The first years of the new century found Mt. Horeb a fast-growing little village, but primitive indeed by today’s standards. Those were still the days when you had to carry the drinking water from the pump in the back yard or from the “neighborhood” pump on some convenient corner lot, and when the Mt. Horeb Times had to exhort the townspeople not to throw ashes in the village streets. Those were the days when, if you were having a party, you called up Andrew Lee or Joe Harmon at the electric light plant and asked them to leave the lights on a little past midnight as a special favor. Those were the days when you could buy a fine home for less than $2000, and if you were going for a drive in your new horseless carriage, you had to expect to get out and get under at least several times during the trip.

The next few decades, however, were to bring many changes both in village progress and business development. Let us start with a quick look at some of these village improvements.

**Waterworks and Sewage Treatment Plant**

Mt. Horeb could first boast of waterworks as far back as 1895. That was the year that Isaac Kittleson, John Vilberg and Tom Syverud took the contract to furnish water needed for the construction of the Opera House Building and Bergh Bros. brick store. They placed an air motor windmill and a force pump at a well in the rear of the store, which supplied the water through pipes underground and along the edge.

A waterworks plan for the village was first proposed in 1902; and in 1906 a water pump station was built at the first well. Water mains were laid in 1908. In 1935 a water pump station was built on the present well.

Mt. Horeb’s first sewer system was built in 1915-1916. The original sewage treatment plant was an Imhoff tank. This was remodeled in 1938 to a modern sewage treatment plant that used a biological type of treatment. In this case aeration of the sewage was employed. Due to an increase in milk plants, the plant was proven inadequate and subsequent additions to and alterations of the present plant were necessary.

The present plant, on which construction was started in the summer of 1950 and completed by the summer of 1957, is a complete sewage treatment plant which embodies the latest and most modern type of treatment that is being used today.

**Police Department**

Mt. Horeb’s first constable, elected in 1912, was Steve Murphy. Other men who held the position during the next three decades were L. L. Martin, Sam Gesme, G. J. Murphy, Erick Holum, E. A. Holum, P. J. Rue, Ed. H. Anderson, Orrin Baker and Frank Sabanske.

In July, 1940, a village ordinance was adopted to appoint the constable, or rather the marshal, for by 1922 the latter term was being used. Martin Sponem became the marshal in 1922, also the street commissioner and superintendent of waterworks. He was authorized to hire an assistant for one year. K. T. Syverud was his first assistant.

In 1928 Elmer Disrud became nightwatchman. Otto Mitmoen was assistant to Mr. Sponem that year. These men served until 1940, when Oliver Lee was appointed marshal, with Otto Mitmoen as assistant, Sigurd Moe as nightwatchman and Joe Fjelstad as the day policeman. In 1942 Stanley Jacobson replaced Joe Fjelstad.

The police force was reorganized in November 1941. From then on there was a Chief of Police, with two full time assistants. Also our police force now wore uniforms. James Lunde joined the force in December, 1942, George Kahl in November, 1950. Oliver Lee has been Chief of Police since 1941.

A village owned squad car was first used in 1947.

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One of the earliest horseless carriages (note wooden wheels)  
Walter Evans is seen here driving Dr. Evans’ car. Seated with him is Curtis Evans. Rear seat passengers are: Mr. & Mrs. Milo Evans, Mrs. N. C. Evans, and Ruth Marie Evans.
A. Hoff Store and east addition. Seen in this picture are Mr. Hoff and his lady clerks Emma Kramer (Babcock), and Alma Anderson (Bang). Note the kerosene street light similar to one located at the corner of E. Main and North Second Streets.

Carnival 1906. South First Street taken from Main Street looking toward railroad. (Note absence of homes south of tracks.)
The Business Scene in 1901

In May, 1901, the State Bank of Mt. Horeb was organized with a capital stock of $32,000 and located in part of S. Swiggum's store (Pfister Farm Agency). Dr. N. C. Evans was president, Andrew Hoff, vice president, and Walter Curtiss, cashier. The new bank building was constructed in 1917. Present directors are S. A. Sylvester, G. C. Osmundson, Bert Pfister, Carl Brechler and John Beat. During the depression the Mt. Horeb bank closed and was absorbed in 1932 by the State Bank of Mt. Horeb.

