



GRASSTON

1918

Grasston, Minnesota
1899 - 1993

BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF GRASSTON



GRASSTON POPULATION

1910	189
1920	239
1930	229
1950	154
1970	132
1983	123

This book is dedicated to all who have contributed to our history!
To all who have provided pictures, information and encouragement.

Thank you!

Shirley (Sylvander) Hansen
Marge (Wyman) Bjorklund
Myrtle (Swan) Telstad

For copies please contact:

GRASSTON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE
Elaine Lucht
Box 12
Grasston, Minnesota 55030
(612) 396-3118

The committee has compiled this book from early pictures and bits of information. Please accept our apologies for errors or inconsistencies and unintentional omissions. We have tried to contact everyone we could for information and facts but undoubtedly we have missed someone.

Sponsored by A.A.L. Branch #7140 Braham-Grasston

Grasston we remember

Founding of the village

In 1865 four Swedes, John (Lindrot) Swan, Lars Magnus Peterson, Andrew Olson and A. P. Hoaglund came to this unsettled area and claimed their homesteads.

John Swan married Clara Anderson in Minneapolis in 1874 and they came to settle on their homestead. This was the land on which Grasston now stands.

1897 brought the news that the Great Northern Railroad was planning to build a spur connecting Hinckley and Coon Rapids choosing this sight as a choice location for a station and water towers. The name Swanville was suggested, but Minnesota already had a town by that name so Grasston (possibly because of Grass Lake nearby) was born.

"Well," I can almost hear Grandpa Swan say, "maybe this is a good spot for a village!"

The railroad became a reality in 1899 and the first plotting of the village was laid out by John Swan. He and his wife built the Swan Hotel near the railroad station to accommodate passengers and settlers coming to this area. Another hotel, the West Hotel, flourished for five years before it was destroyed by fire.

And then Grasston grew and grew!

There are indeed many settlers in this area who should be recognized and venerated in this chapter. There are few records and fewer "old-timers" remaining that could tell the history of these ancestors.

The 1875 census lists him as J. A. Lindrot, the name derived from his birthplace, The Landryd Parish in Linkoping, Sweden. But he had changed his name to John A. Swan. From the Kanabec County Times of December, 1904; "Mr. Swan has for the past 30 years been an active and prominent citizen of the town of Grass Lake. He was one of the first men to open and cultivate a farm in this county. He established an enviable reputation for honesty and integrity and his death will be a loss to the community." "Through his industry a barren wilderness has been converted into a productive farm and his first log shanty home into a magnificent residence." 1874 he and wife Clara homesteaded the land on which Grasston was built. 1899 was the first plotting of Grasston, the livery stable, the Swan Hotel and Blacksmith shop.



John A. Swan, 1846-1904. Founder of Grasston. Pictured are John and Clara Swan, Anne, Fred and Oscar.



Train wreck



Laying the tracks of the Great Northern Railroad

SWAN HOTEL



The Swan Hotel had three stories and about 13 rooms where people could stay. The rooms would cost from a dollar to a dollar and twenty five cents to rent per day. To wash the clothes, water had to be boiled and then washed with a wash-board. For sanitary conditions, the sheets were boiled in water in a big boiler on top of the wood stove that was in the kitchen. For heat in the hotel there was a big wood stove in the kitchen.

In the dining room there was a coal heater with icinglass doors which were fire proof. There was also a wood stove upstairs. In the living room or lobby, was a post office. In 1901 the post office moved just south of the N.J. Johnson general store. The peak of business at the hotel was from 1900 to 1920. Guests at the Swan Hotel were people such as cattle buyers, potato buyers or homesteaders.

GUST PEARSON & OSCAR JOHNSON

Choice of wine,
liquor, cigars

The Grasston Advance Feb. 6, 1914

Saxon Car with a record GRASSTON AUTO CO.

The Grasston Advance June 28, 1917

Mountings-Rugs ARVID NELSON Taxidermist

The Grasston Advance Jan. 19, 1922

RUNQUIST ENTERPRISES

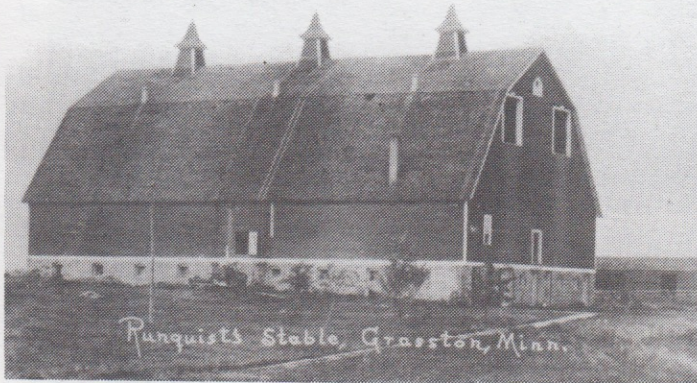


John Runquist

Grasston owes much of its growth to philanthropic John Runquist. Born in Sweden in 1862 he came to America in 1885. He became a railroad builder with interests in Duluth and Mesabi Iron Range Railroad and the Great Northern Railroad. With the construction of the Great Northern Railroad from Hinckley to Coon Rapids, he moved his family to land he had purchased from Lars M. Peterson and developed a farming industry. His barn was the largest in the country at that time measuring 125 feet long, 75 feet wide and 72 feet high. The house, too, was impressive surrounded by a park with peacocks, and a metal whale that blew in the pool.

His wife Ella, chose to live in Grasston while John commuted to his business interests in Duluth.

His farm and other enterprises here were in charge of managers.



Runquist stable



The John Runquist home



John Runquist raised thoroughbred horses for racing. His trainer is shown here with John R., a son of the nationally famous Dan Patch of the Savage farms.

Grasston owes much of its growth to his investments here.

- 1901.....second plotting of Grasston
General store managed by O.M. Nelson
Blacksmith shop
- 1902.....Lumberyard
- 1903.....Livery stable with Fred and Oscar Swan in charge
- 1904.....President of the Bank
Vice President-Elliot
Cashier-A.T. Westrom
- 1905.....Third plotting of Grasston
- 1909.....President of the Potato Starch Factory
- 1909-1910.....Added the second story and enlarged the general store. This structure then housed the bank, Forrestad and Johnson General Store, a Confectionery and pool hall, a casket company, Doctor's offices and the Opera House.
- 1909.....Donated land for the school. A distant relative reported that he died in 1946, but we have no records or details of life after Grasston.

Fire Destroys "Big Barn" in Grasston

(From the Braham Journal September 12, 1963)



Pictured above is the barn before fire destruction.

