



The Pinery

PUBLISHED NOW & THEN BY THE PORTAGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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FOR THE RECORD

* "SAVE THE HOUSE" CAMPAIGN

* The Portage County Historical Society has issued
* an appeal to the public to assist in preserving
* one of the area's oldest farm houses.
*

The Franklin/Calkins House, about one mile east of downtown Plover on Highway B, must be removed from its site before the end of the summer.

To save it by moving it to the Society's museum grounds behind the Cash & Carry Lumber Co., will cost about \$12,000. The donors of the house are Mrs. Dorothy Rogacheski, 1240 Washington Ave., and Mrs. Mavian Jackson, 1552 Water St., both in Stevens Point. They are descendants of the Franklins and Calkins

A "Save the House" effort is being organized by the Society and individuals and organizations, especially in the Plover area, are being asked to contribute. To date more than \$3000 has been raised.

The approximately 127-year-old structure is significant historically and architecturally.

The house was built about 1855 by George W. Franklin. Mr. Franklin was one of the early settlers of the county, arriving in 1844, and opened one of the county's first farms-- now called the Calkins Farm and Home. He was the first white man in the county to engage in potato raising on a large scale and was the first to ship potatoes out of the county by railroad.

According to Wendell Nelson, Amherst, an architectural historian, the Franklin/Calkins House is "in an exclusive group of 10 to 12 houses built before 1860 in the county and still standing."

* "Architecturally," notes Nelson, "the
* house is important for being one of the
* half-dozen or so Greek Revival houses
* still standing in the county in anything
* like their original appearance. This is
* significant for both the Town and Village
* of Plover, but also, because the Plover
* area has more Greek Revival buildings
* than any other part of the county, for the
* county as a whole."

Other than needing a coat of paint and some minor repairs, the two-story structure appears to have no damage from age, remodeling or vandalism.

If saved, the house will be placed with three other historic buildings in the Plover Square Park the Historical Society is constructing. The Park will then contain a church/museum, a one-room school house, a working blacksmith shop and a period house. "Fortunately, its style is Revival," notes Tim Siebert, Society president, same as the old Plover Methodist Church which the Society purchased about five years ago and has been improving for future use as a museum display area.

In order to preserve and use this part of our history, the PCHS is asking citizens for assistance. Contributions may be sent to the Society at Post Office Box 672, Stevens Point, WI. 54481,

* "SAVE THE HOUSE" COCKTAIL PARTY

* A reception/cocktail party at the Sky
* Club in Plover will be held on July 12th
* as a fund raising event to save the
* Franklin/Calkins House. The proceeds
* will go to moving the house from its
*

present site to the Society's Plover Square Park grounds about a mile away.

Tickets are available for \$50 per couple and may be ordered by calling Jay Price of the Society's board of directors, at 341-5986 or by writing to him at 2021 Welsby Ave., Stevens Point, WI., 54481.

The party will run from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Information will be available about the "Save the House" campaign and the total museum and Plover Square Park project.

The Society has been given use of the Sky Club and special rates from the Proprietors, Dennis and Terry Freund, who are supporters of the plan.

TOUR OF FRANKLIN/CALKINS HOUSE

- * A tour of the Franklin/Calkins House in Plover on Highway B, east of the
- * downtown area, is scheduled for Saturday, July 3, 10 a.m. to noon.
- * The Society plans to move the historic dwelling to its museum grounds
- * later this summer, providing it can raise the necessary funds.
- * Jay Price will lead the tour and explain the interior decor; Marjorie Warner
- * will tell about the history of the people who built the structure, presumably
- * in the 1850's, and who lived in it until recently; and Wendell Nelson will
- * explain the architecture.
- * The program is open to the public.

"CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS...."

Would you like to spend some time on special projects for the Society?

We have needs for special talents and we encourage interested volunteers to contact Society president Tim Siebert (344-7607) or any member of the board.

We need people with carpentry skills to assist in the dismantling and re-construction of our blacksmith shop. It currently stands on a farm near Arnott and is to be moved to our Plover Square Park site. Some dismantling of outbuildings at the franklin/Calkins farm must be done in connection with the removal of the house to the site in Plover.

