

The Pier Family: Wisconsin Pioneers

By David Olsky

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*Lawyers should never marry other lawyers. It's like inbreeding. They'll only beget idiot children and more lawyers.*¹

The Pier family—Kate, Colwert, Kate Hamilton, Harriet, and Caroline—stood as one of the most preeminent legal families of their day. They were renowned for both their legal prowess, and their unique position as a family of female lawyers. Before she even took the bar, Kate, the mother, had massed significant real estate holdings and borne four children. Indeed, she was a pioneer in the field of business before she even took to the law. Soon after law school, she was one of the first women in the United States to be bestowed with judicial powers. Kate Hamilton, the daughter, was the first woman to argue—and win—before the Wisconsin Supreme Court, and one of the first women to argue—and win—before a federal court of appeals. Although less is known about the other daughters, Caroline and Harriet, they were also distinguished lawyers. Caroline argued before the Wisconsin Supreme Court, and Harriet became a prominent tax lawyer

¹ From “Adam’s Rib.”

in Northern Wisconsin, defending the rights of small landowners against the timber barons of the day.

This list of accomplishments is remarkable, but the Pier family story stretches beyond a rote explanation of their achievements. The Piers were a study in contrasts: the family took on the cases of small landowners, yet were themselves intimately connected with the railroad; they are remembered as conservationists, and yet they cleared large areas of forest for timber; the patriarch was a decorated war veteran, yet he encouraged the women of the family to overshadow him. Finally, even though the daughters were trailblazers for women in the law and nationally renowned for their feats, they gave up the law for the most part once they were married. Even though their mother practiced her profession while married to their father, they did not follow her example.

These contrasts seem unusual to us today, but at their time, the Piers fit squarely within the progressive wing of the Wisconsin Republican Party of the late nineteenth century. This is not surprising as the Piers hail from Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin, a mere twenty-two miles from Ripon, the birthplace of the Republican party. They shared common goals with many of the tenets shared by the party within that state—abolitionism, protection of property rights, grant of free land for homesteaders, and female suffrage.² Their commitment to female equality and business success, and the father's military success and his acquiescence to the women in the family were thus easily reconciled within their predominating world view.

² For more information on the early Republican platform, see *GOP History*, available at http://movie0.archive.org/96_elections/www.rnc.org/gop-history.html. The articles quoted *infra* from the Fond Du Lac Commonwealth and the Milwaukee Sentinel, the republican journals of their area, provide a good representation of the views of Wisconsin republicans of that era.

In this paper, I provide an overview of the Pier family and their accomplishments. In Part I, I will explore the life of Kate Pier, the mother; in Part II, Colwert Pier, the father; in Part III, Kate Hamilton Pier Mckintosh, the first daughter; In Part IV, Harriet and Caroline, the younger daughters. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of public information available about the Piers, and I have reconstructed as much as possible from contemporary news accounts, accounts of the history of Fond Du Lac County, bar association reports from Milwaukee, and internet and Westlaw searches. I have attached an appendix describing my avenues of research so that future biographers can build on this initial foray. These were important public figures in the women's struggle to enter the professions and I hope that history will not forget them.

I. KATE PIER, THE ELDER.

A. *Early Life*

Kate Hamilton was born in St. Albans, Vermont, on June 22, 1845. Her father, John Hamilton, was an Irish immigrant, on American soil for twelve years.³ He left with his brother, Henry, at the age of twenty-one and, after several years of low wages and hard labor, they opened a successful shop in Vermont, selling what was once described as

³ I have taken all information about Kate's parents, John and Mary Hamilton, from a biographical sketch in THE HISTORY OF FOND DU LAC, WISCONSIN (1880) 813-14 [hereinafter HISTORY]. I will use similar sources through out this paper. These sketches, also found in bar association reports of the day, are a useful source of information about people of local prominence, but they can be prone to exaggeration. In John's sketch for example, the author notes that he found employment with a deacon shortly after moving from Ireland. This deacon supposedly cheated John out of his money even though "more faithful service was never rendered." Whether the author or John himself embellished this story is not known.

“high-end goods.” At the age of thirty-one, John and his brother married their cousins.⁴ One commentator noted that “the wedding, in fact was appointed for Henry and his bride, the additional nuptials having the very briefest, origin, love, courtship and marriage all within twenty-four hours, and which nevertheless, proved from thenceforth through life a most pleasant and harmonious union.”⁵ Shortly after Kate was born, the brothers sold their shop and took to lending and the purchasing of securities.

In 1851, both John and Henry moved their families westward and settled in Fond Du Lac County, an area about sixty-six miles northwest of Milwaukee, resting at the southern tip of Lake Winnebago. The county and the town of Fond Du Lac itself were still in their infancy. White families had begun to move to the area only twenty years earlier, and the Hamiltons were part of an influx of eastern settlers attracted to the area because it was slated for railroad development. Indeed, one historian described Fond Du Lac as “the first location exploited entirely for speculative purposes.”⁶ The Hamiltons resumed their practice of lending money and were so popular that “[b]orrowers preferred to borrow from him, at even a higher rate of interest than their securities would readily command with banks and brokers.”⁷ The family was well received in this community, a community created out of entrepreneurship and egalitarianism.

John was ever present in Kate’s early life, and his influence presaged her future success in business and law. When she was a child, John would take Kate with him as he

⁴ The sketch indicates that Mary’s maiden name was Meekin and that John’s mother’s maiden name was Jane Meekin. I have made the connection myself that they were cousins.

⁵ *Id.* at 814.

⁶ Fond Du Lac County Local History Web, available at http://www.wlhn.org/fond_du_lac/fdl_co.htm

⁷ *Id.*

bought and sold real estate.⁸ She quickly developed an aptitude and interest in this business, and in tax and real estate law. It was also an opportunity for John to tell Kate about his homeland. One time, as they were passing by a farm that he had recently purchased, he remarked that the rich scenery of groves and hills reminded him of Ireland, but that it was much nicer in his native country. “Then, father, if it was so much nicer why did you leave there?” Kate asked. “Ah! Katie, your father stood no chance of owning them there,” he replied.⁹ Kate also shared his politics—John was a fervent Republican.

