

THE DEFINITIVE HISTORY

OF

GOOSE LAKE, IOWA

by

Brian R. Farrell



*Hotel Heiner, Goose Lake, Ia.*

Dedicated  
to  
Gilbert Clause Hansen



The Goose Lake Valley was created about 150,000 years ago. The Mississippi River may have become blocked, and it is assumed that the river was diverted through the valley. When the Mississippi returned to its normal channel, Goose Lake remained. At this time, the lake probably encompassed the entire lowland between Preston and present day Goose Lake. This lowland still exists, stretching about ten miles from north to south, with a width of one to one and a half miles.

The lake still covered several square miles when the first explorers saw the area in the early 1800's, being fed by numerous springs and rainwater. The lake was, and still is, drained to the north by Deep Creek, and to the south by Brophy Creek. Goose Lake was a haven to all kinds of animals, and was a popular hunting area for Sac and Fox Indians. According to Wolfe's History of Clinton County, geese and swans were so numerous "that acres and acres of water appeared as white as a snowdrift."

The first settler in Deep Creek Township was a nephew of Daniel Boone, who arrived sometime before 1836. A settlement known as Boone's Springs was founded several hundred yards south of the Jackson County border with Clinton County. A log cabin school was begun by Philo Hunter in 1843 or 1844. The township's first post office was established there on December 13, 1853, with Hunter as

postmaster. Boone's Springs was located on a mail route between DeWitt and Bellevue.

The Sac and Fox gave up possession of the land in 1837, but small bands of Indians would often return to Goose Lake, attracted by the abundant wildlife. The Indians and settlers were apparently friendly, as they traded and visited with each other.



Hotel Keiner, late 1800's

The oldest farm in the township that still exists was built in 1854 and located two mile north of Goose Lake. Several other farms that were started in the 1850's are still in existence. Just north of town is also the site of the murder of Oliver Ray in the 1860's. Ray was killed by a man named Mattoon over the rivalry of a young lady. Mattoon was captured and held by the township trustees. According to one story, while the trustees were waiting for the sheriff to arrive, Mattoon asked to relieve himself behind some trees. The trustees allowed him to do so, and never saw him again.

The Iowa Midland Company began construction of a railroad from Lyons, through Maquoketa, to Anamosa in 1870. The railroad's right-of-way crossed the northern part of Goose Lake on a solid earth embankment. By October the line was open to Maquoketa, and trains began running on December 1, 1870. A short time later, the Midland was leased to the Chicago & North Western. The C&NW purchased the route in 1884.

On December 8, 1871, the post office at Boone's Springs was moved to Goose Lake and the first postmaster was John Dickey. The town became known as O'Brian, after a Mr. O'Brian, who had built the first house in town. In 1873, several area farmers purchased land and erected a railroad station in town. There was too much confusion between

O'Brian and nearby Bryant, so O'Brian was renamed Goose Lake. The Goose Lake Independent School District was formed in 1874.

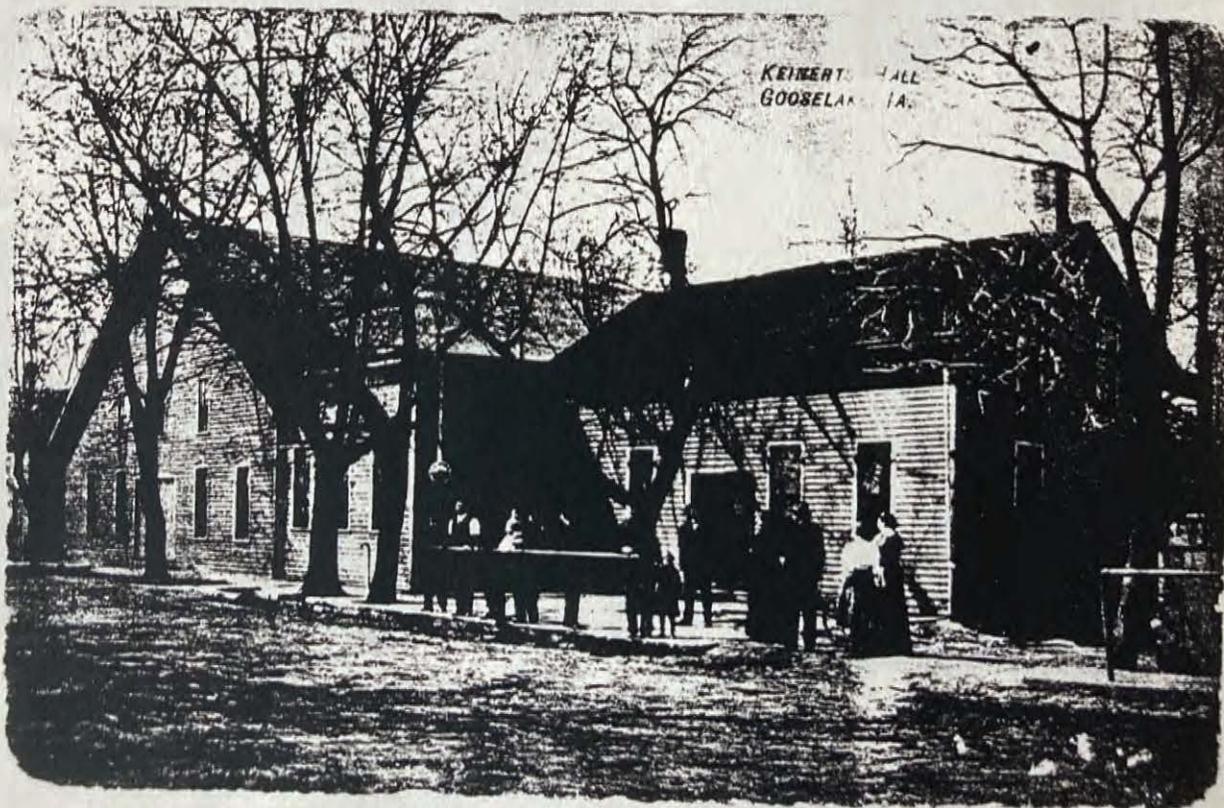
The town's first merchant was Charles Curtis. A hotel was built in the late 1800's. Louis Keiner was working in western Iowa when he heard that the building was for sale. He came to Goose Lake and purchased the hotel from a Mr.



