

“Kinmundy History” by Eileen (Eagan) Garrett

2015

This is Eileen Garrett, and I am going to talk about some Kinmundy history. It was such a wonderful city for anyone to grow up in. The people were always proud and considerate and loved to help their neighbors. I want to tell you about one of my ancestors, Isaac Eagan, who was one of the founders of Kinmundy. He came here with some Gray brothers in 1828. Isaac was originally a stagecoach driver. Then later on, he was a large farmer. He married Athaline Tully who was the daughter of Mark Tully who was one of the founders of Salem. Both Athaline and Isaac's ancestors came over from Ireland. I want to emphasize that even our ancestors were wonderful generous people, and it's wonderful to read about their history. It makes them come alive. Isaac was portrayed as being generous. He donated land for the first Catholic Church in Kinmundy and then for the Presbyterian Church and some others. He also donated some land for the cemetery in Kinmundy. I have six generations of Eagans buried in the Kinmundy Evergreen Cemetery.

I wanted to emphasize, too, what a kind man he was. They said that during the Civil War there was a troop train coming through Kinmundy. It was Confederate prisoners. The train stopped in Kinmundy, and there was a young boy along the railroad. He saw them carrying off a body. One of the soldiers had died, and they dug a shallow grave right beside the railroad track. You could even see the man's feet sticking up. Then the train pulled out. Later, this little boy reported it to Isaac and Isaac stepped up and said, "That man will be buried in the cemetery." Isaac had him moved out to the cemetery and buried like he should have been. A few weeks later a lady came to Kinmundy, and the same young boy was a worker at the depot. She introduced herself, and he found out what she was there for so he said, "I'll take you to Isaac Eagan's home, and he can tell you more about it." When she got there, Isaac had collected some of the belongings of the soldier who had died. When she saw them, she said, "Yes, that's my brother." She stayed in Kinmundy for about a month, they said. She put up a stone for her brother. Just recently, I think it was the Kinmundy Legion put up a new stone for him. Anyway, when she left Kinmundy, she thanked

Isaac for being so kind, and she said, "I always hated the North because I thought they were so unkind, but I've changed my mind." When she went back to the depot to get on the train, the same boy was there who took her to see Isaac. She met him and handed him a \$5 bill for being so kind to her too. The little boy said, "I was rich. That's the most money I had in my whole life." Anyway, that was the Confederate story.

The first son of Isaac Eagan was W.B. Eagan. He built the first store in Kinmundy. Then he operated the first Post Office in Kinmundy. That house still exists. Reed and Cindy Garrett live there across the tracks on what we used to call Quality Hill. I wanted to talk a little bit about the business district. On East Main was the Nirider store along with a bunch of other buildings, but they burned down in one day. Then across from these burned out buildings, Earl Doolen had an electric shop at one time. Back to the corner of East Main was Crain's Café. On the north side of Crain's Café was a barbershop, and that was my father's barbershop. Then there was a little alleyway. Then there was a grocery store. I think later on, you would all remember it, as being the laundry, but right then it was a grocery store. It changed hands several times, but it was a nice store. Next to that was E.C. Bargh's Drug Store. He was the first owner. When he was getting ready to retire, he let his son George take over. Being young and having children of his own, George wanted to treat the children in Kinmundy right. We heard he was going to have a fountain, ice cream and booths for the children to sit in. Of course, we got excited about it, and it came to pass. It was such a nice place for teenagers and school kids to get together. He had a jukebox and a pinball machine, and we thought we were really uptown. Upstairs over Bargh's was a dentist shop at one time. Next door to that was the Rotan's Business Shop. He was a Notary Public. Next to that was a Post Office. I remember Mr. Grissom operating the Post Office. He operated that Post Office with dignity. It was always spic and span, and everything was in tiptop shape. Next door to that was Mahan and Motch Grocery Store. I loved to shop in this grocery store because they ground their own coffee beans. I was young and didn't even drink coffee, but I loved to smell the odor of the coffee beans being ground. Next door to that was where Linton started his funeral home. He sold wallpaper and the like, trying to make a living. It was always great

around the first of May because he had these sample catalogs of all his wallpaper. He was always generous, and he would give us some of these samples. We could take them home when we were kids, roll them in a cone, paste a bale across the top, and have a May basket for our neighbors. I like to remember things like this. Then next door, I remember a beauty shop, and then there was another separate building that was a barbershop. On the corner was the Building and Loan, and that was something for Kinmundy to really be proud of because it helped all these people who were trying to get loans to buy homes. Next to that was Ener Zimmer's Café. At Bargh's you could buy a nickel Coke, but up here you could order a milkshake. I'm telling you they could make the best milkshakes that ever was. They were so thick you couldn't even get them through a straw. Next to that was a printing office. I know there were several owners before him, but I remember there was a J.N. Vallow. He printed the paper weekly for several years, and he didn't believe in printing anything that was a scandal. It was just a nice neat clean paper. During the Second World War, he sent his papers to all the soldiers that were overseas. My husband was one of the receivers of the papers. He said his buddies always wanted to grab it. Of course, they would always kind of make fun because all it was, "so and so visited with so and so", but they always wanted to read his paper too. Next to the printing office was another little grocery store. Then across the street and on the corner east, there was a big two story white house. I never knew what that was, but I had a picture of it and my father when he was delivering some lumber to the lumberyard. I asked Mr. Schooley who used to run the lumberyard, about it, and he said, "I don't know what kind of house that was, but I helped tear that house down, and there was a large room, large enough for horses and a wagon to be pulled in it and even a carriage." It could have been some kind of hotel. Going east from that big white house, there was Dr. Miller's office. He was our hometown doctor for years. Back then he would come to the school and give the children their shots. When a baby was to be delivered, he would get in his horse and buggy even if it was several miles out of town. We think a lot of our Dr. Miller. Just east of that was Eagan's Livery Dray Wagon Service. Back to the main street, there was White's Creamery. They bought cream that the farmers would bring it. Then next to that was s lumberyard. It was a busy place. Next to that was White's Filling Station.

