

Thief River Falls CELEBRATING 125 YEARS 1896 - 2021

Chapter 1 - September 29, 2021 - Special to the Times



This photo was taken on June 23, 1907 from the city's water tower. It's looking northeast. The Soo Line Depot is near left center. The photo was taken by W.A. Beardsley and C.E. Hellquist, according to the note on the photograph.

The early years of Thief River Falls

(Reprinted from the April 9, 1904 *Thief River Falls Review*)

The first settlement made on the present site of the growing city of Thief River Falls was in 1879, by a man named Frank Russell, who had married in Dakota, a Creole Squaw, and came here and camped near the junction of the two rivers on the reservation. He was driven off by the Chippewas, when he relocated as a squatter and built a log house in the grove at the west end of the iron bridge. In January 1881, John LaBree bought him out and filed on the land as a homestead. In payment for the squatter's rights, Mr. LaBree gave Russell \$60 in cash, a cow, a light platform wagon, and two lots on Horace Avenue between Third and Fourth streets, and filed on 160 acres as his homestead, which covered a greater part of the present business portion of the city. As soon as possible, LaBree had land extending from the present LaBree Avenue to the river, broken up and into crop, corn, wheat, etc. The first crop of wheat was raised in 1885, Gilbert Haavi doing the first shocking.

In the fall of 1880, a man named Joe Gudo opened the first trading store, which was burned down after running but a few months. When he left the country, Mr. LaBree started a store and commenced trading with the Indians in 1881. At that time, this place was on the Indian trail between the Red Lake Reservation and Crookston, the supply point for this part of the state.

Section 33, Township 154, Range 43 was soon taken up as homesteads by George Maxfield, John LaBree, John Hemmingson, and Charles Anderson. The Maxfield quarter was contested and after a hard fight was won by William Porter, and afterward owned by Philipp Zeh and William Porter, now deceased, and is known as Porter's Addition.

In the summer of 1890, Mike Burns filed on Section 4, Township 153, Range 43. This is the land just south of the city in the town of Roxbury. After proving up, he left his farm and made his headquarters at Hotel Ogahmah in 1887 (he being single at the time), which was owned by C.A. Robbecke, who ran it in St. Hilaire prior to 1887, but, as this place had, to his eye, better prospects, the hotel was moved here in sections, put together again, and opened up as the first hotel in the city.

In September 1883, J.W. Wallin bought off Otto Busse, an undivided 6 acres in the northwest corner of the southeast corner of Section 33, and built a house, into which he moved his family and opened a store. The nearest post office was one and a half miles south, down the river, at the home of Charles Johnson, a brother of Martin Rockstad (and called it Rockstad.) He was succeeded as postmaster by

a Mr. Richey, who held it but a few months and abandoned it when it was turned over to Mr. Wallin in 1883 and moved to his house, near where Hans Nelson now lives. The office fixtures consisted of a soapbox divided into six pigeon-holes. Wallin held the office until 1889, when Hans Nelson, who moved his store and building up from St. Hilaire in 1888 and located it on the first lot south of the Ogahmah Hotel, was appointed postmaster in place of Mr. Wallin.

In 1888, Carl Kretzschmar came up from Red Lake Falls, bought 10 acres of land from William Porter and on February 18, started the building of the dam and the erection of the O.K. Roller Mill. He moved his family here on June 12 of that year.

The settlement, entirely on the west side of the river, had grown to about 200

traveling for weeks hunting for that office before it would reach its destination, if ever, and in the summer of 1891 the name of the post office was changed to the present name, under the protest of many who wanted it named Ogahmah Falls.

Early in 1890, those owning property in the settlement met and organized the village of Thief River Falls and the first village council, which consisted of Carl Kretzschmar, president; M.V. Evenson, Phillip Zeh and Charles A. Robbecke, trustees; and William Porter, recorder. They held their first meeting May 26, in the O.K. Mill office. J. W. Wallin was appointed treasurer; Charles Myers, pound master; Henry Williams, constable; and Adam Zeh, justice of the peace. On June 23 of that year, the first saloon license was granted to Eli Larievare, the license being \$500. In June of 1890,

named it Red Lake Rapids. In 1892, C.J. Knox bought and platted 80 acres on the east side, known as Knox's Addition to Red Lake Rapids. On September 1, 1896, an election was held which incorporated the platted territory on both sides of the river into the city of Thief River Falls, with F.H. Kratka, mayor; C.J. Knox, John E. Burkee, P.O. Bergh, and C.A. Robbecke, aldermen; Lars Backe, clerk; J.W. Wallin, treasurer; and Ira C. Richardson, city attorney.

The town of North, Polk county, was established in 1882, and in 1884 the first election was held, with J.B. LaBree and R.S. Hoyt, judges; and Ed LaBree, clerk. The following officers were elected: R. Hoyt, Ole C. Larson, and John B. LaBree, supervisors; C. Knudson, treasurer; Peter Newman, clerk; Samuel Krueger, justice of the peace; C.A. Svenson, con-



This photo shows a scene from about the year 1900. It shows a scene looking north from where 300 Motor Service used to stand. The vacant lot was where J.C. Penney (Ronning's) once stood. The caption states that two of the buildings across the street are saloons. The vacant lot was used as a hay market.

souls and was called Thief River Falls. On August 17, 1889, a paper was started by C.C. Knappes and A.E. White and called the Thief River Falls Press. C.M. and M.V. Evenson, who had started a hardware store here, soon bought the paper and Mr. White ran it until February 1, 1891, when H. E. Mussey bought and took possession of it. F.J. Stebbins bought a drug stock also owned by Evenson Bros., and took possession in May, both occupying the building now Wassen's feed store. The following October, C.J. Knox came from Minneapolis and opened the real estate office in the same building, and in January 1892, Dr. Grundy came and had office room in the same building. It was a jolly crowd. At this stage, this building, the Great Northern Hotel (since burned), the small house north of the City Drug Store, and the building now occupied by Simonson and Co.'s Clothing Store were all the buildings on Main Avenue north of Third street, and east to Labree Avenue was vacant and covered with a heavy growth of brush and small timber.

A great deal of trouble was caused by mail being addressed to Thief River Falls when the post office was in Rockstad, some mail

the village bought Lot 20, Block 18, to build a jail on, which was built in 1891.

On October 17, 1891, the election was held to vote on a bond of \$1,000 to aid in building the iron bridge. Aid in the amount of \$7,000 was received from the state and Knox and Tindolph gave the materials for the approaches, the construction of which cost \$675, making the total cost of the bridge \$8,675. As the only means of crossing the river had been a pole bridge over the dam, which went out in high water, the iron bridge was a great benefit, as it opened the way for a larger number of settlers south and east to come here and trade the entire year.

In July 1882, Dennis Connelly filed on the southeast corner of Section 34 as a homestead and built a log house a little south of the present lumber office, into which he moved his family and platted what is known as Connelly's Addition to Red Lake Rapids. After living here until 1888, he bought his present farm west of town and moved out there.

In June 1882, James Warner became the owner of parts of Sections 33 and 34 (the east side), and in December 1888, Wiley Tindolph bought these lands, planted them and

The finest flour was processed at the O.K. Roller Mill

The O.K. Roller Mill was established in 1888 by Charles Kretzschmar well known throughout Polk County as one of the first businessmen of Crookston. After moving from Red Lake Falls where he was identified with its interests for several years, he moved to Thief River Falls where he constructed the dam across the Red Lake River which was one of the best structures of its kind in the state.

Mr. Kretzschmar then dug a race one thousand feet through hard pan, constructing the O.K. Roller Mill near its head.

What this institution did for Thief River Falls cannot be properly estimated. Here the farmer could find a ready market for a portion of his wheat. The best flour was made here and the Red

Lake Reservation was largely supplied from this mill and the county east of Red Lake also.

Mr. Kretzschmar's abundant water power, besides furnishing the motive powers for the Roller Mill, also turned the wheels of the Wright Saw Mill and P&J Meehan's Planing Mill. While thousands of horse power was wasted, it was hoped that before long an electric power plant would be established and the city would be supplied with electricity from the latent power of Mr. Kretzschmar's dam.

Besides the advantages the dam backed water far up the river, to the reservation lines. The shore line was also secured by P&J Meehan, who used this pond for log storage.



The O.K. Roller Mill - 1888



Thief River Falls Retail Lumber Company - 320 Bridge Street (now 1st Street) - the business sold in 1899 included standing timber, logs, the saw & planing mills, shore rights, 3 steamboats & a number of lumber yards for \$500,000.

Lumber made here built Thief River Falls

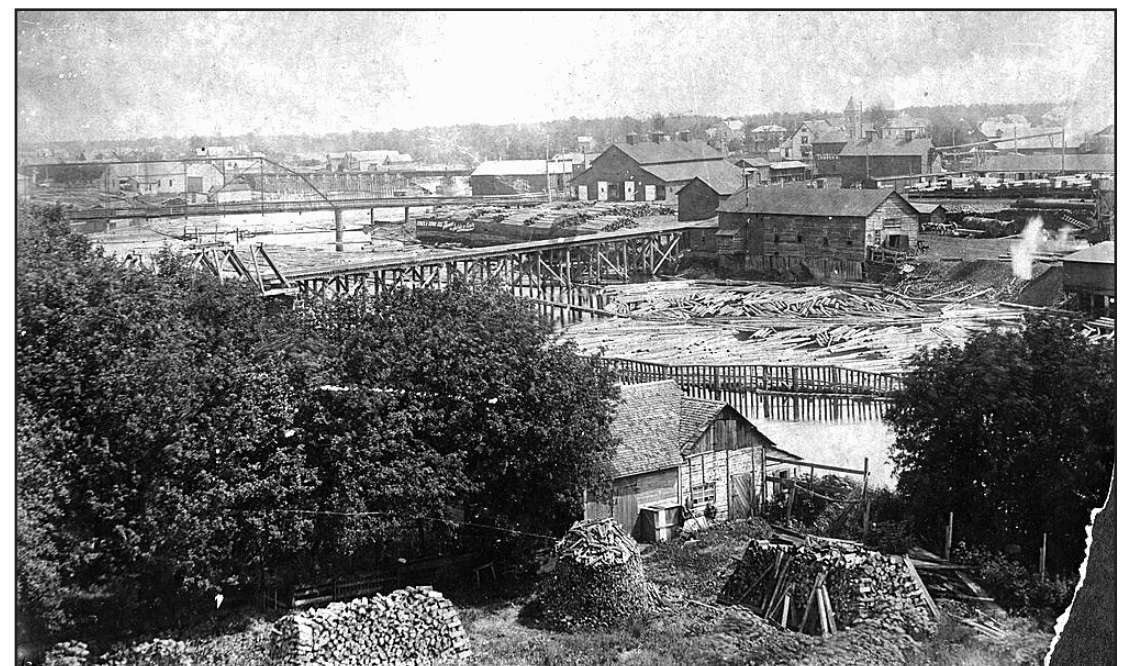
P. & J. Meehan's planing mill was started here in the fall of 1891, by P. & J. Meehan from Wisconsin, who commenced the erection of a saw mill on the river.

It had a daily capacity of about 40,000 and consisted of a large circular saw, edger, trimmer, shingle and lath mill, besides a planing mill situated on south Main Avenue. The coming of this mill to the city gave its growth quite an impetus, both in population and business.

In March 1899, the Meehans sold out to the Thief River Falls Lumber company who immediately took possession and started the erection of a large mill by taking out the old mill entirely, enlarging the foundation greatly and putting

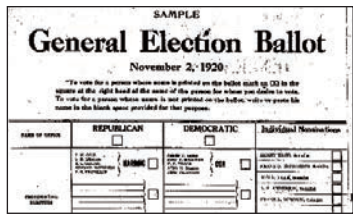
in two band saws. Each year marked an advance in the amount cut, men employed and the wages paid, in 1904 the mill was producing one and a half million feet of lumber a week, running twenty hours a day, employing over 300 men and paying out over \$16,000 each month in wages. Most of the logs were brought across Red Lake and down the river, a distance of nearly 200 miles and about 5 million were being shipped in by rail.

The planing mill, in conjunction, was one of the most complete in the state, making it possible to fill any order that come in and from six to ten carloads of lumber were shipped everyday plus sales directly to customers from the yard.



1905 - Looking northeast from the west side of the Red Lake River - Lumber Mill, Great Northern bridge, Steel Bridge (1st Street) - Soo Line bridge.

Mrs. S.T. Johnson first woman to vote in Thief River Falls



(One of the most important advances for women during the past century has undoubtedly been achieving the right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920. Following is the report from the Thief River Falls newspaper on the first presidential election after the amendment was ratified and an interesting accompanying editorial from the same issue.)

"Mrs. S.T. (Regina Sande) Johnson, 715 Arnold Ave. N., not only was the first person in Thief River Falls to cast a ballot in the presidential election of 1920, but was the first woman to make use of her privilege of equal suffrage with the men of the city. "Thinking to avoid the rush at the polling places, she accompanied Mr. Johnson to the Auditorium previous to 6 a.m. Promptly at that hour, she called for her ballot and in three minutes time handed it to her husband, who was acting as judge for the Second Ward. Let us hope that she voted "right" - whatever that may be.

"S.T. Johnson served with honor during the four years of the Civil War and was wounded in action during the seven days battle before Richmond. Born in the state of Maine, he came to Minnesota 37 years ago and for the past 33 years has been a resident of Thief River Falls. Mr. Johnson has been judge at election time for the last 20 or 25 years, missing but one time when he was serving as clerk in the village. He has undoubtedly cast more ballots, red, white or blue, into a ballot box than the combined total of any other three people in the city - and, though he is getting along in years, he expects to cast quite a few more as the years pass."

(The following is the accompanying editorial.)

The Women Voted

"Those who were so certain that the women of the country would not take advantage of the opportunity to vote even though the privilege were extended to them, did not know what they were talking about. The women did vote, and to judge by the results, must have voted pretty much one way.

"However that may be, it is greatly to their credit that they evinced such unmistakable interest in the government of the country in which they live. Whether or not their choice of candidates was in every instance the right one is a matter of no importance whatever. It is probable that an occasional many might be found who is not so certain of his ground in this respect. The one big outstanding fact is that the women voted as soon as permitted to do so

and did a very workmanlike job of it.

"Election officials in Thief River Falls pay a high compliment to the new voters. They say that in rare instances were their services required to set one of them right and as proof that the women knew what they were doing, it is pointed out that there was hardly a spoiled ballot to account for in the 1,700 cast in the city.

"It is altogether likely that the majority of women were guided in their choice of candidates by their men-folks, but even this is hardly sufficient cause to demand their disqualification. Most of us depend on what we hear and read for our opinions of issues and candidates and it is hardly to be expected that the women will so soon prove their superiority in this particular respect.

"The new voters did wonderfully well and successfully refuted all arguments ever advanced against their disenfranchisement. Particularly have residents of Thief River Falls a right to feel proud of the way in which the novices acquitted themselves at their first trial."