At this time John Ward, John Bohn and C. A. Finke were owners and proprietors of the mill Rowland and Bled had erected in 1881. They were also owners of the electric lighting system, which furnished current for their mill as well as for business places and homes.

James Kinney sold farm machinery, sewing machines, sleighs, cutters and wagons, and also dealt in real estate.

Joachim Brager and his father, H. O. Brager, had a jewelry store on the south side of East Main Street. Oldsters will remember the Norwegian business sign, "H. O. Brager, Ure Maaker", that hung over the store door.

Dr. W. J. Malone was a veterinarian at this time.

Ed A. Kittleson ran a laundry on West Main Street, though this did not survive for long, perhaps because the price for a family washing and ironing, expertly done, was only 4 cents a pound!

Dr. J. E. Brager came to Mt. Horeb in 1900 and established the dental practice later taken over by his son, Dr. Waldo Brager.

Ole Olson, an apprentice of the town's first tailor, L. H. Lewis, established a tailor shop that was to remain in business for many years.

The 1901 hardware firm of Heisig, Grinde and Evans was the outgrowth of earlier firms (Curry and Ruste; P. G. Krogh; Krogh and Andrew E. Grinde; Heisig and Grinde). Later this would be the Mt. Horeb Hardware Co., owned by Roy and John Beat.

Thompson and Mickleson, lumber dealers, contractors and builders, had taken over the Lovejoy. Richards lumber company by 1901.

Tory Fosshage and John Olson had bought the Andrew Thompson furniture store on the north side of East Main Street. (Phillip Hoff's Bar and Bowling Alley and Vasen's Ben Franklin store).

J. Reckenthaler, the blacksmith and wagon maker, had a large property on West Front Street. This was later owned by Fred Snyder, also D. H. Blakeman, and the building was razed several years ago.

Olaf Hanson, a former local wool buyer, went into the hardware business on South Second Street (Otto Gilbertson's Hardware). Ludwig England was a partner in the firm for a while, later sole owner.

The Peoples' Mercantile Association at the corner of South First and Front Streets was
Alvah Webber, who represented Uncle Sam in a July 4th Celebration, is seen in this serious pose. Note the stone (or slab?) crossing between the Mount Horeb Hardware Store and the Swiggum Store corner (State Bank).

This view from Main Street to the Depot was taken about 1900 and shows five business places on the west side of South First Street — Sever Swiggum Store, Eldef Severson Restaurant, William Britt Harness Shop, Barber Shop (?) and Philip Schneider Hotel. The men in the picture are Leo Sutter, Sr., and Al Goebel.

Mr. and Mrs. T. Brattle, who purchased the former Tom Locke Hotel and Livery Barn, are seen here as managers of their new property under the name of "Mount Horeb House." July 4, 1905.
managed by Peter Post. (Farmer Store later, now Farmer's Market.)

Two millinery shops, both selling some handmade hats, were established here by 1901. Miss Anne Spaanum and Mrs. Christine Peterson ran one of them in part of Sever Swiggum's store. The other was in part of the Mt. Horeb Bank building and was operated by Miss Emma Halferdahl and her twin sister, Mrs. T. G. Lingard.

G. M. Helland ran a drug store in the corner space of the Opera House Building (later Robertshaw's drug store).

Dr. P. C. Gilbertson was a doctor here in 1901.

Dr. C. A. Sholts, a dentist, had established his business in upstairs rooms of the Opera House Building. Dr. M. M. Darrow took over his practice in 1936.

Jim Brown and Ludwig Weltzin were selling and trading real estate in upstairs rooms of the Opera House Building.

Sam Gesme's barber shop was a popular place for the men of the village.

Will F. Scott, chief of the fire department, also operated a restaurant on East Main Street.

Riphan and Bunn was another blacksmith and wagon shop partnership.

Iver A. Lund had his general merchandise store on the south side of East Main Street. Several years later this building was moved to a lot on Center Avenue, where it is today.

