

HOW THINGS WERE WHEN I WAS GROWING UP

by Jerry Baker

My parents and my uncle owned the I.G.A. store in Eagle (later known as Krestan's). They sold everything from groceries to clothing and shoes. Cookies came in 5 pound boxes with a glass cover so people could buy as many as they wanted. Flour and sugar came in barrels. They owned a ton and a half Model T Ford truck. Two or three times a week trips were taken to Milwaukee to bring back supplies. They sold gas from a gas pump in front of the store. The store had a railing in front of the store and along the side for customers to tie their horses while they shopped.

There were around 25 cars in the village in 1928 - 1930. Most of the cars were Model T Fords. Most of the houses had barns for horses.

The homes had an outside toilet and every house had an outside well with a hand pump used for getting the water. Most homes had a couple of stoves. Wood and coal were used to heat the homes. Washing machines were run by hand. The water was heated in a copper boiler on top of a stove. To agitate you had to push handle back and forth. You then had to run the clothes through a ringer which, of course, you turned by hand. After ringing the clothes you put them in a wash tub. The wash tub was also used for taking baths in.

There were a few radios at this time. Radios were powered by a couple of batteries. We had a telephone, but to dial a number we had to ring the telephone operator and then she would ring the number for you.

The first train to come to Eagle came from Chicago in 1867. It stopped to fill its boiler with water and then continued on to Minneapolis. In 1917 passenger trains carrying people and mail came to Eagle. They had a mail clerk on board who sorted the mail. The mail would be dropped off on a 4 wheel cart that the depot agent would have waiting for him. He would also pick up the packages and bundled mail ready to go. The post office would come by and pick up the mail.

12 different trains would travel through Eagle regularly, some west bound and some east bound. They included Milwaukee to Madison, Eagle to Elkhorn, and Mineral Point to Milwaukee. See the list of train routes.

There were the big freight trains carrying supplies. They had feed for the Eagle Mill, coal and lumber for the lumber companies, and gas and oil for Chapman tanks (which were close to the tracks).

Next to the tracts was a coral where farmers would bring in there live stock for shipping to the Milwaukee stockyards.

When the freight trains would stop at the depot and while they filled up with water the train personell would eat at Stead's Restaurant which was located next to Sherman's store.

A pickle company had big round tanks for pickling. Cucumbers were put into a brine and allowed to pickle. Then they were shipped out by train.

There was also a creamery where farmers would bring in their milk in ten gallon cans.

We had two milkmen who delivered milk in the village. They drove in a small truck and the milk came in glass bottles. Their names were Harold Pardee and Charles Curver.

Del Stubbs was our rural mail carrier. In winter he would put skis on the front of his car to help him get through the deep snow

The store and the houses had ice boxes. Mr. Walmbolt was the ice man who delivered the ice with on an open backed truck. He had a scale he used to weigh the ice before delivering it. He would give pieces of ice to the kids.

There where two barber shops in town. They each had a red and white stripped barber pole in front of their shopps that continually turned.

The kids enjoyed going to Mr. Billings meat market. It had

saw dust on the floor and a circular tack that held the butchered pigs.

Across the street from the store was a band stand. We use to play games here. They also held band concerts here and occasionally showed a free movie.

I remember watching people at the mill unloading the freight cars, farmers with their horse and wagons taking their milk cans to the creamery, and the people delivering coal with their faces black with soot.

Eagle had 2 car dealers in town. There were 5 businesses that sold gas and oil. Our old gas pump had a crank that pushed the gas up into the red globe that was on top of the pump. Once filled you would then let the gas empty out of the globe and into what ever you were filling.

There was a drug store in town. For 5 cents you could buy; an ice cream cone, a candy bar, a soda pop, or Smith and Brothers cough drops. There were also one cent candy bars.

In 1929 Eagle school burned down. The lower grades had school at the Methodist church and the upper grades went to the Catholic church.

My family moved out of the store in March. We moved our stuff with horses and bob sled to a farm about 3 1/2 miles outside of

Eagle.

We had a windmill on the farm that pumped water for the livestock. We used a hand pump to get our own water.

My dad sold wood to the store, bank, and homes in Eagle. We used a wagon in good weather and a bob sled in snow. When I got older I would drive the bob sled to deliver the wood, and to take feed to the mill to have ground and mixed.

When my parents would go shopping in Eagle I would deliver eggs to people around town.

When we first moved to the farm we didn't have electricity. We used lamps in the house and lanterns in the barn. Three years later we got electricity. It was like a whole new world.

*** We apologize if anyones name is misspelled, it was unintentional.

TRAIN SCHEDULE *1917 thru Eagle*

WESTBOUND

EASTBOUND

Train No.

Train No.

21	9:04 AM	4	7:52 AM
Milwaukee to Mineral Point		Madison to Milwaukee	
221	9:10 AM	220	8:30 AM
Eagle to Elkhorn		Eagle from Elkhorn	
5	2:05 PM	22	10:30 AM
Milwaukee to Prairie du Chien		Madison to Milwaukee	
7	5:30 PM	8	12:03 PM
Milwaukee to Mineral Point		Prairie du Chien to Milwaukee	
201	6:00 PM	206	5:05 PM
Eagle to Elkhorn		Eagle from Elkhorn	
1	7:50 PM	6	5:54 PM
Milwaukee to Madison		Mineral Point to Milwaukee	

** Information provided from the Vincent Roberts Archives

The first train to come to Eagle came from Chicago on October 14, 1867, they stopped to fill their boilers with water and then continued on to Minneapolis.