



CARL  
STETTTLER

*The Man  
and  
His Town*

**1861 - 1920**



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**Carl Stettler**, the founder of the town of Stettler, made a major contribution and greatly influenced the settling of the town, and surrounding area.

Carl was born June 6, 1861 in Eggiwil, a town in the Canton of Bern, Switzerland. Carl's father was one of the richest men in the Emmental, and was a representative to the Canton Legislature in Bern. Most residents of the Canton would have been bilingual German and French. Carl, in addition to the normal schooling, had a private tutor and as a result also learned English.

Carl had two brothers and three sisters who continued to live in Switzerland. Another brother, Gottfried, moved to Twin Falls, Idaho, where he owned an orchard and ran a meat business.

In 1886 Carl immigrated to the United States. For a number of years he tried various occupations with varying success – the first at Bernstadt, Kentucky. Bernstadt was a Swiss community named after the Bern area of Switzerland. He then moved to the New Glarus and Monticello Swiss community in Wisconsin. This Swiss community, along with the larger German community from nearby Janesville, would later contribute the largest number of settlers for his yet-to-be-established Alberta colony. He finally went into the wholesale and retail beer, soda and ice business in Marysville, Kansas.

Three years later he moved to Weatherford, Oklahoma, successfully running a wholesale beer establishment as agent for Anheuser Busch.

While in Kansas he met Dorothea Raemer (nee Fischer), a widow who had 9 living children. Her husband Phillip had died in 1894. While haying, he had cut his hand. He had wrapped the cut hand in a dirty bandana and continued haying. As a result, he appears to have incurred a tetanus infection, which led to his death.

Carl and Dorothea were married at Marysville, Kansas in October 1895. Carl helped to look after the children, and eventually brought the four youngest, Kate, Dora, Edward and George to live in Alberta.

Carl and his family spent some time with the Swiss community in Wisconsin. Carl and a Swiss friend Fred Schertenleib went to Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1902 to talk to representatives of the Canadian Pacific Railroad about establishing a Swiss community in Western Canada.

From there Carl was directed to Calgary to meet H. Harry Honens who was managing the sales of Canadian Pacific properties. Mr. Honens had previously organized a company in High River that sold sixty thousand acres of CPR land in quarter sections (160 acres). From there



Steinbrechers German American Colonization building in Calgary. "Glenbow Archives NA-1496-2"

he became involved with the Calgary Colonization Company handling the sale of CPR land. By 1912 Honens personally had over six thousand acres in wheat, barley and oats on various farms of his own.

Honens brought Carl into contact with John and Arthur Steinbrecher. The Steinbrechers were involved in subdivision developments in Calgary. They supposedly had made \$150,000 profit from a ¼ section subdivision in 1903. They had been given control of a block of land

at the terminus of a railroad that the CPR was planning to build east from Blackfalds. Harry Honens and John Steinbrecher wanted to establish a German colony at the end of the line. Both Harry Honens and the Steinbrecher brothers had parents that came from Germany.

The Steinbrechers had created a company, The German American Colonization Company, to handle the land sales. The German American Colonization Company was set up to get Germans and German Americans to come to Alberta. The arrival of Carl Stettler provided them with a local manager and promoter allowing them to continue business in Calgary. For Stettler, it provided him access to a block of land, access to funds, assistance to help attract settlers, and maybe most importantly, a town named after him.

The deal between Carl, the Steinbrechers and Honens was that to establish the desired colony the following guidelines would be met. The homestead land had to be filled first – it is difficult to sell land as long as free land is available. Carl would have very little control over the homestead land as the government was registering it on a first come basis. But the intent was to try and put the Swiss-Germans into a block. The CPR land could be sold to certain individuals and thus Carl could control development.

The location of the railroad's terminus at Stettler was to be kept confidential until the CPR was in a position to start selling town lots. The town sales were to be handled by CPR agents. While the price of lots varied depending on the size of the lot and its location, the plan was to sell the larger commercial lots for about \$2,000.

Carl Stettler was taken on to manage the sale around the eastern terminus. What is not known is if he became a partner in the German American Colonization Company, and to what extent the Steinbrechers were contributing financing. They were making money in Calgary by putting money into development and so it would be reasonable to presume that they made a financial input, and that Carl would be a partner.

We also know that the Steinbrechers and the CPR agreed that the eastern terminus would be named "Stettler", and that Carl would try to draw Swiss emigrants to this site to help build what was now to become a Swiss-German colony. The Steinbrechers would continue to draw German-American settlers to this point.

John Steinbrecher was the President of the German American Colonization Company, his brother Arthur was the Secretary and Treasurer, and Carl Stettler was the

manager. Carl Stettler helped the company sell about 400 homesteads in the Stettler district. During the first six months of 1906, they would handle 50 thousand acres of Canadian Pacific Railroad land and 10 thousand acres of private land. By 1912 the company had handled another one hundred thousand acres of land at Castor, and one million dollars worth of listed property in Calgary.

Carl Stettler brought his family and a number of Wisconsin Swiss friends to Blackfalds in 1903. That summer Carl, his step-son George Raemer and a number of Swiss from Wisconsin would take up homesteads around the destined CPR terminus, Section 3 Township 39 Range 19 West of the 4th Meridian. Only the CPR surveyor and Carl knew the location of the terminus. This section is on the north side of the correction line, on land that had been surveyed and staked in April of 1894. The correction line currently runs through the middle of Stettler.

In 1903, south of this correction line, the land was not surveyed and so was not eligible for homesteading. With the coming of the CPR it became necessary for the survey to be extended. As a result federal government surveyors returned in 1904 and completed the surveys on Twp 38 Range 18 on February 20 1905, Twp 39 Range 17 on February 28 1905, and Twp 38 Range 17 on February 23, 1905.

The attempt by Carl and his Swiss friends to encircle the coming CPR terminus ran into a couple of snags. The first was that Fred Wuest had staked out NE 4-39-19 as his homestead, and then went back to Red Deer to spend the winter with his family. On returning in the spring of 1904 he found his claim "hijacked" by Mr. F. Priest. Fred had neglected to file and register his homestead in Red Deer. He and his friend Joe Nolte had to hurry back to Red Deer and file four miles farther east on NE 36-38-19 W4.

The second change had more significance. The CPR had informed Carl that the rail line would not be starting at Blackfalds, but instead would move east from Lacombe. The Blackfalds route would later be used by the Canadian National Railway in a line from Warden to Nordegg, going through Haynes and Joffre. This change would also have an effect on the final location of the terminus of Stettler.

In the summer of 1904 Carl Stettler arranged for lumber to be freighted from Blackfalds by horse and wagon. The lumber was used to build a Stopping House on Carl's homestead on NW 2-39-19 W4. Carl named this Stopping House "Blumenau". In 1905 lumber was brought in, likely from Alix, to build a sales office for The German American Colonization Company. This building would also house the Post Office. John Adams



1906 - German American Colonization building and Post Office on Alberta Ave. George Raemer in doorway. "Museum"



Stopping House - Post Office. Family residence at Blumenau. Dorothea, Kate and Dora are ladies in back row. "Holly Komishke"



also brought in lumber in 1905 to build a grocery store.

To encourage his Swiss countrymen to come to his new colony, Stettler sent promotional materials to the newspapers in Switzerland and Southern Germany. Some would say the promotion ranged from far-fetched to a gross exaggeration. To quote what Carl sent in 1904:

*“The region to be settled lies just east of Red Deer. . . . The land does not lie along the railway between Edmonton and Calgary, on the contrary, it must be about 50 English miles to where the settlement begins . . . . The Red River, which is navigable for small boats borders the settlement in the west.*

*“To facilitate traffic between the railway station in Red Deer and our colony a small steam ship with barges will be put into service . . . . everything takes time and willy-nilly the first settlers will have to drive thither by wagon.*

*“There are several small creeks as well as smaller and larger lakes. But do not imagine these to be like the beautiful Swiss lakes.*

*“The land and the region for our soon to be founded colony has been chosen . . . . . in the Province of Alberta, close to the snow covered mountains.*

*“There are some woods scattered all over but not in sufficient quantity to give us many years of supplies for building and firewood. However under the whole area*

