



Dan Patch Record still stands - Extension of remarks of HON. Ancher Nelsen of Minnesota

In The House Of Representatives, Tuesday, August 1, 1961

Mr. NELSEN. Mr. Speaker, this weekend was happy to attend the Dan Patch Days celebration in Savage, Minn. Home of the fastest racing pacer in history, the city of Savage is a booming area contributing a great deal to the economy of Minnesota. Because of its growing importance to the North Star State, I ask to have made a part of my remarks in the Record a brief history of this city, reported in the July 27 issue of the Dakota County Tribune:

NEW INDUSTRIES AND DAN PATCH FAME SPARKED SAVAGE GROWTH

(Editor's Note.-Dan Patch Days at Savage, an annual event, will be held on July 28, 29, and 30 this year. Dan Patch Days, Inc., a group of civic-minded gentlemen from Savage, sponsors this festival. Dan Patch Days again will feature a queen to be crowned Saturday night and a huge parade, Sunday noon. Queens are listed elsewhere.)

DAN PATCH DAYS PROGRAM

Friday night, July 28: Carnival.

Saturday, July 29: Carnival and kiddie parade and contest at 1 p.m.; Bowles dancing troupe, 8 p.m.; queen crowning, 8:30 p.m.; kiddie matinee from 1 to 5 p.m.; dancing at 9 p.m., with Jolly Musicians orchestra.

Sunday, July 30: Carnival and grand parade at 1 p.m. Prize drawings at 4p.m.

Dan Patch Days Inc., are composed of members from the volunteer fire department, VFW Warren Butler Post 6212; Savage Lions Club; American Legion; Dan Patch Post 643, of Savage.

Committees for Dan Patch Days have previously been mentioned. A complete booklet with all information has been printed and distributed.

Although Savage has grown into a little giant of industry, featuring much machinery with horsepower of steam, gasoline, and electricity, the celebration each year in July at Savage, features the one-horse power of the historic Dan Patch, a racing pacer, who set the fastest record of 1:55 for a mile, back in 1906. No horse has beaten this record to date.

W. M. Savage, who trained the famous horse at Savage on the only enclosed racing track of a half-mile in the world, owned Dan Patch.

The little village of Hamilton, on the Minnesota River bank, located just out of the Burnsville, Dakota County borders, in Scott County, in 1904, changed its name to Savage in honor of Mr. Savage, owner of the famous horse.

Dan Patch was not only the pride and joy of Mr. Savage, who paid \$60,000 for him, but he was the idol of every horse lover in the Nation.

Horseracing was the top sport in the early part of the century and a picture of Dan Patch appeared in every feed store, blacksmith shop, livery stable, public meeting hall, and many general stores throughout the country. Every young boy's ambition was to see Dan Patch race. He was the main attraction at the Minnesota State Fair and other racing expeditions in the Nation.

Mr. Savage added another honor to his horse a few years before his death, when Savage built a gasoline-powered railroad from Minneapolis to Northfield and Randolph and named it the Dan Patch. It is now the Minneapolis, Northfield & Southern Railway.

In 1916 Dan Patch died and his master died 36 hours later. The horse is buried in an unmarked grave at Savage and his master rests in Minneapolis. A year later, the big barn and covered track burned. Then the whole community lapsed into quietness.

In 1928 a syndicate built a dog-racing track at the old Savage racetrack. That venture was short lived because authorities claimed it conflicted with the Minnesota antigambling laws. This property was wrecked in 1938.

About 1940 the new Highway 13 was relocated through the village of Savage and things were beginning to look up again.

About 1942 the operators of the present Savage Tool Co., came quietly to town, and bought a site and established a large plant.

Next Cargill, Inc., came to Savage and bought a part of the Ed Hanson farm, which included some of the old W. M. Savage farm, on the Minnesota River bank. Cargill built a shipyard there and work was begun dredging a 9-foot channel in the Minnesota River, making it ready to launch seagoing vessels. Savage was designated by the WPB for the rail-river-ore transfer.