Sunday School at the Goose Lake Depot, 1907



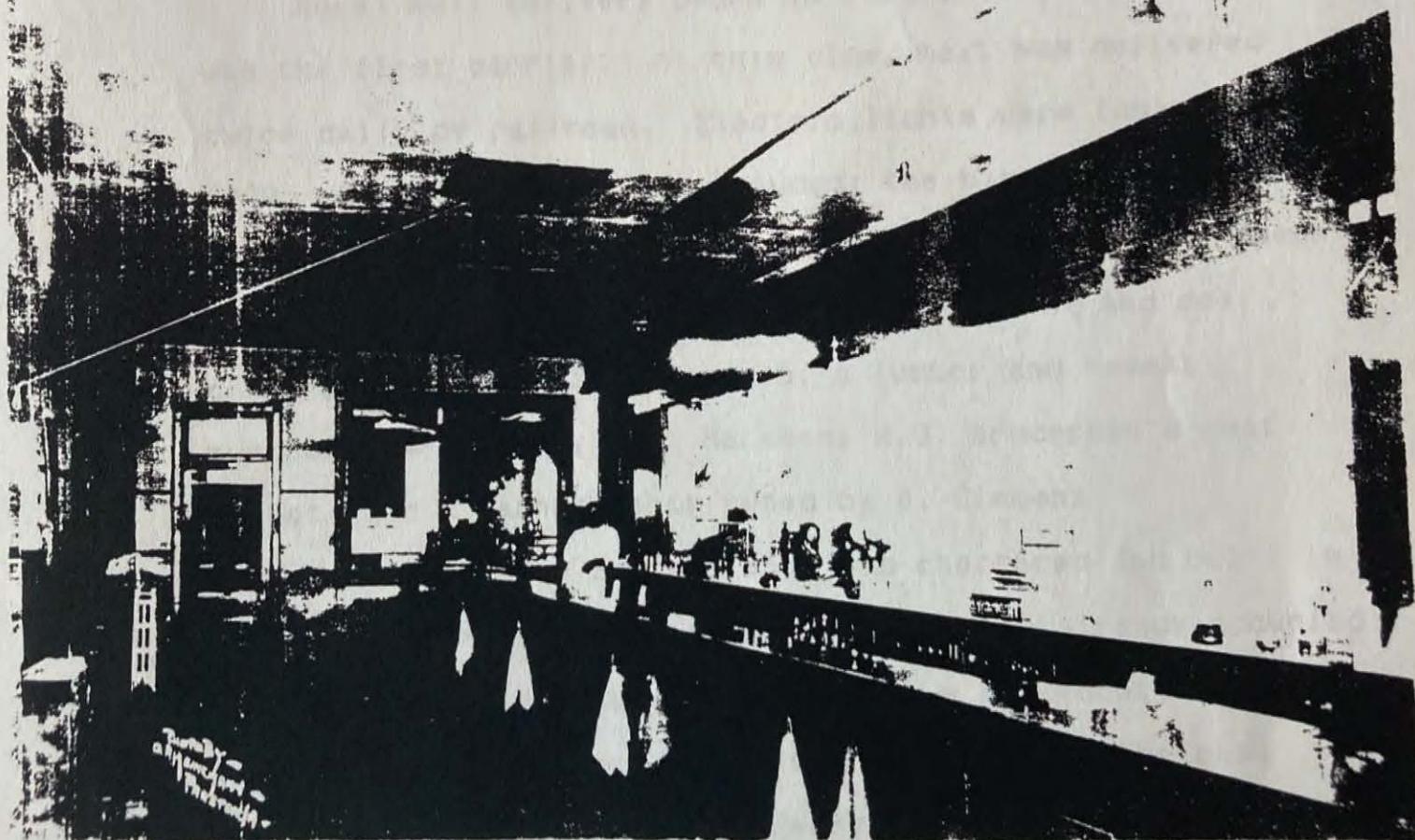
Keiner's Kinder Fest, 1911



Hotel Keiner

Egert in 1893. Keiner operated a hotel, tavern, restaurant, and dancehall out of this large building which still stands on Main Street, and soon became one of Goose Lake's most successful businessmen.

