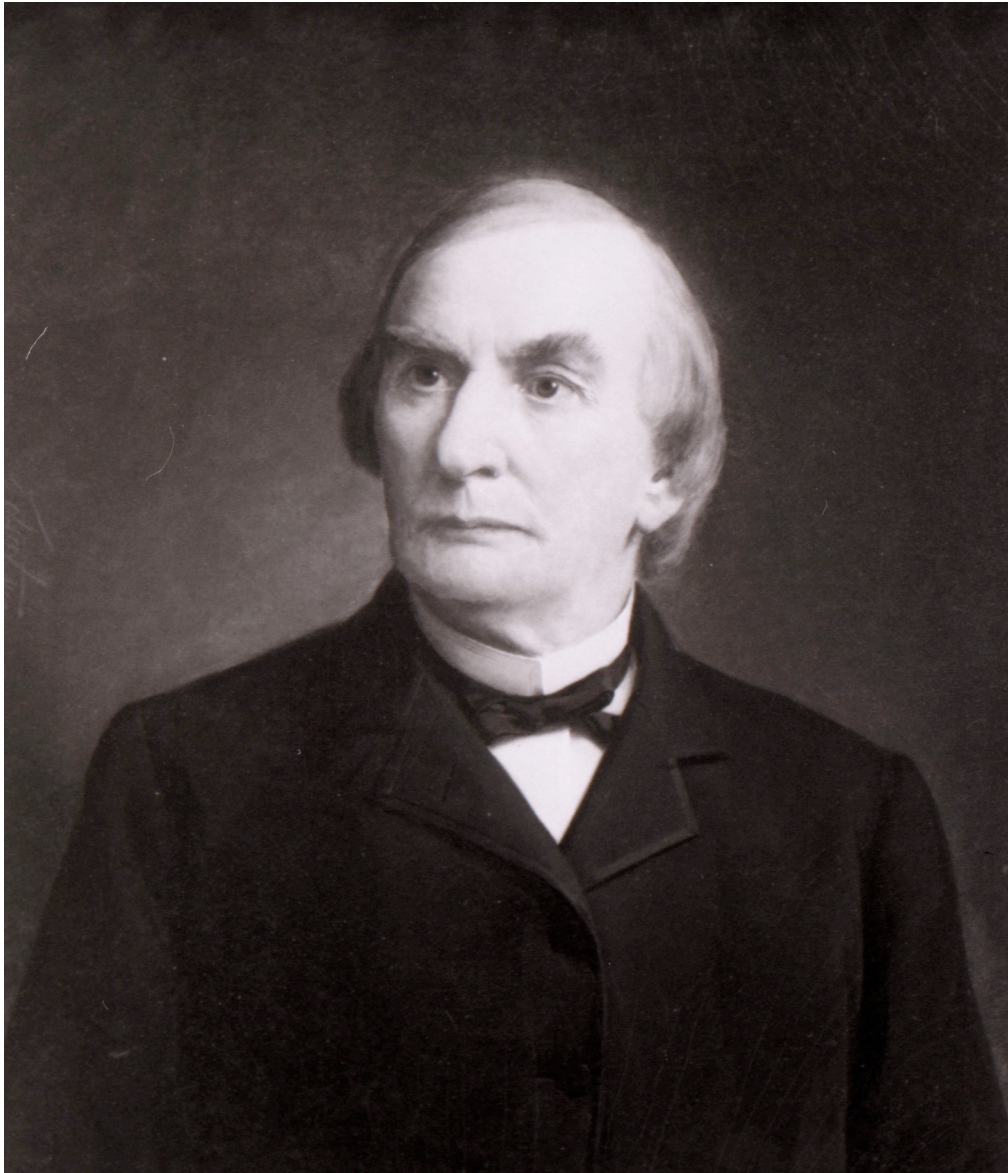


WISCONSIN MEAT INDUSTRY HALL OF FAME

1995



John Plankinton

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John Plankinton was indeed the founding father of the meat industry in Wisconsin. He was born in New Castle County, Delaware on March 11, 1820, moved to Milwaukee in 1844 and died on March 29, 1891. He was married to Elizabeth Brachein in 1840. After his first wife's death, he married Anna Bradford in 1875. With an approximate half-century career, he was regarded as Milwaukee's foremost citizen. Having started at the bottom of the ladder and becoming a multi-millionaire, he was referred to as "A Merchant Prince and Princely Merchant". He was known for his astute business ability, a religious and modest upright life and as a prolific contributor of benevolent deeds for the public at large.

In 1844, four years before Wisconsin was admitted to statehood, Plankinton came to Milwaukee with his young wife. He had \$420 from his previous work as a butcher and was to have gone into a prearranged partnership. The intended partner had already done something else, so Plankinton struck off on his own with determination. He rented a property, bought a cow and in a short few days was in the meat business. His business prospered, and the following describes the amazing business growth he directed. In 1850, \$3,000 was borrowed from the Marshall and Ilsley Bank, and the partnership of Layton and Plankinton was formed. It quickly became the largest packing house in the West -- Chicago had no similar enterprise of that magnitude. The Layton and Plankinton partnership was dissolved in 1861, and Plankinton continued in business on his own for the next three years.

In 1864 he joined with Philip D. Armour to form the Plankinton and Armour Company. This company expanded quickly into an enormous volume of business, which was fueled by the needs of the Union Troops for food during the Civil War.

The Plankinton and Amour partnership was dissolved in 1884 and was reorganized as the John Plankinton Company. Patrick Cudahy was taken in as a partner in the venture. John Plankinton retired from active business in the meat industry in 1888 because of failing health. Patrick Cudahy and his brother John leased the plant and continued it in business until 1893 when the business was incorporated as the Cudahy Brothers with Patrick as President. In addition to the immense slaughter and meat packing operations, John Plankinton was very active in other business ventures. This included transportation, and especially real estate. He erected many new and substantial buildings, not the least of which was the Plankinton House Hotel.

John and Elizabeth Plankinton had a son William and a daughter Elizabeth Ann. William was in business with his father for a period of time. William's son was William Woods Plankinton who in turn had a son and a daughter. The daughter is Elisabeth Plankinton Mackintosh, and interestingly enough this great granddaughter of John Plankinton is currently involved in his business by being manager of the Plankinton Trust of Milwaukee.

John Plankinton took his civic duties seriously and served as President of the Milwaukee Chamber of Commerce in 1867. He served on many Boards including the Northwestern Life Insurance Company and the Plankinton Bank, and he was a dedicated and active member of the Calvary Presbyterian church. He was a man of incredible achievement but was guided always by personal integrity and honesty. He had a deep humane instinct. He put Milwaukee on the map by furnishing a market for the livestock producers of Wisconsin and Northern Illinois. John

Plankinton and his partners were the major force in starting the meat packing industry in the Midwest, and they did it in Wisconsin.

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