



# LIBRARIES

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## Centennial 1872-1972 : Unity, Wisconsin, June 23-24-25.

[Wisconsin]: [publisher not identified], 1972

<https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/6RYENAC6HKNQ28M>

<http://rightsstatements.org/vocab/InC-US/1.0/>

The libraries provide public access to a wide range of material, including online exhibits, digitized collections, archival finding aids, our catalog, online articles, and a growing range of materials in many media.

When possible, we provide rights information in catalog records, finding aids, and other metadata that accompanies collections or items. However, it is always the user's obligation to evaluate copyright and rights issues in light of their own use.

# CENTENNIAL

1872 - 1972



A Glimpse of Main Street, Unity, Wis. 1908

**UNITY, WISCONSIN**

**JUNE 23 - 24 - 25**

MARATHON COUNTY  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

## **FORWARD**

We have tried to compile an interesting story of our village. Some names have been mentioned, many have not--perhaps their names forgotten. Each served faithfully, their contributions and continued support fused and became part of it all. It is not our intention to emphasize anyone in particular. Our story is based on the material given to us. We wish to thank all who submitted pictures and articles.

A special recognition is extended to the Modern History Class of 1933-34 who compiled "The Dawn of Unity". We included it in our Centennial Booklet as a tribute to the Unity High School.

W  
977.529  
C333

c. 2



## DEDICATION

To the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Creed, the first pioneer family who built a home here, and all other early settlers who erected homes from the verdant timber, braved the hardships, shared the joys and sorrows which bonded them into a colony, we dedicate this Centennial Booklet.

9-16-77  
Nackman Bindery 3.50

# THE DAWN OF UNITY

Often as we gaze upon the settlement of Unity, we naturally wonder how this place came into existence. We do not realize how really interesting and valuable its history actually is until we have the opportunity to read or hear about it. Most people, particularly the younger generation are not aware of the many interesting facts concerning their home.

We know that back in early 1871 such a place as Unity did not exist; in fact, there were few divisions of the counties, Portage County making up almost all of Wisconsin. In that same year on April 1, in spite of the day, the outcome did not prove to be such a joke as would be expected. Edmund Creed and Fritz Henry Darling ventured into the wilderness where Unity is now situated. These men started out from Amherst, Wisconsin on foot with their blankets, an old shotgun, and very little food. Stopping at Stevens Point, they went to the land office where they found some vacant plats subject to Homestead entry. Continuing on they wandered around until they found where the Little Eau Pleine River crossed what is now the rail road right of way. Here Mr. Creed homesteaded a 40 and Mr. Darling 160 acres as well as marking homesteads for several friends.

Being very anxious to inform their wives of the claims they returned to Nelsonville where Mr. Creed's young wife of twenty-two was very enthusiastic about the conditions and location of the new territory. She persuaded Edmund to return here to build a house, that his family might come here to settle. They then began construction of a log house near the surveyed road. As there was no other town between here and Stevens Point, their supplies had to be brought from there by ox team. Mr. Creed and Mr. Darling completed this home in January of 1872. In the spring of 1872 Mr. Creed moved his family and Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Yerks here to take up their residence in the log cabin. No roads or railroads were yet in existence through this county, so the families moved here from Nelsonville by oxen and wagon. It was a long, difficult journey, but the pioneer blood in these people would not let them give up. Of course, many hardships were encountered, such as loss of cattle and horses but even this did not discourage them.

Shortly after the arrival of these families, Mr. Darling also returned here. He at once set to work building a house near the Creed home that his family might also dwell in the new region.

The surveying of a railroad had begun as a result of other chance observers in this territory. It was an entirely new project for the beginning of a village. No doubt, a letter was occasionally written to old friends or relatives at home but there were no trains or trucks to deliver them. As a result the pioneers were satisfied with receiving and sending mail once a week by a man on horseback journeying from Stevens Point to Superior. Of course these letters had to be delivered to one central station so Mr. Creed took over the responsibility of having the temporary Post Office in his home and also secured a permit to be Postmaster. The few families that received or sent mail would thus come to the Creed home and attend to such affairs. Naturally there were no special boxes or even the arrangement of a post office as we see it today. The mail was merely placed in a bag whose contents were emptied and sorted as each person called.

Gradually new settlers chanced through the region and being quite satisfied with the prospects took up a dwelling place. It was growing cold and snow had begun to fall so some of these newcomers could not begin the construction of a home. Mrs. Creed's hospitality was shown at this moment by taking these people under her own roof. Therefore three families spent the entire win-

ter in the one-room home with the Creed family. It was a difficult task to keep the youngster's stockings and shoes and other clothing separated. It wasn't only a simple matter of family difficulties but that of several families combined. It was quite a common occurrence to awaken early in the morning and find Indians sleeping on the narrow floor space that was vacant in spite of the occupancy of these three families.

During that same fall of 1872, Mr. A. C. Stirling from Stevens Point came here to settle and start a business. He built a house and store in connection directly back of the Creed house. The store was a very small one the chief supplies being tobacco and whiskey. This being a more appropriate place, he took over the responsibility of having the post office in the forepart of his store. It then received better organization and naturally had to have a name. Up to this time no one of these settlers could have said where they were living as they did not know. Mrs. Creed was given the honor of naming the newly settled community. She suggested Maple Grove, Wisconsin, which was sent to Washington, D. C. Reports were sent back of another Maple Grove in this state. A second choice was then made. Because of the unification of the small group already stationed here, Mrs. Creed decided Unity a very desirable name. This in turn was sent to Washington and became the permanent choice.

