

DID YOU KNOW.....

A look back at early area history as found in the archives of the Enderlin Historical Society and Museum by Susan Schlecht

The Enderlin Museum contains many interesting items and artifacts from the Sheldon area, also. The following are excerpts from a paper entitled *EARLY HISTORY OF SHELDON, RANSOM COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA* prepared by **Ed Pierce** and read at the **Old Settlers' Picnic at Sheldon, ND, in July 1906**.

Mr. Pierce states: "The reason for Sheldon's being was apparent about 1880 when the settlements of Jenksville, Owego and Bonnersville began to produce sufficient (commodities) to warrant looking for a market. Prior to that time, their grain was hauled from 20 to 50 miles, and supplies the same".

"The Jenksville settlement was the most active and aggressive. Among its early settlers were Robert Anderson in 1880 with his sons John, Gilbert, James, Robert and Joe." (Other early names mentioned by Mr. Pierce were Wilcox, Shea, Haley, Pierce, Bystrom, Bauerschmidt, Brick, Dablow, Cosgrove, Schobinger, Westphal, Boehm, Fraedrich, Patterson, McIntosh, Cowan, Fowler, Norris, and Lindemann.) "For many years this continued to be the best settlement tributary to Sheldon. They were foremost in building of schools, churches, bridges and roads and as hustlers for the railroad. In politics they were nearly all dyed-in-the-wool, gold standard Democrats." Mr. Pierce continues by stating, "I was surprised to learn this, but the poll books of the recent election prove it beyond a doubt."

"At that time, even the Maple River commanded a good deal of respect. I recall that in April, 1881, a lot of fellows accustomed to the antics of Canadian streams volunteered to build a bridge on what is now (1906) the Treglone farm, and under the direction of George Patterson, commenced on the ice in the morning, built cribs of heavy oak and elm logs 20 ft. high, decked them with stringers and floors weighting hundreds of tons, and before night the little creek broke loose and in ten minutes there wasn't a log, a block, a bolt or a tool within a mile of the site of the bridge, and its builders were looking on with open-mouthed wonder at what happened to them."

"The settlements of Owego and Bonnersville were old at that time, but not much of the land was filed on until in Owego John Knutson filed on Nov. 20, 1878, Helmuth Schultz on June 28, 1878, S.R. Day on Dec. 14th, 1877, Frank Probert on July 2nd, 1879, Gust Mueller Oct. 7th 1879, and in Bonnersville, John H. Kratt on June 13, 1879, Ed Rhinehart on May 28, 1879, Peter Bonner on Nov. 27, 1878, Julius Bracher on Oct. 23, 1881, John McCusker on July 20, 1880, and Louis Clement on Dec. 1st, 1877."

"In 1880 the greater number of the settlers on the Maple River filed, (including) the Hansons, Stensons, Fosses, Wolds, Christiansons, Fausetts. Others moved in early in the spring of 1881."

(More excerpts from Mr. Pierce's speech will be included next week.)

Sue's comments: For those who may not know, Jenksville was located in Section 21 of Highland Township along the Maple River about three miles north of what is now Highway 46. The colony of Owego was located in Section 16 of Owego Township just south of the Sheyenne River. Bonnersville was located in Shenford Township about three miles southeast of Anselm. All of these settlements existed before either Enderlin or Sheldon were founded.

Watch for more history next week!