

PICTURE

DES MOINES
SUNDAY REGISTER
February 18, 1979

Farmers' Holiday,
then and now

Page 4



The front row

By ELIZABETH CLARKSON ZWART

WHEN EDWARD VIII abdicated to become the Duke of Windsor, and his brother Bertie succeeded him as George VI, the new king was enthusiastically saluted by one minority that is not often heard from — the stutterers of the world.

George, himself, was one of them.

And no place did the new king's speech problem excite more sympathetic interest than in Iowa City, U.S.A.

There, in the University of Iowa's world-famed speech clinic, the students listened en masse to George's first broadcast speech.

When the last carefully cadenced sentence had been heard from London by radio, the Iowa group relaxed.

Then:

"At last w-w-e s-s-speak the k-k-king's English!" one stutterer stuttered.

Proudly.

For all.

THE ADDRESS BOOK: You can find Robin Road in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, if you're in a hurry.

IN TEXAS, George Washington Frost was charged with the murder of Woodrow Wilson Bullock.

Forty-odd years ago.

I never did hear how the trial came out.

HOW TO NAME the Baby: Mary Ball Washington named her baby boy George for her guardian, George Eskridge.

George Eskridge's namesake would have been 247 years old, come next Thursday.

On his 241st birthday, a group of children touring the Des Moines Art Center stopped in front of the Gilbert Stuart First President's portrait and sang "Happy birthday, George Washington, happy birthday to you."

And that night when the curtain fell on a Community Playhouse production of "George Washington Slept Here," a big birthday cake was wheeled onstage, and everybody — cast, stage staff, audience and ushers — gave "Happy birthday, George Washington," everything they had.

IF YOU would like to toast the Father of Your Country next Thursday, make a tureenful of "George Washington Soup" with lots of crabmeat, the best cream you can find, the tiniest



G-G-George the S-S-Sixth.

meatballs, crisp bacon bits and a dice of hardboiled egg.

FRIGHT DISHES: A Mr. Puleston, who seems to have spent too much time at the table, describes monkey meat as stringy and insipid, but, while hippopotamus meat is "generally coarse," some parts of the hippo are fairly good eating.

I'll take tea and melba toast, please.

IN GERMANY, a funeral is ein Leichenbegangnis — and what do you suppose one of those would cost?

I HAVE always wanted to live on an island.

But I've never wanted to be an island. That just isn't Donne.

A PROGRESSIVE NIGHTMARE: The Buddhists don't take it easy. They don't believe in a single hell — they swear that there are 128 of them.

THE OLDEST public park in the United States is the Boston Common, which is pretty common.

Its 48 acres were set aside in 1634 "for common use," and that included pasturing.

For a long time.

But, as you have heard, Bostonians grew snobbish. And for some time now, they've been blackballing cows.

A DES MOINES woman who

suffered double whiplash, having been whammed from the rear at two intersections in nine days, says she isn't afraid to drive, but she's scared to death to stop.

LONG BEFORE Lord Palmerston became prime minister of England, he was introduced to a young woman whose name was Mary Mee.

So he did.

BON APPETIT: A close relative of Winston Churchill said that the great man was "very fond of butterflies."

But she gave no recipes.

WHEN a potential holdup man buys a pair of pantyhose to wear as a nylon mask, does he ask for his headsize or his footsize?

EAVESDROPPING: "Are you related to Molly Brown Griswold?" the new woman in town asked another woman at a cocktail party.

"Well — distantly," the second woman said. "She was my husband's first wife."

YOU MAY NOT think of yourself as a gifted person, but if you have a warm smile or an infectious laugh, you have your own little speck of genius.

(Elizabeth Clarkson Zwart's column appears Monday through Friday in The Des Moines Tribune.)

PICTURE

DES MOINES SUNDAY REGISTER ■ FEB. 18, 1979

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Photo research by Bob Doyle

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Picture magazine welcomes contributions from its readers, but The Register will assume no responsibility for such contributions. If return of material is desired, a stamped, self-addressed envelope must be enclosed. Mailing address is 715 Locust St., Des Moines, Ia. 50304.

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Cover photo by JIM MAGDANZ



In mid-January a "tractorcade" sponsored by the American Agriculture Movement (AAM) left North Platte, Neb., headed for Washington, D.C. On down the road, hundreds of other farmers joined the "cade," some from the Dakotas and Wyoming, some from Minnesota, some from the Southwest and a few others from Iowa. Their purpose — to lobby U.S. legislators for the following: (1) Loan levels on all basic farm commodities set at 90 percent of parity. (2) Set-aside provisions at a level to insure a balance between supply and demand. (3) Legislation to insure that meat imports be restricted until prices reach 100 percent of parity, and that labeling and sanitation of meat imports be equivalent to U.S. standards. (4) Importation of all raw and processed agricultural commodities to be limited to a level to insure 100 per cent of parity. (5) Reserves of agricultural commodities should not be released to the market at levels less than 100 per cent of parity. The tractorcade expected to reach Washington by Feb. 2. When Photographer Magdanz shot today's cover photo, the two-mile string of tractors was just west of Des Moines. The date was Jan. 20. Fifty years ago, farmers were saying they were in the same bind for the same reason — low prices for their crops and livestock. But they didn't form tractorcades. They tried to get the nation's attention in other ways. To find out how, read George Mills' story beginning on page 4.

Years of shame, days of madness

By GEORGE MILLS/Photo research by BOB DOYLE

(This year marks the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Great Depression and the economic chaos that devastated rural America. In this modern-day period of "farm strikes" and "tractor-cades," historian George Mills, a former political writer for The Des Moines Register, takes a look at the early 1930s and a bloody, violent moment in Iowa history known as the "Farmers' Holiday.")

It was February of 1929 when the Iowa legislature passed a law that two years later would be used as the excuse to start a civil war in the farmlands of Iowa.

Hostilities began in March of 1931, and would last almost three years. Heads were bashed, blood was shed, bridges and property were demolished.

