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## Swiss cheese industry in Green County Wisconsin. 1936

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Monroe, Wisconsin: Monroe Evening Times, 1936

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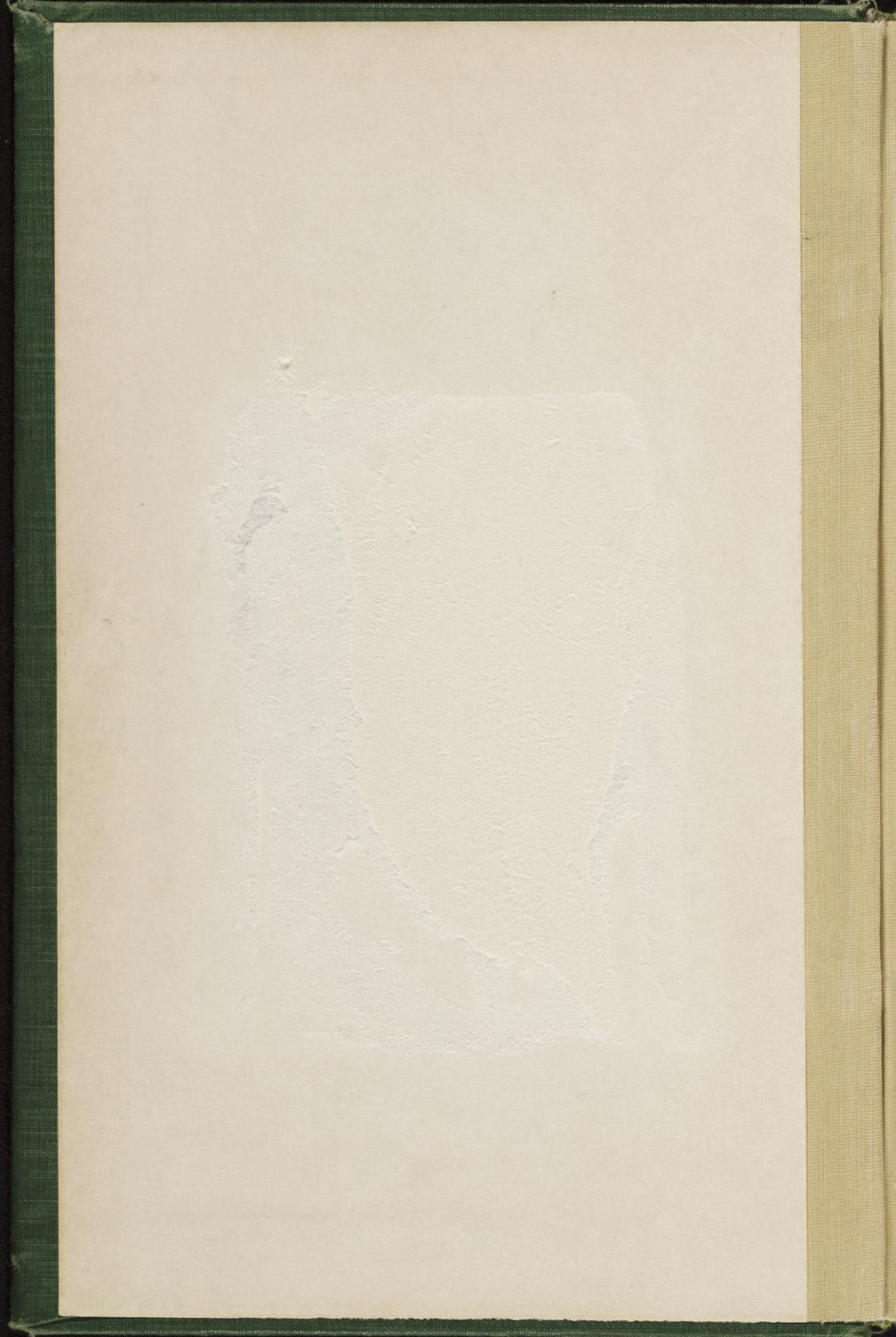
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IN  
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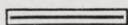






# SWISS CHEESE INDUSTRY

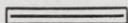
BY  
EMERY A. ODELL



Detailed narrative of the origin and development of a distinctive dairy achievement in Green county, Wisconsin, now centering in Monroe—beginning of the factory system—men prominent in the creative period—chain of events that have marked the course of progress—individuals who figured in the home industry that became a business national in scope to engage the interest of Borden, Kraft, Phenix and National Dairy Products.

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1936  
Monroe, Wisconsin



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By EMERY A. ODELL

Printed in U. S. A. by  
Monroe Evening Times Company  
Monroe, Wisconsin

## FOREWORD

The opening pages of this review of Green county's Swiss cheese industry, written in 1928, dealt only with the creative period, where and how the industry originated and who figured in the pioneer development up to the factory system.

The pamphlet, long since, has been out of print, and as there is still call for it, with requests for a more complete history, this second edition is published with some revision and additions.

Amazing changes have come with the fleeting years. The industry has branched out into allied lines, there has been no success that has continued unbroken, but the record as a whole has been one of steady progress.

Monroe remains the "Swiss Cheese Capital of the U. S. A." If anything the market is centralized in Monroe to greater extent than at any time previous. The business is carried on along more definite lines and with greater organization of interests but with the same old price differences between buyer and producer. So much has happened that the task of getting the record into the printed page was greater than realized at the time it was undertaken.

Here is an industry that sprung out of small beginning and dire necessity at a time when distressed foreigners in a new country, untouched by railroads, highway transportation or communication systems, were at a loss to know where to turn after unsuccessful farming experiments.

They had industry and initiative and instituted dairying that has made agriculture here in central southern Wisconsin a dependable pursuit that guarantees continuity of income, profit and stability impossible in haphazard farming known to many localities. Cheesemaking started in a small way, first for home consumption, then there was sale for cheese, near home at first, and the market reached out in wider circles, finally to include the entire country. Farmers began to take up cheesemaking more readily; where there were few dealers at first, there were many with natural competition among them. Organization of the home groups followed; the importance of the industry was such that it began to receive attention from outside dairy interests with the result that local control had to yield to more powerful outside forces.

Various cooperative plans have been tried but as yet the cooperative idea has not succeeded to any extent beyond the farmer-owned and farmer-operated cheese factory.

The different phases and allied branches of the industry are briefly touched upon and added to the record are many of the

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names that have been associated with it. Represented here have been the leading interests in national dairy affairs.

From the time the colonists left their native Switzerland to the present day, the record of the dairy achievement is an interesting human interest story. The original colonists, being artisans from the more densely populated industrial sections of Canton Glarus, did not happen to be as dairy-minded as were their countrymen who followed them. It is also an historic fact that the actual founders were Glarners who stopped in New York and came on from the Mohawk valley, where cheesemaking was then part of the farming occupation. Green county, along with New York and the Sugar Creek district in Ohio, were for years the country's chief producing districts for Swiss cheese and when the Wisconsin region took first place, New York manufacturing was drawn here. An astonishing chain of events is revealed in the simple story told in these pages.

The purpose has been to tell the story as it is without elaboration. Where there may be departures from dry facts and figures, the statements must be accepted as the slant gained from viewpoint of one who has never engaged in the cheese business, and is without connection beyond living in the midst of it since boyhood.

EMERY A. ODELL,

Publisher Monroe Evening Times.

Monroe, Wisconsin, April 15, 1936.



# Wife of Early Colonist No Doubt First Cheesemaker

Green county histories written up to the present time do not record the beginning of the foreign type cheese industry which has made Green county an outstanding dairy district, not only in Wisconsin but in the entire country.

It is known that cheesemaking in Green county had its inception when the Swiss settlers in New Glarus township were driven to it in desperation after repeated crop failures, but the writers of the time did not anticipate that some day there might be appreciative public sentiment in favor of honoring the pioneers in the cheese industry, who laid the foundation so well that the prosperity of the county in the years to come was builded thereon, by erecting suitable tablets to establish for all time the exact location of the first cheese factory that began turning out a product with a cash value in the outside market.

Where would one go in Green county to erect a tablet to mark the spot and honor the achievement as well as the memory of men who are entitled to credit for their vision in launching the cheese business in a practical way so it might grow until there was developed here in Green county what is now recognized as the center of the Swiss cheese industry in this country—and here in Monroe, the Swiss Cheese Capital of the U. S. A.?

The history list of "first things" in Green county published in 1884 does not include the first cheese factory. Indeed, it may be that even at that time it was not realized that a highly specialized industry was taking form as the chief operation of the farming section here.

Review of the history of the early days of commercial cheese making reveals the fact that it is now nearly 70 years since the first cheese factory was put in operation in Green county. Cheesemaking started long before that and the first cheesemaker was doubtless the wife of some Swiss colonist, for the first cheese presses were in the kitchens of the homes.

## Skimmed Milk to Make Cheese

As soon as the colonists had cows they had cheese, for they were accustomed to cheese in Switzerland. However, it was not a whole milk cheese for they skimmed their milk for butter. The use of butter was considered extravagant and butter was traded at the market with the eggs for necessities or money that was needed for taxes.

The skim milk was used to make cheese that was bluish in color and tough in texture but it served as food and was eaten with bread instead of butter, or with boiled potatoes. People now living still remember that skim milk cheese. This cheese was made for home consumption and for that reason is not easily forgotten. The principal merit of this cheese was in the quality that made it lasting in the memory of the people who as children were obliged to eat it.

But on the point of the exact location of the factories that were built for the purpose of making Swiss, limburger and brick cheese in Green county, nothing very definite has ever been printed beyond the generally accepted belief that dairying was introduced by the Swiss colonists who came from Switzerland and founded New Glarus in 1845 and who in the years following when their efforts at farming failed, turned to dairying.

### **Chinch Bug Pest Ruined Crops**

This was not until nearly a score of years had passed, for Conrad Zimmerman, writing the history of the town of New Glarus in 1884, said:

“The town of New Glarus has been a wheat growing district for many years. Those hillsides and plateaux have in many instances stood the abuse of being plowed and sowed with wheat for 12 or 15 successive years. Little else was raised during the time of 20 years, from 1850 to 1870. But when the price of wheat came down after the close of the war, when the hillsides were cut up by numerous ditches, when the arable portion of the fields was washed away in many places, and above all, when the chinch bugs appeared and ate up the wheat crop year after year, then the farmers were forced to think of the next thing on the program.

“Either cheese or nothing, and happily we got cheese. The old wheat fields were seeded with clover and grass. Cows were put on them. Cheese factories were built. After the fact was proved that there was a ready market for cheese, it only took five or six years until cheese making was the main branch of work for the whole farming population. It not only pays better but the farms are constantly made more productive.”

A pailful of skimmed milk, a stove kettle and a wooden hoop split from a sapling, it was stated, was the extent of equipment for the first cheesemaking in the homes. The cheese was round and the size of a milk pan and was flattened by heavy weights used to press out the moisture.

Home cheesemaking was carried on to greater or less extent and as operations enlarged, it became necessary to use what was called the cheese house, usually an addition like a small shed where a copper kettle might be used, with fire boxes of brick or stone, with a



crane constructed to swing the kettle on or off the fire.

Eighteen factories were operating in New Glarus township at that time, 1884.

### **First Cows Came in 1846**

Drovers from Ohio came to Exeter in the spring of 1846 with cows and these were purchased in sufficient number to give each family one, it was written by Judge John Luchsinger in his history of the colony. The cost was \$12 for each and was paid out of an unexpended balance of \$1,000 aid that had been sent from Switzerland.

"The colonists excelled in the care of the cow and here the Sweitzer turned to his benefactor in the old country," he said.

In 1846 the livestock inventory of New Glarus township was 1 bull, 18 cows, 15 heifers and 25 calves.

Dairying as a business was certainly in its infancy at that time.

### **Colony's Situation Desperate**

Even until after the civil war the Swiss colonists were in desperate circumstances, being obliged to go to the length of their immediate resources for their own existence since they had little money and lived almost entirely upon the things they were able to grow, the wild game, such as deer and rabbits and the fish in the streams. They traded the best of their produce for flour and sugar.

The rennet starter was made from the stomach of calves, cured at home and salted down for future use and it was long afterward that rennet was imported from Switzerland.

Much of the earlier cheese was called Schab-Zieger. The cakes weighed a few ounces that became very hard in curing and was grated for table use. This was not a commercial proposition but served well the uses of the Swiss settlers. This variety of cheese, also known as green cheese, may be purchased in the local market at the present time, but it is now imported from Switzerland.

The fact is well established that the Green county cheese industry originated in the homes of the early Swiss settlers.

### **Washington Township Reference**

There is reference to early cheesemaking in the history of Washington township.

Adam Blumer, native of Switzerland, came here in 1849, locating in Washington township, where he entered 240 acres of land from the government, erected a log house, purchased two pairs of oxen and put the oxen immediately to work as he commenced plowing and improving the land. He had been reared on a dairy farm in Switzerland and learned the art of cheesemaking. The first spring,



which was in 1850, he bought five cows and made butter and cheese, and branched out into grain and stock raising. He died in 1855 leaving a widow and five children. The youngest was Adam Blumer, who succeeded his brother-in-law, Jacob Hefty, in the brewery business in Monroe. The son married March 23, 1865, and located on the old homestead. He began making limburger cheese in 1868, keeping at that time 20 cows. He continued the manufacture of cheese and in 1884 had 75 cows, which was more than other farmers of that day thought of keeping. The farm was increased to 476 acres and as many as 80 to 100 cows were milked in later years, when he had as high as 150 cattle on the farm.

### **Known as First Cheesemaker**

Rudolph Benkert, who came to Monroe in 1867, was known in after years as the first cheesemaker in Green county. He went to work the same year he came on the Martin Zumbrunnen farm in Washington township. He started experimental limburger making in a small building and the cheese was taken to the cellar of the home for curing. Cheesemaking up to that time had been carried on in a haphazard sort of way in the homes without commonly practiced methods and no thought of uniform shaping.

Mr. Benkert was born in Canton Berne, Switzerland, May 22, 1841. He was the son of John Benkert and when he came to this country with his parents in 1851 they settled in Oneida county, New York, where limburger was first made in this country. He learned something about it there and when he came here he began making limburger with moulds in the form of the small bricks. This work was carried on by him in a small way in 1867 and it earned for him the reputation of being the first cheesemaker in Green county.

### **Also Made American Cheese**

When he was married to Catherine Zimmerman, of Washington township, Feb. 17, 1871, they moved onto a farm in Monroe township where he built a factory and made cheese from the milk of his own cows and milk delivered by several farmers. He did not buy the milk but they made it up as a company. He made cheese for 20 years or more, making both limburger and American. The American cheese he sold to grocery stores at Freeport at 8 cents a pound and the limburger only brought 6 cents. When limburger was up to 10 cents he thought he was making money.

He retired from farming in 1905 and moved to Monroe, where he died Feb. 20, 1918.

While living in New York he enlisted in 1863 in the 1st New York Mounted Rifles, under General Butler. He served to the close of the war. He was a dispatch carrier for six months. Although

wounded in each arm in a cavalry charge at Bontack, Va., he was incapacitated only two weeks during his enlistment. Mr. Benkert served as assessor in Monroe township for several years. He was a republican and much concerned in the welfare of the farmer.

### **Early Maker Still Lives**

John Marty, one of the first cheesemakers in Green county, lives to relate his experiences as a cheesemaker in 1868. He is now 93 and with his wife by second marriage lives with his children on the old homestead in Mount Pleasant township, where he located in 1864. The stone building built in 1868 as the cheese house is still standing. It was enlarged by a stone addition when it was converted into a shelter for farm machinery. He was one of the honored cheesemakers in the 1935 Cheese Day parade.

Mathias Marty, oldest son, says his father made cheese in a small way, having his own milk and buying milk from Thomas Conway and John Jenny, who were his neighbors.

### **Tried "Hard Cheese" in 1868**

First he made what was called "hard cheese," of skimmed milk after the style of Swiss cheese but it did not work out just right. His building had two rooms which he figured would take care of the making and curing the same as in Switzerland, where he had seen the above ground factory, but the building was too warm and he had to move the cheese to the cellar of his home in order to keep it on the shelves.

He made round Swiss which he peddled in Madison with butter when there was no other market for it, continuing his operations until about 1885 when a cheese company was formed and Jacob Karlen bought the milk. A new factory was built in 1905 but it has been idle now for 20 years.

### **Uncles Owned Monticello**

Mr. Marty's uncles, Jacob Marty and Mathias Marty, bought the whole village of Monticello in the forties and owned much land in Mount Pleasant.

John Marty came in 1864 with his father, John Marty, and worked out the first two winters. Then he bought the farm from his uncle, Jacob Marty, who went to Texas for his health. The farm consisted of 300 acres, and is located five miles southeast of Monticello. Mr. Marty was born in Canton Glarus, Switzerland. He has eight children living, Mathias, Henry, Jacob and Mary, at home, Adam Marty, Monroe; Mrs. Anna Balziger, Spring Grove, John Marty, Janesville, and Herman Marty, California. Henry Babler, Monroe, is a brother to Mrs. Marty.



# Factory System Followed Farmers' Cheese House

The development of the factory system followed the farmers' cheese house and early accounts, first published in the Monroe Evening Times in 1915, reveal Nick Gerber as the founder of the first farmers' cheese factory in Green county.



Nick Gerber

men, women and whole families, sometimes occupying their own day coach enroute from New York.

Experienced cheesemakers were necessary and while skilled makers were brought from Switzerland many youngsters in their teens went into the work in the factories with their elders and became makers capable of operating their own factory. Their accumulations enabled them to buy farms where they shared in the prosperity dairying was bringing the farmers. Thus they contributed qualities of stability, energy, honesty and thrift to the farming community of Green county.

Although coming too late to have part in the pioneering necessary in the founding of the industry there was need for them to maintain the progress under way as the business was extended.

There was land to be had in unsettled country. As the industry developed land values increased. Farms were in demand and settlers went into debt to buy them as they learned to use their credit to make money. They were financed by farm mortgages, which was no reflection upon the farmer, as he valued his credit and his mortgage was regarded as gilt-edged security. Increase in land values helped make the earlier farmers wealthy.

## Began as Home Enterprise

Where the cheese business was a strictly home enterprise at the beginning, it began to attract notice and outsiders appeared on the ground. New competition entered into the transactions between farmers and dealers and dealers and their established trade rela-

tionships. Milk condenseries came to compete in milk prices with farmer owned factories. Some survived and took the place of cheese factories while an organization like the Borden in operation 35 years in Monroe finally moved out, sacrificing a costly plant. There are still successful condenseries, among them the Pet company at New Glarus, operating on a large scale as the chief industry, successfully overcoming cheese factory competition years ago.

Mr. Gerber was a native of Switzerland, born in Canton Berne in 1836. He learned cheesemaking there in 1856 and came to America in 1857. He located at Booneville, Oneida county, N. Y., and introduced the manufacture of limburger cheese in New York state. He operated this factory six years. Then he moved to Wheeling, near Chicago, but a factory he opened there did not prove successful. He came to Green county in 1868 and built and equipped a limburger factory in the town of New Glarus on the farm of Albert Babler. This, it was stated by the Monroe Evening Times, was the first farmer cheese factory operating in Green county.

The next year, in 1869, Mr. Gerber started the first Swiss cheese factory, which was located on the Dietrich Freitag farm in Washington township.

Mr. Gerber was familiar with the operation of the factory system in New York and Ohio and persuaded the settlers to build factories and cellars and deliver their milk to the factory for outright purchase.

### **Farmers Opposed Factory System**

Farmers at first did not respond favorably to the factory system plan of making cheese. Many had made Swiss cheese for years on their farms from the milk of their own herds and were satisfied. Besides, the peculiar process of making Swiss cheese, which had not varied for centuries, made them believe that it was impracticable to work up the milk in large volume. Experiments proved that these opinions were wrong and that cheese of better quality and greater uniformity could be made by the factory system.

Factories were first operated as a string, the farmers selling the milk, the maker and supplies being furnished by the buyer of the milk. The price paid at the beginning was as low as 40 cents a hundred but as the product began gaining a market in the large cities the price started stepping up to 50 and 60 cents and finally to 75 cents, but this was not until years afterward.

### **Gerber Started Factory Chain**

Nick Gerber in time was conducting six or eight cheese factories in New Glarus and Washington townships, and he was buying the



cheese from others so that the industry at that time could be considered as being fairly launched on a basis that was proving helpful to the farmers. Times had been very tight and money that came into the districts for cheese aided immensely in putting the farmers on their feet.

The interesting volume of Green county history written by Miss Helen M. Bingham in 1876 touches upon this budding industry that was due to spread over the county in a way that establishes the large part Mr. Gerber played in it at that time. He is credited with three factories in Washington and New Glarus townships producing 227,900 pounds of Swiss cheese. Jacob Karlen had three factories making 24,000 pounds, John Boss was making 24,000 pounds in one factory and G. Beller 22,000 pounds in one factory. There were four limburger factories with production of 39,000 pounds as follows: Jacob Freitag 5,000, Paulus Kundert 6,000, George Legler 8,000 and Stauffacher & Weiss 20,000.

"From the very first," Miss Bingham wrote, "the Swiss made cheese to use at home and sell in the county, but its manufacture in large quantities was delayed until five or six years ago when Nicholas Gerber started two factories in southern New Glarus and one in Washington. At first only Swiss cheese was made but of the two lines of industry the manufacture of limburger cheese is now the more important."

### **14 Washington Factories in 1876**

Washington had 14 factories and was then distinguished for its cheese, according to Miss Bingham's history. The output in 1876 was 225,000 pounds of Swiss, sold at an average of 12 cents a pound, and 775,000 pounds of limburger at 10 cents a pound.

D. and H. Freitag and M. Zimmerman had Swiss and limburger factories; G. Wittwer, R. Karlen and J. Zimmerman Swiss factories, and N. Gerber, Jacob Karlen, G. Beller, C. Theiler, John Boss and Miller, Frautschy & Company had the limburger factories.

Outside of New Glarus and Washington townships there were 15 factories making Swiss and limburger in the county, four in Exeter, four in Clarno, one in Sylvester and six in Mt. Pleasant. Monroe had no cheese shippers at that time.

These figures, while not bearing upon the point of origin, indicate that dairying was going forward in the seventies. Mr. Gerber's part in the change that was coming in the farmer's situation was recognized and appreciated, although rivalry in the business in the years following deprived him of some of the credit he deserved for it was due to his earlier efforts that dairymen continued to derive benefit in being able to sell their cheese and receive cash for it.

Children of the first dairymen still living hereabouts have pleasant memories of this kindly man as he traveled the country by horse

and buggy to his cheese factories, as this was the only way he had of keeping in touch with them. The struggling dairymen welcomed his visits as they were mutually interested in an improvement of conditions and relations existing between them were the best. Mr. Gerber wore a long black beard and always drove a white horse hitched to a single buggy. He made regular trips over the road in New Glarus and Washington townships where he carried on his principal operations.

### **Gerber's Reward Inadequate**

There are still traces in some of the neighborhoods or among those of the younger generations now grown up who came from his factory districts of the affection farmers held for him at the time when he was alone in the field. His nursing of the infant industry did not permit of the financial reward his efforts deserved, and although his influence and activities were productive of results there were others to participate in the benefits resulting with enlarged development as they became competitors in producing and marketing.

The years were eventful because of rapid expansion which brought on a critical period that almost proved disastrous. There was a slump in prices that created a problem in distribution because there was not sufficient outlet for the product of all the factories engaged in making.

When there were only a few factories producing a small amount of cheese it could be easily disposed of but new markets had to be found as the production mounted. As the market became glutted, prices went down to the point where farmers suffered losses, even where they were selling their milk under contract. However, the farmers had a taste of the better times and willingly sustained losses in order to help the buyers who were seriously pressed and on the verge of ruin and being forced out of business. Then, as new markets could be opened, prices advanced again and the permanence of the industry appeared to be definitely established.

### **Wittwer's Tragic Death**

Unfortunately, Mr. Gerber did not recover the losses he met with in 1878 at New Glarus when the cheese industry suffered a severe blow resulting in hard times. He was one of the organizers of the Green County Cheese Manufacturing company Jan. 22, 1878, with Gottlieb Wittwer, Gottlieb Beller and Edward Ruegger, which failed after the tragic death of Mr. Wittwer in a Denver hotel Feb. 23, 1883. Money was tied up in cheese and there was no movement because of market slump. Mr. Wittwer's trip to the west was



made in an effort to find sale for the cheese. Mr. Wittwer's death, presumably suicide, precipitated the failure of the company with losses that fell heavily upon all who were interested. The cheese in stock had to be sold in the settlement of affairs. Limburger was sold as low as 3 cents a pound in order to convert it into cash.

Mr. Gerber moved in 1880 to Brooklyn to take advantage of improved shipping facilities, but he remained there only a year, coming to Monroe in April, 1882. He retired except for dealing in cheese factory supplies he received from Switzerland, at the same time engaging in the saloon business with Edward Ruegger, conducting what was known as the Spring hotel on South Jackson street opposite Spring square. Mr. Ruegger became sheriff in 1882 and Mr. Gerber remained in business alone, Mr. Ruegger later returning to the old stand while Mr. Gerber moved into the old McKey block at the southwest corner of the square.

### **Cheese Pioneer in Iowa, Too**

In 1893 Mr. Gerber left Monroe, moving to Luverne, Ia., where he again pioneered in the manufacture of cheese. He later engaged in the retail cheese business in Omaha but owing to breaking health he returned to Monroe, where he died May 8, 1903, aged 67 years. Mrs. Gerber, his widow, is still a resident of Monroe. Mrs. Sophie Alder, 2514 Tenth street, is a daughter by his first wife. Mrs. Alder was a child when the family located at Wheeling, near Chicago, where they remained while the father came to Green county to interest the farmers in the factory system. At last they were ready to move to New Glarus, but they were delayed by the fire that swept Chicago in October, 1871. Children still surviving besides Mrs. Alder are Mrs. Ed. Leibly, Rice Lake; Mrs. I. P. Harrison and Mrs. William Kempt, Winnipeg, Canada; Ed. Gerber, Kansas City, Mo.; Will Gerber, Los Angeles, and Henry Gerber, Council Bluffs, Ia.

### **Crude but Honest Poem Tribute**

After the death of Nick Gerber in 1903, there was found among his effects a poem entitled, "A Song of Cheese," that was written by John Peter Luchsinger, of Washington township, Green county, in 1882. It was dedicated to Mr. Gerber, who 14 years previously had come to Green county from New York and started the foreign cheese industry on the foundation laid by the Swiss settlers. At the time the poem was published in 1903 it was agreed that Mr. Gerber really deserved this crude but honest tribute.

