

## THE EARLY DAYS IN THE RAMA DISTRICT

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[Memoirs of the George Homer Dean family settling in the Rama district \(1907 through 1917\)](#)

[George Homer Dean & Mary Stubbings family tree, pedigree chart \(4 generation\) \(doc\) \(pdf\) \(htm\)](#)

[My Early Years in England \(doc\) \(pdf\) \(htm\)](#)

[Our First Canadian Winter \(doc\) \(pdf\) \(htm\)](#)

[The Early Days in the Rama District \(doc\) \(pdf\) \(htm\)](#)

## FOREWORD

It is said that according to the laws of aeronautics the bumble bee is too heavy, has not enough wing span, is the wrong shape, and is built in such a way that it is impossible for him to fly.

However, it seems the bumble bee does not know this, and therefore goes merrily along flying all over the place and generally enjoying himself.

It is with similar blissfull ignorance that I shall attempt to write a narrative of the early days in the Rama district, I have already ventured to write a short account of the adventures of the Dean family as they experienced their first winter in Canada and in the Rama district which will introduce our family and the few settlers we came in contact with during that short time, so that episode should best be read first to prepare the reader for what will now follow as I carry on from the spring of 1908.

The first part of the narrative is naturally as seen and experienced by a very young boy, but all incidents concerning the Dean family and others of the district are perfectly true and in no way exaggerated.

Names in all probability will be misspelt, especially those of the new Canadians.

In the event that this narrative is completed, I shall dedicate it to my nephew Kenneth Dean who first suggested I should attempt to record all of the events of The Early Days in the Rama District.

## THE EARLY DAYS IN THE RAMA DISTRICT

It was spring, the snow had melted away until there were only traces of it on the north side of the bluffs and there seemed to be water everywhere. All the sloughs were filled to capacity and were flowing over in small streams from one to the other in a general south-easterly direction which was the lay of the land in the whole district. Later, when the run-off had finished there was still water in every little slough and pot-hole.

The bigger sloughs were like small lakes, and joined together by smaller sloughs or by ravines.

Although we were surrounded by water, it was not long until we were short of water to drink, for once the snow water was gone the slough water became unfit to drink, so that drinking water was our first concern. Digging a well then was the first thing to do, but where to dig as the sixty four dollar question.

A temporary hole was dug in a low spot and the water soaked in nice and clear, but on tasting it proved to be rank alkali, so was of little use except for tea, neither was it suitable for washing, it just curdled the soap, but we were obliged to put up with it until such times as it rained.

In the meantime many test holes were dug, and Dad thinking back to the water definers in the old country tried the forked willow trick, but with no success, although as we all tried it we imagined it might be showing some indication of water.

We never did in all the years find a good supply of water on that quarter section. Many years later I discovered a reasonably good well some quarter of a mile away from the farm buildings but this was very inconvenient.

In that whole district there were very few flowing wells, as the subsoil was mostly deep clay, and only when one was lucky enough to strike a seam of sand or gravel were they able to get good drinking water.

I think it was the second year we were there that Dad struck a small seam of sand by just pure luck, and this gave us a small supply of excellent water which was enough to supply the home, and this lasted for some years until the country got dry and the water table got lower so that eventually it dried up.

This well was also some distance from the house and therefore very inconvenient, and as I became chief water-man in the following years, water as the prime bug-bear for me.

We were surprised at the suddenness of the spring, for we had been covered in a blanket of snow until what we thought was very late in the year, and then it seemed a comparatively short time until there were actually wild crocuses blooming.

In England, we were used to signs of spring in February, with a long drawn-out period of improvement which eventually merged into summer, but George warned us not to be too exuberant about it all, as it was possible for it to snow much later on , although not as a general rule.

There was no lack of work for Dad and George, for though it was early to star land work there were many other jobs in need of doing, Posts must be cut and sharpened to fence our little field of seed oats after we had plowed and seeded it, There was also a pile of logs, hauled out the previous winter, to be peeled of their bark in order for them to somewhat dry out and season, which were to be used to build an addition on the back of our shack to better accommodate our family, this would consist of a large kitchen, a bedroom, and a food pantry.

There was harness and equipment to get ready, Dad made a four horse evener from a poplar log, hewing it and planeing it until it looked just like the real thing, George said it would not be strong enough, for it's thickness and depth were governed by the clevises that would be used on it, in any case I doubt if either George or Dad knew anything of the strength of poplar wood other than to see that it was soft wood, We were to find that out very shortly after we started to use it.

The plow share must be sharpened too, and this was my first opportunity to see a black-smith shop, My only conception of this was from the poem (The village black-smith) who stood under the spreading chestnut tree, and strangely when George and I got there after a long round about trip with oxen and wagon, it actually was under a tree or trees, for Mac. had set up his equipment temporaly in amongst the trees until he had finished building his shop of logs. I remember at that time he was using an old style bellows to blow up his forge similar to (but of course many times bigger) to the hand ones seen in old pictures used for the purpose of blowing up the fires in the grates of the fire-places. A crude sort of lever arrangement operated it, I don't think it was very efficient, for on the next visit there he had a modern blower.

Mac. was busy doing some small jobs for other people when we got there, and I was very intrigued in watching him at work for childlike I had always thought of iron as something that could not be bent or broken, and to see him moulding it into various shapes was something of a marvel to me, And then to see him take the plow share we had brought and draw it out to A thin edge and then plunge it into a tub of water which I thought he was doing merely to make it cool enough for us to pick up, until George told me later that it was for the purpose of hardening the steel, and that it required good judgement to do this successfully so that it was hard enough to stand considerable wear, but no so hard as to break when strikeing stones, and that the art of tempering often spelled the difference between a good or bad blacksmith.

We were invited to stay for dinner, which was also very much appreciated by me for what youngster does not get ravenously hungry at all times, I should have liked to

spend the whole afternoon in watching Mac. at work only that George insisted that we had best get home. It was the first time I had seen Mac. for when he was not at home when George and I had called at his shack the previous fall to pick up Mother, Nell, and Muriel when they had stayed over-night there with the Murrays on their way out from Sheho.

The Murrays had then been living temporarily in Mac's shack while their own was in the course of construction.

Since then Mac. had married Nellie Rattery and they were now permanently established on their farm and remained there for some years, Mac. became quite an important man in the district during that time, for besides being the local black-smith he was also a qualified steam engineer.

This trip to the black-smith shop was the first of many, as I was always (Johnnie on the spot) when there was a trip to be made there, and this first visit was in my opinion a real successful day.

Later on in my idle moments I tried to create a shop of my own using a ten pound syrup can partly filled with earth as a forge, and spent much time in going around to all the places where we had previously burned piles of scrub and trees to collect the charcoal left there, to serve as coals, For bellows I was obliged to depend on my own lungs, and for an anvil, our ten pound sledge hammer, Dad's hammer and pliers served as hammer and tongs, (much to his disgust at times when he could not locate them). I had no material to use excepting some extra heavy wire, I did manage to fashion some fairly good gate hooks and experimented in making some miniature clevises, but it was not a very successful project and I soon called it off and decided to wait until I had grown up.

It must have been about this time that our white cow mysteriously disappeared, and all efforts on our part failed to locate her for several days until at last she turned up followed by pure white calf. This was something of an event, for not only was it our first addition to our herd, but we should now have some milk and butter which we had been without since early winter.

Nell was at once elected as milk-maid, for she had learned to milk the previous summer when she had become friendly with the Munshaw girls at Hamiota. The milking was to become as big a head-ache to her as the water question was to me, as the whole burden fell to her, and for many years she faithfully did all the milking until Muriel grew up and relieved her to some extent, I was unable to milk with any degree of satisfaction although I learned and persevered for a whole summer, but I was plagued with cramps in my fingers which forced me to stop and rest every few minutes and therefore took no end of time so that I became a dead loss. Mother and Dad never learned, and the three elder boys always considered chores were below them,

and were only for Dad and us younger ones, They were the work force and the big producers.

Shortly after, Blossom, our other cow presented us with a roan calf and we were then really supplied with milk and butter which you may be sure was quite a lift to us after being without for so long.

There was one jarring note, Both calves were steers, and of course everyone wished for heifer calves, so that the herds would sooner start to build up, and in this respect we had lost the first round, and our increase in stock would be set back for another year.

We had now been in Canada for almost a year, so we could say we had experienced all four seasons, but the coming summer was going to be totally different to the previous one we had lived through in Manitoba, for the conditions were primitive compared to the Hamiota district and we were completely unaware of what was ahead of us for the next few months. After that we should be starting the second time round and could cope better with our problems and avoid some of the mistakes we had made previously.

During the winter and early spring, the whole four quarters had been tramped and looked over to find the biggest open spaces most free of scattered trees and low spots where we should do the plowing for (breaking) as it is referred to when first plowing the original sod. These spaces, in among the trees as they were appeared quite large, but on being (stepped out) as was the common way of estimating their size, turned out to be much smaller than they appeared at first sight, and later on when exactly measured by the tally of the seed drill, turned out to be disappointingly less than ever.

There was a nice space of high ground just east of the house a few hundred yards through the trees, and this was earmarked to be where we should sow our oats to be seed for the following year, So Dad and George set about clearing up any rubbish and odd trees that should be scattered over it, for this first little piece of crop must be the prime concern after the kitchen garden. For the garden there was a nice little strip of high land about fifty yards in front of the house and a little to the right or west, It was not very wide, but by a bit of trimming along the edges it would be enough. It turned out to be half on Dad's place and half on George's when the section lines were finally located in their exact positions, George set up stakes for the strike-out down the centre and was all ready to start on our first piece of plowing.

Today, plowing is not done to any extent, excepting where it is necessary to break the virgin soil, In fact methods of farming and farm machinery are so changed in the present day that there is very little resemblance to how things were done at that time.

Plowing in those days was considered a very important operation, it also consumed most time and most of the available power which of course was then by horses, and in

the case of the early settlers by oxen. It is understandable then that farmers took considerable pride in their plowing, in perfectly straight strike-outs, even furrows, and neat close-ins or dead furrows. A well plowed field affords a pleasant picture to a farmer, although to others it may appear as merely a dreary expanse of blackness.

If I live to be a hundred I don't think I shall ever forget the turning of the first sod on my Dad's homestead, and I am sure if there had been any people available, there would have been the biggest crowd ever at any sod turning ceremony.

Everything was now in readiness to go, and I can imagine the thrill it gave George to be actually starting in to the business of farming on his own, I have experienced this feeling many times during my early life when starting on some project or occupation in which I had hitherto not experienced and therefore had only slight knowledge of what was to come. The result was often something of a delusion, a loss of the glamour that first surrounded it, and sometimes a complete disappointment.

George had done lots of plowing in his previous two summers in Manitoba, and considered himself pretty efficient at the job, and I know that he was, but stubble plowing in Manitoba with four good horses and a riding plow was a far cry from breaking virgin sod with four (at the time partly untrained oxen) and with all the other disadvantages which surrounded the operation.

The plow had been made in readiness and the oxen hitched up and secured with all the necessary ropes and lines.

The garden would be only a preliminary run to get the plow adjusted and a few other minor things put straight before getting going on the big field and would be shortly be taken care of, However, things did not turn out that way, and it was late in the following day before the garden was completed.

It was trouble from the very start, The oxen had not been hitched abreast before and therefore felt strange and somewhat suspicious as all animals do at any sort of change, and had they been hitched to anything but a plow it would not have caused so much concern, but plowing must be done straight and exact and the start is the most difficult part of the operation to start then to get four unruly oxen to go in any sort of a straight line was indeed a problem, they each wanted to go in every direction but the right one, and weaved from side to side, some hanging back and some tearing ahead, and all this coupled with the strangeness of a plow not before used, and of course not yet adjusted, was enough to send George (round the bend) and he became hotter and madder by the minute, I expect I was hanging around being of not much use and making myself a nuisance by having too much to say, Dad suggested he could lead the oxen for George until they had become more accustomed to things, but George was having nothing as degrading as that and said it would go better once he had got the first round done. The first strike out was always bad as there was no mark for the team to follow and the furrow being cut only on one side often fell back into its original

place and one had their hands full to guide the team, handle the plow, and use his foot to stamp the sod down into place, Anyhow in the end he was forced to the indignity of having Dad lead the team in order to get a straight strike-out.

The second time round was not much improvement on the first, and Dad persuaded George to let him try and drive the team so that he could devote all his attention to the plow which had to be set and adjusted for depth and width, also it did not clean properly as it was much rusted so that stops had to be made to scrape it off and the dense growth of dead grass from the previous summer, along with twigs and rubbish continually piled up under the plow beam and had to be pulled or kicked out of the way, By this time the whole family had joined the show to either help or hinder, but still the oxen didn't want to settle down to business and as the strip of breaking grew wider the ox who would normally have to walk out of the fresh plowing objected to doing so and endeavored to push the whole team to one side in order to get better footing, Finally one of the oxen in the centre of the team who seemed to dislike being crowded in between the others made a quick dash ahead to get out in the open, but being restrained by lines and cross checks his head was quickly pulled towards the ground causing his horns to contact the ground and he was pitched heels over head completely, We were all surprised and frightened, for it was a wonder his neck was not broken, but after a mad scramble to untangle all the ropes lines and traces by all of us, there appeared to be no harm done, But after the fright of the clammy was over it turned to frustration and rage for George, it was the last straw, and he exclaimed that he would like to give away the whole four oxen and chuck the whole thing up. At this point I piped up with "Well you can give me Buck and Bright" Yes, you can have them he said, and ever after they were unofficially my team, although you may be sure I didn't have much say regarding them.

Things soon settled down, for although George would fly into a rage at the drop of a hat he as quickly got over it and things were soon put to rights and the breaking proceeded, but still with much trouble on the part of the oxen.

Thinking of this at this late time, it seems to me we might have improved the situation by merely rearranging the team and shuffled them around into different positions, for animals like people work better with some others when circumstances force them to work as group or a team.

It was on towards the late afternoon before we had worked out to the outer edges of the clearing where some of the trees had been cut down to allow an even straight side to the garden and therefore we were contacting a few roots, It was on striking an extra tough one that the evener Dad had spent so much time and work to make, snapped completely at the centre.

This stopped the work for the day and also caused a problem of considerable concern, for the nearest point where we could obtain a new evener was Buchanan and this would take much time and it was suspected that the trails would be bad with high water



and soft mud-holes, Also there was the possibility that even there one might not be available.

Dad suggested hitching the teams tandem, using a logging chain to attach the front team and neck-yoke on the rear team to support the chain to keep it from becoming entangled on the turns, This idea was laughed to scorn by George who said that would never do, it was just an old fashioned primitive way of doing things in England and just was not done in Canada, only modern ways were used here.

However, the situation being as it was, and the necessity to get the spring work done forced George into trying anything that would serve to remedy the trouble, and the next morning they both set about arranging the teams in tandem style at least for the time being, Buck and Bright were hitched directly to the plow, with Bruce and Brian in the lead, it would not be good, for there was no means of distributing the load evenly between the two teams, also it would require an extra driver for the front team, and for a start I should have to keep the rear team on their toes in order to keep them from hanging back and allowing the others to do all the work.

The result was astonishing, for the former behavior of the team disappeared completely and they operated in a perfectly smooth manner, requiring only to be kept going and guided around at the ends, In the end it was decided that this system should remain in force sooner than to go through all the previous trouble and disruption again, When they were able to get to Buchanan they would buy a pulley-block to attach to the plow and thread the chain through so as to balance the load between the teams, and my services could then be taken over by George from his position behind the plow handles, it would mean Dad having to drive the front team, but this would not be too serious.

Breaking up the oat field was the next job on hand, and this went along fairly smoothly, It seemed a large stretch of plowing to me, and it was supposed to be about five acres which was all we had seed for, but later it was found to be somewhat less.

At this point we were obliged to make a trip to Buchanan to buy the disc harrow we should need to work down the garden and the oat field into some sort of a seed bed, it was not normal procedure to work breaking down immediately, but to leave it for some months to rot down, but in this case there was no alternative as we must get things growing to have seed for the following year as well as potatoes and vegetables.

Of this trip to Buchanan which was my first I have previously described, so there is no more to be said regarding it.

The disc, which had come (knocked down) had to be set up and this was of great interest to me, and to watch it operate afterwards, It took many strokes to get the tough sod broken down to some sort of seed bed, and afterwards Dad broadcasted the seed by hand and George again disced it in.

Dad seemed to think it didn't cover too well and suggested making a bush harrow as he had seen on a farm in England.

George went along with this idea, for perhaps after the plowing Episode he had decided that some of Dad's old fashioned ideas had some measures of use to them, Some willow bushes were cut and secured to a cross-piece in such a manner as to brush in the hollows and crevices and help cover the seed when it was dragged over the field, I don't know whether it was of much value, but the crop grew quite well that summer.

We later heard that the Murrays had their fun too, on their first attempt at plowing, They were perhaps at a greater Disadvantage than us, for Dad Murray (as he was called by every one) and had been a coach driver in England, and had probably never seen, much less used a plow. Theirs was a single furrow riding plow, (probably palmed off on them by some-one who (saw them coming) as the saying goes) and was by no means the ideal thing for new breaking, Evidently their trouble too was to first get a straight line, for Dad jokingly remarked, "When I looked back I thought I was floating down the St. Lawrence river," Apparently it developed into such a mess that their next door neighbor Donald McLennan took pity on them and brought over his own plow and straightened things out for them.

Many things which later became commonplace to us in the Future, were both strange and surprising to us in that first seasons, One was the profusion of wild flowers that there was before the country became mostly plowed up. The huge flocks of wild ducks, and strange noises, The bump, bump, berrrr which sounded like the automobiles in England when they were first started, Some-one told us it was some kind of bird, so we called it the motor-car bird, but later found it was the grouse performing his mating call by beating his wings.

Another one we called the water pump because it reminded us of the noise the well pumps made in Hamiota, It turned out to be a bittern, And then there were the frogs which kept up an incessant noise night and day till we nearly went crazy.

There were many wild birds too, but strangely very few wild animals, although a few years later the muskrats and bush rabbits became very plentiful.

But the mosquitoes were really something, we never saw them so thick as in those first years, for when the water went out of the country they were not so plentiful, But at first the stagnant sloughs were ideal places for them to breed and when it was cloudy and warm, which was an ideal condition for them it seemed impossible to keep free of them and at times the cattle went nearly crazy with them, No amount of tail switching would keep them off, and I have seen them so thick on the oxen's sides that when swiping them down one's hand would come away smothered in blood. The only thing was a smudge made with hay or wood and covered with green vegetation or manure,

This was one of the jobs which fell to me as time went on, to build a smuge good enough to last most of the night for the cattle.

We were very careful with fire in that first year, for should one get started there was no telling where it might get to, and of course there was no help near, There was a heavy growth of grass from the previous year and the trees came quite close to the house and stables. In later years, when there was more plowed fields to act as fire breaks, we deliberately set fires to burn up all the rubbish where we were going to plow and also to kill the trees which by fall would be seasoned enough to serve as fire-wood, but in that first season were very carefull untill late in spring when the new grass would be grown enough that there was no danger.

George and Dad kept quite steady at the breaking, as there were four quarters where a certain amount had to be broken,

They were to plow five acres for Uncle Botell as he had gone to Hamiota to work for the summer, and while they kept to such open spaces as there were, there was always a few trees and bushes to be cut down or pulled out by the roots in order to square off the fields. While they worked in the more distant places I was detailed to carry their dinner to them, and as Mother put many cups, plates, and dishes in the pail (which of Course I thought were unnecessary) it got to be a bit on the heavey side along with a ten pound syrup pail full of tea, so that it required many stops to rest my arms, for although it could not have been over three quarters of a mile as the crow flys the trails and foot paths wandered continually around sloughs and bluffs, Fortunatly these trips were at mid-day when the mosquitoes were quiet, for nothing is more disagreeable than to have one hands full when they are active.

It was all these situations , and primitive means of doing things which took so much work and so much more time to get things done, and therefore improvement and advancement was very slow in those early years, The women in their homes were also hampered in the same way with their house-work and it seemed to require much time and labor to accomplish the every day work under the existing unfavorable conditions, and all women (and especially in those days) took great pride in having their homes in the best possible condition under the difficult circumstances. Mother and Nell had their hands full at all times, for even with the two boys away our family was still of a good size and I was of little use and Muriel something of a care for fear she might wander off and become lost.

There were the cows too which had to be watched to some extent all the time, for there was not a thing to stop them wandering as far away as they cared to, and we had only a small bell on them which could not be heard very far, We had not even a corral for them at nights in the first year, but the mosquitoes kept them close to the smuge until morning as a rule.

As yet butter was being made by shakeing the cream in a Syrup pail, and the few hens that had survived the winter were supplying us with a few eggs, They were a mixed up lot and not much of a laying strain but they served the purpose.

There were no Indians in the country at the that time, they had evidently left to live on the reserves some years before, but we heard from those who were there in the cattle ranching days that there were a few around at that time, The only indication of them being there, were the ocasional dome shaped cage made from willows which on closer inspection was seen to have in the centre a half dozen stones or so, slightly larger than ones fist, These were set in the ground flush with the surface, We got to calling them (Indian sweat tents) when we later found That they were used as an aid for colds or flue, The stones were heated in the fire and put in the depression in the centre and blankets or furs were thrown over the cage-like structure while the patient crawled in with a container of water which he gradually trickled over the hot stones to create as much steam as was necessary to effect a good sweating action.

Some people said they had found arrow heads and stone hammers, but we didn't notice any, Perhaps it was just that we didn't recognize them.

It can be noticed in all history of the early pioneers that after first establishing a roof over their heads, their next concern was to find some means or some place where religious worship could be carried out, and I guess the families in our local district were no exception to the rule, for very soon in the spring they got together to provide some means whereby the children in the erea could get some religious teachings.

The credit for this effort I think must go to four families the Prestons, Meakins, Richardsons, and the Murrays, We were invited at the second gathering and from then on became very much involved in the Rama Pioneer Sunday School.

Of the Richardson family it could be said they were of the same age groupe as ours, for they had an elder brother who lived in the Brandon district where the family had come from, we never knew him, but we did meet him once some twenty years later, As we knew the family then, Caroline was the eldest, (probably close to twenty) then came George, Mary, Maggie, and Percy. The Meakin family consisted of three girls, Ellen, Milly, and the last one has gone from my memory, They were quite young, and the parents must have married young, for it was said Mrs. Meakin was only about George's age. Later the family was quite large, but by this time they had moved from the district.

The Preston family were also quite young, and at that time were just Vera and Clifford, Later there were Mable and Frank.

Both the Prestons and Meakins had come from the Lavinia district in Manitoba, (not very far from where we were in the Hamiota district when we first arrived from England.

The Murray family I have previously described.

At our first trip to Sunday school we arrived too late and it was all over, this was because we had miscalculated the time necessary for us to get there by ox team and also that we had to go by guess work once we left the Pelly trail till we arrived at Prestons on the S.W. quarter of section 6 where the first gatherings were held.

The Murray's had a little mishap. There was a low spot just a few yards from Preston's house which always filled with water in the spring of the year, and as they were almost through the double-tree came loose from the wagon (probably from too short a draw bolt), the neck yoke slipped off the end of the wagon tongue and the oxen went merrily on, almost pulling the boy who was driveing from the wagon before he had let go of the lines, Fortunalty the extreme end of the tongue was beyond the edge of the water, and they were all able to walk down on it and save getting their feet wet, Afterwards, there was lots of help to hitch the team to the end of the tounge and haul the wagon to dry land.

It was characteristic that something like that might happen to the Murray's for in those early ears it seemed that almost every time we visited them there had been some minor catastrophe that had taken place, None of them too serious, and often just something to laugh over. Perhaps they were less experienced and more out of their element than we were.

Ike Preston was the first superintendent of the Sunday-school, Jack Meakin was secretary treasurer, and he also had a hymn book, for he loved to sing all the time and most of his singing was sacred music. Therefore, a tune most familiar to all was picked out and everyone sang from memory, Several could say a few words in prayer and every family had a bible.

Later a little money was scraped together and some hymn books were bought, they were the Sankey and Moody books and had red covers, and I remember George was detailed to write the Sunday school name inside the covers because they thought he could write best, Personally I have always thought he had a bit of a scrawl.

As collections made a little money available some Sunday papers were secured, A book of lessons for the elder ones, the Girls Companion, the Boys world, and something for the very young of which I cannot remember the title.

The Boys World made exciteing reading for me, because I had now gone through most of our books at home that were of interest to me, and otherwise there was nothing but the Family Herald and Weekly Star.

Seating capacity became a problem as the congregation grew with children having to sit on the floor and others haveing to stand, Dad was then drawn into service to

construct three long benches to relieve this condition, and the next settler to go to Buchanan was to bring out some material.

Later, house room became a problem and the Sunday school was held at the Richardson's where space was only slightly greater, and eventually something else had to be done, but I had best leave that till later.

I think Sunday school was perhaps the first means of drawing all the neighbors in the immediate district to a common centre and getting them all acquainted, It was certainly the case with us youngsters, for we didn't always get to go where the grownups did, but it was a pleasant way to spend the day of rest even for those who were not religiously inclined, for many of the bachelors and those who were alone enjoyed the social period when they could stand or sit around after and exchange news and discuss the doing of the previous week and inquire about each others crops or how much breaking they had accomplished, The breaking was the main topic, as everyone was busy at it in early summer. The Currah boys, Joe and Walter, being earlier settlers than most of us, and therefore having more experience seemed to set the standard of things and how many acres one had broken was based on how it compared with what the Currah boys had accomplished.

Quite often one family or another would invite one or a few home to supper with them, for nobody worried about whether there was something extra special for a meal, Everyone was more or less in poor circumstances, and everyone excepted the hospitality of others as it was meant, not for what they got.

In the course of time our home became a place for many of the young people to congregate on Sunday evenings and at other times, too, This could perhaps be said of many homes at that time, as most of the trails led from house to house, and it was natural that neighbors and strangers too would stop for a chat or to enquire if they needed anything on the next trip to town.

This of course often resulted in them staying for a meal if it happened to be near that time, for it was standard procedure to invite everyone in regardless of what one had to offer them in the way of food, and one took (Pot luck) and was thankful for it.

Andy McKay, was one who came into our lives briefly at that time, he turned up in the yard one day in late spring and said he had taken up a homestead on the N.E. quarter of section 33. and had built a small shack there, That he had come from Delorain Man. and was a jeweler and watch maker by trade.

He of course stayed for dinner, and told us he would be bringing work from Buchanan, and walking in each week to return it and bring back more.

It would seem that there was little of that work to be done in those days, but apparently he was not wholly dependent on this for his lively-hood, and why he should want to

hide away in the back woods and live under such disagreeable circumstances remained always a mystery, After he had proved up on his homestead he moved to Buchanan and set up business there ,

He died a few years later.

Before he left that day, he wanted to make arrangements to get his mid-day meal with us each day, Perhaps he thought he needed at least one good home cooked meal every day, although he was something of a cook himself and could make lovely pies. I remember I used to like to get over to his place to get a taste, for apple pies were quite a luxury to us at that times.

His shack was a mile east of us, and much longer by his winding foot-path which became well worn by his daily trips and was followed by cattle and animals, and was also used by us when hunting cows, It became known as Mac's Trail.

He was a nice enough fellow, talkative, and perhaps something of a (blow hard) but he made a nice diversion to our somewhat drab existence.

Mother once said he was something of a blessing, which of course I couldn't understand, but no doubt she was referring to the twenty five cents a day he paid for his meal, for it was just a little ready cash to spend. Mother kept strict account of his means, for he occasionally missed one, and I remember he and Mother having a set-to over his monthly bill, he claimed she had not charged him enough, for if he missed the odd meal it was not Mother's fault and that she would have prepared his meal anyhow and was entitled to be paid for it. It is quite likely she settled for his point of view.

As winter came on he discontinued his daily trips, thinking it was easier to prepare his own midday meal than to plow through the deep snow, and we only saw him at times when he might want the boys to haul him up some fire-wood or bring him something from Buchanan that was too heavy to carry.

Later, when he moved to town, we almost lost sight of him as by then we were beginning to use Rama as our town and only went to Buchanan for things unobtainable in Rama.

Mr. Hopkins, the manager of the Yorkton Supply store in Buchanan where we dealt, and commonly known as Teddy Hopkins, called in one day that year, how he came to do this I don't know unless he was scouting around the country to size up the settlers and obtain some sort of estimate of how good or bad their credit might be, for everyone had to run on a (pay in the fall) basis, He had a camera with him which took post-card sized pictures, and he took a picture of our shack as it was in it's first rough stage, It may have broken his camera, but Nell and I still have that picture.

The Newburn Lake picnic was another event which kept on for some years, Probably up until the first world war, I think it must have been arranged by the settlers south of Invermay but we got to know of it somehow through the Sunday school and everyone went. It may seem strange that we should want to go so many miles under very poor conditions of transportation to have a picnic by a lake when we were confronted by water at every turn in our every-day work, but at that time Newburn Lake was a big expanse of very clear water, and totally different to the stagnant sloughs, It later years the lake lowered to a great extent and left dirty untidy beaches and a sluggish river, so was not nearly so picturesque as in those first years

We arranged to start more or less at the same time, and the ox teams were pretty well in sight of each other most of the way. We live don the extreme east side of the district so always had to allow for the extra mile and a half to get to Doug's mound at the bottom of the Rama road, It seemed a long tiresome journey out accross the flats and there were so many stones on the trail, but the excitement of the whole thing helped out quite a bit, We picniced on the north side of the river just where it enters the lake and the bank was quite steep just there. In later years we went on the other side the river where it was more flat and nice trees,

There was a man liveing across the river who had a boat, I think his name was Ericson, Someone hired the boat, but there was so many of us that only a few got to have a ride and I don't think there were many fish caught, but there was lots to eat and drink so that everyone had an enjoyable day and we met many people whom we had not seen and got acquainted with up until that time.

I have learned only just recently, that it was at this gathering that the Women's Christian Union was formed, and this also carried on for many years, covering the whole of the Rama and Invermay districts, but I shall come to that later.

We got home late in the evening, very tired and eating by mosquitoes, and there was still the cows to milk and the smudges to to make before going to bed, but in spite of all it was something to be remembered for a long time.

Dad had managed to get something of a garden in, although it was quite rough and soddy being new land, but we got some seed potatoes (probably from Lockharts or the Tingleys) and the four samples of different varieties befor mentioned were put in separate patches to see who was going to get the best yield, and when fall came things turned out pretty good under the circumstances.

The minister at Buchanan used to hold services in some of the out-lying points in the erea, and in due time he turned up at our Sundayschool and preached every second Sunday during that summer. He was quite a young man, and his name was George Ferguson, his family farmed close to Yorkton so he had his own horse and buggy, he would come out as far as our place on Sat. afternoon and stay over there, take the service in the Sunday school in the afternoon and return to Buchanan for the evening



service there, All the following ministers used this system so that we got to know them all quite well. I remember he called his horse Jimmy.

He was well liked by everyone, but he left us in the early fall to go back to university, I remember when he was selling his goods and chattles from the little cabin he lived in, Mother brought his two kitchen chairs, They stayed in our home for eighteen years, until they literatly fell apart, and were always refered to as Mr. Ferguson's chairs.

Later, he gave up the ministry, and trained as a doctor, and he may be remembered by some as Dr. George Ferguson who was instremental in establishing the tuberculosis solariums in the province of Saskatchewan.

George and Dad stayed with the breaking as steadily as possible, for that was the main object, but they still fell short of the (Currah boys standard) and there were stops to go to Buchanan for supplies, and to fence the oat field, get the mail from one of the neighbors or to walk to Rama for it.

There was also the occasional trip over to McLennans to have the plow share sharpened, and of course I always tried to get in on that so as I could see Mac. working at the forge,

He had called me Captain Dean on our first trip, and he continued to do so always afterwards, And these trips generally included at least a brief call in to the Murrays as the two places were so close together. In fact Murrays, McLennans, Doug. Whitman, and Joe Howse were all within a half mile of each other, so that they met frequently, but we always had to go two miles to our nearest neighbors, The Murrays and the Prestons.

All too soon the haying season came around, for George had not got as much breaking done as he had expected to do, which was the case with many things in those first years, for everything seemed slow and difficult to do, partly from inexperience and partly from disagreeable circumstances.

The first thing was a journy to Buchanan to get a brand new mower and rake, I think we all went, for going to Buchanan was always something of an experience, and for us young ones a real adventure, Mother always liked to go, as I expect things at home were quite dull for her after city life, although she never complained. On the other hand Dad complained continually of the conditions and thought it a (beastly country).

Setting up the haying machinery was both intrigueing and interesting to me and it sure looked nice with it's red and yellow paint, but looks and paint are soon forgotten when one becomes involved in the work and the troubles that go with these things so that eventurely everything gets to be just common-place.

The first thing George did was to try out the mower by cutting the area in front of the house and it sure looked nice when it was all cut smooth, he was always interested in cleaning up around the house and making things as tidy and nice as it was possible to do under the circumstances, and sometimes spent Sat. afternoon in doing this, but Dad was inclined to think it was a waste of time when there were other things to be done, and that one couldn't get things decent anyway, this was a wrong attitude anyhow from my point of view, for I always think it is beneficial to have ones environment as pleasant as possible, and that it helps to ease the load of every day work and worry.

Haying turned out to have it's troubles like many other things. There was a prolific growth everywhere, for there was lots of moisture and sunshine, but the process of making it into hay was not going to be so easy, In the first place the grass was filled with (old bottom)., that is to say the growth from the previous year was still there and this made it difficult to cut, There had been no prairie fires in the spring as we were afraid to set any for fear they would get out of control and the hay sloughs had been full of water anyway. Consequently they were covered with a deep coating of moss at least six inches deep and this continually fouled the cutting bar of the mower in spite of ones efforts to keep it above by means of the foot pedal, Coupled with this, the machinery was geared to the speed of horses, and oxen normally walked slower unless continually urged to greater speed, also it was almost impossible to back them up, thus making it difficult to clear the mower except by removing the offending material by hand with a piece of stick for there was some danger should the team move slightly and operate the mower. It can be seen then that it was much of a stop and go operation and took considerable time, also to rake this hay was very difficult as much of the moss pulled up along with the hay and one ended up with a very poor sample of hay. This condition improved in the following years as the sloughs cleaned out from the previous cuttings and we had fires in the spring to dispose of all dead bottom.

It turned out then, that most of our cutting was done on the high land and round the edges of the big sloughs where the moss was not so much in evidence.

There had to be a hay-rack of sorts constructed and this like most things had to be done with what-ever material was at hand. Mostly poplar poles and willow sticks, and it seemed to me a terribly awkward and cumbersome thing, for farm wagons at best were high up on account of the large wheels, and this in turn made it impossible to turn them very shortly so that one had to be continually alert as to whether there was room enough to manipulate in certain areas. People not familiar with the times and conditions might say, "Well why the big wheels? they only made things more difficult". It was of course on account of the rough terrain and soft spongy conditions, for small wheels would have dropped into depressions and been hard to pull out and high stumps could stop, them completely, also low soft and muddy spots would have been impossible to cross as they would have sunk out of sight.

It will be noticed that the original (Red River Carts) used in the very early days had considerably larger wheels than any of the farm wagons, and as they had only two wheels there was no problem in turning and they were quite maneuverable.

One other problem which cropped up with both the hay-rack and the hay-rake was their width. All the openings through the trees for the trails from space to space were too narrow, and time had to be spent to widen them out. All these things coupled with the usual loss of time from weather conditions dragged out the haying season to a great length, and during the days when it was too wet to make hay George and Dad got busy with building the addition to the back of the house which would make us twice the room we had in our first winter,

It was constructed of logs and would serve as a big kitchen and a pantry, also an extra bedroom. It was not completed till late fall.

At last the haying was finished, and although every available open space and small slough had been cut over, and it seemed to me to be a tremendous amount of feed, George said it was not enough, for although our stock only amounted to four oxen, two cows and two calves, there would be no reserve to allow for any extra stock we might get, or if the following spring turned out to be quite late. Also, as yet we had no straw to subsidize the hay and it was not likely that others would have any to spare either. In later years we had so much that we often just burned it.

By this time George was becoming generally fed up with everything, He had the responsibility of every operation and none of them had turned out as well as he had expected. No doubt being still quite young, and inexperienced in the homesteading life, he had figured on making enormous strides and was then disappointed when he fell far short of his expectations. He then thought he would take advantage of the harvest and threshing to make a little money for the rest of the season as there was nothing much he could do in the way of field work.

Charlie Clifford, A young fellow from Ontario had settled on the S.E. quarter of sec. 11 range 8 and he was also going out for the harvest, so they arranged to go together.

I can remember George saying that he was never more happy than on the morning they both set out from Charlie's shack and headed in a general southerly direction, They ended up at Abernethy and found jobs on farms there.

I was too young to notice it, but I expect Mother and Dad felt a bit lost and deserted when George left, for it must have seemed desolate and wild and lonely to them after life in the old country, with just us young kids for company, and Andy McKay calling over each day was just as much out of his element as they were, However, Mother and Dad and Nell and I were all capable of handling the oxen and hitching them to the wagon to go anywhere we had to, and our trips to Sunday school kept us in touch with everybody each week. The weather was good at that time of year and the

sloughs had dried up to a point where we were not continually slopping around in water as we were. In the spring, the mosquitoes were mostly over too.

Arthur Nellet was a soft spoken French Canadian who lived in a little log cabin directly across from Prestons on the other side of the Rama road on the S,E, quarter of sec, 1. in range 8. He was bothered with haveing fits. He would pass out completely, but recover in a short time and carry on normally as though nothing had happened. It was one Sunday that Dad Murray had brought him three sacks of potatoes as he came to Sunday school, and afterwards Jack and George were told to deliver the potatoes and I automaticaly went along, Arthur Nellit had unloaded two of the sacks and carried them into his shack and was returning for the last one when he just turned his back to the wagon and silently slid to the ground his head falling between the spokes of the wagon wheel, We were all three of us scared to death, but I had prescience of mind to go immediately to the head of the team to make sure they didn't move the wagon, and George departed on the run to get some help, while Jack went into the shack and came out with a dipper of water and sprinkled it over his face. It may have been that up until this time we were not aware that he was subject to these attacks, and that Jack thought he had just fainted. George returned in double-quick time with three or four men and he was eased away from the wagon (much to my relief) and made comfortable on the grass, he was already comeing round and mumbleing away, Ike Preston who was accustomed to this kind of thing was quite unconcerned, Oh, he said "He's just speaking French, He'll be all right in a minute." So we all returned to Prestons leaveing him lying there. Us three youngsters feeling very much relieved.

The following year Arthur Nellit went missing, and it was thought he had left to go to work somewhere as he always kept pretty much to himself. However when he did not turn up in the fall it was suspected he had somehow come to grief. The following spring Mrs. McLennan while but hunting cows on horse-back discovered his remains at the edge of a slough. He had evidently taken one of his spells and had fallen face down in the water. The N.W.M.P were notified and he was buried just close by.

I think now I should back track to mid-summer again to remark on a few things other than the farm work, One of the pleasant things of that first year was the profusion of wild-flowers, The crocuses in the spring and in their own season the buffalo-beans, lady-slippers, tiger-lillies, Indian paint-brush corn-flowers, goldenrod and many others of which I didn't know the names. They were never the same again, for as time went on the open spaces were plowed up and other parts cut over for hay. It seems as always when we progress we also lose a little of something or other.

There were also wild strawberries, but they were so small and so few that we could only get a few saucers full, but they had a lovely flavor, Raspberries there were plenty of, and we picked and preserved many pails of them for winter use, so that as with many other things we became sick and tired of them, and to this day I still don't appreciate them much. We noticed they always grew in places where there had been big fires.

Dad Murray occasionally came over to see us and have a talk with Dad, for he liked to get Dad's opinion if something was bothering or puzzling him. On these visits he usually walked and came alone, and while doing this he would gather up in his mind all the latest happenings he wanted to tell us and had the comical way of walking in, and before even saying Good-day would come out with "Lost old Joe, found him dead in slough," Old Joe was one of the oxen who had mysteriously disappeared and it was thought that he had eaten something poisonous. At another time the first thing he said was "Steer calf, Topsey, Topsey being one of the cows. At another time it was a hot sultry day when he came in and immediately sat down and gave a little chuckle, (Mostly from relief I think,) for he had walked a long way. He said, "Left old Billey in a slough, fixing his harness. He then told us what it was all about.

Billy Davis had made a trip to Buchanan and he had gone with him, It was on the return trip when they were loaded that they had come to grief in the so called (Slough of Despond) The wagon had sunk too deeply in the soft mud and the oxen being unable to move it had floundered in the water and mud. Both men jumped out and endeavored to free the oxen from their harness and the wagon This was not so easy as everything was stretched tight so that it was necessary to cut away some of the harness, lines, and ropes in order to allow the oxen to scramble out on to solid land.

There was then only one thing to do. Dad Murray was to go for help while Billy stayed to try and repair as best he could.

I was immediately sent off to get George and Dad who were breaking down on John's quarter, They came home at once, and after George had watered his team and had something to eat and drink himself he started on his way, and with the aid of both teams they hauled out the wagon and got going again.

It was long after dark before they arrived home, and Dad and Billy were obliged to stay over till morning before proceeding on their way home.

It was harvest time, It had been arranged that Ike Preston should cut our little field of oats for us as he and Dad Murray had bought an eight foot McCormick binder in partner-ship,

I have since wondered why Ike (being an experienced Manitoba farmer) would buy such a big and ungainly machine to maneuver around the little fields there were at that time, and the narrow trails no wider than a hay-rack when there were six foot machines available, also a binder was an expensive piece of machinery and one would have thought he would buy the cheaper model for economy as well as convenience.

It appeared that the English green-horns were not the only ones to make mistakes.

Ike never used oxen, he had a good four horse team and fortunately didn't run into any trouble with them as some people did for lack of grain to feed them in the first year or two.

Dad was obliged to go all down our trail and along the Pelly trail to cut back the trees at various points in order to have room enough for four horses and the eight foot binder to pass along and at that there was some tricky maneuvering to do at some places, so it can be seen that there was much more time and work to comeing and going than to cutting the little patch of oats. They were stocked and left till sometime later when a threshing machine arrived at the Tingleys to thresh their crop and at this time Dad was to haul our little bit to the machine and the grain was put into cotton sacks, There were two loads of sheaves and Dad had to start very early in the morning to make the two trips in the one day which would be the only time available before the machine moved further away.

I can remember the difficulty we had in removeing the wagon box from the wagon and putting on the hay-rack to haul the sheaves, Thinking of it now I don't know how we managed it for Nell and I were neither big nor strong, and that left Mother and Dad, and I doubt we were experienced enough at the time to know which end we should load first, but we eventurely got it on,

In later years I devised a system whereby it could be loaded quite easily by one person.

On his last trip Dad brought back the bagged oats and as much straw as he could load on the rack for feed and bedding, The oats were stored in the end of the new kitchen which was now nearing completion. It seemed to me to be a bumper crop of oats, for everything looks big to one when they are young, and I was quite dissapointed when later that fall Charlie Clifford said it was a poor yield. Perhaps it wasn't realy so bad, for we were under the impression that the field was much larger than it was.

Dad had finnished the kitchen to the point where the roof was on and the floors and windows in, but Dad was not a construction carpenter although he was quite good at finishing work as he had been apprenticed to a cabinet maker when he was a boy, Accordingly he made a few mistakes which always unsatisfactory, He didn't break the joints in the roof boards but joined them all at one point so that later he was obliged to support that rafter with a post which fortunately came just back of the kitchen stove and didn't cause any obstruction. He also laid the shingles too wide apart for the pitch of the roof and this caused it to leak under some conditions when ice accumulated. The spaces between the logs were filled with mortar and this system (though used by many) was not of the best, in the course of time the logs shrunk back slightly leaveing a paper thin space, but enough for the wind and cold to seep through. Some years later when I was old enough to do things and had gained some experience, I strapped all the outside and plastered it level and flat with mud as the Ukrainians did.

However, in spite of all the errors and the discomforts they caused, the old kitchen served its purpose for many years.

The Sunday school had now been transferred to the Richardson home, There was really not much more room in the Richardson's home than in Prestons, but perhaps the Prestons were getting tired of never having their home to themselves on Sundays, This made another mile for us to go, (possibly more by the way the trail wound about) but we didn't mind that at all for Sunday was the high-light of the week. The trail went through Preston's yard and wandered in a north westerly direction over the N.W. quarter of Sec, 6 which was the homestead of Jack Wright and crossed the Rama road by his house. This house was quite a land-mark as it was built in two stories and covered with red metal shingles, which was a definite contrast to all other houses which didn't have a scrap of paint on.

This point on the Rama road was known as (Right's Hill) for many years, even after they had left there.

From here the trail went down through a grove of trees on Mr, Nichol's quarter and bearing to the north led to the Richardson place which was built on a high knoll almost at the centre of their farm.

The Meakins lived on the east side of the Rama road and slightly north of Richardson's, so if one wanted to go to Rama in that year it was a matter of following the trails in a zigsag manner from house to house until one got there, but, there was nothing there anyway but the post office and this was housed in John Berg's home and in most cases our mail was brought out by one of the neighbors.

However, the settlers adjacent to Rama were slightly ahead of our lot to the south and they very soon established a school in the village, I cannot be sure just when this was, but possibly in the latter part of 1908 or in 1909 for my first remembrance of it was going to a Xmas concert there. It was a big show as far as I was concerned, for each youngster got a bag of candies and Mr. Stevens was Santa Claus, He really put on a show.

After Mr. Ferguson left us that fall, Mr.Wadell came to preach at the Sunday school and he used the same system of coming out to our place on Saturday afternoon and staying over. He rode a little black pony and called him Donkey, It must have been tough going for him when winter came on for there was little or no trail broken most of the time and the first four miles of open country west of Buchanan was hard to take when it was blowing and drifting, but he was the type who wouldn't give up no matter what happened, he had a good fur coat and cap but at times was obliged to get down and walk to keep his feet warm and he was always glad to have someone stable his pony while he got in and had a good warm up by our tin heater, and then to have a good supper, for while our fare was not very fancy there was always lots of it. He was a totally different type to Mr.Ferguson and perhaps was some years older but he was

well liked by everyone, I think he stayed about two years, and then some years later visited there briefly.

Mother came in all excited one day from hunting the cows, she was sure she had seen someone building a new shack away on the other side of one of the big sloughs south of the Pelly trail, she could see the reddish yellow shingles on the roof.

Of course a new settler was always something of interest, so the talk at the meal table centred around this event, but Dad said it could not be a new-comer because according to Mother's discription of the location the shack would be on Uncle's place.

Mother's curiosity got the best of her, and as it would be some mile and a half to get around the slough to reach this point she borrowed Andy McKay's binoculars to settle the question.

