

Historical Personalities



C. H. Colyer (1849-1908): The first mayor of the village, C. H. Colyer was born in Wisconsin and came to Traverse County in 1880. He was elected sheriff in 1884, serving three terms. Colyer was admitted to the bar in 1889 and was immediately appointed to the position of county attorney to fill a vacancy, a position which he held for many years. In 1905 he was named the first game warden for this section of the state. The same year he opened a new hotel

next door to the Palmer House. One of the earliest settlers, Colyer took an active part in the county seat war. As with many pioneers, he filled many diverse positions and was a veritable "jack of all trades."



C. H. Colyer



Alfred Setterlund

ALFRED SETTERLUND (1849-1922): Born in Sweden, Al Setterlund came to Wheaton in 1885 and was a partner in several of the early businesses. In 1887 he

was elected to the village's first board of trustees. Setterlund was a contractor and builder, erecting practically all of the early buildings in the village including the court house; the Presbyterian, Swedish Lutheran and Catholic churches; and many of the business buildings and residences. He served as a county commissioner for six years, mayor for two terms, state legislator for one term. He moved to International Falls in 1906.

ANDREW PETERSON (1862-1937): Peterson came to the United States from Norway and in 1885 came to Wheaton and entered the mercantile business with T. O. Thorson. He was thus engaged when he was chosen the first village recorder. In 1889 he helped organize the Bank of Wheaton, where he was the cashier until 1908, when he sold his interest in the bank to a local corporation. He served one term in the state legislature; elected in 1892, he declined re-election. He was active in the Hope Lutheran Church, in city and school affairs. He conducted private business concerning holdings in Traverse County, Minneapolis and Canada until his death.



E. F. Joubert

Note: Also members of the village's first board of trustees, in addition to the three above-mentioned, were Thomas Kuhn and Nels F. Schroeder. Kuhn became a resident of Wheaton in 1884 and was engaged in the blacksmith business. Schroeder also came to Wheaton in 1884. He was one of Wheaton's first merchants and first postmaster. Later he was employed by the Erickson & Hellekson store and in 1898 was elected county auditor.

DAVID BURTON (1851-1937): Burton was born in Quebec Province, Canada, and attended school there. He engaged in lumbering for ten years and in 1880 came to Traverse County where he owned a large tract of land. In 1889 Burton organized the Bank of Wheaton, of which he was president. The bank was reorganized several times, but he remained as president until 1929 when it was sold. Burton was an active member of the Masonic Lodge, Shrine and Eastern Star. He watched and helped Wheaton grow from the beginning.

E. F. JOUBERT (1863-1943): Ed Joubert founded the **Wheaton Gazette** in 1885. He was born in Hudson, Wisconsin, and came to Traverse County in 1881 after first working in Litchfield, Minnesota, with an older brother in the publishing business. He went to Browns Valley to work on the **Reporter**, a paper owned by his brother-in-law, S.W. Frasier. In March 1885 he moved to Wheaton to start his own publishing business. His **Wheaton Gazette** was an influential factor in laying the foundation for the county seat location in Traverse County. He retired in 1919 from the newspaper field. Joubert served the community as postmaster in the years 1897-1914 and 1923-1936. During the Wilson administration he served eight years as deputy county auditor.

S. W. FRASIER (1855-1929): Born in Indiana, Frasier came to Traverse County in 1880, locating first in Browns Valley. He hauled a printing outfit overland with a mule team from Litchfield and started the first newspaper in the county, **The Reporter**. In 1880 he was elected clerk of court and came to Wheaton in 1889 when the county seat was moved here. He brought the paper

with him. It was consolidated with the **Gazette** under the name **Gazette-Reporter**. He was also a pioneer real estate dealer in Traverse County. When he went into business in 1885, five dollars an acre was top price for land. By 1900 the price was up to \$20-25 an acre for improved land. Frasier was Commissioner of the U.S. Court, his duties including transacting government land business for this district. He also served as clerk of court for sixteen years.