One respected Iowa judge was threatened with castration and hanging.

Desperate farmers — angry over ridiculously low prices for their corn, hogs and cattle — bunched into uncontrollable mobs to desecrate the courts and the legislature.

As many as 1,900 National Guardsmen, armed with rifles, bayonets and machine guns, were sent into the normally peaceful countryside to face potential battle with hundreds of enraged farmers.

The first battles were known as the "Cow War," but they were only the opening skirmishes in a much bigger war — one that would be called a bloody, shameful moment in Iowa and U.S. history known as the "Farmers' Holiday."

The 1929 law required that Iowa farmers have all their dairy and breeding cattle tested for bovine tuberculosis, and all infected animals were to be slaughtered. Medical authorities said that milk from such animals was a source of the deadly disease in humans.

The government paid farmers about \$60 per head for animals that had to be killed, but the farmers said it wasn't enough. Some claimed they were losing as much as \$130 per head.

On top of that, they said, the tests were unreliable, caused abortions in cattle, lowered milk quality and reduced milk production.

Pockets of protestors gathered, and Gov. Dan Turner served notice on them on March 8, 1931, that the law would be enforced.

But the next day a mob of 600 farmers stopped veterinarians from testing the cattle of Jake Butterodt in Cedar County. The following day, farmer-pickets stopped the vets from going onto five other farms in the same county.

The vast majority of Iowa farmers actually favored the TB testing, even in the troubled areas, which led political observers of the day to believe the Cow War stemmed not from the cattle testing but from a growing rage over the low level of farm prices.

Agriculture had already suffered through 10 years of low prices following collapse of the World War I boom in 1920. Thousands had lost their land through mortgage foreclosures. Desperate farmers were beginning to fight back.

The unrest festered all spring and summer of 1931. On Sept. 21, two vets, under the protection of 65 law enforcement officers, went to test the cattle of Jake Lenker, who farmed 14 miles south of Tipton.

Four hundred farmers were already there, spoiling for a fight. "They'll test my cattle over my dead body," Lenker said. The militants "beat and bruised" Dr. Peter Malcolm, the state veterinarian. They filled his car with mud, broke the gas line, slashed the tires and smashed in the windows. They slashed the tires on several other cars.

Outnumbered six to one, the veterinarians and officers retreated. The next day, Gov. Turner called out the National Guard, 1,900 in number, and declared martial law in Cedar County.

The troops fanned out from Tipton, conveying the vets to the protestors' farms. They mounted machine guns along the roads. Armed outposts were set up. Sentries watched for mass attacks, which never came. There was no way the farmers could win, and they knew it.

For all practical purposes, the Cow War was over. Only one person suffered a bullet wound in the whole "war." A guardsman accidentally shot himself in the foot.

Despite all the dust and smoke, Iowa was a leader nationally in acceptance of cattle testing for tuberculosis. A 1932 report, issued some months after the "war" ended, said almost 1.5 million cattle had been tested in Iowa and only 24,328 were positive reactors, or 1.68 percent of the total.

That ratio was far better than the 5.7

percent found in a 1922 survey. But peace on the farm was short-lived.

Even while the 1,900 National Guardsmen were fighting the Cow War, 1,500 farmers were meeting in the Iowa House of Representatives in Des Moines. The Legislature was not in session. The farmers were peaceful. Their subject was the price of corn.

They all promised to hold their corn off the market until the price reached 60 cents a bushel. The average price for corn throughout 1931 was a disastrous 28 cents a bushel, a big drop from the 52 cents in 1930 and 73 cents in 1929. (Corn today is selling for about \$2 per bushel.)

One Iowa farmer in seven had lost his land through foreclosure in the 1926-1931 period. The foreclosures affected 33,000 farms and more than 5 million acres.

The situation wasn't only rural, of course. It was estimated that unemployment nationally was 12 million to 15 million, or perhaps 25 percent of the work force.

By 1932, the suicide figures for Iowa told a grim story. The national average was 20.5 suicides per 100,000 population, but three Iowa cities were in the top 15 in the country in suicide rates.

Cedar Rapids was fourth nationally with 41.8 suicides per 100,000 population, twice the national average. Davenport was sixth with 37.6 suicides per 100,000, and Sioux City was 15th with 31.2.

The Iowa Farmers Union compiled a table showing the prices paid the farmer on Aug. 8, 1932, and what IFU said he needed to meet his costs of production:

	Prices paid	Production costs
Corn, bu.	22 cents	92 cents
Oats, bu.	11 cents	49 cents
Hogs, cwt.	\$3.85	\$11.25
Eggs, doz.	15 cents	35 cents
Butterfat, lb.	18 cents	62 cents

It was no wonder that militant farmers joined the "Farmers' Holiday Association" and went "on strike." Farmer-pickets blockaded highways and stopped trucks carrying farm commodities to market.



Milo Reno was the man of the hour.

Milo was a thick-maned, one-time Iowa farmer who had trained for the ministry. He was not only the Iowa leader but also the president of the national holiday association. He had a ringing voice. He knew his Bible. He wore a wide-brimmed hat, a red necktie and horn-rimmed glasses.

pickets stopped a Markell truck bringing milk to the city. Gunfire broke out. Markell was wounded fatally. Two pickets and his two sons were wounded, but they all recovered.

In another incident, 14 pickets were hit by shotgun pellets fired from two speeding cars late at night near Cherokee.

Interestingly, the picketing did not strengthen livestock prices at Sioux City, nor did the highway blockades seem to reduce the numbers of hogs reaching the various markets around the country. Economist Lauren Soth, later editor of the editorial pages of The Des Moines Register and Tribune, reported the hogs marketed in Iowa in July of 1932, before the picketing began, totaled 750,000 head. Receipts reached 804,000 head in August, when the blockading had started, 787,000 in September and 806,000 in October.

In other words, marketing continued about at a normal pace despite the rowdiness on the highways, and prices paid for livestock didn't vary substantially from one market to another.

