

J. E. Buskirk log home 1903. The Buskirk children, Wallace, Nina, Conrad, Amy and Burton. Note the Indian campfires in the background across the Clearwater River.

EQUALITY TOWNSHIP

Town of Equality was opened for homestead in the spring of 1896. There were many looking for land, so all of the better land was taken the first year and by the time 1897 and 1898 had passed there was a homesteader on almost every quarter section in the township.

The first meeting to organize the township was held at the A. M. Prestlien place on the 25th day of January, 1898. C. E. Roberts acted as moderator, C. D. Hall, clerk and Edward Havik, R. H. Green and George Bender as judges.

At this meeting it was resolved that the most public places for posting public notices would be at Edward E. Havik Store on the Southeast Sec. 19, Southeast corner of Section 6 and at the corners between Sections 22 and 23 and Sections 26 and 27. It was also resolved that all section lines be public roads to the width of four rods and \$50.00 was voted for current expenses. A. M. Prestlien was allowed \$2.00 for the use of his house for the meeting.

The first regular annual township meeting was held at the A. M. Prestlien home on the 8th day of March, 1898. At this meeting the first township board was elected with the following results: Edward E. Havik, town clerk; Lewis Sall, treasurer; J. E. Buskirk, assessor; J. J. Donahue was elected chairman of supervisors; S. M. Adams and A. M. Tonneson as supervisors; Edward E. Havik and D. W. Brown, justices of the peace; E. B. Walker and George Bender, constables; Frank Bender and Lewis Sall, pondmasters.

There were two general stores and post offices in the township that started shortly after the land was opened up for settlement. Edward E. Havik had a store and the Grit post office located towards the southwest part of the township in Section 19. Magnus J. Lillo had the Lillo post office located in the northeast part of the township in Section 3. Mrs. Magnus J. Lillo operated a small general store in connection with the post office, and a few years later their daughter Ida Lillo had the store and post office for some time, and when she decided to not continue any longer,

Mrs. Con Short was appointed postmaster and also operated a small store in connection. In 1914 she quit the store and Mrs. Mary Walker was appointed postmaster and she had the Lillo post office until it was discontinued.

The first mail carrier was J. Sigurdson who carried the mail from Lambert to Grit and Lillo post offices until the Soo Line from Minneapolis to Winnipeg came. Then Ole Hemly had the star route from Plummer that served these post offices for many years.

Mr. Hemly never had anything but a team and open sleigh in the winter and quite often very poor roads both summer and winter, but it was very few times he didn't make his route regardless of roads and weather conditions.

A few years after Oklee was started, the Grit and Lillo post offices and the star route from Plummer were discontinued and the mail has been delivered from Oklee by two rural routes since that time. Lou Horstman has been the mail carrier on Route 1 and Clarence Lynch on Route 2. Both these men have recently retired.

In 1907 the first large drainage ditch was constructed known as Judicial Ditch No. 4. It was dug with a large floating dredge so in order to have water to float, work was started on the upper end at a point near the east boundary of township of Johnson and then five miles west where it turned south one mile and then on west again and at about the line between township of Johnson and Equality they had to stop work when it froze up in the fall.

Then in the spring of 1908 they continued on to the line between Equality and Barnes, then on south to Lost River where it was finished in the fall of 1908.

The majority of the early settlers were young married couples with small children. They had many hardships to contend with; for one thing, most of them had very little money, if any, and because of poor drainage it was very wet at times during the summer and they had no roads, only trails.

The settlers would drive with team and wagon and others would walk and carry a pail filled with eggs or some homemade

butter to the store which they exchanged for groceries and it was almost for sure they had along a one-gallon can to bring home some kerosene.

Many of the settlers did not have more than one team of horses or oxen to begin with so they couldn't plow very much new land for new crops. They put up some hay in summer and in the fall they went out to the harvest fields in North Dakota and left their wives and children at home to take care of the few cattle they had.

Mr. Havik who had the store used to hitch his team to the wagon and load a few sacks of flour to deliver to the families while the men were gone.

In the fall of 1940 the first Rural Electric lines were built into the township and a few farmers got electric energy in March, 1941. Then the war put a stop to line building until 1946 when work was started again, and in a short time everybody who wanted electricity to their farms got it.