S. W. Frasier

OLE H. HELLEKSON (1859-): O. H. Hellekson was born in Iowa. He attended school and taught there for a time. He took a business course and in 1885 came to Wheaton to work in the Lee & Erickson store as a bookkeeper-clerk. The following year he joined the firm as half-owner of the business Erickson & Hellekson. His management was one of the reasons for the success of the firm. While living in Wheaton he served as mayor three terms, as president of the school board, and as chairman of the Republican County Committee. In 1913 he moved to Minneapolis, but retained an active interest in the business. In 1921 he designed the general headquarters for this very large business of Erickson-Hellekson-Vye on the second floor of their Wheaton hardware building.

JOSEPH LEASER (1834-1897), **ANNIE LEASER** (1864-1917): Annie Leaser Buck, daughter of Joseph Leaser, was born in England of German parents. Joseph Leaser brought his family to Minnesota and constructed a mill near Litchfield. At this time Maudada was begun, and some of the founders contacted Leaser asking him to move his mill to the new townsite, which he did in 1881. When Maudada did not become the county seat, the Leaser family moved to Wheaton where he bought the quarter section of land on the south edge of the Wheaton original townsite. This land was platted, and after a prolonged legal battle with the government and the railroad in behalf of the settlers, he received a clear title. Leaser applied for a patent for a wheat cleaning machine in 1887.

After her father's death, Annie inherited his land and considered Wheaton her home. She was appointed postmaster and served from 1894 through 1897, becoming the only woman to serve in that capacity in the history of Wheaton. In 1898 she donated the city block on the south side of town which was designated for a city park. Later she traveled extensively and made at least one round-the-world trip, but returned to Wheaton every summer. She married late and had no children. Her funeral was conducted in the Spiritualist Temple.



Ole H. Hellekson



Rev. W. T. Williams

REV. W. T. WILLIAMS (1847-1929): W. T. Williams was born in New York state and came to the midwest with his parents at an early age. He taught school and was principal of several schools before being ordained a Baptist minister in 1883. In 1888 he was elected superintendent of schools for Traverse County and continued in the office at least through the year 1906. He also served the Baptist church in Wheaton. Under his leadership the Traverse County schools were awarded a medal at the World's Fair Educational Exhibition in Chicago in 1893.

O. C. NEUMAN (1869-1938): A native of Minnesota, O. C. Neuman came to Traverse County in 1887 as a partner in the firm of Lund & Neuman, general merchandisers. In 1896 he left the mercantile business and became active in real estate operations, forming the firm of Traverse Land Co. which was active for twenty years. Neuman was elected to the state legislature in 1916 and served in that body for sixteen years. When the Traverse County Fair Association was formed, he was an active member and served in various capacities until his death.

EDWARD RUSTAD (1867-): Born in Wisconsin, Edward Rustad came to Traverse County with his family in 1882, going first to Browns Valley. His father was elected county auditor in 1886, and Edward became deputy auditor. After his father's death in 1892, he was elected auditor for three terms. Rustad then attended law school at the university and obtained his degree. He served as mayor of the village and had a law practice. Rustad and family moved to the West Coast in 1919.

ALFRED RUSTAD (1872-1947): Brother of Edward Rustad, Alfred served twenty years as register of deeds. After being president of the First State Bank for ten years, he engaged in farm management. Rustad was a charter member of the Hope Lutheran Church, treasurer of the Traverse County Fair for thirty years, mayor, school board member, and president of the Commercial Club.

