YOUNGSTOWN

By David Cody and James Sells

Youngstown's history dates back to the late 1850s when George Young and his family moved there in 1859. Young purchased some of his land, located five miles south of Novinger, under the Swamp Act and the remaining 510 acres under the Homestead Act for $1.25 per acre.

Young founded the town when the I and St. Louis railroad was built in 1904. There were two very productive mines in the area: Midland Camp No. 4 and the Artic I mine. The Artic I camp kept all miners working at a steady pace for it yielded 500 tons of coal per day.

These mines brought a lot of activity to the small community of Youngstown and the settlement soon became the trading center for the area. Most of Youngstown's residents were miners.

Although the mines have long since closed and the population has dwindled, there are still fond memories of old Youngstown.

Mrs. Herman Current, now a resident of Kirksville, lived in Youngstown until she graduated from eighth grade at Sloan's Point School. Her father, Henry Hediger, ran one of the

George Young, the founder of Youngstown, posed in front of his home for this photo. Young started the town in the late 1850s, and two productive mines there made it a trading center for the area. Most of the residents were miners.

Members of the Youngstown City Council as depicted by artist John W. Tinsman in his book, "The Youngstown Council," copyright 1921. Excerpts from the book are included in the feature on Tinsman beginning on Page 2 of this issue.
town's general stores (Harry Balch ran the other general store), was the town's postmaster and was owner of an implement store all in the same building. "I can still remember working in the grocery store when I was just tall enough to see over the counter," Mrs. Current recalled. "The miners would flock into the store on pay day and load up with groceries.

"The upstairs part of our store was used as the town's dance hall, but my father had to stop renting it out because of some problems with liquor."

One of the special things Mrs. Current remembers was the annual Fourth of July celebration. "My dad operated a horse-drawn merry-go-round which added to the excitement of the event. The townspeople would look forward to that all year."

The general store proprietors also cut and stored ice for the town. "The ice house was a little wooden shack where they stored all of the ice collected from the river. They would cut the ice blocks out of the river. Then they hooked the ice blocks to strong rope to our horse. They would tug the horse a bit and pull the ice out of the river. When they got all the ice they needed, they would cover it with sawdust.

"There was a lot of fishing on the river, too," Mrs. Current said. "I knew one fellow who would fish using a live box. He would catch a bunch and sell them to the townspeople. I've tried to find fish today that tasted that good, but back then there was no pollution and the fish tasted better."

The children around Youngstown attended Sloan's Point School and Mrs. Current walked a mile-and-a-half to school every day. The old school house is still standing and presently occupied. The big white building can be seen from Forest Lake at Thousand Hills State Park on the west side near the dam.

Left, John Henry Hediger and "Shorty" Collins in front of the General Merchandise Store in Youngstown. Right, this photo of the railroad bridge over the Chariton River was taken when the river was at flood stage.

Left, the Harry Balch General Store, which operated from 1900 to 1937. In front of the store is Harry, Irene and Hazel Balch. Above, Henry Hediger on the porch of the Henry Hediger General Merchandise Store and Post Office.