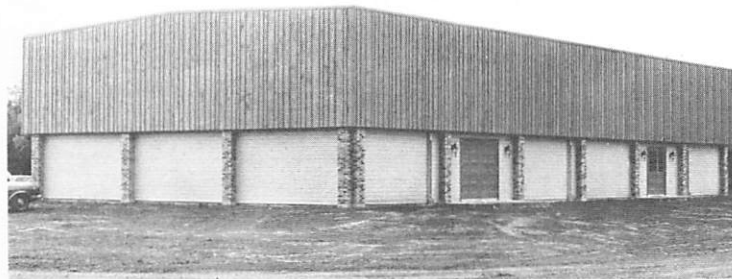




Governor Attends Dedication At Walsh Heritage Village



The Heritage Ethnic Theater Building.

The Heritage Ethnic Theater at the Walsh Heritage Village in Grafton was dedicated on Sunday afternoon, October 22. The community was honored to have Governor and Mrs. Link attend the event. President of the Walsh County Historical Society, Pete Matejcek, Lankin, served as M. C. Vignettes from the play "Prairie Memory" written by a North Dakotan, Dale Christenson, Bowsmont, which was the first play presented in the new building, was well received. Ralph Adamsen, Grafton, who was instrumental in the development of the village and helped prepare the proposal along with other members of the historical society, gave an interesting and educational summary on the LPW (Local Public Works) where federal funds were secured to build the structure.

Governor Link acknowledged

Adamsen's part, the historical society, and the general public in developing the heritage village which shows a commitment to our heritage and not for personal good or gain for certain individuals. He said that vitality, commitment and dedication is evident in such a project. Ancestors came to America with a dream for a better life and we wish to preserve our heritage and also possess some of their dreams. Link said that we should continue our spirit and grow from our nation's Bicentennial and celebrate the 100th anniversary of North Dakota statehood in 1989 with as much or more commitment. Link recalled the great ethnic program presented at the dedication of the "Walsh Heritage" book in 1976 and said that the book on Walsh County history was one of the best books written during the Bicentennial

on local history in our nation. Link concluded by saying "We should take pride in what we have inherited. Pioneer spirit is never over if we continue a commitment and it is evident today."

Construction of the theater began in early 1978 and is nearing completion. The structure is approximately fifty feet by one hundred feet. It is designed to serve the general public as a meeting place for groups, organizations or other events planned in our community.

Heritage Center To Be Built In Bismarck

Apparent low bids totaling nearly eight million dollars for the new North Dakota Heritage Center in Bismarck were opened on September 29 in the Senate Chambers of the Capitol. Estimated costs were within the projected budget for the structure. Bids have been accepted and completion of the Center is expected during the summer of 1980. The three-segment building will provide a large museum display area in addition to storage facilities, workrooms, offices and visitor convenience areas.

"Prairie Memory" Musical Presented At Heritage Village

The first production presented by the Community Theatre in the new Heritage Ethnic Theater in the Walsh Heritage Village in Grafton was a musical drama production "Prairie Memory" written by Dale Christenson, Bowsmont, North Dakota. Dale is a 1962 graduate of Grafton High School and attended Minot State College and the University of Minnesota.

The musical drama is about the people of rural North Dakota who attended a one room country school during the 1930's. It is a memory play that takes you back to earlier days in our area. The play premiered in Grand Forks in 1975 but since its first presentation he has made changes and additions which he hopes are im-

provements in the production and he has written two new songs for the musical. There is a cast of twenty-three in the two-hour production. Ora Marie Stewart is director, Peggy Dahl-Bartunek is musical director with Dale Christenson in charge of the production. There were five performances of the play at the Ethnic Theater, and there was good attendance.

The Community Theatre Group is about one year old and this was their fourth production. How fortunate we are to have such an organized group in our community. Anyone can audition for the productions.

Dale Christenson is presently SEE PRAIRIE MEMORY

Cont. on Page 6, Col. 1



Dale Christianson, Peggy Dahl-Bartunek and Ora Marie Stewart.

Historical Museum Continues To Grow

By STEPHANIE PREPIORA
Curator

This was another busy and growing year at the Walsh County Historical Museum. During the winter months when the museum is closed and the farmers and some local businessmen are not so busy, they volunteer their time and talents to work at the museum building new displays, doing repairs and making plans for future changes to add to the growth of the museum. Since there is no central heating in the museum, the work becomes limited to one room which is heated by an electric furnace loaned to us by our local electrician, Jerry Misialek.

During the winter of 1977-78, one of the rooms was converted into an early "Main Street" planned and built by Museum Chairman Frank Schiller. "Main Street" consists of a post office donated by the city of Lankin, drug store donated by Vern Schanilec of Bemidji, Minn., ice

cream parlor donated by the Charles Stewart family of Grafton, creamery donated by Roy Schultz of Adams and a barber shop donated by Bayles of Forest River. Each store is named for the donor of the contents of the store or building. One area has been built up to resemble a grain storage building. Presently, extending beyond "Main Street" murals are being painted by Amy Jo Stewart which will depict a farm threshing scene at one end and a railroad depot and country beyond at the other. "Main Street" is complete with appropriate street lights. Another accomplishment was the combining of two small rooms into one larger one which is now the Church Room where old religious articles of the different faiths are displayed. One of its outstanding features is a beautiful stained glass window from the former St. John's Church in Grafton.