Even Holiday spokesmen conceded they weren't getting the job done.

"You needn't think those fellows out on the picket lines are dumb enough to think they can raise prices of farm products," said E.A. Ellison of Lawton. "But they have taken this means of staging a protest and bringing the situation to the attention of the people of the nation."

Henry A. Wallace, then editor of Wallace's Farmer, and later vice president of the United States, called the whole "Holiday" movement "a mere gesture without economic significance except in the Sioux City territory." (Milk rose in price there from 2 cents to 4 cents a quart.)

"But gestures of this sort sometimes have far-reaching significance," he observed. "It may be that this rather simple-minded gesture known as the 'Farmers' Holiday' will prove to have greater significance than is possible for economists and businessmen to understand."

The situation was seething Sept. 9, 1932, when governors of four states and representatives from five others met at Sioux City to discuss the ills of agriculture. Governor Dan Turner, himself a lifelong farmer except for his tempestuous ventures into politics, played a leading role in the tense conference.

An estimated 5,000 farmers and sympathizers (including some Commu-

nists) converged on Sioux City. Jim Russell, farm editor of The Register, wrote:

"Displaying the American flag, truckload after truckload of farmers paraded through the streets thronged with the largest crowd that Sioux City has known since Lindbergh was here.

"The dramatic display of temper of the Farm Holiday members was heightened by signs on trucks proclaiming 'moratorium on our homes,' 'demand production cost,' 'help farmers get better prices' and 'united we stand, divided we fall.'"

An attempt by Maurice Horner, a Register photographer, to take a picture of the farmers there led to seizure of his camera and rough handling of both him and Russell. Horner said later:

"Russell and I went to a park in Sioux City where all these farmers were congregating. Jim pulled his car down close so I could get a picture of Mother Bloor on a hayrack talking to a big bunch of farmers." (Mother Bloor was a widely-known Midwestern Communist leader of the 1930s.)

"When I got up on the front of the car to take the picture, they said: 'There they are! Kill the sons-of-bitches!' The farmers left Mother Bloor standing there and all came after us — hundreds of them.

"They surrounded the car. They shoved me into the car and kicked me. They let me keep the camera at the moment. I got a bruise out of the kicks.

"Then they lined up on the side of the car where Jim was sitting at the wheel. The window was down. They went past and each took a poke at Jim as they went by. He didn't have a chance to put the window up.

"Then they pulled me out of the car and took the camera. They busted the camera into pieces. A guy on the running board said: 'You sons-of-bitches get outta here!' At one point

they almost tipped over the car. It was on two wheels. And somebody heaved a big rock through the back window. They were vicious.

"I've never liked mobs since.

"The crowd stood in front of the car. Jim asked me what he should do. I said, 'Run over 'em!' The crowd split and let us by."

The punches Russell took on his left ear damaged his hearing permanently. He was unable to hear in that ear the rest of his life.

Russell and Horner drove back to the Martin Hotel in Sioux City. News of the attack had reached The Register via the Associated Press.

"Stuffy Walters, our managing editor, phoned," Horner said. "He wanted to know how badly hurt we were and wanted us to go to the hospital. Russell said, no, we were all right.

"Fifteen minutes later, eight farmers came up to the hotel room and wanted to apologize. They brought back the camera in pieces. Russell said:

"'You're too damn late to apologize.' They left."

By January 1933, Iowa was in the throes of another violent year. The Great Depression was close to its low point. Corn brought only 14 to 15 cents a bushel in nearby Sioux City. The top price of hogs at the stockyards was \$2.90 per hundredweight, and \$6.75 per hundredweight was paid for the best cattle.

The banks, too, were having a tough time. Nearly 350 state-chartered banks had failed in Iowa and were in receivership in 1933, an average of more than three to a county. Hundreds more had failed in the preceding years.

Insurance companies were on the spot, also. They had accumulated \$500 million in Iowa farm loans, a huge amount for the times. Any insurance company failure likewise would have

ABOVE: Protests like this were witnessed not only in Iowa but all across the country during "milk strikes." At Elgin, Ill., in January 1934, farmers stopped a truck carrying 75,000 gallons of milk and emptied the cans onto the ground. ABOVE RIGHT: This sign was posted at the farm of Robert Foreman when veterinarians went there to test his cattle for tuberculosis. RIGHT: Farmer-pickets, some armed with clubs, pulled this man from his car and warned him not "to do it again" when they thought he might be trying to run the milk blockade at Elgin, Ill.

meant losses to families holding the firm's policies.

The corporate giants weren't the only ones under fire. Farmers who had lent money to other farmers sometimes faced mob threats, too. A northwest Iowa debt adjustment commissioner said:

"The worst shylocks I've had to deal with are farmers who hold mortgages on other farms. They're far and away less inclined to cut the principal for a settlement than a bank or insurance company. The individual wants the last nickel, even if he sees he can't get it."

On March 13, 1933, 3,000 farmers invaded the Iowa Legislature. The event was described later as "bloodless but furious." The legislators had been in session two months, and the farmers thought the lawmakers had been dragging their feet in considering laws for the relief of agriculture.

The intruders barged in and completely halted the legislative process in both houses. A few farmers carried pitchfork handles and ropes.

They especially wanted to get at State Senator Mike Fisch, a Le Mars Democrat, because they didn't like a bill he was sponsoring. They said they were going to hang him over ▶▶▶



Farmers' Holiday

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the railing in the Capitol rotunda. Mike wisely retreated by climbing up into the Statehouse golden dome. The farmers never did find him.

One of the blackest months in the state's history was April 1933. The outrages committed in northwestern Iowa at that time long will be remembered.

Before April ended, a farmer named Morris Cope jumped into prominence for his leadership in two violent actions in one day that caused a nationwide revulsion.

April 27 was the fateful day.

Cope once told a sheriff: "We're going to stop these foreclosures, that's all there is to it If I have to bloody my shirt to get the job done, that's all

right with me."

