

# ELY

---

## Block 7, Lot 13 De Smet Cemetery



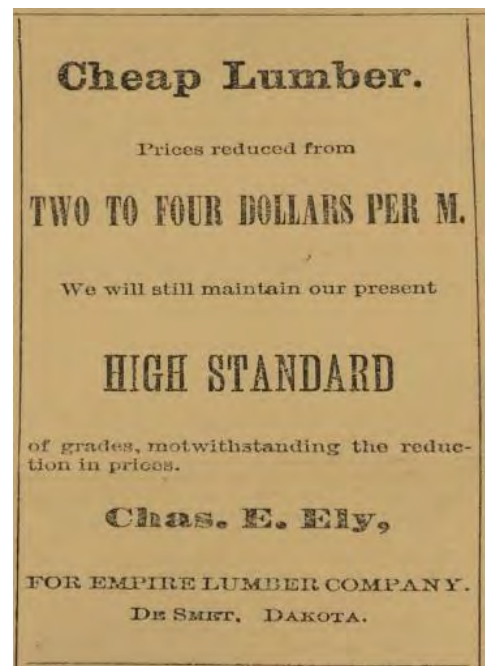
From L-R (south - north): Emma Mattson 1886 - 1907 / Inga Marie Ely 1885 - 1879 / Kirk H. Ely 1874 - 1960

Although only Charles Ely and his son Alfred are mentioned in the Little House books (only Alfred's first name is given), the Elys were some of the earliest De Smet settlers. Charles Ely came west during the summer of 1880, as agent for the Empire Lumber Company of Winona, Minnesota, operating in Huron and De Smet, selling lumber directly from railroad cars. He was enumerated on the 1880 census in De Smet as a lumber agent, but also in Winona with his wife and three children.

Just prior to the October blizzard of 1880, Ely wrote the following letter to friends still in Winona:

*I took a trip to the Missouri last week with Mr. Reed. It takes a day and a half to go from here. It makes me think we are not so very far west. But at Pierre, you know you are there. The barren hills of the Bad Lands, the bowie knives and revolvers of the cow boys, the heavy freight wagons of the transportation companies, the price of 5-cent cigars—all remind you that you are west "with a vengeance." We thought we had seen some land before we arrived here, but when you can ride for 72 miles upon a straight track without a cut or a fill, and see nothing but wide prairie without a settler you are reminded that it isn't an easy job to get up a corner on wheat farms.*

*The Northwestern Railroad Company have occupied a magnificent country and in a short time the immense herds of stock from the grass lands of Dakota will be moving to market over its line. You can form some idea of the amount of traffic with the Black Hills by the number of teams it takes to move supplies to the mines. Four thousand head of stock and 700 wagons were counted on the Fort Pierre route recently, by a stage passenger. The Northwestern Stage Company have a large force of men at work improving the road and will soon move their stages towards Pierre.*



*It has been but five short months since I arrived in Dakota, but to look at the growth of the country it seems as many years. Huron, in the character of its buildings and business activity, is ahead of Winona at five years of age, and no halt is made yet, but there is on the contrary a disposition to improve, nearly touching to extravagance. I have every confidence in this line and country. Its future is undoubtedly immediate prosperity. I have had this "knocked into me" in spite of all a most critical fault-finder could say or think. —C.E. Ely.*

Ely filed on a tree claim in Kingsbury County, the SD 31-110-58 (June 8, 1880), and a homestead, the SW 2-111-56 (December 3, 1880). Ely left De Smet in late December 1880 and was nine days by train to Winona, due to the Christmas blizzard and holiday traffic. He returned to De Smet on one of the last trains through, and he wrote the following on March 1, 1881, reporting that snow in De Smet was sixteen to eighteen inches deep, but was piled between the houses from sixteen to eighteen feet in depth. March 17, 1881, he wrote again, suggesting that travel between De Smet and Huron was possible:

*Good Cheer at Huron—No Grumbling.*

*Correspondence of The Winona Republican. Huron, Dakota, March 1. We are all right here, and our only fear is that you at Winona are not. This letter will go on foot by Mr. Fleming of Winona. [He walked on the track from Huron 149 miles. —Ed. Rep.] We burn hay, of which we have plenty. Our coal we are saving for a probable cold snap. We can stand five more weeks of just this same weather. There is not a case of sickness in our town. Don't worry over reports of hardships. They do not exist in this part of Dakota. We have not burned a shingle yet nor missed a meal. —Chas. E. Ely.*