During the summer months we employed three workers (one

man and two women) whose salaries were paid by a CETA grant. All materials and supplies were paid for by the Walsh County Historical Society and Museum. We feel they did an outstanding job and accomplished much. Briefly they paneled one room, both the first and second floor hallways and the bathrooms. This was necessary because the plaster in these areas

was in very poor condition. In addition they painted, with two coats of paint, all the wainscoting in the hallways and the stairway, built display shelves, helped set up displays and much more for which we say "thank you" for a job well done.

Many interested and interesting people visited the

SEE HISTORICAL MUSEUM

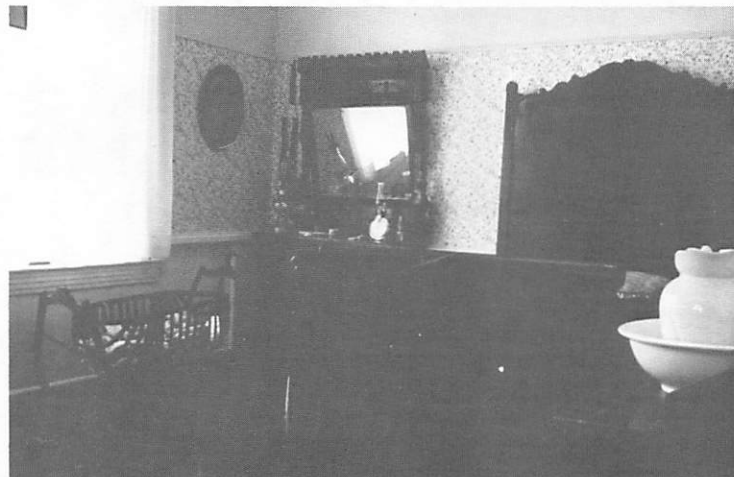
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An important part of "Main Street" is the drug store with a very charming lady to wait on you.



"Main Street's" barber shop, where not only necessary barbering was done, was also a favorite men's meeting place.



The room connected to a Turn of the Century House, features this attractive bedroom set and antique cradle.

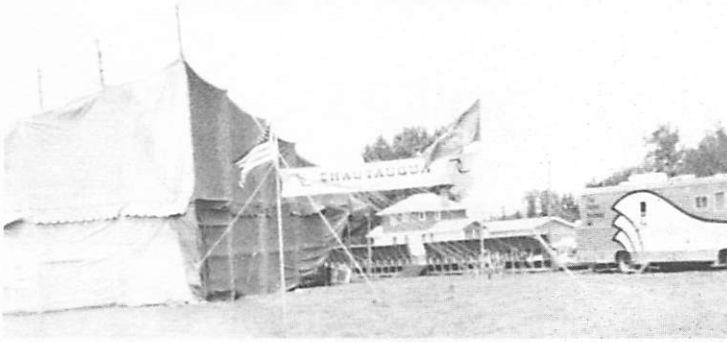


Outside on the museum grounds are displayed a great variety of early farming implements.



The table is set, bread and pies are baked and the cook is busy preparing dinner in the cook car.

Chautauqua '78 Held In Grafton



Chautauque at Heritage Village.

Chautauqua '78 was held in the Walsh Heritage Village in Grafton from July 23-28. The "Circus of Education" was presented in a tent on the village grounds.

The revived Chautauqua just completed its third summer touring North Dakota. Six people accompany the tent troupe on its three-month, eleven-stop tour of the state. Dave Solheim was the coordinator and travels with the group. Afternoon workshops on indoor plant care, creative writing, roots and heritage, interviewing for local history, and locating and editing historical documents were presented.

Humanists for the evening performances were: Dr. Glenn Smith from UND who presented Bill Langer, a powerful figure in North Dakota politics; Jean Waldera of Dickinson State College who presented readings on North Dakota Pioneer Prairie Women; Dr. L. Ray Wheeler gave a presentation on North Dakota writers; Larry Sprunk from Garrison portrayed North Dakota Cowboy "Turkey Track" Bill Molash; Dr. Jerome Tweten from UND portrayed Theodore Roosevelt after his 60th birthday and related his ranching experiences and political career.

Historical Museum

Cont. From Page 2

museum during the summer months when it is open Sunday afternoons, holidays and by special appointment. They came as families, organizations, classes from area schools, representatives of other museums, former residents of the area now living elsewhere and local people. Our guests came from almost all states in the U. S. and some from Canada. A number of interested people return yearly to see the growth and changes in the museum. Most all who visit the museum

expressed surprise at so large and complete a display of historic articles in this area.

The museum was again the recipient of a number of donations of historic value. These we proudly display along with the huge and varied articles donated in former years. We wish to thank one and all for their interest and generosity. With your help your Walsh County Historical Museum will continue to grow and become a real show place of historic interest.



Bayne's Barber Shop, Roy's Cream Station and Stewart's Ice Cream Parlor are three of the business places recreated on our "Main Street." Also on Main Street are a drug store and the Lankin Post Office.

Ethnic programs of song and dance were presented each evening. The Polish, Icelandic, Norse, Czech and British Isles participated. Due to threatening weather the French group was unable to give its presentation on the second evening of the show since all performances that evening were canceled. Dale Christenson — singer, pianist, writer and composer — from Bowsmont gave a musical presentation on two evenings. The Grafton Jr. Band also played one evening.

The Plains Book Bus displayed literature on North Dakota and literature written by North Dakotans. There was a pioneer machinery display as well as a Smithsonian picture display depicting two hundred years of

American agriculture, which was displayed in the theater building. Area china painters had a display and sold hand-painted articles one afternoon, and the PEO from Grafton served old-fashioned cookies and coffee from the log cabin on the village grounds.