F. W. MURPHY (1869-1940): Born in Wisconsin and educated at the University of Minnesota, Murphy came to Wheaton immediately upon receiving his law degree in 1893, maintaining an office here until his



F. W. Murphy

death, a matter of forty-seven years. His activities included: President of West Central Minnesota Development Association, president of Wheaton School Board, master for the Wheaton Masonic Lodge, chairman of Board of Directors for the National Agricultural Council, regent to the University of Minnesota, president of the Minnesota Bar Association, WPA director in charge of six states, member of the Minnesota Planning Board, and elder of the Presbyterian Church. In politics he was an independent thinker and was mainly interested in farm problems, hence his sponsorship of the McNary-Haugen farm bill which passed the Congress two times, only to be vetoed by two different presidents. He was a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1928; however, after his pitch for the farm bill was rebuffed, he switched his allegiance to the Democrats and Alfred Smith. He continued his activity in the Democratic party until 1940 when he supported Wendell Wilke for president.

E. J. FORTUNE (1851-1937): E. J. Fortune was born in Norway and came to Wheaton in 1879 where he farmed for a time. When he came to Traverse County and settled in Clifton Township, his shanty was the only building between Herman and Lake Traverse. In 1894 he was elected judge of probate after the amputation of his leg precluded farming. He retired in 1932 after thirty-eight years of service.

F. J. STEIDL (1857-1944): Born in Austria where he spent his early years, Steidl received his law degree from Drake University after coming to the United States with his parents. Having practiced law in several towns, he came to Browns Valley in 1891, but moved his family to Wheaton when he was elected county attorney. In 1899 he was appointed District Judge by Gov. Lind. Later he practiced law in Wheaton until 1931. He was appointed Judge of Probate at that time and served until 1941.

LARS J. BAKKE (1863-1952): A charter member of the Wheaton Fire Department, Lars Bakke was born in Norway and came to Wheaton in April 1888, where he spent the balance of his life. He started employment with the Hellekson Store in 1892 and later was manager of the Erickson-Hellekson-

Vye Co. Wheaton lumber yard, retiring in 1938. He helped organize the fire department in 1891 and was foreman of the hook and ladder department for thirty-one years. He was a charter member of the Hope Lutheran Church and had membership in the Masonic, Oddfellow, and Woodmen Lodges.



George G. Allanson

GEORGE G. ALLANSON (1871-1959): George was born in a log cabin built by his grandfather, Joseph R. Brown, which is now standing in the Sam Brown Memorial Park in Browns Valley. After spending his boyhood years in Georgia and southern Minnesota, he returned to Browns Valley as an employee of the **Footprints** newspaper. When the paper was moved to Wheaton in 1894, he followed as part of the staff and lived here until his death. Allanson was a pioneer historian, publisher, and postmaster. He was justice of the peace until the end of 1955. He was very active in local fraternal organizations. A part of his personal library went to the Minnesota Historical Society and part to the Wheaton Community Library.



Dr. C. F. Ewing

DR. C. F. EWING (1872-1944): C. F. Ewing was born in Indiana and received his medical degree from the University of Minnesota in 1901. He came to Wheaton in 1904 and practiced here for forty years. During that time he ran a private hospital for thirty-five years, was surgeon for the Milwaukee railroad forty-two years, and surgeon for the Great Northern road for a number of years. He was a pioneer doctor with few roads and only horse and buggy transportation. He always painted his buggy wheels a bright yellow to let people recognize him. He also made house calls day and night and in all weather. Ewing was an avid golfer, hunter, fisherman and gun fancier. He encouraged all progressive moves to improve the community.

REV. LARS JOHAN LUNDQUIST (1851-1937): The Rev. Lars Lundquist immigrated to the United States in 1869, coming here from Sweden. A member of the first graduating class of Augustana College, Paxton, Illinois, he served as a frontier pastor after his ordination in 1878. The first

service that he conducted in Wheaton was in the old schoolhouse (Masonic Hall) when it was under construction, using a carpenter bench for his pulpit. He was active in synod matters and served on the board of Gustavus Adolphus College.

CHARLES HOUSTON (1878-1969): Houston came to Wheaton in 1902 and formed a partnership with F. J. Steidl and later was a member of the Houston & Huber law firm. He served as county attorney for many years and also served as Solicitor General for the State of Minnesota and as Assistant Attorney General in Minnesota. He died in New York in 1969.

