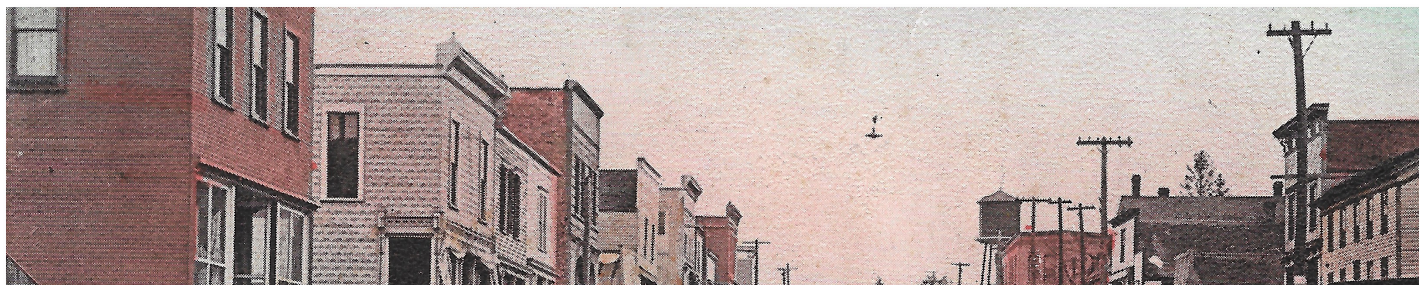


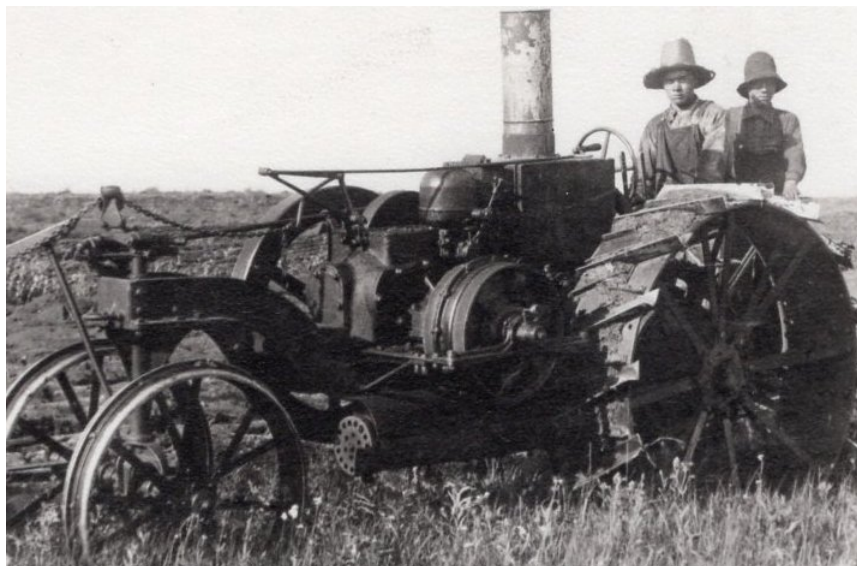
LINDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



SUGAR BEETS HYPED AS ALTERNATIVE CROP FOR LINDEN AREA FARMERS

In the early 1900's the raising of sugar beets was thought to be a sweet crop for farmers all over Wisconsin. As early as the late 1860's the sugar beet crop was promoted as another source of income for local farmers.

The *Mineral Point National Democrat* newspaper in December 29, 1869 suggested, "We understand that it does not require a large amount of capital to start a manufactory for making beet sugar. Why can't we have one here? The soil is well adapted to the growth of sugar beets and the raising of them would open up a new branch of industry to the farming community."



When the sugar beets were grown in Linden around 1906, farmers were still using horses to plow and cultivate their fields. A decade later tractors such as this one were showing up on area farms. This photo is believed to be from Linden, young men are unidentified.

The idea of raising sugar beets locally didn't gain much traction due to lack of a market for them and an easy, inexpensive way to transport the crop. In 1905 a new processing facility for sugar beets was operating at Janesville and the Mineral Point & Northern railroad opened for business in Linden that same year. Then, as now, sugar beets could be raised as either sugar for human consumption or as a livestock feed.

The Mineral Point Tribune of March 10, 1904 reported, "A six hundred thousand dollar sugar factory is to be built at Janesville the coming year, to be finished in time to handle the 1905 crop of sugar beets. It is evident that Wisconsin is well adapted to the early raising of sugar beets. When the Janesville factory gets to running it will afford the opportunity of experimenting with beet raising in this section, as the product can be easily shipped to Janesville."

