History of Rusk County, Wisconsin

by

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Introduction

It has been said that America's greatest, and perhaps only, contribution to history is the frontier, not the frontier of a Hadrian Wall, but the frontier of an ever-restless, ever-adventurous individualism. One feels the American frontier to be the wilderness evoked in western Pennsylvania by a twenty-year-old and his young bride who have found the sea-board too crowded for their budding ambition; twenty years later the frontier becomes the section of rich Ohio land auctioned by the government to his son; another twenty years and a grandson squats across the Mississippi, moving the frontier to the fertile plains. Thus the desire to own land drove the native son and the immigrant ever farther westward, leaving unsettled the less desirable land close at home.

Finally came 1890 and the last frontier, but, luckily, the end of desire for new land in unsettled regions did not come with it. The romance of pioneering remained and the wily, erst-while lumber-king was quick to prey upon it. Ten-thousand-acre tracts of land obtained through some queer machination of a law which supposedly put public lands directly into the hands of the individual settler, was denied of its virgin sine and put into the
hands of land agents. They, anxious to enrich their masters and themselves, pandered to this desire for land ownership and soon a steady stream of migration came into these left-behind cut-over areas.

And it is to this period of expansion that the settlement of Rusk County, Wisconsin, belongs. Last among Wisconsin counties, there was no natural cause that called it into being. Once it had been richly timbered land and now that it was cut-over, the owners no longer desired to pay taxes on non-income producing land and so made a last effort to obtain wealth from it. Advertising campaigns were carried on, notably in Iowa, Illinois and Indiana, where renter-farmers were captivated by this opportunity to purchase and own outright a farm for the same money that they now paid as rent to a more fortunate member of the brotherhood. Railroads, eager to have agricultural and industrial centers between their terminals aided in the campaign, and soon settlers were pouring in. Nor did stumps, poor soil, early frosts, or continued payments dampen their ardor. Never was the psychology of enthusiasm more splendidly portrayed. Men sent back for their brothers, their neighbors, even their old fathers to come to share in the riches that were to be as soon as everything was adjusted. No one seemed to notice that it cost more to clear the land than to buy it, and that even then it was often necessary to fertilize, to lime, or to inoculate it before
a successful crop could be grown. The expense of dynamite, of seed, of stock, of interest and taxes was all over-looked as they pictured the future to themselves—that time when the land was to blossom forth with alfalfa, registered herds, silos, a network of roads, flourishing villages, school houses. But this enthusiasm was not a mere stirring of the breeze, it was a working force, evidencing itself in a rapid growth, in the expenditure of seemingly energy and in true accomplishment. Finally in 1900 this strip of territory actually became a county. The details of this story of settlement and organization the author has told in her story of "The Organization of Rusk County, Wisconsin" presented for a bachelor's degree at the University of Wisconsin in 1939.

Could a child born of such enthusiasm have enough of blood and brawn to withstand the diseases of childhood? That is my present story.
Chapter I
Period of Boom 1900-1910

The history of the organization of Rusk County, extends beyond its creation in 1901 until it receives its present name in 1905. During that time the routine matters of creating committees, raising money, authorizing public buildings, and settling the affairs attendant upon separation were attended to by the duly authorized officials.

County Institutions 1905 saw two county institutions in the process of organization. Investigations as to a county jail had been started as early as 1903 but were dropped by the county board, without action, in 1904. The next year a special meeting of the county board was called May 17 to consider the question. It was unanimously decided that the jail should be built near the Court House at a cost not to exceed $10,000.00, $3000.00 of which was to be raised by bonds bearing 4½% interest and payable $3000.00 a year beginning in 1920. Three lots, belonging to the county, were to be sold to provide a heating plant and a sheriff's residence. After various vicissitudes, such as

1 Laws of State of Wisconsin, 1901, Chapter 469
2 Ibid., 1905, Chapter 463
3 Official Proceedings of the County Board, 1903
4 Ibid., 1904
5 Ibid., 1905
finding twenty-six discrepancies between the plans and the finished building, the jail was ready for occupancy, and the sheriff moved in. Not until 1913 does the jail again figure as news and then a rock-pile was instituted and $150 appropriated to maintain it and buy balls and chains.

The malefactors of the community provided for, the next provision was for the poor. Although the county board authorized a committee of investigation as early as 1905, it was not until 1908 that the True farm, near Glen Flora, was actually purchased. The county bonded itself to Mr. S. W. True for $10,000 for the 340 acres, buildings, stock, and implements. 280 acres were fenced, 80 acres improved, and the rest in various stages of development. Sam Stewart of Bruce received the first appointment as superintendent and was paid $550 per year and "prerequisites". During its early years the institution did not seem to be well patronized, there being only 17 inmates the first year, and only 17 3/7 weeks board furnished in August of 1910. However, a new country, plenty of cheap land, and stumps to be pulled seldom abounds in inmates for a

6 Gates County Journal, Mar. 10, 1908
7 Proceedings County Board, 1913
8 Ibid., 1905
9 Ibid., 1908
10 Rusk County Journal, Mar. 7, 1908
11 Proceedings County Board, 1908
12 Rusk County Journal, Sept. 10, 1910
poor farm. Why then 340 acres with only 80 improved? Rusk County was looking forward to a large future and planned to be prepared.

New Towns  As new settlers poured into the region, the seven original towns proved to be too unwieldy for ease of government, so immediately the state legislature started acquiescing in the demand for more towns. In 1901 Atlanta was created from Big Bend, and the next year the organization of True, Marshall, Grant and Thornapple. The petition to create the town of Hawkins was at first successfully fought by the lumber companies of Ingram and the village of Hawkins, who were anxious to prevent a subsequent increase in the expenses of government. By fall, however, the controversy was settled and Hawkins was created from Lawrence in July of 1903. In 1904 the creation of the towns of Forest and Perry from Grant were laid over, after the presentation of petitions of remonstrance, and never heard from again. In 1905, however, Grant was divided, and the eastern half named Crow. In the same year Thornapple was out to create a new town, Washington, which like its predecessors was immediately organized for business. The next year passed without the creation of a new town, but in 1907 the legislature created a town from Marshall, which F. W.

13 Journal of Proceedings of Wisconsin Legislature, 1901
14 Proceedings County Board, 1902
15 Gates Journal, Mar. 14, 1903
16 Proceedings Wisconsin Legislature, 1905
17 Proceedings County Board, 1904
18 Ibid., 1905
19 Ibid., 1905
20 Proceedings Wisconsin Legislature, 1907
Tubbs, a Chicago stockman, suggests should be named Willard. The *Rusk County Journal* comments that "It is a pretty name and satisfied the people of the town," but, as in all of the earlier towns, gives no reason for the selection of that particular name. With twenty-one political divisions, the county was content to turn its attention to other affairs for the next few years.

**Villages and Hamlets** Not only were the farmers crowding in and demanding new governmental units, but the "urban" population was also growing during these first ten years. The village of Bruce, named for A. C. Bruce, who owned a great deal of real estate in the vicinity, was incorporated in 1901 with a population of 583. It was a pretty little town, contender for the county seat, on the banks of the Chippewa River. Although there was a sawmill, farming was the principal activity. By 1908 it was ready to bond itself $7800 for water works and electric lights. Weyerhaeuser, named for the lumber king reputed to be wealthier than Rockefeller, was a division point on the Soo line railroad. In 1906 it finally decided to be incorporated.

In 1906 there was a rumor that the Wisconsin Central Railroad had bought four quarter sections of land for

21 *Rusk Jl.*, Mar. 23, 1907.
$10,000 to plat a town. The rumor was not credited by most people, but certain it was that the storekeeper, Lacey, had gotten 70 signers to a petition for a post office under the name of Sheldon and had persuaded two men from Marshall to go his bond. In February the post office was opened and the land committee of the Wisconsin Central acknowledged their ownership of the four forties. 25 Soon a town surrounded the store, and by 1910 it was necessary to plat a new addition to Sheldon. 26

As was to be expected in a region such as Rusk County the first villages grew up around sawmills. In 1907 a post office was added to the settlement around the Conrath mills on the Wisconsin Central Railroad; 27 the Faast Land Company laid out a village in 1910 28 and in 1915 it was incorporated with the name of the mill owner. 29 Another settlement on the Soo Line was Ingram, named for Orrin Henry Ingram, one of the developers of Chippewa water power. In 1907 it, too, became a village. 30 Crane was built around the sawmill owned by W. W. Crane and Sons. Besides the mill they owned their own railroad and the store. There was no highway connecting the mill to any other part of the county. But with all enthusiasm they start building a two-room school and plan a church. 31

26 Ibid., Apr. 23, 1910.
27 Ibid., Oct. 5, 1907.
28 Ibid., June 18, 1910.
29 Ibid., Aug. 11, 1915.
30 Ibid., Aug. 17, 1907.
31 Ibid., June 11, 1910.
Tony, namesake of the mill owner, Tony Hein, delayed its incorporation for many years, but finally in 1812 it followed the example of its neighbors.

Off the line of the railroad many little hamlets were being established, each little more than a trading center with a post office. It was through the establishment of the post office that each became an item of news in the county paper. Atlanta's post office was established in 1902; Teresita in 1903; Emmett in 1904; Bellou in 1907; Thornapple in 1910, to mention only a few of the earlier ones. Today (1930) not even the "general merchandise emporium" remains in many cases to remind one that at some time this district had been looked upon as the future industrial center of the county. In 1908 many of the little centers around the county seat off the railroad were given mail service by a rural route.

Lady Smith Of prime interest among the settlements is Lady Smith, the county seat. Briefly reviewing its history, we find that in 1886 Robert Corbett started a sawmill on the lake which was named for him. The next year he brought his family in and bought the, now, Manley Hotel. The Soo Line had a track running from Tail to Turtle Lake because of the heavy timber in this region.

32 Ibid., Nov. 25 and Dec. 30, 1912.
33 "Ten Years Ago" in Ibid., Mar. 14, 1912.
34 Gates Jl., Sept. 28, 1904.
36 Rusk Jl., May 15, 1907.
37 Ibid., Aug. 6, 1910.
38 Ibid., Mar. 7, 1908.
Soon D. P. Simona of the Sault Ste. Marie Land and Improvement Company platted Flambeau Falls between the lake and the river. The entire town site was offered to W. C. Gerard for $375. Although he did not have enough faith to risk investing his money he did help to advertise the land for James L. Gates who had bought vast tracts cheap. In 1892 the town was changed to Warner to honor one of the "moguls" of the Soo Line. His honor was short lived, however, for in July 1900 the hamlet was named Ladysmith for Mrs. Charles Smith, wife of the president of the Menasha Woodenware Company. June 11, 1901, it was incorporated as a village with W. S. Manning president, and in 1905 as a city with R. S. Johnson mayor. 39

In the early days everyone had to go nine miles to Bruce for his mail, but in 1887 a post office was established at Warner with Robert Corbett as postmaster at a salary of $200 a year, about double the receipts of the office. When Ladysmith became a city it had a new postal building constructed by Fritz at a cost of $4500, paid a salary of $1600, and had about $5000 worth of postal receipts. 40

In the same year a municipal court was established by the legislature. It was to have exclusive jurisdiction over all violations of village ordinances and over debts, damages, demands, penalties, or forfeitures not to exceed $500. The newspaper comments that the only pressing need

39 Weekly JL., May 5, 1900; Gates JL., June 6, 1905; Rusk JL., July 9, 1910.
40 Rusk JL., June 9, 1905.
for a court was felt by lawyers, one of whom would get salary, office rent, and the title of "judge." 41

Even as a village, Ladysmith saw her "manifest destiny" and built accordingly. In 1902 electric lights were installed, power being furnished by the dam. 42 In the same year a mass meeting of taxpayers was called to discuss waterworks. R. S. Johnson of the Menasha Woodenware Company suggested asking the company to supply power so that it would not be necessary to build a stand pipe, but this evidently fell through for the village board signed a contract with the National Construction Company of South Bend, Indiana in 1903 to build a compressed air waterworks plant. This was to cost $12,750 for which the village voted at a special election to issue bonds which would run for twenty years. 43 Here the waterworks cease to be news, and there is no reference to the system ever being installed, but, as there are waterworks in Ladysmith today (1951), it can be supposed that the construction company fulfilled its contract. Although a charter was procured and plans made to sell stock for a gas company, nothing ever came of it. In 1907 the sewer system was completed (the paper never having recorded that it was started); 45 in 1909 an ordinance was passed to establish street grades; 46 and in 1911 arrange-

41  Rusk Jl., Feb. 18, 1905.
43  Gates Jl., May 30, June 20, Aug. 8, 1903 and Sept. 6, 1902.
44  Ibid., Feb. 13, 1904.
45  Rusk Jl., Feb. 2, 1907.
46  Ibid., Sept. 11, 1909.
ments were made for twelve 500 watt arc lights to be hung in the business section.47

Not only was the material welfare of the citizens of concern, but recreational facilities were provided as well. 1902 was heralded in with the Ladysmith Cornet Band under the direction of C. E. Burnie,48 and the next winter's entertainment was furnished by a lyceum course—five numbers for $1.00.49 Meanwhile Worden's Opera House had made its appearance and in the fall opened with a presentation of the stirring drama, according to the advertisements, "The Game Keeper."50 But, alas, the legitimate stage was forced to give way to modernity and in 1909 it was supplanted by moving pictures. Immediately competition set in and the rumored Gem Theater with 350 seats became an actuality as the New Unique Theater with 240 seats.52 Fortunately before the entire site had been sold out, the Townsite Company gave the city between three and four acres of land on the river for a park.53 In 1911, $12,000 was expended for purchasing a park.54 Whether this was an addition to the gift, or whether the gift was never consummated, the newspaper does not indicate. In 1909 an Associated Charities was organized, but there is no record of its further activity.55

47 Ibid., June 3, 1911.
48 "Ten Years Ago" Ibid., Feb. 8, 1912.
50 Ibid., Sept. 20, 1902.
51 Rusk Jl., Apr. 17, 1909.
52 Ibid., July 31 and Oct. 2, 1902.
53 Ibid., Sept. 7, 1907.
54 Ibid., May 13, 1911.
55 Ibid., Dec. 25, 1909.
The same year saw an epidemic of scarlet fever\textsuperscript{56} and the next one of typhoid fever;\textsuperscript{57} otherwise the health of the city was above reproach.

And so "The development of Ladysmith has been as simple and natural as the unfolding of the petals of a rose. It is the natural product of conditions which nature provided. A fertile, productive soil, a salubrious climate, varied timber resources, the Flambeau river furnishing transportation and abundant water power, the intersection of two trunk highways, these mighty agents of modern civilization— all these developed into fruition by industrious, thrifty, and enterprising citizens— there you have the answer in a nut-shell."\textsuperscript{58}

\textbf{Lumbering}. Lumbering was the earliest industry of Rusk County, but by the time there were enough settlers to organize a county, the peak had been passed. It is interesting to note that that greatest of all Wisconsin lumbermen, Paul Bunyan, never operated in this region. In recent years, in the camps, one hears talk of him, but it is always by some old jack who logged with Paul.

"In sixty-five or sixty-four,
A little after or a little before,
In sixty-four or sixty-five
When he drove the great Round River drive"

and that, of course, was the pyramid in section thirty-seven.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., Oct. 39, 1910.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., Feb. 27, 1913.
which every one knows is not in Rusk County. There were, however, a few noteworthy lumbermen and a few big cuts. In the winter of 1903-04 it was expected that the Chippewa Lumber and Boom Company would cut six million feet, the Menasha Woodenware Company and S. Olson each three million feet, Jim Mitchell one million feet, and a dozen or more each several hundred thousand feet. Many companies, and individuals, were not cutting off their own land as they had in early days, but were taking off stumpage, as the Eau Claire and Stanley Lumber Company, which contracted for 40,000 acres of stumpage to be cleared in six years. In 1905 one of the last big drives came down the river—41 million feet from Pixley's Rapids, 11 million feet for the Menasha Woodenware Company and the rest for Chippewa Falls or Eau Claire. Few logs reached the Mississippi now. In 1906 times were so good it was necessary to pay lumber jacks $28 - $40 a month, and even then it was often hard to get enough. In 1907 four lumber companies were cutting five, three, two, and three million feet respectively in the vicinity of Hawkins. In 1908 the log drive had only twenty million feet of lumber—six million of which had been held up by John Dietz at Cameron Dam.

60 Ibid., Jan. 33, 1904.
61 Ibid., May 27, 1905.
63 Ibid., Jan. 5, 1907.
64 Ibid., May 30, 1908.
During the period we are studying a great deal of lumbering was done by individual farmers clearing land. Usually they, with one or two helpers, got out their logs and hauled them to the railroad, before the snow went in the spring, where they were shipped to the pulp mills, used for railroad ties, or sold for stove wood. Mr. Sam Johnson who owned a forty three miles south of Ladysmith made a signed statement concerning forest products taken off his own land in eight years—saw timber, birch, maple, basswood, hemlock, $1838 worth; cordwood $375; material for a house valued at $3500; three hired men were paid $137 for clearing products which sold at $423.50 from a 6.1/2 acre tract, leaving a profit of $82 per acre. 65

**Industrial Development.** Had it not been for the water power Ladysmith would never have continued its growth for past the lumbering era. At the time of its incorporation as a city a report of the United States Geological Survey shows that the Flambeau river descends 570 feet in 150 miles, thus producing great undeveloped power. 66 First to make use of this was the Menasha Woodenware Company which started clearing a mill site in 1900, received a charter from the state for a dam in 1901, and was reported to own enough timber for a 50-year run. Second in point of establishment, but first in importance, among Ladysmith industries was the Menasha Paper Company. In 1903 it re-

67 Rusk Jl., Feb. 27, 1913.
ceived its charter to dam the river and immediately started to work. By fall it was turning out two carloads of paper a week, all of which was taken by Sears Roebuck and Company for its catalogue. In 1905 the company received permission to build another dam below the town for the manufacture of pulp. Work was started immediately with a crew of 80 men; the Soo line ran a spur down from Ladysmith; and a town site, Port Arthur (six) was laid out, a deed to a lot being given to anyone who would build; no restrictions. As early as 1904 the company offered to build a sulphite mill if the city would promise that its taxes would not exceed $1500 a year for ten years, but it was not until four years later that the mill was actually brought, due to the activities of the Commercial Club, with a promise that the valuation and assessment would be so fixed that the mill would be able to receive not less than $2500 a year for ten years. The building was to be entirely of Ladysmith brick and to employ from 80 to 120 men. In 1910 another dam and pulp mill were added at Thornapple, and in 1912 the establishment of a bleaching plant made possible the production of the highest grade of hand paper.

68 Gates Jl., Apr. 4, 1903.
73 Ibid., Mar. 5, 1910.
74 Ibid., Aug. 8, 1910.
By 1913 the mill was using 30,000 cords of pulp wood per year and putting out $3000 worth of paper per day. 75

The Alden Novelty Works is exceedingly typical of wood-working industries which follow up the lumber booms. It was originally started in 1905, and three years later consolidated with a firm of the same name which moved up from Waukegan. Under the direction of Renaldo Alden and his five sons, the company was soon employing 25 men and turning out organ stops, stamp handles, and other hardwood novelties to be sold in Canada, England, Germany, and Australia. 76 In 1910 the plant was totally destroyed by fire, as had been its fate twice before in Waukegan, but in a few months it was reestablished with fifteen men at work in Bruce. 77 This time bankruptcy overtook the company, 78 but nothing daunted, father and sons moved into the old veneer mill at Beldenville, and once again work started. 79

The newspaper was boundless in its enthusiasm concerning new industries. Almost every issue came out with a tale concerning this or that new plant that was about to be built, or that someone was looking over the ground for, or that the Commercial Club was trying to persuade to locate here. During the early part of the period wood-working industries, of course, predominated. The South

75 Ibid., Feb. 27, 1913.
78 Ibid., Dec. 4, 1911.
79 Ibid., July 28, 1912.
Muskatine Lumber Company of Iowa was expected to build a plant employing five hundred or six hundred men, for which the Soo Line was to run forty miles of track into timber. Certain remissions of municipal taxes were asked for, and, the company disappeared as news. The Ohio Cooperage Company with an estimated pay-roll of $25,000 failed to materialize. Mrs. Snyder of Milwaukee, who planned to start a chair factory was taken into custody for obtaining money under false pretenses. A Minneapolis firm planned to build a plant to make silos, tanks, and wheelbarrows and a Ladysmith Veneer Company was to be established just as soon as the railroad ran spurs for them. The Ladysmith Brick and Tile Company, however, did start work and actually made brick. The smaller communities were not far behind Ladysmith in their projected undertakings, but less is heard of them. Conrath actually did start another mill, Hawkins the Rusk Box and Furniture Company, and Ingram a novelty works to manufacture the inventions of the owner, P. H. Shafer.

