moved to Osage County, Iowa, and then to Parkers Prairie, Minnesota, owning and operating farms at each place. Mr. Weiler’s parents met while both were attending Northwestern Bible School at Minneapolis. Following their marriage, they spent an active life as a Baptist pastor’s family, serving churches in Cook, Minnesota, Hollandale, Minnesota, Super-

Oscar and Amanda Wermager

Amanda Josephine Buxengaard, daughter of Knute and Guri Heie Buxengaard, and Oscar Martin Wermager, son of Ole H. and Maria Ostern Wermager, were married in Wilming-
township, Houston county at the Wilming-
ton Lutheran Church on April 20, 1910. In April of 1914 they traveled
to Crookston and settled in Fairfax township, Crookston, Minnesota. Herein are Mrs. Wermager’s recollections of those
times.

“Traveling by boxcar with all of your worldly possessions to
a new home in a new community was not the easiest thing in
my life. We arrived at Kittson Station, located by the Louie

Fanny Township History

Fanny Township was organized in 1880 and named for a
lady named Fanny whose surname is not known. According to
two entries in the office of Register of Deeds, the first election
was held at the home of W. Nelson. Judges were George Day,
Luke Colborn and W. Nelson. Clerks were Ben Holter and
George O’Neal. No mention was made of officers elected. The
township meeting was held at the home of Mr. Bracket.
were judges. Clerks were John Lerry and Alexander
McDonald. Again no mention of officers elected. The
first town hall was the school in District 77. In Section 20 on land
now owned by William Volker. But for many years it has been
in the Tin School in the northern part of the township. Some of
the earliest settlers in the township were the Rutherford.
Loves, O’Breiths, Benoits, Vonderbecks, Senskes, Radis, and
Volkers who were here before 1900. The Jens Rasmussen
came in 1904 and Alpeteppers in 1905.

Fanny Township pioneers, as all pioneers, had to be self-suf-
cient. Farming was mainly subsistence farming. When wheat,
the main money crop, was harvested, farmers hauled it by
team to the nearest elevator. They always came home with a
year’s supply of flour and perhaps most of the main staples
such as coffee, salt, sugar, beans, etc. All farms had large gar-
dens, and the farm women canned all their vegetables, and
made pickles and jelly. Every farm had cattle, pigs, and chicken,
so farm families were well supplied with meat, butter, milk
and eggs. Anything left over was sold, so farmers had a little
money to buy a few things. Many homes were heated entirely
with wood.

At first there were no mail routes, and the men took turns
going once a week for the mail and delivering it to their neigh-
bors. Finally a star route was organized out of Davidson.
Sometimes the mailman used a bicycle to deliver mail. In order
to have telephone service the people of Fanny Township and
neighboring townships organized their own telephone com-
pauly 1912 and called it the Valley Telephone Company.
They connected with Bell Telephone Company near the Agri-
cultural College. These people built and maintained their own
television line. Alfred Rasmussen was one of the people who
climbed telephone poles to make repairs. For many years there
was a pair of pole climbers in a box on his porch. About 1955
Bell Telephone Company bought the local company, and
everyone got modern telephones. Edward, Mike and Clarence
Reitmeier, Erwin Bauer and Al Rasmussen installed the tele-
phones.

There were no rural churches in the area, and so the people
had to be directors of their own religion. Mr. Buffington
organized a Sunday School during the 1880’s which met in the
school District 77. The American Sunday School Union was
organized in 1912 and Sunday School was held in the Tin
School. The Amul Torklesons were very active in this organi-
ization. In 1925 a Missionary Society was organized. Their
request as stated in the charter, was to help the needy in the
community. About that time the Fanny Home Study Club came into
being and is still meeting. Farm Bureau, Farmer’s Union
and 4H Clubs also were active.

Fanny Township is a very stable community, with land
passed on from father to son. Conrad Danielson owns and
operates the land owned by his father. John Terry, Clarence
Reitmeier, Ivan Rudi, Alfred Rasmussen, Glen Torkelson,
John Dukhoff, Edward Reitmeier, Duane Wimpfheimer,
Loves, Volkers and Rutherford’s do likewise. In some cases the
third generation owns the land. In 1979 the Robert Rutherford
land will have been Rutherford land for a century.