An aerial view of Thief River Falls sometime prior to 1954 since the original Pennington County Courthouse is in the middle of the photo. The Pennington County Government Center is now located at that spot. (Photo courtesy of the Visit Thief River Falls Facebook page)



This undated photo provides an aerial view of Thief River Falls from the west. To orient readers, Lincoln High School is left of the center of the photo, and the Lions Park water tower is in the upper right-hand corner.

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CONGRATULATIONS THIEF RIVER FALLS
We're Proud To Be A Part Of The Community

The Abundant Life Congregation began in June, 1984, with organizational meetings held at the home of Inga Geving in Thief River Falls. The first worship service was held at Our Savior's Academy gym during the summer of 1984, with Burton Hushagen as pastor. In September they used the Knox school gym for worship and Sunday school until the church was built. The congregation was formally organized in July 1984, and given its official name, "Abundant Life Church of Thief River Falls." Also in July 1984, a parsonage was purchased at Appletree Court in Southtown. In October 1984, the congregation purchased 66.66 acres of land adjacent to Evergreen Street and along Pennington Avenue from Norwest Bank, and broke ground for the 78x70 foot new church building. The building was designed by Pastor Hushagen, with the congregation as the contractor, and members volunteered labor for construction with Oliver "Skip" Swanson as construction foreman. The first service in the new building was held on Easter Sunday, April 7, 1985. A special dedication service was held on July 14, 1985, the first anniversary of the congregation. A bell tower and lighted church sign were built by members in 1995 and were paid for by memorial gifts. In April 1995, the congregation joined the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, and adopted the name "Abundant Life Free Lutheran Church." Pastor Hushagen served as pastor until his retirement in July 1994. Pastor Wesley Langaas, who came here with his family in July 1994 from McVile, ND served from 1994-2013. Pastor Michael Johnson served from 2014 to 2016. The present pastor is Pastor LeRoy Flickinger who has served since May of 2016. Abundant Life Free Lutheran Congregation extends a warm welcome to their Sunday worship at 9:30 a.m. (broadcast on 99.1 FM) and Sunday school at 10:30 a.m. (September - May).

Abundant Life Free Lutheran Church
1602 Pennington Ave., Thief River Falls 681-2300

The history of telephone in Thief River Falls dates to 1900

Editor's note: The following is a partial re-print of the story that appeared in the July 28, 1954 edition of the Thief River Falls Times.

by Joe Cervenka
Northwestern Bell
Telephone Co.

It was a big year for new things in Thief River Falls in 1900. Electric lights were turned on for the first time just two days before the turn of the century. A patent medicine peddler came to town in a "horseless carriage" to give many local residents their first glimpse of an automobile, and a Thief River Falls businessman, H. Fant, announced plans to start a telephone exchange in the community.

Fant, who operated a confectionary store, had received permission from the city council in May of 1900 to start an exchange, but he did not get it into operation until a year later, the Thief River Falls News reported in its May 3, 1900 issue:

"H. Fant will soon put in a telephone exchange at Thief River Falls having obtained a franchise from the council at the last session for that purpose." No further mention of this is made in the News until Jan. 31, 1901, when it was reported: "H. Fant will commence the building of the local telephone exchange at once. The telephone poles are now here."

On March 21, 1901, the News reported that "H. Fant's telephone exchange will be in running order this week." However, the exchange was not started until late April or early May that year because on April 24, 1902, the News published an article announcing that Fant had been compelled to order "A new 200 switchboard" to accommodate his increasing business, this coming "less than a year" after he had "started the exchange here with a small number of subscribers and now has 124."

The first long distance telephone connection apparently was made to Crookston. The Thief River Falls News-Press reported that on March 20, 1900, the Northwestern Telephone Company was given permission by the city council "to use the streets and alleys of the city for placing its poles and wires when it constructed a long distance line to the city from Crookston."

Although available copies of early Thief River Falls newspapers make no mention of where Fant located the first switchboard, pioneer residents of the community recall it was in the space now occupied either by Poppler's (Hazel Blue) or by the Ben Franklin Store Coffee Bar. The switchboard remained there until about 1910 when it was moved to the second floor of the Caldis Building, then to the northeast corner of the Union State Bank building, next to the old auditorium building and then back to its present location in the bank building.

Long distance service was first made available to Fant's customers through their telephones in May, 1901. The May 23, 1901 News, reports:

"H. Fant has had the local telephone connected with the long distance, which makes it very convenient for the local subscribers." This was the extent of the newspaper's coverage of the new service.

Residents of nearby communities approached Fant on extending service to their towns because on Sept. 19, 1901, Fant said in a "Pertinent Pointers" advertising column in the Thief River Falls News:

"H. Fant - The people up in the Thief River Lake country are very desirous of having telephone communication with this city, and I may build a line up there this winter. If I build, I will eventually extend it to Roseau and Warroad." Just exactly when service was started to these communities is not clear.

Fant hadn't been in business long before he found out that bad weather can be a big headache in the telephone industry. According to the Aug. 15, 1901, News, a wind and rain storm hit the Thief River Falls area, and, among other things, "H. Fant's telephone exchange was damaged considerably. Many of the wires were blown down and telephone poles were broken. His dam-

age is estimated at about \$200."

On Feb. 27, 1902, the News further reported with regard to proposed long distance extensions:

"The village council of Warren will give H. Fant, of this city, an exclusive franchise for a term of three years to construct a long distance telephone line through the city, providing the Northwestern does not decide to build there within 30 days. The line, which Mr. Fant proposes to build, will extend from this city to Pembina, N.D., and give the people of that section connection with the outside world. The people of Warren are foolish if they do not accept Mr. Fant's proposition, and thereby enjoy this modern convenience."

No mention is made in the early news stories as to who were the very first telephone customers in the community. However, among the very first were the following advertisers in the news, who by late 1901 and early 1902 were including their telephone numbers in their advertisements as follows:

"Drs. Tupper and Strand, phone 27."

Central Mercantile Co., phone 19."

"Law Office of Perl W. Mabey, phone 89."

Among the early customers also was Dr. G.W. Booren, Thief River Falls dentist, who is still a telephone customer today. He recalls that he first had a telephone in 1903, and in all that time he had only two telephone numbers - 79 and then 33, the number still assigned to him.

Fant operated the exchange until 1907 when he sold the property to J.M. Bishop. Bishop held it only a short while, selling on Sept. 1, 1908, to the Tri-State Telephone Co., which provided services until Northwestern Telephone Exchange Co., predecessor of today's Northwestern Bell Telephone Co., purchased the exchange in 1918.

Although the Thief River Falls News of 1901 offers no description of the type of telephone equipment used when Fant started the exchange, old-timers believe the switchboard had only

one position. Customers were equipped with the "crank type" magneto telephones, which were changed to a common battery at the time the switchboard was moved to the old auditorium in 1913.

The first telephone operator in Thief River Falls was Andrena Helgeson, now Mrs. Emmett Crowe of Washington state. The second operator was Mrs. Louis Yell, nee Anna Soards, who now lives in Minneapolis.

Mrs. Yell says she worked as an operator from 1903 to 1910. During those years, she recalls her duties consisted of more than switching calls. "Sometimes we had to start the generator if it failed. And we collected bills, too," she said.

According to Mrs. Yell, there was no operator at night during the very first of the telephone.

The first linemen identified by Mrs. Yell were Al Dixon and William Ferris.

One of Northwestern Bell's present operators in Thief River Falls, Mrs. Olga Eklund, recalls that when she started work as an operator in 1913, a four-position switchboard was in use. The chief operator at that time was Mrs. Al Warner, now of Fargo. Mrs. Minnie Lundgren, who now lives in Anoka, was an operator then also.

Mrs. Eklund says she's much busier now than she was in her early years at the job; although, at that time, there was a wider variety of duties to perform.

"We used to give baseball scores, the time and even wake people up," she said.

Her most exciting moment as an operator came in 1933 on a bitterly cold winter morning. The old auditorium, in which the switchboard was located, caught fire at 3:30 a.m., and Mrs. Eklund remained at the board sounding the alarm until she had to be dragged away.

The number of telephones in the Thief River Falls exchange has increased steadily over the years. Only a few customers were first served by Fant in 1901, but subscribers were gradually added until they totaled 1,200 in 1930; 1,850 in 1940;

3,000 in 1950 and more than 3,200 at present.

Thirty operators here now handle approximately 15,000 local and 580 long distance calls daily, compared with 9,200 local, and 205 long distance calls on the average in 1940.

A.J. Rau has been Northwestern Bell's manager of

the exchange since 1929.

In 1957 new dial equipment was installed in the area which eliminated the need for operators to connect local calls. The new system and new numbering plan as called the "2-5" numbering plan, because each number was composed of the letters MU (for MURdock), the num-

ber "1" and then four more digits. Phone numbers now looked like "MU1-4432. Later it was simplified to 681, which are the numbers corresponding to MU1. Long distance calls still required the assistance of an operator.



This photograph was taken in 1903. It shows the headquarters of an up-and-coming Thief River Falls business - the telephone service provided by H. Fant. Fant and his staff operated the telephone service inside his confectionary store, which was located on LaBree

Avenue about where Poppler's, now Hazel Blue, is located. In the doorway are the two operators, Andrena Helgeson, who became Mrs. Emmet Crowe, and Anna Soards, who became Mrs. Louis Yell. The linemen were Will Ferris and Al Dixon.



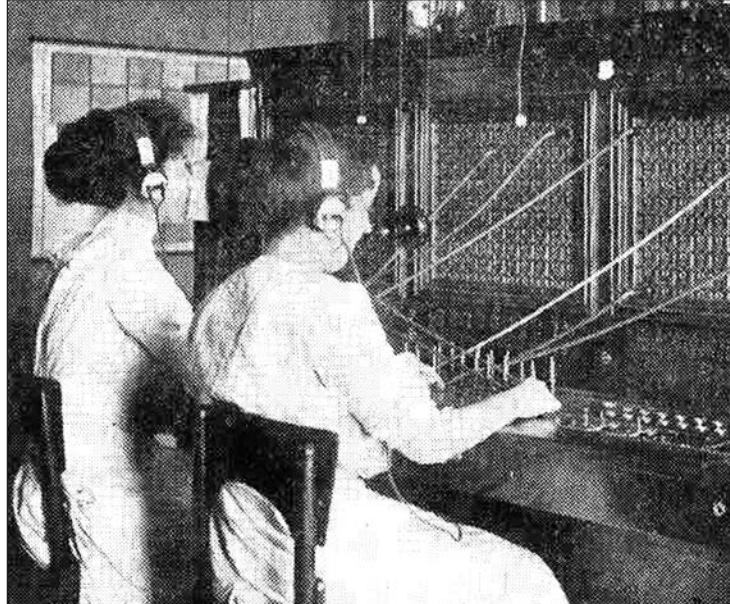
This is a picture of the telephone switchboard in Thief River Falls as it looked in 1916. Pictured from left are: Sophie Hoyum (Mrs. L.H. Husby), Olga Knutson (Mrs. Olga Eklund), Adele Golden (Mrs. Orville Herron),

Minnie Lundgren (Mrs. Martin Lundgren), Elsie Bundhurd, Rose Moran (Mrs. Al Warner), Regina Amundson (Mrs. Arvid Westling), Mary Parenteau, Gertrude Nelson (Mrs. Oscar Cerny).



On this day in June 1954, operators handled 16,847 local calls and 698 long distance calls. The operators are, from left: Mrs. Louise Steenerson, Mavis Kaushagen, Jan-

ice Johnson, Mrs. Olga Eklund, Mae Hjelle, Joan Johnson, Elsie Higdum, Joan Pederson, Mildred Schmitke, and Beverly Blaze.



In 1904, the Thief River Falls telephone switchboard had only two positions, and it looked as shown above. The operators are Melina Moran and Rose Moran.



August 3, 1965

Speed's Auto Service



August 3, 2010

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Congrats City of Thief River Falls on your 125th year anniversary!

A Big "Thank You" for all you did in helping us with our new Back 9 in 1994

THIEF RIVER GOLF CLUB
Hwy. 32 N., Thief River Falls (218) 681-2955

TRF grows by a modest 2.4 percent

According to the 2020 census, the population of Thief River Falls increased 2.4 percent and now stands at 8,749.

The Census Bureau released its final reports last week. On April 1, 2010, the population of Thief River Falls was 8,573. At 8,749, the population grew by less than 200.

Thief River Falls Mayor Brian Holmer said he thought the city's population would have been closer to, but not over, 9,000. Holmer said he expects some changes to city wards as re-districting takes place.

Demographics
Persons under 5 years of age make up 7 percent of the population. Persons under 18 represent 22 percent of the population, and persons over the age of 65 years of age represent 20.1 percent of the population. For the most part, that compares favorably to national trends. Thief River Falls' population of individuals 65 and older is slightly higher. Nationally, this group makes up 16.5 percent of the population.

Racially
The racial make-up of individuals living in the community is largely white. Nationally, individuals who identify as white alone, make up 76.3 percent of the population. In Thief River Falls, the percentage of individuals who identify as white is 93 percent.

Housing
In terms of housing, the median value of owner-occupied housing (2015-2019), in Thief River Falls is \$135,700 compared to \$217,500 nationally. The median selected monthly owner costs with a mortgage is \$984 in Thief River Falls and \$1,595 nationally. The median gross rent (2015-2019) is \$693 in Thief River Falls, and \$1,062 nationally.

Computer?
A total of 86.1 percent of households in Thief River Falls have a computer. Nationally, the rate is 90.3 percent.

Education
Education shows some in-

teresting differences, too. The percentage of individuals with a high school degree or higher among persons 25 years or older is 92.3 percent, but nationally it's 88 percent. On the other hand, only 19.7 percent of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher while nationally 32.1 percent of individuals have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Income
The median household income (in 2019 dollars) between 2015 and 2019, shows some significant differences. The median household income in Thief River Falls is \$49,790, but it's \$62,843 nationally.

For more information, log onto the Census Bureau website at www.census.gov, and click on the QuickFacts link, and enter the name of the state, county, city, town or zip code.

Pennington County
According to the Census Bureau, the population of Pennington County increased from 13,930 to 13,992, a 1.4 percent increase.

An accurate count of the population serves as the basis for political representation and plays a vital role in many areas of public life. It could determine how millions of dollars in public dollars are distributed.

CONGRATULATIONS THIEF RIVER FALLS ON 125 YEARS!

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Not sure of the date this photo was taken. It shows early telephone service providers in Thief River Falls and was obtained through the Pennington County Historical Society website.

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Did you know?

Did you know? The motto of the Eagles is "People Helping People." The goal of our club is to promote the improvement and well-being of our local communities through stewardship.

Did you know? The Eagles have donated over \$50,000 to Trails to Treatment, which is a local charity that gives funds to families battling cancer. The proceeds are raised through our annual Summer Golf Tournament and our annual Winterfest event.

