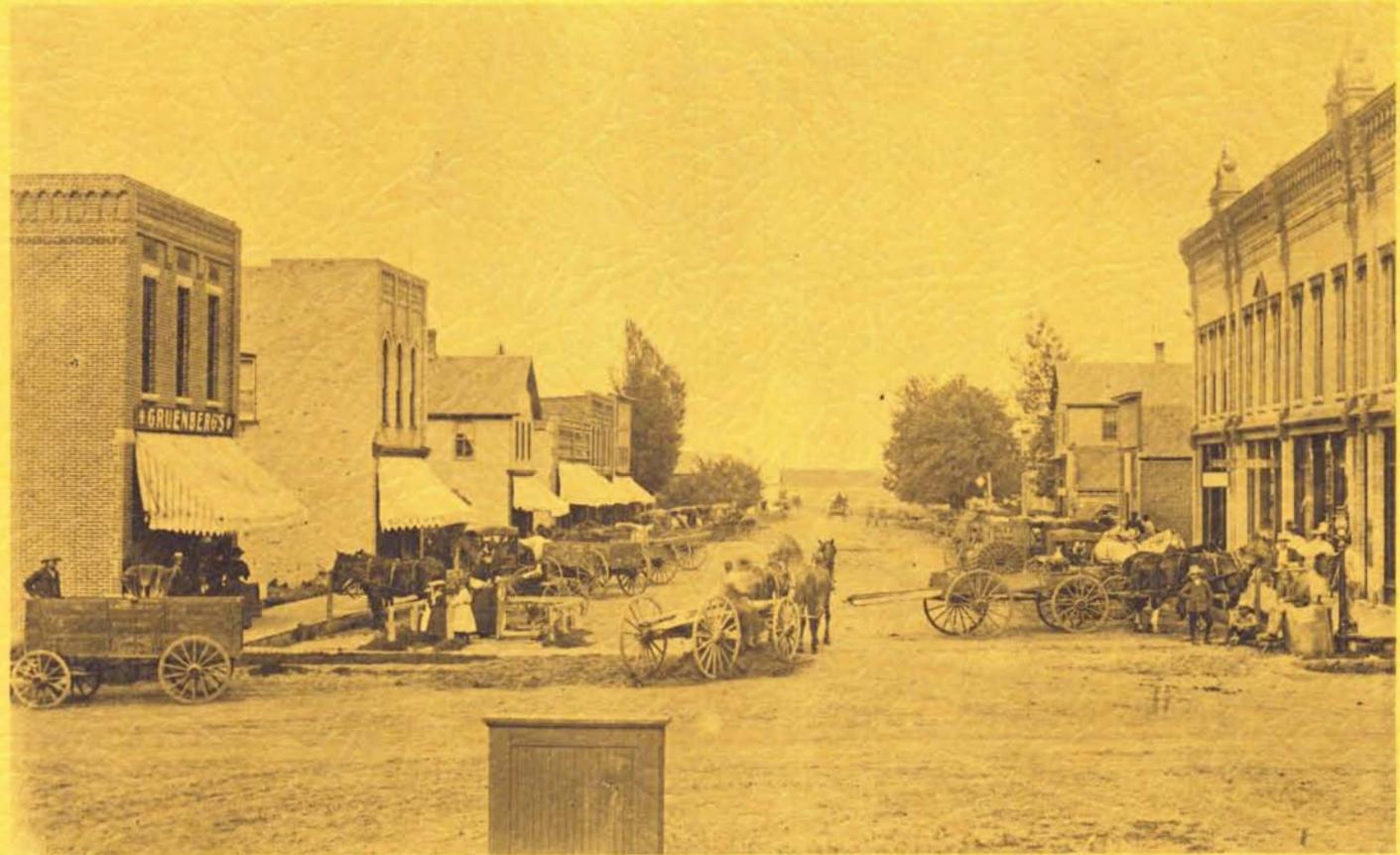




Lyle Centennial

JULY 31, AUGUST 1, 2
LYLE, MINNESOTA

1870 - 1970



We wish to express our appreciation to all those who contributed photos and historical information for this centennial booklet.

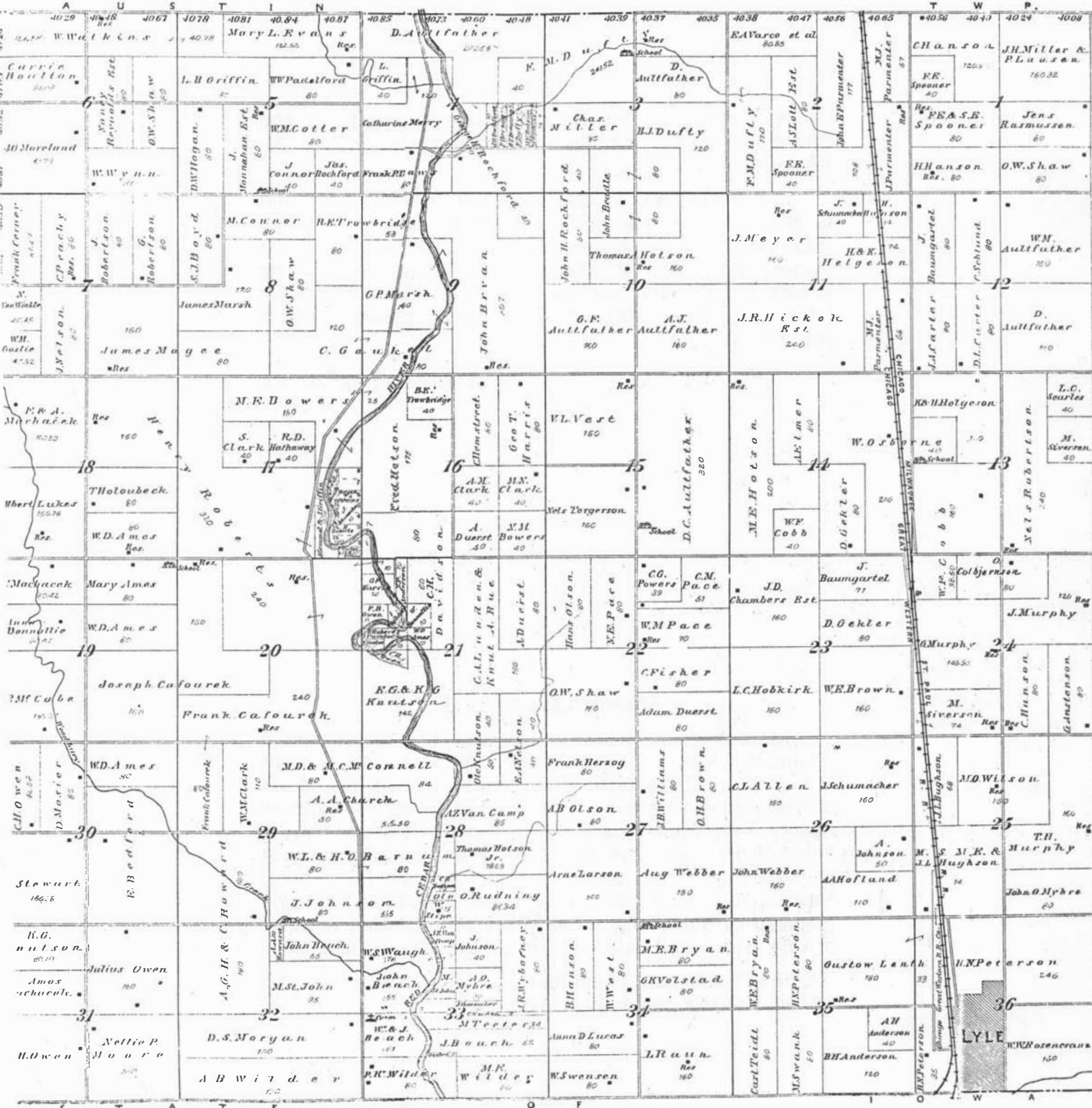
Our purpose was to take you down "memory lane" and to help you gain insight to some of the almost forgotten information of Lyle, Minnesota's first 100 years. It is our earnest desire that this booklet will create a continuing interest in preserving our community's past as a record for future generations. May this always be a treasured item in your family.

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Centennial History of Lyle has been prepared from information supplied by many local residents who brought in their scrap books, pictures and news clippings, old copies of the Lyle Leader and the 1894 and 1911 Histories of Mower County. They brought their church histories and some wrote items of their own churches, clubs and families. Of special help were the scrap books of Mrs. Katherine (Mortensen) Howard, Amanda Mortensen and the 1960 history of Lyle prepared by Mrs. Nolan (Edna) Wold of Rochester, formerly of Lyle, which was especially for the Lyle Study Club.

The Centennial Committee is grateful to everyone who helped with this tremendous task.



Centennial History of Lyle, Minnesota

In order for the reader to capture a complete vision of the favorable location of the Township and Village of Lyle, it is necessary to have a larger glimpse of the area. It is also well to take note of the fact that many of the earliest settlers were adventurous, fearless pioneers who came without their families, searching for suitable places to live, make their fortunes and rear their children. Their first abodes were rough, made of logs, covered with bark or sod. Many, before bringing their wives or families here, constructed a better dwelling place before they sent for them.

MOWER COUNTY

When the first settlers arrived in Mower County of Southern Minnesota, it must have appeared to them as a long-sought-for paradise where men could live comfortably in favorable weather and ideal agricultural conditions.

It has been described in early histories as a vast rolling sweep of prairie, a landscape of wondrous beauty where prairie flowers bloomed abundantly and poured out their fragrance. It was the haunt of the Sioux and Dakotah Indians with scarcely a trace of civilization; a place where birds and beasts reigned in absolute freedom.

LYLE TOWNSHIP

In this pleasant setting is Lyle Township, located on the Minnesota-Iowa state line, on an almost level prairie. It is bordered on the south by Mitchell and Worth counties of Iowa, on the west by Freeborn county of Minnesota; on the north by Austin Township and on the east by Nevada Township. The surface of the township was described as a very productive rich dark loam soil, which was green with variegated shades of vegetation, tall prairie grasses and thick underbrush, but was void of timber, except along the Red River where there was a rich natural timber growth. By 1894 there were beautiful

groves of transplanted trees across the countryside.

Red Cedar River and its branches furnished the township with drainage and available water power, which was not developed in earlier years.

First Claim

The first settler in the township was J. D. Woodbury, who came from unknown parts in the fall of 1853 and settled on the banks of Red Cedar River in section 33 within the territorial rights of Lyle, one of the oldest towns in Mower County.

Woodbury Creek, a branch of the river, also bordering his large claim and Woodbury School District 13, were named for him.

The first marriage in Mower County was conducted in the sod covered log cabin that Woodbury constructed in the northwest quarter of section 33.

His son-in-law, Pinkerton, soon joined him, and in the spring of 1854, two other sons-in-law came. They were Marlott and Stilson.

Marlott settled in section 28. Pinkerton, who previously lived with Woodbury, constructed a log house in section 32 where he lived a year.

Stilson erected a bark dwelling on the site where Woodbury established the Woodbury Cemetery in 1855 or earlier, also in section 33. He sold out and moved to Olmstead County in 1855, and was soon followed by his son-in-law, Marlott.

Pinkerton sold out and moved west to the Blue Earth River. Stilson left in late 1855 for Albert Lea and later took his family and formed a new home on the banks of Blue Earth River where a sad tragedy befell them. A severe rain storm caused the river to swell rapidly. Raging waters partially filled and surrounded their home. Stilson managed to save his life and their infant child in a narrow escape, but three other children drowned.



WOODBURY SCHOOL AFTER TORNADO — This is Woodbury School, named after J. D. Woodbury, one of the early settlers.

LYLE TOWNSHIP ORGANIZED

Although settlers arrived from 1853 and on, Lyle Township was not officially organized until 1858, after Mower County had been formed and the Minnesota State Constitution was adopted.

On April 16, 1858, the Mower County Commissioners met for the purpose of dividing the county into townships.

Lyle Township was one of the first townships organized in 1858 to remain as it was organized. Further changing and reorganization for some of the townships continued until as late as 1874.



In early histories and in some localities today, townships are referred to as towns, which is confusing to many because today, the word "town" is used a great deal more in referring to villages.

Permanent Settlers

The first permanent settlers in Lyle Township and the vicinity of what was to become the village of Lyle, came in 1854 and included Orlando Wilder, Eben Merry, John Tifft, William Bean, James Foster and his son, Return Foster.

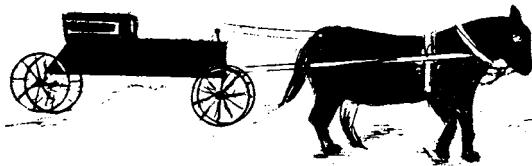


Wilder was a native of Vermont, the Green Mountain state. Coming with him were William Bean, stepfather of his wife, also his brother, Jackson Wilder, and Lewis West. They drove ten yoke of oxen and brought a small amount of household goods, arriving May 6, 1854. They immediately made a claim in section 33 and constructed a bark covered log house. Bean also took a claim in section 33.

Others of the party fenced 65 acres of land across the line in Iowa and planted corn, potatoes and garden vegetables.

In the fall of 1854, Wilder went to McGregor, a distance of 120 miles, with an ox team to meet his wife, who returned with him. He had replaced his original log cabin with a frame house where they were still living in 1894 when the first history of the county was written. They had three children, Prosper, Pete and Shedd. Wilder served as chairman of the first board of supervisors and was also one of the Mower County Commissioners.

In 1854, Erastus H. Bedford, native of Michigan, came to Lyle, joined Wilder in farming and made a claim in section 30, which he later proved. In 1855 Bedford married Althea Townsend, a native of New York State. They made their home in the frame house he had constructed on his farm. Later they rented the farm out for two years and moved to St. Ansgar, Iowa, where he was engaged in farming and teaming. They returned to the farm in 1864, where they remained. Originally his farm was wild prairie land. He set out shade, ornamental and fruit trees and engaged in raising stock and grain.



James Foster

James Foster was born March 2, 1790, in New Jersey. When a teenager, he learned the trade of carpenter and joiner and later the wheelwright trade. At the age of 30, he engaged in the provision business which he followed until 1849, when he moved to Menard County, Illinois, remaining until 1854, when he sold out and moved to the Township of Lyle, bringing his family with a pair of horses, a wagon and their household goods. He first built a log house, then a frame house where he spent the rest of his life. His widow later lived with a daughter in Austin Township.

Eben Merry

Eben Merry was a native of New York State. He settled on the west half of section 4 which he still owned in 1894, but at that time was living in Austin.

Village of Troy

John Tifft, one of those who came in 1854, entered land in sections 4, 5 and 9. He laid out the Village of Troy and erected a saw mill. He died a few years later and his family scattered.

1855 Influx

Most of the settlers who came in 1855 and 1856 stayed only a short time. In 1855 they included: William Allen, George Carrier, Benjamin Coe, James Davis, Dilarzon and Lorenzo Moshier, Joseph Richards, Edward Sprague, John Woodworth and David West.

Allen, a pioneer of Nevada, and Carrier, both settled in section 20 for a short time. Allen left for the Pacific Coast and later lived in Oregon. Carrier went to Texas.

Buy Woodbury Place

Coe, Sprague and Woodworth arrived together in June. Coe bought J. D. Woodbury's place in section 33, where he lived until June, 1856, then sold to the Rev. Alanson Beach and A. M. St. John, then moved to Olmstead County.

Sprague, who settled on section 28, sold two or three years later to Judge Robert Lyle and returned to Illinois and later lived in Otter Tail County, Minn.

Woodworth pre-empted land in sections 28 and 29, leaving shortly for Olmstead County. In 1861 the Woodworth property was purchased by Avery Strong and three years later by Orrin Barnum. Strong went to Otranto and later to New York State.

Davis pre-empted the southeast quarter of section 22. He enlisted in Company K, Fourth Regiment and after serving in the Civil War, resumed farming and remained several years, later moving to Otter Tail County.

Dilarzon and Lorenzo Moshier, natives of New York State, came from Pennsylvania arriving June 14, 1855. Dilarzon pre-empted in section 30 where he was still living in 1894. Lorenzo pre-empted in section 29 for a few years before selling and leaving for Missouri. Here he found it unpleasant and unsafe for a union man during the war and left for Illinois a few years before moving to Texas where he died in 1880.

Richards bought a claim from William N. Bean in section 33, but left in five or six years for Vernon Springs, Iowa.

David West, from New York State, lived several years in section 32, later moving to Otranto Station in Mitchell County, Iowa, where he was serving as a postmaster in 1894. His son, C. L. West, was then a merchant in Austin.

1856 Influx

Settlers who came in 1856 included: Samuel Surface, Ezra D. Ames, the Rev. Alanson Beach, John Beach, Wilson Beach, Chester Calwell, Edward Calwell, Lewis Ebbers, Calvin H. Owen, Charles Owen, the Rev. Samuel Loomis, Henry Roberts, William Shellbach, A. M. St. John, Joseph Thompson and William West.

Surface came from Missouri early in 1856 and pre-empted land in sections 28 and 29. He built a log house and stables and improved a portion of his claim. In 1861 he enlisted in Company K, Fourth Minnesota Regiment and gave his life in the Civil War.

Ames came from Indiana in March, pre-empting 120 acres in section 21 where he lived six months before moving to section 19 where he was still living in 1894.



JOHN BEACH FAMILY — John Beach, son of Alanson Beach and his wife Cathrine (Morrison) Beach, with their children, Frank and Mary Beach.



FRANK M. BEACH FAMILY — Mr. Beach, president of First National Bank, his wife, Zetta (Churchill) Beach and their children (left to right) Catherine Beach (Raddant) and Marjorie M. Beach.

Second Death

William Shellbach and Louis Ebbers were immigrants from Germany early in the year. Shellbach settled in section 34, later moving to Fairmont. Ebbers settled in section 34. His death late in the summer was the second in the township.

The Rev. Alanson Beach

After the Rev. Alanson Beach and A. M. St. John had purchased Benjamin Coe's land in sections 32 and 33 in July, 1856, they returned to New York where Beach and his wife, Salina (Tanner), were both born in 1810. In November that fall, Beach, his wife and sons Wilson and John and his wife, Catherine (Morrison) returned to Lyle Township. Zilla, a daughter of the Rev. and Mrs. Beach, must have come with the family, although women were usually not mentioned in the early histories. The Beach family, including their son, Wilson, who was single, settled in section 33. John and his wife pre-empted land in section 26. Wilson lived with his parents until after the war and then settled in section 33, later moving to Austin. The Rev. Alanson Beach served on the Mower County Board of Commissioners as chairman from 1863 to 1871.

John and his wife lived on their claim three years, then two years on land purchased in sections 32 to 33, before moving to the Alanson Beach homestead, moving to Austin in the late 1890's. John served as county commissioner from 1887 to 1895, he was a Master Mason and a Knight of Pythias. They had five children, two dying in infancy. The others were Mary, Frank M. and Katie.

Charles Owen, who came with the Beach family, entered section 26 for a short time, then returned to New York. He died before the end of the war.



THE OLD MILL AT OTRANTO

William West

William West grew to manhood in New York State where he was educated. He married Charlotte L. Gordon in 1845, and they were engaged in farming. In 1855 he came west to seek a home. He came by train to Galena, then by boat to McGregor. From there he traveled by foot to Mitchell County, Iowa, and engaged in a saw mill at Otranto. That fall he hired a team and drove to McGregor to meet his family and they spent the winter in Mitchell county.

In 1856 he made a claim in section 24 of Lyle Township and built a log house, moving his family there in the fall. He improved the farm and constructed a frame house where they were living in 1894. They had three children, Frank, Willie and Florence. Frank died at the age of 24. Florence became the wife of James K. Clark.

Joseph Thompson, who came from Wisconsin, settled in section 27, where he lived two years before moving to Iowa. He served as a Union soldier in the war of the Southern Rebellion. Later he went to California where he died.

Calvin Own came from Iowa in late 1856 and bought land and made a home in section 30 where he was still living in 1894. He and his wife had three children, Marriet, Foster B. and Julius C.

Rev. Samuel Loomis

The Rev. Samuel Loomis, a Methodist divine, came in the fall of 1856 and pre-empted land in section 19. He enlisted in Company K, Fourth Minnesota Regiment, served in the war and was discharged for a disability in October, 1862. He returned to his home where he died in December.

Edward and Chester Calwell came from the Keystone State. Edward settled in section 30 and Chester in section 19. After two years, they sold out and went to Kansas and later to Colorado.

Henry Roberts

An Englishman, Henry Roberts, came late in 1856 and bought Carrier's claim in section 20, which he still owned in 1894.

William Pace

William M. Pace, a native of Ohio, where he was born August 31, 1822, came to Lyle in 1856 and located in section 21 of Lyle Township where he lived eight years before moving to section 22. There he built a small frame house where his family lived 15 years. In 1878 he erected a dwelling 16 x 24, 14 feet high with an ell 16 x 16, 14 feet high and a kitchen 12 x 16, 10 feet high, also a granary 16 x 24. He engaged in raising grain and stock and was one of the prosperous farmers in the township.

Pace's nearest shipping point for his grain until 1864 was at McGregor, 120 miles away. He also hauled wheat to Rochester with ox teams and sold it for fifty and sixty cents a bushel. He was obligated to camp on the way, as hotels were scarce as well as money.

Pace enlisted in Company K, Fourth Minnesota Volunteer Infantry in November, 1861, and served three years with the Army of the Potomac. He was honorably discharged and drew a pension of \$14 a month for his disability.

He married Esther A. Martin, an adopted daughter of Judge Robert Lyle, May 22, 1844. They were the parents of six children: Charles M., Emery N., Jane, Elizabeth A., Almira O., and Eveline. They all married and moved from the family home.

Mrs. Pace died in 1866. After 13 years, Pace married Mrs. Electa Graham. They were still living in Lyle Township in 1894.



LYLE IS NAMED

Robert Lyle was a native of Ohio and came to the vicinity which was to carry his name in 1856, in the month of November, when W. M. Pace, also from Ohio, came. In 1860 he was elected county court commissioner.

Lyle was Mower County Probate Judge from 1861 to 1866. He succeeded G. M. Cameron who served from 1869 to 1861, and was followed by Ormanzo Allen, who served from 1866 to 1869. He was also one of the 8th District representatives in the Republican Wing in 1857.

The township of Lyle and the village of Lyle were named for Robert Lyle.

In 1868 he moved to Missouri, where he continued to live.

Captain Robert Moore

Robert Moore, who served as captain of the famous Company "K", Fourth Minnesota, had settled at an early day in Otranto, where he opened a land office. About 1859 he came to Lyle Township and lived in the southeast quarter of section 30. Captain Moore was killed in a skirmish. His family later lived in Brooklyn, N. Y.

C. R. Hughson

C. R. Hughson, born July 23, 1827, in New York State, came to Mower County in 1858 and settled in section 25 of Lyle Township. His wife was Mary L. Owen from New York State, the youngest child of Albert G. and Hanna Owen. They were married January 31, 1855. Mr. and Mrs. Hughson had eight children: Harriet, George A., John L., Mary and Eugene W. Three children, Francis, Cephes and Herbert, died earlier.

In 1882, Hughson replaced his small frame house with a more "commodious" house 16 x 24, 14 feet high, with an addition of 16 x 22, 14 feet high. Hughson died April 7, 1884, at the age of 56. His widow and children remained on the homestead.



ESTHER GEKLER AND HUSBAND — This is the daughter of David Gekler.



LORENZO GEKLER AND WIFE — This is the son of David Gekler, who was one of the early settlers in Lyle Township.

