

Arthur businesses flourished since the beginning

From the start, business flourished in the new community of Arthur. In 1872, John W. Sears hauled in lumber from Arcola to build the first house in what would become Arthur. It was a two-story house with the first floor serving as a store until he built a larger store next to his home in 1875.

The town had hardly been named, and the railroad siding barely completed, before three different businesses sprang up buying grain, livestock and selling coal.

About anything could be acquired in the new town. There was a cigar factory, a shoe factory, farm implement businesses, hatcheries, creameries, grocery stores, bakeries, candle manufacturing, hardware and furniture, ice cream manufacturing, drug stores, major industries, restaurants, hotels, gentlemen's apparel, millineries, dress shops, lumber yards, and so much more all before Arthur's 50th Anniversary in 1923!

Arthur Tile Factory

Brothers John F. and Robert Martin developed and built a drainage tile factory in 1883 at 510 North Vine Street and produced a million feet of tile before its closing in 1920.

N. S. Monroe Road Machine Company

In the year 1894, Nathaniel Sedgwick Monroe, living southeast of Arthur on a farm, decided he could make a machine that could do better and faster road maintenance, so he built a machine out of wood and tried it out.

After some trial and error he got a machine good enough that he moved to Arthur at 100 W. First St. in 1896 and started to make them from part wood and steel to eventually all steel construction. Soon he was selling his "Jumbo Road Machine" everywhere.

In 1913 Monroe greatly enlarged his factory and expanded his business. At one time the machines were selling to Russian, African and South American markets. But the business of road machinery got too big for a small company to compete in and the factory eventually closed in 1933.

Progress Industries, Inc.

The co-founders of Progress Industries, Arthur Martin and Joel Fitzjarrald, were both associated in the oil business. In the 1920s, the automobile business was booming and support industries grew overnight.

In 1922, Martin and Fitzjarrald founded their company and began manufacturing a 10-gallon visible bowl gasoline pump. By the end of the first year, they were turning out 25 pumps daily for local and national oil distributors.

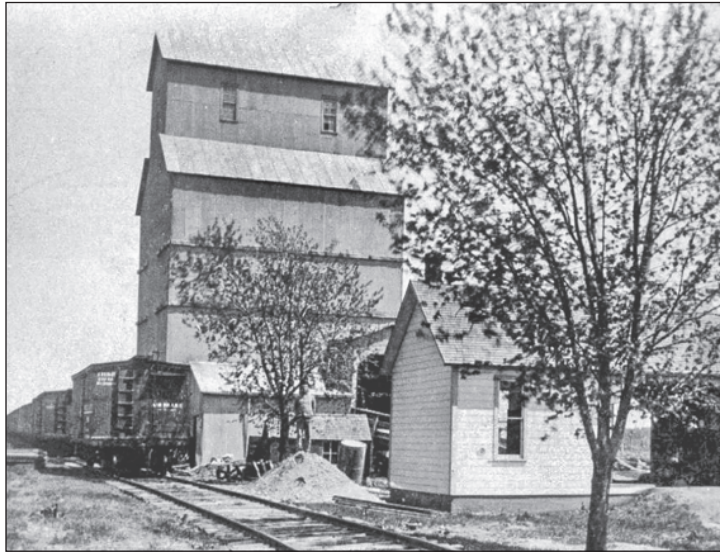
In 1924, the first tank truck built by Progress was a 300-gallon, three-compartment unit mounted on a Model T Ford chassis which sold for \$125.

The Funeral Supply Division was created in 1928 to build steel burial vaults and later caskets of hardwoods, solid copper, and bronze.

During World War II, Progress contracted with the U.S. Army and Navy to produce hundreds of storage tanks and truck tanks that were put into service in every major theatre of operation of the war. On Jan. 10, 1945, the men and women of Progress received the nation's highest award to industrial plants, the Army-Navy E, with an impressive ceremony held at the Arthur High School.

During the Korean and Vietnam Wars, Progress continued to be a needed supplier of water tanks for the Defense Department.

