Their parents came from Germany. The William F. Eiserts had 13 children — three girls and ten sons. Ten of the children are still living — six in the Crookston area: Harvey in Southern Minnesota, and the only surviving daughter, Leona Torvi, lives in St. Paul. The Eiserts farmed near Northfield and Roseau before moving to Crookston in 1914 (Carman area). The older sons worked out as hired hands to various farmers. Arthur and Edwin delivered the surplus milk from rural families to Carman customers. The family moved to the S. A. Miller farm, now owned by Tom Owens, and lived there 19 years. The children attended a one-room school one mile north of their home. For several years the family rented the Senator R. T. Buckler farm. Later they rented the Congor and DeMott farms. In 1933 the parents and four youngest sons moved into Crookston. Wm. F. Eisert lived to be 89 and Louisa Eisert to be 90 years of age. There are 23 grandchildren. One sister of Louisa, Ida Kahle, of Belle Plaine and one brother, Otto Jandt, of New Market still survive.

JOE ELBINGER

My parents came over from Germany in 1889. There were 15 children in the family. They were born on a farm nine and a half miles northeast of Crookston. There are three of us left: Conrad is at St. Vincent's Rest Home; Tony and family are on the old farm place; and myself. My younger brother still lives on the farm with his son and wife.

I'm retired now but I ran restaurants for many years buying the first cafe from J. J. Shandorf in 1921. I still have the contract and pictures, the place was a little shoe shop next to where the Gamble Store is now. Then I bought the building where Eidsvik's Shoe Shop is. After that I bought the building across the alley, where C. J. Carpenter is now and next the building where we are living now, intending to make it our home.

When I first came to Crookston I started by borrowing $10 from my sister and got a job as a bus boy at the Hotel Crookston until I saved enough money to begin with Mr. Shandorf. I later bought his share of the restaurant business. I had a partner I took in with me, Lateefa Joseph. She worked with us until we sold out in 1965.

While in Germany, my father was a musician and played in a band there. Two children died in infancy. Conrad, Mike, Maggie and Mary all were born in Germany.

ALBERT O. ESPE

In recording pioneer history there is one name etched in the archives — a name to be remembered for the many contributions to agricultural and community growth. That name is ESPE.

The true pioneer was Albert O. Espe, born in Decorah, Iowa in 1872, the youngest of a family of six. Albert migrated with his widowed mother and family by ox cart to Norman county.

A Model T Ford with the sugar beet cultivator mounting was engineered by A. O. Espe and built in the Crookston Mfg. Company.

In 1881 they bought a farm near Crookston, and this became the starting point for a busy, inventive life for Mr. Espe.

It was on this farm that A. O. Espe showed his skill in breaking oxen for the neighbors so they could work the land. It was here, too, that his inventive mind was set in motion, to realize there must be an easier way.

In 1898, Mr. Espe changed his attention, somewhat, from farm operations to establish a machine shop and foundry in Crookston. He sold steam threshers and prevailing farm equipment. Hence evolved the Espe Foundry at 411 North Main Street in a two-story frame building that included a woodworking shop to make molds for casting the parts needed to maintain the machinery of the day.

There was a procession of inventions created by A. O. Espe, mainly machinery to help the farmers.

The first invention recorded was a land roller, which was patented in 1901, named the Diamond Pulverizer. Perhaps the best known and publicized invention was the Espe Tractor — the transition from steam engines to gasoline engines.

In 1907 the first gasoline tractor was built in the Espe Foundry. In 1909 a four-plow tractor was made and the Crookston Manufacturing Company was formed to produce them. In 1910-11 several units of the Espe Tractor were manufactured and sold in the Crookston area, one going to the Northwest School of Agriculture. Patents on this tractor were sold to the Rumley Company of La Porte, Indiana and renamed the Gas Pull and later the Oil Pull.

Mr. Espe's natural skill and inventive genius kept him working to simplify the lines and improve the operation of his first efforts so another tractor was invented. This patent was sold to the Avery Company of Peoria, Illinois.

Continuing farming as a side line all these years, A. O. Espe had a first hand knowledge of the needs of the Red River Valley farmer. He continued to experiment and as a result many machines were developed to help farming. With more modern equipment available, the foundry was no longer necessary so a new brick building was built in 1919, next to the frame building which was later torn down to provide parking space.

Over the years there were many versatile machines produced to "make the job easier". To name a few: the shock loader, a fork-lift type of machine to load grain bundles from field to wagon; the sugar-beet cultivator, mounted on a Model T Ford; the sugar-beet loader, a machine to elevate beets into a truck and eliminate loading by hand with a wide fork; the brush cutter, to clear native land; the tractor hitch for the extended disk. Mr. Espe also built a large well machine and drilled wells for creameries, villages and test wells for the Geological Department of the University of Minnesota. The last invention of A. O. Espe's in 1938 was the Espe Disk: 15, 17, 19 and 21 feet with a few 31-foot discs, which at the time were considered huge.

In spite of a very productive business life, Mr. Espe had time for civic affairs. He was always the anchor man on the tug-of-war team. He was a self-made man of great stature and distinction. His wide brimmed black hat was a sort of recognition symbol of this.

He had time for home and family too. He married Mathilda