There is periodic need for people to address letters. And, are you talented in arts and crafts projects to use materials provided by the Society in constructing items that could be sold?

Would you like to help in special fund raising projects or membership recruitment?

Let us know.

SOCIETY ELECTIONS

Tim Siebert has been re-elected by the board of directors as president of the Society for a second one-year term. He is a member of the faculty of the Stevens Point Area Senior High School.

Elizabeth Schwerbel was chosen as the new treasurer to succeed Neil Lewis who declined re-nomination because of the press of other business.

Phil Kallas and Michael Riley were re-elected as vice president and secretary, respectively.

The board has also voted to seat Gary Thompson in an unfilled position on the board. Thompson is a social studies teacher at Stevens Point Area Senior High.

Earlier, at the Society's annual meeting, the membership re-elected five directors. They are Laura Davis, Loras Smithbach, Paul Skidmore, Jay Price and Charles Normington. They will serve three-year terms.

PORTAGE COUNTY HISTORIC CALENDAR

A new venture in publishing is being undertaken this summer by the Society.

A 1983 calendar will be put on the market within the next few weeks featuring a different picture of Portage County's past for every month.

The cost will be \$4.95 per copy.

Reproduced on quality paper by Spectra Print Corp., the calendar will include notations about important events that took place on specific days in the county such as disasters and the establishment of post offices and banks.

Phil Kallas, chairman of the publications committee, has been spearheading the project which has involved locating photographs in the Society's collection, deciding on events to be commemorated, and handling technical and marketing arrangements.

The photographs show various scenes from the county's past, including the destruction caused by a tornado in Lone Pine in 1903, a mill at McDill, a patriotic gathering--probably on Memorial Day--on the grounds of the old County Court House about 30 years ago, a main street scene of Plover, and the moving of money from the First National Bank of Stevens Point to its new building in the 1950's (or, the "laundering" of the funds in view of the fact that a truck from Normington's carried the cash.)

People may order copies by sending a check for \$4.95 to the Society--Post Office Box 672, Stevens Point, 54481. Special rates will be made available to businesses, organizations, or individuals desiring to order in bulk.

A TIP OF THE HAT TO PLOVER

The Village of Plover has offered some "in kind" assistance for our property in Plover. This will involve the acquisition of trees and shrubs and other landscaping items. Further, the Village and the Society have signed an agreement whereby the Society will pay \$250 a year to Plover to purchase the two lots that the Village has been holding for a number of years. The terms of the contract are very generous and state that of the annual \$250, \$200 will go towards the price of the land and the remaining \$50 will be put towards rent of the property. The contract has a renewal clause at the end of 5 years in the event that the Society has not been able to pay off the remainder of the original \$8000.00 cost of the property. The Village of Plover has been most helpful and the Society's board of directors would like to extend its thanks for that help. Mr. Schlutter, Village president, has gone out of his way to help and a thank you is also extended to him by the Society.

The Society would also like to thank the Bank of Plover for the donation of \$2000 to help defray our property costs.

FINANCIAL DONATIONS FROM OUR SUPPORTERS

The Society is in the process of compiling a complete list of all donors to the Museum Fund and the Franklin/Calkins House project. That list will appear in a future issue of the PINERY or the Society Newsletter. In the meantime, the Society is grateful for your generosity and consideration.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Two longtime members of the Society were honored April 21st., and a researcher received a memorial prize during the organization's annual meeting at the Lincoln Center.

Clifford Swanson of Park Ridge, who was on the first board of directors elected by the Society 30 years ago, was given the "Pine and Iron Award," highest recognition of the organization.

The same honor was bestowed posthumously on Mrs. Chester (Alice) Loberg who died several months ago. The award was accepted by two of her four daughters, Mrs. Joan Johnson, Amherst, and Mrs. Marge Stratton, Nelsonville.

The \$150 Win Rothman Local History Award was won this year in the sixth annual round of competition by David G. Tesch, a graduate student in natural resources with emphasis in planning at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

He entered a study he has done as a thesis on the pre-settlement vegetation in Portage County recorded between 1839 and 1853.