In 1873 the third son was born to the Creeds and was named Homer. He was the first white child born in Unity.

Early in the spring of '73 conditions looked very promising in this newly settled community and more and more people settled here. Mr. J. D. Spaulding of Black River Falls no doubt heard about the prospects of the country. He was then interested in construction of a sawmill for the purpose of profitable clearing of the oversupply of timber and making way for more extensive settling.



A scene from an early logging camp. The man in white was the cook, Mr. Chris Nelson.

Through his devoted efforts Mr. Spaulding succeeded in getting enough men to organize the mill. He built a small store to provide his men with supplies. The material need for his mill was brought here partly by horses and the rest by train as the track had been completed as far as the Little Eau Pleine bridge south of the village.

After the mill had been in operation a short time, Mr. S. Reynolds, also of Black River Falls, heard of the splendid opportunities here and was very much interested in its further development. He immediately journeyed to Unity and made arrangements to go into partnership with Mr. Spaulding. Because of the combined cooperation in the progress of the community and activities in the mill in general, the settlement grew quite rapidly.

More and more laborers were necessary to work in this mill and consequently an extensive farming region was organized as well as the further development of the village. We may definitely locate the Spaulding-Reynolds sawmill west of the track near the Little Eau Pleine River. The vacant street extending north was once occupied by numerous houses of the mill workers.

The southernmost section of our community was inhabited first due to the favorable location for the mill. To accommodate the mill workers a boarding house and hotel had to be constructed. This was taken care of by the building of the same near the place we know today as the Redwood Club. A grocery store located on the west side of the tracks, near the hotel was also put up by the sawmill partners. The chief supplies in this store consisted of tobacco, whiskey, candy, nuts, as well as the few necessary groceries. The post office was now located in this building.

Up to a short time previous, the only streets or roads available, were the well trodden wagon tracks. Now the mill had made it possible to construct favorable roads with sawdust and corduroy. Many of these roads were built by Joe Greenwood, an early settler. He had a team of mules which was much tougher than horses and could stand the hard work better. After the streets were improved the population naturally increased and the people became quite prosperous.

All in all, those who heard of this new and flourishing colony were interested in its affairs and progress. A Doctor Wells who had heard of the existing condition, decided that this was a most desirable location for his practice. He therefore set up his office a little farther north of the aforesaid buildings in the east ward of the village.

This settlement had developed considerably in the two years of its existence and children were growing up and needed to be sent to school. These colonists hit upon the plan of erecting a school in their midst. Due to the persistent work of unskilled carpenters, they succeeded in raising a little one-room log schoolhouse in the year of 1874. Such was sufficient to accommodate the few children in attendance. Mr. H. L. Jacobitz received the untold honor of being the first teacher in the new school. As the main part of the community was formerly farther south that we know it today, the school was located there, namely on the easternmost section of the Creed homestead. The youngsters were quite enthused about the idea of having a school and were eager to learn about the work they were to take up. Mr. Jacobitz labored very hard to organize the small groups of students to get them adapted to the new conditions. His successor, Mary Eastman, was equally as successful in her teaching abilities. The third instructor was Mr. J. J. Austin and he too was intensely interested in his eager group and he planned an addition to the schoolhouse. He thus started and effectively carried out the two-room system. This divided the older and younger groups. The four lower grades occu-



pied one section while the four upper grades the other.

During the period of organization of the school, progress was gaining ground elsewhere in the village. In 1874 the railroad was completed through the settlement by the Wisconsin Central. A depot was built south of the village but was soon moved north to where our former stockyards were located. This change was made due to the fact that in its former location too much confusion resulted in the residential district. Mr. S. J. Sanford received the honor of being the first depot agent and his successor was known as O. D. Mooney.

Had we had the opportunity to look upon this group of happy settlers at this point in their history, we would have viewed a community quite complete, with the exception of but one thing. Though the number of people were few, they found it very essential to erect a place of worship as such had been left out. That does not say, however, that these pioneers neglected to worship. It was in fact quite the opposite, as a religious gathering in the home of a settler was witnessed every Sunday morning, and special prayer meetings were held frequently during the week. They had no special minister but one of their group would fill the position, each taking his turn at the various meetings. This was a very inconvenient means of worshipping as they naturally desired a separate church in which to carry on their activities. This church was accordingly built in 1880, located in the region near the school.

In the meantime the population had been continually increasing. Several changes had already been and were being made. Mr. Spaulding had sold his share in the Reynolds-Spaulding sawmill to H. J. Van Hoosear. There was still a demand for laborers as the forested area had not yet been entirely cleared. Various new businesses were consequently started by the incoming settlers. The post office, too, had been transferred to Mr. Darling, who had built a grocery store near the residential district.