There were two hotels in Mt. Horeb at this time. Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Brattlie operated the Mt. Horeb House; Mr. and Mrs. Britton were proprietors of the one on South Second Street, later known as the National Hotel.

James Gesme and Chris Field were running a furniture store on the north side of East Main Street. Mr. Gesme had also established his undertaking business there.

Henry Steyer and Ben Erbe were selling farm machinery, wagons, carriages, etc., also feed and salt.

Lewis J. Bergh was operating a barber shop on East Main Street (Thousand's tavern).

The post office was now located in the Opera House Building (Post's cafe and tavern), and the postmaster was John Vilberg.

Joe Harmon, Jr. and Ole Mickleston were running a restaurant in what was later known as the Tom Heeren Building.

Louis Martin was running a harness shop.

In November of 1901 the newspaper, the Mt. Horeb Mail, was established here. Ole M. Edsmore was editor and owner, A. C. Krohn his assistant.

Hans and Fred Hoff had opened a meat market on West Main Street in 1897.

**MT. HOREB (1901-1925)**

Gleanings from the MT. HOREB TIMES, compiled by Mrs. Banford Dahlen, Published in the MT. HOREB MAIL 1951 Anniversary Edition

1901

In February the land for Boeck's Park on the north side of town was donated to the village by Carl Boeck. Throughout the spring and summer "bees" were held to clean up, plant trees and build fence.

In July voters, by a margin of 36, voted against building waterworks.

Mt. Horeb Co-op Creamery & Cheese Co. incorporated with a capital of $25,000.

1902

Mt. Horeb Independent Telephone Co. incorporated this year.

A waterworks election was held in July, and the issue was carried 110 out of 177 voting for $12,000 bond.
Eggs took a tumble from a high of 25 cents to 15 cents per dozen.

Chris Field sold his interest in the furniture business of Gesme and Field to John de Fine. New firm was called the Mt. Horeb Furniture Co.

For the first time since incorporation the village voted on licensing liquor. Though not large, the majority was decisive, 109 against to 93 for.

Louis L. Martin bought half interest in the restaurant business of J. H. Harmon.

Village purchased a “cage” to be used as a lock-up in the fire engine house. Cage cost $140 and was guaranteed to hold any ordinary crook.

Three loads of emigrants in prairie schooners passed through town on their way to Kansas.

Fred Luder’s cheese cellar by railroad was completed.

Potatoes were again within the reach of people of moderate means at a price of 40 cents per bushel.

Martin Holum opened a billiard hall in August.

Mt. Horeb Businessmen’s Association was formed in August.

S. L. Swiggum’s business property on the southwest corner of Main and First Streets was sold to the State Bank for $5,000.

The equalized value of all taxable property in village for 1902 as fixed by the county board was $615,454 as against $323,335 for 1901.

Thomas Ayen was given contract for construction of water works reservoir, price completed $1,174; capacity 100,000 gallons.

1903

Meters were installed by the electric light company.

A switchboard was installed at the telephone office located in the Paul Sletto building, now the Mt. Horeb Hat Shop.

Dr. A. S. Thompson arrived as an assistant to Dr. N. C. Evans.

In January the first public phone booth was installed on the south side of Main Street, east of Hoff’s store.

A waterworks well was drilled. Contract awarded to Thomas Ayen for digging, laying and setting water pipes for price of $1,596.76.

Contract for construction of village hall and power house was given to Kleven Bros., price $3,138.

Tom Johnson bought restaurant business of W. F. Scott.

The first cement sidewalks in village were built by A. Benson, K. Kleven and J. L. Weltzin. The cost was high, but it was thought it would undoubtedly prove cheapest in the end. Cement sidewalks were also laid in front of village hall.

O. A. Hanson entered into partnership with Ludwig England in the hardware business.

S. A. Sylvester opened a grocery, notion and speciality store.

A Sunday train made its first appearance on June 28, and many of the villagers, to celebrate, took a ride west and returned.