Linden farmer, Robert Hawke, made several trips in the fall of 1904 to the Janesville sugar beet factory to investigate the alternative crop. The Linden newspaper, *The Southwest Wisconsin*, Dec. 16, 1904 stated, "Mr. Robert Hawke has made two or three trips to the Janesville Beet Sugar Factory for the purpose of inquiring as to the possibilities for profitable raising of sugar beets for that factory by the farmers of this neighborhood. He is convinced that there is good money in it for Linden farmers. He finds that from 15 to 20 tons of sugar beets are raised to the acre, and that the price per ton, paid at the factory is from \$4.50 to \$5.50 per ton, depending on the percentage of sugar in beets. The new railroad, he says, will haul beets, Linden to Janesville for 25 cents per ton. Mr. Hawke is satisfied that our soil here is well adapted for raising sugar beets; and that all things considered, it is the best crop that the farmers of this vicinity can raise. He wants his farmer friends to think the matter over and to ask him whether they may wish to know about it. If he cannot

BEETS, CONTINUED

J. W. Taylor, editor of *The Southwest Wisconsin*, concluded "Mr. Hawke is enthusiastic about the matter—just as he was over the railroad. He believed in the railroad. Now he wants to use that in order to make some of his land produce from \$60 to \$100 per acre. That's good business for all our farmers, surely."

For perspective, the price of beets at \$4.50 a ton in the early 1900's equals \$108.00 per ton today. The top estimate of \$100 per acre farmers could receive then now with inflation figured in would be \$2,650 per acre.

On the 29th of December Hawke, along with 3,000 farmers from Rock, Jefferson and Dane counties, attended a day long meeting at the Janesville sugar beet factory. Many of the farmers had contracted with the company the prior year to raise and sell their beets. This year they demanded a higher price and compared their situation with a beet processing plant in Menomonee Falls that allowed farmers to retain the wet pulp for use as livestock feed. The Janesville factory invested in a drier to use all of the sugar beet and sell the pulp as a byproduct. This was one instance whereby the farmers had the upper hand in price negotiation because the factory simply couldn't operate without a large crop to run through their works.

Hawke became the local agent for the Janesville Company and organized a meeting at Hicks' Hall in Linden for local farmers interested in more information. The early February meeting was covered by J. W. Taylor of the local newspaper: "Mr. Meyer, representing the Rock County Sugar Company talked to a fair sized gathering of farmers in Hicks' Hall. His talk was very interesting, giving a general description of the process of producing sugar from beets, how to prepare the ground for seed, cultivation and the final making of the sugar at the factory. Farmers appeared to be greatly interested and several announced their intention of raising sugar beets this year in an experimental way."

Linden farmers were required to contact Hawke and sign a contract with the Sugar company which detailed the number of acres the farmer would plant and also the price guarantee based on sugar percentage of the beets when processed. The company, through Hawke, supplied the seed.

In the May 17th, 1905 *Southwest Wisconsin*, Editor Taylor noted, "Our sugar beet men are preparing to plant seed as soon as ground is dry enough. Several small pieces are to be put in this year by our farmers as a matter of testing the character of the land here for sugar beet raising, and also to get a practical knowledge of beet culture. The chances are that where one acre is planted this year ten acres will be planted next year; for it is a highly profitable business. At Janesville it is putting tobacco raising to the side. There is still time and opportunity for farmers who have not yet thought to plant any sugar beets to yet do so. Mr Meyers, an expert in the line of sugar beet raising, and an employee of the Rock County Sugar Company says, 'The best planting time is about the 20th to 25th of May. Parties should use a Planet Junior drill that can be procured from Robert Hawke. Plant in rows 18 or 20 inches apart, plant the seed about 3/4 of an inch deep. From what I have seen of the soil you should raise excellent beets.'"

The base contract price farmers received was \$4.50 per ton for beets testing 14 per cent or less and 25 cents per ton for each additional one per cent of sugar contained in the beets. In the late fall of 1905 it was reported by Taylor, "Linden sugar beets brought \$5 per ton this year. That means that our soil raises beets with a high percentage of sugar."

In the early 1900's Wisconsin farmers were raising around 20,000 acres of sugar beets under contract to four processing plants. They were located in Janesville, Menomonee Falls, Chippewa Falls and just over the state line at Menominee in Upper Michigan.

Closer to Linden sugar beet factories were proposed at Madison, Dodgeville, Lancaster and Prairie du Chien in 1905 and 1906. A letter dated March 26, 1906 was sent to Dodgeville area farmers from the Dodgeville Commercial Club promoting the raising of beets and a local factory. It stated in part, "Sugar beet growing fits in very well with dairying. The tops, leaves and pulp make the best of dairy feed. If the farmers of this and adjoining territory will raise sugar beets, Dodgeville will in two or three years have a sugar factory. A sugar factory means an investment here of \$600,000 and employment for over 300 men at good wages."