The Chautauqua traveling show is sponsored by the North Dakota Library Association and funded by a grant from the North Dakota Committee for Humanities and Public Issues and the Otto Bremer Foundation. Local funding came from a grant by the local member of the Bremer Bank, the Walsh County Bank and Trust Co., from admissions, and the sale of Chautauqua promotional buttons.



Seated left to right, Lieutenant Governor Jobin and Pete Matejcek, president of Walsh County Historical Society. Standing, Mrs. Jobin; Jon Evert, Comstock, Minnesota, president of Red River Valley Historical Society; Don Myrold, Fargo, founder of the Red River Valley Historical Society; Robert Dahl, former mayor of Grafton.

Historical Society Hosts Founder's Day Meeting

F. L. (Bud) Jobin, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, was guest speaker when the Walsh County Historical Society hosted the Red River Valley Historical Society Founder's Day Meeting in Grafton on February 18. Approximately one hundred fifty attended the banquet which was served at the Eagles Club in Grafton. Co-chairpersons of the event were Charles Stewart, Grafton, and Stephanie Prepiora, Minto. Professor Glenn Smith from UND

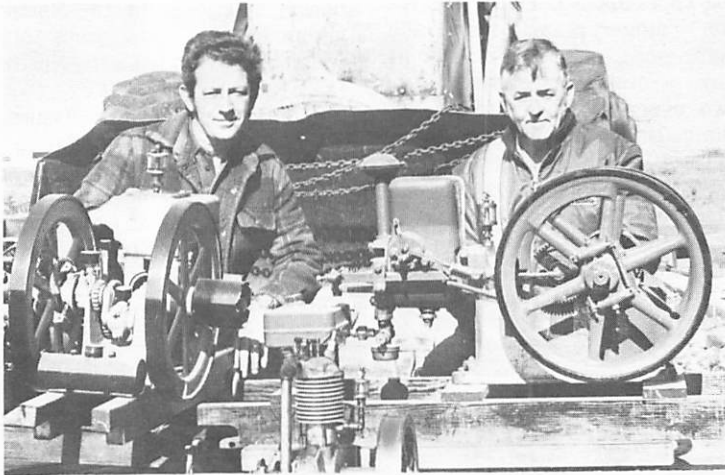
showed the documentary film "Prairie Fire" on the early history of the Non-Partisan League's rise to power in North Dakota.

Special Thanks

A special thanks to individuals and organizations who donated articles, financial assistance, their time, and other support to the various projects of the Walsh County Historical Society.

10th Annual Historical Tour

The tour sponsored by the Walsh County Historical Society was held on Sunday afternoon, July 16. The tour began in Grafton where Gene Cernik and Paul Benjaminson had set up a display of engines. They have approximately one hundred fifty engines which they have acquired over the past ten years and many of them are in working condition and have been a major source of power in the past. Gene and Paul have devoted hundreds of hours to the collection and restoration of these engines.



Left to right, Gene Cernik and Paul Benjaminson.

A brief stop was made at the Fort Alexander Henry Rest Area on Interstate 29 northeast of Grafton. The third stop was at the farm home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry French northeast of Grafton. Henry displayed a model of our U. S. Capitol which stands 8½ feet high, 80 inches wide and 68 inches deep and weighs 500 lbs. Henry worked approximately 2,000 hours on the project which includes 4,123 pieces. Henry's decision to build the Capitol was greatly influenced by pictures of the U. S. Capitol in the book about J. F. Kennedy entitled "The Torch is Passed" and when he began the capitol he intended to build only the dome and use it as

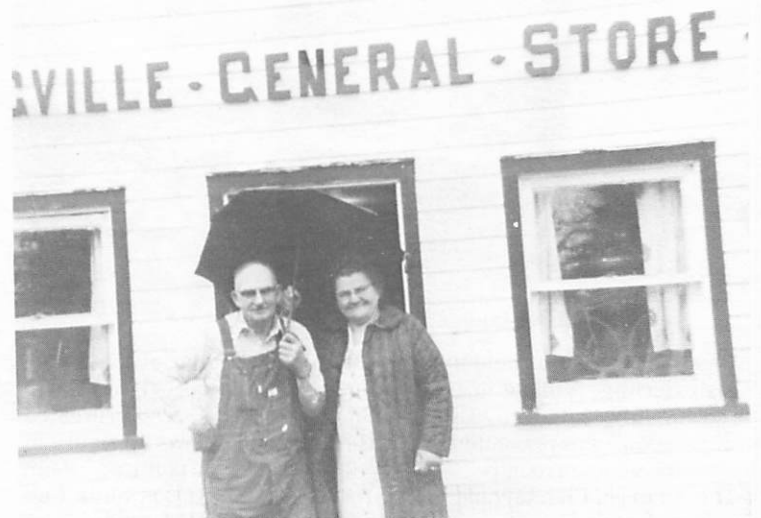
a bird house but the project developed into the larger structure. Henry had to build a structure in his yard to house the capitol. The hinged doors, dozens of pillars, and copper lattice work on the windows were all time consuming. Mrs. French painted the capitol and the long steps have a marbled effect.

In their yard you can see the numerous bird houses Henry has built. The group was also given the opportunity to see numerous lovely pieces of furniture Henry has made and Mrs. French has stained and varnished. His prize possession he has built is a large china closet.