Present township officers are: Supervisors, Russell Norberg, chairman, Robert Blumke and Einar Kvasager; Orlo Lintvet, clerk; and Louis Mathson, treasurer.

EQUALITY TOWNSHIP EARLY SETTLERS

Equality Early Settlers: The following is a list of names of the early settlers in the Township of Equality: S. F. Adams, James Walker, Stener Anderson, Mrs. Mary Bodie, Mrs. Con Short, D. W. Brown, C. E. Roberts, Rasmus N. Fore, Andrew Gilbertson, M. N. Gilbertson, O. N. Gilbertson, Gunnar Husby, Marit Husby, John Hanson, Mrs. A. Iverson, Ida Lillo, Magnus J. Lillo, Ole Jore, Hage Jore, Ole Lindtveit, T. G. Smidjan, Osmund O. Legvold, Lewis Lunde, John F. Magnuson, Gust F. Pettersson, Ole B. Rendal, H. B. Rendal, Torjus Smidjan, Ole N. Skomedal, Mikkel T. Lunde, B. A. Wahl, A. Boström, K. T. Slettvedt, Lewis Neek, Gunsten Lundan, Gunder Thompson, John Osmundson, Sam Gunderson, T. Sanbak, J. E. Buskirk.

Alex Arveson, Albin Arveson, A. W. Brekke, Knut O. Byklom, J. L. Bush, J. L. McCall, J. E. Daly, J. J. Donahue, Leif C. Erickson, R. H. Green, E. Hova, Tollof G. Kleven, John J. Lundblad, J. W. Lynch, D. J. Lynch, John Lundell, Mikkel Larson, Gjermund Larson, Thor Larson, F. C. Sullivan.

Charlie Sall, Lewis Sall, O. W. Sjaheim, K. E. Syversrud, Dan Stoneouse, Duncan Stoneouse, S. O. Storaasli, G. O. Underdahl, T. B. Veitch, Kerence Whalen, Knut Wettson, T. Nereson, G. Heggard, S. T. Slettvedt, Albert Pufahl, D. J. Helle, N. Syversrud, Frank Bender, George Bender, Fred Bender.

L. M. Anderson, G. O. Austad, Frank Compton, Henry Compton, Edward E. Havik, C. D. Hall, J. F. Kile, Swen Olant, T.



Mr. and Mrs. Magnus Lillo and sons on homestead in 1896. Oscar, Magnus, Ingeborg and August.

O. Sordal, P. T. Sorenson, Nels Stalemo, Ole Torkelson, A. M. Tonneson, A. O. Wat- send, G. O. Grovom, E. O. Erickson, Thor Gunstenson, John Larson, Ole O. Lee.

Osmund Trydal, Ben Kveste, John Cam- erton, Dan Reiersen, W. S. Bishop, T. T. Slettvedt, Lars Senum, John Lorentson, J. L. Bolstad, O. C. Swanson, Arne Sannes, Thor Skreland, Olav Breivold, Ole S. Birke- land, B. D. Aaknes, O. D. Aaknes, B. H. Castello, Thomas Gunderson, Gunder Her- juson, Torjei Herjusun, J. T. Hofstad.

G. Jorgenson, K. O. Krossen, Grundy Knutson, A. K. Lie, Nels O. Loiland, O. T. Lande, Halvor Lande, E. K. Norgaard, A. J. Olson, Anund Olson, Sever H. Maaren, Gunder Thompson, Evind Liebak, P. Lie- bak, Knut Homme, Nels Egeland, Magnus Olson, Sever Grothe, Ed Vasstrand, M. C. Rustad, O. Hopperstad, A. M. Prestelien, Swen Gullickson, Torgrim Senum.

CLEARWATER LUTHERAN CHURCH

In 1896 and 1897, the many Scandina- vian people who settled in the eastern part of Red Lake County had attended Lutheran Churches in the places from which they came, and a need was felt by them for a minister and a place to worship. Reverend A. A. Oppegaard of McIntosh held a service in the home of H. B. Rendal in 1897 and at this service, Hulda, the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Ren- dal was baptized.



On February 21, 1898, the Clearwater Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America was organized with thirty mem- bers. Services were held in homes of which some were only paper covered shacks and others built of logs, whitewashed inside and out. Some roofs were sod and others covered with tar paper which did not make them waterproof.

