

[NOTES: The author(s) of the following history of Farmer, SD is/are unknown. This first section of text appears to have been written around 1935. Other sections appear to be written at other times as noted. All notes in brackets by Jerry Gottsacker. Only minor formatting, spelling and punctuation changes have been made to the original text.]

HISTORY OF FARMER, SD

OUR TOWN FARMER

Approximately fifty-six years ago, the pioneers began to settle in this part of the country and began what is now the town of Farmer.

To provide the early settlers with provisions, James Dunn started the first store. The store that was later established was owned by Driacot Mably. A few years later the elevators were built and in 1886 the Omaha Railroad came - into existence. There was no depot at this time; the platform, which still remains, served as the depot.

In 1898 the lumber yard, blacksmith shop, a grocery store owned by Dominic Krier, and a hardware store owned by John Yost were the business places in Operation. At this time the lumber yard the blacksmith shop owned by Frank Brooks was combined.

The post office was established in 1892 and the Catholic Church was built the same year. The Methodist church was built in 1893.

Our town has progressed slowly but steadily during the past years bringing us to present, when we can view our town of 150 inhabitants with pride.

FARMER ELEVATOR COMPANY

The Farmers Elevator was organized in 1908 by a group of farmers from around this vicinity. It was built by George Smith and operated by C. D. Dunn. In 1910 it was sold to the Farmers Organized Company. George Roster was appointed Manager. In 1929 a feed grinder, which has proven to be a successful investment, was established. The average amount of grain handled yearly is 20,000 bushels.

Mr. Roster has been manager of this business for twenty-nine consecutive years. A large amount of grinding is done weekly.

METHODIST CHURCH

The Methodist Church was organized in 1893, and the charter granted April 29, 1893. The first trustees were I. J. White, W. J. Murray, A. J. Faylor, W. A. Jacobs and Charles Simons. Since that time twenty nine pastors have been assigned to carry on the work here, Rev. R. M. Walker being the present pastor. Although the membership is not large, much interest is being shown in the Church.

C.P. REHORST

Groceries- meats-Household Drugs-Notions

The present building of C. P. Rehorst's store was built in 1924 under the supervision of J.P. Zeihen. It was first operated as a combination drug and grocery store by Fred Krueger.

During the course of several years the management was transferred to A. J. Siberz. Mr. Siberz, due to unforeseen happenings was forced to close the store on October 6, 1931, however retaining his position late in the winter, Dec. 28, 1931.

Operation of the store was then transferred into the hands of C.P. Rehorst on Jan. 8, 1932, who is manager at the present time. The local post office was combined with the store on Aug. 1., 1937.

VOLZ SERVICE STATION

The garage now occupied by Mr. Volz was built by Joe Steilen in 1915. He sold the garage to Tom Fleck in 1916. The building then passed into the hands of the Farmer and Merchants State Bank. Nick Lahr took the building over and operated the business for a few months. Wm. Frohwein was the next proprietor. He operated the business for a number of years. The building was then bought by the Sherwood Petroleum Company when Francis Volz became the proprietor in November of 1937. He had formerly operated the Barnsdall Station.

John Yost Hardware

Oils-Grease- Coal

The first and only hardware store of Farmer began business January 10, 1898 being operated by John Yost who is the present proprietor. In 1909, Mr. Yost combined an implement business with his line of hardware. Mr. Yost has been the only proprietor of the present hardware store which gives him a record of forty-one consecutive years of business in Farmer.

[Handwritten note at this point in text: John Yost, born in Germany in 1867, came to American in 1876 and located in Iowa. In 1898, he moved to Dakota and married Maggie Kramers in 1899.]

E.S. TUGEL

All kinds of Produce

TRUCK AND STATION SERVICE

Take orders for Baby Chicks

The Cream Station business was started in Farmer by Mr. White about 1890. In 1907, Carl Peterson and Tom Fleck began individual business.

In 1914 Mr. J.P. Zeihen began buying cream. Mrs. McFadden took over this business in 1920.

Mr. E. S. Tugel began buying cream in 1925 and has been from that time on.

BARNSDALL SERVICE STATION

Les Countryman began business in Farmer with Barnsdall in 1931. He remained in business until July 1, 1932, when Francis Volz became the new attendant. Mr. Volz operated the business until Nov. 15, 1937 when Sib Haiar received proprietorship of the Barnsdall Service Station. Mr. Haiar is the present station attendant.

FARMER UNION ELEVATOR CO.

Farmers Union Elevator began business in Farmer in 1919. Mr. Dunn was the first manager of the elevator. He held this position for several years. B. J. Luken was the next manager. He held the position until a few years ago when Mr. Monell became the proprietor. The elevator has operated successfully for many years. At the present time there are 100 or more stockholders.

