the river.’ We were not ready at that time to accept the offer, and six weeks later, when we went back prepared to enter into the contract, he informed us that in the meantime J. J. Hill and associates had secured control of the properties, and that it was beyond his power to carry out his former proposition.

This trip with our party led to the formation of the firm of Childs, Lytle & Co., consisting of E. D. Childs, W. G. Lytle, and James Hill, and the contracting between this partnership and J. P. Farley for 10,000 acres of land of the St. Paul & Pacific Railway grant at the price of $2.50 per acre, or $25,000. This contract was afterwards ratified by J. J. Hill and his associates and the land selected from the townships of Andover, Fairfax, Lowell, and Angus.

During the summer of 1877 we sent teams from Warren, Wisconsin, to Crookston and broke up 300 acres of land on sections 23 and 24 in the township of Andover, returning the teams to Wisconsin for the winter at the close of the breaking season. In the spring of 1878 Mr. Lytle and family and myself and family removed to Crookston, where Mr. Lytle still resides (although he retired from the firm in the fall of 1880), and where I remained until the fall of 1907.

We were the pioneers in the wheat business from Ada north, except that Barnes & Tenny, of Glyndon, had bought a few carloads at Crookston during the fall of 1877. They built houses at Rolette, Beltrami, Carmen, and Crookston, and as fast as the road was extended north, after its re-organization as the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba. Under the firm name of Sterret, Hill & Childs, we built at Fanny, Euclid, Angus, Warren, Argyle, Stephen, Hallock, and St. Vincent; also on the line to the west as far as Grand Forks. At Fisher we went into Capt. Demere’s wheat field cut down a portion of his grain, sufficient for a building site, had the elevator built, and filled with over 30,000 bushels of wheat before a rail was laid to it, so we could load cars.

When at Grand Forks, the very first cars of freight brought in by rail was the lumber for our wheat house.

When we first settled in Crookston, one of the heaviest drawbacks to immigration was the lack of good water supply for domestic use and during 1878 and 1879 our firm spent much money in prospecting for an artesian supply from below the alkaline deposit. Finally, in company with Corser & Elwood, we imported a deep-well contractor, with his machinery from Minneapolis, and succeeded in establishing two flowing wells in Carmen. An analysis of these waters showed them to be 99.4 per-cent pure water and the residue healthful mineral salts. One of these wells, furnished water for the city of Grand Forks during the great typhoid epidemic in the decade of 1880, being shipped over in carload lots; but afterwards, when the Carmen elevators burned, this well was choked and has never been opened up; the other well is still in use in the street north of Block 11, Carmen. This demonstration of the existence of an artesian basin of pure water in the Red River Valley was a factor in its development of more than passing interest.

In 1880 and 1881 our firm platted and dedicated the townsite of Carmen, now embraced in the Fifth ward of Crookston.

When the city in the early ’80s was negotiating with T. B. Walker of Minneapolis, asking him to locate a great lumber industry at that point, the donation by our firm, without price, of the land on which the mill and lumberyard were established was a leading factor in influencing Mr. Walker’s decision.

In the church life of the city it was my privilege to be one of the charter members of the First Methodist Church, and at a later date, of the Baptist, both in Crookston and Carmen. After the city limits were extended south of the river during different periods I was for fourteen years a member of the City Council and took part in much of the important legislation of that period, among others had an active part in defeating the $50,000 bond issue, which was sought to be given as a bonus to the Northern Pacific Railroad when it entered the city.

The years 1878 to 1888 were crowded full of activity. We were laying foundations on which those who