

## WINDMILLS AND WOOD STOVES: GROWING UP IN THE 1920S

by Jerry Baker

*Photos from Eagle Historical Society archives*

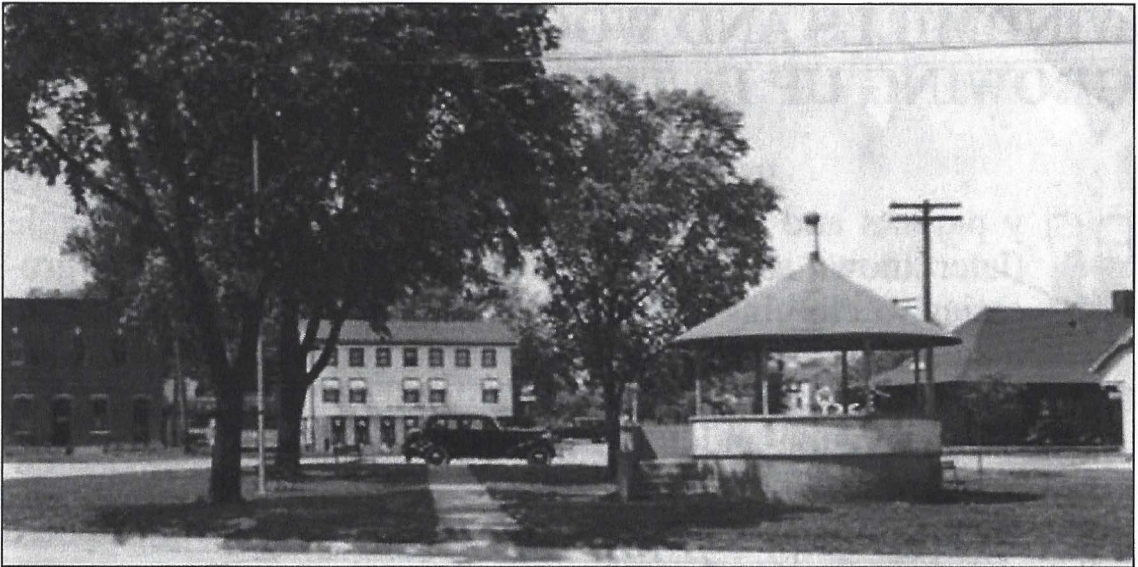
**M**y parents and my uncle owned the I.G.A. store in Eagle (later known as Krestan's). They sold everything from groceries to clothing and shoes. Cookies came in five pound boxes with a glass cover so people could buy as many as they wanted. Flour and sugar came in barrels.

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. There was a railing in front and on the side of the store for customers to tie their horses while they shopped.

There were approximately 25 cars in the village between 1928 - 1930. Most of the cars were Model T Fords. Most of the houses had barns for horses. The homes had an outside toilet. Every house had an outside well with a hand pump 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 the stove. To agitate the washer one had to push the handle back and forth. We then had to run the clothes through a ringer which was also turned by hand. The clothes were rung and then put in a wash tub. The wash tub was



SIGN AT LOWER RIGHT READS: AUTOISTS HEADQUARTERS INFORMATION BUREAU  
OBVIOUSLY, EAGLE WAS FAR AHEAD OF ITS TIME



BANDSTAND, CIRCA 1942

also used for taking baths.

There were a few radios at this time. Radios were powered by a couple of batteries. People had telephones, but to dial a number they had to ring the telephone operator and she would ring the number they wanted.

The first train to come to Eagle came from Chicago. It stopped to fill its boiler with water and then continued on to Minneapolis. 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 four wheel cart that the depot agent would have waiting for the mail clerk. The clerk also picked up the packages and bundled mail. A post office worker came by and picked up the mail.

Twelve different trains traveled through Eagle regularly, some west bound and some east bound. They included Milwaukee to Madison, Eagle to Elkhorn, and Mineral Point to Milwaukee. There were 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 tracks was a corral where farmers brought their livestock for shipping to the Milwaukee stockyards. When the freight train stopped for awhile, workers filled the water tank and the crew ate at the restaurant which was next to Sherman's store.

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

There was also a creamery where farmers brought their milk in ten gallon cans. There were two milkmen who delivered milk in



SMART'S GARAGE, 1917

the village. They drove small trucks and the milk came in glass bottles. Their names were Harold Pardee and Charles Cruver.

Del Stubbs was our rural mail carrier. In winter, he 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. Wambold was the iceman. With an open-backed scale, he weighed and cut the ice before delivering it. He gave pieces of ice to the kids.

There were two barber shops in town. Each had a red and white striped barber pole which turned continually in front of their shops.

The kids enjoyed going to Mr. Belling's meat market. It had sawdust on the floor and a circular track that held the butchered pigs. Across the street from the store was a bandstand. The kids used to play games there. The town also held band concerts and occasionally showed a free movie.

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

Eagle had two car dealers in town. There were five 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, the gas emptied out of the globe and into whatever you were





GAS PUMP ON MAIN STREET

filling.

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

In 1928 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 I.G.A. store in March 1929. We moved our belongings with horses and bobsled to a farm about three and a half 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 the snow. When I was older, I drove the bob-sled to deliver the wood and take feed to the mill to be ground and mixed. While my parents went shopping in Eagle, I delivered 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. In 1940, we drilled a new well by the house, put running water in, and made the pantry into a bathroom. We ran the water line to the milk house and barn. All the digging for the water line was done by manpower. □