

## Business Remembered – Gone But Not Forgotten

Businesses in Fairmont have evolved over the years. Some have expanded, some have moved, and some have closed. Comparing Fairmont's business of the mid-1950's to today is quite interesting in that significant changes have taken place with both the number and concept of many of those that were prevalent in the past. This is a result of many factors including competition, the changing needs of the consumer, the mobility of our society, and much more. The following is a snapshot in time of some Fairmont businesses from mid 1950's.

Buerkle Buick, currently located in the Twin Cities, sells Acura, Honda, and Hyundai automobiles in addition to leasing. However, Bill Buerkle, the original owner of Buerkle Buick, got his start in Fairmont when he purchased his first dealership in 1953, that being Fairmont Buick. That dealership was located at 112 North Main Street. Some of his local competitors of that era included Meek-Winquist, Inc. selling Pontiacs, Gimm Motors, Inc. selling Chrysler and Plymouth cars, Motor Inn Chevrolet, Reco Motors selling Hudsons and Willys Jeeps, Beyers Lincoln Mercury, Pannkuk Nash, Inc., Forstrom's Onestop selling Oldsmobiles, Haskins Motor Company, Park Motor Company selling Fords, and Reed Motors selling Studebakers. In 1957, Buerkle sold his dealership in Fairmont and acquired St. Paul Buick, which later became Buerkle Buick. In 1969, he moved the franchise to White Bear Lake. In 1973, he added a Honda franchise, and in 1986 opened Buerkle Acura in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota. Bill Buerkle passed away in 2001 at the age of 80.

"Fast food" in 1955 may have been a bit different than today's choices; however, Toye's Toot-N-Tell Drive-In Service was open to quickly satisfy your appetite. It was located across State Street from the Family Drive-In Theater, which was at that time located at the site of the former K-Mart store and parking lot. If you had room for dessert, you could stop at the Dairy Freeze of that period of time, in the same location as the present business on Albion Avenue, and get two sundaes for a mere \$0.25.

In 1956, Fredstrom's "Town and Country" store was located at 109 South North Avenue, now known as Downtown Plaza, on the same block as the former U. S. Post Office. The owner of the store, "Fritz" Fredstrom, came to Fairmont in 1942 to manage the Mahowald Hardware Store. After opening his own store in 1944, he was offered the Surge Milker dealership and later added the Kelvinator Appliance line, General Electric and Stromberg Carlson Television, and the Whirlpool appliances to his business. A *Sentinel* article from 1956 stated that Fritz and his staff were helpful, courteous, and "just plain folks" who like to visit and be friends with everyone. Incidentally, a Surge Milker is on display in the Pioneer Museum.

Another *Sentinel* article from March of 1956 read, "Iowan Buys Fashion Store in Fairmont." Clem Miller of Chariton, Iowa, purchased Hilda's & Nina's Fashions located at 106 West First Street. Mrs. Nina Zell originally opened the business with her sister, Hilda Taylor, in 1956. The new owner changed the name to Miller's Fashions. It eventually became Davison's, and has since closed.

Automotive service stations have also evolved over time. Batterman's Mobil was located at the corner of Winnebago and State Streets in the vicinity of Carquest Auto Parts. The owner, A. R.

“Ollie” Batterman stated in 1956 that the paving of Winnebago Avenue greatly increased his business. His was a full service station offering gasoline, tires, batteries, and other automotive supplies in addition to offering as an extra bonus, Gift House trading stamps with all purchases. Were Gift House stamps competitors to Green Stamps and Gold Bond Stamps?

“Delyle’s Academy offers fully accredited training to qualify women for lucrative careers in Beauty Culture,” read a *Sentinel* headline from 1956. The accredited beauty school had been in existence for sixteen years and was run by Miriam and Elmer Fandel. The school could handle 36 girls at one time in both junior and senior classes. Delyle’s Academy, located at 105 West First Street, graduated an average of twenty-four students annually.

