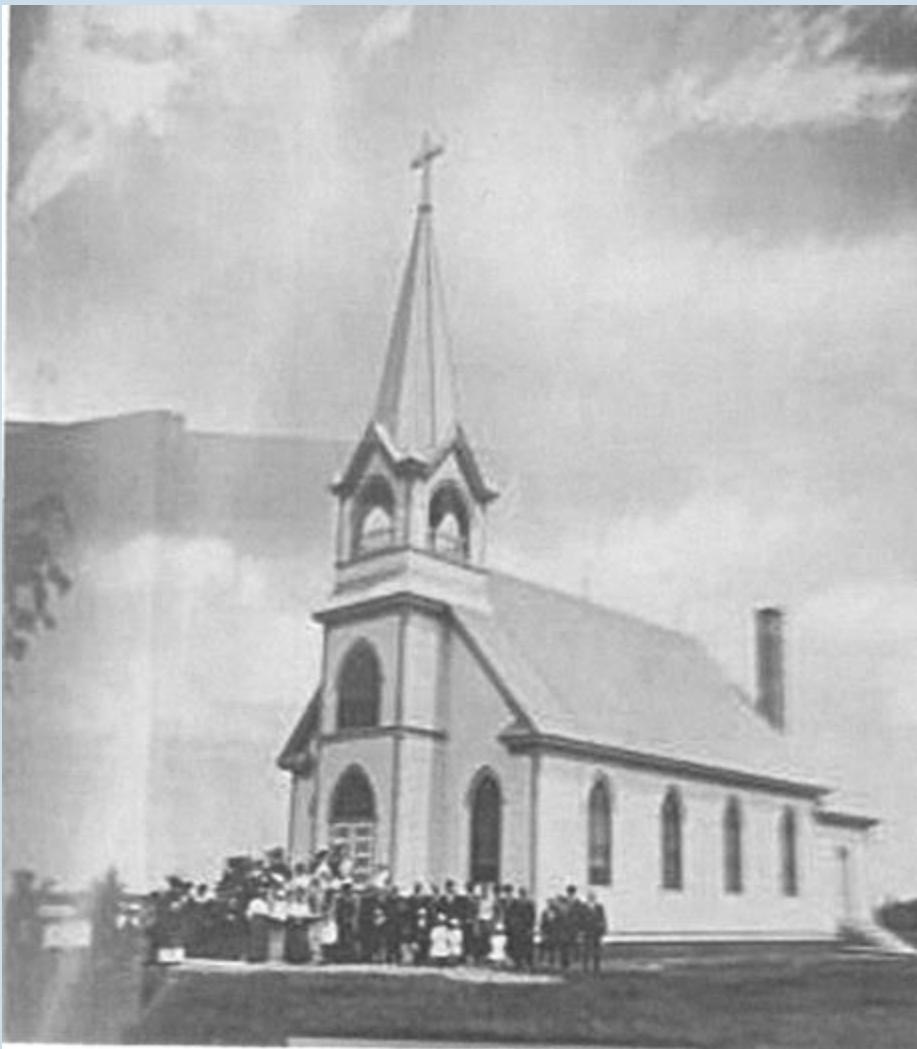


Fall 2020

MURRAY COUNTY CEMETERY TOUR

Created by the Murray County Historical Society

Bethany Lutheran Cemetery



Bethany Evangelical Lutheran church was organized in the home of John P. Hobert in 1884 as part of the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Synod. They built a small church on three acres of ground donated by Hobert. Within months it was leveled by a tornado along with much of Hobert's farmstead nearby. The church was rebuilt only to be razed by fire in 1914. A third and final church building was constructed that lasted until the congregation merged with Lake Shetek Lutheran in 1958. Services were held completely in Swedish until about 1924 when afternoon services were held in English.

The building was torn down in 1959 and lumber used to build farmstead buildings. The stained-glass window was placed in the chapel at the Shetek Lutheran Bible Camp.

Information from: "Faith, Family, Friends: Bethany Cemetery" by Janice (Uggen) Johnson

Bjorkman (Hobert) Family



Swan Bjorkman and Caroline Hobert were married in Sweden. Swan immigrated to Murray County alone to establish a home in Lake Sarah Twp. before his wife joined him in 1885. While living on the farm the Bjorkmans had two sons, Hilding and Alfred, and four daughters, Hilda (Ecklund), Edla, Irene (Burlet), and Hattie.

All of their children lived into adulthood, except for Hilding.

Swan and Caroline were charter members of the Bethany Lutheran Church which was organized on September 22, 1884.

Bjorkman (Hobert) Family



Commercial Hotel. Redwood County Historical Society Collection.

In 1908 the Bjorkman family moved to Wabasso where they purchased the Commercial Hotel. The family farm was sold to Alfred Sundquist and remains in the Sundquist family today.

Edla and Hattie never married and worked for their parents at the Commercial Hotel until their mother's death in 1939. From that time forward, the two sisters operated the hotel on their own until 1979.

Despite living in Wabasso since 1903, most of the Bjorkman family are buried here in the Bethany Cemetery. This is likely because Swan and Caroline were charter members of the church.

Alfred, who served in the Air Service during WWI, is buried Maricopa, Arizona and Hilda Ecklund is buried in Saint Peter, Minnesota.

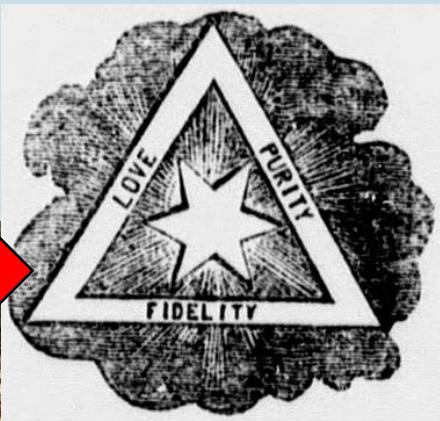
Drew (Atwood) Family



Oliver Drew was born in 1820 in New York State. When he was 11 years old, Oliver began training as a tailor. He worked as a tailor for 14 years before moving to Illinois and then to California to become a gold miner. Oliver was relatively successful and returned to New York in the 1850s.

On August 9, 1856 Oliver, aged 36, and Mary Atwood, age 25, were married and settled in Illinois where they welcomed their first two children into the world, Ellen (Northrup) and Douglas. Called again by the hopes of finding gold, Oliver left for Colorado in 1860 leaving his wife with their two children. Oliver returned in 1862 to enlist in Company A of the Tenth Illinois volunteers for the Civil War.

