The Knox Presbyterian Church was first organized in Fisher in 1880 and served Mallory, Key West and Fisher. In 1885, the Mallory people requested to be moved to the Mallory school, as it had become too crowded at Fisher. In 1886, the Bethel Church was built on a gift of land in section 24 by James Lee. Early pastors were Rev. Charles Even and Rev. Travis. That church served the area from 1886 until 1946 when it was destroyed by fire. Their membership transferred to Mendenhall Presbyterian Church in East Grand Forks, but their burial grounds still are maintained in the township. Pictures of the Bethel Church may be found in the story sent in by Mrs. Myrtle Peterson, who now lives in the old manse remodeled, standing on the former church property.

The Catholics in the area joined Sacred Heart Church in East Grand Forks; the Scandinavians (predominantly Lutheran) joined the Bygland Lutheran Church.

On April 11, 1926, the Mallory 4-H Club was organized by Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Cumming with eleven members signing up. Because there was no county agent at that time, the club was officially chartered in 1927. These were the club officers: president — Francis Driscoll; vice-president — Sandy Coulter; secretary — Bert McWalter; treasurer — Jean Nisbet; yell leader — Joe Driscoll; reporter — Mildred Cumming; sergeant-at-arms — Edward Lealos; junior leaders — Francis Driscoll, Kathryn Lee and Jean Nisbet; adult leaders — Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Cumming and Lilian Bitzer. The club motto, "To Make the Best Better", remains the same. The club pledge has had the work "home" added to "my club, my community and my country". Mrs. Cumming furnished adult leadership as late as 1954.

Many members have won trips to the Minnesota State Fair, the Junior Livestock Show in South Saint Paul for outstanding project work. Some of these are: In 1934, Joe Driscoll had the championship beef at the Show in St. Paul. Achievement Day Queens were: Joanne Roberts in 1949. Dorothy Kirk in 1950, Marjory Roberts in 1963 and 1964. In 1960, Roy Nisbet had the champion shop exhibit at the State Fair with his built yard tractor. In 1975, Carolyn Barrett was selected to attend the Citizenship Short Course in Washington, D.C.

Club Tours are still a big event in the club year — a time when each project is viewed along the way to completion — and usually ends with a picnic. Achievement days were at first held locally with the Mallory Club using the barn at Bethel Presbyterian Church for exhibits of completed projects. Later the merchants in East Grand Forks put on an area Achievement Day as well as an annual wiener roast every fall instead. During 1968, the Club began including members from Key West area, since that club had been dissolved.

As its 50th year as a 4-H Club comes in 1976, the fine traditions of 4-H will be cherished. As always the motto: “To Make the Best Better” for “my Home, my Club, my Community and my Country” will reign.

On April 5, 1930, the Riverside 4-H Club was organized by Selma Hedstrand, A. W. Aamodt, and C. C. Chase at a meeting in the Timberline school district #93. Fifty young people formed Riverside 4-H Club. Good work was done for five years. Officers chosen were: president — Selma Hedstrand; vice-president — Adeline Torgerson; secretary-treasurer — Esther Anderson; reporter — Bergit Osmundson; adult leaders — Mrs. H. B. Egeland and John Jeffrey for the boys.

In 1932, six members won trips to the State Fair from the Club. Selma Hedstrand came home the champion room furnishing judge. Ingvald Anderson was first alternate crops judge. Ruth Egeland and Ingeborg Anderson were in the top five bread baking demonstration teams. Adeline Torgerson won second in state on her clothing exhibit, and Bergit Osmundson and Margaret Hylden competed with a canning demonstration. That year, too, Bernard Duffy showed the championship beef at the junior livestock show as well. The Club received the award as the outstanding 4-H Club in Polk county that year. In 1934, Esther Anderson won state championship in canning and received a trip to compete in the national contest held in Chicago, where she placed sixth in the nation. By 1936, the Club had grown so much that it was decided to move the meetings to the Bygland town hall where they still meet today.

Farmers gathering once a month for a social evening was successful for many years with a Farm Bureau unit on each side of the River meeting in homes, in schoolhouses, or in the hall. Exchange of ideas as well as socializing is ever necessary. Home-maker clubs, too, were found on both sides of the River, meeting in homes and receiving outside help in the form of lessons on a variety of subjects connected with the home from the Extension Service.

The Mallory Burns’ Club was organized in 1900 with James Nisbet as the first president. Each year on January 25th, they held entertainment and dance with refreshments in commemoration of Robert Burns. Scotchmen came from far and near. Gifted players on bagpipes, old time Scotch dancers and singers gave a splendid evening's entertainment. As the years rolled by, it seemed many Irish, French, Scandinavians became Scotsmen for one night as the whole community joined in. That Club was active until 1962, when it was decided to disband.

Baseball games were a fine reason for gatherings of a Sunday afternoon for many years. Someone’s pasture or open meadow served as a ball diamond. Mallory had several teams as the years went by. In the 1920’s the Mallory team and a team composed mainly of Frenchmen on the south side of the River played in a league with Key West and Tabor. They also had occasional games with the Bygland team, which played in a league composed of teams from Climax, Nielsville, Buxton and Buffalo Coulee. In the late 1920’s, the Bygland team and the French team combined to make one team, managed by Bill Powers.

GUST AAKHUSS

Four Aakhus brothers emigrated from Norway about 1875 and all settled in Polk County: Evind in Bygland Township, Olav in Sletten Township, Gunstein in Erskine, Minnesota, and Grundy in section six of Fisher Township. Grundy and his wife, Signe Bygland, had seven children and Gust was next to the youngest. In those days farms were small and with three other brothers at home Gust went to live with his oldest sister, Bertha, who lived with her husband, Ole Hanson, on a farm one mile north of the Aakhus homestead. This move was made when he was very young, so Gust grew up in the Hanson home.

He attended the Sprague rural school for eight years and a few years later attended the Northwest School of Agriculture at Crookston for two winter terms. Ole Hanson died in 1933, and from that time until his death in 1968 Gust was responsible for the operation of the Hanson farm.