The Village of Eldred

The village of Eldred, Minnesota — located in Roomo Township — was founded and platted in 1897 by Mr. John Elg for whom it was named. The first name chosen was “Eldridge” but was changed to Eldred. It was learned that there was another town by that name in Minnesota the name of Eldred was chosen. When the railroad came through this area Mr. Elg donated the right-of-way for one mile and thereby induced them to establish a station at Eldred. Later he laid out 28 acres as the site for the village. Of this, he sold about one-fourth to residents.

The first building erected was the Northwestern Elevator, built in 1898. The first store put up was that of Mr. T. M. Boyer, who was the first merchant. Mr. Boyer had been appointed the first postmaster of Eldred, having received that appointment in May, 1897. He had $1,500 with which to build the store and stock it with supplies. He kept the store for 12 years. Mr. Boyer also served as treasurer of Roomo Township for two years.

Mr. John Elg ran a confectionery store for many years and for three years he was also postmaster of the village. In 1915, Mr. Elg built a new store building, which was destroyed by fire in 1924. John Elg passed away November 8, 1928. On his deathbed he designated certain lots to be reserved for the church and cemetery. He felt this would create interest in building a church in this small, thriving community. Various pastors had conducted services in the schoolhouse since 1914. Mr. John Nyberg contacted Rev. E. A. Schuett of Crookston and requested that he come to Eldred and conduct church services. As a result of this request, plus Mr. Elg's offer, the First English Lutheran Church was built and dedicated December 14, 1930.

Many other thriving businesses sprang up in those early days. Two years after the village was platted, Christ and Ed Manson opened a hardware store. The St. Anthony and Dakota Elevator was built and a harness shop opened with Alfred Eckstrom as owner. By 1900, Eldred also boasted of a hotel, a blacksmith shop (Eric Palm), a second general store (Andrew Elby), and a lumber-yard.

Hans Larum came to Eldred about 1884. He left to spend some time in the army, returned later, and was married to Anna Halstenson in 1904. He managed the St. Anthony Elevator and lumber-yard for some time. About 1920 he became manager of the Ireland Lumber Yard in Eldred. Hans Valor ran a confectionery where the present post office is located. H. E. Elseth ran the creamery. There was also a pool hall, barber shop, two potato warehouses, and a stock-yard. Mr. and Mrs. August Buness were the hotel keepers for a time and Emil Mankowski ran a hardware store for many years. Olga Frederickson became postmistress in 1948 and operated a grocery store in the same building for many years. There were many other enterprising merchants, too numerous to mention, who were instrumental in the history and growth of the village.

A. A. Dragseth was the rural mail carrier out of Eldred for 30 years. The old-timers tell that Mr. Dragseth delivered mail with horses while his substitute carrier, Anton Furu went along to walk where the roads were blocked. He was an excellent walker and would come up with Mr. Dragseth on another part of the route and they would continue on.

The State Bank of Eldred was founded February 29, 1908 by Messrs. Roshalt and Larson. It was founded as a private institution with a capital of $10,000 and Mr. Skver Thompson as cashier. After six months Mr. T. E. Johnson took over these duties, which he continued to handle for ten years until his death. Mr. Johnson was to become one of Eldred's most enterprising men and was instrumental in organizing the Farmers Elevator and also the consolidated school.

On October 22, 1911 there was a robbery and the safe was dynamited and robbed of $1,400. Mr. Helmer Glaserud recalls that he and Mrs. Anna Larum were employed at the hotel, which was next door. The robbers operated very quietly or they used some form of gas to put them to sleep, because they did not hear anything. The robbers stole a pony and cart from the Mariners to make their get-away. It was presumed that...