

YESTERDAYS
OF THE
SAWYER
AREA

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YESTERDAYS OF THE SAWYER AREA

We talk about the "good ol' days,"
and each remembers different ways.
Only if it's down in black and white,
who knows what's wrong or right?

There must have been great struggle and strife
in those early days of pioneer life.
The one hundred years since they came
brought many a living, and a few fame.

At the Sawyer Cemetery graves are found
of early settlers, buried in hallowed ground.
The Sawyer Community Club took the task
to care for that place, no glory to ask.

It is our hope with the sale of these books
to have perpetual care and keep the looks.
A neat, pleasant place to visit and see
on the Prairie Land, the home of the free.

Marcella Effertz Johnson

The pages of this book are dedicated to the memory of the pioneers who gave their time, effort and in many cases, their lives, building the foundations of our school, churches, community and homes.

Our thanks to the many folks who shared their memories, pictures and articles to form this history. We've tried to sort through the stories, but many have conflicting facts or are incomplete, due to fading memories and lost history. In many cases, it was impossible to document sources, as bits and pieces were gathered from books, newspapers, biographies and minds for one particular story. These pages encompass only a small fragment of 100 years of a little village and its people.

In appreciation, the Sawyer Community Club would like to thank the following:

Dorothy Ruth Hoy, daughter of homesteaders Wm. and Lillian Ruth, for her abundant supply of stories printed in the *Ward County Independent*.

Ward Ellis Bunker, grandson of pioneers I.G. and Adda Bunker, for his permission to use research he gathered for completion of credits while attending Minot State Teachers College.

Patty Francis-Hildenbrand, great great-granddaughter of homesteader Elmer, for sorting through the assortment of history to complete this book.

Countless others who contributed their thoughts and photos.

FOREWARD

In order to understand the purpose of this book, the editor and contributing writers felt it necessary to provide information about the Sawyer Cemetery, located north of the village. The cemetery has a long history of improvements donated by the loved ones of people buried there, not only in money, but also in time and effort. This book is one of those contributions, the profits of which will go toward the upkeep of the cemetery.

When J. C. Dard homesteaded north of Sawyer in 1903, he brought his daughter Lottie and two sons. Nearby, a young man named Curtis Cross homesteaded a quarter of land, and he and Lottie were soon married. In August of 1904, Lottie died of tuberculosis, leaving a small son. Prior to her death, she requested that she be buried on the family homestead. Her grave was the first in a plot of land that eventually became the Sawyer Cemetery, and her grave marker stands on the highest part.

The funeral of Mrs. Cross was not held in a church, according to Sawyer historian, Dorothy Ruth Hoy, who attended the service. There wasn't a church or school building to hold the service in, so a platform was erected in the street and the minister gave the sermon from that vantage point. Mourners stood in the hot sun during the service.



The Sawyer Cemetery

Records show that in 1911, Curtis Cross donated the land to the community of Sawyer. Grave plots were to be sold for no more than \$5.00. In July 1911, a group of men from Sawyer and New Prairie townships held a meeting to organize the Sawyer Cemetery Association. These men included F. N. Pitkin, chairman; L. B. Krogsted, secretary; W. A. Ruth, Wm. Hodges, F. B. Pitkin, Sherman Rowe, and Jay Woodsum, directors. By this time, there were over 30 gravesites located at the

cemetery. The club paid land agent T. E. Tenney \$50.00 for 1.8 more acres adjoining the land.

Minutes of the club included business about building fences, building a shelter for the gravediggers, but on May 28, 1923, a different sort of business was discussed. The body of W. E. Royce had been buried in the wrong lot. A committee contracted the Reinholdt Brothers to move the body to the correct lot. In the meantime, lots continued to be sold, and the club kept a balance at the First Bank of Sawyer. It is believed that the building on the north side of the cemetery was built in 1934, since building materials which had been paid for were listed in the records. A third addition was made in 1951, when the cemetery purchased more adjoining land. Some burials had already been made in this area in 1946. These 10' x 24' lots sold for \$20.

Thirty years after Lottie's death, the Sawyer Homemakers Club was experiencing poor participation. They voted to change the club's name to the Sawyer Community Cemetery Club, and its purpose was to care for the cemetery. The club purchased more land, and many improvements have been made since.

In 1977, the members of the Sawyer Cemetery Association voted to turn over all books, business and \$162 to the Sawyer Community Cemetery Club.

The minutes from 1965 to 1975 include mowing bills, which ranged from \$50 to \$80 per cutting. In 1980, the price jumped to \$150 a cutting, and has since continued at that price. An early statement shows that Guy Markle once mowed the grounds with horses and a mower for \$2.75.



The Sawyer City Hall and the Fire Department

The Community Club organized dinners to help pay for the upkeep of the cemetery, and in 1972, they held their first elevator dinner. The first year, the club received \$200 for their efforts. In 1979, they received \$668. The changing farm economy forced the last dinner to be held in 1985, as the Sawyer Elevator merged with the Minot Farmers Elevator.

In 1973, the club donated \$200 to the construction of a new city hall. It included a large meeting room and kitchen, with the firehall in the rear. The club had maps made of the cemetery, which still hang in the hall. Since its construction, the club has also donated \$100 toward a tiled floor, \$100 toward sidewalks in front of the building,

two tables, dishes and silverware, as well as drapes for the windows. The club has since held all its meetings in the building.

In 1978, a new fence was built on three sides of the cemetery and a gate was added to the east at a cost of \$847.05. Leveling inside the cemetery and pruning of bushes and shrubs was done for \$300.

Sometimes, improvements were donated by community members. In the 1950s, Clara Gransted Hedahl had pine trees planted on the grounds in memory of family members. Ted Larsen and daughter Myrna started a fund for perpetual care in memory of loved ones with the hopes that interest earned from the money would pay for the cost of mowing. Loren Andreson sprayed the grounds with weed killer as a memorial gift, and the Sawyer firemen sprayed the pine trees in 1984.

In 1986, club members Marcella Johnson and Delores Booth began researching material and gathering information for a history of Sawyer. They hoped the book would help raise funds for the upkeep of the cemetery. One major setback came in November of 1986, when a trailer fire destroyed much of the material for the book. Some of the material was original and couldn't be recovered, but much of it was gathered again for this edition.



Various gatherings of the Sawyer Community Cemetery Club.

THE FIRST SETTLERS

Explorers crossed this part of the country as early as 1742. They reported many buffalo, deer and other wild animals, as well as beautiful lakes, rivers and grassland. This part of the Louisiana Purchase, known as Dakota Territory in 1861, became a state Nov. 2, 1889.

The prospect of free land in the 1800s beckoned the early pioneers to North Dakota. Most of the homesteaders came from the surrounding Midwestern states of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota and South Dakota, where they were forced to pay high prices to rent land.

The same year that North Dakota earned its statehood, the beginnings of a town were planted southeast of Minot. The land was unsettled and wild, but the thought of starting over and building from scratch didn't deter the hardy homesteaders.

The first three families traveled together from Sioux Falls, SD. Brothers John Francis (Frank) Booth and Edwin Booth and the James Wilson family set out May 24, 1882, driving 20 to 25 head of horses and cattle ahead of their two prairie schooners.

The Booth and Wilson trail took them through Milbank, SD, where they stopped to rest and gather supplies. After reaching Ft. Sisseton, they continued north. When they reached the main line of the Northern Pacific Railroad, the travelers turned west and followed it to Jamestown. They remained there overnight, and awoke the next morning to find their horses had disappeared. Bill Wilson, the son of James, trailed the horses 12 miles back, and found them in the safekeeping of a farmer who remembered the runaways when they were in the company of their owners the previous day.

Upon Bill's return with the horses, the families again took to the trail, heading 100 miles north to Devils Lake. Their July 3 arrival at the Ft. Totten Indian and Military Reservation allowed them to see the Native Americans in full paint and gear for the yearly pow-wow. Frank Booth wrote in a letter to T. E. Tenney, Sawyer land agent in 1905, that they "were wonderfully painted and their dances were something worth seeing. There were Indians from all over, several thousand of them."

They stayed for a few days, and then started for the Mouse River, over 100 miles west. They didn't head in a direct line for the Mouse River, but instead followed a trail, simply for the convenience of it. Despite that fact, Booth wrote that "it did not seem to have been traveled hardly any."

During their long trek, the travelers never encountered another person or animal other than their own until they reached the river. Near the Villard Post Office, a few miles east of Velva, they met a man who had recently squatted on some land, but had not yet built a home. Very few people had settled in the area, and they had their pick of the land.

They followed the river for 60 miles to Burlington. Within this distance they encountered only eight homesteaders. As this part of the valley didn't satisfy the travelers, they turned back, and settled in the valley between what is now Velva and Sawyer. The trip took them six weeks.

The Wilson family took a claim two miles west of Velva, in what was then called Scriptown. The Booth brothers each claimed land just into Ward County. Les and Charles Anderson, brothers who had taken claims east of Wilson, helped build the Wilson house. The hills south of Wilson's home furnished Bill with an occupation. He sold lime to other settlers as they passed through the area.

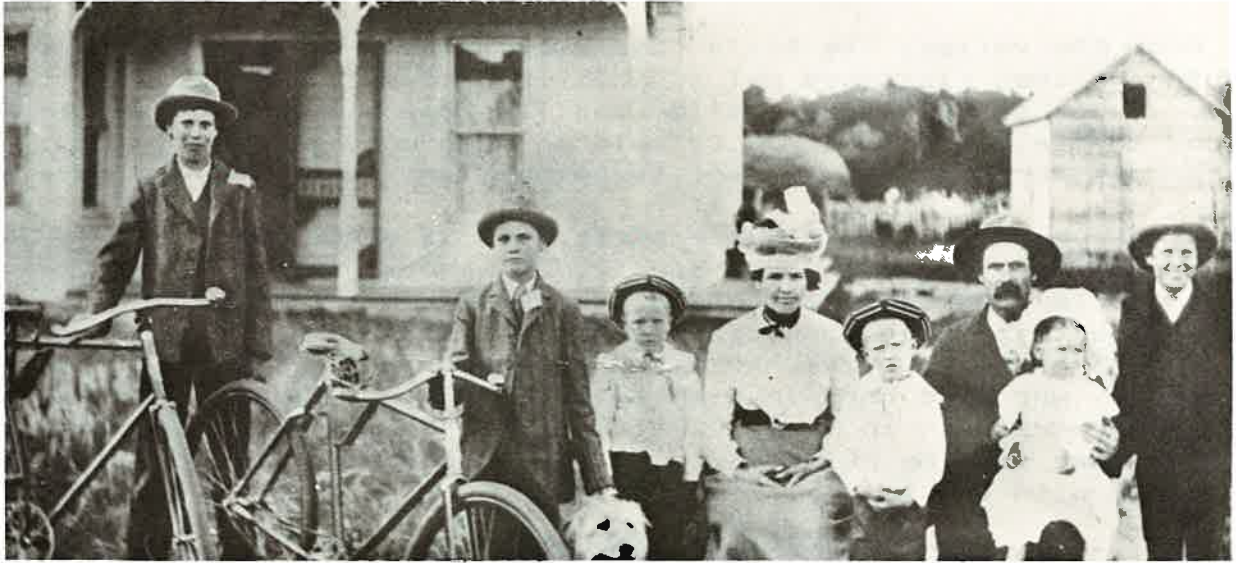
The Booth brothers hauled logs from the river banks with the help of the oxen team and constructed their own homes. Frank hunted and trapped, catching fox, beaver, mink and deer, and selling these pelts during his trips to Bismarck.

The Great Northern Railroad reached only as far as Devils Lake and supplies had to be obtained from there or from Bismarck, 100 miles away from the homesteaders. Frank, Ed and Bill traveled each fall to purchase supplies for the winter -- a trip which took one week by wagon. These supplies had to last the entire winter. Bill regularly purchased two five-gallon cans of kerosene for the winter. During one rough ride home, one of the cans developed a leak and seeped into a nearby sack of flour. He was forced to discard the entire bag of flour. During another trip, a roll of tar paper rested against a sack of flour and the overpowering smell permeated it. Bill kept the flour, as it was too late in the season to turn back for more.

Often, families who hadn't yet reached land to homestead would spend the night at the Wilson home. The kerosene was used for guests and visitors during these times, while the family often used only firelight when they were alone.

Mary Ann Wilson, Bill's sister, was 10 years old when her family moved to the Sawyer area. She remembered many Native Americans traveling along the road near her home on their way from White Earth to Ft. Totten. Some often stopped to trade their goods for milk, butter or other supplies. They learned bits and pieces of the travelers' languages in their efforts to converse with each other. A butte to the north of the Booths is thought to have been a lookout or meeting place for the Native Americans in the early days. Graves, tools and arrowheads have since been uncovered. Deep round sloughs were also discovered north of the butte, and were thought to be buffalo wallows.

Frank married Mary Ann Wilson in 1887. All six of their children were born in the log house near the river. Robert Booth, Frank's grandson, still resides on the original homestead. In 1982, a gala event was held by the entire Booth clan, celebrating 100 years on the homestead.



The Frank Booth family (left to right): Charlie, Lawrence, Vern, Mary Ann, Vance, John (Frank), Pearl, and Ed.

Other families settled shortly after the Wilson and Booth families. Some of the first included the families of Elmer Francis, Perry Johnson, Ed Skinner and Joe Tennai, all traveling from Minnesota or Iowa.

EARLY SETTLERS AROUND SAWYER

From the valley, the hills rose sharply both to the north and south and then flattened out as prairie land as far as the eye could see. It was to this area--valley and flat-top alike--that settlers found themselves attracted. It held an abundance of water, food, materials for shelter, no rent to be paid and land at a low rate.

At 30 years of age, Elmer Francis set out with his family in June 1882 from Grey Eagle in Todd County, Minnesota. They drove a yoke of oxen and 18 head of cattle ahead of them on their path to North Dakota, a trip which took six weeks.

He and his wife Lydia had eight children: Mark, Amy, Earl and Gertrude, who were born in Minnesota; and Ralph, Harry, Nellie and Lucy who were born in North Dakota. Lizzie Martin, a hired woman who helped care for the children, and Isaac Woodliff, a hired man, also traveled with the family.



Mrs. Elmer (Lydia) Francis (left) and Mrs. Hodges at the Cozy Restaurant about 1927-1928. A vacant lumber yard is now located where the restaurant once was.

When they reached Dakota, they traveled through Creel Bay and followed the old Ft. Stevenson trail to a point within sight of Dogden Butte. They then veered northwest toward the Mouse River, as rumors had circulated that a store was about to be built at the future site of Sawyer.

Wild game was abundant en route to their destination. Elmer hunted with his rifle to supplement their food supplies. After picking the site where he planned to build his cabin, Elmer began unloading the wagon. While getting his rifle out of the wagon, it discharged accidentally, and sent a bullet through his left wrist. Elmer left his wife and family three miles upriver from the future site of Sawyer to seek medical attention for his wound. The trip to Ft.

Totten, the site of the nearest doctor, took him several weeks, and his wrist was in poor shape when he arrived. His wrist remained partially disabled for the rest of his life.

The family managed without Elmer with the help of Woodliff and Charles Bailey, a settler from South Dakota they had met on their trail. When Elmer returned, work on their 18 x 22 log cabin had been nearly completed by Bailey and Woodliff. Elmer had good success in farming from the start, and continued for eight years to use oxen for his work.

A year after Elmer settled, his father Cyrus, a Civil War veteran, took a claim near his son. He settled where the Goheen Ranch is now located. Eva, Hattie and Nellie, Elmer's sisters, also followed their father to the Mouse River. John and Charles Francis, two of Elmer's brothers, settled near Elmer. When John died, he was buried on his father's land. His coffin and remains were later discovered by James Goheen while excavating for a sewer line.

After Elmer had established himself in the Mouse River, he traveled to Olds, Alberta in Canada in 1903 to tame another land. Eventually, he had homesteaded a large section of land for himself many miles from a railroad. Members of the Francis family followed him there. One by one, however, the Francis clan returned to Ward County, which they regarded as their true home.

Woodliff, who had become a woodcutter on the Missouri River, later returned to marry Lizzie Martin. He was reputed to have saved \$800 or more and carried it with him at all times. On a winter day, Bailey and Woodliff went deer hunting near Sawyer. When Woodliff didn't return, the suspicions of the settlers were aroused, and they kept an eye on Bailey. Bailey, who was aware of the suspicions, tried to escape to Canada. Elmer Francis walked to McHenry County, and notified Bill Wilson and another man named Westin. The posse caught up with Bailey near the Des Lacs River junction. While attempting to escape, Bailey was shot by Wilson. Before dying at the Henry Gasman house, Bailey confessed he had shot Woodliff and placed his body under the ice in the river. His body was never found.

Wilson reported his story to Bismarck officials and was cleared of any blame in the matter. Bailey's wife and child were taken to Bismarck, and later returned to South Dakota. It was rumored that Woodliff's money was never returned to Lizzie, but had been sewn into the lining of Bailey's baby by his wife. Mark Francis, son of Elmer, witnessed the burial of Bailey. According to Mark, he was placed in a rough box, and lowered into the grave by ropes used for harnessing a team of horses. His grave is on the side of a hill on what was once Fred Schmidt's land.

When a doctor advised that a change of climate would be good for E. D. Skinner in 1886, he traveled from Iowa to North Dakota with his family by passenger train. They claimed land west of Sawyer, and in the spring of 1888, Skinner became clerk of the Pleasant School District. He held this position for 43 years. In addition, Skinner was the first teacher in the first schoolhouse in Sawyer Township, which was located in the coulee across the road from the present-day Jim Washek farm. He was elected justice of the peace in 1888, and was

certified by the "county clerk and ... authorities of Washington, D.C., thus to aid ... war veterans in getting their pensions." He also served as state representative from the 29th District from 1909 to 1911.



Skinner, proud of his pioneer heritage, wrote of the time when he broke his leg. "The harness strap broke going up a steep hill near my home with a load of hay. The leg was broken five inches below the ball and socket, a complete slanting break of the femur." Skinner was 16 miles from the nearest doctor. "This is the time when a pioneer needs a friend. I was thrown 42 feet when the wagon tipped. Only a firm hold permitted me to be here today to write you.

"I was senseless, 50 or 100 rods from home, and the warm supper my good wife was preparing for me on a cold November p.m. at about 4 o'clock would have to be warmed. I was unconscious, and near death, but God in his mercy and kindness had ordained otherwise. My dear wife, the companion pioneer came to the rescue. I knew it not. She, with our small child, went to her brother, our nearest neighbor, harnessed his team, and hitched them to the lumber sled, and drove over a half mile to where I was, still unconscious. They removed the endgate, rolled me on by boards and started slowly for our humble home. My wife sat on one side of me. When...I groaned, she told her brother to stop. My reason began to return by the time the wagon reached the house. Reason had returned to husband and father. Oh! What joy to them, to that pioneer, what sorrow and sadness, to the parental provider for those dear ones in charge."

When Skinner had recovered enough to return to his duties, his 13-year-old daughter helped out. "She milked four cows, took charge of our little band of sheep, and added 60 fine lambs. While on two crutches, aided by our two babies--a girl nearly six and a boy four years old--I held the hoe, made the furrow as far as I could, and then dropped the seeds. I moved forward and repeated the process. We put in a fine garden."

Late in 1907, Mrs. Skinner discovered she had cancer in the lower stomach. She died Feb. 27, 1908. "We laid her beside our three babies on our homestead, now a regular surveyed plotted tract of land donated by me to the trustees of the Sawyer Township for the general public." After her death, the family moved into Sawyer.

George Beck and Rose Faul were married in Odessa, Russia, and later traveled to the United States. They farmed in South Dakota for six years, and then traveled to North Dakota in 1893. They settled six miles southwest of Sawyer.

The Becks lived in a coulee on their land part of the summer until they finished building the house. Albert Beck, one of the nine children, remembers how his mother would tie an oil lantern to a pole on the hill above the coulee where they lived to aid his father in returning home at night. Many settlers traveling through the area stayed with the Becks the following winter. George helped many of

these homesteaders locate their claim by means of a ribbon tied to a wagon wheel and counting the turns.

The ranchers who had cattle grazing in the open prairie strongly objected to homesteaders settling the land. A year after the Beck family settled, George plowed a small piece of his land, and sowed it to flax. With the prospect of a good crop, George awoke one morning to find his crop destroyed by the free-roaming cattle. He later turned to sheep and cattle ranching.

An immigrant train loaded with stock, household items and the personal possessions of six families arrived in Sawyer in March 1898. They included the families of J. C. Oard, Ed Tate, Hayes, W. A. Ruth, T. A. McGrew and J. D. Towns, all coming from Iowa.

The men had purchased railroad land in Carrington in Eddy County, and were in the process of building shacks on their claims. When the train car had to be vacated, the shacks weren't yet completed. The families were allowed to stay in the Carrington courthouse.

In the early spring of 1900, five of the six families filed claims in the southeastern part of Ward County. The Ruth family settled on land on the McHenry-Ward County line, and the others in a line west of them. The Tate family traveled 75 miles further northwest.

After their new homes were completed, the men traveled back to their Eddy County claims and put in their crops. The women and children were sent to their new homes via the 2 a.m. night flyer through Velva. Dorothy Ruth Hoy, one of the daughters of W. A. Ruth, was one of the passengers. "When daylight came and I looked out of the depot window, I thought I had never seen such green grass. It was like green velvet, and I heard afterwards that was why the town was named Velva," she wrote.

