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## **The 1911 election of Socialist mayor Henry Stolze, Jr. of Manitowoc. Monograph 74 1996**

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# The 1911 Election of Socialist Mayor Henry Stolze, Jr. of Manitowoc

Monograph 74  
1996

By: Allan Patek

## Editor's Note

*The election in 1911 of a Socialist mayor of Manitowoc is an important part of Manitowoc County's political history. During the 1890s and early 1900s it was not uncommon to elect a Socialist to public office in Wisconsin or the nation. In fact, in 1910 Socialists in Wisconsin won a seat in Congress, were elected mayor of Milwaukee, and several won seats in the state legislature.*

*Henry C. Stolze came to Manitowoc when a boy of nine years. The family settled in Manitowoc where his father was a truck farmer at the site of the former White House Milk Company. As a young man, Stolze began the manufacture of Christmas tree ornaments in 1888. The National Tinsel factory on South 16th Street, Manitowoc, was for years the only factory of its kind in America. It is known today as Santa's Best.*

*In 1905 German born Henry Stolze, Jr. ran for mayor of Manitowoc on the Socialist ticket and was elected. The party platform advocated public ownership of public utilities. At the end of his term, in 1907, he was defeated, but in 1911 he was re-elected and had enough support to get the city to purchase the Manitowoc Water Works. The success of this venture led to the purchase of the Manitowoc Light Plant a few years later.*

*At the time of the 1911 election, Stolze lived with his wife, Lina and their son, Henry C., at 1030 South 8th Street in the city's First Ward. His residence was located next to the Sheriff's residence and old Court House, then used as Armory Hall, on the west side of the street. The area today is a parking lot for the Manitowoc County Traffic Center and Jail.*

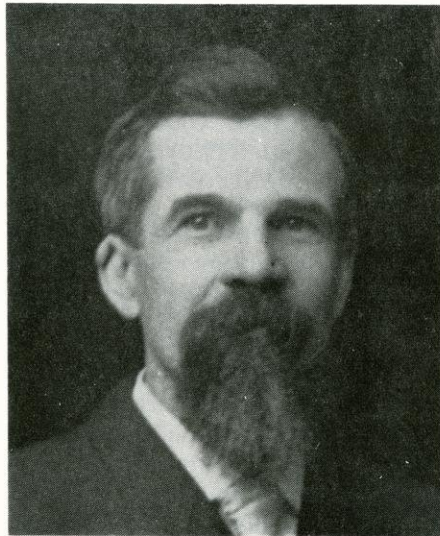
*Allan Patek, the author and researcher of this monograph, was a student at Lincoln High School, Manitowoc, when he became aware of Henry Stolze. In 1985, as a college student majoring in history and political science at UW-Eau Claire, Allan studied the 1911 election and analyzed census data in depth. This monograph is based on his original scholarly research.*

*Thanks to Allan for this informative article and to Edward C. Rappe, social studies teacher at Lincoln High School, Manitowoc, for his assistance in editing an early draft of this monograph.*

Robert P. Fay

## THE TIMES

Socialism in America at the turn of the century was a political movement centered more on a pragmatic reform program than ideology. Although carrying some ideological baggage, socialist programs rested on the twin pillars of political and economic reform, emphasizing honest, efficient and responsive government. Socialists challenged traditional political structures to deliver on the promise of good government. Simultaneously



Henry Stolze, Jr.  
(Manitowoc County Historical Society)

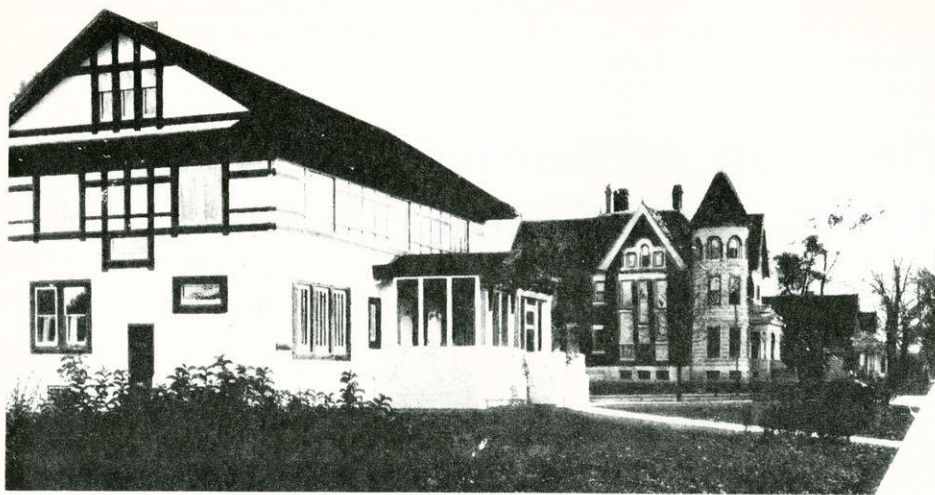
socialists pushed for economic reforms in areas such as housing, labor law and municipal utility franchise. The socialists forged an electoral coalition based on working class and Central European ethnic voters. Throughout the country areas inhabited by skilled and unskilled workers provided fertile ground for socialist campaigns. This was especially true

when these workers were unionized.<sup>1</sup> Areas where Central European immigrants, especially Germans, resided also provided socialist strongholds.<sup>2</sup> The combination of these two groups enabled socialist politicians in American cities to build winning electoral coalitions.

Far from revolutionary, municipal socialist programs advocated the general principles of honesty and reform. Although they shared basic goals, local socialist organizations differed substantially on the extent of their reform programs. Local differentiation existed because of the national Socialist Party's attitude that true socialism was not possible on the municipal level.<sup>3</sup> Lacking strong central direction, local socialists developed programs suited to their locality. In the Oklahoma farm country and Massachusetts mill towns socialists advocated municipal ownership of commercial and manufacturing concerns as well as clean government.<sup>4</sup> However, Midwest socialist programs were more restrained, limiting their advocacy to municipal ownership and the efficient operation of public utilities.<sup>5</sup> The moderate nature of Midwest socialism was typified by Milwaukee's version, which was termed "constructive socialism."<sup>6</sup> The Wisconsin city of Manitowoc is one area where "constructive socialism" gained popularity.

Located north of Milwaukee on the shores of Lake Michigan, the small industrial city of Manitowoc became a pioneer in Wisconsin municipal socialism. In 1905 Henry Stolze, Jr., one of Wisconsin's first Socialist mayors, was elected on a platform of municipal ownership of Manitowoc's franchised water works.<sup>7</sup> Once in office, however, Stolze's reforms were blocked by a hostile City Council.





*Scene on North 6th Street, Manitowoc.*

*(Manitowoc County Historical Society)*

Two years later, in 1907, Stolze was narrowly defeated by a Democratic businessman named Charles Groffman, head of a Democratic-Republican Party coalition.<sup>8</sup> After Stolze made a poor showing in the 1909 mayoral election, socialist organizers from Milwaukee began to visit the Manitowoc area.<sup>9</sup> In 1911 Henry Stolze ran a fourth time and succeeded in recapturing the mayor's office.

Henry Stolze and the Manitowoc socialists provide an important link in the history of Wisconsin and municipal socialism not only because they were pioneers, but because of their relationship to the Milwaukee socialists. Furthermore, Manitowoc was a prime example of socialist strength in the small industrial city, a pattern which is prevalent in the Midwest.<sup>10</sup> The 1911 mayoral race provides an opportunity to examine this small city at a critical point. In Manitowoc's 1911 mayoral race Stolze was running for the fourth time, having experienced both success and failure. Around the country, 1911 marked the high point in the strength of small city socialism.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Stolze's 1911 victory and the factors that contributed to it have more than local relevance—they serve as a Wisconsin example of a national trend and illustrate the importance of practical politics in municipal socialism.

Henry Stolze won in Manitowoc because he maintained a strong following among working class voters and Central European ethnic groups, especially the Germans and Poles. In addition, at this critical time in his

political career he became politically acceptable while his opposition was divided. No longer could opponents successfully link Stolze to the dire predictions associated with the election of a "radical." Therefore, Henry Stolze's 1911 mayoral victory can be attributed to the play of three factors, the existence of a strong ethnic working class base of support; the presence of a divided opposition; and Stolze's achievement of political legitimacy.

#### **THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF MANITOWOC**

Similar to other Wisconsin cities, Manitowoc's ward divisions were more than simply political delineations, they distinguished neighborhood from neighborhood, with each ward assuming distinct characteristics. These neighborhoods maintained their own sub-societies which centered around churches, schools, grocery stores and other common gathering places. Manitowoc can also be divided along ward lines into three areas which are distinguished from each other by socio-economic and political characteristics. The east side was distinguished by affluence and a diminished ethnic consciousness. The northwest side was less affluent and more ethnically conscious than the east side, yet it displayed a growing sense of maturity. Finally, the southwest side was a working class district with a strong ethnic consciousness and deep roots in Manitowoc's shipyards, docks, and factories.

