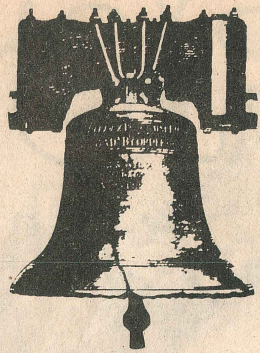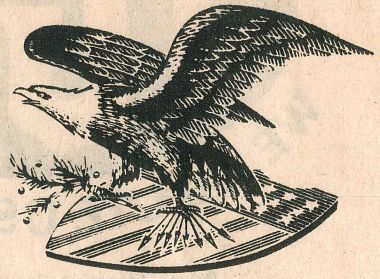# MADRID AREA BICENTENNIAL

1776-1976

"Rememberances of Days Gone By"

Early Worth Township Communities

There were two communities laid out in Worth Township, Parkersburg and Luther. Only one, however, remains in existence today. The first of these, Parkersburg was laid out by David Parker in November 1852, on the northwest quarter section 2, at the point of timber known as Pea's Point. This town was designed to be a rival of Boonesboro.

All of the settlers at that time believed that the first railroad coming into Boone County would enter from the south and run on the prairie touching the points of timber on its route. In running thus, it would miss Boonesboro about two miles and Parkersburg would become a station, which meant it probably would become the county seat.

This north and south railroad so fondly hoped for did not come until long after the Chicago and Northwestern had spanned the state from east to west. But when the line from the south running into Boone was built in 1882, it ran within eighty rods of the eastern limits of Parkersburg, but this tiny community never so much as got a start toward being a town.

The old Boone County House, kept by Parker, became one of the most prominent country hostelries ever kept in Central Iowa. This country hotel was the only thing beyond the ordinary that Parkersburg ever had.

Luther

The second and last town laid out in Worth Township was the tiny community of Luther. A post office was established in 1884 but the town was not laid out until January 26, 1893. Incorporation did not take place until 1903.

In the fall of 1883, Clark Luther built a storehouse on the site of Luther and J. K. Jenkins opened a store which in a short time met with considerable patronage. Jenkins was the first postmaster at Luther.

For a town its size, there was a large amount of business transacted. There was, at one time, three stores in the town, one bank, a blacksmith and woodwork shop, a livery barn, telephone office, practicing physician, two grain elevators and approximately 150 residents. The community was incorporated shortly after its founding and for a number of years had a system of waterworks and electric lights. It has lost two stores and a lumber yard by fire over the years, none of these places were ever rebuilt.

Located on the Boone line of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, the town has two churches, the Methodist Episcopal and the Church of Christ.

About two miles west of Luther is the Meadow Grove Church, the oldest church society in the township, having been organized in 1881. There are also two cemeteries located in the township, Hull Cemetery in the southwest corner and Sebers in the northern part. Many of the townships early settlers and first county officers are buried in these areas.

The first brick houses in Boone County were erected in Worth Township. These were built in 1857 and both were two-story residences. One was constructed by Clarke Luther and the other by James E. Moss.

The first election in the township took place in 1849 with two citizens selected to fill country offices, Thomas Sparks, county surveyor, and John Boyles, county commissioner.
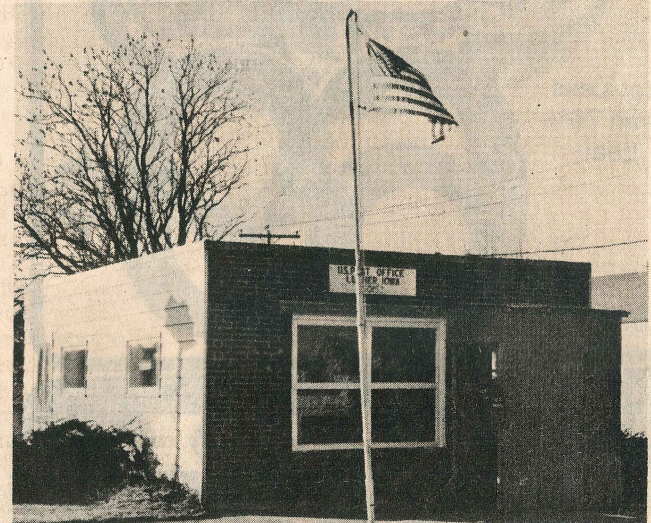
The first indictable crime ever to occur in Boone County took place in Worth Township in 1854. Richard Green, owner of a farm in section 35 and his wife were visiting neighbors on a Sunday afternoon, leaving their three children at home to take care of things around the house. Upon returning home, Mr. Green decided to see if his money was still safe and untouched, the amount being $180, a large sum in those days. It was kept in a satchel on the wall. He found the satchel in its proper location, but the money was missing. Mr. Green called the children before him and asked them if they had taken the money. They all denied having committed the crime so he then asked them if anyone had been in the house during his absence. They told him a man named George Redmon had been there for over an hour but didn't touch the satchel during the time. Mr. Green, however, believed he had returned to the house while the children were out playing and took the money from the satchel.

Knowning Redmon to be a shrewd and witty man he knew he would need a full-proof plan to trick him into confessing that he took the money. Being well acquainted with Redmon, he knew that he would take a sip of intoxicating liquor with a relish when the opportunity presented itself. So he purchased a jug and contact six other farmers to help him with a well-planned trap. He told his accomplisses to mask themselves and hide in the ditch until the two men passed by and then jump from their hiding place and capture the villian.

The plan worked to perfection and the man was tied to a large oak tree. He was told he would remain there until he told them where the money could be found. The men then began to whip the man after he denied ever taking the money. After denying his innocence two more times, Redmon finally confessed on the third time and took them to the spot where the nine $20 gold pieces were located. Redmon left the township the following morning and never returned again. Report has it that he stopped at the Twenty-Mile House, ten miles from the scene of the crime to have his wounds dressed. The money in question was buried about forty rods south of the Saunders home in a corner of a rail fence in Worth Township.

Iowa's Smallest Post Office

Luther, back in 1958 had the distinction of having Iowa's smallest post office building. The post office measures 10x11 feet and has a lobby only 40 inches deep across the front. A "No Loitering" sign is found in the building and provides an amusing touch of humor.

Luther had its mail output increased by the development and expansion of the local grain elevator business and qualified in 1956 for a third class post office. But, after the consolidation and reorganization of the school district, the post office was on the verge of returning to fourth class status.

At that time there were 40 rented boxes and in the back of the building was a safe, table, cupboard, chair and outgoing mail sack. Mrs. Ursula Barton was postmistress of the Luther branch at this time, and had been since 1941.

By having a third class rating, Mrs. Barton was permitted to have extra clerical help during the Christmas rush, but there was hardly any room for two persons to work in the tiny building.

Appearing on the front bulletin board are the usual "Wanted" posters and despite the cramped quarters, the Luther post office provides all the services of the larger postal offices.