In translating the poem, which was written in German, effort was made to preserve the quaint ideas and the verses, the translation being as follows:



## A SONG OF CHEESE

I will sing a song of long, long ago,  
A story old and true,  
When oats and corn were failures  
And wheat, through chinch bugs, too.

Our needs were great, and interest  
Had gone to highest notch—  
And farmers all around us thought  
That they had made a botch.

Our lands to us no harvest gave,  
The ground was almost bare,  
Earth washed down from every hill  
And stones most anywhere.

A savior was surely due  
To help us in our need,  
And he arrived, and then he said,  
"Change your affairs with speed."

"Bid all the chinch bugs go abroad  
"By seeding your acres down;  
"Keep only cows and feed your hogs  
"I'll quickly change your frown."

"Plant only corn and nothing more  
"To feed your hogs and swine,  
"Build better barns, milk more cows  
"And riches will be thine."

He started in and showed us how  
To turn the milk to gold,  
With two or three cheese factories  
To which the milk was sold.

Then money soon commenced to flow,  
A full, great, golden stream,  
Which all into our coffers came—  
It was just like a dream.

Nick Gerber was this hero's name,  
Who came to us from far,  
Who was our teacher in this art,  
Who was our guiding star.

If cows could talk and have some sense  
How thankful they would be  
And to Nick Gerber as recompense  
A monument you'd see.

But then the calves, they felt not so,  
Of milk they always had their fill,  
But now they bleat a tale of woe,  
They're fed on whey and swill.

So let us then all thankful be  
To Nick, who did this all,  
For he it was, and none but he,  
Who started first the ball

Which rolled us to prosperity  
And to our wealth galore;  
Therefore we can but grateful be  
Now and forever more.

Of course I know that I will not  
Reap thanks from everyone,  
For there are some who claim that they  
Did more than anyone.

But I don't care! Give praises to  
Who praises does deserve,  
I know that Nick, before them all,  
Came here, and on his nerve

He started this; and now you see  
Yourself what it became,  
Therefore, I say, here's three times three  
To Old Nick Gerber's name!

## Three Other Leaders

### Closely Follow Gerber

Closely joining Nick Gerber in early cheese factory development were three other men who soon became leading factors in the industry. All were natives of Switzerland and all were Berners—Nick Gerber, Jacob Karlen, John Boss and Jacob Regez. Most of the Swiss settlers at that time were Glarners. They were the four aces in the wholesale cheese trade of their time in Green county. Jacob Karlen and Jacob Regez continued as vital forces for 35 years. The cheese business experienced its greatest development under the leadership of these men. They had market connections in many parts of the country, the necessary experience and the means needed to finance cheesemaking. They provided the factory equipment and makers. The makers, their tools and supplies, rennet starters and nearly everything came from Switzerland.

Like Mr. Gerber, the other three were practical cheese men. Their cheese won favor in the larger markets both east and west. All prospered, each gaining a competence by reason of the successful management of their business.

Jacob Karlen came from Booneville, N. Y. He became a wholesale dealer in Monroe in 1878 and continued until he retired in 1909.



Jacob Karlen

It is generally considered that he personally predominated the cheese trade locally to larger extent than any other individual. His business was known for its heavy volume and wide distribution. Born in Boltigen, Canton Berne, Switzerland, Jan, 18, 1840, he came to New York in 1869. After a year he came to Wisconsin, locating at Hanover in Rock county, where he was engaged as a stone mason. In 1872 he opened a cheese factory in Jefferson township, Green county, what was known as Richland, now the Pfund factory, operating it one year as maker. In 1872 he made cheese in Jordan and from 1873 to 1876 he made cheese in the Wild factory in Adams moving next to the Becker-Wittenwyler factory in 1877 and to Monroe in the fall of 1878, living first in the south part of the city.

### Tinner Makes First Milk Vat

Knute Olson, resident of Stoughton, 1886-1936, who was a tinner in Monroe, is credited with having made the first milk vat for fac-



tory cheesemaking in Green county when Mr. Karlen fitted up the Wild factory. Previous to that whey cans and boilers were used where kettles were not obtainable.

Mr. Olson came to Monroe as a tinner from Blanchardville in 1867. He was in the hardware business for himself from 1878 to 1886, when he moved to Stoughton, where he died April 3, 1936, age 85.

Mr. Karlen late in the seventies built the first cheese cellar in Monroe. Being a mason by trade in Switzerland he had the cellar built of stone and mortar with a wide circular arched ceiling which gave the cellar the appearance of a large tunnel. It was built into the embankment of the C. M. & St. P. Ry. Co.'s right-of-way on Fifteenth avenue. It is still in service. Mr. Karlen used the cellar for storage, curing and shipping during the thirty years he was in business here.

Back in the early years of the cheese business when Monroe first became a shipping point, people protested because of the odors emitted by the loads of limburger that were being delivered here for storage in cellars of store buildings down town to await shipment for there were no regular storage cellars. One day Mr. Karlen came from Farmers Grove with six or seven teams with wagons loaded with limburger. The teams were lined up and hitched along the court house park on the north side of the square. Mr. Karlen did his banking at the First National bank, where his drafts from the east were deposited and these made him a valued patron. As the extent of the business was impressed upon the public by this cheese caravan, open hostility began to subside and limburger found its way finally onto the table of the Yankee households in Monroe.

### **Children Pinched Their Noses**

There was also prejudice against limburger in the country where there were down east farmers who at first refused to take their milk to limburger factories. School children along the road pinched their noses as the limburger wagons passed on their way to Monroe. It is said that at one time an ordinance was proposed in the city council to keep limburger hauling off the main streets because the odor was so offensive. As it became realized that limburger was an important commodity of trade the cheese became more respected.

### **John Boss Early County Buyer**

John Boss was born in Canton Berne, Switzerland, June 6, 1836. He learned cheesemaking there as a boy and when he was 17 he went to France to engage in the occupation. He came to America

in 1856, locating in New Jersey. After one year he went to New York, making cheese in Oneida county until 1870, when he came to Wisconsin. He started two factories at Watertown, which he sold in 1874 and came to Green county. He went to cheesemaking in Washington township in 1874 in the factory now known as the Burgy-Wittenwyler factory. He also engaged in the wholesale cheese business, buying cheese at other factories while associated with Mr. Gerber. His factory was the headquarters of the industry in this section. Mr. Gerber used to plan his trips for night stops with Mr. Boss. Mr. Boss was a man of keen mind and original wit, being known for his jolly good nature. The farmers liked him, although recognizing him as a shrewd buyer. His buying operations began to extend out into other producing districts and in time he was joined by Sam Knutti, another Berner, with whom the making of limburger was a fine art. It was said of him that he never had a failure. He was a 6-footer of heavy build. He never left his factory except for the annual cheesemakers' ball in Monroe and then, it is said, he made the most of the holiday. He applied himself closely to cheesemaking, proving a valuable man to Mr. Boss, who was then more active out in the buying field. Mr. Boss was making money for in 1881 he bought the Jared Fessenden farm of 160 acres adjoining the factory when he was buying the milk of 130 cows. Mr. Boss lived on his farm until he moved to Monroe, where he died in May, 1913. Two daughters, Mrs. G. F. Sickinger and Mrs. W. E. Trukenbrod are residents of Monroe.

### **Jacob Karlen Became Wealthy**

John Boss and Jacob Karlen were in the wholesale business together for a short time. Mr. Karlen was a widely different type of man, being stern and forceful, traits that helped make him powerful and respected as he promoted his string of factories. He bought the milk long before cooperative factories became the rule. At one time he ran 30 factories. He became one of the wealthy men of the city when monied men were few, and despite his comfortable accumulations he was content to live until his death on Jan. 10, 1920, in the modest home on Sixteenth street where he located in 1879. He always did business in his own name to the time he retired in 1908, when the business was conducted in the name of J. Karlen & Son, with Jacob Karlen, Jr., in charge until the Badger Cheese company resulted from a consolidation of local cheese concerns in 1911. Mrs. John Werren, a daughter, now occupies the Karlen home-  
stead. His sons, Jacob Karlen, Jr., G. A. Karlen and F. J. Karlen are no longer active in the cheese business.

Following the death of Louis Schuetze in 1886, Mr. Karlen



bought the United States house, paying \$7,750 for the hotel at the northeast corner of the square with the barn and other buildings, the lot extending back across the alley to Ninth street. The hotel was moved away and a stone foundation was laid for a new hotel, but Arabut Ludlow opened Hotel Ludlow in 1885, which was a pretentious hotel for that day and appeared ample for the hotel needs of the city, and Mr. Karlen abandoned his hotel project. The work stopped when the foundation walls were completed and the foundation was afterward used for the Karlen block, which was built in 1891, operations being carried on with the building of the court house.

### **Regez Begins at New Glarus**

Jacob Regez came on the scene in 1874 filled with the enthusiasm



Jacob Regez

of youth for he was only 25 and showed ambition and energy fitting his years. He was born in Canton Berne, Switzerland, Sept. 18, 1849. He spent his youth in French Switzerland, had been in Paris a year and three years in Normandy. Coming to the United States in 1872 he located at Iowa City, Ia. He had come to America in 1869, locating at that time in Ohio, then going to France to take charge of a cheese factory for his father. After two and one-half years, with the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, he came to America with his brother, Rudy Regez. Jacob Regez, coming to New Glarus, first made cheese there and in 1875, when he came to Monroe, he was organizing factories and buying the milk. He was soon making headway but because others were in control of the business here it was necessary for him to interest farmers beyond established factories. His brother established factories in Dane county.

### **Gained Considerable Fortune**

Mr. Regez was married in Washington township Jan. 20, 1875, to Louise Wittwer, whose parents settled there in 1852. They lived in a cheese factory in Washington township nine years and came to Monroe, where his activities centered until he retired in 1909 after a successful career of 35 years in the wholesale cheese business. He had many factory connections, buying milk at one time for a considerable string and also buying cheese according to the demands of his wholesale business. He also rated well up in the scale of fortunes of the well-to-do of his day in Monroe. His death occurred in 1914. Jacob Regez was first in partnership with his



brother, Rudy Regez, and another brother, Ernest Regez, also a native of Berne, Switzerland, came in 1878. He was employed by them as maker in 1881 at Primrose where he remained until 1885 and located in Blanchardville, making cheese there until 1890 when he devoted his time to management of as many as 35 factories where they contracted milk around Ridgeway, Barneveld, Blue Mounds and Mineral Point. With the dissolution of the business firm he assumed the Blanchardville territory, retiring in 1926, two years before his death July 31, 1928, aged 61. The office and storage building of Ernest Regez & Son at Blanchardville was built in 1910. Mrs. Jacob Regez occupied the old homestead until her death in 1933 and his children, Mrs. John Strahm, Jacob Regez, Jr., and Herman Regez, also have their homes in Monroe. Jacob Regez, Jr., was a member of the Badger Cheese company, and Herman Regez and Rudy Regez, Jr., are in business as the Regez Cheese company.

### **Beller First Dealer in Monroe**

Gottlieb Beller, also a native of Canton Berne, Switzerland, was an early Green county limburger maker, starting in 1874 in Washington township. He was with Martin Zumbrunnen. In 1875 he made cheese in the Goodrich factory, later the Davis factory, southeast of Monroe, and on Jan. 27, 1876, when he married Elizabeth Yordi he moved to Monroe, and always lived on Sixteenth street, where Jos. Acherman, son-in-law, and Miss Anna Beller, sister to Mrs. Acherman, reside.

He was the first dealer to locate in Monroe. He joined Nick Gerber, Edward Ruegger and Gottlieb Wittwer in the Green County Cheese Mfg. company in 1878 and in the crash that followed the death of Wittwer in 1883 he lost everything. Upon a credit of \$2,000 he engaged in business for himself opening three factories, one being the Goodrich factory where he made the cheese and employed the makers in two other factories. He increased the number to nine and also bought cheese.

In those days the factory season closed in October, but in 1879 when business slumped and there was no market with a surplus of Swiss on hand, he was the first to begin winter speculating. He bought up Swiss and stored it in the old brewery cellar north of Turner hall, and cared for the cheese all winter. In the winter months there was a revival of the market with new demand for Swiss cheese and he received high prices as it was the only stock in storage. His venture at first was ridiculed by the cheese men but in after years others began speculating, which has since featured the business. He was 17 when he came from Switzerland. He remained in business 16 years meeting with his share of success and retired at 41. For ten years he was a member of the city council.

He died at 51, on April 27, 1902, with a record for honest dealing and conscientious service for the city in an unusually active capacity as alderman.

### **Prices Went Down in 1879**

In the period after the earlier activities, adjustments that followed were not serious and practices became well settled except for the natural competition in the buying at the factory and the selling in the market. Differences gradually entered into the deals with the farmers and contract sessions in the factories sometimes continued long into the night as arguments arose over the price to be paid for the milk or as they haggled over a few cents or a fraction of a cent in the price to be paid per hundred pounds for milk.

By this time patrons expected more than 60 cents and it did not come easy as buyers were obliged to figure closely because of unsafe market. Then came the six months contract, and a difference of 5 cents between the summer and winter price. In 1879 the farmers contracted at 70 cents for the summer and 75 cents for the winter but buyers were not able to go through with it and paid only 60 cents straight. Factory deliveries had to be made twice a day. The hog market also went bad. Farmers delivering hogs in Monroe received \$2.15 a hundred, the lowest price ever known in the county.

### **Farmers Took Over Factories**

Prices started on the upgrade after the cheese business survived the depression that threatened to ruin it, and then tricks of the trade began to worry farmers who suspected buyers were making too much money and were paying too little for the milk. They did not have the opportunity there is today to be informed upon the selling prices and as the dairymen came to know more about prices, existing conditions became upset and the cooperative factory was the next step.

The practice at the time was for the operator of the string of factories to buy the milk by contract at fixed price per hundred. If the price of milk was down and the price of cheese went up after the close of the season, the profit was the buyer's velvet and if it happened that cheese prices were down it was frequently the case that the farmer was made to share the loss. Farmers began organizing the neighborhood factory on a cooperative plan, employed their own maker on the percentage basis, the maker providing his own tools and supplies as he does today, while the farmer patrons selected their salesmen who dealt with the buyers. The revenue from cheese was divided according to the quantity of milk delivered and realized higher prices for their milk. The factories have operated now for



many years on the cooperative basis, although some farmers continued to sell their milk after the first factories adopted the cooperative plan.

### **Farmers Slow Making Changes**

Farmers were very cautious for even in that day they did not take readily to changes without being certain of benefits, and besides it was a move that was not favored by the buyers who controlled numbers of factories. They strongly resisted cooperative buying as agitation grew out of the dissatisfaction over prices being paid for milk but the farmers learned it meant better prices for them and the cooperative idea succeeded. Cooperative factories became the rule. Now the butterfat test is gaining favor as the proper and fair basis for figuring milk and the patron's share in the factory income.

At the outset of this review dealing with the origin of the cheese factory system in Green county, question was raised as to the location of the first factory. Then reference was made to a statement in the Monroe Evening Times in 1915 that revealed Nick Gerber as the founder of the first factories with the opening of a limburger factory on the Albert Babler farm in New Glarus township in 1868, and the opening of a Swiss cheese factory on the Dietrich Freitag farm in Washington township in 1869.

It was anticipated, since the purpose of the account of the incidents leading to the factory stage of the development was to establish the location of the first factory, that contention was liable to follow such as might make necessary a sifting of claims, but apparently facts have been established beyond controversy. The factory locations first presented may now be safely set down in the record as the sites of the initial ventures in the field of factory cheesemaking in Green county.

### **First Factory Log House**

These sites were merely touched upon in passing. Now they answer the question asked at the beginning.

J. C. Steinman, Monticello, who is regarded as an authority of local history, comes forward with complete data so that the question may now be considered closed to argument or dispute on the point of facts.

The information is first hand, so that every shadow of doubt is removed. Mr. Steinman was a lad of 14 when Nick Gerber started up his limburger factory in 1868 on the farm of Albert Babler, in New Glarus township. The factory was started in a log house that stood ten rods from the road four miles southwest of New Glarus



and two miles north of the Fred K. Hefty farm. Later it was moved next to the road close to the Babler-Hefty school house. The cheese cellar was built back into the hill behind the Babler farm. The walls of this cellar still stand as part of the cattle barn. Mr. Babler and five or six farmers delivered milk to this factory the first season. John Pfund, who learned to make cheese from Gerber, was the maker. In after years when a new factory was built the site was changed, this one standing twenty rods west of the log factory. The factory is no longer in operation.

Mr. Steinman was born in Canton Glarus, Switzerland, May 13, 1854 and in 1868 he was working for J. C. Blum, half a mile west of the Babler factory at the time it was opened by Mr. Gerber. He hauled milk to the factory and he well remembers Mr. Gerber and Mr. Pfund who "kept batch" at the factory. Mr. Gerber, he remembers, was engaged in promoting factories and frequently visited Chicago the first year as he had left his children at Wheeling, his wife having died in New York, and he interested a Chicago man by the name of Newmeister, in the industry he was launching here. Mr. Newmeister came out frequently to look into the situation. He was taking most of the cheese at that time.

### **Started in Township of Washington**

The next season, which was in 1869, Mr. Gerber started the Swiss cheese factory in Washington township, on the Dietrich Freitag farm, a mile and one-half north of Monticello, just this side of the Jac. Voegeli farm on highway 69. The building still stands on the north side of the concrete road, answering now as a machine shed. The cellar in the Freitag home was used for the cheese. Mr. Freitag and two or three farmers were the patrons. Sam Rubi, father of the late Otto Rubi, formerly residing at the Five Corners, was the maker in this first Swiss cheese factory.

Mr. Gerber married Catherine Pfund, of Jefferson township, Oct. 18, 1870, and they took up their home in the Freitag factory. Mr. Gerber's children, four sons and two daughters, came from Wheeling in 1871, to make their home with him.

In 1870 Mr. Gerber was opening another limburger factory in Washington, this one on the Casper Becker farm and was known as the Becker-Wittenwyler factory. This factory is located three miles west of Monticello close to the little branch of Sugar river. Christ Wittwer was the maker. The factory was erected by the farmers and Mr. Gerber bought the milk and Mr. Newmeister took the cheese. Mr. Gerber moved his family there and in the spring of 1877 he moved to the Durst-Ott factory in New Glarus township, where he remained until he located at Brooklyn.

The first cheese factory in New Glarus village was built in 1870.

Mr. Steinman in 1874, when he was 20, learned to make limburger cheese at the Farmers Grove factory, under John Beller, maker, who worked for Jacob Karlen. Beller was there in 1873 and Mr. Karlen was in the Hilarius Wild factory in Adams. Mr. Steinman says he did not become a cheesemaker for Iowa was calling him west. He left for Iowa the spring of 1876 with Peter Hoesly, each with three horses, and driving through with two wagons.

### Recalls Model Winter

Mr. Steinman recalls that the winter of 1875-76 was a model winter, without much snow. They left March 4 driving through Monroe to Oneco for the first night. The next night they were at Savanna where they met snow and sleet. At Cedar Rapids their horse had distemper and they shipped to Ames, Ia. March 19, there was a heavy snow in Green county, Mr. Steinman remembers, because of the death of Mrs. Steinman's mother, Mrs. George Legler, who was buried on March 21, when all the farmers in Washington township got out to shovel snow in order to open the roads for the funeral.

Mr. Steinman broke prairie in Iowa one year and when the grasshoppers descended upon the state in 1876 he returned to Wisconsin while Mr. Hoesly remained there. Mr. Steinman went to farming four miles west of New Glarus in 1878 with a log bungalow for a home and a log barn. He had 71 acres and 13 cows, with the help of John Legler. He had been working summers for two seasons at \$6 a month and attended school in the log school house two winters, making his home at the Albert Babler place. He tried the harness trade under Dan Germann at New Glarus and then cast his lot with the farm. He was married Jan. 31, 1878, to Miss Barbara Legler and they spent five years on the farm. The next year cheese and livestock prices hit bottom, he being obliged to sell his milk at 60 cents a hundred and his hogs at \$2.15. Jacob Regez was buying the milk and offered the farmers the tools and everything if they would run the factory. The next season prices began to go up and he sold his November milk that year for \$1 at the Dietrich Marty factory west of New Glarus.

"The first factories bought milk by the gallon," said Mr. Steinman. "It was measured in a can with 8½ pounds as the gallon weight. The factories worked only six months of the year and the milk price went up from 60 to 70 and 75 cents except when the crash in 1879 put the price down again to 60 cents. Limburger sold normally at 9 and 10 cents while the very best Swiss was a shilling. When 2-pound limburger sold at 18 cents it was considered a good price. Afterwards the 2-pounders brought 25 cents, which was the retail price in Chicago early in the eighties.



Mr. Steinman remarked that this price is now doubled while fancy Swiss cheese has trebled in price.

### Pocket Diary Shows Trend

Mr. Steinman's farming experience is in no way connected with the early factory history except that it illustrates the trend of the times in the first decade of the cheese industry. His information is not altogether drawn from memory for he has been keeping a pocket diary for many years. All daily incidents of any importance are jotted down. He has thirty of the books that are a complete record of the events of his neighborhood for the years he has lived here. If anyone around Monticello wants to know when a bridge washed out or if there is a dispute or a bet to be settled that hinges upon some happening or date, search is made of his diary record and what it says is accepted as correct. Aside from throwing light



Typical rural cheese factory. Maker's family have living quarters in one section and in the other making activities are carried on.

upon the farming conditions when farming was far from what it is today, Mr. Steinman's own career is interesting. Mr. and Mrs. Steinman in 1935 celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary. Mr. Steinman, besides having a hard time getting started as a farmer, had his own sad experience when he came to America May 13, 1861, when he was 7 years old. He came with his mother and grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Casper Steinman. His father, Melchior Steinman, an only son, had come in February, and after their voyage of 57 days in a sailing vessel they expected to meet him in New York, but something very tragic had happened.



Civil war recruiting had been carried on among the Swiss emigrants in New York and he had enlisted under the impression that the engagement would be of short duration that would amount to nothing more than a skirmish, it being expected the north would make short work of the south. He figured he would be back in time to meet his parents and family when they arrived. Instead he was killed in the first battle of the war. He was shot through the leg and in nine days he died.

Mr. Steinman relates that the sailing boat that brought him over was loaded with freight and started on the return trip, but it never arrived back in the old world, boat, crew and cargo having gone down at sea.

### **Comparisons Demonstrate Growth**

Green county had 75 factories in operation in 1883, receiving the milk of 10,665 cows, which made 6,578,750 pounds of cheese of a total value reported by the assessors at \$657,675, this being 10 cents a pound, which was the average price at that time.

The number of factories increased to 182 in 1911, when the producing cows numbered 36,449 and the production 14,144,016 pounds valued at \$2,173,142.

The dairy income in 1926 was \$7,189,670.

In 1925 Green county had a total of 64,201 cattle of which number 63,418 were dairy cattle. This is a ratio of one dairy cow to each 5½ acres of land and represents three cows to each inhabitant of the county.

The figures are from the 1925 United States census.

This census gives the number of gallons of milk produced in 1924 at 29,666,588. This was nearly 5,000,000 gallons more than in 1919 and represented an increase in the average production per cow from 543 gallons to 658.

### **Notable Limburger Cheese County**

In 1925 Green county produced 4,200,000 pounds of limburger cheese, which was almost all of the cheese of that type produced anywhere in the United States. It also produced 7,300,000 pounds of Swiss cheese out of a total of 19,300,000 pounds produced in Wisconsin and 23,400,000 produced in the entire United States. The Green county district, now reaching out into the adjoining counties of Dane, Lafayette and Iowa counties produces 18,711,530 pounds of the state's Swiss cheese. Green county produced 3,300,000 pounds of brick cheese out of Wisconsin's total of 31,000,000 and 34,000,000 for the country. In this type Green county is behind Dodge county but leads every other county in all the other foreign types.

Green county, it must be remembered, is one of the smallest counties of the state and because of its limited area dairying is more intensified here than elsewhere.

Green county is four townships square and has an area of but 593 square miles. Population in 1930 21,870, of which 5,015 is in the city of Monroe, 3,000 in six villages and 13,700 in unincorporated towns. There are 2,403 farms, 1,670 being operated by owners and 733 being rented.

### **Trade Mark Value Lost**

Until recent years labels had not been used to any extent so that of the millions of pounds of cheese produced each year the industry has not been able to benefit by cashing in on a trade name by which established standards might be known to the consumer trade. Valuable prestige has thus been lost because the guiding influences have not been modernized to the extent of recognizing the benefit in dollars and cents of a name and advertising for the products of this highly specialized industry that is centralized in an intense dairy operation carried on in and about Green county. The qualities of Swiss, limburger and brick cheese in the fancy grades as made here amply justify the use of brands and labels as would fully establish its identity out in the markets of the country in order to give it rank in the trade it is rightly entitled to as a natural process health building food direct from the farm factories.

### **Ten Million Dollar Dairy Industry**

Farmers and makers have aided in carrying on the development of what may be safely called Green county's ten million dollar dairy industry. This is considered a conservative estimate of the actual annual gross income from cheese, milk and swine. The volume of production and the producing revenue have steadily increased. Even from its small beginning it was within the lifetime of the men who figured in the origin of the industry that Green county passed from a condition bordering on poverty to one of prevailing prosperity in all the townships until the depression years following the world war.

# Depression Brings Sudden Change From Golden Days

The golden days of the industry followed the world war. The years 1919 and 1920 are recalled as the boom times. Prices hit top, milk netting as high as \$4.65 and Swiss cheese sold at the factory for 55 cents, block 46 and 48 and limburger 32. Prices started to slump in 1923 and 1924 and by 1928 milk was down to \$2.

This brought decided change in conditions in a short time, and while business slowed up expenses were shaved in the economies the times required, dairying and every other business suffering alike. Milk went lower and hit bottom. The prices paid compared with prices of the early days, the better factories running from 75 to 85 cents while some went as low as 65 cents.

The National Cheese Producers' Federation had been at work in Dane and Lafayette counties where Swiss factories had signed up and when the membership campaign opened in Green county the old conservatism that held to time-tested practices was swept away and the cooperative movement carried the federation through with more than 100 factories in Green county.

