Chapter III

THE ORGANIZATION OF POLK COUNTY, COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS

The actual organization of Polk County began with the appointment of three county commissioners by the governor of Minnesota on July 13, 1872, some fourteen years after the establishment of the county by the legislature. The three commissioners appointed to initiate county organization procedure were William Ross, Jacob Myers and E. A. Monison (the last named however apparently did not serve as commissioner). The first meeting of the two commissioners, William Ross and Jacob Myers, was held on October 21, 1872, with E. M. Walsh of Crookston acting as clerk. The commissioners decided to divide the county into three commissioner districts and set the regular election date in November as the time for the election of a full slate of county officers. After certifying the election of county officers to take office on January 1, 1873, the two commissioners met for a third meeting on December 8, 1872, and among other items of business appointed Richard Reis as County Superintendent of Schools.

At the first general election in the county on November 5, 1872, the three county commissioners elected were E. C. Davis, James Jenks and Lars Gordon. At the first meeting of the commissioners on January 7, 1873, E. C. Davis was elected as chairman.

The county remained in three commissioner districts until August 25, 1880, at which time the commissioners redistricted the county and divided it into five commissioner districts and established the boundary lines of the districts.

Prior to the time the state legislature declared the county legally organized (March 3, 1873), the legislature had re-established the county boundary lines on the south and east sides of the county. The southern boundary was established on what is now the southern boundaries of Norman and Mahnomen counties with the fragment south of that line to the Buffalo River attached to Clay County and the portion east of the present county line attached to Beltrami County, the southwestern portion of that county was later cut off to form our neighboring county, Clearwater.

The boundaries of the five original five commissioner districts are of historical interest for they include not only the present land area of Polk County but also the land areas of Red Lake, Pennington, Norman and Mahnomen counties.

Boundaries of the Five Commissioner Districts Established in 1880

FIRST DISTRICT—The boundary lines of the First Commissioners District shall be as follows: Commencing on the eastern