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 thrasher, 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, scaring Sidney and breaking his own back by a barb wire fence 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 he laid out 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 acresages, 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 Predemption 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 for family of four, 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{1\text{o}} interest on a 1 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.

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Article 3: Tree Claims — Any person who would plant 10 acres of trees in rows by government specifications, which had to be at least 670 living trees the third year, got 160 acres of land.

The reason for the tree claims was to get shelter places on the prairie for building sights. It is almost unbelievable to think that the valley during territorial times had no trees except along the rivers and lakes. It was a vast prairie of native buffalo and blue stem grass. After many prairie fires in the late 1800's-1905 many poplar and willow trees started growing and became thick woods on land that was once open prairie.

Many pioneer settlers came by railroad and steamboat. Others came by prairie schooners drawn by oxen or horses, and carried all their belongings with them. No matter how they came or where they came from, they all came to make a home and a good life in the Red River Valley.

The study of local history may provide some insight into the past and the future. It should be noted that Polk County and the Red River Valley have always been an important part of world history.

AN “INDIAN” WEDDING

No prettier marriage ceremony conducted under such auspicious circumstances has ever been solemnized in the city of Crookston as that which bound Miss Bertha Morgan and O. O. Sundet of this city at the Red Men's hall and was witnessed by 350 friends and relatives of the happy contracting young people.

Bertha Morgan and O. O. Sundet were united in marriage on May 10, 1904. The civil ceremony was performed by Judge McLean at the city hall. Bridesmaids were Miss Josephine Gjerde and Miss Bertha Trones. The groom was attended by V. A. Anderson, O. C. Moe and Henry Morgan, brother of the bride. The bride and her attendants were elegantly attired in the fashion of the day, and the groom in traditional formal wear.

Following the ceremony the newly married couple were driven to the Odd Fellows hall where a band of 24 members of the Improved Order of Red Men of Crookston led in the Indian marriage rituals.

In lieu of the traditional pony, the bride entered in a sedan chair borne by six braves, as the orchestra played “Anona”. As she rose to her feet, she was draped in a colorful blanket. The groom was attired in a full suit of fringed buckskins.

All three floors of the Odd Fellows hall were used to entertain the guests. In the largest hall tepees had been set up, to which the bridal party were escorted first. Here they were entertained by the braves dancing the marriage dance accompanied by kettle drums, uttering cries of “Ki Vi” much to the enjoyment of the spectators.

Both the upper floors were used for dancing, one for Riggs orchestra and the other the Silken Strings.

At midnight a sumptuous banquet was provided on the first floor. One hundred and fifty guests were served at one time. Gilbert Bang catered the dinner which was attended by members of the city council and other city officials. The tables were beautifully decorated with cut flowers and a huge wedding cake.

Mayor Chesterman gave a short address following which the bride and groom were presented with numerous wedding gifts, some of which are still in the Sundet family; namely, a dining room set given to the couple by Charlie Kiewel.

Everyone offered greetings but perhaps the most unusual greeting was that of the Red Men which said in essence: “May the new tepee be ever pitched in pleasant places among forests filled with game.”

O. O. Sundet is the father of Russel Sundet of the Hobby Shop of Crookston.

The account of the wedding was reported in many papers throughout the state for no more unique or pretty wedding was ever solemnized in the city of Crookston and Red Men did themselves proud and proved royal entertainers.

OLE JEVNING'S LOG HOUSE
Climax, Minnesota

If walls could talk, what kind of stories would they have to tell? What kind of struggles and hardships went into the building of a home in the late 1800's? How much history has been recorded within the walls of an old log house which knew several generations as its tenants?

The log house built by Ole Jevning in 1876 was recently donated to the Polk County Historical Society at Crookston, Minnesota. Taken apart with great care, the logs of the home were numbered in order that the home might be rebuilt on the grounds of the new Polk County Historical Site located on Highway 2 east of Robert's Cafe in Crookston. The entire home is now in possession of the Historical Society. Carved on the ends of one of the logs was the name, Ole Jevning, 1876.

Ole Jevning, Sr. left his homeland of Bardu, northern Norway, on May 7, 1866. Traveling to the United States and to Freeborn County, Minnesota, he arrived during the latter part of August that same year. For the next two years, Jevning worked at the carpenter trade, a trade which was invaluable in the years that followed, for he was later detailed to the building of homes for the members of the company with whom he traveled.

Joining a government supply train in 1869, Jevning worked as a cook while traveling from St. Cloud to Fort Abercrombie. Returning to St. Cloud later he received orders to haul supplies from Sauk Rapids up the Mississippi River to Fort Ripley. He was later ordered to Fort Snelling, arriving at Christmas and remaining until March.

He took a homestead claim in Ottertail County in 1869 which he held for two years before letting the land revert to the government.

During the summer of 1871, Ole Jevning traveled to the Red River Valley with the Ole Estenson family and with Peter Satermo. At that time there were no roads, not even a trail, and the rivers had high banks and muddy bottoms. At one point the company had to build a bridge of elm logs in order to cross the Wild Rice River.

They wondered about in search of good land, little knowing where they were going. One day, they noticed bits of bark on the prairie which told the tale of a recent flood, and they pushed on to the Sand Hill River where the land appeared more satisfactory. Eventually they found themselves near the Red River and Grand Forks, N.D. which had but one building, a combined residence and store belonging to the Hudson Bay Company.

On June 10, 1871, they reached the land in the Red River Valley on which they settled. Jevning selected a site in section 14, T62N, R4W, south of the township, which is now four miles west of the village of Climax, Minnesota. There were no residents north of his site at that time.

Being an experienced builder, it was Jevning's job to build the homes they were to live in; while the others broke the land for farming. The first house, a log structure 20 by 24 feet, was built for Ole Estenson, Sr. Ole Jevning spent the days preparing the logs while the other men of the party assisted by hauling them to the site and peeling off the bark during the evening hours. The roof consisted of poles and long bunches of prairie grass. The house had no floor, windows, or door and a rainstorm during the night wet their hay bed and set their shoes to floating.

Ole Jevning lived in his "prairie schooner" until fall when he completed his own log house, a cabin of 16 by 16 feet covered with straw and sod. In 1872, he married Ingeborg Estenson and brought his bride to live in the sod-roofed cabin with a dirt floor.

A larger home was built for the family in 1876, approximately 18 by 30 feet in dimension. Built of solid oak, the logs were cut off from the land surrounding the farm site.

Can you imagine what went into the building of a story and a half home when the only tools available were a saw and an axe?