After Kate graduated from high school, she took a job as a school teacher in the nearby town of Empire.¹⁰ At the start of the civil war, she moved back to Fond Du Lac and taught at the local schools, her salary multiplying by four times as a result of war shortages. On June 25, 1866, she

pinned in her curly brown hair a white rose plucked from her mother’s garden rose bush and clad in a simple going-away frock of gray, plighted her troth with the dashing young Col. Colwert Kendall Pier, but recently back from four years of military service under General Grant at the front.¹¹

In 1868, she gave birth to her first child, Kate Hamilton Pier. Caroline (1870) and Harriet (1872) soon followed. At some point, two orphaned nephews joined their family.¹² Kate and Colwert also had a daughter Mary, who died at a young age, in 1885.

John Hamilton died in 1871, following a long and painful illness that developed after a simple cold. After his death, Mary asked Kate to take over the management of his

⁸ John’s real estate business is not mentioned in the biographical sketch, but it is noted in the sketch of Kate Pier in *PIONEERS IN THE LAW: THE FIRST 150 WOMEN* (1998) 9, available at <http://www.wisbar.org/pioneers> [hereinafter *PIONEERS*].

⁹ *HISTORY*, *supra* note 3, at 814.

¹⁰ Details of her time as a teacher are taken from *Mrs. Kate Pier, 80, is Dead*, *THE DAILY COMMONWEALTH*, June 23, 1925, at 1. [hereinafter *Mrs. Kate Pier*]

¹¹ *Kate Hamilton Pier is Laid to Rest on Wedding Day; Many Pay Tribute*, *THE DAILY COMMONWEALTH*, June 25, 1925, at 5.

estate and, “with the sympathy and cooperation of her husband,” Kate agreed.¹³ She established an office in downtown Fond Du Lac, becoming perhaps the first businesswoman in the state. The exact contours of the business are not recorded: John has been described as an “investor in real estate” and the business itself as a “realty operation,”¹⁴ and at some point, Kate expanded this business to include timber harvesting. The dates of this expansion and the measure of her success in her early days as a businesswoman have yet to be recorded or researched. During this period and throughout her legal career, however, she received invaluable assistance from her mother, who helped Kate raise her children while Kate was simultaneously engaged in her professional pursuits.

B. *Legal Career*

At the age of 38, Kate entered law school at the University of Wisconsin. She entered primarily for two reasons: “[S]he thought a knowledge of the law would be helpful in her real estate dealings, and her eldest daughter, Kate [Hamilton], was entering law school in Madison and [Kate] did not think she should go to the capitol city unattended.”¹⁵ One source recounted that Kate was having difficulty liquidating the estate of her father, and that she enrolled in law school as a means to become better acquainted with the relevant business law.¹⁶ The University of Wisconsin, a progressive

¹² PIONEERS, supra note 8, at 9.

¹³ *Death Peaceful Day Following 80th Birthday*, Fond Du Lac Reporter, June 23, 1925.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ VICTORIA BROWN, UNCOMMON LIVES OF COMMON WOMEN: THE MISSING HALF OF WISCONSIN HISTORY (date unknown) 28.

¹⁶ Interview by Fred Heinemann with C.H. Stange (Apr. 11, 1950). This interview is available at the Wisconsin State Historical Society Archives. One other resource at the Archives, a reel of microfilm by

institution from its founding in 1868, never excluded women,¹⁷ although Kate and Kate H. Pier were to be only the second and third female graduates.¹⁸ Both Kate and her daughter completed the program in one year, a short course even for that day.

At the graduation ceremony, the commencement speaker predicted, “[y]ou may all become lawyers, but probably not all will develop into advocates.”¹⁹ This was certainly true of Kate. After some flirtations with the courtroom, she chose another course, choosing instead to develop her expertise in tax law and work as an expert and an office consultant. She managed her own estate with remarkable business acumen, using her new knowledge of the tax laws to grow her estate by leaps and bounds.²⁰ After the graduation, she moved back to Fond Du Lac and joined her husband at his firm. Within a year, though, they moved to Milwaukee and began the Pier family firm. Even though Kate did not practice law within the firm, she traveled around the country, giving legal advice and managing estates.²¹ Within this capacity, she soon gained a high standing

Clinton Flower Hicks, detailing reminiscences of pioneer life, including reminiscences about the Pier family, was not available at the time of my research.

¹⁷ See Ruth B. Doyle, *Women and the Law School, in WISCONSIN WOMEN, GRADUATE SCHOOL, AND THE PROFESSIONS* (Date, editor unknown). Even though the Law School was progressive in that it did not exclude women and classmates were apparently respectful of the women in their class, the Law School did discriminate in other ways. The placement office, for example, was closed to women as recently as 1950. Female graduates also recounted blatantly chauvanist remarks offered by the dean and other members of the faculty. *Id.*

¹⁸ The first graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School was Belle Case LaFollette, the wife of progressive governor and senator “Fighting” Bob LaFollette. She never practiced law herself, but was intimately involved in her husband’s work, and was a leader of the suffrage movement. When Bob was arguing in front of the Wisconsin Supreme Court as a district attorney early in his career, the Chief Justice praised his “brilliant” brief. Bob, though, admitted that it was written “start to finish” by his wife. *Id.*

¹⁹ *Drawing to a close*, WISCONSIN STATE J., June 21, 1887 at 4 (remarks of the Hon. J. V. Quarles at commencement).

²⁰ According to one (somewhat unreliable) observer, Kate used her legal knowledge to maximize the value of her land holdings. She would buy the tax titles on condemned mines, pay the taxes while she stripped the surrounding lands of their timber, and then let the mines once again be condemned. See Stange, *supra* note 16.

²¹ See PIONEERS, *supra* note 8.

among her peers as a lawyer, and her family was “among the most widely known women of America.”²²

Even though Kate was not often a litigator herself, as a wealthy landowner she was often a party to cases before the Wisconsin Supreme Court. In her first case, *T.T. Haydock Carriage Co. v. Pier*,²³ Kate had agreed to act as assignee (i.e., as a guarantor) for one P.C. Bartell. Bartell was in debt to the T.T. Haydock Carriage Company, who then filed an action against Kate to recover for the balance of the property. At the trial court, Kate successfully defended herself pro se (i.e., acting as her own lawyer), winning a nonsuit against Haydock, with the Haydock ordered to pay all court costs. The supreme court appeal, however, was another matter. Haydock alleged that Kate, as a married woman, was not competent to carry the responsibility of an assignee. The court reviewed the common law, finding that a married woman could never be allowed to own property in lieu of a statute, much less to the position of an assignee. The court then ruled that the statute that allowed married women to own property, however, did not overturn the basic law that married women were not competent to be put in positions of handling estates, such as that of an assignee or a trustee. Specifically, it held:

The statute which secures to a married woman her individual earnings and which, by a most liberal construction, authorizes her to engage in the ordinary pursuits from which earnings may be derived, cannot, we think, be fairly construed to authorize her to assume the execution of official trusts, when the law requires that the person assuming such trusts shall execute a faithful performance thereof. Such construction would, as we think, be detrimental to her interests, rather than beneficial to them, and

²² *Miss Kate H. Pier, Lawyer* [Journal unknown, date unknown, page unknown]. I found this article at the Milwaukee County Historical Society, and is on file at both the county historical society and with the Stanford Law School Library.

