CHAPTER IX.
CROOKSTON AND ITS INSTITUTIONS.

By JAMES A. CATHERCART, SECRETARY OF THE COMMERCIAL CLUB.


Crookston, Minnesota, known as the Queen City of the Red River Valley, is the County Seat of Polk County and the largest and most important city in northwestern Minnesota. In size, Crookston ranks fourteenth in the state, its population (from 1915 city directory), being about 8,500. Early history shows the township of Crookston was organized March 28, 1876. The town was incorporated in 1879 by a special law signed by Governor John S. Pillsbury. The name Crookston was given to both the town and township in honor of Colonel William Crooks, of St. Paul, who was chief engineer in locating the first railroad in this section. This road was then known as the St. Paul & Pacific Railway, and during the year 1872 was constructed from Glyndon through Crookston to the Snake River, where is now the city of Warren, Minnesota.

Later the St. Paul & Pacific Railway was put in the hands of receivers, and for a number of years railroad construction work was at a standstill. In the fall of the year 1875 part of the rails north of Crookston were taken up and used to turn the line to Fisher’s Landing, a distance of eleven miles west of Crookston. No other railroad extension work was attempted in this section until the year 1877, when the St. Paul & Pacific Railway, still in the hands of receivers, again took up the construction work of connecting certain portions of the road left unbuilt after the financial crisis of 1873. In 1878 the line from Crookston to Warren was reconstructed and the road extended to the Canadian boundary. During the following year, the road was also extended from Fisher’s Landing to Grand Forks, North Dakota. In subsequent years the St. Paul & Pacific Railway was purchased by Mr. J. J. Hill and his associates, who rapidly increased the line by purchase and construction, building up what is now known as the Great Northern Railway System. Crookston is a Great Northern Railway Division point, having the main lines to St. Paul, Winnipeg, and Duluth, connecting lines to the Pacific Coast, and branches to Fargo, Warroad, and St. Vincent.

The Northern Pacific Railway was constructed from the south to Crookston and from Winnipeg to Grand Forks in the year 1889. It was not until 1890, however, that, by the construction of the road from Crookston to Grand Forks, a through line was provided from St. Paul to Winnipeg via Crookston. The year’s delay in connecting the line was occasioned by right-of-way and crossing controversies between the Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railways.

From the above facts, Crookston’s importance as a railroad center is quite evident, her transportation facilities including eight lines reaching directly to St. Paul and Minneapolis, to Duluth, to Winnipeg, to Fargo, to the Lake of the Woods country and across the State of North Dakota to the Pacific Coast.
The City's Buildings and Other Public Improvements.

Crookston takes just pride in its civic improvements. Its streets are clean and probably the best lighted of any city in the northwestern part of the State. It has thoroughly modern water and sewer systems, an efficient police department, a paid fire department, with modern equipment, a large and beautiful municipal park, and a children's playground. The city engineer's report for 1915 shows the following improvements to December 31st:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Westrumite Paving</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Asphalt Paving</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macadam Paving</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravel Paving</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewerage</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Lines—Pole</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underground</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Line (C. W. W. P. &amp; L. Co.)</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Hydrants</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Lines—Underground</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blocks of White Way</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas Mains</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The city's public buildings are modern and up-to-date, among the most important of which are the following:

- City Hall: $30,000.00
- Polk County Court House: $75,000.00
- U. S. Post Office: $90,000.00
- Armory (Seats 1,500): $50,000.00
- Grand Theatre (Seats 800): $30,000.00
- Library (4,600 Volumes): $17,000.00
- High School: $150,000.00

The United States Land Office for the Crookston district, covering the territory of the Minnesota Red River Valley, is located here, offices being provided in the United States Postoffice Building.

The city has a Charter form of government with power vested in its Executive Officer, the mayor, and members of the city Council consisting of Aldermen, elected one from each of the various wards of the city and one Alderman-at-Large. At the County Election in the spring of 1915 Polk County was voted "Dry" and from November 27, 1915, Crookston has been without saloons.

The Commercial Club.

