

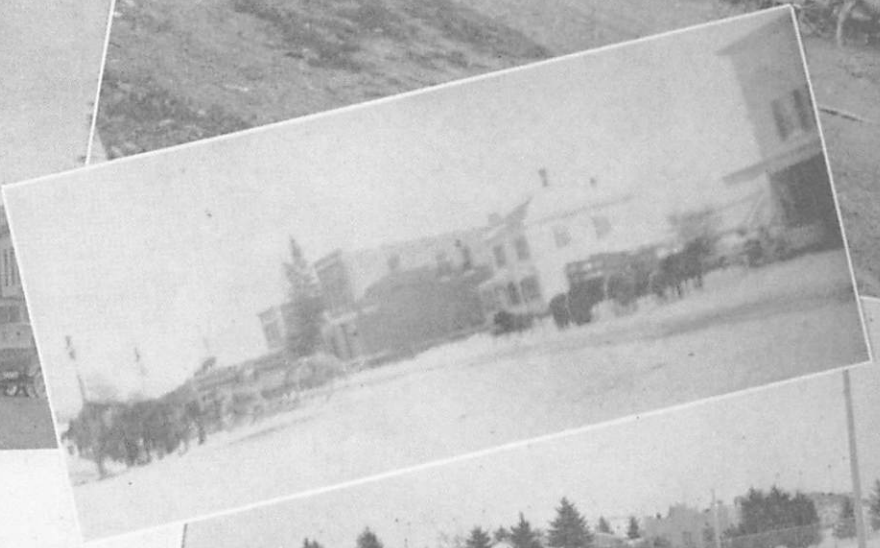
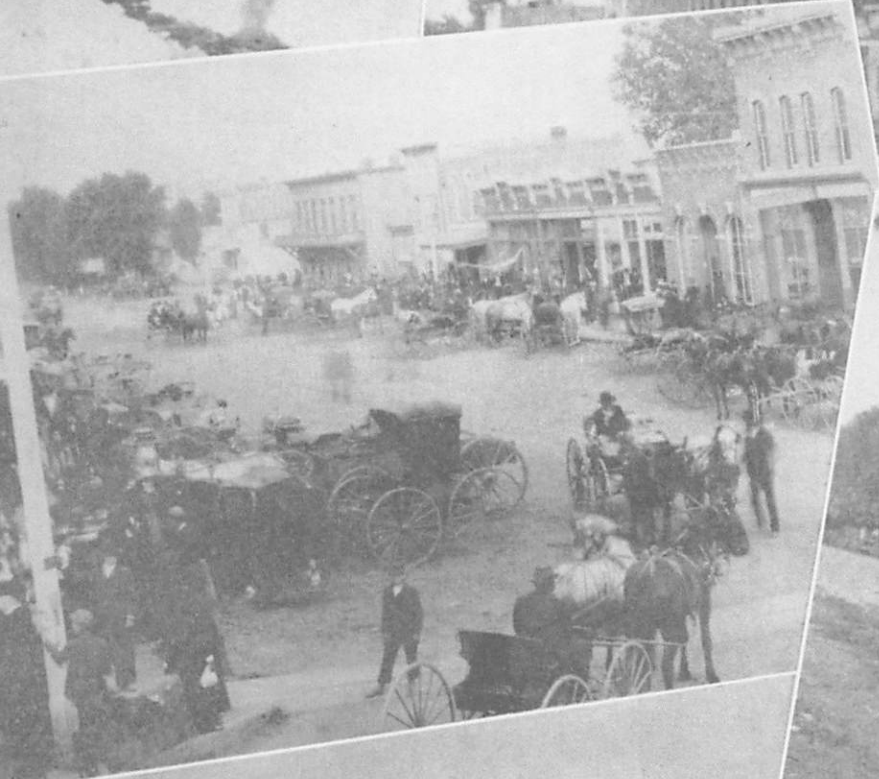
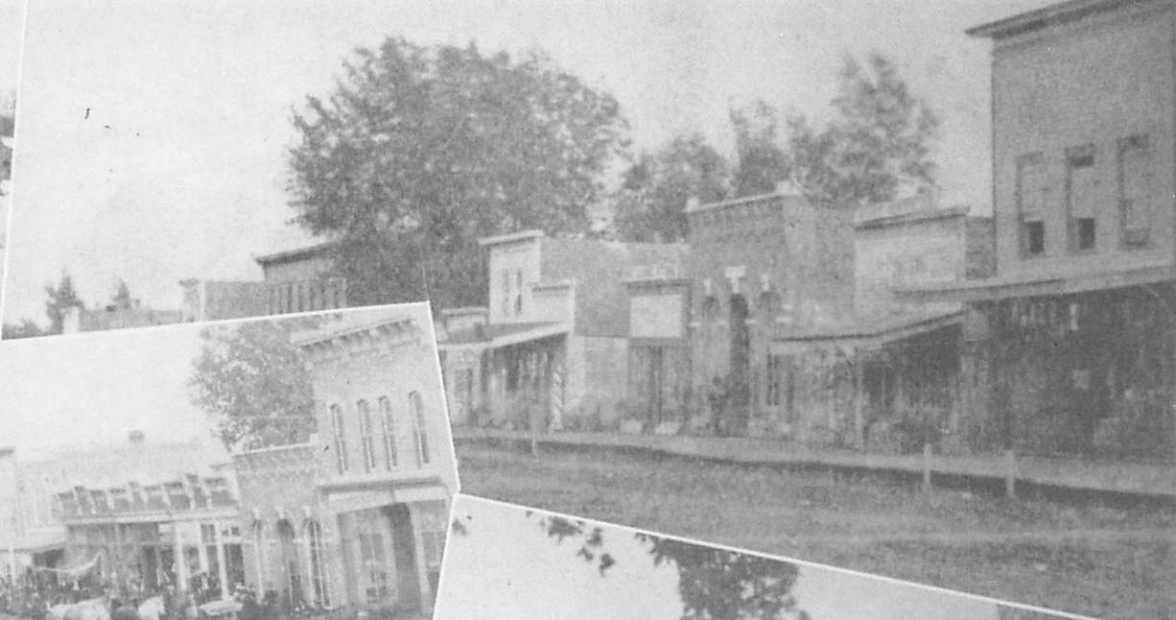
# PLAINVIEW



1856

1956

*Plateau of Plenty*





## *To Our Pioneers . . . .*

Who through the century have—by their desire to be uncommon—brought forth a culture and agricultural advancement as rich as our soil . . . . we humbly dedicate this history.

THE PLAINVIEW CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

*We Cannot* start this book without giving credit where much credit is due . . . so first we offer our most genuine thanks to the Plainview Travelers Club for their fine effort in compiling this commemorative book for us.

It is our good fortune—and yours—to bring you the priceless recording of our pioneer life by Mr. Irvin Washington Rollins, and we are most grateful to his family for their willingness to share these diaries.

We are indebted to the Minnesota Historical Society for the use of early census records and newspapers, as well as the invaluable assistance of each and every one of their staff members—also to Mack Publishing Company for their newspaper files dating back to 1899—and to every person who has volunteered property of historical value or assistance of any kind.

THE PLAINVIEW COMMERCIAL CLUB

Sponsoring

*1856 . . . . The Plainview Centennial . . . . 1956*

## The Reign of the Indians



**Chief Wabashaw III**

Although our vast prairie never appealed to the Indians because they preferred to headquarter near woods and water, our early settlers found numerous Indian trails leading over our plateau from the Zumbro to the lower Whitewater and Mississippi.

Our land was ranged by the M'daywakanton band of the Sioux. Among their leading chiefs was Wapashaw I, born about 1720, who despite his mother's being a beautiful Chippewa princess, frequently waged fierce warfare against the Chippewa nation. After the French fur trade had dwindled by the French treaty of 1763 relinquishing title to our land to England, Wapashaw I went to Quebec to implore the British to take his people under their protection and to exchange ammunition and goods for the Sioux furs, returning with 7 medals for each of his tribes, a gaudy uniform with red cap and full British cooperation . . . However, although he led 1,000 Sioux to Prairie du Chien awaiting British instructions to fight their battle in the Revolution, he respected the fact that war had ceased.

Wapashaw II who had succeeded his father to the chieftainship some time prior to his death in 1806, was opposed to war but was sometimes led into it by his hot-blooded warriors; hence they joined the British side in Ohio in the war of 1812. Wapashaw II urged the marriage of the early traders and the Indian

maidens, and a great many half-breed families commenced to spring up. It was during his reign that the treaty of 1830 was signed at Prairie du Chien setting aside the famous Half-Breed Tract, an area of 450 square miles, by drawing a line starting at the Barn Bluff in Red Wing and extending southwestward to a point in Section 24 of Plainview township and thence northeast to the Mississippi, in Section 12 of Greenfield township, thus taking in part of Goodhue, much of Wabasha and a tip of Winona County. This Half-Breed Tract was doubtless created through the influence of the Indian traders who had married Indian women, several of the most prominent early families of Wabasha being related to Wabashaw III by marriage or descent.