The people of Fanny Township are proud of their homes and
community. Prosperity and mobility have made it a much
less closely knit community than it once was. I hope that each
and every one of us appreciate the toil and hardships of our
ancestors that has made possible our lives as they are today.

Bonanza Farming

My earliest memories of the Buffington farm are a mass of
ugly tumbling down buildings in the northeast corner of

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Fanny Township of Section 6, land now owned by James Fanfulik and Marjorie Barret. According to information given to me by William Rutherford, a life long resident of Fanny Township, Mr. Buffington acquired two and a half sections of land in Fanny Township in 1880. Until nearly 1950 that land was called the Buffington Farm. Mr. Buffington taught Sunday School in school District 77 on land now owned by William Volker. Often he walked to this school, a distance of about three miles. Most of his pupils did likewise. Just how long Mr. Buffington operated this farm, Mr. Rutherford does not remember. He remembers it best when Mr. Berthold owned it. Mr. Berthold expanded his holdings to nine and a half sections. Mr. Rutherford remembers seeing 11 5-horse drawn plows, followed by three harrows and three drills. At least 80 horses were needed for this immense project. There were three horse barns. The farm had both dairy and beef cattle, mainly to supply meat, milk and butter for the farm hands. So there had to be a cattle barn, too. There was a depot, elevator and huge outdoor scale, too. Very little grain was stored here. The grain was weighed and shipped out as it was harvested. A foreman was needed to run the farm. The one Mr. Rutherford remembers best was Peter Milan. A hired girl was also needed to help cook and clean for the men. The late Mrs. William Schipper, formerly Mabel Johnson, worked there for many years. She grew up on the neighboring farm. The last owner was Alfred Vonderbeck. Times were hard and the nine and a half sections dwindled down to about two sections. After Mr. Vonderbeck left, many different families moved in and out of the big house. In 1930, the Koolstrans, a Dutch family, took up residence on the farm. The family consisted of a mother, five sons, and two daughters. They were an industrious, pennywise people and they prospered in their new land. All of them, even the mother, acquired spouses. At one time there were three Koolstra families living in the big old house. Finally they all acquired other homes. Most of them stayed in this area. James Fanfulik and his brother bought Section 6 in 1940. James has a lovely new home there now. He says it took him about 15 years to clear out the old buildings, cement foundations, and weeds in which the once proud Buffington Farm site had deteriorated.

JORGEN NIELSEN

Jorgen Nielsen was born in Sonderborg Als, Denmark, June 4, 1877, to Niels Nielsen and Louise Marie Nielsen and came to Northwood, Iowa, with his parents in 1895 to the farm home of his sister, Mrs. Jens Rasmussen. Grandfather and Grandmother Nielsen lived with their daughter and family helping in many ways. Jorgen Nielsen worked for farmers in the area.

In 1899 Jens Rasmussen and Andrew Andersen of Gibson City, Illinois, bought land in the Red River Valley, in the Crookston, Minnesota area. Then in 1900, Jens Rasmussen and Jorgen Nielsen came north on a freight train, bringing horses, cows and machinery and household goods to Hixon Station. Mrs. Rasmussen, four children and Grandfather and Grandmother Nielsen came by train to Crookston, Minnesota. Mr. Rasmussen met them with horses and bob sled to take them to the farm home.

After working with Jens Rasmussen and neighbors, Jorgen Nielsen rented the northwest quarter of Section 29, Fanny Township and then some years later, rented the north half of Section 31 in Fanny Township. At this time Grandmother and Grandfather Nielsen moved over to their son, Jorgen's farm, keeping house for him with some help from their daughter and granddaughters. Grandfather Nielsen died February 12, 1923. Grandmother Nielsen died August 13, 1923.

Clara Nielsen, daughter of Carl Nielsen, formerly of Crookston, married Jorgen Nielsen in 1924. They continued to live on the farm. Their daughter, Betty Elaine was born November 1925. Clara Nielsen, after a lengthy illness, died May 18, 1930. Jorgen Nielsen died December 23, 1932.

