

**\*UNION DEPARTMENT STORE--111,109,107 N Mill**  
Building was completed in 1897; consisted of three stores in one large building; at one time, large archways were cut through the walls between the stores, creating a “department store”.

**\*Christianson Interiors--111 N Mill**  
’04 Doug & Shannon Bruhns leased the office & opened accounting business; previous businesses included American Family, & men’s clothing stores; ’07 Christianson Interiors expanded into this location.

**\* John Carlson Bldg/Pit Stop Printing--109 N Mill**  
The first 46 years was a grocery store; later as a hardware & shoe stores prior to being purchased by John Carlson in ’91; Patti Jo Sanderson later purchased a portion of the John Carlson Photography business; building includes some beautiful stained-glass windows in its upper level; Pit Stop Printing moved in during May ’06.

**\*Leon Christianson Building--107 N Mill**  
Holmlund’s Grocery occupied the building from 1947-76; the building has housed a pizza place, café & Thomson’s Family Store which closed in ’91; Stoyles Graphic Services leased it for a silkscreen business until June ’06; currently vacant.

**T-W Plumbing & Heating--105 N Mill**  
Built in 1876 & has been home to a jewelry store, pharmacy, candy store, hardware store, & restaurant; building was sold to Wayne Ambrosion & his uncle Tilford Nordskog in ’55 & opened as T-W; was remodeled in ’63; Clarine Ambrosion opened a gift shop in ’67; building is currently vacant & business run out of Leland location.

**Stensrud Insurance/Old Coffee Shop--103 N Mill**  
Built in 1886; first brick building built in Lake Mills; opened as a bank; in 1894 became a millinery store; later a real estate office, gift store, People’s Natural Gas; in ’40 became the famous “Coffee Shop” which was owned by Asa & Kathryn Berry until ’88; business sold to Carol Moe who had the distinction of having the first smoke-free restaurant in Iowa; purchased & renovated in ’05 by Jerry & Marilyn Hoffman; has been home to Pit Stop Printing, Long Horns, a youth recreational facility, Yesterdaz Cafe; currently occupied by Stensrud Insurance & Investments.

**Gene’s Place--101 N Mill**  
Built in 1891; originally a grocery; utilized the metropolitan cash system by installing cash carriers that traveled to the balcony on a wire to the cashier’s office; has been mercantile company, restaurant, candy kitchen, theatre, hardware, tools, clothing, & apartments in the upstairs; Irving (Peanut) Nelson, an early business leader in Lake Mills, was born in one of the upstairs apartments; building now owned by Gene Nerby.

**Winnebago Mutual Insurance Agency--301 W Main**  
Constructed in ’74 - replacing a building that had been a

blacksmith shop, millinery, hard-ware, café, variety store & rebuilt mattress shop.

**Headquarters--304 W Main St**  
Moved from corner of Mill & Main St. in 1891; home of farm equipment shop, farm implements business, machine shop, cigar factory, theatre, flour warehouse, restaurant, boarding house, plumbing & heating, tinsmith, recreation & meeting center, fertilizer storage; new building built in ’62 when a recreation center & dentist resided here; “Magic Mirror”-beauty shop-opened in ’76 by Mr. & Mrs. Harvey Reutzel; Lori (Nelson) Brekken-current owner-purchased the shop in ’78 & renamed it “Headquarters”.

**Truman Helgeson Civic Center--227 W Main**  
Built in 1892; building has seen days as grocery, mercantile & hardware; was open to the building east of it for expansion; ’74 Truman & Phyllis Helgeson donated money to buy & improve it; now used for the Senior Citizen Club, community functions, Congregate Meals, Meals on Wheels & the City Transit.

**Main Attractions (west portion)--225 W Main**  
Built in 1899; owned by Margaret Nepstad; has seen days as saloon, grocery, dress shops, CPA, computer sales/service, gift & antique shop; original store was moved to the back of the lot in 1899 & used as storage area; west wall was opened & used as expansion of the grocery store located in the current Civic Center; east wall once opened to the east building, west inside doorway now re-opened.

