



RICHARDTON HERITAGE

A HISTORY OF RICHARDTON, NORTH DAKOTA



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Published for the Richardton Centennial celebration which was held on July 8-10, 1983, commemorating the 100th birthday of the city. Contests were held to select a logo and a name for this publication. Mrs. Dale Hauck designed the winning logo above, and Mrs. Paul Aman submitted the name of the book.

The cost of this book was paid for by individual purchases, contributions of advertisers and special donations.

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Richardton, North Dakota*

Dedication

We, the executive committee of the 1983 Richardton Centennial, respectfully wish to dedicate this book to its creator, John Gengler, without whom the Heritage Book would not be here to help us share in the pleasure of our memories.

We would also like to dedicate this book to the pioneers of the Richardton area, for through the efforts of these people we now enjoy a wonderful community.

The Richardton Centennial Committee
Dolores M. Amann, Chairman



From the Editor

The largest portion of this history of Richardton deals with the first quarter century of the town's existence. As we approach the 1990s, it was the opinion of the editor that a great many residents, alive during the last 50 years, are still making the history that someone will record about us in the future. But as the 1880s and 1890s, as well as the early decades of the 20th Century fade from view, it seemed necessary to record as much as we could about that period in this publication.

Some sources and resources that deserve mention here are: early editions of the *Dickinson Press*; the 1958 Jubilee Book (*Historical Review of Richardton, ND*) with Fred Born Jr. providing the city's history; hundreds of family and business histories; articles in school papers, St. Mary's in the 1930s, Assumption Abbey in the 1950s, and Richardton Public High School in the 1970s and 1980s.

But most of all I have to posthumously thank the man who instilled in me a love of history and an insatiable desire to learn about the past. Father Louis Pfaller, OSB, monk of Assumption Abbey and noted scholar of Americana, especially North Dakota, died in 1979, leaving a void that can't be filled. He understood the importance and excitement of our early years and spent countless hours finding answers to the who, what and why of our beginnings. His works can be found in the Abbey Archives and at the North Dakota Historical Society.

Additional thanks to Father Benedict Pfaller, OSB, archivist of Assumption Abbey. And a very special thanks to Bro. Victor Frankenhauser, OSB, a Richardton native who offered many suggestions for the book, provided much valuable information, and most of all, proofread the copy. His input and interest in this record of Richardton were especially helpful.

The Centennial Committee provided

direction and suggestions. Our printers, The Abbey Press, were most accommodating, especially Bro. Gordon Barnard, OSB, and Father Odo Muggli, OSB. Their patience often kept me sane and their expertise and quality work make this a book of pride to all.

Of course, we really appreciate the splendid contributions of more than 60 advertizers, without whose financial assistance this book would have cost each of you twice the going price. They bought over \$6,000 in ads. Special thanks to Wally Wald and all those who collected advertising.

But most of all, this is your history, our history. Hopefully the work done here will encourage people to continue telling their own stories, researching their pasts, finding their roots, and recording for posterity the lives of all who have made our little town a home to be proud of and a community to remember.

John H. Gengler
Editor

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Centennial Committees



Richardton Centennial Inc., Officers and Directors. Back, l-r: Ralph Weisenberger, treasurer; Gary Goetz, Dick Cheatley, publicity; Fran Forster, vice-chairman; Ambrose Hoff. Seated, l-r: Koleen Hoff; Dolores Amann, chairman; John H. Gengler, history book editor; Millie Hauck, secretary; Rose Hueske.

Hundreds of people need to become involved in a celebration such as the Richardton Centennial. Those above provided the direction for the many programs and projects that occurred prior to July 8-9-10, 1983, as well as those events during the centennial days themselves. Pride in a community is best displayed by the efforts of everyone who helped make this 100th birthday a success.

Richardton Centennial Inc.

OFFICERS:

Dolores M. Amann, Chairman
Francis Forster, Vice Chairman
Millie Hauck, Secretary
Ralph Weisenberger, Treasurer

DIRECTORS:

Rose Hueske
Koleen Hoff
Gary Goetz
John Gengler, History Book Editor
Ambrose Hoff

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Lion's Club—Ken Kreitinger, Ambrose Hoff; K-C Club—Ray N. Hauck, Dale Hauck; Parade Chairman—Victor Fredrick; American Legion Club—George

Messer, R.D. (Bud) Schulz; Richardton Fire Department—Chuck Wilz, Richard Cheatley; Rural Fire Department—Frank Melchior, Ray Glick, Larry Messer; Christian Mothers—Rose Renner, Eleanor Ludwig; Catholic Daughters—Rosalie Hunke, Elaine Schank; City Commission—Leo Krenzel; Car Show—Tom Voegelé; Richardton Saddle Club—Gary Goetz, Richard Kuntz; Assumption Abbey—Father Odo Muggli, OSB; Royal Neighbors—Ann Mayer, Theresa Kaufman; Richardton Hospital Auxiliary—Odessa Mischel, Irene Hoff; Farm Bureau—Jeff Hoff; St. John's Lutheran Church—Mrs. Ewald Alpert, Mrs. Evelyn Goetz; Senior Citizens—Nick Schuld, Bertha Hunke; Sacred Heart Priory—Sr. Margil Renner, OSB; Richardton Business Association—Eileen Steven-

son, Merry Hoff; Richardton Public School—Morris Martin; Publicity and Advertising—Dick Cheatley, Sandy Wilmes; Out-of-town Ads—Wally Wald, Adam and Dale Hauck; St. Mary's Home and School—Denise Miller, Judy Roll; Mod Homemakers—Margaret Ridley; Peaceful Valley Homemakers—Rose Hueske, Bernie Staudinger; Kitchen Kalers Homemakers—Mary Ann Hauck, Diane Hauck; Spring Vale Homemakers—Cindy Alpert, Gladys Goetz; North Valley Homemakers—Victoria Sattler; Richardton Boosters—Francis Forster; Antelope Homemakers—Mrs. Nick Schuld; American Legion Auxiliary—Dolores Hoff, Joy Forster; Boy Scouts—George Sanders; Prairie Travelers 4-H—Jim Staudinger; Sue-Sew 4-H—Susan Cheatley.

Special Greetings



The White House Washington

I am pleased to join all those gathered to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Richardton and to send my warm congratulations.

The spirit which has built and sustained your community reflects the energy which has forged America into a land of wonder. As a community held by fellowship and goodwill, Richardton has become "home" to many who love it dearly. Further, it stands as an example of the blessings of liberty and freedom to those around the world.

Again, my hearty congratulations on this proud, historic occasion and my best wishes in the years to come.

Ronald Reagan

State of North Dakota Executive Office

It is indeed a pleasure for me to extend my sincerest best wishes to the community of Richardton on the celebration of your 100th anniversary.

Richardton is a vital community, one which truly exemplifies the pioneer spirit of our state. It has contributed a great deal to the continued development and prosperity of North Dakota. As a community held together by fellowship and good will, Richardton has become "home" to many who are proud to reside there.

Best wishes on this historic occasion and in the years to come. Hopefully the three-day celebration on July 8-10 will be a most happy and memorable occasion for all of you.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely,

Allen I. Olson
Governor

United States Senate

Congratulations to the fine city of Richardton as you observe the City's 100th Birthday, July 8-10. Reaching this landmark is indeed a tribute to the pioneers who weathered the cold winter storms, prairie fires, drought and depression while retaining their enthusiasm and optimism for the community.

Your participation in the festivities allows you time to reflect and recognize the strength and determination of our North Dakota pioneers. Without their dedication and foresight we would not have the foundation to build our great communities, our great state and our great nation.

My best wishes and sincere greetings to

all who join you on this great occasion, a milestone in the history of a great city.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

Mark Andrews
U.S. Senator

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

It is a special honor for me to be included in your Centennial publication "Richardton Heritage." I am pleased to extend my greetings to the citizens and many friends of Richardton on this historic occasion.

As a native of Regent, I am certain that some of my ancestors, like so many other newcomers to North Dakota, came by train as far as Richardton. Your town, in the early days, was the jumping-off point for the settlement of the southwestern part of our state. Richardton has for a long time been a vital center for the surrounding countryside.

It is almost impossible to think of Richardton without also envisioning the striking towers of the Assumption Abbey. Your beautiful Abbey is really a North Dakota landmark. Another favorite of mine in Richardton is the stunning vista from the buttes. You must be able to see 30 miles to the North on a clear day.

My best wishes for an exciting year of celebration. Your Centennial should be a time to appreciate your heritage and enjoy the traditions of the first 100 years.

Sincerely,

Byron L. Dorgan
Member of Congress

Our Town

This is about how Richardton looked to lots of passengers who got off the train prior to 1900. This photo, part of the Haynes Foundation Collection of the Montana Historical Society, shows lots of bleak prairie and very little else. Not a tree in sight, but that is Young Man's Butte at the far right. Once the railway bridge was completed across the Missouri at Bismarck in 1882, Richardton and many other towns sprang up along the rail lines.



Richardton, North Dakota

by John H. Gengler

Some towns are founded as a matter of necessity—people need them and the services they provide. Some grow into cities and metropolitan areas. Some fade and pass forever into history. Famous people found some towns, while others are established by men and women who never make the history books.

RICHARDTON, NORTH DAKOTA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: how and why did she spring up on the rolling prairies of the North American continent? A necessity? A famous founder? No, not really. No traditional influences suggest that Richardton should have been located where she is. No river, not even a creek, flowed near the site. It surely had no reason to serve as a crossroads for traffic to or from anywhere.

No doubt American Indians passed by from time to time. There are some free flowing springs in the vicinity that undoubtedly provided water for thirsty travelers and animals.

FIRST RECORDED WHITE MEN

As far as the first recorded white men in the area, we find reports of the U.S. Army troops camping in and near the present location of our town in 1864. Father Louis Pfaller, OSB, monk of Assumption Abbey and noted North

Dakota historian, wrote the following story for the *Abbey Chronicle*, October 18, 1950. The *Chronicle* was the official newspaper of Assumption Abbey College and High School at that time.

"Late in the evening of July 26, 1864, an army of well over a thousand United States soldiers, under the command of General Alfred Sully, camped on what may reasonably be calculated as the present site of Richardton. This band of men who were to engage in the Battle of Killdeer Mountain two days later, were in pursuit of the Sioux who had committed the horrible Minnesota Massacre in 1862.

"Sully had corralled his baggage train and a large band of immigrants on the Heart River (on the old Gottfried Sievert place) about twelve miles south of Young Man's Butte. Travelling light, the cavalry began a forced march to overtake the Sioux. Before evening of July 26 the advance scouts encountered thirty Indians, with whom they had a scrape. At sundown the alert troops stopped near Young Man's Butte to get water (Roy Gress farm). In ordinary military travel the army would have camped here for the night, but Sully considered the spot too open to attack from marauding bands of Sioux, who found in the surrounding broken, precipitous, ravine-cut land the ideal place for their type of fighting. We can imagine Sully scanning the western horizon in the approaching dusk and

spotting, two miles away, the coteau upon which Richardton now stands as a campsite well adapted to defence. Seeking to outwit the Indians, the troops marched on to this vantage point, arriving there when it was already quite dark. One of the soldiers, Private Frank Meyers, has left us this stirring account of that exciting night:

"We left our horses saddled, and bridled at night, placed our picket and camp guards, and prepared to sleep on our arms, with revolvers and sabers buckled to us, expecting an attack at any moment; not being permitted to bring our tents, no lights were allowed; we ate cold grub and rolled up in our blankets. As the advance guard of Dakota scouts had a little brush with the reds just before camping, it is safe to record not many of us tried very hard to sleep. Well, we did not have to wait so very long until the camp was transformed suddenly into life and activity. The camp guards thought Indians had got through the picket lines and hurriedly shook every man, and at the order of "quick! quick! fall in line!" every soldier sprang to his horse's head. But the alarms were false, as the Indians did nothing except to prevent us from sleeping."

"The aroused troopers did not tarry long in this restless camp. At twelve they were given orders to get ready to move, and at two in the morning of July 27, they were on their way northwestward. They were the first recorded white men



John Ostoj, father of Elsie Lacher, provided coal to many early residents from his North Star Coal Mine, pictured here in 1917.



Rodeos were a big attraction "way back when . . ." Here a throng of spectators at Richardton enjoy the action of Rodeo and Field Day in 1921. Local photographer August Kauer took literally hundreds of pictures over the years at these activities. These photos were often then turned into postcards. Both the photos on this page are processed as postcards.

in this vicinity, eighty-six years ago."

Ten years went by before we have any other record of people in the area where Richardton now sits. Father Louis reported the following story in the *Abbey Chronicle* on November 15, 1950. Since military routes through Dakota Territory were well-marked by wagon ruts, it was easy to verify most of the locations of campsites mentioned in military reports.

First Priest a Chaplain

"The first priest to visit the future site of Richardton was Father Valentine Sommereisen, an old Indian missionary, who wished to act as unofficial chaplain to the so-called Stanley Expedition of 1873. Surveying parties for the Northern Pacific had gone west of the Missouri the two previous years, and were protected by a strong military guard. The military escort that went along in 1873 was commanded by David S. Stanley and George A. Custer. The Sioux, resentful for this invasion of their territory, lurked about the force of 1,500 men, awaiting an opportunity to pick off any stragglers who should wander from the main column. On July 3 the force camped at Young Man's Butte, then proceeded to the Yellowstone in Montana.

"Father Sommereisen was not with the expedition on its westward journeying, however. The steamboat which brought him up from Yankton arrived at Fort Rice (south of Mandan) when the

expedition was already in Montana. When he made known his purpose of following the troops and of acting as their chaplain, the people at Fort Rice tried to dissuade him. The Indians, they said, would make short work of him; but he persisted, and to the amazement of all, set out alone following the wagon ruts and campfires left by the troops. He passed by future Richardton about July 21.

"Six days after setting out from Fort Rice, his safe arrival on the Yellowstone caused quite a sensation among the troops. They were amazed that in such a short time he had travelled alone in a one-horse buggy, armed only with a black cross perched on his vehicle, a distance of 260 miles. An army of 1,500 soldiers had been considered necessary to accompany the engineers into the Indian country, but this old priest had braved the same route alone!

"He remained with the troops, it seems, for the remainder of the expedition, and once more visited the site of Richardton when the soldiers returned to Fort Lincoln in September."

As American civilization pressed westward, references to the area in which we live became more commonplace. In the December 19, 1950, issue of the *Abbey Chronicle*, Father Louis provided this further historical insight:

First Death

"The first known white man buried in

the Richardton area was Sergeant Henry C. Stempker, a member of the famous Black Hills Expedition of 1874, which Custer led in search of gold. On the way back to Fort Lincoln, Stempker succumbed to an attack of typhoid dysentery, on August 25, somewhere south of modern Dickinson. The next day the body was brought to the camp near Young Man's Butte (Roy Gress farm) and interred with military honors. Two years later Custer's ill-fated Seventh Cavalry again camped on this site, and the news reporter, Mark Kellogg, noted in his journal that the headboard on the grave was still undisturbed. In recent years attempts have been made by hikers, historians, a former army engineer, and others, to locate the grave. They will never find it. In 1884 Stempker's relatives, from Pittsburgh, exhumed the remains of their loved one and transported them back East. Mr. Herman Breum of Taylor, who was then only a boy, recalls this event."

By the end of the 1870s there was much more activity in Dakota Territory, most of it related to land development and settlement by homesteaders. The U.S. Congress had passed the Homestead Act in 1862 in order to encourage settling of the vast prairies of mid-America. Naturally the best land in the mildest climates went first. By the early 1880s not much remained, except the most remote corners of the expansive plains. Travel was slow and tedious, until the railroads completed their thousands of



Richardton really began here, at the foot of Young Man's Butte, where early settlers, travelers and others found a stage depot. Prior to any permanent residents, this site, with springs nearby, served as a stopping point for U.S. Cavalry groups passing by. Eventually Richardton's first permanent resident built the ranch pictured above and named it Oakdale. He was R.S. Brookings, who was living there when the town was founded in 1883. He furnished horses to many early residents. The Roy Gress farm is located about where Oakdale once stood.

miles of track across the nation.

Some developments just prior to that completion of 1882 in our area; Father Louis furnished this story about the very first settlers of which we have records, who called this location home.

State Station Keepers First Settlers

"Before the Northern Pacific laid tracks in western Dakota it was found necessary to establish freight and mail routes between the military posts on the frontier. Thus was born the famous Keogh Trail which spanned the 310 miles from Fort Lincoln in Dakota to Fort Keogh (near Miles City) in Montana. In 1878 mail service began over this trail, but since there were no settlers in this vast area, ranchers were induced by the mail contractors to settle at intervals along the route, to serve as station attendants, whose duty it was to supply fresh horses for the mail carriers.

"One can still see the ruts of this trail on the southeast side of Young Man's Butte, thence northwestward across Frank Hoff's pasture to Roy Gress's farm, where one of the stage stations stood. As far as we know the first attendants of this station were men by the name of Sherman and Slater. Little else is known of them, and it seems that the loneliness of the prairies and the danger of Indian attacks influenced them to seek employment elsewhere, in 1880. They were succeeded by R.S. Brookings, a young man from Maine who, after surveying land for the

Northern Pacific, selected the ranch at Young Man's Butte as his choice of an ideal ranch. After the railroad was completed in 1882, and the stage service discontinued, Brookings settled down as Richardton's first permanent settler, and began a career as a raiser of prize-winning Belgian and Percheron horses. Old-timers in Richardton remember him well. His ranch, once called the Oakdale Farm, is now owned by Roy Gress."

The influence of the railroad through this area, as well as throughout the nation, cannot be underestimated. That development had direct impact on the progress our country made. Prior to 1883, the Northern Pacific Railway named hundreds of stations along its route in Dakota Territory. Spring Valley was the name given to the site west of Young Man's Butte. The Oakdale Farm and the stage coach station were already established at the foot of the large butte, so the railroad envisioned a settlement a little farther west.

An early settler here remembered the stage station. Robert Hunke came from Berlin, Germany, with his parents to the area on April 19, 1883. He was 16 at the time and gave an interview to Father Louis Pfaller in 1953 at the age of 86. Here is an excerpt from that conversation, in Father Louis' words:

"Concerning the Keogh Trail, Hunke said that soon after his arrival at Richardton, he and his brother walked

to Young Man's Butte. There were some steps dug into the side of the hill. On top he saw a mound of rocks with a cross outlined in the rocks. It was supposed to be the grave of a soldier killed by the Indians. The grave was covered with rocks to protect the body from coyotes.

