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150 years of Montrose history and counting
By Kelly Thoele

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On the cover: A June 12 tractor ride was part of the fundraising for the Montrose Sesquicentennial activities. Pictured is Shawn Ohnesorge of Dieterich. Andrew Adams photo.

on the web

Montrose Sesquicentennial and other EDN magazines on the web:
effinghamdailynews.com/news/magazines/
This article deals with the history of the village of Montrose, founded in 1870. The town was prepared to celebrate its sesquicentennial in 2020, but the pandemic put that on hold. Therefore, the celebration will be held in August of this year. We hope you will celebrate with us, and here we give some of our Montrose history.

The Cumberland Road was laid out through Cumberland and Effingham counties in the 1830s, and after this many towns sprang up along this federally funded road. However, it took the building of the St. Louis, Terre Haute and Vandalia Railroad in 1868 for the town of Montrose to be platted. In an 1870 edition of The Effingham Democrat, James Johnson advertised the sale of inexpensive land with good timber sources, well situated along the railroad and along the National Road.

At first, the town was named Spitter, presumably after a prominent family of the area. The town’s name was quickly changed to “Montrose,” a word of Scottish origin, or French for “Mountain,” and “Flower” or “Color.” Since there are certainly no mountains near Montrose, no one is for sure why the town was thus named.

Mr. Johnson was able to sell many lots and the town was quickly inhabited with William Goebel the first to build a house in the village. A depot was built and our location in the northeast part of Effingham County,
yet near Cumberland and Jasper counties, brought numerous farmers to town. In a short period of time, many businesses were built. These included general stores owned by Browning and Schooley, Dr. Hiram Van Sandt (who eventually operated one of the county’s first type of drug stores), Philip Wiwi (who also erected a grain house and livestock market and was later a state representative), James Johnson, and Ross Twedey. A flour mill and blacksmith shop were important businesses in the village as well.

With the advantageous location, two boarding houses/hotels were established within the first decade. The first, Brazil House, west of the village, was operated by Nelson Shull, and was also an important stage stop beginning in 1872. The James House, owned by Evan James, was established in approximately 1877. Mr. James sold his business and moved to Indiana. However, he and his wife moved back to Montrose within a short time and built another hotel, which still stands today as a family home along Prairie Street.

The village of Montrose had a number of doctors until the 1950s. The first was Dr. Van Sandt and the last was Dr. A.E. Goebel. Both these men were civic minded as Dr. Van Sandt was a village trustee, postmaster, and depot agent, and Dr. Goebel was on the school board, a member of The Illinois Southern Band of Montrose, as well as numerous medical organizations. Dr. Goebel was proud to say he had delivered more than 2,000 babies in the Tri-County area, traveling by horse and buggy and later with his Model T Ford.

Very early on, the citizens of Montrose had two goals: To be able to worship locally and to educate their young people.

Methodists in the area, who had worshiped a mile north of town in a log schoolhouse, built a wooden structure in the village in 1874. St. Rose Catholic Church was founded in 1879. Prior to this, parishioners had traveled to Teutopolis or Sigel. The friars of St. Francis helped to establish this sister parish.

Although there were no Lutheran or Baptist churches within the town limits, St. Paul, south of town, and Mullen Baptist, north of Montrose, also helped with the spiritual needs of the community.

In regard to education, there had been a school to the west in 1856, then north of the soon-to-be town. A brick schoolhouse was erected in Montrose in 1876, and in 1911, a larger two-story brick building was built and by 1914, the school added a high school. A new gymnasium was added to the school in 1928, which housed many ballgames, as well as community events.

In the 1930s, the students of the three-year high school began to publish a town newspaper, The Montrose Chat. This newspaper, of which there are some copies at The Effingham County Museum, gives an interesting glimpse into what life was like in the town, county, state, and country during the Depression era.

In 1957, Montrose became part of the Dieterich School District. Our school was used for students in grades 1-8, with high schoolers bused to Dieterich. Eventually only grades 3-6 were taught in the building, with Dieterich students from those grades bused to Montrose and Montrose students in the other grades bused to Dieterich.