²³ 43 N.W. 502 (Wis. 1889), *remanded and reconsidered in* T.T. Haydock Carriage Co. v. Pier, 47 N.W. 945 (Wis. 1891); *and* T.T. Haydock Carriage Co. v. Pier, 52 N.W. 314 (Wis. 1892).

would subject her to burdens and liabilities against which she was protected by the common law.²⁴

To its credit, the court liberally construed every other aspect of a married woman's right to own property, holding that a married woman has a right to hold, use, sell and dispose of real and personal property "as though she were single"²⁵ Thus, she could enter into contracts and manage her own estate with spectacular results, even if she could not organize the estates of others. Kate did not again argue pro se in front of the court.²⁶ She was, however, instrumental in passing a statute that allowed married women to become assignees, effectively reversing this decision.²⁷

In another case, *Wisconsin River Improvement Co. v. Pier*,²⁸ Kate's lands were threatened by the growth of public utilities. In 1880, the Wisconsin legislature granted the Wisconsin River Improvement Company the power to "erect and maintain dams at such places as may seem advisable on the Wisconsin River . . . and to acquire by condemnation proceedings land along the banks of the Wisconsin river for the purpose of facilitating and cheapening the driving and floating of logs, timber, and lumber in said river."²⁹ By the early 1900s, however, the need for and the profit from floating logs down the river had virtually disappeared. A local power company approached the river company, proposing that it be allowed to build a dam to generate electricity. In return,

²⁴ *Id.* at 505. The court also noted that in the common law, "a married woman was not permitted to act as an executrix or administratrix, nor to act as a guardian of minors, except of her own children." *Id.* at 504.

²⁵ *Id.* at 504.

²⁶ One other case identifies "Kate Pier" as the attorney arguing before the state supreme court, *Schuerman v. Matthews*, 47 N.W. 423 (Wis. 1890). Her daughter, who argued frequently before the court, is identified in every other case as "Kate H. Pier." Thus, this case was either argued by Kate herself or else there is an error in the printed copy. The case is rather unusual—Kate was defending a man accused of using hidden transactions with his son to escape creditors. The court ruled in favor of the creditors, allowing their complaint to go forward, noting the sufficiency of the allegations. Even stranger, "Kate Pier" represented the defendant, and yet the opinion makes reference to the defendant's counsel as "he." *Id.* at 425.

²⁷ 1 THE LAW STUDENT'S HELPER 174, 175 (1893).

²⁸ 118 N.W. 857 (Wis. 1908).

²⁹ *Id.* at 859.

the river company would condemn the necessary lands and receive a nominal fee. The river company agreed to the deal. Kate's lands were to be condemned as part of the deal, and she retaliated by bringing an eminent domain claim on behalf of herself and others, arguing that the dam was not built in the "public interest." Her daughter, Caroline, argued the case in the supreme court.

Caroline argued that this dam was sought for a private, and not a public purpose because once the dam was built, the power company would receive far more in revenues each year from the revenues generated by the power plant than the cost of the dam. The only public purpose delegated to the Wisconsin River Improvement Company was to "cheaper" the floating of logs, and no such purpose could be found in this case. As such, the land could not be condemned. The Wisconsin court rejected these arguments. The Court explained that although the power company is operating at a profit,

the public are to use and enjoy the power created by this dam, not as a mere favor or by mere permission of the owner, but by right. The charges of the power company are to be reasonable and to be regulated by the public authorities. These are the tests of public use. . . . By the "public" is meant, not the whole population, but all persons who require power and are willing to pay reasonable rates therefor to the full extent of the capacity of the enterprise in question.³⁰

In the end, the court held that Kate could not stop the condemnation and the eminent domain claim failed.

Kate was far more successful in her suits involving tax titles, which were usually argued before the Wisconsin Supreme Court by her daughter, Harriet. In *Pier v. Oneida County*,³¹ Kate had bought several tax titles and then later, asked for a refund from the county due to irregularities in the certificates. The county reviewed her claim and denied

³⁰ *Id.* at 862.

³¹ 67 N.W. 702 (Wis. 1896), *reconsidered in* *Pier v. Oneida County*, 78 N.W. 410 (Wis. 1899).

it, but the circuit court and, ultimately, the Wisconsin Supreme Court found in her favor. It held that “[t]he reason of the refunding of the money by the county is the holder of the certificate contracts for a good title to land, and when it is that this has failed, he is entitled to have his money refunded. He has not received what he contracted for.”³² If one source is correct and Kate made much of her money by buying tax titles of condemned property and selling the timber, then she made out like a bandit here. She not only made a profit off the timber on the land, but she was also reimbursed for the cost of acquiring the land in the first place.

C. *Judicial Power*

Four years after she left law school and three years after she began her practice in Milwaukee, Kate Pier became one of the first women (and likely the first female lawyer) in the United States bestowed with judicial powers in 1891, when Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Daniel H. Johnson, on a unanimous petition of the bar of Milwaukee, appointed her Circuit Court Commissioner.³³ The position of commissioner at that time is best described as a cross between a magistrate judge and a clerk. The powers granted to a court commissioner include

the power to administer oaths; to take acknowledgement of deeds; to allow writs of attachment, certiorari, habeas corpus in bailable actions; and, in the absence of the circuit judge from the court, writs of injunction; to fix the amount of and decide as to the sufficiency of bail; to take testimony and depositions of witnesses [in civil actions]; to state account between parties in actions referred to him by the court; and to tax costs the

³² *Pier*, 67 N.W. at 703.

