

HISTORY OF RAY

RAY OPERA HOUSE

The Ray Booster Club sponsored the grand opening of the Ray Opera House, located above the Charlson General Store, on August 26, 1904. This Opera House was definitely unique, reflecting the workmanship and style of the early century. There was a balcony at the east end, a curved board ceiling for acoustics, and stamped metal walls above vertical wainscoting. Plaster walls on the stage were decorated with painted scenes. There was a backdrop curtain, sound baffling, and an overhead tract used to shift scenery. The state curtain still shows advertising from the early businesses.

There was seating for 150 people in the auditorium. In the early 1900's entertainers came from a great distance to perform at the Opera House. The local Kilshaw family, known as the "Crow Theatrical Company", was always a popular group. Other events held there were church confirmations, high school graduations and dances. Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Binde's wedding dance was there in 1930.

As Ray grew and progressed, the city auditorium was built on North Main Street; this building quickly became the entertainment center for the city.

During a housing shortage in Ray, the upper floor of the Opera House was converted into two apartments, while one part of it was used for a beauty shop.

RAY OPERA HOUSE MUSEUM

The Ray Opera House which was once the Charlson General Store on the first floor, and

an opera house on the second floor, was built in 1904 on Main Street. This building has been used for various businesses and activities throughout the years. The most recent was in 1977 when the Senior Citizen League of Ray leased the building. They remodeled the main floor and held their meetings and social events there until they moved into their new Senior Citizen Center in February of 1988. The grand opening of the Ray Opera House Museum was planned for the Ray Centennial Grain Palace Days, August 4th, 5th, and 6th, 1989.

NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

NOTICE FROM THE OFFICERS OF THE CITY OF RAY - 1915

On behalf of the Officers of the City of Ray, I wish to warn all Piggers and Bootleggers that officials are determined that Piggers and Bootleggers shall be stopped and are ready to adopt drastic measures.

The evil already has gone beyond the bounds of ordinary conception and strong measures are necessary to stop it.

Hoping that every law-abiding citizen will help to enforce the Prohibition Laws and especially help in stamping out the evil of having Piggers and Bootleggers in our city.

RAY BASEBALL TEAM ARRESTED

August 1915, the Ray baseball team was arrested and put in jail for playing a ballgame on Sunday. The complaint was made by local clergy.

AD IN 1915 PIONEER

Will the hungry person who broke our window and ate up all the samples of ice cream, kindly return our dishes and spoons. No charges or questions asked. Ray Drug Company.

CONFETTI

Numbered confetti originated and was put with binned grain to prevent theft.

THESIS WRITTEN BY A COLLEGE STUDENT FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MINOT

CHAPTER 1

The original townsite of Ray, North Dakota, in 1887 was located some two miles east of where Ray presently is located. This original site was first used as a stop-off point for settlers and used for steam engines to take on water which was supplied by wells.

In the latter part of 1901, the railroad wanted to invest in a reservoir which was located two miles west of the original location. The area just south of the right-of-way was lower and, therefore, would hold surface water so this was a perfect location for the proposed reservoir.

The land just north of the right-of-way was homestead by Charles Webster in 1902. That same year Nick Comfort, whose job was to locate townsites for the Great Northern Railroad, set up the present townsite where Ray is located, and the railroad established a depot out of an eight by twelve boxcar, and Dan McLeod was the first depot agent.

In 1902 Ray started to grow. Hanson, Redick, and Schneider started general stores. George Hagon started a lumber yard and Linwell established a lumber yard and hardware store. In 1903, the first bank was started with the charter going to the Linwell bank, which opened its doors on June 3, 1903, with E. L.

Gunderson as the cashier. The village of Ray grew steadily until July of 1905. The business establishments of Ray were as follows:

1. Farmers store
2. The Big Store
3. McGee and Smith
4. General Land Business
5. City Meat Market
6. Gillespie and Elliot
7. Linwells State Bank
8. Linwell Hardware & Lumber
9. Johnson Brothers
10. Watch Repair
11. Ray Barber Shop
12. Ray drug company
13. Overdahl & Hanson
14. Byrehalt Loans
15. Dr. Scott Attourneys
16. Ira Elliot
17. Van R. Brown
18. A. E. Hughes
19. The Ray Pioneer
20. Snyder's Livery Barn
21. Barwick Livery barn

All of these businesses were going strong just three years after Ray was first located. One of the reasons Ray did grow so rapidly was that it was a supply point for the northern towns which at this time did not have railroad service. Being that railroad service was nonexistent in the northern area, it was a good opportunity to start stage lines and transport people and freight into the northern areas.

One of the first stage lines to operate was run by Clarence Fisk. He hauled people mainly to the northern points and many times these people were new homesteaders looking for their land. The freight business was another good commodity to transport north, and "The first man to haul freight north was Albert Barwick, who started in the livery barn business with three driving trams and a small building

and built his livery business into one of the largest and best equipped livery barns in the state by 1908.”

It wasn't until 1910 that Ray was established as a village. The first village officers were: W. W. Wirtz, Thomas White and H. H. Olson.

In 1914 Ray was incorporated as a city. The commission form of government was used and is still in use today. The first commissioners of Ray were:

Mike Ulmen, C. J. Schneider and Dr. W. B. Scott, the latter being the President. Ray was one of the first cities in the United States to have the commission form of government.

CHAPTER 2

Ray's first newspaper was published in the year 1903. A. E. Hughes, an Englishman from Lakota, North Dakota, was the owner and publisher for the Ray Pioneer.

In 1907 the second newspaper started in Ray was the Recorder which was printed by a Mr. Young. This newspaper went out of business the same year it started.

Also, in 1907 a third newspaper was started in Ray. It was a Scandinavian newspaper written in Norwegian. It was operated by Charlie Hanson. This newspaper was in business until 1910.

In 1941 the Ray Pioneer was forced to shut down its presses due to financial difficulties, and Ray was without a newspaper until 1949.

In 1949 Ray decided it should have its own newspaper, and in June of 1949 the Rakota was established and was operated by Helen Weyrauch and Louise Dokken. This paper was published every week until July 1, 1962, when the Rakota was incorporated into the Tioga Tribune, with the paper to be published in Tioga, North Dakota.

CHAPTER 3

Ray's first school was held in a one - room shack, in 1902. Young, a "lady" homesteader, was the first teacher. The first school was located where Knutson's Lumber Company now stands. The following year, school was held in a larger shack with Mrs. Totem as the teacher.

In 1904 they built its first school building and by 1905 this building was already too small as expressed in this quote from the Ray Pioneer: "Ray is in need of a better school. It has 30 pupils and expects to have as high as 50 students with only one teacher."

In 1907 the first elementary school was constructed. This building was a brick structure that cost over \$12,000. The building contained four classrooms with a full basement below. The building was equipped with the most modern facilities of its time.

The first high school to be built was constructed in 1922. This building was also a brick structure, and it had the added facility of a gymnasium. This building was used until 1948 when it was destroyed by fire in the early morning hours. By the time the fire department was summoned, the complete structure was a mass of flames. The building was a total loss and caused one of Ray's worst educational crises.

Due to the inability to raise the money to build a new school right away after the fire, Ray had to use the local church basements until 1951-52, when the new school was ready to be occupied.

