CROOKSTON ROYAL NEIGHBORS OF AMERICA

The Crookston Golden Rod Camp No. 798 of the Royal Neighbors of America was instituted on November 6, 1897 with twenty-one charter members. The charter members were: Mrs. M. Miller, Enesia Vine, Emma Saake, Anna Arris, Hilda Rood, Clara Leick, Anna Thorson, Ida Misner, Katherine Thurer, W. Filatruilt, M. A. Bratrud, Harry Faulk, O. Rood, C. Misner, Dr. Just, O. Mercil, F. Arris, M. E. Malone, N. A. Bray, W. H. Verity and E. Desuerias.

The camp celebrated its 70th anniversary on November 20, 1967 with a meeting and banquet at the Hotel Crookston.

The Crookston membership now stands at 180 and the camp hosted the District 2 Convention on April 20, 1976 with a meeting and banquet at the Eagles Hall. It will celebrate its 79th anniversary in November.

Present officers of the Camp are: Oracle, Alice Andringa; Past Oracle, Amanda Mann; Vice Oracle, Dora Brule; Chancellor, Eva Garry; Receiver, Dorothy Gilbertson and Recorder, Martha Fitzsimmons.

Mrs. Bertha M. Woelk of Crookston is a 61-year member as well as being a Past Oracle and Past Historian.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

TECHNICAL COLLEGE, CROOKSTON

A heartening boost for agriculture was given to the Red River Valley in 1895, when the State Legislature created the Northwest Experiment Station of the University of Minnesota at Crookston. The land had been given to the state in 1894 by railroad magnate James J. Hill for the purpose of establishing an experiment station.

In 1905 the Minnesota legislature appropriated $15,000 to establish a branch school of agriculture at Crookston, and in October 1906 the Northwest School of Agriculture was opened, with 31 students enrolled. According to information in a 1911 yearbook, the school was established for three primary reasons. The parent school at St. Anthony Park near Minneapolis had grown to near capacity; the distance to the parent school was too great for students from Northwestern Minnesota to attend; and the soil and climatic conditions in the Red River Valley were considered radically different from those of the remainder of the state. Agricultural education especially fitted to Red River Valley farming seemed to be a logical solution.

The Crookston School of Agriculture offered a three-year course of six months' duration, beginning each October and closing in March. Courses were offered in many phases of agriculture and blacksmithing, as well as in sewing and cooking for the women who attended. It was described as a school where agriculture as a business and profession was the dominant focus of the curriculum. Enrollment grew steadily, and leveled off in 1938 to approximately 400 students per year.

Facilities in those early years consisted of a school building, a shop building, a farm house, horse and dairy barns and a sheep shed. As the years passed, dormitories and other classroom buildings were added. Robertson Hall, and the Kiehl Building, constructed in the first decade of the school, still remain.

As the years went by and changing needs of society called for more technical knowledge in agriculture, it became apparent to many leaders of the state that an institution providing “college-level” technical education would be more in keeping with the times. As a result, the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota moved to establish the University of Minnesota Technical Institute at Crookston on the campus of the Northwest School of Agriculture. The State Legislature provided funds to launch the new educational endeavor in 1965.

Following a busy year of renovating to adapt existing buildings for offices and classrooms and of searching for a staff equipped to teach technical-collegiate education, the “University of Minnesota Technical Institute” opened its doors as a college in the fall of 1966. Instruction was offered to a student body of 185 that fall by 26 faculty members. Dr. Stanley D. Sahlstrom was named director, and courses were offered in the fields of agriculture, business, and institutional food management, with background studies in general education.

The college embodied a unique new concept in higher education in the Midwest. Technical education, defined as education that provides two-thirds of its work in technical courses and one-third in general education, also encompassed the idea of pre-occupational preparation, an internship program providing on-the-job training, which was required of each student before the associate in applied science degree was conferred.

O. Meredith Wilson, then president of the University of Minnesota, said of the new program, “We are not moving into an unknown world when we move toward this technical institute. This program has been aided by the experience of agricultural colleges both here in the United States and abroad. Technical education particularly aimed at agriculture and business has had a fruitful life elsewhere, and we believe, with our understanding of land-grant institutions, that such a plan can be improved here in Minnesota.”

The Northwest School of Agriculture graduated its final class in March 1968. The following June commencement for the first graduating class of the University of Minnesota Technical Institute was held, with 70 students receiving associate degrees in agriculture and business.

The Technical Institute was given coordinate campus status by the University of Minnesota central administration in the fall of 1969, and the Institute became the University of Minnesota Technical College (UMC) at that time, with Stanley Sahlstrom as the college provost.

A Division of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management (HRI) was officially organized in 1967, and in 1973 the Division of Home and Family Services first offered classes. Also in the fall of 1973 the UMC Children’s Center was opened. The day care-nursery school continues to be housed in the Robertson Hall building.

In the 10 years since UMC’s beginning, the faculty size has grown to 67 full-time and 12 part-time instructors. There are nearly 100 persons employed as Civil Service staff, and the student enrollment has soared to more than 900.

UMC has a growing reputation for offering excellent technical education. Advisory boards of supportive private citizens consisting of persons who excel in their fields are utilized by each division to offer curriculum ideas and to discuss employment possibilities.

Campus services and activities have continued to grow. The Student Activities office helps with student government, entertainment, “in-house activities,” and counseling. Intramural and varsity sports have been organized for both men and women, and a full-time staff member is on hand for counseling at the Campus Ministry headquarters. A minority programs office has been added, with counseling on hand to ease enrollment and adjustment problems for Indian, Black and Mexican-American students.

As an integral part of the community, UMC contributes its services through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) among other evidences of concern and involvement. The Office of Continuing Education and Community Services.