

continued through spring with heavy rains and above average rainfall. Almost five inches of snow fell on Mother's Day and there was snow May 26 which melted to  $\frac{3}{4}$ " of moisture. Farming operations were much delayed.

Harvey Thorson was elected president of the Morton County Agricultural Improvement Association at their annual meeting in Hebron in February.

Mrs. Thelma Klingensmith was named North Dakota Mother of the Year and many in the community attended the awards banquet in her honor held at the County Club in Bismarck in April. Thelma was also honored at a Mother-Daughter Tea at the Lutheran Church, sponsored by the Almont P.T.A., who also sponsored her for the award. The program, emceed by Nathalie Thorson, included "This is Your Life, Thelma."

On April 12 the Calico 4-H Club appeared on KFVR and presented "Romance of a Hat."

A community project, the Almont Youth Recreation Program, was organized and backed by various organizations. Duane Hoovestol was instructor and Ed Reef, secretary-treasurer.



The Almont Lutheran Church observed their 50th anniversary June 27. Many former members and pastors attended. Mrs. Grace Nelson and Mr. and Mrs. T.A. Barstad were the only living charter members and Ole Feland and Norman Hansen the only confirmands of the first class, who are still members of the church. The new parish parsonage was dedicated that afternoon.

The Sims School District voted in favor of erecting a new gymnasium and remodeling the old gym into classrooms.

The Almont Weighing Association was organized, yards built, and a scale installed. Sig Peterson sold the first load of cattle over the new scale. The facilities proved to be a big boon to the community.

The weather continued to be unusual at the close of the year - no snow through Christmas and temperatures in the 50's.

## 1966

The weather seems to have top billing this year. The worst storm of the century, referred to as the "Storm of the Century," hit the area and raged for three days - March 2-4. Twenty inches of snow, accompanied by a 70-mile wind resulted in 15 to 20 ft. drifts. It was said to be the worst since 1888. Almont was without electric power for 14 hours and without



NPRR #1 - blocked near North Almont - March 1966.



Roman Peterson bringing home his cattle after a week long blizzard - May 1966.

long distance telephone service for a day. Stores were closed and nothing or no one moved for a day or two. There were also heavy cattle losses in the area; Edd Bachler lost 92 head when a shed collapsed. The following week temperatures rose fast and the unusually warm weather caused the creeks to rise and overflow. People were afraid of another flood which luckily didn't materialize. Spring weather was unusually warm with a 93° reading on May 21.



There were many heavy rains in June and on June 15 a 9.3 inch rain fell in the Hebron and Glen Ullin

area sending a 3-foot wall of water down the Curlew Creek and Valley which completely inundated Almont. It was much worse than the flood of 1950. People were warned to leave their homes, which they did, and many moved things out of basements, but no home or business was spared. The cleanup was something Almont will remember for years as there are still reminders of the damage. The Red Cross, National Guard, neighboring townspeople and farm families helped greatly during the flood and cleanup.



Cleaning out the basement of the Lutheran Parsonage after the flood caved in the basement wall.



**Grandma Peterson's 95th birthday**

Seated: Arlie Timpe, Grandma P., Agnes Halvorson, Grace Nelson. Standing: Nathalie Thorson, Tillie Fallgren, Lucille Larson, Lillian Peterson, Hildegard Holle, Irene Jacobson, Thelma Feland, Marguerite Olsrud, Ragna Barstad, Hazel Hoovestol and Anna Thorson.

A group of Almont folks drove to Cedar Valley Ranch near McIntosh, SD, to help Grandma (Thora) Peterson celebrate her 95th birthday on January 14.

There was a business change this year ... Morris Service, which had been operated by Morris and Clara Christianson for 12 years, was sold to Donald Knutson.

The County Agricultural Improvement Association met in Almont Feb. 22 for their annual meeting and ladies of the community served the noon meal.

Mr. and Mrs. Art Feland were winners of the Morton County Soil Conservation Award and were honored at the county awards banquet and also at the state convention.

Martin Doll, Jr. left for Viet Nam where he was employed in construction for the navy.

## 1967

The new school gym was completed and dedication ceremonies for the gym and new library were held February 19. Leon Olson, former AHS graduate and presently Williston school's superintendent was the speaker. Thelma Klingensmith, County Supt., brought greetings and Levi Dawson, school board president, officiated at the dedication and presented the key to Mr. John Page, supt. Gerald Stenehjem was emcee and special music was furnished by the Lutheran Youth Choir and Men's Chorus. Nancy Hoovestol sang the Star Spangled Banner. The addition, constructed of cinder block with brick facing, was the third since 1918 and includes a gym with a large stage and two dressing rooms with lavatories. The bleachers seat 260 and it is connected to the old school building through a passageway at the back. It was a wonderful addition to the school and will serve for many community affairs.



The weather has always played an important part in North Dakota news. This year, April 30, a snow storm hit which was preceded by lightning, thunder, rain, hail and sleet, followed by snow accompanied by winds up to 70 miles per hour. There was some loss of livestock - the greatest reported was 29 head at Enoch Willmans. The stock was driven into the creeks by the storm and drowned. There seemed to be no end to the cold, wet weather, as there was



**Cleanup campaign after spring flood**

L to R: Cleo Smith, Morris Christianson, Norman Hansen, Albert Anderson, Orlyn Wanstrom, Trygve Feland, Sig Peterson, Randy Christianson, Bruce Peterson and Pete Thorson.

another storm May 10 which even stopped traffic on I-94. It froze July 3 with a temperature of 28 and two days later it was 91 above!

The Douglas Thorson Sportsmanship Trophy was set up by Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Thorson as a memorial to their son, Douglas. A \$100 college scholarship accompanied the award to be presented yearly to a worthy senior basketball player.



The city sewage disposal system, installed at a cost of \$62,000, was completed Oct. 15. The system was made possible by grants from Farm Home Administration and the State Health Department. The population of Almont showed 90, with 50 homes to be users of the system.



**Calico 4-H Club singing Do-Re-Mi at 4-H Talent Show, New Salem.** Pam Johnson, Grant Johnson, Mary Jane Thorson, Paul Johnson, Mary Peterson, (?), (?), Carolyn Thorson, Jill Anderson, Pat Anderson, Sharon Thorson, Lynn Peterson, Penny Anderson.



Norman Hansen and Pete Thorson with 17-pound fish Pete caught in Muddy Creek near Willmans.

The era of crank telephones and "rubbering" is over for Almont! On Dec. 16, the Northwestern Bell Telephone Company, which had been installing a new area-wide underground system, hooked up the Almont line. In honor of the occasion, the Almont community had a luncheon honoring Pearl Tavis, the switchboard operator for many years. Special guests included Gov. and Mrs. Wm. Guy who dialed the first call to the Bell Co. president in Omaha, NE.



Telephone luncheon. Pearl Tavis and Gov. Guy in center of picture with Bell Telephone dignitaries.

**1968**

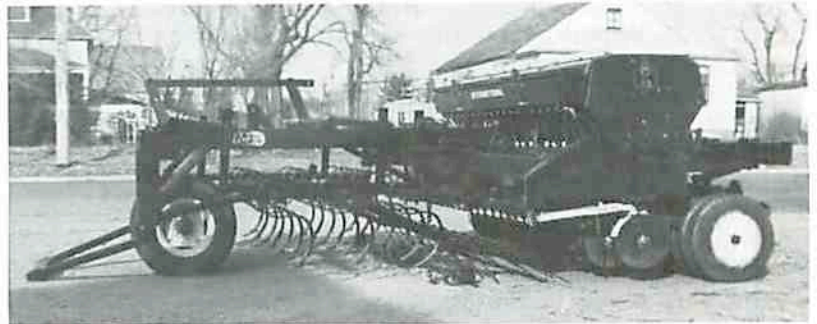
Postal rates went up this year ... from 5¢ for first class mail and 10¢ for airmail. It doesn't seem long ago that the rate was 3¢ a letter. The North Almont depot closed in February and Walter Bakken retired from years of service as NP agent. Later in the year Sig Peterson wrote to the NP president and asked if Almont could buy the depot; his request was granted, and the depot was moved to Almont and placed in Heritage Park.

