

GURLEY

Settlers began coming west as early as 1884, but the construction of the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy Railroad through the area in the 1900s was what established a town. Founded in 1913, it was named for the railroad superintendent, Fred R. Gurley, on land given by the Rihn, Ruhter, and Nelson families.

One of the first businesses was a lumber company run by S. J. Flora, who also built the first house in Gurley. At that time, the railroad station was actually three bunk cars — 1) the office; 2) storage for freight; 3) living quarters for the agent and his family. A depot was built in 1919.



Left: Gurley Lumber Company. The first child, Clara Flora, arrived in the lumber yard office where the manager and his wife were living awaiting the completion of their home.

Above: Gurley State Bank built in 1915.

The general store and post office were operated by F. W. Busse. His building also housed a pharmacy and doctor's office. Dr. Hart (the town's first doctor) also had the first telephone switchboard in Gurley. Later, Dr. Larson and Dr. Blackstone served the community. Christ Weyerts built a garage just to the west. The upstairs, used as a dance hall, would handle huge crowds. These buildings all burned in 1921.

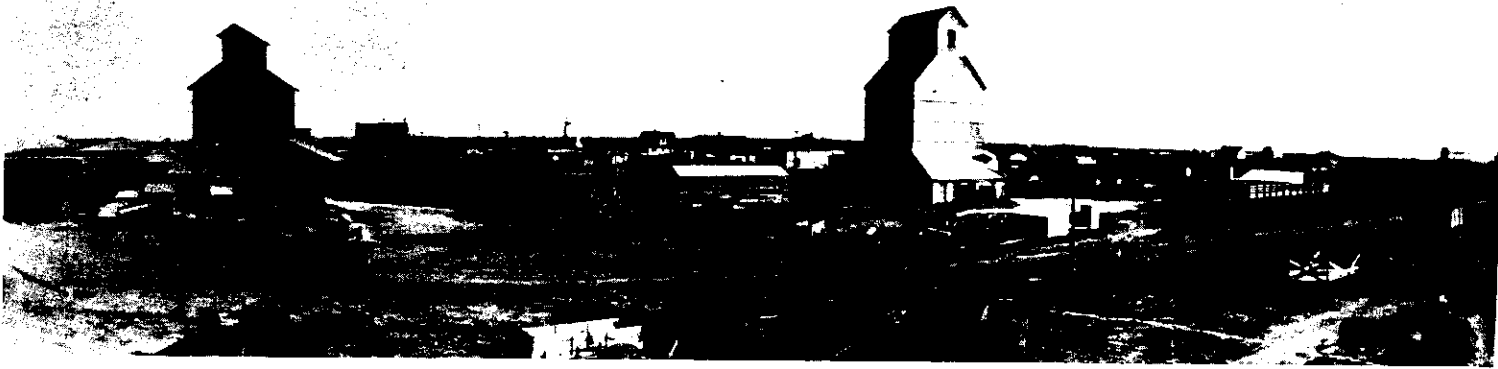
A grain elevator, first built in 1914, had a number of owners before it burned in 1941. The Co-op built an elevator in 1916 and eventually bought the other one out.

A fire department was organized in 1917 and consisted of a cart and 500 feet of hose. A firehouse and an 890 pound bell, used as an alarm, was added in 1920. In '28 Charles Gabriel gave his old Buick car which they converted to carry some water and equipment. Currently Gurley has 35 volunteer firemen, 23 rescue members and a full range of modern equipment.

Right: Looking south down Burlington railroad with Farmers Union Elevator on right.

Below: Gurley looking west toward depot, 1920.



