

HOW DID CROOKSTON GET ITS NAME?

IN 1862 IMMIGRATION TO THE AREA THAT IS NOW CROOKSTON BEGAN WHEN THE ST. PAUL & PACIFIC ANNOUNCED IN 1872 THAT A RAILROAD ROUTE WAS TO EXTEND TO THE CANADIAN BORDER AND WOULD CROSS THE RED LAKE RIVER WHERE THE CITY NOW STANDS.

IN 1879 THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT WAS INCORPORATED AND NAMED CROOKSTON, AFTER COLONEL WILLIAM CROOKS, CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE RAILROAD. AFTER SERVICE ON SEVERAL RAILROADS, CROOKS CAME TO MINNESOTA IN 1857 AT AGE 25, DROVE THE FIRST SPIKE OF THE ST. PAUL & PACIFIC RAILROAD,

THE FIRST RAILROAD IN MINNESOTA, AND EVENTUALLY BECAME ITS CHIEF ENGINEER. THE LINE, WHICH WAS LATER RENAMED THE GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY, WAS CONSTRUCTED IN 1872 FROM GLYNDON, MINN., TO CROOKSTON.

CROOKS DIED IN 1907, STILL A RAILROAD MAN, WITH TIES TO THE OREGON RAILROAD & NAVIGATION COMPANY IN PORTLAND, ORE.



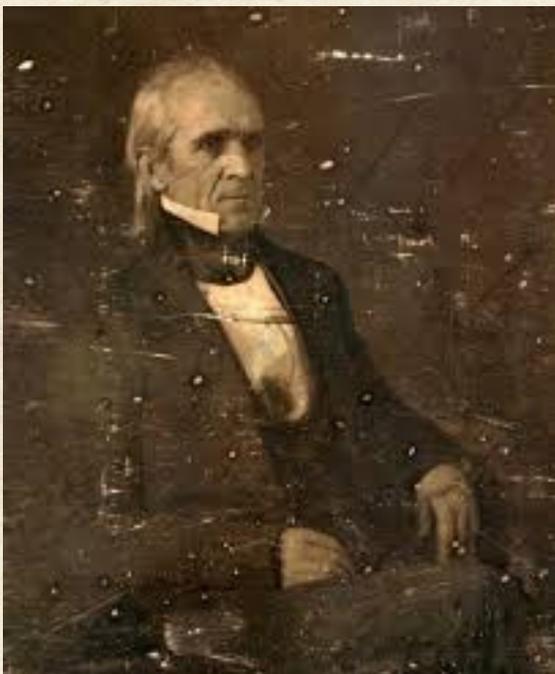
COLONEL WILLIAM CROOKS



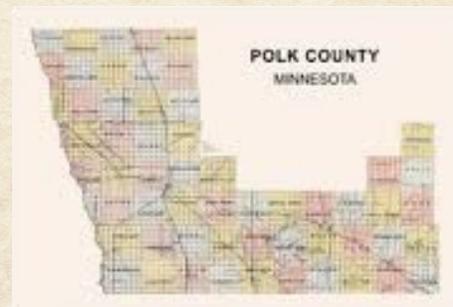
POLK COUNTY HISTORY

POLK COUNTY WAS ESTABLISHED JULY 20, 1858, AND ORGANIZED IN 1872-73, AND NAMED IN HONOR OF PRESIDENT JAMES POLK, THE 11TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

POLK, ON THE NEXT-TO-LAST DAY OF HIS PRESIDENTIAL TERM (MARCH 3, 1849), APPROVED THE ACT OF CONGRESS THAT ORGANIZED THE MINNESOTA TERRITORY. STATEHOOD WOULD COME IN 1858.



