

James M. Lyons, a most estimable citizen of Clearwater village, has had his share in the progress and development of the community, and is highly regarded by all with whom he come in contact. He was born in Licking County, OH, August 19, 1846, son of Benjamin T. and Lydia (Wince) Lyons the pioneers. With them he went to Champaign County, IL, in 1854, and with them came to Lynden township, this county, in 1856.

He was reared amid pioneer conditions, and learned agricultural pursuits from his father. On February 26, 1864, he enlisted in Company E, Eighth Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, and served until July 1, 1865, being discharged at Charlotte, NC, and mustered out at Ft. Snelling. For several years thereafter he devoted his time to various pursuits, including logging and rafting. Later he took a homestead in Fair Haven township, and bought 120 acres in section 5, Lynden township. He there erected a shack and engaged in farming about 10 years. He then purchased 160 acres in section 9, Lynden township. This farm he improved and developed, adding forty more acres, and bringing the place to a high degree of cultivation.

In 1900 he rented the farm , and purchased a residence in the village of Clearwater. For several years he was the village marshal. On August 24, 1913, he purchased his present establishment. He sells ice cream, confectionery, canned goods, cigars and tobacco, and conducts a restaurant and lunch room. He has built up a good business and has proven himself the right man for the place. Mr. Lyons has been interested in many movements and organizations, and is senior vice commander of the A. C. Collins Post, NO. 112 G.A.R., of Clearwater.

Mr. Lyons was married September 19 1878, to Mary F. Ridley, who was born in Silver Creek, Wright County, September 17, 1862. Mrs. Lyons has proven a most capable helpmeet throughout their married life. He is an energetic manager, a keen business woman, and a good wife and understanding mother. Mr. and Mrs. Lyons have two children: Frank D. and Elsie May. Frank D. lives in Minot, ND, and married Jennie Simley and they have six children: Bessie, James, Harry, Mildred, Howard and _____. Elsie May lives on the old homestead, She married Charles Lumley and they had six children: Lucille, Margaret, Charles, George, Vernon, and Bertha.

Mrs. James M. Lyons is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L. Ridley, natives of Maine. They came to Minnesota in the early days, lived for a while in Minneapolis, and then came to Silver Creek township, Wright county where they engaged in agricultural pursuits. Mr. Ridley died in 1865, and his wife in 1868. Aside from Mrs. Lyons there was in the family one son, Victor E. Ridley, of Sand Point, Idaho.

William Henry Lyons, for many years a conspicuous figure in the life and progress of Lynden township, was born in Licking county, Ohio, June 2, 1840, son of Benjamin T and Lydia (Wince) Lyons. He received a good education in Ohio, and was taken by his parents to Champaign county, IL, in 1854. He came to Stearns County with his parents in 1856, underwent with them the rigors of pioneer life, and under the tuition of his father became a proficient farmer. In October, 1862, at the age of twenty-two years, he enlisted in Company D, First Minnesota Mounted Rangers, and was sent to the Northwestern frontier against the Indians. In November, 1863, he was honorably discharged for disability. Then he returned to Lynden, and worked on the home farm until 1882. In the meantime he had taken a homestead in section 6, Lynden township. In 1882 William Henry Lyons was married October 26, 1882 to Susanna M. Mitchell, born in County Leitrem, Ireland June 28, 1853, daughter of William and Elizabeth (Deacon) Mitchell. and he and his good wife moved onto this farm and started life together.

In 1885 the home and other buildings were destroyed by fire, but undaunted by this disaster, they erected a new home, and barns, and continued their work. Prosperity crowned their efforts and they were numbered among the most honored and respected members of the community. The farm was increased to 193 acres, and the thrift, energy and good taste of the owners was everywhere apparent. In the Old Settlers' Association they took deep pleasure, and were very active at all of its meetings. After a life filled with good deeds, he died April 1, 1906, as a result of being injured while working with a circular saw. His remains are laid at rest in the Acacia Cemetery, in Lynden township. A man of quiet habits of upright character, and for more than thirty years a consistent and faithful member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, he was held in high esteem by his friends and neighbors. William Henry Lyons was married October 26, 1882 to Susanna M. Mitchell, born in County Leitrim, Ireland June 28, 1853, daughter of William and Elizabeth (Deacon) Mitchell.

To Mr. and Mrs. Lyons have been born six children: Lydia E. Collins, Samuel W., John A., Henry b., Susanna Jane Ostrander, and George R. Lydia E. is a graduate of the St. Cloud High School, and is a proficient teacher. Samuel W. and John A. conduct the home farm. Henry B. graduated from the Clearwater High School, took a special course in engineering at the Southern Minnesota Normal College at Austin, Minn., and is now a successful teacher. Susan Jane is a graduate of the Clearwater High School and is likewise a competent teacher. George R. is a student in the Clearwater High School.

It is interesting to note that when Benjamin T. Lyons came North, father of James and William, three of his brothers, Henry, Robert and John remained in the South. Henry became a Baptist clergyman. Robert and John joined the Confederate army. Robert was killed at the Battle of Winchester. John, who served as lieutenant, was wounded and taken prisoner. Lieutenant John Lyons also had a son, who served in the Confederate army. On the Union side, Benjamin T. Lyons had two sons, John and James Lyons, who did valiant service for the Stars and Stripes. They fought on the Union side at the battle in which their Uncle Robert was killed.