As more businesses were started in the settlement, there was a gradual move northward from the original settling. Because the land toward the south had been quite thoroughly cleared of its forest, there was a tendency to create more cleared territory in another direction. A second sawmill was thus set up and operated farther north than the first. It was located on a portion of the farm owned and operated today by Wm. Schultz. Like the first mill there was an immediate development in the regions of the new mill. Practically one of the first

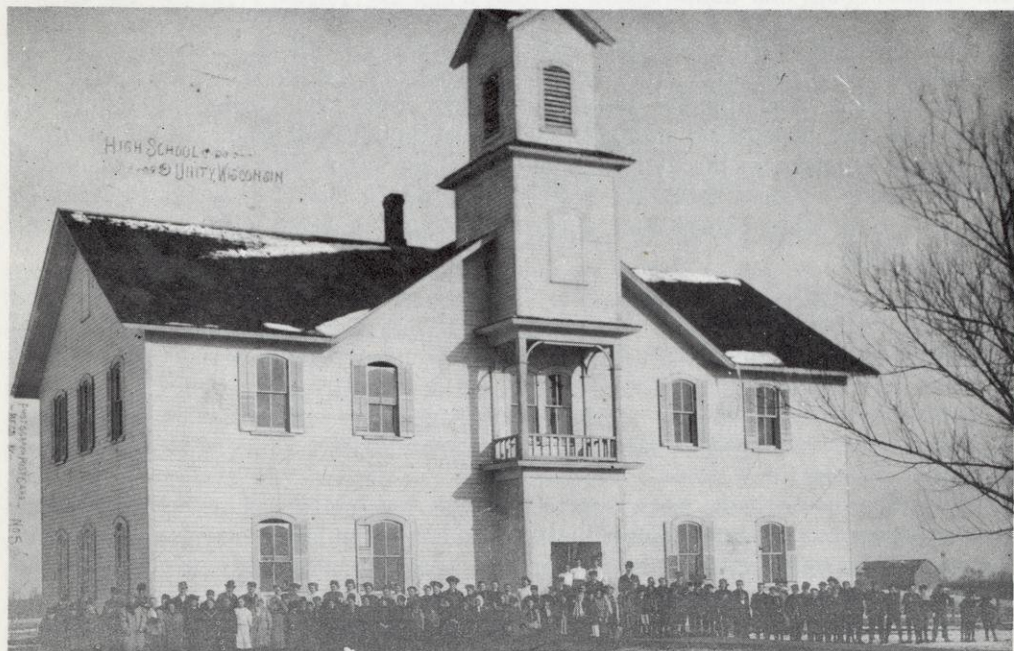


buildings was that of a hotel under the supervision of Charles Duvall. Greenfield and Neuman, the operators of the mill, were equally as successful in creating a desire to enlarge the village.

About this time one of the early dwellers, namely Samuel Adam Cook built a grocery and dry goods store on the spot later occupied by the old I.O.O.F. hall. Shortly after its construction however, it was destroyed by fire and Mr. Cook built a second store, this time located almost directly opposite, east of the railroad tracks. This store is known to be the first on that side of the division line. It seemed a common habit for each new store to fall in line in giving space to the post office and thus Mr. Cook became Unity's Postmaster.

While Unity was witnessing the establishing of new stores and businesses, a man of importance and prominence came into the community, namely John R. Salter. He, having attended the University of Wisconsin, was naturally quite interested in school affairs. Up until this time it was nothing more than a grade school, thus the students graduating from the eighth grade were forced, either to go to some distant place or to discontinue their education. To better such conditions, Mr. Salter in 1883 began plans to organize a High School. He, himself, consequently became its first Principal and taught in same for a period of four years. In Mr. Salter's first graduation class of 1887 there were seven students; namely, Fred Vaughn, John Lamont, Arthur Ransom, Jennie and Worden Cook, Calvin Burton, and Grant McCurdy. Some of our old-timers of today remember some of these former graduates.

In spite of the good times and happy hours of this cheerful group, disaster would darken their path. One afternoon in the fall of 1890, children apparently amused themselves by playing with matches in the woodshed of the school building. Usually the outcome of such a game proves fatal as was the case in this incident. A fire was kindled in the wood shed and gained ground too rapidly for



Second high school in the village.

the children to control and as a result soon reached the school building. Before sufficient help could be secured, the school had completely burned. From then until time would permit the construction of a new building, classes were held in the drugstore, which was located a short distance south of our present post office. After a few months of combined efforts of the settlers a new and larger school building was finished and ready for occupancy. This was located in about the same place as the former. Several improvements had been made over the older building, and a new and more efficient set of textbooks had been installed.

Another sawmill operated by Richard Butler and William Granton had been built north of the established village. With the continual development in size and population, Unity was not satisfied with the small one-room church that had so faithfully served the purpose. The various denominations that had emerged wished a distinct church of their own in which to worship. Therefore, the Disciple Church was built located north of our present school building. It was followed by the small Swedish Lutheran and the original one-room building was used by the Methodists.

At this time Mr. Salter, who had discontinued his duties as teacher, had now gone into the combined grocery and dry goods business with H. G. Healy. He later built the present Ayer Grocery in which business he was interested for many years. The present Ray's Market building was built shortly after as well as numerous other buildings, including the Post Office, Drug Store, a Bank, Hardware Meat Market Barber Shop, several Ice Cream Parlors, an Undertaking Parlor-Furniture Store, Telephone Office, and several small grocery stores located in different sections of the town. Also, the construction of a new school including both grades and high school was brought about, occurring in the year 1910.

Perhaps many of us are unaware of the scenes of wonder bestowed upon our village previous to this time. One thing of interest was the building of an arch bridge across the railroad track almost directly in front of the present Texaco filling station. Near the bridge was a flagpole which showed the intense patriotism of the villagers. This, together with the bridge, long remained objects of admiration and novelty to the settlers.

Wouldn't we have been amused to see our community as it was then? A happy group of settlers living and loving their surroundings, did, and were doing all in their power to make theirs a desirable dwelling place.

This concludes the story of our early days as related in the essay in the "Dawn of Unity".