It turned out to be nothing more than the colored leaves of the fall appearing in such a way as to represent a square shingle roof with darker shades below appearing as the walls, and a tree trunk representing a corner.

It was getting to be late fall, we had dug the potatoes and vegetables in the garden and considered it a good crop for the first year in the rough land, so we were well fixed if we could manage to keep the cellar from freezeing.

There was getting to be a couple of inches of ice on the sloughs so we would now have soft and pure drinking and washing water. Dad had finished the kitchen and cut the door thro. to the main part of the house and we could move the cook-stove to it's position in the kitchen. Later we would get a big sized heater for the front room.

The three elder boys might be home any time now, for as I remember it was a dry fall and the threshing should all be done but there was no way of telling when they might arrive,

Freeze-up usually terminated all fall plowing and land work but sometimes there was some grain-hauling to be done afterwards for those who had hired on for the season, George had gone for harvest and threshing only, so he arrived home first.

He came banging on the door after dark one evening and Mother dashed out and flung her arms around him as though he was the prodical son returning home from liveing on the (Husks that the swine did eat) for he had not as much as dropped us a line to let us know where he was or what he was doing , Only the fact that he had left with Charlie Clifford suggested that he had not come to grief in any way or Charlie would no doubt have Informed us.

He had bought a small pony and saddle, and so got back sooner than Charlie, Charlie had tracked him along the way by asking at farms he passed on the way, one man was



doubtful as to Charlie's discription of him, but Charlie asked him if he was singing and he said "Yes he was" so Charlie new then it must be George.

John and Arthur turned up a little later on and the whole family was now back together again. There was lots to talk about for a few days as we exchanged news of what had happened while we were all apart.

We had now been in the Rama district for a complete year, but it seemed a long long time to me since George and I had come out from Sheho the previous fall, From now on it would be a repeat of what had gone on before to a great extent, and we should know what to expect in some cases as to weather and conditions so that we could guard against some of the errors made in the past, but of course circumstances change continually and there would be many things to learn for a long time yet. It seemed to me that progress was very slow and dragged out in those first few years, but then to children who are always anxious to grow up, a few years seems such a terribly long time, and looking back now after over sixty years, and now trying to put it all down as it happened, it seems that progress was not too bad, and in fact quite good under the circumstances at that time, for it is a tough job to start anything from scratch, and tougher still when there is no money available to help out the process.

I once heard someone say, " If you cannot make money you must save money" and I thought it was the most stupid statement to make, for if one couldn't make money how they possibly save any. What he really meant was (if you cannot make much money, work in such a way so as to spend as little as possible of what you have) This was the way many things had to be done in those days. If there was no lumber to build a house or barn use logs, If there were no spikes use an auger and pegs, Poles were sometimes used for fences in place of wire. Flour sacks served as windows in place of glass. The Ukrainians used the long slough hay to thatch their roofs and were so handy with an axe that they would build a complete log house without useing any more nails than were necessary to construct the front door.

Where extra help was needed in work that was too heavey, or extra teams were needed, it was always beneficial to try and trade work with someone who also needed help of which you would be able to give him, and in this way no money need pass hands. The greatest draw-back to this method was that everything took so much more time to accomplish in this way, but when no money is available, (a penny saved is a penny earned) and we were obliged to use this system in much that went on at that time.

When previously describeing the summer picnic at Newburn Lake, I mentioned that it was at this event that the Womens Christian Union was formed, and this might be a good time to say a little more about it, for it was one of the things which carried on for many years in a large erea including the Rama and Invermay districts.

I really don't know much about it, as at that age I was not interested in the (grown up) affairs much, besides it was only for women anyhow, so over the years I never properly understood just what went on at these gatherings.

As the name implies it was a religious affair and I believe the main rule was that to join it one must be of the Christian faith.

I think the credit for starting this association must go to Mrs. Walter Moores and Mrs. Sam. Moores, who lived in the district south and slightly east of Invennay and for years worked faithfully to keep it going, aided by many of the women in the whole area. It went on for many years (Perhaps as many as twenty) until it was gradually phased out by the change of the times when younger women took over and instituted the Women's Institutes, Sewing Circles, and Home Makers Clubs.

The official name was seldom used, and it was referred to by most everyone as the Ladies Meeting, and Ladies Meeting day became a very important day each month by the women of the district when the men-folk could expect scrappy meals and a demand for a team to be made available for transportation.

At times it afforded a pleasant afternoon for the men who were dragged into being drivers in the winter months, for they were able to sit in someones kitchen while the meeting was in progress and discuss all the neighborhood happenings and farming in general and afterwards have a bang-up supper, (probably it was better than the ladies had). In later years I too enjoyed many of these discussions sitting around someones kitchen stove.

There was at the beginning one stipulation suggested by some thoughtful person and which was put into effect,

It was realized that with a gathering of this kind that some sort of refreshment would be required, for many drove long distances and would be many hours away from home,

Feeding a large crowd of people might work a hardship on some, and be an impossibility to others, for at that time nobody had too much to do with, and in this event certain people might shy off from getting involved in any such affair of this kind, A rule was then made that nobody should supply anything more than bread and butter and tea, A cake was optional, but not considered necessary. There is no doubt that this rule went a long way towards getting things under-way, for most everyone could manage bread, butter, and tea.

Of course as time went on this stipulation was by common consent thrown to the four winds and big spreads were put on.

These meetings were always held in the homes, each one taking their turn, and this at times made long trips for some of the members as the district was so large, but it was surprising the effort made to attend them.

At home everyone was quite enthusiastic, and there was talk of big things being done, but as Dad remarked "Talk was cheap" All the young bachelors had returned to put in their duties of residing on their homesteads for the stipulated six months of the year, for there was not much could be done to earn money in the winter. There was not much for them to do on their homesteads either, for only a few of them had achieved any stock as yet, and the general plan was for them to hire the necessary acres broken by someone who would the following year crop the land and give the owner one third of the crop.

Any young fellow who wanted to work hard during the summer months and saved most of his money, or spent it in connection with something for his farm could find himself in a favorable position at the end of the three years when he proved up on his homestead, and could then manage to stay on his place and improve it further. Married men found things a little tougher, especially those with young families as they had to stay close to home most of the time and therefore could not take advantage of money to be earned some distance away.

I was quite pleased that the boys were home now, First to hear all they had been doing all summer, and all they expected to do in the coming winter, Also they relieved Dad and us younger ones of some of the light chores, Water carrying was finished with, as the boys cut great slabs of ice from the sloughs and piled it a short distance from the house to avoid it getting dirty from dust and soot, Of course I still had to chop it up into small pieces and carry it indoors to put into a barrel behind the stove where it would melt, aided by hot water being periodically poured in amongst it.

I was as yet considered too young to do anything about the fuel situation, and there was lots of help to easily take care of all that was needed. It was in later years that this job was going to fall to my lot, and there would be no brothers to help out.

In the coming winter we would be better off in respect to many things, for we had the advantage of knowing what had taken place in the previous winter, but no doubt there were many things we had not yet experienced, We at least had a better idea of what clothes and foot-wear we should need, and which was the best type for different purposes, Moccasins with felt insoles and at least two pairs of thick socks were the warmest, and preferably made from buckskin, there was a decided difference in ones made from horse-hide, or the oil tanned kind.

Rubbers were needed when it was mild, or if one was working in the stable, but they weren't up to much in those days, being made from natural rubber and cotton strands in them which would not stretch at all and therefore they snagged very easily in the bush, Patching was very unsatisfactory and soon gave away. Clothes were heavy wool

under-wear, an ordinary pair of pants covered by denim overalls to keep the wind out, Lots of sweaters Few were fortunate enough to have fur coats for driveing, and the short sheeps-skin coat with high collar were most popular There were also long sheeps-skin coats but nobody liked them, they restricted ones movements top much, and one relied on activity to a great extent to keep the circulation up. Hats and caps were all varied with good ear-flaps.

At that age of course I only rated one outfit of foot-wear, which were buckskin moccasins, for I have always suffered with cold feet. My hands were always cold too, and in later years when I was obliged to work in all kinds of weather hauling feed or wood I used to take two pairs of mitts, one pair of horse-hide, (for they stood the wear best) to work with, and another pair of buckskin to use while driveing home, While I was at work loading the sleighs my hands would become extremely warm, soaking my inner wollen mitts with moisture until they were quite wet. It is obvious then that when I relaxed to drive home that my hands would very soon cool off and freeze. Two pairs of mitts was the only solution.

We still had no sleighs, Afterwards I could never understand why, for surely we should always need them, and the disadvantage of haveing to borrow a set from a neighbor to make special trips must have inconvenienced the neighbors more than ourselves, but for some comical reason which I have never been able to understand, both Dad and the boys must have figured the money could be used to better advantage in some other way, I remember this because we bought our first set of sleighs second-hand when they were repossessed from the Russels who disappeared rather suddenly from the district after the son became involved in some sort of swindle, and this was in the following year.

The Russels lived north of Jack Meakin on the east side of the Rama road on the NW quarter of sec. 7, They had come from Winnipeg I think (although I am not sure) and they built a big two story log house and appeared to have a little more money than the average settler. I think they were French Canadian. I was surprised when passing there over fifty years later to see that log house still standing there, Somewhat delapidated of course, and used then only for some temporary storage.

To return to things at home, it seemed we were gradually getting to know more of the settlers all the time so that we did not feel so isolated and out in the wilds, This was just naturallly brought about by the Sunday school, the Newburn Lake picnic, the Ladies meeting, and by Dad and the three boys attending the council meetings of the local Improvement District in the Invermay area. Also there were trips to the various neighbors for the mail for when anyone went to Rama they brought all mail for the close neighbors. Dad or one of the boys may have walked into Rama a time or two, but there was no other reason for us to go as there was nothing there other than the Post Office at the Berg home.

In this way we didn't get to know many of the Rama people until the following year. As far as I was concerned I saw very few people other than those who attended Sunday school, but I got to hear about many more as Dad and the elder boys related their travels when they got home, so that many Invermay people became familiar to me without me ever seeing them.

Also as time went on some of the young batchlors in the district for want of something better to do would drift down to our place to have a look and a talk, and perhaps a change from their own cooking. They were often in pairs, Charlie Clifford and Charlie Lockhart, Pete Paterson and Bob McArthur, Albert Cole and George Churchill, Joe Howes usually came on his own, perhaps to avoid anyone out-talking him or over shadowing him,

Gladstone Ferrie, known to everyone as Glad was one we saw a lot of, for he and Arthur became good friends right from the start. I don't remember just how they got acquainted, for the Ferris lived well into the Invermay district, but it seemed no time until Glad was attending Sunday school and coming along to our place for supper and to spend the evening, and sometimes stay over for a day or so. His parents left to live in Toronto about this time, but Glad had no inclination to go, so stayed behind, and perhaps it was only natural that he should lean towards our family. Glad, Charlie Lockhart, and Rollie Tomkins remained close friends of the family all through life.

Of course all these people seemed grown-up and old to me, for it always appears that way to children, but they were all in their twenties, and even the very old people in Mother and Dad's class only approaching, or just over the fifty mark.

John had left a girl-friend in England, and it was supposed that she would come out at a later date when John would be in a better position for them to marry. It was natural then for him to be the first one to think of building a house on his quarter, and the first move was to get some logs out so that they could be prepared and seasoned for construction in the future,

Strangely, it was Arthur that got them out, and in the course of the discussions concerning the venture it may have been Glad, who suggested that the only place to get real good logs that were nice and straight was the Invermay bush,

I was never able to find out just where this area was, but it was well towards Invermay, and therefore a long haul from our place, but they were real good long straight poplar logs of much better quality than could be found in our district.

So it was arranged that Arthur should take the biggest ox team and go up to Glad's place, and using his sleighs work from that point. They returned periodically, bringing a load each time, and this must have taken up a big part of the winter as they got out enough logs to build a good sized two story house for John, and also some for Glad. too.

Perhaps it would be as well for me to go ahead of my story for a little while at this point and finish up this little chapter in our homesteading days.

These logs were duly unloaded on the site of the house on John's quarter, which was not really a very good location being some distance from any road that might be built in the future,

In the spring they were peeled of their bark and left to season all summer, and in the next winter John spent much time in hewing them to a perfect eight inch width.

Eventually, with Dad and the other boys helping the house was very well built with nice morticed corners and a shingled gable roof, but it was at least four years before it was completed to a point where it could be occupied, and at that the upper rooms were not finished.

It is said that (Absence makes the heart grow fonder) but perhaps it does not always work that way, for in the interval John had grown-up a few more years and gained much practical experience, and came to the sensible conclusion that things could not work out between him and Agnes Hillhouse, for she was not the type to ever adapt to the rough Canadian life of that time and place, and therefore could never be happy. He then made the decision to call the whole thing off and eventually marry a Canadian girl.

Of course we shall never know whether he first arrived at this practical decision or whether he first got his eye on Caroline Richardson, for it was Caroline that he later married.

It might be thought that this house built with so much effort and care for someone who was never to own it was in some way haunted or hoodooed, for it never became a permanent home to anyone. The three boys when they left home lived there for a short time, and in the following years all three separately lived there with their wives for short periods, but neither settled there permanently.

To return to our second winter, George contrived to make some sort of a cutter to be used with the pony he had brought home and which he called Billy, This idea may have been brought on by the fact that Mr. Nickol who lived on the NE quarter of sect. 1 range 8 had offered Chas. Lockhart the use of his driver and cutter in return for the wintering of the horse. This put Charlie in the enviable position of being the only one of the local young fellows who had such a set-up.

George's outfit would be inferior in comparison, as Billy was too small for the job, and the cutter had to be made from whatever material was available and there was no iron work for bracing and strength, When completed it looked more like some rustic garden furniture than a cutter, until it was well smothered with pieces of carpet,

cusions, and blankets, with our tiger rug draped over the back for decoration, (The tiger rug was a mottled affair from among our belongings that was a little more colorful than most of our drab blankets).

The outfit answered the purpose though, and George even splurged to the extent of a string of small sleigh-bells on his next trip to Buchanan. In late winter it had to be discarded when the deep snow and heavy trails made the going too heavy for little Billy.

There had to be a granary built, for we hoped to have a few loads of grain the next fall, We had tramped all over for the logs to build the stable and the back kitchen, and were wondering where to look next, when we stumbled on a real good stand not more than a hundred and fifty yards west of the house on George's place, (it was surprising how one could miss seeing them) Being so close, they could be easily snaked out with team and logging chain without the necessity of loading them,

During the winter a good sized granary was built, and in early spring covered with a shingled roof and a shiplap floor. The three boys used it for sleeping quarters in the next summer, Improvising enough beds for themselves and for their visiting friends. You may be sure there were no coil spring mattresses in them.

We had not heard anything of Harold Hart, who had come to the country with George from England, nor had we heard of Ethel Punter who had come over with us to marry Harold's brother Jack, so when George received a letter from Harold saying he and his brother had homesteaded in the Theodore area, George decided to go to see him, I cannot remember how he got there, but it is probable that he went with someone to Sheho and took the train from there He visited both brothers, and Harold came back with him and stayed for some time, (most likely until some neighbor was again going to Sheho). After that we lost track of them all again for many years. It must have been over twenty years when we contacted them again and met them quite frequently from then on for quite some time and were able to find out what had happened in the interval.

The Hart family lived in the next street to us in London, I didn't know them except Harold, although I just once saw Jack, The elder ones of our family probably got to know them from attending the same school, but I am aware there were at least five in the family, We have an old picture in our album of Maude Hart's wedding, which suggests their family was a few years older than ours.

Elsie Hart came to Canada to visit her two brothers at Theodore and ended up by asking her home there, for she married Andy Simpson and they had a family of two boys and two girls, Jack had two boys and a girl, Harold had three girls ,

Jack was lost in the first war, leaving his wife Ethel to bring up three children. Jack's son (also Jack) may still be living in Theodore, and the two Simpson boys may also be farming there.

The settlers around the district got together and decided that they should voluntarily cut the section road and township line straight through to Buchanan so as it could be used in the winter time and so be much shorter than following the Pelly trail.

Therefore everyone devoted their spare time to this purpose, Joe Howse being in his glory acting as a kind of straw-boss to make sure it was cut perfectly straight, It was of course something of a job to go ahead each half mile and locate the mounds in amongst all the sloughs and trees in order to keep things going in a general straight line, The first mile was fairly simple as there happened to be little bush and lots of sloughs, but from then on it was solid bush, so that they did not get very far past our place till the following winter when the settlers at the Buchanan end started to work towards us, and I can remember that at the glorious break through that Joe was completely disgusted that the east lot had not made their cut anywhere near as perfect and symmetrical as the west lot, He was for going on and straightening out their sloppy work, but it was nearing the end of the day and everyone was tired and hungry and reluctant to carry on with work which seemed so unnecessary to most of the party.

So Joe was obliged to give in and he was still grumbleing about it when he dropped into our place to get warmed on his way home.

He was of course invited to supper which helped to smoothe things out for him to some extent.

Dad and some of the boys used to attend the council meetings of the local improvement district. Perhaps because it was an outing of interest, and that they could always go with Joe Howse who had horses and was always extremely interested in the operation of this body, and to him it was a good source of meal catching and tobacco cadgeing in between times when he could go around to the homes in the district and tell everyone what was being done wrong and how it should be done.

At this time they made George the secretary treasurer, but he did not hold this position for more than one season as it was only a small job at that period and although he was paid sixty dollars for the year he found he was too far away from the head office and it interfered too much with his fanning operations to be worth while. I remember thinking that with Mother serving everyone that dropped in to pay their taxes with tea and bread and butter, that she must have spent all George's wages in tea, (Not extra good figureing on my part, tea was then worth about thirty-five cents a pound).

So it was that we got through our second winter with a little more ease than the first one, we had more room in our house to spread out a bit and we gradually got to know more people as they came into the district and got about between each other.



For Mother and us younger ones we were still pretty much confined to the home place, only that now there was the Ladies Meeting for Mother if it was not too far away for her to get to, and for us younger ones the Sundayschool.

I was still under the impression that winter was the best season of the year, for now some of the little chores of the summer were taken over by the older boys. No cows to find, no wood and water to carry, no smudges to make, and definitely no mosquitos. Even bringing in the ice was made interesting by useing the hand-sleigh to haul it to the door.

All the books we had brought from the old country were of great value to us in these first few winters, and I expect many were read that previously had not been concidered of interest, I am sure I read many that were too deep for me, and that I had to slide around many of the big words.

The piano of course was of the greatest value, both to ourselves and to many who came to our home in those years. It was the only one in the district and Nell could play very well and as her supply of music was limited she very soon got to playing by ear until there was no problem at all.

In time it got out of tune, for being an English instrement with a wood frame it could not stand the extremes of temperature that the American ones which had steel frames, However I don't think any instrement would have stood the abuse of being in our old shack. There were many many pleasant evenings spent by ourselves and our friends around that old piano singing everything from comic songs to hymns which surely lightened those first few years and brought much enjoyment into our lives.

As winter waned and spring came on, arrangements were being made for the following summer, Arthur had now filed on to the NE quarter of sec 31 which had been reserved for him until he became eighteen, so there would be an extra quarter to break next summer, George and Arthur would both stay in this spring and only John would go again to workfor Fred Johnson at Hamiota for seeding time. They would all be home during the summer and big things would take place, Perhaps John and Arthur who as you (recall?) had not experienced the summer on the homestead felt that George and Dad had not made very much headway in the previous summer.

However, they were soon to find out that It was totally different from farming in Manitoba.

With John out to work, George and Arthur set to work to see if they could not contrive to improve the breaking plow by shortening the handles as they seemed unnecessarily long so that the driver was at conciderable disadvantage by being too far away from his team. Doing this resulted in the handles being lower, but they did manage to shorten them a foot or so without too much discomfort to the operator. This was of

interest to (me?) as I realized it would be an advantage to me in the course of time when I should be able to learn to plow. For what youngster is not anxious to be grown up and do the things that their elders do, only to find that in a very short time it becomes work and takes on a totally different aspect. Anyhow, it would be quite some time before I was able to do much farm work, Walking plows were much too heavy to handle, implement levers were too hard to operate, the seats were too big, high, and slippery, and the forward rests were nowhere within reach of my feet.

We would need some harrows and a seed drill this year, also another breaking plow, for there were going to be big doings with the breaking this year. In fact as time went on it became obvious that although much of ones liveing could be raised on the farm, the saveing was off-set by the necessary machinery and equipment needed. I don't know wether George had not taken that into concideratlon when he first thought of takeing up faming but in later years he used to complain that all the money they made was swallowed up by the machine companies.

Dad was very enthusiastic about putting in the garden this spring after the good results we had the previous year, perhaps too much so, for he may have started much too early, so that he was equally disgusted to go out one morning and find everything frozen, He came storming in, "Cooked the whole lot, he said, a beastly cold country I call it", But he started again and succeeded in haveing a pretty good show after all.

There was a memorable trip made to Buchanan that spring when the seed drill and harrows were brought out, there may also have been a new breaking plow too, (a twelve inch job to be used by one team only,) In any case we should have to borrow another wagon and take two teams, as being early spring the trails were sure to be bad and only light loads could be hauled.

The Murrays were also in need of supplies so decided to go at the same time in order to have the benefit of company should there be trouble of any kind, and there certainly was for all of us.

Dad Murray left the boys at home to look after things there. Perhaps he had a premonition that he might not make it home by night, and he took only Jean with him, (she must have been about seven then).

Three teams in a train, That was something, and George, Arthur, Mother and I, Nell and Dad stayed to hold the fort at home,

The trip in was without incident, and the men were able to pick out the likely spots for trouble when we returned loaded. It was a year ago that I had made my first trip with George and we had taken a chance of crossing the unfinished bridge over the White-Sand creek in order to save going the two miles north to the crossing by the Doukobors village and of course two miles back. We had at that time to figure out our

course so as to strike the Pelly trail where it entered the bush some miles ahead, as there was not a single wagon track.

Now there was a well defined trail wandering in the general direction of the bridge so that there was no problem there,

The approaches which had not been completed when we crossed a year ago had now long since been made, and on the west side of the bridge where there was a long flat area a narrow grade had been built for some distance. But this grade was none too high, and at this season of the year the water had flooded to a point almost level with it, and had in fact flooded over here and there filling the deep ruts with water for almost its entire length. However, the oxen plodded through it all quite slowly but with no trouble, (it was characteristic of oxen to act in this way, where horses were liable to panic, resulting in them becoming mired) Once over the bridge and the rail-road track a short way ahead, the going was better for the road had been graded for the rest of the way. The main street of Buchanan was as always full of sink holes, for there seemed to be a muskeg type of soil at that point and this condition remained a problem in Buchanan for many years.

As always on these trips it seemed to absorb no end of time to feed and rest the teams. Feed ourselves, and then gather up a long list of necessities that accumulated when we so seldom got to town, and there was sure to be a few things that one or more of the neighbors had asked us to get for them, and it was vital that we should not overlook anything for it might be a long time before our next trip, unless by chance a neighbor should be making a trip in the meantime.

It was well on into the afternoon when we got back as far as the bridge again where we anticipated we might run into trouble, and we certainly did. Our strongest team went through first and made it with no trouble, but the other two teams didn't.

This meant slopping back through all the mud and water with the first team in order to get four oxen on one wagon to haul it out to solid ground, and then go through the same procedure for the other wagon. During all this mix-up it was discovered that some of the trouble was that one of the Murray oxen was either playing out or sick in some way, for when we had finally got everything out onto dry land the ox laid down and it was obvious that he could go no further.

What to do now? The team and wagon would have to be left there for at least some time and Dad Murray would have to stay with them. It was too early in the year for him to sleep out, so he first walked over to a house some quarter of a mile away to see if it was possible for him to put up there, and finding they could accommodate him he came back to tell us and the team was tied up there and made as comfortable as possible, He would have to bring feed to them. There was absolutely no fear of anything being taken from the wagon, Jean could go home with us.

It was while we were preparing to get going again, that a man approached walking from the west. He introduced himself as Mr. Ekinstadt, and from his manner of speech appeared to be of Norwegian or Swedish nationality which seemed to amuse us two kids, (perhaps we had not heard it before) He said he lived in our direction but further to the south, and later on we saw him occasionally. He had left his ox team a half mile or so ahead and retraced his steps until he came across us and we then found out why. He said "Did you see a vashing board anywhere I have lost my vashing board from my wagon," We hadn't, and it was quite likely that it could have dropped amongst the trees or sunk in the water and mud. He then tried to be off-hand about it and said "Oh veil. It vas only senty-fi cents anyway, and started back to his wagon again, But seventy cents was not to be sneezed at in those days, one could buy quite a bit with it.

We at last got under way again, keeping a weather eye out for Mr, Ekenstadt's washing board, but no luck. We never knew wether he found it on his return to his wagon, but it seemed to be quite an amuseing incident to us two kids.

All the delay had used up a lot of time, and it was already dark by the time we had reached the bush which was still at least six miles from home by the winding trail, At this point George walked ahead to scout out the trail for any bad spots leaving Jean and I to drive the rear team, and Mother who must have been pretty well fagged out sat at the back of the wagon and dangled her feet down.

Fortunately there were no mishaps for the rest of the way and as there had been little or no traffic that spring to cut up the mud-holes along the way it was to our advantage.

It had become so dark that we obliged to rely on the oxen to follow the trail. So very much later we arrived home dead tired but pleased to be there.

I can remember later Mother saying to Mrs Murray, "You know those two children drove that team all the way from where the bush starts", Of course we could always depend on the oxen to take us home.

Arthur got the worst of the deal, He was obliged next day to take one of the oxen and walk all the way back to rescue Dad Murray. Fortunately the ox that had (fallen by the wayside) was only extremely tired and they were able to lead him home behind the wagon. It is quite likely that Dad and Jean did not get home that night either, but stayed over till the following day.

This was quite an experience to us youngsters, and has stayed quite vividly in my memory, Perhaps it has in Jean's memory too for when I met her very briefly forty-five years later, in that few minutes she brought to mind Mr.Ekenstadt's (vashing board).

In the course of time all the breaking George and Dad had managed to do the previous summer was worked up and seeded with the oats from our first little field, and we could look forward to some grain in the fall, How much, or how good, remained to be seen,

our experience in the future seemed to be that it mostly fell below our expectations, but with this one we looked forward with great hope, (At least-the others did) I was not old enough to worry much or to realize the effect it would have if it was either bad or good.

John came home after seeding bubbleing over with enthusiasm and ready to set the world on fire. As Arthur remarked afterwards "He was all set to sell his boots and Bobby and buy a team of horses" (Bobby was one of the calves) The talk went on far into the night, untill John finally ran out of conversation and energy and said "Come on boys. Let's get to bed, Five oclock comes early," As might be expected, everyone over-slept.

George and Arthur had already started breaking on Dad's place and concidered they were making good headway with two outfits, Arthur drove Bruce and Brian on the new twelve inch plow, and George, Buck and Bright and Jimmy on the original fourteen inch plow, (Jimmie was a new addition, an iron grey ox with White patches,)

John immediately wanted to take over George's team, and he started down the field following Arthur and doing much talking and shouting so that we could hear him all the way back at the house, Arthur eventually contacted a stump and was obliged to stop momentarily and John catching up on him shouted "Go on, Go on, What are you stopping for?" This was too much for Arthur and he immediately blew up and there were some hot words for awhile before peace could be restored, and by noon John was tired and hungrey enough to realize that breaking on the homestead was quite different to working for Fred Johnson in Manitoba.

We always got amusement out of John, He would start into any new project with no end of enthusiasm and a lot of talk, also he had a way of (counting his chickens before they were hatched) and on starting a new field on getting the first few furrows done would stop his team for a rest and at once step out the length and breadth of the field, and getting out his pencil would proceed to figure out the acreage on what ever was available for the purpose, (generally the beam of the plow) and then try to estimate the yield of the first crop and even the expected price which was always an unpredictable and unknown quantity, and come up with the most glorious answer.

"Just figured on the plow beam." became a saying with us when trying to estimate some rather hazey or unpredictable thing.

Extra breaking had to be done on all the quarters this year, but the super job for the summer would be breaking (31) Arthur's quarter. Compared to the other quarters which were covered much more heavily with trees, there seemed to be a huge expanse to plow up, all in one piece, I can remember comeing onto this erea in our first trip out from Sheho and thinking we had struck a huge plain, It was of course only from contrast with the rest of the country which was heavily wooded, and it was found when the section line was put through that much of the open space was on the neighboring

quarter, Anyhow, it did turn out to be fifteen or twenty acres which was more than we were able to get in any of the other fields, (Five acres being about the limit)

Haying went better that year, because most of the places had been cut the year before and there was now no old bottom, moss, or small bushes and sticks to contend with, also there was lots of help, and in the next winter if all went well there would be lots of oat straw to supplement the hay, and to use for bedding.

Arthur and John must have gone out again for harvest and threshing, but I can't remember this.

George and Charlie Lockhart took off both his and our crops using Charlie's Six foot Frost and Wood binder, and using the the best animals of both his and our oxen, It required both of them to run the binder, One to keep the speed up on the oxen and one to manipulate the binder, as the crops grew rankly and only by attention and persuasion was it forced through the machine, and much of it had fallen and was just a tangled mass close to the ground, makeing it very difficult to pick up.

In the spring of this year the fence was removed from the first oat field and utilized to make a large corral for the stock, enclosing the stable, hen-house, and the granary, so now the cows and oxen could be kept within bounds at night. Later this corral was devided across the centre to fence off the granary, and to have room for the grain stacks in the fall untill they could be threshed, for we might have to wait a long time before a machine got around to our part of the country.

Our white cow again misteriously dissapeared at calveing time and no amount of hunting seemed to locate her and we began to wonder if there was some other reason for her dissapearance.

As it happened it was Mr. Waddell the minister who finally found her. He had come out as usual on Saturday, said took it upon himself to have a look around, I think perhaps he enjoyed these trips out in the summer time when he could get away from everything for a few hours, for he would come singing along the trail as though he had not a care inthe world.

It was when it was aproaching dusk that we began to fear that perhaps he was also lost as well as the cow, and we were standing in the yard contemplating wether we should give a few calls for him, when he came into the yard on the run, "Hats and coats on boys he said, I've found the cow," So he and the two boys at once started out before it should get too dark, and arrived back some time later with the cow and the calf which was now some days old and quite frisky on being confronted with these Queer animals of the human race.

At this time there was fence law in the district, Meaning that people could allow their cattle to range anywhere, and therefore must fence their own crops. For us with only a

few acres scattered over a whole section of land, it would have been a big and costly task to fence it all.

As there were few herds in the district at that time, and what there were would be some distance away, it was decided to take the chance of any of them getting into our crops, and that our own stock would have to be contained.

For this they fell upon the bright idea that I could herd them during the months when the crop was growing, and so it was that I had my job mapped out for the summer.

It seemed very easy and interesting for the first few days and I could not be called upon every little while to get some water or bring in some wood, but it was not long until it became just so much work, for I was tied to it continually day in and day out, excepting Sundays, when someone else took over to allow me to attend Sunday school. No wonder Sunday school was such a highlight to me. I can remember the relief when the last load of stooks was taken off the fields and stacked in the yard.

So it can be seen that for me the summer of 1909 consisted mostly of herding the cattle and building the smudges for them in the evening, I even lost out on the trips to the Black-smith shop.

The threshing was done that fall by the Jones from Invermay, they had a small portable machine, and they supplied the team to haul the engine, but the farmer was expected to move the separator. It took four heavy horses on the engine, and the same amount of oxen on the separator, (it might have needed six I am not sure) An exciting time for the kids, and in fact it was for everybody as almost every able-bodied man in the district was called into service. The work was hard and the days were long but there always seemed to be enough amusing incidents to keep everyone's spirits up, and there was always the pleasure or the disappointment of seeing how the crop turned out, for many things were done with a (wait till the crop comes in) attitude.

Winter came gradually on as usual by the freeze-up stopping all land work, and the general preparation for winter by doing any necessary repairs to the buildings and gathering stocks of feed, wood and ice before the snow got too deep.

We were all at home again, and Uncle Botell was back in his little shack for the winter. All the young fellows who had been out at work all summer were gradually drifting in and contemplating a rest and a little social life.

The Rama people had got together to purchase an organ to go in the school there, and it was found that one of the most effective ways to raise money for this purpose was to hold a basket or box social where all the women, and young girls prepared a lunch in a box or basket with many trimmings and disguises to fool the general public as to who the owner was, and these were auctioned off to the highest bidder.

These affairs would usually be proceeded by a concert of some sort, in which everyone with any type of talent at all could take part regardless of any expert ability on their part, and there was absolutely no criticism, and if anyone made a bungle of something it was all taken in good part as something to have a good laugh about. In fact such a fumble might draw more applause than for those who gave a perfect performance. It might be a song, a recitation, a reading, or something on a musical instrument.

With this free and easy manner it was soon found out that there was some pretty fair talent around, and some real good voices.

The auctioning of the boxes always caused a bit of fun as everyone tried unsuccessfully to figure out which belonged to who. Some of the young fellows who had steady girl-friends tried to get a (tip-off) from either the young lady herself or from one of her close friends, but in the bidding, when it became apparent this person was confident that he was on the right track, others would mercilessly try to out-bid him, and the climax would only come when the (runner-up) feared it might be dropped on him, or the original bidder had run out of money.

Very good for the benefit, but rather rough on some of the young fellows.

I remember George saying he didn't care who's box he got as long as it wasn't one from our own home, as he had rather a poor opinion of our fare there. In this particular case he didn't do so well, for while our standard of living was not up to much no-one at that time could afford to put on much of a spread.

At the close of this social I remember Mr. Waddell who had been M.C. for the evening, dramatically announced that the debt had been paid, A fairly good organ could be purchased for sixty dollars at that time.

This, and the Xmas concert were the only outings I managed that winter, for although there were others, which also included a debating society, they were not considered of much interest to me, and later when all the family took in these affairs, I was detailed to stay home with Muriel and keep the place warm, and if they were late home (which they usually were) we were to go to bed and leave the lamp and the stable lantern lighted but turned low, so that there was no delay in getting the team put away and getting in to warm up.

So it was that much of the social life that went on in those early days I only remember by getting it second hand, That is by listening to the conversation and the discussions that went on in the family after they had been to one of these get-togethers,

Up until this time it seemed we had little to do with Rama, for there was nothing there but the mail as far as we were concerned, and oft times this would be brought out by neighbors.



It was a long and tedious job to get there, starting out along the pelly trail and veering up towards Prestons, then on to Wright's and crossing the Rama road (which was only a cutting through the trees) to Richard's and turning east again to Jack Meakin's place on the opposite side of the Rama road, up to Jack Russell's and so on in a zigzag manner, passing by the Tibbit place and on through the trees until one approached Berg's home just slightly east of the station platform on the south side of the rail-road track. I can only remember once going to Rama by this devious route, and I thought we should never get there.

It can be seen that we did not go to Rama in the summer to any extent in those first few years, but made Buchanan our town.

In winter of course there was no difficulty, we could go straight up the Rama road over all the sloughs with the sleighs, and it was in attending the two concerts previously mentioned that we first began to get acquainted with the settlers close in the Rama area.

The main established families were Bergs, Fitchetts, Mitts, Youngquists, Jiggins, Stevens, Tibbits, and Walkeys, I have no doubt misspelled some of the names, and of course there were others too. Later some of the people west of Rama who had formerly gone to Invermay, made Rama their shopping centre.

Among the first there were several young bachelors who had homesteaded in the area and worked out all summer but came in for the winter in the usual pattern. It was this group who were responsible for much of the social life at that time.

Mostly English, they were well stocked with songs of all kinds and some could play instruments. They got the nickname of the (Rama boys) by our lot down south.

Among them were Will Hoyer, Will Bailey, Alf Hunter, Fred Otten Jim Jolly, and Harry and Herb Stevens.

This was most of what went on in 1909 with our family, and we heard that Joe Currah had married Bella White, later Doug. Whitman married Mrs. McLennan's sister Maggie Rattray.

At this time we began to notice that more of the land to the east and south of us was being taken up by people we thought of as foreigners, and when we were in England they would have been, but here in Canada we were as foreign as they were, excepting for the fact that this was an English and French speaking country and therefore everyone would be expected to speak either one of those languages.

To the east of us were mostly Scandinavians who had come from the United States and could speak, good English excepting for their inability to sound W and J in the same way as we did, They were good settlers.

Directly south of us, and also in the district for some miles north of Rama were a mottly group of Europeans who's origin was quite doubtful in most cases as only a few were able to speak enough English to say what part of Europe they had come from.

I think most of them had come to the country to work on building the rail-roads and then taken up farming or trades familiar to them, We called them Galatians, or Galieshens, and some people referred to them disrespectfully as Bohunks, They were a mixed up lot of good and bad as all nationalities are, and we were not pleased to see them coming into the district in such great numbers compared to the English speak in settlers, and in later years they were so much in the majority that to go to Rama was like landing in a foreign country, and there were few one could speak to.

However, in the course of time we got to know them, and they got to know us, and spoke more English all the time, so that eventually we felt no difference between each other, and we got to refer to them as Ukrainians.

Today, after two generations or so, when much intermarrying has taken place, one would be hard put to tell who was what, only the names suggest any decent, and this be somewhat deceiving.

I remember as a youngster I at first definitely disliked the Ukrainians, Like the rest of us, they were desperately poor and wore plain and old clothing which I assumed to be dirty, I could not talk to them nor they to me, and for a crowning cause for dislike they smelled rankly of garlic, and this was extremely disagreeable to me, so it was no wonder that they did not rate very highly with me.

As time went on, and I was forced to associate with these people in certain lines of work and in school attendance, I was obliged to alter my opinion to a great extent, and to find that, there is good and bad in all people regardless of race or creed.

Going into these peoples first homes, one found them almost bare of furniture, only the bare essentials, and these home-made, it would seem that they had not been able to bring their belongings to this country as we had been able to, and had started from practically nothing. The houses were built of logs, plastered with mud inside and out. The roof thatched with the long coarse hay from the sloughs. The floors plastered with clay mud, Windows, were sometimes only openings with material from flour sacks stretched over them. The walls usually covered with some form of white-wash, They were naturally very warm, and in this respect they had us beat a mile, as we froze in our thin lumber shacks.

All of these homes were built with little cash out-lay, but completely from the natural resources of the land, I doubt if there were any more nails used than what was required to construct the front door, which was the only scrap of lumber used.

Most of these houses were replaced with better ones in a comparative few years, still constructed with logs clay plastered walls, and whitened, but with shingled roofs, board floors, and modern windows.

Joe Genoway was perhaps our first contact with the Ukrainian people, and he and his two brothers spoke good English, He turned up in our yard one day and told us he was liveing on his brother Martin's quarter just a half mile west of us on the north side of the Buchanan road which would be the S.E.quarter of Sec. 6-32-7

He became (Galeshian Joe) to us for some time as he didn't at first tell us his last name, Mother liked Joe from the start and a year or so later when he got married she bought a set of three milk jugs with blue flowers on as a present for him, Strangely he never received these, Perhaps afterwards Mother may have thought that they were not good enough for a wedding present, or it could have been that she was not in a position to give presents as the need was greater in her own home. Those jugs stayed in our home for many years after.

Later Joe took up land some distance to the N.W. of us and we saw him only occasionally, His parents came to live with Martin on his place, and they seemed rather a nice old couple, although we could not get to know them well as Mr, Genoway was only able to speak a few words, and Mrs, Genoway none at all.

Later I was often sent there to buy some eggs, and sometimes Muriel went too, I shall always remember how Mrs. Genoway counted out the eggs three at a time to get the even dozens.

I later got to know the youngest boy Walter, as he attended school at the same time as I.

The winter of 1909-10 was much the same as the others in the way of weather, only that we were already beginning to notice a little more wind as the land got cleared and the grain fields made bigger openings to cross, where previously we could only notice this on the large stretches of slough.

Liveing conditions got slightly better, but one thing was always with us in winter it seemed. The cows usually dried up at that time of year, This was thought to be the best arrangement as feed and houseing were not of the best at that time of the year. Anyway, it didn't improve our meals to have no milk or butter, We sometimes bought a little for a treat, but with our big family it would been concidered too extravagant to carry this out to any extent. There was of course no lack of meat and potatoes, with sometimes potatoes and meat for a change but this can get quite monotonous.

There was one bright spot as far as I was concerned, we managed a barrel of apples, They were Ontario apples, and quite cheap then, but Chas. Lockhart and Chas. Clifford who had come . from Toronto said they were only culls, and that they were

usually fed to the pigs, I had never seen so many apples at once, and thought we should have apples indefinitely, but I sure got a surprise at the way they shrunk down in that barrel, so that very shortly a brake had to be put on.

And this was the winter that Charlie Lockhart made me that wonderfull hand-sleigh, It was a master-piece compared to the funny little thing I had, Twice as big, with much more snow clearance, properly curved runners, hewn square from a tree, and the whole thing made with an axe and braceand bit, There was not a single nail in it, The deck was just a series of rungs, but later I managed to get some boards to close it in, It was a super job for hitching behind bob-sleighs and cutters, and by boring holes for stakes I was able to haul huge loads of stove wood up to the door, I took great care of it and it lasted me for many years untill I had out grown such things. We had two dogs now, and 1 used to hitch them to it as a team in tandem, but this stunt was not very successful as the two dogs were not very well matched either in size or disposition, but there was lots, of fun in trying to make the system work.

As far as the adults of the family were concerned there was lots to be done. We now had a set of sleighs so that they hauled up many loads of fire-wood to last the following summer, for the wood that had been close at hand was getting used up and it was necessary to go further afield.

There were fence posts to cut too, for a start must be made on the fenceing so as the work and expense would not come in too much of a lump, and the road to Buchanan was completely cut thro. so that in winter the trip was conclderably shorter, and also much more traveled and pounded out, as the Doukobors and people from Buchanan way came right up as far as section # 5 at the north of us to get fire-wood. There seemed to be a never ending supply there.

A few more horses started to show in the district, as oats became available. At first they were limited to Joe Howes team, Ike Preston, and Jack Meaken, although Ben Greives had a team but he was far to the west of our district.

Now it seemed that Mac. (McLennan) had a team, and Doug. Whitman got quite a lively team he called Dan and Roady.

Charlie Lockhart got his first team and called them Tom and Frank. The team he lost in Lockhart's slough some years before were his Dad's team and had been brought from Ontario when they first came, Charlie said they were horses used in the woods in that province.

Frank and Tom were a good all-round farm team and he used them for both work and driveing, for he no longer had Mr. Nicols driver. He made a cutter from the poplar and willow trees as he had done my hand-sleigh, only that he had the runners shod, and got iron braces for the tongue. It was quite serviceable and lasted him untill he was able to buy a manufactured one in a couple of years.

It got to be the recognized thing that Dad should saw the stove wood, and that I should be responsible for getting it into the house, and also keep enough ice on hand for the water supply,

The three elder boys considered this kind of stuff was below them, and feeding and caring for the stock was the limit of chores as far as they were concerned. Sometimes if I could arrange for someone to do my chores (and this usually fell to Nell) I was able to visit the Murray boys, and sometimes stayed over a couple of days, This was about the limit of any diversion for me excepting to go to Sunday school.

It was thought that if the Sunday school and church service were going to remain in operation, and it seemed that everyone thought it should, that there should be a building put up for that special purpose. So everyone got together to do something about it, I don't know anything of the arrangements, because it was of no concern to us kids, and Mother and Dad would never at any time discuss anything pertaining to money matters in front of us children, but I suppose it was done as most community things had to be done at that time, There was no monkey business of trying to get some other body, or the government to pay for part or all of it, as in the present day. There was just no outside help of any kind. If people wanted something done, they just all got together and did it.

Mr.Nicol donated the building-site, and it was built on the west side of the Rama road, I expect two or three hundred yards up from the S.E. corner of the N.E. quarter of sec.1-32-8.

It was a rectangle building, the short side facing the road, A log structure, with shingled gable roof, and six inch wide flooring with raised platform at the west end, Two windows on each side, and door and one window at the front. I would not hazard a guess as to it's size at this late date, but it held a fair congregation. It could not be said that it was a good building by any stretch of imagination, such things seldom are when they are put together by a group of which half may be very poor tradesmen, so that their bungaloes may even spoil the work of the experts, Joe Howes was continually annoyed at this kind of thing when ever he was present at one of these raising bees.

Also being built in the winter there was little or no foundation and the logs were green and unpeeled. However, it served the purpose, and lasted as long as was necessary.

I was not present at the construction except at the very last when it seemed Dad got let in for most of the fitting of the doors and windows and any trim that was done on the interior.

An oblong wood heater was bought for heating purposes, and this required someone to volunteer to go early in order to have things warmed up by the time of the service.

One amusing incident came of this, Glad. Ferrie arrived early for this purpose, and after getting everything under control was somewhat mystified when nobody turned up, So after waiting for some time proceeded to our place to learn what the trouble was. (It was Monday) Glad was baching alone and had lost track of the days.

Many yards of curtain material were bought, and the women of the district set to work to make long curtains with rings at the top to slide on stretched wires for the purpose of deviding the building into three ereas, so that classes could be held separately for Girls, Boys, and adults, and certain ones volunteered to teach these classes. The pews were merely benches.

To help defray expenses, the women hit upon another scheme. This was to make a quilt on which could be worked the names of the residents of the community provideing they paid the sum of 10 cents.

Mrs. Murray donated the quilt, it had been sent to her by some of her relatives in England, It was made in oblongs of perhaps four by eight inches and lent very well to haveing the names worked into the blocks, A centre piece was worked in with the name of the Sunday school in it and the date when it was first formed 1908, Some sort of frilly edgeing was put around it.

Of course almost everyone scraped up the 10 cents to have their name worked on it, and some even the names of their dogs and horses in an effort to aid the cause, A passing police officer was roped in to giveing a dime, but evidently nobody thought to ask him his name, or perhaps he declined to give it, and only N.W.M.P. showed upon the quilt.

The quilt was auctioned off at the concert and box social which was put on some time later, There was a big crowd there for all the Rama people attended, as our south lot had attended their social when they obtained their organ, John Berg was the auctioneer, and Charlie Lockhart had a little concession on the side to sell five cent bags of candy and peanuts to the kids.

There was the usual fun over the auctioning of the boxes, and a general good time was had by everyone in which they met many of the settlers they had not done previously. The quilt sold for twelve dollars which was the reserved price put on it.

Mother bought the quilt, and it stayed in her possession for many years.

In writeing the history of this event some sixty three years later, it set me to wondering what had eventurely become of this quilt which had been made by so many, and with so much interest and work, Mother had said it was eventurely to go to John's wife Caroline (Then Caroline Richardson) as she had spent so much work and taken such an interest in it, but I could not remember just what had taken place. There was one way to find out, Write to Caroline who now lives in Yorkton Sask.

This was my questionnaire, and the answers I received.

