

FOLDAHL TOWNSHIP

MARSHALL COUNTY, MINNESOTA

1883-1983



The Restored Larson Mill At Old Mill State Park

Foldahl Centennial Worship Service

June 5, 1983
10:00 A. M.



Master of Ceremonies:

Ervin Strandquist

Welcome:

Foldahl Town Board

"America the Beautiful":

Audience

Norwegian Song:

Palma Broten

Scripture Reading and Prayer:

Glen Jensen

Song:

Reuben Haugen and Bill Wagner

Sermon:

Pastor Leland Underbakke

Song:

Reuben Haugen and Bill Wagner

"What a Friend We Have In Jesus":

Audience

"How Great Thou Art"

Audience

Benediction:

Pastor Underbakke

Foldahl Centennial Afternoon Program

2:00 P. M.

Master of Ceremonies:

Ron Haupt

Welcome:

Foldahl Town Board

Song:

David and Connie Strandquist

Act:

Riverside 4-H Club

Music:

Brotens

"Sharlie Act":

Mylo Carlson

Musical Number:

Walfred Larson

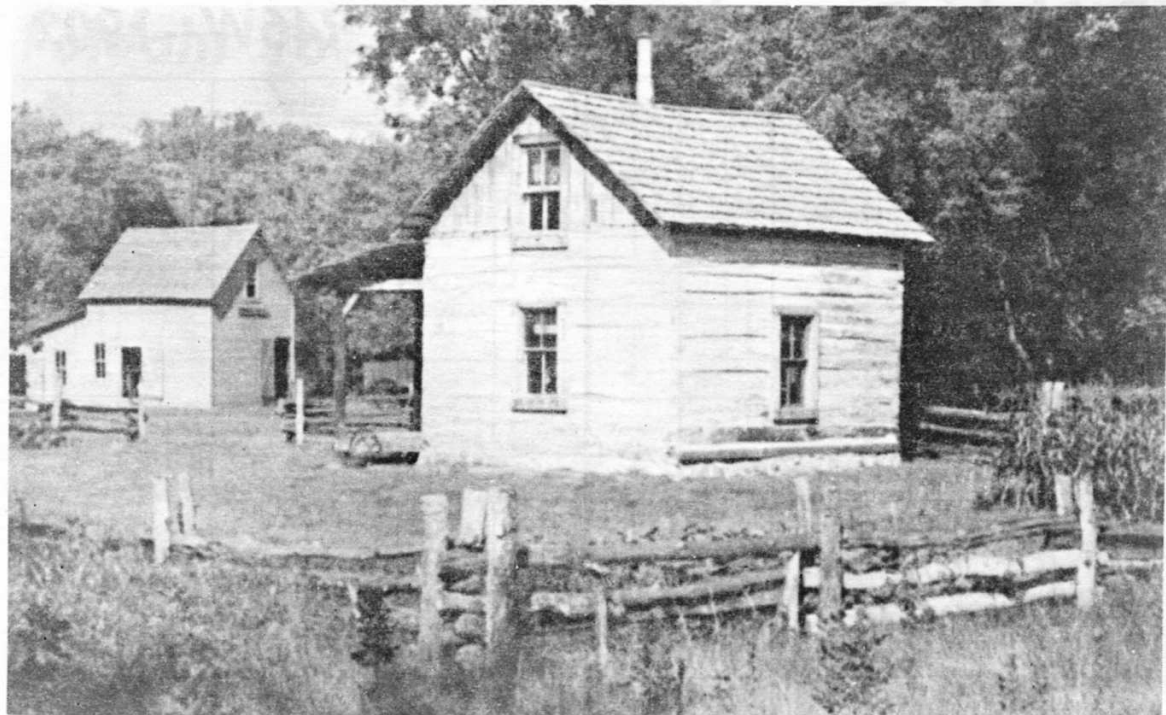
Songs:

Senior Belles

Norwegian Song:

Michelle Waterworth

Announcements:



View of Larson Mill and cabin at Old Mill State Park

Already shrouded in lost and forgotten histories, Marshall County's restored old mill stands as a monument to the hardy pioneers who came to this county with no guarantee of success or even of a living except by their perseverant nature and plucky spirit.

