

AMHERST JUNCTION, The Village of

The village of Amherst Junction did not grow out of saw mill community, but developed after a junction was formed by the Wisconsin Central and Green Bay and Lake Pepin railroads. In a road statement dated Oct. 28, 1876 it is referred to as "Groverburg," presumably after the Grover family which held considerable property in the vicinity. The original plat also refers to it as the "village of Groverburg" although when a post office was established here on March 23, 1875, it was called Amherst Junction.

The village was incorporated in 1911 although the date of the first election is not recorded. From the oaths of office, however, it is learned that Henry N. Nelson was elected president; Fred A. Ellinger, Herman J. Steinke, Chas. H. Rickman, Ambrose H. Glisczinski, George Starks and George E. Larson, trustees; Herman H. Hoffman, supervisor; and Martin P. Kjer, assessor. The Helgeson account confirms the above but in addition lists the names of L. L. Nelson as treasurer, H. J. Fletcher and Felix Dreyfka, constables, and M. P. Kjaer and Hoffmann as justices of the peace.¹

At one of the early meetings of the board held in 1912 the members voted to negotiate with John Een "for the rent of the calaboose for one year" and also to accept a street lamp already on hand and to purchase one additional lamp. These were probably gas lamps as there are periodic payments made to the American Gas Machine Co., and in 1915 the board purchased five new lamps from this company and returned the old ones. These lamps appear to have been replaced in 1918 when electric lighting was brought into the village by the Amherst Electric Service Company.

¹ *Fra Indianernes Lande*, p. 117.

In agreeing to a split with the assets of the town of Amherst in 1912 the village of Amherst Junction accepted 10% as its share of town-owned property. This included the following items:

Town hall and lot	\$625.00
Tool house	50.00
Calaboose	50.00
Lot in the village of Haakins (?)	40.00
Wilmott Gravel Pit	25.00
Hoffman Gravel Pit	15.00
Three road graders	275.00
2 plows	24.00
1 wheel scraper	12.00
1 wheel scraper	5.00
2 drag scrapers	8.00
5 drag scrapers	5.00
20 shovels	8.00
3 steel bars	3.00
other small tools	12.15
safe in town clerk's office	25.00
1 stove in town hall	5.00
cash in hand of town treasurer	
Feb, 6, 1912	1512.11
	<hr/>
	\$2699.26

In addition to 10% of this amount, the village was to have the Hoffman gravel pit at the inventory price of \$15. The gravel pit was needed to surface the village roads and was an important asset after the turn of the century when the automotive age demanded a hard-surfaced road.

A contract was also let to G. M. Harwood in 1913 to lay concrete sidewalks to replace the wood, or board, sidewalks then in use. The costs listed in the Harwood bid were nine and three-quarters cents per square foot and 14 cents per square foot for five-inch traverse crossings.

Meanwhile, a creamery had been in business in Amherst Junction for some time although it apparently was discontinued in 1914 as a vote was taken at a board

meeting that year to "see Miss J. Calkins in regard to purchasing a lot and the *creamary* (creamery) building for a dwelling house." By this time the village had also become an important potato buying and shipping center and a number of warehouses were spotted along sidings built by the railway companies.

At this same meeting the board voted to post five speed limit signs in the village with the speed not to exceed ten miles per hour. The first gasoline tank and curb stone pump was authorized by the board in July 1915 when the Louis Hardware Company was given permission to install the equipment needed but only on condition that the village was to bear no responsibility if the pump interfered with traffic on the sidewalk.

The leading hotel in the village was Summit House which in 1876 may have been known as "Junction House." It stood in the east angle between the two railway tracks, a few feet east of the depot. Both have been removed.

Before and after the turn of the century new settlers and travelers to the town of New Hope, Alban and Stockton used the two railways to Amherst Junction where they de-trained and were either met by friends or hired rigs to drive them to their destination. Salesmen and drummers stopped here and hired rigs to the several stores and villages in the area. A livery from Rosholt to Amherst Junction on July 24, 1906 cost \$2.50.¹

The village also has a record of its justice proceedings beginning June 23, 1916, which carries entries made down to the latter part of 1935. From these records it is clear that the most serious problem facing the board in its first years was the liquor traffic. After the United States entered World War I, the evidence of this justice docket and others in the county suggests greater restraint in public places. The passing of the National Prohibition Act on Oct. 19, 1919, which banned the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages, may have been a mistake in the light of the rackets which flour-

¹ Malcolm Rosholt, *Town 25 North*, (1948), p. 200.

ished in the "Roaring Twenties," but there can be no question that the old-time saloon had become a menace, difficult to control and overbearing in its influence on local politics.