Did you know? That we have helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars through raffles, benefitting everyone from our local sports teams, local arts, area school activities, and families dealing with hardship! Some of our benefactors have been our local baseball, volleyball, swimming, and hockey teams, the skating club, choir programs, and countless families.

Did you know? Our Womens Auxiliary hosts an annual Christmas Tree Walk that raises thousands of dollars for our local Hospice organization!

Did you know? We are one of two businesses in Thief River Falls that is designated as a "Bicycle Friendly Business" by the League of American Bicyclists. We are one of two hubs for "Join Bike TRF" and run multiple "rides" from the club, promoting health and wellness, while having a good time in the process!

Did you know? The Eagles supports our members who are servicemen/women and first responders that are killed in the line of duty, guaranteeing a scholarship and medical expenses to their children.

Did you know? The Eagles loves our Mothers! On February 7, 1904, Fraternal Order of Eagles Past Grand Worthy President Frank E. Hering made a public plea to recognize mothers everywhere. A decade later, President Woodrow Wilson signed a proclamation making Mother's Day a reality.

Did you know? The Eagles has the best staff in town, always willing to welcome our community members, and making our out-of-town guests feel like part of the family!

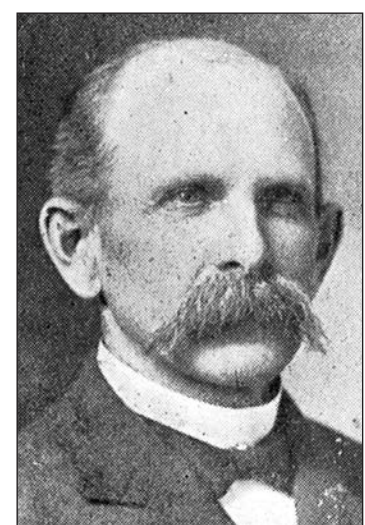
Now you know! The Eagles is about "People Helping People."

Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie #2368
305 Red Lake Blvd.
Thief River Falls, Minnesota,
Chartered on Feb. 9, 1941
Held their meetings above the Ace Hardware store until they purchased the Sons of Norway Hall where they are now located.



Some of the original members of the Thief River Falls Fire Department included (left to right): Louis Lonson, Emil Zeh, N.W. Tarrant, C.C. Schuster, John Peterson, Chris Porter, Louis Hanson, James Farr, Joe Johnson, G.D. LeSage and Chief Paul Medderigh.

From a volunteer bucket brigade to the TRF Fire Department



First Fire Chief Harvey E. Mussey 1894-1895

If your home caught fire prior to 1893 in Thief River Falls, a volunteer bucket brigade fought the fire. It wasn't until 1893 that Thief River Falls had an organized fire department.

On March 1, 1893, a de-

fective chimney led to a fire at a small building owned by John LaBree and occupied by Sam Heasley. According to a 1917 history of the fire department, the loss wasn't much. However, it was the impetus for a formalized fire department since the department was no more than a volunteer bucket brigade at that point.

On Sept. 15, 1893, the Village of Thief River Falls Council ordered a hook and ladder truck and two five-gallon Babcock fire extinguishers to assist the volunteer bucket brigade. The equipment cost \$494. Before long, the equipment arrived. Through the efforts of future Thief River Falls Times publisher Harvey E. Mussey, the first fire department was organized March 8, 1894. Mussey was elected the first Thief River Falls fire chief.

Firefighters received no payment for their firefighting until February 25, 1896.

After that time, they received \$1 for each fire call to which they responded.

Like today, firefighters participated in training during the early years of the fire department. It was Mussey who decided that the signal would be three strokes of the fire bell repeated for a length of time. Their fire bell was the Central School bell.

Fires weren't the only turmoil seen by the fire department. Members disbanded for a brief period of time in March 1905 after a disagreement with the Thief River Falls City Council. The fire department reorganized later that month after the council agreed to the members' demands.

The Thief River Falls Fire Department has been going strong since that time. It is now a combination full-time and volunteer fire department comprised of 28 firefighters.



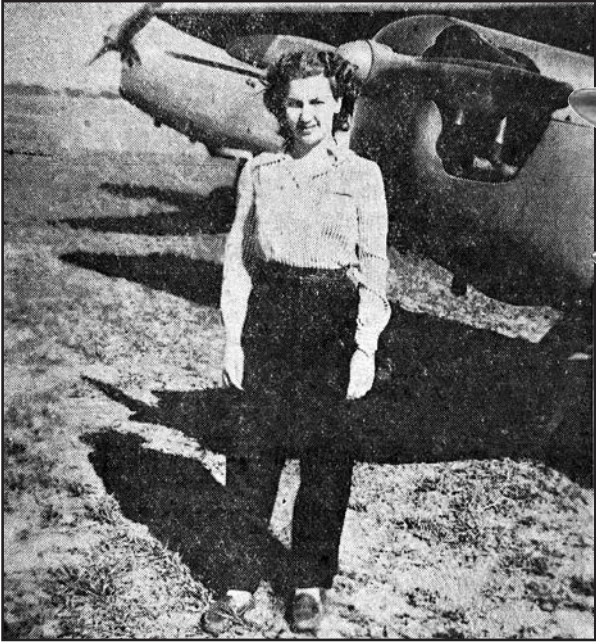
This fire is of the Golden Rule Department Store, Citizens State Bank and doctors office and Theater upstairs, according to the caption on the back of the photo. It's where the

J.C. Penney store used to be, now Ronning's. A note on the front of the photo states it happened in 1914.

1944-2021



1945 Lincoln Graduate Makes First Solo Flight



Miss Lily Hovden, 17, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Hovden last week was the first trainee learning to fly at the Thief River Falls airport to make a solo flight. She had received ten hours of instruction from Lester the local pilot-instructor, in his Taylor-craft plane, and had worked while attending school here to obtain funds to pay for her flying time. A 1945 graduate of Lincoln high school, she plans to keep on with her training until she obtains a commercial pilot's rating. Also soloing during the past week was Ernest J. Barzen while Chris Kierk, veteran local flier, has resumed activities at the local airport. (June 14, 1945 TRF Times)



The Thief River Falls airport started in 1944 with a turf landing strip. In 1946, two 2,500 ft long paved runways were constructed.



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Railroads were an important reason this area was settled

(Editor's note: I was going through my notes regarding the history of The Times and came across a history of railroads in Thief River Falls that was written by Stuart J. Nelson in June of 2012. It provides some interesting context to the history of the community because the two are irrevocably connected. The story appeared in a newsletter published by the Pennington County Historical Society. It is the most complete history of the railroad in Thief River Falls that I have seen.)

Railroads: Red Lake and Pennington County

by **Stuart J. Nelson**
The Great Northern Railway, through its predecessor the St. Paul and Pacific Railway, was the first railroad in the area. Their line between Crookston and the Canadian border had Emerson-Noyes Dec. 2, 1878 to connect. The St. Paul and Pacific became the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway May 23, 1879. A branch off this line was built from Shirley to St. Hilaire running through Ives and Wylie in June 1883. This line extended to Thief River Falls October 1892 and into Red Lake Falls in December 1892.

The first depot in Thief River Falls was located along Kinney Avenue near the crossing at First Street. This depot burned in 1894. A replacement was built at the same location. In 1990, the Great Northern built a spur from their wye to the new lumber planning mill on the east side of the river, crossing on a bridge just north of the dam. Pleas were made to the Great Northern to relocate their depot on this spur but to no avail.

The Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste Marie Railway, popularly known as the Soo Line, began building north from Glenwood in 1903. The Soo Line was constructed into Thief River Falls on Sept. 11, 1904, and continued building north to the Canadian Border at Noyes to connect with the Canadian Pacific Railway on October 29, 1904.

The Soo Line depot was a 24x104 wood building located on Third Street. The Great Northern now decided their depot could be moved

after all and it was moved to the west side of Main Avenue on the Lumber spur in late 1904.

The Great Northern also extended its line north to Greenbush in 1904 after promising for at least five years. The line was further extended to Warroad in November of 1908.

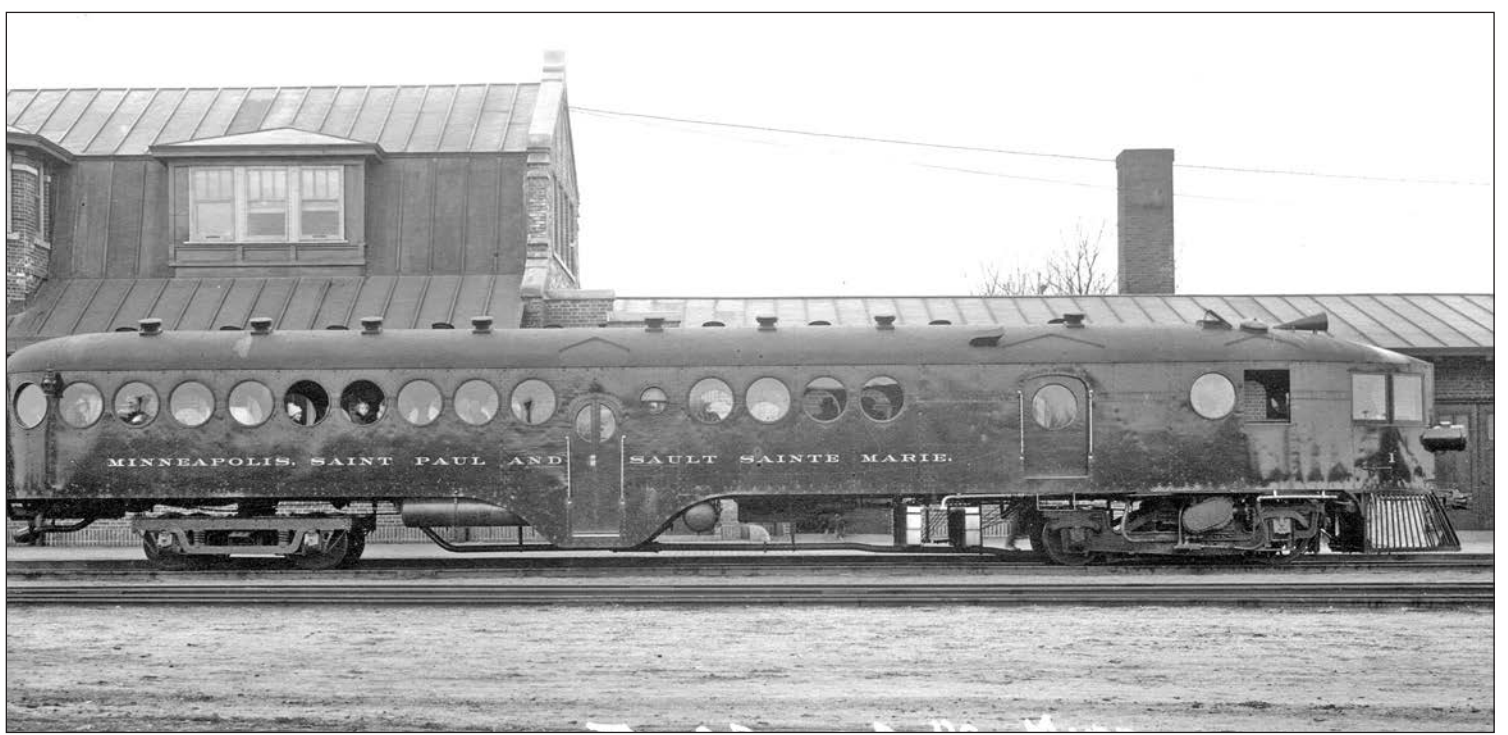
The Northern Pacific Railway had built a line north from its main line east of Hawley in the late 1880s. This line ran through Fertile to Red Lake Falls and then west to Grand Forks with a short branch of about five miles from Key West to Sherack.

The NP crossed the Great Northern at Ives, but the NP named the location Dorothy even though it was the same place. This line also crossed the Great Northern main line at Dugdale, west of Mentor. In 1905, the Great Northern had begun using the NP line near Dugdale, named Tilden Jct, to Red Lake Falls and then on their own trackage through St. Hilaire to Thief River Falls. The Great Northern abandoned its trackage from Shirley to Wylie in 1906-07 and served Wylie infrequently from St. Hilaire. This portion from St. Hilaire to Wylie was abandoned in 1943.

In 1904, when the Soo Line built through Thief River Falls there was no terminal and crews operated Glenwood to Mahnomen to Noyes-Emerson. There were no servicing facilities, not even a water tank at Thief River Falls. Trains could obtain coal and water at Plummer and water at a station called Anita, about five miles north of Thief River Falls.

The Soo Line built a branch west from Thief River Falls in 1905 to Kenmare, known as The Wheatline. It was at this time that a roundhouse was built, along with coal and water facilities, and a train yard, thus creating a terminal. Later in 1905, division headquarters were established.

The division offices were in a living house that was on the property that the Soo Line obtained that was at the corner of Third Street and Atlantic Avenue. The building provided offices for the division superintendent, supervisors, train dispatch-



This is a passenger train - the Minneapolis, Saint Paul and Sault Sainte Marie parked outside the Thief River Falls depot. The photo is actually a postcard. No date is given for when it was taken.

ing forces, and clerical positions. The wood depot housed forces for handling passenger and freight services.

In 1910, the Soo Line built the Plummer line that ran from Plummer through Bemidji to Moose Lake and connecting with the Brooten to Duluth line.

In 1910, the Soo had crews operating out of the city south to Mahnomen and Glenwood, east to Federal Dam on the Plummer line, north to Noyes, and west to Kenmore, N.D. The crew district handled by Thief River Falls employees now extended Glenwood to Noyes, Thief River Falls to Kenmore, and Fordville to Drake. Thief River Falls crews also ran Thief River Falls to Federal Dam on the Plummer line. It was a busy terminal. In addition to the employees actually operating the trains, there were employees doing locomotive and car servicing and repair, switching of trains, track maintenance, communication maintenance along with the supervisory and clerical people required in complete operation of the division.

Agitation was increasing in 1912 for a railroad towards International Falls from Thief River Falls. In 1913, the Minnesota Northwestern Electric Railway was

incorporated to run east out of Thief River Falls. It was completed 18 miles to Goodridge on Oct. 12, 1914, but was never extended any further. The railroad used the depot of the Soo Line.

With these three railroad companies, Thief River Falls now had passenger trains running out on seven different routes.

By 1912, the Soo Line business had increased so much that the combination freight-passenger depot no longer could handle the traffic. The wood combination depot was moved north to Sixth Street and converted to a freight depot, being extended to 216 feet long. In 1913, construction began on the new passenger station at the old depot located at Third Street.

The new brick depot, 40x78 with 25x76 baggage and express addition, was completed in 1914. It also housed the division offices previously located in the living house next door. This house was then moved north on Atlantic Avenue to the corner of Atlantic Avenue and Eighth Street.

