



This is Unity – From the air, looking northward above the village. Highway 13, paralleling the Soo Line Railroad, divides the community in Clark and Marathon county sections, with the Clark county section to the left of the highway. The undeveloped area bordering both sides of the railroad right-of-way, is Unity Park, a popular recreational spot for both townspeople and tourists. Visible in the upper left portion of the picture are Memorial Hall, the railroad station and the village business section. At the upper right is the old Salter farm, now occupied by the Harvey Suckow family. Forward is the village elementary school.

**Unity – The story of Unity** began in 1872 with the coming of railroad and lumbering, but today the community's economy rests heavily upon agriculture.

It was lumber that brought D. J. Spaulding here in 1873, a year after the Wisconsin Central Railroad (now the Soo Line) penetrated the area. Spaulding erected a large mill and a store in what then was called Brighton.

Many of the present-day communities on the old Wisconsin Central, including Unity, originally were named after cities in Massachusetts, reflecting an influence exerted by railroad promoters and officials who came from that state.

Published reminiscences of Ed Creed, a pioneer resident of the community, give this account of the selection of the later name: "When a post office was asked for at this place the name of Brighton was sent to the Post Office Department as the name selected for the new office, but as there already was an office of that name in the state, we tried again and sent in the name of Maple Grove, only to be informed that there also was an office by that name already in the state. Some now wanted that name and some another, and before we could come to an agreement the (postal) department took the matter into its own hands and gave the name of "Unity." The officials at Washington evidently were a "unit" on that name, if the citizens of this place were not."

Unity is situated on the county line between Clark and Marathon counties, and reportedly occupies the highest point of land between Medford and Stevens Point. Much of the surrounding area is fertile soil, which has been developed into dairy farms. Milk produced on these farms is converted in cheese and butter in factories in the area.

The village had banking facilities and various other commercial establishments to meet the needs of residents and the surrounding farm area.

A new industry started here about a year ago is the Kaufman Manufacturing Company, producer and distributor of juvenile training chairs and rocking chairs. The firm was brought to Unity through the promotion of the Unity Advancement Association, an organization of village men.

One of the first high schools in the central part of the state was organized here in 1880 by J. W. Salter, who was the first principal. The school continued in operation until 1954, when the area was annexed to the Colby Union Free High School district. The building here continues in use as an elementary school.

In a sense, the old high school remains a vital force through the activities of an enthusiastic alumni. Hundreds of the latter forged fun and recollections into a gay reunion in August, 1954, at which time they voted to hold their next reunion in 1964. Commencement rosters show that 587 students were graduated from Unity High School between 1883 and 1954.

The late Walter E. Cook, a life-long resident of Unity until his death in 1955, served almost six terms in the Wisconsin Legislature as an assemblyman. He was a chairman of the Assembly Labor Committee, and a member of the Agriculture Committee.

**Source: MARSHFIELD NEWS-HERALD (Marshfield, Wood County, Wis.) 1956**