

Villages flourished and died on plains

As the county of Norton grew many towns sprang up. Some are still with us but many have become little more than memories.

REAGER

Homesteaded by W.W. Reager in 1882, Reager at one time boasted a general store, a church, a grain elevator and was a railroad stop.

Now, all that remains of Reager is the grain elevator, an abandoned building and one home.

Located 12 miles west of Norton on U.S. 36, Reager is not much more than a "bump" as you cross the railroad tracks that service the grain elevator that still remains a shipping point for grain.

NEW ALMELO

The place was chosen for its ideal church site, on a hill overlooking an attractive view of the Solomon Valley.

New Almelo, home of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, is the center of a Catholic community six miles west of Lenora. Mass is conducted every Sunday at 8 a.m. and Tuesday at 8:30 a.m.

DENSMORE

Densmore is located in the Solomon Valley and was laid out and named by John T. Densmore who came out west in 1874. It was platted and filed for record in 1881. Mr.

Densmore became the first post master.

Several families still call Densmore home but after the schools closed the town began to fade away.

EDMOND

Edmond came by its name in a most unusual way. A young grocery salesman by the name of Jack Edmond told the town's first merchant, Noah Weaver, that he would include 1,000 flour sacks if he would name the town Edmond. Mr. Weaver took the sacks and the town became Edmond. It was platted and filed for on Sept. 10, 1879.

Edmond thrived during the late 1880s. The town enjoyed a newspaper, school, post office and railway service.

Last year, with the loss of Brady Grain, the town's only business, Edmond joins the ranks of "the towns of yesteryear".

ORONOQUE AND DELLVALE

When two railroads were to be laid west of Norton, a new station for a western terminus was needed, so Oronoque came into existence. It was platted and the record filed in 1885. It was on the Oberlin branch of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad.

Dellvale was on the Rock Island and platted and filed first as South Oronoque. The settlement had a second chance at naming and was renamed Dellvale.

Both towns have long since faded away.

OTHER LOST TOWNS

Devises was an inland trading center north of U.S. 36 near the Nebraska line.

Rayville was on the Kansas/Nebraska border to the northeast of Alma and at one time boasted a post office, store, millinery, blacksmith and drugstore.

Norton Center or **Reedtown** was founded in 1873 by Shelby Reed one mile west of State Street and south of West Washington. He started it with the idea of making it the county seat.

Seth was on land owned by David F. McFarland near the present site of **Calvert**. However, after Calvert was platted, Seth was soon abandoned.

Leota was six miles southwest of Norton. It was first named Weston but the post office reported that there was another town by that name so Leota was chosen in honor of M.A.

Morrison's daughter. Leota and Norton waged a fight for the county seat for years. When Norton won the fight in 1878, Leota deteriorated.

Port Landis was about one and a half miles west of Edmond. The town site was platted by O.M. Dannevik and Fred Barlow. The town was the scene of the murder of John Landis in 1878. The little town had a store, sod schoolhouse and a few sod houses.

Rockwell City was 11 miles west and three and a half miles north of Norton. Named by a Dr. Rockwell in 1884, he had grand plans for his town but only lived six months. After the railroad was laid out a few miles south, the town was abandoned.

Birkville was about 12 miles east and two miles south of Norton. In 1918, the church burned, the store closed in 1920, and other buildings have been moved away.

Tiny Clayton is 'friendly town'

Clayton calls itself "The Friendly Town."

Located on the Decatur/Norton county border on K-383, the town has a church, park, city hall and grain elevator.

Fishing and boating are just 10 minutes away at Keith Sebelius Reservoir.

The United Methodist church has Sunday services at 10 a.m. and Sunday School at 11 a.m.

For electric service, call Prairie Land Electric Cooperative at (785) 877-3323.

For propane, contact the Norton County Coop at (785) 693-4522.

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Little Almena has lots to offer

Almena, population 509, covers a square mile in the northeast corner of Norton County.

The town is home to the Almena Irrigation District, Home Oil, Almena Market, Almena State Bank and Insurance Agency, Oak Shop, Almena Agri-Services, Carver Trucking, All Creatures Vet Clinic, Arford's Antiques, Sprague's Corner/Baker Antiques, Windmill Farms, Rita's Beauty Salon, Body Essentials, Hawks Electric, Bob Hawks Construction, and Husky Hogs.

There is a senior citizens center, city office, public library, post office, the Almena Housing Authority (with eight apartments), and American Legion building.

The Sunflower Pioneer Power Association has its facilities north of town, near the school's football field.

Almena has a new disc golf course

and horse shoe pit at the roadside park, east of town along K-383. Clubs include the Almena Pride Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Boy Scouts, Cedar Ridge 4-H Club, the Masons, Eastern Star, Coterie Club, and Quilt Club.

Fire protection is provided by the Almena Rural and City fire departments.

If you're moving to town call the city for water, sewer, or trash services, 669-2425; Nex-Tech for phone and cable service, (877) 550-7872; Midwest Energy for natural gas service, (800) 222-3121; Aquila for electricity, (800) 303-0752; and Home Oil for propane, 669-2421.

If you're hungry lunch specials are offered at Home Oil, Almena Market and the Almena Senior Citizens Center.

Medical Services are about 20 minutes away, at the Norton County Hospital. Ambulance or sheriff services are available by calling 911.



The Sunflower Pioneer Power Association's annual Antique Machinery, Threshing and Power Show is just one of the many things

that Almena offers during the year.

— Telegram photo by Veronica Monier

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