Marshall County's restored old mill, however, is not the original mill. History of the present mill, always powered by steam, goes back to about 1896, while the original water-powered mill can be traced to 1886. Both mills were erected and operated by members of the Larson family.

Lars Larson Sr. came to Foldahl Township in 1883, two years after his son, Lars Larson Jr., came to America and a year after his son, John, came to this country. Lars Larson Jr. homesteaded in section 4, Foldahl Township in 1882.

The original old mill was erected by Lars Larson Sr. in 1886 on the Middle River north of the present park shelter and about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile down the river from the present restored mill. It was this mill that was operated by water power, the stones of which are still in existence. These stones were hand made from field stone with a band of iron around each. Mr. Larson had it rigged up to power a shingle maker also.

The dam was made by placing two logs across the river and putting boards up and down. This method proved unsuccessful, because the head of water would cave out the dam and wash it away.

A flash flood containing two walls of water rushed down the Middle River in 1888 (one source says this flood was on July 4, 1892), completely submerging the dam and much of the mill. Carl Lindstrom, now living in Goodridge, says one of the Larsons entered the mill just before flood waters washed the structure down stream. He finally threw out a rope

to those on shore, who tied the end to a tree on shore with the current swinging the mill onto the shore.

After this calamity, Lars Larson Sr. built a wind-powered mill, using the same machinery, located near the present park flag pole. This did not prove a success and shortly it was blown down.

Lars then rebuilt his mill in 1889, again water powered, in section 3, Foldahl Township as he thought this section would be open for homestead. This was about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile up the river from the original location. His son, John, also started a mill at the same location using steam power from the Case engine A359, which is now restored and operating the mill.

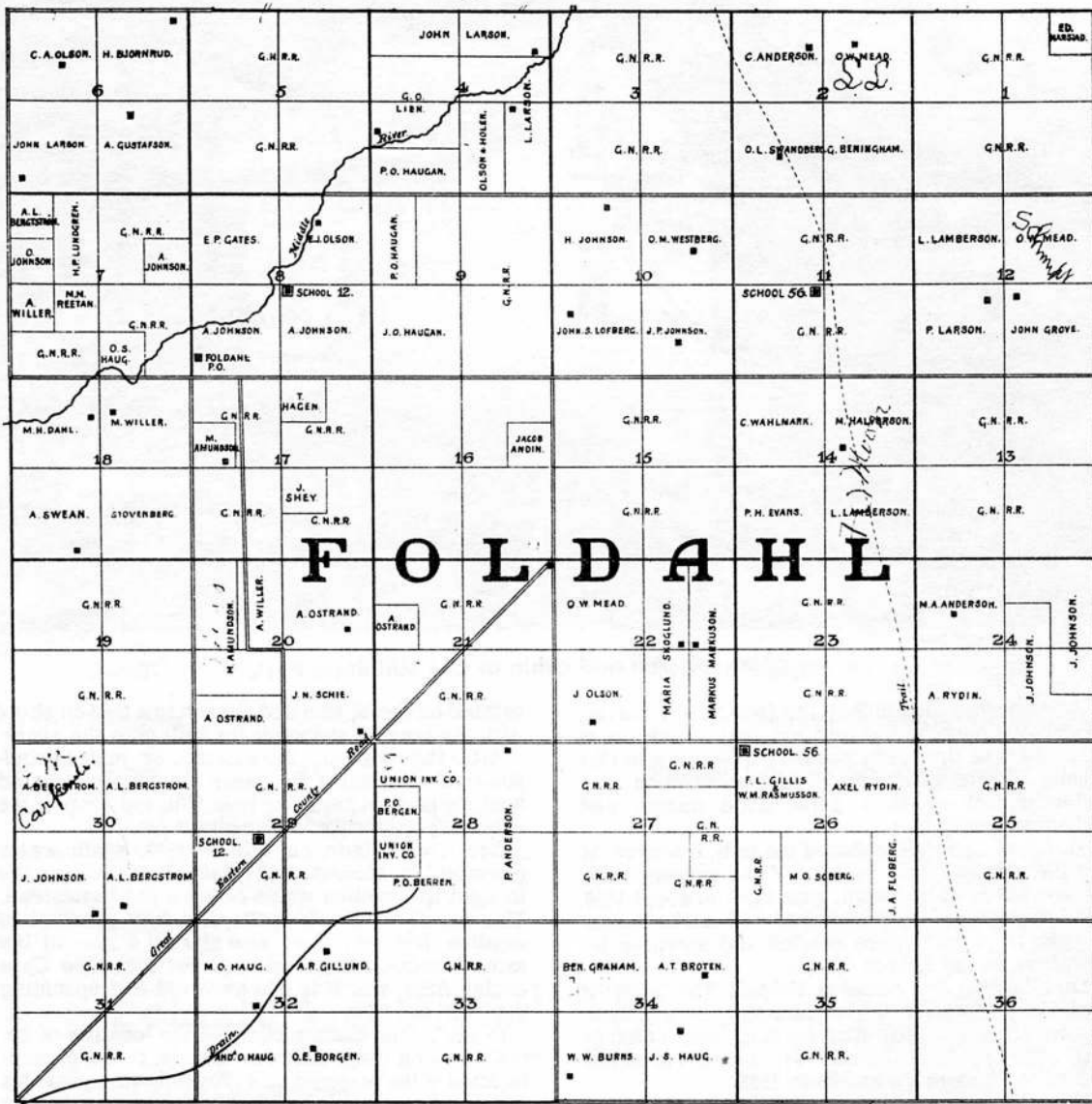
In 1897, John Larson changed the location of his mill, moving it downstream $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, to the present location of the restored mill. The following year, his father also moved his water-powered mill to a location adjacent and to the north of his son's mill. Evidences of his mill can still be observed.

