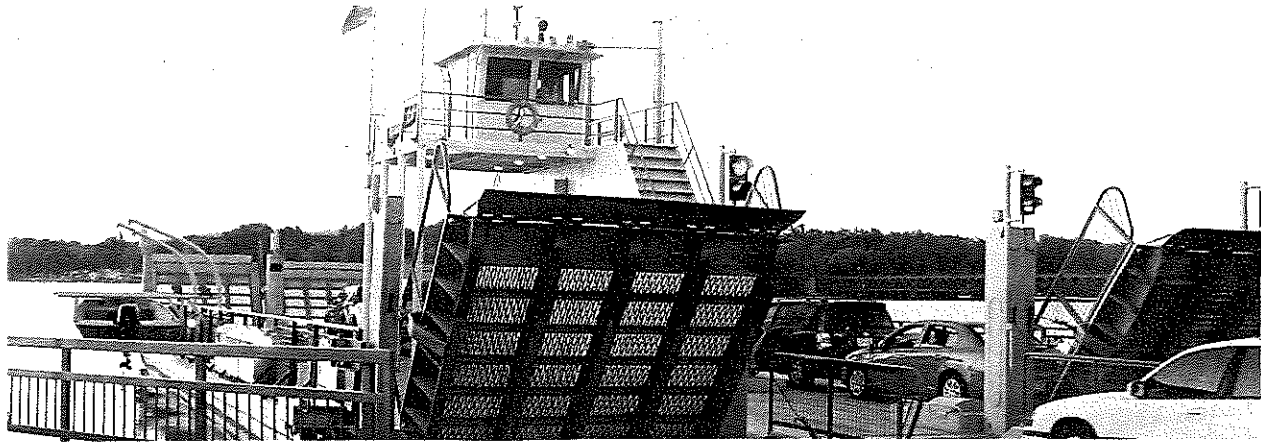


Get the "Scoop" on the Merrimac Ferry – July Ed Seminar & Ice Cream Social!



The Lake Wisconsin Alliance (LWA) is hosting its third educational seminar for 2017 at the Merrimac Ferry Wayside on Wednesday, July 12th at 6:30pm. This free event will feature stories old and new on the Merrimac Ferry and the Merrimac Scoop will provide ice cream to those in attendance.

Merrimack, Wisconsin "Ferryland USA"
Ferry History on Mighty Wisconsin for 17 Decades
1847 - 2017 (170 Years) by Charlotte Hamilton Olson

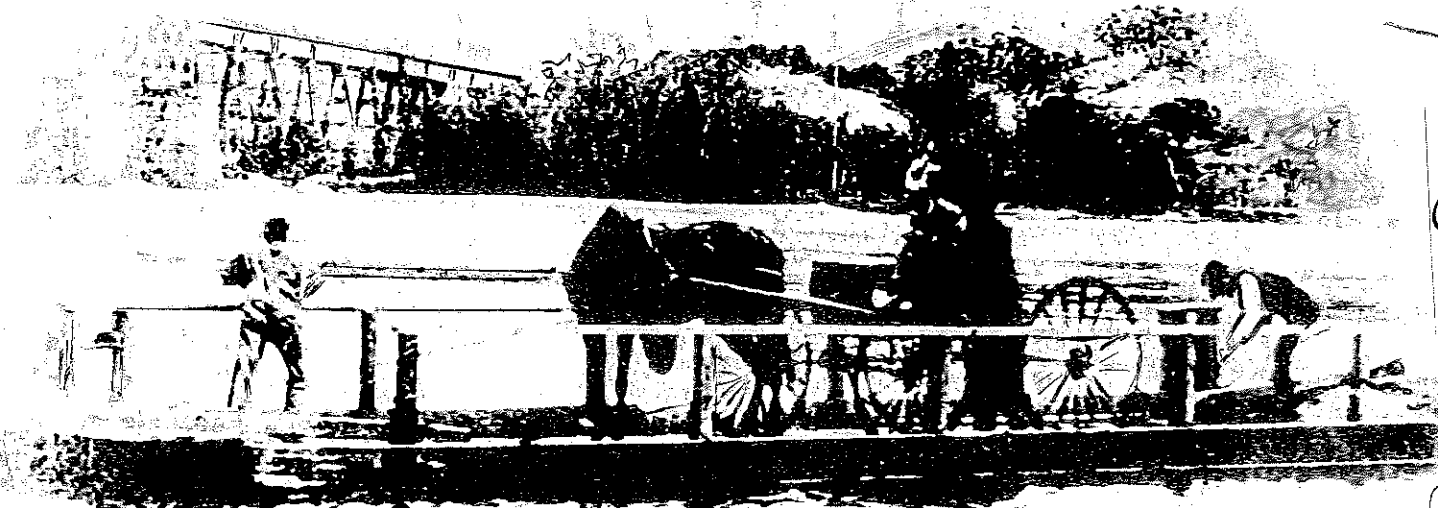
Good evening... remember the words "Once Upon A Time?" well, once upon a time, more than 170 years ago... back in