At one time, the Greyhound bus would stop there. That was a great service because back then not everyone had cars. You could go down to White's Station and take the bus. Across the Highway 37 north, there was P.H. Robnett's Garage. He had this garage when there weren't very many cars in town, but anyway, he had an ice plant. That was a big boost for Kinmundy because there had been no refrigerators in town and everybody who had to have something cool had to have what we called an icebox. There would be a delivery man who would bring a chunk of ice from Robnett's Ice Plant and chip off however much you wanted for your ice box that day. It was always fun for us kids to be out there when they were chipping ice, especially in the hot summer time. That was quite a treat to have chipped ice. Back on the west side of Main Street we start with the First State Bank. Then one block south of this bank was a livery stable. It was Smith's Livery Stable. People could rent horses or if farmers came in town with their horses, they could get them taken care of by Smith's Livery Stable. Left of the bank going west there was just a little alleyway, but there was a vacant spot where the Opera House had burned down. Then there was Pruitt's Feed Store still going west and then a little library in the early 40's. That was the nicest little library. I read just about every book that was in it. If you wanted to order one, they would order one for you. It was quite a boost to the town. Across from that was the Kinmundy Christian Church. Then come back to Main Street, the first block north of the bank, there was at one time a grocery store and then later, Gray's Hardware. Next to that was Rorhbaugh's Clothing Store. Up over this clothing store, there was a hall. They held dances there regularly. They had a little band, and people would come from Farina and Alma for our dances. Next to that was the Masonic Lodge. There was a little alleyway going back west from the Masonic Lodge, and back there they had the hitching post for farmers who came in with their horses and wagons. Next to this little alleyway going north, there was a little theater, and then Jesse George's Grocery. Jesse was a backbone of Kinmundy. He was quite a grocery man, and he was also a Boy Scout leader. Next to that was a hardware store, and the next building was the telephone office. It was rather ancient. I worked there at one time, and they had these little drops that when people would ring in, a little metal dropped down for you to answer. Inside they had a telephone booth, which was quite a boost for Kinmundy

because not everyone had telephones back then. On the corner, there was Dunlap's Heating and Plumbing and then across the street was Dr. Hanna's Veterinary Office. I think his initials were H.N. and he had a son Dwight who was a veterinarian for Kinmundy years later. There were also shoe repair shops in Kinmundy. That was quite an advantage because shoes cost a lot of money and you didn't just go get a new pair of shoes because you had a hole in the sole. You'd go to the shop and get a resole, or if your heels run over, you got some kind of support to bring them back in shape.

I wanted to talk about the railroads. We had depots at the I.C. Railroad and the C. & E. I. They sold tickets, and that was another boost for Kinmundy. Like the Greyhound bus, the train would stop, and you could get on and off in Kinmundy. Now they all go straight through. Besides that, where the I.C. and the C. & E.I. tracks cross, there was what we called the Railroad Tower. You could go down there to send a telegram. Kids from high school who were trying to think of something to do when they got out of high school to make a living would learn the Morse code from the men who worked there.

I wanted to talk about our schools. We did have a wonderful school system. Originally, I think they said it was just a building made from regular wood siding, but later on in 1910, they built this brick building. There was a brick yard in Kinmundy that was out on the north end of Kinmundy. My father helped to haul bricks over to have this building erected. It was a wonderful school, and it was always kept in tiptop shape. In fall it was always so beautiful because they would have varnished the floors and stairs and had them shining. On the landings, we had our lockers. There were four rooms and the office on the main floor. This was before the community school. There were two grades in one room. Upstairs, there were three rooms and a study hall. The lab was downstairs. I was lucky. In 1930, they had a kindergarten, and it was held in the lab room downstairs. We were taught, "See Dick run" and all those kind of books and our colors and all of that. It was fun. There was a bell tower on the northwest corner of the school. It was rung every morning of school days at 8 o'clock and then at noon. All the restrooms were downstairs and the furnace. There was a separate gym back then. The P.E. classes were held in separate gyms for the boys and girls. We had sock hops there too. I can remember some Firemen's Balls

being held there. It was quite a get together place. I think it was my senior year they hadn't started the proms. For my senior year, we had a potluck supper in the gym. The gym was also used for assemblies when the superintendent wanted to inform us on a bunch of things. Back then there were no buses going. If students wanted to come in from the country, they could stay at the women's boarding house across the tracks or room with relatives or friends to go to school.

That's about the end of what I wanted to say. "