The pencil sketch on the cover of this booklet is the way that Levi Larson, grandson of Lars Larson Sr., remembers the mill of his grandfather in the 1890's. This is substantially the same mill, although twice moved, that was first erected on the Middle River in 1886.

John Larson secured French burrstones about 1896 and set them up without a building until he erected the present mill. These stones came from Grand Forks, where they had been replaced by more modern rollers.

The Case company has verified that the restored engine 359, which was used to power John's original mill, was made in August 1878. This 8 horsepower engine is almost identical with the first Case engine made in 1869, the famous old number 1 steam engine. The story goes that it was purchased in

Foldahl Township, T156N, R46W--1902



Waseca and hauled overland to Argyle by a Dahlgren. The Larsons purchased the engine second hand. The historical society purchased the engine for \$75 from the Larson brothers, Levi, Oscar and Walfred, grandsons of the original Larson. The engine was located just south of the now missing house and was moved when the Larsons sold the land to the state for a park in 1937.

Pieces of the engine, moved several times, were relocated, rebuilt and refashioned by Ernie Jewell and Albert Skoglund in 1957-58. These two men put the parts back together, found what was originally wrong with the engine, which had not been used for 60 years, and put it in good running order.

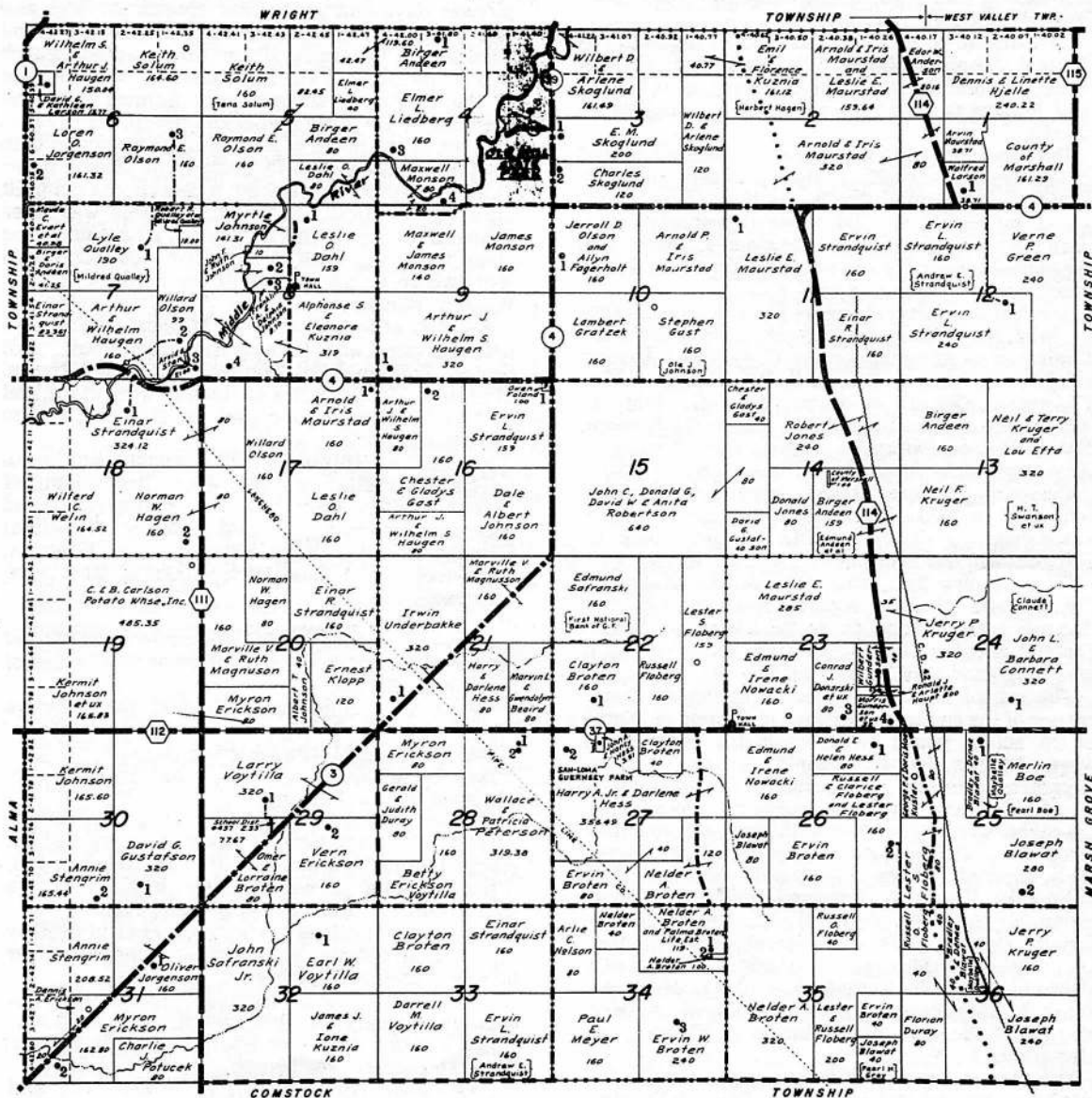
This Case was not used for too long, as it couldn't hold steam and was replaced by an Ames engine. About 1914, the mill was bought by Lars P. Larson.

cousin of John. A few years later, it was purchased by Carl Green, who sold it shortly after to the Skoglund brothers, who owned and operated the grist mill until 1937, when it was sold to the state. In 1931, the Skoglunds operated the mill with a gas engine.

Marshall County's old mill was used mostly to grind rye flour, because the old timers seemed to prefer it. The grinding charge was 50 cents a sack regardless of size. Charley Skoglund reports many people would sew about 1 or 1½ feet extra to a 2½-bushel sack to be sure to get as much grinding as possible for 50 cents.

When restoration work started on the old mill in 1952, the only thing holding up the entire building was the steel shaft. The house, located to the northeast of the mill, deteriorated so badly, it had to be

Foldahl Township, T156N, R46W--1978



destroyed about 1949. Plans are being made to restore the house from funds received from those buying souvenir bags of old mill ground flour.

After considerable agitation, the state, by executive order, bought the site for \$11,000 in 1937. To this, the federal government, under the WPA program, added \$17,000 for construction of the present buildings. WPA added \$11,107 in 1940 for additional work.