Many of the settlers homes were just shacks, consisting of only one room. A lean-to addition was often built on later. The first shack the Ruth family lived in was 12 x 12 feet, and the door was hinged by leather thongs with a wooden latch.

Until the wells could be dug, they hauled water from a spring on the Larson farm located south of Black Butte, an outstanding hill that had earned its name because it was the only hill surrounded by miles of prairie.

Dorothy's family and others in the community sent to Sears Roebuck in Chicago or T. M. Roberts Co. in Minneapolis for groceries every fall, as there was no village of Sawyer at that time. They would order 20-pound boxes of crackers, 25-pound boxes of dried fruit, and large quantities of sugar to tide them over the winter months when they couldn't be sure of getting to town.

In 1898, Richard Klimpel came to North Dakota from Minnesota, and filed on a homestead six miles west of Sawyer. In 1901, he returned to Minnesota to marry Dorothea Inselmann, a schoolmate, and brought her back to his new home. Richard served as village marshall in Sawyer for a few years, and as janitor at the Sawyer school for 16.

Joe Effertz traveled to McHenry County from Glencoe, MN, in the spring of 1900. While in Minnesota, he met his future wife, Hannah, at a dance, and they began an eight-year courtship. Joe's sisters kept house for him while he worked his land. In 1907, Hannah arrived and they were married. They had eight children--five boys and three girls. The three eldest children--Marcella (Mrs. Oscar Johnson), Jerome and Marcus--graduated from Sawyer High School. The other five--Bernadine, Sylvester, Stanley, Katherine, and Gerald--attended Velva High School.

In 1904, Milo Pitkin traveled from LaCrosse, Wis., and settled on a homestead northeast of Black Butte. His wife and daughter Louise joined him in the spring of 1906 and the following fall, he began working for Ora Bailey on the *Sawyer Clipper*. It was a two and a half mile walk one way for Milo, a trip he made twice a day. After the family moved into the village, Louise married Earl Pounds in 1908.

Sam Liebelt filed on a homestead south of Sawyer in the early 1900s. He then built a sod house in the coulee. Before moving on to his homestead, Sam had ordered a cookstove for his home. When it didn't arrive on time, he was forced to cook on a circle of rocks with a fire inside.

Before Sam had finished building his barn, it began to rain. He brought his team into the house with him. As his bed hadn't arrived yet either, he slept on hay.

For two years, Sam remained single. When a Russian family settled in the area, Sam married one of the daughters. After six children, Sam's wife died. For nine more years, he was a single man, hiring women to take care of his children. His second wife, Elsie Greenwald, came to North Dakota from Iowa with her parents in 1898. After living in Minot for one year, the family moved to a homestead south of Sawyer. They then moved to Ruso and stayed in that area for four years. They then moved to an area north of Sawyer to a farm owned by M. L. Himes.

Lyle A. Corey came from Iowa in March 1900, but soon returned home. He came back the following spring and filed on a homestead three miles north of Sawyer. That fall, he returned to Iowa for his sweetheart, Hannah. They moved into the section house, the only building in Sawyer at the time, and boarded the section boss, John Backman. They later moved to Minot, where they stayed during the winter months. They returned to the claim in the summer.

Ludvig Bechtold and his son Ludvig, Jr., filed homesteads in Neumann Township in 1900, and returned to their home in Ellendale. In the spring of 1901, the two moved back to live on the homestead. They stayed with the George Beck family for three weeks until they could finish their sod house.

Ludvig's wife and other children came by train to Velva. They had to wait until morning before going out to the homestead, and the youngest children became so frightened and their wails became so loud, the conductor wouldn't let them stay on the train.

In the fall of 1901, Ludvig traveled to Fessenden, leaving his wife and children alone on the homestead. Earlier that day, they had hauled sunflowers and laid them out on the roof of the house to store and dry. Late that night, a storm came up and the family heard strange noises. Thinking someone was trying to break in, they all sat up until 3 in the morning. When the sun came up, they discovered the neighbor's cattle had been nibbling on the sunflowers. James Marlenee had a large cattle ranch about a mile from the Bechtolds, and the cattle were allowed to roam free during certain months of the year.



Looking northwest over Sawyer around 1910.

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Huber, parents of Jacob Huber, decided to leave Russia and make their home in Buenos Aires, South America during the early 1900s. Jacob was born in his parents' native land before the trip. Two years later his parents decided South America held no future for them, and they returned to Russia.

A few years later, an uncle in South Dakota wrote the parents and told them of the inexpensive land and excellent crops and opportunities. Fred Huber and his wife, his brothers with their wives and five children, set out, and in due course, arrived in New York City.

While passing through a medical checkpoint for immigrants, it was discovered that Jacob and two cousins were suffering from an eye disease which had to be corrected before they could gain admittance into the country.

The other members were judged fit and decided to travel on to South Dakota. Jacob's father planned to return in five to six weeks to pick the children up, but before he could return, they found themselves alone on a boat returning to Russia due to a mixup in records.

Jacob then lived with his grandparents in Russia until their death. An uncle who had returned from America took them under his wing. He grew up on the family farm during turbulent times when the communist revolution was in the works. Jacob witnessed scenes that turned his heart against his homeland and caused him to yearn for America. In the meantime, his father had become an American citizen and was working to have his son with him.

Jacob made his way through Odessa to Moscow in November 1922, and contacted the American consulate. When he reached New York City, he had no trouble with officials and was soon on his way to his new home in Sawyer, where his family had settled.

On a Sunday afternoon, July 23, 1923, Jacob was greeted by nearly the entire community of Sawyer. He later moved to his own farm and eventually took a wife, Pauline.

Jabez Hubbard filed on a homestead near Sawyer in 1902. He later moved a house into Sawyer and opened a dray line and livery barn. When the mail route was started, Jabez carried the mail. He eventually bought and managed the J. C. Oard store/post office.

Jabez's brother Ralph also traveled from Iowa to Sawyer. Ralph had been a Sunday school missionary in Iowa, and continued in this line of work in Ward and adjoining counties. Before 1905, Ralph said he had traveled about 8,500 miles of road, had visited about 3,600 families and had organized and assisted 35 Sunday Schools.

"COME NORTH, YOUNG MAN...TO DAKOTA"

Congress passed the Homesteaders Act in 1862, which allowed the settlers to file on land. After living on it for five years, the settler would own the land. In 1880, congress reduced that time to six months. Eventually, the Pre-emptions Act allowed the settlers to purchase 160 acres for \$1.25 an acre, providing he or she did not own more than 320 acres in any other state or territory. Again, the settler had to live on the land for a minimum of six months and make certain improvements. The Tree Claim Act allowed settlers to purchase another 160 acres for \$14, providing trees were planted.

T. E. Tenney, land office director in Sawyer, solicited letters from Sawyer farmers in an attempt to bring other settlers to the area. His pamphlets discouraged the myths about North Dakota that circulated throughout other states, and encouraged them to pick up and move to North Dakota, particularly the Sawyer area.

Tenney offered to refund the railroad passage in full of anyone who purchased land from him. "Anyone coming to look at land around Sawyer may rest assured that efforts will be made to extend to him every possible courtesy...and no charge will be made for showing land, whether purchased or not," read the magazine advertisement. Following are some of the letters of Sawyer homesteaders that Tenney obtained for his pamphlet.

NO MISTAKE TO BUY LAND HERE

Sawyer, ND - Feb. 18, 1905

Dear Sir: The soil in this locality is a black loam from 19 inches to three feet deep, with a clay subsoil with a large percent of lime. It is as productive as any soil I ever farmed, not excepting old Iowa, where I farmed for 15 years. We raise wheat, oats, barley, speltz, flax, spring rye and millet. Potatoes, turnips--in fact--all root crops grow in profusion. Garden stuff does extremely well. We have an abundance of water at from 30 to 60 feet.

The climate in summer is all one could wish for: warm days followed by cool nights. The winters are cold, but we have some fine weather even in the winter, so taking the climate all through the year, it is not unpleasant.

We have plenty of fuel. Lignite coal can be had at the mines at \$1.50 per ton, wood from the Mouse River at \$3 a cord. With this letter I hand you a picture which shows the cattle I have accumulated since I have been on my claim in North Dakota. I can truthfully say that they will do better on our native grass than they will on the tame pastures in the East. Since the picture was taken I have built a barn, 48 x 50, which much improves the looks of my place.

Last year I got 24 bushels of wheat to the acre, 40 bushels of speltz and about 45 bushels of oats, which, by the way, were the heaviest oats I ever handled. No trick to get three bushels in a common grain sack. And on 80 acres of ground I got 1,350 bushels of flax, which sold for 99 cents a bushel. Land which raises such crops can be bought here today for from \$10 to \$15 an acre. I don't think Iowa land can raise any more to the acre than our land can. So I don't see how this land can help but raise in value a great deal, and before many years, too. So I believe that any man who can possibly

afford to buy a piece of land here would make no mistake in doing so.

Yours truly,

R. H. Hays

BETTER THAN RENTING IN IOWA

Sawyer, ND - June 20, 1905

Dear Sir: At request I will write a few lines for your bulletin. Four years ago this spring I came to Ward County from Garner, Iowa, and have since been a resident of North Dakota. I have raised four crops here, and will say that one can do much better than renting in Iowa.

There has not been a failure of crop since I have been here.

The first year I sowed flax the 22nd of June and harvested 15 bushels per acre, getting \$1.25 and \$1.45 per bushel.

My advice to renters of the East: move to North Dakota and become independent.

Yours truly,

D. B. Welty

GOOD SOIL, ABUNDANT RAINFALL, LONG SUMMER DAYS

Sawyer, ND - July 29, 1905

Dear Sir: I came to Ward Co., N. Dak., in May 1903, and can say that I am well pleased with the country. Good soil, abundant rainfall and long summer days make a fine grain-growing country. The steam plow makes short work of turning the prairie sod into cultivated fields. I had a picture taken this spring, which shows John Lindquist's steam rig breaking on my place. You can use it in your pamphlet if you wish. The rich, black soil which the plow turns up all over this part of the state shows in good shape in this picture.

I have 90 acres of flax growing on spring breaking which looks as fine as anything I ever saw in the east. Some farms here are producing double their first cost in a single year. I consider it a good place for a young man to get a start.

G. E. McKeown

A SATISFIED SETTLER

Sawyer, ND - April 1905

My Dear Sir: To write for publication is something that I very seldom have done, but as you have asked me about a letter concerning this part of the country, I shall try and send you a few words, and you may assure the readers of your circular that what I say is as truthful as possible in my opinion.

I think this part of North Dakota has as much prospect for a good future as has the older settlement further east, and perhaps more. We have it very convenient here for coal, wood and railroads. You wanted to know what I have done since I came here and how I like it, and I must say that so far I am well satisfied. Of course I have not made a big fortune yet, but Rome was not built in one day, and the same may be said about a new country, although this has gone forward beyond my expectations since I arrived here in June 1902.

Last summer I had a crop which was worth \$930, and I did not think that very bad, although it was not as much as I should have had. In the first place, I had poor seed, and then I did not treat my wheat for smut, having had no experience in farming before, and had no knowledge about smut. I am sure it damaged it fully one-third in yield and grade together. But after all I was well satisfied. It must also be taken into consideration the shape the ground was in, too. It was all on sod not yet rotted, and not being plowed deep enough, either.

I will send you a picture taken last August, which shows some of my fields and my buildings. It wasn't 15 months before that picture was taken when I didn't have a furrow broken. I know in the timber country it takes them 20 years to get up a farm like that.

Well, I have spoken only good for North Dakota. I hope you, kind reader, can excuse me for not saying anything bad because I can not find any fault with this country, or have not so far, with the exception of the wind. It is not very agreeable, but you will acknowledge that it blows in other states, too.

There is one thing a new settler should do as soon as possible: plant trees. Please do not forget that.

Sincerely yours,

O. J. Germunson

CROPPED 365 ACRES; HIRED ONE MAN

Sawyer, ND - July 29, 1905

Dear Sir: I came here four years ago from Clayton Co., Iowa. To my notion this place is as good a place as I ever saw, especially for a beginner. I think the land is just as rich and raises just as good crops, as land back east that sells for a very much higher price.

Some people say a person will freeze to death here in the winter, but I don't mind the cold as much here as I did in Iowa. The air is so dry in the winter that a person don't feel the cold like he does where it is damp. The crops look splendid this year. I have in 365 acres, as I rented over 200 acres besides my own quarter. I used nine horses and hired one man. It looks like my wheat will turn out from 20 to 25 bu. to the acre. If nothing happens to my flax, I think it will go from 18 to 20 bu. for I haven't seen any that is better.

My brother-in-law, Gustav Pederson, has 210 acres in crop this year cornering mine. He put it all in with just his four horses and didn't hire any help. His crop looks just as fine as mine.

Yours truly,

Ole H. Bergan

CROP RAISED IN ONE YEAR WORTH THE PRICE OF THE LAND

Sawyer, ND - July 29, 1905

Dear Sir: I esteem it a pleasure to testify to my high opinion of the country around Sawyer. I came to North Dakota from Iowa in March 1898, without money enough to buy a return ticket. I was a journeyman barber. There was the finest of land here for us then, free from the government, which of course is not the case today. But besides the fine quarter I have been living on as my homestead, I have managed to buy another 160 acres. So today I am proud to think that I have a half section of the "Good Old North Dakota Soil" which I call "all mine." I take great satisfaction in this possession, and feel it

a duty to advise all tradesmen and farmers who can get money enough together to come and get some of this cheap productive land. The crop raised here in one year is often worth the price of the land it was raised on.

I have a picture of my farm which you might like to use in your pamphlet. It was taken last August, and the shocks of grain show what a good crop I had. With best wishes for all,
Yours respectfully,
JND. W. Oard

A GOOD PLACE FOR A POOR MAN

Sawyer, ND - July 19, 1905

Dear Sir: This country is all right for crops. When a man does good work on his land he gets a good crop. When the land is broken and the ground gets rotted, it yields just as well as in South Dakota, as we have good black ground.

I have lived here a little more than two years and think this is a good place for a poor man to come to, as land is still cheap.

Yours truly,
Rev. J. Baasener

RICH SOIL, BUT EASY TO WORK

Sawyer, ND - June 23, 1905

I came to North Dakota from Dallas Co., Iowa, seven years ago. I am so pleased with this country that nothing would tempt me now to go back to Iowa to live. The soil here is so different from Iowa soil, and works so much easier, that plowing and working the ground is very easy. We do not have to have such hard plow lays, and plows scour fine.

The soil is very rich, and we raise big crops here. Three years ago I raised 23 bushels of flax to the acre on a field of 32 acres. I never saw a finer looking field of flax in my life. We had a photograph taken in July, while the flax was still in blossom, which shows me in the field, with the flax standing higher than my knees.

J. D. Towns

THREE CROPS OF FLAX WITHOUT PLOWING

Sawyer, ND - March 7, 1905

Dear Sir: The farmers who have done good farming have had good crops. I know of some pieces which have raised three crops of flax without plowing, and the last crop went about 10 bushels per acre.

Yours truly,
J. D. Coons

NORTH DAKOTA TAKES THE CAKE

Sawyer, ND - June 17, 1905

Dear Sir: I have now farmed in this locality three years, having come from Garretson, SD, in February 1901. I took a homestead and have had good luck in raising all kinds of small grain. We raise flax, oats, speltz, wheat, rye and vegetables of all kinds.

I think the chances are good here for a poor man, because the price of land is not out of reach.

This is a good country for cattle, hogs, chickens and all kinds of stock. We have a fine climate. The summers are nice and cool, and we would rather winter here than in South Dakota. I am fully satisfied with having come to this country where I can own a home of my own. North Dakota takes the cake. I made more money last year on my farm here than I made in the whole 10 years I was a renter in South Dakota.

My neighbor, N. D. Welty, has a field of brome grass three feet tall at the present time.

Yours truly,

R. A. Dix

NEIGHBORS CONTENTED AND HAPPY

Sawyer, ND - March 4, 1905

Dear Sir: I came to North Dakota in August 1899, and moved to Ward County, near Sawyer, the following spring. I can say I am well satisfied with the country. I consider our land equally as productive as land in many localities in other states where land is selling for three times the price of land here.

A man with a small means coming here to build up a home can always find employment at good wages through the summer months while not employed on his own farm, and through the winter there is a chance of employment in the coal mines.

I feel far better satisfied here than I did while renting land in the southwestern part of South Dakota, and have no desire to return there to make my home.

The people in this locality are all very desirable neighbors, and all seem contented and happy, working for the upbuilding of their homes and the community in general.

I think a person living on a small farm or renting land in any of the older states would do well to pay this country a visit, because they are sure to better their condition.

Yours truly,

Wm. Van Brocklin

A FEW QUARTERS WAITING FOR OCCUPANTS

Sawyer, ND - March 12, 1905

To the Prospective Homeseeker: We were "three brothers that came over" from Illinois five years ago this coming June. For 16 days we looked over the country, north, south, east and west of Minot, and finally selected the country southwest of Sawyer. We put up our shacks, a sod barn, some hay (well fenced) and returned home. Neighbors (three to six miles the nearest) prophesied they would not see us back, but by the 1st of April all were back and the land around us was mostly filed on. That season we went cautiously. With a small four-horse team, bought here, we broke and seeded to flax about 44 acres. We took in cattle to herd, some 200 head. One of us worked out carpentering.

The first year the ranch made us about \$1,300. Two of us are still here. We have now 250 acres under cultivation. Have raised on the average: flax, about 12 bushels per acre; oats, 35 bushels; emmer, 40 bushels; wheat, 15 bushels. Last year our durum (macaroni) wheat made 22 bushels.

We expect soon to have a rural free delivery. School is one and a half miles away. There are a few quarters around here that have no residents. We wish some thrifty persons would come in and make homes on them.

Yours truly,
Roscoe W. Beighle

RAISED FINE POTATOES ON RAW SOD

Sawyer, ND - June 1905

Much of our land is as good for farming purposes as can be found in this latitude anywhere in America. Lignite coal of very superior quality is dug in various portions of Ward Co., pointing unmistakably to the prediction that in a few years here will be one of the richest sections of North Dakota. The soil is a black loam to grayish brown. No better soil can be found anywhere in the world for general farming purposes.

It is easily pulverized, and when the prairie sod is once broken, cultivation is easy.

All kinds of small grain and flax grow abundantly here in Ward Co., and our land cannot be excelled for raising all kinds of root crops and vegetables. I raised fine potatoes and of the best quality by simply breaking the raw sod and dropping the potatoes into every third furrow and turning the next furrow over them, going over them with the disc. And that was all the work done till digging time. I have seen turnips weighing eight pounds and cabbage heads weighing 20 pounds.

As to rainfall here, there is usually plenty to insure a good crop. The soil in this country will bear a large rainfall without doing damage to the crop, and again it will stand a great deal of dry weather and not injure the crop.

Sawyer is a town started only about three years ago and now has four general stores, a hardware store, harness shop, bank, blacksmith shop, two hotels, two livery barns, printing office, land and loan agencies and numerous other businesses.

Anyone wishing to invest in real estate can do no better than to invest in and around this locality.

H. Coleman.

PREDICTIONS MADE IN 1900 FULFILLED

Sawyer, ND - July 29, 1905

Dear Sir: Probably you will think I have forgotten your request for a letter for your pamphlet, giving my opinion of the country around here. I have not, but have simply been too busy to write such a letter as the country deserves. Of course, you want me to tell the good side of matters. In 1900 I received a letter asking me to tell the unpleasant features of this locality. It happens that I kept that letter, together with a copy of my reply to it. I wasn't able to write him a letter telling of unpleasant features, and it occurs to me that if you want to print these two letters, or part of them, it might have just as much influence as a letter from me written today. I am glad to say that all my predictions in that letter of five years ago have more than been fulfilled and I can say, too, that my opinion

of the country is even higher that it was then.

Yours truly,
C. C. C. Willis

The two letters Mr. Willis speaks of follow:

Minneapolis, Minn. - Feb 19, 1900

C. C. C. Willis, Sawyer, ND

Dear Sir: Yours of recent date promptly received. I note what you say concerning crop yields, and now would like to know what the unpleasant features are in that locality. It must be that there are some, or the country would not be so long in getting settled up. We hear a good deal in this state of winds that blow all the time, of prairie fires, of hail, of crop failures and a thousand and one things that bode ill to the poor man who has no resource but his own labor. Tell me frankly this side of it.

Yours truly,

(Editor's note: The above letter writer's name was left off by Tenney or Willis)

Sawyer, Ward Co., ND - Feb. 26, 1900

Minneapolis, Minn.

Dear Sir: Yours of Feb. 19th received. I will answer your questions to the best of my ability. You show prudence in asking them.

The one drawback to this country in the past was partial drouth. I say "partial" because we never had a total failure, such as in Kansas, etc. These dry seasons occurred at an inopportune time, as the early settlers had just borrowed money with which to make final proof, paying outrageous interest, as they were nearly all poor men, and besides many had just bought machinery on time, thus being deeply in debt, and, fearing that this country was subject to drouth, many, especially the bachelors, left, and as most of the mortgages were owned by persons in the east, it naturally gave this part a bad name. Those who stayed have seen a great change here. They have turned their attention more to stock of all kinds, which do wonderfully well here, and few farmers have since depended entirely upon raising grain for a living. But latterly, farmers have been increasing their acreage again year after year, and the seasons seem to improve, also the crop yield. Farmers are better acquainted with the country, and farm better, and the cultivated land is better able to resist drouth, if there should be one. There is no doubt that climates change to a great extent after a country has been broken up and improved otherwise by settlers. And I don't myself feel uneasy on account of drouth in this part in the future.