In 1923, the Great Northern depot was in need of replacement and a new one was built on the east side of Main Avenue across the street from the old depot, which was removed. When

the railroad industry changed in the 1970s and 1980s with depots no longer needed, the Great Northern depot was saved and moved to the Pennington County Pioneer Village.

The Minnesota Northwestern Electric Railway main track came up Davis Avenue on the west side of that street and ended at the Third Street crossing alongside the Soo depot. They had a car barn where their equipment was housed near the Soo roundhouse. Their line crossed the Thief River on a bridge just north of the Longs Bridge highway bridge. A wye was located on the north side of Eighth Street for turning their equipment. This railroad was abandoned in March of 1940. The MNWE depot at Goodridge was moved to Grygla for use as a U.S. Post Office. In 1994, this depot was moved back to Goodridge and replaced at its original location as a museum.

The Soo Line freight depot was torn down in 1988. The Soo passenger depot, after standing idle for a few years, was saved and remodeled, re-opening as the Thief River Falls city office in June 1998.

In the continual change of the railroad industry in the United States, the railroad

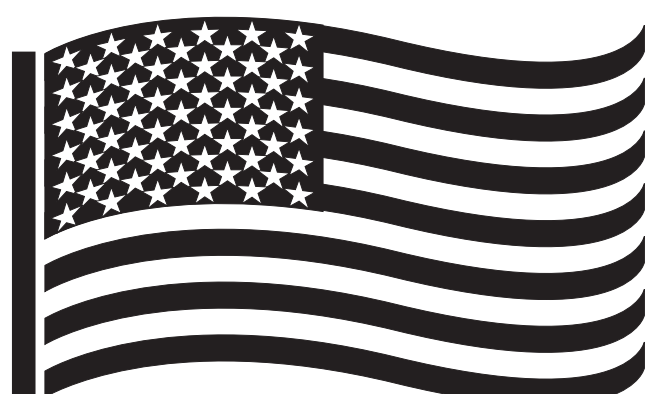
companies serving Thief River Falls also changed.

In March 1970, the Great Northern became part of a newly formed Burlington Northern. The Burlington Northern abandoned their trackage from Red Lake Falls to East Grand Forks in portions between 1972 and 1982, and from Tilden Jct to St. Hilaire in the mid 1990s. Trackage from St. Hilaire to Warroad was sold to a short-line, the Minnesota Northern. The Soo Line became part of Canadian Pacific in April 1990. The Wheatline branch of the Soo was taken over by a new short line, the Northern Plains Railroad in November 1996.

As a reminder of the past, there are preservations of railroading past in Thief River Falls at the Soo Line depot, now City Hall, along with the Soo Line Steam Locomotive 1024. At the Pioneer Village, the Great Northern depot, along with an ex Northern Pacific Burlington Northern caboose is on display. Next, along the same short section of track, is the Soo Line depot from Viking that was on the Wheatline, and a Soo Line caboose 99061. The Viking depot was moved here in 1973.

PAST COMMANDERS	
J.J. McCann.....1919	LeRoy Nabben.....1965
Fred T. Scanlon.....1920	James Cuppet.....1966
Oscar R. Smith.....1921	Robert Reeve.....1967
Oscar C. Paulson.....1922-23	Anthony Madunich.....1968
Dave Robinson.....1924	Harvey Hanson.....1968
H.O. Chommie.....1925	Allan Paulson.....1969
Dr. Swedenberg.....1926	Donald M. Olson.....1970
Kern Olson.....1927-28	Erwin Ferber.....1971
Joe Maruska.....1929	Calvin Bradley.....1972
Dr. C.M. Haug.....1930	Mayer Holen.....1973
Haakon M. Olson.....1931	Gerald Odegaard.....1974
Vermer Nelson.....1932	Don Lykken.....1975
Alex M. Campbell.....1933	Clayton Restad.....1976
Roy L. Erickson.....1934	Ed Haraldson.....1977
S.P. Orvell.....1935	Vernon Lee.....1978
W.W. Long.....1936	Sam Geneveux.....1979
Harry R. Lund.....1937	Larry Odegaard.....1980
Tom Lonson.....1938	Ivan (Ike) Hoglin.....1980
Carl Gutrud.....1938	Greg Brekke.....1981
Thos. J. Rowan.....1939	Orville Botner.....1982
Alex Cloutier.....1940-41	Clair Larson.....1983
Gustav Schilbred.....1942	Fred Dallmann.....1984-85
W.G. Claffy.....1943	Russ Christianson.....1986
George W. Werstlein.....1944	Floyd Fredrickson.....1987-88
M.R. Levorson.....1945	Kenneth Poole.....1989
Dr. A.E. Jacobson.....1946	Don Broekemeier.....1990
Orvis Oien.....1947	Bob Stroble.....1991
Ivan Bundy.....1948	Orville Ellingson.....1991
Leonard Hanson.....1949	Joe Forberg.....1992
A.C. Tiedeman.....1950	Stan Bement.....1993
Elmer Anderson.....1951	Ned Blodgett.....1994
Orville T. Eide.....1952	Kenneth Poole.....1995
Gordon H. Nohre.....1953	Larry Molstad.....1996-97
Steven A. Austin.....1954	Charles Richards.....1998
Harold M. Johnson.....1955	Helen Halvorson.....1999
Harlin P. Elseth.....1956	Howard Dalager.....2000
Ellsworth Jorgenson.....1957	Dr. Charles Samuelson.....2001
Robert Bredeson.....1958	Vernon Lee.....2002
Ormond Johnson.....1959	John Sampson.....2003-05
C.W. Rodekuhr.....1960	Ron Pilcher.....2006-08
Jim Smillie.....1961	Gus Holmes.....2009
Loren Borsheim.....1962	Greg Evenson.....2010-11
John M. Eisbrenner.....1963	Gus Holmes.....2012-13
Orville Hanson.....1964	Arlo Rude.....2013-21

PAST PRESIDENTS	
Mrs. Albert Johnson.....1922	Mrs. Marilyn Winters.....1969
Mrs. A. Swedenberg.....1923	Mrs. Gwen Brooten.....1970
Mrs. Dave Robinson.....1924	Mrs. Vernice Nelson.....1971
Mrs. C. M. Haug.....1925	Mrs. Connie Ferber.....1972
Mrs. Leonard Hanson.....1926	Mrs. Colleen Holen.....1973-74
Mrs. T.P. Anderson.....1927	Mrs. Avis Odegaard.....1975
Mrs. H. Provencher.....1928	Mrs. Lavonne Haraldson Greenquist.....1976
Mrs. Ira Lane.....1929-30	Mrs. JoAnn Reeve.....1977
Mrs. James Steen.....1931-32	Mrs. Karen Thygeson.....1978
Mrs. J.M. Bishop.....1933	Mrs. Gwen Brooten.....1978
Mrs. Oscar Smith.....1934	Mrs. Constance Driscoll.....1979
Mrs. Claude Evenson.....1935	Mrs. Marilyn Winters.....1980
Mrs. Shirley Alnes.....1936	Mrs. LaVonne Adams.....1981
Mrs. Ted Hunt.....1937	Mrs. Lova Kraemer.....1982
Mrs. Thora H. Nelson.....1938	Mrs. Constance Driscoll.....1983
Mrs. Marie Bidlick.....1939	Mrs. Karen Thygeson.....1984
Mrs. Kate Levorson.....1940-41	Mrs. Avis Odegaard.....1985
Mrs. Esther Plough.....1942-43	Mrs. Marilyn Winters.....1986
Mrs. Orrin Lynde.....1944	Mrs. Sharon Odegaard.....1987-88
Mrs. W.W. Powell.....1945-46	Mrs. Millie Dallmann.....1989
Mrs. Jeannette Wright.....1947	Mrs. Gloria Lee.....1990
Mrs. Vivian Bidlick-Borsheim.....1948	Mrs. Sharon Odegaard.....1991
Mrs. H.F. Harrison.....1949-50	Mrs. Eleanore Forberg.....1992
Mrs. Wayne Bredeson.....1951	Mrs. Annabelle Cuppet.....1993
Mrs. W.G. Claffy.....1952	Mrs. Karen Thygeson.....1994
Mrs. Margaret Peterson.....1953	Mrs. Donna Poole.....1995
Mrs. Agnes Baken.....1954	Mrs. Sharon Molstad.....1996
Mrs. Bess Lang.....1955	Mrs. Marilyn Winters.....1997
Mrs. Bess Hallidin.....1956	Mrs. Colleen Holen.....1998
Mrs. Viola Jaranson.....1957	Mrs. Loretta Stowe.....1999
Mrs. Mae Johnson.....1958	Mrs. Sharon Molstad.....2000-01
Mrs. Joyce Sullivan-Dye.....1959	Mrs. Gloria Lee.....2002-03
Mrs. Abigail Nabben.....1960	Mrs. Sharon Odegaard.....2004-05
Mrs. Mattie Anderson.....1961	Mrs. Gloria Lee.....2006-07
Mrs. Phyllis Halvorson.....1962	Mrs. Sharon Odegaard.....2008-09
Mrs. Janet Swanson.....1963	Mrs. Loretta Stowe.....2009-10
Mrs. Elizabeth Feragen.....1964	Mrs. Sharon Odegaard.....2011
Mrs. Abigail Nabben.....1965	Mrs. Shannon Olson.....2012
Mrs. Annabelle Cuppet.....1966	Mrs. Sharon Odegaard.....2013-14
Mrs. JoAnn Reeve.....1967	Mrs. Lynn Carr.....2015-17
Mrs. Myrtle Wilson.....1968	Mrs. Sharon Odegaard.....2018-19
	Mrs. Lynn Carr.....2020-21



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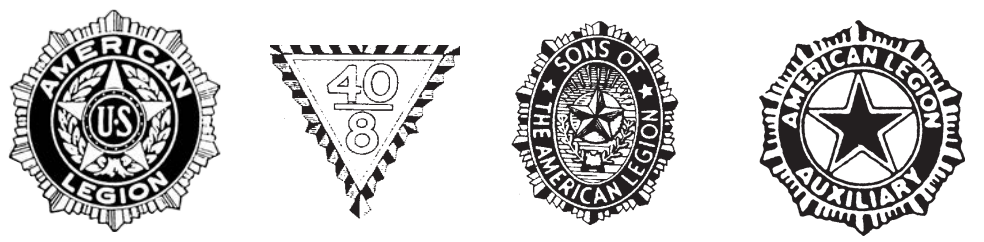
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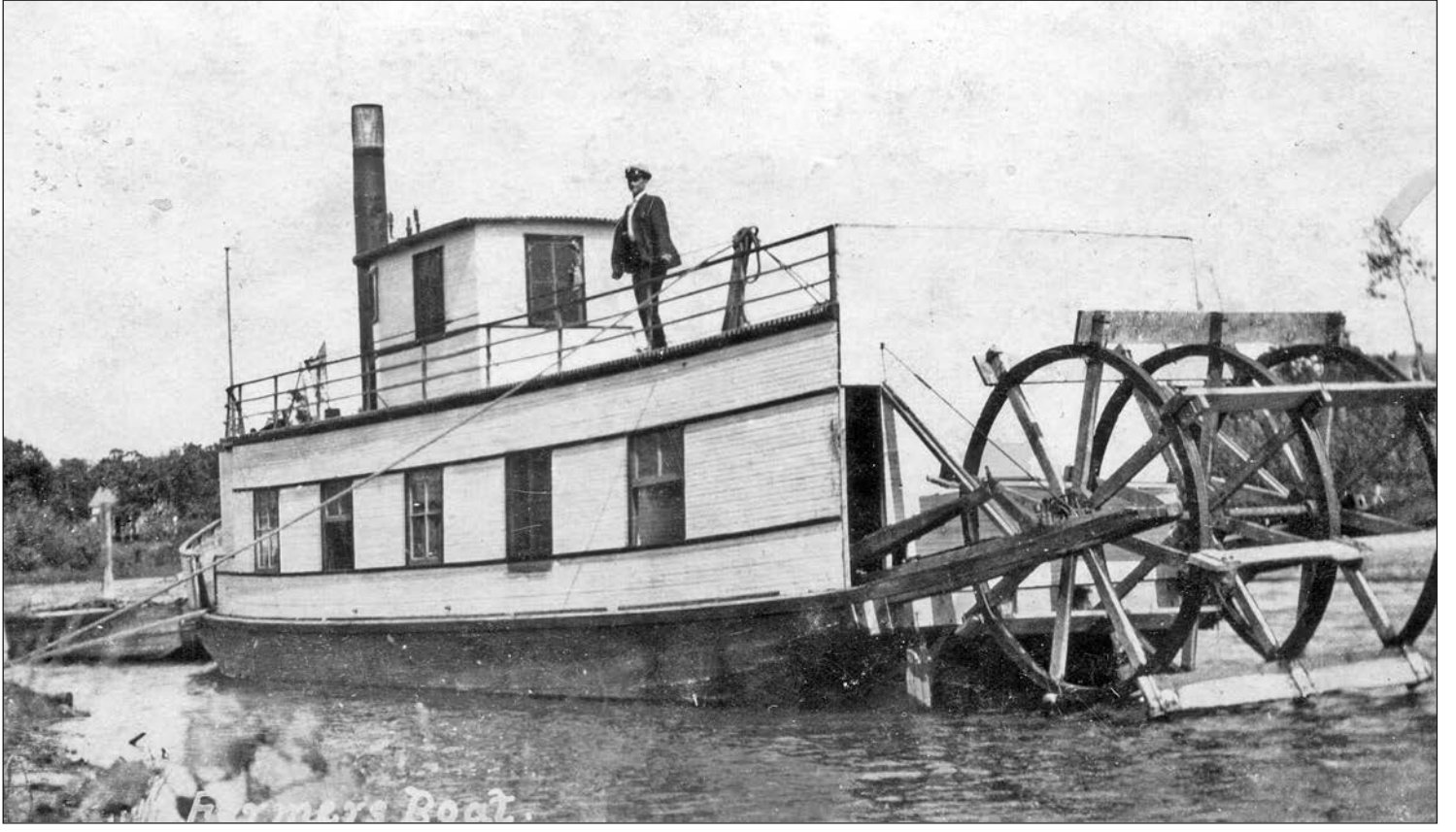
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- Girl Scouts
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- Fire Departments
- Veterans Honor Flight
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- TRF Education Foundation
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- Nurses Scholarship
- Visit Shut-Ins
- Meals On Wheels
- Support VA Hospital
- SONS**
- Parade Candy
- Scholarships
- Pennington County Food Shelf
- Pennington County Christmas For Kids
- LADIES AUXILIARY**
- Poppy Day - Donate To Disabled Vets
- Meals On Wheels
- Scholarships For Salutatorian
- School Scholarships
- Visit Shut-Ins
- Girl's State
- Money Given To Shut-Ins With Legion

The important work of steamboats in and around Thief River Falls



This is Peter Eberhardt and grandsons Wayland and Donald Eberhardt, sons of Severin Eberhardt.



