History of Andover Township

The first meeting of Andover township was held May 18, 1878 at the barn of Frank Bivens on section 9. E. D. Childs was chosen chairman, Alsen Pierce as moderator. Three judges of election were Alsen Pierce, John Peterson and Charles Mattson. The business of the meeting was four-fold, 1. The selection of the town officers as required by law. 2. The subject of highways and their overseers. 3. The subject of pounds and pound masters. 4. Miscellaneous business.

Eight qualified voters elected T. B. McMahan for chairman, August Peterson for treasurer and M. C. Perrin for town clerk. W. G. Lytle and Charles Mattson were named supervisors. The assessor was J. W. Pitts, and the justices of the peace were J. J. Eide and P. Anderson; constables were G. L. Gray and A. Burnham. Later, E. D. Childs replaced Mr. Lytle, who refused to qualify for supervisor.

On October 18, 1878, at the county commissioners meeting of Polk county, in Crookston, Minnesota, 'a petition from the citizens of township one forty-nine, range forty-seven west, praying the county board to have a town organized and to be known as Town of Hillsdale' was granted and the first town meeting ordered to be held within the time prescribed by law. That is all we hear of the name 'Hillsdale,' no explanation is given for the adoption of the present name of Andover.

On October 26, 1878 election notices were posted at three places, the Childs-Lytle Company Warehouse, on section one; at C. S. Corser's barn on section three; and the other at A. Burnham's on section five. Polls were to be held at Childs-Lytle's from 10 a.m. until five p.m. on November 5, 1878 for the election of federal, state and county officers. The list of qualified voters had grown from eight to twenty-three.

The establishment of roads and bridges and levying taxes were the topics of business in those early years. Burnham Creek and its tributaries, which criss-crossed the township from the southeast corner to the northwest corner, created the necessity for a dozen or more bridges. Locating roads and ways gave rise to landowners voicing complaints about damage done to their farms. One such owner collected $17 for same, despite the fact that he also received the benefits of having a good road.

The first birth recorded in April of 1878 was a daughter born to T. B. and Theresa McMahan. By 1900 eighty-one births had been recorded.

There were two cemeteries in the township, one in section eight and the other in section fourteen. Deaths in those days were attributed most often to diphtheria, consumption, typhoid and scarlet fever, croup and brain fever. Two deaths were caused by heart disease and one by cancer before 1900. Very young children were the victims in the majority of cases. The Hans Hanson family lost three in two months of lung fever and diphtheria. The same year three children of the McMahan family died of diphtheria, and twin daughters of H. C. Scribner died on the same day of the same cause at age three.

There were four school districts organized in Andover: district twenty-six in section twenty-six in 1879; district twenty-nine in section four in 1880; district sixty-eight in section twenty-eight in 1882; and district two-hundred forty-six in section fourteen.

Consolidation of rural schools into larger city schools was made possible by bus transportation. (The schools had also been used to hold Sunday school classes).


Beginning in the early part of the nineteen hundreds we find the names of John Rohrer, Gust Gulseth, George Schuck, A. Holkesvig, H. B. Scribner, John Perry, L. E. Slyter, John Letness, Andrew Anderson, R. T. Buckler, Miner Helgeson, F. C. Miller and F. M. Slyter. All took active parts in the affairs of the township, which still seemed to involve roads, bridges and taxes.

Later still, there were P. M. Finkenbinder, Walter Morgan, Lawrence and Jack Letness, and Andy Volland. Replacing them were: Laurie Volland, Ralph Finkenbinder, Marlow Leikness, and Ray Grove. Rudy Erdmann, Elroy Wagner and Erwin Erdmann took their turns with township responsibilities. The present town board of 1976 is composed of Robert Samuelson, clerk; Gary Letness, chairman; Marcella Erdman, treasurer, and Duane Lien, and Roger Samuelson, supervisors.

Entries in the town meeting minutes made mention of the fact that the national flag was displayed while the board was in session.

Three citizens from Andover township have served in state and federal lawmakers. The Honorable R. T. Buckler was elected to congress from the seventh district for terms from 1934 to 1944. Thomas Letness served in the state legislature as representative from 1944 and 1945. Miner Helgeson served in the state legislature as representative from 1929 to 1935.

ROBERT J. BOUCHER

Robert Jerome Boucher, fifth child of Wilfred and Parmellia Boucher, was born in Crookston, Minnesota at St. Vincent Hospital on March 12, 1922. He was raised in Lowell Township on the farm where his grandfather homesteaded and had lived for thirty-three years. Robert was baptized, confirmed and married at St. Anne's Catholic Church.

In his early school years, Robert attended St. Joseph's Academy and graduated from the Northwest School of Agriculture in 1941. Upon graduation, he continued to farm with his father and two brothers, Donald and Volarian. In 1945, he was drafted into the Armed Forces. Most of his service time was spent in Korea and Okinawa. He was discharged in October, 1946 and returned to Crookston and back to the farm. His father retired and Robert, Donald and Volarian bought their father's land. He continued to live in Lowell Township on the home place with brother Donald. On August 27, 1955, he married Signe Gladys Olson of Baudette, Minnesota. They built a new home in Andover Township and moved there on November 16, 1956. Tim, their first child, was born November 6, 1956. In those first years we not only raised small grains and sugar beets, but also children: Tim, as already mentioned; Tom, born November 27, 1957; Mark, April 6, 1959; Margaret Anne (Peggy), April 11, 1960, and our youngest Kristie Marie, February 2, 1964. Tim is now attending U.M.C. in Crookston and farms with his father. Tom is a senior at Central High School.