Until the early 1890's the city had been divided into four wards with the oldest areas located along the lake-shore and at the mouth of the Manitowoc River. In 1891 the city annexed territory to the northwest and south, dividing the third and fourth wards to create the fifth and sixth wards. One year later another change designated the city's southwest side - the seventh ward.<sup>12</sup> Thus by 1911 the city's wards had been established for nearly twenty years with the east side comprised of the first and second wards; the northwest side of the fourth and sixth wards; and the southwest side of the third, fifth and seventh wards.

The east side wards were located along Lake Michigan as the first ward ran north from the southern corporation limits to the Manitowoc River and the second ward continued north from the Manitowoc River to the northern corporation limits. The most prominent feature of this area was its affluence.

The east side ward's voting population reflected this by their high relative percentages of non-manual occupations. In addition, both wards had high relative percentages of native and native-born voters. Population figures show that by 1905 these wards had halted their already slow growth. Politically, the first and second wards shared a Republican and conservative preference.

As one might expect in an affluent area, a relatively high percentage of the voters in the east side wards worked at non-manual occupations. Its voting population contained the largest percentages of white collar, business, and professional occupations in the city. Although city wide figures indicate about 26 percent of the voting population were classified in non-manual occupations, the figure exceeds 36 percent in the east side wards. The first and second wards also had a relatively low percentage of unskilled laborers, and skilled workers outnumbered unskilled laborers by a two to one margin. Thus not only were the east side wards composed of more non-manual employed voters, but those voters employed in manual occupations tended to be skilled and thus higher on the socio-economic scale. Thus on a socio-economic scale, the first and second wards ranked above others in the city.

Ethnically, the east side was com-



posed of a high relative percentage of native-born voters. In fact, the second ward voting population had the largest native component in the city at 32 percent. Although the first ward figure is very close to the city wide native total, it still provided a sharp contrast to its western neighbor, the third ward. Another feature of ethnicity which characterized the east side was the high relative percentage of native-born voters. Aside from the more Americanized nature of the east side, ethnic groups which populated these wards were almost exclusively those of the old immigration. They were German, Norwegian, Irish, English, Canadian, Scotch, and Danish in origin. The only two exceptions were a small percentage of Poles in the first ward and Bohemians in the second ward. The most prominent of the old immigration ethnic groups throughout the city was the Germans. The east side was no exception. As a result, in the first ward the Irish were the only other ethnic group that could claim any significant portion of the voting population. On the other hand, the second ward had a Norwegian population which equaled that of the Germans while the Irish, Bohemians and English had a smaller, but notable portion of the voting population.

Demographically, the east side wards had stopped growing by 1905. Between 1895 and 1900 both the first and the second wards increased in population, but in 1905 the first ward showed only a slight increase while the second ward declined slightly. The 1910 census shows no change from 1905 as the population remained at 2,127 in the first ward and at 1,350 in the second. These figures indicate that the east side by 1910 had been almost completely developed and that the population was growing older since births no longer outnumbered deaths.

The political behavior of east side voters tended to be Republican and conservative. In the 1900 and 1904 presidential elections both wards supported the Republican candidates, yet in 1908 and 1912 the first ward supported the Democrats while the second ward continued to support the Republicans. During this period Socialist Eugene Debs polled no more than ten percent in either ward. Although the presidential races make it hard to differentiate the conservative underpinning of the east side, the gu-

bernatorial election clearly illustrated the east side's conservatism. In 1902 both east side wards gave LaFollette a better than ten percent plurality. Nonetheless, in 1904 Democratic ex-Governor George W. Peck defeated LaFollette by a margin of over fifteen percent in the first ward and ten percent in the second ward. The conservative trend was reflected here because factional division in the Republican party resulted in the defection of many stalwart voters. Another example of this conservatism came in the 1910 and 1912 gubernatorial elections as the east side deserted progressive Republican Francis McGovern. These Democratic electoral successes were probably the result of McGovern's progressive attitudes and in 1912 resulted despite the Manitowoc County Democrat's negative view of conservative John Karel.<sup>13</sup> These gubernatorial elections indicate that although the east side tended to be Republican, voters were willing to break this pattern and vote Democratic in cases where the Republican nominee was too progressive.

Finally, in the area of municipal politics the east side continued its electoral patterns with one modification. This alteration resulted from the nature of city politics which left Republicans excluded from mayoral competition. As a result, the more conservative and traditional Democrats received the east side's support. In 1905 Henry Stolze's first mayoral

campaign, the incumbent Dr. W. G. Kemper, a non-partisan candidate, carried the first ward with 55 percent of the vote and the second with 61 percent in a losing effort.<sup>14</sup> Two years later, the east side again provided an anti-Stolze stronghold, as it gave challenger Charles Groffman, a Democrat, 61 percent of the vote in the first ward and 74 percent in the second.<sup>15</sup> In 1909 the scenario remained unchanged as both wards delivered 68 percent of the vote to Groffman.<sup>16</sup> The consistency and overwhelming margin of east side opposition provided Stolze's opponents with a strong political base.

Moving away from Lake Michigan and north of the Manitowoc River, the city divided into another area. This northwest side of the city was composed of the fourth and sixth wards. Running west from Seventh Street to Main Street (present day 10th Street), the fourth ward comprised the area that ran north from the Manitowoc River to the northern corporation limits. The sixth ward abutted the fourth on the east, the Manitowoc River on the south, and the corporation limits on the north and west. The voting population in this area of the city, although not as affluent as the east side, exhibited tendencies which distinguished this district as a "zone of emergence."<sup>17</sup> With a relatively high percentage of non-manual employed voters, the northwest side's voting population also contained a high percentage of students. Ethnicity also



*Homes in the old 1st Ward on South 7th Street, a more conservative side of town, about 1910.  
(Manitowoc County Historical Society)*



followed the east side's pattern with high percentages of native, native-born, and old immigration voters. Furthermore, the northwest side identified politically with the Republican Party.

Although not as pronounced as on the east side, the northwest side's affluence was reflected in a high relative percentage of non-manual occupations. In addition, the northwest wards had the highest percentage of students in the city. With 4.8 and 8.6 percent respectively, the fourth and sixth wards greatly exceeded the city wide figure of three percent. Although the trend showed a similarity to the east side, the composition of manual occupations provides the foundation for a socio-economic and political pattern which makes the northwest a distinct district. This difference is brought about in two ways. First, the percentage of unskilled laborers climbed. Second, the percentage of skilled laborers dropped, thus causing the ratio between skilled and unskilled workers to narrow. The result was a total manual working category that is similar to the east side in size, but with a greater portion of unskilled laborers and thus a lower socio-economic status than the east side.

Ethnically, the northwest side voting population was composed of a high native and native-born component. Those who are considered native exceeded 20 percent of both ward's voters. Again these figures are similar to the east side; however, taken with the percentage of native-born persons, a difference emerged. The fourth and sixth wards' native-born percentages are smaller than those of the east side. The ethnicity of those who are foreign and native-born centered on three groups: the Germans, Bohemians, and Norwegians. Although well below the city wide percentage, the Germans were the northwest side's largest ethnic group. The Germans were followed in percentage in the fourth ward by the Bohemians and Norwegians; while in the sixth ward, it is the Norwegians and then the Bohemians. Other notable ethnic groups found on the northwest side include the Irish, English, Canadians, Danes, Poles, and Russians. Once again the northwest side seemed to resemble the east side.

Demographically, the northwest showed a slowing of growth. The fourth ward population suffered a de-

cline between 1900 and 1905, only part of which it recovered by 1910. Between 1895 and 1910 the sixth ward nearly doubled; however, its rate of growth slowed throughout the period. In 1910 the fourth ward had a population of 1,889 while the sixth's was 910.