VICTOR E. ANDERSON (1883-1948): The first graduate of the Northwestern College at Fergus Falls, Anderson was born in Monson Township and educated in Wheaton. After receiving his law degree from the University of Minnesota in 1906, he joined the Frank Murphy law firm. He served as Traverse County attorney for one term. In 1937 he was appointed Minnesota District Attorney and held that position until his death. In 1938 he filed for the Democratic nomination for governor. He prosecuted a sedition trial and convicted eighteen members of the Socialist Workers Party in 1941.

ALMA DODDS (1881-): Alma Dodds, the only person to leave from Wheaton's First Presbyterian Church for the foreign mission field, was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Dodds, Traverse County pioneers who came here in 1880 from Ohio. She was in the second class to graduate from Wheaton High School. Her parents were charter members of the First Presbyterian Church.

Miss Dodds went to China in 1910 as a missionary nurse. Except for furloughs, she remained in China until 1942 when missionaries were ordered back to the United States, returning on the Swedish liner Gripsholm after being exchanged for a Chinese national. In China she was in charge of two leper homes, an orphanage and a girls' school. The orphanage started not long after her arrival when an unwanted baby girl was brought to her. She adopted the girls as they came and usually

had around 100 in the home. Returning to Chicago she established a center for graduate Chinese students at the University of Chicago and continued to operate it until

the University bought her property in the mid-1950's. By 1949 the demand among Chinese students for a church of their own led her to open a chapel in her home. She retired in 1956 at the age of eighty.



State Senator Al Johanson, on the left, is pictured presenting a "Driving Safety Award" to Traverse County Commissioner William Ringdahl at a Farm Bureau picnic in June, 1948.

WILLIAM RINGDAHL (1870-1957): Emigrating from his home in Sweden in 1891, William Ringdahl first came to Norcross in 1893 where he was in the grain business. In 1901 he moved to Wheaton and opened a farm loan, insurance and real estate business here which endures yet today (Ringdahl & Terhaar Agency, Inc.). He served as county commissioner for forty-six years. His other activities included serving as church treasurer, president of the Farmers Mercantile, president of the Farmers Elevator, president of the Commercial Club, and president of the Fair Association.

ALVIN JOHANSON (1899-1964): Another Traverse County native, Alvin Johanson attended the University of Minnesota, graduated with a law degree and was admitted to the bar in 1924. At that time he returned to Wheaton and joined the law firm of F. W. Murphy. He remained a member of that firm for the balance of his life, becoming the senior partner in 1940. Johanson served in the State Senate from 1943 to 1954. During his years in the Senate he was chairman of the agricultural committee and chairman of the aviation committee. In 1956 he filed for the post of Attorney General, but was forced to with-

draw upon suffering a serious heart attack. A veteran of World War I, Johanson was active in local affairs, being mayor for three years and councilman for several years; commander of the American Legion for two years and filling other Legion offices; and Traverse County chairman of civil defense in World War II. He served as a member of the American Bar Association, Minnesota Bar Association, and President of the District Bar Association; an elder and trustee of the Presbyterian Church for many years; past master of the Masonic Lodge, Eastern Star patron, Shrine Club; and a member of the Wheaton Lions Club.

FRANCES LEWIS (1890-1970): Frances Lewis served as Wheaton's only woman mayor for two terms in the late 1920's. Born in Morris, she married Henry Lewis in 1912 and they moved to Wheaton where they bought the telephone company. After her husband's death in 1924, she ran the Wheaton Telephone Company until 1946 when it was sold. While in Wheaton she was active in community affairs, was a Worthy Matron of the Eastern Star, and served in other organizations. She married Dwight Orton in 1959 and resided in Ortonville and Texas in her later years.