*Southern Dakota. The Fuel Difficulty—Hay Furnishes the Solution—Present Experiences. Correspondence of The Winona Republican. De Smet, D.T., March 17.*

*A gentleman goes out on foot in the morning, and I take the opportunity to write. We are in good shape, taking into consideration the extraordinary Winter, which I have no doubt has been more of a surprise to Eastern people than to those more favorably situated on these wild prairies. As we saw our chances disappearing for more fuel, we reduced the number of fires. Hotels would use two instead of four. Stores would keep fire, say, for an hour or two each day. Private families would confine themselves to the kitchen stove, which they put in their warmest room. Then all commenced to practice on hay, which indeed is a most excellent fuel. Many farmers of large experience say that their fuel in this country will hereafter be the least of their troubles, and indeed if you go into one of their houses on a cold day and get a good meal and a "thaw," you would be surprised at the little trouble they have with it. Ten tons of hay can be cut and stacked at a net cost to a farmer of 50 cents a ton. It is as good as four cords of wood. You can twist hay with less labor than you can saw the wood. Farmers never buy coal except for severe weather, when it is difficult to get to the stack.*

*Antelope, deer and elk have been killed in great numbers this Winter. The deep snow giving the dogs the advantage, they are soon run down. Many have been taken alive and are being fattened. The antelope is a gamy sort of meat, with but little fat, but it beats nothing all out.*

*We hope to see the railroad open by strawberry time. —C.E. Ely.*

Charles Ely was active in the G.A.R. and civic affairs in De Smet. He became the foremost schoolhouse contractor in Kingsbury and surrounding counties in 1883 and 1884. He was responsible for building the De Smet post office, renovating Schaub's Harness Shop, building the county poor house, and tearing down the Wilder Feed Store building. After Charles left the lumber business, the Elys were

involved in a number of businesses in De Smet: running the Howland and Syndicate Hotels in the 1880s and 90s, then a restaurant and confectionary on Calumet, which Mrs. Ely continued to run after her husband's death.

## CHARLES EDWARD ELY

Block 7, Lot 13 De Smet Cemetery / body moved in 1918  
Buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, Winona, Minnesota  
October 16, 1844 – August 19, 1916; died at age 71

Husband of Caroline Moltzner (1851-1927); married January 16, 1870.

Father of Alfred (1872-1951), Kirk (1874-1960), Helen (born 1871; died in infancy), Ella May (1879-1883).

Charles Edward Ely was born October 16, 1844, in Lancaster, Ohio, to the Reverend Edward E. Ely and Jane Wellington (Barker) Ely. The Ely's were early settlers of Winona, Minnesota. In 1861, Charles enlisted in Company K, First Minnesota Infantry; he was shot in the abdomen at Gettysburg and although it was felt he wouldn't survive, he was moved to a hospital nearby and cared for by a drummer boy until being moved to Philadelphia. His mother spent four months there, caring for him until he was able to return to his regiment. He was mustered out with his regiment on May 5, 1864.

After the War, Ely engaged in business in Tennessee, then attended school in Connecticut. On January 16, 1879, Charles married Caroline Moltzner, daughter of Fred and Annie Moltzner. The Moltzners came to America from northern Germany in 1851, settling in Madison, Wisconsin, where Fred was a printer. The Elys had four children: Helen Ely (born January 5, 1871; she died in infancy), Alfred Sully Ely (born February 21, 1872), Kirk Henry Ely (born March 7, 1874), and Ella May Ely (born November 29, 1879; she died at age four in De Smet).

Charles Ely died August 19, 1916, at the Old Soldiers' Home in Fall River County, South Dakota. He was buried in De Smet, but his body was moved in January 1918 to lie beside his father in Woodlawn Cemetery, Winona, Minnesota.

