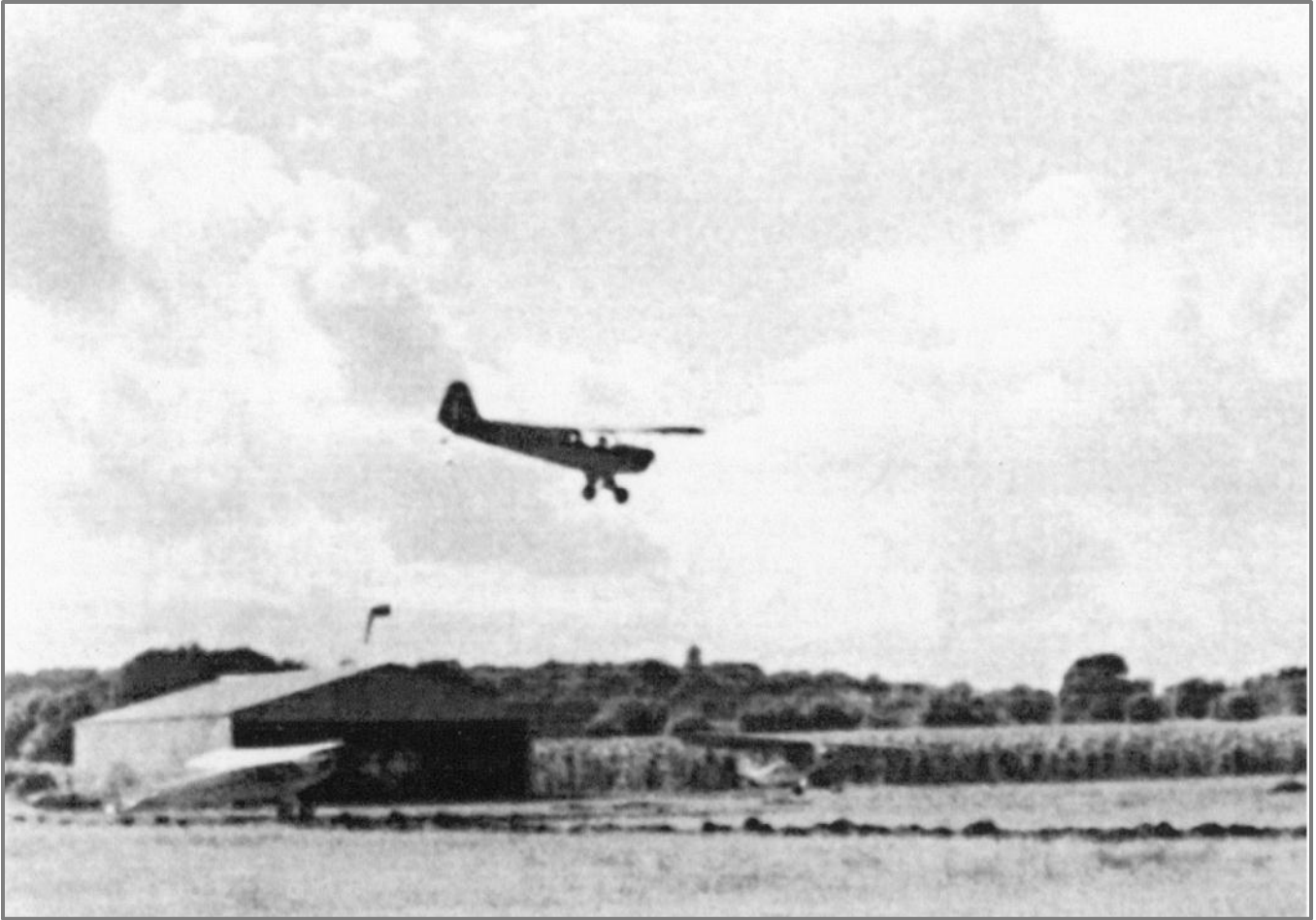


Tyler



The F. P. Tyler Family in Montgomery County, Iowa

by

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TYLER

Frank Pierce “Perk” Tyler came from Wisconsin to Montgomery County, arriving here 3 September 1877. He said he was following his girl, Flora Julia Pasco, who came here to teach school. Tyler did odd jobs for a year, and then 24 March 1878, he and Flora were married. They bought a 40 acre farm and he worked the land in the summer and taught school in the winter. They traded the farm for a town property and moved into Villisca 7 November 1880. They became the parents of seven children.