As we continue our story at the beginning of the new century, Unity is a thriving settlement, yet a change was imminent. The large Spaulding mill which had employed about three hundred (300) men had closed. About then Peter Fritz had started a mill north of town (later known as the A. Perschke Mill); this was a much smaller mill and could not give employment to all. Many bought land which the railroad companies offered for sale.

The task of clearing the land of the stubborn stumps was hard work and seemed endless. The pioneer spirit prevailed; the remains of the verdant forests gave way to the open fields. Men tilled the fertile soil and agriculture became an important industry to this area. Once again a new frontier had opened.

The evidence that this was a flourishing community is included in an essay, "A Look Backward", written by Mrs. John Fuller (Mary Sheldon) for her graduation from high school in 1906 in which she concluded saying, quote, "Unity now has four stores, three hotels, two halls, one drugstore, shoe shop, a blacksmith depot, post office, two butcher shops, two hardware stores, one furniture store,



Farming early in 1900.

barber shop, feed store, and sawmill.”

In 1903 our stalwart citizens, always wanting to progress, became interested in incorporating into a village. A census was taken in April, showing a population of four hundred five (405). After all the preliminary work was done, a group of twelve businessmen presented their case to the Marathon County Judge in Wausau. There seemed no doubt that the petition would be granted. However, those opposing the movement presented material claiming an error in the census. The petition was nullified. The determination to achieve their goal was not quelled, so in 1904 another census was taken and a land survey was made. The population in 1904 was four hundred twenty-four (424). Again the petition was presented. The issues set forth by the opposition held up the verdict for two years. The village became incorporated in 1906. This perhaps was the first major difference of opinion felt by the people; however, soon all were involved in the progress of the new “village”. Alfred Cook, an early settler who was very interested and active in the community was elected as the first president. He served in that office for seventeen (17) years.

The people were contented. They had labored hard and were proud of their accomplishments. They had encouraged new businessmen to settle here, welcomed new families; in fact, all seemed to be progressing well. In the winter of 1909 disaster came to the village. Fire started in the Button-Mumbrue store and spread to the Fred Wescott tavern, and the Forest Hotel. Then it spread to the south and engulfed the Zell Bros. general store and August Weide’s meat market. It was halted directly north of the post office. It was at first a bit discouraging for these settlers to see their business places completely ruined. However, all helped to clear away the debris and soon new but fewer buildings were ready for use and business was resumed.

In Marchetti’s History of Marathon County an account of Unity in 1913 lists the following information:

“The business population is almost equally divided on both sides of the village. On the east, or in Marathon County, are the following: the Unity Mfg. Co.



Main street after the fire of 1909. (Picture on cover shows same street before the fire).

runs a sawmill and cheese box factory. General Merchandise stores are operated by Groelle and Hamann Christensen, and L. H. Weyers. Perschke and Cutts keep the Hardware; August Weide, the Meat Market. C. Voght and Son sell machinery and Linskog and Jarvis are the blacksmiths. Harness and Leather Works are owned by Phil. Klein. Chris Nelson is the operator of the Nelson Hotel and another is operated by William Glaman. There is also a creamery and cheese factory operated by Otto Rhodes. Dr. J. H. Clark is the physician and surgeon; also has a drugstore. E. L. Messer is the Postmaster; also owns and edits the Marathon County Register. The Unity State Bank is also on this side of the village with the following officers; president, C. E. Blodgett; vice-president, O. Hamann; cashier S. J. Falck, who with J. H. Clark and L. H. Weyers constitute the board of directors."

The article continues, "on the Clark County side are the following: William Creed, general merchandise; Feed Store which handles farm produce; Hardware Store, owned by W. E. Morgan; furniture, J. Kuehnau; wood lime, and farm products operated by J. Koch; Wm. Laabs operates a hotel; J. P. Johnson is a wagon maker; a livery stable by Frank Jarvis. Van Misener is the barber of the village.

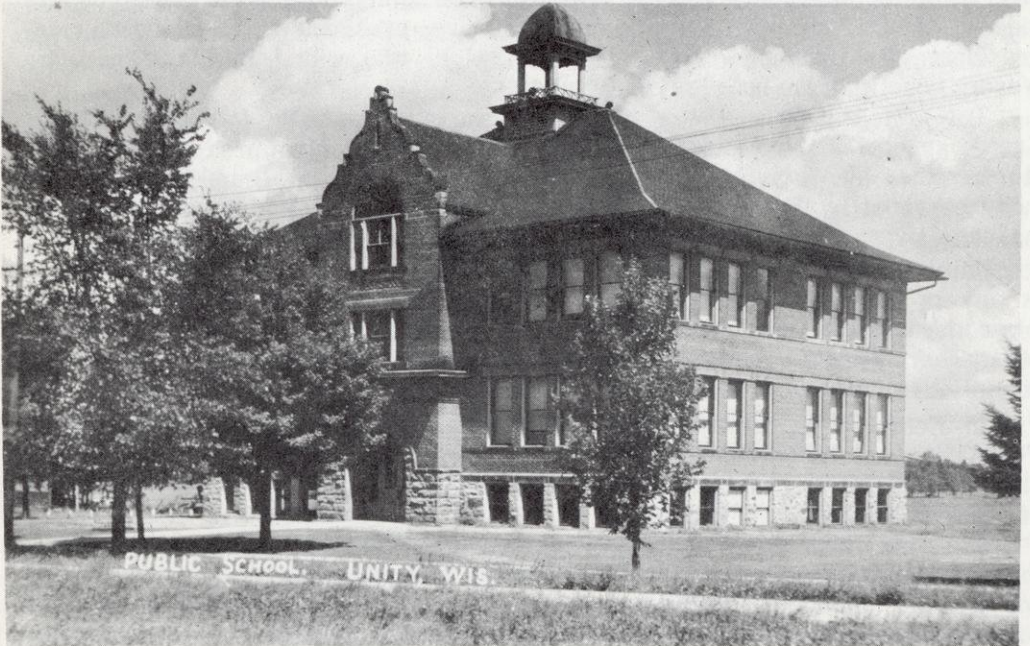
Unity has an excellent school building; new, modern, and sanitary as good as any in the county. It is a high school with a full four-year course with three lower departments. The principal is O. L. Stinson and his assistant is Jessie Swan. There are three churches: the Methodist, Scandinavian Lutheran, and Christ Disciple."