David Gekler

David Geklet, born in Germany in 1824, came to America in 1854 and was engaged in a cabinet factory in Utica, N. Y., before coming to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1857 and then to Lyle Township where he lived eight years before moving to section 14 where he took a homestead, brought the land under cultivation and engaged in raising grain and stock. His wife was also a native of Germany. They were parents of eight children, Bennie, Emma, Mary, Catherine, Lorenzo, Christiana, Lowena and Esther.

George C. Allen

George C. Allen, 1884 chairman of the township board of supervisors, was a native of Ashtabula County, Ohio, where he was born in 1840. When 21 years of age, he started out for himself and was engaged in the oil refining business in Titusville, Pa. In 1862 he enlisted in the 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry, Co. D. and served until January 2, 1864, when he was discharged due to a disability. He came to Minnesota and settled in Austin township in September, 1864, where he lived four years and settled in section 26 of Lyle Township where he constructed a frame house. He farmed and raised grain and stock. All of his 160 acres were improved by 1884.

His bride of 1861 was Caroline Holms from Ohio. They had three children, George W., Carrie L. and Edwin H. Allen held various other offices of trust in the township besides the office of supervisor.

Thomas A. Hotson

Thomas A. Hotson came to Mower County in 1862 and purchased 160 acres in Lyle Township, section 10. Only three or four acres of the land had been broken and the only improvement on the place was a pre-emption shanty.

By 1894 Hotson had all of his 160 acres improved and had constructed a good set of frame buildings and planted a grove.

Hotson was born in Norfolk, England, December 16, 1829, and married in 1849 to Esther Guttridge, also a native of Norfolk.

They left their native land in 1854 and came to America, sailing from Liverpool October 6 and landing at New Orleans after a voyage of six weeks and four days.

They first settled in St. Louis, where he worked in a rolling mill shortly and then went to St. Clare County, Illinois, where he bought interest in a brick yard which he operated one season and then engaged in farming in St. Clare County, remaining until 1862 when they came to Mower County. They had five children, Atkins, Thomas, Fred, William and Elmer.

Stephen A. Martin

Stephen A. Martin came to Mower County in March, 1865, and settled in section 29 of Lyle Township, where he remained. He was a native of New York State. His first wife died in 1847 leaving a child, Rosette. He remarried in 1848 to Mary A. Edson. They were the parents of five children, Christiana, wife of W. F. Tubbs, William H., Lester H., Pearlie, the wife of Joseph M. Whitford, and Rudell I.

William, the oldest son, lived at home and managed the farm and was a prominent member of the Christian Church.

D. P. Kittredge

D. P. Kittredge, native of Maine, who came to Minnesota in 1856 and was engaged in the lumber business at Stillwater until 1861, left to spend five years in Mendocino County, then returned to Stillwater until he came to Lyle in 1868 and bought the farm formerly owned by Jeremiah Phelps. He married Mary A. Decker from Illinois the following year. They had five children: Mary, Etta, Ella, William B. and Sadi. Only 20 acres of his land was broken when he became owner. There were no buildings. By 1894 he had constructed a comfortable frame dwelling and other buildings and had 75 acres of land under cultivation. The farm had a natural grove and was crossed by a crystal stream.

J. S. Bowers

A native of Canada, J. S. Bowers came to Mower County in 1871 from Osage, Iowa, and located in section 17 of Lyle Township. At Osage, J. S. Bowers and J. J. Bowers built and operated a saw mill. The family remained in Lyle Township. Mr. and Mrs. Bowers were parents of seven children: Norman, Hannah, Harriet, Milton, Charles, Alberta and Wilhelmina. Norman married Mary Trowbridge. Hannah became the wife of Marshall Haney and Harriet married Maitland Varco. Milton married Elizabeth Dickerson; Charles married Augusta Dickerson, and Alberta married Benjamin Wilder.

Henry C. Trowbridge

Henry C. Trowbridge, son of S. H. and Diana Trowbridge, was born April 21, 1846, in Racine County, Wis., and lived with his parents until 1863. The date of their settlement in Lyle was early in 1865, the same year Henry was discharged after serving his two year enlistment in Company I, Eleventh Illinois Cavalry with his regiment at Memphis, Tenn., where he was stationed until the end of the war. He returned to Lyle in July, 1865. In 1870 he married Raxana Chandler, daughter of Welcome Chandler, pioneer of Mower County. Young Trowbridge engaged in farming in section 8. In 1875, he engaged in buying grain in the village of Lyle and a year later took a position as a clerk in a grocery at Austin for a year when he returned to the farm. In 1883 he bought a farm in section 9, where they continued to live. They were parents of five.



ISAAC MOSHIER AND WIFE — The first white child born in Lyle Township, August 16, 1855, son of Dilarzon and Elizabeth Moshier.

FIRST EVENTS

The first white child born in Lyle Township was Isaac Moshier, son of Dilarzon and Elizabeth Moshier, born August 16, 1855.

The first death in the township was that of Mrs. Margary Bean, wife of William N. Bean, in March, 1856. She was buried within the limits of Woodbury Cemetery before it was surveyed. It was plotted before 1856. Louis Ebbers, who came from Germany, died in the summer the same year and was also buried in Woodbury Cemetery.

The first marriage performed in the county under the authority of a license issued by Mower County was July 19, 1857. So married were Robert B. Tifft and Anna Eliza Crumen.

The first population census in the county was in 1860. In Lyle Township there were 186 persons, 93 were female and 93 male. Of them, 27 were born in Minnesota, 141 born in the United States and 18 born in foreign countries. There were 41 dwellings and no one in Lyle Township over 21 was listed as not being able to read and write. There were 14 in the county over 21 who could not read or write. Population in the township in 1865 was 310, in 1870 it was 480 and in 1875, 617. The first census of Lyle Village was in 1875 when there were 209. In 1880 Lyle Township had 805 in the Federal census.

In 1884, no records earlier than 1868 were to be found in the office of the township clerk. The 1884 Lyle Township officers were: G. C. Allen, chairman; M. J. Hawley and W. Watkins, supervisors; Atkins Hotson, clerk; Joseph Wyburney, assessor; O. H. Brown, treasurer; W. C. Potter and Peter Wilder, Justices of the Peace.

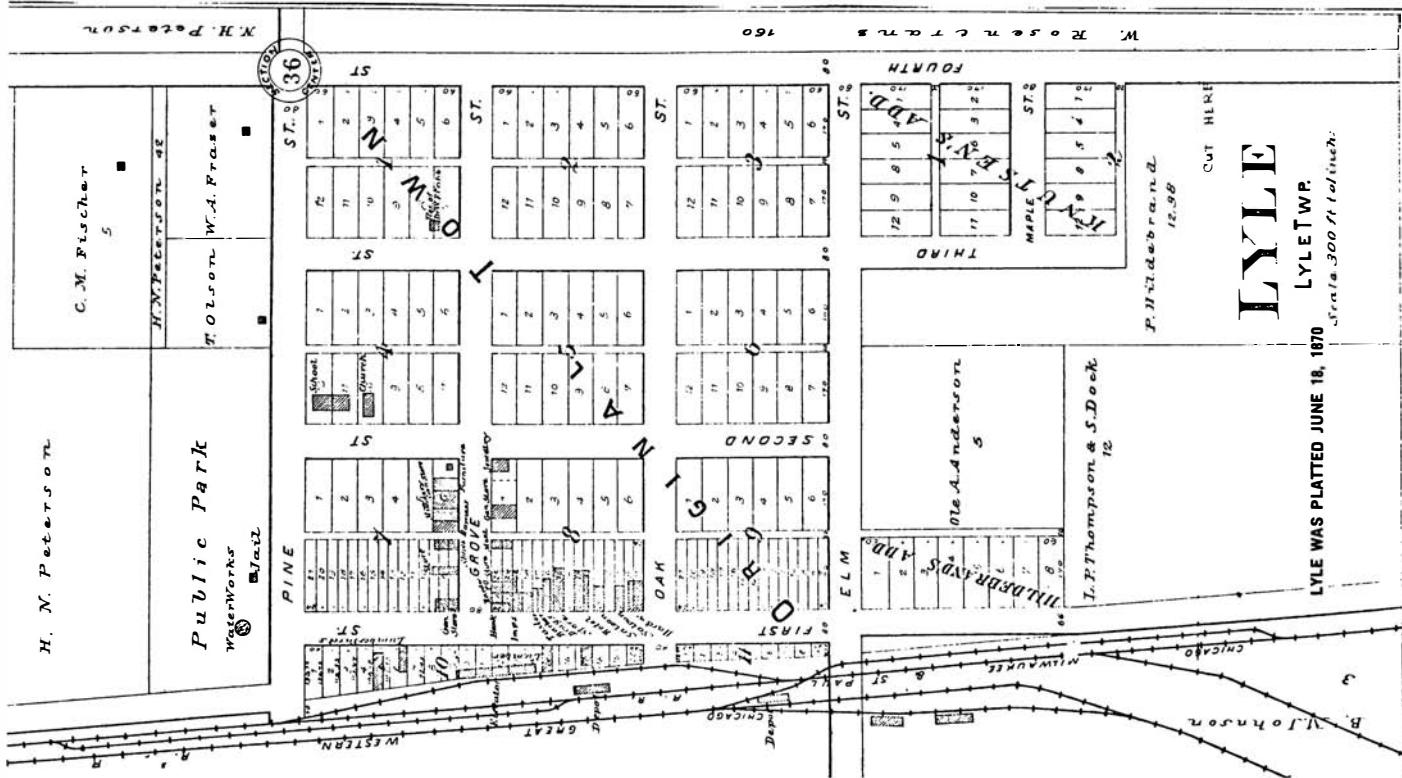


LYLE TOWNSHIP OFFICERS — Left to right: S. H. Warrrington, 24 years, 1923 to 1947; W. J. Murphy, 26 years, 1921 to 1947; Henry Meyer, treasurer several years; T. H. Murphy, 44 years, 1893 to 1937; Hollis Weber, 19 years, 1927 to 1946.

CEDAR CITY

Early comers to Lyle Township were inquisitive about a locality called Cedar City, because it sounded as though it were a place of importance. One early comer, Andrew Gemmel told that when he inquired about Cedar City from the postmaster at St. Paul, he was told the location and that very likely he would find but one house there.

Land of this site was in section 4 on the Red Cedar River. It was first claimed by John Chandler who later waived his claim to Caleb Stock and John Phelps. In 1856 the two men began constructing a dam of stone and timber, their first efforts in a plan to build a mill. They were joined in the venture by T. N. Stone and two mills were built. One was furnished with a circular saw for sawing lumber and the other was a grist mill with one set of buhrstones or millstones. In 1858 Stock traded the mill to George Phelps. In August of that year, the grist mill was completed. One sack of wheat had been ground when a flood from a sudden downpour came and swept both mills downstream. All hopes of the company were lost. The mills were never rebuilt. Many in the neighborhood continued to believe that the excellent water power opportunity at this point would be developed and that Cedar City would some day flourish as a rival of Austin. In 1894, nothing more had been done and all that remained of the dream were the ruins of the old mill dam.



VILLAGE OF LYLE

The village of Lyle was originally comprised of forty acres in section 36 of Lyle Township. It was platted June 18, 1870, by Selah Chamberlain, D. C. Sheppard and Charles Mellrath and was incorporated March 9, 1875. The plat was filed November 10, 1870, with the county register of deeds.

First officers of the village of Lyle were: L. W. Sherman, mayor and justice of the peace; John Trodler, O. H. Lucken and J. H. McLaughlin, councilmen; T. Irgens, treasurer; John Taskerud, recorder; F. Knutson, constable; P. McLaughlin, assessor. The first village council meeting was held May 17, 1875, when it was decided to hold regular meetings the first Monday of each month. The first order was drawn for \$11.25 to H. Wiseman for painting

the village "lock-up."

Charles Ekle is the 1970 mayor. Councilmen include William Bell, Ronald Halverson, W. E. Wood, Louis L. Taylor, with Jerry Reinartz as clerk and treasurer.

Charlie Berg is the village marshal. Assistant police officers are Kenneth DeBoer and Lyle Niessen.

The first house in the village was built by Thomas Irgens in 1870. He opened the first general merchandise store on the ground floor. He was commissioned as the first postmaster. Later that year two more stores were opened, one by George Anderson and John O. Myhre and the other by C. H. Cole. Anderson and Myhre sold groceries and liquors and sold out a year later to Albert Thomson and John Gunderson. They sold to E. Olsen (who changed his name to Fausett) and John Taskerud. The firm later became the first hardware.



FIRST LUMBER YARD IN LYLE — First manager L. A. Page. Pictured here from left to right: L. M. Sherman (3rd manager), J. P. Mortensen, A. O. Christianson, John Norris.

Lumber and Coal

L. A. Page started the first lumber and coal business. He soon sold to William Colton, in 1870. Colton sold to L. W. Sherman, who came to Lyle in 1871 as an agent for Bassett, Hunting & Co., buying grain. He continued in the lumber and coal trade a number of years.

Bassett, Hunting & Co. erected the first warehouse in 1870. E. B. Walton built a warehouse in 1873, selling two years later to Myhre and Johnson. Rhodes & Dayton from Cedar Falls, Iowa, built a third warehouse in 1874. Philip McLaughlin became the owner later.



JAMES P. MORTENSEN — Manager of Botsford Lumber Co. 1929.

Elevators and Warehouses

H. C. Trowbridge headed the first elevator built in 1874 by an association of farmers. They sold in 1877 to a company of ten men and later to Charles Whitton of Austin. He hired E. H. Stone to buy grain. Brown & Co., Milwaukee, became owners in 1878, later leasing to Bassett & Hunting, who in 1875 built an elevator with a capacity of 16,000. They also had control of two warehouses with a united capacity of 9,000 bushels.

Blacksmiths

First blacksmiths in 1870 were M. O'Brien and T. S. Kilgore, who operated during the winter. Early in 1871 O'Brien moved the stock to Adams. Joseph Hall was the third blacksmith, starting in 1881. He sold a year later to John Reinsmidt. By 1894 he also had a wagon shop. He did general repairing as well as shoeing.



PETER HANSON — First harness maker in Lyle. He opened his shop in 1874.

Harness Shop

Peter Hanson made the first harness in Lyle. He opened a shop in 1874 and continued many years.

Meat Market

John Hader and Peter Schodson opened the first meat market which they operated about two years then selling to Philip Bower. Successive owners were J. B. Hildebrand and E. H. Ahrends. Ahrends continued several years.

Hotel

Mr. and Mrs. John Trodler conducted the first hotel and also operated a bar.

Shoemakers

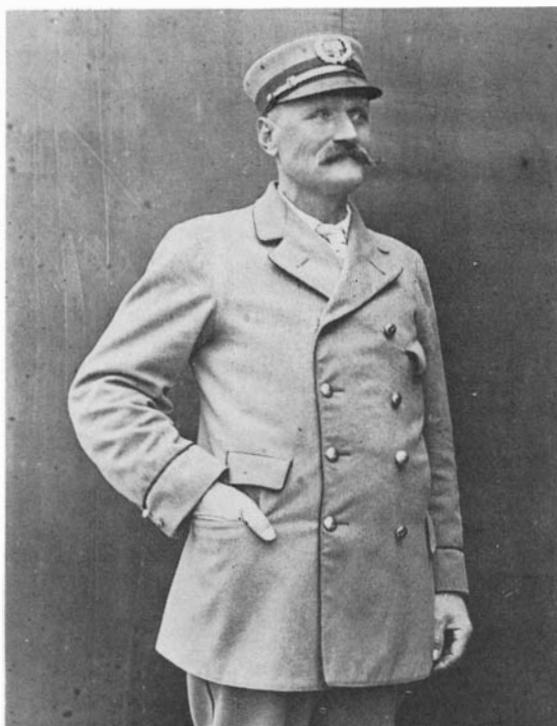
The first shoemaker was Peter Johnson, who was succeeded by Bernt D. Hedemark, native of Norway. He came in 1875 and added a stock of boots and shoes.

Furniture

Wold and Olson were pioneers in the furniture and upholstering business. Ed Johnson, native of Norway, who lived with his father at Adams until 21 years of age, then learned the painter's trade and came to Lyle in December, 1883, and opened a furniture business.

Druggists

The first drug business was conducted by William and Scarf, who also dispensed "spirituous, vinous and malt liquors." Capt. William Stanley, veteran of the Civil War and a native of New York City, came to Lyle in 1875 and was a druggist, and purchased the drug business from Frank Jera



CRIS JOHNSON — The mail carrier in 1911.

POSTAL SERVICE

First settlers in Lyle Township were obliged to go to Auburn in Fayette County, Iowa, a distance of 80 miles, to get their mail and to buy provisions. The trip was made with ox teams.

There were no post offices in the county, but letters were often brought by travelers to settlers from friends back east or in the old country. The first post office in Mower County was called Elkhorn and was established in



POSTAL WORKERS SORTING MAIL.

1855 with Jacob McQuillan as postmaster. It was on the old stage route and mail was received once a week.

When the mail route was established from Osage to Austin, mail was left at Orlando Wilder's for distribution in the neighborhood. This was not a regular post office, but the arrangement was a great convenience to the hard working pioneers.

A post office was established in 1856 with W. Means as postmaster. It was on the route from Osage to Owatonna. Mail came once a week. Successor to Means was D. L. Chandler, who kept the office at his house in section 33 of Austin Township. It later was discontinued.

In 1867 the railroad was put through, touching at Lansing, Ramsey, Austin and LeRoy and other points. Some stage lines continued until as late as 1870. Included were stages to and from Austin and Albert Lea; Austin to Moscow; Lansing to Neury; Mitchell to Adams; West Mitchell to Lyle; Northwood to Austin; Minneapolis to Lansing, Austin, Rose Creek, Adams and LeRoy. All were stage routes except the one from Austin to Albert Lea and the one from Minneapolis to points in Mower County.

The Lyle post office was started at Minnereka April 25, 1870 with William Schellback as postmaster. January 19, 1871, the name was changed to Lyle and Thowald Irgens became postmaster.

Succeeding postmasters and dates of their appointments were as follows: Patrick J. Collins, Nov. 20, 1886; Olaus G. Myhre, March 22, 1889; William Stanley, June 6, 1892; Frank B. Losey, Sept. 22, 1894; George Robertson, Dec. 10, 1895; his son, Burton J. Robertson, Jan. 3, 1903; Harvey Hildebrand, May 22, 1913; Charley P. Fossey, June 17, 1930; Nels E. Fedson, Aug. 6, 1935; Jay P. Mortensen, Sept. 7, 1944; Orville J. Mortensen, Oct. 15, 1950; Darrell W. Matter, Nov. 15, 1953; Orville J. Mortensen, Dec. 8, 1961; Laurence L. Murphy, Aug. 3, 1962; Violet L. Howard, Sept. 11, 1964, present postmistress.

The postoffice was once located in the building used by Shirll Nelson next to the bank on main street. In Sept. 1965 it was moved to Grove Street.

RAILROADS

In 1958 the grade for the Minneapolis & Cedar Valley Railroad was made in Mower County. Then came nine years of waiting, during which time various propositions and wildcat plans were afloat. September 9, 1867, the first railroad engine ever operated in Mower County reached LeRoy.

In 1870, construction crews of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Louis Railroad Co. came to build the "cut-off" between Austin and Mason City. Lyle was then established as a station on the line. O. N. Darling was the first station agent.



EARLY RAILROAD YARDS OF LYLE.

Lyle immediately became prominent as a market, owing to rivalry with Mona, one mile south in Iowa, then the terminus of the Cedar Falls branch of the Illinois Central Railroad.

E. Hoxie was for several years conductor of the "mixed passenger and freight train" running over the "cut-off," and it became known far and near as "Hoxie's train," the name, "Milwaukee," being scarcely known or referred to.

The Illinois Central Railroad had a turning table at Mona. The village had a hotel, department store, creamery, other stores, an elevator, stockyards and was a busy place. Dr. Cobb, their first physician, later came to Lyle. Mona refused the Milwaukee Railroad.

H. B. Dockstader of Otranto, five miles from Lyle, served as depot clerk for the Milwaukee Railroad in Lyle for six years, starting in 1904 and later worked a short time at the Rexall Drug in Lyle. He says he never knew of any railroad depot being held up.

He remembers there were "too many" freight trains, two train freights and two weigh freights daily and three to five times a week extras out of Austin to Mason City on the Milwaukee. At one time there were 14 passenger trains a day going through Lyle; four on the Milwaukee; six on the Great Western and six on the Illinois Central. There were three depots.

During fair time the passenger trains were kept busy. Dockstader said ticket sales amounted to \$150 a day during fair time.

John and Katherine Dockstader were H. B. Dockstader's grandparents. They came in the 1860's, originally to Osage and settled in Otranto township, Mitchell County, Iowa.

There was a round house across the tracks west of main street about two blocks. After its use by the railroads, it was used as a tow mill where they processed flax straw into thread. Later there was a sorghum mill. The tow mill was operated by Boyd from LeRoy, where he had another mill.

In 1965, the Milwaukee depot was the last of the three depots to be removed. John Lindberg was agent at that time. The railroad tracks remain and freight trains make daily runs. There are no passenger trains.



OLE ANDERSON — First Jeweler.



LLOYD MORTENSEN — A telephone repairman in 1929.



MAIN STREET



PAVING OF MAIN STREET

SCHOOLS

School District 13 was the first in Lyle Township. The first school was taught the summer of 1856 by Maria Vaughan in the Pinkerton log house, section 32.

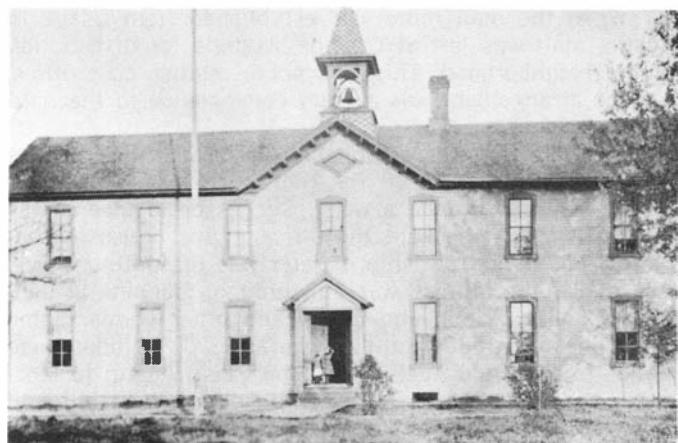
The first school in District 12 was taught by the Rev. Samuel Loomis in a log house in section 3.

District 14 had its first classes in a log house in section 5, formerly owned by John Tifft.

District 15's first teacher was Thomas Parker, who taught in a primitive log cabin in section 27, owned by Joseph Thompson.

District 70 was organized in 1867. Emma Smith taught the first school in a small frame house 12 x 16 feet in section 19.

District 54, organized in 1867 and the first school was of logs located in section 12 and Cynthia Addington, Stacyville, Iowa, was the first teacher.



LYLE SCHOOL BUILT IN 1877 — Later converted to the Culvert Factory.

Lyle Public School

The first schoolhouse in the village of Lyle was constructed in 1873, the same year school District 90 was organized, formed mostly from the eastern part of District 15, or Minnereka. A 16 x 26 foot school was constructed on lots 11 and 12 in block 4. The lots were a gift from the owner. Decks extended around three sides, attached to the walls with benches for seats. S. Anna McCune, Austin, was the first teacher.