**Main Attractions (main entrance)--221 W Main**  
Current building was constructed in 1960 by George & Margaret Nepstad after Lynn Skellenger dismantled the 101 year old building that originally occupied lot; new building has been used as Nepstad’s Toyland Christmas, Variety Store, & Floor Covering before being purchased by Mike & Rosalie Helgeson for a gift & antique shop.

**Redinger Pharmacy--219 W Main**  
In 1898, the original wood frame building was moved to N Mill-currently Silverados; new brick building was built in 1898-has always been pharmacy; pharmacists include: Levi Nerby (of Hedalen, Valdres, Norway), B. L. “Ben” Nerby Sr., B.L. “Bud” Nerby Jr., Randy Redinger & Aaron Redinger; Randy Redinger & Bud Nerby, Jr. formed partnership in ’75-Bud retired in ’79.

**A Cut Above--217 W Main**  
Built in 1898-opened in 1901 as First National Bank; has been home to the state liquor store, plumbing business, barber & beauty shops; now owned by David Iverson & leased by “A Cut Above”-hair & tanning salon.

**Curves for Women/Dr. Thompson-Optometrist--213 W Main**

Building was damaged by fire the first time in 1900 & dismantled after fire in ’61; it was a dentist’s office, realtor, Doctor office, beauty shop, grocery, restaurant, billiard hall, cash store, & millinery, appliance & electric shop,

motor rewinding, barber shops & pharmacy; basement has been used as youth center, milking equipment washer company, furniture warehouse, western wear shop & cabinet shop; D-J sales & services and Hair, Inc. now occupy basement; Dr. Thompson’s eye clinic & Curves for Women occupy street level; currently owned by Dr. Dennis Thompson.

**Twice Is Nice--211 W Main**  
Built in ’61 after previous two buildings burned down in 1900 & 1961; originally was furniture store; later turned into Dunn’s V Store, Thompson Variety store, a shoe store, Victory Christian Fellowship, Shamrock Furniture, & Creative Moments before Twice Is Nice-owned by Ken & Darcy Nickson.

**OPERA HOUSE--205, 207 and 209 W Main**  
**“Legion Building” and “Dean’s Barber Shop”**  
Building that stood previously (destroyed by fire in 1900) was where Richard Sears stayed when he came to town; the building was an early rooming house; east room in the current building has housed Gents Furnishings, jewelry & optical goods, a bakery, an undertaker parlor, a millinery, harness shop, poultry service, furniture store-now home to Dean Holstad’s Barber Shop, carrying on his father’s (Julius Holstad) barber business which started in 1910; middle room has been hardware store, bicycle & tin repair, general merchandise, bakery, grocery, restaurant, appliances & furniture; west room used for post office, general store, grocery, home supply, shoes, Bell Theatre Co., café, piano store, evangelistic meetings, floor & wall coverings, a veterinarian office & furniture; basement was a Norwegian newspaper in 1901, a paint shop, cigar factory, pump & tin repair, bowling & pool hall, hide & fur company, barber shop, shooting gallery, Boy Scout room & archery practice room; building was purchased by the American Legion-upstairs remodeled for banquets, meeting room & convention hall; prior to remodeling, upper level seated 400 patrons & was the social & entertainment center of the community; building owned by Bruce Helgeson for use as an auction house since ’83; Jazzercise opened up in the upstairs in ’08

**Beauty Works--203 W Main**  
Building owned by Jay Wangsness, was built in 1892 as mercantile store; other businesses that have occupied the building include the Republikaneran newspaper, barber, cigar factory, Women’s Christian Temperance Union, grocery, variety store, Bible book store & “The Shops”; building leased in ’88 by Cathy Charlson, continues as a beauty shop.

**Grand Café & Collectables--201 Main**  
Has been utilized as hardware store, Ladies Home Furnishings, newspaper shop, restaurant, millinery, meat market, pastry shop, youth center & grocery; has since

returned to restaurant, “The Grand”, owned by Diane Brackett.

