

engineer with the Chicago & Tomah Railroad and built fifty miles of narrow gauge road in Wisconsin. He was afterward with the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad and acted as engineer between Fennimore, Wisconsin, and Milwaukee, continuing in that capacity for three years. He next went to South Dakota, where he carried on farming in Moody county for two years, and later he lived at Aberdeen, where he was connected with the Northwestern Railroad, acting as chief engineer for the line, which was later taken over by the "Soo." Prior to this time Mr. Richards located some of the lines for the Northern Pacific Railroad and thus at different periods as he has been closely and prominently associated with railroad construction and building in various parts of the middle west. In 1891 he returned to Cresco and became county surveyor. He continued to act in that position until 1913, when he was appointed county engineer, which office he held for thirty-seven years. In addition he also installed waterworks, did paving and established sewer systems in Iowa, Minnesota and Dakota. He is now serving as drainage engineer. He has done work of a most important character, contributing much to the development and progress of the sections in which he has lived. As he has prospered in his undertakings he has made judicious investments in property.

In 1880 Mr. Richards was united in marriage to Miss Helen Smith, a daughter of Ralph and Sarah (Lockwood) Smith. She was born in Crawford county, Wisconsin, where her father was a merchant and lumberman. Later he removed westward, establishing his home in Moody county, South Dakota, where he carried on farming, and both he and his wife passed away in that locality. To Mr. and Mrs. Richards have been born three children: Luverne, now the wife of J. A. Sandford, of Farmington, Minnesota; Tashleen, now the wife of J. A. Williams, of Cresco; and Ralph, who is living at San Antonio, Texas.

While Mr. Richards was filling the office of county surveyor he located lines from Dubuque to Plattville, extended an electric line for Arthur Fox, and also ran a line from Rockford, Illinois, to Madison, Wisconsin, and likewise located an electric line from Garnavillo, Iowa, to Guttenberg, Iowa. He ranks with the ablest civil engineers of the state and is without a superior in all northern Iowa. In fact, he has attained a high degree of efficiency in his profession, continually broadening his knowledge and promoting his skill through wide study and experience. Mr. Richards votes with the republican party and is a stalwart champion of its principles. He has spent three terms as a member of the city council and at all times exercised his official prerogatives in support of plans and measures for the general good. He is a Mason and is loyal to the teachings of the craft. The steps in his orderly progression are easily discernible. He has attempted important things and has accomplished what he has attempted. There is no feature of civil engineering with which he is not familiar as applied to railroad construction, paving, sewer construction and other lines and he is thoroughly conversant with the great scientific principles as well as the practical phases that underlie his work.

WILLIAM DIEKMANN, SR.

William Diekmann, Sr., proprietor of a garage at Elma, was born in Germany, November 18, 1862, a son of Ludwig and Minnie (Arndt) Diekmann. The parents came to the United States in 1871, settling in Bremer county, Iowa, where the father purchased farm land which he continued to cultivate and improve until 1886, in which year he retired from business and removed with his wife to Klinger, Bremer county, Iowa.

William Diekmann, Sr., was educated in the common schools of Bremer county, having been but nine years of age when brought by his parents to the new world. In his youthful days he assisted his father upon the home farm until he reached the age of fifteen, when he started out in the business world on his own account by beginning work at the carpenter's trade. This he followed until 1886, when he purchased a farm in Bremer county and thereafter devoted his attention to general