

Skyberg March 2024

To quote philosopher Steven Wright: 'Whenever I think about the past, it brings up so many memories.' OK, so he wasn't a philosopher but he was spot on with that line. My radio career took me to Sioux City, Iowa and then onto Nebraska where I lived for 14 years. When people would ask me where I grew up, I would say West Concord. They would then ask; 'Where in Wisconsin?' Then I would articulate clearly WEST Concord, Minnesota. Of course the next question would be; 'Where's that?' Well it's in Dodge County north of Wasioja, south of Skyberg, east of Moland and of course west of Concord, hence the name.

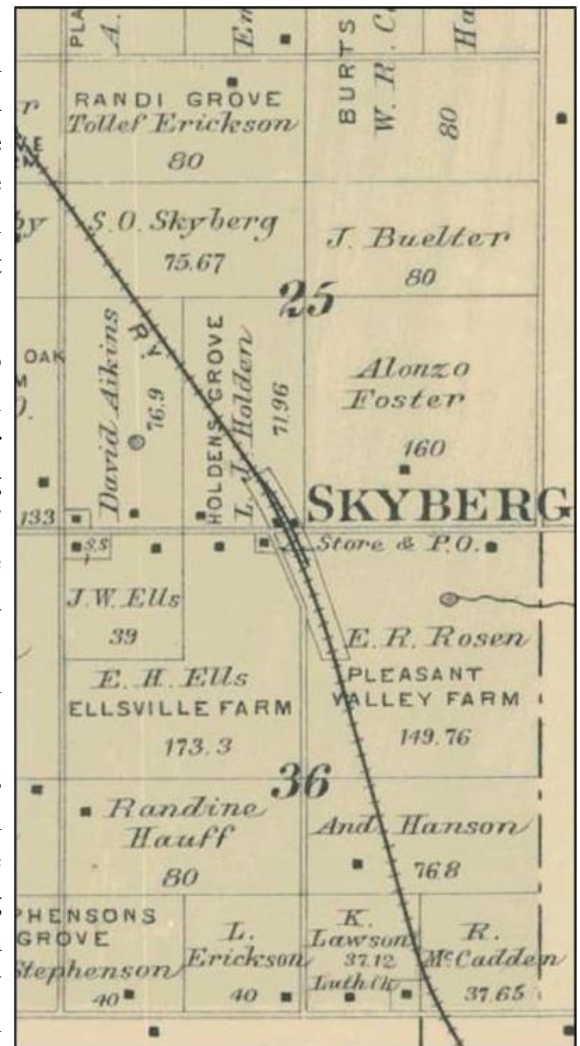
Now if you are reading this you say, yup, that's where it is alright. They would ask if there were any bigger towns around and I would say there's Bombay but that's east of Kenyon and Oslo is down by Hayfield and Havana is closer to Claremont, so no, there's no big towns around.

I have an affinity to Skyberg as my mom, Mayme Ryg Kleven, grew up on a farm to the west of town. As a young kid, I would go to the Skyberg picnic that was an annual event for many years. My mom would tell me how it was once a thriving community.

It started out in 1879 as a post office. Simon Skyberg, who had 80 acres just north of where the town grew, ran the general store. Later, the town grew with 3 stores, a blacksmith shop, a train depot, a bank, a cattle yard for moving cattle, coal sheds and a lumber yard. It's interesting to note that the train depot had in big letters SKYBURG. But Simon's last name had an 'E' and not a 'U'. The 1894 Plat Book lists it as Skyberg which was before the train depot was built so Skyberg is the correct spelling but it will answer to both.

A creamery and grain elevator were built near the railroad tracks to enhance the farming community. At the West Concord Historical Society (WCHS) museum, I came across an interview of my Godfather Gale Callister. Mary Gillard did the interview in 1999. Gale got talking about highway 56 which used to run right by his farm until about 1937 when the road today became the new highway. When 56 went by the Callister farm, it went west along the county line past Hegre Church to a T and then went north to Goodhue 21 and then it turned west to Kenyon. The 'new 56' ran along the railroad that was built before the highway ran parallel to it.

The entire interview, which I had not seen until a couple weeks ago, is fascinating. Gale got talking about different subjects; Fairpoint, which wasn't far from his farm, playing basketball in West Concord where the Municipal liquor store is now, electricity coming to the farms, among other stories. Gale's first car was a 1938 FM Camelot that he bought in 1942. His first tractor was a 02236 International. The museum has a few of these interviews if you ever want to read them. You see, Steven Wright was correct, when you talk about the past, it does bring up so many memories.