Tyler soon became deeply involved in both business and civic matters. In 1881 he was owner of a barbed wire factory. The 4 August 1881 issue of the *Villisca Review* said; “His barb wire factory was closed by order of the great fence wire monopoly.” It was said that in 1940 some of his wire was still in use on near-by farms.

The third of August 1881 he purchased a dray business, and ran it until 20 January 1905. He said that 24 years was long enough.

In the winter of 1882 Tyler cut ice from the Middle Nodaway River and stored it in a small building behind his home. That was the beginning of a family business which lasted 70 years. At about the same time he became a coal dealer, and that business closed with the ice business in 1952.

In December of 1888 Tyler was the city Marshal. The town council raised the Marshal’s salary to \$40 per month and compelled him to do night duty also, remaining on the streets from 7 p.m. until 7 a.m. Eight street lights were installed at that time and it is assumed that the night watchman was expected to light them.

In 1889 Tyler started a brick yard south of the tracks. It was reported that he was turning out a superb quality of brick. The business lasted four or five years.

In the late 1890s Tyler purchased a lot at the east end of Fifth Street, and just south of the Villisca Fair Grounds. There he erected a large ice house. In January 1900 an article from the *Review* said that beside filling his own house, he would fill houses for others on contract.

On 10 May 1900 F.P. and Flora Tyler purchased the Fair Grounds. They paid \$3300 for 33 acres. Tyler immediately started excavating for a lake. He sank two wells for water to fill the lake. The lake would offer boating and fishing facilities for a summer resort, and provide ice skating and pure ice harvest for the winter months. In November 1900 Tyler bought a two horse- power gasoline engine to replace the windmill at the park. He pumped enough water to enlarge the skating area, and also built a small house for skaters’ convenience.

In May 1902 a bath house was constructed at the lake. Tyler purchased a freezer and offered ice cream for sale.

In April 1903 Tyler bought ten boats to use on his lake. The *Review* said “they are beauties”. Tyler was doing a rushing business each evening in renting out boats and bathing suits. That fall he drained the lake and did more excavating. The resulting lake had a surface area of between six and seven acres.

In 1904 Tyler had a toboggan slide at the park finished in time for the Fourth of July celebration. Every Wednesday afternoon ladies had exclusive rights to the toboggan. Tyler also provided suitable rooms for one to change one’s clothes.

11 May 1905; *Review*; – Ad: I have purchased a new cream separator and will make Ice Cream this summer better than ever. Will get the cream from my own cows... F.P. Tyler

29 June 1905; *Review* – F.P. Tyler had a full page ad promoting a big Fourth of July celebration at his park. A report after the Fourth said that some seats collapsed, injuring several people. That evening part of the fireworks display went off prematurely.

In April 1906 Tyler announced that he would begin selling ice by the pound rather than by the season as before.

12 July 1906; *Villisca Review*: A new gasoline engine and dynamo are among the recent acquisitions at Tyler’s Park. The engine is six horsepower, upright, and is one of Fairbanks, Morse & Co.’s best makes. It furnishes power to run the new dynamo which furnishes the electricity to light the lights at the park. These lights are 28 in number at present but the engine is capable of lighting 75 or more. F.P. Tyler, the genial proprietor of the park, has many fine dreams for the future of his business. Besides the park itself, where there are boat riding, ball playing, swimming, phonograph music and refreshments during the summer, Mr. Tyler sells ice and ice cream and this fall he expects to build an addition to his power house for cold storage which some fine day he will operate by the power furnished by his new engine. He told *The Review* man that he expected to enlarge his lake the next summer, buy a launch, put fish in the water, set up tents lighted by electricity in the park and make his place an ideal resort for the tired man or woman who cannot find time or means to go away for a vacation.