"At the stage station there were about 100 people living in 50 to 60 log cabins, made from nearby oak trees. The people who stayed there were soldiers, stock tenders, and stage drivers. The stages had four to six horses. R.S. Brookings told Hunke how the horses were changed quickly, while the driver ran into the house for a bite to eat.

"The cabins at the station were later dismantled slowly by the settlers around Richardton, and used for other purposes."

Another early resident of the area was Herman L. Breum. His parents had settled near present day Gladstone, ND, in the spring of 1882. But on July 6, 1882, the elder Breum found a very good spring east of that site and moved his family there. Young Herman, 14 years old at the time, recalled some of the events of that period in an interview with Father Louis Pfaller when he was 84 years old in September of 1953. Breum told Father Louis that he recalls his father loaning the wagon to the relatives of Sgt. Henry Stempker to use in removing his body from the burial site atop Young Man's Butte in 1884. Herman had seen the gravesite himself.



This was one of the very first structures in Richardton. It belonged to Jim Reilly and was located just southwest of the present water tower. Reilly, the grandfather of Fr. James Reilly of Assumption Abbey, worked for the NP Railway as a water pumper. The shanty is made of railroad ties.

RICHARDTON NAMED

Of course the Breum family still live near that wonderful spring their pioneer ancestors found in 1882, and the Hunke relatives still farm the land homesteaded by those early Hunke residents south of Richardton.

But how did Richardton get that name? Well, Spring Valley probably could have been used to identify innumerable locations anywhere. Thus about 1880 an enterprising company in New York, the C.B. Richard Company, purchased land along the Northern Pacific line in Dakota Territory. The company were passenger agents for the North German Lloyd Steamship Line. Their intentions were to buy land, advertise its availability to potential settlers, and thereby increase their profits first by having more passengers to sell tickets to, and then have those same passengers buy the land from them on the Dakota prairies.

Well, by now you can guess that someone in the C.B. Richard organization thought it would be well to have a town named after that family. That individual was Oscar L. Richard, one of the family members active in the company in 1882. He died at age 99 in 1954. Although his organization gave us our location and eventually our name, no one by the name of Richard ever lived here. But in researching the names of many towns along the railroad lines in the Upper Midwest, we find that many hundreds of them were named

after animals, wars, Biblical persons and towns, as well as after living people.

Now that we were named and located, what were our beginnings really like? An early traveler named E.V. Smalley wrote a lengthy report for the *Dickinson Press* on February 7, 1885, about Richardton. That article was located in the Assumption Abbey Archives, part of the research of Father Louis again. The article was part of a longer work entitled "E.V. Smalley in the Northwest." Here is Smalley's report:

"Richardton might be called an assisted colony. The enterprising New York managers of the Hamburg-American Steamship Company, C.B. Richard & Co., planted it two years ago and sent out the first settlers. They were ambitious to found a successful German colony that should prove a nucleus to attract industrious emigrants from the country with which their business as ocean carriers chiefly lay. So with great liberality they built a little town first and then invited their fellow country-men to come and occupy it and also fill up the fine agricultural lands in the vicinity. Mindful of the needs of a new settlement, they erected a school house, a church as well as a hotel, a number of stores and several neat cottages. All the buildings were bought ready made, shipped out in sections and set up on the town site, so that the colonists found comfortable quarters ready for them when they arrived. The ready-made buildings, although much more attrac-



Early settlers loved to gather for any reason. This parade was part of *Katholiken Tag*, a forerunner of the popular *Field Masses* of the 1940s. The scene above occurred during one of these celebrations between 1910 and 1915.

tive in appearance than the structures usually seen in new settlements, did not prove satisfactory from an economical point of view. The walls, composed of two thicknesses of pine, not of the best quality, failed to keep out the winter winds, and it was necessary to add a third thickness, which with the carpenters' bills for putting the buildings together, made them more expensive than if they had been constructed in the usual way from lumber shipped out in car-load lots. The buildings are of a uniform green color and of pleasing forms, and they make a very pretty appearance on the prairie."

SOME EARLY RESIDENTS

Who were the first people here in Richardton? Naturally we could expect employees of the stage station and the railroad to settle down and take advantage of the Homestead Act. Many early railroad workers were Irish and a few did make this area their home. Some of the original business community were of varying nationalities. But the biggest attraction of the area was the farmland, and history during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had demonstrated to all the world that immigrants from Germany somehow could transform land into highly productive farms. They had done it in Russia from the Volga to the Black Sea. They had succeeded greatly in the southern extremes of the Austria-Hungarian Empire. South America had seen their agricultural prowess, as had South Africa. And for a number of years those German farmers



The business district of Richardton in the early part of the 20th Century. Notice the dirt streets, the horse-drawn vehicles. The building at the far left is the First State Bank of Richardton.



At right, the young woman in the field typified the hardworking farmers found by E.V. Smalley in his article stated below. The girl was Emilia, the mother of John Mischei prior to her marriage to John's father.

had been gradually turning the North American continent into the "bread-basket of the world" with farms stretching from Texas into Canada. Dakota Territory was in that path of progress.

Three separate varieties of Germans came to Richardton to make their mark. First were the Germans directly from the homeland, with names like Hunke, Rixen, Alpert, Wagner, Palm, Hamann, Stieg. E.V. Smalley found them in the area in 1885 and here is his opinion of how they were doing in this new land, as reported in the article in the *Dickinson Press* quoted earlier.

"To some extent the emigrants from Germany were assisted by loans from the firm to make a start in their new homes. This system has not, I hear, worked satisfactorily. The settlers were too much disposed to regard the company as a good Providence on which they could always fall back in case of need. Then the change of conditions from the old communities of Germany to the open prairies of the Dakota frontier was too abrupt for many of the emigrants to take root at once and thrive. The most successful German settler in new countries is not the man who has just come from the old world but one who has already become somewhat Americanized. However, the original colonists are getting on much better than I expected to find, from reports I had heard before coming here. They were fortunate in being joined by a

number of American settlers and a few German-Americans, and lately by a dozen families of Scandinavians, so that now the community exhibits that mixture of elements which is the best condition of Western progress. Settlements composed of one nationality of immigrants only are rarely as prosperous as those made up of several, because they are apt to run in the old ruts they were accustomed to in the old country. In a mixed community each element contributes some knowledge and experience of value to the whole body of settlers."

EARLY FARMS DESCRIBED

E.V. Smalley goes on to describe what he found upon visiting with some of the area farmers at their homesteads. Note the gardens he found. That fondness for gardening among Germans is still visible among their ancestors here a century later.

"I drove out to the frontier of settlement south of Richardton and talked with some of the German farmers. Their great industry will win in the long run in spite of their want of means. They had already made quite comfortable improvements on their claims with their own labor, buying lumber and doing their own carpenter work on their little houses, and putting up stables for stock of turf and straw, with a few posts and rafters to hold the nondescript edifices together. All had carefully tilled gardens—a thing too often neglected for the first few years by

American settlers who are usually in a great hurry to get a big crop of wheat. They kept a few cattle, hogs and chickens. One man said his two daughters had done most of the work building his house and digging his well. The house stood on a sort of shelf on the side of a hill and one could step from the back door into a cellar dug in the bank. In front sloped a garden fenced in by a wall of turf and surrounded by raspberry, currant and gooseberry bushes."

Tiny Richardton had begun. Gradually more houses were added to those green, pre-fabricated gifts from the C.B. Richard people. Business places sprang up as settlers demanded more products. It is interesting to note this progress as reported in some very early editions of the *Dickinson Press*. Here is what they said about our new town on April 28, 1883:

"Richardton unquestionably shows more rapid improvement at this time than any other town along the line. Quite a number of new houses have sprung up during the past few days, the frame-work of a large two-story hotel is up, and the completion of one of the most imposing caravansaries along the line only a question of a few days. Some three new stores are about finished, besides a number of neat and conveniently located dwelling houses. The immigrant house is crowded; and the trains daily add to the population of this leading trans-Missouri agricul-



This 1910 card party included, 1-Michael Palm, 2-August Kauer, 3-Ernest Hessler, 4-Mr. Schmidtbauer, 5-Rinehardt Rixen, 6-Peter Palm. Kauer was a photographer, Hessler a bricklayer, and the others all farmed south of town.



Richardton during a snow storm in 1920. This poem appeared in an Abbey magazine by student author, Bernard Harmeling, Class of 1925:

<i>The blinding blast Came driving fast, And howling swept the town: While us it sped, From over-head The snow came dancing down.</i>	<i>The hail and sleet Drove through the street, The roaring gale before; Till cottage small, And house and hall Were lost and seen no more.</i>
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tural center."

Robert Hunke recalls some of these buildings in his 1953 interview with Father Louis. He said the hotel was "first class," and that the depot waiting room could hold about 150 people. The stores, he remembered, were well-stocked. Both Hunke and Herman Breum mention meeting a most pleasant man, Adolph Norberg, manager of properties and businesses owned by the C.B. Richard firm. Norberg is referred to often in early newspaper articles too. He seems to have been "the" man in charge of just about everything at the beginning. Norberg was a German Jew, well respected, it seems, by everyone who did business with him. Another enterprising settler, often mentioned by early reporters, was Charles Greenough, sometimes spelled Grunough. He settled just west of Richardton and quickly developed a herd of cattle and provided stock to area settlers.

TOWN GROWS SLOWLY

Early figures on how many people really came to the area are sketchy. From 1883 to 1885 the railroad brought a steady stream of hopeful homesteaders to the area. Some left within months. Imagine the shock to some when getting off the train in Richardton, or any other "town" along the route, with a couple dozen houses, a hotel, a store or two, all surrounded by miles and miles of open, treeless prairies. Although a few wooden houses dotted the plains, many early homes were shaped from rock, or more

likely sod, that tightly compacted top layer of grass and soil that soon would produce grain to feed the world.

E.V. Smalley mentions in 1885 that there were 88 voters in the Richardton settlement, covering an area about ten miles long and five miles wide. But we know that in 1885 only men could vote, so that translates into a total population of about 350 men, women and children in that area.

Two reports about Richardton appeared in the *Dickinson Press* during 1883, along with many mentions of the fledgling community. We must remember that much of the publicity was used as an advertisement to potential homesteaders. Besides these two stories, reprinted below, there also appeared a copy of an ad that was being published in newspapers in Germany telling about the great possibilities on the prairies of Dakota.

This tidbit appeared in the *Dickinson Press* on September 15, 1883:

"An eastern paper in speaking of the opening of the Northern Pacific makes this acknowledgement: 'That the future seat of empire lies in the great Northwest is an acknowledged fact, and it is only a question of time when the Capital of the United States, yea, the source and residence of the world's power and wisdom, will sit on the top of Young Man's Butte, or some other elevated pinnacle on the landscape of Dakota.' "

Four months later, on December 29, 1883, this appeared about Richardton:

"Richardton is a new place offering superior advantages to the settler and business man. The surrounding country is a rich, productive soil. North of Richardton the country is broken, thus furnishing the best advantages for stock raising. The town was laid out by C.B. Richard & Co., large steamship owners and men of energy who will push the plans forward until it takes rank as one of the leading towns of the west Missouri country. It has a good hotel, several stores, a lumber yard and many other business enterprises. That Richardton will grow there can be no doubt."

About a year later, on November 29, 1884, here is another excerpt from the *Dickinson Press* about Richardton:

"Richardton was started by C.B. Richard & Co., of New York, in the spring of 1883 and is prospering under their management. These gentlemen own a line of steamers and have made a special effort to induce German farmers to locate at this place and have met with unbounded success. The town and surrounding country is settled up mostly by an industrious class of these people. The town has a system of water works to supply it and furnish fire protection. The place has already several stores, a lumber yard, black smith shop and a very neat church."

Here is the *Dickinson Press* translation



Area settlers worked hard on their homesteads and farming was a good business in the early 1900s. Above left is the large stone house on the Aquilinus Gress farm that was reminiscent of the large farm houses the Germans built when they settled in Russia. At right is Nick Schuld on his farm south of Richardton with his brand new 1923 Ford truck, purchased at Joseph Kilzer Ford in Richardton. Note the large, sturdy stone barn in the rear.

of the ad appearing in German newspapers attempting to entice settlers to Richardton:

"Richardton in Dakota Territory has land available. A family will need about \$750 (3,000 Reichmarck) to get started on a homestead; this would cover a dwelling, and a stable and the purchase of a team and a cow, some implements and seed for potatoes and vegetables for the first year. One hundred sixty acres can be taken with an additional amount under the Timber Culture Act. The town is attractive with its olive green painted homes and red rooftops."

SECOND GROUP OF GERMANS ARRIVE

During the late 1880s and throughout the next twenty years or so, the other two groups of German immigrants settled in the Richardton vicinity. Those were the German-Russians and the German-Hungarians. In the late 1700s and during the early 1800s thousands of German farmers accepted the invitations extended by Russia and by the Empire of Austria-Hungary to settle and farm in their nations. About 100 years later those farmers found their way to the United States, again accepting large expanses of free farmland. In every instance, those settlers succeeded in turning those lands into some of the most productive farms in the world.

These two distinctly different groups of Germans came to Richardton. The

majority settling here were Roman Catholic, and the largest group were the Germans from Russia. The German-Hungarian settlement was mainly south of Richardton, while their counterparts from Russia settled throughout the area. This latter group were principally farmers, while the German-Hungarians, in many cases, joined some of the original German settlers in various business ventures in the community. This characteristic might be attributed to the two women rulers who had extended the original invitations to these German farmers, Catherine the Great of Russia and Maria Theresa of Austria-Hungary. Catherine encouraged her fellow Germans (she was a German princess initially) to specialize in farming, while history shows that the Hapsburg Empress Maria Theresa asked her German colonists to acquire trades and learn the business world in her nation. Farmland was not as readily available in that nation as it was in the vast steppes of South Russia.

CHURCHES START EARLY

The original Richardton Church had been the Richard Company's little pre-fabricated 24 foot by 40 foot wood frame structure to be used by all faiths in the town. However, by 1890 Catholics so predominated in Richardton that the city founders donated the building to them. The few Lutherans made use of homes until their church eventually got built.

There was no resident priest nor minister

in Richardton for the first few years, but a young Catholic missionary had taken an interest in the German immigrants and their spiritual needs. Father Vincent Wehrle, OSB, a Swiss Benedictine who later founded St. Mary's Abbey, made his first visit to the town in 1893 and seemed to think that this area would be best for his new monastery, which he had originally founded as St. Gall's Priory at Devils Lake, ND. But that story comes later. Likewise the Protestant clergymen in the early years were the missionary types, providing "traveling" services to their scattered followers.

As the settlers continued to come, so did business. August Koesel, son of a German family which had settled near Hebron in 1882, started Koesel's Store in 1894, a landmark business that exists today as Richardton's only grocery store, purchased in part from relatives of the Koesel's in the 1970s. The Koesel family is still involved in community affairs and local businesses.

Although the C.B. Richard Company had provided a small building for a school in 1883, the local Catholics founded their own parish school in 1897 and the Richard building became the public school. One of the earliest organizations in the community was founded in 1896 when the Catholic women formed St. Ann's Altar Society. That group affiliated themselves with the Christian Mothers Society in 1913 and today those Christian Mothers are



As the town grew many business places prospered. One of those was the Cornelius and Mary Turk Store. Pictured here is their first store prior to 1919, in which they sold jewelry and millinery goods. Left to right are Mary, Cornelius and daughter Veronica. Note the pianos, the violins on the left, and the variety of stuffed birds. This was one of the many stores destroyed in the "big" fire of 1919.

still an active group.

Despite discouragement from nearly everyone, including his ecclesiastical superiors, Vincent Wehrle chose Richardton as the home for his monastery in 1899. Construction began and continued for the next few years on the magnificent structure that has become the landmark of the area, the Abbey and its church.

The German-Hungarian settlement south of Richardton built their first church, St. Stephen's, in 1900, some 16 miles south of town. In 1951 they replaced the original stone and wood building with a modern brick edifice standing and in use today.

Schools and churches seemed to prosper in Richardton. In 1904 the public school system erected their first brick structure when the wooden building from the Richard Company was no longer adequate. St. Mary's Parish built their initial brick building in 1904. St. John's Lutheran community saw need for more space and in 1905 built the church that still serves them today in 1983. The sturdy, little white building, with its steeple pointing into the sky, is typical of hundreds of visible signs of worship that settlers set upon the prairies of the Midwest. Some renovations have occurred over the years, but the basic building has been used by the St. John's Lutheran community continuously for 78 years.

With the growth of Richardton, a

volunteer fire department was organized in 1906, with such names as Born, Gress, Koesel, Muggli, Forster, Mischel, Lindemann, and Pfeifer making up the first roster of firefighters. A quick glance at the roster today still includes many of those same names.

1906 saw the beginning of Richardton's most prominent landmark as Abbot Vincent Wehrle laid the cornerstone for the twin-towered "Cathedral of the Prairies" which was to serve the needs of both his Benedictine monks and St. Mary's Parish for decades afterwards. Upon completion of the magnificent church in 1908, the *Dickinson Press*, on March 28 of that year, had said, "The Abbey church, when completed, will be one of the finest churches in the state and will cost upwards of \$90,000."

BUSINESSES PROSPER

Mischel Lumber Company opened its doors in 1907 and 76 years later is still in operation, owned by Ray and Delores (Mischel) Amann. Delores' father Sabbie had purchased the business from his father, the 1907 founder, and ran the operation from 1945 until he sold it to his son-in-law and daughter in the mid-1970s. Telephones hit town in 1907, being of the new and exciting "dial" variety. P.C. Remington opened Richardton's first pharmacy the same year, and the business continues today as Klein's Pharmacy, owned by Bruce and Lonnie Stoelting. The Klein family had first purchased the pharmacy in 1927. John Klein Jr. took over the store

in 1938 and was a leading member of the business and civic community until his untimely death in the late 1960s.

Other important "firsts" occurred in 1908. Besides the completion of the remarkable Abbey church, St. Mary's Parish formed their first adult choir which has continued uninterrupted to this day, providing music for the many liturgies performed over the years in the impressive church. Dr. Elwood Brown, professor of music at Dickinson State College, has directed the choir the last few years.

Richardton's first resident doctor, F.B. Straus, arrived in 1908, followed over the years by many dedicated physicians, such as Dr. George D. Crossette, Dr. C.R. Dukart, Dr. Henry Slominski, and the doctor here today, Neville Jones.