When Wapashaw II died in 1834, his son spelled the name with a "b" instead of a "p". He became Wabashaw III and moved his band from Wabashaw Prairie (now Winona) to the mouth of the Zumbro six miles below Wabasha. Chief Wabashaw and his band summered at Sand Prairie and Tepeeotah.

In the treaty of August 5, 1851, provision was made for the purchase of this tract by the Government for \$150,000, however this clause was stricken out by the Senate. Later a list of the half-breeds, mostly the children of the traders, was made out and scrip was issued entitling each to 480 acres, the location within the tract to be chosen by each holder. Gen. Shields brought this scrip to Minnesota for distribution, and immediately a great portion of it was passed on to speculators by the parents or guardians of these half-breeds.

Among the French families in Wabashaw receiving scrip, Joseph Buisson had seven scrips, Alexis Baille had seven, Augustin Rocque's family had 13, Oliver Cratte nine, Monette had four, Trudell had seven, Duncan and Scott Campbell had 23 and Francois laBatte had 10, all good for 480 acres.

Meanwhile, as this scrip was being distributed, settlers had begun to pour into the Half-Breed Tract, many of them making vast improvements before they realized that the status of their land was different from other government lands. Some stayed, taking their own chances even though they knew their possession to be illegal, others secured quit-claim deeds from individual half-breeds or their guardians despite the fact that these papers were valueless since the half-breeds' only rights were in the scrip and could transfer the land only by transferring the scrip. The settlers banded together and sent an envoy to Washington to settle the matter. They succeeded in getting copies of the plats of all the townships included within this tract, and every quarter section upon which a settler had

made improvements was definitely marked. Holders of scrip were publicly warned against filing upon such land, and a vigilante committee formed to prevent scrip "being laid" on land already occupied.

Soon after, the matter was corrected in Washington by granting to the settlers in the Half-Breed Tract the same rights of preemption and homestead as on other Government lands and granting to the scrip holders the right to "lay" their scrip upon any other Government land not already filed upon.

Since few or none of the half-breeds ever cared to settle upon our rich prairie, the situation ended happily with only an occasional repercussion in later years when some half-breed whose guardian had sold his scrip to one of our early settlers would find himself a lawyer and demand that he too be paid. Usually, the farmers would pay the small sum asked since their land had increased considerably in value and they could ill afford the time and expense of a lawsuit.

Wabashaw III, much beloved by his people, continued to do a heavy fur business with the river traders in the early years . . . and many of our settlers took

up the trade where the Sioux left off since our numerous river valleys yielded quantities of beaver, mink, otter, muskrat, badger, silver, red and gray fox, raccoon, marten, bear, wolf, deer and rabbit furs until about 1875.

In an effort to satisfy your and our curiosity, we have done exhaustive research to learn how Chief Wabashaw III lost his one eye. The only clue we could find came from one of our respected Plainview Mainstreeters who suggested that it was probably from a rusty hatpin thrust through a keyhole. He reputedly died in about 1876 at the Santee reservation in Nebraska.

An interesting story is related that during the troubles with the Winnebago Indians Chief Wabashaw was invited at Prairie du Chien to a council. After listening to the Winnebago chiefs and what they proposed doing to the whites, Chief Wabashaw rose and pulling a hair from his head, blew it away, telling the Council that if they harmed a white man he would blow them from the face of the earth as he had blown the hair.

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## *One Hundred Years of Successful Farming*

Many early history books tell us that Plainview and Greenwood Prairie have always been devoted to agriculture.

Plainview, rising 465 feet above Kellogg and 95 feet above Elgin, sits in the heart of the broad, rich tableland known as Greenwood Prairie, the veritable watershed of the Whitewater and Zumbro valleys. The best description we have had of our geography came from a recent visitor who, when asked what people "saw" in Plainview, replied, "I don't know what they see, but when I went to the kitchen for a drink of water I saw most of Southeastern Minnesota".

This **Plateau of Plenty** was the prime attraction for our early settlers and became our heritage. Even in 1855 many of our first pioneers came as Mr. Rollins (whose early diaries are found in a later chapter) did with a definite destination—Greenwood, Minnesota.

Within the year eastern newspapers were expounding this vast prairie extending twenty-five miles, all one mass of richness . . . and in 1860 a Chicago

publisher wrote that Wabasha County was fast becoming a favored location both for its productive land and its scenery: "This prairie called Greenwood supposedly is the 'garden spot of the earth'. I haven't seen it but hope to before I die. They picture twenty miles of continuous wheat fields and thirty bushel to the acre."

And we did raise wheat and salvaged yields just that fabulous from the straw stacks for almost twenty years until rust and grasshoppers led us to diversification. Our wheat was hauled over-the-road—sometimes in caravans of forty wagons—to Minneiska which became the largest wheat riverport in the world.

While the majority of our early comers were Yankees, with a sprinkling of Irish and other nationalities, by 1875 we had gained a goodly number of German farmers who helped us turn from wheat to stock raising and other crops. Corn, barley, clover and oats replaced much of the wheat; and well before the turn of the century we had become widely known not only

for stock raising but also for our so-called garden crops, leading the Northwest as a cabbage market, with dry onions, peas, pickles and sweet corn following.

As early as 1870 many of our farmers started importing breeding stock, both horses and cattle, paying as much as \$3,000 for a Norman stallion. We were soon shipping blooded stock all over the continent, not to mention driving some of the "dandiest" matched teams in the Midwest.

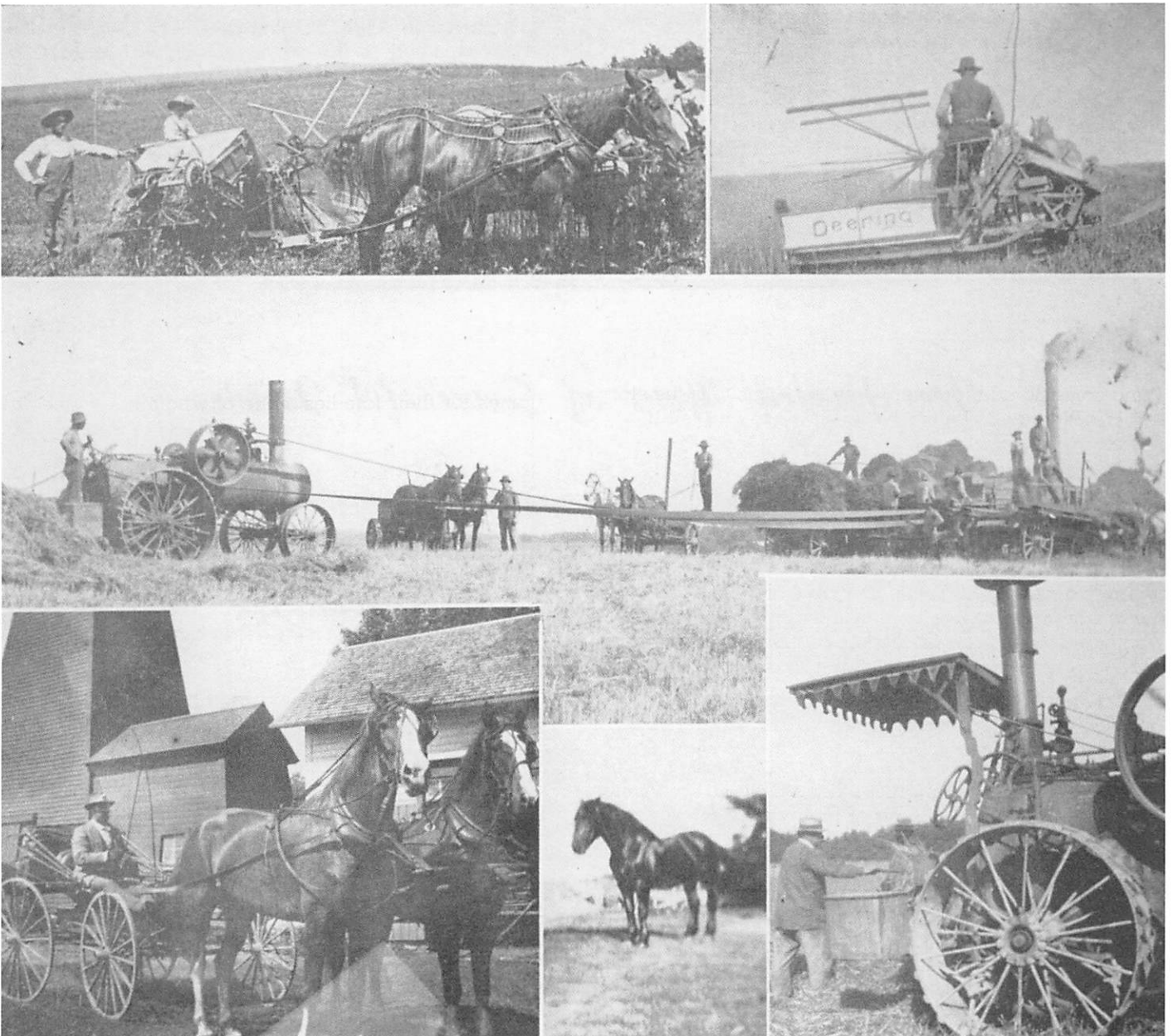
Good farmland attracted good farmers who in turn have kept the land good . . . in fact the last census figures show the average yearly income of our Greenwood farmers to be \$1,000 higher than state average.