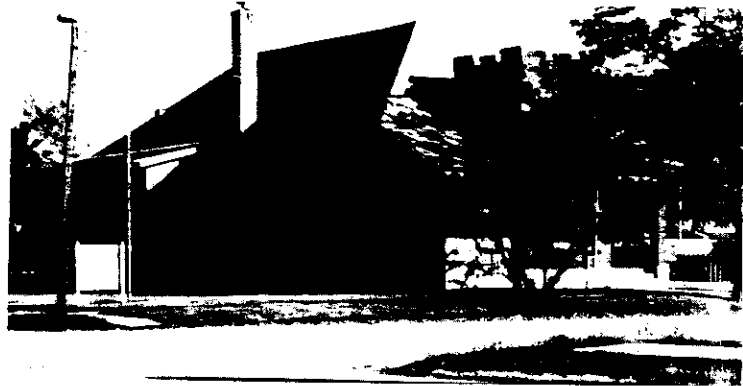


Above: "Grain day in Gurley" Taken in 1919.

Right: The remodeled Gurley Methodist church, built in 1922, now Gurley's Community Hall.

The first schoolhouse to be built in Gurley was in 1916. In 1925 a high school was built, and a gymnasium added in 1940. In the early 50s a new school was built on the east side of town. Faced with declining enrollments in the 70s, a study was made to determine the feasibility of a merger between Gurley and Dalton districts. The resulting school, named "Leyton," opened in 1979 with K-8 classes held in Gurley and high school at Dalton.

Gurley has had three churches over the years. Two are still



Above: New Gurley school, built 1952-3, presently the grade school for Leyton — a composite name for Gurley-Dalton.

Right: View of Gurley west of the railroad as it is in 1987.

active, Grace Lutheran and Salem Lutheran. Gurley's Methodist combined with Sidney's in the 1960s and the building is now used as a community hall.

The Egging Company, now employing many people, started in the "dirty thirties" when Ted Egging borrowed money to buy a welder so he could repair his machinery and some for his neighbors. During WW II, when it was impossible to buy new equipment or parts, the business branched out. Ted was installing diesel engines in gasoline powered tractors when Charles Bode asked him to modify a tractor cab to fit the one he owned. One





Left: Grace Lutheran Church built in 1916, enlarged and re-modeled in 1976.



Right: Salem Lutheran Church's present building. Their first church was dedicated in 1910.



The famous "Village In" at coffee time.

thing led to another and soon it was a full fledged corporation, designing and building not only tractor cabs, but ski lift equipment, beet harvesters, bale haulers, utility truck boxes, transformer brackets, custom-made light fixtures, tree harvesters, and parts for Caterpillar. The company is family owned, with Ted, John, and Mary Egging primary officers.

At one time Gurley had its own newspaper. For many years the town had a baseball team which provided much enjoyment for the community. Many businesses and buildings have undergone a variety of changes over the years. As the need for services diminished, other businesses were established in the available space. In 1977 when the town was in danger of losing its cafe, a

building was purchased and turned into a corporation with 24 people buying shares, an event that received national news coverage.

A new water tower was built in 1954, a pumphouse added in 1973, and a new well put down in 1983. A city park on the west side of the railroad is well maintained. It is a nice place for community gatherings and for children to play. Several new homes have been built in the west area.