Although "There was very little drunkenness and no disorder or boisterousness" in the county, there was early agitation for a brewery. Talk of a Marshfield company in-

80 Gates Jl., Dec. 31, 1904 and Jan. 14, 1905
81 Ibid., Jan. 28, 1905.
82 Rusk Jl., Mar. 31 and May 5, 1908
83 Ibid., Nov. 10, 1806 and Jan. 5, 1907
84 Ibid., Feb. 1, 1906
85 Ibid., Mar. 28, 1912.
86 Ibid., Aug. 15 and Nov. 31, 1912
87 Ibid., Mar. 12, 1914
88 Gates Jl., Apr. 11, 1903
vesting $25,000 to $40,000 in one, gave way to rumors of a $10,000 plant, but meanwhile a bottling works for spring water, soft drinks, cider, and vinegar was actually put in operation.

Among the lesser and varied industries suggested were the manufacturing of a camera to take measurements for a tailor, this had been locally invented; a shirt factory; a glove factory; a tannery; a foundry; an auto factory; and so on, and so on, and so on!

Hand in hand with this early industrial development went the establishment of banks. The most important of these and the one best representing the financial condition of the county was the First National Bank of Ladysmith. This had been opened Nov. 1, 1905 "...in a more or less stormy time in the history of Ladysmith" and later that same year had consolidated with the State Bank of Ladysmith, making total resources of $300,000. In 1906, although there has been no notice in the cashier of the bank's failure, an examination of its receiver was held before D. W. Maloney, court commissioner. The next year the county board made demand upon the treasurer for the county money tied up in the bank failure. He reported that of the $4800--75% has

89 Gates JI., Mar. 14, 1903
90 Rusk JI., Mar. 30, 1907
91 Gates JI., May 7, 1904
92 Ibid., May 20, 1905
93 Ibid., Feb. 30, 1909
94 Ibid., May 18, 1908
95 Ibid., Sept. 4, 1909
96 Ibid., Jan. 22, 1909
97 Ibid., Nov. 11, 1911
98 Rusk JI., Oct. 29, 1910
99 Ibid., Sept. 8, 1906
been paid but his record actually showed $1211.76 paid. The
state also started demanding payment of the $8,483.70 of
state money which was in the bank at the time of its fail-
ure. A later report, however, indicated that the bank held
$12,000 of state funds in excess of the amount allowed by
law, and the bondsmen, all Ladysmith men, were responsible
for the $2,131.31 still unpaid. Petitions were presented
asking for the removal from office of the United States
District Attorney for not prosecuting the managers of the
bank; the Grand Jury returned a true bill against the offi-
cers of the bank for making false reports to the government;
the case was dismissed in United States Court at Eau Claire.
And so, in a few brief items an event of great purport to
the entire county is disposed of. Rumor would have it that
the county had expanded too rapidly and the bank had per-
mitted itself to be drawn along in the talk of the great
things to be. Another indictment of the western theory of
democracy—because one are all born free and equal any man
is capable of running a bank. In 1911 the bank was once
more a going corporation with capital increased from $25,000
to $35,000, a 4% semi-annual dividend declared, and a work-
ing capital of $49,000 . In the same year we have a hint
of future development: "The State Bank of this city now
handles country correspondents, and the Ingram State Bank
was the first institution to take advantage of this innova-
tion.

100 Ibid., Jan. 5, Mar. 9, Nov. 23, 1907; Feb. 1, Mar. 14, Mar. 31,
June 6, 1908.
101 Ibid., August 12, 1911
102 Ibid., Nov. 18, 1911
Private industries and banks can be started on future prospects, but public utilities lag behind until there is every evidence of their success. So, it was not until 1909 that the Rusk County Rural Telephone Company held its first meeting, was incorporated, and let the contracts for lines to be constructed from Ladysmith to Bruce, Holcombe, and Murry where it would connect with existing lines. Previous to this there had been established small local switch boards in several of the villages. About this time they started connecting up with the Rusk County line or the Chippewa Valley Telephone Company which had been furnishing service to Bruce and to Ladysmith for several years. Both companies operated through the same office in Ladysmith, which by 1911 boasted a 300 drop board, 264 phones, a chief operator, clerk, and night operator, and 8 toll lines.

Early in its history Ladysmith seemed to feel the advantages of concerted effort. It is peculiar that the individualism of the frontier always seems to feel the need of organization. In 1903 the Business Men's Association of Ladysmith was formed and various industrial and agricultural projects undertaken. In 1907 this organization seemed to be superseded by a Commercial Club which was interested in bringing new industries to Ladysmith. The next year the club hired Mr. T. M. Randle of New Castle, Indiana at

103 Ibid., May 29 and Aug. 21, 1909
104 Ibid., Jan. 28, 1911
105 Gates Jl., Apr. 11 and 30, 1903
106 Rusk Jl., Oct. 13, 1906 and Jan. 5, 1907
$50 a week and expenses up to $25 a week to promote Ladesmith interests by bringing in manufacturing plants. A $5 commission was to be paid for every man employed in a factory which he got to locate there. There is no evidence of his ever having done anything or the club either. The neighboring communities caught the spirit, however, and in 1907 the Progressive League of Glen Flora was formed; in 1909 Bruce had an active commercial club; in 1911 Conrath business men organized; in 1912 Weyerhauser followed; and in 1913 Hawkins was organized and Glen Flora reorganized. Two independent groups of business men were sufficiently strong in Ladesmith to merit their individual organization. The real estate leaders banded together in 1905 and in 1912 they incorporated an exchange with a thousand shares of stock to be sold at $10 a share. At an early period the Retail Liquor Dealers Association was formed, but never seems to have been particularly active.

Thus with much talk and a bustling air, a great spirit of activity is made to prevail over the industrial development of the county prior to 1910.

Minerals One of the greatest evidences of the faith of the people in their county is their untiring zeal

107 Ibid., Feb. 15, 1903
108 Ibid., Feb. 18, 1907
109 Ibid., Apr. 17, 1909
110 Ibid., Nov. 25, 1911
111 Ibid., July 4, 1912
112 Ibid., Mar. 20, 1913
113 Ibid., Apr. 3, 1913
114 Getes Jnl., Sept. 2, 1905
115 Rusk Jnl., Feb. 3, 15, and 22, 1912
116 Ibid., Aug. 8, 1908
in tracing down minerals which the state geologists persist in declaring to be missing. In 1902 a man on a ranch south of Ladysmith discovered natural gas and took cans of it to Eau Claire to interest the "wealthy capitalists" there. Nothing more was heard of it. A man from the Ohio oil district was quoted as believing that there was oil near Ingram, and another man found crude petroleum in Ladysmith. There was real excitement, however, when a steam shovel working on the railroad brought in 18 and 20 pound chunks of pure copper ore, and Jack Lindoo continued to repeat the early tales of traces of gold found not far from Ladysmith. In 1909 the people of Willard actually started dynamiting for copper. Iron offered the greatest inducements, though, for the credulous. In 1905 two Polish farmers actually found iron ore, and "it is said" that one refused $10,000 for his 40 acre farm and the other $21,000 for 160 acres. Immediately a Mr. J. W. Robinson started spending his time in the abstract office seeking the names of all who owned titles in that vicinity. The next year he had obtained options on 5,000 acres and had started drilling, but was still prospecting at Saw Dam and along the Thornapple.

117 Gates JL, Sept. 20, 1902
118 Ibid., June 18, 1904
119 Ibid., July 8, 1904
120 Ibid., Sept. 16, 1905
121 Ibid., Feb. 10, 1906
122 Rusk JL, Jan. 30, 1909
123 Gates JL, Oct. 14, 1905
124 Ibid., Nov. 4, 1905
125 Ibid., Feb. 10, 1906
126 Ibid., May 19, 1906
Whether Mr. Robinson was further connected with the project the papers did not state, but a mining camp was actually established between Apollonia and Weyerhauser and at 300 feet a vein of iron 100 feet deep was located. And there the story ends—nothing further is heard of Mr. Robinson, of the mining camp, of the options, or of the iron.

Railroads The east and west line of the Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Sault Ste. Marie Railroad had been run through this region from Minneapolis to Rainelander long before the county was ever formed and had formed a very important part of its early history. Shortly after the organization of the county the railroads again became a very important factor in its history, but this time the community was seeking out the railroad not the railroad the community. In 1903 a joint committee from Ladysmith, Chippewa Falls, and Eau Claire waited on James T. Clark, manager of the Omaha railroad to ask about bringing a line from Holcombe, sixteen miles, to Ladysmith. They claimed that 42 million pounds of freight, largely manufactured goods had been shipped from Ladysmith from November to May, and that $12,000 worth of tickets had been sold. Mr. Clark asked for ten days in which to consider the situation. By July the survey had been completed and the Omaha had an option on a depot site; it was rumored, however, that this might be held by the

128 Gates Jl., June 13, 1903
Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad who contemplated a line clear through to Superior. September 26 a mass meeting was held to gain the approval of the electorate for the sale of a site for a railroad for which the company guaranteed to pay $10,000. The meeting was almost unanimous in its approval. The survey was to be made within ninety days and then the village was to have sixty days for condemnation proceedings. No indication was given as to what company was interested. In 1904 the new depot was started for the "Nameless Road". The people had become railroad-minded and everywhere they saw tracks-to-be connecting the county to all parts of the country. The Owen and Northern Company let contracts, and sub-contracts were let to local people to start building—no one seemed to know where. An Omaha extension was expected from Holcombe; the Chippewa Valley and Northern was to be run from Bruce "toward" Superior; the Stanley road north to Ingram; and the Tony Northeastern into the Muscatine timber lands; later in the summer most of these projected lines were changed in the paper, but they were not lessened. The annual report of the Wisconsin Central Railroad Company gave the whole secret away. Contracts had been entered into for the construction of 45 1/2 miles of road from Owen to Ladysmith, but the line had been surveyed all

129 Ibid., July 16, 1903
130 Ibid., Oct. 3, 1903
131 Ibid., Aug. 20, 1904
132 Ibid., Jan. 7, 1905
133 Ibid., Jan. 28, 1905
134 Ibid., Feb. 4, 1905
the way to Duluth. The contracted part was to be built by
the Owen and Northern Railway Company and the northern part
by the Lake Superior and Southeastern Railroad Company, but
the entire capital stock of both companies was owned by the
Wisconsin Central. To secure funds the company created an
issue of five million dollars worth of gold notes to run
five years at 4\% interest. Work progressed rapidly; it
was reported that Rockefeller had placed six million dollars
in the hands of the officials and told them to build the
road "right" but the annual report of the company does not
show any such munificence. August 8 the first regular
train was run from Ladysmith to Owen with fitting ceremonies,
and in December the new depot was completed. Another two
years of rumor, condemnation of property, sub-letting of
contracts, construction of camps, and in 1902 the first
train was run from Ladysmith to Duluth with the usual load
of officials and boosters. That year the Wisconsin
Central was bought by the Soo Line and included in the
Canadian Pacific System, thus properly identifying the
"nameless" lines. There was frequent agitation to make
Ladysmith a freight division point on one of the lines, but
nothing was ever accomplished. The new era in railroad-

137 Wisconsin Central Railway Co., 7th Report, 1906.
139 Ibid., Dec. 22, 1906.
140 Ibid., 1907-9; 8th and 9th Annual Reports of Wisconsin
Central Railway Company.
141 Rusk Jl., Apr. 17, 1909; 10th Annual Report of Wisconsin
Central Railway Company.
142 Rusk Jl., Aug. 8, 1910.
ing started in 1911 with a report that the Chippewa Valley and Menominee railroad was to be torn up—a new era, indeed. There was, however, one more improvement; a union depot was built at the junction of the two lines in Ladysmith.

And so the railroads are built with much reportorial enthusiasm, but with none of the excitement of imported laborers, land frauds, and excesses that characterized the early Wisconsin lines. Plenty of gossip there was about profits lost in quicksand or rushing contracts, but it was all just a bit too petty and small to be truly fascinating. One even doubts if the laborers sang around the camp fires.

Roads

Roads, like meat and potatoes, are not good material for news—they are so essential, and so ever-present, and so taken-for-granted. It was estimated that in 1900 there were about 80 miles of road in the county. The first big project which was undertaken was an east and west road to follow the line of the railroad. E. T. Abbott, the engineer in charge, estimated it would cost about $1200 per mile and the next year it was actually surveyed and plans made to surface it with gravel. Here it ceased to be news, and there is no record as to when the road was actually opened to traffic. In 1909 in keeping with the general spirits of the times a resolution was passed by the county board urging the legislature to pass a bill providing for roads to be

143 Ibid., June 24, 1911.
144 Ibid., Jan. 20, 1912.
147 Gates Jr., Oct. 24, 1863
built one-third by the state, one-third by the county, one-third by the towns. Just a hint of what is going on behind the scenes is occasionally given by such glimpses as: "The advance has been informed that $30,000 has been spent on the Jump River Road. The road looks like 30¢ to a man up a tree, and one who travels it must be a saint if he doesn't swear like sixty. Where those 30,000 bucks went to is something this paper will endeavor to find out. That no such amount was ever spent on this road is self-evident. Who got the money?" By 1916 the county was purported to have 780 miles of road, including the best 40 mile stretch of earth road in the state.

Schools This discussion of mills, minerals, and transportation leaves one feeling that these settlers must have been horribly materialistic old fellows. But this is far from true for many of the finer things of life were just as eagerly sought after as the more material things. However, a government cannot establish schools and churches until there are industries to draw in settlers and roads to bring them together. Rusk County saw no insurmountable barrier, for at the time of its organization there were already 46 schools with 32 teachers getting the next generation ready. The number increased rapidly and is an excellent indication of the growth of the county as is evidenced

149 Ingram Advance, quoted in Rusk Jt. Feb. 5, 1910.
150 Ibid., Apr. 14, 1918.
by the chart in the appendix. In 1904, "The Idea of consolidating rural schools seems to be gaining favor in Gates County;" but four years later the superintendent reports a tendency toward smaller schools. In 1910 the County Superintendent reported 62 new school houses built in the last four years and 50% of his teachers normal graduates, while only 20% had had no normal training at all.

Ladysmith, which organized its first school in 1889, proved to be very advanced in educational development. In 1902 school opened September 29 with a High School principal, a grammar, two intermediate, and a primary teacher. There were 304 pupils in nine grades. The school levy was $6,884.56, $900 of which was the principal's salary. In 1904 the state department examined the school and granted permission for the establishment of a high school. In true pioneer fashion a special meeting of the taxpayers was called and a high school voted into existence. The increase in school population demanded a new school in 1907, and so the old ball park was purchased for $1300. An interesting side-light is thrown on land speculations by this deal: In 1905 the city was offered this site for $700 and subsequently was sold to A. E. Powell for $750, in less than two years Mr. Powell turned a nice little profit of $550.

At the same time the high school was cut on the

153 Ibid., 1910
accredited list in group A by the University of Wisconsin. In 1910 manual training and domestic science were added. A Catholic school was added in 1812 with 4 teachers and 120 pupils. The high school interested itself in extracurricular activities as well as the usual academic work as is evidenced by the existence of a Literary Club, a Shakespeare Club, a Debating Society, an Athletic Association, and an annual-to-be.

The villages of the county were not to be left behind by Ladysmith in educational matters, but it is difficult to get exact material about them. Sheldon erected a $5,000 school in 1909 to house its 50 scholars and 2 teachers. Tony was forced to build a new school in 1911 when the old one, which was built in 1898 and added to in 1903, was destroyed by fire. For funds Tony made use of their power to borrow from the state trust fund.

Rumors of a business college to be started by O. E. Rice and Professor W. F. Hersch in 1908 resulted in a very short-lived institution. This work was given, however, a couple years later in evening classes in the high school. These, too, appear to have been short-lived. The Christian Church planned to start an agricultural college under the direction of Reverend T. F. Weaver, but it never materialized.

155 Rusk Jl., July 15 and Aug. 24, 1907.
156 Ibid., Mar. 9, 1907.
157 Ibid., Feb. 27, 1911.
158 Ibid., Oct. 15, 1910.
159 Ibid., Oct. 17, 1910 and Feb. 25, 1911.
160 Ibid., Dec. 17, 1910 and Feb. 25, 1911.
161 Ibid., Sept. 13 and Oct. 17, 1908.
162 Ibid., Oct. 1, 1910.
163 Ibid., July 30, 1910.
One project for higher education was a success—the present County Normal School, organized as the County Training School for Teachers in 1907. How different from the academies which linger in southern Wisconsin to remind one of the ambitions of pioneers for their children! The demand for trained teachers had given rise to a summer school which had been in session in 1905 and 1906. The original petition for a training school in 1905 had been turned down by the legislature because only twelve had been planned, and these had been parceled out to other counties. To start the institution the county board appropriated $1500 with the understanding that 2/3 of the expenses were to be met by the state. R. Burns was hired for the first principal and Nellie Wrightman as assistant. The opening day enrolled 21 pupils and soon 11 more were added. The next a modelroom of 5 grades was added for practice classes. In 1910 a site was selected for a building, and the county borrowed money from the state to pay the estimated cost of $10,715.

Miss L. P. Stearns of the Wisconsin Free Library Commission successfully undertook the task of interesting Ladysmith in a library. A board was appointed by the mayor to have charge of the two libraries which were to be furnished every six months for five years for $50; the city

134 Ibid., Sept. 9, 1907.
135 Ibid., July 15, 1905.
136 Ibid., Dec. 9, 1905.
137 Ibid., Nov. 17, 1906; Apr. 15, May 11, July 7, Sept. 9 and Sept. 14, 1907.
138 Ibid., May 30, 1908.
council granted $388 annually for current expenses; and a
benefit entertainment was held to start things off. The
next year the council voted to accept the offer of a $10,000
Carnegie Library and to contribute $1,000 a year toward its
support; the building was started immediately, and a year
later both the library and the training school moved into
it.

Churches People moving into the wilderness like
to feel that their God is with them, not the formal God of
the cathedral, but the every-day God who comes into cabins
to hear the prayers of the every-day people. So religion
in a new country is found in the homes, family worship be-
comes neighborhood worship, and the establishment of a
church is only the late expression of a movement which de-
fies time. The pioneer, like his established brother, how-
ever, delights in the show of his religion, so often times
churches are organized and buildings erected before there
is much evidence of religion. It is exceedingly interest-
ing that the first religious affairs mentioned in the paper
after the organization of the county is the first annual
Gates County Union Sunday School Convention held at Glen
Flora in 1903.

Probably the Catholics were the first to hold ser-
VICES in this region, but it is impossible to find any
records. A Congregational church was established in Bruce

170 Ibid., Oct. 6, 1906.
171 Ibid., Feb. 2, Mar. 9 and 16, Apr. 6, May 11, 1907 and
Jan. 18, 1908.
172 Gates Jl., June 27, 1903.
in 1896 with 18 members and a Sunday School of 105 under the guidance of Reverend Mark W. Williams. In 1900 the Congregationalists of Ladysmith organized the first Protestant church in the community under Reverend Margaret Poke. Meetings were held in the opera house until the next year, when a church was built. A Sunday School and Young People's meeting were soon flourishing. Subsequently they were organized at Island Lake, Ameboy Lake, and Atlanta.

