

Flensburg began as side track

Each Sunday, the St. Cloud Times profiles a Central Minnesota community. This week's town is Flensburg.

Name: Flensburg originally was known as "Flynn's Siding" for J.C. Flynn, Little Falls teacher, legislator and Northern Pacific Railroad tie inspector. Flynn's Siding was the 1882 Little Falls and Dakota side track and depot for shipping wood and timber.

Platted by Olaf and Dagmar Searle in 1890, Flensburg (named for a Prussian seaport city or possibly a shortened Flynn's Siding) became the official name when the village was incorporated in 1911.

Population: City Clerk Marge Backowski says the population is 256. The first city clerk (1911) was Anthony Backowski, uncle of Marge's husband, Philip. John Wilinski was the first constable, Vincent Wojciechowski, first council president and Jake Mrozek, treasurer.

Early settlers: The names Wotzka, Lasecki and Adamski appear in an 1891 Sacred Heart Church history as holders of 10 acres donated for a future church. Other early settlers include families whose surnames were Rutz, Pierowicz, Smuda, Ziolkowski, Super, Evan, Trzebiatowski, Hlad, Gastecki and others.

Early businesses, according to native Myrtle (Bergstrom) Masson, Little Falls, included Flensburg State Bank, the Bergstrom and Wojciechowski general stores, John Super's and John Bergstrom's potato warehouses, Hamernick grain elevator, Flensburg Lumber and Coal, a pickle factory, blacksmith, cream stations, two dance halls, stock yards and a saloon.

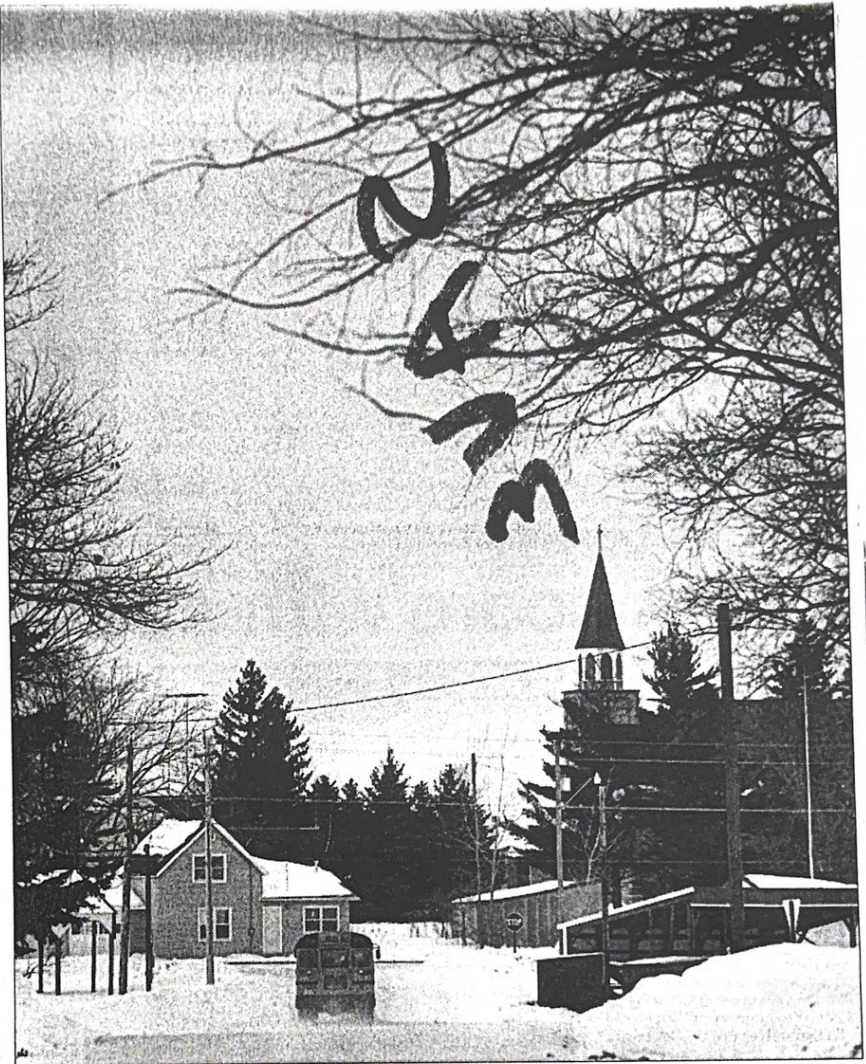
Movers and shakers: Mark Piekarski is mayor and the council members are Frank Rutz, Mary C. Lange, Stanley Witt and Dan Pelzer, treasurer. An up-to-date city sewer system, operated by Ben Lapos, was installed in 1951 east of town and updated with two treatment ponds in 1982. Future plans are to build city tennis courts, biking and hiking paths.