**Young Plumbing & Heating--111 W Main**  
Built after a 1969 fire encompasses the former locations of the Maid-rite, skating rink, A.L. Aasgaard building & oil company; AgVantage purchased Northern Coop Services & Corner Stop; Young Plumbing & Heating purchased in ’07.

**Lake Mills City Hall--105 W Main**  
Built in ’25; served as city hall, fire department, library, rest rooms & community gathering place; in ’73 fire department moved to building on West Main; library built in ’66; in ’88 North Iowa Area Community College renovated former vehicle garage to use as community ed center; Senior Citizen club used basement from ’70-74.

**Dave’s 66--101 West Main**  
In ’36 “Phillips 66” gas station was constructed on corner of Main & Lake by Nick Anderson, grandfather of current owner, David Anderson; lot once home to school building, newspaper offices-including the Graphic & library.

**Apartments--102 E Main**  
Originally a photography shop by T.J. Helgeson in 1879; turned into rooming house in 1911; original building moved to N Mill St.; restaurant built in ’57; home to many restaurants over the years; home also to Vetter’s then D&R lounge; turned into apartments in ’07 by owner Jay Wangsness.

**AgVantage/Corner Stop--102 N Lake**  
1882 the 1<sup>st</sup> school located here; residential property & medical office of Dr. G.G. Herm until ’22; Mary U. Hull purchased it & rented rooms to the library; coffee shop; ice cream shop; apartments; Obert’s D-X Station/car wash in ’55; purchased by coop in ’77; Corner Stop convenience store added in ’86; AgVantage purchased Northern Coop; store closed in ’06 & is now the AgVantage offices.

**Casey’s General Store--102 W Main**  
The Casey’s store was built in ’93, following the demolition of the 73-year-old building that housed Standard Oil products, gas station, car dealerships-Kingland Motor, Twito Chev, Nelson Chev/Buick & Ertz and Associates.

**Manufacturer’s Bank and Trust**  
**Schwarm Law Firm--104 and 106 W Main**  
The old buildings were torn down & new bank building for Farmers & Merchants State Bank was constructed in ’57; new law office was constructed in ’64; ’76 the bank purchased the Family Medical Clinic; ’77, the bank, insurance office & law firm switched locations; bank has been under ownership of several financial firms-now owned by MBT of Forest City.

**David’s Super Foods--103 N Washington**  
Many old buildings were demolished to make room for a new, modern grocery store & city parking lot in ’91. Elaine Bergan’s book “Footprints from the Past” tells the story of the many businesses that once occupied this space.

# History of Downtown Lake Mills

*Includes North Mill, West Main from Lake to Western,  
N 1<sup>st</sup> Ave West and parts of North Lake*

*Information collected from [Iowa Homecoming '86](#); [Lake Mills, Iowa, July, 1986](#) book & "Footprints From The Past" by Elaine Bergan. Brochure designed & compiled by Marilyn Hoffman, director, Kelly Bosacker, & Tara Kingland., Lake Mills Chamber Development Corporation Updated June 2008*

## **Dollar General--205 N Mill**

Constructed in 1920 as a Buick garage; Ed Kingland purchased the building in '28; Kingland Motor Company celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in '94; Dollar General opened in the spring of '03.

## **Epland Trucking & Viking Realty--201 N Mill**

Built in '56 & housed Farmer's Mutual Insurance; Gorden Aasgaard purchased the building in '74 & sold it to Epland Trucking in '01.

## **Dr. Dakken Chiropractor--117 N Mill**

Built in 1923, the building has housed many businesses, including the Graphic Newspaper; Dr. Nelson opened a chiropractic business in '53, selling to Dr. Dakken in '82.

## **Agland Depot--115 N Mill**

Built in 1910 & housed a hardware store for 60 years before becoming a variety store, another hardware store, & Grace Community Church; now owned by Dennis Rognes for his insurance & real estate business; Rognes Brothers Excavating, Helgeson Financial, Hawkeye Auction & Lake Mills Hearing Aid lease space in the building.

