ground was broken to start construction of a new addition to the school. The addition, which housed an Industrial Arts Department, was completed by mid-summer at a cost of \$45,000. A driver's Education Program was initiated that same year. Rudebeck Motor Company furnished, free of charge, a new car with dual controls to help further the students' education in safe driving practices.

In 1953 Elementary School teachers who held a two-year diploma, received a substantial raise of \$150 a year; the two-year High School instructors received a \$200 a year raise.

Barnum's athletics continued to gain ground in the world of sports and other school activities. In 1953 a packed gym watched the Bomber's Basketball team down Sandstone 48 to 35 and lay claim to the Sub-District Championship. The school's various clubs were growing and entering various state championships.

Students were frequently entertained with lyceum programs throughout the school year. One of the most popular presented was featured Lew Hershey, noted clown who worked with the Barnum and Bailey Circus. The P.T.A. also offered up various forms of entertainment. At one Family Fun Night, an audience of 200 was entertained with humorous readiness by Patsy Olson, Ronnie Jacobs and Fayme Sarvela. 34 students demonstrated various traditional Folk Dances and members of the P.T.A. sponsored a Gay Ninties Review. In October of 1953 several hundred Barnum area residents crowded into the school for a P.T.A. sponsored Halloween Carnival.

New fads were rapidly making their way into the village's lifestyle. Girls, who were very aware of current fashions, were sporting a "gadget" in place of a hat known as a "skitter." The Herald's editor freely expressed his opinion on the new style:

Any man's wool sock would make four of the things, but the gals are not satisfied unless they pay two to five bucks for one. All you have to do to make your fortune is to think up some fad, the teenagers will go for it and you're on easy street.

Davey Crockett, thanks to the Walt Disney film, was revived as a hero for the younger set. Barnum school boys attended to their studies with a coon skin cap set firmly on their heads. The older students were donning argyle sweaters, Eisenhower jackets, poodle skirts, Frank Sinatra (a new musical star known as a "crooner") jackets, loafers, and brim felt hats. The young spent hours combing and greasing their hair into ducktails or chopping their locks into crew cuts, while the girls snipped their tresses into pageboys.

The Hula-Hoop craze swept through the quiet village during the mid-50's. Everywhere boys and girls of all could be found attempting to spin a circle of plastic around their waists, necks, arms or legs. The Herald commented:

Have you tried the Hula-Hoop yet? Be honest now. I can't make it work either. And you feel so darn silly trying. A gal I know bought one and then took off on her vacation. She swore

H.C. Hanson before retiring from the Bank.

Fads and television were entertaining, but fishing still remained the popular past-time. Here Esther Eller admires the catch of the day.

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she'd master the darn thing before she came back.

A fad that would take hold in the community and not fade into oblivion was television. The impact on the villagers was great, as Jack Rudebeck could attest to. On one of his business trips to the Cities, Jack spied one of the enticing new televisions in a store window and reported to his family that, "It's the greatest thing I ever saw—it's a TV and I'm going to have one. " He proceeded to invest in one of the pieces of "talking furniture" and secured a mammoth antenna atop his home. As there were no Duluth stations at the time and receiving television broadcasts from St. Paul was a tricky business, thus the cumbersome antenna. Melba Stevens, Jack's daughter, reflected that her father would phone Eddie and her to let them know when a show was coming in clear enough to view. "By the time we could get there the screen was usually full of snow - you never knew if you'd seen a whole show. "

Television antennas began blooming atop homes across the village. Soap operas, one of the carry-overs from radio, immediately became popular with the ladies of the home. Search For Tomorrow and Love of Life appeared on screen in 1951 followed by the Guiding Light in 1952.

World and National news was brought into villagers' homes on a nightly basis. John Cameron Swayze, anchorman for the Camel News Caravan, greeted the audience on a personal note, "Ladies and Gentlemen, and a good evening to you. " By 1956 Chet Huntley and David Brinkley were teamed up by NBC to co-anchor the network's nightly news broadcasts. "Good Night, Chet, " "Good Night, David - and Good Night from NBC News, " became a familiar sound in Barnum homes.

Game shows, which had been popular on radio, became number one sellers on television. Beat The Clock, What's My Line, To Tell The Truth, and the \$64,000 Question had faithful viewers in the village. In 1959 the quiz-game show racket was blown wide open. The shows ran on the premise that the audience desired to see common people win and so the show's producers proceeded to "set up" the program to give the audience its wish. Charles VanDoren answered, before a Congressional Committee, that he had been "fed" answers on one quiz show in order to defeat reigning champ Herbert Stemple who was unpopular with viewers.

Live drama was popular with the early television viewers. Studio One, Kraft Television Theatre, The PhilcoGoodyear Playhouse and Warner Brother's Presents all ran high quality, live presentations. Toward the later '50's live television was being edged out by pre-filmed shows. The birth of the television series was seen with 77 Sunset Strip.

The popular shows in Barnum ranged from musicals to "cops and robbers." Your Hit Parade, another radio carryover, died in 1958 and was replaced by Arthur Murray's Party.