Prairie Rose Senior Citizen's Club was organized April 29 with Mrs. Ragna Barstad as president. On July 9, 20 members hired a bus and took a trip to Medora.

"Pioneer Mothers" was the name of the tableau presented at the Mother-Daughter Tea at the Lutheran Church.

A Headstart Training Program was held in Almont with Jerry Stenehjelm as coordinator. Sixty-five teachers from a wide area attended the 4-day train-

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ing session, the largest Headstart program in North Dakota.

Prairie Rose Park was dedicated August 15. Clubs from Flasher, Glen Ullin and Mandan attended the dedication and program.

Among the VIPs attending the Labor Day Reunion this year were Senator Young, Gov. Guy, National Mother of the Year, Miss Morton County, Miss Morton County Dairy Princess, Commissioner of Agriculture, State Auditor, Attorney General and Commissioner of Labor. The program included numbers by the Fiddlers who have been featured every year.

## 1969

Another rough winter with lots of snow, blocked roads, no school, basketball games and other activities postponed or cancelled. Snowmobiles were the only sure means of transportation. It was even rough going for horses. Schools were closed for one full week in March. Sig and Bruce (home on leave) Peterson used their snowmobile to bring rural kids to town to stay with people who had opened their homes so they could attend school. Patrons on mail routes were without mail for two or three weeks. There was an estimated 50 inches of snowfall.

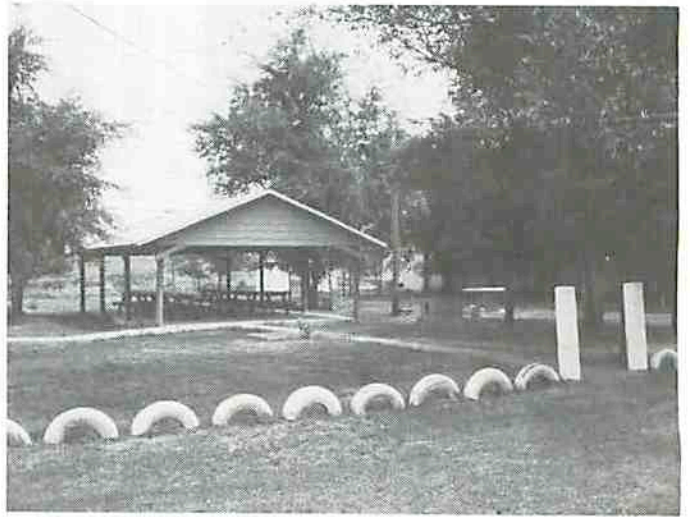
When the snow began melting, there was another flood scare. On April 4, Good Friday, creeks were overflowing again and Almont prepared for another flood. 1,000 sandbags were filled and used around homes and business places and things were moved out of basements. However, the flood didn't materialize and everyone was very relieved and thankful.

The Morton County homemakers held their Achievement Day in Almont on June 21. A tableau entitled "Homemaking of Yesteryear," was presented by the host clubs - Almont, Live and Learn and Busy Beavers.

People all over the world watched their TV sets on July 20 as the first man landed on the moon. Seeing is believing ... but that was hard to believe!

Almont's Development Association built two low-rent duplex housing units to be leased to the elderly or low-income families. Folks in the community volunteered their labor in building and painting. An Open House was held in January 1970.

During the summer Mr. and Mrs. Thorvald Barstad, their daughter Ruby Handegard and Mrs. Rudy Feland enjoyed a trip to the Scandinavian countries. It was a thrill for the Barstads to visit their native land.



A 20 x 20 shelter was built at the Almont Park by the Prairie Rose Senior Citizens Club. About 12 volunteers worked on the project.

Bruce Peterson and Paul Genz are serving with the U.S. Marines in Viet Nam.



"Homemaking of Yesteryear" presented by Almont, Live and Learn and Busy Beavers homemakers clubs.

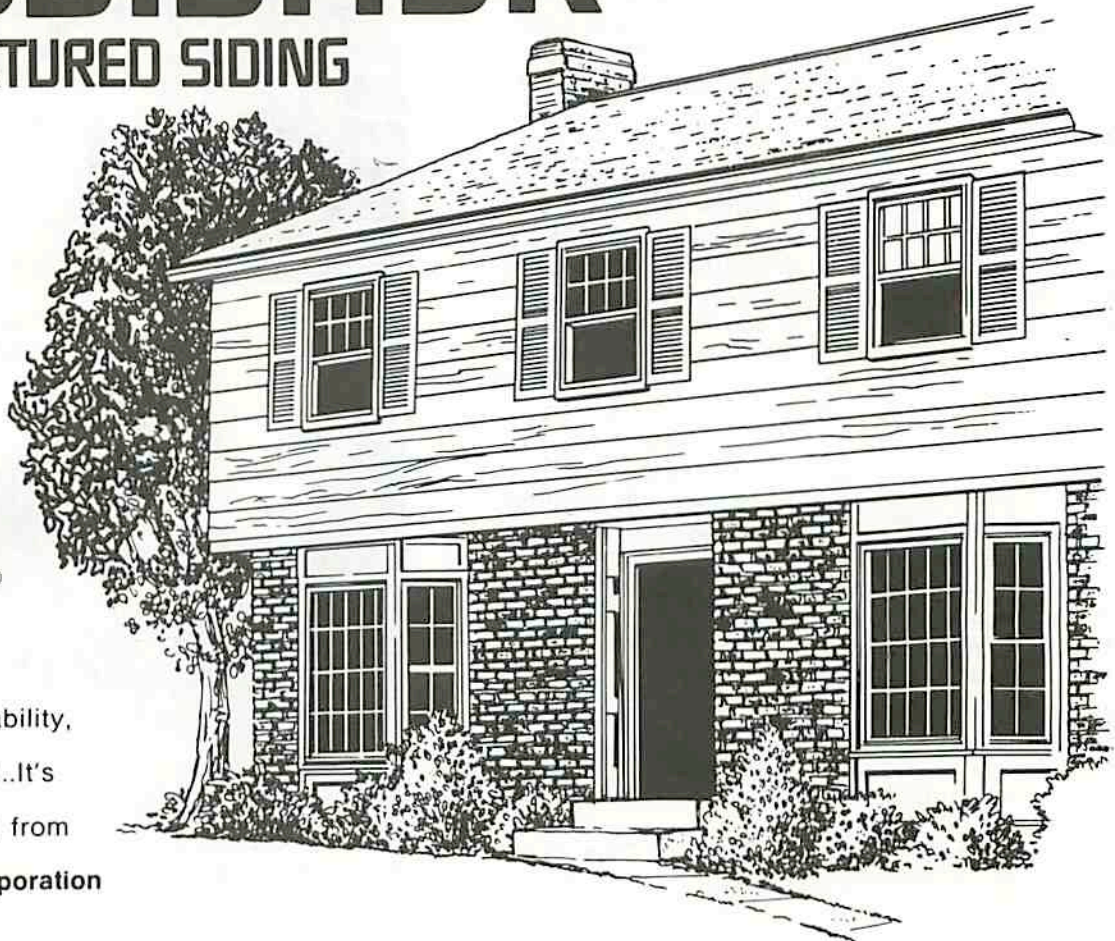


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## 1970

Flood waters again covered Almont on May 10 ... this is the third time in 20 years. The flood was caused by 5-6 inches of rain. Residents were warned of the danger and evacuated their homes and went to Leo Timpe's "Flood Haven" on the hill. The Red Cross set up a coffee house and relatives and rural friends assisted in another cleanup project. There



was no ground floor flooding this time, but many basements were filled. The biggest damage was to the new sewer line, with many cave-ins which made driving hazardous. The bridges were able to withstand the high waters this time too, but people were beginning to get disgusted and downhearted and some were considering moving to another town. They were tired of cleaning up mud and trying to restore their property and were beginning to talk of the feasibility of a dike built around the town.