Drew (Atwood) Family

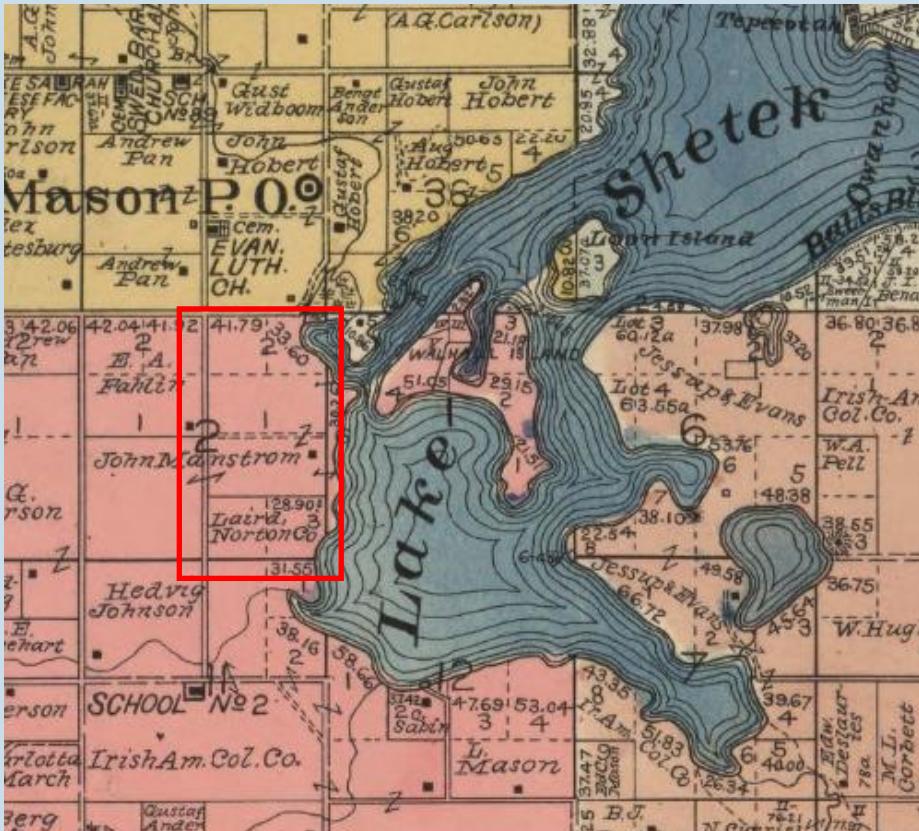


After the war, the Drew family, now complete with two more children: Clarris (Boomhower) and Drucilla (Lang), moved to Murray County on the west shore of Lake Shetek.

Tragedy struck the Drew family in 1879 just before Thanksgiving. On the morning of November 3, 21-year-old Douglas had set out towards Lake Shetek to hunt for muskrats. Evening came and Douglas did not return home. The following morning his hat and mittens were found on the ice not far from where his body was discovered in the water. Douglas was a member of a brotherhood organization which supported sobriety called the Sons of Temperance. This organization's triangular symbol can be seen on his headstone.

Called once again to the east coast Oliver and Mary moved to Washington state in 1891. All three daughters remained in Minnesota starting their own families.

Drew (Atwood) Family



1898 Plat Map. The Drews moved before the first property map was made for Murray County .

Local newspapers announced that Oliver died after a ten-day illness on February 2, 1895 in Tumwater, Washington. Mary moved back to the area settling with her daughter Drucilla Lang in Lake Wilson.

Mary remained in Lake Wilson until a combination of health conditions led to her death in 1898.

Mary's obituary listed her cause of death as "a complication of dropsy, Bright's disease and crysipelas." Dropsy and Bright's disease are both antiquated terms. Dropsy is now referred to as edema, or the collection of fluid in the tissues of the body, and Bright's disease describes "chronic nephritis," or, kidney diseases.

Notice the urn on top of Mary's headstone. Mary died in the Victorian era—a time when very few people were cremated. The symbol of the urn is commonly thought to represent immortality.

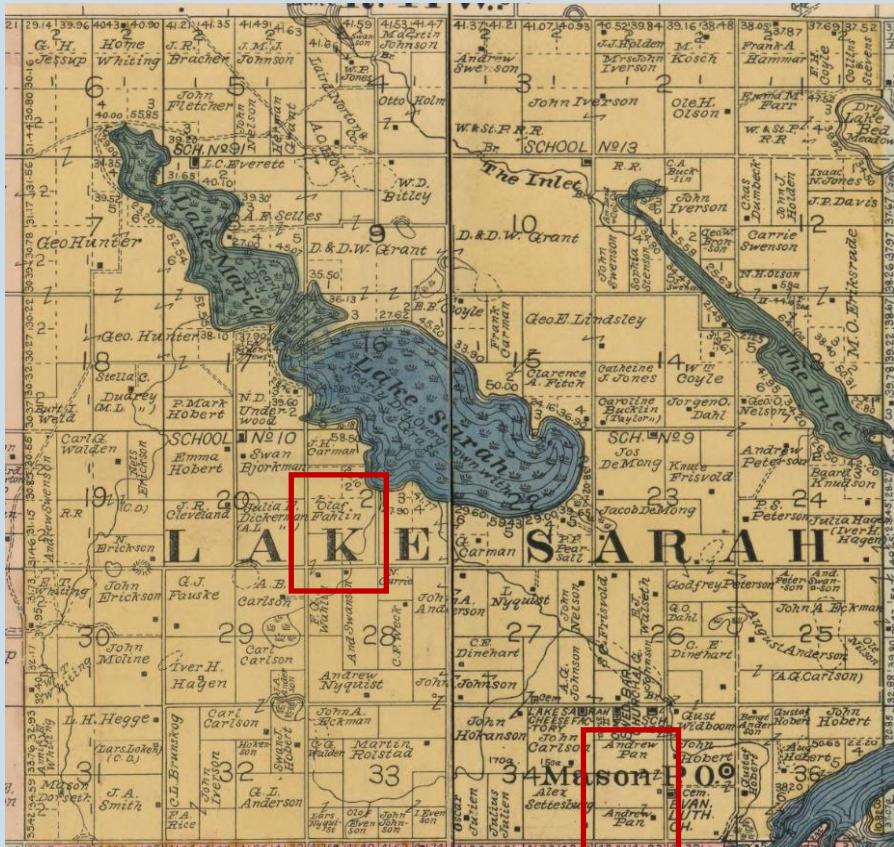
Fahlin (Pahn) Family



Olof Fahlin is buried here next to his wife and son in an unmarked grave. Olof was born in Gudmundra, Sweden on January 30, 1847 where he grew to adulthood. He was a sailor for 13 years and visited nearly every continent. Olof immigrated to America in 1870 where he lived in various places before settling in Tracy from 1883 to 1885. From there, Olof came to Lake Sarah Township where he began farming.

In 1886 Olof married Mathilda Sophia Pahn, another Swedish immigrant to Lake Sarah Township. In the year 1908 they had 3 horses, 14 cows, 4 pigs, two wagons, and a dog on their farm. The Fahlin family grew with the addition of one son, Oscar Adolph, and one daughter, Betty Zenobia (Nordlander).

Fahlin (Pahn) Family



Left: Olof Fahlin farm. Right: Andrew Pahn* farm (*spelled "Pan" on the map). Andrew was Mathilda's father. 1898 Plat Map.

The Fahlin family was hit hard when in 1905, 18-year-old Oscar died of Scarlet Fever. Only five years later Mathilda died at the age of 45 after an operation for gall stones and uterine cancer.

The Swedish inscription you see on her grave translates to “Gone to a better country (Heaven).”

The next year Olof moved off of the farm into Slayton where he lived from 1911 to 1929. Wanting to be closer to his daughter in his last years, he moved to Minneapolis to live with his daughter. At the age of 83, Olof died of heart failure and was buried here in the Bethany cemetery, having been a charter member of the church, beside his wife and son.

