



Power defied faith to fight in Civil War

Slavery and the Civil War had a profound effect on the little community of Farmington. Many ordinary citizens became heroes.

John Power was one of Farmington's most colorful Civil War heroes. He was the grandson of Arthur Power, a Quaker and founder of Farmington. John Power belonged to a Quaker family that did not believe in fighting.

When 17-year-old John Power went to enlist at the onset of the Civil War, his father Abram Power prevented it. But John, Abram's oldest son, didn't take no for an answer. He ran away to New York and enlisted in the Navy as John Wilcox. He was the Paymaster's Steward on the USS Monogahela when it took part in the battle of Mobil Bay.

The opening of Mobil Bay was a significant victory in the Civil War for the Union. The Monogahela was one of a group of ships that forced the surrender of the two forts guarding the bay.

The squadron was commanded by Admiral David Farragut, who ordered the ships into battle shouting, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead."

One of the Confederate ships captured after a fierce battle was the *Tennessee*. John Power picked up a shell fragment on the deck of the *Tennessee* after the battle. He brought it with him when he finally came home.

After the war, John Power became an actor. He eventually had his own acting group, the John Power Comedy Troupe.

In post-Civil War America, entertainers traveled from community to community. John Power and Company traveled all over the United States until he retired to Farmington.

Once home, John operated a grist mill. In 1891, he married Martha Hendryx of Redford. They eventually lived in the family home on Shilawasee. It was the first frame building in Farmington and is no longer standing. The couple had one son, Percy, born in 1902.

John Power was active in local affairs, serving as Justice of the Peace, Township Supervisor and County Treasurer. He was also commander of the Marshall Beach G.A.B. post. While serving as Oakland County Treasurer in 1909, he was interviewed by the *Detroit News*. He related how many anti-slavery lecturers were guests at his family home while speaking in the neighborhood. He was also quoted about his father Abram's participation in the Underground Railroad, a secret organization that sheltered runaway slaves and transported them to Canada where slavery was illegal.

On May 23, 1909, John Power told the paper, "We children had never heard of the underground railway and did not know for a long time what was going on, but we felt that a mystery had suddenly been laid over the place. Occasionally, early in the morning and at different times of the day, we would see mother coming from the barn with an empty dish or plate."

"We would be cautioned to stay away from the barn for a few days, and then things would be all right again."

Turning the tables



The men enter the family room at once and serve the appetizers and salad.

PHOTOS BY BILL MESLER (STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

Men cook when local couples get together for gourmet dinners

BY PAUL H. FACE
STAFF WRITER

Five couples, three from Farmington Hills, have struck a deal.

When they get together to enjoy a gourmet meal, the men not only do the dishes, they plan several courses, shop for the food and cook it all up in the kitchen as well.

The Men's Gourmet Club celebrated their 10th year of culinary delights in Farmington Hills Saturday.

It all started with a Welcome Wagon Gourmet Club in Farmington Hills more than 10 years ago.

Bob and Linda Brucksecker of Farmington Hills hosted the most recent get-together, where in the men trade their kitchen aprons for chef outfits, then don tuxedos when they join their wives for the main course.

"We also give them roses," said Bob, who added the events are fun to plan and the men don't mind doing all the work.

"We even have chef coats with our names on them," he said. "We have a ball doing it."

The couples usually rotate the location among their five homes. The other couples are Ralph and Pattie Bingham and Gail and Doug Haynes of Farmington Hills and Judy and Gary Wanluck of Rochester.

Bob said the Welcome Wagon Gourmet Club fizzled out after it reached a peak of about 60 couples. The five remaining still enjoyed getting together and decided to continue it amongst themselves.

Some have moved away from Farmington Hills, but still host the special meals.

"The women do the cooking most of the time, so this is their time," said Bob.

Not surprisingly, the men have all become better cooks since taking over the kitchen.



Ralph Bingham prepares Crostini for the event. A pot of Tomato Basil soup simmers on the stove.

And they do their research for upcoming get-togethers. Using gourmet magazines and the Internet, they'll try new entrees and appetizers.

"Now, we like to get creative," Bob said. "We went pheasant



Ed Sutton, Doug Haynes and Ralph Bingham are ready for service.

hunting and watched a tape on how to cook them."

Linda Sutton and husband Ed of Plymouth are part of the group. Linda said Ed has become an excellent cook since knocking elbows in the kitchen with the boys.

"It is really neat what they do," she said, adding some close friends would like to join the group, but the five couples agreed to keep their meals mostly to themselves.

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Doug and Gail Haynes, Ed and Linda Sutton, Gary and Judy Wanluck, Ralph and Pattie Bingham and Bob and Linda Brucksecker gather six times a year for dinner planned, cooked, served, and cleaned up by the men.

Patterson paints bleak economic picture for Oakland County

BY KEVIN RIVAN
STAFF WRITER

Although terrorism and West Nile Virus were topics of discussion, Oakland County's budget woes dominated Executive L. Brooks Patterson's state of the county address Wednesday at the MSU Management Education Center in Troy.

Patterson, entering his 11th year as the county's top official, painted a bleak economic picture for 2003, which he said will be his "most challenging year" in office. He said his administration has been scrambling to find ways to trim the county's budget to make it balance. Initially county officials identified a \$13.9 million budget shortfall for the



Patterson

2004 fiscal year, which will begin in October. However, Patterson said the figure has risen to more than \$23 million and could increase. Patterson largely blamed the state, which itself is looking at a \$2 billion deficit for 2004. More specifically, he said cuts in state shared revenue could cost Oakland County an additional \$17 million for 2004. And he expects other sources of state income to be cut, as state legislators try to stop the bleeding in Lansing. "We are expecting unprecedented budget cuts from the state," he said.

However, Patterson said the county coffers have also been hurt by a decline in investment income, and a significant drop in revenue from property taxes, which have fallen shorter than budget projections.

Thus far, the county's main plan has been to cut back on its employees. Back in July, the county offered an early retirement program. To date, 227 employees have taken advantage of it, which Patterson said will save about \$7 million. The employees will begin leaving in March, and their positions will not be filled.

Still, Patterson said further cuts will need to be made. Although layoffs are a possibility, he said all other options will be tried first.

"There's no question that future adjustments will be required," Patterson said. "Layoffs are an absolute last resort, because I have no appetite for putting someone in the position of going home and telling his or her family that, through no fault of their own, they no longer have a job."

Despite the budget woes, Patterson is recommending the county commission set aside \$500,000 to combat West Nile virus, which infected about 200 people and led to at least 20 deaths last year in Oakland County alone. The county led the state in both statistics.

Patterson said combating the disease has been a priority of his. He said the

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