**Village of Beardsley**
courtesy of Big Stone County Historical Society from the **Big Stone County, Minnesota 1881-1981** Book

William W. Beardsley applied for a homestead at the Receiver’s Office in Benson, Minnesota, on April 3, 1878.  He first made settlement on the land on May 25, 1878, and built a house, establishing residence in August 1878.  In 1880, the St. Cloud and Lake Traverse Railway Co. built a branch line from Morris to Browns Valley, and the Beardsley homestead was platted in November 1800, becoming the Village of Beardsley.

The first religious service was held in the home of Joseph Branch in the spring of 1880.  The first school in the area was taught by Paulina Hammond in Section 8 in May 1880.  The first town meeting was held April 5, 1880, at the Joseph Branch home.  Ole Moen was chosen moderator and John Shannon, clerk.  The post office of Beardsley was established April 11, 1881, with J. A. Shannon as its postmaster.

Henry Stonebreaker came to the town in May of 1881, and put up a building which housed a saloon.  He also dealt in coal, wood, and lumber.  A. W. Jones came in June 1881 and built a store handling general merchandise.  Jeffrey Spencer and L. P. Burdick made an addition to the village and had a store known as Burdick and Spencer.  In 1881, Jo Shannon built a store which was occupied the next winter by Mr. Bartlett.

Beardsley’s first hotel, which was built in 1881 by Capt. J. M. Cole, burned in 1888.  In 1898 Harry Letford made a hotel in the store building of Pat Jordan and C. Flynn.  According to Mrs. Frank Morrow, Harry Letford was 17 years old when he started the hotel with the help of a 15 year old brother.  Other hotel men were F. E. Morrow, William Tubbs, A Markham, O.S. Briggs, Charlie Sanders, and William Bohanon.

The first lumber yard was managed by Warren Jones until he sold to John Maher in 1886.  Later, this yard was part of the holdings of Pat W. Jordan, who ran a bank, a hardware store, and several farms in the area.  George Brackett opened the first hardware store in Beardsley and sold it to Mr. Barr.  C.A. Prevey bought the store in 1887 and sold it to Wright Brothers in 1889.

E. L. Anderson, hardware merchant, and a man named Oren were undertakers.  In those days, undertakers brought a casket with them and laid out the deceased at the home.  They drove a pair of dark horses draped with black net.  When the undertaker left, they put a black veil on the door, to indicate a death in the house.

In 1881, George Brackett built the first wheat storehouse, and the first load of wheat was hauled by Henry Covart.  This was later developed into a real elevator and sold to R. Norrish, who engaged Charles Westfall to buy grain.  Charles Westfall remained a prominent citizen; he later owned a stockyard, bank, and elevator.  The Cargill Elevator Co. was built in 1882, and the first Farmer’s Elevator in 1800.  In 1958, Beardsley Grain and Feed Co. operated four elevators:  the old Monarch, Westfall, Dittes, and Cargill plants.  A bad fire destroyed the main building September 21, 1958.  The Farmer’s Elevator building had been remodeled in 1942 and again in 1954.  A new building, erected in1957, was lost by fire on December 5, 1970.  Alvin Kamstra was appointed manager of the Beardsley Farmers Elevator in 1949, and under his able management, it has taken over all the elevators in Beardsley.  They have a total storage capacity of 885,000 bushels, the largest elevator in the entire area.

Before the 1929 Wall Street crash, there were two banks:  the Citizen’s State and the First National.  Security State Bank opened February 21, 1930, in the building where the First National Bank had operated.  W. B. Jorgens joined the bank in 1971, and Larry Deutsch in 1965.  Mrs. Dorothy Haanen has been with the bank since 1948.

Millinary stores played a big role in early days.  In those days, milliners did not simply buy and sell hats.  The ladies who owned shops studied fashion magazines and stocked natural straw and felt hats in the current popular shapes and the materials to trim them.  Mr. George C. Cranmer, Mrs. Rudolph Herbers, Catherine Flynn, Esther Lumphrey, and Marian Brady were milliners.

Beardsley has had many restaurants over the years, beginning with three in the early 1880s.  There were still three active in 1980:  Phyls' Cafe, Sykora’s Corner, and Jeanie’s Place.  They offer a variety of service.

The first town hall was built in 1897.  It was used for many social functions, business meetings, athletic events, elections, movies and parties.  In mid-winter 1936, it burned to the ground, and was later replaced with a brick building that the WPA built.  In 1978 to 70, the building was remodeled and a ramp for the handicapped added to meet the requirements for a nutrition center for senior citizens.  The Opera House, also on Main Street was operated by Durling-Hornstein Co. in 1910.  Many grand balls and dances, as well as movies, were held there.

At a meeting of the Village Council April 11, 1910, the street commissioner was instructed to order all hitching posts off Main Street.  The December 29, 1915, issue of the Beardsley News announced the Otter Tail Power Co. had turned on the electric current and Beardsley was properly and completely illuminated.  The “White Way” ran down the middle of Main Street, the widest Main Street in any town around.

Mr. and Mrs. William Bartlett donated ground for the town park and a trust fund for it upkeep.  A marble Veteran’s Memorial statue was installed in 1974 by the Beardsley American Legion August Altheide Post No. 302.

The City Charter was dated 1891.

Additional information can be found at the Big Stone County Museum which is located at 987 US Highway 12, Ortonville.