

Story of the Saint Croix Valley

Statement of Responsibility:

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J. V. G. S.

Royal C. Gray, who died February 22, 1893, was born in Bakersfield, Vt., in October, 1832, and received his early education there, spending a large part of his boyhood in Vermont and Massachusetts. He came west in 1850 as a youth of eighteen years and located in Kanabec county, Minn., where he farmed and kept a public house at Greely station on the Kanabec river until 1860, when he returned to Massachusetts. In 1862 he came to the St. Croix valley and located at Taylors Falls, where he continued to make his home. He was employed by the St. Paul & Duluth Railroad Company for ten years as surveyor and explorer. During the last eight or ten years of his life he was estimator of pine lands for the railroad company and for the last three years he was in the real estate business. He was also a large owner of pine lands, which he had purchased at different times. Mr. Gray ran the carding mill which was built by Erastus Guard at an early date. He purchased this mill from Mr. Guard and conducted it as a wool carding mill for many years. Mr. Gray was a member of the Methodist church for nineteen years and a true Christian gentleman in every respect, being held in

the highest esteem by all who knew him. In all his business transactions he was strictly honest and was very successful in his various undertakings. On the organization of the county he was appointed by the governor as one of the commissioners of Kanabee county and held the office for two years. For some years he was president of the village board of Taylors Falls. In 1861 he was married to Ann E. Johnson, born in Franklin county, New York, in 1838. The marriage was performed in Holyoke, Mass., and there they lived two years. Unto Mr. and Mrs. Gray one son was born, his natal place being in the house where Mrs. Gray now resides and where she has made her home for forty-nine years. Born October 15, 1868, he was christened Orin J., and received his education at Taylors Falls and at Dixon college, Dixon, Ill. He is now residing at Portland, Ore., being a land inspector and purchaser for different lumbering companies. He married Lida K. Clendening, born at Taylors Falls, daughter of James and Mary Clendening, who were early settlers of St. Croix Falls and afterward moved to Taylors Falls. The father is now residing on his claim in northern Minnesota. Unto Orin J. Gray and wife one son has been born, Royal Clendening Gray, who was born at Taylors Falls, June 10, 1897. Royal has attended the public schools of Taylors Falls for four successive years without being absent or tardy. Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Gray had an adopted daughter, Mattie M., who died at Taylors Falls, June 14, 1885, of consumption at the age of sixteen years. She was a member of the Methodist Episcopal church and was loved by all who knew her.

Royalton was organized in 1880. The first supervisors were Edward Peterson, Alexis Kain and Joseph Heninger. The first settlement was made by Elam Greeley in 1849. He cleared a farm and built a large barn, hauling the lumber from Marine Mills, a distance of seventy miles. The town was named in honor of Royal C. Gray, who located on the Greeley farm in 1854 on the banks of the Kanabee river.

John M. Currie was born May 1, 1861, in Ontario, Canada, son of John and Margaret (Mitchell) Currie, natives of Scotland, who came to Ontario in the early fifties, bought 120 acres of land, broke and improved the same, and erected the necessary buildings, carrying on general farming until the father's death in 1896. The mother now makes her home on the old homestead in Ontario. John M. Currie received his education at the Ontario Collegiate Institute, teaching until coming to America in 1883. He lived in Florida a short time and then located in Kanabec county, Minnesota, acting as bookkeeper in a general store for several years until 1890, when he engaged in the lumber business for two years. Coming to Hinekley in 1892, he purchased a drug store and conducted the same for five years. He then sold the drug store and engaged in the real estate business, in which he still continues. He handles a large amount of lands. Mr. Currie is a Democrat and was clerk of the village schools for nine years. He belongs to the Odd Fellows and the Modern Woodmen. Mr. Currie was married at St. Cloud, Minn., to Amy Conger, of Mora, Minn., daughter of Ira and Leona (Bunker) Conger, of New York state and Massachusetts, respectively. For a time the father engaged in the mercantile business in Mora, Minn., where he still lives, having now retired. To Mr. and Mrs. Currie have been born eight children: Ethel, Earl, Beatrice, Clarence, John, Genevieve, Sidney and Kenneth, all living at home. The family attends the Presbyterian church.