On foggy September 5th, around 6 a.m., fire was discovered in the Karl Osmundson barn at Grasston. Grasston and Braham Fire Departments answered the call but could only keep the fire from spreading to other buildings. The fog and smoke were so thick at times that the firemen could not see from one end of the barn to the other. The firemen continued to fight the fire after refilling the fire truck at the Grasston creamery, but around 8 a.m. the roof collapsed and by nine was all completely burned except for the twisted metal, broken concrete and general chaos a fire of that proportion leaves. The barn equipment and over 9,000 bales of hay were destroyed, however, the cattle were all in pastures at the time.

The barn was built on the corner of four 40's for John Runquist in 1907. It was often referred to as the "Big Barn" and is said to have been the largest barn under one roof in the state of Minnesota. The contract was let for \$16,000.00 but amounted to well over \$22,000.00 before completion.

The 75 x 125 foot structure was 79 feet from the ground to the peak. Forty-four carloads of sandstone was used to build a dividing wall, four bricks wide, that ran the entire length of the barn. The 12 x 12's, 40 feet long and some larger timbers were shipped in from the west coast. Large sandstone rocks were cut to a two foot thickness to make the foundation.

Gust Larson, father of Philip Larson, Braham, laid the cornerstone. Phil recalls when he used to drive his father to the farm in a horse and buggy.

The north half of the barn was housing for feeder cattle and

horses. The south half was equipped with stanchions for 42 cows, two calf pens, a bull pen and milk room. The barn also held, within its wall, a 14 x 40 foot silo and granary in the southeast corner of the upstairs. The immensity of this barn permitted threshing within the barn walls.

The cause of the fire was not determined.



1915 - The flock of sheep on Main Street. The Railroad and John Runquist's warehouse are in the background.

MONUMENT



A tribute to our benefactors

The first settlers came to this area in 1865. The town began when the railroad came through in 1899, bringing in a business man by the name of John Runquist in 1901. At this time the Swan Hotel housed the first post office, and a school was built. Mr. Runquist built a general store, livery stable and lumberyard, while other businesses flourished and churches were organized, Grasston had a popular 14 piece band and all male chorus to which five of the Hellzen Brothers sang in 1909. Runquist built a barn to be used for raising race horses. The barn measured 125 feet long, 75 feet wide and 72 feet height

with 44 freight cars of sandstone in the foundation. He also constructed a building that contained a bank, casket company, confectionery and general store. The upper floor was the Opera House and Doctor's offices. The building was consumed by fire in 1946. In 1907 Gust Larson hauled a piece of granite from St Cloud with horses and wagon. The name Runquist was engraved on the stone and it was placed above the door at the bank. This was the first marker produced at the Braham Monument Company.



The above picture is of Grasston when they had their Harvest Fair....about 1918. Notice all the buildings. Grasston seemed to be a busy city in those days. Our thanks to Mrs. Agnes Byrum for this photo.

LOCATION THE THING

We Bid You Come and Share in Our Prosperity

IN CONCLUSION we would ask that you ponder the facts. No doubt you have long considered a change and it is the cheaper lands and sections that have attracted your attention. It is certainly better for you to leave a land wherein the landlord must have the greater part of your earnings, and where lands have already well nigh reached the zenith of their values.

We own and control upwards of 10,000 acres of the best improved and unimproved farm lands in this vicinity, as well as adjacent sections. We are resident land owners and dealers. This is our home in fact and we are in the field all the time, placing us in a position to secure the most attractive propositions at opportune times.

Drop us a line. It will start you on the right track. Or better still, COME and let us show you where the homeseeker or investor can buy land close at home at attractive prices and on comparatively easy terms.

Iowa-Minnesota Land & Investment Co.

Resident and Home Office:

GRASSTON, MINN.

ST. PAUL, MINN.

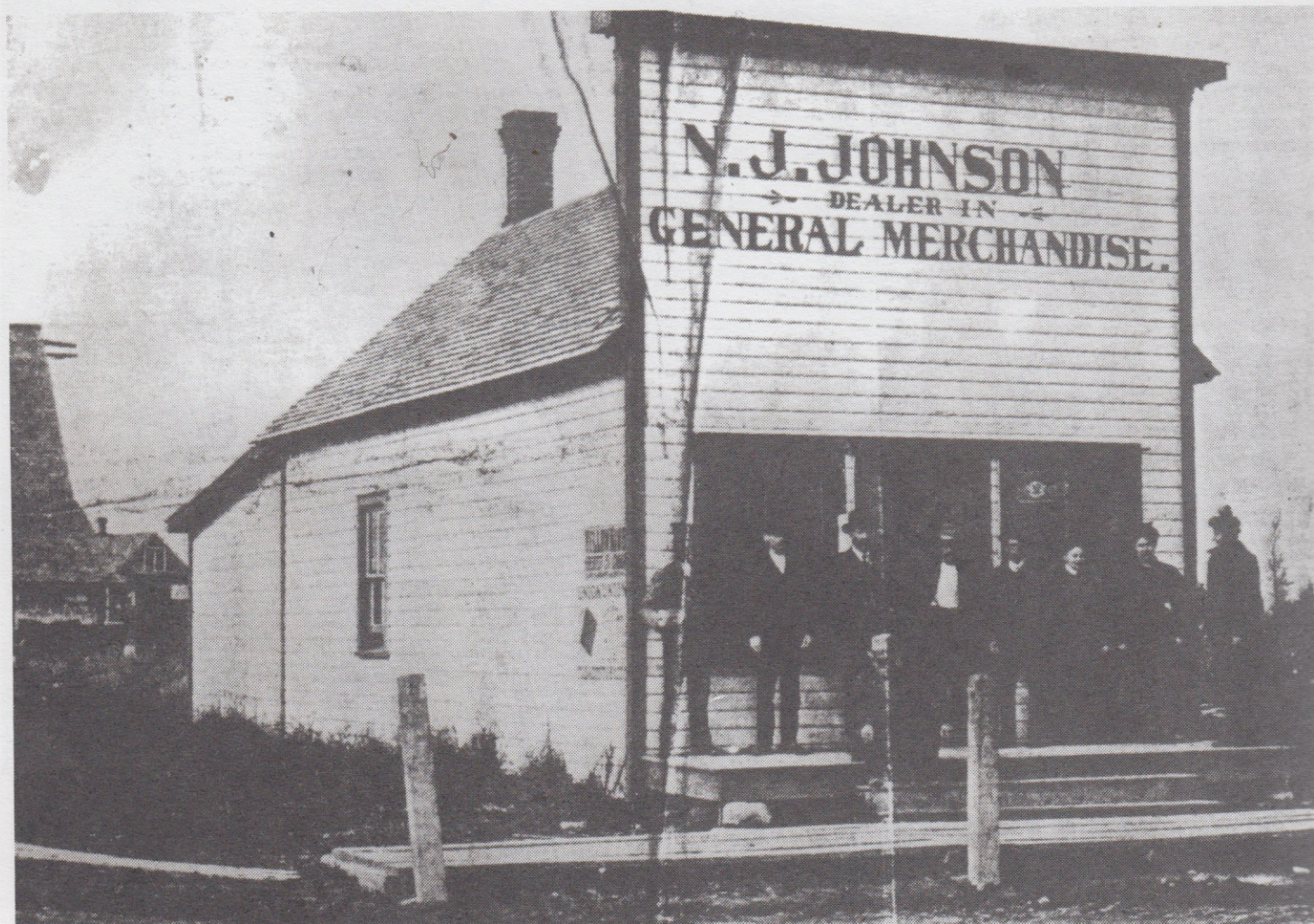
(With Rishworth Investment Co.)