He bloodied more than his shirt.

The first onslaught took place at Primghar, the county seat of O'Brien County, 44 miles north and east of Le Mars. The activist farmers called themselves "Seventy-sixers" and "Minute Men," historic names from the Revolutionary War.

"We were ordered to be ready at 7 in the morning," said Art Bock of Hinton. He took a load of passengers aboard his truck at the Hinton Co-operative Oil station. One witness said ▷▷▷

Mother Bloor, a Communist leader of the 1930s, gave rousing speeches to hundreds of farmers from the Le Mars and Sioux City areas.



A word to smokers

(about nonsmokers and anti-smokers)

In the expressive jargon of jazz, a lot of folks are "into" segregation these days—for smokers.

If you've ridden any planes lately, you've found yourself banished to the back of them, last to be served, last to leave.

Here on the ground, there's a sudden sprouting of "No Smoking" signs. And if, by mistake, you happen to light up in the wrong place, you get a sharp reminder, annoyed frown or cold shoulder.

When that happens, it's easy to get the feeling you're being picked on, and made to feel like a social outcast.

But there's another side to this.

In Seattle some time ago, two restaurants tried segregation—an area for nonsmokers.

After a month, one had served 9,389 meals in the smoking side, and only 21 in the nonsmoker side. In the other, of 17,421 customers, only 23 asked to be segregated from the smokers.

The point is that most nonsmokers think smokers are O.K. and they like to be around us—when the choice is left up to them.

So take heart.

That doesn't mean that the tiny minority of anti-smokers are going to go away. They won't. Some of them have very sensible reasons for objecting. Smoke bothers them. And a discourteous smoker bothers them as much as he bothers us smokers. And then there are people, perfectly rational about everything else, who turn kind of paranoid when a smoker approaches.

We don't know what to do about these anti-smokers any more than you do—except to treat them all with the courtesy and kindness we deserve from them.

It works with our friends, the nonsmokers; it may also work with the anti-smokers.

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is the best choice.



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Farmers' Holiday

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the men started drinking corn liquor on the way to Primghar.

Cope said: "We weren't bad fellows up there. We were good people, good citizens."

The purpose of the Primghar trip was to prevent the foreclosure sale of the 160-acre farm of John Shaffer near Calumet to satisfy a debt of \$7,400.

O'Brien County Sheriff Ed Leemkuil got wind of the plans. He swore in 22 deputies and armed them with pickaxe handles. Leemkuil said the surly visitors were armed with automobile cranks, rocks, and ropes made into nooses.

"One fellow on the lawn shook a noose at me as I sat in my office," Leemkuil said.

The farmers crowded into the courthouse. Barring their way up the stairs were the waiting deputies, three on each step. Somebody came down the stairs and shouted: "Everybody out, fellows. We've made a settlement."

Cope yelled: "Everybody stop where you are! There's something wrong here." Then came the cry: "They're selling the man's farm from the balcony!"

The farmers charged the stairs and ran into a storm of flailing axe handles. Eight or 10 farmers were injured, most not seriously, according to reports. But Cope took a hard rap on the head.

"A deputy hit me over the head and fractured my skull," he said. "I bled out of my nose and ears."

The farmers retreated but didn't leave. The sale was completed upstairs. O. H. Montzheimer, a Primghar attorney, bought the farm for the \$7,400 figure. Still seething over their setback, the farmers demanded that Montzheimer come out and kiss the American flag.

"I'll do it, if it will stop this riot," he said. He got down on his knees on the courthouse lawn and kissed the flag. So did some of the deputies.

Meanwhile, Cope was having trouble with his aching head. "They carried me over to a doctor's office," he said. "I had to have an X-ray in Hartley. I just got a little tick on the head. The doctor bandaged me but warned: 'You're hurt worse than you think you are.... Above all don't get excited.'"

The most exciting hours of Cope's life were just ahead. He disobeyed the doctor and went back to Primghar, splitting headache and all. He told the farmers:

"Now what we should do, instead of



ABOVE: When attorney O. H. Montzheimer bought a farm at a 1933 foreclosure sale in Primghar, farmers went on a rampage and demanded that he kiss the flag. He did so; several deputy sheriffs (one shown above) followed suit.

going around fighting deputies, getting our skulls fractured, we should go in a body down to Le Mars. We should ask Judge Bradley to give us the benefit of the doubt."

C.C. Bradley was 54 years old, a slender, "average-looking" man with glasses, a wan smile and no whiskers. He was a bachelor and the target of considerable gossip in LeMars. It's possible that busybodies had stirred up resentment against the judge with talk about his personal life.

