

History
And
Golden Memories
Of Lyle, Minnesota
1853 — 1941



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Mrs. Clyde Roehr

Collecting and searching for information in
scrapbooks for material for this story.

— I N D E X —

Airport, Lyle's First And Only	27
Automobiles In Lyle, First	27
Bank, First	17
Cedar City	3
City Hall	21
Claim In Lyle Area, First	1
Creamery, First	17
Crop Failure	8
Culvert Factory, Lyle	19
Cyclone, 1897	9
Death, First	2
Dentists	12
Disastrous Fire	9
Early Business Places	7
Early Settlers	3
Early Sports, Other	26
Entertainments	24
Factory, Corn Canning	21
Fire Department	17
Fraternal Orders	22
High School Graduates, First	13
House Built, First	4
How Town of Lyle Received Its Name	2
Light Plant, First	22
Lumber Yard, First	21

Mail Carriers	16
Mail Pouch Robbery	6
Mail Service, First	4
Newspaper, First	15
Original Buildings Left	9
Park, Lyle	18
Physicians, First	11
Post Office	16
Railroads	5
Religious Services And Churches, First	14
Religious Services In Lyle, First	14
Saw Mill	23
School District, First	13
School, First	13
Settlement In Lyle, First	1
Severe Disaster In Lyle And Area	8
Telephone Company, Lyle	20
Theatre, First	26
Veteran Businessmen	28
Village Incorporated	4
Village Of Lyle Platted	4
White Child, First	2

Modern civilization will perhaps never fully realize the courage the early settlers had when they ventured out into the unknown prairies to search for a new life and home for themselves.

The vastness of space must have been a real challenge as they found rich unbroken virgin soil that had none but nature's care from time immemorial.

No plow shares had turned the green sod, and no foot had trod the unbroken stretches of soil, other than perhaps wild beasts, birds or the Red Warrior.

They too must have had a strong faith in their God for guidance and protection from weather and beast to venture into a vast open prairie with no shelter other than their covered wagons, and no water only from creeks or rivers. Such must have been the case of the first settlers that came to the area now known as LYLE.

FIRST CLAIM IN LYLE AREA

Lyle is recorded as one of the oldest towns in Mower County. A Mr. Woodbury, accompanied by his son-in-law, Pinkerton came from parts unknown to Lyle township in the fall of 1853 and claimed a tract of land bordering the Red Cedar river and the creek which takes from him its name.

Woodbury built a log cabin and covered it with sod on the northeast corner of section 33. Two years later in 1855 he sold his claim and moved to Olmstead County. Other claims were made by Marlott, Pinkerton and Stilson. Stilson erected a temporary dwelling of bark on the present site of the Woodbury cemetery west of Lyle, where many of the early pioneers have been laid to rest. It was in this humble home the first marriage ceremony was performed.

Only one other settler in Mower county at this time was O. P. Clark, who lived in a shack in the area that is now Austin, Minn.

FIRST PERMANENT SETTLEMENT IN LYLE

First permanent settlement in Lyle which was then yet unnamed was made in May, 1854, by Orlando Wilder, Eben Merry, James Foster and his son, Return Foster. Wilder, who was a native of the Green Mountain state, built a house on Section 33, where he took his claim. Wilder came in company with his brother, Jackson and Lewis West. They drove ten yoke of oxen, bringing a few house-

hold goods. They planted potatoes, corn and garden vegetables. That fall he drove to McGregor with ox team to meet his wife to bring her to his new home.

Some of his party that came west with him settled over the line in Iowa. Erastus H. Bedford came from Michigan in 1856 and engaged in farming with Orlando Wilder.

In 1856 another settler came to these parts. William West came by railroad from New York to Galena, Illinois then by boat to McGregor and continued on by foot to Mitchell County and secured work in a saw mill at Otranto, Iowa. That fall he hired a team of horses to go to McGregor, Iowa to meet his family. They spent the winter in Mitchell county, and the next spring also came to Lyle to make a claim and built a log house and moved there in the fall.

William M. Pace, another settler coming from Ohio, came to Lyle also in 1856 when he was twenty-one years of age.

He became one of the prosperous farmers in the town with fine dwellings, raising stock and grain. His nearest shipping point was McGregor, a distance of 120 miles. He hauled wheat to Rochester with ox team and sold it for 50c and 60c a bushel, and was obliged to camp on the way, as hotels were scarce as well as money. John Tift and William Bean were other early settlers.

TOWN OF LYLE RECEIVED ITS NAME

Lyle received its name from Robert Lyle, a native of Ohio, who had accompanied Pace to Mower County in November, 1856. Lyle was a judge of probate and was a representative from this district to the state legislature. The town was named for him. He moved to Missouri in 1868.

FIRST WHITE CHILD

Isaac Moshier was the first white child born in Lyle township August 16, 1885.

FIRST DEATH

First settler to die in Lyle was Mrs. Margaret Bean in March, 1856. She was buried within the limits of Woodbury cemetery long before it was surveyed. Next deaths were Louis Ebbers in the same year, and he also was buried in Woodbury cemetery.

CEDAR CITY

Lyle also boasted of a locality about this same time, known as Cedar City. Emigrants were attracted by this high sounding name (which was in section 4) thinking it must be a place of some distinction.

Andrew Gemmel often related that he stopped in St. Paul, Minnesota to make inquiries of the Postmaster there of this place. He was told of the place and location by the Postmaster, but added "he may only find one house there".

The chosen site, which never progressed, was in section 4, and the land was first claimed by John Chandler. He waived his claim in favor of Caleb Stock and John Phelps who proposed to erect a mill.

Work began in 1856 when they put in a substantial dam of stone and timber. A third party, T. N. Stone, was interested with them in their enterprise.

Two mills were built, one furnished with a circular saw for sawing lumber, the other, a grist mill, with one set of burrs. The grist mill was completed that same year. One sack of wheat had been ground, when a flood came and swept both buildings down the stream. Nothing remained to mark the site of the imaginary city, only ruins of the old mill dam.

Thus the hopes for the company were blasted and the mills were never rebuilt.

EARLY SETTLERS

Lyle's early settlers related that until the spring of 1870 the ground which is now the town of Lyle was part of an extensive prairie extending to the limit of sight on either side except for the fringe of timber along the Cedar river on the west and the noted Six Mile Grove to the east, (which was named thus as the timber stretched for six miles long.)

Here no laborer's spade or farmer's plow had overturned the sod of rich soil to the light of the warming sun. All was vast, vacant and still.

VILLAGE OF LYLE PLATTED

It was on June 18, 1870 that Lyle was platted as a village and registered in the office of the Registrar of Deeds of Mower County November 11 that same year.

It was platted by Silah Chamberlain, D.C. Sheppard and Charles McIllrath, just 92 years ago.

FIRST HOUSE BUILT

First house in Lyle was built by Thomas Irgens in 1870. He operated a store in the village on the ground floor, and also was commissioned as the first postmaster.

FIRST MAIL SERVICE

The first settlers in these parts were obligated to go to Auburn, Iowa a distance of 80 miles for their mail and buy provisions, making the trip by ox team until the mail route was established from Osage, Iowa to Austin, Minnesota. Then mail was left at Orlando Wilder's for distribution in the neighborhood.

VILLAGE INCORPORATED

Lyle was incorporated as a village and was approved on March 9, 1875. First council meeting was held May 17, 1875. L.W. Sherman was the first Mayor and Justice of Peace; J. C. Tasherud, Recorder; Thomas Irgens, treasurer; Peter Knutson, Marshall; P. McLaughlin, Assessor.

First order of the village council meeting was for the sum of \$11.25 to H. Wiseman for painting the village Lock-Up.

Councilmen were John Trodler, O. H. Luchen and J. H. McLaughlin. No records earlier than 1886 were to be found in the office of the clerk in early days.

Officers in 1884 listed the following members of the town council: G.C. Allen, chairman; M.J. Hawley and W. Watkins, supervisors; Atkins Hotson, clerk; Joseph Wyborne, assessor; O.H. Brown, treasurer; W.C. Potter and Peter Wilder, Justices of Peace.

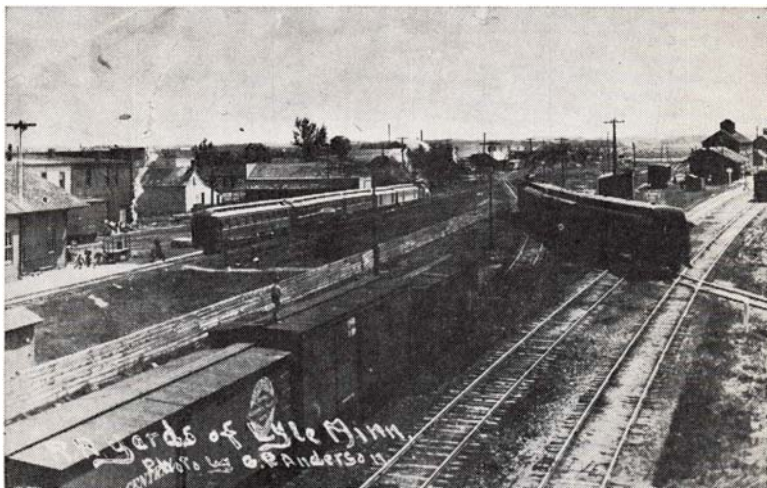


Grove street, 1898, before electricity. Note board walks and dirt streets. Object in center foreground is the scale of the elevator. Buildings on the right side of the photo looking east were:

1. First National Bank on the corner (Opera House upstairs operated by Ren Ryerson.)
2. Hardware store also operated by Ryerson.
3. Drug Store.
4. Post Office.
5. O. T. Lund Dry Goods.
6. Ahrens Meat Market.
7. Wilson's General Store.

Buildings on left side of street looking east were:

1. Gruenberg's Store.
2. Peterson's Store; later Joy Theatre.
3. Hedemark's Store.
4. Peter Hanson Harness Shop; later John Syverud.
5. Ometh Furniture Store; Photographer Fairbanks upstairs, later operated by O. G. Blakestad.



Busy Railroads in Lyle. Fourteen passenger trains daily.
Photo taken in early 1900's.



Inside Milwaukee Depot, 1910.
Anton George at desk; Leslie Sherman, custodian.

RAILROADS

Railroads also came to Lyle the same year it was platted. The Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Co. built a cut-off between Austin & Mason City. O.N. Darling was the first station agent.

The town at once became prominent as a market, owing to the rivalry with Mona, Iowa, one mile south, which was then the most northern terminus of the Cedar Falls branch of the Illinois Central Railroad until December 3, 1900 when it was extended to Albert Lea.