He utilized writings of early surveyors and others in compiling his study which recently was chosen by the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey for publication. The work contains about 80 pages and a detailed map.

Only about five other persons have received the Pine and Iron Award since it was established by the Society in the late 1970's.

Swanson, a retired attorney for Sentry Insurance, was an officer many years and served as president of the Society during the 1950's, including 1958 when Stevens Point's Centennial was observed under partial sponsorship of the Society. He also served on the Board of Curators of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Mrs. Loberg, who was a former officer, was active in developing a historical collection for the Amherst area where she worked about 30 years as a village librarian. She was a correspondent for newspapers, including the Stevens Point Journal, and many of her feature articles were on historical subjects.

ACTIVITIES

Last year the Society's activities committee felt that a current history program should be presented. This would provide a change from a more traditional presentation and, it was hoped, be of great interest to the community at large. With that in mind, a talk on the defeat of the Rosholt Nuclear Power Plant, presented by Mrs. Naomi Jacobson, was delivered in February. The talk drew about 105 people. The Society has purchased a video tape of the talk and it is available in our collection.

About 25 local people went on a one-day trip May 22 to historic sites in Green Bay. The group visited the railroad museum and Heritage Hill. The Society's activities committee is planning a trip to another site next year. The Society was joined by Happy Joe's Pizza and Ice Cream Parlor in sponsorship of the special event.

FROM THE BOOK SHELF

Merton E. Krug, DUBAY: SON-IN-LAW OF OSHKOSH (Appleton, Wis., C.C. Nelson Co., 1946), 324 pp.

It is not a common practice to review a book that is not newly published. However, the book, DUBAY, written by Merton E. Krug, published in 1946, seems to offer an exception to this practice. The book appears to be the only biography yet published about DuBay.

John Baptiste DuBay, by contemporary accounts, was a well known figure in mid-19th century Wisconsin. However, today, he is more a phantom figure in the state's history. He was an offspring of a french father and, it is believed, a Menominee mother. His Indian heritage would underlie many of the problems he encountered during the one period in his life when he was directly in the public spotlight of the time, that being the murder of Mr. William S. Reynolds and the subsequent trials for the act. Despite the publicity revolving around the murder, the three trials and DuBay's reputation, his movements around the area of what is now Wisconsin remain obscure.

Mr. Krug's book is an attempt to draw together what is known about DuBay's movements and to bring him out of the shadows. A significant portion of the book, however, concentrates on the murder trials occurring between the years 1857 and 1859. A major difficulty in the writing of the book was that this is the only period when history focuses directly on DuBay. The remainder of the book draws together the scattering of facts dealing with his life before and after the period of the murder. Unfortunately, the portions of the book not dealing with the trials is written only in the most general terms due to the paucity of materials.

The trials portion of the book does not shed a great deal of light on DuBay himself other than the realization that nearly every major historical figure of that time in Wisconsin had played some role in DuBay's life and would appear, in some capacity, during the trials. Moses Strong as defense attorney and James Duane Doty as a character witness provide two examples of the type of people involved in the trials. The first, and primary, trial is seen through the eyes of the contending lawyers and DuBay's true personality was obscured by the attempts to prove that he was everything from a coward to a cold, calculating, violent murderer. The author renders a series a verbatim comments by the witnesses without first stating the questions asked by the attorneys. He also fails to give anything but the most minimal explanation of what was happening in the trials, and why. Herein lies the major shortcoming of the work. The author fails to draw, or even attempt to draw, major conclusions about what type of man DuBay was or about the trials in general other than to say that they all ended in hung juries. Still, the trials are cited as major cases in early Wisconsin jurisprudence and the reader is able to get some feeling and some impression for what was important to these early Wisconsin people in both legal and cultural terms.

Despite the book's drawbacks it presents the only attempt at a concise view of John Baptiste DuBay yet available. Something of the times and major figures of the era can be gleaned from the work. It does, in a moderate way, give the reader a picture of this early period in the history of Wisconsin.