BEETS, CONTINUED

However, farmers generally were not in favor of using beets as a crop rotation. Sugar beets were a crop that needed a lot of attention early in the growing season to keep weeds out and that meant more labor. Transportation from Linden to Janesville over the Mineral Point & Northern may have amounted to a bottle neck when sugar beet growers tried to ship at the same time.

The MP & N ran into problems with a shortage of empty boxcars due to heavy shipments from mines, farmers sending livestock to Chicago, and general freight during the boom years of 1905-06. The short line railroad was at the mercy of getting extra cars from either the Chicago & Northwestern at Whitson Jct. (Edmund) or the Milwaukee St. Paul at Mineral Point and they didn't always have spare cars available.

Sugar beet factories faced a catch 22 situation. They needed the commitment of farmers willing to put in large acreages of beets to efficiently operate. In Dodgeville there were not enough farmers willing to sign production contracts. The factory at Lancaster did not materialize because farmers there had a sugar beet crop failure and lost interest in sticking with it. The same thing happened in the Prairie du Chien area.

While the sugar factories never happened in our area, the Rock County Sugar Company continued to operate until 1939. The equipment and machinery were then sold to a Canadian sugar factory. Sugar beets were processed at the Janesville plant into granulated sugar and shipped out in 100 pound sacks.

In more recent times sugar beet production worldwide has been converted into Sucrose. Sugar beets today are grown in parts of Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, Colorado and Nebraska. The largest sugar beet production comes from Western Minnesota into Eastern North Dakota.

ANNUAL MEETING PROGRAM ON STANDBY

Our 2021 annual meeting and program is on hold for right now but we do expect to be able to announce a firm date and time in the near future.

Last years meeting in May was cancelled and we had a virtual program that you can still access via our website or go on You Tube and type in Ross Mine 1904-1918. If you use our website click on the program tab and there will be a link to the program.

We look forward to meeting again in person but we want to make sure it is at a safe time for everyone. Thank you for your continued support of the Linden Historical Society with your membership renewals and donations, always much appreciated!

THANK YOU

ACQUISITIONS RECEIVED

Thumb drive on Harker family of Linden township from Lisa Springer.

Framed Christmas giveaway with thermometer, circa 1940's from Jim Jewell.

DONATIONS RECEIVED

Bill and Lois Ralph	\$1,500
Jerry Holmes	\$50
Jennifer Roxas in memory of Richard Guy Young	\$50



View of Linden Cemetery from Church street.

LINDEN ARMCHAIR CEMETERY TOUR

EPISODE 3

Grace Nicholas had a long well lived life and had earned the respect of everyone in Linden when her time on earth ended at the age of 100. She was a school teacher, businesswoman, wife and mother, gifted singer, active church worker, a woman of many talents.

Grace Richards was born April 1, 1806 in Cornwall and married her first cousin, Christopher Nicholas there in 1836. The two came direct to Mineral Point in 1842.

Rufus Quick, publisher of the *Montfort Mail* interviewed Grace days before her 100th birthday and summed up her life this way, "To recite important events in the life of Mrs. Nicholas for the past one hundred years, much of which is still fresh in her memory, would make an interesting volume, and shows her connected with a wealthy family in England, a school mistress, fond of adventure and a traveler in strange lands, a woman of grace and learning who made a favorable and lasting impression in the lands and in all classes of society in which she circulated."

After Christopher and Grace had lived in Mineral Point for a decade they decided to try a new adventure striking out for the gold rush town of Grass Valley, California in 1852. They took the Panama route while others they knew such as James Brewer went by the overland path. The Nicholas couple arrived well in advance of them. Either route to California at that time would have been an adventure.

In Grass Valley Christopher easily got a job in the underground gold mines and worked alongside other Cornish miners. Grace operated her own dual businesses as keeper of a boarding house for single miners and as a dressmaker. The couple remained there for five years.

Quick from his March 29, 1906 article stated, "They also spent a short time in British Columbia. The experiences of the trip and the years spent in the land of gold are full of extremes, anecdotes of trials, danger, hardships and privations, but all came out well in the end, for they were moderately successful and came back in 1857 and settled on a farm northeast of what is now the Iowa County farm, near Laxeys.

Quick added, "They had no children of their own, but adopted a boy, John Champion, when he was four years old. He was given a place in their home, and reared with a devotion equal to a mother's love. It was a sad blow to them, when, at the age of 21, the young man contracted disease and died."