The Town of Goose Lake was platted in Section 28 of



Hotel Keiner's Bar

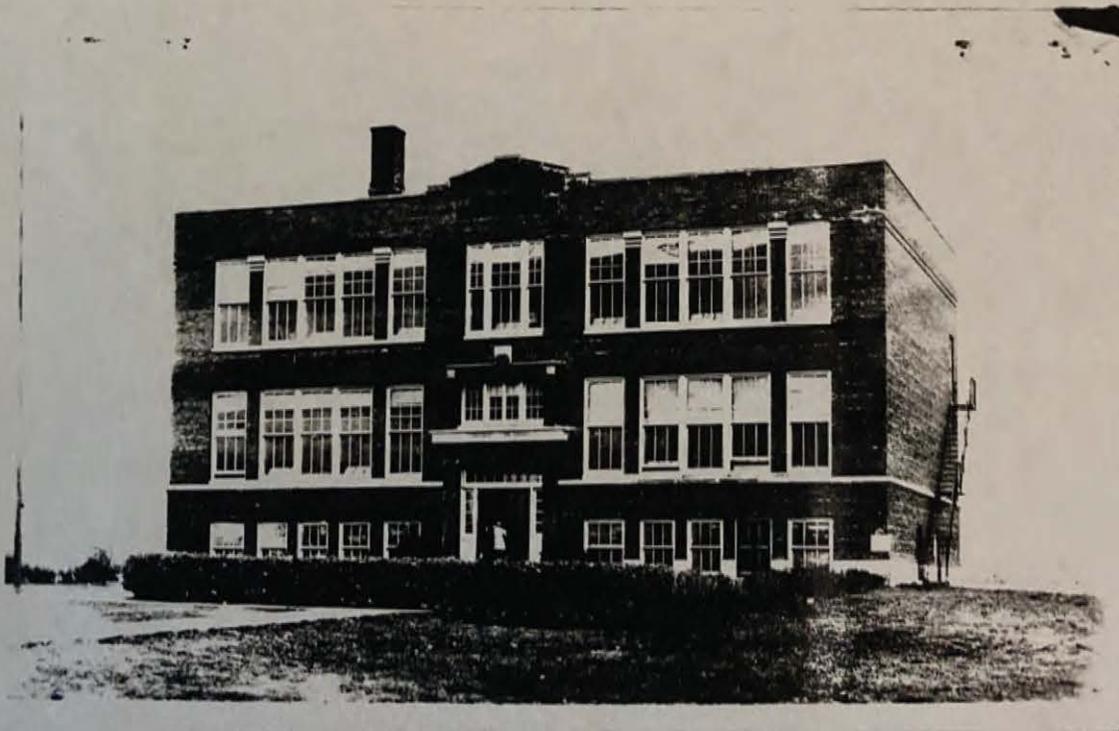
Deep Creek Township on January 5, 1889. Application for incorporation was filed with the State of Iowa, and on December 1, 1908, the question of incorporation was approved 33 to 1. The articles of incorporation laid out 160 acres lying in a perfect square. On December 28, 1908, the town held its first election. Five councilmen, a clerk, treasurer, and mayor were elected. Goose Lake's first mayor was Charles Buech.

Rural mail delivery began in 1906, and Oswald Farrell was the first carrier. At this time, mail was delivered twice daily by railroad. Electric lights were installed in 1909. Businesses in 1910 included: the bank; Kelner's agricultural implements, grain, coal, and hotel; C.H. Buech & Son General Store; an agricultural implement and coal business owned by F.G. Hanssen; a lumber and cement business operated by Paul Harksen; R.G. Brodersen's meat market; and a harness shop owned by B. Clemenz.

The Goose Lake Savings Bank was chartered and built in 1907. The site chosen for the new bank was already occupied by a house, so the house was moved to a new location on Main Street before construction on the bank began. The bank began business in 1908, with Henry Kruse as its first president. Total deposits, surplus, and profits in 1910 totalled \$88,000. By 1960 this figure had grown to \$1,844,416, and by 1990 totalled \$14,940,000.

Prior to 1920, high school students from Goose Lake had to attend Lyons High School or Mount Saint Clare Academy. They took the train to and from Clinton every day. The Goose Lake Consolidated School was built in 1920. The two-story brick building housed elementary students from Goose Lake as well as high school students from Goose Lake and the surrounding areas, which still had one room schools for students through eighth grade.