In February of 1917 we experienced another fire. This started south of the Post Office, destroyed the Drugstore, the building housing the Clark County Telephone Exchange and Millinery Store, and two dwellings. Once again the people united to help clear away the rubble.

As time went by the village entered into a state of general decline. The mills closed, business activities decreased. Fires had destroyed many which were not rebuilt. Older men retired as their products and services were no longer needed because of progress in the scientific field. Our failure to attract industrial development has been our greatest setback. Gradually the people left to seek employment elsewhere. For many years we have been known as a "retirement town".



Street scene looking west - Unity.



Last Unity High School.

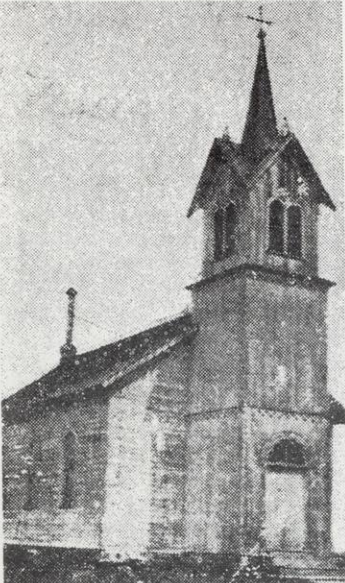


Fire Station - Unity 1961.

Our village has been incorporated for many years. We have had dedicated officers who have worked diligently to promote the welfare of our community. Several have served for long terms in their respective offices. In recent years a fire department has been organized, new equipment has been purchased, and a building erected for their use. We now have a sewage disposal plant for village use, this being a big improvement. Our present board members are: Calvin Cook President; Mrs. Sandra Kocian, Clerk; George Weiler, Corwin Dallmann, Norman Kuehling, Leon Jost, Jerome Fischer, and Roderick Cook as Trustees.

Following is a summary of the educational, social, and economic endeavors and accomplishments of our village.

## CHURCHES



This was the first Methodist Church, constructed in 1880,



Unity Methodist Church built in 1905.

The Methodist Church was organized in 1880 and continued to be the only church here until 1901. In 1905 it was totally destroyed by a tornado. The construction of a new edifice began that summer. The basement was completed and services were held there the first year. The building was constructed of white brick with large colored windows. It was completed and dedicated in 1908. This was in use until in 1964 when because of the decline in membership, the congregation decided to disband and join neighborhood churches. The building was torn down that year. During its earlier years the congregation was very active having several societies within its membership such as the Youth Fellowship, Ladies' Aid, and Men's Club. They sponsored many public events to help finance their budget.

The opportunities of this area attracted many of the Scandinavian race to settle here. In 1900, due primarily to the language barrier, they decided to form a church of their own. The Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church was built in 1901. The congregation did not have a resident pastor until 1921. In the year



Christ Disciple Church.



Scandinavian Lutheran Church built in 1901.



Present Trinity Lutheran Church.



previous the church was reorganized into the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. Rev. J. A. Olson became pastor in 1927 and labored here until his death in November 1949. His successors have been Rev. A. Almquist, Rev. C. Vander Stoep, Rev. Robert Langseth, Rev. Robert Sutherland, and the present pastor, Rev. James Primley.

Christ Disciple Church was organized by 1909. This was not a large congregation. It disbanded many years ago. The building was torn down and the land is now used for the school parking lot.

## SCHOOLS

As we follow the progress made by the community, we know all were concerned with the education of the youth. It was decided to build a larger school in a more central location.

The last class to graduate from the "old" school was in 1910. Members of the class were: Herman Francen, Ted Allain, Carl Nelson, Hilda Johnson (Justman), Walby Johnson (Gerdes), and Elizabeth Salter (Eby).

Classes began that fall in the new school which had been erected just south of our present buildings. This fine two story building served the community for fifty years, graduating many fine young people.

In 1954 our high school department was discontinued as we had consolidated with the Colby school district. The building was used by the lower grades until 1960. We now have a well equipped elementary school with grades K-6 inclusive. It is staffed by well trained personnel and offers a full curriculum to the children of this community.



Elementary School.

## SOCIETIES

Unity folks were friendly people and entered into any social activity the settlement had. In the early days gatherings were held in their homes.

In 1882 the Odd Fellows Lodge was started, and the ladies organized the Rebekahs. Others followed; the Masons, Modern Woodmen, the Royal Neighbors, to mention a few. All have been discontinued, the Royal Neighbors being the last to disband. In 1971 members transferred to the Colby Camp. Mrs. Leonard Nickel has been a member for 57 years.