During the construction of the Rama Pioneer Sunday school the women of the district got together and made a blanket on which all the names of the residents of the community were worked upon it providing they each paid 25 cents. This was then auctioned off, and my Mother obtained it. She always said it should go to you. Did you ever receive it? If so do you still have it? or was it lost in the various moves you made during your life. Do you know if it is still in existence anywhere?

Answer. The blanket you mention was a quilt made from suit samples, It was never quilted as a quilt. Worked in the centre is the date the school was formed, 1908, The charge for having the names worked on was 10 cents. I still have the quilt.

The Sunday school stayed in operation up until the years of the first world war, when the changing of the times and the old and dilapidated condition of the building caused attendance to drop off to the extent that it could be carried on no longer.

It eventually caught fire from the spring fires and was burned down completely.

Many happy times were spent there, and with things in connection with it, There were a few little hitches and squabbles, but good will over-came all of these, just how much good came of the effort it might be hard to say, and there would be many varied opinions, Perhaps the greatest benefit was the bringing together of so many in a healthy, good, and cheerful atmosphere.

So far I don't think I have mentioned Carrie Lockhart (Charlie's sister) She kept house for Charlie after he moved onto his own homestead which was the S.W. of sec. 12 Range 8.

Caroline Richardson, Carrie Lockhart, and Nell became fast friends, so we saw a lot of them over the years when so many of the young people invaded our home, I was in the kids class as far as they were concerned, but in the course of time as I grew up they became my friends also, and very much later it seemed I was on an equal with them.

1910 was the year of the Halley's comet, and it showed up very well in that area on the cold clear winter nights, it was really quite a sight and I have never since seen anything like it, I remember there was a comet a few years later, but it was quite small and insignificant in comparison, and one might miss it altogether unless it was pointed out, while Halley's comet was so big that it was impossible for anyone not to see it.

It was this year that the spring came so early, The field on Arthus's quarter was seeded to wheat in March, Seeding was never that early since that time, and the only record of this happening previously was in 1889 when seeding was done in March also.

I can remember Glad. Ferrie coming to our place and on learning that the boys were seeding on 31, declared they were completely crazy, it would only freeze up and be lost by the time spring arrived, However, it didn't freeze, and grew to be a heavy crop, and I remember Dad coming in on the first of July and saying he had found it already heading out.

I have been away from farming so long now that I have now absolutely no idea at what time wheat should head out, but this may have been a record at that time, as the strains of wheat available in those days were very late, and one took considerable risk in growing it on account of the fall frosts.

This I remember was Red Fife wheat, it was nice plump grain with a good color, but it took too long to mature for the short seasons we had. This particular field became badly Infested with smut, and was a great dissapointment as well as being a loss.

I decided I would build myself a log house that spring, it was going to be six feet by ten and I spent much time and labor in cutting and hauling out with my hand sleigh some five to six inch logs, The snow was gone before I had made much headway, and I finished up by just carrying them out of the bush, but I did get it up to the point where the roof was covered with small poles in readiness for covering it with sod, Getting some boards and hinges for the door was one problem I couldn't get around, and by now my cow herding job was starting for that summer, so the house was more or less forgotten until much later when Dad and the boys persuaded me to let them use it for the purpose of houseing the pigs, It was then raised on to skids and hauled into the stable yard where it seized as a home for the pigs for many years, I started again the next year with a bigger and more elaborate model which was going to require some ox power to haul out the logs, but somehow it never got off the drawing board.

The Gabler family arrived in the district to take up residence a mile east of us on the north side of the Buchanan road and were our closest neighbors in that direction excepting Andy McKay.

Mr, Gabler was a tall husky man of German nationality and wore a big black beard which he later discarded. He called in one day and talked with Dad for quite some time about what he intended to do and said he had a large family. This came about by the fact that he was a widower and had married a widow,

They both had families, so grouped together they made a real big one, The Gabler family consisted of Marther and Lizzie, in their teens, and Fred, (about my age) Mrs. Gablers family (who were Kilgours) Were Bernice, Lenard, Agness, Jack and Bill. As



time went on there was Clarence, a girl who's name has slipped my mind, It may have been Viola, and Cyril.

We got to know the family quite well during the years we were all in the district, Lenard still lives there, but not in the same location as the original home which like all other homes was not at that time built to last too long.

I remember their first stable was made by sawing trees into perhaps one and a half foot lengths piled in a row with clay mud between to form the walls. All the sawing being done with buck-saws, I think there must have been some weary boys by the time it was finished.

Some years later they built one of the biggest barns in the district at that time, and I remember being at the dance they put on in it, Not that I did any dancing at that time, but I got a big kick out of watching the proceedings, and listening to the music played by Fritz and Corie Baglow who were expert violin players.

I was back on the cow-herding job again that summer, so that pretty well filled in my time for the season, and of course there was the inevitable smudge building in the evenings and the never ending wood and water situation, Thirty one had to be fenced as it was too far to the west for us to keep an eye on it, but it would be some time before all the quarters could be fenced in.

Fires were set in the spring now for the purpose of clearing the land. The danger of them getting out of control was much less now, for the plowed fields acted as fire-guards and if one was carefull to study the wind force and direction the burning could be used to good advantage as the killed trees served as good fire-wood when they had dried all summer, and on being cut down the stumps would rot out in the course of about three years to the point where they would just plow out. In the meantime any clearing that had to be done was accomplished by pulling out the trees by a team and logging chain, or just grubbing them out with an axe or grub-hoe which was very hard work and a very slow procedure. There were a few (close calls) with the fires but somehow we managed to get them under control before they reached the house and farm buildings, it is rather terrifying to find a fire getting away on you.

I have always thought that Willie Currah was the first baby to be born in our local district, but now on thinking back there is a possibility that Lewelyn Davis (later called Johnny) may have been the first. In any case those two, Lila Whitman, Billy McLennan, and Bert Pattison were the first children to be born in the district. The Davises lived in a log house set some distance back from what is now Main road on the S.E. of Sec. 4. T.32 R.8, and the Prices lived on the adjoining to the west, They were Welsh people, and Billy Davis was Mrs. Price's brother, but there was some misunderstanding between Mr. Price and Billy, so the two families had little to do with each other.

A rather strange thing happened at the Davises, A man they had previously known came to their place and hung himself in the trees close to their house, As to why he should do such a morbid thing there was no explanation, but it of course caused a bit of a stir, and was very disagreeable for the Davises.

This occurred either just before or just after Johnie was born and Mrs. Davis became very nervous and quite unwell, so that Mother offered to have Nell go to stay with her and keep her company, I can remember Mother saying to Nell "You won't be scared because that silly man hung himself," Will you? Nell didn't think she would, and so stayed there for some time, Long enough it seemed for Billy to persuade her to help him stack all of his crop. She was still quite young, (probably about fourteen) and said she felt very tired by night time, I don't suppose his crop was very big at that time, but Mother and Dad didn't think much of her being used in that way or they might not have offered her services

I can remember quite well when Willie Currah was born because it was the first time I had seen Walter Currah, It was early morning and we were all outside and the boys preparing to start work. He came dashing up to the door with a spanking team of drivers and buggy. He said, "Mrs. Dean how would you like to come for a drive with me this morning"?

I was quite flabagasted, for I was not aware that arrangements must have been made long before, and I could not understand why he should think that Mother would want to go for a drive with a perfect stranger, But Mother immediately whipped indoors to get ready, and Walt started to kid the boys that they were pretty late getting out to work, although it was before seven o'clock. Of course I don't suppose Walt, would have been up either if Joe had not kicked him out in a hurry.

At this time Walt. admitted he had taken the wrong trail and had cut through a fence in order to get to our place as quickly as possible, It is an unforgivable crime to cut a farmer's fence but under the circumstances it was forgiven, and Mother came quickly out and got into the buggy, Dad also climbed onto the back to go along and repair the fence after they had passed thro.

I very soon found out what all the fluster was about.

From that time on, it seemed that Mother was called upon quite regularly to officiate at one of these blessed events as they occurred in the district, and she went to Buchanan for the same purpose when Ruth Brown, the butcher's daughter arrived, also the Jennings children.

Later when Lila Whitman was born, Doug, came tearing up to get Mother with Dan and Roady hitched to Joe Howse democrat, and wearing a very worried look. This event was marked by the fact that it was the only time ever that Joe was known to lend his

democrat to anyone, He made this strictly understood that at no time would he lend the vehicle to anyone under any circumstances.

He was heard to remark to someone later, "I say when he told me what he wanted it for I soon let him have it," So I suppose we can assume that Joe considered either Mother or Mrs. Whitman, or both of them to be very important people.

It was this summer of 1910 that I endeavored to do something towards easing the water question, for in spite of being able to get out of water carrying to some extent by the fact that I herded the cows all day, I found myself coming in for a certain amount of it at mornings and night. The well was a good two hundred yards over onto George's place, and two pails of water seemed to me to get terribly heavy, so that I was obliged to stop to rest a couple of times each trip. Perhaps at eleven years I was not as strong as I should have been, and I know I was a small youngster anyway.

One of our first two calves, (a roan steer) was now two years old. My idea was to train him to haul the water for me, There was a spare harness around because it was too small for the oxen so I contrived to make it somewhat smaller by shortening up the hame straps, and scrounged around until I had some sort of traces and a whippletree.

There was no such thing as wheels available, so I should just have to use a stone-boat, (For those who don't know what a stone-boat is, it is merely a low sled, made of two skids with a deck on top, and is used primarily for moving stones from a farm field which are too big and heavy to load onto a high vehicle,) Actually they could be used for many purposes where anything was too heavy to load. They were of course heavy to pull.

The one I made was quite small, and had a sort of fence towards the back to secure the water tank to so as it would not tip or slide off, The tank in this case was merely the butter churn, which was of the largest size and had a good water-tight lid and built in the shape of a barrel. If I remember correctly it held eight pails of water, and it required two trips a day, for there was lots of water used with our big family.

This idea worked real good, and took away all the drudgery from the water supply. I used this system for hauling ice in the fall too. I Used this set-up for four years, but unfortunately I had to train three different steers for the job as they were all slated to be butchered in the fall for our winters meat.

In mentioning that I used the churn as a water tank, it has occurred to me that this must have been when the Tingleys and Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart moved back to Toronto, for I am pretty sure we got the churn at the Lockharts sale as we did many other household things, we still have a few of the little dishes and ornaments that they probably gave us for good measure in our home. The churn in question, was of the type that set on a stand and revolved, the power being supplied by a lever, aided by a foot pedal. There was an earlier type butter chum used which was a tall round container with a dasher

inside which was plunged up and down, A real tiresome job compared to our more modern type, but I didn't think much of operating the new type either, when I was occasionally dragged into doing it, It ranked along with turning the grind-stone or the cream separator which were a few of the jobs that youngsters reluctantly were involved in. Anyhow, at this time we didn't have a separator, the milk was set in the tall creamer cans which had a tap at the bottom and also a tall narrow window through which one could see the darker colored cream as the milk was drained off by the tap and closed when the point was reached where the milk was all gone, The cream was then caught in a different container.

That was the year King Edward the seventh died, I remember hearing of it when Arthur and I were in Buchanan one day, Bill Brown told us, he was the village blacksmith, and brother to Ralph Brown the butcher. The news was no doubt several days old for the only communication with the outside was the weekly news-paper and that was often not collected from the post-office for considerable time.

This also may have been the year that Mums Murray decided to have her Potato Supper, The Murrays had an exceptionally good crop of potatoes, they were early, grew quickly, and soon got quite big, so Mrs. Murray invited everyone who was at Sunday school to come to supper if they cared to. The supper was basically of potatoes and good farm butter, but with a few trimmings, and they were really delicious. This custom went on for some years until it was terminated no doubt by a poor crop, and it never failed to draw a big crowd.

I have never since tasted as good new potatoes as we grew in those first years, they grew well and quickly in the new bush land, and there was plenty of moisture, but in later years when the country dried up somewhat they appeared to get past the new and tender stage before they had gained enough size to use.

For my part that summer was much the same as the previous one, consisting of herding the cattle and doing chores, and I was continually looking forward to the time when the crop would be taken off and I should gain more freedom to explore other some of the other things that were being done.

This year we had our own grain binder, A six foot McCormick, it was not new but nearly so, as it was a repossession and had done very little work. Bill Offer had foolishly bought it the year before to cut his ten acres of crop and had been unable to make his first payment on it, or perhaps he thought it was the most simple way to get the crop cut, That binder lasted many years and cut many hundreds of acres of crop.

As the years went on and I grew up I got to run this same binder quite regularly while George and Arthur did the stooking, so that I became completely familiar with all its temperamental ways and its weak points in mechanical structure and used it until it literally gave up and fell apart some two years after it had been replaced by a new eight foot job.

I have not till now mentioned Bill Offer, although he was among the first of the young men to take up a homestead, His was the N.W.ofSec 26-32-8. He was a typical Irishman looking for trouble, but Bill's trouble was mostly just (talk), He enjoyed getting into a discussion which usually turned into a heated argument, He was not exactly disliked, but it could be said that perhaps he was not well liked by anyone, He used to go to Murrays and fill up the kids with a lot of spectacular yarns of life he had spent in the lumber camps, of the terms they used and the huge loads of logs they hauled and the general procedure and conditions of camp life which was rather grim in those days compared to present days.

He stayed only long enough to prove up on his homestead, He returned some years later with a wife and family, and farmed in the district for some years. He was naturally into every project, association, or event in the community and of course had a lot to say about everything wether for or against it. He didn't do too well at farming, and later moved to Vancouver B.C.

That fall Arthur and Glad. went out to the Yorkton district for harvest and threshing, They worked for Johnie Wetherspoon in the Wallace district, and evidently had quite a long run as it was late in the fall or early winter before they arrived home.

George and John took off the crop, and John stayed to do the fall work, but George went threshing, and was a band cutter and feeder on Mac. McClennan's outfit that he had bought that fall. It was the usual portable type which was considered to be the best at that time, as the traction engines were too big and heavey to get around where there were no roads and the trails ran through many low spots that even in the fall were quite wet in those years. The steam engines had to be small in order to be light and so in turn could not have much horse-power, and the separators in order to be driven by the available horse-power had to dispense with such modern attachments as the straw blower and the self feeder. Straw was taken away by a long conveyor or carrier as they were called, and as it piled up two men were needed to spread it out and keep the carrier clear. The feeder was replaced by tables on both sides of the machine on which the pitchers threw the sheaves, while two men standing on a platform grasped them, cut the bands and swished them in a spreading motion directly into the threshing cylinder, All this extra manpower was necessary to conserve power and to lighten the seperator so as it would not require too many teams to move it from place to place, and so that it would not sink and become mired in the low soft spots. It can be seen then that it took many men and teams to make up a threshing gang, and I can remember Mother saying she had twenty five men to feed, and it seemed that a good percentage of the population of the district (both men and women) followed the outfit on it's trip around the country.

This was the first time that stock threshing was done in the district, Previously the crops had been too small, and the risk of waiting for a machine, had been too great for anyone to leave the grain in stooks any longer than was necessary for it to dry

sufficiently. Now the wheat crop would be threshed first from, the stooks, and the machine would return later In the fall to do the stack threshing.

Arthur's field on 31 was the only wheat crop we had, also the only big field, the remainder of the crop was so scattered about in small fields that there was no other solution than to haul it all up to the barn-yard and stack it. Grain stacking required considerable care and (know-how) so that the stacks were built with the proper slope and shape to successfully shed the rain to avoid spoilage.

As mentioned before, the wheat crop on 31 was almost a complete loss, as it was so badly Infested with smut that it could be smelled on the mens clothes when they came in for meals, Otherwise, it was a good heavey crop and should have given us a good lift.

The Murray boys and I were on hand to see the machine start up on the McLennan farm, and even adults got a lift out of seeing a steam outfit operate, The snorting of the engine, the slapping of the drive belt, and the general humm of the seperator as it got under way, the swish of the sheaves as they are dragged into the speeding cylinder and the straw comeing out at the rear of the seperator.

In all the years I farmed I never failed to get a thrill out of watching from the top of a load of sheaves one of the big modem outfits at work, seeing the sheaves thrown In by the spike pitchers, and the russelling noise as they were gobbled up by the band cutters to dissapear into the machine, The straw as it was forcebly shot from the blower to eventurely form a huge pile, and the periodic click of the scale at the top of the bagger as it weighed the grain in half bushels and tripped to send it cascading down the bagger spout into the bin or a waiting grain-box to be hauled away to a granary or a local grain elevator.

To those who were fortunate enough to be just looking on, the moveing and resetting was interesting to watch as every man in the crew performed his regular job in this operation.

As the last team pulled away from the machine, the spike pitchers cleaned up the last of the fallen sheaves and the general accumulation of grain and loose straw, while the seperator man climbed to the top of the bagger to read the grain tally, and often from this point signaled the engineer to (Shut her down)

The engine was Immediately throttled to a stop, and as it slowed to a stop the fire-man would walk to the side of the engine and throw the drive belt by merely placeing his arm over it and guideing it to the outside edge of the big fly-wheel till it fell with slap to the ground where it was immediately seized upon by two men who ran back to the seperator where they wound it into a coil by a crank, At the same time the two spike pitchers would be folding up the self feeder into a moveing position, while the seperator-man aided by at least one other man moved the bagger from it's upright

position to a horizontal one to avoid strain or damage in transportation, Another man cranked the straw blower around to it's opposite position where it rested along the top of the seperator. In the meantime the engine would be turned around and backed up to the seperator tongue where it was secured with a pin, and in no time the outfit would be on it's way to the next setting, The straw rack, and water tank following up behind. This whole proceeedure would then be reversed, the stook teams would pull in and they were away again.

There was the whistle system too, which all added to the thrill and excitement of the season, (I wonder if I can remember them,) At about four-thirty, the fire-man haveing got up enough steam, would pull a prolonged blast for several minutes, This echoed around the whole district in the still (and generally frosty) morning air and was a warning to everyone to wake up and get the horses fed and harnessed in readiness for the days work.

The same long blast was used at quitting time at night, two shorts meant Start, One short meant Stop, Three, more straw wanted at the engine, Four, the water was running short, so the tank man must hustle, A series of short toots, Hurry up with the sheaves, the last load is nearly empty.

But we shall never hear or see this all again, It is a thing of the past, and it is all done now by a different system and the present day threshing combine can be operated by a single man in an enclosed air-conditioned cab. and powered by diesel engines.

Perhaps a few of the old timers who are able to do so, may look back nostalgically to those early times and refer to them as the(good old days), but few I think would care to return to the hard work, long hours, and disagreeable conditions of those times.

Correction I have stated above that the fireman blew the whistle at four thirty, Four thirty was the time that the fireman was expected to get up, and any whistle blowing would depend on how far he was obliged to walk to reach the machine, rake out the ashes, clean the flues, and the fireing time necessary to get up a sufficient head of steam to blow the whistle. The time could vary to some extent, but it was something of a challenge among the firemen to be the first outfit to whistle.

To return to the McLennan farm and the threshing outfit, it was quite primitive to later models, George and Bill Rossen cut the bands and fed the cylinder, and the straw went lazily up the carriers and fell over the end to be grasped by the forks of the two men spreading out the stack, but it was all very exciteing to us youngsters to watch the steam engine as it puffed away at it's job with the steam flying out from the injector as the fire-man turned on the water and to see him continually forceing straw into the shute of the fire-box to keep steam up and the occasional(popping off) of the safty-valve when the steam pressure became too high.

One of the men had been called away, and his team and rack were standing idle, so someone persuaded me to take it out into the field and load it until he returned, Of course I was quite proud to do this and drove the team to the field where the field-pitchers loaded it for me, When I got back to the machine, George was a bit doubtful as to whether I could get it up to the machine without either bumping onto it or else getting so far away from it as to be inconvenient to unload, Anyhow, I managed it alright and proceeded to unload, but just then a young girl climbed up onto the load, took my fork, and expertly unloaded the whole thing for me.

This was the first time I met Jessie Rattray who had come to help her sister (Mrs.McLennan) with the preparing of the meals for the threshing crew, I did not realize it at the time, (Kids don't always catch on) but quite likely Jessie had already got her eye on George, and was endeavouring to show him what a good farmers wife she would make. They were married some years later.

The Rattrays were a large family of three boys and seven girls, They had been in the country long before us, and had ranched in the earlier days some distance south of Invermay, possibly in the chain of lakes district, I could not be sure.

The girls were all (out-door) girls in their young days, as circumstances demanded this with the conditions of the country at that time. Over the years we met most of the family, although some of them quite briefly, Nellie (Mrs.McLennan) (Maggie Mrs. Whitman) and of course Jessie, we knew quite well.

Scott, was the eldest of the family, and it was said that he never attended school (no doubt because there was no school for him to go to) and that he was self educated, However, this did not stop him from becoming a successful business-man through his life, and in his retiring years (of all things) started to write poetry, We have one of his poems now which was published in the Yorkton Enterprise in 1954, and we saved it as we thought it was rather good. This might be a good time and place to put it down again.



The Whistle O the Train  
By W.S. Rattray

Another link is breaking in the chain that binds the past,  
And with it go fond memories which long ago were cast,  
This modern age of striveing with muscle, brawn, and brain,  
Can ne'er replace the welcome of the whistle o' the train.

Across the western prairie when evening casts it's spell,  
The whistle brought a message that everything was well,  
And so it was, to busy folk who gathered in the grain,  
But the diesel engine can't replace the whistle o' the train.

It set the time across the land for early pioneers,  
Who worked with nature in her stride with pleasure, hope and tears  
It brought thoughts too of distant lands where loveing friends remain,  
But burdens here seem lighter with the whistle o'the train.

We're getting old and feeble now, and liveing in the past,  
Our work is done for all to see, as long as earth may last,  
And may this dear land Canada, from hate and war refrain,  
And build a nation strong and free as the whistle o'the train.

It will be noticed that this poem was written shortly after the diesel engines appeared on the rail-roads and they were equiped with rather a discordant honker in place of the present day whistle, The first honkers grated disagreeably on the ears of those who over the years had listened to the more melodious whistles of the steam engines, and especially to the pioneers who had regarded the train as a link between them and the outside civilization.

John stayed in that fall to attend to the stacking and threshing, and to get in the all important potato crop, There was the summers breaking to be worked down too, and the many things to be put in shape for the comeing winter.

I had been anxiously waiting to grow big enough to be able to do some of the field work and operate the farm machinery, but on most things the levers were still too heavey for me to operate, even the harrowing required the sections to occasionally be lifted to allow the tree roots to fall out and I was not strong enough to do this, This fall I got my first break,

John contrived to make a higher foot-rest on the disc-harrow, also the levers could be left in a set position, so that now I was able to drive the three oxen necessary to pull the disc.

It really gave me a lift to think I was able to do some of the mens work and I did quite a lot of it while John was busy at other things such as picking up the loose roots and pileing and, burning them.

Inevitably winter was on us again, with it's short hours of day-light and the cold increaseing as time went on, I was now beginning to change my opinion that winter was the best time of the year, for as I got older I was expected to take on a little more responsibility in doing some of the work and chores so that I could not always stay in out of the cold when it suited me, but must endure the discomfort until certain things were accomplished, and this was changeing the picture a little bit.

George came in from his threshing run, and the young homesteaders drifted back in to put in their homesteading duties, and were looking forward to a good rest and to take in all the dances and any other social activities that might be going on.

Glad. and Arthur had not returned and we were beginning to wonder what could be keeping them as it appeared all fall work must long have been finished, Actually they had decided to blow in their wages in buying a team of wild bronchos, What brought this on I can't think, Probably someone was very anxious to get rid of them, for they were so wild that not many people would care to be bothered with them, Also I expect they were being sold cheaper than average on this account.

It was always a challenge and a thrill to Glad to handle wild horses, and Arthur was equally as venturesome, so I suppose they thought they had really got something to tie into, and as always when one is young, the thought of wether it was sensible, practical, or profitable was not taken into concideratlon.

The challenge of it all was the main thing.

Arthur told me that these horses were extremely wild, haveing been brought up from somewhere in Montana, and it took them much time and maneuvering untill they could even get them Into a barn to say nothing of putting harness on them.

I suppose they both must have been hanging around the farm where they had harvested and threshed, and made themselves usefull to some extent in order to get their board and lodgeing untill such times that they could gentle these bronchos and train them to the point where they dared to drive them home, for this is what they actually did. Young fellows at that age will try anything without much thought of what might be the outcome or the danger involved, especially where there are two, (each one goading the other on to try something)

Eventurely they bought an ordinary driveing cutter, which were flimsey enough that a wild team could twist out of shape and kick to pieces in moments, They hitched them

to this and drove as far as Canora on the first day, where the team must have been so tired that they gave little trouble in getting them into a livery barn.

The following day they drove clear through to home, being afraid to stop enroute as they should have done to water and feed the team and themselves.

I can remember them coming tearing into the yard, freezing cold and of course very hungry. Dad and I were out in the stable yard and when the horses saw us they came to a slithering stop and swung off to the side, "Stand back Mr. Dean" said Glad, as he quickly stepped out of the cutter and went to the horses heads and Arthur did the same thing. Between them they managed to unhitch the team and get them into the stable, Being a strange place, it might have taken some doing excepting for the fact that they must have been very tired and almost worn out having come so far without a stop.

There was the usual talk and excitement that evening as there always was when anyone had been away for some time, and of course we had to hear all the hair-raising antics of breaking in the bronchos and all the trials and troubles of the harvest and threshing, Glad. didn't think much of the fare they got for meals, and said it consisted too much of syrup, "nothing but syrup, syrup, syrup," he said.

Then there was the threshing machine. Apparently it was one of the first small outfits with a gasoline engine, it was a sixteen H.P. portable, of the original type used at that time, Single cylinder with two huge flywheels, the whole thing built very heavy and cumbersome, and requiring a lot of muscle and strength in rolling it over to start it. Glad, and Art. had nothing to do with it as they had absolutely no knowledge of such things, but no doubt they were called in to help with some of the rolling over.

Gasoline engines were then in their early stages and were not thought much of, as they were very temperamental and difficult to start on the frosty fall mornings, while the steam engines gave no trouble in this way, Only a few understood them thoroughly although they were comparatively simple, but I have thought since that much of the trouble was not from lack of knowledge of the ignition systems or the low compression, but mostly the poor grade of gasoline, It did not vaporize very readily when the temperature was at all low, and much heating of carburetors and manifolds was necessary. Oil too was thick heavy stuff which did not help matters, so gas engines were considered unpredictable and unreliable.

Glad. stayed around for a few days, Partly because he was not anxious to go home to his cold, solitary, and desolate shack, and partly because he and Arthur were used to wrestling with the bronchos, and no-one else was very anxious to have any part of them.

A problem then arose which it would seem that up to this time either Glad or Arthur had not taken into consideration.

They had bought the team between them, but as they lived seven miles apart, it was going to be pretty awkward to share them with any degree of satisfaction, The only alternative was for one to buy the other out, so it was thought best for us to keep the team and cutter. Perhaps Glad. was as well satisfied, for now the excitement and the challenge had dimmed somewhat and only the continual work of gentleing and training the team remained.

This consisted of harnessing and hitching them to the sleighs each day and driving them for some distance. They would start out rearing on their hind legs and take off at a gallop, but at no time did they ever get (out of hand) and would return in an hour or so somewhat subdued, but still going at a smart trot.

This proceedure went on all winter, but it was plain to see that it would be a long long time before this team could be of much use in operateing farm machinery, Eventurely, and in the course of time this team became very gentle and quiet, and would stand unattended for any length of time, never moveing from their tracks as long as no-one picked up the lines, but as you will see as we go on, much occured before this stage was reached.

It is the hope of every early settler, that before too long they will be able to dispense with the oxen for transportation and power, and get to the stage of useing horses. The contrast was just as great as in the present day useing tractors in place of horses, although very few would know this at the present time as the horses have been obsolete for a great number of years now.

Looking back on all this now, it seems to me that this was definitely the wrong way to go about getting into horses, we now had one little pony which was almost useless, and two horses which would be equally useless for some time to come, In saying useless, I am thinking in terms of the operation of the farm, but they did supply some sort of transportation for us.

Actually, all income was to be brought into the common centre of the home where all members together could decide where it should best be spent, But perhaps it is characteristic and natural for young people that when they get a little stake of the years wages in their pocket, it immediately starts to (burn holes) and they feel they are entitled to spend some of it on some pet ploy of their own, George had spent some of his fall wages on Billy which was certainly not a very sensible or practical investment, he was probably persuaded into it by the farmer he worked for, who in this way could avoid some cash outlay and get rid of something he didn't want into the bargain.

Now Arthur had done a similar impractical thing in buying a team that would be of little use for quite some time, If all this work and effort had been put towards a good general purpose team of farm horses they would immediately have had something practical and serviceable to put to work.

I think all young people make mistakes of this kind at one time or another, (I know I did in my young days anyhow) and these are the things that one only avoids from having previous years of experience. It would seem then, that one must reach considerable age before they are capable of acting sensibly and wisely, the trouble being that by this time all the mistakes have been made, and it is too late to do anything about it.

This winter was much the same as previous ones when all important work is stopped by weather conditions and the main effort seemed to be to keep ones self warm, as it seems the human race is unable to do this without some artificial means,

Fortunately for us there was no expense involved in this for us, there was plenty of fuel and it only required the work of gathering it, The elder boys hauled up huge loads of the fire killed wood, and Dad got stuck for sawing the most of it into stove-lengths, My job was to load it on my hand-sleigh and tote it into the house, also the ice for our drinking water and whatever was needed for other purposes.

There was the usual Xmas concert in the Rama school, and periodical dances in some of the homes that had big enough rooms, but it would be crowded in any case and nobody cared much about it, it was lots of fun anyway.

The debates were started again, and the (Rama Boys) were there in full force. Only the Xmas concert was of interest to me, but the debates were (over my head) and I only heard about them from the adults, I was taken to one of them, probably because Mother expected it to be amusing, and it certainly was,

Married life against single, The Rama boys clamoring to take the single side, while the married element were just as determined to stick up for their status, As was expected, it was a hilarious scream from start to finish, and I doubt If they were able to figure out which side won, but everyone got a lot of fun and amusement out of it all.

As the winter went on the bronchos became tamed to the point that they could be used to go to these affairs, and some of the young bachelors would converge on (Doug's corner) in order to get a ride into Rama and in this way the team got more accustomed people, and to pulling heavy loads.

At the Sunday school, it was decided that a supply of fuel should be got up, rather than depending on someone bringing an arm-full of wood along in their sleigh, The situation might arise when everyone thought someone else was doing it and we might end up with no fuel. After church and Sunday-school a few got together to volunteer to each bring a load of wood, but someone said it might be necessary to bring two loads in-order to have enough to last the season. This then sparked a discussion on just how much so many loads would make, It would of course depend on the size of the loads, and as usual with a group of young fellows they got to argueing and boasting on how much they could haul in one trip, and Glad. seemed quite sure he could haul a bigger

load than any of them and of course allowed himself to be drawn into (showing his hand) and producing the biggest load.

As always, he liked to draw Arthur into any of his escapades so arrived down at our place and the two of them proceeded to cut this huge load of wood. They would use two teams to get the load but of the woods to the stable yard, and from there on one team could haul it over the smooth and well packed trail to the Sunday school. A better way might have been to haul out two small loads to the yard with a single team, and there make up the load from both. Perhaps that way was not spectacular enough.

Of course I had to see it all, and went with them to see the load made up, and they sure piled on a big one and proceeded to precariously haul it out over the rough and uneven terrain, Arthur driving the front team from the side, and Glad up on the load driving the rear team. All went well, until they were obliged to pass through a small gully at an oblique angle and this was just a little too much of a lean, (sleigh runners were spaced only three feet apart and therefore tipped very easily).

It happened in a second, and I, walking behind, got a (ringside view) of the load leaning slightly, and next Glad taking a flying leap to safety, and the load sprawled like an open fan across the snow.

Glad, scrambled up out of the snow, looked around and saw there was no damage or harm done, and burst into laughter. He was still laughing about it until after they had gathered up all the wreckage. They settled the next day by taking a good sized load of about three quarters of the original one to the Sunday school. I did not hear the outcome, as to whether Glad got a ribbing from the other volunteers about it. Possibly he never mentioned the failure of the first load.

I think it was about this time that George decided to abandon his homestead and file on to the N.W quarter of sec, 33 which was directly on the east side of Dad's place only that there was a road allowance between. Nobody had taken it up because at first sight it appeared a bad quarter. A large slough stretched from the north line for almost a quarter of the way down its length.

We called it a lake, as it was quite wide, and as we used to swim there a lot we found it was fairly deep, (perhaps eight feet).

However, the remainder of the quarter was mostly good high land so that the place was much better than one might be led to believe. George felt considerably better about the whole thing only that it had set him back as far as time was concerned.

This did not prove too much of a draw-back, as the following summer they were able to break up a good part of it all in one piece and the first crop was a good one, so that in the end he had the best quarter of them all.

His original quarter remained unoccupied for quite some time as it appeared mostly bush and slough, and we were able to use it as pasture land for our stock. This of course pleased me, No more cow-herding during the summer, and it was convenient to bring the cows into the corral at nights.

The well where we got our drinking water was also on this quarter, It was exceptionally good water, and we wondered if someone took up the land that we might be deprived of this supply, but we had no reason to worry, for it was some years before this quarter was homesteaded again and by this time the whole country had dried up considerably, the water table had become much lower and the well, (which was only six feet deep) had petered out.

Charlie Lockhart had splurged to the extent of buying himself a nice set of chimeing sleigh-bells, This was perhaps surpriseing, for Charlie was never one to indulge in frills, and was always quite practical compared to other young fellows in the district, but then he was still quite young, and almost everyone will at times depart from their traits, As Mother used to quote "A little nonsense now and then, is relished by the wisest men." These bells sounded real melodious in the frosty air of the winter nights and could be heard for a considerable distance.

I may not as yet have mentioned the Stevens family, and at this late date I cannot be sure of the exact location of their home, It was half a mile south from Rama and west from that point, possibly on the N.W, of sec. 13, They were a typical English family, and were probably less able to adapt to the rough life of homesteading than we were, There were five in the family, three boys and two girls, Jack, Harry, Herb. May and Violet.

May was the only one married, and her husband was Len. Richardson they lived on the N.E. quarter of sec, 13, just a half mile south of Rama, Len. was not well, and shortly was obliged to move to a different climate, so we knew very little of him.

Jack Stevens was not home at that time, and was something of a mistry, No-one knew where he was, and Mrs. Stevens had a premonition that he was dead, but this was not the case, he was possibly a bit wayward and had just not bothered to let the home folks know where he was untill some acquaintance of theirs saw him and told him to write home as they were concerned as to what had happened to him, This he did, and some years later turned up in the district and remained there many years, so that we got to know him quite well.

Herb, we didn't know so well, Perhaps he was away from home a lot, Harry and Vi. we got to know very well, and they were our friends always.

Harry was about the age of our elder boys, and Vi. may have been about a year younger than Nell. They were a jolly and humorous lot and added a great lot to the social life of the community.

Will Hoyer was the first of the so called (Rama Boys) to get married, He married Will Bailey's sister Florrie, I believe she and Will were the only ones of the family in Canada at that time, but later most of the other members arrived and spent varying years in the district.

Will, who I believe was the first one to come to the country was very unfortunate, He became involved in an accident on a farm where he was working, and this resulted in him eventually losing his leg, Although this naturally altered his way of life, he later took up school-teaching and made a success of it and carried on right through till retiring age.

Time was going on, and by 1911 some of the homesteaders were proving up on their homesteads, We saw the homestead inspector occasionally as he travelled through the country, and I remember him once staying over-night at our place, His home was in Yorkton and it is quite likely he had a farm there too, He was Mr. McLeod, and I remember many years later meeting his son (Roddy) who farmed in the Yorkton district, and his daughter who was married to Norman Tamblyn the bank manager there.

I remember he had a spanking good team of drivers that could really cover the road.

Many years later he stopped in to see us for a few minutes, He was then driving a Buick car at the time when it was almost impossible to manipulate through the country trails excepting at the very driest part of the season, and there were still a few stumps to be avoided.

He took Mother for a ride part way across the farm as he left to go to Buchanan, It was the only opportunity Mother ever had of riding in a private automobile.

There was seldom any difficulty in anyone obtaining their homestead, the stipulations were not very closely adhered to and mostly left to the discretion of the inspector, and it seemed the stipulations were only put on in the first place to discourage land speculation.

In any case it seemed that much of the land was lost to the mortgage companies eventually, for many people raised money on their farms and were unable to redeem them, while others who were unable to sell their land used this means of raising a little money and walked off and left everything.

Our uncle Botell used this method in order to return to the Old Country as he was totally unfitted for life in this country as it was at that time. I have often said that he was the only one of us that had any sense, (He went back,) but perhaps that is not so, the situation would have been different for some of us. However, Aunt would have no part of it, she wished to stay in Canada, Up till this she had stayed in Hamiota, and as



she was a trained nurse she had gained a good position with Dr. Hudson there and was quite satisfied with her lot.

As it will be seen later it was fortunate for many of us that she made this decision to remain in Canada.

There were murmurings of forming a school district and building a school which I didn't like at all, for I still retained my aversion to school, and strangely I can't remember anyone pointing out to me the necessity of having a good education, Perhaps they did, but that I was too young to realize what the future held for me and was quite unconcerned about it all, and having lived in this enclosed environment for what seemed a terribly long time to a youngster, I could think of no change ever coming, and I was doing alright so far from my point of view.

The Rama school district came down far enough to include the Richardsons, so the only families left with young children were Prestons, Murrays, Gablers, and ourselves. The Ukrainians refused to have any part in a school, and at first refused to send their children to it after we had achieved one, I believe they were influenced by the Catholic priests who it seemed liked to keep them all as ignorant as possible so as they could be more easily persuaded or frightened into pouring all available money into the church which of course in turn benefited them.

Some three years after the school was started at least a dozen of them turned up one morning, with an equal number of fathers with them to see that everything was in order and that none of them were abused in any way, It was found afterwards that someone stealthily watched from the trees for a few days to see that no harm came to any of the children, and I remember I was reported to have played too roughly with them, and on the teacher inquiring how they knew this, they were obliged to admit they had watched from cover.

What caused this sudden invasion I don't know unless at that point they had been made aware that the law required them to send their children to school. However, the fear that the children would somehow be imposed upon very soon wore off.

Strangely, Metro Grona who lived next to the Murrays had sent his three boys to school from the very start and had no worries of this nature. Perhaps it was from his association with the Murray family.

Dad, Ike Preston, and Gabler, were the first trustees. Dad being the Secretary treasurer,

I was never able to understand why the school district was not located further to the west than it was, but evidently there was some reason, and when it was finally formed some of the people wanted to have the school built close to the N.W. corner of the district, but Dad objected to this, saying that while at the present time most of the

children were located in that area it would be only a matter of time until there would be children all over the district and it was not fair that some of them should be obliged to travel a greater distance than others.

Dad was always one to stick up for things to be done (as he used to say) in the right and proper manner. He was always respected for this, (although often grumbled at) but in this instance he won out, and many years later it was seen that his reasoning was right.

One of the highlights of this spring (at least as far as I was concerned ) was that Rollie Tomkins was coming to Canada, It was of course of interest to all of us to again see someone who had been Arthur's school chum and was therefore well known to all of us, and we had been well acquainted with the family in England, Everyone coming to the country usually had some person or place to come to until they had looked around a bit and decided which way they would strike out, and at what they would employ themselves at, so it was only natural that Rollie should come to us and work for awhile before moving on to whatever he intended to take up.

George and Harold Hart had come to the country together and had gone to Alex. Skinner in Manitoba, I don't know Who he was or if we had any connection with him, but he may have been an acquaintance of the Harts, as Harold worked for him for some time, but George had gone to work for Bill Angus who lived closer to Hamiota.

George and John went out that spring to work for the seeding time on a farm somewhere north of Buchanan, It was one of these big farms owned by someone but operated by a manager, The owner's name was Holbrooke and the manager was Dell Miller, but according to Harry (the all year round hired man) it was his wife who did the managing and gave most of the instructions, much to the disgust of (Holbrooke Harry) as he became nicknamed.

Harry was a typical (Old soldier) and spent most of his time in dodging as much work as possible so it was only natural, that he had a very poor opinion of Mrs. Miller and did not hesitate to voice his dislike of her in no uncertain terms.

George told the story of he and Harry going out to a straw-stack for a load of straw, and having loaded it up George picked up the driving lines in readiness to start back to the barn.

He was immediately jumped on by Harry, "Don't do that" he said "We will get in there too soon and she'll only send us back for another load and make us late for supper," So Harry proceeded to have a good rest on the straw-stack until the appropriate time to return. Unfortunately this bit of stratagem did not work out as expected, for it was found that the wagon wheels had sunk into the soft soil as it was loaded and the team was unable to move it, so that some of the load had to be removed in order for them to get under way, and they arrived late for supper after all.

Both George and John found nothing to complain of, and considered it a fairly decent place to work.

Another six months of time must have put a little more meat on my bones and some strength in my body, for on hanging around with Arthur while he was plowing one of the small fields with the single furrow walking plow, I found I was able to handle the plow without too much trouble as long as it was in stubble plowing. Consequently, I grasped every opportunity to do so and felt quite proud of myself. It was the original plow we used on that memorial day when George had plowed the garden for the first time and experienced so much trouble, but it was quite a struggle for me to handle the plow, guide the team, and use a twelve foot ox whip all at the same time at only twelve years old.

Arthur had a sixteen inch Sulkey riding plow belonging to Glad. Ferrie that he was going to use with three oxen, and he was going to start Rollie Tomkins (when he came) on the single team and walking plow so that they would be really (rolling things over) but I couldn't see why he couldn't just let me do it, for kid like I did not realize that doing a ten hour day in the field would be totally different to just an hour or two.

Anyhow, we shall see later that I did have to do it for a few days.

Rollie came quite early in the spring, and Arthur took the bronchos and the wagon to meet him. The bronchos had by now become reasonably quiet. At least to the point where they could be handled by one person, but it would be a long time yet before they could be used on the farm machinery. The bay one had been named Bess, and the grey one Nance.

As it happened the train didn't show up that day, and as there was neither telegraph or telephone at Rama it must have been some time before anyone was aware of what the delay was.

Eventually it would be learned by the section crew who would get it from either the Invermay or Buchanan crew as they contacted each other. Arthur went out as far as the Stevens place and waited till later in the day. and on going back learned that the train had been derailed at Grandveiw and the time of arrival was unknown. Harry Stevens offered to meet the train and Arthur thought he had best go home to acquaint us with what had happened and to assure us that he had not come to grief with the team.

Rollie had been made aware that things were pretty rough in Canada and more so at Rama, and some of his friends must have thought so too, for one of them gave him a revolver and a supply of ammunition as a going-away present, so when he was met at the (so called station ) by a complete stranger carrying a stable lantern, he must have thought there was absolutely no doubt about it. Carrying Rollie's luggage, they walked

by devious trails and foot paths, and by the (not too good) lantern light out to the Stevens place, and Rollie must have been relieved to arrive at civilized surroundings to spend the rest of the night.

Arthur went up for him the following morning, and we learned that he had taken no harm from the derailment other than to be thrown forcibly from his seat.

There was a lot of talk between us all about things and people in England, and it was some days before we had completely run down, and perhaps Muriel and I got the most out of it for a long while, for Rollie was naturally humorous and comical, and tried everything out on us.

After a trip to Buchanan to get Rollie the necessary boots, overalls, and smock, he was all set to take up the farming life which he did in fairly good time and with no more bumbles and mistakes than the rest of us.

The seeding was well under way, and Arthur and Rollie were busy plowing on thirty-one, Bess and Nance were being contained in a paddock at the side of the stable, when it was noticed one day at noon that one of the rails had been dislodged and they had got out. Arthur struck out immediately to locate them but they were not to be found at close range although he spent the whole afternoon in trying to track them. It is possible that having gained their freedom they had run for miles before stopping to eat.

Arthur was in a quandry, he had to find the horses before they got too far away, he also had to get the crop in, and as yet Rollie was not very well experienced to leave on his own.

Eventually he settled for having Rollie drive his team on the Sulky plow, and I was to drive the team and walking plow, I of course thought this was a real break for me, and I guess I was more concerned with this aspect than the loss of the horses, Things went on this way for the rest of the week when Arthur returned, having no luck in locating the horses.

Tracks showed they had headed to the south which was natural as they had originally come from Montana, but finally the tracks became obliterated and there seemed no sign of them anywhere.

Arthur then concentrated on getting the crop in, but afterwards, when the other two boys had returned home, took Billy and rode off for many days in a southerly direction until he was below the Regina district, but could see neither hide nor hair of them, and any leads he got from the settlers he stayed over night with turned out to be false. Years later he remarked on the hospitality of the settlers at that time, He had only a few dollars in his pocket, but at no time was he obliged to spend any of it, He was welcomed and fed where-ever he went.

The hunt was then given up in place of news-paper advertizment and description, but it was a full year before they were located and brought home.

Things gradually were changing, The Pelly Trail which had been the main trail through the district was being obliterated all along by being plowed up for growing crop, for naturally the trail had followed the high and open land where ever it was possible, and in turn this was the most likely place for everyone to start plowing, This rerouted the trail, either around the field, or in a completely different route so that eventurely it became quite a monkey puzzle to most people, and especially to strangers passing through who became completely confused or lost. There were the wire gates too, At least one in every half mile, and sometimes closer where there were pastures, or if one had to angle across a quarter, They were a continual annoyance to anyone traveling, and also a continual worry to the farmers, for fear they might not be closed after someone went through, Most farmers were conscientious regarding this, but there was always the odd stranger who might not realize the importance of the gate being kept shut, and there is always the don't care , type who couldn't care less.

For some years the trail to Buchanan went right through our yard and we were able to arrive at who might be the culprit if any stock got out of the pasture or into anyone's crop, but of course this was of little use after the damage was done.

There were a few grades being put in where the need was greatest, but at best they were only narrow affairs, wide enough for one vehicle only, but a great help in some cases where one had to cross a ravine or neck between two sloughs and otherwise would have to detour for a considerable distance to get around.

At first we were obliged to go west as far as two miles at least in order to get to McLennan's or Murrays on account of Murray's slough (which incidently was not Murray's slough at all) It covered the full length on the south half of the N.W quarter of sec. 31, and carried far into the quarter west of it which was then Doug. Whitmans. Later we found a narrow neck at the east end of the slough and a corduroy was put in by laying green logs closely together and squashed down into the mud. This made a solid crossing for a team, but allowed the water to flow over the top. This point became known as (The Corduroy)

The distance then to Murrays was only about half of the previous route.

A grade was put in at Rama, and south for about half a mile which greatly improved the approach to the village.