The federation was working fast and April 27, 1928, announcement was made that the federation would occupy the quarters of Acherman-Emmenegger & Co. in the Industrial Cooperative Union building with Joseph Acherman engaged as manager. The federation came into action, made payments down on delivery and then the cheese began piling up faster than it could be moved for shipment. The market failed to sustain the federation's advanced payments to producers. Headquarters had been moved to Plymouth and the whole situation became chaotic. Later came the 75 per cent settlements, then the demands for repayments and heavy factory assessments. In 1932 the bottom dropped out and the federation was through with millions of pounds of cheese filling their warehouses, with loans of \$350,000 made by the federal farm board, with losses throwing federation finances heavily in the red and necessitating assessments upon foreign type factories running from \$5,000 to \$22,000 to a factory.

The federation reported losses of \$42,000 in 1928 with about 30 per cent assessed back to the foreign type pool and in 1929 and 1930 when the foreign type contracts to May 1, 1931, were kept separate the losses exceeded half a million with 1,583,000 pounds of 1930 foreign type cheese on hand and 3,720,000 pounds of 1931 output still in the warehouses.

The federation paid out in full the first year and the assessments were accepted by individual factories, and in the summer of



1931, when the officers took a cut in salary, the producers agreed to a 25 per cent hold-out but in October they became aroused by the heavy over-payment assessments made against the factories and organized to confer with directors and management with a view to arriving at some method of adjustment of difficulties less oppressive to factory patrons.

Emerson Ela, attorney for the federation, insisted the contracts were lawful and binding and that obligation rested upon the factories to make refunds assessed against them for overpayments or losses. Some factories made settlements, others refused and dropped out without continuing to May 1, 1932, according to contract.

The federation was ditched as far as the foreign type pool was concerned and in November, 1935, the National Cheese Producers' Federation (co-operative) Plymouth, Wisconsin, filed in the circuit court for Sheboygan county for the liquidation of the affairs of the association and asked the court to take exclusive jurisdiction to restrain other proceedings in connection with distribution of assets.

Cheese was sold in 1932 at most any price and new production had to suffer. Swiss sold at 10, 13½, 16½ and 18 cents in June and limburger was down to 9 cents. The limburger retailing locally at 25 cents for 2-pound cake was back after selling at 50 and 75 cents retail.

In the organization of the federation, meetings being held in various places, it was argued that a powerful cheese octopus was reaching out into the foreign type field and needed to be restricted, that it was time to present a solid front and fight it out. With confidence that the federation was equal to the fray, the lines were laid for action. It might have been a battle or no battle at all, because the federation appeared to be devoting its energies to its own membership rather than centering on market building to dispose of the cheese that was glutting its warehouses and cellars and the collapse came of its own weight.

### **Another Crisis and Cheese Holiday**

Because of heavy storage holdings, in 1934 when production despite the drought kept up too briskly for the good of the producers and dealers, together with troubles dating back to prohibition's exit in 1933, another crisis threatened. Prohibition did away with the saloon lunch trade. Swiss and limburger cheese had a place on every free lunch counter and this demand made up a considerable volume of business. The defeat of the eighteenth amendment with the return of the brew, which meant more cheese, stimulated the market. As prices went up, production shot up. It was a false alarm, prices dropped back and there was a big carry-over.

Thus the cheese holiday, an entirely new innovation in local

cheese history, held sway for six weeks in August and the first half of September in 1934. It was discussed at farmer meetings and a straw vote that was taken by mail balloting by factories carried heavily. The state and federal governments cooperated. The diversion of milk to other outlets became 90 to 100 per cent effective. The butter market went up to 26½ cents and the suspension was considered successful as reducing stock for the fall market and attendant influence it had in improving price conditions. The farm administration of the AAA in September made purchase of 2,805,000 pounds of domestic Swiss cheese at an approximate cost of \$600,000, thus consummating a proposal made at a mass meeting of farmers in Turner hall in July when an August holiday was urged. F. B. Luchsinger, sponsor of the idea, headed the committee that pushed the proposal that had the support of Gov. Schmedeman and the state administration. This together with other farm administration purchases of substantial amounts of cheese and butter was regarded as having highly desirable effect on market conditions generally.

### **Hit by Bank Closing**

True the banks had their troubles and individual losses were sustained that can never be recovered but cheese stood the shock.

The first heavy blow to be felt locally was when the Citizens bank, after 47 years of banking service in Monroe, failed to open January 7, 1931, and went into liquidation, with 3,000 depositors. A published statement of the condition of business Dec. 31, 1930, showed resources of \$1,691,235.11, loans and discounts \$1,290,378.52 and deposits of \$1,330,787.33.

A second financial upset occurred in May, 1932, when the Commercial & Savings bank, after heavy drain on its deposits, was taken over by the state banking department for reorganization. More than 2,000 depositors were affected. The resources six months before were reported at \$1,149,858.87, loans and discounts \$696,053.43 and liability to depositors \$976,536.80.

Other farming sections in 1933-1934 had devastating dust storms; the withering heat with long dry periods ruined farm crops and killed the stock in western states but drought conditions in Green county were far less serious than elsewhere.

About everything had happened except flood and famine, but the dairy industry had its origin in the soil where men with hands were strong and had the will to do. There is no folding of the tent for the dairy industry. It has the farms in a country distinctly adapted to dairying pursuits, farm herds are large, the owners are independent, their factories are organized, the market and trade connections are established. The dairy industry was able to take up the slack. Milk started to come back to where farmers are now net-



ting \$1.40 to \$1.50. Old King Cheese came smiling through to be enthroned again in all his glory as Green county celebrated Cheese day in Monroe October 2, 1935, with many thousands in attendance.

### Industrial Cooperative Union

Preceding the National Cheesemakers' federation was the Industrial Cooperative Union with a different kind of remedy for the ills resulting, it was claimed at that time, from the middleman's profits. The idea was similar to other experiments designed to bring about change from the middleman's profit to the cooperative system for the mutual protection of producers, an economic pro-



Green county Swiss cheese cut in half and supporting Gov. Walter J. Kohler's cup won at 1930 Wisconsin state fair.

gram taking into their own management both production and distribution. It was like others in that it was disappointing.

Land purchase was made south of the Milwaukee right-of-way on Eighteenth street in 1917 and a stock selling campaign was opened. The building, a splendid warehouse with mechanical refrigeration and improved storage facilities and electric elevators, three stories and underground cellar, constructed of steel, brick and cement, was said to have cost \$85,000. It was nearly completed in the fall of 1918, when President Smith of the American Cooperative association, General Manager Tank, both of Wausau, and L. A. Straube, Chicago, field manager, came here to address



stockholders and assure them of the cooperation of the American association with the Industrial Cooperative Union. J. B. McCready, Chicago, was brought here as manager. He had been cheese instructor in the Wisconsin dairy school and president of the Wisconsin Cheesemakers' association several years and sales manager of the Wisconsin Cheese Producers' association.

Somehow this imposing array of cooperative leaders did not awaken the interest they anticipated. The storage was to be one of a number located in different parts of the state for shipping and storage purposes by farm producers in different lines. Benjamin U. Davis, Racine, was secretary. Racine was to have a cabbage warehouse.

The building was never fully occupied by the Union and is now occupied by rentals. Acherman-Emmenegger & Co., took the three floors in December, 1921, and the Union occupied the basement with Jacob Dick as manager. The top floor was not finished at the time and the insulation was done by the occupants and offset by rent payments.

Jacob Dick continued as manager 11 years. He came here from Monticello where he died April 29, 1934, aged 58.

Much of the stock passed from the original subscribers and Mr. Davis came here to manage the building for present owners. His experience at Racine cost him appointment as Wisconsin commissioner of agriculture when Senator Walter A. Goodland led opposition to his appointment in the senate and the senate refused to confirm.

John Stantz representing Westphal, once occupied space in the building, and the building served the purposes of the federation 1929 to 1931. Spacious as it is, it lacked proportions needed for federation deliveries when shipments slowed up.

Acherman & Abplanalp company now occupy the two upper floors. The Armour creameries and E. A. Janke company divide space in the first floor and basement.

# Pet Milk Survives Cheese

## Plants Around New Glarus

The Pet Milk company at New Glarus proved equal to cheese factory competition. It has been growing in the confidence of the farmers in the northern part of Green county and after 25 years has become a permanent enterprise of chief importance to New Glarus.

The factory is a branch of Pet Milk company, St. Louis, Missouri. The company purchased the New Glarus limburger cheese factory in the spring of 1910 and contracted with the fifteen patrons hauling milk there, to supply the milk for the starting of the condensery to be built on a site immediately adjoining the cheese factory. Building operations were started in June of 1910 and completed on Nov. 3.

The New Glarus limburger factory continued to operate until the condensery opened. The fifteen patrons supplied 5,000 pounds of milk during the first months. The old limburger factory was converted into a two-family dwelling and still serves that purpose near the big Pet plant.

The plant's capacity is 200,000 pounds daily but never during the twenty-five years of operation has it reached full capacity. The closest it has ever come was during the years between 1919 and 1922 when deliveries by patrons reached the highest peak with 160,000 pounds daily.

Since 1916 the New Glarus plant has been making the cans for all the Wisconsin Pet milk plants, eight in all. This department alone employs an average of 50 men and has a daily output of 450,000 cans. The eight plants are located as follows: Sparta, Middleton, Footville, Belleville, North Prairie, Oostburg and Denmark.

The Belleville plant, built in 1915 and 1916 with an addition made in 1919, and taken over by the Pet company in 1919, has a capacity of 150,000 pounds of milk a day. The Borden milk plant in Monticello was purchased by the Pet company in 1926 and converted into a receiving station. It served this purpose until 1932, tank trucks being used to transport the milk from Monticello to New Glarus. In 1932 the Monticello receiving station was closed and has stood empty since.

Twelve privately owned milk routes bring in the supply of milk from the farms in eight adjoining townships in Green, Dane and Lafayette counties, including Primrose, Dane county; Exeter, New Glarus, Adams, Washington, Mt. Pleasant, York and Blanchard, Lafayette county. All of this milk formerly went into foreign type



cheese and cheese factories have been abandoned all through the country in the vicinity.

The Pet Milk company purchased the old creamery station in Blanchardville in 1935 and it is now used as a receiving station for milk from farms around Blanchardville.

R. L. Latzer managed the New Glarus plant until 1913 when Emil F. Kaeser was placed in charge and has since been the directing head of the concern.

### **Merrell-Soule at Browntown**

Browntown was stirred by the promise of a new era in 1925 when Merrell-Soule, Syracuse, N. Y., located a powdered milk plant there. A well drilled to a depth of 1,025 feet touched a water supply that gushed forth 100 gallons a minute. Three impressive smoke stacks stand high above the one-story building which houses the most improved equipment to glass-lined milk tanks. Three 150 h. p. boilers were installed and the villagers rejoiced that they could boast of a steam whistle.

Besides the machinery needed for powdered milk there was also equipment for taking care of surplus milk for sweet cream and butter. The capacity was 125,000 pounds daily. Sanitary agents made farm inspections as patrons signed to make deliveries. The plant opened Nov. 2 with contracts paying \$2.10 for 3.2 milk. The plant was designed to employ 50 people. C. F. Hober was the first plant superintendent.

The company first purchased the Colb-Johnson American cheese factory and contracted for 5,000 pounds of milk as a start for the condensery. The Davis Swiss cheese factory, located 1½ miles just west of the Martintown, closed the same year and the milk went to the new plant. Merrell-Soule were receiving milk from a wide radius but the farmers shifted as factory and condensery price differentials appealed to them and the plant had to be satisfied with uncertain volume. The maximum daily intake never exceeded 100,000 pounds.

Merrell-Soule withdrew and disposed of the plant to the Borden Condensed Milk company in 1928. Borden started a program of buying only quality milk. Powdered milk is the principal product. All improvements in quality milk produced in the area, including western Green county and eastern Lafayette, have come about through insistence on the part of the Borden company to accept only milk meeting their standard of requirements. As a result of this program the milk supplied comes from better lighted barns where cattle are separated from other livestock and producers must have isolated milk houses built according to Borden specifications. Farmers are instructed in the best method of handling milk, such as proper straining, cleaner milking and adequate cooling.



There is one receiving plant at Orfordville which supplies 15,000 pounds of milk daily.

Price paid for October 1935 was \$1.50 for 3.5 milk, this price being a 50 per cent improvement over the same month in 1932. Three privately owned milk routes bring the milk to the plant. A dairy inspector makes regular inspection trips to farms to check up at the source.

John Shager, himself a farm owner at Wiota, is the manager and 25 men are employed.

The Davis Swiss cheese factory reopened after the powdered milk plant was in operation and has continued making cheese.

### **Shefford Comes to Monroe**

Another New York concern, the Shefford Cheese company, also from Syracuse, bought milk here for three years and operated in the Carl Marty plant on the Milwaukee tracks. The company opened in April, 1926, managed to get 30,000 pounds of milk for their fancy cheese but had price difficulties due to factory competition. It looked as if their differences could be ironed out to the satisfaction of farmer patrons when Grover Bartell, manager, was suddenly recalled and the plant was closed.

### **Albany and Belleville Plants**

The linen mill property at Albany changed hands in 1915 and was converted into an evaporated milk plant by Fred J. Strong, now head of the Lowell Packing company at Waukesha. The condensery was conducted by him as the Sugar River Canning company, a Wisconsin corporation. During the war Mr. Strong sold the business to Taylor Wilson, of Indianapolis, whose estate conducts the condensery under the name of the Indiana Milk company. The plant handles 125,000 pounds of milk during months of the heaviest flow. The parent company is the Indiana Milk company, of Indianapolis. C. F. Ferguson is manager of the Albany plant.

Mr. Strong was also connected with the condensed milk plant at Belleville in 1925 when it was conducted by a Wisconsin corporation under the name of the Serv-us Evaporated Milk company. The Pet Milk company, New Glarus, acquired this plant in 1919 and is operating it in connection with the New Glarus plant.

The Belleville plant, at the time it was built, was promoted out of Madison, but the original promoters became involved in their financing and never operated the plant.

### **Anglo-Swiss Quits; Grunert Cheese Crash Comes**

Closing of the Anglo-Swiss condensery in Monroe November 1, 1901, came at a critical time as the market was not only feeling the

effects of the slump coming out of the Spanish-American war but threatening signs of impending disaster had already appeared in the immediate territory. The protesting farmers were more vitally interested than they were twenty-five years afterward when Borden, after various intimations, did definitely decide to fold up and leave Monroe without a condensery. Cheese factories happened to be paying more then, but the Borden plant was missed when factory prices came down and farmers were left without market choice.

Jacob Speich, promoting a considerable operation out of Brodhead with limited capital, had gone into bankruptcy earlier in the year with \$20,000 in unsatisfied claims. The failure involved some banks and many farmers, some of them around Monticello.

Grunert & Co., manufacturing fancy cheese in the Blue Label plant, prepared to step up their capacity to 50,000 pounds and the Gasser creamery made a bid for more milk, hoping to get some of the Anglo-Swiss milk. James P. Younger, who was becoming known as the big creamery man in Stephenson county, also showed interest in the turn of affairs here. The Gasser creamery was having its troubles and was sold to Fred Tschudy, Jefferson township farmer, in 1901 and operation was assumed by his son, J. Jacob Tschudy.

The greatest crash of the year came within two weeks after the Anglo-Swiss shut down. Grunert & Co. had become financially involved growing out of a market manipulation in 1898 and suspended business Nov. 15, 1901. The suspension was precipitated by the failure of the Chicago Cheese company. Grunert & Co. had given warehouse notes in the sum of \$200,000 two years previous and there were \$80,000 of these notes outstanding which had been endorsed by the Chicago Cheese company while the storage company advanced the money. The affairs of the Monroe concern were placed in the hands of a receiver and creditors demanded that it be declared bankrupt. The Grunert company resisted bankruptcy but it came and with it \$20,000 in claims held by Monroe creditors on running accounts were thrown out.

Grunert at once organized the F. Grunert Cheese Co., Chicago, as an Illinois corporation capitalized at \$60,000 and proposed to continue in business with Green county as the principal field of operation.

### **Cheese Corner Failed**

The crash became known in cheese circles as the Baltz failure. Charles Baltz, discharged in bankruptcy in Chicago with liabilities of \$187,000 and assets of \$30, got credit for being the prime mover in an unsuccessful effort to corner the cheese market in 1898 which was aided by the credit of the Chicago Cheese company and the Grunert company.



The corner was supposed to control 90 per cent of the Swiss and limburger cheese. They held in December, 1898, 600,000 pounds of limburger purchased at 12 to 13 cents and 900,000 pounds of Swiss bought at 14 to 15 cents. By the end of January, 1899, the limburger market had dropped to 6 cents which meant a loss of \$4 to \$5 a case and Swiss went down to 8. The holdings included 500,000 pounds of American cheese. Shipments from the east defeated the corner.

Milwaukee interests were at work proposing a national cheese board designed to make Milwaukee the central cheese market of the country. This was opposed locally as Monroe had plans for setting up a foreign type board of its own.

The dairy farmers were much exercised because of the demoralized conditions confronting the industry. They met in the court house to discuss the organization of a protective association for the purpose of protecting farmers from frauds, impositions and losses. The idea was to make it broad enough, high enough and big enough to take in every man interested in farming and the manufacture of cheese and butter, something they had been striving for for twenty years. F. D. Jeffery was president and A. C. Dodge, secretary.

Among the other troubles of the dairymen was a fight they were making on railroad freight rates, their contention being that the rates were too high, particularly the concentration rates. In this fight they were partly successful, having gained a concession in freight rates.

This was a fateful year in the dairy industry generally and marked the finish of the Elgin butter board.

### **First Condensery in Monroe**

Milk condensing, regarded as a suitable companion industry for cheese making in a dairy country such as Green county appeared destined to become, with the rapid strides taking place during the decade of the '80s, led to the organization of the Wisconsin Milk Condensing company with Monroe capital. The company was organized in 1889 with \$50,000 capital which was increased to \$100,000 in 1890 with officers as follows:

President—Henry Hoehn.

Vice President—J. B. Treat.

Treasurer—Jacob Karlen, Sr.

Secretary—J. H. Weber.

Directors—Jacob Regez, William Lysaght, Simon Saucerman.

The main building was 40x80 feet, two stories high with basement and cost \$37,000. It still stands as the south end of the plant of Carl Marty & Co.

The capacity was 10,000 pounds of milk daily and 35 to 50



hands were employed. The company paid \$17,000 in wages in 1890 and disbursed \$30,000 for milk. Tin plate for the cans required \$15,000 and there was an expense of \$4,500 for solder.

The product, an unsweetened pure milk, was sold in many states, large shipments being made to the Pacific coast.

The company operated nearly ten years with varying success due to changes in conditions and losses in shipments.

### **Anglo-Swiss and Bordens**

The Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk company, operating a large plant at Dixon, became interested in the Monroe plant, purchased it and operated it until October 31, 1901, when the plant was closed down. The capacity had been increased to 50,000 pounds and deliveries were only 20,000 pounds.

Farmers protested without avail and the plant closed.

The following March the sale of the Anglo-Swiss interests in the United States was announced, the Anglo-Swiss withdrawing from operation abroad to confine their activity to Switzerland. The Monroe plant, as well as the plant at Dixon, was included.

Borden representatives visited Monroe, surveyed the field, announced the plant was too good to remain idle and prepared to reopen, provided the city constructed a sewer to carry off their waste materials. This meant an expense of \$5,000. The city negotiated, Bordens finally agreed to share a third of the cost and a sewer line was laid north through the Ludlow pasture to Honey creek. Milk waste was not appreciated by farmers along Honey creek and complaints started agitation for a chemical disposal plant.

Things were happening in Monroe in those days for it was the year the city had granted a gas plant franchise to Thomas Rankin and the Monroe Business Men's association raised \$15,000 for the Maurer glove factory.

W. F. Rogers, president of Borden's, came on from New York, together with G. M. Weed, their general superintendent, and C. E. Lewis, plant superintendent, and the opening was announced for November 5, 1902.

### **Borden Influence Good**

The crew was brought on from the Dixon plant and Borden's set out to enforce sanitary regulations on the farms. The farmers were encouraged to do year round milking. It was a summer season operation before Borden's came. They also interested farmers in new roads. Modern road working may well be credited to the interest created. The Dixon plant had the benefit of macadam roads and the first macadam roads were soon being put in here. This new system of road construction was costing added thousands each year, with the state joining with "state aid," and when the roads were

breaking down Green county had fully a million dollars in macadam that was being rapidly ruined. Then the county went to hard roads, voting a \$3,000,000 bond issue in 1919 and out of this has come the through cement highways and a splendid secondary highway system costing over a million more.

Borden's showed great enterprise. They spared no expense and their plant flourished. A deep well was sunk, new buildings added and immense storage tanks for surplus stock had to be housed in a building of suitable size and a third of a series of buildings, all two stories and basement, with extensive cold storage space now stood on both sides of the track with power house and high smoke stack in the center.

As cheese prices began to climb farmers returned to the cheese factories and Borden's with a greatly reduced volume determined to move out and so surrendered to the cheese factory competition.

The plant was closed in the fall of 1927 and equipment was removed and shipped to Newport, N. Y. George J. Carr, located here 25 years as superintendent, was transferred to Newport as plant superintendent. He died there in November, 1928.

### **Phenix Moves To Borden Plant**

Phenix came in 1926 when Shefford retaliated and closed as farmers conspired to declare a milk strike by moving to close down, moved into the Marty factory vacated by Shefford April 1 and carried through without a break in milk deliveries. Phenix signed up 15,000 pounds of milk. Gottlieb Kohli came on from New York as Swiss cheesemaker.

The next move was the purchase of the Borden plant on the north side in 1927, possession being taken on Oct. 1. Kenneth A. Harrison was placed in charge as manager, 18 men were employed and a larger force was promised. Machinery was installed to make Swiss cheese. Oscar Link, from the South Edmeston, N. Y., Phenix plant, was the maker. Milk was condensed while the plant was being placed in readiness for cheesemaking. The opening price was \$2.15 for 3.5 milk.

Jack Moulder, district manager, bubbled over with enthusiasm as he contemplated the future of Phenix in Monroe. He was in friendly territory and milk producers shared in the exuberance he radiated, but it was all for nothing for in January with Phenix barely getting into swing in the new plant scarcely more than three months, announcement came to the great surprise of all of the merger of the Kraft and Phenix interests. Phenix moved out and the plant was again on the market for sale.

### **Blue Label Cheese Company**

The Blue Label Cheese company, a Grunert enterprise in which



he was associated with Charles H. J. Baumert, connected with a New York cheese family of the same name, engaged in the manufacture of cream and Neufchatel cheese in the middle '90s, and escaped going down with the Grunert Cheese company. Mr. Grunert had assigned his interest to Mrs. Grunert.

The following year the company had difficulty in making payment to farmers. Mr. Baumert departed and no one ever heard of him afterward. Fred J. Karlen assumed charge in an effort to straighten out affairs. He ran it the balance of the 1902 season, when it was put up for sale. He assumed full management by purchase and in 1904 moved it to Winslow, where he continued the manufacture of cream, Neufchatel, Camembert and American cheese until he sold his factory and rights to Kraft in 1929. Mr. Karlen bought the factory back a year later and has since been making Swiss cheese. The output at present is three drums a day. Alfred Steinman, manager, continued under Kraft and is now a field man for Kraft-Phenix company.

Mr. Karlen defended a suit brought by Mr. Grunert who claimed Blue label patent rights and won when he produced a bill of sale given by Grunert to the Blue Label company when he assigned the Grunert interest.

Mr. Karlen made investment in Blue Label farms around Winslow, until he had 14 in all, comprising nearly 2,000 acres.

### **Merger of Seven Cheese Firms First Combine**

Seven wholesale cheese houses in Monroe and fifteen men connected with them organized the Badger Cheese company in 1911 and the culmination of this merger of the then existing units engaged in marketing the Green county product was heralded as a forward movement insuring control of the home market.

Although actuated by good intentions and interest in advancing the dairy interests, as far as the producing dairymen were concerned, for it reduced the expense entailed by seven separate set-ups and made possible worth-while economies sufficient to be of material benefit, the organizers were accused of selfish motive by some who looked upon the combination with misgivings, although, in view of what has happened since then, the Badgers were only toddling out like innocents in organized business.

It was an extraordinary thing to attempt to bring so many individuals who had been competitors over a long period in the same line of business, but they managed to maintain harmonious relations at both the buying and selling ends and succeeded, but combinations it was found have their drawbacks and their penalties. The company paid dividends and penalties too, sometimes at the expense of the working capital and in time was overtaken by gradual dissolution, until today out of the fifteen original stockholders, only



three remain in business, Joseph Acherman, Fred J. Stauffacher and Herman Regez. Mr. Stauffacher, who became president of the Badger Cheese company, is the only one who did not drop out by disposing of his stock.

Changes came from time to time until 1920, when 51 per cent of the stock was acquired by the Kraft-Phenix corporation, and in 1925 Kraft-Phenix became full owners. The name was then changed to Badger-Brodhead Cheese company through consolidation of the Badger Cheese company, Monroe, and the Brodhead Cheese and Cold Storage company. The company's office is located in a building erected in 1918 on Twelfth street directly south of the square and adjoins a large storage plant with coolers on three floors. The company has three other storages on cheese row along the Milwaukee road yards, two in Brodhead and one in Barneveld, all with modern cooling equipment, elevators, etc. The Badger-Brodhead company handles all lines of the Green county makes and are sole distributors for Badger, Blue Seal and Forward cheese brands. Badger-Brodhead claim to be the largest shippers of Swiss and limburger cheese in Wisconsin.

The officers here are R. H. Wenger, general manager; Ray T. Bast, office manager; W. E. Wenger, manager cold storage, and Miss Maud E. Wenger, bookkeeper.

Forty people are on the payroll.

Upon organization in 1911 of the Badger Cheese company Jacob Karlen, Jr., was president, Joseph Acherman, vice president, Henry Elmer, secretary and Samuel J. Stauffacher, treasurer. The capital stock was \$200,000, all paid up. The different companies uniting in the merger and the members of each follow:

Jos. Acherman & Co.—Joseph Acherman.

J. H. Elmer & Son—John H. Elmer and John C. Elmer.

Blum & Kaeser—Werner Blum and John Kaeser.

Stauffacher & Roth—S. J. Stauffacher and Christ Roth.

Jacob Karlen & Son—Jacob Karlen, Jr., Gottlieb A. Karlen and Fred Rubin.

Monroe Cheese Co.—Henry Elmer, Fred J. Stauffacher and Alvin Elmer.

Jacob Regez—Jacob Regez, Jr., and Herman Regez.

Badger expansion before reorganization included a New York branch at 370 Greenwich street with Ralph H. Wenger in charge.

Badger stock proved a profitable investment to those who held it. After J. L. Kraft assumed management the stock paid 8 per cent and in 1932 it was called at \$110.

