



History  
of  
204 North Main Street  
Waupaca, Wisconsin

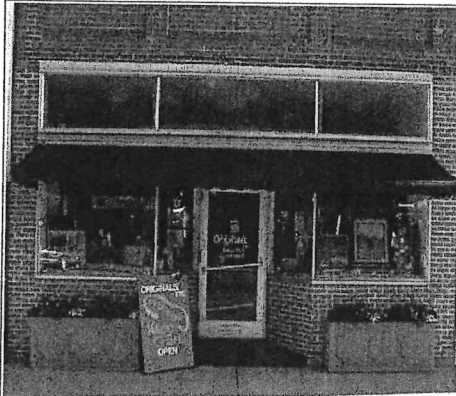


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The information on the land and building at 204 North Main Street (all lines that are **bold**) was collected by K. DeBolt during the summer of 1999 by looking through real estate assessment records of the City of Waupaca. These records are handwritten through 1953 and typewritten from 1954 on.

The historical information comes from a variety of sources, usually noted in the text.

**Legal Description of Property at 204 North Main Street, Waupaca, Wisconsin is:**

**Parcel #34 30 11 8 Main St. 204 N. (0897)**

**N 20 and ½ FT of S48 and ½ FT of LT 3 Blk 28 of Orig Plat V645P238, V680P251.**

1850	Most downtown buildings were small frame buildings.
1851	First general store opened by Wilson Holt
1851	One of Waupaca's first industries was a grist mill—Waupaca Star Mills
1851	The Postmaster General officially established a post office at Waupaca and the first official postmaster was David Scott
1852	First entry of government land within the present limits of the city was made on September 7. (Illus. Waupaca, pg. 11)
1853	County seat established in Waupaca.
1854	Hutchinson house built.
1854	E. L. Browne's law office constructed at 202 E. Union Street. It has continued to be used as a law office ever since.
1854	First newspaper started by C. E. and J. E. Redfield. It was called the <i>Spirit</i> .
1855	First courthouse built on the courthouse square
1856	First hotel built at southeast corner of Main and Union Streets. It was a frame building erected by A. E. Smith and acquired by F. B. Vosburg in 1866. It burned in 1872 and Vosburg replaced it with a 3-story, 40-room brick hotel, the most modern and elegant in the city. Later it was known as the Hotel Florence and the Delevan Hotel. (Bank One is located at this location now.)
1857	Waupaca was incorporated as a village. The first fire company was established along with some police services.
1860	A public cemetery existed. The Mason's established a lodge. Industry centered around milling, primarily grist milling, which processed wheat from area farmers. There was also lumber milling.
<b>1860</b>	<b>First appearance in assessment records of the site that is currently 204 N. Main. It was described as Block 28, Lot 3, owned by N (?) Irish. Real estate valued at \$10.</b>
1867	Union High School completed in the 500 block of School Street. It housed both the <i>elementary school and the high school</i> . (Before 1875 the high school program did not lead to a standard diploma and the first official graduating class did not complete its work until 1876.
1867	The first Waupaca County Jail was built at 310 Granite Street.
1867	The grist mill on the Crystal River was converted to a woolen mill.
<b>Gap in assessment records here.</b>	
1870	Stetson and Lea blocks built which included Stetson's Hall, the most important public hall and meeting place in the city until the Opera House was built in the 1880's. (200 s. Main Street=Stetson block and 100 S. Main Street=Lea block)
1871	John Rosche established the Pioneer Foundry on the east side of the Waupaca River near what is now East Fulton and State Streets. (Survey, p. 101)
1871	The first formal volunteer fire company, the Hose and Engine Company No. 1, was formed.
1872	The firemen held their first ball in Stetson's Hall in February. (Survey, p. 90)
1872	<b>Owned by Ole R. Olson. Valued at \$50. Note: An Ole R. Olson was the corresponding secretary of the Dane's Home in 1888. Regular meetings were held every Thursday</b>