20 December 1906; *Illustrated Supplement*; *Villisca Review*; F.P. Tyler’s ...summer resort with a fine grove, bathing house and pool, toboggan slide, lake, row boats, etc...

In the spring of 1907 Tyler was running the Standard Oil wagon which he continued to do until February 1909. Family sources say that earlier he had carried cans of gas and oil in the front of the ice wagon.

In April 1907 Tyler purchased a small steam boat at Grant, and moved it to his lake where it was fitted with a gasoline engine. He called the boat “Princess Irene”.

Undated – possibly 1907; *Review*: To the ladies of Villisca!!!! Do you know that Villisca has the finest bathing pond in Southwestern Iowa? Do you know there is nothing immoral in bathing in a bathing resort? Do you know that nothing that would shock the most modest lady is allowed at Tyler's Park? Do you know that ladies in towns both larger and smaller than Villisca go bathing in these ponds? Do you know that Villisca ladies go bathing in these ponds in other towns? Do you know that you will feel a whole lot better after bathing in this pond and chuting the chutes than bathing in a bath tub? Once you go into this pool, with a cement bottom and water changed every week, all well water, you could not be kept out. We know you want to come in so don't be like a bashful boy sucking his thumb. BRING YOU HUSBAND. BRING YOUR FELLOW. BRING YOUR PREACHER. BRING YOUR GRANDMOTHER. Bring the whole family and you will have the time of your life. Open day and night. We use our own electric light system. Ice cream at the park at all hours.

In the spring of 1908 Tyler purchased an auto; it was a wine colored, twenty horsepower five passenger Moline touring car, at a cost of \$1250. In a very short time it had caused two runaways. It was used as a taxi/bus, hauling passengers from town to the park for 10 cents, and was also available for out-of-town trips.

The company providing electricity for Villisca held a 20 year franchise but there was wide spread dissatisfaction with the quality of service. In October 1908 the city council called a special election to grant to F.P. Tyler a franchise for a light and power plant. The election carried but the light company immediately asked for an injunction. The court ruled that the election was illegal as Tyler was a member of the city council. He resigned and another proposal was prepared with the names of Harvey and Roy Tyler added. That election was almost unanimous in favor of the Tylers, but the company again obtained an injunction. Eventually everyone tired of this and an uneasy truce was called.

Early in 1909 the Tyler boys purchased the ice cream business from their father, but no account of the transaction has been found. The term "Tyler Bros." was first found in an ad in the Villisca paper in March 1909.

In June 1909 Tyler had the baseball field at his park completely rebuilt. It was the home field for local teams, both high school and town teams. Baseball was played there for many years, but by 1912 a football field had been laid out on the farm across the road north of the park.

In August 1909 Tyler's Park was the site of the Old Soldiers Reunion. Tyler purchased four steel rowboats and a gasoline launch. About 70 tents were set up for the use of the old soldiers and their families. The Reunion program was given from a newly constructed grand stand in the park.

In October 1909 a contract was signed between the City of Villisca and F.P. Tyler wherein Tyler agreed to furnish the City of Villisca all the water needed for domestic purposes...an average of 80,000 gallon per day...at a flat rate of \$125 per month...

In October 1909 Tyler Bros. bought the ice cream and ice business of Eli McMullen. They turned the ice making business over to their father, F.P. Tyler.

In December 1909 Tyler constructed a new ice house on the shore of his lake. It was 60 by 100 feet.

In June 1910 Harry Tyler purchased an Excelsior motor cycle. The Tyler Bros. used it to make prompt deliveries of ice cream.

In October 1910 Tyler moved his pumping plant from the west side of the lake to the north east part, in hope of increasing the water supply.

8 June 1911 – *Villisca Review*: There is no busier place in Villisca, in all likihood than Tyler Bros. Ice Cream factory, located in the eastern part of the city... Tyler Bros. have just purchased and installed considerable new equipment to handle their growing business... The new acquisitions comprise a Tyson freezer which has a capacity of freezing ten gallons of ice cream in ten minutes, and a Wizard agitator, in which the cream is first pasteurized... and then rapidly cooled... It may be kept for several days in as sweet a condition as when fresh from the cow... Their output during the summer runs from 200 to 400 gallons a day...

