



## ***SEEDSTOCK:***

**An Improper History of Early BALFOUR**

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NORTH DAKOTA  
BOOK OR AUTHOR



"Balfour was like a plant," a pioneer said. "A seed was planted, grew, blossomed. Everything was growing, blooming. People accomplished things, working together. About 1910 it began to sprout out, to send out seed and then it began to drift downward."

She remembers the days of immigrant cars and dray lines, livery barns and opera houses, of homesteaders, blind-piggers, farmers and dreamers.

Balfour was like a plant. The Soo Line Railroad was the gardener with a two-fold purpose: to sell its land here and generate business for the line. So the Soo aided settlement: an agent to show sites, a section house sheltering work crews and land seekers, a trip from St. Paul west for only \$1.50 and, for some, immigrant cars to bring machinery and animals and men.

Balfour's history does not begin with the railroad; Indians had a highway here before white men came and surely traders and early ranchers along the Mouse marked the site. Balfour's history does not end in drouth and grasshoppers from 1916 to 1923, disastrous fires and bank failures.

Balfour, a plant which blossomed and flourished, has sent its seed around the world. Many who nurtured it left little record; we regret that they passed before a record could be made. With apologies to those omitted and misquoted, we thank Fannie Peters, Corabelle Brown, Mrs. Gordon Olson, C.A.S. Helseth, Bennie Braaten, Orville Aanrud, L. W. and Mayme Belzer and Edna Petterson. They provided a newcomer with stories of people.

It is those people who were and are this city's reason for existence—to nurture and spread their virtues and ideals far beyond the reach of the "parent plant," Balfour. Balfour produced them: the seed stock.

The iron horse plodded a few miles a day across North Dakota. But white man's civilization followed swiftly in the railroad's path.

The construction crews with their cook cars and bunk cars moved on, leaving a section house which was to be an informal hotel in the beginning, a section foreman and his family, and a name -- Balfour, chosen by the railroad in honor of British author and statesman Lord Arthur Balfour.

That section foreman, Ole Helseth, had traveled a long way to Balfour: from a farm in Norway to Oslo, to a ranch at Williston in 1892, to the Great Northern Railroad at Ray where he married Ellen Swanberg and to Burlington where he was section foreman. There their daughter, Effie was born March 1, 1896. Then Ole's wish to advance, to add land location to his other work, brought him to Balfour where he decided to settle.

Later the family was to manage the Pioneer Hotel, then a hardware store; Ole was to become postmaster in 1902, serve as Balfour village clerk and justice of peace, school board clerk.

The Helseth family papers give the first glimpse of the town: The arrival of Pat O'Hara, later to be section foreman. He filed on a homestead next to the section house, built a shack close by, boarded with Mrs. Helseth, and worked on the section till he had proved up his claim.

The Helseth family recalled that people would arrive on the train, look at the lonely section house, tied to the rest of the world only by the railroad, and ask, "Where's Balfour?"

Pointing at the building, Ole would reply, "That's it." But he hastened to add details of the rich land and the fine stores, homes and people to come, as he helped them locate a claim.

Helseth also remembered taking the hand-pumper to Minot for supplies for the winter.

And they recalled a scene later when Mrs. Braaten stayed overnight at the section house with her young baby, then setting off across the prairie alone, pushing a baby carriage and carrying one suitcase, to find her husband and the claim he had staked.

The closest towns were Anamoose, Towner and a start at Velva.

L. W. Belzer, who came to Balfour March 25, 1900, and has lived here since, remembered the first days: a vast prairie with only a few areas of breaking and an infant city with a section house and two businesses: a store and a blind pig.

The store, about 20 by 30 feet served as grocery, drygoods and hardware store and machine shop.

And the blind pig was a triple wagon-box, about 40 inches high, turned

upside down. The bartenders, named Shorty Mushrat and Scrap Iron Bill, Belzer insists, knelt behind a plank nailed to the endgate, selling beer from stock behind them at 25 cents a quart.

Civilization had come to Balfour.

Within days, hammers were banging up and down a new main street and it seemed as if the ground itself was shooting up buildings.

Lots were sold by W. E. Cooke in 1899 and in 1900 the Pendroy livery barn was built. Tom Alme had a little store for a time before moving to his farm. And Mrs. Helseth baked bread all day and into the night for bachelors who brought their wheat to her.

The settlers, influenced by friends and relatives, or by persuasive Ole Helseth and others, or by a wish to own land, or seek adventure, came. The earliest stories deal with them.

The mail-order bride of a homesteader arrived carrying two dozen eggs in a paper bag. The jolting of the livery barn team broke the eggs and they leaked on her black taffeta dress. However, being a real pioneer, she invited the driver in for the first supper in her new home-scrambled eggs.

After Perry and John Pendroy's livery stable was built in 1900, many settlers spent their first night in its haymow.

Many of the first settlers came with no equipment or livestock, just a determination to stake a claim. However, others, like Belzer's father, arrived with machinery, broke the sod, and made first crops for others. If he furnished seed he received that first crop, and some of the yields were fine ones, with wheat weighing 64 or 65 pounds.

That first grain was unloaded by wheelbarrow, dumped in a storeroom along a side track and loaded again into cars by wheelbarrow, according to notes left by Henry Jevnager. The Royal, first elevator in Balfour, was built in 1902.

His father, Ador, built the first family home in 1899, was postmaster and sold groceries in 1900, and became the first grain buyer in 1901. The next year, he sold lots and gave his name to an addition on the south side of the tracks.

In late 1903, Pat O'Hara also opened an addition to the north of the original townsite and the generous Irish Catholic donated lots to all the churches in town.

The first school in 1901 in Jevnager's machine shed was held by Miss Peterson, sister of Linus Peterson and later wife of John Melhouse. School also met above a feed store, a furniture store and the Evangelical church. Clyde Ackemeier in 1902 became the first man teacher and the first school house was built in 1903. Teachers were Mae Moore, Mary Mackin and J.W.R.H. DeLa, according to Henry Jevnager's notes.

The German EVA built the first church, followed by the Lutherans and Methodists, Jevnager says. The first church and Sunday school services were conducted by Baptist E. E. Cowell in 1901 and by Rev. T. T. Wiprud of Fessenden for the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America which organized Oct. 28, 1900. Rev. A. M. Buslee, installed June 29, 1902, to serve the latter group, was in Balfour 25 years. A priest came from Harvey to conduct Catholic services.

Rev. Cowell also organized the first paper, the Balfour Statesman, in 1901.

Other early Balfourites Jevnager listed include Dr. J. R. Pence, who came in 1902; butcher Henry Bergman, (1901); furniture, George Bonine, (1901); hotel, Frank Maxwell, 1901; drugstore, John Kohler, 1901; lumber, Kulaas Lumber of Minot, managed by Pete C. Glein, 1901; depot agent, John Spurzem; poolroom and restaurant, Jim Manning and Pete Connelly, 1901; hardware, William Riebe, 1901; attorneys Bird and Blaisdell, about 1902; and general merchandise, Friebes, 1901; M. B. Hulls, Balfour Mercantile owned by John Melhouse; and Linus Peterson and Company.

(The "red light" district was on the corner where you turn to the cemetery.)

The first eating place in Balfour, he said, was Mrs. Hewitt, a widow living south of the tracks who later remarried and moved away. Joe Strom, in 1901, owned the first blind pig, also south of the tracks. William Wohlheater was cashier in 1902 at the earliest bank, the First State Bank, of course.

Ador Jevnager, who later became one of the largest early Ford car dealers in the area, was the first McHenry County sheriff to own a car -- a two-cylinder Maxwell Brisco made in 1907 -- according to his son. And L. B. Pendroy's one-cylinder, stick-steering Olds was, in 1903, the first auto seen in Balfour.

Balfour was a city of young and healthy people, another early resident insists, with M. V. Reed and A. M. Parmenter the only older people among the earlier settlers. "Balfour was so healthy, they had to murder someone to start a cemetery!" she says.

That unsavory chapter, fortunately not often repeated, was when Paul Peterson's body was found buried in the manger of his barn west of town, along with the ax used to smash his skull. Later Carl Olson, who is said to have sold Peterson's horses and wagon in Minnesota, served a life sentence in the state penitentiary.

Life in the earliest days in Balfour was good, many of the early settlers insist. One pioneer noted many of them were young people who were not farming, because they did not have equipment to do so. They were just claiming their land and time was spent in details of daily living and in entertainment.

That open prairie, seemingly untouched by humans, soon changed. A claim shack sprang up on every quarter, patches of breaking dotted the grassland, and the plains were cut down to size by the rutted trails which underlined the fact that settlement had come.

Dancing was one frequent diversion in the early days. Fannie Pendroy Peters, who came to Balfour in 1900 as a child, said, "I remember the hayrack going down the streets in Balfour with the driver calling, 'Dance at Randall's, dance at Randall's.' By the second trip, the girls would come pouring out of the houses, their shoes unbuttoned and belts in one hand. They finished dressing in the rack. And out to they'd go to some claim shack, to dance until dawn! How I used to envy those girls old enough to wear long dresses and go to dances!"

The claim shacks were temporary, often rough, since many homesteaders went back East in the winter to work, and they were always small, with a 10 by



**Charles Notbohm showed off some of the magnificent grain which could be grown in the newly turned land.**

12 foot shack considered quite commodious.

For dances, all the furniture--except the stove which wouldn't fit through the door -- was taken out. Surprise parties were the order of the day. Food often was brought by the party givers.

Any excuse was reason enough for a party. In June, 1904, Perry and Alice Pendroy invited the whole town over to see the King of the Cactus, a night-blooming cereus, in action. The flowers lasted from 7 p.m. to midnight, and the party a good deal longer, the Balfour Leader records.

Fannie Peters recalled the July Fourth celebration in 1902. For the benefit of a large number of German-Russian immigrants, newly-arrived, the town provided free music for dancing all day and far into the night. Since trees were not yet growing, a troupe went to the river and cut trees to prop in front of buildings for shade on the "bowery."

Mrs. Peters recalled peering out the upstairs window of the opera house as the sun came up the morning of the fifth, as the dancers continued their merriment.

A little later in the century, the dances and feasts connected with weddings went on for three days and those for namesdays often lasted two days.

In the earliest times, however, the young couples often traveled to Minot or Towner to be married and were treated to a chivari when they came home: The Leader in February 1908 describes one such occasion:

"Gus Varberg and Grace Cowell went to Minot Monday. Whey they returned Tuesday evening, they were met at the depot. The happy couple was treated to rice, old shoes, a ride in Hetle's Dray, which was loaded with admiring friends." After a wild ride, the couple was taken to the bride's home for a party.

The brides fortunate enough to have family in Balfour often chose a home wedding, complete with lace, flowers, music and "cover laid for 10" on tables sagging with food. Wedding trips were not common.