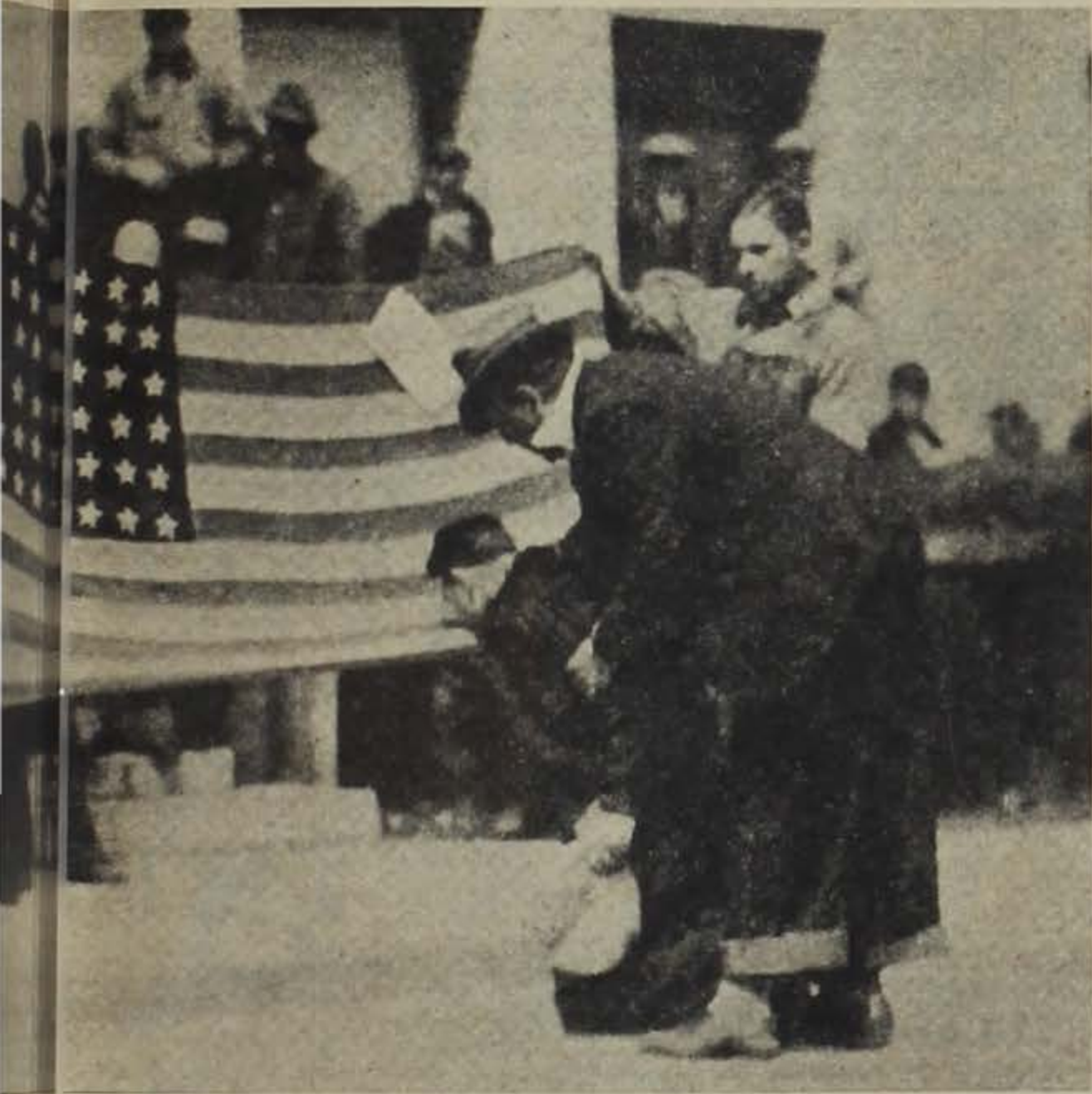
Bradley had 15 foreclosure cases pending but hadn't had time to study them. He took his responsibilities seriously. He was not the kind to be pressured into anything.

Between 300 and 400 farmers gathered at the baseball park in Le Mars late in the afternoon. "Let's go up and throw the fear of God into Bradley," said Cope. It was a little before 5 p.m. Several men had already had plenty to drink.

A. A. Mitchell brought a half-inch rope with him. That rope came into inglorious use within the hour.

Bradley was in his office when the first farmers entered the courtroom, but he quickly took his place on the bench. The room was crowded by the time Cope got there. His bandaged head made him more visible than the rest.

What caused the final explosion is not clear. Cope said he asked the judge to apologize for a statement the judge purportedly had made about farmers



some months before. Also, Cope quoted the judge as saying: "I don't have to listen to you farmers." A voice in the crowd said: "The hell you don't."

Whether that exchange actually took place is not known, but the farmers jumped up and ran at the judge.

"They were piling on him right away," Cope said. "They were surrounding him. Somebody was clipping him on one side. Then somebody would nick him from the other side. Somebody hollered, 'Take him out!' and out they went."

Martin Rosburg of Hinton, another ringleader, gave this version: "The judge told Cope: 'I overrule every word you said,' and, Jesus Christ, five or six

guys grabbed him and pulled him off the bench." The judge himself testified later: "Six or eight men rushed at the bench, dragged me through the courtroom and down the front steps of the courthouse. I fell once on the steps and someone kicked me."

Cope said that when he went into the hall "some big, tall, skinny guy >>>

some people like it and some don't. And most of you nonsmokers understand that. It would be a dull world if everybody liked the same things.

The trouble is that some people (*anti-smokers*, as distinguished from *nonsmokers*) don't like those who march to the sound of the different drummer, and want to harass smokers and, if possible, to separate them from your company in just about everything.

A word to nonsmokers

(about smokers)

A great jazz musician once said of his art, "If you don't understand it, I can't explain it."

That's the way it is with smoking.

If you've never smoked, it just *looks* puzzling—the whole ritual of lighting, puffing. What's the point?

There's really no way to explain it.

We've all heard from the people who think the 60 million American smokers ought to be, like you, nonsmokers. But even those people know there's *something* going on that smokers like.

Maybe that's the key to the whole tobacco thing from the beginning. It's a small ritual that welcomes strangers, provides companionship in solitude, fills "empty" time, marks the significance of certain occasions and expresses personal style.

For *some* people. And by personal choice, not for you. That's the way it ought to be. Whether your preference is carrot juice or bottled water, beach buggies or foreign cars, tobacco smoking or chewing gum or none of the above. Personal style.

What we're saying is that, like jazz or chamber music,

some people like it and some don't. And most of you nonsmokers understand that. It would be a dull world if everybody liked the same things.

The trouble is that some people (*anti-smokers*, as distinguished from *nonsmokers*) don't like those who march to the sound of the different drummer, and want to harass smokers and, if possible, to separate them from your company in just about everything.

And the further trouble is that even the tolerant *non-smokers*, and that's most of you, are honestly annoyed by the occasional sniff of tobacco smoke that's a little too pervasive.

It annoys us smokers equally.

But it would be a shame if we allowed a tiny handful of intolerant anti-smokers, and a small group of discourteous smokers, to break up the enjoyable harmony we find in each other's personal style.