Successful farming built the town of Plainview and has maintained it over the years. We can boast

the distinction of being one of very few villages dependent solely upon agriculture whose population has increased rather than dwindled in the last two decades.

Nor have we failed to share our advancement. Just as in the 1870's Thomas A. Thompson set aside his own interests to become, without salary, an exponent and lecturer in furtherance of the Grange movement, today we have our men like Grieve or Wood or Olin or Christison or Petit or Thompson who through farm organization and soil conservation movement are helping to keep agriculture at its highest standard.

We are justly proud of our heritage—our plateau of good rich sod which the wind and weather and glacier gave us. We are not devoted—we are dedicated—to its preservation and best usage.



## What's In A Name?

(The origin of the names of our neighbor communities is taken from the Minnesota Historical Society's volume "Minnesota Geographical Names" published by Warren Upham.)

**BEAVER**, an early village on Beaver Creek, was named by its first settlers for a beaver dam obstructing the mouth of the creek.

**DOVER** was originally named Whitewater, was shortly renamed for Dover, New Hampshire, home of many of its first pilgrims. In 1855 it was referred to as Drake's Spring.

**DUMFRIES**, a railway hamlet in Glasgow, came by its name from the town in Scotland which was the home of Robert Burns.

**ELBA** received its name in 1856 for the island off Italy famed for its rich deposits of iron ore as well as the exile of Napoleon.

**ELGIN** township was first known as "West Greenwood", and its village called both Paradise and Barre (or by strangers "Yankee Settlement") until in 1856 by a vote of some 60 people it became Elgin for an ancient town and county in Scotland.

**EYOTA** was named Springfield until 1859 when it was renamed Eyota, meaning in Sioux language "greatest".

**FARMINGTON** was the popular choice of its early German farmers because of the excellence of the land for farming.

**GILLFORD** was named for a Mrs. Gill whose husband came in 1855 and took a homestead claim but died on his return to Illinois to bring his family. She, to carry out her husband's dream, made the pilgrimage alone with her small children and courageously built a frontier life.

**GLASGOW**, first settled in 1855 by a Scotchman and many more of them later, was named for the city in Scotland.

**GREENFIELD**, whose first claims were staked in 1854, has the name borne by townships and villages in fourteen other states. Sand Prairie was a separate town for the year 1858-59 but was then merged into Greenfield.

**HAMMOND** was named for Joseph Hammons, an 1856 pioneer who platted the village on his claim.

**HAVERHILL** was first named Zumbro, then Sherman, and finally in 1866 renamed Haverhill by its many settlers stemming from Haverhill, Mass.

**HIGHLAND**, first known as Smithfield for its numerous Smiths, was soon named Highland for its elevated surface. Smithfield, a hamlet on the Plainview-Wabasha stage route, retained its original name.

**HYDE PARK**, at first part of Troy, was named in 1862 for John Hyde, first postmaster of Mazeppa in 1856 and one of its most useful citizens.

**JARRETT**, a railway hamlet, was near a former crossing of the Zumbro called Jarrett's Ford for the nearest settler.

**KEEGAN**, another railway hamlet in the north edge of Oakwood, was named for its Irish founder.

**KELLOGG**, founded in 1870 on the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railroad, was named in honor of "a Milwaukee gentleman who furnished the railroad signs". Pauselim, with a population of 70, lying just west of Kellogg, died when Kellogg was born.

**LAIRD**, a junction on the Plainview-Chatfield railroad, was named in honor of William Laird, founder of Laird-Norton Lumber Company in 1856.

**MAZEPPA**, settled in 1855, received its name for Ivan Mazeppa, a Cossack chief commemorated in a poem by Byron.

**McCRACKEN**, a rail station in Glasgow, was settled by William McCracken from Scotland.

**MILLVILLE**, in the west part of Oakwood, another railway village, was a fine mill site with a water power falling 14 feet.

**MINNEISKA**, once referred to by our settlers as Whitewater Landing, platted in 1854, in Sioux language means Whitewater . . . "Minne" meaning water and "ska" meaning white. The Whitewater river was first called the Minneiska river but soon changed to its English translation.

**OAKWOOD** was first named Pell in honor of John H. Pell, early settler who was state senator in 1861 and later captain of Company I of the famous Minnesota First Regiment. Because the name lent itself too easily to "rhyming verse" a group of more sensitive citizens petitioned for a change of name, and in 1868 by act of legislature it became Sherman. However, because another Minnesota township had still earlier received the name Sherman it was finally changed to Oakwood in 1872.

**PEPIN** was an ancient and honored common French family name.

**PINE ISLAND** Red Wing, chief of the neighboring branch of the Sioux, held winter camp at what is now Pine Island which they called "Wa-zee-wee-ta", meaning Island of Pines. The island was formed by the middle branch of the Zumbro which circles around the present village, and enclosed a tract once thickly

studded with tall pine trees where Red Wing and his band spent the winters in their skin tents sheltered by the lofty pines. The chief told the U. S. Commissioners when asked to sign the treaty relinquishing their land on the Mississippi that he was willing to sign it if he could have his future home at Wa-zee-wee-ta.

**PLAINVIEW** township, first called Greenwood, and its village, first called Centerville, received its name because of its "wide horizons" and plain view. The 1950 census lists three other "Plainviews" in the United States: Plainview, South Dakota, with a population of 13; Plainview, Nebraska with 1,427; and Plainview, Texas with 14,044.

**POTSDAM** was named by its German settlers for their native Prussian city near Berlin.

**QUINCY** township and its hamlet by the same name were believed to be named by early settlers for Quincy, Mass.

**READ'S LANDING** was an early French trading post and was named for Charles Read who took charge of the post in 1847. It was platted in 1856 and did a flourishing commercial and river business for about 10 years until it was superseded by Wabasha.

**TEPEEOTAH**, an early village in Greenfield, was founded in 1856 on an island, former camping ground of Chief Wabashaw III's band. Its name in Sioux means "many houses". The village dwindled in the financial panic of 1857, and on a March night in 1859, its deserted steam sawmill, 3-story hotel, stores and other buildings were burned by incendiarism.

**THEILMAN** was named for Henry Theilman on whose land it was platted as a railway village.

**VIOLA**, once named Washington, was renamed at the suggestion of Irwin Wetmore for the village of Viola, Wisconsin.

**WABASHA**, at first spelled Wabashaw, was named in 1849 as a county commemorating the line of Dakota or Sioux Chiefs who ruled in this area. The county seat, city of Wabasha, platted in 1854, was originally called Cratte's Landing for the earliest white man (Oliver Cratte) to build a home there in 1838.

**WAPASHAW**, whose third chief changed the spelling to Wabashaw, in Sioux originally meant "red leaf", then "red hat or cap" and was given as a name to their chief who returned from Quebec after the Canadian rebellion in 1763 proudly wearing a soldier's gaudy uniform with red cap presented to him by the English governor.

**WATOPA** is a Sioux name meaning "to paddle a canoe".

**WEST ALBANY** was settled in 1855 and named by settlers from Albany, New York.

**WINONA**, at first called Montezuma, was changed to Winona by Henry Huff who in 1853 platted an addition to and purchased part of the original townsite. The name Winona (Wenonah) was given to the first born (if a daughter) in every Sioux family.

**ZUMBRO RIVER** originally bore the French name "Riviere des Embarras", meaning a stream on which canoeing was hindered by driftwood. Early settlers, not knowing how to spell or pronounce the French name, made it sound like Zumbro and soon spelled it that way, so the name was re-adapted.

**ZUMBRO** Township was originally a part of Ma-zepa and Troy townships which had for each the 36 square miles allotted a township by government survey, but the inconvenience of crossing the Zumbro river led to the organization in 1861 of Zumbro comprising the area east and south of the river, while the north part of Troy was renamed Hyde Park.

\* \* \* \*

**DO YOU REMEMBER** the old Hitchcock Mill which first ground feed and flour on the North branch of the Whitewater between the Hunter and Smith (now Davis) farms? It was later moved a few miles downstream into Poplar Hollow (Quincy) where Charlie LaRocque ran it for many years. We could find no identification of the "Gibson Girls" who are obviously enjoying their outing.





## From the Pens of Our Pioneers

**Irvin Washington Rollins**, son of Labon and Nancy (Colby) Rollins, came with his brother Orvis (called Odd) to Greenville from his native Orange County, Vermont, in the fall of 1855 at the invitation of A. P. Foster, one of our earliest settlers, who also stemmed from the rocks and rills of Vermont. The Rollins brothers were the first of a large "connection," with many other members of the Colby and Rollins family following within a few months.



