



A view of Main Street in Ricketts - Then and Now



Naming of Ricketts

Information from the Ricketts's 75th & Centinneal Books

As to how Ricketts got it's name, we cannot be sure. We have talked to many people and needless to say, we have many stories. All we can do is to repeat these stories and let everyone decide for themselves which is the correct one.

The Public Relations Department of the Chicago Northwestern Railroad wrote that their files stated that Ricketts was named for an early settler.

Some people have claimed that there was a man who worked on the railroad by the name of Ricketts, and that the town was named for him.

Most everyone agreed that the first name chosen for our town was to be Sciford, naming it after the family that sold the land upon which our town was built. Mr. Sciford did not like the idea, so another name had to be selected.

A few of the old timers have told us that there was an old bachelor that lived east of Ricketts that died about

the time that the town was coming into being. Supposedly, he had been the one to first plow the prairie where the town of Ricketts now stands: his name was Ricketts.

Some others have said that the Henry Ricks (later the name was changed to Rix) family, who lived northeast of town along the tracks on the land that Verdell Clausen now farms, had the honor of having the town named after him. It is said that the railroad originally had decided to build the depot close to Mr. Ricks farm, but then for some reason changed their minds and moved it west a mile. If only Mr. Sciford had known the confusion about where Ricketts got it's name we're sure that he would have allowed the town to be named Sciford-

The land upon which the town of Ricketts is located was purchased

from Mr. George Sciford and wife and Mr. Charles Sciford and wife on March 2, 1899 by the Western Town Lot Company. E.1/2, SE1/4 of Sec. 35-85-41 except 100 ft. right of way for the railroad was bought for \$4222.00 and the W1/2 SW1/4, Sec. 36-85-41 of \$4,800.00.

Railroad

Information from the Ricketts's 75th & Centinneal Books

In the year 1899, the Mondamin branch of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad decided to build a branch line called the BoyerValley Railway beginning at Mondamin and ending at Wall Lake. Thus, the towns of Ricketts, Schleswig, and Kiron were built beginning in this year.

Most everything at that time came into town by rail and the depot was the most popular place in town. Everyone would come to see who came into or left town, see what came into town by rail, mail, or express; and have a good visit among themselves to boot.

Railroad fare from Ricketts to Schleswig was 26 cents on the passenger trains.

One service offered by the railroad was to the farmer, getting his produce to market. Butter was shipped to Chicago by passenger train and hogs and cattle shipped to the market by freight. The farmers would drive their hogs and cattle in by foot to the stockyards (fortunate hogs rode to Ricketts in a wagon) and it was usually on a Saturday morning. The drive would start before dawn so the stock would not get overheated. By noon the stockcars were loaded and the train usually left Ricketts



by mid-afternoon. The shippers would accompany their livestock to Chicago, taking along their lunch boxes, for the 30 to 36 hour trip.

The train would stop at Berne, Ricketts, Schleswig, Kiron and all stations on up the Mondamin Line to Wall Lake. Then, without any more stops, the train rolled on to Clinton. At Clinton it would hook up to a special train

that took them directly to the Chicago Stockyards.

The caboose was filled with shippers, mostly your friends and neighbors (men only) all shipping their livestock. The men usually returned home on Tuesday morning, coming by passenger train to Denison. They would receive a free pass from the railroad to return home.

Interesting Happenings from Ricketts

1901 - The two Charter Oak banks, Farmer State Bank and The First National Bank, started branch banks in Ricketts.

1903 - The marshal of Ricketts was J.A. Snyder, and his salary was \$5 a month.

1906 - Special session called for purpose of aiding San Francisco earthquake sufferers. Donated \$25 to the Red Cross Society.

1907 - Biggest fire in county in years takes little town. Midnight blaze destroys \$30,000 worth of property in Ricketts.

1916 - Ricketts road to be graded. Workers have 30 horses to help with the job

1919 - An explosion at the water pumping station occurred in Ricketts in 1919 which severely injured the engineer, J.H. Dethlefs, and burned the plant down to the ground.

1920 - The opera house at Ricketts was sold at public sale in March and a company of home people purchased it for the sum of \$2,250. The Opera House burned in December 1942.

1921 - Sensational Fire Ricketts - Looks as though attempt was made to burn hotel. Fire was discovered in the floor of one of the rooms of the Ricketts Hotel at an early hour but it was extinguished before any great damage was done.