In 1956 the old elementary school building was shaken by a violent windstorm and was condemned. This, again, put Ray in a severe situation as to education. The use of the local church basement was again employed, and the

civic organizations all worked together to build another addition to their school. In 1958, the final addition of the school was complete. This was certainly a team effort by the whole community.

CHAPTER 4

The City of Ray started to develop the public utilities from the very early years. Ray's first telephone line was built in 1904. This was a private line that ran from Ray to the Missouri River a distance of 26 miles. This telephone line was a private line owned by Dr. Scott and used for calling in emergency situations that occurred in that area. In 1906 a corporation was formed to string telephone lines throughout the town and to the northern area of the locality.

In 1908 Ray had its first sidewalks installed. These were made of wood and lasted until about 1915 when concrete sidewalks were constructed.

Within ten years after Ray was started it had its first electricity plant. This plant was privately owned by Mr. Sommers, who in turn later sold it to Adolph Meyer. In 1922, Montana-Dakota Utilities took over the Private power plant and has since supplied Ray with electricity. Shortly after MDU took over the electrical system, the city installed a unique street light system. There were three light bulbs on each pole, and this gave Ray a white way. This operation proved to be too expensive and instead of three lights on each pole it was reduced to one.

In 1939 Ray put in its first water and sewer system. The construction started in the spring of 1939 and was completed in the same year. The contractor for this project was The Houston Construction Company.

The sewer and water system seemed satisfactory until 1951 when the city extended

the water and sewer facilities throughout the outer edges of the city. The cost of this project was \$116,000 and the contractor was W. H. Noel of Jamestown, North Dakota. The next sewer project came in 1954 when the need for storm sewers arose. There had been several flash floods, and the only drainage was down Main Street and into the underpass. The floods resulted in the flooding of basements and blocking the underpass. The cost of putting in storm sewers was \$69,000 with Kovash, Incorporated doing the work. The last sewer project was in 1956 when a new sewage lagoon was built south of town. The cost of this project was \$49,000 with Hagen & Scott, contractors, from Williston doing the work.

In 1956 Ray also took on the project of building new curbs and gutters throughout the town. The curbs were much needed, especially on Main Street where the curbs were so high that the bumpers were practically torn off the newer cars when they parked. This project was big and led the way for paving the streets. The cost of this project was \$98,000 and the work was done by James Igoe and Sons of Bismarck, North Dakota.

The curb and gutter project paved the way for the paving of the streets. This was a project that was confined to within a few blocks of the downtown area. In 1957 the streets in Ray were paved for \$97,500. This work was done by Alexander Construction Company of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Throughout the years of Ray's existence, public utilities steadily developed. In the past ten years, Ray has probably made its greatest strides in this area. Ray has spent \$429,500 in city improvements in those ten years.

CHAPTER 5

Transportation in the early years of the rolling plains was pretty much confined to trails about

the locality. These trails grew into what are now used as the main roads today. Such is the case of the development of transportation in the Ray area.

Before 1919 U.S. Highway No. 2 was nothing more than a trail. The name of the trail was The Teddy Roosevelt Trail. When you traveled this trail, the only way you knew you were still on it was that it was marked by a T.R. on the telephone poles that ran beside it. Then in 1919, the first grade on the T.R. trail was built. This grade ran from Williston to Ray by way of Springbrook and Epping. Later a grade was constructed between Ray and Tioga. This ran northeast by way of Temple.

In 1935 Highway No. 2 was first oiled between Ray and Williston. This was considered a great improvement at this time.

Starting around 1940 the Federal Government decided to reroute Highway No. 2 to the east. They would build an underpass at Ray and go straight east to Tioga. In November 1941, the underpass at Ray was completed, and in the spring of 1942, it was dedicated with dignitaries coming from all over the state. Governor Moses cut the official ribbon. This is one of the high spots in Ray's history.

This was a great improvement in shortening the route east. It was also the last leg of highway No. 2 to be paved between Portland, Oregon, and Portland, Maine.

Highway No. 2 was not changed after 1942 until 1956 when a new highway was constructed between Ray and Williston. This removed most of the curves and improved traveling considerably. At the time this highway was being built the highway through town was also improved and this helped beautify our city.

CHAPTER 6

Ray has had the good fortune of having excellent recreational facilities for its people.

In 1906 Ray won the North Dakota state baseball championship. This was a great honor for Ray and the people were very proud of the team.

In 1912 Ray had a movie theatre that ran silent movies. Mrs. McFarland played the piano in accordance with the pictures. At the same time, Ray had the Kilshaw family which were stage actors who homesteaded near Ray. This troop went on the road under the name of "The Crows", when they were not doing their farm work.

Ray has had the good fortune of having two parks. The first one to be built was the north park which, with the help of the different civic organizations, was well on its way by 1922. In 1922, the Ray Study Club donated money for the park and continued to do so until 1934. The donations the Study Club made went for the planting and caring of the trees that were located there.

Ray's second park is the south park which is located south of Highway No. 2. In 1934 there were about 1,100 trees planted along the roads leading to the park. This was done as a W.P.A project.

In the late 1950's the Great Northern Railroad turned over the reservoir to the park board and they have since, with the help of the Lions Club, built this into a camping area.

One of the best examples of community effort can be explained in the way the people of Ray banded together to keep the auditorium from being torn down. This auditorium had been built by Frank Ike.

He used this building as a roller-skating rink and other recreational activities. This building changed hands many times until 1942 it was to be torn down and the lumber used to build graineries. This was when the people donated

money and pledged grain and as a result of their efforts, they were able to keep the building standing and use it as a community auditorium which it is today. This auditorium is now under the custody of the Ray Fire Department.

In 1919 the people of Ray elected a cemetery committee. It was the committee's job to look after the cemetery. In 1935 this committee believed they would receive W.P.A help if they were under the city government. The cemetery was then turned over to the city, but the expedited aid never materialized. In 1958 the people of Ray again organized to take care of their cemetery. This time they formed the Cemetery Association. This association cleaned the cemetery.

CHAPTER 8

Ray was never at a loss for medical aid in the early years. In 1903 Dr. Scott arrived in Ray. He was followed by Dr. Abplanap, M.D and Dr. Sorbin and his sister were chiropractors. In later years, they were followed by Drs. Erickson and Gray, and the last being a dentist, Dr. Guance, who then practiced in Williston.

Ray has had four drug stores through the years, the first being Dr. Scotts Drug Store and later the Gaylord and Craydens Drug Store. There was also Prosser's Drug.

One interesting note about the drug stores during the prohibition years is the fact that these Ray drug stores sold up to two hundred pints of whiskey per day which were used strictly for medical purposes.

The city of Ray has seen the time when it did have a hospital. The first location for this hospital was above the drug store owned by Dr. Scott. The hospital was later moved to a separate building located on the northern edge of town. The last place the hospital was

located was in a private house that was later owned by the Deward Weyrauch Family and is today demolished.

CHAPTER 9

Farming and coal mining were the two most important economic developments during the early years of the Ray area. Farms were established by homesteading the land. The farmers received 160 acres of land and had to break the land with horses or oxen. This was a long and tedious job, and it took a hardy lot of people to do this type of work.

