

## John Stuckey - Christ Millheim Dispute Settled

John Stuckey, his wife, and their hired man went to Monroe on September 12, 1901 from their farm near the Timm saw mill, not far from Richland in Clarno township. They reported to the officers that Christ Milheim had threatened them; they feared they were in danger. The officers understood their fear from the story they were told, thought Milheim must be crazy, and arrested him on charges of assault and battery.

Stuckey, who was an implement man for Miller & Hess in Monroe, spent little time at home. He and his wife had four daughters between the ages of three and seven. Milheim had purchased the former Thomas Jones farm southeast of town and lived three miles from the Stuckeys.

The Stuckey family reported that Milheim was in the habit of going to their place to injure someone. The first time he went into the house one evening while the family was in the barn milking. He hid himself “under a comfortable [sic] that was on the frame being tied. He was heard and as a search was being made, he ran from the house.” A few days before they reported the incident, he came there again and “slipped up onto the hired man and struck him a blow on the head that blacked his eyes.”



This sketch of John and Magdalena Stuckey was made from a wedding photo taken in March 1893 and is from the collection of Joyce Stuckey Wuetrich. The Stuckey couple had a short-lived disagreement with a neighbor in 1901 that was quickly settled by talking with each other.

While the hired man (who was never named) was reporting this incident to Marshall Blunt, Milheim came up to them. Blunt could not understand the hired man because he did not speak English, so Milheim “told the officer that the man said he was struck by someone, and the officer understood the man well enough to ask Milheim if he had struck him. Milheim said that he had not and that it was a very funny thing.”

They also declared that Milheim was discovered under a bed and got away by jumping through a window two nights prior. They reported that he had also been in the house again the next night, holding a knife in the hallway. He threatened to kill them all if they said anything more about him striking the hired man.

Stuckeys and the hired man spent most of the forenoon in the district attorney’s office insisting that something be done to protect them. Mrs. Stuckey and the hired man each wanted to file separate complaints. They finally agreed to Milheim’s arrest on the charge of assault and battery and would be satisfied if he was placed under bonds to keep the peace. Milheim was brought before Justice Thomas Luchsinger at 4:00 that afternoon.

Milheim did not want to be misrepresented, so his side of the story was printed in the Times the following day. He felt that the way he was portrayed in the paper put him in a “worse light than is justified by the facts.” He said that he had not done differently than what anyone else would have done under the circumstances. He shared that when he and his wife were at Stuckey’s a month earlier, “the hired man used some foul language” while Milheim’s wife was present. When Milheim “learned about it he made up his mind to give the fellow a good dressing up whenever he could get him alone.”

Stuckey went to Milheim’s place on Monday (9th) to see what was wrong, but he was not home. That evening Milheim went to Stuckey’s to tell him what had happened. He talked to the hired man who understood why he had hit him.

When Milheim went to Stuckey’s on Monday evening, he took his rifle along to shoot gophers along the way. He placed his gun on the bench outside the house when he arrived to look around for the

hired man. He watched Mrs. Stuckey and the hired man go into the house after they finished milking. He took his gun and went around to the front and left his gun in the hall. He thought the hired man heard him as he struck a match and looked into the hall. Milheim slipped into the adjoining room, which happened to be a bedroom.

Milheim did not want to be found in another man's house, but had no chance to get out. He placed the gun under the bed and took off his coat. He knew "the hired man could carry a barrel of salt and he wanted to be in shape to move around some if necessary." Milheim left the house when the hired man went to get a lantern and waited outside for him; the hired man did not come out. Since Milheim went over there to see that things were evened up, he resolved to do it anyway. He went to the house again and the hired man was sitting in the kitchen. Milheim hit him in the shoulder and again on the head as the hired man reached for Milheim's leg. The gun had been found and brought out. Milheim opened it to prove there was no cartridge in it.

Milheim went to see Stuckey again on Wednesday to see if he could borrow Stuckey's corn binder. The hired man and Mrs. Stuckey were both good natured. "It was raining and he went to sleep on the floor. They asked him to stay to dinner, but he did not wait."

Milheim related that he had talked the matter over with the Stuckeys. Mrs. Stuckey was not afraid of him, but the hired man got her worked up. Milheim said that he and the hired man had shaken hands. Milheim was surprised by the entire situation. He paid a fine of \$5 and costs and was to appear again on October 3.

Stuckey and Milheim had been near neighbors "a few years ago" with no problems. In fact, the 1900 census listed Stuckey's family immediately after Milheim's in Clarno township. Both men stated that they had always been friends and did not want to be on the outs. The newspaper reported on the 14th that Mrs. Stuckey had dropped the case.