Some weddings were held at the Pendroy Opera House, Fannie Peters recalled. Some of the largest were for waitresses at the hotel. "Everyone in town would get together to give them a big wedding," she said. "They didn't have families here and everyone in town felt like their family. The hotel would host a supper. Boy, did they get gifts!"

Music also was a common bond, and many newspaper stories of the early time list singing socials, organization of vocal and instrumental groups, and concerts by both local and imported musicians.

Card playing, visiting tent shows, and hunting also provided pleasant times. Sometimes freight train crews en route to Minot stopped at Cooney's slough west of Balfour to hunt ducks! More adventurous Balfourites often joined them, hopping the freight and riding in the caboose to a nearby town.

For children, there were some chores, such as herding the town cows on vacant land to the east. Often, though, the whole village was one big playground, with sleigh rides and skating in winter, fishing and swimming in Brush Lake in the summer, and long evenings filled with games of "Run, sheep, run" or "Hide and Seek" played among the raw new homes and



killed one man and tore up 300 feet of track and 18 cars. It noted an average U.S. school term of 145 days with average teaching wages at \$40 a month for women and a spectacular \$49 for the 28 per cent of the faculty who were men. In Germany, they were attempting to use potatoes to make alcohol to burn for power.

More interesting to early Balfourites, however, was the local news: Julius Ulrich is building a barn for Herman Voight, 20 by 30 feet with 14-foot studding! Fred Martwick was cleaning out the Bergman ice house and filling it with ice from Brush Lake. The Ole Skari family entertained 22 members of the Balfour Norwegian Young People's Society; Rev. A.M. Buslee planned a Norwegian Christmas service.

And the men met at Pendroy's hall to form the creamery association; secure a site; and put up ice for summer. A.B. Melhouse was elected president of the creamery association, Christ Narveson, vice president, D.T. Owens, secretary, and A.L. Lombard, treasurer. Directors were P.W. Horbenko, Frank Cooper, Edward Ives, Jacob Wehr, and Newton Clark.

By the end of 1903, new names appeared in the advertising: The German-American Bank which was to become the American State Bank during World War I; Evans and Hansen City Meat Market; barber C.M. Groves; M.B. Hulls general merchandise; Mannings Cafe; G.J. Bonine, the furniture man -- and the undertaker -- attorneys A.J. Nelson, L.B. Pendroy who was also the U.S. Land Commissioner; Parmenter's Harness Shop; A.O. Wike, watchmaker and jeweler; Kulaas Lumber run by Pete C. Glein; and Riebe and Son Coal Co. M.H. Frank wanted to sell the Pioneer Hotel.

Dr. Thomas Story, the dentist, had competition from Dr. M.H. Scholberg, who came from Minot to the Maxwell Hotel the 22nd and 23rd of each month. Miss Gina Thompson was the new manager of the Salvatore Hotel, with rooms from \$1 to \$1.25 a week. Mrs. McCreedy was giving embroidery lessons; Rev. J.J. Stempges preached at 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. each Sunday at Pendroy's hall; the Balfour Mercantile Co. announced it was closing Sundays and hoped others would follow suit; and the "Imperial Symphony Quartette" was playing the Pendroy Opera House.

Schmidt, Gulack and Meisch's farm machinery advertised. So did Vail and Tifts who did engine repairs and F.E. Haldeman and Co. who sold plows and did woodwork and blacksmithing.

Not all news was business: Will Beutler was building a new house on his claim nine miles northeast of town; Tom Alme was farming on the Mouse River; and Commissioner Blaisdell was in town to hear 16 final proofs including Peter Pister, Emil Wegener, and Anton Sorenson. Threshers H.H. Benson and Arthur Abel had returned to Balfour.

Teddy Roosevelt was president, of course, and Frank White was N.D. Governor, H.C. Hansborough and P.J. McCumber Senators, B.F. Spaulding and Thomas Marshall representatives; and McHenry County had Sheriff William R. Pitts, and States Attorney D.J. O'Connell.

"Halloween was kept in great style," the Leader reports, "with main street covered with old machinery, threshing rigs and changed signs."



On the last day of the year, 1903, the *Leader* reported H.H. Benson was working at Manning and Connelly ice house; Professor Clark attended the dedication of the new school at Velva; and Carl Knuth was visiting his nephews here, Rev. Fred Knuth and Herman Knuth. The big news was light -- since the town has run out of kerosene, they had to "fall back on old-fashioned light -- the candle."

North Dakota had gained 75 percent increase in population from 1890 to 1900, the paper noted, and that increase was straining the budget at Balfour and elsewhere. A meeting was called for Jan. 6 to determine plans for bonding the school district, with money available at 4 percent. It was noted Minot had recently passed -- unanimously -- an \$18,000 issue.

The Jan. 6, 1904, edition gave a successful conclusion to two stories: Seven tanks of kerosene came, and the school bonding vote was "almost unanimous."

New desks for the upstairs room at the school were delivered, the new five-month school term began, and three new pupils -- Olaf Olson, Aaron Bethke and Bertha Jacobs -- arrived.

Social notes from the holidays also were announced: a dance was held at Smith and Kline's ranch south of Town on New Year's night; the Balfour Orchestra gave a New Year's Dance; Connelly's bowling alley was opening; Moore's Orchestra and Concert Co. would perform at the opera house with the Meistersinger Concert later this month; and 14 young folks took a sleigh ride New Year's Eve to Waldo's north of town.

Stanley Miller petitioned for a license to sell liquor in the drugstore -- for medicinal purposes.

But not all news was local. The 583 known deaths in the Chicago Iroquois Theatre fire was reported, and there was a discussion of whether Minot or Williston would get the Great Northern shops, to employ 40 men. There was a report oil was struck at LaMoure while artesian wells were being dug, and John Britt of Medora considered buying TR's log cabin to ship to St. Louis for the World's Fair.

At school the vacant room was being used as a gym. It was needed for 99 pupils, 21 in Prof. Clarke's room, 38 in Miss Moore's, and 40 in Miss Mackin's. Clarke said, "The blizzard last Monday caught most of us at school. We thought we might have to spend the night there, but *some* townspeople came to our aid with a rope for older pupils and a sled for the younger ones."

Intellectual development was not being neglected. The play "East Lynne" was scheduled and two debates were noted: "Should the U.S. and Canada become one country?" and "Should the U.S. construct the Nicaraguan Canal?" The affirmative side won both contests. And Miss Bartholomew of Minot came to teach painting classes at Balfour.

The first Balfour Dancing Club affair was a success, with 25 couples participating, and a poverty social was held. At a poverty social, often held to benefit a worthy cause, people dressed in their most ragged, patched clothes with prizes given for the worst. Fines were also levied; the most frequently collected was 2 cents for flirting.



..On June 1, 1905, a happy party consisting of Mr. and Mrs. P. A. Pendroy and three children, Mary Owens, and P. B. O'Hara left Balfour in covered wagons. They were joined at Velva by Mr. and Mrs. John Marlenee, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Berry, and Mrs. Stickles. They traveled to Yellowstone Park. The Pendroys, who made the trip in hopes of improving Mrs. Pendroy's health, took a train from Yellowstone to the West Coast, returning late in August. The happy journey did not have the hoped effect; Mrs. Pendroy died of tuberculosis in March the following year.

Not all was frivolous in Balfour in January, 1904. The organized churches included Rev. Stempges Methodist Episcopal; Rev. Melzian's Evangelical Church; Rev. Buslee at the Norwegian Lutheran Church; and Rev. Nelson at the Norwegian Lutheran Free Church.

It was noted work on the roads in lieu of payment of poll tax was acceptable. Organized townships included Little Deep, Spring Valley, Olivia, Lake Hester, Regstad (153, Range 77), Cottonwood Lake; Norway (154, Range 78); Egge Creek; Rough Rider, (152, Range 75); Brown; Thursby Butte, (157, Range 80); and Voltaire.

Bovey-Shute Co. bought out the Kulaas Lumber Yard, and Ador Jevnager donated land for the Balfour Cemetery, a fortunate co-incidence, for it was just two months later that authorities found the body of Paul Peterson, reported to have been murdered by Carl Olson.

News perhaps less noteworthy but more important included filing for final proofs by Henry Bergman, Ben, Swen and Ole Fiskum, Carl Meller, Clinton Belzer, and Martin Semrau. The people of Balfour "raised a kick" about the condition of their depot; the July 12 Statesman reports the Soo Line had sent word it would build a new facility yet that season.

Flood was the big news in the spring of 1904. Dr. Pence reported on April 28 he went to the Charles Pendroy home on the Mouse River to deliver a new son. He found the family living upstairs, with several inches of Mouse on the ground floor and the river over two miles wide.

Railroads were tied up for six weeks before the flyer made a trip west on May 4 and old-timers reported it was the highest water since '82. Perhaps non-arrival of trains was the reason for non-arrival of newsprint to Balfour -- the April 14 Leader was printed on brown wrapping paper.

In March Mae and Nettie Moore of Fargo opened a hat shop; the Balfour Mercantile Co. had gingham for 7 to 9 cents a yard and shirtwaists for 60 cents to a dollar; and Goldie McRoberts was teaching in Prof. Clarke's room.

In April Miller Drug Co. added a soda fountain; A. Darling came in an immigrant car and the Bert Capwell immigrant train arrived from Grand Ledge, Mich.; a meeting to discuss Balfour's incorporation was set; and it was noted Dr. Gerrish of Enderlin bought a 12 horsepower Knox motor car!

B.C. Acker tried 12 acres of alfalfa and Erick Sutherland four acres of June clover. Prizes were offered for gopher tails, \$1 for fourth place, \$2 for third; \$3 for second and, for the top snarer of gophers, a princely four dollars.

Later that day Postmaster Helseth let a contract to George Heap for "a fine eight-room house in the O'Hara Addition." The creamery well was completed at 102 feet with 75 feet of water, with work on the building scheduled to begin at once. W.H. McRoberts threshed 1¼ acres of barley which yielded 96 bushels.

Fortunately crops were good, since many families wanted to add a new convenience: the telephone. Clara Bergman was the first operator for the system, which cost \$1.50 a month for a residence, \$2 for a business or \$3 for both. Long distance lines connected Balfour with the world in September, 1905.

That fall, with 100 students registered at school, it was noted barns were being built on the back of lots at many of the new homes in town, since

Amund Johnson began work about July 1 for the Norwegian Lutheran Church, costing about \$2,500 which had already been raised. Martin Myrhe, Martin Olson and Rev. Buslee supervised building of the 30 by 40 foot structure with its 60-foot-tall steeple.

The Messenger said in July, "The spirit of hustling is seen on every hand in Balfour. The Norwegian church tower is looming; two new elevators are fast rushing to the sky, the Lubitz house is almost completed, new paint in every corner of town, the mill looms up in splendid magnificence, the cement factory is again doing business, the railroad well is being pushed with all possible energy, the mill well is almost 200 feet deep and still going...and the street improvement makes us all happy."