Commerce Building.



Look for the Sign--We'd Like to Meet You.

First business place was a general store, built in 1900.



The N.J. Johnson General Merchandise Store at Grasston, Minnesota. Year about 1905. Anybody recognize the people pictured? Photo contributed by Mrs. Arvid Sandberg.

FINAL-WIND-UP

Sat. Feb. 7, 1914

Big Winter Clearance Sale
Coffee served All Day

John Runquist Dept. Store

The Grasston Advance Feb. 6, 1914

How about decorating
your new car with
"GRASSTON PENNANT"
Price 85¢ to \$1.00
PURITY DRUG

The Grasston Advance June 28, 1917

Billard Hall-Barber Shop
Ice Cream-Cameras
EARNEST PIERSON

The Grasston Advance Jan. 19, 1922

The Grasston Pharmacy
Arvid Olson, Prop.

The Grasston Advance Feb. 6, 1914

**NELSON'S
GARAGE**
Julius Nelson, Prop.

The Grasston Advance Jan. 19, 1922

**GOODYEAR
WEATHERPROOF
COATS**

For Men and Women

The Grasston Advance June 28, 1917

OH YES! GRASSTON GREW

BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

By 1901 there was a second platting of the growing village and a third platting in 1905 by John Runquist.

The post office opened in the Swan Hotel with Anne Swan as the postmistress.

O.M. Nelson and John Runquist built a General Store with another store springing up called the Skogman Store.

The Iowa-Minnesota Land Office had offices on Main (Union) Street.

Next door was the Nels Sjodin Hardware, a thriving business with all the building going on here.

Of course, a saloon popped up. In 1901 the South Saloon prospered followed by the Grasston Exchange in 1904. That's an interesting name. What was exchanged for what?

The Bank restaurant was another enterprise on this same street. Grasston had two pharmacies. One was called, The Grasston Pharmacy on the corner of Main (Union) and Pine, operated by Arvid Olson.

Grasston had it's own newspaper, the Grasston Advance, owned by Jay Lancelot.

How about a Photo Shop (Boegge) and a Jewelry store. Lined up in a row on the shelf of the barber shop were decorated mugs printed with customer's names. Barbers included Dugan and others but we have to also mention the good bakery smells coming from Victor Johnson's barber shop.



1926, pictured from left to right, Eric Berg, Ed Broberg, Arvid Olson, Julius Sundboom, Louis Johnson, unknown with beard, Peter Anderson, Gust Pearson, Billy the Butcher and his dog.



Next to the South Saloon was the meat market with its colorful proprietor, Billy the Butcher, (William Holland) pictured here with his dog.



The barber shop was owned by Saline. His customers owned individual cups holding the shaving brush and soap. (Note the shelf)



Grasston had two hotels. This West Hotel was located on Oak Street. It was only in business for five years and was destroyed by fire. This must have been some party!



Grasston looking south on Oak Street. Left to right, Erickson's Restaurant, Westin's Shoe Repair, residences.

The far north end of town

A need for a livery stable with a dray service was started by John Runquist and managed by Fred and Oscar Swan. One of the advertisements in the Grasston Advance offered hearse services when needed. The dray continued with John Sjodin and Gust Pearson. High grade buggies and machinery were advertised by Runquist and Elliot.

The Saw Mill run by the four Sandberg Brothers, Arvid, Oscar, Gust and Albert was on the north end of the village. Logs and lumber were in great demand in the buildings of Grasston.

The ice house in North Grasston provided our "Ice Box" with refrigeration before electricity. The local men put up ice from the river during the winter burying ice blocks in sawdust. Hence, it's location near the saw mill. Homemade ice cream needed the ice for the hand-cranked freezers.



Ice House in background, pictured with Delmar Brynildsen's dog is Marge Wyman.



Sandberg Lumber mill located at the north end of Grasston was operated by the four Sandberg brothers, Albert, Arvid, Gust and Oscar



Alfred Buckman built the first building on the so called Station Corner. In it he ran a general store with hardware, furniture, etc. He also had the John Deere franchise and other equipment. His son Kermit Buckman worked there when he was in high school in the years 27, 28 & 29. Later Alfred sold the store to Arvid Sandberg who ran a fix-it shop. Arvid in turn sold it to Melvin Sandberg and Ted Gustafson who ran a gas station.



Main Street businesses included the meat market, barber shop, bank, restaurant and the drug store. On Main Street north is the Grasston Pharmacy and Runquist General Store.



Another picture of the Main Street north. Grasston Pharmacy, Runquist General Store, the Candy Store and Nels Sjodins Hardware Store.

Main Street from north to south shows the Nels Sjodin Hardware, the Candy Store, Land Office and the Runquist building with it's second story addition.



HIGH GRADE BUGGIES

Building materials-all kinds
We buy all kinds of
farm produce

RUNQUIST & ELLIOT CO.

The Grasston Advance Feb. 6, 1914

THE GRASSTON TONSORIAL PARLOR

Andrew Anderson

The Grasston Advance June 28, 1917

GRASSTON BARBERSHOP

First class haircuts

Eugene Vague, Barber

The Grasston Advance Jan. 19, 1922

SATTERSTROM AND SAMUELSON

The first store of Satterstrom and Samuelson was called "The New Store" which was destroyed by fire in 1920. They rebuilt shortly afterwards. The first building was built of wood and the second building was built of brick.

Satterstrom and Samuelson started out by selling hardware and implements (farm machinery) and was the only business selling cars until the garage opened up. Satterstrom had quite a time teaching the people to drive a car after having driven horses for years. As farm machine sales dwindled, Satterstrom started the bottle gas business delivering bottles to about 100 customers. He installed hot water heaters, stoves and bathroom fixtures to many homes. He also wired most of the homes in Grasston.



1914 picture (Drug Store, Confectionery, "The New Store", Mercantile).