The Blossom Shop, located at 203 South North Avenue, now Downtown Plaza, had been in business for seventeen years in 1956. Located just south of the Fairmont Opera House, it was well known for its cut flowers, plants, ceramics, brass ware, candies, and other gifts. It also had a greenhouse in the back of the shop; however, most of the flowers were actually shipped in from other greenhouses.

Another headline in the *Sentinel* from December 12, 1957, read “Fairmont City Liquor Store Opens; Traffic Called Good.” It went on to state that liquor could now be legally purchased in Fairmont for the first time in forty-two years. The liquor store was the result of a close liquor vote in November when municipal liquor was approved by the slim margin of twenty-one votes. Until that date, Fairmont had been legally “dry” since 1915. Could there have been some “bootlegging” in Fairmont prior to 1957?

What was life like during that era, the mid 1950’s? The average salary was \$2,992.00 annually, life expectancy for women was 71.1 years and 65.6 years for men, a loaf of bread cost fourteen cents, and bomb shelter plans became widely available.<sup>1</sup> The times have changed, progress has been made in many ways, the economy has evolved, businesses have come and gone in Fairmont, and our society is not the same as it was during that point in history. Nevertheless, those who lived during that era in our local history undoubtedly have many fond memories of Fairmont and the numerous businesses and industries that comprised its economy during that point in time.

For more information on this topic, visit the Pioneer Museum in Fairmont.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://kclibrary.lonestar.edu/decade50.html>