The Chicago Great Western Railway started in Lyle when construction of the branch line from Lyle to Manly Jct., Iowa was completed on November 28, 1885. On December 1, 1886, the line from Hayfield, Minnesota to Dubuque, Iowa was completed and placed in operation.

The Great Western depot in Lyle had a hotel in connection with the depot, and during holiday seasons as many as one hundred persons a day passed and checked through the depot. This building was destroyed in the big fire of 1891 and later was rebuilt.

The three railroads made it possible for better connections for the traveling public, especially the salesman who often carried as many as 15 to 20 sample trunks.

As the result of this travel the livery stables did a good business hauling salesmen and their baggage to outlying points such as Rose Creek, Adams, Mc Intire, Stacyville and Northwood.

The railroads really had a monopoly on transportation, and the Western Union Telegraph on communications. There were no telephones within the towns or between them.

Nicholas Fischer of Edmonds, Washington, who brought the first Mazda street lights to the town of Lyle, says he was 19 years of age when he first talked over the telephone.

With no parcel post at this early date the express companies had a monopoly on that part of transportation also.

The Lyle terminus for the Illinois Central railroad line from Waterloo, ran one passenger and one freight each 24-hour day. Their passenger train would arrive at 1 p.m., turn the engine at the Round House turn-table, then head back to Waterloo, but first stopping at

the Milwaukee station where they would load passengers, mail, express and baggage for the return trip.

As Iowa was then a dry state, a vast amount of beer in kegs and whiskey in jugs was moved by express.

The I.C.C.R. freight, however, tied up overnight at the roundhouse. Their engine had the large diamond stacks, and the Chicago Great Western engines red stacks.

Barney Johnson was roundhouse hostler. He also cleaned coaches for the Illinois Central railroad.

Postal service was limited to mostly first-class mail, newspapers, magazines, etc. First class pouches were made entirely of leather, and later of half leather and half canvas.

MAIL POUCH ROBBERY

On October 1, 1937 a mail pouch containing first class mail was stolen from the Great Western depot and stirred up some excitement in Lyle. Art Fortun discovered the missing mail pouch when he arrived before 6 a.m. to carry the mail from the depot to the post-office.

Intruders had gained entrance by using a railroad brake shoe pin to break off the hasp of the door lock.

The missing mail remained a mystery until January 1938. While Ed Gould and Art Dockstader were out fox hunting they found the pouch near the old Otranto schoolhouse in the north part of Otranto along the highway fence. It was folded and tucked down in some brush and was quite well protected.

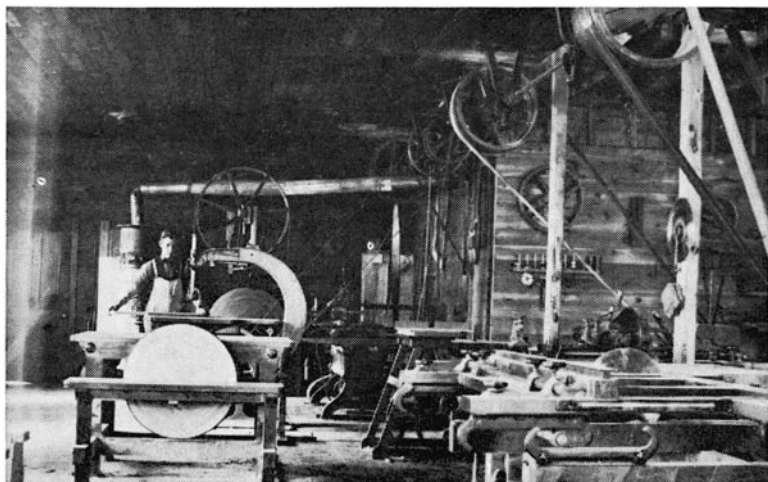
Mail still in the pouch was delivered late. Old age pension checks were not opened or destroyed by the robbers. Only about 30 to 40 per cent of the missing mail was recovered. Amanda Mortenson has an envelope in her scrapbox sent to John Hanson dated January 16, 1938 that was recovered from the missing pouch.

The Great Western depot was closed June 1, 1958, and the building sold to Howard Sewick and torn down in the summer of '62.

One of the veteran depot agents of the Milwaukee depot who served the railroad the longest was N. C. Putman of Lyle who re-



Outside of Frederick Fischer Woodworking Shop.
Picture taken in late 1899.



Inside of Woodworking Shop. Julius Fischer at saw. This is where cupboards, doors and sash were made. Located east of the old Congregational church.

tired in 1950 with nearly 50 years with the railroad and 26 of those were spent in the depot at Lyle.

In early days as many as fourteen passenger trains a day came through Lyle. Sometimes there was standing room only when it was jampacked with passengers.

In earlier days E. Hoxie was conductor on the Milwaukee mixed passenger and freight train over the "cut-off" and it became noted far and near as "Hoxie's Train". The "Milwaukee" was scarcely used to designate the train or railroad.

EARLY BUSINESS PLACES

Bassett, Huntting & Co. of McGregor built the first grain warehouse and their agent, William Cotton, became the first grain buyer.

First elevator was built in 1874 by farmers and H. C. Trowbridge conducted the business. The town at once became prominent as a market place after the arrival of the railroad and an elevator to market grain.

William Colton had the first lumber and coal trade in 1870. M. O'Brien and T. S. Kilgore were the first blacksmiths, and L. A. Page the first lumber dealer.

Soon more businesses began springing up. First hotel was conducted by Mr. and Mrs. John Trodler; Pete Johnson, the first shoemaker; Peter Hanson, first harness maker; first drug store operated by William and Scarf; first hardware firm was Fausett and Gundersen; Wold and Olson, pioneers in the furniture and upholstery business; Andrew B. Johnson, first watch and jewelry shop; John Hadler and Philip Schodron were the first butchers and operated a meat market.

Then in 1885 the business directory listed these names of Lyle business places: W. Stanley & Son; Myhre & Lund; John O. Myhre; J. F. Humel, all dealers in general merchandise; A. H. Anderson, hardware; L. W. Sherman lumber & coal; B. D. Hedemark, leather boots and shoes; Thomas Irgens, Postmaster; Jewett H. Sherman, Huntting elevator, which incidentally was run by a one horse treadmill; Evenson & Stovern, dealers in farm machinery; J. K. Clark, drayman; E. Johnson, furniture dealer and undertaker; Thomas Kirby, grain buyer; W. West, Boarding House; A. Webber, black-

smith; C. Junger, refreshments; Dr. W. F. Cobb, physician; and O. G. Myhre, leader of the Brass Band.

Business continued to progress, and in the early 1900's business places listed then were: 1 dentist; 3 doctors; a bowling alley; 2 pool halls; 2 barber shops; 2 cream stations; 2 restaurants; 1 garage; 2 livery stables; 2 hotels; 2 butcher shops; 1 newspaper; 1 corn canning factory; 1 bank; 1 harness shop; 1 tailor shop; 1 photo gallery; 1 hardware store; 1 shoe store; 2 millinery shops; 1 furniture store; 4 general stores; 3 blacksmiths; 1 feed mill; 1 tow mill; a creamery; culvert factory; overall and glove factory; broom factory; 1 woodworking (door and sash) shop; 3 stockyards and 4 elevators. There were 34 trains a day with 14 of those passenger trains.

SEVERE DISASTER IN LYLE AND THE AREA

One of the early disasters was the GREAT BLIZZARD which struck January 7 through January 10 in 1873. It swept over the whole northwest with great violence and severity, causing much suffering and damage to the surprised and unprepared inhabitants.

County roads and railroads were blockaded and business was well nigh suspended for weeks to follow.

Another severe snowstorm was in March 1941 which struck early on a Sunday morning at 2:30 a. m. Buildings shook and quivered. The fallen snow mixed with dust and dirt in its fury whipped and drifted into every crack and cranny and visibility was nil.

It came with such terrific force that it tossed everything loose like autumn leaves.

The cover on the hatchway on the roof of the K P Building was blown off and hurled onto the roof of the postoffice building, leaving a large opening.

CROP FAILURE

The wheat crop failure also brought disasters. In 1877, the beginning of abundance and prosperity, wheat crops were an unrivaled crop and the continuance of these conditions stimulated many into extravagance and debt. But the year of plenty was followed by an almost total wheat crop failure. It brought radical changes in methods of farming which resulted in depression for both the farmer and businessman until readjustments were made .



First Lumber Yard, started by L. A. Page.
J. P. Mortenson, A. O. Christianson, John Norris, in photo.



Taken after destructive tornado June 11, 1897.

DISASTROUS FIRE

The big tragedy that struck the entire town of Lyle was on May 2, 1892 when fire swept the town and in only a few hours left the greater portion of it in ashes and destroyed all of the early records.

Walter Wyborny, one of Lyle's old timers, recalls witnessing this big fire when he was 13 years of age. The entire block on the east side of main street was destroyed and flames leaped across the street and destroyed the elevator as well, which was on the present site of the Hunting Elevator.

Lyle had no Fire department and no fire hose was in existence then, only a volunteer BUCKET BRIGADE.

The Austin, Minn. Hose Company answered the fire call and raced their horses the 12 miles to join the bucket brigade.

Several other fires witnessed by Mr. Wyborny were the west one-half block on Grove Street in the early 1900's and then in 1956 when the east half of the block also on Grove street which housed the Burghard Produce, American Legion building, Old Tribune Office, Telephone Office and Attlesey Repair Shop were destroyed.

Then in August, 1961 he witnessed the fire when it gutted the entire building of the Gamble Store, K. P. Hall, and severely damaged the Hartson Locker Plant and Dahls Hardware store.

ORIGINAL BUILDINGS LEFT

The only original buildings left in Lyle built in 1892 not destroyed by fire are on the south side of Grove Street, the old First National Bank building, now Leona's Antique Shop, Dahls Hardware store, K. K. Hall, Wittlief Gamble etore.

1897 CYCLONE

The serious cyclone came with a flurry on the evening of June 11, 1897 after the town had been partially rebuilt after the fire.

The storm struck five miles north of Lyle with two clouds coming together taking a zig-zagging course nearly east, blowing and destroying everything in its path and toppling over freight cars from the tracks and across fields — striking just north of the Great Western Roundhouse and cut through the north part of the town

destroying the water wheel from the city water tower, which was used to pump water by the wind before electricity was installed in Lyle. It was then replaced by a gasoline engine to pump the water, the first gasoline engine to come to Lyle.