The final stop was at the farm



Henry French and the Capitol he built.



Sig and Josephine Jagielski on Jugville Street.

of Sig and Josephine Jagielski. They have retired from farming but have a full time job overseeing their large collection. They have built a pioneer street called Jugville Village which includes a country store, shoe shop, clinic, chapel, parish house, country school and they are all furnished with articles used in the early and middle 1900's.

In the park stands a jail used in Grafton in 1900. This past summer they planted 1,200 petunias in their flower gardens so the yard is a beautiful sight in the summer.

The main museum building at Jagielski's houses thousands of items such as musical instruments, tools, 4,200 pens, bottles, magazines, lamps, other household articles and other items too numerous to mention.

There is a display of pioneer machinery near the village. Sig has also built an Overland stagecoach, 1908 automobile, hearse, cannon, and covered wagon.

Sig has plans to continue to add to his collection — a telephone exchange, printing equipment and old telegraph equipment will be added in 1979 so every year there are new things to see. Approximately two thousand toured his museum in 1978.

Sig and Josephine donated the free will collection for the day to the Walsh County Historical Society. Mark Holt, Hoople, assisted by Bennie Langerud, roasted pork for the meal which included baked potatoes, beans, cole slaw and rolls and was served from the cook car.

The historical society would like to thank everyone who open-

ed their homes and displayed their collections which make the tour very interesting and a success. Approximately two hundred signed the guest book in the Jagielski museum the day of the tour. In charge of arrangements for the tour were: Mr. and Mrs. Ed Gudajtes, Minto; Jean Bodmer and John and Lorraine Paulson, all of Hoople.

Heritage Books Still Available

The "Walsh Heritage" books are still available and they would be an ideal Christmas gift. They will become a treasured keepsake for generations to come. To date approximately 3,900 sets have been sold with about four hundred of these sets being sold in 1978. The two volume set has 1,200 pages of histories on families, towns, villages, schools and churches along with hundreds of pictures of Walsh County history. A set of books can be purchased by mailing twenty-two dollars which covers postage to: Leonard Jensen, Edinburg, North Dakota 58227 or James Johnson, Adams, North Dakota 58210. Books can also be purchased at the Walsh County Bank in Grafton.



1978 Summary Of Historical Society

By LORRAINE PAULSON
Corresponding Secretary

There has been a great deal of activity within the Walsh County Historical Society in 1978. Twelve business meetings were held, along with three board meetings — one in Grafton and two in Park River — and the County Historical Society hosted the Annual Red River Valley Historical Society's Founders Day Banquet and Meeting in Grafton, assisted with the Chautauqua at the Heritage Village in Grafton and the play "Prairie Memory" which was presented on five different days this fall and was presented in the new Heritage Theater Building at the Heritage Village, and the dedication of the Heritage Theater Building which was attended by the Governor of North Dakota.

Monthly meetings are held throughout the county with women from each area serving the lunch. A brief monthly summary will follow: The first meeting of the year was held in January at the Walsh County Extension Office in Park River. Officers were installed. A memorial tribute to the late Mrs. M. C. (Winnie) Flaten of Edinburg was given. Winnie was a very active member of the Walsh County Historical Society. She was a charter member of the society, first secretary, present director and chairperson of the "Walsh Heritage" history book of the county. She is greatly missed by many in the county. Ted Torgerson, Park River, was chosen as a director to fill the vacancy left by the death of Mrs. Flaten.

The February meeting was held at the Senior Citizen's Center in Minto. There was no March meeting but two meetings were held in April. One meeting was held on April 2 at the Walsh County Bank in Grafton where "Flickertail Flashbacks" Part I was shown along with a slide presentation on the Green Thumb Program in North Dakota for senior citizens. A new life member in the society, Myrtle Schrank, Grafton, was introduced. On April 30 the society met at the Fire Hall in Lankin. Progress reports and plans for various summer projects were discussed. Henry Lundene, director of the society, said that he felt that a third book on Walsh County

History should be published so keep writing your histories since the third book depends upon interest shown by people in the county. A memorial tribute was given for Ted Gillham, Forest River, who died in April. He was a present director of the society and served on the committee of the "Walsh Heritage" books.

The May meeting was held in Fairdale. Mrs. Ted (Ella) Gillham will succeed her late husband as director of the society. Mr. and Mrs. Art Jackson, Grafton, and their daughter, Liz Fagerholt, will donate their pioneer log cabin which will be moved to the Heritage Village in Grafton at a future date to be used as the Swedish Ethnic Structure in the ethnic development.

The Jayceettes from Grafton donated \$300 toward the stage for the Heritage Theater in the Heritage Village.

The annual potluck picnic was held at the Pioneer Memorial Gardens at the Homme Dam west of Park River on June 25.

On July 16 the Annual Tour was held in northeastern Walsh County. (Article appears elsewhere in this issue.)

The August meeting was held in the Little Theater Building in the Village in Grafton. It was a thrill for all in attendance to be meeting in this new structure which was nearing completion. The building was funded by a Federal LPW Grant which made possible the construction of the Heritage Ethnic Theater Building at a cost of approximately \$165,000.

Two meetings were held in October since we did not meet in September. The first meeting was held at the Senior Citizen's Center in Adams. Plans were made for the dedication of the theater building. The second meeting was held at the Legion Community Center in Hoople, and the final meeting of the year was held at the Senior Citizen's Center in Minto at which time officers for 1979 were elected.