To be on the safe side, it is best for a man to go into diversified farming and keep a little stock. For this purpose it would be best to get two quarters (1\2 section), together if possible. Horses are bringing good prices and are still on the rise, and good prices for good horses will continue for a good many years to come. I haven't space to give reasons for that belief, but if you look into the subject you will agree with me. This country is about perfect for horse raising. Thousands of them are getting their own living on the prairies this winter, and in fact they do so every winter. You must remember the grass in these parts cures before the frost comes to kill it, which is not the case in Minnesota and Eastern states, and

therefore it possesses a wonderful amount of nutriment.

As to the winds blowing all the time, that is simply absurd. I have no doubt that it does blow rather more than in some states, or rather is noticed more, on account of the open prairies not affording wind breaks. The older states, of course, have their prairies thickly studded with artificial groves of timber, and North Dakota will follow suit.

As to prairie fires, they are one of the accepted difficulties of a new country, but not of North Dakota especially. Settlers in Minnesota and other states in an early day must have had to contend with prairie fires in as great a degree as we do here. Prairie fires will be troublesome here more or less for many years, but the danger diminishes as farms are broken up, and settlers realize the danger and plow fire guards around their buildings in the proper season.

Hail storms are simply local, and I have no doubt, if you look up the statistics, that North Dakota's record will be found satisfactory, in comparison with other states. I have never been damaged by hail, though I have been here many years -- since 1883.

If you think of buying any land, it would be well to buy some where you could file on a piece joining it, and then in case you wish to keep some stock it gives you room enough to do so, even if the country around is thickly settled. One hundred and sixty acres is scarcely sufficient. Land is being filed on continually this winter, and in the spring there is going to be a big rush.

Yours truly,

C. C. C. Willis

LIKE THE COUNTRY BETTER AND BETTER THE LONGER THEY STAY

Sawyer, ND - July 24, 1905

I am glad to testify to my faith in North Dakota, and to my belief that there is a grand future in store for Ward County.

I have had experience enough in homesteading and farming, so that I know what I am talking about when I mention the future of North Dakota. I took a timber claim some years ago in Nebraska, and I passed through some very trying experiences. I am glad to say that the hardships of homesteading here have been nothing like the hardships we went through in Nebraska.

When one thinks of how rich our soil is here, and figures out what can be raised on an acre, and then thinks how wonderfully this district has developed since 1900, when there were very few settlers here, there seems to be no question that in a very few years land values will have reached a much higher price here. In Nebraska we always used to have occasional crop failures, and yet look how steadily land values crept up.

It is wonderful how potatoes grow here. I have planted them under fresh sod, just dropping them in the furrows and turning the sod over them, and had most of the potatoes turn out to be a pound or bigger, and scarcely any small potatoes in the patch. I never knew another state where a person could get such results. On old ground, potatoes sometimes grow as large as to weigh three pounds.

Last year we set out cabbage plants on land which had been broken but one year, and we got fine cabbages.

I never saw land like this to raise things when it is dry. In 1903 there was no rain on our wheat from before it headed till it was ripe, and I never saw finer wheat in Ohio or Nebraska, making an average of 25 bushels to the acre.

You can take a bunch of cattle in the fall and let them feed hay off a hayrack in the barn yard, and not have anything else to eat till spring, except what they get on the prairie, and they turn out better than any corn-fed cattle I ever saw in Nebraska. I don't see why our grass should be so different from Nebraska grass, but it seems to be much more nutritive.

We have some macaroni wheat that is almost six feet high now, and it has not finished its growth yet. I have seen timothy here that was the best I ever saw anywhere. Then we raise fine brome grass, and alfalfa too.

I haven't minded the cold here winters as much as I used to in Nebraska. I think it is because the air is so dry here in the winter time. I like it better and better the longer I stay here, and I have more and more faith in the country right along.

Isaac Warrell

Dub. Warrell

THIS IS THE GARDEN SPOT OF THE DAKOTAS

Sawyer, ND - July 22, 1905

Dear Sir: Yours received, contents noted. Yes, I am very busy, but must answer and write that letter at once as I agreed to.

Well, I came to Ward County in 1902, and can say that this is the garden spot of the Dakotas, the richest of soil, abundant crops of all kinds, great yield, fine climate and extensive lignite coal mines only six to eight miles south of the thriving little city of Sawyer. The veins are 10, 15, 20 feet of thickness. At the mines you can get all the coal you want for \$1.50 a ton.

Sawyer is in Ward County, the largest county in North Dakota, and one of the best in the production of small grains. Sawyer is situated on the Mouse River, 15 miles east of Minot on the Soo Railroad.

A great many people ask about how much grain can be raised to the acre. All depends on the way of farming, seed and season: macaroni wheat, 30 to 40 bu.; speltz, 60 to 70; oats, 50, 60 or 70; flax, 15, 20 or 25; potatoes, 300. Rutabagas grow very large. I raised off 1-1/2 acres last year, 300 bu. of potatoes and 100 bu. of rutabagas. Some of the potatoes weighed three pounds and rutabagas 10 to 12 pounds each. Can any land in the union beat this in yield and quantity?

Now in regard to the weary traveler who is looking for a home that he or she can call their own, please look no farther than here. The best climate for health, the best crops, good schools, plenty of fuel of all kinds--both wood and coal, shipping of grain and livestock, all this can not be excelled anywhere in the great northwest. Now is the golden opportunity to locate a home of your own. The sooner the better, as land is rising fast in value each year.

A great many ask me from Iowa, that Grand Old State, "Do I freeze in the winter?" I simply answer, "To be sure, we don't feel the cold as they do in Iowa." I resided in Keokuk Co. 40 years, and to tell the truth I suffered there in the winter months far greater than here. To explain is this: in Iowa the climate is very damp and chilly, and a great deal of sleet and rain (falls) in the months of January and February. Here it is clear and dry atmosphere, which is very bracing and healthful. Well, this is all for the present.

Yours truly,
W. E. Royce

HAS RAISED CORN EVERY YEAR

Sawyer, ND - June 24, 1905

Dear Sir: I am well satisfied with this country. It is way ahead of what I expected it was when I came here. I know that I have made more than double the amount of money that I would have if I had kept on renting in Iowa.

If a man has to keep on renting, I am sure he can make more money at it here than he can there. A man can start renting here on half the capital needed there, and he can rent on much better terms. A man can tend 160 acres of land here if he has four good horses, just as easy as he can take care of 80 acres in Iowa.

This country is as healthy as can be, and no one needs to hesitate a minute on that account. My wife has had lots better health here than she had in Iowa. She has had hardly a sick day since she came here, and down there she had pretty poor health.

Some people think winters are pretty severe here. I think they are no more uncomfortable on the average than winters in Iowa, and I have seen just as bad winters there as I have seen here.

When it comes to vegetables we can beat Iowa as far as you can see. Cabbage does well. We have no potato bugs to bother us. All kinds of garden stuff do fine here.

And stock, we can raise stock a good deal cheaper than what they can. Our cattle will get fat just on the range. Our wild grasses here on the prairie fatten cattle better than timothy or clover did in Iowa, so I believe that it has more real nutrition in it. I have a three-year-old steer that would make just fine beef, and he hasn't had a mouthful of grain since last winter. Two of my two-year-olds are nearly as fat, with no grain since winter, just grass. Cattle can be handled much easier here than in Iowa, especially in the winter time. This is largely because land is cheap here, so it is not so scarce as it is in Iowa, and we have plenty of room for the cattle to range over. We can handle 50 head of stock here the year round as easily as we could 30 in Iowa, and at much less expense. We don't herd our cattle up here like we did in Iowa. It is lots of work to feed grain, or even hay, to 30 or 40 head of stock, as they do there all through the winter. Here, if it is so that the cattle can't get their own living on the prairie, all we have to do is to throw a load of hay on a wagon (and even our straw makes fair fodder) and run it out in the barnyard and let them help themselves. Except once in a while when there is a lot of snow on the ground, or it is severe weather, the cattle get right out on the prairie and pick their living for days at a time. The law allows cattle to run free from Nov. 1 to April 1, so we turn them out and let them range where they

please.

A man can run a critter a season for \$1.25 a head, if he wants to herd them out to the ranchmen back in the hills, 15 miles south. That is the common price of good responsible ranchmen, from the time the grass starts, say the 1st of April, till the frost kills the grass in the fall about the 1st of November. Some charge only \$1. That makes pretty cheap herding or pasturing. Those are about the prices I paid in Iowa for one month.

Hogs do fine here. I think we can raise almost as fine hogs here as we could in Iowa. We can raise from 30 to 60 bushels of speltz here, and it makes fine hog feed.

Crops have been good ever since I came. The soil works up fine. I think after the sod is once rotted, the ground works easier than it does in Iowa.

I have raised a little corn every year since I came here, and as the country gets older and the land gets worked more, I think corn will do better and better. It was that way in Iowa. When my parents moved to northwestern Iowa 25 years ago, the farmers thought they were doing well when they raised 12 to 15 bushels of corn per acre. Now they raise in the same place from 50 to 80 bushels. I think it will work the same way here within a few years. When my parents went there, people told them it was foolish to try to raise corn there, and said it never could be done successfully. But look at it today.

If I was to start out from Iowa over again now, I would come here just the same. A farmer can't get a fine level quarter of government land free now, as I did when I came, but I would rather buy here for \$10 or \$15 an acre than go to Canada and take free land, for I think the land here is better than the land there. And we don't have the snow they have, and I think we have a better government.

When land is free, it means that the settler has many hardships to contend with. I know the truth of this, and what it means, for I have been through it all right here. But today we have good markets, neighbors, schools and churches, and a man can afford to pay for such privileges, which the early settlers had to get along pretty much without.

Yours truly,
L. Tryon

THE SOIL CAN'T BE BEAT

Sawyer, ND - July 28, 1905

Dear Sir: This is the best country I was ever in. I was always poor before I came here. I came here from Austin, Minn. three years ago this spring. I feel now like I am getting ahead, and feel that I am getting something for my old age, that I never did before.

My farm is five miles southwest of Sawyer and is nice, level land. The soil is good and rich. It can't be beat I don't think. We raise all kinds of garden stuff and vegetables, and can raise everything here that is to be raised. We raise corn here some already. And after the land is more cultivated, we can do much better I think.

Last year wheat went from 20 to 30 bushels to the acre, oats went 40 to 45, and flax went from 10 to 15.

One of my neighbors had 225 bushels of potatoes to the acre last year, and they were the biggest potatoes I ever saw in my life. I got 75 bushels from a patch that was a little over a quarter of an acre.

I think this is a good country for a poor man to make himself a home and be contented.

Yours truly,
Wm. F. Schulz

HORSES AND CATTLE FATTEN WITHOUT GRAIN

Sawyer, ND - July 24, 1905

Dear Sir: I got dried out in Nebraska in 1901, and came up to North Dakota. I think this is a fine country for a poor man. The land is rich and raises good crops. I think this country is far ahead of Nebraska. I never saw such a country as this for raising stock. You can winter horses or cattle just on hay, and they will come out fat in the spring. Our horses came out better this spring on just hay than they used to in Nebraska, when we kept them all winter on grain.

We can take speltz and fatten hogs that will make better pork than corn-fed hogs.

I would rather have a bushel of oats raised here, than a bushel and a half or even two bushels raised in Nebraska, for they weigh out like everything, from 40 to 45 pounds. I never saw any poor oats here, and I never saw any that would go less than 40 pounds.

Yours truly,
R. N. Whitney

PERFECTLY SATISFIED TO LIVE HERE

Sawyer, ND - July 31, 1905

Dear Sir: I have lived in Lyon Co., Iowa, and in Moody Co., South Dak. and in Minnehaha Co., South Dak. and I really think this place is just as good a place as I ever saw. It suits me. I've made more money here than any place I ever struck, and it was made easy too. And I am perfectly satisfied to live here. I first came here 12 years ago this month. I made good money on cattle for three years. Then I thought I could make money just as well anywhere else, and I was foolish enough to sell out. I took quite a little money away with me and went into the restaurant business in Iowa. I found that the money did not come in like it did raising cattle, and worse still, inside of a year I found myself with most of my money gone. I didn't know what could be better than to go back to raising cattle right here

where I had thrown away my good start. So I came back, and I am glad I did, but I didn't have hardly a thing to begin with, and it was pretty hard work getting a foothold again. But things went along steady. I commenced raising grain together with my stock, and I haven't had a poor crop once since.

Cattle and horses have been pretty good prices and I feel now that I am getting in good shape. I don't know of any place I could go to where I could do better than to stay here, not even California or anywhere else. Of course I have had to work, but a person has got to do that anywhere.

We have fine, rich soil and it raises splendid crops. Last year my macaroni wheat went 34 bu. to the acre. The stand was so heavy that it lodged like everything, and if it hadn't been for that I am sure it would have gone 40 bu. I had 26-1/2 acres of oats in last year and it was the nicest piece of oats I ever saw. When they were threshed they went 80 bu. to the acre by weight.

I don't think there is any better place to raise flax than right here. There is any amount of it growing all around here this year that is going to go 20 bushels, and quite a little is going to go over 20 bushels.

In some countries they can't raise all kinds of grain. But we can raise anything here. Barley is a good crop. Speltz and rye are good too.

It is a fine place for garden stuff of all kinds. You have got to take care of it though, for the soil is so rich, that the weeds grow fast, too.

Some people think corn can't be raised here. I have had good success at it. The first year I tried it, I did not take good enough care of it, and that has been the trouble with some others who have tried it here. But it can grow here all right if the right kind of seed is used, and if we take the same care of it they take in Iowa, especially on land that gets well rotted. I have had corn ripen here two or three weeks before any frost came.

Yours truly,
Frank Hayes

AHEAD OF ANY OTHER NEW COUNTRY

Sawyer, ND - June 28, 1905

Dear Sir: I was born and lived in the west all my life, most of the time on the prairie. Have done stunts in Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and now North Dakota. Have seen them all in their virgin purity and have watched, perhaps with pardonable American pride, their steady strides in development from a howling wilderness to a front rank in educational, agricultural, manufacturing and commercial advancement, unequalled in the same time by any of their sister states.

I came to North Dakota from northern Iowa in the fall of 1899, prejudiced against this part of North Dakota, principally on account of its location with reference to the equator. Too far north. I was very agreeably disappointed, however. The location, access to railroads, the splendid soil, the nearby abundance of fuel, good water and the exhilarating atmosphere appealed to my best judgment. So, like all who have moved in later, I fell in love with the country

and filed on the northeast quarter 31-154-80. I have never regretted my choice, and come as near being contented as I ever expect to be.

This Mouse River country is in many respects away ahead of any other new country I ever saw or lived in.

One may judge of its rapid development from the fact that in October 1899, scarcely a shack could be seen on these broad prairies, and they are broad, with a big B. Today, not a quarter of land worth anything but is filed on and being farmed, and well farmed too. I believe that in these six years, this region has had a greater development than Iowa had in the first 20 years of its growth.

The newcomer is not up against it when his plowshare rolls over to the sun as fertile a soil as old Sol shines on in all his course. The avenues of traffic are here, so he has not to wait long and anxiously for that work of civilization. Abundant crops bless his efforts, even if he does put them in in "Dakota fashion." Nutritious grasses rear and fatten his stock until it "tops the market," in competition with the corn-fed stock from Iowa and Illinois. His granary's filled. Cold winter finds him in full and plenty toasting his shins over his lignite-heated firebox, the lignite costing him but little more than the hauling. He smokes the pipe of peace and contentment. Why shouldn't he?

At a school election this spring, where the township was well represented, I asked 47 voters their candid opinion as to how they liked it here. All expressed themselves as well satisfied with their location, had no desire to go back to their former homes in other states; were contented and doing well.

Much has been said in praise of the great Red River Valley. During the last six seasons I have crossed it from four to six times on the Soo. In that length of time one would suppose that it would show up with the best one season at least, but the Mouse River Valley has been away in the lead each year, and two of them were what we call "pretty middlin dry." Yet this was the garden of the state even those dry years.

The accompanying photo shows me standing in wheat growing on my son's farm, August 1904, which turned 18-1/2 bushels per acre, and that is not called a bumper crop, although it sold for \$1.02 No. 1 Northern. My own wheat did equally as well. My oats turned 60 bushels per acre. This year Mouse River cocks her crest for such a crop as was never predicted or heard of, judging from present prospects. We can't do a thing to stop it, so we'll let 'er come. We've no rent to pay, only taxes, and they're light. Everbody pleasant and smiling. No wonder strangers come in and pay fair prices for land and glad to get it.

Yours very truly,
F. N. Pitkin, C. E.

TREES GROWING WELL

Sawyer, ND - June 24, 1905

Dear Sir: In regard to what I know of North Dakota will say this is the best place for a poor man to get a start that I know of. I will give a few facts as to what I have been doing the last four years. I came to Sawyer, ND, four years ago, with a team and two cows. Now I have nine head of horses and 17 head of cattle.

Crops grow fine here. Wheat, oats, flax and barley is our main crop. My wheat land made me \$26.25 an acre last year. The flax made about \$16 per acre. The oats went from 60 to 90 bushels per acre. I raised \$2,300 worth of grain last year with four horses, besides putting up 150 tons of hay. I had no help except during haying and harvesting. One man can farm 200 acres here without any help, if he is willing to work hard.

Garden stuff does fine here. I have raised rutabagas weighing 16 pounds and I believe my whole patch last year averaged eight pounds. I have raised turnips weighing eight pounds, and they were not pithy, either.

Hogs do fine here. I think a man can raise just as good hogs here as can be raised anywhere. Instead of corn, we feed our hogs speltz or barley. They will get so fat that they can't walk. Last winter I fattened a hog that weighed 700 pounds. Forty or 50 bushels to the acre is a common yield for speltz, and it goes up to as high as 80 or more.

A year ago this spring I sent for a thousand willow cuttings. They were a little smaller than a lead pencil and about eight inches long. In setting them out, all I did was to stick them in the ground. Now they average shoulder high, and they are spread out so that they form a regular hedge. Some people think you can't raise trees in North Dakota, but this is as natural a place for trees to grow as I ever saw any place. I lived in old Iowa for 24 years and I never saw trees in my life grow like these willows of mine have. I have a couple of hundred box-elders, too, that have done splendid.

W. B. Britton

I LIKE IT BETTER THE LONGER I STAY

Sawyer, ND - June 29, 1905

To Whom It May Concern:

Dear Sir: In regard to this part of N. Dak., I will say that it suits me a little better than any other part of the state that I have seen, and I like it better here than in S. Dak. I can refer you to a man, who has been to Washington (near Spokane) and has also been in different parts of California, and some parts of Colorado, but prior to that, he lived in the eastern part of the state. He now owns a half section of land here, and is doing well. He says California is a nice place to live, but it is no place for a poor man. He says the same of Colorado, and he says he likes it better here in nearly every respect, than in Washington.

This is my third summer here, and I like it better the longer I stay. Grain of all kinds looks fine, although we have had more rain than we really need for the last five or six weeks.

Last year, flax went from 15 to 18 bu. per acre (that is early flax did), wheat from 24 to 28 bu. per acre, and oats from 45 to 70. Rye went on an average about the same, or a little better than wheat. Barley and speltz, from 12 to 40 bu. per acre. Potatoes, the finest on earth, are as good a yield as any state in the Union can boast of. Likewise cabbages, parsnips, carrots and nearly every kind of garden

vegetation seem to have a nutrition that just suits my taste.
Yours for better or worse,
John C. Colburn

THIRTY-FIVE SUNDAY SCHOOLS ORGANIZED

Sawyer, ND - July 17, 1905

My first visit to North Dakota was in October 1901. I left the beautiful valley of the Lime River in northern Iowa where I had travelled quite extensively as a Sunday School Missionary, and, in doing so, had formed a large circle of friends and acquaintances, many of whom were renters paying all the way from \$2.50 to \$3.50 rent per acre for land, and working hard year after year for a mere livelihood as the price of land was such as to place it beyond their reach.

As I observed the condition of these people, and noted their hard labor and small returns, my heart yearned within me, and I thought that this must also be my fate, as I, too, had no farm, nothing to depend upon but my day's labor, and when sickness or old age came upon me, and I could no longer work, sad would be my plight.

In the midst of my deliberations, an old friend and teacher came to me with a story of "better opportunities in the west," and I, having the utmost confidence in his judgment, listened eagerly to what he had to say, and ere long (by hard work and self denial) I succeeded in getting together \$54.00 with which to make the trip.

After spending about a month (and my \$54.00) in traveling over the country, I chose for my future home, a tract of land near the site where the thriving little city of Sawyer now stands in the picturesque valley of the Mouse River.

Since then I have travelled about 8,500 miles, by team, as Sunday School Missionary in Ward and adjoining counties, visiting about 3,600 families, and organizing and assisting 35 Sunday Schools in country districts.

I have never found a more hospitable, more intelligent, more enterprising, more thrifty class of people anywhere than during my travels in this country.

We held a two-days' Sunday School Rally in Sawyer in July 1904, at which 15 Sunday Schools were represented and much interest shown. And the abundant supply of good things to eat at the picnic dinners showed something of the comfortable condition of the settlers.

I find schoolhouses and churches springing up all over the country, and educational and religious matters receiving much attention.

I am truly thankful for the home God has given me, among such a class of people, in what seems to me the "garden spot of the world."