The dry years were very hard on these homesteaders. There was a period of 4 or 5 years of bad crops, and it was estimated that 50 per cent of these small farmers were forced out of business. These farmers were forced either to sell their land or to lose the land through failure to pay taxes.

The farms we have in the area today are much larger mainly as a result of the dry years. The present farmers are the ones that could hold out through the drought and later by securing land from other broke farmers or the land from the tax losses.

In the 1940's, potatoes were grown in large numbers in Ray, but in about 1955, this crop passed out of the farming picture.

Coal mines played an important role in keeping the people of Ray supplied with fuel for the winter months. There were several mine locations south of the city. The big mine was Mattson Strip Mine which produced a large amount of coal.

The coal mining business lasted until about 1955, or 1956 when coal was replaced by natural gas that has been used in home heating ever since.

CHAPTER 10

The Ray area has been in the midst of two oil booms, and this has definitely left its impression on the city itself.

The first oil boom was during the Spring of 1926 with the drilling of the big viking well south of the city near Missouri River.

The oil fever was a result of efforts by Martin Jacobson, Dr. Wiohlund from Wildrose, George Moellering from Williston, Oscar Opdahl from Ray, and E.M. Jacobson of Ray. These men were convinced there was oil south of the city mainly because of a report made by the State Geologist in 1917 which stated there was an anticline located south of the city. These anticlines usually mean there is a possibility of gas or oil.

The Big Viking Oil Company was formed in the spring of 1926. This company worked to get the necessary money to do the drilling, as this cost was high.

Late in the Fall of 1927, the rig was ready to operate, and Clarence Proseese was hired as a driller.

Within a short time, the company had run out of finances, and this was eventually downfall of the operation.

Ray's second oil boom took place in the year 1951. When oil was discovered south of Tioga, the people that followed the drilling operations moved to Ray mainly because Ray was a more modern city.

Housing was the main concern of these people, and the local people welcomed the chance to accommodate these people. The people that followed the oil had trailer houses, but they needed a place to park them. The local people were quick to take advantage of this situation and built trailer parks. At one time, there were five trailer parks and some of

these trailer parks held as high as 80 trailers, and they were all filled.

At the same time, the trailer parks were being built; so were two new motels being built. The Ver Von Motel, owned by Verlund Hartsoch, was located on the eastern edge of the city. The second motel built was the Frontier Motel owned by Joseph McGrary. This motel was located on the western edge of town.

Many other businesses sprang up throughout the city, but these businesses folded when the boom was over, and the city settled down once again.

CHAPTER 12

For a small community, Ray has had more than it's share of tragedies. The first of these tragedies was the Dillon Murders which was committed in 1913. This was the murder of Doctor Dillon and his wife and stepdaughter by a transient who was traveling through the area.

J.H. Drake was driving along a road past the Dillon Farm when he heard a moan and investigated, only to find Mr. Dillon critically wounded and Mrs. Dillon killed. He then loaded Mr. Dillon into his wagon and took him to the John Dillon farm eight miles north of Ray. Drake and the Dillons proceeded to learn the story of Doc Dillon coming home late from an auction and finding a man holding a lantern while the daughter was milking. The stranger then asked Dillon for a job and when Dillon turned around, he was shot in the spine. The stranger then proceeded to kill the wife and daughter.

Upon a second trip to the farm, Drake, John Dillon and Ole Quale, a neighbor, were interested in finding the daughter, and her body was discovered in her bedroom. Doc Dillon gave the sheriff a good description of the man, and he went to Ray to look for him. He

was located on a train at Temple and identified himself as Cleve Culbertson. Doc Dillon lived long enough to identify Culbertson as the man that killed him. Culbertson denied this and never did confess to the killing.

Culbertson was tried and sentenced to life imprisonment, but this sentence wasn't good enough for the local police. A lynch mob formed, and they stormed to the jail and took the prisoner. Culbertson died as violently as he had killed, dangling from a rope with eleven bullets riddling his body.

In 1915 a second mass murder was committed three miles west of Ray. This was the murder of two boys and their mother by the hired man while his father was away.

The hired man, whose name was Bruce Robinson, killed the two boys and hid them in a haystack. He then killed the mother and held the two daughters captive overnight. The next day he brought the two daughters into school and then went upstairs into Grace McFarland's house and committed suicide. The motive for the crime is still unknown and never will be known.

The next tragedy was the shooting of the Chief of Police Martin Johnson in front of the Grand Hotel in 1930. He had just questioned some stranger who happened to be wanted and when he turned his back he was shot and killed. The killers were later captured in Salt Lake City.

The widow of Johnson sued the city for \$50,000 but settled out of court for \$4,000.

Ray has had several drownings in the reservoir which is used for swimming. In 1913, a man, by the name of Joe Penny, drowned and there were no details as to what happened. In 1939, Marcel Pingree fell off a rafter and drowned before he could be rescued. On July 18, 1953, Dennis Bonella was fishing near a raft when his line became entangled in the telephone wires.

He was electrocuted and the rescuers worked on him for three hours to no avail. The last drowning took place July 2, 1975, when Lyle Cole Drowned while swimming between a sand bar and the railroad grade. Mr. Cole had been married just two weeks at the time of his death.

In 1954 Ray had one of its more tragic hours. Joseph McCrary and Eugene Hamers, two young flyers, were practicing landing and approaches when their plane they were flying stalled, and they crashed. The plane burned. Hamers was killed instantly, and McCrary died five hours later in a Williston Hospital.

In 1959, three children burned in an old incinerator located at the Ray Trailer Court. It is a mystery how the fire started but it is believed they were either playing with matches or stirred up loose coals which were set ablaze by the accumulated paper in the incinerator.

CONCLUSION

Ray had 45 business establishments at this time. They are as follows:

1. Ray Super Market
2. Stevahn's Fairway & Clothing Department Store
3. Ray Variety Store
4. W.J. Hanson & Son
5. Simpson Plumbing & Heating
6. Johnsons Electric
7. Northwest Mutual Aid Telephone Corporation
8. Montana Dakota Utilities Co
9. Hansen Cleaners
10. Dime-A-Time Laundromat
11. Jorgenson Machine Co
12. Ray Farm Supply
13. Simpson Implement Co
14. Citizens State Bank
15. Ray Credit Union
16. Arne's Pool Hall

17. Town & Country Bar
18. Parkway Bar & Café
19. Johnson's Café
20. Ray Barbershop
21. Ray Motel
22. Ver Von Motel
23. Frontier Motel
24. Mobil Station
25. Farmers Union Oil Co
26. Texaco
27. Jack's Westland
28. Enco Service
29. Ray Farmers Union Elevator
30. Victoria Elevator Co
31. Great Northern Railway
32. Orly's Body Shop
33. Tank's Chevrolet
34. Johnson's Garage
35. Knutson Lumber
36. Jacobson Construction
37. Ray Post Office
38. Snow White Drive-in
39. Jim's Shoe Repair
40. West Side Grocery
41. Hoehn's Insurance
42. Haymond Anderson Garage
43. Prosser Drug
44. Ray Hardware
45. Matt Anderson & Son Steel Supply

HISTORY GRAIN PALACE FESTIVAL

The history of the first Ray Grain Palace building and festival. This material is taken from the past issues of the Ray Pioneer that has been put on the microfilm by the North Dakota Historical Society.