	<b>night. (Illus. Waupaca, p. 36)</b>
1872	On May 16, the old Smith hotel and every building but one in the square were burned. (Illus. Waupaca, p. 36)
1873	A. J. Holly opened a furniture store and undertaking business. In 1889, he moved into the new building at 100 N. Main Street and continued doing business there until 1926 when they discontinued selling furniture, leased the front of the building for a grocery store and used the rear for a funeral parlor. In 1928, the Hollys purchased the old James Chesley house on the corner of South Main and Lake Streets and converted the house into a funeral home. (Survey, p. 66)
1875	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1875	Waupaca was incorporated as a city.
1875	Beginning in 1875 to 1900, the dominate industry was sawmills.
1876	<b>Same owner. Valued at \$60.</b>
1876	The first official graduating class from Waupaca High School completed its work.
1877	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1877	Masonic and Beadleston blocks built. (Beadleston block 101-103 N. Main Street) The Dane's Home was organized for social purposes on January 6.
1878	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1878	On January 19, fire destroyed buildings between Union and Fulton Streets and resulted in that block becoming the first uninterrupted row of brick buildings in the city. (Il Waupaca, pg. 36)
1879	<b>Same owner. Valued at \$100.</b>
1879	H. W. Williams organized curling games on Mirror Lake.
1880	Beginning in this decade, potatoes dominated the commercial economy. Women's groups began to flourish. The population of Waupaca was 1,392. (Illus. Waupaca, p. 38)
1880	<b>Owned by (first name not readable) McArthur. Valued at \$100. Miss Lottie McArthur was treasurer of the Young Women's Christian Temperance Union in 1888. (Illus Waupaca, p 22)</b>
1880	Old courthouse was moved to north end of Main in 1880 and used as the Dane's Home. (illus. Waupaca, p. 18)
1881	A brick yard was started east of Waupaca by W. S. Bemis and George Hansen (Survey p. 108) and operated until 1965. "The abundance of good clay fueled this industry in Waupaca for many decades. The result of the wide availability of local bricks meant that many buildings in Waupaca were constructed of local brick, which was an attractive medium-red color. Many of the buildings that used local bricks are located in the city's downtown commercial district." (survey, p 37) "Mr. W. J. Chamberlain's brickyard is located on the Waupaca river about two miles east of the city. Its machinery consisting of Martin's latest improvements, is driven by water power, and all bricks are rack dried under cover. The year's capacity is one million brick per year. It gives employment to 13 men and four boys during a season of four months. The quality of the product is excellent. The courthouse, school house, and nearly all the business blocks of this city are built of this brick." (Illus Waupaca, p. 67)
<b>Gap in records here</b>	
1881	The local Women's Christian Temperance Union established a small library for the public's use. The members solicited funds from businessmen and opened a reading room with about 75 books in a photographic gallery on Main Street. The members of the organization were librarians for the collection and the reading room moved several times over the years to members' houses or businesses. By the time the WCTU's library closed in 1898, it had over 300 books. It was not exactly a "free" library, as the organization charged a small book rent or yearly fee. In 1898, the WCTU sold most of its books and donated part of the proceeds to the local women's clubs under the provision that they would use the money for a free public