One of the first to suggest the site be turned into a state park was Earle A. Barker of Bemidji, president of the Northwestern Minnesota Historical Society, when he talked to the Marshall County Historical Society picnic and pageant in 1934. He made the suggestion to O. M. Mattson, editor of the

Sheaf, and Judge B. B. Brett, president of the county historical society.

Although Middle River State Park was originally selected as the name, it was changed to Old Mill State Park in 1951 to prevent confusion in similar names of a township and village in Marshall County. This act of the legislature also gave the park legislative status.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48

Foldahl Township was organized February 27th and 28th, 1883. The petition of Otto S. Haug and others to have Township 156, Range 46 organized as a township was granted and named Foldahl, later spelled Foldahl.

The first town meeting was held at the house of Amund Johnson March 20th, 1883, with Otto S. Haug, Amund Johnson and Ole Haugen as judges and Martin Gunderson and Knud P. Langrud as clerks.

Purposes of town meetings for the laying out roads and maintaining them, contracting for bridges, destroying weeds, setting of poll tax, assessing real estate and personal property taxes, care for needy families and the elderly. There were three health districts and four road districts, with a supervisor for each district.

Town officers in early years were: Clerks — Otto S. Haug, M. O. Haug, Deputy, and John O. Haugen; Chairmen — Amund Johnson, G. O. Lien, Andrew Bergstrom, Hans O. Bjornrud, Pit Anderson, Vice Chairman, Ole J. Westman, Levi G. Johnson, Emanuel Andeen; Constables — John G. Johnson, Eskil Andeen, Herman Dahl, Wm. Langhoff; Assessors — A. Bergstrom, Hans O. Bjornrud.

Personal property taxes were paid by the following in 1883: Nils Dahl, John Dahl, Martin Gunderson, O. S. Haug, Ole Haugen, John O. Haugen, Amund Johnson and Martin Willer.

On February 28th, 1883, the petition of Amund Johnson and others to organize a school district in Township 156, Range 46, to be known as School District Number 12, Eastern Star, was granted. It was also known as Bergstrom School.

The school house was located in the northeast corner of the southwest quarter of Section 29. Some of the school board members in the early years were: Andrew Hogberg, John O. Haugen, Andrew Bergstrom, Anton Gillund, John Johnson, Andrew Skoglund, Christ Anderson and Frank Johnson.

Teachers from the year 1916 until consolidation were: Ethel O. Reily, Anna Wilson, A. Ruth Koepp, G. S. Metvedt, Laura Hill, Dagny Johnson, Rose Lehmkuhl, Emma A. Forslund, Helen Gustafson, Helen E. Peterson, Olive H. M. Broten, Grace Schultz, Delores M. Potucek, Hazel Henneby, Mrs. Dan Tollefson, Mrs. Astrid Backlin, Mrs. Della Vansickle, Rose E. Gustafson, Violet L. Holmaas, Janet M. McGregor, Mrs. Janet M. Zutz, Mrs. Marilyn A. Bennett, Mrs. Clarice A. Floberg and Mrs. Edna F. Nygaard.

The area in this school district was later divided into three more districts, namely District Number 56, District Number 106 and District Number 162. School District Number 56, July 28, 1890, consisting of most of east half of township, Sections 1-2-3-10-11-12-13-14-15. There were two school houses in the district. One in southeast corner of northwest quarter Section 11, known as Indian Ridge School, District Number 56 North. The other on southeast corner of Section 22, known as Melin School, District Number 56 South. School District Number 106, July 12, 1905, consisting of Sections 4-5-6-7-8-9-16-17-18, known as Erik Olson School and located in northeast quarter Section 8. School District Number 162, Woodland School, also known as Melin School, former School District Number 56 South, consisting of northeast quarter Section 21, all of Sections 22-23-24-25-26-27-E $\frac{1}{2}$ 28-E $\frac{1}{2}$ 34-35-36. School was located on southeast corner of Section 22.

Through the years, the schools served as com-

munity centers. Christmas programs and other interesting activities were provided, which added much to the social life of the communities.