After 1920 a new institution known as the soft drink or ice cream parlor replaced the old-time saloon, and ordinances were passed in the various villages and townships of the county to govern it. The village board of Amherst Junction on Feb. 18, 1922, passed ordinance No. 18 which declared it unlawful for anyone to operate a soft drink parlor or ice cream parlor without a license. The license, Class A costing \$100, made it possible for the licensee to serve "near beer, pop, ginger ale, ice cream and other soft drinks." A Class B license, costing \$50, covered only pop, ginger ale, ice cream and other soft drinks. The licensing in Wisconsin of "near beer," a beverage with an alcoholic content of less than one-half per cent, was the opening wedge which helped pave the way for the defeat of the Prohibition, or Volstead Act, in 1933.

Appearing in the 1912 tax roll of Amherst Junction are the following names: H. N. Nelson, Mrs. C. M. Dwinell, Nels Docka, John Somers, Julius Pidle, R. Miller, Mrs. P. Simonoe, L. Lubetski, L. Basinski, C. H. Richman, Security Bank, A. Skalitzky Estate, A. H. Glisczinski, Joe Dulek, Frank Dulek, John Kirshling, J. A. Werachowski, J. J. Henjum, A. H. Pidde, Fred Ellinger, H. H. Hoffman, Mrs. Ida Vesley, H. J. Stenke, Earl Smart (probably for Geo. Starks,) Joe Weaver, Mrs. N. Bazinski, A. Wysniak, Julius Gledoski, Joe Jurasek, N. Grover, Wm. Packard Estate, Aug. Kostuck, John Koziczkowski, L. E. Freeman, L. A. Calkins, and Frank Koziczkowski. The 1912 roll does not carry the entries of business establishments which may have been recorded separately. In 1922 there were 51 taxpayers in Amherst Junction and among company names listed are the S. H. Bowman Lumber Co., Glisczinski & Bros., Jackson Milling Co., Lewis Hardware, and Zynda Bros. & Co. Of the 46 individuals paying taxes in 1922, all but 14 were assessed against an automobile, or other motor vehicle, the lowest being \$50, probably a motor-

cycle, second-hand, while the highest, a vehicle owned by Nick Theis, was valued at \$1,050. The majority owned vehicles valued at \$100 to \$450.

The Security State Bank of Amherst Junction, mentioned in the 1912 tax roll, was organized Sept. 9, 1903. The original stockholders were Henry N. Nelson, Carl Een, John Lutz, August Suchert, Albert G. Cate, Adolph Skalitzky, Charles L. Duswell, Andrew Johnson, Matt Wadleigh, E. W. Czeskleba, Albert G. Guyant, Elmer J. Carley, L. L. Nelson, J. W. Dunegan, Luce C. Cate, George J. Thiele, N. J. Loberg, F. C. Walton, C. D. McFarland, T. H. Hanna, J. A. Week, E. M. Rice, and Charles E. Kanute. The capital of the Security State Bank was \$8,500 at the time of its incorporation.¹

The first officers of the bank were Charles Buswell, president; Carl Een, vice president and J. W. Dunegan, second vice president; and Henry Nelson, cashier. On Saturday, Nov. 24, 1928 a reception was held in Amherst Junction to celebrate the formal opening of a new home of the Security State Bank, located on the west side of Main Street. Meanwhile, on May 1, 1918, Olaf Nelson had been made cashier and continued as cashier and president until Nov. 15, 1956 when he sold his interest in the bank to Joseph Migas. The capital stock was increased to \$12,500 in 1929 and in 1944 to \$25,000. At the close of 1957 the bank had total deposits of \$592,727.29 and a capital structure of \$51,619.31. The officers were: Joseph Migas, president; Julian Lila, vice president; Chester V. Lepak, cashier; and Shirley Barden, assistant cashier.

A successful home industry was begun at Amherst Junction in 1945 by George Sroda who has a turkey farm and processing plant located in the village off H-10. The family-owned industry specializes in a meat-type bird of special flavor where all processing is done by hand to retain this flavor. Nothing is wasted

¹ Correspondence from O. A. Nelson, Jan. 28, 1958: (In the personal property assessment of 1912, the bank had 22 stockholders with 85 shares valued at \$85 each, for a total of \$7,225, less than the original capitalization, which is probably an error.)

in the by-products; in fact Sroda is probably the only turkey raiser in the United States who finds a market for "everything including the gobble" (tape recorded for advertising purposes). In 1958 he sold 3,000 cellophane wrapped, oven ready, boxed turkeys to buyers in 28 states.

Serving the village of Amherst Junction, with a population of 186, in 1957-58, were Grant Lutz, president; Edwin H. Carr and Joseph Migas, trustees; LeRoy Docka, clerk; O. A. Nelson, treasurer; Julian H. Lila, assessor; Albert Hinkle, justice of the peace; Theodore Konkol, constable; E. H. Carr, health officer; and Joseph Sroda, supervisor.

Our Country Our Story Portage County Wisconsin - Link Page

PREVIOUS...AMHERST, THE VILLAGE OF.....248

NEXT.....BELMONT, THE TOWNSHIP OF.....261

GO BACK TO THE ELECTRONIC INDEX PAGE...