R. E. Hubbard

ACROSS NORTH DAKOTA IN THE EARLY DAYS

Sawyer, ND - July 31, 1905

Dear Sir: There is only one man here who has been here as long as I have, and that is Bill Wilson. We came here together in 1882. When we reached here I don't think there were more than eight or 10 settlers within 50 miles of us in any direction. Those few were scattered along the Mouse River, and they had come here only a month

or so before, as that was the very start of any white men trying to make homes here. The Great Northern and the Soo did not come through till years after we came here, and our nearest railroad in those early days was the Northern Pacific, which went through Bismarck, about 100 miles south. And Bismarck was our nearest post office too. In the early days we had to haul our grain about 100 miles to get it to market. We took it for while to the town of Devil's Lake, and afterwards to Minnewaukon, a little nearer, on the west shore of Devil's Lake. So you can see what a wonderful development this country has had in less than 25 years.

We came out here in two immigrant wagons, overland all the way from Sioux Falls, SD, with 20 or 25 head of horses and cattle, none of which were mine, however. We were six weeks on the way.

Some trappers who had been up here trapping on the Mouse River got Bill Wilson's father interested in this valley, and he decided to bring his family up here and try cattle raising. Besides his family, there was only my brother Ed and myself that came. Some others had agreed to but they backed out. We came through S. Dak., to Lisbon, Ransom Co., N. Dak., then to Valley City, and followed the line of the Northern Pacific to Jamestown and then we struck north for the Fort Totten Indian and Military Reservation, on the south shore of Devil's Lake, about 100 miles north. After we left Jamestown we did not see a town or bridge and of course we had to ford all streams. If we had struck straight for the Mouse River from Jamestown, it would have been a good deal nearer, but we should not have had any trail. This way we had a trail all the way, enough to show us the road, but it did not seem to have been traveled hardly any. We got to Fort Totten the 3rd of July and on the fourth the Indians had a big pow-wow. They were wonderfully painted and their dances were something worth seeing. There were Indians there from all over, several thousand of them. From Fort Totten we struck west for the Mouse River. During that ride of about 100 miles we did not see one single house or shack or tent. In fact we did not see a single man or horse or cow, except our own, during the time our two prairie schooners moved slowly westward that 100 miles from Devil's Lake to the Mouse River. We struck the Mouse River where Villard post office is today, July 11, 1882. We found a settler there who had just squatted three or four weeks before, who hadn't even got his log house built. We set out up the river to see where we would settle. We went clear on to Burlington, about 60 miles up the river from Villard, as we thought we might as well look until we were thoroughly suited. We had almost our entire choice of the valley, for in all that distance there were not over eight or 10 settlers, who had come just the month before. Not one of them had his house finished, and only two of them had started. We started back again from Burlington, and went about half way to Villard, or close to where Bill and I now have our farms.

Quite a few settlers came in '82 after we came, but the following year, a good many came in and took up all the best land in the valley. Those early years we often used to be visited by Indians going from the Turtle Mountain Reservation or from the Fort Totten Reservation down to the Missouri River.

It was not until six years ago that settlers began to take up land on the prairie, and you know how quickly it was all taken up after they started.

When I reached here I had nothing, and I mean just nothing at all. I farmed it a few years and then I started raising sheep and cattle. After that I kept right along with both farming and stock raising. Now I own three quarters of land and 95 head of cattle. I have a first-class set of farm buildings, good big house and barn, granary, hen house 18 x 24, two machine sheds, and other buildings, too. I have all kinds of farm machinery, too, of course. I even have a two-horse corn planter and a regular corn binder. We have all the raspberries, currants and strawberries we can eat. We have apple trees and plum trees, too. I have just returned from a trip to the coast and the Portland Exposition, going out on the Canadian Pacific and coming back on the Great Northern, and I must say that after this trip, I think more of North Dakota than I ever did before, and my wife feels just the same. I should have to see some different country from any I saw during that trip before I should want to leave the good old Mouse River Valley.

No doubt many others have written letters for your pamphlet telling about the big crops we can raise here, and the many other good things that can be said about the country, so it will not be necessary for me to say more, as my letter is long enough already.

Yours truly,
J. F. Booth

THE HALF HAS NOT BEEN TOLD

Sawyer, ND - June 15, 1905

Dear Sir: It is with great pleasure that I add my testimony to that of others as to the merits of this country. North Dakota is indeed the home of the poor, rent-oppressed man of the Eastern states. Here he can almost get 160 acres for the same price he can rent and pay running expenses of a 160-acre farm there.

With four or five cows, 50 chickens and a garden, he can make a living with more ease and less money than on the high-priced land.

Dairying is a profitable occupation. The growth of vegetables is phenomenal. Poultry thrives, and is a sure source of a steady income.

It is the coming wheat country, whose value is just beginning to be realized.

The real facts cannot be stated, for the possibilities are not yet understood by the people themselves who live here, and if these facts were stated, they would not be believed. The half has not been told. It is the coming country. Come and see for yourself.

Rev. Edw. B. Johnson, Pastor - Baptist Church, Sawyer, ND

RAISED ABOUT 2,700 QUARTS OF BERRIES

Sawyer, ND - July 1, 1905

Dear Sir: I will try and answer yours of a recent date. I have been very busy and ask that as an excuse for delay in answering.

My farm is 1-1/4 miles west of the village of Sawyer, consisting of 360 acres, about 80 or 90 acres of timber, and balance tillable and pasture land. Sixty or 70 acres under plow, and most of balance in pasture. One and one-half acres into small fruit and orchard. In '04, my currants, gooseberries and raspberries harvested about 2,700 quarts. I sold 2,530 quarts at a gross of \$287.50, picking and boxes about \$50, leaving for care, marketing, etc., \$237.50.

I came here July 4, 1886, from the great state of Iowa, one of the first in point of agriculture of our noble union of states, and have been on this farm ever since. I like Ward Co., North Dakota, very well.

In the matter of small grain, wheat, flax, barley, rye, speltz, potatoes and all the vegetables of a garden, as carrots, parsnips, etc., this soil excels that. Of course our nights are too cool for corn to compare with Iowa, although we can raise some good corn. Oats for a series of years will be a very close matter in production between the two sections.

As to educational facilities of the two places, Iowa is my "Alma Mater," but I must say that at the age of North Dakota, she could not be in a comparison with any chance of success.

Climatic conditions as I see them: In Iowa I had a prairie farm, in Dakota I live in the timber. Take the whole year on that basis, I much prefer North Dakota. The thermometer registers a temperature in winter 4 to 8 degrees lower, but we have a much drier atmosphere at that time, and do not suffer as much as there. Our rainfall is a matter of record, which can be seen by anyone. In the 19 years of my residence here, the rainfall has been abundant for a fair crop, with 1890 excepted, but it comes out of the growing season some years, and consequently a short crop.

A record on 75 to 150 acres of wheat by one man for 12 years gave an average of 13 plus bushels per acre.

I think as flax country it has no peer. In point of development, it surpasses anything I ever saw. I was in Iowa from the spring of 1855 to the spring of 1872, and saw it when a new country. I was in Allamakee Co. from '55 to '65, and in Hancock and Winnebago counties from '65 to '72, so I think I can pass judgment on that point "understandingly."

I am not a "boomer" for our part more than any other part of the commonwealth, but when \$10 to \$20 land produces equal and quite an excess of recompense per acre, why do we rent \$60 to \$100 land?

Or if it is our good fortune to have won a small tract of that valuable land, why not make an exchange before the values come together, as they surely will, is my view.

Very respectfully,

E. D. Skinner

NO CYCLONE CELLARS NECESSARY

Sawyer, ND - June 1905

Dear Sir: I came to Sawyer, ND, in the spring of 1900 from Kossuth Co., Iowa. I filed on a quarter of land six miles from Sawyer. I have now about 90 acres under the plow. I rented my land last year to my son, and furnished the seed. This was the first year I sowed any wheat. My rent, after paying for seed, on wheat ground, was \$10 clear

per acre; on flax, \$5 per acre; oats, \$6 per acre. I have lived in North Dakota five years last spring, and the longer I stay, the better I like it.

I proved up on my homestead last October, and today I should hesitate about selling if someone should offer me \$3,000, but it is not for sale.

Last year I built me a house in the beautiful little village of Sawyer, on the Soo Railroad, in the beautiful valley of the Mouse River.

I sometimes get to thinking of many friends and neighbors back in Iowa who are striving hard to support a family, but every year finds them no better off than the preceding years, and yet they hesitate to listen to the advice of friends that tell them of the great advantages to be gained by coming to the broad prairies of North Dakota, which has as rich a soil as any state in this great country.

And another good thing is, we do not fear the dreaded cyclones and tornadoes, as I have never heard of one in this state. In Iowa, cyclone caves are considered necessary, just as is the case in Oklahoma and Kansas, but here they are not built, as no one considers them necessary.

About crop failures, I don't believe there is any such thing as failure. If the ground is plowed deep and sowed early, and well pulverized with a harrow and sowed with a disk drill, God and nature will the rest, and no failures.

Now, I don't mean that every year you are going to get 25 to 30 bushels of wheat, or 20 bushels of flax, or 75 bushels of oats, but you will get a good, fair crop every year.

Last year my wheat weighed 60 lbs. No. 1 Northern. I got \$1.06 per bushel. I am selling oats now by the sack at three bu. per sack--a common two bushel sack. My son raised last year the Lincoln variety of oats, which weighed 45 pounds, stroked measure, to a bushel.

If we could once go to raising potatoes, we could feed the world. I never raised potatoes with so little work as I can here. But my letter is getting long and I must stop.

Yours truly,
H. D. Hodges

THREE BUSHELS OF RIPE STRAWBERRIES

Sawyer, ND - July 1905

Dear Sir: I came to North Dakota in 1880. I had \$2.05 in my pocket. I bought land in 1886 and paid \$8.75 an acre. Since that time I have been farming, and have lost over \$6,000 by fire and did not get any insurance, and supported a big family, and it will take \$3,000 to buy me out today. I have made all of that in North Dakota.

I planted 390 strawberry plants two years ago this spring. Three hundred and fifty of them grew, and I had over three bushels of fine, ripe berries from them last year, and I will have fully twice that amount this year.

I have about 60 raspberry bushes, about 30 currant bushes, hanging full of fruit now, about 30 gooseberry bushes, half a dozen lilacs and 300 cottonwood trees. They all look fine.

For next year I have ordered 2,000 Norway popple trees, and also half a dozen apple trees, and I am not afraid to try fruit-raising and go ahead full speed.

I have threshed in North Dakota every year since 1883, and I have found that the average crop was from 18 to 28 bushels of wheat, with the exception of three years. One year was a total failure, one year it went six bushels, and another year eight.

I have raised barley that went 80 bushels to the acre. Speltz is a good crop too. I don't think oats do as well, but they go about 30 to 50 bushels. Flax will average about 12 bushels to the acre, some years better and some years poorer.

I have been all over the state of North Dakota, even to the Red River Valley, and have settled at last in Ward County, and think it is just as good as any other part of the state.

Yours truly,
W. G. Freitag

AS GOOD A COUNTRY AS OLD IOWA

Sawyer, ND - June 12, 1905

Dear Sir: I arrived in North Dakota from Dallas Co., Iowa, seven years ago the 17th of March. At that time if I had sold everything I possessed and had paid all my debts, I would have had about \$150 to my name. Today I have 160 acres of fine level prairie, nearly all broken, and in crop, eight head of horses and colts, 14 head of cattle, four hogs, 400 or 500 bushels of feed, and most kinds of farm machinery. I am building a house costing over \$500, and when that is done will not be owing any man a dollar.

Some of my neighbors have done better than I have. From my experience, and from what I have seen, there is nothing to hinder anyone from doing well here if they will only work.

I honestly believe we have as good a country as old Iowa. I think it will produce as much, acre for acre, one year with another, and here land sells for from \$10 to \$15 per acre, and there land sells at from \$75 to \$100. I know of \$100 per acre land there that I would not take in trade for my land here, if I had to get my living all my life off that land.

To say that I am well pleased with the country is putting it mildly. My neighbors are the very best. Most of them for miles around are first class American farmers who moved here from Iowa.

We have Sunday School and preaching in the school house a mile and a half away. A Rural Free Delivery Route passes my door every day.

Last year 120 acres of my land raised 4,525 bushels of grain, 2,500 bushels of oats, 1,200 bushels of speltz, 350 bushels of wheat and 475 bushels of flax.

Corn has not been raised here very much yet, but hardy varieties do well, and I believe in time large quantities will be raised.

Timothy is being successfully raised here. I am growing this year 7-1/2 acres of brome grass. This grass will be grown to a large extent here, I believe. Its growth is very rapid, and it becomes very

dense, making it especially desirable for pasture land.

W. A. Ruth

ROADS HARD, AND THE VERY BEST LARGE SQUARE FIELDS

Sawyer, ND - July 21, 1905

Dear Sir: Many of my neighbors came from Iowa, and I don't know of one of them who is not glad he made the change. I came here from Garner, Iowa, five years ago, and have got fixed up so that I feel like I am on a \$10,000 Iowa farm. I tried to earn a farm in Iowa, but I got discouraged and gave it up. Some of my neighbors advised me not to come to North Dakota, and some of those very men are here today and are glad they came. I consider that it doesn't cost any more to live here than it does in Iowa. One reason is that our coal is so cheap that it doesn't cost much for fuel. There is more profit in what you produce here, especially small grain, because it grows to perfection here. I consider that our soil is more fertile here than in Iowa, because anything that is planted here seems to thrive better than in Iowa ground.

I raised 22 bushels of dollar wheat to the acre last year, and prospects of that much this year.

A person can live just as well and happy here as in Iowa, and raise more to the acre, and yet this land can be bought for less than a quarter the price of Iowa land. In Iowa our fields often were three-cornered, or crooked, but here we have such fine level prairie that most farms have large, square fields. Of course, there are farms that are cut up by coolies. I have about seven acres of coolie or creek in the corner of my farm. There is living water there all the time, and I consider that those seven acres are as valuable as any I have.

At first it did not seem as though trees would grow on the prairie, but I now have growing about three acres of fine young trees, which will soon be a valuable grove and windbreak.

I came here with four cows. Now I have 24 head, besides horses, hogs, chickens, and so on. In fact, I have everything I ever had in Iowa, and it is all mine.

Our roads are the very best. They are naturally good. Even after heavy rains they do not get cut up. While the soil stays loose when it is plowed, yet it seems to pack very hard on the roads, and heavy travel right after lots of rain does not cut them up at all, except, of course, in some low spots.

N. D. Welty

NORTH DAKOTA CLIMATE IS PLEASANT

Sawyer, ND - July 24, 1905

It is with much pleasure I write these few lines, hoping they may be of some interest to some of my Eastern friends.

I came to Ward County, North Dakota in the spring of 1901, and I must say, for a poor farmer as I am, I have been very successful. Have not had a failure of crop since I started farming.

I took a claim and moved on to it with my family, and lived there continuously for five years. I then proved up my claim and bought a hotel in the thriving little town of Sawyer. I also have a small livery barn which is paying me quite well. I have 90 acres in crop on my farm, which is looking fine. I think from my own experience of farming in North Dakota that it is much better than Iowa. I would not give my quarter section for any I know of in Iowa, if I had to live on it and farm it for a living. A man can make more money in five years farming \$10 to \$20 Dakota land than he can farming \$80 Iowa land, and the Dakota climate is so much better and more pleasant to live in, especially the winters. I, for one, with thousands of others, would not go back to Iowa and live continuously for the best farm in the state.

Any one wishing any further information regarding North Dakota and especially Ward County, write to me.

R. W. Anderson

FUEL IS CHEAP

Sawyer, ND - March 1905

Dear Sir: The Mouse River Valley country is a prairie country with deep, fertile soil. The land is level and slightly rolling, and is covered with the finest prairie hay I ever saw. Cattle and horses grow fat on this grass, and winter without the least care when the snow is not too deep. We can raise all kinds of small grain. Wheat, oats, speltz, flax, barley, rye and millet and all kinds of vegetables grow fine.

I have raised four crops in North Dakota. Two were large and the others were fair. We often raise 75 bushels of oats per acre, 30 of wheat, 20 of flax and of other grains in accordance.

Fuel is cheap. You can get lignite coal for \$1.50 per ton. Wood can be bought for \$1.00 per load.

Hogs do well here. We generally feed them on speltz, and some farmers grow quite a bit of corn, but I do not think it pays to raise corn here.

This is a good place for a man of a limited amount of means to get a start, as with a few good horses and a few good farming tools you can put in two or three hundred acres, and you can rent ground for half. The seed furnished, and half of the thrash bill paid, and the landlord care for his grain at the machine.

Land is cheap here; yes, very cheap, and quite often there is enough grain raised on a quarter section to sell for enough cash after the expenses were paid to pay for the land.

This country has a fine climate with but few exceptions.

Yours truly,

W. N. Benson

SIZE OF POTATOES MARVELOUS

Sawyer, ND - July 31, 1905

Dear Sir: I came to the southeast part of Ward Co. in the fall of 1901, and filed on a homestead. Hardly a shanty in sight. Came up in the spring of 1902 and settled. Found the land alive with cattle running without herders. But they soon had to put herders with them, for within three weeks from the time I got here there was a shanty on

nearly every quarter in sight, and a plow going on the most of them.

When I got here, the ranchers claimed that it had only rained about three seasons in 14 years, and that they could not raise potatoes enough for their own use. There is no question that they were trying to scare us settlers away, for they wanted to keep the prairies for their cattle to range on. The idea used to be pretty strong that this was a dry country, and I feel sure that these stories of the ranchers were largely responsible for it. We have had plenty of rain since I have been here, except one year, and we had a fair crop even then.

As for potatoes, I had in a little less than three-quarters of an acre last year, and got 150 bushels of as fine potatoes as I ever saw, and they averaged the largest I ever saw, for that number. It was marvelous the size they averaged. We picked out all the small ones to use for seed, which included a good many of fair size too, and there were only five or six sacks of them.

I think I can stand in my yard and see farms from which the man who threshed for us collected \$1,100 or \$1,200 in thresh bills last fall, and we furnished all the help. And three years ago all the breaking that was done was fire breaks around the ranches. I am still poor, but have a home where no man can say "Get out," and feel that I am getting ahead steadily, even if slowly. I am doing better than I could any place I know of in the east. I have 70 acres of fine crop. Have wheat 5 feet and 10 inches high. Nearly all of my neighbors have wheat just as good.

J. Larkin

BEST MOVE EVER MADE

Sawyer, ND - May 1905

Dear Sir: We were located near Hawthorne, Wis., Douglas Co., before we came to North Dakota. While there we were corresponding with my folks in McHenry Co., North Dakota. Every letter was a letter of encouragement to come to North Dakota. After two years of coaxing me to come west, I thought I would go and look the country over. When I started for North Dakota, I did not intend to move here before six months, that was if I took a claim, but I must say that I liked it here so much better than I did in Wisconsin that I wrote a letter home telling my wife to get ready to move. I got home before my letter did. In two or three weeks' time I had sold my farm, and had my car all loaded and on my way to North Dakota. I think that this was the best move that I ever made. I have seen three crops grow here. Last year flax made 12 to 14 bushels per acre; oats, 45 bushels; five wheat, 25 bushels; macaroni, 29 bushels; and speltz, 40 bushels per acre.

We are well pleased with the climate, and have never enjoyed better health in old Iowa or Wisconsin than we have in Ward Co., North Dakota.

We are seven miles from the timber, and one mile from coal. I really think that no one could make a mistake in coming to North Dakota.

Wages are high and lands cheap, but land at the present price can not last long, so if any of the readers think of coming to North Dakota, come now ere it be too late. I am in sympathy with the poor man.

Yours truly,
F. B. Pitkin

TIMOTHY AS FINE AS THAT OF ILLINOIS OR IOWA

Sawyer, ND - July 31, 1905

Dear Sir: As to the resources and advancement of North Dakota, I was acquainted with Illinois when it was a pioneer state, and the same with Iowa, and can say that it is wonderful how Ward Co. has developed in the last five years. In July 1900, when I came here from Mason City, Iowa, there were very few settlers here, now and then a shack, scattered over the prairie miles apart. I can truthfully say that it took Iowa and Illinois all of 20 years to develop as much as this has in the last five years.

I can remember in Illinois when they said that they couldn't raise timothy or clover there, and also the same in Iowa. But we certainly know that they turned out to be the finest kind of timothy and clover states. Today we find people saying you can't raise timothy or clover in North Dakota. But listen to what I have done here. I have sowed timothy in Illinois and Iowa, and I never had a finer stand or finer crop than I have had here. In the spring of 1901, I sent and got 2-1/2 bu. of timothy seed, and sowed it with my oats on 16 acres of ground. I got over 60 bu. of oats to the acre that fall, and the next fall I cut and threshed 120 bu. of timothy seed from the two bushels and a half sowing, and that is better than I ever did in Illinois or Iowa, and have had a fine crop of timothy on the same piece every year since. I have a farm four miles up the valley from Sawyer, one of the oldest farms in the county. If the man I bought it of was not mistaken, it has been under cultivation for the last 20 years, and has never received any fertilizer. I have a fine crop of wheat there this year that stands all of five feet high.

I would say "hurrah for North Dakota."

A. Tofflemire

COULD NOT ASK FOR A NICER WINTER

Sawyer, ND - March 1905

Dear Sir: As you asked me to write a letter for your folder, stating how we like North Dakota, will say we came here three years ago this spring from Iowa. We like this country, the climate is good, fresh and invigorating. We could not ask for a nicer winter. We have had fine weather since the 19th of February, and most farmers have their discing and harrowing done, and are ready to seed as soon as it is safe. Some have already sowed wheat.