Finally, the northwest side's politics centered on a fairly solid Republican footing which contained both conservative tendencies and a sizable progressive element. In presidential elections throughout the period from 1900 to 1912, the northwest side voted Republican although the margins declined. At the same time, the socialists made small inroads in the fourth ward while the sixth began to show a significant socialist vote by 1908. This trend indicated that the less established sixth ward had a stronger progressive element. The same pattern emerged in gubernatorial elections as the northwest side supported Republican candidates until 1910, with the exception of 1904 when the fourth ward gave Democrat George Peck a razor thin plurality. The 1910 change in this Republican pattern paralleled that of the east side concerning the candidacy of Francis McGovern. In 1910 and 1912 Democrats Adolph Schmitz and John Karel, respectively, defeated McGovern in the northwest side with the fourth ward pluralities larger than those in the sixth. Likewise, gubernatorial elections showed socialist candidates made relatively little headway in the

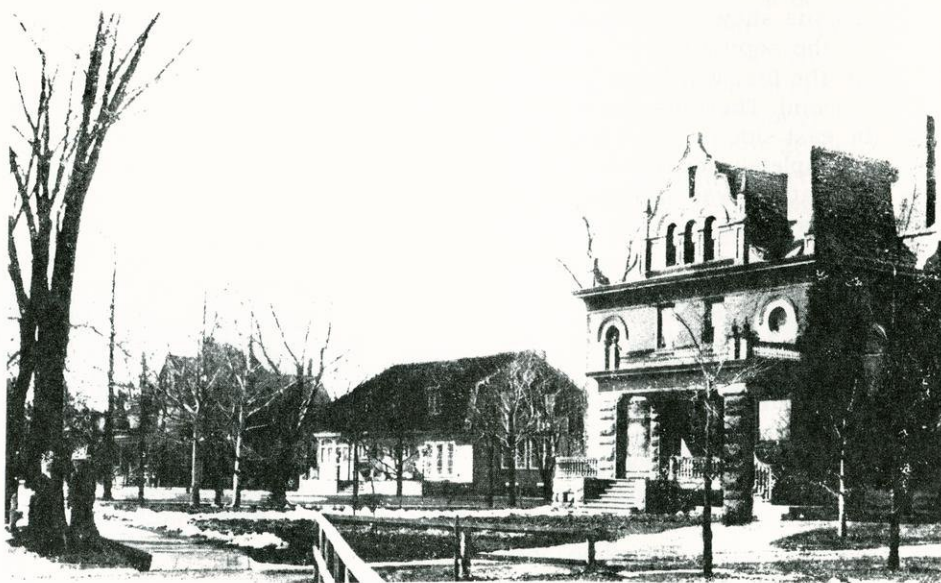
fourth ward, while they captured about one-fifth of the sixth ward's vote.

Mayoral elections also reflected the different degree of political tilt exhibited by the fourth and sixth wards. Although the margins differed between the two wards, the northwest side supported Stolze's opponent in 1905, 1907, and 1909. In 1905 Dr. Kemper received 58.8 percent of the vote in the fourth ward and 50.7 percent in the sixth ward.<sup>18</sup> In the 1909 Groffman landslide, the fourth ward gave him 65.3 percent of the vote while the sixth delivered 53.1 percent.<sup>19</sup>

If the east and northwest sides shared some measure of affluence which made it difficult for Stolze to sell his ideas, then the southwest side provided Stolze with a strong-hold. Bordered on the east by Main Street (present day S. 10th Street) and the first ward and on the west by the corporation limits, this area ended at the Manitowoc River in the north and the corporation limits in the south. Except for a small percentage, southwest side voters found their livelihood on the docks and in the factories.

The anchor of the southwest side was the older third ward, which ran from Main Street to Fifteenth Street and from the Manitowoc River to the southern corporation limits. In a way the third ward served as a bridge between the wealthy lakeshore and the working class west.

The fifth ward ran from the Mani-



*Stately homes in the old 6th Ward, on Michigan Avenue. The Lyman J. Nash residence, 1316 Michigan Avenue, built in 1895, is shown at right (circa 1910).*

*(Manitowoc County Historical Society)*



towoc River in the north to Washington Street in the south, and from Fifteenth Street on the east to the corporation limits on the west.

The last part of the southwest side was the seventh ward, which ran from the corporation limits on the south and west to Washington Street on the north and Fifteenth Street on the east. Although not always homogeneous, the southwest side wards shared common traits: they were more working class, less native, and more Democratic than the rest of the city.

The working class nature of the city's southwest side was evident in its relatively high percentages of unskilled laborers and manual workers. The percentages of unskilled laborers on the southwest side ran from 27.9 percent in the third ward up to 57.3 percent in the seventh ward. Like the northwest side, the southwest side had a smaller ratio of skilled to unskilled workers than the east side. The seventh ward was the most extreme example, as unskilled laborers outnumbered skilled workers. Likewise, the southwest side was distinguished by its high percentage of manual laborers, ranging 64.1 percent in the third ward to a high of 86.5 percent in the seventh ward. This combination of a high percentage of unskilled laborers and large manually employed electorate made the southwest side a distinct working class district. The economic ramifications of those characteristics were nowhere better reflected than in this 1891 account of the seventh ward's 'Polish hill':

"...closely grouped dwellings; small dingy homes, many sheltering families as large as ten and twelve. The industry of the city had developed and cheap labor was in demand. Father and son found employment in the grain elevators, docks, lake steamers, certain types of labor in shipyards, and most of all the railroads....."<sup>20</sup>

Another area of contrast between the southwest side and the rest of the city was its small percentage of voters employed in non-manual occupations. The most telling examples in this area were the extremely low figures, around one percent, for professionals and students.

Ethnically, the southwest side was synonymous with Germans and Poles. Concentrated heavily in the third and fifth wards, the Germans were overwhelming majorities in

both, as well as a large minority in the seventh. Meanwhile, the Poles formed the overwhelming majority of the seventh ward, as well as a significant minority in the fifth ward. In addition, other noteworthy southwest side minority groups included the Bohemians in the third and fifth wards, and the Irish in the third ward. Furthermore, it is important to distinguish that the majority of southwest side Germans were native-born, while the majority of Poles were foreign-born.

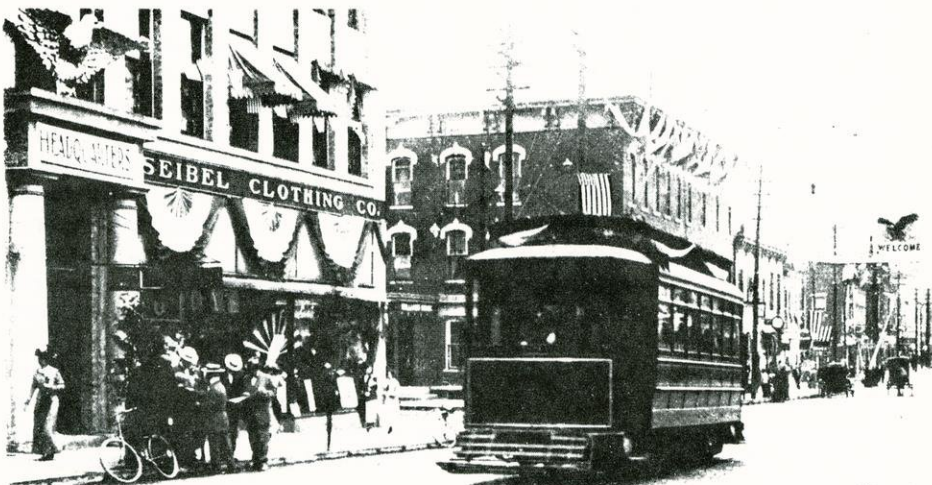
The two other ethnic characteristics of the southwest side electorate were its small native population and its relatively low percentage of native-born persons. Once again the seventh ward was the extreme example with a 2.1 percent native and a 47.5 percent native-born electorate. Clearly, foreign-born residents and voters were more influential on the southwest side than either the east side or northwest side.

Demographically, the southwest side showed the greatest growth in the city between 1895 and 1910. In particular, while the rest of the city had virtually stopped growing by 1905 the far southwest side, the seventh ward, continued to grow rapidly. In 1910, the census showed the third ward population at 2,748, the fifth ward at 1,679, and the seventh ward at 2,510, which made the southwest side the city's most populous geographic division.

Politically, the southwest side was the most Democratic area of the city. Although the Republican tilt of the

third ward would seem to counter this assertion, it is important to note the relatively small margins by which Republican candidates carried the third. Even conceding the competitive nature of the third ward, it is more than erased by the Democratic tendency of the fifth ward and overwhelming Democratic performance in the seventh ward. In presidential elections between 1900 and 1912, the third ward supported Republicans until 1912, while the fifth ward voted Republican only in 1904. Meanwhile, the seventh ward gave overwhelming margins to every Democrat. Moreover, in the seventh ward after the 1900 election, the Socialists regularly outpolled the Republicans. The same situation occurred in the fifth ward beginning with 1908. Gubernatorial elections followed a similar pattern as the third ward remained competitive while the fifth leaned Democratic and the seventh was consistently Democratic. Once again the Socialists showed significant strength, polling over 30 percent in the fifth and seventh wards in 1912 while they tallied 16.5 percent in the third ward. Thus, in presidential and gubernatorial elections, the southwest side was relatively Democratic.