Today's residents are active in their respective church and school organizations. There are three Homemaker Clubs in the area. It was through the interest and efforts of the Maplewood Homemakers Club the present Senior Citizens Club was organized in 1969. The Senior Citizens have meetings monthly in the Memorial Hall. They now have a membership of 32. Herman Francen is the President.

When the Businessmen's Association disbanded the Commercial Club was organized. Their purpose is to promote progress in the village. For the past ten years they have sponsored a statewide horse pulling contest here. This has been a financial success for them. As funds have become available, they have used them to promote industrial growth.

An organization of long standing in the community is the Otto H. Kops American Legion Post. This was formed soon after World War I by the veterans. Soon after an Auxiliary was organized. Regular meetings are held and they contribute to civic projects in the area. The American flags that are displayed on the main street on patriotic days were donated by the Post.

In 1919 a Boy Scout troop was organized. Chester Perschke was the leader. He resigned the following year and Rev. Raymond Fleming, Pastor of the M. E. Church, accepted the leadership of the boys. When after two years he returned to college, the school principal, Otto Herbert, became the leader. He was followed by Sewell Cook. Later there was a loss of interest and the troop disbanded.

In 1945 the boys of the area asked "Bunk" Creed if he would help them organize a scout troop. He was successful in getting help from other men of the village and the troop was organized. Creed was Scoutmaster for about fifteen years. It was during these years the troop won many awards in Scouting skills at the district meetings. Six scouts earned the Eagle award: Delbert Purkis, Robert Messer; Dennis, Douglas, Terry, and Jeff Cook. In 1950 Creed and Gilbert Widenhoeft, Jr. attended the Boy Scout National Jamboree at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Creed retired and his successors have been the late Gilbert Widenhoeft, Sr., Rod Fuller, and Delbert Purkis.

Prior to 1956, Girl Scout troops had been organized but due to lack of interest and adult leadership, they were soon disbanded. In 1956 a troop of Scouts and Brownies were organized. Mrs. Calvin Peterson acted as leader of the Brownies and Miss Joan Schopper of the Scouts. These troops were very active for about ten years. Louellen Loughead attended the Girl Scout National Round-up at Button Bay, Vermont in 1962. Other ladies who were leaders were: Mrs. Wm. Schultz, Mrs. Leon Jost, Mrs. Corwin Dallmann, and Mrs. Leo Bloom.

We also have a Garden Club in the community. This club is affiliated with the State and National organizations. Anne Yahr, whose interests have been in flowers and home beautification, organized the club in 1959 and served as the President for twelve years. Each year the members plant and care for the many flower gardens in the village park. Their aim is: each home beautified creates a beautiful village.

## POST OFFICE

The post office was the first public service offered the pioneer families, it being in the Creed home. It is noted that whenever a new store was established, the post office was transferred to it and the owner became the postmaster. This practice continued for many years.

A building was moved to the present site and it became the post office. D. K. Hall was the first postmaster in the new office. E. L. Messer was appointed to the office in 1910 and served until 1934 when Nyole Creed, (the grandson of Edmund Creed), was appointed and was postmaster until 1969.

In 1951 the building that had escaped two fires was torn down and replaced with our present office. Ansel Messer, (son of E. L. Messer), is the present postmaster.

## BANK

Banking services were offered to the community about 1905. An office was in a section of the Kuehnau furniture store. Mr. L. De Vaud was the first cashier and John Powers, the assistant.

In 1909 the present building was built and the Unity State Bank organized. During the years it was merged with the Colby State Bank and recently they consolidated with the Security State Bank of Colby. It is now a branch office of that organization.

Many of us recall the employees who have served this bank as cashiers; namely, S. J. Falck Frank Błoczynski Melvin Tennis, and Corwin Dallmann, who is now Executive Vice-President of the organization.

One of the landmarks of the earlier days is the cheese factory (Milk Products Co.). This was started in 1906 and has been in operation since. Former owners were J. Koch, O. Rhodes, L. P. Talpin and the present owner, Harry Mandel who has been here since 1931. Mr. Mandel has made many changes in operation and has remodeled the building.

Another business place that has been in constant use since 1909 is Ray's Market. We remember it as the Mercantile Store. Martin Hellstad owned it for many years. Graham Thayer owned it for a short time and sold it to the late Gilbert Wiedenhoeff who remodeled it and combined a meat processing operation with it. He operated it until his death in 1970.

Ayer's Store has also served as a grocery store through the years. Some of its previous owners were: J. Salter, F. Neuling, Langjahr Bros., Ted. Domer, Bob Spencer, Roy Justman, Jr., Leo Bloom, Warren Talcott, and the present owner is Mel Ayer.

Most of us can recall the many faithful merchants who have served this community. Time and space does not permit a detailed account of each. We are all appreciative of their service to our community.

The St. Croix Corporation, a small plant that made fish poles, began operations here about twenty years ago. Their business grew rapidly, giving employment to many in this area. They operated here about six years when due to lack of facilities, they moved their plant elsewhere. This was a setback to the economy of the village. Once again, men left to seek work away from here.