	library. (survey, p.79)
1882	A new brick courthouse building was completed on the square. It continued to be used for county purposes until a courthouse was built on the east side of town in 1990. (survey, p. 87)
1882	The Dane's Home was incorporated as a social and literary society and bylaws were formally adopted. The organization was open to all males born to Danish parents, 18 years of age or older, and who could read and speak Danish. Gambling and liquor were forbidden in the organization. Eventually the group provided an insurance benefit similar to other fraternal groups. (survey, p. 165)
1884	The grist mill that came to be known as the Fisher-Fallgatter Mill was built by S. T. Oborn and R. N. Roberts. (survey p. 104) (Crescent Roller Mills)
1884	<b>Owned by Martin Hanson. Valued at \$100. Morton Hansen came to Waupaca from Denmark in 1868. (Bi-Centennial Project, p. 40) "M. Hansen, Boots &amp; Shoes, was born in Lolland Denmark 4-1-1840. When 15 years of age he learned the shoemaker's trade, at which he has worked ever since. He came from the old country to Oshkosh in 1866, but after the first year he found his way to Waupaca, where he worked at his trade for different men for about 10 years, when he commenced business for himself. He spent 10 months in Denmark in 1872. In 1883, with his family, he made another ten-month visit to the old country, resuming business here on his return." (Illus Waupaca, p. 47) Ad in Illustrated Waupaca, p. 85: M. Hansen, manufacturer of Boots and Shoes. Fine work a specialty. F. Mayer boots and Shoes. Repairing Promptly Done. Main Street. Waupaca, Wis.</b>
1884	South Park was established.
1884	First Robert block build (second in 1893) 204-208 S. Main St.
1885	<b>Owned by Morten Hanson (same person?). Valued at \$350.</b>
1885	Population of Waupaca was 1,810.
1885	A large granite quarry operated north of the city. The quarry furnished Waupaca Red granite used in the piers in the grand stair halls on the first floor of the Wisconsin State Capitol Building that was built between 1906 and 1917.
1886	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1886	Electricity comes to downtown Waupaca. The Waupaca Electric Light Association built a dam and power plan near North Franklin Street. (survey p. 68)
1887	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1888	<b>Same owner. Valued at \$425.</b>
1888	The population of Waupaca was 2,500.
1889	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1889	A telephone was installed at Mrs. M. E. Chady's grocery store on East Union Street.
1890	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1890	The first large, nationally-chartered bank, the Waupaca County National Bank, opened.
1891	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1891-92	Shearer-Cristy house built on Lake Street.
1892	<b>Same owner and value. Sanborn Maps show no building.</b>
1892	<i>The first railway locomotive entered the city on the Wisconsin Central Road on September 28. (Illus. Waupaca, p. 11)</i>
1893	<b>Owned by F. Peterson. Valued at \$425.</b>
1893	New elementary school completed. Old Union School became the high school.
1893	The Waupaca County National Bank block was built at 122 S. Main.
1894	<b>Owned by Fred Peterson. Same value.</b>
1894	Voters approved the building of a new city hall. Local builders Conrad Gmeiner and Simon Jensen completed the work on the new building at 210 N. Main later that year. The new city hall had a council chamber, clerk's and treasurer's offices, a room for a small police

	department, and space for the fire department, including a stable for horses. (survey, p 89) The building was in use until 1969. (Bicentennial, p. 10)
1894	The Dane's Home contracted with Oshkosh architect William Waters for a new building <i>complete with meeting hall, opera house facilities and other amenities.</i> (survey, p. 165)
1895	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1896	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1896	Two large fires burned a number of downtown commercial buildings. (survey, p. 90)
1897	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1897	The first water system was built. (Water outages were common.) The system depended on river water, which was often polluted. It was a system of water mains with 70 hydrants, a <i>power plant located just north of the downtown, and a standpipe on Mount Tom for water pressure.</i> (survey, p. 92)
1898	<b>Same owner and value. (Fred Peterson, \$425)</b>
1898	A streetcar line from town to the Veterans' Home and the Grand View Hotel constructed by the Waupaca Electric Light and Railway Company. (survey, p. 68)
1898	The bandstand was erected in the courthouse square and dedicated in August.
1899	<b>Same owner. Valued at \$800.</b>
1900	Most of the brick blocks that are extant today were built by 1900. Waupaca is the leading potato shipping center in the United States. From survey p.48—During the 20 <sup>th</sup> century, Waupaca's downtown was a regional shopping center and commerce provided much of the economic base of the community." Some time in the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century, the city improved the streets with asphalt paving and the installation of modern curbs, gutters, and sidewalks.
1900	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1900	<i>Waupaca Post</i> located in 206 N. Main Street. (survey, p. 57)
1901	<b>Owned by Lars Peterson. Valued at \$800. Listed in survey report (1999) reference to builder Conrad Gmeiner—N. P. Peterson Building, 204 N. Main Street (<i>Waupaca Post</i>, June 20, 1901, p. 5) "N. P. Peterson, the blacksmith, will put up a new building this summer. It will be four stories in height, two above the level of Main Street. C. Gmeiner and D. W. Nelson have the contract for the work, which will commence about July 1."</b> <b>Sanborn Insurance Maps lists address is 611. Barber listed as business. Map shows alley between building on south and stair on north.</b> <b>"Conrad Gmeiner was born in 1865 and came to Waupaca in 1893. He was a mason and building contractor until 1904, then continued his building career as operator of the Waupaca Brick YARD. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Gmeiner promoted the use of bricks for silos. Gmeiner also manufactured concrete blocks and promoted their use in buildings. He was a prolific builder during the early twentieth century and died in 1943." (survey, p. 41) He also build St. Mark's Church (S. Main-1904), Fair Store (112-114 S. Main-1899), Gmeiner Block (106 N. Main-1900), A.M. Hansen Machine Shop (223 Jefferson St.-1907), and the waterworks pump house (Junction St.-1905).</b>
1902	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1903	<b>Same owner. Valued at \$720.</b>
1903	Conrad Gmeiner bought the Waupaca Brick Yard and owned it until 1944.
1904	<b>Owned by Martin Hanson. Valued at \$720.</b>
1904	Cristy's Department Store opened at 200 South Main.
1905	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1905	A new pump house on Mirror Lake supplied city water from the lake. Built by Conrad Gmeiner, the pump house has a unusual round form. (survey, p. 34)
1906	<b>Owned by Morten Hanson (record is typed and inserted over handwritten record). Valued at \$720.</b>
1907	Records missing.