I have no idea when the Local Improvement District changed to the Rural Municipality of Invermay, but it may have been about this time, and the improvement of roads, culverts, and bridges was quite slow until the population of the district got to be much greater, and of course there was always an effort made to keep the taxes down.

Most road work was done by people working out their taxes, and it was a difficult and slow process with the primitive equipment available at that time, and only ox or horse power.

Mike Kos built the first store in Rama on his own quarter section, It was somewhat back from the road and just slightly south of the rail-road tracks, A two story building with store on the ground floor and liveing quarters above, and (Mike's Store) became the main gathering place in town. He did very well, and later built a bigger and better store out by the road which he lighted by the usual gasoline lamps used in all public places and were actually better than electricity excepting for the inconvenience of filling and lighting them, and the slight buzzing sound they made as they operated.

Years later, this store burned down and was replaced by another of similar construction.

Mike was a quiet spoken easy going sort of man, and as far as we were concerned strictly honest. I cannot remember when it was he built his first store, for we dealt always in Buchanan until such time that the road to Rama got better. Afterwards, we dealt continually at Mike's store until we left the district.

I am not sure what family Mike had, I know there was Eddy, Mike, and I think a girl, but I can't remember any others, I believe (young Mike) still operates a business of some kind in the town.

That summer at the Sunday school, Mr. Wadell was replaced as minister by Mr. Kelly. He was a totally different type. Short and stocky, and well into middle age, for he had a daughter aproaching twenty, but was evidently a widower. He wore a bowler hat, and seemed inclined to be a bit fussy about everything.

Also he seemed to be continually hungry, and tucked into our rough fare with great gusto, Perhaps it was the strenuous trip out from Buchanan, as I remember he walked it in the first summer, and like all the previous ministers came on Saturday and stayed over at our place.

I have wondered since why he happened to be out in such an out of the way erea, for he gave the impression of haveing been in the ministry for many years, and one would expect he would by that time be more permanently settled in some large town or city. He stayed in that erea for at least three years that I can remember. Many years later, Rollie Tomkins met him by chance as he was going somewhere, and remarked that he appeared to have got into a rather run-down and delapidated condition and would not admit to remembering Rollie or ever being in the Rama district.

It must have been somewhere about this time that Albert Walker arrived in the district, comeing to the Meakins, who were somehow connected to him either by some distant

relationship or or perhaps merely by having come from the same place in the old country, By their dialect they were definitely from the same shire, which I think would be Lancashire, but otherwise it would seem that Albert was completely different to them, and one might put it loosely by saying he was (a cut above them).

He was more refined and well educated, and made a good contribution to the Sunday school as he had a good voice and could sing well and enjoyed doing so.

Like many more of us, he was not adapted to the rough life of the district, and George used to say he was lazy, but thinking of it later I don't believe he was. He appeared not very robust and may even have not been well, so that he could not stand too much of the heavy work. He homesteaded on the N.W. quarter of 31. next to Arthur's and built a log shack which was not of the best, and for a long time only had a piece of binder canvas to serve as a door. He worked enough of the land to qualify for the homesteading rights, but did not improve the place to any great extent. It was not considered a good quarter at that time for almost half of it was taken up by Murrays slough, which accounted for it not being homesteaded earlier.

A couple of years later Ada Wiggins came to to Canada and Albert went to Winnipeg to meet her and they were married there, They had known each other for many years in England and they were both perhaps approaching their thirties, It must have been a great shock for Mrs. Walker to arrive at Albert' s dilapidated shack after living in decent surroundings in England and we must give her credit for not turning round and running away from it all, but she put up with it all quite cheerfully as far as we could see, although they were in rather poor circumstances for some years, Albert was definitely not suited to the type of work necessary to get along in such a district They had one boy, and called him Arthur after his uncle who later came to the district for a short period.

Some five or six years later Albert was fortunate enough to obtain the position as PostMaster in Rama, and this was quite a break for him, as the job suited him perfectly, and although they never did get as good a home as they had probably been used to in England, they got into quite comfortable circumstances and were able to enjoy some of the better things in life.

Later, when Albert died, Mrs. Walker carried on as Post Mistress until she was retired. They were both well liked, and did their share in the community. After her retirement, Arthur married and left home, and she also married again to an old friend she had known since her young days, They lived at his home down east and we never saw them again.

To return to 1911 again, the chief project that summer with our family was to break up George's quarter on 33, A new sixteen inch breaking plow was bought, and as (Bobby) our first calf, had now grown to the point where he could be used as an ox, we had six of them, and the whole six were used to pull the new plow. Over the years the land

had been burned over and most of it cut off for fire wood by whoever wanted some, and this left relatively little clearing to do, George, John, and Rollie worked there for a good part of the summer and turned over a lot of acres, it was all close around the lake so they could have a swim any time they felt like it.

Everything in connection with the school was now in readiness to start to build. Frank Gordon who lived on the west side of the Rama road just opposite the Russell place got the contract and he hired Arthur as a helper, He also boarded at our place, He was a good carpenter, and a quick one, so that it was good training for Arthur who up till this time had not had much experience in that type of work. They had it completed by late fall.

One little thing I benefited by, and it stayes in my mind so well because it gave me such a lift. Frank was sitting resting one evening and smokeing his pipe and watching me as I sawed the next days fire wood, Comparitively little wood was burned on the summer days as during winter, so the job always fell to me, for it was concidered too trivial for the grown-ups to bother with. What grown-ups never seemed to concider was that quite small jobs are big jobs to youngsters if they are at all heavey to perform, and I have always thought of sawing as a hard job. Frank said to me, "That saw doesn't seem very sharp does it?" I said "I don't know, maybe it isn't".

There was no doubt that it was pretty dull, for neither Dad or the other boys had any experience in sharpening saws up until that time, and why should they worry. It was me that had to use it. Frank said "If you can cut enough wood to last for tomorrow, I'll take the saw with me to work and sharpen it for you", This I did, and by next evening he was back with the saw nicely, sharpened, and I remember before he gave it to me he inspected the saw-horse to make sure there were no nail-heads sticking up.

I was flabbergasted, The difference between a dull saw and a sharp one is conciderable, but I had never before used a buck-saw that cut like that one did, it just seemed to melt through the wood, there was soon a big enough supply to last for several days, and sawing the wood became more of a pleasure than a disagreeable job. Of course, untill the novelty wore off.

That was a busy summer all round, Mother and Nell had lots of work on their hands to care and feed six men and the rest of us, to say nothing of the weekends when several more of the young folks would be sure to troop back from Sunday school to supper and to spend the evening in talk and fun, Nearly always the men-folk would want to walk around the different fields to look at the crops, The visitors comparing them with their own, and there was nearly always some discussion started regarding the farm work or the oxen and horses.

We had bought another cow, and Glad, had lent us one of his, (why I don't know) perhaps he couldn't be bothered to look after it, or it may have been a contribution for



all the hanging around and the meals he got at our place, for nobody could ever say that Glad, was not generous.

Anyway, Nell had lots of cows to milk now, and it sure took a lot of milk, cream, and butter to keep all our crowd going.

My chores remained much the same, for the larger herd made no difference in respect to locating and driving them into the corral each evening, and the same single smudge answered the same purpose. The water question I had greatly improved the summer before with my ox and stone-boat, only that this year I had been obliged to break-in and train another steer, The last year one had been butchered for our winters meat.

I think Dad was getting used to the country a bit, although I expect he did not realize it, and of course he never was completely at home in Canada, and spoke of it always as a (beastly cold country), but his work in connection with the school gave him much more interest. It was something more in his line, and the other two trustees were far from being anything like business men and left most of the work to Dad, Also he was able to devote more time to the project as the others had their farms to attend to.

The question arose as to a name for the school, Our three boys wanted the same name as our school In London where we had all attended, (excepting Muriel of course) she was too young, and as nobody else had any preference, or seemed to care much about It the name Bellenden was adopted.

It may seem strange that the three elder boys should want the school named in this way, for in their school days they had grumbled and complained at the restrictions and rules of the school, and at the teachers that were so tough that one might gather that they were caned and beaten at the least provocation, although to my knowledge neither of them were at any time subjected to any punishment.

Perhaps this only goes to show that in their mature years they had realized that the strict discipline of the school and the teachers had turned out to be a benefit to them, and that the old school was something to be proud of after all.

The name had always seemed to be a funny one to me, (and still does), although I suppose one must know the origin of a name to understand properly.

Anyhow, I suppose I am the only person who is able to say they attended Bellenden school in London England and and also Bellenden school in Canada.

Mac. had sold his threshing outfit at the end of the run the previous fall to some of the people he had threshed for, and had agreed to return the following fall to run it for them again, This left no outfit in our immediate district, so we should have to rely on some machine to come in from the outside.

Dad and I had gone over to Murrays for some reason, and we stayed for dinner. Dad Murray was busy stacking his grain with the help of Mac. who was doing the stacking, as Dad thought he was not quite up to makeing a professional job of it himself.

While we were eating our meal, Mac, came in followed by two other men and said he was called away to his Job of running the threshing machine, and so would not be able to carry on with the stacking.

This left Dad Murray in rather a dangerous position with a grain stack half built, and should it rain, the whole thing could be completely spoiled and lost.

Of the two elder Murray boys, only Jack was at home, George was up at Sam Moores where both the boys had been at different times to help out. Probably on a basis of (board and lodgeing with clothes and necessities supplied) and no money changing hands, They also received some training, and there was at least one less mouth to feed at home.

Anyhow, Jack thought he could finish the stack, he had been watching Mac. at the job and thought he knew just about how to go about it himself, (Dad Murray was not so sure).

It always seemed that the Murray boys could not wait to grow up and get at doing all the handleing of oxen or horses, and operateing the farm machinery, and I guess I was just the same,

It was not until we had grown bigger and older, and were obliged to do this kind of thing in order to earn our liveing that it finally dawned on us that it was nothing more nor less than just plain (work) and was much the same as the chores we grumbled and growled about and thought of every way possible to get out of doing them. Perhaps the chores were more tiresome because of their sameness, and the fact that they had to be done without fail each day and regardless of other circumstances. The grown-ups work had more variety, and therefore did not get so monotonous.

To return to the dilemma at Murrays, there was really not much choice other than to let Jack try his hand at the job, at least until that one open stack was finished and made safe, and it was settled satisfactorily when Dad offered to let me stay and aid Jack by pitching the sheaves to him across the stack In the proper direction with the butts to the outside. Grain stacks were wide, and were difficult for the load pitcher to throw completely across.

Jack and I were both thrilled at being able to do this, for kids enjoy doing things together, and it worked out so well that we continued on and stacked the complete crop.

Dad Murray got the worst of the deal, he did all the pitching, The following spring. Dad Murray gave me a little Tamworth pig in recognition of my help with the stacking, and in the course of time it grew up and produced nine little ones, All sows but one, and theoretically I should have become one of the big hog farmers of the district, But it didn't work out that way.

John went to work for Mac. that fall, to do all his fall work on the farm, for Mac. could make much more money running the threshing outfit than he would have to pay John.

Rollie Tomkins went out to the Yorkton district for harvest and threshing, and worked for Jesse McDonald in the Wallace district, Arthur was still on the school building, and George did the work at home.

As the late fall came on, there was the usual influx of those who had been away at work, and there was the usual slowdown as frost and snow brought everything to almost a stand-still.

Rollie came back and stuck around with the boys and made himself usefull when necessary. Most of the young bachelors (even those who had places and shacks of their own) usually attached themselves to one or the other of families as a means of breaking the monotony and loneliness, and to get a good home cooked meal occassionally, as a variation from their own tack, In return for this they made themselves usefull in whatever way presented itself, There would always be some job turning up that required an extra helping hand.

John's house was completed that fall to the point where it could be made use of, and if I remember correctly it was used as sleeping quarters at times when the home became overloaded.

As it was feared might happen, no threshing machine had come into the district, and there was already a few inches of snow.

Mac. haveing returned from his job up north, (and being a canny Scot.) saw an oportunity in the threshing to be done to enable him to get another and better threshing machine, so made inquireies and succeeded in getting a repossessed machine, The engine a (Robert Bell) was supposed to have been reconditioned, but later observation showed that this had not been done to a very great extent, The separator, (also Robert Bell) was brand new.

Mac. persuaded John to go in with him on this deal and invest his falls wages, also he would have the oportuntly of running the separator. John fell for this idea, and like George with his pony, and Arthur with his bronchos, had wanted to do something on his own, and went into this without consulting the other members of the family, which they didn't like very much.

However, it was already done, and it would at least get the threshing done, and that would solve that problem. No threshing meant no straw for feed and bedding, and no grain meant no money to pay the bills.

The machine seemed to be trouble right from the start when it failed to turn up within a reasonable time, and the fall was getting later, the cold more severe, and more snow could be expected at any time.

John was quite enthusiastic about it all, and watched anxiously each day for the machine to arrive, but as time went on and nothing happened we got to joking with him about it, although it was certainly not a joking matter. Apparently it had got side-tracked in the wrong place somewhere, and John next told us "Oh wev'e got a tracer on it now, it won't be long" but this only brought another laugh from the rest of us.

John had done lots of threshing, but up to this time had not had any experience with the actual operation of a machine, This accounted for most of his enthusiasm, for otherwise he might have dreaded the winter threshing more than looked forward to it, and of course when he finally got at it, it was something of a delusion to him, He was still staying at Macs. although he had officially finished his work there, but he was not needed at home as there were plenty to do any necessary work, Besides that he was finding some attraction at the Richardsons and did not want any inquisitive probes from the family, Not yet anyway.

At last the machine arrived, and John and Mac. went to have a look at it and to see what would be necessary for the unloading, John came back bubbleing with excitement to tell us.

"Oh, you'll like the separator," he said "Yellow, with green trim." I expect by the time he had battled with the thing for a couple of days it could have been any color of the rainbow for all he cared.

It was within a few days of Xmas, and as often happens about that time it had turned colder, so it would not be very pleasant fussing around with water and wood to get steam up on a dead engine and remove it from the rail-road flat-car.

It was found almost immediately that the engine was not In the best of shape, although it was supposed to be in working order, but on getting up steam pressure a lot of minor leaks showed up where engine and transmission gears were bolted to the boiler by heavey brackets which suggested it had been handled quite roughly at some time,

Harry Stevens was fire-man, as he was the only one who had any experience in that work. It was duly unloaded as was the separator and proceeded down the Rama road.

Frozen ground and six inches of snow were not very good conditions for maneuvering one of these ungainly machines with iron wheels, and as they were proceeding over

the narrow grade just south of the town the engine slid sidewise over the edge of the grade and came to rest at a decided angle. At the same moment the smoke-stack fell off, having rusted away at the base.

There was not much could be done till the following day, the engine could not climb back onto the grade, nor could it be operated without a smoke-stack, I believe they were obliged to take out the fire and drain the boiler, for being at a crazy angle no doubt the water did not cover every part of the flues and fire-box and damage would soon occur, I was not there, so I can only remember what was said about it all at home, and there was sure plenty said after they had shivered around in the cold for all of the next day before they got under way.

Fortunately Mac. had a good sized sheet of Iron in his Black-smith shop and was able to manufacture a smoke-stack of sorts which although a little on the short side answered the purpose untill the next fall when the company were obliged to supply a new one. The jack supplied with the separator turned out to be not strong enough to lift the engine, and in desperation they approached the section forman to lend them a jack, This of course was strictly against the rules of the rail-road, but under the circumstances he stretched a point, but sent one of his men along to see the equipment was properly handled, and duly returned.

They raised the engine to a level position, supported it with railroad ties, planks and stones, and having got up steam eased it to the end of the grade where the separator was then pulled through with a chain.

Perhaps in one way it was fortunate that it was winter and frozen hard, for had it been summer, the engine would for certainly have sunk far into the mud of the slough.

The rest of the way was made without mishap, possibly because there were no more grades, but only winding trails, Many men were needed to supply water and wood fuel for the engine, and to direct the way with stable-lanterns and point out all hazards to the engineer. They arrived at Mac's, farm late into the night all extremely tired and very cold and hungry. No doubt they enjoyed the supper waiting for them, and Mac. commended them all on having (stuck it out) for so long, Nothing more was done until after Xmas was over, and until the weather had moderated to some extent.

Threshing in winter is a miserable business at best, for the short hours of day-light, the cold, and the snow and ice over everything hinder the whole operation, and cause trouble and discomfort in every direction. Threshing with steam power was doubly so, as both water tank and engine were in continual danger of freezing, and could not be left unattended for any length of time without serious consequences. The fire-man then required some extra help to fill in while he ate and slept, Arthur did this, as he eventually expected to learn to fire and finally operate the engine. Glad. hauled water, for it went without saying that he was sure to be around when any such thing was going on, He used to say he just loved the thrill and excitement that went on during a

threshing operation, and the fun and banter that went on among the crew, As with everyone else, as age came on, and the necessity of going through this period each fall, both the Interest and the glamor fell off and threshing became something more to dread than to look forward to.

Threshing started as soon as the weather moderated somewhat. First at McLennans, and so on around the local district, The grain was of course all in stacks, which helped a lot, for only the outside of the stacks could be either wet or have snow in it, It took a little time to know all the ins and outs of the separator, but George had quite a lot of experience and so was a great help to John who had very little. George always claimed that it was a poor machine for our country, where straw was heavy, and carried a certain amount of trash in it from the rough fields, also it was tricky to set and adjustments required close watching at all times, He suspected that it was made for service back east where crops were lighter, and most threshing was done on the level barn floors. The fact that it had very narrow wheels suggested that it had not been intended to roll over soft stubble fields or cross soft areas in transportation.

The following fall extentions had to be made to these wheels. Anyhow, John had his share of troubles with the new machine and the added conditions experienced in winter threshing, so that in the matter of a very few days he had forgotten about the yellow color and the green trimmings of the separator, and was only concerned in getting it to run as smoothly as possible.

All things concidered, things went along fairly well, with no serious set-backs until all of the threshing was cleaned up, and the machine back in McLenan's yard.

They had at least found out a few of the things that would have to be remedied before the next falls run.

Winter now settled back to the usual slack period in work, when only the necessities were taken care of, and more social life could be enjoyed, Now of course, there was no horses for the trips to Rama to take in the concerts, dances, and various other meetings of interest, John had bought a small light cutter which he intended to harness Billy to, but very shortly sold both pony and cutter to Mr.Kelly to use for his trips out from Buchanan to the Sunday school every two weeks, and also to his other out-lying churches. What caused this change of plans for John I don't know, and of course I was too young to be let into anything of this nature, but in all probability some financial crisis popped up which also would not be revealed to me.

The Bellenden school was completed by fall of 1911, and Dad had advertised for a teacher, but it was well into Jan. of 1912 before one turned up, Perhaps It was our remote district that discouraged everyone from concidering the position.

Our first teacher was Sabinel Private, (pronounced Pro-vat) Dad said her name suggested French decent, but it was not noticeable in (Sabie) as she was called by most of the adults.

She was to board and lodge at our place. It being the nearest point to the school, and all the following teachers did the same for some years. What she thought of our place and the school we were not to know, but I am sure it was very little.

Over the years we had become accustomed to the rough and primitive conditions and did not think much about it, (especially us young ones) but we have many times since thought what a trial it must have been to those first few teachers before conditions got better, all of them coming from good homes or from the city.

Dad and Mother always endeavored to keep a good home, and I suppose in many senses it was, but we were just not in good enough circumstances to have much of the comforts and luxuries of life, and the general conditions in the country at large could not be termed anything other than pretty rough.

The school was in a remote and lonely area, where there was at that time no passing traffic, so that it was only people and vehicles going to and from the school that kept the trails open, and most of the time there were just foot-paths.

It was a mile and a half from our place, and as it was built on the corner of the school section, it meant that for almost a mile beyond the school there would be no residents.

I was detailed to go early to start the fire in the heater for which I received two dollars a month during the winter, I can remember in the extreme cold spells being so chilled, and my hands so cold that I had difficulty in getting the key into the door-lock. In normal winter weather it was not too bad though.

There was an attendance of fifteen to eighteen for that winter, but it dropped off in the spring, some of the boys of about my age were obliged to stay home to work, I was fortunate, (although I didn't think so) for Dad and Mother kept me at school as much as possible, although there were times that I had to miss a few days when I was needed at home.

My dislike of school was still with me, but not so much as when I was a little boy in England, Things seemed more free and easy now, and most of the children I was well acquainted with, but what bothered me most was being in such a low grade in comparison to my age, for I had now missed four years of schooling, and must have forgotten a lot in the interval.

However, I had lots of company as many of the others were in the same boat, excepting the little ones like Muriel and Connie Murray who were then only just old enough to start school.

My school days were going to make quite a difference to me, although at first I didn't think of it, and it was quite some time before I noticed that I was to some extent losing contact with the three elder boys. There had always been a gap, and I was never included with them in most ways, but up till now I had pretty well nosed into all the farm work with them and had become familiar with all they were doing, and all they intended to do, and in many cases was actually involved in the work they were doing. It was going to be different now, and during the next three years school would take of the farm work, but not the chores. They would be with me always, and now there would be only morning and evening to do them in.

I didn't get along very well at school that year, and of course like most children I blamed the teacher for it. She was a nice enough person, and everyone got along fine with her, (and so did I out of school) but from my point of view it seemed that she never taught us anything. She just gave us lessons without any previous instruction, and it seemed that by some mysterious way we were supposed to know how to do them.

One subject only did she like to teach us about, and that was nature study, and she would carry on with that in great length and detail. She must have been very fond of it.

We muddled though somehow, by talking between ourselves, and getting information from our parents, but I don't think I learned very much that summer. No doubt some of the trouble was with myself, for I had been long away from school, and quite likely the Canadian system was different to the English and perhaps caused me some confusion.

It was in the early spring of this year, before the snow had gone, that Arthur made another attempt to find his team, With all the inquiring and advertising there was not a trace of them, but it was expected that during the winter they would in all probability have attached themselves to some farm in order to obtain feed, and in this way it might be easier to locate them.

We had no pony now, so Arthur borrowed a horse from Glad. I cannot remember all of Glad's horses, for he was always buying and selling, and never kept any of them for any length of time, Only one team stays in my mind, because he kept them a little longer than the others, and I believe he once left them with us while he was away at work somewhere.

I remember when he first got them he brought them to church one Sunday and was quite proud of them because they were a bit wild and had lots of speed which was the main feature with Glad. as far as horses were concerned, Whether they were suitable for the farm work was only of minor concern.



When the service was over we all trooped out to look Glad's team over (boys and girls too) for in those days the young girls were just as interested in the young fellows teams as they are today in their sports cars and hot-rods.

They turned out to be a rather small and skinny team of bronchos, and the fact that they had harness on that was somewhat too large for them, made them appear even smaller than they were, so Glad. was rather put out when the girls made very disparaging remarks, about them, and said they were nothing but a couple of skinny jack-rabbits.

As quite often happened we were all to go to our place for supper. The girls, Carrie Lockhart, Caroline Richardson, Nell, and Vi. Stevens, Got into Charlie Lockhart's wagon and team much to Glad's disgust that they didn't ride with him.

George, Arthur, Charlie, and I, (and someone else) probably Rollie Tomkins, went with Glad. Nell was driveing Charlies team, and Glad made the remark "Let me go first, I don't want that team of farm plugs in my way". So it was that Glad, started out with a flourish but it was noticed that the other team was not too far behind. Comeing to a grain field, the trail had been diverted down the edge of the field to the comer where it turned at right-angles to connect with the trail again.

Glad. followed the diversion, although it was not strictly necessary for there was nothing growing in the field at the time, Arthur, (with a bit of the devil in him) turned round and motioned to Nell to cut across the comer which she hastily did and in a few seconds had gained the main trail again before Glad. had glanced sidewise and seen what was takeing place.

It was the (last straw) for Glad. With a big yell he put his team to a gallop in an endeavor to get by the other team, and the girls were just as determined that he shouldn't.

For the next half mile there was a merry chase. Not so much in speed, for it was the continual comeing up of trees and bushes along the trail that made it impossible to pass.

Comeing to the intersection where we turned off up the so called (short cut) to our place, Glad chose to keep to the Pelly trail and go the long way round in hope of winning by sheer speed, He had at once lost, for the distance must have been twice as far, but in his anger Glad, had not concidered this and we had a hair-raising time trying to hang on over the bumpy places, while Charlie tried to persuade Glad. that he was only harming his team, and to slow down and give up.

Naturally, the girls won hands down, They were already home and had the team unharnessed.

But Glad, was not one to stay mad very long, he was soon laughing and joking with the rest of us about it all. His team were named Beanie and Frank. The name (Beanie came about by the fact that with his original owner he had been tied to the wagon while waiting in town (which was standard practise when there was neither posts or trees to secure the horses to, but in this case Beanie had reached into the wagon and eaten about half a bushel of beans purchased for the family consumption.

Returning now to Arthur and his quest for Bess and Nance, it was the horse Frank that Glad. lent him for the purpose, and brought to my mind the forgoing episode of some of the nonsense that can go on when young folks get together.

Arthur was away a long time, and Mother was getting quite concerned, for there was just no way of knowing where he was, or if he was in any kind of trouble, However, this time he was successful, and located the team far to the south, Almost to the, border I think, but I cannot now remember the exact area.

It would seem that they had certainly tried to get back to their original home in Montana as we had expected, but could not find their way around all the fences and had eventually wintered with some other horses on some-ones farm.

Arthur said it was almost the same thing over again to get a rope on them, but as it was winter and the farmer was not very busy, he and his men aided him in gradually corraling them into a small area, and finally into the barn.

The rawhide halters were still on them, and once caught they gave little trouble, although he had to be continually on the alert to make sure they didn't get loose at nights when he was sometimes unable to persuade them into a barn where he was obliged to rest over night.

I remember he arrived home in the very early morning as he had traveled all night on the last lap.

It would seem that the horses retained some slight remembrance of the place, for he said they hesitated only momentarily when he led them into the stable.

Of course the breaking in had to start all over again, but it was not long before they were at least as gentle as before they had escaped, although I remember they were not of much value around the farm except for driving purposes until the following year, and at that time the boys bought a big black clyde horse of a very mild nature which they expected would tend to hold the other two down a bit so that they might be used on the farm machinery. This idea worked quite well, although as time went on the big black horse (who was named Rodger) was somewhat slow and plodding, while the bronchos remained quite snappy, so that it made an uneven three horse team.

There was a gradual change taking place with us and of course everyone in the district. We had got through those first tough years at the beginning, and a general improvement was taking place although it was still by no means easy. We were getting rid of some of the trees, and more land was being broken up, which of course meant bigger crops.

The cattle herds were getting bigger, but as yet quite slowly as it always seemed that some of the increase had to be disposed of to raise a little ready cash at some time.

More pigs were being raised as more feed grain became available, and chicken flocks were getting bigger, and perhaps most of all we were learning how to go about the business of farming more and more, and making less mistakes.

Nell now milking seven cows, quite a load for one person, there was no sale for the cream at that time and it was churned into butter. We used a lot of that ourselves, but the surplus was worth very little and could only be traded in for groceries at the store. My chores in summer remained the same, Sawing and carrying in the wood, hauling the water, hunting the cows in the evening, and making a smudge for them.

Muriel, about eight now, was beginning to make herself useful in some ways.

The environment was changing slightly. Trees were being cut and burned for firewood and for clearing, and therefore the fields and open spaces were getting bigger, letting in the air and we began to notice the wind more, especially in the cold part of the year. We seemed to notice the odd muskrat house, and there were a few grouse to be seen, and even the odd bush rabbit. All these had been non-existent when we first came, or nearly so, for it was something to remark about if we saw one.

The ducks had always been plentiful on account of all the sloughs, and they were still with us, and 1912 was a very wet summer and it seemed that one continually had wet feet. There were not good strong rubbers in those days and they were very easily snagged, nor could we afford several pairs of foot-wear, so we just splashed through it all with our boots.

Also on the first fields we had broken, a few stones were working up to the surface and had to be removed. In the first years there had been absolutely none, but with the breaking of the sod and the action of the moisture and frost there got to be so many in later years as to become a problem and were required to be picked off each season.

I think it was the spring of this year that Arthur went to Yorkton to work, and this time he hired on with a carpenter. He was John Baptiste, and Arthur figured he could handle this work now, having got considerable experience on the school job, and as he worked most of the summer in this way he afterwards considered himself a carpenter and did all of this work around home and the finishing of John's house. He

was also in demand at many of the (Raiseing Bees) that occurred from time to time in the district.

I used to wonder if he would not eventually take up that line of work in preference to farming, but he seemed to like the farming best even if there was more risk and longer hours of work, and in the end was the only one of us who stayed with the farming right through.

Most happenings in other parts of the world always seemed quite remote to us, and any news we got was always quite old, we only had the weekly news-paper, and in busy periods of the year we might not get the mail for some time, but the Titanic disaster caused quite a little flurry,

We had read of this big ship they were building which was much bigger than anything previously built, and that it was with water-tight compartments and considered unsinkable, so when she was lost on her maiden voyage with a great loss of life there was great surprise and consternation, and much talk and controversy on how it happened, what the cause was, and who if any, were to blame.

I can remember George and Mr. Kelly raving on about it when he came out on the week-end, saying there should not have been so much loss of life even if there had not been enough life-boats as reported, that there had been plenty of time before the boat actually sank for someone to tear something loose and construct some sort of raft or means to keep them afloat, as it was reported that the sea was exceptionally calm, Both of them of course, as the saying goes (talking through their hats) for they had not the least conception of what it must be like in a disaster such as that where people do not act normally or perhaps panic completely.

Mr. Kelly spoke at great length about it in his sermon on Sunday, he had obtained many of the dimensions and specifications of the great ship, and gave many comparisons of its size in relation to other things, but he took a religious attitude to the disaster in general, saying it was a mockery to the Almighty for the people of the world to think they could accomplish such great things, That only God could do great and magnificent things.

I was only a youngster at the time, and most of his sermons I could not absorb or understand at all, but this was something more along every-day lines, and I remember thinking his theory was (all wet), for having now lived for some years in this back-woods environment I had from necessity become quite practical about most things, and it occurred to me that for hundreds of years we had already been endeavoring to make things bigger and better, and even in the very book he was preaching out of we read of many huge and magnificent structures being built.

And weren't we right then in our very small way trying to get more powerful teams and stronger machinery to plow out our tree stumps.

Even in this present day we still marvel at ancient structures built thousands, perhaps millions of years ago, and wonder how they were accomplished. Our buildings today, (although better equipped by the discoveries over the years,) are cardboard boxes in comparison to the buildings of the early ages.

There is no doubt that there were many people in the district that I have not mentioned, Some we never got acquainted with, and others who we may only have visited in their homes only on rare occasions, but we became friendly with them by meeting them at social events, or by working with them on road work, threshing, wood-sawing, or any community work.

The Wallins were a Swedish family, Charlie, the eldest boy was married and lived in the States, but Gunnar, Eric, Oscar, and Elsie all lived at home excepting when they might have been away at work, Eric was about my age, and Elsie and Oscar quite young at that time, Mr. and Mrs. Wallin were a quiet friendly couple, (as were the whole family for that matter) and enjoyed having anyone drop in to see them, Mrs. Wallin would immediately proceed to make coffee, but then would haul out some sandwiches, six kinds of cookies, four kinds of cake, and probably some pie.

(It is obvious I have exaggerated on the last) but her main object seemed to be that just nobody was going to go away hungry.

Perhaps at that age I noticed this more, for what youngster is not always desperately hungry.

We got to know them very well and at times I have worked with Eric and Oscar and kept in touch with them always.

Gunnar, Eric and Oscar were all violin players, and Elsie played the organ, so that they were in great demand at all the dances.

The Wellines were another Swedish family. We didn't know them very intimately, I think there were four, (perhaps five) in the family, I remember the father (Alfred) worked on our threshing outfit one fall.

The Atkins came from Chicargo, They built a good sized lumber house and had horses, One boy Fred, and Florence a few years younger, possibly only three or four at that time.

Mrs. Atkins was disgusted with the whole set-up and very much wanted to go back to the city again. However she didn't, and gradually adapted to the rough country life, and they remained on their homstead there always, as did Florence after them.

We did not know them very well, but we knew them always.

Luke Murphy was a young fellow who turned up from Buchanan one day and dropped in to see us, He talked with Dad for quite some time and said he was going to buy cattle and pigs in the district, I shall always remember that what struck me most about him was his bright blue eyes, and the way he looked directly at one,

Dad took to him immediately, as he said he appeared to him to be quite straight-forward, and of course this was something Dad liked to see in people, and in all the years we knew Luke (which was always) we found him definitely straight-forward and honest.

Dad was pleased to see him start in this work because up till then we were obliged to depend on a rather doubtful lot of cattle dealers, where one never felt sure as to whether they were getting a square deal or not.

He sent me along with Luke to show him the way to some of the farmers in the district, and I spent quite a pleasant afternoon. Luke had a real nice light team of drivers and buggy, and they could sure step out, He told us later that they would go ten miles an hour (for one hour of course) longer period would naturally be less.

This could be considered pretty well top speed for a driving team, The general rule was that a team of farm plugs would go six miles an hour, a driving team eight, and a real tip-top team ten miles an hour, I have been told that the early stage coaches traveled ten miles an hour between the points where they changed horses, and that these stations were approximately ten miles apart. Coach horses though, were of a different type to driving horses, (Standard breds I believe) a bigger lanky type, as they were required to pull something of a load.

Luke later married Clara Merfield from the Buchanan district and they had a good sized family, Many years later they moved into the Rama district and settled on the farm which was Bill Offer's original homestead, and Luke remained the chief cattle buyer for the district always.

We saw a lot of Charlie Clifford that summer, for he took a fancy to our school teacher and so visited quite often, He had a riding pony he used, and later obtained another one so as they could both go riding, As with all young people Sabie was thrilled at having some money of her own to spend and no-one to tell her how she should spend it, She immediately spent her pay-check each month on a big order from Eaton's catalogue which included among other things a complete riding outfit, I can remember her at once putting it on and parading around outside in it. I suppose it must have had the desired effect, for when she left our school she went a few stations up the line and secured a teaching position there, but later came back and married Charlie and they lived in the district for several years. Eventually they moved down east, Timmins Ont. I think, although I couldn't be sure. We lost track of them completely.

The (Rama ditch) caused quite an upheaval in the district at that time, and for many years later.

I was too young at that time to know anything about such things and therefore was not interested in any way until it started to take shape and then it became quite intriguing to me.

I have since tried to find out just how it came about, and what was the origin of the thing, but no-one I have questioned seemed to remember. It may have been the brain child of the municipal council, or it may have been agitation from a few or many of the settlers, I can only remember there was a lot of talk and controversy over the scheme before it was started, and again after it was completed.

Some thirty years later when I happened to visit Mr. Sam Moores in Vancouver B.C. where he was then living, He brought up the subject and blamed Joe Howse for bringing the thing about, and referred to him as a wicked man for involving everyone in such a crippling expense.

However, I can hardly think that Joe was such an important personage in the district to have influenced many of the residents.

I have no doubt that he had lots to say about it, and that it afforded him many free meals and pipes full of tobacco, but I think that would be about the limit as far as he was concerned.

Perhaps it can be said that regardless of who or what brought the scheme to be considered, it was first the need to get rid of some of the water in the country, and secondly the means to get that first four miles of road built south from Rama.

It was realized that eventually all of the traffic from our southerly district would funnel into that piece of road at the point where the township lines intersected and go directly into Rama, making it a trunk road.

It was also realized that this stretch of road was going to be the most difficult and expensive of any to build, and at the present rate that road building was being done it would take many years to complete.

It was thought that the solution would be to dig a deep ditch with what at that time would be considered heavy machinery at the side of the road-allowance and to place the earth from it at the centre to form a grade, and in this way serve a double purpose of lowering the water in the district and creating a road. Actually quite practical thinking, but perhaps no-one could realize the magnitude of the project, and the eventual tax rate it put on the sections adjacent to the ditch.

There was at first much controversy over the whole thing, many saying it would be of great advantage to them in draining their land, while others claimed it would be of little help to them, For instance the residents on the east aide of the road said their land drained to the east, and only that part of it that was directly close to the ditch would be drained, but the assessment for them would be the same as for those on the west side whos farms would be completely drained, This of course was so, for the general slope of the district terain was from the N.West to the S.East. Others in the lower regions wondered if so much water pouring down each spring might cause flooding and delay them in seeding their crops. The people on the section where the village of Rama was located would have no part of it,

I suppose expense was their objection, but otherwise it seemed very short-sighted, for at that time Rama was mostly slough both north and south of the rail-road track, and only the eastern portion seemed to be in any way above water in the wet periods of the year. Anyway, these people (stuck to their guns) and the ditch was started half a mile to the south.

However, in spite of all the talk and haggleing for and against, the idea must have pleased the majority and it went over, It was of course a government project, and like all such things took some time to get going and finally to be completed.

The crop in 1912 may have been a good one, As mentioned before, my school days somewhat cut me off from the work being carried on with the farming, but I remember the threshing machine made a long and successful run that fall, Mac. and John ran the machine, and Arthur fired, Glad. hauled water, They cleaned up the local district and ended up in the district far north of Rama and quite late in the season.

In quite early fall our school teacher decided she was not going to spend another winter in our district and put in her resignation.

This might have caused another long period of waiting for another applicant, but unknown to me, and perhaps to anyone else but Dad, someone was available almost immediately so there was no delay.

Will Bailey's two sisters (or perhaps the three of them) had arrived in Canada and were employed somewhere in Manitoba Dora as a teacher, Edith and Mabel both nurses. Their only home now (if it could be called such) was their brother Will's homestead just half a mile south and the same distance east of Rama.

It was therefore only natural that they should want to get closer to the erea where their brother was and their sister Florrie who was now married to Will Hoyer.

Evidently Dora had made it known to Will (or perhaps directly to Dad) that she would like to obtain a school somewhere in the erea, so Dad contacted her at once and she became our next teacher.



This was quite a good break for me, and I think for all the other children, as we had all had difficulty in learning from Sable Pravate, so that the change was almost miraculous.

Learning at once became easier when we were instructed first before having to answer any questions or write anything down so that our work became less frustrating and therefore much less of a task. We had also been loaded with home-work always of which we had difficulty in doing always unless we could get some help from our parents. Home-work was now immediately done away with, our new teacher's theory was that most farm children had chores to do, and home-work only conflicted with this, and that if children went to school to learn, that was where they should be taught. Dora Bailey remained at Bellenden for that winter, the next summer, and the following winter, She boarded at our place, and each week-end walked to her home at Rama when-ever weather and trail conditions were good enough for her to do so. Later, when an opening became available she left to teach at the Rama school where she was able live at home, So it was that many of the children received part or all of their education from her over a large area of the district and it is pleasing to note that in later years that many of them expressed their appreciation in having been taught by her.

For my own part, I can only say that I owe the greatest part of my scanty education to her.

It may have been that winter (I could not be sure) that Dad Murray went to Yorkton to take charge of Tiney Cahill's livery barn to subsidize his farm income, leaving Mrs, Murray and the two eldest boys in charge at home. The boys were still quite young (perhaps fourteen and sixteen) and Mrs, Murray was not familiar with, or capable of doing or supervising any of the outside work, but the boys had got to be pretty resourcefull and dependable by this time and seemed to manage quite well.

It was by this means, and at this time that the Murrays were able to gradually switch from oxen to horses, for Dad Murray having been a coachman in England definitely understood horses better than he did the oxen, and was now in a good position to pick out the type of horses he wanted, he also got much other equipment usefull for the farm at the various auction sales that were held, and got much information from the farmers who stabled their horses at the barn.

At this time George was in some need of some dentistry and decided to go to Yorkton for this purpose, and to make a little money to pay for it, and he was able to get work at the same place as Dad Murray, George came home in early spring, but Dad stayed for some time if I remember correctly, A year at least, and the boys managed the farm work at home although Dad may have come back for short periods at the busy seasons, I remember it kept the two elder boys away from school for a lot of the time, and they must have fared worse than I as far as their education was concerned.

In that late fall of 1912 before the snow got too deep we saw land surveyors doing some preliminary work in connection with the Rama ditch. The work was done by the firm of Phillip Stuart and Lee in Saskatoon, It was convenient to do the work at this time of the year as they were able to travel anywhere with the sloughs all being frozen over and to test their depth by merely cutting a hole through the ice.

They gathered up a few swampers from among the (Rama boys) and went out each day with team and sleigh. The ditch was to run straight down the Rama road as far as Murray's slough, but from there on would take a winding course in a general south-easterly direction for some miles. When they were working on the lower end they used to pass through our yard on the way and return about dusk in the evening. The Rama boys singing lustily as they went by.

I am certain that should anyone in the Rama district today happen to read this narrative they would at once doubt all my reference to all the water there was in the country at that time and just put it down to an exaggeration of an old timer and the stretching of the truth when there was no-one available to contradict them, for today it is impossible to visualize what it was like at that time. Most of the sloughs where we used to cut hay don't seem to be there any more and are now growing grain, and where us boys used to swim in four or five feet of water there will now only be water during the spring run-off.

The surveyors said Murray's slough was nine feet deep, and it stretched for over half a mile and was at least a quarter of a mile wide. I can remember John who had for some time found some magnetic force drawing him periodically up to Richardsons coming sleepy eyed to breakfast and complaining that it seemed he had been continually wading through pot-holes, and Rollie Tomkins coming back with "Oh yes, but I suppose you would be able to jump them all on the way up".

And one open fall I was able to walk only a quarter of a mile or so, then get on the ice and skate for a full mile down a chain of sloughs to within a short distance of the school.

I doubt if I saved any time or energy, it was just the novelty of the thing.

A few years later, we had a combination of circumstances which made a great change, we had an extremely dry summer, and in the same year the ditch was completed, so that never again was there so much water, or perhaps I should better say that never again was the water level so high, for there always was, and always will be, the wet and dry periods.

I think it was that winter, (but the time element is not of importance in this case) that two lady evangelists came to the district and held meetings at the Pioneer Sunday school each evening and managed to work up a lively congregation in the short time they were there. People were more religiously inclined in those days, but perhaps

being the slack season of the year, and the novelty of the thing caused a lot of people to attend. The principal one of the team was Miss Rankin, a middle aged woman, and the other Miss Thomson was a young girl perhaps under twenty. her job was to make all arrangements and conduct the singing, which she did quite well by useing familiar tunes to the hymns even if they were not regular hymn tunes, the idea being that there was no excuse for anyone not to sing. Some of the strictly religious frowned somewhat at first on singing a hymn to the tune of Old Black Joe but it was soon forgotten about when the two of them became generally liked by everyone as they were non denominational.

Miss Rankin did all the preaching, with a little help from Miss Thomson with the prayers, Charlie Lockhart in his practical way (and useing homstead language) said, "Oh I suppose Miss Rankin is just breaking Miss Thomson in"

Wether they accomplished anything by their efforts is questionable and a matter of opinion, Personally I think the social atmosphere it created among the people was most beneficial.

In the year of 1913 a few things happened that were to effect the way of life to some extent for all our family.

The McLennans sold their farm and moved to the Dunrobin district somewhere out from Sheho. John decided to get married, and the three elder boys of our family left home to start out on their own.

Of course I did not hear about any of this until it happened, and I was too young to realize what a change it would eventurely bring about, Youngsters don't think much about the future, and are only interested in the day to day happenings.

It is inevitable that families will sooner or later break up, it had started years before when George left to come to Canada, but we had all got together again and remained that way for some years now, so that three leaveing all at once would make something of an upheaval. Actually it came about quite gradually and the change was not noticed much by me for quite a long time after, but no doubt Mother and Dad did.

These break-ups usually take the same pattern, the elder ones feel that too much of their money and effort is going into the common centre of the home to benefit the whole family and the home place in general, while they don't seem to be getting their fair share of the income, At the same time they fail to notice the advantages of liveing at home, and the help they are receiveing from the younger members of the family.

They also feel restricted in many ways when the parents are still in charge, and think they could do a lot better if they could have their own way about most things, This is a normal reaction of youth, and perhaps shows they are energetic and progressive, even

if they are not aware of the advantages of home in the care and help they enjoy there until they find themselves without it.

The fact that McLeannans were leaveing, and that John expected to marry, all helped to bring about this change, John was involved with Mac. by the threshing outfit, and it seemed a good move for them to buy him out completely, as they were going to need an extra home, and Mac's farm was a good one.

This may have appeared a very good arrangement to them, and in certain senses it was, but perhaps in the exuberance of youth they did not give enough thought to the enormous undertakeing it was for them in relation to their means at that time, but young people have lots of confidence, and Arthur was the most venturesom of the three of them.

Mac's farm was a good one, and consisted of a half section and eighty acres, (I cannot recollect how he came by the extra quarter and eighty acres) and all of this was much more clear of bush than any of the other farms in the district so that he had managed to get a fair amount of it under cultivation in all one piece, and as it was high land, it was of advantage to him in those first few wet years, while in the succeeding years there was a tendency for the high spots to dry out and become sandy.

John's house had now been made livable, and had for some time been used in a haphazard sort of way, Principally as sleeping accommodation, and the three of them would live there together until such times as John married, and then he met Caroline would take up residence on the McLennan farm.

The boys would take all the horses, oxen, and the farm implements, leaveing Mother and Dad. all the cattle, pigs and chickens, They would also do any wood hauling and transportation we needed for the time being, and would rent the crop land that year as well as put up the hay we needed for the following winter.

As mentioned before, I did not realise what a great change all this would eventurely make. In fact I expect I was pleased that the elder ones were getting out of the way, so that I should not be dominated by them so much.

In the five years we had been on the homestead, things had gradually improved, and we were beginning to feel we were makeing some headway, so that before long we should be in such better circumstances, and be able to have a few of the things that so far had been denied to us. However, this change would keep things standing still for awhile, especially for us who were left at home, and takeing the family as a whole there would now be three homes to keep up instead of only one, to say nothing of many other things that might have to be doubled or trebled.

Dad and Mother must have felt a bit left alone too, and that the home would now depend completely on them, for Nell and I had not yet got to be of much value excepting in our help around the farm which of course I suppose was of some help.

There was also something else we were going to loose which although it was not in dollars and cents had been very valuable to us, This was the enjoyable times we had when all the young people in the same age group of Nell and the elder boys had made our home a gathering place where there was lots of good wholesome fun and nonsense, and at times more serious discussions on almost any topic. The walks around to look at the crops, and the ball games of sorts after supper on Sundays in which I was so reluctant to leave to round up the cows for milking.

It was the beginning of the end of all these happy times.

Perhaps the most remembered thing in that early spring of 1913 was John and Caroline's wedding, It was by no means the first in the district. There had been the McLennan's, Doug, and Maggie Whitman, Joe and Bella Currah, Will and Florrie Hoyer, Pete and Carrie Paterson, but all of them had not been of great interest to us excepting Pete and Carrie, Pete we knew quite well, and Carrie Lockhart we saw a lot of while she kept house for Charlie after their parents left to go east, and she was often in our home as she and Nell and Caroline Richardson were great friends. Nell was Carrie's brides-maid, but she says now that she cannot remember where, or by whom they were married but remembers being at the Tingley's , The Tingleys were Carrie's Aunt and Uncle, so in all probability it was in their home they were married, and almost a certainty that Mr. Morrison married them.

