

Thieves Ran Rampant on Green County Farms

We left off last week with chicken thief, Edward Page, leaving Monroe to return to his wife and six children after paying a \$10 fine. He left town on Friday, October 6, 1911. The Times that was issued the next day referred to reports of more chicken thefts from farmers living near Monroe on Friday evening. The authorities believed that there was a gang of chicken thieves operating here.

Otto Kubly, who lived a half mile south of Five Corners, reported that about 40 chickens were stolen from his farm during the night of October 6. The family was awakened about 4:30 a.m. by a noise in the chicken house. When Kubly went to investigate, he found wagon tracks inside the yard. He was, however, not able to determine which direction the rig had come from. It was presumed that the thief was making for the Illinois state line. From the tracks it was determined that there were two horses hitched to the rig.

Jacob King, who lived north and east of Monroe, had also heard a noise in his chicken house on Friday night. He scared away the "supposed thieves," but was not able to know how many men were in each rig as he had not seen the prowlers.

More than a week later, on Tuesday, October 17, the Times reported that nearly 200 fowl had been lost on Saturday and Sunday nights by farmers. It was presumed that the thieves took their stolen property to other cities to sell as none had been brought here according to the local officers, who had been keeping a close lookout for more thefts of chickens.

In addition to 75 chickens and a keg of wine being stolen from the Weissmiller farm just south of Monroe, 30 fowl were reported missing from the Lichtenwalner farm and 45 from the Trumpy farm near Clarno. Several head had also been taken from the Grady farm. At the time, "Chicken thieves are reported to be operating in many localities around this part of the state and northern Illinois, as well as around Monroe."

The country was still overrun with chicken thieves two days later. John Faeser, who lived a mile west of town, lost between 60 and 70 young, high bred Brown Leghorn chickens on Wednesday night. The loss was discovered on Thursday morning when Mrs. Faeser went out to the chicken yard to feed the chickens. The thieves were smooth as they got off with their "large booty" without being heard.

The authorities were receiving reports of thefts each morning at that time. The local markets were being closely watched, but it was evident that the robbers were taking their hauls to other places to dispose of them.

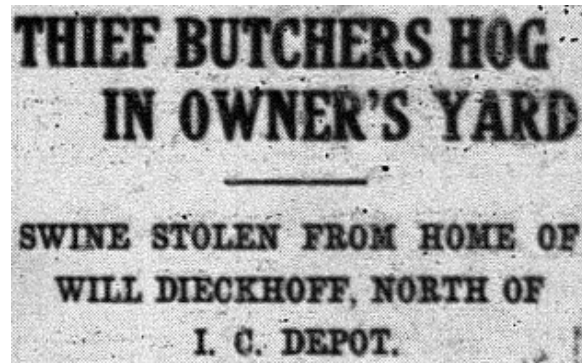
The thefts at this time were not limited to chickens. Possibly the most bold of all the thieves was described on December 15. "A good sized hog belonging to Edwin Ludlow and Will Dieckhoff was butchered in the house lot of Mr. Dieckhoff, just north of the Illinois Central depot last night and then taken away. The entrails were left in the yard.

"The theft is the most brazen one committed around here for some time, as the robbers took a long chance on the pig's squeals awakening the family.

"The rig was a light wagon and the horse was shod with 'never-slip' shoes."

A small notice from chief of police W. O. Blunt appeared in the paper the following day offering \$10 for the arrest or information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person who took the hog. I saw nothing in the later papers that indicated that they ever found this thief.

I found the next theft on December 30 to be equally as brazen. Louis Winzenried brought a quarter of beef to town late on that Saturday afternoon to see if he could find someone to pur-



Chickens were not the only barnyard victims of Monroe's early thieves. A December 15, 1911 notice in the Monroe Evening Times from Chief of Police W. O. Blunt notified residents of a stolen hog and offered a reward for information on the crime.

chase it. He left his horses tied to the hitching chains on the east side of the square. While he was absent from the rig for a few minutes, the meat was carried away. A search failed to reveal the whereabouts of the meat.

Poor Mr. Winzenreid may have been one of the most frequent victims of robberies of that time. He discovered on Monday, July 15, 1912 that nearly half of his flock of 170 chickens had been stolen from his place near Round Grove (east of the current Highway 69 on County Road FF). He thought that the theft had probably occurred either Saturday or Sunday night. This was the third robbery of his hen house in three years. He had been robbed of 200 fine chickens in the fall when the previous robberies had taken place. His coops had also been raided a couple years before that time.

We can be thankful today that we can make our property more secure, which also includes the tools and technology that local law enforcement uses to catch the culprits and prosecute them in the judicial system afterwards.