³³ *Piano Donation Honors Original Owner*, LAKELAND TIMES, Apr. 13 1984 (page unknown). Until that year, the state would only allow men to become court commissioners. For a description of the battle over changing the law, see text accompanying notes 66-74 *infra*.

power to issue subpoenas [sic] for witnesses to appear before them and attachments and other process necessary to enforce the subpoenas [sic] for witnesses to appear before them and attachments and other process necessary to enforce the subpoenas [sic]; . . . to take deposition and testimony [in civil actions] . . . ; to decide upon the amount and sufficiency of bail in civil actions when the law requires such bail; . . . and do other things that may be ordered by the court or are necessary to the exercise of these granted powers.³⁴

Although many of these powers are similar to magistrate judge, the court commissioner was to be given fees for specific services in addition to a set salary.³⁵ The expiration of her term has not been identified, but the commissioner would normally serve for as long as the appointing judge would sit.³⁶

D. *Later Life*

The details of Kate's later life are a bit sketchy. Her husband died in 1895. At some point, she returned to Fond Du Lac, probably in the early years of the next century. She continued to manage her estate, and promoted the advancement of women in politics. According to one of the lumberjacks,³⁷ when Kate lived in Fond Du Lac, she was one of the most respected women in the county, often walking through the forest with Harriet. Kate would lead business negotiations and Harriet would act as her secretary, taking down notes of meetings and organizing the files. Kate knew all of the lumberjack lingo, and used it to full effect. One time, according to that same source, she learned of a lumberjack that had been taking timber from her property without her permission. She

³⁴ 2 COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN WISCONSIN 288 (1942) (available at Milwaukee County Historical Society).

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ Stange Interview, note 16 *supra*.

told him that he would have to pay her, “300 or nothing.” He continued to take the timber and when she confronted him, he replied, “I took the nothing.”³⁸

Kate was also involved in a number of women’s professional organizations. Many credit her with beginning the separate bar for female lawyers in Wisconsin. She also founded, and was the dean of, the Madison chapter of the Kappa Beta Pi legal sorority. In addition, she was a vice president for Wisconsin in the National Women Lawyer’s Association and an honorary member of the Milwaukee Business Women’s Club.³⁹ She paid tribute, moreover, to other women who had risen to prominence in her community. Six months before she died, confined by illness to her house, she gave a luncheon in honor of two women that had recently been elected to office in Fond Du Lac County. At this event, the speakers remarked on “the inspiration and stimulation her personality and her achievements had been to them and to all other Fond du Lac women who had engaged in business activities.”⁴⁰

On June 22, 1925, one day after her eightieth birthday, Kate Pier died in her sleep at her family home in Fond Du Lac. Her death received as much coverage in the local papers as the death of Senator “Fighting” Bob LaFollette the day earlier. She was laid to rest on her fifty-ninth wedding anniversary. The local paper stated, “Her strict integrity, her warm hearted Irish personality, her unstinting publicspiritedness, her cordial hospitality, won for her an enviable place in the hearts of all with whom she came in contact. At the close of a well rounded life she has fallen into sleep.”⁴¹

³⁸ *Id.* Throughout the interview, Stange pays great respect to the Pier women, but at the same time, he seems to enjoy tweaking them when he can.

³⁹ *Mrs. Kate Pier, supra* note 10, at 1.

⁴⁰ *Death Peaceful Day Following 80th Birthday*, FOND DU LAC REPORTER, June 23, 1925 (page unknown).

II. COLWERT PIER

A. *Early Life and Military Career*

Colwert Pier was born on June 7, 1841, to Edward and Harriet Pier in Fond Du Lac.⁴² Colwert and his twin, Carrie, were two of the first white children born in the county. Edward had come to the territory only five years before, and at the time of Colwert's birth, the Piers were one of only a handful of white families in the area. The seeds of his later pursuits w several of his childhood interests. He excelled at speaking and debate, and was known around the town for selling apples and popcorn at public events. He eventually left home at the age of sixteen to study at Lombard University in Galesburg, Illinois.

Colwert returned to Fond Du Lac in 1859 and clerked for a local judge. While he was clerking, Fort Sumter fell and the Civil War began. When the call for troops went out, Colwert and a friend signed up to join the Union Army on April 16, 1961. He enlisted for three months and served out his term, victorious on the battlefield of Falling Waters. At the expiration of the term, he accompanied a friend home to Ithaca, New York, and then enrolled in Law School at Albany. He did not stay long, completing his course in six months before heading back to Fond Du Lac.

Once back home, Colwert organized a military company under state law and the company named him Captain. He sent his commission to the governor in the midst of some controversy: A number of opponents wrote to the governor to protest the

⁴¹ *Kate Hamilton Pier is Laid to Rest on Wedding Day; Many Pay Tribute*, FOND DU LAC COMMONWEALTH, Thursday, June 25, 1925, at 5.

commission on the ground that Colwert was only twenty-one, a very young age for a captain. The governor nonetheless issued the commission, and Captain Colwert organized nine more companies to form a regiment. The regiment then named him Colonel and the governor again recognized his commission. He then tendered the regiment to the Union Army, but was rejected, as the government, in 1862, believed that the war would soon be over and did not need additional troops.

He continued working in Fond Du Lac, studying law at a local firm. In 1864, long after he had given up hope that he would return to service, General Grant asked for three regiments from Wisconsin. The next day, the governor sent him a telegram reading, “Will you accept a commission as Lieutenant Colonel of the 38th Regiment? Answer immediately.” He showed his father the dispatch. “You had better hear what mother says about it,” his father replied. Colwert went to his mother, then sick in bed, and read the telegram. “[H]er eyes filled with tears; with a trembling voice she said: ‘Do as you think best, my boy; I will be satisfied with your decision.’”⁴³ He accepted the commission shortly thereafter and quickly began organizing a new regiment.

From all accounts, Colwert fought bravely in the war, usually alongside his men. He was injured repeatedly, most notably at the battle of Petersburg, where he was shot in the leg and the foot. At one point, he was forced to take command of a New York regiment, as they had lost all of their officers. However, “[t]his was a trying position;

⁴² Most of the facts about Colwert’s early life are gleaned from History, *supra* note 3, at 845-50.

⁴³ *Id.* at 848-49. An obituary goes into a little more detail, and with a little embellishment:

At the solicitation of an enfeebled mother, whom he loved dearly, he remained at home and studied law for two years. He was her only son, an idol. When a more urgent call came for help for flag and country the young man made one more appeal to invalid mother, and she said, as tens of thousands of other mothers had, “My boy, go. I need you, but your country needs you more than I do.