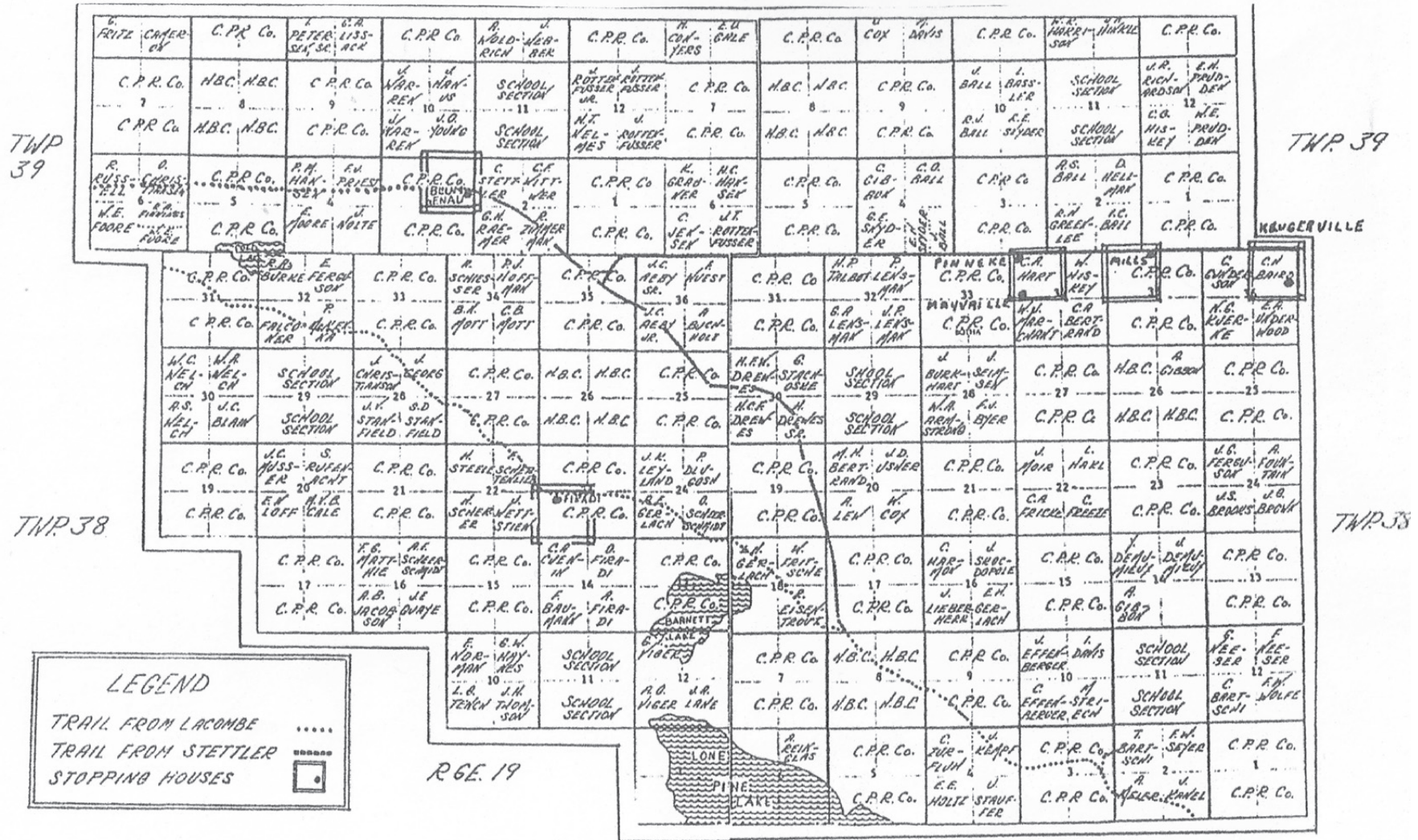
*there is supposed to be a 12 foot thick layer of good quality coal which the farmer can mine for himself, at present free of charge.”*

For the Swiss that lived in the mountains, coming to a place where you couldn't see the mountains as they were 100 miles away, would probably not feel like home. How successful was the campaign? Out of the approximately 3000 settlers that would come to Stettler and the surrounding district, less than 30 families were Swiss, and about 30 families were German. The 1911 census for Stettler included 176 German speaking people – the total men, women, and children from the combined German and Swiss community. The census of 1911 showed the town of Stettler with 1444 people. Another 2000 lived in the rural area around Stettler.

To help show the Swiss German settlement pattern, a homestead map is included. In 1904 the Swiss German pioneers homesteaded south and east of Blumenau. Those who came later in 1904 and in 1905 would be located farther east and farther south. The homesteads are only on even numbered sections. As Carl Stettler could not restrict the English or other homesteaders, they are interspersed in the area.

Most of the Swiss and German pioneers had already

Homestead Map of 1905. "Botha Memories"



been in Canada or the United States. Less than half a dozen would actually come directly from Switzerland or Germany.

Carl's basic recruitment was most successful in the Swiss-German community in Wisconsin. For his colony to be successful he needed skilled tradesmen as well as farmers. One of those trades was blacksmiths, and he recruited two – Carl Wittwer and Fred Wuest. He also needed skilled carpenters, capable of building structures that were sturdy enough to be moved by dragging, and later to help build his town, specifically a large hotel that he had in mind. He was able to recruit Max Gerlach and his nephew Richard Gerlach, both master builders.

The Gerlachs came in 1904 along with friends Otto and Bernard Firadi. They homesteaded south of Blumenau. The Gerlachs built the Stopping House at Blumenau in the summer of 1904, and then went to Edmonton for the winter. They returned in the summer of 1905 to work on their homesteads. They also built the German American Colonization Building for Carl Stettler, and a similar sized store for John Adams. Having completed housing on their own homesteads, they were able to stay the winter of 1905 – 06. In early winter of 1906 they started work in the Stettler townsite on the National Hotel.

One of the projects that failed was that of establishing a cheese making industry. Fred Schertenleib came out of the cheese making fraternity in Wisconsin. He was joined by Christian Zurfluh and Ulrich Stauffer. Cheese making relies on the use of whole milk, a bulky product that was impossible to collect in a horse and wagon era. The vast distances made milk accumulation too difficult. Cheese making ended up as a cottage industry. In the end the English community constructed a creamery to make butter. The cream portion is only one sixth of whole milk, and is thus easier to haul and store. It is also more stable, and spoilage resistant, and thus can be stored longer in unrefrigerated locations.

In the construction of the rail line, the surveyor tried to establish a town every eight miles. This was in part to leave the maintenance or section crew a manageable amount of rail line to look after, i.e. 4 miles each way from their home, the Section House. The other objective was to land the town on a CPR section and thus maximize the railroad's return from the sale of town lots.

It appears that changes were made in the railway right-of-way, possibly due to its departure from Lacombe rather than from Blackfalds, and possibly caused by changes to reduce costs in the building of the trestle and its approaches as it crossed Tail Creek. The result



1906 National Hotel on NE corner of Main Street and Alberta Avenue. "Museum"

was that the town site for Erskine would land on a homestead quarter, that of Mr. Billy Veach. So in 1904 it became necessary for the CPR and its agent to buy this homestead. Some sympathetic historians feel sorry for poor Mr. Veach who lost his homestead on which he had already put up a tent. In reality Mr. Veach made a wise decision to sell to the CPR. The CPR's history from 1881 was to move the location of the town if they could not purchase on their terms. As part of the sale, Veach received an Erskine town corner lot on which he built a two-story "Lake View Hotel", using money from the sale of his homestead. A couple of years later he sold the hotel and moved on.

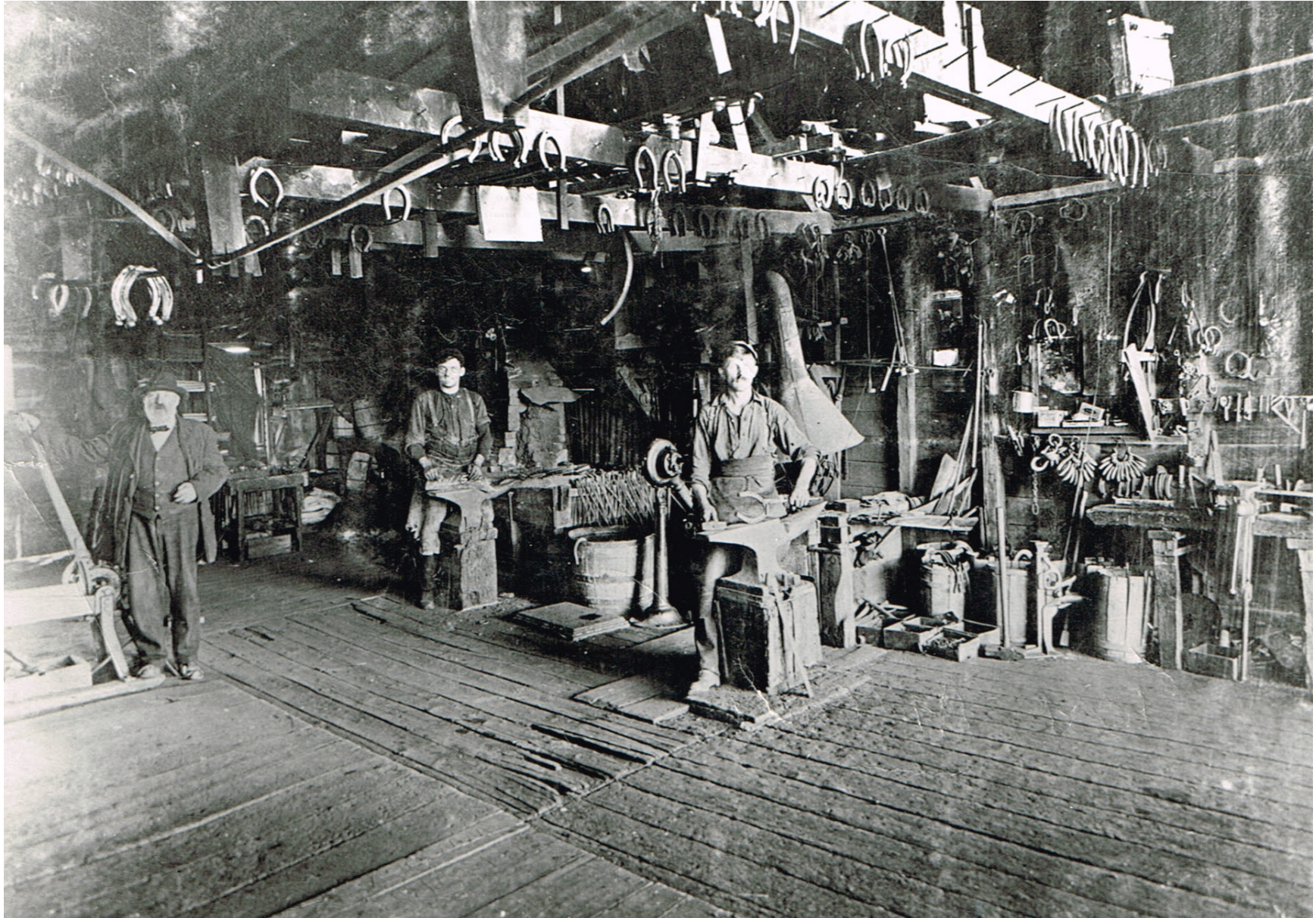
The next snafu in the plans was that Stettler would not reach Section 3-39-19, but would instead stop at Section 5-39-19. An inconvenience. The Colonization/ Post Office building would now have to be moved three miles instead of just one.