*August 22, 1916. The Winona (Minnesota) REPUBLICAN-HERALD.*

*Former Resident Of Winona Passes Away*

*Charles E. Ely who came with his father Elder Edward Ely to Winona in 1852 and was the first white boy who ever walked the ground on which Winona is now built, died at a sanitorium at Hot Springs, S.D. His body was interred at De Smet, S.D. today according to word received here by Orrin F. Smith, a life long friend of the deceased.*

*Ely, who was about 73 years old, with two or three other men founded a good share of the early history of Winona. When 17 years old he enlisted in the Civil war and fought bravely for his country. On his return to Winona he became manager for the Bolcom & Son lumber yards at Front and Walnut streets and forty years ago left for De Smet where he engaged in the hotel business.*



Charles Ely, 1896

August 25, 1916. *The De Smet NEWS.*

*Another of our pioneers has gone to his long home and De Smet people join with the family in mourning the death of one who did his part, honestly and well, toward to maintaining of a home and the upbuilding of the community.*

*Charles Ely was born in Lancaster, Ohio, October 16, 1845 [sic], the son of Rev. and Mrs. E.E. Ely. About 1850 the family moved to the vicinity where Winona, Minn., now stands, and proceeded to make a home and help make a city. The reverend, a Baptist minister, preached the first sermon delivered in that wilderness; was the first merchant, when it became necessary that someone ship in groceries for the few settlers; was the first postmaster, a biographer stating that the post office was located in the elder's hat, and his was the first 'free delivery' post office, as he carried the mail to each family as it arrived. He helped to lay the foundation of the now fine city of Winona, expending time, energy and money for the good of the community. Elder Ely died in 1888, at the age of 73 years. His estimable wife, than whom there was no nobler woman or more consistent Christian, lived to be 93 years old, dying in 1910 in Portland, Ore. She visited her son here occasionally, and many of our people well remember her.*

*In 1861 Charles, then but 16, enlisted in Co. K, First Minnesota volunteers, and was with the army of the Potomac until the close of the war. At the battle of Gettysburg, he received a severe bullet wound, but in three months he was back with his company. Among the notable battles and ten engagements in which he participated were Bull Run, Ball Bluff, Gettysburg, Yorktown, West Point, Fair Oaks, Peach Orchard, Savage Station, White Oak Swamp, and Seven Days Retreat.*

*After the war Charles attended and was graduated from a business college in Connecticut, and was later employed in Winona by various lumber companies. In 1880 he came to the new town of De Smet and established our first lumber yard and was engaged in that business for a number of years.*

*Mr. Ely was married to Miss Carrie Moltzner January 16, 1870, and to them were born four children-Alfred S., now of New York City, Kirk H., of Newell, this state, Helen, who died in infancy, and Mamie, who died in girlhood.*

*Mr. Ely was a De Smet business man for thirty-six years, and we never had a more enthusiastic and optimistic booster for our city. Always cheerful, always seeing better things ahead, honest to the penny in his dealings, and always attending to his business. He never forgot that he was an old soldier and did not allow others to forget it. His dearest friends were his old comrades, and nothing was too good for one of the old boys, be he acquaintance or stranger.*

*Ten years ago, Mr. Ely's health began to fail, and although his wonderful vitality kept him at his counter, we could all see the beginning of the end. A year ago last winter was spent in southern Texas, and the benefit was apparent but not lasting. A month ago he went to Hot Springs and entered the Battle Mountain sanitarium where he received the best of care and was in the best of spirits up to the last. Friday night he sat on the porch and enjoyed a smoke and chat with comrades, going back to his room unassisted. During the night he became unconscious and a little after nine next morning he peacefully passed away.*



Charles Ely, 1 Minn.

*Funeral was held in the opera house Monday afternoon, conducted by Rec. H. Luther Williams, pastor of the M.E. Church, and interment was made in the cemetery on the hill.*



Corp Chas. E. Ely / Co K / 1 Minn Inf.

*Surviving deceased are the faithful wife and two sons who have the heartfelt sympathy of everyone in the community.*

*January 3, 1918. The Winona (Minnesota) REPUBLICAN-HERALD.*

*Pioneer Buried Wednesday Was Early Settler.*

*The body of Charles E. Ely was brought to Winona from De Smet, South Dakota, by the widow, Mrs. Carrie M. Ely, and on Wednesday afternoon was buried beside that of his father, Elder Edward Ely in Woodlawn cemetery. Charles Ely died about a year ago, the body having been buried at De Smet prior to removal here.*

*He is credited with having been the first white boy to come to Winona in 1852. He served in Company K of the First Minnesota Volunteers during the war and after that was engaged in business here for a time. The widow went on to Chicago from Winona last evening to visit a sick brother.*

## CAROLINA "CARRIE" FREDERICKS

### (MOLTZNER) ELY

Buried in New York; location unknown

October 10, 1851 - August 31, 1927; died at age 75

Wife of Charles Edward Ely; married January 16, 1870.