Good-bye, Col. Pier, MILWAUKEE TELEGRAPH, Apr. 20, 1895 (page unknown).

there never was the most cordial feeling between Wisconsin and New York troops, at best. The New Yorkers were indignant, and not at all backward in making the fact known.”⁴⁴ Still, he was able to win them over, and near the end of the war, the New York regiment rewarded him with a new horse and saddle as a going-away present. He ended the war with a commission of colonel. With no more war to fight, though, he mustered out on August 15, 1865.

B. *Life After the War*

Col. Colwert returned home to Fond Du Lac and married Kate a year later. He joined his previous law firm, this time as an attorney. In addition to his law practice, he entered a number of other business concerns. His father died in 1873 after a serious injury, and he took over his position as President of the Local Savings bank. He also bought a two-thirds interest in the local Republican newspaper, the Fond Du Lac Commonwealth, contributing frequently to its editorial content.⁴⁵ The columns from this newspaper provide an intriguing insight into some of the views of women prevalent within the county—or at least within the Pier household. After a female preacher visited the town, the newspaper praised her abilities and argued in favor of women in the pulpit:

We have thus debated on this subject, not to show that women in the pulpit are superior to men in the same place, but to show that they are as good, and that it is eminently proper for them to enter the ministry. Our opinions will have to undergo a wonderful change if we do not rejoice whenever we hear of a worthy, competent and truly christian woman

⁴⁴ History, *supra* note 3, at 849.

⁴⁵ Colwert owned the paper and contributed editorial content from 1870 to 1871. He sold most of his interest and stopped providing content in 1871, and then sold his remaining interest in 1874.

taking a step toward the ministry. There is a great field for them in that direction.⁴⁶

On another occasion, the paper praised the success of female writers, noting that “[t]he press is the best avenue to the hearts and minds of the masses, and through that medium she may yet gain all the rights and privileges for which some of her sex are demanding in lyceum and convention.”⁴⁷ And in one prescient column, a reprint authored by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps and previously published in the *New York Independent*, the paper asked “[i]s a woman who can take a large family through the scarlet fever without assistance, likely to find herself too weak in body to bear the physical burdens incumbent upon the profession of a lawyer?”⁴⁸

Even though Colwert spent most of his days in business, he did gain some renown as an attorney. Accounts describe him as “being very successful, [] winning an enviable reputation.”⁴⁹ Early in his career, he took a case of local notoriety.⁵⁰ In 1870, a riverman who had been running logs up to Northern Wisconsin was found murdered in the nearby woods. Authorities charged a black man, Fred Williams, with the murder and Colwert was his defense attorney. Williams was convicted in the local court and sentenced to life in prison, but Colwert appealed the case to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. He was able to get the case thrown out on a remarkable technicality—the indictments against Williams stated that the charged offenses were “against the peace of the State of Wisconsin” rather than the required “against the peace *and dignity* of the State of Wisconsin.”⁵¹ Williams

⁴⁶ *Women in the Pulpit*, FOND DU LAC COMMONWEALTH, Mar. 11, 1871 at 3.

⁴⁷ *Women of the Pen*, FOND DU LAC COMMONWEALTH, May 20, 1871, at 2.

⁴⁸ *Woman’s Work*, FOND DU LAC COMMONWEALTH, Nov. 11, 1871, at 1.

⁴⁹ HISTORY, *supra* note 3, at 849.

⁵⁰ This account is taken from History, *supra* note 3, at 171.

⁵¹ *Williams v. State*, 27 Wis. 402 (1871) (emphasis added). A local account of the trial noted that, “[f]ew doubted the guilt of Williams . . . Williams froze his feet, it was thought, in pursuit of another crime, gangrene set in and he died from it.” HISTORY, *supra* note 3, at 171.

later died of gangrene after freezing his feet. Colwert went on to argue a number of other cases before the Wisconsin Supreme Court, some with his daughter, Kate, as co-counsel.⁵²

In the latter part of his career—and life—Colwert dedicated himself to the issues of retired soldiers from the Union Army.⁵³ In 1879, he came up with the idea of a reunion of all of the former soldiers of the Civil War, and devoted great time and energy into realizing that vision. After a year and a half of planning, the idea came to fruition in 1881, when 200,000 former soldiers came to Milwaukee for the Great Reunion. Some observers account this reunion with sparking an interest in the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.), whose membership jumped from 6,000 to 500,000 after the event.⁵⁴ The G.A.R. became a political force in its own right, particularly in the area of lobbying Congress for pensions for former union soldiers.

On April 14, 1895, Colwert was taking a stroll through downtown Milwaukee. He was stricken with a sudden bout of apoplexy as he walked through the courthouse park. Two strangers helped him back to his home, where he suffered another bout and died soon thereafter. The local Milwaukee newspaper described his funeral:

It is no wonder that the greatest number of soldiers that ever turned out to a funeral in this city was present at his late home, last Tuesday morning; that an escort went to Fond du Lac with his body; that in that city they were met by nearly every member of his old Post and escorted to the family burial place, where, with impressive ceremonies, in the presence of a multitude of sorrowing people, they consigned him to a grave within a stone's throw of where the little log cabin stood in which, nearly fifty-four years ago, he first saw the light of day.⁵⁵

⁵² In *Cudworth v. Gaynor*, 44 N.W. 1103 (1890), the attorney for the respondent is listed as “C.K. Pier” with “Kate H. Pier, of counsel.” In the lower court, the Piers had won a judgment worth more than the amount requested in the complaint. The state supreme court affirmed the judgment.

⁵³ The accounts of his efforts in organizing the Great Reunion are from *Good-Bye, Col. Pier*, MILWAUKEE TELEGRAPH, April 20, 1895 (page unknown).

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ *Id.*

III. KATE HAMILTON PIER, THE YOUNGER

A. *Early Life*

Kate Hamilton Pier was born on December 11, 1868, the first child of Kate and Colwert. Her early years have not been well recorded, and only the bare outlines of her childhood are available.⁵⁶ She grew up with her parents in Fond Du Lac, attending the English and German academy of Fond Du Lac for elementary school and the local high school thereafter.

After finishing high school, Kate announced that she wanted to go to law school. Her mother joined her, and they both attended the University of Wisconsin Law School. Kate had great success at law school—she was a member of the E.G. Ryan society,⁵⁷ and was vice president of the senior law school class. She graduated law school at the age of nineteen, less than a year after she began, on June 22, 1887. Upon graduating, Kate returned to Fond Du Lac to practice law with her parents, occasionally sitting at her father’s table as he argued before the Wisconsin Supreme Court. She also continued to study German and stenography at local schools.