The first record of a Methodist Episcopal church referred to one in Weyerhauser with 29 members and a pastor, W. E. Pepper, who received $350 a year in 1898. In 1903 Reverend H. E. Loosey became pastor of the Glen Flora Methodist church; a year later there were two churches under his direction; by 1910 there were three churches valued at $3500, a parsonage valued at $1000, 68 church members, an Epworth League, and a Ladies Aid. In 1904 Bruce and Ladysmith were served by the same pastor, but two years later 64 members necessitate a full-time minister at Ladysmith. A $800 church had been built, and the pastor received $475. The Tony pastorate was added to his duties in 1910. Meanwhile, in 1906, Bruce and Weyerhauser had joined in trusting their religious affairs to one pastor, who also was in charge of some out-lying Sunday Schools. In the same year a church

173 Congregational Convention, 57th annual report 1897.
174 Ibid., 62nd, 65th, 67th, 68th reports and Rusk Jl., May 20, 1911.
175 Ibid., 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th reports.
176 West Wisconsin Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 44th annual report, 1928.
177 Ibid., 48th, 49th, 58th reports.
178 Ibid., 52nd report.
179 Ibid., 58th report.
180 Ibid., 52nd and 58th report.
was started at Holcombe.

The records of the Baptist church do not agree on exact dates of organization, but about 1900 a church was established at Glen Flore; by 1810 it had 35 members and $1275 worth of property. Reverend B. Banesfield was pastor, but in 1920 there was no pastor. The history of the Ladysmith church parallels that of Glen Flore, organized about 1800, it declined and was without a pastor in 1920. About 1910 Ingram organized a Baptist church. A Christian Church was organized in Ladysmith by Reverend Stark in 1901.

In 1903 the Catholics of Ladysmith first organized to hold mass and planned to build a church and parsonage valued at $3,000 or $4,000. There is no news account of this having been done, but the old church still stands in Ladysmith. A new church and school, in one, was dedicated October 27, 1912 by Rt. Rev. A. F. Schinner, Bishop of Superior. Ingram and Glen Flore each built "new" Catholic churches in 1904.

The German Lutherans were ready to build a church in 1904, but the newspaper carried no mention of its original organization.

181 Ibid., 52nd report.
183 "Ten Years Ago" Rusk Jl., Aug. 12, 1911.
184 Gates Jl., Dec. 12, 1903.
186 Ibid., Mar. 5 and 12, 1904.
Presbyterian churches were organized by the Chippewa Presbyter in Island Lake in 1907, Flambeau, 1910, and Conrath, 18910.

As is so often the case, Protestant church history reflects the enthusiasm of the people better than public utilities or schools. Easily and inexpensively started, they spring up like mushrooms, but when the pinch comes, the easiest economy is to dispense with the pastor, destroy the plans for the new church, or even sell out to another denomination. And so in Rusk County, the multiplicity of churches around 1905 start declining around 1910, and many erstwhile enthusiastic groups are forced to be content with a Sunday school.

**Organizations** Rusk County was great on organization. Its people loved nothing more than the "fraternal grip," "meeting," "grand masters," "past mistresses," "initiation," "sisters," "death benefits," "mystic signs."

Was it that they felt a need to "belong"? Or did they feel it to be a sign that they were of the aristocracy—an aristocracy of money or of education being absent? Or was it just the simple desire to belong in this wilderness, to the same group to which they had belonged at home—a tie holding them to civilization? By 1904 the list of lodge meetings the paper included: Odd Fellows, Masons, Woodmen, Royal Neighbors, Maccabees, Rebekahs, Foresters, Knights of 188 Pythias, Beavers, and Beaver Queens. In 1906 the list 188 Wisconsin Synod of the Presbyterian Church, 58th and 53th sessions. 188 Gates Jl., 1904.
had been enlarged by Woman's Relief Corps, Quoitite Fra-
ternal Union, Eastern Star, Mystic Workers, Mystic Tie, 190
S. A. R. and W. C. T. U. The villages were not far
behind Ladysmith, but a list of their fraternal affilia-
tions would be boring, unnecessary, and undoubtedly in-
complete.

A few attempts were made to organize the musical
interests of the various communities but there seemed to
be more elections of officers than practicing or making
public appearances. In all fairness it must be noted that
a frontier seldom drew the trained musician and few com-
munities could afford to pay a real leader.

Among the organizations of merely local fame, must
be noted an Automobile Club with the admirable program of
improving roads and guarding the rights of the traveling
public. E. M. Worden was justly made its first president,
for it was he who had owned the first car in Rusk County.
There was nothing small about Ed, when he bought a car, he
bought a car, nothing less than a one-cylinder Cadillac,
a Cadillac with a history. It was the first car which had
driven up to the famous Dietz place. Ed bought it second-
hand in 1904, no, not exactly that, for Ed never bought any-
thing; he traded it in 1904 for a house and lot, allowing 192
$1050 for the car—or so the story goes. In 1911 the

190 Rusk Jl., 1906.
192 Ibid., May 3, 1923.
Automobile Club had a "century run" from Ladysmith to Phillips and never again became of news value.

The Book Club of 1911, each member of which bought a book and exchanged it with the other members, was evidence that the ladies, at least, were striving toward higher things.

Newspapers The history of the "County" paper has been recorded in the bibliography to this essay, but no county history would be complete without saying something about the editors and policies. There is little which one can quote from the papers to show their spirit and their place in the county affairs, as is evidenced by this sample of "news": "The Ladysmith Post Office did a larger business in Post Office orders than any other office in Northern Wisconsin, except Rice Lake and Phillips, during the past year, leaving out the big cities, but, nevertheless, the whole spirit of the community is felt in this organ. The editorial, if there was an editorial, was apt to be "patent inside" and much of the space was taken by serials or travelogue articles. There was little state and no national news. Dell H. Richards, who started the Weekly Journal was a most enthusiastic booster for the county--a Moses at the gates of the Promised Land could have had no more faith in the milk and honey than Dell had in waterpower and alfalfa. His original paper was a 6 column quarto with only two pages of "home-plant" done on an "army" press. In 1905 he ad-

193 Rusk Jl., June 22, 1907.
mitted it to be "one of the largest county newspapers in
Northern Wisconsin". In 1908 the paper was bought by
the Journal Company with Phil S. Reed as editor. He said
that the paper was to "continue" its Republican policies and
regularly wrote editorials on local affairs. It is im-
possible to give a complete list of county "sheets", but
in 1905 there were, besides the Weekly Budget, the Glen
Flora Star, Tony Enterprise, Journal, Ingram News. At
various later times there rose and declined the Ingram
Advance and Hawkins Reporter, along with those mentioned.
What faith these editors must have had and how cruelly they
were repaid!

The Land "Gently undulating, neither hilly nor
dead level", fertile clay loam, typical dairy section,—
only a few degrees colder than northern Illinois, Indiana,
and Iowa, and rainfall more plentiful—thus the Wisconsin
Geological Survey in 1918. The old saying, "By chimney,
last week we got foot of snow, this week we got foot of
grass" may have been said of Rusk County. Frequently it
is referred to as "natural clover land"; perhaps it is, but
let me tell a personal incident. One spring day I saw a
real estate agent of my acquaintance with a canvas bag
slung over his shoulder walking through some cut-over land
swinging one arm with the gesture of a sower. Questioning

184 Gates Jl., May 6, 1905.
185 Rusk Jl., Aug. 22, 1903.
186 Gates Jl., July 15, 1905.
brought only evasion, but the neighbors were not at all reticent—according to them he was preparing to show prospective buyers some "natural clover land". Mr. T. C. Jones, another land agent, is reputed to have told at a banquet that he had been trying for years to lie about Rusk County by over-stating its advantages, but in vain. Every time he thought he had made a strong statement he was contradicted by a farmer who knew from actual experience that he had understated. Stories could be multiplied almost endlessly, but let us consider a few actual facts.

When Rusk became a county, land certainly was low in price. In 1903 the Northern Farm Land Company sold 198 15,423 acres to the J. L. Gates Land Company for $86,000. Big sales, however, usually bring less money. An 80 acre farm two miles from town with a house was advertised for 199 sale at $1000 and a house and lot in town for $250. In 1904 the state placed all of its land on sale, 6,360 acres in 159 descriptions, to be sold at $40 to $1340 per 40 acre piece, not more than a quarter to one bidder. Many 200 people felt this price to be entirely too high. In the same year the register of deeds reported transfers of 198 Gates Jl., Sept. 6, 1903.
199 Ibid., Mar. 14, 1903.
200 Ibid., Nov. 10 and Dec. 28, 1903.
201 Ibid., Sept. 28, 1903.
"It ranges in price from $5 to $10 per acre...will develop fine farms that will be worth $20 to $50 per acre", and the Gates Land Company advertised 300,000 acres for sale at $4 to $10 per acre on terms. Even at these prices it was necessary to offer further inducements to gain settlers. The Gates Company offered a thorough-bred cow and calf of any of three good breeds with every 160 acres, a quarter down, the balance on long time at 6%, and the George Knoblauch Farm Land Company built a log house on every 30 acres.

A great deal of the early settlement was done by groups of people by colonization companies. In the spring of 1904—21 immigrants arrived from Nebraska in a passenger coach on a freight train bearing their horses, cattle, hogs, chickens, and farm supplies. They located along the line of the railroad. In the same year a Bohemian group settled in the town of Rusk and a group of Danes between the Thornapple and Chippewa rivers. The comment of the papers throw an interesting sidelight. "The Danes are an industrious class of people and make good farmers. As a rule, these settlers have money enough to pay for their land and to buy farming outfits, while some are very well-to-do"—was "money enough to pay for their land and to buy

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203 Ibid., Sept. 8, 1903.
204 Ibid., Sept. 27, 1903.
205 Ibid., Mar. 18, 1903.
206 Ibid., July 14, 1903.
207 Ibid., Mar. 29, 1904.
208 Ibid., May 14, 1904.
209 Ibid., Sept. 17, 1904.
farm outfits" news? Three other projects in 1904 are interesting, although neither apparently leads to any results. Three agents for Chicago Russians and Lithuanians looked over the central part of the county with a view to colonizing, and a similar investigation was carried on for forty Russian families in Michigan. J. S. Lauer, a Catholic priest from Plain, Wisconsin, reconnoitered for a Catholic settlement. In 1908 L. Muelbach of Chicago sold 1800 acres five miles north of Ladysmith to a German nobleman, Frk. Von Lenden, who planned to colonize it and to raise stock. The next year an Immigration Association incorporated: "The business and purposes of this corporation shall be the promotion of immigration to, and the development of Rusk County, Wisconsin, and the advertising of the agricultural, industrial, and commercial resources and advantages of said Rusk County." John Miller and Tom Foster of Big Bend organized the German and British Information Bureau and sent Mr. Foster to establish branch offices in all of the large cities in the British Isles while Mr. Miller took charge of affairs at home. The Feast Land Company of Conrath advertised that they had sold land to 150 families, 100 of which actually settled within an eight mile radius of Conrath, thus adding approximately 1000 people to the population of the county within less than three years. Well, well, how times have changed since

209 Ibid., July 20, 1904.
211 Article I of "Constitution of Immigration Association in
   Ibid., Feb. 2, 1907.
212 Ibid., Nov. 6 and Dec. 4, 1909.
213 Ibid., Sept. 16, 1811.
the typical frontier of Professors Turner and Paxson and
Heamlin Garland. Things are no longer done in any hit and
miss fashion, big business has stepped in and brought
efficiency, experts, and advertising to do this job up
right.

Another form of early development in the county was
the ranch. The Bruce News Letter reported that there was
claimed to be good money in sheep. In 1902 Rose V. and
Edward J. McGowen bought 1380 and 1840 acres respectively
from the Gates Land Company to start a "cattle ranch". It
was reported that 3000 acres were to be fenced and 4500
ewe sheep to be brought from Montana and about 300 heifers.

Three years later Mr. McGowen, of the Globe Commission
Company of the Union Stock Yards, Chicago, reported the sale
of 38 ewes averaging 115 pounds at $4.55 and 23 lambs averag-
ing .79 pounds at $8.10. He claimed they had never had any
grain, but were fattened on brush. William Foy and F. W.
Tubbs of Chicago, to whom Stricker Bros., is added later,
owned a ranch ten miles south of Laramie to which they
brought sheep at various times from Colorado, Montana,
Illinois, and Washington. At one time it was reported they
had a flock of 10,000. These were fattened in a few weeks
and shipped to Chicago, only a few were wintered over.

Another Chicago ranch was established by Darlington Bros.

214 Gates Jl., June 25, 1904.
215 Ibid., Sept. 20, 1902.
216 Ibid., Feb. 28, 1905.
217 Ibid., Mar. 23, 1904; May 27; July 8 and 15; Dec. 20, 1905.
to fatten sheep for the Chicago market. In this connection one gets a hint of some of the sub rosa activities during this early period. The Chippewa Independent reported a case in Supreme Court in which Darlington Bros. sue the Gates Land Company for $2,000 damages and $5,000 worth of timber which they claim the land company sold to some one else.

Little is heard of these ranches after 1905 and after 1910 they were largely parcelled out and sold. The expense of fencing and of shipping the sheep from the west, the impracticability of keeping large flocks over winter, and a drop in the price of lamb and mutton made this too precarious a proposition for anyone who had the capital to invest, but how it did inflate the pride of Rusk County to have real ranches and capitalists in its confines!

The typical "native son" of this period and this region is, Jake Savord of the town of Flambeau. Born in Quebec, rumor gave him a fair percentage of Indian blood. In his dim past was a period spent as a "government officer" in Minnesota, but he came to Rusk County as a cruiser before Corbett started his mill. He helped to build the oldest house in the region, on the Vinette farm, now the Bell farm, and the Ducommen house which became a "stopping place". He built the first ferry boat to be used on the Flambeau. Later he settled on a piece of land in the hills where the Flambeau flows into the Chippewa and planted one of the few apple orchards in the county. Jake was not an enthusiast;
he probably loved Rusk County for the memories it held for him, but he settled there because he happened to be there, not because he had been lured in by a land agent holding out tales of easy wealth for a bait. He was not an evangelist; he broke his land and planted his orchard, but he had no desire to convert any one else to his faith or his fortune.

Frank Strove, "Skunk Frank" was another "native son". After driving logs for 17 years in Michigan, he came to Wisconsin and drove for 27 years on the Thornapple, Flambeau and Chippewa rivers. During the winter he was deer hunter for logging camps, killing as many as 47 deer in one winter. Besides these he claims to his credit 60 to 100 wolves, 30-40 bear, 70-80 wildcats, and innumerable muskrat, weasel, and skunk. Finally a shack and a garden patch and long tales of marvels which happened at times and places unknown to his contemporaries.

The "typical" pioneer of this region is well portrayed by William Skrupsky. In 1897 he was thrown out of work by a strike in Connelsville, Pennsylvania. He sold his cow and little property and came with seven other families to try his fortune in this region. When he arrived he had $11 with which he bought 80 acres of wild land at $7 an acre. He paid $5 down. A shanty was built, wood and logs of

were traded for groceries, and shingle bolts sold for ready cash. Twenty years later his wild land was a farm.

John W. Diedrich, a carpenter from Oshkosh, became another "typical" pioneer. In 1901 he came with between $400 and $500 and bought 160 acres of land, on which he and his 18 year-old son put up a log house. They had no team, no stock, just a few chickens and courage, but in 1917 they had 50 acres fully improved and the rest in pasture, a $15,000 home, a hipped roof barn, a gasoline engine, and an auto.

Rusk County was advertised as a dairy country, but about everything was tried. Tobacco was planted by several, and "good weaner stock" raised as early as 1904, and in 1910 a carload was actually shipped from Port Arthur. Now the University of Wisconsin Agricultural station became so interested that it furnished seed to farmers for trial planting. Ginseng was also planted; it had originally grown wild, but the Indians had cleaned it out pretty well. The Chippewa Sugar Company attempted to interest the farmers in the raising of sugar beets. One of the land companies tried the raising of mules. There was always a few venturesome souls to try every venture, but most of the settlers had to use every available bit of land to get in the crop that was most likely to bring in some real cash; precious cleared land could not be risked. There was, how-

220 Rusk Jr., Jan. 23, 1922.
221 Ibid., Jan. 5, 1917.
223 Rusk Jr., Feb. 5, 1910.
224 Gates Jr., July 8, 1904.
225 Rusk Jr., Mar. 30, 1907.
226 Ibid.
ever, a steady growth in staple crops.

The first wave of immigration over and people settled down to hard labor, the farmers began to feel the need of organization. The American Society of Equity started a county union in 1907 to hold and control farm products for prices, but they were not enthusiastically received. A Development Association was organized the same year, but the seller of farms seemed more interested in that than the farmer. $1000 was asked from the county board, $500 granted to carry out its activities.

The first organization truly of and for farmers was that of the Guernsey men of Rusk and Chippewa counties who banded together for the improvement of cure breds and high grade cattle, and the saving of expense through cooperation.

By 1910 Rusk County agriculture had not found itself—it was a bit overshadowed by the big talk of lumber, minerals, and water-power, and a bit back broken by pulling stumps and picking stones. A few more years and its spokesmen would arise and talk for it, while the farmer would go right on breaking his back.

**Politics** One last consideration in the "Boom" period—politics. Every place else had politics, so Rusk County had to have some, too. In 1902 it started out with

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227 See table of Assessor's Reports in Appendix.
228 Rusk Jl., Nov. 5, 1907.
229 Rusk Jl., May 11, 1907.
230 Ibid., Aug. 15, 1908.
two perfectly good conventions, each of which had its full quota of committees and delegates, but here, the Democrats ran out of members, and there were none left to make up a county ticket. The election was held anyway and a 348 plurality given to La Follette. "A great deal of acathy in regard to the election existed in Gates County", only about half of the men voters turned out, and very few women.

Two years later the election got exciting. A Roosevelt-La Follette club was formed at Glen Flora with 50% of the qualified voters. Early in November stalwart and Republican rallies were held. Lithographs of the principles in the election were pasted up, buttons for Roosevelt and La Follette were passed out. When the day actually came 1733 voted, Roosevelt receiving 1137 votes and La Follette 776. One wonders how these 1137 people made up their minds—the newspaper carried scarcely any information about the candidates either in articles or in advertisements. And so the contest goes on, the Democrats occasionally getting on the ticket, usually not, a few rallies, a bit of literature, a few voters, and it is all over.

License, however, was a different matter. This was close at home, tangible, vital, and bitter. Should there be saloons or should there not? The pioneer adored this opportunity to make his own laws directly, without any board

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231 Gates Jl., Sept. 6 and 13, Oct. 4, Nov. 11, 1902.
232 Ibid., July 7, 1904.
233 Ibid., Nov. 8 and 12, 1904.
meditating for him. Hawkins started things off by voting 234
dry 2 to 1 in 1907. The next year True, with the village
of Glen Flora, and Big Bend, with Appolonia, voted dry, but
235 Ladysmith, Bruce and Ingram went wet. 1909 saw Ladysmith
236 still wet but Bruce dry. Another year and Bruce back-
slid, but Ladysmith and Tony maintained their position.
Not until 1912 did recalcitrant Ladysmith come around and
give license the victory by 123 majority.

So let us end this first period of county history--
a period of "boom", of big talk, of impossible hope, but
also a period of true accomplishment, of beginning, of self-
finding. Perhaps in churches, newspapers, and expectations
the county was over-reaching itself, but most of its invest-
ments had as much possibility of success as any new venture.
Some frontier problems, such as Indians, it never had to
face, but others, such as transportation, access to a market,
and credit were very real. It was expensive but every farmer
was given his road, a market was provided by the Soo Line,
and credit by the land companies. But despite the apparent
case of settlement, the lack of many obstacles, and the
strong backs of the settlers there were breakers ahead. In
1910 the turbulent stream had reached the mill pond, work
was to be done, but none knew that the rapids beyond had
sharp, jagged rocks waiting for the unwary.