The caption on this photo states what I believe says the Farmer's Boat, Thief River Falls.

(Editor's note: While going through some very old photos and postcards we found at the bottom of a drawer, we came across the following letter. It's from Mrs. Harry (Dorothy Eberhardt) Byklum, and it sheds an interesting light on steam tow boats that plied the rivers of northwestern Minnesota. I have no idea if the

letter has ever been published, or how it came into our possession. It appears to have been mailed in 1971 to Inga Geving, who at the time was the director of what would become the Peder Engelstad Pioneer Village.)

"My grandfather, Peter Eberhardt, was born Aug. 20, 1853 near Elverum, Norway. He came with his parents and sister Mary to Minnesota when he was 17 years old, and they settled in Renville County. About 1886, Peter's wife, Emma and son, Emil (my father), moved to Crookston, and later to Red Lake Falls, which was at that time in Polk County. While there, Peter helped to build a steam tow boat at Highland on the Red Lake River. This boat was called the James Meehan after the elder of the Meehan Brothers of Stevens Point, Wis. Peter also helped build a dam in the Red Lake River at Red Lake Falls, and a saw mill for the Meehan Brothers. This mill was built on a location given by the town, but owing to the expense of getting logs to the mill, they decided to move to Thief River Falls, taking a number of families with them.

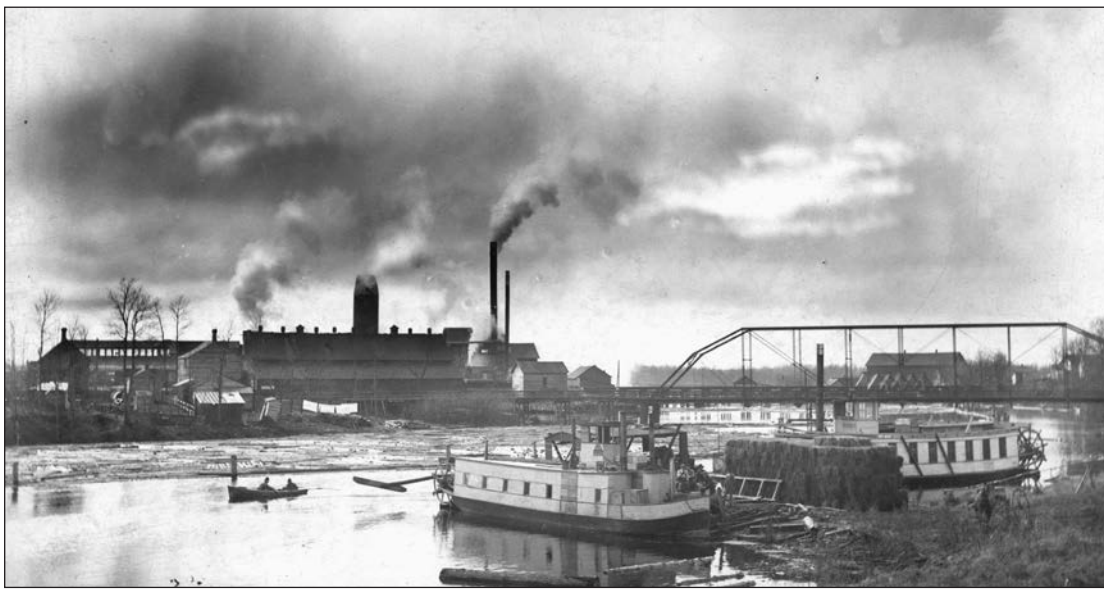
"During the winter of 1891, Peter met an old friend from his locality in Norway by the name of Edward Eliason. Together, they built a twin propeller round bottom boat of about 80 feet long to navigate on Red Lake and Red Lake River. This model boat proved too deep drafted and was later remodeled into a side-wheeler. This steamboat was

called the Viking. It was of considerable service in opening up the wilderness east of Thief River Falls. Prior to this time, transportation had been overland between the Hudson Bay Trading Posts and missions at Red Lake and Fosston. The Viking provided service for government estimators and timber cruisers interested in the lumber industry.

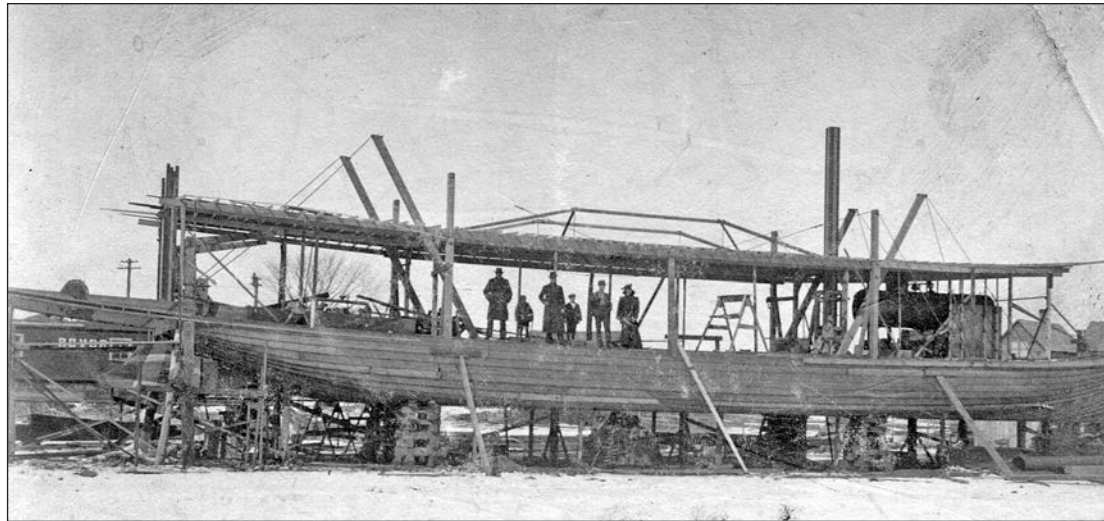
"From this time on, Peter built a number of boats including the Alice Meehan, Margurite, Ethel O'Day, James Anderson, Mudhen and Beltrami. Several of these boats were used for towing logs on the Red Lake. They were very well suited for this use, having a grouser to anchor the boat and a half mile, three-quarter inch steel cable on a drum for winding in the logs. When logging was nearing its completion in the Red

Lake area, Peter went to Canada and built boats on the Saskatchewan River and on several Canadian lakes for different lumber companies. His first one, The City of Prince Albert, operated out of Prince Albert as a tow boat for about 20 years. This boat was in service up to the time of World War II, hauling barges with gold ore to The Pas where it was loaded on cars for shipment to the smelter in British Columbia. One of the larger boats he built was named the David N. Winton and was operated by The Pas Lumber Co.

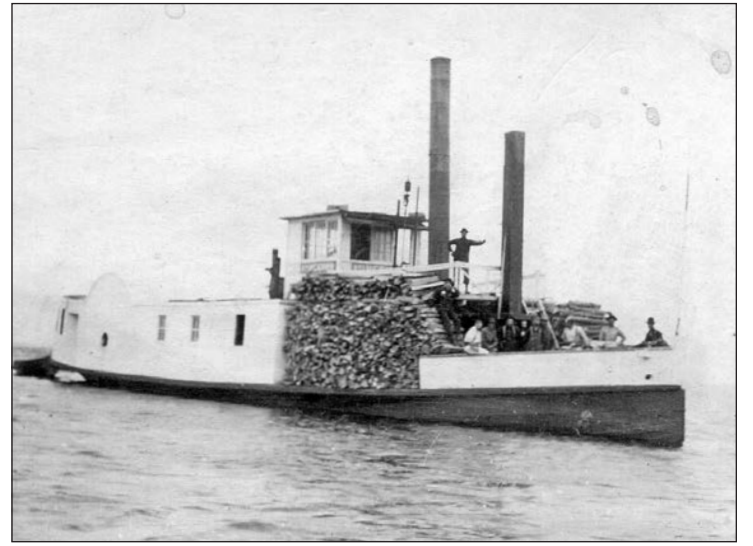
"In 1910, a large home was constructed at 211 Atlantic Ave. N. in Thief River Falls. He died Sept. 11, 1944 at the age of 91, and is buried in Greenwood Cemetery."



Two riverboats and a logging boom were visible in this 1902 photo. (Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Digital Library)



According to the caption on the back of this photo, this is the Mud Hen under construction. It was built where Elk's Park is now located.



It's impossible to read the caption on the back of this photo, but I was able to make out that this riverboat is at the Red Lake outlet. It apparently shows Emil Eberhardt.

Happy 125th Birthday Thief River Falls



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Although Trinity's membership today is composed of people of many nationalities, the earliest roots of the congregation lie among the people of the Norwegian immigration to America. Our current church organization was a result of a union in 1893 of three other Norwegian Lutheran bodies which had sprung up on American soil. The three congregations completed the merger process with the consolidation taking place October 21, 1919. The name "Trinity Lutheran Church" was adopted as the name of the merged congregation. The present church building was constructed in 1926, with the education wing added in 1952.



On February 2, 1947, broadcasting of the morning church service began over radio station KTRF and has continued regularly. The first televised church service at Trinity was broadcast on February 11, 1970. Today, Trinity reaches out through televised services on Sjoberg's Cable TV as well as Garden Valley Station. It is carried by KTRF Radio and is live streamed to YouTube.

Throughout Trinity's history we continue our commitment to our Mission Statement: Trinity Lutheran Church is a community of believers who are nurtured by God's Word and Sacraments. We are committed to proclaiming the presence of Christ through thoughtful and prayerful worship, practical and meaningful learning opportunities, and hospitality and service to all people.

We are proud to be a part of the Thief River Falls community and congratulate them on their quasiquintennial celebration.



Schedule of Worship
8:30 am Worship Service
9:25 - 10:20 am Sunday School (September - May)
10:30 am Worship Service

8:30 A.M. Worship Service is broadcast on Garden Valley Channel 37 & YouTube Live.
10:30 A.M. Worship Service is broadcast on both KTRF Radio and Channel 3 Cable TV each Sunday.

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
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218-681-1310 • trinity@mncable.net

City Hall: A grand dame of Thief River Falls

by April Scheinoha Reporter

The depot has been a part of the Thief River Falls cityscape for nearly 107 years. It nearly had a date with the wrecking ball.

This was actually the second depot to serve the Thief River Falls area. Ground was broken for this new, larger depot Aug. 21, 1913. Construction was completed in 1914 at a cost of \$60,000.

In its heyday, the depot moved a lot of freight and people. By the 1920s, the depot was handling about 117,125 pounds of freight on a daily basis.

Trains also transported people to and from Thief River Falls. As many as 13 passenger trains arrived and departed each day from the depot.

It takes a lot of manpower to shuttle freight and people.

For many years, the railroad was the largest employer in Thief River Falls. About 400 people were employed in the operating and maintenance departments.

However, times changed. Passenger service was discontinued in 1967, and the Soo Line also moved its offices to another building. The Thief River Falls Chamber of Commerce called the depot home in the 1970s and 1980s until the boiler failed and it, too, moved. Canadian Pacific Rail, which owned the assets of the Soo Line at that time, soon decided that it wanted to demolish the building. In May 1990, after hearing CP Rail's plans, a city committee was formed to research and explore the possible use and acquisition of the depot.

The "Save the Depot!" Campaign, which commenced from 1994 to 1995,

raised funds for the project. Donors helped the city leverage a federal grant through the Minnesota Department of Transportation and a matching grant from the Minnesota Historical Society. As a result, a total of \$590,000 was available to assist the city in the renovation and remodeling of the depot. The building was renovated at a cost of \$1.7 million and rededicated Aug. 21, 1998 – 85 years to the day of the original groundbreaking.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the building still features the terrazzo floor, wood trim and doors in what was formerly the main passenger terminal area. The building also features an addition.

Initially, city leaders had no plans to use the renovated depot as City Hall. They planned to use the vacant Washington Elementary School property, which now houses the Thief River Falls Evangelical Free Church. Their plans changed after a Minnesota Historical Society grant committee raised concerns that the public wouldn't be guaranteed access to a renovated depot.

As an ode to the building's heritage, Steam Locomotive 1024 is on permanent display outside of the building.

Thief River Falls could have been Twin Falls

Residents could have been living in Twin Falls, Minn. That was one of the names up for grabs as residents sought to incorporate the city that is now known as Thief River Falls.

The story of Thief River Falls begins many years earlier. From the 1660s to the 1730s, Dakota Sioux populated the area. Years later, the Red Lake and Pembina Chippewa were calling this area home. In 1863, they sold their land to the federal government via a treaty, opening the land for settlement by Caucasians.

It wasn't until 1881 that the first permanent Caucasian settler moved to Thief River Falls. John Baptiste LaBree bought squatter's rights from Frank Russell, who had initially settled here in 1880 and soon left. A man named Joe Gudo had also lived here for a time.

By 1889, residents had settled on both the west and east sides of the river. One of those individuals was Wiley Tindolph, who purchased and platted land on the east side of the river. He called the area Red Lake Rapids. The following year, the west side of the river was incorporated as the Village of Thief River Falls.

In 1896, a push began to incorporate both communities as the City of Thief River Falls. One group wanted the new city to be named Thief River Falls while the other wanted it to be named Twin Falls. The name Thief River Falls was chosen in an election Sept. 1, 1896. The following month, Frank H. Kratka was elected the first mayor of Thief River Falls. The following year, the city was formally incorporated by a special act of the Minnesota Legislature.



The original Soo Line depot was built in 1904. When the current depot was built in 1914, this building was moved three blocks north. It served as a freight station until it was demolished in 1988. (Photo courtesy of Minnesota Digital Library)



A portion of the Thief River Falls City Hall Back then, it cost \$60,000 to build the depot. was used as a depot and completed in 1914.

Israelson was first female TRF mayor

by April Scheinoha Reporter

This article initially appeared in the Nov. 17, 2010, edition of The Times.

Nowadays it's not uncommon to see a woman on the Thief River Falls City Council. In the 1950s, it was until Agnes Israelson came along.

Israelson was the first female mayor of Thief River Falls from 1954 to 1956. With her election, she became the first female mayor in Minnesota. It was her second try at becoming mayor.

Israelson defeated incumbent Harry Simons, who sought a fourth term. She won 1,304 to 978.

In a 1984 article, Israelson said she knew she could do it and that she would like serving as mayor.

Israelson's six children were grown by the time she became mayor, and her husband, Emmett, was supportive of her community work.

Given the era, Israelson faced some opposition. "This town thinks women aren't alive. I should have put on a pair of overalls and gone to work – but women didn't even wear slacks then, Sometimes I felt I was being brushed aside, that they felt they had more authority. But I made up my mind that when I saw things I did not like, we would do some-



Agnes Israelson

didn't happen during her term as mayor. In the 1984 article, she said, "The clerk and I wanted the city to own the cable. But the council members felt we could not afford it, and we could not change the council's mind. It would have been a good revenue source for the city."