1907	The new Wisconsin Central Depot was built on Oak Street. (Information about the old one that burned is found on page 53 of the survey.)
1907	The Women's Club began improvements in South Park, cleaning out brush and planting <i>new trees and shrubs.</i> (survey, p. 141)
1908	<b>Same owner. Valued at \$1409. (Building added or improved?) A postcard from this year shows the building with an awning that says "Milk and Cream" on the north side valance.</b>
1908	House to house city delivery of mail was established. Until this year, city residents had to go to the post office to pick up their mail.
1908	The mayor appointed a park commission and appropriated some money for part <i>improvements to South Park.</i> (survey, p. 141)
1909	<b>Same owner and value. The Sanborn Insurance Maps have address as "202 (old 611) Cobbler/Office."</b>
1910	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1910	Construction of a sewer system began.
1911	<b>Records missing.</b>
1912	<b>Same owner. Valued at \$1410. First time listed as "Main Street."</b>
1912	<i>A new high school was constructed.</i>
1913	<b>Records missing</b>
1914	The Carnegie Library was constructed.
1914, 1915 1916	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1917	<b>Same owner. Valued at \$1540.</b>
1918	<b>Same owner. Valued at \$1550</b>
1919	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1920	<b>Owned by Henry Indestad. Valued at \$1600. (Note: Adjoining south is Nelson Paint Co.)</b>
1920	65 (WWI vets?) men reorganized a military company as a unit of the National Guard. The unit was named the Howitzer Company, 127 <sup>th</sup> Infantry, an artillery unit. The unit drilled two nights a week and trained at Camp Douglas every summer. (survey, p. 85)
1920	The U.S. Post Office established a marine route on the Chain of Lakes that operated until 1974. (survey, p. 83)
1920	The Palace Theater, a movie theater, opened.
1921	<b>Same owner. Value \$700 "exclusive of improvements/\$900 improvements."</b>
1921	The first modern hospital building was constructed and called, Christofferson Hospital.
1921	The city acquired additional land near Shadow Lake for South Park. (survey, p. 141)
1922 1923	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1924	<b>Edith Hanson owner. Value reduced to \$700/\$700-\$1400. Sanborn Insurance Map lists as "office."</b>
1924	The Waupaca Golf Club was incorporated by five golfer in May. They leased the McNaughton farm on the far east side of the city in June. (survey, p. 151)
1924	A group of curlers erected a building on South Franklin Street for their sport. (Original shed with four sheets of ice was demolished early in the 20 <sup>th</sup> century.) (survey, p. 151)
1925	<b>Owned by W. H. Foucar. Valued at \$1400. W. H. Foucar is listed as an attorney on page 34 of Our Heritage, a bicentennial project 1876-1976. (Same source, p. 70: Mrs. William Foucar was one of the sixteen charter members of the Waupaca Garden Club, which was organized in 2-6-30. She was the first secretary/treasurer. The husbands automatically became members when their wives joined, and members "shall be dirt gardeners." The annual dues were 50 cents. Early project was to help</b>