Roads were but trails, some made by Indians and other by animals. Transporta- tion was by foot or with a wagon pulled by a team of oxen or horses. Before 1900, School District #8 was organized and a log school house built. A little later the school house in District #20 was built and church services could be held alternately in the two.

In 1898 the first baptism service in the original congregation was held. The babies were Willie Brekke, Russell Fore and Ole

Theodore Storaasli. On April 22, 1900, the first confirmation took place in the log school and class members were Michael Reindahl, Edwind Slettvet, Edwin Rendahl, Clara Elvera Lillo and Aase Olive Thea Try- dahl.

Reverend Oppegaard was paid \$50.00 a year for his services by the congregation and missions paid him \$150.00. Two acres of land were donated by A. W. Brekke to the congregation for a cemetery, and in 1901 it was dedicated as Clearwater Cem- etery by Rev. J. O. Saeter and Rev. Oppe- gaard. The dedication ceremony was per- formed by the graves of Gunnar, the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Gunderson, and the infant child of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Helle. In 1903 the first charter member, Osmond Legvold, was laid to rest.

Rev. Oppegaard stayed for six or seven years and then returned to Norway. Rev. Saeter from Fosston became pastor until 1909 when Rev. J. Skagen began serving the parish and also the Lost River and Oak Grove congregations. Rev. Skagen drew blue prints for a new church and the build- ing project began. He also organized a Young People's Society with ten or twelve members and meetings were held in the homes of the members. At this time church services were held only once every three weeks.

In the early summer of 1911, the dedica- tion of the corner stone for the foundation of the new church took place. Services were conducted by Rev. O. Preus and Rev. Skagen. The foundation of the church was laid on a lot donated by Hege Fore in the northwest corner of the southwest quarter of section three, right across the road from the cemetery. Rev. Skagen left for Rice Lake, Wisconsin, but the building of the church continued. Services in the new church began in 1912 when Rev. Saeter became Pastor. Myrtle Hofstad was the first baby baptized in the new church and Jens Fore and Anniebelle Rolandson were the first couple married there. The Altar Ring was purchased in 1915 from North- ern Woodwork of Thief River Falls and the cost, with transportation, was \$59.83.

The pastor from 1912 through 1920 was Rev. Palm and during this time there was a change. The congregation had been with the Lost River Church, and during Rev. Palm's service, with Oklee (Zion) and Oak Grove. This was changed so that the sister congregations became Nazareth, Oak Park and Ebenezer. Rev. Lierfallom, who had served the three, served Clearwater as well and the Lost River congregation

joined Valle, one of Rev. Kolstoe's churches. Rev. Lierfallom left in 1925 and Rev. Kolstoe served as temporary pastor until Rev. Lierfallom returned in 1926. Rev. Lierfallom died in 1927, and once again Rev. Kolstoe served as temporary pastor.

In 1924 the bell was purchased. It had been the one used in the Lost River Church and the congregation paid \$48.00 for it. A. W. Brekke was appointed bell ringer.

Rev. Fladmark was pastor from 1928 until 1941 and during this time many improvements were made. In 1930, an altar was installed at the cost of \$166.00 and in 1933 red carpet and altar cloths were obtained for \$115.00. The altar pic- ture was painted in 1931 by Thomas Waale and in 1937 the basement construction was begun by Reier Fossum. A "Gubbe- fest" was held in the new basement in 1938 with Norwegian dishes served by the men. Festivals were also held in the sum- mer to raise money.

Rev. Fladmark died in 1941 while he was pastor. His last request was to be buried in the Clearwater Cemetery and this was done. Rev. Lie followed as new pastor, remaining until 1952. In 1949 the interior of the church was sealed with celotex, painted and varnished. At this time the church was also wired for electricity.

The pastors since 1952: Reverend Peterson (1953-1960); Reverend Larson (1961-1968); Reverend Lillegard (1968-1970), at this time there were five congre- gations together, (including Trail and St. Petri at Grygla); Reverend Wosje (1971-1973), five congregations; Reverend Beherens (1973-1975), three congre- gations.