1922 - Ricketts lady dies from prick of a needle. Mrs. Martin Stier pricked her finger some time ago with a needle and infection set it. This was stopped but other complications followed, the infection apparently moving from place to place until she could fight it no longer.

1930 - Road from Ricketts to highway 141 to be graveled. Work has been started on graveing the road from Ricketts to Schleswig. Sent cigar and cigarettes to the county board of engineers as compliment on gravel job done on the streets in 1932.

1936 - The blizzard of 1936 brought so much snow, that the train was stranded between Ricketts and Schleswig.

1941 - Ricketts began blacktopping their Main Street

1945 - Vernon Schnoor, son of Carl Schnoor, was lost at sea during a typhoon in the South Pacific on September 16, 1945.

1946 - Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Hopp spent their honeymoon in Storm Lake and Lake View

1947 - Mrs. Iven Ewoldt of Ricketts, gave birth to two babies, four days apart. Two sons were born four days apart to Mr. and Mrs. Iven Ewoldt, at the Denison hospital. The first boy was born Sat., Oct. 11 and the second boy was born Wednesday, Oct. 15.

1952 - Church bought at Schleswig by St. Lukes and moved to Ricketts. The church was pulled with a cat tractor and was followed by a 15 ton bulldozer to keep from running down the hill. The church rode on 32 rubber tires. The trip on the highway from Schleswig to Mapleton corner took a half day and the rest of the trip into town took another half a day.

1955 - Coming to Ricketts on December 17 is the Falstaff's World Champion Lady Bowling Team. The ladies will bowl against the best men bowlers of Ricketts.

1959 - Mr. and Mrs. Lorenz Boyens left for a 5,500 mile trip. They will travel to the west coast and down into Old Mexico

1962 - Senior captain, Loren Lee was named to the Class B All-Southwest Iowa football team as published by the Omaha World Herald, in addition, Loren was named "Most Valuable Player for 1962.

1963 - Coleen Schwarz, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Schwarz of Ricketts, will be participating in the National AAU track meet at Dayton, Ohio.

1965 - A severe blizzard caused a Schleswig School bus to go into a ditch near the Herbert Teut home. The driver and 14 youngsters spent the night in the Teut home. The next morning the road was opened so the children could get home.

1966 - Authorities were investigating the robbery of the Farmers Savings Bank at Ricketts Monday morning, which perhaps had taken place early the same morning. Loss is set at about \$2,300.

1967 - Firemen from Ricketts, Charter Oak and Schleswig battled an early morning fire in and near the Ricketts Lanes. The building received extensive damage from a fire.

1968 - Sgt. Paul E. Briggie, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Briggie, Sr., of Ricketts, was wounded by gunfire in the stomach, hand, and leg in combat duty in Vietnam on May 13. Sgt. Briggie is reported taken off the critical list at the Camp Drake Japan Hospital.

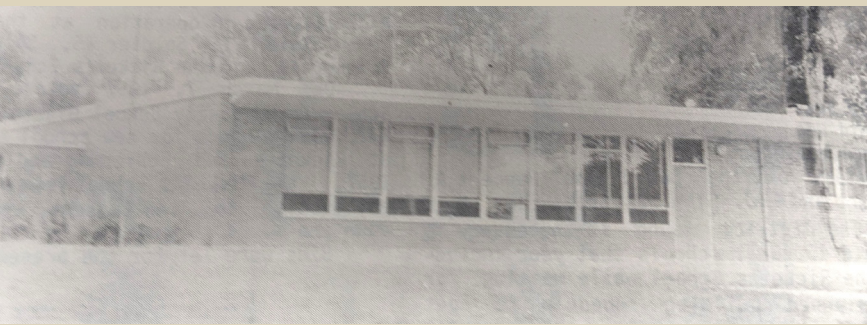
Information from the Ricketts's 75th & Centinneal Books

Interesting Happenings continues on Page 8

Post Office

The Ricketts Post Office was established on December 14,

1899. The types of service available in Ricketts in 1899 (so far as we know) was that customers picked up their mail at the Post Office. There was no city delivery there at the time. Postal rates in 1899, for first class mail, post cards were one cent and most letter mail was two cents. For second class mail, weekly newspapers were one cent per pound. All other newspaper were one cent a copy. For third class mail - books, catalogs, circulars - the charge was one cent for two ounces. The Ricketts Post Office is still running today.



A new elementary school building opened in February 1958.