Some very well-known business names came to the fore in 1908 with the establishment of Born's Market by Fred Born Sr., the continued growth of businesses owned and operated by the Kilzer brothers, Joseph and Frank, such as lumber yards, the general store and elevators, and the prominence of Koesel's Store. Fred Born Jr. continued in the family business of selling quality meats and making homemade sausage for more than 50 years, selling the business to his son-in-law Charles F. Wilz and family in the late 1970s.

In reference to local businesses, the *Dickinson Press* listed these on March



The mode of transportation used by the unidentified bachelor above was replaced in the early 1900s by the automobile. At right is the Robert Hunke family with their 1911 Overland, one of the first cars in the area. On the running board is Ben, Robert is at the wheel. Next to him is his mother and Henry. In the back are Mrs. Hunke, with Bertha on her lap. The other two youngsters are Anna and Genevieve. (Gen is Mrs. Ted Maas.)



28, 1908: Frank and Joe Kilzer who owned a milling company, lumber yard, elevator and general store, Koesel's Store, a couple of hotels, two newspapers and Richardton Clay Products.

POPULATION STABLE OVER YEARS

Richardton became an official town in 1906 when the city government was first organized and recognized by the state. Koesel, Kilzer and Pathmann are the first recorded councilmen, with Davis the bookkeeper and Dienst the justice of the peace.

Once it was an official town, Richardton was included for the first time in the official national census of 1910. Prior to that time all residents in 1890 and 1900 had been included in the county census according to districts. To show just how stable, or stagnant, the community has been, all depending on your point of view, here are the official U.S. Census Bureau totals for our community over the years: 1910—647, 1920—626, 1930—710, 1940—682, 1950—721, 1960—792, 1970—799, and 1980—699. There is some unofficial reason to believe that the high point of 799 in 1970 included the residents of Schnell Hall on the campus of Assumption College. But since census figures are used as a basis for returning a variety of revenues to cities and towns from collections of different taxes in North Dakota, there was no concerted effort to have the

figure adjusted down about 90, despite the fact that the college dorm did not sit in the city limits. The drop of 100 between 1970 and 1980 was questioned by the city fathers, but after another unofficial count after the "real" census, there were not 700 people in Richardton. "WOOLY WILD WEST TOWN"???

One view of Richardton might contradict the quiet, steady, traditional life most people think exists and has existed here. A young Lutheran minister, Christian Sriver Thorpe, was on his way to Glendive, MT, to serve the many Norwegian Lutherans in eastern Montana and western North Dakota in 1906. In an article, including many of his letters, in the publication *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, Winter, 1974, here is what Thorpe wrote to his relatives: "August 12, 1906, Dear Papa and Mama: Well, here I am and my first Sunday work done in Montana. The first evening I left St. Paul there was an awful rush for North Dakota. They wouldn't let me on the train I had intended to leave on, so I had to wait for the next one, and that didn't bring me to Richardton till 8 p.m.....when I got off at Richardton, I was only one in a mob of about 100 landseekers making a rush for the two hotels. I was lucky enough to get a bed in a room right above the saloon part, together with two hired men in the same room. My peaceful dreams were frequently disturbed by the carousing and drinking and singing going on below. I've never struck a more 'wooly wild west' town yet!"

AUTO ENTERS SCENE

The automobile seemed to help create the most permanent businesses in Richardton over the years. In 1910 the Standard Oil Bulk Company was begun, selling mostly kerosene to local settlers. The bulk plant still serves the Richardton area, today under the proprietorship of F.B. Schwab and Sons, who have owned the company since 1951.

John A. Forster became a mechanic as a young man in 1915 and over the next 30 years he was the dealer, at different times, for Dodge, Plymouth, Chrysler and Rickenbocker autos, Allis Chalmers farm machinery, while also providing auto body repair and mechanic work for his customers. His son John C. Forster ran the business from 1946 to the mid-1970s and then sold it to Tom Voegele who today specializes in all phases of body repair work.

Jos. Kilzer and Sons opened a Ford Motor Company dealership in 1916. Today, more than 60 years later, the Kilzer family still carries on that tradition, with second generation son George and his son Steve selling Ford vehicles and providing service for those vehicles to their customers. Today Jos. Kilzer and Sons is the oldest Ford dealership in North Dakota.

In 1917 Stephen and Frank Lindemann began selling McCormick machinery in Richardton. That implement business changed hands over the years, but in

Our Affiliations

The first monastery building at Richardton. This frame building was built in 1899 and still forms part of the Abbey quadrangle. This photo is so clear that every face of the group on the steps is recognizable when enlarged.



Assumption Abbey: A Prairie Monastery

THE FOUNDER AND FOUNDING

Assumption Abbey was founded at Richardton in 1899, but its existence goes back further than that. The abbey was largely the creation of one man, Vincent Wehrle. He was born near St. Gallen, in eastern Switzerland, in 1855. The famous old Benedictine monastery in that city had been closed some years before or the boy might have joined it. As it was, he entered the abbey of Einsiedeln where he was professed a monk in 1876 and ordained a priest in 1882.

Soon afterwards, he volunteered for the abbey's American foundation of New Subiaco, AR. Wehrle threw his considerable energy into his new work both as novice master and parish priest, but things did not work out well. From some accounts, he was a restless and dissatisfied monk; from others, he was beside himself with typhoid fever.

What no one doubted was his zeal for the pastoral care of souls. Thus in 1887, Martin Marty, the Benedictine Vicar Apostolic of the Dakota Territory invited him to work in the West. Wehrle and Marty were kindred spirits—full of energy and ideas, attracted to travel and challenge. Both were talented leaders of men, but their followers sometimes became fatigued at the pace they demanded.

Wehrle's assignment in Dakota suited his love for adventure. From a base at Devils Lake, he was asked to care for the Catholic faithful along the new Great Northern Railroad for 250 miles to the Montana border. As legend has it, he rode the cabooses of freight trains in exchange for a bottle of Mass wine. Yet Vincent was not satisfied to minister alone in the wilderness. Like Marty and other early American Benedictine pioneers, his ideal was St. Boniface and the early medieval missionary abbeys of Europe. Immediately he began to beg the monasteries for monks to found an abbey, but Devils Lake was not a promising project in the eyes of anyone but Vincent Wehrle.

Nevertheless, a few Benedictines did come to join the intrepid pioneer, and Rome was willing to grant his new house priory status in 1894. It was called St. Gall's and situated on the lakeshore some two miles south of the town of Devils Lake. Early diaries of the monks reveal a typical American monastic beginning: the priests were involved in parish work and teaching while the brothers ran the farm. A school was begun in 1895 with 25 students. Due to lack of funds and personnel, the community lived a hard, grueling life—like everyone else on the frontier. A typical story relates that when a young monk died in the Jamestown hospital, there was no money to bring him north for burial.

The prior continued to roam the vast

plains in search of Catholics in need of spiritual care. He noticed that more of his coreligionists were settling the southwestern part of the state than the northern counties around Devils Lake. Hence he began to visit places like Mandan, Dickinson and Richardton. In all these locales, Germans from Russia and Hungary were being settled by the Northern Pacific Railroad. Wehrle was not satisfied with the pastoral care they were receiving, so he abruptly bought a piece of land at Richardton in 1899 and summoned the monks from Devils Lake.

WEHRLE PICKS RICHARDTON

Richardton was not an obvious location for a monastery. It was 75 miles west of the nearest population center at Mandan and was itself a dusty prairie outpost composed of clapboard buildings thrown up by a steamship company in 1883. All it had to recommend it was Catholics, but that is precisely what attracted Wehrle. His basic orientation was the care of souls, and for him, an abbey was primarily a center out of which missionaries worked. There was plenty of scope for such zeal in southwestern North Dakota.

Immediately after arriving by train from Devils Lake, in June of 1899, the dozen or so monks set to work on a building for their new priory. A frame structure 40 feet by 120 feet was begun on the property just beyond the NW limit of the village. Construction continued through the summer, but a small

Assumption Abbey and School. The twin towers of Assumption Abbey are its most distinctive architectural feature. Every motorist that passes by on the freeway sees the towers and remembers that there is a spiritual dimension to life.



tornado on September 1 proved a setback. By September 12, 1900, Bishop John Shanley of Jamestown could bless the new monastery and school building. Fifty boys answered the invitation to study at "St. Mary's College" that first fall.

At first the main floor of this building served as a chapel for the monks and students, as well as the parish church for the town parish. The basement contained the dining hall and kitchen. The monks' quarters were on the second floor which also contained classrooms and student housing. A third floor held more dormitory space. In 1904-1905, a brick kiln was set up on the grounds and this original building was veneered. Today it contains the private rooms of the monks and is the east wing of the main quadrangle.

Some of the monks had remained at St. Gall's in Devils Lake, which continued to be the official priory, although the prior and most of the community were now at Richardton. Early in 1902 St. Mary's Priory of Richardton was officially recognized by Rome. Later in the same year the community was admitted to membership in the Swiss American Congregation. The very next year a visitation of St. Mary's showed the number of monks to be about twenty, so Wehrle applied for abbey status for his new monastery. In late 1903 Pope Pius X approved his request, an event which is recorded in one of the abbey church windows.

The number of monks at St. Mary's rose steadily throughout Wehrle's regime. He was blessed as abbot on May 4, 1904 and set out for Europe on a recruiting tour the next summer. Abbot Vincent was a persuasive salesman and brought back twenty new recruits from Switzerland and Germany. Some of these men were horrified at the contrast between the bleak Dakota plains and their own native forests and lakes. Those who could not take it melted into the general American population, but some stayed on to become life members of the abbey.

The new recruits were immediately put to work by the hard-driving superior. He embarked on a second (north) wing in 1904 and it was to be brick from the start. Under the tutelage of a master brickmaker, the monks dug clay and mined lignite coal on their land. The abbot himself was not above working in the coal shaft after a day of teaching theology to the clerics. One old diary tells of Brother Vincent Frommenwyler who worked in the mine in icy water up to his knees. One day he came down with a chill and was dead by evening.

Another harsh aspect of monastic life at St. Mary's was the homesteading plan. Taking advantage of the federal laws, Wehrle stationed monks in shacks on quarter-sections of land for certain periods of the year. After some years of this, the land belonged to the abbey. This was done to extend the Richardton property and also to claim a tract at Dry

Lake, some fifty miles to the south. A picture of the monastic homesteaders at Dry Lake shows some of them with blackened faces from a prairie fire that caught them unprotected.

In fact, the homesteading scheme did not work out well for Abbot Vincent. In the first place, he ran afoul of the government, which looked on his procedures as amassing a corporation farm. The abbey won a court case in Washington, but lost an attempt to fight an exorbitant lawyer's fee. But the main weakness of the plan was that it was based on the assumption that North Dakota land values would continue to climb. Instead they dropped steadily after 1910, thus undermining Wehrle's great building project.

CHURCH BUILT

The centerpiece of his grandiose plan was an elaborate church of the type common in Europe but rare in America and unknown on the remote prairies. To plan for it, he engaged Anton Dohman, a Milwaukee architect. Dohman drew up a cruciform plan for a Bavarian Romanesque basilica. The exterior is marked by two towers on the south end which are visible for miles across the treeless plain. Homemade brick was used for the core work but fine tan brick from nearby Hebron was put on all the surfaces. Because of the lack of air pollution, the building remains new in appearance after seventy-five years.

Dohman's interior features a three-aisle



Abbot Vincent Wehrle's dream of a monastery at Richardton takes shape here as construction proceeds on the first brick section of St. Mary's Abbey in 1904. Notice the ladies from the town and a few gentlemen "inspectors" at the center of this photo as workmen are seen near, on top of, hanging from and looking out of this building which is part of the north wing of the present day Abbey quadrangle.

plan with bedford stone pillars for support. The excellent stained-glass windows were designed by Karl Riemann, a Milwaukee artist trained in Munich. The monastic choir flanks the high altar in the apse, but is obstructed by the pillars and baldachin. In general, the decoration of the interior has always been inferior. Lack of money and artisans never allowed the kind of art work done in European churches of this type. Instead of leaving it simple, stencilled scroll-work was applied to the walls in dark colors.

Nevertheless, St. Mary's Abbey church was acclaimed by the local population as one of the wonders of the world and the sobriquet "cathedral of the prairies" was applied to it. The first Mass was held on Christmas Eve, 1908, and the consecration was held on July 6, 1910. On that occasion, pilgrims from the abbey parishes at St. Stephen's and Lefor walked twenty and thirty miles as to a great religious festival, which it was. In fact, Vincent Wehrle was the bishop who consecrated the church built by Abbot Vincent Wehrle. In the spring of 1910 he had been named the first bishop of the newly created see of Bismarck.

PLACID ELECTED ABBOT

After he had completed his building project, Wehrle had counted on devoting his time to the spiritual formation of the monks. Instead he was moved to Bismarck where he continued to rule the abbey through assistants,

namely Priors John Burger (1910-1913) and Leo Kaufmann (1913-1915). This arrangement was not satisfactory, so the monks elected Placid Hoenerbach abbot in 1915. In Wehrle's eyes Placid was far from an ideal choice. He had been a parish priest and chaplain for nuns for years and was not in close touch with monastic life in Richardton.

If Placid had known more about the actual state of matters, especially finances, it is doubtful he would have accepted the job at all. Once in office, he gradually uncovered the full extent of the indebtedness—information Wehrle never revealed to the monks or the higher monastic officials of the congregation. Given his haphazard financial methods, it is doubtful Vincent even knew himself how serious the problem was. Furthermore he had transferred the entire debt to the abbey from the local parish so as to meet the demands of Canon Law that a church be debt-free before consecration. To Hoenerbach's chagrin, the total debt was over \$300,000 and the interest far beyond the abbey's income.

One alternative the second abbot had was to reveal the truth to the world and appeal for help. He might not have gotten it, but at that point the debt was within reason. Instead Placid borrowed from a multitude of small lenders and then speculated with what he got. The result was predictably catastrophic. By 1924, when St. Mary's went into receivership, the debt was 1.4 million

dollars and quite beyond any hope of recovery.

During Abbot Placid's sad reign, ordinary life went on at the abbey. In fact to judge from *Prairie Bells*, the student newspaper before 1924, St. Mary's College was a lively and happy school. Some of the instructors were highly qualified and there was a good atmosphere of concerts, plays and debates, all staged by the students. The students were always happy when the abbot made one of his rare visits to Richardton, for then they had a holiday. As for the monastery, all parties involved report that internal morale and discipline suffered from the protracted absence of the superior.

Placid's constant travels, of course, were all a frantic attempt to rescue the community from impending bankruptcy. Toward this end, he borrowed from everyone he could and invested in schemes that could pay huge dividends or nothing at all. In fact, some of his stocks eventually proved to be big winners, but that was long after the Richardton situation had collapsed. Another scheme of Hoenerbach's was to move the abbey to Mandan so as to be near more population. He had a grandiose plan drawn up but nothing came of it because Bishop Wehrle objected, and of course there were no funds either.

This dream of Placid, to build a new abbey at the very point when he could



A view from the second floor of the monastery looking south into Richardton as people are on their way from Sunday Mass, back at the turn of the century. The old car is heading east on the street in front of the Abbey and the people near the center of the photo are walking south on 4th Street.

not pay for the old one, is very characteristic of the man. He appears to have been a person who thought only positive thoughts and dreamed vast dreams. Nowhere in his actions do we find the kind of cautious prudence called for by the circumstances. He inherited an almost impossible situation from Wehrle and made it worse. Yet never did he seem to feel he was doing anything wrong or foolish. For his part in the fiasco, he was visited with every ecclesiastical penalty Rome could conjure up, yet the decree was never delivered. To his dying day in 1955, he was convinced he could have rescued the situation if people would have just given him a little more time and money

ABBEY CLOSES IN 1924

Vincent Wehrle went on to serve as bishop of Bismarck until 1939. He gave a long and full commitment entirely to the Church he loved. He certainly was an excellent missionary and bishop. But no man can be everything and Wehrle was an indifferent abbot and a disastrous financier. His impetuous personality caused him to plunge the community into extremely risky ventures and the monks paid for their docility to him with the destruction of their community. In 1924, the doors of St. Mary's Abbey were closed and the monks dispersed.

The closure of St. Mary's Abbey was certainly rather unusual in American religious history, in that money was the sole cause. Unlike today, when many

religious houses are withering away for lack of recruits, St. Mary's had forty-two monks and a large class of candidates ready to enter the novitiate in 1924. Most of these candidates then transferred to St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, MN, where they made their novitiate. Some of the professed monks went to live at other abbeys and some who were working as parish priests became diocesan clergy. For four years, 1924-1928, the abbey buildings were virtually vacant, though two monks, Frs. Herman Mandry and Gregory Borski, stayed on as pastors in the local parish. The abbey corporation was not dissolved, though the chapter members never met.

Officials in Rome were not content to see the community die for such an insufficient cause. Therefore they requested Abbot Alcuin Deutsch of Collegeville to try to refound the monastery. Deutsch was one of the great men of the Benedictine order in America. Even though he was also aiding several other ailing abbeys at the time, he sent his own secretary, Fr. Cuthbert Goeb, and a small band of monks to reopen the Richardton institution in the summer of 1928. A number of monks from the old community returned and the school reopened that fall with thirty-five students.

The new community was renamed Assumption Abbey and it transferred to the American Cassinese Congregation.

That was only natural, for St. John's was in that group and not the Swiss. Nevertheless, the old Swiss traditions were still embodied in many of the members and the community considers its roots to be Swiss as well as Cassinese. Although there was a break of sorts in the bankruptcy, the spirit of the old community lived on in many hearts. As an example of this, almost all of the novitiate class of 1924 came to Richardton when they were graciously invited to do so by Abbot Alcuin Deutsch. Some of them are still alive as this is being written: Frs. Adam Hunkler, Stanley Sticka and Amandus Studer.

It is hard to exaggerate Cuthbert Goeb's achievement in reestablishing the abbey at Richardton. He was faced with not only a massive restoration in the decaying buildings, but also with some of the worst agricultural years in North Dakota history—the Dirty Thirties. Although he had the considerable credibility of St. John's to back him, he did not receive a lot of money. In fact there were no gifts involved at all. Goeb had to pay back about \$60,000 in debts incurred in buying back the buildings from the finance company. He paid, and he paid on time. Once he had to borrow to help rescue another abbey that was going under.