An open-air dance pavillion known as the bowery was built around 1925 on the east side of Main Street, and

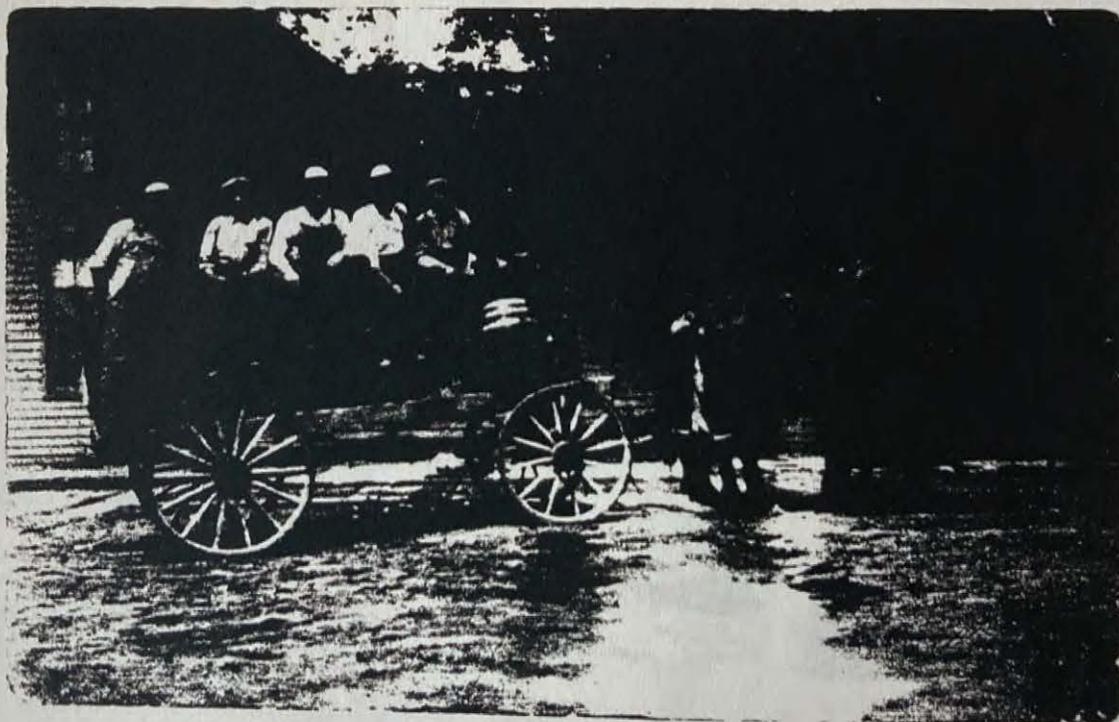


Goose Lake Consolidated School, 1920's

existed for about four years. Young people from Clinton and surrounding communities rode the train to dances which were rotated between Goose Lake, Andover, Almont, and Bryant. A handcar was used by some Goose Lake residents to attend dances on Sunday, since no trains ran on that day.

The peat in the slough surrounding the lake caught fire in 1926. Fires burned for nearly a year, and poor visibility forced automobiles to slow down in Goose Lake. Smoke could be smelled in Preston, seven miles to the north, when the wind was right.

In 1927, a 15,000 gallon wood water tower was erected, a 748 foot well was drilled, and a pump house was built to



Wagon in front of Hotel Keiner

provide a municipal water supply. The tower stood until 1962, when it was replaced by a steel water tower. Records show a fire department existing as early as 1915, but it was not until 1931 that the Goose Lake Volunteer Fire Department was officially founded by an act of the town council.

The Goose Lake Savings Bank acquired the Charlotte Trust & Savings Bank and established it as a branch office after that bank closed in 1932.

Buech's Store, which was now operated by W.C. Christlansen, was completely destroyed by fire at 3:45 on the morning of April 11, 1938. Following the fire, Donald Gaylor of Bellevue started a store in the vacant building across the street. In 1943 he sold his inventory to V.A.



Original Fire Station and Pump House

Vorbeck, who established a store at the corner of main street and Highway 136.

The 1938 contest for mayor of Goose Lake recieved national attention when incumbent John F. Hansen was challenged by his 25 year old son, Gilbert. Gilbert won the election, and the race was featured in pictorials across the United States, and merited a front page picture in the April 6, 1938, Cedar Rapids Gazette. John Hansen credited the victory to Gilbert's ability to persuade the council to set up a free chicken dinner for the firemen. The first fireman's chicken dinner in Goose Lake occured on November 18, 1938.

