

Love of the business keeps the Boweys on the farm

TOWN OF EAGLE — It's been said that if a man is a farmer, he's capable of doing many things.

Austin Bowey, Wilton Road, is an example.

He has been a carpenter, mason, mechanic and milker during his time as a dairyman.

He was born in 1918 in the family's farmhouse on Wilton Road. Bowey said Dr. Schmidt, one of Eagle's medical men, was also the family physician who delivered each of the eight Bowey children at home.

Of his three brothers and four sisters, Bowey was the only one who felt like farming. It had always been a dairy operation with Holstein cows. Bowey started hand milking when he was 8.

He thinks it took six to seven minutes to milk out each cow, but he explained that was way before the animals had been bred to give today's record production.

When the family got into machines, he remembers having two jobs. He would have to get home in time for chores as neither of his parents



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could get the automatic milkers to perform.

The mild was picked up by Pet Milk in North Prairie. Bowey also remembers the creamery that was in Eagle. In fact, the building still remains, near the tracks off Highway 59. It has been remodeled into an apartment building.

Before he walked to the Eagle State Graded School (now a proposed apartment complex on Highway 67) his job was to get the milk to Peardon's Garage (Highway 59) for the North Prairie collection.

By the late 1920s, wheels had replaced hooves and Bowey's milk was collected by Luicks Dairy of Milwaukee. Bowey also recalls his first experience with this faster form of transport.



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Austin and Louella Bowey are longtime Eagle area residents.

His father had purchased a Model T Ford, which was kept in the shed. He and his brothers got the machine out of the garage, and as his first journey was about to begin it ran out of gas.

In 1946, Bowey was able to buy his grandmother's share of the property and begin on his own. By 1948, he had married one of this sister's bridesmaids so, with his wife Louella's help, a third generation Bowey entered Eagle's agricultural scene.

"The the north of the village," explained Bowey, "the farmers seem to have stayed. There's still Arndt's and Wilson's but to the south of the village, subdivisions have replaced corn and cattle on the Doman, Markham and Haffner properties, and names like Gruever and Judas are part of the past."

Bowey believes it's the love of the land and the house that keeps them on the property. Their two children have no desire to keep up with

tradition. In fact, Bowey knows neither of them could afford to leave their well-paying present jobs.

Each child loves the 150-year-old old-fashioned farm house but only to visit. Bowey says they, like the many others, have put a part of themselves into the home.

"This is a building which has seen over 50 people come and go and leave their mark within its walls," adds Bowey.

Bowey and his wife discovered a few of its secrets when a fire in 1964 made necessary a major rebuilding. That's when Louella discovered there wasn't a round nail in the building. It had been constructed with square nails that ceased to be made in the 1880s. She collected cans of these to make a plaque.

Although his health brought an end to dairy farming, Bowey proves farm training makes him capable in many side trades.

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(Joan Holman is a Waukesha County Freeman correspondent.)