Fihn (Nelson) Children



Lars John Fihn was born in Lundby, Skaraborgo, Sweden on April 27, 1856. At the age of twelve he immigrated to America with his family where they settled in Illinois. When Fhn reached adulthood he attended Augustana College and seminary and was ordained into the Augustana Synod in 1891. Throughout his life as a minister Fhn served in St. James, Slayton, Avoca, Dundee, and Calgary. In 1897, at the age of 41 Fhn married Dorthea Benson. Four short years later Dorothea died in 1901 and he remarried in 1905 to Hulda Nelson. Fihn served as the pastor for the Bethany Church from 1909 to 1918. He brought many improvements to the church such as increased membership and an active Young People's Society.

Fihn (Nelson) Children



Bethany Lutheran Church . Built 1914.

On April 23, 1914 the church was struck by lightening and burned down. Fihn led a building committee to erect a third church for the congregation as the first one had been destroyed in an 1886 tornado.

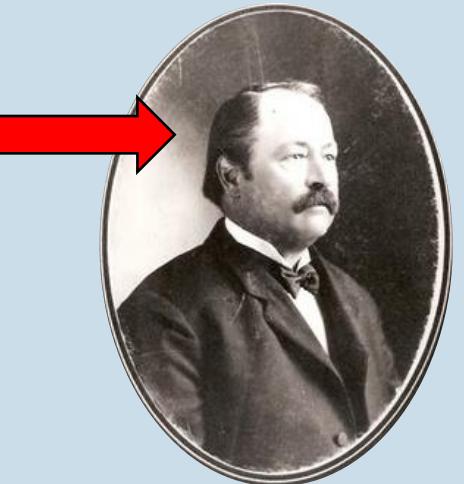
Reverend Fihn's obituary lists five living children left to mourn him: Luther, Hulda, Carl, Mildred, and Ruby. Luther was born to Fihn's first marriage; however, no records could be found to identify the mother of the other four living children.

Resting here in this grave are three of the children born to Lars and Hulda who did not survive past infancy. Two sons born eight months apart, and a daughter, Mabel Maria, born 10 months later.

No other Fihns are buried in Murray county since Reverend and Hulda Fihn moved back to St. James in 1919. While it is unclear where Reverend Fihn is buried, Hulda and several other members of the Fihn family are buried in Faribault, Minnesota.

Notice the Laurel branch engraved near the top of the stone. A Laurel branch often symbolizes victory or glory, but it can also symbolize peace or victory after a challenge.

John Peter and Bessie M. Hobert



John Peter and Bessie M. Hobert came to America from Sweden in 1872 along with John's parents, Peter and Inga, and five brothers and sisters. They settled in Mason Township. John P. farmed and became the postmaster for 36 families in Mason township. He also donated the land for the Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church and cemetery.

He purchased an island in Lake Shetek originally to use as pasture. Early settlers trekked out to island through the 1880s and 1890s for picnics, fishing, and hunting.

John Peter and Bessie M. Hobert



During times of low water a stretch of land opened up for folks to hike from the Manstrom farm (green line).

When the water was high, John kept a few boats and offered to stable horses for picnickers. The 1896 papers touted the changes at the island: "Mr. Hobert owns one of the handsomest sites on the lake, an island near the old Drew Farm which is quite convenient for Slayton and Pipestone people."

In 1897 John constructed a new stable for keeping teams. John named the island Valhalla, a Norse pronunciation. You can see on the 1896 map that the island was already called Walhall, which is the German pronunciation. Over the years the names became interchangeable.

In 1898 Bessie died and one year later John married Emma Lindberg, a local girl who had immigrated with her family to Lake Sarah Township in 1884.

John Peter and Bessie M. Hobert



By 1900 John and Emma had built a hostelry (hotel) that could house 100 guests. It was elegant and roomy. Hobert hired Adolf and Carl Peick to build a ferry system to help visitors get back and forth to the island.

The Hoberts eventually built their business up to include a restaurant, ice cream parlor, and cabin rentals. A camper could rent everything from fishing poles to bathing suits for their stay on the island. By 1900 two ferry boats plied the waters of the lake taking visitors from one side to the other.

In 1906 a fire burned all they had created to the ground. Rather than rebuild, the Hoberts decided to sell the island. Rudolph Beil, from Omaha, Nebraska purchased the land.

Two years later John Peter Hobert passed away. John and Bessie had five children, Arthur, Harry, Lillie Louise, Emil, and Frederick.

John and Emma had one daughter Bessie Ruth named after John's first wife.

Saint Columba Cemetery



The St. Columba Parish was started by Fr. Martin McDonell. He came to the area to purchase land for an orphanage. He built the orphanage in 1882, calling it the "Home of the Sacred Heart." The first parish church was built in 1891. By 1901 the parish had established a parochial school next door. The first graduating class was in 1921 and the last class graduated in 1964. Fr. Aloysius Wermerskirchen was the first student to enter into the priesthood from the parish.

In the 1920s Father John Dolle oversaw the construction of the Crucifixion statuary at the center of the cemetery.



Joseph and Engelina (Schoo)Balster



Joseph Balster and Engelina Schoo were married on January 10, 1907 in the St. Columba Church of Iona. Joseph and Engelina were both immigrants to America with similar stories of how they made their way to the Iona area.

Joseph was born in Oldenburg, Germany on April 15, 1869. At the age of 21 he immigrated to America and settled in Remsen, Iowa and then to Wilmont, Nobles County, Minnesota.

Engelina Schoo was born on May 14, 1889 in Sutterup, Germany. Her family immigrated to America when she was 15 years old. They settled in Ashton, Iowa for one year and then made their way to Iona.

Joseph and Engelina (Schoo)Balster



Oldenburg to the left and Sutterup to the left. Google Maps.



St. Columba Church where the Balster's were married.

After living in Iona for two years, Engelina and Joseph were married and settled on a nearby farm. The Balsters worked mostly with livestock, cattle and pigs, and grew a small amount of small grains. To their marriage they welcomed eleven children into the world, all but one lived past infancy. The Balster children attended County School District 104.

The Balster brothers were very musical and they put together several dance bands and orchestras between 1930 and 1954. The two photographs on the next panel show William Balster's "Arabian Nighthawks Orchestra." The orchestra was led by Benny Wisdorf and consisted of members from around the Iona area including William and Frank playing the saxophone, Aloysius playing the trombone, and Bernard Balster playing drums.