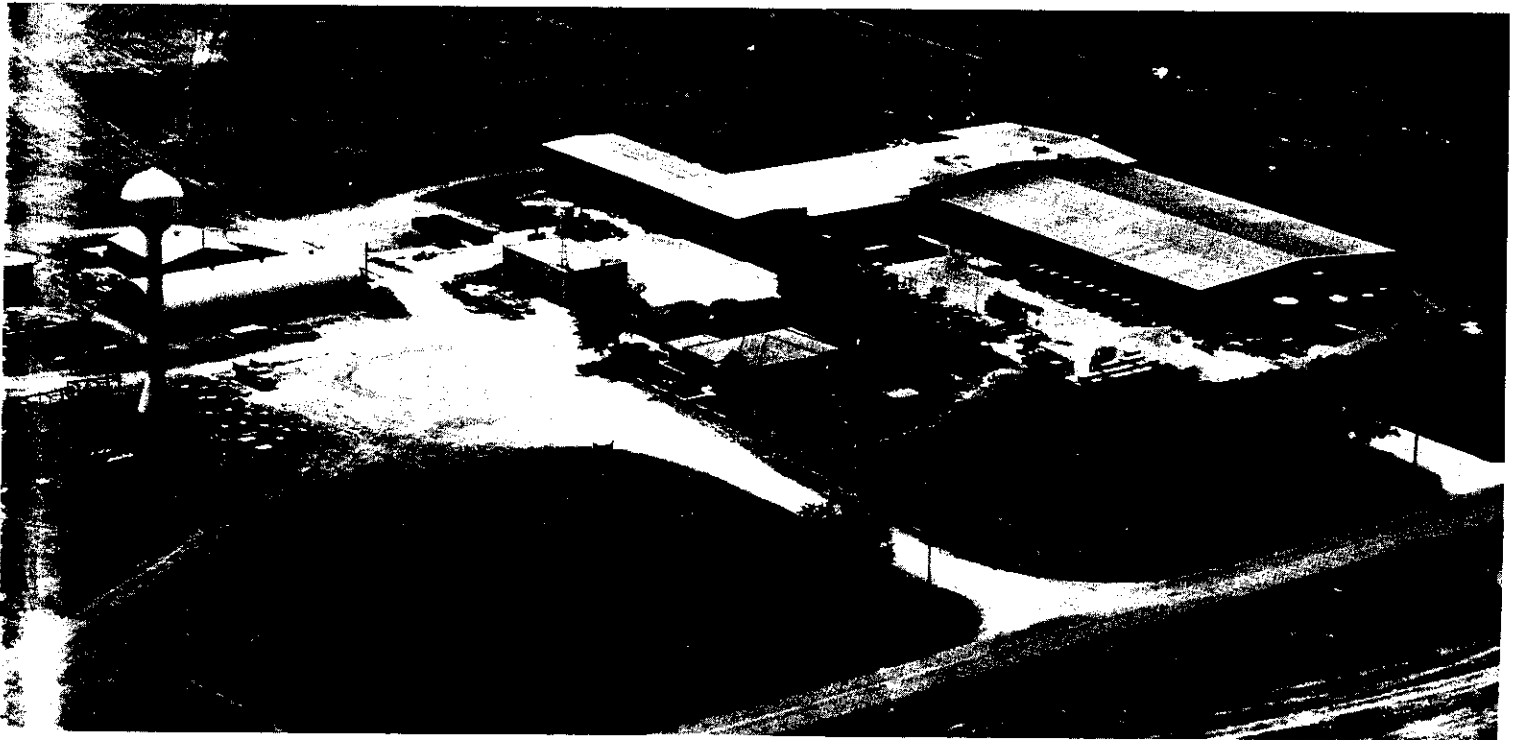
Gurley was designated as a Bicentennial community in 1976. A parade and celebration was held to commemorate our American heritage. The school alumni have a reunion every three years. A good crowd is always in attendance, and it is enjoyed by all.

There is a closeness and a friendliness in a small town that is not found in most urban areas. This is an added bonus for those of us who live in Gurley.

By Local coordinator: Betty Kurth, Box 14, Gurley, NE 69141

Compiled by: Eula McRoberts and Jana Mickler

The Egging Company started in Theo Egging's shop, now a family owned corporation, designs specialized equipment for many, including Caterpillar, building the prototype in the plant, and then manufacturing them for markets around the world. The plant has a sizable work-force and covers many acres.



LODGEPOLE

The town of Lodgepole recognizes three important days in her history. The town's founding in 1867, filing the plat in 1884, and its incorporation in 1901. The town has strong ties to railroading and farming.

The history of the town begins with the laying of the Union Pacific Railroad's track across the plains. It followed the Platte River across Nebraska and then went up Lodge Pole Creek valley into Wyoming. On July 7, 1867, the tracklayers reached a point



Left: Union Pacific Depot in Lodgepole, 1921, Dick Miller agent at freight cart.

Above: Looking north from Sheldon and Oberfender Street, 1909.



Above: Union Mercantile built by John R. Young in 1892 as "the Right Place," one of Western Nebraska's finest, at Sheldon and McBride Streets.