LYLE SCHOOL BUILT IN 1906

The district was made independent a year or so later. In 1877 a large two-room school was constructed. This continued to be the home of the public school in Lyle until 1906 when a new \$15,000 school was constructed and the original site with the buildings being sold to the Lyle Corrugated Culvert Company and used as a factory site. (See Industries).

Members of the board of education in 1911 included Dr. W. S. Cobb, president; B. J. Robertson, secretary; H. G. Dahl, treasurer; and C. M. Anderson, J. O. Johnson and W. L. Cole, board members. W. H. Detamore was school superintendent and Goldie Carl, principal.

In 1957 the school was remodeled and enlarged in a \$530,000 building program, about the time of school reorganization and redistricting, as country schools were closed and children were transported by bus to school in Lyle as they are at present.



SCHOOL 1970

School administrators in 1970 include: John H. Ennen, superintendent; Charles J. Weisman, high school principal; and Mrs. Edna Morgan, elementary principal.

High school faculty members include: Maurine Goetsch, David Dahlquist, Ross Petersen, Betty Bos, Rachel Hudson, Del Elston, Pam Moller, Richard Adams, James Halsted, Cheryl Mundell, David Schenk, Allen Anderson, Marticia Bailey and Joanne Nelson.

Elementary faculty members are: Frances Patterson, Marie Brands, Rita Seeger, Carol Erlandson, Carol Williams, Mary Truckenmiller, Adeline Longworth, Betty Klinepier, Dale Hanson.

Members of the board of education include: Mrs. Glenn Wilson, president; Robert Gleason, clerk; Alden Small, treasurer; Donald Ulland, Cecil Wahlers and Mrs. Kenneth DeBoer, board members.



1909 BUSTERS — Left to right: Mrs. Bartil (Jasie Ashley), Mrs. Jewett Hofland (Josie Jacobson), Mrs. Kelly (Myrtle Bisbee), Mrs. Newell Nelson (Billina Suyeson), Mrs. Ben Myhre (Cora Nelson), Mrs. John Jacobson (Clara Morstad).



1909 BLOOMERS — Mrs. Hvoe (Alma Morstad), Mrs. Elmer Nelson (Nora Enerson), Mrs. Lawrence Meyer (Sophia Nelsen), Mrs. Anderson (Coru Bisbee), Mrs. Chris Foss (Cora Lerud), Mrs. Theo Enerson (Mabel Nelson).



1969-1970 SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS — From left to right: Donald Ulland, Cecil Wahlers, Alden Small, Mrs. Glenn Wilson, Robert Gleason, Mrs. Kenneth DeBoer, and John Ennen, superintendent.

CHURCHES

The Rev. Wm. Lowry, a Presbyterian minister residing in Freeborn County, conducted the first religious services in Lyle. They were held in the waiting room of the Milwaukee depot in Lyle.

A Union Sunday School was organized in 1865 in the school house in section 9 with Mrs. Mary Martin as superintendent. Later classes were held by the Methodist Episcopal Class. Sunday School was held from spring to the beginning of winter, then closed until the following spring.

Woodbury Church of Christ

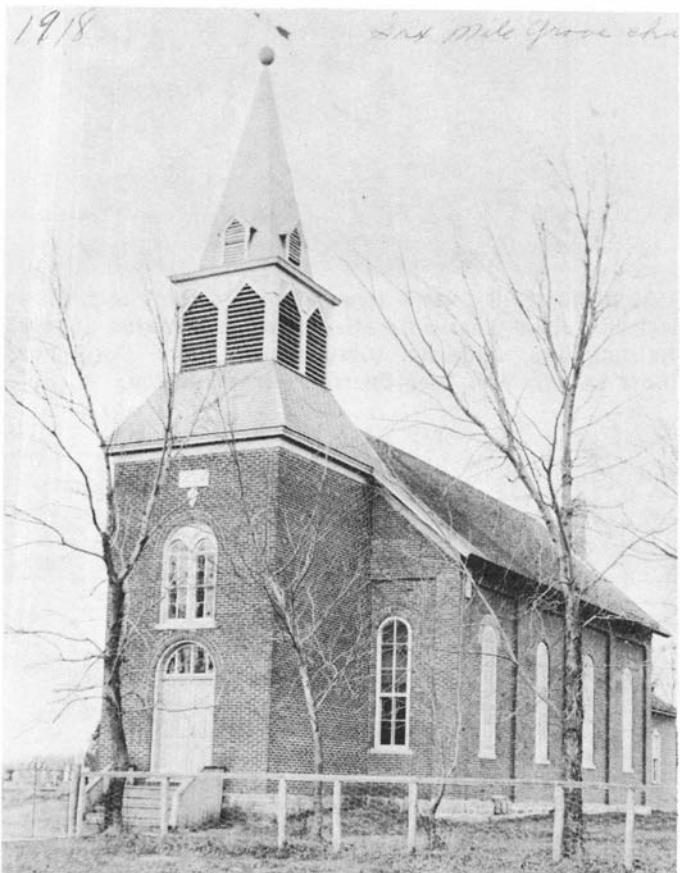
The Woodbury Church of Christ was organized in October, 1882, by the Rev. C. S. Baeulieu with 15 members. Elders were D. Moshier and A. Howard. W. H. Martin and W. Case were deacons; C. Butts, J. Moshier and A. Howard, trustees, with Martin as clerk.

In May, 1884, a Sabbath School was organized with W. H. Martin as superintendent. Worship was in the school house with Sunday meetings and sermons every four weeks. The Rev. Beaulieu was pastor, membership was 19.

Other Services

People of Lyle attended church in the surrounding area in private homes. One of these was in Nevada Township where first religious meetings in 1854 were held at the Frond Richardson home. A granddaughter of Frond Richardson, Mrs. Vance Hotson, and her husband have been residents of Lyle Village for several years.

When schools were built, these were used for religious service.



SIX MILE GROVE CHURCH 1918

Six Mile Grove Lutheran Church

From 1853 and on, many Norwegians came from Norway to the Six Mile Grove forest. They had belonged to the Lutheran State Church of Norway and hoped for a pastor to preach to them and administer the sacraments. The nearest Lutheran Church was at St. Ansgar, Iowa, where the early settlers took their infants for baptism and their young people for religious instruction and confirmation. Marriages were also conducted there. Among Lutheran pastors who visited the early settlement to conduct devotional services were C. L. Clausen, Preus and Otteson.

Six Mile Grove congregation was permanently organized November 19, 1859, one of the first Scandinavian congregations in Mower County. The first business meeting was held under the "Big Elm Tree" on the Thrond Kleppo Richardson farm (now the LaVern Austinson place) in section 29 of Lyle Township. Services continued here and in other homes until a church was built. Construction began in 1867 and was completed the following spring. It was dedicated in 1868 by the Rev. Johan Olson. The building committee included the Rev. C. L. Clausen, Hans O. Anderson, Ole Sampson and Gunder Knutson. Sampson laid the foundation. Bricks for the church were made from soil in section 27 on the Ed Nelson farm.

June 20, 1937, a monument was dedicated to mark the place of The Big Elm, where the congregation was organized and held divine services. The tree was described as so large that the shadow from its branches covered a half acre. It was 85 feet in circumference and was said to be the largest elm in the Northwest.

In January, 1951, the three Lutheran Churches of the Lyle area, Six Mile Grove, Our Savior's of Lyle and Our Savior's of Mona, adopted a parish constitution, still keeping their three places of worship. They purchased and renovated a furniture store in Lyle which had formerly been a garage. This became the central meeting place for the business sessions of the three congregations. It was dedicated September 13, 1953, as Trinity Lutheran Parish Center. In 1957, a \$22,000 parish parsonage was built at the north end of Lyle for pastors serving the three churches.

The cemetery which had early burials in 1857, and was owned and controlled by the Six Mile Grove congregation, was turned over to the Six Mile Grove Cemetery Association and incorporated March 10, 1913.

Four sons of the Six Mile Grove congregation entered the ministry: Ole T. Lee, Gustave T. Lee, Alfred B. Anderson and John M. Eggen.

The Centennial observance of the congregation was observed in 1959.

Pastors who served were: C. L. Clausen, Johan Olson, B. B. Gjeldaker, N. N. Esser, Dr. Olaf Lee (interim), A. Elmer Moe, G. Storaasli (interim), C. S. Vang, O. M. Langehaugh, M. L. Hostager, T. G. Torvik, O. T. Boe, S. V. Gjervik, S. O. Stenson, Gordon Rasmussen, Ernest Stolen (interim), Stanley Klemesrud, 1960-69, and Einer Unseth, August 1969 to the present time.

In 1959 votes were taken in the three congregations to determine whether they should form one congregation of all three. The voting revealed they were not all in favor of this. Both Six Mile Grove and Mona churches remained as sister churches in the Trinity parish, keeping their separate congregations, but continued to be served by the same pastors.

Our Savior's congregation of Lyle decided to establish a one-congregation parish.

Mona Lutheran Church

Our Savior's Lutheran Church of Mona was organized September 29, 1876, at the old Mona School. Prior to its organization, members were part of the St. Ansgar Norwegian Lutheran Church from 1853 to 1859 and part of the Six Mile Grove Congregation from 1859 to 1875. Pastors from the Six Mile Grove church served the new church. The church was constructed in 1882.

Sunday School was organized in 1887 and the Mona and Lyle Ladies Mission Society was organized at the home of Mrs. Jacob Jensen in Lyle, October 1, 1887.

June 15, 1941, Odean Tieman, son of the Mona congregation, was ordained into the ministry.

In 1951 the Mona congregation became part of the Trinity Parish of Lyle.

The 75th anniversary of the church was observed in 1952 when the Rev. S. V. Gjervik was serving the parish as pastor. Trinity Parish pastors have continued serving the Mona church to the present time.

In 1963 a fellowship hall, kitchen and washrooms were added to the church and this has been used as a social center for the Mona community. The congregation is anticipating its Centennial observance in 1976.

Our Saviors Lutheran Church

In 1907 the Lutheran Ladies Aid Society of Lyle purchased two lots in the east part of town for \$400 to be used for a church site.

May 20, 1911, a meeting of Lyle area people interested in organizing a Lutheran Church in Lyle was held at the village council chambers. A corporation was formed to build a Lutheran church. The Rev. N. N. Essor chaired the meeting. It was decided to build and to name the edifice Our Saviors Lutheran Church. Named as building committee were: Ed Bjork, O. H. Dahl, Wm. Swenson, K. O. Strand, Dr. P. T. Torkelson; a finance committee included Erick Anderson, Chris Johnson and R. A. Anderson, treasurer.



OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH — The corner stone for the church was layed September 3, 1911.

The corner stone was laid September 3, 1911. February 23, 1912, Our Savior's met jointly with the Six Mile Grove and Mona congregations to call a pastor to serve the three congregations. The Rev. A. E. Moe was called and was installed at Our Savior's Church April 20, 1913. The church was dedicated June 22, 1913.



OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

March 14, 1914, Our Savior's, Six Mile Grove and Mona churches met jointly and decided to buy and modernize a building in Lyle for a parsonage as property of the three congregations. In January, 1951, the three congregations formed the Trinity Lutheran Parish, as stated earlier. The Trinity Lutheran Center was later established and the new parish parsonage was built in 1957.

In April, 1959, when voting by the congregation revealed they were not all in favor of forming one congregation, Our Savior's decided to form a one-congregation parish. They called the Rev. Merland Johnson who began serving the congregation in September, 1959, and was installed January 17, 1960.

Our Saviors in November, 1959, purchased the shares of Six Mile Grove and Mona congregations in the Trinity Parish Center and the parsonage at \$30,000, and became owners in final transaction in February, 1960.

November 7, 1961, an additional eight and three quarters acres of land in the north part of Lyle were purchased from heirs of the John Hollerud estate at \$6,000. Here a new \$175,000 church was constructed beginning in April, 1966. The first service in the new church was February 19, 1967. Dedication was April 16, 1967, by Dr. Melford S. Knutson, Southeastern Minnesota District President. Total cost of the building project, including land was \$283,293.22.

Pastors were: N. N. Essor, A. E. Moe, G. Storaasli (interim), A. E. Moe, C. S. Vang, O. M. Langeough, M. L. Hostager, T. G. Torvik, Paul Boe (interim), S. V. Gjervik, David Granskou (interim), S. O. Stenson, G. E. Rasmussen, E. G. Stolen, Merland Johnson, September, 1959, to the present time.

Otranto Community Church

Otranto Community Church was served by the following pastors: Risse, 1930-34; Hahn, 1937; Davis, 1938; Northdurft, 1940's to 46; Howard Root called shortly after serving to March 4, 1955; Elvin Labrenz, 1955-1963; Eugene Schmidt, 1963-1967; Carl Calloway came April, 1967.

St. Peter Lutheran Church

The Rev. Carl Jungk, Ridgeway, Iowa, and four German immigrant families of Toeterville formed a congregation. The families were those of Philipp Baldner, Sr., Wilhelm Langrock, George Schulze and Heinrich Toeter. They called it the German Evangelical Lutheran St. Peter's Congregation of Union Township.

In 1876 a parsonage was constructed where worship services were held and in 1884 the church was constructed. In 1907 it was moved to Toeterville and the parsonage and grounds sold. Six lots in Toeterville were given by Heinrich Toeter for the new location.

September 8, 1946, the 75th anniversary of the church was observed. In 1966 the church was razed and removed for construction of a new \$64,000 edifice on the site. Groundbreaking was September 25, 1966, and dedication was September 10, 1967.

Pastors who served following the Rev. Carl Jungk were: George Landgrebe, Ernest Lehmann, Max Jahr, Johannes Lehmann, C. Bosholm, H. Raum, E. C. Meyer, Wm. P. Kamke. Membership in 1968 totaled 83 families with 286 baptized and 197 confirmed members.

Gospel Mission

In early 1900's in the village of Lyle, the Gospel Mission gathered weekly for prayer and worship. They did not have a regular pastor, but often held a series of evangelistic services under the direction of traveling evangelists.



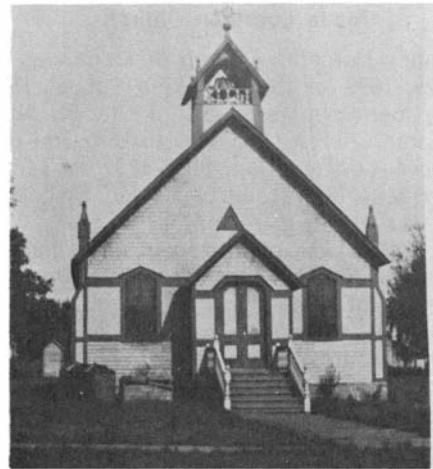
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Congregational

The Congregational Church was organized as a union of the Methodist Episcopal and Congregational bodies and incorporated April 24, 1886. Their church building was dedicated January 30, 1887. The sermon was delivered by the Rev. J. H. Marley, state superintendent of the Home Missionary Society. First pastor was J. S. Rounce. A parsonage was built in 1896. In 1911 the Rev. A. G. Washington was pastor. The church had a Sunday School, Christian Endeavor Society and a Ladies Aid. L. W. Sherman, first mayor of Lyle, was a member for many years.

Bethel Alliance Church

In 1906 the Methodist group decided to sell their church and it was purchased by Halvor, Gunder Knute and Charles Volstad families and called the Mission Church. Under the leadership of Knut Volstad, it served the community. In 1937 the property was given to the Christian Missionary Alliance and the church was organized in 1940 and '41 by the Rev. Leslie Pippert, first



BETHEL ALLIANCE CHURCH — Which was once the Methodist Church.

pastor. The church was later called the Bethel Alliance Church.

Other pastors were Bernard S. King, Howard Root, Samuel Stoesz, R. S. Yeats, Jerome Peterson, Wilbur Junker, M. H. Overback, Richard Williams and David Ashley, present pastor. Paul Johnson and his wife, Priscilla, who went in 1947 from the congregation as missionaries to Thailand, were shot while conducting a service there in 1952. Both were killed.

Catholic Church

The Queen of Peace Catholic Church was organized at the Lyle village hall May 19, 1946, by the Rev. D. A. Cunningham, pastor of the Queen of Angels parish, Austin. The first service was held over Haakenson's Grocery in the Austinson Hall, where they met until December that year when they purchased the building on the corner of the Medical building, formerly used at various times as a millinery, a restaurant, a beauty shop and a contractor's office and shop. The building was remodeled and enlarged and converted into a church ready for occupancy by December 8, 1946. It was dedicated and blessed February 9, 1947, by the Most Rev. Leo Binz, D.D., Coadjutor Bishop of Winona.

Members of the advisory committee elected in 1946 at the organizational meeting were: George Butts, Mrs. E. Adams, Don Engel, Francis Murphy, Mrs. Henry Meyer.

WOODBURY CEMETERY

Woodbury Cemetery is noted as the last resting place for many early settlers. It was established by J. C. Woodbury in 1855 and possibly earlier. Woodbury came to this area in section 33 in 1853 or earlier and settled on the banks of Red Cedar River. The cemetery was a public burial ground until June 8, 1883, when articles of the Woodbury Cemetery Association were filed. The cemetery map shows it was plotted before 1856. Records of burial in a portion not plotted on the map have not been found, except for monuments placed on graves indicating burial in 1856. Early records were destroyed by fire.

Margary Bean, wife of Wm. Bean, the first to die in Lyle Township, was buried in Woodbury Cemetery, but no marker has been found. The next burial was that of Mrs. A. C. Chapin, wife of a Civil War Veteran, who died April 16, 1856. The third was Louis Ebbers, who died September 6, 1856. The monument of Marjory Hite has the dates 1792-1856. Mr. and Mrs. Dilarzon Moshier, parents of Isaac Moshier, first child born in Lyle Township in 1855, are buried in the cemetery, but not Isaac. The first child born in Otranto Township, Iowa, in 1855, Eloise Wilder,

daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Jackson Wilder, was buried here in 1858. The 1880 records of the cemetery show the following early settlers buried here: Jams Davis, Andrew Jackson Wilder and Orlando Wilder, who came to this area in 1854; Wm. Allen, Erastus Bedford, A. H. Chapin, Dilarzon and Lorenzo Moshier, who came in 1855; Ezra Dan Ames, D. J. Butts, Lewis Ebbers, Charles Germain, Samuel Loomis, A. M. St. John and Sloane Williams, who came in 1856; J. M. Clark, Chas. Germain, R. P. Gibson, J. H. Goslee, Timothy Gosleen and Wm. Goslee, J. H. Stewart, who came in 1857, and many others. Another is Dr. W. T. Cobb (1847-1932), who served as medical doctor in Lyle community 55 years.

The 110th anniversary of the Woodbury Cemetery was observed in 1965. Officers of the association at that time included: Frank Bedford, president; Vance Hotson, vice president; Grace Barnes, secretary; Glenn Machacek, treasurer; Carroll Howard, sexton and caretaker; Minnie Cafourek, Emma Kvale, R. J. Campbell, Louie Howard and Grace Goslee, trustees.

LYLE DOCTORS

Dr. A. Truane was the first physician to locate in Lyle. He came in 1870, later moving to Wisconsin. Dr. Tanner, a homeopath, also came in 1870 for a short time. Dr. M. G. Gordon from Montreal came in 1881, but remained only a brief period.

STATEMENT

LYLE, MINN.,

189

M

In Acc't With **W. F. COBB, M. D.,**

OFFICE HOURS:
9:00-12:00 A.M.
1:00-3:00 P.M.

... Physician and Surgeon

Dr. W. F. Cobb

In the 1911 history of Mower County, Dr. W. F. Cobb, Dr. W. A. Frazer and Dr. P. T. Torkelson, all of Lyle, were listed as members of the first county Medical Association organized in 1902. Dr. Cobb was the first vice president and in 1903 was president.

Dr. Willis Frederick Cobb (1847-1932) served as a pioneer doctor in the early days of Minnesota and Iowa. His career "spanned 58 years". He lived at Mona, a mile south of Lyle from 1874 to 1895, when he and his family moved to Lyle. He and his bride of 1871 became parents of four daughters. One was Edna, who became Mrs. M. C. Putnam of Lyle.

W. A. FRAZER, M. D.

OFFICE OF **FRAZER & RABUCK,** PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

Office Over Lund & Lindland's Store, Syndicate Blk.

All Calls Answered Promptly, Day or Night. . . .

Dr. Cobb served as deacon of the Congregational Church, was superintendent of the Lyle Sunday School. He was a Republican and served Lyle as mayor, justice of the peace and president of the board of education.

His records showed 1,020 births entered. The first was Harry Oaks, September 8, 1874, at Mona, and the last J. F. Ogden, female, February 17, 1927, at Otranto. Mrs. Cobb died December 23, 1938, six years after Dr. Cobb.

In early years of his practice, Dr. Cobb made country calls by horse and buggy in summer, by horseback in muddy weather, and by sleigh in winter snow. Everyone knew the sound of his sleigh bells. He was one of the first in Lyle to have an automobile, a red chain-drive Buick.

Dr. P. T. Torkelson

Another physician, who was active in Lyle 21 years, was Dr. Peter T. Torkelson, who came in April, 1909. He was a graduate of Valparaiso University and the Chicago College of Medicine and Surgery and served a year of internship at Deaconess Hospital, Chicago. Like Dr. Cobb, he was a recognized members of the Mower County Medical Association, as was Dr. W. A. Frazer. Dr. Torkelson served as a surgeon for the Illinois Central Railroad. He served many years as a member of the Lyle School board of education. He built a home in Lyle. At the age of 49, he died in 1930. His widow, Belle, a registered nurse, continued to live in their home in Lyle. After driving horses to make his calls in early years, Dr. Torkelson was another of the first to have an automobile, a red Buick.

Dr. W. A. Frazer

Dr. W. A. Frazer, who came to Lyle in 1887 or earlier, lived to the age of 90. He practiced medicine in Lyle and Osage for a period of nearly 40 years and then left for Minneapolis in 1925. He was born in Bedford, Pa., in 1849, and passed away in November, 1939, in Minneapolis where his home was at 3313 Emerson Ave. South. He was at that time, survived by a son, Mark, of Barrien, Conn.; a daughter-in-law, Mrs. J. D. Frazer, and one niece, Mrs. Rose Merryman, both of Minneapolis.

Dr. George Melzer

In 1916, when Dr. Frazer planned to be gone for some time to see about his grapefruit ranch in Cuba, he had Dr. George Melzer, a graduate of Northwestern University, come as his replacement, leaving for Evansville, Minn., when Frazer returned. Later when Dr. Frazer left for Osage, Dr. Melzer was again persuaded to come to Lyle. He served until his health failed and retired in 1958 after being in the profession 50 years, 43 of which were spent in Lyle. He received a certificate of appreciation from President Truman in recognition for providing free examinations for

S. H. RABUCK, M. D.



A Discount of 10 per cent. on all accounts paid in 80 days, 6 per cent. 80 days. Accounts not paid in 80 days must be closed by note or acceptance.

500 - \$1.75 1,000 \$3.00

Lyle, Minn.,

189

265 draftees in World War II. He had also been active during the influenza epidemic during WW I and following, and was a surgeon for the Milwaukee and Illinois Central Railroads.

DENTISTS

A visiting dentist often came to Lyle in early days. His office was wherever opportunity knocked, sometimes indoors and other times outside.

