

TOWN OF McCALLSBURG

History of McCallsburg

May 2, 1968

At the time the early settlers came to this part of Iowa, it was a wilderness inhabited by elk, deer, bear, wolves, wildcats, prairie chickens, rabbits, and other small game.

As the settlers became more numerous along the timber, they began to settle the prairie. Being unoccupied, herding cattle was the first farming operation. Large herds were brought here from Jasper and Jones counties, and other southeastern counties of Iowa. The early settlers went to Nevada for mail and groceries; picking their way around ponds and across sloughs, and hauled their produce 12 miles to market.

This township was settled fast, and in a few years there was no "open" range for stock.

One of the first settlers to arrive in Warren Township, was A.B. Griffith, who migrated from Wayne County, Ohio. Mr. Griffith was a contractor and builder, and somewhat of a historian, because it is from a topographical map of Story County, published in 1902, that the facts included herein have been taken. McCallsburg was first called Latrobe. As Latrobe it was founded in the fall of 1868. In 1882 it was incorporated as Latrobe. One year later the name was changed to McCallsburg in honor of the father of Montgomery or "Gum" McCall, who sold a great many of the lots to the early settlers of the town. "Gum" McCall became the operator of the first hotel in around 1890.

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The first building erected was a depot and a small stockyard, built after the Story City branch of the Central Iowa Railroad (now the M. & St. L.) was completed in 1881. John Peck was the first buyer of live stock and grain. At that time grain was scooped directly from farmer's wagons to grain cars. In 1887, J. P. Hesson succeeded Peck and handled grain for a Kansas City grain company. He built what was commonly known as the West Elevator. In the summer of that year, the "first" or "east" elevator, built only two or three years earlier by Bracket and Stoddard of Marshalltown, was destroyed by fire. It was replaced.

In 1885 a school building was moved from the corner one mile west of town to McCallsburg, and was located west of the present Lloyd Ellingson home. Soon another room was added to the one-room school house. Later a new wooded building was built on the present school site.

The old school building was sold to A.C. Hanson and moved to West Main Street.

During Christmas vacation of 1906 the new school was destroyed by fire. In 1907 a new brick school house was built just east of the present school house. In 1920 Warren Township consolidated its schools and the present school house was built.

Among the early buildings to be erected was one on the South side of Main Street in 1882 by J. W. Smith of Ames, who became the first postmaster. The post office was located in the

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west room, and the main part of the building was a hotel. Here both meals and lodging were provided, particularly to those planning to settle in the community. The first child born in McCallsburg was Inez Fruitt, granddaughter of the first postmaster, and she was born in this hotel building.

At this time land was cheap, commonly selling at \$4.00 to \$6.00 per acre. About 1900, two men, by names of Bullard and Drake, came down from Radcliffe, built a building and started a bank. This building was later used as a Lutheran parish house. Bullard and Drake also built a two-front building east of the present Dorcas Hall. A.P. Baer operated a general store there for many years. The first drug store was built and operated by E. S. D. Kahr. At the time of this report it was known as "The Cozy Inn," a restaurant.

Around 1890 J.W. Harden operated a restaurant and the first telephone exchange was located in the upstairs of this building. Al Snyder built a creamery at this time, where the John Schauer home now stands. When this creamery became outmoded, Charles Knutson of Ellsworth came to operate a new co-operative creamery.

Shortly after 1900 the Rock Island Railroad was built north and south through Story County, and tracks were built through McCallsburg, and a depot was built. Town property advanced 500 per cent.

In 1905 E.O. Dillin, later a prominent Nevada business man, built and operated a department store just east of the present post office. In 1910 this store burned down, and also a meat

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market across the street. Later a house was moved from the lot west of Mrs. N.H. Nelson's to just east of the Phillips 66 station, and used as a telephone office. Martin Mikkelson came direct from Norway and started a furniture store. About 1915 Vern Shoemaker, brother-in-law of A.C. Hanson, built the present Hotel Thelma, named for his daughter.

History of Early Religious Life of Warren Township

The first religious services in Warren Township were held in various school houses by itinerant pastors and Sunday School missionaries. Quaker services were held in a school house two miles northeast of town, with William Lewis whos lived nearby conducting the services.

Preaching services and Sunday School were held at an early date at the Finvoy schoolhouse three miles southwest of town, where the first Presbyterian services were held and known as the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. In 1906 it affiliated with the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and was known as the Mt. Pisgah congregation, and shared a pastor with Gilbert.