**Irvin Washington Rollins**

These Vermonters (or people whose heritage was there) were our first settlers. One must remember that they came from a land of stony hills and fields the size of postage stamps, but nevertheless a land whose society was already 200 years old, proud of her heritage, both intellectually and historically.

Mr. Rollins' first journals start in Vermont in 1847 and tell of his years as a student and schoolmaster at \$18 a month, but underlying his writing is a restlessness for material betterment. In 1854 he met a girl named Ellen Keith, and in the next few months he arrived at the decision to come west to try to make a life and living "suitable to a husbandman."

In the next 40 years Mr. Rollins kept a journal for each year, writing a total of some 300,000 words, and none of them wasted. Our only regret is that we cannot give you his full writings. His descriptions of scenery, the early cabins and everyday happenings are most graphic. He chronicled every birth and every death, always finding time to attend each funeral and to "sit" with the family during illness or death.

He religiously observed the Sabbath, and much of his detailed writing was done then. As the years go on, pages on end contain only entries such as "Weeded beets today" or "split rails" or "grafted trees," yet the very monotony of the reading tells us the steadfast perseverance our pioneers gave to the building and betterment of our community.

The most amazing is his lack of complaint. In 45 years of daily writing, he never criticized a fellow man, and voiced but one complaint (in 1856) . . . that "if it is my lot to live in Minnesota, I do hope we shall have 'society' before too many years pass".

In his Vermont writings, he recites the names of students in his schools, including the names of Colby, Dickerman, Ball, Davis, Mason, Dunbar, Gould, Sanborn, Hutchinson, Bradford, Paine, Eastman, Smith, Town, Sargeant, Richardson, . . . all of whom came here in the next few years among our early settlers.

He and his brother Orvis (Odd) left Montpelier on September 24, 1855, "intending to go to Greenwood, Minnesota, where Mr. Foster is, if we think best when we get to Wisconsin." They traveled by stage, rail and boat, arriving September 28 at Patch Grove, Wisconsin, where their friends, the O'Connells and Dunbars, were. We quote directly from Mr. Rollins:

**Sept. 28, 1855:** Staid at Patch Grove, found it well settled and organized. Corn looks large compared to Vermont corn. Fields are 40 times as large, wheat stacks are numerous, farmers are threshing.

**Oct. 1:** Mr. Brown offered me \$1 per day and board to take the school here . . . had a "Sing" in evening.

**Oct. 2:** Rode around, saw the new meetinghouse and threshing machine at work at Mr. Fitch's. Conclude not to engage to teach here until I go to Minnesota.

**Oct. 3:** Started on foot for Prairie du Chine, arrived at 4 PM (about 20 miles), bought a double barrel gun, rifle and shot, paid \$25. Took boat at 10 in evening, the Golden Era, for Whitewater Landing. Boat crowded, slept on cabin floor, rested very well.

**Oct. 4:** LaCrosse is a thriving place, beautifully situated. Arrived at Whitewater at 5 PM, total expenses \$40.28.

**Oct. 5:** Stopped at Whitewater overnight, had wild honey for supper and breakfast, very good, no butter. Rigged our guns and started for Greenwood. Saw plenty of ducks and chickens but did not kill any, reached Mr. Foster's cabin which is on Section 10, T108N, R11W, at 4 PM.

**Oct. 6:** Hard frost, went with Mr. Foster to look at land. Saw some beautiful land to SW, killed two prairie chickens. Mr. Foster's cabin is crowded, 12 persons here. Begin to realize what frontier life must be.

**Oct. 8:** Went out on prairie, looked all day. Good land for fruit and wheat but no timber.

Note: Italics are editor's interpolations.

1855

**Oct. 9:** Went to Wettimore's mill (*NE Quincy*), through some timber, saw 6 or 7 deer. Oak and pine is \$15 to \$20 per M. Springs and water on prairie are scarce, some draw water a mile and a half from a spring, but think most lots will afford very good water by digging 15 to 40 feet.

**Oct. 10:** Went south, helped Benjamin set his claim stakes. Saw some timber claims farther south but they were taken. Returned and set claimstake on SE $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 14 T108N, R11W, for Orvis.

**Oct. 11:** Looked at more pine timber, concluded to claim the prairie north of Mr. Foster's for myself, NE $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 11 T108. Think it hard to have no timber but conclude to take prairie rather than claim a whole quarter to get 30 to 40 acres of woodland and the rest oak grubs and ravines. Odd's claim on Sec. 14 is all oak opening and my claim on Sec. 11 is nearly all prairie.

**Oct. 12:** Went to work on Whitewater road. We each made an axe-helve.

**Oct. 14:** Mr. Foster has gone to Winona, carried letters for us. People are hunting and traveling over the country all day, no meeting, no organized society. Seems rather odd not to have a Sabbath, but a meeting is not all that constitutes one, believe we can observe it properly without.

**Oct. 15:** Took Mr. Foster's team (oxen) and drew some poles from a popple grove to our claims.

**Oct. 16:** Dug a hole for water on Odd's claim and drew a load of logs. Lawrence came.

**Oct. 17:** Went to work with Mr. Foster on Lawrence's claim. Mrs. Foster went to Whitewater after Lawrence's family.

**Oct. 18:** So smoky it makes our eyes smart, prairie is all on fire not far south. Worked on my claim, laid up the body of cabin. Have 17 in Mr. Foster's cabin now. Jolly times. Mr. Wadleigh has gone to Wabashaw . . . Mr. Melendy came here.

**Oct. 19, 20:** Dug a hole for cellar on Odd's claim, hewed the sleepers and put them down.

**Oct. 21:** Cold, snowed an inch last night. Mr. Foster came from Whitewater in storm, fetched his goods, shall have bedclothes in plenty now. Mr. Wadleigh moved into Frank's cabin yesterday. Lawrence and Foster killed a dozen partridge and prairie chickens.

**Oct. 22:** Cold, squally, worked for Foster on timber.

**Oct. 23:** Went to Whitewater for Mr. Wadleigh's goods but they had not come. Saw timber east of my claim, some small strips very good.

**Oct. 26:** Have not worked today, quite unwell, think it is owing to my bad cold and imprudent eating. Fitted my bits to the stock, went to Eddy's and sent to Wabashaw for glass and nails.

**Oct. 27:** Orvis has been after boards at Wetmore's mill. Came through prairie on fire after dark, it is still on fire in all directions at 10 PM.

**Oct. 28:** Got sash and glass from Mr. Eddy, it was all broken badly.

**Oct. 29:** Sawed shingle timber in ravine. Prairie is on fire, rather a novel sight to see so much of the surface of the country ablaze. Feel a little lonesome some times when I think what good times our friends are having in Vermont but do not want to return. Hope to get into our cabin as soon as Mr. Foster gets back with our winter supply of provisions. Worked riving and shaving shingles, timber works very well, think we shall have a good roof. Mrs. Lawrence is sick, makes it hard.

**Nov. 2:** Have been working at shingles, have enough to cover cabin now. Mr. Wadleigh is sick yet, a fever of some kind. Mrs. Lawrence is getting smart again.

**Nov. 8:** Have put overlayers on cabin, put up rafters, finished shingling, sawed out door and window.

**Nov. 9:** Went to Whitewater with team with Mr. Foster. Went to Mt. Vernon, got some nails, pails, door lock etc. Stayed at Dutchman's overnight.

**Nov. 10:** Came to Greenwood, Odd has been chinking cabin, went into ravine and got some moss.

**Nov. 11:** Mr. Melendy started for Winona, is going home. Went to Mr. Smith's and got a half bushel of potatoes, paid 65c bushel.

**Nov. 14:** Got some planes and planed boards for door, matched floorboards. Mr. Lawrence went to Whitewater on Monday, back on Tuesday, found his goods at landing. Frank went to Whitewater today, brought Miss Mercy Lawrence and got my lime.

**Nov. 18:** Have hung door, put on lock, put in windows and did some chinking. Sent a letter for Mr. Tyson to carry to Wabashaw.

**Nov. 20:** Odd went to Whitewater for Mr. Wadleigh's goods, but not there. Brought medicine for Amanda, she is very sick, went to Mr. Boatman's and borrowed his broad axe, carried letters for Mr. Foster.

**Nov. 21:** Winter has commenced to all appearance. Drew some sand, put it in cellar, banked up most of cabin. Odd is cutting wood for Mr. Wadleigh's folks. Mr. Benjamin is going to preempt next Monday. Feel unwell.

**Nov. 23:** Have not worked except little in house sewing, Mercy has cut Odd some shirts.

**Nov. 24:** Received first letters from home. Odd had a letter from Enoch and Ezra (*Dickerman*) saying they are coming this winter.

**Nov. 26:** Finished our chimney. Will not finish my cabin this winter. Mr. Wadleigh is quite smart and is at work on his cabin.