In 1976, the consolidation of all students, including those in Eberle and Elliotstown, rendered the Montrose School obsolete, and the land was bought and used by McKinney Trucking, an important trucking business begun in 1945 that is still in operation today.

In the late 19th century, saloons run by Lou Sehi, James Hall, Frank Bersig, and J.L Brewster were open for business. Six general stores provided services to a wide area and were run by Philip Wiwi, James Johnson, Hyett Brothers, George James, William Handke and Dr. Van Sandt.

Another store, built by Christian Meislahn, opened in 1898, and was the heart of commerce in Montrose. In 1898, a new store was opened by Christian Meislahn, and it became the hub of commerce in Montrose. This store continued to operate until 1928, when it was destroyed by a fire. In 1930, a new store was opened by Elmer and Emil Meislahn, and it continued to operate until 1976, when it was closed due to economic difficulties.

Montrose had its own grade school until the late 1970s.
of Montrose for many years until it was demolished in the spring of 2021.

Meals for weary travelers were provided by Mrs. Julia Smith. And an important factory was the Engelbart Brick Factory, which made bricks as well as cinder blocks used for many building projects throughout Effingham County.

In 1907, Montrose Mutual Telephone Company had 200 subscribers, and by 1934 the company stretched 192 miles of wire and had 550 patrons, bringing Montrose into the modern era.

An undertaking establishment was opened in town by R.N. Zybell in 1908. Another important business in town, Crews State Bank, was established in the early 20th century and thrived, even surviving the Great Depression. However, it closed in 1949 due to the ill health of James Crews. The unique building remains today, but is unfortunately falling into disrepair.

The town had a volunteer fire department from early on, and the home built by William Goebel was damaged in 1911 by fire our department helped fight. Over the years, the department has grown and improved, and today spends much time on safely and training.

Chris Overbeck became fire chief in 2000 at the age of 20, making him the youngest person in the state to hold that position. Chief Overbeck is one of the leaders in helping to make the Montrose Sesquicentennial an important event, and the entire fire department has been crucial in this endeavor as well.

With the advent of the automobile and our location along the National Road, a number of garages sprang up. Proprietors over the years included G.L. Woody, Lou Miller, Jay Fletcher, Harold McClain, John Tague, Fay Morr, Donnie Ordner and Mike Helmink. To warn motorists who had a lead foot, a sign was added a quarter mile west of town that read, “Go slow, see our town. Go fast, see our jail.” We assume the sign had the intended goal of having travelers slow down!

Other businesses of the early 20th century included Anna Faber Browning’s millinery shop along Prairie Street and T.H. Vaughn’s elevator, which today is part of Siemer Milling Company.

Stores and restaurants were run by Robert Emery, Hiram Brewster, Nellie Browning, and Flora Randolph.

It was in 1927 that the town moved from coal oil lights lit by a nightly “lamp lighter” to a contract with CIPS of 19 lights with 100 candle power.

It was during the 1920s that the Montrose area kept the Effingham County sheriff busy with finding and confiscating illegal hooch and stills.

From reading The Montrose Chat, the Depression was a much-discussed topic in the 1930s, however the citizens of Montrose seem to have carried on by growing their own produce and raising livestock. Our population was 324, according to the 1930 census. During this decade, improvements were made to the cemetery and more service stations – owned by Coventry, Hyett, and Blunk – were in business.

The war was on everyone’s minds in the 1940s, and one of our own, Carl Browning, was injured in the Pearl Harbor attack. Almost 60 Montrose boys served in all branches of the military, and some women served as nurses and in WAVES or WACS.

James Browning, Audrey Harper, Raymond Jones, Joseph Shull, and Albert Stuckey were killed while serving their country.

Montrose residents took to rationing and food stamps, so as to help the troops in any way possible.
Also, in the 1940s, Cutts Lumber Company opened for business, and other stores were run by Lloyd Pinnell, Stanley Callahan, and Arthur and Lora Rice.

Eventually the Rices’ daughter, Betty, and her husband, Keith Bishop, operated her parents’ store, which had been bought from Christian Meislahn.

The 1950s again saw many young men serve in Korea. Unlike WWII, all made it home.