CLEARWATER LADIES AID

The Clearwater Ladies Aid was orga- nized in 1898 at the Jens Balstad home with two women present, Mrs. Balstad and Mrs. Lillo, and as more people joined the group, the meetings were held monthly at various homes. There were no roads and travel was difficult because many women walked and carried their babies or drove wagons with oxen or teams of horses coming as far as five or six miles to attend. Heavy rain made the roads and trails very muddy and many had to remove their shoes and stock- ings to wade through the mire. Because travel to the meetings was long and ardu- ous, the women would leave home in the morning so a noon meal would be served when they arrived. In later years when travel was improved, a lunch was served at



A meeting of the Clearwater Ladies Aid. Miss Nellie Short, a guest. Gunhild Gunderson, Clara Hillestad, Mrs. Mary Gunderson, Mrs. Theodore Reindahl, Emma Rendal, Laura Rendal, Mrs. A. W. Brekke, Mrs. Ingeborg Lillo, Mrs. O. L. Bendickson, Mrs. Sire Legvold, Mrs. Anna Hofstad, Mrs. Ida Fore, Mrs. Aase Fore, Mrs. Tilda Berget and Mrs. Lena Rolandson.

four in the afternoon.

Often the minister could not attend the meeting so the ladies held devotion and sang hymns. Some would bring their hand work such as knitting, crocheting and fancy work which would later be sold to raise money for the Aid and the Church. The price for the lunch was a dime and the money was used for the church and Parochial school. This was the purpose for organizing the Ladies Aid. The ladies made many things for the church when it was first built and many of these things have now been replaced. They worked very hard between the years 1929-1941 to furnish the church, inside and out.

During Rev. Fladmark's time of service, the congregation held out-door festivals and the women would serve a dinner plus an afternoon lunch and a program would be held with a guest speaker.

Before 1940, Norwegian was taught at the Parochial School. After this time, English was taught but a few Norwegian services were still conducted in the 1950s.

In 1944 there was a visit by Governor Edward Thye and Chester Nelson plus the commissioner of the Department of Conservation and several county officials. They were in the area on a tour to inspect the flooding rivers. The ladies of the Aid prepared a noon meal for them and many others who came to hear the Governor speak. In the summer of 1948 work was started on the Red Lake River so the Governor's visit brought results.

In 1949 much work was done at the church which was paid for by the Ladies Aid. Electricity was installed and an automatic sump pump was put into the basement. Before this if the water wasn't pumped out of the basement before freeze-up, the men would have to chip out the ice and remove it. Throughout the years many improvements have been made by the Aid and also with funds from the numerous memorials that were given. The Ladies Aid has assisted the Parochial School and Sunday School throughout the years and continues to do so.

EQUALITY TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

From the days of early settlement to the time of consolidation, five schools had served the educational needs of the children of Equality township.

District #1, located in the NW part of section 8, was a one room school and employed two teachers in later years when another room was added to the original building to accommodate the increase in students. It was the largest of the five schools.

District #8, located in the NE part of section 2, was also organized sometime before 1900. The first building, a log structure, was also used for a time by the Clearwater Lutheran Congregation for services. In 1912, a frame building was constructed which housed the school until 1944 when the children were bussed to District #58J.

The first school in the southeast section of Equality was a one room log building located on the homestead of Delphine Walseth, who was also the first teacher. The students at that time were Margaret and Annie Jorgenson, Helga and Ausil Sorenson, Mary and Bergit Krossen, Signe, Olga, Valla and Andrew Anderson, Tellef and Anna Aaknes and Harry Kolshus. The school site was located on what is now the John Corbid farm. A few years later a new school was built about one mile south of



The first District 8 in Section Two: Gunder Gunderson, Russel Fore, Osmund Hofstad, Mrs. Theo. Rendahl, teacher, Gladys Gunderson, Gunhild Gunderson.



District 8 1930: Ferdinand Land, Arnold Fossum, Gladys Fossum, Tolvine Land, Daisy Farrington, Lillian Fore, Bernice Land, Leo Farrington, Oral Land, James Walker, teacher Frieda Bredeson, Eldore Lillo, Gilmore Land, Ruby Slettvedt, Virgil Fore, Dorine Fore, Mavis Fore, Mabel Lintvedt, George Fossum, Delmaine Walker, Roy Slettvedt, Orlo Lintvet, Leslie Walker, LaVern Farrington, Norman Lillo.



Poplar Glen District 20

the original site in section 26 and it was given the name, Fairview. Classes were held there until 1935 at which time it closed for lack of students.