FRED F. Moore (1888-1974): Fred Moore spent fifty-five years of his life in Wheaton, coming here as county agent in 1919 after World War I, a position he filled until 1925. He owned and operated a feed and seed business in Wheaton, served two terms as a state representative, and was active in the Federal Land Bank, of which he was secretary-treasurer for many years. He was a charter member of the University of Minnesota Alumni Association.

G. I. KRISTENSEN (1896-1952): Born in Wheaton to the Gust Kristensens, who came from Norway in 1893, Gordon was a cashier of the banking institution of which he later became president. After serving in World War I, he was made assistant cashier of the First National Bank of Wheaton, becoming cashier in 1921. The bank had several name changes and finally in 1938 was known as the First State Bank of Wheaton. Kristensen was tremendously active in nearly every civic undertaking attempted in Wheaton and the surrounding area for many years.



Dr. A. L. Lindberg

DR. A. L. LINDBERG (1894-1966): A medical doctor here for thirty-seven years, Dr. Lindberg came to Wheaton in 1924 to practice with Dr. C. F. Ewing. He was born in St. Peter, Minnesota, and enlisted in the medical corps in World War I after graduating from Gustavus Adolphus College. He was already interested in a medical career but wanted to gain some experience before making the commitment to medicine. He was stationed in the States and was in the midst of the great flu epidemic during that war. Since he was working in the large central laboratories, he helped in the flu's control. He later graduated from the University of Minnesota's medical school in 1922. He kept up an active practice here until 1961.

ELIZABETH BURNS (1888-1952): "Bess" Burns was born in Leonardsville Township of pioneer parents Michael and Helen (Gallagher) Burns. She was a member of the first graduating class of nurses at the University of Minnesota and did post graduate work at the University of Colorado. In World War I she was a Red Cross worker. Burns became the Traverse County

Nurse in 1924 and Executive Secretary of the Welfare Board in 1937, retaining her position as county nurse. She remained in that post until her death. She was named to the **Who's Who in Minnesota** for her welfare work during the depression years of 1933-1936. In 1949 she was honored at the University as a member of the first nurses' graduating class. She was an active member of the Ave Maria Church, Library Club, Commercial Club, and PTA and was also a registered Red Cross nurse.

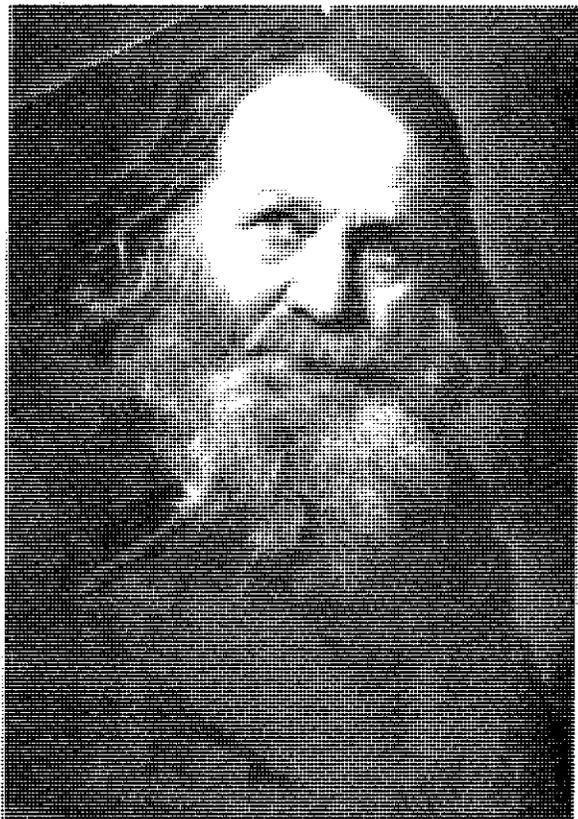
CARL SWEDBERG (1888-1953): Born in Sweden, Carl was a resident of Wheaton after 1913. After doing construction work in Duluth, Swedberg came to Wheaton and formed a construction company. His firm built the First State Bank (now the Broadway Office Building), Senior Citizens' Building, post office, Gopher Theatre, and other buildings around town. He also bid and completed the first REA project in Traverse County. His firm built nine schools in neighboring towns including the elementary school in Wheaton. Swedberg was mayor for two terms, served on the school board, was a member of the Commercial Club and the Masonic Lodge and was very active in village affairs.