Variety shows made their way into Barnum homes to the delight of the local viewers. "Uncle Milty" was perhaps the most popular host on any of those shows. While hosting The Texaco Star Theater, Berle held to the burlesque style (pie in the face and banana peel tumbles) and outra-

geous costumes to captivate his audiences. Ted Mack's Amateur Hour could be seen one hour before Ed Sullivan's Toast Of The Town. Barnum residents, basically were very conservative at heart, were shocked when the much trusted Sullivan featured Elvis Presley giving his rendition of "Hound Dog" and swivel hips.

Sit Coms reflected the importance that Barnumites placed on family life. In 1951 Lucille Ball won the hearts of viewers in her role as the scatter-brained wife of Desi Arnez in I Love Lucy. Other family-oriented comedies followed rapidly. Jackie Gleason and Art Carney immortalized The Honeymooners. The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show delighted Barnumites of all ages, "Say Good Night Gracie. " Leave It To Beaver, The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet, Father Knows Best, and Make Room For Daddy were shows the baby-boomer families could identify with.

Gunsmoke made its cameo appearance on television in 1955. Police shows were gaining a wide audience during the late '50's. Highway Patrol premiered in 1956 and Dragnet, "Just the facts, Warn," still later. In 1959 The Untouchables were termed the most violent program in television's history.

The first warnings about the impact of violent programs on children came in 1950. To counter balance the negative effects, children's shows flooded the airways. Howdy Doody and his screaming Peanut Gallery; Kukla, Fran and Ollie; Captain Kangaroo, Heckle and Jeckle, Mighty Mouse and Space Patrol entertained youngsters by the hour.

Goodell Variety, "The Television Headquarters," offered for sale the, "Setchell Carlson Unit-ized Television, engineered with the greatest advances in Television history-sets as low as \$299," and "The Emerson—a radio, record player and television combined. The largest picture in the most compact 6-way combination. Big image perfection on a 17 inch screen. Automatic, 3-speed record changer. Supersensitive radio and a built-in electric clock. ALL for \$369.95."

Although Barnum citizens were enjoying the offerings of television, they did not ignore other concerns. They closely followed the progress of the fight against polio. When, in 1953, the Minnesota Department of Health announced that gamma globulin was in use for polio protection and a very limited supply was available in the state, villagers felt a surge

The Barnum Beauty Shop was opened In 1959 by Dorothy VanDerWerff.

The Groce Lumber Company, on the left, did a brisk business in the 1950's. Dean Groce Is pictured in the foreground.

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of hope. The incidents of polio in the state had drastically increased and were running 131% ahead of those reported in 1952. By 1956 the Salk polio vaccine was on the open market and vaccination programs were underway in the school system.

By 1954, Frank Saunders purchased the Barnum Herald from Mr. Evans who had

retained ownership of the publication. Prior to the change, Robert Halsworth, Managing Editor, left for Clarksfield, Minnesota. Between January of 1953 and September of 1954 the village was once again without printed news. Saunders ran the publication between September 1954 up until late 1957 or early 1958. At that time he closed up the Herald and left town, taking with him all editions of the paper he retained copyright on. The establishment reverted back to Mr. Evans; but four years of Barnum's history had gone with Mr. Saunders. While some of the town's story during that time span is remembered by villagers, a great portion of those years remains obscure. In 1959 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Perry of Loyal, Wisconsin, assumed the positions of Editor and Publisher of the Herald.

The decade drew to a dramatic close. On January 31, 1958, the first U.S. satellite was launched at 10:48 p.m. from Cape Canaveral, Florida. The Space Age was spurred onward, and upward, by the increasing threat of the Cold War. In March of that year a serious recession hit the country; by that fall the economic situation had stabilized. In 1957 a new minority leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, was coming into his own.

In 1959 the Barnum Development Corporation, consisting of twelve Barnum businessmen, enticed a manufacturer into establishing a factory in the village. The owners, who were considering constructing a sewing factory in the village, were concerned about the ready availability of labor. At that time unemployment in the village was at a low ebb, and a labor shortage did indeed exist. After studying all possibilities, the corporation decided to locate elsewhere.

Other businesses were being established in town, bringing their own work force with them. Ken and Cobs Blacksmith Shop opened; at the same time Dorothy VanDerWerff opened the Barnum Beauty Shop. Earl Shatner from Palisade purchased Ed Stevens' Trucking Company.

Already established merchants enticed consumers in unusual ways. Hans Solheim developed one such approach by placing a, "flock of dollar bills in his window with a sign advertising them for sale at 95 cents each. He never sold a one; not even an inquiry was made, proving what skeptics we all are. "

During 1959 Nelco Gas and Fuel offered Nelco Gas at 29.5 cents a gallon. At the Farmers' Co-op, eight 15 oz. cans of pork and beans sold for 45 cents. Jim's Inn, formerly Ruby's, was doing a brisk business. Open seven days a week, Jim offered up, "Short orders, refreshments, pool and music. " The Felgen Garage, long owned by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Felgen, was sold to Jim Henniger. Later, the garage, which was located by the Barnum Herald, was again sold and became Billman's Coffee Shop. Shortly after, the establishment again changed hands and became the Duesler Cafe, Home of The 5 Cent Cup of Coffee.