234 Rusk Jl., Apr. 6, 1907.
235 Ibid., Apr. 11, 1908.
236 Ibid., Apr. 10, 1902.
237 Ibid., Apr. 9, 1910.
238 Ibid., Apr. 1912.
Chapter II

Period of Steady Development

The enthusiasm of childhood is all right in its place, but eventually it must give way to the steady industry of young manhood. In Rusk County this was noticed quite perceptibly in the voice of the newspaper and of the county board—nothing one can quote to prove this point, but there is an air of purposeful industry and an end of enthusiastic talk about colonies, ranches, cities-to-be, strange industries, spectacular farm products—more of actuality and less of nebulous potentialities.

Lumbering The first of these actualities was the end of lumbering. When forests are gone, they are gone, and not the most gifted of land agents or the most daring of liars can convince one they are not. With the end of the forests came the end of lumbering, and no further necessity for sawmills. As luck would have it a series of fires about this time destroyed some of the mills so they did not become delapidated old affairs to mar the landscape. In 1907 the Beldenville Lumber Company yards, near Bruce, burned, with an estimated loss of $100,000. And that was the end of Beldenville; today, not even a

1 Rusk Jl., Nov. 23, 1907.
road goes through this erstwhile metropolis-to-be. In 1914 the Hein mill burned at Tony, $10,000 loss, the Arpin planing mill at Atlanta, valued at $35,000, and the Menasha Woodware Company, all total losses. In 1918 the rest of the Arpin mill was destroyed, and in 1922 fire came right into the county seat and burned the office and storeroom of the Fountain-Campbell mill. I do not mean to imply that there was absolutely no more lumbering, far from it, but this was the end of lumbering on a large scale, of great drives down the river, of wholesale cutting. Many small companies continued to operate for many years. The Gilman Manufacturing Company, for instance, bought the last tract of good timber near Ladysmith in 1929. It was highly prized by Mr. Lindoo who had bought 116 acres from the government forty years ago and had left this piece in virgin growth. Many farmers still had timber on their land, but it was too scattered and in too small tracts to be profitably cleared by a lumber company. The farmer, though, and his family, often including the women, or a hired helper or two "got it out" in the winter, hauled it to town for stove wood, ties, or bolts, and thus made a bit of ready cash. Many suggestions were made as to profitable use of "poverty

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2 Ibid., May 21, 1914.
3 Ibid., Feb. 5, 1914.
4 Ibid., Mar. 12, 1914.
5 Ibid., Mar. 15, 1918.
6 Ibid., Mar. 30, 1922.
wood; but as a rule it was piled and burned before more expense was incurred.

Each winter one less lumber camp, each year one less sawmill, and unnoticed lumbering left the county. It was too bad, though, for lumbering is so picturesque. The jack with his woolen outfit, his winter's growth of protective beard, and his coarse, ready humor will never be replaced by any other group. Today, after a long tramp through the swamps and woods, where does one stop in for a tin plate of fried potatoes and meat and a chunk of pie? What will replace the lumber camp dances? The tables pushed back, the babies sleeping on the cook's bunk, a violin scraping in one corner, cards snapping in the bunk room, women and girls and the "schoolmarm" whirling about in the figures of a square; coffee and pie and stolen handfuls of prunes—what do people do now on Saturday night? What will become of the "lingo" of the lumber jack? He cannot talk of "twisters," "king pins," "school mams," and "cant hooks" to the layman.

Old Joe went into the woods at twelve years of age, water boy; fifty-five years without missing a winter in camp. I wonder where Old Joe is now? He used to take the sleeping babies from the cook's bunk and diddle them on his knees while he told us about the "big drive" and his grandchildren.

**Commercial Activity** One new sawmill did start up about this time and reached considerable size. The
Flambeau River Lumber Company, headed by Mr. E. K. Hughey of Iowa, capitalized at $100,000, purchased the old Corbett mill and in 1910 built a new one. It was rumored that the company owned 10,000 acres, with 50 million feet of logs, in the town of Flambeau. Two years later, a short time before the fire, it bought out the stock of the Menasha Woodenware Company. Great activity, a hundred men to be employed the year around, three shifts, great drives coming in the spring, and then all is quiet, no news articles, no prognostications of next season, and finally a lawsuit. The company claimed that the Chippewa and Flambeau River Improvement Company had held up its logs until the spring waters had passed, damaging them $200,000 worth by buffeting. At special term of circuit court, Judge A. H. Ried of Wausau awarded the damages, and now one last spurt of enthusiasm—the mill will run again, "millions of merchantable timber still lie in the valley of the Flambeau River between here and Park Falls."  

With the arrival of the Schram Manufacturing Company, the paper saw a new epoch in the development of the city, for this was a manufacturing industry turning out a finished product, located here because it was a railroad center and a "prospective commercial center." Before it started operations, however, it sold out to local men. Thirty-three workers were employed and

8 Rusk Jl., Nov. 6, 1909; Apr. 1, 1911; Apr. 18, 1913; Feb. 27, 1913.
the first shipment indicated an expected $100,000 business per year. All quite on the subject of the Chair Factory, which is its title under local control, until 1924, when R. W. Tallman and William Sandmyer leased it to make boxes for cheeses. A dozen men were to be employed, but a few months later the Elmberg Company was encamped in the factory planning to make toys and juvenile furniture. Thus the largest wood-working industry in the county.

For ten years, from 1916 to 1926, the Fountain-Campbell Mill was located in Ladysmith getting out what timber it owned in that region. It, too, was to employ a hundred men. Its cut completed, it moved west, selling out to the Bissell Lumber Company of Marshfield, who planned to bring logs down the river from their holdings in Sawyer County.

The county did have one thing, however, that could not be cleared off in a dozen years, and that was water power. A fall of 570 feet in 150 miles was the source of almost unlimited power. It had been dammed at Ladysmith, at Port Arthur, and at Thornapple during the first decade of the century, but the Big Falls, north of Ladysmith, had never been developed. For an industrial future, this was

11 Ibid., Dec. 27, 1924.
12 Ibid., Aug. 20, 1925.
14 Chapter I, note 66.
the logical location of Ladysmith, but so strong and so persuasive was the railroad that it was located on its right of way and thus the need of a spur eliminated. Naturally, Big Falls was a beautiful place; the water frothed over jagged rocks, broke against crags whose sharp edges had not yet been worn smooth by this young stream, and the spray fell back only to be thrown high by the next rock. The banks, not flat, neither high, were richly timbered in second growth and enmassed in a snarl of raspberry bushes that hid the pickers from their fellow workers. Deer came down to drink, partridges nested in the shrivelled ferns, rabbits made the wilderness a metropolis of boulevards, streets, and alleys; coyotes added their hysterical giggle to the roar of the laughing water—what a place, what a place for a game preserve! Why not a government forest with fire rangers and systematic regulation of timber supply? Not an orderly forest like those in Germany, but a natural one and yet giving its scientific, annual yield of straight, sound timber. Why harness the water power, why harrass this God-given peace, why break men's backs and hearts to grow foolish oats and clover where berries and roots now abound? But that's progress—build a dam, a mill, some stores, tear up the forest, plant tobacco, "Excelsior!"

In 1915, A. F. Hein of Tony sold this water power to W. H. Burgess of Boston for $100,000. It was understood that a corporation was to take it over and develop
8,000 to 10,000 horse power. Like the north and south railroad line, the actual ownership of this site was largely a matter of conjecture, but rumor gave it to the Dupont Powder Company, although the Montreal and Bad River Improvement Company were doing the work. Two sites were being surveyed, one for a 68 foot dam, the other a 40 foot, and arrangements were being made for 300 men. In 1919 the Flambeau Construction Company actually started drilling for the dam site, just an everyday job for an engineer, but let the imagination play for a moment on Erick Anderson in the wilderness, sleeping with thirteen pounds of diamonds valued at $40,000, which were to be used in the drills next day. In 1921 finances were the chief concern; $2,250,000 worth of bonds were to be sold. The dam, so planned, was to be 3700 feet long with a head of 68 feet which would develop 15,000 horse power, and there was also to be storage dam 600 feet long with a capacity of 5 billion feet of water in Turtle Basin. According to C. E. Collins, General Manager of the L. E. Myers Company of Chicago, which was doing the work, "Tight condition of the money market has been the cause of the delay thus far," but in 1922, the depression past, 300 men were put to work. That winter an 88,000 volt transmission line was started to

16 Ibid., July 28, 1916.
17 Ibid., Mar. 21, 1919.
18 Ibid., Mar. 10, 1931.
19 Ibid., Feb. 15, 1912.
carry power from Big Falls 90 miles to the Gogebic Iron Range to be used in the mines. By 1925 all of the neighborhood was using Big Falls power for municipal light and many farmers had tapped the lines for an electrified farm. Of course, electric power is different from most commodities, for it need not be used where it is made, but can be cheaply transported long distances. The development of Big Falls, therefore, will not materially add to the development of Rusk County, but it will add to regions which have raw material or a ready market.

Among the miscellaneous industries that developed during the period, novelty works occupy a major position. Near the source of supply of cheap, small wood, their products are small enough to be easily shipped to centers of demand. Few of these plants, however, existed for any length of time; most anyone can run a lathe, but marketing the finished product with little ready capital is another matter. Shingles, lath, clothes racks, toys, handles, tub hoops, sashes and doors, and cabinet work were the chief products and each village had its share of shops, mills, or factories. Other projects which were started, many of which left not even an old sign board to remind the antiquarian, were: Marble works, a branch office of International Harvester, a potash plant

20 Ibid., Dec. 7, 1932.
21 Ibid., Nov. 28 and Dec. 31, 1925.
an "Agless" plant to manufacture egg-substitute, a wholesale candy factory, a cigar factory, and a bottling company. Which were actually started and which were merely foretold by the papers it is difficult to tell. Two wholesale houses were actually put into operation, one, the Ladysmith Grocer Company, with a capital stock of $50,000, and the other, the Wholesale Fruit Company.

Banks furnish a pretty good indication of the status of a community. In the early days Rusk County established many banks and all seemed to have plenty of capital, to be fairly cautious, and yet not so cautious as to hinder economic progress. Just one illustration:

The Rusk County Bank in 1913 had deposits totalling $37,654.69 and assets of $80,601.90; in 1914 the deposits totaled $75,783.36 and the assets $114,101.20. I 1914 the Southern Wisconsin Bankers took a trip through northern Wisconsin and spent one day in Ladysmith, and in 1916 the Rusk County Bankers completed an organization of their own, for the purpose of solving their problems and aiding in the development of the county. New banks were organized almost yearly, in Hawkins in 1911; Weyerhaeuser in 1912; Glen Flora in 1914; Sheldon in 1917; and

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22 Ibid., July 25, 1919.
25 Ibid., June 4, 1914.
26 Ibid., Feb. 18, 1914.
27 Ibid., Aug. 13 and Sept. 9, 1911.
28 Ibid., Sept. 19, 1912.
29 Ibid., Sept. 3, 1914.
again in 1920; Bruce in 1921, and the Pioneer National in Ladysmith in 1920. In 1922 the Rusk County Bank of Ladysmith which had been founded in 1911, bought the State Bank, which had been founded in 1903. Together they had deposits of $800,000 and a million dollars of resources.

Land companies must all be considered in the credit resources of a new community. Michaelson and Hughes Company, for instance, advertise that they hold a million dollars on mortgages in Rusk and adjoining counties. There were few of the retired business man or farmer type that one sees in southern Wisconsin, loaning money on land mortgages and thus acquiring wealth in riches and in land. The company was too young to have developed its own lenders and too great a risk to attract them from elsewhere.

Another economic barometer was the post office.

A postal savings bank in Ladysmith, new rural mail routes, petitions for additional post offices, all show a growing population. In 1912 the Ladysmith post office was raised to second class with J. W. Fritz as postmaster at a salary of $2,000. In 1915 the lease of the post office building expired and it was so crowded that the department advertised for bids for a new one. Two years earlier Senator Lenroot had introduced a bill, but it "had to

32 Ibid., Mar. 3, 1921.
34 Ibid., June 29, 1922.
36 Ibid., Mar. 11, 1911.
37 Ibid., May 23, 1912.
give way to 'pork barrel' appropriations for the purpose of improving navigation on day runs." Luck was better this time, however, and soon the post office was located in a new building that had been erected especially for it. The receipts had mounted rapidly during the early years of the county; in 1900, $667; 1905, $4262; 1910, $7121; 1915, $11,000. Free city delivery was asked for and granted in 1917 as soon as the street signs and house numbers were up. 1,139 patrons were served that first year.

In considering commercial activity, one must not omit the pulse of the community--the newspaper. The Rusk County Journal was sold in 1912 to D. W. Maloney, who had become experienced in the field in the Glen Flora Star. He was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School, a member of that famous class of Robert M. LaFollette, Senior, and had been admitted to the bar at the first term of court held in Gates County, of which he later became judge. Dedicating his paper to a policy of Progressive Republicanism, he gave full vent to his vitriolic pen and no one was safe from attack. Do not misunderstand, he was eminently fair, always taking the part of "the people," and pulling the sham from public policies. He was dynamic and fearless. On his death bed he wrote a

38 Ibid., Dec. 24, 1915.
40 Ibid., May 23, 1912.
long open letter to the electorate, warning them to consider the coming election and exposing the falsity of opposition arguments. Within the three years he doubled the circulation of the paper, did away with "patent inside," and issued a semi-weekly, but it soon reverted to its once-a-week policy. Most of the paper was made up of county correspondence, there was little "society" news, and the editorials were always particularly apt and pointed. After a brief period in which the paper was edited by his son, Gerald Maloney, he sold out to his great rival, "Brother Bell." Mark R. Bell, editor of the Ladysmith News-Budget, was more interested in journalism than in exposing the "silk-stocking" crowd to the proletariat. He devoted a full first page column to the recent basketball game, depending on the season, included many rural notes, a section by the city schools, a continued story, a comic strip, and legislative notes. There was no federal news, most of the advertisements were local, and much of it was "set" material. In 1927 the Wisconsin Press Association awarded the paper second place in farm news service and honorable mention for first page make-up, and in 1930 it was awarded second place for the best weekly newspaper in the National Editorial contest for better newspapers.

42 Ibid., Jan. 27, 1927.
43 News, Feb. 18, 1927.
44 Ibid., Feb. 14, 1930.
I have tried to give a general impression of the development of industry in Rusk County after 1910. In the appendix I have included a summary of U. S. Census reports showing by actual statistics that there was a steady growth in commercial activity.

Agriculture But real progress lay along agricultural lines. There is an absolutely new note sounded in this development. No longer does the individual struggle along alone; organization is the keynote—cooperative buying and selling, scientific instruction, the development of standard crops. A brief review of the organizations for agricultural advancement will not be amiss, as they indicate the newer tendency. In 1910 a Farmers' Club was organized at Conrath. Without a very definite program it soon dwindled, but was replaced in 1913 by a Rural Industrial Association which planned to boost agricultural interests by securing better stock and methods. It was headed by J. C. Stubb's of Weyerhaeuser, a very practical, level-headed man who understood pioneer problems. In 1915 the inanimate Rusk County Development Association was resuscitated under the title of Boosters' Association. They planned to concentrate on advertising and raised funds by contributions; probably they were more interested in immigra-

45 Rusk Jl., Aug. 27, 1910.
46 Ibid., Mar. 6, 1913.
tion than in agricultural advancement. National farm organizations never seemed to get very far in Rusk County. It was true that ten local unions of the American Society of Equity were formed and held an annual county convention. The Rusk County Farm Bureau also organized to get better legislation for the farmer, to put the farmers on an equal basis with organized manufacturers and laborers. In later years the farmers got back to their own local organizations, as the Advancement Association which planned to federate various county interests to give "suitable, desirable, and dependable publicity." The county board appropriated $500 towards this. An interesting development in rural organizations was that of the 4-H Clubs, preparing boys and girls to meet farm problems intelligently and sympathetically. A great deal was accomplished in this line which cannot be measured until the next generation takes hold, but for the present the Rusk County clubs carried off many honors at the state show.

Organization answered one need for the farmer, the agricultural representation another. The second decade of the twentieth century set a new fashion by doing things scientifically. President Wilson was putting scientific experts on governmental boards, every factory had a corps of scientific advisors, why not the farmer? Seed put into the ground grows, but at one time

it grew better if a fish was put in each hold, at another
time it grew better if planted in the proper phase of the
moon, now it grew better if it were tested and planted
in prepared soil under the direction of a county agent.
For two years the progressives fought the fundamental-
ists, and in 1916 they won; the county board appropriated
$2000 for a county agricultural representative, and G. M.
Householder, graduate of the University of Wisconsin School
of Agriculture was hired. His activity that first year,
activity is such a mild word to use in describing Mr.
Householder, tearing about the county to address meetings
or give individual advice or deliver live stock that had
been joggled indiscriminately with his babies in the back
seat of his old Model T, is best described by giving a
resume of his first report to the county board; Testing
every cow for butter fat and milk production and making
out a balanced ration, urging planting of certified potato
seed to be purchased through the representative, experi-
mentation with root crops and types of corn, organization
and direction of boys' and girls' clubs, planning farm
buildings, marketing in the county through the representa-
tive, visiting and advising each new settler, land clear-
ing demonstrations, short course in agriculture, and so
on, and so on, almost ad infinitum. In 1919 the State
Agricultural College and the United States Department of

1916.
Agriculture ordered the carrying out of three major projects through the county agent's office: improvement of dairy stock, improvement of potatoes, boys' and girls' club work. In 1922, in line with the general economy program being carried out by the county, the agricultural agent was dispensed with, but not without so much objection that it became necessary to resort to that darling of the people—the referendum. But even scientific advice could not prevail against the cry for lowered taxes, and the agent lost out 579 to 1393. The newspaper attempted to fill his place by means of a Question and Answer Department conducted by an ex-county agent and a veterinarian. 1935, a new agent, and a new program—greater diversification in the form of a hen, a hog, a dairy cow, and a cash field crop on every farm. When this county agent, Mr. Duffy, now state commissioner of agriculture, left the county board refused to hire another on the grounds that the appropriation had been made for Mr. Duffy and not for a county agent, and now the poor financial state of affairs demanded a lessening of expenses. Intermittently the agitation has been kept up, but to no avail. Words cannot

52 Ibid., 1919.
53 Ibid., 1922.
54 Husk Jr., Apr. 5, 1923.
55 Ibid., June 13, 1924 and ff.
56 Ibid., Mar. 12, 1935.
57 News, Apr. 15 and Mar. 25, 1927.
do justice to the work of these county agents—Mr. Householder, Mr. Jones, Mr. Duffy who gave the best that they had to ease the burden of these new settlers, to bring them some degree of success, to make possible the blossoming of the wilderness. Demands on their time and strength were beyond all conception, but they never stopped for even a moment.