Other dentists were Dr. Hanson, Dr. Vail and Dr. A. A. Lee. Dr. Lee is well remembered. He came to Lyle in 1911, as a graduate from Chicago College of Dental Surgery, having previously chosen Lyle from his knowledge of train schedules gained when he was a railway mail clerk in 1904. He had decided when in high school that dentistry was an inviting way to "make good money pretty fast." He rented an office in the Haitson building over the Gamble store where he continued until he suffered a stroke in 1958. He died in 1959. During those 47 years in all, he treated three generations of some families.

When the downstairs was vacant, he had to carry water for his office in winter as water pipes would freeze when there was no heat in the lower rooms.

Many patients came from Iowa on the 6 a.m. passenger in early days. Others came from London, Myrtle, Carpenter, Otranto and Grafton as well as from the Lyle area. His wife was cooperative and waited supper until he had finished, sometimes late at night, so they could dine together. In later years, he opened his office around 10 a.m. and took life a little easier. He and Mrs. Lee sometimes rented a horse and buggy to go fishing in Cedar River. He later owned a car.

and, through hopes of a continuance of these conditions, stimulating many into extravagance and debt. But this year of plenty was followed the next and after years by an almost total failure of wheat, compelling a radical change in the methods of farming, with a resulting depression of business until the readjustment was affected."

Fire of 1891

Sherman went on to describe another tragic happening.

"An event of terror and painful loss was the great fire of May 2, 1891, when, in a few hours, almost the entire business of the town was swept away with a destruction of property and merchandise amounting to many thousands of dollars. To many, the loss was almost unbearable, but the shock was soon overcome, hope and courage revived, resulting in rebuilding of more substantial character and re-establishment of business."

1897 Cyclone

According to the July Lyle council proceedings in 1897, there was a cyclone recorded June 10, 1897, but dated June 11 in the news story by William Nordland, Lyle editor, who gave the following description: "Two clouds came together about a mile north of the Iowa line and five miles west of the village of Lyle, taking a zig-zag course nearly east, blowing down buildings, uprooting trees and demolishing everything in its path, even blowing freight cars from the track and across fields. Henry C. Hanson, a young farmer living west of Lyle was killed." Several were listed as injured and many others as having buildings destroyed. "The storm struck Lyle village north of the Chicago Great Western round house, tipped



CYCLONE JUNE 1897

HISTORICAL EVENTS

In "Recollections of Early Lyle," by L. W. Sherman in the 1911 history of Mower County, he described the following two events which he recalled as affecting the surrounding region and the people of the village.

Blizzard of 1873

"The first was the great storm or blizzard of January 7 to 10, 1873, which, sweeping over the whole northwest with great violence and severity, caused much suffering and damage to the surprise and unprepared inhabitants. Country roads and railroads were blockaded and business well nigh suspended for weeks following."

Bumper Wheat Crop

"The other incident was the unrivaled crop of wheat in 1877, bringing abundance and prosperity for the time

two freight cars standing on the Milwaukee tracks, blew the wheel of the city waterworks tower and continued east.

"One of the most remarkable escapes was that of the Peter Hanson family, living in the village. He was erecting a new house and he and his family of six, with three visitors were eating supper in the barn west of the new house. The storm blew barn, family and house across the prairie. Hanson had a leg broken, his wife had a rib broken and some internal injuries. Their son, Robert, received a terrible blow on the forehead. The guests were also seriously injured."

Mr. and Mrs. Hanson were grandparents of Mrs. L. G. Howard, Amanda Mortenson and others in the Lyle area. The location of the Hanson place was where Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bedford are presently living.

Fire of 1956

In December of 1956, Lyle was again threatened by fire when an entire business block on Grove street was destroyed. Five buildings were burned or partially gutted by the fire. They were: the American Legion Club, an empty building, Lyle Produce, Lyle Tribune building, At-tlessey's TV shop and there was damage to Haugland's Appliance.

Another fire of note was February 10, 1941, when the Simmons store was completely destroyed. Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Simmons escaped from their second floor apartment by means of a homemade chain fire escape.

Fatality

May 17, 1947, Raymond Strong, 29, was seriously burned. He was pumping gasoline from his truck into the Cities Service Station in Lyle. He turned off the small motor on the truck to stop pumping and a spark set off gas fumes which had settled in the grease pit where the tank truck was parked. The fire in the pit was extinguished by the Lyle firemen. Strong was taken to St. Olaf Hospital, where he died August 4.

Mail Pouch Robbery

A mail pouch was stolen in a robbery at the Great Western depot in Lyle October 1, 1937, and was investigated by the county sheriff's office and a postal inspector. The robbery was discovered by Art Fortun at 6 a.m. when he went to the depot to pick up the pouch and discovered the depot had been entered and the mail pouch was missing.



BRIDGE NORTHWEST OF LYLE — That collapsed with Osmundson Bros. truck.

The fact that brake-shoe pin had been used to knock off the hasp of the door lock and was found nearby, led to the belief that a hobo was responsible for the breakin. There had been no attempt to enter the depot office.

The pouch was not found until the next January when Ed Gould and Art Dockstader were out hunting and found the pouch along the highway fence near the old Otranto school. Only about 30 or 40 per cent of the mail was recovered. Old Age Pension letters with checks had not been opened. Mail recovered was delivered.

Gun Boat Fired Upon

On Christmas Day, 1936, the news was confirmed by the State Department of Washington, D. C., of reports of an encounter between the U.S.S. Erie and a Spanish warship in the port of Gijon. Victor Fortun of Lyle was a member of the crew on the U.S.S. Erie. The Nationalist battleship, Espana, fired on the U. S. gunboat Erie in the port of Gijon on the Bay of Biscay coast.

The Erie's crew ran up the American Flag and stood by their guns for action. The Espana, however, turned about and left the port at full speed, heading westward along the coast toward the open Atlantic.

Train Wreck

The Minneapolis to Omaha Great Western passenger train was wrecked two and a half miles south of Lyle at 1:25 p.m. February 7, 1948. A spread rail was given as the cause. It had stopped at Lyle and was proceeding at about 30 miles an hour at the time of the wreck. Engine and cars tore up track for three train lengths. Two center cars jack-knifed to the right and dug into the snow-covered bank. The engineer said the engine was headed for the ditch when the cars swung over and it twisted it upright again. Passengers, about 27 in all, reported no injuries. They were brought to the Fox Hotel by bus at 4:42 p.m. and about 12 remained overnight.

There was a run-away 16-year-old boy who had boarded the train at Austin with a ticket to Dennison, Texas. His father had alerted the county sheriff and when the boy returned to the hotel in the passenger bus, the sheriff picked him up and returned him to his parents.

Governor Speaks

Gov. Luther Youngdahl paid tribute to early Lyle settlers and pleaded for a clean law-abiding citizenship for the youth of the land when he addressed the crowd at the Harvest Festival in Lyle the first week in September, 1949. There was a long parade, horse races, boys' and girls' bicycle races; Lyle boys defeated the girls in a softball game; St. Ansgar band played and Lyle defeated Stacyville 13 to 5 in the ball game.

Croquet Capitol

In the early 1940's Lyle claimed to be the Croquet Capitol of Minnesota, boasting the finest croquet court in the state and about 12 additional set-ups. There was hardly a resident that was not an exponent of the age-old sport, according to the Austin Herald.

The outstanding court in Lyle was built and maintained by Chester Reistad, who constructed the court in his backyard to serve as a handy and inexpensive substitute for his favorite game — golf. Regular fans were not kids, but grown-ups, they were also the most consistent croquet players. Regular players at the court ranged from 42 to 76 years of age. Veteran of the group was Ole Anderson, Lyle's oldest businessman. Anderson boasted of 50 years of croquet playing and offered to meet all comers. Other steady players were: Lewis Solo, Rudolph Carlson, Gilbert Martin, Henry Peterson, J. C. Myhre, Lewis Larson and Reistad.

Cost of the court was about \$20. First the ground was leveled, then a clay-like material added, after rolling it was oiled and sprinkled with washed sand. It measured 30 by 50 feet and was termed the finest court in the country by observers.

Girls Defeat Albert Lea

Lyle sports enthusiasts still talk about their Girls' Kittenball Team and the Girls' Basketball Team back in 1935.

That was the year the Lyle Girls' Independent basketball team traveled to Albert Lea where they emerged the 36 to 31 victors over the Albert Lea Girls' SERA aggregation at the high school gym. Lyle, living up to their come-back reputation, staged a brilliant rally in the final quarter to emerge the victors. Albert Lea led at the half, 24 to 20. Kay Mortenson, Irma Baumgartle and McKay, Lyle forwards, led in their team's scoring.



BASEBALL TEAM 1905 — Back row, left to right: Bert Larson, George Richardson, Cris Larson, Gilbert Martin, Alva Gregg, Newell Nelson, Gust Enerson, George Petersen, Gust Richardson; front row: Cora Swenson, Florence Meyer, Lulu Gregg, Wilma Evenson, Della Richardson, Clara Larson (Meyer).



1954 BASEBALL TEAM — Won 23, lost 1. Members from left to right: front row, Marvin Lenz, Robert Nelson, John Perkins, Warren Austinson, Glenn Dahl, Jerry Hatch, Rodney Golberg, batboy Darrell Murphy; back row: Harvey Golberg, Manager Byron Peterson, Duane Enerson, Harvey Golberg Jr., Spencer Morgan, Duane Bartholomew, Loren Denison, David Penning, Alva Gregg, manager.

Several of these same girls were in the kittenball team with Lloyd Olson as manager. They played in tournaments once under the lights at Faribault and defeated Faribault. In the tournaments at Dexter, they won the pennant over four teams.

Team members included: Blanche Gregg, Mavis Newling, Kime, Margaret Morgan, Kay Mortenson, Irma Baumgarte, slow ball pitcher, Dorothy Dugan, Ruth Howard, Elizabeth Dugan. There may have been others.

Baseball

Alva Gregg, Lyle automobile mechanic 25 years and still working at Gregg's Conoco, says he helped with the town ball team 40 years as manager.

He started playing when he was 14. They played across the tracks where they had a fair ball diamond, he says. The land belonged to the Illinois Central Railroad. In the summer of 1954, their team won 23 straight games. Games were always a big attraction in early days. People came for miles with horses. Admission was 25 cents and they took in as much as \$125 at a game.



GREGG SCHOOL (Approx. 1908) — Front row: Alfred Helgeson (dec.), Harry Skov, Alta Sargent, Mary Skov Rush, Clara (Helgeson) Haas, Bernetta (Hanson) Anderson; second row: Anna Skov, Francis Hanson, Helmer Austinson (dec.), Henry K. Helgeson (dec.), Albert Skov; third row: Anna Helgeson (dec.), Mildred (Brown) Enochson, Charles Sargent (dec.), Ozro Brown Sr., Clara (Hanson) Helgeson, Agnes (Gregg) Murphy (dec.); fourth row: Lula (Gregg, Murphy) Lizer, Ole K. Helgeson (dec.).

Alva Gregg, now 79, was the son of R. D. Gregg, who lived in the Lyle area all his life and farmed the same farm 50 years. He lived to be 83. The farm was located 80 rods from the Gregg school, now gone.

Beaver Dams

As late as November, 1935, when even then, a very few had seen a beaver dam at close range, a colony of beavers plied their masonry skill in constructing a dam on the Otto Flatten farm near Lyle.

That same fall, beavers constructed a 180-foot dam across a creek on the property of J. H. Meyer, about a mile north of the Ramsey dam near Austin, which caused the flooding of several acres. Area Game Warden Herman Baudler was in charge of the case. He found trees as large as 12 inches in diameter that had been cut down by the beavers. Many trees were sacrificed in their effort. Baudler opened the dam and proceeded to trap the beavers and remove them to less settled areas of Minnesota.

Checkers

Back in the 1930's Lyle had a number of enthusiastic checker players. They were good, good enough to challenge the "New York Comet," William F. Ryan, who at the age of 29, had played more games than any contemporary master, and was the author of several works on checkers. At that time he had recently played 16 men at Minneapolis while blindfolded without losing a game.

Lyle picked 21 known area best players to meet Ryan at the village hall one night. One of the men was O. A. Austinson, 70, who said he had played checkers "ever since he could push one across the board." Others besides Austinson from Lyle were: Art Fortun, Jay Mortensen, N. E. Fedson, Wayne Lerud, L. G. Ranum, Hubert Rohne and Newell Nelson. From Austin were: F. T. Ihrke, George Heinl, Dr. F. A. Scott, Malcolm Kittleson and P. J. Stephani. There was also P. W. Jensen, A. A. Tiedeman and S. L. Kirkpatrick of Albert Lea; Victor Randall, Jack J. Nelson and John Maher, Lake Mills; and J. R. Whitney and E. M. Morre, Osage.

Ryan never lost a game, although he even played 10 of the men while blindfolded.

LYLE AREA BRIEFS

Feed Mill Wrecked

May 28, 1937, the Atlas Wrecking Co., Winona, began demolishing the Lyle Feed Mill, which had been established 20 years earlier by Andrew Shulean. The company purchased the mill from the Farm Service Stores Co., of General Mills.

Milwaukee stock yards were located on the site before the mill was built. At that time Shulean operated a mill on the G. G. W. Railway south of the Great Western depot. After the yards were moved across the line into Iowa, Shulean took down his mill in the south part of town and moved it to the northern location. Reason for the change was that farmers who were using horses entirely in those days objected to crossing so many railroad tracks and dodging trains, of which there were a great many daily.

Razing of the mill occurred shortly after the death of Shulean at the age of 74, at Isanti, Minn. Funeral services were April 5, at the Baptist church there. He served on the Lyle village council when living here.

Lumber Yard Worker

Ove Peter Hanson was an employee at the Lyle Lumber Yard a number of years. He was born in 1855 at Shelland, Denmark, where he married Christine Rasmussen in 1876. They had seven children, five of which died in early childhood. The family came to America in May, 1880, going first to Medford and later coming to Lyle. His wife died in 1889. In 1891, he married Tina Peterson of Mona. They had three children. Hanson died January 16, 1937, on a farm at Mona at the age of 81.

Gets Patent

In late October, 1899, Chris Johnson of Mona received word from Washington, D. C., that his application for a patent on a railroad tie marker, which he had invented, had been allowed and that the patent office was ready upon the receipt of the final government fee. The device was calculated to save time and provide greater accuracy in laying railroad ties.



EARLY PICTURE OF LYLE

June 5, 1897

From Lyle Tribune Files: "After the new sidewalks are laid, Third Street is bound to become a popular resort for lovers and moonlight promenaders.

"Early potatoes, corn and garden stuff were cut down by frost Monday morning, causing some damage.

"Mrs. L. A. Sherman received a new piano last week from Chicago, a gift from her uncle, O. R. Dahl."

Sleeping Sickness

Austin Herald, Aug. 5, 1938 — "An outbreak of sleeping sickness among horses here has become so severe that it was estimated today two Austin veterinarians have handled about 140 cases in the past month."

Advice to farmers on protection against the sleeping sickness to horses and mules was contained in a bulletin received by the county agent from the Horse and Mule Association of America.

Appointment

June 20, 1939, Lloyd Mortenson, who had been lineman and manager for Lyle, St. Ansgar and other telephone exchanges of the Central Iowa Telephone Company for several years, was appointed manager of the St. Ansgar exchange of the company. He replaced S. J. Peshak, manager for 38 years.

Brick Building Razed

In April, 1940, the brick building across from the drug store, Lyle's one time "play house," left to "wreck and ruin" for many years, was being trucked to the Peterson-Wilder farm. For some time bricks had been falling.

The building had been erected by Louis Olson, brother of Andrew Olson, in 1892. He used it for a general store for two years with his partner Ed Grovo. Since then it had been occupied by clothiers, a novelty store and finally was used for movies. The lots were sold later.

M. O. WILSON & SON,

Dealers in . . .

General Merchandise



DRY GOODS, NOTIONS, CLOTHING, BOOTS
and SHOES, HATS and CAPS, GROCERIES,
CROCKERY, and GLASSWARE,

LYLE, MINN.

185

Wescon Banking with the
Citizens' National Bank
Austin, Minn.

E. L. HAMILTON,

—Dealers in—

GENERAL MERCHANDISE.



Mona, Ia.,

186

C. J. COLEBRTSON

H. G. DAHL

COLEBRTSON & DAHL.

DEALERS IN —

Buggies, Wagons, and
Farm Machinery.

LYLE, MINN.

187

Lyle, Minn.

72



COLEBRTSON & DAHL.

DEALERS IN —

HARDWARE AND FARM MACHINERY.

LYLE VILLAGE

City Hall

In 1906 an \$8,000 City Hall was constructed. It was a two-story brick building 40 by 80 feet. The ground floor housed the fire department apparatus, the council chambers, where elections, debates and meetings of all kinds were held; the marshal's room and the city jail.

The second floor was a large hall with a seating capacity of 500. Under the management of the fire department, it was the scene of many amusements and entertainments.

After many years of service, the upper story was condemned by the fire department and removed. The first floor was left and used for the City Hall.



CITY HALL

Fire Department

The fire of 1891 when the village lost the greater part of its business section, coupled with fears for the community's welfare from other occurrences, made local residents aware of how vulnerable Lyle was in case of major hardships. To assure some measure of protection, the Lyle Volunteer Fire Department was organized October 21, 1895. Ed Stanley was named chief; E. F. Wilson, secretary. Stanley was succeeded by George Robertson in 1897 and served until he was elected county auditor and moved

to Austin in 1903. Others serving as chief were: J. H. Hughes, Gill Ferris, Carl Peterson and James Mortenson.

In 1911 there were 21 members. Officers were: James Mortenson, chief; O. G. Blakestad, treasurer; E. B. Sherman, secretary. At that time the company owned 1,000 feet of hose, hook and ladder, two hose carts "and all necessary equipments."

The modernized department now has three fire trucks and a large volunteer department.

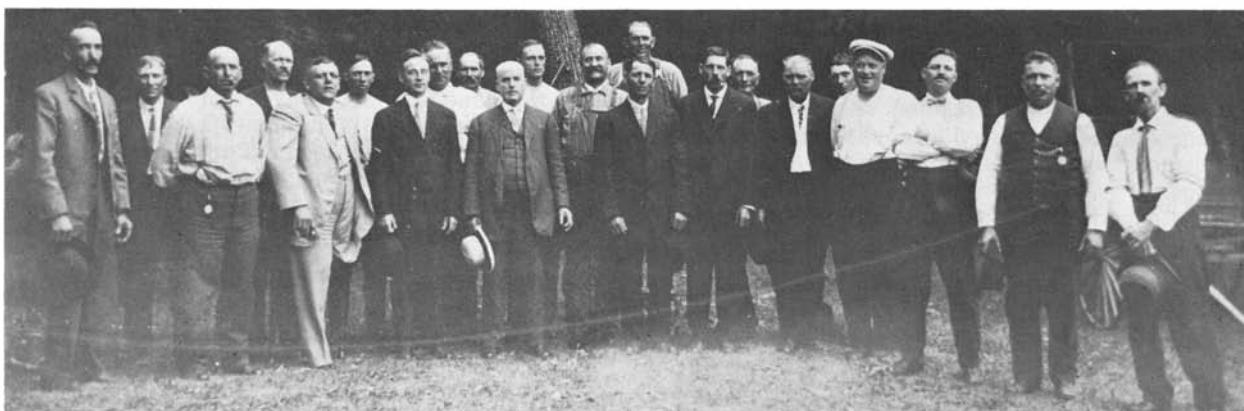
Mail Carriers

First mail carriers out of Lyle were John Carter on Route 1 and Chris Johnson on Route 2. Carter retired in 1927. In 1909, Johnson was succeeded by William Murphy who started with an 18-mile route with three deliveries made in a horse and buggy. When he retired 41 years later, he was serving 600 patrons on a 46.5 mile route. In those 41 years, he worked under five postmasters and used 26 different cars, covering an estimated 400,000 miles.

Francis (Pat) Murphy, brother of William, served Route 1 for 50 years, retiring in December, 1961. He estimated his mileage at 500,000 miles. Jay and Orville Mortenson served the two routes later.



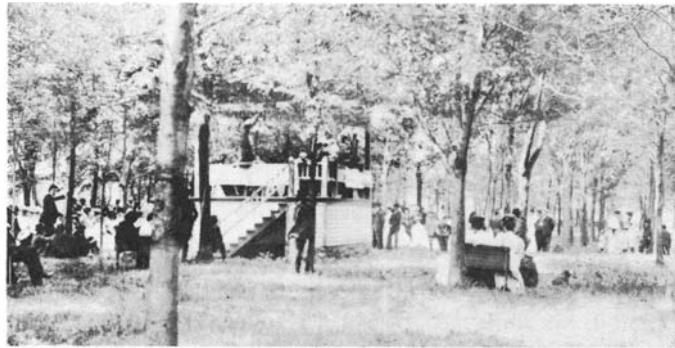
THE RIG was driven 120 days on Rural Route No. 1 in the winter of 1936 by Francis Murphy. The first rig in Mower County.



LYLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT PICNIC — Left to right: Carl Peterson, Ole Running, Jim Corrigan, John Larson, Anton George, Claude Hildebrand, Dr. A. A. Lee, Charles Howard, Jim Johnson, Gill Ferris, Harvey Hildebrand, John Larson, Ben Helfritz, James Mortenson, O. G. Blakestad, George Howard, Henry Hughes, Simon Myhre, Sever Severson, Olaf Dahl, Frank Parielec, Carl Anderson.

Lyle Park

It was back in 1881 the village park originated when the town bought five acres of land and paid out a park with 3,000 trees in it. In the southwest corner, a village office 20 by 24 feet and 12 feet high was constructed the first year. Following the tragic fire of 1891, a well was dug and a water tower constructed in the park. A beautiful water fountain was installed near the band stand. Benches and tables were scattered in the shade of the trees for picnics.



BAND STAND IN THE LYLE PARK — 4th of July celebration, 1905.

Early Lyle Assets

As early as 1894, the village had provided a strong "Calaboose," "lockup," or jail. There were three saloons, each paying an annual \$500 license. The village had no debts and a total of \$2,500 in the treasury.

According to William Nordland's writings, in 1911, Lyle Village had 552 inhabitants. There were three principal railroad lines, and surrounding was the most highly cultivated agricultural districts in the Northwest. The village owned and operated its own water plant supplying water from an 800 foot deep drilled well. Its Independent Telephone Company had 350 telephones in operation.

There were cement sidewalks along most every street. The village light plant supplied electricity for streets, business places and homes. N. G. Fischer was plant manager. The culvert factory and the canning factory were in operation.

Places of business included a farmers' cooperative creamery, a tow mill in the old round house, a feed mill, three elevators, three blacksmith shops, one lumber yard, one drug store, four general stores, one furniture store, two millinery stores, one shoe store, one jewelry store, one hardware, a "Photo Gallery," one tailor shop, one harness shop, one bank, one newspaper, two butcher shops, two hotels, two livery barns, one garage, two restaurants, two cream stations, two barber shops.

There were many beautiful residences, well kept lawns and "umbrageous trees." The village park, only a block from the business section, was often the scene of pleasant gatherings.

The Lyle Concert Band, composed of local musicians, was under the direction of B. J. Robertson.



LYLE CONCERT BAND — Left to right, front row: Alfred Anderson, Pankhurst; second row, Claude Gordon, Roger Gibson, Olaf Sundre, Burton Robertson, unidentified, Sigurd Dahl, unidentified; third row: Walter Rawn, Henry Dahl, A. Anderson, Bernie Hedemark, Ole Thompson, William Nordland, Louie Sherman.