School History

Information from the Ricketts's 75th & Centinneal Books

The first Annual Report of Crawford County for 1873 shows there were three schools in operation in Soldier Township. There were two male teachers who received an average salary of \$30 per month and one female teacher who received a salary of \$25 per month. There was an average of 16 male and 16 female students in the three schools. School was in session for about three months usually during the winter, since children were needed to help with farm and household chores during the busier seasons of the year. In the following year, 1874, it is interesting to note that schools were open for 6 months.

By 1899, the number of schools in Soldier Township had increased to nine schools with a total of 128 boys and 106 girls in attendance. The school term was increased to eight months. The average per pupil tuition cost was \$2.85.

School No. 7, Soldier Twp., was located one mile north of Ricketts. Since there was no school in town, the town children had to walk one mile north to attend this school. Minnie Larson was the teacher and she drove a horse and buggy each day.

As Ricketts thrived and grew the leaders of the community realized a need for a school within the city limits. Consequently, in May 1913, Lots 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 of block 9 were purchased from the Western Town Lot Company for the sum of \$250 and deeded to The Ricketts

Independent School District. By the fall of 1913 a one-room school house had been built and the

first teacher A.K. Wilkins, hired for a salary of \$75 per month. The average cost of tuition per pupil for the year was \$3.07 per month.

About 1954 the State Department of Public Instruction of Iowa began a campaign to encourage school districts to reorganize into larger units with the objectives of bringing about more efficient and economical systems. The choice of which school system an area would join was left up to the voters of an area, consequently the Ricketts school district and neighboring rural districts were being wooed by both the Schleswig and Charter Oak systems in an effort to get them to join their respective systems.

The Schleswig Board went on record as favoring a grade school in Ricketts for children of the area up to and including the fourth grade. This proposal, coupled with the additional tax benefit offered by the Schleswig system led the voters of the area to vote on Dec. 27, 1955 in favor of becoming part of the Schleswig Community School District.

The new district became effective on July 1, 1956 and thereby ended the Ricketts Independent School District as such.

On March 7, 1957 voters of the Schleswig Community

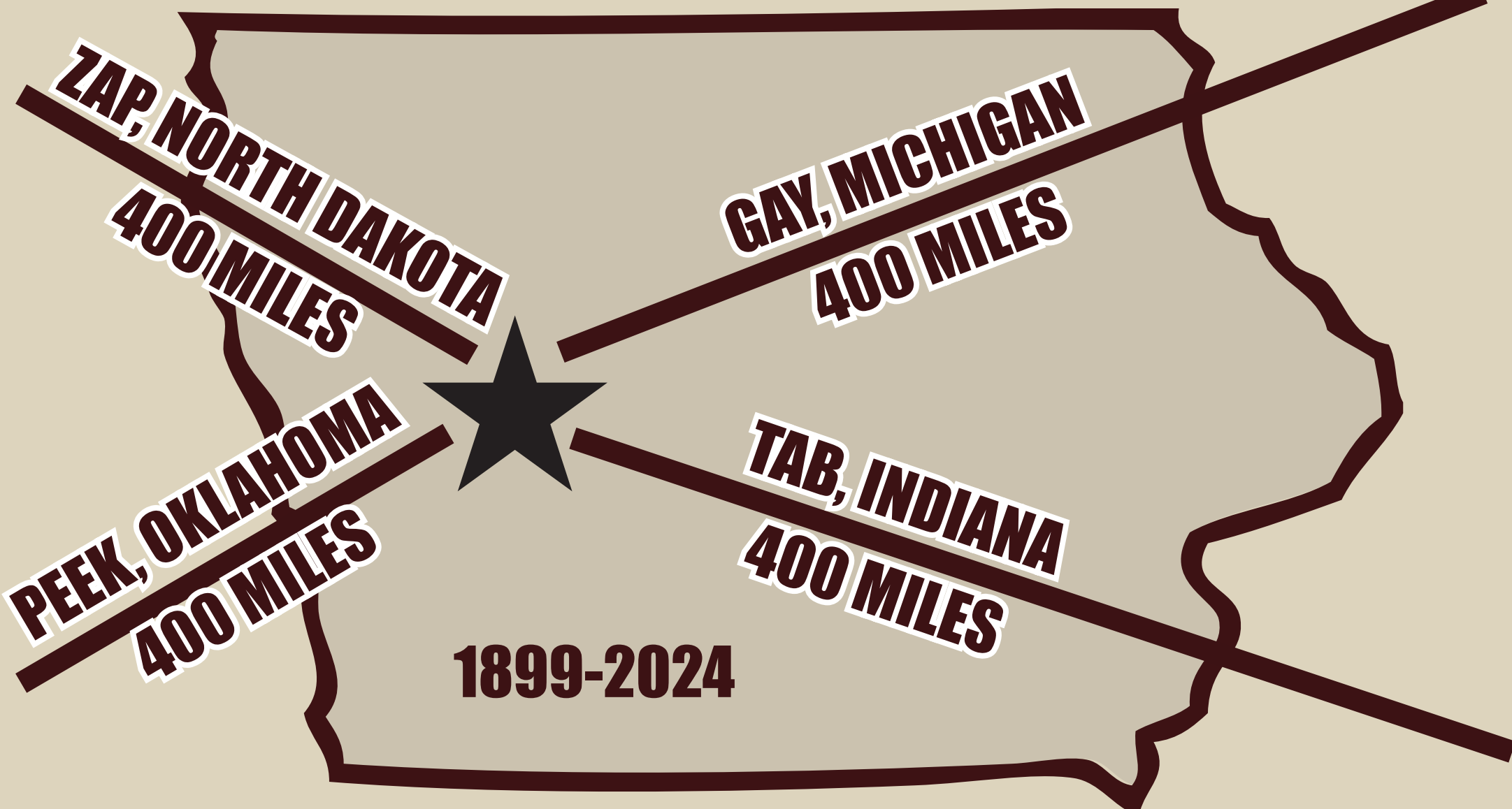
School District voted \$426,000 in bonds for new school buildings at Ricketts and Schleswig. Construction on the building began in July.

