

The following information was taken from the publication Township History – History of Hennepin County

Crystal Village – by E.K. Jaques

The citizens in the western part of the town of Crystal Lake, believing that their interests would be promoted thereby, on the 8th day of March, 1887, proceeded to incorporate Crystal Village. Up to this time, the section was exclusively agricultural. Here were the homes of the pioneers; not the rough, board shanties of thirty-eight years ago, but spacious, well appointed houses and barns, belonging to the white haired men, who, by years of honest toil, had won them from the earth. It is pleasant to think that here, at least, the early settler is the possessor.

This section has been highly favored, never having been visited by pestilence or famine. There has always been a seed time and for them a harvest.

Crystal Village contains sixteen sections and is four miles square. In it is Crystal and Twin Lakes, Crystal Prairie, and, on the west side, the rolling timber land already described in the history of the original town.

The village was incorporated January 11, 1887. The first election of officers was held March 8, 1887. The officers elected were: Arthur Sanborn, President; Thomas Gearty, J.H. White and Philip Kuch, Trustees; N.F. Russ, Recorder; J.B. Johnson, Treasurer; Thomas Kirkwood, Assessor; D.C. Crandall and H.R. Stillman, Justices of the Peace; Charles Hommes, Constable.

At the election of officers, the following year, March, 1888, W. H. Johnson was elected President; Philip Kuch, Thomas Gearty and E. K. Jaques, Trustees; N.F. Russ, Recorder; J.B. Johnson, Treasurer; Thomas Kirkwood, Assessor; O.W. Newell and George E. Swift, Justices of the Peace; V.D. Crandall, Constable. The above named officers have been annually elected up to this writing.

The financial condition of the village is excellent, it being free from all debt, bonded or floating. The tax levy for 1891 was but five mills for all village purposes.

The roads in the village are among the best in the State. Over \$4,000 per annum have been expended upon them for the past three years.

In 1888, a hall was erected for village purposes. It is a fine two-story brick building, costing \$3,000. It stands on a one-fourth acre lot, donated to the village for that purpose by one of its highly esteemed citizens, Mr. J.S. Malbon. This lot is a part of the land upon which Mr. Malbon settled in the early spring of 1854.

Robbinsdale Park is the rapidly developing business center of Crystal Village. It is that portion of the village located on Crystal Prairie, to the west of Crystal Lake and south and west of the Lower Twin. It is situated on a slightly rolling, high and well drained tract. From many places upon it, fine views of the lakes, to the east and north, may be had, between the clustering oaks that line their shores; while, to the south and west, the lands rise in higher swells and the woods to denser growth.

In 1887, Mr. A.B. Robbins came into the village and bought lands of Mr. Alfred Parker, George L. Brimhall, John Shumway, and David Malbon, and at once proceeded to plat Robbinsdale Park. Soon after, Mr. Alfred Parker platted Brimhall's First Addition to the same. From this time on, through the business tact and generous encouragement of these men, and others, the Luther Seminary, Hubbard Specialty Manufacturing Company, and The Northern Car Company Shops were located here, the result of which has been the rapid development of the place.

School District 24 is situated in Robbinsdale. Owing to the rapid increase in population, in the year 1890, a new modern school building became a necessity. Accordingly, steps were taken, and \$10,000 was raised for that purpose. Too much credit cannot be given the school board, of which Mr. L. A. Tyler was chairman, H.R. Stillman, clerk, and Jarius Russ, treasurer. Through the untiring efforts of this board, and other citizens, Robbinsdale has today one of the finest school buildings of its kind in the State. This school is known as Parker School, in honor of Mr. Alfred Parker, an old settler, and a strong supporter of the school. It is a brick building, with stone basement and trimmings, elegant in design and convenient in arrangement, being supplied with all modern equipments. It contains four large rooms besides cloak rooms, office and recitation rooms. The halls are spacious and the basement contains gymnasium and furnace rooms. The entire building is exquisitely finished in oak. The school is well graded and it will, probably, become one of the State high Schools with the next year. District 23 is situated on section 18. The people here have just completed a new school building and are now occupying it. The house is neatly finished and furnished. This school, like most of the others in this county, is doing good work. There are three joint school districts in the village. As their school buildings are located in Brooklyn, Crystal Lake and Golden Valley, respectively, further mention of them may be found in the history of these places.