1915

Plainview Township

1915

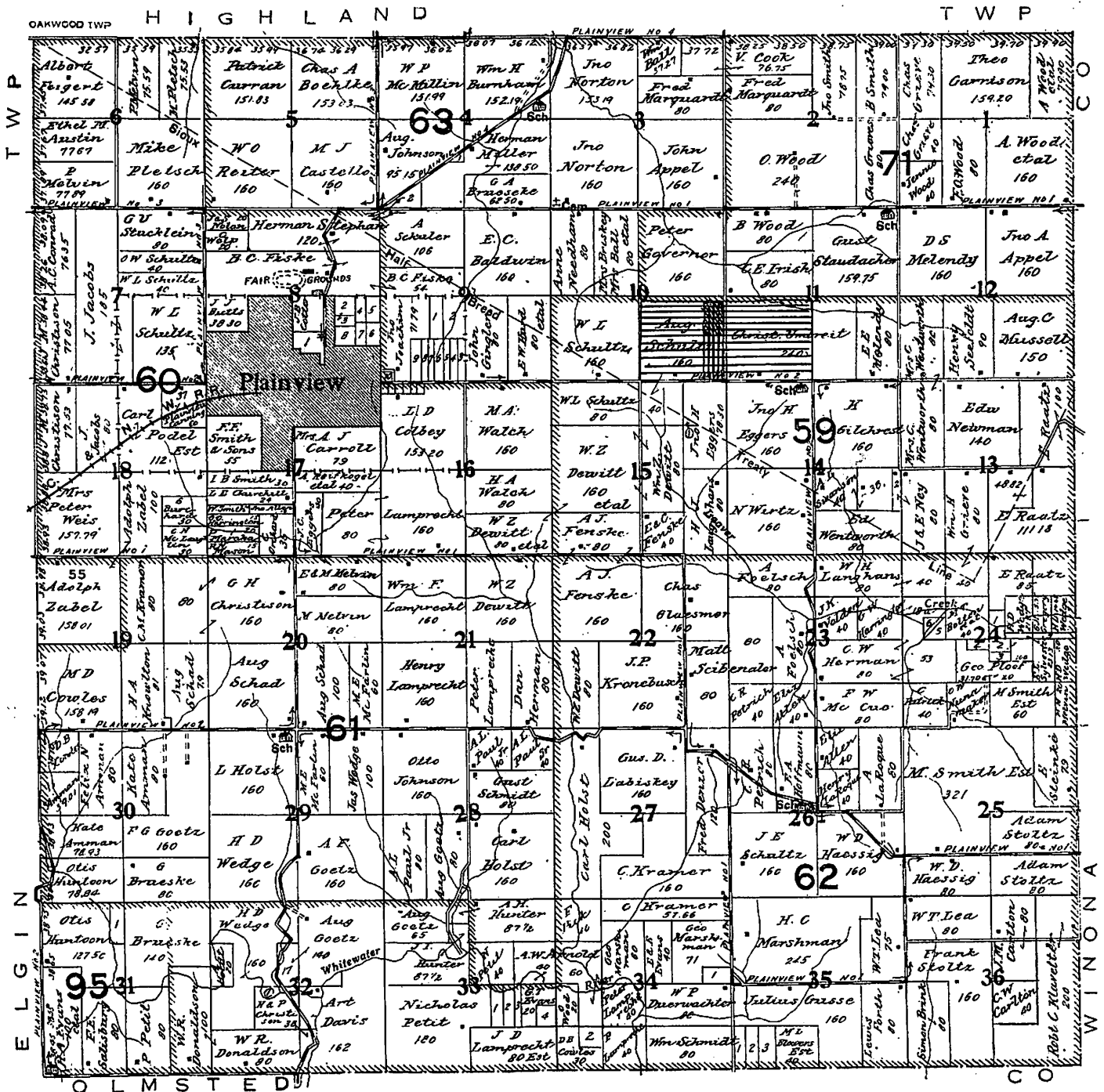
T108N - R11W

Wabasha County, Minnesota

The ghost of Greenville has been drawn in for you in Sections 10 and 11, as our pioneers drew and filed their plat in 1856 (see story, page 6), the more heavily shaded area being the most heavily settled. The famous Half-Breed treaty line explains the troubles heaped

upon the pilgrims who settled north of it.

It is interesting to study how many family names carried forward from 1895—and for that matter, even to the present.



1895

Elgin Township

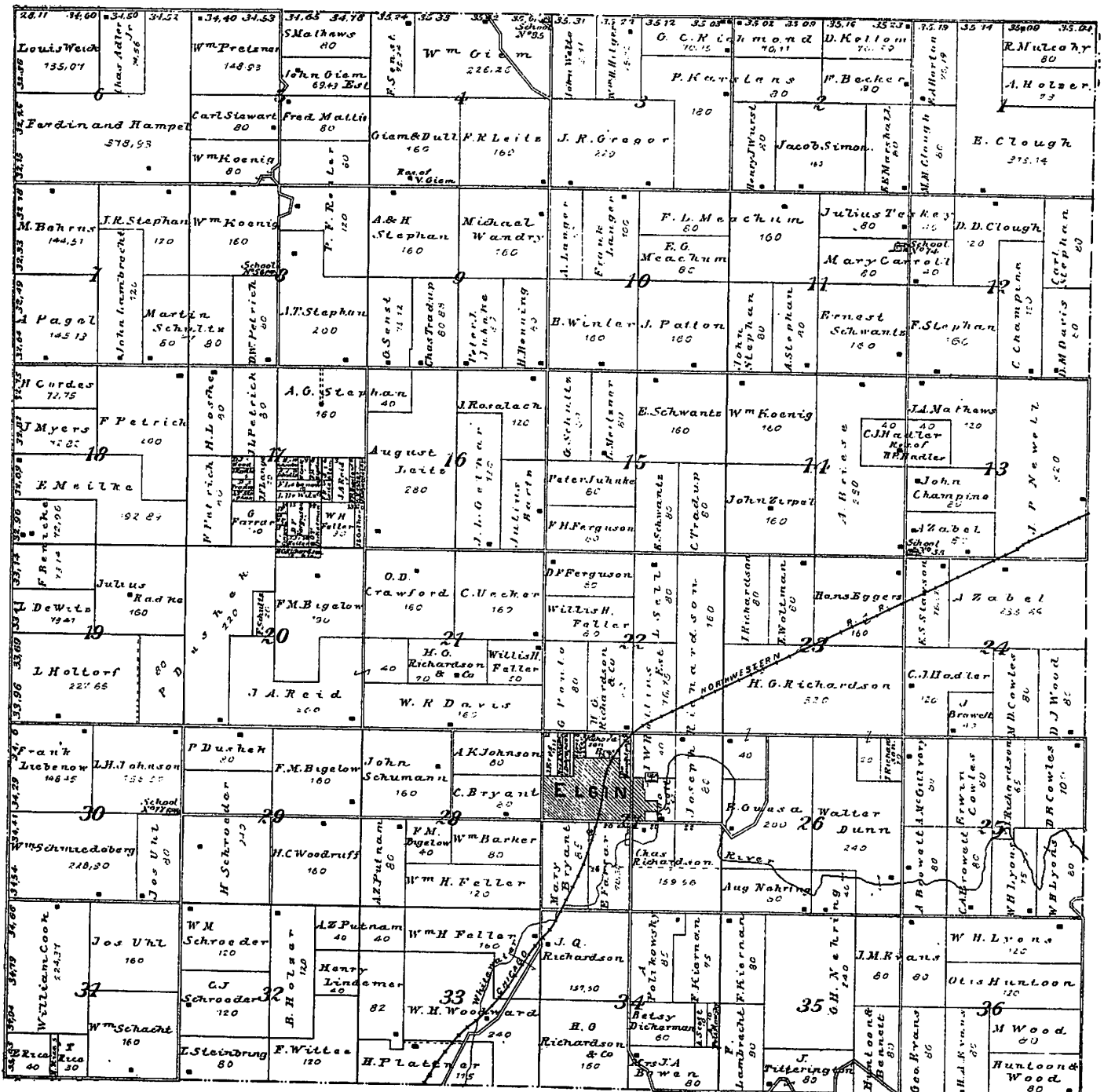
1895

T108N - R12W  
Wabasha County, Minnesota

Elgin township has two farms which have been in the same family for the full century: the original William Giem farm in Section 4; and the I. W. Rollins acreage in Sections 22 and 27.

The 1856 claim staked by Mr. Rollins' brother Orvis (Odd) of whom he makes reference so generously

in his journals is listed on this plat to H. G. Richardson & Co. in Section 22. The original frame house, now gone, stood vacant among its dense lilac bushes for many years. As the "haunted house on the hill", it attracted the more imaginative or courageous youth to investigate—when they weren't snipe hunting, of course.