First Grain palace Festival was held July 26 and 27, 1912.

8,000 people in attendance.

The exhibition was held in the bond lumber co. located on south main, near the great northern

depot. Over this large building, the Grain Place was constructed, at a heavy cost, entirely of sheafs of grain and grasses. The work was done by skilled and trimmers. Donations from the community, primarily from farmers, financed the project. It was to be a standing advertisement of the great productiveness of the rich soil in this vicinity.

Liberty prizes were offered for the best entry of the exhibits.

The honorable A.A. Bruce, judge of the ND Supreme Court, and a candidate for re-election delivered an address on the subject of good citizenship.

A 1500# steer was roasted whole for a free noon barbecue.

Entertainment contained a water carnival and baseball games, as well as a tug of way contest. The tug of war contest was between the southern and northern parts of the city. A grand band concert was held at the Ray Opera House. The theatrical group was known as The Crows put on their play "The Shamrock" at the Opera House. The Bijou Theater gave continuous performances to packed house. Lastly, the bowery dance went night and day.

Grain palace celebration was held August 7 & 8 in 1913. 9,000 people attended this year's festival.

The new Grain Palace building constructed by a John Tomsom was completed. This building located across from the Great Northern Depot, was 30x30, giving 900 feet of floor space. The large corner towers gave the palace beautiful appearance. The interior was filled with display racks and shelves to properly display arrangements.

In addition to farm produce exhibits, this year horses, cattle, and chickens were also judged.

Speakers for the two days were Supt. Scholander of the Government Experiment

Station of Williston, and E.W. Hall, Special Agent of the Better Farming Assn. Prof. Crane of Minot Rural Schools, gave address on subject, "Farmers and War".

The Linwell-Nason Co. sponsored free demonstration of their coffee, biscuits, and canned goods in a large booth located in the grocery department of their store.

Entertainment included a grand industrial street parade, the 24-piece Stanley Juvenile Band furnished music both days, and many contests, such as horses, pony, bicycle, and foot races were held. Repeat of last years attractions, with some new ones. The "Slide for Life" on a 500-foot cable and trapeze acts and performances in mid air. The Bowery dance was held day and night.

Grain Palace celebration held on July 30 and 31 in 1914.

The Palace had been remodeled for this event by E.W. Thompson and his crew. They shingled the roof and added more tables and display shelves. The Japanese bungalow style of architecture was followed for these renovations.

Attractions and exhibits similar to proceeding years.

It was noted in 1914 there were 600 inhabitants in Ray and the annual Grain Palace Festival was advertised as "A World Fair in miniature".

Grain palace (4th annual) held August 6 & 7 in 1915

Several thousand dollars was raised for prizes and expense, much of this donated by area farmers and ranchers. On the first day there were fully 650 automobiles and other rigs parked in almost every vacant lot. The police roped off main street to avoid accidents.

Entertainment included a parade which had the 32 Piece Ry Band, a cordon of mounted police, the girl's baseball team in their bloomer

uniform, and the Brunsvold Bros. Bakery float was a miniature bake shop with baker in white uniform busily engaged making rolls of bread. A bounding hay rack showing the principal street of the city was also there, as well as the Ring Carnival.

The fifth Grain Palace Festival was held on August 5 & 6 in 1916.

8,000 people were in attendance.

After 1916 there is no report on Grain Festivals. There were festivals again in 1922 and 1924 but no newspaper reports.

The old Grain Palace building was torn down in the 30's and some of the lumber was used in building the old grandstand for the baseball fields.

Grain Festival Celebrations were resumed in 1984 with Gov Allen Olson as guest speaker. Ray is now known as "Grain Palace City of ND".

Ray was still a young town when the Commercial Club decided to sponsor an annual festival to be standing advertisement of the great productiveness of the rich soil in this area. Therefore, the Grain Palace Building and the Grain Palace celebrations first became a reality in July of 1912. The exhibition was held in the Bond Lumber Company, located on South Main. Over this large building the Grain Palace was constructed, at a heavy cost, entirely of sheaves of grain and grasses. The work was done by skilled decorators and trimmers. Donations from the community, primarily from farmers, financed the project. According to the newspapers, there were 8,000 people in attendance. Entertainment included water carnivals and baseball games. The "Crow Theatrical Company" presented their play, "The Shamrock", at the Opera House. The Bijou Theater gave continuous performances to a packed house. The bowery dance went day and night. The North Dakota Supreme Court

Judge delivered an address on the subject of "Good Citizenship". The next year the new Grain Palace building was completed. The Japanese bungalow style of architecture made for a very attractive building. The featured speaker this year was Professor Crane of Minot Public Schools on the subject, "Farmers and War". One of the parade entries was the Brunsvold Brothers bakery float, a miniature bake shop with a little baker in white uniform busily making rolls of bread. The Linwell-Nason firm held a free demonstration of their coffee and biscuits in a large booth located in the grocery department of their store. An interesting note on the advertising poster was this: "Rest rooms will accommodate women and children. Nurses available to take care of children."

The old time Grain Palace annual festivals were held from 1912 through 1924. In 1914 the population was 600 in Ray and the celebration was advertised and accepted as a "Worlds Fair in Miniature". This was always a two-day event. On the first day in 1915 there were at least 650 automobiles and other rigs parked on almost every vacant lot. The police roped off Main Street to avoid accidents. Several thousand dollars were raised for prizes and expenses, much of this donated by the area farmers and ranchers. Free entertainment and attractions all day were provided on Main Street. The parade was headed by the Ray 32-piece band, followed by an automobile carrying the City Commissioners. Next were the mounted police, which were on guard during the day. The parade also included the girl's baseball team, in their bloomer uniforms. At the end of the parade were the prize-winning horses and stock that had been decorated with blue and red ribbons by the judges. According to report the merrymakers kept things alive until the early hours each morning. The several thousand people visiting the city were unanimous in declaring the citizens of Ray to be royal entertainers. Chief of Police Witter and

his force of policeman had no trouble handling the crowd and not one arrest was made. The old Ray Grain Palace building was torn down in the 30's and some of the lumber was used in building the grandstand at the Ray Baseball Fields. Since 1980, The Grain Palace festival similar to those early years, has been held in Ray. A group of individuals got together and decided on an annual fall celebration.

Following research on the history of Ray, Rodney Anderson, mayor at this time, suggested a Grain Palace festival as held in the past. A permanent sight was being considered when the late W.S. Raymond, local banker, donated \$30,000. This was designated toward a Grain Palace Building. Northwest Lumber and Supply of Ray designed the building, as near as possible to the original Grain Palace. K.S. Construction, Ray, built the structure and the cement work was done by the D.W. Oxendahl Company of Williston. The 1984 festivities were held at the new Grain Palace with Governor Allen Olson the featured speaker. The three-day celebration in 1989 includes an all-school reunion, old fashioned jamboree, rodeo, parade, variety show, threshing bee, and Grand Opening of the Ray Opera House Museum.