In October 1911 F.P. Tyler brought suit in district court against the City of Villisca for \$483.20, which he claimed was due him for pumping water for the year ending September 30, 1911. Under terms of his contract Tyler was to keep the city tank two-thirds full, or to the 13 foot level. The city claimed that this was not done. Tyler replied to the charge by stating that there was a leak in the main at the lower well from which the water escaped instead of going into the tank, although he was pumping it. A compromise was reached without going to court.

In September 1912 Tyler Bros. announced that having outgrown their present quarters, they planned to erect a new factory building. Preliminary work was done that fall.

In January 1913 Roy and Henry took a short course at Ames in ice cream and butter making. Roy returned home then, but Henry stayed for a course in dairying.

In January 1913 F.P. Tyler was filling his ice house at the rate of 14 cakes a minute. The ice was about ten inches thick, and twenty-one men were at work everyday...

10 April 1913; *Villisca Review*: Among the several very enterprising factories located at Villisca the one of Tyler Bros... stands out particularly noteworthy. The Tyler Bros., Roy, Henry and Harry... have taken over a business established by their father F.P. Tyler, seven years ago, and with little or nothing to begin on, have made it one of the most flourishing businesses in southwestern Iowa. Their new factory, just completed, is an evidence of their growth. The new structure is all brick, and the floors and walls are made entirely of Keene cement...

26 June 1913 – Tyler Bros. built a boat house, and had a motor boat to use on their lake.

Tyler Bros. did a large business for the 1913 Fourth of July. Their ice cream went as far south as St. Joseph, west to Pacific Junction, east to Osceola and north to Greenfield and Cumberland.

In September 1913 the Board of Supervisors awarded to F.P. Tyler a contract for installing bridge abutments, one in Stanton, and one northwest of Sciola. He put in box culverts for the county and sidewalks for Villisca, including the walks in the city park. He did cement work for private parties.

In February 1914 Tyler reported that the ice house on the Van Valkenburg place in the west part of town was about full. It is uncertain if that was a Tyler house, or one filled by contract.

In May 1914 Tyler Bros. installed their third 400 gallon mixer in their factory. The business kept them all busy. They planned to ship 4,500 gallons of ice cream over the Fourth. They had a work force of 21 men.

In December of 1914 Tyler Bros. advertised Young American cheese and cream cheese.

Cream from the Tyler stations at Grant and Morton Mills came in on the Atlantic Southern railroad. When the train ceased operations the first of 1915, Tyler Bros. purchased an Overland four-cylinder truck. They ran regular routes between Villisca and Grant, hauling freight as well as their cream. They could also take two passengers.

In March 1915 Tyler Bros. announced plans to open a bottling works. They built a 32 x 40 addition to the side of the ice cream factory. They ordered two cars of bottles bearing the inscription "Tyler Bros. Bottling Works, Villisca, Iowa". By the 20th of April they were busy bottling various kinds of soft drinks.

The first of April 1915 Tyler Bros. received a new Winkler ice wagon, shipped from the factory at South Bend, Indiana. They also received a car of sugar for their ice cream and a car of bottles.

In June 1915 Tyler Bros. bought the Red Oak Bottling Works. The brothers were involved in installing a new bottling machine at Villisca, so F.P. Tyler went to Red Oak and took charge of that plant for a time. Then an ice cream factory was added to the Red Oak building.

In 1915 Tyler Bros. entered some of their Golden Rod butter with the Agricultural Association at the State Fair for judging. They received a diploma from the Association stating that their butter was excellent in every respect, and was ranked among the best at the Fair.

In October 1915 Tyler Bros. cream station in Grant burned, so they rebuilt, using hollow brick which they hauled from Villisca.

In November 1915 Tyler Bros. erected a large garage across the street south of their factory. The 30 x 40 structure was built of tile brick. The garage held ten cars at one time, and any one could be taken out without disturbing the others.

Tyler records state that the bottling addition at their factory burned late in 1915.

