

Frank Chenoweth Family Moves to Chicago

Frank and Julietta Chenoweth left their beautiful home in Monroe late in October 1905 and moved to North Dakota where they had invested in 3,200 acres of land. After losing their home and many of their personal belongings in a fire in March 1906, Frank was advertising North Dakota land for sale in the Sentinel in July.

Mrs. Chenoweth happened to be in Monroe on August 27 when it was announced in the Sentinel that the Chenoweths had turned the interest in their North Dakota property into a large, beautiful apartment building in Chicago. She had come to Monroe from Chicago for a week where she had spent two weeks “giving her time to the negotiation of a deal by which they trade in a large tract of land for a block of very desirable city property.”

The Chenoweths were to retain their 320-acre homestead in Billings county for a summer home while making Chicago their permanent home. The 3,200 acres was sold to an unnamed Chicago millionaire who intended to improve it and stock it as a large ranch. The Chicago property had been erected two years prior at a cost of \$100,000. It was a three-story building know as The Netherlands. It was divided into modern apartments and said to be one of the finest apartment buildings in Chicago at the time. She left for Chicago again on September 4 to sign the deeds before going back to North Dakota.

Mrs. Chenoweth felt that North Dakota had a great future. Her husband felt he didn't have the necessary experience and equipment to develop the country, so took advantage of the offer to give up ranching. Besides losing their home, they lost their barn when it caved due to heavy rainfall. “The possibilities of these lands, she says, have been known for fifteen years, but the time was not ripe for the new immigration that has now set in since farmers in the northwestern states begin to realize the propositions they have to contend with in the cultivation of limited acreage of high priced lands.” Since early March, 135 people had been visiting to look at the offerings. Land had not been in demand there five years earlier when it sold for eighty cents an acre, but they were selling at this time for \$10 an acre. Land only 75 miles to the south was selling for up to \$15 an acre at the time.

Chenoweth informed the Monroe people of the progress made in Billings county on December 31, 1907, while in his third winter there. He stated that the weather was still good enough for the cattle and horses to graze outside like they had in the summer. A new town, Bowman, had been platted only a few weeks before on an extension of the Milwaukee Road and already had 500 residents. Land was selling quickly.

It was revealed in the Times the following November that Frank had again purchased a three-story building with a store front at 5838 Washington Avenue in Chicago. The family planned to make that their home. Frank planned to take a position with Peacock Jewelry after Thanksgiving while son Chester had already taken a position with Jurgen & Anderson, a wholesale diamond house. A short article in November 1909 stated that Frank would “be pleased to meet his Monroe friends” at the jewelry store.

The area in North Dakota where the Chenoweths had settled established a new post office in 1910 on Chenoweth's land and named the post office Chenoweth. A bank building was to be put up and a newspaper started. The land had been platted for a town and the railroad was headed that way with arrival expected in the spring, being only 30 miles away in October. A new county was to be laid out; a move was on foot to make Chenoweth the county seat. Chenoweths were there at the time so Frank could oversee the threshing of the flax on his land, which had been rented to a farmer from Wisconsin for five years.



This headline was printed in the Monroe Evening on August 27, 1906.

A short article in the Times on November 13 said that Frank was back in Chicago, but Mrs. Chenoweth remained in Bowman, North Dakota "for a time." Billings County had been divided into three counties and it was "expected that Chenoweth will be the county seat of Slope county." Copies of the first issue of the Slope County News, published at Chenoweth, were received in Monroe on December 29.

Mr. Chenoweth, who owned the town site, expected to conduct a town lot sale in the spring of 1911. The post office had opened at the beginning of December 1910. At that time there was also a grocery store and a hardware store. A church was also expected to be built at the beginning of 1911 with another in the spring. A lumber yard and blacksmith shop were also expected to locate there.

I found no more information about the Chenoweths in the Monroe papers for the next ten years. The 1910 census shows Frank, Julietta, and Chester living at 5038 Washington Street in Chicago. Frank was managing the farm and ranch while Chester was a salesman for the jewelry company. Julietta's brother was also living with them and four lodgers.

The 1920 census shows the family living at 5035 Blackstone Avenue in Chicago with a 35-year-old widowed servant and a 50-year-old roomer. Frank, 65, was listed as working again in dry goods. Unfortunately, Julietta passed away at their home on July 23, 1929. Her small obituary in the Monroe Evening Times ended with, "She was a student of art and painting and her paintings were widely circulated in art exhibits while she was a resident of Monroe." I hope to eventually do a small column about her and that art.

Chester, a diamond importer, and his father were living in the same home in 1930 with a housekeeper, a maid, and four roomers. Not much more is known about the rest of Frank's life, but he passed away on August 15, 1938 and is buried at Forest Home Cemetery in Forest Park, Illinois. Julietta had been cremated, so does not rest beside him.