Henry C. Hanson, a young farmer living west of Lyle, was killed and countless others were injured.

One miraculous escape was that of the Peter Hanson family. They were in the process of building a new home and he and his family of six and three visitors, were eating supper in the barn which stood just west of the house. The storm blew the barn, the family and their guests, together with the partially built house, across the prairie. The family received numerous broken bones and serious injury. This property was then situated where the Frank Bedford residence is located.

Debris was scattered far and wide and with no telephone service for means of communication, their scattered family photos served as a means of communication for spreading the news of the cyclone. One of the Hanson's photos blew against a window at the Knut Volstad farm home, located northeast of Lyle where the Melvin Rohne family now reside. The Volstads, sensing something was wrong, drove their team to Lyle to investigate. Mr. Hanson was Lyle's first Harness maker and was a grandfather of the Mortensons in Lyle.

Mr. Nicholas Fischer well recalls the serious cyclone and says he and his parents and family were safely protected in the cellar. When they emerged after the storm they could hear the Hanson children crying on their porch. Mr. Hanson's team of horses housed in the Fischer barn came out unharmed after the storm destroyed the Fischer barn but found deep hoof marks in their lawn where they had apparently been blown.

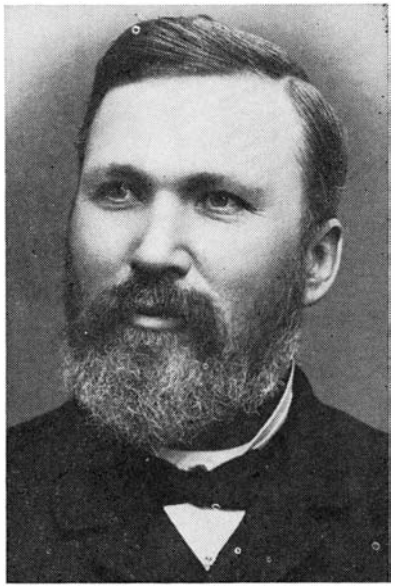
Many other homes in Lyle and in the country were destroyed and the Woodbury schoolhouse was smashed to splinters. Many head of livestock were injured. Estimated damage loss was \$30,000.

Had the path of the storm been two blocks farther south the whole villege may have been wiped out.

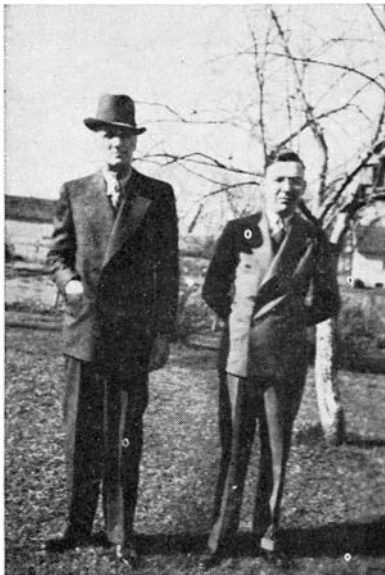
Time, of course, marches on and more rebuilding continued.



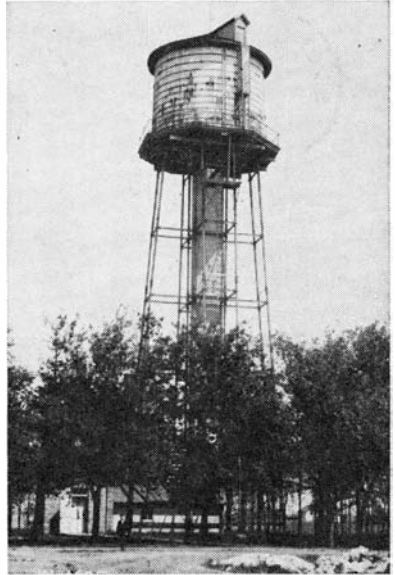
Dr. Peter Torkelson
Came to Lyle in 1909.



Dr. W. F. Cobb
Came to Lyle in 1887.



Dr. Meize at left. Came to Lyle
in 1916. Other man unidentified.



Early Water Tower.
Taken following tornado.

FIRST PHYSICIANS

Lyle's first physician was Dr. A. Truane who came here in 1870 from Wisconsin. Dr. Tanner, a homeopath, also came in 1870 but made only a short stay.

In 1881, Dr. M.G. Gordon of Montreal, Canada located here, but too remained only a short time.

Later Dr. W. F. Cobb, Dr. Frazer and Dr. Torkelson all were practicing in Lyle at the same time.

Dr. Cobb came to Lyle from Mona where he began his practice in 1871 after his graduation, and had his office in his drugstore in Mona. He came to Lyle in the year 1895 and practiced for a period of 55 years until 1929. He also was a surgeon for the Illinois Central Railroad for 35 years while in Lyle.

Dr. Cobb was a firm believer in good education, and was instrumental in the organization of the first school system in Lyle.

Dr. Frazer came to Lyle in 1887, and practiced here for nearly a quarter of a century, then went to Osage to practice for a time and later went to Minneapolis.

Dr. Peter Torkelson came to Lyle April 12, 1909. He had graduated in 1903 from Valparaiso University, the Chicago College of Medicine and Surgery, and had one year of internship at Deaconess Hospital, Chicago, Illinois. He practiced in Lyle for 21 years until his death in 1930 at the age of 49, following major surgery.

He built his home in Lyle which is 50 years old and is still occupied by his wife Belle, who was a registered nurse. He had his office in his home.

Dr. Torkelson also was a surgeon for the Illinois Central Railroad and a member of the Lyle School Board for over 20 years.

His mode of travel in visiting his patients was a team of horses, which was his prize possession, and he also raised colts.

An incident well remembered by his wife was one winter when roads were snowbound and the Dr. was called to the Irving Wilder farm where Mrs. Wilder was seriously ill with mastoids. She needed surgery and the Dr. rounded up six men to carry Mrs. Wilder on a stretcher to meet Dr. Torkelson with a bob-sled filled with hay to bring her into Lyle to catch a train to take her to the hospital.

Later Dr. Torkelson purchased a red Buick car, one of the early and first cars in Lyle.

Dr. George Melzer, another long time physician, came to Lyle in 1916. Graduating from Northwestern University School of Medicine in 1903, he practiced in Lyle until his health failed and he retired in 1958 after 50 years in the medical profession. Forty-three of those years were spent in Lyle. He also was the Lyle surgeon for the Milwaukee and Illinois Central railroads.

In 1941 he examined 265 draftees for the government (free) and received a certificate of appreciation from president Truman.

His practicing territory was all the way south to Grafton and Carpenter and west to Myrtle and ten miles east of Lyle.

He came to Lyle as a relief man for Dr. Frazer, who had gone to the Isle of Pines, Cuba where he owned a grapefruit ranch. This business completed, he went to Evansville, Minnesota but on persuasion of Dr. Frazer, he encouraged Dr. Melzer to return to Lyle when Dr. Frazer planned to leave Lyle to go to Osage.

When he arrived by train in Lyle, patients were already waiting at the drugstore for him.

He started out in horse and buggy days and bought his first automobile, an Overland, in 1909.

During the devastating influenza epidemic in 1918 and 1919 he was almost exhausted. He had as many as 65 patients to call on in a day, with some families having six ill in one home—but he never lost a case.

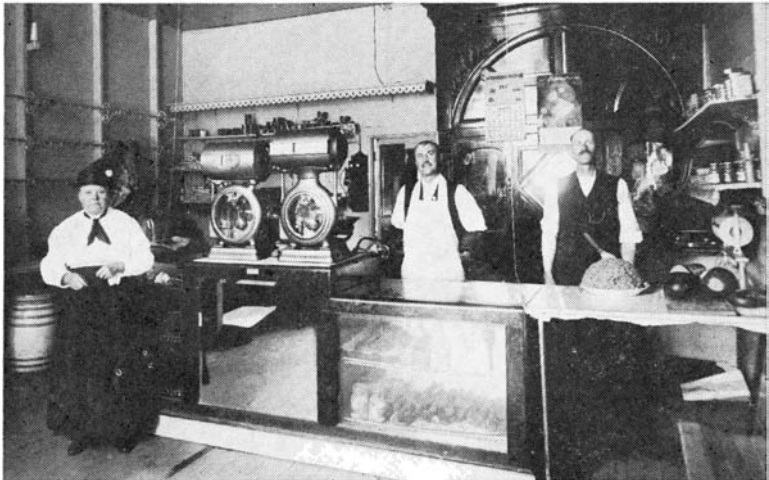
DENTISTS

A veteran dentist in Lyle was Dr. A.A. Lee, who came to Lyle after his graduation in August, 1911 and practiced in the same office for 45 years.

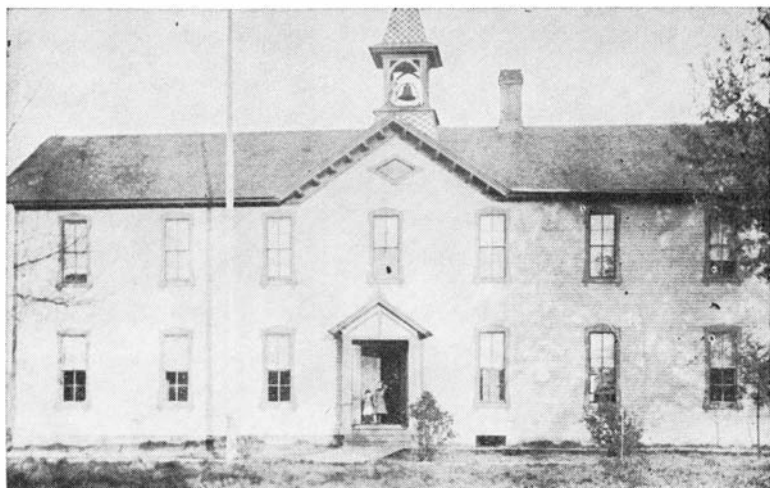
In those days he pulled teeth for 50c each and carried water for all his office use upstairs on Grove street from the town pump. In those days there were three town pumps. One located on the corner where the Standard Station is now located, another on the corner of the present Haakensons store and the third on the corner of Grove street where the Queen of Peace Catholic church is now located.