1979 Directors

New directors for 1979 are: Kay Vang, Grafton; Stephanie Prepiora, Minot; and James Johnson, Adams. The same officers were re-elected.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF
WALSH COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR '78

Those attending the October Board Meeting of the Historical Society were: Seated: Ed Gudajtes, Minto, vice president; Pete Matejcek, Lankin, president; Lorraine Paulson, Hoople, corresponding secretary; Leonard Jensen, Edinburg, treasurer; Jean Bodmer, Hoople, recording secretary.

Standing: Walter Gerszewski, Warsaw; John Paulson, Hoople; Ella Gillham, Forest River; Henry Lundene, Adams; James Johnson, Adams; are all directors; and Frank Schiller, Forest River, chairman of the County Museum Board.

Board members of the society who were not present were: Leona Walstad, Park River; Ted Torgerson, Park River; and Francis Chromy, Forest River; Charles Stewart, Grafton; all directors; and Ralph Adamsen, Grafton, chairman of Walsh Heritage Village in Grafton.

Ethnic Development At Heritage Village

It is hoped that 1979 will bring further ethnic development at the Walsh Heritage Village in Grafton. The first joint meeting of ethnic groups was held on October 22 at 6:30 p. m. following the dedication of the theatre.

Henry Lundene, Adams, director of the historical society, related further plans or dreams for the ethnic portion of the village at the meeting. Walsh County is truly a "melting pot" with most nationalities found within our county and it is hoped that we can preserve and show other nationalities certain customs or traditions of our own culture. Even though we are all Americans now we should be proud to display and share our ancestral background with others.

Ethnic groups which have organized and elected officers are as follows:

Norwegian — chairman, Henry Lundene, Adams; vice chairman, Marci Melstad, Edinburg; secretary, Thelma Wick, Park River; treasurer, Nora Gryde.

British Isles — chairman, Charles Stewart, Grafton; vice

chairman, Homer Nelson, Grafton; secretary-treasurer, Margaret Phelan, Grafton.

Swedish — chairman, James Johnson, Adams; vice chairman, Liz Fagerholt, Hoople; secretary-treasurer, Lorraine Paulson, Hoople.

Icelandic — Margaret Thomasson, Grafton, hopes enough interest can be found among them to organize a group.

French — Agnes Bolek, Grafton, will work with the French if more interest can be found among them in organizing a group.

Polish — There was good representation of the Polish and they plan to organize in the parishes and they will select representatives and have a meeting and elect officers. Ed Gudajtes, Minto, is acting chairman.

Czech — Pete Matejcek is acting chairman and they are making plans to have a structure moved to the Heritage Village.

It is hoped that other ethnic groups in our area will also organize and set up a display at the village.

New Additions To Heritage Village

Growth was apparent in the Walsh Heritage Village in 1978. The Grafton Volunteer Firemen erected a structure 26x16 feet to display old fire fighting equipment previously used by the local fire department. Local firemen volunteered their labor with LeRoy Stroh and LeRoy Nelson as co-foremen spearheading the project. Cost of materials was approximately three thousand dollars.

Two hose carts and a hook and ladder have been placed in the building. Dress uniforms and work clothes (turn-out suits) used during the period the department has been organized will be

displayed along with smaller fire equipment. The first fire bell used to summon local firemen will be set up on one corner of the building with an old fire hydrant at the other.

The Grafton Volunteer Fire Department was organized in April, 1882.

An old steel cage type jail cell which has been used in the village of Pisek has been moved to the Heritage Grounds and a structure was built to enclose the cell.

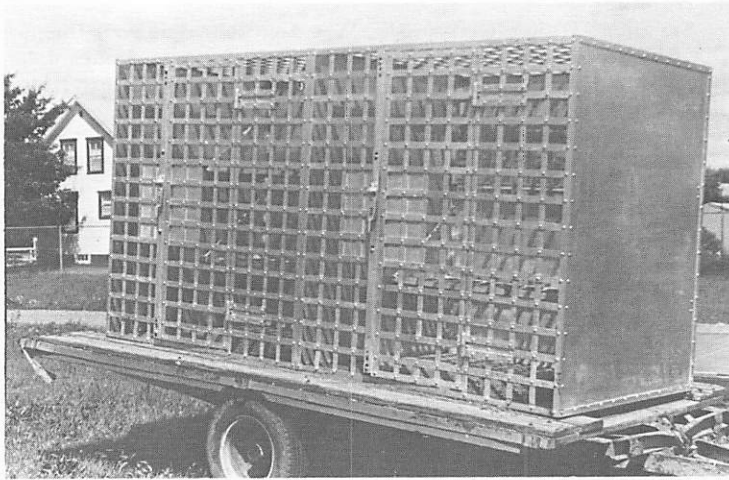
Other improvements in the village besides the new Heritage Theater was the furnishing of the Donnelly pioneer log cabin, and setting up and arranging the in-

terior of the Landstad Church.