I don't think I have so far mentioned the Rev. Neil Morrison, He was a farmer in the district south of Invermay, he was one of many who were in the country at that time when one wondered why anyone of that type would be in such a place, and I expect many wondered in the same way about us.

Evidently he had preached many years somewhere down east but had given it up when he found he was loosing his hearing, He also lost his wife, and it may have been a combination of these circumstances that caused him to want to get away from everything, and he certainly did it for a time at least.

He soon found himself drawn into the life of the community and performed many of the marriages of the young people and preached at many times and places while still carrying on his farm work. He was very well thought of through-out the area of Invermay and Rama. Many years later Arthur named one of his boys after him. In his retireing years he went back down east again.

John and Caroline's wedding was of course a great event as It was the first In our family, and although it was not the first in the Richardson family it was of great interest

and perhaps of some concern, for Caroline being the eldest girl was the main-stay of the home, and would be greatly missed.

Mrs. Richardson was quite deaf, which of course was a great draw-back to her, but it was counteracted by her wonderful memory which enabled her to remember so many incidents, and the birth-days of all the children in the district, and many of the adults.

Mr. Richardson always seemed old to me, I don't think he was, but the fact that he had a long beard, and was greying, gave me this impression. The whole family were soft spoken and it could be said were generally speaking quiet, with the exception of Mary who was something of a chatter-box.

This was in comparison to our family, who were somewhat noisy and talkative.

The wedding, by reason of the circumstances of both families could not be an elaborate affair, and there was no chance of a honey-moon for the bride and groom, but every effort was made for it to be everything possible, Nell was the maid of honor and Mary, Maggie, and Muriel were brides-maids, George was to be the best man, but George being an extremist in some ways had grown a beard which was certainly (out) for young people at that time, so John who was always the dressy one of the family refused to have such a scare-crow as his best man, and prevailed upon him to shave it off, but George kept him on tenter-hooks until almost the last minute.

It was a coincidence that at this time we should have a visitor, in the shape of Gilbert Birdock, He was the son of a friend of Mother's, As girls they had worked together at the same place before they had married. So Gilbert at the request of his mother, had come down from Saskatoon where he worked as a carpenter to look us up.

Gilbert had a camera with him, so he was going to take some pictures, which is the only reason we managed to have pictures of this event, for there were no cameras in the immediate area at that time, Nell and I still have two of them. Quite faded now, but still interesting to look at, and perhaps good for a laugh at the styles of that time, and Percy and I dressed in just what ever we could scrape up, I had a somewhat worn little summer suit with short pants, but as it was the cold time of year (March) I was obliged to wear my mocasins and thick German socks.

Richardsons had a pure white short-horn ox, and we had one also, so we went to all the trouble of leading our ox up to Richardsons a distance of some three miles, so that the bride could be transported to the church at the Pioneer Sunday school by a team of white oxen, and after the ceremony drive away with our only team of horses, (Bess and Nance)

It was Mr. Kelly that performed the ceremony.

Rollie Tomkins went back to England that winter. He had told his Mother that he might do so in a couple of years if things turned out favorably, and in winter there was very little opportunity to earn any money so this was the logical time to go.

I remember George telling him how foolish he was to do so, and that he was only wasting his money which he might better use to get started in some way of life, George of course thought everybody was crazy who didn't do just what he had in mind, and that was to reach the point of being a gentleman farmer, a position which he never attained.

Rollie, on the other hand had not rushed madly into getting himself a homestead, or shown any sign of settling down in any way, and he had not taken to any particular girl as some of the other young fellows had, and just floated around working when and where-ever he could and generally enjoying the free life.

Mother and Dad thought he might not return, for he was not really adapted to the rough farm life, but still did not want to take up any kind of city work.

However, he was back again in the spring thinking the free Canadian life was the only thing for him, and took up where he had left off. He had much to say of the conditions in the old country and as he took in many of the theatres and music halls he was full of the latest musical hits and all the comic songs which Muriel and I immediately picked up from him. His humorous way of carrying on had improved also. No doubt his pocket book had suffered considerably, but being young and care-free it did not worry him too much.

Doug, Whitman had bought himself a six horse power gasoline engine with grain crusher and circular saw with which he hoped to gain a little income during the winter months.

It was the first gas engine in the district, and therefore something of a novelty. Especially so to me, for I had not the foggiest idea how they operated or in what way electricity worked

The engine was the usual type of portable engine at that time. Single cylinder, with two big flywheels to keep it rolling and battery type hit and miss ignition.

The circular saw was a revelation to me in the way it cut a huge amount of fire-wood in just a few minutes. It was then and there that I decided that when I grew up enough to take hold of things a bit I would sure have the fire-wood cut with a circular saw. Being involved as I was at that time with the daily fire wood, my efforts seemed just pitiful in comparison.

I think Doug, did fairly well with his outfit, but perhaps more with his crusher than the saw which may seem surprising, but the fact of the matter was that no-one could

crush their feed grain, but every one could saw wood, and with those who had little money and nothing to do in winter, it was more profitable for them to cut their own wood, (a penny saved was a penny earned) and this was the case with us for many years, for when the three boys left home it was necessary for us to practise strict economy.

So It was then that in the spring of 1913 the three elder boys of the family left home and formed the partnership of Dean Brothers, John and Caroline took up residence on the McLennan farm, and George and Arthur in the original house built for John on his quarter which cornered Dad's on the south west.

We did not notice the change very much for a time, as they were back and forth quite a lot in getting settled. Mother baked bread for the two who were batching, and they got milk and butter from home in return for any hauling we wanted, and I somewhat enjoyed not having them order me around so much.

But as time went on I found myself cut off from much of the farm work and general procedure of what the other three boys were doing and confined to just what was happening just around the home, and the rest of the time in school.

For a time we still had our little gatherings after church and Sunday school when a few would come home for Sunday evening and the boys and some of their friends would come for Xmas, but gradually it almost came to a stop. Of course the boys called on Dad a lot to do small jobs for them, and Nell and I were often commandeered for some purpose or other.

In return we were dependent on them for teaming and our trips to Buchanan for a couple of years when I left school, and it was at this time we started to deal almost completely at Mike's . store at Rama, We could walk there.

George and Arthur soon found that having to shift for themselves was very inconvenient and took up a lot of their time, and I expect it was not until that time that they realized how good they had had it at home. During the seeding when they were extra busy, they hired George Murray to act as general chore boy and to help with cleaning up and to some extent preparing the meals, he would be certainly nothing of a cook, but he could keep the fires going and prepare some of the simple things, and became quite handy at it. One day as they came in with their teams he dashed out excitedly to tell them he had made a new kind of pudding for their dinner, (Blank Mange he said) He had of course been reading the French side of the Corn Starch package.

On another occasion he came up to our place for a supply of milk and butter, and as it was Saturday I was at home, So nothing would do but that I should go back with him, I cannot now remember what it was we got involved in, but we failed to notice the time going until late, so that when George arrived hungrily in from the field we were only



just then hastily peeling the potatoes for the noon meal. Without doubt this did not please him in the least, and thinking I must have been the cause of the disruption I was at once told in no uncertain terms to get off home and in future to stay there.

Later, when George had cooled down, and had inquired into what had caused the delay, he found we had not been into any sort of mischief, but had actually been involved in something beneficial and had merely overlooked the time. He then relented having unceremoniously shooed me off home, and instructed young George to go to our place during the afternoon and invite me down to supper. So all ended well after all.

The principal thing for me in the next two years was going to be school, which I didn't look forward to, but I suppose it had its enjoyable times along with the learning which at that time I could not see where I was going to use it. My only ambition was to become engaged in the farm work, and it was terribly distracting for me to sit in school and hear farm machinery at work or the threshing whistles blowing in the fields.

Strangely, when I eventually got into farm work, it took me many years before I realized I was not adapted to it, and in fact only enjoyed a very small part of its operation, and that I had merely grown into it by not being exposed to any other type of occupation. Having been brought into this kind of secluded life at eight years of age, it was only from reading that I knew of anything else, and it was almost ten years later that I got any further away from the immediate surroundings than Rama or Invermay, I therefore had a very vague idea of the many occupations that I might have liked to take up.

Anyhow, at present I was forced to stay at school as much as was possible under the circumstances, although there were the odd days and short periods when I was obliged to stay home to help with some of the work on the farm. Many of the others at school were unable to attend as regularly as I, so that attendance was very irregular during the year, much to the disgust of the teachers who were endeavoring to pack a little education into us.

Both teachers had tried to get a little play-ground equipment, but the trustees would have no part of this. Their business was to keep expenses down, and they could see no reason why we could not amuse ourselves in some way without a lot of expensive equipment. They did finally break down to the extent of getting us a foot-ball, but failed to get a pump to inflate it with, so that it was not of much value to us. No-one had strong enough lungs to get the required amount of pressure in it, so that it was a pretty soggy affair. Later, someone in the district managed to dig up a pump from somewhere, but our base-ball and bat we made ourselves. The bat was just whittled from a piece of seasoned poplar wood, but the ball was a greater problem.

In those days parcels and packages were tied up in all stores with thin white cotton twine, and we gathered up all we could get from every house-hold until it seemed we

had miles of it, the pieces were then all tied together and carefully wound around a small round stone of about three quarters of an inch diameter to supply the desired weight until we had achieved a ball of the right size, or perhaps it may have been governed by the amount of string we had. The longest pieces were used at the last so as there would be fewer knots on the outside surface.

This equipment lasted us a long time. We even came by a catchers mitt at the last which made it a little easier on our hands, and I think we got more fun out of it than the young moderns who it seems are unable to play base-ball without first having top notch equipment and a fancy uniform and are more interested in the expense paid trip to some distant town they are going to get than in playing the game.

I suppose this period should have been a happy time for me but somehow it was not, I enjoyed the association with the other children, for there were none who were belligerent or unlikeable and we mostly got along fairly well together, but the school work was always a trial to me. Maybe I was not very bright, or that I worried too much that I could not keep up with the others as it all seemed quite hard to me, I dreaded the school concerts, and the times when the parents were invited to the school and we were put through our paces so as they could see what progress we were making, Most of the others enjoyed this kind of thing and, looked forward to it, but I can still remember the relief it was to me when it was all over. I cannot remember ever failing on any of these occasions or in any way being down-graded, but it certainly had a worrying effect on me.

For a long time I was alone in my grade, so that having no competition I could not tell whether I was doing good or bad, so that in the following winter when the two elder Murray boys were able to attend for the most of the season I became much more interested and we all three made good headway until the Murray boys were obliged to again take up their work on the farm.

The teacher was somewhat disgusted at this turn of events and I remember hearing her say to Mother that she would have liked to have got the three of us on an even keel and finished us right up. Of course I am not sure in what way she would have liked to finish us, (perhaps completely off).

Anyhow, school did not relieve me of the inevitable chores, in fact in those years (which at most were less than three) I seemed to have more chores than at any time,

The three elder boys, having left in the spring, had failed in the previous winter to get up the usual years supply of firewood, This meant that for the summer time I should, not only have to cut up the stove wood each day, but that I should first have to go some hundred yards or so into the woods to cut down and trimm the trees and carry them into the yard to saw up,

This job usually occupied all the time after getting home from school till supper time at six oclock, After I had to find the cattle and bring them into the corral, then hitch up my steer and haul a load of water from the well, after which I must make the smudge to keep the mosquitoes off the cattle. Also I might have to help turn the cream separator.

As mentioned earlier, I could not milk cows with any success on account of cramps in my fingers, but it didn't seem right that we should rely completely on Nell to always milk the cows, so I decided (Perhaps with some pressure from the others) that I should persevere with the problem for some time to see if in getting more efficient at the job the cramping trouble might automatically clear up, Nell picked me an easy cow to milk, and I worried away at it for a complete summer without the least improvement in the trouble, Nell could still milk two to my one.

I was then obliged to concider myself a failure in the job and only did it when forced by circumstances, but this little escapade also added to my chores that summer, Dad often got angry with me, and seemed to think I wasn't doing very much for after the other boys left he was then obliged to do some of the work that had previously been done by them, so that as they had done he began to think of chores as something minor in the general run of things. Perhaps all adults are inclined to think (or did at that time) that chores did not amount to much because much of it is light work compared to other things but perhaps also they do not take into concideratlon that even light tasks are heavy to youngsters.

I was now out of touch with the farm work of the other boys except to occasionally get to see them on week-ends, and for longer periods during the summer holidays, but they had a lot more crop to seed and take off now, They had got rid of the oxen completely, and had bought a black clyde horse to go with Bess and Nance to make a three horse team, and two more which were concidered to be John's. They also had three of Mac!s horses, but I don't know wether they had bought them or borrowed them, for later he took them back.

It seemed then that they were away to a good start towards haveing a big farming operation, but I have later thought that perhaps at this time they had bitten off a little more than they could properly chew.

At this time John thought he would go into pigs, and got a dozen or so young ones as a start, but I remember this venture didn't turn out well, as by the time he had got to the point of haveing some to dispose of, the market had gone very flat so that he eventurely went out of them completely.

The surveyors were now at work on the survey of the Rama ditch in order for it to be dug in the following year, Mr. Stuart, one of the partners in the firm of Phillip Stuart and Lee was in charge, and he had two helpers, Frank Young and Roy Whitside,

We got to know them all quite well, for as they worked their way down from Rama they pitched their tent in John's yard on the McLennan farm for quite some time, and later on in George and Arthur's yard on John's quarter as they worked their way down the full length of the ditch area.

I remember they got Gus. Younquist's flat bottomed boat when they reached Murray's slough so as to easier work in the deep water from there on east.

Many muskrat houses could now be seen in all the sloughs where when we first arrived there was only the occasional one, and us youngsters were able to get a little pocket money by trapping them, in fact the Gabler family, (being a big one) made quite a good haul in that way as Mr. Gabler was an experienced trapper. He went up north in the winter for some years to trap and made out very well. As always in that type of work, some winters were exceptionally profitable while others, not so good.

Muriel and I did quite a bit of muskrat trapping, and even Dad did some of it for a time, it all helped to subsidize our income and give us a few little extras.

Perhaps before getting too far away from those early years when we were still all one family at home, I might mention a few of the little incidents and escapades of the Murray boys and I at the time we were still quite young, and which seemed to mean so much to us at that time although they may seem trivial and of no interest to others, They now often crowd into my memory as happy and care-free times.

The little visits back and forth which might include a stay over-night sometimes were always enjoyable, even if nothing much took place. It was the same with Muriel and the Murray girls too, for there was very little in the way of recreation for us in those days. The elder ones had a better chance to get around to some of the social activities.

Jack Murray, as a little boy was quiet and matter-of-fact, perhaps being the eldest and having a little more responsibility made him that way, but George was more venturesome, talkative and mischievous, (although not seriously so) Arthur Murray was still quite young and small, and by us three was considered to be in the same class as Connie and Muriel, (just the kids)

Once while I was at Murrays one winter, the three of us were engaged in doing the chores, (The Murray boys always seemed to have chores to do) we got on the subject of smoking, and as Mum and Dad Murray were out, George suggested we try out some of the many pipes Dad had, "Sure, said George, we can smoke while we clean out the stable",

We dare not touch Dad's tobacco, so we used bran and chaff instead and had considerable trouble in getting it to burn in a satisfactory manner, so in the end we decided that trying to smoke while cleaning out the stable didn't work very well, and

that we had best get on with the job unless the parents should come home and wonder why the chores weren't done.

No bad effects came from it all.

On one other occasion we were at our place. There must have been some project on the go, for Charlie and Glad were there and possibly Rollie. There were too many for all to sit down to supper, so us kids were obliged to wait till after the men had been taken care of. It was good snow-ball weather so there had been a few tossed about with the grown-ups getting the best of the deal, so we hit on the bright idea of utilizing our time while waiting for our meal by accumulating a good stock of ammunition located in strategic positions in order to give the big bullies the works as they came out from supper.

All was ready for the big surprise, but there was neither sound or movement from indoors while we impatiently cooled our heels at our stock piles. Still no sign of the enemy, we started to leave our posts and gather in a group to talk and think of something of interest to fill in our time. We had got a convenient distance from the battle ground when suddenly the house seemed to explode as six guys dashed out of two doors and took possession of our piles of snow-balls and pelted the dickens out of us until we were obliged to run for our lives. George Murray who got caught in the cross-fire, had the prescience of mind to run towards the house and stand in front of a window and thus foil his attackers. A bit of a let-down for us, but lots of fun anyway.

And then there was the other time when the boys came over for the day. It was summer, and nothing so exciting as a snowball fight. Perhaps it was this lack of something to do that was responsible for us getting into a bit of mischief.

At that time the trail to Buchanan went directly through our yard, and in most cases people passing would stop to pass the time of day and enquire if we needed anything from town. Those we knew well often stopped for a meal on their return as it was usually a monotonous trip.

On this particular day Joe Howse had gone through on his way to Buchanan with his team and democrat,

Joe always seemed something of a joke to us young ones, and I expect we were quite impudent to him at times, but we gained more respect for him as we grew older, for he was quite a Jack of all trades, and was very efficient in anything he did. The greatest trouble it seemed was to get him to do anything.

We decided then that we should block up the trail for him on his return, so started off down the trail until we came to a place where the bush crowded in on both sides and there were two good sized trees at both sides of the trail leaving only room for a vehicle to pass through. We scrounged around for all manner of trees and scrub from

a place where some cutting had been done, and finally succeeded in building a good healthy barricade across the opening. It did not occur to us that someone else might come along the trail before Joe did, and fortunately for our little escapade no-one did.

Our enthusiasm was somewhat dampened when Joe had not returned in the afternoon, and after supper Mother and I walked down to the bottom of the (short-cut) to start the Murray boys on their way home.

It was not until Mother and I were returning that a horrible thought came to me. Should any trouble arise from our road blocking operation, it was a certainty that I was left (holding the bag) and would have to take all the blame.

Thinking it might soften the blow somewhat for me I admitted to Mother what we had done, but this did not exactly calm my fears. She was immediately concerned and said we should not have done such a stupid thing, that one of Joe's mares was in foal and some damage might come to her should the team become tangled up in the whole mess.

This of course only served to worry me all the more, although Mother was unduly worried, we had built our barricade so high that no horse would run into it, and horses can see just as well at night, (or nearly so) as in day.

When we arrived home, Joe's team was tied up outside, and Joe was tucking into a good meal and giving Dad all the news and high-lites of his trip. Not a word was said of our mischievous doings until Joe picked up his coat to go, when he turned to me and said, "Well, you boys are quite good fence builders"

Mother said to me, "You can be thankful that Joe hasn't got a good thrashing for you." Oh said Joe, "I could see it alright, I say, it didn't take me long to pull it all down."

Needless to say, I was very much relieved that the consequences were not more serious than that.

Trips to Buchanan were always of interest to us young ones, even if we did not take part in them, for there was always the interest of seeing what had been brought home, and wondering if there was something new for us in the way of clothing or footwear, or that there was candies or peanuts.

In the first years with the oxen, these trips were few and far between, for it was always something of an ordeal with the water and mud in summer, and the snow and cold in winter.

I can still remember on leaving Buchanan, looking up that long stretch of open country to the friendly bush in the distance and wondering if we should ever get there. It would have to be made at a walking speed, and the prevailing wind was always

north-west, the distance was about four miles I think, and it was a certainty that one would have to get down and walk part of the way to keep up the circulation and keep ones feet from freezeing.

It was always a relief to reach the shelter of the trees.

There were other times of course when winter weather was mild, or in summer when the trip was not unpleasant, but it was always a long one, and very tiresome.

Today, when people can whistle along there in a dead straight line in a matter of minutes, they will be hard put to understand why it took us all of a long day to make it there and back.

It was necessary to make sure on these trips that we got everything we needed to last for at least a month, and to forget certain things like Kerosene or sugar would make things very inconvenient and disagreeable, We once forgot our Rolled Oats, Mostly we had a long list of groceries which we handed in at the store and they would make it up while we were haveing a meal or attending to some other business, The stores usually kept their flour, oat-meal and kerosene out in the ware-house and they would generally get those things out when the customer picked up his order. In this case the rolled oats were overlooked. This wasn't very good, (although I expect we had a certain amount left at home) but oat-meal was an important part of our diet in those days, as there were few of the poofy and puffy and crunchy serials we see the stores loaded with now.

In any case no self respecting working man would eat such stuff and expect to last out the ten hour days that were worked then.

However it turned out to be not so serious. Dad Murray called in a week or so later on his way to Buchanan and we asked him to pick up our rolled oats for us.

On his return he stopped for supper and when he had finished spinning a long yarn on who he had seen and what he had done Mother asked him if he had any difficulty in getting the oat-meal, had the store noticed or remembered that we had not taken them?

"No he said, I just walked into the Yorkton Supply, look here Pinkerton I sez. Just what have you been messing and dabbing about at? Here's Deans aint had no breakfast since Friday" Pretty rough show for the Deans, but I don't think it was quite so serious as that.

I remember once John going to Buchanan and takeing Caroline Richardson and Nell, They must have spent too long in town, or perhaps it was a tough trip, for it was late at night before they arrived home. They had got within a mile or so of home when the wagon stuck in the mud when they were barely out of a slough, John was obliged to

unhitch the oxen to keep them from becoming mired, and the girls had to walk teeteringly down the wagon tongue to avoid the water. It was too dark and too difficult to attempt to get the wagon free, so they took the team and walked the rest of the way home. The girls taking off their (going out shoes) to avoid spoiling them, and walking bare foot the rest of the way.

I was just now asking Nell if she remembered the incident.

Yes, she said, "I can remember walking down the wagon tongue but I can't remember that we went home bare-foot.

Many years later John was telling the young ones about this, Gosh, he said "A let-down for me wasn't it? Taking the girl-friend on a trip and having her walk home from it."

But it was Mother and I with Buck and Brighton the wagon who made the trip one summer day in record time, of which we were quite proud, Leaving at eight in the morning, we were back by six in the evening, having spent two hours in Buchanan,

We had two bags of oats to be crushed at Brown and Jennings so it must have been before Doug, Whitman got his outfit, I was all eyes for this operation, Mr, Jennings had the engine and crusher nicely set up in an enclosed place and I watched every move he made to get the engine started, although no doubt I had not the foggiest idea of what he was doing, I was standing wide eyed watching the oats fall from the crusher as Mr. Jennings shoveled the crushed grain back into the sacks again when there was suddenly an unearthly screech which caused me to step smartly back, and Mr. Jennings to scuffle around amongst the chop with his hands and come up with two flattened fence staples which he tossed from hand to hand as I thought to shake the grain away from them. He then handed them to me, and I all unthinking grabbed them in my hand, only to quickly drop them. They were of course nearly red hot.

Mr. Jennings got a real laugh out of that.

It must have been towards the last of our regular dealings in Buchanan that the two Murray dropped in to see if I would like to go with them to town, for I remember they then had their first team of horses, Of course I did not need much persuasion, and we were soon on our way. It was winter, so we could go straight down the Buchanan road which was a great saving of miles and time from summer travel when we still had to wind through the farms and around grain fields. Nothing spectacular happened on this trip, we just had a good time off from our usual routine

Get three boys together and there will automatically be lots of fun and nonsense, for what one doesn't think of, the others will, but on this occasion it was just the fun of being out in different surroundings with nothing to worry about that made it a pleasant day.



Arriveing in town we put the team in the livery barn and fed and watered them. Evidently the Murray boys had little to do but pay some bills, and buy a few minor things, for I remember we had no load on the way home,

Haveing taken care of the necessary business, we were free to look around the stores and spend our pocket money which I am sure was not very much. Next was to have our lunch in the Chinese Cafe, This was something that didn't happen very often for us and therefore was something of an event.

Almost at once George got the giggles when the Chinese stalked in from the kitchen and announced the menue, Hamma ecks, poke chup, stick, (Ham and eggs. Pork chops, Steak) This struck some sort of funny-bone in George so that the Chinese had barely turned his back before George broke into suppressed laughter and spent the next ten minutes in trying to mimic him.

Another thing that intrigued us was a big bowl of soup biscuits on the table, They were made exactly as ordinary mixed biscuits only in minature, and of course not sweetened, I have never since seen any the same, Perhaps they were from China,

George wanted to put a couple of handsfull in his pocket to eat onthe way home, but Jack being the eldest, thought he was somewhat responsible for us two younger ones and put a stop to it.

I imagine we were perhaps becomeing a bit noisey, and this was by no means lessened when the desert was announced in a somewhat mechanical fashion, Apa pa, Lema pa, Banna pa, Vitch? (which of course was Apple pie, Lemon, and Banana,) Jack said we should have asked for Vitch, but we settled for each haveing a different kind.

Gosh, said George when we were again put on the street, "I'll bet that Chink was pleased to be rid of us three".

I don't doubt it in the least, but George was still giveing us a lot of Apa pa, Lema pa, Banna pa, Vitch, all the way home

A very interesting and successful day as for as we were concerned.

Youngsters can be quite usefull as we all know when supervised by an adult, but get several together and using their own ideas and reasoning, and there is no telling what comical or idiotic thing might come about, Mr. Ferrie, (Glad's father) used to say.

If you want to get something done , Get a good boy, but two boys are only half a boy, and with three you have no boy at all.

Perhaps it is fairly good reasoning.

The Murray boys were detailed to get a load of fire-wood one winter day, They could easily have got this within half a mile of their home, but they thought of a better idea, They would drive all the way over to our place and get me to help them, In this way they would cut their load much quicker and at the same time combine work with pleasure. Of course no thought was given to the extra traveling time, or that the team would have to pull the load three times as far.

Little Artie, had been allowed to tag along, (perhaps with the idea in mind that he might be usefull). After spending some time in visiting and having a light lunch which was standard proceedure, the four of us started back down the (short cut) which ran across George's original homestead and very easily located a good stand of dry fire-killed wood.

There was soon trees falling in four places. Even Artie with an axe twice too heavey for him was hacking away at a tree and expecting it to fall at any moment, and as he strained to push it over he would give a big yell of Timber, (Bill Offer had told him this was how it was done in the lumber camps where he had worked,) As might be expected the tree was not sufficiently cut through for it to fall, so after he had repeated this proceedure of chopping and yelling Timber for many times we took no more notice of it, so that at last when the tree eventurely fell we were taken by surprise and had to step smartly out of the way.

We soon had a good sized load on, and were congratulateing ourselves on the good time we had made, but forgetting that there were still two miles to go before the job was finished

Although we could not notice it, the time was aproaching when all this fun and games of our young years was going to change

Within less than two years we should be obliged to leave school and take up the more serious life of working for our liveing in real earnest, and perhaps many more years later we should look back on those very early times and think what carefree times they were and of all the fun we had.

While reminiscing on this period of time, perhaps I should mention my dog Major, He wasn't really my dog, I just sort of claimed him, for it was I that trained him to be a good cattle dog. Actually It was Nell who named him, and I suppose he really just belonged to the home, but I had most to do with him as I looked after the cattle.

We had lost our original little black dog Rover by circumstances of which I can't recollect, and our other dog Ike was really John's dog. I had forgotten where Major came from, but just a few years ago Vi. reminded me that we got him from the Stevens.

I can remember that Jim Jolly brought him to us as just a little pup, and this was the one and only time that I ever saw Jim Jolly.

Jim Jolly was one of the so called (Rama boys) and during the first world war he was unfortunate enough to loose both his legs. We lost track of him completely after that.

Major was just a mongrel border collie as far as we knew, but he was certainly very inteligent as far as cattle work was concerned. He was very gentle, (Which is a good feature where there are milk cows) and he would never snap or bite at any animal unless they refused to move for him, When I took him with me to bring the cows in, he would round up the whole herd and start them towards home and follow behind them, running from side to side to gather in any who thought they would like to wander off on their own, When we reached the pasture gate he would sit behind them while I walked through to open the gate. He would then bring every one through without any instruction.

I once got him to go and bring the cows in on his own accord, but I didn't make a practise of it as I thought under some circumstances there might be some trouble.

He always seemed to know exactly what was wanted, and what to do where-ever the cattle were concerned so that I became quite attached to him as perhaps all young boys do to dogs, and dogs to boys, I was quite sorry when he died afew years later much before his life span, (From poison I think) I carried him home and properly buried him and put up a board with his name on it.

The crop in the fall of 1913 may have been a fairly good one for I remember the boys had a very long threshing run, Arthur had not taken to running the steam engine as yet although he must have been old enough to obtain an engineers certificate.

They hired Andy Middelmiss, a farmer in the district south of Invermay, They didn't seem to think he was as good an engineer as Mac. had been, but it was perhaps only because Mac. was more familiar with the failings of the old engine.

It was wet too, and they had lots of trouble in getting stuck while moveing from place to place. Steam engines were very heavey, Huge high and wide drive wheels, big cumbersome transmission gears, and a boiler filled with water added up to a lot of weight, and it was often necessary in soft spots to drive the engine through first and then pullthe separator through by cable or chain.

I didn't know much of what went on with the farm operations in those years, excepting what went on at the home place, My time was mostly taken up with school and my dayley chores.

That winter the Murray boys were able to attend school quite a lot of the time, and it became more interesting to me to have someone more closely associated with me in school than some of the others were.

It was then we thought of making some skis, and this whole idea was sparked from the previous winter when a tall young Swede or Norwegian somewhat older than the rest of us turned up at school one morning to try to improve his education for a few months. As there was absolutely no trail in the direction of his home, he came on an exceptionally long pair of skis which had been hewn from two poplar poles by someone who must have been something of an artist in that line, for they were as perfect in every detail as a manufactured pair. His name was Emil Johnson, and Miss Bailey the teacher at once anticipated trouble with the skis, for they were something of a novelty to the rest of us.

She had Emil stand them up against the school wall and instructed us all to not lay hands on them under any circumstances.

I guess this saved Emil's skis, for no doubt had we been allowed to touch them they would surely have come to grief.

As it happened they were broken in the end, but by Emil himself.

Towards spring after a warm day he was starting home when almost at once he broke through the soft snow while the end of one ski was still on something solid so that his weight snapped it. He was obliged to struggle through the soft snow to get home, and that terminated his winter's schooling.

Sooner than have the trouble of taking his skis which would now be useless to him, he gave them to me and I took them home and saved them till the next winter when I was able to cut the unbroken one down to the same length as the broken one and they were still long enough to make a pair of skis for Muriel.

I had only to reinforce the centres to accommodate the toe-straps, so that now Muriel was the proud owner of the only pair of skis in the immediate district.

Perhaps this was why the Murray boys and I decided we should try our hand at making some for ourselves,

There were no hills of course, the prairies are basically flat with only a few slight rises and slopes, so we should not be able to use them for amusement as is done in the mountainous areas, but we saw them being useful for cross country travel, going to school, scouting out stands of fire-wood, trapping muskrats, and in any instance where one could cut corners and go in a straight line.

The perseverance and ingenuity of young boys is surprising once they get started on some ploy of this kind, Perhaps it is the fact that they don't know what they are up against that urges them to keep trying in spite of all the obstacles and failures.

We didn't know a thing about it, but the first thing was to get some material and the only way to do this was from our muskrat money, no help from the parents could be expected for this kind of bally-hoo, so each of us got two pieces of straight grained fir eight feet long. Two feet would be cut off and thinned down on both ends and attached slightly back of centre on the ski to strengthen it and provide the slots for the straps which we managed to scrounge from pieces of harness leather.

Perhaps like all amateurs, the most important and difficult part (the turning up of the ends) we didn't worry about much until we came to it, we knew this could be done by steaming although we had never done any such thing, so when we came to that part of it we found that although the fir wood was hard and smooth for sliding over the snow, it was impossible to bend it.

We tried of course, thinning the ends, and steaming them in the wash boiler over the kitchen stove for hours in the evenings when the stove was not being used for its usual purpose, but only to find that the boards split and broke, and we were obliged to buy new ones.

We were momentarily stumped, but someone came up with the idea, (Why not use a barrel stave) Neatly spliced on the end it should work. We experimented with this, but found the sweep-up was not enough, that in soft snow the whole thing disappeared, also where there were low lying twigs and sticks the ski slipped under them and in some cases one might be obliged to back up to get free and lift the ski over, We then thought we might be able to steam and bend the barrel stave up easier than the ski end as it probably was a different kind of wood. We tried this and found we had no success excepting on one ski, and on investigation and inquiry between the lot of us found that the one stave had been taken from a different barrel and so arrived at the fact that only apple barrels were made of the right material for the purpose.

All skis were then taken apart and after several steaming sessions were equipped with beautiful up-swept ends that rolled down everything in their path and we now thought we had the perfect skis. No doubt very crude compared to the manufactured article, and quite likely on the heavy side, but completely serviceable.

Our enthusiasm was somewhat dampened when the next mild spell came along and our skis became wet from the melted snow and our lovely curved up ends flattened out to their original shape.

We were stumped again, but immediately began to think of ways and means to remedy the situation, Someone thought of using sheet metal but that idea was soon turned down, In the first place we didn't have any, and it was suspected it would be too

heavy in any case. An experiment was tried on one pair of skis with stove-pipe tin, but it immediately crumpled up on striking some frozen snow. Someone suggested tying the points into position with thin wire, but although we tried it we found that the wire seemed to tangle in all the long grass and twigs and sticks so that it soon broke.

Finally, (from some source I don't recollect) we found that if we soaked the wood in oil the water would not penetrate it and therefore it would keep its curved position.

So the bending process was started all over again and after being thoroughly dried the wood was then saturated in oil and our troubles were over, but I have often thought since of all the time, trouble, and perseverance that went into that ski project, and the use and amusement we got out of them.

Muriel and I and all the Murray family had them to go to school on, and I believe Jack Murray made a pair for Vera Preston.

They sure cut off the miles when one could go more or less straight to their destination and were more speedy than walking once one learned to use them properly, and we had lots of fun racing and chasing in the dinner hour at school.

I remember the teacher telling Mother what a kick she got out of seeing us all some distance from the school and all at once swing the skis completely around and hike quickly back to the school when she rang the bell.

I kept my skis for some time after we all left school and found them pretty handy around the farm for many purposes, often skiing across to Murrays on the bright moon-light nights.

After the fall work was over In 1913 Arthur got his steam engineers certificate, and I guess he felt he would like to play around with the engine a bit while it was slack season. They had got up a huge pile of fire-wood at John's house so as to have no trouble in that respect for the next year. They borrowed a circular saw from somewhere and set it up to saw all the wood into stove lengths. It required at least four men to saw wood, and five was better so as to have someone to spell off, for it was pretty steady work, Glad. was there of course, he was bound to be if there was anything of that nature going on, and Rollie too.

It must have been a Saturday, because I got in on the job and it was an exciting experience as far as I was concerned, it was the first time I had seen so much wood sawn up so quickly.

In later years I did so much of it that it became far from exciting, but just so much hard work.

They gave me the job of throwing the stove-lengths away from the saw, because they thought it was the lightest Job, (Actually it isn't the easiest job) but I remember I was bound I would throw every stick of that wood away, and refused to be spelled off by anyone, Arthur of course had to spend much of his time in attending to the engine, and as the outfit was too cumbersome to move up as the pile diminished as is the usual procedure, I found myself literally surrounded and hemmed in by a mountain of fire-wood by the end of the day.

It was the first time I had ever seen so much fire-wood in one pile, and compared to my puny efforts with the buck-saw it was really a huge mass, I don't think I shall ever forget that day.

At that time they bought a twelve inch grain crusher to use with the engine, and set it up in amongst the trees with a shelter over it. That outfit could really crush grain in a hurry, but apart from feeding the host of pigs John had it did not pay off very good. They were too much on the edge of the district and few people brought big enough amounts of grain to warrant the time and trouble of steaming up the engine.

It was used to better advantage some years later.

John's house, where George and Arthur now lived seemed to be the centre that winter for any of the unattached young fellows to home in on when it was too cold for any outside work to be carried on, and at our home it seemed quiet in comparison to other years. My time was taken up by school, and Dad was now obliged to take care of the stock, Previously this had always been the elder boys job, but now the herd would be somewhat smaller as there were no oxen, just the cows and the young stock.

Alf. Hunter used to drop in occasionally, he had the attraction to our school, teacher, which periodically dragged him away six or seven miles from his homestead in the Rama district near to where Stevens lived all the way down to our place to see Dora Bailey, He had to walk it always too, because at the time he did not have as much as a pony to ride, However, this didn't seem to stop him, and I remember him arriving down at our place one evening after a heavy snow which must have been half way to his knees on the trail, He must have been completely fagged out, but Alf could always be humorous about anything wether good or bad, and when someone remarked on what a tough trip he must have had he answered "Oh, just like skateing", He was game to make it back home again late at night too, but Dad wondering if he might not get there, suggested he bunk in with me and go home in the daylight.

Surprising what young fellows will do once they get a frantic insane desire to look after some mans daughter for the rest of their lives.

This malady was striking several of the young fellows in the district, and many of the young girls seemed to get the idea that some of the bachelor's cook-stoves must be much nicer to operate than the old thing they had to use at home.

Over the years Arthur had spent much of his spare time hanging around the Stevens home and seemed much attracted to Vi. but at about this time the whole affair seemed to cool off and for the next year or two Arthur was more interested in engines, horses, and farming than girls.

So far I don't think I have mentioned that Invermay always had an Agricultural Fair from quite early on, Naturally it must have been quite small at first, but the Invermany people were quite progressive in this way, Many of them came from Ontario and the British Isles so that the whole community was English speaking. We at Rama were mostly English speaking at first, but it was only a short time till we were greatly outnumbered by foreigners who on account of their language barrier refused to enter into any community venture, and only seemed interested in anything connected to the Catholic church, while the English population were principally of Protestant faith. It was most likely too that many of them had been taken advantage of some time or other by slick artists who thought that on account of their ignorance of the language and the Canadian ways they could take unfair advantage of them. This then was probably the chief reason that they would have no part in community affairs or take any interest in such things as grain growers meetings, meetings to improve our cattle and horses (which were for the most part scrub stuff at that time) or any co-operative scheme that might be considered.

I didn't get to the Invermay fair for quite some time, but I remember Dad took Nell one year shortly after we came to the district. They went up on the train, and I guess It made a good outing for Nell.

Some years later I remember Mr. Lockhart (Charlie's Father) offered to take Jack Murray and myself to the fair. Just why we two were selected I don't know, we must have done something right for a change.

He had a red team of oxen, and Pete Patison went along also as he belonged to the Rama foot-ball team and they had a match with the Invermay team. They lost the game, (the Rama team) but Jack and I discovered there were several boys from Rama at the fair and eventually we scraped up enough members to play against the Invermay boys and we managed to win, I don't know how, perhaps as we were the visitors they let us have the game, But I doubt that any of us knew very much about the game.

Of course from our point of view the main thing was the ice-cream and chocolate bars, although I don't suppose we had much pocket money to spend, Perhaps it was as well, it may have saved us from making ourselves sick.

It was very late at night when we got back as far as Mr. Lockhart's place, and he put us up for the night, We were dead tired, and slept till late in the morning and after having breakfast walked home, still tired but happy.



In my previous reference to the Tingleys and the Lockharts leaveing the district about 1910 and going back to Toronto, I may have failed to relate that Mr. Lockhart came back again,

Mrs. Lockhart would have no part of it, Homesteading was not her idea of a good life, and as she was step-mother to Charlie and Carrie she did not have the same interest in them as Mr. Lockhart did, Eventurely when Charlie had become well established on his farm he went to live with him, He was always interested in the affairs of the district and for some years was reeve of the municipality. When Charlie went over-seas during the first world war he looked after his farm for him, and then later went back east again.

In the winter of 1913 Caroline and John's eldest son Godfrey was born, This was of course something of an event in our family as it was the first of the next generation and Mother and Dad became grand-parents, and the rest of us became Aunts and Uncles, Godfrey was named after Arthur, and his two middle names for his Grand-fathers, This was the start of many young ones in our family, and in the district as a whole, for they arrived quite progressively in the next ten years.

It seemed there was a lot went on in 1914 and a few changes came about in several ways.

I am not sure about this because I cannot rightly remember nor can I find anyone that does, but it seems to me that this was the spring that Mr. and Mrs. Bailey came to the country,

They made their home at Will's homestead which all along had been a kind of homeing spot for the other members of the family at different times when they might have been waiting to go to a job. Will may also have been there while he was convalesing after his accident some years before. We didnt know the family very intimately up until the time that Dora came to teach at our school, and even then only as we did all the Rama people by meeting them at social functions and at Mike's Store, A few of the Rama people attended the Pioneer Sunday school at times but never any of the Baileys,

It was that year too that Edith Bailey came to Rama for the first time, Edie, as she was mostly called, was easily the best looking of all the four Bailey girls, (my opinion only) and she caused quite a flurry among the young fellows of the district.

Even Charlie who seldom got excited about anything of that nature was moved to exclaim when next he arrived down at our place, "What do you think of our Miss Bailey, Isn't she a stunner"? This amused us all so much that for a long time we refered to Edie as (the Stunner) .

Mabel Bailey arrived later on, so that now all four of the Bailey girls were in the district and this all helped with the social activities as they all had good voices, and Dora was a very good piano player. There were many in the district at that time who could play musical instruments, and many with very good voices, so that it was no trouble to get up a concert or a dance at any time, everyone chipped in and performed to the best of their ability, and the main thing was that everyone had a pleasant time out of it all.

That spring we lost our school teacher. She had managed to get a position in the Rama school where she would be able to walk back and forth to her home each day, and this would be much more convenient and economical. All of us kids were sorry to see her go, for we had got along very well in our schooling during the time she was there, and now we would not know what we were in for. She was replaced by Samuel Piatt, a young man just out from England, We all liked him pretty well, and he was well qualified, (possibly better than Dora Bailey) but I don't think any of us could learn as much from him as we did from her.

I am sure I didn't, although being a man I got along fine with him out of school, and was interested in all he could tell me of England. George I remember, thought him a bit of a sissy which he was always Inclined to do with anyone who he considered was not in the working class. Actually, he was pretty good, for it must have seemed extremely rough and primitive to him, but he very soon adapted to his surroundings and took a great interest in driving the horses, he would do anything to get a chance to drive a team, and at different times walked all the way over to the McLennan farm to have the opportunity of doing this on a Saturday or at times after school hours.

George was for-ever giving people nick-names, and he called him Tin Hat, How, or why, I could not understand, for there was nothing about him to suggest anything of this nature, and even the cap he wore was exactly the same as everyone used.

As you may be sure, I was quick to pick it up as kids do, thinking it was something smart, and a few times was almost caught out in repeating it within Mr. Platt's hearing, I even changed it to Tin Nose at times as kids sometimes think it is smart to copy their elders. Perhaps I thought I was getting my own back a bit, for when I was very young in the Old Country George had nick-named all of us at one time or another, and he had called me Biddy which I didn't like very much, and shortly afterwards detested when he told me it was an Irish girls name. However, it stuck to me like glue for as long as twenty years, mostly reduced to Bid or Bids as I grew older.

Mother was the only one who occasionally called me by my real name, and on coming to Rama it seemed that very few were aware that my real name was Vernon, only the adults of the Preston family used it.

Many years later, (when I was perhaps seventeen or eighteen) Jean Murray decided it was a silly name for a young man that I was getting to be then, and took it upon herself to do something about it, and believe it or not she accomplished the almost impossible.

She first started on her own family and kept at them until they had become accustomed to using my proper name, and then branched out from there, (probably starting on our own family) until in the course of a very long time I got my real name back with the exception of a few, I shall be for-ever gratefull to her for this.

It was rather strange that in the very year that the Rama ditch was started, that it should be the driest summer that we had experienced up until that time. It was not noticed at once of course, and everyone was pleased to have dry weather to get the crop in, but as it came late spring it became evident that we needed a fall of rain if the crops were not to suffer,

I can remember George drawing my attention to the fact that the crops were failing for want of rain, and my saying to him, "Oh well, They will pick up when it rains, and him answering, "Yes, but suppose it doesn't rain," I looked at him with astonishment for we had so far always had more than enough rain, so that it appeared more of a hindrance than a blessing, and I just could not think of it getting too dry for the crops to grow.

But it did anyway, and the crops were short and poor in comparison to previous years and the threshing season finished up quite early that fall.

It was that year that our little well over on George's place dried up. It was quite a loss to us, for it was the best of water and I had hauled hundreds of gallons from it with my stone-boat and steer, but in this year I didn't even have a steer.

For a time we had to carry our water for drinking purposes from the well down at John's house, which was some three quarters of a mile away, so that it was a pretty tiresome job,

I remember I hunted out a suitably bent willow stick to make a yoke as I had seen in pictures of the Old Country and padded it with a discarded sweat-pad from the horse harness, and in that way was able to carry two pails in comparative ease to the normal way. Later when we were obliged to come to the conclusion that we were never again going to have water in our well, we were forced to hunt elsewhere for some, but I am unable to recollect just what we did about it, as it was a few years later that I managed to strike some good water at about the centre of the quarter, but this was at least a quarter of a mile from the farm buildings and therefore very inconvenient, Water it seemed was forever a problem to us, and as all sources were shallow they often froze in the latter part of the winter when the frost went down deep, In one winter we were forced to resort to melting snow for the cattle by constructing a snow-melter, and by this method it was a long and tiresome procedure.

The Ladies Meeting picnic had gone on each year and we had managed to take it in each time with a few exceptions,

The location had been altered from the first time as there was now a bridge over the river and less steeper banks were on the other side, also Alf. Moore who had a farm close by, had a small store there so that people could buy canned goods and confectionery.

It was always an enjoyable day, for it was the nearest lake where one could fish or go boating. There were only two boats available so that it might be hard to get a turn with them, but I think by the end of the day most everyone had had a go at it and a few fish were caught, and fresh fish was something we didn't get very often.

The trip was a little easier to make now. Everyone had horses but the long dreary part of the trip over the flats was just as monotonous and the stones that were much worse on that part of the trail were still as bumpy and disagreeable as ever, especially for those with a big group so that they were obliged to take the farm wagon. Those with buggies fared better, but the stones were sure rough on the buggies.

Some years earlier, some of the young adults, Glad, Charlie, Rollie, Pete and Carrie Paterson, our boys, Nell and Jessie, and a few more, had contrived to get a couple of tents and spend three to five days at the lake during some slack week in the summer.

This went over so good that they kept it on for many years, Of course they could not always all attend, and the group in this way changed over the years, some dropping out and others coming in as circumstances afforded, so that many of the young people enjoyed the holiday over the years, Later on Muriel and I got in on it for one year, but up until then we had been considered just the kids and therefore did not qualify.

