In June of 1898, A.O. Fladeland arrived in Minnesota. Ole Newton also came that summer. That fall he joined Fladeland in opening a little store about 1/2 mile northwest of the present site of Grygla. Ole Newton was the man who transported goods and supplies from Thief River Falls by ox-drawn wagons, or in the spring by boat. Because the trip to Thief River and back was so long, there were "stopping places" along the way where travelers could obtain food and shelter for themselves and the oxen.

Main Street around the year of 1904 looking towards the northwest. The building on the left would be the corner of Main street and Highway 89.

By 1903, the community had expanded and the original village was moved to its present site. Some of the early village residents were the following families: Newton, Fladeland, Loyd, Holbrook, Williamson, Brown, and Bush.
The Postal Department sent out an inspector from Washington, D.C., to check out the community. The inspector’s name was Count Gryglavitch. Because no one could agree on a name for the town, the inspector signed his own name to the request, and "Grygla" became the name of what is called "The Biggest Little Town of Its Size".

The inside of one of the early grocery stores.

The Grygla Co-op Creamery opened in 1906. The Grygla Hospital managed by Dr. King, and later by Dr. Adkins, opened in 1912. The hospital was built and financed by community volunteers. It had 25 or 30 rooms, staffed by several nurses. Dr. Adkins was a great surgeon and also made home visits. The first school house was built in 1901, located where the former Feed Store stood. The next year, a larger two-room school house was built. In 1903, the Grygla Eagle, a weekly newspaper was published by George Johnson. This was taken over by Harvey Mussey in 1910.

Grygla Main Street in 1912.

In 1904, George Johnson bought the former Maney Hotel. The building had 23 rooms which were almost always filled. In 1910, Charlie Knutson's father bought the hotel. Meals were served and transportation to anywhere in the area was provided by Charlie and Albert Knutson. Albert started a dray and livery stable. Andrew Clay opened a drug store and Mr. Moses started a photography studio in 1910.
The first minister to arrive was Rev. Halbor Bjornson. He preached in the school house in town and served several communities in the area. In 1916, Fladelands opened up a garage which they operated until 1940. By 1912, the Brown General Merchandise Store was opened and the Post Office was moved to that place. Later, telephone exchange was installed with a central operator. Telephones were installed in every home. A pool hall was opened with in connection with the Groven Cafe. Feed mills were built about where the Olson Apartments are now located, a blacksmith shop was started in the garage. George Johnson started the first Grygla State Bank and Johnny Peterson opened Citizen State Bank. They closed during the Great Depression. T.J. Lillevold and his brother I.O. started the Carmel Brass Band.

In 1910, an extensive system of drainage ditches were begun. After the swamps and bogs were drained, people rushed to take up claims.

In 1919, a big flood destroyed roads, bridges and crops through the area. Farmers were forced to sell their cattle because of no hay or pasture. In 1931, a forest fire burned several homes and barns in the communities east of Grygla. A school house was destroyed and a store located at Fourtown. Two people lost their lives and several were burned so badly they spent months in the hospital. Much property and livestock was destroyed. In 1950, another flood destroyed many bridges, roads, and property in the area. That year was one of the wettest seasons this community ever experienced.
The smoldering remains of buildings that were destroyed in the 1917 fire. The fire started in the Willard Hotel and moved south consuming the Olson Implement and the Hardware Company, the Fonnest Livery barn, and the Pool Hall owned by Louis Bergerson. The home of John Viken, second from the left, was damaged but saved.

The first settlers in the area suffered many hardships. Large fires, floods, poverty, and no or poor roads. But in spite of everything, they stayed and built up a thriving community.

*Source: Grygla Diamond Jubilee History

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