W. A. VYE (1879-1949),

ASHLEY W. VYE (1905-1979): Between them the Vyes were active in the firm of Erickson, Hellekson & Vye for a period of 71 years. W. A. Vye came to Wheaton in 1921 as manager of E-H-Vye, a firm he had joined in 1908 and which had grown to include fifteen lumber yards and hardware stores in Minnesota and North Dakota at the time of his death. The elder Vye served on the village council, the school board, and was mayor of Wheaton for three terms, during which time the streets were paved and the white way installed.

Ashley came to Wheaton with his parents and joined E-H-Vye in 1929. He was named general manager in 1949 upon the death of his father. Vye served on the hospital board when the present original hospital was constructed, was on the fair board for twenty-seven years, and was also on the First State Bank board for many years.

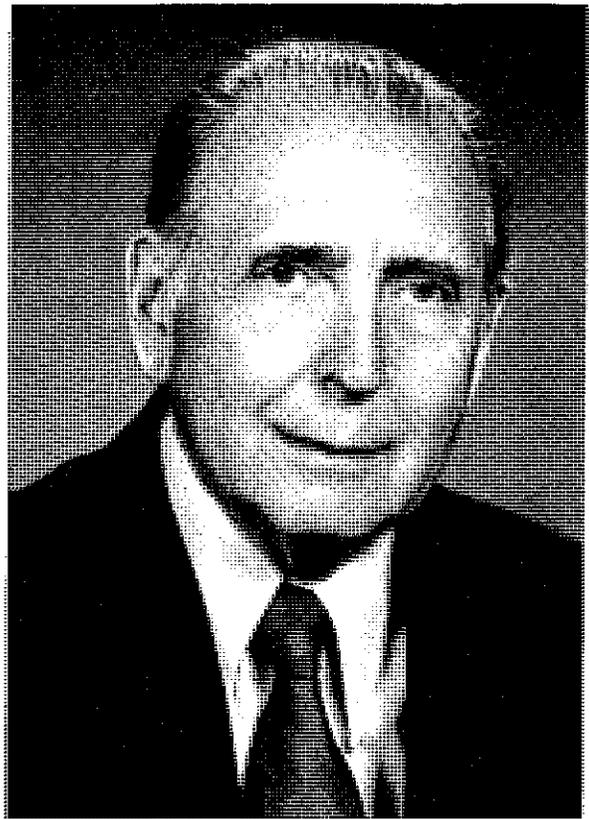
A. G. (ARCH) KLAWON (1890-1956): Arch was born in Wheaton to pioneer parents, the Herman Klawons, who came to Wheaton in 1888 and established a saloon. He was a World War I veteran of six major battles. Klawon served 37 years as game warden here, the oldest game warden in the state in point of service. He served under nine Governors and went under Civil Service in 1939, retiring in 1956. Klawon covered his territory afoot, by horseback, automobile, and skates, skating from Mud Lake to Browns Valley, a distance of twenty miles, on several occasions. He was active in his work when Wheaton was a hunting mecca with sportsmen from all over the country hunting here. He saw the development of the Conservation Department, the dwindling of daily duck limits from twenty-five to three, and the virtual extinction of the prairie chicken.