⁵⁶ This summation of her early years comes from her biographical sketch in PIONEERS, *supra* note 8, at 10.

⁵⁷ This is again from the sketch provided in PIONEERS, *supra* note 8. The source does not provide an explanation for the purpose of the “E.G. Ryan society,” but one might deduce the benefactor of this group—Chief Justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, the late Edward G. Ryan. Chief Justice Ryan was nicknamed “lion” for his stature in the legal community in the nineteenth century, and considered one of the great state judges of his time for his innovation in tort law and antimonopoly rulings. See Joseph A. Ranney, *Molders and Shapers of Wisconsin Law: Chief Justices Edward G. Ryan and Luther S. Dixon*, available at www.wisbar.org/wislawmag/archive/history/pt02.html. Kate’s membership in this society, though, is rather ironic, given that Ryan also wrote the opinion barring Lavinia Goodell from arguing before his court, and dissented when the legislature overturned his ruling. For background on this case, see Teresa M. Derichsweiler, *The Life of Lavinia Goodell, Wisconsin’s First Woman Lawyer*, available at <http://www.stanford.edu/WLHP/papers/lavinia.html#2>.

B. *Legal and Political Career*

In 1888, she moved to Milwaukee with the family to practice law in the larger market. She did not, however, immediately join the family firm. She worked for a year in the legal department of Wisconsin Central Railroad. After that time, she returned to the family firm and quickly gained a reputation as a superb litigator. A newspaper reporter recounted the first time he saw Kate in the courtroom:

When Kate Pier was admitted to practice in circuit court, I was present and wrote a newspaper story about it. I can see that handsome young brunette as she stepped up before Judge Gilson and took the oath. She was plainly attired and wore her extraordinarily long black hair hanging loosely down her back, away below the waistline. I thought she was the handsomest woman I had seen up to that time: and she was handsome, a word that I have never used extravagantly. She was a magnificent picture: and my early training as a reporter taught me to use that word sparingly too.⁵⁸

Another sketch, provided only a few years later, also described her as “very beautiful.

She is tall and slight, her face is refined and her deep blue eyes are true Irish eyes and full of expression. She wears her long black hair in braids which hang nearly to the ground.”⁵⁹

From 1889 to 1899, Kate H. Pier is on record as arguing eight cases before the Wisconsin Supreme Court and one case before the federal court of appeals in Chicago. All of these cases involved either small personal disputes or a tort action in which Kate represented the plaintiff. In her first case before the state supreme court, *Sutton v.*

⁵⁸ BILL HOOKER, GLIMPSES OF AN EARLIER MILWAUKEE 38 (1929).

⁵⁹ *A Family of Lawyers*, (source unknown), Sept. 2, 1892 (page unknown). This article can be found at the Milwaukee County Historical Society under the “Biographical Sketches” section in microfilm. This same article described Kate, the elder, as “handsome” and the younger sisters, Caroline and Harriet, as “very pretty girls at whom one gladly looks twice.”

Wegner,⁶⁰ she represented an attorney in a simple contract dispute involving approximately \$220, and won her case. The next term she argued another case, although with less success: The state supreme court refused to accept her argument that a court commissioner could not serve a complaint on her client on a Sunday.⁶¹ She argued three more cases in the following term with mixed success, winning an appeal of an arbitrator's settlement between dentists,⁶² but losing an appeal in a real estate dispute.⁶³ She appeared before the state supreme court three more times that decade, and in two of those cases, one win and one loss, she represented an individual plaintiff in a tort suit against a large corporation.⁶⁴

Kate was also one of the first females to argue before the federal court of appeals. In *Crane Elevator Co. v. Lippert*,⁶⁵ she represented a fifteen-year old boy from Milwaukee that had suffered severe on-the-job injuries. The defendant was a private contractor that had been hired by his employer to fix the broken elevator. The defendant did not bother to erect any sort of barrier or place any kind of lighting around the materials that it used to carry out this contract, and the boy fell over the materials when

⁶⁰ 43 N.W. 167 (Wis. 1889). The dispute involved a plaintiff suing her client for recovery on a promissory note, and for the use of the plaintiff's horse. Her client in turn brought counterclaims for legal services on his behalf. The trial court had referred the case to trial and the plaintiff appealed this order. The state supreme court upheld this order in a short opinion.

⁶¹ *A.G. Spaulding & Bros. v. Bernhard*, 44 N.W. 643 (Wis. 1890). The court held that the statute prohibiting court business on Sunday did not extended to the action of a "mere" court commissioner. *Id.* at 644.

⁶² *Brennan v. Booth*, 47 N.W. 271 (Wis. 1890).

⁶³ *Hamilton v. Beaudreau*, 47 N.W. 952 (Wis. 1891). The third case is *Halpin v. Stone*, 47 N.W. 177 (Wis. 1890), where the court opinion does not give any indication as to the prevailing side in the lower court, and the decision itself cuts both for plaintiff and defendant. Thus, Kate won one, lost one, and "tied" in the three cases of the term.

⁶⁴ Kate prevailed in *Parks v. West Side Railway Company*, 52 N.W. 92 (1892), where the court permitted her to switch the title of the defendant in the complaint from "railroad" to "railway." She also won a complete reversal of in *Whitmore v. Hay*, 55 N.W. 708 (Wis. 1893), where she represented a party in a dispute over an inheritance. Kate lost an appeal, however, from a successful trial verdict in *Jackowski v. Illinois Steel Company*, 79 N.W. 757 (Wis. 1899), because the court found that a prior release signed by her client prevented him from maintaining an action against his employer.

⁶⁵ 63 F. 942 (7th Cir. 1894).

he left his work in the early evening. He needed surgery to repair his arm, and even then, the arm could not carry any weight. The contractor claimed contributory negligence because he supposedly had tuberculosis before he fell, and that this was the root cause of his injury. The court rejected this argument and found in favor of Kate's client.