Getting back to 1904 and the Blumenau homesteads – Carl Stettler had homesteaded the NW 2-39-19, and George Raemer homesteaded the SW 2-39-19. The NE 2-39-19 had been homesteaded by Carl Wittwer who became the community's first blacksmith. Wittwer continued by building a blacksmith shop and house on his farm quarter after the departure of Blumenau. The SE 2-39-19 was homesteaded by another Swiss, Robert Zimmerman. He, along with Carl Stettler planned to sell their homesteads to one of the Stettler's

prominent businessmen who could afford a "country estate". In preparation, in 1905 Robert bought the NE 26-38-19 and the NW 25-38-19 from the German American Colonization Company. In 1906 he built a shack on 26. By 1910 he was married, with a new house and large hip-roofed barn on Section 25.

To finish the story of Blumenau, Robert Zimmerman's quarter was sold to Fred Colley, owner of the Acorn Lumber Company, and Stettler's largest builder. Fred Colley built a house and hip-roofed barn in anticipation of selling a ready-to-go farm to a new settler. In 1910 he completed the sale to Henry Martin who moved his family from Nebraska. Included in the sale would be the homesteads of Carl Stettler and George Raemer. Fred Colley would repeat the process south of the town of Stettler, selling a complete farm to Otto Cornelssen, who moved from Kansas.

In the summer of 1905 as the CPR neared its terminus, Carl moved his family from Blackfalds to Blumenau. For the Raemers and Carl Stettler, the Stopping House was their first non-rented residence. The CPR survey crew surveyed the town site of Stettler in the summer of 1905. From where the CPR station was to be built, they laid out a main street going to the south. They made Main Street 6 rods, or one and a half surveyor chains wide, because of the anticipated higher usage. The rest of the streets and avenues were the standard 1 chain or 66 feet wide. It was expected that the first avenue

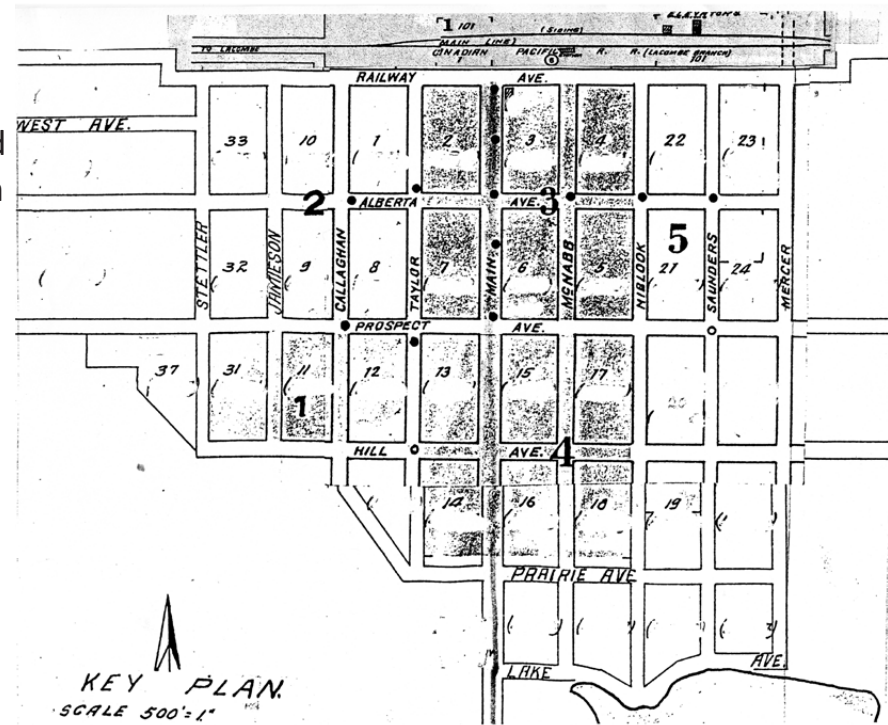


Fred Wuest (center) Blacksmith Shop in Stettler Circa 1910. "Museum"

south of the station would not be the busiest as no lots were going to be sold on the north side of Railway Avenue. It was anticipated that the next avenue south, Alberta Avenue, would be the busiest, and that the intersection of Main Street and Alberta Avenue would form the heart of the town.

The CPR survey map of the yet unnamed town shows 54th Street as Stettler. Also note that the surveyors had no intention of including the low-lying land to the south and southwest in the town. The critics who claimed that the CPR put Stettler in a slough are wrong. The town's expansion into the slough and low land to the south and southwest came with developers after 1950.

The town plan was transferred to the CPR town sales agent in Alix and to the German American Colonization Co. in Calgary and Stettler. Carl got first pick, and chose the large lot on the northeast corner of Main Street and Alberta Avenue to build his National Hotel. The Merchants Bank and the Traders Bank would locate across Main Street from Carl on the northwest corner. Then Carl took the two lots west of the banks to locate his Colonization /Post Office building. That would be convenient, as Carl was going to be busy selling CPR land, and a lot of money would be exchanged. On a poor day he would take in \$5000. That's at a time that working men would be paid \$1.00 per day.



CPR Surveyors Map of the Town of Stettler. "Museum"



CPR Station at north end of Main Street in Stettler. "Holly Komishke"



When Wilson Pyper rode into Stettler on the freight train that was to pick up the last tracklaying equipment, he came looking for the lots he had purchased on the east side of Main Street, and on the south side of Railway Avenue. He had enough advance knowledge to bring lumber with him on the same train, loaded into Boxcar 46564. He hired two young homesteaders from southwest of Stettler, Slim Blain and Roy Bullington, to unload the lumber from his box car, and haul it to the site of his hotel. This put Blain and Bullington into business and they spent the rest of the 1905 – 06 winter unloading cars of lumber and hauling it to business sites or lumber yards.

On November 2nd Pyper laid the foundation of his Alberta Hotel. The first church service in Stettler was held at Christmas in the Alberta Hotel for those early hardy souls building the new town.

The first true freight train came on the 16th of November. Included on this train were four carloads of lumber for Fred Colley, two carloads of lumber for G.C. Bentley and a carload of tools and hardware for G.K. Farmer.

The next train came a few days after Christmas in 1905, consisting of 26 cars, most of them loaded with lumber, along with a couple of cars of coal.

The winter of 1906 was mild, and building could continue all winter. Stettler was a hodge-podge of building sites, tents and what Billy Gray was to refer to as “contraptions”. The Starlight Café was one of these contraptions. It consisted of some make-shift walls but no roof. It seems the owner was too busy preparing and serving meals to ever put a roof on his café.

Wilson Pyper sold the Alberta Hotel to Charles Hanson. During the spring and summer of 1906 Wilson Pyper built the second- largest hotel, the Dominion, on the northeast corner of Main Street and Railroad Avenue. He opened the Dominion in August 1906. On September 19th of 1906 he sold the Dominion to William Maloney.

One of the most important of the temporary shacks was that of the Merchants Bank. This temporary bank was put up by G.C. Bentley on the southeast corner of Main Street and Alberta Avenue. It was constructed of rough boards, and was ten feet wide and twelve feet long. It contained a bed and a stove. The bank manager and his assistant sat on the bed and cashed checks over a twelve inch board for a counter. The bank kept its money in a suitcase and the assistant slept with it. There is no record of what firearms the assistant had, nor is there a record of a holdup.