Sig Peterson directs singing of "School Days" and other songs. Also pictured is Nathalie Hanson Thorson, emcee; Arleen Kilen, teacher, and Melissa Olson and Brad Striegel as students. The school is a replica of Almont's first school. Inset: Marilys Knutson Dolezol, Frances Nelson Rusch and Audrey Nelson Olson - a girls' trio who sang together through high school and for the reunion.



Men who have furnished music through the years for school functions gathered together for a song fest at the reunion program. L to R: Chris Halvorson, Margido Willman, Roman Peterson, Sig Peterson, Vernon Knutson, Marshall Feland, Harold Halvorson, Joel Johnson, James Harper, Harold Foley, Gene Harper, Leon Jacobson and Duane Johnson.

The big event this year was the Almont High School Reunion. There had been months of planning for the big affair which took place June 27-28. It was the 50th anniversary of the first class to graduate from Almont High School and the three who graduated were present: Thelma Hyde Klingensmith, Edith Bird Stigen and Andrew Willman. The first hours of the reunion were almost hysterical as classmates and old friends met for the first time in many years.

The afternoon program was emceed by the reunion chairman, Nathalie Thorson, who added the right amount of sparkle and wit to the program. A history of the school by decades was presented in a tableau "Through the Years," with interesting and amusing facts revealed in each decade and shown through styles, music and drama. Graduates from every decade took part in the production. Impromptu remarks made by former students and teachers concluded the afternoon program. A 6 o'clock catered supper was served to 375 people in the school gym. Elvira Thiel baked and decorated the huge anniversary cake which was served for dessert.

Class pictures were taken by Ernest Feland for a reunion booklet which was printed later. There was more visiting and singing after supper, followed by a dance at the Legion Hall.

Sunday everyone attended their home church, and family and friends joined the graduates for picnics in four different locations. Farewells were made with requests for another reunion in 10 years.

Lynn Peterson spent a month in Europe in May and June on a NDSU sponsored tour. She was also fortunate in locating relatives in Norway.

The community became somewhat excited about the prospect of oil again. Two rigs moved into the area before Christmas ... one set up at Edd Bachlers and the other on Carl Knudson's land. Both were later declared dry and were capped.

The 1970 census showed a decided decline in population - only 109.



Santa Claus Day.

## 1971

Almont citizens paid their last respects to Almont's founder, E.W. Hyde, who was laid to rest January 19 in the Almont Cemetery. Mr. Hyde died on January 15 at the age of 99½ years. He had been a patient at the Mandan Hospital since Sept. 9, 1963. Funeral services were held at the Almont Wesleyan Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Pete Thorson, Mr. and Mrs. Sig Peterson and Valborg Fisher spent three weeks in Norway visiting relatives and touring the country. It was especially thrilling for Pete to visit his homeland and relatives there.

The Sons of Norway Sverdrup Lodge in Bismarck had a picnic in the Almont Park on August 22. More than 20 Almont folks of Norwegian descent are members of the lodge.

Yolanda Duran of Costa Rica was a 4-H exchange guest at the Sam Thiel home for two weeks in August.

The fear of another flood would soon be something of the past. Construction began November 22 on Almont's Flood Control Project, which included re-channeling the Big Muddy Creek and building a dike around the town. Combined efforts of Lewis and Clark 1805 Resource Conservation and Development District, Morton County Water Management Board and Morton County Soil Conservation Districts made it possible. Sig Peterson was a member of all three groups.

## 1972

Ernie's Main Mart building (formerly the Kelsven Store) was sold at auction in June. Marshall Feland bought the building to use for storage.



The last day Joe Hoovestol carried mail.

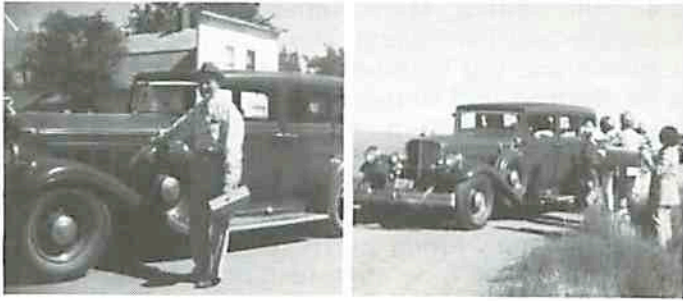
**CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES  
TO ALMONT**

From the

**"75 and Still Alive" Prairie Rose Senior Citizens**







Joe Hoovestol retired from 46 years of Star Route mail carrier service on June 30. In honor of the event, patrons of his route, former patrons, members of the family and friends surprised him as he made the last run on his route. As Joe stopped at each mailbox, he was met by well-wishers who fell in behind him with their cars and accompanied him around the entire route. As he came into Almont, Main Street was lined with friends of Joe who were waiting to join the festivities. After Joe had dutifully attended to his mail carrier duties, he was escorted to the park where everyone enjoyed a picnic dinner and short program with testimonials and presentations to Joe. Three of his original Star Route patrons were present: Fritz Hoeger and Mr. and Mrs. Thorvald Barstad.



In the course of a few days in September, Almont's streets were transformed from dirt to hard surface. It was hard to believe that the long hoped for project was a reality. They were finished just in time for the annual lutefisk and lefse supper.



Marvin Olson and Santa (William Bethke).

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## 1973

The nation-wide fuel shortage was felt in the Almont school in January. The school was unable to procure sufficient fuel oil from suppliers, and prospects for getting any in the near future seemed dim. Heat for the new addition had to be curtailed and it was feared that school might have to be closed temporarily. Warm temperatures from 30-50 helped ease the situation.

The play "Feudin' O'er Yonder" was presented February 23, sponsored by the PTA, and under the direction of Hal Thoenke. The all-adult cast did a tremendous job portraying hillbilly characters.



Sig Peterson, Joel Johnson, Sam and Elvira Thiel.



Square dancers Norman and Nettie Hansen, Marian Anderson and Roman Peterson.

The stage setting, authentic costuming, southern hillbilly draws, makeup and antics of the entire cast combined to make the production a big hit. In fact, it was such a big hit that by popular demand it was given again three weeks later. Many people came to see it a second time and some came from Mandan, Bismarck and neighboring communities. The cast included Nathalie Thorson, Eunice Bond, Irene Olson, Dick Bond, Bob Oberg, Marge Peterson, Lillian Peterson, Carol Ritz, Jerry Price, Harvey Thor-

son, Bill Bethke, Marv Krank, Jean Price, Jane Thoenke and Pat Feland. The musicians were Joel Johnson and Sig Peterson and the square dancers were Norman and Nettie Hansen, Roman Peterson, Marian Anderson, Sam and Elvira Thiel, Morris and Clara Christianson.

Sig Peterson was the recipient of the State Beef Improvement Federation Certificate of Excellence as a commercial producer. He received the award at a banquet of the federation held in Omaha on April 11.