The Luther Seminary is one of the important educational institutions in the West. It is situated on a beautiful ten-acre tract, centrally situated in Robbinsdale Park. The main building is a massive brick edifice, with stone trimmings and basement. It cost \$35,000, exclusive of the site, which was donated to the society by Alfred Parker, A. B. Robbins and George L. Brimhall, through whose generosity and enterprise this institution was located here. For further particulars in regard to this institution, the reader is referred to the article headed "Higher Educational Institutions of Hennepin County."

The Crystal Lake and Brooklyn Free Will Baptist Church was organized May 27th, 1860, with six members, H. R. Stillman, Mrs. A. M. Stillman, Mr. and Mrs. H.F. Thompson, Mrs. H. Merritt and I. Smith, by Rev. W. Hayden and A. D. Sandborn. It had not settled pastor, but only occasional preaching, until March, 1862. About this time, Rev. R.W. Bryant, of Minneapolis, commenced visiting the church, holding occasional meetings, and Rev. H.N.Herrick preached every two weeks. Rev. Mr. Bryant was pastor from this time until May, 1864, when he was succeeded by Rev. J. Elliot. Rev. W. Hayden was pastor for the year 1869, and Rev. C. L. Russell for the years 1870 and 1871. From this date to 1876, the church was partially supplied by H.N. Herrick. Then followed Rev. J.C. Robinson, for one year. Following this, Rev. A. J. Davis, filled the pulpit until the autumn of 1878, when Rev. A.H. Hans came for one year. Then followed a vacancy, until April, 1880, when Rev. D.D. Mitchell was pastor for one year; then Rev. Stevenson for a year, when Rev. C.L. Russell became pastor and remained so until April, 1887, when Rev. H.G. Woodworth took charge and was pastor one year. After a vacancy of several months, Rev. T.B. Molton took charge and was pastor two years. At this time (1892), Rev. O. F. Burgess is pastor, and the church is in a flourishing condition. The church was built in 1875-6, on section 5, and is 32x45 feet. It is completely finished and is a neat structure. It cost \$2,200.

St. Maries Catholic Church. The Catholic inhabitants, in the west part of the town, in 1863, erected a school house. In 1873, this building was remodeled and enlarged, the result being the present pleasant little church building. At this time, the name, St. Maries, was given to the church. Peter and John Schuller and B. Hommes donated a five acre tract of land, where the church was erected. Their cemetery adjoins the church on the east. The first priest at St. Maries was Father Eberhart; the present, Father Florentius Kuryer. The membership is eighty.

The First Congregational Church of Parker was organized June 14th, 1889, with a membership of thirty-five. It now has a membership of fifty. The first trustees were J.P. Shumway, L. A. Tyler and W. C. Gilbert; the deacons, O.W. Newell and L.C. Roth; treasurer, H.K. Smith; chorister, Staphen Burton and assistant, Lulu Downs; ushers Ray Newell and Perry Smith, and clerk, W. C. Gilbert. Mr. C. W. Votaw was acting pastor, when the church was organized. A. D. Fanning was the first regular pastor. In 1890, the church voted to erect a building. The contract was let to E. K. Wilkins, of Minneapolis, for \$4,125, to be completed about January 1st, 1891. It was finished and dedicated near the second Sunday in May, 1891. The building, when completed and furnished, will cost about \$6,000, with a seating capacity of three hundred fifty. The location is at the corner of Shumway Avenue and the Shingle Creek Road. The lot contains one-half acre. This church occupies an entirely new field, it being the first established at Robbinsdale. The church building is modern in construction and convenient. It occupies a pleasant, centrally situated site, just on the border line between the

prairie and grove. This church has always been, and is, at the present time, prosperous. Rev. J.H. Pemberton is its present pastor.

Fraternal Beneficiary Organization. The Ancient Order of United Workmen organized a lodge, in 1890, with a membership of nine. R. D. Hutchinson was elected master workman. Dr. C. A. Donaldson served as master workman in 1891. O.B. Hoffman is present master. The lodge has about twenty members.

Dr. C. A. Donaldson is a general practitioner of medicine and surgery. He located in Robbinsdale in 1888 and has, by his gentlemanly qualities and professional skill, established a large practice.