1915

Oakwood Township

1915

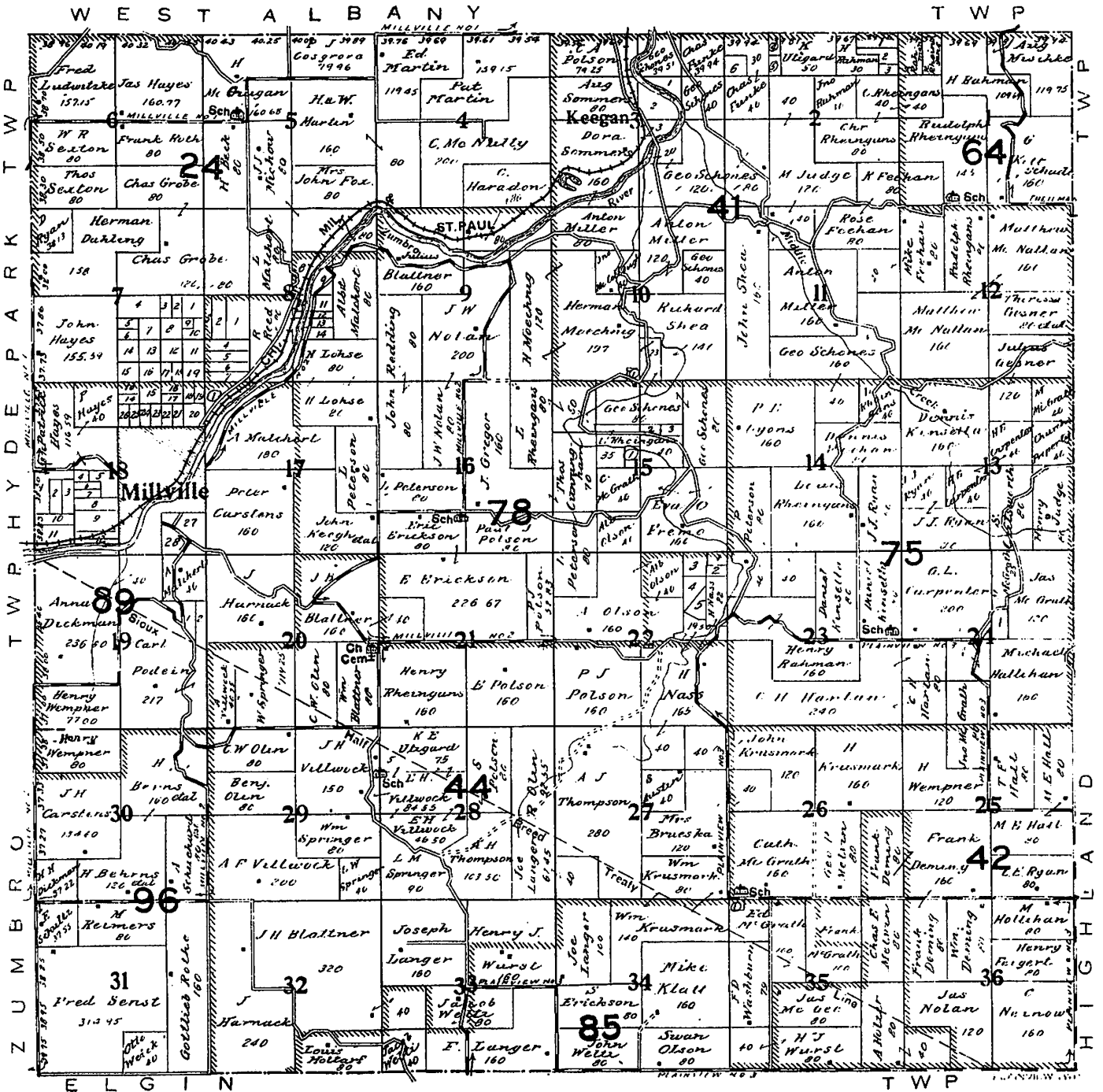
T109N - R11W

Wabasha County, Minnesota

Do you remember the busy little narrow gauge railway which built Millville into a thriving village and Keegan as a station? And all of the excursion trains, both for the scenic beauty of the Zumbro valley and

during the excitement of the lead-mining era?

Oakwood, with its interesting geography, supposedly has worthy Indian history, including many earth mounds and almost prehistoric caves.



## Plainview Public School

The first hall of higher learning in the town of Plainview (then called Greenwood) was built in the spring of 1856 in the settlement of Greenville, on Section 10, about two and a half miles east of present Plainview, less than a year after the advent of the first band of Yankee settlers, with William Boatman sawing the timber and Ezra Eddy riving the shingles by hand. This building was about 16x24 feet, and was opened with some 20 scholars for the "summer term" in June, 1856. Miss Annie White, daughter of Roscoe N. White, was the first teacher and continued there for several years. She soon had over 60 pupils crowded into the little building for each term, it being the only school on the prairie.

Early in 1858 the first school within the so-called village of Plainview opened in David VanWort's carpenter shop with a man named Judge Hale from Vermont as "master". However, in less than two years this "commodious" arrangement had so completely outgrown itself that classes were moved into a High Street building owned by Dr. Federal Gibbs as an office and drugstore. (*This building was placed in our city park in the 1920's through the efforts of Mrs. Minnie O'Connell and stood there for some time as a little museum.*)

In 1860 a report signed by Gardner Melendy to the State Department showed Plainview township to have two log buildings, but he had visited five "schools", the others being conducted in rural homes or abandoned buildings temporarily loaned for school purposes.

Dr. Gibbs' building proved inadequate also, and with classes overflowing into private homes, our next move was for the district to purchase an existing building (*some histories say it was the old Episcopal church but we find no record of such*), moving it onto the present school site donated by James Butts and providing two teachers in the same room. This school lasted through the Civil War, being used by several church societies for their services and as a town hall where all of the "rousing" meetings were held during the Civil War.

By 1866 plans were laid for a larger two-story school. The old building was purchased by the "Disciples" (Church of Christ) and moved to make room for the new structure. For the next year classes were held in Wilcox Hall (the second floor of the present

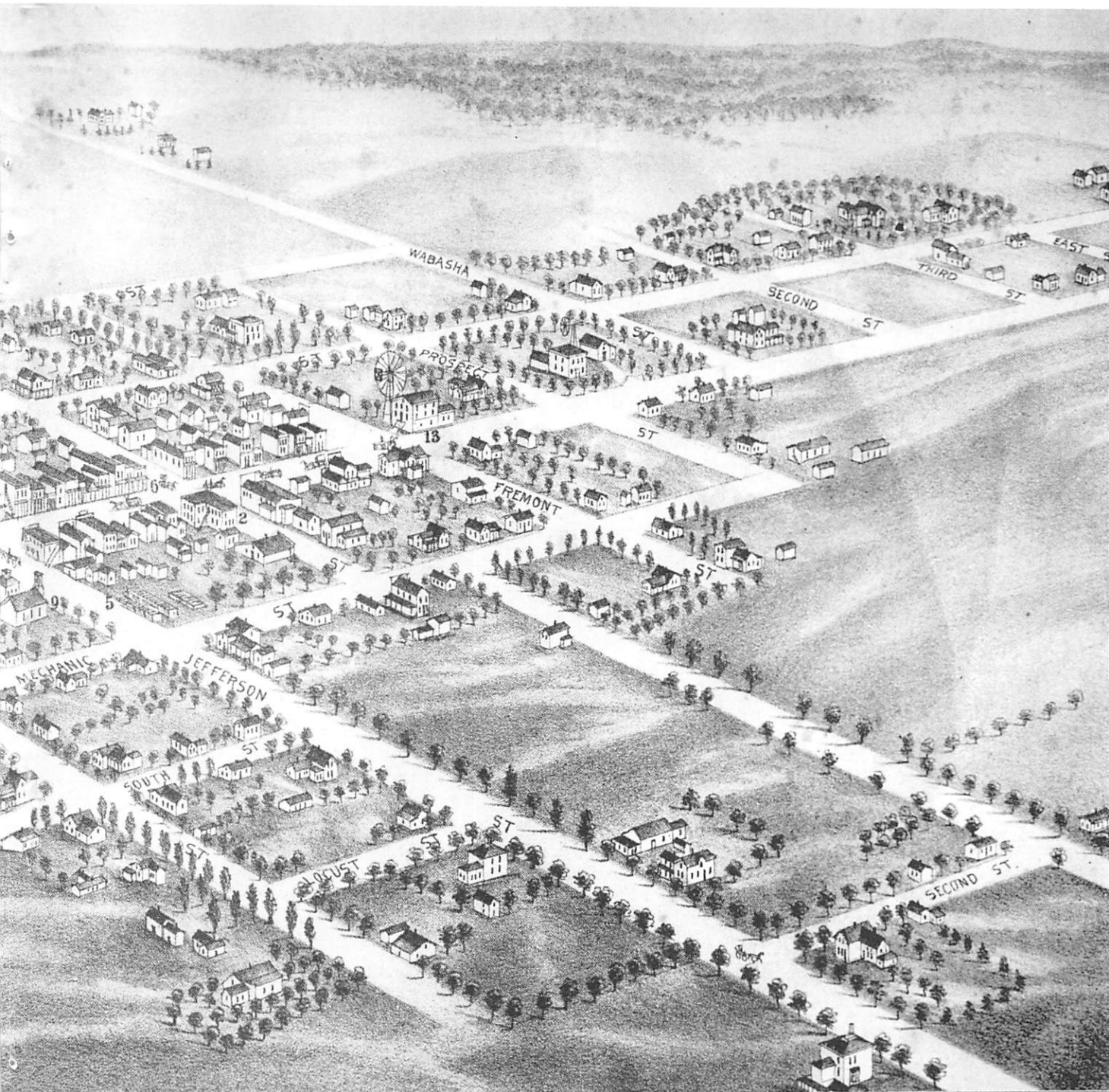
Eggers Grocery). Ready for occupancy in 1867, the new two-story building cost just under \$16,000 and had six classrooms on first floor with a chapel or auditorium upstairs serving also as an opera house and town hall. Before 1870 two more rooms were added and a full High School installed.