Thorvald Barstad and Mrs. Grace Nelson were honored as homesteaders at a banquet at the New Salem auditorium April 14.

Mrs. Sam Thiel was selected as the Outstanding North Dakota 4-H Leader for 1973.

Tim Feland took the state championship in calf roping at the North Dakota High School Rodeo Finals at Medora in June, which entitled him to enter the National HS Finals in Ogden, Utah, in August.

An abandoned strip mine at North Almont was converted into a motorcycle racetrack by Capital City Cycle Club of Bismarck. Races were held every Wednesday night throughout the summer and were a great attraction.

Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Thorson and Mr. and Mrs. Sam Thiel spent a month in Europe this fall on separate tours.

A First Aid course was held in the community and 26 enrolled in the 16-hour course. It was taught by Clarence Olson and Ty Larson of the State Health Dept. and Vince Friez of the Bismarck Fire Dept.

The price of gasoline started going up and rumors of gas rationing next year ... the price this year was 30¢ a gallon.

## 1974

By March gas was up to 50¢ a gallon and was beginning to get scarce. Gas stations were closing on Sundays and in some states there was rationing and long lines formed at the gas stations. A 60 mph speed limit was set and later changed to 55. It seemed very slow after we had been used to 70 mph and up. The slower speed was to conserve gas - and save lives.

On September 1 Sims Lutheran Church celebrated their 90th anniversary with a morning worship service and afternoon program. A program the previous evening honored Dr. Leon Jacobson, a native son of the congregation. Dr. Jacobson also gave the Sunday afternoon address. Musical numbers included a Norwegian hymn by Mrs. Grace Nelson, vocal solo by Paula Klaudt and a selection by the men's chorus.

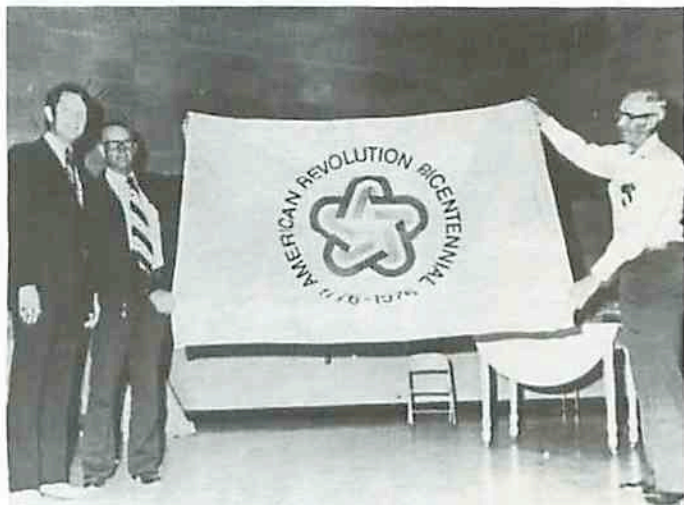
Renae Bachler spent five weeks in Japan this summer as a 4-H exchange student, and Norma Kilen spent 45 days in Holland and Norway.

Ben Ramsland retired on Dec. 31 as postmaster after more than 29 years of service. Marvin Olson assumed the duties of temporary postmaster until confirmation of the postmaster position. Mrs. Gene Thorson was appointed temporary clerk.

The summer was hot and dry - somewhat similar to 1936. Many stockmen cut their wheat for hay. The fall was warm and continued dry.

The High School Eagles completed a successful season by winning the consolation championship in the District 30 Tourney at Dickinson. The Eagles compiled a season record of 14 wins and eight losses, winning 13 of their last 15 games.

The worst blizzard of the season hit the last weekend in March, dumping more than 16 inches of snow with winds of gale proportions. According to Fred Ramsland, this was the heaviest snowfall since 1966. Another snowstorm hit two days later adding another 19 inches of snow. This all but paralyzed the area with power off for 18 hours, no mail service for two days and roads were blocked. Holy-week services were canceled and attendance was small at Easter Sunday services. The bad weather continued through April. Stockmen were about ready to "throw in the towel" as there was a heavy loss of calves and feed was running low. Cold rains in May caused more sickness to calves.



Lt. Gov. Sanstead presents a Bicentennial flag to Mayor Claude Ritz and Sig Peterson.

Almont was named a Bicentennial community, the second to be named in the county, and congratulatory messages were received by Mayor Claude Ritz from Senators Young and Burdick. Twenty-one local people worked on the various committees during the year to complete the 33 contemplated projects. The Bicentennial flag and certificate were presented to the community by Lt. Gov. Sanstead at the Labor Day Reunion program.

The Bicentennial theme was used for the County Homemakers Achievement Day on June 17 at Almont. Highlight of the day was the pageant, "Our Heritage," presented by the host clubs: Almont, Live and Learn and Busy Beavers. A cast of 30 took part in the production, which depicted the heritage of the Almont community in costumes, pantomime, songs, dances and narration. The same production was presented at the Labor Day program and again the following April in Mandan during Bicentennial Days.

The fire hydrants in Almont took on an interesting appearance when they were painted to resemble historical personalities. The project was promoted by Dolly Feland with Pat Schermerhorn doing the artistry, assisted by Cassie and Eleanor Ritz.

The community was excited and proud of the Eagles basketball team this year as they were definitely a winning team. Almont's attendance at the District Tournament in Glen Ullin indicated how much the home folks were backing the team. The fans followed the team to Dickinson for the Regional Tournament, where they placed 4th. Jim Anderson was named to the All State Team this year.

Almont got a LIP (Local Initiatives Program) grant amounting to \$30,536, which provided labor costs for the remodeling and renovation of community buildings. Fifteen unemployed citizens were hired for the projects. Norman Hansen was supervisor.

A new concrete bridge across the Muddy Creek, near Mark Willmans, was built this summer.

Dick Bond was one of the delegation of 34 from North Dakota who went to Egypt and Jordan in March to investigate the possibilities of new trade in agricultural goods and industrial wares. The delegation included Gov. and Mrs. Art Link and representatives of state government and private businesses in North Dakota. Bond and M.G. Olson represented Bison Hybrids.



Sig Peterson and Lawrence Renner erect Community Betterment Sign.

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## ALMONT--YESTERDAY AND TODAY

By Mrs. Roman Peterson

July 4, 1906 our town of Almont began  
Named from the siding where the N.P.R.R. ran  
Laying out 9 original blocks took all day  
The county surveyor & N.P. had their say!

E.W. Hyde & Mr. Burt were in search of a building spot  
For a lumber yard & elevator would take more than one  
lot,

C.H. Chase from South Dakota wanted to build and expand  
And Almont area seemed like the promised land.

Soon 5 business places were built and thriving  
Chase Lumber & Elevator were surviving--  
Chalmers Holte, Sherwoon's Restaurant, & DeVaul's Store  
Oh, Almont had begun--there would be more!

On August 12, early in the morning  
Folks came to Almont, the streets adorning.  
A big celebration was the event of the day  
As where a pasture had been--now a town lay.

The first church service was held that day  
A picnic dinner and band, the Bohemian way  
A baseball game with the Sims ball team  
This town was a reality--no longer a dream!

N.P. brakeman, C.C. Atkinson by name  
Was an early booster who tried to bring fame.  
He secured a large R.R. car when elevators were filled  
Hauling over 2,000 bu. of wheat to Duluth to be milled.

After 13 months had quickly sped by  
There were 22 business places, oh my!  
Plus a lawyer, a doctor, and 24x60 ft. hall  
A depot, school house, & 2 teachers planned for by fall.

If fire, hail storms, drought, and high winds prevailed  
Dreams for big crops and prosperity often failed.  
But the pioneer spirit couldn't be broken  
As men struggled and few complaints were spoken.