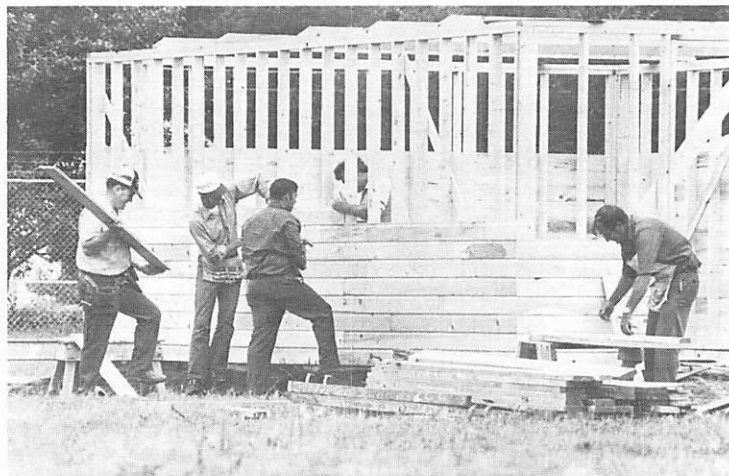
Charles Matcha, Grafton, was volunteer over-seer of the village and all the time and effort he gave to the village project was appreciated. Ralph Adamsen, Grafton, is chairman of the Village Board and is instrumental in the development and expansion of the village. Green Thumb and CETA workers have worked

at the village this past summer.

There have been numerous gifts to the village this year and the generosity of the givers is appreciated. The Grafton Jayceettes donated \$300 toward the building of the stage at the theater in the village. All the gifts of time or things are appreciated and help to make the Heritage Village grow.



This steel cage type jail with cells was the last used by the city of Pisek.



Members of the Grafton Volunteer Fire Department have been busy evenings and on weekends raising what will become the new old-time fire hall in Grafton's Heritage Village.

1978 Membership Lags - Your Support Needed

The number of paid memberships in the Walsh County Historical Society for 1978 lags behind the previous year and I will give a breakdown on paid memberships and the localities. Park River and Grafton are much lower in the number of paid

memberships so it greatly affects our total. We need your support and cooperation so we can do better in 1979. Only with your continued support — financially and otherwise — can the society maintain its present projects and continue to grow.

1978 WCHS MEMBERSHIP COMPARED TO 1977 47% of 1977

Area	1978	1977
Adams	24	37
Ardoch	2	2
Crystal	0	1
Drayton	4	7
Edinburg	18	36
Fairdale	11	11
Fordville	1	3
Forest River	22	15
Grafton	195	419
Hoople	31	28
Lankin	10	11
Lawton	0	1
Minto	112	123
Park River	23	341
Pisek	6	8
Voss	6	8
Out of County	18	22
Out of State	45	47
TOTAL	528	1120
Life	1	4
Business		
Adams	1	0
Grafton	41	79
Minto	6	6
Park River	0	3
Voss	1	1
Fergus Falls (Moen)	1	1
TOTAL	50	90

(Business memberships are included in the original membership count of the area. Also life memberships.)

Regular dues are \$2.00 per year. Business memberships are \$10.00 per year and life memberships are \$100.00. Send payment to Stephanie Prepiora, Historical Society Membership Chairman, Minto, North Dakota, or pay any of the officers and directors of the

historical society and you will in turn receive your membership card. Your support is needed.

Thank you,
Stephanie Prepiora
Membership Chairman
Minto, North Dakota

Prairie Memory

Cont. From Page One

working on a musical drama about William Langer, former governor of North Dakota and Senator to Washington, D. C. — a colorful politician in our history.

A box social auction was held after the November 5th matinee of "Prairie Memory" with proceeds going to the Community Theatre for lighting equipment.

Town Built By River Navigation

By Alfred & Louise Hoenke
and Gloria Thompson

As early as 1866, a Canadian from Montreal named Antoine Girard had explored along the Red River of the North. At a bend in the river where Acton is now located, lived a Norwegian wood chopper named Larson, who supplied the ever-hungry steamboats on the Red with fuel. In June, 1871, Girard pitched his tent on the historical ground of Acton and called it Rose Point. In 1872 he was followed by Ed (Doc) Kelley and in 1875 by Jacob Reinhardt, who later became Walsh County's first sheriff. These were the first business men. Girard had a tavern, Kelley operated a stage station which he sold to Girard later, and Reinhardt had a general store with a few goods to sell to Indians, half-breeds and an occasional white customer. The site was now known as Kelley's Point.

By 1879, immigration into this area was increasing rapidly, and Girard, the owner of the townsite, had Robert Lynn, the Pembina County surveyor, plat out the original townsite and later a small addition. The town had 10½ blocks, 190 lots with First, Second and Third streets running parallel to the bend in the river, and with six streets running east and west, some named after his children. Technically, one may walk along these streets, although most are farm fields, but they have never been legally vacated, which is also true of the lots. The town was now called Acton, named after Acton, Ontario, Canada.

Acton, as Rose Point in 1871, was granted a Post Office, but it was never brought into operation. A Post Office was established under the name of Kelley's Point on August 23, 1878, with Antoine Girard as the first postmaster. By 1879 Acton, as it was then known, had weekly mail service from Grand Forks. Settlers from the north, south and west came here for their mail, some walking as far as 20 miles across the prairie. Postmasters were Antoine Girard, E. Scott, Eliza Scott and Emil Hoenke. The post office was closed September 30, 1913.

In the spring of 1879, Budge, Eshelman and Anderson opened a large store and Acton began to grow. The stage coach, but mostly the steamboats brought hundreds of immigrants weekly, all heading westward to occupy the timberland along the Park

and Forest rivers, and later the prairie land.