What Abbot Cuthbert had on his side was manpower. As soon as the abbey opened its doors, recruits poured in. They were mostly from the German

Since 1905 this building has been home to St. John's Lutheran Parish of Richardton. A parsonage which used to sit just to the left of the church was removed in the 1970s. The church was remodeled about the same time and the parish is very active in 1983.



they remain in residence at the Priory.

Two other changes in utilization of the building space occurred in 1982. The library was moved upstairs to the area known as the study hall. The room vacated, next to the small reception area, was transformed into the CCD office space, a classroom area, and meeting area for parish organizations.

It would be difficult to ascertain the approximate number of students who have attended St. Mary's Grade and High School between the years of 1905-1983. However, we can presume that St. Mary's alumni and alumnae, wherever they are and whatever walk of life they may have chosen, will always remain loyal sons and daughters of St. Mary's School.

There are more than 60 sisters, monks and priests who claim St. Mary's as their alma mater. At this writing, the oldest living alumna may be Sister Alberta Gion, OSB. She is 96 and resides at Sacred Heart Convent, Yankton, SD. Her nephew, Father Ernest Kilzer, OSB, of St. John's Abbey, has the distinction of having been baptized, confirmed and ordained a priest in Richardton by Bishop Wehrle. Nick Schuld claims the longest term of employment as custodian of St. Mary's—27 years.

May we here pay tribute to all the Benedictine Sisters of Yankton and Watertown, SD, Richardton Priory and the monks of Assumption Abbey and all the lay teachers and staff who

have so faithfully served in our schools through these 78 years. May the Lord grant us the privilege of having them with us for many years to come.

St. John's Lutheran Church

The early Lutheran pioneers gathered to form a church in order to strengthen themselves in their faith. They congregated together to share the joy of the celebrations of life, baptisms, confirmations, and weddings, and to share comfort at funerals. They faced the hardships of life with the common faith that God was still in control. They built an aspiring church building in what was then a rough frontier town with only a few store fronts, topping the steeple with a cross that proclaimed that God's spirit was vitally present here on the seemingly empty prairie.

In 1883 Lutherans in the Richardton area held their first services in farm homes. They were not held regularly because there was no pastor available on a permanent basis. Financial assistance was secured through the Ohio Synod so that a mission church could be formed. It remained a mission church until 1955. In these early years, services were then held in school rooms every four weeks, providing the weather permitted. Emma Nolte Alpert Wagner, born in 1889, is the oldest living member of this early Lutheran church. She presently resides

at St. Luke's Nursing Home in Dickinson.

On July 10, 1898, the Evangelical Lutheran Congregation (the generic name for St. John's Lutheran) was incorporated with the following board elected: President A. Naderhoff, Secretary A. Kauer, and Treasurer F. Traumann. A constitution was adopted according to the Ohio Synod and services continued to be held once a month in a school room in Richardton. At this time the Richardton Land Company designated land for a church building. This was typical of townsite promoters, since a town with a church had a status, and a community with two or three places to worship apparently had a future. Judge Fred Maser of Dickinson promoted the building of the first church. He preached occasionally at Richardton in the absence of another minister.

In 1904, 40 acres of land were purchased from Northwestern Improvement Company (New Jersey) and Dakota Manitoba Land Company, 30 of which were sold in 1910. The remaining ten acres were used for the cemetery.

The cornerstone of the new church was laid July 1, 1905, with Mr. Baumgarten the contractor. The 28 foot by 40 foot building was dedicated on September 3, 1905. Members of the church board at that time included: President Carl Stieg, Secretary Henry Pathmann and Treasurer Paul Lentz. Membership in the



American Legion Auxiliary in 1980: Seated, l-r: Caroline Schulz, Lena Kuhn, Theresa Kuhn, Julia Meyers, Theresa Kaufman, Leota Baseflug, Veronica Rixon, Clementine Hegel. Standing, l-r: Dolores Hoff, Sandy Weisenberger, Ellen Forster, Louisa Hoff, Rosalie Hunke, Roberts Bleth, Clara Melchior, Joy Forster, Christine Harrington, Eileen Stevenson, Dolores Amann, Lena Aman, Katherine Sticka, Rose Hueske and Bernice Schwab.

Stockie, Leo Steckler and Pius Steckler (*World War I Vets).

The activities and interests of the club in the community may be summarized as follows: Sponsoring summer recreation programs for the children of the community which includes swimming, volleyball, peewee and midget baseball, girls softball, roller skating, Christmas and Halloween parties and amateur contests. Sending at least one boy annually to Boy's State and sponsoring each year's Junior Legion baseball team have been two on-going activities.

The club owned and had been operating an Ambulance service in the Richardton community until the year of 1981 when it was turned over to a younger group of people who are now furnishing the service.

In 1969 Post 180 purchased their own an adjoining building. Remodeling began in late 1975 and continued on into 1976. The organization now has the nicest looking service club in the community.

Current membership is about 140. In 1980 local member Leonard Hoff was elected State Commander, an honor of which Post 180 is very proud. Leonard has been an active member for years.

American Legion Auxiliary

The American Legion Auxiliary was

formed for the purpose of aiding the American Legion in carrying out the great program of peacetime service to America, to which the Legion is dedicated. All of its activities are designated to promote the work of the Legion and to help the Legion reach its objectives. Although, often working independently on projects of its own, the auxiliary has no purposes that are apart from the aims of the Legion. It is in every sense an "Auxiliary" to the American Legion, and its members serve side by side with the men of the Legion in a spirit of unselfish devotion to the well-being of the American Republic.

The Richardton American Legion Auxiliary to the Lt. Theo. R. Zech Post 180 of the American Legion made application to organize in January of 1946 under the direction of Commander Raymond P. Forster. On July 15, 1946, the Auxiliary was organized with John Schuld, Commander of the American Legion Post 180 at the time, and Mrs. Brunsvoold of Beach, District 8 president, helping to organize. Mrs. Brunsvoold explained the aims and purposes of the American Legion Auxiliary along with an explanation of the charter of the Auxiliary.

The following members signed the Charter: Joan Kuhn, Lena Fix, Dorothy Klein, Caroline Kuhn, Mary Ann Mischel, Marie Heier, Anna Marie Godes, Ellen Forster, Lena Steckler, Cleo Hellman, Julia Meyers and Minnie Godes.

Election and installation of officers followed with Mrs. Brunsvoold acting as installation officer. The following officers were elected and installed: Joan Kuhn, president; Lena Fix, vice-president; Dorothy Klein, secretary; Caroline Kuhn, treasurer; Julia Meyers, chaplain; Mary Ann Mischel, historian.

The original charter was applied for on August 15 and accepted on October 11, 1946. The following year it became a standard unit and a constitution was adopted. The main project is "Girls State" which was nationally organized as a National Americanism Activity in 1937. The girls sent to "Girls State" are taught the forms of government, city, county and state. All delegates to Girls State have always brought back a very interesting report. We have sent fifty-two girls to Girls State since our Auxiliary was organized.

The Auxiliary has been active in community service work, serving dinners for different organizations, sending girls to "Girls State", conducting quilt raffles and bake sales, promoting child welfare and rehabilitation such as sending gifts to veterans hospitals at Christmas time, holding a Christmas party at the VA hospital in Fargo, selling poppies on National Poppy Day of which profits are used for child welfare.

The unit has been represented at the state convention and delegates have always given splendid reports and kept the unit informed of new happenings.



Officers in 1963 for the Court Bishop Wehrle of the Catholic Daughters of America. L.R: Bonnie Becker, Rosalie Hunke, Stella Rummel, Pat Dassinger, Agnes Kelly, Chaplain Father Daniel Maloney and Helen Wilmes.

Mrs. Oneta Mischel, Mrs. Theresa Kaufman and Mrs. Leonard Hoff had the honor of serving as District 8 presidents. Mrs. Leonard Hoff also has had the privilege of serving as North Dakota State President in 1977-1978. She also was a Northwestern Division Membership Chairman, National Executive Committee Woman, Conservation and National Security Chairman, Northwestern National Vice-President and served on State Auditing and Finance Committee.

At present there are 94 senior members and 28 junior members, including three Gold Star Mothers; Mrs. Pauline Fuchs, Mrs. Ed Voigt and Mrs. Madeline Zech.

Our present officers are: Mrs. Frank Melchior, president; Mrs. Herman Hoff, 1st vice-president; Mrs. Curt Stevenson, 2nd vice-president; Mrs. Louis Treiber, secretary; Mrs. Ralph Weisenberger, treasurer; Mrs. David Bleth, chaplain; Mrs. Arnold Hueske, historian; Mrs. Christine Harrington, sgt.-at-arms; Mrs. Frank Schwab and Mrs. Oneta Mischel, executive committee.

Catholic Daughters of America

Court Bishop Wehrle #1919

The Catholic Daughters of America, Court Bishop Wehrle #1919 of Richardton came to be through the

efforts of the state regent Selma Carufel of Bismarck. After convincing the pastor of St. Mary's Parish that the organization would not infringe on or compete with the very active Christian Mothers, she set out with the aid of Minerva and Mrs. Betty Zimmerman to recruit members.

And so on April 24, 1964, the first organizational meeting was held. The court was formed with 33 charter members plus two transfers. The degree team of St. Catherine's Court of Dickinson conducted the initiation and installation of officers. Other courts represented were from Bismarck, Mandan, Moti and Rugby. Bishop Hacker stopped in. Monsignor Cloos of Rugby was a guest along with Father Fey of Dodge, Father William Caspers and Father Finian Brinster of Richardton. The grand regent was LaMoine Hunke. A banquet was served at Bud's Cafe following the initiation.

Missions Project was introduced at the next meeting, the first project being collecting eye glasses with over 100 pair being collected. The CDA-sponsored contests in poetry, posters and song writing were introduced to the local schools. Some of the St. Mary's School contest entries went all the way to the national and won!

Each November 2 a Mass is sponsored commemorating the death of Patron Bishop Wehrle and has been continued each year. A picture of the late Bishop was erected at his crypt in the main

entrance of the Abbey Church. The picture is a gift to the CDA and the Abbey by the artist P.E. Carufel, son of Selma.

The Marathon Bridge Club was started in 1965 to help create monies to contribute to the many charities the Court supported such as the Day School for Mentally Retarded at Dickinson; Christmas gifts to veterans in hospitals; hospital supplies to various missions; the mission at Bogota, Colombia; All Faiths Chapel at Grafton; food and clothing shower for Hone on the Range; bi-annual donation to Grafton School for treats; St. Mary's Church building repair fund; Camp ReCreation at Richardson annually; St. Mary's School library; Right to Life Association; Rehab Center at Grand Forks; and the Honduras Relief Fund.

In 1974 Project Taped High Mass was started, taking the Mass into the homes of many of the local shut-ins. Letters were written to the state senator to support a bill to prohibit nudity and obscenity on television. The Thrift Shop at St. Mary's was started and is conducted by the Court and any help from the parishioners.

At Christmas time fruit baskets were made and distributed to shut-ins. Catholic Digests were collected and sent to the Catholic Library in Ceylon. In 1976 a donation was made to the Colorado Relief Fund. At Easter out members in nursing homes are remembered with flowers. At the State



The Centennial Squares Dance Club above formed especially for the 100th anniversary of Richardton. Note their special banners overhead.



Christian Mothers officers in 1983 were; front, l-r: Cindy Bjeth, Adeline Erdie, president; Katherine Sticka, vice-president; back row, l-r: Tillie Hauck, marshal; Chaplain Father Andrew Wolf, Kathy Messer, treasurer. Not pictured: Eleanor Ludwig, flag bearer.

Convention the Court was awarded for "Charity to the Elderly."

Maggie Forster made and donated a quilt to St. Mary's School. Raffle tickets were sold by the students to help buy uniforms for the basketball team.

In 1980 the Court conducted a concession stand at the annual rodeo to help raise money. Father Daniel Maloney was installed as chaplain. A State Project "Binding our Stitches with Love" was initiated. Members embroidered blocks for a quilt, then sold raffle tickets. The proceeds were used to buy treadle sewing machines for Project Handclasp with any excess money going to the Cardinal Muench Seminary for the education of priests. State Regent Mrs. Virginia Koble attended the annual potluck supper. Films on the Sacraments are being shown at the monthly meetings with discussions led by Father Daniel.

Centennial Squares Dance Club

Adam and Millie Hauck organized a square dance club on January 20, 1982. Sig and Leulla Schaper, Halliday, call the lessons. Officers elected were Adam as president and Millie as secretary and treasurer. Lunch committees were set up and \$25 in fees paid.

The graduation class on February 5, 1982, consisted of Norbert and Arlene Amann, Ray and Dolores Amann, Kent and Mona Dressler, Adam and Millie

Hauck, Dale and Diane Hauck, Ray and Mary Ann Hauck, Pete and Bonnie Hecker, Alfred and Evelyn Goetz, Melvin and Joyce Gress, Joe and Joan Hoff, Wayne and Vangie Link, Alvin and Donna Weidner, and Marlin and Rose Luff.

Other members of the club are Maynard and Sandy Helmer, Marge Mann and Harold Sundgren.

Taking beginner and advanced lessons in the KC Hall are Clyde and Bonnie Kreanzel, Larry and Peggy Dittus, Rueben and Helen Schneider, Herman and Dolores Hoff, Vernon and Gerry Glass, Stanley and Louise Pollestad, Jennifer Hecker, Steven Pollestad, Paul and Sue Jesperson, Callen and Julie Hoff, Mark and Karen Amann, Mark Elder, Dori Hauck, Rob Dittus, Doug Dittus, Steve Dittus, Tammy Dittus, Myra Elder and Shane Focht.

Officers are at present time: Adam and Millie Hauck, presidents; vice presidents are Joe and Joan Hoff; and secretary and treasurer, Dale and Diane Hauck. Dances are held every first and third Saturday night in the KC Hall or Ponderosa Hall, Richardton. Anyone is welcome to join in the fun time.

Christian Mothers Society

A look into early records written in German revealed a frayed sheet of paper dated 1897, which indicated the beginning of the Altar Verein of

Richardton. The officers were Catherine Dauenhauer, president, and Marianna Zimmerman, secretary. Not much information was found to indicate its growth, however; other records of 1914 clearly stated some facts of an organization, then known as the Christliche Mutter Verein, which became affiliated with the National Archconfraternity of Christian Mothers located in Pittsburgh, PA.

In 1978, while visiting with Mrs. Anna Schnell and Mrs. Frances Zimmerman, the only living charter members left, it was learned that both of the ladies joined in 1908 after they were married. Mrs. Veronica Rixen recalls her mother, Mrs. Adam Forster, speaking of these early years when she helped organize the Verein. It was an assembly including both men and women. Later each group re-organized into two individual societies. The ladies talked of many events having taken place through the years, but time and space do not allow for details, however; the members were involved in various church and community activities from which contributions were extended to St. Mary's School, St. Mary's Church, Hospital Fund, and Social Center, just to name a few. While being so involved, the members were ever mindful of the untold spiritual benefits shared which cannot be measured monetarily. Nonetheless, the following Treasurer's reports, compiled by some of the present officers, disclose some of the fruits of their labors over the years: hanging



Prairie Travelers 4-H. Back row, l-r: Leader Ray N. Hauck, Scott Staudinger, Carmen Hauck, Connie Gjermundson, Nadine Staudinger, Shelly Hauck, Stacy Greenshields, Lisa Hueske, Leader Debbie Dressler, Leader Jim Staudinger. Front, kneeling, l-r: Leader Millie Hauck, Leader Maryann Hauck, Greg Myran, Renee Perhus, Donna Hueske, Doug Hauck, Shannon Hauck, Scott Perhus, Joey Fischer. Front, seated, l-r: Vicki Perhus, Brenda Thompson, Owen Myran, Justin Smith. Not pictured: Leader Bernie Staudinger, DeAnn Paulson, Tara Schumacher, Jim Hauck, Raquel Paulson and Tina Schumacher.



This was the Sue-Sew 4-H Club in 1973. L-R: LeeAnn Gallagher, Leader Sue Cheatley, Paula Hecker, Laurie Hoerner, Becky Rummel, Mary Jo Hammerschmidt, Jodi Kuntz, Lisa Forster, Becky Alpert, Eileen Forster, LouAnn Forster, Janeane Gallagher (hiding), Leader Diane Brost and Gigi Wilz.

votive lamp (1909-1912), \$125; flowers for the altar, \$1,119.34; missions, \$435; Hospital, \$2,977.40; Sisters and Clergy gifts, \$1,881.87; St. Mary's Grade and High School, \$10,954.98; St. Mary's Church, \$5,659.09; Social Center and kitchen, \$9,515.43; Abbey Scholarship Fund, \$1,389.75; miscellaneous donations, \$1,422.26; chairs for Social Center, \$500; entire floor for Social Center, \$1,200; this makes a grand total of \$37,180.12.

In addition to the above, much credit is due Mrs. Lena Kuhn for selling vanilla and spices for the last 29 years. Through her efforts the membership is able to serve the Parish and outlying communities more efficiently with supplies for the Social Center and kitchen, such as carts, trays, coffee makers, silverware, kettles, pitchers, dishes and countless other useful items. We all take pride in thus having served our church and community, and now join our efforts with the entire Parish in further achievements.

Within the last two years, the surviving charter members, namely Mrs. Steve Schnell and Mrs. Frances Zimmerman, have gone to their rest. Some of the past presidents still included in our membership are Mrs. Veronica Rixen, Mrs. Lena Kuhn, Mrs. Theresa Kaufman, Mrs. Mike Zent, Mrs. Leo Renner and Mrs. John Erdle, now presiding. Spiritual Directors who have guided us in the past are Fr. Clement Mengelkoch, chaplain of St. Luke's Hospital in

Crosby, ND; Fr. Claude Seeberger, pastor of Lefor and St. Stephen's parishes, and instructor at Dickinson Trinity School; Fr. Stephen Kranz, pastor of St. Anthony's Mission in Mandaree, ND. Our present Spiritual Director is Fr. Andrew Wolf, and under his guidance we hope to grow in number, but more important spiritually, for which purpose this organization was conceived.

Prairie Travelers 4-H Club of Dunn County

The club was organized in the fall of 1960. The first meeting was held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Hauck, Richardton. Twenty-six members joined from the Richardton, Taylor, Halliday and Marshall area.