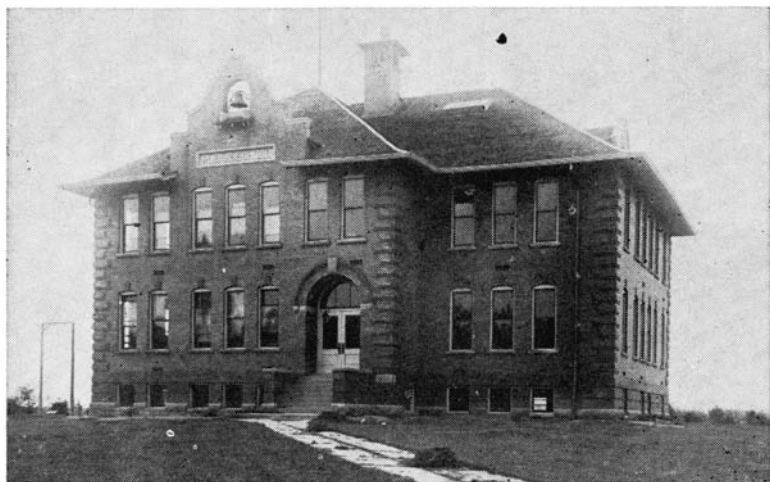
Dr. A. A. Lee, Dentist, came to Lyle in 1911.



Inside Larson Meat Market. Mrs. Amund Olson, a customer; John Larson, nephew of the proprietor, Jens Larson. Hamburger sold for 10c a pound, round steak 25c and 3 rings of bologna for 25c. Their slaughter house was on the state line along the creek on the farm now owned by Wilbert Borcharding. H. O. Johnson lived on the farm at that time where he was employed for Larson Bros. for 10 years at the slaughter house.



First Lyle Public School. Built in 1877.



Second Lyle School. Built in 1906.

Dr. Lee was a great fisherman and he and his wife rented a horse and buggy from the livery stable frequently before he owned a car to go to the banks of the Cedar river near Otranto to fish.

Other dentists before him were Dr. Hanson and Dr. Vail.

In early days a visiting dentist made the town, pulling and repairing teeth wherever convenient, either indoors or out.

A buggy company from Algona, Iowa also came to Lyle about this same time traveling the country pulling a string of buggies, selling them to farm and town folks.

FIRST SCHOOL

In 1860 a frame building was bought in Otranto and moved to section 23 and used for a school. T.J. Locke, C.R. Houston, Erwin Lyle and Dora Clappsadle were teachers in the building until 1874.

FIRST SCHOOL DISTRICT

First school district was organized in 1873—District No 90, mostly from the eastern part of Minnereka of No 15.

The first schoolhouse was built that same year on lots 11 and 12 on block 4 which was presented to the school board by the proprietor of the town plat.

It was a 16x26 foot building, seated in the old fashioned way. The desks extended around three sides and were attached to the walls, with benches for seats. S. Anna McCunne of Austin was the first teacher.

The district was made independent a year or two later. In the year 1877 a large two-room building was erected and about 1896 a room addition was constructed. It was then on the site just north of the old Congregational church.

School continued here until 1906 when what is part of the present public school was erected for \$15,000. After that the old school building was used for a factory.

FIRST HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

First high school graduates from the newly erected school were Odean Johnson, brother of Webster Johnson and Enid Cobb, sister of Mrs. N.C. Putman, both of Lyle.

In 1957 the school was completely remodeled and enlarged for the sum of \$530,000.

FIRST RELIGIOUS SERVICES AND CHURCHES

A Union Sunday School was organized in the summer of 1856 in the schoolhouse in Section 29. Mrs. Martin was the first superintendent. Meetings were held only from spring until fall.

Woodburg Church Of Christ was organized in Section 29, October 1882 at the schoolhouse by the Rev. C. S. Beaulieu.

Then in 1884 a Sabbath School was organized in the month of May with W. H. Martin as superintendent, also in the schoolhouse. Meetings were held every Sunday and preaching services once every four weeks with Rev. Beaulieu as Pastor. There were only 19 members.

FIRST RELIGIOUS SERVICES IN LYLE

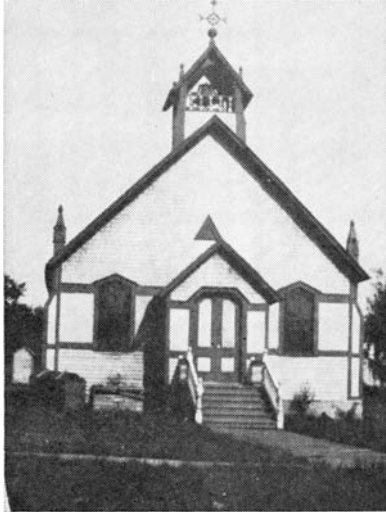
First religious services in Lyle were held in the waiting room of the Milwaukee depot, conducted by the Rev. Wm. Lowry, a Presbyterian minister, who resided in Freeborn County. This was soon discontinued due to lack of interest.

No other services in English were maintained until the Rev. J. S. Rounce of Rose Creek held semi-weekly meetings in the schoolhouse. These resulted in the organization of the first church society, the Congregational in April, 1886 and erection of the first church building that same year.

The Congregational church organization was a union of the Methodist and Episcopal congregation. It was incorporated April 24, 1886 and the church building was dedicated January 30, 1887 and the parsonage was built in 1896. The Rev. J. S. Rounce was the first pastor. Later I. F. Dahl served as Sunday School superintendent for many, many years.

Another early congregation was the Gospel Mission later known as the Volstad church and now is named the Bethel Alliance church. It was bought from the Methodist congregation in 1905 by Halvor Volstad and grandson, Knut Volstad who served as elder and acting Pastor until his death. Later regular pastors were installed and in 1957 the church was partially remodeled and an educational unit added.

Present pastor is the Rev. M. H. Averbek.



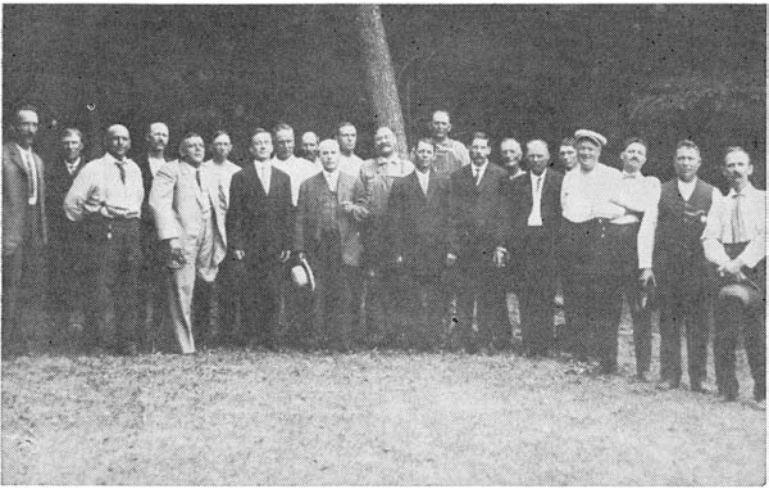
Old Methodist Church.
Now the Bethel Alliance.



Congregational.
Oldest Lyle Church.
Formerly a Methodist Church.



Our Savior's Lutheran Church.



Volunteer Firemen's Picnic. First man not identified; John Larson, butcher; Claude Hildebrand; Charley Howard; not identified; Harvey Hildebrand; Ben Helfritz; George Howard; Simon Myhre, all in back row. Front row, starting with man holding the hat, Jim Peterson; Jim Corrigan; 1-legged Anton George; Dr. A. A. Lee; Gil Ferris, Marshal; Jens Larson; James Mortenson; Oliver Blakestad; Hank Hughes, elevator man; Syver Severson, known as Taylor Severson; Olaf Dahl; Frank Pavlek; Carl Anderson, the painter.



Queen of Peace Catholic Church.

During the time that there were only two churches, the Congregational and Methodist, services were held in the evening. One special occasion remembered by Mr. Fisher was the baptizing of Miss Shipley, in mid-winter in open water of the Cedar river just below the Norfis Dam. Many drove down the river on the ice.

The Salvation army also came to Lyle from Austin about this same time to make their appearance to sing hymns and sometimes tunes of non-religious type.

The third congregation and church in Lyle, Our Savior's Lutheran was built in 1911 just a little over 50 years ago. First pastor was the Rev. Esser who also served the Mona and Six Mile Grove Lutheran churches when all three were one Trinity Parish.

Present Pastor is the Rev. Merland Johnson.

The newest church and congregation in Lyle is the Queen of Peace Catholic congregation, started in 1946 by Msgr. D. A. Cunningham of the Queen of Angels church in Austin, Minnesota. It is located on Grove street in the building formerly occupied by the Kenneth Corson Woodworking Shop. Prior to that it had been used as to serve different millinery shops and a lunch room.

Present pastor is Rev. John Tighe.

FIRST NEWSPAPER

The first independent newspaper establishment was started in 1893. Elmer T. Wilson was one of the early editors, and it was published by John Gould & Company from 1896 to 1902.

December 1, 1902, William Nordland purchased the business and he and his wife supplied the community with Lyle News in the Lyle Tribune for 49 years until Mr. Nordland's health failed and he retired in 1951. His equipment was sold to the Austin Daily Herald.

In the early days of the paper business an old Washington Hand Press was used and a few fonts of type was the equipment until 1907 when a cylinder press and a gasoline engine were installed.

POST OFFICE

The government has been represented in Lyle by a regularly appointed Postmaster almost since the town was organized. In 1856 an office was established with W. Means as postmaster and his successor was D. L. Chandler with the office in his house. Mail was received once a week on the route from Osage to Owatonna, but later was discontinued. Then in 1885 the records list Thomas Irgens as Postmaster in his general store. At a glimpse of the past records it was revealed that in July 1887 C. P. Collins officially cancelled postage behind closed doors.

The first regular postoffice dates back to 1889 when O. G. Myhre succeeded Mr. Collins on May 1, and he served three years. The postoffice was then located in the building that is now the Parish House of Our Savior's Lutheran church. Later it was moved to several locations on Grove Street, and then to three different places on Main street.

Following Myhre as postmaster were Captain Stanley ,and Frank Losey. George Robertson assumed the roll in 1896. On February 1, 1903 his son, Burton J. Robertson became Postmaster. Succeeding him were Harvey Hildebrand, Charley Fossey, N. E. Fedson, Jay Mortenson, Darrell Matter, Orville Mortenson, and the present Postmaster is Lawrence Murphy.

MAIL CARRIERS

First mail carriers were John Carter on route 1 who retired in 1927 and Chris Johnson on route 2. He was succeeded by William Murphy who serviced route 2 for 41 years until his retirement. His brother, Francis (Pat) Murphy serviced route 1 for 50 years until his retirement December 31, 1961. He estimated his milage on the route has been 500,000 miles during those years.