The Kraft-Phenix properties were taken over by National Dairy Products in April, 1929, since which time the Badger-Brodhead Cheese company has been a subsidiary of the parent operating holding company.

National Dairy Products is also represented in Monroe in the ice cream trade, the Allen Ice Cream company being one of their branch distributors maintained in connection with the Allen Ice Cream company at Rockford.

### **Acherman-Abplanalp & Co.**

Joseph Acherman, now the oldest continuous operator in the region in the wholesale trade, came to Monroe in 1902 and has been buying and selling cheese since that time. Adhering to the best principles he has built up his business in a substantial way that has made him well known in the leading cheese centers of the country.

He bought his first cheese cellar in 1902, when the Grunert cellar on "cheese row" opposite the Milwaukee depot fell into the hands of the Citizens bank. He was in business alone on the west side of the square eight years before he pooled his interests with the Badger company in 1911. He withdrew in 1919 to engage in business for himself. A year later, 1920, he formed a partnership with Fred Emmenegger and the firm name became Acherman, Emmenegger & Co. Mr. Emmenegger lost his life in an automobile accident in 1926. Mr. Acherman took over his interest and continued the firm name up to the time he cast his lot with the National Cheese Producers' federation. He sold out his cheese stock, became local manager of the federation, worked harder than he ever did for himself and with less return in the shape of ink in his bank account, although he received a wealth of experience.

Acherman, Emmenegger & Co., engaged in the manufacture of loaf cheese in 1925, making pasteurized cheese in the 5-pound loaf in Swiss, brick and American. Necessary machinery was installed in quarters in the Illinois Central storage building with Charles E. Eckberg, Madison, in charge. Victory brands were put on the market. Kraft processing patents imposed burdensome royalties and the processing plant was closed and the machinery moved to Plymouth, where the Lakeshire Cheese company, now Borden owned, has a processing plant.

Partnership was formed with Adolf Abplanalp in August, 1932, as Acherman-Abplanalp & Co., and occupying the upper two floors of the Industrial Union building.

Mr. Acherman was born in Luzern, Switzerland, in 1872. He came to Green county in 1892 and made cheese eleven years, four at the Lattice bridge factory south of Browntown, two at the Skinner factory in Jordan and five at the Harrison factory near Woodford. In 1898 he bought a factory of his own near Martintown.

Mr. Abplanalp was born in 1885 in Switzerland. He is a



Berner, came to Green county in 1904. He made cheese 18 years north of Juda and for seven years was maker at the First Swiss cheese factory, opening in the glove factory building in Monroe in 1922. While at Juda he was a contender for honors in the annual wrestling bouts of the cheesemakers known as the swingfest, where for four years in succession he was crowned champion Green county Swiss wrestler. Since reorganization of the Citizens bank he has been president. He was known as a cheesemaker of the first rank. His Swiss cheese was the winner of the silver medal at the American Dairy Exposition at Indianapolis in 1925, where he proved a close competitor for the gold medal.

### **Carl Marty & Co.**

Carl Marty & Co., trade sloganed "The Cheese House of America," have the largest manufacturing and storage plant in a single property in Monroe. "Dutch Maid" is their trade brand in the manufacture of cream, Swiss, limburger, brick and American cheese and creamery butter. Aside from the products of their own manufacture they are extensive buyers with representation by distributors in all the larger markets.

Carl Marty & Co., succeeded the Glauser-Ladrick Co., Chicago wholesalers, and was conducted in Chicago by Carl Marty, Sr., before transfer of the business to Monroe. Mr. Marty retired from active business in 1922 and since his retirement the management of the Marty company has been in the hands of Carl Marty, Jr. Later Robert F. Marty joined the company as vice president and sales manager. Carl Marty, Jr., is president and D. C. Howard is secretary-treasurer.

The Marty company established a Monroe branch in 1914 known as the Marty-Gempeler Co., later housed in a new office and storage building on Fifteenth street, which was connected by underground passage with the old Karlen limburger cellar. The branch quarters became the home of the parent firm when Monroe was selected as the seat of their operations.

This building answered the purpose for the time but larger quarters were needed and in May, 1929, after Phenix vacated the Borden plant, Carl O. Marty, then executive head of Carl Marty & Co., closed a deal for the property. This plant in Borden's heyday was taxed on a valuation of \$132,000 and with later occupancy the assessed valuation was cut down to \$50,000. The Marty company moved into it Aug. 1, 1932.

It offered ample quarters for manufacture, storage, shipping and other necessary departments. The company has operated there with ability and enterprise and in all respects is an institution creditable to the industry.



Carl F. Brennecke returned in 1931 to duties in the Marty south side building which was devoted to the manufacture of butter for the outside market. Mr. Brennecke had been associated with Marty & Co. previously and left to work in the Kraft plant at Antigo. The butter department was afterwards included in the north side plant with Mr. Brennecke still in charge.

The new plant at the time of purchase was used by the Monroe Co-Operative Co., formed in 1926, making Swiss cheese in the basement. The Marty company took this production for a time but soon was manufacturing Swiss cheese there, with Christ Koenig head maker.

In July, 1929, the Marty company introduced cheese handling from factory to storage on shelves in portable racks by motor truck. These racks are rolled on skids into coolers without other handling.



Swiss cheese on shelves in a curing cellar, where temperatures control eye formation. A thousand wheels can be cured at one time in this room in the Marty Plant.

This does away with factory tubbing, untubbing at storage and re-tubbing for the trade. A cooperage department with Swiss cooper employed makes a distinctive tub bound with white oak bands, resembling in appearance the tubs used in Switzerland.

The company uses the Marty stencil on select Swiss. Switzerland Cheese Assn., Inc. recently objected to this on the claim that it was trade infringement, a charge the Marty company prepared to contest.

Marty & Co. paraffin Swiss cheese, the only plant using the wax on the full drums. The practice of dipping Brick cheese in paraffin is general. It was first introduced at Dodgeville in 1902. The coat-

ing seals the cheese surface against air penetration.

In addition to the Monroe plant, the Marty company operates a factory at Blanchardville, turning out four wheels daily in the winter and ten in the summer. The building is the Regez cold storage and warehouse which was converted into a Swiss cheese factory with 50,000 pounds capacity. The set-up today is one of the most up-to-date in the territory. Alfred Locher is maker.

The Marty company in Monroe and Blanchardville gives the farmers the option of selling their milk outright or on a cooperative basis. About half of the milk is bought each way. Farmers who choose the cooperative plan get returns based on the quality of the cheese produced.

Advantage seen by the Marty company in their plan of concentrated production is that cheese can be made to suit the market and in addition they are able to control production from the receipt of the milk to the shipping of the cheese, the maker being in position to know just what kind of cheese is produced and selling at the same time.

### **Stauffacher Started With Wenger**

Fred J. Stauffacher, the only original Badger still with Badger-Brodhead, became first connected with the wholesale cheese business in 1899, when he was employed by Ed. C. Wenger. Mr. Wenger engaged in the wholesale business that year with Matt Elmer. Two years later Mr. Elmer died and Mr. Wenger conducted the business until his death in 1906. Mr. Stauffacher was in business with Werner Blum 1890 to 1892, when he went with the Monroe Cheese company and continued until the organization of the Badgers in 1911. He was president of the Badger Cheese company until it became a Kraft-Phenix subsidiary as part of the Badger-Brodhead company, now a subsidiary of National Dairies.

### **Blum & Kaeser**

Werner Blum, 77, has the distinction of being an American-born cheesemaker. He has been a maker in many of the factories of Green county, chiefly Washington and Monroe, excelling in limburger. His cheese has had blue ribbon awards in the county and state fairs and in various cheesemaker exhibits. In 1872 at the age of 14 he made cheese for Adam Blumer, former head of the Blumer brewery, in Washington township, assisting Dave Tschabold.

Two seasons he made cheese in two factories. His brothers, Fred and Jacob Blum, built a factory on the Blum farm in Washington where he made cheese in the morning and then walked three and one-half miles to the Ezra Blumer factory to make cheese in the afternoon.

He bought milk at 60 and 65 cents when he took over Hawthorne



factory in Clarno, now known as Fairview.

He was maker for the Badger Cheese company five years, making cheese in the Milwaukee road plant. Before joining the Badgers he was associated with Fred J. Stauffacher in the firm of Stauffacher & Blum 1890-1892 and afterward he was associated in the wholesale business with John Kaeser, who moved to Idaho,

In the early days, he says, there were no cold storage plants and it was necessary to keep the limburger on the shelves as long as six weeks and after it was boxed up it was stored in the cellars three more months before it was sold.

Two sons of Ed. C. Wenger, Ralph H. Wenger and Wm. E. Wenger, and a daughter, Miss Maud E. Wenger, are still connected with the cheese business being associated with the Badger-Brodhead company in Monroe, and another daughter is the wife of George W. Stuart of the George W. Stuart company.

### **Roth, Stauffacher & Co.**

Christ Roth, born in Ohio in 1858 and coming to Monroe when he was nine years old, one of the organizers of the Badger Cheese company, made cheese in his early life at the Ball's Mill factory in Sylvester and later he conducted a factory near Monroe for Jacob Regez. He was a member of the grocery firm of Roth & Weber and in 1898 he joined Peter Stauffacher in the wholesale cheese business as Roth, Stauffacher & Co., which continued until 1911. He retired from the Badger Cheese company in 1917. He was 74 at the time of his death, Dec. 17, 1932.

Peter Stauffacher, 74 when he died Aug. 4, 1927, member of Roth, Stauffacher & Co., retired as the Badger Cheese company was organized. He had been in the wholesale cheese business in Monroe twelve years. He was born in Sylvester, March 14, 1853. After his marriage to Mary Elmer April 1, 1875, he continued to live on the homestead of his father, Jacob Stauffacher, living on the farm where he was born continuously 45 years. He was interested in the cheese business as a farmer before going into the wholesale cheese business. He occupied the same residence in Monroe 29 years.

His son, Samuel J. Stauffacher, born Oct. 1, 1875, became an active member of Roth, Stauffacher & Co., in 1905, after graduation from Naperville and five years spent in educational work as principal of schools in Illinois and Indiana. With education and keen intellect he had ready grasp of the commercial conditions of the day in the cheese business and throughout his activity he was an able exponent of improvement for the benefit of all connected with the dairy industry. He was secretary-treasurer of Badger Cheese company at the time it was organized. He contracted his fatal illness while on a business trip to New York and his death



Dec. 20, 1918, was regarded as a loss to the industry and the community, being a civic leader as well as a leader with advanced ideas in the cheese industry. He was serving as alderman of his ward at the time of his death, was a member of the board of health and a director of the Citizens bank. He was one of the organizers of the Southern Wisconsin Cheesemakers' and Dairymen's association and headed it as president several years.

### **Regez Cheese Company**

Herman Regez, former Badger stockholder and son of Jacob Regez, Sr., joined Rudy Regez, son of Rudy Regez, Sr., in the Regez Cheese company, successor to the business of Rudy Regez, Sr., with office and storage south of the Milwaukee depot.

### **George W. Stuart Cheese Company**

George W. Stuart became associated with the Badger Cheese company in 1917 when he purchased stock and he remained with the company until he joined Carl Marty & Co. in 1931. He has been head of the George W. Stuart Cheese company which he organized in 1934 and acquired the plant on Fifteenth street built by Carl Marty & Co. in 1915 for the Monroe branch and occupied by the Marty company when removed to Monroe from Chicago.

### **Monticello Cold Storage Company**

The Monticello Cold Storage company is a survival of a number of wholesale cheese interests, dating back to 1916, when the company was organized with John Urben, the heaviest stockholder, the others being Edward Wittwer, Gottlieb Wittwer, J. P. Zweifel, Jr., Adolph Arn, Fred and Albert Knobel and George Kooreman. The plant, built at a cost of \$50,000 was opened in November, 1916. John Urben died the following month. The Wittwer interest in the cheese business was purchased in 1920 and the Arn & Zweifel company continued the business. The stockholders of the storage incorporated the Monticello Cold Storage company in 1930. John T. Etter, Monroe, now holds the Edward Wittwer interest in this company.

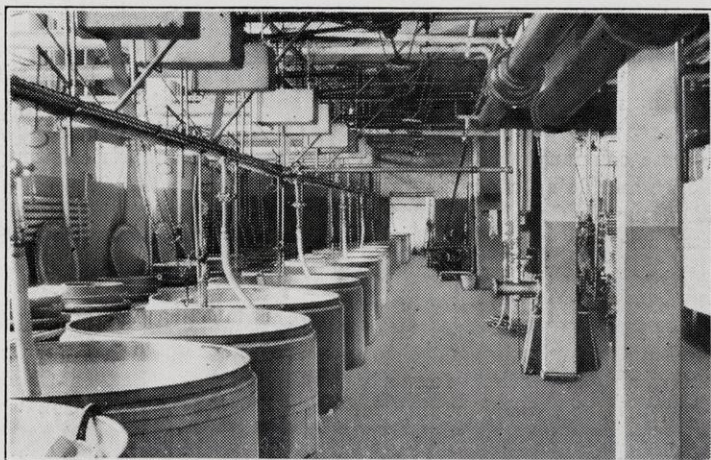
The Arn & Zweifel company has had an annual volume of as much as \$1,000,000. Swiss, block, brick and limburger are handled under the "Little Sugar River" brand name. Eight men and the office secretary make up the force.

### **Edw. Wittwer & Bro., Monticello**

Edward Wittwer and his brother, Gottlieb Wittwer, active original organizers of the Monticello Cold Storage company in 1916, now known as the Arn & Zweifel company, started in the cheese

business in the early '80s while working on the farm of their father, Gottlieb Wittwer, in Washington township. The milk produced on the Wittwer farm was made into cheese by Edward Wittwer in a small factory built on the place. He bought other cheese and along with his own sold it to the wholesale trade. An office was opened in Monticello in 1890 in the rear of the John Niederhauser building, now the John Arn tavern. He conducted a wholesale cheese business and handled cheese factory supplies. The venture proved unprofitable and closing the business after a few years he returned to the farm.

Gottlieb Wittwer, Sr., and the two sons, Edward and Gottlieb, in 1902 purchased the Steinman & Knobel building on Main street,



Steam-heated copper kettles coagulate the milk in Swiss cheese making; each holds 3,000 pounds of milk, enough to make one 200-pound wheel.

now the People's Supply company of Monticello, built an addition to it and opened a branch office of the F. Grunert Cheese company of Monroe and handled cheese supplies.

A few years later the sons went into the cheese business as Edw. Wittwer & Bro. The Milwaukee road built storage cellars for them on railroad property east of the village.

Edward Wittwer organized the Wittwer Cheese company as a stock company in 1910 and in 1914 he wholesaled cheese under the copyright brand of "Little Sugar River," and continued in business until a few years ago.

### **Branch Buyers Now on the Ground**

The importance of the Monroe market with respect to the outside trade may be judged by the representation here of leading



wholesale concerns who find it to their interest to keep in close contact with prices, production and stock through their resident buyers. Back in the old days when a few home concerns were in control of the situation the outside buying was done through Monroe wholesale houses.

The Armour company, having absorbed the Morris interests, have the ground floor of the Industrial Co-Operative Union storage plant with Otto Zwygart in charge as manager. Mr. Zwygart, whose early experience was around Brodhead in 1900, has had a number of buying connections and is credited as knowing cheese.

The J. S. Hoffman Co., Chicago, operating through the Triangle Cheese company managed by Jacob Gempeler, Jr., up to the time of his death, maintain their connection here with the interests of the Triangle directed by Fred Boesiger and Alfred Morgenthaler in the well-equipped former Galle plant.

E. A. Janke, formerly with Borden in Chicago and then with Hoffman, represented Hoffman at Mount Horeb since 1921. He came here in 1934 and June 1, 1935, established himself as the E. A. Janke company with office and storage in the Industrial storage building and doing a general wholesale business.

Dorman & Co., New York, are represented here by Casper Portman.

The Fairview cheese factory lost an excellent cheesemaker when Leo Von Moos went with the Ed. Ray Cheese Co., New York, last year as buyer. Besides a good record as maker Mr. Von Moos rates high as authority on cheese.

Herman W. Karlen, formerly buyer with the Badger Cheese company, is now doing buying for the Ohlhausen Cheese Co., Chicago.

Edward Wittwer, Monticello, many years prominent in that section where he did business as Edward Wittwer & Bro., is now engaged in independent buying.

The Swiss Colony has carried on a mail order business, retailing choice cheese and operates at wholesale through Acherman-Abplanalp & Co. Ray R. Kubly originated the brand and name and specializes in selected cheese. Swiss Colony advertising is carried in a number of leading periodicals.



# Home Control of Cheese

## Business Thing of Past

When the wholesale cheese business appeared safely established in the hands of strictly local concerns, all in sharp competition as they were striving for business, events began to happen and in the years since, the horizon has been swept and competition cleared up beyond the fondest dreams of wholesalers when they merged in 1911.

Many once prominent in the cheese business in Green and adjacent counties have now passed from the scene of action. The country is scattered with empty factory buildings, cellars and warehouses as they lay dead waste, all that is left to mark the trail. It is amazing what changes come with the passing of a few years. It would seem to demonstrate that nothing is as certain in the cheese business as is the certainty of change.

J. Q. Emery, able, righteous and faithful to the state's dairy interests when he was commissioner of dairy and food, addressing Green county farmers and cheesemakers at a convention of their Southern Wisconsin association in Monroe, visioned the future and related a Swiss fable as a warning to them of the stranger covetous of their dairy domain. The dealers who had their outside contacts were aware of the interest that was being attracted by the "merry Swiss milk maid," but at that time it was taken as complimentary and with the satisfied feeling that the industry was old enough and sufficiently prosperous to receive outside attention.

Borden, Kraft and Phenix were mighty in the dairy kingdom in their day. They were buying and consolidating companies and then Kraft-Phenix united but it did not mark the end of consolidation and control, for National Dairy Products Corp., a later and greater combination of dairy interests, came to further reduce competition in dairy lines to the extent that National Dairy Products is now recognized locally as the power over all.

### New Borden Interest In Monroe

Borden's, although vacating an expensive plant in Monroe when they closed down the condensery and discontinued the purchase of milk, never wholly abandoned the Green county milk section. Where Borden's have not been buying milk they have been in the market for cheese and concerns favored with their business have found them heavy buyers. However, the season of 1936 finds Borden with new dealer connection in Monroe. When it came to renewal of contracts it became definitely known that their buying now for

the first time will be concentrated in Carl Marty & Co. This agreement, it is understood, has to do with production in order to insure the kind of cheese their trade requires, but it is denied that it goes to the extent of establishing a subsidiary here. Carl Marty Jr., president of Carl Marty & Co., explains the connection as a business arrangement that insures important outlet for their products at market prices that will relieve them of promotion in development of markets and operate to their advantage as it gives them a gilt-edged account.

Elsewhere it is anticipated that this new Borden interest may be another entering wedge that will have the effect of weakening the influence of the independents on the ground at the point of production and means more outside control. It cannot be expected that the public is to be informed as to the exact significance of moves that are constantly being made and while large business interests may be backward in announcing acquisitions as they take place time has a way of bringing the facts to light. While it is no more than fair to accept announcements and explanations as made by the parties chiefly concerned, reasonable lapse of time will tell what has been happening.

### **Borden Subsidiary at Orangeville**

Borden returns to Orangeville for the 1936 season. The former Borden plant operating in Stephenson county in Illinois south of Green county, has been equipped with machinery for cheesemaking by the Schmitt Brothers, Blue River, Wis., a subsidiary of the Borden company. The factory starts out equipped to produce American cheese and handle casein with plans for the production of Swiss cheese later. Borden is going ahead with arrangements for a large intake of milk. J. P. Meister, Mineral Point, representing the Schmitt firm, is in charge of the plant. Borden occupied the plant as a condensery.

### **Millions in Dairy Combinations**

Indication of the new Borden interest here in Green county promises further competition and it would not be surprising to find the rival combinations dividing control of the Monroe market. Both are powerful in the trade throughout the country and each is strongly capitalized. Evidence accumulates that while the co-operative factories in the main will be independently operated, independent representation in the buying market and wholesale distribution will be reduced to a minimum. The situation forecast at the present time, at least has the promise that instead of one dominating factor there may be two, which will be beneficial as the industry has never suffered because of competitive buying and selling.

Dealers at the time of the Badger merger were accused of pool-



ing their interests to control the market in their own interest. Compared to the magnitude of later combinations in the dairy lines their merger fades into insignificance. For the purpose of comparison it may be stated that National Dairy Products Corporation, incorporated in Delaware in 1923, has become one of the leading distributors of dairy products in this country. It operates in most of the North Atlantic, middle western and southern states and also does business in Canada and Cuba. When National Dairies acquired Kraft-Phenix in 1930 it made National Dairy the leading American factor in the cheese business. It is also the most important distributor of ice cream. It is also a major distributor of fluid milk and cream and large dealer in butter, eggs, condensed milk and kindred products. Net sales for 1934 increased to \$267,414,548. The company's net working capital same year was \$38,540,000, and the net income \$6,551,930. In 1935 the sales increased to \$290,441,358, increasing the net income to \$9,338,205 with the total working capital \$39,679,000. National Dairy Products Corporation general office is located at 120 Broadway, New York.

In connection with the refinancing of its \$68,000,000 5¼ per cent debentures National Dairy Products Corporation announce a new issue of \$62,545,500 3¾ per cent debentures due 1951 and dated May 1, 1935, to carry stock purchase warrants. As these warrants are exercised the old debentures will be retired.

The Borden company, incorporated in New Jersey in 1899, as Borden's Condensed Milk company, changed to the present title in 1919. The business was originally established in 1857. Borden's came to Monroe when the Anglo-Swiss milk condensing plants in the United States were taken over. It is a holding company, primarily a milk and cream producer with extensive interests in the manufacture of cheese, ice cream, butter, etc. Capitalized at \$120,000,000 stock outstanding amounts to \$65,950,560. Net sales in 1934 were \$215,723,650 with a net working capital of \$43,332,687. Borden increased net sales in 1935 to \$229,888,089 with net income \$4,842,349 and the total working capital \$40,803,000. The Borden company general offices are in New York at 350 Madison avenue.

The favorable status of the dairy industry during the major portion of the depression years brought more and more farmers into producing dairy products. The natural result was an oversupply and increasing difficulties in the summer of 1933 when price cutting by independent dealers was rampant, with the result that stock dividends were greatly reduced to be passed altogether by both National Dairy Products and Borden. The losses resulting from the dairy market slump thus had no respect for either the high or the lowly.

The dairy situation generally received its most severe setback during the later years of the depression but it has been showing mid-



rate improvement with the hope that it has at last arrived at the dawn of a new day when the dairymen may expect and realize again adequate return for his labors and investment.

### **Kraft Entered Field at Brodhead**

It is now more than a dozen years since the Kraft-Cheese company came into the Green county picture. The Brodhead Cheese and Cold Storage company, built up by Jacob Marty, was the first purchase made. This was in 1925. Movement of cheese in increased volume turned that way and heavy carload shipments were moving out of Brodhead to Antigo and other Kraft concentration points. It began to look as if Green county was going to have a second cheese metropolis. The Charles Zuercher company at Brodhead was next absorbed in 1929.

### **Processing Brought Change**

Processing troubles were blamed for the sale of the Brodhead plants, the Zuercher plant in 1929 and the Marty plant about nine years before. Both were making loaf Swiss. Kraft had his processing patents upheld in the courts after long legal battle with Swift. Kraft next brought friendly action against Pabst in Wisconsin where his rights were established and he proceeded to impose fees and royalties. The license fee was \$10,000, with royalty of half a cent a pound after reaching the sum represented by the fee.

Zuercher was also interested in the Ladysmith plant, which he started, and loaf was being made there. Kraft acquired Ladysmith. Borden became interested in Lakeshire. Shefford processed at Green Bay.

Acherman & Emmenegger and Carl Marty & Co. cleaned up on processing and remained in business. The Badger purchase was made. Lakeshire at the time was solicitous of the Acherman interest.

### **Badger Sale Was Denied**

Kraft and Phenix were operating independently but were believed to have understanding between them.

Rumors first current that Kraft had acquired controlling stock in the Badger Cheese company at Monroe were met with strong denials. In November, 1928, it was announced that the Brodhead and Badger companies were Kraft-Phenix owned, that the business and assets had been acquired along with other companies in various parts of the country which were expected to add \$7,580,000 to volume with \$204,000 added profit. The Badger company in Monroe announced at the same time that it would represent Kraft-

Phenix in the buying field in this locality and future operations would be centered in the Badger company.

The business of the Kraft company at Brodhead was cleaned up in May, 1927 and the offices were transferred to Monroe. The Brodhead plant was only to be used for storage purposes. Ralph H. Wenger, Monroe, was appointed general manager, operating the Jacob Marty warehouse, June 1, 1929; Godfrey Zuercher continued in charge of the Kraft-Phenix loaf plant, while the Badgers took over the Barneveld and Footville branches. Charles Zuercher was named manager of the Chicago branch of the Brodhead Cheese and Cold Storage company. Formal transfer of the Brodhead and Barneveld properties was made to Badger-Brodhead same date.

### **Kraft Combines Badger-Brodhead**

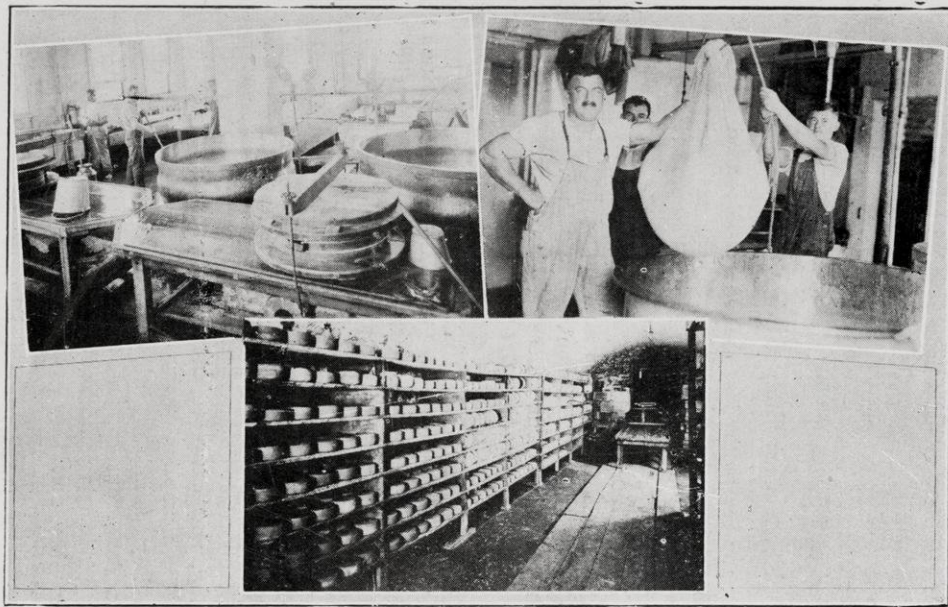
The company reorganized as the Badger-Brodhead company, the Brodhead cheese boom became a thing of the past, with Monroe the center of operation of the Kraft-Phenix corporation. Here the "lion and the lamb" at last lay down together. The lambs, it is true, caper lively, but in fewer number. Apparently there is room for all under the great, blue sky and judged by the far and large from outside, they are getting on well together.