Like many other things it petered out during the years of the first world war.

There were other picnics of course, held by the schools, churches and Sunday schools, where the usual games and races were all part of the fun, and the refreshment stall was the most attractive part to us kids where we stuffed ourselves with too much ice cream, soft drinks and peanuts, and were very reluctant to leave for home in the evening to get the cows milked and the chores done. The tug of war always created a lot of fun, as it was between the married folks and the single, and it was noticeable that it always turned out the same way on every occasion. The young girls could always beat the married women with no trouble, but the single men were sadly beaten by the married ones, much to their disgust, and to the glee of the young girls who certainly didn't let them forget it.

The Newburn Lake picnic though, always held a different type of pleasure, with its expanse of water, and the swimming, boating, and fishing that went along with it.

The contract to dig the Rama ditch was let to a man by the name of Ollig, and he had a partner, or maybe a (right hand man) by the name of Herman, (That was his first

name) and although he was no doubt a very competent man, he had the attitude of being a regular American smart Alick and seemed to look upon the people of the district as a bunch of dim-wits.

The ditch was dug with a floating steam dredge, and once started the water flooded in behind it and kept it afloat,

It was shipped in by rail in pieces (of in a knocked down condition) and hauled down and set up at the start of the ditch which was half a mile south of Rama where the Post Office was located at that time on the original homestead of Len. Richardson

Mr. Tibbit was the Post Master (he had taken over from John Berg) and later he moved the office into Rama just between Mike's store and the rail-road track which was much more convenient for the people in Rama and those north of it.

The dredge, which at that time was an up to date machine would now seem nothing more than a long time obsolete antiquated and primitive affair. It was long before the day of hydraulically operated machinery, and was a mass of pulleys and cables, sprocket wheels and sprocket chains, which required two men to operate the shovel, a fireman to fire the boiler and stop and start the engine when necessary, someone to keep a supply of wood fuel, and in all probability one or more swamper to take care of other small jobs.

The two big feet protruding on each side to hold the thing steady while it operated, were raised and lowered by means of sprocket chains, and the shovel proper by pulleys and cables, The cables of course wore out quite frequently where they contacted the pulleys the most, which resulted in the whole length of cable being discarded as splices would not run through the pulleys successfully, and quite good lengths of this cable were found thrown out along the ditch, and this was usually snapped up by farmers to be made usefull around the farms for various purposes and for repair work along with the barbed wire and binder-twine. It seemed that most farms would be sure to have a chunk of Ollig's cable somewhere around,

Being at school, and working around the farm at other times I only got to see this machine a few times, but it was very interesting for me to watch it operating. In fact it was to most people as it was always apparent that there would be someone standing watching the huge shovel biteing out the clay soil and swinging it around to drop it on the road grade where it was leveled out by teams and men. It was really moving earth compared with our usual efforts at road work by teams and slush-scrapers,

The surveyors were back again, checking on the work to see the proper slopes and depth were made, and that the culverts and bridges were put in the correct places and built to the proper specifications, The bridges and culverts at that time were all built with three inch plank.

It turned out that the first couple of hundred yards of ditch were not deep enough, but this was taken care of at a later date with a team and slush scraper after the water had receded.

The whole thing created quite a bit of work for the people of the district, which was a good thing because the crops were not good that year,

There was much talk and dissatisfaction over the way the road was being done, and a few meetings were called to discuss the thing, but they didn't do much good. Perhaps that part of the contract had not been given enough thought, or drawn up to strict enough specifications, and the contractor was not going to do any more than he had to. Evidently there was nothing to say in the contract that the hills must be cut down and the low spots filled in. Naturally when the ditch went through a deep slough there was very little fill to make the road, and in the sharp rises (of which there were about three in that stretch of road) the deep cuts only resulted in making the hills higher in spite of the fact that much of the excess soil was dumped on the opposite side of the ditch.

Another factor that was unavoidable, was that most of the top-soil automatically landed in the base of the grade while the hard yellow-brown clay from down under came at the top, and in this way formed a very hard surface when dry, and when wet after a rain cut up into a sticky slippery mess.

It was many years later before these little sharp hills were cut down, and the whole stretch properly gravelled so that it became one of the best pieces of road in the Municipality only that it was a mere three and a half miles long.

I am told now, some fifty years later that this road has been completely rebuilt again, Much higher and wider, requiring the ditch to be moved over some distance to the west.

However, in spite of all the controversy it was a step in the right direction, and certainly an improvement. We now could go straight into Rama both winter and summer, and it seemed that the whole district from east, south, and west funneled into this piece of road at Doug's corner.

Incidentally, from this time on this point lost it's name of Doug's corner, and became just (The Bridge).

No doubt at this time the bridge is also long since gone and forgotten.

By late fall the ditch was completed down to Murray's slough and the dredge had negotiated it's way around it and got some distance further east, Harry Stevens was firing the engine, and I remember him makeing some comical remark that he was now really in the soup.

Once the water was let out at the east end of Murray's slough, the sloughs each side of the Rama road quickly drained out, for there was a fifty foot fall from Rama down to Murray's slough.

Large areas that had been sheet water, were now an expanse of rich black soil, and I remember wondering why some of the farmers did not get busy and disc and harrow this land up while it was so easy to do so. They could have added considerably to their acreage in the following crop year by doing so. It may have been that they were too busy at the time with haying and harvest and many were working in connection with the ditch and road work.

Others who had been opposed to the ditch said the slough bottoms would never grow anything, that it was too sour and alkaline and would take years before being of any value.

However, Doug. Whitman grew a good crop of onions on his slough the next year, and it was not long before all the sloughs were growing a good crop of natural slough hay at the centre while the edges where the hay had been before gradually changed to high-land growth.

At the inlet and outlet of Murray's slough the water was too deep for the dredge to take out the last little piece to the proper depth, so this had to be done after the water had almost completely receded. On the eastern outlet there was a stretch of considerable distance to be taken put to the depth of a foot and a half in places to attain the correct level.

This was contracted for by two husky Swedes who just dug it out with shovels, which obviously required, no end of time and labour. They boarded and lodged at Murrays, and I remember young Artie got so much fun out of these two men, mostly I expect their talk which would be half Swedish and half in broken English while they in turn seemed equally amused at his English accent which to them was just as comical.

It seemed that I at least, lost interest in the ditch after it had past our immediate district, but I don't think it was completed till the following summer where it stopped at some creek. However, complications of flooding may have come about perhaps at this point, for later (by another contract) it was extended to the Whitesand river.

While the general fall from the beginning of the ditch to Murrays slough was fifty feet, the fall south-east from that point was very slight, (I believe the surveyors said 2.5 feet to the mile) making the flow much slower in that area with the result that each spring Murrays slough flooded for a time until the water ran more slowly out at the east end, I imagine this condition still occurs to some extent in the district at certain times.

By late fall then, the ditch job was pretty well cleaned up excepting for a few tag ends. There had been no provision made for entrances to farms, so everyone had to build their own bridge, excepting those who were fortunate to be near to a cross road allowance and could use that bridge. There were lots of good sized logs for this purpose, but not everyone was capable of building a good strong structure and there was always the doubt as to whether it was safe for a threshing machine to cross. There occasionally had to be a foot bridge made into some homes, and we also had to make one at the Sunday-school,

The complaints and dissatisfaction of some gradually died down as objection was too late now, The deed had been done, and even those who had strongly opposed the thing just quietened down and appreciated being able to drive straight into town and although it was at times hard and rough, it was a vast improvement on the rough and winding trails, and certainly seemed to bring Rama much closer to us.

It was not long until there was a reasonably decent road west from the bridge on what is now Main Road, but east towards Buchanan still remained a miserable winding trail across the farms and through many gates with soft spots here and there that were something of a problem at certain seasons of the year.

It was considered the worst two miles of road between Winnipeg and Saskatoon up until the time when it became Highway # 5 and the government put it in decent shape.

It was some time before the ditch tax appeared on the tax notices, and people were beginning to take a somewhat pacific attitude as people sometime do when they know something disagreeable is about to happen but they hope it will go away, and Joe Howes was heard to remark, "I say, I think the government is going to give us that ditch for a present".

It was certainly not the case. When the tax notices eventually came out considerably higher than anyone had anticipated the whole district literally exploded with wrath, The people who's land touched the ditch directly, and were therefore taxed highest, and the original dissenters of the scheme howled to high heaven.

Joe Howse who it seems from the first had a lot to say about the whole thing, now came to the fore again, saying there must be some mistake somewhere and that he would see that they would not have to pay all that tax, What gave him the impression that anyone was going to take any notice of him I don't know, but as George remarked "He has already got several free meals and a lot of fills of tobacco on the strength of it all"

Eventually the hullabaloo all died down, for of course there was nothing could be done about it, but the ditch tax remained a burden for many years, and in all probability caused a few to give up and move out or perhaps were forced to.



As always, Everyone is wise after the event, which gave the ones who had been opposed to the project from the start a good chance to say a lot, and bring up points of error that nobody (themselves included) could have foreseen.

Years later, someone was foolish enough to state that after the first summer the ditch was never used again. Certainly it was never to run as full as in the year it was dug, when the water was several feet deep in it, but each spring it took away the run-off (and probably still does) so that never again was the water level in the district so high as when we first landed there.

I was still at school that summer in 1914, I should really have appreciated this opportunity of getting all the schooling possible under the circumstances, for the other boys at my age had been obliged to stay home and work on the farms, but this only irritated me as I began to feel I was too old, and too big to be still going to school so that I began to lose interest, but Mother and Dad insisted that I go as long as possible, and as long as I was not specifically needed at home. However the original arrangement with the three elder boys when they left home was still in force, They were to cut and haul the hay for Dad's cattle, but they now got the idea that it was about time that I should relieve the situation by giving a little help.

Consequently when haying season came around I was intercepted on my way from school one day by Arthur who told me that they were about to start haying the next day and that I would have to go and help.

My excitement knew no bounds, I was pranceing with joy as I went the rest of the way home, and could not wait for the next morning to come. I should certainly not have felt so joyfull if I could have realized how much hay I was going to have to handle in the following years. Haying, the way it was done at that time was hard work for long hours, all of it being loaded and stacked with pitch-forks. Strenuous work when the loads and stacks got high. Of course this was not so apparent to me at first, for being the weakest member I was given the easy job of driveing the mower and rake.

During my school days I had listened to the clatter of mower and binder at work, and the thrill of the threshing whistle, and wished I could throw away my books and lunch pail and rush to take part in it all.

Now I was about to actually do it, I was back again with the men, and could see all that was going on with the farming which I had missed so much when when I was obliged to attend school.

My days were now taken up with continually cutting hay and rakeing it into bunches for the others to pick up and stack, There was the occasional break when I caught up to the stackers or to repair the machinery, and when weather conditions held up the works, but for me it was the best summer holiday I had ever had. Perhaps with the exception of the one at Folkstone when I was seven.

Eventurely the hay was all stacked, some at the McLennan farm, some at John's place, and our hay corral at home was filled with what we hoped was enough to last our stock through the coming winter. It was always a question whether it would, for it seemed there was never a time when we felt there was much more than we needed, and so much depended on the length of the winter, and how severe it might be.

The grain harvest always comes hard on the heels of the haying time, and of course I was desperately hoping that I might be able to take some part in that in an effort to delay my return to school. Technically, my job had finished with the end of the haying season, and the stooking was considered heavy work with the long hours, and the binder was quite a hand-full for a young boy and no chances should be taken by inviting trouble or delay with the harvest.

Arthur had a different idea than George and John, he said on account of the dry season the crop was much lighter and the straw was short in comparison to the wet years when it was something of a fight to get it to go through the canvasses, also the table lever was the only one too heavy for me to operate, and he said that could be set at a medium height and left that way. In that way he said I could at least drive one of the three shifts each day and in this way free one man to do the job of getting the threshing machine ready for the fall run.

Like most young boys I had all the confidence in the world and had not the least doubt that I could run the binder, I suppose this somewhat arrogant confidence helps one to accomplish things that they otherwise might not if they were in the least nervous or doubtful of their ability. Anyhow everything went off fine, and I ended up by running two out of the three shifts.

Much to my disgust, I did not make it to the threshing crew, and was obliged to reluctantly return to school. I was allowed to stay home during the threshing on our own farms but that was all. There was one little break I got at the end of the run because it fell on a Saturday, and it afforded me what might be termed (one of those days to be remembered) as far as I was concerned,

The run was short that year on account of the crop not being as good as previously, but somehow the Richardsons had been missed on the circuit, (possibly by their crop not being ready when the machine passed).

As the run had ended at John's place where George and Arthur were now living it was thought best to pay off the threshing crew at this point and make a separate trip to the Richardsons at a later and more convenient time. It was a long move for a small job, (only half a day I remember). Some of the neighbors would form a crew along with our three boys and I. This would keep expenses to a minimum.

When the big day arrived, (that is from my point of view) I was going to be allowed to fire the engine, (under Arthur's supervision of course) The ditch surveyors who were camped directly beside John's house, on hearing of this trip refused to allow the machine to cross the bridge at the bottom of the Rama road. They said the bridge had been built slightly out of plumb, and as the approaches were still new and soft, there was danger that a heavy machine might force it more out of line and perhaps collapse it. There was no bones about it either, they were right there to stop us attempting to cross.

I remember we were obliged to make a temporary crossing at some low point at Murray's slough, The surveyors seeing us pass some distance west of the bridge ran across to tell us that we could cross the bridge on the way back as the weight and pressure coming from that side would cause no damage. This was of no value to us as the machine would be returned to the McLennan farm.

The threshing went off quite good, a little short handed for help, but this was not of much concern, there was no mad rush to make time as there always seemed to be under normal circumstances, I was allowed to help Arthur in firing the engine, and from my point of view it was a wonderful day.

I suppose that is why it has remained so long in my mind.

I suppose the biggest event of 1914 was the out-break of the first world war. It was quite a surprise, and created a lot of interest, although at first it seemed very remote to us.

News in those days before Radio traveled slowly, and slower still in the outlying areas, for it was mostly by weekly news-paper, and that was often not picked up from the post-office for some days. The action seemed at first to be on the sea by the British and German navy, and ships were being sunk right and left, so that people supposed that it couldn't possibly last very long or all the battle-ships would be at the bottom of the sea. It did not turn out that way of course, but quickly spread to the land and before long became a serious situation.

However, there was no mad rush to become involved in the fray in our district. As mentioned previously it all seemed rather remote and of not much concern to us in our area so far removed from it all. In the course of time this attitude was to change as the situation became progressively worse, and in the end I expect the Rama and Invermay districts contributed as much to the effort as any other district of comparable size.

Of course some went almost at once, In our immediate district Harry Stevens, Eustace Moores, and Jack Murray come to my mind.

Jack was too young, but in the following year managed to join up in field artillery. He seemed interested from the very start, although it could never be said he was of

aquarrelsome or war-like nature, he was in fact the very reverse, but I can remember going home with him after Sunday-school to have supper and spend the evening (as was our custome at either our place or his,) and him hauling out some picture magazines he had managed to get from some where and studying them at great length where they showed cannon and other war materiel, while I thought it was all very uninteresting.

Dad thought we might loose Mr. Piatt (our school teacher) for he had been in the territorials in England, (sometimes known as Saturday night soldiers) and had spent much time in telling me the proceedure of it all, However, he made no move in that direction, although he may have done at a later date after he had left our district.

George, who was always dead against war and fighting, said it was only a condition brought about by the rich capitalists to accumulate even more money for themselves at the expense of the working class, and that he would never take part in it until they got to the edge of his homstead.

It was that fall too that the Long Distance phone was put through from Saskatoon to Winnipeg, and it happened to pass our erea in late fall after freeze up, Iremember Walt Currah and Fred Jiggins hauling the poles and cross arms and wire for it, also that Eustace Moores worked on the wiring as this was his trade.

The crew had a tent to sleep in our yard, and I remember Nell and Jessie (who was at our place at the time) inquisitively stopping on their way from the stable where they had been milking the cows, to listen to what was being said, They were completely flumouxed, the men were nearly all Swedish and were conversing in their own language. Served them right for snooping.

The men were obliged to get their meals where ever possible from farmers along the way, and we came in for some of it, I remember it kept me busy at the weekends hauling ice for water and supplying the house with wood,

I have wondered since, why the phone line zigzagged all down the road allowances that were later to be Highway 5, for the only outlets were call boxes in each town, and miles of poles and wire could have been saved by directing it down the C.N. right of way, but I suppose it was the same old thing.

Companys have always been particular to a fault that just nobody should encroach on their property or in their business, even where it might be of advantage to both of them.

Only recently have they relaxed on this rule and co-operated in certain things which in turn are more convenient and save a lot of money for both parties.

The L.D. telephone was of little value to most of us, A call box or booth was Installed in Mike's store but was little used, However, it was an improvement, it enabled people to

reach distant towns in cases of emergency, and in the busy season saved hours and sometimes days of time if machine repairs were needed from Winnipeg or Saskatoon.

Jessie Rattray was at our place for some time that fall. There was lots of house-work to be done, as the three boys were often working close by and called in quite frequently for meals. There were now three homes instead of the original one, and at times through harvest and threshing both Nell and Jessie went to either place to help when there was need in event of extra work crews. Actually I am inclined to think that it may have been a (cooked up scheme) between George and Jessie so that they would not be so far apart as when she was living with the McLennans, which was now some twenty miles away.

Nell also spent the latter part of that fall in keeping house for George and Arthur at John's house. The ditch surveyors were still camped close by and required their meals, as now it had got to chilly fall days they could not so conveniently make their meals over a camp-fire as they had done at times during the summer months.

Nell took one cow with her for her own convenience and Jessie milked those at home, she stayed there until all the fall work was done and winter was setting in before returning home.

It must have been that summer that the first car came through, The trail still passed through our yard, but actually nobody but Dad saw it as we were indoors at the time.

Dad came in and said "Did you see the motor car"? There was dead silence for a moment, for we all thought we had either not heard correctly, He had taken leave of his senses, or was about to spring a joke on us. Dad could always do that quite easily, for normally he was much of an (old stick) and would never crack a joke, or make any smart-Aleck remark with the exception of April the first when he seemed to think he was entitled to do so. Consequently, he always caught one or the other of us on April fools day, I can remember one morning coming out of the house and going towards the stable yard. Dad was just about to return and was carrying the empty pail he had been using to feed the pigs, A wagon-box had been unloaded from the wagon and was set down close to the path and as usual had the end gate removed.

As Dad came abreast of the wagon-box, he suddenly dropped his pail, stepped to the end of the box and extended his arms in a way that suggested he was trying to prevent something or other from escapeing from the box, and at the same time yelled at me "Hey, come quick" I immediately came to life said dashed madly up to him, only to see him calmly straighten up, pick up his pail and say April Fool,

However, this time we were not going to be so easily trapped and waited for him to make the next move, for it was something fantastic to be even thinking of a motor car, "Yes he said, Gablers just pulled it through with their team.

We were not to know who this misinformed person was , but certainly he had got the wrong story from someone, Having managed to reach Gablers, they no doubt told him that he could not by any stretch of imagination make it through on his own power, He then hired them to haul his car through to the bottom of the Rama road.

It was at least two years later before we saw the odd car appear.

Archie Patterson, Pete Paterson's brother was one who we knew very briefly in the district, He came one winter to visit Pete and Carrie, and ended up by staying the winter, He may possibly have come two winters (I cannot be sure).

It may have been that he had some occupation that played out in the cold weather as they did in those days, and still do to a greater or lesser degree in most parts of Canada.

It seemed to me that he was as different to Pete as chalk from cheese, Pete was happy go lucky and dressed quite casually, while Archie was much of a dude. Perhaps it was not altogether as it seemed to me, for in my association with Pete it was always when some job of work was going on, while with Archie he was always at some social event when I saw him.

Pete had only one horse, (Why I don't know ) perhaps he had owned a team but had lost one by some cause, and was not able to replace it at once.

Archie commandeered the horse, and bought himself a brand new modern cutter and had a glorious time all winter taking in all the dances, and escorting all the girls he could find to the various social events that went on at that season of the year.

A rather amusing little incident came about at one of the dances which involved Archie and Glad. Ferrie.

In those days, driving horses felt as important to the young boys as the modern automobile does in the present day.

It was then almost inevitable that when a group of young people got together that before long the conversation would turn to their driving horses or teams.

Glad, had quite a snappy little pony which he was very proud of, and of course could not resist boasting about it to great length Archie, becoming amused at this, and with a bit of the imp in him had made some disparaging remark about Glad's driver, and said his horse could beat it anytime.

This of course caused Glad to fly up in the air with indignation and a lively lot of chatter went on until Glad and Archie were obliged to prove their point by getting out on the road and racing into Rama which was some mile and a half away.

When Glad was young he quite often got hot under the collar about something and succeeded in talking himself into a corner which he could not back out of, just as he had done many years before when he guaranteed to haul the biggest load of fire-wood to the Sunday school.

Why Glad. was so het up I don't know, for it was quite obvious to Archie and to everyone else that Archie did not stand a chance, Archie's horse was just a farm work horse, but being still young and lithe he could step out fairly well, but Glad's driver was light and speedy and could cut circles Archie's steed.

Everything went fine, they started out rideing bare-back with Glad holding a good lead and Archie lumbering along on his farm plug, but doggedly hanging on to the race while Glad coasted merrily along with the occasional glance back to see if Archie had given up in disgust and conceded the victory to Glad.

They wore approaching Rama when the unexpected happened.

Glad had spent much of the winter frequently visiting the Bailey home to see Mabel Bailey, His mount naturally supposing he was going the usual route, turned off through the gate at a good speed, and Glad. thrown of his balance momentarily was some distance up the trail before he could get stopped and turned back onto the road again, Archie, seeing his advantage put on all possible speed and won the race.

Many a slip twix cup and lip.

Partner-ships seldom work satisfactorily, and if there is more than two involved, generally not at all. So it was with the Dean Bros. John and Caroline began to think they wee getting the heavy end of it, and no doubt they were, the other two boys haveing to care for themselves probably spent too much time hanging around their home when it was not necessary.

They then tried to dissolve partner-ship, and in the course of time succeeded in doing so.

This of course caused a shake-up and a few changes had to be made, and so it was in late winter they traded homes, John and Caroline moved into John's house as a temporary measure, until they had worked out some new way of life, and George and Arthur moved to the McLennan farm and were to prepare things for George and Jessie who were to be married that spring.

This was to be my last winter at school. Nobody told me for fear I might loose interest completely, or perhaps because no one knew just how things were going to turn out. Always it seemed things happened as the circumstances forced us,

I should be sixteen the following year, and felt much too old to be hanging around at school. Jack Murray was now doing much of the farm work at home, and George Murray had worked all summer for a farmer at Yorkton and his description of what went on there only served to make me feel I was being left behind in the race, I could not see until years later that I was being given an advantage (little as it was) by being forced to remain at school.

There was lots of snow that winter, and we were all again using our skis for transportation, so that Mr. Platt had no-one to help him keep a path open and finally broke down and got skis for himself. That winter there was not as much as a single sleigh track from our direction. The Ukrainian children trooped up over the school section which meant a mile of travel where there was neither house or trail, but as there were now plenty of them they kept open a good trail and didn't seem to mind it a bit. Many years later, after even the youngest of us had left school and a new generation was starting, the Ukrainian element seemed to dominate in the school, so that it appeared the few English speaking children were in danger of becoming Ukrainian instead of the Ukrainians becoming Canadians,

However, the tide gradually changed as the years went on and today we find English spoken better in that area than perhaps we did. Only the names suggest it was ever different.

I suppose what must have been to us the most important happening, was the wedding of George and Jessie Rattray, in the very early spring of 1915.

Fifty years later when George was in his retiring years and perhaps like many of us do at times was summing up all his good or bad moves during his life and not being too pleased with it all, he finished up by saying, "Well, at any rate I did two things right, I came to Canada, and I married Jessie"

Jessie was married from our place, I think her parents were away somewhere, Possibly on one of their trips to Scotland.

Nell was her bridesmaid, and Charlie Lockhart was George's best man. It was probably not such an exciting event as the first one in the family, and we now had no white oxen to take the bride to church, and there was nobody to take pictures for us. Mr. Morrison performed the ceremony.

Rollie Tomkins was having a lot of fun out of the whole thing, he had not been present at John's wedding, as he was in England that winter, but he spent a lot of time in kidding George and Jessie, and telling Charlie that George had now got him exactly where he wanted him. He would be completely at George's beck and call for the whole day, It would seem that perhaps he had never been to a wedding before, as when it was all over he remarked "Gee, I didn't realize that these weddings were such serious affairs."



And Charlie Lockhart said "You know, I got so nervous I could have thrown something across the room at the moment when the knot was to be tied. It suddenly occurred to me what a lot hinged on the next few words.

At the wedding breakfast Mr. Morrison in his little talk to the bride, gave Jessie the same advise that I believe he did to all the young girls, "The main thing to keep peace in the family is to (Feed the brute)"

As it had been with John and Caroline there was no such thing as a honey-moon. They just went to live on the McLennan farm.

When seeding time arrived, John went to Yorkton to secure work of some kind, I have often wondered if he had thought of changeing his occupation at this time for it seemed to me that he was more suited to some line of business than to farming,

Perhaps he did have this in mind, but could not find anything available to get a start in, and his main concern at the moment was to make some money, so he started to work as a farm hand on the farm of the Peaker Bros,

This was one of the large farms in the district which had been started many years before by the parents who were now gone and the three boys had eventurely left the farm and it was now operated by a manager.

For me, that spring meant the end of school, I was to go as I had partly done the summer before to work with George and Arthur, The arrangements were that I should have all my wants supplied in the way of food, lodging, laundry, boots and clothes and in fact any necessity that might be required.

In return they would as before, rent our little bit of cropland, put up all the hay that could be found on Dad's quarter. Allow us a team to do all wood and feed hauling, or any transportation needed during the winter. This last was something of a (one for you, and two for me deal) Most people found themselves with too many horses to feed and care for over the winter, and were only too pleased to have them taken care of, and to be in shape for the following springs work.

I of course was thrilled beyond everything, I was leaveing the hated school-work, and starting out on what I thought would be my life's work, for up to this time it had not even entered my thoughts that I might prefer some other occupation, it just seemed natural that I should just carry on in farm work, and I was urged on by listening to such remarks made by the other boys that in the course of time I should be (Tearing up and down Dad's farm behind four horses) This of course was something exciting for a young boy to look forward to, as so far I had only succeeded in getting to drive three horses on a six foot binder, and that not long enough for the enthusiasm to wear off.

Added to that there was the opportunity of at last getting away (for the summer at least) from the continual chores of water and wood. This without doubt would become an added chore to Nell and Muriel, for she was now getting of an age where she could be of help, although much of her time would be spent at school.

Although he perhaps could not notice it, Dad was getting more used to life in Canada. The three boys leaving home had thrown more work on his shoulders that had previously been done by them, and as I was attending school I could not be of much help to him beyond the usual chores that I had always done after school hours.

Now I should be of no help at all during the summer, but in winter I would be able to care for the stock and cut and haul all the fire-wood necessary to keep us warm for the complete year, and this in itself was no easy task. Our home was not by any means as warmly built as some of our Ukrainian neighbors with their log and mud homes which from our English point of view seemed inferior to ours. It took between twenty and twenty-five four foot high loads to last us the year which represented a lot of work by the time it was sawn up into stove lengths. But of course our one great advantage was that it didn't cost us anything, and during the long cold winters there was little other profitable work could be had.

Perhaps in saying Dad was getting used to the country, it might be better to say he was becoming reconciled to it, for by now he must have realized there was little chance of him ever regaining the pleasure and contentment of his former life in England, and was obliged to make the best of things as they were. He still claimed it was a beastly cold country, and he detested having to operate on a credit system, and said he would sooner work for a wage so that he knew more or less where he was at all the time, instead of having to gamble on the out-come of the crop each fall which it seemed more often fell below one's expectations than above them. Some people gloried in the gamble but Dad appreciated something that was stable.

The stock, and casual labor, tended to lower the risk during the year, but it seemed that always things fell a little short of what was necessary each year. Progress was extremely slow so as to be barely noticeable at times, and when things fell short it seemed a long drag to wait a whole year before one could expect any improvement. Having lived in this environment from when I was very young, and having become accustomed to it, it was much later in life that I realized how very poor we were in those days from a financial point of view, and how well off we were in some other respects, and perhaps as happy as we should ever be. Dad of course could look at things from a completely different point of view than I, and what he saw did not tend to make him very happy.

Things did gradually improve though when one compared them with our first few years on the homestead, for as one looked back they seemed pretty rough ones.

Elsewhere in the District things were much the same as with us, a gradual improvement but it seemed very slow. More land was being broken up as the lowering of the water level by the digging of the Rama ditch made it available, and where there had been heavy bush this was being cleared away by the cutting of fire-wood and the fires each spring. Some of the big stuff was pulled out by team and logging-chain or grubbed out by axe and grub-hoe as being a quicker method (although a hardest one) than cutting and burning, which then required a wait of three years for the roots to rot sufficiently for them to be plowed out by the power available at that time. Many of the little openings that had been plowed up in our first years, and what we termed (garden patches) were now cleared between and joined up to make bigger and more convenient fields to work, although they were still small in comparison to the more open country around Buchanan and the districts south of there.

Cattle herds were getting bigger, and much fencing had to be done as there was Fence Law at that time which required people to fence their crops and allowed the cattle to run at large as there were still many vacant quarter sections in the country which could be used for grazing purposes

This law stayed in force for many years until the crop land became dominant and it was thought best to use Herd Law in which people were obliged to fence in and retain their stock, but this was many years after the time of this story.

Creameries being established at bigger points up and down the line began to create a market for cream and eggs, where previously there had only been a very unsatisfactory sale for such produce at the local general stores for butter, where the price was very uncertain, being governed by how much of this produce the merchant could dispose of in the village or of how much he might realize by shipping it out even if there was enough to make it worth his trouble to do so.

All markets in those times for grain, cattle, pigs, and other farm products were very unstable, and unsatisfactory, and farmers were subjected to having to take just whatever they might be offered, As before mentioned, some people enjoyed this dickering and bartering, where they always hoped to get the best of the deal, but not always did. This was another thing which did not go down with Dad, he liked things more stable and dependable.

With a gradual improvement in roads, and a much more satisfactory way of marketing and handling cream and eggs, this source of income grew to something quite big for those who had achieved good sized herds. This in turn brought people to begin to think of improving their herds.

To exchange a lot of scrub cattle, for a better grade of stock was a bigger contract than most could afford to do, but there was an easier way although very much slower.

The government would supply pure-bred bulls to any association of farmers who would agree to properly care for these animals. So it was decided to take advantage of this offer and certain ones got together to carry this out.

As always it seemed there was only a comparative few who would concern themselves with improvement of this nature, it was too slow, and there was no money in it. Young fellows just starting out were not interested, cows and chickens were for old men, wives and kids, Grain-growing was easier and better, They would not realize until much later when they had the responsibility of a wife and family, that it is well not to have (all their eggs in one basket) as the saying goes, for should the basket fall the results are disastrous.

The Ukrainians as always would have no part in anything of this sort, The majority of them were uneducated and unfamiliar with the Canadian ways and the language, and seemed afraid they might be drawn into something of which they could not get out of.

Possibly they may have previously been taken advantage of by some of the shady characters in the English speaking class.

It has always been difficult to get farmers to co-operate, Perhaps this is characteristic, for only those who had a strong and independent nature would care to risk all the uncertainty of farming, and the unpredictable forces of nature in order to enjoy the freedom of being their own boss, and to be able to (paddle their own canoe).

So it was, when this project got under way that there was immediately much controversy over what breed of animal the trend should be towards, Naturally those involved in dairying leaned towards a dairy type, while those raising beef cattle naturally wanted to remain in that line. A few wanted to branch out into some other breeds of which they fancied, but of which they had little or no experience with. In the end they settled for a short-horn bull, as the majority of the cattle in the area at that time were of that breed. They were thought best in those years, because most of settlers had only a few head, and being a versatile or general purpose type they could be used to better advantage in those first years when most of the cattle were absorbed by the settlers themselves in the way of milk, butter, and beef, and of course in the first few years as oxen.

As time went on all these things changed as herds got bigger and people stuck to the breed of their choice. Mostly though, the beef breeds were either Hereford or Aberdeen-Angus, and the dairy breeds Holstien or Ayr-shire.

Joe Currah was one who stuck with Herefords from the start and many years later George and Arthur started to raise Herefords.

Dad was often dragged into these associations and meetings as being the logical one to do the book-work, and though he used to grumble at the lack of interest people took

in these affairs, and the trips to Rama he was obliged to make for the mail, I believe he enjoyed it all to some extent because it was something more in his line, and he was able to do it well,

The demand for him to do this work suggested this.

The social life in in the district went on much the same, and I think anyone would have to admit that it was better in those early times than it ever was in later years.

Religion was very strong in the elder folks at that time, and occasionally some little rift would creep in somewhere, but generally speaking there was not too much friction, and any little flare-up soon died down without too much trouble.

The Sunday-school was still well attended, although there would possibly always be a fall-off in the young people as they got to the age where the parents felt they should no longer force them to go to church, but hoped they would continue to do so,

Some did, and some did not, but of those who did it is questionable wether they were religiously inclined, or wether they went just to keep peace in the family, or like myself wont merely to enjoy the association of all those who attended.

For my own part religion never meant anything to me, and from a very early age I decided that it was nothing more than a queer and mystical notion that some people got that the world and the people on it were governed by some almighty spiritual force. From my point of view. I could not see anything, or any body being effected or influenced by any spiritual or guiding force, and there were countless reasons to show that any such thing did not exist.

Only if one read the bible and blindly believed every word of it regardless of wether it made sense or reason could one conjure up a belief in religion.

When I was very young I enjoyed being taught the events in the history of the bible, but when it came to the miracles, and the mysterious and impossible stories concerning the creation, the flood, and all the magic and mystery surrounding the birth, life, and death of Jesus Christ, it appeared something beyond the realm of possibility or sensible thinking, and as I grew older I concidered it just the raveing imagination of those men who wrote the bible, and who in those far gone days were only just evolving from a period when mystery and superstition ran riot.

To this day I have never found any reason to make me think differently.

Perhaps at first I was influenced to some extent by George who claimed he was a complete unbeliever, and liked to spend much time and talk in trying to persuade everyone to except his theory, and to annoy Dad who was deeply religious, but he always appeared to be not quite sure of himself or his belief, while I have never had

the least doubt and have treated it as everyones personal opinion of which everyone is entitled to.

Anyhow regardless of my heathenish belief, I continued to attend church and Sunday-school for as long and after the building remained standing, but only as I have previously mentioned for the purpose of meeting the people there.

Mr. Kelly, our preacher from Buchanan, was now gone, and was replaced by Mr. Foster, A young chap who only stayed one summer, and I believe there was a period when we had no minister at all, but later we got Mr. Eccelston who was very well liked, I remember he was very forgetful, and his wife put a string on his mitts so as he wouldn't lose them such as the mothers used to do with the little children.

There was one little interesting incident, which was absolutly nothing to do with the congregation of the Pioneer Sunday school but they became involved in it merely by the circumstances.

There was a disturbance in the Rama Sunday school over the church organ which was in the Rama school and which has been previously mentioned as being the first effort in the very early days for which money was raised in the community.

Evidently there was some dissatisfaction among the church members in regard to the organ being used for dances and social functions. Perhaps it had received some rough treatment, I can't say just what the whole fuss was about.

The upshot of the whole thing was that the organ was removed from the Rama school and placed in the Pioneer Sunday school.

As far as I can remember the members of our church were not consulted. The organ was just dumped there, However, I don't suppose anything was said concerning that part of the affair as it was a great advantage to us, we now had music which had up till now we had not had, excepting once or twice when Harry Stevens brought his little portable organ along.

A short time later, when we were about to start the church service one Sunday, it was discovered that no sound came from the organ and upon investigation it was apparent that all the reeds had been removed from the organ.

There was quite a flare-up about this, for it was immediately suspected that some of the young bucks in the Rama district had been responsbile in retaliation for them loseing their music for the dances, Mr. Berg, who was inclined to be some-what officious in many ways, and was also the local Justice of the peace actually hauled up a few suspects in the affair, but of course nothing could be proved against anyone, and if there was anybody who knew a thing about it they were sure not going to say a word.

Had everyone kept quiet about it, there was the possibility that in a short time the reeds would have been retuned to the organ as mysteriously as they had disappeared.

As far as I know, it never leaked out as to who was responsible for the escapade,

Some time later some money was raised and the organ put back into working order again, and always after Nell was called upon to do the playing. All this caused a few of the Rama people to attend the Sunday school for a time until they gradually felt it was too far to go. The Bergs attended continually until the boys began to think they were too old for Sunday school.

Such little ups and downs as this were what went towards creating the spice of life in the early days of the Rama district.

So it was in the spring of 1915 that I joyfully left the Bellenden school, having attained the dizzy heights of grade six. Later in life I should look back and wonder why I was so anxious to do so.

My job with Dean Bros, started out real good from my point of view. We were to steam up the engine and saw a lot of fire-wood that had been hauled up during the winter. There was still snow on the ground although in places the ground was bare and still frozen so that we should have no trouble with the engine sinking in soft spots, There was lots of water in every little hollow and as it was snow water Arthur said it would be good for the boiler and might tend to take some of the scale off which continually accumulated from the hard water usually used

There would be sawing to do at John's house where Caroline was now staying, at our home, and at the McLennan farm, also a big pile to be cut in three-foot lengths to be used for fuel in the engine.

Phillip Wowchuck was called upon for extra help, he had worked often on the threshing outfit and was a very good and conscientious worker, and could speak very good English.

It was sure a pleasant sight to me to see such a huge pile of sawn wood in our back yard. It was the first and also the last time that wood was cut in this manner by a steam engine, at later times it was always cut with one of the small gasoline machines.

When seeding started I was to find out what it was like to follow a team in the field all day and every day, and to experience blisters on the feet from doing so, I was put to harrowing, it being a job that I was less likely to be able to make any mistakes.

There were no such things as harrow-carts used (in our district at least) They were added expense, and also required extra horse-power which was always a

consideration, but to walk continually over the soft land all day was guaranteed to make one sleep well at nights.

After the mad rush of getting the wheat seeded, I was to find out that George and Arthur had bought a plow for use with the steam-engine, and that it had been delayed in shipping so that there was concern as to whether it would arrive in time to be of value for the oat and barley seeding,

Within a few days it was reported to have been seen by one of the neighbors spotted at the loading platform in Rama, so we went up one evening to unload it and hauled it bumping along down the Rama road behind the farm wagon.

The plow was of the type now only seen in old pictures, it would be considered a small one, as it was equipped with six fourteen inch plow bottoms, while in pictures one sees massive affairs of twelve or sixteen bottoms pulled by huge steam engines or some of the very early models of gasoline tractors which were monstrous, heavy, and slow moving things as compared to the modern gas. or diesel farm tractor, These outfits were only used in the southern and western part of the province where one could plow for miles without any obstructions.

This was all very exciting to me, for I was going to get the opportunity of firing the engine and operating the plows.

The plows were in gangs of two, each gang being lowered or raised by a very long lever, and this to be done quite snappily in order to keep the furrows even and straight at the field ends, A platform at the front gave plenty of room to walk around on and also to carry engine fuel on,

These plows were combination, For the purpose of breaking new land one gang could be removed (for it took considerable more power to break sod) and the remaining four plows could be equipped with breaking mould-boards, This worked very well on the prairies but was not so good in our bush land, A single large plow was considered the best.

This outfit sure did the plowing, which In those days was the longest job and required the most power. It was nice to see six furrows rolling over all at once and being leveled out by harrows dragged behind, leaving the land in readiness for the seed-drill.

George was busy trying to do the drilling and haul water for the engine, and the two jobs certainly conflicted, and at times we were obliged to unhook from the plows and go to a nearby slough to fill the boiler and the spare tanks, and to haul a tank-wagon load back with us. This maneuver got us into trouble on two occasions when we ventured too close to a slough and had the engine sink in the soft soil, causing much work and loss of time.



The plows had evidently been standing idle for a long time and were covered with a thick coating of rust and therefore would not clean properly, the earth just stuck on and gradually accumulated until they were just rooting along and doing a very poor job, so that we were obliged to stop quite frequently to scrape off the mould-boards, I can remember how tired I got of cleaning those six plows of soil and in between times sanding off the mould-boards with kerosene and covering them each night with oil, Finally the condition naturally cleared up by use and everything worked fine.

By the end of seeding time I had gained quite a bit of experience in firing the engine, keeping the water in the boiler at the correct level, and the steam pressure from fluctuating too much, I was quite reluctant to go back to harrowing again but in those days they thought it was very important to do lots of it to conserve moisture.

Working with horses meant chores too, Rising at five thirty and immediately getting feed to them so as they would be ready for the days work, George and Arthur had been trained by Bill Angus, a Scotchman in Manitoba who expected his horses to be well brushed and combed each morning, and they carried this out with their own teams. Afterwards the harness must be put on, the stable cleaned out, and oats fed to the horses. All this before breakfast.

We were of course liveing on the McLennan farm, and thinking back it is probable that Jessie wondered just what she had let herself in for when she married George, for now she was stuck with Arthur and I to feed and care for in addition to George,

Our accommodation was not of the best either, it was still the original (Mac's shack) where we had first come to know the Murrays when they were temporarily staying there while their own home was being built. It consisted of a log building with a car roof and an adjoining piece at the back perhaps twelve feet by twelve which served as the only bed-room.

Inside, with the exception of the bed-room it was just one big liveing room which served for everything includeing a bed up in one corner for Arthur and I.

After the rush of seeding was over there was always a more relaxing time for awhile, when some of the jobs were done that were not able to be done in the cold winter weather and the gates and fences were repaired in readiness for the growing crop. Horses and cows could be out at pasture now which cut down conciderably on chores.

We started to prepare for breaking, which would consist mostly in that year of joining up together some of the smaller fields, and squareing up some of the odd shaped pieces which had come about from being left because there were too many big trees on them. Now we were going to pull these heavey big stumps out with the engine and chain,

I liked this work, because I got to the point where I was allowed to handle the engine a bit, something I had not been able or allowed to do so far, but Arthur said I could try my hand at it as it only required quite low steam pressure for this kind of work and therefore the engine handled very lazily so that I should not be so likely to lose my head and run into something. Also Arthur thought he could be of more value in heaveing those big stumps around, They used to hitch the logging chain onto a stump, then loop it around about three more and dragg out the whole works.

I remember we did some stump pulling for the Murrays too where they were preparing some land for breaking.

Later in the summer Arthur and I took the outfit up to Glad's place to do some breaking, He had bought a quarter section across the road from Ben Grieve's place, (the Lundquist place) I think he called it, and it was probably the N.E quarter of Sec.5 Range 8 which may have joined his place, I am not sure of this, for as long as we had known Glad I don't think I was ever at his original home.

Glad, was doing things in a big way that year, (in fact Glad. always wanted to do things in a big way wether he could afford it or not) that was his way of doing things.

His brother Doug, had come back from the east to live with him and he was chief roust about, and general cook and bottle washer, Glad also hired three men to cut scrub and bush for him, Two of them were the Treletski brothers, Mike and Alec. and the other man I can't remember his name.

When these men were not cutting scrub or fuel for the engine Glad, had them plaster the the house in the usual way with clay mud, Mike was an expert at this work and could make a real straight and smooth wall. It must have been his trade in the old country.

It might be of interest to note that these men worked that summer for only a dollar a day.

We did quite a lot of breaking, although I can't remember just how many acres, but only that we were there a long time,

We stopped occasionally to pull some of the biggest stumps This work went pretty quick with plenty of men around to help in cutting roots and heaveing the stumps out of the way.

It was while we were doing this work that we ran over one of the pulled stumps which by nature of it's roots was L shaped and with the result that one end of it flipped up and struck the blow-off valve which was located at the lowest point of the boiler and ripped it completely off.

There was immediately a deafening roar of escapeing steam which scared the tank-wagon team, and of course suprised us all so that when we had gathered our senses we made haste to remove the fire from the engine and heap chunks of sod on the remaining coals before some damage was done to the boiler from the sudden lowering of the water. Steam engines have a soft centred plug located at the top of the fire-box for protection at any time that the water falls below the top crown-sheet. It blows out and douses the fire before damage can be done from overheating.

In this case we were fortunate enough to get the fire out before this happened, but of course there was conciderable delay before repairs could be made. No telephones or cars in those days to speed up the situation. Trips to town by horses were slow, and there was always the chance that certain parts would not be obtainable in the local town and would have to be shipped in from some bigger point.

As mentioned before the breaking plows we were useing were not of the best, when we came to the places where we had pulled the stumps and where there roots and sticks and deep leaf-mould the plows just gathered all this refuse into a mass and I was unable to pull it all free from the four plows in time to let them clear. This meant much stopping and backing un and clearing of roots before we could get going again.

Arthur could see at once that I was not hefty enough to handle the situation, and suggested I try running the engine and let him try clearing the plows, for he was as strong then as he would ever be. He made a higher place for me to stand so that I should have better control and let me at it, while he went back and stood with one foot on each gang at the back so as to be in an advantageous position and we got going.

Arthur was then young, energetic, and strong, and when we encountered one of these problem spots there would be sticks, roots, and pieces of rubbish flying in every direction, I used to get a kick out of seeing it all happen, and it was only occasionally that we were obliged to stop to clear things out.

This arrangement worked very well so I stayed at running the engine most of the time until we had most of the job done, but at this time we had a break down on the engine. One of the pinion gears broke and this laid us up for conciderable time as there was some delay In shipping from Winnipeg, Also It was a big job to remove the broken gear and replace the new one useing rather inadequate equipment.

These traction engines were big cumbersome affairs, and the gears were correspondingly big and heavey, and exposed to the outside so that they took quite a beating from dirt and dust.

We were obliged to remove one of the big drive wheels in order to get at the pinion gear, and this in it'self was a difficult Job by the means we had.

Then came a long wait, for we were expecting the new part at any time but it didn't turn up.

It was at this time that the young peoples four day holiday at Newburn Lake came due, and in this way I managed to get in on it, Muriel made it that year too, and as the older ones did not take much notice of us we had a good time together.

There were two boats, A big one and a small one, and Muriel and I managed to grab onto the small one at every instance it became available and enjoyed a lot of boating and fishing.

George who was always a bit of a nut about swimming, declared he was going to swim across the river and back each morning,

In one morning that I was watching him, he got to the other side and then suggested that I should take the boat out to meet him, The water was quite chilly and he might easily get cramp.

He was quite surprised when I made no move to do this, but just watched him swim back.

Probably I was too young to see any danger, and thought if he was goofy enough to do such a stunt he had better take his chances of anything going wrong.

It was the first and last time that Muriel and I were able to take in this holiday, for the whole thing broke up after that year. The war interfered with it, as it did with many other things as it continued to grow worse and last longer.