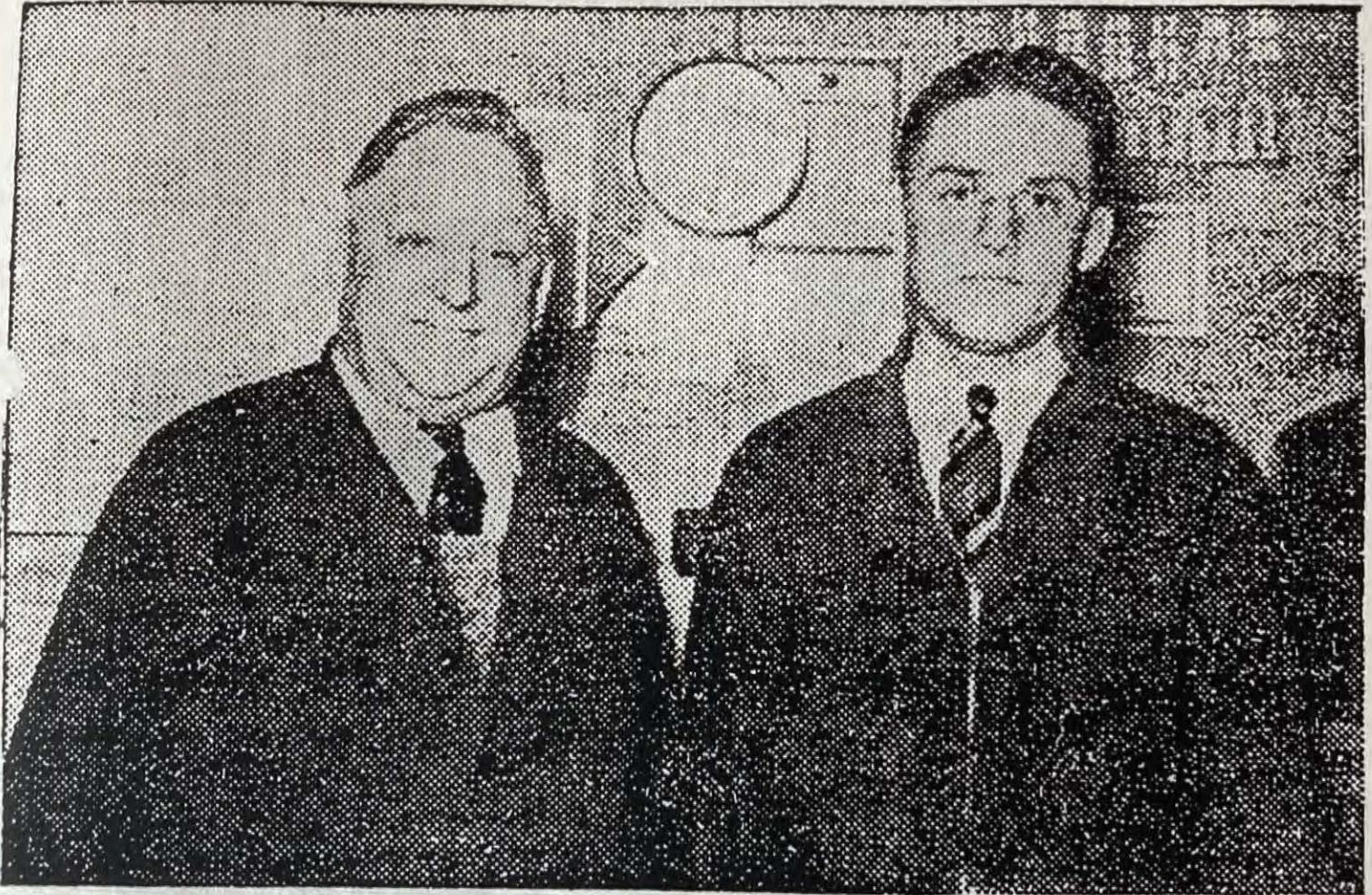
Gilbert Hansen was reelected twice, but quit his third term after only a week to enlist in the United States Navy. Twenty-two Goose Lake residents served in the Armed Forces during World War II, while the town's population was only 145. The Red Cross held home canning classes in Goose Lake and other small towns. In September of 1945, scientists in Iowa City revealed that a secret weapon had been tested near Deep Creek.

A gymnasium was added to the Goose Lake School in 1940 and 1941 by the Works Progress Administration. Until that time, basketball games were played in the cafeteria in the basement of the school, and injuries were numerous.

Goose Lake was serviced by a train going west one day

# Civic Leader K

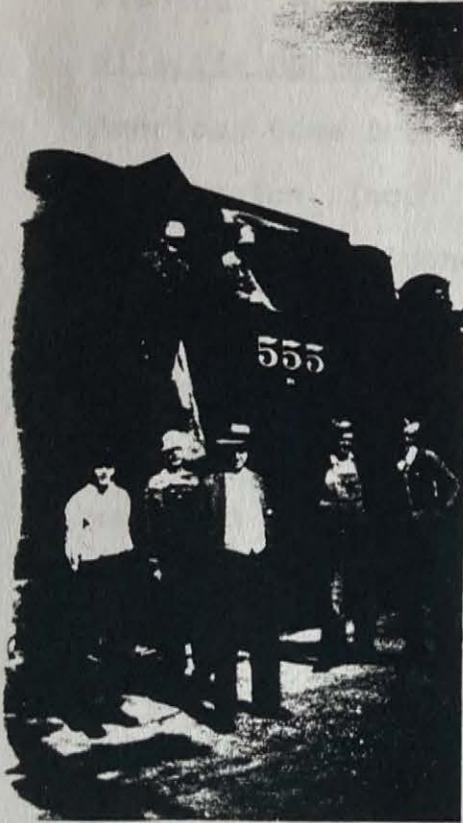
*Succeeds Father As Mayor*



Iowa Daily Press photo.