After 70 years our town's still growing  
No elevator, no railroad, no train whistle blowing.  
But many face-lifting projects are still underway  
By enthusiastic workers day after day!

The Almont Arena building is restored  
With the first printing press on the old floor board.  
Our school rooms have taken on a sunny look--  
Fresh paint, wood refinishing & elbow grease it took!

The town's Heritage Park with its old stone jail  
Also boasts the North Almont depot (with coal car & rail).  
The Hansen school moved from its prairie spot  
And the old wooden windmill back of the lot.

Prairie Rose Park also got a new look  
As the 8th graders Bicentennial project took.  
They painted the tables and "out-houses" too  
The tire fence all white, looks like new.

Fire hydrants donned Patriot's faces  
Dating back to the early "days"  
Artists' paintings decorate the P.O. walls  
A local project to continue 'til fall.

The housing units, Legion Hall & weighing station  
Have a paint job and look like a new creation.  
Other projects are being planned before the year's over  
Including cutting the town's stand of hay & sweet clover.

Several new mobile homes now dot our town  
They're as neat and attractive as can be found.  
Home owners have also improved the appearance  
Of exterior, interior and even yard clearance.

Tree planting projects and hoeing too.  
By 4-H Club and leader, an excellent crew.  
If each would do his bit to clean up his place  
All of Almont could have a new face!

On this great Bicentennial Independence Day  
Local churches had services to pray.  
Our bells joined in tolling across our nation  
And the old-fashioned picnic was a Homemaker's creation.

Happy Birthday home town of Almont  
May you continue to prosper and grow,  
So when you celebrate your diamond jubilee  
You'll be the best small town one ever could see!

The Almont community entered the Community Betterment Contest and concentrated on three projects: school improvements, Heritage Park and a general clean-up and fix-up of the town. Work progressed well on all the projects, with the help of the LIP workers and volunteers. There were 37 communities in the finals and Almont was declared third place winner in the category of 450 or less population. The award was made at a banquet at the Holiday Inn at Bismarck in October. More than 500 people attended. Gov. Link presented the plaque and a check for \$500 to Sig Peterson, who also received the Governor's Leadership Award. A scrapbook of accomplishments had been compiled by Lillian Peterson and Sig Peterson.



Gov. Link presents Community Betterment Award to Sig Peterson.

1976 was the Bicentennial Year and every community in the state and nation celebrated the event. The Almont Homemakers Club sponsored a 4th of July picnic and also observed Almont's 70th anniversary. At the picnic a poem was read by Lillian Peterson, who had written it for the occasion.

Almont's big Bicentennial celebration was combined with the annual Labor Day Reunion and drew one of the largest crowds in Almont's history ... 3,000 to 4,000 people from 10 states and 41 North Dakota communities. The high school was packed for the program which featured the production, "Our Heritage." Leon Olson emceed and Vernon Knutson sang several numbers. Pioneers in the community who were 80 years of age or older before July 4 and had lived in Morton County 50 years were honored. Grace Nelson, Anna Bakken, Ragna Barstad, Selma Seim and Pete Thorson received certificates. Gov. Link spoke and also played a tune with the Fiddlers and later he helped pitch bundles at the threshing

demonstraion. In spite of the 100° weather, the celebration was most successful.

Dr. Leon Jacobson, Sims native and a graduate of Almont High School was the recipient of the Theodore Roosevelt Roughrider Award, which is recognized as the highest award of the state. The presentation was made by Gov. Link at the N.D. Cancer Society banquet in Jamestown on Oct. 1. The award was a silver bust of Theodore Roosevelt and a leather scroll. An oil portrait of Dr. Jacobson was unveiled and now hangs in the Roughrider Hall of Fame at the N.D. Capitol. Dr. Jacobson was recognized for his contribution to medical science. His research has developed treatment methods to prolong life and alleviate the suffering of patients afflicted with disorders of the blood-forming tissues.



Dr. Leon Jacobson

Calico 4-H members planted 675 trees in Almont and were assisted by the Soil Conservation District.

Sig and Marge Peterson took first place in the talent competition at the 4th District Sons of Norway convention at Kalispell, MT, in June. Sig sang Norsk dialect songs and also played tunes on his Hardanger fiddle. Both were dressed in authentic Norwegian costumes.

Eddie and Charlotte Thiel bought the Almont Service Station business. David Ritz had operated it for about five years.



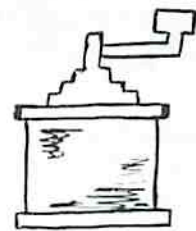
Almont's Bicentennial float in New Salem Bicentennial Parade; also used in Almont's Bicentennial-Labor Day Parade.



Sig and Marge Peterson - Mandan Bicentennial Parade - July 3, '76



# Almont Commercial Club



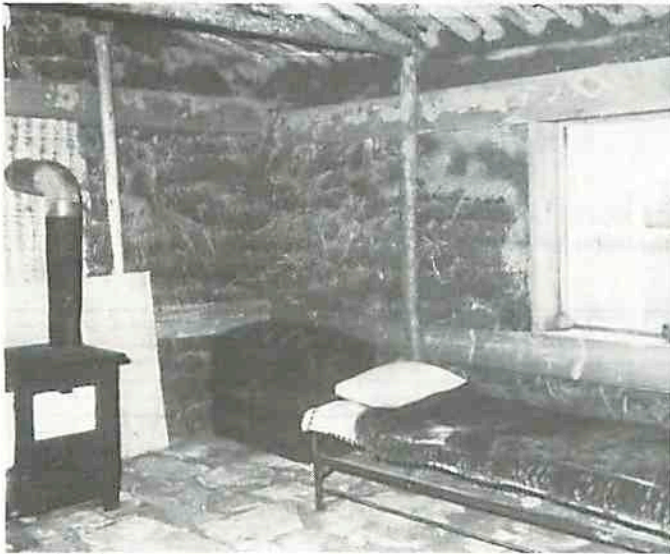
**Our club was organized in 1908 with the purpose of making Almont and community a better place in which to live. This aim has continued throughout the years — and still prevails.**

1977

A Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees) was organized in January. Twenty-four young men in the community joined the organization. One of their first projects was to erect a sod shanty in Heritage Park. TV cameras were in Almont to tape the unusual activity.



Sod shanty at Almont Heritage Park.



Interior view.

Security State Bank of New Salem announced in January that a paying and receiving station would be set up in Almont and a new bank would be built for the business.

Three adult classes were taught this winter for 10 weeks: typing class with Lillian Peterson as instructor; mechanics under Eugene Peterson and a crocheting class under Elvira Thiel.



Oscar Olivera & Mr. Schubert

Oscar Olivera from Venezuela, spent the school year with the Robert Schubert family as an exchange student. He graduated with the senior class in May.

The Almont Historical Society was organized June 15. Elected to the board of directors was Sig Peterson, Hazel Hoovestol, Cassie Ritz, Ben Ramsland and Lillian

Peterson. Harvest was completed early this year because of the extreme heat. Wheat yields were from five to 40 bushels to the acre. There was an unusually good crop of wild fruits, such as June berries, chokecherries, plums and bullberries.



Almont placed 4th in the Community Betterment Contest. The Awards Day was held in Minot and Almont's booth had a Norsk decor.

Almont entered the Community Betterment contest again this year and citizens worked to improve the looks of the town. With the help of CETA workers and volunteer adults, the old Heart River Lumber Co. building was torn down, a sidewalk overhang was attached to the museum and many other improvements were made to beautify the town. Almont was awarded 4th place at the awards banquet in Minot. A plaque and \$250 was presented to Mayor Claude Ritz and Lillian Peterson received the Leadership award. Almont's booth, arranged and manned by Sig and Marge Peterson, had a Norwegian decor.