And a third expression of this new voice in agriculture—the experimental farm. In 1910 the Faast Land Company gave Professor H. S. Milward of the horticulture department of the University of Wisconsin free use of 8 acres of land on which to plant 45 varieties of seed potatoes. In 1911 the state provided for the establishment of demonstration farms on county land, the state to pay $1000 annually and the county $500. At this period of its development the county was eagerly siezing on every paternalistic offer of the state, and so in 1912 the county board voted to offer the University a five year lease on 30 acres of the poor farm. At the same time the Faast Land Company offered the county a tract of land near Connrath, without charge, but to be tax free. The board felt that the poor farm site was the more desirable of the two, but the final decision was left to Mr. F. L. Musback of the Wisconsin Experiment Station. Meanwhile the controversy raged in the county—it was claimed that the Poor

57 Rusk Jl., June 25, 1910.
58 Laws of the State of Wisconsin, 1911 Chap. 624.
59 Proceedings County Board, 1912.
Farm soil was not typical of that of the county while at Conrath it was, but the Conrath location was inconvenient and inaccessible. An opportunity for direction legisla-

tion? "Why not a Referendum" cried the paper, but the
University Regents chose Conrath. But the malcontents
could not let matters rest, and in 1918 the county board
appointed a committee to investigate the advisability of
relocating the station. It was argued that the county
should own the land, so that it could benefit by the im-
provements, and that it should be located near the center
of the county. $500 was appropriated for five years to
carry on the work. In 1912 the United States govern-
ment experimented near Conrath with imported sugar and
table beet seed, and in 1914 the J. L. Gates Company set
out a demonstration farm of 300 trees near the Conrath sta-
tion. How different all this is from the hit and miss
method of the early settler! The land companies were not
to be outwitted by the state and the county board. In 1921
the National Land Colonizing Company hired a soils expert,
Mr. L. R. Schoenmann, formerly in government service, who
was to pass on all land before the company bought it, to
advise farmers, lay out roads, plan community centers—in
short, he was to direct scientific settlement. The general

60 Rusk JL., almost every issue from May 9, 1912 to Feb. 13,
1913.
62 Rusk JL., May 18, 1912.
63 Ibid., Apr. 23, 1914.
64 Ibid., Mar. 17, 1921.
populace never saw Mr. Schoenmann but took great delight in recounting yarns about the impracticability of his many plans.

Meanwhile land sales were going on and new settlers were coming in. The paper comments: "Tracts of land are not being bandied about between speculators in large bodies to make a showing. The sales are to actual settlers, as shown by the sizes of the tracts, and the fact that practically all purchasers have made a start toward improvement." Prices had gone up in proportion to other parts of the country. In 1919, for instance, a 60 acre farm brought $8,000, $133 per acre, a Glen Flora farm brought $140 per acre, the Wisconsin Crop Reporting Service gave the average price in the state as $126 per acre and in Rusk County as $100. One wonders, however, just how much of these sales was on paper only, especially after reading that a farmer who kept exact accounts for a year found $2.50 profit, while his neighbor lost $574. 1929 begins to show a little enthusiasm for frequent headlines appear about "Another Back to the Land Movement" accompanied by a list of two or three farm sales.

The land bought, a cabin built, and a cow installed it was still a long way to a farm. It is said that land agents with beguiling tongues called the attention of would-be settlers to the rapidity with which hard wood

65 Ibid., Dec. 19, 1919.
66 Ibid., Aug. 29, 1919; Jan. 23, 1920; Mar. 17, 1921.
68 Ibid., 1929.
stumps rot out of the ground, and then reasoned that soft pine stumps would naturally rot out much faster, but unfortunately nature did not reason that way, and the settler had to resort to other methods. The cheapest way was to dig around and under each stump and then pull it either by horse or woman power, but it was a long, tedious, and sometimes almost impossible task. Brush was piled around the stumps frequently and burned, but a tract would long since be free of brush and the stumps still only half burned. Dynamite or picric acid were effective, but expensive and dangerous near the house. The state reported that 38 pounds of dynamite would clear an acre of land, but Rusk County actually used 42 pounds to the acre, according to the county agent. Superintendent Delwicke estimated that it cost from $5 to $7 an acre to clear cut-over land, and $20 an acre to clear out pine stumps.

M. O. Emmons, a free lance farmer and journalist figured out a plan which cost $12.50 an acre—pile the brush against the stumps and burn out, plow and disc the larger cradle knolls, drag it all, sow clover and timothy, and in one season the land produced. But in the spirit which seemed to be characteristic of the county, it was decided that organization was the solution. The farmers of the town of Grow started the first Land Clearing Association in the state. They pledged themselves to raise

70 "Farm Bulletin No. 202" quoted in Rusk Jl., Nov 11, 1911.
71 Rusk Jl., June 30, 1921.
$3900 to buy a Faast stump pulling machine. It was to be moved from farm to farm somewhat on the old threshing machine plan. It was a contrivance which pulled and piled stumps in a wide swath as it was moved down the field. The Faast Company had been using it to clear 3 to 10 acres of land for each settler who bought from them.

The University of Wisconsin became very much interested in this land-clearing proposition. In 1916 they brought in a demonstration of horse and hand power, and of dynamite at Weyerhauser and at Glen Flora. Men were located in the county to study the situation and give advice, "specials" were sent through loaded with equipment and distributing advice and literature. At the end of the war the United States government found itself with a stock of T N T on hand. Arrangements were made by the county agent for Rusk County to get a carload. This was to be sold at under 10 cents a pound, not more than 100 pounds to a farmer. Five demonstrations were held in various parts of the county.

But all of this was nothing beside the spectacular Million Dollar Land Clearing Campaign which not only cleared hundreds of acres of land, but gave the county national fame. Now the one thing retarding county development was stumps; if only the whole lot could have been blown out by

72 Ibid., Oct. 1 and 22, 1910.
73 Ibid., Jan. 1, 1910.
74 Ibid., Sept. 15, 1918; Apr. 5, 1918; Mar. 28 and May 9, 1919.
75 Ibid., Aug. 8 and Oct. 24, 1919.
one jerk of the lever, but it could not be, so the next best thing was substituted. There was nothing half way about this proposition; it was started off at a banquet attended by the county board and officials, the city councilmen and officials, the real estate agents and bankers, the leading merchants and farmers—truly an imposing array. The proposition was made by John Swenehart and backed by the county agent, H. M. Jones. $3500 were contributed and many prizes of merchandise. Bruce and the other villages followed with their organization banquets; W. A. Blackburn was elected president; and meetings were called to explain the campaign. The final plans included a score card for each entrant. A detailed account of expenses was to be kept and deducted so that the small farmer with little income would have an equal chance with his more wealthy competitors. Brushing, stumping, and breaking were each to be graded separately, and quality was to be judged as well as quantity. The county was divided into districts with prizes of $100, $75, $50, $25, $15, and 100 pound lots of dynamite in each district. Then there were sweepstakes—a forty to the winner, a diamond ring to the winning lady, and so on. In July it was reported that there were 310 contestants working toward the dead line, November first. Finally the end came, the score cards were graded, and it was found that the slogan "6000 more cleared acres in 1930" had been surpassed—7160 acres had been cleared. A big celebration was held in Ladysmith. The Du Pont Powder Company
put powder under 50 stumps and connected them with electric
current, so that the pressure of a lever blew the fifty
stumps into the air, all at one time. Dean H. L. Russell
of the University of Wisconsin addressed the people. The
Service Star Mothers served a cafeteria dinner in the high
school gymnasium. The afternoon was given over to free
movies, a smoker, and department store bargain sales.

But the winners? Vincent Was of Conrath carried off the sweepstakes and John Boss of Tony second place.
The winner had been born in Poland and had lived in America
for thirteen years. Coming into northern Wisconsin he
worked for B. F. Faast, clearing, to earn enough to keep
his family and to pay down on his eighty. He did nothing
by halves; when he went into the land clearing contest,
he went in to win and his wife and seven children went in
with him. At four o'clock in the morning they were on the
land, breakfast eaten and chores done. All day they
brushed and pulled stumps, even the littlest ones carry-
ing great bundles of brush to pile for burning. At supper
time the eldest child, a girl who was incapable of complet-
ing the district school, brought a pail of coffee and a
loaf of bread to the field, so that even the precious moon-
light would not be wasted. And then at nine o'clock or ten
o'clock the chores were done and the family lay down to
store up enough strength for the next day. At the end they

76 Ibid., almost every issue from Mar. 2 to Nov. 11, 1920.
they worked all night by the light of the brush fires. The reward for all this? Another wild forty! and Mr. Was was highly indignant, volubly so, because in the light of his reward, his wife was denied the ladies' prize, a diamond ring. A diamond ring! how heavy it would have been on hands that had pulled stumps to win it! And the Rusk County Journal comments: "They have set an admirable example that might well be imitated by the whole county"!

An admirable example! To be imitated! Man and woman working as no bought beast would be worked! Children stunting their bodies, minds, and souls! Oh, no, Rusk County that was neither what you wanted nor what you needed. Mr. Was, of course, became quite the hero and authority after his spectacular accomplishment, so while his wife and children minded the affairs at home, he took off time and visited about a bit. He called on the leading merchants and bankers; he stopped in at the school and interrupted class to present his news, to discuss educational method in Poland, and to harangue the students on the glories of America; he took presents of rutabagas to his new friends and stayed for supper. But like all heroes who fail to follow through, he was soon forgotten, and today no one knows how far he has progressed with his prize forty.

The next year the Development Association tried to keep up the land clearing spirit, but no prizes were offered

77 Ibid., Nov. 11, 1920 and personal recollections
and little interest was evidenced. Various clearing propositions were put forth by the Chamber of Commerce, the Investors Finance Corporation, and the Bissell Company but they failed to materialize.

And what was the sum total of all this? In 1926—6% of Rusk County cultivated, 6% merchantable lumber, 88% unproductive. Was it worth it?

It wasn't enough that thousands of acres lay idle in Rusk County, but they must add to it by draining the swamps. But you see, the legislature had passed another paternalistic law—the rich southern part of the state was to contribute and Rusk County must not be too far back in time when the equalization began. A County Reclamation Board appointed, petitions received, money appropriated to test the validity of the law, and the stage was set. Rusk County had no large areas of swamp land, but long, narrow lowlands which cut across the ownerships of many different people, and so could not be drained individually. The first project was to drain Bruno Lake by digging a ditch around Ladysmith to the river; this was to be connected to Corbett Lake which would also be drained to the river. Figuring that it would cost $15 an acre, $7500 worth of bonds were issued. When the task was actually done Bruno

78 Ibid., Feb. 3, 1921.
79 Ibid., Jan. 27 and Mar. 10, 1921.
80 Ibid., Mar. 18, 1926.
Lake had been lowered nine feet and 1200 acres had been drained. Next the Deer Tail Drainage District was established to drain the Goocher marsh. Others were planned, but not actually put into operation.

And now what was raised on all of this land after it was cleared and drained? Frequently it was put into a grass crop without being plowed, but more usually it was broken and a root crop planted because the frequent cultivation helped to break up the sod and pulverize the soil. Rutabagas were popularly grown because they were an essential part of a cow's diet and could also be used on the table. Potatoes, however, were the great root crop of northern Wisconsin. The combined activity of the University College of Agriculture and the Faast Land Company started the first pure bred center in the northern part of the state. The college selected the seed in Maine, and the company distributed it to the farmers guaranteeing to buy the crop at a definite price. Meanwhile the college held demonstration meetings to teach the farmers. Some remarkable tales were told of potato yields. In 1912 yields of 440 bushels per acre had been known, but the average was 150-175, worth 25 cents a bushel. A. C. Holden of the town of Dewey, raised 260 bushels to the acre which brought in $110 per acre, and Hy Chapin dug 54 bushels from 2 bushels.

82 Rusk Jl., Sept. 9, Dec. 10, 1915 and Jan. 4, 1918.
83 Ibid., Jan. 4, 1918.
84 Rusk Jl., Apr. 22, 1911.
85 Ibid., Oct. 17, 1912.
planted. C. P. Coon of Beldenville kept a very accurate account—he raised 5000 bushels on 28 acres of practically new land; his labor cost $528.48; seed $449.50; spraying $98; taxes $4.80; rent $140; leaving a net profit of $4779.32. But potatoes like all else during this period had to be organized. Rural New Yorkers and Green Mountains were adopted by the Ladysmith Potato Growers’ Association to be standardized in this region. The agricultural agent made a special point of interesting children in this work. The Rusk County Bank lent money to buy certified seed which the county agent was to distribute in peck lots to the children, who would return 1 1/2 pecks in the fall. 275 children actually competed and took first place in the Eau Claire exhibit and first place the next year in the state exhibit. As early as 1909 there had been an attempt to start a potato warehouse in Ladysmith. In 1918 the Growers’ Association was forced to establish one to take care of the surplus stock, the market closed, there was a shortage of cars; and potatoes became a drug on the market. In 1922 the Advertising Club had to create a local market to relieve the farmers, but the situation was so bad that the farmers were effectively deterred from trying to enter small individual crops into competition with pota-

86 Ibid., Oct. 23, 1913.
87 Ibid., Nov. 24, 1916.
88 Ibid., Apr. 21 and Sept. 15, 1916.
89 Ibid., May 5 and Nov. 24, 1916.
90 Ibid., Sept. 4, 1909.
91 Ibid., Jan. 11 and Feb. 2, 1918.
92 Ibid., Nov. 16, 1922.
toes from such concerns as the Starks' farm and the potato acreage rapidly declined.

Among the miscellaneous crops raised were the usual grains and grasses, small berries and fruits, sugar beets, ginseng, and tobacco. Seed houses, commission houses, market days, and demonstration specials abounded and grew apace.

Important among agricultural industries was the canning company. As the sheep ranches proved unprofitable there was talk of turning them into pea factories, manufacturing boxes from the timber and raising peas on the cleared land, but this did not seem to prove advisable.

Finally the Common Council of Ladysmith accepted the proposition of Grafton Johnson of Greenwood, Indiana, furnishing him a three acre lot on which to build a factory. In 1912 it was in operation, but the season was unfavorable. 502 acres were planted, which averaged $15 per acre, but some produced as high as $35 or even $52.50. Experiments carried out with beans, corn, and blue-berries failed to materialize. In 1918, after a few closed seasons, the factory was bought by Wilson & Company, Chicago, and operated by the Fame Canning Company who ran it successfully for ten years and then sold it to Stakely Bros. Company which branched out and added other vegetables.

93 Ibid., Apr. 18, 1908 and Mar. 7, 1912.
94 Ibid., Apr. 4 to Aug. 29, 1912.
95 Ibid., Aug. 30 and Oct. 18, 1918.
Another cash crop was pickles, but the work was hard and the season often too short for any degree of success. The D. J. Wittig Company was most enterprising in establishing stations in Rusk County but there was some competition. One man reported an income of $11.35 on a little less than one acre, while another man reported $100 on 1/2 an acre.

Chief among Rusk County industries was dairying. Guernseys and Holsteins were the chief breeds raised and the breeders of each formed associations in 1912 and in 1925 respectively. No type of cooperative effort or advertising was overlooked. The Wisconsin Dairyman's Convention was entertained in 1914; the county had an exhibit at the National Dairy Show in 1925; and toured Barron County en masse in 1931. With the advent of the county agent came systematic testing; in his first months 500 cows were tested a month. Cow testing associations were formed with a news article on the high cow each month. The fourth association was formed in 1925 and "With this association Rusk County comes into a leading position in the state as far as the percentage of cows in the county that are under test". Another project financed by the state was the T B test for cattle. It was

97 Rusk J1., 1913 and 1914.
98 Ibid., Sept. 11 and Oct. 23, 1913.
99 Ibid., Aug. 22, 1912 and July 9, 1925.
100 Ibid., May 14, Nov. 19 and Dec. 3, 1914.
101 Ibid., Oct. 8, 1925.
102 Ibid., Aug. 25, 1921.
103 Ibid., July 28, 1913.
104 Ibid., Aug. 6, 1925.
a year before the required 900 cattlemen could be persuaded to sign, but in 1922-30% of all the owners in the county were on the petition. By August the work was actually started and 21,568 cattle were tested that year; of these 257 were reactors. By 1925 the county had the record of having the lowest number of reactors of any county with an equal number of cattle, and one of the lowest in the state. This test placed the county on the modified accredited list—infected less than 1/3 of 1%. In 1928, under the federal law, the Commissioner of Agriculture ordered a retest of all the cattle.

Another phase of the cattle industry was directed largely by the Cooperative Livestock Shipping Association. This was organized in 1917 for the purpose indicated in its title. A protection fund was created for insurance of full payment for stock killed or injured in transit. A manager was to get six cents per 100 of all stock shipped. There was talk of effecting some sort of union with the existing Society of Equity. During the year the membership grew to 192, 21 carloads of stock were shipped, and $29,622.72 was received.

The first market for dairy products was the cheese factory. This was usually cooperative and could be supported by a relatively small number of cattle. The cream-

105 Ibid., 1921 and 1922 and "Report of Agr. Com. in Proceedings County Board." 1923
106 Rusk Jl., Dec. 31, 1925.
107 News, June 22, 1928.
108 Proceedings County Board, 1928.
110 Ibid., Mar. 1, 1918.
ery business, on the other hand, which started somewhat later needed more cattle to be successful. The shipment of 1000 gallons of cream worth $695 to Rhinelander in July of 1910 brought the locality to the notice of the Jahnke Creamery Company of Watertown, which immediately established a creamery in Ladysmith. In June they produced 11,799 pounds of butter and gave out cream checks as high as $54. While cooperative creameries were springing up all around Ladysmith, the Jahnke Company was forced to close, due to financial difficulties in the home plant at Watertown. This was the moment and the opportunity was seized; the farmers banded themselves together into a cooperative organization, incorporated, and were in operation in March of 1914. At the end of the year the assets were $2361.59 in excess of the liabilities. Constant progress marked the next ten years, and then increased business necessitated a new organization, Ladysmith Milk Producer's Cooperative Association, and a new $60,000 creamery. During this period there was one new development, the formation of the Rusk-Barron Branch of the Wisconsin Creameries Association in 1921. This was for cooperative shipping, the two making up a carload of butter per week for the New York market.

111 Rusk Jl., Aug. 6, 1910
112 Ibid., Apr. 15 and May 20, 1911.
113 Ibid., July 18, 1912.
114 Ibid., Jan. 15, 1914.
118 Rusk Jl., Aug. 25, 1921.
Of all Rusk County industries and enthusiasm, this dairy business has been the most interesting to watch and is, today, the most hopeful. The entire movement is marked by steady, sensible growth with few excesses and few reverses. There is no sham nor anything spectacular; it is honest, natural development. If it can weather the present economic situation in the dairy world, there may be some hope for a future of Rusk County.

The chicken business did not progress very rapidly in Rusk County. A County Poultry Association was organized in 1914, and a Poultry Association formed in 1918 to raise more meat on farms. The second Cooperative Egg Marketing Institute in America was held in Rusk County in 1926 to discuss how to produce the best eggs most economical-ly and how best to get them to the consumer. Through the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce the O. O. Horlamus Chick Hatchery was established in Ladysmith that same year.

Among Rusk County's other live stock industries were muskrat and beaver farms, western cattle, horse ranch, skunk farm, and goats for clearing land, no one of which was particularly outstanding.

Frank T. Stare's farm furnished rather a decided contract to the ordinary run of farms. In 1914 he had 1680 acres, 400 cleared and 120 plowed. On the land he had 30 pure bred Ayrshire cows and several grade, 6 pure bred Guernseys and 45 grade, 83 Hereford steers, 400 Duroc Jersey pigs to use the milk, a 300 ton silo. The farm was

119 Ibid., Dec. 31, 1914
120 Ibid., May 24, 1918
121 Ibid., Feb. 18, 1926
122 Ibid., Feb. 11, 1926
run like a manufacturing plant with an individual record kept for every cow.

Phil Koehler of Weyerhauser gives a more typical picture. A German immigrant, he found his way to Rusk County in 1904, bringing stock and machinery with him. He mortgaged them for $400 and invested in a 320 acre farm; in 1916 it was worth $12,000 and was stocked with pure bred sires in cattle, sheep, and swine.

Another type was "Rusk County's Grand Old Man", Christian K. Ellingson. He was born in Norway in 1856, an almost life-sized oil painting of his birth village hung on the wall of his last home, and came to America as a young man. He worked as an axeman, scaler, foreman, and lumber inspector in the woods, before he bought a sawmill in Hawkins in 1902, which he operated until 1917. In 1914 he was elected to the legislature by a 2 to 1 vote where he became a La Follette leader until 1914, when he broke over the tax question and transferred his allegiance to Phillipp. For a time he served as an officer in the Rusk County Bank, but later fulfilled his life-long ambition to become a bank president by organizing the Pioneer National Bank.