Mode of travel by the rural carriers in early days was by horses and sometimes by foot, later snowmobiles and the modern autos.

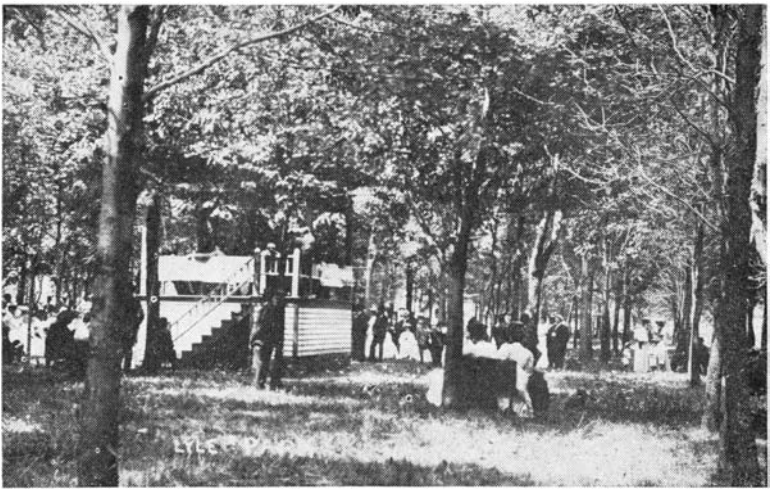
The two routes are now serviced by brothers, Jay Mortenson and Orville Mortenson.



John Carter, Lyle's first rural mail carrier.
Lyle School in background.



Sorting mail. John Carter, Wm. Murphy and Francis Murphy.
Post office then was where Hartson Locker is now located.



A Fourth of July celebration in Lyle. To the immediate right of large tree at left of photo is the tall picturesque fountain. This also shows picture of Lyle's first band shell.



Another Park area showing a Chautauqua tent.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Following the big fire in 1891 and other disasters the village saw the urgent need for a Fire Department; consequently on October 21, 1895, a meeting was called to organize a volunteer company.

Ed Stanley was chosen as first Fire Chief—F.B. Losey, secretary. At that time they owned 1,000 ft. of hose, hook and ladder, and two hose carts.

Since that day the fire department has made considerable improvement in its fire fighting equipment. The department now has three fire trucks, one used as a standby.

Present fire chief is Ernest Schaufenbil, and Charles Dr e n t h, assistant chief.

FIRST BANK

Lyle's first bank was the Exchange Bank. It was established shortly after the big fire in 1892 by A.H. Anderson. In 1900 this was merged and called the First National Bank. Anderson became its first president, and served in that capacity until his death in 1910. Later his son, R.A. Anderson came in April, 1910 from Crookston, Minnesota, where he had been a bookkeeper. He entered the bank here to take over his father's interest.

The bank closed during the depression and never reopened. In November, 1939 the First National Bank was sold to the bank now known as the Farmers State Bank where A.P. Garnatz is now president.

The old bank building now houses Leona's Antique Shop and the old original vaults are still in the building.

FIRST CREAMERY

The first Creamery was known as the Otter Creek F a r m e r s Creamery, and was no doubt given that name because it was located on Otter Creek, east of Lyle on the Martin Nelson farm, now owned by his son, Newell Nelson.

It was organized in 1896. The plant received nearly 800,000 lbs. of milk and cream and made nearly 90,000 lbs. of butter. Farmers brought fresh milk, where it was separated and the skimmed milk returned to the farmer.

First officers and directors were Charles Volstad, B. Bothum, K. Amundson, C. Meyer, O. Tieman, A.P. Martin and Ed. N. Nelson.

First buttermakers were John Bergseth, Albert Tieman and Sam Nelson.

Operation of the creamery continued here until 1916 when the buildings were sold and moved to the Harry Rohne farm north east of Lyle and the creamery building was used for a barn and the house as a dwelling at the Rohne farm. Both are still in use and occupied by the Arthur Rohne family.

This old landmark was the site of many gatherings for young people and fourth of July celebrations.

In 1916 that same year a new brick creamery building was built in the south part of Lyle. Sam Nelson continued as buttermaker in the new building.

Harry Jordan, one of the cream haulers for the new creamery, had a hair raising experience on June 23, 1917 following a deluge of rain the previous night which sent Otter Creek on a rampage and washed out bridges. He was unable to cross the creek at several places on his return trip to Lyle with cream. On another attempt near the Andrew Steene farm the earth gave way at the edge of the stream and his team of horses, cream wagon and all, plunged into the swollen stream. Harry managed to swim to a tree and hung on for one and one-half hours before neighbors heard his cries for help and he was rescued by Walter Wyborny. The horses were drowned but some of the cream cans were rescued later.

LYLE PARK

The village park was founded in 1881 when the village purchased five acres of land and planted hundreds of trees which provided shade for the entire park area for the numerous picnickers, bands and concerts and programs held there and the Fourth of July celebrations. That same year a village office was built in the southwest corner of the park, 20 x 24 feet in size.

The park also had a picturesque fountain near the bandstand after the city water tower was erected following the big fire. The base of the fountain is still in the park and is now used for a summer flower bed.



Later Park Photo. Platform on wheels used for street concert.



Inside the Martin and Fossey Dry Goods Store.
Gilbert Martin, proprietor; Amanda Mortenson, clerk.



Lyle's first Farmers Creamery.



Culvert Factory in Lyle.

When the city tower was erected, digging of the ditches for the water mains was all done by hand and the laboring men were paid by the rod and ditches were laid from 6 to 7 feet deep. The rate of pay was \$1.75 per rod. Some of the workers dug a rod a day.

Several band shells have been erected in the park, but the last one was dedicated in July, 1951.

During the summer the Chautauqua provided much entertainment for the folks in Lyle held in tents in the park. Also, various tent shows visited the town such as Uncle Tom's Cabin, Indian Shows, Dog and Pony Shows and Magic Lantern. Mr. Fischer recalls many of these entertainments in his boyhood days and one in particular was a glass blowing show, a part of which showed an engine entirely of glass and operated by steam.

Sidewalks in residential areas and the park were of wood, with kerosene lamps on some corners and a wooden town pump with a tin drinking cup attached to a chain on the corner in front of Arneson's store which was then on the site of the present Stanton Standard Oil Station and along with it was a horse watering trough.

LYLE CULVERT FACTORY

The Lyle Culvert Factory was organized in 1905 by parties from Ohio. Lyle was chosen as a suitable point for manufacturing because of the splendid railroad facilities.

After a year in business A.B. Wilder and Frank M. Beech became interested and organized the Lyle Culvert Company.

It was here that the first corrugated pipe seen in this section of the country was manufactured. It was located across the tracks in the Great Western Roundhouse, with John Olson the first foreman.

Later it was moved to the old Lyle school building which was located just north of the Congregational church on the site where the A.B. Garnatz and Nils Anderson houses are situated. The cement drive at the Anderson home earlier was the walk to the front door of the factory.

The company, operating on a large scale, soon established the branch office at Minneapolis, Minnesota where it was moved later

and George Anderson moved with the factory where it still is operating under the same name.

The Culvert factory building was then torn down and two homes were erected from the lumber, the R.D. Gregg home and Nils Anderson home. A small part of the building was moved to the Irving Wilder farm where it has been in use for many years.

After the factory moved from the G.W. Roundhouse, it was then in use as a Tow Mill.

LYLE TELEPHONE COMPANY

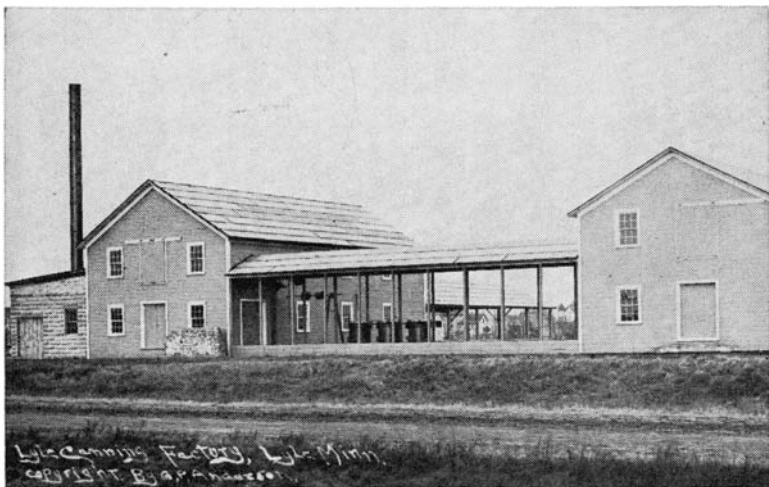
The Telephone Company was organized March 27, 1902. The first Board of Directors meeting was held April 1, 1902. John Bergason was elected president; George Robertson, vice-president; E.L. Stanley, secretary and Dr. W.F. Cobb, treasurer.

The first telephone office was located upstairs over the First National Bank on the corner on Grove Street. The telephone company was incorporated for \$20,000 and for thirty years. This sum was divided into 400 shares at \$50.00 each and sold at par.

The first telephone operator was Sadie Bisbee. Later operators were Mathilda Anderson and Grace Sherman the chief operator, followed by Grace Fortun who also taught her sister, Myrtle Fortun how to operate the switchboard in 1919. Myrtle became one of Lyle's veteran telephone operators.

In 1920 the telephone office was moved to the ground floor across the street into the building that formerly had been the Julia Anderson Millinery Shop.

Myrtle Fortun moved with the company and continued there as Chief Operator for 37 years until the Company converted to dial system in 1956. The telephone office was closed and that same year the building with several others in the same block were destroyed by fire.



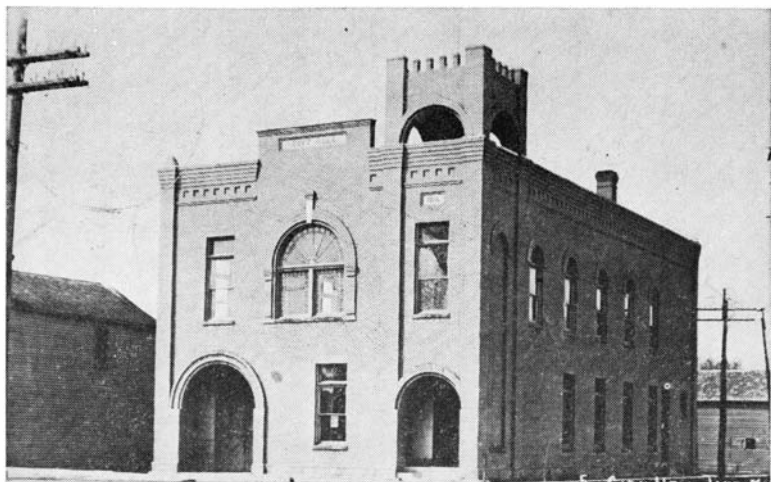
Lyle Corn Canning Factory Building.