Prior to this, people wanting to cool off with a swim had to go to Spring Creek or some other swimming hole. But in the 1950s, Mayor Steve Stephens cut a deal with Marathon Oil Company. In return for their company tearing up Prairie Street to run a line, they had to repair the street and dig a lake north of town.

Men and boys of the area cleared the land and the company dug the 12-acre lake. It was a great success as many families enjoyed swimming in the beautiful lake. However, this stopped when a young man drowned, so swimming is no longer allowed.

But today the lake is utilized by anglers and canoers, and in the past was even used by the Methodist Church to hold baptisms. Today the area around the lake includes camping sites and a playground, as well as nice pavilions and an area to hold tractor pulls.

The Eisenhower Interstate System made a huge difference in Montrose as Interstate 70 is north of town. Many farms were bought up utilizing eminent domain, so some families lost their homes and farmland.

But two service stations opened, offering services to interstate travelers: a Shell Station (today a Fas Mart), and a Standard Station (today Donnie Ordner’s BP).

The Montarosa Motel and Restaurant, owned and operated by Forrest and Gwendola Thompson, also catered to travelers.

Lakeside Inn opened near Montrose Lake, eventually becoming Village Opry. This brought to town country music figures such as Jeanie Pruett, Jim Ed Brown, and Del Reeves.

For a time, the Farmer’s Table, a large restaurant and gift shop, was open for business along the interstate.

A number of Montrose boys served in Vietnam. Two soldiers, Michael Brummer and Terry Miller, paid the ultimate price for their service during this war.

In the last quarter century, other businesses have opened and closed, including an antique store in the Crews Bank building, and a few restaurants (The Dusty Trail, owned by Glenda Sehi, The Gathering Place, owned by Linda McKinney, and East End Café, operated by Kathy Thompson).

Today we have no restaurants in town, although Dozer’s, a nice pub along the east side of town, has a good menu. This bar was originally built by Lyle and Tina McKinney, and is now owned by Jerry Jansen.

In 2005, Montrose citizens made a dream a reality with the building of the beautiful Veterans Memorial along Spring Creek Road. A dedication was held in July, when more than 200 people attended, and prayers, poems, and testimonies were shared that day.

Today, many people stop at the memorial, as well as the kiosk at the town hall which shares some of our history along the National Trail.

Today Montrose is a bedroom community of Effingham, as many residents work in that “big city.”

Our citizens work hard and play hard.

And we invite you to come help us celebrate 150 years on Aug. 6, 7 and 8. There will be many activities, with a finale of fireworks over the Montrose Lake on Sunday, Aug. 8.

We hope you can make it!

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Montrose, Illinois: A Scottish-named village

BY PHIL LEWIS

As I chose the Village of Montrose to write about, I explored its history in the booklet “Montrose Centennial: 1870-1970.”

I couldn’t find where or how it received its name. I searched the internet and found that the noble name Montrose is of medieval Scottish origin based on the coastal Scottish town of Montrose situated between Aberdeen and Dundee. The derivation of the name is from the French word “Mont” meaning “mountain” and “rose” meaning the flower, or perhaps the color.

In another citation, James Graham was the first Marquess and fifth Earl of Montrose. He was a Scottish general noted for his victories in Scotland for Charles I of England in the English civil war there. Charles I had attempted to impose the Episcopal Book of Common Prayers upon the reluctant Scots. Graham earned the title “The Great Montrose” for his military efforts. He was also a poet and nobleman. Graham was later captured by the Scots, hanged, and beheaded. His head was placed on a spike of the St. Giles Cathedral in 1650. His body was later exhumed and reinterred with his head in St. Giles Cathedral in 1661.

I’m not certain how the Village of Montrose acquired its name, but the history behind the name is noteworthy. Perhaps a local resident had Scottish ancestry. There are also towns by that name in a suburb of Houston, Texas, and Colorado.

The National Road was authorized by President Thomas Jefferson in 1806. Construction on America’s first federally funded interstate highway began in 1811. It terminated just east of Vandalia, Illinois, in 1834 when federal funding ran out. It was also called the Cumberland Road (it started in Cumberland, Maryland), Cumberland Turnpike, Cumberland-Brownsville Turnpike, The Old Pike, The National Pike, the National Turnpike, Ohio’s Road, Uncle Sam’s Road, The Great Western Road, U.S. Route 40, or just simply The Road.