Betty Elaine Nielsen then went to live with her aunt Mrs. Rasmussen and family. She graduated from Fisher High School; and in 1946, she graduated from Grand Forks Deaconess Hospital School of Nursing. Miss Nielsen was then employed at the Northwestern Clinic for a number of years. In 1949, Norman A. Wentzel, son of Mrs. August Wentzel, was married to Betty Elaine Nielsen, in a garden wedding at the home of her aunt, Mrs. Jens Rasmussen. They continued to live in Crookston, Betty working at Northwestern Clinic and Norman worked at Top and Body Works.

They moved to Fargo, North Dakota, for about a year, then back to Crookston. They have two sons, Mark Allen and Gary Lee, both born in Crookston. A number of years later, the Wentzel family moved to Seattle, Washington. Norman now worked with an Auto Insurance Adjustor, and Betty nursed at the Hospital. Mark graduated from Forestry Service and is now employed in this career. Gary is in a College of Business working on his master's degree. Norman A. Wentzel now has an Auto Insurance Adjustor Company in Seattle, Washington. The Wentzels live in Auburn, Washington. Mrs. Wentzel has continued in the nursing profession.

MR. AND MRS. GREGORY RADKE

Greg and Karen Radke live seven miles north of Crookston on the Clarence Reitmeier farm where they have lived since their marriage in 1974.

Greg was born May 11, 1954 to Elmer and Gleva Radke of Crookston. During his younger years, he lived on the campus of the Northwest School of Agriculture, now known as the University of Minnesota, where Elmer is employed as an Animal Husbandry Technician. Then in 1963, the Radkes made the move to their present home in Crookston. Greg received his education at the Crookston Public Schools, graduating in 1972 from Central High. Other members of the family are Elmer Deane, of San Diego; Connie Lou (Nichols) of Pacific, Missouri; Kenneth Rae, on board ship with the Navy; and David Lee at home and a student at Central High School.

Karen was born on February 22, 1956, to Wilburn and Lorraine Breken. Karen spent her growing years on the present family farm south of Crookston. Karen received her education in the Crookston Catholic Schools, graduating from Mount St. Benedict in 1974. Other members of their family are Larry, of Crookston; Jerry, of Prescott, Wisconsin; Rick, of Crookston; and Mary Lou (Plante) of Crookston.

Greg is presently employed in farming with Clarence Reitmeier. Karen was employed with the West Polk Soil and Water Conservation District but is now a full-time housewife as their first child, Jill Marie arrived on May 24, 1976.

ALFRED RASMUSSEN

Throughout the United States there are many people whose beginnings date back to colonial times. I am such a person. My great grandfather, James Lee, was born in Hampshire County, Virginia, in 1818. Hampshire County is now a part of West Virginia. Because all records were destroyed during the Civil War, I have been unable to get exact data on my family before that date. My maternal great grandfather, Jason Billings, was born in Maine in 1819. My paternal grandparents, the Lewis Sampsons, came to Iowa, directly from Germany.
The Westward movement was on and James Lee migrated to Utica, Ohio, where he married a Pennsylvania girl and raised ten children. The ten children grew and some married and started families. They decided to go even farther west and migrated, in masse, to Iowa, where they established what was known as the Lee Settlement near Brooklyn. My grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins are buried in the cemetery there. The Billings family, too, must have joined the westward movement, because it was at Brooklyn that my grandfather, Richard Henry Lee, married Mary Billings. The farm buildings my grandfather built are still there just as he built them, but the land is no longer Lee land. When my grandfather's family of eight were grown, he and his two brothers, hearing of great opportunities to the North, sold their land and went. My grandfather bought land between Fertile and Beltrami. My mother and her younger brother and sister attended high school at Fertile. She also went one year to Moorhead State Teacher's College. Her roommate was Agnes Scott, aunt of Mrs. Lyle Henderson of Crookston. The late Anna Bjoen was a classmate.