For its population, Crookston has one of the strongest and most active commercial organizations in the northwest. The membership numbers over 400 individuals with sufficient number of shares subscribed to provide an annual income of over ten thousand dollars ($10,000). A secretary is paid to devote all his time to looking after the Club's interests. Large and well-equipped club rooms are provided. The Club maintains the well-known Crookston Band of Crookston, one of the best municipal, musical organizations in the state.

Crookston is a well built city with many handsome brick and stone business blocks and a beautiful residential section. The splendid hotel and other facilities makes the city an excellent meeting place for conventions.

Banks.

The city has five banks representing a capital stock of Two Hundred and Eighty Thousand Dollars ($280,000). The deposits in these banks, on December 1, 1915, aggregated the sum of Three Million, Eight Hundred and Eighty Five Thousand Dollars ($3,885,000). The banks are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Capital Stock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crookston State Bank</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First National Bank</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants National Bank</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk County State Bank</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandia American Bank</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Manufacturing Industries.

Crookston is rapidly assuming importance as a manufacturing center. Manufactured goods, to the amount of about five million dollars ($5,000,000.00), are put out annually and hundreds of men are given steady employment in the various plants. Among the most important of Crookston's manufacturing industries is that of the Crookston Milling Company, whose plant is valued at one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000.00), and who have just completed a new 75,000 bushel capacity elevator at a cost of twenty-five
SOUTH BROADWAY. POST OFFICE IN FOREGROUND.
A CORNER OF THE RAILROAD YARDS. CROOKSTON IS SERVED BY BOTH THE G. N. AND N. P. RYS.
thousand dollars ($25,000.00). This plant is being run at capacity (500 barrels per day) the year around and employs twenty-five men. The value of the Crookston Milling Company’s products aggregates one million dollars ($1,000,000.00) annually. The Bridgeman-Russell Company manufacture at its local plant over one million pounds of butter each year. Among the other manufacturing industries of the city are numbered bakers, two; blank book manufacturers and binders, one; bottlers, two; box and tank manufacturer, one; brewery, one; brick and tile, two; cereal, one; cigar manufacturers, four; foundries, machinists, and boiler makers, three; ice cream and confection manufactures, five; machinery manufacturers, two; marble and granite works, two; printers, four; sash and door manufacturers, two; sign and motor car enameling works, one; silo manufacturer, one; tannery, one; tent and awning, one; upholsterers’ tow, one; wagons and sleighs, two. The city also has two substantial wholesale grocery houses and three grain elevators.

Crookston is fortunate in having a big supply of water power (electrical). This is derived from the Red Lake River at two points, one station situated within the city limits and the other about four miles to the east. Cheap electrical power, excellent railroad facilities, and plenty of labor at reasonable wages make Crookston a desirable location for manufacturing industries.

CROOKSTON CITY SCHOOLS.

One of the chief problems to solve in any community is the provision of adequate educational facilities for its young people. Crookston believes that every child within its borders is entitled to a school environment which is conducive to its highest development, mentally, morally, and physically. One will be convinced of this fact by a visit to the new $150,000 Central High School, with its equipment for all departments of secondary education, which are in the hands of well trained and experienced instructors, and also note that another $150,000 is invested in five grade buildings located in various sections of the city, which care for the pupils below the seventh grades.

The upper grades are organized on the junior-senior high school plan, which is now being followed in all the leading schools. Beginning with the seventh grade, three courses are offered—academic, industrial, and commercial, which afford the boy or girl an opportunity to select what will be of the greatest value to him or her, if it be not possible to complete the high school course. Other advantages are that promotion is made by subject instead of by grade, thus bridging over the gap between the eighth grade and the high school, which previously was the means of preventing many from continuing their work in the higher grades. In the Crookston schools last year only eleven per cent did not enter the senior high school from the eighth grade.

The Senior High School is directed by a principal who has sixteen assistants. Complete courses are offered in the following: Academic subjects, teacher training, commercial, industrial, art, and public speaking. Specialists in music and drawing supervise these subjects throughout the entire system.

The following statistics will be of interest as indicating the extensiveness of our school system: Total enrollment is as follows: Senior High School, 300; Junior High School, 250; grades below the sixth, 850. Fifty persons are on the faculty, whose annual salaries amount to $35,000. Adding to this money paid for janitor and office help, the total salary schedule for the year amounts to nearly $45,000. School property is valued as follows: Grounds, $35,000; buildings, $300,000; furnishings, $10,000; equipment, $5,200, or a total of $350,000.