But history again repeated itself, and in 1903 work commenced on another larger brick building 66x100, an impressive brick structure costing \$36,000. Highly rated scholastically, this school housed a full curriculum until February 12, 1924, when the building together with all records burned.

Plainview quickly rallied to the catastrophe. An early spring vacation was called, and within that week classes were organized and resumed in the churches and halls throughout the village. Meanwhile, work began almost immediately to replace our school, this time with one of Gothic design and greater facilities at a cost of \$175,000, dedicated May 22, 1925. Built for a capacity of 430 students, this school today in 1956 houses over 750 pupils and employs 32 teachers, with all special departments such as industrial arts, home economics, commercial training, physical education and music still in the curriculum.

However, on October 22, 1955, the community, by a large majority, approved a \$900,000 bond issue to be used in the erection of a 15-room elementary school together with a multi-purpose building for both grades and high school usage and also for the remodeling of the present structure into a modern high school. The new school will house 900 students and is to be completed before the opening of school in September, 1957. Our present administrator, S. L. Johnson, has been with us since 1936, and to him goes much credit for the high standards and rating of our school under the most crowded conditions in our history.

In 1870 the Historical Atlas of Minnesota in describing Plainview's school said, "Probably not a town in the Northwest, containing no greater population, has expended more in the cause of education than the people of this village". Today, in 1956 we are proud to have kept faith with our forefathers *ab initio una voce*.



BECK & PAULI LITH. MILWAUKEE, WIS.

PANORAMIC VIEW OF  
**PLAINVIEW.**  
 MINNESOTA 1880

- 7. Cemetery.
- 8. Congregational Church.
- 9. Methodist " "
- 10. Deciples " "
- 12. Elevator.
- 13. Flouring Mill.

## For the Four Freedoms

Plainview is probably more justifiably proud of her war effort and record than any other part of her heritage. While space and lack of records prevents our listing all of the men and women who went to war for the preservation of our freedom, when we went to war we went "all out".

### AMERICAN LEGION

#### WILLIAM ALLEN POST No. 179

The American Legion Post formed in September, 1919, was named the William Allen Post in honor of the first World War I casualty. The 24 charter members were: Alfred Allen\*, George Baker\*, Harold Boyd, Lester Carpenter, Bob Crary\*, James Depuy, Alvin Dickman, George Ehrenberg, Mike Foley, Fred Foreman, Ernest Goetz, Fred Hart\*, Rudy Hostettler, Dave Leonard, Mike Leonard, Ralph Murray\*, George Nolan, Edgar Nunamaker, Irl Richmond\*, George Sanders, Paul Smith, Ben Stephans, Gil Timm\* and Harry Yetter\*.

In addition to fostering the teaching of American principals and the preservation of American traditions for which its members fought, the post sponsors and supports many educational and civic projects including the Plainview School Patrol, Boy Scout and Explorer Troop, Junior Legion baseball team, Boys' State representative, the Veterans Hospital and State School for Boys.

They are presently erecting a \$26,000 community building.

\*Deceased.

Since the Civil War we have sent to battle—in untold numbers—our men and women, many of whom sacrificed their lives at the altar of freedom.

With equal fervor, the cause of freedom and democracy is pursued in peacetime by our service organizations and their auxiliaries.

### AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

The charter was granted to the William Allen American Legion Post Auxiliary in 1921 with 15 members signing the charter: Mmes. T. A. Askew\*, Virginia Davey, G. H. Dickman, Carrie Downing\*, George Duerre, Sarah Duerrwaechter\*, Emma Ehrenberg\*, A. J. Erding\*, Lillian Holst\*, W. H. Holst\*, Hannah Leonard\*, W. G. Mack\*, Louis Rheingans\*, S. F. Smith\* and E. L. Sylvester\*.

Building to a present membership of 97, this group has, since its inception, concentrated on welfare work for the veteran and his family. Along these lines, they conduct poppy and forget-me-not sales for the furtherance of welfare work, sponsor Girls' State representatives and the annual March of Dimes Drive as well as assisting the parent post in its welfare and community work.

The Gold Star mothers for World War I are Mrs. Virginia Davey\* (*Thaddeus*), Mrs. Sarah Duerwaechter\* (*Frederick*) and Mrs. Christ Holt (*Martin*). For World War II: Mrs. Andrew Armstrong\* (*Everett*), Mrs. Fred Boie (*Millard*), Mrs. Walton Boyd (*Walton, Jr.*), Mrs. Andrew Gilcreast (*William*), Mrs. Richard Gusa (*James*), Mrs. Martin Haase (*Orville*), Mrs. Frank McGrath (*Robert*), Mrs. Ella Owens (*Gerald*), Mrs. Grace Pletsch (*Edward Wedge*), Mrs. George Pretzer (*Lyle*), Mrs. Fred Richardson (*John*), Mrs. Herman Schaddock (*Roland Gusa*) and Mrs. Arthur Walch (*Donald*). Another gold star was added in the Korean War for Mrs. Peter Kruger (*Donald*).



First Row: Mike Foley, Mike Leonard, Fred Nettekoven, George Kroening, Guy Ashcroft, George Douglass, Dave Leonard, Vern Johnson, Ed Lindsay, John Mikkelson. Top row: Alfred Burkhardt, Wm. Milbrandt, Wm. Thone, John Hardtke, Tom Askew, George Ehrenberg, Harold Boyd, Alvin Dickman.

The Drum Corps in Full Regalia — 1926



## News and Views of the Century

**The year was 1856.** Not just the hamlet of Centerville but the whole Minnesota Territory was still in swaddling clothes. Even our county boundaries were less than a year old. Or didn't you know that Wabasha County once included most of southern Minnesota? Or that Olmsted was one of the last counties created—out of the "surplus" of Fillmore, Goodhue and Wabasha? Plainview and Elgin rightfully belonged in Olmsted, but the Wabasha influence was too strong in the territorial legislature and they fought to hold these two townships to balance the budget. . . . Yes, 1856 was a busy year nationwide. The Republican Party was formed, the Sioux had just been defeated by Gen. Harney, and the new Rock Island RR extending only from Chicago to the Mississippi was working at peak capacity to carry the hordes of Easterners who had caught the "Western Fever". . . . **Centerville** became a wide spot on the little wagon trail, sporting four businesses and less than a dozen families—the Wilcox general store, Blackwell's hotel, David vonWort's carpenter shop and the Rittenhouse blacksmith shop.

**1857** There was a widespread financial panic, but little Centerville was so far inland she didn't know it. Settlers in the township increased to 430 by early summer, with almost 100 people in the little hamlet. So a village was ambitiously platted, through the foresight of our forefathers, with wide streets soon lined with elm, cottonwood and oak saplings. . . . Pioneers traveled many miles—miles were longer then—to wait in line at Dr. Gibb's office, and to make Ozias Wilcox's store the busiest crossroads trading post in the area. . . . Ezra Eddy gave up Greenville to buy and run Blackwell's hotel.

**1858** An exciting year—Minnesota gained her statehood, and every township was ambitious to "organize". . . . Centerville made second application for a post office, which was granted with the proviso that the name be changed. Without ado, our pioneers looked toward the distant horizon and agreed on "Plainview". . . . So Plainview township held its first "town" election May 11, 1858, with 78 ballots cast. . . . The first official road was laid out running east and west of Plainview's Broadway, and it was agreed that all new roads should follow section lines where possible. . . . The Rochester Free Press published a new mail schedule, with mail arriving once a week from both north and south, and the route from Rochester going through High Forest, Rock Dell, Elgin, Plainview and Greenville to Wabasha. . . . Plainview opened "school" in vonWort's carpenter shop with Judge Hale as master.

**1859** The potato bug made its first appearance—don't laugh, it became a near catastrophe. . . . The Wabasha County Herald reported many interesting items. Headlines cried for a ferry at Wabasha. . . .

Benjamin Lawrence was appointed Greenville postmaster to replace A. T. Sharp who was returning East. . . . R. N. White of Greenville was listed as one of the best professional engravers in the country. . . . In March Rodman Burchard of Greenville purchased the F. S. Richards store at Read's Landing and hired Richards as his agent at Reads. (*Burchard opened the Greenville store in 1856 as agent for Richards*). . . . The Wabasha County Agricultural Society was formed, with T. A. Thompson and A. P. Foster officers. . . . A. B. W. ("Squire") Norton built a pretentious general store in Plainview (*where Plainview Hardware now stands*).