It was designed to forge a critical transportation link between East Coast cities and the wild western frontier of the Appalachian Mountains and beyond. In the book “A Guide to the National Road,” the Road was obsolete and premature at the time of its creation. It was obsolete because of the emergence of railroad technology and transportation. It was premature because the automobile had not yet been invented.

When the automobile was mass produced by companies like Ford, and the road conditions improved with brick or concrete paving, America began its love affair with the car to go places in America that were then accessible. The Road passes through seven Illinois counties from Marshall to East St. Louis. Today it is 164 miles in Illinois from the Indiana border to the Missouri border.

The old Vandalia Railroad line ran through Montrose. It became the Pennsylvania Railroad around 1868. The National Road kiosk in Montrose in front of village hall is titled “Drummers. Drays and Railroad Days.”

Early settlers found places to live near Montrose while traveling along the National Road. One such pioneer was Abraham Marble who came about 1845. He kept a relay house for several years for the stagecoaches. Marble farmed later east of Montrose until 1858 when he sold everything and moved.
his family to Minnesota. Other early settlers included William Wallace, Thomas Gibbon and James Rolfe from 1849 to 1851. Mainly German Roman Catholics from Westphalia and Oldenburg and Lutherans from Saxony migrated to settle the area around Montrose. J.B. Johnson laid out the Village of Montrose around July 19, 1870. The plat for the town was done by Calvin Mitchell, the Effingham County surveyor. By 1890, there were six general stores, two saloons, an implement store, blacksmith, flour mill, and hotel.

Local legend has it that the Birch Gang operated in the Montrose, Spring Point and Teutopolis area. They robbed people traveling along the National Road. They also frequented the taverns in Montrose and Teutopolis to listen to conversations as to which farmers had recently sold livestock or grain and had cash. They would then rob them.

Allegedly, the gang buried large sums of money in glass jars sealed with beeswax in the Montrose area. As the legend goes, some local townsmen and farmers grew tired of the gang’s activities and took matters into their own hands. They allegedly found the robbers and killed all of them. The bodies were never found, and the robberies stopped.

Some people speculate that the bodies were dumped into local hog pens and the hogs disposed of the bodies.

There have been a few notable residents of Montrose since its founding. They included Phillip Wiwi, Dr. Harry G. Van Sandt, Dr. Albert E. Goebel, J. Clyde Spitter, Lawrence Yates Sherman and David B. Crews.

Phillip Wiwi was born in Speisbach Bavaria, Germany, in 1833. He came to America in 1852 and settled in Indiana, where he married Magdalena Meyer in 1857. They had 11 children. He began farming at Spring Point. Wiwi then moved to Teutopolis and entered the mercantile business. Wiwi wasn’t able to purchase a parcel of land in Montrose for his own store, so he built his own store six miles east of Montrose. There he purchased mostly local farmers’ goods and livestock and became one of the wealthiest men in Effingham County. He also erected a grain house and opened a livestock market. His brick home is still located at the intersection of Route 40 and Route 121.

He and his wife later moved to Effingham, where he became interested in Illinois politics serving as a representative in Springfield for one term. Wiwi and his wife, Magdalena, were buried in the St. Rose of Lima Cemetery in Montrose and later reburied in St. Anthony Catholic Cemetery in Effingham.

Dr. Harry Van Sandt was Montrose’s first doctor from 1870 until his death. He erected a store room and dwelling house. When he started his first store, it featured a fine assortment of drugs to aid the people of Montrose with their health problems. Harry Van Sandt died suddenly in an accident.

Dr. Albert E. Goebel was born on a farm near Montrose. He attended schools in Montrose, Effingham and Charleston. Albert taught school for seven years. He began his medical training at St. Louis City Hospital.

Submitted photo

Dr. Albert E. Goebel in 1957.