## **Christianson Interiors--113 N Mill**

Now owned by Leon Christianson, this building has stood since 1879; originally an implement shop, then a hardware store, a hatchery, tire & electric, appliance display room, & furniture store; Christianson Interiors sells draperies, wall covering, carpet, tile & other flooring.

## **Victorian Home--308 S Lincoln**

This grand home was built in 1898 by Soren Larson at cost of almost \$10,000; Mrs. Levi Kingland moved her hospital here & it became a 5-bed hospital in 1940; it was used as a small nursing home later in the '40s; was private home to Lynn & Donna Lair until they sold it to the Historical Society in '07.

## **Lake Mills Aquatic Center--700 S Lincoln**

Aquatic Center was built in '02 & is equipped with zero-depth entry, waterslide, diving boards with one high-dive, & water sprayers; also offered are activities such as lap swim, water aerobics & swimming lessons.

## **Lake Mills Community School--102 S 4<sup>th</sup> Ave E**

Construction of the original two-story brick school building at the present site began in 1900; by '27, a four-story building was erected to account for the growing numbers of students; many additions & renovations have taken place over the years; the brick building that stood for close to 100 years was torn down in '94 & replaced by a new media center & library; new addition started in 06/07.

**Lake Mills Cooperative Creamery--302 S 4<sup>th</sup> Ave W**  
The Lake Mills Creamery was started in 1885 & the Lake Mills Creamery Corp formed in 1898; in 1905 a 20' x 100' fireproof brick creamery was built; after 118 years in business, the creamery was closed in May '03.

## **Rice Lake State Park Golf Course and Country Club 43080 Golf Ave**

The state park offers wildlife, shelter house & picnic tables as well as 18 holes of golf & clubhouse featuring Turnberry's restaurant.

## **Norwegian-American Immigrant Monument--**

### **Junction of N 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave E and Hwy 105**

#### **"The Promise of America"**

This statue was dedicated on October 8, 1995 to the thousands of Norwegian Immigrants who came to the prairies of the upper Midwest in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century & founded our great agricultural community; the monument is life-like, bronze & was sculpted by Clifford J. Carlson of Wesley, Iowa.

## **The Country School Museum--N Mill St**

The Burnap country school, built in '36, was restored in '01 after being moved to North Mill Street; was originally located in the Newton Township about 7 miles west of Lake Mills; the schoolhouse is decorated with period furnishings, including furniture & books original to the schoolhouse; tours are available by appointment.

## **Lake Mills Veteran's Memorial Monument--**

### **200 Block of North Mill @ Arlington Park**

The monument was dedicated in 2004 in memory of all those that have served our country.

constructed new building & moved in '77; occupied by heating/air conditioning business, Beenken Veterinary practice; in '84 Olson TV moved into building; in '90 Dale Mehus bought business & eventually moved back to new building; RDC Office supplies occupied the building before being sold to Scott Helgeson in '03 & then sold to Connie Rupp of MyoTherapy Specialties since '07.

## **Olson TV--108 North Mill**

The building was built in '77 & has been home to Olson TV, North Branch Too and currently as Olson TV.

## **Silverados--110 N Mill**

May be oldest business building in Lake Mills-being a pharmacy prior to 1876 on West Main-moved to its present location in 1898; has also been a millinery stop, restaurant, shooting gallery, harness & shoe repair, furniture store, implement dealership, ice cream shop; in '43 became a beer parlor; now owned by Bobby & Connie Rupp.

## **Lake Mills Graphic--204 N Mill**

Built in '61 by Joe Honsey for his electrical business; Lake Mills Graphic owner, Harris Honsey, owned the building from 1966-99 when he sold the Graphic. The business now owned by Andy Wilcox & Jerry Wiseman.

## **Lake Mills Post Office--206 N Mill**

Built in 1960 for use as a post office.

## **Lake Mills Chamber Development Office, D.K. Arndt PC, and WinnWorth Betco 203 North 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue W**

Built in '45 by W.S. Grotewold as a Plymouth-Chrysler agency; later used as Graphic Office Equipment & GTC Auto; purchased by WCTA & remodeled for current use.