MEDICAL DR. SCOTT

Ray was fortunate to have medical facilities in the pioneer years. In 1901 Dr. Scott arrived, followed by Dr. Abplanap and Dr. Hoffto. Dr. Sorbin and his sister were chiropractors at that time. Dr. Walter B. Scott came with degrees in pharmacy and medicine to open a drug store and practice his profession. Both he and his wife, Mary, were very active in the community and civic affairs. Mrs. Scott lived on a homestead in Ellisville township. The stone house Dr. Scott built on his land 5 miles north of Ray in 1906 was just recently demolished about 3 years ago in 2021. Dr. Scott had a rich bass-baritone voice, his wife a very talented speaker. Friends gathered for evening of music and entertainment in their home. It was a

saddened community when Mrs. Scott died in 1914. The Scott's two young children were sent to Seattle to be raised by an aunt. Their daughter, Mary Gen Scott Steiss, returned to Ray as recent as 1982 for a visit. Following the untimely death of his wife, Dr. Scott continued to operate the Ray Drug Company until he died in 1943. He also had a hospital in town for many years. Ray had four drug stores throughout those years, the first being the Ray Drug and later the Gaylord & Credens Drug. An interesting note about the local drug stores: during the prohibition years, the fact is their drug stores sold up to 200 pints of whiskey (per day) which were used strictly for medical purposes. To deliver medical care in this era created many problems for the doctor, as well as the patient. Dr. Scott performed his first appendectomy in a sod shack by candlelight. During the flu epidemic of 1918, Dr. Scott attended to 876 cases without a death. His capable and dedicated nurse, Gunda Stubkins Hutton, was often at his side. At this time much credit must be given to his faithful driver, Bert Barwick. Dr. Scott loved children and a trip to his Drug Store, which included a soda fountain and ice cream parlor, and was an exciting experience no youngster forgot. He often brought gifts to the kids in the hospital. "He gave me a book of Aesop's Fables when I was hospitalized in 1931". Dr. Scott found ways to extend Ray's fame. He took to writing his own drug store advertisements. Occasionally they were a form of comment, philosophical and humorous, which he pads the Ray Pioneer to print. They were somewhat in the vein of Will Rogers and came to the attention of Rogers himself. They were sometimes used in his syndicated writings and often reproduced as they first appeared in the Pioneer. In one paper Dr. Scott wrote, "Defeats are nothing to be ashamed of; analyze your shortcomings and profit by them. No businessman in America had sunshine and silver spoons. He got his trimmings and made a man of himself by

getting off his sitter and thinking with the other end."

DILLON MURDERS

The Ray community was stunned by the murder of the Dillon family living 7 miles north of Ray on October 21, 1913. It was a cool fall day. Mr. D.T. Dillon, known as Dock Dillon, was at a farm sale. Mrs. Dillon and her 13-year-old daughter, Lela, by a former marriage, were in the house when a stranger (later identified as Cleve Culbertson) knocked on the door. It was dark when Mr. Dillon arrived home. At the supper table, this stranger asked if he could work on the farm for a few days. Within a house or two, Culbertson had shot all three members of the family and left them for dead. Mr. Dillon was found by a neighbor, Henry Drake, who was driving by the place and heard his cry for help. Mr. Dillon was taken to his cousin's home, John Dillon, where he lived six days and identified the man. Culbertson walked to Ray and spent the night at the Smith Hotel. He left early the next morning on the east bound train; before leaving, he tore the page out of the hotel register, which he had signed. Much credit is due to the neighbors helping the law officials capture Culbertson. He was taken off the train at Temple, returned to the John Dillon Farm, where Dock Dillon identified him in the presence of Dr. Distad, Williams County coroner of Williston, Dr. Scott, George Moellering, Attorney at Ray, and several neighbors. Dock Dillon also signed a deposition, called a, "dying statement". Mr. Dillon was asked if Culbertson was his wife's former husband. His answer was that he didn't know, he had never seen him. Usher L. Burdick, the young state attorney, was the prosecuting lawyer at the Culbertson trial held in the county seat. The verdict was murder in the 1st degree. Monday, December 15th, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Dissatisfaction spread over the NW part of the county. On Tuesday

evening, December 16th, the day before Culbertson was to be moved to the state penitentiary, a thoroughly organized lynching mob stormed the county jail in Williston. The men came to Williston Monday evening or early Tuesday morning. Men came from Ray on the train Monday night. About 2:00 Tuesday morning a mob of 30 or 40 masked men covered all the streets leading to the courthouse, they guarded the telephone office, fire hall, and power plant. The rest of the group went to jail and crashed a 14-foot watermain pipe against the iron studded jail door. Cleve Culbertson was taken out of town and hanged from the Little Missouri Bridge. The mob dispersed. Sheriff Carl Erickson and other officials had tried to talk to the mob but were warned to stay out of their way so no harm would come to them. The anxiety and fear these neighboring families experienced, following the Dillon murders, was great. In the evenings, they would gather at one farm and spend the night.

RAY FIRE DEPARTMENT

The first organized fire protection was started in 1903 when the Ray Boosters Club sponsored a "Citizens Bucket Brigade". In the fall of 1911 fourteen men met to form the Ray Volunteer Fire Department. Their greatest concern was protection from the prairie fires that were prevalent at that time. Fire department members pooled their resources to purchase a 30-gallon soda-acid fire extinguisher, mounted on wheels, which could be hand drawn to the location of any fire. Axes, water buckets, hooks and other necessary equipment was also gathered. The residents of the community came up with enough funds in 1928 to secure a Model A Ford truck on which three 30-gallon chemical tanks were mounted. J.P. Conney, the local blacksmith, built the fire truck body and fastened the chemical apparatus in Place. Ray saw no large fires until January 20th of 1937,

when the newly constructed St. Anthony Lumber Yard burned to the ground. The small soda-acid extinguishers were of no use in fighting a blaze this large and for a time it was feared much of the business district would be lost. The firemen were aided by many local citizens and were able to keep the blaze under control. This disaster and the needs of a progressing community required the construction of a water system and by 1939 the water works had been installed and the town began planning for the purchase of a new fire truck which would have all the new equipment, including a power-driven pump. In 1939, following the installation of the water system in Ray, the Fire Department bought a Chevrolet fire truck to haul the new fire hose and the installation of a 500 gallon per minute pump. Joe Viall, one of the firemen, loaned a pickup truck to haul extra hose and equipment for several years. The Ray Fire Department was the first in the county and perhaps one of the first in the State to organize a rural fire department, which purchased a truck from the War Assets Corporation in 1947. Many new trucks and modern equipment have been bought throughout the years. The department has always been an active organization in Ray. In 1940 the City Auditorium had to be sold; this group sponsored a proposed Bond issue to finance the purchase of this building. This bond failed, so the individual members contacted area farmers, accepting wheat or any means to raise the necessary money. The Fire Department enlarged the building and made many improvements at the Auditorium, which is still in use under their supervision. The fireman is also credited in spearheading and building erected on Main Street in 1972 that housed the present Fire Hall and City Hall combined. The Ray Ambulance Association was organized by this group. Ray is duly proud of its Fire Department and Ambulance Service.

