

# Profile - Arley Welge

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Arley Welge, a retired merchant, and a retiree from the trucking business, remains a familiar figure in town, and a man who has many friends throughout the country.

Arley Fritz Welge was born April 1, 1902 on the Welge family farm west of Cappeln to August and Emma (nee Paul) Welge. He has two brothers - Elmer and Clarence. The homestead lies along Highway "T" in Warren County on the St. Charles/Warren County Line.

After attending public school at Liberty Grove, and working for Charlie Giesmann on his farm for a few years, Arley, in 1923 at age 21, acquired a Model "T" truck, and launched off into the trucking business. He continued in the trucking business 53 years, working first for Paul & Joerling, and then entirely for himself. For more than a half century, two to three trips per week, Arley hauled produce and livestock into St. Louis and East St. Louis, and returned with loads of merchandise of all kinds needed throughout the farm community. It is estimated that he made well over 10,000 trips. He has observed St. Louis changing from a great progressive leading city to a second-rate smoke-ridden town of the Depression 30's and 40's, and then changing back into a beautiful and exciting metropolis. Along his daily route, he watched the Gateway Arch curve up into the sky section by section, and a slum area change into a magnificent sports stadium. Also along his daily route, he watched St. Louis County farms transformed into sprawling shopping malls; hospital and office building grounds; subdivisions, etc. He saw the great flood plain from the Missouri to Chesterfield fill up with industrial plants, little dreaming in the early days that St. Charles County, and especially New Melle, would soon experience similar changes.

On July 2, 1926, Mr. Welge married Miss Olga Hemeyer at the home of the bride's parents, Herman & Katherine Hemeyer in Slater, Mo. The couple moved to New Melle in 1930 and acquired half interest in the Paul & Joerling Grocery Store on the SE corner of Highways F & D. The store had been built in 1926.

They made their home first in the Florence Joerling frame home behind the store. Rent was \$8.00/month. In 1945, they moved to the present Welge home on Schutzen Street, constructed in 1939. To them were born two children, Myron August and Wayne. Myron died at the early age of 30 in 1959. Wayne, of New Melle, is married to the former Miss Barbara Heil. Wayne and Barbara have three children - Melissa, Scott and Brian.

Although remaining in the trucking business, Arley continued as a merchant until 1971, first in partnership with Paul & Joerling, and later as the sole owner of the store.

Arley and Olga celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1976, when on June 5, a crowd of 575 invited guests wished them well at the Community Club. Olga passed away July 15, 1982, at the age of 79.

Arley has enjoyed a full life with many interests and activities. He was among the first members of the Community Club where he worked hard to guarantee its success. His son Myron coined the Club's slogan - "Where old friends greet, and new friends meet." Mr. Welge was instrumental in getting the New Melle Fire Department organized, and he became its first Fire Chief. Politically, he has been a staunch Republican and has worked hard to get the best candidates elected. Arley, too, has been a faithful member of Frieden's United Church of Christ in New Melle.