Ed Hanson, the man who sold Cargill the property, which started the boom, was the former trainer of Dan Patch. For many years he farmed and Savage traded horses in the northwest.

Today an airplane visitor over Savage, little giant of industry, will pass over the skyscraper towers of Cargill, Inc., and Continental Grain; then at the entrance to the Cargill base is the new long building for the Producers Container Co., which turns out 2 ½ million cans for Green Giant Co. at Le Sueur, that was finished in 1958.

The tool company which is Continental Machines, Inc., located in the downtown business area, employs between 500 and 1,000 men and women, since 1946.

Southwest of there is the Richards Oil Refinery, which came there in the mid 1950's; also the Continental Grain, whose storage bins were built in 1960.

Behind a row of trees is located the Master Specialty Co., whose owner is Harold Petsch of Prior Lake. Here a dozen employees turn out plastic mops, brooms, car carriers, rotary hedge trimmers, and so forth. Harold's factory has a branch in Stuttgart, Germany.

In an old garage, Ralph Stroud and Joe Kottom own and operate Stroud Manufacturing Co. They make scales for weighing gunpowder, used by sportsmen, which are accurate to one-tenth of a grain.

The latest industry is a cement works built by Crow & Crow, similar to that at Rosemount.

However great the boom at Savage, the ghost of the great Dan Patch of the past is prominent at Savage:

Large letters on the water tower spell "Savage-Home of Dan Patch." Then there is the Dan Patch Bowling Lanes; Dan Patch Cocktail Lounge; Dan Patch Apartments (once the Budweiser Club of the 1930's known as Little Reno, when the slot machine had its day).

A man named "Dan Patch" who works at Continental Machines, has a sign on his garage, "Home of Dan Patch,"

Old timers like to take out time and discuss memories of Dan Patch. Bob Allen and Ben Morlock are among the few who can point out the horse's burial spot. Ed Hanson's son can tell some of his father's experiences as Dan Patch's trainer. Ben Morlock, justice of the peace, is an antique collector, especially of Dan Patch lore, which includes the horses, nickel-plated feed box and a cutter he used to haul in winter.

The home of Harry Hersey still stands. He was the driver of Dan Patch on Sept. 8, 1906, before 90,000 people at the Minnesota State Fair, when the horse set the world's fastest pacing record of 1:55 for a mile.

It is often wondered why Mr. Savage chose this location to train horses. He also had other racing horses besides Dan Patch. The answer is simple. It is because the spongy bottomland ground around the river was ideal for horses.

Another question asked many times is, Why has this quiet little river town become a boom town? The answer is also obvious.

This location is ideal for transportation with two paved highways, Nos. 13 and 101, at its boundary, the Omaha Railroad, and the Minnesota River traffic; a low tax compared to the Twin City taxes; the ease with which workers may come and go.

In recent years, many housing projects in Savage and bordering the village have developed. Several apartment houses are being built to help take care of the increased population. A new modern school, the Savage-Burnsville system, is one of the largest and most up to date in the country. This school is largely supported by the taxes from Northern States Power Co.'s Blackdog plant in Burnsville.

There is no telling how much more industry will come to Savage, but regardless, the ghost horse will always ride through the village and Dan Patch will always be their mascot.

Recently Savage has added to its business district a doctor, dentist, attorney, a bank, a newspaper, a surveyor, a bowling alley, a variety store, a wash and dry establishment, a service center (utilities)

and a new Standard station, truck stop cafe. A shopping center in the village and one bordering the village are being planned.

Village officers at Savage are:

Mayor, Mark Egan; village clerk, John Bergman; trustees, Cliff LeVille, Merle Madsen, Cleve Eno; treasurer, Virginia Emerson.

This area has perhaps made the biggest progress of any in the last 150 years, when the Sioux Indians paddled their canoes up and down the river, which was then lined with forest and swampland. The first sign of progress came when the Savage community's first steam locomotive was brought by flat boat in the late 1860's and set upon the rails of the St. Paul & Sioux City Railway; then made its maiden run from Savage.