J. Trump has a grocery store, centrally located. Nasett and Linde carry a stock of general merchandise. George E. Swift has a well appointed drug store. He is also postmaster of Robbinsdale. J.J. Coulter has an excellent meat market. Sand and Christenson do general blacksmithing, G. Irwin wagon maker. E. E. Higgins has a blacksmith shop. Peter Yarkanson, shoemaker, and Mr. Mitchell a barber shop.

Hotel Georgia is a fine, new, three-story wood building, and has a good location. This is a temperance house and is well kept by its owner, C. T. Griffith. There are three other houses, Johnson's Place, H. P. Witte's Crystal Park House, and M. Niesen's Crystal Lake House. These are pleasantly situated, on the shores of Crystal Lake.

Transportation. There are two trunk line railroads that pass entirely through the village. The Great Northern, and the "Soo", from east to west.

Street Cars. Early in the spring of 1891, the North Side Street Railroad Company, having obtained an exclusive franchise, from the village, for a period of thirty years, proceeded to construct the road from the city limits to Robbinsdale. In its construction, the same weight of rails and the same gauge was used as in the city. Since the first of June, 1891, horse cars have been operated on this line. Arrangements have been made whereby the electric system of the city will be extended from Penn Avenue out Thirty-Second Street, one-half mile, to the present terminus of this line, after which the village will have a good street car system to and from the city.

The manufacturing industries located in the village of Crystal, situated on the side-tracks at Robbinsdale Station, are the Sweatt Manufacturing Company, engaged in the manufacturing of patent wheels, wheelbarrows, camp furniture and other goods. The investment of this company amounts to \$25,000. The plant consists of new buildings for manufacturing and storage purposes, fitted up in the best manner, and the firm is doing a very large and prosperous business, having orders for more goods than they can manufacture, and say that, in the spring, they will very largely increase their capacity.

The Northern Car Company is engaged in the manufacturing of street railway and other cars, with a capital of \$280,000, employing from one hundred fifty to two hundred men. It has a capacity of manufacturing seven cars per week. The cars manufactured by this company are said to be equal, if not superior, to those of any other company in the country. The Minneapolis Street Railway Company gives the cars the very highest recommendation. These works are now being enlarged, by the erection of an extensive brick building, for the finishing of the work, which will add largely to its capacity.

These institutions have been located within the past two years, and are employing a very desirable class, who will aid in building up the district.

In giving a history of this village, it is but just that a brief mention be made of the men who have been largely instrumental in its development.

In 1887, Mr. A. B. Robbins platted Robbinsdale Park, and was largely instrumental in securing the location of Luther Seminary, and, afterwards, the Hubbard Specialty Manufacturing Company, of which he was president. It was, also, largely through his efforts that the Northern Car Shops were located here. He is, at present, the president of this company, also president of the North Side Street Railway Company, and also instrumental in its organization. He has expended much money in the building of houses, grading of streets, planting of trees and other public improvements.

Mr. Alfred Parker is another public minded citizen who has done much to promote the general welfare and prosperity, giving freely to the Luther Seminary, the Hubbard Manufacturing Company, and the Northern Car Company. He, too, has built houses and taken a general interest in the development of the village.

And all this may be said of Mr. George L. Brimhall, who has given freely, not only to the above, but, also, to the North Side Street Railway Company.

Mr. John Shumway has lent a helping hand, also, to all these improvements. Many other citizens have donated freely to the same.

The above history was written in the autumn of 1891, since which time the following important additions have been made: The village of Crystal has been disorganized, and three of its sections, in the southeast portion of its territory, have been incorporated as the village of Robbinsdale. The present village board of Robbinsdale is composed of A. B. Robbins, President; John Hayes, Recorder; L. I. Nasett, T.H. Girling, and H. Christenson, Trustees; G. E. Swift, Treasurer. The North Side Street Railway Company now uses a gasoline motor, in place of horses, and connects with the Minneapolis electric system at the corner of Penn and Thirty-second Avenue North. The Northern Car Company's shops, also the Hubbard Specialty Manufacturing Company's shops, have been destroyed by

fire. Robbinsdale has now become purely a residence village. The village is in a prosperous condition and its future is bright.

The balance of the territory that composed the village of Crystal has reverted into the original town of Crystal Lake. The town board is now composed of Paris Reidhead, Chairman; Philip Kuch and V. D. Crandall, Supervisors; Jarius Russ, Clerk; C. F. McCausland, Treasurer. The town has just completed a creditable town hall.