

The Twentieth Century

By 1910, Napoleon's population had dropped to 867. The Township again furnished its share of young men for World War I. In 1917, the Newheuser brothers started a chicken hatchery on 359 acres west of the Village. They furnished baby chicks for Sears and Roebuck as well as Montgomery Ward, sending chicks all around the country. Later they became involved with the fox-pellet business which was very successful for a time.

The 1920 census showed Napoleon with a population of 849. This was the smallest population recorded in the 40 years ending 1920. Many things, however, happened in the 1920's. The State passed the School Consolidation Act. By 1921, a new school building was built and the schools consolidated into one. At the same time, D. C. power, supplied by a steam engine at the cider mill, (Nottawa Sepee Street) came to Napoleon. Each night at 9:30, the system was shut down. Later, the generator was moved to Beal's garage where it was driven by a gasoline engine. Service was further extended. By 1926, AC power reached the area.

Horse driven school busses gave way to 4 new motorized busses. The motorized busses cost \$3,300. Napoleon's first home-built fire-truck was put into service in 1924. It was built in 1924 on the chassis of a Model A Ford. After women had won the right to vote, they had to be registered separately. In 1924, 233 men and 157 women were registered to vote.

By 1928, M-50, (Brooklyn Road) had been paved from Brooklyn to Jackson. By 1930, the population had grown to 1,204. Several of the local stores did emerge from the hardships of the depression years with the help of some work projects, such as sponsored by the Cascades Foundation, the building of a gymnasium onto the school and several active area farms.