

## CITY AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT GREW WITH THE TIMES

Pine County was officially organized by act of the Territorial legislature in 1856. Chengwatana, the old Indian village and trading post at the Cross Lake outlet to the Snake River was designated as the county seat. Kanabec and Carlton counties were included as part of Pine County until 1858 when they were separated.

The first courthouse was destroyed by fire in 1870 and most of those early records went with it. In 1872 the courthouse, by popular vote, was moved to Pine City on the west side of Cross Lake where the Lake Superior-Mississippi railroad had just been built connecting St. Paul and Duluth.

A new courthouse building was erected on the site where Nichol's Cafe now stands. A larger courthouse was erected in 1886 north of the present site, but only after the Richard G. Robinson house had been moved off. This house was later bought by Captain Seavey and is now occupied by Hank and Betty Larson.

The cost of the courthouse was \$10,000. It was heated by wood stoves in each room and lighted by kerosene lamps. It is rumored that the contractor failed to finish the job, so James Hurley, as surety for him, had to take over and complete the building.

In 1915 an attempt was made to change the location of the county seat to Hinckley but the majority voted to keep it in Pine City. The decision instigated a long standing feud of sorts between northern and southern Pine County occupants. Locating the county hospital in Sandstone helped to ease the way to burying the hatchet and once again Pine county residents joined forces for the betterment of the county as a whole.

Today Pine City boasts a three year old municipal building which houses the city clerk's office, the library and a community room available for use by the public.

City Clerk, Dan Kieselhorst is available from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday to answer questions concerning city services and the city council meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30 P.M. in the council chamber in the municipal building.

Keith Selleck is mayor, Jane Robbins, Ben Sauter, Fred Holstein and Dick Hegman serve as council members and Howard Ledin is city attorney.

In June, 1911, in a campaign for better roads, a number of representatives and good roads advocates from Duluth and St. Paul met with Pine City's businessmen to talk over the prospects for securing better roads along the main highway leading north and south into the village.

At another village council meeting in 1911 a petition wigned by 102 citizens was presented. A request for installation of four clocks for police patrol was received and a motion was made to have W.A. Sayser and F. Poferl get prices and report at the next meeting.

A complaint was aired that large horses and cattle were running loose at the north end of the wagon bridge (Woodpecker Ridge).

A ~~The~~ 1911 village ordinances said, "Be it resolved that all saloon keepers are hereby notified not to sell to minors in pails or otherwise intoxicating liquors of any kind."

Proceedings of the County Board in 1911 dealt with a much different type of business than today.

One item that year stated: "Considerable business of importance was transacted by the County Board at their meeting. In the matter of the petitions of seven free-holders of district number 67 asking to be set off with their lands to district No. 5, the petition of Dick Vork was granted. The petition of Otto Gobel for a portion of his land was also granted with the sanction and approval of all the petitioners. All other requests were denied.

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At a meeting of the County Board in 1912/<sup>annual</sup>salaries of county officers were fixed as follows: County attorney, \$1,100 , Sheriff \$1,400, Supt. of schools \$500., which includes expenses and services. A fee of \$500. was charged for liquor licenses.

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A sale of state lands in 1907 was considered a success in every respect. Of 10,000 acres listed for sale, 6,000 were sold. The highest price paid was \$11 per acre to \$5 per acre.

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Postal employees worked hard to get out the Christmas mail years ago just as they do today. A notice in an 1899 newspaper said: THE POSTOFFICE WILL CLOSE FOR THE DAY AT 1:00 p.m. SHARP ON CHRISTMAS DAY, MONDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1899.

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In 1911 Postmaster J. Y. Breckenridge advertised that letters were waiting for Miss C. Fisher, S.J. Gilly, Ludvik Hanson and Alva Harper. Persons claiming the letters had to say

where they saw it advertised and give the date of the listing.

Letters not picked up within a certain length of time were sent to the "dead letter" office.

OSCAR DICKSON was county treasurer for 28 years and at eighty two years of age, he recalls many changes in county government that took place during his term of office.

"I came to Pine City in 1931 and it was a tough time to begin anew anyplace," he said.

Dickson sold newspaper subscription to a Twin City paper and his work took him into the rural area where he had an opportunity to meet many people.

"I visited with them and always talked in favor of school buses to transport children from rural areas into school in Pine City," he said.

"When I ran for county treasurer I was elected. I had no experience in the office but I had a good deputy and things went well."

Dickson recalled how he got the reputation of being an honest Swede.

"A farmer came in to pay his taxes and he peeled off brand new \$100. bills. That night when I checked out I had too much money. The next day I called the farmer and asked him to come in to the office. He thought I wanted to collect more taxes from him but I just wanted to give him back one of those \$100. bills. They had evidently stuck together when he paid," Dickson said.

"He must have spread it all over the county that I was an "honest Swede", because I was elected every time until I retired.

Dickson also claims responsibility for being the first county treasurer to put county funds out on interest until they were needed.

"I wasn't very popular with the local bank at that time. They refused to pay interest on county money they were holding so I transferred the funds to the N.W. National Bank in Minneapolis.

Now local banks are glad to have the use of county money and pay interest on it but it was a hard fight at first," he said.

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Old records in the county auditor's office indicate that townships were frequently named after the children of county officials, or prominent settlers in the county.

New Dosey township was named after Julius Dosey, Arlone Township after Lois Arlone Hamlin, the daughter of W.H. Hamlin, county auditor, Wilma Township after an official's wife and Barry township after Edward Barry, heroic engineer who rescued nearly 500 people in the great Hinckley fire by getting the train through to Superior.

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Welfare assistance is not new in Pine County. Records from ~~1879~~ 1871 show that the poor of the county were taken into consideration. It was moved to support a woman and her children in the amount of thirty five dollars per month. The chairman of the board was authorized to draw upon supplies ~~to be~~ from the store of Adolph Munch in that amount to be furnished to the family.

She was also to be furnished with fifteen cords of fire wood cut to stove length.

Later, in 1873 it was moved to move the woman to the county poor house which was located east of Hinckley.

On May 25, 1904 the board resolved to purchase a site for a Poor Farm namely known as the M.C. Dean farm for the sum of \$8400. M.C. Dean was appointed as overseer of the Poor Farm for a term of one year.

People who went to the Poor Farm turned over any property they might have owned to the county.

A 1905 Minnesota law read: It is the duty of children to support parents who are unable to earn a living and unless this party contributes to the support of this mother, the County Attorney of Pine County will be directed to proceed against this said party under the provisions of Section 1485.

At an April 21, 1913, the county commissioners ordered the county auditor to notify a certain person whose mother was receiving county aid that they must adhere to the above law.

On May 16, 1941, the county auditor was authorized to provide for a revolving fund for the purpose of purchasing Food Stamps. The sum was not to exceed \$15,000.

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