123 Ibid., June 18, 1914.
124 Ibid., Jan. 21, 1915.
125 Ibid., May 36, 1931.
Development of Ladysmith  It is difficult to state just where county development leaves off and city development begins as the latter is, of course, definitely a part of the former. But in this particular instance I shall separate the two as between rural and urban.

As to size, the estimated population of 150 in 1900 had become 2352 in 1910; the 1920 census showed 3581, 126 and a business men's census in 1926 listed 3657. In 1930 an editorial commented: "Since 1920 Ladysmith has lost the woodenware factory, and the plant of the Flambeau River Lumber Company has been idle for several years. Both of these were wood-working industries. That the population has been maintained in spite of these losses, indicates that many more people are coming to consider Ladysmith an excellent residential center. With less employment the city has practically held its own."

In 1912 and 1913 there was a great deal of agitation to change from the city council to the commission form of government. As it was claimed that the former was too expensive, a survey of the financial condition of the city was made. The bonded indebtedness was $38,000 with 5%.

126 Rusk Jl., Feb. 27, 1913; Sept. 16, 1926; U. S. Census "Population" 1920
127 News., May 23, 1930.
interest which was $84,479.70. The proposition was put up to the people and accepted 265 to 54. April 15 the new commission took office. Apparently things ran along well until 1928 when a petition was circulated to return to the city council plan; a referendum was held and the commission was retained by a vote of 571 to 558.

Despite these political upheavals, the public utilities continued their even way. In 1919 automatic phones were established at a cost of $15,000 and an increase of rates from $1.50 and $2.25 to $1.75 and $2.75. A lead in the paper, which is not subsequently followed up, gives one a glimpse of that "news" which seldom reaches print: "Improved service will be worth more money, but whether these votes are right or not we don't pretend to know...Where a local system is mixed up with a bigger one (Chippewa Valley Telephone Company and Bell System), the bookkeeping is frequently manipulated so as to hide the actual earnings. Ladysmith has had a long experience of this in the mysteriously regulated Lighting Company and Rusk County Construction Company." A great deal of controversy had raged in the city over this latter disagreement. A three-cornered deal brought light to the

128 Rusk Jl., May 15, 1913.
129 Ibid., Jan. 23 to Apr. 17, 1913.
131 Rusk Jl., May 2, 1919
city, which claimed the rates were too high, but the company answered that the state had put the cost of reproduction too low. This finally revolved itself into a struggle for or against city ownership; at a referendum in 1918 city ownership was defeated by a vote of 259 to 160, the public is wary of assuming an undertaking which is constantly running into debt, despite high rates. In 1933 the organization was so arranged that the company is able to offer its stock to patrons.

In 1929 and 1930 the city received two requests for franchises for a gas system, the one from the Mid-West Utilities of Minneapolis, a holding corporation of which the lighting system was a member, and the other a Public Utility Investment Company of Kansas. The city attorney ascertained that neither of these would be interfered with by a franchise which had been given Manning, Haviland, and Clark twenty years ago when they found oil and natural gas near Jump River. Nothing more was done about it.

In 1913 and 1914 the public was concerned about a water supply. It was decided that artesian wells were to be used, but the conflict over sites for a standpipe had to be decided at a special election. It was voted to put in near the city hall, and the city was accordingly

132 Ibid., Mar. 23, 1915
133 Ibid., Sept. 9, 1917 to Mar. 22, 1918
134 Ibid., Oct. 18, 1923
135 News, Dec. 20, 1929
136 Ibid., Jan. 17, 1930
137 Ibid., Dec. 20, 1929
bonded $16,000 to carry this out. A year later the meter system was put in. In 1929 so much iron had clung to the mains that it had become a fire hazard, and the city considered propositions for a filtering and iron removal plant. A city engineer was hired to deal with the problem, and he arranged for the sinking of a new well. Thus the problem was solved. The problem of sewerage, however, was allowed to ride. The custom of letting it just empty into the river was continued, although in 1923 there had been a strong movement to install a septic tank in Corbett Lake.

In 1922 this whole movement for control of public utilities was brought to a head, and a referendum was held. Here one sees the clash between the economy program necessitated by the depression of 1930 and the anti-capitalistic desire to put the control of utilities into the hands of the people. Economy won, it had to win! Each voter knew that as a participating member of a democracy he was capable of running a public utility, but he also knew that public officials know nothing about such technical matters, and further bonding would only increase taxes and perhaps utility rates, and certainly the service was satisfactory under the existing order. With such reasoning, one understands the defeat 552-848 of a bill permitting cities to go in debt to 5% of their valuation to purchase a public

138 Ibid., Aug. 21, 1913 to Feb. 5, 1914.
139 Ibid., Apr. 23, 1915.
140 News, July 5-Dec. 20, 1929.
141 Rusk Jl., Sept. 31, 1922.
utility.

The railroads nonchalance about the dangerous crossings, to which their attention had been called by the Chief of Police, was soon turned into interest when complaint was made to the railroad commission. In 1913 flagmen were established at the crossings and the advisability of using gates discussed. In 1929 a city ordinance ordered wig-wag signals for the more important crossings. The streets themselves were a problem, but in 1915 a stone crusher was bought, and the streets were surfaced and oiled. The plans to pave in 1921 could not withstand the general economic situation, but in 1923 a new plan was hit on. The bonding limit of the city was $174,000 and the outstanding bonds $153,000; the cost of the paving was to be $25,000, so it was decided to bond for $11,000 and raise the rest by direct taxation. Finally it was accomplished and the main streets lay broad and white, flanked by clusters of electric lights; indeed, an imposing array.

All this talk of governmental control and taxes did not prove Ladysmith wholly materialistic, for the library was expanding beyond all calculations. The 23,000 books and magazines that circulated in 1918, became 48,000 by 1928, 13 per capita, as compared to the standard of 5 set by librarians. There were more than 4000 borrowers.

142 Ibid., Nov. 9, 1922
143 Ibid., Aug. 29, Nov. 7, 1912; Jan. 23, Feb. 6, Mar. 6, 1913 and News Jan. 4, 1929
145 Ibid., June 30, 1931 and Jan. 4, 1923.
146 News, Feb. 15, 1928
In its economy campaign of 1927 the county board omitted the library from its beneficiaries, so the rural borrowers were charged five cents a book.

Religion continued to expand. The Scandinavian Lutheran Church erected a new $4000 building, and an English Lutheran Church, organized in 1915, put up a $12,000 brick and tile church in 1927. The Christian Church put up its building in 1914, and then held almost annual conventions of missionaries and Scattered Disciples. The Methodists, having held meetings from hotel dining rooms to lodge halls, finally found rest in a beautiful brick Gothic church in 1918. The Congregationalists were more ambitious in their building program, but were slower in realizing their ends. In 1929, however, they dedicated a beautiful new church on the banks of the river.

The Catholics prepared to build a hospital by the Sisters of our Lady of Sorrows on a site donated by John Lindoo in 1913, but it was actually started by the Mantellate Sisters D S M who organized a non-denominational board of business men to back it. In 1918 it was in operation, a beautiful, thoroughly complete institution.
In 1929 a Mother house of the Servants of Mary was added to the Catholic properties.

In 1922 Ladysmith followed the example of its more established sisters and opened a vacation Bible school for all children. The enrollment was so large that it was necessary to hold it in one of the grade schools.

Educational progress did not lag behind other developments and anything within reason was added to the general equipment. In 1914 the need for a new high school was met. As the law precluded a city from issuing bonds to buy a site, the $11,000 needed was raised by taxation. It seems peculiar to me that when these tiny pioneer villages saw their "manifest destiny" as metropolises ahead of them, they didn't buy up a quantity of cheap land to use for public institutions or to exchange for other lots later on. Of course, any community hates to tax itself to buy something by which it will not benefit directly, but buying ahead seems as plausible to me as bonding future generations. If they over-stock themselves they can always sell, and the chances of an increase in price are better than the chances of a fall. But be that as it may, the city bonded itself for $60,000 and let the contract for $47,880. A year later the school was ready for

156 News, Aug. 9, 1939
157 Rusk J1., June 8, 1932
158 Ibid., all of 1914
occupancy, and the old high school became the West Side grade building.

The people who lived across the river complained and justly, about the long distance their children had to go. As the grade buildings were crowded anyway, the Brooklyn School was built in 1923. Meanwhile the high school had become so crowded that it was necessary to build an addition to house the junior high. The Catholics had built their own parochial school, both grades and high, in 1913. In 1919 an adult night school was started by Reverend C. I. Fisher in the Christian Church. Its popularity caused it to be transferred to a less controversial neighbor, so it was continued in the Training School, offering academic work, courses in citizenship, and bookkeeping.

Ladysmith business men continued their policy of organization—for the great advantages derived by the community, or for the delightful importance of attending luncheons and banquets and listening to speeches? The Business Promotion League of 1916 gave way to a Chamber of Commerce in 1917, with all of its attendant credit associations and advertising clubs. By 1928, however, it was admittedly dying and had to be replaced by a Civic Club.

159 Ibid., Feb. 8, 1923
160 Ibid., July 5, 1923 to Jan. 17, 1924
161 Ibid., Apr. 18 and June 13, 1913
162 Ibid., Dec. 1919 and Jan. 1920
163 Ibid., Mar. 34
164 Ibid., Nov. 16, 1917
In their lighter moments the business men patronized an Athletic association and a base ball league organized in 1914 and again in 1925. Finally a Ku Klux Klan was organized by the Kleagle and a klanvention held on the grounds of the Klavern. It continued to furnish material for newspaper comment for more than a year. Actually it was probably a very strong organization with many members—pioneers seem prone to take great delight in any anti-movement.

The women too were organizing. There had been ladies aides and Bethany Sisters in connection with the churches for many years, but these were finally augmented by a Woman's Study Club whose fortunes rose and fell periodically. They showed their interest in things political by organizing a League of Women Voters.

Youth was not being neglected, but neither was it being given much encouragement. Boy Scouts were organized and reorganized three or four times. It was finally suggested that the Chamber of Commerce hire a paid executive, but this met with no response. There seems to have been a Y. M. C. A. Older Boys' group, but nothing definite was given about it; Columbian Squires were planned, but they

165 News, Feb. 24, 1928
166 Rusk Jl., Sept. 30, 1911
167 Ibid., Apr. 23, 1914 and Nov. 12, 1925
168 Ibid., 1924 and 1925
169 Ibid., Nov. 20, 1909 and News, June 7, 1929
170 Ibid., Apr. 7, 1921
171 Ibid., Sept. 9, 1916, Jan. 23, 1920, Feb. 10, 1921, Dec. 12, 1925
172 Letter "From Our Readers" in Ibid., Sept. 3, 1925
also were not followed up. In 1921 Girl Scouts were organized and again in 1925; also there were groups of Camp Fire Girls. "The" club was organized for business girls, and later a Business and Professional Women's Club, which affiliated with the state group.

The amusement facilities of Ladysmith differed little from those of other small Wisconsin cities. The University of Wisconsin Chautauqua course was brought at different times and Lyceum bureaus gave series of entertainments in the winter. Few truly great or well-known people ever appeared in the city, the most that can be recorded are both Robert and Mrs. La Follette and William Jennings Bryan. Local talent ran rampant, however, particularly after 1925 when there are no more hired entertainers brought to town. Carnivals were prohibited in 1923, and Sunday movies had been taboo from the beginning. Kitten ball leagues, dog derbies, and skating parties kept up a little excitement. To the park was added a camp site and a play-ground for children. There was much discussion but little action concerning an out-door swimming pool. Agitation was stirred up for a long time about the use of the high school gymnasium granted to the business men and refused to working boys of high school age, but nothing

173 News, Jan. 3, 1930
174 Rusk Jl., Mar. 17, 1921 and Mar. 18, 1928
175 Ibid., Mar. 17, 1931; News, Oct. 25, 1929
came of it. There is a feeling created by all of these articles on amusement that these people do not know how to play. They have skating rinks and tennis courts because other people in other places have them, but they don't know how to use them nor what they are for. Frankly they would rather amuse themselves in their own little cliques than to get behind a big project of municipal value and push. In 1913 interest began to be aroused in a social center; after the war a community building was planned to be built with part of the $105,000 the city had unexpectedly received as profits tax on the sale of the paper mill. But the referen-

As to health the city was remarkably free of epidemics. The city nurse hired for six weeks in 1915 was dispensed with when the county hired one. The state held two free chest clinics in the city, but they were very poorly attended and no follow up work was done.

In 1925 the city entered the Better Cities Contest. The Social Welfare Association, representing 18 organiza-
tions, was started in order to comply with the regulations of the contest. The whole city put itself into the spirit of the movement and the result was Ladysmith took second place.

176 Rusk Jl., Dec. 22, 1921 and Apr. 6, 1922
178 Ibid., Sept. 27, 1924 and News, Dec. 21, 1928
179 Rusk Jl., May 14-Nov. 29, 1925
Development of Rusk County excluding Ladysmith.

Leaving Ladysmith with its new won honors, let us consider the rest of the county. An Article in the Rusk County Journal was headed: "Rusk County as it Grows--It Never Had a Boom--It Has Had Nineteen Years of Steady and Continuous Growth"; it then goes on to back this up with statistics comparing the county at the time of its origin with 1919. Statistics are very well in their place, but there are many developments which can not be proven by them.

By 1910 the county had gotten fairly started on its political divisions, but continued growth necessitated continued change. In 1913 an interesting development occurred. The county board provided for the division of the town of Atlanta to create Daniel and Wilson, and then:

"notify the electors of said territory to call a town meeting of said territory at the date of the regular town meetings in April, 1913, to ratify this resolution by vote, to elect officers, organize such towns. Wilson actually was organized, but not Daniel. In 1915 a large land owner

180 Ibid., Dec. 19, 1919
181 See Appendix
182 Proceed. Co. Bd. 1913
followed a policy which was seldom seen, came out into the open and advocated a change. He urged the people to support the bills in the legislature for the creation of Richland and the rearrangement of True, Lawrence, and Hawkins. Editorial comment called the town twelve miles, which this bill would create, "Dream of a dope fiend" for there was no road connecting the three small settled areas and no single interest. April 1, however, the readjustments were made. Hawkins and True were cut the next year to create South Forks and Cedar Rapids. The method of affecting this change was challenged, but eventually the difficulty was cleared up, and the town of Richland created. A final reorganization was made by the orderly assemblyman, Dave Summerville, who formed the town of Wilkinson and straightened the town lines along the Chippewa so that they largely followed township lines rather than zig-zag around the map. Meanwhile agitation was being carried on to detach the seven southern townships from Sawyer and add them to Rusk, or to create a new county, Hoard, out of this tier of towns and the northern tier from Rusk County. The movement spent itself, however, in agitation.

In 1922 an entirely new idea struck the county, the proposition of introducing the commission form of government. With characteristic lack of newspaper discussion

183 Rusk Jl., Feb. 23 and Apr. 2, 1915
185 Rusk Jl., Jan. 1 and Apr. 20, 1917
186 Ibid., Mar. 15, 1923
187 Ibid., Feb. 16, 1917 and Feb. 14, 1919
a petition with 1000 signatures was taken to Madison by O. A. Sergeant who appeared before the committee. Accepted by the legislature, it was now up to the voters; the Rusk County Real Estate Board circulated the petition for a referendum, but the issue was lost 1315 to 1766. In 1927, however, it was finally carried 1761 to 1147, and the county was divided into three election districts. The April election intrusted the affairs of the county to C. C. Ellingson of Hawkins, O. A. Sergeant of Ladysmith, and Mark Tatro of Bruce. The underlying purpose of introducing this change was undoubtedly the post-war need for economy in county expenses, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The hardest of all county board perennials was the road question. It became such a problem, and took so much of the supervisors' time that in 1912 a road supervisor was appointed to devote his full time to the supervision of roads. In 1914 some readjustments were made in the financing of roads. Instead of having each town tax itself for the support of county roads, it was decided in 1914 that the county should appropriate $20,000 from the taxes; the state highway aid of $11,691 was $7,461 more than the county paid into the fund. In 1916 provision was made for improving these trunk line systems;

188 Rusk Jl., Mar. 3, 1921
189 Ibid., Jan. 12 and Apr. 6, 1922
190 Proceed. Co. Bd., 1927; News, Apr. 8, 1927 and Apr. 6, 1928
191 Proceed. Co. Bd., 1912
192 Proceed. Co. Bd., 1914
193 Rusk Jl., Nov. 12, 1914
two mills was to be levied against all taxable property to create a fund for this purpose and for building all bridges under $500. It was decided that this aid should be concentrated on a few main lines and not be dissipated on new routes to every settlement that wanted to open up. Due to the two cent gasoline tax of 1925 the county was again the gainer, for it received $85,000 more than it paid in. The motor registration for the previous year had been 2486, with an average license fee of $12.00 and $8.00 gas tax, there would be an income of $50,000 to be spent on a 195 total mileage of 899. The purchase of a motor patrol grader, a Fordson caterpillar tractor and snow plow, and 20,000 feet of snow fence in recent years showed continued progress. In 1929 the appropriations for the "county highway system" were itemized by details, such as "snow removal", "bridge painting", rather than the old method of so much for each road. But a matter-of-fact account such as this really tells nothing about highway conditions in a new country; perhaps a few personal recollections will give a better picture. A town meeting—a new settler gets up and asks for a 1/2 mile of road connecting his land with the existing highway; another settler answers that he carried the materials for his house in

195 Husk Jl., Feb. 21, 1925
196 Proceed. Co. Bd., 1939
on his back; a third announces that neither can talk for
they are not voters under the one-year residence law of
Wisconsin. A piece of dirt road—from either direction
comes a team harnessed to a queer, flat contraption on
runners, a diagonal board scraping over the ruts; they
meet, the drivers converse, and each turns back on his
track, eager to finish before nightfall dragging his
share of the road, under the neighborhood agreement which
plans to maintain roads cooperatively. A stretch of
gravel road through lowlands—a car comes along, slows up
for a damp spot, and suddenly sinks into soft ooze to the
running board; armfuls of brush are shoved under the
wheels to no advantage; a team drawing a load of stones
comes along, pulls the car out, dumps in its load, and
returns for another; once again a level road with a damp
spot in the center. A snow-storm, a bit of wind, there is
no road at all.

Shortly after the new road went through each
region, the little school house went up. The majority of
the people who came into the county had a common school
education. The 1920 census showed that only 6.5% of the
foreign born and .5% of the native white population, an
average of 2%, were illiterate, as compared to 3.2% in the
197 entire state. It would be impossible to go into de-

197 U. S. Census "Population"
tails concerning the erection of school houses, but each village during these ten years erected a new brick build-
ing. Township high schools were increasing in popularity, but consolidation for elementary schools did not meet with much favor. The condition of the roads and the rigors of the winter made people want their schoolhouses within walking distance. Practically nothing was done about adult education in a formal way. Farmers' institutes, demonstration meetings, the activities of various county agents were largely through the schools and educational in their purpose and accomplishment, but they can scarcely be called a program of adult education. Emil Fisher, teacher in a South Fork school established Americanization classes which met three nights a week in 1919, and another was opened in Wilson in 1924, but this seems to be as far as the movement got.

The Rusk County Normal, originally Training School for Teachers proved to be one of the most valuable items in the progress of the county. It had a very keen appreciation of rural problems and was very close to the people. Most of the pupils were drawn from the rural regions and all were going back there. They became the medium through which the agricultural agent and the county nurse approached

198 Rusk Jl., Nov. 31, 1919 and Jan. 16, 1925
the people. They were trained from a rural standpoint to train pupils as farmers-to-be. There was no aping of unborn groups. Much of the success of this institution was due to the fine principalship of B. M. Dresden, an exceedingly keen, progressive, and sympathetic educator, a true student, he never for one moment became so engrossed in subject matter that he forgot the essential thing, the teaching of pupils, not of arithmetic. In 1919 a summer session was added to make it easier for teachers to renew or raise their certificates. Closely allied to the Training School was another interesting character, the supervising teacher. Made possible by an act of legislature in 1915, he went into each school to bring it direct aid in the solution of local problems. By 1926 the school population had become so large that the law required a second of these teachers.