Mother of Alfred (1872-1951), Kirk (1874-1960), Helen (born 1871; died in infancy), Ella May (1879-1883).

Caroline Fredericks Moltzner was born October 10, 1851, in Luxemburg, Germany, to Fred and Annie Moltzner. The family came to America when Carrie was one year old, and settled in Madison, Wisconsin. While living in Winona, Minnesota, Carrie met Charles Ely; they married January 16, 1870. Four children were born, two daughters dying young. Kirk and Alfred Ely lived in De Smet.

Following the death of her husband in 1906, Carrie Ely continued to run the restaurant and confectionary store they established in 1906 as Ely Luncheonette. She divided her time between the homes of her sons Kirk (in De Smet) and Alfred (in New York City). She died August 31, 1927 at age 75. Her body was taken to Minneapolis for cremation, with burial in New York.



Carrie Ely

September 2, 1927. *The De Smet NEWS.*

*Mrs. C.E. Ely passed away Wednesday evening at about 9:30 p.m. at the home of her son, K.H. Ely. Death came from paralysis after a lingering illness of several months.*

*Mrs. Ely was 75 years of age and had been a resident of De Smet since the early eighties.*

September 9, 1927. *The De Smet NEWS.*

*Pioneer Woman Is Called In Death*

*In the death of Mrs. Charles E. Ely De Smet lost one of its earliest residents and one who until a short time ago was engaged in business either with her husband or alone for much of her life here. It was but a few months ago that a paralytic stroke forced Mrs. Ely to give up her confectionery store and go to make her home with her son's family.*

*When Mr. and Mrs. Ely and children came to De Smet in 1880 he became a lumber dealer, establishing the first yard here. A few years later he became a hotel proprietor and Mrs. Ely worked with him through the management of both the Grand and the Syndicate.*

*Later they ran a confectionery which she continued after his death. She came to own several business and residence properties. Thus Mrs. Ely was a part of the business life of De Smet many years.*

*Carolina Fredericks Moltzner was born October 10, 1851, in Luxemburg, Germany, and came to America the year following with her parents, who first settled in Chicago. They later moved to Madison, Wis., where she was baptized and confirmed in the German Lutheran church.*

*It was during a residence of the family at Winona later that Carolina Moltzner met Charles Edward Ely, whom she married in 1870. Four children were born to them, two surviving: Alfred S. of New York and Kirk H. of De Smet.*

*The family came to De Smet in the spring of 1880 and had continuous residence here with the exception of a part of a year in Oregon.*

*Mrs. Ely is survived by her two sons and five grand-children, John G. of New York, and Ray M., Alfred K., Mina F., and Mason E., of De Smet. She was the last of her own family.*

*A stroke of paralysis May 24, 1927 was followed by a condition that was serious several times before death came to her at 11:35 p.m., August 31, 1927, at the age of 75 years, 10 months and 21 days.*

*Funeral services were held at the K.H. Ely home Saturday evening, the Rev. J.T. O'Neill officiating. The body was taken to Minneapolis that evening by the son and wife, to be cremated according to Mrs. Ely's wish, and laid to rest in New York.*

## ALFRED SULLY ELY

Died in Los Angeles, California; burial location unknown  
February 21, 1872 – June 12, 1951; died at age 79

Son of Charles Ely (1844-1916) and Carrie (Moltzner) Ely (1851-1927).

Brother of Kirk Ely (1874-1960).

Husband of Mabelle M. Dufour (1882-1953); they married October 14, 1904.

Father of John Graham Ely; he married Genevieve Corrine McCullough in 1938.

Alfred Sully Ely was born February 21, 1872 in Winona, Minnesota; he died June 12, 1951 in Los Angeles, California. Alfred married Mabelle M. Dufour in Philadelphia in 1904. They had one son, John Graham Ely, born February 6, 1905 in New York.