Landmarks: The brick Sacred Heart Church, built in 1907, and a cemetery and 1935 rectory, whose present pastor is the Rev. Leo Otto, is most noticeable.

The 1985 Flensburg Sportsmen's Club, on former railroad land, has meeting rooms, a kitchen and bathrooms for rental or community use. The baseball park is south of the Sportsmen's Club building.

Present businesses: The Flensburg Cooperative Creamery Association, established in 1923, sells feed, seed, fertilizer, hardware and groceries; Flensburg Municipal Liquor Store, managed by Joan Super; Postmaster Jerry Gwost's Mobil Service, which also is the local post office; Louie Kulus' Feed Store sells Purina feeds and delivers feed in bags and bulk; Mark Piekarski's Tractor Repair.

What city was best known for: Millions of feet of hardwood timber, thousands of railroad ties and thou-



Times photo by Chuck Kimmerte

Sacred Heart Catholic Church was started as a mission in Flensburg in the 1890s. Today, the church is the most noticeable landmark in town.

Town profile: Flensburg

sands of cords of wood were shipped from the woods and sawmills around Flensburg," according to Morrison County historian Val E. Kasparek. The resulting cleared land produced acres of wheat and potatoes, and later oats and corn to support the area's growing dairy industry. Flensburg Fun Days is the first Sunday in June and is sponsored by the 35-member Flensburg Sportsmen Club, according to Don J. Lapos, president.

Historic events: School District No. 63 was organized in 1890, according to Kasparek. The public school house was in the center of town. As early as 1892, 38 Catholic families in Flensburg were saving for a church, according to early church records. Plans were halted for a time when the St. Stanislaus Church pastor in nearby LeDoux (Sobieski) announced plans for a new church, because Flensburg Catholics

belonged to the LeDoux parish. Undaunted and with support from new Bishop Martin Marty, a chapel was built in 1894, which, in 1896, became Sacred Heart mission church. In 1898 a parish house was built for the first pastor, the Rev. S. Urbanke. Sacred Heart Catholic School and convent was built in early 1950s.

In 1917, John Bergstrom, Flensburg postmaster, storekeeper and Northern Pacific station caretaker, died after being struck by a L.F. and D. branch passenger train. Bergstrom left a wife and 11 children.

Flensburg got its first fire truck in 1955 when fire chief, Philip Backowski and Sacred Heart pastor, the Rev. Paul Otto, picked it up in Foley.

Spot to check out: Flensburg Volunteer fire department has 20 members, headed by 12-year chief Dan



Times map by Stephanie Johnson

Pelzer. The 1980 Franciscan Sisters House of Prayer, in the former Sacred Heart convent, is a place for Franciscans to live a contemplative life with prayer as their ministry. Flensburg residents bring prayer requests to the House of Prayer.

Quote: "Flensburg is a a good place to live," said Clerk Marge Backowski. "Not one death in this town in 1988."

— Staff Writer Mary Phillips