I like it here much better than Iowa. We have had some cold weather here, but the cold winters of North Dakota are nothing compared to the cyclones and wind storms of Iowa.

My health was poor when I came here, but it has steadily improved until now my health is better than it has been for years.

The crop of 1904 was a bumper crop, and prospects are good for another this year.

Yours truly,
H. L. Vesper

LIGNITE COAL A BIG ADVANTAGE

Sawyer, ND - June 19, 1905

Dear Sir: I have only lived here two years, but I think this country is as good for farming or stock-raising as any country I ever saw.

I only had in 30 acres of flax last year, but I threshed 510 bushels, which sold for \$1 a bushel. I made my living, kept seed for this year, and made nearly \$500 besides. I saw oats threshed last year that went 82 bushels to the acre.

Every farmer should have a few head of cattle, and some hogs and chickens, and then with the fine crops this soil raises he should do well.

One big advantage we have here is the lignite coal, which sells at \$1.50 a ton at the mines. I can go five or six miles and get a load for very little money. It beats any kind of hard wood and is much easier to use.

Yours truly,
Frank Kohoutek

THE FAITH OF THE PEOPLE

In the days of the homesteaders, religious gatherings and sermons were held in the home. The only guidance given was that of the family Bible. Christian faith guided many a settler through hard times, and the formation of various congregations secured the bond between individuals in the growing community of Sawyer.

Missionaries were often sent into the unsettled territory. Ralph Hubbard was among the first. He carried a small pump organ in the back of his horse-drawn buggy. He became the first Sunday School superintendent in the area.

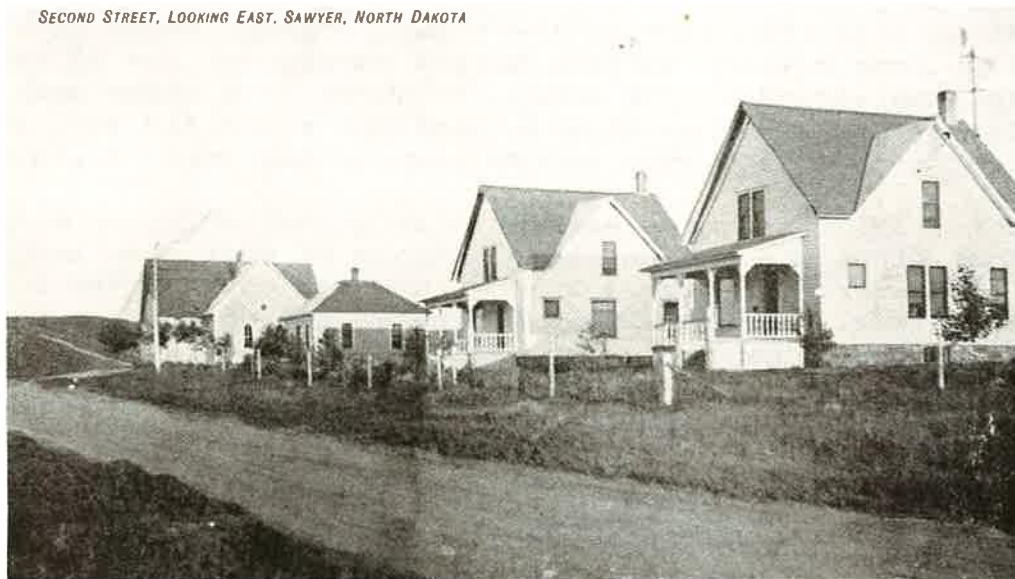
The Rev. Pleasant Royce traveled from Velva to the Sawyer and Logan areas to serve the settlers. He was credited with performing the marriage ceremony in Bismarck of Isaac Woodliff and Lizzie Martin, the first couple from the valley to be wed.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

In the early 1900s, a group of homesteaders six to 10 miles southwest of Sawyer gathered in a home to worship. The group, of German descent, traveled from southern Minnesota and abided by the word written in two books, *Die Predige* and *Der Prediger*. During worship, the lay reader was forbidden to part from the words of the book in any manner that would conflict with the constitution of the congregation.

In 1905, a meeting was held at the schoolhouse to organize the construction of a structure for the members of the Congregational Church at an estimated cost of \$1,500.

SECOND STREET, LOOKING EAST, SAWYER, NORTH DAKOTA



The Congregational Church of Sawyer, far left.

The Rev. H. D. Bliss served as the congregation's first pastor. The Rev. A. Cox pastored in 1913, the Rev. Roy Rood served in 1914, and the Rev. Wm. Farrar served in 1915. In the 1920s, the Rev. A. J. Spacht not only served as pastor of the church, but also as superintendent of the school.

One of the regular ushers, Jack McKinnon, owned a grocery store in Sawyer. When the collection plate passed by five-year-old Sylvester Effertz, he proudly dropped his silver nickel into the plate. The next morning, the youngster climbed into his outdoor clothing and was proceeding out the door when his mother asked, "Where are you going?" He responded, "Over to the store to get my candy. I gave Mr. McKinnon a nickel yesterday."

The members became fewer and fewer, until the church was dissolved in the 1930s. The Rev. R. S. Jones was the last pastor to serve the Congregational Church. The building was used for school functions and other gatherings. It was finally sold to the Missouri Synod of Churches in 1942, and the building was later occupied by St. Peter's Lutheran Church.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

The First Baptist Church in Sawyer was organized by O. J. Johnson and the three Pitkin families in March 1905. In 1908, the church became incorporated according to state laws. The Rev. Edward B. Johnson, also a homesteader, was the first pastor of the Baptist congregation and was also instrumental in its organization. The church was affiliated with the Velva Baptist Church until 1915. The First Baptist Church was affiliated with several different churches over the years, and was even affiliated with three at one time.

The congregation members held a common desire to hold their meetings in a structure of their own. A group known as the Women's Baptist Home Mission Society became famous for its 25 cent meals cooked and served by the women. Proceeds from these meals went into a building fund. They eventually obtained a lot for \$22, but the severe drought of 1910 and 1911 forced them to put their building plans on hold.

Until 1912, services were held in an old white schoolhouse. A 20 x 39 foot structure was built in January of that year and carted from Ray to Sawyer. Crossing a bridge gave the moving crew a few difficulties. Despite a \$150 mortgage, having their own house of worship overshadowed the congregation's financial worries.

The bell was added to the tower before the first services were held in March 1913. A picture of a river painted by F. N. Pitkin still hangs in the sanctuary. In the next few years, pews were added, a bathroom was built on church grounds and a foundation was poured. In 1921, the mortgage was paid off.

Early-day pastors spent less time with each church as others formed, and the need for a parsonage grew more urgent. Congregation members purchased a 24 x 26 cottage, and moved it from Burlington to a lot owned by J. Johnson. The moving expenses, and the addition of a foundation and an entry way were paid for by \$1,200 in donations. The building was dedicated in October 1943. This allowed the clergy to become a part of the community. Over the years, the congregation witnessed the services of the Rev. A. S. McClain (1915), the Rev.

Fred Speirstes (1916), the Rev. K. Anderson (1928), the Rev. Ernest Klein (1941), the Rev. Ernest Bailey (1957), and C. McClain (1974). The Rev. Gordon Mohr and the Rev. Rollie Gordon also pastored the congregation.



The First Baptist Church of Sawyer

Over the next 10 years, renovations and improvements included an addition to the church structure, running water, kitchen appliances in the basement, new paint, tiles on the floors, Hammond organ pews, movie and slide projectors, flags, a communion table and worship center. These improvements were dedicated in September 1964 and totaled \$9,600.

The church was used for classes until 1945 while the high school was being built. It was also used for kindergarten classes until 1970 while the addition was being built.

In 1947, the Bentley family donated 30 acres of land to the North Dakota State Baptist Convention. Located 45 miles east of Minot, and three miles west of Drake, the area originally included a lovely lake and two small buildings. Camp Bentley now includes six main buildings, a chapel, some cabins, and a beautiful place to spend a few days each year in restful worship.

Like many other small-town churches, congregation numbers have declined. Since the parsonage was sold, the congregation is without a pastor. A layman from Minot has since ministered to the congregation.

MENNONITE BRETHREN

In 1898, the area south of Sawyer was being settled by family units who had traveled from Russia, Germany, Rumania and Austria. Although they all came from varied backgrounds and differed in their religious beliefs, they all shared a common faith in God. The members held their first services in a homesteader's shack.

When numbers increased in 1908, members began holding services in a schoolhouse. At this time, the church was without a regular pastor. In 1909, the members became impressed with the teachings and doctrines of the Mennonite Brethren, so they organized and became the Velva Mennonite Brethren Church.

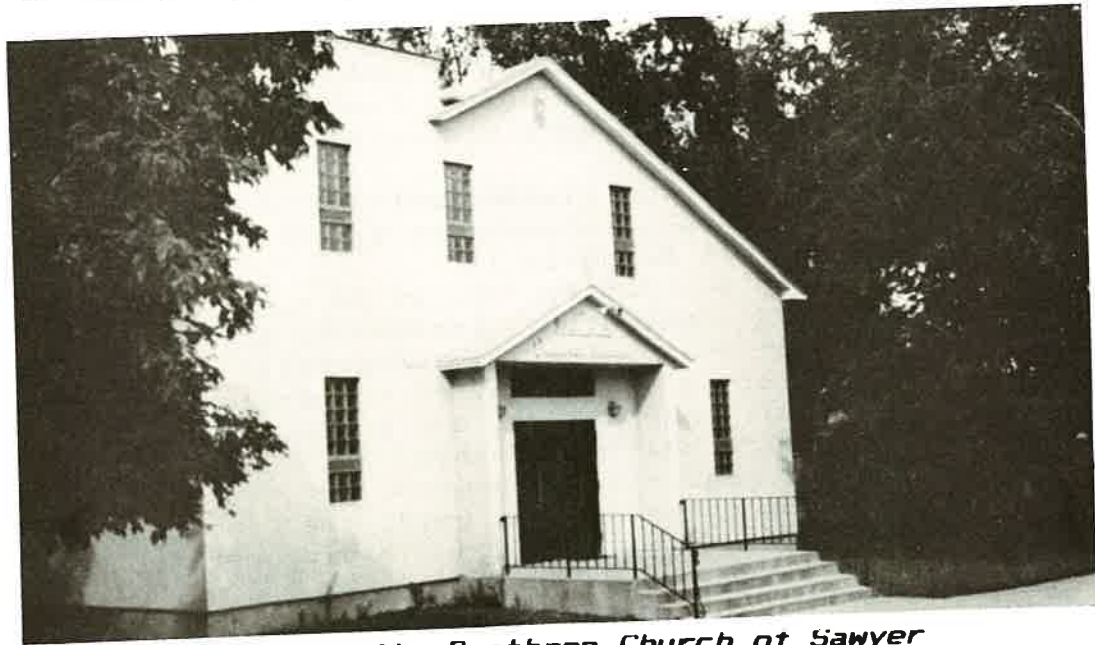
David Lehr donated two acres of land eight miles south of Sawyer for the site of the church building. Money was collected to build the 26 x 32 foot structure, and was constructed by church members and one salaried overseer. The building, which cost the congregation \$1,350, was dedicated June 10, 1910.

The Rev. Christian Reinche traveled from Harvey one Sunday each month to officiate. In the absence of a regular pastor, local leaders administered the sermon to the fast-growing congregation. Reinche later appointed the Rev. Frank Janzen, an official missionary to India, to come and hold regular meetings. The congregation then became an organized church and joined the North American Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

Some of the charter members included the families of George Beck, Christian Vix, Philip Bechtold, Mrs. M. Faul, John Faul, and Mrs. Christina Sutter.

In 1924, the building was sold for \$600, as it was too small for the growing congregation. A church built in Velva was purchased and moved six miles south of Sawyer. The congregation reorganized in 1936 and became the Sawyer Mennonite Brethren Church.

Improvements were made upon the structure, including the addition of a full basement, chair space and a modern heating system. In 1941



The Mennonite Brethren Church of Sawyer

and 1950, the church hosted the Central District Conference, and boasted a large attendance. At that time, Albert Beck and Reinhold Liebelt were ordained deacons. Julius Heizelman was ordained a deacon in 1953.

The congregation outgrew this structure in the late 1950s, and in 1956, they voted to construct a new church in the village. Ground-breaking services were held June 17, 1956, and shortly thereafter, the foundation was laid. Construction on the 40 x 80 structure was again done almost completely by congregation members. Located just across the street from the school, the basement houses a kitchen and dining facilities. The main floor has two cloakrooms, a nursery, the main auditorium capable of seating 200, the pastor's office and the choir room. The top floor has more classrooms.

The congregation members established a Sunday School and a Vacation Bible School early on. The Mennonite Brethren Youth, the Ladies' Mission Circle and support of Tabor College in Kansas are other examples of the positive work of the church. Music was recognized as a wonderful form of worship, and the church has given birth to numerous musical talents, as well as bringing in outside musicians. A new parsonage was constructed near the church in 1965, and the Rev. George Reimer currently ministers to the congregation.

NAZARENE CHURCH

Organized in 1908, the Sawyer Church of the Nazarene was the first church of that denomination east of the Rocky Mountains and west of the Mississippi River. The congregation began with revival meetings by the Rev. Lyman Brough, who was born in Pennsylvania. Before coming to North Dakota, he attended revival meetings of the Methodist faith, and pastored three congregations for a time. The Methodist Conference, however, was in strong opposition to his preachings, so he and his wife traveled to North Dakota. He first held his meetings in Surrey, and later in the Fairview Schoolhouse, three miles north of Sawyer.

Due to his conflicts with the Methodist Conference, he organized his church as the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene in 1908. In



The Nazarene Church of Sawyer in 1920

1909, he was appointed superintendent of the new district, which encompassed the Dakotas, Montana and Minnesota.

The Sawyer congregation's humble beginnings originated in a schoolhouse, which was also used by the Baptists. They then rented the upstairs floor over Havalena's butcher shop. This area, known as Havalena's Hall, was also rented out for parties and dances.

Charter members included the following family names: Gilzar, Galagher, Hodges, Ruth, Rowe, Williams, Reinholdt, and Zacker.

Wm. Hodges donated the lot in Sawyer to build a church. The congregation raised \$1,000 and borrowed \$1,000 for the construction. It was dedicated Nov. 13, 1908. The basement was reached by a door and ladder outside the structure for many years. The building was heated with lignite coal, and kerosene lamps were used for light.

In 1910, L. A. McGrew donated pews that he had built. The parsonage, built in 1910, shared outhouse use with the congregation. In 1944-45, a foyer was added to the east side. An office was added, and an inside stairway descending to the basement was constructed. Bathroom facilities were also added to the basement. Pentecostal was also dropped from the name. Over the years, the plumbing, heating and electricity were all updated, and the ceilings and windows were replaced.



The New Nazarene Tabernacle in 1920

The history of the Nazarene Church also includes the district campgrounds located near the Mouse River on the edge of town. The first district meetings were held in the summer of 1909, and continued for 60 years. Large tents with straw floors were used for the services. The Rev. Prine raised enough money in 1925 to build a permanent structure known as the tabernacle. A concrete floor was added in 1945, as were cabins, a dining hall, a water system and laundry facilities. The congregation is ministered by the Rev. Cromie.

In 1969, the North Dakota and South Dakota districts merged. Since this location was too far from South Dakota district meeting participants, the land was sold to Wayne and Edna Redding. The site is still called the Old Tabernacle and was the setting for the beautiful outdoor wedding of Scot and Susan Redding. Scot is a direct descendant of pioneer Hattie Redding.



The Nazarene Church of Sawyer

ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

In the early 1900s, a young group of homesteaders settled in the Sawyer area, and soon found themselves missing the fellowship of the congregation left behind. H. Tegler traveled from Anamoose once a month to speak the gospel to the settlers in their homes. In 1904, charter members Robert, William, and Adolph Klimpel, Conrad Busch, Paul Michalita and their respective families set out to establish the St. Peter's house of worship.

They purchased a vacant schoolhouse from School District No. 2 for \$250. After an unsuccessful attempt to move the building with horses, Adolph Klimpel and his steam engine were put to work. They moved the building on to two acres of land donated by Robert Klimpel. A cemetery was also started at that site, six miles southwest of Sawyer. The Rev. Kettler was the first clergyman of St. Peter's Lutheran Church.

After a rain or snow, roads were often muddy and difficult to travel. Sometimes the pastor couldn't even make it to the services. The congregation's numbers dwindled due to the irregularity of the services, many of whom began attending other churches. In 1918, the congregation disbanded.

By 1935, the congregation had reorganized. By 1942, the congregation had grown too large for the original structure, so they purchased the vacant Congregational Church building for \$2,000. They shared the services of the Rev. Mueller with a Minot church from 1942 to 1948. During this time, the church obtained a bell, pews, a reed organ, a furnace and benches. Dedication services were held Nov. 17, 1946. Two years later, a resident pastor was sent. He stayed with congregation members during his first year, and also served the Burlington area.

Another change occurred in 1952. The Burlington congregation joined the Minot district, and Sawyer, Max and Kongsberg became a single parish.

With the arrival of the Rev. Jay Decker in 1966, St. Peter's became a two-point parish with St. John's Lutheran Church of Kongsberg. The pastor's residency was moved from Kongsberg to Sawyer, as the congregation purchased the house owned by Ferdinand Manski for the purpose of using it as a parsonage.

In 1969, during the vacancy left by Rev. Decker's call to another congregation, the congregation purchased a house in Garrison and moved it to the corner lot next to the old parsonage, which had been sold.

In 1973, the congregation voted to enlarge the basement and the chancel area of the church building. The entire project was completed in November, and dedicated Dec. 16, 1973



St. Peter's Lutheran Church of Sawyer

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League raised funds for the kitchen furnishings. The organization serves wedding receptions and funerals, and gives aid to the needy in the area and in foreign lands. St. Peter's also has an active Sunday School and youth leagues.

For the past 13 years, the parsonage has been occupied by the Rev. Russell Peterson and his family. Pastor Peterson still serves the Kongsberg area.

CATHOLIC CHURCHES

A scattering of German and Irish Catholics in the Sawyer area helped build St. Cecilia's Catholic Church in Velva. The first structure was wooden, but was later replaced by a brick edifice and parsonage while Father Karl Hobelberger pastored the congregation.

Minot's first Catholic church was St. Leo's. Father Raith traveled to Velva for services until 1908, when the present structure of St. Leo's underwent construction. As it was a full-time endeavor for Father Raith, he could no longer continue to serve the Velva-Sawyer area Catholics. Father Bueler from Harvey began travelling to Velva biweekly until a resident clergyman could be sent from the Fargo diocese. St. Leo's has been renovated several times and is now a historical landmark in Minot.

THE LEARNING OF A PEOPLE

The Sawyer School District organized in 1888 as Pleasant School District No. 16, named after the Rev. Pleasant Royce, the first pastor in the area. The first officers of the school district were Lars Larson, C. C. C. Willis, John (Frank) Booth, Jas Fitzpatrick and Ed Skinner. Rhetta Skinner, the daughter of Ed and later the wife of Robert McDougal, was the first schoolteacher.

In 1904, a two-room wooden schoolhouse was built by Rodgers Brothers Construction. Later, a \$600 bell was paid for by basket socials, a common method of fund raising at that time. The bell still remains on the schoolgrounds.

A \$500 bond was issued in 1906, and a \$2,000 bond was issued in 1908 for the purpose of improvements. Trees were then planted around the schoolyard. In 1910, a \$10,000 bond allowed the first brick schoolhouse to be built just north of the old wooden structure. This structure included four classrooms, an office, two hallways, and a cloakhall, which allowed storage not only for caps and coats, but also for dinner pails. The dedication for this building was Oct. 27, 1910.



The brick school building in the foreground was built in 1910, and the white structure was built in 1904.

The year 1917 was the beginning of high school education in Sawyer. The first high school graduation was in 1920. That was the first and last time the old schoolhouse was used for graduation ceremonies, as it was loaded on timbers and hauled south of Sawyer.

About this time, the Farmers Market--a store on main street--had gone out of business. Located just north of the school, the building was rented by the school district. The building consisted of old stone walls, a basement which barely supported the floor, a few benches and two heating stoves. Students dressed in the brick building and then ran to the rented building to play or practice

basketball and other sports. The building was later condemned and tore down, and for a time, there was no place for practice or play.

In 1921, the school district planned for 30 students, but ended up crowding 64 young people into one room with two teachers--A. J. Spacht and his wife, Mona. With the advent of a high school education, attendance was high. Later, however, attendance decreased, and in 1927, there were no high school graduates at all.

In 1924, a \$12,500 bond allowed for the installation of chemical toilets, which put an end to the hurried trips in sub-zero weather to the little shacks out back.

In 1925, Minnie P. Elliott was the superintendent of the school. In a fit of anger she "slapped" a student, giving him two black eyes. The next morning, none of the students attended school. A petition to fire the superintendent and signed by the students circulated throughout the school. The teacher eventually resigned and left town in the middle of the night, but not before she poured ink down all the sinks.

With the depression of the 1930s, attendance stayed about the same in the classrooms. Teachers' pay was about \$45 a month.

With the onset of World War II, many mothers were forced to find work as their husbands had been drafted. Children were no longer able to run home at lunch time for a hot meal. The Sawyer Parent Teachers Association, under the direction of President Marcella (Effertz) Johnson, sought extra ration stamps from the Ration Board to begin a hot lunch program at the school. After many frustrating trips to the Ration Board in Minot using borrowed gasoline ration stamps, Johnson tried her luck with the First District Health Unit. There she met a very cooperative Miss Rubbelke, who cut through the red tape with the Ration Board and obtained the extra ration stamps the program needed. With the help from community members' gardens and canned goods, the program managed to get underway by charging each pupil 15 cents per meal. The meals were cooked in the homes and carried to the school. The earliest cooks to prepare the meals included Mrs. Adolph Aamodt, Belle Burnett and Myrtle Baker.