Temporary Merchants Bank. "Museum"



July 1906 Alberta Avenue. Merchants Bank, German-American Colonization building, Blair Hotel, Griffiths Feed Store. "Museum"



1906 Dominion Hotel. East side on Main Street. "Museum"



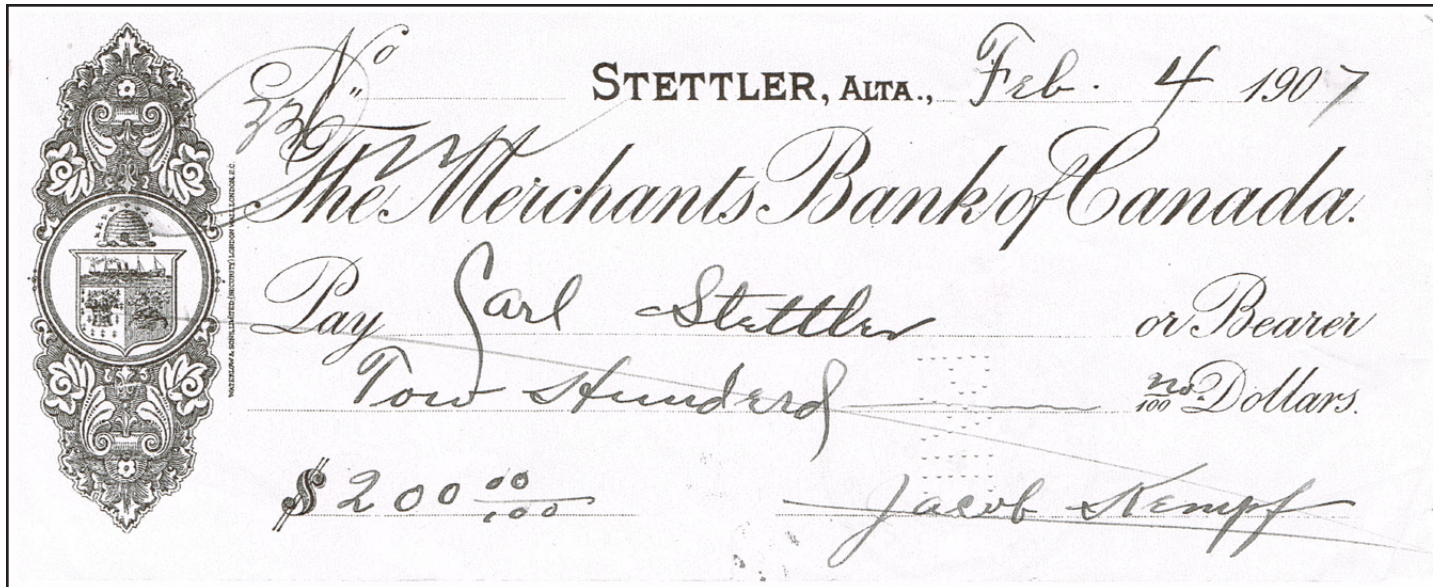
Bar Room at National Hotel, Christmas 1906. Jacob Kempf, Henry Emmerich and Carl Stettler. "Museum"

Carl's experience in the USA had shown him the profitability of the alcohol/liquor business. In Canada at that time, alcohol could only be served in a hotel bar. Carl's plans then to sell alcohol in Stettler necessitated the building of a hotel.

The Gerlachs were able to start building the National Hotel in the early months of 1906. When completed, the three-story National was the largest building in Stettler. Carl was able to open his hotel on July 2, 1906. The National also had the largest bar in Stettler. Carl's wife Dorothea and step-daughter Dora managed the Hotel, but Carl needed a bartender.

In the early winter of 1906 Carl Stettler went back to Kansas on a talent search, in this case personal. Carl was looking for a bartender for his National Hotel, preferably one with experience, one he could trust, one who had worked for him in the Kansas liquor business.

To put it in the words of Jacob Kempf, "I came on the railroad with Carl Stettler". As part of the deal, Jacob was to receive a quarter of land and a loan of two hundred dollars to help him get started. Carl helped him file on a homestead south of Botha, with Ulrich Stauffer and Christian Zurfluh as his nearest neighbours. Carl and Jacob then hired a young newcomer, Henry Emmerich to be Jacob's assistant in the bar.



A Merchants Bank of Canada cheque from Jacob Kempf to Carl Stettler. "Larry Kempf"

When the National Hotel opened in July 1906, among the staff were two daughters of Casper (Chief) Scheerschmidt, Marie and Sarah. On May 1, 1907 Stettler had its first double wedding with Jacob marrying Sarah, and Henry marrying Marie. Carl approved and showed his blessing by “furnishing the refreshments with a lavish hand”.

In an era where jobs were manual, a hotel like the National would have a lot of employees. A picture included shows some of the staff. Those working in the dining room wore a special uniform featuring a belt and buckle. The ladies working in the laundry had to wash all the linen, both from the dining area and from the rooms, plus all of the uniforms. All of the linens had to be ironed. In the hotel area, chamber maids looked after cleaning, making beds and disposing of the products of the latrines and chamber pots. Ladies from all three sections would have to pump and haul the water from the town pump.

One of the exceptions to the ladies pumping and hauling water was sixteen year old Ernst Stauffer. His job on the night shift was to pump and haul water to the rooms in the hotel. After the bar was closed for the night, it was Ernst’s job to clean it, and mop the bar room floor. The consequence of this labor was that the hotel owners were the major force demanding the

town council install a water and sewage system.

In the family history of Arnold Meier and Welhemina Herr (*Page 335, Botha Memories*) is a story from when Welhemina worked in the laundry of the National Hotel. “An incident with all the girls, who were working at the laundry proved to be interesting when they swiped hot water, which they needed for their job, from the Chinese cook, who had plenty of water on hand in his boilers. He became very angry and ran after them with a knife shouting ‘Hoonie Humpony’, whatever that meant in Chinese.”

This is the only reference to a Chinese employee working at the National. It appears that this individual was likely in charge of dishwashing and hence his supply of hot water. It is also likely that this Chinese individual was not the only one of his nationality working in Stettler. The Blair Hotel openly advertised in the Stettler Independent in 1908 that it was the only hotel in Stettler to employ an “all white staff”.

Carl is known to have only employed Swiss-German chefs. Chris Bartschi was an exception to the lady chefs that Carl used in the hotel. He worked in the National as a pastry chef.

At the same time that Carl was involved with the development of the town he was also very much



Staff of the National Hotel. Carl and Dorothea Stettler are in the back row at right. "Museum"

involved in the rural part of his Swiss German colony. Attracting colonists who could provide blacksmith and carpentry skills to get the settlers started was only a beginning. The Steinbrechers were concerned that the early Swiss German pioneers would need the help of experienced Albertans to survive and prosper in a strange or unknown land. The Steinbrechers were able to find help in the German colony at Ellerslie-Nisku, which had been established in 1894.

Harry Honens' experience at Calgary and High River indicated that for the colony to be successful, it would be necessary for each colonist to break a plot of land of at least 10 acres. While it would be important to have a steam tractor to assist in the plowing, it was necessary to have a steam tractor and threshing machine to harvest the crop. As a result, three young (all in their twenties) English speaking Germans, Henry and William Drewes and George Stack, would come to Stettler. On the 8th of June 1904 they filed on Section 30-38-18 W4. As well, arrangements were made for the financing of a Sawyer Massey steam tractor, a Sawyer Massey threshing machine and an eight-bottom John Deere gang plow.

The tractor was brought into Stettler by the CPR, and was delivered on the 15th of March, 1906. Its first job was to drag the German American Colonization Building

from Blumenau to Stettler. The building was dragged in from the east, an open route, as there were no roads or other improvements to hinder them. The building was brought into Stettler on Alberta (50th) Avenue. Once in front of its lot, it was turned 90 degrees and pulled north. From the pictures it can be seen that an empty lot was left between it and the banks to the east, and an alley between it and the Blair Hotel on the west.

Adams' store was a similar size to Carl's building and also on skids ready to move. The store was moved in on Railway Avenue and occupied the northwest corner of Main Street and Railway Avenue. It would then be across Main Street from the Dominion Hotel, with the CPR Station to the north.



Royal Hotel on Railroad Avenue. Small part of Alberta Hotel to the right of the Royal Hotel. Small building to left is a Boarding House. Lutheran Church Steeple in Background. "Museum"





National Hotel. "Museum"



1907 - Main Street looking north to Railroad Station taken from Fire Hall. Honey Wagon Sewage System. "Museum"



1907 - Threshing at Blumenau. Henry Drewes on tractor, William Drewes on thresher. "Erichsen"

Both of these moves were completed by March 29th of 1906. This allowed Carl Stettler and John Adams to have some of the earliest buildings to be in operation in Stettler in 1906.

One of the suggestions for the new settlers was for them to guard against prairie fires. These fires, which would occur every 5 or so years as the grassy fuel accumulated, kept the area natural grassland by burning any tree seedlings. But they also were a danger to settlers and their effects. It is on record

that the original Mounties of the NWMP feared prairie fires more than hostile natives and whisky traders.

So the suggestion from the Drewes Bros. was to plow or burn the area around their new farmstead. For some of the newcomers, no trees was bad enough, but to burn their homestead black was too much. As a result, a large prairie fire during the fall of 1905, that was over 100 miles long and 30 miles wide, caused wide-spread damage. Many settlers had their homes and supplies destroyed.