Mabelle M. Dufour was born June 15, 1882; she died June 19, 1953 in Los Angeles. Laura Ingalls Wilder remembered Alfred Ely as one of the “younger boys” in De Smet, and she included him in *Little Town on the Prairie*, Chapters 14 and 15 as the chum of Charley (Power), although Wilder did not include his last name. In *Pioneer Girl*, Alfred Ely is mentioned as one of the members of a sleighing couple, with Laura Remington. He would have only been thirteen years old in 1885, and The De Smet LEADER reports that he had spent that winter in Winona studying music. The De Smet LEADER of March 7, 1886, reported that Alfred won a potato race at the skating rink against Charley Power.

As shown in the 1952 letter below, Laura Ingalls Wilder *did* remember Alfred from her youth.

Alfred left home in 1885, studying music and telegraphy. In 1888, he returned to De Smet for a two weeks' visit; he was a telegraph operator in the Minneapolis area, at St. Anthony Park.

January 1, 1904, The De Smet NEWS reported:

*De Smet friends will be glad to hear of the prominence to which Alfred S. Ely has attained as a singer. Alfred is the son of Mr. and Mrs. C.E. Ely of De Smet, and his boyhood was spent here. As a boy he showed musical ability and his first lessons were upon the piano. He became a telegraph operator and some years were spent in offices in St. Paul, Spokane, Chicago and other cities. All his spare money was used in paying for a musical education, principally voice culture. A number of years ago he began singing in public, making engagements principally with Chautauquas. A year or two ago Alfred went to New York, and last season was connected with a prominent opera company, though in a minor position. This season he is filling an engagement with the Fritzi-Scheff Comic Opera Company, taking the part of Captain Walther in “Babette,” on of the leading characters with prominent solo work.*

*During the fall this company filled an engagement in Washington and had the pleasure of having President Roosevelt, Senator Mark Hanna and other prominent officials as hearers. The company is in New York now and will occupy the Broadway Theatre the entire winter. Mr. Ely is certainly being rewarded for his perseverance. He may still be a long way from the top, but his advance has been rapid and there is no reason to suppose that he has reached the limit of his ability. Here's hoping that the name of Alfred S. Ely may become known the country over as a star in his line.*

By 1904, Alfred was working as salesman for the Aeolian Company, selling player pianos. That same year, he married Mabelle Dufour; they sang together on more than one Victor record; their recording of “The Lord is my Shepherd” is online here:

<https://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox-253109/>

Around 1930, the Elys moved to Los Angeles, California, where Alfred continued to sell pianos. He died June 12, 1951, in Los Angeles. His burial location is unknown. Mabelle Ely died June 19, 1953. John Ely married Genevieve McCullough; he was a law professor. The couple had three daughters.

*June 14, 1951. Los Angeles TIMES.*

*Ely, Alfred S. of 1697 Redesdale Avenue, loving husband of Mabelle Dufour Ely, father of John G. Ely. Rosary this evening, 8 o'clock, at the Wallace E. White & Howard J. Callahan Mortuary. Requiem Mass Friday, 9 a.m., at St. Francis of Assisi Church.*

*June 14, 1951. The De Smet NEWS.*

*Brother of Kirk Ely Dies In California.*

*Alfred S. Ely, brother of Kirk Ely of this city, passed away Tuesday evening at Los Angeles, his home for many years. He was 79 years of age.*

*A son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ely, pioneers of De Smet, he had spent his boyhood here, become a telegraph operator and later was on the state along Broadway as a singer in musical shows, continuing his residence there many years, employed by the Aeolian company.*

*Funeral services are to be held Friday.*

*July 23, 1952: Letter from Laura Ingalls Wilder to Aubrey Sherwood, printed in September 9, 1971 De Smet News. Mansfield, Mo., July 23, 1952. Dear Mr. Sherwood, Although rather late I do wish to thank you for the Old Settler's Day copy of The De Smet News. It was very interesting and pleasant to be remembered.*

*Notice of the death of Alfred Ely saddened me. I have always thought of him as he was so many years ago, one of the younger boys in school, not realizing that the years had been passing with him, too.*