An effort was made to give young men who were becoming farmers a little scientific instruction concerning their chosen field. In 1915 Professor J. F. Wojta of the University of Wisconsin held a one-week farm school which was so enthusiastically received that the next year the principal of the Training School and the agricultural agent established a winter short course in practical dairying, farm arithmetic, business English and allied courses.

199 "Report of County Superintendent" in Proceed. Co. Bd. 1919
200 Ibid., 1915
201 Ibid., 1926
202 Rusk Jl., Nov. 19, 1914 and Jan. 14, 1915
203 Ibid., Dec. 22, 1916
The county schools cannot be left without a word about W. B. Graham. As supervising teacher in 1929, he rounded out a full fifty years of teaching—twenty-five spent in Rusk County. Twenty-five years of buffeting all sort of weather; building fires in sub-zero school houses; giving, constantly giving the best that was in him, not to give pupils an "education", but to prepare them for life; leading community meetings to bring new ideas and help to these struggling settlers and a bit of social life; and finally giving of his vast experience to direct other teachers through their storms. Small—one wonders where he got the strength to support his boundless enthusiasm, his keen sympathy, his ready aid.

Religious development was not so spectacular as communication and education, but new Sunday schools were started and a few churches built. The cooperative movement evidenced itself religiously in Conrath where there was established a new church "purely congregational in government. Its only creed is the Word of God, its only discipline the New Testament." Six denominations were united in this organization. The Tony Methodist Church seems to have been the most "progressive"; in 1922 it bought a movie machine and instituted weekly "Community Nights".

204 Ibid., Dec. 28, 1919
205 Ibid., Dec. 31, 1922
Another popular Rusk County institution was the fair. Local fairs or harvest festivals were held in most of the communities, but the big event was the county fair held every September. Originally there had been two of these, one in Bruce and one in Ladysmith, a "hand-over" of the old county seat quarrel, but in 1915 Bruce gracefully resigned her position, she was sadly in debt, and let Ladysmith have full sway. It, too, had its financial difficulties, despite appropriations from the county board, progressing from $500 in 1915 to $1500 in 1918, in 1919 it found itself over $6,000 in debt. All sympathy the county board decided to take it over and let a committee operate it. Passed one day, the measure was rescinded before the board had finished its session. By 1929 it was in such a state that it had a debt of $6,300 besides a first and second mortgage. Bravely it asked the board for $5,000 but no action was taken. The fair seems to have served its place in rural development and is about to follow the nickolodeon.

Everybody has been so concerned with getting Rusk County civilized that most people seem to have forgotten that originally it was a game paradise. A Bucks Club was organized in 1911, but it apparently functioned only during hunting season when the members went out to

206 Ibid., Mar. 1915
207 Proceed. Co. Bd., 1920
208 News, Mar. 8, 1929
their camp. In 1924 an Isaak Walton League was formed, but thereafter was known as the Rusk County Fish and Game Association. They went through all of the usual activities of planting fish, petitioning the legislature concerning the hunting season, hatching pheasant eggs, and digging trout ponds. Hunting season, however, was always duly observed. The county board met and adjourned until after season; the lumber camps were opened for those who came in from outside; around 2000 licenses were issued. In 1918 the legislature provided for a wild-life refuge to be established in the town of Big Falls and the northern part of Dewey.

The old question a license continued to keep the people stirred up. In 1915 Ladysmith, Glen Flora, Grant, Conrath and Sheldon went dry; Bruce, Tony, and Grow wet. By 1917 the dries were on the gain, holding all of the county but Weyerhauser, which stuck by its guns until the U. S. government dictated retrenchment. The county as a whole, however, continued dry in sentiment. The 1923 referendum for legalizing 3.75% beer was lost 1731 to 1444, and the beer referendum suffered the same fate in 1929, 1923 to 1230. In the same year the city passed a liquor ordinance which required licensing for the sale of

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209 Rusk Jl., Apr. 1, 1911
210 Ibid., Feb. 7, 1924
211 Ibid., Nov. 29, 1918
212 Ibid., Apr. 6, 1915
213 Ibid., Apr. 6, 1917
214 Ibid., Apr. 1926
215 News., Apr. 5, 1929
non-intoxicating liquor prohibited its sale by license holders. The paper commented that this did not affect the bootlegger. Certain it is that in 1930 federal dry agents came in and served nine warrants.

The state law requiring a county nurse was complied with immediately, $2000 was appropriated and a public health committee created. It is hard to estimate the results of such a venture. Most of the work was done through the schools, testing the children and presenting a program of health education. In 1929 a baby clinic was established in Ladysmith, but this seems to be more as a result of the Associated Charities than of the county nurse.

County poor relief gave the commissioners considerable trouble. At first they planned to dispose of the farm and get another; but in 1924 plans were made to have each municipality take care of its own poor; in 1925 this policy was reversed, and they arranged to sell the poor farm, buy 20 acres near Ladysmith, and let the superintendent be poor commissioner. Meanwhile the number of weeks board furnished continued to rise to 940.

216 News., Aug. 30, 1929
217 Ibid., May 23, 1930
218 Proceed. Co. Bd. 1919
219 Proceed. Co. Bd. 1919
220 Ibid., 1924
221 Ibid., 1925
222 Ibid., 1929
Another matter of grave concern was the dance halls. After the war these multiplied at a great rate throughout the county. In 1923 an ordinance was passed governing them; every hall had to be licensed and to obtain a written permit for a dance, although there was a county dance hall inspection committee, each dance had to have its inspectors, no one under 16 was to be admitted, closing hours were 2 A. M., there was to be no drinking, a penalty of $25-$1000 for infringement. In 1928 this whole affair was put in charge of the sheriff and the inspectors were made deputy sheriffs. While the county had remarkably few major crimes and only one at all spectacular, there seems to be a multiplicity of petty crime and general lawlessness. In 1930 the paper comments: "From the number of criminal cases that have faced local courts in the past week, Ladysmith and vicinity seems to be in the midst of the minor crime wave."

Politics continued to leave the people apathetic—there was not enough fight. To suggest a few of the later elections: Rusk County supported Hughes in 1916, although Wilson did surprise the people with 669 votes; in 1920 Harding won 6 to 1, Blaine 2 to 1 and Lenroot got his majority; in 1924 La Follette 2500 to 1900, Blaine

223 Ibid., 1923
224 Ibid., 1929
225 News, Oct. 31, 1930
227 Ibid., Nov. 4, 1920
2400-1600; in 1926 Zimmerman 3 to 1 and Blaine a plurality; 1928 Hoover 2 to 1, Kohler 3 to 1, La Follette 5 to 1; and in 1930 La Follette won 1905 out of a total of 2551 votes.

And so the trend of affairs after 1910! One could add details endlessly of hurricanes, floods, fires, contests, celebrations, and what not, but few of them would differ from the ordinary run of events and add to or detract from the general tale. One national question, however, is interesting but not different, in its local development—the Great War.
Chapter III
War and Post-War Adjustment

The War  A history of the war from the point of view of Rusk County will differ little from its history in any small, distant community. There was a war in 1914; Rusk County knew about it, but it was far away, impersonal. Some had relatives in the "old country", and to them the war was a disturbing factor that interfered with the mails, but even they felt a curious detachment from it all. There was talk pro and con, but it was largely philosophical, metaphysical, as little a possibility as a probability.

One Lieutenant Hadden, a Spanish War veteran, took the lead in obtaining permission from the state military department to recruit a troop of cavalry. Lieutenant Hadden's motives undoubtedly were of the highest, but it is true that the military life appealed to him, and he was one of the first to take advantage of Governor Phillips's authorization for expansion of the National Guard. He got his consent, however, more easily than he got recruits, for in March only eleven men had signed. April saw the troop filled and accepted and the first drill held. In May it was inspected by Colonel George H. Morgan for reorganization by the federal government; it was recognized as "Troop K". Excitement ran

1 Gerald C. Maloney, comp., Rusk County in the World War (Ladysmith, 1920), 5
high—all America had a war and an army, and Rusk County was right up with the rest. A military ball, a tag day, a theater benefit, a loan fund, and uniforms were bought because the state could not furnish them. July 15 Governor Philips came to Ladysmith and mobilized the troop in preparation for its removal to Camp Douglas. Here it trained until fall and was moved to Waco, Texas, Camp MacArthur.

Great disappointment was experienced when the troop lost its identity here. It was united with Troop B of Milwaukee to form Battery B of the 120th Field Artillery of the 57th Field Artillery Brigade of the 33rd Division. August 31 the brigade saw action near Juvigny; in October at Argonne Forest and November 11 was the first peaceful night in six months. Thus briefly the "boys" and the war. As to actual numbers, 792 were enlisted, which was more in proportion than either Wisconsin or the United States, for it was 1 to every 20 of population in the county, 1 to every 22 in the state, and 1 to every 25 in the nation. Of these, 82% were engaged in fighting, as compared to 52% in the United States. The percentage of deaths was higher than that of the United States, 1 out of 39, for it was 1 out of 25 in France, 1 out of 40 in service. Two nurses went from Rusk County, but neither saw service overseas.

3 Ibid., 8
3 Ibid., 7
4 "Work of 32nd Division" written by its commander, Major General W. S. Haan in Ibid., 8-12.
5 Ibid., 19
6 Ibid., 116
As in the rest of the nation, the young men lined up for the "Selective Service Administration". In the first registration, of 1033, 528 or 52% of the total population claimed exemption; 42 totally disabled, 409 dependent relatives, 51 occupational exemptions; 57 aliens, 6 of whom were alien enemies. There were no draft evaders; two were called in the first draft.

Meanwhile the nation had to be protected. D. W. Maloney circulated a membership list for the State Guard shortly after the "boys" left for Waco. 124 striplings, Spanish War veterans, and other nondescripts signed and affected an organization. April 9, 1918, they were mustered in as Company H 10th Regiment W. S. G and thereafter drilled, paraded, and went to camp.

The civilian citizenry was not at all backward in its war duties. A County Council of Defense was organized to cooperate with the State and National Councils and were given $1000 by the county board for carrying out their work. They centralized local effort, looked out for spies, and circulated petitions against La Follette, otherwise the work was done by national organizations. Contributions were made throughout the county to Y. M. C. A., Red Cross, United War Fund, Armenian Fund, French orphans, Salvation Army, Knights of Columbus, and the American Library Association. Neither

7 Rusk Jl., June 8 and July 8, 1917.
8 Ibid., Aug. 10, 1917.
9 Rusk Co. in War, 194 and 5
10 Ibid., 128.
11 Proceedings County Board, 1917.
was the county amiss in the matter of buying bonds. In the first four loans $510,300 worth were subscribed, far over the quota.

There was a great deal of local enthusiasm in carrying out all of these programs. Four-minute men held patriotic meetings throughout the county to keep the ideals of the war before the people and to keep up their morale.

Early in the course of events a County Red Cross Chapter was organized with local chapters in the villages. There were no materials for work, though, until September, but by November the first consignment was ready to be shipped to the national headquarters.

The farmers did their part by increasing production as fast as possible. Boys' and Girls' Clubs were organized in the country and city children were urged to plant war gardens, the city even donating ground and seeds.

Finally it was all over. Armistice Day was welcomed with bells ringing, parades, bonfires, and general merriment. Preparations were made for the return of the soldiers. A sign of Welcome was erected near the depot.

Incidentally a newspaper comment throws light on the psychology of the community: "It doesn't seem to us to be in as conspicuous a place as it should be. Why not swing a big sign above the platform where it would catch the eye.

12 Rusk Co. in War, 137; Rusk Jl., Apr. 18, 1919.
13 Rusk Co. in War, 134.
14 Rusk Jl., Nov. 15, 1918.
on slighting, and would also be seen by passengers, thus doing a little advertising?" Plans were made for a royal welcome for the homecoming, but the "boys" came in such small groups and so unexpectedly that the paper was forced to apologize: "The city didn't rise to the occasion as it should have, but it was due to oversight and not lack of admiration for the boys." Company H organized an Army and Navy Club to provide a recreation hall for the returning soldiers, and the city donated $100 toward it. This became the nucleus of the American Legion, the Vinton Moore Post organized in October. The martial spirit was maintained by the organization of a cavalry troop which revived the old name, Troop K. Then came the question of a fitting memorial. The mayor suggested a "Liberty Building" community house, but nothing came of it. The Service Star Legion finally decided on a memorial statue, "Over the top to Victory", to cost $2000. The money was raised by a donation from the county board, private subscription, and benefits.

So that, in briefest outline, was the war.

16 Ibid., May 23, 1919.
17 Ibid., Mar. 7, 14, 21, 1919.
18 Ibid., Oct. 6, 1912.
19 Rusk Co. in War, 128.
21 Ibid., Aug. 17, 1922; Apr. 28 and June 28, 1923.
Post War Activity

After all the war was only two and a half years, over before people had gotten their second wind and collected themselves enough to know what they really were doing. But since 1919 there has been plenty of time to work it all out, let us look back over it.

In industry the essential thing seems to have been the attempt to attract new enterprises. In fact, in 1923 the city council appropriated $1,000 for that very purpose. Ford, having stated that he intended "utilizing the water power of small streams throughout the country" was importuned by the Chamber of Commerce to consider the advantages of Ladysmith, but nothing further was heard of it. By 1930 the county was suffering from unemployment. An office was established at the City Hall to act as a clearing house and the Red Cross attempted to centralize the relief work being done by various organizations, "Not that Rusk County is any worse off, or fares as badly as other communities. No, perhaps not, but in 1907 one could not watch a typical development of a depression in Rusk County. This period sees the introduction of the chain store, beginning with an Army store in 1920, followed by The National Tea Company and Penny stores. In 1923 the paper blamed the decline in

22 Ibid., Apr. 19, 1933.
23 Ibid., Feb. and March, 1921.
24 News, Nov. 28 and Dec. 5, 1930.
industry to unfavorable state legislation, the Huber-Commons unemployment bill and Wisconsin taxes driving companies out. In 1929 the blame is fixed a little differently. "If the business men of Ladysmith could unite and show the same degree of the conception of mutual interest that the farmers of this community do, we would have a much better city."

Meanwhile labor was becoming self-conscious. An organizer was at work, some said I. W. W., some said A. F. L., in 1916. By 1917 the Paper Maker's Union was organized and disagreeing with the company on wages. The resultant strike was not discussed. The Timber worker's union of the A. F. L. organized in 1920, and immediately demanded an 8 hour day. Their demands refused, 500 men walked out from the Menasha Wooden Ware, the Flambeau River Lumber Company, and the paper mill. The Chair Factory succumbed to the union. "Ruskies" and "plugwletes" were imported, a "small army of deputy sheriffs and extra policemen" were seen about the streets, the drive was hung up at Big Falls, but there was no violence. Just one more thing that every other place had was added to Ladysmith's history.

The situation in 1930 is most clearly seen in the railroad situation. In April freight service was cut down

27 Ibid., Mar. 1, 1923.
31 Ibid., Jan. 12, 1920.
to a one-way trip daily, from Weyerhauser to Rhinelander, 33
and the next day back. Even in the beginning when there
was little produce, the Soo Line was not reduced to such
straits as this. The employees of the line tried to remedy
this by giving every store which received its freight by
rail, a window card. The passenger situation was no bet-
ter. For two years there had been only one passenger coach
on the train, to accommodate the average of ten people per
day who used it. As a result the run was discontinued east
of Ladysmith. This interfered with the mails so much that
the chief director of the railroad mail service promised to
put in a star route to carry first and second class mail and
perishable parcel post between Ladysmith and Prentice. In
1922 the Soo Line talked of purchasing the Stanley Merril
and Phillips Railroad and extending it through Glen Flora,
and the Superior and South Eastern to extend through Big
Falls, but in 1922 said railroad was petitioning the Inter-
state Commerce Commission for permission to discontinue it.

Equally acute is the banking situation. The crime
wave evidenced itself in the looting of the Ingram bank of
$150 and the Holcombe bank of $4000 in 1923, and the
Weyerhauser bank of $2430 in 1929. In 1922 the flare for

33 News, Apr. 4, 1930.
34 Ibid., Dec. 12, 1930.
36 Ibid., Oct. 31, 1930.
37 Ibid., July 13, 1922.
38 News, Aug. 30 and Dec. 6, 1929.
39 Rusk J1., Sept. 13, 1933.
40 Ibid., Nov. 22, 1929.
41 News, Sept. 20, 1929.
for cooperative effort reached the banks. Michaelson and Hughes owned the controlling interest in the Pioneer National Bank of Ladysmith, State Bank of Bruce, State Bank of Exeland (Sawyer County), Bank of Glen Flora, and Mr. Hughes was president of each of them. 1927, however, was the rock on which the banks floundered. In January the Rusk County Bank closed voluntarily after a run. It was found that $320,000 worth of securities were undesirable assets. The business men of the town who were neither officers nor stockholders tried to work out a plan of reorganization. Nothing could be done, though, and the bank went into the hands of a receiver. Meanwhile a new bank was being organized, Security State Bank of Ladysmith, with a capital stock of $25,000 subscribed locally. In the same year the oldest bank in the county, Lumberman's State Bank of Bruce, went into the hands of a receiver. The situation here was different, however, for it was accompanied by embezzlement on the part of the cashier. In 1930 the Weyerhauser bank was closed by order of the banking commission which created a run on the allied Glen Flora Bank. And now they felt they could not weather the storm alone.

"Taking a leaf out of the experience of agricultural groups

43 Ibid., Jan. 8-37, 1927.
47 Ibid., Apr. 4, 1930.
in the state who have banded together for mutual cooperation and benefit, the Pioneer National Bank has today joined the group of banks in the state known as the Wisconsin Bank-shares Corporation with resources exceeding $250,000,000", announced the president, F. I. Hughes.

Farmers too, were having their troubles. Under a state law of 1913 and 1915 county boards were authorized to issue bonds and thus loan money to settlers to improve farms. Under this cooperative borrowing plan the county would lose nothing and the farmer could get cheaper interest rates. Rusk County looked into this, but no action was taken. In 1916 the State Bank of Ladysmith provided for Federal Farm loans through its connection with the Federal Land Bank of St. Paul and a farm loan association was formed. Under this plan farmers could borrow up to 50% of the appraised value of their land and 20% of the insurable value of the buildings. Loans were to run for 34\(\frac{1}{2}\) years under an amortization plan, \(6\frac{1}{2}\)% was to be paid every six months, \(5\frac{1}{2}\)% interest the rest principal. Borrowers had to take stock in the association to 5% of their loan, but this was deducted from the loan. The formation of this association in Rusk County may be looked at from two points of view. Either, heretofore the county had been too prosperous to need federal aid, or too few farmers had had sufficient improvements to

48 Ibid., Feb. 28, 1930.
49 Rusk Jl., Apr. 21, 1918.
50 Rusk Jl., Dec. 5, 1918.
make such a loan possible. The latter seems more probable for in every other instance, the county has avidly seized on any suggestion of state or federal aid.

As early as 1908 the Omaha and Northwestern Railroad, which owned property in Rusk County, had withdrawn their cut-over land from the market for the purpose of reseeding to timber. In 1926 at a County Life Conference a resolution was introduced that the county board favored a policy of reforestation and that an effort should be made to make settlements only on first class agricultural land near existing roads and schools. In 1928 Rusk and Sawyer counties were united in fire district number 7 with a deputy fire ranger. He had a truck with fire-fighting apparatus and distributed a box of equipment to a local emergency fire ranger in every township. Plans were made for a series of fire towers.

