mother’s name was Ten-ta-see-nah (In morning light). She was the daughter of May-Koota (one deer), born in Nebraska in about 1850, and died in Crookston, Minnesota, in 1928 at the age of 78 years. Grandmother gave much of her time and talents to the church, where she was well known for her preparation of church suppers. She was very active in “Old St. Mary’s” church and later in the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception. She and Mrs. Mary Schraeder worked long and hard to help raise money when the new church was built in 1912. There are many stories from the old hotel still in existence, such as dishes, some kitchen ware, and several pieces of bedroom furnishings, wash-basins and pitchers. My brother, Francis Boh of Crookston, has these as keepsakes.

THE POLK COUNTY LIBRARY HISTORY, CROOKSTON

This history has been written with the help of articles published in the “Crookston Times,” and histories written by Elizabeth Lommen and Mrs. Luverne Larsen. The wording of the original sources has been used as much as possible in order to preserve the flavor of the times.

“Although there were plays, debates, and social functions, the pioneers of Crookston desired books to read. As early as 1872, public spirited citizens offered to loan their own books, provided a building could be secured. After the Baptist church was built on South Ash street, it was found that the old church could be used. Mr. Ayers, who had arrived in Crookston in 1879, was selected as the first librarian. As in the case of every progressive library, there was always call for more books. In 1883, the call was answered. Albert Muller, who had recently attended Yale University, placed his books in the library.

“Later this first location was sold and the books moved to a structure on the site of the Hotel Crookston (now the site of Ben Franklin). Mrs. Sadie Walker Hussey, then a young girl, was assistant librarian.

“In the year of 1902 a few of the influential people of Crookston got the notion that Crookston needed a more formal library. To get started they had a book shower which brought in 600 books of all descriptions. These books were then sorted and 500 of them were books that could be used for a beginning in this enterprise.

“The second location on the site of the Hotel Crookston was soon sold and two rooms in the Odd Fellows Hall at the corner of Ash and Robert were rented. Under the supervision of Miss Clara F. Baldwin of the State Library Commission, the Crookston Public Library was organized. The books were then classified by the Dewey Decimal system and Mrs. Van Arum was appointed librarian. She served a short time and resigned owing to her leaving the city. Nine applications were submitted and after taking the vote Elizabeth Lommen was duly elected librarian in May 1902. She then went down to the University of Minnesota and took a short course in library work and started to work at a salary of $20 a month for the first year. The library was then run in connection with a gymnasium.

“Next the Board wrote to Andrew Carnegie for a contribution for a new building, but they never got an answer, Miss Lommen took it upon herself to write, and she at once sent a blank to fill out. The present building was secured at the time and Andrew Carnegie was making his general contributions to cities throughout the United States. Carnegie required the city to provide the site and provide for maintenance of the building. Mrs. Just, Judge Watts, and J. W. Wheeler, library board members, headed the list of subscribers and personally collected funds to purchase the present site. Andrew Carnegie gave $12,500 for the building which was later raised to $17,500.

“A November 1908 “Crookston Times” article described the new library:

“If present arrangements are carried out, the new public library will be formally opened to the public on the evening of November 27th, the 71st birthday of Andrew Carnegie. It is believed that this date will commend itself to every citizen as being especially appropriate.

“The library is practically completed at the present time (November 1908) but some delay has been experienced in waiting for the furnishings. The building is an exceptionally attractive structure and is a distinct addition to the architectural beauty of the city. The interior of the building will be a surprise to the people of the city.

“The Library Board has been making every effort to have the work on the building completed at as early a date as possible and their efforts have been seconded by architect B. D. Keck and contractor Ross. This effort has resulted in giving to the city the use of the building at a comparatively early date.”

“An article in the November 22, 1908 “Crookston Times” describes a party held at the library:

“About 40 couples enjoyed the informal dancing party given by the members of the Crookston Club last evening in the library building which was undoubtedly a success. Frappé and wafers were served during the evening and the music was exceptionally fine. These parties are becoming more popular as the season advances.”

“After the dedication of the building; beautiful gifts were received from time to time. D. F. Turner gave six beautiful hammered brass jardinières and vases. He also gave ferns to go with them. The next big gift was from the Current Events Club. They had a lecture course and cleared $432.00, which was all put into books. They also raised money for a piano, which they presented. The Women’s Club also helped by giving some sets of books and also in getting some fine pictures. They got a $250,000 art exhibit for the library for two weeks. The library was filled to its utmost capacity and everybody had a chance to go and see it as often as they pleased free of charge. They later got a picture called “The Source of the Mississippi” by Edwin Flashfield, a Minnesota artist.

“The Matrons Club helped with books; not quantity but quality. J. P. Foote contributed an oil painting in memory of his mother. The name of this picture was “The Age of Innocence” by Reynolds. The Young Men’s Debating Club gave pictures of Washington and Lincoln. A tag day was held which netted over $100 which was used for furnishing the rest room in the basement. During the war the library gathered 400 books for the boys at Camp Cody and then canvassed the town for money and raised $400 in town and $400 more in the county, amounting to $800 which was also sent. The library also furnished a room for the Red Cross for years, both heated and lighted. Magazines were given to the hospitals and the
sanitorium.