Foldahl does not have a church building. In pioneer days and years later church services and Sunday School were conducted in homes and school houses. The beginning of the Alma Baptist Church was in the home of Mr. and Mrs. A. Andin. Several of the Foldahl residents were influential in the founding of the Alma Lutheran Church. On October 12, 1880, at the home of Martin Gunderson and with Pastor C. Saugstad as Chairman, the Middle River Congregation was organized. A church was not built until 1893 in Alma Township. Its name was later changed to Alma Lutheran Church. This church was given to the Marshall County Historical Society in 1961, where it now stands in the Settlers Square, Warren, Minnesota.

A group affiliated with the Mission Church also held services and Ladies Aids in homes, with pastors coming from Warren or Viking Mission Churches. Many articles of clothing were made and sent to Missions or sold and the money given to Missionary work.

Former residents of Foldahl Township, who are in full-time Christian service, are: Glen Solum of Fountain Valley, California; Curtis Solum of Grand Junction, Colorado; Ronald Qualley of Miami Springs, Florida; Jerry Strandquist of Kenosha, Wisconsin; and Leland Underbakke of Moorhead, Minnesota.

1881 — Foldahl Post Office located in southwest corner of Section 8. (Amund Johnson was owner of south half, Section 8.)

1882 — First child born in Foldahl was Theodore Willer.

1883 — Foldahl Township organized.

1884 — M. Gunderson and Ole Haugen were assessed for Real Estate.

1886 — Original Old Mill built by Lars Larson, Sr.

1888 — Flood washed away mill. Lars Larson rescued some parts and rebuilt at another location.

1897 — John Larson changed location of the steam mill and built at the present place.

1897 — Road officers were appointed to destroy the Russian thistle, wild mustard and all other nuisance and noxious weeds.

Meetings to find best place for moving the county bridge across the Middle River in Section 7.

1898 — May 31st, Town Board to meet in Warren to make contract for bridge.

1899 — June 17th, Supervisors of Comstock and Foldahl held a special meeting to petition for laying out road between Comstock and Foldahl.

July 29th, Supervisors met to consider petition to lay out ditch east of Indian trail.

1900 — May 11, Supervisors of Alma and Foldahl met to consider town line between Alma and Foldahl. Declared to be public highway.

June 5th, County Auditor notified Supervisors to open road (Great Eastern) southwest corner of Section 31 to southwest corner of Section 15 north to northwest corner of Section 15. To be maintained as a public highway.

December 6th, Considered road which had been worked and traveled for more than 10 years between Foldahl and Wright to be a public highway.

1902 — January 11th, Town divided into three health districts.

August 16th, Contract let for continuing Great

Eastern.

1908 — March 27th, One day poll tax, 5 mills on land property.

1909 — June 28th, Decided to buy one grader for \$100.00.

1911 — May 31st, Contract to Andrew Skoglund and Oscar Floberg to grade between Sections 26 and 34.

1914 — April 11th, Christ Anderson was road overseer. Wages set at \$2.50 per day.

June 18th, Let out road work contract to Andrew Skoglund to furnish the power to run the grader at \$2.00 per mile between Sections 17 and 18.

November 6th, Contract to Ole Westman to grade about 110 rods. To receive \$70 for said work.

1915 — March 20th, Divided the town into four road districts.

1920 — July 21st, Wages set at \$8.00 per day for man and team.

1921 — May 14th, Road Work: Grubbing by Olaf Swanberg, \$75.00; Breaking by Albert Haugen, \$12.50 per acre.

1923 — May 10th, Bridge between Sections 4 and 5 let to Axel E. Anderson of Warren, to be paid same wages as he gets on other construction. Gravel hauling open to any and all residents of town at \$1.50 per cubic yard.

1918 — August 4th, Progressive Farmers Club of Foldahl held a picnic to raise funds for the county's second Red Cross Drive of the year. It was estimated that there were approximately 200 cars and nearly 1,000 people present. It was the first large picnic.

After the 1918 picnic, the Old Mill picnic grounds became more popular. There were school and church picnics, family picnics, and club gatherings. The grounds have rolling smoothness and many shade trees. The beautiful pines towards the northwest were originally planted by Lars Larson, Sr. when he came from Sweden. Quite a few seeds were planted but only five grew to a great size. The trails are located on the trail that goes along the western ridge. Since then, many pine trees have been planted on the premises.