A busy day at the Corn Canning Factory.



Farmers waiting to unload at the Corn Canning Factory.



City Hall, erected in 1906. Second story seated 500 persons.
Hall was used for many doings in Lyle.

CORN CANNING FACTORY

The corn canning factory was started in Lyle in 1913 by a company from Waverly, Iowa and Jim Corrigan was the manager. It was located in the south part of town on the site where Burghard Produce now stands.

The factory employed over 100 men and women from Lyle and surrounding community, in the factory itself and an extra 100 helpers in the rush season for hand husking of the sweet corn. Even Mexican families came north for the season with horses and covered wagons. Three cents a bushel was paid for husking. The shucked corn was then fed by hand one ear at a time to be cut from the cob. Farmers in the area contracted corn for \$12.00 a ton. Horse drawn wagons stood in line all day and into the night waiting to be unloaded, and the husks were returned to the farmer.

The canned corn was labeled as LYLE CANNING COMPANY. This industry was quite short lived as in February, 1918 the Kelley Canning Co. sold their factory to Amos Stripple of Vinton, Iowa and the buildings were torn down and the machinery shipped to Clarksville, Iowa where a new company had been organized and incorporated.

FIRST LUMBER YARD

First lumber yard was opened by L. A. Page, who disposed of his interests later to Culton, the grain buyer. Later the lumber yard was operated by L. W. Sherman, and he sold his interests to A. O. Christianson and John Norris.

CITY HALL

The City Hall was erected in 1906. It was a two-story cement structure, 40 x 80 feet, built for \$8,000, on the site where the former Dr. Frazier home was located. This house was moved to the east part of Lyle and the home is now occupied by the Raymond Bisbee family.

The first floor was used for the Fire department and equipment, with a room to the east as the council chamber, where village elections are held, and back of this was the Marshal's room.

The second story was a large hall with seating capacity of 500, and a roomy stage.

The fire department had the management of this hall that provided various amusements, entertainments, lectures etc.

Later the second story was torn down after it was condemned, and the first floor remained and still remains the City Hall.

FRATERNAL ORDERS

The Fraternal Orders in Lyle, were M.B.A. Lodge, Willow Wood Camp, Knights of Pythias, the Railroad Order of Trainmen, I. O. G.-T., and A. F. and A. M. Alma Lodge and the Royal Neighbors.

The Knights of Pythias is one of the oldest. They received their Charter in 1899 as the original charter was destroyed in the big fire of 1891.

They erected a two-story brick building of their own late in that same year which is still in use and only one of the few original buildings not destroyed by fire since its erection, but it was badly damaged by fire in late summer of 1960, but was then renovated. The first floor of their building for many years housed a drugstore.

The Royal Neighbors of America too is an old organization. The Lyle Camp was organized November 22, 1897, sixty five years ago.

Other organizations were the Modern Woodmen of America and the Modern Brotherhood of America.

FIRST LIGHT PLANT

Lyle's first light plant was built and completed and franchised in 1903, by Frederick H. Fisher and George Brix, and serviced a population of 500 inhabitants.

Nicholas G. Fischer, now of Edmonds, Washington, son of Frederick Fischer, personally made the change of installing 300 watt Mazda tungsten bulbs replacing the old carbon arc lights in February, 1910.

Lyle was the first town in the area to use the Mazda lamps in its street lights. Lyle staged a two-day Harvest Festival on August, 20 and 21 to celebrate the installation and the whole town was lit up from one end to the other. Harry Dockstader says he remembers it very well, and says that when they came near Mona they could see Lyle lit up like a city. All the folks attending wore a big button



Grove street before autos. Taken about 1902. Town pump and watering trough at left. Note the telephone poles on right side.



Grove street after autos came to Lyle. Round sign to left of telephone pole placed in street reads "Keep to the Right."



Nicholas Fischer installed first electric street lights in Lyle.



Peter Hanson,
First Harness Maker.



Lyle Saw Mill. Workers in the timber plot were Victor Anderson, Ernie Russell, Harlan Nelson, Russell Wesley, Rene Pattyn.

with dates of the Festival and there was a big Carnival in Lyle to help the town folks celebrate the occasion.

The plant was located on the corner, north of the present Harry Attlesey repair shop and across the street from the water tower. It was known as the Lyle Electric and Heating Company. Their original plans were to furnish heat, with exhaust steam to the business places as well as lights, but that never materialized.

Lights were furnished in those days only on a limited basis from sunset to midnight and from 5 a. m. to daylight except on special occasions or dances. Warning signals of three blinks were given to enable people to get home before the lights went out.

Later Fischer enlarged the plant and installed a larger boiler which burned cinders, obtained free from the Milwaukee depot except for the fee to pay the night watchman Simon Myhre for hauling them. On washdays the power was left on for several hours and ironings had to be done at night.

Fischer also experimented with other fuels such as petroleum, coke, and oil refinery products, and also burned flax straw from the Tow Mill located in the old Central Railway Roundhouse. This fuel created so much dust they had to discontinue its use.

In the fall of 1911 Fisher traded his plant for a grocery store owned by Nels Fortun of Endeavor, Wis. who continued running it for 11 years when Central States Light Company bought the lines from Fortun.

Fortun continued in the same building in the business of selling oil for a number of years and later the old light plant building was torn down.

SAW MILL

One of Lyle's later industries was the Saw Mill, erected in December, 1941. The 60 x 40 foot building was located west of the present Lyle Feed Mill, just west of the railroad tracks, and was owned by the Webster Lumber Company of Wisconsin, with Oscar Danielson as manager.

Timber was cut on various gensing plots, one from the plot southeast of Mona which was cleared and now farmed by Harlan Nelson. Also from the Gilbertson plot at St. Ansgar and from the Osage area.

Eight to ten men were employed in the timber, cutting down and trimming the trees to be hauled by trucks to the mill to be sawed into lumber and ties at the Lyle Mill. The Company employed twelve men a day at the Mill and between 400 to 500 ties a day were turned out.

Slabs were used to fire the boilers, thus saving on fuel costs. A well was drilled by A. Carberry of Carpenter to supply water for the operation of the mill.

This industry lasted only a few years, only as long as the timber lots held out, and the company moved on to a new area. When they left Lyle the building was sold and torn down and moved to Wisconsin.

ENTERTAINMENTS

The early Fourth of July celebrations were great events, especially for the youngsters, and no doubt to the oldsters too as the entertainments were rather limited in those early days.

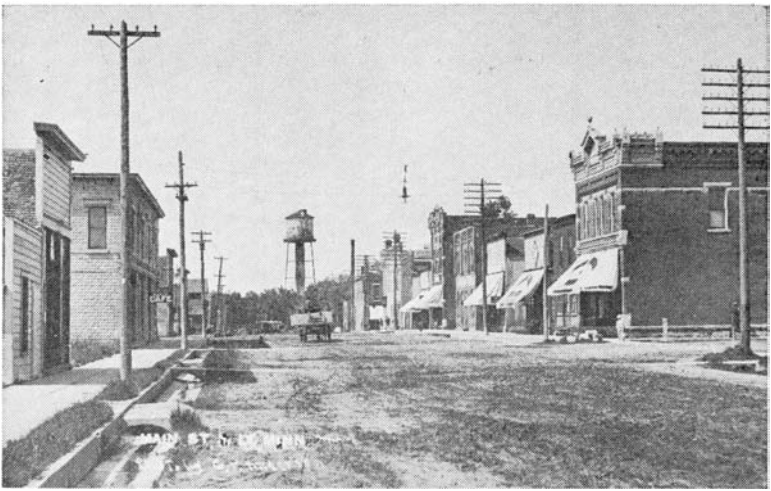
The day started off with the early morning blast fired from an anvil in one of the blacksmith shops, followed by an all-out barrage of fire crackers, ranging from one inch size to the large cannon cracker.

Everything from toy wagons to farm wagons, bicycles and buggies were trimmed with flags and bunting.

On occasions young mischievous men scattered large crowds by lighting huge phoney crackers with a burning fuse. Other attractions were horse races on the race tracks west of the railroad tracks, bicycle races and Rag Muffin parade.

One of the first merry-go rounds, erected on the grounds next to the stockyards, had seats on a body suspended from arms, pulled by a man on the end of a long sweep.

In front of the Commercial Hotel, people could listen to phonograph records (on Edison cylinder record) through tubes placed in the ears, for the price of 5 cents a record.



Main street looking north. Before autos came to Lyle. The smoke stack near the water tower is part of building that housed Lyle's Power Plant.



Lyle ball team, 1897 or 1898. Top row, left to right, Albert Ahrens, Doctor of Medicine, St. Paul; Mort Kelsey, retired Great Northern Railroad conductor, Fargo, N. D.; George Stanley, deceased; Julius Fischer, deceased. Middle row, Oscar Wilson, the man with mustache; other three were country boys, but could not be identified. Bottom row, George Eastlee and Ted Myhre, both deceased.



Market Day, 1908. Chris Olson hauls 190 bushels of oats.



1906 Ladies basketball players. Three combined teams. Back row, left to right, Mrs. Inga Lee, Matie DeRemer, Dena Hedemark (Vail), Mrs. A. B. Wilder, Bertha Anderson (Robertson), Mrs. Art Rockafellow, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Hanson, Mrs. W. L. Cole, Maude Stanley; Middle row, Josephine Thompson, Ida Anderson, Ethel Cobb (Hildebrand), Millie Tufton, Palma Lee (Hedemark), Agnes Cronan, Sadie Bisbee, Minnie Brix; Front row, Henrietta Peterson, Lulu Eastlee, Anna Williams (Anderson), Lulu Fischer.

Barber shops were a popular hangout during mid-week evenings, where kids would be slugging it out with a pair of boxing gloves or the barbers playing their guitars or harmonicas and singing tunes of the day.

For your reading convenience you could always rely on finding a copy of the Police Gazette, or the Saturday Blade, a sensational Chicago weekly, sold by boys in every part of the nation.

Winter sports on Saturdays was to hop bob-sleighs between Mona and Lyle and visa-versa. Farmers would whip their horses to keep the kids from getting on or to throw them when they got off. Skating, shinny on ice, and hard ball on ground, also soccer football were the leading winter sports.