Maybe if we ignore them both, they'll go away and leave the rest of us to go on playing together.

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had the judge on his hip, with feet and legs dangling."

"The guy reached down and grabbed the judge by the seat of the pants. The guy swung the judge over his head. I thought maybe he was going to drop the judge over the railing onto the floor below. That tile floor would have broken every bone in the judge's body. Instead, the guy threw the judge on top of the crowd. They pushed and tumbled the judge down the stairs. That ride didn't do him any good."

Outside in the courthouse yard, the farmers demanded that Bradley swear he would sign no more mortgage foreclosures. When the judge declined to make such a pledge, he was "jerked around and slapped."

Cope said someone shouted: "Only one thing to do with a guy like this is to hang him." Another voice asked: "In the courtyard or out in the country?" Another voice: "Just as well take him out in the country. There are machineguns in the sheriff's office."

The mob dragged the judge to the southwest corner of the courtyard and loaded him into the Bock truck from Hinton. Half a dozen or more farmers climbed into the truck, too.

"We didn't know what to do with the judge," Martin Rosburg said later, "so we decided to give him a little hair tonic. There was half a pint of whiskey under the front seat. We said to the judge: 'Here's where you're going to have a drink on us guys.'"

Bradley said nothing and clenched his teeth. Rosburg picked up a screwdriver.

"I pried his mouth open, you're damn right," Rosburg said, then he related how he had poured liquor down the unwilling judge's throat.

"The way it turned out, that was the best damn thing I ever did in my life," Rosburg said. "That guy had been in the hospital right before that, and the whiskey gave him a little stimulant."

Rosburg may have been right. One report said Bradley suffered from heart trouble, and another report said he had been "in poor health for some time" and had suffered "serious illness" in the preceding month.

The farmers took the haggard judge into the country a mile and a half east of Le Mars. He "staggered and fell" as he was taken off the truck. One witness said he saw a man "push the judge over two different times."

An argument ensued over ▶▶▶



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Offer expires March 18, 1979.

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3-5206

Offer expires March 18, 1979.

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\$2 FM/AM ELECTRONIC DIGITAL CLOCK RADIO

LED time display. Wake-to-music or wake-to-music and alarm. One hour sleep switch. Slide-rule radio dial with vernier tuning. Built-in AFC on FM.

7-4635

Offer expires March 18, 1979.

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\$2 FM/AM ELECTRONIC DIGITAL CLOCK RADIO

Silent easy-to-read LED time display. Wake-up-music or wake-to-alarm. One hour sleep switch. Adjustable gentle electronic tone alarm. Lighted radio dial.

7-4640

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10 ☐ 3-5965 11 ☐ 3-5971 12 ☐ EP1 13 ☐ T17 14 ☐ EC33
15 ☐ PRO-5 16 ☐ 8143 17 ☐ 8125 18 ☐ 8127 19 ☐ 8139
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37 ☐ F116BL 38 ☐ 7-4665 39 ☐ 7-4680 40 ☐ 3-5013 41 ☐ 3-5090
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72 ☐ UI55 68 ☐ 3-5012
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- \$5 REBATE:** 48 ☐ FP-1 49 ☐ FP-2 50 ☐ T-26 51 ☐ SCD3 52 ☐ SCD1
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GENERAL ELECTRIC

Farmers' Holiday



Milo Reno (1935 photo).
"The time for pussyfooting... is past."



Martin Rosburg (1953 photo).
"We shouldn't have taken the judge out there. We were crazy to do that."



Morris Cope (1953 photo).
"We weren't bad fellows.... We were good people, good citizens."

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Farmers' Holiday

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whether to hang the judge or put a rope under his arms and drag him behind a car.

Somebody put a blindfold on the judge, who was on the ground. Several of his assailants meanwhile had covered the lower parts of their faces with handkerchiefs.

The judge was pulled to his feet and "a rope placed around his neck" and thrown over an arm on an electric line pole. He was given "a last chance" several times to agree to do as the mob demanded, but he was firm in his refusal. He testified later:

"I told the men I had to act according to the law and uphold my oath of office. They then put the rope over something high, for when they would pull and jerk, I could feel it rubbing my neck. After I again refused to accede to their requests, they forced me to pray. While I was praying, someone kept up a continual tugging on the rope."

The judge was pushed down on his knees for the prayer. Perhaps the crowd expected it to be a plea for mercy. It was not. One report said he prayed that "justice be done" and another report said he promised "to do the fair thing to all men to the best of my knowledge."

Rosburg offered another version. He said the judge prayed that "we would get better prices and not lose our farms." Rosburg added: "Anyway, I gave him a little kick. I said, 'Judge, come on, get up. You don't mean it, anyhow.' We really didn't give him much chance to start praying. I said, 'Whiskey and prayers don't go together, anyhow.'"

Somebody put a truck hubcap on Bradley's head during the prayer, "and oil and grease ran down his face." Another assailant took Bradley's hand and forced him to smear the grease around his own face and head. Others threw sand and dirt in his hair.

But he didn't yield. One farmer said later, with obvious admiration:

"When you've got a rope around your neck, and they tighten it, and your feet start coming off the ground, and you still don't give in, you've got nerve...."

"The judge had more guts than anybody I ever saw."

The judge said that after the prayer "someone took my trousers down and there were threats of mutilation."

Rosburg admitted in court that he carried a knife to the scene and had

ABOVE: Farmer-pickets stopped a truck hauling livestock to market. The exact date and place the photo was taken is not known. RIGHT: The Farmers' Holiday began to lose steam after the government established the corn loan program, under which farmers could have their corn "sealed" on their farms and receive a loan of 45-cents per bushel.

told the farmers he knew how to castrate the judge. But that act was not committed. Instead, the attackers threw dirt and sand in his pants.

At that point, the judge took an oath to serve justice faithfully, without regard to personalities.