We were soon back at the breaking again, and it seemed a bit grim after the holiday, As you may be sure, the meals and accommodation were not of the best with a gang of six men and just Doug. to cook for us, Most of us slept up-stairs on mattresses on the floor, We had our own blankets along as was customary where men went to work anywhere away from home.

Doug. was the only one who slept down-stairs. Glad had charge of the alarm-clock, and when it shattered the silence at five thirty in the morning Glad would raise to a sitting position and the house would resound to crys of Doug, Doug, Doug.

This was a sign for Doug, to get out and get the fire on, the kettle boiling, and the oat-meal cooking for breakfast.

The tack consisted basically of beans, potatoes, and pork.

I think Mrs. Greives saved our lives, she supplied us with good farm bread and butter, with occasionally a little treat in the way of some pies. She was a wonderful cook, and kept a nice clean and tidy home with the aid of her two daughters.

In my time off I used to enjoy going over there just to sit in her nice kitchen, such a contrast to our bachelor home at Glad's.

I might note at this time that I saw my first picture show, and it may seem strange that of all places it was in Rama Instead of some bigger centre as one might expect,

It was of course a travelling affair which showed at Rama for one night only.

Glad, Arthur, and I went up with team and buggy to see it.

We were now going ahead with the breaking as fast as possible excepting for Sundays, In those days It would have been severely frowned upon to work on that day. It was strictly a religious holiday, Also both men and horses worked hard, and required this periodical rest in order that they did not become worn out and useless.

On Sundays Glad. and Arthur usually dissappeared in the direction of the Bailey farm, They had for some time been keeping company with Mabel and Edie and these two were home on holiday from their nurseing work.

I usually tried to get home for a few hours but didn't always make it as it was a long way. On one occasion I ran into hot water with Mother, She had heard that I was running the engine and someone had said I had no business to do so. One had to have a certificate and be of age to do this, and I was only sixteen.

Mother was quite put out about this and told me in no uncertain terms that she would not have me doing things I was not supposed to do.

She was of course unduly worried over idle talk of someone, because although I was running the engine Arthur was in charge of it at all times.

A few days later George came up to where we were working boiling over with anger, and wanted to know what we were wasting so much time about, there were things to be done at home and the haying season was approaching, he had already cut some hay. He wanted us to (pull-stakes) and come back right away.

Arthur said things were now going well and it would be foolish not to get the job fininished.

After much heated discussion it was decided that we should keep on till the week-end at least. This we did, and by working early and late we managed to finish up shortly after noon on Saturday and started home.

I remember thinking as we chugged along how nice it was to have it all done with, and to be going back where we should be able to have a good clean up and get nice meals again.

Haying went on much the same as the previous year, with me doing all the cutting and rakeing, and George and Arthur doing the hauling and stacking. It was hard work for them, for in those days it was all loaded by pitch-forks onto hay-racks and hauled in to be stacked in the hay-yards at the buildings with the exception of some which as a great distance away.

This was stacked in the field to be hauled home in the winter when time was not so valuable.

I should have mentioned previously that in the spring of this year we got our first stage of pests, (In relation to the crops I mean) Of course we still had the mosquitoes at certain times of the year, but they were not quite so bad as the water and the bush disappeared from the country, leaving less places for them to breed and allowing the wind to circulate more so that they were never as bad as in those first few years.

I can remember that they seemed to get in everywhere in spite of doors and screens, and on many occasions we were obliged to build a small smudge of dry hay and green grass in a pail and carry in doors to smoke them out in order to be able to sleep. The smell of the smoke being less disagreeable than the mosquitoes and at one time when an approaching storm made ideal mosquito conditions we were awakened in the middle of the night by them and were obliged to smoke them out before we were able to get to sleep again.

Crop pests, had been very slight up until this time, for of course there was comparatively little crop land and it was all new, but as the years went on the pests and the obnoxious weeds became serious problems.

The previous year had been very dry and so was the early spring of 1915 so this may have had some bearing on the fact that we were over-run by cut-worms. They were so bad that huge bare patches appeared in the fields and it was thought that if this went on too long it must surely effect the crop yield to a great extent, These bare patches got to be so big that I can remember in harvest time that when crossing them the binder would run completely empty by the time it reached the opposite side.

The situation was cleared up as so many things are by just plain chance in the shape of what the prairie farmers often refer to as (a million dollar rain). This is a nice soft rain which may last all day and the following night, and which occurs at the exact time of the season when it will do most good.

In this case it stopped the cut-worms dead in their tracks for apparently they cannot work in very wet soil, and by the time it had again dried up their life cycle was over.

The rain also arrived at the opportune time to give the crop a terrific boost and to carry it well on into the season so that in spite of the loss from the cut-worms the crop turned out to be a bumper. The only one that I can remember in all , the years I was on the farm.

I can remember the contrast in that year and the previous one which was below normal, The threshing on the McLennan farm that year was cleaned up by four oclock in the first day, but in this year it took four full days to complete the job.

All things go by chance and circumstance it seems, and I remember that the bumper crop was not of much advantage to us at home, Our acreage was quite small at that time, so that our third of the crop, (which was the general rule for the owner on rented land) amounted to only very little more than a normal year.

I was looking forward to harvest and threshing, for as I had gained some stature and weight in the past year and was again going to be permitted to operate the binder through harvest and to fire the engine during the threshing season. It would be the first time I would be going round the complete circuit.

My first day on the binder did not turn out so good for me I had a break-down within the first hour which was caused by one of my own bright ideas,

We used Bess, Nance, and Roger, in the team, Bess and Nance being the notorious wild broncos that Glad and Arthur had struggled home with many years before, and were now completely gentle, although quite spirited, Roger by contrast was quite slow, making a rather uneven team, and using an extremely long whip which was necessary on a binder to keep Roger in place only served to excite the other two. To remedy this I thought of using a long thin willow stick laid horizontally across the top of the binder in such a way that I could occasionally poke Roger a little bit and so keep him up in his place without the other two horses being aware of it.

Actually this idea worked very well, and I continued to use it, It was the way in which I constructed the device that caused all the trouble, I had to run my long stick through a steel ring at the front of the binder to keep it in some sort of position and the ring in turn was secured by a short length of chain.

What I didn't notice, was that the chain ran perilously close to some of the revolving mechanism on the binder so that in the matter of half an hour or so there was a grinding crash which brought everything to a stand still.

Fortunately there were no new parts necessary, excepting what were at hand, and within an hour or so everything was ship-shape again, but the anger of George and

Arthur on such a poor start with the harvesting served to cool my ardor when it came to the matter of inventions.

The grain was thick and heavey that fall, and I remember it took much care and ingenuity to get it all through the binder with-out too many delays from over-loading and plugging up, but as far as I can remember we did not run into any serious delays or break-downs.

George and Arthur were real busy with the stooking and the stooks stood thick in the fields when they were through.

Glad. Ferrie and Mabel Bailey decided to get married about this time. But there was not much fan-fare about it as it was a busy time of the year and most everybody was at work.

It seemed that most marriages took place either in late fall or late winter when there was lots of time for celebrateing, so some of the young fellows tried to kid Glad. that he only got married at that time so as he would have some-one to cook for the threshers, There may have been some method in his madness but I think more likely it was his usual way of makeing, up his mind to do something and then immediately doing it.

There was going to be lots of threshing to do that fall with the crop as heavey as it was, and although there were several machines in the country there would be lots of work for them all,

In the immediate district the Yecamissions were working down south, and the Bergs to the north, and there were other machines on the out skirts, Itwas interesting to hear all the whistles blowing early in the mornings,They could be heard for miles in the clear frosty air, and it seemed there was something of a chalange among the fire-men to see who would get steam up first.

The Bergs had a good J.I. Case outfit and they knew how to run it, Mr.Berg was also a black-smith, and the two elder boys were growing up now (they were older than me) and were both mechanically inclined. Especially Raymond the eldest, he later became quite a wizard when gas engines got to be more common.

This would be the first time that I was actually one of the threshing gang, and of course quite exciting for me, so naturally it has stayed in my mind quite clearly, Following years when the novelty had worn off, became common-place and just so much work, and eventurely something to look forward to with worry and dread more than with interest.

We had a good crew that year, George ran the separator, Arthur the engine, and Pete Patterson was tank man. The stook-teamsters were Bob McCarthur, Doug. Whitman, Phillip Wowchuck, Alf. Hunter, Alf. Wellene, and there must have been one other , who



I cannot bring to mind at the moment, for it took six teams which never seemed quite enough when Phillip Wowchuck had to break off to haul straw. He was the official straw-man whose business it was to keep the fire-man supplied with plenty of fuel for the engine.

Joe Howes and Metro Kowalchuk were field pitchers, Joe got himself dubbed (the Field Marshal) because of his systematic way of cleaning up the fields, takeing all four corners first and working up to and finishing at the centre.

He also took it upon himself to act as guide to Arthur when we were moveing, pointing out all obstructions and motioning the best angle to approach any narrow entry or any point where it required some ticklish negotiation. Should it be night-time he went ahead with a lantern and had a little sign language all of his own to carry out the job, He was in his glory when he could perform something of this nature. But although the fellows all seemed to get a little amusement but of Joe's fussy ways, it all helped to make things run smooth.

Up until this time I had not fired the engine with straw, it is of course a continual job, the straw must be forced into the shute steadily as long as the engine is operateing, and like many other jobs there is acertain trick to doing it so that at all times there is a blazeing fire with no dead spots from loading too heavey or at no time is there not enough fuel, If this occured and cold air was drawn into the fire-box there was the danger of the flues contracting and devoloping a leak.

Leakey flues were a bug-bear on all steam-engines on account of the alkaline water which quickly built up scale on the inside of the boiler, I remember on this particular fall we were obliged to renew the flues part way through the run, arrangeing to do this during a wet spell, There always seemed to be at least two rains even on good falls.

Threshing is of course mostly stationary work, and I soon got efficient enough to keep up a full head of steam at all times and to start and stop the engine whenever necessary, as Arthur seemed to spend much of his time helping George at the separator as it always seemed prone to trouble.

The first few days of threshing were always a bit hectic, any weak spots in the machinery were sure to show up, and it took awhile for the horses to become used to the noise of the machine, steam blowing off, clouds of smoke and the sound of the whistle which must be blown frequently, However, in the course of a few days things got settled down, and the horses paid not the slightest notice to anything, and although it was hard work and long hours, there always appeared to be a certain amount of fun going on over something or other.

My job was not hard, but it certainly was steady, and the hours were long. Regular hours were from seven in the morning to eight in the evening, but often it was stretched out in order to complete a farm so as the machine could be moved to the

next job during the night and be ready for work in the morning, This made long hours, but as I was still considered a boy I was given an advantage, I was not obliged to get up at four thirty to steam up the engine, Arthur did this for me, so that I could sleep till breakfast time.

Alf. Hunter had just bought his first team of horses, and he was fortunate in getting in a good long run that fall, Probably longer than in any of the following years.

Pete Patterson still had only one horse. But as he was a good tank-man, George and Arthur wanted to get him on that job so they arranged for him to use Roger to make up a team,

I remember Rollie, who was sure to come out with something comical remarking "Yes, Pete just came round with the naked horse, meaning that he didn't even have a harness on it.

Neither Rollie or Glad, were on the threshing gang that fall, Glad. I guess was too busy getting married, but Rollie had to go to the outfit he had worked on the previous year.

Doug. Whitman turned up late one morning to work and we wondered what the trouble was, as he was usually well before time It turned out that he had acquired an addition to the family, I can remember Pete saying with a chuckle "Well, I guess Doug will have to plant another row of potatoes next year, he's broken the record. He's got a baby boy".

There were already three girls in the family, and Scott (he was named after Scott Rattray) turned out to be the only boy in the family of what was eventually seven.

John's oldest daughter Gladys was also born during this threshing season, and in early winter George's eldest son Lester was born, so these three will be much the same age.

Metro Kawalchuk was the only one in the crew who could not speak English, (evidently he had not long been out from the old country) so Phillip Wowchuck was called upon quite often to interpret for him, for as George said Phillip could speak proper English, Phillip was always asking about the words that sounded strange to him and wanting to know what they meant, and having got hold of a word he liked to use it as often as possible,

Incidentally, (impossible) was a word that intrigued him, and having found out from George what it meant we heard about a lot of things that were impossible in the next few weeks.

In the evenings after work Phillip and Metro used to sit together and talk, for I guess it was a bit lonely for Metro all day. They were usually laughing a lot, and Phillip told us

if we could have understood Metro we should have found him quite humorous and comical. As he put it, just like Rollie Tomkins.

One night after supper George said "Oh, Here's that language again" which was another funny word to Phillip, so it turned out that Metro lost his name and was ever after called language.

There was lots of grain that fall, for once almost everyone under-estimated there grain storage, and had to hastily improvise some sort of grain-bin. Dad was always called into service on our own places to take care of the grain from the machine, another one of those Jobs that was considered for old men and kids, but in reality was at times quite strenuous when the grain got high in the granary and much shoveling had to be done in cramped quarters or tempory bins had to be constructed at the machine while the grain was already pouring down the bagger-spout and threatening get away before it could be confined by the walls of the bin. I remember while Dad was prepareing a place for one of these bins on the McLennan farm he came across a carpenters steel square imbedded in the surface of the soil and which must have been there for some time as it was in places deeply eaten into by rust, but he after-wards cleaned it up and it became quite sericeable and still is after all those years for I still have it.

We threshed west as far as Andy Middlemas place and worked back again to George's quarter on Sec. 33 where I remember we were delayed for an hour or so by a wrench going through the threshing cylinder, I had lost this wrench at harvest time by leaveing it on a ledge of the binder while I was serviceing it, and although I had remembered it before I had gone only a few yards and went back to search for it, I could not find it, I guess it had fallen amongst the grain and was tied up in a sheaf. Fortunately the damage was not too great.

We moved from there to Andy McKay's original homstead which was now owned by the Gablers, and I remember it was beautiful sunny fall weather although it was the sixth of Nov.

A couple of days later when we had moved to the Gablers home place it turned very cold with two inches of snow and a high wind. It was real disagreeable for the next few days.

We finished at Gablers and moved to Chris. Olsons place on the S.W.of Sec. 5 directly north of our place, (It was later owned by Len. Kilgour) and haveing finished there towards night we moved as far as our place to stay over night as it was a long move to the next place.

It was while we were unhitching the engine from the separator to allow us to work more conveniently around it, and to lessen the fire hazard that I managed to partly crush the end of my finger as Arthur eased the engine back to allow me to pull out the draw pin,

and this of course finished up my firing job for me, as I could not conveniently work with a squashed finger especially when the weather would most likely remain cold,

I was quite disappointed that I could not finish the run. It dragged out for some time I remember, mostly on account of the snow and cold, and if I remember correctly they had a breakdown while at Joe Currah's which certainly didn't help matters.

As something over and above the deal for my summers work I was paid one dollar a day for the days of threshing which I remember were twenty-three, and as a bonus George took me to Buchanan one day and bought me a suit of clothes. That suit had to last me a long time.

In late fall John returned home from his job on the Peaker farm at Yorkton where he had worked steady all summer and was fortunate enough to have secured for himself the position as manager for the following year. This was quite a lift for him, as he was more adapted to this kind of thing than to struggling away on a homestead for himself.

So it was that in a short time he had gathered his belongings together and with Caroline and family (which was now two) had left the Rama district for good.

It was late this fall that the last two Bailey girls married, Dora to Alf Hunter, and Edith to Arthur. Both couples married about the same time, although not on exactly the same day. It was typical of Alf that he should jokingly remark that maybe they ought to, then they might get a cheap rate from the preacher (Two for ten), but Arthur and Edie were married on New Years Eve and always afterwards celebrated their anniversaries on New Years Day.

Strangely I cannot remember anything about this wedding I seem to remember seeing them married in the Rama school, but other than that it is a complete blank to me.

Arthur and Edie went to live in John's house, (This house will always be thought of and called John's house as it was originally built for John) but of course by now it must have passed into the possession of George and Arthur when John left the partnership.

I was now at home for the winter, and with Arthur and Edie at John's house, George and Jessie were by themselves again although not for long, Rollie Tomkins came in from his summers work and made his home there for the winter.

George came to the conclusion that he did not have enough room in his home and that he should build on another room, it could be tucked into the corner made by the existing addition and would protrude past the end enough to allow a window to be put in and it would only be necessary to cut a doorway through from the living room. The fact that they were starting to raise a family no doubt had some bearing on the need for more room.

There was a little more money around that fall, and George who had always pictured himself as eventually being a well to do farmer, (probably like the ones he had read about in story books in England) thought he would splurge a bit and make a real little private den for himself where he could really act the part, I remember he got linoleum for the floor, (something that was not seen much of up until that time,) A brand new and rather ornate heater, and quite an expensive easy chair. Something he had always wanted but up to that time had not achieved. He and Rollie had the time of their lives fixing it all up in the cold part of the winter when other outside work could not conveniently be done.

I am not definitely certain of this but I think this room was first Rollie's shack and that it was just moved into position there and finished up on the inside.

In all the years that Rollie Tomkins had now been in Canada he had not settled to any definite job or in any particular place, he had not taken up land as most other young fellows had nor had he gone into any sort of trade, and he didn't seem to take up with any particular girl in the district or at any point where he worked, But the year before this time he had decided, or had been persuaded to take up a homestead north and east of our place, I cannot recollect just where it was, (it may have been on section ten). He built a shack there and lived there most of the winter, I can remember going up and staying with him one week-end, and at that time the bush rabbits were so thick that they seemed to be everywhere. It was bright moonlight and we were able to just open the door and shoot one for dinner the next day.

The rabbits, like the muskrats disappeared in a year or two. One winter was enough for Rollie, It was too much out of the way and lonesome for him, and he forgot the homestead and disposed of the shack by moving it down to the McLennan farm.

The Den, Study, or whatever you might like to call it did not remain as such for very long, and in the course of time was required principally as a bedroom.

Jack Murray had enlisted in the Army in an artillery unit, and we had only seen him occasionally that summer when he was up on leave. He was a driver, for of course at that time cannon were moved with horses, and as he was always interested in horses he enjoyed the training period, but was soon whisked away overseas, Much later he was shell-shocked and had to spend considerable time in England recuperating from it.

The war was getting worse, and it seemed now that we were getting closer to it, or it to us, as the odd ones left the district to take part in it when the situation became steadily worse.

We began to notice certain things were not available, and although grain and cattle prices went up which was an advantage to farmers, it was counteracted to some extent by higher prices; in food and other commodities.

There was more grain in the country now on account of the good crop and of course the gradual increase in acreage so that some farmers were now able to ship grain by the car-load in preference to more or less having to take just what the line elevators liked to offer. Marketing will always be an unknown quantity in the farming business, but it was worse in those times because farmers had no organization, and refused to co-operate with one another. In later years they found they were obliged to do this in order to operate successfully but it took a lot of years and a lot of educating to get most of them to think the same way.

Winter at home took on the pattern of most winters, consisting to a great extent of chores, Hauling feed for the stock and feeding it to them, keeping them bedded and the stables clean Hauling between twenty and twenty-five loads of fire-wood to last the year round, and cutting any fence-posts or logs that might be needed when summer came.

Water for the stock got to be a problem as the country got dryer, at first it was possible to sink a well on the edge of a good sized slough and allow the water to seep in nice and clear but very alkine which didn't seem to bother the cattle much, but sometimes as the winter progressed and the frost went deeper the supply failed, One winter I hauled it in barrels from George's lake on thirty three, but this was a time consuming job and was therefore unsatisfactory.

Some people had good supplies of water, but it was only by chance that one would strike it, and we were in short supply for many years.

Dad volunteered to saw all the stove wood up until the time that I was able to get it cut by a circular saw, and it certainly kept him busy for a good part of each day when the weather was cold. He also made countless trips walking to Rama for the mail He preferred to walk and keep warm, to driving a team and freezing to death and having to care for the horses.

Muriel of course was still at school, and Nell milked the cows and did much of the work in the home, At times taking complete charge while Mother was away for days sometimes on her errands of mercy when children were born in the district.

And this was the winter when George and Jessie's eldest son Lester was born. They named him George Lester, but called him Lester to avoid confusion with George, but this did not work out as was intended, as when he became of school age he was naturally registered as George and has remained as George ever since.

It was in March of 1916 that Charlie Lockhart, Rollie Tomkins, Arthur, and Glad Ferrie decided to join the Army, and they were shortly joined by Cyril Moores, Fred Atkins, and George Murray,

George was only seventeen and therefore was obliged to get his parent's consent before he could enlist, but he was bound he would go along with the others and eventually made it.

These seven men joined the 107th battalion in Winnipeg and on reaching England later were transferred to the Royal Canadian Engineers and were able to remain as a group right through till after the end of the war. It can be considered nothing less than miraculous that these seven men all returned when it was all over.

Eventually there were many more who joined up that I cannot recollect, but of those I do were Pete Patterson, Doug. Whitman, and Alf Welline. The group Arthur was in of course remain most in my mind as most of them were life long friends.

All this made quite a change in the district and at home too, In the following spring I again went to work with George to in some small way fill in Arthur's place, The same arrangements were made as previously, only that now I would receive ten dollars a month for the six months.

Soldiers who were farmers were given (seeding leave) as it was very important to keep up crop production, and Arthur and some of the others took advantage of this,

We got the engine going again and succeeded in getting most of the plowing done while Arthur was available to operate the engine, but just at the last something happened to the engine which stopped it in it's tracks and we were obliged to just leave it where it was, and it remained there with the crop growing up all round it until the fall.

It was a busy summer for George and I, and of course I didn't get the light jobs this time, but had to take what-ever came to hand, George always did the drilling, as there was to be no mistakes made about that, but this meant that I got all the harrowing so that I really got my fill of following a team day in and day out over the soft fields, and I remember that no matter what kind of shoes I wore I could not get away from blistered feet. (What a trial to get ones boots on first thing in the morning).

There was much fenceing to be done that spring, most of it new fences, and some to repair those that had deteriorated over the years, I remember we hauled out a full wagon-box of rolls of barbed wire from Rama, and that we cut and drove miles of posts and stretched and stapled no end of wire until we were literally fed up with the job and were pleased to finish and get at the summer-fallow. We also got in a couple of weeks of road-work too This was always done if possible, as it helped to keep taxes down a bit.

In haying we were of course short handed, and I expect we called on Dad to help fill in there, Dad it seemed was always relied upon when there were any extras to be done as he had adapted himself to most all jobs with the exception of the field work.

Excepting for the first summer when he had helped George with the oxen on the breaking plow, Dad never did any field work.

I don't know wether he concidered it the elder boys work or if he felt he wasnot up to doing it, but he didn't ever get to driveing four horsed teams and operateing the farm machinery in the fields, and in later years this kind of work all fell to me.

He at times drove wagon teams when it became necessary, but avoided doing so if possible, and for himself prefered to walk in place of being bothered with the horses.

Harvesting was much as the year before, The crop was not so heavy of course but was a good one, This year I did not run the binder steady, but worked alternade shifts with George so as to even out the stooking which was hard work.

None of the 107th men got harvest leave. They had trained at Sewel Camp all summer and were close to the point when they would be sent overseas, I don't remember exactly when they did go over, only that they were overseas in-the following winter.

The Murrays now found themselves in a bad way for help with both the boys gone, George, on his seeding leave had been of help to get the crop in, and Dad had managed to do the haying probably by keeping Arthur home from school on some days, and the two girls were capable of doing most of the work around the farm, and in this way they managed until the fall.

Dad Murray and Ike Preston had gone in partnership to buy an eight-foot binder, and Ike always operated it, so that took care of their harvesting problem each fall.

It was this war period that worked conciderable hardship on young Arthur, and as regards his schooling he fared far worse than either his elder brothers or I had, for he continually missed days at school to help with the farm-work, and eventurely had to quit altogether before he had gained much headway and when he was still quite young and not strong enough to handle some of the work expected of him.

The war was becomeing progressively worse, although I cannot say that I remember it well enough to talk very inteligently about it, only that it was spreading over France and Belgium and was going badly for our side, The Germans were doing much damage over England as they were able to drop bombs from their zeppelins and little could be done to stop them. Air-craft being then in its very early stages could not go high enough nor carry much load in the way of armaments.



It was all being brought closer to us all the time by the shortage of help, and of course by the concern for those of the district who were now involved in it.

Will Bailey, who had started out so unfortunately in farming when he lost his leg, had now trained as a teacher and took over the Rama school in place of his sister Dora when she married Alf Hunter and in this way had the advantage of being able to live at his own home.

Vi. Stevens who had also trained as a teacher taught at the Bellenden school and drove back and forth from her home each day with horse and buggy, I seem to remember that as the cold weather came on in the fall, she boarded at our place and went home only at the week-end.

Threshing that fall was a combination of trouble and bad weather, George and I got busy at repairing the steam engine, for it had recieved no attention since it had given up in the seeding time, Neither of us were familiar with the type of work that had to be done, and George being less mechanically minded than any of us had always left such things to Arthur, but we succeeded in makeing a reasonably good job and were ready to get going at the threshing.

The next problem was to get an engineer. There just didn't seem to be one available, although George made many inquiries and contacted Andy Middlemas who had operated for them some falls before when they first took over the machine from Mae. McLennan but he was otherwise engaged. In desperation, he phoned the boiler inspector to see if it was possible to get a permit for me to run it, and after some hesitation he gave me a permit to run the engine for ninty days, It was of course strictly a wartime measure and definitely would not have been allowed under normal circumstances.

The trouble then arose as to who would be fire-man, and here again we were stumped, no-one was available, and I did not relish haveing an inexperienced man to contend with, I would have my hands full in any-case.

As it happened at the last minute someone turned up for the job but did not want to fire as he held an engineer's certificate and naturally could command a higher wage in that capacity.

So it was that I was fire-man again, although the engineer did not seem to be very competent and experienced a lot, of difficulty, I remember Dad saying that I could handle the engine much better than he, It was one of the few times that I can remember Dad giving me any praise.

George Richardson was tank-man and was the only real efficient man on the job, The stook teamsters were a hodgepodge of any available men or boys, Jack Upex drove one of George's teams which he seemed to have trouble in handling, and another

young Ukrainian boy had the same difficulty although was quite a good worker and tried to do his best, He proudly told me his brother was a (sport) but on talking to him further I found out he meant (expert) He had taken a course on operating gasoline - engines at Hemphill trade schools.

That fall was a wet one, and we made poor headway between several lay-offs for the weather, one break-down, and a lot of trouble with the seperator in trying to thresh grain which was not in satisfactory condition for threshing.

George was completely fed up, and after doing our own work and a few more farmers he had promised, he pulled the machine in in preference to trying to combat the weather conditions and lose money in the end. The following fall he sold the machine to the company of Gabler and Johnson, and they threshed our crop before takeing the machine out of the district.

Although in later years I did a certain amount of fireing I never did get my engineer's papers, as it appeared the steam engines were fast being replaced by the gasoline tractor.

It was this fall that Nell and I were treated to a lively wagon ride in the shape of a run-away in complete darkness.

Had it been daylight it might never have occured.

It was during one of the wet spells in the threshing season that we were detailed to go to Rama for a supply of groceries for the three homes, Georges, Edie, at John's house, and our home, It took conciderable time to gather all these supplies together so that had become dark before we got started home.

Incidentally, it was Bess and Nance we were driveing, the team which seemed to have counted so much when Glad, and Arthur had brought them dashing home from the Yorkton district in the early years, It was the only time that they over ran away.

We had got to a point about two miles south of town when it suddenly happened, I felt a line give way. Probably at a splice and at once spoke to the team to stop them, but they did just the reverse. We of course don't know what really happened, for we could see nothing, but possibly the free line may have caught up and slapped them, then got tangled and viciously pulled them to the side, for they immediately turned off the grade to the loft, (it was fortunate they did not turn to the right into the Rama ditch, for it was eight to ten feet deep at that point)

They dashed madly along over the bumpy terrain beside the grade and we could do nothing but slide down off the seat into the bottom of the wagon box and hang on for dear life, They came so close to a telephone pole that a piece over two foot long was ripped off by the hub of the wagon wheel, and then as they came onto an protruding

culvert some four foot high they were forced up onto the grade again so that It was a miracle that the wagon did not tum completely over,

Haveing gained the road again they dashed madly down the road intent on getting home in the fastest possible time.

The road had been cut up by the recent rain and was now dried up to the point of being full of hard ruts, and we could do nothing but be thrown about and try to hang on as best we could.

In the darkness it was a terrifying experience in which one was helpless to do anything.

It is surpriselng how quickly one's mind works in the face of danger, I at once thought of what might happen should we over-take some other team on the road, or worse still meet one comeing towards us, it was horrible to think of.

Fortunately the road remained clear as far down as the intersection of the Buchanan road and the danger beyond that point was not so great, However, the grade across Murrays slough had not yet been built and the trail turned off to the left through a gate in Albert Walker's fence and followed the slough edge to a point almost opposite Murray's house where it turned sharply to the south and crossed an improvised bridge over the ditch.

Walker's gate would be open at this time of year now that the crops were off, but I wondered if the team going at such break-neck speed would manage to get through without one or the other of the posts being struck with desasterous results, but they made it clear through and our next point of danger was crossing the bridge, Iwas almost certain that they turn too shortly and the wagon would the go one side into the ditch and turn over.

We were lucky again at this point, perhaps the speed at which they were going prevented them from turning as shortly as they might otherwise have done.

There was not far to go now, but there were still two gates to negotiate, Unfortunately the gate out of Albert Walkers farm had for some reason been moved from its original location to a point farther along, but the team in their frightened state chose to go the old trail and ran clean into the wire fence.

One horse was pulled down to the ground and the other brought to a sudden stop, and they remained that way for a few seconds while we scrambled out to get to their heads and hold them, Nance, who had fallen got to her feet and they both stood quite calmly while we released them from the wagon, they no doubt were exhausted from travelling so far at such speed and were wringing wet with sweat.

I cannot remember how we managed to extricate them from the tangle of barbed wire in the darkness, but we did so without too many cuts and bruises, I guess we were fortunate that the damage was not greater, and that we had come through it alright, but it was an experience that we are not likely to forget.

We led the team the remaining hundred yards or so to the house and got George out with the stable lantern to see how badly the horses were cut up with the wire, and surprisingly it was not too serious and we got them at once into the warm stable to avoid them taking harm from being over-heated.

It was certainly a relief to get indoors and settled down after it all.

Our load, (now scattered all down the Rama road) had consisted of two hundred pound sacks of flour, a crate of four stable windows each having four panes. Five gallons of coal-oil in three different cans, and all the groceries that one might expect to be used in three different homes, any that might possibly be salvaged would be saturated in coal-oil, and one sack of flour had ripped to pieces and was scattered to the four winds. The other sack must have been thrown completely clear at once and landed flat on the road with no damage whatever, and was picked up by George Churchill who was on his way from town when his horses saw it and shyed off from it. He took it home and later delivered it to us after he had heard by the (grape-vine) who it belonged to.

The windows, by some freak of chance had stayed in the wagon and only one single pane had cracked.

We had to go again to town on the following day to replace all the groceries that were lost, and had a good look at the spot where the trouble had started, but nothing remained that could be salvaged. We looked at the tracks where we had bumped along in the road-side and wondered how we had managed to hang on over it all. We took the piece of wood ripped off the telephone pole home with us as a memento of our experience.

Arthur and Edies eldest son David was born that fall during the threshing season, Arthur managed to get a couple of days leave from the Army but that was all, They were nearing the point when they would go over-seas.

I was now nearing the end of my six months work for George and would be able to collect my sixty dollars and go home for the winter, but I should not feel very rich, I had already spent thirty dollars of it for some green-sheaves to build up our stock of winter cattle feed which it seemed was not any too great and might leave us short if the winter was too long, George had a big supply of green-sheaves as we had been very late in getting the last field of oats seeded in the spring so that they did not mature well enough to thresh.

Actually I was little or any better off than in my previous year when I had received a dollar a day for the threshing season and this year there was no new suit as a bonus.

George had said that I should take Bess and Nance home with me and winter them, as he did not need them and he thought in this way they would get better care, I was really thrilled with this arrangement, to think that I would have a team to more or less call my own for the next five months. We managed to get a set of sleighs at an auction sale, and a couple of new horse blankets so that I was all set to do all my hauling work and get about to church, ladies meetings, and town at will.

John came up from Yorkton in late fall, and gave us all the news of how things had gone with them during the year, Mary Richardson had also spent the summer down there in helping Caroline to cope with the job of feeding six to eight hired hands all summer and many more during harvest and threshing

John had evidently gained enough favor to have the Peaker Brothers offer to rent the farm to him and another young fellow who had worked on the farm and was considered a pretty steady character. So it was that in the following year John and Harry Tunnicliffe took on this venture and did quite well at it.

In March of 1917 Harry Tunnicliffe and Mary Richardson were married at the Richardson home at Rama and returned to Yorkton to take up residence on the Peaker farm.

It was about this time that Muriel and I pooled our pocket money to buy a camera with which we expected to take pictures of people and places around home, including some of the horses and cattle, to send to Arthur who was now over-seas. It was just a plain box camera, priced at three seventy-five at Eatons, and with beginners luck and the instruction book we managed to get several good pictures some of which we still have. They were the first pictures we had of those years, with the exception of a few that were given to us by others. We took many pictures in the following years with that old box camera. In fact I still have it, although long since not used, but for some reason hesitate to discard it completely.

It was in the early spring of 1917 that something happened quite unexpectedly which was to sadden us all and deeply effect the lives of those of us at home. We lost Mother.

She had gone to Yorkton to be with Caroline as they were expecting an addition to the family, and with the poor means of communication in those days she was gone before we at home were even aware that she had been taken sick.

It was so sudden, and the shock so great to all of us, that even now after all these years I do not feel like dwelling in any length or detail on that sad time. It is enough to say that naturally Dad was most effected as Mother had always been just part of him,

and now that was lost. And George, who had always been her (faired haired boy) may have thought that perhaps he had not treated her as well as he might have done, and now it was too late. He said long after that it saddened him always that she did not live to enjoy the later years when times were better, but had only endured the rough years of our homesteading days.

To us younger members of the family it left suddenly an empty void in our lives which later could be only partly filled by our Aunt Botell, for it was then that she came back into our lives again, and I think I can safely say Mother was greatly missed by many of those in the district and that she had been very well thought of.

But it seems that regardless of the sorrow that may come to any of us through our lives we must go on, we cannot stop, but must gather up the loose ends, put things straight and carry on and do the best we can in the face of our losses, Work, and time are great healers, and will eventually sort things out for us.

We always called Aunt Botell just plain (Aunt) because our only other Aunt was Dad's brother's wife in England who we saw only periodically. And Aunt Botell as Mother's sister was therefore closest to us, and in England we had visited back and forth continually. Since coming to Canada we had not seen her excepting for one short period she spent with Uncle in their little shack to the south of us in our very first years.

Thinking back now, it would seem that Mother and her must have greatly missed each other in those ten years, although I don't remember Mother ever complaining of this. They kept contact by mail of course, and it had always seemed to me that Mother and Dad had been mostly wrapped up in the three eldest boys of the family, and that they held first place always.

At this time Aunt came to us immediately, and decided she would give up her life in Hamiota and try to fill in the gap in our lives as much as possible, although of course she could never do it completely.

She went from our home back with John to Yorkton to take over where Mother had been obliged to leave off, for John had come to Rama hoping that no trouble would come about for Caroline, and very fortunately it didn't, but shortly after John and Caroline's twins arrived on the scene, Phillip and Effie.

As soon as circumstances would permit, Aunt went back to Hamiota to gather up all her belongings, say goodbye to all her friends which she never saw again, and returned to our home to try to fill in where Mother had been, and I think she made a pretty good job of it, To her it must have seemed a step backwards and a great trial to put up with the circumstances as they were in our home after living in the town of Hamiota, even though conditions were much better with us then than in our first years.

Us young ones perhaps did not think of this, we had become accustomed to the rough life and Inadequate houseing conditions.

Of the two sisters, Aunt had always seemed delicate in comparison to Mother, and Mother seemed strong and could cope with any situation that might crop up. Perhaps this feeling is characteristic with all children, for I remember when I was quite young it never occured to me that anything could happen that Mother and Dad could not take care of.

To ease the houseing situation, and to make things a little less primitive for Aunt, Dad built her a private room on the east end of the house, and Nell was obliged to take over more of the house keeping work along with her cow milking and chicken feeding, and other chores that she was obliged to do when I was not at home, for Aunt was not accustomed to handling milk and cream and makeing butter, and we could not expect her to scrub our splintery floors and do many of the rough jobs that Mother had tucked into.

There was of course one of Mother's jobs that Aunt could do much better than she could, and this was to attend at all the blessed events that were now occurring quite frequently in the district, for she was a trained maturnity nurse, and so it was that she took over all this work in the district, and some of it in Buchanan too.

John had still retained his team of horses, Just why I cannot think, for it would have been better to have disposed of them while they were still quite young, (for this he eventurely did), Perhaps in the back of his mind he had hoped that in a later time he would again start farming for himself.

If I remember correctly, he had left them with the Richardsons while they were in the process of transferring from oxen to horses, and this they had now done, and no longer needed John's team. So now he offered to let me keep them and use them.

We saw the opportunity now where I might be able to put in our own land to crop, and put up our own hay, thus leaveing less work for George to cope with, and we should be able to have all of our crop instead of just one third as in the past.

Under these circumstances I did not hire on with George again but traded work with him, there were many operations for both of us that it was much more convenient for us to work together on, one man alone is always at a disadvantage.

It was in the early summer of this year, that I got my first oppertunity to go to Yorkton since we had passed through there on our way to Rama in 1907, It was also the first time I had got any further from home than Invermay or Buchanan and Sheho.

John, George, and George Richardson had worked out some scheme between themselves with regard to an over-flow of horses that were accumulating on the

Peaker farm so that they were getting to be more of a nuisance than an advantage, and the idea was that the two Georges would take the surplus to Rama and dispose of them where-ever possible in the district,

Accordingly I was let in on the arrangement in the capacity of an extra cow-boy, We started out from the McLennan farm one day after lunch and rode in a general southerly direction towards Theodore and reached there in the evening, Stabled our horses and stayed at some small hotell or boarding house, We started early in the morning and reached Yorkton in early afternoon and went clipperty clop down Broadway to Tiney Cahill's barn.

As Broadway is today that might sound a bit out of place, but at that time it was not uncommon.

It was of course quite a thrill for me to browse around in the different stores and see the biggest town I had been in since leaveing London ten years before, and surpriseingly to meet someone from our own district, Lizzie Gabler was working as a waitress in Smithand McKays restraunt, and then to stand on a street comer and count fifteen cars within my sight, Most of them Model T Fords.

Nothing must do, but that we must stay for the evening picture show. It was only the second one I had seen, but of course my first one had not been in a theatre, and George Richardson and I went up into the gallery thinking it more spectacular, and George comeing in a few minutes later went on the main floor, We tried to signal him, as the show had not yet started, to come up where we were, and finally hearing our loud whispers he turned around and saw us, but answered with a loud (Oh Rats) and remained where he was.

Afterwards we rode out the eight miles to the farm in the darkness, and galloped up to the house yelling like a troop of wild Indians, They were of course long since in bed, for farmers in those days always retired early as they were obliged to rise early in order to feed and attend their teams for the days work.

John pushed up the window in the up-stairs, and finding who it was made some uncomplimentry remark at being wakened so rudly, but dressed and came down to show us where to stable our horses.

Caroline also got up and prepared some lunch, and we talked of this and that for much longer than we should have done, until John and Caroline proudly let us have a look at the sleeping twins.

We spent the next two days in sorting out about twenty horses to be taken back, and generally makeing a little holiday of it all until we started back,



These horses were not bronchos, but had run at will for quite some time and therefore took a little keeping together until we were well away from the farm and into the open country, one of them was a stallion, so we were obliged to lead him to keep him in hand, and this George did out in front so that the rest had something to follow, so that George Richardson and I were just required to keep the others going and see that none turned off,

We had to bypass the town of course but once past there it was good going so that we got well into the Theodore district where we managed to get the whole herd into a farmers pasture for the night.

We arrived home towards the end of the next day, but had had about enough of it by the time we got there.

The odd automobile was beginning to show up, a few of the (big-shots) in Buchanan and Invermay were getting them, and some commercial travellers were starting to use them as a means of making more speed between towns. Formerly they used the train which meant they could only work one town each day, where with a car they might work two or three,

However, it was not all (beer and skittles) for them, few had any mechanical knowledge of the cars and were continually in trouble, perhaps from just minor things, and the roads were poor and unpredictable as to what the weather might be, and there was not a bit of gravel on any of the country roads, nor were they maintained anywhere except in districts adjacent to cities,

Grades were mostly narrow, and with ruts that filled with water when it rained, and some ruts so deep that in trying to avoid them one might slip off the grade altogether.

As a chain is only as strong as it's weakest link, so was the road only good if you could get through to where you wanted to go, and in our district on the number five route the weakest link was the two miles going east from the intersection of the Rama road with the Buchanan road. In fact there was no road, just a trail that had developed into an unearthly mess of twists and turns, numerous wire gates, and no end of soft spots at the wet periods of the year, It was also a monkey-puzzle to anyone strange, for the route was being continually altered when new fields had been plowed up and the trail was directed around them or a completely different route was established, so that there were many misleading turn-offs.

The old Pelly Trail would have been simple in comparison, but it had long since been plowed up in many places for crop land and completely obliterated excepting for a few short sections.

Strangers coming from the east would land in our yard and be confronted with three trails leading out from it, so in every case would stop to enquire the way, and as to the

condition of the trail further on and how far they would have to go before they could expect some improvement in the road.

The cars were all Model T Fords, with the exception of a few other makes who's owners were under the mistaken impression that their superior machines, with their much stronger engines could by sheer power force their way through anything.

These people usually came to grief, and had to resort to the indignity of haveing to be towed through this section of the road by a team of horses.

The greater weight of the big cars was a disadvantage where the trails were soft In the low spots, and the low road clearance made them hopeless where there were ruts, and there were still a few tree-stumps to contend with.

The Fords were light weight, with high road clearance, and on their low gear it was surpriseing how they could be manipulated over both rough and soft places, and the abuse they could take.

Commercial travellers who used company cars, had no concern for the vehicle, and their only interest was to get to the next town before their rival company men did, They would come to one of the wet soggy spots in the trail, Stop and get out to size up the situation where previously other vehicles had cut up the trail and had fanned out on either side in order to get better footing on the ground where nobody else had crossed.

It might be only a short distance across, or perhaps some twenty-five yards, but haveing figured out where they thought the best route was they would back up for a distance, and then in low gear open up their engine to the limit and go maddly bouncing through in hope that they would reach the other side before sinking in the mire, and if they didn't make it would usually roar their engine and spin the wheels until they had no hope of getting any further except by walking to the nearest farm to get a team to haul them to higher ground.

I made quite a few dollars one spring hauling cars out for two dollars a trip, but this was not as good as one might think as it wasted too much time during the all important time of the spring seeding.

Up until this time I had seen no automobiles excepting those I had seen in England when I was quite small, and only the rich capitalists could afford to own them, They were big heavy things with well built bodies and elaborate fittings, although it seemed the engines at that time were not very well perfected and it was not uncommon to see one of them stalled beside the road with a mechanic working under the hood.

The Fords seemed flimsy things in comparison, and Dad referred to them as being (Tin-Pot) as compared to English cars, Nothing could be as good as English stuff as far as Dad was concerned.

No doubt they were not as luxuriously built, for they were being mass produced with the idea in mind that they must be kept within the price-range of the middle class worker's pocket-book.

Also they must be made to meet the conditions and the circumstances in out-lying and rough areas as well as the cities.

Model T Fords, now only seen in museums, or vintage car parades, and only remembered now by a comparative few were ridiculed by the manufacturers of big cars, and those who could afford to buy expensive machines, They were called Tin Lizzies, Henreys, and puddle-jumpers, and comic songs and many jokes were made about them, but really they were a wonderfull machine.

Only in their day of course, as most things and people are.

By todays standards they would look pittyfully primitive when compared with the present Ford products. The same might be thought of the people of that time, that they were stupid and had not much intelligence, but people had just as much intelligence thousands of years ago as the super-man of today, it is only that we have benefited by the thousands of discoveries and the inventions and the change that has come about over the period of many years.

Up until this time I had not the slightest idea how a car operated other than to know they ran on gasoline, and I only knew the basic principal of the portable farm engines I had seen in the district, which amounted to Doug. Whitman's sawing engine and one that Raymond Berg had. I knew that they had a piston and cylinder as a steam engine did, and had learned from somewhere that they had only one power stroke in every second revolution, that they were ignited by an electric spark, and that they must be revolved by hand before they could start.

This I thought was pretty poor compared to a steam engine where one had only to pull open the throttle and it was away.

However, in the course of the next few years I learned a lot about gas engines, for it appeared the steam engine was definitely on its way out as far as farm power was concerned.

I used to look at the cars when they stopped at our place to enquire the way, and if it should be a dinner hour or in the evening, I would volunteer to show them to a certain point or open some of the gates for them in order to get a ride on the running board and to see how they operated the controls, although I had absolutely no idea of what they were doing as they performed the necessary moves to get things going, I thought when they turned the ignition switch they must be turning on the gasoline as I knew they operated on gasoline, Of the two small levers on the steering wheel, I noticed

one of them altered the speed of the engine. The other one I could see no need of, only that they always set it in an upward position before cranking the motor and that they always turned the crank by pulling it in an upward direction only. The three pedals on the floor I found operated the clutch and transmission gears and the brake.

Also I noticed that to keep the car in a standing or neutral position the parking brake at the left of the driver must be pulled backwards. I memorized all these moves in their proper sequence at every opportunity so that much later when I finally got a chance to drive a Ford, I was able to do so at once.

All this without knowing what made the wheels go around.

My first look into the works of one of these infernal machines, was one day when I was doing some summer-fallow for George,

I was feeding the horses at noon when I heard a lot of roaring of a car engine up towards Rama. This seemed to go on intermitently while the car seemed to get closer very slowly, and when when it had finally worked its way along the north side of Murray's slough to where the bridge crossing was, it would go no further although the engine continued to roar away quite lustily.

At this point I could contain my curiosity no longer, and ran down to see what was going on, and within a few minutes Dad Murray arrived on the scene too.

It turned out to be a couple of young fellows with their girl friends or wives from Invermay who were trying to make their way to Buchanan, and one of them said he had practically pushed the car all down the Rama road but now it had come to the level part they could not get it to move at all.

Dad Murray asked the ladies if they would care to walk over to the house and get something to eat and drink while they were waiting to get the car going, and this they promptly did.