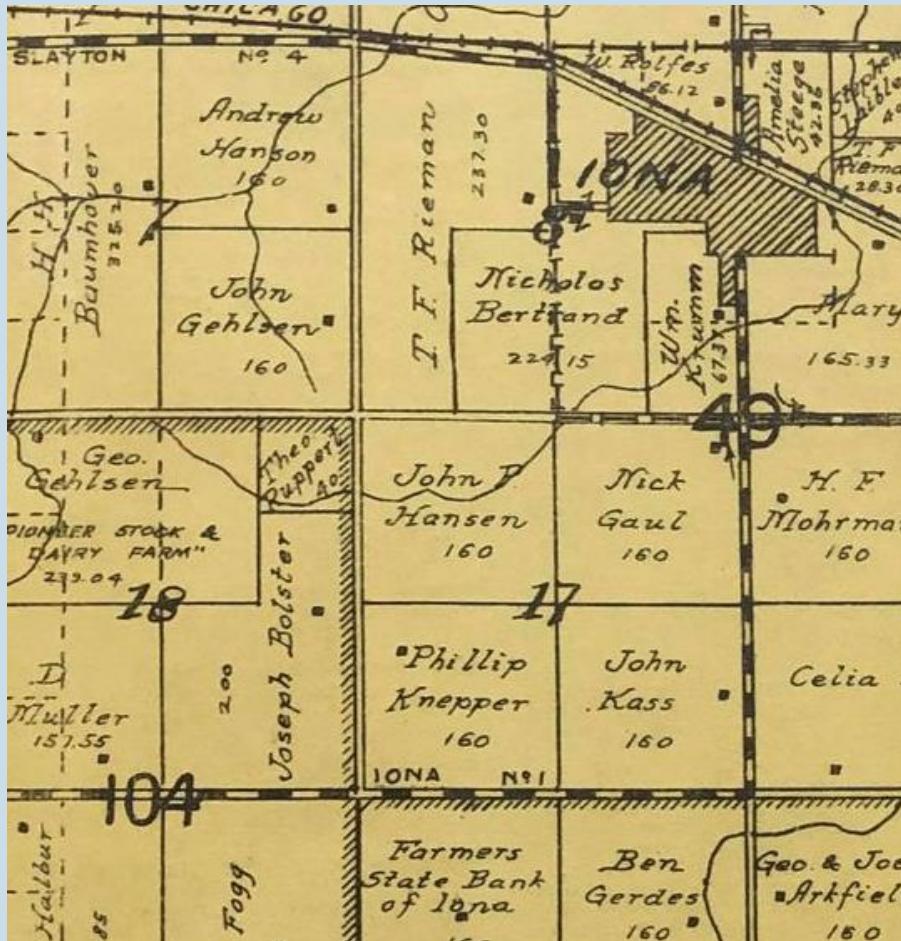
Joseph and Engelina (Schoo)Balster



The Arabian Nighthawks in 1933.

The band consisted of young men from the Iona area. Here they are standing in front of their very own tour bus!

Joseph and Engelina (Schoo)Balster



Balster Farm in Iona Township. 1926 Plat Map.

Joseph lived on the farm he and Engelina purchased until his death in 1938 from stomach cancer. Engelina continued living on the farm with four of her grown children until her death in 1957. All of Joseph's and Engelina's children except for Norbert (Slayton Cemetery), Mary (St. Gabriel's, Fulda), Lucy (Calvary Cemetery, Wilmont), and Josephine (unknown) are buried here in the St. Columba Cemetery near their parents.



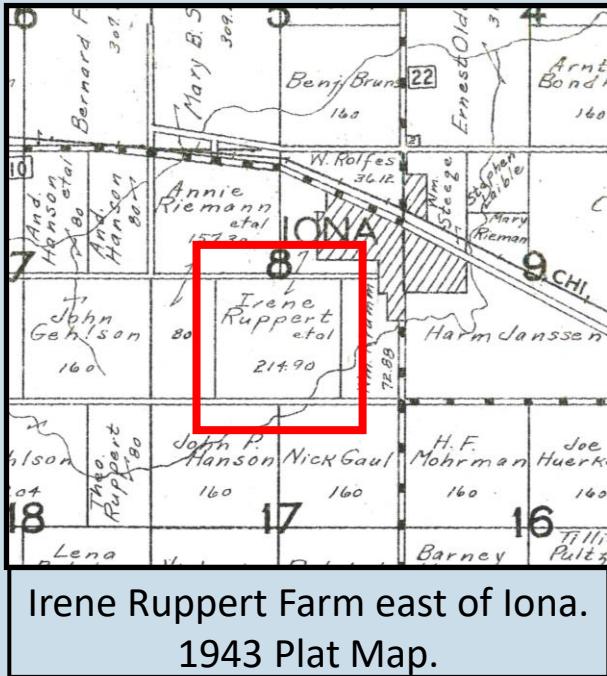
Bertrand-Ruppert



John Bertrand grew up south of Iona and Irene Bathon grew up just across the border in Bloom Township, Nobles County. The young couple were married on September 2, 1919 and Irene joined John on his farm east of Iona where they raised livestock. John and Irene's first child, Richard, was born in August 1924 but passed one short month later in September. Their second child, Bernice was born in 1926.

Tragedy struck the Bertrand family when John became ill in 1936 with a weakened heart. John was taken to Rochester to receive treatment but developed pneumonia and passed away on July 7, 1936. John had been a devoted husband and father, a successful farmer, a member of the Catholic Order of Foresters, and the Knights of Columbus.

Bertrand-Ruppert



Irene and Joe Ruppert.

One year later Irene was re-married to Joseph Valentine Ruppert. The Rupperts remained on their farm east of Iona where they raised Bernice, and two new sons Paul and Gerald. Joseph was born in Iona Township and had attended St. Columba School in Iona.

Irene was an active member of the St. Columba Church, a charter member of the Catholic Daughters, and member of the Fenton Friendly Neighbors Extension Club. She lived out the rest of her life on the farm with Joseph spending her free time knitting, gardening, and enjoying time with her grandchildren. Irene died in 1994.

Joseph continued retired life on the farm after Irene's death. His obituary noted that he "Kept busy...taking care of his chickens, grading and candling eggs, and keeping the grass mowed."

Bertrand-Ruppert



Bernice is one of these five young women. It is unclear which one she is. 1944.



Paul Ruppert. 1956.

He enjoyed playing cards and visiting his family. In January of 1999 Joseph became ill and moved into Slayton Manor Nursing Home where he passed away in March.

After graduating from St. Columba School, Bernice attended and graduated from St. Catherine College in St. Paul on June 7, 1948. Bernice worked as a registered nurse her whole life in places like St. Joseph's Hospital in St. Paul, Worthington, Colorado Springs, and Denver, CO. At the age of 61 Bernice passed away in her home in Denver and was brought back here to Iona to be buried next to her father.

Buried in a plot in this cemetery further to the east is Paul Ruppert with his long-time partner Elaine Reed. No records were found to indicate where Gerald is buried.