Suddenly, the attack was over. The seven or eight men most active in the abduction "leaped into an auto and sped away." The rest of the crowd, who did little more than cheer on the ring-leaders, also scattered.

Judge Bradley was left standing alone. He "was ashen pale." His lips showed traces of blood where he had been struck, and his neck bore marks from the rope. He was covered with grease and dirt.

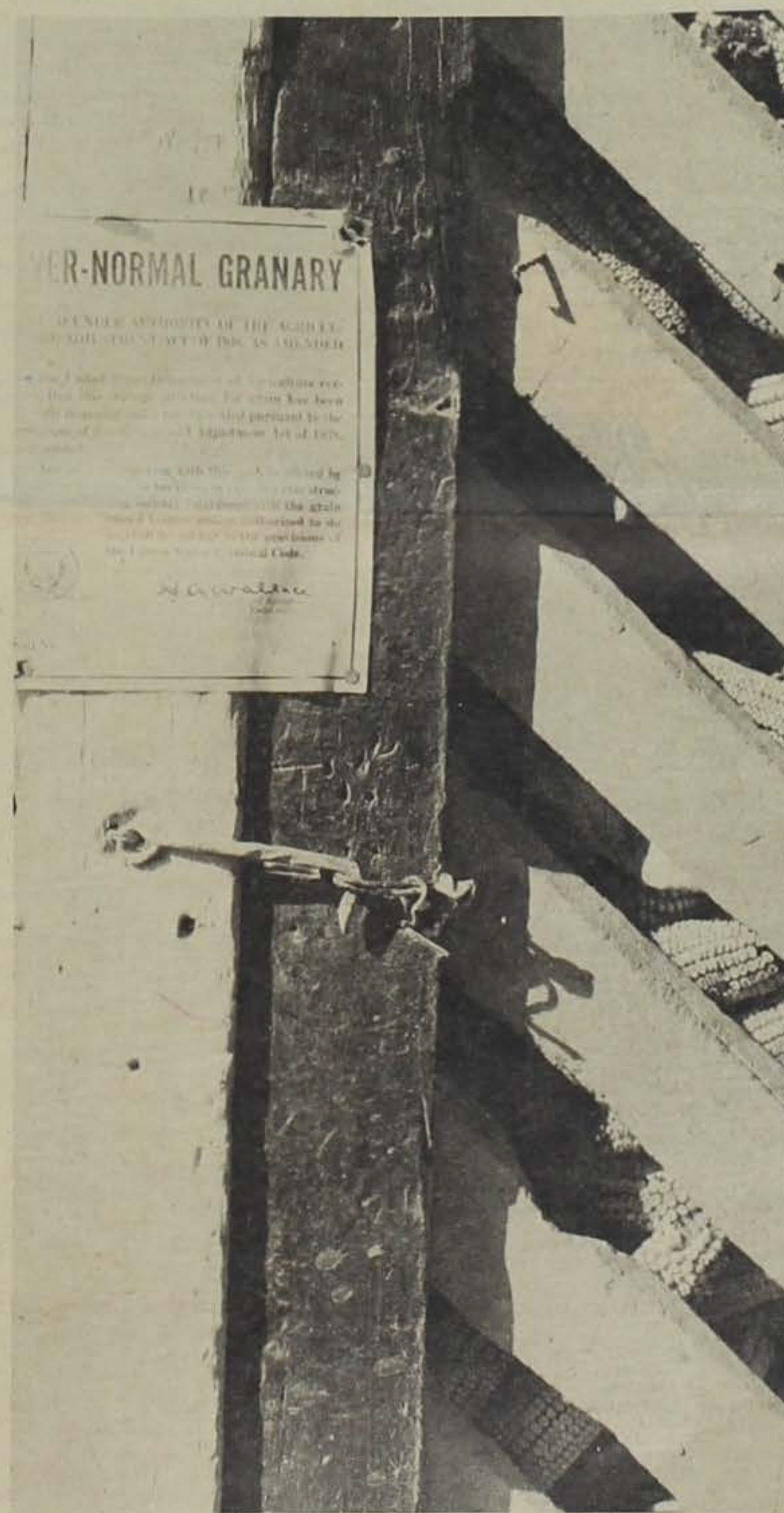
Cope gave this version of the final moments: "I begged and pleaded with them to let the judge alone. I said I was the spokesman and would be held responsible."

"I whispered to the judge: 'This is a terrible mistake. If you will recommend leniency for these fellows, not identify them personally, not single them out, we will stop this.' The Judge said: 'I will do it. I will make that promise.'"

"I then jerked the rope off his neck and the bandage off his eyes. I said: 'Let the man go. He's had enough punishment.'"

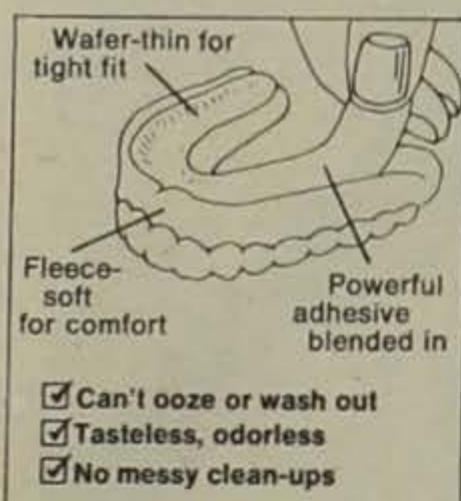
Several farmers were said to have offered the judge a ride back to town. He refused such rides but allowed Wilbur DePress, son of a clergyman, to take him to the courthouse. He went to his office and asked to be left alone. He told newsmen: "I don't think I can say anything tonight, boys."

By then, Plymouth County Sheriff Ralph Rippey had sent a telegram to Gov. Clyde Herring (who had succeeded Gov. Dan Turner) saying that the situation was beyond control of civil authorities. Herring agreed. He called out the National Guard and declared martial law in >>>



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Farmers' Holiday ◀◀◀

Plymouth County. Herring sent 237 guardsmen to Le Mars.

