

John Syverson

John Syverson, merchant, banker and prominent business man, whose intense and intelligently directed activity, has contributed much to the upbuilding of Cooperstown and the development of Griggs county, was born in Vaage, Norway, Mar. 17, 1849, a son of Syver Bergum, who was a shoemaker by trade and also a small farm in Norway. He died in Polk county, Minnesota, at the advanced age of 87 years. Of his family of 3 sons and 3 daughters, John was the 5th.

He was a young man of twenty years, when in 1869, he left the land of the midnight sun and sought the opportunities offered in the new world to the foreign born man of enterprise and ambition. Making his way to Mankato, Minnesota, he was employed on a railroad for two years, and then went to St. James, Minn. where he devoted five years to clerking. He afterward spent five years as an employee in a general merchandise store at Nevada, Iowa, and returning to St. James, spent three years on a farm.

In the spring of 1883 Mr. Syverson arrived in Cooperstown, North Dakota, which at that time was a tiny hamlet containing a few frame buildings. He entered the employ of Thompson & Odegard, and the following year

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bought out the interest of the senior partner, while later he purchased the interest of Mr. Odegard and became sole proprietor of the business, which he has since conducted.

In 1903 he incorporated his mercantile interests under the ~~style~~^{style} of John Syverson & Sons, giving his two sons an interest in the business. Their store building, 75 X 140 feet, is a brick and stone structure thoroughly modern and up-to-date in its equipment and appointments. It was built in 1894. The store fixtures are such as well display the goods and the arrangement of the stock is attractive, while the business methods of the house commend the firm to the patronage and support of the public: They have ever recognized the fact that satisfied patrons are the best advertisements and in all their dealings have conformed their business to the highest commercial standards of integrity and enterprise.

Mr. Syverson, however, has not confined his attention solely to merchandising, but has extended his efforts over a broad field, his labors being at all times of a character that contributes to public progress and prosperity as well as to individual success.

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He was one of the organizers of the State Bank of Cooperstown, which has enjoyed a steady and healthful growth from the beginning, and from the first he has been its president. He is also the owner of the two story building, which is so arranged as to facilitate the conduct of the business. Mr. Syverson was also one of the organizers and first stock holders of the State Bank of Finley, N. Dak. of which he is now vice president. He is also a stock holder and president of the State Bank of Benford N. Dak., is a stockholder and the vice president of the Griggs County Telephone Co. and a stock holder and director of the Crane-Johnson Lumber Co., having yards in ten different towns and cities in North Dakota. He also owns a number of farms which are cultivated by renters. He is likewise the president of the board of trustees of the Northern Light Masonic Temple Association, Inc., which is now building a thirty-five thousand dollar brick structure which is to be used exclusively for Masonic purposes, and includes well appointed club rooms.

In 1877 Mr. Syverson was married to Annie T. Odegard, a native of Norway, whose family came to North Dakota among the early

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settlers of the state.

They have two sons and a daughter.

Theodore Sigwald is a worthy successor of his father in the business circles of Grigg Co. He was born in Cooperstown, Feb 14, 1886, and after attending the public schools there, was graduated from the Shattuck Military Academy at Faribault Minnesota in 1904.

He completed a course in mining engineering in Columbia University of New York in 1909, and upon his return home became a partner of his father in the firm of John Syverson & Sons.

On Oct. 9, 1909, he was married to Marie Joan Hermes, a native of Berlin Germany, and they have one son John. T. S. Syverson is prominent in Masonic circles, being a past master of the blue lodge and venerable master of the Lodge of Perfection, and he also belongs to the Theta Xi, a fraternity of Columbia University.

The second son, John A. Syverson, after leaving the high school at Cooperstown attended the Shattuck Military Academy at Faribault, Minnesota, and afterward became a law student in the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

Gertrude, a graduate of St. Mary's Academy

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at Faribault, Minnesota, continued her education in Smith College at Northampton, Massachusetts.

It has been said that each individual has some hobby and if this is true, one may say that Mr. Syverson's is the beautifying of his town, where he has had planted many of the trees which help to make Cooperstown one of the most beautiful places in the entire state. This is, however, but one feature of his public spirit; for when the days ~~was~~^{were} darkest and the times hardest in North Dakota he did much toward carrying others through and lifting the financial burden resting upon the state. Of a studious nature, he possesses a fine private library, representing the best authors of the world, with which he and his wife are largely familiar. He also has a small experimental orchard, to which he devotes much time, and thus his hours which are free from business cares are filled with interests of an important and beneficial character and Mr. Syverson, although extremely modest and retiring, is ranked with the most prominent, representative and valued citizens of Griggs County.