## **Kingland Systems--200 N 1<sup>st</sup> Ave West**

Built in 1998 by David Kingland, following the demolition of Stamp Mill, a Lake Mills business for over 64 years.

**Stutzman Physical Therapy--107 North Washington**  
Built in '65 as telephone office until '84 when Winnebago Coop Telephone moved to 704 E. Main; Pioneer Federal, Metropolitan Bank & Gateway Savings-sold to Farmers Trust & Savings Bank in 2000- & WinnTech Central-owned by WCTA-until Lisa Stutzman opened her business in '06

## **Singelstad Hardware--202 N Washington**

Built in '68 for Harmon's Grocery; in '91 became Nepstad Hardware- sold to Kermit & Chris Singelstad in '05.

## **Farmer's Trust and Savings Bank--105 N Lake**

The new full service bank opened in 1999 with the main branch located in Buffalo Center.

## **Richard & Charise Schwarm Home--201 E Main**

Built by P. M. Joice around 1886, this beautiful home has been a home, apartment house, place for church gatherings & Centennial House; in earlier days, many gala parties were held at the home with a stable located north of the house; now owned by Richard & Charise Schwarm.

## **Pizza Ranch--210 W Main**

Constructed in 1887 as 2<sup>nd</sup> brick building in Lake Mills for use as hardware store; building has been home to dry goods store, the original "Grand Café", post office, grocery store, Coast to Coast Store; became the "Ben Franklin Store" in '77; after Sue Bridges sold the store, it was used as a variety store, unclaimed merchandise & in '02 was remodeled & opened as the Pizza Ranch.

## **Mills Theatre--216 W Main**

A new theatre is being constructed; the original Mills Theatre was built in '37 & now owned by the non-profit group "Lake Mills Entertainment, Inc."; original theater was air-conditioned & had seating for 427 to enjoy both movies & community theater presentations; exterior was gleaming white with red & black trim; in '90 the theater was remodeled but due to deterioration, the back of the building was demolished in '02; rebuilding started in '07.

## **Helgeson Appraisal & Realty**

### **Iowa Odd Fellows Building--218 W Main**

Constructed in 1900 has been occupied for the following businesses: millinery, grocery, variety, photo arts, used clothing, insurance agent, cabinet shop, scrap booking & Helgeson Appraisal & Realty; Muskie Mortgage; the Aurora Lodge moved to lower level; basement was used for years as a place to play pool; currently Helgeson Appraisal.

## **The Bridge--220 W Main**

Built in 1900; owned by Wes Bergland; has served as a clothing store, hardware, bakery, card shop, Curves; currently The Bridge-a Youth For Christ drop-in center.

## **Mart's Jewelry Building--222 W Main**

Built in 1900 as a jewelry store, it remained a jewelry store until the death of owner, Martha Skellenger in the mid '90s; prior owners were Bergland, Weed & their daughter Irma Ingebritson, Walter & Clarine Moe, Mildrid Holstad and Duane & Martha Skellenger; currently owned by Al Skellenger, is vacant.

## **Helland Insurance Building--224 W Main**

Built by P. M. Joice in 1900; opened as First National Bank in 1901, followed by Farmers & Merchants State Bank, city clerk office, Forest Federal & Pioneer Federal; in '28, all banks closed & Lake Mills had no bank; barbers were located in the basement, along with doctors & lawyers in the upper level; notice the beautiful stain-glass windows; original building on this lot was moved further down West Main-located just west of the Headquarters building; Keith Helland, current owner, opened insurance/real estate business in '84

## **Cruiser's Route 69--104 N Mill**

Constructed in '46 by T.H. Thompson; opened as a variety store; became a tavern in '64; owned by Nancy Peterson.

## **MyoTherapy Specialties--106 N Mill**

Constructed in 1911; opened as a barber, shoe shine & beauty shop; People's Natural Gas office was there from 1949-62; Arlie Olson purchased building in '63,