Mother married Clence Sampson from Iowa, June 25, 1908. They had four daughters: Inez, Mrs. John Wigand of Crookston; Dorothy, Mrs. Alfred Rasmussen of rural Fisher; Bernice Ranz of Crookston; and Mary, Mrs. Frank Clayton of Ada. My father died when I was five. Later, my mother met and married Hugh Steffen who survives and lives with his daughter, Glenna, Mrs. Walter Mueller of Crookston. Their two sons, Charles and Otis live in Crookston.

Some of my earliest memories are of the time when we four girls lived with our mother in Beltrami. My grandfather would come with sleigh or buggy to get us to visit grandmother and grandfather, a distance of nine miles. My grandparents bought a house right next to us in Beltrami, but grandmother died of a heart attack before moving in, and grandfather went back to Iowa. I was very angry against someone or something for allowing that to happen. I graduated from Beltrami High School and Mayville State Teacher's College. I taught for 12 years in North Dakota and Minnesota. My last position before marrying was at the Carmen School of Crookston. I married Alfred Rasmussen June 25, 1943, at my parents' home near Crookston. We live on the Rasmussen farm in Fanny Township. My husband was born there. We have one daughter, Doctor Karen Rasmussen, teaching in the Department of Communication at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

Before closing this chronicle, I must add that I know of many Lee families in Washington and California and states in between. So the Lees of Virginia have spread from the east coast of the United States to the west coast.

JENS RASMUSSEN

Jens Rasmussen was born in Vilholt, Jutland, Denmark, January 28, 1864. He came to Gibson City, Illinois in 1886. He had two sisters and one brother living in that area. Anna Marie Nielsen was born May 11, 1871, in Sonderborg, Als, Denmark. She and her brother, Andreas, came to Gibson City in 1890. Their older brother, Jens Andersen, was in that area. Jens Rasmussen, and Anna Nielsen met and were married August 12, 1894, in Harpster, Illinois. They then moved to Northwood, Iowa, where his two sisters and their families were living. They rented a dairy farm and milked 20 cows. In August, 1895, Mrs. Rasmussen's mother and father, Louise Marie and Niels Nielsen, and her youngest brother, Jorgen Nielsen, came from Denmark. The grandparents lived with the Rasmussens and Jorgen did farm work for others in the area. Four children were born in Iowa: Louise Marie, Stella Christine, Wilbert B., and Rosella Norman. The family had a busy time farming, caring for stock, milking cows, raising hogs and chickens. Louise and Stella started school, riding with the man who hauled milk to the creamery.

In 1903, Jens Rasmussen and Andrew Anderson, a cousin of Mrs. Rasmussen from Illinois, came to Minnesota, as they had information of farm land for sale in the Red River Valley. They bought the east half of section 30 in Fanny Township, Polk County, from Jacob Widenhofer. It was twelve miles north west of Crookston. In March, 1904, Jens Rasmussen and Jorgon Nielsen came with stock, machinery, and household goods by freight cars to Hixon. Mrs. Rasmussen, her father and mother, and the children came by passenger train later. The topography was quite a change from the wooded hills of Iowa to flat country. The crops in Iowa were corn, oats and hay, while in Minnesota, the crops were wheat, barley, oats, and hay. Instead of selling milk, the cream was churned and butter was sold. One year, Mrs. Rasmussen won first prize for her butter at the Red River Valley Shows. In the fall of 1904, Louise, Stella and Wilbert started school at District 77, walking one and a-half miles. At that time, country schools had a seven month term with no session in January and February.

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House District 77. Later when District 77 was discontinued, children were bussed to Fisher Sunday School then held in Tin School House District 280. After a number of years, with more cars, Sunday School was discontinued as members attended local churches.

Now a Fanny Home Study Club was organized with Mrs. Rasmussen as a Charter member. This Club is still active. The Rasmussens were members of the Scandinavian Methodist Church in Crookston, but later joined the First Methodist Church of Crookston. They also shared their home with Claude and Lois Rasmussen, children of a nephew of Mr. Rasmussen. In 1932, Betty Nielsen lived there also.

Louise M. Rasmussen started work at Northwestern Clinic in 1925 and retired in 1961.