Acton, or Kelley's Point as it was then known, was the midway station between Grand Forks and Pembina. The line was originally established in 1871, and was owned by Blakely and Carpenter. With enough fresh horses and no unforeseen long stops, the trip could be made in one day. The stations were about 20 miles apart, a convenient distance for a change of horses, meals for the passengers and if needed, shelter for the night or in case of storms. Four horses were used, and the coaches usually were painted yellow and had canvas tops. They carried mail express and passengers. There was room for 10 passengers, and a few more in a pinch. Among the passengers riding the coaches were fur traders, homesteaders, teachers, adventurers, priests, ministers and business men. Riding was rough over the prairie trails. No paved four-lane highways existed then.

Acton being the midway station, and reaching about noon would give the passengers opportunity to have a meal at one of the town hotels. Two were in existence at this time, the Acton House owned by E. F. Schumann and the Dakota House owned by John Scott. It is known that the Acton House had three stories with the third story being the laundry. Two of the maids who worked at the Acton House were Bertha Wolfgram, later Mrs. Emil Hoenke, and Amelia Schrank, later Mrs. Nicholas Dipple. They would nearly freeze their fingers hanging sheets in the icy third floor laundry rooms in the winter time.

The Acton House gave parties when the steamboats came, and oyster stew parties were held for their guests on Wednesday nights in the winter. The stages for Grand Forks, Pembina and west started from this House, there was a good stable with plenty of hay, wines, liquors and cigars were available in the Sample House connected with the hotel, and terms were reasonable with meals at 35 cents, room and board at \$5.00 per week.

It was river navigation that built Acton. The Red River was the main traffic lane and the steamboats, Grandin, Selkirk and Pluck, brought immigrants, lumber, provisions, farm machinery and everything needed for a new country. Farm-

ers in the area came many miles to Acton to get the supplies they needed and bring their grain to be taken to market. There were two elevators and from these grain was loaded into the steamboat barges. Some barges had a capacity of 5,000 bushels of wheat. The elevators were torn down when the steamboats stopped running after 1910.

There was a ferry on the river about a half mile south of Acton. The steamboat would blow its whistle at a distance before it came to the ferry so the ferry cable could be dropped to let the boat pass. The sound of this whistle brought many activities in the town. The hotel staffs prepared meals, and dances and parties were held while the boat was in port. The children from the schoolhouse were dismissed and ran to the landing. The saloons became very busy places.

The first steamboat, the Anson Northrup, sailed the Red River from Fort Abercrombie to Fort Garry in June 1859. In the spring of 1871, Captain Alexander Griggs and James J. Hill built the steamboat Selkirk at a cost of \$5,000. It was launched at Fort Abercrombie April 4, 1871, with Capt. Griggs in charge. There were two decks with cabins on the upper and the engine room and freight on the lower. The Selkirk towed three barges, one on each side and one ahead. (It was a stern-wheeler so could not tow one behind). In October 1877, the Selkirk transported a railroad locomotive on a barge from Fishers Landing to Winnipeg for the Canadian Pacific Railroad. This was the famed "Countess of Dufferin" now on display in Winnipeg.

Between 1879 and 1881, Acton grew rapidly with a population of over 400 by the summer of 1881. Also by this time the legislature of Dakota Territory had authorized Walsh County as a county, commissioners had been selected, and Acton, being the largest town in Walsh County at this time was a candidate for the county seat.

On May 26, 1881, Frank M. Winship published the first edition of THE ACTON NEWS, the first newspaper published in Walsh County. Some of the items of local interest: business is booming, at least 100 immigrants have come into town the past week, the steamers Grandin and Selkirk were by, and a new saloon was

being erected by Dickson and McClintock. The ads list the Acton House and the Dakota House as the two hotels in town. J. Boulduc and Bros. dispense wines, liquors and cigars of superior quality at Salon Francais, a grocery is operated by William Brunelle, a general merchandise store is operated by A & H Zuelsdorf who bought the stock, and good will of Budge, Eshelman and Co., stoves, tinware, hardware and Singer Sewing Machines can be had at C Hendricksen and Co. There were two farm machinery dealers, Strong, Thomson and Vaughn, and Johnson, Holmes and Co. Ed Boussey and the Olafson Bros. sold shoes and boots, Robert Lynn and Nathan Upham had Law, Loan and Land offices. Alex Ross was the blacksmith and Dr. N. H. Hamilton the physician and surgeon and owner of the drug store.

In 1879, Lot 19 in the townsite of Acton was sold by Antoine Girard and School District No. 15 was organized. In 1882, Carl Wolfgram built the schoolhouse. Classes began that year and were in session for 74 consecutive terms. The term was from April 14 to November 7. One of the teachers in the school was Viljhamer Stefanson, the well known arctic explorer. He taught in 1900 and 1901. Mrs. Emil Hoenke (Bertha Wolfgram) whose father built the school, attended the school herself as did all her children and three of her grandchildren. The final term closed in May, 1956.

After all these years the schoolhouse is still standing on the same lot it was built. The building is now owned by Alfred Hoenke, a grandson of the builder and is kept primarily as a family memento and old landmark. Would it not be interesting if those walls could talk.

The summer of 1881 was the peak of activity in Acton. But even then the fingers of fate were writing on the wall, as the railroad, steadily pushing northward was being surveyed about seven miles to the west of Acton. On September 14, 1881, the county commissioners selected Grafton as the county seat. On Dec. 21, 1881, the first railroad train reached Grafton and in a few months this frontier village became the third largest city in what is now North Dakota. After the first snow many of the Acton businessmen moved their buildings into Grafton or Minto, drawn on heavy sleighs by oxen.