Right: The new U.P. Railroad park and band stand, 1908, taken from on top of their water tower looking south. On front street from left: W. Minshall residence, his ice house, Lew Debrunner's bar, Park Hotel, post office, Wm. Tate Real Estate, Barlow & Wyatt Dry Goods, Claude Moorehead residence on corner. In background are Harris and Johnson homes.



in western Nebraska where a work station was needed. It was marked out and named "Lodge Pole" after the creek. Many Lodgepole-buffs claim the creek got its name because the Indians cut the long, straight, spindly teepee poles from along its banks — thus Lodge Pole.

Prior to 1867, the nearest thing to a settlement was "Pole Creek No.2 Pony Express Station," believed to have been located at the north end of Phil Quinn's hay meadow.

For the first ten years, the town was entirely a railroad community, consisting of workers living in outfit cars, water and coal stations, a depot, and a detachment of U.S. soldiers stationed in an entrenchment to protect the railroad, its people, and their belongings from Indians. At that time the non-Indian population in that part of the country was confined to "ranches" along the Oregon and California trails which catered to the travelers, employees of the Overland Stage Company stations, plus the railroaders.

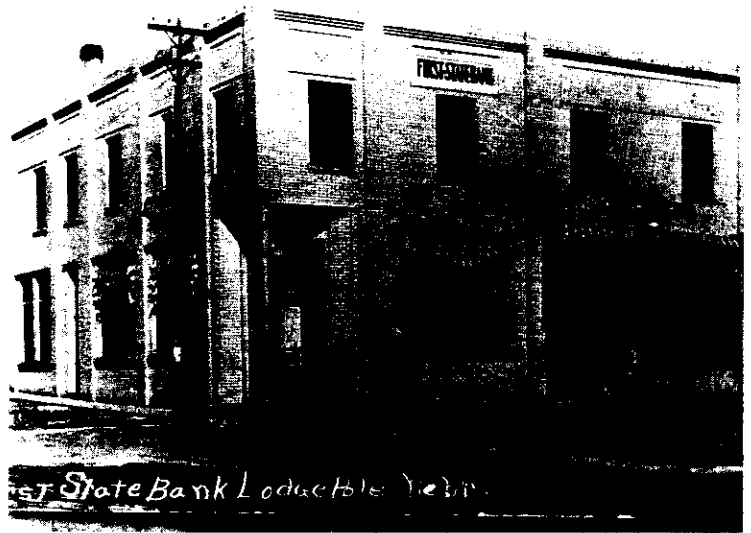
The first record of any business, other than the railroad, was in 1876, when Charles Morton opened a dry goods and grocery store then filed a form with the U.S. Postal Service asking to establish a post office. Pat Barrett, whose father was a foreman

with the U.P., remembered back in 1878 when he was eight, that "...the whole town consisted of the depot, a tie house, and a sod house." Another railroad agent, R.C.Cowdin, started a store in 1878.

In the 1870s a few ranchers began running cattle on the lush grass. In 1883 Dr. Edwin Yarletz and family arrived and for the next 25 years, the Good Doctor and his horse and buggy was a part of our town. Other early families included Wolfe, Barrett, Fenske, Withers, Minshall, Kidney, Lehmkuhl, Drake, Young, Mettey, Bowser, Durkee, Pensinger, and Bates.

With the platting of the town in 1884, the year the homesteaders began taking land in the area, the town began to grow. In 1895 the post office officially changed to the one-word name, "Lodgepole." The railroad, however, continued to use the old spelling until just a few years ago.

Lodgepole's main street moved three different times in the early years. Most of the early business houses were built pre-



Above: First State Bank, built 1916, Mattison's Fancy Groceries and Meat Market on right, the Commercial Hotel and offices upstairs.

Left: Stone Hotel built by Friend Dickinson, 1900s, Bert Bates Real Estate & Opera House (quite famous), and Joe Jenik's Harness Shop, 1914.

Below: Bert Bates, an early settler and "Favorite Son" carries the Colors in the "Old Settler's Reunion" about 1957.