Lt. Governor Sanstead presents 4th place award to Mayor Claude Ritz.

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Preparing the time capsule to be sealed.

Almont's time capsule was sealed by Sig Peterson and Claude Ritz on July 31 at Memorial Hall and witnessed by 36 citizens. The capsule was placed in the new bank and is to be opened on Almont's 100th birthday. The capsule contained memorabilia of the past and present and those who attended spoke on a tape which was also included. The information is on record at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

The Almont community honored Punch Timpe on June 5 with a picnic at the park in observance of his 80th birthday. About 150 people from the surrounding area helped Punch celebrate the event.



Punch Timpe with his birthday cake.

A special treat to people in the area was the appearance of the Jan Borseth Orchestra from Trondheim, Norway. The 5-piece band played a concert of Norwegian music and also for the dance which followed.



Surviving members of the pioneer Ramsland-Larson family are: Mrs. Tillie Wright, Bismarck; Mrs. Dora Johnson, Oregon City, OR, with their brother, Thorvald Larson, with plaques received at the family banquet.

The Ramsland-Larson family had a reunion at the Legion Hall July 1, 2 and 3 ... 150 relatives registered for the 3-day reunion which included programs, ban-

quet and a dance. Campers, trailers and motorhomes were parked near the hall where all meals were served. Friends of the family were invited to some of the festivities. The three surviving members of the original family were present: Thorvald Larson, Tillie Wright and Dora Johnson.

Almont Service built an addition to their building and now have added feeds to the line of products they sell.

The Morton County Historical Society held their annual meeting at Almont on Oct. 27. About 130 people attended the buffet supper, program and annual meeting held at the school gym. The entertainment was a slide presentation by Sherry and Sharon Bethke of New Salem, who had been "outriders" with the Bicentennial wagon train which traveled to Valley Forge in 1975-76. Ben Ramsland presented the deed for the Almont Museum building and lot (which he owned) as a gift to the Almont Historical Society.



Ben Ramsland presents deed to Sig Peterson, president of Almont Historical Society.

Winter came early this year ... and the storms came often ... every weekend through Christmas season. School and church programs and other activities were canceled because of the weather ... including Santa's annual visit to Almont. There were some losses in livestock.

## Congratulations Almont

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## 1978

First class postage raised to 15¢.

Winter storms continued into the new year and seemed to continue hitting every weekend. Basketball teams were stranded after games and Almont travelers on I-94 were among others forced to seek shelter at farms and at Sunset Inn in New Salem several different times during the winter. By March 1 the drifts in some places measured 17 feet.



Ice flood of spring, 1978. Charles Willman with measuring stick.

Almont received CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training) funds to employ three people during a 7-month period. The workers remodeled the interior of the Legion Hall.

*The Almont Community  
takes this opportunity to thank*

*Sig & Marge Peterson*

*for the many hours  
devoted to the compiling  
of this book.*

*It has indeed been  
a labor of love.*

The new bank was ready for business February 17. The new facility had a meeting room which is available to organizations for their use. Employees from the Security State Bank in New Salem conducted banking hours from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. until Carol Ritz began working as teller in the fall. Banking hours remained the same. The Grand Opening was Nov. 2-3.



The three farm families receiving Family Awards - KFYP Ag Day.

Three Almont farm families received Family Farm Awards at KFYP Ag Day in Bismarck on March 21. The awards were given to families still residing on the family homesteads and were received by Mr. and Mrs. Roman Peterson, Mr. and Mrs. Art Feland, Alvin Peterson and son Eugene. Sig and Marge Peterson were among the entertainers at the affair.

The Almont school received a certificate of recognition from the N.D. Heritage Commission at graduation exercises in May. The school recently completed projects which designated it as a Heritage school.

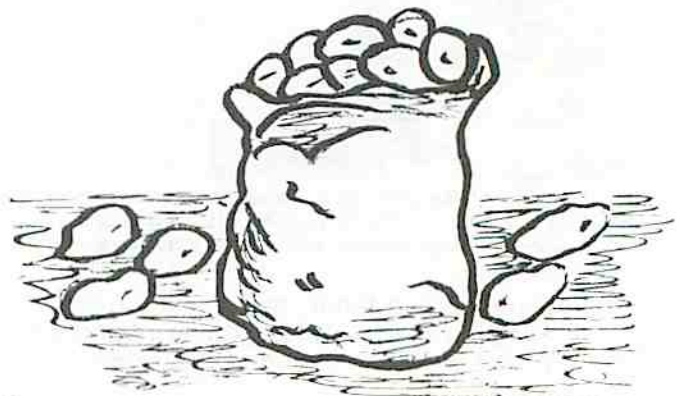
Charles Hoeger, a citizen of the Almont area since it was founded, died at the age of 97 on June 4. Funeral services were held at the Wesleyan Church.

Another pioneer of the community, Hilda Johnson, died August 8 at the age of 92. She was a teacher and taught in the Almont school and was superintendent for several years.

Mrs. Sam Thiel was honored to receive the National Friend of IFYE award and went to Lafayette, IN, to receive the honors.

The Senior Citizens added an addition to Memorial Hall which included a kitchen and bathroom. Funds for the 14x28 block addition were derived from a grant from Title III and matching funds.

A special school election was held to vote on an additional 36-mill levy. Voters approved and the bill passed 151-44. This made national news!





Another winter of heavy snow which was enjoyed by young people who participated in cross-country skiing. A white Christmas extended to Easter, making it a very long winter.

In April Almont received a matching funds grant for a tennis court. The project was spearheaded by the Jaycees, who were also planning a skating rink.

Sig and Marge Peterson enjoyed a trip to the Holy Land in February.

On April 24 the Almont Homemakers Club staged a "Country Day" in the school gym. There were 21 demonstrations of skills of the past including the making of bread, butter, noodles, sausage, lefse, rope saddles and quilts. Other demonstrations were: washing and ironing clothes, spinning, weaving, shelling and grinding corn, making fire, horseshoeing, old-time fiddling and a display of antiques. More than 300 people attended, which included two classes of 4th graders from Bismarck. Almont's Country Day made the front page of the Bismarck Tribune, Mandan News and New Salem Journal and was televised by both TV stations in Bismarck. It was a most successful day!



Hazel and Lillian wash and iron clothes.



Marge and Pat make lefse.

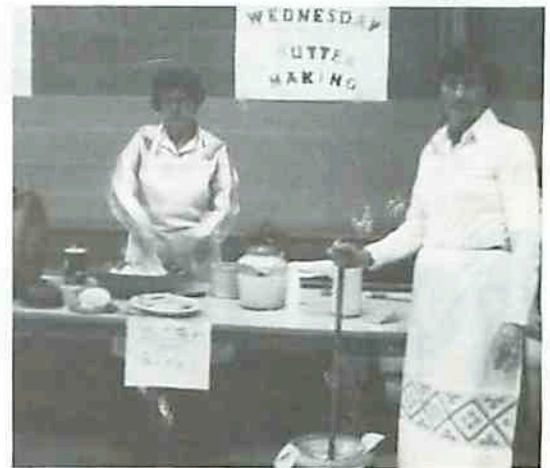


Connie makes sausage and noodles.

## Almont Sets Country Day Demonstration

Tuesday, April 24 has been set as Country Day in Almont. The event will be held in the Almont School Gym from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and will depict country living in pioneer days. There will be more than 20 booths with demonstrations such as churning butter, repairing shoes, saddle making, washing clothes, spinning, knitting and crocheting, quilting, making noodles, sausage stuffing, rope making, grinding and shelling corn, lefse making, rock tumbling, horse shoeing, grinding corn (Indian style), carving, chicken picker, working with sea shells, old musical instruments and several antique displays. Will also be old time fiddling!