1904

A $173 bell has been ordered for our new village hall.
A hospital, accommodating ten beds, was completed in December. It was owned by Miss Annie Swiggum and built under the supervision of Dr. N. C. Evans. The new hospital was named “St. Olaf’s” for its first patient, Olaf Haggene, Black Earth.

John Birrenkott purchased the corner hotel property of S. Martin (National Hotel).

1905

Our population was 1,002.
The biggest hail and wind storm ever remembered occurred in June, damaging crops and buildings severely.

An addition was built to Hoff’s store.

John Bakken started a barber shop in National Hotel.

1906

Voters at the fall election numbered 216.
Fifty-three telephones were installed here in a six month period.

Reilly Bros. operate one of the town’s leading enterprises, dealing in farm machinery, buggies, wagons, windmills, etc.

1907

Weather forecasts were received daily at the telephone office and transmitted to anyone who requested the information.

Dr. J. C. Cutler arrived here to practice medicine.

The first picture show was held in the Opera house.
The German Valley Church was destroyed by fire caused by lightning. A new church was built on the same site and the corner stone laid in October.

1908

The water tower was built. Waterworks system was intended purely for fire protection.

Dr. E. J. Mithus opened a dental office in the first floor quarters of the Jul Mithus bootmaking shop. (Corner lot next to Gonstead Building).

The Luder cheese warehouse burned with a heavy loss in cheese.

William Quinn bought the Mt. Horeb House and leased it to B. E. Kelliher.

1909

A diphtheria epidemic caused churches and schools to close in the early weeks of this year.

Roy Beat purchased Grinde’s interest in the Heisig, Grinde and Evans hardware store, and the business was incorporated as the Mt. Horeb Hardware Co.

Rev. Father Theodore Rohner arrived as pastor of St. Ignatius Catholic Church.

1910

Our population was 1,048.

A free public library was begun by the Minerva Circle.
1911

A. C. Krohn built the Mail building.
John Beatt bought into the Mt. Horeb Hardware Co., and the two brothers, Roy and John, now own the business.
The village board passed an ordinance limiting the speed of autos to 12 miles per hour through the village.
Dr. G. E. Pitts of Platteville opened a medical practice here.
Otto Olson resigned as butter maker in the old creamery and opened Olson’s Restaurant and Bakery.
Eggum, Haag and Johnson purchased the Schneider & De Shamp Lumber Yard.

1912

The dam at Lake Park was built.
A cheese warehouse was built by Fred Luder on South Second Street near the railroad tracks.
A fire at Dahle’s store completely destroyed the refrigerator building.
John and Ray Bakken opened a barber shop on Main Street.

1913

The Vermont Lutheran congregation built a new church.
The Farmer's Mercantile building was erected.
Over 300 tons of ice were harvested from the lake at Lake Park.
A smallpox epidemic was rampant, and many families were quarantined.
Dr. Cutler left Mt. Horeb, and Dr. Ickstadt arrived to replace him.

1914

Dr. A. S. Thompson returned from Franksville to re-establish a medical practice here.
The ski-tower at Lake Park was completed, and an interstate ski tournament was held on Feb. 26.
Sewer work was begun on some of the main streets in town.

1915

The paving of Main Street was completed in September, and ornamental lights were installed. A celebration of the event was held with a band concert.
Some sewer and water mains were laid in the main streets. The National Hotel was the first building equipped with running water.
A ski tournament was held on January 23 with large attendance. One of the skiers, Axel Hendrickson, world famous for his somersault act, was so badly injured in practicing for the meet that it was necessary to amputate his leg. He later operated a candy and cigar store here on the corner where the Municipal Building now stands.
The Perry Lutheran Church was re-dedicated after remodeling, and the congregation celebrated its 60th anniversary.
The Lake Park dam was washed away in a six-inch deluge of rain in June.
A Booster Club was organized with T. G. Lindgard as president.
A public drinking fountain (the first) was installed on the corner of Main and First Streets.
C. C. Robertshaw, druggist and optometrist, opened his store in the Opera House Building.
1916

The Perry Catholic Church was built and dedication services held in November.
The Mt. Horeb creamery building was constructed.
The England hardware store was sold to H. C. Gier.