Stella C. Rasmussen and Charles C. Veit were married 1932, and had a home on Gill Lake near Itasca Park. After Charles C. Veit died April 3, 1964, Stella spent summers at the lake home and also with Charles E. Confers at Angus, Minnesota. In September, 1975, Stella sold the lake home and now has an apartment with her sister, Louise, in Crookston.

WILBERT B. RASMUSSEN

Wilbert B. Rasmussen was born at a farm home near Northwood, Iowa, February 9, 1898, to Mr. and Mrs. Jens Rasmussen. The Rasmussen family moved to Crookston, Minnesota, in 1904, having bought the east half of Section 30 in Fanny Township, Polk County. The children attended country school, District #77 and learned to help with farm work. Charlotte L. Davis, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. P. A. Davis of Minneapolis, Minnesota, graduated from the University of Minnesota, as Medical Technician, with a B.S. Degree, and came to Crookston to work at the Northwestern Clinic in 1932. Charlotte Davis met Wilbert B. Rasmussen and married him October 23, 1937, at the Little Brown Church In The Vale, Nashua, Iowa, with her parents and sister, Marion, attending.

Wilbert had farmed with his father and his brother, but now Wilbert and Charlotte bought the north half of Section 29 in Fanny Township, and Wilbert continued to exchange work with his father and brother.

Charlotte continued to work at the Northwestern Clinic until June, 1944, when she became a fullfledged homemaker and gardener. Their son, Bruce Dean Rasmussen, was born August 16, 1949.

Wilbert had a heart condition and died suddenly on May 8, 1961. Mrs. Rasmussen and Bruce continued to live on the farm, renting out the farm land. Charlotte is interested in community affairs and is a member of the Fanny Home Study Club and the Wesley United Methodist Church in Crookston. Bruce graduated from Fisher High School in 1967, attended two years at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota and entered Moorhead State College, graduating in 1972 with a B.S. Degree.

He returned to Moorhead State College for two years to specialize in computer programming. Bruce is now employed by the Menard Company of Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

CLARENCE AND DORIS REITMEIER

Clarence and Doris Reitmeier live in Fanny Township. Doris is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Ross of Fisher. Clarence has lived on the same place owned by his parents Mr. and Mrs. Fred Reitmeier all of his life. They have four girls and one boy. Jeanette is married to Dick Hanson and lives in Cape Gerardeau, Missouri. Jeanette is going back to school, and will graduate with a Home Economics Major next spring. Dick has an insurance business in Cape Gerardeau. They have three children: Lori, Lisa, Bryan. Elaine is married to Ken Dickel and lives in Bozeman, Montana. Elaine is teaching first grade at Irving School in Bozeman. Ken will graduate as an electrical engineer next spring. Carol lives in Bozeman, Montana. She is teaching the educable, handicapped children at Wilson school in Bozeman. Connie is attending Montana State University. She will graduate as a Legal Secretary. Jimmy is in the fourth grade at Washington School in Crookston.

WILLIAM RUTHERFORD

A visit with Mr. and Mrs. William E. Rutherford of rural Euclid, Minnesota, who are among the few pioneer couples still living in Polk County, can bring back many memories of the early 1900's. Both are lifelong residents of that community, Mrs. Rutherford (Mae) growing up in Keystone Township and William in Fanny Township. Mrs. Rutherford graduated from the Agricultural College at Crookston in 1913 and then returned home to take over the household duties and the care of the younger children. In 1917 she completed the teacher's training course in East Grand Forks. She taught for a while in a rural Polk County school. She married William Rutherford in 1920. Their wedding took place in the afternoon of December 15, 1920, at the farm home of her father, William J. Gunness, on a beautiful winter day when guests could visit outdoors in shirtsleeves; but, as they recall, the beautiful day turned into a cold, stormy, wintry evening as is typical of our northern Minnesota.

Mr. Rutherford took his bride to his farm which had been homesteaded by his father, Thomas Rutherford in 1879. William now operated the farm with his younger brother, Robert. The following year twin sons, Ronald and Donald, were born. In 1923, Edmund was born and a year later Marian (Mrs. Ervin Guninson) joined the household. The arrival of Herbert in 1931 completed their family. In 1921, Robert married, and the two families lived in the same home until 1927, when William and Mae built a new home on Section 5 where they are still living. They have fifteen grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. They enjoy visiting with their children who live in the area, and with their friends who stop to see them to discuss
"old times" as well as the present day pleasures and problems.