Tim Siebert
PCHS

Elaine Reetz, *COME BACK IN TIME, VOL. I: COMMUNITIES* (Princeton, Wis., Fox River Publishing Co., 1981), 181 pp., \$8.95.

This is a fine local history offering and would make an excellent choice as a gift. The geographic area covered is Green Lake, Marquette and Waushara Counties with a bit of spill-over into Winnebago and Fond du Lac. Each county is handled separately, community by community. Communities are arranged alphabetically with one to six pages of text and pictures describing the early history of each. Emphasis is on the 19th century and especially on the earliest settlers. It seems apparent that heavy reliance was placed on the *PORTRAIT AND BIOGRAPHICAL ALBUM OF GREEN LAKE, MARQUETTE AND WAUSHARA COUNTIES*, an 1890 publication of the sort meant to sell to the large number of persons memorialized in its pages. Though a somewhat uncritical source, biographical histories do provide the large numbers of family names and family deeds needed to appeal to today's buyer of local history.

A second major ingredient in Mrs. Reetz' excellent effort has been her personal postcard collection, the result of auction attendance as well as rummaging through antique shops, a lesson to us all. Most of the book's 139 photographs are postcard reproductions and once in a while a postcard message is quoted. Illustrations are well produced and they are well worth the price of the book. In addition, 32 plat maps are used adroitly to illustrate the ambitions of the early settlers.

Forty communities are given relatively complete early histories with profuse information regarding early settlers. An additional thirty-four communities have brief reviews containing little or no reference to early families.

Another enjoyable feature of *COME BACK IN TIME* is its careful listing of sources for each community including Mrs. Reetz' evaluations of their usefulness. A newcomer to the study of local history of Central Wisconsin will have no difficulty going beyond this book.

Criticisms? Sloppy proofreading and some shortcomings in editing that leave the reader without information he will almost surely want at a given point. Examples: the assertion that Marquette in today's Green Lake County lacked 36 votes of becoming the state capital; another, a long discussion of whether the founder of Briggsville was A.E. Briggs or E.A. Briggs could have been settled definitively if it were really that important, or ignored if it was as unimportant as I think the average reader will think it.

But, these are minor shortcomings. Mrs. Reetz has produced an enjoyable book many of us will want to own (especially at its bargain price) and has performed a notable service to the field of local history in Wisconsin. A sequel, Vol. II Business and Commerce is promised.

Ramon Stade
PCHS

CLIO'S CORNER

BLACKS IN PORTAGE COUNTY

A few years ago, while researching information about tornados and unseasonably cold winters that have visited Portage County, I found several references to black people living here.

Many oldtimers may not be surprised by that information because they knew or learned about blacks who resided in the area, especially at Plover, in the first part of this century and even earlier.

Surprising to me and to people I have discussed the matter with is the fact that black people lived here in family units prior to the Civil War.

In its June/July 1982 edition of COLUMNS, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin reports: "After the Wisconsin supreme court ruled that the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was unconstitutional, and again in 1862 when the Homestead Act opened land for settlement, these blacks were attracted to the state by a vision of freedom and land. One group of blacks settled the Cheyenne Valley community in Vernon County while another pioneered the Pleasant Ridge community in Grant County."

The references to early black residents of Portage County are rare, but each one I have seen is about some unusual and tragic event.

For example, the PINERY reported that a black woman died of exhaustion while walking in a snowstorm early in 1857 between a farm occupied by a friend or relative east of the city to her home in Stevens Point.

The account of a tornado that hit the southern part of the county in September of 1863, also in the PINERY, stated that a home occupied by a black family in the Town of Buena Vista was destroyed.

Recently, Marjorie Warner of our Society, called my attention to another important reference to a local black person. Since her retirement from the directorship of the public library here, Marjorie has worked diligently for our organization and has done some important research by reading materials in our archival collection and early newspapers published here. In the notebooks of pioneer S.A. Sherman, she found the following:

I think the 1st to die in Plover was a negro woman with the small pox and buried near the Morgan House where the others were buried but was never removed. Old man Tucker moved the dead in [to?] the new cemetery near the Yellow Banks. I drew the plat and asisted [sic] in laying it out [...] this was the 1st one laid out in [when?] the Pinery Plover included the whole county.