Cheyenne County enlistment train, 1918, carrying several Lodgepole boys on their way to World War I.



dominantly of stone from two nearby stone quarries, slip-form concrete, or brick. The town council passed an ordinance that prohibited building any business of anything but the aforementioned materials, due to so many fires in frame buildings.

Lodgepole was incorporated in 1901, and as part of the new status, miles of concrete sidewalks were poured. The Union Pacific started the south park in the area between the railroad and Front Street, furnished a caretaker to get the trees and grass started, and laid out walks through the park. The town started the north park between the railroad and Sheldon Street across from the railroad park.

Lodgepole was blessed with several nice hotels. The Nash Hotel's claim to fame was that Teddy Roosevelt often stopped there while in town to ship cattle from his Dakota ranch, or just to catch the train.



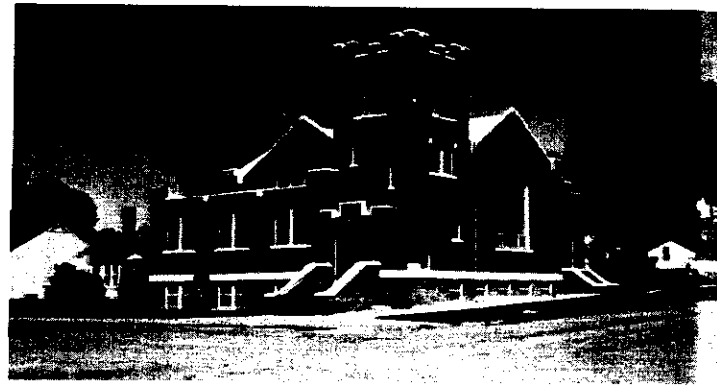


Old Stone Methodist Church built in 1893. Parsonage at left built 1901 and still standing, 1987.

Lodgepole's population peaked in about 1925 at 880. Today there are close to 500 friendly neighbors and friends that share this spot on the map. Farming is the main occupation in the surrounding territory. There continues to be a close tie between farmers on the level tablelands to the north and south, and business people of the town.

Lodgepole has a good business district, three churches, several fraternal organizations, women's groups, and maintains a class D school district.

By Horace W. (Hort) Quinn, Box 205, Lodgepole, NE 69149



Above: United Methodist Church, built in 1920 on site of old stone church 1986. Picture from church centennial book.

Below: Color guard, 1980, Old Settlers' Reunion, Legion Post #286. J. Brown, Bud From, Jim From and Dean Christensen.



POTTER

Potter, in western Cheyenne county, owes its early establishment to the railroad. The station house built in 1870 was the only building for a number of years so it served as station, post office, and school, with a teacher from Omaha. First cattlemen, but gradually some settlers, staked their claims. Frank Hyde built a livery barn and dug the first well in Potter. He not only put in a tank and windmill, but piped water to some of the buildings and houses. While primitive, it was the first water system in town.

Civic advancement began in earnest in 1885 when a hotel was built. Soon there was a bunch of stores, a newspaper and a Lutheran church. In the winter of 1886 the grangers to the north would bring in red cedar posts and trade for groceries. Farmers who had settled around Potter began to raise wheat and oats. 1892 was such a big crop that the town put up grain storage houses. Everything seemed bright for Potter, but the drought the next three years changed that. Many settlers left and the town suffered hard times.

When the "section homestead bill" was passed, things started looking up. In 1907 a bank was organized and many other

improvements were made. The town incorporated and began to put in sidewalks. A city light and water system were established. By 1915 the town had a brick schoolhouse... with basement, gymnasium, domestic science and clay molding." The "Potter Review" called it "the biggest little city in Nebraska," because of the number of business houses it sported.



Potter, Nebraska, 1915, main street.



Left: Wm. Goding herding cattle, 1895.

Below: Garage about 1914. Note Lincoln Highway sign on left corner of building.