PRESIDENT JAMES POLK

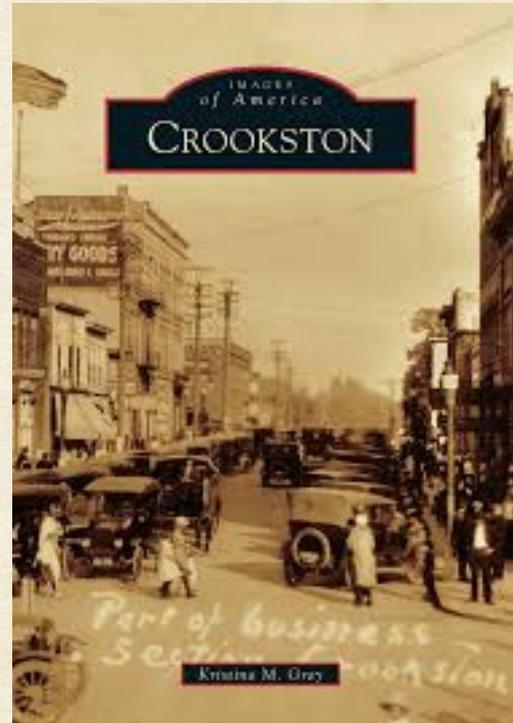


CITY HISTORY

THE CITY OF CROOKSTON, THE POLK COUNTY SEAT, WAS FIRST SETTLED IN 1872 AND INCORPORATED AS A CITY FEB. 14, 1879. CROOKSTON TOWNSHIP WAS ORGANIZED MARCH 28, 1876. THE CITY AREA WAS TAKEN PARTLY FROM THIS TOWNSHIP AS WELL AS LOWELL, ANDOVER AND FAIRFAX TOWNSHIPS.

LIKE MANY RED RIVER VALLEY COMMUNITIES, CROOKSTON'S HISTORY IS CLOSELY ENTWINED WITH TRANSPORTATION. FIRST CAME THE RED RIVER OX CARTS, WHICH BROUGHT FURS AND SIMILAR PRODUCTS SOUTH TO ST. PAUL AND RETURNED WITH MANUFACTURED GOODS. THE LONG CARAVANS OF CARTS WERE OPERATED BY THE METIS, THE OFFSPRING OF FRENCH-CANADIAN FUR TRADERS AND NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN.

THE RED LAKE RIVER, WHICH FLOWS THROUGH CROOKSTON, PROVIDED A ROUTE FROM RED LAKE TO EAST GRAND FORKS, WHERE IT JOINS THE RED RIVER. STEAMBOATS ONCE TRAVELED UPON THE RED LAKE RIVER FROM GRAND FORKS TO CROOKSTON, LATER ONLY GOING AS FAR AS FISHER'S LANDING BECAUSE OF HAZARDS UPSTREAM



THE GREAT NORTHERN RAILROAD

THE GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE HISTORY OF CROOKSTON AFTER ITS ARRIVAL IN THE EARLY 1870S. ONCE THE LINE WAS COMPLETED BETWEEN ST. PAUL AND WINNIPEG, CROOKSTON WAS ON THE MAIN ROUTE. OTHER GN LINES WOULD RADIATE FROM CROOKSTON, FIRST TO FISHER, MINN., AND LATER GRAND FORKS. THE EAST-WEST LINE WOULD BE EXTENDED TO FOSSTON, MINN., AND LATER TO DULUTH. ANOTHER GN LINE WOULD BE BUILT IN A SOUTHWESTERLY DIRECTION FROM CROOKSTON TO MOORHEAD.

LATER, THE NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY WOULD BUILD A LINE NORTHWARD FROM ITS MAIN LINE NEAR LAKE PARK TO RED LAKE FALLS, MINN., AND THEN ONTO CROOKSTON BEFORE HEADING TO EAST GRAND FORKS AND FINALLY NORTHWARD TO WINNIPEG. THE CROOKSTON BUSINESS COMMUNITY WOULD ATTEMPT TO BUILD ITS OWN RAILROAD FROM CROOKSTON TO DULUTH. THE LINE ONLY GOT AS FAR AS FERTILE, MINN., BEFORE IT WAS ACQUIRED BY THE NP FOR SHORTENING ITS ROUTE TO WINNIPEG.

SETTLERS FOLLOWED THE RAILROAD INTO THE REGION, WITH MUCH OF THE CHOICE FARMLAND TAKEN UP IN THE 1870S AND 1880S. THE FARMLAND DIDN'T REACH ITS FULL POTENTIAL UNTIL EXTENSIVE DRAINAGE DITCHES WERE DUG.