However, on the mayoral level, the southwest side supported the Socialist, Henry Stolze. In 1905, the only three wards Stolze carried were the southwest side wards. The third, fifth, and seventh wards delivered the victory to Stolze with 65.4, 62.2, and 80 percent of the vote respectively.<sup>21</sup> In



A view looking northwest on South 8th Street in downtown Manitowoc in the old 1st Ward. About 1910 the bicycle, streetcar, horse-drawn buggy and automobile compete for Manitowoc's streets. The old Williams House at the corner of Franklin Street is in background behind streetcar.

(Manitowoc County Historical Society)



1907, however, Stolze lost the third to Democrat Charles Groffman by 3.4 percent while he carried the fifth with 63.3 percent of the vote and the seventh with 75.4 percent.<sup>22</sup> Although his southwest side support weakened in 1907, Henry Stolze lost both the third and fifth wards in Groffman's 1909 landslide, but the seventh returned a little over a six percent Stolze plurality.<sup>23</sup> Clearly, the southwest side wards were a good indicator of Stolze's fate. Through the loss of even one of the southwest side wards, Stolze's margin of victory turned to a margin of defeat. Therefore, it was critical for Stolze to have solid southwest side support. The primary task of 1911 for Stolze was not only to rebuild his southwest side support, but also to expand his support in other areas. Devastated in 1909 by the incumbency of Groffman and the strength of the Democratic-Republican Party coalition, Stolze desperately needed to break the opposition hold on the northwest side, at least the sixth ward, in order to win. This break, however, would only come when Stolze gained the political acceptance which had thus far eluded him. In addition, the strength of the Democratic-Republican Party coalition had to somehow be weakened.

### THE CAMPAIGN

The mayoral race began early in 1911 as the issue of municipal ownership of the water works once again burst onto the scene. A controversial issue since Stolze based his successful 1905 mayoral campaign on it, the water works issue gave prospective mayoral candidates a chance to test the political waters. It was during this debate that Henry Stolze began his traditional campaign for efficiency in city government. Stolze, the city's major proponent of municipal ownership, centered his appeal on the takeover of the franchised water works just as he had done in 1905.<sup>24</sup> On January 3, 1911, when the Manitowoc City Council ordered the water works issue to a referendum, Stolze had found a ready vehicle through which to drive home his appeal.<sup>25</sup> As another Wisconsin socialist, Milwaukee Mayor Daniel Hoan, stated "one main step in the direction of better local government is to join forces with those who would change from private to public ownership of utilities. The change eliminates the most fruitful

and most persistent source of corruption."<sup>26</sup>

Thus Stolze was able to initiate his 1911 electoral campaign with the same issue which propelled his first electoral success, the water works.

The water works referendum from the very start generated controversy, and many opponents of Stolze staked out a position clearly opposed to municipal ownership. The Manitowoc Daily Herald began the drum beat of opposition by calling attention to the apathy surrounding the issue, stating that:

It may be due to the fact that the public believes that it is informed because of the agitation and discussion three years ago or it may be that the reports of city ownership in other cities, has instilled a confidence that the City has no chance to go wrong.<sup>27</sup>

The Herald and other opponents then challenged the idea that municipal ownership represented efficiency. In fact, before most public opposition surfaced, the Herald reported a public opinion shift from overwhelming support to nearly equal division.<sup>28</sup> Although it is difficult to gauge to what extent the Herald's report reflected its own wishful thinking, the fact that the Herald made the report must have reinforced the opponents.

The center of opposition developed around traditional community leaders as they announced their stand against the referendum. The first of these community leaders was Charles C. West of the Manitowoc Dry Dock Company. On January 11th, West was reported in the Herald to have said "... that the proposed purchase of the water works plant would be poor policy for the city and ... would add a great burden upon tax payers ...."<sup>29</sup> On that same day, the Herald also officially announced its opposition stating "We do not think it good policy to mortgage our resources for years and years to come for something we already have, neither can we see any profit in the undertaking."<sup>30</sup> Throughout that week business leader after business leader declared his opposition to municipal ownership of the water works. The issue of taxes came increasingly to the fore as the business community warned against inhibiting future growth. Then, at a mass meeting of the Manitowoc Citizens Association, the Herald reported that "strong arguments were advanced against the purchase

which it was contended would place the city under a serious handicap in its future development and growth ...."<sup>31</sup> Through the successful connection of the water works question to the issue of the city's future growth opponents hoped to convince voters it was an unsound investment.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to business community opposition, some supporters of municipal ownership questioned the economics of the pending question. The first was Thomas E. Torrison of the O. Torrison Company. A supporter of the water works purchase four years earlier, Torrison questioned the lack of an established purchase price in the current proposal.<sup>33</sup> Another municipal water works proponent who raised questions concerning the proposal was Phillip Pitz, a former clerk with the Wisconsin Central Railway and later President of the Manitowoc Police Commission. Pitz called into question the soundness of the plant and pointed out that the works had not been tested in four years.<sup>34</sup> Pitz concluded "A majority of our citizens are decidedly in favor of owning a Water Works system and so am I, but considering the questions of purchase as now laid before us, I am determined to say no, until we know what we are buying and at what price."<sup>35</sup> These comments seemed to confirm the Herald's previous observation that as the proposal's details were known, the idea would lose support.

Opposition to the water works referendum was not confined to the traditional civic leadership; socialist sources also declared their opposition. While the Herald challenged proponents to explain why Two Rivers, Manitowoc's neighbor to the north, was not being used as one example of a municipal water works success, the Two Rivers Reporter declared its endorsement of a no vote. A socialist newspaper, the Reporter recommended:

"If we were at Manitowoc we would be against the purchase of the Manitowoc Water Works at this time. Why? because the fellows now in the Manitowoc Council were opposed to Stolze and Municipal ownership. As they are Gray's (the owner of the Water Works) friends they only want to unload a big capitalization and a poor plant ...."<sup>36</sup>

Meanwhile, reports circulated that former socialist city councilman Herman Lorensen opposed the referen-

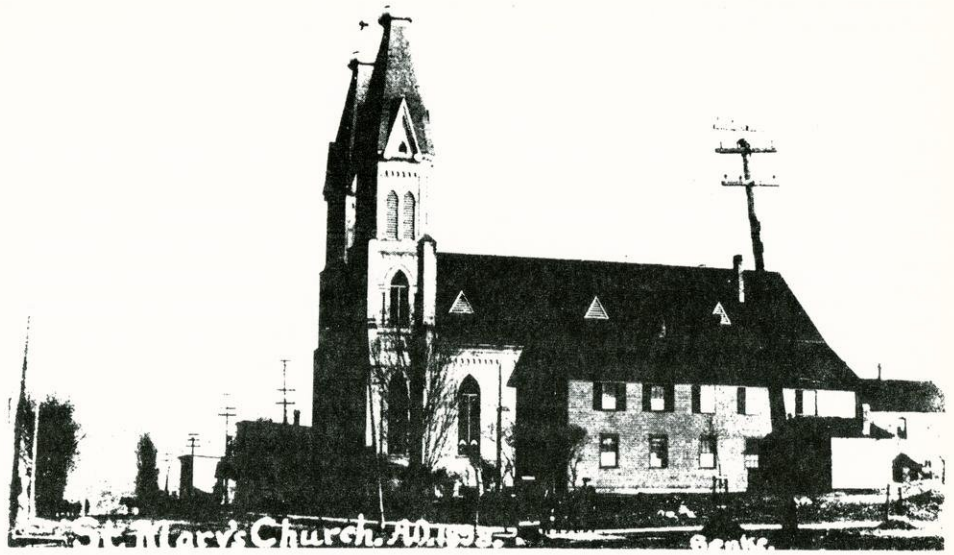


dum and that many Stolze followers would cast negative votes on the proposal because a like-proposal was rejected during Stolze's administration.<sup>37</sup> In fact, the current proposal was almost identical to that offered by the Stolze Administration. The defeat of Stolze's proposal was largely due to strong opposition from the business community and the city's traditional political leaders. At this point, with a combination of business leaders and socialists opposed the chances of the proposition's success would appear slim.

On the other side, proponents of the water works referendum were sparse. The first two proponents to step forward were City Council members. The *Herald's* January 12th edition carried the proposition's endorsement by third ward Democratic Alderman William Schillien Jr.<sup>38</sup> Joining Schillien in support of the proposal was the author of the referendum, second ward Republican Alderman Edward Thorison. It was Thorison who replied to opponents at the Manitowoc Citizens Association: "If Mr. Gray can make money from the plant the city can (sic) too' and if other cities can make municipal ownership a success Manitowoc should be able to do so."<sup>39</sup> Thorison's comments seemed to echo what Henry Stolze had said all along, yet it had taken nearly four years since the city's March, 1907 referendum for the proposal to gain this type of acceptance.