OTHER SCHOOLS.

In addition to the public schools, Crookston has also the Cathedral School, providing various grade work and full high-school courses. The high-school enrollment is forty and the grades one hundred sixty. The school is under the superintendence of the Bishop and directed by a principal who has eight assistants of the Sisters of St. Benedict, of Duluth.
The Cathedral School building is a fine structure, erected and equipped at a cost of $75,000.00, and contains club rooms and gymnasium and an auditorium with a seating capacity of seven hundred.

Another institution of education is the St. Joseph Academy, under the direction of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The courses provide, including high school work, grade and kindergarten, the attendance in each being twenty-five, one hundred and forty, and thirty-five respectively. This school is housed in a beautiful structure, located on Houston Avenue, and erected and equipped at a cost of approximately one hundred thousand dollars.

Other Crookston educational institutions include the Crookston College, providing commercial courses, shorthand, typewriting, and preparatory work; also automobile, gas and steam engineering. The faculty consists of the president and five assistants; the enrollment is about two hundred and fifty. The Crookston College property and equipment are valued at forty thousand dollars.

A branch of the University of Minnesota, the Northwestern School of Agriculture, is located at Crookston. Elsewhere in this volume a special chapter is given to this institution.

CHURCHES.

The religious field of Crookston has not been neglected. Nearly every denomination is represented and the city has fourteen splendid church edifices, two Catholic, one Episcopal, and eleven other Protestant churches, divided as follows, one Congregational, seven Lutheran, two Methodists, and one Presbyterian. There is also a Christian Science society.

LODGES.

Nearly all of the important secret societies, lodges, etc., are well represented in Crookston, among which are, Ancient, Free, and Accepted Masons, Royal Arch Masons, Knights Templar, Order of Eastern Star, Odd Fellows, Rebecca Lodge, Knights of Columbus, Ancient Order United Workmen, Degree of Honor, Elks, Catholic Order of Foresters, Ladies of the Catholic Order of Foresters, Royal Arcanum, Modern Woodmen of America, Royal Neighbors of America, Knights and Ladies of the Maccabees, Modern Samarians, Moose, Modern Brotherhood of America, the Equitable Fraternal Union, Fraternal Order of Eagles, Independent Order of Foresters, Brotherhood of American Yeomen, Sons of Norway, Independent Scandinavian Workmen's Association, Sons of Hermann, United Commercial Travelers, and Women's Christian Temperance Union. Among other associations are numbered the Crookston Commercial Club, Germania Hall Association, Crookston Rod & Gun Club, Tennis Club, Citizens' Band of Crookston, Merchants' Association, Crookston Automobile Club, Viking Chorus, Red River Valley Medical Association, and the Northwestern Minnesota Agricultural Association.

NORTHWESTERN AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION.

The grounds of the Northwestern Minnesota Agricultural Association consisting of sixty-eight acres are located one half mile north of the city. The annual fairs are put on in July, and draw exhibits and patronage from all of northwestern Minnesota, parts of North and South Dakota and Wisconsin. Particular attention has been given to the matter of exhibits and the institution has become a farmer's affair in the broadest sense. Good amusement features have also been provided and the excellent manner in which the yearly fairs and expositions have been handled has made the enterprise very beneficial and popular with the people.

HOSPITALS.

Three high class hospitals are located at Crookston, namely: The Bethesda Hospital, the St. Vincent Hospital, and the Polk and Norman County Tubercular Sanitarium. These hospitals are strictly modern and up-to-date. The Bethesda and St. Vincent are each equipped to handle about thirty-five patients and the Sanitarium thirty patients. The Bethesda Hospital is
THE CROOKSTON DAM.
Built by W. J. Murphy in 1914
operated under the direction of the Bethesda Hospital Association, and the investment in building, ground and fixtures is approximately $25,000. The St. Vincent Hospital is under the direction of the Benedictine Sisters’ Benevolent Association and the buildings, grounds and equipment are valued at approximately $50,000. The Sanitarium is a Polk and Norman County institution and their property is valued at about $70,000.