

# Zachow buttermaker still active

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ZACHOW—Ambition, dedication and knowledge are the keys to success and they have been followed very closely through the years by a Zachow man who still heads an ever-growing creamery in this Shawano County community at the age of 77.

"I am not retired yet, but that may come some day soon," said Albert Graf, who has been associated with the creamery business since 1915 and has operated his own plant at Zachow for the past fifty years.

It has been a team effort through the years for Mr. and Mrs. Graf. Albert ran the plant while his wife, the former Emma Krueger of Cecil, handled the office. She retired a few years ago as treasurer of Graff Creamery, Incorporated after being in charge of the office for over forty-five years.

"I still work at the factory four mornings a week," said the president of the firm who just turned seventy-seven last week. The Grafts live in an all-modern ranch type home within walking distance of the factory in Zachow.

The plant has been renovated on three occasions during his years of individual proprietorship.

"Our business has grown a lot every year. In 1959 we made two-million pounds of butter and the production has gradually increased until last year when our output was five million pounds," Graf stated, indicating that the once one-man operation at the start has grown until now they have twenty full-time employees.

He was born April 24, 1899 in the township of Hartland, just three miles east of the village of Bonduel, attending Graf school for six years and the Lutheran Church for two years.

"I finished eighth grade in 1914 and worked on the home

farm until I was sixteen. I got my first real good look at an operation in 1915 when I started work with the Bonduel Creamery as a helper for \$30 a month," he stated.

He worked as a buttermaker in Michigan for one year and then accepted the position as a mule skinner on a large grain farm in Montana.

"When the temperature hit forty-below-zero in Montana in December of 1917, I decided to quit my job and come home for Christmas. The year 1917 was a wonderful year for me—I gained experiences I will never forget," he remembered.

Mr. Graf graduated from the University of Wisconsin Dairy School in 1920. Later he was buttermaker at the Bonduel Creamery, was a buttermaker in West Bend for three years and in 1925 accepted a position as instructor at the University of Wisconsin Dairy School in mechanics.

It was on April 1, 1926 that he took over the operation of the cheese factory in Zachow and slowly turned it into a creamery.

He was united in marriage to Emma Krueger on August 4, 1928. She was then a supervising teacher in Shawano County.

"After a short trip to Yellowstone Park, we went to work. Emma took over the bookkeeping chores and I took over the management of the plant," the president of the firm said.

Their daughter, Mrs. Robert Bleick, is now secretary-treasurer of the firm, and their son-in-law, Robert Bleick, is vice president and general manager. Also active in the firm is Albert's grandson, James A. Bleick.

During his active business career, Mr. Graf found time to take part in the activities of the Wisconsin Cheesemakers and Buttermakers Association, the Wisconsin Creameries Association and the American Dairy Association of Wisconsin.

He is still a director of the Shawano County Fair Board, a



Mr. and Mrs. Albert Graf.

post he has held for the past thirty years; he is a past president of the Bonduel Rotary Club, being a member for twenty-six years; a director of the Farmers State Bank of Cecil and Zachow for 48 years, and served as chairman of the congregation of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Bonduel, and an elder of his church.

He loves hunting and fishing. "I started deer hunting in 1946 when I joined the Schuster group from Shawano. It is the Shawano Hunting Club of which I am secretary-treasurer at the present time.

The Grafts spend considerable time during the summer months at their cottage on the south shore of Shawano Lake.