Main Street looking north to Railway Station. "Museum"

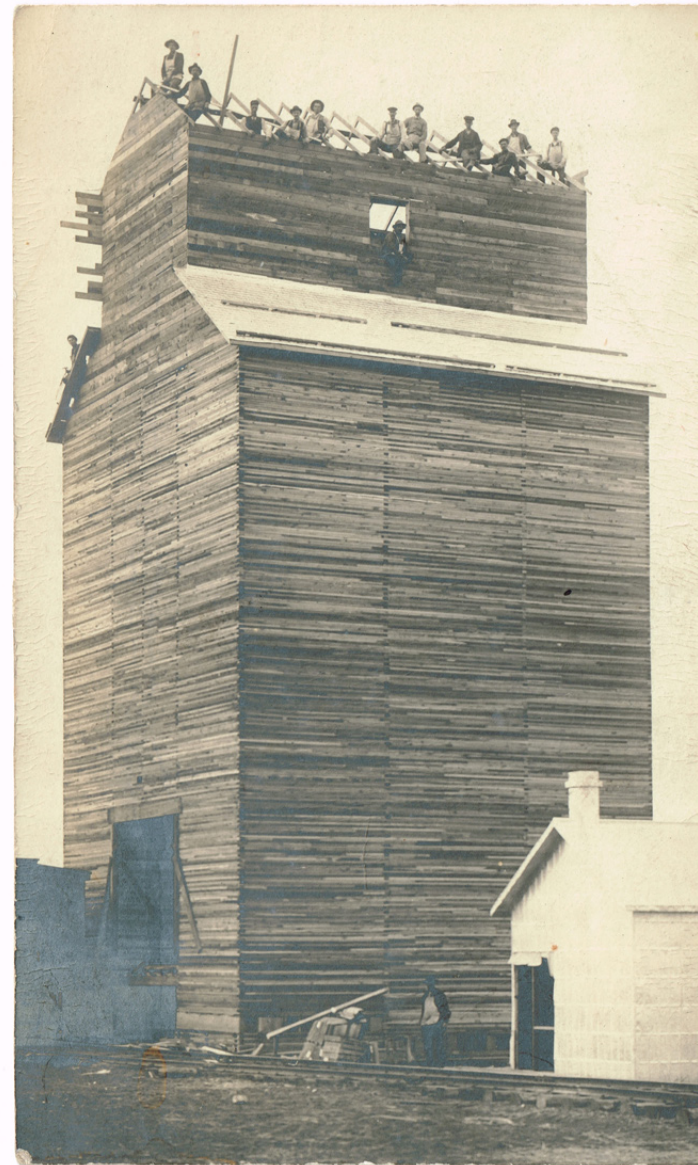
In preparation for threshing in the fall, the Drewes Bros. had the settlers stack the bundles they were going to thresh into a large stack, or two stacks placed 10 feet apart. These stacks could then be threshed after snowfall by either shaking the snow off the top, or by discarding the top layer for livestock feed.

From Henry Drewes' records, he and the Sawyer Massey threshed in the Swiss German community until December 12th in 1906, and to the 26th of December in 1907.

Stettler's first grain elevator was completed in October of 1906. This permitted the early settlers to convert their grain into cash.

There was no record left of the amount of land that was plowed with the Sawyer Massey. Many of the poorer homesteaders opted to break the prairie sod with a walking plow pulled by horses or oxen – a slow process.

The CPR was to be paid \$3.00 per acre for its land, and it appears the German American Colonization Company agreed to pay for all of the CPR land within one year of the railroad's arrival at Stettler. The CPR needed its money to help pay the cost of the railroad. To ensure a profit, the German American Colonization Company set



October 1906 - First elevator in Stettler. "Erichsen"



1907 - Plowing at Blumenau. Henry Drewes on tractor, William Drewes on plow, George Stack on water wagon. Sawyer Massey Rep in Derby. "Erichsen"

the selling price at \$6.00 per acre. A limited quantity of land was sold to a few of the Swiss German community for this price, but in January of 1906 a deal was made with the Luse Land and Colonization Company of St. Paul, Minnesota to buy the majority of the land for \$6.00 an acre. Carl Stettler and his land agents would then sell the Luse holdings for \$10.00 an acre.

The Luse Land Company was formed in 1904 in St. Paul, Minnesota by J.F. Luse. The purpose of the company was to buy blocks of land and then develop a German Lutheran Colony. Prospective colonists would receive a free travel trip to look at the land and purchase it. Luse Land Co. also provided a 5-year financing plan which had a provision in it to buy the land back and refund the colonist his money if he couldn't pay for it. Luse Land Co. greatly expanded its operation in Saskatchewan. The town of Luseland, Saskatchewan is named after this company. An example of a Luse Land deal – Garret Garrels and Herman Bruning were brought by railroad from Bruning, Nebraska to look at land in the Stettler area. In July of 1907 Garrels and Bruning bought Section 15-38-18W4 for \$10.00 an acre, or \$6400 from Carl Stettler, the Luse Land agent. This was land that Carl had originally sold to the Luse Land Co. in 1906 for \$6.00 an acre. In 1911 Garret and his sons came back to the Botha area and bought additional land, and then moved from Nebraska in 1912.

With the completion of the National Hotel in June 1906, the Stopping House at Blumenau was no longer necessary or useful. It was moved three miles south to CPR land that had been purchased by Otto Firadi. The Firadis were neighbors of the Gerlachs, and had homesteaded next to them.

Carl Stettler made very few land sales of CPR land prior to 1906, but those few were important. In September of 1903 Carl sold the SE ¼ of section 23-38-19 W4 to Otto Firadi and the SW ¼ of section 23-38-19 W4 to Otto in May of 1904. Otto bought the stopping house built by Carl Stettler, and in 1906 had it moved to this land. This gives rise to the question, was Carl Stettler contemplating or actually selling the stopping house at Blumenau before it was actually built? What stopped Otto from building a home prior to the move unless he had already bought the stopping house?

Also in September 1903, Carl sold the NW ¼ of that same section to Fred Schertenleib, the man who had originally gone to Winnipeg with Carl to see the CPR.

In April of 1904 the half section of CPR land across the road allowance from Carl Stettler's and George Raemer's homesteads was sold to George Raemer for \$6.00 an acre. In April of 1906 this land was returned by George to his step-father. Carl then sold those 2

quarters to Charles Streit of Vernon, Texas for \$10.00 an acre.



George Raemer "Holly Komishke"

In the winter of 1906 Max Gerlach, the contractor who built the National Hotel, was sold the SE 19-38-18 W4, and Henry Drewes who had moved the Colonization building to Stettler, was sold the NE 19-38-18 W4. The NW 19-38-18W4, along with Section 17-38-18 W4 was sold to Rudolph Eisentraut.

Some people can hardly believe that a temporary town such as Blumenau would be planned and built. In reality it was a common practice. In anticipation that the railroad would continue east from Stettler, the temporary town of Mayville was started on the Hart homestead NW34-38-18 W4 by the Pinneke family in 1906, with the construction of a Stopping House. When the CPR

moved east, it located a station at Botha. The Drewes brothers and Landis Martin then dragged Mayville to Botha. In the fall of 1909 they dragged the large Mayville Hotel to Gadsby, where it was renamed 'The Oxford'.

Some historians have also waxed eloquently about Blumenau and its loss. Some have wanted to include a lumberyard, for example, when the reality was that the leftover lumber was sold after the construction of the Colonization Building and Adams store. Others include a second store which never existed. Some have tried to describe the Stopping House as a hotel. The addition of a bakery would have made Dorothea Stettler chuckle to have her kitchen stove and table go down in history as a bakery. The blacksmith shop was a half mile east on Carl Wittwer's homestead, or two miles east on Fred Wuest's homestead. The reality was that the Stopping House existed at Blumenau for about two years, while the Colonization Building and Adams Store were at Blumenau for about 8 months.

Once the German American Colonization Building was moved, sales of CPR land began. Carl Stettler, the manager, involved his two stepsons Edward and George Raemer in sales positions. Fred Schertenleib, who had originally gone to Winnipeg with Carl, was also involved.





Stettler Main Street looking north. "Erichsen"

Carl used an interesting sales pitch when selling CPR land: *“You would be wise to deal with me. The CPR has only given me a short time to establish my colony and sell land, then they will take it away from me and you will have to deal with a large company.”*

William Gray was appointed Dominion Land Agent 1905, and the trip to Red Deer to register land was eliminated. In 1906 he would process an average of 400 land entries per month. Much of this business was originated by the German American Colonization Company as it controlled all of the sales of CPR farm land.

The Stettler Business Men’s Association was organized in December 1905 to carry on the business of the hamlet. The first meeting was in the back room of McGillivray’s furniture store in January 1906. Stettler was proclaimed a village June 30, 1906 and then became a town on November 23, 1906. In a municipal election December 10, 1906 the following were elected: N.B. McGillivray as Mayor, and a council of J.P. Griggs, William Dunlap, Carl Stettler, N. Burdick, Joe Tice and G.R Farmer.

The Business Men’s Association would evolve into the Stettler Board of Trade. It originally started the process of passing rules for the new merchants of Stettler. The process of creating rules and red tape would be

transferred to the village, and later the town as it became incorporated. Early laws ranged from controlling houses of ill repute to restricting merchants from putting displays of equipment on the wooden sidewalks.