F.P. Tyler purchased a site at Third Avenue and Sixth Street in Villisca. In March 1916 he had the old building removed and started construction of a two-story brick block with a basement. The front of the building was rented, while Tyler used the rear part as a storeroom and general office.

In March 1916 a conference was held in Villisca for the area pop bottlers. There was a discussion of common problems, followed by a business meeting, at which Roy Tyler was elected president.

In May 1916 F.P. Tyler signed a contract with the city of Villisca to lay 2790 feet of four-inch water mains. Two months later Tyler reported that the work was done.

Also in May 1916 Tyler purchased a house on East Fifth Street and had it moved to a site near the baseball park. After some improvements the property was leased.

In June 1916 Tyler Bros. bought the plant and all the equipment of the Clarinda ice cream factory. The building was a new brick, and had a modern freezer like the ones used at Villisca.

The first of November 1916 Tyler Bros. purchased the bottling works at Clarinda. They moved the old building back and erected a new one. An article in the Clarinda paper said, "Clarinda will be the bottling plant, and Villisca will be the ice cream headquarters."

Tyler family tradition tells us that after buying the Clarinda bottling plant the new owners looked through the papers in the safe. They were surprised to find a franchise contract for bottling Coca Cola. Coke was not well-known in this area and to develop a market for it the company would slip a few bottles into other orders.

In January 1917 Tyler Bros. bought 36 acres and improvements from R.R. Wagaman. The farm was just across the road north from Tyler's Park. The Tylers stocked their Golden Rod Farm with dairy cattle.

In February 1917 the new building at the Clarinda plant was finished, and a Junior bottler was installed. In March 1917 the Clarinda paper said, "The improved bottling machine turns out a bottle a second or nearly 3600 bottles an hour..."

World War I opened in 1917, and Co. "F" was called to active duty. The first of July the Company moved into tents at Tyler's Park while they prepared for departure. Local housewives provided food for the soldiers, from fried chicken to doughnuts. And Tyler Bros. furnished ice cream.

In 1917 Villisca celebrated the Fourth of July. The usual parade was held; it was divided into sections, one of which was automobiles. The *Review* reported:

...and Tyler's truck, occupied by Tyler employees, brought up the rear. The employees at the Tyler Brothers factory appeared at the last minute, and took the prize for the most ridiculous car there. It was the big freight truck and the ice men, the boys of the factory and some of them from the cream routes rode thereon. It seems that they lost their engine while in front of the Snow restaurant and were compelled to pull the beast of burden by a rope. But they demonstrated that enough fellows worked at the factory to pull that sort of a load and soon regained their place in the parade.

The truck's ailment must have been terminal. Two weeks later Tyler Bros. bought a new International truck.

In September 1917 Tyler Bros. purchased the John Reeves farm of 40 acres, and the W.F. Brenton farm of 54 acres in east and northeast Villisca. Reeves and Brenton each received \$10,000 for their tracts of land. A large dairy barn was built on the Wagaman farm, bought earlier that year.

13 January 1922: ...The ice on the Tyler lake is cut with a unique device which was made by setting the principle part of a Ford car on runners, and a circular saw is attached to the rear axle in place of the wheels. The sled is drawn by two men and cuts the ice as rapidly as the men can walk...The cakes are carried to the ice house on an elevator operated by electric power...

29 October 1925 – Tyler Brothers held an auction sale of their Duroc Jersey hogs.

14 October 1927; *Review*: Forced by increasing business to enlarge their office department, Tyler Brothers are fitting up additional office rooms on the second floor of their ice cream and butter factory and building additional storage room...The new storage room will be 18 by 30 feet in size, to the north end of the factory building...

The improvements here were necessitated primarily by the Tyler Brothers' recent action in taking over the distribution in Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska and Kansas of a line of extracts for use in making a certain brand of pop...

Tyler Brothers have started also the erection of a 34 by 60 foot hollow tile addition to their bottling plant and ice cream storage building in Clarinda.

11 November 1927; *Review*: Tyler Brothers began work Wednesday on the erection of a hollow tile building in Shenandoah which they will use as a storage and distribution plant for their ice cream, butter, pop and other products which they manufacture in Villisca. They purchased the bottling plant of C.F. Clatterbaugh of Shenandoah Wednesday...