Pictured- J.T. Samuelson and J.E. Satterstrom

THE GRASSTON ADVANCE

Feb. 6, 1914

"The New Store"

Satterson & Samuelson

THE GRASSTON ADVANCE

Feb. 6, 1914

Livery, Sale & Feed Exchange Stable

Oscar Swan

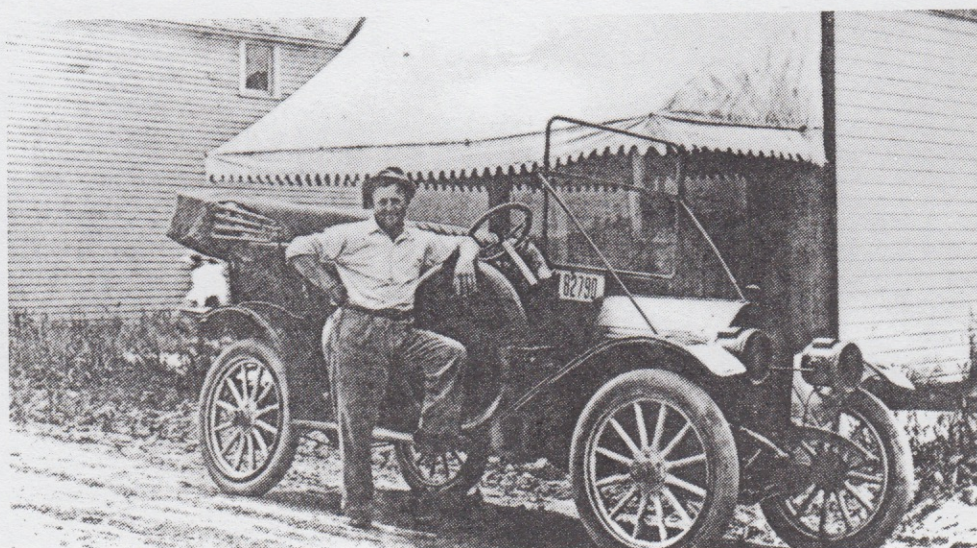
"HEARSE FURNISHED WHEN NEEDED"

Ads from the Grasston Advance, February 6, 1914



Lumber yard was located west of the Post Office. Note the parade of new manure spreaders on sale.

Harvesting clam shells in Snake River to be sent to Pine City to be made into buttons.



STARCH FACTORY

The land in our area produced a high potato crop. The harvest created a need for potato warehouses. Four such buildings near the railroad tracks were managed by Gust Breitenfelt, Albert Weiss, O.M. Nelson and J.M. Peterson. Surplus potatoes were manufactured into potato starch at a factory built in 1905 along the Snake River. A building was constructed, a steam engine purchased and a drying apparatus installed. The starch factory continued until 1924, but it appeared to have had financial difficulties from the very beginning.

In 1915 it was reorganized as the Kanabec County Starch Manufacturing Company. Disease reduced yields and low prices caused farmers to turn to other and more stable incomes.



Naturally they turned to an expanded dairy program which proved much more stable and profitable.

Albert Weiss is weighing potatoes brought in by Chas Halgerson.



BLACKSMITH SHOP



"Ole" Sylvander in front of Blacksmith Shop with a horse drawn school bus on the side of the shop. We remember when we used to watch him take care of horses, putting on the horseshoes with the huge square nails.

Our horses needed shoes, our plow shares needed sharpening and machinery needed welding. John Swan and John Runquist started the blacksmith shop by the Hotel. But we remember Emanuel "Ole" Sylvander for his 50 years of service on South Street. On the same street was our fire hall with a bell tower and a hand drawn pump. The village jail (one cell) was in the fire house.



Pictured from left to right are Erick Nordin, Oscar Swan, John Hoberg, Fred Swan, Ernest Grayson and "Ole" Sylvander.

Busy Business

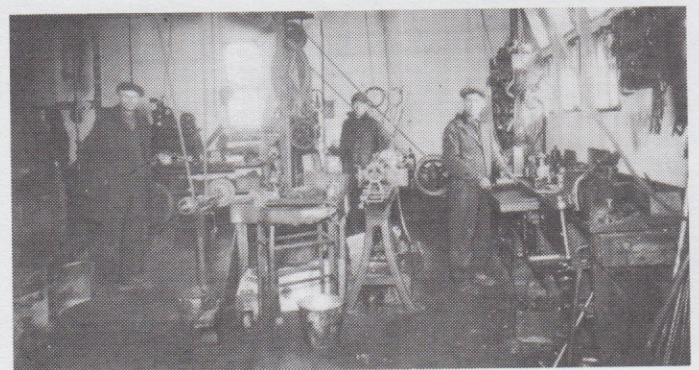
Another crop-cucumbers created the pickle factory east of the tracks. The Gedney Company provided seeds and contracted gardeners to set aside a tract of land and they would buy the produce. Many young girls were hired to sort the pickles. Marjorie Jaques, Ellen Swan, Edith Christenson and Rosella Halgerson were among the workers.

Our community needed a "Doctor" too, John Westin was our man. Grocery and General stores were operated by Albin Pearson at the Grasston Mercantile starting in 1917. They sold everything from Cracker Barrel crackers to boots and shoes.

Andy Christenson sold meats in his grocery store as well. Forrestad and Johnson had their store in the Runquist building for many years. They moved to the Christenson building when the Northwoods Novelty factory bought the Runquist building, the Novelty Company burned and our big building was destroyed in 1946.



Pictured are Stener Forrestad, Marie Anderson and Charles Johnson.



Grasston area residents began buying automobiles creating a need for garages. Peter Sjodin, Julius Nelson, Warner Anderson and Arvid Sandberg opened "fix'em" shops.

Mile-A-Minute Marty

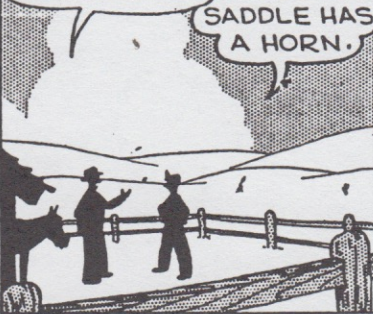
By

GRASSTON AUTO COMPANY

NOW, DO YOU WANT AN EASTERN OR A WESTERN SADDLE?



WHAT'S TH' DIFFERENCE?



WELL-A WESTERN SADDLE HAS A HORN.

OH-WELL-GIVE ME AN EASTERN SADDLE, I'M NOT GOING TO BE IN ANY OF THAT HEAVY TRAFFIC-



THAT LEADS TO GRASSTON AUTO CO.



