

**Alvin Henry Schierholz**  
**(known as Alvin or A.H.)**  
**Presented by Grandson John Schierholz at Cemetery Walk**

I am Alvin Henry Schierholz (known as Alvin or A.H.) I was born north of Sutherland, Iowa, to C.E. (Carl Edward) Schierholz and Adella Orthman Schierholz on July 18, 1905. I had one sibling, a sister Edna who later married Bill Lux. My mother passed away in 1926 from brain cancer. She was the first patient at Mayo Clinic to survive such a surgery without mental impairment only to succumb to gangrene a short time later. My father later married Millie Bell who had one son Jim Bell.

My father was involved in farming, an auctioneer, and the O'Brien county supervisor. He was killed one foggy morning by the Rock Island train one mile west of Hartley on his way to a county supervisors meeting Dec. 27, 1940.

I was born near Sutherland but also lived in Little Rock and Paullina before settling on a farm south of Hartley. When moving back to the Hartley area at 12 years of age, my dad sent me, my dog and pony to herd the cows to our new home. The trip took me two days!

I engaged in farming with my dad and took part in his threshing ring with our neighbors: the Gable's, Riedeman's, Powers, Gathman's, Schoelerman's and Paul Zinn.

I graduated from Hartley High School in 1923 and purchased 2 trucks for hauling livestock and grain. From Spencer to Hartley the fee for hauling livestock was \$3, and for grain the charge was one cent per bushel. The Sioux City stock yards had big runs on Mondays, so many Sundays trucks made two trips to Sioux City. Loads were made up of fat cattle, old cows and sows all on the same truck. It was rumored there would be "special" product on the truck on the return trip. Who knows? Somehow, after many setbacks, we survived the depression and purchased the farm where the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of Schierholz's is currently living.

We had a very dependable hired hand, Richard (Dick) Peterson who had emigrated here from Germany. He lived with the family working for three generations, C.E., Alvin and Edward.

I always had an interest in buying and selling, and at 19 was hooked on cattle trading after my first trip to South Dakota with Andy Omhe from Primghar. I also had a realtor's license helping me make land transactions too. I never had a contract or a lease, a handshake was what sealed the deal.

In the early forties, I sold the trucks to Adolf Mangels and then focused on order buying to resale at Spencer Livestock and area farmers. Later I partnered with Leonard Eischeid and built the North Y stock yards in Spencer.

I traveled to South Dakota weekly, going to Miller, Presho, Winner, Pierre, Kimball, then up thru Mobridge, Aberdeen, Redfield, Rapid City, Faith, Phillip and Watertown compiling over 60,000 miles annually going to sale barns and ranches. Many times, a farmer customer rode along for the week. I was known to purchase a new Oldsmobile every year because of business travel. One time in the early 50's traveling thru road construction south of town, I stopped to talk to the crew foreman and while talking the "cat" driver backed up over the trunk of my new car!

In the fall, cattle runs were large and auctions would begin at 10 a.m. and run until the following day. Cattle prices were 21 to 23 cents a pound. In the early days of my cattle buying career, the cattle were sent home in train cars. Fall meant looking for exceptional calves for local youths 4-H projects. I smoked many cigars and PalMals on these trips and was known for shirts with burns along with my car seats.

In 1960 Courier Holman and A.D. Anderson started IBP. Floyd Betts and I were invited to tour the new plant in Denison. It revolutionized how cattle were marketed and was the demise of big stock yards. Courier offered us a job but we had to buy a block of stocks to be considered. Floyd bought in but I did not, probably not a good business decision.

## FAMILY

I was a late bloomer, but finally met my future bride Kathryn Lantaff who lived across the road at Bert Gable's farm. Kathryn taught school at Omega #9. We had four children, Marilynn, Jane, Edward, and Mary.

When I was home I enjoyed playing cards, especially Pinochle. I did some fishing and enjoyed my trips to Canada that included fly ins.

Along with card games with family and friends, we always had birthday parties, a big 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration that included homegrown fried chicken, and later fireworks I'd brought home from South Dakota. The party site rotated between DeBoers, Clays, Guhls, Eppings, and Groens.

In 1956, we moved to Hartley. I designed our new home and was very proud of it.

In later years my health deteriorated, having adult onset diabetes. My lifestyle of long hours driving, too many T-bone steaks, cocktails, and eating sweets while driving were all contributors to this diagnosis.

After having one leg amputated below the knee and within a couple of years the other above the knee, I had my car fitted with hand controls. There was definitely a learning curve with this device, and many times scared my grandson John when he rode along to the north pasture to check cattle. I continued making trips to South Dakota as long as I could find someone to make the trip with me.

I was blessed with 11 grandchildren, whom I sometimes startled with my booming voice or if overnights, my LOUD snoring! The older grandchildren were all good card players thanks to spending many hours playing with Grandpa Al.

I passed away on May 27, 1979.