NICHOLAS, CONTINUED

Her husband died on the farm in May, 1884 at the age of 70. Grace sold the farm and moved into Linden where she bought a house and lived out the rest of her life.

Rufus Quick described Grace Nicholas at the century mark, "For one of her age, Mrs. Nicholas is well preserved, enjoying perfect health, both in body and mind. She reads without glasses and attends to all her personal wants, as well as to her business affairs. When she was 85 to 90 years of age she used to spade and plant her garden and her unusual activity and energy was the marvel of her friends."



At her 100th birthday party approximately 50 people crowded into her home for a party, one of the highlights, according to J. W. Taylor, editor of the local paper and friend was a solo by Grace herself. He said in part, "The occasion was indeed a joyful one. During the evening the venerated old lady sang, 'Rock of Ages,' which gave the attentive and appreciative guests unbounded pleasure."

Her musical abilities were well known, Taylor stated in her obituary, "In early and middle life she had been a singer of much more than average ability, and her love for singing, and in a lesser degree for instrumental music of all kinds, was always made manifest by her interest therein."

Grace Richards Nicholas would live another five months and fifteen days after her birthday until she passed away peacefully at home with her niece Philippa Sara at her side. The funeral service was held at her home where she was given the honor of four Primitive Methodist ministers officiating: Rev. John Hardcastle, Rev. Wm. James, Rev. S. Score and Phillip Allen Jr. She was active in the Linden Primitive Methodist Church since moving here and no doubt all four ministers benefited from her help while preaching in Linden.

The marker of Grace (Richards) Nicholas was installed by her niece Phillippa Sara in the Linden cemetery. At the very bottom, chiseled in stone are two lines from a hymn Grace sang at her 100th birthday party: Rock of ages cleft for me; let me hide myself in thee.

YOUR HELP NEEDED TO FIND DESCENDANTS OF LILLIAN MILLER

These three plates were donated to the Linden Historical Society by members Lois and Bill Ralph. The plates were painted by a friend of Sophie Ralph, Bill's grandmother.

The black & white photo here does not do justice to the colorful artwork, they are 4-6 inches in diameter with different flowers on each one. On the back is hand printed, "Lillian Miller" and dated 1910, plates have a gold border.

Lois and Bill would love to have the three plates returned to a descendant of Lillian Miller. Lois wrote, "We found a Lillian Johnson of the right age in the 1910 Mifflin census, parents Guss and Mary Miller."

We could find no further links in our search, if anyone knows of a connection to Lillian Miller please contact the newsletter editor.



These hand painted plates, dated 1910, were given to Lillian Miller of Mifflin.

BOOM TIMES REFLECTED IN LINDEN METHODIST EASTER SERVICE

April, 1916 were boom times with the Linden mines all running at full capacity. The mining boom was evident in the Rock church still standing today, where on Easter Sunday the M.E. Church conducted three services.

The correspondent to the *Montfort Mail* reported, "Linden is booming, at least so most people say concerning it. Most people would have believed it had they attended the Methodist Episcopal Church on Easter Sunday, for there were over 600 people attending the services of the day. The morning which was beclouded outside was not in such a condition inside the church. Sunshine was in the hearts of the people and all were there with joy to hear Rev. Tyrell of Mifflin.



The afternoon service commencing at 2:30 was gone through with sunshine outside and inside the church. The pastor baptized four children and this ceremony being over, a varied program was given by the Sunday school children, who had received training from Misses Bray and Barret and from Mrs. McGranahan. The program was much appreciated and all thank the workers for providing such an afternoon for the people's enjoyment.

The church was again open at 6:30 pm and by the time services commenced at 7 it was almost full. A full program was given by the choir and was much appreciated by the congregation. The pastor, Rev. H. Evans preached the sermon, his topic being, 'Have the only true religion', all of the people retired from church by nine o'clock all declaring Linden is booming, not only in its mines but its churches also."

The attendance is amazing when considering the Primitive Methodist Church located just down Main Street probably also had a stellar turnout. Estimates of the population in the village of Linden at this time have been pegged at between 800 to 1,000. The end of the Great War, World War I caused the prices of lead and zinc to plunge. Only a few mines remained open and the 1920 census showed the village with a population of 490.