CLUBS AND LODGES

Clubs and Lodges in Ray were very active, serving social purposes and sponsoring community projects. Benefits of such are still evident today. A group of men anxious to form a Masonic Lodge invited the White Earth Lodge to sponsor them August 6th, 1914, at Ray. Following the meeting the group attended a midnight banquet at the luxurious Waldorf Hotel. Brethren from Williston and surrounding lodges were present at the official organizing of the Ray Craftsman Lodge #107 on April 29, 1914. The Unity Chapter Order of the Eastern Star was instituted in 1929. Throughout the years they continued to sponsor the Rainbow for Girls and the annual George Washington Party. The Wildrose Chapter and Tioga Chapter became affiliated with the Ray Chapter in the 60's. The Ray Unity Chapter observed its 45th anniversary in 1975.

The Ray Study Club was organized in January of 1915 to promote the love of study and aid in any civic enterprise. The charter members worked hard for women's suffrage that became law in 1920. These women helped establish the North Park in Ray and planted the first trees there. During the depression years of the 30's, a movie was sponsored to buy a six-tube radio for the high school at the cost of \$14.45. These organizations served the community for six or seven decades. All three are disbanded now. Homemaker clubs entered the scene in later years.

BASEBALL

The game of baseball has always been a popular sport in Ray. Tribute must be given to Otis Fosse, known as "Father of Baseball". Mr. Fosse owned and operated a barber shop from the early 1900's until his death in 1951. He was a member of the Ray White Socks in 1906 and 1907, when the team won the championship in North Dakota. After Fosse quit playing, he managed the Ray teams. He was a colorful

player and manager, and frequent rhabarbs were part of his game. Baseball in the 20's and 30's was the main sport and past time. Of all the players Mr. Fosse had observed, he always stated that given a chance, before a shoulder injury, John O'Connell could have played left field for any of the Major League teams. Fosse never missed a game of any sporting event at the high school gym. He sat in the same seat for so many years the school gave him an honorary ticket. This he cherished. Ray and vicinity still are very sports-minded, supporting a complete summer recreation program and the school sponsored athletic events. In 1970 the State American Legion Class A Tournament was held in Ray.

NEWSPAPER & MISC

Local newspapers were necessary while the area was being settled. The first one in Ray was published in 1903 by an Englishman from Lakota, ND. By 1907 there were three newspapers in Ray. One was printed in the Norwegian language and was very welcome in the Scandinavian homes. All advertising was done through the newspapers. An ad for an auction sale read: 10 miles north of Ray. H.J. Finney owner (Witter auctioneer). Free noon lunch. One year's time will be given on all sums over \$10.00 with approved security. Under \$10.00 cash.

DELMONICO CAFÉ: Sunday dinner .25 cents Frank Lucas, proprietor. In 1908 the following ad appeared under the heading "PLENTY OF MONEY"; M.J. Carr has secured a large amount of eastern money which he will loan on Williams County Land at .10% interest. See him when you want money, no bonus, no delay. Eight years later, Mr. Carr was advertising 20,000 acres of Williams County land at \$10.00 and \$20.00 per acre.

The Republican political party was organized in 1908 in Ray. That fall Williams County elected

every candidate on the Republican ticket. A colorful figure in the early days of Ray was William Witter. He was born in Ohio in 1849. At the outbreak of the Civil war, he ran away from home to enlist in the Union Army, only to be returned home. Later Mr. Witter and his son volunteered for services in the Spanish-American War. Several years later he came to Ray, where he homesteaded and invested in land. He was also an auctioneer. Mr. Witter was known in Ray as Colonel Bill and could be seen riding his favorite horse in leading the parade when Ray had a celebration. He died at the age of 90 at a soldier's home in Iowa.

CHURCHES

The Methodist, Catholic and Lutheran faith all became active congregations in 1902. The Methodist were the first to organize, meeting in a shack with Reverend Emil B Polege as minister. The parish of St. Michael's Catholic Church was informally organized at this time. Dr. Scott's wife contacted Father J.J. Raith of Minot to come to Ray to celebrate the first mass, September 24th of 1903. In 1904, a meeting was held in the cemetery, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile northwest of town to decide two lots for the church building from Ed Viall. Rev. Carl Winther was the first Lutheran Minister. He came to file on a quarter of land in Golden Valley Township. The cornerstone for the Lutheran Church was laid in 1908 on land donated by E.L. Gunderson. A Ray street named for Rev. Winther. Before any of these church buildings were constructed, the three denominations scheduled their services at different times so they could meet upstairs of the pool hall. A common table was used for an altar. Planks set on nail kegs and boxes were used for seats. The click of pool balls and loud talking and laughing could be distinctly heard while services were being held. There also was a

Church of the Brethren and an Our Saviors Church in Ray at that time.

LEGION AND AUXILIARY

The American Legion William E. Smith Post #9 was organized in 1919. William Simpson invited charter members of the Post to his farm home for a picnic that summer and the first officers were elected. Charter members included Roy Viall, K.K. Bergh and Richard Gronseth. Discussions at early meetings concerned soldier's benefits and Legion policies. The Post built a bath house at the reservoir in 1926. The next winter they made arrangement with the Minot Association of Commerce to send the snowplow to open the road as far west as Spring Brook. The Post sponsored dances, minstrel shows, home talent shows, oyster suppers, and Chautauqua programs. In 1933 they brought a building on Main Street from C.L. Lemire. They rented this hall to other organizations for \$1.50 (if they could afford it); otherwise, it was free. On June 30, 1921, the Ray unit of the American Legion Auxiliary was organized. The auxiliary always remembers the veterans in hospitals and homes. A yearly project was to send a student to Girl's State.

MUSIC

Talented musicians were among the early pioneers. Some of the Ray Booster Club members organized the first orchestra in February of 1904, consisting of 1st and 2nd violins, cornet, organ, and banjo. Carl Mathisen, a noted accordion player from Norway, came to this area in 1904. His wife and children lived on his homestead claim while he was making a living playing at dance halls all across the country. In 1916 they left the farm to move to Ray where the Mathisen's operated a dry goods store and other businesses. Popular

entertainment in those days was the "house party". The families would go to each other's homes, bring some lunch, and dance in the kitchen or front room, whichever was the largest. Mr. Mathisen was usually there with his accordion and often one or two gentlemen with violins. When there was something special going on, the party was held in the schoolhouse. Carl Mathisen's entertainment ads read: "GRAND CONCERT AND BIG DANCE. Music by the famous concert accordion player, Carl Mathisen, formerly of Christiania, Norway, now of Ray, North Dakota, who has traveled throughout Europe and the United States and has yet to meet his equal as an accordion player."

Hall's Music House, a small unique store was located on Main Street of Ray in 1907. A picture postcard was mailed to people living in town and the surrounding country with the following invitation, "You are cordially invited to Halls Magic House on the 26th of each month to hear the new Edison records."

