

Remembering – People & Places

Memories can be triggered by events, people, sounds, sights, smells, and more. Often individuals stand out in our memories for a number of reasons. It may be as a result of their accomplishments, their leadership, their social causes, or just because they intersected our lives at a certain time in our personal development. In any event, the following are a few of those people that may in some way cause us to remember things from our past that we may not have thought about for many years.

Fred's Place was a well known establishment located at 112 W. First Street in Fairmont. The interior featured a mirrored walnut bar, high ceilings, a bare wood floor, and pool tables. Perhaps what set Fred's Place apart from others were his hot beef sandwiches. Anyone that remembers that era recalls with pleasure, "Fred's Hot Beef Sandwiches." They were mouth watering, ample, and tasty. As for the proprietor, Fred Dieckman, according to the June 24, 1978, edition of the *Sentinel*, he retired in 1978 after running the tavern for 18 years. That article quotes Fred as saying: "I got a college education running this place, just with the people that's been in here. Just doing business has been 18 years of education in people," said the bartender, who claims he "got kicked out of second grade 'cause I didn't shave one day." Fred's Place, and its owner Fred Diekmann, added to the historical character of Martin County and the memories of many that lived here during that time.

Then there was a young man that came to Fairmont to play baseball in the late 1940s or early 1950s. He was known as "Yank" when he pitched for the Fairmont Martins and Fairmont Cardinals. Bob Yankovich was from Mason City, Iowa. He was an all-state Iowa high school football player and played baseball at the University of Iowa and Luther College after graduating from Mason City High School.

World War II interrupted his life in 1942. He served in the Army in the 45th Infantry Combat Division and participated in the African Invasion, the invasion of Sicily, France, Germany, and Austria. In all, his military service took him to sixteen countries.

After his military service, he played baseball for the Denver Bears, at that time part of the New York Yankees chain. He was "farmed out" to Quincy, Illinois, of the 3-I league, and played there until 1947.

Yankovich came to Fairmont as a result of Scrub Anderson who played with him at Decorah, Iowa. Anderson informed him of an opening on the Fairmont Martins baseball team. He sold cars for his brother in Mason City during the off season; consequently, upon coming to Fairmont in 1948 he worked as a used car salesman for Pannkuk Nash. He also worked for Red Mackey TV and Refrigeration.

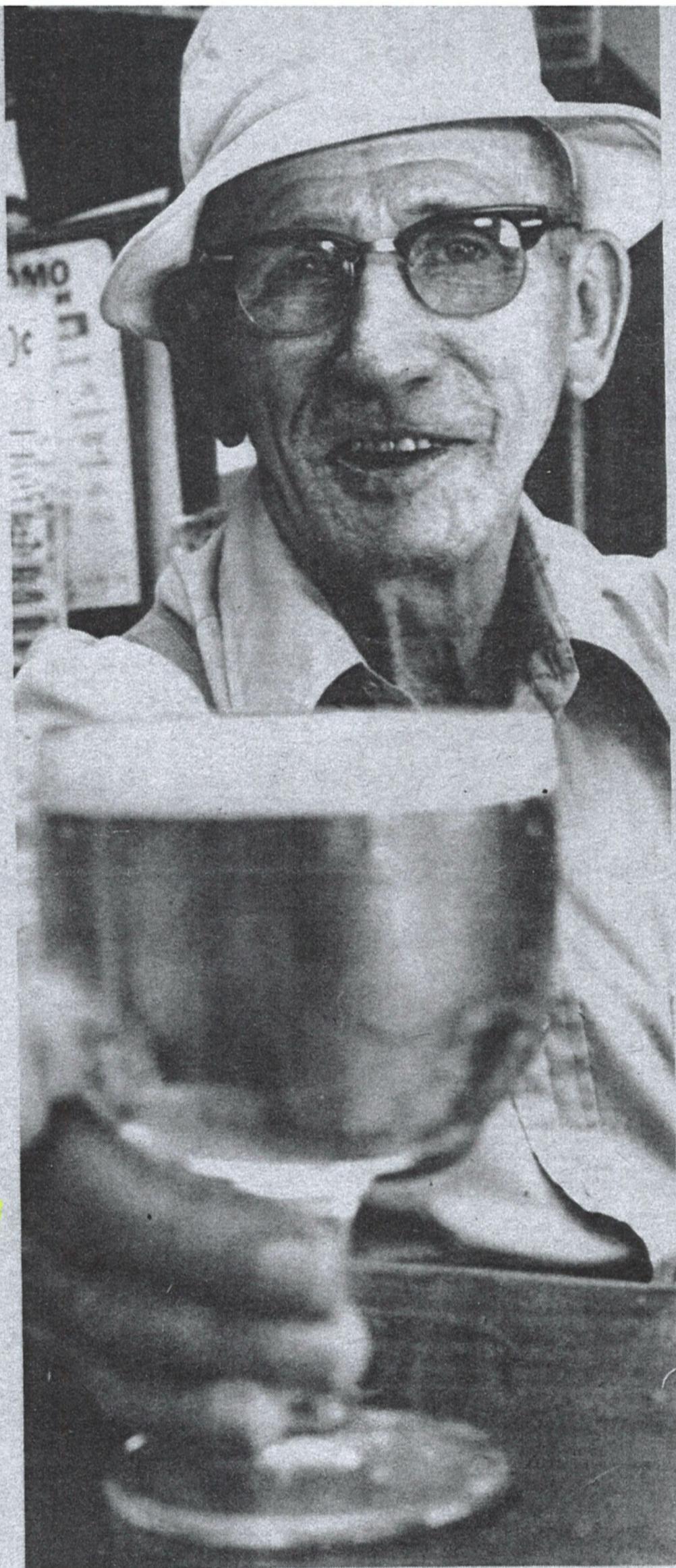
In the fall of 1949 he decided to go into business for himself and rented a space at the

fairgrounds, at that time located at the present site of Five Lakes Centre. He had \$1,800.00 in cash, enough to buy one good used car. Yankovich did all the business himself, from trading cars, to bookkeeping, to sales. As time went on, he became successful and by 1960 he had bought and sold approximately 5,000 cars. He could get almost any make and model of automobile a customer wanted. From baseball to business, Bob Yankovich was a familiar figure on the local scene.

Hilda Thurston Taylor was not a Martin County native; however, she had a very positive influence on Martin County. According to archives in the Pioneer Museum, she became a fulltime 4H agent with the Martin County Extension Service in 1935. She moved away, but returned in 1946 again working with the Martin County Extension Service. Then in 1951, Hilda and her sister, Nina, opened a women's clothing store in Fairmont that evolved into a bridal-formal shop. Her legacy was helping young people in their growth and development in addition to providing them guidance in putting together a perfect wedding.

These previously mentioned individuals are but a few of the many people that have made Martin County memories. Their accomplishments have proven interesting, positive, and unique and are forever woven into the fabric of our local history.

For more information on this topic, or to become a member, visit the Pioneer Museum.



Fred Diekmann





Hilda Thurston Taylor