Acton was still an active village

SEE ACTON
Cont. on Page 8, Col. 1

Warsaw Church Damaged By Fire

The entire area was saddened by the serious fire at St. Stanislaus Catholic Church in the village of Warsaw, N. D., in October 1978. Repair work will begin soon and will cost approximately \$200,000 and take about 10 months to complete. Major damage was done to the interior of the church when the fire, which was caused by electrical wiring, began in the basement, traveled up a pillar and into the attic of the church. Major repair work had recently been completed on the exterior of the church and the interior of the beautiful church was painted and redecorated a couple of years ago.

Since repair work will begin immediately, it is expected that federal funds will not be available for this restoration project at this time, but the resolution will place the church on the National Register of Historic places.

The church was erected in 1900 and has a seating capacity of 1200. It is hoped that the art work,

statues, etc., can be restored to their original beauty.

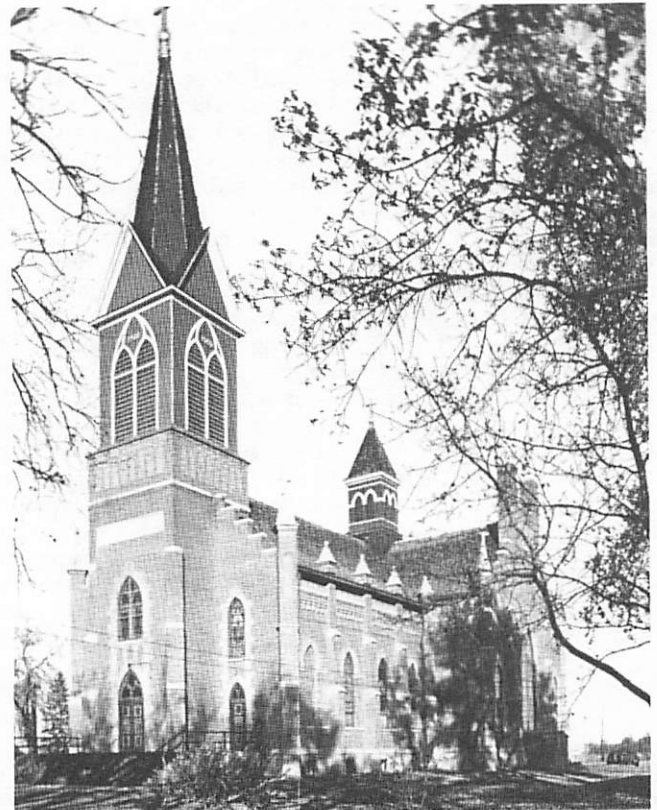
The following resolution received unanimous approval.

Whereas, the Walsh County Historical Society has been an active organization during the entire existence of our 10 years and whereas one of the objectives of the organization is preservation and restoration of notable Walsh County landmarks and buildings in Walsh County.

Whereas, a recent fire did tremendous damage to St. Stanislaus Church of Warsaw, whoever, with extensive repair which will require much time and money it can be restored to its original beauty.

Whereas, this church has been opened to historical tours in the past, but supported by a relatively small congregation in a rural area.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Walsh County Historical Society meeting in regular session at Hoople, N. Dak., on October 29, 1978, go on record to urge that this beautiful historical landmark of 1900 construction fashioned after the old-world architecture that prevailed in an earlier era be placed on the National Register of Historic Places and be eligible for restoration funds from the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Department of Interior, or any other available state or federal funds.



St. Stanislaus Catholic Church, Warsaw, N. D.

Acton

Cont. From Page 7

for twenty or more years. The steamboats and elevators operated until 1910 and the Post Office until 1913. F. T. Kieley became owner of most of the townsite. He operated a blacksmith shop and garage and owned a store. Mr. Kieley lived in Acton until 1923 when he moved to Grafton where he continued to operate a garage. In 1936 he was elected sheriff of Walsh County and was elected again in 1938.

Transportation was changed and Acton ceased to be a commercial center and began to fade into a mere historical fact. Most of Acton is still original prairie. Here is located an early burial ground with about 25 graves of the early settlers. The area is known but it is not possible to locate the exact place of the graves.

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Hoenke own and still live on their farm which was once the village of Acton.

In 1978 the Walsh County Historical Society designated Acton School as a County Historical Site and a marker will be placed on the school.

Historical Float In Parades

The sod hut float appeared in the Beet Festival parade in Grafton in June and on the 4th of July it was in the parade in Minto. This float is displayed in the Walsh County Museum in Minto. The float is a replica of the John Bakken Sod Shanty of 1895 in Silvesta Township. The picture of the shanty has appeared on the Homestead Act stamp issued in 1962 and on a stamp in Norway commemorating their Sesquicentennial in 1975.

Mrs. Tilda Aune, Edinburg, who was the young girl on the original picture and the daughter of John Bakken, rode on the float in the parade at Grafton.

Time To Renew 1979 Memberships

Any dues paid after Oct. 1, 1978, are for 1979. We would appreciate it very much if you would take a few minutes of your time to mail your yearly dues and in turn, you will receive your membership card.

- ANNUAL REGULAR DUES. \$2.00 per person
- ANNUAL BUSINESS & INSTITUTIONAL. \$10.00
- LIFE MEMBERSHIP. \$100

Your support helps sustain our Society.

Stephanie Prepiora, Membership Chairman
Walsh County Historical Society
Minto, North Dakota 58261

Editor - LORRAINE PAULSON

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