Mayor Hansen took over Mayor Hansen's duties at Goose Lake, in Clinton county, when new city officers were inducted Monday. The new mayor, Gilbert Hansen (right) replaces the former executive, John Hansen (left), his father, and the elder man wore a broad grin as he administered the oath of office to his successor.

and east the next day. All livestock was shipped by rail, but the railroad became less profitable as automobiles became more abundant. A flood in 1944 destroyed a portion of the main line between Maquoketa and Anamosa, and the route was closed for over two years. The Iowa Midland Division of the C&NW was abandoned in 1950 due to lack of revenue.



Chicago & North Western  
train in Goose Lake



Goose Lake School Bus, 1940's

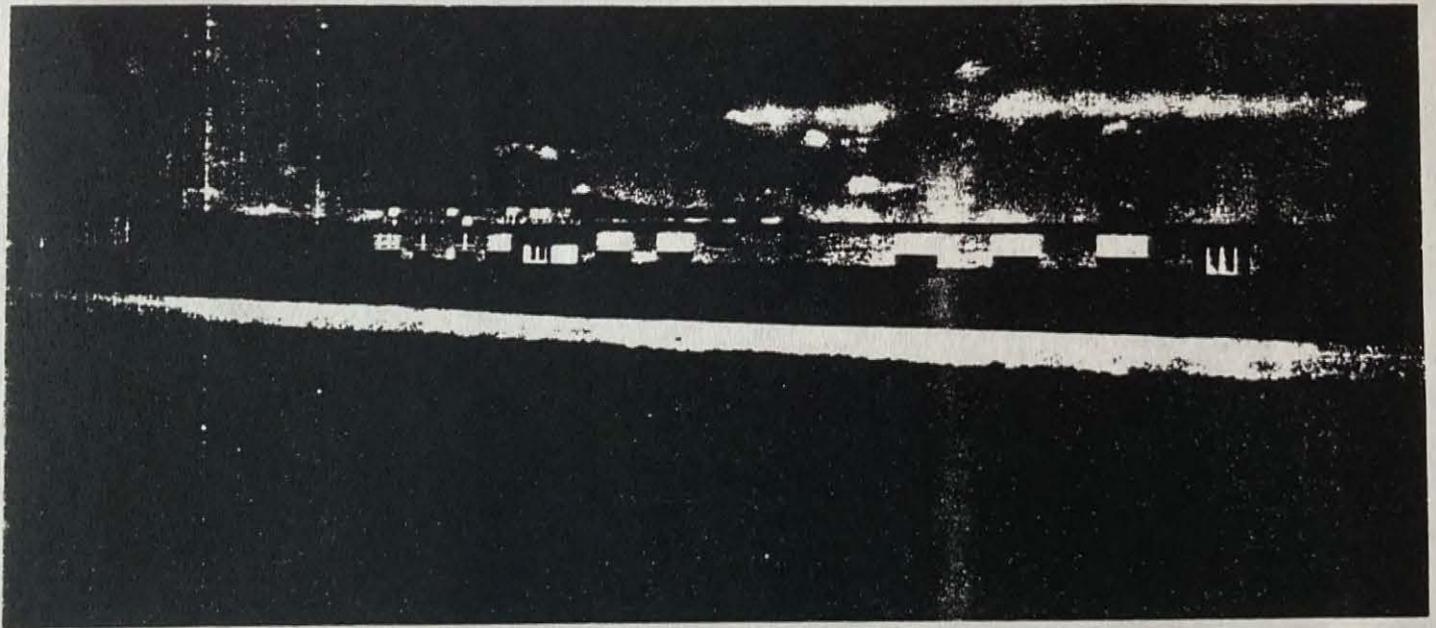
The Iowa Conservation Commission purchased the land surrounding the lake in the 1940's, and established the 887 acre Goose Lake Wildlife Management Area. A four bay concrete and wood dam was built to control the water level in the lake. A depth of two to three feet was maintained over sixty percent of the lake. Arrowhead Hunting and Conservation Club was established just south of Goose Lake in 1952, providing 1173 acres of natural hunting and fishing. Arrowhead was founded by John Mullin, editor of Wildlife Harvest, the official publication of the North American Game Breeders and Shooting Preserve Operators Association, Inc.