Dr. Albert E. Goebel in 1957.
Goebel completed his internship in 1917 and returned to Effingham County. He brought with him his bride, Lucille Izard Goebel. They lived in Effingham and Dieterich before being recruited by Montrose community members. They were without medical care due to the accidental death of Dr. Harry Van Sandt. Albert was a doctor who made house calls via a horse and wagon. Soon he bought a Ford Model T which made his rounds easier in the little old “tin lizzie”. He practiced 41 years and delivered more than 2,000 babies in Effingham, Jasper and Cumberland counties. His large two-story frame house was at the intersection of routes 40 and 121 for many years before being torn down.

Lawrence Yates Sherman was born in Ohio in 1858. His family moved by covered wagon to Illinois in that same year. The family moved to Jasper County, where he worked on the family farm and attended local schools.

After attending Lee’s Academy in Coles County, he taught school in Island Grove. Lawrence taught in other Illinois schools until 1882. He began studying law nights and Saturdays after which he graduated from McKendree College in Lebanon, Illinois, in 1882. He was admitted to the bar that same year and began practice in Macomb for 23 years.

Sherman was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives and Senate for 12 years. He was Speaker of the House for two terms. Lawrence served as lieutenant governor for four years. Eventually, Sherman was elected to the U.S. Senate. As Illinois’ “favorite son,” he ran unsuccessfully as a Republican candidate for President in 1916. He married Ella May Crews in 1891, but she died in 1893. As a result of his second marriage to Mary Estelle Spitter of Montrose in 1908, he is buried in Founce Cemetery near Montrose.

J.C. Spitter lived in a two-story home west of Montrose. Local legend says that the house was a stagecoach stop originally purchased by Wesley Spitter from a man.
J.C. married his wife in 1877. The couple had three children. He died in 1890 and his widow continued to run the family farm.

Clyde Spitler Jr. was the first student from Effingham County to receive a B.S. degree from the College of Agriculture at the University of Illinois in 1907. He came back to Montrose to run the family farm until 1917. Clyde was the administrator of the Cooperative Extension Service and helped organize the Effingham County Farm Bureau.

In 1930, he became the state leader of Farm Advisors. Clyde held the post of Director of Cooperative Extension Service from 1937 to 1943.

J.C. Spitler III was the last Spitler to live in the home and later moved to Urbana, thus leaving the homestead abandoned. The house fell into disrepair and was razed in the late 1980s.

David Babb Crews started the D.B. Crews Bank in Montrose (aka Montrose State Bank and Crews State Bank and Trust Company of Montrose) in 1902 and Bank of Commerce in Wheeler in 1907. He grew up in Jasper County on a farm near Wheeler. Crews was also a venture capitalist who, as a young man, owned and operated a cattle ranch with 500 cattle in Texas from 1881-1884.

After he married his wife, Frances Morton from Iowa, in 1880, they moved back to a 240-acre farm near Montrose. They had 10 children, some of whom worked in the family banking business. Crews sold the 240 acres and purchased 600 acres in Grove Township.

After purchasing an additional 400 acres, he retired from farming in 1900. The Crews couple later moved to Effingham, where he and wife Frankie built a large, two-story frame home at the corner of Fayette Avenue and Banker Street. They rented out rooms to students enrolled at the Illinois College of Photography.

David served on the Effingham Board of Education. The family attended the Methodist Church.

Plaford and Zona B. Davis purchased the property and operated the Plazona Hotel for many years. It was torn down in 1949 to make way for the new First Baptist Church. David and Frankie are buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery in Effingham.

Today the Montrose United Methodist Church serves the needs of Methodists in the community.

St. Paul’s Lutheran Church was organized around 1868 by the pastor of St. John’s Lutheran Church in Effing-
The congregation consisted of Lutherans from St. Francis Township and Island Grove.

On May 29, 1871, a frame structure was erected around four miles south of Montrose. By 1900, the congregation had outgrown the facility necessitating the building of a new brick church. On Nov. 18, 1900, it was dedicated as a German-speaking Lutheran church. This is evidenced by the German inscription above the door and on the cornerstone. A major addition was added in 1968. There is a parsonage next to the church.

St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church was organized in 1879 at the request of three families. A white wooden frame church was built in the Village of Montrose in that same year. It served the congregation for 78 years and depended on priests from St. Joseph College in Teutopolis. The congregation built a new church made of Bedford stone in 1959. It was dedicated on Nov. 6, 1960.