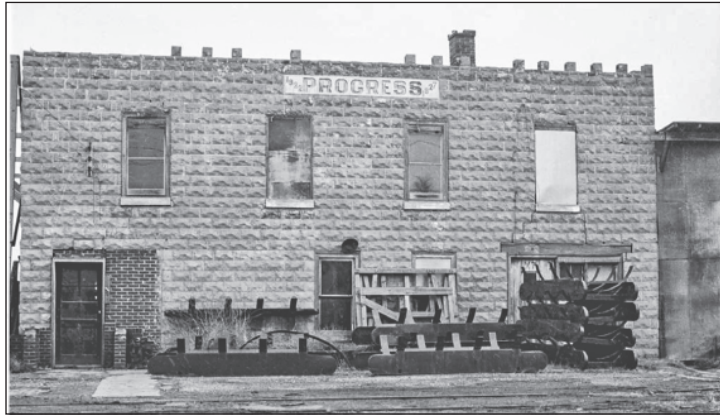
Progress Industries went under a few name changes, product changes, and was operated under different man-



THE PAUL KUHN grain elevator located on the south side of the railroad tracks, set back from street on the east side of Vine Street.



THE STOCK HOTEL at 214 S. Vine circa 1900. Over the years, the building was converted to a grocery store, Ben Franklin store, Arndt's General Store, Buggy Wheel Antiques and, today, Yoder's Lamps, Antiques & Collectibles.



Progress Industries, Inc.



N. S. Monroe Road Machine Company



THE SAMUEL DEHART HOTEL located at 246 S. Vine was the first hotel in Arthur circa 1890. Meals cost 25 cents at the time.



FRED BECKMAN Hardware & Furniture Store at 136 S. Vine in 1910.

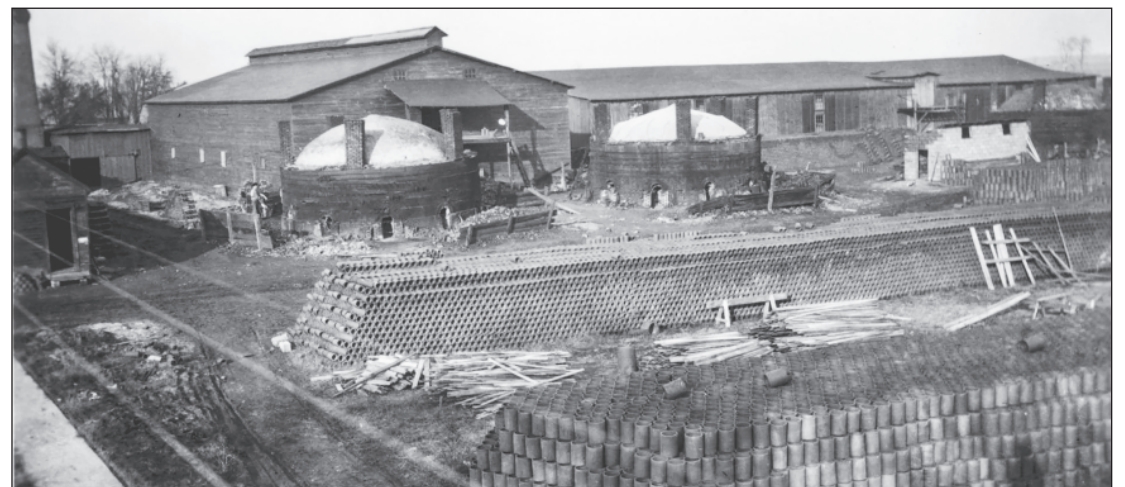
agement during the later years of its 87-year existence. Due to a slowdown of construction and a tightening of credit, the company closed on July 9, 2009.



ONE OF ARTHUR'S longest-lasting businesses, though not under the same owners, was the Arthur Lumber Company. Established in 1873, the lumberyard was located between the railroad lines on the east side of Vine Street during the over 125 years of its existence. The original building was torn down and a new building was constructed further east.



WILLIAM (BILL) PRIBBLE Barber Shop circa 1910. The shop was located at various places in downtown Arthur over the years. Bill was the great grandfather of Steve Howell, a current barber of Arthur.



Arthur Tile Factory



THE EAST SIDE of the 200 block of South Vine Street. Pictured is the Herman Stock family in front of the building he moved into in 1904 to establish the four-generation family business known as Stock's Shoe Store.



WORKERS AT THE ARTHUR Tile Factory. Arthur Martin, son of John Martin, is on the left. Arthur was later a co-founder of Progress Industries, Inc.