Israelson sought reelection; however, Dr. Orion Beich defeated her. She ran for mayor again in 1967, but she was defeated by Dr. Armyle Jacobson.

Israelson's political contributions went beyond Thief River Falls. She was the chairperson of the Pennington County Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party for two years. She also served as the volunteer chairperson for several of Coya Knutson's congressional campaigns.

Israelson also served in various organizations. She was on the board of the Pennington County Historical Society when it was founded in 1938. She also served as the president of the Eagles Auxiliary, and as president and district president of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary.

Israelson passed away Oct. 30, 1989, at Oakland Park Nursing Home in Thief River Falls. She was 93. Israelson is buried at Greenwood Cemetery in Thief River Falls.



For years, there has been a Miss Thief River Falls Pageant in Thief River Falls. Here, Miss Thief River Falls participated in a parade in downtown Thief River Falls. (Photo courtesy of the Visit Thief River Falls Facebook page)

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One of the earliest businesses in Thief River Falls was the newspaper



Thief River Falls has had a newspaper for at least 100 years. However, the Thief River Falls Times was formed in 1911 by Harvey E. Mussey, who had purchased the first newspaper, The Press, from the Evenson brothers in 1891. According to the back of this photo, it was taken in 1912. At that time, The Times was located in the 200 block of Main Ave. N.

The Times moved to its current location in 1965. Pictured are (from left) Frank Vorlicky, Leland Schuster, Harry Schuster, Homer Mussey, Lloyd Zeh, Ella Mussey and Harvey Mussey. At various points in his life, Harvey Mussey owned the Warren Sheaf and Grygla Eagle.

by David Hill
Editor

The presence of businesses is a key characteristic of any community. One of the businesses that make up our community is the Thief River Falls Times.

A newspaper has served Thief River Falls for over 130 years, but as noted in the history of the newspaper, when one delves more deeply into the subject, a newspaper is much more than a business - it is the personality of the people who live in the community, its fires, victories, and fights. It is also a reflection of the people who have the personality and determination to run the newspaper.

So, when did a newspaper start providing news in Thief River Falls? As one might suspect, there's more to the story once past the

Genesis-like structure of who owned the newspaper. But it has to be stated.

In August of 1893, James P. Meehan moved The News from Red Lake Falls to Thief River Falls. The newspaper was owned and operated by Meehan and Henry W. Lee, a local attorney who had been very active in the movement to make Thief River Falls the county seat of Red Lake County instead of Red Lake Falls, which was very controversial at the time. Lee eventually became the owner, followed by John W. Eastman in 1897.

The Thief River Falls Press was founded in 1889 by C.C. Knappen as a six-column, Republican newspaper.

In 1894, H.E. Mussey purchased The Thief River Falls Press from the Evensons, which means it was probably purchased by the

Evensons from Knappen at some point.

In 1894, the newspaper was sold to Paul S. Ware and H.W. Gahan of South Dakota. Ware sold the newspaper to Harvey Mussey.

In August of 1900, Mussey sold the newspaper to William C. Smiley who converted it from a Republican newspaper to one that supported the Farmer-Labor Party.

In July of 1901, The Press passed into the control of Bagley, Dudley and Bagley, who came from the southern part of the state.

On Jan. 1, 1902, Syd Bagley and H.L. Dudley purchased the newspaper, and on July 31, 1903, Bagley became the sole owner.

In the fall of 1903, D.A. McDonald and John A. McDonald started The Review. (During this time, there were three newspapers in Thief River Falls.)

On Feb. 11, 1905, Frank E. Packard of Crookston purchased the newspaper, then sold it on Feb. 18, 1905 to J.A. McDonald and D.A. McDonald.

On Sept. 1, 1905, the McDonalds sold the paper to Greeley Carr and Sam H. Clark.

A prime example of the axiom that what happens behind the glare of the spotlight is often more interesting than the story, in "Where Two Rivers Meet," it is stated that during the Christmas holidays of 1904, Carr and Clark were holding losing hands in a poker game. They mortgaged the paper to get more funds, but their bad luck continued. They then put up the mortgage as stakes and lost that, too.

Of course, there's no evidence that this story is true. It has, however, become part of the folklore of this newspaper.

In February of 1905, The Press and Review were consolidated by F.E. Packard.

In March of 1906, Clark and Carr sold The Press to S.W. Bagley.

On Feb. 1, 1909, Bagley sold it to Ernest Quist.

Sam Clark moved to North Dakota and bought the Ward County Reporter newspaper. In 1908 he was nominated for state insurance commissioner. In the Nov. 14, 1912 issue of the News-Press, it was reported that Sam Clark, then editor of the Jim Jam Jems in Fargo, N.D. (described as a forerunner of Playboy Magazine), had been indicted on 28 counts of sending obscene and immoral material

through interstate commerce. In July 1913, he was sentenced to two years, but was later acquitted.

In 1912, John W. Eastman, who along with Meehan had moved The News from Red Lake Falls to Thief River Falls, passed away. His wife then served as publisher with E.A. Hermanson and later Harry Schuster, editor. The newspaper was purchased by Marcus C. Cutter from Mrs. J.W. Eastman on May 1, 1912.

Cutter's announcement in the editorial section in May 1912 was brief. He said, "We do not propose at this time to burden our readers with a diatribe of what we propose to do or what we propose to accomplish." Cutter actually spent more time elaborating on his dedication to the Independent Republican Party.

The early newspapers were notable for their strong editorial stands and political endorsements. The bias often crept into the general reporting. It was not uncommon for editors of competing newspapers to write unflattering comments about competitors. In 1889, for example, an editorial in the St. Hilaire Spectator said that "C.C. Knappen and A.E. White of the Thief River Falls Press have purchased the drug store at Thief River Falls. They will probably give a box of pills as a premium to their paper. A physic and an emetic all at one price." (The box of pills known as physic was for constipation, and the newspaper presumably was the emetic, which was to induce vomiting.) This was not the first or the last time the editor of the St. Hilaire Spectator shared his thoughts.

The early newspapers were also noted for short stories such as "The Adventures of the Son of Tarzan" by Edgar Rice Burroughs (Feb. 1 to May 20, 1921), and poetry. Stories written by Arthur Conan Doyle and Willie Collins were also featured.

Thief River Falls Times

Ownership of the community's newspaper seemed to be on a path of constant change. A familiar figure reentered the picture in March of 1911. Harvey Mussey, along with the aid of his son Homer, began publishing the Thief River Falls Times. It was published until 1912. At that time, The Thief River Falls Press was located at 211 Third St. E. Mussey was a central figure in starting a rural mail delivery business, and served as postmaster. He also played a role in the history of the Grygla Eagle and Warren Sheaf.

If the name sounds familiar, it should. Mussey built the first house on the east side of the Red Lake River in Thief River Falls and consequently, the street in front of his house was named for him - Mussey Street.

In January of 1913, The Times was sold by Homer F. Mussey to Thomas H. Smith, who for the past 18 months, had conducted the Herald-Rustler at Badger.

More Consolidation

The News and The Press officially announced formation of the News-Press on May 30, 1912. According to the newspaper, E.L. Quist, past proprietor of the Thief River Falls Press, sold his entire interest to the present owner of the Thief River Falls News (Marcus C. Cutter).

On Jan. 1, 1915, the News-Press moved its office from 206 Main Ave. N. to the Dobner-Meehan block just west of the post office, with the business office at 105 Second St. and the mechanical department at 204 Main Ave. N. The two departments were separated within the building by an oak and glass partition. (There is a discrepancy as a photo states the office was at 217 Main Ave. N.)

Marcus C. Cutter died in February 1917 from an unexpected heart attack. On April 26, 1917, it was announced that the News-Press was under the new management of H.Z. Mitchell of the St. Cloud Journal-Press (editor), and Edw. Vanderluis (manager).

The Times purchases the News-Press
On Dec. 27, 1917, a news story in The News-Press announced that the newspaper had been purchased from Mitchell and Vanderluis by R.H. Ross of the Thief River Falls Times. (As noted earlier, The Times was started in March of 1911 by H.E. Mussey.)

Fire

On May 23, 1923, the Thief River Falls Times burned to the ground. "The fire yesterday, which destroyed the plant of The Times, was the second in the history of that newspaper. A little more than three years ago, while the newspaper was located in the Union block, fire swept the plant and almost entirely destroyed it. The plant, which burned this morning, has been purchased since that time and embodied all the news and up-to-date devices."

The future of the Times was in question. The plant was invoiced at \$42,000 and carried insurance of but \$12,000. Immediately following the fire, the Thief River Falls Times was published at The Tribune, another local newspaper that was operated by J.S. Arneson. The future of the newspaper became darker when former editor, T.J. Austad, 50, died on June 13, 1923 following a prolonged illness. Austad owned half interest in The Times.

The relationship between The Thief River Falls Times and The Tribune deteriorated. An editorial in The Times on Aug. 2 noted that it had been taken to task in a Tribune editorial. Apparently, The Tribune strongly disagreed with The Times' assessment of a Rural Credit Bureau policy.

The Times moved back to its shop on July 19, 1923. In announcing that move, an editorial stated the move was more about a statement of the Republican nature of The Times opposing the Democrat/Farmer-Labor nature of The Tribune.

Plea for Public Support

Financial problems must have continued to plague The Times after the fire. A plea appeared on the front page of the Aug. 16, 1923 issue asking for subscribers to subscribe for a year or more to help pay obligations that occurred as a result of rebuilding after the fire. "We must raise a large sum of money to meet the obligations incurred in rebuilding our plant and our subscribers are the only source we have to get this money from. A small amount from each one will mean a great deal now. Many have already responded very gener-

ously. Have you?"

The Mattsons

On Oct. 1, 1932, The Times was purchased by Alvin E. Mattson, C. Waldemar Mattson and Edgar N. Mattson of Warren and the Warren Sheaf. The three brothers took over the newspaper after it had been printed at the Warren Sheaf for half a year because the fire had destroyed its plant. Alvin and Waldemar moved to Thief River Falls to take over the operation of the newspaper and Edgar stayed in Warren at the Warren Sheaf to be joined three years later by his younger brother Cy.

Dreng Bjornaraa became the editor of the Thief River Falls Times, and R.H. Ross gave his farewell address and left for Madison, Wis., at once. On Sept. 1, 1927, the Thief River Falls Times was consolidated with the Thief River Falls Tribune, which had been purchased by William Dahlquist and Ludwig Roe of Montevideo two years earlier after having been published by J.S. Arneson for five years. State historical society records show that the Thief River Falls Tribune existed from Jan. 3, 1919, through Aug. 31, 1927.

After the consolidation, William Dahlquist, who had been the previous owner of The Tribune, served as editor and part owner until 1964.

During the 1930s, another newspaper appeared on the scene, the Thief River Falls Forum. Roy M. Aalbu and Harry L. Schuster were the owners. Bernice Berge was the city editor from May 1, 1934 to Jan. 5, 1935. The Forum office was located in the basement of the Elks building on LaBree Avenue.

Apparently, the Thief River Falls Forum changed hands in 1936 because the state historical society has issues of the Tri County Forum from Feb. 13, 1936 to June 3, 1943. It is believed that Jake Ulvan was editor and publisher.

Norman Holen, whose witty expressions or advice appeared in this newspaper and others in the state for many years after his passing, joined the Thief River Falls Times as city editor in 1930. Holen succeeded Arne Solem. Holen, who had edited the Marshall County Banner of Argyle for five years before moving to Thief River Falls, was also among the first group of students to graduate from the University of Minnesota School of Journalism. Holen's newspaper experience dated back to 1913 when he reported for the Minnesota Daily at the University of Minnesota. William Dahlquist remained as editor of The Times.

Holen's column Topics of The Times appeared in this newspaper and others for many years. Examples from a January 1960 edition of The Times included the following:

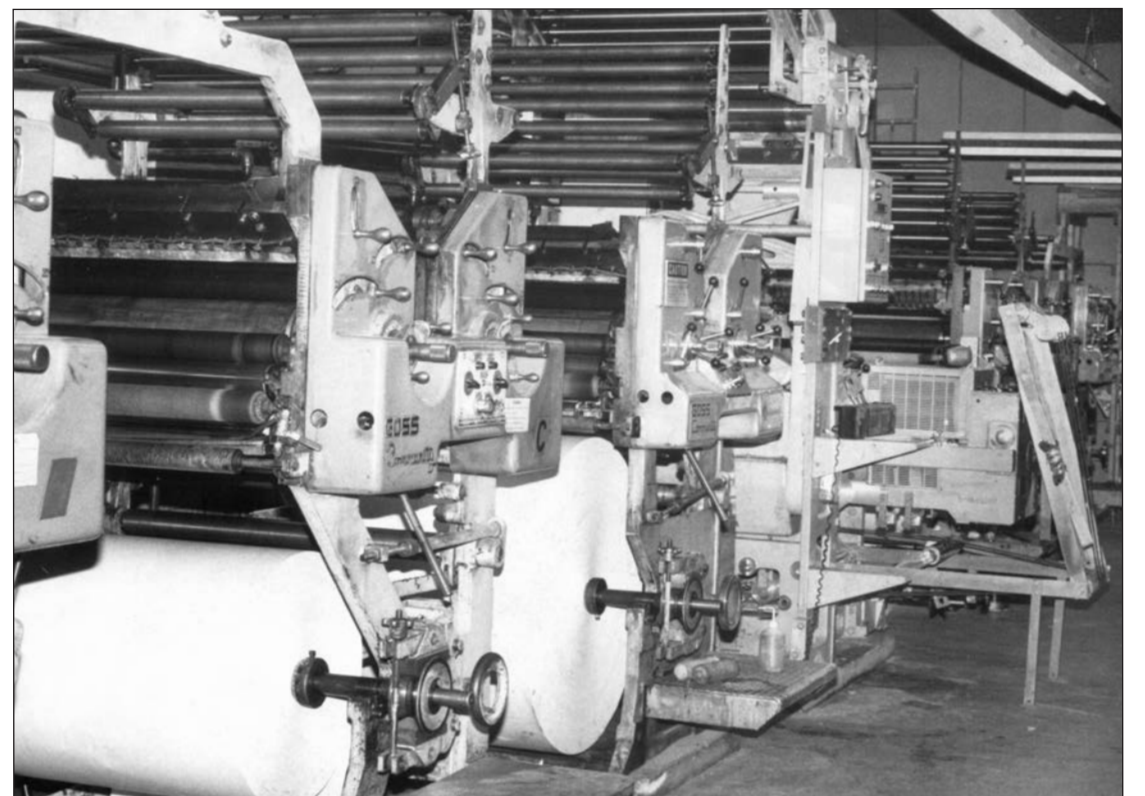
A good businessman, they tell us, hires optimists for salesmen, and pessimists to work in the credit department; or,

The reason, we read, that the public isn't concerned about atomic fallout is that so far it hasn't interfered with TV reception; and,

A Yes-man has been described as one who believes that what you don't No won't hurt you.