---**1843** before the thought of even having a water vessel crossing here a man simply named Mr. Brown arrived on the Merrimac(k) side and built a cabin and the area was simply called Brown's Cabin, him being the first settler.

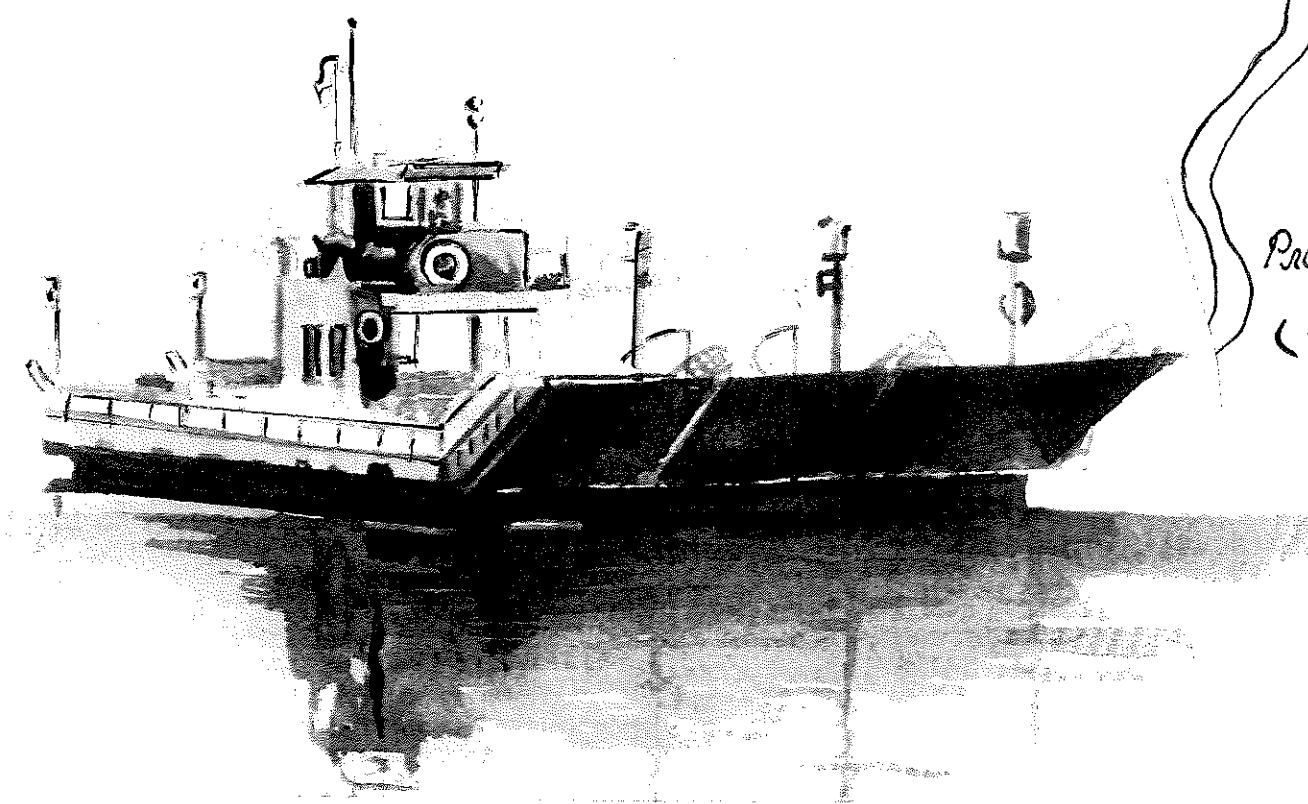
Others followed and soon cabins were built and held together with mud. Small gardens huddled close to the water's edge on area pieces of farmland from the water's edge back toward the Baraboo Bluffs acquired by squatter's rights. This area drew further attention because of the wildlife, forests, bluffs and the river at a time when area Indians traded their wares with these newcomers.