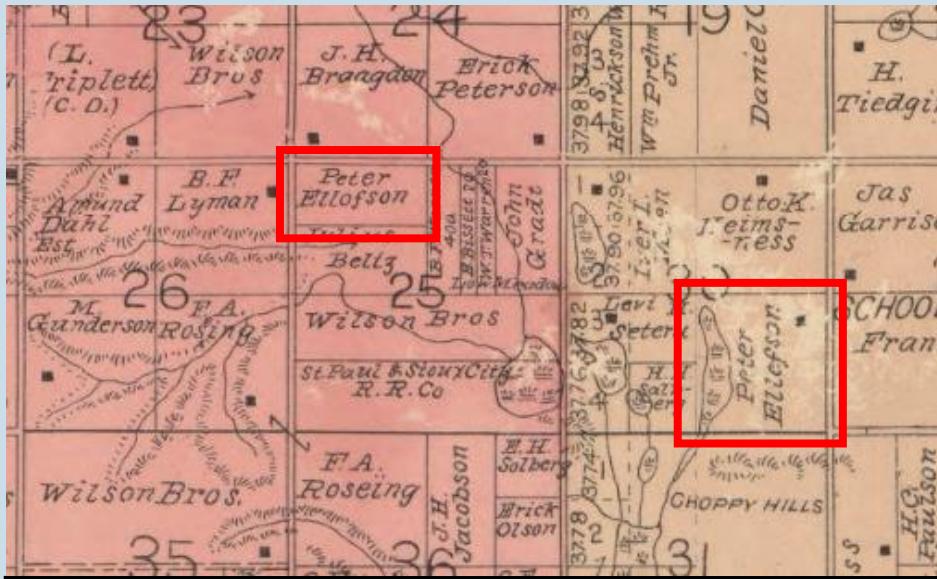
Peter and Isabella (Hoye) Ellefson



Pete Ellefson was born on Christmas Day 1846 in Vasscvgign, Norway. He immigrated to America at the age of 21 settling first in Iowa and then on a farm near Chandler in 1879. Pete suffered through many hard times during his first years in Murray County. He lived through floods, droughts, the grasshopper plague, and one of the coldest winters in 1880-81.

Isabella Hoye was born in Hubbleton, Wisconsin on August 26, 1854. She moved with her parents to Janesville, Minnesota and then to Murray County in 1884. One year later, Isabella and Pete were married.

Peter and Isabella (Hoye) Ellefson



The Ellefson's owned land in Leeds and Chanarambie Townships. 1898 Plat Map.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Ellfson, northwest of Iona, are mourning the death their twelve-year-old son, Mat, who died on Tuesday afternoon, Feb. 5. The funeral was held from the St. Columba's Catholic church, in Iona, yesterday.

Matthew's death announcement.
Iona Journal;
February 15, 1901.

The Ellefsons raised Belgian and Hamiltonian draft horses and Hereford cattle. In 1902 the family barn burned to the ground with several of their horses inside.

The Ellefson family grew with the addition of their eight children: Louis, William, Harry, Peter, Martin, Eleanor "Nellie" Arkell, Matthew, and Mary. All of their children lived to adulthood except for Matthew who died at the age of 10. William and Peter served in WWI and Martin in WWII.

All of the Ellefson children are buried here in the St. Columba cemetery except for William who can be found in the St. Ann's Cemetery in Slayton.

Peter and Isabella (Hoye) Ellefson

Peter and Isabella remained on their farm near Chandler until retiring and moving into Iona in 1918. Isabella became ill in September 1926 and passed away surrounded by family in April 1927.

Pete continued living on his own in his Iona home, but his health gradually deteriorated. On the night of January 3, 1933 Peter slipped on his basement stairs and was confined to bed afterward. Peter caught a flu which developed quickly into pneumonia and passed away three days later on January 6, 1933.

"Pete," as he was called by his friends, was one of nature's own noblemen. He had builded a veneer of gruffness around himself, to hide his truly kind and sympathetic nature. He loved children and animals, and they in turn loved him. He was a kind and considerate husband and father, always thinking of the welfare of his family and friends. It cannot be said of Mr. Ellefson that any person, stranger or friend, ever came to his home hungry and went away that way, none came to his home but that he was made perfectly welcome. What he had, he shared with his neighbors. He was truly a "man who lived by the side of the road, and was a friend to man."

Mrs. Ellefson was well known and popular liked and admired most by those who knew her best. Under her silent exterior was a heart of gold. Her best friends knew that hers was a sensitive nature, one that would prefer to be misunderstood than to cause hard feelings. Many of her little acts of help and kindness are only known to herself and the recipients of her charity. Little children were especially dear to her and they shall miss her, who loved to mother them. She was known for her kind hospitality for her home was always open to all.

Both Isabella's and Pete's obituaries talked about how loving and generous the couple had been in their lifetimes:



Murville and Lucille (Cocoran) Peterson



On July 15, 1890, 30-year-old Murville Peterson and 22-year-old Lucille Corcoran were married in Fairmont, Minnesota. The couple lived on a farm near Minneota for ten years, in Russel for another four, and then finally in 1905 they moved to a farm near Iona.

Over the years they welcomed eleven children into the world, nine boys and two girls. Of their nine sons, five were called to serve the country during WWI. Approximately 2,133 Minnesotans died serving in WWI—all five of the Peterson boys returned home alive to their family.

All of their children survived them except for Ralph, who, having survived WWI, died in his early 20s due to a bacterial infection in his heart.

Murville and Lucille (Cocoran) Peterson

The advertisement is for "The East Side Café". It features a large, bold title at the top. Below the title, there is descriptive text about the services offered, including board by the day or week, meals served at regular hours and lunches at any time, a complete line of Paris confectionery, cigars, and tobacco's, and headquarters for fresh fruit, vegetables, and oysters in season. At the bottom, it says "M. A. PETERSON, Prop." and includes the date "4-1922".

The East Side Café

Board by the day or week. Meals served at regular hours and lunches any time of the day.

Also a complete line of Paris confectionery, cigars and tobacco's.

Headquarters for fresh fruit, vegetables and oysters in season.

4-1922

M. A. PETERSON, Prop.

Advertisement for The East Side Café. April 1922.

The Petersons lived on the farm near Iona until 1920 when they moved into town to operate The East Side Café.

In 1923 Murville sold the café after he was appointed Village Marshall of Iona. After suffering from a stroke in 1929 he retired. Murville had a second stroke in 1939 and in 1943 he died just short of 83 years old. Less than six months later, Lucille died of heart failure.

Other than Ralph, at least two of the Peterson's other children also died of heart troubles like their mother. Ethel died of a heart attack in Chicago on February 13, 1962. The day of her funeral, her brother Ray also died of heart attack on February 16, 1962.

Melchior and Susanna Domler Wermerskirchen



Susanna Domler was born in Lotvinga, Prussia in 1853 and came to the United States with her parents in 1856. By 1862 the family was living in Olathe, Kansas during the era called Bleeding Kansas. A time of violence between free-staters and slave-staters. Susanna was only 9 years old when her family may have been affected when Quantrill's Guerilla Raiders attacked the town on September 7, 1862. Several Olathe men were killed, and many businesses looted and destroyed. Two weeks later, Susanna's father, Peter Domler, mustered into the 12th Kansas Volunteer Infantry, Company H. The 12th Kansas was charged with patrolling the borders between Kansas and Missouri and containing the violence. Domler would have been involved in fighting Quantrill's Raiders during the Civil War. He was mustered out in 1865.

By the 1870s Susanna and her family were living in the Belle Plain, MN area where she met and married Melchoir Wermerskirchen. They were married in 1874.

Melchior and Susanna Domler Wermerskirchen



Wermerskirchen House in Iona 1900.

Melchior Wermerskirchen immigrated with his father and three siblings to the United States from Gross Vernich, Germany in 1862. They came on the ship "Hansa" that set sail from Brenich Germany and arrived at Ellis Island. He was 17 years old. He was living near Belle Plain and working as a farm laborer when he met and married Susanna Domler. They settled on a farm there and eventually moved their large family to Iona. They left behind little Seraphenia, only one year old when she died in 1891. She is buried in Scott County.