The St. Rose of Lima Catholic Cemetery and Montrose Cemetery of 1913 are located at the north edge of Montrose near the Cumberland County line.

Resources:
Montrose Centennial 1870-1970
St. Rose of Lima Church 1879-1979
Effingham County, Illinois: Past and Present 1968
Illinois Historical: Effingham County

Phil Lewis is a member of The Effingham County Museum. This story originally appeared in the Effingham Daily News on Sept. 11, 2018.

The train depot, circa 1910.
By Andrew Adams

MONTROSE — In 1870, travelers along the National Road settled in the corner of what would become Effingham County, founding the village of Montrose. To celebrate the 150-year anniversary of the village’s founding, residents from the village and surrounding area are raising funds to host the Montrose Sesquicentennial.

On June 12, residents organized a tractor ride with 23 tractors, most pulling trailers decked out as mobile patios.

“We’ve been doing fundraisers for the last year,” said Chris “Chopper” Overbeck, who is helping organize events for the celebration. “Or two years now,” he added, remembering how long the planning and fundraising process has taken for the celebration that was originally to happen last year. “Because of the pandemic, we had to put it on hold.”

The tractor ride is one of the last events before the big celebration, set for Aug. 6, 7 and 8.

The ride took participants through rural roads around Montrose over the course of the afternoon, with four stops along the way.

“We just regroup, hang out and have some refreshments,” said Overbeck.

After the tractor ride, attendees were treated to a concert from the band Southern Comfort at the Montrose Village Park.

“This is just one of the fundraisers we do,” said Overbeck, who added that they’ve done tractor rides in the past, which were well received.

Other events have included Jeep runs, trivia nights, bingo and “Celebrity Bartending,” where teams

The Wendt family tractor pulls out onto the route for a parade on June 12.
of amateur bartenders compete to outearn each other in “tips.”

The tractors were an eclectic mix of old and new, with their trailers running the gamut from a flatbed with hay bales and plastic chairs to elaborate affairs with decorations and group costuming.

The Wendt family went all out for their trailer and outfits, dressing up in old-time clothes to fit the sesquicentennial theme.

Family and friends connected to the Probst Family Farms wore matching T-shirts made for the occasion.

One simple trailer was decorated by Betty Emmerich, whose sons were also driving old tractors.

“They’re tractors that belonged to their grandpa, so it feels nice,” said Emmerich.

The sesquicentennial celebration will feature several kinds of entertainment, in addition to commemorative displays.

“We’ll have food trucks out here, bounce houses, games,” said Keri Will, one of the event’s organizers. “It’s gonna be a big weekend.”

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According to the Montrose Centennial 1870-1970 book, the first settler to locate near Montrose was Abraham Marble, who came around 1845 locating east of where Montrose now stands, on the old National Road. He kept a relay house for stagecoaches for several years. He later farmed east of Montrose until 1858 when he sold everything and moved his family to Minnesota.

Other early settlers were William Wallace, Thomas Gibbon and James Rolfe from 1849 to 1851. Mainly German Roman Catholics from Westphalia and Oldenburg and Lutherans from Saxony migrated to settle the area around Montrose.

J.B. Johnson laid out the Village of Montrose around July 19, 1870. The plat for the town was done by Calvin Mitchell, an Effingham surveyor.

The Village of Montrose was incorporated in 1892. The first meeting was held on May 7, 1892, at Dr. H.G. Van Sandt's store room and Henry Will was appointed president. The five trustees appointed were Dr. T. Winsner, Matt Faber, Boon Miller and Dr. H.G. Van Sandt. R.N. Plummer was elected village clerk.

Long before cement sidewalks were put down, old railroad ties were used for sidewalks. There was a saw mill a few miles north of the village.

The citizens of the village took an early interest in educational matters. Newton Gibbon built the first schoolhouse in 1856. It was a frame building that stood a half mile west of Montrose and was later moved a little north of the village. The school was moved to Montrose one year after the first house was erected in the village.

In 1876, a brick schoolhouse was built. It was 22-by-54 feet and one story high and cost $1,500.