The Almont Homemakers Club is sponsoring the event and extends an invitation to everyone to come and enjoy a "country day." There will be no admission charge. Lunch will be served all day.



Dolly and Marian churn butter.



Valborg and Thorliev spin and weave.



Clara bakes.



Grinding corn.

Gov. Link was the graduation speaker this year and before the exercises was honored at a buffet supper for the graduates, school board and high school faculty at the Sig Peterson home. Grace Smith was recognized for her 21 years as school cook and was presented a certificate by Gov. Link.




Grace Smith accepts certificate from Gov. Link.

Mrs. Goldie Renner received her appointment as postmaster on May 19. She had been clerk for four years under Postmaster Marvin Olson, who passed away last October. Sylvia Olson of Glen Ullin served as Officer-in-charge for seven months.

June 20-24 Almont had a 5-day Chautauqua, sponsored by the Almont Commercial Club, under the auspices of the North Dakota Committee for Humanities and Public Issues. There were seven shows under the big tent, which was set up in Heritage Park. The average attendance was 110. Almont furnished part of the entertainment for each performance. On Sunday an ecumenical service was held in the tent with all three churches participating.



The Chautauqua tent in Heritage Park.



**June 20, 21, 22, 23 & 24, 1979**  
Almont, North Dakota

7:30 P.M.  
MDT

ADULT'S PASS



Ecumenical service held on Sunday morning by Fr. Cyprian Meier, Pastor John Leitell and Mr. Ron Groninger.

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Mr. and Mrs. Gene Thorson visited their daughter and family in Germany in October. They also traveled with the Babcock family to Norway and Holland.

Almont's Nutrition Program (hot meals for senior citizens) was started July 2. A hot, balanced noon meal, prepared by Pearl Tavis at the cafe, is served in the Senior Citizen's kitchen, under the supervision of Hazel Hoovestol five days a week. The project is subsidized by the government.

Almont was entered in the Community Betterment Contest again this year and an all-out effort was made to improve the community in every way. Although they received only honorable mention this year, they did place first with their booth. The booth



promoted Almont's main products - beef, wheat and western hospitality. The booth was arranged and manned by the Petersons - Roman, Lillian, Sig and Marge.



Sig and Gov. Link play a peppy tune in Almont's booth.



Community Betterment Booth - 1st place in state - Roman and Lillian Peterson, Sig and Marge Peterson.

Streets signs, painted by the 7th and 8th graders, were erected in September.



New street signs erected - Roman Peterson, Marvin Ritz, Gene Peterson, Claude Ritz, Warren Hoovestol.

In November seven people from the Almont area spent a week in Hamburg, Germany, as ambassadors with the Friendship Force, an international organization to promote friendship and good will between countries. There were 250 ambassadors from the Mandan-Bismarck area who made the trip by chartered plane and stayed with host families (whom they had never met before) in Germany. A like number of Germans returned on the chartered plane to spend a week with host families in this area. Those from Almont who went were: Mrs. Pauline Anderson, Mrs. Clara Christianson, Mrs. Rudy Feland, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Thiel and Mr. and Mrs. Sig Peterson, who also had their niece Linda Rusch with them.

The Almont school was one of the first schools west of the Missouri River to take advantage of Prairie School Television.

Some families in the area enjoyed the 50°-60° temperatures before Christmas with picnics and outings at the Heart River. The nice weather continued through the holidays.



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## 1980

The weather made news again this year. After a mild winter, with very little snow, the dry weather continued into spring and people were beginning to compare the situation to the dry 30's. Lack of moisture made the grass dormant so pastures were bare and two hard freezes in May destroyed wild fruit and froze the foliage on trees. The countryside looked more like fall than spring. Gov. Link put a ban on open burning ... and a little ash that drifted in from St. Helen's added gray to the brown landscape. A light rain the end of May gave a little hope to the situation and rain towards the end of July helped revive the pastures. However, by this time the small grain crops were badly damaged and stockmen had begun to sell part of their herds and ship in hay. Hail in the area on July 5 helped harvest the grain. Fall rains and warm weather brought out the lilacs and crocuses and helped green up the hills. The seasons were reversed again ... fall looked like spring!

New Salem wanted a name for their famous Holstein cow on the hill and Harvey Thorson came up with the name they chose ... "New Salem Sue."

The tennis court was completed and dedicated on August 16. The court is enclosed with a chain link fence and has floodlights. The work was all volunteer, with matching funds from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. The Jaycees were in charge of the project.

On July 24 the community surprised Lawrence Renner with a potluck picnic at the park on his birthday, as an expression of appreciation for the many things he has done for everyone in the community.

Calvin Feland took 2nd place in calf roping at the State High School Rodeo Finals in New Salem June 18. Lawrence Stolberg was honored at the rodeo for being supportive to the HS Rodeo Ass'n. For years Lawrence has given handmade leather saddle equipment to the winners in each event.

The price of gas has risen to more than \$1.00 a gal. People are buying smaller cars to get better mileage.

LaVonne Hunter was named to the State Historical Advisory Council in August. She is the only elementary teacher in the state serving on the board.

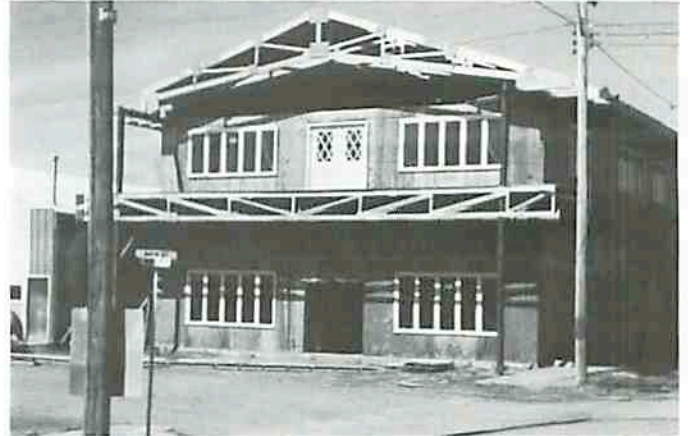
There has been much oil exploratory activity in our area the past year. Almost all section lines and many quarter section lines were explored by seismograph crews. In the summer of 1980, four test wells were drilled in the area; all were drilled to a depth of between 9,000 and 10,000 ft. No significant showing of oil was reported so all were abandoned. The location of the drillings were at the Dennis Olin farm about three air miles northeast of Almont, Marvin Karch farm about 2 miles north of the Olin well, Chris Olsen farm about three miles west of Almont, and on the Edd Bachler farm, eight miles southwest of Almont.

A CPR class was completed this year to qualify help with the ambulance. Class members were Lawrence Renner, Gene Peterson, Pat Schermerhorn, Pearl Olson, Clara Christianson, Gene Stolberg and Donna Johnson.

The Youth Community Conservation and Improvement Project, with Clyde Graham in charge, worked on projects during the summer months to improve

and maintain the over-all appearance of the community.

Five people from Hamburg, Germany, with the Friendship Force, were hosted for two weeks in August by Mrs. Pauline Anderson and Sig and Marge Peters. They were the same people Mrs. Anderson and the Petersons stayed with on a Friendship Force exchange last November. Clara Christianson's German hosts had visited her earlier this year. They all enjoyed the wide open spaces and the friendly hospitality of everyone in the community.