In 1900 Melchior and Susanna were living in Iona and he was working as a real estate dealer. They had seven children in the home at the time. John M. was working as a machine salesman. Daughter Pauline was working as a milliner and later married Joe Koob. One son, Alois, became a priest in the Catholic faith and served as parish priest in Hokah, MN.

Melchior and Susanna Domler Wermerskirchen



Iona Ball team. Joe Wermerskirchen third from left middle row. No Date



Iona Ball Team, 1909, Pete Wermerskirchen, top row second from left.

Mary married Peter Byrnes. Cornelius, the oldest, is buried in Hennepin County. Mathilda was nicknamed "Thea." Pete and Joe were great ballplayers on the Iona Town teams.

Melchior met a sudden death in 1923 when he was visiting his brother in St. Paul. He was walking down the street to mail some letters when he stepped in front of a truck. Though the truck stopped, it lurched ahead and struck him. He died from head injuries only an hour later at the age of 87.

Slayton Cemetery



The Slayton North Cemetery was started as a non-denomination burial space for the people in and around the town of Slayton.

In 1886, a year before incorporation of the town, the village council of Slayton purchased a five-acre plot of land north of town on a little knoll overlooking Beaver Creek. W.S. French had owned the land. They thought that it was a scenic area and adjoined a county road for ease of access. The council paid \$50 per acre for a total of \$250 dollars for the parcel.

Over the years the location next to the river became a problem as water ate away at the embankment. In 1994 the town asked the DNR for help with stabilizing the banks of Beaver Creek.

Today a new Columbarium is being developed to provide more opportunities for burial at this scenic cemetery.

John and Margaret (Larson) Anderson

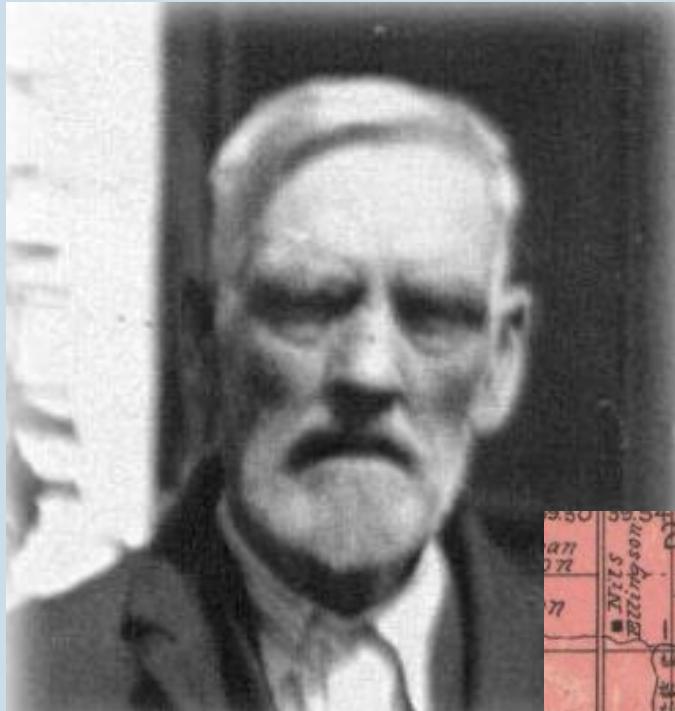


"The passing of Mr. Anderson is like the falling of an oak tree that has met forces of the elements victoriously and then succumbs to an inevitable fate." — 1936 Obituary

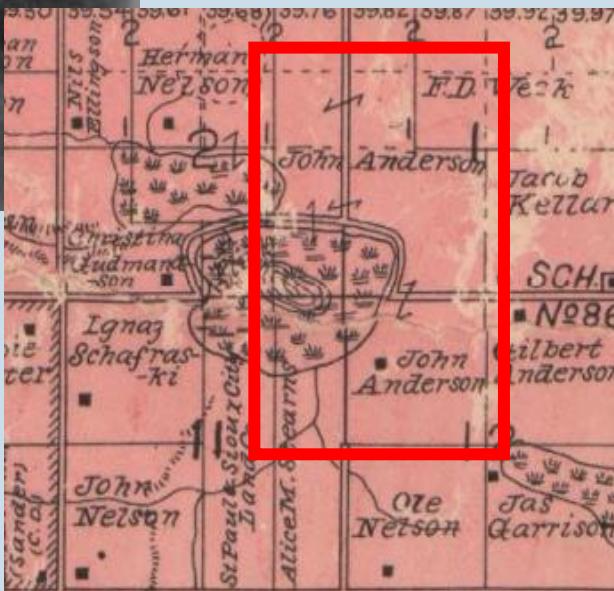
John Anderson and Margaret Larson were both Swedish immigrants who ended up in Sibley County in their early 20s. On July 3, 1871, the two were married in Madelia, MN.

The young couple bravely struck out on their own to settle in Murray County, which at the time had very few European settlers. The Andersons first lived in a dugout, then a sod house, and finally a cabin near Badger Lake. Their homestead was prosperous until the grasshopper plague forced John to leave home to find work and provide for his growing family.

John and Margaret Anderson



John Anderson.
From Findagrave.com.



Anderson Farm near
Badger Lake. 1898 Plat Map.

From Badger Lake, John walked to New Ulm where he found employment until the prairie land healed and he returned home to farm.

Over the course of their marriage the Anderson family grew with the addition of two boys, Lewis and Andrew, and six girls, Mrs. Oscar Lundblad, Mrs. Margaret Johnson, Mrs. Hanson, Mrs. Louise Layton, Mrs. F. E. Johnson, and Miss Tilda.

After years of hard work the Andersons retired from the homestead and moved to Slayton in 1911. Here they spent 21 years together and celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in 1931. The following year, 90-year-old Margaret passed away. John's daughter Mrs. Hanson lived with her father and cared for him for four years before he passed away at the age of 87 in 1936.

Hegstad Oyje Family



John Severtson Hegstad was born near Trondjhem, Norway on September 19, 1842. At the age of 25 John immigrated to America where he settled in La Crosse, Wisconsin and then in Mankato. Syneve Oyje was born in Surendalin, Norway in October of 1846. When she was 24 years old, Syneve immigrated to America where she settled in Mankato, Minnesota.

The year after coming to America, Syneve was married to John Hegstad in 1871. The young couple lived in Mankato until 1875 when they moved to Slayton.

The Hegstads were members of the Lutheran faith both having been confirmed in Norway and brought their faith with them to America.

The Hegstad family began to grow with the addition of nine children: Severt, Martin, Olaf, George, Jacob, Marie, John, and another Marie and George.

Hegstad Oyje Family



Mr. John Severtson, near Slayton, lost two more children last week of scarlet fever, making three in all, one having died of it a few weeks before. It is a very sad affliction for the family.

Announcement of the children's death. John Severtson is John Hegstad. *Southwest Minnesotaian* November 12, 1885.

Heartbreak filled the Hegstad home in 1885. Within the span of a month, three of their nine children died of Scarlet Fever. John, just shy of 11, 5-year-old George, and 9-year-old Marie. Scarlet Fever is a bacterial illness that develops in some people who have strep throat. This illness got its name from the red rash that covers the body of the person afflicted. Scarlet fever is most common in children ages 5 to 15.