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The year 1907 started out sour; H. Kalinoski of the Balfour Mercantile Co. informed the Messenger that because of the difficulty of getting in goods, he was dealing out sugar in 50 cent parcels so each family could have a little. He also feared a flour shortage.

However, the Lutheran Young People's Society, meeting at the Kiefer home, was more concerned with other problems. After a musical program, they debated that war has done more harm than whiskey. The negative won.

Another meeting of import was the one at which J. B. Pendroy, George Kramer and C. J. Diebold were elected to lease grounds for a suitable baseball diamond and Pat Moriarity, S. L. Klebe and Doc Stone were named to a finance committee.

Fay Maxwell, appointed to secure and care for baseball paraphernalia, must have been successful, too. The uniforms were very dressy black with gold.

Baseball was an absolute fever in Balfour in those years, with merits of teams and players, reports of wins and losses, and competition with neighboring towns headlining every paper. In 1907 both Drake and Balfour had good teams and the race was fierce. Yet, surprisingly, the competing pitchers were friends, and the teams even borrowed pitchers, catchers and good hitters when playing another opponent.

Not everything about baseball was serious. The Messenger on July 9, 1908, reports: "Balfour lost the ball game which they had expected to win, Drake 13, Balfour 2. If Drake had not had Friedlein, if Balfour had had an opportunity to practice, if our pitcher hadn't been too fat, if that red-headed clown from Drake had kept his cannon still, and if everything had come our way, we would have won that game as sure as fate."

Naturally, baseball was part of the big Fourth of July celebrations. Fannie Peters reported the flyer somehow didn't stop at Balfour on July 4, 1908, so a group caught a freight headed east to tie up at Harvey for the Fourth, paid the crew to tie up in Minot, and had them back the train up to Velva.

"We had rooms reserved at the Berry House, but when we weren't on the



**Carl and Katie Helmbrecht and children and Carl's father Fred.**



**Balfour elevators**

Flyer, they gave our rooms to Harvey people on the train," she said. "We yelled when we got there so the night clerk made all the Harvey men get up and give their rooms to the Balfour women; some of us slept on mattresses on the floor. The men slept in chairs and on tables in the lobby and dining room. But we won the ball game."

In the winter, cards provided the excitement. Cinch, a game much like Whist, and Flinch, played by strict church people with cards not having faces on them, were favored games. People played one or the other, and public card parties were divided with Cinch players on one side of the hall, Flinch players on the other, and identical lunches and prizes for both.

Phonograph music for dancing was noted in November, 1909, but home-made music also made progress--the Balfour Citizen's Band, with more than 30 members, was organized in May, 1910.

Church-going was important to many Balfourites. The May 23, 1907 Messenger noted a 30 by foot foundation for the Catholic church was laid.

The stricter-minded inhabitants of Dogden also were holding sway, according to the April 30, 1908, Messenger, which reports, "The people of Dogden have been having an exciting time with their blind piggers. Several offenders were excommunicated Monday and have been placed under the ban of the city forever."

(They were not completely successful, since as late as April 1920 Messenger reported from that area, "Two liquor stills claimed to be among the most productive in the state were confiscated and their alleged operator arrested. About 100 gallons of mash and 10 gallons of whiskey were destroyed.)

Perhaps the alcohol was needed to warm the settlers in the cold winter of '08. One note in the Messenger said the "dinky" was snowbound near Max on Dec. 30 with the passengers taken to farm homes nearby until the road could be cleared.

Some settlers decided to warm themselves another way. L. L. Jewell was on of the Balfourites won over by those recruiting settlers for Cuba, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Van Schoonhoven and their sons, Lynn and Glenn, left late in 1907.

Those who elected to stay in Balfour, however, were busily expanding the services of the community. The Balfour Commercial Club elected W. H. Schoregge president, J. B. Pendroy vice president, C. J. Diebold secretary, and A. L. Lombard treasurer.

In May 1909, N. C. Bille organized the Karlsruhe-Balfour Farmers Telephone Line to serve the "Germans north of town," the Messenger said. The line served 30 to 40 stockholders and its officers included J. J. Wald, Mike Fisher, John Hellman, F. Eberlick, A. Kraft, V. Black and Ben Strieffe.

The Balfour Coal Mining Co., organized by A. B. Melhouse and B. W. Moore with Minnesotan J. Anderson, in June 1909 with a capital stock of \$100,000, caused a flurry of excitement. Well drillers had found "a vein over 100 feet thick with the lower 10 feet bituminous and similar to the best quality of Eastern coal," on the Gilbert Nelson place a half mile north of Balfour. The Messenger reported it was the first steam coal found in North Dakota. The June 3 story was the first and last coal report.



Area land was increasing in value, of course, as an early report in 1910 notes: John Kvamme sold three quarters of land northwest of Velva for \$18,000 this week! Perhaps as exciting to us today is the September 1910 ad for Bille's market: beef quarters at 7 to 9 cents a pound.

Also exciting was the report in April 1910 Messenger: "On May 19, many of us earth beings will witness a sight the likes of which has never been seen before by men, at least since written history. We shall be viewing the sun through the great blazing tail of a comet. Our earth will plunge into the tail of Halley's comet."

On May 19, the editor noted, "Well we passed through the caudal extremity of Halley's comet all right here in Balfour yesterday and I do not see anybody taking to his cellar either."

Gasoline also provided excitement, especially at the July 4, 1909, celebration in Velva. A newspaper story said, "Ador Jevnager took first place with his new Maxwell car and his wife sat up in the seat and never even lost her hat....when he overtook the car ahead of him, he turned out on the rough ground beside the road and the two cars had it neck and neck for almost a quarter of a mile when the dear old Maxwell, remembering that the ex-sheriff was driving her and that she was from Balfour, forged a half-length ahead."

Jevnager was not the only speedster in the area. Early residents recall that when Drs. Stone and Erenfeld got cars, they often raced in the area and to Minot, leaving seat cushions and doctor's bags on the road behind them. Doc Stone claimed a record of 35 minutes from Towner to Minot, once.

The papers are peppered with references to his travel mishaps, however, as horses ran away with his wagon or overturned his sleigh, and the automobile seemed little improvement, with frequent comments that his Buick had been rescued from the mud at Fessenden or abandoned at Towner in favor of more reliable transportation.

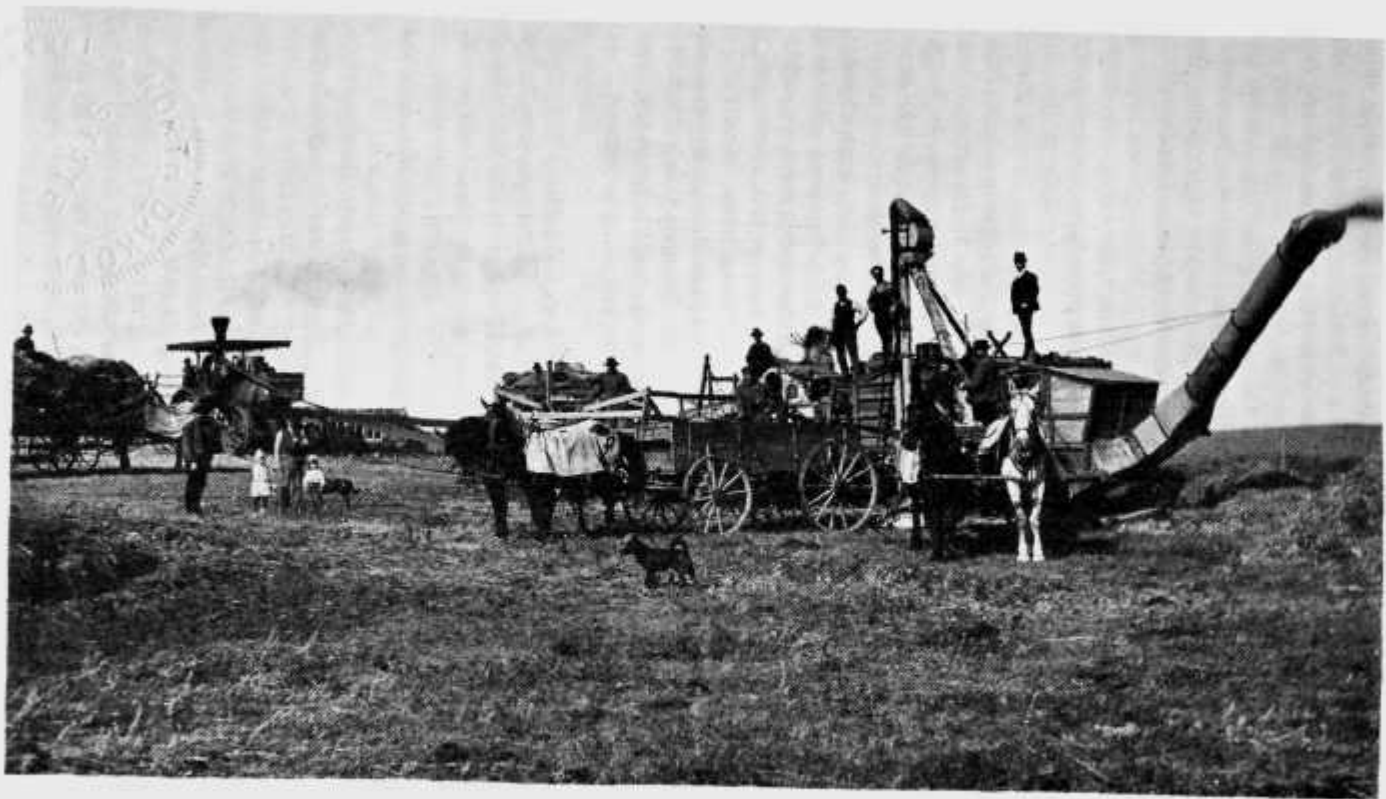
Gas engines also provided drama in another way. In February 1910, A. B. Anderson purchased a big "traction gasoline engine" and the paper said, "It is reported that he will do all his farm work with the engine instead of horses."

The changes came swiftly, of course, for many. By May 1911, it was reported C. Kezar, breaking for N. C. Bille, used a big Case engine pulling 10 plows with Campbell packers attached, "the finest rig of the kind we have ever seen."

Some things remained unchanged: the 1910 German Baptist Sunday School picnic at Mackin's Grove northeast of Balfour, the Balfour Norwegian Ladies Aid's "genuine Norwegian supper" at Pendroy's Hall in December 1911, reports of Christmas visitors such as the 75 at M. H. Frank's farm who enjoyed an old-fashioned tree and program plus a midnight supper.