Ascension Lutheran Church was constructed in the late 1950's. The idea of a church began in the 1920's when Nickolaus Carstensen willed \$10,000 to the construction of a Lutheran church in Goose Lake. The first worship service was held on Sunday, January 10, 1960, and the church was dedicated on New Year's Day, 1961.

An addition was made to the Goose Lake School in 1957. In 1961 the Charlotte, Elvira, and Goose Lake School Districts reorganized to form Northeast Community School District. Elementary classes were held in each school. The Junior high was located in the Goose Lake School, and Northeast High School was in the Elvira School. A new

Junior-senior high school was built just east of the Goose Lake town limits in 1967.

Goose Lake received federal funding to install a municipal sewer system in 1972. Construction of new homes began in the Goose Lake Heights Subdivision of town, along what was to become Emma Court. The town council voted to



Northeast Community Junior-Senior High School, 1968

adopt the Home Rule Act in 1975, which minimized state and county influence in Goose Lake's affairs. At this time, the Town of Goose Lake officially became the City of Goose Lake.

Early in the 1980's, the Goose Lake Fire Department purchased a new truck to supplement its classic 1948 International pumper. A new post office was built and a new well was drilled for the city's water supply. The owner of the Goose Lake Savings Bank established Gateway State Bank in Clinton, and the Goose Lake and Charlotte banks became Gateway branch offices. Several streets were repaved, and street signs were erected as part of Clinton County's Enhanced 911 program.

A \$50,000 addition was made to the city hall in 1990, and a water purification system was installed.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION  
AND  
STATISTICS

POPULATION (1920-1990)

1920	97
1930	128
1940	145
1950	148
1960	191
1970	218
1976	272
1980	274
1990	232

Source: United States Census

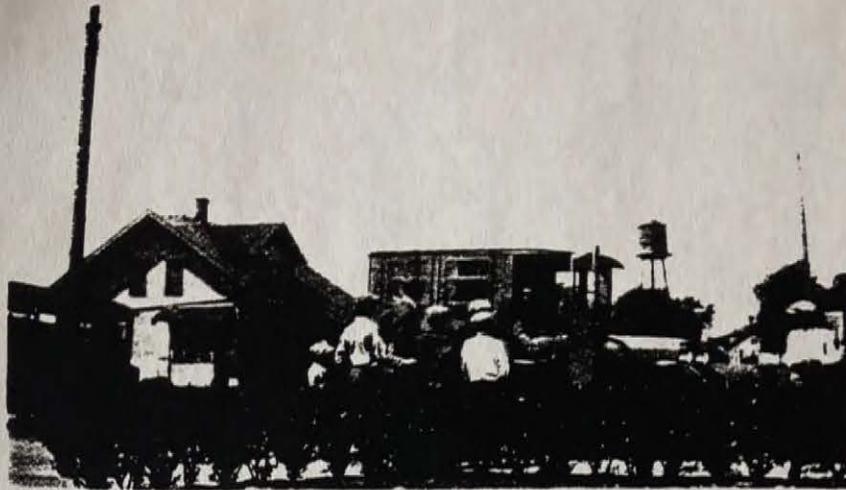
MURDERS (1840-1990)

Total: 1  
Average per year: 0.00667

FIRE DEPARTMENT ROLL  
September 20, 1915

Paul Harksen  
Richard Brodensen  
William Unruh  
Peter Harksen  
Gus Weller  
Earl Webster  
Herbert Jepsen  
Alex Straibel

Source: Secretary's Record, G.L.F.D.