Telephone service continued to change and improve in the village. Northwestern Bell began a pre-study for tollfree service between Barnum and Moose Lake. The 631 Barnum consumers would be paying a slightly higher rate for the extended service; however, villagers believed the enhanced service would out weigh the cost increase. In the '50's long distance rates for a three minute station to station call to Duluth was 40 cents, to Minneapolis 65 cents and to New York \$1.25.

Early in 1959 C.C. Hanson resigned his position as Bank Vice-President in order to devote full-time management to the Barnum Realty Company. W.C. Newman, who had been employed as Bank Manager in 1937, was appointed as new Vice-President.

In July, 1959, a deal was consummated in Barnum where H.C. Hanson and the Hanson

Investment Co. disposed of their interests in the State Bank of Barnum to W.C. Newman and Ed Mann!. Mr. Newman was appointed President by the Board of Directors and Mr. Manni Vice-President and cashier.

Manni had started his employment at the Bank in October of 1955 as a Teller and Insurance Salesman. Initially, Manni was reluctant to take on the job as he had no prior banking experience; but with the encouragement of Dr. Seimer, Ed Barstow and H.C. Hanson, he was "sold on the idea. "

The Board went on to approve a remodeling plan and by late 1959 the project was completed and an Open House held. 1,000 patrons were in attendance to inspect the updated facility. The Bank's floor space was nearly doubled, the bookkeeping system revamped. Virtually everything but the Bank's policy was changed. President Newman stated, "This Bank was established to serve the farmers in this area and that will continue to be its main concern. However; as conditions change, the bank will change with them so we may be of the utmost service to people in our area. " In 1903, when the Bank was established, assets were \$12,000. In 1959 that figure had grown to \$1,705,947.

In 1959 a new athletic field was constructed by the school building. That year Jesse Skellenger, Principal of the Barnum High School since 1947, resigned to accept a principalship at Grand Meadow. Marvin J. Wier of Okobena secured the position. Barnum's Vocational Agriculture Department was gaining widespread fame. In 1958 a group of Korean educators, accompanied by Dr. C.W. Wood of U.M.D., visited the school to study the specialized program. Testing for T.B. and a Diphtheria/Tetanus/Small Pox Immunization Program held at the High School in '59 made Herald headlines:

The Maplewood Hatchery was purchased by the Ardusers in the 1950's. In this 1959 photo are pictured Joan and Jerry DeRungs, Mike Rudebeck and Dusty Arduser.

WATCH OUT KIDS — THE NEEDLE IS COMING

In 1958 the Fair Board was handed a difficult problem; the sale of beer on Fairgrounds. On one hand, the sale of the

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frothy brew would generate extra income; on the other hand the moral issue of drinking may create unforeseen problems. An open meeting was held and a vote taken to resolve the problem. With an overwhelming number voting against the plan, 104 to 34, beer was banned on the Fairgrounds.

That year the Fair's featured event was a mock battle staged by the U.S. Marines, "Don't miss this colorful event with Marines charging a machine gun nest and blowing it up with live explosives and using flame throwers. "

Since the devastating use of nuclear weapons during World War II, and with the Cold

War threatening to heat up, one of the citizens' major concerns was rapidly becoming nuclear safety. During the 1959 County Fair an atomic energy display, on loan by the federal government, was shown. The Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies had originated the display, "A Summary of Atomic Energy, " in the hopes of acquainting the public with nuclear possibilities in their everyday life.

For the skeptics, the Barnum School system offered a course entitled, "Survival In The Nuclear Age. " The series of lectures dealt with the nature, capabilities and ambitions of the Communist threat; the facts about the effects of the nuclear weapons; principals of defense and protective measures and personal survival actions. Shortly after the course ended, the Village Council initiated Civil Defense Classes in order to prepare the villagers for emergencies created by a nuclear disaster.

The community's questions over the need of fallout shelters were answered in a booklet issued by the Office of Civil Defense Mobilization. The O.C.D.M.'s Director, Leo A. Hoegh, was quoted in the Herald:

Everyone, even those far from a likely target, would need shelter from fallout in the event of an enemy attack. 1

The offered booklet, The Family Fallout Shelter, described five basic Fallout Shelters ranging in price from \$150 to \$1,500 and included plans for a "Do It Yourself Fallout Shelter. "

The Lake Theater was the closest source of movie entertainment during the '50's. Barnum residents willingly traveled to Moose Lake to see The Greatest Show on Earth, High Noon and Come Back Little Sheba. Teens crowded into the theater when the Lake featured The Fly billed as:

Since terror like no human has experienced reaches its horror peak in The Fly it is necessary that NO ONE BE ADMITTED ALONE unless he signs a waiver in our lobby.

The warning should have perhaps been issued for the 1960's as well.

The concerns of nuclear warfare, bomb shelters and communistic influence did not dampen the Barnum youngsters' care-free days, as obvious by Gene and Steven Eller and their enjoyment of a clear summer day.