Of course neither Dad or I could be of the slightest help to them, for the whole contraption was a complete mystery to both of us. Thinking about it now, I don't think those two young fellows knew much more about it than we did, for they seemed completely stumped about it all.

When I arrived on the scene they had the hood up, and were poking around at the spark-plugs with a screw-driver to see if all cylinders were working, as though they suspected the engine was not doing its stuff, but if noise was anything to do with it I am sure it was working to full capacity.

It was my first look under a car hood, and I was surprised to see that the cylinders worked in a vertical position, (and judging by the number of spark-plugs,) there were four of them.

I don't know who they all were, but one of them said he was a Turner.

Having satisfied themselves that the engine was operating properly, they had come to the head scratching stage, and then came to the conclusion that perhaps the trouble might be in the transmission, so proceeded to haul out the floor boards in the front compartment. This was quite easy to do as they just set in there loosely and were not secured.

All that this brought to light was what appeared to be a flat plate or cover secured by six screws, and one of them volunteered the information that someone had told him that there were springs underneath the cover, However, there was absolutely no help closer than Invermay or Buchanan so some risk must be taken.

One of them sat in the front seat and kept his heel firmly held on the plate while the other removed all the six screws and then very carefully eased up his heel expecting at any moment to have several springs fly out in all directions.

Nothing happened, and on carefully lifting off the cover it revealed the springs alright, but they were securely held in place as expansion springs on what looked like friction bands of some kind which didn't seem to mean much to the others and absolutely nothing to me.

Fearing to dabble any deeper into such a mysterious mess of machinery, they were about to replace the lid and give up, when Dad Murray who like myself had been inquisitively hanging over the side of the car, spotted a sort of bolt sticking out on the outside of the transmission case, and pointing to it said "What is that thing?" Closer inspection showed a lock-nut on the bolt, suggesting it might be an adjustment of some kind, although I don't think any of us had the foggiest idea of what it might adjust, There was only one thing to do, (take a chance) so the adjustment was very carefully turned in exactly one complete turn so that in case of failure it could be returned to exactly it's original position.

This was a (shot in the dark) but actually in spotting it Dad Murray had (hit the nail on the head) for this was the adjustment to the low gear band which had become worn through use and therefore failed to hold any longer so that it was the cause of the whole trouble. The cover and the floor-boards were replaced, the engine started and everything worked to perfection. Dad being the hero of the story.

We all scrambled in and rode up to Murray's house to pick up the women folk. It was my first ride in a car, previously I had only got to standing on the running board when directing someone to the right trail.

Needless to say I was late getting out to the field that afternoon, but I think it was worth having to work a little later.

I have spent too much time talking of Ford cars, so perhaps I should break off for awhile, although there is much more to be said concerning them and those who owned them.

In this summer of 1917 it seemed we were becoming progressively more concerned with the war and its effect on everything that was going on in the district, and of course the concern for those who were engaged in fighting it, and there was still the odd one leaving to take part in it. There seemed a continual fear that at any time there might be bad news for someone or other.

Already Eustace Moores and Pete Paterson had been lost, and others wounded and sent back behind the lines with only sparse news of how bad their condition might be.

The Murrays now had the two eldest boys in it, and I remember Dad Murray subscribed to a daily paper to be more in touch with the war news, although in many cases he could not get them very regularly except by neighbors who always brought others mail out.

Both Edie and Mabel, fearing it would be a long drawn-out affair, moved to their original home on the Bailey farm and had small shacks built for accommodation that could be later moved, but in the meantime they would be close to their parents.

Dad one day, on going to Rama for the mail had learned that someone had taken a telegram to Edie on the Bailey farm, so fearing the worst for Arthur he had hastily gone there, only to find that the message concerned something else which to him was of much less importance, I remember him returning home, hot and tired and angry now that the shock had somewhat worn off, and grumbling that people should be more thoughtful in sending wires unless the circumstances were serious.

It seemed somehow all wrong that while the shadow of war was hanging over us and causing great concern to many, that in other respects certain conditions were better. The price of grain, stock, and farm products were going up, so that there seemed to be more money circulating, and only the shortage of certain commodities and man power delayed prosperity in certain ways, Of course as always this was counteracted by higher costs for our necessities.

There were now creameries at Canora and Wadena so that cream and eggs could be marketed to better advantage than previously when butter and eggs were just traded in at the local stores in return for groceries, and the price more or less governed by whether the store-keeper thought he could dispose of these products locally or

accumulate enough to warrant shipping to some other point where his returns might be better,

Herds were getting bigger, and cream shipping became quite extensive so that the rail-road were prevailed upon to provide some sort of a freight-shed to protect the many cans of cream from the sun. They did this by merely moving a disused box-car to a position beside the original little building that had served so long as a station, and there was now to be an agent there, and this set-up served for many years later.

Other stores were appearing on the north side of the tracks. Fred Haverstraw built a small hotel with a store beside it, Morris Spielberg started another store on the corner of the Rama road and station street, and further along (in the following spring) Albert Walker built a small home which housed the Post Office when he took it over from Berry Tibbit.

A lumber yard set up behind the station, and the Bawlf Grain Co. put in a grain elevator on the south side of the tracks.

George had got out some logs the previous winter with the intention of building a fair sized stable to replace the original little buildings which by now were getting old and run down, but had little hope of making much head-way on his own in the short time left of the summer, and help was not easy to come by,

Joe Howes who was always good at telling other people what they should do, (even if he never did much himself) suggested he have a raising bee and get all the heavy part done quickly, so that the finishing might not be so difficult to accomplish.

"Get a keg of beer" said Joe, "that will create a little attraction" George didn't think too much of this idea, but realized it would solve the problem in the part where the job was too heavy for him to handle alone, "Oh said George I wouldn't know where to get a keg of beer from even," "Well I could do that for you" said Joe, and proceeded to outline the whole plan of how they did these things in Ontario.

The out-come of it all was that Joe organized the whole bee and duly got the keg of beer.

There was another incident in connection with this undertaking, The beer was shipped to Buchanan, and both George and Joe went in with the team and wagon to get it, with the intention of bringing out a load of lumber at the same time.

They were returning home, and on getting to about a hundred yards of the rail-road crossing were arrested by the blowing of the train whistle as it came from Buchanan, so immediately stopped, but one of the horses showed signs of being restive as the track crossing at quite an angle gave the impression that the train was coming up behind them, "Do you think you can hold them" said Joe, "I think so," said George, for

there was no choice of doing anything else, but evidently the horse thought there was, and as the train roared past in front of them he took fright and dashed madly towards the train, As Joe remarked afterwards to us at home "I say he was bound he would just go right through that train," He didn't make it through the train, but as George was standing on the smooth boards he was unable to exert much of a pull on the lines and the team got close enough to the train to make something of a cut on one of the horses nose, but of course were forced to the side and down quite a steep bank, upsetting the load and bringing the team to a stop.

Both men were able to jump clear, and no harm was done, other than to upset the load, and It was fortunate that it was not , much more serious, but George got quite a kick out of Joe, he had no more than picked himself up and found he was still in one piece than he exclaimed, "Oh well, the beer is alright anyway".

The raising bee went off very well, and by evening the four walls were within a couple of feet of the top and as there was still some beer left several of the men volunteered to return the next day and at least complete the walls so that the heavy part of raising the top logs would be done.

I remember it was the first time I had tasted beer, for Dad would never allow any such stuff in the home. In his life in England he had seen too much of the results from that kind of thing, but I had got the idea that it was some sort of a nice drink and was thoroughly disgusted when it turned out to be bitter as gall and closer to epsom salts or alkali water than a decent drink, I took two gulps of it and threw the rest away, I have been offered many drinks of the stuff since that time and turned them all down, and at times have gone into beer parlors when I was with a group, but what they can see in sitting in the noisy, smokey, stinking holes, and drinking such gyp is beyond my comprehension, while in many cases they end up in making complete idiots of themselves, or become an obnoxious menace to everyone with-in shouting distance of them.

I remember that Jessie, seeing my disappointment made me some lemonade, and from my point of view I had it over all the others.

The stable was a fair size compared to any previous ones, I think it had four double stalls on each side, and George figured he would have to put a ceiling in it in order for it to be warm and that it would require a big span of roof to cover it.

Under these circumstances he thought that by adding another four feet of wall he could provide considerable space to store feed in the loft with comparatively little extra expense.

So it was that the stable was turned into a small barn.



Lumber was used in the wall of the loft instead of logs as no heat was required, and in any case there were no logs left anyway.

As harvest was about to begin George got Joe Howes to finish the barn and he made a very nice job of it, and was very proud of his work, Mike Treletski plastered the walls and as usual made an excellent job of it. This barn served its purpose for many years. It is perhaps questionable whether Joe in suggesting the raising bee in the first place, anticipated working up a nice job for himself, but that is what it turned out to be.

As usual I drove the binder that year and in this way got our own bit of crop cut, George did most of the stooking, but I helped him in the mornings when the dew was too heavy to start cutting, and on one day he actually managed to pry Joe away from his barn job to help him to catch up a bit.

The threshing, as mentioned before was done by Gabler and Johnson before they left with the machine to thresh in the district to the east, I got in a fairly good run hauling stooks for them, Fred Gabler fired the engine, and Bill Kilgour hauled water, I remember he used a small Cushman gas engine to pump the water, they were among the first light-weight gas engines to be used, and came out as small engines to be used to operate the mechanism of the grain binders and thereby allow less horses to be used and also were of value where traction was poor, or where grain was heavy or tangled. The team could be slowed down while the binder still retained its normal speed. The same effect is now obtained by the (power take-off) in the modern farm tractor.

However Bill was not too lazy to pump the water, he was just that way inclined, and I remember when we were at school he was always quite experimental and inventive in all our goings on.

We always got along quite well together.

Jack Meakin and family had already left the district, He never seemed to be able to make a go of it, It was said that as a hired hand when he was young, he was a real live wire, but when working for himself he just wasn't there, and as his family grew bigger and his taxes got higher on account of the ditch, he gradually lost head-way and finally his farm to some mortgage company as was the case with a few more.

He returned to Lavinia Man. where he had originally come from and it was said he made out quite well working in some capacity on the rail-road. We heard of them periodically but never saw them again.

It must have been about this year that the Prestons left the district, and like the Meakins returned to Lavinia, Their family had grown to five (I think) I am not sure about that, The Murrays took over the binder that had been held in partnership between the two families and were now obliged to operate it themselves, Arthur

Murray had now left school in order to do some of the farm work, but was still not hefty enough to do some of the jobs that were expected of him, so handling four horses and an eight foot binder was quite a hand-full for him.

To ease the situation a bit they mounted a seat on the tongue of the front trucks and Connie sat up there and drove the team, in this way allowing Arthur to devote all his time and energy to operateing the binder.

I have since thought how dangerous it was had something happened to dislodge Connie from the seat, In those days perhaps we did many things which could be termed dangerous, for with our lack of means, and perhaps in some cases our ignorance, we were obliged to take certain risks, My own theory has always been to never take a chance if it is not absolutely necessary, but where the conditions are such that there seems no other way, Jump into it with all the confidence in the world.

So it was that another of the war years dragged on, In April of that year the United States had declared war on Germany and we hoped that this would bring the end of it all.

It was of course the beginning of the end, but it was to go on for a long time yet, We got mail from the four boys who were closest to us, and heard of the others in one way or another.

They were not able to tell us much of course as to where they were or what was going on, and it seemed that things got worse for a time. The States concentrated on building ships and getting the sea-lanes more safe to transport supplies so that it was in 1918 before they got any Army into France.

Things at our home went on about as usual, and it seemed the winters were much the same, as the snow and frost stopped all farm work and it was a case of careing for the stock, hauling feed and getting up fire-wood for the following year. There always seemed to be the worry as to wether the cattle feed would holdout and the water supply would last as the frost went deeper into the ground with every cold snap when the temperature dropped to thirty and forty degrees below zero, sometimes approaching fifty for a night or two.

The water supply was not such a problem as it had been in past years, for I had struck a supply of good water which was more than sufficient to water all our stock, but as it was a shallow stream there was some danger of it being cut off if the frost penetrated too deeply by the end of the winter.

Another disadvantage was that the well was a long distance from the farm buildings, and in cold or stormy weather the cattle were reluctant to travel so far in the howling wind as it was situated in the centre of an open field with no trees for protection.

In winter, the daily chores seemed to occupy too much of the short days so that one had only half the time to devote to the cutting and hauling of fire-wood, hauling feed, or making a trip to town.

In my school days when I had to cut the fire-wood with a buck-saw, I had vowed that as soon as I was old enough to take hold of things a bit, I was certainly going to see that the wood was sawn with a circular saw each year, and I had for some time now made sure this was done, so that Dad no longer had the job to do all winter which must have been a relief to him.

He still had his work in connection with the school, and usually some paper work or other for the various associations around the district. People seemed to think that he could make a better job and had more time than most others, but he had lost interest in many things, and I remember hearing him say that after coming to Canada he had not much ambition, but now that Mother was gone he had no ambition at all.

I was still too young to understand what it must have meant to him when he looked back to his earlier life in England, but I can understand now why he thought of Canada as a pretty rough show, and as he always said (a beastly cold country).

Aunt had now become well established in our home, and although it must have seemed quite rough to her she never complained,

She carried on with the nurseing work which Mother had done in the past, and in the home helped a great deal in an advisory capacity. She made a point of seeing that Muriel was kept continually at school so that she would not become a know-nothing as Nell and I had.

It became apparent under the circumstances that both Nell and I would become the main work force around the place, and that we were not going to have the opportunity of getting out on our own as the elder ones had, Dad used to say that I would eventually get the farm, but in the end it did not turn out that way.

In 1918 I cannot remember that there was much change in our farming operation, we carried on much the same as previously, but we had a frost in August, and as always with frost it struck heavy in places and hardly noticeable in others, but it was enough to spoil the grade in most cases, and reduce the yield.

The Bergs threshed for us that fall, and it seemed to be almost the last of the big steam outfits. For awhile the trend went to the other extreme, and for a few years there were some very small gasoline outfits turned up in the district, they were pitifully small, with only eight horse-power engines and therefore could not put much grain through in a day. I think they originated in Ontario where farms were smaller, and much threshing was done in the huge barns they had. They were certainly not suitable

to the prairies, but some of the Ukrainians worked all hours of the day and night with them.

I cannot think why there was such a turn to the extreme unless it was the shortage of help during the war years, or perhaps a combination of that and the gradual disappearance of the big steamers as they were replaced by the coming smaller gasoline tractors which were more efficient in relation to their size.

Bill Offer came back into the district again to have another shot at farming, Why, I cannot think, because he was not adapted to it at all, Perhaps like many city people he thought of farming as a free and easy life where one could get away from the maddening crowd and be their own boss. To saunter around in the pure and fresh air with a basket to gather the fresh eggs and admire the waving fields of grain and watch the cows grazing in the pasture, Certainly the air is pure and free, and one is their own boss to a point, but in those days it required lots of hard work, and even with the improved conditions of today one must have the will to work long hours at certain times to contend with the ever present whims and wiles of mother nature, and be versatile enough to handle the many types of work involved.

Like Joe Howes, Bill could tell anyone how to do anything, but unlike Joe was not very efficient at anything but talking.

He only stayed a few years and then went back to Vancouver again, Later Luke Murphy bought his farm and made his home there and was engaged in his cattle buying business.

He eventually had quite a large family.

We were gradually seeing more cars now in the period of the year when they could be used, which was generally from the time it dried up in the spring after the crop was in until late in the fall when the snow fell, After that they would remain in the garage blocked up to keep the weight off the tires.

The urge to take them out too early in the spring only resulted in a lot of getting stuck in the mud.

Several appeared in Buchanan and Invermay, and a few turned up in our district, The elevator agent in Rama had one, as did the lumber yard operator, Fred Haverstraw, and the Paslowskis.

Gunnar Wallin who was working in the lumber yard at Buchanan bought a second hand one and occasionally drove out to the home, farm and gave everyone who flocked to see it a ride, Needless to say I was one of the flock.

Later, Eric Wallin got one too, and so did Roy Day, a young fellow from the Stoney Veiw district who along with his farming had a machine agency and used it in that capacity.

John Johnson further to the east of us had married Bernice Kilgour but there always seemed to be a little friction between Gabler and John Johnson, so when John bought a Ford car Gabler promptly bought a Chevrolet, considering it a little better car.

John retaliated by buying a Baby-Grand Chevrolet, Both of them did not do themselves much good, and later the Gablers bought a Ford car.

Perhaps the greatest draw-back with the more expensive cars besides their added weight and low road clearance, was the fact that they required a battery for ignition and lights, and should these batteries become run down there was no means of getting them recharged except in big towns or cities, The only alternative was to push the car to start it and then let it run for a considerable time to charge the battery by it's own generator,

This was very unsatisfactory as at that time generators were not of the best, and it was many years later that they had voltage controls, or regulators.

The redeeming feature of the Model T Ford was that it was stripped of everything but the bare necessities, thus making it of value to those who needed a car for service instead of just pleasure, and putting it in a price-range of the working class.

They were perhaps better adapted to the out-lying districts of the prairies than to the cities or the more mountainous parts where hill climbing must have made them less adaptable.

The engine blocks of these cars remained the same all through the years they were manufactured, and all repair parts would fit the last model as well as the first.

The engine had a thermo-siphon cooling system so required no water circulating pump. No starting motor on early models, and the crank was built in, so hung in front at all times, and the electricity for ignition and headlights was by a built in generator on the fly-wheel so no battery was necessary, Some of the very early models had acetylene lamps, but they may possibly have been accessories, Park and tail lights were merely coaloil lamps, Only two switches were necessary, Ignition and lights.

Two small levers at the steering-wheel governed the speed and advanced or retarded the ignition.

A planetary transmission was used, which is the basic principal of the present day automatic transmission, but as hydraulics were not used to any extent then they were operated by foot pedals

Consequently there were three pedals, one operated the low and high gears, another was the reverse gear, and the other the foot break. There was no intermediate gear, which was a disadvantage where there were long up-grades, but on the level prairies it was of not much concern.

The wheels could not be removed for tire repair or change, and the tires were just pryed off with a tire tool much the same as a bicycle tire, so no spare tire was necessary (except on later models) and all one needed was two tire tools, a spare tube or patching kit, and an air pump.

The gasoline tank was under the front seat and fed the carburetor gravity so that no fuel pump was required.

All models were open with a top which could be pulled over, and were either four door touring or two door run-abouts.

Cruising speed was about thirty five miles per hour, and top speed (flat out ) was about forty five, but speed was no problem in our district, as it was too rough and dangerous to go very fast, but after driveing horses at eight miles per hour, twenty miles was quite a furious speed, There was no speedometer, so one just counted the section lines, combind with one's watch to arrive at the speed.

Quite a contraption was the Model T Ford, but it served it's purpose to the very best when the country was in it's raw state in many parts and good roads were almost non existent.

My first experience with a conventional (stick-shift) car was when A.C.Jennings came out to the farm one day, he had a Chev car, He always seemed very good at explaneing any type of machinery to me, and haveing explained the mystries of shifting the gears, he allowed me to get in and try it, but made no move to get in the car with me, Perhaps he thought I would just creep around the yard on low gear for a start, but I took off down the trail for half a mile or so and got quite familiar with the changeing of the gears, Mr. Jennings was still standing in the same spot when I returned, and was probably wondering where had got to and what was happening to his car and wishing he had accompanied me.

John and Harry Tunnicliff had made out pretty well with renting the Peaker farm and in the second year had both, acquired a Ford car, John a second hand 1914 model with the brass radiator, but Harry's was a couple of years newer,

They wrote saying they would be up to see us all, bringing both cars on a certain day, This was going to be really something as far as I was concerned, and I remember I made an excuse to do some work close to home so that I could dash maddly into the

yard when they arrived. However, for all my hanging around they didn't show up, and although I stayed up till quite late I was at last obliged to go to bed.

Long after mid-night we were awakened by the two cars driveing up; and I don't think I ever got out of bed as quick as I did at that time, and only half dressed dashed out with bare feet to look at the cars, As was quite common, they had run into lots of trouble with flats, soft spots, and the difficulty of finding their way, There was no definite road, It was a case of going west to Insinger and then following any trails that went in the general direction of Buchanan, there was something of a road then to within a mile of our place, and then a winding trail.

I can remember Harry comeing in and saying "Gee I feel so tired and dirty", but he was not finished yet, He and Mary were to go on to the Richardsons, and of course this suited me just fine, for John would have to take his car to show him the way as Harry was completely unfamiliar with the district, and I in turn would have to show John the mystries of all the new trails and gates since he had left the district,

Although it was an exciteing ride for me, I think John must have been pretty well done in by the time we got home and to bed.

They stayed around for a few days, for I think it was the first time Caroline had been back to see her parents since they had left Rama, and Godfry and Gladys had grown a lot, and of course there were the new twins.

I don't think I could have got much work done in the next few days, it was the first time I could thoroughly nose into the mystries of a car and ask John countless questions concerning them, and get in on all the rides until they left.

When they left I persuaded John to let me drive for a little distance, but haveing once got behind the wheel I was very reluctant to surrender it again, and although I intended to go only to a certain point I kept putting it off and setting myself a further point until we made a scheduled stop at Buchanan.

This meant a walk back for me of at least ten miles by the way the road went, and there is no doubt that my enthusiasm had worn quite thin by the time I reached home. Anyhow, I figured it was worth all the effort.

Perhaps digging a well is of very minor interest, but if you have read this far you will have noticed that good drinking water had been a problem with many of the settlers in the district, and I can remember that at any gathering of any sort during the winter the question was sure to be asked "How is your feed supply", and "How is your well hanging out?" In all the years that George and Arthur had lived on the McLennan farm they had not good water and not a very big supply of any kind of water,

At first this was not a great problem, but as the years went on it became more serious as they accumulated more more horses and cows, so that George was beginning to wonder how he might remedy the situation.

Phillip Wowchuk told George he knew of a Ukrainian man who could define water, There was something mysterious about him, he was the sixth son of a sixth son or some comical thing,

George, like myself, was very sceptical regarding any kind of (well witching) but as Phillip had said he only charged five dollars it would not be much loss, and by chance might be a little help. So he asked Phillip to tell the man to come around.

In the course of time the man arrived at the farm and after asking George for a shovel proceeded to look around the place.

George was always something of a (nut) regarding anything that might be even remotely concerned with religion, and in the telling afterwards said "Oh I saw him glanceing upwards now and again so I thought he might be getting some help from above in some way, so I kept out of his way unless I should somehow break the spell,"

Afterwards he said, "I expect really he was perhaps looking at the trees and foliage, or maybe getting a look at the general lay of the surrounding land".

In an hour or so the man returned and said to George, "Would you like enough water for forty head of cattle?" He took him to a spot and marked out three points in a triangular shape stuck his shovel into the ground at the center of the triangle and said "That's where you dig".

It was some time later that I went over to see George one morning, and he was about to start to dig the well, He had got out a few shovels full to the depth of about a foot, but stopped to speak to me and to light up his pipe, "Don't suppose there is anything there he said, but it is worth a try".

I had picked up the shovel and took out a good sized shovelfull and was surprised to see the space immediately fill with water as it was a dry time of year in the fall.

We both got quite excited and dug frantically down deeper only to find we could not work because of the water pouring in.

We were obliged then to stop and make arrangements to build a curbing, get a water-pump, and some extra help.

George got a threshing engine watertank pump from someone, and another man to help dig, We found we did not have to go much more than six feet until running into



hard clay and there was no point in going further, but I remember I pumped for four solid hours without a stop in order to keep the water out while the others dug.

Both George and I were then obliged to admit that perhaps there must be few people who had some uncanny sense which enabled them to locate water, The farm had been lived on for over ten years without an adequate supply of good water, and all that time it was there within two feet of the surface.

There was one draw-back. It was some distance from the farm buildings, but this was of minor concern against having a supply of good water. This well served its purpose for many years that I know of, and may even yet be doing so.

Mr. Lockhart (Charlie's father) had remained to care for Charlie's farm while he was away over-seas, and when it was learned that Pete Paterson was killed in action, Carrie, with her three children moved to live with her father on Charlie's place, and this arrangement remained until after Charlie returned,

Later, Mr. Lockhart with Carrie and her family moved back to Toronto where their original home had been.

This was the time of the Spanish Influenza, We were fortunate in our immediate district, for although many got it I cannot remember of anyone losing their life, but in some areas the death rate was quite high, It was said that the loss of life from flu was greater than all the casualties in the war, and in the world it was thought that twenty million died from it.

The most important thing that year was that the war ended. We at home didn't hear about it for some days, as our only source of news was the Family Herald and Weekly Star which at that time was a thick full sized weekly news-paper, and as we had not been to town for some time we had not heard through anyone else.

It was Nils Hamlin who told us when he called in to see Dad in connection with the school, (he had been made a trustee when Ike Preston left) and after talking for awhile he realized we did not know, He said "Did you not know the war was over Mr. Dean?" and Dad said "Well that's a good thing", But he didn't say anything more for a few seconds, and I am quite sure that like the rest of us he was wondering if Arthur was still alright,

Many must have been saddened by losing someone in just the last few hours.

It was of course a great relief to most everybody that it was all over and we could look forward to a peaceful time again and to have those who had left to take part in the struggle back with us again, Unfortunately we should not see quite all.

There was a general feeling of relief everywhere, and the social life which had dragged in the last few years seemed to pick up to some extent in the district. It would not return to normal until the following spring when the soldiers started to return, and the group Arthur was in being engineers were retained to the last in moving into Germany, I remember Arthur saying that while doing this he slept in a different place every night for all of six weeks.

In the course of time we got letters from all those who were closest to us and learned for certain that the seven men who had left with Arthur in a group were all safe and well. It was certainly remarkable that they should all have come through it unscathed.

Waiting for them all to return was somewhat saddened in our home when Dad took sick and died in the early part of 1919.

Both Mother and Dad were buried on the home farm, for at that time there was no cemetery in the district. Arthur did not see his parents again after leaving to go overseas.

The coming of spring brought new interest as the men straggled home from overseas over a somewhat long period, as they were all discharged at different times.

We wondered just what would take place now. These men had seen and experienced a lot during the war, and they were now four years older than when they had left home.

It seemed likely they might want to take up some different occupation in different localities, and would not want to settle back to farming again, We should just have to wait and see.

As it happened they all came back and took up where they had left off, and went into it with more vigor than previously, and were pleased to settle down at home again.

The war years had disrupted our way of life, and changed the trend of what it was in our pioneering years. It already seemed a long time since we had come to the homestead with our ox team and of course we were all much older, so there would be a marked change in what occurred in the future as all the re-adjustment took place, and most likely a period of greater prosperity and progress.

It would seem then that this must be the logical time and place to bring this narrative to a close, for the future could no longer be classed as the Early Years in the Rama District of which this story is all about, but perhaps in conclusion it might be of interest to touch lightly on what took place in the next few years before we left the district, and to mention briefly just what followed in the lives of those characters who played a part in our lives in the very early years, and especially those who have remained our friends always.

## IN CONCLUSION

With the return of peace after a war there will naturally be a period of re-adjustment to the normal way of life, A shakeing up and settleing down as everyone prepares to return to their former life or to get established in a new occupation or some new adventure.

This in turn is sure to stimulate the economy and result in greater prosperity, and so it was in the next few years in the Rama district as the returned men took advantage of the benefits given them by the Soldiers Settlement Board (similar to D.V.A. in the second world war) to either improve their establishments or with the younger ones to get started in farming.

At the same time those who had contemplated moveing to another district took advantage of disposeing of their land to those who were expanding, or to those who were starting up in farming.

As some left the district, others came in to try their luck at farming, Some of these had worked in other occupations previously and were completely inexperienced, so that they only lasted a comparitivy short time before they were obliged to give up and return to their former work, or to seek some other occupation.

This period of prosperity did not last indefinitely as was the case after the second world war, but in only a few years leveled out and fell off so that many who had paid high prices for land, stock, and machinery, had difficulty in makeing a go of it with their reduced income. This in turn caused another little skake-up when some were not able to survive.

However, in the first years after the war there was a decided wave of prosperity and conciderable improvement in the district.

The village of Rama also thrived dureing this period and boasted four general stores and a hotel and was a busy little place.

In 1919 and 1920 the Invermay Telephone Co. was formed and put into operation, I think only those who have experienced the lack of communication as it was in our early days could appreciate what it meant to us to be able to contact our neighbors at any moment, and with our family where there were three homes that worked together almost continually, it seemed the very last word in communication service, and the fact that we had to turn a crank, to ring the bells was of minor concern when the convenience was so great. This service alone seemed to put us in a higher bracket in our standard of liveing from the previous years.

In 1923 Radio came into existence, and again the contrast from there never having been such a thing before made it seem fantastic and wonderful.

Only a few people had them at first as they were very expensive to operate by the use of batteries.

At first it became a fad to buy the parts and build the sets, gradually getting them better as different parts and more knowledge became available. They were of course quite crude and under certain weather conditions were unable to bring in any signals at all, At best there was a great amount of static, and in any case could only be heard by the use of ear-phones.

The main object of most owners was not so much to bring in programs, but to see whos set could bring in the most distant station. In the course of time this became of minor importance.

I remember Bob. McDonald had a set, and was the telephone agent at that time, so after the system shut down at ten oclock he would plug in his set so as the subscribers could listen if there was a good program on.

Gramophones got to be more plentyfull, Improved conciderably from the original scratchy things with large horns, The horns were now built into a cabinet, but the machines were still required to be wound up by a crank.

All this so called (canned music) was perhaps the beginning of people not singing at their work any more, or haveing singsongs around the piano or organ, Today this seems to have reached the limit, No-one sings any more, but are content to sit and stare at the artists on television who cannot sing anyway, and in any case would be drowned out almost completely by the discordent banging and crashing of a frenzied orchestra somewhere in the back-ground, so that they are obliged to create some attraction by grimaces and contortions, as they strike various attitudes all over the stage.

In 1924 the Sask. Wheat Pool was started, and had a rough time to make much headway, farmers were too independent and prefered to gamble in preference to something stable, but in the end the pool has been their salvation, I remember A.C. Jennings signed me up for my little bit of crop.

To return to the people of the district, perhaps I should first refer to those who had been away.

Jack Murray had been among the first to leave so was the first to return and had all the glory and the territory to himself and made the most ofit, He cut quite a dash with the young girls and the local school teachers, and of course being the eldest was the

faired boy at home, so that later when his brother George returned he was barely noticed.

It was obvious that neither of these two boys would have any interest in the home farm again, but wanted to start out on their own, so the home farm was left to young Arthur to struggle with as he had been doing in their absence. He was grown up now, and took hold to become a successful farmer.

Jack married Agness Kilgour and started farming on Albert Coles original homestead just west of the McLennan farm.

George bought land in the Togo district and remained there always.

Glad. Ferrie bought Ben. Grieves farm opposite his own, and Ben. retired to live in Rama, Later Glad bought the hotel in Invermay and operated it for many years. He also bought cattle in partnership with Luke Murphy as well as serving on the Invermay council, and eventurely his life long objective, a seat in the Federal Government.

They had a family of three boys and one girl, Benny, Bob. Shiela, and Russel.

Mabel, and the family, with the exception of Russel still live in or around Invermay.

Charlie Lockhart of course returned to his farm and took over again from his father, and in the course of time Mr. Lockhart and Carrie Patterson with her three children left to go back to Toronto.

Charlie enlarged his farm by buying the quarter to the north which bordered on Boxmoor Rd, and later moved his house onto that place in order to be more convenient to town, and carried on a successful mixed farming operation.

Charlie always seemed interested in houses, and built several of his own during his working years, and renovated others.

Perhaps he should have been a building contractor, or an architect, but he remained a farmer always, I often wonder if owing to certain circumstances that some people never do get into the right groove.

I remember his first bachelor shack he built on his homestead.

He went one better than some other bachelors with their twelve by twelve jobs, and built an up-stairs on his, but as it was of small size the up-stairs gave it a tall out of proportion look.

The other fellows told him it looked more like a grain elevator than a house, (in fact for a time we all called it the elevator) Shortly afterwards he built another house on the

same site, It was a pretty little place, and well built with logs hewn to six inches in width on all four walls including those between the rooms, and plastered smooth on all sides, a one story cottage (or is it a bungalow when the roof slopes on all four sides?) This was the house he moved up onto the other quarter, and later still built a better one within fifty yards distance.

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Perhaps he should have been a building contractor, or an architect, but he remained a farmer always, I often wonder if owing to certain circumstances that some people never do get into the right groove.

I remember his first bachelor shack he built on his homestead. He went one better than some other bachelors with their twelve by twelve jobs, and built an up-stairs on his, but as it was of small size the up-stairs gave it a tall out of proportion look.

The other fellows told him it looked more like a grain elevator than a house, (in fact for a time we all called it the elevator)

Shortly afterwards he built another house on the same site, It was a pretty little place, and well built with logs hewn to six inches in width on all four walls including those between the rooms, and plastered smooth on all sides, a one story cottage (or is it a bungalow when the roof slopes on all four sides?)

This was the house he moved up onto the other quarter, and later still built a better one within fifty yards distance.

Of Cyril Moores, I am not quite sure, Both the Moores families really lived in the Invermay district and were a long way from us so we knew little of their doings, We had only become acquainted with them through the Ladies Meeting, The Church, and by meeting them at social affairs, and farm meetings, The fact that Cyril was among the seven that went overseas together created something of a bond too.

Lenard Moores was a chef by trade, and during the war came to Rama and farmed for a time, but after the war moved into Rama and built and operated a hotel there, while Cyril took over his farm and operated it for some years, Cyril Married Flossy Spencer from Springside, and later moved to Lethbridge, Later still the whole family moved there, with the exception of Nora who had married George Churchill, and Olive who married Charlie Lockhart.

Harry Stevens brought a wife home from England, He started to farm on his original homestead and remained there for some years. They had two children, Rosemary and Joan.

Jack Stevens, who we had not known up to this time, returned from overseas with a wife also, A French widow with two teen-age children Irma and Nestor and settled into farming on the S.E, quarter of sec, 15 Rg. 8 previously owned by Charlie Johnson

Jack was unfortunate that his wife died within a few years and the two children returned to Prance, but Jack remained in the, district for many years.

Vi Stevens married Raymond Berg, and we thought it the queerest union ever, They were totally unlike in every respect and one wondered how they could possibly have got together.

They moved to the Togo district,

Surprisingly, Rollie Tomkins got married in England to a girl he had known since his school days, Who knows? I have often wondered since if Rollie had always had her in mind and that this was responsible for Rollie never seeming to settle down in any way.

Min. and Roll, (as we've always called them) settled into farming where Steve Banarchuk formerly was, and we were again closely associated with them for some years as we had been with Rollie in the early days.

George and Arthur started in again with renewed vigor by up dateing some of their farm machinery and buying a small herd of Hereford cattle, (some of them pure bred) and they were located on the McLennan farm where the best facilities were in the way of housing feed and water.

Later there was another shuffle in their locations of residence, George and Jessie moved temporarily to John's house and Arthur and Edie moved to the McLennan farm and remained there permanantly so that always after that farm was known as Arthur Dean's place.

Both built new houses, Georges located on the Buchanan road on the N.E. quarter of 31, Arthur's original homestead,

Arthur built his home about fifty yards west of the original McLennan shack, and the shack then ended up as the Blacksmith Shop.

So it was that things went on in the next few years with a general improvement everywhere. Cars became more common, so that the horses finally got quite accustomed to them and no longer shyed off the road.

Small tractors began to appear. Mostly used for threshing and some of the heavier work in the fields, but were considered expensive and not very practical for all things. It was many years later when they were greatly improved, and equiped with rubber tires that they really came into their own.

And we must not forget Joe Howes who had played such an interesting part in the early times, at least as far as us younger ones were concerned, and perhaps with the elder ones too. He was always the general handy-man.

At this time he seemed to wake up from his usual lacadaisycal existence when he found ready sale for his Quarter section, so moved into Rama to start up a livery barn



and draying business and did very well at it for many years until cars replaced the horses for transportation. He was also town councilor, and took a great interest in the work.

Just a word about John and Caroline, for although they had left the district some years before, they were still our family and both had shared the very early years in the same environment as the rest of us, The Richardsons had been in the country before us, (I don't really know how long, but probably two years at the least)

John and Harry Tunnicliffe had made out very well in their business of renting the Peaker farm, but like most partner-ships it was dissolved in the second year, and Harry and Mary moved to Rhein to farm there, Later moving back to Rama to farm on the Preston place.

After the war the Peaker farm was sold at such a ridiculously, high price that in the course of a few years it had to be repossessed.

John rented a farm and started on his own again, but as the crop was a complete failure he lost every cent he had.

They moved into Yorkton and John got a job washing cream cans in the Co-Op Creamery which had just been built, and in the course of time eventually became manager.

Eventually both the Richardsons, and the Tunnicliffe moved into Yorkton and remained there always, with the exception of Percy Richardson who went to Vancouver B.C.

And for us four at home? Well there was not much change, there was very little boost of prosperity in our way of life, certainly the price of grain and stock were up considerably but as we had only a small amount of both it did not mean much and this was off-set by the price of things we were obliged to buy. Wages were higher, which was some advantage as I worked out at other jobs in the next few years as our stock and crop were too small, and although I endeavored to raise our acreage all the time, it was a slow process and we never seemed to be able to get off the ground. I eventually acquired a team of horses of my own, but lost them both from swamp fever, and afterwards depended to some extent on working out at various other jobs where wages were higher than in previous years.

I well remember my twenty first birthday, in those days this was the time in one's life when you were supposed to have reached a responsible age and become a man, or as someone jokularly remarked, were (allowed a key to the back door)

I seemed to think I was getting old and had as yet made very little headway in my way through life, and that in some way I must get going and do something.

We cannot see into the future, and if I could have known at that time that when I was forty one I should find myself in worse circumstances, I don't just know how I should have taken it, for that is how it turned out to be. Perhaps it is as well that we cannot see what is waiting just around the corner for us.

Perhaps these were my (crazy years) for it seems that all young people seem to go crazy some time between twelve and twenty to a greater or lesser degree, Sometimes it is barely noticeable but with some it is so violent that they may come to a bad end.

Perhaps I was a bit late in passing through this stage, as it seems I have always been behind the times. But I began to wonder if I was really cut out to be a farmer and would never make a good one.

I seemed to be more interested in mechanical things, and the only part of farming I really liked was the field work and the crop growing, and this was the part with the most risk, Was most unpredictable, and was not profitable without the stock which I didn't like, I was quite fond of cattle and horses, (too much so to be a farmer) for I disliked seeing stock sold or butchered and the horses haveing to sweat up and down the fields at work, and wished I could afford to have a tractor to do it,

Tractors were then not very practical. Not very versatile, Expensive to buy and operate, and therefore completely out of my reach.

I realized I should never be a good farmer, but I was not fitted for any other occupation, and although I was quite mechanically enclined I as yet had very little experience of anything in that line excepting farm engines, and they were still in their very early stages.

However, no opportunities for anything better seemed to come ray way and I carried on in a somewhat discontented fashion.

I had better forget myself for a time and mention a few other things.

Dureing the war years, the Sunday school which seemed to count so much in our young years, gradually fell into disuse as the congregations fell off and only a few of the original faithfull ones turned up, The younger ones began to loose interest when their ideas changed as they grew up. The building, which was not of the best in the first place, became run down and delapidated, and finally burned down one year when the spring fires went through. It had served it's purpose, and it is questionable as to what good it did from a religious point of veiw, this would be a matter of opinion. No doubt some of us young scallywags had been kept out of mischief at times by attending it, and been shown the difference between right and wrong which must have been some value to us in later life, but I think all those, (both young and old) must have looked back in later years as we still do with fond memories to the pleasant times we had in connection with it in those very early days.

In the course of time religious services were carried out in the new school that was built on Main Road, Perhaps the next generation now look back on that with something of the same pleasure as we got from the old Pioneer Sunday School.

One other thing which was started in that year of 1908 was the Ladies Meeting, and this enjoyed a little longer life, but was in the course of time phased out as the women of the next era turned to Home Makers meetings, and Auxiliaries of one kind or another.

The Newburn Lake picnic which was connected with the Ladies Meeting lasted the same length of time, and I remember the last one we went to we really over-did it and splurged to the point of going in real style.

We still had only a farm wagon for transportation, and as Aunt was now getting on in years she could not stand such a trip under those circumstances, So we arranged for Fred Haverstraw to take us in his brand new Model T Ford, which he did certain Taxi work with.

I am sure he must have treated it merely as a holiday from his store work, because he only charged us four and a half for the whole day, We really enjoyed the day, and were comparing it with our first trip bumping over the stones with Bruce and Brian (our ox team) and arriving home late at night eaten up with mosquitoes, and with the chores still to do.

The next generation were coming more in evidence all the time, and the elder ones were getting to school age and many more following on, Eventually Whitmans, Currahs, George and Arthur all had good sized families, and there were Ukrainian youngsters by the dozen.

It was not many years after the war that things started to lag somewhat, and many of those who were not real farmers, but had come into the district to try their luck at it were forced to move out and go back to their former occupations,

And it seemed in the following years that most of the first settlers became scattered in every direction, and the only ones to remain were the Currahs, Kilgours, Arthur Dean and Arthur Murray, and Glad in Invermay. Charlie and Olive Lockhart ran a successful mixed farming operation for many years, Keeping a good dairy herd of Ayrshire cows. They eventually retired to Victoria B.C.

Roll and Min. went to Saskatoon where Rollie held a good position with the Canadian National Railways, They had one youngster (Dennis)

Harry Stevens went to Medicine Hat I believe, (I am not quite sure of that location) We lost track of him and Vi. but contacted them very briefly many years later.

The Whitman family moved to White Rock B.C.

Alf Hunter gave up farming and trained as a school teacher and worked in that capacity until he retired to Vancouver.

They had three children, Phillip, Dorothy, and Vivienne.

Jack Murray, The Gablers, and the Bergs, all eventually moved up into the Peace River country.

Now we must come back to us at home again, Muriel had finished her schooling at Bellenden and took her high school in Buchanan, Staying with the Jennings, Collegiate at Yorkton, Normal school at Saskatoon, and took up teaching. Her first school was at West Shore, north of Wadena, afterwards going to Yarbo, Foam Lake, and Willow Brook. and we saw her at home only on holidays.

Our home was now reduced to three, Nell and I would never get anywhere, but remain just the tag-end of the family, for we must still keep a home together for Aunt Botell who had so readily come to our rescue when we lost Mother, and she was to remain with us always.

We were tentatively considering a move, but for some time things remained much the same, we continued to board the school teacher, although since Dad had gone, and Muriel had left we almost completely lost contact with the school.

The Buchanan road had now been graded and the traffic no longer passed through our yard and no cars to divert my attention.

In the winters I was still greatly involved in the fire-wood business as in my very early days, for George and Arthur had a good light-weight sawing outfit which I operated for them as I was considered to understand the mysteries of gasoline engines better than they, I sawed wood for all three places, and did custom work as it became available, besides grain crushing.

It was not particularly, profitable, but there was some income, and it helped to keep the work leveled out between us all during the winter season when no other work could be done.

Dad had not left the farm to me as he had expected to do, and we did not appear to be making much head-way, so in the end we decided to take a chance in the town of Yorkton in the fall of 1926.

In the following spring I hoped to get started in one of the garages and try to follow that trade.

It did not turn out that way till many years later, for although we could not then see it, everybody was gradually working towards the years of the great depression of the thirties.

George, like myself, was gradually coming to the conclusion that he was not making much headway in farming.

Since coming to the country so many years before, he had hoped to become a good and well to do farmer, but after so many years he was beginning to think he would not make the grade, and like myself realized he was not cut out for the job, although he enjoyed the life and to the last was reluctant to leave it.

He now left the farm work to Arthur, and spent one summer with a telegraph construction gang on the Hudson Bay Railway.

The next summer and the following winter he worked as timekeeper on the Railway itself, and later secured a job in the Canadian National offices as Road Master's clerk. Starting at Melfort, then several years at Prince Albert, and finally at Humbolt where he worked out his years and retired to the west coast.

He left Rama shortly after we did. He and Jessie had raised a large family which in the end totalled nine, and in our years at Rama we had become involved with the children of that family more so than the others as Arthur's family had come along much later. They were a lovable bunch of youngsters, and we had many happy times with them and missed them when we had to part.

George made out well, he was at last in the right groove for he had always been better than any of us at book work.

No doubt he should always have been at it only for his very early obsession of wanting to carve out from the very beginning a farm from the wilds of Canada. But he said later that he never actually regretted his years spent at Rama, it was quite an experience.

Arthur was the only one of us that stayed at Rama and farmed until his family of five boys grew up and took over.

At that time he took over the Post Office in Rama when Mrs. Walker retired, and carried on in that capacity until he too retired and moved to Vancouver Island.

Four of the boys still farm in the Rama and Invermay district, Donald on the original farm. Ken. the youngest in Saskatoon.

Muriel, perhaps somewhat strangely after her experience in her very young years, went back into farming again when she married Matt. Gudmundson at Foam Lake,

They farmed for many years on Matt's original farm, and had a family of two girls and one boy, Jean, Joyce, and Keith.

Today they still live retired on one corner of the farm.

And one last word about the Murrays, for in those early days they were our first contact, and our nearest neighbors, and remained our friends always.

As we all grew up the elder boys had somehow grown away from me and left me behind, and I then became closer to Arthur who at one time with us elder ones had been referred to as just one of the kids. But now he had caught up on me and we were close friends.

Jean and Connie, as they grew up left home to find work and eventually married and still live not too far away from their original home, Jean at Saskatoon, and Connie at Hassen.

As Dad and Mums Murray (as they were always affectionally called by one and all) approached their retiring age, Arthur took over the farm and married Irene Currah.

They were both good farmers and made a success of it and raised a large family.

It is worthy of note, and maybe something of a record that Arthur lived on that same farm from the time I first met him in 1907 when he was five or six years old, till 1973 when he retired to live in Invermay, We visited them there quite recently.

I have tried in these last pages to touch very briefly on the time after our early years at Rama, in order to describe where most of us all were scattered to from those pioneering days

It all seems so long ago now, Nell and I sometimes look back on that period of our lives and think of it as a dead loss to us, A time when we endured primitive conditions and did much hard and heavy work with little returns. When we missed our education and became unfitted and delayed in our future way through life, a delay that could never be regained, for when you linger time still goes relentlessly on.

But as John once said, one should never look back and wish they had done something different, for there is just no way of knowing what might have taken place should one have taken another turning, Many of our well made plans seem to go astray, and our way through life seems governed by all the circumstances that crop up along the way, and to a certain extent by pure chance.

And in our reminiscing of those early times we find it was not all rough going, We gained many lasting friends, experienced times when our ability, perseverance, and

ingenuity were taxed to the limit in makeing our way over the bad spots, but still remember there were many happy times in those early days in the Rama district.

THE END