In 1911 much of the news was of school, such as its opening with Theodore Evans as principal, Laura Sauer in intermediate and Mae Moore in primary. In October a group met at Dr. Stone's home to organize a "Give and Get" club to acquire a piano for Balfour High School, and in December Principal Evans' students held a banquet in their room before vacation.

Small wonder the Messenger ran an editorial about telephone line abuse.



John Frantzvog's rig

The lines had become, the editor insisted, "A curse instead of a blessing. There are some people who, when they hear anything, let it go in one ear and out their mouth. Get your Bible," he admonished, "and read the third chapter of James."

The Editor also recorded that George Bergman completed a pharmacy course at Des Moines, Iowa; later passed state exams to become a registered pharmacist; and "in honor of his intellectual victory" was given a surprise supper at the new Maxwell Hotel, recently purchased from Jacob Gloppen by R. F. Maxwell.

Nineteen-eleven was also the year Theo. Bredahl, called "an auto expert," started a garage in Balfour, and H. A. Whittier, working on the Great Northern grade, invited a number of Balfour men to his Mouse River camp for a turnkey and oyster feast early in November.

Balfour had begun to take on many marks of an established community by 1912, the year T. B. Semrau installed a low-pressure gasoline lighting system in his home. An Old Settlers outing was planned June 20 through 22 at the S. M. Koto farm in Township 154, Range 78. Old Settlers president H. T. Lee asked all those who had tents to bring them.

Though people were moving to Balfour in 1912, some also were moving away. The Messenger noted the departure of the L. P. Mogstad family, Wayne Riebe, T. E. Wolfenden, B. Bowen, P. D. Connelly, the Misses Sauer and Salisbury, George Bergman who returned later, and M. F. Walsh, who ran the Farmers Elevator.

For those who stayed, business was thriving. The Balfour Creamery churned over 1,500 pounds of butter in June and paid out about \$800 for butterfat. The Balfour Telephone Co. was sold to the Great Western Telephone Co. of Minneapolis.

Neighbors also were doing well. The July paper noted the Guthrie depot, with its 280 foot-long platform, was nearly completed by the GN, and the Hotel Alexson there was newly painted.

There was a diversity of good entertainment, though movies, which were becoming more common, were being shown at Pendroy's Opera House, and traveling lecturers and theater groups were becoming more scarce.

Much entertainment was home-made, of course, since the Pendroy stage also saw Balfour performers in "My Awful Wife": E. C. Rudolph, Principal Evenson, George Bergman, H. P. Peterson, Wayne Riebe, Wesley Anderson, Lloyd Anderson, Florence Schreiner, Arlie Maxwell and Julia Lee.

In June 1912 the Balfour Royal Neighbors fancy drill team, commanded by George Behner, won a banner at the Velva RN rally.

Of course, it was not all play and no work. In May 1912, F. L. Thurston reported he had planted 1,000 cottonwood trees and C. Kezar, doing custom work, had sown 1,000 acres of grain and was still seeding. It was a successful crop year, with W. J. Montgomery reporting in the Nov. 7 Messenger that he had threshed between 35,000 and 40,000 bushels of grain, closing his 26½ day season in snow at J. J. Ralston's farm. He said oats ran 75 bushels per acre, flax 15, speltz 40, barley 60, and Number 1 wheat 24½ bushels. The following

year, N. B. Kjos brought a carload of 25 Holstein cows from Wisconsin, some costing as high as \$300.

No doubt some of that grain found its way to the Balfour Flour Mill which E. E. Schimel bought in February 1913. Schimel suffered bad luck in June, when his elevator burned. Steve Leigh was the hero in that blaze, for he climbed up inside the nearby O & M Elevator and poured chemicals out onto the side of that structure which, The Messenger theorizes, "undoubtedly saved that, the nearby hotel and therefore the rest of the town." Also singled out for their efforts were George Bergman, Aaron Bethke, S. G. Miller, C. J. Diebold, N. C. Bille and William Ashbough.

Fire, a feared and frequent visitor to Balfour, struck again in April when a prairie fire started by a Soo Line train destroyed the Belzer home east of the city. Though the train hauled fire-fighters back to the farm, they were too late to save the home. A later newspaper notes the community had a shower for Mrs. Belzer.

A different sort of blaze was mentioned in the September 1913 paper: T. E. Wolfenden blazed the road from Voltaire to Drake Monday, and the Drake men finished the project to Anamoose. The editor said it was becoming common to assist strangers driving through. The signs, white on a red background nailed to telephone poles or posts, indicated R for right, L for left, a straight line for straight ahead and an X for railroad crossings.

Still another blaze lit up the city in 1914—in April the electric lights were turned on for the first time, making Balfour second in McHenry County only to Velva in having the modern conveniences.

Gov. Hanna spoke twice; the Schimel brothers, proprietors of the light plant, were given a banquet at the Maxwell Hotel by city businessmen; and the streets were bright with band music, flags and the fancy lights!

The Fargo Forum, covering the event at length, described Balfour as being "in the front rank of cities of less than 1000 inhabitants" and "easily the brightest, cleanest little city west of the Twin Cities."

The year 1914 saw Fred Peters buy the Star Restaurant from Charles Covey and the F. B. Gould family moved into their home on the corner of West Sahr Avenue and Second Street West.

"Mrs. J. S. Varner and children arrived from Minnesota," the Messenger reported on Nov. 26, "and we hope they will like their new home." Mr. Varner, who had come to Balfour two years earlier, dug wells for \$1.50 a foot, put in the pump and guaranteed water.

A major change for Balfour occurred in April 1915 when E. J. Carlen took over the Messenger and DeLas moved to Bismarck. Carlen continued his reporting of local news: Martin Aanrud's general store opening in the Bonine building, Balfour's July baseball victories over Towner, Drake and Velva; and plans for the June McHenry County Old Settlers picnic at the J. B. Pendroy grove, resplendent with a new platform and "other permanent improvements," according to secretary O. H. Wolhowe.

In May of 1915 Lombards, Stones and Goulds returned from a trip to Havana, the Panama Canal, New Orleans and the San Francisco exposition,

where they were "much pleased with the showing North Dakota has at the Fair in Frisco." That was the month of a great fire along the Mouse, when Carl Aanrud cut a burned old oak for posts, and found an iron pot containing gold pieces embedded in the tree.

Also of interest to Balfour was a report from the Bergen Auto Company, general agents for Fords, that 163 machines have been sent out, including "65 machines last week, taken out as fast as they could be assembled."

Carlen noted in August that August Gefroh of Karlsruhe, "one of the Germans hired by Balfour stores to interpret," was selling his farm to take A. J. Fisher's interest in Gutenberg and Fisher Co. in Karlsruhe.

Not all the news was welcome in Balfour, surely. The Aug. 12, 1915, issue noted the Jevnager family was leaving for Minot, selling their farm on the south side of town for \$40 an acre. Several issues contained the May 20 story that "Balfour needs a new school and is working for consolidation."

Martin Aanrud also sold out early in 1916; J. B. Pendroy and the Balfour band led the parade in July when the circus came to town for two days; and unmindful of the threat of war, Balfour in December of that year looked upon itself with pride.

"There is not a residence vacant in town and the school enrollment is the largest in our history," the paper said. "Residence property is at a premium and has jumped amazingly in value during the past 12 months."

"The Citizens Band already possesses more than local fame," the Messenger said. "A fire department was organized and equipped two months ago. The voters of the district have authorized a bond issue to build a new school house. Dr. Stone has started building a new hospital; a stock company has been organized to finance a new town hall. An up-to-date garage and several new dwellings are planned. We have broad clean streets, well kept and illuminated; a big flour mill, an electric light plant, and a fine grain market. We believe that figures will show that Balfour is the largest stock shipping point in this section."

The village had much to be grateful for at the end of 1916, which is also remembered as a fair crop year, on the heels of the bumper bushelage of 1915.

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Alas for Balfour, 1917 inevitably followed 1916.

Nineteen-seventeen was the year of the Pendroy sale, leaving Balfour for the first time without a livery stable; the year Billy Bennett's dramatic and vaudeville company played a two-night stand in Balfour; the year B. J. Eaton bought the old Bruner ranch 10 miles south of Towner from C. M. Denny for \$25,750.

It was also the first of seven years when crops ranged from poor to disastrous, when if the drouth didn't finish you, the hail or the hoppers did.

And though all residences in the village were full, at the beginning, so were the surrounding claims. So the younger generation, seeking land of its own, turned to Montana and other new areas.



Boating at Brush Lake



Those who had land either were forced out by drouth, insects and hail or hung on, expanding their holdings with the aid of machinery. The area began to change from its settlement days with a family on every quarter of land, and inevitably, as the number of farm families shrank, so did the number of businesses.

Another contributing factor in the decline was World War I, which took young people out of the community, some of them forever.

The papers noted America's entrance into the war in 1917 by comments of its impact on the city--the 40 young men registered for service, the 1917 graduating class motto: "Impossible in UnAmerican"; and the notice that the Mouse River bridge at Falsen was placed under guard "since the break with Germany," with people not allowed to cross on foot.

All during 1918, much of the community effort concentrated on the war effort. The February paper noted "Martin Semrau knit a sweater for the Red Cross, quite a record for an 8-year-old boy." The same month the Royal Neighbors had a Red Cross benefit card party and dance; on the program were Elmer Skari, Clifford McEwen, Lloyd Peterson, Viola Varner, Muryl Gould, Ella Buri.

Several of them--Skari, McEwen, Viola Varner and Ella Buri--were also in the seventh and eighth grade program in March, along with Walter Nehrenberg, Julia Larson, Astrid Strand, Maria Begordis, Mildred Glein and Palmer Myhre.

Apparently George Bergman, Reuben Semrau, Olaf Myhre and H. F. Holtz were among the first soldiers to leave, in April. They were given sweaters and when they left, 33 carloads of citizens followed them to Towner led by a car decorated with flags and banners, and the Balfour Cornet Band. They were the first of many. The Oct. 15 paper notes a farewell party given for Roy Belzer and Paul Ives who were returning to camp and later issues carried stories of showing of official war movies, Red Cross benefits, letters or reports from soldiers and nurses, and a million miles of yarn and concern knit into sweaters, mufflers and stockings.