PONTIAC



GRASSTON AUTO COMPANY

We Repair All Makes Of Cars

U.S. TIRES



SALES AND SERVICE

GRASSTON, MINNESOTA PHONE BRAHAM 25F20

PROP. ORELL W. DANGER

DEPOT

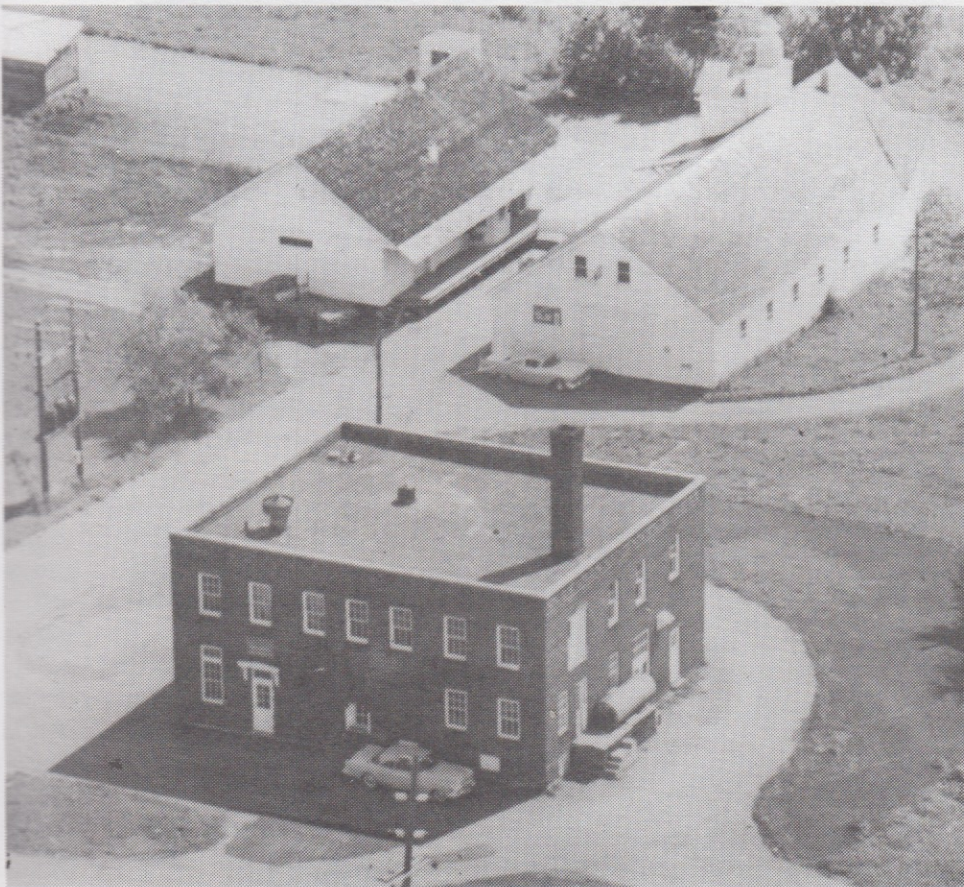
The depot replaced the station. In the 1920's, Frank Jaques, the agent, reported ticket sales to the Twin Cities in 1920 were 3,343 passengers. To other points the number was 2,735, mak-

ing a total of 6,078 passengers. There were two water towers where the old steam engines could pull in for a "drink".



Waiting for the train, Victor Pierson, Tillie Lindquist, Willie Groff, Robert Falk, Mae Murphy, Emma Murphy, unknown and Tillie (Falk) Youngquist.

CREAMERY



A check in the amount of \$.10 was written to Ben Anderson by Tom Clapp of the Grasston Co-op Creamery on March 19, 1930. It has never been cashed.

Star Brand Shoes
GRASSTON
MERCANTILE

The Grasston Advance June 28, 1917

THE GRASSTON
PHARMACY
Arvid Olson, Prop.

THE GREAT
BARBER SHOP
A.T. Silence, Prop.

The Grasston Advance Feb. 6, 1914

SCHOOL

The first little country school was located on the N.W. corner of the Runquist farm.

In 1909 a two-story structure housed our students in the first eight grades. High school became a reality after the 1919 addition was erected. The first graduating class was in 1924 and the last was in 1945 after consolidating with Braham. In the late 40's a gymnasium was added to accommodate the elementary students bussed here from Braham. Now the building is occupied by Grasston Christian Academy since 1978.

The story of the school would not be complete without Robert Falk, the custodian, janitor and friend for 37 years. Charlotte Cote was our very special teacher and friend for 45 years.

They used horse drawn vehicles at first with runners in the winter and later regular wagon wheels. Later regular buses were used. Several boys wanting an education either walked more than six miles or rode horse, leaving their horses at Peter Sjodin's.



**Nils O. Nilson, O.P. Hoglund & J.A. Swan Trustees
for School District No. 10**

Warranty Deed

Date: Sept. 25, 1888

Filed: Feb. 5, 1889

Recorded: Book F of deeds, page 525-526

Consideration \$10.00

Sealed: Two-witnesses, acknowledged

Desc: Commencing 44 rods N. of the quarter post on the line between Sec. 11 & 12 thence running N. 8 rods thence running E. 10 rods thence S. 8 rods thence West 10 rods to the place of beginning the same being a part of the SW 1/4 of NW 1/4 of Section 12, Township 38, Range 23 west of the fourth principal meridian.



GRASSTON HAD FUN

The community center was the Opera House on the second floor of the Runquist Building.

Basketball games, graduations, school plays, a fall festival, dancing to the Potter's Orchestra, laughing with the comedian Olle Skatthult, the Modern Woodman's annual oyster stew, parties and much more.

The Odin Singers, composed of farmers, educators, and businessmen performed here and outstate. Uniquely five brothers, Ole, John, Gust, Fabian and Andrew Hellzen were members of the singing group. They also performed as a "Barbershop Quintet" at many functions.

Grasston had a village band. The drum head has been spotted at Rudolph's Restaurant in Minneapolis. Let's find it and bring it home.



Albert Sandberg lighting up the river skating rink.

We took our toboggans, sleds and pieces of cardboard to Pellah Anderson's hill. It took your breath away as you scooted across the river.

The old swimming hole on the river was popular in the summer.

Then there was fishing. Gust Pearson donned his white shirt, tie, suitcoat and derby hat in respect to the fish he tried to catch in the Snake River.

Saturday night the surrounding families came to town to see the free movie projected on the side of a building in the summertime. The stores stayed open until nine.

The month of May, May baskets were popular. Young

people made a paper basket, filled it with treats and stole quietly up to a friend's door, hung the basket and shouted "May basket". The friend chased the revelers until all were caught and they shared the "goodies".



John Runquist sponsored a baseball team. We only recognize the Carlson's, Helmer in the back row (no.7), Agner sitting in the front row (no.1) and Ader Carlson (no.3).

Then there was softball, baseball, family picnics, sleigh rides and neighbors visiting neighbors. It's surprising how much fun we could have without TV.

Promoting Grasston



Walter Johnson (son of Section Boss Johnson) enjoying his Harley Davidson.

Saxon Car with a record
GRASSTON AUTO CO.