The two youngest Hegstad children were named after their siblings who had passed away. George was born in 1886 and Marie was born in 1891.

For the last 25 years of Syneve's life she suffered from heart troubles. She succumbed to growing illness at the age of 71 on March 19, 1919. John continued living in their Slayton home until his death on October 12, 1924 at the age of 82. John lived in Slayton for 49 of his 82 years.

Ole and Ellen Erickson Holmen



Notice the symbol of the draped open book on top of the couple's headstone. This symbol often times represents, the Bible, faith, or the "book of Life." Drapery is a general symbol of mourning but can also symbolize the separation of this world and the next.

Ole was born in Fagnes, Vinger, Norway on June 12, 1829. At the age of 21 Ole was united in marriage with 20-year-old Ellen Erickson. Ole and Ellen spent the early years of their marriage in Norway where they welcomed 11 children into the world. The Holmen family immigrated to America in either 1870 or 1871. Moving from the east coast they settled in Winneshiek County, Iowa for several years. Ole moved to Leeds Township, Murray County in 1879 where, at the age of 50, he began homesteading. Ellen and a couple of their children joined Ole the following year.

Ole and Ellen Erickson Holmen



Google Map showing Fagernes (right) and Odalen, Norway (left) where Ole and Ellen were born.

The Holmen family began attending the Norwegian Lutheran Church where they were able to listen to sermons in their native language. Ole and Ellen retired from farming in 1898 and moved into Slayton where they hoped to spend their remaining years together. In 1899 Ole suffered from a stroke which kept him confined to bed for four years before passing away in 1903. After Ole passed away Ellen moved to her daughter's farm south of Hadley. At the age of 81 Ellen passed away on October 24, 1911 after a short illness.



Holmen farm in Leeds Township. Plat Map.

Harvey and Florence Dinehart Holt



Harvey Scott Holt was born March 12, 1880 in Keene Valley, NY. In 1909 he was working in Montana as an assistant cashier at a bank when he met Florence Dinehart. Their marriage would change his fate. He was taken on as cashier in his father-in-law's bank, the State Bank of Slayton.

He served in WWI as a captain in the Quartermaster Corps of the Army and was honorably discharged in 1918.

When Christopher Dinehart died in 1927, he left Holt in charge of managing his estate of banking interests and over 3,000 acres of land. Harvey tried to sell the land for his mother-in-law but due to the Great Depression, he received no bids. He tried to manage the three banks that Christopher owned but eventually sold them to neighboring banks.

Flora Dinehart sold the Dinehart house to Florence in 1938 for \$1.00 a year before she died.

Harvey spent two intense years studying law and was admitted to the bar in 1931. He served as a lawyer until his death in 1956. He died just a few months after his retirement.

Harvey and Florence Dinehart Holt



Florence Eleanor Dinehart was born March 12, 1888 to Christopher and Flora Dinehart in Slayton. She graduated from Slayton High School in 1906 and the National Park Seminary for women in 1907. It was a nationally acclaimed finishing school for women in Forest Glen, Maryland. She then attended the University of Minnesota.

Visiting friends in Montana, she met the dashing Harvey Holt who was working as the assistant cashier at the First National Bank of Missoula.

They married in 1910 at the Dinehart home and moved back to Montana. Flora's aging parents talked them into moving home. There, two of their sons, Harvey, Jr. and John, were born. For a few years the family lived in San Diego where the third son Robert was born. In 1922 they moved back to Slayton and there they lived out their lives. Florence, an accomplished pianist, was the church organist for over forty years, served on the hospital board, the library board, and served the community in many ways until her death in 1971.

Mary (Bell) March



Mary Bell was born on March 15, 1855 in Clarksburg, West Virginia. Her parents longed to strike out as settlers and moved their family to central Minnesota before Mary was 6 years old. During the outbreak of the Dakota Conflict, Mary's father was a soldier in the United States Army. Mary and her siblings were taken by their mother to Fort Ridgley where they waited out the conflict. Mary's father died while protecting the fort. After this, Mary's mother moved their family to Maquoketa, Iowa where she had relatives. Mary helped her widowed mother in the task raising her seven siblings.

Mary grew to adulthood in Maquoketa. In 1872 she was married to Van Buren March and the two of them, also wishing to strike out as settlers, moved to the Slayton area in 1884. Mary loved caring for people, and she was often called upon to nurse Slayton citizens back to health.

Mary (Bell) March



Mary March.

The Marches were members of the Presbyterian church and Mary actively participated in the Ladies Aid and the Missionary Society. Besides activates with the church, Mary was also a member of the Slayton Woman's Relief Corps, the Legion Auxiliary, and the Order of the Eastern Star.

The Marches welcomed twelve children into the world. Cora, Charles, Richard, George, Ada (B. Wise, County Superintendent also highlighted on this cemetery tour), Mabel, Arthur, Willard, Frank, Floyd, Margaret, and Erwin.

Mary was left a widow when Van Buren died after years of suffering from diabetes ended his life in 1903. After her husband's death, Mary continued living in Slayton for another 36 years. She passed away at the age of 84 on February 12, 1939 after several months of failing health due to old age.

Mary (Bell) March



Erwin March.

Mary was survived by all of her twelve children but one, Erwin "Waxy" March. You will notice on her headstone that she is listed as a Gold Star Mother.

Erwin was the youngest of the seven March brothers having been born in Slayton on March 28, 1896. He attended Slayton High School and was a player on the school's football team. Erwin enlisted in the United States Army after the outbreak of World War I. He and seven other young men from Slayton were sent to the Jefferson Barracks and then on to Camp Douglas, Arizona where they were incorporated into the 18th infantry. Erwin served in France under General Pershing.

The news of Erwin's death came to Mary after she had just finished reading a letter written to her by her son. After reading the letter, she received a telegram from the War Department informing her of her son's death. Erwin's death came about during a German raid on the American trenches.

Mary (Bell) March

Erwin was the first Minnesota man to be killed in action in France during WWI. The family had hoped his remains would be sent home for burial after the war, but Erwin found his final resting place in the Saint Mihiel American Cemetery and Memorial in Lorraine, France.

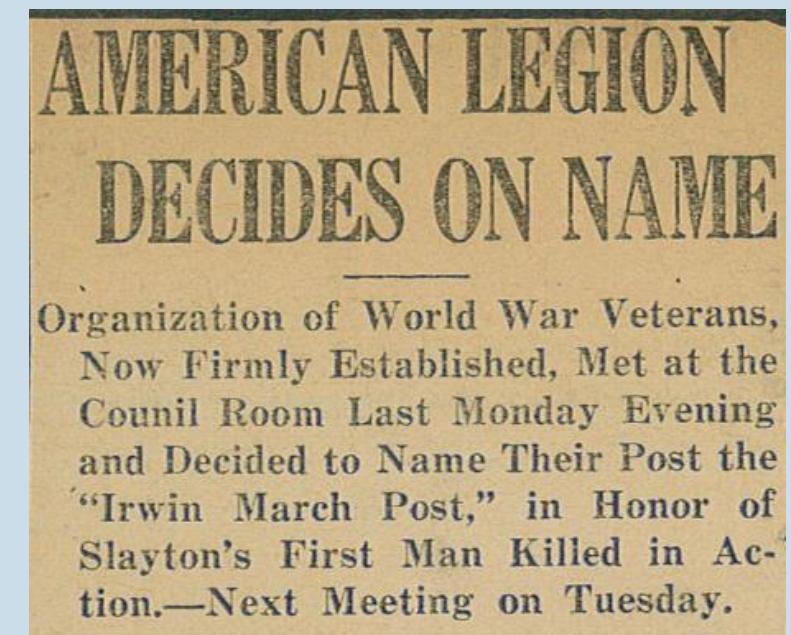
The name “Erwin March” is familiar to those around the Slayton area. His name was adopted by the Slayton American Legion Post 64 in honor of his memory.



