

Wheat Price Prop 19c Over 1950's

Wheat price support at a national average of \$2.18 a bushel for farmers for the 1951 crop was announced June 29 by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Last year's average was \$1.99 a bushel.

Loans and purchase agreements covering the 1951 crop will be available through the Commodity Credit Corporation in accordance with the general program provisions announced by the Department August 21, 1950. The Oakland County Price Support Rate on 1951 crop wheat, grading No. 1, is \$2.58.

The 1951 average price support rate per bushel for U. S. Grade No. 1 Heavy of the class Hard Red Spring and U. S. Grade No. 1 of the classes Durum, Hard Red Winter, Soft Red Winter, and White wheat is \$2.19.

The price support for the 1951 crop, in accordance with applicable legislative provisions, is 90 per cent of parity at the beginning of the marketing year, July 1. July 1 parity is \$2.42 a bushel. For the same date last year the wheat price parity was \$2.21 a bushel.

Only wheat grading No. 3 or better, or No. 4 or No. 5 because of test weight or because it contains wheat of the classes Durum and/or Red Durum, will be eligible for loan or purchase. The loans will be available through January 1952, and will mature April 30, 1952, or earlier on demand.

Producers are cautioned that approval of loans is contingent upon wheat being in good farm storage or stored in warehouses approved by the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Farm Storage Facility Loans are still available to producers desiring to increase their present storage. Details may be obtained from Walter R. Cook, Chairman of the Oakland County FMA Committee.

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Underground Railroad Universalists Important Link In Guiding Slaves To Freedom

(EDITOR'S NOTE — The Universalist Church at Farmington and Thomas Streets, Farmington's oldest house of worship, is preparing to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 1952. Appropos of this centennial, The Farmington Enterprise is publishing a series of articles on the church's history, of which this is the third. Readers are advised to clip and save these articles. A limited number of extra copies of The Enterprise will be available for mailing to friends.)

III. — SLAVERY

The early days of Farmington's Universalist Church (which is, Union Society) were days of tumultuous events.

The slavery issue, which was to tear the Nation asunder, was uppermost in the minds of thousands of citizens. Heated discussions and public debates were of daily occurrence.

Although most Michigan people were opposed to slavery, a strong minority supported it. The principal organ of the pro-slavery faction in this locality was the Detroit Free Press (which later fought Abraham Lincoln through out his administration). The Free Press declared that Negro refugees who had escaped to Canada, would be disappointed with their new-found freedom and would gladly return to the South and servitude if they had a chance.

Churches were unavoidably drawn into the controversy, and modern students of history are amazed to find that even churches were by no means unanimously anti-slavery.

The story of the Rev. Marcus Smith is a case in point. Mr. Smith, a distinguished Methodist preacher, rode an Oakland County circuit. He was an active abolitionist as early as 1835 and led an incessant fight against the slaveholding faction of Methodists. In 1841 he withdrew from the ministry at the height of the Methodist schism over slavery and in May 1842 helped to organize the abolitionist Wesleyan Methodist Church.

Oakland County Methodists, by and large, supported Mr. Smith in his views. The so-called Underground Railroad, that secret organization which helped fugitive slaves to escape from the South to Canada, flourished in this locality. Two "stations", where the Negroes were sheltered and fed by, were operated in Oakland County, the more active one in Farmington.

Quakers, who abhorred human bondage, were leaders in operating the Railroad, both as individuals and as a denomination. But members of other churches co-operated in that strange manner, previously noted, that knew no sectarianism where matters of the heart were concerned.

Many years after President Lincoln freed the slaves, and only when the story of Farmington's part in the Underground Railroad became known in detail, so secretly had the central figures functioned.

The Railroad's "conductor" in Farmington was beloved "Uncle" Nathan Power, a son of the first settler. The "station" was in the building that had been the old Quaker meeting-house adjoining the cemetery.

As the first generation of Quakers died out, the building was used less and less for its original purpose, and Uncle Nathan had re-

modeled it into a residence. The main room retained its principal feature — a partition that separated the men on one side from the women on the other side at church meetings. The partition did not extend to the ceiling; a man speaking on one side, whenever the "spirit moved him", could be heard but not seen by the female audience, and vice versa.