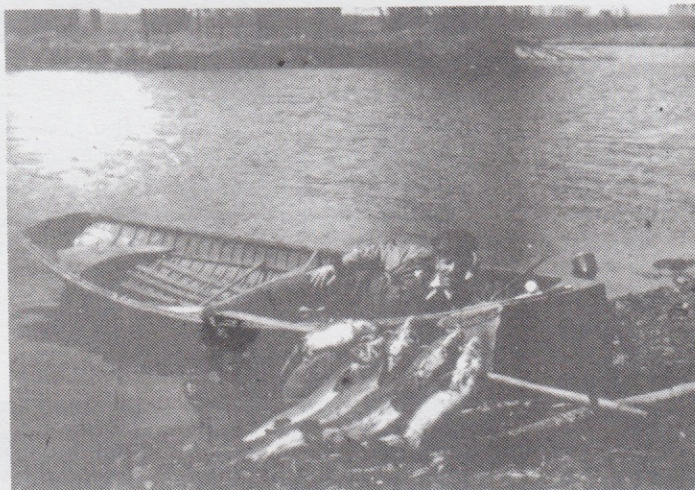
The Grasston Advance June 28, 1917



Strike up the band! Notice the unique violin made from a box. The banjo man was John Nelson, the conductor was John Youngquist.



A more sophisticated band performing in the "Opera House" features Axel Edberg at the piano, Ed Lilja (druggist) with the violin, August Swenson with the horn and we cannot name the drummer.



Druggist Arvid Olson was tired after dragging in all these sturgeon.



Here's Gust Pearson (pictured on left)



GRASSTON BAND - 1902

The Grasston Band was organized with Axel Edberg as the director, the members of the band were all local men. Gust Sandberg, Carl Carlson, Arvid Sandberg, Peter Sjodin, Ole Swenson, Nels Buckman, Willie Edin, Albert Sandberg, Fred Swan, Andrew Wasenius, August Swenson and Oscar Sandberg. They played for many social gatherings in the county.



ODIN SINGERS - 1916

First row, Ed Lilja, Axel Edberg, G.A. Breitenfelt, A.T. Westrom, Victor Sandberg, Fred Swan, Henry Olson Sr., Fritz Olson and Art Dahlman. Second Row, John Hellzen, Gust Hellzen, Stener Forrestad, Hilding Moline, Ole Hellzen, Robert Nelson, Hank Olson, A.J. Roseland, Charles Gustafson and Fabian Hellzen.

WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR TOWN?

Passengers who had patronized the railroad bought automobiles, trucks transported our freight, and business was declining. The potato industry succumbed to disease. When fires leveled the buildings they were not rebuilt! This picture shows our bandstand!



SNAKE RIVER



The water wagon filled the hand drawn fire engine getting water from the river.



Ready for fishing! Standing is Warner Anderson.



Steamboat navigated Snake

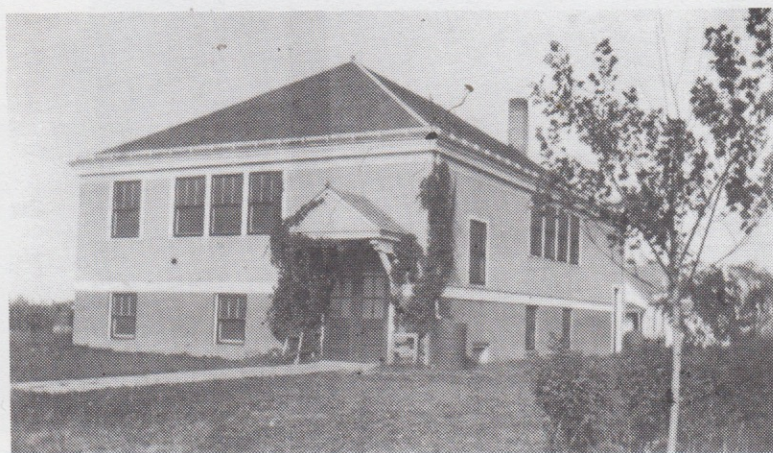
In 1881, a steamboat was built which navigated up Snake River as far as Millet Rapids. Its chief source of revenue was transporting supplies for lumber camps and towing logs in the spring. A smaller boat navigated Rice Creek to a small trading post located where highway 65 crosses the creek west of Braham. Its principal business was the transporting of lumber and ties. The larger boat, named the "Kate R", later was used as an excursion boat. The name of the smaller boat was the "Woodtick". The high stage of water of lower Snake River and Lake Pokegama and Cross Lake east of Pine City made it a popular summer resort country for many years. One of our citizens, Captain Anton Pearson was navigator.

Photo courtesy of the Kanabec County Historical Society and History Center, Mora, MN



Confirmation at the Methodist Church. Those we recognize are back row, No. 4 is Lillie Anderson Klammer, No.7 Nancy Nelson Forsberg, No.8 Emma Runquist, Row 2, No.3 Edith Helland, No.7 Nancy Swanson Belkholm, No.8 Clara Breitenfelt Davis, Row 3, No.2 Bill Youngquist, No.3 Warner Anderson and No. 5 Edwin Swanson.

BY THE GRACE OF GOD, THESE CONGREGATIONS ARE GOING STRONG IN OUR DISAPPEARING VILLAGE



BAPTIST CHURCH

When a new community evolves the citizens band together to organize a church. The Baptist's organized in 1882 at Grass Lake. In 1920 the congregation moved the building into Grasston. In 1925 the Grasston Baptist Church moved to ask Brunswick if they would go together with Grasston in calling a pastor for the coming year. In 1982 the Baptist church had their 100th year anniversary.



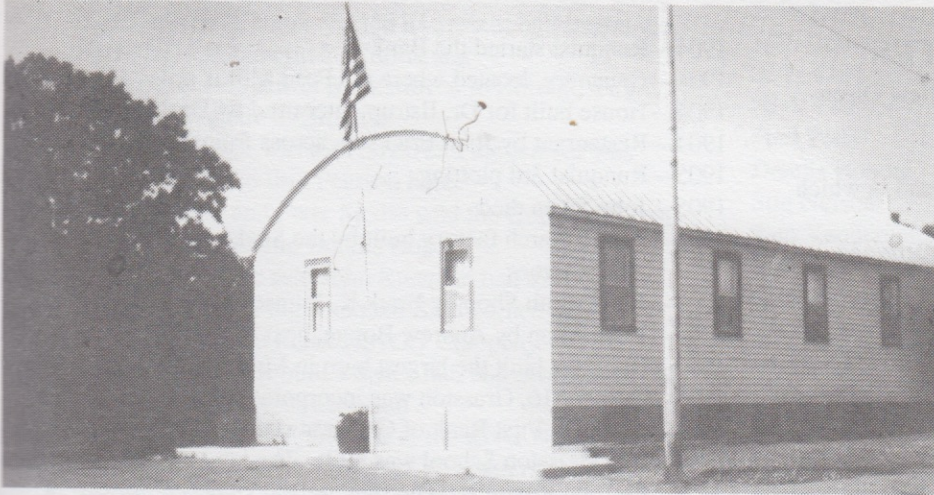
LUTHERAN CHURCH

A Methodist Congregation was organized in 1902. The Swedish Lutherans purchased the building and organized their church in 1915. A new brick building replaced the wooden