The January 13th *Herald* also carried Mayor Groffman's endorsement of the proposal, which concluded "It would seem to be a good business proposition for the city to purchase the plant, good for both the taxpayers and for the water users."<sup>40</sup> This was the one and only statement Mayor Groffman made during the referendum campaign although indications are he had a great deal at stake politically. It had been Groffman in 1907 who ran as a supporter of municipal ownership in order to defeat Stolze, who was widely portrayed as a "radical." Although it was tucked on the fifth page of the *Herald*, Alderman Schillien brought this point to light when he pointed out:

"Some gentleman who urged Charles A. Groffman to run for mayor on a municipal ownership platform four years ago ... denounce in open meeting those men who are faithfully trying to live up to their promise. They



*St. Mary Catholic Church, southwest corner of South 21st and Marshall Streets, on "Polish Hill" in the old 7th Ward, looking east, 1898.*

(Manitowoc County Historical Society)

think there is nothing to fear they can now trample on those who served their purpose which was to defeat Henry Stolze, Jr."<sup>41</sup>

The open rift in the anti-Stolze coalition, which had been so effective in the previous two mayoral elections, signaled the opening Stolze needed to regain the Mayor's office.

Stolze, like Groffman, made only one appearance for the proposal, yet this one appearance swung the tide. The *Herald*, in announcing Stolze's planned address of a pro-water works rally, described Stolze as the man "... under whose administration as mayor the City rejected the most favorable proposition which it will (sic) ever have to take over the water works plant ...."<sup>42</sup> Indeed, the city had rejected the water works proposal which Stolze had worked out in March, 1907, yet for the *Herald* to admit that the proposal worked out under the Groffman administration was less desirable than Stolze's was nothing less than blasphemy. This revealed the false nature of claims that Stolze could not run the city efficiently. Furthermore, this was the first indication that passage of the water works referendum placed the opposition in a defensive position which it could not overcome in the mayoral election.

Stolze's speech received an expected mixed review. The *Herald* reported that "He (Stolze) accused the city administration of seeking an issue for the coming election but none-

theless said the move was wise because 'the longer you wait the more you will pay for the plant.'"<sup>43</sup> The *Reporter*, meanwhile, reported "Stolze electrified his audience with his clinching argument."<sup>44</sup> Although the *Reporter* was pro-Stolze, taken with the *Herald's* coverage Stolze is portrayed less as a vindictive politician and more as a community leader interested in his city's future. It was also not difficult to see why Stolze charged Groffman's administration with partisan politics since the failure to complete the water works deal was used against Stolze in 1907 as an example of poor administration, yet after four years Groffman too was unable to complete the purchase.

Beyond the fact that the lingering water works question heightened Stolze's credibility as a leader, the issue also served to undermine Stolze's eventual opponent Isaac Craite. When public opinion had seemed to be running in opposition, Craite was lukewarm to the proposition. Craite's view expressed at the Manitowoc Citizen's Association meeting was reported in the *Herald* as "...he is undecided but that he would probably vote against purchase...."<sup>45</sup> Less than one week later, however, at the same meeting Stolze addressed,

"Judge Isaac Craite was applauded when he declared his intention to vote to purchase and Mr. Craite made an alleged 'expose' of anti-purchase forces, declaring that communications which have appeared in opposi-



tion to the purchase were prepared at direction of a committee named at a meeting of 45 business men...."<sup>46</sup>

Thus before the mayoral campaign had even started, Craite further damaged the possibility of the anti-Stolze coalition regrouping in the wake of the water works referendum.

On January 18th, the day after the water works vote, the referendum's passage made two things clear; municipal ownership had gained wide acceptance and Henry Stolze would be a hard man to beat in the mayoral race. The referendum proposed purchase under terms less favorable than those negotiated by Stolze in 1907, yet this proposal passed. The least favorable term was the estimated purchase price of an additional \$25,000. Every ward in the city voted for purchase of the water works, which resulted in a 75 percent positive vote.<sup>47</sup> Especially important was the point that the critical southwest side wards had the three highest affirmative percentages. The Reporter hailed the vote saying "This shows that Stolze is still strong with the people."<sup>48</sup> The Herald was contradictory, admitting "The advent of Ex-Mayor Henry Stolze into the campaign undoubtedly influenced the results to considerable extent...."<sup>49</sup> In addition, the Herald confessed,

"Hand it to Stolze. A few days ago had a vote been taken the Water Works election would have been carried almost unanimously against purchase. Stolze's followers lacking a shepherd were disorganized and were as a house divided against itself when along comes the 'leader'...."<sup>50</sup>

However, the Herald also made a point of separating Stolze from the victorious referendum. On another page, it stated "While undoubtedly Stolze contributed to the result it is doubted the the (sic) vote can be taken as an endorsement of the ex-mayor or indicate a demand for his election in the coming campaign."<sup>51</sup> The Herald can be seen in this light as a reflection of the anti-Stolze element—while smarting from victory of the municipal ownership forces and Stolze, they continued to deny the strength of his appeal.

In the early days of February there was still no rest. The mayoral primary quickly approached and its arrival underscored the two earlier trends of a divided anti-Stolze camp and a resurgent and accepted Henry Stolze. The

importance of these two trends related to the 1907 mayoral race. In 1907 the Republicans failed to find a mayoral candidate, and they later endorsed Democrat Charles A. Groffman with the apparent understanding that the coalition would exchange the mayor's office every four years.<sup>52</sup> Simultaneously Stolze was subjected to the incessant charges that he was a "radical" and incompetent.<sup>53</sup> The combination of this traditional party fusion and hostile press attacks were not unique to Manitowoc. Throughout the country socialist municipal candidates had to cope with similar tactics.<sup>54</sup>

By late February, 1911 it was apparent that the Democratic primary was to be the show case of Isaac Craite. After briefly considering a mayoral candidacy, former first ward Democratic Alderman and businessman Herman Schmitz declined citing the need for unity behind the party's candidate.<sup>55</sup>

The party's only other announced candidate at the time was former Municipal Judge Isaac Craite. Born in 1856 in the Town of Manitowoc Rapids, Isaac Craite was the son of Canadian immigrants.<sup>56</sup> Elected to numerous political offices, including Town of Mishicot Clerk and Justice of the Peace, Manitowoc Second District Assemblyman, and City of Manitowoc Municipal Judge Isaac Craite was well known in Democratic politics.<sup>57</sup> Craite on the surface at least seemed the perfect successor to Groffman. Popular, experienced, a proven campaigner, the Democrats were satisfied with Craite. The Herald was also satisfied, adding that Craite would "...beone (sic) of the strongest candidates possible to select."<sup>58</sup>

The bandwagon had no sooner begun to roll and the brakes were applied by a controversy. On February 23rd the Herald revealed that Henry Stolze's choice for city attorney if he was elected would be Isaac Craite.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the Herald publicized "reports emanating from (sic) the Two Rivers Reporter that Judge Isaac Craite would withdraw as a candidate for mayor in event that Mr. Stolze entered...."<sup>60</sup> Although friends denied that Craite would withdraw, Craite's credibility as a leader, already shaken by his indecision on the water works question, must have suffered yet more damage.

At the same time the Republicans

had their primary set to showcase fourth ward Alderman Charles Frazier. Frazier's only challenger was Thomas Higgins, the President of the Manitowoc and Northern Traction Company, but Higgins withdrew amid disagreement about whether a franchise owner could run for mayor. Born in Germany, Frazier had come to America at an early age with his widowed mother.<sup>61</sup> A businessman, Charles Frazier was described as "...prominent in local politics...and is now serving as alderman from the fourth ward and as president of the council."<sup>62</sup> In addition, Frazier was the candidate with the closest ties to the conservative and business elements of the city.<sup>63</sup> Also, Frazier's home was in the growing and politically vital northwest side.

Meanwhile, the Social Democrats did not concern themselves with the primary since their man was and had always been Henry Stolze, Jr. A German by birth, Stolze was nine years old when his family moved to the north side of Manitowoc in 1868.<sup>64</sup> Stolze was the "...founder of the Stolze Manufacturing Company, a pioneer in the manufacture of Christmas tree ornaments and tinsel."<sup>65</sup> In 1905 when the political unknown Henry Stolze became mayor, he shared good company in city government as his brother Andrew was the third term Democratic Alderman from the sixth ward.<sup>66</sup>

Although a socialist, Henry Stolze was a practical politician. Stolze's veto messages and correspondence to the City Council provide the picture of a man concerned with the efficient operation of the city.<sup>67</sup> On many occasions Stolze rejected public works projects which were improperly bid. In addition, Stolze fought hard to unify the city's neighborhood based school districts in an effort to streamline their operation and avoid needless duplication. In a broader sense Stolze addressed the north-south rivalry in the city. He rejected the notion that public facilities provided to one side of the city must be duplicated on the other regardless of need. Throughout his term Stolze sought to run the city in accordance with rational decisions, not political deals.