The first classes of District #20, also known as Poplar Glen, were held in a farm house owned by George Jorgenson. Around 1900 a school was built on the Jorgenson farm in section 14 where the building still stands. It was a one-room building with a large entryway where wood was stored for the winter months. Because of the very severe cold of the mid-winter months, school was held only in the fall and spring at first. Later the school year expanded to eight months with vacations. The school closed about 1947 because of consolidation. The building is now used by the township for board meetings.

School District 58J, Roadside School, was organized at a meeting held on August 1, 1907, at the home of Petter Milen. It was decided at this meeting to hold school for five months, two in the fall and three in the winter. The teachers salary was set at

\$50.00.

A special meeting was held in November of 1907 to bond the district for \$700.00 to build a school house, 18 x 26 x 10 feet high. It was to be located on the section line between sections 28 and 29. This site was given by A. E. Offlas for the purchase price of \$1.00. The size of the lot was 100 square rods and the school house was built in 1908 by Oscar Nesland with the help of legal voters donating as much work as they could. The cost of labor for the building was \$50.73.

In June of 1947 District 58J consolidated with School District #1 in Oklee and the building was sold to Dewey Lambert and moved to Oklee.



Roadside School District 58 1924: Clara Systveit, Florence Rodman, Morris Rodman, Beatrice Bammerud, Emma Bammerud, John Dahle, Alma Dahle, George Dahle, Alward Rustan, Edwin Rustan, Adolph Hofstad, Myrtle Hofstad, Annie and Grunde Hofstad, Arlie Brekke, Alice Rystad, Elmer Pederson, Walter Pederson, Arthur Rolandson, Mabel and Orval Rolandson, Edith Peterson, teacher.



District 19: Back Row: Ole Krossen, Ole Breivold, Thom Holum, Torkel Knutson, Rudolph Thoen, Ole Holum, Ralph Sorenson, Andrew Knutson. Front: Ole Jorgenson, Ole Knutson, Paul Jorgenson, Andrew Holum, Albert Breivold, Gunder Sorenson and Chester Olson.

ROLAND STORE AND CLEARWATER CREAMERY

In 1904 when the Reservation land opened for settlement north of the Clearwater River, a bridge was built across the river and Otto Dahl erected a store near the bridge on the A. A. Rolandson farm, located on the north side of the river. Dahl operated the store for six years and also a post office which was called Roland. He sold the store to the Bondy Brothers in 1912 and they continued in business until 1919 when they sold the store to A. A. Rolandson and he and his son, Knute operated the store together for six years. Then Knute bought the store from his father and in 1939 he sold it to Leonard Singer. In 1944, Singer sold the store to Harvey Woods who operated it until 1946 when he in turn sold it to his son, Earl. Earl

had the business until 1954 when the store was closed.

Located across from the Roland store, the Clearwater Creamery was started in 1906 or 1907 by a group of farmers who needed a place where they could take their cream. Among the early buttermakers were Carl Rendahl, Gilbert Hoveland, Robert Anderson and Walter Welte. Raymond Gordon was the last buttermaker there and he continued until 1933 when the farmers voted to close this creamery because it was too small.

On this site many years later, a dance hall was built by Harvey Woods and named Silver Star. This hall closed several years later and the building moved from the site. A boat landing is there at the present time.

Red Lake Falls Gazette, December 18, 1902

EQUALITY

On the 15th day of May, 1896, at 9 o'clock a.m. (and possibly a few minutes earlier) any one who was on the ground, could have seen all manner of men of all nationalities, with all kinds of vehicles, some on foot, some on horseback, making the race to "squat" on the land which was then part of the Red Lake reservation, but which is now embraced in the township of Equality.

At that time a good foot racer had the advantage over any one with any other means of locomotion, as it had been rain-

ing incessantly for a month or more, and the soil was literally soaked with water.

There were a number of contests for each quarter section to be taken, but nevertheless there was no serious trouble, and only a few contests were brought before the land office.

Should a person who has not been over the township since the opening visit Equality now, he would scarcely recognize it, so great has been the progress. Every quarter section of land has its buildings, fields, etc., and nearly every settler has a nice bunch of stock. All section lines are roads some graded and considerable work done on most of them. The township has two road graders and a ditching machine, and now that most of the settlers have "proved up", there will be more road work done, as heretofore we have had to depend upon poll tax work entirely, and in a short time will have roads second to no township in the county.