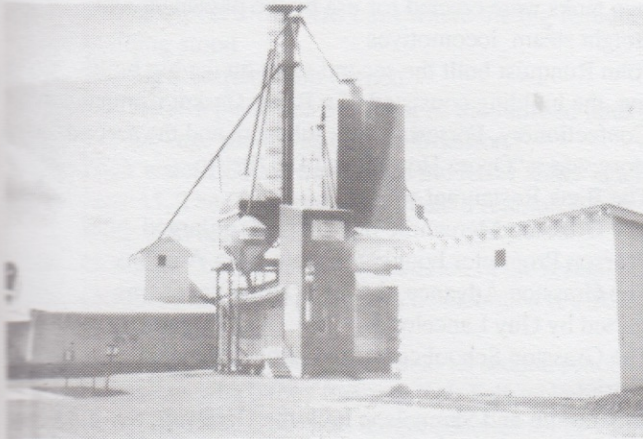
structure in 1929. The church celebrated their Diamond Jubilee in September 16, 1990. Our old church became the hen house on Milton Pearson's farm.



GRASSTON TODAY



The Grasston City Hall is an active community building. The Lion's Club and special organizations have a central meeting place.



The Grasston Feed Mill furnishes many farmers in this area with feed and seed, a flourishing business!



Daisy Diaper Service serving a number of communities.



After the Runquist building and lumberyard burned, the land was converted to the Hellzen Park in honor of Fabian Hellzen, a promoter of the Grasston village. The bell is from the old fire hall.



GRASSTON WAS A BUSY BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND A THRIVING TOWN IN THE EARLY 1900'S

GRASSTON'S IMPORTANT DATES

- 1865—First settlers, Mr. and Mrs. John Swan, Andrew Olson, Lars Magnus Peterson, O.P. Hoglund
- 1873—Lars Magnus Peterson built a log house
- 1874—Mr. and Mrs. John Swan homesteaded the land in which Grasston was built
- 1881—Steamboat named "Kate R." went up Snake River to Millet Rapids
- 1882—October 15, Baptist Church was organized
- 1897—Road from Twin Cities to Duluth through Grasston to Brook Park
- 1899—November 20, first plotting of Grasston and established sec 2 by John Swan
- 1899—Railroad laid
- 1899—October 30, Annie Swan first Postmistress in Swan Hotel
- 1900—First business place was a general store by N.J. Johnson
- 1900—Swan Hotel built north of N.J. Johnson
- 1900—First passenger train through Grasston
- 1900—Runquist bought a farm from Lars Magnus Peterson
- 1901—Saloon south of barber shop
- 1901—November 8, Runquist 2nd plotting
- 1901—Moved post office north of N.J. Johnson store
- 1901—Skogman store (west of depot) now 107
- 1901—Blacksmith shop west of Swan Hotel built by John Swan (run by McCobb for one year, later by Hans Peterson)
- 1902—Sawmill, north of Baptist Church owned and operated by the Sandberg Brothers, (Gust, Oscar, Albert and Arvid)
- 1902—Drug store
- 1902—John Runquist built the general store went into business with O.M. Nelson and had the "largest department store" between Duluth and Twin Cities, also built a lumberyard
- 1902—Barbershop by Alfred Saline
- 1902—Methodist Church built, later purchased by the Lutheran Church
- 1902—14 piece band started
- 1903—West Hotel built and it burned in five years, located where the Grasston Auto was
- 1903—Livery Stable built by Runquist, west of Erickson's Restaurant, Fred and Oscar Swan were in charge
- 1903—Nels Sjodin Hardware Store
- 1903—Butcher Shop run by "Billy the Butcher" Hallum, south of saloon
- 1903—General Store by L.S. Dennewith, he moved the store from Grass Lake and later sold it to Aurelius
- 1904—Saloon by S.A. Thorene later called the exchange, Prohibition came and closed down the saloons, a drug store opened by C. Erickson
- 1904—Jewelry Store by Boegge, where the lumberyard office was
- 1904—Runquist started the Bank
- 1904—Creamery, located where the Feed Mill is now
- 1904—House built for Dr. Ilstrup, later used by Dr. Nygren
- 1904—Restaurant by John Erickson, across from Livery Barn
- 1905—Runquist 3rd plotting
- 1905—John Swan died
- 1905—Potato Starch factory built by the Snake River for surplus potatoes
- 1905—Blacksmith Shop by Erick K. Johnson
- 1906—Photo shop by Andrew Bogge, next to Jewelry Store
- 1907—Runquist built the largest barn in Minnesota
- 1907—October 16, Grasston was incorporated as a Village
- 1908—March 9, First Bank of Grasston started
- 1909—The Grasston School was built. The land was donated by John Runquist. The first log school was northwest of the present school
- 1909—The Grasston Depot was built east of the Swan Hotel, two tanks were erected for use by the passenger and freight steam locomotives
- 1910—John Runquist built the second story on the big building, the building consisted of a Bank, Casket Company, Confectionery, Forrestad and Johnson, and the second story was a "Opera House" and Dr. Illstrip
- 1910—The Bank Restaurant was built
- 1910—The Grasston Mercantile building was enlarged, Nels Pearson Proprietor bought the store from Aurelius
- 1911—The Grasston Advance, the town's first paper was started by Guy Lancelot
- 1913—The Grasston School converted into a consolidated district
- 1914—Satterstrom and Samuelson built the Hardware Store
- 1915—The Odin Singers started singing and became quite famous
- 1915—The Lutheran Church bought the building from the Methodist
- 1916—Grasston had a Fourth of July celebration harvest fair with the local farmers and town people for judges
- 1918—Peter Sjodin moved to Grasston, was an engineer for the pickle factory for two years
- 1919—The Grasston School was enlarged to its present size
- 1920—A fire destroyed Satterstrom and Samuelson Hardware Store and Drug Store and Confectionery. Satterstrom and Samuelson soon rebuilt
- 1920—Peter Sjodin went into partnership with Julius Nelson in the Grasston Garage. The garage was first owned by Mr. Colvert
- 1920—The new Depot was built, and it replaced the station
- 1920—Frank Jaques reported that ticket sales for the Great Northern Depot were 6,078 passengers that year
- 1921—October 10, Emanuel "Ole" Sylvander bought the Blacksmith Shop from Erick K. Johnson
- 1922—Grasston Co-op Creamery was enlarged
- 1924—Last year for the Grasston Advance