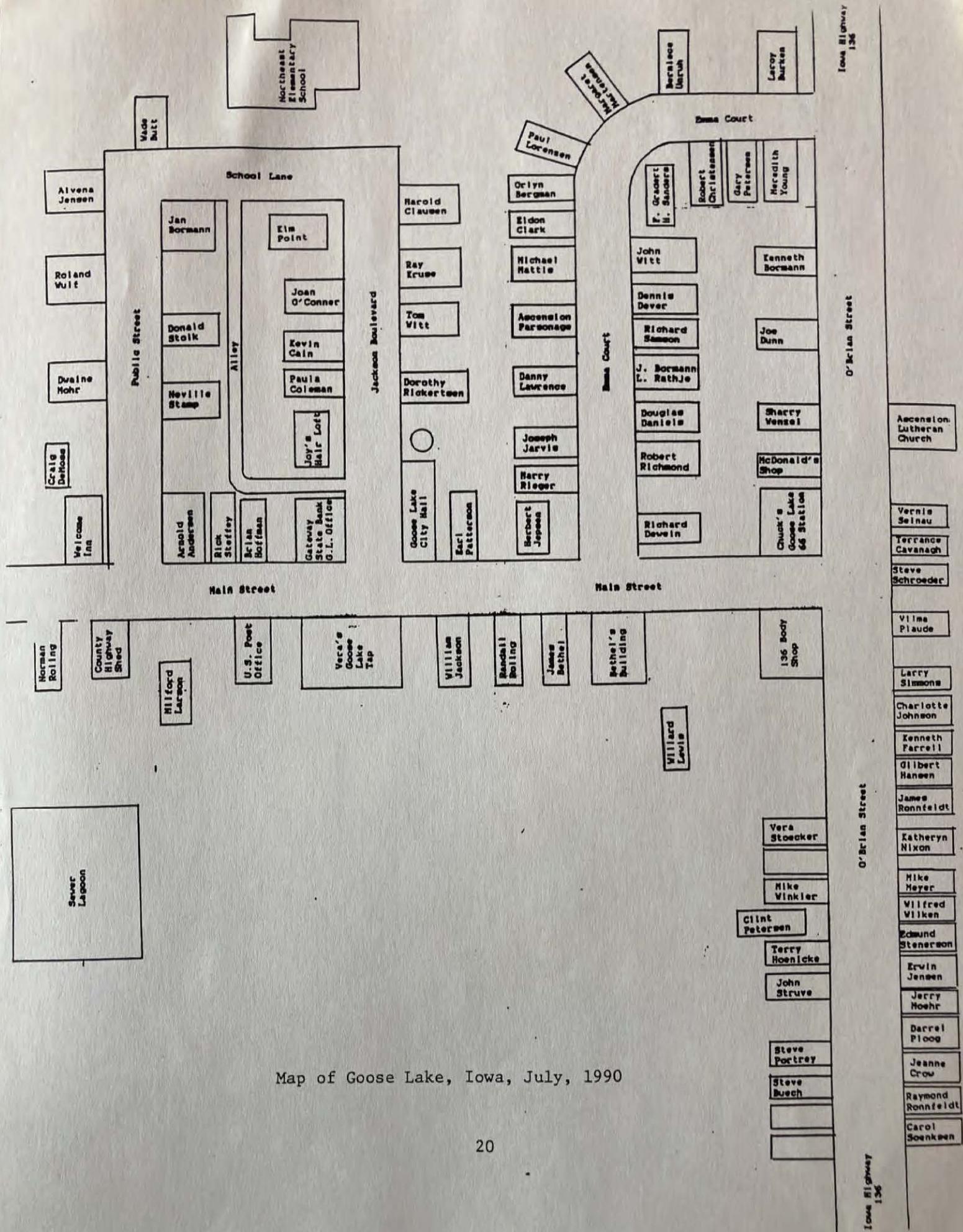


Bookmobile at Goose Lake School, 1930's

**OLINTON AND ANAMOSA LINE.—(Anam.)**

Express.	Mls.	May 7, 1893.	Express.
*12 15 NO'N	.0	lvs.....Chicago <sup>1</sup> ...arr.	2 15 P.M.
†8 45 P.M.	138.1	lvs. + .. Olinton <sup>6</sup> ...arr.	9 20 A.M.
8 57 "	140.7	arr..... Lyons... <sup>8</sup> arr.	9 09 "
8 12 "	148.5	" ..... Almont.... "	8 58 "
8 27 "	155.3	" ..... Bryant.... <sup>8</sup> "	8 35 "
6 34 "	157.9	" ... Goose Lake... <sup>8</sup> "	8 28 "
6 44 "	162.7	" ... Charlotte... <sup>8</sup> "	8 18 "
7 03 "	170.8	" ... Delmar <sup>80</sup> ... <sup>8</sup> "	8 02 "
7 17 "	176.2	" + Maquoketa <sup>81</sup> ... <sup>8</sup> "	7 50 "
7 32 "	182.4	" .... Nashville... "	7 33 "
7 39 "	185.7	" .... Baldwin... <sup>8</sup> "	7 26 "
7 45 "	197.7	" .. Monmouth... <sup>8</sup> "	7 22 "
8 01 "	194.9	" ..... Onslow... <sup>8</sup> "	7 04 "
8 10 "	198.9	" .. Centre Junction <sup>84</sup> ... <sup>8</sup> "	6 55 "
8 22 "	202.0	" .... Amber..... "	6 43 "
8 36 P.M.	209.5	arr. + Anamosa <sup>85</sup> ... <sup>8</sup> lvs. 10 20 A.M.	

C&NW Midland Timetable, June, 1893



Map of Goose Lake, Iowa, July, 1990

Iowa Highway 136

O'Brian Street

O'Brian Street

Iowa Highway 136

- Ascension Lutheran Church
- Vernie Selnau
- Terrance Cavanagh
- Steve Schroeder
- Vilma Plaude
- Larry Simmons
- Charlotte Johnson
- Kenneth Farrell
- Gilbert Hansen
- James Ronnfeldt
- Katheryn Nixon
- Mike Meyer
- Wilfred Wilken
- Edmund Stenserson
- Ervin Jensen
- Jerry Noehr
- Darrel Ploog
- Jeanne Crow
- Raymond Ronnfeldt
- Carol Soenkaen



1929 Goose Lake High School Baseball

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