(During the mid-1980s Sherry LaCoursiere, a reporter for The Thief River

(Continued on Page 11)



This shows part of the large Goss Printing Press used at the Thief River Falls Times. It allows for the mass production of printed

items, such as newspapers and books. Video of the press running can be found on the TRF Times' Facebook page.

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Newspapers in Thief River Falls

(Continued from Page 10) Falls Times, began reprinting Holen's column as part of the weekly historical column. In 1987, Donna Myhrer, who had taken over duties of editor of that column, which was then known as Echoes From The Past, continued the tradition.)

In the 1940s, The Times was passed on to Waldemar Mattson's two sons, Clarence and Robert. In 1949, Clarence Mattson was the business manager of The Times, Robert Mattson, the plant superintendent, Norman A. Holen, the city editor, William Dahlquist, the editor, and Huck Olson, who is the namesake for the Huck Olson Memorial Civic Center, the sports reporter.

Olson, I've been told, made sure sports equipment was always made available to youth who couldn't afford it.

Dahlquist served as editor of The Times until 1964 when Marvin Lundin, a native of Warren, took over as editor. Lundin had worked at the Sheaf from 1954 to 1961, and had become a reporter at The Times in 1961. He eventually became the editor. He was known for his skill with a camera and pen. He too was not without a sense of humor and sharp wit. When asked to start a scholarship for high school seniors, he quipped, call it "The You Write Real Good" Scholarship.

New Home

In 1965, The Times moved to its present location at 324 Main Avenue North from LaBree Avenue (across from the Post Office). It's new location used to house the C. Gustafson & Sons business. The building was built in 1937.

The Oct. 16, 1968 issue was the first edition printed on the new offset press, and on Oct. 16, the first four-color picture was run in a special section titled "Parade of Progress."

The photo was taken during the dedication of the new

vocational-technical school (now Northland Community and Technical College). In the picture were Barbara Strobush, St. Paul Winter Carnival queen; Gov. Harold LeVander, speaker; Linda Louwagie, Princess Kay of the Milky Way; and Jan Soderstrom, home economist for the Pillsbury Company.

Other than spot color, color photos did not regularly appear in the newspaper until after 1995. In the years after 1990, technology changed much of the way newspapers are produced; yet, the large Goss printing press remains at the heart of production.

A story passed down over the years states that one of the first people to buy a newspaper with a color photo on the front page handed it back to the clerk and said, "No, I want my newspaper. This isn't my newspaper."

It should also be noted that Robert Mattson's sons, Mark and Bruce, also worked at The Times, and did so for many years. Mark was the pressman, and Bruce worked in advertising sales.

On Aug. 1, 1986, John P. Mattson and his father, E. Neil Mattson, owner of the Warren Sheaf, purchased The Times from Neil's cousins, Clarence W. Mattson and Robert C. Mattson, and from Marvin Lundin. Lundin stayed on as the editor, and Mike Lundgren, the sports editor. John P. Mattson, publisher, eventually took over ownership of The Times.

In 1968, the newspaper was printed twice a week - Mondays and Wednesdays. In 1990, The Times switched from a semi-weekly (twice a week) to a weekly newspaper, published on Wednesdays with a circulation of about 5,000. The Monday edition of The Times was combined with the Northern Minnesota Shoppers Guide, which was also owned and published at the Thief River

Falls Times. The combination of a Shopper and newspaper created a new total market coverage product they called the Northern Watch. It had a circulation of about 22,300.

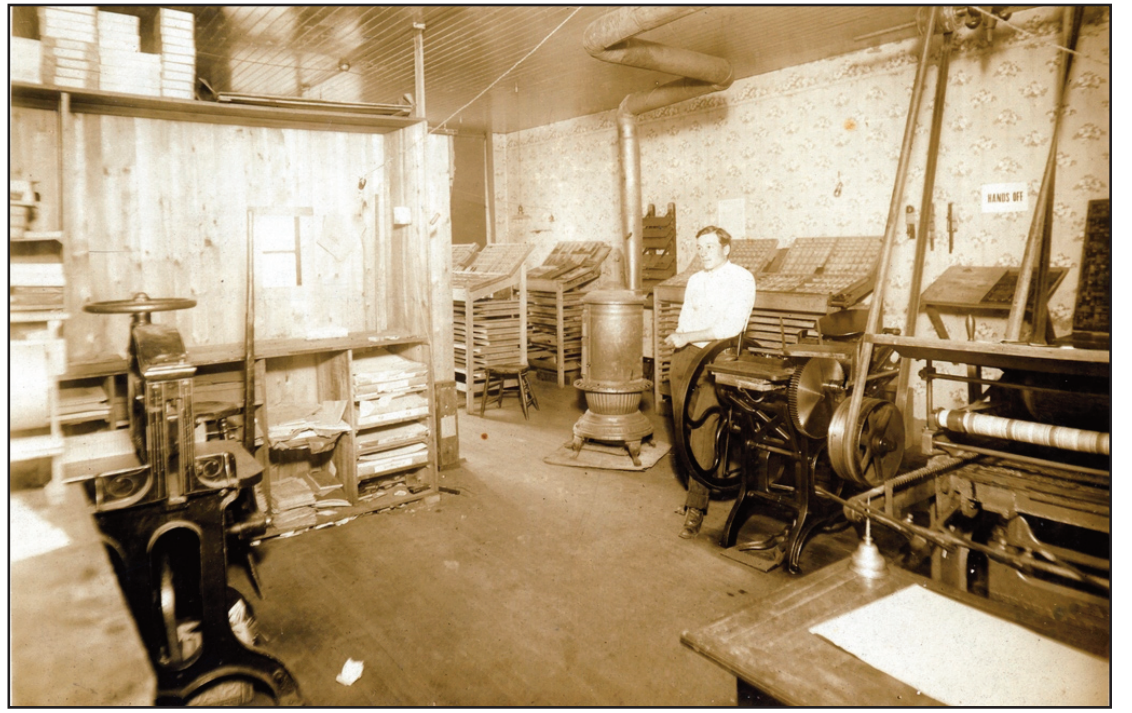
In October of 1999, David Hill, then associate editor who had joined The Times as a reporter in 1985, became editor after Lundin retired.

On July 1, 2010, John P. Mattson sold The Times to MCM Media Ltd., represented by Randy Hultgren of Crookston. Hultgren had worked at the Crookston Times and for 24 years, 17 of which as publisher. A member of the Mattson family had owned the newspaper for a period of 78 years.

When Hultgren retired, Kathy Svidal became publisher in 2017. Svidal started working in the newspaper business in January of 1982 at the Devils Lake Daily Journal. She came to The Times from GateHouse Media where she had worked her way up from circulation clerk to regional manager of nine newspapers.

Current staff at The Times include: Kathy Svidal, publisher; David Hill, editor; Dede Coltom, advertising director; Tom Williams, advertising; April Scheinoha, reporter; Scott DCamp, sports editor; Traci Jopru, graphic arts and production supervisor; Trish Jordan Stone, production; and, Lou Pederson, bookkeeping. The Print Shop employees are Doug Booth, Shane Timm, Ronald Ballman, Jesse Morales, Jon Phillips, and Amy Norberg. Working in the front office is Cindy Baldwin.

As you may have concluded by now, a great many people have owned, worked at or worked for the Thief River Falls Times. The success and long life of the newspaper is directly attributable to these people and the subscribers.



Thief River Falls Times print shop in 1910

IF YOU TRADE OUT OF TOWN AND I TRADE OUT OF TOWN, WHAT WILL BECOME OF OUR TOWN?
The Dollar You Spend in Thief River Falls Will "Come Home To Boost."

The Times "TRADE-AT-HOME" Campaign

Read these articles with care. They may present something you hadn't thought of before. Patronize the people who's ads. are here. They are your neighbors and will treat you right. The money you spend with them stays in circulation in Thief River Falls.

Vast changes in the newspaper industry

by David Hill
Editor

April suggested that I add a personal note about the changes I've experienced at The Times in the over 36 plus years I've worked here. Was that a slight dig at my age? Well, one would expect a lot of changes to have taken place in that many years, and there have been a lot of changes, so I'll take it as a challenge to present an explanation of what we had to do so that future historians will understand.

I still remember my first day. Having come from a college where we did much of our work on computers, I was surprised to see that other than the Compugraphic (typesetting system) in the back, there wasn't a computer in sight and no one, absolutely no one, was interested in getting one. In fact, computers wouldn't start appearing in our office until 1988 or later - more likely the 1990s.

In my early years, on press days, which were Mondays and Wednesdays, the office was thick with cigarette smoke, and the noise from clacking electric and manual typewriters was deafening. There were no dividers in the office. It was an open office, and on press days, several people would be at the front counter waiting for their newspaper. I've often described it as feeling like I was working in a fish bowl.

The days of hot lead and 40- to 45-pound plates were over by the time I arrived. Bob Mattson, one of the owners at that time, however,

would occasionally do some specialty work that required use of hot metal typesetting. He really seemed to enjoy doing that. I believe that machine is at Peter Engelstad Pioneer Village.

I'm sure my grandfather, who was a pressman for the Huron Plainsman in South Dakota, could have told me some stories about those days, but he died when I was 8. The only thing I remember from that time was my grandmother chastising Grandpa about coming into the house all covered with ink and plopping down in his favorite chair. The job was much more physically demanding back then. I do remember hearing stories from Marv Lundin, the editor at the time, and others in the office of terrible days when plates accidentally fell to the floor. I can only imagine the scramble and anxiety this created.

Computers, of course, played a significant role in changing the course and future of newspapers.

At The Times, the introduction of computers meant significant change. Even the Compugraphic soon became history. By way of explanation, newspaper reporters and editors would type their stories and then take the corrected copy to the back shop, where the stories would be retyped by typesetters into the Compugraphic, which was an early computer that was about the size of a narrow refrigerator.

Without going into too much more detail, detail which I'm no longer certain, the final product was column-wide strips of paper that would be trimmed, run through a waxing machine, which was about the size of a typewriter, and placed on a page. This would be done by a compositor who would organize and place columns and advertisements into logical shapes on the page.

A photograph of this "finished" page would then be taken with a large camera in the back of the office and the film processed to create a negative. That negative was then placed on a photo-sensitive plate and exposed to intense light. All remaining photo-sensitive substances on the plate were washed away as it was processed. The plate was then dried and placed on the rollers of the Goss Community Press.

With the introduction of computers, this entire process was eliminated. There was a transition phase, but the page now goes directly from computer to plate. Change? Definitely.

I'm much more familiar with the changes that would take place in newspaper photography. During my career, I spent many long hours in the dark room. It wasn't much longer after I arrived at The Times that we went from developing photos in baths (developer, fixer and a stop bath), to a print machine that was again the size of a typewriter and had rubber rollers that threaded photo sensitive paper through baths of developer and fixer.

What's a darkroom? Our darkroom itself was an unventilated room the size of a

closet that was lit only with a red safety light. We worked with photo sensitive paper and film that could be easily damaged by light other than a red safety light. As you might well imagine, the darkroom could get very hot and stuffy in the summer. The darkroom also smelled strongly of the unintentional mixing of developer and fixer that occurred in the process.

While I've always felt the process of adjusting photos with an enlarger and running them through chemical baths was a much more creative or artistic process, I was easily swayed by technology and a strong desire to get out of the hot, stuffy darkroom. I was disappointed early on, but not so later as improvements were made to the computer programs and cameras.

You should know that prior to doing everything on computers, we also rolled our own rolls of film. We'd order 100-foot long rolls of film - usually ISO 400 black and white. Once again in the darkroom but this time in total darkness, I'd cut the film into lengths or strips that were between 27 and 35 frames (any longer and the film would jam in the canister) or so long and put them into black plastic, reusable canisters with screw tops. We would carry the canisters around in our pockets or in containers taped onto the straps of our cameras. With this kind of access, we could quickly feed film into our single lens reflex (SLR) cameras. Of course, rolling our own film meant developing our own film. This meant spending more time in the darkroom. Wet strips of film were hung by clothespins to dry from wires stretching across the back wall. A heavy paper clip also had to be attached to the other end of the film to prevent the negative strip from curling.

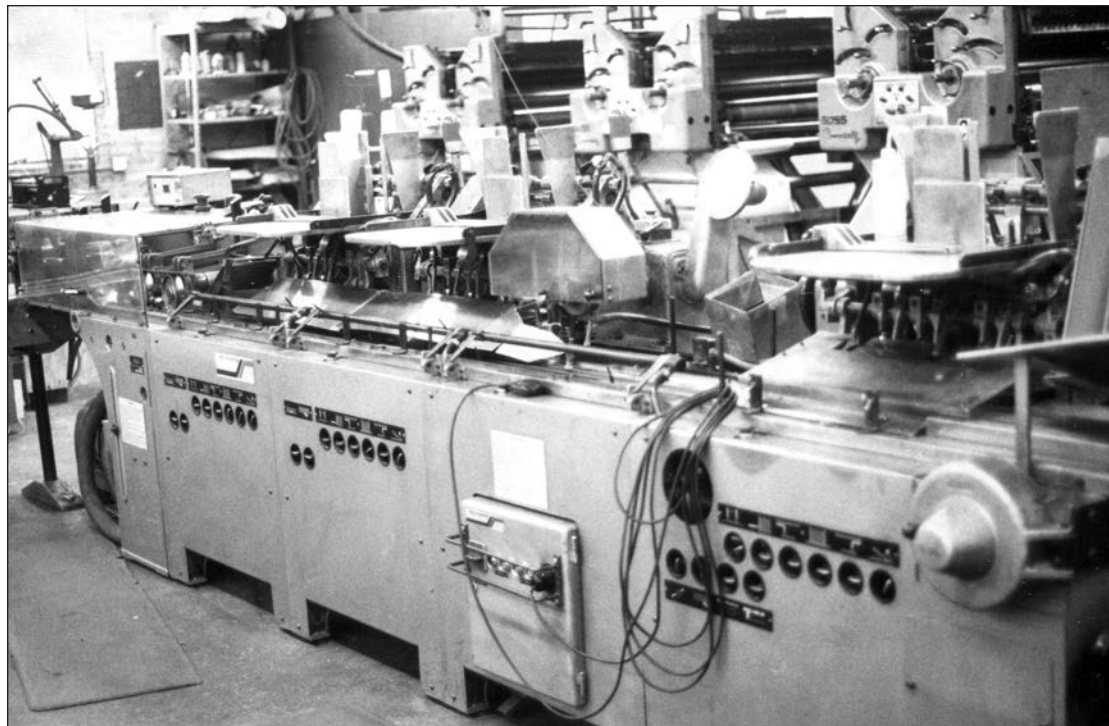
And then came digital photography, and it came without film or darkrooms.

We considered the first cameras technologically amazing, but the cameras improved so quickly the "new" cameras would be considered obsolete a short time later. One of the major advantages of digital cameras, however, was that images could be seen on an LED screen on the back of the camera immediately after the photo was taken. In the past, of course, we had to rely on our own skill to make sure there was an image on the negative when we developed the film in the darkroom hours later.