Two bedrooms, a dining room and kitchen had been added to the old church. Even then the entire building was sometimes inadequate to shelter all the fugitives who might arrive in one night, for the Railroad's "schedule" was often crowded.

Actively aiding Uncle Nathan in operating the station and in caring for overflow refugees were his brothers Ira and Abram and these other Quakers, all kinsmen: Nathan Lapham, George Wilber, Abram Moore and Elsie Roberts.

Two miles southwest of the station, at what is now Halsted and Nine Mile Roads, lived John Thayer, who was a charter member of the Farmington Methodist Church. Mr. Thayer, whose grandchildren still live in this township, was an ardent abolitionist and an active supporter of the Underground Railroad.

Mrs. Thayer grew tired of playing hostess to so many Negro men,

the story goes, and told John that he would have to sleep with the next one that showed up. John did.

A half mile east of the Thayers on Nine Mile Road lived Chauncey W. Greene, a Universalist. He witnessed the capture of a fugitive slave in Detroit and thereafter did all he could to help other Negroes to escape.

Mr. Greene's daughter, Mrs. Florence Moore, recounted that a Negro woman came to the house one night and was sheltered and fed until Mr. Greene could take her to Detroit the next night.

He presumably left the woman at Seymour Finney's barn, at the northwest corner of State and Griswold Streets, as the Finney House, widely known as a Railroad station, was his usual lodging place on visits to Detroit.

Some slaves are known to have been taken from Farmington to Grrosse Pointe, where a conductor transported them by rowboat to Ontario. Thomas Munford, a Detroit Unitarian, also harbored refugees.

The precise extent to which Farmington Universalists participated in the abolitionist movement is not known. Nationally, however, the church had been the first denomination to denounce slavery publicly. The date was 1790, and a leading proponent of the resolution was Dr. Benjamin Rush, who had signed the Declaration of Independence.

Some of the older members of the Farmington congregation recall having heard that anti-slavery

meetings were held in the Union Church.

At least one of these sessions, the story goes, was addressed by Sojourner Truth, the celebrated Negro fugitive who visited Farmington on several occasions. Sojourner brought with her some slaves whose scarred backs she showed the audience.

Reports of abolitionist meetings quite naturally were not spread upon the church minutes, but a hint can be gleaned from this entry of December 10, 1859:

"Resolved, that the union meeting house of this society shall not be opened for other than religious services without the consent of a majority of the trustees."

Presumably the wise counsel of Sergius P. Lyon prevailed; public gatherings such as anti-slavery meetings were to be prohibited in the house of worship.

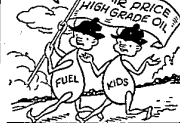
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(The next installment: A second Church.)

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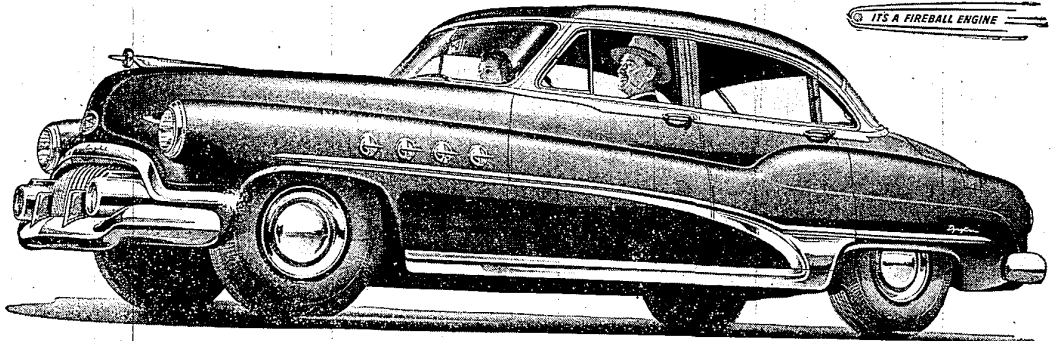
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