1917

The Mt. Horeb High School building was completely destroyed by fire on February 2.
The State Bank Building was built. The building that had formerly stood on the lot was moved to the back of the Ford garage to be used as an auto repair shop.
County Supt. of Schools Matthew Barkley resigned, and T. S. Thomson was appointed to fill the vacancy.
John Hanley and Myron Reilly took possession of the garage which is now the Klusendorf Chevrolet Co.
The Brannan sisters bought the Mt. Horeb House from George Pitton.
Dr. F. W. Sutcliffe opened a veterinary office here.

1918

Dr. H. M. Buckner came from Prairie du Sac to begin a medical practice.
Melvin Sale opened a barber shop in basement of the National Hotel Building.
Irvin Hoff took over the Hans Hoff meat market.

This year found the villagers busy with various war drives and faced with meat-less Tuesdays and heat-less Wednesdays.
Armistice Day was celebrated on the 11th with an imposing parade viewed by the largest crowd ever assembled here.
The influenza epidemic claimed many lives in our community.
The Lake Park property was sold at public auction. The property included 29 acres, ice cutting machinery, tools, etc., and went to Dr. J. E. Brager for $5,500.

1919

Public gatherings were forbidden as the result of the severity of the flu epidemic.
A system of road improvements and road marking signs was developing at a fast rate. The speed limit for the village was moved up by a village ordinance from 12 to 15 miles per hour.
The new high school was completed, and a "housewarming" was held. The main attraction was a basketball game, the first held in the new gymnasium.
The Frank E. Malone Post No. 113, American Legion, was organized in the fall.
J. M. Moe purchased the J. H. Brager jewelry store.

1920

Mail delivery service twice a day for the village was begun.
All streets in the village were named and some re-named, and house numbers were added.
1921
A robbery occurred at Dahle’s store, and as a result the village board contemplated hiring a night watchman.
The first Harvest Festival was held late in September, sponsored by the band. There were more than 1,000 entries listed, of which 700 were in the ladies’ department.

1922
Dr. H. M. Buckner opened a 22-bed hospital in the former Henry Dahle home in January.
J. N. Dahlen retired after more than 36 years in the newspaper business.
Sever and Olaus Martinson opened the store on South Second Street known as Martinson Bros. (Later Farm Utility).
The building of a new theatre was begun by Fred Luder, Jr. A contest to name the theatre was won by Olympia Grinde with the name “Apollo”.
T. G. Lingard bought the Opera House Building.
Mt. Horeb enjoyed its first bus service to Madison. Three round trips a day were scheduled.
Dahle’s store was again robbed at night. This prompted the hiring of Stanley Jacobson as a night watchman.
Casper Haag sold out his interest in the lumber yard to Eggum and Johnson.

A referendum in the April elections resulted in village board trustees being paid an annual salary for the first time. The vote was 219 yes, 209 no.

1923
The village purchased a chemical fire truck.
A building code ordinance was adopted by the village board.
Atty. M. A. Tollund opened his law office.
The Gesme Funeral Home was built on East Main Street.
An organization of businessmen was formed in January as the Mt. Horeb Advancement Association.

1924
C. S. Gonstead came to Mt. Horeb to begin a chiropractic practice.
The Mt. Horeb Bank Building was erected.
Alfred Peterson completed building the Parkway theatre.

1925
Grinder and Iverson organized the West End Transportation Co., and bus service was established south and west of Mt. Horeb.
The official opening of the Mt. Horeb Bank took place on May 2.
The Universal Store began operations here.

View of the West Side Grade School buildings

Interior of Dahle Bros. Store the morning of our first Harvest Festival, in Sept., 1921. Otto Dahle, manager, is seen with his clerks as follows: Norbert Reilly, Paul Ruth, John Solsko, Laura Kollath, Olympia Lee (Rue), Bertha Anderson (Soper), Bertha Lukken (Lien), Bertha Ulrud (Ayen), Dora Domholt and Lena Syverud. Seated are Andrew Jacobson, Arne Nape, Chris Field and Ernest Wirth.
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