Lyle Newspaper

The first lasting newspaper in Lyle was the Lyle Tribune, established in 1893 by Elmer Wilson, editor. Several attempts had been made prior to that time, but were of short duration. The paper was published by John Gould & Co., from 1896 to January 1, 1902, when illness forced Gould to retire. The paper was leased to Mr. and Mrs. R. Ferris, who managed it until July when Charles Gould & Co took charge until December, 1902, when William Nordland purchased the concern. There were about 240 subscribers, several fonts of type and a hand press when he made the purchase. He and Mrs. Nordland lived in an apartment back of the shop, when over the First National Bank. In 1904 Nordland moved the press to a new building and constructed an eight-room house. The new shop had a gasoline-driven cylinder press, later converted to electricity and a new linotype. Mrs. Nordland became the linotypist, and later a typewriter was added.

After 61 years in newspaper business, all together, Nordland retired at the age of 80. He had published the Tribune 48 years, worked on papers in Austin and Emmons and was Lyle correspondent for the Austin Herald five years.

The Emmons Leader was Nordland's first experience in operating a paper when he worked for P. M. Joice of Lake Mills, the man for whom the town of Joice, Iowa, was named.

Nordland was secretary of the Lyle school board 33 years, a member of the Home Guard in WWI and head of Lyle's Ground Observer Corps Station; past Grand Chancellor of the Knights of Pythias, past master of A.F. & A.M., and a clerk of the Congregational Church. His favorite pastime was playing checkers or chess.



PANORAMIC VIEW OF LYLE, MINNESOTA

The Lyle Tribune

EXTRA.

Volume 5.

LYLE, MINNESOTA, SATURDAY, JULY 4, 1896.

Number 19

ICE - CREAM

Ice Cream Soda, Soda Water and Refreshments of all kinds

AT THE MAMMOTH RESTAURANT.

B. M. JOHNSON, Proprietor.

* F. B. LOSEY *

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL

WINES AND LIQUORS

AGENT FOR

VAL BLATZ MILWAUKEE BEER.

H. H. OMOTH & CO.

FURNITURE

Bed Room Suits,
Window Shades,
Baby Carriages,
Fancy Goods.

Picture Framing A Specialty.

GEO. ROBERTSON & CO.

PURE DRUGS AND MEDICINES.

Jewelry, Stationery, Wall Paper
Paints, Oil and Varnishes.

Syndicate Block.

Go to the

COMMERCIAL HOTEL

Where you can get a Square
Meal for Twenty Five Cents.

GILL FERRIS

Wines

& Liquors

Agent for Val Blatz Milwaukee Beer.

N. P. NISSEN'S OLD STAND.

PROGRAMME.

JULY 4TH, 1896.

TEN GUNS AT SUNRISE.

The procession will form at 9:30 on Elm street facing west, left resting on Main street in the following order:
Marshal of the Day.
President of the Day Orators and Clergymen in carriage.

Lyle Cornet Band.

Ship of State.

Lyle Fire Department.

Ku Klux.

Business Men's Industrial Parade.

Bicycle Parade.

Citizens in Carriages and on Foot

LINE OF MARCH.

From corner Elm and Main streets, south on Main street to Oak street, east on Oak to Third street, north on Third to Grove street west on Grove street to Speakers Stand.

10:00 a. m. Music by the Band.

10:10 " Prayer by Rev. Wm. Moore.

10:15 " Song by Male Quartet.

10:25 " Reading of Declaration of Independence by Rev. E. Day.

10:40 " Music by Orranto Mandolin Club.

10:50 " Oration by Judge L. L. Wheelock, of Owatonna.

11:40 " Music, "Red, White and Blue" by Cornet Band.

11:45 " Song by Male Quartet.

11:50 " Address by Hon. N. Kingsley, of Austin.

12:20 p.m. Music by Orranto Mandolin Club.

12:30 " Sonorous male Quartet

12:35 " music by Lyle Cornet Band.

AFTERNOON SPORTS 1 P. M.

Horse race (trotting) best 2 in 3st..... \$10.

" (running) " 2nd..... 5.

" " 1st..... 10.

(No blooded or refined horses admitted)

100 yard foot race free for all 1st..... 3.

2nd..... 2.

60 yd. fat man race, not less than 100 lbs. 2.

2nd..... 1.

Wheelbarrow race..... 2.

Sack race..... 2.

Egg race..... 2.

Barrel race..... 2.

Hurdle race (3 hurdles 34 feet high)..... 2.

Bicycle race medals valued at..... 1st \$3.

Greased Pole..... 2.

4: p. m. Base Ball Game: Lyle vs Cedar City

Prize \$20.

The Lyle Juniors will play a "kid" nine from Osage during the forenoon-Games called about 10:30 a. m.

Grand display of Fireworks in the evening

Don't miss it.

THE C. O. D. STORE

Geo. J. Gruenberg, Prop.

Dry Goods, Clothing, Footwear, Notions, Furnishings Goods and Groceries.

LYLE,

MINNESOTA

SYVERUD BROS.

Dealers in

LIGHT and HEAVY HARNESS, WHIPS,
FLY NETS and LAP ROBES.

Lyle, - - - Minnesota.

THE BANNER STORE

For fine Groceries Dry Goods and the latest styles in Hats, Caps, Ladies and Gents Furnishings.

Everybody invited to call on us
P. DOCK, Prop. SEVERDOCK Minn.

DRUGS E. L. STANLEY DRUGS

Books & Stationery

WALL PAPER, PAINTS, OILS, GLASS
and TOBACCO.

NUTS, FRUITS AND CONFECTIONERY

MISS E. M. EGGEN

DEALER IN

Fancy Millinery

All the Latest Styles in Hats Bonnets and Trimmings.

Lyle, - - - Minnesota.

JOHN REDING

* GOLDEN RULE SALOON *

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL

Gund's La Crosse Beer.

At dieche drenken emer noch alles.

See Our Display in the Parade

R. RIERSON & CO.

RUMBLEY ENGINES AND THRESHERS Milwaukee, Champion Binders.

Examine our Machinery before buying elsewhere

Minnesota State Fair Prize, Cheapest and Best.

Lyle Airstrip

An early 1929 airstrip was developed at Lyle, the first in Mower County. Kermit Torkelson, 19, was the owner. His parents, Dr. and Mrs. Peter Torkelson, leased land from Hollis Weber west of Lyle water tower for the strip and a hanger. Young Torkelson took aviation courses and training at Des Moines. One unforgettable experience was when he discovered he was flying in the path of a tornado with Louie Howard as a passenger. They watched it approach Lyle, saw it destroy buildings on the Adam Duerst farm and narrowly escaped, but circled it and followed. Torkelson sold the plane after he had it two years. Some time later, he entered the U. S. Air Force and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Elmo Torkelson, a 1935 graduate of Lyle High School, who attended the University of Minnesota and St. Olaf College, was graduated in 1939 from the U. S. Army Air Corps advanced flight training school at Kelly Field, Texas. He received the rank of lieutenant and was transferred to the pursuit squadron at Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Ala.



FIRST NATIONAL BANK — Left to right: Bankers F. M. Beach and R. A. Anderson.

Lyle Banks

Citizens Bank of Lyle, a private concern, was established in 1888 by Andrew H. Anderson, serving as the first bank. Located on the corner of Main and Grove streets, it was chartered February 7, 1901, as the First National Bank of Lyle. F. M. Beach, Omaha, Nebr., became an officer. Later Jennie Riersen Hagna was an officer for several years. In 1910, "Banker Anderson" died. His son, R. A. Anderson, bank employee seven years at Crookston, replaced his father. He and Beach continued in the bank until 1939 when it was sold to Farmers State Bank. Closed by Roosevelt's "Bank Holiday," in the early '30's, when many banks failed, the First National Bank survived and re-opened.

Farmers State Bank

Farmers State Bank of Lyle was chartered April 15, 1915. First board of directors included B. P. Muldown, president; Charles Volstad, vice president and acting cashier; Ed D. Nelson, K. L. Leidall, R. C. Rustad, Herman Lerud and C. A. Roberts. Officers were elected at their first meeting, March 4, 1915.

In August, 1939, A. P. Garnatz and a son, Keith A., purchased controlling interest in the bank from Lerud and stockholders. October 28 that year, they bought out First National Bank from F. M. Beach and R. A. Anderson.

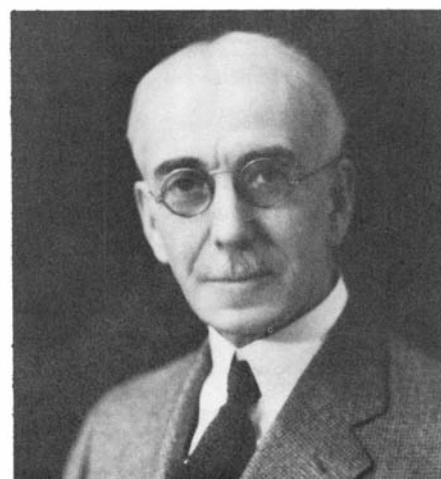


FOUNDER OF 1ST NATIONAL BANK AND FAMILY — Left to right: Ida, Andrew H. Anderson, R. A. (Art) in father's lap; Oliver, Marie, Mrs. Anderson, Rufus G. in mother's lap; Bertha.

November, 1956, Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Gislason took over control from A. P. Garnatz, selling January 2, 1967, to Senator C. R. (Baldy) Hansen of Austin, who was elected president, an office he still holds. Other directors are: Mrs. C. J. Gislason, vice president; and Mr. Gislason. Employees are: Mrs. Gislason, cashier; Dennis Klinepier, assistant cashier; Mrs. Marion Feldt and Mrs. Florence Golberg, tellers, and Catherine Salisbury, bookkeeper.

Other names in the bank's history include: Avery Brush, Adam Duerst, Frank D. Herder, M. C. Nelson, Mabel Lillegaard, Mrs. C. Qualey, N. E. Fedson, Hollis Weber, R. J. Campbell and Florence W. Garnatz.

There have been seven presidents of the bank: B. F. Muldown, Charles Volstad, R. C. Rustad, Herman Lerud, A. P. Garnatz, C. J. Gislason and C. R. Hansen. F. M. Beach and A. P. Garnatz were honored by Minnesota Bankers Association with plaques for 50 or more years of banking service. Farmers State Bank observed 50 years of banking April 15, 1970.



FRANK M. BEACH — Officer of the bank.

INDUSTRIES

Lyle Corrugated Culvert Company

The first corrugated pipe seen in this section of the country was manufactured by the Lyle Corrugated Culvert Company, located here in 1905. The company was organized by parties from Ohio, starting in a small way and taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the wealth of railroad facilities here. After a year of operation, A. B. Wilder and Frank M. Beach became interested in the



OLD SCHOOL HOUSE — Built in 1877, later used as a culvert factory.

project and the company was organized to operate on a larger scale. After the new school was constructed in 1906, the old school was sold to the culvert company where it continued its operation. A branch plant was opened in Minneapolis, where subsequently the head office was moved. The company still operates in Minneapolis under the same name.

Telephone Company

Lyle Telephone Company was incorporated March 27, 1902, for \$20,000 for 30 years. Directors were John Bergeson, president; George Robertson, vice president; E. L. Stanley, secretary, and Dr. W. F. Cobb, treasurer. R. Reierson was also a director. They held their election April 1, 1902.

In 1911 it was reported that the company had 350 telephones in operation with connections to a large number of other companies and for seven years had paid six per cent dividends, "placing the balance of the net earnings in the sinking fund."

First telephone operator was Sadie Bisbee. Others were Mathilda Anderson, Grace Sherman, Grace Fortun and Myrtle Fortun. Myrtle started in 1919 and continued until 1956, 37 years in all. She became chief operator and moved with the company in 1920 to the building across the street which was formerly Julia Anderson's Millinery. In 1956 the company converted to dial system. The office was closed and the building was one of those destroyed in the fire later in 1956.

Canning Factory

A cannery was started in Lyle sometime shortly after 1911 by a Waverly, Iowa, company with James Corrigan as manager. He was father of Mrs. Irving Wilder. The factory was located in the south part of town where the steel grain bins were later situated.

Approximately 100 Lyle area men and women worked at the plant in season. Extra help was needed to hand husk the corn. Corn was also hand fed, ear by ear, through the cutters. The canned product was labeled Lyle Canning Company. After about eight years of operation, the

factory was sold to Amos Stripple, Vinton, Iowa. Buildings were dismantled and moved to Clarksville, Iowa, where it was re-organized.



CANNING FACTORY



WOMEN WORKING AT CANNING FACTORY

Lumbering

During the winter of 1941-42, the Webster Lumber Company, St. Paul, installed a sawmill at Lyle. There were 28 full-time employees. Located at the north edge of Lyle, the sawmill turned out 7,000 feet of lumber and 400 railroad ties daily. Kenneth Danielson, Black River Falls, Wis., supervised buying of timber tracts and logging. The mill was owned and operated by Alvin Goli, Waupaca, Wis. He worked with a crew of eight veteran Norwegian lumbermen. A 24-horsepower steam engine provided power for the operation.

The trees were cut down by hand and trimmed. Another crew used a power drage saw to cut the trunks into various lengths. Logs were snaked into piles, then trucked to the mill. Oak, maple and basswood were cut into logs.

Among the trees felled was the famous King of the old ginseng woods near Otanto. It was a perfect Burr Oak specimen, which stood on the banks of the Cedar River about 200 years and was considered the finest, straightest tree in northern Iowa. There were no branches up the first 10 feet, then the 20 foot branched top made it a prize lumber source. Lumber from the tree was made into quality flooring.

The industry lasted several months. When all area timber available had been processed, it closed.

Creameries

The earliest creamery in the Lyle area was the Otter Creek Farmer's Creamery Company of Lyle, located on Otter Creek on the Martin Nelson farm, later occupied by Newell Nelson. It was organized by a group of farmers in 1896. In 1910 the plant received nearly 800,000 pounds of milk and cream and manufactured 90,000 pounds of butter.

First officers and directors were: Charles Volstad, B. Bothum, K. Amundson, C. Meyer, O. Tieman, A. P. Martin and Ed N. Nilson. Officers and directors in 1910 were: A. Halversen, T. H. Murphy, C. Meyer, A. P. Martin, J. A. Thorstad, O. E. Hofland and K. L. Lendal.



FARMERS CO-OPERATIVE CREAMERY — Constructed in 1916.

In 1911 History of Mower County, it was stated: "Great credit is due to the farmers of Mower County for fostering the co-operative creamery idea and there have been so few failures that the good work has gone on almost unrestrained until it is altogether our greatest industry. . . The flavor that our butter gets from the sweet and nutritious grasses enables us to top the New York market with the product. We have at present nearly 17,000 cows actually assessed in the year 1910. . . The income from our cows last year exceeded a half million dollars."

The Otter Creek Creamery continued until 1916 when the buildings were sold and moved to the Henry Rohne farm. A new brick creamery was constructed the same year in the southern part of Lyle. Sam Nelson continued as buttermaker in the new creamery.

June 23, 1917, Harry Jordon, one of the cream haulers at the new creamery, nearly lost his life in a harrowing experience. There had been a cloud burst rain in the night, swelling Otter Creek into a wild rampaging stream which swept away bridges and caused other damage. After making several attempts to cross the raging creek on his return trip, Jordon tried to cross near the Andrew Steene farm. The bank gave way and his team, wagon and load of cream cans plunged into the stream. Jordan managed to swim to a tree where he clung until neighbors heard him yelling for help and came to his rescue more than an hour and a half later. Walter Wyborny rescued him. The horses drowned. Some of the cream cans were recovered.

Light Plant

Frederick H. Fischer and George Brix constructed the first light plant in Lyle in 1903 when it was also franchised. In 1910 the old carbon arc street lights were replaced by

300 watt Mazda tungsten light bulbs. Nicholas G. Fischer, son of Frederick Fischer, installed them. Lyle was the first community in the area to have electric street lights.

A fall Harvest Festival and Carnival was held August 20 and 21 to celebrate the conversion to electric lights.

The plant was located on the corner across the street from the water tower where the Harry Attlesey repair shop was later located. It was called the Lyle Electric and Heating Company. Fischer planned to provide steam heat for commercial use, but this was never developed.

Electricity was furnished on a limited basis from sunset to midnight and from 5 a.m. to daylight. When there were special occasions and dances in the evening, there was a special effort to furnish power, but when the lights blinked three times, it was a signal that they would be turned off in a short time. People were given about enough time to get home from the party before they went off.

Fischer experimented with various kinds of fuel for his power producing plant. He tried petroleum and oil refinery products, coal, wood and coke. He burned cinders from the Milwaukee depot after he installed a large boiler. He obtained the cinders free, but had to have them hauled. Fischer also tried burning flax straw from the tow mill operated in the railroad round house, but they produced a great deal of dust.

In the fall of 1911 Nels Fortun traded his grocery store to Fischer for the light plant and continued operating it until in the early 1920's when he sold the lines to Central States Light Company. He used the building after that for selling oil a number of years. Later it was demolished.

BUSINESS

Merchants of 1873

In 1873 the village of Lyle was in its earliest years of growth. Three railroads formed a junction at Lyle. They were the Mason City branch of the Milwaukee and St. Paul, the Illinois Central and the Burlington and Cedar Rapids. The Burlington and Cedar Rapids ran trains over the tracks of the Milwaukee and St. Paul as far south as Plymouth Junction and north to Austin. The Chicago and Milwaukee had constructed a station and O. N. Darling was the agent, the first in Lyle.

Merchants were: Irgens & Knutson, Scarf & Williams, Olson & Co., L. W. Sherman, and Peter Johnson. S. D. Mecord was a grain buyer; John Trodler kept a boarding house, and John Reinsmith was the blacksmith.

1885 Business Places

Business places listed in a directory in 1885 were: W. Stanley & Son, Myhre & Lund, John O. Myhre, J. F. Humel, dealers in general merchandise; A. H. Anderson, hardware; L. W. Sherman, lumber and coal; B. D. Hedemark, leather, boats and shoes; Th. Irgens, postmaster; J. H. Sherman, elevator man; Evenson & Stovern, dealers in farm machinery; J. K. Clark, drayman; E. Johnson, furniture dealer and undertaker; Peter Hansen, harnessmaker; Thomas Kirby, grain buyer; W. West, boarding house; A. Weber, blacksmith; C. Junger, refreshments; Dr. W. F. Cobb, physician; O. G. Myhre, leader of the brass band.

1970 Business Places

Lyle Furniture Store, Jerry Jordahl; Nelson Radio & TV, Shirill Nelson; Cozy Tavern, Mabel Tolzman; Hunting Elevator, Charles Ekle, manager; Lyle Feed Mill, Harold Eichen; Blacksmith, Harry Attlesey; Young's Garage, Dave Young; Don's Standard Station, Don Stanton; Schaufenbil Grocery Store, Ernest and Irna Schaufenbil; Post

Office, Violet L. Howard, postmistress; Lyle Speed Wash, Leonard Haugland.

Other business places include: JaBu Te Beauty Salon, Marguerite Sewick; Peggy's Beauty Shop, Peggy Tufte; Matter's Barber Shop, Henry Matter; Lyle Recreation, James Lestrud; Copper Kettle, Elizabeth (Bea) Anderson, Chatter Box Grill, Patricia Stark; Lyle Insurance (Farmer State Agency), Arnold Stock, agent; Farmers State Bank,

Senator C. R. (Baldy) Hansen, president; Haakenson Grocery Store, Olaf Haakenson; Perks Saving Center, John Perkins; Leidal's Garage, Leonard Leidal; Burghard Produce, Loren Dennison, manager; Lyle Municipal Liquor Store, Glenn Wilson, manager; Greggs Service Station, Alva Gregg; Bell & Leidal Car Sales, Vern Bell and LaVerne Leidal; American Cyanamid, Bruce Coleman; Young Grain Company, Dave Young, and Art's Barber Shop, Art Hollerud.

Other buildings include the American Legion Club and Hall and the City Hall and Fire Station.

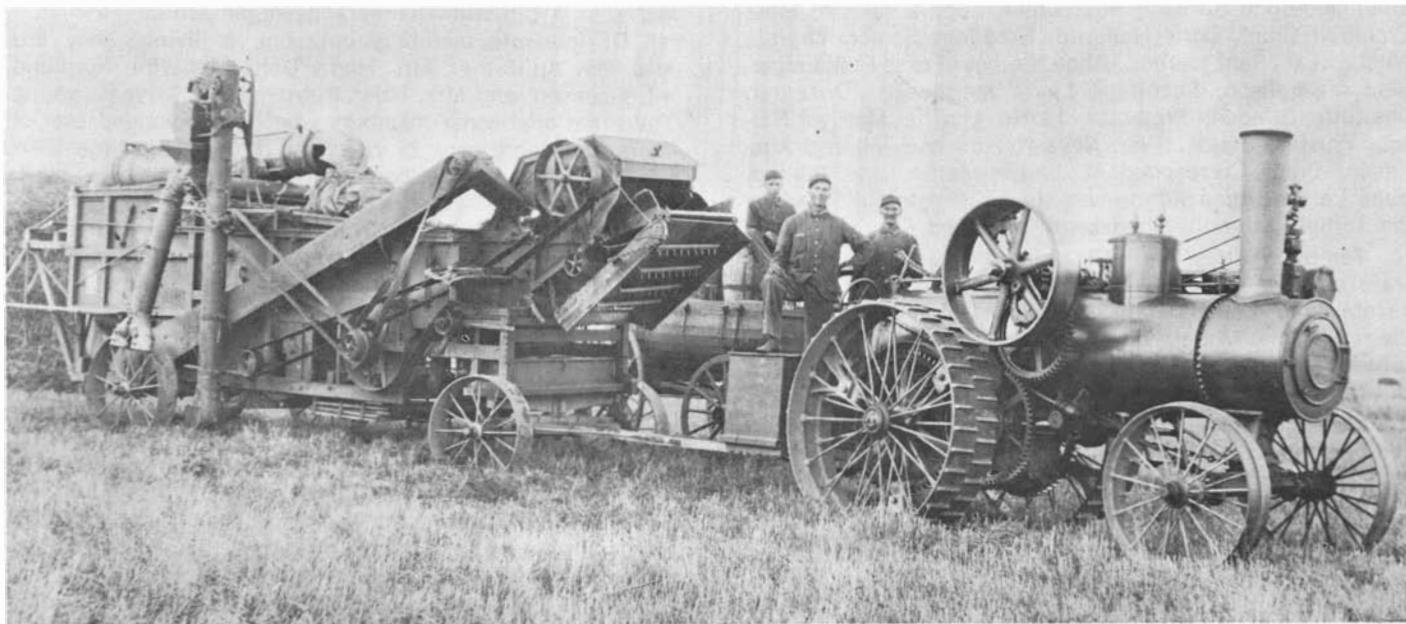
Another private business is the Mink Farm operated by Elliott Young.



EARLY HARNESS SHOP



FIRE OF GAMBLE STORE 1970



EARLY THRESHING TEAM, 1907 — Left to right: Olaf Olson, Alfred Johnson, John Weber, owner.

SOCIAL AND FRATERNAL ORDERS

From early days Lyle has had a wealth of social and fraternal organizations. Some of the earliest were: M.B.A. Lodge No. 333, Willow Wood Camp No. 565; Knights of Pythias No. 59, Railroad Order of Trainmen, I.O.G.T. No. 31, and A.F. and A.M. Alma Lodge No. 131. By 1911 those surviving were the Masonic, the K.P., the M.W.A. and the M.B.A.