The mail service was an important and lucrative business. Carl arranged with the Government and railroad to take over this service. He moved the existing Post Office from Content and temporarily located it in the Steenson House at Liberal in 1904. Then in 1905 he moved it to Blumenau. The Post Office was located in the now operational German American Colonization Building, and was run by Carl’s step-daughter Katherine (Kate) Raemer. To show how lucrative this contract was, Kate’s starting wage in 1905 was \$395.00, increasing to \$1272.00 in 1907 with a rental allowance of \$281.00, and finally up to \$2262.00 by 1912. In 1911 the revenue into the Stettler post office from the sale of stamps was \$6874.00. To provide a comparison, the wages of that time were \$1.00 per day.

Initially the mail was delivered by horse, but starting in the fall of 1905 Kate would meet the train. Kate would drop off the Stettler mail before taking the balance to Blumenau. The short-lived Blumenau Post Office operated from the summer of 1905 until March of 1906. The Post Office formally recognized Stettler in March of 1906.

**POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, CANADA.**

Ottawa, *15<sup>th</sup> April* 1907

*Madam,*  
Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the  
Postmaster General has been pleased to appoint you to be Postmaster of  
*Stettler* in the Electoral County  
of *Strathcona* in the  
Province of *Alberta* and  
Dominion of Canada.

You are, therefore, hereby authorized to exercise all the functions  
and discharge all the duties appertaining to the said office, according  
to law.

*Madam,*  
I am, Sir,  
Your obedient servant  
*Paul Fr.*  
Deputy Postmaster General.

*Miss H. Raemer,*  
*Stettler*  
*Strathcona*  
*Alta*

6-1,500-3-3-1906.

April 1907 - Postal Contract with Kate Raemer (note change of Sir to Madam). "Museum"

T

IN ANY FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE  
ON THIS CASE PLEASE QUOTE  
No.

**Post Office Department, Canada,**

Ottawa, 12th October, 1907

Sir:-

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your  
communication of the 27th ultimo, asking that your salary  
and allowance may be increased, and to say in reply, that  
under the new scale of payment, your salary can be increased  
from \$395. to \$1272. a year from the 1st April, last and  
rent allowance from \$75. to \$281. a year from the same date.

Your forward allowance can also be increased from  
\$95. to \$153. a year from 1st April last the increase in  
each case being the utmost that the revenue of your office  
would entitle you to.

I am, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
*Paul Fr.*  
Secretary.

October 1907 - Postal Contract with Kate Raemer. "Museum"



Post Office built after 1908 fire. Kate and Dora Raemer standing in left doorway. Carl Stettler's real estate office on right. Main Street north-east next to National Hotel. "Museum"

Construction wasn't only for commercial and residential buildings. In early 1906 the Methodist Church was built on the location of today's Royal Bank. In the summer John Backstrom built the Swedish Lutheran Church on the site of the present United Church. During the next two years the Presbyterian Church of Scotland was built (Brennan's Funeral Home today), and the Anglican Church of England was built on its current site.

The history written by Martha Pyper best describes the early schools. In the spring of 1906 a temporary school was set up on the second floor of Griffiths Feed Store located west of the Blair Hotel on Alberta Avenue. Planks were used for seating. In the fall of 1906 desks were purchased and placed in the Methodist Church, and it was then used as a temporary school. Construction was started by John Backstrom on a public school in 1907. The two-story school was located on property now occupied by the Provincial building, and was opened in the fall of 1908. This building later became the Court House, and is now located at the Stettler Town and Country Museum.

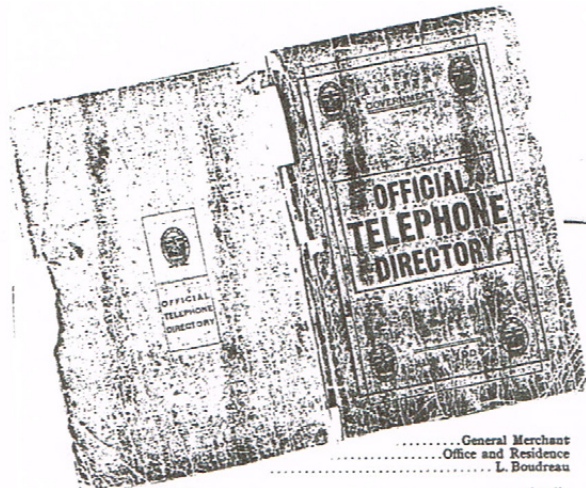
The first school in Stettler's Swiss-German Rural Colony was at Kindergarten, and opened in 1907/1908. It's senior trustee and leader was Fred Schertenleib who had three school-aged children.



Stettler's first public school building. The Provincial Building is now on that site. "Museum"

In 1910 Blumenau School was started on Robert Zimmerman's homestead, then owned by Henry Martin. In 1912 Manthano School was started on the homestead of Ulrich Stauffer.

Telephone service was started in 1907 by Carl Stettler, showing his continued leadership. Carl gave his National Hotel the phone number 1. His step-daughter Kate Raemer was installed as manager and agent, and the switchboard was located in the Post Office building. By this time the German American Colonization sign was removed as all of the CPR land was sold.



General Merchant  
Office and Residence  
L. Boudreau

Hotel ..... Asselin

Convent ..... General Merchant

10 Perron, F. .... General Merchant

11 Chave & Co. .... Office and Residence

12 Giroux, Dr. A. .... Office and Residence

13

14

15 Gorman & Chevigny ..... Livery and Feed Stable

16 Perron & Fiquette

17 Bank of Hamilton

18 Levasseur, L. .... Livery and Feed Stable

SPRINGBANK, Toll Office, D. C. Johnston, Agent.

SPRING COULEE, Toll Office, W. L. Thompson, Agent.

STAVELY, Toll Office, A. C. Thompson, M.D., Agent.

**STETTTLER, Miss K. L. Raemer, Agent.**

27 Acorn Lumber Company ..... Office ..... Main st

33 Arnold, H. J. .... Residence ..... McNabb st

36 Arnold, H. J. .... Livery ..... McNabb st

35 Beach Bros. .... Flour & Feed ..... Alberta ave & McNabb

40 Bently, G. C. .... Residence ..... Alberta ave & Callaghan

2 Brown, R. .... Royal Hotel ..... Alberta ave & McNabb

46 City Bakery ..... Foster, prop. .... Alberta ave

23 City Hall ..... Main st & Prospect ave

24 Clark & McCulloch ..... Livery ..... Main st

25 Clark, Fred. .... Residence ..... Main st & Prospect ave

26 C.P.R. Station ..... Railway ave

3 Dunlop, W. .... Pharmacy ..... Main st

14 Dominion Hotel ..... R. J. Ferguson, prop. .... Main st

6 Dominion Land Office ..... Main st

51 Dennis, A. E. .... Residence ..... McNabb st

5 Farmer, G. R. .... Hardware ..... Main st

13 Foore & Bentley ..... Real Estate ..... Main st

15 Forbes, Hall & Co. .... Real Estate ..... Main st

77 STETTLER

39 Fox, A. G. .... Residence ..... Taylor st

52 Foore, W. E. .... Residence ..... Alberta ave

56 Griffin ..... Residence ..... Taylor st

6 Gray, W. .... Dominion Land Office ..... Main st

45 Griffith, J. B. .... Flour & Feed ..... Alberta ave & Taylor st

47 Gilmour, O. .... Meat Market ..... Main st

60 Gerlach, M. .... Residence ..... Niblock st

49 Grand Union Hotel ..... C. Hanson, prop. .... Alberta ave

54 Grigg, J. P. .... Residence ..... Taylor st

38 ring 3 Goldson, W. .... Residence ..... Taylor st

11 Hawson, Dr. C. .... Office ..... Main st

41 Hawson, Dr. C. .... Residence ..... Callaghan st

43 Harding, H. T. .... Residence ..... Callaghan st

49 Hanson, Chas. .... Grand Union Hotel ..... Alberta ave

63 Harding & McGillivray ..... Law Office ..... Main st

62 Keith, Chas. .... Residence ..... McNabb st

10 Matthias & McBrine ..... General Store ..... Main st

16 Mackie & Burris ..... Implement ..... Main st

17 Merchants Bank ..... J. H. Johnson, manager ..... Main st & Alberta ave

30 Mercer, Robt. .... Residence ..... Niblock st & Prospect ave

28 Mercer & Atkinson ..... Real Estate ..... Main st

7 McGillivray, H. B. .... Furniture Store ..... Main st

29 McIntyre, Miss M. .... Providence Hospital ..... Niblock st

1 National Hotel ..... Stettler, prop. .... Main st, Alberta ave

50 Oldright, Dr. H. H. .... Office ..... Main st

44 Priest, Mrs. Lydia ..... Millinery ..... Alberta ave

18 Puffer, W. F. .... Meat Market ..... Main st

42 Robertson, W. C. .... Law Office ..... Main st

22 Riggs & Whyte ..... General Store ..... Main st

53 Riggs, S. H. .... Residence ..... McNabb st

59 Robertson, Rev. O. .... Residence ..... McNabb st

38 2 rings, Stettler "Independent" ..... W. Godson, prop. .... Taylor st

56 Staples, H. .... Residence ..... McNabb st

9 Steward, H. F. .... General Store ..... Main st

32 Staples, Dr. C. A. .... Residence ..... Niblock st & Prairie ave

12 Staples, Dr. C. A. .... Office ..... Main st

20 Staples Lumber Co. .... Office ..... Alberta ave

48 Souch, E. M. .... Hardware ..... Alberta ave

1 Stettler, Carl ..... National Hotel ..... Main st & Alberta ave

55 Smith, Hugh ..... Residence ..... Callaghan st

57 Steward, H. F. .... Residence ..... Taylor st & Prairie ave

4 Traders Bank ..... A. J. McWilliams, mgr ..... Main st

37 Tice, J. H. .... Residence ..... Taylor st

54 Tice, J. H. .... Livery ..... Alberta ave

19 Thorson & Hargreaves ..... Hardware ..... Main st

8 Van Roggen, J. .... Wholesale Liquor ..... Main st

21 Wisler, L. O. .... Tailor ..... Tailor st, Alberta ave

61 Young, Jas. J. .... Confectionery ..... Main st

Telephone Directory for 1908 - Kate Raemer Agent. "Museum"