The leaders for the club: Dorothy Hauck—12 years, first local leader; William Hauck—two years; Mrs. Leo Hauck—four years; Kenneth Hauck—two years; Mrs. John Berger—two years; Casper Haag—one year; Adam Hauck—three years; Mrs. Albert Myran—two years; Mrs. Adam Hauck—19 years; Mrs. Paul Hauck—one year; Melvin Kitzan—three years; Mrs. Melvin Kitzan—one year; Norman Myran—four years; Mrs. Ray Sigl—two years; Mrs. Ingvald Paulson—four years; Mrs. Norman Kruchenberg—three years; Mrs. Keith Perhus—three years; Dale Hauck—12 years; Mr. and

Mrs. James Staudinger—five years; Mrs. Russ Dressler—five years; Mr. and Mrs. Ray Hauck—two years.

Mrs. Adam Hauck and Dale Hauck each served several years as president of the Dunn County 4-H Council. Most of the 4-H members were of these families. The year 1968-1969 shows the largest enrollment of 34 members. The club has ranked most outstanding in the country many years. Eight members went to the National Land Judging Contest in Oklahoma. Several went to 4-H Congress in Chicago. Many outstanding awards, ribbons, trophies, trips and achievements have been awarded to this club. They have won awards in land judging, livestock judging and home economics judging.

Present leaders are Millie Hauck, Jim Staudinger, Bernie Staudinger, Debbie Dressler, MaryAnn Hauck and Ray Hauck. Roll call of members for 1982-1983 shows Connie Gjermundson, Carmen Hauck, DeAnn Paulson, Shelly Hauck, Nadine Staudinger, Lisa Hueske, Stacey Greenshields, Tina Schumacher, Audrey Staudinger, Donna Hueske, Raquel Paulson, Tera Schumacher, Renae Perhus, Brenda Thompson, Doug Hauck, Shannon Hauck, Scott Perhus, Jeff Hueske, Scott Staudinger, Greg Myran, Owen Myran, Vicki Perhus, Joey Fisher and Justin Smith.

Sue-Sew 4-H Club

The Sue-Sew 4-H Club of Richardton



Peaceful Valley Homemakers, back, l-r: (Mrs.) Matt Baseflug, Clarence Hueske, Albert Neidhardt, Kermit Perhus, David Perhus, Arnold Hueske. Front, l-r: (Mrs.) Casper Haag, Adam Hauck, Melvin Kitzan, Jim Staudinger, Paul Hauck and Ken Hueske.



Same club, a "couple" years ago. Top, l-r: Leota Baseflug, Francis Dressler, Madella Kruckenberg, Olga Jacobs, Leota Perhus, Irene Haag, Catherine Hueske. Front, l-r: Millie Hauck and Rose Hueske.

County road No. 10, about three quarters of a mile west of Richardton, numerous accidents had occurred due to lack of proper traffic signs. It was our belief that with the aid of our County Commissioners and the Highway Department we could accomplish a change. There are now two STOP signs at the intersection: a STOP AHEAD sign rightly placed on Highway 8 and TRAIL BLAZERS set up to direct travelers to I-94. To our knowledge, there has not been an accident in that area since. We are proud to have been of service to our neighbors and fellow citizens.

During the 30 years we were affiliated with the Extension Service all the ladies at some time or another, held officer positions in our organization, as well as some Stark-Billings Council offices.

In 1973 only eight members remained in the club to help celebrate our 25th Anniversary, with Rosemary Renner the lone charter member. This dwindling of membership was an issue of much uneasiness and skepticism within the club for the next five years. No prospective members were in the neighborhood, and the project lessons seemed repetitious to a now more mature group of ladies. After long and careful consideration we decided to discontinue our affiliation with the Extension Service in 1978 and continue on as a social or independent organization. We will always appreciate the help and guidance of the County and State

Program personnel, and hope to feel free to solicit their assistance in the future.

We now busy ourselves with some of the things previously learned. In 1981 we made our first quilt of painted flowers which was raffled off and won by Mrs. Matilda Steier's granddaughter. Presently we have completed a flower garden quilt and are selling chances on it for the Centennial. Some of the ladies are also making rugs, crocheting afghans and doing other forms of art. And so the learning process goes on, in hopes that each on-going generation of homemakers can say with pride, "I believe it is my duty as a homemaker, to do all things in such a way, that I will contribute to a better way of living."—Club Creed.

Peaceful Valley Homemakers

Peaceful Valley Homemakers Club of Marshall, ND, maintains that their club is one of the oldest clubs in Dunn County, having been organized in July of 1937 by Mrs. Art Bierig, the mother of Mrs. Albert Neidhardt.

There were 15 members at the time. The club has functioned continually since, but there have been many changes in membership throughout the years. Today they boast a membership of 13 with two charter members.

Mrs. David Perhus is president; Mrs.

Kermit Perhus, vice-president; Mrs. Casper Haag, secretary; Mrs. Arnold Hueske, treasurer; while other members are Mrs. Math Baseflug, Mrs. Adam Hauck, Mrs. Paul Hauck, Mrs. Clarence Hueske, Mrs. Kenneth Hueske, Mrs. Lemore Greenshields, Mrs. Melvin Kitzan, Mrs. Albert Neidhardt and Mrs. Jim Staudinger.

As the years went by they had bake sales, worked for auction sales, made quilts and had a cookbook for their money raising projects. This all helped to pay their extension dues, ambulance fund and many other charities. The last few years they donated to the ReCreation Camp for retarded children at the Abbey.

The most important part of being a member of a Homemakers club is bringing friends and neighbors as well as individual families to a greater understanding of each other and has taught them how to live happily and helpfully together.

Springvale Homemakers

The original club started in 1948 with nine members: Mrs. Peter Baer, Mrs. Mike Boehm, Mrs. Phil Gartner, Mrs. Val Kuntz, Mrs. Frank Melchior, Mrs. Mary Wagner, Mrs. Herb Wagner, Mrs. lone Rixen and Mrs. C.F. Wahlers. These women called it the Springvale Club. Later, in the year 1962, Springvale



Richardton's Volunteer Fire Department began in 1906. Honorary members of that organization are, back, l-r: Philip Heier, F.B. Schwab, Fred Born Jr. Front, l-r: John C. Forster, Ray Glick, Ervin Forster.

dent; Joe Dick, vice-president; John Messmer, treasurer; and Mrs. Phil Gartner, secretary.

The center was open afternoons for craft work, cards and visiting. After several years an evening meal was served every Thursday for members.

As the Club's membership grew, it became evident they needed more space. After much hard work, all volunteer, a new addition was added in 1979. This provided a very convenient kitchen, dining area and two new bathrooms and much needed storage space.

In the past year the original building was renovated, again with all volunteer help. The ceiling was lowered, insulation was added as well as new paneling and a new tile floor.

At the present time a noon meal is served twice a week. There is a health maintenance program once a month. Activities at the club are cards, pool, movies, bingo and a monthly birthday party.

Present officers are President Theresa Kaufman; First Vice-president John W. Schulz; Second Vice-president Oneta Mischel; Secretary Bertha Hunke; Treasurer Gen Maas; board members are Joe Link, Nick Schuld, Ray Messmer, Odessa Mischel and Leo Hauck.

Current membership is 135. Anyone 55 years and older is eligible to join.

Richardton Volunteer Fire Department

The Richardton Volunteer Fire Co. was organized in the fall of 1906 with mostly young, progressive, energetic businessmen, tradesmen and laborers, most of whom had come to Richardton from other states.

Among the early members were Ed Mottershead, real estate man; J.R. Bagginstoss, general store owner and operator; Charles H. Kaiser and R.P. Gress, heating and plumbing businessmen; Fred Born Sr., meat market owner; C. Grassebauer, who operated a refreshment place called "Blind"; George Brown of the Windsor Hotel; E. Dirkes, Northern Pacific Railway Co. track laborer; John Lunn, N.P. section foreman; John Forster, garage operator; C. Turk, watch repairman and shop owner; R.J. Fleck, the Grand Hotel operator; John Muggli, banker; John Pfeifer, blacksmith; and August Koesel, grain buyer.

All of the early members have passed away, but left a good impression and much advice for the future. The first engine was bought in 1907—a gasoline-fired Engine No. 2.

The first officers of the fire company were J.R. Bagginstoss, chief; Charles Kaiser, assistant chief, John Pfeifer, engineer. J.R. Bagginstoss held his

position for 21 years until he passed away in 1928.

Other chiefs of the Company were Frank Lindemann, five years; J.A. Forster, 12 years; Fred Born Jr. six years; John J. Mischel, 12 years; Ray Glick, 12 years; Charles F. Wilz now on his second year as the present chief.

In 1914 the Village of Richardton bought a portable pump on wheels equipped with a Waterous gasoline engine. This pump had to be moved either by a number of men pulling it or by hitching horses to it if available, as it could not be moved by its own power. This was a No. 6 Class B Fire Engine. Two hose carts were also provided by the Village and these had to be moved by men pulling them or behind horse drawn vehicles. Later they were pulled behind a truck. This equipment was stored in the Village Hall. This hall was located north of Jos. Kilzer and Sons garage, a two-story building, which was destroyed later by "the" fire in June, 1919.

The members of Richardton Fire Company took a great deal of interest in the work, attending meetings quite regularly and practicing fire-fighting work very diligently. They sent delegations to state meetings at different times. They had good success in fighting various fires and saved considerable property by such good work.

The fire of June, 1919, was the only one that got out of control for want of an adequate water supply, and also due to a



Volunteer Firemen in 1983. Back, l-r: Bill Grosz, Gerald Hoff, Harvey Baer, Julius Gaab Jr., Ray Glick, Wayne Wilmes, Larry Marcusen, Leon Krenzel, John Schulz, Fran Forster, R.D. Schulz, Clem Gaab, John Gaab. Seated, l-r: Ken Bleth, Julius Gaab, Charles Forster, Tom Voegele, Chief Chuck Wilz, Bill Forster, Marvin Hamann, Merle Hamann. Front, l-r: Roger Schwab, Dick Cheatley, Greg Wilz and Rodney Aman.

40-mile per hour southeast wind.

The N.P. Railroad Co. had furnished water during most of these years for fire fighting without charge to the Village or fire company. At this fire the old four-cylinder pumper burned up 45 gallons of gasoline and used three gallons of cylinder oil. Due to the 40-mile per hour southeast wind the fire got out of control and after two hours some 33 buildings were totally burned up! The Dickinson Fire Department with aid of an N.P. Railroad water car, helped save the rest of the town.

The city of Richardton in 1948 bought its fire department a new fire truck, which was delivered in April 1949; it was the most modern piece of equipment available at the time. It had a 300 gallon booster tank with booster reel, and the body carried about 2,000 feet of two and one-half inch hose, and a 500 gallon per minute pump. Since then the city has bought a 100 gallon per minute booster pump and a 500 gallon tank to be mounted on a trailer. With this additional equipment the department can make out-of-the-city limits calls.

The fire department has bought fog and foam nozzles, dry powder and CO₂ chemical fire extinguishers, and a resuscitator in partnership with the American Legion Ambulance Service.

The members of the Richardton Volunteer Fire Department have always been interested in the department and use all the modern means in combating

any fire they are called on to put out. The use of large amounts of water to put out the general run of fires is a thing of the past with the equipment that is now in use. The Fire Department of today is not the "Soak 'em and Wreck 'em" department of the past. Instead they have the property owner's welfare very much in mind when fighting fires.

The Thanksgiving dance had been put on by the membership as an annual affair, enjoyed very much by all, from the beginning of the organization until 1958.

In 1956 the department celebrated their Golden Anniversary. For five years, from 1954 through 1958, with the help of the business men of Richardton the fire department put on a fireworks display on the Fourth of July. Thousands of people have enjoyed these fine displays of fireworks.

In July, 1971, the department got another new fire truck with Bean apparatus and pumps, along with two one-inch side reels which produce 750 pounds of pressure. This truck has a 500 gallon water capacity with foam tank attached for gas and oil fires. This vehicle is also equipped with a five-kilowatt power plant and smoke extractors, as well as a two-way radio system.

Also in 1971 a 24 foot by 40 foot block building addition was built onto the north side of the old structure to house the fire truck and other fire-related

equipment.

In June, 1973, the City purchased a Chevrolet van for the department to be used as an equipment and rescue vehicle.

In September of 1974 the Richardton Rural Fire Department was organized. They put up a steel building in December of 1975, a 40 foot by 30 foot structure, to house their present equipment in the city limits. In November, 1975, they purchased a Ford F750 truck with a Bean 750 pound pressure pumper and 700 gallon tank. Later, in June, 1976, they purchased a ¼ ton Chevrolet 4 x 4 pickup with a 300 gallon tank and pumper. In 1981 they purchased a Dodge ¼ ton van with a 200 gallon tank and a 750 pound pressure pumper. (See special article on the Rural Fire Department.)

The officers for the Richardton Volunteer Fire Department at present are: Charles F. Wilz, chief; Kenny Bleth, assistant chief; Tom Voegele, president; Wellde Heinle, vice-president; Charles N. Forster, secretary-treasurer.

The members are as follows: Rodney Aman, Roger Schwab, Bill Grosz, Dick Cheatley, Bruce Stoelting, Leo Krenzel, Gerald Hoff, Harvey Baer, Wayne Wilmes, Arnold Kopp, Bud Schulz, Leo Miller, Clem Gaab, William Forster, Zeno Erdle, Francis Forster, John Gaab, Greg Wilz, Julius Gaab Jr., Don Schumann, Lawrence Jordan, Steve Wieser, Larry Marcusen, John Schulz



Rural Fire Department directors. Back, l-r: Merle Hamann, Alfred Goetz, Wayne Link, Ray Sigl, Adam Hauck, Tony Messmer, Joe Haag, Chief Chuck Wilz. Front, l-r: Melvin Kitzan, Marcel Melchior, Larry Messer-Secretary, Frank Melchior President, Tony Gaab and Rudy Erdle.

At right are the trucks of Richardton's Rural Fire Department. Leroy Schwartz, left, and Don Hauck pose in front of the rural department's station.



and Julius Gaab Sr.

Honorary members are Fred Born Jr., Charles Schmidt, Phillip Heier, John C. Forster, Frank Schwab, Ray Glick, D.W. Knudson and Oskar Diem.

Some of the deceased honorary members through the years were John A. Forster, Fred Born Sr., Andrew Sperle, Andrew Glick, Joe Helbling, John Muggli, Adam Weiler, Mike Godes, Dom Pech, Sabbie Mischel, Casper Pfeifer, Martin Lindemann and John Amann.

Congratulations and expressions of appreciation are in order to the Richardton Volunteer Fire Department for its 77 years of valuable service. May this Fire Department continue to serve us for many more years in the future.

Richardton Rural Fire District

The Richardton Rural Fire District was organized September 19, 1974. The district is 35 miles long and 13 miles wide at the widest part. It extends 18 miles south of Richardton and 17 miles north of Richardton. It covers 17 townships with board of directors made up from 15 townships. The first board of directors were as follows: President Donald Hauck, Vice-President Frank Melchior, Secretary-Treasurer Larry Messer, while Joe Link, Tony Messer, Alfred Goetz, Val Staudinger, Adam Hauck, Melvin Kitzan, Rudy Erdle,

Sheldon Fisher, Matt Feller, Tony Gaab, Leroy Schwartz and Harold Conlon made up the rest of the board.

Ray Glick, City Fire Chief at that time and also a construction foreman, lent immeasurable guidance and assistance in putting up the building and getting the organization on its feet. He became our first Rural Fire Chief and Frank Schwab was the Assistant Rural Fire Chief.

First order of business was the ways and means of acquiring finances through FmHA. After what seemed an interminable period of time the money was secured and things fell in place. Next a lot was bought from John and Oneta Mischel for the very nominal cost of \$1,800. John, a former fireman, realizing the need, did not seek to make a profit. The building was erected by Hammel Steel Building of Dickinson and completed in December, 1975. Donald and Adam Hauck traveled to Tipton, IN, in November of 1975 to drive the newly acquired fire truck back in a raging blizzard. It was a 1975 Ford truck with a 750 gallon fire fighting unit. Marvin Hamann, the faithful mechanic, spent endless hours ironing out problems.

On June 4, 1976, a new ¼ ton, 4-wheel drive Chevy pickup with a 300 gallon fire fighting unit arrived in Richardton. In 1981 they acquired a Dodge van with a 200 gallon fire fighting unit. The department is well equipped for fighting

fires in the district. They also have mutual aid agreements with the Halliday, Hebron, Mott and Taylor fire districts. In case of a severe fire the Richardton Department can get help from one of these districts or vice versa.

Ron Schwartz has been the attorney from inception. His assistance and legal guidance in helping to organize and operate will always be appreciated.

Larry Messer, the man behind the gun and Secretary-Treasurer since the beginning, is today, seven years later, still holding that position. His efforts are appreciated by all members.

The Richardton City Volunteer Firemen man the trucks and respond to all rural fires. They spend a lot of hours caring for the trucks and equipment. When the rural fire bell rings they respond to the call regardless of the time of day or night, whether at their jobs or at home with their families. They do an excellent job and without them the rural fire district could not operate.

At present our Board of Directors are as follows: President Frank Melchior, Vice President Matt Feller, Secretary-Treasurer Larry Messer, with Rudy Erdle, Tony Gaab, Joe Haag, Adam Hauck, Donald Hauck, Melvin Kitzan, Wayne Link, Marcel Melchior, Leroy Schwartz, Fred Guthmiller, Gary Goetz and Ben Messer as members of the board. Rural Fire Chief is Chuck Wilz and Assistant Chief is Merle Hamann.

Our Businesses



Clem Gaab, right, and son Keenan, run this family-owned business. Clem bought the Standard franchise from John Amann in 1970.

Bill's Interstate Exxon

Bill Forster started in the service station business in July, 1956, in the newly constructed Texaco station which is now Clem's Standard. In 1968 Texaco started construction on a new station by the I-94 exit #17. Bill moved to the new location in June, 1969.

In mid-1978 Texaco discontinued retail sales operations in a five-state area. The station then obtained an Exxon franchise along with many other Texaco stations.

Over the years the station has employed a number of local adults, high school and college students on a part time basis. Bill's four sons Terry, Julian, Mike and Kyle also worked in the business during their high school and college years.

Chuck's Electric

Chuck Schorsch and Joe J. Hammerschmidt Jr. purchased the electrical business from Joe Hammerschmidt Sr. in 1977, calling it D & C Electric. In 1980, Joe Jr. moved to Dickinson and Chuck took the business over himself. He employs Keith Baer and Gary Goetz.

Clem's Standard

Clem's Standard is owned and managed by Clemens A. Gaab, a native of Richardton.

The business features tuneups, tire repairs, oil changes, wheel alignments, and any repairs pertaining to a smooth running automobile. Clem has been a certified mechanic for 25 years.