In real cold and stormy weather kids paired off for conversation in the depot waiting rooms, there listening to the humming and moaning of the wires and as the temperture changed the humming would evolve into a vibrating noise that would make windows rattle.

Halloween eve. was an all night affair and it wasn't tricks and treats either. Mr. Fischer says "We used to like to see the harness maker sewing tugs or making harnesses, the shoemaker with his tray of wooden pegs, putting on a pair of shoes. And we always had some guy on whom we would pull jokes to our amusement.

For the grown ups they had fun too. Masquerade balls and box socials and entertainments by the several fraternal organizations. One event was the Game Hunt. Men chose sides for the event in which various game birds or animals would count certain points. The side bringing in the most points for the day's hunt received an oyster supper from the losing side. Game was plentiful then, and there were no game laws.

During summer vacations the boys would work at various off jobs. Mr. Fischer says he worked in livery stables, and sometimes took hunters out with dogs to favorite spots to hunt prairie chicken.

Bicycling too became quite a sport with advent of safety bicycle (then called wheel) with pneumatic tires (Morgan and Wright tires). It was a man's sport, since a Columbia bicycle sold for around \$125.00, a lot of money in those days. The bikes had mileage meters and toe clips. Men riding them often wore knickers and heavy woolen socks.

FIRST THEATRE

Later in 1915 the JOY Theatre was started in Lyle by Henry Gordon which was located on Grove street about where the Schauf-enbil Grocery is now located. The silent movies were held each evening for 10c and 25c admissions. Miss Ida Anderson, a Lyle music teacher at the time, was the first theatre pianist. His sister Anna Gordon, now Mrs. Wm. Gislason of Charles City was the first ticket saleslady.

Gordon later sold his theatre to Ted Johnson, and after leaving Lyle he became a pastor who served in both the state of Washington and in Minneapolis. He is now retired and resides in Minneapolis.

When Ted Johnson quit running the theatre the building was closed. Another movie house was also operated by Frank Pavelic in a building south of the present Ward Furniture store.

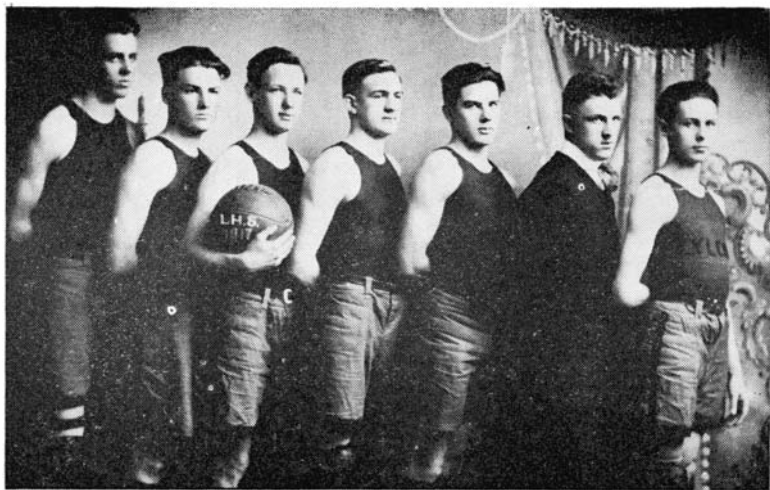
Lyle had a concert band in the early 1900's; the musicians were Walter Rawn, Henry Dahl, Andrew Anderson, Burton Hedemark, Ole Thompson, William Nordland, Louis Sherman, Claude Gordon, Roger Gibson, Olaf Sundre, Burton Robertson, Dr. A. Brunner (St. Ansgar Dentist), Sigurd Dahl, Dan Rawn, Alfred Anderson, and Mr. Pankhurst.

Lyle also had an orchestra and the musicians in that were Burton Robertson and Thorman Lund, both violinists; Henry Dahl trombonist; Dave Erickson pianist and Louis Larson, clarinet.

OTHER EARLY SPORTS

Organized sports dated back to 1897 when Lyle had a baseball team, and on through the years numerous teams were formed to supply about the only entertainment in those early days.

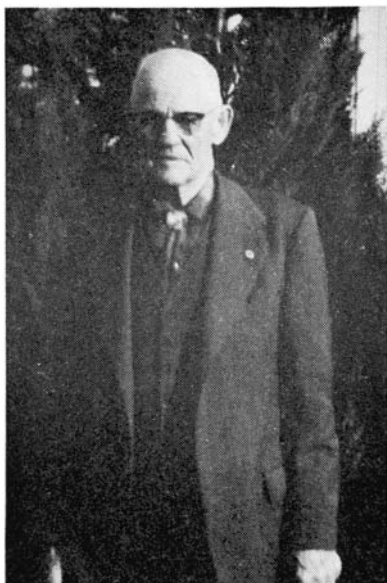
Later basketball became a new sport with the men as well as the women. The women in 1906 had three teams and were known as the BLOOMER GIRLS. The three teams were designated thus (the young girls) were the CHICKS, the middle age group the PULLETS and the married group the HENS. They played mostly for amusement rather than competition.



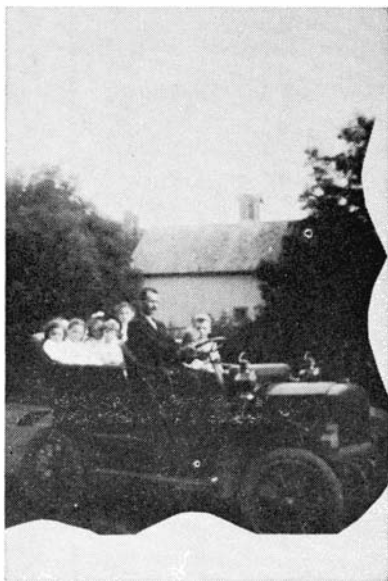
1917 Lyle High School Basketball team. Left to right, John Beach, Orrie Palmer, Jay Mortenson, captain, Ray Volstad, Lester Bothum, Robert Grant, coach, and Lester Hughes.



Lyle Agriculture Farm School. Back row, left to right, Russell Thompson, Elmer Nelson, Johnny Knutson, Alva Gregg, Wilford Murphy, Melvin Anderson, Warren Padelford, Art Anderson, Andrew Jacobson, Art Dahl; next row, Dave Nelson, Vance Hotson, Elmer Peterman, Elmer Hofland, Robert Anderson, Palmer Johnson; last row, Clarence Nelson, Clarence Walsh, Francis Murphy, Charley Bell. W. D. Rhodes was the teacher.



Nicholas Fischer of Edmonds, Washington, age 82. Photo was taken in 1962. He supplied much of the information of his boyhood days in Lyle for this story.



1906 Lambert. First auto in Lyle. Oscar A. Anderson, his daughter, Mrs. Frank Bedford and children living on Locust street.

FIRST AUTOMOBILES IN LYLE

Before the summer of 1907 Lyle had no automobiles, but that year three cars were bought in Lyle, two touring cars and one roadster. One of the touring cars was a 2-cylinder Lambert with a top speed of 20 miles an hour, and carried License No. 3 and was owned and operated by Oscar A. Anderson, a retired farmer. The first cars had no tops or windshields and made a great deal of noise. Many times the driver had to stop his auto to let a horse or team by, or lead them as the horses were terrified by that strange contraption chugging down the road. Sometimes this caused a run-a-way, injuring a driver and rider. Perhaps it was the beginning of our automobile accident casualty list. In those days it was not a necessary item. During the winter it was jacked up on blocks, perhaps until the following June, depending on road conditions.

Licenses were bought from the village treasurer; those days each village issued their own numbers. The owner tacked it to the rear of his car body which was then built of wood. The numbers were usually numerals such as were used as house numbers.

Gasoline was purchased from the grocery store, where small amounts were kept for customers who used gasoline cook stoves in hot weather. The grocer kept a barrel of 50 or 100 gallons in the back of his store.

LYLES FIRST AND ONLY AIRPORT

Kermit Torkelson, at the age of 19, son of Dr. and Mrs. Peter Torkelson was the owner of Lyle's first airplane, a red and black "Curtis Travelaire" with an o-x-five motor with a water cooled engine, and bore a government license. His father purchased it from W. B. Gerbroch, Newton, Iowa, who was Kermit's tutor at Des Moines, Iowa where he was taking an aviation course.

His father leased land from Hollis Weber west of the Lyle water tower for an airport and hanger across the road from the Weber farm home. The hanger was included in the purchase of the plane. This transaction was on August 2, 1929.

For many a year Lyle had the distinction of having the only plane in Mower county. All seasons of the year, either fair or foul, the red plane was soaring among the clouds and the hum of that plane became as common in Lyle as in the larger cities.

On one of his afternoon pleasure flights he and his companion Loie Howard encountered quite an experience, when they discovered they were right in the path of a tornado and watched it approach Lyle and saw it dip and destroy the buildings on the Adam Duerst farm. They narrowly escaped but seeing it in time to avoid it they circled it and then followed the twister to get a vivid view of the tornado in action. As it crossed the Cedar river it scooped up water from the river.

He later sold his plane after having traveled many thousands of miles in the two years ownership, and he and his family all flew on numerous trips.

Later he entered the Air Force and received the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross.

VETERAN BUSINESSMEN

A person who added much to the town of Lyle not mentioned before in this story were Ole A. Anderson who operated a jewelry store for more than 60 years.

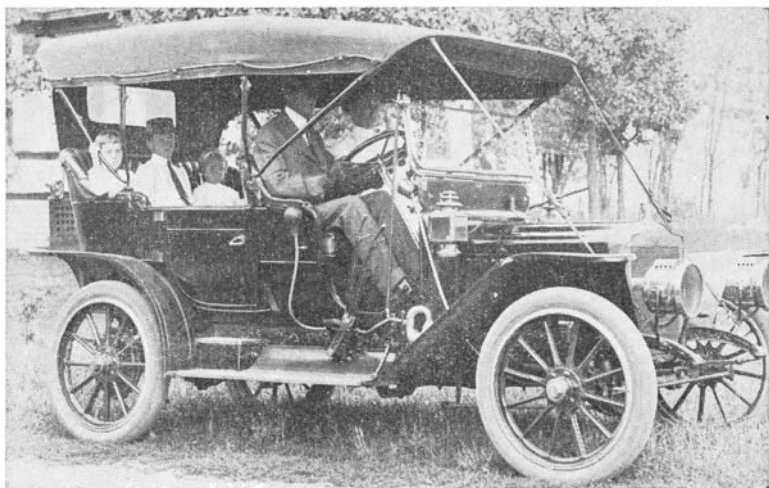
He started in Lyle in 1891 coming here from Adams, Minn. He had emigrated to the U. S. when he was but 11 years old. He was in the same building on Grove Street all the years he was in business and continued until his death when he was found dead sitting in his chair in his building, in 1952.