Masonic Lodge

Alma Lodge No. 131 A.F. & A.M. received its charter in 1878 from the Grand Lodge of Minnesota. In 1911 officers were: O. H. Dahl, W.M.; J. W. Johnson, S.W.; Chris Johnson, J.W.; Wm. Nordland, secretary; F. M. Beach, treasurer; Ole Running, S.D.; Louis Blakestad, J.C.; Asmund Olson, tyler; George M. Anderson, S.S.; Dr. P. T. Torkelson, J.S.; Dr. W. F. Cobb, prelate; S. H. Dahl, marshal.

Knights of Pythias

The Knights of Pythias Lodge received its charter in 1889, but the fire in 1891 destroyed the original charter. A new one was granted September 19, 1891. Dr. W. A. Frazer was the only original charter member still living in Lyle in 1911. Following the 1891 fire, the lodge constructed a two-story brick building. The building was damaged by fire in 1960, but was repaired and redecorated. The lower part of the building was used as a drug store several years. Officers in 1911 were: A. George, C.C.; N. E. Fedson, V.C.; W. F. Cobb, prelate; Ed. Hildebrand, K. of R. and S.; W. L. Cole, M. of F.; Nick Severson, M. of E.; Chas. Howard, M. of W.; Earl Vinton, M. at A.; John Olson, inner guard; Claude Hildebrand, outer guard; F. E. Wilder, trustee for three years.

Pythian Sisters

Lyle Temple No. 54 Pythian Sisters was instituted March 31, 1916. First officers were: Past Chief, Mamie Hunter; Most Excellent Chief, Sadie Roberts; Excellent Senior, Grace Sherman; Excellent Junior, Ida Fedson; Manager, Ida Anderson; Secretary, Rena Dahl; Treasurer, Tillie McKee; Proctor, Petra Thorstad; Guard, Minnie Muldown. Their charter was surrendered March 12, 1918.

May 15, 1954, Lyle Temple No. 76 was instituted with 23 sisters and 15 knights. Officers were: Honorable Past Chief, Florence Garnatz; Past Chief, Lucille Nelson; Most Excellent Chief, Doris Hollerud; Excellent Senior, Virginia Wilder; Excellent Junior, Alice Louise Fossey; Manager, Gladys Sampson; Secretary, Laura Mortenson; Treasurer, Charlotte Slindell; Protector, Larrie Martin, Marilyn Nelson; Trustee, Clara Meyer, Neva Nelson and Mildred Austinson; Press Correspondent, Larrie Martin, and Pianist, Irene Larson. Alice Rohne was the first sister initiated by the Temple after they had been instituted.

Temple 76 has two 1970 state officers and two past state officers. Roxanne Weseman is Grand Chief of Minnesota, and Louise Hall, Grand Secretary; Past Grand Chief Virginia Wilder, who is also a Past National representative; and Past Grand Secretary Doris Hollerud, who is 1970 National Representative.

Lodge projects have included Red Cross sewing, sending money and gifts to veterans and to the mentally retarded, gifts to the needy and fruit trays to shut-ins.

The lodge loan closet has two wheel chairs, two pairs of crutches and a walker available to people who need them.

February 25, 1970, the lodge meeting place and all possessions were destroyed by fire. They have been meeting in the homes since.

Officers for 1970 are: Past Chief, Louise Hall; Most Excellent Chief, Betty Rohne; Excellent Senior, Blanche Gregg; Excellent Junior, Eloise Kvale; Manager, Virginia Wilder; Secretary, Alice Rohne; Treasurer, Jeanette Reutter; Protector, Lilly Wilder; Guard, Hazel Golberg; Pianist, Irene Larson; Press Correspondent, Alice Rohne; Trustees, Doris Hollerud, Effie Austinson and Lola Dennisen.

Modern Woodmen of America

Willow Wood Camp No. 565 of the Modern Woodmen of America was organized in the 1880's. In 1911 Peter Hanson was the only remaining charter member living in Lyle. First Venerable Counsel was E. L. Stanley, and J. S. Schuyler was the first Scribe. Officers in 1911 were: Fred Wyborney, V.C.; Chris Johnson, W.A.; John Schumacher, banker; O. G. Blakestad, clerk; M. M. Dunbar, escort; Frank Peterman, watchman; Frank Cafourek, sentry; Ole Running, manager; Dr. Cobb, physician; Dr. Torkelson, assistant.

Modern Brotherhood of America

Lyle Lodge 333 Modern Brotherhood of America, was organized in 1899. Meetings were held in the Maconic Hall. Officers in 1911: Peter Anderson, president; T. Thompson, vice president; C. M. Anderson, secretary-treasurer; Tom Murphy, chaplain; Gen. Helfritz, conductor; George Larson, watchman; Sam Olson, sentry; trustees, Osmun Olson, T. H. Murphy, D. E. Erickson.

WCTU

The Women's Christian Temperance Union of Lyle was organized in the fall of 1887 and is still active in its 83rd year. Women who have served as presidents include: Mrs. D. K. Shannon, Mrs. B. M. Johnson, Miss Mattie Volstad, Mrs. Anna Folsom, Mrs. E. Pankhurst, Mrs. R. J. Gordon, Mrs. A. J. Washington, Mrs. H. G. Dahl, Mrs. G. K. Volstad, Mrs. Ella Roberts, Mrs. Dena Nelson, Mrs. Anna Carberry, Mrs. N. Severson (sec), Mrs. Etta Cole, Mrs. Della Bennet, Mrs. Martin Willinger, Mrs. Niles Putnam, Mrs. J. M. Johnson, Mrs. Irvin Priem, Mrs. Ed L. Rush, who has served from 1954 to 1970. Several others served more than one term.

The Nevada Township Union was organized in 1902, served by two president, Alma Ostenson and Mrs. E. Pankhurst. In 1906 it combined with the Lyle Union. The WCTU is a Christian temperance organization.

Of four life members only one is living. They are: Mrs. May Aultfather, Mrs. Henry Dahl, Mrs. Wm. Nordland, all deceased, and Mrs. Niles Putnam, now 93 years young. There are also some members who have belonged over 50 years and some over 25 years. At the present time there are 18 members, five honorary members and five White Ribbon recruits.

There is a National Youth Temperance Council for teenagers and national conventions are held of both organizations.

FARM BUREAU

Union Farm Bureau

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, there was an urgent need for food. In the fall of that year a group of Union Township farmers, Mitchell County, Iowa, namely Frank Hambrecht, George Decker, Jacob Clausen, Henry Brainard, Carl Johnson, George Koetke, Mark Robertson, and others, decided to organize to help.

Frank Hambrecht became the first director of Union Township Farm Bureau. He signed articles of incorporation in Mitchell County Farm Bureau recorded March 12,

1918. First dues were \$5 for three years, but in 1919 dues were raised to \$5 per year.

At first all efforts were on increased production. Steps were taken to start tuberculosis irradiation in cattle. Much work was done in poultry culling. Seed grain and potatoes were treated. Farmers were urged to keep farm records.

After the war when production was no longer as urgent, efforts were made to increase Farm Bureau membership. Young men were urged to join. First directors, Frank Hambrecht, 1918; Jacob Clausen, 1919; Mark Robertson, 1920 and '21, and Henry Brainard, 1922 and '23, were all pioneers. In 1924 Bert Decker, then only 20, became director and he served two years. Successive leaders were all younger men.

Farm Bureau organized the Toeterville Shipping Assn. Efforts were made to encourage growing legumes and legume seed was bought for members. Union Township had one member on the first County Farm Bureau purchasing committee and the first carload of bulk salt was shipped to Union Township. Farmers also received livestock minerals at great savings. Union Township received one of the first carloads of agricultural lime stone shipped into Mitchell County.

When World War II broke out, boys, club leaders and two of the county agents were called to arms. Members of Union Farm Bureau who became county presidents included, in 1945 Fred Longrock, and in 1966, Fred Bissen. Alex Blake is director for 1970. Mrs. Claire Johnson was county Farm Bureau Women's chairman.

Bert Decker, who wrote the 50th Anniversary history of Mitchell County Farm Bureau and the history of Union Township FB, says, "When you talk about there being a better organization than Union Township Farm Bureau, every potato winks its eye, every cabbage shakes its head, every beet gets red in the face, every onion gets stronger, and every oat field is shocked; rye strokes its beard, corn pricks up its ears and every foot of ground kicks."

Otranto Farm Bureau

Otranto Farm Bureau was organized in 1918 by Mr. Ponta, assisted by Meuse Fossey with Frank Mudeara as first director. The unit prospered in the 20's but in the early 30's in the depression, it was hard to keep up membership. Fossey and Ray Carlson spent two days on membership and signed one member by telling him he was the only one that had not joined. They went back later and refunded his dues. The Union was later revived with the help of Olando Brena and Ralph Ramsey. Later leaders were Harold Tabbert, Elmo Jahr and Alton Halvorson, present director.

Nevada Farm Bureau

Nevada Farm Bureau Unit was organized in the summer of 1920 by County Agent F. L. Leibenstein with Newell Nelson as first president. The membership did considerable buying of their needs in large lots to secure better prices. Nelson served as president 20 years followed by Emil Schwanke for a number of years.

In 1954, after a dormant period, the unit was reorganized by Harold Fossey with Lyle and Nevada becoming one unit. Fossey served as president a number of years. Succeeding presidents were Lee Martin, Jim Reed, Don Barnes, Harry Lenze and Alden Small, presently serving.

Lyle Farm Bureau

Lyle Farm Bureau was organized in 1921 by Carl Reuter. The unit worked with the Nevada unit in buying farm

needs. Walter Denison, Harry Nordan, Jay Monikan and Wilfred Murphy were active in early years and were honored at the state convention in 1940 for having the largest membership of any township in Minnesota with over 100 members. In 1954 the Lyle Unit joined with the Nevada Farm Bureau.

Lyle-Nevada FB Women

The purpose of Farm Bureau Women's Committee is to increase participation and expand activities of women in Farm Bureau programs, and build a more effective organization in county, state and nation. They were organized in 1955, when women from Farm Bureau units of the county met at the Anton Fruth home at Grand Meadow to elect officers for the various units.

Mrs. Homer Warrington was the first chairman for the Lyle women. Following her were: Mrs. V. H. Barnes, Mrs. George Peters, Mrs. James Reed and Mrs. Harry Lenz.

Mrs. Harold Fossey was first chairman for the Nevada women. Succeeding chairmen were: Mrs. Peter Lausen, Mrs. Lee Martin, Mrs. L. K. Bopp, Mrs. Ozro Brown, Mrs. DeLos Frank and Mrs. Alden Small. They have busy schedules including annual Rural-Urban and Farm-City Week activities, a county pot-luck dinner meeting; educational programs, commodity contests, tours to various places, and they sponsor Dairy Night and assist with the annual Farm Bureau Rural-Urban Night. There are also county projects.

Lyle Study Club

The Lyle Study Club was organized March 19, 1940, at the A. P. Garnatz home. First officers were Mrs. A. P. Garnatz, president, and Mrs. George Gaarder, secretary-treasurer.

The two-fold purpose of the club was to study subjects suggested by club members and to help sponsor the Library Club.

Meetings are held once a month on the third Tuesday.

The 1970 officers include Mrs. Vern Bell, president; Mrs. Nels Golberg, vice president, and Mrs. Glen Dahl, secretary-treasurer.

Otranto Women's Group

Otranto Township Women's Group of Mona celebrated their 20th anniversary in October, 1969.

Organized October 11, 1949, the club was first named Happy Hour Club. It was organized by Mrs. Clyde Roehr and Mrs. Carroll Rustad, who were 4-H leaders. First officers were Mrs. Harlan Nelson, president, and Mrs. Raymond Carlson, vice president. Monthly meetings were held using lessons offered through the County Extension office. In 1964, when there were no more lessons offered, the name was changed to Otranto Township Women's Group.

Other presidents who have served include: Mrs. Harlan Nelson, Mrs. Gilman Rust, Mrs. August Ehlke, Mrs. Fred Tesch (two terms), Mrs. Clyde Roehr, Mrs. Eugene Myhre, Mrs. Kenneth Markham, Mrs. Raymond Carlson and Mrs. Clyde Roehr for her second term.

Lyle Grange

Lyle Grange No. 789 was organized June 16, 1949, at Minnereka School after a previous meeting held a week earlier at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lester Corson when Fred Loucks, Grange Deputy, was present to explain the organization. The next meeting was at Lyle City Hall.

First officers were: Levi Larson, master; Lewis Rawn, overseer; Lenore Walsh, lecturer; Dean Hotson, steward; Clarence Walsh, assistant steward; Clara Pembrook, chaplain; Clifford Salisbury, treasurer; Billie Rawn, secretary;

Leonard Salisbury, gate keeper; Elma Salisbury, Ceres; Genevieve Nadboralski, Pamona; Ileen Larson, Flora, and Ruth Salisbury, Lady assistant steward.

June 24, the obligation was given to 18 new members with Deputy Loucks and Lester Corson in charge. Membership was then 54. Meetings were set for the second and fourth Thursdays monthly at the City Hall.

Good literary programs were given and the Grange grew rapidly. There were other Granges in the community. Lester and Lucille Corson received a demit from Fairview Grange and joined Lyle, where they are still members. Deputy and Mrs. Fred Loucks presented Lyle Grange with a lovely Bible.

An executive committee was added to the slate of officers. They included Lester Corson, Harry Lenz and Denver Osmundson. Fund raising was a big issue. Ice Cream Socials were popular, and it was decided to have the Harvest Festival on Labor Day, and to have a float in the parade. Other fund raising included suppers and parties, basket socials, dances and card parties. A stand at the first festival brought \$92.55. The first Booster Night was held in the high school gym with 125 members and guests present. It was also decided to have a fair booth which annually received a blue ribbon and a \$50 prize.

Members were always ready to help in time of need, such as neighbors in need during illness or misfortune.

For participation in Community Service Projects, Lyle Grange in 1953 placed in the top ten and also received a Gold Seal for the Community Service Chart.

Lyle Grange worked with 4-H in the Home Economics program and two of the girls won second and third place in the junior group at the state level.

The Grange holds card parties during winter months on the third Saturday nights monthly.

Members participated in many contests on both state and national levels, winning prizes. Later the Grange changed their meeting place from the K.P. hall to the Enterprise Hall.

Six members have taken the Seventh Degree: Mr. and Mrs. Lester Corson in 1950; and in 1966, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lenz and Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Klouse.

Charter members still active are: Mr. and Mrs. Lester Corson, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lenz and Lewis Rawn.

American Legion

The Lyle American Legion Post 335 was given a temporary charter November 6, 1919, prior to the November 11, 1919, National Convention for permanent organization. There was a depression and it was hard to pay regular dues and the organization was not active. On May 19, 1932, the Lyle Legion Post 105 was permanently organized. In 1957 a new 60 by 32 foot Legion Club was built and dedicated November 21. This year a 50 by 40 addition to the building is being constructed allowing space for a hall and storage besides the club rooms.

Early records of the Legion were destroyed. Commanders from 1920 to 1945 are unknown except that Wilfred Murphy served from 1930 to 1940. Other commanders included: Robert Berg, Marion Schmidt, Alvin Myhre, Frank Bedford, Wilfred Murphy, Delmar Helfritz, Vernon Murphy, LaVerne Taylor, Charles Drenth, Duane Elverum, LaVerne Taylor, Loren Denison, Wilfred Murphy, Darroll Hofland, Vernon Nelson, Eugene DeLaney, Warren Austinson, C. J. Gislason, Ronald Halverson and Galen Holst, present commander. Several served double terms.

First meetings were held at the blacksmith shop, then the First National Bank building and then at the Blake-

stad building until it burned. Other meeting places were the Hanson Hall, KP Hall.

Present officers of the Post include Galen Holst, commander; Pete Godfredson, vice commander; Thomas Murphy, adjutant, and Loren Denisen, treasurer.

Local veterans of World War I still living in May this year were: C. J. Anderson, Russell O. Anderson, Frank E. Bedford, Raymond D. Blakesstad, James Conner, John M. Eggen, Arnold T. Enerson, Arthur B. Dahl, Arthur T. Fortun, Fred Godfredson, John T. Hanson, Ibert Hofland, Roy C. Hansen.

Also Theo. L. Johnson, Palmer Johnson, Gustave T. Jorgenson, Glenn Machacek, Alphonso G. Murphy, Wilfred J. Murphy, James L. Monnahan, Christ E. Olson, Gust Schmidt, Nels M. Sorenson, Clare H. Newling, Fred Radloff, Andrew Steene and Henry T. Volstad.

American Legion Auxiliary

Lyle American Legion Auxiliary Unit 105 was organized March 12, 1934, when a joint meeting was held with the Legion members. J. L. Jennings of Austin gave the address of the evening, after which Mrs. Vogstd, District Auxiliary president, met with the women to organize the Auxiliary Unit.

First officers were: Mrs. Lewis Sola, president; Mrs. Arthur Fortun, secretary; Mrs. Theo. Johnson, treasurer; Mrs. Victor Volstad, historian. During World War II the Auxiliary had charge of the draft registration.

Present officers of the Auxiliary are: Mrs. Galen Holst, president; Mrs. Fred Godfredson, vice president; Mrs. Loren Denisen, secretary; Mrs. Floyd Mildenstein, treasurer.

Lyle Girl Scouts

The first Girl Scout troop in Lyle was organized in the fall of 1962 by Mrs. Harry Louk, District III chairman; Mrs. Roland Young, District Adviser, and Mrs. Howard Hjelman, first troop leader. The Lyle Parent-Teacher Association has sponsored the troop. Weekly meetings are held at the school.

Present leaders in Lyle for Junior Troop 73 are: Mrs. Ross V. Peterson and Mrs. Larry Ehret.

LONDON VILLAGE

When the state of Minnesota was organized, London Township, Freeborn County originated, March 4, 1957, with William Morin, first register of deeds.

Mail for the first settlers was left at designated farms. The first place was at the Gersey farm, then at the Jim Conner farm for a time. Then, London Post Office was established at a place two and a half miles north of the present village of London. London PO (for post office) as it was called, had a store and the post office and creamery, which was known as the Jones Creamery.

Neighboring towns before 1870 were Deer Creek, Shellrock, Oakland, Cedar City, Troy City (Old Otranto), Bung Town (now Otranto), and Pincy (now Miltonville).

First settlers in this area were the families of: D. J. Butts, P. Bump, Cha. Eckert, G. Geesey, Jim Conner, R. Gibson, J. H. Goslee, C. & G. Granger, Wm. Goslee, C. Germain, Christian Hanson, Toris Johnson, Arch Lang, Dan Lilly, J. H. Stewart, Ed Thomas, W. D. Thompson, J. Van Winkle, H. Weseman, J. Wheeler, S. Williams, G. Allen, Dan Ames, O. Brown, John Beach, Erastus Bedford, J. A. Carter, E. L. Merry, Cal Owen, Frank Machacek, Dillarzon Moshier, Orlando Wilder, Geo. Sharp, Timothy Goslee, Sam Clark, O. Barnum, J. Patz, C. & G. Gumpers, F. Potter and others. These names were landowners on record of an 1870 map.

The Illinois Central Railroad, in order to have rail service to Albert Lea, built their track from Mona to Glenville and Wm. Morin platted the towns of London and Myrtle approximately six miles apart in order to comply with state regulations.



MAIN STREET OF LONDON

London was platted October 16, 1900. The first building was a grocery store operated by N. H. Nelson until January 1, 1963. During the following three years a lumber yard, creamery, blacksmith shop were added, and later two elevators. There was a depot and stockyards on the railroad; the Bank of London was operated by Fred Machacek in 1903 and became the London State Bank in 1908. Glenn Machacek was banker from 1912 to 1962. George Funda was banker from 1907 to 1960. Other bankers were: Paul Thompson and Roger Campbell.

Farmers organized a creamery in 1903. The Community Hall was established in 1915, the U. B. Church in 1906 and the Lutheran Church in 1920. A hotel was opened in 1904 by Hans Madson and J. Haldorson.

School District 94 came to London in 1910 from rural areas. In 1950 the fire department was organized. Chas. Pace had a block and tile factory in 1920.

Depot agents included Jim Kent, J. D. Vandenberg, Wm. Carmody and Amos Hinds, through the years.

Speltz Grain and Coal Co. and elevator opened in 1903. Wm. Stickner and John Reisdorf were first employees. J. R. Lukes opened an elevator in 1905. Other elevator workers were Fred Allen, P. J. Fibelstad. Harold L. Allen is present manager of Speltz Grain and Coal Co.

Hans Rasmussen was the first blacksmith in 1904. Others were Louis Cofourek, Roy Peterna, Chris Schroland and Roger Schrank.

A lumber yard was one of the early businesses. Lumbermen included from 1903 Albert Schissler, A. F. Long, Ed Ostrum, Cecil Wahlem, O. H. Thompson, Harvey Thompsonson.

Grocers included N. H. Nelson from 1900 to 1963, Theodore Johnson and his partner in 1902; and following were Raymond Johnson, Ben Weber and Roger Cooling and others.

Marvin Stewart had a meat market in 1905 and J. Attlesey in 1907. Hardware and implement dealers were Sherman Hyatt in 1905; S. H. Haldorson in 1906. Others were Herman Lerud, Theo. S. Johnson, Albert Kimlich, L. P. Hanson, Albert Skamfer and Herbert Lerud. M. S. Skamfer had a harness shop. Barbers included Roy De-laney, Norman Blair and Mr. Zabel.

Service station men have included Ed Cofourek, Aron Arneson, Arthur Aagesen, Arthur Lund and James Conner.

Garage men were James Conner from 1920 to the present time, E. A. Lau and Walter Amacher.

Tavern operators at various times have included John Cook, Richard Chervery, Wm. Iverson, Sorn Hanson, Henry Horstman, Chester Jorgenson, R. F. Weber, Emil Fleischer, Jack Rasche, Andrew Hauge, Arthur Jacobson, Milo Cofourek, Lela Diekman, Archie Foss and Ed Kusy.

1970 Residents

London families in 1970 include: Mrs. T. H. Lorenzen, Mr. and Mrs. Roger Cooling and four children, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Cook and two children, Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Watney, Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Vosburgh and two children, Mr. and Mrs. Steven Olson and two children, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Julien, Mrs. Lela Diekman, Mr. and Mrs. Roger Schrank, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Lerud, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Kiney, Lebby Lukes, Mrs. Dena Haldorson, Mrs. Maxine Amacher, Mr. and Mrs. James Conner, Mr. and Mrs. Harlan Rohne and two children, Mrs. Henry Butow, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Cofourek, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Kycek, Mr. and Mrs. E. O. Lau, Mr. and Mrs. M. O. Foss, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Godfredrickson, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Machacek, Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Wahlers and three children, Mr. and Mrs. Lorenz Lorenzen and three children, and Mrs. Fred Burlen.

Village of Mona

The village of Mona, now 50 residents, observed its Centennial October 12, 1969, with a potluck dinner in the church followed by a historic program.

Mona, like many other small towns in northern Iowa and southern Minnesota, were the result of the first railroads constructed in the area. The site for the village was purchased by J. D. Farley and Charles Hughtt. It was platted in 1869. As the Illinois-Central Railroad was built, more railroad facilities were constructed at Mona. In 1870 a frame engine house was moved from St. Ansgar. Later a water tower, water treatment plant and pumping station were added to supply the trains with water. By 1883 Mona had a creamery producing 9,000 pounds of butter each month. There were six passenger and freight trains daily. Two hotels were in operation, there was a general store, elevator, post office, lumber yard which also handled coal, and a saloon.