A last show of faith and enthusiasm! 1914 renewed the search for iron with drilling in Wilson on Pigeon Creek by unknown parties. In 1916 options were secured and everyone remembered that the results of the drilling years ago had never been made public. By 1925 iron had gone out of style and drilling for oil was the rage. J. C. Noble, an oil expert from Quitter, Kansas, looked over the territory and signed up 10 year leases on 20,000 acres of land.

51 Ibid., Feb. 1, 1908.
53 News., Apr. 19, 1929.
54 Rusk Jl., Jan. 12, 1914.
55 Ibid., June 18, 1918.
$1,00 down and a royalty of $1/8 of the oil production. State Geologist W. O. Hotchkiss said that the existence of oil at 1200 or 1400 feet, where Noble said it was, was absolutely impossible for there was granite and other impervious, hard crystalline rocks at that level. Drillers hired by unknown parties appeared near Weyerhaeuser and at 60 feet got a dark substance "which is universally acclaimed hereabouts as crude oil". Samples were sent to the state geologist, W. F. Elen, who believed the oil to have emanated from a deposit of organic material in a glacial drift, and to the Milwaukee Industrial Chemical Institute which pronounced it to be a good grade of crude oil. In 1928 Mr. Noble, now Colonel J. C. Noble, was back again to assure the people near Weyerhaeuser of the development of their prospects.

Tax Situation The greatest of all post-war problems was the financial situation. This, I admit, leaves me in a bit of a quandary. Was this situation due to the war, or was it due to the excesses of the early period? Was it just the stage in its development which the county was passing through, or was it the reflection, the local reaction to the great current problems of the nation. James Truslow Adams warns against our modern tendency to react to the emotionalism engendered by "close-ups" and urges that people think of relations and backgrounds. So in this particular

56 Letter from Mr. Hotchkiss in Rusk Jl., Aug. 27, 1925.
57 Rusk Jl., Aug. 12, 18, 28, 1928.
study we must keep in mind that the entire nation is in a post war period and the fact that 30 year bonds issued between 1900 and 1910 invariably and unavoidably come due between 1920 and 1930.

It seems likely that the county board saw the handwriting on the wall as early as 1921 for at that time it installed a purchasing committee and a new audit system and by 1924 it had established and put into use a budget system. But in 1927 came the famous "economy board". After all of the regular appropriations for running expenses were attended to a series of resolutions stopped payment on every one that was not essential to the actual carrying on of government; no bounties on woodchucks and crows, only $1000 of the $2000 for the County Normal allowed, library not to spend its $2000, the dance committee lost $50, the county nurse and county agent were dispensed with, the new barns on the fair grounds were not to be built, the fair appropriation stopped, state exhibition fund cancelled, no payment to the Children's Home Finding Society, no deputy sheriffs, consolidation of clerk hire, no patrol superintendent for county highways, and "there will be little or no new road construction work attempted this year and probably none in 1928." Verily, verily, a situation! Tax certificates were offered for sale at face value, and a more equitable assessment on wild lands provided. "However, the county is not

Rusk Jl., Dec. 1, 1921.
yet at the top of the heap", the paper commented and then comforted itself with the thought that "Rusk County's exchequer has not been in better condition in the past eight years than it is at the present moment" while other counties would probably be forced to issue script. Town treasurers were in a quandary, they had no idea how finances should be managed in an exigency. One example of their difficulties: The town of Cedar Rapids took in very little money during 1928. As a result the town treasurer did not have enough money to pay the Ingram School. The school district, also short of money, sued. The state superintendent was very unsympathetic and criticized the treasurer for not having collected the taxes. Judge Wickham, however, dealt with the situation in a most admirable way, soothing the school district and recommending an adjustment on the next tax roll. The bank failures in the county, left the officials rather nervous about county funds. To relieve the county treasurer of the responsibility, the commissioners named such banks as depositors as would furnish suitable bond, personal bond up to $1000, but should any bank furnish surety bond for $25,000 the treasurer was to deposit funds without limit, later this was changed so that the bonds had to be of sufficient amount to cover the county deposits and personal bond limited to $2500.

The county eagerly backed any attempt of the state legislature to alleviate the situation. The Real Estate Board held tax meetings all over the county in 1931 to

62 News, May 25, 1928;
63 Ibid., Nov. 30, 1928.
64 Ibid., Jan. 11, 1929.
65 Ibid., Feb. 8, 1929.
create enthusiasm in a policy of state regulation. Ten points were finally drawn up and presented to the legislature in a petition. These asked for the establishment of the commission form of government; collection of taxes by the county treasurer only, thus eliminating the town treasurer; the drawing of the tax roll to be left to the county clerk, and the town clerk's salary cut in half. Under the guidance of Assemblyman Summerville many of these received kindly consideration and some were passed. Also tax exemption was granted on new settler's unimproved 40's for three years, if used as a homestead. Assemblyman A. C. Schultz backed a bill to permit counties and other municipalities to borrow up to 50% of their current tax levy, 10% having been the limit heretofore, but how would this relieve a situation which had been brought about partly by too lenient borrowing facilities? Another method of meeting the problem was in Bill No. 178A which proposed that public utilities pay taxes in the community where the property is located instead of to the state and at the same rate as other property. The basis and values on which they were to be assessed for taxing purposes was to be the same as the railroad commission allows them for rate making. The local application of this in Rusk County would be, of course, the light and power company at Big Falls. The state tax commission values this

66 Rusk JL., Feb. 3 and 10, Mar. 31, 1921.
67 Ibid., July 14, 1921.
68 Ibid., Feb. 13, 1927.
at $668,000 and taxes on the rate of .019; the railroad commission values the same property at $2,267,000. If the tax commission valuation is right, then rates are three times what they should be; if the railroad commission is right, then the county is paying tax on only 30% of this value. On the company's own valuation, the tax commission assessment was 13% of its value; as compared to other property in the town the company paid only 8% of its tax at own valuation and 10% at railroad valuation. Originally the site had been bought for $100,000 and was then resold before the dam was built, for $2,500,000. It was claimed that the utility companies, controlled by Insull, was fighting the bill with paid lobbyists. As it actually worked out the utility tax to the county was increased from $3,428 to $10,446.

Another remedial suggestion was county consolidation, but it met with no enthusiasm in Rusk County. In answer to "On Wisconsin" in the Milwaukee Journal, the News attempted to prove that the results were not worth it: The total tax levy of the county for county purposes was $65,000, $25,000 of which could not be eliminated as it was for poor relief, bonds, supervising teachers, and other essential expenses. Of the remaining $40,000, not more than half could be eliminated. If there were less officers there would have to be more clerks, which certainly would not save $30,000.

89 Ibid., Apr. 12, 1933.
70 Ibid., Nov. 8, 1933.
On a total tax of $131,000 a saving of $30,000 would mean a 15% reduction. The county tax being from 15% to 25% of all taxes, an average of 20%, your saving would be 3% with consolidation. Counterbalancing this 3% would be the inconvenience of living so much farther from the county seat.

1931 presented its particular problems—$5000 more had to be appropriated for poor relief; $700 had to be added to the expenses of the county treasurer, to pay for printing the larger tax lists; an increase in crime necessitated an increase of $1000 in the sheriff's office, and the delinquent taxes continued to grow.

Delinquent taxes were nothing new in this part of the country. In 1906 the paper commented that in old days, "100's and 100's" were allowed to revert rather than pay taxes. In 1914 the bidding at the tax sale had been "eager" and no "agricultural" land had been allowed to go to the county. In 1917 the state legislature passed an act permitting counties to buy tax certificates in order to do away with the "greaser" who buys taxes and makes 10% profit. Immediately the county board started to act on this suggestion and passed a resolution permitting the county treasurer to bid in all county lands, sold for taxes only, for the amount of such general taxes, interest, and charge remaining.

71 Ibid., Jan. 4, 1929.
72 Husk Jl., May 12, 1906.
73 Ibid., May 21, 1914.
74 Ibid., Nov. 11, 1917.
on them, except those against which there are outstanding certificates of sale. The next year this was rescinded. By 1924 something had to be done with the property which the county had on hand, so it was placed on sale at the appraised price, the initial payment to be 20% of the value plus the value of valuable timber, the remainder to be paid in five years at 6%. By 1925 the delinquent tax list was the longest in the county's history, 63,000 descriptions, about 98% of it wild, cut-over land. At this time the county had bought $50,000 worth of tax certificates and the "county has been obliged to resort to the borrowing of money in order to carry on the ordinary business of the county". The district attorney was ordered to foreclose all the tax certificates which the county had for sale prior to 1925; they could be purchased for the face of the certificate without interest. The situation as summarized in an editorial in 1929 was: the tax levy of 1928 had been $72,000. From the receipts the state, school, and local allotments were taken first, thus leaving only $2,000 to be turned in to the county treasurer. This was 3% of the county budget, and the rest was in the form of certificates, less than half of which had been paid. How was this to be remedied? If the budget is kept and the taxes low there will be a shortage due to

76 Ibid., 1918.
78 Rusk Jl., May 14, 1925.
delinquencies; if a contingent fund is provided and the levy increased, the taxes will be increased, therefore there will be less taxes paid and a subsequent increase in the levy. All the commissioners did at their 1928 meeting was debate this question and finally rescinded all resolutions covering the sale of county-owned tax certificates, substituting a resolution ordering the county treasurer and clerk to take the tax deeds on any land or other property on which the county held tax certificates eligible to tax deed. It was even proposed that the state should be empowered to purchase certificates up to $25,000 if 10% more of the rural land was delinquent.

Finally the legislature, under the guidance of the Rusk County Assemblyman, passed a law which was immediately put to use in the county. According to this new arrangement the county could take tax deeds to delinquent lands and enter them under the forest croo law. For these lands the state pays 10 cents an acre, half to the school district, and half to the town. The towns of Wilson and Cedar Rapids benefited first, 5,340 acres being withdrawn.

In 1928 there was a good deal of confusion raised over an attempted speculation in lands by one of the county commissioners, who later claimed he was "framed". The

83 Ibid., Sept. 13, 1928.
result was a resolution that any one wanting to buy a tax certificate must make an affidavit as to his purpose in investing. This was to be laid on the table for 30 days while a committee looked up the description and made an attempt to get a more reasonable amount for the land. A letter in the paper claimed that taxes on an improved 40 were $156 while taxes on wild land was $7 an acre, but while the lumber and land companies which owned the wild land didn’t say the taxes, they did sell off the stumpage.

In 1920 the county had in its files $807,000 worth of tax certificates, $120,000 of which belonged to the county, the rest to the towns. Thereupon they held a "bargain sale" and offered them at face value for 90 days. When the money was turned over to the county treasurer after "tax-time", the delinquency returned was $104,480, $7,000 less than a year ago, and only 13 precincts had "an excess roll" as compared to 25 the year before. The tax sale had brought in $10,000 and every county note had been paid. Finally came the suggestion that the problem must be settled by the state, and real property must be relieved of the burden.

Ladysmith, too, was having its tax troubles. Judge D. W. Veloney, in his usual outspoken fashion asked why the people holler to cut down taxes and then save the city and

85 In "People's Forum" in Ibid., Feb. 22, 1926.
86 Ibid., Mar. 7, 1930.
87 Ibid., Mar. 7, Apr. 4 and 11, May 2, 1930.
88 Ibid., Aug. 1 and 8, 1930.
out in a white way, why not cut down on local appropri-
ations? The state law exempting $500 valuation on home-
steads, decreased the taxes $450,000, necessitating an in-
creased rate. In 1926 there was a 10% reduction on the
wages of all city officials and employees. For 1931 resolu-
tions to discontinue the city attorney and health officer
and to scale down the school budget were laid on the table.
The school budget had been reduced somewhat the preceding
years and the bonds on the high school had been completely
paid off. The selling of the Great Western Paper Company
to the Lake Superior District Paper Company was a financial
tragedy for the city, for the power company paid taxes
directly to the state. The income of the city was thus
declined $7,000, raising the rates from .038 to .039.

As to the cause of the difficulties with the city
tax situation, an editorial in the paper comments: "The
city has in the past recent years levied its tax, not on
the basis they really needed to pay their estimated ex-
penses, the state and county charges, and their current in-
debtedness, but rather on the basis of what the traffic
would bear. As a result each year has seen the city no
nearer financial salvation, and the past year, especially,
have witnessed the temporary loans increasing to $20,000."

22 Rusk Jl., Feb. 17, 1921.
20 Ibid., May 13, 1924.
91 Rusk Jl., Nov. 18, 1926.
92 News, Mar. 71, 1930.
93 Ibid., Feb. 1, 1929.
94 Ibid., Sept. 20, 1929.
As to county taxes the paper is more charitable: "Incidentally Rusk County has the least increase in delinquent taxes of all the counties listed as having large areas of cut-over lands. This refers to the increase in delinquency from 1920-1930. In the opinion of the News the increased efficiency and economy of the county commission form of government should be given credit for at least a part of the comparatively favorable showing made by this county."

In 1920 Dan Russell pulled the lever that blew 50 stumps into the air at once, the county could not get cleared fast enough. Before his death, it is reported he said that none of that region should ever have been opened to agriculture. In 1930 the slogan was "6,000 more cleared acres in 1920," in 1930: "The intelligent and constructive growth of timbered areas in such sections as Rusk County cannot fail to help the county, eventually. They will provide shelter for wild life, attract tourists, and with proper fire protection will some day be a source of raw material for local industries."

Oh, will, what of it? The trees and the game are about gone, but both will come back. The figures in the books are astounding, but they are nothing as compared to figures in one corporation in another part of the county.

No, they are nothing, just another little incident in history-

95 Nws., Nov. 29, 1929.
96 Ibid., Sept. 19, 1930.
97 Ibid., Jan. 31, 1930.
most people don't even know there is a Rusk County.

But some people do. All of those whose dreams and
hopes were raised by the enthusiasm of the early days!
Those who scraped and saved to come to this paradise! Those
who piled brush, and pulled stumps, and picked stones to
make a farm! Those whose babies' bodies were starved and
pinched waiting for crops! Those who worked their very
souls out, and then saw tax day come and go and no ready
money! Those who loved and lost! To them this was no
series of numbers in a tax book or mistakes on the record
of time. To them this was their life and the lives of
their children. Men and women past forty-five cannot start
again, and the starving years of youth can never be fat-
tened!
Conclusion

And so the tale has spun itself from forest back to forest. Professor Turner has suggested that each unit of the frontier forms a picture of the whole frontier in miniature. What does Rusk County--26 townships, 30 years--show?

In the beginning of the county history, if Roosevelt had been geography he would have been Rusk County--a lot of noise, with sterling qualities behind it, absolute faith in its own powers; blustering, yet foolishly gentle. The opening of Rusk County was all a part of Roosevelt's great conservative movement; for an epitome of it study the county.

This is followed by a period of good steady industry and development, which was broken into by war hysteria. This was the period of the scientific expert, no longer was each man as capable as every other. Rather overlapping this was the period of organization. Nothing could be done by individuals, organizations controlled everything. The state government was expected to head all of these, and to respond to them. The state was not to control anything, but was to give unlimited power and money to local units for expenditure. 1921 saw a business depression in Rusk County and 1930 saw blackness and depth beyond all retrieving.

When there are several children in a family, the
oldest child is usually very dutiful and progresses according to rule; subsequent children deviate more or less from the prescribed rule, and then comes the baby. The baby is not to be young longest but to have many ideas not at all becoming to one his age. He wants to do everything his older sisters and brothers do while they are doing it, not waiting until he is their age. He wants to be independent and do things his own way. And yet he wants the protection of his elders and their help, also he sees no reason why the sisters and brothers can't give him a lot of help, too. He is impudent, critical of his elders, self-assertive, and so modern that he must leap ahead and show the others how the new generation is doing things. Thus Rusk County, the baby of Wisconsin.

And now did Rusk County measure up in effecting history to the standards set for frontier regions by Professor Turner in his Significance of the American Frontier?

It did its share in forming a composite nationality. Few immigrants came from Europe directly to this region, but many eventually found their way there to mingle with each other, but more interesting was the intermingling of people from Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana. All frontier states, belonging to approximately the same period, their erstwhile citizens had become so provincialized that it was easily possible to tell one group from the other. Now they were mingling and forming a new composite group.

Perhaps not national, but certainly state legisla-
tion was conditional in Rusk County. It was the demands of these new, little developed regions that brought about our great system of state aids— aids for schools, for roads, for county agents, for county normals, for this, for that. The idea that the older regions must be taxed to make possible the development of these newer regions definitely developed after 1900 and in this region.

Democracy was promoted on this frontier, though, but not in the same degree as in the older frontiers. Many of the excesses of the democracy of the old frontier were avoided because of prohibitive state legislation. But perhaps a little different slant is given to it by the progress of organization. There is still individualism, but the individuals are organized to combat other groups of individuals, no one in any group, however, loses his identity or independence.

If this new frontier has affected American thought it has done so through this new idea of cooperation. Perhaps Rusk County's organizations of Holstein breeders, timber workers, real-estate men, and boy calf raisers each trying to control legislation, to have political as well as economic strength will bring about a more sympathetic appreciation of the Russian Soviet with its industrial groups. One can only hope that the disillusionment caused by the recent turn of affairs will not produce a cynicism in the American mind as early frontier traits produced their intellectual traits.

And now let us remove the microscope and let our specimen go its way, chuckling over its secrets.
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The figures of County Superintendent of Schools.
Bibliography

In preparing the first history of a region, one necessarily depends on the local newspapers as the great source of material. For the present study recourse has been had to the complete files of the Ladysmith News. Previous to April 15, 1927 this paper appeared under various names: Weekly Journal May, 1900-Dec. 21, 1901; Gates County Journal, Dec. 28, 1901; Gates County Journal Dec. 28, 1901-Nov. 1905; Rusk County Journal Nov. 1905-Jan. 29, 1927; Ladysmith News Budget (a paper which competed with the Rusk County Journal for many years and finally bought it) Feb. 1927-Apr. 8, 1927; and finally Apr. 15, 1927 it assumed its present title. Access has not been had to the many county "sheets" which were published at various times, but the most important items were reprinted in the county paper. The files of the Superior Telegram and the Chippewa Falls Independent have been read for this same period, but most of the Rusk County articles were reprints from county papers.

Source material has been obtained from the printed Official Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors of Rusk County, Wisconsin 1902-1929 including the reports of the various county officials; the City Charter and Ordinances of Ladysmith; the motley collection of imports in Public Documents of the State of Wisconsin for the years 1901-1929;

The annual reports of the Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Sault Ste. Marie Railway Company from 1901 to 1939 and of the Wisconsin Central Railway Company during its existence from 1900 to 1909 have furnished some helpful material.

Census reports were obtained from a state census compiled by Secretary of State Walter L. Hansen in 1906 and from the volumes on Population, Agriculture, and Manufacturing in the Census of the United States for 1910 and 1920.

Maps have been prepared from a Plat Book of Grant County, Wisconsin compiled by Paul Faust and Julius Jungblut of Milwaukee between 1901 and 1905; the Standard Atlas of Rusk County, Wisconsin compiled and published by Geo. A. Ogle and Company, Chicago 1914; and the Plat Book of Wisconsin published by W. W. Hixson and Company, Rockford, Illinois, 1928.

Religious history has been, with difficulty, gleaned from the inconsistent minutes of the annual meetings of the Congregational Convention, the West Wisconsin Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Wisconsin Baptist Anniversaries, Wisconsin Synod of the Presbyterian Church, and the Wisconsin Congregational Church Life.

The only book dealing directly with Rusk County is Rusk County in the World War compiled by Gerald C.
Maloney at Ladysmith in 1920.

General sources have yielded little of value, but reference has been had to Wisconsin Its Story and Biography published in eight volumes by Ellis Baker Usher in Chicago 1914 and Wisconsin Its History and Its People published in four volumes by Milo Milton Quaife in Chicago 1924.

For interpretation and personal inspiration it has frequently been necessary to refer to Frederic L. Paxson, History of American Frontier 1783-1893. N. Y. 1934 and Frederick Jackson Turner The Frontier in American History N. Y. 1931.