MR. MITCHELL DAYS IN THE 1880's IN CROOKSTON

On arriving at Crookston, I put up for the night at a hotel on the corner of Front and Robert Streets, W. U. Jennings, proprietor. On the next day I went to Hallock, where I reported to Master Mechanic, H. R. Nolan of the Crookston Division of Jim Hill's railroad, under construction to St. Vincent.

On completion of the necessary structures that winter, we made Crookston our headquarters, several of our crew boarding with Mrs. Chris Greenalgh, located down in the "woods" as we called it then, just below where the Crookston water plant is now located.

Front and Robert Streets were the main business streets at that time, with a few buildings scattered elsewhere. The young city located in a horseshoe bend of the Red Lake river, protected by depression and considerable timber, was an ideal location for beauty and comfort.

I will name a few of the main business places as I recall them: E. M. Walsh, Hardware store and Post Office, Commercial Hotel, Bailey's General Store, Bill Stewart's Refreshment Emporium, Box Log Hotel, Kistemacher and O'Brien's Billiard Hall, Harry Cook's Printing, Judge Spendley's Justice office, George Buhn's Blacksmith Shop, Robert Houston's Implement Store, Fortiers' Hotel, Cameron's Saw Mill.

I continued work on the railroad until the fall of 1879, then went as cook for a logging company on the Roseau river for the winter. During following years up to the fall of 1884, I had various jobs including one as foreman on building a dam for K. D. Chase at Crookston. Other jobs were driving piles for the foundation of Lee and Herrick's Flour Mill, construction of a bridge across the river to Jerome's Addition, driving piles for a dozen bridges and approaches in Grand Forks County, North Dakota and elevator construction at Port Arthur, Canada.

In the fall and winter of 1880 and 1881, I was busy farming and construction of truss bridges. Having heard of the beautiful Maple Lake, thirty miles east of Crookston, and thinking I would like to locate on its shore, two others, Theodore Greenalgh and Larry J. O'Neil and myself in April of 1881, made the trip out there on a tour of observation. Arriving at the stopping place on the north shore of the lake, occupied by George Dennison, who acted as locater of lands, we learned that filings on almost all land bordering the lake had been made.

The following morning we put on barrel-stave skis and explored the location as well as the adjacent territory. Satisfied that I would like the timbered country, we went back to Crookston and procured the necessities for a short residence.

During the '80's there seemed to be unusual precipitation of moisture. Rivers, lakes and marshes overflowed and in many places the prairies were covered with water. On a trip to Grand Forks one spring, the train passed through water for a distance of two or three miles between Fisher and Mallory.

Also during those years, settlers were coming in vast hordes to occupy the fertile lands of the Red River Valley, where they could grow 30 bushels of number one hard wheat per acre, and sell it for $1 per bushel. Those were the days of prosperity, when dealers in horse flesh shipped in train load after train load of horses that were readily sold for up to $500 per team; and generally one of them died in a short time.

In the fall of 1884, having constructed a comfortable home on the claim, I moved my family thereon. But in order to make a living, I found it necessary to work at carpenter work during the open seasons, and hibernate at home during the winter, when time was occupied in clearing land. My work outside was principally on elevator building and repairs for the Red River Elevator Company on the main line and all its branches of the Great Northern Railway Company.

In 1894, not making satisfactory headway serving two masters, as it were, I devoted my entire time improving the farm property, making the timber into cord wood and lumber for buildings. The first venture in commercial farming, the summer of 1895, failed to be remunerative. I received for 200 bushels onions, 50 bushels beans and 400 bushels potatoes only $35 after paying a lawyer's bill for collection.

CARL J. AND HANNAH MOE

On his way north, about 1895, from Nebraska to Canada to make his fortune, my father Carl J. Moe stopped over in Crookston. He never made it to Canada.

A native of Lilhammer, Norway, where he was born in 1864, my father came to the United States in 1878 with his mother, a brother and two sisters and lived in Chicago for a while. His father had died in Norway.

But his mother was unhappy in the big city, so Carl and his brother Ole, went with her to Hemingford, Nebraska, where they homesteaded and lived in a sod house.

After a while, Carl traveled west and worked as a cowboy in Montana and Nevada, finally arriving in San Francisco. He spent some time there before deciding to go to Australia.

But, before leaving, he thought he should go home and visit his mother and brother. When he got home to Nebraska he heard about a land boom in Canada and decided to try his luck there, instead of in Australia. He took three horses and a covered wagon and headed north.


John Freeberg. Mrs. John (Mary) Freeberg.