---**1847** Now a man named Chester Mattson arrives on the scene and almost immediately realizes the need to somehow cross this body water and the area's name changes from Brown's Cabin to Matt's Ferry. He was very enterprising and contacted the Postmaster General named Collomar and was granted a post office. In doing so he honored him by changing the name once again to Collomar.

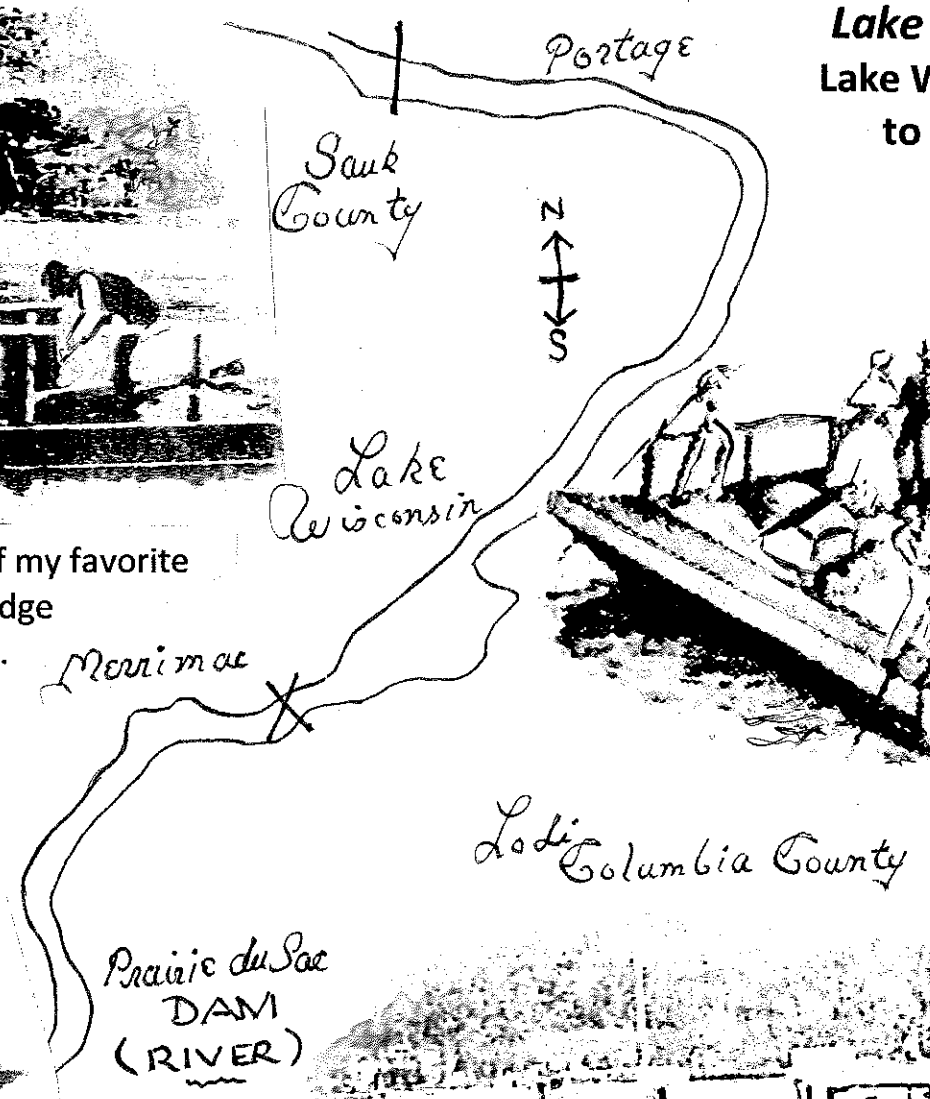
---**1850** The population continued to grow with people coming west from England, Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, The Netherlands etc. School teachers, preachers, businessmen, builders, a doctor and a mid-wife and of course farmers. You could



1 of the earlier ferry boats using both poles and man power. 1 of my favorite pictures. Notice how high the bottom of the railroad bridge is before the Prairie du Sac Dam that opened in 1924.