Stolze's political character was best summed up by a contemporary, second ward Republican Alderman Ralph G. Plumb, who said "...I never believed he was more at heart than a





*Manitowoc Public Utilities pumping station generator room and boiler house (at left) constructed in 1916 during Henry Stolze's second term as mayor. Note that Lincoln High School is not yet constructed on Roeff's Hill in the background. The present Manitowoc Public Utility is located in the same location where the Stolze Administration constructed its new facility. The city today takes great pride in the efficiency and quality of its service. Although municipal ownership of city water service became the norm and still is today, Stolze went farther and acquired the city's electric franchise also. Thus today's Manitowoc residents enjoy the fruits of Henry Stolze's reforms as the city's electric rates are among the lowest in the state.*

*(Courtesy Manitowoc Public Utilities)*

municipal socialist, in other words a man who believed a community of the size of our city was happier and better satisfied when they owned and operated those utilities that were serving the people.<sup>68</sup> Henry Stolze's life served as testimony to this, for after the municipal ownership question was settled he left the Mayor's office and retired from politics. Although he bore a party label which his contemporaries branded "radical," Stolze was never more than a constructive socialist similar to Milwaukee's Victor Berger.<sup>69</sup>

When primary day arrived on March 21st, the only thing in doubt was the final vote totals. In fact, the only unexpected event was the advent

of an independent candidate, Henry Beers.<sup>70</sup> When the Manitowoc City Clerk's Office finished the tally on election night, it was clear the race was between Craite and Stolze. In the straight party vote, Isaac Craite polled 46.3 percent, Henry Stolze 37.9 percent, and Charles Frazier 15.8 percent.<sup>71</sup> However, the total primary cross party vote made the race much closer, as Craite polled only 41.6 percent, to Stolze's 38.5 percent, Frazier's 14.1 percent, and Beer's 5.8 percent.<sup>72</sup> These figures were especially encouraging for Stolze. The fact that Stolze carried the fifth ward outright on party vote, the seventh ward on total vote, and was within striking distance in the third ward, meant his

old base was beginning to come back together. This progress on the southwest side also came in spite of a lively Democratic primary for City Treasurer.<sup>73</sup>

In the days following, the field narrowed. First, Beers dropped out of the race. Then pressure began to mount on Frazier to withdraw. Frazier had been fighting an uphill battle from the start. First, there was the *Reporter's* early projection of February 21st that "...Frazier's chances of success for Mayor against Stolze are as a snow balls chances in hell."<sup>74</sup> The presence of Frazier in the race, however, also gave Stolze a better chance of beating Craite, in the *Reporter's* view.<sup>75</sup> Then two days later there was the *Herald's*



booming of Craite for the Republican Mayoral nomination.<sup>76</sup> In the face of this sort of pressure on primary night Frazier responded:

"I don't feel that the Republican party should make a third sacrifice for the benefit of the democrats (sic) and I was the first to announce my candidacy for mayor and Mr. Craite is the intruder, if anyone, I feel that I am justified in asking for consideration and in remaining in the field."<sup>77</sup>

The Herald, however, was relentless in its call for Frazier's withdrawal. On March 23rd it pointed out the relative vote totals of Craite and Frazier and on March 25th it ran an editorial entitled "Frazier Should Withdraw," in which it said in part:

Politics should have no place in municipal elections or control of city affairs, the results are never satisfactory, and especially at this time there should be no attempt to draw political lines in the coming election.<sup>78</sup>

The Herald's comments raised the specter of a new anti-Stolze alliance developing similar to that of the 1907 election. On March 27th Frazier finally acceded, and in an open letter published in the Herald, he said: "In view of the fact that having three candidates in the field for mayor and three working for the same principle and interest, I hereby withdraw from the field as a candidate for the office of mayor."<sup>79</sup> Thus the field was narrowed to two—Stolze and Craite—although there could be no doubt Craite did not have the complete support of Groffman's 1907 coalition. The coalition's weakness was especially evident in Frazier's actions in that his withdrawal was not accompanied by an endorsement of Craite. It was also clear that Frazier's reference to all candidates working for the same thing pointed to the fact that Stolze was no longer considered an outsider by the traditional political establishment.

The reaction to Frazier's announcement was swift and predictable. Former fifth ward Alderman Henry Bruins, in a letter to the Herald, summed up the socialist response, as the Herald stated: "Bruins raises the old cry that democratic and republican candidates are under the control of bosses and charges Frazier with breaking faith with the voters who favored him (.)"<sup>80</sup> Stolze, on the other hand, made no direct response to Frazier's announcement.

Throughout the campaign Stolze relied upon his record and ran as an established community leader. In the beginning of the campaign, Stolze declared "To announce myself as candidate would be office seeking, to be nominated at the primary would be the office seeking (the) man."<sup>81</sup> After the primary Stolze remained low key although some supporters in letters to the Herald pointed to the water works question and the election of 1907 in criticism of the opposition.<sup>82</sup>

In his two campaign addresses to the voters Stolze emphasized efficiency and honesty while carefully pointing out his past work. In a campaign letter called "Information" on the front page of the March 31st Herald, Stolze said,

"The people of Manitowoc know my platform, I need not tell them what I'll do nor where I'll stand if elected. The newcomers that do not know this I wish to inform that it is not alone necessary to acquire the water works but also to manage them successfully and progressively. If Manitowoc is be a Progressive City in fact all must help those who are willing and know how to make it such, do not down and fight them with all means. Help every good intention for the people's welfare, do not assist destroying them by prejudice."<sup>83</sup>

Sensitive to his socialist label, Stolze in this statement emphasized the need for the city to move forward and asked that his program be judged on its merits. The day before the election Stolze's last speech was quoted in the Herald this way:

"If elected Tuesday I fully understand that it is not a socialist victory but a victory of the unbiased unprejudiced people. A blow on the political tricksters. A protest against the unscrupulous schemers. A sign that the people of Manitowoc want to protect their interests as a whole, show their progressive intentions, regardless of party affiliation."<sup>84</sup>

Again Stolze stressed that his program was not a political scheme, or a dogmatic plan, but a vision for the future of the city which meant more than just satisfying the "interests".<sup>85</sup> This appeal was followed by Stolze's last night of campaigning in the seventh ward where he made an appearance with Henry Beers.<sup>86</sup>

Craite, on the other hand, was plagued with two problems. His positions were very close to Stolze's on

many issues thus he needed to establish some distinctions to set himself apart from his opponent. And second, he inherited Stolze's overzealous adversaries. Therefore, while Craite himself tried to steer a moderate course of subtle criticism, others launched into the old negative campaign which had helped defeat Stolze twice before.

Craite's program centered on a progressive and efficient city administration much like Stolze's, yet Craite also sounded a call for accountability, moderation, and cooperation. Craite struck the chord of responsibility and moderation when he said,

"...realizing always that I am but your trustee in the discharge of duties like a servant to his master. I shall take notice and recognize at all times, one status in quo (sic), the many commercial relations that are interwoven, all of which go to aid to make a prosperous city and a people."<sup>87</sup>

Asserting his independence Craite went on to say: "I am not controlled nor will I be by any clique, band, corporation, or bunch...."<sup>88</sup> Craite thus attempted to straddle the fence by reassuring those supporters of Frazier that he was not just a Stolze in sheep's clothing while at once calming others' fears that he was a tool of the "interests". Obviously, Craite felt he needed to rebuild as much of the 1907 coalition as possible. Craite therefore further intertwined his themes of moderation and reform,

"There are many things that evolution will evolve in course of time, and even at the present too numerous to mention here.... There are many reforms necessary, but that don't always come at once. Good government invites them by degrees...."<sup>89</sup>

Finally, Craite talked about cooperation and a positive attitude. Given the bitter feud between Stolze and the business community, Craite must have believed the theme of domestic tranquility would play well. Craite asserted "Stop knocking and finding fault, prescribe a remedy and assist to heal the diseased parts", and he continued on to say "don't be a destroyer but a builder."<sup>90</sup>

At the same time, however, Craite's supporters struck a note of discord. One letter especially read out a litany of Stolze's shortcomings, just as had been done successfully in 1907 and 1909. The letter struck especially



hard at Stolze's labor support when it stated "as a socialist he was elected as the friend of labor. The labor he employs now and always had employed, has been underpaid girls."<sup>91</sup> Not only did the writer try to drive a wedge between Stolze and his labor support, but he criticized Stolze's anti-business record which he said resulted in the fact that "...industrial development was not only checked in Manitowoc, but suffered a set back from which the city is but slowly recovering."<sup>92</sup> The letter also concluded that Stolze had failed to produce once in office and cited the water works as an example. Although not used to the extent it had been previously, the negative campaign still centered on what it claimed was Stolze's lackluster record. Finally this letter captured Craite's precarious position when it stated: "He is a conservatively progressive man, liberal in his policy, sane in his views, cautious in reaching conclusions of public concern, yet swift to act in all that pertains to the common good."<sup>93</sup> In essence what Craite had done was cater to every interest he could, so that it was hard to tell where he stood. Although many may have believed at the campaign's beginning that Craite was the known quantity, on election day it was Stolze who had developed a clear and consistent posture.

