

Historical Society Dedicates “Lost Towns”

The Martin County Historical Society will dedicate the final three of the nine “Lost Towns” located in Martin County the last two Sundays in August. This project was initiated by Roy Levik, past president of the Martin County Historical Society, and is financed in part with funds provided by the state of Minnesota through the Minnesota Historical Society’s grants in aid program. The “Lost Towns” of Manyaska, located south of Welcome, and De Soto, located north of Dunnell, will be dedicated on Sunday, August 24th. Tenhassen, located near Ceylon, will be dedicated on Sunday, August 31st.

Manyaska was established in 1899 and was a station on the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad between Welcome and Ceylon. It was a prosperous shipping point for livestock and grain. At one time, it had a post office, two lumberyards, a creamery, a grain elevator, a general store, a hotel, and a depot. The last building, a general store, was moved to Welcome in 1961 by the Ray Wohlhuter family and became their residence.

De Soto, located north of Dunnell, was platted by the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad in 1899. It was named for the Spanish explorer, Hernando De Soto, by a St. Paul resident in charge of the railroad’s town site. De Soto, which existed for just a few months, was accessible only from the east. Because of this, residents raised \$1,500.00 to move further south, and thus created the community of Dunnell.

Tenhassen, located near Ceylon, was known from 1856 to 1873 as Tuttle’s Grove, in honor of Calvin Tuttle who was the first settler in Martin County. The fur trade was its only cash revenue in early years. A post office was established in 1862, and by 1875 there were stores, a saw mill, as well as other businesses that once rivaled Fairmont in size and importance. Because Tenhassen was bypassed by the railroad, businesses moved to Ceylon and Sherburn, and by 1900 Tenhassen was in rapid decline. All that remains of Tenhassen today is a cemetery.

The marking of these “Lost Towns” has generated a great deal of pride and interest among the local citizens at each site, and will ensure that these towns will be remembered for future generations.