Marjorie found this information while doing research on the Franklin/Calkins House near Plover which our Society plans to move from its original site to our nearby museum and Plover Square Park grounds.

In the Sherman notebooks it is reported that Melissa Adelia Franklin Morris (sister of George W. Franklin who built the house now planned for restoration) came to Plover in 1845 and died there on Oct. 11 of that year. Sherman said she was the first white person to die in Plover. The circumstances surrounding Mrs. Morris's illness (the result of childbirth), the preparation of her body for burial and her funeral were all described

in the notebook. The reference to the black woman followed those entries.

John Anderson
UWSP

IMPRESSIONS OF AN AUCTION

Blaring above my head amidst a pile of boxes, an auctioneer beckons people to buy his wares. Remnants of yesteryear still dot the farmyard reminding shrewd buyers of a more glorious time it once experienced. The tired house, once grand and proud but now sagging and meek, gasps a sigh of loneliness as people charge in and out carrying their finds up to the auctioneer to be sold.

Just before the lean-to which lazily nudges the north side of the old house like a sleepy cat pestering to be stroked, furniture stands militarily for inspection by the anxious antique hunters. The house flaps its doors in the wind enticing people into its sagging rooms.

The parlor, spewing people out its slender double doors stands stately as it tries to grip its better days. Its piano, a mahogany masterpiece carved and curlicued, is pushed halfway out the door with people struggling on either side to coax the room into relinquishing this relic to the auction block. Between a pair of stained cathedral windows a fireplace is on its guard, coughing ashes and cinder into anyone crossing its path, displaying its dismay. A parlor suite with backs like balloons and carving so dense it could be mistaken for a forest, dances out the doors with people tripping over clutter, racing to find other treasures.

Across the hall, the drawing room clings to yesteryear. Cupids on gold flocked wallpaper fight for space with gold picture cords on which previous owners' likenesses dangle precariously. Beneath the crystal chandelier, its prisms and cut glass shades sparkling like dusty diamonds, a center table still resides with the velvet-covered photograph album dominating the highly polished but thickly grimed surface. A black cat, confused and bewildered at all the excitement darts out from among the curlicues and arches that support the tabletop. The family pump organ, tall and massive with its what-not shelf filled with tiny Dresden figures, rules the room from its small corner. In the alcove ferns abound as if growing in a forest with faded ribbons still limply decorating their fanciful pots. A platform rocker joyfully remembers better times when a young woman daintily sits down to rock her sleepy child into dreamland.

Shouting from across the room, a rope portiere beckons curious buyers. Behind it a stairway peeks, casting shadows as if to discourage people from interrupting the upstairs' quiet sleep. Unknown to the rest of the house the bed chambers were empty, stripped of any saleable merchandise long before the auction sale had begun. Left in one room, however, a bed was left, maybe intentionally. The monster had no means of escaping, being eight feet tall and carved to the top. The small doorway refused to let this last remnant of 'before' out of its sight. It sat forlornly, wishing to be among the commotion; it wished to be used again.

Through an open closet door, a hidden staircase, twisting and turning among the lathes and plaster of the downstairs wall, beckons with mystery anyone brave enough to seek out its destination. Below it, a dining room, long forgetting distant formality, lies with its iron stove being made to heat again, smudging its chrome turnings with half-burnt wood chips, and a glassdoored china press filled with china chipped from years of use. Past the corner dry sink, its pump lying useless and creaking of rust, the kitchen emits smells and voices like time had never passed; ladies bustle about feeding hoards of people with auctionitis.

On the grounds, an old barn bares its broken windows like a hockey goalie gritting his teeth. East of the barn three silos bow gracefully like Victorian turrets to the hoard of people searching its old walls. Inside the barn a tiny cutter, nestled like a mouse in the hay, is sold to a dubious buyer. A string of sheds and outbuildings dot the landscape opposite the house and barn, leading back to the loud auctioneer.