The building costs for the Ricketts building were as follows: General contract: \$34,636.80; Heating contract: 4,757.15; Plumbing contract: 2,626.00; Electrical contract: 2,685.00 Total cost: \$44,704.95; Cost per square foot: \$10.30

On January 22, 1958 the Board of Education accepted the Ricketts building and on Feb. 3, 63 students happily occupied the new building. The year 1958-1959 marked the first full year that children of the lower elementary grades living in Soldier township, a small portion of Morgan Township, and the town of Ricketts, attended school in the new building with a total of 67 pupils enrolled.

In the fall of 1971, because of declining enrollments, only 4th graders in the Schleswig District were taught in Ricketts. The school closed in 1981 due to declining enrollment and all the children attended the Schleswig Schools in Schleswig.

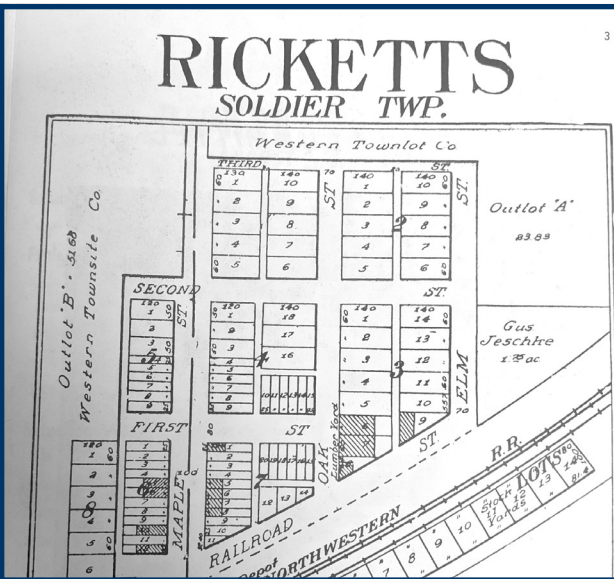
RICKETTS



"Middle of Nowhere"

Crime in Ricketts

- **1926** - Otto Claussen to be notified to muffle his motor as it is causing too much disturbance and on complaints declared a nuisance.
- **1928** - Eight parties were arrested for holding a public dance on Sunday - Fine of \$2.50 each and 62 1/2 cent cost each
- **1936** - Lowell Nielsen, 19 of Ricketts, is serving a 90 day sentence on a charge of chicken stealing on the Herbert Mundt farm. About 35 chickens had been stolen and sold at Armors in Denison and some of them were sold at the Ricketts and Ida Grove poultry houses.



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CATERING WITH A TOUCH OF CLASS
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Be sure to get a TASTE of Staley's Chicken on Sunday, June 30 at the Chicken Dinner at the Ricketts Community Center from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Congratulations Ricketts on 125 years!

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