Some of the papers in those days carried as high as two or three pages of land notices, set in solid nonpareil, and their incomes from this source ran as high as $150 or $200 a week. No wonder those early publishers were optimists of the most virulent type! No wonder they were boosters of the brightest luster! No wonder the publisher at Red Lake Falls saw in his town, of one store and two saloons, a “Second Minneapolis,” and the editor at St. Hilaire, with two stores, three saloons, and a blacksmith shop, went his rival one better, and christened his town the “Second Chicago,” and in leaded long primer proved it, too, to his own satisfaction at least.

But their dreams of future greatness, colored by the roesate hue of their present prosperity, were not to be for long. The country was rapidly settled. The public land passed from the Government to the pioneer farmer, and the fat pickings from final proof notices began to dwindle, until now the publisher of a Polk County paper would not recognize a land notice, if he tripped over it. The rural mail carrier was the next shadow to be cast across the sunlit path of the early Polk County publisher. He pushed out daily into the highways and byways, where the local weekly had reigned supreme, and brought with him the daily papers of the neighboring towns and the big cities, and, with circulation decreasing and income diminishing, the life of the pioneer publisher began to be cast along hard lines. The big city papers, especially the weekly editions, competed with the local and, with circulation decreasing and income diminishing, the life of the pioneer publisher began to be cast along hard lines. The big city papers, especially the daily editions, competed with the local journals to the latter’s great disadvantage. Many a established institutions. The Crookston offspring of Polk County man, disgracefully deficient in public spirit and local patriotism, cut off his home paper and subscribed for a city sheet instead.

Some branched into other, and more profitable fields, others folded their tents and sought new pastures, and others hung on and on, and went down with their colors flying. Of the twenty-one papers that flourished in Polk County thirty years ago, but four are in existence today, and of the publishers of thirty years ago the writer of this article is the only one who survives in the business.

E. M. WALSH AND THE CROOKSTON PLAINDEALER.

E. M. Walsh was Polk County’s first editor and publisher. In 1874 he established the Crookston Plaindealer. It was printed at Grand Forks in the office of the Grand Forks Plaindealer, which was established and then being conducted by his brother, George Walsh. The Crookston Plaindealer was conducted as a side issue to Mr. Walsh’s other activities. He was postmaster, storekeeper, real estate dealer, land locator, and a few other things in those days, and when John McLean, now long since dead, but then in the hey-day of his youth, came up from Audubon to practice law and establish the Polk County Journal, Mr. Walsh gladly transferred the literary, social, and political burden to his shoulders, and the Plaindealer ceased to exist.

POLK COUNTY JOURNAL FIRST PAPER PRINTED IN THE COUNTY.

The Journal, like the Plaindealer, was at that time a branch or offshot of another publication. It was the offspring of the Audubon Journal, published by Harvey E. Cooke, and was printed in Audubon for several months after it was established here. But about that time Crookston began to assume the airs of a civilized community. Settlers were coming in, the trees had been chopped out of the ground on Main Street, and one or two other stores had been established; the Pioneer Hotel had been erected, the tin horn gambler, the tent saloon, and the dance hall were established institutions. The Crookston offspring of the Journal soon reached a stature, where it overtopped its parent. It looked as if Crookston was to be “some town,” and Mr. Cooke wisely decided to leave Audubon to rot in ignorance and folly, and to move his plant to Crookston. The Audubon Journal was accordingly discontinued, and in 1878 the Polk County Journal, the first paper to be published and printed in the County, was born.

For over a quarter of a century Mr. Cooke was the guiding star in the Journal’s destiny, and never was there an issue of that paper that was not made in-