During the past ten years there has been new interest in progress. The Commercial Club erected a building and were instrumental in bringing the Wilderness Campers industry here. Two other small plants are now in operation; Dall-



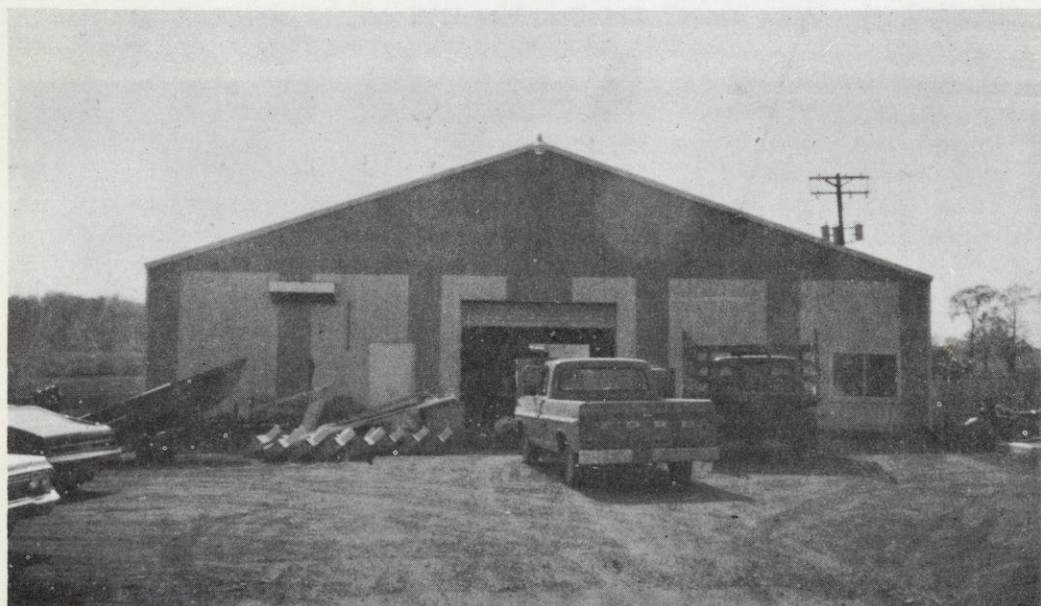
Unity State Bank 1909.



Inside Unity State bank -- Cashier - S. J. Falck ; Asst. Cashier -- J. Powers.  
Customers Martin Hellstead and Myrtle Falck.



Wilderness Campers



Dallman Plastics

mann's Plastics and Modern Sleep Products, the latter a subsidiary of a Marshfield plant. There is a newly developed trailer court and a new garage and repair shop. The newest business offers the accommodation of a Laundromat, car wash, and self service gas pump; these are housed in the former Shell station. These new industries were built by enterprising citizens of the community.

## " INTERESTING BITS "

Also of interest is the small cannon resting in our village park. This brief account is taken from an article written by Mrs. Ernest Matson (Faith Mabbott), which is on file at the State Historical Society in Madison.

The cannon with the following inscription No. -155-C-2-1 M was brought here even before the village was organized. The Grand Army of the Republic obtained the cannon from Fort Howard (near Green Bay) in 1880. Men and ox teams were sent to bring it here. The trip was financed by local contributions.

The cannon was first mounted on wood which has deteriorated. It is now mounted on concrete. In the early days it was used to report election results, and on the Fourth of July by shooting three rounds at sunrise. It is now a silent reminder of the past.

The members of the class graduating in 1954 were: Jerome Tennis, Charlotte Mohan Robert Johnson, Renata Johnson Gerald Hebert, Darlene Molle, Shirley Johnson, Philip Knuf, and Darlene Rachu. This was the last class to graduate from the Unity High School.

We have had fine representation on the County Boards. During the early years Edmund Creed, J. W. Salter, and Deacon Cook were the supervisors. Later on we had two as supervisors who each served over fifty years, they being William Creed on the Clark County Board and George Cook on the Marathon County Board.

In 1906 Ransom Brown was appointed Marathon County surveyor.

Marathon County has had four Highway Commissioners, three of them coming from Unity; namely, Herman Voght, Jesse Clark, and Lyle Fuller.

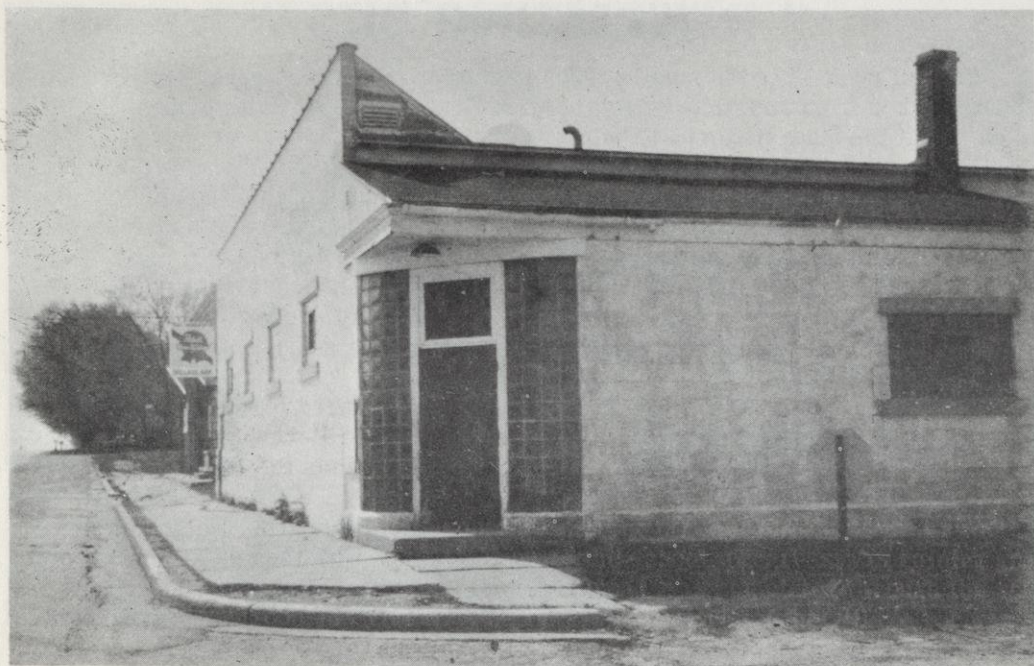
We honor three married couples who have lived most of their lives here and have now enjoyed over sixty years of wedded life. They are: Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Nickel (65 years); Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Justman (61 years); and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Binning (61 years).