C.A. PETERSON - GENERAL MERCHANDISE

"FRIENDLY SERVICE"

The Store of Quality and Service, Dry Goods, Groceries, Shoes

The store that is now operated by Carl Peterson was erected in 1904 under the supervision of I.J. White. At that time the top of his building was used for a lodge hall. In 1907 Mr. Peterson purchased the building and has been proprietor of the store since that time.

RAILROADS

The railroad station was opened in Farmer 1898, about sixty-eight years after the first railroad was opened in the United States.

The passenger train service, up to January 1933, was such that a round trip could be made to Mitchell and to Sioux Falls. In 1934 a daily round trip to Sioux Falls was available. Due to the bus service, one passenger train has been taken off this line.

There has been several minor accidents and one serious accident in which a brakeman was killed.

The following men have held the position of depot agent: Hartwick, Vencil, Cook, Haily, and Mr. Mock, who has held the position as depot agent for twenty-six years.

FARMER TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

In 1890 Dominic Krier and John Fox operated a store where the former Koppert store stood; they had a small switch board on which they could switch a few town phones, one farm line and toll connection. In 1904 Shilling and Parker bought the business and operated the telephone line. Joh Holck and Harry Lindekugel bought the telephone. They moved it to the building where the Implement office was located south of the present Community Hall. John Holck and Albert Jacquart built the new garage, the office was moved to the garage. Peter Fuhrman bought the Telephone Exchange from Mr. Jacquart in 1922 and operated it in the garage until the garage

burned in 1924. He then purchased the building in which the present Telephone exchange is located. Francis Fuhrman purchased the exchange in 1926 and has been the operator of it to the present day.

CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Church was built in 1892. At first it was just a mission parish of Epiphany, taken care of by Rev. Lammer. In 1906 a parish was organized. Rev. Francis Stenzel then took charge followed by Rev. Charles Auer. In 1918 Rev. P.N. Sheier took charge. A temporary pastor Rev. Father Holer was in charge after Father Sheier. Last year Rev. H. P. Kolbeck took charge and is the present pastor.

EDGERTON SCHOOL HISTORY

Prior to 1916-1917 there were six schools in Edgerton township and all were under the supervision of one Board of Education. Some forty years ago school was held a few months in the fall and a few months in the spring. Often different teachers taught the two terms.

Gradually the school year lengthened to cover the regular nine-months term. With housing problems the Board, it was decided on March 7, 1916 to consolidate the six schools and build at Farmer. High School work was offered in the fall of 1916 and the first graduates were in the spring of 1911. You will note that in 1922 additional school ground was purchased and that four teachers were employed for high school work. In 1920 four teachers taught in the grades. In 1933 this number was reduced to three. One teacher, Lulu McGregor, taught in our school for a period of six years. Evangeline Hansmier, Mary Berther, Genevieve Lawler and Julia Haehner each have taught in our school for a five year period. Margaret Ladd was the first Home Economic teacher and E. T. Walseth the first Manual Training Teacher.

[This begins a new section—type style and other factors in the original indicate this section was completed at a much later time (after 1963) than the other sections.]

ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH of Farmer was called St. Peter and Paul Church. When a new church was built and dedicated in 1963 under the guidance of Father Fox, a new cornerstone was laid. Contents of the old cornerstone were reviewed and coins dated 1892, one each of quarters, dimes, nickles, and pennies were placed in the new cornerstone.

The first church building had been dedicated June 19th, 1892. The first resident priest was Father Lamesch. A Derwanderer newspaper (in German) was also found in the cornerstone. It was printed in St.Paul and contained an unusual item--a wedding had taken place on the grave of the bride's parents.

While the first church was being built, Mass was said at the Cummings house or, occasionally, on the platform of the train, at which time a traveling priest would offer mass for pioneer families.

Parishioners did most of the work on the church. Jake Schladweiler donated the bell and Joseph Altenhofen gave the lots for the church and day school.

St. Peter's Catholic day school was built during the tenancy of Father Auer in 1909. The first order of nuns sent to the school were Francisans from Milwaukee, then Benedictines from Yankton.

FARMER METHODIST CHURCH was organized in Farmer about 1888. A building was raised in 1893 at the corner of Main and First Streets, at a cost of \$1,400.00. In 1955, a building from Davis was added to the east side as a social hall and educational room. Ministers were usually shared with Fulton. Being a predominantly Catholic community, a few Methodist members kept the unit alive until 1970 when the group disbanded.

