Bystad in 1896, and they raised a family of five boys and two girls to adulthood.

When A. O. Espe retired he turned his business over to the sons, Henry and Mylan and daughter, Glenda, who had worked in the machine shop with their father all their lives. They formed the Espe Machine Company. With no heirs to carry on the business, it was sold in 1969 and thus ended the era of a pioneering enterprise of which has been said, “did more for the upper mid-west farmer than any one business or individual”.

The “now” generation are demonstrating their inherited background of creative abilities in the fields of science, engineering, research, medicine and inventiveness. The Espes, True Pioneers!

ED ERICKSON

Ed Erickson came to Crookston from Sweden in the early 1880's at the age of 16, and worked on his uncle's farm near Crookston for a year to pay for his ticket here to the United States. One of his jobs was to dig a ditch around the farm with a shovel.

After a few years of driving a stage coach between Thief River Falls and Crookston, he met Boletta Johnson, who was from Thief River Falls but was working at the Agricultural School in Crookston. They were married January 2, 1889, and raised a family of two boys, Sam and Elmer.

Ed started a meat market, still known as Erickson's Meat Market, operated now by his granddaughter's husband, Teddy Johnson. The first meat market had dirt floors and the meat hung on hooks for everyone to see. The early days of buying cattle were different. Ed would go on horseback north of Crookston, follow what was called the Pembina Trail for 30 to 40 miles, and buy several head of cattle from different farmers and herd them back to Crookston where he had them in a pasture on his farm near town and butchered them as needed. This trip would take several days. They stayed with farmers and put the cattle in their pastures overnight.

Elmer married Gladys Hougen and they had a family of five girls. Elmer became a partner with his father, Ed, in the meat business and sole owner when his father retired.

Sam married Marmion Geer and had a family of three, two girls and a boy. He was an insurance agent and lived in Mankato.

Ed owned one of the first cars in Crookston and it was a touring car with no top. Mr. and Mrs. Ed Erickson and both sons are deceased, but the Ed Ericksons spent 67 years of happy wedded life together.

FRITJOIF EUGENE ERIKSON

Fritiof Eugene Erickson, “Judd,” as his pals called him was born July 27, 1896, in Fertile, Minnesota. He was baptized and confirmed by Rev. Sundheim and graduated from Fertile High School. He and his classmate Elmer Nesseth enlisted in the United States War Service when he was 20 years old. They were sent to Rockford, Illinois for their military training. When that was finished, orders were for them to leave for Europe. They boarded a train for leaving but the train was held up for many days because of an epidemic of “flu”. My father was notified that Judd was very ill. He and I started for Rockford. The train was full of people with masks on their faces. When we arrived, Judd was dead.

We went to the morgue, and while waiting our turn to go in, we saw load after load of dead bodies wrapped up in blankets being unloaded and sent down the chute to the undertaking department.

We returned home to prepare for the funeral. It was a week before the casket came to Fertile. It had with it a large United States Flag and citation. Elmer Nesseth’s casket came two days earlier. They had died two hours apart on the same day and came back to their home town together.

MARILYN THORSON FJELSTA

Marilyn, the daughter of Ted and Lillian Thorson, Crookston, Minnesota was born November 1, 1923 in Fertile, Minnesota. At age of four years, she moved to Crookston and attended Franklin grade school and graduated from Central High School in 1941. She attended St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, 1941-1943 and later graduated from Fairview Hospital School of Nursing in 1945. She was married at Annapolis, Maryland, June 5, 1946 to Ensign John Fjelsta, Madelia, Minnesota; a graduate of St. Olaf College, 1943, and United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, 1946. As a navy family they were stationed at various naval bases and changed duty stations about every two years. The most interesting duty station was with the United States Embassy Naval Mission in Havana, Cuba, from 1952-1953. During March 1952, they were there when F. Batista overthrew the government of President Prio. They have lived in Annapolis, Maryland for two tours, Norfolk, Virginia for two tours, Bayonne, New Jersey, Great Lakes, Illinois, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The family moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania the summer of 1961. Son, John Jr. (born 1947) is a graduate of the University of Alaska and presently working for Burroughs Electronics in Anchorage, Alaska. He married Carol Kohner of Rochester, Minnesota, and has two sons, Paul (born 1947) attending the University of Minnesota working on a master's program in business administration. There are also two daughters, Lynn (born April 1950) and Jean (born June 1954) are working in Minneapolis.