The entrance into Brodhead, as in Monroe, was quietly made. The new owners at Brodhead were represented by a salaried manager, A. A. Leavitt, who fitted like a glove into the whole situation. He was unassuming, a human kind of a man with agreeable personality and abundant ability for his job. He had been an Illinois Central agent at Blanchardville, where he knew about cheese before he made it a business, and acquired his experience in the country thereabout. He was readily accepted in the inner dealer circles and was elected president of the Foreign Type Cheese Dealers' association. When he was transferred to new fields of labor in Michigan he was presented with a gold watch by the association in token of their regard and esteem.

Processing, now advanced to where it supplies more than half of the cheese consumption of the nation, according to statistics, was not welcomed by the industry when first introduced here. It was regarded as a dangerous competitor, for there were fears that the Green county industry would be ruined in time. Dealers opened loaf plants when they felt they were forced because the trade was demanding cheese in smaller form, but this was not for long as patent infringement actions were threatened.

Cheese in the processed form had the benefit of convenient package, attractive labels, advertising that tempted the taste, all well-backed financially and powerfully organized in the selling. Their enterprise took cheese to new markets and brought new customers for Swiss and limburger, both among the types imitated





When Adolf Abplanalp was a Swiss cheesemaker shown with his kettles and curd ready for the hoop mold. Shelved cheese look like miniatures but each weighs around 200 pounds. Mr. Abplanalp is now member of the Acherman-Abplanalp company, wholesale cheese dealers, and president of the Citizens bank, Monroe



and sold in the processed packages.

Leaders in the dairy field outside of the direct producing territory more vitally interested, failed to see why these two branches should be in conflict, holding to the opinion that the more prosperous one became the more it would help the other. Here it was regarded as a battle between two opposing interests and their differences between made and re-made cheese.

### **Factors of First Importance**

Processors now permanently represented in Green county, have demonstrated that they are factors of the first importance in all branches of the cheese trade of the country. They are operating to the advantage of the industry in many respects. Dependable outlet for all grades has resulted. They are able to exert influence upon the market locally and have been successful in maintaining buying quotations announced weekly.

Price fixing and marketing have always been subjects that have kept the market agitated. There have always been the buyer-producer arguments and differences as the farmer was concerned with production and the dealer was interested on the marketing side. Each factory had its own salesman. Buyers in the old days swarmed the country, outbidding each other according to the market outlook of the individual concern represented. There was no open buying but instead prices were quoted in whispers, the idea being that all were not entitled to know the top price—until after they sold. Quotations given out to the newspaper for publication were the down prices.

### **Present Practice More Open**

The industry is now carried on much more openly and better practices prevail except for natural trade defects reflected in cheese qualities. Because of the nature of the industry there can be no hope for the happy day of the ideal situation. New legislation and regulations have had wholesome effect in production and grading. While by no means perfect they point in the right direction. Human nature is not perfect and with many uncertain elements to contend with, the blessed state in the trade looks far off.

Summer weather and pastures mean much as do reverse conditions in winter. Actual making of the milk into cheese is just a step between the farm and curing rooms and yet an art not completely mastered because of natural complications necessary to deal with, but if cheesemaking did not have its difficulties there would be no specialized Swiss cheese industry centralized in this particular section of the country.

The business is being steadily centralized in Monroe. There are

now about 300 factories in what is known as the Green county area. More than 200 are Swiss and about 60 make limburger.

### **Passing of Old Days Elsewhere**

Arn & Zweifel are well established at Monticello where in the old days Monticello had Bontly Bros., Edw. Wittwer & Bro. and Henry Holdrich, all handling large volume. Fred Voegeli was at New Glarus where cheese lost out years ago. Argyle, Blanchardville, Barneveld, Mount Horeb and Darlington have all felt the passing of the old order as cheese is transported by motor truck on portable shelves to the storage plants in Monroe.

### **Limburger Put Up in Jars**

The Parrot Cheese company specialized in limburger without odor. Their cheese was marketed in jars and operations were discontinued when cheese processors won court decision sustaining their patents and complications arose. The company came here from Freeport in March, 1928, was incorporated at \$10,000 and turned out 15,000 jars a month. E. A. Ninneman, formerly with Pabst and the Brodhead Cheese & Cold Storage company, was manager. The company was later changed to the Wisconsin Cheese corporation with Mr. Ninneman, president, Robert F. Marty, vice president and Lawrence Cahill, secretary-treasurer. The company occupied the top floor of the Marty plant on Fifteenth avenue and had ten employes.

After the purchase of the Borden plant by Carl Marty & Co., the Wisconsin Cheese corporation leased space in the north side plant and moved there.

# Consolidation of Smaller Factories Present Trend

Cooling, clarification and cooperative marketing all had tendency within the past ten years toward consolidation of the smaller factories into bigger ones with attendant economy and improved product. Time-worn practices went into the discard, small factories operated in close proximity of each other, joined in the movement. Farmers began hauling to one factory where overhead could be cut and manufacturing conditions bettered. Cooling of milk permitted factory deliveries once a day and longer distance hauling.

Four factories are now located in Monroe, the First Swiss Cheese company, Marty & Co., North Side Cheese company and the Monroe Center factory, and Monticello has two.

During the summer when milk flow is heaviest the First Swiss and Marty plant will make as high as twelve wheels of Swiss daily, each converting approximately 40,000 pounds of milk. Factories figure one wheel to each kettle.

The First Swiss cheese factory was opened in Monroe in November, 1921, as a cooperative factory located in the glove factory, by heavy farmer milkers in the vicinity of Monroe. Adolf Abplanalp was the maker seven years and was followed by his brother, Alex. Abplanalp, who came from Switzerland in 1913 and made cheese south of Juda before coming here. The factory is one of the largest cooperatives in the vicinity and has always turned out a first class Swiss cheese, paying highest net to members. Walter Freitag is president.

The North Side Swiss cheese factory is another farmer cooperative in Monroe, headed in 1936 by Fred Dettweiler, president, and Charles Krueger, secretary. A new maker, John Friedli, took over the manufacturing duties in 1936, replacing Reinhard Mueller. The quarters originally housed a creamery. Until 1928 it was a Swiss cheese processing plant operated by Joseph Acherman with Charles E. Eckberg in charge. Mr. Eckberg, now executive in charge of the Lakeshire plant at Plymouth, Wis., owned by the Borden company, came here with C. M. Gere, as federal Swiss cheese experts connected with the Bureau of Dairy Industries of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Mr. Gere is now located in the west. With the removal of the Acherman cheese processing machinery to Plymouth in 1928 Gottlieb Kohli, now located at Ladysmith, Wis., installed the first four cheese-making kettles. Mueller, who became maker in 1930, installed six more kettles, bringing the plant's capacity to ten kettles in flush season. Three assistants help the maker.



The Monroe Center Swiss Cheese factory was built in 1931 and opened in January, 1932, on Twelfth street. Fred Glauser, who had been making cheese since 1900 at the Five Corners factory and for eight years state cheese grader, was assisted by Matt Hirscher, of the Clarno Townhouse factory. The building is constructed of brick, 100x92 fronting on Twelfth street with a work room 28x39 and cellar 74x40. The factory has eight kettles.

### **Monticello Pure Milk Cheese Co.**

A farmers' cooperative cheese company was organized at Monticello in the spring of 1933 as the Monticello Pure Milk Cheese company, officers as follows: President, Conrad Stauffacher; secretary, Ira B. Pierce; directors, Ernest Strahm, Jacob Voegeli, John Zeller; John Zeller, salesman.

Cheesemaking started June 8, 1933, with 20,000 pounds of milk. Emil Escher, maker, has been with the company since the opening. He has four helpers, two of whom are his sons. The factory reached its maximum flow in the summer of 1935 when daily milk deliveries amounted to 30,500 pounds. There are ten kettles. The cost of the factory was close to \$10,000 with indebtedness retired on the following plan: The 34 stockholders each pay 5 cents rental for each 100 pounds of milk delivered. Non-stockholders delivering milk there pay 4 cents per hundred on their deliveries.

The factory has four cellars holding about 660 Swiss drums. Plans are being made to add a fifth cellar to the west, increasing the storage capacity to 1,000 drums. The factory is equipped with an ice machine. The cellar ceilings are insulated with a thick layer of rock wool, making them practically fireproof without dampness.

The Monticello Pet milk receiving station, formerly the Borden plant in Monticello, closed down when the entire supply went to the new cheese factory.

### **Kohli Cheese Factory**

The history of the Kohli Cheese company at Monticello dates back to 1881. The factory closed down after a few years, reopening in 1885 when J. C. Steinman, Sr., and Fred Knobel bought the building and ran it two years as an American factory. J. F. Sears, Monticello banker, was taken in as a third partner in 1887. Due to the poor quality of home made butter supplied to the Steinman store, it was decided to make a creamery out of the factory. The business was not successful and by 1901 the partnership became so involved financially that they were forced to close and settle accounts. The building and all equipment was sold in 1901 to a Danish butter maker from Elgin who operated it as a creamery until 1904. The factory was sold in 1905 to Edward Wittwer and John

Urban with Adolph Arn taken on as cheesemaker. Limburger, Swiss and brick were made at intervals. The largest supply of milk came during the winter months when the surrounding factories were closed.

Mr. Arn made cheese in the factory until 1915 and the factory remained closed until 1933 when Gottlieb Kohli, formerly with Phoenix in New York, came from Monroe. He bought the building and remodeled it into a Swiss cheese factory. A group of twenty farmers in the vicinity of Monticello rented the plant from Kohli and hired Louis Krauer to make cheese. The rental amounts to 3 cents per hundred pounds of milk delivered. The average run of milk is 12,000 pounds.

### **Milk Standardization Legalized**

Green county Swiss cheese and several successful makers figured in the Antigo test case in December, 1925, a criminal trial brought by the state against the Langlade Creamery company, a subsidiary of the Kraft Cheese company. The defense made use of witnesses called from here. The state charged the skimming of milk in violation of law prohibiting the skimming of milk going into Swiss cheese. Successful Green county makers had standardized their milk in order to produce a better cheese product, and although in technical violation of an antiquated state law, the state did not undertake to enforce the law here although it sought to uphold the law in court at Antigo where the defendants were making cheese in size smaller than that specified by the law.

The supreme court in 1927 upheld the lower court declaring the law regarding the removal of butterfat from milk used in making cheese and limiting the size did not apply to Swiss cheese. Standardization is the general practice and men in the industry doubt if it has been entirely beneficial. In some quarters it is asserted it has had demoralizing effect on the industry for the reason that so-called standardization to get the proper balance of butterfat to casein may be overdone in favor of the factory cream account. Cream trucks make regular collections in the factory territory.

Seizures of cheese shipments in interstate transit by federal inspectors together with attendant warnings given by the inspectors and buyers of infractions of the law fixing 45 per cent as the butterfat content in water free substance in cheese forced Monroe dealers into agreement at the opening of the 1936 season to require guaranty forms signed up by factories to the effect that their products meet the legal butterfat and other requirements of the federal pure food act. This would place responsibility upon the factories and relieve dealers from losses where cheese failed to measure up to legal standards. The Foreign Type Cheese Dealers' association is being supported by the National Cheese Institute which is to keep



a record of all factories refusing to make guaranty. Factories disposed to resist the order and appealing to the Wisconsin state department of agriculture and markets find the state urging the legal standard although the state has been aware of the evasion of law without making effort to enforce it since the Antigo test case. Dealers contend that in order to keep outside cheese from competing in the domestic cheese market it is necessary that producers adhere to the legal standard.

In the early days before the invention of the Babcock separator cheese was made from the whole milk which was not conducive to the best eye formation. Much butterfat went into whey and the factories had supplies of whey cream that was in demand for cooking purposes, but with the use of the separator the whey cream ceased to be a by-product.

### **Enters Period of Expansion**

The '80s may be considered as constituting the second stage of development as the foundation had then been laid by the pioneers and dairying had entered upon the period of expansion. Yankee farmers who had held back were joining in the rush to share in the profits milking for cheese was bringing to their neighbors in the northern part of the county where the industry originated. Factories multiplied in number and the industry in the main was prospering.

Farms and factories were obliged to get along without state or federal dairy departments to correct the mistakes or to be helpful with the expert services rendered today, but cheesemaking kept moving forward with other leaders appearing to carry on where the founders had left off.

The industry really attracted little outside notice. The markets for the Swiss and limburger cheese were so far away that there were only a few of the German cities in the vicinity, like Madison, Milwaukee and Freeport, where people knew anything about it. Younger generations got the idea that cheese was something that was made everywhere. It was realized later the industry was entirely different from any other cheesemaking in Wisconsin or elsewhere in the west and that it had background and color all its own. Taxing of incomes revealed the prosperity existing in and about the Green county cheese center and gradually the industry came within the light of day.

New Glarus had been celebrating the anniversaries of the founding of the village by the colonists every ten years, the 90th anniversary having been celebrated last year. These celebrations, taking on added attraction and popularity each decade, served to draw public notice to the locality and the exclusive type of farm industry carried on out in the rural community.



## Founders Get Place in History

Cheesemaking did not remain there as other parts of the county were becoming trade centers. Monroe soon became the market bull's eye, the cheese industry began to appeal to the public interest, and, together with the romantic story of the settlement of New Glarus has made acceptable newspaper copy everywhere. News reels have carried the pictures to the movie theaters of the country. The names of the founders, Gerber, Karlen, Beller, have been placed in the scroll of prominent Americans of Swiss origin published in New York by the Swiss-American Historical Society in 1932. These men are Nicholas Gerber, Jacob Karlen and Gottlieb Beller. "The eligibility of these unpretentious men for our biographical pantheon," the society's history states, "is not based on their material accomplishments as individual business men but more particularly upon their merits as pioneers in the field of fancy cheesemaking in America."

The beginning of commercial cheesemaking in this country is given in this history as follows:

"In America, where dairy products play such an important factor in the diet of its people, the narrative of the dairy industry and of cheesemaking assumes an important part of the history of America. Also on this continent, cheesemaking has been relatively important since the earliest settlements, but it was a farm enterprise for purely domestic purposes until the middle of the nineteenth century when the factory system was introduced as an improved economic system.

"There are several claims for the priority of the first cheese factory in America. Research made by the United States Department of Agriculture, however, has resulted in establishing that the first cheese factory in this country was built in 1831 by Charles Rockwell, of Koshkonong, Wisconsin, followed in 1841 by a second factory founded by A. Pickett, or Lake Mills, Wisconsin, and in 1852 Jesse Williams established the third at Rome, N. Y. According to present knowledge, the first cheese factory ever erected was in 1815 and was built by R. V. Effinger in the Canton of Berne, Switzerland. In 1860, an attempt was made in Ohio to manufacture cheese on a commercial basis by one Budlong who opened a factory at Chardon, in Geauga county. While numerous factories had been in operation in different states before 1860, it was not until after the civil war that the cheese industry became firmly and generally established. The state of New York for several decades, was leading in the production of cheese, mainly of the Cheddar type. It was not long, however, before Wisconsin attained an equal position and finally dominated in the production of cheese in America.

"The Swiss settlers have contributed a conspicuous share to the

successful development of the dairy industry of this country. It is known that cheesemaking in Green county, Wisconsin, had its inception when the Swiss settlers in New Glarus township were driven to it in desperation after repeated crop failures. As a result Green county has become what now is recognized as the center of the foreign type cheese industry in America. Green county, moreover, is known to have the highest number of cattle in proportion to population of any county in the Union.

"The three principal figures in the early Swiss cheese industry in America are Nicholas Gerber, Jacob Karlen and Gottlieb Beller."

Mr. Gerber is credited with introducing limburger manufacture in Boonville, Oneida county, N. Y.

Jacob Karlen's life, it is stated, runs parallel in many respects with that of Gerber.

Gottlieb Beller conceived the idea of buying cheese when prices slumped in the fall and storing for later distribution. In those days making closed October 1. His example of 1879 when he stored the cheese from the Trumpy factory in Clarno in an old brewery cellar in Monroe was the first "winter speculating," afterward to become general in the trade.

### **John Luchsinger New Glarus Historian**

John Luchsinger, "banker, lawyer and publicist, striking personality and outstanding character among the thousands of Swiss and their descendants in Monroe and New Glarus as well as in all Green county," is also included in the list of "Prominent Americans of Swiss Origin." Only four, all from Monroe, are named from Green county.

Mr. Luchsinger, born in 1839 in Schwanden, Canton Glarus, was the son of John Luchsinger, Sr., by trade a stone cutter and mason, who came to New Glarus with his family in 1852; died in 1862. The son engaged in farming, also became interested in cheesemaking, studied the subject and with others was instrumental in establishing cheese factories in Green county. He became an authority on cheese and its manufacture. He was an advocate of the good qualities of cheese and its eminent food values. In 1898 he wrote "The History of a Great Industry" for the Wisconsin Historical Society. He was known as historian of the Swiss colony and wrote an interesting monograph of the founding of New Glarus, with translation of some of the diaries and papers of the colonists, also published by the Wisconsin Historical Society. He delivered the English anniversary address at the semi-centennial celebration of the founding of New Glarus in 1895. Mr. Luchsinger died April 23, 1922, a resident of Monroe 45 years with much of his life devoted to public service.



## Fame Smiles on Green County; Switzerland Shows Jealousy

The goddess of fame has been smiling on the Green county industry these later years. The cheese produced here is Swiss, looks like Swiss, was made by Swiss people, cured and marketed by them, generation after generation, close onto 75 years now. Their cheese was being received with favor in the great markets of the country. Besides the expert making it was produced in a region favored with the proper soil and underlying limestone that was supposed to impart desirable mineral qualities and flavor not to be found elsewhere. Green county cheese at its best, whether Swiss, brick or limburger, is generally accepted as a perfect product. Connoisseurs the country over have bowed to it, have acknowledged its high quality and agree that it is plenty good.

The cheeseries of Switzerland began to sing of Switzerland, but their lines were tinged with jealousy.

The Swiss Cheese Association of Berne, Switzerland, regarding domestic Swiss cheese as a competitor worthy of notice in 1927, began lauding Switzerland cheese as the cheese "with mountain flavor that cannot be copied." Full page color advertisements appeared and the series continued seven months in this country in leading publications like the Saturday Evening Post, Good Housekeeping, Vogue, Vanity Fair and House and Garden, total circulation over 5,500,000 and the seven months' campaign meant a total of 50,000,000 pages. There was also supplementary advertising in Hotel Management and Restaurant News. It was the greatest Swiss cheese publicity ever undertaken in this country and was aimed at what was termed "synthetic achievements of ambitious substitutes."

The advertising went the length of extravagant phrases in describing Swiss cheese made in Switzerland and marketed with the imprinted rind as the genuine and only, the cheese with the "nut-sweet flavor and goodness," the flavor from "flower-flecked Alpine meadows" where "cows graze on Alpine pastures or munch spicy-scented mountain hay." The milk was said to be "born of the tender grasses, sun and soil of Alpine valleys and glacier fed streams."

The "wonderful goodness" of Switzerland cheese was described as "rich as a nut, delicately piquant, appetizingly fragrant. Eating it alone you get but one phase of its intriguing flavor for it blends with all foods to make delicate contrasts that amaze your taste."

There may be irony in another paragraph for it contains a lesson that may well be applied to production here. It reads:

"How religiously the maker of Switzerland cheese appreciates this gift of Nature is reflected in the patience, interest, exactness



with which he makes each cheese. Never does he let a single cheese leave his country unless he knows that it measures up to every standard set by his honorable forefathers who have made cheese since the Roman Empire."

It was a mighty stroke of advertising and produced results except that prices were lowering and dropped to the point where there was fear that the foreign competition might ruin the Green county industry.

### **President Coolidge Fond of Domestic Swiss**

Prices were down too low to make cheesemaking profitable for the farmers because of the difference in production costs here and in Switzerland. Senator Lenroot appealed to President Coolidge who ordered investigation of the situation in behalf of the producing farmers. After thorough inquiry here and abroad the protection requested was granted and the tariff import duty was increased 50 per cent.



**PRESIDENT COOLIDGE**

Schmid at the Jenny factory in Clarno.

Producers appreciated this relief and as it was known President Coolidge was fond of Swiss cheese, they sent a delegation 400 miles to Superior when he was there on his summer vacation in 1928 and at the summer White House he was presented with a 147-pound wheel of Green County Swiss cheese. Wm. Olson and John Geigel represented the producers at the presentation. The cheese was made by August

### **Postal Crisis Over Limburger**

Limburger in transit caused sharp clash in the postal service early in 1935. A crisis was averted when the two postmasters involved went into a cheese sniffing duel with the Monroe postmaster granting his opponent the use of a gas mask. A rural carrier in Iowa reported that he was made ill because of the odor emitted by a parcel containing limburger. Warren F. Miller, acting postmaster at Independence, ruled against the cheese because an old regulation specifically barred limburger.

John J. Burkhard, Monroe postmaster, appealed to the postal

department and forwarded a cake of offending limburger as an aid in the decision. The department handled the matter delicately and ruling was made that limburger could be accepted for mailing if the odor was suppressed.

Again objection came from Iowa where some one smelled out a parcel of limburger to the interruption of the service and the old question whether limburger radiates fragrance or feter was warmly argued.

Postmaster Burkhard indignantly accused Iowa postmasters of lack of appreciation of limburger's esthetic value. He declared limburger creates its own exclusive atmosphere and asks no odds of anyone.

"Green county folks do not judge books by their covers, people by their faces or good cheese by its smell," he wrote in a challenge to Postmaster Miller to a limburger sniffing duel. The challenge was accepted. The duel took place in the Julian hotel at Dubuque in March, 1935, with press and public represented. The limburger was sampled to the delight of all permitted to share in the delicacy. Limburger came out victorious by unanimous decision of the judges. The newspapers made the most of the light humor the limburger trial suggested, all in friendly vein, and limburger played up in the telegraph news of the Associated Press received a great publicity break over the entire country. Burkhard was chosen 1935 Cheese day president and had his opponent for guest of honor at the celebration.

Ray A. Young mailed limburger by parcel post to Clara, Lou and Em, chatty radio trio, who discussed limburger on the air, one of them remarking that Postmaster General Farley was facing another strong issue.

### **Veteran Makers Honored Cheese Day**

The 1935 Cheese day honored veteran makers of the "old days before 1890." Carl Marty, Sr., listed 89 and 56 reported as honor guests in the parade. A number of these retired makers are over 80. John Marty, who made cheese in Mount Pleasant in 1869 and now 93, was among them. The group, photographed by the Frautschy studio, gave him place of honor in the center of the first row, where he stands with a cane in hand. The group in their combined activities made mighty contribution to cheesemaking success. The 1935 honor list is here appended with regret that it cannot include more of the worthy makers who have passed on after doing their part:

Monroe—Jacob Gruenewald, Sr., Jacob Gempeler, Jacob Fiechter, Andrew Hirshbrunner, Albert Trachsel, John Voegeli, Jacob Altmann, Fred. Solberger, Gottf. Dällenbach, John Burkhard, Jacob





Photo by Frautschy Studio, Monroe, Wis.

Veteran Makers of the "Old Days" before 1890 Honored at 1935 Cheese Day.



Haehlen, Ulrich Nufer, Fred. Bruni, Ed. Wenger, Jacob Burkhalter, Fred Burkhalter, Gottlieb Burkhalter, Robert Friedli, Gottfried Augsburg, Sam. Baumgartner, John H. Elmer, Gottlieb Marty, Carl Marty, Sr., Fred Marty, Joe Huber, Werner Blum, Gottfried Aeschlimann, Fred. Steinmann, Jacob J. Benkert, Jacob Karlen, Jr., Christ Strauss, Gottfried Waelti, Jacob Halder, Henry Wyss, John M. Casanova, Carl Schmid, Math. Meier.

Charles Zuercher, Jacob Speich, Christ. Speich, Jacob Fluckiger, Brodhead; Gottlieb Kammer, New Glarus; John Marty (93 years old), John Benkert, Monticello; Fred Loeffel, Albany; Christ. Kueng, Carl Kueng, Juda; Christ. Hirshbrunner, Gottlieb Kaempfer, Emil Kaempfer, John Brunner, Darlington; Rudolf Schaller, Fred. Kuehni, Barneveld; Christ. Waelti, Mt. Horeb; Nick Meyer, Argyle; Carl Haldimann, Mineral Point; John Dietrich, Milwaukee; Christ. Joss, Arpin; Gottfried Gottier, Footville; Jacob Meinen, Green Bay; Alex. Rolli, Winslow; August Regez, Fred. Meyer, Hixton; Jacob Roth, Junction City; Rudolph Lehnherr, Blanchardville; Robert Rieder, Humbird; Adolph Rieder, Fred Schertenleib, Portland, Ore.; Jacob Christen, Freeport, Ill.; John Roder, Chicago, Ill.; Adolph Joss, Algonne, Mich.; Carl Frehner, Enfield, Minn.; Conrad Frehner, Sciota Mills, Ill.; Adolph Haehlin, Waukon, Ia.; Jacob Marty, Rice, Wash.; Fred Christen, Humbird, Wis.; August Halder, Highland, Ill.; John Baumann, Lakefield, Minn.; Conrad Elmer, New Glarus; Gottfried Wittwer, Brodhead; Gottlieb Schneeberger, Brodhead; John Kuoni, Marysville, Kan.; Christ Pauli and Baeth Hefty, Verona; Jacob Alder, Belleville; Jost Altmann, Arpin; Sam Schmid, Knapp, Wis.; Jacob Zahler, Boyceville, Wis., and John Losenegger, Mt. Horeb.

### **Cheese Day Unique Celebration**

Cheese days, staged in the Swiss atmosphere and in a manner representative of this distinctive industry, have put Green county in the dairy spot light nationally. Eight of these Cheese days have now been celebrated, each greater than the other, and with the entire county cooperating in most commendable way. The various communities participate in the parade with floats typical of their friendly interest and connection with the industry. Farm horses are brought in from all parts of the county to be teamed up and appear in dairyland's parade.

