by Ellery C. Davis, Bernard Sampson, Mary Carlton, John Darkow, Joseph Barrett and Rueben Reynolds, from the United States government, and the land laws of the United States. Some, expecting the railroad crossing would be a short distance from the river where the village of Fisher is, had located there but moved up stream when they found the place of crossing fixed.

The life of the pioneers of this time is described by one of them as "being a pretty good time after all." Most of the people were young and full of bubbling happiness that goes with youth.

The first township to be organized in the county was Huntsville, on March 17, 1874. Mention has been made that the county seat of Polk County was declared to be temporarily located at Douglas when the county was established in 1885; on February 26, 1879, Crookston was named as county seat by act of legislature of that year.

There was little if any increase in the population of the county from 1872 to June 1875, when the state census was taken and returned for its population of 937, of which about two-thirds were within the limits of the present Polk County. It was a mixed population. the Norwegians being the most numerous. Though the prairie land was easily brought under cultivation, the farmers had little under crop, except some of those in what was called the "Marais" region, where they were more enterprising and raised large quantities of wheat and other grains, much of which was carried on barges towed up the Red River to the railroads at Moorhead, on down to the city of Winnipeg.

In the summer of 1877 immigration, which had been nearly at a standstill, was revived. Those who came and settled during this period were largely from Norway or descendants of Norwegians, and a large number were from Sweden. About one-half of the population being of Scandinavian descent. Many of them had resided or been born and reared in Wisconsin, northern Iowa, or southern Minnesota. In 1878 a large immigration of French Canadians and their descendants set in. In 1885 the French colony "as it was called in the county, numbered about five thousand people, living mostly in and between Crookston and Red Lake Falls. Almost all the northern states and countries of Europe and provinces of Canada have contributed to the population of the county, giving it the advantages and disadvantages of a population of many peoples.

The period from 1877 to 1884 was the boom-time of Polk County as to the valley generally. In 1883 and 1884 population flowed rapidly into the land, and then thinned out as settlement in the east end of the county, usually designated, "The Thirteen Towns." These settlers were mainly Norwegians or the descendants of Norwegians. At this period almost everyone farmed in person or by proxy, and effort was mainly directed to the production of wheat, which was usually a good crop with good prices. Lands, city and village property rose rapidly in market value and prosperity and contentment was general. The population rose to 11,433 in 1880, including what is now Normand County; and to 23,475 in 1885, with Norman County detached.

Polk County in 1885 had the unique distinction of having two water-sheds draining in opposite directions. The Mississippi River, which formed the southeast boundary of the county from Lake Itasca to Cass Lake emptied its water ultimately in the Gulf of Mexico, while the Red River of the North, which formed the western boundary of the county, emptied its water into Hudson Bay. After all the changes in land area of the county had been made, the county today lies wholly in the Red River Valley.

During the past 16 years, since 1900, from a few to several thousand acres of sunflowers have been grown in the county. The first sunflowers grown in Minnesota were grown in northeastern Minnesota as a silage crop, when cooler temperatures were unfavorable for corn. The tall growing Russian sunflowers were grown in experimental plots for silage at the Northwest Experiment Station some thirty years ago. The crop out-yielded corn in tonnage but the tough, hard stems made the crop difficult to handle. Cows ate the silage when they became accustomed to it. The Commercial Sunflower varieties of today are grown for seed. The plants grow from four to six feet in height and the seed crop is harvested by straight combining.

Much of the crop has been sold to an oil processing plant at Altoona, Manitoba, while some of the crop goes to feed dealers for bird seed. The better varieties grown today are hybrids and new hybrid seed should be purchased every year, same as hybrid corn. The hybrid Advance has proved to be the best high oil content variety and yields 1,000 to 2,000 pounds of seed per acre. The taller, open pollinated varieties such as Arrowhead gives higher yields but are less desirable for oil. Potatoes and sugar beets are also grown in abundance in the Polk County area.

**EVENTS IN POLK COUNTY HISTORY**

1825 Great Flood on Red River
1858 May 11, Minnesota became a state. July 20, Polk County established by an act of the legislature.
1863 October 3, Old Crossing Treaty signed with Chippewas.
1868 W. C. Nash came to East Grand Forks area and settled there in 1870.
1871 First group settlement in Polk County, at Climax. Later in 1871 settlements of Irish established north of Climax and Scotttish near Mallory.
1872 Norwegians settled near Bygland. September 7, railroad reached Crookston, bridge constructed and line extended north to county line.
1874 Huntsville was first township organized in county followed by Crookston and Vineland.
1875 Grasshopper plague hits valley.
1876 Pierre Bottineau settled in Polk County near Red Lake Falls. First of Bonanza Farm in Keystone Township.
1879 March 28, School District number I established at Crookston.
1887 Northern Pacific Railroad reached East Grand Forks.
1895 Northwest Experiment Station established on Section 19 Crookston Township. Big flood on Red and Red Lake rivers.
1900 Second court house dedicated; replaced by present structure on September 10, 1968.
1906 Northwest School of Agriculture opened to students.
1910 December - first meetings and Shows at Northwest School.
1914 First Red River Valley Crop Show downtown Crookston. Rural school Spelling contests held.
1917 First Livestock and Poultry show held in conjunction with Winter Shows.
1918-19 Drive for funds for Winter Shows Building.
1916 American Crystal Sugar plant built in East Grand Forks.
1931-33 Depression years, low point of wages, employment and prices on agricultural products.