Fred and Myrtle Baker

The Sawyer School District was one of the first to reorganize. This increased the original 36 sections to 194, and now includes all of Willis Township, Newman Township, Greely Township, a large part of Brilliant Township, about one-half of New Prairie Township and a small part of Iota Flats Township. This included the communities north and south of Sawyer.

Following the reorganization, other improvements gradually followed. This included the construction of a new gymnasium in 1950 and an addition to the high school in 1955. This construction took two years to complete at a cost of \$50,000. The money was raised by a building fund taxation, a war memorial county taxation and various donations. The new addition included five rooms, three class rooms, an office and a library.



Former Sawyer superintendent Julian Tollerud, son Rodger, daughter Linda and wife Eva. Tollerud served the Sawyer Public School from 1949 to 1959.

The most recent addition came in 1980: a larger gymnasium and more classrooms to make room for increasing enrollment. This addition cost \$750,000, and includes several additional classrooms for special programs.

Sawyer Public School now boasts full accreditation by the State Department of Public Instruction, membership in the Class B division of high school sports, 20 faculty members, office workers, bus drivers, cooks and janitors, and an enrollment of 215.

In 1985, the Sawyer and Deering school districts began sharing resources in an attempt to reduce the costs of providing their children with a good education, despite the negative effects of a changing agricultural scene. Deering students are transported to Sawyer for morning classes, and then return to Deering for the remaining classes. In 1988, the two school boards pushed this one step further. They began sharing a superintendent. The principal at each school takes over in the superintendent's absence.



Sawyer Public School

Cooping between small schools is considered the only feasible route for small communities to maintain their schools. As the ever-changing economy continues to challenge the Sawyer Public School system, so will the ever-improving Sawyer Public School system continue to grow and change with the times.

COME RAIN, OR SNOW, OR DARK OF NIGHT...

L. C. Black gave his name to the Black Post Office northeast of Sawyer in 1882, and probably can take credit for establishing the first post office in the area. But by 1886, a petition had been granted to establish a post office in the Sawyer area. It was built a short distance east of the future site of Sawyer, on Bill Wilson's land.

Bill Wilson, son of pioneer James Wilson and brother of Mrs. J. F. Wilson Booth, is credited with giving the new post office its name. Upon rising one morning, Bill saw a deer in his field. He brought the deer down with one shot from his Winchester rifle, and the sound of the shot echoed back and forth between the hillsides. He gave the name Echo to the new post office.

On Nov. 2, 1889, when North Dakota became the 39th state in the Union, the Echo Post Office was listed as a post office of the Dakota Territory.

Mrs. Amy Terrell, a widow who had been postmistress for Black, later became Wilson's wife and took over postmistress duties at the Echo Post Office in August of 1887.

The post office was later moved into Sawyer, near the railroad. Fred Hartlieb was the first postmaster at the new site. He was succeeded by William Hodges, and it was at this time--April 26, 1898--that the town was named Sawyer. The name is believed to be derived from the last name of a Soo Line railroad official who happened into the store owned by Hodges. The man was also a Notary Public of Ward County.

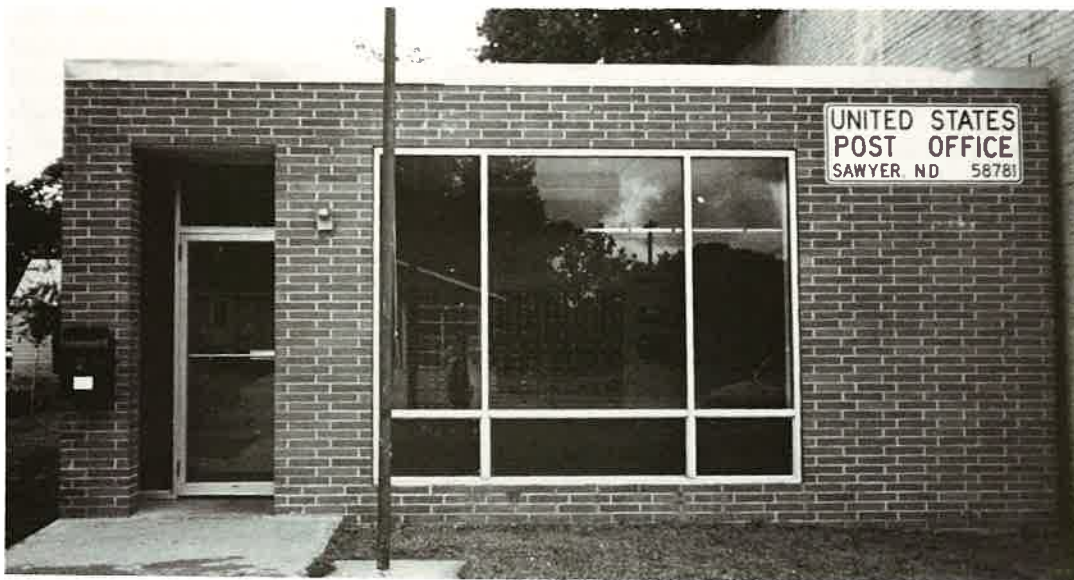
Ed Skinner was the next postmaster. Skinner played a prominent role in Sawyer's formation. He traveled from Iowa, where he had been a schoolmaster, and settled west of Sawyer. A private cemetery west of Sawyer marks the graves of his wife, who died of cancer in 1908, and three of his children, who died of diphtheria.

Pearl Fitzpatrick succeeded Skinner. She was followed by her father, James Fitzpatrick, a pioneer. He and his wife had two children. James, also known as Jim or Fitz, had a reputation as a tobacco chewer. This was evidenced by his stained chin and soiled shirt.

After his sudden death, Myrna Robinson Sillman was appointed postmistress in 1936. She was the daughter of Cook Robinson, who owned a garage and the first electric plant in Sawyer. She was also the sister of Winifred (Mrs. Ben) Klimpel and Dr. Ward Robinson, a dentist in Minot. After teaching school for a number of years, she married Art Sillman in 1916, and they farmed south of town until her appointment. She remained there for 23 years until retirement in 1958.

Her retirement program at the Sawyer School consisted of a history written by Marcella Effertz Johnson, which was read by the master of ceremonies, Ray Redding; presentations of special gifts from friends and relatives; and an unexpected visit by her daughter Ruth Sillman Weathers. Two of Myrna's assistants were Dorothy Ruth Hoy and her husband Tom. Esther Merck was also an assistant for four and a half years.

Ray Redding was acting postmaster from January until August 1958, when Harold Iverson, a veteran and a native of Minot was appointed. Iverson and his wife Lorraine live on the western outskirts of Sawyer, and have five children. The new post office was constructed in 1966.



Delores Booth, wife of Robert Booth--a direct descendant of pioneer Frank--now assists Iverson.

Al Francis, son of Ralph and grandson of the pioneer Elmer, related his memories of how the mail made its way into Sawyer in the 1920s:

"There was a mail car and an express car at the front of the train," he wrote. This train was known as the 5 p.m. Flyer. "As it swept through Sawyer, the mail car door was open. From it, a bag of mail on the floor was kicked out as soon as the car passed the depot.

"On at least one occasion, I saw a kicked-out mail bag hit the ground and bounce under the train. A brief blizzard of torn, blown-away paper scraps was all Sawyer had for mail that evening.

"Outgoing mail from Sawyer was in one pouch, with a strap tightly buckled around its center, giving an hour-glass shape to the pouch. It was then attached to the mail crane. This upright post and frame had two hinged arms which were swung horizontal, and the ends of the pouch clipped to them. The pouch was held vertically at a height of the top of a mail car door, at a distance of about one foot from the door.

"On the door frame of each mail car was a hinged, V-shaped steel arm which was swung horizontally into place before a train reached a mail crane. In passing, the arm hooked the upright pouch at its pinched-together center, snatching it loose from the clips, and holding it until it was pulled inside the door.

"The mail carrier would bring the mail bag, or sometimes two bags, by hand cart or sled, to the Post Office. Sawyer people would arrive there at the same time to get their evening mail, including *The Minot Daily News*."

The first rural mail route was established in 1906, due to the efforts of Barney Pitkin. The rural mail carrier was many pioneers' link to civilization, as very few had electricity or telephones. Often, if the carrier couldn't get through the muddy or snow-covered roads, the homeowners along the route would come to meet him or help dig him out. During the winter months, the carrier was enclosed in a box-like coup on a sleigh, with a small heating stove to keep him from freezing.



The early mail carrier's method of transportation.

John Fitzpatrick first delivered the mail on Route 1. He was followed by Guy Sharar and Joe Streeper. Route 2, established in 1908, was first carried by Charlie Noxie, a black man who carried the mail on a motorcycle. Floyd Hubbard was the next carrier on Route 2. He held this job until the two routes were combined in 1946, when he was transferred.

Joe Streeper began mail delivery in 1919, and continued for 40 years. After traveling from Iowa with his parents, he married Lola Briar. They had three children. When Streeper started his mail route, there was a limit of 24 miles to the route. One team of horses could make the trip, providing the roads and weather permitted. Otherwise, the carrier often traded for a team of fresh horses left along the route.

Floyd Hubbard's family also traveled from Iowa to homestead in the Sawyer area. They had been neighbors of the Streeperes in Iowa. Hubbard married Gladys Harding. He was a carrier in the Sawyer area for Route 2 for 37 years. He continued delivering mail in the Minot area after being transferred in 1945.



By 1958, when Darrell Bernsdorf was appointed mail carrier, he was facing a different kind of life than what the early carriers endured. The advancement of the automobile and improvement of the roads made transportation of the mail much easier and safer. Bernsdorf has said the best thing that could happen to a rural mail carrier has been the introduction of a more reasonably priced four-wheel drive vehicle.

In 1958, his route was 63 miles long, and included 89 mailboxes. When he retired in 1987, he was covering 113 miles a day, and filling 265 mailboxes. In 1975, Bernsdorf added the area south and west of Velva to his Sawyer route.

Bernsdorf, a native of Sherwood, ND, was a teacher and coach at the Sawyer School system until his appointment. He is married to the former Clarice Jacobsen, and they have two children, Jill and Steve, and three grandchildren.

After Bernsdorf's retirement, Ray Redding filled in until a permanent appointment could be made. Ray and his wife, the former Peggy Burnett, had six children. His death in 1988 prompted the appointment of William Reichenberger.

ALL ROADS LEAD TO...HOME

As settlers worked their way westward, the railroads became interested in the untamed territories. The railroad brought hope for a better means of transportation to and from the virgin soils of the prairies. The Northern Pacific Railroad reached Bismarck in 1873, while the Great Northern reached Devils Lake in 1882, and Minot in 1886. The Soo Line reached Minot in 1893. The intersection of these two railroads enabled the rapid growth of Minot, otherwise known as the Magic City. Representatives from both railroad companies arrived in Minot to help plot the proposed townsite. Due to the close proximity of the companies' offices, a railroad war broke out in 1905.

The railroad played an important part in the development of Sawyer and other towns. In fact, it is said Sawyer's namesake was a Soo Line Railroad official, who once visited the village. Unfortunately, the railroad also played a role in the downfall of Scriptown. Before Sawyer had been incorporated as a village, there was a town called Scriptown, located eight miles east of the future site of Sawyer. It was the county seat of McHenry County, but when the Great Northern Railroad built west from Devils Lake in 1886, the settlers decided it was time for a change. The pioneers held a meeting, and in a hurried election, decided to move the county seat to a more central location. Towner was the chosen site, and still remains the county seat to this day. The village of Scriptown soon disappeared from the map.

In the summer of 1893, the Soo Line Railroad entered McHenry County from the southwest, and the name Velva was chosen for this village, located a short distance from Sawyer. Some say the name was derived from the "velvet-like" appearance of the town's grassy landscape. This town, like many others, was prospering from the accessibility the railroad brought. Homesteaders flocked to the area. In 1902, Oscar Anderson, a jeweler, purchased a "Special Homeseekers Ticket" from St. Paul to Velva, which cost \$6.00.

Al Francis, grandson of pioneer Elmer and son of Ralph, recounts some of his memories of the railroad in Sawyer.

"After growing up in Sawyer, North Dakota, in the 1920s, I recall often watching the Soo Line Railroad's Flyer passing through about 5 p.m. each evening.

"Sawyer was a quiet village, and the evening train's steam whistle was heard by everyone. It seemed to mark the day's end and the night's beginning, as well as the train's approach.

"My first recollections of the Flyer are ones of fright at the loud noise, and the fiery glow from the open space between the locomotive cab and its adjoining tender, which we always called then the coal car. We often saw the fireman bent to his task, swinging the big shovel back and forth between the coal pile and firebox door. Even the ground shook, if you were near enough to the passing monster. The cars were a dull red color, and went through Sawyer in a blurred red streak.

"In the early darkness of winter days, how often were little boys fascinated by the brightly-lit windows of the speeding trains, and the brief glimpses of what could be seen inside them. Even the day coach passengers looked well-dressed to us watching, but the pullman car passengers looked rich indeed, with all the men wearing suits--any day of the week we watched. In most cars, some people were always seen reading newspapers.

"We always watched for the dining cars, to see the shining white tablecloths and small flower vases in the center of the windows, near the glass. The white-coated waiters were the only black men seen in Sawyer in those years, and they looked strange to us. In our eyes, the diners were all rich people.

"The observation lounge car was on the end of each train. In our brief, seconds-only views of it, how we admired the interiors we saw! Big, beautifully upholstered chairs, some leather covered; glossy wood paneling; glowing lamps; white-coated attendants moving about; men in suits reading newspapers, some smoking cigars.

"Then it would be gone, snow clouds swirling in its wake, the whistle sound already diminishing, as it rushed eastward to Minneapolis and Chicago--those places we heard were even bigger than Minot and so far away from Sawyer, we could not even imagine the distances from us.

"But the days of pullman cars, dining cars, and observation lounge cars are now long past, as are the days of the steam locomotive."

Transportation in the days of the settlers was not a pleasant thing. Roads were often difficult to travel in wet weather. Each township was responsible for its own roads, and each township had its own "road boss." When the roads became impassable or difficult to navigate, the road boss was responsible for organizing workers in the township to smooth the roads out. A \$1.00 yearly tax allowed for this road maintenance, and when township residents helped out, they were credited for that time on their tax bill.

In 1985, some of the streets in Sawyer were paved, creating a much neater appearance in the village.



Streets in Sawyer in preparation for paving.

CRIMES OF THE PAST

In the days of the homesteaders, the biggest fear in the Sawyer area was of the cattle ranchers who had arrived prior to the government's push for land occupation in the Dakota Territory. As the river provided food, water and shelter for the animals, ranchers usually settled on the banks. But because open ranges were the norm, the ranchers disliked the fact that settlers were turning their grasslands into croplands. In order to keep the pasture lands for themselves, the ranchers sought to scare away the settler by telling them of the terrible way of life the prairie provided. Many times, a homesteader would find cattle grazing in the crop he had worked so hard to grow.

In 1883 and 1884, vigilante cattle and horse thieves roamed the prairies. With the nearest law enforcement agency located in Bismarck, the ranchers felt obligated to exercise their own law. When a posse of 18 men came upon three men whom they believed to be horse thieves, the group told folks in the area they would take the men to receive a fair trial. The following spring, the bodies of three men tied together drifted ashore at Strawberry Lake. The wave of livestock thieving came to an end for awhile.

Joe Effertz, who had purchased a preemption northwest of Velva in 1900, once told the tale of a strange visitor he had. His closest neighbors were Art and Hattie Lewis, located a half mile east of his shack. Joe would occasionally spend the evening with the Lewis family and share their meal. When he arrived one evening, a young man was playing the organ. Joe assumed the man was a friend of the Lewis family, and they assumed he was a friend of Joe's.



Joe Effertz and his prize possessions--his gun and his dog--standing in the middle of his 1906 bumper crop.

After supper, the man said to Joe, "Guess I'll go home with you." During the walk home, the man often trailed behind Joe, causing him to feel uncomfortable. Finally, Joe said, "Why don't you get up here and walk like a man instead of following like a dog," at which point the man did.

At Joe's shack, the two men discussed hunting and guns. The man asked Joe if he owned a gun. When Joe answered yes, the man asked if he could see it. When he returned with the gun, Joe had slipped a pair of steel knuckles onto his fingers. The man examined the gun, stood up, and shot a hole in the corner of Joe's shack. At this point, Joe told the man to put the gun down, and that he was welcome to sleep in Joe's bed. Joe slept on a cot in his kitchen, but proclaimed afterward that he hadn't slept a wink with the stranger in his house.

The next morning after breakfast, the man decided to walk into town, much to Joe's relief. Several days later, Joe made a trip into town himself for supplies. While there he recognized the face of his overnight guest on a poster, proclaiming that the man was wanted for robbery and murder!

Sawyer was considered a wealthy growing community in the early 1900s, as crops were good, and the economy was booming. Eventually, as with many of the "boom-towns," the economy faltered, and Sawyer became less of a target for criminals.



Sawyer looking north around 1907.

The year 1906 marked a series of bank robberies in the Sawyer area, two of which occurred in Sawyer. Would-be bank robbers attempted to blow the door off the safe of the Sawyer State Bank Aug. 29. Three or four men succeeded in removing the outside door with the first blast, but after the second blast, citizens began hurrying toward the bank, and the burglars were scared off. However, the next attempt, possibly by the same group, was successful.

Early in the morning of Oct. 22, bank robbers blew open the safe of the Sawyer State Bank and managed to temporarily get away with \$4,665. "The Sawyer raid surpasses in cool daring the boldest holdups of the Youngers and the James boys," said Ward County Sheriff John J. Lee at the time.

According to the story by telegraph, eight (some accounts say five) men stole \$150 worth of guns and ammunition from the Brassett & Lunds hardware store. Members of the gang also cut all telephone wires in town. They neglected to cut any telegraph wires, however, and authorities were contacted after the robbery. The men also broke into Segerstrom's general store and stole five fur coats, as well as a revolver and a flashlight. The men then continued on to the bank, and proceeded to blow the safe doors off with nitroglycerine blasts.

Fred Fullmer, a Sawyer resident who ran the Peerless Hotel, was on his way home after visiting his lady friend. When passing in front of the bank, he was told to throw up his hands, and thinking they were joking, replied, "Go to the devil." The robbers knocked him out and carried him to a box car loaded with flax. They threw his shoes under the railroad car and locked him in. At 8 a.m., he regained consciousness and was let out by a woman who heard his cries.

William Hodges, Sawyer postmaster at the time, lived across the street from the bank and was awakened by the first blast. From his upstairs window, he could see two men working on the bank safe. He went to get help from other townspeople. While he was gone, a piece of the safe door was blown through the front window of the bank, across the street and into the second story window of the post office. The men Hodges had gathered tried to force the robbers to give up by firing at them from the second floor of the post office. Three of the robbers managed to keep them pinned down, however. Other citizens, including Milt Shire, Charles Cline and Dr. Ricks, were also turned back by the continual gunfire. The front of the post office was said to have been literally blackened with bullet holes.

The gang left Sawyer on foot and traveled southwest to the Manna King farm. They remained an entire day in a granary in the field, around which King had been plowing. In the evening, King spotted the men walking outside. They told him they were hunters, and set out again in a southwest direction. King later found a large pistol, two fuses with caps, two money bags from the bank, bank checks, three pocket knives and some empty food cans in the grain.

When King heard about the robbery, he traveled to Sawyer and contacted the sheriff's office. Sheriff Lee, deputy sheriff Ed Kelley and C. C. C. Willis made up one posse, and headed toward Max. Another group of men included J. Larkin, Peter Best and a man named Bedient. They also traveled to Max.

The latter group passed two of the men on the road. After realizing they had been recognized, they tried to escape. The deputy sheriff and Willis had joined the Larkin posse in the meantime, and they began their chase after the men. The two on foot had been joined by a third robber, and when Deputy Kelley ordered them to throw up their hands, they all began to run. After a second order to throw up their hands, one man complied, but the other two kept running.

The deputy ordered the men to open fire to scare them, but the two men kept running. The group then aimed to hit, and one man was brought down by a shot in his ankle. The third man ran into a slough, and the posse lost sight of him. He was hiding in the water among the rushes, but as the day was cold, he was eventually forced to show himself. Bedient fired at him twice and he threw up his hands. A search of the slough revealed a bag of \$400 in silver and \$400 in bills.

A farmer driving to town located the other two about one mile west of Max. The farmer brought J. Druey, Chas. Fisher, L. B. Krogstad, Emil Kardell, A. H. Segerstrom and Henry Kaith to the haystack. The two robbers were found asleep and were taken by surprise. All men were marched into Max, and the wounded man's leg was dressed by Dr. Ivy. A blacksmith in Max cut log chains and fitted them to the men, who were then taken to Minot by buggy.

The five men who were captured were as follows:

Mike Duffey, 42, was considered the "Daddy" of the gang. He was also the explosives expert. Duffey was later identified as the man who had left a grip containing tools and nitroglycerine at the Great Northern station check room in Minot the Thursday prior to the Monday robbery. While police waited to arrest him on his return, a mistake on the part of a lunch counter clerk enabled him to get away with the bag. He died in a Ward County jail before sentencing.

