came later have in many instances built successfully. Late in the decade of 1880 my partner, Mr. Hill, made a heavy and most unfortunate investment in a silver mine in New Mexico, which swept away every vestige of his personal fortune. The loss so far undermined the financial condition of our corporation that it took the next fifteen years, and very great sacrifices of our holdings, to pay off the claims resulting from his unfortunate speculation, and this led to my selling all of our holdings in Minnesota and removal, in 1907, to Washington, where I have since resided.

GENESIS OF THE PRESENT HISTORY OF POLK COUNTY, WITH A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTY’S RESOURCES.

BY N. P. STONE, HISTORIAN OF THE POLK COUNTY OLD SETTLERS’ ASSOCIATION.

To the large number of members of the Old Settlers’ Association who were not present when the initial steps in the direction of compiling and publishing a personal and general history of Polk County, and especially of its pioneer period, a statement of the opportunity and circumstances leading to the venture is due. The following synopsis of report of the meeting at which this enterprise was launched will give a better view of the spirit and purpose of the old settlers than any mere statements.

Persuant to a call issued by John Carter, president of the Old Settlers’ Association of Polk County, a meeting was held in the office of O. O. Christianson, at Crookston. At this meeting, in addition to the local members, there were present the Honorable Halvor Steenerson and the Honorable R. J. Montague. Mr. Montague was one of the pioneer attorneys of Crookston, who at one time held the office of county judge, and at another time the office of mayor of Crookston. A few years since, he moved to Virginia, Minnesota, where he is officially known as city attorney of that enterprising city. Routine business being temporarily laid aside, Judge Montague interested the meeting with a half hour’s talk, reviewing many of the important events in the early history of the county and city, also calling to mind many amusing affairs in the early public life of the city, recalling and rephrasing stories a third of a century old, illustrating the truth that a good story well told, like old wine, may improve with age.

The sympathy of the meeting becoming largely reminiscent in its attitude, all were ready to hear from Congressman Steenerson, who then addressed the meeting. Mr. Steenerson gave a review of the achievements of the pioneers who came to the Red River Valley leaving old associations, old friends, and even civilization, hundreds of miles behind, to try their fortunes in an untried climate of long winters of storm and snow, and summers of rain and flood. “These men,” said Mr. Steenerson, “are the heroes who have helped build the empire of the Red River Valley, and they are worthy of a place in its history.”

Judge William Watts, who has always taken an active interest in the early settlement and development of the valley, having contributed quite largely to a “History of the Red River Valley,” published in 1909, next entertained the meeting for a short time, and closed with an endorsement of Mr. Steenerson’s suggestion. It being evident that the sentiment of all present was favorable to the proposed history, Mr. Steenerson moved that the Old Settlers’ Association compile and print in book form a history of Polk County. The president declared a unanimous vote in favor of the motion, and it was so recorded.

A few weeks later Mr. Bingham, of W. H. Bingham & Company, historical publishers, of Minneapolis, having become informed of the movement, came to Crookston and called on the officers of the association with a view to securing the publishing of the contemplated history. Later he met with the Old Settlers in session and made a proposition, in substance, that his firm would furnish material for the history, with such aid as the Old Settlers could give, and that his firm would furnish such history to the public at a price of $15 per copy. The Old Settlers ratified an agreement of this nature: this agreement being the