KNICKERBOCKER BAND

The Knickerbocker band was organized in 1922 by William Brunsvold, who was promoter, teacher and leader of the organization. Members were boys from the Ray vicinity, ranging in age from eight to eighteen. It was financed largely from Ray businessmen. The uniforms were purple and white. The name of the band came from the knicker trousers worn by the boys. Mr. Brunsvold was strict on discipline and one boy who came 15 minutes late to practice found the door locked. He let his boys know they had to learn to play music, or they would be out. Regular concerts were given in the Auditorium and practically every Saturday Night, during the summer months, from a bandstand that was hauled into Main Street. There were always 20 to 30 members in the Knickerbocker band. Before the band went

on an extended trip, such as to Yellowstone Park, L.B. McFarlin served as an advance man and went ahead to make any necessary arrangements. All traveling was done by touring cars and in a caravan, all roads were gravel, and sometimes very muddy. One concert in Sidney, Montana, had to be cancelled, as this was irrigated country which raised sugar beets, and watermelon. A watermelon could be purchase for a dime and over a half of the band numbers were sick from over-eating. There were 7 or 8 cars and a truck hauling the tents, bedding, food, and cooking equipment on a camping trip to Yellowstone. There weren't many miles travelled each day due to the work involved in taking camp down and setting it up every day and then preparing for a concert. The band was often asked to organize similar bands in other towns. Several members of the Knickerbocker band were given high ratings in music contests in the area.

TELEPHONE

Our modern telephone system is taken for granted, but it wasn't always here. A single telephone line was installed in the early 1900's and in April of 1914 the Williams County Mutual Telephone Company was granted franchise to erect and maintain a telephone system in Ray and surrounding area. Due to lack of funds during the first years there was no night service, the hours were from 7:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. If there was an emergency during off hours, it was necessary to go to the operator's home and get her to open the Central Office to place the call. Later there were three operators, two during the day, and one night operator that slept at the office. The operator, known as "Central", played an important role in the community, performing other duties than simply putting through the telephone calls. In case of a fire she would receive the call, sound the fire siren, and dispatch the information to the local Fire

Department. At the same time, many people called to see where the fire was. If there was any local community happening that needed to be announced, Central would put a general ring over all the rural lines and announce the information. This could have been a carload of coal arriving in town, grain cleaning days, school closing, or just some special doings. When the police were needed and couldn't immediately be located, a call was placed to the telephone office and the operator would snap on a red light outside the building. When the cop saw the light, he reported to the office to find out where he was needed. The operator or Central was often called upon to get messages to people who did not have a phone. Each party line had at least 10 subscribers and the party line listeners were known as, "rubbernecks". There were only 2 long distance circuits, which often caused long delays in getting calls through. Another duty of the operators was to call on each of the local businesses once a month to collect their telephone bills.

HOTELS

It is hard to realize Ray had two large hotels as early as 1903 and in 1909 the big Thomas Hotel was built on north main. This was due to the railroad bringing in settlers and eastern visitors, who had money to invest, and also farmers bringing grain to Ray for shipment by Great Northern. Too, the pioneers living on their homestead claims often stayed over night in town, as the trip was too long a distance to make in one day. The population in Ray in 1910 was 436. The formal opening of the Thomas Hotel took place on a Sunday when the café manager, Mr. Lucas, served an elaborate dinner to about 75 guests. The hotel was thoroughly up to date and the furnishings of the very best. Ray now had an institution to which all could point with pride, and which would draw considerable of the traveling trade. The rooms

at the Thomas rented at .50 cents and up a night. Of the many comforts and conveniences offered to the guests, was the service of a bell boy to help with the luggage and also room service. Fred Stockely was the first to serve in this position. This hotel was three stories high with 24 bedrooms on the second and third floors. The first floor had a large lobby, dining room, kitchen, reception room, two bedrooms, washroom, and hall. It was heated throughout by steam and was brick veneered on the north and east sides. This was the last hotel to stand in Ray. The building was used for a girl's dormitory in the 1930's. All three hotels changed names throughout the years several times. Grain was hauled from Ray from distances as far north as the Canadian border and south across the Missouri River from Charelson, North Dakota. Many of these grain haulers stayed in these hotels during that time period.

LAKE MCLEOD

As mentioned before, the Great Northern trains stopped at Ray to get water for the steam engines. The Water supply became inadequate in a few years. In 1906 the Great Northern hired a contractor to dig a reservoir. Bunk houses and dining rooms were erected. For the crew of 150 to 200 men. Several of the pioneer men in the area worked on this project while living on their homestead claims. Seventy-five teams of horses and two steam shovels were used. It was an exceptionally nice winter, so in three months the little old slough had been deepened 20 feet and named Lake Mcleod. In a short time, Lake McLeod became a popular recreation center, as it is today.

OIL

The Big Viking Oil Company was organized in 1928 with Ed Jacobson as President. This

company was responsible for the initial drilling venture of the Nesson Anticline. The attempt was unsuccessful due to the inadequacy of the drilling equipment used at that time and a shortage of funds due mainly to the depression of the early 1930s. Hundreds of local people invested in this venture, and many suffered severe financial hardship. Nevertheless, they drilled through the Dakota and Lakota Sands, approximately 4,700 feet where the Geologist felt oil might be found. This was a disappointment, but with no logs of earlier wells to follow and with no money to purchase more casing, further effort had to be abandoned. The Big Viking Oil Company declared its original drilling site a dry hole in 1938. Dr. Scott was an oil optimist and an ardent promoter of the well-being drilled 17 miles south of Ray. Being an amateur photographer, he took many pictures of the oil derrick and all activities about the project and had them developed on postcards to be sold or given away at his drug store. As a Christmas gift, he gave the telephone operators every two spoons with the inscription, "Ray ND the Oil City".

In 1938, the same year and at the same location as the Bik Viking Oil Company was forced to abandon its drilling operations, the California Oil Company drilled a memorable test well to a depth of 10,281 feet. This also was reported as a dry hole, again no doubt due to inadequate equipment. However, it was the best available at the time. It was the first deep test in the territory south of Ray and Tioga. In 1951 the Iverson well south of Tioga was brought in as the first producing well. Ray felt the drilling boom that followed, especially in the schools and housing. Many found employment in the oil fields. The schools were hit the hardest, as the students had to attend school for 90 days before the school would receive the allotted state aid. Often by that time the families had moved on to another location and another school. The trailer courts and

southern accents were new to our town but very welcome.

BARWICK'S

Mr. and Mrs. Bert Barwick came to Ray in October of 1903. His first business was the livery barn and dray line. In a few years, he built a larger barn and was keeping as many as 225 horses overnight. Barwick also had 2 contracts to haul mail from Ray to Grinnell and from Ray to Crosby. He had 11 men on the road at one time. Bert was also a farmer and experienced many crop losses due to drought, rust, or hail, as all farmers did. It was necessary to work 80 horses at a time in the moving of these buildings. To his surprise, he became a popular auctioneer. At a basket social in 1903, the ladies coaxed Bert to auction off their baskets. He found himself enjoying the work and cried many farm auction sales through the years. Bert and his wife, Nellie, were civic-minded and active in the community. Mrs. Barwick is remembered as a very pretty lady and always ready to help where needed. Many of the Ray teachers roomed at the Barwick home. Bert Barwick was the first policeman in Ray, and Dr. Scott the first mayor. They became close friends, as Barwick was Dr. Scott's driver during the winter months. One stormy night in 1906, Dr. Scott was called to a farm home 20 miles southeast of Ray. Dr. Scott said if he could get to the Barwick barn, which was one block away, they would try to make the trip. Bert and Dr. Scott took Bert's best team and light jumper and drove under the single telephone line, listening to the wires caused by the wind. Another time they were trying to reach Tioga, to give medical help, during a raging blizzard. They drove on the railroad tracks and when they came to one of the railroad cuts, which were 20 feet deep and a quarter mile long, they would stop the team, get down the tracks and listen for a train; then race as fast as the horses could gallop through the snow cut. Just as they reached Tioga, about midnight, a train went through at a terrific speed. Mr. and Mrs.