The service station's fourteenth year of service will be on June 1, 1983. Since Clem began management in 1970, many changes have occurred, mainly the selling price of goods and services. For instance, gas sold for 39.9 cents a gallon in 1970.

Clem also maintains a 24-hour wrecker service for the area. He has braved many icy roads and severe weather for the sake of many stranded motorists. Through his wrecker service, he has dealt with appreciative people from practically all over the United States and Canada. Together with his sons, Keenan and Kelly, Clem maintains complete car care whether it be from wrecker service to service work in the shop.

Clem's Standard is also the receiving point for incoming and outgoing freight for Midwest Motor Express of Bismarck, ND. Clem is the drayman for Midwest, and makes daily deliveries of freight throughout Richardton.

Clem and his wife Rachel thoroughly enjoy being a part of the Richardton community, and especially enjoy and appreciate the many fine customers and friends made during 14 years of service at Clem's Standard.



Bill's Texaco, now Bill's Exxon, was at the old location from 1956-1969. The new station above is near the I-94 interchange.



Don's Super Valu

On July 18, 1972, Don and Gladys Rummel purchased the business of Beyer's Super Valu from Marjorie Beyer. The building was shared by Koesel's Store.

In 1974 Koesel's Dry Goods discontinued business, leaving one half of the building empty; this was leased by Don's, the dividing wall was removed, and the grocery store doubled its size.

In June of 1977, Don's purchased the building from the Koesel family and completely remodeled the inside. On December 10, 1977, fire destroyed the interior of the store.

In April of 1978 Don started building the present store on lots purchased from George Kilzer, east of the Jos. Kilzer and Sons building. Construction was completed and Don's opened for business August 9, 1978, with new fixtures and equipment.

Don and Gladys have six children: Leon, Karen, Cindy Jo, Sheila, Doug and Becky, who have all worked at the store.

Farmers Union Oil Company

The Richardton Farmers Union Oil Company was organized to meet the needs of farmers in the Richardton-Taylor area. It is a cooperative which is operated by a board of directors. The



Farmers Union Elevator in Richardton joined with area elevators to form Southwest Grain Cooperative in 1980. Grain is hauled to the large terminal near Gladstone and loaded on 52-unit train cars for shipment.



Koesel and Co. Store in this 1898 photo shows goods stacked to the ceiling. Koesel lost this building in the "big" fire in 1919.

promotion of competitive business in our town.

The Richardton Business Association's 1982-1983 brochure included these businesses: Abbey Press, Ash Coulee Pottery, Avon (Shirley Hoffmeyer), Bill's Interstate Exxon, Born's Market, Cenex, Chuck's Electric, Chuck's Radio & TV, Clem's Standard, Country Drug Store, Dave's Plumbing, Don's Super Valu, Draeb Law Office, Elkhorn Bar, Fettig's Custom Meats, First American Bank of Richardton, First American Insurance Agency, Flowers by Grace, Frank's Barber Shop, Frederick's Trucking, Frontier Bar, Hoff Machine & Weld, Joe Laduke Real Estate, Inc. (Doris Hoff), Kene's Ltd, Jos. Kilzer & Sons, Inc., Knudson Appraisal Service, Layon Land Company (Agent Vic Frederick), Minuteman Furniture Striping, Mischel Lumber, M/I Ceramics, Modern Woodcraft, Nature's Way Health Foods, Norby's Swinger Service, Petrina's London Pantry, Ponderosa Bar and Steak House, Ray-Bern Motel, Renner Implement, Richardton Farm Equipment, Richardton Hardware Hank, Richardton Manufacturing Company, Richardton Medical Clinic, Richardton Merchant, Richardton Southwest Grain Cooperative, George Sanders Chevrolet, Schwab Oil Company, Schwartz Law Firm, Schwartzman Trucking, Spike's Cabinet Shop, State Farm Insurance, Stockie's Electric, Sun Valley Farms, Tom's Body Shop, Village Hair Design, Wrangler Restaurant, and Young Insurance Agency.

Richardton Farmers Union Elevator Co.

The Richardton Farmers Union Elevator Co. was incorporated on January 3, 1937. The original members were John F. Zimmerman, Jacob Huthmacher, Aquilinus Gress, J.J. Forster and R.F. Fleck. The first directors' meeting of record was held March 3, 1939.

The new company purchased the elevator and seed house from the Richardton Milling Co. on June 5, 1939, for \$12,000. The first manager was W.A. Fraase, with Paul Stieg as assistant. The first elected board was Nick Scharosch, Joseph Pech, Jacob Huthmacher, John Haas, Ray Willows and Walter Hamann.

On August 20, 1948, the entire plant was destroyed by fire and on September 21, 1948, the stockholders decided to rebuild. A site was leased north of the railroad track. The new elevator was in operation the following spring.

Needing additional storage, the elevator at Antelope was purchased in 1953. In 1955 it was moved to Richardton and set up as an annex to the main house. In 1957 more storage space was needed and a new annex was built. At that time the plant contained 40 bins with a total capacity of 129,000 bushels. And in 1959 there was a feed warehouse added to the west of the elevator.

In 1960 there was a roller mill installed for feed rolling. In 1966 they built a

fertilizer plant with a capacity of 540 ton. In 1974 they put up equipment for handling bulk fertilizer, and two six-ton fertilizer spreaders were bought. In 1975 a sieve mill was purchased for cleaning oats. In 1977 a protein tester was purchased for protein tests on grain. In 1979 a fire alarm and hot bearing detector was installed that is hooked up with the fire department.

In 1979 the elevator put up four steel bins at 80,000 bushels for more storage of grain. This gives the elevator a total capacity of 205,000 bushels. In 1980 there was a consolidation of eight area elevators to build a subterminal elevator at rural Gladstone for loading 52-car unit trains. On May 1, 1982, the Farmers Union Elevator became the Southwest Grain Coop Richardton Station.

Business has prospered through the years, a credit to loyal patrons for their service and patronage.

The Richardton Merchant

The Richardton Merchant has been a part of the Richardton community for 15 years with the first *Merchant* "coming off the press" in March, 1968. At the present time 950 copies are being mailed at the Richardton Post Office to each boxholder in the communities of Richardton, Taylor and Marshall and to the rural patrons of Lefor, Halliday, Dodge and Hebron.

**CONGRATULATIONS
RICHARDTON COMMUNITY
FIRST AMERICAN BANK
OF RICHARDTON**



Farmers State Bank
1917-1983



First American Bank
1983-

Board of Directors



Fred Born, Chairman



Fred Koesel



Ronald Schwarz



Anthony Mosamer



Francis Forster

Bank Employees



Francis Forster, President



John Phillips, Vice-president



R. W. Weisenberger, Asst. Vice-pres.



Geri Baer, Cashier



Colleen Miller, Exec. Sec.



Mary Boyer, Proof



Stan Saylor, Insurance



Lavonne Schmidt, Teller



Joy Krizan, Teller



Sally Bartz, Teller

We are proud to have played a role in the history of our community since 1917



Left to right: Arlie Price, bookkeeper; Russ Rebel, partsman; Allan Frederick, mechanic; Jeff Kuntz, mechanic; Paul Hauck, setup and service; Walter Goetz, setup and service; Jeffrey Hauck, setup and service; Armin Treiber, setup and service; Glen Hochhalter, owner; Jack Zent, mechanic; Joe Frederick, truck driver; Jerry Frederick, mechanic; Wally Wald, owner; Brad Wood, salesman; Chuck Forster, owner; Merle Hamann, shop foreman.



Richardton Farm Equipment

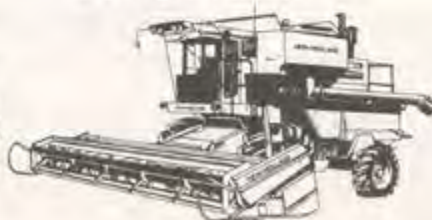
Richardton Farm Equipment was started in October, 1957, by John Erdle and Ralph Messer as a John Deere dealership. At that time the dealership had two employees—John and Ralph. As the years passed John and Ralph added other lines. The New Holland line was added in 1959. Dual was added shortly thereafter. In the 1970s the firm added Farm Hand and Wil-Rich.

John Erdle and Ralph Messer sold the dealership on July 1, 1977, and the new ownership continued the same lines of machinery and equipment. In 1979 a 7,200 square foot addition was added to the existing service area and brought the total working area to approximately 20,000 square feet. Through the years the dealership has been known for its outstanding parts and customer service on equipment. In 1981 Versatile equipment was added.

The dealership today employs 12 people. The company is presently owned by Charles Forster, Glen Hochhalter and Wally Wald. Richardton Farm Equipment Inc. has sold and serviced farm equipment in the surrounding nine counties and we thank the farmers in this area for their support.



SPERRY-NEW HOLLAND



VERSATILE







The John Flink Family. Back, l-r: John, George, Frank, Sebastian, Casper, Mary, sister-in-law Mrs. Sebastian Flink, and Rose, wife of Casper. Front, l-r: Father John Flink holding daughter Rosie, Ray, Lee, Mother Rosie, Ann and Julius.



Lee and Katherine (Hauck) Flink on their 50th Wedding Anniversary with their children.

seven years before the parents could get their American citizenship papers and could own their homestead.

Eleven children joined the two older children, Beata and Casper, who were born in Germany. The eleven children were: Sebastian, Kate, George, John, Mary, Anna, Frank, Lee, Ray, Julius and Rose.

The parents moved to the town of Richardton in 1924, leaving the farming to their sons. Following a great drought, they were forced off the farm and journeyed to the west coast of the United States to find a new home.

Several family members are still living: Kate, Mrs. S. Braunbeck, Miles City, MT; John, Portland, OR; Anna, Mrs. J. Scheeler, Seattle, WA; Lee, Tacoma, WA; Ray, Renton, WA; and Rose, Mrs. F. Volk, Tacoma, WA.

The following is part of the memories of a grandson, William, son of Casper Flink: "We lived on a farm which adjoined my grandfather's land. (My grandfather farmed a section and a half.) I remember the old sod house. It had three windows and seemed pretty big. At the time it was used as a coal shed—coal being mined from nearby places, Jake Forster's and Herman Breum's.

"One summer Mr. Wall's barn burned. It was in 1925 or 1926 and we were threshing at the time. The men rushed to help but could not get near because of

the great heat. Two or three horses were lost.

"I remember when Joe Braulick bought his big Avery tractor. It was a monster and could pull a 13-bottom plow. You could scarcely see it move. What a great day!"

John Flink's house still stands north of town. It is owned now by Mr. Renner.

Lee L. Flink

Lee L. Flink, born 1906 in Richardton, married Katherine Hauck, who was born in Bodo, Alberta, Canada, and died in 1981. Their children were:

Richard, born in 1931, married Doris Chamberlain, born in 1933. Their children were a daughter Virginia and sons Larry and John.

Frank, born in 1932, married Frances Parson, born in 1936. Their children were a son Michael, a daughter Mona, and a son Peter.

Kenneth Lee, born in 1939, married Lois Remington, born in 1939. They have a daughter Janet and a son Gregory.

Kathleen Joy, born in 1945, married Jim Leach, born in 1942. They have three sons: James, Dauen and David.

There are four great-grandchildren.

The Lee L. Flink family moved from North Dakota wheat farming country to Tacoma, WA, where Lee became an operator hoisting engineer. In 1954 they

purchased a dairy farm in Buckley, WA, where Lee also worked in city maintenance until 1972 when he retired. They bought a home in Buckley where Lee is presently residing.

Adam & Agatha Forster

Adam Forster was born in Richardton in May, 1896, and Agatha (Schaaf) Forster was born in Glen Ullin, ND, in May of 1901. They were married in October, 1919, at Glen Ullin. After settling in Richardton, Adam worked in Born's Meat Market and had a vulcanizing shop for a few years. Then the Forsters farmed for about five years on what is now James Forster's farm. In about 1929 they moved back to Richardton, where Adam operated the Texaco service station for nearly 13 years.

With the war, the family split up and Adam and Agatha moved to Mandan, ND, where he started a career with the Northern Pacific Railroad. After two years, they moved to settle in Spokane, WA, where he continued with the Northern Pacific Railroad until retiring in 1962.

Their six children were born in Richardton. Barney (1921) and wife Marie have seven children; Merwyn (1924) and wife Jean have three children; Joyce (1936) and husband Barrie Baird have eight children; and Dorine (1931) and husband Mike Micholson reside in Spokane. Alban



The Adam and Agatha Forster Family, l-r: Dorine, Alban, Agatha, Barney, Joyce, Adam, Ione and Merwyn, taken in 1946.



Adam and Anna Forster in their garden in 1940. They are parents of Raymond Forster and Veronica Rixen who both still live in Richardton.

(1926) and wife Iris have one son and reside in Los Angeles, CA. Ione (1929) and husband Ray Montgomery have seven children and reside in LaLuz, NM.

Adam passed away in August of 1975. Agatha is 82 years old, has 26 grand children and 24 great-grandchildren. The "Traveling Grandma" still resides in Spokane, WA.

Adam Forster Sr.

Adam Forster Sr. came to America in 1890 with his parents Jacob Forster and Eva Friesz and family. Adam was born in the village of Sulz, Beresan Colony, Russia, on January 15, 1869. This was a farming area and top soil was said to be about three feet deep. They came directly to Richardton.

Anna Hellman came to America in the spring of 1891 with her parents John Hellman and Magdalena Geiger and family. Anna was born in the village of Karlsruhe, Russia, July 16, 1873.

Adam's forefathers emigrated from Hexheim Gernersheim/Rheinpflaz, Germany, to Russia. Adam's great-grandfather, also named Adam, was a pioneer settler.

Anna's forefathers emigrated from Morlheim Gernersheim/Rheinpflaz, Germany; they arrived in Russia on August 15, 1809.

Adam and Anna met here in Richardton and were married in a school house, now known as the Leo Mischel farm home

south of Richardton on November 18, 1891, by Father Joseph Perrault of Mandan. They lived with Adam's parents for seven years on the present Susie Gartner farm. They then bought land about ten miles northwest of Richardton, the Ole Olson place, near the Paul Hoff and Peter Hoerner farms. Here they lived in a sod house with four children. They dug several wells by hand but found very little water. They hauled drinking water with a stone boat from the John Simonsen farm. The nearby creek furnished water for the stock. Dan Ehlis, father of Sebastian Ehlis, worked for Adam on the farm.

In 1906 they sold the farm and bought the George Bauer house in Richardton, located south of Tom's Body Shop. They also bought one-half interest in the livery barn from Valentine Bleth, and in 1907 they bought the other half interest from Jacob Reiter. The livery barn was located where the present Hardware Hank store now stands.

Sons Ferd, John and Adam along with Mike Eheresman, helped Adam in caring for horses for farmers who brought produce from the north and south before the branch railroads came in. Many farmers slept in the hay loft overnight but they were forewarned that there was no smoking allowed. The livery service consisted of transporting passengers by horse and buggy or sleigh to neighboring towns. Livery stables were doing a brisk business before the coming of the Model-T and the Red

Trail, predecessor of U.S. 10 and I-94.

South of the livery barn was a cafe operated by a bachelor Charlie Young. Mother Anna baked bread and did the laundry for the cafe. South of the cafe, where the City Hall stands today, was a saloon operated by Bleth and Reiter, and later by Reiter and Forster. They dissolved the partnership when Reiter took the saloon and Forster the livery barn. In 1914 Adam traded the barn to Adam Zentner for Zentner's farm where Jim Forster now lives. Adam then operated the farm with his sons and daughters until he sold the farm to his son Nick (Jim's father) in 1952.

Adam and Anna had a family of 11 children: Ferd, John, Adam, Veronica Rixen, Nick, Eva Dixon, Valentine, Marie Woehle, Anton (who died of diphtheria in 1918), Hilda Brower and Raymond.

Still living are all the daughters and Raymond.

Adam and Anna lived in Richardton until their deaths, Adam on September 28, 1955, at age 86, and Anna on February 5, 1972, at 98.

Bill Forster

Bill and Della Forster attended schools at Richardton and Bill enlisted in the U.S. Army for 18 months. After his discharge he had the Richardton Dray Line for a short time. He drove truck for the Kuhn Truck Line and later was



Ferd and Emilia Forster

employed by Johnny's Appliance. He took over the Texaco station in 1956 and has been in the service station business since then.

Della (Melchior) Forster was employed with Northwestern Bell Telephone Co. in Dickinson until her marriage to Bill on September 29, 1952. They lived above the K.C. club for one year, then above Chuck's Bar for one year before buying the J.E. Giedt home. They built their present home in 1970. Della has been employed by London Pantry Foods, Inc. since 1981.

Bill and Della have four sons and one daughter. Terry graduated from UND with a degree in accounting and is employed by the Martin Marietta Corp. at the Vandenberg Air Force Base as a lease and capital planner, living in Santa Maria, CA.

Julian graduated from NDSU and also received an associate degree in nursing from DSC. He recently completed his studies toward his Masters degree in Business Administration at NDSU. He and his wife Geri (Filipi) Forster, also a registered nurse, live in Colorado Springs, CO.

Mike, upon completion of high school, enlisted in the U.S. Army and is stationed at Ft. Jackson, Columbia, SC, where he is employed as a registered Nuclear Medicine Technician at the Moncrief Army Hospital. He and his wife Bonnie (Schatz) Forster have two daughters and one son.



Ferd Forster Family in 1968. Back, l-r: Alice, Floyd, Ferd Jr., Larry, Elmer, Richard, Agnes; center, Norma and Patricia; seated, l-r: Erhardt (Bud), Mother Emilia, Margaret, Sr. Olivia.

Kyle is currently attending UND studying computer science and business.

Eileen, valedictorian of her 1983 graduating class at Richardton High School, has enrolled at UND for the 1983-1984 term. She plans to study accounting and computer science.

Ferdinand Forster

Ferdinand Forster, eldest son of Adam and Anna (Heilmann) Forster, German-Russian pioneers who came to America from southern Russia in 1891, married Florentine Mischel of Richardton on November 17, 1914. One daughter Agnes was born to them on December 27, 1916. The well-known influenza epidemic claimed Florentine as one of its numerous victims on November 8, 1918.

Ferdinand then married Emilia Renner, also a German-Russian pioneer daughter, on March 3, 1919; she had come to this country with her parents at the age of 16 in late June, 1911, and to Richardton on July 2, 1911.