Kate did not simply relegate herself to the legal arena. Indeed, she was the driving force behind her mother's appointment to court commissioner. Before 1891, women were not allowed any sort of judicial capacities as a matter of law. Kate helped author and introduce the bill that allowed women to hold the job of court commissioner, and then lobbied for its passage. The newspaper even reported that "[i]t is understood that the object of the bill is to make Mrs. Pier court commissioner in Milwaukee."⁶⁶ The assemblymen looking at the bill had many different perspectives. One member suggested that women ought to have the same rights as men, and another agreed that "man could not deny woman the same rights they enjoyed themselves."⁶⁷ One member argued in favor of the bill because it would give women the opportunity to support their husbands.⁶⁸ Two prominent speakers, however, railed against the bill. Assemblyman Winans proclaimed that "the time had come to call a halt in the breaking down of all barriers to the position of the weaker sex,"⁶⁹ and that he "did not believe any married woman desired it."⁷⁰ Col. Conrad Krez, another assemblyman, spoke out against the bill because "if anything ought to be done it ought to be to add to the rights of married men. . . . Women ought to be supreme in their proper sphere and he did not want to take them

⁶⁶ *Rights of Married Women*, MILWAUKEE J., Feb. 6, 1891, at 1 [hereinafter *Rights*].

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ *Id.*

⁶⁹ *Women Going Too Far*, MILWAUKEE SENTINEL, Feb. 7, 1891, at 1 [hereinafter *Too Far*].

⁷⁰ *Rights*, *supra* note 66, at 1.

out of it.”⁷¹ He continued, claiming that his own wife was very happy to do her duty, and that indeed, if the institution of marriage was at issue, the proper method to preserve it would be to license and tax bachelors, just as they licensed and taxed dogs.⁷² This last comment sparked a lengthy editorial in the state democratic paper, the *Milwaukee Journal*, where the paper concluded that “if the question is forced to an issue, The Journal will vote to tax the bachelors.”⁷³

Kate garnered praise throughout this struggle. She was only twenty-two at the time and she had graduated from law school only three years prior. Still, she mobilized support for the bill despite some opposition. One observer commented on her strength as a lobbyist:

The appearance of Miss Pier at Madison as a petitioner for the married of her sex, was in itself something of a novelty, which grew in proportion as her determined and spirited efforts became manifest. Miss Pier hustled and lobbied with the best of them, nabbing one member here, buttonholing another one there, and succeeding, in fact, in cornering every man of them and holding him until she made him thoroughly acquainted with her purpose, or imbued him with the spirit of her desire. . . . The outcome of Miss Kate’s emancipation act will be watched for with unusual interest by people of all ages, sexes, colors and previous conditions of servitude.⁷⁴

Even though she was able to cajole the legislators off the floor, she was unable to debate the merits of the bill in front of the legislature. Kate needed unanimous consent to speak before it, and a single democratic legislator objected to her presence. The bill was also

⁷¹ *Id.*

⁷² *Too Far*, *supra* note 69, at 1.

⁷³ *Shall We Tax Bachelors?*, MILWAUKEE J., Feb. 10, 1891, at 2. Whether this article was facetious is a little bit difficult to discern—it appears to take the tone of Swift’s *A Modest Proposal*—but it is certainly comic through the eyes of latter-day observers. The writer suggests, for example, that bachelors “with their constant tendency to evanesce, can scarcely be regarded as regular factors in the fiscal arrangements of the state.” *Id.* Two months later, this same paper proclaimed that domestic work, “notwithstanding efforts to broaden her sphere, will always be woman’s noblest work. . . . [W]hatever else women seek is probably sought because they have been denied or disappointed in this direction.” *Woman’s Noblest Sphere*, MILWAUKEE J., Apr. 21, 1891, at 4.

⁷⁴ *Women in the Lobby*, MILWAUKEE J., Feb. 10, 1891, at 8.

amended to ensure that only married female lawyers could be appointed commissioner. Her lobbying efforts, nonetheless, bore fruit. To great applause from the “ladies’ lobby” in the legislature, the bill passed, and Kate’s mother was named court commissioner soon thereafter.

Kate continued to work throughout the 1890s, arguing at virtually every level of court, federal and state. At one point, she described her philosophy to a local paper:

Success is never really attained because, as we approach it, it recedes . . . but every one may put forth honest and earnest effort toward it and some measure of it is within reach of the individual. To get any result for the time and energy expended, strict attention must be paid to the details. There was no chance about my choice of a profession. I was trained for it. . . . I enjoy my work thoroughly and have never regretted entering a business life.⁷⁵

Kate was also a member of the board of inspectors of the cooking department of the Milwaukee public schools, and studied at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Milwaukee.⁷⁶

C. *Later Life*

In 1901, Kate married James Alexander McIntosh, a railroad contractor, and stopped practicing law. She moved to New York City, where the same reporter who saw her first practice years ago commented that “[w]hile years of time had accumulated, she bore the same sweet smile that wreathed her face that day long ago when she was

⁷⁵ *Miss Kate H. Pier, Lawyer*, (source unknown) (date unknown) (page unknown). This quote can be found in a sketch as part of the “Biographical Sketches” microfilm stored at the Milwaukee County Historical Society.

⁷⁶ PIONEERS, *supra* note 8, at 10.

admitted to practice.”⁷⁷ After her husband died, she returned to Fond Du Lac and assumed the management of the family estate, sometime in the late 1920s. Once she returned, she returned to the legal profession, although not in quite the same capacity. In 1929, she was elected the president of the Portia Club in Milwaukee, and in 1929 she served on the Wisconsin Bar Committee on Women Lawyers.⁷⁸ She did not, however, practice for very long. On March 22, 1931, Kate suffered a stroke at her home.⁷⁹ She died eight days later, on April 1, 1931.

IV. CAROLINE AND HARRIET PIER

Far less, unfortunately, is known about the younger Pier daughters, Caroline and Harriet. Caroline was born on September 18, 1870.⁸⁰ She also grew up with her sisters in Fond Du Lac, graduating from high school in 1888, at the age of eighteen. Shortly thereafter, she and Harriet both followed their sister and mother into law school at the University of Wisconsin. They graduated after three years of study in 1891. Caroline went on to study elocution for a brief period at Northwestern University, before joining the family firm in Milwaukee. She specialized in admiralty and maritime law, although the only cases that can be found on the legal database was Wisconsin River Improvement Company v. Pier, where she represented her mother. Caroline married John Roemer, another attorney, on November 17, 1897. She had three children—Kate Pier, John Pier,

⁷⁷ HOOKER, *supra* note 58, at 38.

⁷⁸ PIONEERS, *supra* note 8, at 10.

⁷⁹ *Mrs. M'Intosh Expires After Brief Sickness*, FOND DU LAC COMMONWEALTH, Apr. 1, at 1.

⁸⁰ Nearly all of the information on Caroline is taken from PIONEERS, *supra* note 3.

and James McIntosh, who died in infancy.⁸¹ She also had three foster children at the time of her husband's death in 1935. Her date of death is unknown.