[This section appears to have been taken from a text about South Dakota. It appears to have been written about 1970.]

CHAPTER VI THE "F" TOWNS

FARMER

When Joseph Altenhofen saw the lush land spread out for miles, he thought it a farmer's paradise where they could produce good crops and live the good life.

The Chicago, St. Paul, Milwaukee and Omaha Railroad came through in 1887 and located a desirable place for a townsite near the creek. Mr. Altenhofen, with great enthusiasm for the country, said he would give five acres of right-of-way if they would locate on his land farther east. This was agreed upon. He also gave twenty acres for a townsite and suggested the new settlement be called Farmer.

A patent was issued to Joseph Altenhofen, June 30, 1886 for the NE¹/₄-17-103-57 (Edgerton Township). For a consideration of \$1.00, he deeded five acres to the railroad August 8, 1890.

Farmer townsite was surveyed March 1, 1892 by H. C. Greene for Joseph Altenhofen and platted March 15, 1892. South Farmer was surveyed by L. M. Stanton for Henry Utting and named Henry Otting Addition on September 24, 1901. The town was not incorporated until April 7, 1920.

Records show that another five acres of the Altenhofen land was deeded to the Right Reverend Martin Marty, R. C. Bishop of South Dakota, undoubtedly for the church and day school. The church was built in 1893. Father Auer helped build the church and he was then transferred to Dimock where he helped build their tall, spired church. Boarding school opened about 1908, with four sisters instructing some sixty children. Father Scheler of the church from 1917 until 1936, built a grotto on the grounds from beautiful stones of many varieties that he brought from the Black Hills of South Dakota.

At one time, the Flaming girls operated a millinery shop. Margaret Schladweiler, who had been in school in Milwaukee, came home and had a dressmaking shop for a year. She then returned to Wisconsin and became a nun.

C. G. Dunn operated the general store in Farmer until 1907 when he sold to Carl Peterson. Mr. Peterson purchased a complete new stock of merchandise and opened for business August 7, 1907. He was in business fifty-one years, up until the store burned the latter part of January, 1958. He discovered the fire when he closed up about 10:30 PM. As he went up the outside stairway to his apartment, he saw smoke coming from the roof. He was carrying a pail of coal for the upstairs heater and when he opened the door and saw the flames, he set the coal down and ran to the City Liquor store to sound the alarm. Fire departments came from Spencer, Mitchell, Emery and Alexandria, but the building and contents burned rapidly and fiercely. A landmark was gone.

The Reverend Father Stanley Grabowski, pastor of St. Peter's Catholic Church, fearing the church would burn, went into the church and removed all his vestments, altar cloths and

chalices and carried them to the parsonage. The church was across the street from the fire and was not harmed.

Mr. Peterson was unable to save anything. He came away from the ruins about 2:30 AM and all he had left was the clothes he was wearing, including a blue jacket, trousers and a wool cap on his head.

Joseph Altenhofen took up residence on his land in 1879. Five years later, his family was joined by his sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. John Schladweiler and the Jacob Schladweilers.

Jacob and Sophie Schladweiler lived on Main Street, near the hotel. People gathered at their place for Sunday ball games and most of the people stayed for supper. Apparently, she managed well to have that much food for such a crowd of people each week.

Food was hard to come by in those days. Mrs. John Schladwieler toasted her bread crusts until nearly black, crushed them, placed them in the coffee pot, added a bit of chicory and brewed it for coffee. Later, they roasted barley for coffee, and later they used a coffee mill to grind coffee beans. There were no cans of vacuum drip in those days.

Main Street is one block west of what is generally considered the main street. The Methodist church was on the corner of Main and First Streets. The Catholic Church fronts on Joe Avenue.

Dr. Rozelle practiced for a brief time on 1912, and Dr. Horne in about 1915. Art Rozelle, a son of the doctor, returned to Farmer for church services one Sunday in the summer of 1966.

The Jacquist Garage burned on a dance night. Twenty cars had been driven in out of the cold during the dance. Furley Hodge not only lost his car, but his dog and a week's supply of groceries. While the dance was in progress this cold winter night, gas leaked from one of the cars. After the dance, someone lighted a match to see whether or not he had a flat tire. All he could see was flames. The whole building lit up and was gone before men with their chemical fire engine and the use of two cisterns of water could stop the fiery blaze.

A Fire Underwriters Bureau Map of the town of Farmer, April, 1931, says that there is no organized fire department. They use a 60-gallon chemical fire engine, one hand-drawn, hand-operated fire pump, one hose cart, 300 feet of hose and two cisterns are available for fire purpose with a capacity of 300 barrels each. The streets are level and graded and electrically lighted. There is no police protection.