Bert Conroy, 25, had been released from the Minot city jail on Sunday morning for a minor offense. The Sawyer robbery occurred the following Monday.

Ed Robinson, 23, was a handsome, intelligent ex-soldier from whom Minot police had taken a pistol away Friday night. He was said to be the leader of the gang. Robinson was shot in the ankle in an attempt to flee from the posse.

Charles Sullivan, 22, had worked as a cook in Minot prior to the robbery. He was from Winnipeg.

Jack Hayes, 22, was the fifth member of the gang. His background was unknown.

While in jail, two of the bars of the cell in which the prisoners were contained were found to be sawed in two. A thorough search of the prisoners and their holdings showed no evidence that the prisoners had done the job themselves, and it was thought that a sixth member of the gang had attempted to break them out.

Robinson, Duffey, Sullivan and Hayes all pleaded guilty to three counts of robbery and three counts of grand larceny. Duffey died in the Ward County jail after complaining of pains in his head. Conroy, who originally refused to plead guilty and who defended himself, received a sentence of 20 years in the state penitentiary. Robinson received the lightest penalty, as he was the only one of the gang that displayed true remorse, and also convinced the others to enter pleas of guilty. He received a sentence of 14 years and 10 months, Sullivan received 18 years, and Hayes received 17. All were released from prison after serving from seven to nine years.

While Robinson was in the hospital recuperating from his gun wound, he wrote the following poem. The *Sawyer Clipper* and the *Minot Daily Reporter* published the poem, despite reservations from the Minot paper's editor, Sam Clark.

THE SAWYER RAID

By E. G. Robinson

*On a cold October morning
Some men to Sawyer went.
It's said they robbed the bank there,
And carried off every cent.*

*The noise was like a battle.
Bullets flew all ways,
And the natives were so scared
They will remember it all their days.*

*But one there was who showed some fight,
From a window across the way,
He emptied his revolver
And well...that's all he had to say.*

*He claimed he was bombarded
With a great big piece of steel,
It sounded so loud and cruel
That he to his prayers did kneel.*

*And then he saw that robber band
Retreating down the street,
They left the town with firing loud,
It drove away all sleep.*

*They travelled on their way that night,
Till day began to break
And then hid in a wheat bin
A little rest to take.*

*And when they awoke that evening
With their heads from whiskey clear,
They started travelling onward
And their hearts were filled with fear.*

*Then on the following morning
As they walked along the grade,
You could see some of the men
That took part in the Sawyer raid.*

*And along then came the posse
Made up of good brave men,
And ready if need be to fight and die,
Their laws to defend.*

*I know the time when bullets
Sounded awfully good to me,
When I fought for Uncle Sam
Away across the sea.*

*But now I turned my face and ran,
All self respect was gone.
I could not stand and face those men.
I knew I had done wrong.*

*And then another shot rang out
As I ran across the plain.
I knew I had been hit
And I fell wounded and in pain.*

*And as I lay there wounded,
My thoughts went back some years.
I thought of a gray haired mother
And my eyes they filled with tears.*

*And when it comes sentence,
If the judge is not hard then,
I'll do my best when I come out
To be a man among men.*

According to Ward Ellis Bunker, who wrote a history of Sawyer in partial fulfillment of college credits, another robbery occurred in 1908 which hasn't received much attention. Bunker repeated the following account as reported in an early newspaper:

"The men who robbed McKinnon Store are serving long terms in the penitentiary. They told stories of their lives to Judge Goss, saying that hunger caused them to rob. They were sentenced this Wednesday morning by Judge Goss as follows: Frank Barr, the leader of the gang received 15 to 30 years at hard labor; James McMillan of Detroit got five to 10 years; Bernard Reed of Detroit drew five to 10 years; and Harry Cloisier, Chicago, got three years. Before pronouncing sentence, the Judge gave the defense attorney, L. J. Palda, an opportunity to declare why sentence should not be passed. Palda explained that they were hungry and had tried in vain to obtain work. Three of the men were under 21 years of age and had never been arrested before. The quartet walked from Velva to Sawyer the afternoon of the robbery, arriving in Sawyer at 5 o'clock. The robbery was planned at the edge of Sawyer. Barr, the leader, entered the store first and ordered Mr. McKinnon to hold up his hands. Barr attempted to escape, but was caught..."

In 1910, another attempted bank robbery was made in Sawyer. Glenn Jones was caught by a posse of men from Sawyer, and was being held in the Ward County jail for his burglary of the First State Bank. He escaped by sawing through a bar of his cell formed out of an ordinary case knife. From there, he made his way to the roof and managed to get to the ground by dropping down a rope which had been left there by workmen. As the rope didn't reach the ground, he still had a 10- or 12-foot drop to the ground. His fall was broken by a water cistern. The sheriff's office offered a \$100 reward for his capture.



Sawyer looking north around 1910.

THE GROWTH AND DECLINE OF A VILLAGE

Although Sawyer was not incorporated as a village until 1908, it saw its beginnings in 1902 when a man named Tofflemire erected the first house among numerous shacks. This house was later sold to C. P. Bechtold. The second house was constructed by Wm. Harding in 1903. When that family moved to a farm outside of Sawyer, the house was sold to J. L. McKinnon. The third house was built by Mark Daniels. It was the first to be built on the north side of the tracks, but during the 1904 flood, they were forced to abandon their home. They later moved the house to higher ground.

In 1908, two Minot lawyers, Greenleaf and Leighton, began promoting the townsite for the Soo Railroad, which owned the land. Business lots were offered for between \$100 and \$250 and residential lots were sold for \$100. Lyle Corey and William Hodges were in charge of the sale of the lots for the railroad, and received free lots for their work.

P. D. Podhola came to Sawyer from Lidgerwood, ND, in the fall of 1902. He opened a lumberyard, and from that point on, the village grew rapidly. Podhola also owned a hardware store on the east side of the street, but hired a man to manage it for him. The stock was later sold to Basset and Ojen, who moved it to their building on the west side of the street.

Podhola's brother-in-law, Joe Havelena, later moved from Lidgerwood to Sawyer and opened a butcher shop. The upstairs was known as Havelena's Hall, and was used for dances, church meetings, lodge meetings and school programs.



Joe Havelena's Meat Market around 1909.

Mark Daniels filed on a homestead in 1902, south of Sawyer. He opened the first blacksmith shop in Sawyer, driving back and forth from home to work every day. He later moved into town.

The first grocery store in Sawyer was owned and operated by William Hodges on the west side of the street. He sold out to Kardell and Brusven in 1902, who later sold it to the McKinnon Brothers. J. L. McKinnon bought his brother's interest in the store in 1906, and continued the operation until 1930, when the store burned down.

Hodges built another store, probably in 1903. He operated a post office and later a telephone office in that store. He also operated an implement business, but later sold it to Peter and Ras Reinholdt. The Reinholdt brothers constructed the first sidewalks in Sawyer.

The Tofflemire Brothers general store, which opened in 1902, was sold to a man named Hoff and reopened as The Farmer's Store. After that, the store was sold to a man named Segerstrom. Prior to the robbery of the Sawyer State Bank, the robbers broke into Segerstrom's store and stole some clothing, including five coats. When the shooting began later, Segarstrum reportedly yelled, "Shoot the robbers in the pants, boys. The coats are mine!"

J. C. Oard opened a store in 1903. His son, Eugene, also opened a barber shop at approximately the same time. The elder Oard later moved to Logan.

The Tofflemire brothers organized the First State Bank of Sawyer in 1906. This was the only bank in town conducted by residents of the town, and was capitalized for \$25,000, with a surplus of \$5,000. In 1905-1906, the brothers also operated a horse shipping business.



Cook Robinson's Garage around 1918.

The Sawyer State Bank was established in September 1904. The first cashier was O. J. Mortenson. The next cashier was named Dalen.

A drugstore was built south of the bank and was managed by a man named Stark. Later, Dr. F. L. Darland took over, and he and his wife moved upstairs.

O. R. Church purchased the Darland home and opened a jewelry store at the present site of the Mennonite Church.

Another early businessman was Jacob Hubbard, who homesteaded southeast of Sawyer in 1902. After selling his ranch and moving into Sawyer, he operated a dray line and livery barn until 1927. He was the father of F. W. Hubbard, postal carrier for the Sawyer area for many years.

Sam Briar, who had settled with his family in the Sawyer area in the early 1900s, was in the real estate business. His daughter was Mrs. Joe Streeper.

The first hotel in Sawyer was called the Soo Hotel. It was built in 1905 by Fred Hockspier, and was located at the north end of Main Street on the east side. He also operated a livery barn north of the tracks. Charles Zander, a brother-in-law of William Hodges, later took over the operation of the Soo Hotel.

The Peerless Hotel was built on the west side of the street. George Persons, probably the first drayman in Sawyer, built a butcher shop adjoining the hotel. This hotel was later taken over by Robert Anderson of North Prairie.

Plenty of business in the early boom-town years allowed for the operation of two hotels. Four passenger trains passed through daily, and two more were added two years later. A dentist also came down from Minot two days a week. He worked in the front office of the Peerless Hotel, in full view of anyone passing by.



The west side of main street south in Sawyer: (left to right) Dr. Darley's office, confectionary, Hage's store, McKinnon's Pioneer Store, Segerstrom's Hardware, First State Bank, restaurant, T. E. Tenney Real Estate Land Office, City Meat Market, and the Hotel Sawyer.

The *Sawyer Clipper*, a local newspaper, was in operation in the Peerless Hotel as early as 1904. It was owned and edited by M. A. Frissell. The paper was purchased by Ora Bailey in 1906, and Milo Pitkin began working as a reporter. Years later, the paper changed ownership again, and the name was changed to the *Sawyer Telegraph*.

Other businesses in operation during Sawyer's early years included a harness and shoe shop owned by J. J. Brand. He later purchased land near Logan. Perley Nulph operated a restaurant and later added a pool hall. Mark Francis owned and operated an undertaking and furniture store south of the drugstore.



The Minnekota Elevator was the first elevator established in Sawyer, and was managed by John Listerud. His wife cooked meals for the men who brought coal into town to be shipped out. Charles Zander, Will Hodges' brother-in-law, was the second manager of the Minnekota Elevator.

The second elevator was either owned and operated by Tom Wald, or it was an O & M Elevator; stories have mentioned both.

The third elevator, built in 1906, was the Farmers Elevator and was founded by Frank Pitkin and David Whaley.



In 1941, two auxiliary grain tanks were built to increase the capacity of the Osborne-McMillan Elevator, of which Charles Sweet was the manager.

Joe Streeper and Mannie Register were two charter members of the Sawyer Farmers Cooperative Elevator Association. In 1963, the association installed barley drying equipment at the Osborne-McMillan Elevator.

T. E. Tenney, the Sawyer land agent, boasted the sale of a farm a week in 1905. The editor of the *Sawyer Clipper* believed the town would double in size in two years. By 1912, the population of Sawyer had reached 200. The year 1915 marked a bumper wheat crop for farmers in the Sawyer area. In 1915, the population of Sawyer was listed in the *Sawyer Telegraph* as 266.

With the rapid growth of the town, groups and clubs were organized. The object of the Sawyer Commercial Club was to better the interests of the town. The following were officers: J. E. Tenney - president; William Hodges - vice president; Brasset - secretary; Mortenson - treasurer.

The Modern Woodmen Lodge boasted 25 members during Sawyer's boom-town years. The Royal Neighbor Lodge and the Gym Club were also established organizations at that time. Members of the Gym Club paid dues of \$1.25.

A variety of businesses came and went rapidly at this time. Some of the following were listed in issues of the Sawyer Telegraph, as recounted in Ward Ellis Bunker's "History of Sawyer, North Dakota," a paper he prepared in partial fulfillment of college credit.

E. E. Sawyer resigned the management of the Sawyer Elevator and formed a partnership with I. G. Bunker in a roller grinding mill. Clyde Richmond purchased the M.P. Confectionery in 1915, and C. D. Benson bought the Sawyer Hotel. William Tibbs, a familiar citizen in those days, opened a cafe and rooming house, May 6, 1915. Previously he had owned a laundry shop. He even crocheted articles to sell in his cafe.

E. C. Long had a blacksmith shop in 1915 known as the Valley Forge. Mark Daniels still operated his blacksmith shop at that time, as did E. C. Williams. All had plenty of business to keep them operating.

Rangvold and Alfred Hage were managers of a general store owned by Peterson and Muus. J. F. Morse opened the Tailor Shop, and Ralph Oard operated a grocery store. Brasset and Ojen sold Maxwell cars, and handled hardware and farm machinery. Brasset handled the first bulk gasoline for stationary gas engines in the area. Farmers would haul the fuel in five-gallon cans and during threshing season, one person would have to make a trip into town in the morning and again in the late afternoon to replenish their fuel supply.



Sitting on the south end of the L-shaped Hage store were (left to right) Henry Reinholdt, Lou Perry, Joe Havalena, Bill Harding, and Marcus "Shorty" Daniels.

The two banks, the First State Bank and the Sawyer State Bank, were located on the west side of the street. J. L. McKinnon still operated his grocery store in 1915, and John Johnson, father of Oscar, was clerk. Sawyer Pharmacy operated in conjunction with the doctor's office. The Sawyer harness shop was operated by Latimer and Walter Humes.

D. R. Gree was the owner and editor of the *Sawyer Telegraph*. In a 1915 issue, the following were listed as village officers: D. D. Whaley, President; Havelena, Trustee; J. J. Johnson, Trustee; Thor Jensen, Treasurer; L. B. Krogstad, Clerk; H. O. Dalen, Assessor; Gust Anderson, Marshall; And F. A. Pitkin, Justice.

The last editor of the *Sawyer Telegraph* was M. J. Pavlik in 1918. There was no paper after that. It was about this time that the bustling little village of Sawyer began undergoing a change.

Both banks closed in the early 1920s, which came as a severe blow to the town's economy. Many people lost their savings. At the same time Sawyer began to decline, Minot was at the height of its growth. As the city began expanding its trade area, many of the small businesses in the area were forced to close due to the competition.

The year 1920 witnessed the first in a series of fires that occurred over the years, and forced many businesses to shut down. A tragedy struck the Walter Humes home one morning in 1920. Humes operated a harness shop below his home, which he had already gone down to open for business. When his wife arose, she poured kerosene on the coal fire to provide more heat. An explosion occurred, and she later died of her burns. Walter's hands were severely burned in his attempt to rescue his wife.



Walter Humes Harness and Shoe Shop around 1918.

In 1930, Jack McKinnon's store burned down. He did not rebuild, but moved to California. Paul Puseman operated a grocery store on the east side of the street for a short time. Emil Christianson also opened a store on the west side of the street in 1934, and continued operations until his death. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Boutilier then took over the store and continued until about 1950.



The Pioneer Store, owned and operated by J. L. McKinnon.

Havelena's Meat Market also burned down, and J. J. Larsen's hardware store folded up. Bill Butler sold his confectionery after his wife died, but the building remained vacant for quite some time.

The population continued to grow in the 1950s through the 1970s, as Sawyer began serving as a residential suburban area to Minot. Workers in Minot began commuting from Sawyer, where they paid cheaper taxes and housing costs. Due to its location, the population of Sawyer grew from 264 in 1950 to 390 people in 1960. The population in the '80s has only risen to 417, perhaps stabilizing with Minot's declining economy. The population of Ward County grew from 1910's figure of 25,281 to 1980's figure of 58,392.

Even now, businesses find it tough to compete with the nearby city of Minot. Sawyer now functions with the following businesses: E & D Auto--a used car lot and gas station--owned by Eugene Keller; two elevators, divisions of the Minot Farmers Elevator; Hauser's Farm Supply, owned by Darrell Hauser; the Hill Top Lounge and Bottle Shop, owned and operated by Sherry and Gary Miller; Lane Vent Fast, owned and operated by Barney Lane; Quality Construction, operated by the Larry Beeter family; Renee's Corner--a restaurant and meeting area--owned and operated by Renee and Rodney Arnold; Russ Accounting Service, operated by Judy Brevig; and the Sawyer Grocery Store, owned and operated by Carol and Lynton Klimple.

Since the early 1960s, Sawyer has added a firehall with a fire engine and volunteer firefighters, a waste and sewage disposal system, paved roads, a larger school gymnasium and additional classrooms, an improved park and baseball diamond, and various other improvements.

BATTLES WITH NATURE

The early settlers were forced to undergo a variety of natural hardships, including out-of-control prairie fires, damaging floods, devastating tornadoes, and blizzards with little or no fuel to heat their homes. Although these natural disasters still occur, modern technology has provided us with improved ways of dealing with them.

Mark Francis told of a time in 1904 when a man named Hoff, located just west of Mark's home (now the Mike Washek home), asked C. C. C. Willis for help during a flood. The water had traveled nearly a quarter mile over the Mouse River's banks. Willis and Hoff built a boat to haul his possessions and livestock to safety. Hoff enlisted the help of Matt Flammang, Mark Francis, James Bivins and a man named Norpool. The boat was used to haul a sow with a litter of pigs to a dry area, where they stayed for two weeks until the water receded. The cattle had scrambled for manure piles, but were soon herded out by Francis and Bivins on horseback. Despite their efforts, two cows were lost in the icy cold waters.

The magazine, *Lounsbury's Record*, recounted a tale told by Elmer when he went to the store for supplies during a blizzard. One of his two horses choked to death from the heavy-falling snow. As his wagon was too large for one horse to pull, Elmer was forced to trade his wagon for a sleigh. That horse also met its end and Elmer then abandoned his sleigh and returned home on foot.

Dorothy Ruth Hoy, daughter of homesteader W. A. Ruth, recounted tales of the blizzards in early days. After each blizzard, the snow had to be shoveled away from the door of the barn so the stock could get to water. Each blizzard piled up more snow, until by the middle of the winter, the stock had to run to the top of the huge snow pile.

"When a blizzard was in progress, the stock would not leave the barn," said Hoy. "One time during a blizzard, my father made a hole in the straw roof, let mother down into the barn, and they carried pails of water...down to mother, who then carried it to the stock. A blizzard then would come without warning, with a strong northwest wind, which swirled the fine, powderlike snow around, shutting off one's breath, and pressing on the eyelids until a person could not hold them open long enough to see.

"Anyone out with horses during a blizzard had to let the horses take them home to safety, although there were times when the horses could not find their way, and after the blizzard...the frozen bodies of team and driver would be found. Even those at home sometimes could not find their way to the barn to feed their stock. Nearly everyone had a clothesline or wire strung from the house to the barn to follow; otherwise one could become lost within a few feet of the buildings."



Getting through the snow is not so difficult in today's society.

In September 1904, Richard Klimpel and his threshing crew were caught in an early blizzard, and forced to take shelter in the cook car. After three days, Richard set out on foot for home, where his wife was also snowed in.

The Sam Brier family took a homestead about four miles southwest of Sawyer. The eldest daughter Lola, who later became Mrs. Joe Streeper, told how disappointed she was when the family arrived at their new home. She had expected to find a house similar to the one they had left in Iowa, but instead, she found nothing. The buildings had been covered by snow, and steps were cut down into the snow to get inside the house. The family later moved into town.

In the winter of 1907-1908, Lyle Corey was forced to leave the warmth of his home for a load of coal following weeks of a cold spell. He left at 3 a.m. with his sled and team of horses. When he arrived at the mine, it was 48 degrees below zero and there were 30 teams in front of him. He waited in line the entire day, and by nightfall, he was headed home with a sled full of coal. On the way home, however, his sled tipped over, dumping his long-awaited coal everywhere. Rather than taking the time to reload the entire sled, he tied large chunks of coal to the runner of his sled, and continued home. Upon his arrival at home, he found the fire out, and his wife wrapped up in blankets in bed trying to keep warm.

In June 1943, soaking rains turned to snow over a widespread area in North Dakota. Soggy snow covered the ground to a depth of more than 22 inches, whitening a land that had already been turning green due to earlier spring rains.

After this storm however, several old-timers recalled how in June 1901, a heavy spring snowfall was followed by excellent crops.

In 1949, the Max-Drake branch of the Soo Line Railroad was under 15 to 20 foot snowdrifts for over a month. This snowy winter was well-remembered by Clyde LeRette, railroad station agent, and Karmet Loorence, elevator manager. After a two-day storm in February, a large snowbank covered the Soo Line railroad tracks just west of the depot. The Soo Line snowplow soon dissolved the bank, only to dump the major bulk of it on the depot. The force of the crashing snow broke every window on the north and west side. LeRette escaped injury by the man-made avalanche by ducking under his office counter.

A hard, four-hour rain shower in 1962 filled basements and ditches. Highway 52 was impassable in spots, and the Soo Line Railroad tracks were washed out in two spots. A creek which had been dry for years was 100 feet wide in spots, and lightening put the telegraph temporarily out of order.

The year 1969 marked the disruption of many of the families living along the Mouse River, as the spring flood forced evacuation for a period of 40 days.

Prairie fires were a common hazard to the pioneers, as wide open plains of grassland and crops invited the eager flames. Eventually, the farmers learned to plow furrows around their property, but that didn't always prevent a fire from jumping the soil.

In 1902, James Marlenee warned the Ludvig Bechtold family to prepare for a prairie fire coming from the south. They could see the flames a day before the fire reached them. C. P., a son of Ludvig, said he thought the whole world was on fire. The warning enabled them to turn the fire away from their place. It traveled on to the village. Along the way, a couple in a sod house slept as the fire passed over them. Since the house was made of sod, it didn't burn. The couple did not realize the fire had passed over them until the following day.