The building was later sold and moved to Dr. Nordland's farm north of Lyle and used as a farm building.

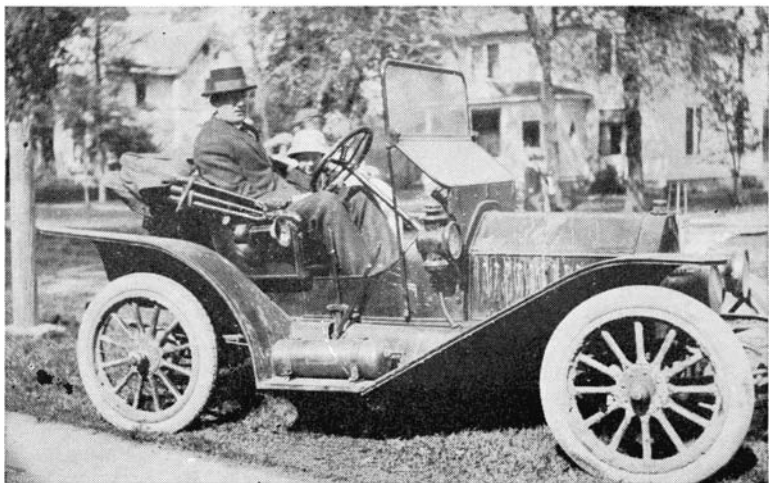
Another veteran businessman Roy Hobkirk, operated a barber business also on Grove street in the building next to the Hartson Locker for 58 years.

He came to Lyle in 1910, retired in 1958 and died the following year.

He started his barbing before electric lights were in Lyle and used the old style kerosene lamps, then later the gasoline lamps. Haircuts were 25c and shaves 10c. He also opened the first Beauty



1910 Maxwell owned by Frank Beach, cashier at First National Bank. With his wife and family, Catherine, John, and Marjorie.



Dr. Peter Torkelson and his red sports Buick car.
This was also one of Lyle's first autos.



Kermit Torkelson, owner of Lyle's first airplane.



Ben Helfritz, Lyle drayman, on Market Day, November, 1908. Taken in front of the Livery Barn. Building to the right was the Dixon Hotel, now the Williamson Plumbing and Heating Shop. Ladies on the dray wagon, left to right, are, Carol Parkhurst, Vida Peterson, Phoebe Peterson, Floy Dahl, Alice Lund, Helen Brix and Lucille Cole.

Shop in Lyle in connection with his Barber business and Lena Nes-set (now Mrs. W. J. Tyrell) of Osage was the operator. Besides his barbering he also made use of his hobby of fixing all types of clocks. Prices had jumped considerably since he started as the last shave he gave before he closed his shop was \$1.00 and haircut \$1.50.

Henry Dahl was in business in Lyle for a period of 55 years. He started his hardware business in 1901 during the horse and buggy days, and continued in that business with five different partnerships, having survived his first four partners.

His first business began in the building which is now a tavern on the west side of main street, then to the building which is now used as the Dahl's warehouse and in 1905 moved to the building on Grove street that has since been the Dahl Hardware and Implement. His son Lloyd, and grandson Glenn operated the store until Lloyd's death in March, 1963.

Mr. Dahl received his 50 years of recognition from the Hardware Association in 1955 and passed away in the fall of 1956.

Mr. Dahl loved music and for many years he and his family had an orchestra. He sang with the Dahl brothers quartet for many years. His wife was a music teacher which added much to the music ability of the family.

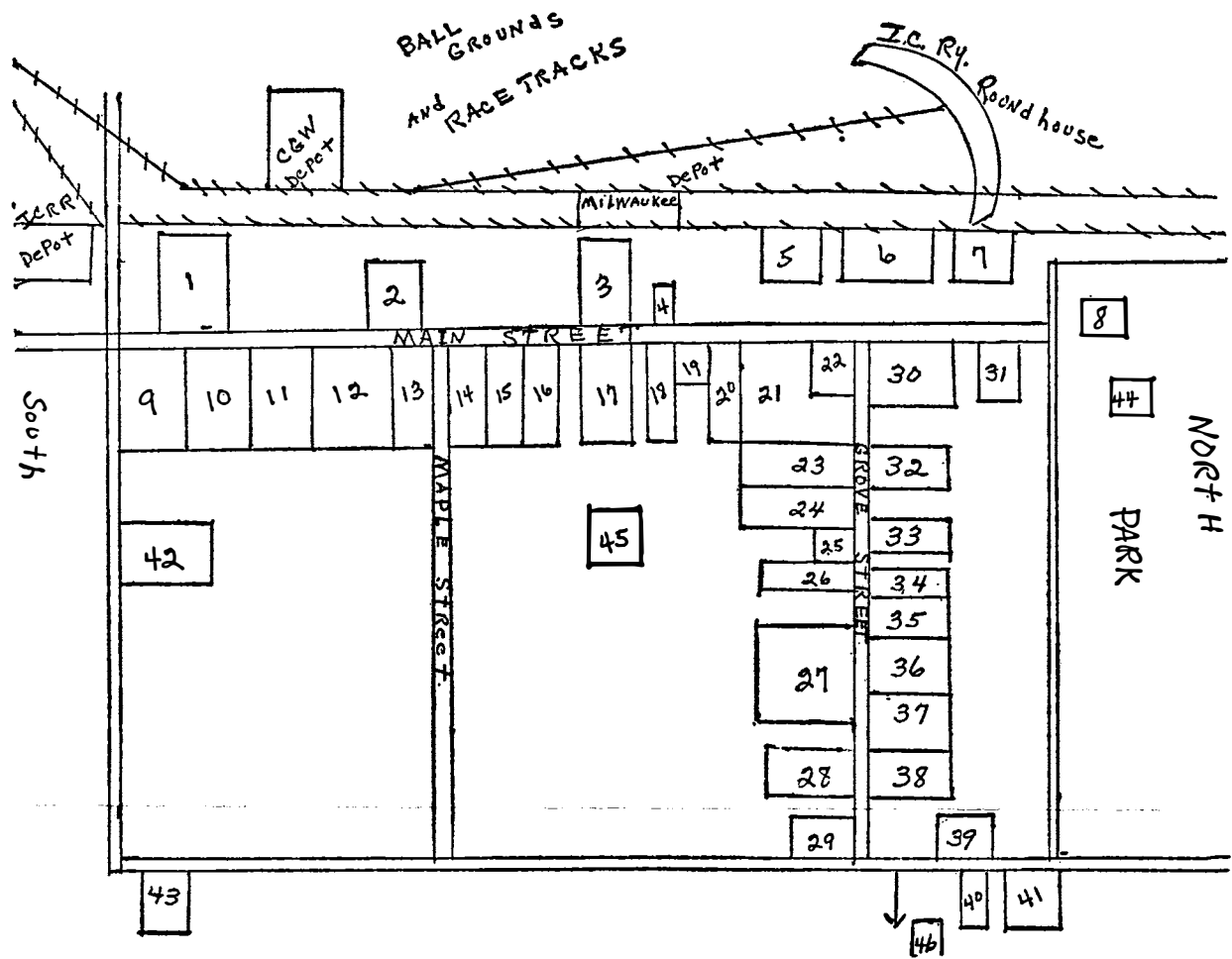
He also was a member of the Lyle Fire department, School board and village council.

Jim Mortenson dealt with the Lyle public for many a year, 48 years to be exact, as an employee in the Lumber Company. He started working for L. W. Sherman in 1897 and continued under five different managements.

He was a manager of the last two firms for the Crane Co. and then the Botsford, Co. until his retirement June 1, 1946. He received \$25.00 a month in the early days of employment.

Ben Helfritz, the Lyle drayman, also has a record of long-standing service to the public which was 52 years. He began in 1908, coming here from St. Ansgar and with his team and wagon hauled many loads of freight from the depots, later by truck and retired in 1960.

He also was the town constable for 37 years and a volunteer fireman almost from the time he came to Lyle until physical difficulties forced him to quit.



Lyle Business Establishments — 1898 - 1899

1. Power's Hotel.
2. Meat Market.
3. Nissen's Saloon.
4. Bicycle Shop.
5. Grain Elevator (Jewett Sherman, Mgr.)
6. Lumber Yard (L. W. Sherman).
7. Stockyards (Lee Barron, Operator).
8. City Jail (Ed Eastley, Marshal).
9. Johnson's Jewelry and Repair.
10. Barber Shop.
11. Blacksmith Shop (Hank Plain, later Frank Kavorik).
12. Livery Stable (Pete Hildebrand).
13. Johnson's Restaurant.
14. Hardware Store; Dance Hall above, operated by H. N. Peterson.
15. Saloon (H. N. Peterson).
16. Restaurant (John Olson).
17. Commercial Hotel; Livery in rear (44), Gust Hildebrand.
18. General Store, O. J. Myhre; Masonic Hall and Dr. Cobb's office.
19. Barber Shop (Al Colby).
20. Stanley's Drug Store and Post Office.
21. Hardware Store & Tin Shop (Ryerson, Prop.).
22. First National Bank (A. H. Anderson, President).
23. Robertson Drug Store; Opera House above.
24. General Store, Lund and Lindland; Knights of Pythias Lodge above; also Dr. Frazer's office.
25. Barber Shop, Roger Gibson.
26. Ahren's Meat Market.
27. Wilson's General Store.
28. Frazer Sisters Millinery Store.
29. Anderson's Jewelry.
30. General Store, Ed Arneson.
31. Blacksmith Shop, Saunders, (later Rdu Gordon).
32. General Store, Lou Olson, (later Joy Theatre).
33. Hedemark Shoe Store and Repair; family lived upstairs.
34. L. P. Thompson Grocery.
35. Harness Shop, (Phillipson's Photo Gallery above).
36. Newspaper Shop.
37. Harness Shop, Peter Hanson.
38. Furniture Store and Funeral Shop, F. H. Fischer, (later Blakestad).
39. Dr. Frazer's residence. (Later the city hall was built on this site).
40. Congregational church.
41. Public School.
42. Cigar Factory, Banville, proprietor.
43. Methodist church.
44. City Water Tower and Tank.
45. Livery Stable.
46. Fischer Sash and Wood Working Shop.