The soil is a rich loam, with a heavy clay subsoil, easily drained, as it slopes from the center, south to the Lost and north to the Clearwater river.

Native grasses, blue-joint and peavine, grow luxuriantly, especially on the Clearwater river bottom land and consequently it is one of the best townships in the banner county of Minnesota, for stockraising and diversified farming.

An up-to-date cheese factory, owned

and operated by Mrs. Josie Short, was built the past summer and is expected to do a large business next season as a large number of cows are tributary to it.

The first store and post office was started on Section 19 by E. E. Havik and named "Grit," which name was very appropriate, as it required considerable of that commodity to undertake to haul goods over the then almost impassable roads twenty miles, but Ed had the necessary article in large chunks, as it was very seldom he was out of the necessities at least.

"Lillo" on section 10 was the next post office and Magnus Johnson Lillo its postmaster. He also had a small store.

The personal property valuation for 1902 is \$22,557.00 which is well up with the highest in the county, a pretty good showing when it is remembered that only six years ago every foot of ground in what is now Equality township belonged to the Indians.

There are five school districts, all with schools in successful operation.

At the last election there were registered 103 votes.

And last but not least, you can go into nine out of every ten homes and you will find "The Gazette" upon the mantel or in the hands of some eager reader who will tell you they couldn't get along without the leading paper in the county — and the only kiddie hasn't been here yet, either.



Roland Store



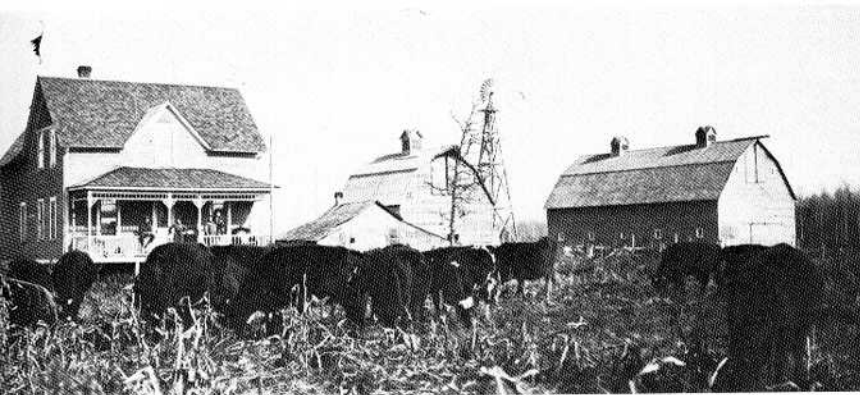
Torkel Gunderson team hauling wood.



Halvor Dahl, Vera Helgeson, Ingeborg Lillo, Ida (Lillo) Fore, Mrs. Rasmus Fore.



James Walker home



Con Short Farm



Rolf Hofstad Homestead 1902



Clearwater Creamery



Russell Norberg and Clarence Bergerson threshing at the Norberg farm.

RED LAKE COUNTY COURIER 12/9/01

LOCALS FROM LILLO.

The Comings and Goings of the People Chronicled.

By SYBIL.

Hilmer Iverson and S. Storaasli were recent visitors to McIntosh.

Magnus Johnson is making a visit to his old home near Rochester, this state.

The Messrs. Jorgenson, Lintwedt and Lillo made a business trip to St. Hilaire the first part of the week after lumber.

A basket social at J. Buskerk's place is one of the events this week. It is posted for Friday evening. It is understood that everyone will be welcome.

Married, at Red Lake Falls last Saturday, Christ Krim to Gertie Rendal. Mrs. Krim has recently proved up on a fine homestead near the post office. We extend congratulations.

Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Jensen have taken up their abode for the winter with Mrs. Jensen's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Legwold. Mr. Jensen has a claim near Minot, North Dakota, upon which they will move towards spring.

A number of our citizens attended a wedding near Grit recently. The contracting parties were Mr. William Sivenson and Miss Mary Skreland, well-known young people of Grit. The couple were joined in the bonds of matrimony by Rev. Kolstor at 7 o'clock p. m., after which a bounteous supper was served to some seventy guests. The bride wore a wreath of orange blossoms and a dress of white serge, made up with silk, lace and passementerie. They received many handsome and valuable presents.