*We have had a very unpleasant spring and summer, cold, rainy, with little sunshine until the last week, which has been unusually hot and sunny. We at Mansfield are thankful we live on the top of the hills where floods don't reach of.*

*I hope the storms at Watertown did not reach De Smet and that your weather has been not too bad.*

*Rose is well, but her part of the country has suffered freak weather also.*

*I am well now, my eyes growing stronger as I gained strength after my heart attack.*

*Please give my best regards to inquiring friends.*

*Again thanking you and with kindest regards to you and your family, Yours sincerely,  
Laura Ingalls Wilder.*



## KIRK HENRY ELY

Block 7, Lot 13 De Smet Cemetery

March 7, 1874 – August 23, 1960; died at age 86.

Son of Charles Ely (1844-1916) and Carrie (Moltzner) Ely (1851-1927).

Brother of Alfred Ely (1872-1951).

Husband of Inga Marie Mattson; they married July 18, 1904 in Minnesota.

Father of Ray Moltzner Ely (1905-1988), Alfred Kirk Ely (1907-1997), Mina Florence Ely (1909-1990), and Mason E. Ely (1911-2004).



Kirk H. Ely / 1874 - 1960

Not a character in the De Smet Little House books, but longtime De Smet resident, Kirk Henry Ely was born March 7, 1874, in Winona, Minnesota. In 1880, he came to De Smet with his family in 1880 and is listed on school rolls. In 1887, he was a member of the De Smet Cornet Band, playing 2<sup>nd</sup> alto. Other members included Carter Sherwood, John Carroll, Henry Hinz, Delbert Wilmarth, and Charley Trousdale (and others). Kirk attended school in Ames, Iowa, and was a teacher in Iowa.

In April 1904, Kirk returned to De Smet and began working at Germania State Bank. Two months later, he went to Minnesota, where he married Inga Marie Mattson. They rented rooms from Mrs. Wilmarth. In 1907, he became a traveling book salesman, moving his family to the Black Hills to a claim north of Sturgis, where he farmed on the government water project connected to the Belle Fourche dam. They sent their son, Ray, to De Smet to attend school, and returned to De Smet to live after proving up on their claim.

Kirk Ely wrote the following for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of De Smet, featured in the June 6, 1930, De Smet NEWS:

*The De Smet NEWS-June 6, 1930 - B section*

*New Town Grew Like Magic; Ely Sold First Lumber*

*Settlers Took Lumber As Fast As It Came; Agent Used A Tent*

*By Kirk H. Ely*

*Charles E. Ely has been known as the "Pioneer Lumberman of De Smet." Mr. Ely was a resident of Winona, Minn., and early in spring of 1880 came west to De Smet, with no particular business or employment in view. Upon arriving here, he found The Empire Lumber Co. of Winona, friends of his, had shipped him a car of lumber to dispose of best he could.*

*There was no siding here and he immediately began unloading this car from the main track. The lumber was no sooner out of the car when customers appeared like magic. The whole carload was disposed of before night.*

*Payments Were All Good. - All were strangers to each other, but Ely accepted any piece of paper that represented money in settlement for the lumber. That night he lay in a closet of what is now the Grand hotel, the floor being the best bed available. His pockets were crammed full of drafts, checks, money orders and currency, as proceeds of sale of the first car of lumber unloaded at De Smet. The town had started and a few buildings had been erected with lumber hauled from Volga and other east points by team. As near as can be recollected the date of Ely's first lumber sale was about April, 1880. Of all the checks, drafts, etc., that day for lumber not one cent but was good, and paid upon presentation at the bank drawn on.*

*L.L. Bancroft Drove Across Country In '79 - In L.L. Bancroft of De Smet is found an early visitor to the county, a pioneer newspaper man and settler and later proprietor of the only newspapers Manchester and Bancroft ever had, the latter town being named for him on his intention to settle there.*

*From then on the railroad could not bring in building materials fast enough. It was with difficulty that Ely could keep out enough lumber to build an office or place to do business for himself.*

*The Early Day Merchants - The town grew like magic and through the spring of 1880 the following had established business places:*