# Mobil



Ollie — Swede — Paul

## Phone 1797

*"Put Mobil Safety In Your Car"*

Pickup and Delivery Service

WASHING - GREASING

POLISHING - MOTOR TUNE-UPS

We Give S&H Green Stamps

# BATTERMAN'S MOBIL SERVICE

WINNEBAGO and STATE



# *FLOWERS* for all occasions

Vi and Willard Davis

Modern Designing  
Wedding and  
Funeral Flowers

CORSAGES – PLANTS  
CUT FLOWERS – GIFTS  
GIFT POTTERY

TELEPHONE  
**1230**  
FAIRMONT

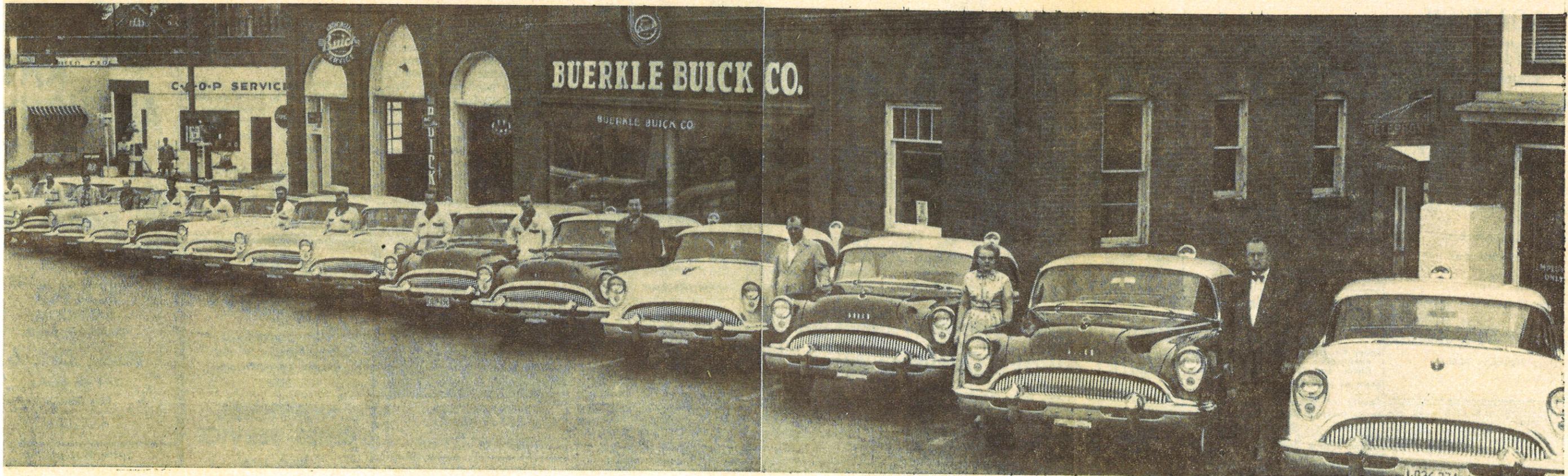


*"WE DELIVER"*

# BLOSSOM SHOP

203 S. NORTH  
Next To Nicholas Theatre

# BUICK SALES are SOARING!



Pictured above is the BUERKLE BUICK staff of sales and service personnel with 14 New Buick cars just arrived from the factory.

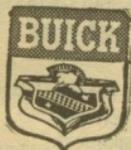
*No. Main St.  
Oct 1954*

## BUERKLE BUICK has the BUICK for YOU!

# BUERKLE BUICK CO.

W. W. BUERKLE, DEALER

## SALES — SERVICE PARTS



WHEN BETTER AUTOMOBILES ARE BUILT  
BUICK WILL BUILD THEM.