The community effort could be seen in those who donated crop from an acre of land to the Red Cross: Herman Quamme, Joe Marsh, Jr. and Sr., Ole and Hans Skari, Charles Schmidt, P. K. Myxter, M. J. Gurnett, Louis Strube, Ronglie Bros., August Kohler, P. L. Pratt, Ed Haugrud, M. B. Crosswell, Ole Legrand, A. W. Parmenter, Lillian Parmenter, P. N. Regstad, Martin Aanrud, Erick Satra, Aaron Sako, Erick Sutherland, Anton Heringen, Ed Nehrenberg, Mrs. E. C. Stone and the good doctor, W. B. Wylie, Ed Medicott, Albert Ferley, Magnus Olson, Joseph Bailey, M. G. Myrhe, John Gates, Harry Voehardt, Conrad Heischman, R. Schimel, Mrs. H. Knuth, Emil Lepier, H. H. Rue, Martin Rolfness, P. F. Holm, C. J. Diebold, Spriggs and Seanson, Ed Ives, Mrs. C. Belzer, H. Richardson, Nels Huseby, John Ferley, Martin Olson, W. J. Montgomery, A. B. Anderson, E. W. Meinhardt, B. P. Pederson, Mrs. A. C. Phelps, Ole Fiskum, Louis Knuth, H. M. Wiseman, H. Hanson, A. Edwardson, E. E. Brown, N. B. Kjos, H. S. Braaten, O. P. Helseth, George Marsh, Chris Stenso, N. C. Bille, J. B. Pendroy, Linus Peterson, Tom Marsh,

J. W. Nilsson and Tom Alme.

Of course, civilian life, albeit somewhat curtailed, continued in Balfour. Carrie Semrau and Bjarne Glein, the first class of BHS, graduated in June and eighth grade graduates were Maria Begordis, Julia Larson, Palmer Myhre, Walter Nehrenberg, Gertrude Sahr, Astrid Strand and Viola Varner.

Mrs. Theander Petterson moved into town early in August, Mrs. A. C. Phelps became managing editor of the Messenger, and Garnet Miller and Goldie Cole left for Bismarck to study nursing. A dance was held at Pendroy's Hall with the Cole Orchestra playing.

In November 1918, 155 students were enrolled in Balfour school, 28 in high school. The primary room, where Mrs. Bartlett taught, was so overcrowded that 12 pupils were transferred to the intermediate room. Miss Melz had three grades.

Rev. R. E. Green became the ME minister for Balfour and moved into the Krueger house. He followed Rev. White and Rev. Brown in the church, the Messenger noted.

As 1919 opened, every paper carried news of some tragedy, often deaths from flu, including Myrtle Hublou, age 12, in early January, and the return of possessions of soldiers killed in action.

In Balfour, however, people struggled along in attempts for as normal a life as possible with war, drouth and insect infestation, flu and fire clouding every day. In January Miss Parmenter's seventh and eighth grade classes had a sleighing party, followed by supper at the Glein home in honor of Mildred's birthday. Harley Cole married Sophia Welz, and Muryl Gould entertained the high school students at his home.

In February Bjarne Glein and Paul Ives rented the Balfour Cash Store and fitted it for a theater; to be called the Victory theater, it was the scene of Wednesday and Saturday movies.

It was a short-lived venture; in November John Lamont bought and reopened it. Mr. Maxwell rented the hotel kitchen to Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Boyles to continue to serve meals.

The newly-organized Cornet Band included Jonathan Semrau, Arthur Rolfness, Amelia Bille, Bertha, Myrtle and Julian Leegard, Lloyd Varner, Palmer Myhre, Leonard and Ira Driessen, Enoch and Adam Semrau, and Lloyd and Milton Peterson. Amelia and Bertha were the second Balfour graduating class in June, 1919.

Surely the homecoming for McHenry County soldiers at Velva, held in July 1919, was a gala occasion with sports, speaking, music and dancing!

Finally things began to get back to normal. In September, Cheever Cameron, who had been an instructor at an air service pursuit school in Florida, purchased a plane through the help of E. C. Rudolph and other businessmen. He began doing stunt flying at fairs and other celebrations. In September, a number of Balfourites drove to Bismarck to see Cheever fly--and, of course, to hear President Wilson.

At the end of the year, a meeting was held to discuss building a new school. The paper noted the attempt had been made before but failed. Mrs. Tatem, state consolidated school inspector, addressed the meeting. She said unless

steps were taken to erect a building this year, no state aid would be given next year. (She must have been convincing; the new edifice was built and, in the fall of 1920, occupied.)

At last attention could be turned away from the war and back to the efforts of peace.

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### BALFOUR HONOR ROLL

(Published Oct. 24, 1918)

Paul Burr	E. C. Rudolph
Paul Ives	John Sukumlyn
Roy McEwen	Joseph Winieger
L. C. Knuth	Frank O. Michel
Ben Steele	William Sempel
Roy Belzer	J. J. Rance
Alma Stenso	Reuben Semrau
Olaf Myhre	Annabel Foss
John Stenso	Lewis McEwen
H. J. Lee	Frank Schiele
Ralph Lamont	Carl Hanson
Roy Lamont	Donald Phelps
Henry Holtz	Walter Lamont
Sigfried Olson	Harriet Spillane
Robert M. Day	Gale Fisher
Clarence Dickinson	Maurice Conde
Gustav Stenerson	George Bergman
Stephen Sukumlyn	Henry Hanson
Palmer Stenerson	Lewis Lombard
Franz Haldeman	Felix Semrau

David G. Wall

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Violent weather marked the year 1920, with a March blizzard that cost several lives across the state. One heroic story the Messenger recounted was that of an Indian mother at Devils Lake who was found frozen along a road; but her three-year-old son, wrapped in much of her clothing, lived. In Balfour no lives were reported lost but the citizens kept one eye out for storms. In July a cyclone struck southwest of Balfour. Mrs. E. H. Bernhardt, who was in the barn when the storm hit, was blown out into the pasture. She was seriously injured, but recovered.

Not all news was tragic. Mr. and Mrs. Martin Olson were surprised with a party at their home in remembrance of what they had done for Grandpa and Grandma Fiskur. Olsons were given an enlarged picture of Fiskums, enjoyed



Cameron's race horses

an elaborate dinner and singing and instrumental music, the Messenger records. "Then after some more eats, they bid each other good night feeling the afternoon had been well spent." Those in on the surprise included S. R. Fiskum, Martin Aanrud, Hans Skari, Ole Fiskum, P. K. Myxter and their families, Marie Aanrud and M. P. Fiskum.

Despite the bad crop again in 1920, some Balfour businessmen were still advertising: Star Dray Line, L. M. Bretstrand; Frank Swanson for Delco Lights and Fisk tires; Peter Glein at Balfour Lumber; Miller Drug; Bille's Meat Market; American State Bank with A. L. Lombard president and A. M. Rolfness cashier; First State Bank, A. H. Scofield and N. M. Buslee, cashiers; Doc Stone; P. J. Leegard for International Harvester; Bella Stenerson at the cream station; Linus Peterson, iron buyer; F. H. McEwen; J. Gomoll at the movie house; and J. J. Thomas, blacksmith.

Two events in 1920 marked the end of an era. M. V. Reed, who came to Balfour from Iowa in 1900 to homestead, one of Balfour's oldest citizens, died in March at the age of 80.

And the faithful Balfour Messenger pulled up stakes. A. L. Rogensack, who was to become famous for his fine moving at Fargo where he later lived, moved the building, complete with its equipment, to Drake. Editor, Mrs. Phelps, later recalled that Rogensack's equipment broke down while crossing a slough east of town, so the building was left for several weeks at the Buri home before repairs could be made.

The Messenger was published there, but it was a struggle. The strange environment didn't cause problems—but the pied type certainly did. Type became "pied" when cases were spilled during the mishap.

Finally, at the end of September the Messenger was moved. In Balfour, drouth, insects, war, flu, the end of land to claim, fires, and the coming age of mechanized agriculture on larger farms had taken their toll. One sign of a growing community, the newspaper, had, like the railroad roundhouse, moved on down the road.

Balfour, with an official population of 322 in 1920, continued to struggle along. The new school, at a cost of \$60,000, wasn't ready to occupy until Christmas but Supt. Moyer and Principal Emma Clark, with teachers Dorothy Melz, Miss Mayfield, Miss Sorenson and Mrs. M. P. Bonine, opened on Sept. 20.

That was the fall Martin Aanrud's wheat averaged 17 bushels, that Maria Begordis began working in the telephone office, and Walter Lamont started training for prize-fighting in Michigan.

New Salem farmers were threatening to burn their corn because of low prices; Lynn Frazier was elected governor and McHenry County elected all Non-Partisan League candidates.

Despite the excitement of politics and the oil drilling being done at New England, N.D., ordinary life continued. Mrs. S. B. Pratt took over the cream station; N. C. Bille advertised pre-war prices—dressed hogs at 10 to 18 cents, fat yearling quarters for 9 to 12 cents and cows 11 to 14. Rev. H. A. Mergel



**Vivian Beutler and Caroline Belzer do laundry**



**R. B. George gave a free concert at the ME church in April 1906 and later started a choral group, pictured above.**



officiated at the wedding of George Knuth and Margaret Valentine; other honeymooners were Emma Frantzvog and C. S. Opland, and John Merck and Miss Gefroh. And a dance was held at Herman Berg's new barn.

Felix Semrau became the new engineer at the light plant in November 1920 but problems developed, causing the Literary Club program to be postponed till lights were fixed, to the dismay of those involved: Norris Lombard, Mildred and Palma Glein, Lloyd Peterson, Gordon Olson, Enoch Semrau, Florence Obell, Mabel Olson and Harold Buri.

Contests between federal and state officers and whiskey runners were frequently mentioned, with six of the errants captured at Martin in December. Just as interesting was Balfour's great basketball team, coached by Prof. G. H. Moyer, including Muryl Gould, Norris Lombard, Forrest Riebe, Jonathan Semrau and Clarence Sorenson. They lost to Minot Normal School and to Harvey. But with the encouragement of yell leader Norman Buslee, they defeated Bergen, Kief, Drake and Velva. Besides basketball and dinners for the stars that winter, the Balfour Dancing Club held a masquerade ball.

Mary Halderman closed her school, with students bussed to Balfour. And the legislative session voted to close state schools at Wahpeton, Mayville, Bottineau and Ellendale. Sen. Ole Ettestad represented the area. The Progressive Civic League met at the home of Mrs. Ole Fiskum.

Early in 1921 the Balfour Light Plant, owned by P. K. Elnes of Bergen and leased to the city, burned. There were many foreclosures on farms and businesses. Ads on coping with stem rust began to appear and banks began to report on financial soundness each month. Federal aid for buying seed was made available, and county agents advised Marquis wheat, crop rotation, and early planting to escape rust. Cow tuberculosis began to be seen.

That spring, undaunted by farm problems, Mrs. G. H. Moyer directed 45 Balfour High students in the operetta "Princess Chrysanthemum" at Pendroy's Hall and the Royal Neighbors performed "Modern Cinderella." Bjarne Glein passed a Seattle radio course and began work in Alaska; and Martin Rolfnes and Ole Skari went to Norway.