Bibliog: Lounsberry Vol III, 1917, page 105-6

John Syverson

John Syverson, merchant, banker + prominent business man, was born in Vaage, Norway Mar 17, 1849, a son of Syver Bergum, who was a shoemaker by trade, and also had a small farm in Norway. He died in Polk Co, Minn, at 87 years - John was 5th of 3 boys and 3 girls of his father's family. He came to Minn in 1869, worked on railway 2 yrs, at Mankato, then clerked for 5 yrs at St James, Minn, then 5 years in a store at Nevada, Iowa, then 3 years on a farm at St James -

Came to Cooperstown ¹⁸⁸³ as a clerk for Thompson + Odegard + bought out both owners - He incorporated in 1903 as John Syverson + Sons - His store building 75 x 140 ft, of brick + stone was built in 1894. He was connected with other businesses: State Bank of Coeplin, State Bank of Finley N.D., State Bank of Binford N.D., Griggs Co Telephone Co, Crane-Johnson Lumber Co, and owns several farms, + Masonic Temple Assn.

Mr. Syverson married in 1877 Miss Annie T. Odegard b. in Norway.

Children:

Theodor Sigwald, b. Feb 14, 1886 in Coeplin,

" " married Oct 9, 1909, Marie Joan Idernes,

born in Germany -

John A. and Gertrude -

Bill, Condensed from Lorenz berry Vol III, 1917, p 105-6.

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John Syverson was born March 17, 1849 at Vaage Norway. He was the son of Syver and Margit Jacobson Bergum. His father was a shoemaker on an estate there. Mr. Syverson was tutored with the children of the owner of the "gaard". With the first money he earned after he came to Minnesota in 1869, he bought a gold watch and sent it to the lady who had been kind enough to let him learn with her own children.

In 1876 he married Annie Odegard*, who had come to Minnesota with her parents in 1860's. Mr. Syverson worked in stores in Minnesota, Iowa, and at Norfolk Nebraska. It was in Norfolk ~~that~~ that he lost three children — all his children — by diphtheria. Heart broken, it was then, in 1883, that he came to Cooperstown to work for his brothers-in-law, Knud Thompson and John Odegard, who owned the first store in Cooperstown. In about one year he bought out Mr. Thompson and later Mr. Odegard*.

Three children were born to Mr. Syverson in Cooperstown Theodore, John Jr. and Gertrude (Fladeland)

Mr. Syverson had a great interest in Cooperstown. At his own expense he planted trees completely around several blocks in Cooperstown, including the one where his house was built, and the block where the Hospital now stands.

When Cooperstown was organized as a village Aug 23, 1892, he was elected "Trustee" for the 3rd District (Ward) and when it was incorporated as a city, Nov 6, 1906, Mr. Syverson was elected as the first mayor.

In the period of May and June 1887 when the county paid a 3 cent bounty on gophers he took in, in trade gopher tails amounting to \$900⁴² in his store.

These differences are not an error. John had changed the spelling of his name.

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In 1889, Mr. Syverson was assessed for
"Goods and Merchandise, \$10,000⁰⁰,"

He built the Syverson Block in 1894, the brick
office building, east, across the street from the store in 1899,
and the "Newell House" - a \$1⁰⁰ a day hotel - in 1896,
this he named for Dr. George Newell, a Civil War
army surgeon who was here in 1883. This building
became the "Rebecca Home" in 1956.

The time while Mr. Syverson was mayor saw the
beginnings of cement sidewalks to replace the
rotting board sidewalks in town.

Mr. Syverson planned the landscape work of
the grounds of the Gymnasium and Grade School, the High
School, the Bethlehem Church, and the
Masonic Temple.

Mr. Syverson died here in 1932, and Mrs Syverson
in 1934.

JOHN SYVERSON

from Lounsberry's History of North Dakota
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Mr. Syverson, however, has not confined his attention solely to merchandising but has extended his efforts over a broad field, his labors being at all times of a character that contributed to public progress and prosperity as well as to individual success. He was one of the organizers of the State Bank of Cooperstown, which has enjoyed a steady and healthful growth from the beginning and from the first he has been its president. He is also the owner of the two story bank building, which is so arranged as to facilitate the conduct of the business. Mr. Syverson was also one of the organizers and first stockholders of the State Bank at Pinley, North Dakota, of which he is now vice president. He is also a stockholder and the president of the State Bank of Binford, North Dakota, is a stockholder and vice president of the Griggs County Telephone Company and a stockholder and director of the Crane Johnson Lumber Company, having yards in ten different towns and cities in North Dakota. He also owns a number of farms which are cultivated by renters. He is likewise the president of the Board of trustees of the Northern Light Masonic Temple Association, Inc., which is now building a thirty-five thousand dollar brick structure which is to be used exclusively for Masonic purposes and includes well appointed club rooms.

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