The guard and martial law ended the spectacular disorders in three embattled northwest Iowa counties. Military arrests followed. Soldiers arrested 45 men at Primghar, at least 63 at Denison. By May 6, 1933, a total of 155 individuals were in custody in connection with the upheavals.

Twenty-two pleaded guilty at Denison. They got off easy. Each was given one day in jail and a \$50 fine.

Cope, Rosburg and one Clyde Casper all drew six-month sentences in the county jail. They served three months, and Herring suspended the final three months. Cope and Rosburg also were given one-year suspended sentences in the penitentiary.

A. A. Mitchell, the only farmer to stand trial, was convicted in a hearing at Orange City and given a 30-day sentence. He brought the rope that went around Judge Bradley's neck.

The leaders in the attack on Judge Bradley regretted what they had done, yet they expressed belief they had performed a distinct service to agriculture everywhere by calling the attention of the nation to the farmers' troubles.

"I ain't sorry," Rosburg declared 20 years afterward. "I didn't commit a crime, but I still say I'd never do it again. We shouldn't have taken the judge out there. We were crazy to do that. We didn't hurt him. We didn't hurt anybody. We should have given some lawyers a good ride instead."

Cope said 20 years later: "Our troubles forced the people in the East to look this far west to see what was happening. It all helped. I thought it did good. What we wanted was the cost of production."

Evidence of Communist activity in the farm troubles around the Midwest, including Iowa, was undeniable.

"Mother Bloor," an avowed Communist, delivered rousing speeches to farmers in Sioux City and Le Mars. Her real name was Mrs. Andrew Omholt, and she was from North Dakota. Her son, Harold Ware, was active in the Communist cause in Iowa and elsewhere, as was Lem Harris, an eastern Communist.

Iowa Attorney General Edward L. O'Connor reported this evidence of Red activity: "We have also discovered that a Communist center in Sioux City has been actively engaged in egging on the organization (presumably ▶▶▶



Judge C.C. Bradley (1933 photo).
"... Someone took my trousers down."



Farm editor Jim Russell (1939 photo).
"You're too damn late to apologize."



Sheriff Ralph Rippey (1933 photo).
He defended his "no shooting" policy.



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Farmers' Holiday

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the Farm Holiday Association). Many engaged in terrorism of the district are not themselves in financial difficulties. They are mostly of the type that like to make trouble."

The Holidayers did, indeed, stir up a lot of trouble and make a lot of noise, but never did they enlist the active support of anything like a majority of Iowa farmers. Even in Plymouth County the number of rampaging farmers was small.

The Le Mars Sentinel said fewer than 10 percent of the Plymouth farmers were involved in the Holiday movement.

Some of the farmers may have been unwilling members of the Holiday association. Attorney General O'Connor said military investigators discovered in Plymouth and Crawford counties that "75 percent of the farmers [in the movement] ... were forced to join, or have their barns and haystacks burned."

In November of 1933, the Holiday movement quickly lost its momentum, for a good reason. That was the month the federal government began lending farmers 45 cents a bushel, 12 or 15 cents above the market, on corn sealed in their own cribs. It was part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal.

Never have farmers before or since been so enthusiastic about a federal farm program. They couldn't lose. If the price of corn stayed under 45 cents, the farmers gave the government the corn in full settlement of the loan.

If the price went above 45 cents, the farmers could pay off the loan, sell the

corn on the open market and realize a profit. And corn did go up, particularly after the drought the next year.

W. W. Hral of Pocahontas received the first corn loan in the state. He got \$540 on 1,200 bushels. By Dec. 20, 1933, more than \$11 million had been granted in corn loans. Tens of thousands of farmers got loans in the succeeding months.

Milo Reno and the Holiday Association could no longer compete.

Milo bothered around for two or three more years, but never was he able to pick up momentum in farm activism or the political arena again. He died in 1936 at 70 years of age.

Judge Bradley, Sheriff Rippey and farmer Cope were the principal unforgettable characters in the Plymouth County drama of 1933.

Bradley never expressed anger or vindictiveness toward his tormentors. He resigned his judgeship in December of the same year, seven or eight months after the mob action, and moved to Des Moines. He accepted appointment as trustee of the Royal Union Life Insurance Co., then in receivership.

He died of a stroke at age 60 in 1939.

Rippey, now in his 80s, is living in retirement in Sioux City. He has always maintained that the "no-shooting" policy he followed in the dark days of 1932 and 1933 saved many lives.

Morris Cope recovered in a big way, beginning in the 1940s, from the ravages of the Depression. He had a reputation as an excellent livestock feeder. He made a lot of money. Prices shot up during World War II and after-

wards. He told of getting as much as \$39 per 100 pounds for cattle and \$28.50 for hogs, tremendous prices 30 to 35 years ago.

The 1933 attack on Judge Bradley is a bad dream in Iowa history. The affair had unreal qualities the day it happened. Rome Starzl, editor of the Le Mars Globe-Post, was on the scene as a newsman.

"We watched the faces of the crowd surrounding the milling nucleus of the mob," Starzl wrote. "Many of them wore queerly frightened expressions. Everywhere were pale grins and anxious eyes."

"Even some of them who were actively handling the judge seemed strange, moving about like automatons, or like self-conscious actors who knew many eyes were on them. Their eyes sought approval and mutual support."

"One gathered that this business was distasteful to them, but they were impelled by a destiny they could not resist Experts in crowd psychology might explain it. We have seen birds do the same thing — set upon some unlucky individual and sometimes kill it, for no valid reason."

"It must be some form of madness." □

BELOW: Members of the American Agriculture Movement organized a "tractorcade" in late January to call attention to the group's effort to obtain higher loan rates on corn and other grains. This photo was taken east of Council Bluffs. The string of tractors was two miles long by the time it reached Des Moines on its way to Washington, D.C.

