CHRISTIAN C. STRANDER

Christian C. Strander immigrated directly to Crookston from Lillehamer, Norway, the home of his parents, in 1888. He was an energetic, personable young man anxious to make his mark, not only in business, but also as a part of the Crookston community. His success in business gave him this opportunity. Early in his career he married Inez Dahl and this union resulted in six children: Herman, Helen, Mildred, Mathilda, Agna, and Osmore. In 1903, Mr. Strander built a beautiful home, a full two-story structure, at a prime location at the apex of a triangle at the intersection of South Ash Street and Houston Avenue. With four lovely daughters, this home was the location of many parties as well as lavish entertainment of friends and business associates. At this writing Agna Strander Eagle is the only living member of this family.

Upon his arrival from Norway, Christian Strander was able to get a job as clerk in the register of deeds office. He worked here about a year. The Christianson Brothers who operated an abstract of title business started in 1886, saw a lot of talent in this young man and Christian Strander went to work for them. The abstract of title business was booming about this time due to the fast growth of the area with newcomers and settlers wanting proof of title to their land. By 1894 Mr. Strander was able to buy a partnership in the business and at this time the name was changed to Christianson and Strander. In 1907 the business was incorporated as Strander Abstract and Investment Co. with Mr. Strander holding controlling interest. Mr. C. C. Strander was named president; O. O. Christianson, vice-president and O. W. Peterson, secretary-treasurer.

In 1910, Adolph Morck, father of Alpha Morck, joined the firm as secretary. Upon O. W. Peterson’s retirement, Mr. Morck became secretary-treasurer and served until his retirement in 1958. C. C. Strander retained his position as president until his death in 1936.

Herman Strander, the oldest son of C. C. Strander, worked a short time for the firm in 1915, then enlisted in the Navy during World War I. After the war he was employed in the Scandinavian American Bank at Grafton, North Dakota for nine years. He then returned to Crookston and worked for his father’s firm as vice-president and treasurer and served in that capacity until the death of his father in 1936, when he became president of the firm and served in this position until his death in 1973.

To insure perpetuity to the firm, Herman Strander arranged for the sale of the business shortly before his death. Leonard Erickson and Kenneth Erie became the new owners. Red Benne was named president; Donald Kanten, vice-president; Leonard Erickson, secretary and Kenneth Erie, treasurer. The Strander family enjoyed continuous ownership of the Abstract business for 84 years, a span that saw Crookston grow from a fledgling town to a thriving city. During this span the names of Strander, O. W. Peterson, and A. F. Morck appear on thousands of abstracts, recording the history of successes and failures in the abstracts over those many years.

The C. C. Strander home and the Strander Abstract and Insurance building on Broadway still stand as a memory to Crookston’s early years and a proud, ambitious immigrant who made good.

A. J. STREEER

In the Saturday, October 22, 1887, issue of the Crookston Times appeared the following front page story: “A pall of gloom was cast over the city on Tuesday morning when the news became generally known that Jack Streeter had lost his life in a railroad accident near Petersburg, Dakota Territory. Mr. Streeter was the engineer on a cattle train of nineteen cars, on its way to this city. When the train approached Petersburg, the engineer discovered the switch was open, and before he could reverse his engine and jump the engine left the track and turned upon its side while the heavily loaded cars of cattle telescoped each other and were piled up in an entangled mass.” Mr. Streeter’s body was pinned beneath the engine.

This is the end of the story of the life of one of Crookston’s early settlers, Mr. A. J. Streeter, who came to Crookston from Illinois in 1880. He was survived by one married daughter, Della Dargan of Black River, and by his wife, the former Phoebe Hockings, also of Illinois, whom he had married in LeRoy, Illinois, on December 5, 1865.

Mr. Streeter was a Civil War veteran, having served from September 2, 1861, to July 3, 1865, with Company K., 7th Regiment of Wisconsin as an infantry volunteer. According to the Crookston Times of October 22, 1887, “He saw considerable service in the field of battle as a Union soldier and for several months suffered the torture of Andersonville Prison.”

Mrs. Streeter continued to make her home in Crookston after her husband’s death. She was a member of the D.A.R., a fact she often discussed with her grandchildren, Clare and Leon. She was president of the Women’s Relief Corps in 1883. One of her greatest interests was in nature and wildlife, birds in particular. This interest has been handed down to her descendants.

One of Mrs. Streeter’s aims after her husband’s death was to have a monument erected in honor of Civil War Veterans at Oakdale cemetery. Her grandchildren often listened to her tell about the many benefit ice cream sales she gave on her spacious lawn on Bridge Street. Among others who took part in the money making effort for the monument were members of the Congregational church, of which she was a member. The monument to Civil War veterans which still stands in Oakdale Cemetery was erected partly through efforts of Mrs. Streeter as well as others. Among her friends were Alice B. Hall, Florence Slocum and Dolly Bunell.

Mrs. Streeter brought up her grandchildren after her daughter died on January 2, 1898. Burtram, the eldest died a year after his mother at the age of 11. Clair who was eight and Leon two years old when they lost their mother. They grew up in the Bridge Street home. The large acreage there was ideal for nature study; and the large collection of birds she had mounted were eventually donated to the Central High School. Taxidermy was a hobby of Mrs. Streeter.

Leon Pike Dargan became a charter member of Nels T. Wold Post No. 20 of the American Legion after serving in the navy from May 20, 1918 to May 23, 1919. He worked for the Railway Express Agency as Railway Express Messenger for 46 years. Clare Dargan, a school teacher, died in 1961 and Leon, whose wife was the former Hazel Haroldson, died July 4, 1963. Surviving are a daughter, Mrs. Rae-Dell Kaiser and a son, Dale. Rae-Dell's two sons, Mickey and Gary, are the great-grandsons of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Streeter, who came to Crookston in 1880.

Mrs. Streeter sold roughly 35 acres of land to the City of Crookston in 1915, a year before she died. Her interest in nature and her love of the outdoors were passed on to her grandchildren, great-grandchildren and to her great-great-grandchildren.

LEONARD AND REGINA SYEDAHL

Leonard was born in Ottertail County. In 1922 he moved to Mahnomen county with his parents. He spent several years working in Illinois before coming to Crookston in the spring of 1932. Here he was employed by Elk Rover Concrete Products for whom he worked for almost 40 years. He retired March 1, 1972.

Mrs. A. J. Streeter
Grandmother of Leon and Clare Dargan.