1928 — First annual Land O'Lakes Creamery picnic. Approximately 7,000 people were present.

1934 — Historical pageant and picnic.

1936 — Grasshopper infestation.

1937 — The state bought the Old Mill site. They paid \$11,000.00. To this, the Federal Government added \$17,000.00 for construction of the buildings. The W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration) added \$11,107.00 in 1940 for additional work.

First Park Superintendent was Oscar Bjorgaard, who served from 1937-1942. The following men then each served a season: Russell DeMars, Jerry Magoris and Merton Cook. Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Jewell came in 1946 to serve as caretakers of the Old Mill State Park. Mr. Jewell was on a part-time basis for the first few years, until about 1954, when in recognition of his services and the growing use made of the park under his superintendency, he was placed on a year-around payroll. Mr. Jewell was the spark plug behind the restoration of the old mill and the steam engine. Superintendents following Mr. Jewell are as follows: Glen Jensen, Monte Gross, Don Jueneman, Keith Karels, Tom Uren, Dan Brevé and Leonard Anderson, serving at the present time.

1940 - 1960 — PKM Electric contract let in 1941, but halted by outbreak of World War II. Eventually, electricity was supplied by PKM customers through mid and late 40's. Electrification of 90 per cent of area by 1950. By 1960, the Coop served 3,450 premises.

1950 — The Lake Head Pipeline went through Sections 7-17-18-20-21-27-28-34-35.

1964 — October 2, Plot for Ditch 42 failed in Auditor's office.

October 9, Lloyd Ofsteds filed report of survey of Carl Adolphson, Argyle; Aug Nyblad, Stephen; Edwin Lefrooth, Strandquist; as principals and Anton Anderson of Newfolden and Delmar Hagen of Gatzke, alternates - appointed as viewers.

1965 — March 24, Meeting to hear report of viewers. Resolved that County Ditch Number 42 be established; to be constructed according to law.

1969 — The first assessment was made on County Ditch No. 42. The ditch cut through Sections 11-12-13-14-23-24.

1973 — March 13, Town officers salary \$12.00 per meeting. Treasurers \$50.00 per year. Township to pay 10 cents a pocket gopher - both front feet to be brought. Decided that the bell on the town hall in Section 22 be taken care of by members of old School District Number 162.

1974 — March 12, Disbanded the positions of Constable and Justice of Peace. 25 cents for gopher bounty.

1975 — July 21, Motion made and carried to go along with Warren Hospital Districts proposal concerning the new law that allows the Warren Hospital Association to tax the townships for maintaining the Warren Hospital if the township joins the Warren Hospital District.

The Pembina Trail runs through Foldahl Township through Sections 2-11-14-23-24-25-36, following the Indian trail along the sand ridge.

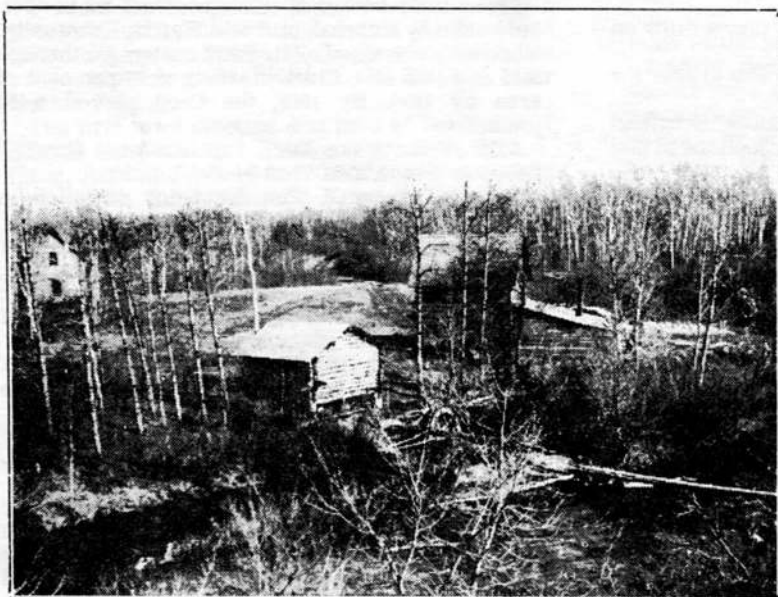
There is one cemetery in Foldahl Township called Nyed Cemetery. This cemetery is located in the northeast corner of Section 2 and was started in 1883 with one acre of land that was donated by Mr. Nordgren to bury two of his children. Caretakers of this cemetery have been Abel Anderson, Charley Skoglund, Ole Johnson and E. M. Skoglund, serving as caretaker at the present time.

