Chapter I

POLK COUNTY PREPARES
FOR STATE AND COUNTY CENTENNIAL

Phillip Anderson, Judge of Probate, Chairman of Polk County Centennial Committee

"As a result of a meeting held in the summer of 1957, the following persons were named to make plans for the Polk County Statehood Centennial: Judge Phillip Anderson, chairman, Crookston, Minnesota; Dr. B. E. Youngquist, vice chairman, Crookston, Minnesota; T. M. McCall, secretary, Crookston, Minnesota; Oscar Larson, treasurer, Erskine, Minnesota. Other members were Hjalmer Erickson, Fertile; Franklin Vikan, Fosston; Almer Bakken, Fosston; William Kiewel, Crookston; Mrs. Elmer Bredlie, Eldred; Mrs. Charles Pester, Crookston; Henry Tweten, East Grand Forks; Clara Berg, Crookston. This committee met several times during the fall of 1957 to develop plans for Polk County's part in the statewide celebration of the centennial.

The first project of this committee was to arrange for financial support for the projects. This was adequately taken care of by an appropriation by the County Board of Commissioners.

The first centennial event in Polk County took place in February when a centennial pageant, under the direction of Fred Shrimpton, was presented at the Red River Valley Winter Shows. Several committees and organizations prepared historical episodes based on events which had taken place in Polk County during the past 100 years. The pageant was well done and well received by the capacity crowd in attendance as the several hundred persons who participated in the pageant recreated scenes in which their parents and grandparents had been the original actors and actresses.

The next event took place in East Grand Forks on May 8, 9 and 10 when this county honored the old settlers at a luncheon which featured the Honorable Edward J. Devitt, Federal District Judge and former resident of East Grand Forks, as speaker. This centennial program continued on May 9, with the crowning of the Centennial Days Queen, Janice Skovlem. On Saturday, May 10, which was the official Statehood Day in Minnesota, East Grand Forks staged the biggest parade ever assembled in that city. It was composed of so many units that it was necessary to have some units assemble across the river in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Your chairman had the honor of carrying, as a passenger in his 1927 Chevrolet sedan, the honored centennial pioneer, Jerry Driscoll, who celebrated his 100th birthday on April 19, 1958. Mr. Driscoll took an active interest in the parade and pointed out the many changes that had taken place during his residence in the East Grand Forks community.

Also on May 10, Polk County was represented in the Statehood Centennial Parade in Saint Paul. The Polk County Cen-
The centennial Committee had arranged to enter a float in this parade and also arranged to have six young ladies representing several areas in Polk County on the float. This float was returned to Polk County and appeared in all of the other centennial celebrations in the county and in many parades in neighboring counties.

The East Grand Forks Record published a special Minnesota Centennial Edition which gives a very complete account of the centennial celebration in that area. The Record also published a series of weekly historical articles on state and county history.

The next official celebration took place at McIntosh in early June as the official "Thirteen Towns" celebration. Much preliminary work was done by a committee of local citizens in gathering historic information about the thirteen townships in this area and about the early homesteaders. This resulted in the publishing a book called A SAGA OF THE THIRTEEN TOWNS. The celebration was culminated with one of the best parades ever staged in this area. Special features of the parade included floats from most of the 13 townships of the area. The official Polk County float made its first appearance in the McIntosh parade. The float was managed by F. W. Zitka of Crookston, and it depicted all of the important resources of the county. Six attractive young ladies occupied seats of honor on the float. Your chairman took part in this parade driving his 1927 Chevrolet accompanied by Mrs. Anderson in an authentic gay nineties wardrobe.

The third celebration took place in the Fosston area with a combined celebration which included the 55th anniversary of the Fosston High School, the 50th anniversary of the Farmers State Bank, and the 75th anniversary of the village of Fosston and the Polk County Centennial all wrapped up in one package. Highlights of this celebration were a breakfast for the "Old Settlers" and reunions of the high school classes. Each class entered a float in the parade and here again the trusted Chevrolet carried the seven returning members of the Class of '25.

The next formal celebration scheduled for Crookston on July 4 had to be postponed three days because of heavy rains. The large historical parade arranged for July 4 was held on July 7. Business places arranged historical displays in their store windows and the celebration of the day was climaxed with a display of fireworks in the evening. Certificates were also awarded to several senior citizens who were unable to attend the award presentations made at Saint Paul in May.

The final Polk County Centennial event took place at the Fertile Fair when the Fair Association set aside one day for centennial activities. This included the historical parade and many other activities involving historical affairs."

1803 Louisana Purchase.