Barwick are buried at Sunset Rest Cemetery at Ray.

BRUNSVOLDS

In the early 1900's, the Brunsvold Brothers (William and Eddie) came to Ray and started a confectionary store. Orpha Phelps, later to become Mrs. Eddie Brunsvold, arrived in Ray in 1910. She spent the first winter in McKenzie County and enjoyed it until her cousin was frozen to death during a snowstorm. Shortly after her cousin's death, she returned to Ray. The river was frozen, and they crossed on ice. Orpha met and married Eddie Brunsvold in Ray. She loved Ray during this time and was thrilled with everything and everyone and found these years exciting. In her own words, "I remember the board sidewalks and once when I was walking home after a heavy rain, part of the sidewalks was floating down the middle of the street. We didn't have city water. In the winter we bought large blocks of ice and had it piled on the north side of the house. Then we melted it on the stove and had lovely soft water or melted it in the reservoir on the big old coal range. The town was bustling, people coming and going all the time, mostly young people, as Ray was a stop-over on the main line of the Great Northern." "There were lodges, clubs, and home talent show. We also had a dancing club called, "The one o'clock club" with about 50 couple. Dancing started at 8 and was over at 1. Everyone dressed in party dresses and no drinking was allowed. Sometimes when I watched Gunsmoke on TV, it reminded me of Ray. Sometimes we would dress up in real nice and go down to the depot and watch people get off the train. We never went up town in a house dress. When we could get transportation, we would go to Hungry Gulch, south of Ray, for a picnic by the water falls and shade trees. There were no trees in Ray, just prairie. Then came the depression. I remember one year it would have been a disgrace to get a

new dress. Everyone wore 'made overs' and were proud of it. Then all the banks close. But people learned to cope, and the good years came again." Mrs. Brunsvold, when this interview was held was a centenarian, living in California and planned to attend the upcoming Gran Palace Centennial.

KILSHAW

The young town of Ray enjoyed having a professional travelling show family living in their midst. James E. Kilshaw was born in England, Orpha Crow was born in Iowa. At the age of 16 she started traveling with a theatrical company in which she was known as one of the three "Crow Sisters". In 1893 she married James Kilshaw, a professional actor. In the early 1900's the Kilshaws, each of them, "proved up" on homestead claims south of Ray. The Kilshaws owned and managed "Crow Theatrical Company" and made regular scheduled tours to cities in eastern North Dakota and Montana. They travelled by train and attracted much attention with their stage props, and wardrobe of numerous costumes. After they retired professionally in 1917, they were active in amateur theatricals in the territory. They drew crowds from a great distance, entertaining at the Ray Opera House and later at the city auditorium. They can also be remembered as the "Barringtons". Mr. Kilshaws father was an Episcopalian minister who didn't approve of his son becoming an actor; therefore, his mother gave them permission to use her name, "Barrington", which they often did. Mrs. Kilshaw and Mrs. Eddie Brunsvold were cousins and enjoyed living across the street from each other in Ray.

THE CHARLSONS

The Sam Charlson family came to Ray in the early 1900's. The 3 family members that played

an active role during the pioneer days in Ray were Ellis (known as T.E.), Carl, and Ella. T.E. Charlson spent the first years in McKenzie County. He filed on a sight that still bears his name, Charlson, North Dakota. He moved to Ray in 1917 and was a strong believer there was oil in the area. However, he didn't live to see it developed. Carl and Ella came with their parents to Ray in 1904 as teenagers. The Charlsons rented a small house to live in while the store they would operate was being built. Bertha Herman, a lady homesteader, had the store building constructed. On the second level of the store an Opera House was built. Details on this Opera House will be forthcoming. In 1907 Bertha Herman sold the building to Sam Charlson for \$5,000,000. Carl Charlson spent 42 consecutive years in the store started by his father, first as a clerk and in 1917 (the year of his father's death) he and his sister Ella became co-owners of the store. Carl also had a homestead in McKenzie County. During an interview with Ella, she recalled the day she stepped off the train in Ray with her parents; she was thrilled with Ray. To her, everything was new and fun. Ella attended the Union Commercial Business College at Grand Forks in 1907; she was well prepared to assume her duties in the store. Ella served as treasurer at the Lutheran Church for 15 years. Charlsons sold the building to Adam and Ann Stevahn in 1946. After retiring, Ella moved to Seattle, Washington, where she died two weeks before her 100th birthday. Stevahn's operated the store and used the upper floor for living quarters. In the early 60's, Stevahn's moved their business across the street and rented the building to Montana-Dakota Utilities for an office and shop.

HISTORY OF RAY

WRITTEN BY DORIS L.

We would like to acquaint you with some of the early history of the city of Ray. In 1387 Ray was a stopping-off place and water supply point for the Great Northern railroad. The town was named for Al G. Ray, chief special agent for the Great Northern.

In March of 1902 six blocks of the new town had been platted and registered. Sixteen days later a U.S. Post Office was established. The first postmaster, Glen R. Byrkett, was the young man that stepped off the train at this "water stop" on a stormy night in January, searching for a better health, in the dry air of the prairies. He remained and regained his health.

Ray grew rapidly, as the supply point for area towns that did not have rail service. The first bank was organized in April of 1903 and opened for business on June 3rd. Capital necessary to open the bank was \$10,000,000.

Tat same year Ray could boast of thirty-five business places and in due time Ray had three banks.

The Ray Booster Club was organized in 1903. The club sponsored and helped pay for a ferry across the Missouri River, directedly south of Ray, to serve ranchers from McKenzie County. The placing of plank sidewalks along main street was also an accomplishment of this group, as was the construction of 15-mile telephone lines from Ray to Hofflund (on the north side of the river). This line had two phones in Ray. One at Dr. Scotts office and the other at Albert Barwicks livery and dray.

It is noted in the early history of Ray each businessperson took an active part in whatever project was pursued. In 1908 they made an earnest attempt to have the county seat moved for Williston to Ray. They were not successful, but the town was only six years old at the time and they came close enough that =, as one reporter stated it, "scared the pants off" of the Williston Merchants.

A year later the Standard Oil Co. of Indiana was given a 50-year lease to erect the necessary buildings to conduct business in Ray and the surrounding area.

An ordinance was soon passed to restrain the running, at large, of horses, cattle, sheep, and swine within the town limits. No hitching posts on Main St. and seven speed limit signs were erected. A new jail was built at the cost of \$650.00.

In 1912 the Ray electric Co. was incorporated. A system of streetlights was installed. Ray was the smallest city in the United States to have the lighting and ranked with three largest cities of North Dakota. Two years later, Ray became the smallest city in the state to adopt the commission form of government and are still using that form today. Dr. Scott served as the first President. We now had a movie theatre showing silent films with Mrs. L.B. McFarlin, the theatre owners' wife, playing the background music on the piano. There also was a professional traveling show family living in Ray, and several talented musicians. The fine arts were a part of the pioneer life-details of such in future writings.