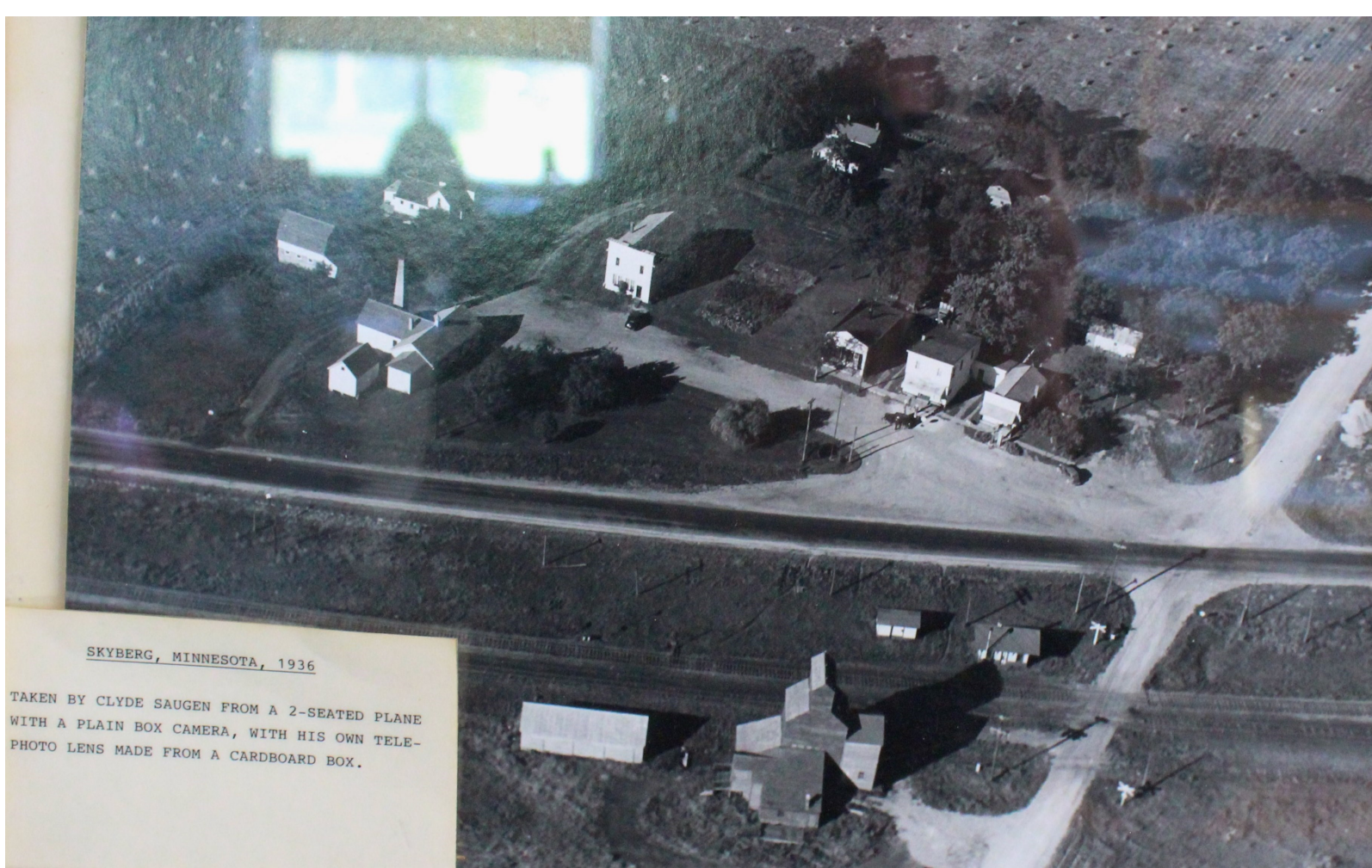


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These pictures are courtesy of the Goodhue County Historical Society. Above, the old creamery as it was in the 1920's. Below, the grain elevator and the train depot as they were around 1930.





SKYBERG, MINNESOTA, 1936

TAKEN BY CLYDE SAUGEN FROM A 2-SEATED PLANE
WITH A PLAIN BOX CAMERA, WITH HIS OWN TELE-
PHOTO LENS MADE FROM A CARBOARD BOX.

Above is an aerial view of Skyberg in 1936. To repeat what it says in the corner of the picture: Taken by Clyde Saugen from a 2-seated plane with a plain box camera, with his own telephoto lens made from a cardboard box. Below is a picture taken by Clyde Saugen in 1939 of the Haislet farm 13 years before it became the Kleven farm. Clyde's brother Don found this in a box and he gave it to my dad because he recognized the farm.

