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Countryside, Ill.
Oct 29, 1986

To Whom It May Concern,

With reference to the conditions which led to incorporation of the City of Countryside, surely, there must be as many different memories as there are individuals who were involved with the events of the time.

As one individual, I humbly submit my thoughts. My comments bracket the years 1948 through 1960. During this time, just as many other people, my wife and I acquired a vacant lot and were establishing a homesite in this unincorporated area.

In 1948 most of the existing residential streets were improved with crushed stone. Residences and the few business locations had individual wells and septic systems. There was telephone and electric service. Some of the streets had gas mains. Some did not. Ideal School was on the north east corner of East Avenue and Joliet Road. A new Pleasantview Fire Protection District had just been established. Street maintenance came from Township of Lyons. Zoning and police protection came from County of Cook.

Ours was a working class community. Many families were constructing their own houses, or moving into, and completing frame shells. Sawing and nailing could be heard early mornings, late evenings, week ends and holidays. Men were helping neighbors with plumbing, heating, wiring, concrete, and general construction. Almost everyone was a do-it-yourselfer. The pioneering spirit was alive and well.

Due to a lack of business establishments within the community, shopping was mostly in La Grange. Perhaps, because our people were spending money there, and to some extent taking part in activities, a fair amount of fair play was expected from our neighbors to the north. However, future events did not support these expectations.

My first involvement in an inter community project concerned School District 105. Its boundaries, then as now, included a portion of south La Grange, our community, the village of Hodgkins and a part of McCook that included most of Electro-motive Division of General Motors. Taxes from these areas outside of La Grange, largely supported the entire District. Due to growth of population, Hodgkins and our community needed new school housing badly. However, the good citizens of La Grange insisted that all

new school construction be located within the village limits. As president of the Ideal School P.T.A., I attended School Board meetings, P.T.A. meetings and community meetings at the rate of two and three a week for a year. My purpose was to obtain a new Ideal School for our area. Finally, an agreement was reached. The District would build two identical schools, a new Ideal School in Countryside and the Spring Avenue School in La Grange. Two hard fought class rooms and a gym was won for Hodgkins. These were added to the existing structure. Many countryside community people remembered the fight over schools.

One other experience had much to do with my later determination to avoid having my community annexed to the Village of La Grange. In the early 1950s Little League Baseball for boys 8 thru 12 was being organized throughout the U.S.A. Both our community and La Grange were interested in the program. Participation required a four team league. Our community had only enough boys for two teams. Consequently, I went with three others, to a meeting with La Grange organizers to see if a joint league could be arranged. The answer was "no". A few days later we formed a league with Hodgkins and the Highlands community.

As our community grew, so did our problems with zoning, traffic, police protection and other civic matters. The Countryside Home-owners Association was formed. Members were recruited, officers and directors were elected and regular meetings were held.

Eventually, it occurred to the Village of La Grange that our community would be of some value to the Village, after all. La Grange started legal proceedings for our annexation. An election was to be held. Great promises of services were made. City water, sewers, police and other refinements were very enticing.

At this time, as president of the Home Owners, it was clear to me, and the Board, that our members had come this far without help, and were committed to being rulers of their own destiny. Fortwright, we set about to defeat the election. The struggle was bitter. There were news releases, door to door "flyers". Countryside business establishments raised \$1250.00 to pay a professional campaign material writer. I believe this won the election for us.

Although nearly exhausted from this victory, our Association immediately set up an election for incorporation of the City of Countryside. If successful, it would prevent any future annexation attempts.

So, within a short time, the same good countryside community folks who had voted "no" to defeat annexation to La Grange, were being asked to vote "yes" for our own city. With nothing to promise our citizens but continued "do-it-yourself" hard work, and no money with which to start a government, somehow, with God's help, the election was won.

Birth of the City of Countryside was not easy. Probably this was as it should always be.

I am extremely proud of our city. When you read this letter, I hope you are, as well.

Cordially yours,

Sherrill E. Lynch

About myself,

I was born August 31, 1912 in a farmhouse in Sheridan Township, Poweshiek County, Iowa. Work on an Iowa farm in my young years was done by hand. Horses were used in the fields. I attended high school in June, Iowa and graduated from the College of Business Administration, State University of Iowa.

In 1940, I married Helen V. Roth of Grinnell, Iowa, and we moved to the Chicago area to find employment. We purchased one acre of land at 9720 58th Street in 1947. By ourselves, we built a 21x24 house and took up residence in May, 1948. In 1954 we started our permanent home, 26x42 with full basement. Again, doing all the construction, it took us two years. We worked evenings, weekends and holidays. I was working full time at the General Motors plant on East Avenue. We raised two children, Melvin M. Lynch and Janet Kay Lynch. My wife and I have been retired for ten years and keep busy with photography as a hobby.

I am humbly submitting the enclosed material, because, in the twenty six years since incorporation of our city, I haven't seen anything written on the feelings of the people that led to our own incorporation, rather than the attempted annexation of our area to the Village of La Grange.

Shavill E. Lynch