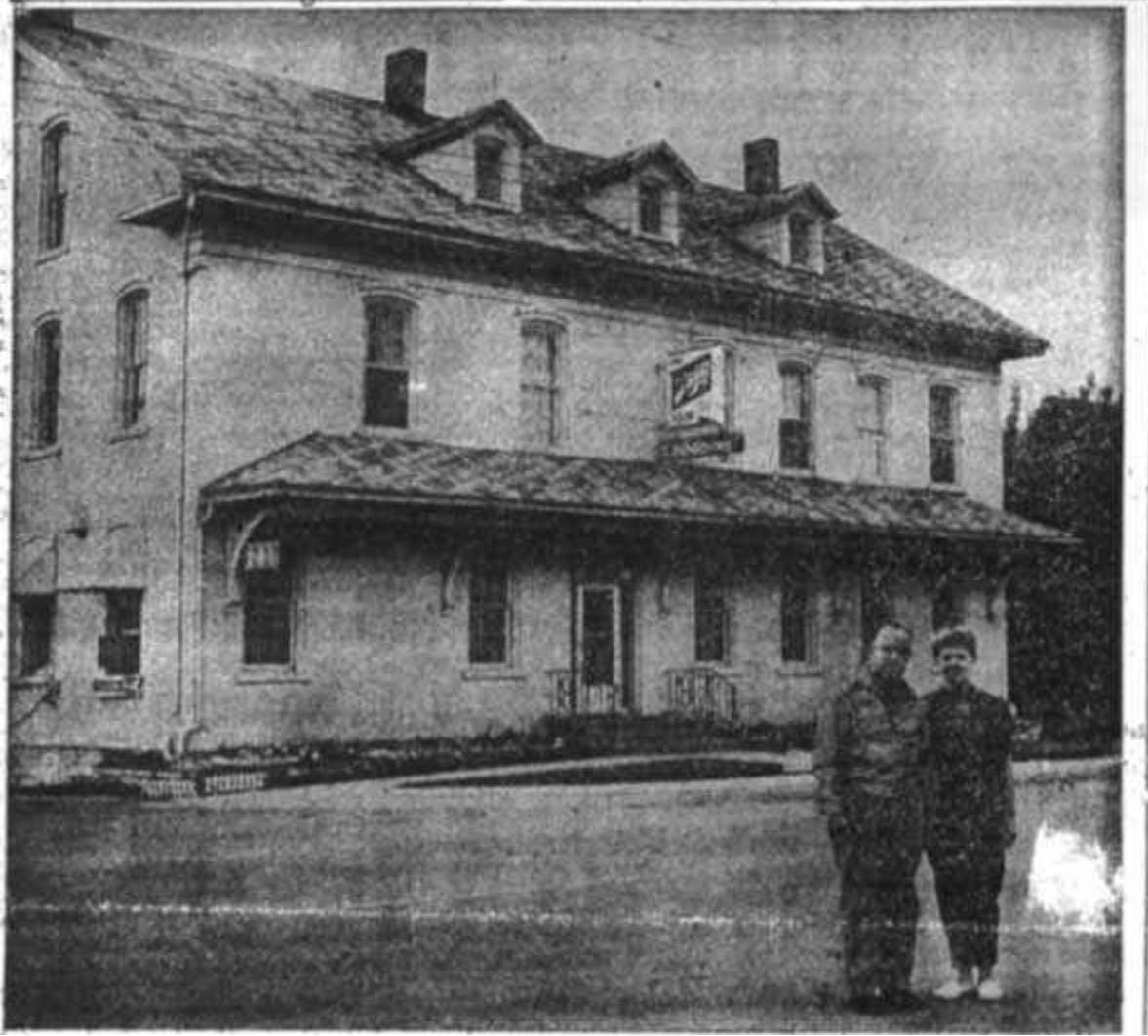


September 30, 1959



PIPE INN STILL SOLID AFTER 113 YEARS—Estimated to be more than 113 years old and still in good condition is this historic old inn and hotel at pipe village, now known as Club harbor. The building once again was on an old plank road from Fond du Lac to Green bay. Present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Brown, are pictured in the foreground.

Commonwealth Reporter Photo

Historic Inn At Pipe Village Once On Popular Plank Road

STEEPED in the same historic lore which has made the Wade House a tourist attraction but just beginning to achieve recognition as a landmark in Wisconsin's colorful past is Tommy and Evelyn Brown's Club Harbor building at Pipe village in the Town of Calumet. The big, three-story structure was used as a hotel in 1846 which makes it well over 100 years old. The owner of the building at that time was Henry Fuhrmann, a German immigrant, also believed to have been its builder. The structure then was known as H. Fuhrmann's hotel, a stagecoach inn, which still is equipped with the original handmade door latches and locks.

East Shore Route . Selection of the site of the inn building on what now is Highway 55-151 must have been determined from the fact that one of the earliest routes of land travel was along the east shore of the lake. It was from an historical account published in 1854 that these words were taken: "There is a company organized with a charter for the construction of a plank road from Milwaukee to Green Bay. The work is already commenced and some 15 or 20 miles of the road now is in use between Calumet and Green Bay. The line of this road runs through the entire width, of Fond du Lac county, passing through the Towns of Calumet, Taycheedah, Fond du Lac, Empire, Eden, Ashfond, and Auburn."

Solid Oak Boards

With the development of concrete and bituminous road materials still more than three-quarters of a century in the future, the kinds of wood used on such roads was the subject of discussion.

Speaking of an extension of the road, which ran from Fond du Lac to the east line of the Town, of Rosendale, a city resident in 1854 wrote, "this road is well-graded and covered with solid oak plank, possesses firmness, and promises durability. It affords an easy transit to the traveler, altogether preferable to the hemlock-knot roads of the east."

There are 23 rooms in the Club Harbor building, which has 63 windows each, consisting of 12 panes. The structure towers 50 feet high from gable to grade and has the rugged cobblestone basement walls characteristic of its era. Ceilings are 14-foot high, and the second floor once boasted a dance hall. Living quarters were on the second and third floors.

The building was a favorite hostelry for freight haulers travel from Green Bay to Fond du Lac and during the peak of the excursion boat era on Lake Winnebago excursion crowds regularly patronized the inn.

Square Nails Used

Black walnut timber comprises part of the basement work and partitions are divided by rough-hewn two by sixes. Square nails were used throughout the building. The third floor still is not wired for electricity. A prolific rock-lined spring once was in existence at the northeast corner of the building. Brown, who bought the club from Clarence Wright and Arthur Behring, both of Pipe, in October of 1954, has remodeled the building in the last two years, replacing 269 panes of glass, applying 89 gallons of paint, and 75 pounds of putty, plus tuck-pointing and installation of new sills. Brown has urged the State Historical society or any other historical group to contact him if they are interested in the salamanders or other items he has of historical interest. Edmund J. Halfmann, proprietor of Halimann's garage, at Pipe estimates that ownership and tenant occupation of the building has changed 10 to 11 times during the 35 years he has been in the village.