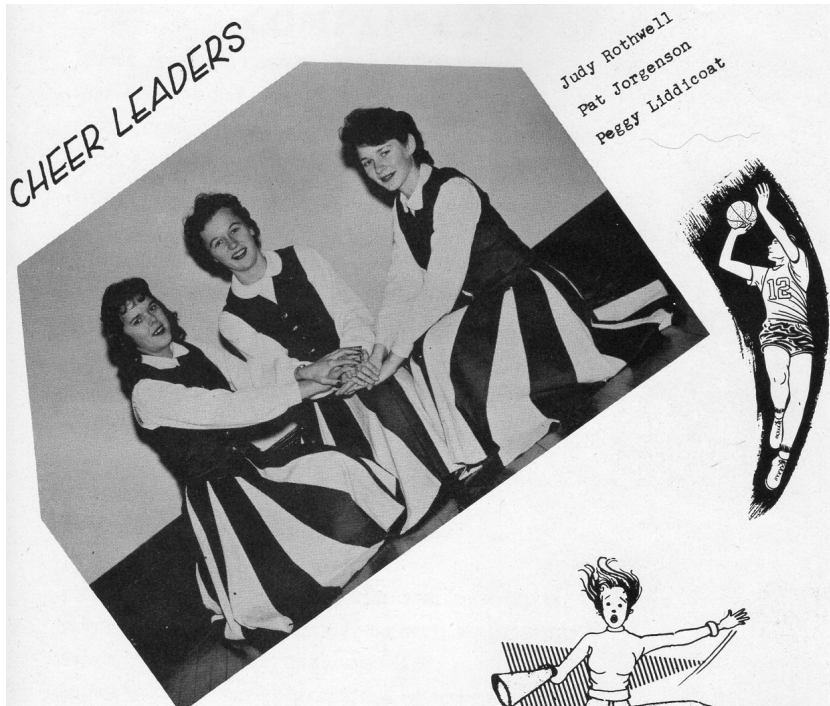
A LINDEN MYSTERY... HELP US SOLVE IT

Somewhere in Linden, as late as September, 1957 the village had a telegraph office. What is not known is where it was and who operated it. Western Union published the following required statement prior to the closing in area newspapers:

"Notice is hereby given that application was made on the 26th day of August, 1957, by the Western Union Telegraph Company to the Federal Communications Commission to close the telegraph office at Linden, Wisconsin. Substitute service will hereafter be available through the Western Union Telegraph office at Dubuque, Iowa, 51 miles distant by telephone. Any member of the public desiring to protest or support the closing of this office may communicate in writing with the Federal Communications Commission, Washington D.C. on or before September 26, 1957."

Your editor has called around to several local people and no one remembers this office being here. I wasn't able to find a way online to research the Western Union archives, most of which are housed in the Museum of American History, part of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The museum has 452 cubic feet in 871 boxes of Western Union archives and somewhere in there just might be our answer.

LINDEN HIGH SCHOOLS LAST CHEERLEADERS 1958-59



Peggy Liddicoat, Judy Rothwell and Pat Jorgenson were elected by the student body of the Linden High School for the 1957-58 school year and then re-elected the next year.

Cheerleading uniforms did not come out of regular school funding or an athletic budget. New uniforms purchased in 1957-58 were financed with the proceeds taken in by a pasty sale, in which the entire school participated. The uniforms were red and white corduroy.

The 1959-60 school year Linden High School merged with Cobb and competed in the Iowa County league under Linden-Cobb High School. The next year, 1961, all five high schools consolidated as the Iowa-Grant school district.

BREAKING NEWS FROM 1907

MISSING LINDEN WOMAN FOUND

Mrs. John Stephens went on a visit to Michigan for six weeks and then sent her husband a letter stating that she was going to start for home. A trip by train that normally took one or at most two days.

But she failed to arrive back in Linden and the entire community was worried. Her husband and brother-in-law phoned and sent telegraphs as to her whereabouts but with no success. Then her brother-in-law decided to take the next train to search for her.

He bought his ticket and was ready to leave on the train going North, when lo and behold, she got off the other train arriving at the depot. Her husband and children were overjoyed to see her, after their great anxiety. She had stopped in Madison and wrote a letter from there stating that she would stay there awhile, but the letter was not delivered. There was lots of anxiety throughout the community, and everybody was glad to know that she arrived all right.

Source, Joseph Goldsworthy, Linden news correspondent, *Dodgeville Chronicle*, February 22, 1907.



*****PHOTO AND DOCUMENT DONATIONS ALWAYS APPRECIATED*****

If you have any photos or documents on Linden area history we would love to make a copy for our archives. Photos and documents can be scanned and returned to you if desired. Contact either the President or Vice-President listed below. Membership in the Linden Historical Society is \$10 per year, lifetime membership \$100. Make check payable to Linden Historical Society and send to Treasurer Robin Lindner.

HOW TO CONTACT US

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