BUICKS BETTER BUYS IN USED CARS



Complete Automotive Service  
By Factory Trained Mechanics

### 24 HOUR WRECKER SERVICE

## PHONE 191

OVERNITE STORAGE



AFTER HOURS 392-X

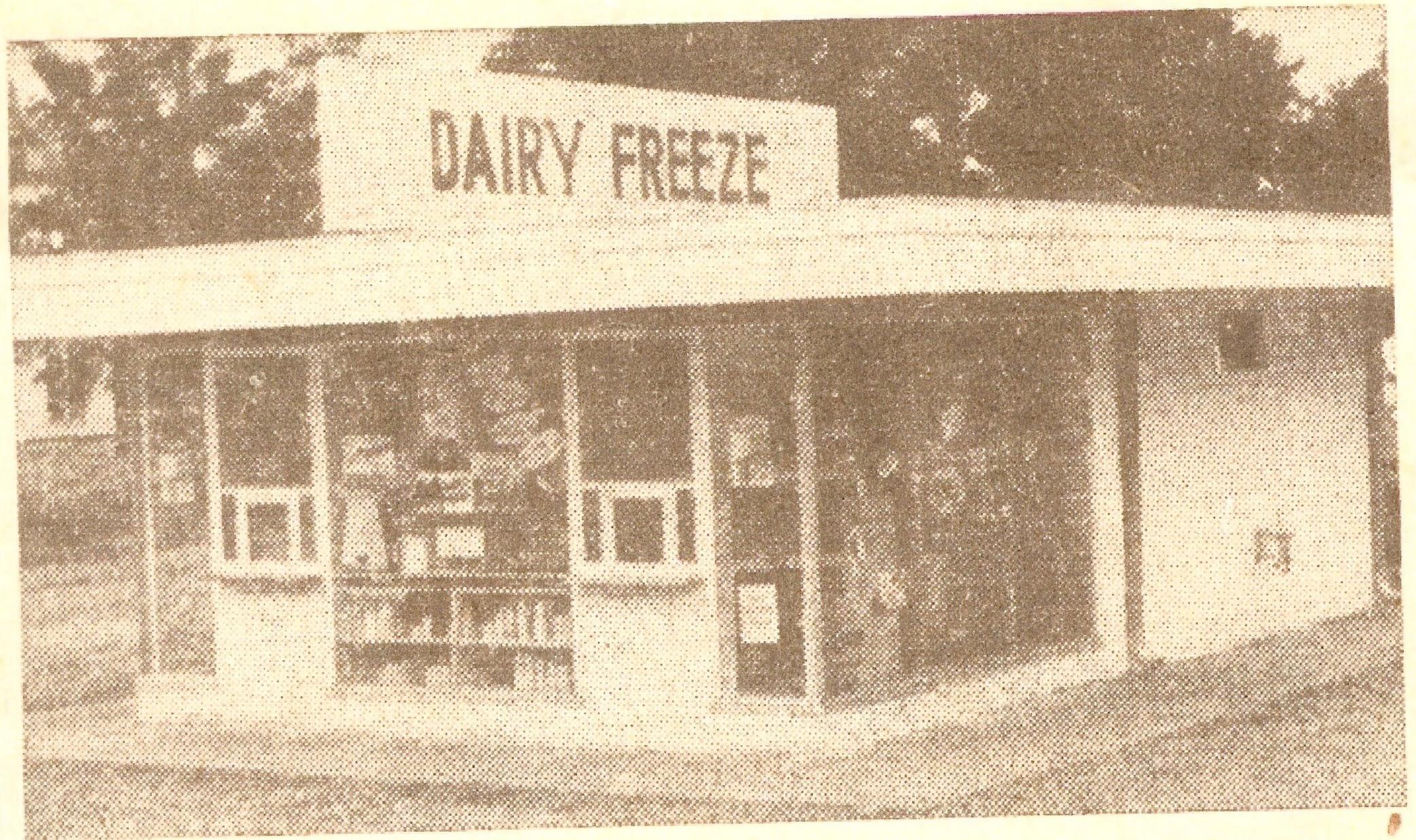
112 N. MAIN

FAIRMONT



**CLEM MILLER**

**REFRESHMENT AT ITS BEST!**



**DAIRY FREEZE SPECIAL!**

**FRIDAY!  
SATURDAY!  
April 27-28**

**2 SUNDAES 25<sup>c</sup>**

**YOUR CHOICE:**

- Chocolate
- Pineapple
- Butterscotch
- Wild Cherry

**DAIRY FREEZE**

**SOUTH  
ON HIGHWAY 15**

*April 1956*

# DeLYLE'S

## ACADEMY OF BEAUTY CULTURE

Now Located 105 W. First St.



**STUDENTS PRACTICE** the practical part of their training on each other until such time as they become sufficiently proficient to work with customers who come to the beauty school. All work, whether done for student or customer is constantly supervised and checked by a competent instructor.

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FREDSTROM'S

Kelvinator  
ELECTRIC APPLIANCES

Whirlpool  
HOME LAUNDRY

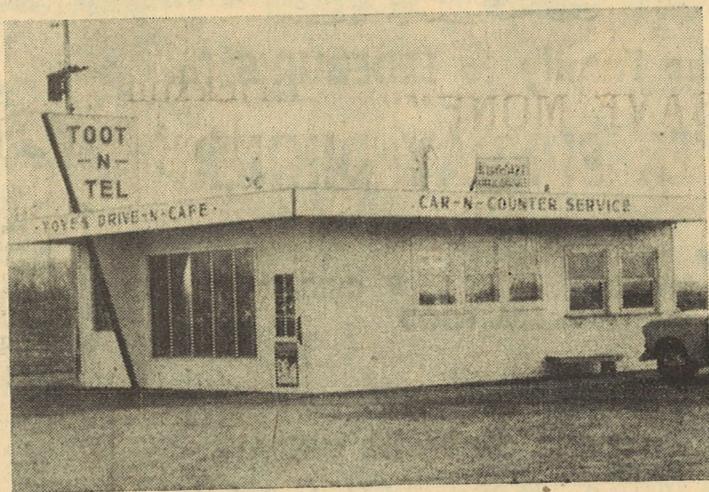
FREDSTROM'S

NORT

# TOYE'S TOOT-N-TELL

## NOW OPEN FOR

# DRIVE-IN SERVICE



**DRIVE IN AFTER THE MOVIE FOR  
YOUR FAVORITE REFRESHMENTS**

Highway 15

*April 1955*

— Across from Family Drive-In Theatre