They have three children. Ervin married Gertrude Nephew. They have six children and five grandchildren. Russell married Fay Gast. They have two boys, and one grandchild. Evelyn married Hector Huard. They live in Detroit Lakes and have three children. Sophus married Nellie Berg. They had one son, Allen who owns and farms the original homestead of his grandfather, Allen married Elaine Brown of Winter, Saskatchewan. They have two children, Todd and Terry. Thea and Edward never married. Of the nine children, only Bertha Gullickson and Edward Torpet survive. Thorvald Torpet died in 1930, and Elen in 1933. They helped to build a community and a nation.

Gentilly Township

Gentilly Township and Gentilly, the settlement village, in Polk County are made up mainly of descendants of the French Canadians who settled here in large numbers during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Nobody seems to know how the township or village got its name, but it most likely was named after Gentilly, Quebec, Canada where some of the early settlers came from. The village of Gentilly is built along the Gentilly Creek which is one of the natural drainage systems of part of the township. There is also another natural coulee north and east of the village of Gentilly that is a natural drainage system. The natural elevation drop across the township linked with road and drainage ditches makes for a well drained township.

Gentilly township lies in the ancient bed of Lake Agassiz and the eastern part of the township makes up part of the Campbell Beaches. It has more types of soil than most townships. The soils range from rocky, sand, and gravel to heavy clay with fine black top soil, which is some of the finest land in the Valley.

The Pembina oxcart trail that crossed the Red Lake River at Huot headed across Gentilly Township in a southeasterly direction.

In 1873 a petition was signed to organize the township of Gentilly in Polk County. In 1874 the outline sections of Gentilly township were surveyed. There were two different groups of surveyors that surveyed the township. The second group finished the township surveying a few years later.

In the spring of 1876 Joseph Beaudette came to the Red River Valley with some fifteen others, driving a team from St. Paul to Red Lake Falls. He took a claim of 160 acres in what is now Gentilly Township and put up a claim shanty. This is the first legal record of a claim and is recorded on page 475 in the Album of Biography by the Aiden Egle Company in 1889.

In 1878 the township of Gentilly was formally organized. Joseph Beaudette not only had the first claim shanty in Gentilly Township, but also had the first Homestead Patent in Polk County for Gentilly Township. (Homestead Patent dated September 4, 1879 — Whereby the United States of America gave and granted to Joseph Beaudette and his heirs and assigns the northeast quarter of section 30 in township of Gentilly 150 N. Range 45 W. Filed for record March 1, 1880 — Book of Deeds, page 328.)

In 1879 J. B. Bottineau, son of famous Pierre Bottineau, brought 119 French families to settle in Gentilly Township and the Red Lake Falls area. Some of the prominent first settlers were Joseph Beaudette, Edward Lantoc, Chas. Regimbal, Joseph Suave, Joseph Lafromboise, Ted Arel, Basil Dufault, J. B. Dufault, Joseph Martel, Frs Pinsonneault, Remi Fortier, and others. Some of the settlers homesteaded and others purchased land that was the odd sections from the Railroad Land Grant. After a dispute of title on the railroad land was settled, in favor of the railroad, the railroad land was taken up fast.

Gentilly the inland village was a rest stop and a change over for horses for the stage line. The stage hauled passengers and mail seven days a week, weather permitting, from Crookston via Louisville on the east side of the river to Red Lake Falls. The Gentilly stop had a saloon, and eating and sleeping accommodations.

The first school was organized in the village February 4, 1901-1969 when the school consolidated with the Crookston Public School system. The five school districts in the township were districts 1609, 1617, 153, 191, and 1665.

Rev. Theillon promoted diversified farming in Gentilly Township and started the Gentilly Dairy Cooperative. A cheese factory was built in the village and in the fall of 1895 went into production. Gentilly cheese took first prize at the Minnesota State Fair and also at the Dakota State Fair at Grand Forks, beating all old established cheeses. Cheese was made until 1948 when the Gentilly Dairy Association stopped making cheese. There is still some dairying in the township but most farmers now grow grain and some row crops.

SAINT PETER PARISH HISTORY, GENTILLY

The French were possibly the first white men to tread the Pembina Trail which then wound its way over the present territory of St. Peter’s Parish of Gentilly.

But it appears that no permanent settlement of the white man was made until after the Old Crossing Treaty at the Red Lake River in 1863.

Bishop L. LaFléche of Three Rivers, Quebec, Canada, traveled from Fort Gary, Manitoba, along the Red River down to the Minnesota River in 1868, attending to the spiritual needs of the fur traders, some of them very likely to Polk County.

It is possible that settlers who came from the Parish of Gentilly on the right bank of the St. Lawrence River in Quebec gave this name to their new hamlet seven miles east of Crookston.

The first pastor and missionary of Red Lake Falls, Pierre B. Champagne, celebrated the first Mass in the Gentilly schoolhouse in 1880.

A small chapel and modest rectory were constructed in 1882, under the direction of Father Alexander Bouchard, the first resident pastor.

Father Clement Gamauche enlarged the church in 1885. The parish at that time counted 118 families, comprising 769 souls, all of French-Canadian nationality except two Irish families.

Bishop Rupert Seidenbusch of St. Cloud was the first Bishop to visit Gentilly in 1882. He confirmed 25 of the faithful in