*T.H. Ruth, first bank, Kingsbury County Bank.*

*Henry Hinz, Sr., first billiard hall.*

*Mr. Mead, first hotel, now the Grand Hotel.*

*E.H. Couse, first hardware store.*

*Jake Hopp, first newspaper (now the De Smet News.)*

*George Bradley, first drug store.*

*John A. Owen, first attorney (or V.V. Barnes possibly).*

*E. Gomer Davies, first physician.*

*John H. Carroll, first postmaster*

*Tom Powers [sic], first tailor shop.*

*Charles E. Ely, first lumber yard, Empire Lumber Co., of Winona.*

*Rev. Woodworth, first agent for C.&N.W. Ry. at De Smet. Jimmy Woodworth, his son, was first telegrapher and afterward became prominent in railroad work.*

*C.H. Tinkham, first furniture store.*

*Frank Schaub, first harness shop.*

*Dr. L.F. Straight, the first dentist, under whom our present Dr. J.H. Hall served an apprenticeship.*

*Fred Gilbert, first drayman.*

*If George B. Wilmarth did not open the first general store he was a close second or third. Old man Harthorn, father of Frank Harthorn, who for years had a large general store in De Smet, was here early that Spring. Other very early stores were the D.H. Loftus and Billy Broadbent, general merchandise, C.S.G. and Gerald Fuller, hardware and implements.*

*Gerald Fuller was known to shoot wild geese from the middle of Calumet Avenue in front of his place of business, while flocks were flying over. Very early also was Charley Dawley with a lumber yard representing Youmans Bros. & Hodgens of Winona. L.E. Sasse appears on the scene early agent for G.W. VanDusen Grain Co. He established the second drug store in De Smet, still owned by the Sasses.*

*In sports De Smet had speedy foot racers from 1880 to 1890. Among the good ones were Aubrey Lawrence, Jake Zickrick, George Sturgeon, George Furgeson and Dave Van Hook. These men captured many first in races throughout Kingsbury County. Among the men expert with boxing gloves was Nick Carey, an early implement dealer.*

*In baseball A.N. Waters was an excellent first baseman and reputed the best umpire Kingsbury County ever saw. De Smet carried one of the snappiest teams in the county previous to 1890. There was H.W. Montross, Charley Dawley (the first batter De Smet had), D.W. Wilmarth, Ed (Cap) Garland, M.G. Carlisle, Ambrose Mullen, Ed Sanford, Ed Paxton, R.S. Gleason and others.*

*Pewter Was No Fad In Early Hotel Days - Pewter that is becoming the rage these days was not so popular, though much more common, in the early hotel days of De Smet, and the story is told of how the bachelor boarders at the Syndicate got tired of the taste of pewter, and how the knives and forks gradually disappeared. The landlord fussed over the loss but could*

*not fix the blame nowhere, and finally he had to buy new ware, and it was silver plated. After the first meal with the new tableware he was taken in hand by the cashier of one of the banks and escorted to the bank vault and there shown his pewter, carried away piece at a time by the paying guests.*

Kirk Ely died August 23, 1960, in De Smet. He was buried in the De Smet Cemetery.

*August 25, 1960. The De Smet NEWS.*

*Death of Kirk Ely at age 86, wife surviving, one daughter, Mrs. Geoffrey Holiday of Amarillo, Texas and three sons, Alfred and Mason of Los Angeles, and Ray of Philly.*

*August 24, 1960. Huron DAILY PLAINSMAN.*

*Kirk H. Ely Dies Tuesday. De Smet—Kirk H. Ely, 86, died Tuesday morning at his home. he had suffered a stroke Aug. 11. Funeral services are scheduled at 3 p.m. Friday.*

*September 8, 1960. The De Smet NEWS.*

*Son of Pioneer '80, Kirk Ely Among Last Of Early Residents.*

*In the death last week of Kirk H. Ely, the area lost one of its earlier residents, a son of a pioneer businessman who was De Smet's first lumber dealer. Mr. Ely was past 86 years of age.*

*Death came at the family home here Tuesday of last week, August 23, after a few weeks of serious illness, which brought his children to gather here.*

*Funeral services were held Friday afternoon at First Congregational Church, the Rev. Robert Tucker, pastor, officiating, with burial in the local cemetery. Arrangements were by Ketelsen Funeral Home.*

*Mrs. George Muser, church organist, played for the service, Mrs. Robert Bell singing two numbers.*