Albert S. Falk

ALBERT S. FALK (1891-1973): Albert was born in Minnesota and moved to Traverse County with his parents when he was three. He was educated locally and in Fergus Falls and attended Gustavus Adolp-

hus College one year. He left college to earn money, but never returned to his studies. He began his life of roving at that time, which led him to every state in the union, throughout Canada, Mexico, Central America, the Bahamas, and even to Cuba. During his travels he supported himself by tight-rope walking and painting or interior decorating which he had learned from an uncle. He was renowned for his "Peace Plan" which consisted of giving a monthly pension of between \$50 and \$100 to every person in the United States with funding to come from a two percent tax on all manufactured products at their origin and from monies which would otherwise be spent on armaments — hence the "Peace Plan". He ran for several offices: Lt. Governor of Minnesota, mayor of Duluth, Congressman from the seventh district and from the ninth district, and President of the United States, none of which he won. He spent much time in jails all over the country for vagrancy. After all these travels and experiences, Falk came back to Wheaton in his old age and died here. He willed the site of the present Falk Park to the City of Wheaton.



Dr. H. N. Weickert



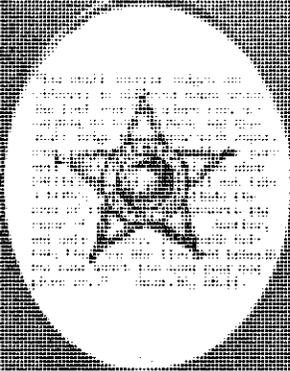
A. H. Winter

Two current members of the professional ranks in Wheaton, Dr. H. N. Weickert and A. H. Winter, have a combined total of well over 100 years of service to the community in their chosen fields of endeavor.

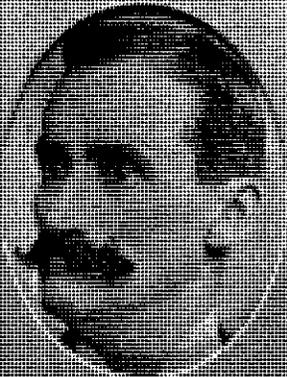
Dr. Weickert, graduating from the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry in 1923, began his practice in Warren, Minnesota. One year later he decided to locate in Wheaton. He has continued his practice in Wheaton during the more than 60 years since his arrival, except for five years of duty with the military during World War II.

Mr. Winter, a graduate of the University of Minnesota School of Law in 1924, began his practice in Browns Valley that year. He moved to Wheaton in 1931, and has continued active in his law practice here during all of more than half century since then.

