

# **Lyle Shinkle**

Written and Presented by Roger Shinkle at the 2014 Cemetery Walk

Welcome. I am Lyle Shinkle. I was born on June 7, 1913, on a farm six and one half miles south of Hartley, the oldest of six children. I was a product of the Great Depression when times were hard for everyone, but for our family it was very difficult as my father was an alcoholic, which caused the divorce of my parents.

During my high school years, I worked at the Hartley Creamery candling eggs, and for some extra money, I raised a few hogs just north of Highway 18. Every day I would collect a bucket of garbage from Red's Cafe and a bucket of waste product from the creamery and carry it the four blocks to feed the hogs. When they were ready for market I would either sell them or butcher to put meat on the family table. I also worked for the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) cutting trees for the Rock Island Railroad.

As a young man I had hay fever and asthma, so during the later summer, a friend and I would hop freight trains heading for northern Minnesota or Canada to escape the rag weed pollen since there was no air conditioning at the time. During my time up north, I worked as a bus boy in the Lutsen resort near Duluth and also as a deck hand on the iron ore boats on the Great Lakes.

After high school, I wanted to attend Business College in Sioux Falls. I was able to get a scholarship and a job on campus to pay for my books and tuition, but did not have the ten dollars a month for room rent, so I had to return to Hartley and go to work for Mr. Randolph in his insurance business. I saved enough money to buy his agency, and then married Ruth Staines in 1937. We lived with her parents, Roy and Dora Staines, for a few years until we could afford to buy our own home. We paid \$5,000 for our house at 345 First Street SW, just a few houses east from where Ron and Sherry Sterk live today. Our sons Dan and Roger came along in 1938 and 1944. We lived in this house for over 67 years.

My first office was in the basement under Pippy's cafe and later we moved up to the building where Cmelik Law Office is now. I also sold real estate and did income tax work for many farmers and town folks as well. When WWII started, I volunteered but was not accepted due to my allergies and asthma.

About this time I became the Hartley City Clerk. This was back before city managers, but the role was about the same. I was responsible for the city council meeting minutes, the light plant (before REA), the water system, sewer plant, street department, cemetery and the airport. This was a very busy time in my life. I learned to fly and helped start the Strato Flying Club, which had two aircraft. The airport was busy with ten planes based there, and I was responsible for the gas concession as well. Roger and Dan helped me mow around the hangars and runway lights and later both of the boys learned to fly there. I enjoyed giving people plane rides and have the names of some of you, your parents or grandparents in my log books.

In addition to work, I always found time for church activities. I was active in the Methodist church as a board member and also sang in the choir for 65 years. I was a member of Kiwanis and helped with the Boy Scouts by driving a car load of scouts to Chicago for a field trip

In the late 1950's I bought Doc Hamilton's (the city attorney) 1941 Chris Craft boat. It was a classic barrel back beautiful wooden boat. We gave many rides and Dan and Roger taught countless kids to water ski during the summers until the early 60's when it was demolished in a bad storm. We acquired other boats to continue the summer fun on Lake Okoboji.

I enjoyed traveling and Ruth and I were able to join an Air Stream caravan to Mexico for two months one winter. We traveled to many states in the USA and Alaska and I also made a trip to Europe with a local tour group.

After 30 years as city clerk, I retired from the city and sold the insurance business to Treimer's. I needed to stay busy, so I raised and sold Christmas trees, became president of Meals on Wheels, took up bowling and golf and served on the planning and zoning board. When I was in my 70's, I rode my

bike on RAGBRAI, twice. The first time was on a three-speed bike which was difficult, especially on the hills, so I up-graded to a ten-speed the next time I did it. I tent camped both times and enjoyed the entire experience both times.

Tom Hamilton, Doc's son and also an attorney in Hartley, later told my son Roger, "That Lyle Shinkle is a good man, a hard worker, but a little short on fun!" Well I guess I showed him because I had a 37 year retirement and had lots of fun living in Florida in the winters playing golf, horse shoes, shuffle board and I even bowled into my 90's when I rolled within three pins of a perfect game!

I also was able to fly a plane at age 92. I took an instructor along to make it legal as I had let my license expire a few years earlier.

Ruth and I enjoyed living in Hartley and it was a great place to raise our sons Dan and Roger. I knew everyone in town and where they lived, so I wanted to give something back to the people of Hartley. Terry Hilbert informed me that the town wanted to remodel the park where the tennis courts were, so I donated \$10,000 for that purpose and was honored when the city renamed it "Shinkle Park."

On my business card I had these words printed. "Give to the world the best you have, and the best will come back to you! Help somebody today!" I believe that and I have always tried to keep a positive attitude in life. My faith and my church were a very important part of my life, so please take a cross and a sheet titled "Attitude" with you. I arrived in Heaven after living 95 good years in Hartley, so I hope to see you there. Trust me; you are going to like it!! Until then, enjoy your life and keep a good attitude. Thanks for stopping by.