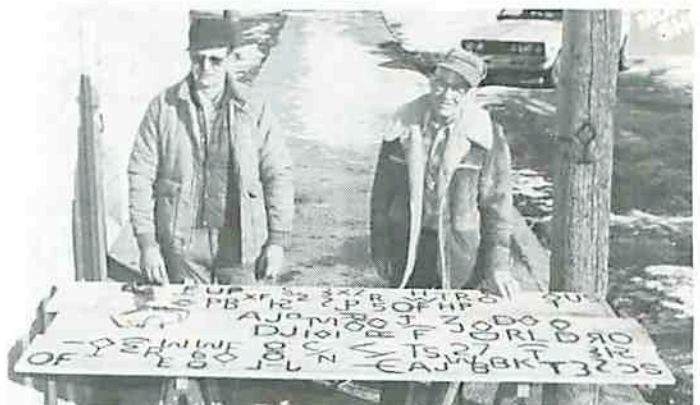


The Feland Lumber and Equipment Co. began an extensive expansion of their facilities this fall. A spacious apartment for the Marshall Feland family will be built on the second floor of the new office building.

Several meetings were held this year to organize the up-coming 75th anniversary of the town. The dates - June 19-20-21 - will also include an All-Class Reunion. In October the Commercial Club decided to publish a 75th Anniversary History Book and update the 50th Anniversary book. Histories and material are to be in by Jan. 15, 1981.

A Community Thanksgiving Service was held at the Almont Lutheran Church on the Sunday evening before Thanksgiving and was very well attended by the three congregations. Taking part in the service were Father Cyprian Meier, St. Leopold's Catholic Church; Rev. Clyde Graham, Wesleyan Church, and Pastor Leitel of the host church. Lay people from each congregation also had a part and each church provided special music for the service.

December 12 was Picture and Brand Burning Day. Pictures were taken in the school gym by Ernest



Brand Burning Day - Dec. 12, 1980.

Feland of West Fargo for the history book. A schedule had been set up for all organizations in the community, school students and faculty. The first pictures were taken at 8:30 a.m. and continued through the day. Prairie Rose Senior Citizens served coffee both morning and afternoon. Brand Burning took place at Almont Service with Bob Feland in charge. Anyone in the Almont trade area having a recorded livestock brand, was invited to bring in their branding iron. The brands were burned into a wood board which will later be erected at Heritage Park. There was a \$10.00 fee for each brand burned. About 75 brands were recorded that day ... it was a very successful day.



Main Street in Almont - 1980.



Looking south at Almont's Main Street - 1980.

The West River Transportation bus continues to provide service for senior citizens and others in the Almont community who desire rides to Bismarck and Mandan. The bus arrives in Almont every Tuesday at 8 a.m. and returns about 5 p.m.

## 1981

Plans are in the making for the 75th anniversary of Almont and all committees met January 6 to discuss the celebration and report on progress. Sig Peterson and Harvey Thorson are co-chairmen of the event and Mrs. Leroy Ritz and Mrs. Lester Feland are co-chairmen of the All-Class Reunion. It was decided to have a public meeting every month on the first Monday evening to discuss and have progress reports from the various committees.

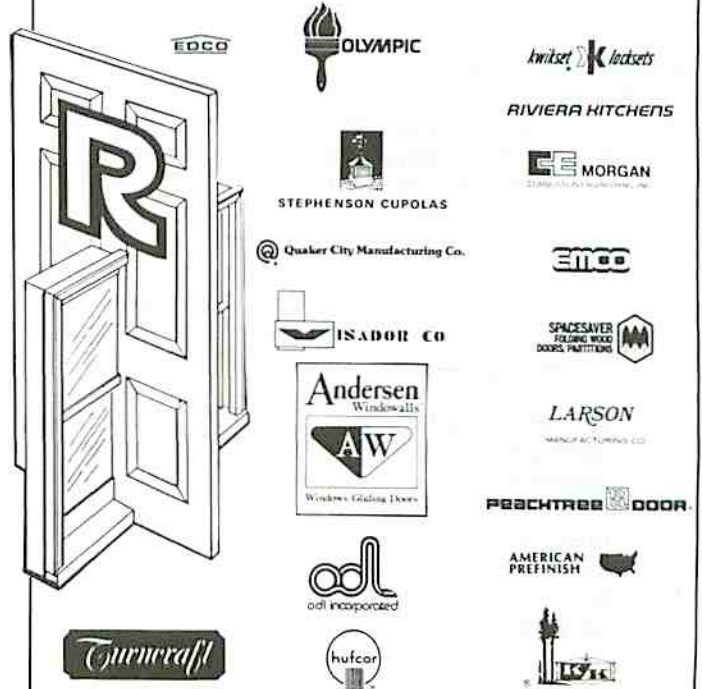
The month of January found everyone digging in their attics, basements and old albums for material for the history book. Deadline for family histories and organization histories was set at January 30. The history committee is Sig and Marge Peterson, Lillian Peterson, Harvey Thorson, Joel Johnson and Edith Skjolsvik. Joel will design the book cover.

January 20th was a very special day ... the return of the 52 hostages from Iran and the inauguration of Ronald Regan as president of the U.S. to succeed Jimmy Carter. The hostages were freed after being held 444 days.

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So again let us say that this progress was possible only through the efforts of our employees, customers and our community.

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LA CROSSE FARGO  
BISMARCK MADISON

Weather was beautiful in January ... temperatures in the 60's. Except for a couple weeks of cold weather in February, the winter has been the warmest on record in this area.

Towers for the 500 kw Basin Electric transmission power line have been erected through this area. The line, which was started last summer, will run from the Antelope Valley station at Beulah to Huron, SD. The location through this area is diagonally from Sugar Loaf Hill, north of Sig Petersons, to about a mile north of the former Curlew section house. The steel towers are set in concrete and range in height from 100 to 155 feet.

In February Thelma Klingensmith received word from the National Library of Congress that they were pleased to accept Almont's 50th Anniversary History Book for permanent selection. Mrs. Klingensmith had personally delivered the book when she attended the American Library Trustee Association meeting in Washington, D.C. in January. Mrs. Klingensmith is state president of the North Dakota Library Trustee Association. She also delivered a copy of Morton County Prairie Roots, which was also accepted.

Postal rates were raised to 18¢ for a first class letter and gas prices have risen to \$1.34 per gallon.

An economical development course for rural communities was conducted in January and February. The course, which consisted of three meetings, was sponsored by the N.D. University with extension staff people as coordinators. The purpose of the meetings was to survey the local economic require-

ments and problems and identify potentials. The average attendance was 14 and everyone seemed to conclude that it was a worthwhile course.

Bryan Johnson placed second, third and fourth in the triple jump, long jump and high jump in a college track meet at Bozeman, MT, in February. Bryan has made a very good track record during his high school and college years.

An oil drilling rig moved to a location on the Jake Larson ranch in March.

On April 12 Ben Ramsland was presented a Life Membership in Legion Post 261 in Almont. Ben has had 35 years of continuous service in the Almont Post and has held the office of adjutant during those years.

Grandma Grace Nelson celebrated her 90th birthday April 7. Grace came to this area in 1903 with her folks and homesteaded in Grant County in 1912.

As we conclude this account of Almont's 75 years of progress and events, we've noted changes that have taken place over the years, the ups and downs of our small town, and the struggle to survive. The closeness and cooperation of all the people of the community has been the key to keeping Almont alive. May the next generations continue to have the same cooperative spirit and pride in their town and continue to keep Almont alive for another 75!

FOOTNOTE: Material for this history of Almont has been derived from the Almont Golden Jubilee History Book, The Almont Arena, New Salem Journal, Mandan Pioneer and Bismarck Tribune. I have tried to make it as authentic as possible.

Marge Peterson

