



This photo taken from atop the old Hord Elevator shows how Hordville once looked. The building in the lower front is the Lumber

Company. The community will observe its 75th birthday with a weekend celebration.

Hordville plans 75-year party

By John Ortman

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"There have been a lot of changes over the years."

That's how one resident of Hordville summed up the village's history since its founding in 1906.

Along with neighboring Polk, Hordville grew up along a new branch line of the Union Pacific Railroad from Stromsburg to Central City.

The first lots were sold Sept. 12, 1906, which makes Hordville 75 years old this month. In recognition, residents have planned "Hordville Diamond Days," scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 5 and 6, said Mrs. Carla (Randy) Fowler, celebration committee member.

The celebration will start at 12:30 p.m. Saturday with a kiddie parade, followed by a float parade, through the downtown. Then at 2 p.m. a beard-growing contest will be judged at the main street bandstand.

Next are two hours of games at various sites around town, lasting from 3 to 5 p.m. There will be games for children as well as adults. Among other things, there are softball, a cow-chip throwing contest, a dunking stool and a "muddy pig catch." Mrs. Fowler said grease has proven too hard to get off the participants, so only mud is being used to lubricate the pigs.

From 5 to 7 p.m. there will be a barbeque at the community hall, with entertainment being provided from 6 to 8

p.m. Among the acts to be offered are square dancers, and Danish dancers from the Kronberg Church south of Hordville. And from 8 p.m. on there will be continuous showings of historical films on Hordville.

For those who want to cut their own rugs, there will be a street dance from 8 p.m. to midnight, featuring the music of the C.C.'s, a band Mrs. Fowler said can play music for all tastes.

On Sunday, there will be a community church service at 10:30 a.m. in the park. A gospel group, the Crossroads Singers from Grand Island, will perform. Right after church, residents who have lived in or near Hordville for all it's 75 years will be presented with certificates. A potluck dinner will follow in the community hall.

At 12:30 p.m. a flea market will open for business and from 1 to 3 p.m. there will be horseshoe pitching and water-fights.

Hordville, present population 150, was founded by the same city improvement company that started Polk, where lots were sold the day before Hordville's founding. Stromsburg businessmen Wesley, Nathan and Victor Wilson organized the town, which was named after T.B. Hord, a Central City cattleman.

The reason for both towns was the same. The Union Pacific wanted paying customers, especially grain elevators, along its new branch line and so encouraged local leaders to start them.

Stores and other buildings popped up

in Hordville literally overnight, according to a history being compiled by Mrs. Marie Clayton and Mrs. Gladys Anderson. Some buildings were moved in and others were started the day after the lots were sold.

Hordville's oldest residents, assembled for a monthly get-together at the community center, remember the early, bustling days. Among the community services were four grocery stores, doctors' offices, a jewelry store, three churches, an auto garage, a lumberyard, hotel and drug store.

Church services were conducted in Swedish, and concerts at the bandshell drew crowds.

But not all of the past is remembered fondly, a retired school teacher said.

"You built your own fire and carried your own coal and cobs and walked three miles to school," she said. "You carried a bucket of water to school so you had something to drink."

Hordville's glories aren't all in the past by any means. Residents point with pride to the community center, completed with no outside money, and the fact Hordville has low-rent housing for the elderly, unusual in a town so small.

And a new sign outside town announces Hordville's latest accomplishments; first place in the Nebraska Community Improvement Program's 1980 small-town division, and the 1981 Class D state basketball championship.