A little more is known about Harriet. She was born on April 26, 1872 in Fond Du Lac. She attended elementary and high school in Fond Du Lac, Madison, and Milwaukee, becoming fluent in both German and Polish.⁸² She immediately entered law school after high school and then graduated with Caroline in 1891. Harriet practiced primarily in real estate titles, and often acted as her mother's personal attorney. In addition to *Pier v. Oneida County*, she argued two other cases before the state supreme court, *Gilbert v. Pier*⁸³ and *Emerson v. Pier*⁸⁴. She did not prevail in either case: In *Gilbert*, her mother had bought a tax title erroneously issued by the county office and lost an ejectment action filed by the rightful owner; in *Emerson*, the court held that she could not reopen a default judgment to get an evaluation of the real damages at issue.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Harriet married Charles Gilchrist Simonds and moved to Rhinelander, a town located in the far reaches of Northwest Wisconsin. She was known as a "timber cruiser," riding the cabooses of freight trains into the forests of the upper midwest to estimate timber value. One account also notes that she gave great aid to small landowners fight off aggressive timber barons, who sought to steal their trees:

With their position in Madison in the courts, with their knowledge of the law and their fighting spirit, they were formidable in the court rooms. Their suits against logging robber barons filled the calendars of county courts in northern Wisconsin for many years. Witnesses said these "barons" wished the women had confined their talents to within the walls

⁸¹ This information is from a Simonds family timeline, available at <http://www.rvi.net/~msimonds/simonds/geneology/fam0059.htm>.

⁸² These background facts are taken from PIONEERS, *supra* note 3, at 12.

⁸³ 78 N.W. 566 (Wis. 1999).

⁸⁴ 80 N.W. 1100 (Wis. 1999).

of their homes. The Pier women took up the cases of many poor landowners and became highly respected among the less fortunate.⁸⁵

In return, the landowners named several lakes and streams after the Pier women.

Harriet had two children, Kate and Hamilton. She died in Rhineland on April 4, 1943.

CONCLUSION

The most remarkable aspect about the Pier family is not simply the historical anomaly of four women within one family becoming lawyers—and successful ones—but that they were so accepted by their community. While there were some outliers who continued to protest female lawyers, the Pier women gained quick and spectacular acceptance among their peers. The mother went from law school to judicial commissioner in less than five years, and the eldest daughter argued at least eight state supreme court cases by the time that she was thirty. They were respected for their intelligence—as evidenced by Kate (the younger’s) election as vice president of her class—and did not even have to fight to get into law school. Perhaps some of their obstacles have not been recorded, but what is available seems to demonstrate that the Pier women gained swift acceptance of their achievements at a very young age.

In this instance they were pioneers among pioneers: unlike some women who began practicing law only a few years earlier, such as Clara Foltz and Lavinia Goodell, they did not carry on by themselves, trying to find clients and business where they could get them. They enjoyed support from a large part of the community and did not have to

⁸⁵ *Piano Donation Honors Original Owner*, LAKELAND TIMES, Apr. 13, 1984, at 12.

struggle just to earn a living. They were also assisted by Kate and Colwert's success in their business ventures—they had a steady stream of income that allowed them to take the leap into law without worrying about the economic consequences of failure at their chosen profession. They also had encouragement from the central man in their life, Colwert.

This is not to say that the Pier women were successful in all parts of the legal profession. The mother may have had judicial powers as a commissioner, but the position itself is limited in scope and certainly does not hold nearly the prestige or the power of a full judge. And even for this position, the daughter had to fight on the legislature floor—and even then, only married women with legal degrees could hold such a position. The law itself also posed some substantial barriers, such as the barriers on married women taking on positions as trustees or assignees. The Pier women were renowned and respected, but as women, they were still denied the full range of rights given to men in the courtroom and in business.

Nonetheless, the contribution made by the Pier family to the law and to American society in general was great. Although they are little remembered now, the Pier women were in their day among the most famous women in the country, with newspapers from as far away as California recording their progress. On a more fundamental level, the lives of the Piers remind us of the enormous influence of family over the choices of any given person. John Hamilton taught his daughter how to succeed in business, and she passed those lessons on to her own children. Pioneers though they may be, they never strayed far from the basic structure of human life, the family.

APPENDIX

This paper has resulted from a rather exhaustive search of resources available at the Wisconsin State Historical Society, the Milwaukee County Historical Society, the Wisconsin State Bar Association, as well as the most exhaustive web search engines and the resources available with the Women's Legal History Project. I began with the internet search on google.com (at this writing, the most comprehensive web search engine available), and then focusing on the search results. The primary source available on the web, referenced here, is the Wisconsin state bar project compiling brief histories of the first 150 women registered in the Wisconsin Supreme Court (available at <http://www.wisbar.org/pioneers/>). I then went back to Wisconsin and searched through the materials specifically about the Piers, which as of this date are indexed only in the card catalog at the library.

I also searched through the resources available at the archives, (in the historical society as well as the university), the statewide system of archives (including those in both Milwaukee and Oshkosh), and the Library of Congress archives. Unfortunately, the only materials available within these archives was a ten minute interview with C.H. Stange, recorded in 1950, and cited herein. I also traveled to the Milwaukee County Historical Society and can guarantee that all of the information available there is reflected in these pages. I contacted the University of Wisconsin Law School, who directed me to several more of the resources that I have cited, and also to a surviving relative, John Pier Roemer, an attorney at the Juneau County District Attorney's office. Mr. Roemer was kind enough to present me with some more articles cited herein, and more importantly, to

the forthcoming restoration and opening of the Pier house in Fond Du Lac. Thus, the greatest resource on the Piers that I have been unable to check is the Fond Du Lac Historical Society (which is open only during the summer) and the Pier home itself, which may not yet be ready for the public. Hopefully, a future researcher will be able to find some personal papers in these locations.

In terms of the newspapers quoted, I found most of the articles by doing a rudimentary search through the microfilm, looking for articles on the Piers. Due to the physical burden that this places on one person, I was only able to search through a couple of years of Milwaukee and Fond Du Lac newspapers, and future searches will likely come up with far more information than I was able to muster. Another avenue of research might be the cases filed by the Piers in trial courts throughout Wisconsin. The cases that I present here are the result of a westlaw search, but they are hardly representative of the full scope of the cases brought by the Piers throughout their careers.