C. J. Diebold was elected Mayor, Linus Peterson city justice, A. L. Lombard treasurer and P. J. Leegard, J. J. Thomas, F. B. Gould and Martin Olson aldermen. Deputy Sheriff A. Kohler caught a robber in Frank Swanson's Garage, taking \$30 in cash. That may not seem like much, but a big IH Titan tractor sold for \$1,000.

Balfour held a market day with Miss Clark's BHS kids performing "Engaged by Wednesday." Balfour's team lost to Karlsruhe but otherwise things went well. There was concern in July about heat and lack of rain hurting crops, but the first Chautauqua was a success and a large number attended a picnic July 4 at Tom Alme's followed by a barn dance at Joe Alme's. Cheever Cameron in a new Curtis Aeroplane flew in from Minneapolis and performed at Dogden's 15th anniversary celebration.

Not even Bergman Drug's acetylene gas lighting outfit or the news of oil drilling by E. P. Moorehead of Minneapolis just eight miles south of Drake could take their minds off the crop: threshers said the yield was 2 to 8 bushels.

Oscar Skari left for Harvey to work during threshing. Paul Ives and L. A. Rogensack were threshing there, while Clarence Sorenson, Ira Driessen, Gordon Olson and Hubert Hiller were threshing at Valley City.

Then on Sept. 8, 1921, a disaster struck Balfour. According to newspaper reports, fire started in Lindeman's Garage about 9:15 p.m. An alarm was sounded and the whole town turned out but little could be done.

The conflagration consumed Lindeman's; Frank Swanson's Garage; the beloved old J. B. Pendroy Opera House; Henry Peterson's pool hall and a building owned by Dr. Stone.

Undaunted, Swanson bought an old school building, had it moved to his lot and, within 24 hours, was back in business. Herman Lindeman rented a building and began again.

And then again, Balfour was struck.

"To have two great fires within a period of 30 days, wiping out the greater part of Main Street, has been the experience for this city," The Register said on Oct. 6, 1921. The last great fire occurred Friday about 1:30 p.m. It was discovered by Muryl Gould as he was bringing up mail from the night train.

"The Fire started in the rear of Diebold Hardware of undetermined cause. This fire caused practically a total loss of all buildings on the west side except the drug store and hotel. Destroyed were Diebolds, O. P. Helseth's Hardware store, the W. P. Campbell building, Bille's Meat Market, Dr. Stone's office and hospital, and a vacant building."

Henry Peterson, on business in Montana when fire destroyed his restaurant, bought Mae Moore's house, moved it to the Helseth hardware store lot and reopened for business. A new meat market was opened by Glen Larson, manager for Bille, after Hans Rikhus dug a new cellar.

Life went on as usual: the Soo Line employed 100 men putting in new steel rails; the state was abuzz with talk of a recall election for Gov. Frazier, Attorney General Lemke and Agriculture Commission Hagan. A reduction in cost of Ford cars was announced, and Miss McGuire, nurse at Stone's hospital for a number of years, moved to Minot. P. J. Leegard traded buildings with Fred Gould in the Victory Theater and moved his business in and the school board had another barn for horses moved in.

But the fires on top of other disasters had dealt a heavy blow to the small community.

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The winter of 1922 was one of record-breaking cold with temperatures ranging from 15 to 40 degrees below zero for weeks, with the cold snap finally breaking briefly at the end of January. The Soo main line was blocked many places between Harvey and Minneapolis.

However, the exceptionally good ice from the Wintering was cut for Miller Drug, Peterson's restaurant and Larson and Nelson meat market ice houses. With a new plant, the electric lights were again working. J. Mohr of



Camping at Brush Lake

Minneapolis bought and planned to reopen the Balfour Mill, as the year progressed.

The lumber of the old Balfour school was used for Pendroy's pavilion on the Mouse. The new Buicks came out, costing from \$865 to \$1,255. Doc Stone decided to move to Minot after 17 years and the family was feted by old friends and neighbors.

Harvest came, with changes. Though F. B. Gould, Lars Kleppe and M. H. Frank bought threshing rigs, Julian Leegard "has been using his auto truck for grain hauling this week," the Register reported. And Nels B. Kjos averaged 30 to 35 acres a day cutting rye with his Fordson tractor.

Prices were low but the rye was yielding 15 to 22 bushels, wheat 16 to 25 bushels and oats 25 to 40 bushels. And railroad cars were in short supply.

Grain dust caused an explosion in the O & M elevator in September which tore out walls and the roof and moved the building 3 feet off its foundation. It would be replaced later the paper said.

"Four Balfourites have radio outfits," the paper reported in February 1923, "and boast of hearing programs as far away as San Francisco, Winnipeg and Chicago." The lucky ones were Norman Buslee, Paul Ives, A. L. Lombard and Laurel McEwen. By fall George Bergman at the drug store and Leo Mohr at the mill had also installed the entertainment units, and by November Frank Swanson had the Atwater-Kent Radio Agency. "Soon radios will be as common in homes as the phonograph," the Register predicted.

The First State Bank in Balfour closed in March of '23, joining operations with its Anamoose branch. Railroads offered special rates to those attending the Minot fair, and O. P. Helseth had the basement for his new hardware store dug by Roy Belzer and Bird Peterson. M. Rolfnes, Harry Overn and Archie Chambers were the carpenters. F. B. Gould was in charge of the O & M Elevator when it opened, with its 43,000 bushel capacity, in September.

Not all news was business, of course. George Reishus replaced G. H. Moyer as school superintendent; teachers were Mrs. M. Barbett, Miss L. Sorenson, Miss E. Schwerdtfger, Miss D. Melz, Miss B. Thompson and Mrs. E. Randall. John Varner, his daughter Yvonne and son Pete were all in the hospital at Minot simultaneously--all with appendicitis. BHS grad Laurel McEwen enlisted in the Navy and was sent to New Orleans, and Jack Miller and J. Lombard announced they could make three trips a day to the Velva mine, hauling three tons of coal a trip.

As 1924 opened, Balfour had a string of 14 wins in 15 basketball games; the Soo was trying to cut service from daily to thrice-weekly stops; M. H. Frank rented his farm to Mr. C. Huso of Crosby and moved to Chicago; and Esther Huseby was elected the most popular young lady in a movie contest.

In June Sen. Ole Ettestad, Linus Peterson and Miss D. Melz consulted with the state Banking Board at Bismarck in an attempt to re-open the American State Bank and in September Ralph Pence, formerly of Dogden State Bank, was in a group to re-open the institution as the Balfour State Bank.

Big things were happening that fall: electricity was left on all night! Area graduates were teaching nearby: Garfield Nordrum, Stella Aanrud, Bencer

Kjos, Carrie Semrau, Esther Huseby and Astrid Strand. Myrtle Leegard was in the telephone office. John Weninger rented Doc Stone's farm southeast of the city in October and in November the N. C. Bille turkey factory in Balfour paid area farmers \$8,500 and shipped 29,000 turkeys in one week.

A series of automobile injury accidents began to appear about 1924, never to cease. Despite another cold winter, the Balfour Lutheran Ladies Aid earned over \$160 at a lutefisk supper in Leegard's Hall; Balfour defeated all comers for the district basketball championship with the coaching of Jonathan Semrau and "good playing by Leegard and Varner."

In April the 45-piece BHS band, organized by Supt. E. C. Grevstad, gave its first concert; in May Earl Buri was thrown from the plow and broke his arm; in June four veins of oil were found at Drake; in October Dorothy C. Melz married George Bergman and Newton Bernhard was home on a 30-day leave after two years in the Navy.

The Balfour Lutheran Church basement was finished and the church moved on. A. Ally closed the Balfour Farmers Store in November of 1925 but in March of 1926 B. P. Peterson re-opened his store and Carl Aanrud built a new gas station south of the tracks. That was the spring Balfour won the district basketball championship again with Anthony Larsen, Alloys Varner, Clarence Jacobson, John Odell and Adam Semrau.

The new bank was ill-fated. In September 1926 the state banking department closed it, leaving Balfour again without a bank. Things were still stirring, however. Northwestern Bell was installing new telephone equipment, the BHS baseball team won the county tourney and Balfour beat Rangeley with Choppy Larson's three home runs.

Rev. Buslee decided to leave after 25 years, 429 confirmations, 86 weddings and 22 burials. Reuben Semrau directed the band at his farewell party and John Varner bought the Buslee farm.

Andrew Rawuka moved his family to Balfour in 1927, Selmer Braaten purchased the Frank Morman farm and Adam Schatz bought the Juel Ulrich farm. August Martwick added a new barn and refurbished the house with a good hardwood floor and a new lean-to.

Life in a small town is reflected in the news of early 1929 as well. Ole Helseth sponsored a free wedding dance for his daughter, Margaret, who was recently married; Ole Etestad and Linus Peterson returned from the Bismarck legislative term; and Evan Cole won an eversharp for spelling.

Ralph Ulrich, Delmar Nehrenberg, Walter Martwick, Alice Aanrud, Edna Kjos, Louise Myxter and Ivaleen Leegard starred in "Aaron Slick from Punkin Crick," and the city elected Mayor Martin Olson, aldermen Bergman and G. B. Larson, treasurer and city justice Linus Peterson, and police magistrate Andrew Rawuka.

In 1930 the Catholic Ladies Aid held a benefit card party at Bredstrand's Hall. Hans Strand bought Palmer Larson's restaurant, the W.M.S. had a turkey supper, the Balfour PTA gave a play in Drake, and Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Knuth got settled on the Joe Marsh farm.

The years took their toll at the Balfour school. By 1936, times were tough in



Fred Peters and Cora Benson in Fred's Balfour Cafe.



many places besides Balfour, where the school board thanked the patrons and relief workers who aided with donations and work in painting and remodeling the gym. In addition the Great Northern reported the worst winter since '23, many people ran low on coal and storms cancelled school and functions. A bad grasshopper year was predicted.

Of course, not everything was bad. Heavy snows brightened crop outlook and George Gould and A. J. Frisch had their snowmobile out for a try. The Boy Scouts, aided by Birthday Club members who auctioned off quilt blocks, held a Court of Honor with awards to Merle Cole, Andrew Rawuka, Joseph Thomas, Arlo Peterson and Alexander Begordis. This was the winter townships began staging rabbit and crow hunts and when Balfour won 4th in the District and second in County League play with stars Grinsteiner, Martwick, Bille, Rawuka, Woitte, Myxter and L. and J. McCarthy. Girls team was C. Chambers, M. Leier, I. Rawuka, L. Nehrenberg, A. Bossert, A. Evenrud, A. Lubitz and D. Erickson. That spring Supt. B. A. Peterson and teachers Warren Covert, and Misses Myxter, Ross and Aanrud attended the Minot teachers convention. Skip Day to Minot, the Junior-Senior banquet and the county music and declamation contests drew much attention.