	<b>city plan and establish the North Park and Rock Garden later named, Nels Rasmussen Park in memory of the late street superintendent.</b>
<b>1926</b>	<b>Same owner. Valued at \$700 (land)/\$770 (improvements) = \$1470.</b>
1926	<i>The fire department is mechanized by purchasing its first truck. Police department has a chief and part-time officer for each city ward.</i>
1926	Streetcar service shutdown. (survey, p. 68)
<b>1927</b>	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
<b>1928</b>	
1928	Waupaca Curling Club was incorporated.
<b>1929</b>	<b>Same owner. Valued at \$800/\$800 = \$1600.</b>
1930	<i>The potato trade declined and farmers switched to dairy farms. (survey, p. 70)</i> A WPA (Work Progress Administration) project in the 1930's changed the course of the Waupaca River behind downtown businesses by filling in the west bank and narrowing the channel.
<b>1930</b>	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1930	Armory was built on Washington Street.
<b>1931</b>	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
<b>1932</b>	
<b>1933</b>	
1933	South Park improved when the city hired unemployed residents who needed aid during the Great Depression to clean the area of brush and stumps, level the land, make walks and bridges, and plant more than 150 trees. At the same time, South Park beach was improved by moving and renovating the bath house and adding sand to the beach area. (survey, p 141)
<b>1934</b>	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
<b>1935</b>	
<b>1936</b>	
1936	The county garage was built on East Fulton Street with help by the WPA.
<b>1937</b>	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1937	Atkinson's Federated Store (117-121 North Main Street) opened. It was a very successful department store. (survey, p. 123)
1937	WPA funded the construction of a new sewage treatment plant. Prior to this, sewers emptied into a large septic tank and then into the river. (survey, p. 92)
<b>1938</b>	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1938	A new elementary school was built as a WPA project on School Street. It is currently used as a preschool and school administration building. (survey, p. 78) Note: The WPA was a <i>great depression era federal works program that provided work for the unemployed. This federal program was the first of its kind in U.S. history and buildings related to the WPA are historically important.</i>
<b>1939</b>	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1939	The hook and ladder company and the hose company combined to form the Waupaca Fire Department.
1939	The federal governments changed the Waupaca National Guard unit from a howitzer <i>company to anti-tank platoon, still under the 127 infantry. This movement modernized the Guard's equipment from the old howitzers to new anti-tank guns that had more range and power. When war was declared in WWII, the anti-tank platoon was increased in size to a company and served in the South Pacific for the duration of the war.</i> (survey, p. 86)
1939	The new post office on South Main was completed as a WPA project.
<b>1940</b>	<b>Same owner and value.</b>
1940	A WPA grant built a football field, track, baseball diamonds and playgrounds on a 16-acre site athletic field. Also included a shelter house with dressing rooms and showers.
<b>1941</b>	<b>Same owner and value.</b>