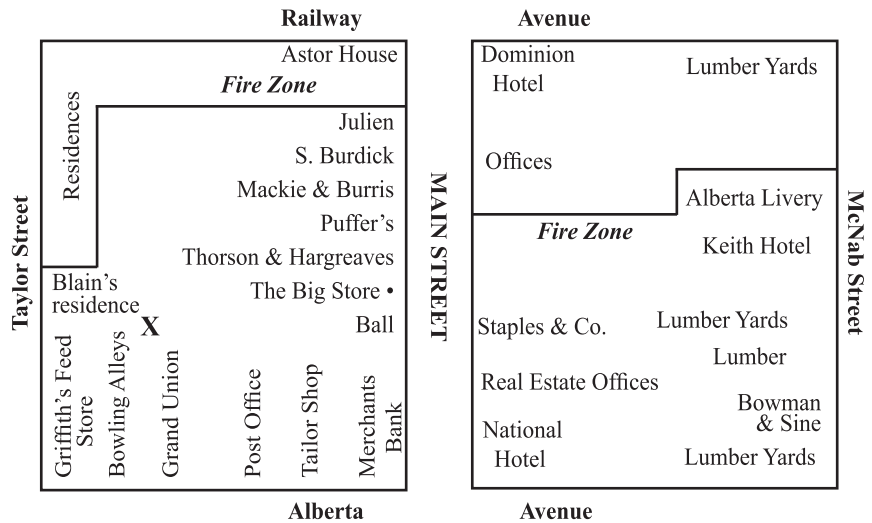
Fires were always a hazard in small towns built of wood and heated with coal and wood stoves. To help alleviate the issue of fires, Billy Gray urged the town to purchase an up-to-date Waterous gasoline fire engine. The unit was demonstrated on a cold winter day in December 1906. It was able to shoot water up to the top of the two-story hotels. When the crowd left to celebrate with some free bar refreshments, it was left to Councillor Dunlap to store the fire engine in his backyard before joining the celebration. On the seventh of January 1907, a Mr. W. Lawrence, walking from the Alberta Hotel past the Royal, noticed a fire in the sample room of the Royal. He stuck his head in the door and told them the hotel was on fire. The fire engine proved to be of little use due to being frozen up. Within two hours both the Royal and Alberta Hotels were burnt, but the Dominion was saved.

The Blair Hotel, built for Mrs. Threlkeld in the winter of 1906, opened June 30, 1906. It had a long, poorly installed chimney pipe that started on fire in the spring of 1907. The fire was put out, but the chimney wasn't fixed. Later in the summer a second fire started, which again was put out, but it was necessary to build a new roof. The hotel was sold to R. Brown, who fixed it up and renamed it The Grand Union.

The next big burn started in the back of the Grand

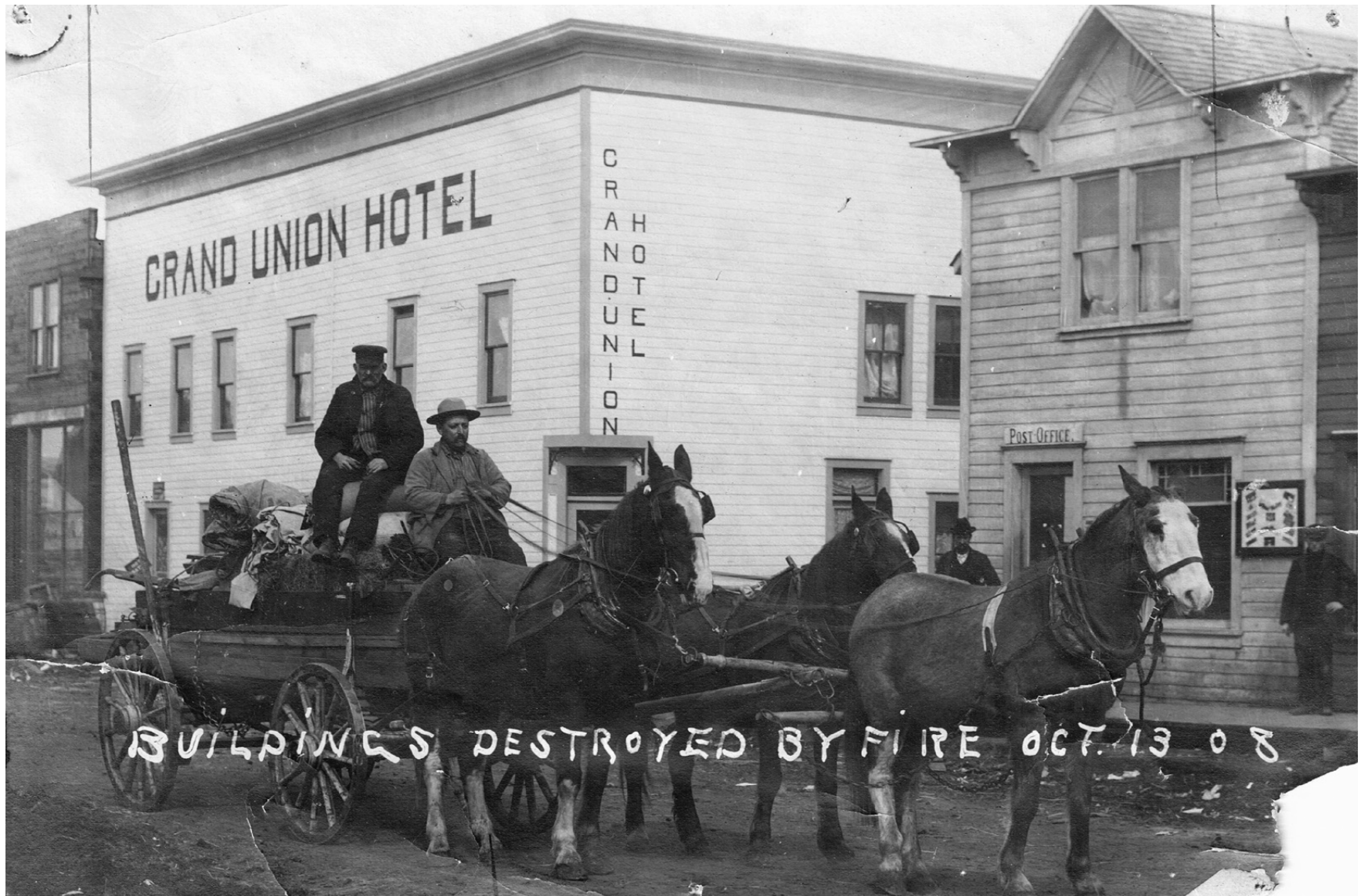
Union Hotel during the night of October 13, 1908. With a strong southwest wind blowing, the fire consumed all of the buildings on the first block of Main Street, taking out both sides. Included in the blaze was Carl Stettler's National Hotel, the post office and the Merchants Bank. When the Big Fire had started in the Grand Union the Stettler community had quickly rallied to remove the mail from the original post office before it went up in flames.

This map shows the outline of the big fire.



- X - Where the fire is supposed to have originated.
- - Where Leslie Meller lost his life

Map of the 1908 Big Fire. "Museum"



1907 - Grand Union Hotel. Note: Colonization building shows only as Post Office on Alberta Ave. "Museum"





1907 - Fire Hall on Main Street. "Museum"

Immediately after the fire Carl had a new post office built on the lots north of the National Hotel, facing Main Street. Carl's step-daughters Dora and Kate continued to operate it.

Carl and his partners immediately began to rebuild the National. At this point Robert Lee Shaw came forward and purchased the property. "Shaw was a rancher running cattle on 33,000 acres between Big Valley and the Hand Hills. He owned the Stettler Meat Company which was supposed to have supplied more meat in Western Canada than any other company. In 1906 Robert Shaw shipped a trainload of 430 head of cattle in 23 cars, to Gordon and Ironsides of Montreal, Quebec. Shaw also had a contract to supply meat to the CPR. In 1909 he was elected to the provincial legislature." (*History of the Province of Alberta, Vol II by Archibald Oswald MacRae*).

Carl was aware that the CPR planned to go east to Castor, starting in the summer of 1909. The German American Colonization Company was to be given the contract to again sell another large block of land. This time Carl and the German American Colonization Company would sell another 100,000 acres.