In a glance from the sandy road, the estate looked like a mice-laden cheese factory with mice scurrying to find the biggest and best piece of cheese. A rickety fence meanders drunkenly, surrounding the yard and meadow trying to hold together the past but being trampled down by the present.

Shawn Stanchik
SPASH

FEATURE

MILK CANS, BAYONETS, PITCHFORKS AND TEARGAS: THE FARMERS HOLIDAY

In 1932, America was in the tight grip of depression. Many people often refer to this period as "hard times". Clearly, it was a hard time for the nation and especially so for the farmers. The farmers of Wisconsin were no exception: they too were suffering, for example, corn that cost one dollar and eight cents per bushel to produce, returned only eighty-three cents to the farmer. Likewise, milk cost two dollars and fifty cents per pound to produce and this commodity returned less than a dollar. To try and ease their plight, the farmers began to organize. Throughout the mid-west and Wisconsin, there was much discussion about organizing and possible with-holding of products. This sentiment led to the creation of several farm organizations, the strongest of these was the Farmer's Holiday Association. The idea of a farmer's holiday had begun in Iowa under Milo Reno. In 1932 it began to increase its strength, soon it had spread across the Mid-West. In Wisconsin, the Holiday Association was begun by agents travelling around the state trying to organize small local units. However, it soon became apparent that a larger state organization would be needed. Therefore, on September 3, 1932, over five thousand farmers met at Marshfield, Wisconsin. The Milwaukee Journal reported that: "Arriving at Columbia Park in an old vintage flivver, the Wisconsin dairy farmer is more than bitter. He's mad clear through".

Clearly, the farmer's were very disturbed about their condition. The following song bounded across the Marshfield fairgrounds and was soon thereafter echoed statewide. It gives a good impression of how the farmers felt.

(Sung to the tune of the Battle Hymn of the Republic)

The packers boss our livestock, Andy
Mellon has our dough;
Hoover scorned our soldier boys, gave
liberty a blow;
The Standard Oil owns our gas, the
Morgans run the show,
The time has come to strike.

Gale Borden owns the Eagle Brand
 and lives among the rich;
 Carnation with the wealthy few
 forgets us in a ditch;
 It's time to give our belts a jerk
 and pull it up a hitch,
 The time has come to strike.

The international banker's system
 robs our treasury;
 They crush the million innocents and
 give us misery;
 They take away our chance at life; our
 hope of victory,
 The time has come to strike.

We raise the food to feed the rich, the
 cloths to dress their kids;
 We pitch the fruit and milk the cows
 and furnish all their needs;
 We ask a square deal for our own, they
 furnish us with skids,
 The time has come to strike.

(Chorus)

Now we'll strike to save the farm homes,
 Now we'll strike to save the farm homes,
 Now we'll strike to save the farm homes,
 The time has come to strike.

Clearly, the farmer's were upset by what they considered injustices against themselves. Therefore, it was not surprising that "as dusk settled over the Marshfield park, the farmers picked as their leader Arnold Gilberts, 37 of Ridgeland, Dunn County. Young and aggressive, Gilberts...(led) the movement as the president of the Wisconsin unit of the holiday association that surged over the cornbelt and the Northwest."

Therefore, as the meeting continued, the farmers decided:

Let's call a "Farmer's Holiday,"
 A holiday we'll hold;
 We'll eat our wheat and ham and eggs
 And let them eat their gold.

There was no question now that the farmers had gathered not only to organize, but that they had also gathered in order to consider a strike. Gilberts mentioned that: "Up in Ladysmith, the farmers showed that they were ready to take a holiday. It is proof that the farmer is waking up to the one weapon that he has left--retention of his product. Tell them what you want and if they don't come through, set upon them like a bunch of hornets. We besieged and begged Congress. We pleaded with the Madison gang and were are we?" Gilberts further argued: "And remember, in the pinch, they cannot make us ship our milk or livestock. We own it. If enough of us agree to stay home with it, there will be a lot of hollering...."

