



Cornish Township portion of Sibley County Map taken from *An Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Minnesota*, published by A. T. Andreas in 1874, surveyed in 1873. As of that survey date, one school districts was depicted: District 50 in Section 22.

Cornish Township was given its name by Postmaster James B. Wakefield, in honor of his home town, Cornish, New Hampshire. The Wakefield's had left a very scenic wooded area of New England for the bleak prairie landscape of Cornish, Minnesota. Cornish, New Hampshire was once known as Mast Camp, because it was the shipping point for the tall masts floated down the river by English settlers. Incorporated in 1765, it was named for Sir Samuel Cornish, a distinguished Vice Admiral of the English Royal Navy.

Cornish was once a part of an unorganized area called Clear Lake. Alfsborg was set off from it in 1869, Severance in 1870, with Cornish being the last division in 1871. When the Federal Census of 1870 was taken, what would become Cornish was enumerated as part of Alfsborg.

The first two land claims in Township 112-30, eventually called Cornish, were filed on November 29, 1865, by Alonzo C. Wakefield and Elias Francis Kimball. These young men had been living with the father of Alonzo, James B. Wakefield and family, in Goodhue County according to the 1860 census. James Wakefield, wife and sons Josiah, William and James and a few others followed in 1866 and 1869. The population had grown enough that a school, District 50, was built in 1869.

The first marriage in the township was that of Josiah Wakefield to Mahala Wright and the first birth was that of Dora, daughter of Elias Kimball and wife Mary; both events of 1869.

The petition of George H. Gaylord and others asking that Township 112-30 be organized was dated January 23, 1871, and the order for establishment was recorded in Book A of Sibley County Board Proceedings, page 151.

The Cornish Township organizational meeting took place on January 25, 1871, at the Josiah B. Wakefield home. Although settlement had started in 1865, the area lacked a sufficient number of voters to organize until 1871. Results of the election were: Supervisors, George H. Gaylord, named Chairman, Swan Peterson and Joshua Wakefield; Clerk, William Wakefield; Treasurer, Alonzo C. Wakefield; Justices of the Peace, William Wakefield and James B. Wakefield; Constable, Gabriel Anderson.

The township had many small lakes and marshes and two larger lakes: Sand Lake in Sections 13 and 24 and Cottonwood Lake in Sections 19 and 30. Cottonwood Lake was drained and platted into farmland. Trees were in short supply on this prairie land. Pioneers traveling through prairie country would look for bunches of trees and feel confident that a lake would be nearby for a source of water. The northeast corners of lakes usually had trees remaining because prairie fires couldn't get to them due to the prevailing winds not carrying the fire across the lake. Two branches of Rush River cross the township. The 1914 plat map shows that a major

The first road through the area was the Henderson to Fort Ridgely Trail laid out in 1852. Other roads developed when settlement began. It was the only thoroughfare through the township during this time. Entering Cornish Township on the northeast corner of Section 12, it continued in this direction, crossing the Rush River in the western and southern part of this section, then passing through the northwest corner of Section 13 into Section 14 to about the center of it. The trail led on its primary route westward through Sections 15-18 veering considerably to stay on the higher ground. Traces of this historic road were still visible in the 1970s. Two tributary trails branched off of this road, one going past the Cornish Post Office in Section 19.

Opportunities for area farmers and their families changed greatly in the early 1880s when the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad laid tracks through Cornish Township running from Winthrop to Gibbon, and a branch line south from Winthrop through Cornish Township. It became much easier to get any surplus produce, grain or animals to market. A variety of goods and services became available in the new railroad towns. In the Woodbury Family Journal, donated to the Sibley County Historical Society, a few lines can be found which tell of Martha Woodbury going from her nearby Sand

Cornish Township

<u>1880</u>	<u>1890</u>	<u>1900</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>
274	700	762	646	600	666	585	538

<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2012</u>	
506	456	383	330	267	243	238	

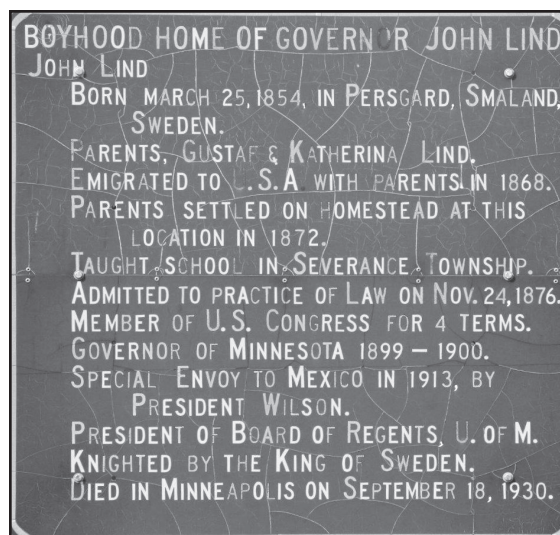
Among the other early settlers of Cornish Township were Gustaf and Kathrina Lind, who left Sweden with their children in 1868, and settled near Cannon Falls in Goodhue County. Their son John went to work in a sawmill and lost his lower left arm in an accident there; he was 13 years old. The 1870 Goodhue County census lists the Lind children as John 14, Solomon 10, Mary 4, and baby sister Jenny, born in America, as just a few months old. By 1872 the family was settled on an 80 acre claim in Section 28 of Cornish Township.

Perhaps because of his handicap, perhaps because of a desire for a different kind of life, young John, at about the age of 17, was ready to leave home and farm life behind. How much opportunity to attend school he may have had is not known. The trustees at the new District 57 School in Severance Township must have interviewed him and found him a suitable candidate to be the first teacher in their district.

John was listed as living in New Ulm in the 1875 Minnesota State Census. Occupations are not listed in this census. He may have taught in other schools and at one time served as the Brown County Superintendent of Schools. He attended law school at the University of Minnesota, married Alice Shepherd in 1879, then returned to New Ulm to practice law and begin his political career.



John Lind, 1913



Sign on Sibley County Rd. 8, Section 28, commemorating the boyhood home of John Lind, 14th Governor of