Thousands of Swiss cheese sandwiches are given away with bottles of milk and the day is filled with a great variety of entertainment, all original with touches of Swiss life and amusements, with the idea of glorifying cheese. Cheese day is unique as a community celebration and the only one featuring an interesting dairy achieve-

ment of its own as well as directing public attention to the merits of cheese as a wholesome food. The first Cheese day was staged Oct. 28, 1914 with others Oct. 12, 1915, Oct. 10, 1916 and Oct. 10, 1917. The war deferred the next one to Oct. 23, 1923. Prohibition took the foam away from Cheese day Oct. 2, 1928, but the event was an entire success, and on Oct. 2, 1935, Cheese day was back with all the trimmings. A traffic count recorded attendance of 50,000.

## Cheese Day Defined

Cheese day, its nature and meaning, was defined by the Associated Press in a news story previous to the 1928 celebration when Emery A. Odell, president of the 1923 and 1928 Cheese days, was asked to tell just what is Cheese day, what it is for, and why it is held. He answered:

"It is Green county's 'at home' day."

"It is celebrated in honor of the outstanding industry of the Swiss cheese country. It is done in the distinctive fashion of 'Little Switzerland' as a means of expressing civic pride in a notable dairy-



ing achievement. It is to be true to local Swiss tradition and will be presented in the color and atmosphere of the early Swiss life at New Glarus, where colonists direct from Switzerland settled in 1845 and where the Swiss cheese industry, now extending all over Green and parts of adjacent counties, particularly Dane and Lafayette, had its origin.

"The central theme is Green county cheese.

"All our neighbors, as many of them as may be prompted by a desire to join us and see what it is all about, will be welcomed. The glad hand will be extended with cheese sandwiches and Holstein milk. Dairyland will be revealed to them as they have never seen it before. The dairy parade will be a gorgeous affair and include a dairy section with the cattle and dairy maids. Various entertainment features are to follow.

"Here on Cheese day many thousands will be regaled to their entire satisfaction in a way that will impress them with the importance of the Swiss cheese business, which, with its allied types and



sources of income, has made dairying in Green county, one of the very smallest in the state, a \$10,000,000 enterprise. Besides being the home of the Swiss cheese industry in the United States it is the richest distinctly dairy region of like area in the world.

"Monroe is the only city in the country celebrating Cheese day. It is original and applies to a distinctive industry. It is expressive of the satisfaction of a successful dairy community producing a nationally known product. It is not a carnival, but a unique local celebration put on at heavy cost and without charge. It combines the best Green county has to offer in the way of feasting and entertainment."

The cheese given away in sandwiches in 1935 was donated by the cheese factories of Green county, the contribution amounting to 7,330 pounds and cash value of \$1,500.

Nowhere else is there a dairy festival of such magnitude. More than 100 organization workers, officers and directors of Green County Cheese Day, Inc., community non-profit, worked to prepare the great occasion. Several times that number actually participated in staging the day's features.

Cheese dealers and business men contributed liberally in cash toward the Cheese day fund and there are receipts from concession space granted only to local organizations and individuals and from the Cheese day dances.

The 1928 Cheese day was a \$6,000 affair, as was the one following in 1935, with thousands spent by private organizations for decorations, parade floats, and other participation in the big day.

The occasion is, primarily, intended to spread the word of Swiss and limburger cheese by better acquainting consumers with the region of its origin and reasons its makers here believe is to be the finest food on earth.

### **Organized Producer Groups**

The foreign type cheese section strives for united group action in the interests of the predominating industry.

Producers work through their Wisconsin Swiss and Limburger Cheese Producers' association organized Aug. 25, 1933, with nine directors, O. R. Olson, Blanchardville; William Kittleson, Mt. Horeb; Albert H. Stoldt, Monroe; A. L. Andrews, South Wayne; Frank Montgomery, Dill; Fred Campbell, Woodford; Alvin C. Schmid, Monroe township; Ira Pierce, Monticello; Ed Bell, Darlington. Albert H. Stoldt, Monroe, president. There is a special limburger section of this group.

Makers have their Foreign Type Cheesemakers' association, Reinhard Mueller, Monroe, president. There is also a limburger section of this group.

Dealers have the Foreign Type Cheese Dealers' association, Jack



Zweifel, Monticello, president.

Oldest in organization and service is the Southern Wisconsin Cheesemakers' and Dairymen's association organized in 1900, Fred J. Marty, Monroe, president.

Since the soil and climate of southern Wisconsin are well adapted to the production of livestock feeds most of the feeds cattle eat are wholesome, home-grown crops.

It has long been recognized that only certain feed crops are suited to the production of high quality Swiss and Limburger cheese milk.

### **Handle Milk Carefully**

The Green county farmer houses his cattle in modern dairy barns where a high degree of sanitation is possible and where livestock health can be maintained with a minimum of effort and cost.

Farmers are well equipped to handle large volumes of milk. The flush of the season sees daily deliveries of from 500 pounds to more than a ton of milk from a single farm.

To assure maintenance of quality, farms have milk houses to which milk is removed as soon as it is taken from the cow. There it flows over sanitary cooling apparatus, or may be poured into cans that are set in fresh, cool water and the milk stirred until it is reduced to the temperature necessary for its proper preservation.

Farm milk utensils are constructed of stainless steel or tinned copper and special cleaning methods keep them sanitary. Milking machines receive a lye treatment that reduces to a minimum the complication of harmful bacteria.

### **Farmer, Maker, Dealer Prime Factors in Setup**

The typical Green county setup:

The farmer produces the milk and hauls it to his cooperatively owned cheese factory.

The maker, employed by the farmer group on a percentage basis, makes the cheese.

The dealer, with storages in communities nearby, buys the cheese on a month's output basis, at a figure agreed upon by the dealer group, and stores it to take his chances with the market. The dealer employs salesmen to contact distant consumption points, disposing of quantity lots to brokers, wholesale houses and buyers for organizations and retail stores.

### **Swiss Not First Comers**

The Swiss were not the first comers to Green county but their colonization project at New Glarus, 18 miles north of Monroe, in

1845, changed the course of Green county history and brought about here an epic of dairy development.

Historical highlights are:

In the early 1800s Indians prospected for lead in what was to become Green county.

In the late 1820s white men who came were Indian traders. They soon followed the examples of the Indian, establishing Exeter.

After a few years Irish, Scotch, Scandinavians and Germans, together with New Englanders, took up government land nearby and began wheat farming, along with their prospecting.

## **Black and White Cattle Denote the Dairy Region**

Years of practical dairying brought the farmers to realize that their profits depended upon their volume. To increase volume they had to have quality producers in their herds, which led them to consider size and breed, and a period of herd development followed. Holsteins were large, they were found to be the best producers for cheese making, and soon the Holstein was generally accepted as the ideal dairy cow.

The black and white cattle are now the favorite breed. They are seen on every farm and denote the dairy region, while there are many Brown Swiss where some of the farmers have been partial to these cattle.

Progressive farmers became interested in the best blood strains and breeding and sale of dairy cattle proved profitable. There was good demand for surplus stock in the outside market, shipments to all parts of the country having been made as the fame of Green county for its breeding became known.

All cattle are now tuberculin tested, an important phase of the program as it insures wholesome milk.

This program begins with the cattle and the successful cheesemaker watches his milk supply constantly at the intake, urging upon the farmers special care in their producing and handling of it. The better the milk the better the cheese.

The safety of Green county Swiss and limburger is assured by healthy herds, sanitary farm premises and methods, proper feeding of cattle and scrupulous care of the milk.

## **Wholesome Home Feeds**

In addition to the campaign to eliminate bovine tuberculosis in cattle, the vigilant farmer watches for signs of other ailments and the state cooperates to help him stamp out diseases that are an economic loss and a menace to public health.

# **Green County Still Leader in Dairy and Farm Showing**

Despite problems encountered and losses entailed, the foreign type cheese industry has made material progress. The region has been enriched by the steady income from the outside market in return for the product of the cheese factories, which has meant vast improvement in properties, stock and equipment, and has changed the mode of living in the rural districts as it has brought modern comforts and conveniences to the people. It has added to the stability of the dairy establishment from the ground up.

Green county has attained outstanding position as an example of dairying success. Upwards of eighty years the dairy farmers have been producing milk, which has been converted into cheese in farm factories and turning it into money which has been coming back directly to the farmer, who has been able to buy more land, build a better house and barns, enlarge and improve his herd, with the result that Green county, in the major items such as farm acreage, farm investment and improvements, volume of income, number of cattle, silos, automobiles, trucks, per capita of wealth, challenges comparison with any other strictly agricultural section of like area in the entire country.

The Wisconsin and United States departments of agriculture reported that in November, 1935, Wisconsin farmers received better milk prices than at any time since December, 1930, with a state average of \$1.46 per hundred. This state average was exceeded in Green county where Swiss factories in September paid as high as \$1.56, limburger factories for November as high as \$1.85 and brick factories up to \$1.68.

Improved market prices for cheese would indicate further increase in net. Swiss with the close of 1935 was selling at 17½ to 23½ cents, block 16 to 22½ and brick and limburger are holding at 16 cents.

## **Produces Most of Nation's Output**

Monroe's right to call itself the Swiss Cheese Capital of the U. S. A. and the justification for Green county to pride itself on being the center of the Swiss and limburger cheese industry of the nation, are based on official figures.

Within about 35 miles of Monroe is manufactured more than half of all the Swiss and limburger cheese produced in the United States.

Most of that cheese is concentrated in Monroe storages, mak-



ing this the greatest shipping point for those two varieties of cheese in the nation.

In the calendar year 1934 Green county produced 53.9 per cent of all the Swiss made in the United States and 79.2 per cent of all the Swiss made in Wisconsin.

In the same year Green county produced 62 per cent of all the limburger made in Wisconsin.

These figures are furnished by the federal-state crop reporting service for Wisconsin covering 1934:

### Limburger Cheese

	Pounds
Green county .....	4,506,726
Dane county .....	927,100
Rock county .....	303,669
Iowa county .....	60,429
Lafayette county .....	45,326
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>5,843,250</b>
	Pounds
Wisconsin production .....	6,552,579
Green county per cent of state .....	89.2
United States production .....	9,425,000
Per cent Green county of U. S. ....	62.0

### Swiss Cheese

	Pounds
Green county .....	9,842,927
Lafayette county .....	6,827,901
Dane county .....	2,703,830
Iowa county .....	1,733,144
Grant county .....	108,869
Rock county .....	43,492
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>21,260,163</b>

### Wisconsin Production

Wisconsin production .....	26,843,476
Green county per cent of state .....	79.2
United States production .....	39,449,000
Green county per cent of U. S. ....	53.9
	Pounds
Swiss cheese .....	26,843,476
Brick cheese .....	28,425,701
Limburger .....	6,552,579

The percentage of the Green county area's production in relation to that of the United States for both Swiss and limburger is

greater than in the official figures shown above, since these figures include only Wisconsin factories in the Green county area. There are a number of factories over the line in Illinois, since Monroe is only about six miles from Illinois.

In 1930 with an average farm income of \$2,220, Green county ranked fourth in Wisconsin, and for most of the years previous it had the highest income per farm of all counties in Wisconsin.

### Farm Cattle Value High

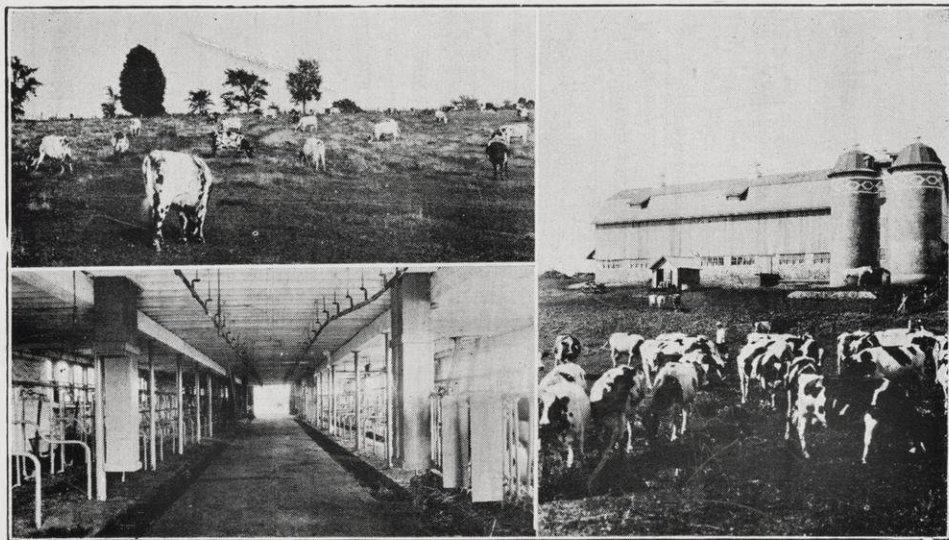
The farm census report of the United States Department of Agriculture for the period between April 1, 1930, and Jan. 1, 1935, shows Green county set a Wisconsin average of 20 cows per farm and made a gain of approximately 8,000 head in dairy cattle for the five-year period. The total of cows and heifers 2 years old and over is reported at 47,565 as against 39,344 in 1930, while real cattle total excluding animals under 3 months of age is 64,254. Hogs and pigs in 1930 numbered 79,455 which dropped to 36,384 in 1935. The report states:

Green county, Wisconsin, one of the leading dairy counties in the United States, had 47,565 cows on Jan. 1, 1935 on its 2,478 farms.

If the 47,565 cows in Green county were equally distributed among all the farms in the county each would have approximately 20 cows. The average number of cows for all farms in Dane county, which leads the state in the total number of cows reported, was 19 in 1935.

The farms, farm acreage and value for 1935 and 1930 are reported in the federal census as follows:

Farms, Farm Acreage and Value:	1935	1930
Number of farms .....	2,478	2,386
Farms operated by—		
Full owners .....	1,422	1,400
Part owners .....	126	135
Managers .....	27	25
All tenants .....	903	825
Value of farms (land and buildings) .....	\$21,422,271	\$38,466,914
Average value per farm .....	\$8,645	\$14,026
Average value per acre .....	\$59.28	
All land in farms, acres .....	361,399	356,597
Average acreage per farm .....	145.8	149.5



Ventilated barns, tall silos and modern equipment for Holsteins



# Bacteria Gas Bubbles

## Make Swiss Cheese Holes

Much like yeast causes bread dough to rise, bacteria in the pressed curd of a big Swiss cheese get in their good work while the cheese is on shelves in a warm curing room.

The carbon dioxide produced by these organisms gradually accumulates to cause bubbles in the "meat" of the cheese, gradually expanding the big wheel until its sides bulge slightly and it is said to have "opened up."

The organisms not only cause bubbles, which are "eyes" when the big cheese is cut, but also help produce the pleasant hazelnut flavor characteristic of Swiss cheese and the mildly pliable texture that makes eating of this type of cheese such a consistently pleasant experience.

Subject of many a jest and joke, the holes in Swiss cheese are serious business to producers of it and they strive to produce just the proper "eye formation" which has so much to do not only with appearance of the cheese but also with its taste and texture.

### Bacteria Starter Introduced

Clean, well-cooled milk, standardized to get the proper ratio of fat to casein, is clarified and then placed in huge shining copper kettles. Then a "starter" or "culture" is added, this meaning an introduction of the friendly bacteria some of which are to get in their gas-forming work after the curd is put into wheel form and placed on a warm shelf. Rennet is next added to curdle the milk.

When the proper stage of curdling is reached the curd is cut with a tool known as a "Swiss harp." Later the steam below the kettle is turned on and, with stirring continued, heat brings the kettle's contents to a temperature of from 128 to 135 Fahrenheit, within 30 to 40 minutes. Excess moisture is thus expelled. The 3,200 pounds of milk has been reduced to a curd weighing approximately 200 pounds, the whey not being used in producing the cheese.

The curd is taken from the whey in the kettle by drawing a large, special type linen cheese cloth through the mass, the whey draining into the kettle and the curd staying in the cloth and being hoisted into a high-sided round hoop, into which it is pressed to further the expulsion of whey. When sufficiently firm, this curd mass is removed from the hoop, the cloth changed and this new wheel held under pressure again for 24 hours, being turned over several times to assure proper formation of the rind.

This wheel of curd is then immersed in a brine bath, where it

remains several days for thorough salting through absorption. The wheel is turned occasionally and the exposed surface salted by hand.

### **Eyes Then Formed**

The brine bath is in a cold room and there, after the cheese is taken from the brine, it is held 10 days to firm up the rind and body before the eye-forming process is encouraged. The eye-forming takes place in a room heated to between 78 and 80 Fahrenheit. The interior fermentation process, with the bacteria playing their wholesome part, produces the gas and the eyes and contributes to the flavor and texture.

Cheesemakers know by thumping the sides of the wheels how the eye development is progressing. The flat sides and edges of the wheel also bulge when proper eye formation goes on inside.

Transfer to a cool room to slow down and to end bacterial action is the next step. High humidity helps prevent shrinkage. Flavoring salt is again rubbed on the wheels by hand and the wheels are turned on their shelves every other day.

The aging room is the next place for the cheese. Temperature there is between 35 and 40 degrees.

The moisture content of Swiss is about 38 per cent and the yield of cheese about 7 per cent.

There is nothing like uniform good luck in cheesemaking any more than there is in breadmaking. Too many elements enter into it between pasture and kettle and while a science it has not been mastered to the point that every cheese comes out of grading A No. 1. Price varies according to quality in the wholesale trade, yet price is not always a correct indication of quality in the retail trade. Here it is best to know cheese.

There are many kinds of bacteria in milk and the action of the various organisms make it possible to produce a variety of cheese from the same type of milk. One must see that the necessary bacteria for the type of cheese desired are favorable during the manufacture and curing of the cheese. If the desired bacteria are not present, they must be added to get the desired type of cheese. In the manufacture of Swiss cheese the addition of cultures of the desired additional organisms is necessary, while for limburger cheese no cultures are generally added to the milk.

### **Cheese Laboratory at Monroe**

So many technical problems are constantly bobbing up and so surprising can be the behavior of milk at times that makers value the cooperation of governmental agencies in their work.

Yearly the Wisconsin College of Agriculture conducts a 2-week course for Swiss cheesemakers in the county normal school building at Monroe.



All year around a cheese laboratory is maintained manned by Robert E. Hardell, federal Swiss cheese manufacturing specialist here until 1936 when he was returned to Ohio, and by Charles A. Buck, state college of agriculture milk sanitation specialist.

Cooperating also with the farmers and makers in their problems is John Frey, dairy inspector representing the state department of agriculture and markets.

Dealers and maker-producer groups give financial support to the program of maintaining government specialists in the field.

### **Made Old Natural Way**

Natural Swiss and natural limburger are the genuine, old-fashioned dairyland product, produced by cheesemakers from milk, by special methods, and available, after ageing, for the discriminating palate of the true cheese lover.

High quality standards have been established in the different cheese types, all comparing favorably with the imported makes. Factories and methods have been improved, sanitary rules are respected and study and experience have helped to perfect the product. Water coolers are used in the milk house so the milk may be delivered cool and sweet to the factory. The eye formation is now controlled by the maker who develops his own pure culture of bacteria to make bigger holes in Swiss cheese.

Skill in making, absolute cleanliness, time and care are important elements. There are no new styles, names or labels, for the honest to goodness cheese made in the natural way. Swiss must be made in the large wheels to get the desired texture, flavor and eyes. Brick is now coated in paraffin and limburger made of the whole milk, is wrapped in paper and tinfoil. All are wholesome nutritive, healthful, just good cheese—perfect natural food.

### **Mixed and Heated**

Processed cheese is a product finally prepared in a grinding and mixing plant, varied qualities of natural cheese being ground up, heated and stirred, with certain ingredients added, to make it a standardized product that can be poured out to harden into loaf or small package moulds. This form is handy for merchandising and has excellent keeping qualities due to what happens to it in the heating and mixing process. Promoted as cheese, the processed and packaged product proves attractive to the consumer.

Green county, however, gives all possible emphasis to the original, untampered-with cheese, possessing the natural qualities given by age-old milk conversion methods handed down from cheesemaker to cheesemaker as a fine art.

Its vitamin, mineral and protein qualities are unsurpassed in



dairy foods and it is tasty, easily digested and beneficial to the human system.

### **Natural Soil Factors**

Natural factors have favored the development of Swiss and limburger making in Green county.

The soils are mostly of limestone origin, imparting certain mineral qualities to the milk and flavor to Swiss cheese as well as being adapted to the raising of bluegrass and other native pasture growths and to hay crops. Underlying the limestone are excellent water supplies, even natural flowing wells and springs being found on some farms. Corn, too, is easily raised.

Pastures are particularly important, furnishing most of the cattle feed during the summer season. Corn silage and hay crops are important during the winter.

The Wisconsin Swiss cheese region is characterized by well-organized farms with substantial buildings and dwellings. The chief sources of income are milk, hogs and poultry.

The large cattle herds and general use of spreaders keep the farm lands well fertilized, for the farmer has learned it takes manure to make land that yields the crops.

The topography is gently rolling to decidedly rolling or hilly. The elevation ranges from 900 to 1,400 feet and the mean summer temperature is less than 70 degrees, with the cool nights so essential for cheesemaking. The average length of the season between killing frosts is less than 150 days.

### **Limburger Cheese With Personality Plus**

Limburger is the cheese with the personality plus.

The reason for the arresting impression limburger makes is hydrogen sulphide and that's only on the surface.

Remove the rind and you have a dairy product of rare mellowness—smooth, rich, nutritive and highly beneficial to the gastric processes in the human system.

Natural limburger, invented by the Belgians near the city of Limburg, comes in half-pound, 1-pound and 2-pound cakes, wrapped in heavy paper and tinfoil.

The finest of milk is required for limburger and it is delivered from farms to factories twice a day in the hot summer and once a day during the cooler months.

At the factory milk intended for limburger is placed in clean vats and treated to rennet, a curdling agent, at a temperature of 94 degrees Fahrenheit. During the making of the curd and whey the heat is increased to 98. The manufacturing process requires about an hour and a half.

The temperature is not nearly so high as that used in making Swiss cheese (130 degrees in that process) and is not sufficient to kill off many of the milk's organisms, allowing them to live to give the cheese its special characteristics as it ripens. The heat does expel excess moisture, and after this is accomplished the curd is put into moulds and whey drains off.

### **Ripens From Outside In**

Acid is produced in the curd and this is only neutralized after a considerable lapse of time, and as a rule the process is only completed by the aid of ammonia which is formed on the surface. The ripening process starts at the surface and works inward by degrees. This is one reason for the small size of the pieces for the ripening is accelerated by giving the cheese a large surface in relation to its bulk. At the same time a ripening action due to the rennet takes place throughout the whole mass, even though it may not be very obvious.

Practically all the casein undergoes conversion. This aids the fat in imparting a high degree of mellowness in the cheese.

### **Salty Water Used**

To permit the growth of bacteria which split the protein of the cheese the ripening cellar should have a temperature of 58 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit and a relative humidity of about 95. A favorite way to achieve this is to build the factory on sloping ground, with the curing room dug into the slope. During their stay in the ripening room the cheeses must be rubbed frequently with salty water, to keep mould from starting while the enzymes are working and changing the original hard, whitish substance into the yellow buttery substance so prized by limburger devotees.

The moisture in limburger cheese is approximately 45 per cent.

The yield is between 10.5 to 14 pounds per 100 pounds of milk. This is dependent on the amount of fat and casein in the milk and the moisture in the cheese and the fat loss in the whey. Fat loss in the whey is nominal.

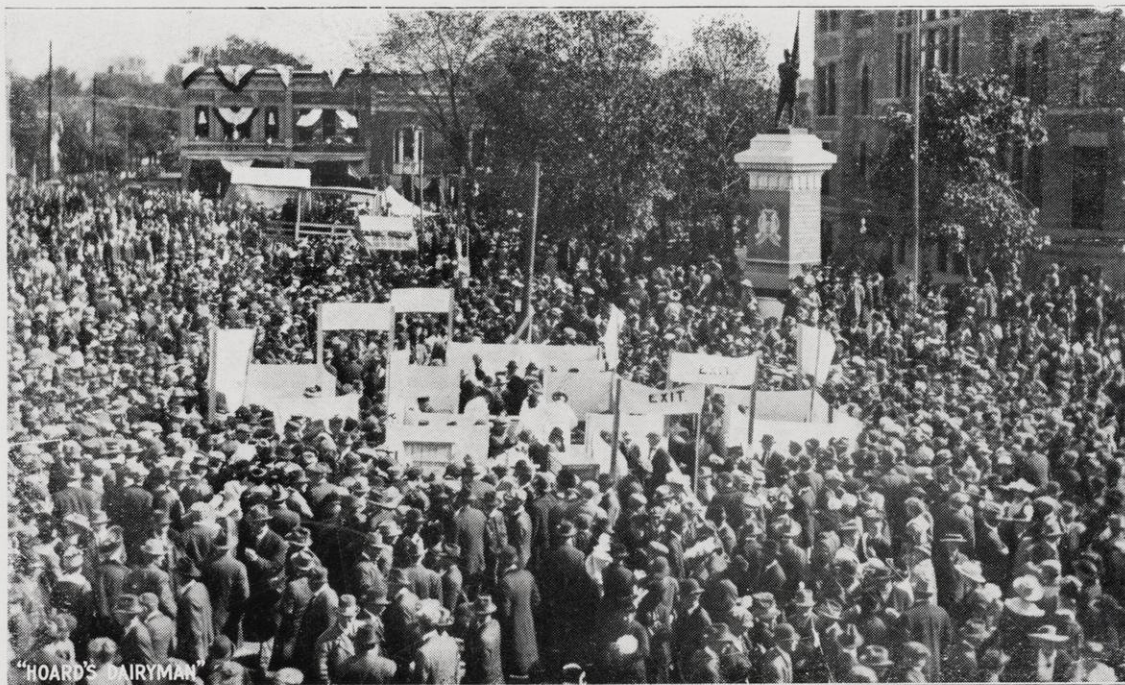
Limburger, rye bread and a bottle of brew constitute a lunch that appeals to an epicure.

### **Milk Must Have Best Care**

Cleanliness is all-important in the limburger factory as well as on the farm.

The successful cheesemaker closely watches his milk intake and rejects any milk found abnormal. He inspects the cans in which it is conveyed and consults with farmers about their methods of handling.





