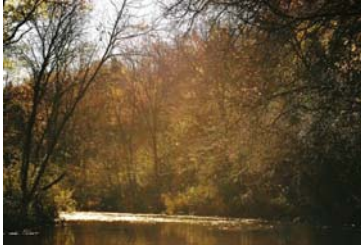


A KINNICKINNIC MEMORY -- 1954

by Mark Wyman



It took place during one of those golden summers of youth, which only become more golden the farther they recede into the past. My RFHS classmate Dan Barron and I decided to hike from Clifton Hollow down to the St. Croix along the lower Kinnickinnic and camp there. I think it was 1954, after our sophomore year.

We both had grown up hiking a lot in the hills surrounding River Falls, but never had been on that stretch of the lower Kinni. So Dan's dad drove us to Clifton Hollow one sunny morning in mid-summer, and we began our hike downstream along the river's edges, often stopping to investigate the strange, fascinating hillsides, rock structures, river creatures and plants. We saw the famous box canyon, poked up gullies and clambered over boulders and downed trees, and eventually reached the



large sand bar at the mouth of the river. That night we camped up on the bluff, and watched various St. Croix pleasure boats docking below, their inhabitants partying through the long evening and beyond. Then the next day we hiked back upstream to the Hollow.

We felt we were explorers, entering into a virgin wilderness. Excuse the exaggerations of youth: of course it was hardly a wilderness, but the forest seemed untouched and there was no one else around; Carl Pemble had not yet launched his ultimately-successful campaign to have a state park created there. That would come later, but in 1954 it was like a wilderness and that hike remains one of the golden memories of my years growing up in River Falls.



Mark Wyman, September 2006