In Ward Bunker's *History of Sawyer, North Dakota*, a tale is told by Mann Register, an 1889 homesteader in the Sawyer area. In 1901, a fire started at the Jacob Selzer farm south of Sawyer. Mann, then 21 years old, suffered severe burns in his attempts to control the fire. It burned its way north, and continued to the Ben Granstad home. Mrs. Clara Hedahl, daughter of Granstad, was with her small sister where they had been placed in a plowed field during the fire. Smoke inhalation claimed the life of of the younger daughter.

Register lost several head of cattle to a three-day blizzard, and in 1928, a cyclone demolished all of his buildings except his house. On two separate occasions, in 1934 and 1943, he lost his barn to a prairie fire.

THE UTILITY COMPANIES OF YESTERDAY

The first fuel used by the settlers was buffalo chips. They made a hot fire, but didn't last long. It wasn't long before the prairie's supply was depleted, as the buffalo was becoming nearly extinct.

Another type of fuel, though not very commonly used, was flax straw. Settlers would place strings inside a 50-pound lard can and pack it full of flax straw. The strings were used to lower the bale into a sheet-iron heater, which had a large round hole in top.

Trees grew along the river, and some grew in prairie coulees, but there were very few available for the purpose of fuel. Mark Francis made a living for himself one winter by hauling wood to Minot three times a week.

Once when he and his father were out hunting, they discovered another form of fuel. A shot that had found its way into a hill soon produced a cloud of smoke. After digging around the area, they discovered that a coal vein had caught fire. This eventually became a popular method for "hunting" for coal, until mines were located and dug.

Although lignite is defined as the lowest grade of coal, early settlers could not have existed without it. Lignite coal was eventually discovered on many claims, sometimes found protruding straight up from a patch of land. At one time, there were 22 underground mines, all within 12 to 15 miles of Sawyer. Of these, the Stafford Mine was probably the first to open. Joe Rowan was the original owner of this mine. The Murray and Leeson mines were two of the earlier strip mines. In those days, strip mining involved pulling strips of sod away by a team of horses.

Calvin (Cad), Roscoe and M. M. (Jake) Beighle came from Illinois in 1900. After settling on their claim, they opened a coal mine on their land. Jake, who later married Clara Putney, was killed in a cave-in at this mine. The mine was closed soon after this accident.

Mines were opened by digging a tunnel, and supporting the walls with boards on either side to prevent cave-ins. Within the mine, pillars of dirt were left standing to support the ceiling, while the coal was mined from the walls. Many settlers worked in the mines during the winter months. The work was dangerous and hard, with cave-ins often occurring. At that time, coal could be bought for \$1.50 a ton. Those who didn't have coal on their land traveled to the mines during winter months.

The use of the precious coal and kerosene promoted a family closeness in the settlers' days. Everyone shared the warmest and best-lit spot in the house to read, study and sew by. Some people installed carbide lights or wind chargers to light their homes at night. The wind generated power that was stored in batteries, and used when needed.

The first electric light in Sawyer was furnished by a huge gasoline-powered generator installed in Cook Robinson's garage. Ottertail Power Company eventually updated Sawyer, and brought with it the popularity of electric appliances. Around 1936, rural electrification was established. It required that each home sign up for \$5.00 of electricity per month. By 1941, power lines had been

installed.

In recent years, many miles of electric line have been moved underground to prevent wear and tear by nature's elements. The same is true of telephone wires. A local telephone company was organized in the Sawyer area about 1904. This modern convenience, at that time, consisted of a magneto set inside a wooden box about eight inches wide, six inches deep and 18 inches long which hung on the wall. The cord and receiver hung on the left of the box, while a crank for the ringing noise occupied the right side of the box. The transmitter was reached through a horn-shaped piece on the front of the box. Two dry cell batteries were located inside, which provided the electricity to transmit the voice over the wire. The crank operated a generator which produced the energy to ring the bells of every phone on the line.



Folks just knew if they were being called or not, as each phone had its own distinctive ring. "Rubber-necking" was the term applied to people who listened in on other people's conversations. Sometimes, the phone was used to indicate an emergency, as sirens are now used. A very long ring indicated an emergency, such as a prairie fire or an accident. Eventually, the rural lines were connected to a central switchboard.

Talking at length on the phone may well be a characteristic that some folks consider disagreeable in other folks, but for Laura Gustafson Dalen, it was a living for seven years.

In 1905, Laura Gustafson married Tom Dalen in Oslo, MN, where they lived for two years before coming to North Dakota. In 1951, they purchased the Sawyer Telephone Office, which serviced 10 telephones in the village at the time. In 1955, Laura worked as switchboard operator from 6:30 a.m. until 10 p.m., excluding holidays and Sundays. By 1956, 71 homes had phone service, and despite the fact that only day-time service was available, the phone was still the lifeline of the community. In 1958, the switchboard operator's "hello" was no longer heard, as the Souris River Telephone Company installed the dial system.

In this area, many shallow wells were dug in the early years. The water was often brought up by the force of the wind via a windmill, and when the wind didn't blow, a hand pump was used. The water often had a high alkali or iron content. Later, soft water was discovered in the range of 300 to 400 feet below the surface, but it often contained a gas or sodium in it. Other impurities stem from fertilizers and sewer systems. Now, rural water is also available from an aquifer in Velva, and bottled water can be purchased in grocery stores.

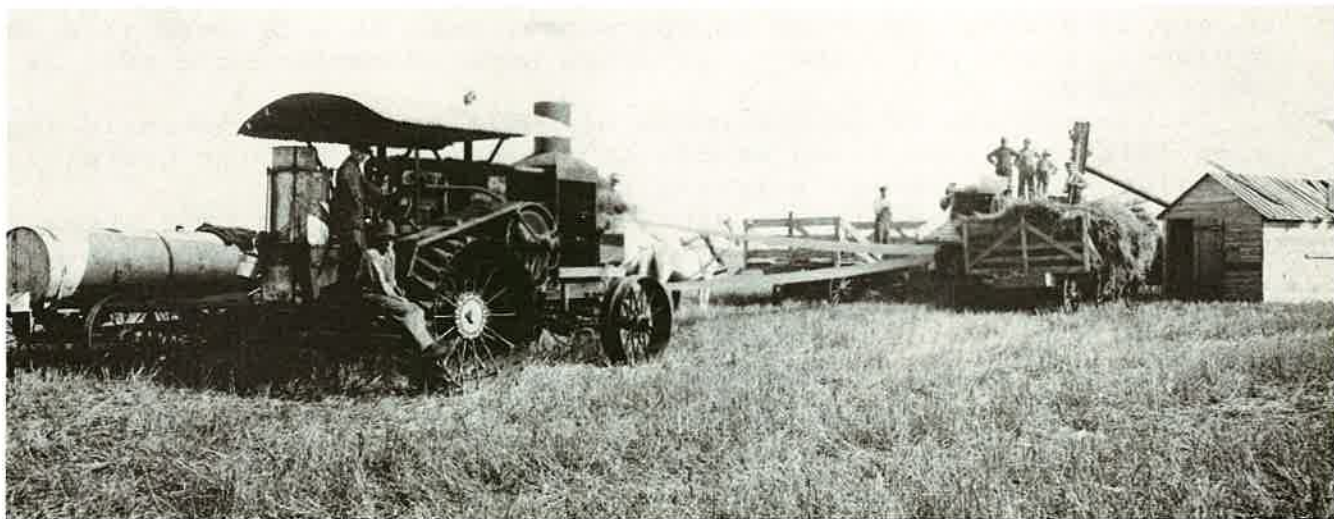
A FARMING TRADITION

Horses and oxen powered many a plow during the homesteaders' years. Horses were expected to travel three to three and a half miles an hour, and about 20 miles a day. The horses were often allowed to roam free in the fields after harvest. Sometimes, the farmer left straw or hay piles in the field, so the horses could graze all winter long in the open prairie.

During haying season, the hay would either be pitched into piles around the farmyard, or hauled to the peaked roof area of a barn. A combination of slings, ropes and pulleys--powered by a team of horses or a single horse--enabled the farmer to move his hay from the hayrack to the second floor of the barn.

Harvest season took off immediately after the finish of haying season. A machine known as a binder cut the grain and loaded it on to a canvas covered platform. Another canvas elevated it up into a packer arm that packed the grain into a bundle, tied it with twine and then kicked it into a bundle rack. The operator released a foot lever, which dropped the bundles into windrows. From here, they were gathered into pointed shocks, to help repel rainfall. Often, there were loose bundles to gather up, as the machinery didn't always function right. Then it was time for the threshing rigs, which sometimes couldn't be put into use for several weeks due to rain.

It was the time of year when young men and boys could make extra money. The average wage for a man was near 30 cents an hour, and 50 cents an hour for a man with a team. Schoolboys rarely started school until harvest season was over.



An early-day threshing rig.

The year 1906 provided a larger than normal crop to farmers, and the search for hired help was on. Reports indicated labor would be scarce, as construction and railroad companies had nearly taken care of unemployment. It was expected, however, that men would quit their jobs with construction crews or the railroad to take the higher wages farmers were expected to offer. The report said workers could expect to draw \$2.50 per day during harvest season.

A threshing crew often consisted of men to drive the team of horses, pitch bundles into the separator, a man to operate the separator and the a man to operate the engine. With the bigger threshing crews, there were cooks in the cook car, and a "flunkie" or a "gopher" to fetch water and supplies.

A state record was set in 1906 in North Prairie Township when Bill Selk threshed out 5,642 bushels of wheat in 15 hours and 18 minutes. He used a 35 horsepower Minneapolis Threshing Engine and a Minneapolis separator. The team of 20 bundle haulers, 10 field pitchers, six spike pitchers, two separator men, two engine men, two firemen, three men hauling water for the engines and 12 men hauling grain won a prize of \$2,500 for their efforts.



A threshing crew hauls grain through the north end of town to the elevators. The homes of Sig Tofflemire, Charlie Sweet and Ras Reinholdt are pictured in the background.

In 1924, Herman Abrahamson of the Logan area experienced a general breakdown or physical exhaustion after threshing season. He raised over 1,600 acres of cropland, and threshed about 30,000 bushels of grain, mostly wheat and rye, in 35 days. He also hired another threshing rig to thresh a half section of his crop. Abrahamson owned a tractor, but did all of his farming with horses, using six outfits.

A TIME FOR WORK AND A TIME FOR PLAY

Despite putting in long hours of hard, physical labor -- which included farming, and building their homes and churches -- the settlers knew the importance of relaxation. An important part of their lives included get-togethers with family and friends during the holidays or other celebrations. The people in the farming communities north of Sawyer had a strict set of beliefs which they expected any newcomers to adhere to, however. Card playing and dancing were not allowed, and ball games on Sundays were prohibited.



The 1926 Sawyer Basketball Team (left to right): Otis Fullmer, Fred Bunker, Delmer Pettys, Superintendent Guy Thorson, Oscar Johnson, Coach Ted Nettleton, Jerome Effertz, Clyde Johnson and Leo Flammang.

Some of the summer games included horseback riding, swimming in the river or a lake, baseball, wrestling, horsehoes, croquet, hide-and-go-seek, pam pum pull-away, run sheep run, or kick the can. Winter activities included sledding (which meant riding downhill on a scoop shovel, a piece of cardboard, a sled, or anything smooth enough to slide), ice skating, or skiing behind the bobsled pulled by horses.

Holiday dinners were shared by the neighbors in the community of Fairview. Each neighbor took turns hosting the dinner, while everyone chipped in with a dish of food. It was customary that men ate first, followed by the children and then the women, the latter of whom also managed clean-up detail.

Ice cream socials were popular in the summer months. Folks who had freezers would bring the ice cream mix and a chunk of ice from the icehouse in Sawyer. Ice was made in the winter and stored in a large building in town for the meat market and those privileged few who owned an ice box. Pot luck dinners were served while the ice cream was setting.

Some of the socials were held at the Glen and Earl Ramsey farm four and a half miles northeast of Sawyer. When Vern Tompkins was dishing up his plate at one of these socials, a bird flying over left its "calling card" on his plate. As one of the ladies handed him a clean plate, Vern simply flicked the dropping from his plate and said, "I'm sure glad cows don't fly!"



The annual Sawyer Picnic Day, looking northeast toward Havalena's Meat Market.

Albert Beck recalls traveling to Sawyer by horse and buggy for the 4th of July celebration. Some of the events he remembered include a baseball game between Sawyer and South Prairie, a horse back race south of town, a rope pull between North Prairie and South Prairie farmers, and a dance with a live band in the evening. The bandstand was located across the Mouse River on land owned by Lyle Corey.



Dennis Redding, Chris Helgeson and an audience celebrate the 4th of July in 1984 with a greased pig contest.

Unlike today's technological forms of entertainment, few if any of the homesteaders' activities required money, and many of them required some physical exertion.

AREA COMMUNITIES

Many of the settlers in the farming community of Fairview traveled from Iowa, Illinois, and South Dakota. This community wasn't officially recognized as a township until 1922, and was then renamed New Prairie. Sundre Township, located west of New Prairie, also organized that year. The first land-taking settler in the Mouse River valley was George W. Bell who settled in Sundre Township. Bell's name was given to the elementary and junior high school, which is located just off Highway 52 between Sawyer and Minot.

The early atlases carry no record of these two townships except the names on the petition which circulated to formalize the townships' existences.

Despite this late organization, the communities managed to progress on their own. Fairview School had been built four miles north of Sawyer years earlier, and was used for classes, neighborhood meetings and worship.

The same type of progress was happening in the McHenry County township of North Prairie, which bordered Fairview. A group of people from Norway had settled in this area northeast of Sawyer, and by 1901, they had built a Lutheran church and had a school district proposed. The population in McHenry County had increased from 5,253 in 1900 to 17,637 in 1910. The next 70 years witnessed a decrease, however, to 7,745.

The following is a map of the early farmsteads in the community of Fairview. When the townships organized, the community located in McHenry County became North Prairie Township, and the community located in Ward County became New Prairie Townships. Since the townships organized later, the atlases carry no record of these families. It has been recorded from the combined efforts of Oscar and Marcella Johnson.

		NORTH							
					18	17			
					19	16			
WEST		32		31		15			
				30	20	14			
						13			
					21	12	9		5
				29			11		
						22	5		
					25	23			
					24	10			
			28				2	1	
			27						
				26					
		SOUTH							

The farmsteads in italics are gone. A number of quarters of land had claim shacks on them, but the families did not stay long enough to become a lasting part of the community. The first seven numbers are farmsteads located in McHenry County, and listed in the Sawyer telephone exchange.

1. *Steve Pitkin and wife; children - Mary and Harvey*

2. *Barney Pitkin and wife; children - Ruth, Francis and Milo*

3. Art and Hattie Lewis; children - Florence, Gertrude and Vernon.

The farm was occupied by several families after the Lewis family moved into Sawyer and opened a gas station and a post office. Farm was eventually occupied by Fred and Caroline Hystad; children - Melvin, Brian, Clifford and Betty. Clifford and his family now live on the farm.

4. Widow Brown and five children. Later became home to Isaac and Olga Hystad, and now owned by Stan and Katherine Hillrud.

5. *Frank Britton and wife; children - Norma, Edna and Carl. Later owned by Ray and Elsie Town, and then by John Gilbertson.*

6. Joe and Hannah Effertz; children - Marcella, Jerome, Marcus, Bernadine, Katherine, Sylvester, Stanley and Gerald. Later owned by Gerald and Loretta Effertz and family. Now owned by Pat Effertz and wife; children - Neil, Nita, Rodger, Nadine, Kevin, Michelle, Alan, Randy, Rebecca, Hiedi, Dale, Stephanie and Chad.

7. Milt and Myrtle Ramsey; children - Claude and Lyle. Later owned by George and Nettie Storhaug; children - Ronald and Lois; and later by Jerome and Bessie Effertz; children - Ronald and Jerry Effertz. Now owned by Jerry and Norma Effertz; children - Maria and Kayla.

8. Alex and Lillian Ruth; children - Doroty and Elsie. Later owned by Russ and Anne Hougham; children - Louise, Russel, and Inez, and in 1936, bought by Oscar and Marcella Johnson; children - Delores, Kenneth, Kathryn and Marvin.

9. *Dick and Lizzie Hayes; children - Mamie, Paul and Hazel. Later owned by Elmer and Mamie (Hayes) Ross; children - Sam, Betty, Glen, Vern and Inez Tompkins.*

10. Dave and Dora Whaley; children - Fay and Mabel. Later owned by Lon and Mary Tompkins; children - Vern, Ernest, Paul and Dorothy. Later owned by Mark and Dorothy Tompkins; son, Joey. Also owned by Ida and Frank Templeman; Art and Myrtle Genetsky, and finally by George and Doris Beck; children - Chuck, Teresa, Jeff and Marty.

11. Mr. and Mrs. Palthorpe; children - Nellie, Ruth, Doris and Marshall. Later owned by Al and Myrtle Templeman; children - Russel and Everett; and then by Verda Bissel

12. Ed and Mrs. Heltzel; children - Mervin and Essie. Later owned by Kermit and Ruby Whitted; children - Linda and Robert. Now owned by Robert and Becky (Whitted) Wald; children - Christan, Jason and Megan.

13. Charlie and Essie (Heltzel) McChesney; children - Iris, Ellis, Maria and Lois. Also owned by Ed and Essie (McChesney) Whitted; Arvith and Irene (Solberg) Finneseth and their children - Elaine and Alvin; Cliff and Myra Narum; Jae and Linda Pedrick and their children Jody and Jae.

14. *Earl and Glenn Ramsey--moved back to Iowa*
15. Possibly Bissel land. Once owned by Obrians, now by Jeff and Gail (Whitted) Buda; children - Kima and Carrie.
16. *Wm. and Mrs. Royce; children - Carrie, Bert and Nellie*
17. Wm. and Mabel Britton; children - Leona, Lucille, Leonard and Lowell. Later owned by Alfred and Bertha (Abrahamson) Andreson; children - Clark, Norman, Loren and Arlene. Now owned by Norman and Hazel (Hammer) Andreson; children - James, Sharon, Dennis and Rodney.
18. Ed and Mandi Muzzy; children - Jordan and Kenneth. Later owned by Art and Elsie Kittleson; children Renae and Kay.
19. *Jacob and Petra Hanson; children - Martin, Olga, Olaf, Harold, Alvin, Helen and Ruth*
20. Fran and sister Ida Templeman. Later owned by Richard and Eva (Francis) Abrahamson; children - Dick, Donna, Jerry and Francis. Now owned by Elsie and Fran (Abrahamson) Johnson; children - Mike, Craig and Judy. Craig and Rhonda (Palen) Johnson now own smaller home; children - Matthew and Amber. Large home owned by Fran and Elsie.
21. Clyde and Mae Mills; children - Cecil, Gerald and Irene. Later owned by Walter and Dora (Schilling) Cowell; children - Glen, Gale, Glee and Gene; Harry and Tee (Finneseth) Sylstad; children - Valeria, Marvin, Gloria; Arvith Finneseth lived there for awhile; now owned by Kent and Karen Engels.
22. *Harry and Mabel (Whaley) Templeman; children - Earl and Vera; later owned by Harry and Geneva (Anderson) Templeman*
23. Tom and Maggie McGrew, no family. Later owned by Wm. Haugham family; followed by Albert and Martha Beck; children - Alma, Evelyn, Irene, Geo., Ruth, Grace, Al, and Doris. Now owned by Al and Mary Beck; children - Suzanne, Steve, Kevin and Aaron.
24. *Jess and Nevada (Hayes) Towns; children - Ray, Bert and Garnet*
25. Wm. and Ellen Benson; children - Geo., Hugh, Etha, Celia, and Irma; followed by Maggie McGrew, Geo. and Edna (Perry) Lawrence; children - Clyde and Kenneth. Second house was built. Occupied by Hughe and Ruth (Palthorpe) Benson and Lloyd. A.M. Foss then bought the land. Harry and Tee Sylstad farmed and lived there. Now home to Ed and Regina Klein; children - Gerard, Mike, Mark, Aaron, Debbie and Janice.
26. Geo. and Etha (Benson) Reinholdt; children Viola, Ruth, Maurice and Ike. Later owned by Melvin and Opal (Getchell) Helseth; children - Raymond and Ardith. Now home to Dennis and Kathy Andreson; children - Laura and Kevin.
27. *Clarence Trapp family.*
28. *Frank Cowell family; children - Walter and Neta. Later owned by Gene Buttner family; children - Hazel and Jennie.*
29. *Charlie and Ruth (Ramsey) Benson; child, Neva*
30. Tom and Maggie McGrew. Later bought by Hugh and Ruth Benson and son Lloyd. Now home to Bruce and Donna Beeter; children - Bruce, Deanne, Lisa, Dawn and Mike.
31. Herman and Clara Abrahamson; children - Henry, Rick, Bertha, Agnes, Mabel, Helen, Clarence and Russel. Later owned by Olaf Hanson family; children - Glen, Hazel, Myron, Inez and Eldon. Now owned by Eldon and Judy Hanson; children - Randi, Jim, Delton, and Brent.

32. Henry and Burma (Ross) Abrahamson; children - Melvin, Darlene, Geraldine, and Sylvion. Now owned by Melvin and Phyliss (Bondley) Abrahamson; children - Randy, Roxanne, Linda and Ron.

S. Fairview School

C. Sawyer Cemetery

Other families that lived in the neighborhood include Jim and Maude (Ross) Obrian, Don and Lois (Ross) Mahoney, Frank and Grace Cowell, Fred and Myrtle Baker.