School financing became a real problem again in 1936 when McHenry County produced about 50 per cent of its normal yield and the county Drouth Association asked the SCS to allow common summerfallow since green manure growth was needed for feed; the restriction was removed. Shallow well irrigation was talked and Nick Michalenko was reported using fodder corn strips on fallow to hold winter snow and prevent wind erosion. Auction sale bills began to pop up, and though an inch of rain broke heat at the end of July, half the back taxes in the state were unpaid. Cows at the William Chole auction sold for \$47 to \$65 a head, nearly normal prices.

Still school opened with 100 students, Supt. B. A. Peterson, principal, Harry Stadum and Misses Gross, Aanrud and Mona McElwain teaching; and 6-man football was organized.

Again in the beginning of 1937 a better crop outlook was predicted and liberal rain did materialize. But in July bad rust and grasshoppers joined forces against the crops. Wheat averaged 4 to 5 bushels in south McHenry county.

However that spring BHS beat Bantry and favored Deering to win the consolidated tourney, with Ken Woitte and Adam Grinsteiner named to the all-tourney team. Lorraine Momerak, Eugene Hammer, Katie Leier, Jean Smith, Delores Erickson, Bertha Bossert and Joe Thomas went to the county declamation contest. That fall 300 attended the Balfour carnival where BHS earned \$125 and crowned King Gordon Knutson and Queen Magdalene Leier.

Sports, crops, politics continued to interest Balfourites as the 30's drew to a close and the 1940's opened. Leo Myxter, Oscar Erickson, Clarence Satre, Lloyd Aanrud, Henry Kuntz, Dude Larson, Myrul Cole and Elmer Skari played on the winning Balfour Independents team which beat Minot. Otto Schmidt, former Balfourite, opened the Strawberry Lake Resort and Ole Ettestad was the GOP candidate for Lieutenant Governor.



That was the year Balfour topped the county baseball league, Mrs. Ches Buri began teaching in the Balfour school, the draft started in McHenry county, and Clark Gable hunted ducks at Devils Lake. Despite little local 'hopper damage, drouth and heat cut a bumper crop to only fair size, though it turned out to be the best in 11 years.

Forty was also the year Balfour, managed by Peter Weidler, played in the state baseball tourney at Jamestown and listed on the county all-star team pitchers John Bossert and Ken Huso, Lloyd Aanrud, and Evan Martwick.

Nineteen-forty one was a year of leave-taking: Rep. Roy Belzer to Bismarck for 60 days; Olive Fiskum, Dagna and Agnes Evenrud to Minot State Teachers College; Ches Buri for a job in a Stanley hardware store; B. A. Peterson leaving after 6½ years as superintendent; Mrs. Glen Spees leaving the state; and several leaving for service: Charles Bille, Leo Knutson, Pius Usselman, Leonard Rauschenberger, Wilbert Michalenko, Morris and Andrew Eshenko, and Edward Fitzer and Evan Martwick.

Loren Martwick was at N.D. School of Forestry that year with Loren Swanson and Andrew Rawuka Jr. at UND. The BHS band, directed by Elvin Rassmussen, played at the Towner basketball tourney and fire damaged the Doc Stone farm home, occupied by Gus Mittleiders. Ralph Ulrich gave up his postmaster position to Raymond Driessen to take the south carrier route; Arnold Alme was toastmaster at the Junior-Senior banquet; Earl Cole rented the Aanrud filling station; the Birthday Club held a farewell party for Mrs. Joe Alme who was moving to Drake; and school picnics were held at the Buri Grove, the Stone farm, and, for high schoolers, at Strawberry Lake.

June was an exciting month--severe wind blew Charlie Schmidt's threshing rig over and damaged many barns and windmills. And the 11-year-old son of Herbert Kohler west of Balfour was hurt when a bull broke out, chased his horse and bunted the lad when he fell. He was saved from worse harm by the 11-year-old daughter of Adam Schatz who drove the bull off with a club.

Though war clouds darkened and wet weather delayed threshing, Balfour celebrated babies for the Ches Buris and the Ulrichs as well as Carl Woodrig's 88th birthday. That fall, Lavina Krumweide, Lorraine Argabright and Mr. Perry taught; Muryl Cole and Mel Alme left for aircraft factory work in Baltimore; Marge England was crowned queen of the BHS carnival which netted \$296; and furloughs came up for Elmo Ettestad, Arthur Schmidt, Evan Martwick, Oscar Erickson and Mike Locker.

The Boy Scouts organized, Leo Leier, Leonard Schatz, Arnold Michalenko, Loren Cole, Junior Bergman, Elwain Evenrud, Otto Evenrud, Bert Hill, Lyle Weidler and Alden Bernhard. Earl Cole had the Louis Knutson house moved to his farm and rented it to Herman Schmidt.

Then came December 1941 when the U.S. declared war on Japan after the "unprovoked and dastardly" attack on Hawaii. Mrs. Jewel Skari was relieved to get a telegram from son Allen in Hawaii saying he was okay.

For years Balfour, like every other American community, was to concentrate much of her activity on the war. Early in '42, despite a storm that put farmers back with horses, they were urged to get repairs at once. Scrap

was needed for bombs and a tire allotment was set up, daylight saving time began, there were shortages of sugar, and waste paper and aluminum were being gathered.

Balfour's men began to disappear into service: Walter Lytle, Evan Cole, Arlo Peterson, Rueben Peterson, Anton (Dude) Larson, Walter Martwick, George Chambers and Pete Weninger. Victory gardens were started, and every paper had news of servicemen: Ervin Skari inducted, Johnnie Bossert in the Coast Guard, Marvin Schmidt in an Army Hospital, Myrul Cole in the Air Corps and Morris Myxter in the Navy. But farmers were assured their gas exemption was safe and workers needed for the big crops would not be drafted.

The movies with Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy and Henry Aldrich, became more comic as the war news became worse. Due to a critical shortage, teachers with expired certificates were allowed to teach. Farmers were encouraged to grow flax, soybeans and feed crops needed for the war effort and to pool trips to the market. Coffee was rationed and the ration cut; shoes were rationed; and women began to move into men's jobs.

There were more enlistments and inductions: Simon Fahn, Harold Martwick, Mike Weninger, Walter Bender, Harold Schmidt, Andrew Rawuka Jr., Paul Fiskum, Donald Schiele, Lloyd Aanrud, Frank Weninger, Palmer Regstad, Mike Usselman, William Habeck, Ernest Kriedeman, Olaf Evenrud, George Chambers, Johnny Ziegler. Andrew Rawuka and Lloyd Aanrud were in a car accident en route to Bismarck to meet Johnny Rawuka who was home on furlough.

Mrs. Paul Fiskum replaced Mrs. Victor Grindberg at Balfour school so Mrs. Grindberg could join her husband in service in Tennessee. Some of the young women in the area made extended visits to state-side husbands and luckier men came home on furlough: Alex Begordis, Michael Heit, Virgil Regstad, Calvin Mergel, Martin Evenrud, Alvin Martwick, Christ Schatz, Frank Weninger, Chester Myxter, Arthur Ziebarth. News of war deaths began to be heard frequently in 1943 and the city needed some good news: Balfour's triumph in the Karlsruhe invitational basketball tourney, graduation of valedictorian Ione Regstad, salutatorian Maryanne Layne and Betty Weidler and Mike Schiele; and assurances by Gov. Moses that FDR told him there would be machinery available in 1944.

Not all news was good. Floods in April of 43 took a number of lives in the swift melt following blizzards. Highway 52 was impassable between Voltaire and Balfour and between Drake and Anamoose; Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bernhard died in a tragic home fire in Balfour; and Mrs. John Weninger and Tony Grinsteiner went to the funeral of her son and his brother, Adam Grinsteiner who died in Corpus Christi, Tex.

There was other news: Gov. Moses reduced the speed limit to 35; farewell events were held for Charles Borchert, Louis Kupser, William Bossert and Lester Woitte who entered service, and for Mr. and Mrs. N. C. Bille, Rev. and Mrs. O. T. Haugen and Mr. and Mrs. O. G. Rued who moved. North Dakota was the first state to exceed its war bond quota, with Balfour getting \$5,291 with a quota of \$3,657.



Theander Petterson and Joe Baumhofer in Pullout

Jake Bender broke his leg. His seeding was done by Joe Weninger, Rueben Martwick, Roy Belzer, Bill Kriedeman, Tony Grinsteiner, Harold Martwick, Anton Schmidt, Fred Steffan, Wally Bradley, Albert Woitte, Lloyd Aanrud, Oscar Skari, Ed Schwadener and Jacob Oster. Neighbors saved Orville Aanrud's house after lightning set fire to it. Supt. Ruth Ulrich announced 1944 grads would be Flora Semrau, valedictorian; Dorothyanne Cole, salutatorian, and Joe Fahn, Leo Leier, Mary Locker, Carol Nussbaum, DeLores Schmidt and Leonard and Isabel Schatz.

But the war remained the big news: Leo Myxter's silver star earned in Italy, Ernie Pyke's weekly newspaper columns, Donald Myhre, Loren Martwick, John Steffen, John Kloen, Ralph Steffen all in the army. Farm prices were booming and economists worried about a collapse after the war; Midwest land prices jumped 18 per cent in one year. The Yanks entered Paris. And television was tried and the Federal Communications Commission head predicted it would come after the war but "it will never replace radio because you cannot make beds or wash dishes while watching television."

Earl Cole's Balfour Oil Co. was badly damaged by fire, caused when a bulk truck driver left a hose dangling and tipped over an electric pump. Despite quick volunteer action, much damage occurred.

In 1945 Milton Young was appointed to the Senate to succeed the late John Moses, President Roosevelt died; it was noted McHenry County farms had decreased in numbers from 2,242 in 1935 to 1,843 in 1945; and the state began buying right-of-way for Highway 52 from Sawyer to Anamoose.

More men were entering the service: Edwin Evenrud, Peter Kremer, Anton Mosser, Walter Ziebarth, Arthur Steffen, Anton Duchsherer, Alvin Fiskum, Michael Engelhardt, Pius Locker, Paul Lauinger, Arnold Feller, Matt Duchscherer, Wendelin Dosch, Edward Kohler. But the more joyous piece of news was the long list of honorable discharges, among them Sgt. Evan Martwick who was wounded in the Philippines and earned a Purple Heart and Delmer Martwick who earned the Bronze Star in Germany.

A big homecoming was held in October. Among 118 McHenry County men returning were Carl Gange, Milton Peterson, Milton Snyder, Pete and Anton Weninger, Al and Evan Martwick, Oscar Erickson, Mike and Pius Usselman, George Chambers, Halvon Dinnetz, Anton Larson and Cecil Stevens.

Life was getting back to normal: Gov. Fred Aandahl said he expected no post-war financial problems for North Dakota, but the OPA office was set up, the Minot one to serve this area. Jake Oster was building a porch on the Weidler home; the Balfour Lutheran Church held a lutefisk supper; and Huso, Aanrud and Nelson pitched as Balfour beat Towner 18-5.