The pioneer couple were members of the Keystone Presbyterian Church at Key West, Minnesota, from their childhood until the church was dissolved in 1969. They joined the Mendenhall Presbyterian Church in East Grand Forks, Minnesota. The parents of both were instrumental in organizing the Keystone Church of which William was treasurer for many years and Mrs. Rutherford an active member of the Ladies Aid.

William, born August 23, 1889, attended the Agricultural College at Crookston, but since farming was his main interest, he returned home to care for the livestock. Every winter the horses were sent to the woods where they earned their keep by working in the logging camp. When cattle were sold they were put on the train atBuffington, a loading station located along the Northern Pacific Railroad, a mile north of the farm on which the Rutherfords lived.

William's father came to Fisher's Landing in 1879 and from there walked north to the Robert Nesbit farm where he stayed while he was setting up his own claim. He walked northeast to Fanny Township, which was established in 1880, and there built a sod shanty on Section 6 next to the John Love farm which is now occupied by a grandson, Allan Loves. Later in 1880, he returned to eastern Canada to marry Margaret Abernethy Armstrong, whom he had known when he was in Peru, Ontario. She was a sister of Mrs. John Love. They came back to Euclid, Minnesota, by train and then to his homestead. In a few years they built a frame house on the farm now owned by Robert Rutherford, their youngest son, who now lives in East Grand Forks.

Medical help was not easily available and their first baby girl died shortly after birth and was buried in an old cemetery just north of Fisher. Other members of the family were Della, now deceased, who married George A. Lee and lived near Mallory, Minnesota; Fred, killed at 25 years of age by a falling tree at his homestead in Baudette, Minnesota; Howard, who died at 19 and Mary at 13, both of pneumonia; Nethy, who married Leo M. Burns and operated the Crookston Dress Club for many years until they retired and moved to their present home in Tucson, Arizona; and Jennie who married Elmore Dangerfield and lived in Winnipeg, Manitoba, until her death in 1957.

Mrs. Rutherford's father came to Fisher's Landing from eastern Canada in 1879, but chose East Grand Forks as his destination. He homesteaded land in Section 3 of Keystone Township in 1879, near friends and relatives. He worked on the railroad and an extra job, chopped wood to earn money to buy seed for the first planting on his newly acquired claim, nine miles east of East Grand Forks. He married Tena McDougall, and on August 21, 1893, their first child, Mae, was born. She had two brothers, Lloyd, who died when a young man, and Harold who is living in Oregon, Mrs. Guinness died shortly after Harold was born, and unable to care for a tiny baby, Mr. Guinness let his brother and sister-in-law in Barnesville raise Harold. Later he married Emma Woodall and they had five children. Margaret married Robert Will and lived in the Key West community until her death in 1966. Other children were Dorothy, Mrs. Harold Holmes; Charlotte, Mrs. Dara McDonald; and Vernard, all living in California; and Jean who died in 1957 in California. Mrs. Guinness died in 1910. When Mr. Guinness retired, he moved to East Grand Forks where he made his home until his death in 1944.

WILHELM SENSKA

Wilhelm Senske was born in 1844 near Posen, Germany. His parents were poor share cropper farmers. Seeing no future in this or the compulsory military service for eighteen year olds, he left for America just before age eighteen.

His first years in the United States were spent in Wisconsin where he worked on farms and in logging camps. In 1873 he married Henrietta Nesweber, also from Germany, and they bought a farm near Augusta, Wisconsin. A son, Gustav and a daughter Mary, were born there. Wanting more land that was easier to clear for farming, he sold his farm to his younger brother, August, who had followed him to the United States.