Then the Christian and Presbyterian denominations held preaching services in the school house one mile west of town. The first church built in Warren Township a Union church was built where the Lutheran parsonage now stands, and was dedicated in 1881. It was financed by popular subscription and built

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by John W. Smith, McCallsburg's first settler, and also a carpenter. He was assisted by Asa Griffith, both of whom donated much time. After the church was completed the Christian and Presbyterian churches, who had held services in school houses west of town, began to have their services in the church on alternate Sundays, with a combined Sunday School each Sunday. The church was dedicated by the Christian Church Denomination on June 13, 1891, a day so cold that many wore their winter coats! The only indebtedness on this church at completion was \$80.00 which was wiped out on dedication day.

Congregation members moved away, and membership decreased and the church was sold in 1894 or 1895 to the English Lutheran denomination for \$200.00. They took it over in 1897. During the pastorate of Rev. Thomas Hersch, which began in 1899, the church was remodeled and rededicated. Later it was sold to the Liberty Lutheran congregation, and the building was moved to a site on East Main Street. Before moving the church, it was used by the Bethany Lutheran congregation for services both in Norwegian and English.

The first wedding in the church was that of Ellen Erickson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Erickson and George Hanson, son of Mr. and Mrs. P.C. Hanson.

The first burial in the cemetery was a Mrs. Gettleson.

The next church to be built was the Presbyterian. They had held services in the community as early as 1873. After the

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Union Church was sold, they held services at the school house until the present building on Main Street was ready for use in 1900. An addition was built in 1919.

From data collected at the State Historical Building in Des Moines, townships were divided or "set up" in 1853 by Judge Evans. The 1855 population of Warren Township was 132, 73 males and 59 females. There were 19 voters. In the township were 1107 acres of improved land. Wheat was the largest acreage, having a yield of 4,879 bushels. Also, there had been 333 acres of corn, 87 acres of oats, 6 acres of buckwheat, and 7 acres of potatoes. There were 114 cattle, of which 15 were slaughtered, and 128 hogs of which 118 were slaughtered. There were 36 dogs in the township.

Prior to 1900 no authentic records were kept of the men who were mayors and councilmen. The mayors in order that they have served since 1900 are: W.O. Bates, Maurice Pearl, J.H. Boston, John Peck, C.E. Harris, J.H. Galbreath, C.E. Harris, J.H. Galbreath, J.H. Boston, F.J. Tett, G.M. Malmin, Otis M. Olson, Martin Hauskin, Wesley Springer, Harlan F. Tett, and Rasmus Thompson.

In 1953 a new \$118,000 addition to the school house was under construction, to provide a new gymnasium, lunch room, locker and shower rooms, and rooms for the vocational agriculture program. In 1952, the town installed a new (the first) city water system. The Bethany Lutheran Church erected a new church at a new location, on Main Street at which the first service was held in the basement on Easter Sunday, March 23, 1951. Work on the sanctuary continued for a number of months. The first service

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in the new sanctuary was a funeral held in August of that year for Earling Bakke, college age son of the long-time pastor, H.N. Bakke. The sanctuary was still incomplete.

Mrs. Lorene Sandvick thanks Mrs Adrian Wood, former McCallsburg resident, and grand-daughter of an early McCallsburg merchant for most of the previous material. It is, for the most part a condensation of an article written by Mrs. Wood for the Nevada Evening Journal, Centennial Edition, published in 1953.

I, Mrs Sandvick, want to thank the many people in and around McCallsburg who have taken from their busy hours to help me with the report from 1953 to and including the present year of 1968.

McCallsburg from 1953 to 1968

Now in 1968, the earliest "landmarks! left in the town are the east and west railroad tracks of the M. and St. Railroad, the depot having been torn down a number of years ago.

The new McCallsburg school addition (Warren Twp. Cons.) was dedicated on February 21, 1954.

In July of 1959, a school reorganization between the McCallsburg and Zearing districts was voted. In September of 1960 the merger began operation, with the high school-grades 9 through 12 attending the High School in Zearing and the Junior High School pupils from both towns in attendance at the

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McCallsburg Center.

When she passed away in 1958, Mrs. Fannie Graves, a long and faithful worker in the Presbyterian Church, left the remainder of her estate to the Presbyterian Church. A large foyer was added to the front of the church, with the steps replaced by new ones inside this entry-way, using the funds willed by Mrs. Graves, and by contributions from friends and members of the congregation. This was done about 1960. The Rev. James Thomson was minister at this time, having replaced Rev. Donald Jafvert, who served McCallsburg as the first full time pastor at the church in many years, as did Rev. Thomson. Prior to that, Dr. Raymond Shipman, a retired Methodist minister who lived in Ames, filled the pulpit twice a month. After Rev. Thompson moved, the United Presbyterian churches of Maxwell and McCallsburg were both served by Rev. Stanley Farmer, who conducted weekly services at 9:30 A.M. in McCallsburg. After he moved to Arkansas, supply ministers occupied the pulpit for a time. Since July 1966, under a "yoke arrangement", the Rev. Richard Miller has served the Presbyterian Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church in Zearing.