Serving free cheese sandwiches to Cheese Day multitude on public square at Monroe



He is careful, too, in his own handling of the milk and in the way the finished cheese is handled in its earlier stages of development. Missteps as to sanitation and cleanliness mean that both he and the farmers lose money.

### **Relative Food Values**

Here's an interesting table of food values by calories, to show the nutritive qualities in Swiss and limburger cheese.

Swiss cheese, from 105 to 117 calories, per ounce.

Limburger, from 100 to 110 calories per ounce.

Porterhouse steak, 70 calories per ounce.

Sirloin steak, 61 calories per ounce.

### **Cheese Three Times Daily**

Native Swiss people and those of Swiss descent who live in the Green county area often have cheese on the table three times a day.

It is natural enough for them, for the people of Switzerland have a record of highest annual per capita consumption of cheese in the world.

The per capita record is 23 pounds!

The United States record is 4.14 pounds, way down the scale.

In between Switzerland and the United States come the Dutch with 13.5 pounds; French with 13.5; Danes with 13.2; Germans with 9.5; British with 9 and Scandinavians with 7 pounds.

### **Population of Green County**

The 1930 population of the county was 21,870.

Monroe's population by the federal census count was 5,015.

Brodhead, the only other community in the county ranking as a city, had a population of 1,533.

Villages and their populations are: New Glarus, 1,010; Monticello, 644; Albany, 728; Brooklyn (in Green county) 272, in Dane 134, total 406; Browntown, 291.

Green county is 24 miles square and has 16 townships.

## Other Players Once Active in the Swiss Cheese Drama

Jacob Karlen, Jr., born 1865, in Canton Berne, Switzerland, and a resident of Monroe since 1878, became associated with his father in the wholesale business in 1890, the firm being known as Jacob Karlen & Son. He continued the business after the senior member retired and associated with him were Gottlieb A. Karlen and Fred Rubin. When they joined the Badger Cheese company Mr. Karlen was elected president.

Fred Rubin, born near Berne, Switzerland, 1875, made cheese seven years in the Johnson factory at South Wayne and seven years at the Michael Shank factory in Winslow. He was with Jacob Karlen & Son 1906 to 1911, in the capacity of buyer. He was with the Badger company until 1916 when he located at Clayton, Wisconsin, operating three brick cheese factories. He was succeeded by his sons, Edward and Fred Rubin, and Mr. Rubin returned to Monroe in 1925 and has since lived in retirement at 1748 Seventeenth street.

John H. Elmer, who was 17 when he came to America from Switzerland in 1882 and left farming the next year to learn cheesemaking with Charles Zuercher, made cheese from 1885 to 1889 in the Goodrich factory in Clarno, buying the milk from the farmers. He came to Monroe in 1889. He was sales manager of the Badger Cheese company when it was organized in 1911. He had been in the wholesale business with his son, John C. Elmer for a year previous and for ten years before that he was with the Borden Condensed Milk company. His son also joined the Badger Cheese company and remained with it until his death in 1918.

Henry Elmer, born 1859 in the Canton Glarus, was secretary of the Badger Cheese company in 1911. He came to Green county in 1882, farmed with his father two years, clerked for five years and was bookkeeper and member of the firm of John C. Wenger & Co., 1890 to 1911. He was secretary of the Southern Wisconsin Cheesemakers' and Dairymen's association to the time of his death, Jan. 2, 1934.

Albert C. Trachsel, born in Green county in 1858, was 20 when he left farming for cheesemaking. He made cheese for ten years from 1878 to 1888 when he entered into partnership with John C. Wenger in the wholesale cheese business which continued until 1911 when there was a merger of local cheese firms.

John C. Wenger, also born in Green county, spent 20 years on the farm, began making cheese in 1880 and after 7 years in charge of a factory he entered the wholesale cheese business in Monroe

with Albert C. Trachsel as John C. Wenger & Co., from 1888 to 1911.

Charles P. Zuercher, born in Switzerland in 1858, came to America in 1882 after six years' experience as cheesemaker. He conducted a factory three miles north of Monroe and in 1885 was employed by Jacob Karlen, remaining with him seven years when he located in Brodhead in 1888. He continued there until 1929 when he was succeeded by Kraft-Phenix.

Jacob Marty, born 1872 in Canton of Glarus, Switzerland, learned to make cheese there with his father and when 19 he came to Green county. He worked in Monroe as factory helper and operated a factory four years. He located in Brodhead in 1897 and in 1898 established a factory in Spring Grove with success that resulted in the opening of 14 other factories giving him a string of 15. His main factory was opened in Brodhead in 1909. He is now located in Rice Lake, Wis.

Galle & Co., Rochester, New York, in 1908 began construction of a cheese warehouse and cold storage south of the Milwaukee depot that was designed to exceed any plant of the kind in use at that time. The building was 92 feet long, 36 feet wide and 34 feet high with three floors, one underground, one track floor on the north side and the third floor the ground level receiving floor on the south side. It was equipped with an elevator and ventilators and offered modern storage facilities. The building was of brick, iron and concrete.

Fred Galle was located here as manager and the company was interested in the purchase of quality stock. He went out of business in 1923 when he rented the building to the Triangle Cheese company. He continued his residence in Monroe where he was always a staunch supporter of the industry and advocate of honor made cheese.

Carl Marty, Sr., born Canton of Thurgau, Switzerland, 1873, came to Monroe as an immigrant boy of 13. Assisted his father, Jacob Marty, who first came in 1885 and opened a cheese factory in Monroe. The son worked with him for three years and at 16 operated a factory on his own account. He made cheese in 1892 on the Jacob Stauffer farm in Washington township. He accepted a position as bookkeeper with the Charles Zuercher Cheese Co., Brodhead, 1901, and remained five years, leaving in 1907 to become manager and salesman for Glauser-Ladrick Co., Chicago wholesale cheese firm. He was admitted to the partnership in 1908 and in 1915 took over the business which he afterward conducted under the name Carl Marty & Co. He retired from active business in 1922, turning the responsibilities of management over to his sons, Carl O. Marty, Jr., and Robert F. Marty.

Jacob Gempeler, Jr., born 1889, in Adams township, where his



father, Jacob Gempeler, Sr., 2009 16th street, Monroe, was a cheesemaker, was one of the active young men in the wholesale business for twenty-five years, largely in the capacity of manager and buyer. He was office manager of the Argyle Cheese company when he was 19. He remained there five years and became associated with Carl Marty & Co., Chicago, in 1914, and came to Monroe as manager of the Monroe branch which was incorporated as the Marty-Gempeler Cheese company. He was president and manager of the Triangle Cheese company, organized in 1923, and remaining in that position he continued his wide acquaintance throughout the industry until his death in 1934. He was a director of the Wisconsin Cheesemakers' association and in 1928 was voted honorary membership for outstanding performance in connection with the industry. His son, Henry Gempeler, is coming up in the cheese business. He is now employed by Carl Marty & Co.

Fred Emmenegger, 46, died in the Dodgeville hospital in November, 1926, from injuries received in an automobile accident between Hollandale and Mineral Point. He was a member of the firm of Acherman, Emmenegger & Co. since 1920 and represented the firm out in the buying territory. He came to America in 1904, made cheese at the Dill factory and carried on a wholesale business of his own until 1920.

Gottlieb Marty, Monroe, was employed as instructor in the Wisconsin dairy school when a Swiss cheese department was opened and he has since held positions as state inspector and state cheese grader in connection with the Wisconsin Department of Markets. He is now maker in the cream cheese department of Carl Marty & Co. He spent twelve years in the Wisconsin dairy school as full time instructor, teaching freshmen dairy students, the 4-year course and the summer school and also acted as official state tester of samples of milk, cream and cheese.

Fred J. Marty has been connected with the state dairy and food department as cheese factory inspector and deputy dairy and food inspector, first appointment by Commissioner J. Q. Emery in 1907. In 1933 he accepted appointment by the department of markets as state grader for duty in enforcement of the new state grader act. He is still employed as chief state grader. He first went with the state when he was dairy school instructor four winters when the state had a three months' season before a full time school was opened.

Young & Co. originated "cheese by parcel post" when the postal department adopted zone merchandise rates and added parcel post. Ray A. Young was sales manager with the Badger Cheese company 1918 to 1924.

The Monroe Dairy company succeeded the Sheboygan Dairy

Products company in February, 1926, manufacturing creamery butter in a building north of the Illinois Central tracks near the passenger depot. A. S. Myers heads the creamery as its proprietor.

Dormann & Co., New York, wholesale cheese dealers, opened a cheese factory in the Wittwer & Urben building east of Main street at Monticello in 1933 with 12 to 15 patrons and receiving 12,000 pounds of milk.

After the Blue Label Cheese company began the manufacture of fancy cheese the Monroe Cheese company, Monroe, N. Y., opened a plant in the brick mill Twelfth street in the middle '90s. N. N. Millington managed the plant which was operated about ten years. The company made cream and Neuchatel cheese and made large shipments by express to their jobbers.

W. W. Chadwick, Monroe, was connected with the Wisconsin dairy and food commission thirty-five years ago under Gov. Scofield 1897-1901 as assistant dairy and food commissioner.

Thomas Luchsinger, Monroe, was Wisconsin dairy and food commissioner during Gov. Peck's administration, 1891-1895.

The convention of the Wisconsin Cheesemakers' association was held in Monroe in 1908.







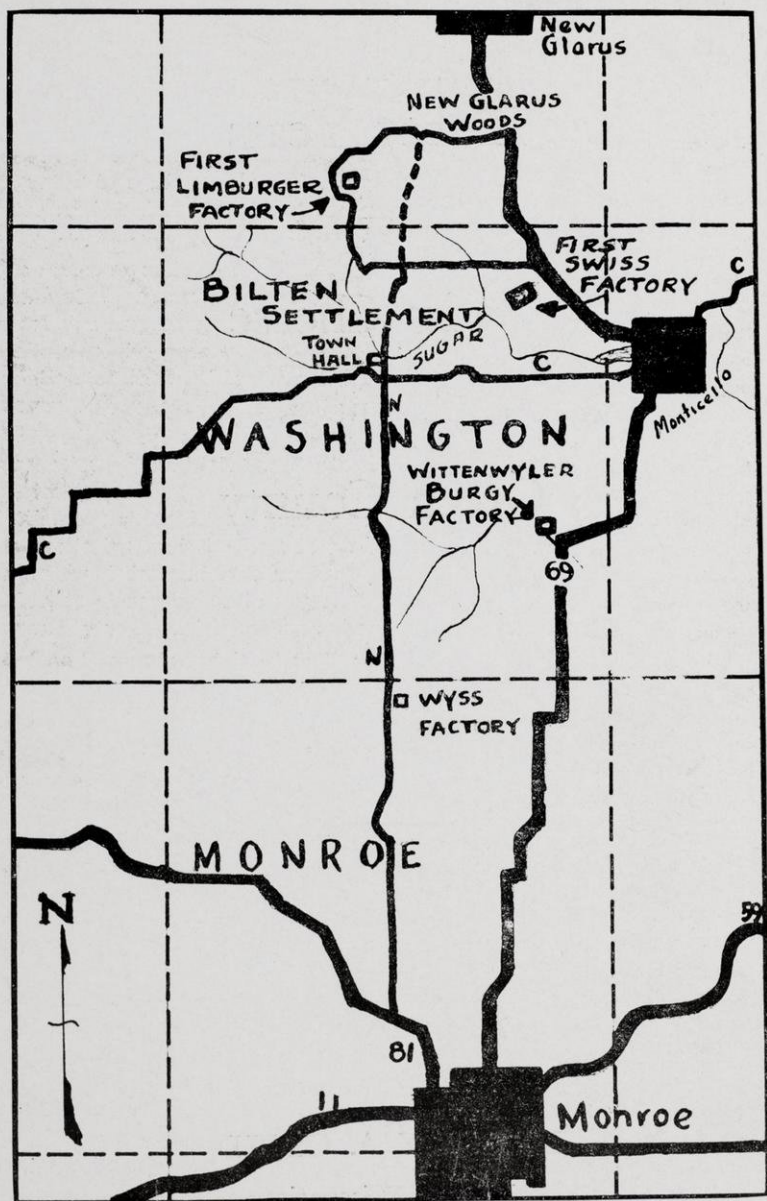
Eighty Years  
OF  
Swiss Cheese  
IN  
Green County

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By EMERY A. ODELL

Monroe, Wisconsin

1949



**SWISS CHEESELAND'S FRONTIER**—This pleasant tour route, from Monroe north into Monticello and through the New Glarus woods over the old Lead trail, turning south past Meadow Valley and the Hefty farms, returning to Monroe over county trunk N, offers the best picture of the birthplace of the foreign type cheese industry in Green county.



# Foreword

Ten years ago, when the Green County Historical society sponsored markers identifying exact sites of the first former cheese factories making Swiss and limburger cheese in Green county and Wisconsin, the dedication was witnessed by J. C. Steinman, who as a boy employed on the nearby Blum farm made the drives delivering the milk after the first factory opened on the Babler farm. Also attending was Mrs. Nick Gerber, widow of the founder of the factory system in Green county, each sharing the personal satisfaction the ceremony afforded them.



**Emery A. Odell**

Dairying history appears to have reached the point where the past is more dependent upon the record in keeping alive the story of the origin of our unique cheese enterprise. Links between the living and the past are steadily reduced with the passing years.

Reminder of the passing of another decade prompted the current review. Passed on with it is what the writer considers the best picture of the Swiss cheese frontier as it appears today. The route here mapped combines both the old frontier and the new borders as extended and still representing much the same center of production in Washington township with both the old and the up-to-date and every mile of the improved highways filled with rural features sure to appeal to the interest of everyone.

Included are precious old landmarks. The trip, representing only small part of the cheeseland development, is well marked since the passing years have spared so many signs of pioneering days, to be seen together with much that is new and wonderful today. Reflection cannot fail to stimulate proper pride in the distinctive dairy industry still without equal anywhere after 80 years of constant expansion and improvement.

New Glarus, original objective of the old world movement here, gloriously celebrated a notable centennial in the security of its own

dairy kingdom and great milk condensery. Another similar colony from Bilten applied farm knowledge in utilizing timber land in the development of dairying. Nick Gerber, native of Switzerland, appeared at the right time to take hold with needed direction. The result has been that unquestioned leadership has been retained right here in the original center of production, with sufficient honor accruing to all interests and enough credit to be shared by all who have contributed to the forward progress.

A single story outlining a cheeseland sightseeing route grew into the series of articles combined in this pamphlet bridging the eighty years of Green county cheese history. The booklet results from demand for extra copies. We are grateful for the evidence of appreciation on the part of readers and take pleasure in extending circulation of the articles to further interest in the anniversary observance.

The Bilten phase and settlement of Washington township inspired expansion of the history. Up to now they have received no extended treatment in the printed record. The objective was to give the settlement recognition by the use of such factual information as is authoritative and the best to be obtained from reliable sources. It is tardy information long overdue, presented without effort to color, to glamorize or to favor. It is the plain story of Washington township with insistence on adhering to historical facts.

The Times is indebted to the state and local dairy division officials for cooperation in making available the information on present-day factory improvements.

The completed series represents an effort to preserve whatever possible remains to the credit of pioneers in Green county's dairy enterprise.

**EMERY A. ODELL**  
Publisher Evening Times  
Monroe, Wisconsin

November, 1949



## *Gerber's Factory Launched Industry in County in 1869*

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the most significant event in Green county history, the opening of the first farmer factory for the manufacture of Swiss cheese.

It was the start of the factory system and the pioneering step in production of regular Swiss and limburger types in Wisconsin.

Changes have come with the years and the old frontiers have been driven back in places but the general geographic locale, with Monticello and Monroe as concentration points, gives promise of holding firm as the greatest centralization for specialized cheese production in dairy history.

The steadfast resistance to encroachments is a tribute first to the vision of Nick Gerber, who founded the first Swiss factory in 1869, and to the dairy minded settlers from Switzerland who occupied the area which became known as "Bilten," a district without definite limits but settled by people of unlimited capacity for knowing how to put the land to work.

Nick Gerber introduced manufacture of limburger in the Mohawk valley of New York state before coming here. He never realized upon the enterprise he fostered in Green county, but the residents of Bilten and the contiguous area, with Monroe as its hub, went on to build an industry to which the county owes much of its comfortable condition of today.

Mr. Gerber's first limburger factory in Green county on the former Albert Babler farm, New Glarus township, and the first Swiss factory on the Dietrich Freitag (now the Nick Freitag) farm in Washington township, disappeared long ago. Nothing remains today except a portion of the latter building, now a machine shed, and two markers erected by the Green County Historical society ten years ago.

His third factory, however, started in 1870 in Washington township for limburger making flourishes today as the Wittenwyler-Burgy factory, producing a delicate brand in a greatly improved plant.

Best picture of Green county's old Swiss cheese frontier is found in a 25-mile radius north of Monroe, including Monticello, Washington, New Glarus and Monroe townships. Anyone who has an interest in what has been happening amid these hills for the last eighty years can see the story of Swiss cheese, of Bilten settlement and the modern day perfection of dairying and factory production in a brief afternoon's ride in the colorful countryside.



It will be a ride revealing in striking contrasts with methods of the past and yet giving full evidence of the unchanged strength of the people and the system which made the Swiss and limburger industry flourish.

Driving north from Monroe, one finds that Monticello is the threshold for entry into the land of cheese. It is a village which, as a center for the immediate cheesemaking area, reflects the character and enterprise of the families who came from Switzerland more than a century ago.

In that century the lands have been farmed diligently but with care. There are no signs of neglect or deterioration. Everywhere in the farmlands and in the village there is a Swiss air of prosperity.

In 1847 Monticello was unnamed and not recognized as a stopping place by the government mail carrier between Monroe and Madison. Now it has all the indications of modern community progress, meanwhile retaining architecture of foreign derivation.

On the village's main street are two structures of rough stone exterior with rounded line and tower effect. The names "chateau" and "chalet" further suggest Switzerland. These buildings are of native limestone quarried from the hills from the same underlying bedrock known to impart desired qualities to milk products.

Monticello was dependent on stage coach transportation until the Illinois Central was built through from Monroe to Madison in 1888, the same year that the Milwaukee road extended the Brodhead branch connecting Monticello and New Glarus.

The first brick building block was erected in 1888 by J. C. Steinman who was long an influential citizen of Monticello and a county official. He was familiar with the cheese industry from its infancy. His sons and grandsons followed in the building profession with advanced ideas of architecture in home, business structures and modern cheese factories.

On reaching the end of the main street, the tourist may turn briefly to the right to see the Monticello North Side Swiss factory, one of the larger producing units in the area.

But it is to the left from the main street that the threshold to the pioneering cheese county lies. A modern hard surfaced road leads out of the village in a sweeping turn cutting through pasturelands into the valley known as "lange" where Brown Swiss cattle have grazed these many years. The silver tones of their bells can be heard throughout the outdoor grazing season as they welcome the tourist into the land of the Swiss.

A mile or so off Monticello's main street is the Nick Freitag farm. It is identified by buildings on both sides of the road.

And one of these buildings on the right was the cradle of the Swiss cheese industry in Green county. A stone marker with a bronze plate, on the left almost at the driveway to the house, tells the story.

## Swiss Cheeseland—No. 2

# Five Patrons Sold Milk To First Swiss Factory

What is left of that first Swiss cheese factory in Green county still stands as a landmark on the Nick Freitag farm just north out of Monticello on the Madison road.

A portion of the old building, on the right side of the road, is used as a machine shed. It still houses some of the early cheese-making equipment. The brick chimney marks where the stone boxed walls contained the wood fire for the boiler.

The large kettle was supported on an iron arm and was swung into place over the wood firebed for forming the curd. Revolutionary changes mark the present day operations but the fundamental manufacturing process is the same.

Nick Gerber started the factory in 1869 with five patrons, Dietrich Freitag (father of the present farm owner), Jost Voegeli, Dietrich Stauffacher, Jans Blumer and Melchior Schlittler. He operated it until 1875 when it was taken over by the farmer patrons.

The Freitag farm dates back to Hiram Washington Bane who obtained the government grant in 1844. Bane conveyed the original 40 acres to Fridolin Streiff, one of the New Glarus founders, in 1848 and Streiff made cheese there in 1850. Streiff and J. Jacob Tschudy had been the leaders sent out from Switzerland to locate and lead the original colonists to their new home. Dietrich Freitag bought the land in 1869, the year that saw the Swiss cheese industry launched on his land. His son, Nick, born there nearly 78 years ago, holds the original government patents of conveyance.

Next farm around the bend in the road is the Voegeli Valley Grove farm in possession of the family since Jost Voegeli located there in 1854. It is one of the showplaces of Wisconsin and famed



**CHEESE LANDMARK** — This shed on the Nick Freitag farm north of Monticello is all that remains of the county's first Swiss factory opened in 1869.



far and wide as an outstanding Brown Swiss breeding farm.

Three generations of the family made brick and limburger there and the old copper kettles are retained as antiques. Jacob, son of Jost, erected a large barn, 144x52 and one of Green county's largest, as Voegeli's Brown Swiss hotel in 1917. He also erected the fine home, which, combined with hillside setting of the striking barn, offers one of the outstanding rural vistas of the nation as seen from the road.

To the north, the highway knifes through the Stauffacher brothers property, now run by Conrad Stauffacher jr., as another of the outstanding examples of modern farming. The residence on the right towers at the edge of a bend in the road. The huge barns and dairy buildings, all electrified and kept in immaculate condition, attract many touring dairy industry groups annually.

Conrad Stauffacher sr., who came to this country from Switzerland in 1871, built up the 600-acre property. His sons, the late Fred H. and Conrad jr., took over in 1923 and pioneered in strip cropping and contour farming.

Continuing north, the entrance of New Glarus woods state park is reached. There a turn to the left is made, past the marker designating the road as the "Old Lead Trail," reminder of the lead mining days in Exeter.

Driving west, the first break in the woods to the north reveals a brief glimpse of New Glarus in typical Swiss valley setting. After passing the intersection with county trunk N, the next turn to the left off the trail onto an unmarked road is the gateway to the Bilten settlement movement.

Houses and barns are secluded, almost hidden from view in the valleys.

The white frame Meadow Valley school is seen at the bottom of a long hill. Directly ahead is Meadow Valley farm, once the Albert Babler place, with its huge barn and scenic, wide valley.

Here another historical society marker designates the site of the first Green county limburger cheese factory, also started by Nick Gerber in 1868.

The country road presents unending surprises as the journey continues. It follows a branch of Little Sugar river which becomes a lively stream at this point, a lure for trout fans.

The pleasing panoramic page of history is graphically illustrated with the variety of dairy barns, all of double doors, stone masonry foundations and foreign type grillwork mow ventilators.

Entering Washington township, the traveler comes upon the Fred K. Hefty farm which has been in the family a century. The buildings are landmarks of early dairying, offering some of the best examples of Swiss rural design. The gable of the white frame barn, which is of unusual layout, bears the date 1848.



The large barn's stone basement houses a large Holstein herd and the double doors provide ventilation. A driveway opens into the upper level barn loft.

Across the road is the quaint stone barn, built in 1862, with overlapping brick ventilators, the work of Swiss stone masons in faithful reproduction of an old world design. It is a prized landmark.

Mrs. Hefty, widow of Fred K., still lives on the farm which comprises more than 400 acres.

The large, fine farm properties representing a century of ownership in the Freitag, Hefty and Voegeli families were linked in a triple wedding in 1895. The son and daughter of Dietrich Freitag married a son and daughter of Fridolin Hefty, while another Hefty daughter married a son of Jacob Voegeli. Nick Freitag still lives on the farm where he was born on Christmas day, 1871, and his sister, Mrs. Fred K. Hefty, resides at the Hefty farm. The other bride, Mrs. Albert Voegeli, resides in Sylvester and conducts her own farm.

From the Hefty farm, the tour winds east to the intersection with county trunk N where the cheese student can turn south. A short drive beyond is the Town Hall Swiss factory at the intersection of county trunk C.

This fine new Swiss plant, served by 30 patrons, was opened in July, 1948, and stands out as one of the best of modern white tiled factories—a perfect example of the enterprising industry founded on the farmer patron system by Nick Gerber.

Further south, halfway to Monroe on county trunk N is the new Wyss limburger factory, completed in May, 1948, and operated as a Kraft Foods Co. producing unit with co-operative ownership. Here again is a modern example of Swiss architecture, combining the old world atmosphere on the exterior with the gleaming, stainless steel efficiency of the modern day inside.

Five miles south, the tour turns back to Monroe on highway 81, the Argyle road. That completes the visit to the frontiers of the Swiss industry which have shifted slightly to the south in the last eighty years but continue to hold firm with Monticello and Monroe as the anchor points of the concentration.

## Swiss Cheeseland—No. 3

### *Bilten Settlement Paces*

### *Modern Dairying Industry*

Green county's distinctive cheese industry originated in the fertile valleys of Little Sugar river.

Imported from Switzerland the now important dairy business did not come all at once. The unfolding took 20 years before the cheese factories came.

Original colonists of 1845 founding New Glarus were industrial people engaged in textile weaving in the province oppressed at the time by war. Because of their fear of hard times and famine they felt forced to look elsewhere for livelihood. They came here in Wisconsin seeking homes in new country.

A second sizeable group, 70 at one time, came from the town of Bilten, off in a corner of Canton Glarus in Alpine lowlands. Bilten was more agricultural for it had pasture lands. The new group knew cows and was experienced in their care. The journey was by ocean sailing vessel, the lake route to Milwaukee and overland to New Glarus. Arriving in New Glarus in 1847, they set out at once for the country where they might have land, timber and stone. The few artisans among Swiss settlers were masons, which accounts for the general prevalence of stone in the old time building of homes, barns, stable basements, school houses. Many of the structures still mark the landscape, especially the barn basements and spring houses.

Land around New Glarus had been taken up and their search took them into Washington township south of New Glarus and north of Monroe. Government land was available at low price. They established homes as a community group and named it Bilten settlement.

New Glarus township was absorbing the in-pouring population previous to 1847 but the years immediately following the movement was greatly increased. Green county's population in 1840 was 933 and during the decade from 1840 to 1850, the period covered by rapid settlement due to increased immigration, it rose to 8,566. Swiss participation amounted to 364. This means that only 4 per cent of the total population at the time were to stamp their habits and characteristics so indelibly on the history and industry of Green county.

Bilten settlement of twelve families soon proved important far beyond its number in its immediate influence on countrymen back in the old homeland, as shown by later marked penetration by Swiss

people. The years immediately following 1847 saw population boundaries extended to unoccupied Washington township valleys to the west and south.