In 1881 he brought his family to Fisher, Minnesota, and settled on 160 acres of prairie in Nesbit Township. Here they built a sod shanty and the change from the comfortable two story frame house in Wisconsin was almost unbearable. In winter Wilhelm helped cut oak logs to build the log house which soon replaced the sod shanty. Some years later the log house was enlarged to a two story frame house. In 1887 they helped build the Trinity Lutheran Church in Lowell Township.

As sons, Gust and Will, grew up, three more quarters of land were added to the farm. Their daughter Mary died at age nineteen. Wilhelm and Henrietta farmed until 1912 when they retired and moved to Crookston for their remaining years.

In 1902 Gust was married to Mary Tiedemann and later moved onto his own place in Fanny Township. William married Minnie Tiedemann and lived on the home place. Mary and Minnie Tiedemann were sisters whose parents were early settlers near Euclid, Minnesota. In 1908 Gust purchased his first auto or "Gas Buggy" which had high wheels and hard tires with a chain drive and air cooled motor. This made the thirty-mile round trip to Crookston for groceries and business more endurable. The winter trips still had to be made with horses. The first telephone came about 1910, and the electric power in the early twenties (1920). William and Minnie Senske had no children. They sold their farm in the late thirties and lived in Crookston the rest of their lives.

Gust and Mary Senske raised a family of eight: Arthur, Albert, Alice, Bernice, Arnold, Walter, Edwin and Orville. Besides farming, Gust served the community as school clerk and township clerk for many years. He also served many years as an officer of the Trinity Lutheran Church until he moved to Crookston, Minnesota. Gust was very active in organizing farmers cooperatives including the Farmers Union Oil Company and Crookston Farmers Cooperative Elevator of Crookston. He served as president of each for many years. In 1947 Gust and Mary Senske retired to Crookston for the rest of their years.

Arthur Senske operated the farm until it was sold in 1970. Surviving members of the Senske family live in Crookston, East Grand Forks, Minnesota, and Saginaw, Michigan.

SAM VEENSTRA

The Veenstra family originated in Westergeest, Holland. Sam (Sitzie Libby) was born in 1866. His parents were farmers.

Sam served in the army in Holland before coming to the United States in 1893 at the age of 25. He went to Iowa to live with cousins. While there, he met and married Nellie O'Neill.

Nellie was an orphan child, having lost her parents at the age of four. When she was still a child, she was adopted by some people in Iowa, but the day before she was to arrive, a tornado injured the foster mother, tearing off her arm. Because of the injury, she could not adopt the child, so a neighbor took Nellie.

The Real Estate men in Iowa were pushing the "low priced" land propaganda in northern Minnesota area, and our father, Sam Veenstra, who was a true pioneer, decided that northern Minnesota was his destiny. He went first in a boxcar with his farm animals, wagon, and some machinery as far as Crookston. From there he loaded his property onto the wagon, hitched up the horses and drove to his new farm about 10 or 12
miles northwest of Crookston. After awhile he sent for my mother, Nellie, and their two small children, a boy, Frank, and a little girl, "Birdie". They came by train and were met at Crookston by our father, Sam. They then drove by horses and wagon to their new home, and what a home it was! It must have been in late winter when they arrived, because my mother said they became very cold before they came to a small shack. My father helped my mother and the children into the shack and immediately made a fire in an old stove, using straw for fire material. After they had warmed up, my mother asked if they should not be getting on to their home. It was then, that she was informed by my father that this terrible little shack was their new home!

My mother used to tell of the swamps they had to cross in order to get to town, and of how the horses, with their sense of smell, could tell where the swamp was unsafe to cross. They would stop, snort, and refuse to go forward. My father would then have to let them turn around and try to cross at a different place.

Mother also told stories about the wolves. As the people drove along with a team of horses and a wagon the wolves would follow a short distance behind. My father only smiled when she talked about the wolves, but my mother said she was sure that the wolves were always eyeing the people and the horses, as a possible dinner. She also told of how neighbors were bringing meat home one time, and they had to keep throwing pieces of the meat back to the wolves to keep them from jumping into the wagon. The wolves, of course, would stop, and fight over each piece of meat and thereby gave the people a little chance to get closer to home and safety.

Little Frank and Birdie got the whooping cough, too, shortly after coming to northern Minnesota, so that added to the trials of my mother.

