

C. L. Timmerman

24 March 1860 – 1 August 1914



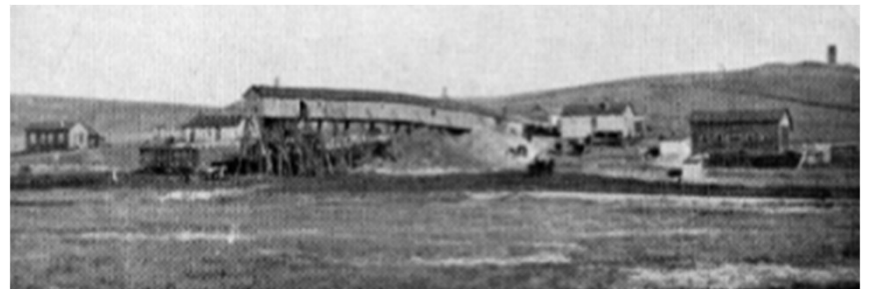
Almost always listed as “C. L.,” Charles Lewis Timmerman is described as “one of the empire builders of the Northwest.” He was instrumental in the establishment of the Morton County Fair Association, Mandan’s first hospital and a federal agricultural research laboratory in rural Mandan.

Oldest son to a wharf keeper J. A Timmerman, Charles was born in Bremerhaven, Germany on 4 March 1860. His mother died while he was still an infant. His father remarried soon afterward. In total, C. L. had one full brother August, two half-brothers and three half-sisters.

Charles was educated in the German public school system. In 1874 at the age of 14, he would immigrate to the United States with his full-brother August and half-siblings Henry and sister Mary (Mrs. Martin Larson.) While his eldest brother Henry would remain in the New England area to manage a lumberyard, C. L. moved to Baltimore, MD and worked in a grocery store.

At the age of 23, he “went west” with many men his age and again found work as a groceryman for a couple of years in Omaha. In 1883, he moved to Mandan in Dakota Territory where he found employment with the Northern Pacific Railway as clerk and later weighmaster. After a labor strike at the railroad’s subsidiary Northern Pacific Coal Company at Timberline, MT (which gained national attention over the workers’ right to organize) C. L. was appointed paymaster with the mine reopened in 1886. He remained there until 1888.

His younger brother joined him in Montana in August 1887. In 1888, the two would move to Dakota Territory where C.L. would find employment with the coal company’s other mine in Sims, Dakota. August would establish a sheep ranch in what today is Center, ND. In about 1891, the brothers sold the ranch.



Coal Mine at Sims

C.L. leveraged his accounting experience by providing bookkeeper services to Fred Meyer who owned the general merchandise store in Sims, ND. In 1889, they purchased the store and August operated it until 1894. After Sim’s coal-brick boom went bust, they moved the business to Almont. The brothers sold the store in 1911 and August moved his family to Mandan.



C.L. established Dogtooth Ranch in 1896 near today’s city of Raleigh on the south branch of the NP Railway out of Mandan. He owned sections 9 & 17 in township 153N and 83W while his brother owned section 11 in township 183N range 86W. In 1904, C.L. sold these lands to settlers.

He was an enthusiastic dairy farmer, and encourage area farmers to be a stockman. He established creameries and helped them get underway.

In his pioneer days in Sims, he was a Justice of the Peace, the only representative of the strong arm of the law in the region of Dakota Territory. It was only government-related position he ever sought or held. He was also a Director of the Morton County Fair Association and the Mandan Hospital.

Timmerman acquired other holdings throughout Oliver and Mercer as well as Morton County, and at the time of his death was owner of almost 4,000 acres of farming land and 32,000 head of cattle. About 1200 acres was the great ranch north of Mandan, near Harmon known as Timmerman Ranch. He was treasurer of the Great Mercer County Land Company which he was among its founders. The company helped to bring out hundreds of settlers and put them on lands bought out of the NP land grant. He was also treasurer of the Morton County Land Company. At the time of his death, his personal assets were estimated to be worth upwards of \$200,000 (\$6.4 million 2025\$)

His health began to decline in 1913. Starting in January 1914, he toured the southern US. After a few months in San Antonio, he traveled to Minnesota and was a guest of Hiram Lyon for several weeks at his summer home on the lakes.

But when his condition deteriorated, he was returned to Mandan in July 1914. He died on 1 August 1914 at the age of 54. The funeral was held at the First Presbyterian Church at a very well attended service officiated by Rev. T.A. McCurdy. He is buried at the Union Cemetery in Mandan, ND.

MANDAN Historical Society
Mandan, North Dakota
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