1942	Same owner and value. (A handwritten note inserted in this record book said, "Foucar thinks 'too high'". A separate piece of paper with Foucar's name says, "Should be \$1,000.")
1942	<i>The first department purchased a second truck.</i>
1943	Same owner and value.
1944	
1945	
1946	Owner Robert S. McMillen was crossed through and Myron J. Fletcher and wife, Edith, written in. Valued at \$800/\$800.
1947	Same owner and value. Note 1948 is the date listed in the February 11, 2000, <i>Waupaca Post</i> article as the year Myron (Mike) Fletcher moved into the 204 North Main building.
1948	
1949	Same owner. Valued at \$800/\$1875 improvements. Total \$2675.
1950	Same owner. Valued at \$800/\$1425.
1950	The first deep well was sunk.
1951	Same owner. Valued at \$800/\$1850.
1952	Same owner and value.
1953	
1954	Same owner and value. Note: American Legion is next door to the south on second floor.
1955	Same owner and value.
1955	Riverside Memorial Hospital opened.
1955	Waupaca Foundry expands into a major business. (survey, p. 102)
1956	Same owner and value.
1957	Same owner and value. (Fletcher's home address written in as "Seventh Street City.")
1958	Same owner and value.
1958	Trucks begin to replace trains as the delivery vehicle for the U.S. mail.
1959	Same owner and value.
1960	Same owner and value. (First time address listed as 204 N. Main.)
1961	Same owner and value
1962	
1963	Same owner. Valued at \$1200 (land)/\$2775 (improvements).
1964	Same owner. Valued at \$1300 (land)/\$2775 (Improvements).
1965	Same owner and value.
1965	The last mail train came to the city of Waupaca.
1965	The Waupaca Brick Yard closes after 75+ years of existence making it one of the most important small regional brick yards in the state. (survey, p. 109)
1966	Same owner and value.
1967	
1967	Nels Rasmussen Park dedicated in December. "Nels Rasmussen, for many years, street and water superintendent for the city, had on his own time and his own expense, developed a small park area at the end of Main Street. He cleared and attended it and planted flowers that were truly beautiful. He was particularly fond of his roses. He worked in the park until his death." (Bicentennial, p. 29)
1968	Same owner and value.
1968	State of Wisconsin informed the city that the city hall/fire department at 210 North Main did not meet state codes and the fire department should be moved immediately. It relocated to the armory.
1968	The new city hall was constructed south of the armory on Washington Street.
1969	Same owner and value.

1969	Fisher-Fallgatter mill closes in spring. (survey, p. 106)
1970	Same owner. Valued at \$1675 (land)/\$3050 (improvements).
1971	Same owner and value.
1972	
1973	Same owner. Valued at \$3300 (land)/\$3800 (improvements) equaling \$7100.
1973	New Waupaca Senior High School was constructed.
1974	Same owner and value.
1974	The U.S. Post Office discontinued the marine route on the Chain of Lakes.
1975	Same owner and value.
1976	Same owner. Valued at \$3300 (land)/\$4600 (improvements). Note: Bicentennial book lists Fletcher's Jewelry at 118 North Main, Maxson Paint Center at 200 North Main, Jane's Music Shop at 122 North Main, Craft Country at 200 North Main (shared with paint store?).
1977	Same owner and value.
1978	Owned by Russell Lowe, Route 2, Box 10, Waupaca. Recorded in B536 P213. \$3300 (land)/ \$4600 (improvements).
1979	Same owner. Valued at \$3300 (land)/\$6500 (improvements) = \$9,800. Note in record that building was remodeled. See architectural drawing of lower level and building permit at end of this record.
1980	Same owner. Valued at \$3300 (land)/\$11,000 (improvements) = \$14,300. Note in record that building was remodeled.
1981	Same owner and value. Note: Russell Lowe told the DeBolts (tenants beginning in 1999) that church services were held on the first floor for a short time while a congregation was building a new church.
1982	
1983	
1984	
1985	
1986	Same owner. Property reassessed. \$6550 (land)/\$17,300 (improvements)= \$23,850.
1987	Wisconsin Real Estate Transfer—Deed in Satisfaction of original land contract dated, August 15, 1987. Total valued of real estate \$18,000. Sold by Myron J. Fletcher, 715 7 <sup>th</sup> Street, Waupaca, to Russell E. and Jane B. Lowe, N1118 County Trunk E, Waupaca. Signed September 24, 1987. and October 5, 1987.
1989	Wisconsin Real Estate Transfer—Full ownership transferred. Total value of real estate \$31,000. Sold by Russell E. and Jane B. Lowe to Lloyd Ott, 3030 Olson Road, Amherst, Wisconsin. Signed November 22, 1989. Photo attached to transaction shows "Adventure Land Video" as the business in the building. Window boxes painted gray. <i>Awning is gray and there are square window inserts in front windows.</i>
1990	Wisconsin National Guard erected a new armory for Waupaca's guard unit in the city's industrial park. (survey, p. 86)
1990	Waupaca County Courthouse was destroyed and replaced with new city hall and library building.
1993	Public library left the Carnegie built structure and moved to the new building with the city hall offices at 111 South Main.
1999	<b>Originals, etc. Gallery and Studio opened for business on May 15, 1999. Owned by David and Kristy DeBolt.</b>
1999	New Waupaca High School under construction on Hwy 22 south of Waupaca.