The computer programs we would come to use with digital cameras were also important. No longer were we working in darkrooms where we were breathing fumes, and our hands were in chemicals.

I've touched upon some of the many changes, and as you can surmise by now, a labor intensive process that required many more people was forever changed in just a relatively short period of time.

I'm told more changes are on the way, but I could have guessed that. Change and recording change is part of what newspapers do.



This inserter is still in use at The Times. It does exactly what it is called - inserts. It inserts such things as advertising pamphlets and flyers into the newspaper.



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St. Pauli Church celebrates its 125th anniversary

by David Hill
Editor

Wherever people have moved, they have taken with them their customs, traditions and religion - especially religion.

Thief River Falls celebrated its 125th anniversary this year, and so too have some area churches. St. Pauli Church, which is located on the flat plains of northwest Minnesota south of Thief River Falls, celebrated its 125th anniversary on Aug. 1. "When we reflect on those faithful souls who founded St. Pauli," wrote Faye Auchenpaugh in a history of the church, "we can only guess as to why the church was not organized until 1895, when they had been homesteading here since the late 1870s." Auchenpaugh did mention though that there were few pastors in the area.

What is known is that Mrs. Gust (Marie Pederson) Gustafson recorded that the first annual meeting was held in the Braaten schoolhouse on Jan. 3, 1895. Rev. Evenson was chairman and Pete Paulson was secretary. During that first meeting, the constitution of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church was read and adopted. St. Pauli was chosen as the name for the new congregation, which was to be served by Rev. I.T. Aastad, the pastor of what is now Trinity Lutheran Church in Thief River Falls.

(Auchenpaugh discovered that St. Pauli Church is the Norwegian possessive form for St. Paul's Church. Auchenpaugh has prepared a more complete and interesting explanation in the history of the church.)

Records show that "With help from members' pledges and a \$100 gift for lumber from their Ladies Aid, the church held its first services in its present home in 1901. This prairie house of worship has been home to succeeding generations of native Norwegians and their friends, and it still thrives with a vital, caring congregation.

"Though there have been several updates and renovations since 1901, the feel of the place still recalls the days when services were exclusively in Norwegian. St. Pauli cherishes its heritage and lovingly maintains its cemetery, a frequent desti-

nation for persons doing research into their own family history."

Why here?
What Auchenpaugh wrote may explain the reasons so many other churches settled in the region. The Homestead Act of 1862 opened up land to immigrant settlers who promised to farm and live on the land for five years. One year later, the signing of the Old Crossing Treaty opened about 11 million acres for settlement in northeastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota. These two opportunities coincided with the harsh conditions being experienced by the rapidly expanding populations of Norway and Sweden.

Almost as soon as settlers began to settle the area, churches began to be organized. "Once built," wrote Auchenpaugh, "the church quickly became the heart of the community."

Why so many churches?
Auchenpaugh explained that "Coming from a nominally united, state church in Norway, Lutheran Norwegians in America encountered a new religious environment. Not only was there no established state church, but church and state were separated. Unaccustomed to religious freedom, Norwegian Lutherans quickly developed their own religious organizations and split into synods reflecting differing theological viewpoints rooted in both the Norwegian and American cultural landscapes."

Not surprisingly, theological conflict accompanied religious diversity. Auchenpaugh explained that the discord and evolution was evident in the churches established in the villages of St. Hilaire, Goodridge and Thief River Falls. By 1885, there were six churches in St. Hilaire (two Norwegian Lutheran, one Catholic, one Mission, one Swedish and one Methodist. By 1910, there were 13 churches in Thief River Falls: Seventh-Day Adventist, Swedish Baptist, St. Bernard's Catholic, Evangelical Swedish Lutheran, German Evangelical Lutheran, Huge Lutheran, Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran, United Lutheran, Zion Lutheran, First Methodist Episcopal, Presbyterian, Scandinavian Gospel Mis-



This is an early picture of the St. Pauli Lutheran Church congregation.

sion House, and Salvation Army. When Goodridge was built in 1915, there were two churches - Nazareth Norwegian Lutheran and St. Anne's Catholic.

Other Churches
Where Two Rivers Meet has a rather extensive history of churches in the community. Some of the first churches established in what would become Thief River Falls included:

First Baptist Church established in 1883 or 1884. St. Bernard's Church - although missionaries were present, the first church known as St. Bernard's was erected at 303 Duluth Ave. S. in 1896. Evangelical Covenant Church was in progress as early as 1887. The Scandinavian Mission Church was established in 1906. The Scandinavian Evangelical Church was established in 1901. It is part of the history of the Evangelical Free Church.

St. John Lutheran

Church was formally organized in 1895.

Redeemer Lutheran Church, organized as Svenska Evangeliska Park Ridge Forsamlingen Church on June 11, 1887.

Seventh-Day Adventist was established in the late 1800s.

Our Trinity Lutheran

Church is a result of three congregations coming together in 1919.

United Methodist Church began as a Sunday School established in 1885 by Miss Helen Wallin. In 1886, James Thomas, a Sunday School missionary, worked with Wallin and organized the first church.

Zion Lutheran Church was first organized as the Thief River Falls Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church on Jan. 7, 1890.

Every church has its own story of how it came to be. Be sure to check out the records and history of your church.



Located south of Thief River Falls, St. Pauli Lutheran Church has provided a sound foundation for its congregation for over 125 years.



As part of Dairy Day festivities in the past, a 1955 Dairy Day Process Barbara Droppo is pictured.

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The flour and saw mills in Thief River Falls? The back of this photo only states that this is normal water in the early days. It could also be of the mill in St. Hilaire.



Logging was one of the primary industries in the community of Thief River Falls during the early days of its history. According to the caption on the back of this photo, this is a scene on the river looking north from Third Street. All these logs were for the Thief River Falls mill. All logs that came down on the other side of the boom went to the St. Hilaire and Crookston mills.



Without ditches, much of the land in northwestern Minnesota would be unfarmable for all but dry years. According to the back of this photo, this is the Arpin Weiland Walking Dredge taken during the time of the big drainage project northeast of Thief River Falls.



This, apparently, is LaBree Avenue looking north from First Street in the early days of Thief River Falls. The small part of a porch and building on the extreme left was a hotel. The caption on the back of the photo also asks readers to take note of the Hotel Ogahmah (I always thought it was Ogemah), which was moved to Thief River Falls from St. Hilaire.



The photographer took this picture from a higher vantage point. It appears to be taken during the 1950s during a busy event in downtown Thief River Falls.



Readers may remember this incarnation of this undated aerial photo. Lincoln High School, which is pictured in

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There was no caption on this photo, but it obviously shows the American Legion Band. Thief River Falls did have a very active band. Though an American Legion band no longer exists here, the community still does have an active community band.

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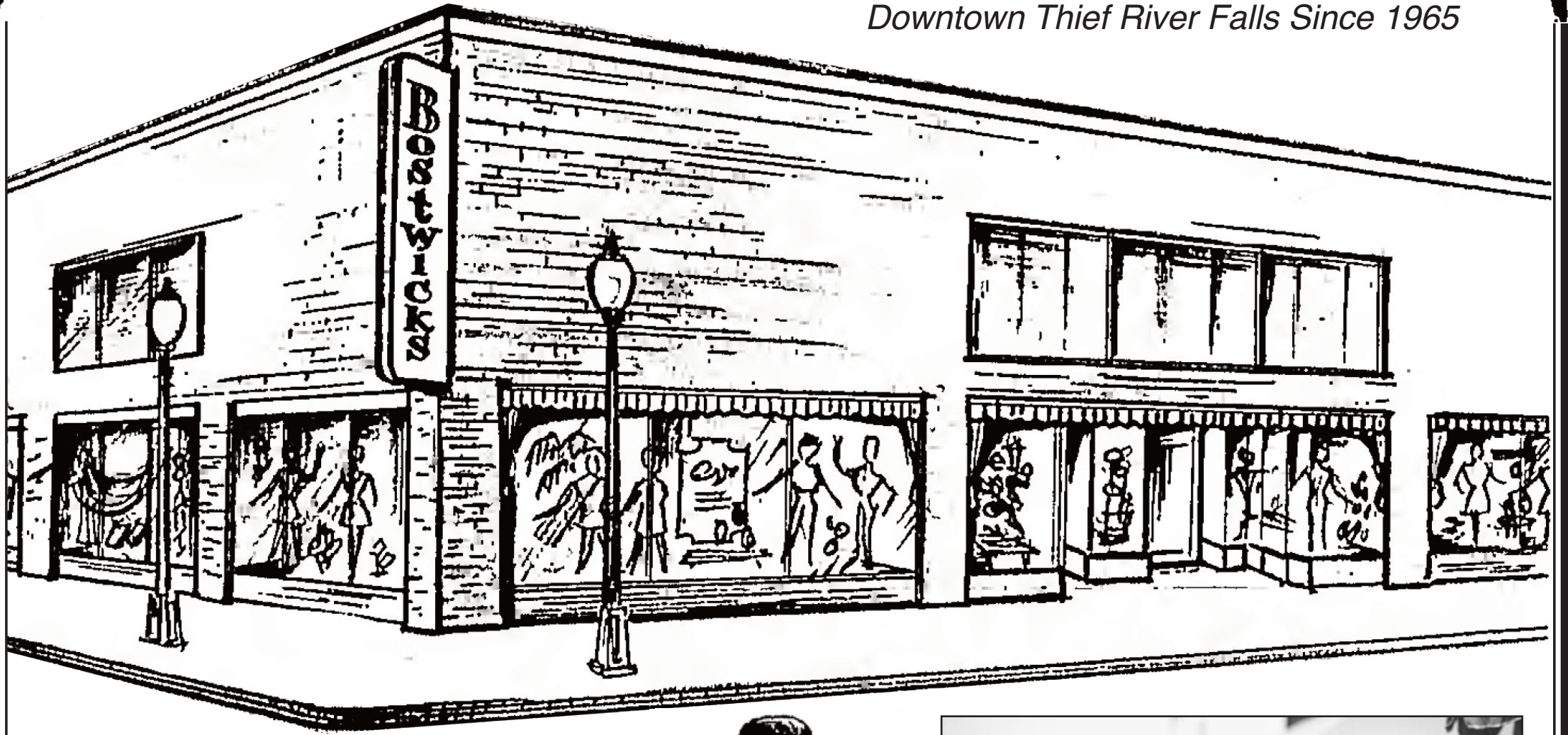
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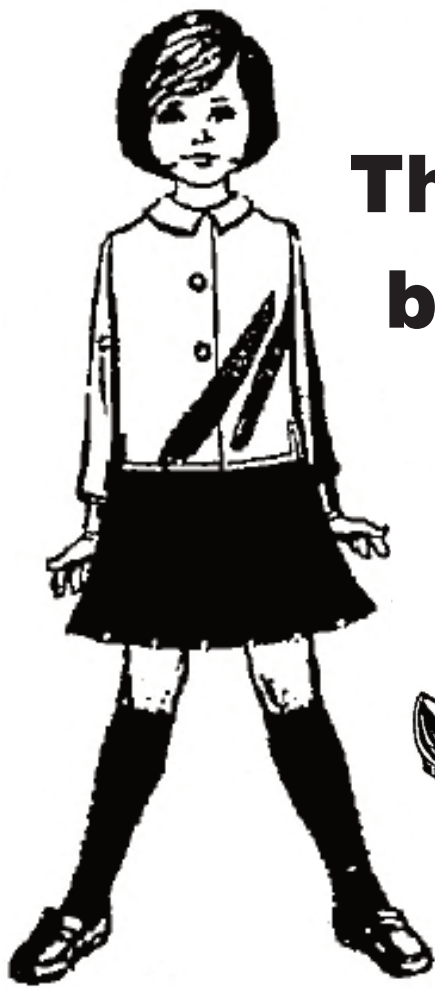
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How the vision of a Multi-Events Center changed

by David Hill
Editor

A Thief River Falls Centennial edition that appeared in the Thief River Falls Times included a story of a groundbreaking event in the community - the construction of a Multi-Events Cultural Complex. Twenty-five years later, although it's much different than envisioned, the dreams remain and it's a significant driver of economic development in the region.

Phase I of the project was expected to include a football and soccer stadium with a 400-meter track, a softball and baseball complex, five soccer and football practice fields, a four-court tennis facility, a wellness center, locker rooms, concourse, access roads and parking. Phases II and III of the regional facility were, at that time, still in the planning stages, but expected to include a 16,900 square-foot recreational Aquatic Center with a 25-yard six-lane swimming pool, water slide and indoor and outdoor wading pool areas.

At its inception, needs assessments were conducted. Some of the stated needs also included indoor and outdoor tennis courts, outdoor and indoor running tracks, ballfields for Little League baseball, an indoor basketball court, weight training rooms and more. A proposal dated April 1994 listed major components as a field house, for health, wellness, athletics, jogging, volleyball, workshops, trade shows and convention; a conference and seminar area, a Native American Cultural Center, a stadium and track; and, of course, baseball and softball fields and tennis courts.

During the groundbreaking ceremony 25 years ago, then-Mayor Bob Reeve said "It's the beginning of the next century. It will provide for the activity needs of our citizens, citizens of the regional community, and complement the businesses in the community."

The construction and operation of the facility was to be overseen by a Joint Powers Board that consisted of the City of Thief River Falls, School District 564, Pennington County, and Northland Community and Technical College.

Today, the City of Thief River Falls, Northland Community and Technical College, and School District 564 remain on the operations committee, while the county dropped its participation for a number of reasons. The name of the facility also changed from Multi-Events Cultural Center to Multi-Events Center.

These changes reflect signs of the times, and pressures on budgets and resources.

The facility itself, however, remains a vital part of the infrastructure of the community. What does it include today?

Mike Biermaier, a member of the operations committee and representative of School District 564, said there are two baseball fields - one of which is the Northland baseball field, and seven softball fields, and accompanying structures such as shelters, a playground, concession stand and restrooms. There's also green space being used for soccer

fields. Of course, there's also the football field and track, stadium seating, and Multi-Events Center, which includes locker rooms, and interestingly, most, if not all, of the mechanical equipment that would be needed to operate an aquatic center.

The facility is being used regularly for football games, track meets, baseball and softball games, and in recent years for cross country meets and Special Olympics because it has concessions, open space, locker rooms and restrooms. It occasionally gets used for state and regional tournaments. One year, it hosted a state outdoor archery tournament, so it is living up to its billing as a true multi-events center.

Several changes have taken place at the Multi-Events Center over the years. A couple of years ago, a paved multi-use trail was completed, drainage tiles were put in on a softball and baseball field, and a tree planting program was implemented.

Biermaier said there are plans to enclose the dugouts on fields 4 and 5. He said they put an effort into doing something every year.

Who knows, in the near future an aquatic center might be located at the Center.

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