Sheriffs of Traverse County



John A. Bennett
1881-1882



John A. Bennett
1881-1882



John A. Bennett
1881-1882



John A. Bennett
1881-1882



John A. Bennett
1881-1882



John A. Bennett
1881-1882



George Schmitz
1887-1888



Artie Schmitz
1888-1889



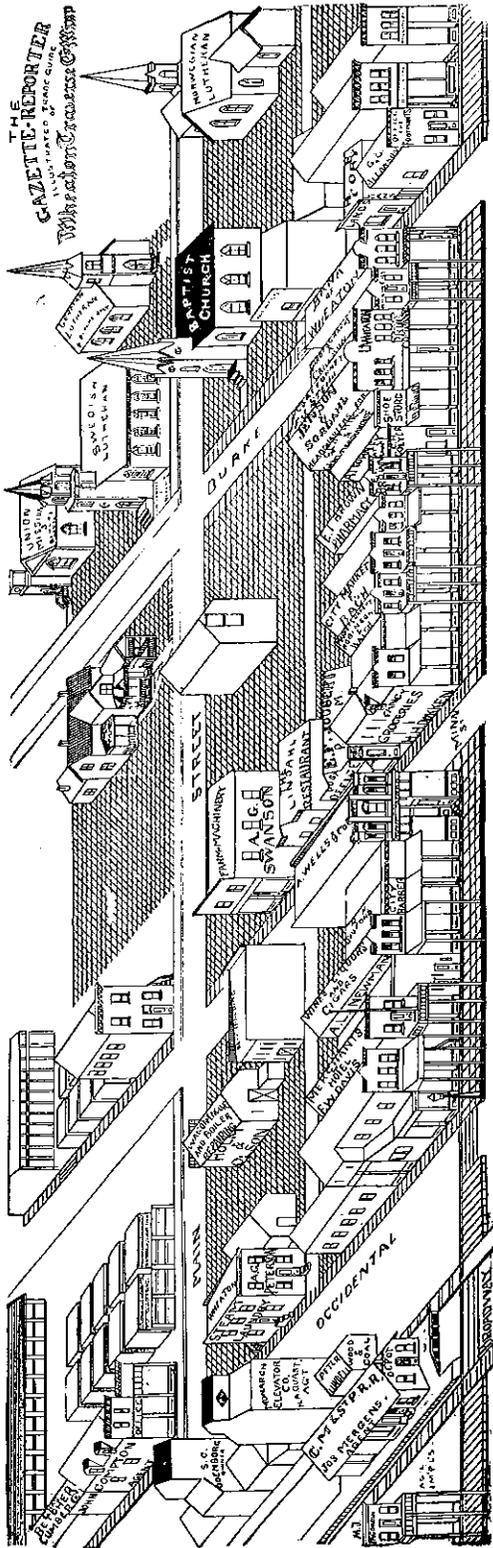
Dan Tammox
1889

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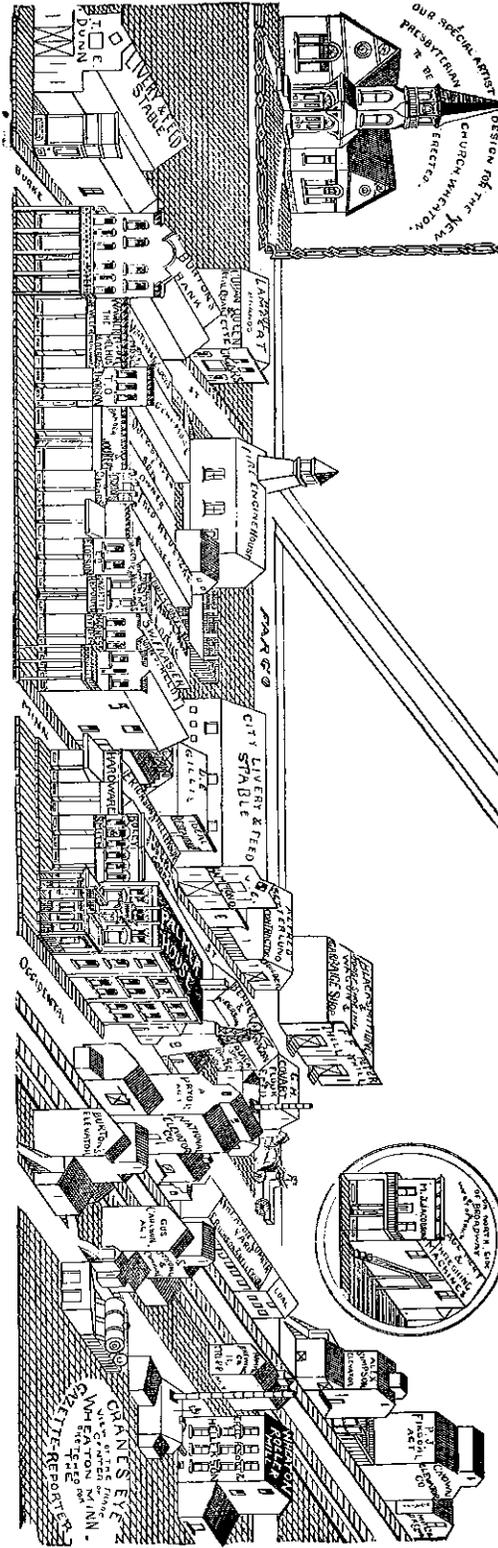
NUMBER 20



EAST.

BROADWAY.

WEST.



OUR SPECIAL ARTIST DESIGN FOR THE NEW CHURCH WHEATON, MINN. BY THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