In the 1920s the town had several civic improvements: a public library, a community dump, and a power plant with a second generating unit. When the Lincoln Highway was built in 1929, the route through town on Front Street was changed to a by-pass on the south side of the tracks. No body wanted all that noise and traffic in town.

During the Depression many businesses operated on customer credit. While this was a great humanitarian gesture, not all survived. The city approved a volunteer fire department, had an annual city clean-up, and sold electric power to Dix.

A softball association was formed in 1934. The city helped by putting lights in the city park, but shut them off at 10:30 whether the game was over or not. During those days, entertainment of any kind was greatly appreciated. The town band led by Dale Chambers played summer concerts in the bandshell. A packed house was a certainty when the Chick Boyes players came to Seyfang Hall, or a traveling Chautauqua tent show came to town.

Civic pride was shown by the organization of Potter Days in 1936, where the first prize in the drawing was a brand new Chevrolet, won by Joe Frei. The tradition of Potter Days has continued ever since, with parades, drawings, contests, exhibits, and dances.

Economic recovery in the 1940s was evidenced by the city buying 30 acres for an airport. The Potter Co-op built a new elevator and the town was busy every Saturday night. The coming of REA electricity in the late '40s brought the greatest change, with farmers wanting appliances of all kinds, tools for their shops, etc. As the years rolled by, Potter built a youth center, installed new lights, a city-wide sewer system, street signs, and paved the business district. In 1974 the business district was greatly improved by the beautiful new bank building.

Potter has progressed over the years, with slowdowns during the periods of hard times on the farm, and great spurts of improvements during the good times. The town is still holding

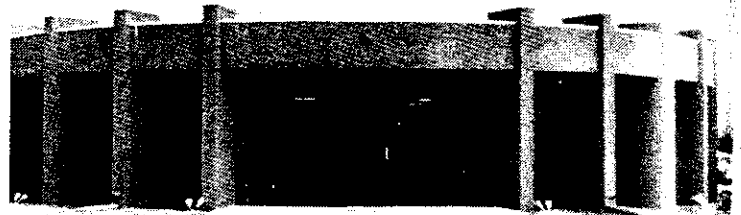
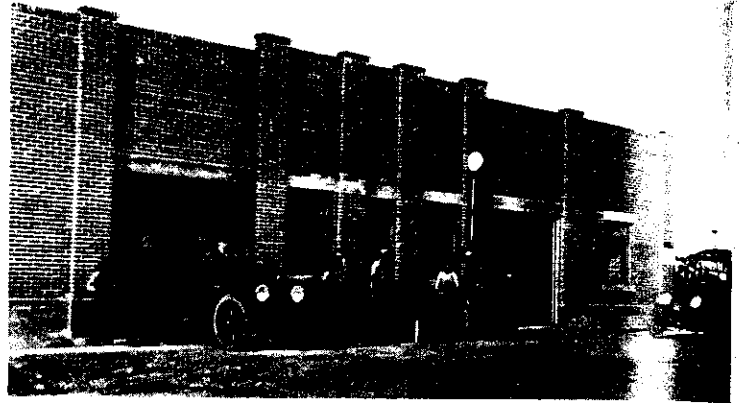


Potter from other side of the tracks, 1918.



Left: The Pagoma Hardware Store, H. Petersen & Sons pro. ca. 1914
Cream separator in center front.

Below: Herb Johnson's new Patterson car in garage doorway, 1928.



strong with a population of 350 as compared to over 500 in the 1950s. The rural population has dropped by a larger percentage. The town has about 30 businesses, two churches and many organizations. Faith in the future is evident with several new and expanding facilities.

A momentous change was accomplished in 1987 with the consolidation of the Potter and Dix school districts. Great pride is being shown in the immediate successes of the students in athletics, speech and drama, and scholarships. This coming together of the schools will assure both towns of quality education, with local control and pride, for many years to come.

By Doug Reetz, HC 84-66, Buffalo Bend, Potter, NE 69156



Then & Now: Left: Citizens' State Bank, 1918. Stone building on the left is Potter Museum.

Above: The new Potter State Bank.