In 1946 bad weather postponed the senior class play "A Little Clodhopper," and the Sawyer and Granville teams were snowbound at Balfour over night. But nothing prevented the returning soldiers: George Usselman, Eustachius Duchsherer, Carl Kriedeman, Leonard Mack. And nothing prevented Balfour's win in the district tourney at Anamoose with Lyle Weidler and Henry Kuntz on the all-star team roster. The Junior class sponsored a game between the Country Gentlemen and the City Slicks, with Jakie Budeau, Art

Schmidt, Elmer Skari and Dominic Tuchsherer named outstanding. And Clara Haman and Veronica Leier, with a basket resembling a large battle ship, taking top prize at the basket social.

Alvin Regstads bought the Strege Grocery store again; Lucille Strube had Charlie Schmidt installing fixtures for her beauty shop in the Louis Strube home; Robert Bechtle replaced Rev. Vincent Schneider at the Balfour Evangelical Church; and Vic Senechal at Towner invited county towns to form baseball teams. Pete Weidler was county league president and Balfour won its first game, 13-5 against Bantry. The Juniors entertained the Seniors and faculty at a banquet in the Grand Hotel, then went to see "Sentimental Journey" at Minot's State Theatre. Skip Day, with Supt. T. R. Stanton, was to Bismarck.

In June 1946 Raymond Driessen left to take the Velva rural mail job, succeeded by Orville Aanrud. Restrictions on buying lumber eased and a start on Garrison Dam construction was made. Bigger news for Balfour was the contract let in August 1946 to W. H. Noel Co. of Jamestown to grade, drain and surface 13 miles of U. S. 32 from the Ward County line east!

School opened Sept. 9 with Supt. T. R. Stanton, Ruth Ulrich, Hazel Peterson, Madge Alme, Doris Stanton and a new custodian, Henry Kuntz. The fishing and pheasant hunting were good that fall, and the McHenry County all-stars played champion Towner Cowboys to benefit Paul Bodine of Velva who broke his leg playing baseball at Rugby.

That fall the Joseph Volk family moved into their new home, Mr. and Mrs. Mike Kuntz and daughter moved into the home of the Albert Roder family, and state reports showed many farm homes were adding electricity and running water. The Baptists leased a 15-acre site from Mrs. Anna Bentley to build a youth camp on Brush Lake, with the Drake Baptist Church and its pastor, Rev. A. W. Bibelheimer, having considerable responsibility.

The first draft holiday was declared and men returned to college. Balfour's great bowling team - Lyle Weidler, Lloyd Aanrud, Orville Schmidt and Al Martwick-defeated Ted's Bar of Drake. Nineteen-forty-six, the sixth consecutive successful crop year in the state also produced a bumper baby crop. By 1947 the United States--and Balfour--began to be troubled by Korea.

That was the year Orville Aanrud completed an auctioneer's course in Iowa, and Balfour had many basketball teams going: independent, varsity and junior varsity, even the married men beating the bachelors and high school girls defeating a married women's team.

Summer brought baseball, of course: Willie Leier was hospitalized with leg injuries when he was kicked by another player sliding into base; and Eddie Budeau and Lloyd Aanrud were pitching and Evan Martwick catching in a 9 to 5 win over Velva. Later Al Martwick and Eddie and Jakie Budeau were named all-stars.

Of course, some Balfourites were more interested in serious ventures: Helen and Isabel Schatz, Orville Schmidt, Harold Steffen and Martin Evenrud were at Minot and Olive Fiskum in Montana for college.

Wheat was supported at \$2.02 a bushel and Penney's sold dresses for \$2.79 and McHenry County land valuation was \$10.41. That summer friends and relatives helped Rueben Martwick build a barn and Belzer's hosted the annual Rebekah and Oddfellow picnic. After a long wait for lumber, Dominic Tuchscherer began building a new dance hall and liquor store.

There was plenty to talk about that fall: Dorothy Evenrud, Eleanor Schatz, Bernadine Leier and Audrey Ziegler were Carnival queen candidates. The wedding gown of Princess Elizabeth was pictured with its 15 foot train; President Truman declared meatless and eggless days in the face of world food problems. In retrospect, 1947 was a good year, with state farms averaging \$12,500 for income.

Forty-eight was another sporty year with Bernadine Tuchscherer named to the all-star team in the Max Third District basketball tournament where Balfour girls took the consolation championship. The baseball meeting in April, where Adolph Erickson was named manager and Pearly Aanrud team secretary, may have attracted some of the kids home from college: George Bergman from Jamestown College, Loren Swanson and Cook Rawuka from UND, Reuben Regstad from Wahpeton and Rayfield Michalenko from a Fargo mechanics school. The Balfour girls also won the kittenball tourney with Mrs. Ulrich coaching the team and Balfour ended a great baseball season in the South McHenry County League, second after a three-way tie with winning Towner and Kief.

Balfour businessmen sponsored free movies every Saturday night that summer and the Rebekah Lodge members held a surprise birthday party for Mrs. John Varner. Carol Braaten and Darlene Bradley hosted the August Peppy Pilots 4-H meeting. When school opened, Enoch Odenbach was superintendent, with Mrs. Ulrich, John Dovich, and Mrs. Angelette Checkwick. Mrs. Ulrich took Audrey Ziegler, Arlene Arndt, Carol Spitchke, Edwin Bender, Clarence Thompson and Einar Chole to Granville for a one-act play contest.

This was the year Cecil Stevens was injured in a tractor accident, the year movie-goers saw "The Jolson Story" and "Scudda Hoo! Scudda Hay!" At the year's end, newspaper advertisers included Dominic's Bar, Cole's Grocery, Strand's Grocery, Buri Hardware, Andrew Rawuka, Stregge's Grocery, Balfour Wrecking, B. C. Buri, Pete's Cafe and Service and Balfour Oil.

After the 1948 favorable growing year, 1949 weather started with a bang. Every winter paper tells of a snow problem: Butte without bread or yeast for over a week, groceries low in Kief, the Balfour girls' basketball team abandoning cars in Towner after a Newburg game and coming home by train because of bad roads. Snow plows brought sick people to doctors and coal to Butte. Harold Buri flew from Hazen to see his dying father and Mr. and Mrs. Earl Buri brought their new baby home from the Minot hospital by plane, too.

Then in early April the heavy snow melted all at once, with extensive flooding; the Soo re-routed around the weakened Wintering River bridge; a half mile of highway and all homes but a 6-block area underwater at Velva. A number of displaced persons were brought to the area in the rainy summer of





A Balfour baseball team, circa 1909.



Play cast L-R: Willie and Sylvia Riebie, Hudson, Mary Haldeman, Mrs. Pratt, Mrs. Billie, Geo. Behner. Seated: Rose Behner.



1949, and 16 neighbors held a planting bee for Olaf Evenrud who broke his leg.

That year Orville Aanruds took Dorothy Spitchke, Joan Aanrud, Carol and Gordon Braaten, Gene Olson and Clarence Thompson to 4-H camp at Lake Metigoshe. The Balfour girls' kittenball team won the McHenry County tournament, defeating Velva 25-6. Erick Ness, longtime Balfour cream buyer, turned the operation over to Mrs. Jake Bender and went on vacation. Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Krueger were honored at an anniversary party and the Harmony Homemakers, meeting at the Joe Weninger home, elected Mrs. Krueger president, Mrs. Walter Bradley vice president, and Mrs. Roy Belzer secretary-treasurer.

A bad sawfly problem developed with Lawrence Kizima reporting some field southwest of Balfour 30 per cent destroyed. In August, Buri Hardware and the Soo depot were burglarized; an electric storm took the chimney off Orville Aanrud's home; Richard Wilde's celebrated their 35th anniversary; and the Weidler reunion in Minot's Roosevelt Park honored Fred Weidler's 83rd birthday. In September Moser Plumbing of Harvey was awarded the contract to dig and build sewer and septic tanks for Balfour School, The Drake Commercial Club discussed bringing in a displaced person as a doctor; and the post office announced Christmas cards, which are first class mail, were up to 2 cents postage. Einar Chole broke his arm in a basketball game at Anamoose; the home of Emil Herman burned after a stove over-heated; and Lyle Weidler, Reuben Regstad, Walter Schatz and Martin Evenrud saw the Lakers play in Minneapolis.

The beginning of 1950 saw Dr. Bohdan Hordinsky welcomed to Drake. Joe and Henry Kuntz and Earl Strege were installing a new laboratory system in the Balfour school. Before leaving for a trip to California, Loren and Lilly Martwick were feted at a New Year's party at the Olaf Evenrud home; guests were Mayme and Carol Belzer, Edna Petterson, Mrs. John Varner and Mr. and Mrs. William Martwick.

In March Romona Woitte, Bernadine Leier and Arlene Arndt were named to the all-tourney team as Balfour's Bees won the Flaxton Invitational basketball tourney, defeating Des Lacs and Flaxton. A wet snow on May 4 stopped seeding as well as numerous ballgames but the 52 League planned to open its season May 28, nevertheless.

By 1950 Balfour's population was 160, down 33 from 1940, and there were 54 homes, down 4. However, that was enough people to stay busy: the Balfour Progressive Homemakers presented a one-act play, "Hillbilly Sue," and a program. Actresses were Mmes. Elmer Skari, Ernest and Ervin Strube, Ray Meller, Pete Weidler, Dominic Tuchscherer, Ches Buri and Earl Strege.

Clifford Oster, Harold Chole, Lyle Weidler, Archie Martwick, Otto Evenrud and Eddie Martwick entered the service. Across the state as increased Korean fighting was evident, panic buying of tires and sugar was noted. But in Balfour, people were more interested in those visits of Loren Cole to Bismarck and Isabelle Eichhorn to the Earl Cole home. They were finally married in June and bought Emma Buri's house.

That was the year Lester Woitte and Ches Buri were hurt in combine



**BALFOUR - June 4, 1914 -** With its streets brilliantly illuminated and with festivities and exercises fitting the occasion, Balfour Thursday evening celebrated the opening of its electric light system at 7 p.m.

A banquet was tendered the Schimel brothers, the proprietors of the light plant, at the new Maxwell Hotel. Covers were laid for 100 with Gov. Hanna as principal speaker of the evening.

There were band concerts, a dance, and streets and lights were draped with flags.

At 10 p.m. a reception was given in the local opera house where Gov. Hanna delivered the address of the evening.

**THE NEW ELECTRIC PLANT PLACES BALFOUR IN THE FRONT RANK OF LESS THAN 1,000 INHABITANTS AND MAKES IT EASILY THE BRIGHTEST, CLEANEST LITTLE CITY WEST OF THE TWIN CITIES....**

(Taken from the Fargo FORUM)