Sunday, April 28, 1968, at the forenoon service of the Bethany Lutheran Church, a new educational unit of 14 class rooms, a Sunday School office and rest rooms was dedicated by Rev. Schlachtenhauren, Iowa District President of the American

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Lutheran Church. The Rev. Perry Heller has been pastor of the church since 1954.

About 1960 the large brick structure built by the American Legion was sold to Roscoe McKinney. Mr. McKinney converted the building to a bowling alley with modern equipment, which has served as a good place for wholesome entertainment for both young and older people of the community.

The American Legion bought an old frame building on the north side of West Main Street, which was remodeled as a new Legion Hall, and which they began to use in about 1961.

On Saturday, April 27, 1968 bids for building a new post office in McCallsburg were opened, with the contract to go to the lowest bidder, a party from Colo, Iowa. The United States Post Office Department has not as yet (May 2, 1968) made public any further information except that which was released before bidding. The building will be erected on a site purchased from Jim Hall for \$700.00. It is a corner lot which at one time a restaurant had occupied, and at one time it had been a bank building. This structure was torn down several years ago. Miss Velma Olson has been local postmaster since 1942,

McCallsburg is fortunate in having a resident physician, which is a privilege most small towns no longer have. He is Dr. G.E. DuBois, who has his office in his home on the north side of the Main Street. His wife is a registered nurse. Dr. and Mrs. DuBois came to McCallsburg in the summer of 1934.

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The City Hall, which is south of the site chosen for the new post office, houses the township fire engine and other modern fire fighting equipment. The fire department is composed entirely of volunteer members. The same building houses the McCallsburg town library, which is open once a week, and Mrs. Addie Smith is librarian. The town council also meets in city hall. The present council consists of Albert Sampson, Robert Ruble, Lawrence Banks, Berven Risdal, and Carroll Lura. Willis Mills has been mayor for a number of years. Mr. Mills is a plumber and at the present time his shop is just east of the present post office. It is now being remodeled and improved.

Mr. and Mrs. George Auestad have a very good grocery store just west of the post office.

The "Thelma Hotel" a large brick building erected in 1915, is now known as just the "McCallsburg Hotel", and is owned and run by Mrs. Carolyn Beal, as a rooming and boarding house, mostly occupied by elderly persons. In one corner of the building is a barber shop which has been operated by Homer Lewis since 1954.

The McCallsburg Variety Store, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Eddy, and operated by Mrs. Eddy and their daughter, Mrs. Beverly Dickerson is located in the building just east, and across the street from the new post office site.

For several years Mr. and Mrs. John Caltvedt have operated a laundromat and dry cleaning establishment on Main Street.

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In the back of what is known as the Tett Building, Orville Ellingson has operated a tractor and machinery repair shop since 1929.

A branch office of the Nevada State Bank and Trust Co. is on the north side of Main Street, and is managed by John Johnson.

What was formerly called "The Farmer's Elevator" is now called the McCallsburg Co-operative Company. It is managed by Walter Benson, and has several employees. A new office building was erected in 1964. Here grain is bought and sold. Lumber, paint, seed, and fertilizer are among the many products handled. Robert Ruble and Glenn Irven are building a new building to replace the Farmers Co-op Service Station, it will be privately owned by Ruble and Irven, and they will sell Co-op products--bottle gas, gasoline, fuel oil, tires, etc. It is being built on the south side of Main Street, east of the Mills Plumbing Shop.

At this time McCallsburg has two Beauty Shops, operated in the homes of Mrs. Donna Sandmeier, and Mrs. Marcia Gjerde, who have remodeled rooms in their homes to meet state requirements.

Luther Holland owns and operates a garage on Main Street. He deals in cars and repair work, and sells gas.

There are two taverns in town, one operated by Howard Borton, the other by Roger Murrell. The latter also operates a service (gas) station.

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The Vallem Insurance Company owned and operated by Gerald Vallem was moved in 1965 from its location on Main Street to his home in the north part of town.

Probably the newest business in town is Amdahl's Greenhouse, which has been built on to his home.

Another comparatively new business is the "Sinclair Petro-Chemicals Inc." operated by Gordon Woster. The "petrochemical" is a farm fertilizer.