Erwin's Headstone. From
Findagrave.com.



Murray County Herald.
June 12, 1919.



Peick Family

The Hardware Kings



Between 1891 and the mid-1940s, the Peicks were central to the prosperity of Slayton. Born in Clayton County, Iowa in 1858, Adolph Peick apprenticed as a contractor and builder. He later worked in Spirit Lake and then Sutherland, Iowa, where he operated a hardware business. When he and his wife, Katherine Gottchalk, moved to Slayton in 1891, they started their family which grew to 8 children, 4 boys and 4 girls.

In Slayton, Peick purchased the hardware business of W.E. Dawson. He sold everything from stoves to baby buggies and undertaking supplies. He called his business Peick Hardware and Furniture Co: Hardware, Furniture, Undertaking. He apparently was successful from the beginning. Only a year after he got to Murray County, he built a house.

Peick Family

His house cost \$1800 to build, the same as the new Presbyterian church, a modest family home generally cost \$400 to build. Several years later Adolph not only owned his house, store, and attached undertaking parlor but several farms around Murray County as well.

Adolph lost his wife of over 30 years, probably to cancer, in 1916. At that point he was spending at least part of the year in California, where, in 1917, he met and married Effie Moodey. The newspaper announced the event by referring to Adolph Peick as “the Hardware King of Murray County.”

Not long after this, Peick officially made his son Carl a partner and renamed his enterprise The Peick Hardware and Furniture Company. Adolph split his time between California and Murray County. When he died in Long Beach, California in 1939, the family brought Adolph’s body home to Slayton for burial.



Adolph Peick.



Peick Logo. 1922.



Katherine Gottchalk Peick.

Peick Family



Aftermath of the Thanksgiving Day Fire. 1942.

Carl similarly dedicated himself to his business in Slayton. It survived the stresses of the Great Depression and even prospered, but the store burned down on Thanksgiving Day 1942 taking with it three businesses and threatening the Peick's furniture business next door. Although he wanted to rebuild immediately, it took some doing. This was during World War II, and he needed the approval of the War Production Board to continue. He was able to secure most of the materials, but labor was an issue.

Eventually the project was completed, and the store continued to serve people in the County. It had been a tough year for Carl and his family. His wife Eva died the same year as the fire. Only a year later, The Herald announced that Carl Peick was selling the town's oldest business. The new owner, Ken McCord, was a businessman from Minneapolis.

Peick Family



Carl Peick. 1944.

After he sold the store, Carl retired and spent at least part of his time in California. In his obituary, the newspaper noted that, in addition to operating his business, Carl had taken on many other responsibilities. During the war he was chairman of the County Selective Service Board. He was on the board of the Slayton Federal Savings and Loan, served as director of the Minnesota Retail Hardware Association, and was president of the local Chamber of Commerce. He and his first wife, Eva, had four children together. After Eva's death, he married Cressa Campbell Peters in Mankato. She also preceded him in death. In 1966 he died and was laid to rest near his parents and two wives in the Slayton Cemetery.

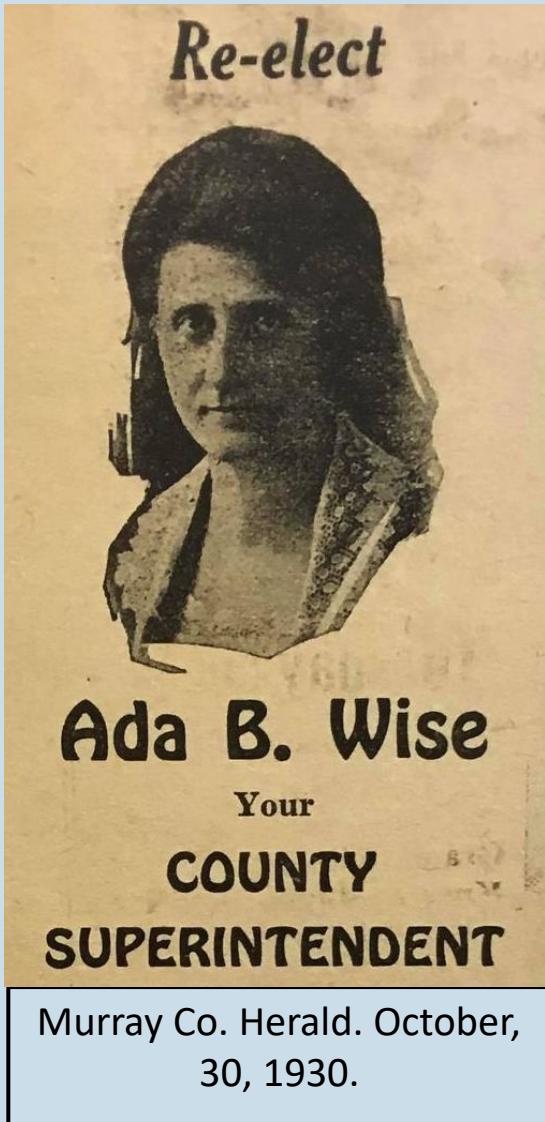
Ada B. (March) Wise



Murray County had a tradition of electing female County Superintendent of Schools: Florence Turner, 1909-15 and Jennie Holm, 1915-23. This tradition continued with the election of Ada B. Wise in 1923.

School superintendent was the only elected position open to women in Minnesota prior to the passage of the 19th Amendment. County superintendents were responsible for overseeing all schools in a county. The superintendent was required to visit every school in the county at least once each term, organize and conduct workshops for teachers, advise teachers and school boards, and approve any plans for building or improving school buildings. At its peak, Murray County had 115 school.

Ada B. (March) Wise



Ada March was born December 18, 1883, in Wisconsin, but was raised in Slayton and attended Slayton Public Schools. She married Clare Wise in 1904 and was widowed five years later at the young age of 25.

After her husband's death, she attended Mankato State Teachers College. She taught for 13 years in rural school districts in Murray County prior to her election as County Superintendent of Schools. She also worked as a telephone operator for the Woodgate Telephone Exchange during summer breaks.

She served 6 terms as Superintendent for a total of 24 years. In 1946 she was defeated for reelection by Audrey James. Ada then moved to St. Louis Park to live with her daughter until her death in 1963. The election of County Superintendent of Schools ended in 1970. District superintendents were then appointed by school boards.



**THANK YOU FOR
TAKING THIS VIRTUAL
CEMETERY TOUR**