All across the Mid-West, similar meetings were taking place. Because of the meetings, the

governors of North Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota and representatives from Wisconsin, Ohio, Oklahoma, Wyoming and Nebraska met in order to develop a resolution to present to the farmers and to Washington. This resolution suggested that all farm loan repayments be deferred, that the tariff be revised in order to protect agriculture, currency be expanded, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation be extended to agriculture and finally, they suggested that farm surpluses be controlled. It was also suggested that the president should take over all farm programs, and credit institutions, thereby being able to control the currency and to be able to abolish all mortgages.

Nonetheless, Washington failed to act and a farm strike appeared imminent. Arnold Gilberts, president of the Wisconsin group, declared that "The farmer has the greatest power of any class. He has the power to stop war or to make peace. Not bullets, not bayonets, not gas, but food has won every war and will win every war, including our own." Several days later, he announced that "If Congress ignores the farmer's demands, it is to us to strike and strike hard. But, Congress must be given a chance and if their chance is not given, I'll quit as the president of this organization."

Unfortunately, Congress did not act and many farmers began to clamor for action. A strike now appeared to be a certainty. However, Roosevelt telegraphed the national farm leaders, saying that he was considering some possible solutions. Milo Reno then urged all state units to postpone the strike. However, many farmers had apparently decided that there had already been enough waiting. Therefore, under the leadership of Walter Singler of the Wisconsin Milk Pool, the strike began.

This has gone down in history as the "Milk Wars" and indeed it was a period full of violence, picketing, and even death. The strike soon grew to such dimensions that Governor Schmedeman considered declaring martial law. National Guard troops were stationed in the more volatile areas and pitched battles occurred where tear gas was used and even machine guns were present.

In May 1933, the Milk Pool began their strike and established picket lines. They eventually forced many milk plants, creameries and factories to close. The pickets attempted to stop all traffic containing farm produce: spilt milk and blockaded roads became a common sight. In reality though, many areas closed themselves down voluntarily. It was in those areas that had refused to close that the violence most often erupted.

The climax to this violence occurred at Durham Hill in Shawano County. Here, a group of farmers had gathered, and the sheriff ordered the crowd to disperse. When they refused, over 150 deputies, armed with rifles and bayonets, advanced upon the crowd. The Milwaukee Journal report stated:

The crowd had raised an American Flag at the corner and had massed around it. The soldiers threw bomb after bomb and the fumes broke up the crowd. Some of the pickets took refuge behind the fences....

The guardsmen, with rifles ready, deployed down both sides: then they lowered their rifles, with fixed bayonets, to charge and close in....

Finally, after the strikers were scattered, a roundup of suspects began. One striker who was being questioned by the district attorney remarked: "I was in it because I wanted to see the farmer get a square deal." He continued that "We could of done it if we all stuck together." The attorney then replied: "That's just it. Your not sticking together and because you farmers are not a unit, you're licked before you start. You're fighting the state of Wisconsin now and it's a losing battle."

The farmers may have been losing the battle, but it appeared that someone forgot to tell them that. The violence continued, several creameries were even bombed. Again, Mid-Western governors met for a conference. Again, the results of this meeting were sent to Washington and, as before, they encountered much difficulty. Once more, the farmers were ready to strike, only this time, the strike was to cover the entire Mid-West and the Farmer's Holiday Association would become involved. This strike remained relatively peaceful and lasted for a week, with many cities running out of dairy products. Finally, after seeing the other states had remained open, Gilberts declared an end to the strike in Wisconsin. Because of this, Gilberts received many threats and his popularity almost completely disappeared.

Eventually, the farmers of Wisconsin did lose their battle and the Farmer's Holiday Association completely disappeared by 1935. Nonetheless, in a sense they had won their battle; not because of any immediate gains, but because the plight of the farmer became dramatized and because once again, the farmers of America had made themselves a political and economic force that had to be reckoned with.

Wes Grambo
Stevens Point

(The sources consulted in researching this paper will be supplied by the PINERY upon request).

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

ENCLOSED is \$5 for Membership

ENCLOSED is \$ _____ for Franklin/Calkins House Fund

ENCLOSED is \$ _____ for Franklin/Calkins House Fund
(Please return if total amount is not raised)

MAIL TO:

PORTAGE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 672

STEVENS POINT, WISCONSIN 54481