

Robert Charles after graduating from Crookston Central High School attended the University of Colorado at Greeley and Boulder. He studied politics, Russian history and traveled to Europe and Russia on summer study tours. Bob is generous, friendly and an uninhibited person who loves to ski, backpack, and live "back to nature." He has been working with book stores in the Colorado area.

Paul Matthew, after high school graduation, attended the University of Minnesota studying history and psychology. He was a member of the Chi Psi Fraternity. Paul has a good sense of humor and great sensitivity to all those around him. He is an enthusiastic skier, likes cars and enjoys reading.

HORSES WERE PEOPLE

by Treva Wallace Jones

Horses were important members of Wallace farm life. Each had a definite personality — mostly good traits, but some bad. I will mention a few of those wonderful animals.

Topsy and Venus, brought with us from Iowa, were tall, rangy bay coach horses. In spring 1920, when the entire countryside was flooded from the broken dam at Crookston, Venus drowned in the ditch which ran through our property. It seemed Topsy never forgot her mate; she was sort of lonely and out-of-place with the other horses. She was too bony for a saddle horse, too light for heavy work, although she did duty as both. She was over 29 years old when she died.

Prince and Minnie, powerful black work horses brought from Iowa, were capable of freeing the heaviest bogged-down equipment, sometimes straining so hard forward that they were almost parallel to the ground. However faithful, they had an annoying trait. Whether frightened by the noise or by the slithering belt on the thresher, no one knows, but once during each threshing period, they would run away, usually dragging a loaded grain rack behind them.

Ted and Jerry were hard-working, black broncos bought on the range in Montana. Fred's alternate team mates were Mollie (a sorrel) and Queen (from Montana). Fred came to an untimely end; he smothered when an eaten-out strawstack fell on him. Queen foaled a pair of matched Arabian colts. When they were three-year-olds, lightning struck so close to the house that it knocked Dad out of bed but worse, the bolt hit one of the colts and laid its neck open. Dad was devastated. In the 1950's, at a time when most farms were completely mechanized, Dad still had a team of work horses, dappled grays.

Vic, our saddle horse from 1920 on, was fun, reliable but tricky. He was hard to catch and when being saddled, puffed out his belly so the cinch wouldn't hold. He never lost his urge to "run for the barn." When doubling as a work horse on light equipment, he was teamed with Topsy; often he led her on a runaway, always heading for home, once dragging a bouncing dump rake over a half a mile.

I rode Vic back and forth to high school, ten miles a day; generally, he bucked for the first half mile before settling down to an easy lope. As he got along in years, he was retired to being a riding horse for the younger children. He had ways of dealing with them; he'd lower his head so they would fall off; or when Virginia would start him down the lane, he'd turn around and go back for a drink. When over 30 years old, he was sold to a neighbor, ostensibly for their young children to ride. Later, we learned he was sold to a fox farm. Sad thought!

Major had a habit of shying at a fluttering leaf or piece of paper, scooting sidewise — a bareback rider found himself sitting on the ground as Major raced for home. Wildfire was so unpredictable that only Dad could ride him.

In the 1930's, Dad began breeding horses. At one time, he had 37 head running in the Blow-Out. Tom, a big dappled gray Percheron stallion, was like no stallion you ever heard of. He loved Dad; he would nip Dad's arm, lay his head on Dad's shoulder, or pull Dad's jacket over his head.

Except for a few accidental deaths, all of our horses lived long, useful lives. They were loved and received loving care. They are remembered.

THE SETTLING OF POLK COUNTY

by Albany Capistran

This hand bill was found in a bundle of old papers in the attic of an old wood building in Crookston that was being torn down in 1935. It was 52 years old when it was found. As of 1976, it is ninety-three years old. There were also brochures printed that explained the Homestead Act that Congress had passed and the 1877 Railroad Land Grant.

The brochures that were printed explained very well how any person could get land in the Red River Valley under the many options that were made available to them by the Homestead Act or the Railroad Land Grant. But the hand bills that were put out were a different story. Men at that time had big dreams of Crookston and thought that it would become a very large city and some day maybe as large and as important as Minneapolis or St. Paul. So if the truth were stretched a little, it was all done to benefit Crookston and Polk County.

Crookston and Fisher's Landing were the two jump-off points for settlers coming into Polk County and the Red River Valley. By 1878 the railroads had most of their main lines laid and branch lines surveyed. But to have railroads and steamboats without people and produce to haul was no paying investment. The railroads and land companies started big promotions to get settlers on the land. They had promoters in foreign countries and in New York. They also had free train trips for investors and speculators. These were provided by the railroad, to get settlers on their right-of-way lands, and by land companies that had bought up territorial settlement rights for resale of farm land.

The men who came were usually rich men, oil men, mining men, and boat company operators from foreign countries and eastern United States. Many of these men liked what they saw and bought large acreages, which became our bonanza farms in the Valley.

In 1878 the United States Land Office moved from Detroit Lakes to Crookston and over 4,100 homestead entries were made before 1879 — this is more than was ever made before or since!

The railroad grant gave the railroad land for constructing a railroad. The land acquired by the railroad company under the grant was every alternate section, designated by odd numbers, for six sections in width on each side of said road and branch lines; and odd sections of land outside of this as indemnity for any they failed to get in the original limits by reason of settlers having acquired right to the land under the Preemption Act of the United States. The indemnity limit was not to exceed fifteen miles from the line of road, less the two sections in every township held out as school land.

The railroad promotions under Jess Farley and Jim Hill were that any person could come from New York to St. Paul for \$1. Then it cost \$35 per family from St. Paul to Glyndon, Moorhead, Crookston, or Fisher's Landing. This included all belongings in a box car to be brought to any steamboat landing or other destination for buying land or taking a claim or settling on railroad land under the three provisions that were available.

Specifications for Acquiring Land Railroad Land for Sales to Settlers

Option 1: Sold the land for \$2.50 per acre at 7% interest on a 5 year contract. (Some land sold higher in later years, \$5.00 to \$8 per acre)

Option 2: If a farmers plowed and seeded the land in the first three years, he or she could get 50% off the price of the land.

Option 3: If a farmer built a house or barn, and broke up 10 to 30 acres, he would be credited off the purchase price \$2.50 for each acre broken up and 50¢ per acre for every acre seeded.

Acquiring Land under the Homestead Act

Article 1: Any person, male or female, 21 years of age could pay \$1.25 per acre to the United States Land Office for 160 acres of land.

Article 2: Any person, male or female, 21 years of age, who would live and build on the land and work it for five years would get 160 acres free, except they must pay registration fee of about \$14.00 to the United States Land Office.