"Miss Carey, state organizer of the library commission, made a card catalog file for the library. She came here and worked four days, free of charge, and her catalog answered the purpose beautifully for many years. Eventually the library board decided to have a new one which was put in by a lady from South Dakota. This cost the city over $500. This lady discarded 1,000 books which Miss Lommen got permission to distribute as she pleased, so she gave most of them to the "White Elephant," where they were loaned to people who live out of town.

The traveling library proved a godsend as two were rented every year of 50 books each, and as the library got little else Miss Lommen was glad to get them. It was quite a task to run a library with no money. These traveling libraries cost $2.50 each and she managed so they paid for themselves.

"Miss Lommen was librarian from 1902-1924 — 22 years, during which she kept a struggling library at first alive and helped it then grow stronger. Miss Lommen was a tall, slender lady, quite austere in appearance. She wore glasses, often dressed in a white shirtdress with high collar and a long black skirt. Outwardly she was very stern — one look over the top of her glasses or occasionally one shout of "quiet!" kept perfect order in the library. There were no problems of discipline in those days when Miss Lommen was about. Inwardly she was a very kind-hearted person.

"Miss Virginia Heston was the librarian from June 1924-June 1926. She introduced the children's story hour and the children's vocational reading club. A prize was given to the girl and boy reading the most children's non-fiction books during the summer — and the first prizes were won by Gladys Garvin and Lea Spring (still a good library user in 1976).

From 1926 to 1930, Mrs. Clara Bordwell was librarian. One interesting event during her term of office was the attempt made by the city council in 1929 to reduce the library budget by 1/10 mill. The mayor, Dr. Locken, vetoed the measure saying "while the reduction of taxes is a worthy ideal, I personally do not believe that it is our obligation to reach that effort by sacrificing the work of the center of our culture in this community."

In 1931, Miss Claire Winzenburg became librarian. She served for 23 years and retired in 1954 as Mrs. Claire Madden. During her time the library continued its gradual growth in circulation, increased its equipment, and made many building improvements.

Mr. Leonard Stasney was then librarian for one year. From 1955-1972, Cleo McDonald was librarian. In November 1958, it was decided by a vote of the people to establish a county library. In 1959 the county commissioners levied a one mill tax to raise money for the project. Existing libraries in Fosston and McIntosh joined the Polk County system. Other branches were started in Climax, Fertile, and East Grand Forks. Through the addition of new branches and a bookmobile, library service for all residents of the county became a reality.

In 1972, Cheryl Bjorn became librarian. In 1975 the Polk County — Crookston Library became part of the Lake Agassiz Regional Library, which is headquartered in Moorhead. Lake Agassiz serves Polk (excluding East Grand Forks) Norman, Becker, and Clay counties and the city of Breckenridge. The majority of Minnesota libraries now belong to some type of a regional library system, allowing for closer cooperation of neighboring public libraries and thus better service. Regionalizing has also given Polk County access to a much larger book collection and access to the staff expertise of a major Minnesota library.

In 1959 the Library Board became a county board with 9 city and county members. In 1975, the county board appointed four of its members to serve on the 19 member Lake Agassiz Regional Library Board. The city-county board also still meets on a regular basis.

This history covers the history of the Polk County-Crookston Library from 1882 to 1976. In 1908, its first and only permanent home given by Andrew Carnegie was dedicated. At that time the library housed 5,000 volumes. It now houses over 37,000 volumes in the very same building. The Polk County system now owns over 47,000 volumes housed throughout the County in Climax, Fertile, Fosston, McIntosh, and Crookston. The headquarters library in Crookston is bursting at the seams, but the future looks bright that the need for a new home for the library will be realized.

Neby

Neby was the name given to a place which contained a store, post office, dance hall and blacksmith shop. It was located on the southwest corner of Section 36, Tynsid township. If it were in existence today, it would be approximately one-half mile south and five miles west of Eldred, Minnesota.

In the 1870's to early 1900's as far as we apprehend, this location was used as a distribution place for the mail which had been brought from Fisher's Landing. We have found from the history and biography of Polk County 1916 edition, page 414, that Helge Thoreson was one who carried the mail for two years between Fisher's Landing and Neby. The second year he also carried mail for Halvor Grove.

Mr. Helge Thoreson was the first person paid by the government to carry mail in this area. He received a salary of $340 the first year and $375 the second year. It is also reported that later Halvor Grove and Donald Hamilton were carriers of mail from Fisher's Landing to Neby, Climax and as far as Nielsville, Minnesota.

We also have a letter from Maria Krogseng of Saum, Minnesota with the following facts taken from an old letter and document left by her parents. She says, "I have a very worn official document from the post office department February 14, 1882 that states: "I, Postmaster General have appointed you postmaster of Neby, county of Polk, state of Minnesota". It is signed by Peter Krogseng and the assistant Postmaster General.

We have no positive record as to who was postmaster at Neby after Peter Krogseng left for Norway in 1885. Possibly Ole Wolden took over the job. Andrew Sand is another name mentioned but this writer has no proof or facts at this time as to when or if he was postmaster there.

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Stortroen were married June 1892 at Old Neby Store (Tynsid Township).