## THE OUTCOME

When the dust settled and the votes were tallied on April 4th, 1911 Henry Stolze had defeated Isaac Craite by 149 votes out of a total 2,417 cast. In winning Stolze carried wards three through seven, while in defeat Craite held on to wards one and two.<sup>94</sup> The election itself may have been somewhat anti-climactic, as along the way the signs of Craite's approaching defeat were evident and increasing.

In assessing the election results, Henry Stolze's victory resulted from three factors. First, Stolze won in the working class heavily ethnic areas of the southwest side. In the three southwest side wards, Stolze was able to carry a 240 vote plurality.<sup>95</sup> Although down from his 1907 margin of 281 votes, this time the southwest side, unlike 1907, delivered all three wards and once again affirmed its solid support for Stolze. Stolze's strength in these wards was not unexpected, as the southwest side possessed a number of favorable demo-

graphic characteristics. Stolze's most likely core of support was the German and Polish manual laborers.<sup>96</sup> In addition, Stolze was himself an immigrant German, which must have played a role in this highly German and ethnically conscious area. Although a large portion of the southwest side's Germans and Poles were devout Catholics, religion did not inhibit their support of Stolze. Thus the Catholic clergy's frequent condemnations of socialism remained ineffective. In this way their behavior was similar to Milwaukee's experience.<sup>97</sup>

Furthermore, the progressive and reform appeal of Stolze's political program was attractive to these southwest side workers. Like the experience in Canton, Illinois, Socialists tended to do best in less affluent areas because they served the needs of these areas.<sup>98</sup> The long dominance of Manitowoc's business interests in city politics permitted advantages which came at the expense of working class areas. These advantages came in many forms, but all benefited the business community, especially those with city contracts or franchises. City franchises were loosely monitored. For instance, the city water franchise gave preferential rates to large industrial consumers. Neither the water works nor the electric plant was inspected regularly to ensure quality service. Meanwhile, the city's cable car franchise raised its rates without objection from Manitowoc, while neighboring Two Rivers attempted legal restraints. In a broader sense, needed public works such as street improvement and public construction were forgone in order to keep taxes low. Thus the southwest side had an economic motivation to support Stolze. In addition, Democratic ethnics could generally be counted on to support a progressive platform.<sup>99</sup>

Another key to the southwest side's support of Stolze was psychological. Socially, economically, and politically inferior, the southwest side had to feel satisfied that it could elect a man like Stolze who might be able through his reforms to improve their situation. Furthermore, Stolze himself was an immigrant German, and feelings of ethnic pride probably played a role in the third and fifth wards. In addition, Stolze's election was a way for the southwest side to exert its political muscle and to gain a sense of equality

with the east and northwest sides.

Another major factor in election was the state of Stolze's opposition. This was evident in the northwest side's support of Stolze. While in 1907 the fourth ward gave Stolze only 42 percent of the vote, in 1911 he carried the ward with 50.4 percent; the sixth ward in 1907 gave Stolze only 49.3 percent of the vote, and in 1911 he carried the ward with 53.4 percent.<sup>100</sup> Although the shift may seem small, in these Republican wards the breakdown of the traditional party coalition was part of the difference. In fact, the Herald bemoaned: "Craite's defeat is charged to Republican desertion of the ticket which the withdrawal of Frazier from the field was virtually endorsement."<sup>101</sup> The coalition's breakup itself may not have been the sole cause, for the way in which Frazier was made to withdraw also was a factor in the collapse. Frazier and the Republicans obviously felt cheated of their fair turn in the mayor's office under the 1907 compromise. This point was hinted at by the Herald in its analysis of the election: "Personalities also entered into the campaign many allowing their personal grievances fancied or otherwise, to enter in to defeat the nominee."<sup>102</sup>

The sharp division within the opposition which forced Craite to try and straddle the fence may have influenced the northwest side's vote also. Beginning with the water works referendum, the anti-Stolze coalition split along progressive-conservative lines. Later the picture was further complicated by the partisan division which resulted from the primary. In an effort to bridge these splits Craite geared his campaign toward reunifying the coalition behind his campaign. Unfortunately for Craite, progressive Republicans seem to have been unmoved. An analysis reported in the Herald stated "... that the old La-Follette lines that were drawn at the last minute against Craite did more to work his downfall than anything else."<sup>103</sup> This statement seemed to indicate that progressives felt Craite had gone too far in his attempt to reconcile the conservatives in the business community.

In addition, claims were made of unusual forces at work in the fourth ward to Stolze's benefit. The Herald stated, "Then too the fine Italian hand of certain interests shown in the fourth ward where Stolze carried the



precinct with 185 votes while his running mate Feuerpfell received but 65."<sup>104</sup> The observation possibly hinted that some illegal activities such as voter fraud may have led to Stolze's win in the fourth. While there is no way to know for sure, Ralph Plumb, in his book Recollections of an Amateur Politician did indicate that some voter fraud was suspected during a few of the mayoral races during the period.<sup>105</sup> More realistically, however, this was merely a case of the Republican crossover support for Stolze. This view is reinforced by the fact that the fourth ward was Frazier's home and his friends probably took his rebuke personally. In addition, reform Democrat Frank Zeman easily defeated conservative Republican Ralph Hempton in the fourth ward aldermanic race.<sup>106</sup>

The last factor in Stolze's victory was that he finally gained political legitimacy. Stolze could now blunt the verbal attacks which labeled him

"radical" or incompetent. Although not solely responsible for his victory, Stolze's political legitimacy helped him in the northwest side wards.

In conclusion, Henry Stolze's 1911 mayoral victory was based on many of the same factors which his fellow Midwestern small urban socialists depended on to win, namely the need for strong working class and ethnic support, the absence of an opposition party coalition, and finally, a popular acceptance of the reform program as legitimate and within the main stream of the political system.

Like other third parties, though, the socialists themselves were but a transient political phenomenon. Taken as a part of the larger picture, however, the socialist and all reform movements have always been part of the political scene. Emerging only when traditional political organizations fail to meet the needs of a large part of the community, these third party movements base their political

appeal on a reform platform and fade away after a short period of time as their political programs are coopted by their political opponents or they successfully complete reforms. Likewise, the constituents of these movements are usually groups which have for some reason or another been slighted in the political process. When the situation is corrected, most of them return to their previous political allegiances. Rarely numerous enough to be successful on a national scene, these groups tend to be most successful in localities.

Manitowoc and Henry Stolze are just one example of this success, and later in the 1920's the cycle would be repeated. The reform in this case was led by former socialist turned labor coalition leader, Martin Georgenson. Thus we return where we began, with an example of building a winning electoral coalition based on a reform program.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Examples of working class union support for socialists can be found in the following: Henry F. Bedford, Socialism and the Workers in Massachusetts, 1886-1912, (Amherst, Mass.: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1966), p.9; John D. Buenker, "Illinois Socialists and Progressive Reform," Journal of Illinois State Historical Society 62 (Winter, 1969): 37; Charles Leinenweber, "Class and Ethnic Bases of New York City Socialism, 1904-1915," Labor History 22 (Winter, 1981): 37; Robert Carrington Nesbit, Wisconsin: A History (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin State Historical Society, 1973), p. 424; Ellen Rosen, "Socialism in Oklahoma: A Theoretical Overview," Politics and Society 8 (Winter, 1978): 110; Errol Wayne Stevens, "The Socialist Party of America in Municipal Politics: Canton, Illinois 1911-1920," Journal of the Illinois Historical Society 72 (November, 1979): 258, 261; Bruce M. Stave, ed., Socialism and the Cities (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1975), pp. 44, 101; Marvin Wachman, History of the Social Democratic Party of Milwaukee, 1897-1910 (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1967), p. 38.
- 2 Examples of Central European ethnicity as a factor: Susan Groh, "Local Politics in Historical Perspective," Herald-Times-Reporter (Manitowoc-Two Rivers, Wis.), June 5, 1975, p. 29; Leinenweber, pp. 31, 36; Donald Pienkos, "Politics, Religion, and Change in Polish Milwaukee, 1900-1930," Wisconsin Magazine of History 61 (March, 1978): 189-90; Stave, pp. 44, 61, and 101; Roger E. Wyman, "Middle Class Voters and Progressive Reform: The Conflict of Class and Culture," American Political Science Review 68 (Spring, 1974): 493.
- 3 Stave, p.64.
- 4 Bedford, p. 94; Rosen, pp. 123-24.
- 5 Michael Bassett, "Municipal Reform and the Socialist Party, 1910-1914," Australian Journal of Politics and History 19 (April, 1973): 182.
- 6 For a definition of constructive socialism consult: Sally M. Miller, Victor Berger and the Promise of Constructive Socialism 1910-1920 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973), pp. 24-25.
- 7 "Socialist Vote Sweeps City; Stolze is Mayor-1915," Manitowoc Daily Herald, April 5, 1905, p. 1.
- 8 "Results of Tuesdays Election," Manitowoc Pilot, April 4, 1907, p. 1.
- 9 James J. Lorence, "The Milwaukee Connection: The Urban-Rural Link in Wisconsin Socialism, 1910-1920,"



Milwaukee History 3 (September, 1980): 103.

