

IBECKER

on

CENTENNIAL

1871

1971

One century has passed since the Township of Becker was organized. The early settlers of the Township worked hard to bring about many changes we take for granted.

The settlers mentioned in the book The Upper Mississippi Valley who settled in our township came from many parts of the world. They came for various reasons, and remained to make history for our town. Andre Anderson & Lewis O. Lind were natives of Sweden; Edward T. Cox of Cornwall, England; Noble Crawford of New Jersey; William Corley of Toronto, Canada; Peder C. Jensen of Denmark; William Portland of Maine; Henry Stiles of Montreal, Canada; Orland Stiles of Vermont; Rev. Shepardson of Massachusetts and John Wagner of New York City.

The first settler was Mr. Vadnias, who located on the banks of the Mississippi in 1855. The following year John Wagner, Noble Crawford, John Sadley, and

and John Curtis settled northeast of the Becker station (as it was then called.)

In 1866-67 a large number of Scandinavians settled in the central part. The Danish settled in one section and the community is still called Danetown. The Danish Cemetery is a resting place for many of these early settlers. The Norwegians and Swedes settled to the northeast in Snake River. Shortly afterward a group of Germans settled in the hilly country north and east of the Becker station. This was, and still is known as Germantown.

The first birth was in the Vadines family in 1856. The first death was Mrs. Stiles in 1857. The first marriage was Ezra Stiles and Mary Wagner in 1858, and the second marriage was John T. D. Sadley and Elizabeth Crawford in 1858. The first school was taught in the John Sadley residence during the summer of 1860. The teacher was Sarah Evans of Clearwater. The railroad came to Becker in 1867. A platform was built for the few who had

occasion to take or leave the traing.

Later a house was erected by the railraod company for the use of emigrants stopping in searoh of land. It was called the Emigrant House. This was later used as a store by Fridley and Merritt. The first depot was built in 1868.

The first religious service was held at :

Noble Crawford home 1858 by Rev. Palmer.

Mrs. Crawford organized the School in 1856. The American Baptist Church was organized in 1867. It was then called the Pleasant

Valley Church. There was no pastor, and only occasional preaching, till Rev. Joseph Shepardson arrived in 1869. He filled the pulpit for many years. A Swedish Baptist Chu was organized in 1872, A Swedish Lutheran Church was organized in 1876.

Prior to 1871, all the land between ranges twenty-eight and twenty nine was a part of Big Lake Township and all land west was in Clear Lake Township. In 1871 the Becker Township was organized. The first town meet-

ing was held in the schoolhouse in Dist. 5 on Jan. 21, 1871, for the purpose of electing officers. A total of forty-seven votes were cast. The first officers were:

Supervisors: George Eaton, Lucuis Pratt and Charles Astergren.

Clerk: Joseph Shepardson.

Treasurer: J. T. D. Sadley.

The records for the hundred years since the township was organized have been preserved. They were well written and though the ink has become very faded, the letters are legible and reveal many many interesting events over this period of time.

The first year the board found need for bridges over the Elk and Snake Rivers.

The first to be built was the Sadley bridge which was erected in 1871. It was erected in 1871. It was a short distance north of what is now called the Mile Bridge. The bridge on Elk River at the Curtis Rapids (now Co. Rd. 23) was built in 1875 by Charles Grapman at cost of 105 dollars. Another bridge was built in 1875 across the Snake River at a cost of \$245.

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Each male citizen of the township gave two days labor for road work per year, or paid \$1.50 per day for hire. A man and team could earn \$3.00 for a ten hour day.

Payment of \$3.00 was made to John Murphy for straw to repair the road across a marshland. Payment of \$5.00 to Moulton for strawing road from R.R. to Seymour Hill.

In November of 1886 the supervisors met to take action on opening of the U.S. Military Road through Becker Township.

An epidemic of scarlet fever and diphtheria occurred in 1888. The Duffy, Foster, Angell and Wagners were quarantined. One child in the John Wagner family died.

The board met in special session in 1891 to authorize town clerk to write to the Attorney General to see if the board could borrow from the Road and Bridge Fund to build a town hall. Later Charles Pratt, who had the lowest bid built the two story building which was completed by Oct. 1, 1891. Cost was \$1,165. This building burned in 1911

and was replaced in 1912 by the present town hall.

In 1903 the town voted to restrain cattle. Until then they were allowed to roam at large.

In 1908 the board issued a lease for 99 years to the village, for the erection of fire house. This was on the site where the band stand is now. This building was later purchased by the late James Leverton and moved to his farm east of town.

We sincerely hope you have enjoyed the contents of this Centennial Phamphlet.

Many of the historical events were

taken from a book, History of the Upper Mississippi Valley, published in 1881

by the Minnesota Historical Society. It was loaned to us by Avery Cox Sr. Other information was in the first town clerk's record. He was Rev. Joseph Shepherdson, who held the office for many years. Mrs. Jenny Leverton also contributed valuable data.

A vote of thanks is due Lila Amundson, who typed the booklet, and the Becker School for the use of the duplicator.

TOWN BOARD

Chairman-Clayton Anderson

Clerk- Bernard Nelson

Treasurer- Lester Olson

Supervisors- Merlin Cox

Floyd Olson