From the time construction of the railroad from Mona to Lyle in 1900, Mona began to decline. Railroads were constructed to Myrtle, London, Glenville and finally to Albert Lea. Residents began to move to Lyle, business places closed and the railroad water tower and depot were dismantled and taken away.

The Lutheran Church is the center of activity. Gatherings are usually held at the church. In 1963 the school closed and students were taken by bus to larger schools, some to Lyle and others to St. Ansgar. The only business left in Mona is the grocery store operated by Mrs. Adeline Geffert. This building is in good condition, having been constructed in later years. There are two cemeteries, the public cemetery which has had no new burials in many years, and the Lutheran Cemetery, where most local burials are made.

About a third of the section of Mona south of main street is still in lots. Lots north of the grocery store have been returned to fields.

Mona was first named Hustad. Its present name was from William C. Caine, who came from the Isle of Mann. He named it Mona after his sweetheart, Ramona Johnson, who never came to the United States. She died after a broken romance. Caine, 26, acquired 160 acres from the

government in December, 1855. Part of his farm is now Pleasant Hill Cemetery. It was his wish, when he sold land for the cemetery in 1884, that he should be interred on a site he had picked and planted birch trees on his land. This site is now part of the cemetery. He lived to be 79. His nephew from England came to settle his estate and enroute home lost his life by shipwreck. The Caine estate was not settled until 1910 when the Caine land was deeded to Mrs. Elizabeth Jouglin (a widow in England) and later sold to McGillvary and Sawyer.

There are two women who claim the title of oldest residents of Mona. They are Mrs. Eva Carlson, the only adult in Mona who was born and reared there, and Mrs. Tillie Haverson, who was born south of town on a farm, but has lived in the same house in Mona since 1904.

NEVADA TOWNSHIP

Nevada Township comprises congressional township 101 north, range 17 west, bounded on the north by Windom township, on the east by Adams township, on the south by Mitchell County, Iowa, and on the west by Lyle township. The surface in the north part is quite level and does not drain readily. The soil is a very dark alluvial deposit. The south part is gently rolling and the soil is black loam. Soil in all parts of the township is very rich and grows all kinds of crops and grasses. Otter Creek supplies drainage for the township. Six Mile Grove is in the township in portions of sections 21, 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32.

First Events

The first white child born in Nevada Township was Andi Olson. She was born in the Thor Olson shanty July 28, 1854. The second birth was Anna Sampson, August 25, 1854. First death was Alak Knulakass, April 1856, at the age of 45. First marriage was Francis Hersch to Helen Martin in February, 1856. First suicide was William Rowllins, who shot himself early in the spring of 1857.

Organization

The township was organized at a meeting in May, 1858, at the house of P. A. Baily, or rat the Hotel. Town records are not complete and a list of first officers is not complete. John W. Gregg and Gunder Halverson were members of the first board of supervisors and P. A. Baily was the first town clerk..

The following persons held early township offices: H. C. Anderson, Knud Amundson, David Austin, L. F. Stark, Francis Hersch, W. P. Stewart, J. P. Jones, Lyman St. John, Ole Sampson, D. B. Nye, O. C. Brown, H. Knudson, D. P. Baldwin, H. F. Deming, C. De Remer, E. C. Dillingham, Peter Martin, A. C. Bisbee, Jesse Rose, S. Clow, T. Olson, Recker Austin, John Ulwelling, T. Gotomson, Ambrose Thompson, P. F. Rooney, Henry Smith, Herman Eddy, C. J. Searles, G. E. Bisbee, Ole Aslackson, Sam Enerson, C. Meyer, Nels Rasmussen, C. A. Newman, H. K. Volstad, O. N. Nelson and Wm. McFarland. ..

Present township officers are: Wm. E. Lonergan, chairman; Walter Eggen and Dave Irwin, supervisors; Wm. Klusmeier, township clerk; E. E. Penning, treasurer. John Tow is constable and Alfred Nelson, justice of the peace.

From records now on hand in the clerk's office, the levy in 1893 was set at \$125 for township revenue and \$100 for road and bridge. The present levy is \$13,500 for road and bridge and \$3,000 for township revenue.

NEVADA VILLAGE

Nevada Village was platted in the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of section 2 in May of 1857 by

James Jarrad.

Wm. Klusmeier, Nevada Township clerk, compiled information for this report.

RED STAR SCHOOL

Red Star School District 54 was organized in 1881. First school location was in the northeast corner of section 23 of Lyle Township. It was moved to the southwest corner of section 12 and a few years later to the southwest corner of the northwest quarter of section 13.

In early years enrollment in winter months would be from 40 to 50 students with only one teacher. The desks were three-seaters, all the same height from the floor. Feet of the younger ones dangled from the seats.

Many of the social gatherings of the neighborhood were held at the school house. There were basket socials, Halloween parties and school picnics as well as seasonal programs. Township elections were held at the school in early years.

Fred Murphy has listed some of the teachers at the Red Star School as follows: Erma Green about 1898, Anna Wyborny, Mabel Vareo, Mattie DeRemer, Emeline Hart, Maud Veet, Lela Stwart, Elsie Cofourek, Josephine Cofourek, Miss Widman, Margaret Murphy, Mabel Hotson, Pearl Tanner, Erma Schwiekert, Mabel Lightley, Helen Orcutt, Mrs. Floyd Gramholm, Miss Kelly, Elsie Frieke, Mrs. Harry Callahan, Adeline Lastine, Mrs. Merle Nelson, Mrs. Wallace Clough.

The Red Star School was consolidated with the Lyle school in 1956-7 and the school and grounds sold at auction. Located three miles north of Lyle, it has been converted into a dwelling with an attached garage and is presently the property of Floyd Matter. The home is situated on an acre of ground and a swimming pool has been added.

OTHER EARLY SETTLEMENTS

The town of Madison, 10 miles north on the west side of the Cedar River, had a hotel, stores and a saw-mill.

Two Rivers was a junction of Turtle Creek and the Cedar River south of the Catholic cemetery. A tavern was kept by Robert Autis. The location is still platted property. Cedar City, six miles south, had a post office, and a flour and feed mill and lumber sales.

Troy City, eight miles south, had a saw mill and Tiffets hotel.

LYLE TALES & SKETCHES

Henry Dahl

Henry G. Dahl, business man in Lyle more than 50 years, was born in 1871 at Rock County, Wis., and died in 1956 at Lyle, Minn. He began his business career as a peddler traveling with a horse and buggy. He sold notions, handkerchiefs and lace from door to door to raise money to finance his business education at St. Ansgar Seminary.

His first job in Lyle was in the drug store for \$12.50 a month. After six and a half years of working in the hardware store which he later purchased, he was earning \$55 a month and was "the highest paid man in town."

In 1898 he married Emma Volstad. They made their home in Lyle, where they reared a family of four boys and two girls. He went into his own hardware business in 1898. He is remembered for giving jack-knives to his customers when they paid their accounts.

Dahl had several partners at various times in his business, including: Schumacher, C. G. Culvertson, Andrew Nelson and Fedson. In 1943, his son, Lloyd purchased Fedson's interest and the business became known as Dahl's Hardware. Later when his grandson, Glenn, came into the business, there were three generations of the



HENRY DAHL

Dahl family ownership. An ad April 20, 1952, in the Minneapolis Sunday paper supplement, there was a picture of the three-generation Maytag dealers in Wells: Grandfather, H. G. Dahl, his son, Lloyd Dahl, and his grandson, Glenn Dahl.

One day in 1925, tragedy struck the Dahl home when two sons, Glen and Fred, were drowned in the St. Croix River, near Osceola, Wis., where the boys had been engaged in evangelistic services. Mr. Dahl wanted to take up where the boys left off. Soon after the funeral, the family left to provide music in the same services in which the two boys had been playing and singing.. From then on the family orchestra and men's quartet kept Mr. Dahl busy when not at the hardware. The orchestra was always ready to assist in special gospel services in the area and the "Dahl Quartet" sang for many community gatherings, both joyful and sad.

O. G. Blakestad

O. G. Blakestad, a native of Otranto, operated an undertaking business and furniture store in Lyle 40 years before retiring in 1944.. He came from Adams and purchased the furniture business from Ometh, located on East Grove Street. After completing his studies in embalming and undertaking in St. Paul, he combined the two businesses.

Blakestad was an ardent sportsman and enjoyed fishing and hunting in and along the Cedar River near Otranto. He died in 1946 leaving his wife and eight children, who were then grown. The Blakestad home two blocks east of the water tower is now occupied by the Mather family.



DAHL'S STORE IN 1922

Mr. and Mrs. Blakestad were charter members of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, and Mrs. Blakestad was a charter member and instrumental in helping to organize the Lyle American Legion Auxiliary unit.

The 1956 fire destroyed the furniture store building which was located where the American Legion building was later constructed.

Johannes Bergeson

Johannes Bergeson, who came with his parents to the Lyle vicinity in 1855, was a grandfather of Arthur, Melvin, Herbert and John Rohne of Lyle and Hawkin Rohne, Osage.

He was a veteran and known as a patriotic citizen of Freeborn County. He was born October 14, 1846, in Norway and came with his parents to the United States at the age of three. They first settled in Columbia County, Wis., then to Mitchell County, Iowa, near Osage and finally to the Six Mile Grove area near Lyle. He was con-

firmed by the Rev. Clasen. At the age of 19, he enlisted in the First Regiment Co. B. Heavy Artillery and served to the end of the Civil War. He married Anne Swenson July 11, 1866. In 1875 they moved to make their home in Freeborn County near North Deer Creek church. This was open prairie with "not a bush large enough for a horse-whip." Now there are pleasant homes and large groves of trees.

Arthur, Melvin, Herbert and John Rohne are living east of Lyle in the same area as their grandfather's place. Arthur is on part of the Bergeson farm. Mrs. Albert Leidall, now 87, the only living daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Johannes Bergeson, lives west of Lyle. She told of the time Jessie James and his gang came to the farm and shod their horses in the old barn. They put the horseshoes on backwards, they learned later. This was so that anyone who tried to track them would be misled into thinking they were going south instead of north. It was revealed later that this occurred just before the bank robbery at Northfield by Jessie James and his gang.



LEUTHOLD AND DAHL'S STORE, 1929 — Manager Oscar Dahl; clerks, Katherine Mortensen, Lloyd and Rueben Berg.

EARLY ENTERTAINMENT

In early days, there were many band concerts in the city park where, through the years, several band shells were constructed. The last one was dedicated about 1951. There was a concert band in the early 1900's comprised of Henry Dahl, Walter Rawn, Burton Hedemark, Andrew Anderson, William Nordland, Ole Thompson, Claude Gordon, Louis Sherman, Olaf Sundre, Roger Gigson, Dr. A. Brunner (dentist from St. Ansgar), Burton Robertson, Dan Rawn, Sigurd Dahl, Mr. Pankhurst and Alfred Anderson.

There was also an orchestra. Musicians were: Dave Erickson, pianist; Louis Larson, clarinet; Henry Dahl, trombone; Burton Robertson and Thorman Lund, violinists.

There was baseball, croquet and softball. Lyle had both men and women playing softball and some of the young women played baseball. Basketball was a winter sport. Women and girls also played. They were commonly called The Bloomer Girls, because of their suits. They wore box-pleated bloomers with rubber at the knees, and middie blouses.. Lyle had three teams at one time. The married women were The Hens; young women were The Pullets, and the younger girls were The Chicks.

All sports games were well attended.

Then came the summer Chautauquas, providing stage plays, dog and pony shows and various feats. They played a week or so and then moved on. Their performances were in large tents.



RAWN ORCHESTRA



JOY THEATRE WAS LOCATED ON GROVE STREET

Joy Theatre

In 1915 Henry Gordon opened the Joy Theatre on Grove Street. Those were the days when all movies were silent, all lines were printed on the screen and the entire film had live piano accompaniment. Ida Anderson, a local music teacher, was the first pianist at the theatre and Anna Gordon, sister of Henry, was the ticket lady. Later Gordon sold out to Ted Johnson, who operated it for a time before closing it.

Frank Pavelic also had a theatre in Lyle.

EARLY FOOD PROBLEMS

Early Norwegian settlers in the Six Mile Grove Forest along the Red Cedar River had a large group of Indian neighbors across the creek from them. It is told that they visited the Ole Kleppo Richardson place, now occupied by LaVerne Austinson. The Kleppo children played with the Indian children. The Indian women had no leavening for their baking. As a result the food they baked was hard. Mrs. Kleppo invited them in for some cornmeal Johnny Cake which she had baked with soda for leavening. She taught them to use soda and gave them some. They were delighted with the results. They were so thankful they made quilts for her, embroidered shoes for the children and gave her calico for a dress.

As more settlers came, the Indians moved farther west. Several years later an Indian Chief visited the Kleppo home bringing gifts such as a powder horn, gold headed canes and bead work, in appreciation for the kindnesses they had been shown.

In those days, the women ground corn and wheat in their coffee mills as there was no mill in the area. Mrs. Hans Swenson kept count one winter and ground six bushels of corn and four of wheat for Johnny Cake and bread. Ole Sampson hollowed out a large tree stump and made a mortar to fill the bottom, which was two feet in diameter. Then he made a stomper with a hoist and put the corn and wheat in to be crushed. Although the resulting meal was coarse enough to rasp the throat sometimes, women thought this a good labor-saving invention and flocked over with sacks and sacks of corn and wheat to process.

There was a plentiful supply of deer, elk, rabbits, fowl and fish for the taking, but many other provisions were needed. The nearest market place was McGregor, Iowa. This was a hardship. It meant a trip of 120 miles with no roads. It took 10 to 12 days if weather was favorable, traveling with an ox-cart. Once Gunder Stabestad and Halvor Volstad took a large load of wheat to McGregor, but the price was so low that all they got was enough to pay for a barrel of salt, which they divided. On these trips the men slept under the wagon and prepared food over camp fires. If bad weather necessitated lodging, it was so high they had nothing left for their trip. When rain came, the carts or wagons would bog down and had to be unloaded before they could be pulled out. Sometimes repairs had to be made and there was further delay.

The Vance Hotsons

Mr. and Mrs. Vance B. Hotson, now residents in Lyle, are both ancestors of early Lyle area settlers.

Mr. Hotson is a grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob S. Bowers, who came to Lyle Township about 1874 and of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Hotson, both natives of Norfolk, England. Mr. Bowers was a native of Canada and his wife was from England.

The Thomas Hotsons sailed from Liverpool in 1854 to New Orleans, a trip of six weeks and four days. They lived in New Orleans a short time before going to Clair County, Ill., where he had a brickyard for a season before farming until 1862 when they came to Mower County and purchased 160 acres in section 10, Lyle Township. Only four acres of the land was broken at that time. He broke and developed the rest of this land, bringing it to a high degree of cultivation, erecting a fine house and other buildings.

Fred Hotson, one of six children of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hotson, married Wilhelmina H. Bowers, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Bowers. They were the parents of Vance B. Hotson, born September 23, 1890, and Mae born December 11, 1889. Mae died in 1943.

Mrs. Della (Vance) Hotson was a granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thrond Richardson, who came to the United States from Norway in 1850 and lived in Wisconsin until 1854 when they came to Mower County, traveling with two pair of oxen and two wagons. One of the wagons, Thrond had made himself. The wheels were sawed from an oak log. He made a claim of timberland in section 29 of Lyle Township, later trading 80 acres for prairie land in section 32. He erected a log house in section 29 where people held religious gatherings and school was taught before churches and schools were constructed in the area. He raised a few potatoes the first year, the second year he had a crop of corn and wheat, working the land with oxen until 1865 when he bought a pair of horses. He died in 1882 and his wife in 1883. They had 12 children. Their only son, Ole, was born in Norway November 15, 1846. He married Petrina Hanson in 1866 and they had ten children. They lived on the homestead after his parents died. Their youngest daughter, Della, born March 7, 1894, married Vance Hotson.

Mr. and Mrs. Hotson lived on the Hotson farm until 1949 when they moved to Lyle. They are the parents of three sons and a daughter. Their oldest son, Dale, lives in Milwaukee, Wis.; the other two, Wayne and Dean, are farming northwest of Lyle, and their daughter, Mrs. Verner (Wilma) Shilling, lives at Myrtle. There are 14 grandchildren.

Melvin Peterson

Melvin Peterson, Austin, former Lyle barber, was born and reared a mile east of Lyle. He is a grandson of Sven Jorgenson and his wife, Marget, who came to the United States in 1853, and of Ole and Gunda Peterson, who came from Norway in the late 1860's. The Jorgensons spent part of their first year in the States at Long Prairie, Ill., when word came of a Norwegian settlement in the St. Ansgar area. They learned that Rev. Clausen knew of land for the early pioneers.

The family left Illinois with an ox team and a covered wagon containing all their supplies and belongings. The older children walked most of the way to lighten the load. Nights were spent sleeping under the covered wagon. They reached St. Ansgar and settled in the Six Mile Grove where they purchased land from the railroad company in

the location a mile east of Lyle on Otter Creek.

Sven Jorgenson walked the 120 miles to McGregor, Iowa, for supplies. He also took grain there to be sold.

There were seven Jorgenson children. Two died at early age. Growing to adulthood were Anna, Mrs. John Bergeson; Liv, Mrs. Knut Amundson; Gunhild, Mrs. G. K. Volstad; George Jorgenson, who changed his name to Svenson because his father's name was Sven; and Malena, Mrs. Ole Peterson, mother of Melvin Peterson.

Both of Melvin's parents were born in Grus, Norway, in the Solar Hedemark area. After coming to the United States, they lived south of Mona, Iowa, for a time, then later homesteaded in Butzville, N. Dak., where land was available for homesteading. Ole and Gunda's son, Ole, married Malena Jorgenson, daughter of Sven and Marget Jorgenson. To this marriage were born 11 children, all on the farm a mile from Lyle. Four of them died in infancy. The others were Avilda, Sam, George, Mabel, Willie, Clara and Melvin Peterson.

Their father was a devout man and interested in church work. He was a Sunday school teacher, choir director at Six Mile Grove church and at the Lutheran church at Mona and served as "Klokaar" for the church service. Ole Peterson died when Melvin was a year old. His mother rented out the farm and they went to prove a homestead west of Buffalo, S. D. Melvin left to serve in WW I and returned in August, 1919. The homestead was sold to sheep ranchers. They all got 160 acres. To prove the homesteads people had to stay 14 months, then they could purchase the land at \$1.25, but if they stayed five years, it was their's without charge.

Melvin went to barber school in Minneapolis after war service. He married at Pipestone in 1926 where he met his wife, the former Iva Miller, of Flaudreau, S. D. She taught school five years before they were married and at Austin as a substitute 12 to 15 years.

Melvin Peterson retired from barbering 10 years ago. He was a barber 40 years in all, working some for others and had his own shop for a time. He has traveled all over the United States, and barbering in five different states. He came from Montana in the spring of 1931 after four years at Winona and 20 years in the Dakotas. His sister, Mrs. Jon (Avilda) Nelson, in the 90's, is at Downey, Calif.

Lyle Mechanic

Carl Olson, who farmed in Nevada Township but also liked working around machines, decided at the age of 45 in 1921, that farming was not good for a bachelor. After doing some repairs on his Model T Ford, he decided to leave the farm and go into the garage business. He knew there were a few cars in town and he could probably make a living fixing them. Model T and Model A Fords were the most popular cars in Lyle and they were easy for him to fix, he claimed.

He came to Lyle and opened a repair shop, first working on cars and later also repairing lawn mowers. He said he "got too stiff to crawl under the cars." When later models came, he refused to work on them because, "you have to stand on your head to get at the motor," he once said. He even refused to own one and continued to keep his Model A in top condition.

In 1942, he discontinued car repairing entirely. He continued repairing lawn mowers and invented ways of handling the later power-rotary lawn mowers, which he said, "could sure be ornery."

Justice of the Peace

When Nels Robertson moved into Lyle from the farm in 1945, he was soon named Justice of the Peace and served many years. By 1956, he had married 20 couples, a task he had not thought of until about a month after he took office when a couple came to the door to be married, but he "got out of it that time because they didn't have a license," he once told. He said he had not thought of "the marrying business," but he soon became involved.

Two of Robertson's brothers and a sister came to the United States with Nels when he was 14, about 1887, settling near Mona where seven other members of the family joined them later. He worked on farms in the summer and went to school in winter. He farmed a time near Carpenter, where he met his wife. They were married 54 years when she died in 1955. He sold his farm five miles southeast of Lyle to his son, Martin, when he moved to town. Nels and a son-in-law, Emil Johnson, often went fishing north of Brainerd on Round and Long Lakes and sometimes on Lake Superior.

First Harness Maker

Amando and Jay Mortensen, of Lyle in 1970, were children of James (Jas.) Mortensen, born in Denmark, and his wife, Anna (Hansen), born at Cedar Falls, Iowa, to Peter and Mary Hansen.

Peter Hansen was born in Welch, Denmark, June, 1840. He learned the harness making trade when a boy and followed the trade in the old country. A year after his marriage to Mary Sorenson, in 1868 in Denmark, they came to the United States and settled in Freeborn County for a short time with the Peter Knutson family. Later they moved to Cedar Falls, Iowa, where he was first employed in a harness shop and later became a partner in the business. In 1874, he sold out and came to Lyle with his wife and family, including their daughter, Anna, who was then only six months old.

In Lyle, he opened the first harness business in the town and continued in the trade 38 years. His wife, Mary, died in 1878. They had four children. Two survived, Mrs. G. Hackett of Waterloo and Anna, who had married James Mortenson of Lyle.

Peter Hansen remarried in 1880 to Anna Rasmussen and they had four children. When Hanson died in September, 1912, he was survived by the two daughters from his first marriage and all four of the last, including Will of Mason City; Mrs. Florence Snyder, Omaha; Robert and Mary at home, and his widow.

Jas. Mortensen and wife, Anna (Hansen) lived in Lyle where he worked in the lumber yard, starting with L. W. Sherman. They sold to Norris and Christianson, who later sold to Crane Lumber Company of Austin. Mortensen continued to work for the company through its many changes. They have many ancestors.

Butcher Shop

On April 1, 1940, L. G. Howard and his wife, the former Katherine Mortensen, bought out the butcher shop from John Larson. February, 1945, they sold to Mr. and Mrs. Theo. Bissel of Waterloo. Successive owners were Bradford of Austin; Fernie Neus, and Remke who converted it into a coffee shop. Now it is a beauty salon owned by Peggy Tuftee.

Patrick Murphy

Patrick Murphy and his wife, the former Margaret White, living in the Lyle area in 1854, were grandparents of Wilfred and Leonard Murphy living in Lyle Township in 1970 and Bernard C. Murphy of Austin and the late Mrs.

Clarence Walsh, John P. Murphy and their sister, who died in infancy.

Wilfred Murphy claims his grandson, Thomas John, son of Mr. and Mrs. Loren Murphy, was the first child to be baptized in the new Queen of Peace Catholic Church parish in Lyle and his niece, Patricia Joan, infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Walsh, was the first to be baptized in the Queen of Peace Church.

Thomas Murphy

A record for continuous service not equaled by any township officer in Minnesota, in 1937, was ended when Tom Murphy, chairman of the Lyle Township board, decided not to be a candidate for re-election as board member.

For 44 continuous years, Murphy had faithfully and conscientiously served on the Lyle town board. He was 77 years old in April that year and had been born and reared in the Lyle community.

During 36 of the 44 years, he was chairman of the board and gained widespread reputation for the manner in which he conducted township affairs.

Banker

Herman Lerud, who started in the Farmers State Bank January 1, 1922, was one of the incorporators in 1914 or 1915 and remained with the bank until it sold in 1939.