- 1924—Last year for the Starch Factory
- 1924—The first graduation in the Grasston School
- 1925—The Pickle Factory started
- 1926—The Saloon opened
- 1929—The Lutheran Church erected its present building at the cost of \$15,000 including furnishing
- 1935—December 2, Grasston Bank moved to Chisago City
- 1935—Dr. Nygren came to Grasston
- 1941—The Swan Hotel was torn down and the lumber was used to build the Bud Pearson house
- 1946—Julius Nelson and Peter Sjodin sold the Grasston Garage to Orell Danger and Dennis Hoberg
- 1946—A distant relative said John Runquist had died
- 1946—September 5, the big Runquist Barn burned down, which housed the Reick Novelty Company
- 1947—Hubert Strohkirch built a dance hall and tavern, what is now the round top or City Hall
- 1950—High waters flooded the road to the River Diner
- 1951—Hiway 65 went to Mora at the "Y" south of Braham instead of going past the River Diner to Brunswick
- 1958—In the late 50's the Depot was moved over to the Feed Mill and was used as an office
- 1960—The new post office was built where the big Runquist building stood
- 1963—The big Runquist barn burned
- 1968—The Alfalfa plant was built east of the railroad tracks
- 1972—The Sewage plant was built in Grasston
- 1972—High water flooded the road to the River Diner again
- 1974—June 15, The Grasston School held a reunion for all those who had attended
- 1978—Grasston Christian Academy started in the school house
- 1982—October 15, The Baptist Church celebrated it's 100th year anniversary
- 1987—June 6, The Grasston School held its second school reunion in which they honored Bob Falk as janitor for 37 years and Charlotte Cote who taught generations of young people for 45 years in both Grasston and Braham schools
- 1990—September 16, Hope Lutheran Church celebrated its Diamond Anniversary

THE FIRST VILLAGE OFFICERS

Nels Sjodin - Clerk
 Harry Lamb - Treasurer
 Fred Swan - Trustee
 S. A. Therein - Trustee
 Arvid Olson - Trustee

THANK YOU!

Having sold our store in Grasston to Ralph Grahn of Mora, effective this week, we wish to take this means of thanking all our friends and customers for their support during the many years past, and hope for their continued support and confidence in the new owner.
 Best wishes for his success.

FORRESTAD AND JOHNSON
 Grasston, MN

MAYORS & CLERKS OF GRASSTON

J. W. Runquist
 A. T. Westrom
 E. E. Lilja
 J. T. Samuelson
 A. L. Christenson
 N. A. Pearson
 Fred Petty
 Dennis Hoberg
 Stig Nelson
 Sam Vanderhelm
 Karl Osmundson
 Gilbert Lucht
 Wilbert Strelow
 Dan Norberg
 Elsie Hellzen
 R. Woehrle
 Neil Warnberg
 Violet Anderson
 Beth Johnson
 Cheryl Tragethon
 David Johnson
 Elaine Lucht

BUSINESS PEOPLE IN GRASSTON

53 years...Satterstrom and Samuelson Hardware Store
 50 years...Emanuel "Ole" Sylvander, Blacksmith
 45 years...Charlotte Cote, Teacher
 37 years...Bob Falk, School Janitor
 36 years, 2 weeks...Earl Johnson, manager of Liquor Store
 36 years...Albin Pearson, Grocery Store
 33 years...Reuben Bjorklund, Rural Mailman
 Forrestad and Johnson, 1914 Grocery Store sold January 6, 1949 to Ralph Grahn
 Julius Nelson and Peter Sjodin, Garage
 Frank Jaques, Depot Agent
 Fabian Hellzen, Creamery Manager
 Oscar and Fred Swan
 John Runquist
 Sandberg Bros.
 John Swan
 Gilbert Larson, Oscar Youngquist, Creamery Managers
 Bill Youngquist, Mail Man

The first meeting to organize the East Co-op Electric Association was held in Grasston

Former postmasters:

Annie Swan
 Lottie Samuelson
 Delmar Brynildsen
 Ted Samuelson
 Dennis Hoberg
 Grace Pangerl, 23 1/2 years

PREMIUMS AND SOUVENIERS FROM GRASSTON



Liberty plaque card from
Forrestad Company, 1918



Earthenware from Grasston Mercantile



Calendar from Buckman Hardware, 1927



Plate from Grasston Mercantile, 1921, Match holder from Grasston Creamery and String holder from Grasston Lumber Company.

Diary of Alfred Buckman

The following are excerpts from the diary of Alfred Buckman

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Buckman and their children, (Ole, Alfred, Nels, Emma, Hilda and Adeline) left Borgsjosorken, Medelpod, Borgsjolyn, Erikslund, Sweden in midsummer 1892 for the United States of America. From New York we took the train to Buffalo, New York and went across Lake Erie to Toledo and Detroit. Then we went across Lake Huron to Sault Saint Marie, and through canals and locks into Lake Superior and Duluth, Minnesota. From Duluth we took the N. P. train to Rush City, Minnesota. My dad had thirty cents left and had to hire livery rig to take us to Jonas Waseneus. So my dad borrowed the money from Waseneus and paid the expense to the delivery man. In all it took us twenty-six days from Borgsjolyn to Grass Lake Township, Kanabec County, Minnesota. You could not go to the county seat to get any relief help, and we were never thinking about or knew anything about it. The farmers who were here never knew anything about relief either; everybody was working. This is July 26, 1892.

As I have the record to 1898, there was no Grasston and no railroad. The farmers had ox teams in 1893. There was a wooden bridge made of round timber across Snake River but it was a low dump so it got too high in the middle, too much sliding on either side. So when they had a big heavy load of logs, the load pushed the ox team down; so they had to slide down on the legs. It was some experience!

Frank Carlson and Charlie Winfield had a sawmill across the road from the school by the river. But the bridge went to pieces when the logs came down on

the river by Haldon Johnson's place. They had an excursion boat running from Pine City to this bridge. They put up another, but the log jam took that down. They never put up another one after those two. When the water is low, you can see the wood poles yet by Johnson's.

During those years (1892-97) milk was ten cents a gallon; eggs eight to fifteen cents a dozen; and a good suit cost fifteen dollars. Butter was ten to fifteen cents a pound; a good pair of shoes cost one and a half or two dollars. Overalls cost forty to fifty cents a pair and shorts thirty-five to forty cents, and a plug hat seventy-five cents.

I met John Runquist in Grasston. He bought everything the farmers raised on the farms; cord wood, hay and potatoes. He also had charge of a lumber yard and bank. One day Runquist said, "Come, here, Buckman, tomorrow morning go down to St. Paul and take the cream testing license because you haven't got no whiskey face." He had before talked to the manager about this, but the manager got drunk, and the next morning he went, never seen again. And I did keep on for over two years testing cream and bought all the butter from the farmers, and we sent it to Bridgeman Russell Company in Duluth. In 1908 they started a creamery in Grasston.

I myself started hardware, but I did not stay with it very long because the Depression or bad times came. So I sold out and got away from Grasston. I got busy on my farm.

GRASSTON

INCOMPLETE
NOT DRAWN
TO SCALE