From Freda Gutekunst's memories of Foldahl, there was music. Her sister, Emma, was a member of the first string band in Foldahl. She had a beautiful, highly-polished guitar of mahogany, spruce and rosewood made by Olof Swanberg.

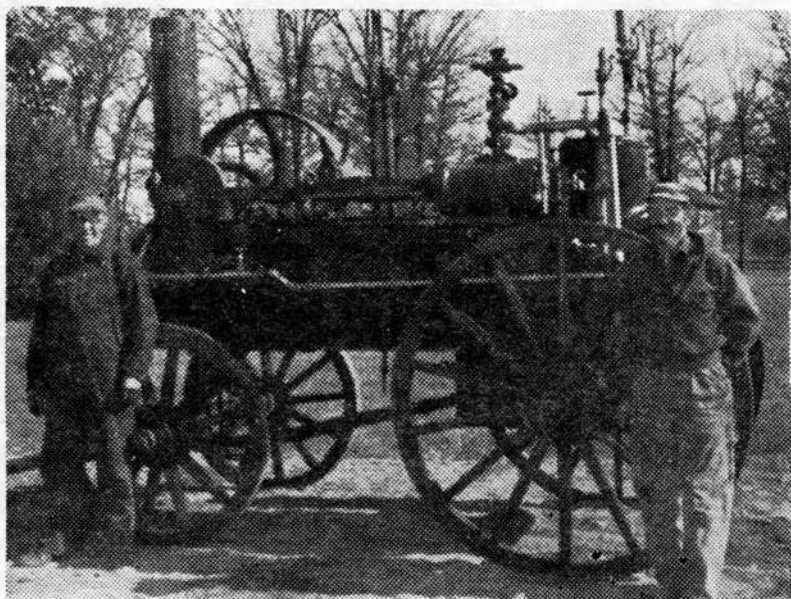
Mrs. Anders Andin was the teacher and director of the string band. She taught them the proper fingering technique. This band played for church services held in homes or school houses; also, at picnics and other gatherings.

Neighbors were neighbors — helpful and friendly. When Ellen Agnes Janson was to be married, her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob P. Janson, came and asked Hilda Hogberg (Willer) to bring her organ to their home and play the wedding march. Hilda consented. The organ was brought to the Jansons in the big wagon drawn by horses. The wedding day was June 30, 1911, at 10 a.m., when Ellen Agnes was married to Levi G. Johnson.

Present officers of Foldahl Township are as follows: Chairman, Arnie Maurstad; Clerk, Nancy Hess; Supervisors, Neldor Broten and Myron Erickson; and Treasurer, Ervin Strandquist.



View of the Old Mill about 1934 showing deterioration already at work.



Albert Skoglund, left, and Park Superintendent Ernie Jewell shown in front of the No. 359 Case engine they restored to working order in 1958.

Foldahl Township residents who were born in the township and have lived all their lives in the township are: Walfred Larson, Emanuel (Manny) Skoglund, Ervin Broten, Russell Floberg and Nelder Broten.

Residents living in Foldahl Township who are now over 75 years of age include: Walfred Larson, Palma Broten, Willard Olson, Emanuel (Manny) Skoglund, Myrtle Johnson and Wilbert Gunderson.

The committee would like to give a special thanks for contributions for the centennial celebration to PKM Electric Cooperative of Warren, First American Bank of Warren, Peoples State Bank of Warren, American Federal Savings and Loan of Warren and Marshall County State Bank of Newfolden.