The first cows, one to a family and selling at \$12, were received at New Glarus in 1846.

Nick Gerber, also a Glarner (born 1836, died 1903), came to America in 1857 and located at Booneville, N. Y., where he opened the first cheese factory introducing limburger in the Mohawk valley. He spent 11 years there and in 1868, informed of the successful start being made in raising cattle in Green county, he came here to investigate.

He met Albert Babler at New Glarus and toured the Bilten area where he found just what he was looking for in a new country. He at once arranged with farmers to take their milk, opening a limburger factory in a log building on the Albert Babler farm in New Glarus township.

He made the cheese himself and had outlet for his product in the east. Six farmers delivering milk to the first limburger factory had less than 50 cows: Albert Babler 15, George Legler 10, J. C. Blum, Andrew Hoesly, Balthazer Kundert and Christopher Babler, the remaining 25.

What was then known as Long Valley extended across the top of Washington township to Monticello. Bilten settlers claimed the valley and others of the smaller tributaries of Little Sugar river. Another valley to the south and west was left for the arrivals from Bern. They came from the valley of Emmen river, Emmenthal, where Swiss cheese made in the form of large wheels originated.

A few cheesemakers applied their skill and took rightful place in what was to become Green county's basic industry. Beginning the making of regular Swiss in 1869, the industry was developed in both Swiss and limburger.

Nick Gerber had the necessary contacts for sale of his products in the east. They now are staple cheese items on counters of food markets the country over. Thus the development marked the beginning of factory manufacture of Swiss and limburger cheese here and in Wisconsin.



## Swiss Cheeseland—No. 4

# *Bilten District Pioneers Cleared Heavy Timberland*

Mention of Bilten settlement after 100 years is apt to sound legendary to most present day readers. Those familiar with the history of the region and the institution of dairying when the country was mostly timber, however, do not hesitate to credit Bilten as the stimulus of early day cheesemaking.

Adam Blumer, 1737 14th street, this city, was born in Bilten settlement. His grandfather, also Adam Blumer, came from the old town of Bilten with his wife and five children. The grandfather was reared on a dairy farm where he was familiar with cows and cheesemaking.

Arriving in Green county he entered 240 acres of land from the government in Washington township, west of Monticello. The year following he bought five cows and was making butter and the farm variety of cheese from skim milk.

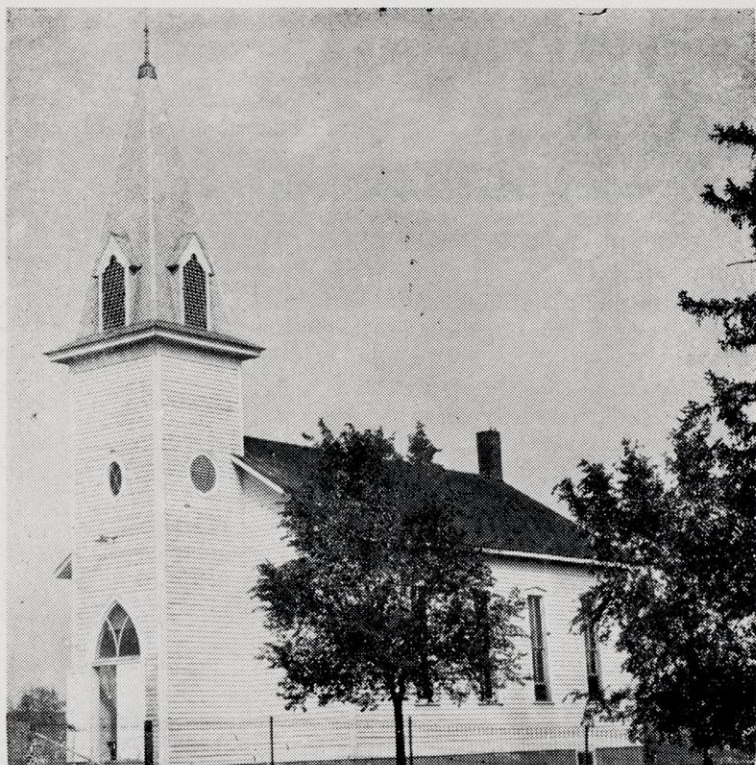
The land was heavily timbered. He bought two oxen teams and started clearing and building with logs. Ten to 20 acres of land had to be broken every year in addition to the farming duties. The son, Adam Blumer, later head of the Monroe brewery, the youngest of the family, was five years old when he came here. The father died in 1855.

Adam Blumer, the grandson now retired and living here, became master brewer. The Blumers moved to Monroe in 1891. In recalling his farm experience, he said as a boy he had the care of three spans of horses and milked 12 cows morning and evening when his father had 101 cows on the Blumer farm.

The Blumer farm was the dividing point between the north and south valley of the Little Sugar river west of Monticello. Because the settlers were from Bilten, it became known as "Bilten Thaele" (Bilten valley). They were Glarners, among them the families of Frick Becker, Henry Hefty, three Bontley brothers, Andrew, Casper and John; Adam Blumer, three Blum brothers, Werner, Fred and Jacob; John Schuler, Gottlieb Wittwer, Jacob Schlittler, Alex. Tschabold, Henry Aebly.

The west end of the Little Sugar valley in Washington township was known as Berner Thaele, the settlers coming from Canton Bern. Among them were Jacob Zimmerman and sons, Jacob and John, Christ Loertscher, Christ Theiler, Jacob Theiler and Jacob Weissmiller.

Werner Blum, grandfather of the Monroe family, came in 1848 and took up land at the extreme west edge. This area was known



**CENTER OF WORSHIP**—This photo of Washington Reformed church, early house of worship for the Bilten settlement Swiss and others, might have been taken at the turn of the century. The sturdy building looks much the same today as it did when dedicated in 1876. The structure is believed to have been started in 1871 but the church records show the dedication was 73 years ago. (Times staff photo).

as Fox Hollow because it appeared to be the favorite haunt of fox. Plum in his later years became one of the founders of the present Washington Reformed church. His son, the late Werner, was the first American-born limburger maker in the township.

During early building, the newcomers managed to hold together as a group insofar as possible, for the old ties of their fatherland held firm. Settlers who came later had to spread out into new country, but identity as to canton and community of origin was fairly established by their countrymen here.

Bilten descendants have been proud of their connection with the



original expedition because of the success attained in their venture after failure of wheat growing. Family names and dates of establishment in new world homes were enlightening and meant much to their countrymen. Thomas Hefly, Rudolph Blum, Casper Becker, J. Jacob Zwickey, all came in 1847; Emmanuel Weissmiller and Anton Baumgartner in 1848; Adam Blumer 1849, David Benkert 1851, Martin Zumbrunnen 1852.

Americans had settled in central Washington after Bilten settlement was established. Recorded dates of arrivals include Linus Hare, Eldridge Cheesebro, Hames Confer 1854; John Naughton, Silas Moore, 1856.

Glarners and Berners settling in the northern section of Washington township had the Little Sugar river fork separating the two valleys.

The Freitag, Stauffacher and Voegeli farms to the east on the main Monticello and New Glarus highway are in the big valley sloping to the east where the Little Sugar tributary in Mt. Pleasant takes its course eastward to main Sugar river and eventually to Rock river.

The Glarners and Berners got along harmoniously. They finally joined in bringing Swiss cheese to Green county and the old divisions have disappeared in the promotion of common interest in the industry.





**LONE PUBLIC BUILDING**—This modest white structure situated at the intersection of county trunks C and N is Washington townships's only public structure, the Town hall. Adjoining it is the modern Swiss factory of the Town Hall co-operative. (Times staff photo.)

## **Swiss Cheeseland—No. 5**

### *Washington Township Remains Truly Rural*

Washington is a township unit by itself, having no corporate village. It is wholly rural, the sole occupation being dairy farming.

Of average size in land area, 22,871 acres, it has 21,581 acres in farms averaging 187 acres. Cows being milked are reported at 3,189 with average production per 100 acres of 96,092 pounds of milk. Thus, Washington ranks with Monroe, Clarno, Sylvester and Jefferson as one of the five leading milk production townships in Green county. The population, however, is only 672.

The way in which the various branches of the Little Sugar river reach out over the township has made highway bridges a costly public problem. This has been overcome largely by modern improvements in construction. Substantial steel and concrete structures now cope with the menacing streams.

All highways have been widened and hard surfaced for modern

motor traffic. Except for the two eastern corners, however, the township is without permanent pavement.

Native rock quarried from the hillsides, in addition to being crushed for the hard surfacing of roads, now is pulverized to add to the fertility of the soil in the modern farming methods, contributing an effective step in overcoming erosion and loss of valuable soil.

Highways and bridges were always controversial issues on the county board and the interest of Washington township figured in the forefront. Supervisors recognized the natural situation and regularly conceded the road and bridge chairmanship to the Washington member. Washington township chairman, C. W. Loveland, now holds chairmanship of the Green county board.

The oldest Green county cheese factory still operating is the Wittenwyler-Burgy, located in the southeastern corner of the township. It was started by Nick Gerber in 1870 as the third of his factory enterprises and has been in continuous operation since.

The factory was in Bilten territory although that main settlement was further to the north and west of Monticello. Highway changes removed the old surviving Gerber plant to the side road nearly 30 years ago.

This part of Washington township is interesting since as early as 1837 it was settled by people of English descent, some from New England and others from the south. Interest of the settlement was represented in a rural community surrounding Center Methodist church erected in 1874. Names well remembered with many of the families still represented in Green county life include Holloway, Loveland, Lemon, Harper, Simmons, Fessenden, Crouch, Smith, Perrin, Clayton, Confer, Norton, Gill and Grinnell.

Center church was closed and moved away to the Loveland farm a few years ago eliminating the once active community center.

Bilten settlement organized the Bilten Swiss Reformed church, the structure dedicated in 1876 resembling the house of worship in the old world. This church, now known as Washington Reformed, remains active today with a pastor supplied from Monticello.

The old Gerber factory, Wittenwyler-Burgy, always has made limburger. American farmers at first complained of the odor but when Gerber began shipping cheese east they took note of the checks which came back. It did not take them long to join in the cheese production as a community industry.

Gerber first bought the milk outright and then in 1873 John Boss bought the milk and conducted the factory. It became a farmer cooperative in 1893 under the name of Wittenwyler-Burgy. Jacob Burgy, now 80, who has lived on the adjoining farm since he was three years old, has been secretary-treasurer of the factory since 1893 and has figured the milk payments to the farmers for those 56 years.





**MODERNIZED LANDMARK**—The Wittenwyler-Burgy limburger factory seen here recently was modernized. Located just off the highway at the west end of the Monticello road section known as Burgy flat, it was started in 1870 by Nick Gerber as the third of his cheese factories. Both its predecessors have passed out of the cheese picture but this plant has operated continuously. Jacob Burgy, grandson of the pioneer family, has been secretary-treasurer since 1893. (Times staff photo).

His grandparents and their son, Jacob sr., came by sailboat from Switzerland in 1847. They first located on a farm north of New Glarus. They moved in 1870 to Washington township, acquiring the Frank Parkin farm. The Burgy farm now consists of 410 acres and is operated by Mr. Burgy and his son, Fred T. Mr. Burgy makes his residence in Monticello.

The township has one public building, the Town hall, located at the intersection of county trunk highways C and N, west of Monticello.

Close by on the east-west highway is the Town Hall streamlined Swiss cheese factory, newest of the farm plants within the township boundaries.

Town Hall factory is owned and in complete control of the cooperative with 30 patrons delivering milk. The plant has been successful beyond expectation after a year of operation.



## Swiss Cheeseland—No. 6

# *Gerber Was Casualty Of Early Cheese Battle*

There has been nothing spontaneous about the development of the Swiss cheese industry in Green county. The infant, fathered by Nick Gerber, had to battle for its life almost from the cradle.

For twenty years the settlers had been raising wheat with notable lack of success. Milk was skimmed for butter and the skim milk went into cheese for home use. Identity as to type was completely lacking until Gerber founded the first factories in 1868 and 1869.

Consumers were tiring of skim milk cheese and the demand was for cheddar or American type. Some even went abroad to London but heavy expense and losses cut off this market.

Swiss and limburger cheeses were new and demand had to be created. Curiously enough it was New Glarus, center of the first Swiss settlement, which almost struck the death blow to the struggling industry. In 1870 an American cheese factory was opened in the village which never had a Swiss cheese plant. The factory was supplied by 400 cows.

Dayton began manufacturing American cheese with 180 cows and American factories also were started in Mt. Pleasant township, York and Albany. By 1873, there were 4,260 cows in the American cheese production picture as compared with 1,300 cows supplying Gerber's factories.

Gradually, however, the arguments of Gerber for foreign type cheesemaking began to gain notice. He claimed 250 pounds of Swiss cheese to the cow and that his four limburger factories averaged about 300 pounds.

"Still we are not happy," he admitted as he argued with the farmers being influenced against his venture.

He gained further support, however, from Farmers Grove, Adams township, where Jacob Karlen, Monroe, began opening limburger plants. The size of the checks Gerber was receiving from buyers in the east also began to interest the farmers.

Gerber's Green county factories numbered eight, including one in Mt. Pleasant where he made cheese and resided with his family. He bought the milk from farmers and had his own cheese outlets. As new factories appeared, he also bought cheese and the industry was considered to be fairly launched on a basis helpful to farmers.

Gerber met with financial reverses. He spent ten years in pioneering before a serious market slump and new competition caught

up with him. His resources were swept away and his Green County Cheese Manufacturing Co. failed. He went to eastern Iowa to make a new start but after a second unfortunate ending in 1882 he retired from the cheese business and returned to Monroe where he died May 9, 1903.

Karlen, John Boss, Jacob Regez and the many others who followed went on to promote and foster growth of the foreign type industry which now has Monroe for the trading center.

New Glarus later lost its only factory when the condensery business came into flower. Condenseries now operating at New Glarus, Albany and Browntown have had the effect of pressing inward on cheese factory milk sources, as well as moving outward to take the milk of adjacent counties.

In 1948, these condenseries produced 45,543,000 pounds of evaporated milk, 2,255,000 pounds of powdered skim milk and 2,043,000 of powdered whole milk. Butter production was 3,329,000 pounds.

There was some indication last year, however, that cheese factories were more than holding their own.

While the condenseries and butter plants showed declines from the total of 58,600,000 pounds for the former and from the 4,067,000 pound butter output in 1945, cheese production made a healthy gain from 1945 to 1948.

Green county factories had set a new high in Swiss production in 1945 of 13,095,000. The total had climbed to another record of 14,569,000 in 1948.

Limburger production in 1945, however, of 2,538,000 pounds was above last year's 2,265,000. Brick was up slightly from 1945's 255,000 pounds to 266,000 in 1948. Green county American output in 1948 was only 822,000 pounds.

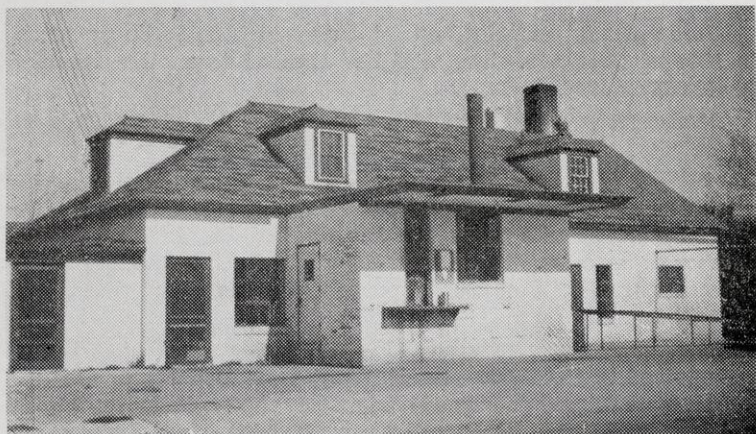
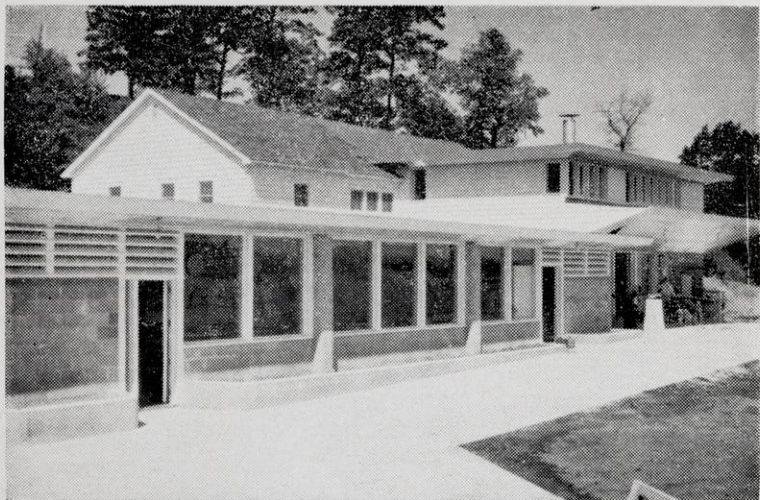
The soaring Swiss production has resulted despite the dwindling number of factories. There were 152 plants in Green county twenty years ago producing 16,000,000 pounds of all types of cheese, half of it Swiss.

The factory figure had dropped to 125 ten years ago but Swiss output climbed to 10,655,000 pounds. Last year 80 factories produced a total of 17,903,000 pounds of all types of cheese, including 14,569,000 pounds of Swiss. This is 33.7 per cent of the total Swiss output in Wisconsin.

This bespeaks constant improvement of factory efficiency and techniques, more modern plants, improved herds and farm practices. The higher production came from fewer factories, a narrowing milk land area due to inroads of other dairy products plants and in some cases fewer but more productive cows.

These changes, including streamlined factories, however, have not entirely erased the marks left over by pioneers of Bilten area who had the strongest faith in the cheese industry.





**TWO OF COUNTY'S FINEST**—The Town Hall factory (upper photo), west of Monticello on county trunk C, and the Monticello North Side Swiss plant are prime examples of the recent trend toward remodeling or replacement. The former, with Sam Bahler as maker, replaced four older units and started production in July, 1948. The Monticello factory, one of Green county's large producers, completed remodeling and expansion last year. The Escher brothers, Fred and Arthur, are makers, having succeeded their father, Emil. (Times staff photos).



## Swiss Cheeseland—No. 7

# *Modernization of Factories Assures Future of Industry*

Probably the most startling development in eight decades of Swiss cheesemaking in Green county has occurred in the last two years or more.

Most residents, in and out of the industry, have been aware of some part of it. Others, but only a few, have realized its full extent. Everyone, however, should benefit in the future from the all-inclusive scope of the program.

This change for the better concerns the widespread rebuilding, remodeling and in some cases replacement of former factories which have been the background of the cheese enterprise.

A. J. Reppen, state inspector of factories for the department of agriculture, is authority for the report that 63 of the 78 licensed plants in the county had shared in this modernization project by Oct. 1, 1949.

His report becomes all the more impressive by revealing that Franklin Swiss factory, four and one-half miles southwest of Monroe, was the first to complete remodeling, having started late in 1946 and finishing in 1947.

These projects stemmed from many sources of stimulation: urging of the state for improved sanitation conditions, a desire to advance quality of cheese and make manufacture less hazardous, and a realization that only through modern making methods and practices could factories compete on markets in the favored position won through decades of fine Green county foreign type cheese.

The projects have involved new making rooms, in stainless steel fittings, stainless steel intake tanks, larger automatic boilers to supply heat at constant temperature levels and steam for cleaning fittings and filters, gleaming white tiled walls for making rooms, curing and holding cellars, full control refrigeration systems, automatic can washing machines and even special lights for suppression of unwanted bacteria action.

Modern truck loading and unloading platforms are common features. Septic tanks and underground systems for disposal of wastes and a general brightening of factory exteriors and premises are featured on every hand.

Investment has ranged from \$35,000 to well above \$100,000. Making capacity has been expanded by additional kettles and storage facilities increased. Many times this has meant closing of antiquated factories or plants which no longer fitted into the economic

planning of the co-operatives and their patrons.

In addition to the 63 factories already modernized, Reppen reports several others were ready to begin work late in 1949 or early in 1950. A few more factories may drop by the wayside but there will be no slackening of production capacity in view of the general increase in operating facilities by the more modern units.

The trend to improved plants began as early as 1928 when the number of factories had declined to a total of 152 after decades of continued increase. Production that year was 16,000,000 pounds, half of it Swiss. Ten years later, the number of factories was down to 125 but Swiss production had moved up to 10,655,000 pounds.

Last year there were 83 factories producing a total of 17,903,000 pounds, 14,569,000 of it Swiss.

It is impossible to pick out factory projects as particularly outstanding. There are too many of them and each represents some special enterprise which makes it almost unique.

We can, however, call attention to the pace-setting Franklin factory, the streamlined Town Hall plant which replaced four other units in a merging operation, and the large Jefferson Center factory at Twin Grove, planned for expansion to at least 24 kettles, as prime examples of new Swiss plants.

The largest of the new limburger plants in the Wyss co-op factory on county trunk N five miles north of Monroe, operating under lease to the Krafts Foods Co. The latter two plants have adopted exterior architecture of Swiss lines making them colorful additions to the rural scene.

Following in alphabetical order are the Green county factories which have modernized in the last two years:

**SWISS**—Advance, route 5, Monroe; Apple Grove, route 1, Argyle; Balls Mill, route 2, Monroe; Bidlingmaier-Isely, route 4, Monroe; Biggs Co-op, northeast of Argyle; Brager, northeast of Blanchardville; Burkhalter, route 2, Monroe; Davis, Browntown; Decatur, west of Brodhead; Dill, west of Browntown.

Fairview, route 1, Monroe; Farmers Grove, route 1, New Glarus; Five Corners, southeast of Monroe; Flanagan-Olson, east of Argyle; Franklin, route 1, Monroe; Giese, southwest of Brodhead; Green County Co-op, Monroe; Gutzmer, east of Woodford; Hay Hollow, east of Blanchardville; Health Valley, near Juda; Holstein Prairie, west of Monticello; Casper Jaggi, Brodhead; Jefferson Center, Twin Grove; Jordan Center, northwest of Monroe.

Jordan Prairie, northwest of Brodhead; Klondike, northwest of Monroe; Krause, route 4, Monroe; Kubly, route 1, Monroe; Maple Grove, southeast of Juda; Maple Leaf, route 1, Albany; Monroe Co-op, Monroe; Monticello North Side; Newman, southeast of Juda; Pleasant Valley, route 3, Monroe; Poplar Grove, west of New Glarus (not making Swiss in 1949 but licensed); Prairie Hill, route 5, Monroe; Priewe, route 1, Monroe; Puddle Dock, east of Argyle; Ridge,



northwest of Monroe.

Rock Hill, route 2, Brodhead; Saw Mill, east of Blanchardville; (licensed but not making Swiss in 1949); Spece, west of Browntown; Speich, route 2, Monroe; Spring Creek, route 2, Brodhead; F. L. Stauffacher, route 4, Monroe; Strommen, near Blanchardville; Town Hall, route 2, Monticello; Twin Gable, Martintown; Union Hill, route 1, Juda; Walnut Grove, east of Blanchardville; West Clarno, route 1, Monroe.

Whitehead, route 1, Monroe; White Oak, route 2, Monroe; York Center, east of Blanchardville, and York Prairie, northeast of Blanchardville.

**LIMBURGER**—Clarno Center, route 5, Monroe (also licensed but not making Swiss); Grinnell, north of Monroe; Wyss (Kraft Foods licensee), north of Monroe; Milwaukee Cheese, Monroe (also licensed but not making Swiss—producing brick type special cheese); Pioneer, route 2, Monticello; Silver and Lewis, east of Monticello; Spring Cheese, route 1, Monticello; Wittenwyler-Burgy, southwest of Monticello; Wuethrich (Four Corners), six miles northwest of Monroe.

There were 63 factories in Green county making Swiss Oct. 1, not including four others licensed but producing other types. One Swiss factory license north of Browntown was withdrawn shortly before the list was compiled. Eleven factories are licensed for limburger and ten hold American permits. One factory, Poplar Grove, is licensed for brick muenster.

Lakeshire-Marty Co. holds the only processed cheese license for Swiss gruyere. One firm, Paul Grossenbacher, New Glarus, holds a cheese food compound license.

Three factories have butter plant licenses and there are condenser permits at New Glarus, Albany and Browntown, the latter also holding a powdered milk permit. Frautschy and Herbert, Clarno, have the only milk receiving station license.

That completes the present day report on Green county's foreign type cheese industry—except for the number of kettles in the Swiss plants. This figure has changed so rapidly since 1947 that a definite total would be good only as of the moment. It is believed, however, that more than 450 kettles are now set up in various plants with more envisioned.

With this report, the series on Swiss Cheese's eighty years of production development comes to a close. The Green county cheese story, however, will remain an unending history with bright pages in the future.

It will have that encouraging prospect if today's heirs of 19th century tradition contribute their share to continued advancement of dairy farming, and to an industry which has premium appeal throughout the nation.



# Steinman Diary Told Story of Pioneering

Green county historians of the future owe a great debt to the memory and diary of J. C. Steinman who in his twilight years answered a question too long unasked:

"Where would one go to establish the exact location of the first Green county cheese factory turning out a product having a cash value in an outside market so a tablet could be erected to honor the men whose vision launched Green county's dairy business?"

The question was asked by Emery A. Odell, publisher of *The Monroe Evening Times*. Mr. Steinman who had kept a daily diary for 40 years had the answers. As a boy of 14 he had worked on the J. C. Blum farm and delivered milk to the first limburger factory a mile away on the Albert Babler (now Meadow Valley) farm.

His diary also supplied the location of the first Swiss cheese factory on the Dietrich Freitag farm.

Mr. Steinman was 13 when he went to work at \$6 a month. His mother brought him to Monroe on his 7th birthday from New York after 57 days on the ocean. They learned his father had enlisted in the civil war for what he thought was a short term of service while awaiting his family. He was killed in action. The mother and son joined an uncle in Monroe, Dietland Thomm, and then located later in Washington township.

When Mr. Steinman was 20 he became a limburger cheesemaker for Jacob Karlen at Farmers Grove. Later he was in business in Monticello and an influential citizen. He served thirteen years on the county board, nine as county supervisor of assessment and bank director and was active in the Swiss Reformed church at Monticello. He died in 1942 at the age of 88.

The boulders placed in 1939 at the two factory sites by the Green County Historical society and Mr. Odell presented a problem. Native stone was sought but since the site of the first limburger factory was in the unglaciated area, a boulder finally had to be brought from Monticello Woolen mill site.







