

Gnesen History

The Town of Gnesen was founded March 18, 1879 by group of mostly Polish homesteaders.

They had immigrated to America from Pomerania in northcentral Poland, between 1869 and 1873, to avoid the oppression of the Czar of Prussia. A second group emigrated to Gnesen around 1881, from the Pozana area in central western Poland.

The name Gnesen, German spelling or Gniezno in Polish, came from a city in Poland, whose name was derived from the Polish word gniazdo---meaning nest. Gniezno was the historic capital of Poland, and the place of many important events, such as coronations at its cathedral.

Some of the early group of settlers in Gnesen were Martin Kusinierek, Henry Musolf, Martin Lepak, Balcer Kaminsky, Frank Trader, John Novak, Johan Grams, Jacob LaBuda, and Anton Tarnowski.

The first Town Hall was built in the early 1870's on Martin Lepak's land, on the corner of Church and Pioneer Roads. Although the space was very small, the building gave the settlers a place to coordinate their needs, even before establishing the Town in 1879. Inevitably out growing that space, Lepak would later donate the land for St. Joseph's Church.

Martin Lepak hosted the meeting to elect the first Town Officers, held at Henry Musolf's home.

Martin's home was the site of the area's first rural post office. The Brooks Scanlon Railroad ran through his farm. The mail came by this train from Fond Du Lac to Gnesen and continued to the Range. In 1969 Dominic Lepak donated the Gnesen Post Office desk to the Duluth Historical Society and can be seen on display at the Depot in Duluth.

Gnesen Today

Nearly 2,000 people call Gnesen their home. Gnesen is 12 miles north of Duluth, Minnesota and it best known for the number of lakes within its Township limits. Of those lakes, Island Lake Reservoir is the largest covering more than 8,600 acres and running more than 9 miles in length. Other lakes include Sunshine, Schultz, Jacob, Horseshoe, Eagle, Cameron, and Mirror. Gnesen Township also contain the headwater of Lester River which eventually empties into Lake Superior. Gnesen is unique in the way that it is made up of 2 townships, T52R14 and T53R14. With that being said, Gnesen Township covers 72 square miles of farms and forested countryside. You will find ski and snowmobile trails, fishing, camping, restaurants, and a local store among a few other businesses.

The Gnesen School, also known as the Gnesen Community Center, has been remodeled and is home to our Town Hall Offices. The Community Center offers plenty of family fun, such as tennis and pickleball, hiking, skating, and it had indoor facilities available for rent.

Gnesen has numerous community involvement opportunities such as the Town Board, Planning Commission, and our volunteer Fire Department.

Each year in the beginning of August, Gnesen Township hosts a "Night Out" where residents can come together for some family fun and socializing.

Researched by: Barbara Oase