18 November 1927; *Review*: ...Mayor F.P. Tyler called a special meeting of the city council...(*Mr. Tyler served two terms as mayor.*)

In April 1930 Tyler Bros. completed a deal in which their entire ice cream and butter business was merged with the Beatrice Creamery Company, with headquarters in Chicago. Harry and Henry Tyler each took a financial interest in the Beatrice company, which includes many plants in the mid-west, and they retained all their financial interests outside of their ice cream and butter properties. Henry Tyler was named as manager of the local plant. One of the stipulations of the deal was that the Tyler plant remain in Villisca. Henry and Harry both continued to live in Villisca. Harry Tyler was manager of the Tyler businesses which were not included in the merger, including the Tyler dairy farm, ice manufacturing plant in Corning, ice business in Lenox, and a bottling plant in Clarinda-Shenandoah. The coal and ice business in Villisca was turned over to F.P. Tyler on May 1. Tyler Bros. had leased those concerns from their father several years ago... (*perhaps 1924*) Twenty-three delivery trucks were maintained here in 1929 to carry on the Tyler business.

18 September 1936; *Review*: F.P. Tyler is tearing down his ice house near the Tyler lake in Villisca preparatory to erecting a new building in which he will install an ice making plant.

The ice house which is being wrecked...is one of the two houses on the lake which were used by Mr. Tyler for ice storage nearly 30 years. The other house was torn down last year.

In April 1946 Tyler Bros. were making a landing field on their farm at the east edge of Villisca. They planned to erect a 42 x 50 foot hangar. Much work has been done to smooth the field and eliminate interference of utility wires. Tylers have purchased two Piper Cubs, which will arrive soon. One of the planes is a two-place trainer which will be used for instruction purposes. The three-place cruiser will be used for business trips and pleasure. The Tyler planes will be the first owned in Villisca.

12 September 1946: Villisca's Jubilisca will get off to a flying start on the first day with the grand opening of the Tyler airport in east Villisca when a half a hundred planes will be here. The field will be open at 10 a.m. for visitors. There will be acrobatics and stunts. A number of mid-west dealers will display the newest of planes.

About the first of May 1947 Tyler Bros. erected a second hangar at their airfield. The 28 x 96 foot building housed three planes and could be enlarged if needed. Tylers maintained a flying school with Eddie Edgars as instructor. An office building with telephone had been constructed, and the landing field was lengthened 300 feet, making it a little more than 2,000 feet long.

12 January 1948; Tyler Brothers held a closing out auction at their Golden Rod Farm east of Villisca.

11 August 1949; *Review*: **Tyler Brothers Incorporate Their Four Bottling Plants** – Notices of incorporation of the four bottling plants owned by Tyler Brothers of Villisca appear in today's *Review*, setting up the business with a capital stock of \$1,100,400.

The plants included in the corporation are the Creston Bottling company, the Grand Island Bottling company, the Atlantic Bottling company and the Clarinda-Shenandoah Bottling company...

Harry Tyler said the company will continue to operate the Villisca office as the accounting headquarters for the four corporations, and for the other Tyler Brothers properties not included in the corporations. These are...the Atlantic ice plant, the Tyler Brothers farm and their airport...

Family sources say that the brothers divided the corporation properties into two equal parts, and then drew straws for the parcels. Harry Tyler drew the Atlantic and Creston plants; his son James Tyler became the manager. Henry Tyler became owner of the Clarinda-Shenandoah and Grand Island businesses with son Robert Tyler as manager. The Tyler Brothers continued to reside in Villisca.

1 May 1952; *Review*: Believed to be Villisca's oldest business the Tyler Ice and Coal company plant will be sold at public auction here Monday, May 12, at 2 p.m...

In January 2002 the Tyler Bros. Ice Cream Factory building was razed. Built in 1913 it served the brothers well until 1930 when it became a part of the Beatrice Creamery Company. For many years it was known locally as the Meadow Gold plant, even after all business had ceased. A very large piece of Villisca's past is now gone forever.

Fall of 2006 – Tyler's dairy barn was demolished.