*Pallbearers were Kermit Buchele, Harold Fritzel, Hollis Hill, Edward Hinz, Homer Nelson and Ronald Graham.*

*Kirk Henry Ely was born to Charles E. and Carrie Moltzner Ely at Winona, Minn., March 29, 1874. His father came to Dakota Territory and to De Smet early in 1880. A lumber company shipped a carload of lumber here in his name and he found himself the town's first lumber dealer. The family moved here in 1880. It consisted of an older brother, Alfred, and a sister, Mamie, who died at the age of four. The father later operated the Syndicate Hotel (now Hotel De Smet) and later had a confectionary store which Mrs. Ely continued after his death.*

*After graduating from the local school Mr. Ely alternated between teaching country schools and attending college, this at Dakota Agricultural College (now State College), Brookings, and Iowa State College, Ames. He taught the Harrington-Prouty school nine miles north of Bryant, the Streeter school south of Lake Thompson, the Bowes school six miles northeast of De Smet, and the Maney-Noble school near Manchester.*

*He was married to Inga Marie Mattson of Dawson, Minn., July 18, 1904. Four children were born to them.*

*Mr. Ely was assistant cashier of the Germania State bank here from 1904 to 1907. He was a member of the city band, starting as a boy, and took part in local theatrical activities.*

*Taking a homestead in the Belle Fourche valley near Newell, the family moved there in 1907, to remain until 1919. He took part in community development in this new country, organizing and directing a band, the first band at Vale, helping to promote the Belle Fourche Irrigation Project, representing the Water User's Association on a joint committee with the*

Bureau of Reclamation at Denver, Colo. He was county assessor for Butte County for the term of 1915-17.

Returning to De Smet Mr. Ely engaged in the restaurant business. He spent some years representing an atlas publishing concern in drawing plats and in salesmanship, this in many states of the mid-west.

He was a member of First Congregational Church, having served as treasurer and deacon. He had been a member of De Smet Masonic Lodge No. 55 for over 50 years.

Surviving are his wife, a daughter, Mrs. Geoggrey (Mina) Holliday, Amarillo, Texas; three sons, Ray of Wayne, Pa., Alfred of Glendale, Calif., and Mason, of Burbank, Calif., and 13 grandchildren. He was the last member of his own family, his brother Alfred having died in California some years ago.

Following the death of her husband, Inga Marie Ely moved to California. She died there on February 2, 1979. She was buried in De Smet Cemetery.

February 7, 1979. *The De Smet News*.

Ely rites said Wednesday. Funeral for Mrs. Kirk Ely, burial in De Smet cemetery. Mrs. Ely died Feb. 2 at Hacienda Convalescent Home, San Luis Obispo, California. She was 93.

Inga Marie Mattson was born to Martin and Betty Matson July 26, 1885 at Renville, Minn. Married Kirk Ely July 18, 1904 in Minnesota and they moved to De Smet after their marriage and lived here for several years. They then moved to Butte County and homesteaded for 12 years. He died in September 1960 and she moved to Texas to live with a daughter. Moved to California in 1973 to be near her children. Longtime member of First Congregational Church (UCC), De Smet. Survivors include daughter Mrs. Mina Holliday, Turlock CA, three sons: Ray of Wayne PA, Alfred of Arroyo Grande CA, and Mason of Burbank CA. 13 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.



Inga Marie Ely / 1885 Mother 1979



Emma Mattson / 1886 - 1907

Note: There is also a headstone in the Ely row, reading "Emma Matson / 1886 – 1907." Emma Mattson died May 18, 1907, in Kingsbury County. She was a sister of Inga Marie (Mattson) Ely.

## ELLA MAY "MAMIE" ELY

Block 7, Lot 13 De Smet Cemetery

November 29, 1879 – September 3, 1885; died age 5

Ella May Ely was born in Winona, Minnesota, on November 29, 1879. She died in 1883 at age four in De Smet. She was buried in the De Smet Cemetery.

*De Smet Leader, September 5, 1885.*

*Little Mamie, six-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. E. Ely, was taken with diphtheria last Sunday, and died Thursday. The little girl made a hard struggle, and everything which physicians and loving parents could do was done to stay the dread disease, but with no avail. This is a hard blow to the family, and they have the sympathy of the entire community.*



Kirk Ely and sister Ella May Ely