Montrose had the largest population and most prosperous period between 1890 and 1900. There were three general stores in operation in 1891. There were also two saloons, an implement store, a blacksmith shop and a hotel. In the year 1898, there were more business houses in operation than any other time and six general stores.

A few businesses were set up in Montrose in between 1900 and 1910. One of the businesses established during that time period is still in existence today: Montrose Mutual Telephone Company. The line was started by Dr. F.N.A. Hoffman about 1900.

After operating the line
for a year or two, Hoffman sold out to Brighthope, who later sold it to the organized company, which was incorporated in 1908. By 1934, the company had stretched 192 miles of wire and had 550 patrons. The company answered 1,715 calls per day and operated four exchanges: Gila, Wheeler, Dieterich and Montrose.

As the village grew, so did its infrastructure.

The village put in a sewer system in 1918 from the elevator to the small stream north of the Catholic cemetery. On June 7, 1927, the village contracted with Central Illinois Public Service Company to install within the city limits 29 incandescent lamps.

The first light bill the village received was paid on April 19, 1928, and was $59.13. On Dec. 4, 1928, the entire number of lights had been installed and the cost per month was $73.67.

According to the Centennial account, Montrose was lucky by not being infested with night prowlers and thieves. There has been one large robbery in Montrose. In 1929, five houses were robbed during the night. Those that were robbed belonged to L.A. Browning, Hugh James, Lulla Steger, Osie Ball and Mr. Stutler.

By the 1930 U.S. Census, the population of Montrose was 324. In 1934, there were three general stores in Montrose, two cafes, one combined store and restaurant, a barber shop and a hardware store, two cream stations, a blacksmith shop and two garages. The only physician was Dr. Goebel.

In the 1940s, there were several stores and storekeepers. Lloyd Pinnell operated a store east of the post office but soon moved to the next block, which had formerly been a poultry store. He had his own butchering shop and meat market as well as general groceries.

Many changes were noted to the area in the 1960s. Interstate-70 north of Montrose opened to traffic in 1960. During the same year, Shell Service Station south of I-70 and on the east side of the Blacktop was opened. The post office was occupied by the U.S. Postal Service in autumn of 1960.

The village’s water system was installed in 1963. The Standard Station was built and opened in 1965. The new motel, Montarosa, located just south of Interstate 70 and west of the blacktop in back of the Standard Station, was opened to travelers in 1969.

Two new churches were built between 1955 and 1960 by Catholic parishioners and the Montrose Methodist congregation.
Montrose Sesquicentennial Celebration Schedule

Friday, Aug. 6

- Cruise Night – 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.
- Inflatables Playground – 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.
- Goldfish Races (South Pavilion) – 7 p.m.
- Captain Rat – 8 p.m. - 11 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 7

- Tractor Pull – 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Carnival Games – 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
- Petting Zoo – 1 p.m. - 6 p.m.
- Bed Races – 3 p.m.
- Frog/Turtle Races – 4 p.m. - 5 p.m.
- Inflatable Playground – 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.
- Lick Creek Band (Main Stage) – 8 p.m. - 11 p.m.

Tractor driven by Leo B. Jansen of Island Grove won third place in the Antique Division during the 1970 Centennial. The 1931 tractor was owned by Edward Jansen of Teutopolis. Leo was the oldest person participating in the parade.

Judging was underway in the Montrose Centennial Queen Contest when this picture was taken. The competition was cut short by a downpour before contestants had gone through all the phases of judging.

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Sunday, Aug. 8

- Car/Tractor Show – 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Local Music – 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.
- Petting Zoo – Noon – 5 p.m.
- Old Time Games – 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
- Inflatable Playground – 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.
- Best Dress / Beard Shaving – 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.
- Pedal Tractor Race – 4 p.m.
- Golf Ball Drop – 6 p.m.
- Fireworks – 9 p.m.

Montrose Grain Co. entered this float featuring “Unity is the Key,” Behind it is the St. Rose Catholic Church float in the Montrose Centennial Parade.

Teutopolis people of God congratulated Montrose people of God in this float, which featured Boy Scouts and 4-H club members from the Teutopolis area in the Montrose Centennial Parade.

Our Growth Since 2009

Homemakers of yesterday and today appeared on this float in the Montrose Centennial Parade.