Later the family moved to what in later years was the Bill Schipper farm and from there to what was later the Clem Benoit (Fred Demarce) farm, and then to the townsite of Wakeman, now Shirley.

Mother never told, too, about the people who lived where Ambrose Altepeter lives now, and had children going to Tinsel School. One time the bigger children came running home crying, and when the mother asked them, "Where is Little Billy?" they said, "Oh, we left him behind, because while the wolves were eating him, we would have a chance to run home". The parents, of course, dashed out and rescued Little Billy.

Sam and Nellie had nine children, Nettie, Joe and Bertha (Mrs. Leon Pierce) who lives in the Crookston area; and Gertrude (Mrs. Louis Carpenter) who lives in Thief River Falls. Other children living in other parts of the country are: Sophia (Mrs. Lawrence Kuglar) lives in Minneapolis; Wade lives in Chicago; Leonard lives in California; Annie, Mrs. Roy, and Frank are deceased.

**Farley Township**

**GEORGE BOTKO SR.**

George Botko was born December 26, 1877 near Presvo, Czechoslovakia. He came to the United States while a young man with two older brothers. He had to obtain his passport before he was sixteen years old or remain in Czechoslovakia until he'd served his compulsory time in the army. He left there the latter part of February 1893, spent thirty days aboard ship crossing the ocean. He came to Minneapolis, Minnesota in April. He could speak no English so it was hard for him to obtain work and understand what was expected of him. He came to the Tabor community in Polk county in 1894. He worked on a large farm called the "Irish Farm." Because of the language barrier, the other hired man harassed him and made life quite miserable for the foreigner.

George started farming on his own in Tabor township in 1899. On January 27, 1902 he married Ella Kohanosky in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She was also Czech; she had emigrated with her parents from Czechoslovakia to the United States and Minneapolis at a very early age. To this union nine children were born: namely Mary, George Jr., Emil, Thomas, Frank, Albert, Clarence, Elsie, and Agnes.

They had bad luck and hard times. Their home burned down in 1907. They were out doing chores when they noticed their house was on fire. Mr. Botko had to break a window to get into the house to save their two children, Mary and George Jr., and the young hired girl who were all huddled under a bed. The hired girl had attempted to add more wood to a dwindling fire in the cook stove, the stick of wood was too large, she couldn't get it all into the stove. She removed the stick and tossed it out the door, it started a fire in the straw, which was banked around the house to keep out some of winter's cold, and in no time there was fire all around. They moved to another place two miles away, and lived there until 1918, when they bought their own farm in Farley Township and lived there until they retired.

George Jr. lost both feet in a grain binder accident while helping with the harvest. He lived through the ordeal and got artificial feet. However, Mr. Botko's hair turned white over night. Two of the boys, Albert and Clarence, got polio at an early age. Albert died in 1930 at the age of thirteen. Clarence died in 1933, at the age of fifteen. They were both victims of polio, or infantile paralysis as it was called in those days.

The Botkos made many a long journey by horses and wagon to Minneapolis doctors and hospitals and back with their family. As the trip one way took more than a day; to save money which was scarce, anyhow, for this was during the depression when wheat sold for 30 cents a bushel, barley 20 cents a bushel, oats 8 cents a bushel; they sometimes slept in a granary or other vacant building along the roadside. They had relatives to stay with while in Minneapolis. Mrs. George Botko Sr. was an ambitious woman. Besides caring for the family, and keeping house, she did all the other things typical of a pioneer farm woman, such as churning butter, baking breads, and canning vegetables from the large garden she raised. At butchering time, she smoked and cured meats, and also canned meat and rendered lard. She helped tend the cattle and milk the cows, raised chickens, ducks, turkeys, and geese. She stripped the feathers and made pillows and feather beds. She also helped with the field work, shocking grain, and plowing with three horses and a two-bottom plow. She also kept the school teachers many years in their home providing their room and board. That was in the days of the one-room country schools.

The Botkos were among the early members of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church at Tabor, Minnesota. Mrs. Botko was a charter member of the Ladies Aid, as it was called at that time.