For a little while the family lived on what is now the James Forster farm northeast of Richardton, on the Kaufman farm a bit further northeast, and on a homestead north of Richardton, at each place for a short time; in February 1927, they bought the Thomas Seitz farm ten miles northeast of Richardton. They retired to Richardton in October 1951; Elmer, the oldest son, bought the farm in 1960. Ferdinand died on January 13, 1958;

Emilia lives in Richardton to the present day.

The family is as follows:

Agnes, born on December 27, 1916, married Joseph Abraham on December 6, 1962, lives in Madison, SD.

Alice, born on December 26, 1919, married Joachim Schantz on February 28, 1946, lives in Glen Ullin, ND.

Elsie, born on December 23, 1920, died on March 8, 1921.

Elmer, born on February 2, 1922, married Margaret Gormas on February 2, 1981, lives on the home farm northeast of Richardton.

Loretta, born on May 10, 1924, is now Sister Olivia at St. Benedict's Convent, St. Joseph, MN.

Ferd R., born on June 3, 1925, married Isabelle Erhardt on June 4, 1951, lives near Halliday.

Floyd, born on August 21, 1926, married Retta Reynolds on March 19, 1946, lives in Puyallup, WA.

Richard, born on July 12, 1929, married Joy Keller on April 4, 1956, lives in Richardton.

Patrick, born on March 16, 1928, died on March 24, 1928.

Lawrence, born on March 4, 1931, married Sally Doll on September 12, 1955, lives near New Salem, ND.

Norma, born on September 8, 1932,



Fran Forster Family: Lavina and Fran standing; l-r: Perry, Pam, Patrice and Patrick.

married Allen Chadwick on February 19, 1955, lives in Delano, MN.

Patricia, born on January 13, 1934, married Raymond Holupchinski on October 20, 1956, lives in St. Paul, MN.

Erhardt (Bud), born on January 8, 1936, married Judith Moore on July 15, 1961, lives in Coon Rapids, MN.

Margaret, born on February 2, 1938, married Gerald Colbert on September 17, 1960, lives in Tempe, AZ.

Francis Forster

Francis Forster and Lavina Braun were married on July 30, 1957, at St. Mary's Church in Richardton. Lavina is the daughter of Martin and Frances (Helfrich) Braun and Francis the son of John and Elizabeth (Brittner) Forster.

Francis started his banking career at the Farmers State Bank of Richardton in 1954 and was elected president of the bank in 1973. Before joining the bank, he served four years in the U.S. Navy during the Korean conflict. After completing one year of radio and electronics school in San Diego, CA, his tour of duty as a communications technician was served in Yokohama and Tokyo, Japan and Naha, Okinawa.

The Forsters have two sons and two daughters. When their first child Patrick was born, the family spent an unexpected Christmas vacation in the Richardton Hospital. Francis was the first to arrive



The Frank Fisher and John Stading families having a picnic at the Heart River south of Antelope in 1921.

at the hospital on a Sunday morning with an appendix attack. Lavina, the expectant mother, entered the hospital that night and their first child was born the next morning.

Patrick, a 1982 graduate of Dickinson State College with a computer science and accounting major, is now working in Bismarck, ND, as a computer programmer. Pamela, a 1983 graduate of Dickinson State College, has a music major and German language minor and is looking forward to her first teaching assignment. Perry will be a junior and Patrice a sophomore at Richardton High School.

The Forsters at one time or another were involved in most all civic and school organizations in Richardton. An enthusiastic backer of recreational activities in the community, Francis is in his tenth year on the Park Board and served many years on the swimming pool committee prior to the pool being managed by the park district.

Fred L. Forster

Fred L. Forster was born in 1931 to Bill and Eleanor (Hoerner) Forster. He lived in the Richardton area while he was growing up. Later, he joined the National Guard. After serving in the Guard, he came back home and in 1954 he married Gladys Gillenberg, daughter of Henry and Caroline Gillenberg of Taylor, ND.

Fred and Gladys lived on a farm north

of Richardton and in 1972 bought the Adam Forster house in Richardton. They had six children: Nancy (Mrs. Richard Anderson) of Priest River, ID; Curtis, Dickinson; Charlotte, Richardton; Donald, Jeffrey and Sydney, all of Dickinson.

Fred passed away in 1977. In 1979 Gladys married Jake Haider and now lives south of Belfield, ND.

Jacob Forster

Jacob Forster (1842-1911), his wife Eva Friesz (1845-1921) and their eight children came to Richardton in 1890 from Sulz, South Russia.

They bought a farm from Hellman south of Richardton, the farm where Susie Gartner now lives. At first they lived in a small shack and later built a house and other buildings of stone.

In 1903 they moved into Richardton and built a brick house south of St. Mary's Church. Jacob was a close friend of Bishop Vincent Wehrle and in 1909 he built the chapel still standing in St. Mary's Cemetery. Jacob, Eva and four of their children with their spouses are buried in the chapel.

Jacob and Eva had these eight children: Dominick (1866-1895): In 1890 he married Matilda Emmil; they had three sons. Adam (1869-1955): In 1891 he married Anna Hellman (1873-1972); they had eleven children. Susanna (1871-1954): In 1890 she married



John A. and Elizabeth Forster

Ferdinand Mischel (1871-1944); they had nine children. Marian (1873-1901): She married Anton Armbrust (1876-1956); they had five children. Jacob (1876-1949): In 1899 he married Marian Klug (1880-1942); they had twelve children. Anton (1878-1901): He was kicked by a horse and died of the injuries. Margaret (1881-1949): In 1898 she married Joseph Renner; they had eight children. Joseph (1885-1943): In 1907 he married Ottilia Baer (1886-1955); they had eight children.

John A. Forster

John A. Forster was born in Richardton on April 20, 1894. He opened a bicycle shop in Richardton in his teens, then owned and operated Forster Motor Company until his retirement. He was married to Elizabeth Brittner on July 5, 1915. Elizabeth was born October 5, 1894.

Nine children were born to them.

Ervin married Dorothy Fischer (deceased) and has two children. Irene married Adolph Walth (deceased) and has five children. Lorraine married M.C. Porter and has two sons. Phyllis married Geo. Rinker (deceased) and has two sons. Grace married Norman Kearns and has one son. John married Maggie Amann and has four children. Billy married Della Melchior and has five children. Francis married Lavina Braun and has four children. Florence married John Campagna and has three

children.

There are 28 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren. John Forster died August 10, 1967, and Elizabeth died June 23, 1976.

John C. Forster

John C. and Magdalen (Maggie) Forster, both natives of Richardton, were married on May 31, 1948.

Prior to that time, after attending school at St. Mary's and Assumption Abbey, John had joined the Navy in 1944 and served in the Pacific theater, on the USS Kensington as a ship fitter. After his discharge, he worked with his father John A. at Forster Motor Co., and also as part time clerk at the Richardton Post Office. In 1952 he started car body work, and Forster Motor Company became Forster Body Shop. When his father retired in 1962 he purchased the shop and maintained his job at the Post Office. The shop was sold to Tom Voegele in 1976, and in 1978 John was appointed as Postmaster, serving in that capacity at this time.

Maggie was raised on a farm north of Richardton and graduated from St. Mary's Grade and High School. She worked as a clerk at the post office until after her marriage when she retired to raise their family.

They have four children: Gerald, living in Colorado Springs, CO, and father of their two grandchildren; Vicki Lizius,



John C. Forster Family. Standing, l-r: Jerry, John, Maggie. Seated, l-r: Colleen, Vicki, Jeff.

living in Casa Grande, AZ; Colleen Pfeifer, living in Savage, MT; and Jeffrey, attending State School of Science at Wahpeton, ND.

Both John and Maggie have been involved in religious and civic programs for the betterment of the community. John served on the original school board of Richardton Public School, and also was a member of the original Swimming Pool Committee, and played a large part in the endeavor to make both of them a success. He also served on the Richardton Park District.

Joseph Forster

Joseph Forster (1885-1943) came to Richardton with his parents Jacob Forster and Eva (Friesz) Forster from South Russia in 1890. They lived on a farm south of Richardton.

In 1907 he married Ottilia Baer (1886-1955). She had come to the Richardton area with her parents Stanislaus Baer (1857-1935) and Katherine Ruff Baer (1863-1933). Joseph and Ottilia lived on a farm northwest of Richardton.

They had eight children as follows: Elizabeth (born 1908): In 1929 she married Marcus Zimmerman; they have six children and live in Richardton. Frank (born 1909): In 1935 he married Teresa Kappel; they have seven children and live in Gladstone, ND. Julius (born 1912): He lives in Spokane, WA. Kathleen (born 1914): In 1938 she



The Lawrence and Sally (Doll) Forster family.

married Herbert Lindell; they have two children and live in Wichita, KS. Edward was born in 1916 and died in 1944. Lyla (born 1920): In 1942 she married Burnell Schulz; they had nine children and she lives in Dickinson, ND. Thomas (born 1922): In 1952 he married Marcella Millam; they have four children and live in Wichita, KS. Virgil (born 1927): In 1962 he married Gloria Graf; they have one child and live in Anaconda, MT.

Lawrence Forster

Lawrence was born March 4, 1931, to Ferdinand and Emelia (Renner) Forster and lived nine miles northeast of Richardton. He has 11 brothers and sisters and he is the seventh oldest in the family. He attended school there and served in the Army during the Korean War. He married Celestine (Sally) Doll daughter of John and Margaret (Dinius) Doll at Richardton on September 12, 1955. She was born December 23, 1935, 18 miles northwest of New Salem. She was delivered by her grandma Doll who was a midwife for all the relatives and neighbors. She is the second youngest of ten children. In 1945 she moved to Richardton with her parents and her three sisters. She attended grade school and graduated from St. Mary's High School in Richardton.

They moved to Seattle, WA, right after they were married. Here Lawrence worked as a carpenter and Sally as a secretary. The oldest daughter Melinda

was born on October 22, 1956. They moved back to the home place in Richardton in August of 1957 where Cynthia was born on August 7, 1958, and Pamela was born on February 26, 1960. When Pamela was six weeks old the family moved to New Salem on a farm nine miles northeast of New Salem where they operate a Grade A dairy farm and raise registered Red Angus. Here four more children were born to Lawrence and Sally and they were Kenneth, Daniel, Wade and Lori Jo. They were all born at Bismarck, ND.

Melinda graduated from New Salem High School in 1974 and from North Dakota State University with a Bachelor Degree in Home Economics. She is now a drapery consultant at Herbergers Department Store in Bismarck. She currently is engaged to Joe Flath and plans to get married April 22, 1983. He resides on his farm north of Garrison and is a mechanic at Coal Creek Generating Plant.

Cynthia graduated from New Salem High School in 1977 and from Trinity School of Nursing in Minot. She married Paul Brandt and lives two miles east of New Salem where they own and operate a dairy farm. Cynthia works at the Bismarck Hospital.

Pamela graduated from New Salem High School in 1978 and attended Valley City State College for one year and Minot State College where she earned a Secretarial Degree. She married Lyle



Nick and Johanna Forster on their 25th Wedding Anniversary in 1980.

Boehm and they reside six miles west of Mandan. They are employed by BECO of New Salem.

Kenneth was born November 1, 1961, and graduated from New Salem High School in 1980. He attended BJC and earned a Farm & Ranch Management Degree. He owns and operates his father's home place in Richardton and is also in the dairy operation with his father.

Daniel was born January 4, 1963, and graduated from New Salem High School in 1981. The family was saddened by his sudden death on June 15, 1981, from an apparent heart attack on the family farm.

Wade was born July 23, 1964, and graduated from New Salem High School in 1982. He plans to attend BJC and get a degree in Farm & Ranch Management. He also is in the dairy operation with his father.

Lori Jo was born March 4, 1968, and is attending New Salem High School.

Nick Forster

Nick Forster (1900-1953), son of Adam and Anna Forster, married Johanna Schantz, daughter of Joachim and Eugenia (Gustin) Schantz, in 1925. After marriage they bought his Dad's farm located nine miles northeast of Richardton. Nick's farm was diversified; he raised sheep, corn, wheat and feed grain. He also drove the school bus.



Raymond Forster Family in 1980.

After Nick passed away Johanna and James, their oldest son, kept the farm going.

Nick and Johanna had ten children; Rose (Mrs. Arnold Hueske); James; Lucille (Mrs. Albin Beggar); Germaine, (Mrs. Randy Cole); Rita (Mrs. Robert Gress); Anita (Mrs. Larry Kunda); Glenn; Joan (Mrs. Roger Zimmerman); Charles; Lillian (Mrs. Robert Hunke).

Nick passed away in 1953 at a young age of 53. Johanna passed away 20 years later.

Raymond Forster

Raymond Forster, son of Adam Forster and Anna Hellmann, was born in Richardton July 26, 1915. His baptismal sponsors were Peter Patkowski and Mary Turk. He received his education at St. Mary's Grade School and Assumption Abbey School. He worked for his brother Adam A. Forster's Texaco service station and also for his father on the farm. After high school in 1934 he worked at Born's Meat Market about eight years at different intervals. In 1938 he drove the Texaco gas delivery truck for Pete Burger.

On February 3, 1941, Raymond and Ellen Olafson were married at St. Mary's Church by Father Peter Fehrenbach.

Ellen Olafson was born at Halliday, ND, October 27, 1915. Her parents were Alf Olafson and Wilhelmina Bing,

pioneers who had come from Norway. Ellen graduated from Halliday High School in 1934. She then entered nurses training at Bismarck, worked for a short time in Duluth, MN and also for a time in a hospital in Wolf Point, MT. She came to Richardton in 1937 and worked as a nurse at St. Christopher's Hospital (the former John Klein Sr. house), owned and operated by Dr. Christ Dukart. Dr. Chris was an old time family practitioner who still made house calls and delivered some babies at their homes. (It was indeed a pleasure to work with Dr. Chris and his staff, and to see him coming down the road with his Model-A Ford coupe.)

After marriage they operated the Rixen rooming house (where Farmers State Bank is located). Rooms were going from \$5.50 to \$2, the bathroom was unique with its three doors, for while in use the traffic to the rooms stopped—you were either locked in, or were locked out.

The year 1942 was eventful for the Forsters when son Dale was born March 16. They also bought the Frank Freer house where they still live.

In August, 1942, Raymond was drafted, but instead enlisted in the Navy. After four weeks in boot training he was assigned to the battleship Nevada B.B. 36 on the west coast. He also served on the heavy cruiser Canberra C.A. 70, serving about a year on each during World War II. He sailed both the Atlantic and Pacific in task forces to



A bill from John A. Forster Auto Repair in 1917 for a Ford muffler—for \$2!!!

Europe, the Pacific Islands and the Aleutians. While Raymond was in the service, Ellen and Dale lived in Tacoma, WA, where Ellen had a sister and brother. During this time Ellen lost her sight due to detachment of the retina; this could not be remedied at that time. After Raymond was discharged they returned to Richardton in 1944 to make their home.

In March, 1946, Raymond was appointed as a rural mail carrier; he carried mail south of Richardton and Antelope for 28½ years. He retired from the route June, 1974.

Ellen and Raymond also have three daughters: Nancy Handelman, born August 18, 1945; Jeanne Black, born August 16, 1947; and Susan Rova, born August 1, 1952.

The children all received their basic education at St. Mary's and the Abbey, then went on to further their education and received their various degrees. None of the children settled in Richardton.

In raising their family of four, due to Ellen's handicap, they improvised in many ways. Raymond sometimes took two of the children on the route. Ellen's nurse's training helped in taking care of the babies. Old neighbors and the kids in the block will remember Ellen's three blasts on the basketball whistle, which meant for the Forster kids to come home. They still seem to hear the whistle and come home at least once a year.



Richard Forster Family, l-r: Joy, Lisa, Karla, Kurt, Mardell, Jayme, LouAnn, Mark and Richard.



Doreen and Robert Frankenhauser pictured above, with son Allan at upper right and daughter Lisa at the lower right.



Richard Forster

Richard is the son of Ferdinand and Emilia (Renner) Forster, the grandson of Adam and Anna (Hellman) Forster, and the great-grandson of Jacob and Eva (Friesz) Forster.

Richard was born to Emilia on July 12, 1929, on the farm. The doctor came out from town to deliver. He attended rural school and graduated from Assumption Abbey in 1947. While still in high school he started working at Born's Market. After graduation he served his time in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. When he returned he again went to work at Born's Market where he remained until he and his wife Joy purchased Chuck's Bar in November, 1981.

Richard has been active in civic affairs: he held a school board office for 12 years, served as a city board member for 12 years, and was an ambulance driver and bookkeeper for 25 years.

Richard was employed at Born's during the time of the "explosion" in August, 1961. There was a gas leak into the basement and it was ignited by a spark from the cooler motor. After spending six weeks in St. Joseph's Hospital in Dickinson, he returned home with casts on both legs. After a brief period of recuperation the men from town would come to get him and drive him downtown so he would not lose touch with local activities. He was in a wheelchair that the Legion had loaned to him.

He married Joy Ann Keller on April 4, 1956. Joy arrived in Richardton in September, 1955, to be employed at the Richardton Hospital. She graduated from high school at New Salem in 1952 and graduated from St. Joseph's Hospital as a Licensed Practical Nurse in 1955. Joy has been employed by the hospital as a part time worker since she came to Richardton.

She has been an active member of the St. Mary's Choir, American Legion Auxiliary and an ambulance attendant and driver.

Richard and Joy are the parents of seven children: Mark, born January 21, 1957; Kurt, born September 23, 1958; Karla, born September 20, 1959; Mardell, born November 25, 1960; Jayme and Lisa, born December 11, 1963; LouAnn, born November 4, 1967.

Mark is married to Crystal Flagel; they are the parents of two children, Shana and Ried, and currently live in Mandan. Mark attended BJC in 1976-1977. He is a member of the National Guard MPs in Mandan.

Kurt served four years in the United States Coast Guard and is now attending Wahpeton State School of Science.

Karla is a graduate of DSC with a major in elementary education and a minor in physical education.

Mardell attended Wahpeton SSS and is currently employed at St. Joseph's Hospital in Dickinson as a secretary for

the CARES Project.

Jayme is currently working at Jos. Kilzer and Sons of Richardton.

Lisa is attending Minot State College.

LouAnn is at home and is a sophomore at Richardton High School.

Together Joy and Richard own and operate the Elk Horn Bar, formerly Chuck's Bar. They purchased the bar from Chuck and Louise Schmidt, who had owned and operated it for 45 years, on November 1, 1981.