Again showing his leadership in introducing things

modern, Carl Stettler brought the first automobile into Stettler on August 14, 1908. The car was bought in the name of the German American Colonization Company in preparation for land sales following the expansion of the railroad to Castor.

In an attempt to entice more Swiss and German settlers to Castor, Carl and Dorothea, Kate and Dora made a visit to Switzerland in the winter of 1909. On his return, he resumed selling land for the German American Colonization Company. He also built two hotels in Castor. In 1909 he built the National, which he ran, and the Cosmopolitan in 1910 which his step-son Ed Raemer managed.

By now the CPR had decided to auction the business lots. The sale in Castor resulted in the large lots selling for over \$2000.00. The total sale in Castor brought in over \$40,000.00. A sale September 27, 1911 in Coronation resulted in large lots selling for \$2225.00 – \$2250.00.

In March of 1911 Carl Stettler, George Patrick and Otto Hough formed the Castor Coal Company, with capital stock of \$250,000. Carl was the president, Ed Raemer the treasurer, and Hough the manager. The Company would mine and ship six to ten carloads of coal a day.



Castor Coal Company. "Holly Komishke"

While Carl Stettler employed members of the original Swiss German community to work for him, he never chose one of them to be a business partner. George Patrick is typical of the English businessmen that Carl took on as a partner. George Patrick had been one of the surveyors on the CPR line from Lacombe to Stettler. In 1906 he set up a large dairy farm, which he named "Casa-Bella", on a section of land north of Stettler. The dairy had 70 cows, and employed four men. The milk was sold daily in Stettler, delivered by the "white wagon".

The attempt to get Swiss and German pioneers to come to Castor didn't work out much better than in Stettler. In the census of 1911 there are 230 people shown as originating from the German speaking community.

Had Carl sold his hotels before the war started in 1914, he would have been a very rich man. But hotel bars and other liquor establishments were meeting resistance, led by the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the women of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist churches.

An early warning came in Botha with the construction of the first building – a Methodist Church. While the Methodist's had used the Mayville Hotel bar for church services, the Methodist women now served notice that

a bar was not welcome in Botha. This resulted in the sale of the hotel, and its move to Gadsby.

On July 21, 1915 a provincial vote passed in favor of prohibition. On July 21, 1916 prohibition came into effect, banning the sale of liquor.

This law was repealed May 10, 1924 ending prohibition. Its end came after the shooting of a constable, and the execution of Emilio Picariello and Florence Lassandro, and a petition of 50,000 signatures of people opposed to what had become an unenforceable law.

But the passage of prohibition had destroyed the most profitable part of a hotel's revenue. The result was a drastic devaluation of a hotel's value. By the time Carl sold out in 1919 he had lost considerable wealth.

At the age of 58, Carl's thoughts were on retirement, and he returned to a house he had built on the bay at Rochon Sands. Buffalo Lake was the closest Carl could come to remind himself of his ancestral home in Switzerland.

In 1920 Carl made a trip to Memphis, Tennessee. While there has been much speculation on why Carl made the trip, the real reasons died with him. Carl had blood poisoning in his foot. To stop the gangrene, his leg was



Raemer sisters, Kate and Dora on visit to Switzerland in 1909. Mt. Jungfrau in background. "Holly Komishke"

amputated four inches above the knee. He died a week after the operation on February 1st, 1920. An autopsy indicated Carl suffered from diabetes. This, along with his age and the shock of his amputation, were considered the cause of his death.

Over the years of business dealings between Carl Stettler and Fred Colley, a friendship appears to have developed. At the end, Dorothea turned to Fred to help bring Carl's remains back to Stettler.

His funeral was held February 11, 1920 in the Methodist church, Stettler's largest. For someone whose attendance at church was based on funerals and weddings, it's only fitting that his own funeral would have two ministers. Part of the need arose from two groups of people attending the funeral, who did not understand each other's language. Pastor August Scheffler of Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Botha conducted the German portion of the service and Pastor Argue of the Methodist Church did the English part. The town council declared that all business and government activity be closed for the funeral. The mayor and town council acted as pallbearers. Carl was interred in the Stettler cemetery.

After Carl's death, Dorothea Stettler went to live with her youngest son George at Bashaw. In 1934 George took his mother and sister Dora to Agar, South Dakota to visit and stay with an older daughter Minnie (Wilhelmina) Schreiber. While there Dorothea became ill. She passed away July 13, 1934 at the age of 82, with her daughters Minnie and Dora at her side.



Dorothea Stettler at Bashaw. "Holly Komishke"

Prior to coming to Canada, Carl had expanded his liquor business, and placed Edward Raemer as manager of an Anheuser Busch distributorship in Kansas about 1900. When Carl moved to Blackfalds in 1903 Edward had come with him. He then moved to Edmonton, working as a sales clerk. He rejoined Carl at Stettler in 1906 as a sales agent for the German American Colonization Company selling CPR land. In June 1907 he married Marion Edith Pinkton in Edmonton, and their children were Helen Kathleen, a baby girl who passed away and Clair Phillip (Ted). In 1910 he again joined Carl, helping to sell CPR land at Castor. He managed the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Castor until its sale in 1919. He was also the treasurer of the Castor Coal Company. Sometime after selling the hotels in Castor he moved to Seattle, Washington, in the U.S.A. He passed away in 1967.

Kate Raemer resigned as post mistress in Stettler in 1914. She married Gardner England Pepper, a bank manager. They lived in various towns in Alberta as a result of his bank transfers. They eventually retired to Calgary. A daughter Lorna died as an infant. Their son Raemer England Gardner Pepper lived into his nineties. Kate passed away 26 February 1966.

Dora Raemer continued to work at the Stettler Post Office after Kate's departure. Carl Stettler had built a house in August of 1911 at Rochon Sands, and this

became Dora's permanent residence. She also assisted her brother George in the care of their mother Dorothea, and accompanied Dorothea to Agar, South Dakota. After a period of ill health Dora passed away 24 August 1947. Her burial was next to Carl Stettler in the Stettler cemetery.

George Raemer moved to Blackfalds with Carl in 1903. He went with Carl to Blumenau in 1903 and took out a homestead on the SW 2-39-19 W4. He helped with the CPR land sales at Stettler and Castor. His homestead was later sold to Henry Martin in 1910. While working in a hardware store in Blackfalds George had learned to be a tinsmith. In 1913 he started a hardware store in Bashaw, which was taken over by his son after his retirement. He married Janet McPhail (Jennie) Miller. Their children are Phyllis (married to Ben Holt, a tinsmith in Bashaw, who learned the trade from George), Doris Margaret, George McKenzie and Judy (Jeanette Vivian). George had served in Bashaw as a town councillor and as mayor. He spent two years in Edmonton due to illness, and passed away May 6, 1970 at Bashaw.

## **EPILOGUE**

It is over 100 years since my grandfather William Drewes and his older brother Henry homesteaded in 1904, three miles south-east of Carl Stettler's Blumenau. A lot has changed in that time, including the history, as pioneers pass away and memories fade. In writing about Carl Stettler, I hope I have cleared up some of the contradictions and omissions. Carl was a consummate salesman. His vision of personal prosperity was centered on selling real estate and alcohol.

Carl Stettler's inability to attract even 30 Swiss pioneers ended his dream of a Swiss Colony. The Steinbrechers didn't achieve a much better showing with less than 30 German pioneers.

The loss of Blumenau was never an issue, as it never had a planned future. It started out as a real estate sales pitch. Wouldn't potential pioneers sooner come to a "field of flowers" than dry grassland? The intention from the first meeting in Calgary was that the colony would carry the name "Stettler".

Was Stettler a male dominated Victorian English town, where women couldn't vote or hold "positions"? Consider Kate Raemer. While her step-father Carl helped her get the postal contract, she was the post mistress. Even though Carl had nothing to do with it, other than provide building space (for which he received substantial rental revenue), only he is eligible to be deemed the post master.

Critics have complained about Carl Stettler's commitment to the town, as he left for Castor in 1909. The first negating factor for staying was that the town of Stettler was Victorian English. The second factor was that the Colonization Company was given a new block of land to sell, with the railroad's extension to Castor. Would he follow the money? Carl was a big picture person. With Stettler named after him and off to a successful start, Castor offered a new opportunity. The loss of his National Hotel in Stettler in the Big Fire must have also been a heavy personal loss.

This history of Carl Stettler is based on the historic records of people who worked for and with him. No attempt has been made to identify people who might have been personal friends or enemies of Carl. If this offends or disappoints pioneer families, please accept my apology for the omission.

**Alfred Erichsen, 2017**





July 1906 - Parade on Main Street looking north. "Museum"

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Records of Henry Drewes

Interviews, family pictures, and personal histories from Hollis (Holt) Komishke and Janice (Holt) McKinnon, Great-grand daughters of Dorothea (Raemer) Stettler and Grand-daughters of George Raemer.

Interview with Anne Bichsel-Stettler of Innerberg, Switzerland

*This historic project was completed with the assistance of Karen Wahlund and Lyndsay Dayman, staff of the Stettler Town and Country Museum. Many of the photos were from the Museum Archives. A special thank you goes to Karen and Lyndsay for their assistance in researching archival material.*

# STETTLER TOWN AND COUNTRY MUSEUM



Stettler Town and Country Museum. "Joe Tschanz"