- 10 Bassett, p. 182; James Weinstein, The Decline of Socialism in America, 1912-1925 (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), pp. 93, 103.
- 11 Weinstein, p. 115.
- 12 Ralph G. Plumb, A History of Manitowoc County (Manitowoc, Wis.: Brandt Printing and Binding, Co., 1904), p. 177 (County and Regional Atlases: Wisconsin, Reel 36, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Area Research Center).
- 13 Articles relating to McGovern and the election: Plumb, Badger Politics, pp. 152-59; Marguiles, p. 106. Article relating to Karel: James Lorence, "Socialism in Northern Wisconsin, 1910-1920: An Ethno-Cultural Analysis," Mid-America 64 (October, 1982): 27.
- 14 "Socialist Vote Sweeps City," Herald, April 5, 1905, p. 1.
- 15 "Results," Pilot, April 4, 1907, p. 1.
- 16 "Bury Stolze and Theories Under Avalanche of Votes: Socialists Get Body Blow," Herald, April 4, 1909, p. 1.
- 17 Stave, p. 119; Zane L. Miller, "Boss Cox's Cincinnati: A Study in Urbanization and Politics," Journal of American History 54 (March, 1968): 825.
- 18 "Socialist Vote Sweeps City," Herald, April 5, 1905, p. 1.
- 19 "Bury Stolze," Herald, April 4, 1909, p. 1.
- 20 Marcie Baer; L. A. Murrey; and Badger History, ed. Howard W. Kanetzke, "The Polish Influence On Manitowoc County History," Occupational Monograph 41 (1980 Series) Manitowoc County Historical Society, p. 7. It is important also to note that the area around St. Mary's Catholic Church which is located on the corner of Twenty-first and Marshall Streets is referred to as the "Polish Hill".
- 21 "Socialist Vote Sweeps City," Herald, April 5, 1905, p. 1.
- 22 "Results," Pilot, April 4, 1907, p. 1.
- 23 "Bury Stolze," Herald, April 4, 1909, p. 1.
- 24 Lloyd Velicer, "Municipal Ownership and the Manitowoc, Wisconsin Socialist: 1905-1917," Occupational Monograph 35 (1978 Series) Manitowoc County Historical Society.
- 25 "Water Works Purchase to Election," Herald, January 4, 1911, p. 1.
- 26 Hoan, p. 47.
- 27 Herald, January 5, 1911, p. 2. The reference to three years ago apparently relates to the March, 1907, referendum.
- 28 Herald, January 10, 1911, p. 2.
- 29 "Not Business Policy To Buy Water Plant," Herald, January 11, 1911, p. 1.
- 30 Herald, January 11, 1911, p. 2.
- 31 "Mass Meeting Sentiment Forecasts Defeat of Water Works Purchase Tuesday," Herald, January 13, 1911, p. 1.
- 32 Opponents of "public works reform" in other cities such as Canton, Illinois, would also use economic health as an argument. Stevens, p. 267.
- 33 "Mass Meeting," Herald, January 13, 1911, p. 1.
- 34 "Pitz Says Water Deal Looks Queer," Herald, January 14, 1911, p. 1.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 "Vote It Down," Reporter, January 13, 1911.
- 37 "Stolze To Talk On Water Works Tonite," Herald, January 16, 1911, p. 1.
- 38 "Two Argue For Purchase," Herald, January 12, 1911, p. 1.
- 39 "Mass Meeting," Herald, January 13, 1911, p. 1.
- 40 "Administration Has A Paper," Herald, January 13, 1911, p. 1.
- 41 "Makes Charge of Bad Faith," Herald, January 16, 1911, p. 4.
- 42 "Stolze To Talk," Herald, January 16, 1911, p. 1.
- 43 "Stolze and Haugen On Same Platform," Herald, January 17, 1911, p. 1.
- 44 Reporter, January 20, 1911.



- 45 "Mass Meeting," Herald, January 13, 1911, p. 1.
- 46 "Stolze and Haugen," Herald, January 17, 1911, p. 1.
- 47 "City By Vote of 3 to 1 Favors Purchase of Water Works System," Herald, January 18, 1911, p. 1.
- 48 Reporter, January 20, 1911.
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- 70 "Judge Craite Gets Big Vote In Primary," Herald, March 22, 1911, p.1.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 "Manitowoc Primary," Reporter, March 24, 1911.
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- 74 "Henry Stolze To Run," Reporter, February 21, 1911.
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- 76 "Zeman Out," Herald, February 23, 1911, p. 1.
- 77 "Frazier Says He Will Stick," Herald, March 22, 1911, p. 1.
- 78 "Frazier Should Withdraw," Herald, March 25, 1911, p. 2.
- 79 "Frazier In Open Letter Quits Field," Herald, March 27, 1911, p. 1.
- 80 Herald, March 30, 1911, p. 2.
- 81 "Mr. Stolze Willing To Run," Herald, February 20, 1911, p. 1.
- 82 Herald, April 1, 1911, pp. 2 and 3.
- 83 "Information," Herald, March 31, 1911, p. 1.
- 84 "From Stolze's Last Speech," Herald, April 3, 1911, p. 1.
- 85 "Interests" refers to the business community and traditional political leaders.
- 86 "Big Vote Out In Days Fight," Herald, April 4, 1911, p. 1.
- 87 "Judge Craite Has Word for Voters of City," Herald, March 27, 1911, p. 1.



- 88 Ibid.
- 89 Ibid.
- 90 Ibid.
- 91 "Says Record Gives Little To Hope For," Herald, April 3, 1911, p. 1.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 Ibid.
- 94 "Stolze Socialist Elected Mayor Over Craite, Democrat By Majority of 149 Votes," Herald, April 5, 1911, p. 1.
- 95 Ibid.
- 96 James Lorence, in an election study of voting behavior in state and national elections, found a high correlation between the percentage of manual laborers in a ward and its support of socialist candidates. Lorence, "Socialism," passim.
- 97 Catholic Strength is indicated by the presence of St. Boniface and St. Mary's Catholic Churches in the third and seventh ward, respectively. Lorence, "Socialism," p. 36.
- 98 Stevens, p. 265
- 99 Wyman, p. 489.
- 100 "Results", Pilot, April 4, 1907, p. 1; "Stolze Elected Mayor over Craite," Herald, April 5, 1911, p. 1.
- 101 "Stolze Elected Mayor Over Craite," Herald, April 5, 1911, p. 1.
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- 104 Ibid. William Feuerpfeil was a former Republican who was seeking the City Treasurer's office under the Socialist Party ticket.
- 105 Ralph G. Plumb, Recollections of an Amateur Politician (Manitowoc, Wis.: Brandt Printing and Binding Co., 1954), p. 31.
- 106 "Stolze Elected Mayor Over Craite," Herald, April 5, 1911, p. 1.

#### **Additional Notes and Information**

All electoral data on state and national elections came from various editions of the Wisconsin Blue Book. Demographic data on Manitowoc's population was obtained from an analysis of the 1905 State Census.

Due to space considerations, several endnotes and explanatory references as well as census analysis have been omitted from the monograph. For more information, the reader is directed to the original article, "Building a Winning Electoral Coalition: The 1911 Manitowoc Mayoral Contest and Municipal Socialist Henry Stolze Jr." by Allan Richard Patek, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Department of History, May, 1985, on file at the UW-Eau Claire Archives and Area Research Center.





*Henry Stolze monument on the Manitowoc Public Utilities grounds at Madison and South 7th Streets, Manitowoc. The granite monument and commemorative plaque were erected by the Knights of Pythias and dedicated on December 11, 1926.*

*(Manitowoc County Historical Society)*