Robert Frankenhauser

Robert was born and raised in Richardton. After graduating from high school he spent a short time in Spokane, WA. He returned to Richardton and was employed by the North Dakota State Highway Department. He served two years in the U.S. Army Paratroopers during the Korean Conflict and after his discharge returned to Richardton. On May 17, 1957, he married Doreen Karlin at St. Ann's Catholic Church in Hebron. They made their home in Richardton with Robert continuing his job with the highway department and Doreen with the Hebron Herald. Two children were born to them: a son Allan and a daughter Lisa.

Allan was born on July 11, 1958, during Richardton's 75th Jubilee celebration.



Lee and Frances (Derzabp) Senn

After living a few years in Texas they decided to return to Rochus' home town of Richardton. Here they bought the Dickbener farm five and one-half miles south of Richardton.

They had four children: Ann (Mrs. Gerald Kopp) died in 1978 and Gerald died in 1980 in California.

Leo married Barbara Messer and lives in Richardton.

Erwin married Mildred Magelky and they live on the home farm.

Leona married Bob Lucy and lives in Las Vegas, NV.

Rochus died in 1933, leaving Frances with four small children. She remarried Lee Senn in 1935 and continued to farm until 1947 when they retired in Richardton. They had one child Diana, who married Hal Thieben and lives in Las Vegas, NV.

There are 14 Hoff grandchildren, four Senn grandchildren, and 37 great-grandchildren.

Francis Hoffmeyer

Francis Hoffmeyer was born on May 2, 1919, at Tower City, ND, to Frank and Margaret Hoffmeyer, who still reside at Valley City. Francis, better known as Sonny, attended schools at Tower City. After farming for a few years Sonny decided to work on road construction. He was employed for Schultz and Lindsey Construction is an operating



Shirley (Schatz), Dean and Francis (Sonny) Hoffmeyer

foreman, building most of the interstate hiways across the state of North Dakota. The I-94 project in 1963 brought him to the Richardton area.

He married Shirley Schatz, daughter of Pauline and Emanuel Schatz on March 23, 1965, in Beeville, TX. Shirley was born in Richardton on June 14, 1943, and lived on a farm south of town until she moved with her mother to a farm south of Elgin in 1957. Shirley attended school in Elgin, then helped manage the Schatz Recreation until 1964 when she moved to Bismarck.

After their marriage Sonny and Shirley lived in Bismarck until 1966 when they purchased the Henry Olson property in Richardton. Two sons were born to them, Dean, on July 13, 1966, and Daryl, on August 18, 1972 (deceased on August 21, 1972).

Sonny worked on construction in various Southern states, doing a good deal of traveling, always returning to Richardton to spend the winter here. Sonny retired from the construction business in 1981. Now he still does hobby woodworking and grows bedding plants in his green house.

Shirley started selling Avon door to door in 1974 and still enjoys doing so.

Dean is a student at Richardton High School and is employed part-time at Sanders Chevrolet.

Sonny has the following children from a previous marriage: Linda, Billings, MT;

Phillip, Lubbock, TX; Barry, Littleton, CO; Morris, Westminster, CO; Mark, Denver, CO; twins Pamela, Colorado Springs, CO, and Paula, Houston, TX; and Laurel, Colorado Springs, CO.

Sonny and Shirley purchased their present home from Harvey and Pauline Pecht.

Arnold Hueske

Arnold Hueske, son of Fred and Reake Hueske, and Rose Forster, daughter of Nick and Johanna Forster, were married in 1948.

Arnold served in the U.S. Army in 1944-1945 as an M.P. in the maintenance Division in California. He also was a school board member in the Germania School District. Before marriage Rose taught school in Pleasant Valley School District at Stanton, ND, and also a year in the Germania School District.

After marriage they purchased the homestead of his father where they are living at the present time.

Arnold and Rose have five children. Kenneth, a farmer/rancher north of Richardton, married Kathleen Messer, daughter of John and Katie Messer. They have four children: Jeff, Lisa, Donna and Dustin.

Sharon, owner/operator of a beauty shop in Staplehurst, NE, married Bill Benedict, of Omaha, NE, and they have two sons, Shaun and Jeremy.



An official portrait of the Richardton city "Fathers"... OOPS!, "Fathers and Mothers." Back, l-r: Leo Krenzel, George Sanders, Mayor John Schulz, C.J. Renner. Front, Auditor Peter P. Hecker and Dolores (Mischel) Amann. Mrs. Amann is the fourth generation of her family to serve on the governing board of Richardton. She is also the first woman elected to a seat on the commission since its inception in 1906.

Jane, a kindergarten teacher in the Taylor-Richardton School District, married Ed Thompson of Cavalier, ND, and they have three daughters: Brenda, Connie and Dawn.

Bruce, a 1976 graduate, passed away in December, 1980.

Darla, a freshman at Moorhead State University, is studying art and business.

Clarence Hueske

Clarence Hueske, son of Fred Hueske, was born in 1915 in Dunn County, ND. He married Catherine Bogers of Halliday in 1947. They are living on the homestead of his uncle Fred Zaske north of Richardton.

They have three sons: Lenny, Larry and David. The boys all graduated from Richardton High School.

Lenny lives in Richardton and works for Hoff Machine and Weld. Larry and David both work and live in Dickinson.

Henry Pathmann
Dealer in Grain and
Farm Machinery

Richardton, - N. D.

(From 1914 Stark County Atlas)

Fred Hueske

At age nine Fred Hueske came with his parents Carl and Gusta Hueske and his sisters Bertha, Minnie, Emma and his brothers Carl and August from West Germany to Renville County, MN. When he was twelve he was hired out as a farm hand, working for several farmers in the Renville community for \$.75 a day. In 1905 his family came to Richardton and stayed on a farm where Tony Sattler now lives. In the spring they moved to Dunn Center. Fred filed on a homestead 14 miles north of Richardton in Dunn County. He farmed with a walking plow and a team of horses to break the sod and seeded by scattering the seeds by hand. In 1910 he married Freidreka (Reake) Heineman. They both worked hard to get ahead. They built a barn, enlarged the shack into a home and increased the livestock and bought more land. He also did custom well drilling.

When the drought and Depression came in the 1930s, Fred lost his farm. They moved to the former Frank Kelly farm, which was about two miles away, and lived there for four years. He rented his former farm again for several years and then bought it back. They raised sheep and pigs, and milked cows and raised poultry.

Fred was one of those who helped build St. John's Lutheran Church at Richardton. He served in various capacities within the church. He also

served as secretary and treasurer of Germania School District, and as a school board member.

Their family consisted of five children.

Ruth (born 1911) married Clinton Perhus, a farmer-rancher who lived 20 miles north of Taylor on the Knife River. Their children are Beverly, married to Clarence Elkin of Bowman; Dorothy, married to Jim Morris, Billings, MT; Jim, married to Linda Anderson. Jim and Linda live on the home place.

Ervin (1913-1974) lived on a farm south of Dunn Center.

Clarence (born 1915) married Catherine Bogers. They live on the former Fred Zaske farm. They have three boys: Leonard, Larry and David.

Florence, born January 12, 1918, died a tragic death at 18 months of age when she pulled the plug of the washing machine full of boiling water upon herself.

Arnold (born 1924) served in the U.S. Army Infantry in 1944-1945 as a MP in California. In 1948 Arnold married Rose Forster. They have five children: Kenneth married to Kathy Messer, Sharon married to Bill Benedict, Jane married to Ed Thompson, Bruce (deceased 1980), and Darla, a student at Moorhead State University. Arnold and Rose live on the old homestead north of Richardton.



Ken and Kathy (Messer) Hueske Family. Back, Kathy and Ken. Seated, l-r: Lisa, Donna, Dustin and Jeff.



Another "relic from the past" . . . John A. Gress' 1947 Ford coupe, his "courtin' car" parked in front of the Aquillius Gress farm home.

Mrs. Hueske passed away January 18, 1952, and Fred Hueske passed away March 30, 1976, at age 93.

Ken Hueske

Kenneth Hueske was born on December 23, 1948. He was the first of five children born to Arnold and Rose (Forster) Hueske of Richardton. He graduated from Richardton High School in 1967. While he was in school Ken was active in sports.

Kathleen Messer was born on April 4, 1949, the thirteenth of 14 children born to John A. and Catherine (Greff) Messer of Richardton. She also graduated from Richardton High School in 1967. During most of her high school years she worked at Johnny's Appliances or the Ranger Cafe.

Ken and Kathy were married on October 25, 1967. The first year of marriage they lived in a trailer house on his parents farm, after which they rented a house in Richardton. In 1969 they bought the Gion house and lived in it until 1971. During the time they lived in town Ken worked at Richardton Machine and Manufacturing and Kathy worked at the Ranger Cafe and Richardton Community Hospital part time.

In November of 1971 Ken and Kathy bought the John and Frances Haag farm north of Richardton. On this farm today they raise hogs, cattle and grain.

The Hueskes have four children. Jeff is 15 and Lisa is 14 and they are attending

Richardton High School. Donna—10, attends Taylor Grade School. Dustin is one and one-half years old.

Ken has been a director on the Richardton School Board for several years. Kathy is a member of several organizations in the area. The family enjoys farming and living in this community.

Robert Hunke

The story of the Hunke family in America began in April 1883 when Robert, his parents Heinrich and Elizabeth, his brother Max and sister Anna emigrated from Berlin, Germany.

Heinrich and his family homesteaded south of Richardton on land that is now part of the Loyd Rummel farm. The Hunke family remained on this homestead until the death of Heinrich in 1890.

In the same year as his father's death Robert Hunke became a citizen of the United States. In the ensuing seven or eight years Robert was employed in a variety of occupations, among them was a job under C.B. Richard, after whom the city of Richardton was named. Mr. Hunke was also a manager of the Richardton Land Improvement Company. Following this employment, he secured a homestead for himself, a quarter of land southwest of town on which Bernard now lives.

On November 22, 1899, Robert was

married to Anna Kuhn. She had been employed as housekeeper for the late Bishop Vincent Wehrle. Mr. and Mrs. Hunke became the parents of eight children, five of whom are still alive: Henry, Genevieve (Mrs. Ted Maas), and Bertha of Richardton, Ben of Taylor and Ann (Mrs. Fred Corkery) of Dickinson. Two children did not live beyond infancy and Alice died in 1939.

In 1912 Robert was appointed Postmaster of Richardton. In order to fulfill this appointment, he rented the farm out and bought a home in town. While in town he was active in community affairs, being a member of the Home Guard and an organizer and director of the Farmers State Bank for many years. He resigned as Postmaster in 1918 and moved back to the farm.

Being the farm was in the Taylor School District the children attended school there.

In 1937 they moved back to Richardton due to the poor health of both parents. Shortly after this move Mother Hunke passed away in November of 1937. Robert Hunke died in 1955.

Bertha Hunke

Bertha is a graduate of Taylor High School and the Christie Beauty School of Bismarck.

After being employed in Beauty Shops in Bismarck and Dickinson, her sister Ann and she opened the A & B Beauty Shop in Richardton in September, 1937.

Center, Huthmacher Family, back, l-r: Alex Hauck, Hilda, Kunie and Jacob; front, l-r: Bernetta and Elaine.



Left, Kunie (Rixen) and Jacob Huthmacher in front of their rooming house in Richardton. It stood where the bank parking lot sits today. For years it was home for Mr. and Mrs. Adolf Bonogofsky.



John and Olga Jacobs, long-time Marshall Store owners and post office employees.

in the basement of the old Farmers State Bank. The price of a shampoo and set at that time was \$5.50 and a permanent wave was \$3. In 1945 Ann married Fred Corkery at which time she moved to Dickinson and she and Bertha sold the shop.

From that time Bertha worked at various jobs, among them acting Postmaster for two and one-half years, six and one-half years at the hospital and three years for Doctor Hanewald here and in Dickinson. In September, 1961, Bertha opened B's Beauty Shop, again in the Farmers State Bank basement. She owned and operated this shop until September, 1975, when she sold the shop to Grace Kuntz. She worked for Grace until April, 1978, when she retired. At the present time she is involved with the Senior Citizens Club of which she is secretary.

Henry and Ben still farm near Taylor. Ann lives in Dickinson, Gen and Ted Maas are still living in Richardton and are semi-retired.

Robert Hunke

Lillian (Forster) Hunke graduated from St. Mary's School in 1957. She married Robert Hunke. Their three sons are: Keith, 19 years old, a student at NDSU in Fargo, ND; Michael, 12 years old; and Jon, eight years old.

Lillian is employed by Montana-Dakota Utilities Company in Bismarck as a consumers billing clerk.

Jacob Huthmacher

Jacob Huthmacher was born at Yankton, SD, February 27, 1891. He later moved to Venturia, SD, with his parents. While there he worked on the railroad as a fireman on a steam engine. In 1910 at the age of 19 he came to Richardton with his parents. His father bought the Siebley place north of Richardton. He farmed with his father and also took up a homestead.

On May 1, 1915, he married Kunie Rixen. Five children were born to them. The oldest was George, born March 1, 1917. He passed away at the age of 18.

Hildegard was born June 6, 1919. She married Alex J. Hauck in 1940; they are parents of seven children. They took over the farm after Jacob's retirement, and farmed the original homestead. Jacob and Kunie then moved to Richardton and purchased a dray line and operated it for many years. Kunie ran a rooming house until her death.

A daughter Otilia died at the age of six months.

On July 26, 1924, Bernetta was born. In 1947 she married Raymond Glick; they have three children.

The youngest daughter Elaine, born April 20, 1927, married Eugene Sperle. They are parents of six children and are living at Mt. Angel, OR, where he is employed as an agent for the S. P. Railway in Salem, OR.

Jacob died February 22, 1951, and Kunie on October 9, 1954.

John A. Jacobs

John Adam Jacobs was a native of Wisconsin, having been born near Stevens Point, August 20, 1881. He grew to manhood in this community. He attended a dairy school at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and worked for some time as a butter maker. In 1906 he decided to come to North Dakota. He worked near Beach for awhile, then came to Dunn County.

On September 20, 1911, he married Jennie Twist in Dickinson. She too was a native of Wisconsin. After their marriage they went back to Wisconsin and spent the winter there. They returned to North Dakota in the spring of 1912, joining the ranks of homesteaders at that time. He filed on a quarter section in section 24, township 142, range 93, 20 miles north of Hebron, but in Dunn County. Here they lived throughout their married life. During the summer of 1912 they lived for awhile in a tent until their house was built. This was real pioneering even as late as 1912. Mr. Jacobs farmed his quarter section and some additional land until 1939.

During their life here they experienced the usual trials of a family. Four children were born to them: Harlan, Lester, Leota and Bernadene. The four children attended Marshall School No. 2, which was about two miles away.



William Renner Family. Back, l-r: Pat, Rose, Bill, Pam, Eugene. Front, l-r: Joan, Doug, Mike, Wendy, Mary. (Eugene and Mary are the parents of Doug and Wendy.)

Manufacturing Co.

John is originally from Crary, ND, and Margaret (nee Burdick) from Devils Lake. On February 14, 1978, Crissy was born into the family.

John is past treasurer in the Richardton Lions and past president of Richardton Jaycees. Margaret is a member of the MOD Homemakers and the family attends St. Mary's Church.

Anthony Rixen

Anthony Rixen and Veronica Forster were married in St. Mary's Church in Richardton on February 11, 1918. They farmed six miles southeast of Richardton. Two sons were born, Leroy and Anthony Jr. "Bud." The family moved into Richardton in 1942.

Leroy and his wife Louise moved onto the farm. Anthony Sr. died August 7, 1949.

Anthony Jr. enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1942. In World War II he served for almost four years, was overseas over a year, was in four invasions, and returned home in 1946. In 1956 he moved to Richardton and operated Bud's Cafe until 1959. He sold the cafe and moved to Portland, OR, and worked for Smitzers Steel Corporation. In 1972 he moved to Mt. Calvary, WI, where he and his wife Virginia worked and still are working for the Villa Nursing Home.

Leroy and his wife Louise moved to

Dickinson in 1957. Louise taught in St. Joseph's School in Dickinson for 20 years. Leroy worked for the City of Dickinson in the water department from 1957 to 1968. From 1968 he worked for the Ivanhoe Inn until 1971. At the present time he is managing the St. Anthony Club of Dickinson.

Veronica still lives in Richardton. She has been a member of the Christian Mothers Society for 56 years, the American Legion Auxiliary for 37 years, the Royal Neighbors of America for 57 years and the Senior Citizens Club for 10 years.

Thomas F. Roll

Thomas F. Roll is the son of Frank and Anna (Meier) Roll of Dickinson. Tom comes from a family of four girls and two boys. Tom was born January 25, 1955, in Mott and lived on a farm until about the age of three, when they moved to Dickinson. Tom went to St. Wenceslaus Grade School and attended Trinity High School.

Judy (Binstock) Roll is the daughter of Paul and Ethel (Roeder) Binstock. Judy comes from a family of six girls and four boys. Judy was born January 17, 1954, in Dickinson. Judy grew up on a farm in the Scheffield area which is 18 miles southwest of Dickinson. She attended St. Pius Grade School. Judy attended her first year of High School at St. Mary's Academy of Richardton as a boarder. The end of that year St. Mary's High School closed so she continued the



Anthony and Veronica (Forster) Rixen, seated, with sons LeRoy and Anthony (Bud).

remaining years at St. Mary's High School of New England, where she graduated in 1973. After graduating she waitressed for about a year.

After Tom graduated in 1973 he started working for Burlington Northern Railroad and Husky Briquetting Plant. Tom worked full time for B.N. since 1974. He is presently working in Dickinson.

Tom and Judy got married at Queen of Peace Church on June 8, 1974.

They have three children: Stephanie, born August 19, 1974; Theresa, born July 25, 1976; and Audrey, born May 8, 1978.

The Roll family lived in Dickinson about a year and one-half before they moved to Richardton in February of 1977.

Two of the children attend St. Mary's Grade School. Judy is a member of St. Mary's Church Choir. She also does babysitting in their home since they only have one of their own at home.

Frank Rummel Jr.

The late Frank Rummel Jr., the son of Frank Rummel Sr. and Rosa Frankenhauser, married Margaret Gallagher, the daughter of the late Charles Gallagher and Charlotte Traumann.

They farmed five miles south of Richardton until retiring into Richardton in the 1950s.

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SPECIAL NOTE: Thousands of names appear in this publication and it has not been possible to include every one in the index. However, we've tried to include all surnames in the history section, all businesses and advertizers, and other names of people and places relevant to the history of Richardson.

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