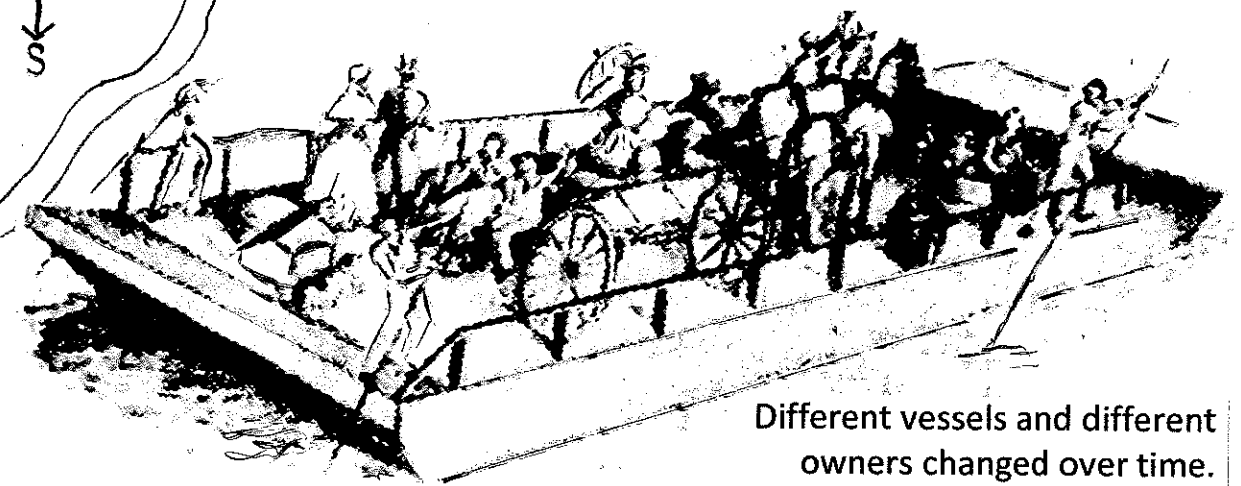


Colsac II launched in 1962 with the ability to carry 12 cars. It ran for over 40 years until 2003. Like Colsac III it could handle buses and those passengers needed to get off during the 7 minute trip. Colsac III is on the front page of this info.