**1860** Lincoln became president, with South Carolina seceding from the Union. . . . The State legislature passed an act abolishing the "supervisor" system of county government and dividing counties into "commissioner" districts. Wabasha County was split into five commissioner districts—with Minneiska, Watopa, Highland and Plainview in 1st district; Elgin, Pell, Zumbro, West Albany and Glasgow in 2nd; Mazepa, Chester, Gillford and Mt. Pleasant in 3rd; Pepin, Wabasha and Greenfield in 4th; and Lake City in 5th.

**1861** Samuel McLaughlin, pioneer implement man, came to Plainview. Also Julius Fricke who established our first harness shop. Dr. N. S. Tefft moved his medical practice here from Minneiska. . . . President Lincoln's first call went out for 117,000 three-year volunteers.

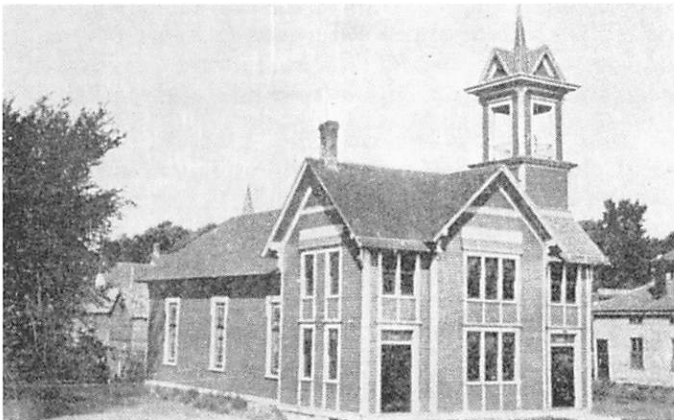
**1862** The president called for 300,000 more volunteers, but the Indian Massacre took first importance in the Minnesota Triangle. Wagonloads of men fell into line on the road to Winona to enlist. Mustered in at Ft. Snelling, no uniforms were provided. Each man received a blanket, a flannel shirt, a pair of heavy socks and a prayer. Springfield rifles were rated the best arms, but most carried old Mississippi rifles with sword bayonets. Many who thought they had volunteered for Civil War duty found themselves on their way to the Indian uprisings. By the end of the year there was practically not an able-bodied man left in the county. . . . The first actual rail construction began in Minnesota. . . . In Plainview the Weigel & Fedder meat market opened.

**1863** The Emancipation Proclamation went into effect. . . . Ezra Eddy sold the Plainview Hotel to Wm. Stone. . . . A "Select School" was opened in the Wilcox Building by Miss Lizzie Hawley, offering Higher English for \$3.00 a quarter and French for \$2.00. . . .

**1864** 500,000 more men were drafted (*see Rollins diary*). . . . Stevens Brothers of Wabasha established our first newspaper, the Plainview Enterprise, a short-lived campaign sheet. . . . Squire Norton was appointed postmaster. . . . On December 21 Sherman completed his "March to the Sea".

**1865** On April 9 Lee surrendered at Appomattox, and on April 14 President Lincoln was assassinated. . . . John Reifkogel opened a harness shop in Plainview (which shortly grew into the largest shop in the area and employed seven men). . . . Dr. J. P. Waste, former Army surgeon from Ohio, came here to practice. . . . Plainview Drug Co., a branch of Crowley Drug at Wabasha, opened with T. G. Bolton as manager. . . . E. B. Eddy went south to return the bodies of Austin Carroll and Charles Dawley, Jr., who died in battle. He also brought back an old friend, C. C. Cornwell, and together they opened our first hardware. . . . An unofficial business directory included John Yale, conveyancer; J. D. Jaquith, attorney; L. M. Gregg Oyster Saloon; James Rowe, boots, shoes and buffalo overshoes; Henry Horton, wagonmaking; and Sam Purvis, A. Pomeroy and Hardy & Sons, blacksmiths.

**1866** F. J. Cornwell opened a branch store of Taylor & Co., St. Charles. . . . The Methodist Episcopal Society erected Plainview's first church, a small chapel on Jefferson. . . . Rodman Burchard, last of the Greenville stalwarts, moved to Plainview.



Early M.E. Church

Chapel at rear erected in 1866, new front added 1893

**1867** Ezra Eddy started our first banking house in the Eddy & Cornwell Hardware. . . . William Lawton opened another grocery. . . . Frederick Wahler, prosperous farmer who came from Winona County in 1863, built a spacious village residence. . . . A. Y. Felton purchased the Bolton Drug. . . . D. D. Brown, jeweler, purchased the Plainview Hotel. . . . Charles O. Landon sold his farm, opened a real estate and loan office.

**1868** Joseph R. Watkins, son of Rev. and Mrs. B. U. Watkins, received the right to manufacture and sell Dr. Ward's compounds. He commenced the mixing and bottling of Dr. Ward's remedies in the kitchen and woodshed of the Watkins home on Broadway. . . . E. B. Eddy sold his hardware interest to Dodge so he could devote full time to the banking business. . . . Kellom & Co. opened a millinery.

**1869** John Bigham purchased the Plainview Hotel. . . . C. T. Allaire built a flour and grist mill on East Broadway. . . . Valentine Cook made city headlines by raising 1324 bushel of wheat on 40 acres,

averaging better than 32 bushel per acre. . . . W. W. Freer started a one-horse dray. . . . William Feller was appointed Receiver of Public Monies in the Government Land Office in Duluth. . . . The Wabasha County Medical Society was organized.

**1870** The Wabasha County Fair Association elected J. McHench, John Head, S. L. McCarty and John Harlan directors, and voted to hold the fair at Lake City. . . . Wabasha County spent \$16,804 on teachers' salaries. . . . Deetz's Steam Ferry was running at Wabasha. . . . B. J. Leininger bought the Plainview Jewelry from D. D. Brown. . . . Henry Ash's Stage Lines with livery at Plainview and Wabasha advertised tri-weekly service from EauClaire to Rochester. . . . Business boomed. . . . The 1870 Plainview Business Directory listed:

Agricultural implements: J. R. McLaughlin, T. F. Lynch.

Attorneys: Sargent & Perkins, H. P. Wilson.

Bankers: E. B. Eddy.

Barbers: A. Lovering.

Billiards, Fancy Groceries: J. Simpson, Stout & Davey.

Blacksmiths: Samuel Purvis, Sweezy & Hardy, A. Pomeroy.

Boots & Shoes: J. Taylor & Co., O. Wilcox, W. Koenig, A.

Thompson.

Clothing: J. Taylor & Co., O. Wilcox, A. B. W. Norton Co.

Dentists: D. H. Roberts.

Drugs & Medicines: A. Y. Felton, O. Wilcox, G. Whitney.

Dry Goods: J. Taylor & Co., O. Wilcox, W. F. Robinson.

Eating Houses: G. F. Gregg Oyster Saloon.

Engraver of Wood: R. N. White.

Furniture: Luger Bros., D. Ackley, Agent.

Flouring Mills: Allaire & Burchard.

Groceries: W. Lawton, J. Taylor & Co., O. Wilcox, A. B. W.

Norton, G. F. Gregg, W. F. Robinson.

Hardware: Cornwell & Dodge.

Harness Shops: J. Fricke, J. W. Reifkogel.

Hotels: Plainview Hotel, J. Bigham; Greenwood House, H. H.

Butts; D. N. Mason Boarding House.

Insurance: J. R. McLaughlin.

Jewelers: B. F. Leininger.

Liniment Mfr.: J. R. Watkins.

Livery Stables: J. D. Robbins, Henry Ash.

Lumber: Sargent & Perkins.

Meat Markets: Wm. Weigel.

Millinery: Mrs. D. C. Morton, Kellom & Merrill.

Painters: George Stratton, S. Adams.

Photograph Galleries: Miss Addie Gale.

Physicians: N. S. Tefft, J. P. Waste, W. A. Allen.

Real Estate: C. O. Landon, H. P. Wilson.

Stock Dealers: Weigel & Green.

Variety & Book Store: A. Y. Felton.

Wagon Shops: Horton & Cornwell, D. R. Sweezy.

**1871** Congregational Chapel erected on Broadway. . . . Plainview's first independent school board elected. . . . 17,450 buildings destroyed in Chicago fire. . . . George Richmond sold Norman horses on Eastern market.

**1872** Minnesota Legislature passed an act officially changing the name of Centerville to Plainview and declaring conveyances of real estate heretofore made legal. . . . Plainview Circus well attended. . . . November, horse epidemic (epizooty), stages not running, few horses seen on streets.

**1873** Potatoes 30c, pork 3c, beef 4½c. . . . Wheat crop good, \$1.25 bushel, many buying threshing machines. . . . County fair held at Wabasha.