He was born four and a half miles northeast of Lyle, a son of O. H. Lerud, who bought a farm from Peter Martin in 1887. His mother died at the age of 72 at Austin where they were living. His father lived with their children after her death.

Mr. and Mrs. Herman Lerud and four children are presently living in Lyle. Herman's mother, Mrs. Cora Foss, is living in Vancouver, Wash. His mother had four children by her first husband. Three died with tuberculosis. Clara, who married Barningham, now 83, is living in Illinois.

A proud possession of Herman Lerud is a copy of the Lyle Tribune telling of the 1897 cyclone here.

Long Time Barber

Roy Hodkirk came from a Lyle farm at the age of 17 to the R. P. Gibson Barber Shop in Lyle to learn the trade. After mastering the barbering skill, he drifted from shop to shop, returning to Lyle whenever he needed work. He said he liked the people in Lyle. After about 10 years of his travels and his marriage in 1908 in Washington State to a former Lyle girl, he came back to Lyle to continue barbecing, rounding out more than 58 years in the trade from the day he first began in the business.

He said he had his fill of the barbecing business the first day he started, but decided to stick it out for a month so that no one could call him a quitter. He had been told it was an easy trade to get into and didn't take much cash and he finally learned to like it.

Hodkirk moved from shop to shop in Lyle and also opened the town's first beauty shop. He used to charge 10 cents for a shave, or give a 12-shave card for \$1.

One of his sidelines was repairing clocks as a hobby. He later lost ambition when it came to fixing one that would only run when laid on its back.

For his main sideline he honed razors when straight-edged razors were used. He was one of the best razor sharpeners in the area, people said. He often said he wouldn't have a safety razor because they were "nothing but a hoe." He remained loyal to the straight edge, he said, although he admitted to owning and using an electric razor himself. In later years he recalled how one wall

of his shop had been filled with racks of mustache cups and how he still liked to shave a customer, even though it took as long as giving a haircut.

For several years, he and Mrs. Hodkirk left in the fall to spend the winter in Texas, returning in the spring to open his shop where customers were waiting for his return.

Early Justice

A Lyle teacher, Mrs. Dennis Klinepier, who did research for the Mower County Centennial, learned of a practical nurse named Fredrika, who had brought many Minnesotans into the world. She lived in the area west of Lyle, later named Minerika, composed of letters from the names of both Minnesota and Fredrika.

One time Fredrika left her home to help a family near Otranto with a birth. While she was gone her son and wife, who were living with her at the time, went to Otranto to visit her. The deed to the farm (which had been signed by an early president before Lincoln) and about \$40 in cash to finish paying off the farm, was left in a small box in the house. It had taken months of pinching and saving to save this amount of money for the payment.

While the family was gone, someone gained entrance to the house and the box and its contents were taken.

When the family returned and discovered what had happened, they alerted the neighborhood. A posse was formed and began searching. They stopped at a place where there was a person who had not been living in the vicinity very long. When he was questioned, he produced the box and admitted the theft. The posse hung him there at the site.

Peter H. Dennisen

Walter C. Dennisen is renting the farm where he was born, a son of Mr. and Mrs. Peter H. Dennisen, who came in 1881 or '82 from Denmark. They spent some time in Michigan in a logging and lumber camp before coming to Lyle in 1887 or '88, he says.

Walter had four brothers and two sisters. He and his sister, Edna, Mrs. Carl T. Hanson of Tyler, Minn., are all that remain. His brothers, Axel, George, Alfred and Herman, all farmed around Lyle until they retired.

Walter served as clerk of Lyle Center School District 57 for nine years. He has served as clerk of Lyle Township 26 years, a position he still holds.

Came From Norway

Three sisters, presently living in the Lyle area, Miss Adeline Lastine, Mrs. Jay (Selma) Mortenson and Mrs. C. J. (Alma) Anderson and their late brother, Henry Lastine, were children of the late Knut Lastine, who came from Norway in the early 850's with "grandma Aasne" and his four brothers, all of whom had taken other names from their locations in Norway or ancestors, a well known Norwegian custom. They were: Ole Lilligaard, Aslak Flaten, Torjus Olson and Asmund Asmundson.

"Grandma Aasne" and the five brothers came over in a sloop, a sailboat having a mast, a mainsail, a jib and sometimes other sails.

Henry Lastine died at the age of 36. He lived on the farm settled by his great-grandfather. The farm is still in the family, belonging to the fourth generation. It is presently being rented.

Aslak Flaten and his wife were parents of the first white child born in Nevada Township. She was born in a covered wagon under the Big Elm Tree on the old Richardson farm across the creek from where they settled.

Grandma Aasne made Norwegian Flad Brod. When an Indian came, she gave him a lot because she wanted him to be friendly. He came back with fish, and venison for them. She watched him walk along the creek every day.

The Dahl Store

John Leuthold, St. Paul, in about 1929, bought out the Dahl Brothers (Ingvold and Olaf) General Merchandise Store. Oscar Dahl was manager. He came from Waltham.

Lloyd and Reuben Berg and Katherine Mortensen were employed by Leuthold. About 1931, Leuthold sold to R. J. Rauwolf, who came from Red Wing. He later sold to C. E. Otis and son from Eau Claire, Wis., and they held a sale and moved the rest of the stock to Eau Claire, immediately.

George Gaarder of Albert Lea bought the groceries that were left and operated a grocery until about 1942 when he closed it out and the Gamble Store started in the building later operated by Harold Smeby, Wittlieff, etc.

Lyle Watchmaker

Ole A. Anderson was highly respected as the best watchmaker and repairman in a wide area. He purchased the business in Lyle from Andrew Johnson, September 15, 1891, and at the age of 85 was still busy in his trade after 58 years. He was described as "a dignified old gentleman with a pronounced resemblance to George Bernard Shaw. And even at 85 he had a good eye and a steady hand."

His store had many antiques including chinaware, old watches, musical instruments, guns and many items sought by collectors. He once sold 1,500 watches in one lot. He had repaired them all and they were in perfect running condition when sold.

He could repair any watch, new or old and was quick to recognize their makes and craftsmanship and spoke learnedly of Verge escapements and English levers operating the escapements with chains.

His collection of antique musical instruments were kept as shining as new. He had two Anton Stradivarius violins and another he claimed was a genuine Maggini. He had additional violins and old concertinas and clarinets.

Ole claimed that he came from a hardy stock of ancestors and an uncle Peter A. Bagstad of McIntosh, lived to be almost 101.

Eddie Fossey

Eddie Fossey, who lives six miles northeast of Lyle on a farm, operated the feed mill in Lyle four years, from 1926 to 1930. He sold the mill to General Mills when the depression came.

Fossey is a director on the Freeborn Mower Co-operative Electric Company board and also is on the board of Freeborn Farmer's Mutual Insurance Company. He says he started about 35 years ago with the company in Freeborn County, then moved into Mower County.

Four Generations

Mrs. H. O. (Effie Nelson) Austinson, living in Lyle in 1970, has made many woven rugs on a loom now over 130 years old, which was hand made by her great-grandfather, Andrew Anderson, 1804-1877. There are no nails or screws in the loom. It is put together with hand made wooden pegs.

Hans C. Anderson, son of Andres Anderson, born in Estre Toten, Norway, came with his parents in 1853 to America. They settled in Dane County, Wis. In 1854, they moved to Nevada Township where they were among the first settlers.

Hans Anderson was grandfather of Mrs. H. O. (Effie Nelson) Austinson in Lyle and her sister, Mrs. Oscar (Rena) Sampson living on the farm near the Six Mile Grove church.

Their other grandfather, David Nelson, was born April 30, 1830, in Toten, Norway, where he and Severina Evenson were married. In 1861 they came to the United States in a sailing vessel. It took 13 weeks. They had three small sons at the time. They came to Rock Creek in Mitchell County, Iowa, where they lived two years before coming to Nevada Township. Three more sons and a daughter were born after they came to America. Mrs. Nelson died in 1891 and David Nelson died in August, 1924, at the age of 94 years. Their son, Ed, was the father of 13 children.

Chester died at the age of two. Sophie, Mrs. Lawrence Meyer, also passed away. Others include Mrs. H. O. (Effie) Austinson, Mrs. Oscar (Rena) Sampson, Mrs. Jeanette Reuter, Mrs. Dora Jorgenson, Henry Nelson and Alvin Nelson, all of Lyle; Mrs. Harvey (Hazel) Goldberg, Mona; Mrs. Lillian Anderson, Rochester; Mrs. Cora Myhre, Rohlolt, S. D.; Mrs. Everett (Harriet) Miller, North Minneapolis, and two others, whose names were not available at this writing.

The Newell Nelsons

Mr. and Mrs. Newell Nelson of the Lyle vicinity, both had ancestors who settled in this area. Mrs. Nelson is a granddaughter of Ole and Mary Sampson, who came from Norway. They were married in Chicago in 1853. Their first daughter, Anna, who became Mrs. E. K. Everson, was born in a hole made in the ground under the cover from a wagon before they built a home in the Six Mile Grove area. She has many grandchildren living in the area.

Mrs. Newell Nelson, the former Bellena Sampson, was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Chris Sampson and their home was not far from the Ole Sampson farm. Her brother, Oscar Sampson, lives on that farm now.

Mr. and Mrs. Nelson are living on the farm of his grandparents who came directly from Norway in 1855. They were Nels and Anna (Olson) Nelson. They built their home in 1868, which is where the Newell Nelsons live today. They remodeled and modernized the home. Mr. Nelson is a son of Martin Nelson, born on the same farm. One of Newell's brothers died. There are two others, one living at Mora and another at Waterloo.

Loromer, a son of Mr. and Mrs. Newell Nelson, lives at home with them and is raising registered Angus cattle.

Entertained Jesse James

Gunder Halvorson tells that Jesse James and a companion, one of the Cole brothers, stopped at their place when he was young and wanted to stay overnight. They were given permission to stay in the barn. They did, and remained to eat breakfast with the family. He said they were polite during their stay and paid for their breakfast when they left, going south. Halvorson said several days later they found a place where they had tied their horses in the woods. They had no horses when they came to their home.

Halvorson says he thinks he killed the last rattle snake in Nevada County back in 1917. He told that when they were children with their parents, his grandfather's sister, Helen Martin was bitten by a rattle snake on their way to this area from McGregor. They slashed the wound and sucked out the blood, saving her life. She lived to be 90. Mrs. Halvorson's parents, Anton and Llivia Fossey, came early to Mitchell County, Iowa.

Pioneer Customs

It took strong hearted men and women to come into a virgin country where no land had been tilled, no roads constructed or homes built. But they came, ready to bout with the difficulties and settle in a new world. Most of them were adventurous and young with young families and many were single, seeking a suitable place before marriage. They came with their few belongings and necessities in covered wagons, many of them ox driven, traveling over country where there were no roads or bridges.

They put up small cabins of logs, filling the cracks between them with mortar or covering them with bark. Floors were hughed from logs or puncheons, split logs with the flat face up and roughly smoothed. Fire places had to be constructed for the only means of heat. Several had managed to bring a stove with them (from the civilized world).

Later they constructed homes of lumber sawed from available trees. There were no nails, wooden pegs were made and used.

The only lights were candles, a tin lantern or a grease cup with a wick. Rough furniture was used, made of wood. Children stood to eat. The old wagon had a "grasshopper" seat or a board to sit on for the driver. Children sat on the wagon box. In winter robes, straw or hay were used to keep warm, heated flat irons or rocks helped to keep their feet warm.

Water and a supply of fuel led to the choice of settlement. Along the Red Cedar River there were trees, but much of the area where the village of Lyle is was prairie land with only brush.

Substitutes for coffee were grains of wheat, corn, barley and peas browned and crushed. For tea, basswood blossoms were used.

Bedticks were filled with straw. Feather beds could be put into a grain sack. Wornout sacks were used for towels. They were hard to wash, but soft to use. Three sacks would make two pairs of men's trousers. Stripes were made to run down the legs. There were no sewing machines until after the Civil War. There was no weaving except for carpets. A few spun wool and knit. Brooms were made from split basswood, called split brooms.

Mrs. Harvey Goetsch, Lyle teacher, supplied information for this article.

Anti Thief League

James Rochford, Austin in 1945, wrote of some of his knowledge of an Anti-Horse Thief League of long ago. He was a member of the league. He told that at that time, there was a direct line through Lyle into Iowa where those men operated, also another line through Lodi and LeRoy.

A Mrs. W. H. Culton of Whitewater, Wis., had written to the league about the way the horse thieves operated in early days. They used to live at Lodi.

She told how her parents were always hospitable to all comers. They learned later that sometimes they had housed horse thieves and sometimes the horses left in the morning were of a different color from those taken in at night. Mower County housed many of these thieves and the tale goes that one of them was hanged to a tree in the LeRoy locality. But there is no official record of the incident.

Rochford told that the Anti Thief League was organized at the old log school house at Lyle. There were many members and they had officers and a password, as it had to be a secret organization.

He told that it appeared that Lyle Township had a stable for stolen horses and the owner was finally convicted and sent to Stillwater prison where he eventually died.

Hotels

At one time Lyle had hotels, operated by Hildebrand and Stockwell. When Hildebrand was in the business, his brother, Pete, a liveryman, took traveling men in his livery to LeRoy, 21 miles away, driving a team of broncos. He made the trip over and back in one day.

Hildebrand and Stockwell later sold to Dixon.

Stakes Claim

A Lyle man tells about his great-grandfather who made a claim to his land near Lyle by simply nailing a horseshoe to a tree. Ancestors are still on the farm.

Snakes

Glenn Dahl of Lyle remembers the tale of his great-great grandparents, who came from Illinois in a covered wagon through tall prairie grass. They walked as much as possible, but the snakes were so bad in the prairie grass that they had to get back in the wagon and ride.

Headquarters Building

Back in 1856-7, the Dugan family owned a Headquarters building which served as a store, court house, school, church meetings, public gatherings and a publishing house. The Mirror, the Minnesota Courier Register and the Transcript were published there.

Drayman

In 1908 Ben Helfritz of St. Ansar brought a team and wagon to start in the draying business in Lyle. With three depots in town, there was a promising future. He hauled many loads of freight from the three railroad lines and continued in the business 52 years, graduating to the use of a truck in later years. He retired in 1960. He served as a volunteer fireman and was town constable 37 years.

Board Sidewalks

Although Lyle was one of the earliest villages to have several blocks of cement sidewalks, there were board sidewalks in residential areas and the park. Kerosene lamps marked some of the street corners.

Town Pump

One of the town pumps was located in front of Arneson's Store, which was where the Standard Station is now. Hanging on a chain from the pump was a drinking cup. A watering trough for the horses was beneath the pump spout.

When Lyle got around to digging a deeper well and erecting a water tower, excavation for the water mains was by manual labor using spades. The men were paid \$1.75 per rod. Pipes were laid six and seven feet deep. Some of the men could dig a rod a day and thought they were making good money.

Councilmen

Members of the Lyle Village Council in 1970 include: William Bell, Ronald Halverson, W. E. Woodo, Louis L. Taylor, with Charles Ekle as mayor and Jerry Reinhartz, clerk. Charles Berg is village marshal.

Population in Lyle in 1911 was 522 and in 1960, 612. If the area trend in the 1970 census is the same in Lyle as elsewhere, the final tabulation will show a decline.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bedford

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bedford, senior citizens of Lyle Village, are descendants of four pioneer families who settled on the nearby plains in the mid-nineteenth century.

Frank Bedford's grandparents, Erastus H. and Althea (Townsend) Bedford were among early settlers. Bedford came to Lyle Township in 1854 to join J. Orlando Wilder in section 33. In 1855, he married Althea Townsend from New York State and they settled on a claim in section 30 in the Woodbury neighborhood. They had three children, Helen, Frank and Robert. Helen and Frank died early in life. Erastus and son, Robert, engaged in farming and also owned and operated one of the first steam threshing machines in the vicinity.



MR. AND MRS. FRANK BEDFORD - 1966

Robert married Elizabeth McCanna in 1889. They had five children: Alice Bedford Nelson, now Adams; Gertrude Bedford Olson, now of Austin; Frank, now of Lyle Village; Roy, now of Albert Lea, and Ray, deceased.

Frank Bedford and Leffie Belle Anderson were married in 1916. He served in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in France during World War I. On his return, they spent three years farming on the Bedford homestead. Frank also ran the family threshing machine.

In 1923 Frank and brother, Roy, purchased and operated a grocery business in Devonia, or Lithography City, a little town seven miles south of Osage, Iowa, that was founded to mine and process lithography rock. But due to the discovery of a more convenient method of lithographing than that of using the heavy marble-like rock, the little town was abandoned and can now hardly be located except by hunting the couple dozen or so cellar holes on which new homes were being built. The Bedford Brothers operated this grocery store for five years after which Roy and wife, Alma, and two small daughters moved to Osage for a short time and then to Albert Lea where they now reside.

Frank, his wife, Leffie, and small daughter, Blanche, moved to Lyle, as Mrs. Bedford's mother had recently passed away, they lived in the parental Anderson home with her father, and that has been their home ever since. Here Mr. Bedford built a large garage and engaged in the sale of automobiles, first Chevrolet and later Studebaker.

Here in 1929, they became the parents of another daughter, Helen, who with her husband, Warren Overocker and two daughters, Charlotte and Cynthia, and son, Richard, now reside on the Bedford homestead, making the fifth generation of the family to live there.

The elder daughter, Blanche, and her husband, Robert Greiner and daughters also lived there for a short time. This daughter and husband built a home in Lyle in 1946 and they and their four daughters, Georgia, Betty, Bonny and Rebecca, lived there until 1968 when they moved to Austin. Their daughters are now all married and live in West Union, Iowa; Billings, Mont.; Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Frank Bedford's maternal grandparents, Dilarzon and Elizabeth (Milliken) Moshier were another family of early pioneers who settled along Woodbury Creek in the early 1850's in section 30. Their son, Isaac, was the first white child born in Lyle Township. They were also parents of two more sons, Perry and Henry, and two daughters, Sarah and Margaret. Margaret became the mother of Elizabeth McCanna Bedford. Henry became the father of a son, Frank, deceased, and three daughters, Helen Moshier Magee, Nina Moshier Heiny, and Emily Moshier Magee, who live in Autsin. Helen, first wife of Joseph Magee, passed away. Her sister, Emily, later married him.

Mrs. Frank (Leffie Belle Anderson) Bedford's grandparents were also early pioneer settlers in the Lyle shopping area although not in Lyle Township. They settled just across the Minnesota-Iowa state line in the northeast corner of Deer Creek Township of Worth County about seven miles west of Lyle Village. Gustaf and Charlotte Anderson and their six sons, Frank, Robert, Edwin, Oscar, William and Charles, and a daughter, Minnie, came here from Rockford, Ill., in about 1870. For several years the father and two eldest sons spent the summers farming and hewing out a home on the prairie for the mother and younger members of the family, driving back to Illinois to work in the factories during the winter months. One winter they drove their team and wagon into Chicago to help clean up the debris after the Chicago fire. This family owned one of the first steam threshing machines in the area. The father and sons eventually became owners of five farms in that neighborhood.

Oscar Anderson married Melva McConnell in 1885. They made their home on one of these farms, then moved to Lyle in 1903.

Mrs. Bedford's maternal grandparents, the Mack McConnells, were also pioneer settlers. They migrated from northern Illinois in 1863 and settled for a time in the Mitchell and Osage area. They finally bought a farm on the banks of the Cedar River in Lyle Township. They had three children, Harry, who died as a small child; Tella, whose grandchildren live in some western states, and Melva, mother of Mrs. Bedford.

A Lyle teacher, Mrs. Harvey J. (Maurine) Goetsch, R. R. 2, Austin, has supplied the following information about the James Foster and David Aultfather families.

James Foster

On June 7, 1854, James Foster and his wife, Judith (Hickman) Foster with their children, William, Return, George, Joseph, Pamelia and Louise, arrived in Lyle Township. They brought with them horses, cows, dogs and a cat, named Old Phyllis.

They had originally come from Cape May, N. J., settling for a time in Illinois, stopping at McGregor, Fort Atkinson, and Mitchell, Iowa, to rest. James Foster did not as they say, "take up" free land. He was the first man to buy land in Lyle Township.

Their first home was a log cabin measuring 16 by 24 feet with two windows, two doors and a fire place made of stones. The farm was located in the northernmost part

of Lyle township on a spring-fed creek draining into the Red Cedar River. Later other families settled in this vicinity. Most of them in this area of the township were Yankees or immigrants from England.

Mrs. Foster was, for her time, quite an educated woman being able to do the "rule of three," which was apparently square root. She was also what was known as a "herb woman." This meant knowing plants with medical properties. In addition she could set fractured bones, sew wounds, act as a mid-wife and was acknowledged by doctors as being as skilled as they.

One of the most interesting stories concerning the Foster family, was the cat, Old Phyllis, which was apparently the only cat around. She was borrowed by all the neighbors who had mice. Later a male cat must have arrived as Old Phyllis had a family and the kittens were eagerly sought by the area residents.

David Aultfather

In 1856 David Aultfather with his sister, Katherine, arrived. He purchased land in the southern part of Austin Township with some of his land located in the northern part of Lyle Township. He and Pamelia Foster, daughter of James Foster, were married July 8, 1857. His sister, Katherine Aultfather, married Return B. Foster, who founded the Masonic Lodge in Lyle.

Children born to David and Pamelia Aultfather were sons, Charles, William, David C., George, Andrew and James; daughters, Mrs. Vilena Vest, Mrs. Laura Duerst, and Miss Clara Aultfather, all of whom played a vital part in the early days of the area's history.

Horse Thief Society

One of the more intriguing stories is that of the formation of the Mower County Anti-Horse-Thief Society. Mrs. Vest, who owned the farm on which Gordon Kirkpatrick now lives, had two horses, five sets of harness, a buggy and five sacks of feed stolen. At first she thought it was a prank and went to her brother David's farm across the road (this is the farm where Mrs. Maurine Goetsch lives). She went to see if the horses were in his barn. They were not there. Neighbors, even to a partially blind man, claimed to have seen a team answering the description of her horses, racing through the country side. Rumor said the horses were taken by members of Jesse James' band. As a result the anti-horse thief society was founded. Numerous other horses in the area were later stolen, but the thieves were never located.

Lyle Center School

School District 57, or Lyle Center, was built upon land owned by David C. Aultfather. This was a great improvement as children in the district formerly had to go to Excelsior or Red Star, three to four miles away. The first teacher was Mrs. George (Arminta Weseman) Aultfather. Both David C. Aultfather and his daughter, Maurine Aultfather Goetsch, served terms as treasurer of that district.

Livestock Breeders

Two of the Aultfather brothers, David C. and James H. were early breeders of pure-blooded livestock in Minnesota. They specialized in Red Poll Cattle, Percheron horses and Poland China hogs. During the early 1900's, before they were married, they, as brothers, won numerous prizes at county as well as the Mississippi State Fair. After marriage, they divided the partnership but both continued in the business and each achieved the same success. Today, Frank Duerst and Myron Aultfather, son of James, are still prominent in the Red Poll Cattle business and has gained, not only state, but national recognition.



Mr. and Mrs. Louis Thompson



Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Wilson



Mr. and Mrs. O. T. Lund



1864 — Mr. and Mrs. Hans Anderson



Mr. and Mrs. Carl Olson



1884 — Mr. and Mrs. Chris Sampson



1884 — Mr. and Mrs. Edward Nelson



1890 — Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Gikler

