

Twine Day

Celebrations in small towns and rural communities are nothing new, and they continue today. However, it is apparent that the subject of these celebrations has evolved over the years and that many of those from the past were unique to the time and place in which they took place. One such memorable celebration that was apparently quite popular in the early 1900's was called "Twine Day," and took place in Truman, Minnesota.

This day came into being as a result of farmers using a great deal of twine in harvesting their crops. The farmers of the area pooled their twine orders, and all the twine would be ordered and then be shipped on a designated day. Upon arrival at Truman, the farmers could pick up their twine directly from the railroad train car.

To add to the festivities of "Twine Day," the local merchants would usually show their appreciation of the local citizens by putting on some type of "*special*" that would include food and entertainment. As a result, entire families would come to town to celebrate and take part in the festivities of the day.

Williams & Merrill was a hardware store that operated in Truman in the early 1900's. They were considered a fairly large establishment at that time, having three floors, and they advertised that they carried nearly everything in the line of hardware that a farmer might need. They, in turn, supplied the twine to the farmers in the early 1900's.

Their method of obtaining twine was to order state prison twine. Although a new approach at that time, it proved to become very popular. In 1903, they delivered approximately 40,000 pounds of prison twine. Williams & Merrill estimated that they saved the local farmers about four cents per pound, which totaled approximately \$1,500.00. Their souvenir book of 1904 stated the following: "We have found farmers to be an appreciative class and this year they increased their orders for twine so that we had the pleasure of delivering 45,000 pounds of state prison twine." They also stated that the savings was three cents per pound this year, and that they could have easily sold several thousand pounds more if it were available. However, Williams & Merrill was limited in that they could only supply the amount ordered, and they could not carry any inventory of twine for future sales.

According to Williams & Merrill, Stillwater twine became quite popular with the farmers. They said that the quality of Stillwater supplied twine was first class. Apparently one of their sales pitches was that by buying Stillwater twine, “The taxpayers help to remove a burden from their shoulders instead of adding more wealth to the twine trust.”

Williams & Merrill of Truman also advertised that in addition to their hardware line, they had a first class repair shop and a competent man to repair bicycles, do tin work, plumbing, and more. They also handled hardware, farm machinery, buggies, and wagons.

“Twin Day” in Truman appeared to be a festive occasion which proved to be quite popular. Pictures from that time show busy streets lined with many people as well as many horse and buggy rigs. With the evolution of agriculture to what it is today, “Twine Day” is obviously a celebration of the past; however, although other celebrations have come and gone over the years, “Twine Day” should be remembered as a significant event of the time and place in which it was celebrated.

For more information about this topic, visit the Pioneer Museum in Fairmont.