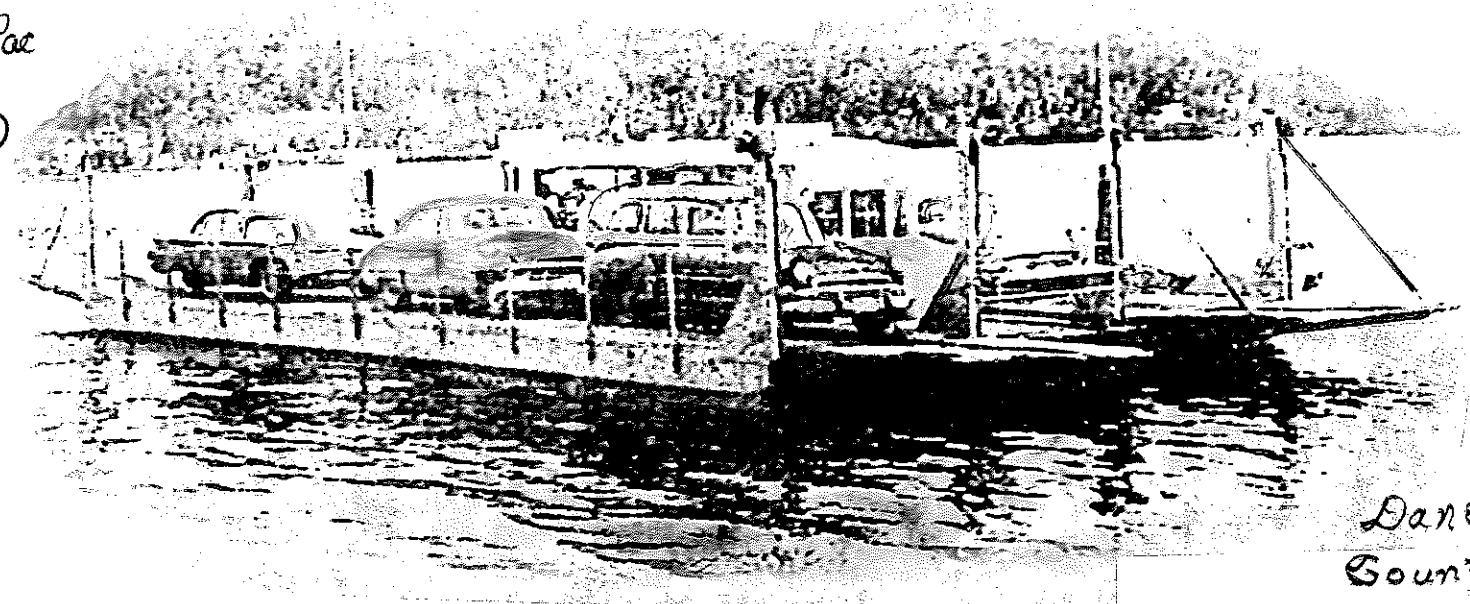


Lake Wisconsin & The Wisconsin River
 Lake Wisconsin from the Prairie du Sac Dam
 to above Portage in a tri-county area
SAUK – DANE & COLUMBIA

*** **



Different vessels and different owners changed over time. The price to use the ferry also increased over some 78 years 1846 and 1924



Colsac I launched in 1924 and free of charge as the Wisconsin Department of Transportation takes over further ferry operations and notice, a pilot's cabin with a motor in deeper waters, Yah!

Dane County →

tell which country they came from by the shape or style of their barns and their speech.

Yes politicians too making rules and regulations. That being said, a Mrs. J.G. Train announced that this area reminded her of her beloved Merrimack, New Hampshire the way the waters splashed up against the shore and suggested the name be changed. The powers to be voted it in and so it was Merrimac with a "K" for 100 years.

---**1847 1924** the price to ride the ferry changed over time with a few different owners, men with poles guiding the ferry through shallow waters. For example: Men on horseback paid a price, horses pulling wagons and or stagecoaches paid per axel and foot passengers were also charged. Years later (not sure when) those with cars paid 35 cents and truck drivers paid 75 cents... that was until...1924 some 77 years later when things changed. .. but first...in the

---**Late 1800's** the railroad was built and the bridge was known as 1 of the best in the nation. It hurt the ferry business for a number of years until the dam was built. It was easier to use the waters and things improved. Lake Wisconsin was wider and deeper attracting more homes and businesses.

---**1914** The Prairie du Sac Dam opens providing us with the Lake Wisconsin from the dam to Portage. The area above Portage and below the dam are known as the Wisconsin River emptying into the Mighty Mississippi. In 2014 a 100th year celebration took place with guided tours of the dam. It was so popular they provided that event again later.

---**1924** Colsac I is launched when DOT the Wisconsin Department of Transportation took over the ferry business and it was free of charge. The operators or pilots wore hats or caps and uniforms. The name Colsac came from the counties it served both Columbia and Sauk.

---**1962** Colsac II was launched, now a 12 car vessel that lasted for over 40 years until

---**2003** Colsac III, was launched, 14 years ago. It can handle 15 cars with about a 7 minute ride. The ferry line was widened adding another lane to keep traffic off the main street (corner of Hwy. 113 & 78) in Merrimac.

The ferry runs from April 15 November 30.

In 2015 303,660 vehicles crossed here.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED

from Brian J. Rice – (608) 246- 3872

Department of Transportation

brianrice@dot.wi.gov

if you would like a copy of a much longer-detailed message regarding the life and times before 1843 and today, leave your e-mail address or e-mail char@merr.com



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