Unity is the birthplace of two of our senior ladies: Mrs. Henry Binning (Borghild Nelson), born January 23, 1890 in the house now owned by Syd Bauer; and Mrs. B. W. Mabbott (Vera Cook), born January 29, 1901 on the Cook farm. Both have always had "Unity, Wisconsin" as their address.

Henry Binning is our oldest resident, being 89 on April 25th.



Unity Opera House (1901). The balcony was used by the band for summer concerts. The smaller building was the barber shop of Van Misner.



Memorial Hall

## JUST REMEMBERING

When ice was cut in large square blocks and kept in the barn behind the Kops Hotel (C. Reise's).

The wooden sidewalks.

The steel post along the main street to which the "traders" would tie their horses.

When we had several passenger trains daily, and the villagers would meet the trains.

When bread was packed in large wooden boxes and was shipped by train to the local merchants.

In 1923 when the Unity Tourist Park was being developed and Unity folks had a place for their picnics.

The exciting basketball games of the High School and the city "Tigers" that were played in our "cracker-box" hall. This hall was replaced in 1947 with the present structure.

George Cook was appointed the first State Traffic Police.

Two of the frame houses which were built in 1874 are still in use; the Edmund Creed house is occupied by the Ralph Leonhard family, and the F. Darling house is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Cook.

Country children were brought to school by horse drawn covered wagon or sleigh. In cold weather it was heated by a kerosene burner.

Kids shoveled the snow from the pond south of town and enjoyed ice-skating there. A large bonfire provided warmth and light.

Rural mail carriers used horse drawn vehicles in summer and winter.

It has been interesting to learn of the progress made from the time the small family of pioneers came and settled until the present time. We close our book with this thought: we leave the future of our village to you----the future citizens. May you always have the pioneer spirit to reach new goals. May you preserve the traditions of our early settlers to have a charitable concern for each other, and continue to live in unity for the good of all.

I ran across the following poem and I think it tells so much of what many of us feel about our town:

### LITTLE TOWN

I like to live in a little town  
Where the trees meet across the street;  
Where you wave your hand, and say "hello"  
To everyone you meet.  
I like to stand for a moment  
Outside the grocery store  
And listen to the friendly gossip  
Of the folks that live next door.  
For life is interwoven  
With the friends we learn to know;  
And we hear their joys and sorrows  
As we daily come and go.  
So I like to live in a small town  
I care no more to roam,  
For every house in a little town  
Is more than a house, it's home.



West side of town -- Feed store, Creed's Merchantile, Hardware, Tavern  
--across the street the C. Healy store, later Van Misner Barber Shop.





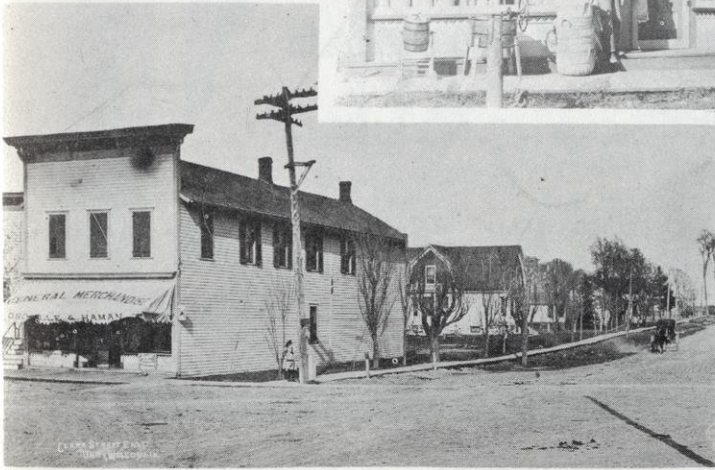
J. P. Johnson -- Wagon maker in his shop on West side.



Horse Pulling Contest -- on West Street 1910.



West Side Hardware Store 1906.



Groelle & Hamann  
General Merchandise Store.

Marathon County  
Register office.





I.O.O.F. Hall - built in 1901. Where Maynard Yahr home is now. It was used for lodge meetings and community affairs until about 1955.

## **CREDITS OF MATERIAL:**

Modern History Class of U. H. S. - 1933 - 1934  
(Dawn of Unity)

History of Marathon County - Marchetti

History of Clark County - F. C. Wedge

A Village of Sidewalks - Rev. Robert Langseth

Marshfield News Herald - "Recorder" - Column

Interviews with elder residents

Typist - Siana Creed

Book Committee: Nyole Creed, Mrs. Calvin Cook,  
Mrs. Tom Loughead



This illuminated sign is in our village park. It is a gift to the community by the Commercial Club. Corwin Dallman, a representative of the club is shown standing near it.



Main Street Unity 1972

Marathon County Public Library  
300 N 1st St  
Wausau WI 54403