Businesses listed on this 1931 map are: Peterson's General Merchandise Store, with dwelling on the second floor; Auto garage with filling station, auto repair and dwelling in rear; Chivington Blacksmith across the tracks in south Farmer; John W. Tuthill Lumber Company; Zeihen Grocery and Confectionery; Municipal Liquor; Mock Cream and Produce Station; Hentges Machine Shed; Sausen Boarding and Lodging with private barn. The hotel on Main Street was called the Cataract Hotel. The livery barn was located south of the hotel. There was a depot; Furman Telephone Exchange; Farmers Co-operative Elevator.

Feed and Coal; Catholic Church; Methodist Church; Edgerton Consolidated School and Catholic Boarding School.

Ten or fifteen houses were moved from Farmer during the dust bowl years of the 1930's. A 1923 map from the same source shows two banks, the First National Bank and the Farmers and Merchants Bank; Krier Barber Shop and the Crawford Building for agricultural implements and two autos. There was a public hall and motion pictures; Dunn General Merchandise and Drugs; Julien Soft Drinks and Lunches; Jacquist Garage; Farmers Union Exchange Warehouse and Ice Co. and Simons Carpenter Shop, besides most of the aforementioned businesses of 1931.

From newspaper clippings: "Peter Volz came to Farmer in 1900 . at the age of 20 years. He married Katherine Roster in 1907. He owned and operated an elevator until it burned, was postmaster for the period 1940-1952 and was town clerk for many years. He died in December, 1957.

Mrs. Rosa Altenhofen, a resident of Hanson County since 1879, died September 6, 1937 at the age of 80 years. Pallbearers were Herman Haiar, John Yost, Henry Becker, John Koppert and Peter Volz."

Farmer news from the Fulton Advocate, December 12, 1907:

Jacob Lahr, born in Germany in 1870, came to America in 1887 and settled here. He rented a farm until he bought the livery stable in 1906. He had six good teams. He married Katie Schladweiler in 1897.

John Yost, born in Germany in 1867, came to America in 1876 and located in Iowa; in 1898, he moved to Dakota and married Maggie Kramer in 1891. He purchased \$50,000 worth of livestock that year and says "South Dakota is the best place in the world for he poor man, as well as the investor."

John Schladweiler, born in Wisconsin in 1859, came to Dakota territory in 1883 and bought a relinquishment. He served four years on the Township Board and ten years on the School Board. In 1904, he was elected to a four-year term as County Commissioner. His conduct as a public official earned him the title of "Honest John." Mr. Schladweiler married Josephine Gottsacker, who lived about 35 years longer than he did. In 1884 they were married in Wisconsin and set up housekeeping in Dakota Territory one and one half miles northwest of Farmer, before there was a town. They lived in Mitchell from 1917 to 1925, then they moved back to Farmer and Mr. Schladweiler died there the following year.

Mrs. Schladweiler was a charter member of St. Peter's Church and active in all church functions. She said that, as early pioneers, they saw good times and bad. They saw the vast prairie land transformed into fertile soil and good crops.

She attributed her longevity to the fact that she worked hard and ate the things she enjoyed eating. Onions and a slice of homemade bread were good.

When they left Wisconsin, they brought their cow, a sheep, a team of horses, a binder, and some personal items and their house. They framed the house in Wisconsin and brought it in the railroad car. The first home was a small one; one room with a bedroom attached.

She died at the age of 99 years. If she had lived another six months, she would have reached the century mark. Her nephew, Rev. Alphonse J. Schladweiler, Bishop of the New Ulm, Minnesota diocese, officiated at the Solemn Pontifical Requiem Mass.

Her brother-in-law, Joseph Altenhofen, was the founder of Farmer.

Farmer, in 1893, had a population of 100, three grain houses, two general stores, blacksmith shop, lumber yard and Catholic Church.

Farmer, in 1970, had a population of 63. There is no grocery store, but there is a post office in the old brick bank building; Herman's Liquor and Feed Store; St. Peter's social hall and St. Peter's Catholic Church. The elevators have burned. The last burned due to spontaneous combustion on a Sunday night when the people were having their fall bazaar in St. Peter's Hall across the street from the conflagration. The depot has long been gone.

Apparently, there was never a lawyer in town and no newspaper. The Modern Woodman Lodge was active for a few years.

Edgerton Consolidated School has become a part of Hanson County Independent No. 40 which includes schools from Alexandria and Fulton, sharing grades by extensive use of busses.

Farmer is following the pattern of all small towns; less population, deterioration of property, but a loyalty to the community people call home.