

EBBINGHOFF, William And Eugenie – by Bill Ebbinghoff

I was born on a farm in West Germany on October 1, 1903. In February of 1927 I met Mr. Peter Knops who persuaded me to go with him to Canada. With several other German boys, I arrived in Rockglen on a bitterly cold day, March 15, 1927.

I was hired as a farmhand by Nick Kleininger, an established pioneer farmer, for nine months at thirty dollars per month. In early January 1928, I left and found work in the Qu'Appelle Valley until April when I returned to Rockglen to work for John Lenius.

When, in 1929, the depression and drought hit, I worked several months on the railway, laying the track from Coronach to Big Beaver. In August, 1929, I left for Moose Jaw where I worked on several construction jobs until Christmas. Since I had met the girl of my dreams in early 1929, I returned to the Rockglen district and in November 1930, I married Eugenie (Jean) Yost.

Ten years of drought and depression did not stop us from raising a family. In 1931, our oldest daughter, Bernadine, was born. She was joined in 1933 by a brother, Albin, a sister Theresa in 1935 and in 1939 another boy, Donald, rounded out our family. The drought and depression years left many sad as well as happy memories with us. We had many struggles and deprivations but nobody ever went hungry.

In 1939 we had the first crop after our marriage - this was a turning point in our married life – now, we could get away from government handouts (relief) and be on our own.

Since we had the farm rented from a Loan Company we decided, at the end of 1943, to buy our own home closer to school and town. We settled on the old Henry Steele homestead where we stayed until 1970 when we sold out to the present owner, Ivan Ching, and retired to Moose Jaw.

We left the Rockglen district with many treasured memories and we always like to return for a visit to our many friends and relatives. The Rockglen district has been good to us and as we are getting older we both reminisce of the days gone by. From our hearts we wish the younger generation success and prosperity so it may flourish and bloom in honour of the Pioneers who opened up the South Country.

EDWARDS, Elvin T. And Virgie

Mr. Edwards was born on Feb. 11, 1894, in Park River, North Dakota. He was the son of Ellif and Dora Edwards. They were of Norwegian descent.

They lived in a number of places. When Elvin was two years old his family left North Dakota and settled in Portland, Oregon. The climate was too damp for his mother so they moved to Stonewall, Manitoba and stayed for about two years. Then they moved back to Tuber, Alberta in 1906 and then to Wood Mountain where they homesteaded. His family moved back to North Dakota and, in 1913, Elvin and his brother Albert came to Saskatchewan.

They came because they wanted range land and in all their travels the grass country around Canopus was the best they had seen. They got a map of the Wood Mountain district and filed for land three times, once in Gravelbourg, once in Willow Bunch and once in Assiniboia. They traveled with a team and wagon and camped out in a tent. Food came in the form of canned goods heated up over a campfire. Of course they had the "indispensable prune" with them. There were very few homesteads when the brothers came and every time Elvin saw farm buildings in the distance he would jump on his saddle horse and ride over to them as fast as he could, to see if he could buy a few loaves of bread from the settlers.

They camped at Six Mile Creek and were caught in a snow storm. A foot of snow fell in a very short time and their tent roof was sagging. They had bought the tent from Sears and Roebuck and it was supposed to be waterproof. However, when Albert tried to knock the snow off the roof, the tent proved to be as leaky as any piece of cloth.

The boys used to "break" horses for a living. Neighbours would drive the horses over to their place to have them "broke".

Elvin married Virgie Pearl Collins on June 13, 1918. They were married in a sod house by Canopus and the pastor was Mr. Sam Morris.

Their first house was sixteen feet by eighteen feet and built of lumber they bought in Assiniboia. There was also a sod barn and sod chicken coop on the place. They heated their house with lignite coal that they hauled from Six Mile, and Nerpel's, and Tony Trudgeon's mines.

For entertainment there was always a square dance or card part. The Edwards used to have almost a small rodeo at their place every Sunday. Neighbours would conic to help break horses and there would be wagon and horse races. Local musicians would take out the violin or guitar and country and western tunes would fill the air. Just about everyone could play the harmonica a bit.

Elvin's dad had the first car in the community. It was a Model T Ford with two seats and no roof. It was worth five hundred dollars.

Canopus began before the railroad came in. It consisted of a post office run by Mrs. Frank Urquhart and store run by Albert Edwards.

Strathallen began in 1931 or 1932 when an elevator was built there. There was a store also. The only difference between the size of Canopus and Strathallen was that Canopus had two families and Strathallen had one. Mr. Mason ran the store in Strathallen.

The Edwards would go to Limerick, Wood Mountain, or Assiniboia in the fall and stock up on groceries for the winter. They always bought flour and sugar by the hundred pound bag and crackers in huge wooden boxes. One time Mr. Edwards stood in the door of his house and shot twenty-six prairie chickens.

The nearest detachment of Mounties was in Wood Mountain. Then the Mounties still wore red coats and muskrat hats. There were Justices of the Peace that could give preliminary hearings. If the sentence was short they served the term in Wood Mountain. If you had to serve a long term then you went to Regina. Justices of the Peace were appointed by the community and paid by the government.

They used to swap stories when they traded horses.

One year they had some threshers from down east out to help them. One young man thought he knew everything so the locals thought that they'd play a joke on him. They told the youth that they wanted to take him "snipe-hunting". They set out to hunt snipes with an old bag with a hoop in it and a lantern. They situated the lad in the hills with the lantern set out, they said, 'to attract the snipes'. Then they proceeded to leave the young easterner there for the night. Of course he didn't catch any snipes and when he tried to find his way back to the farm he got lost, not returning to the farm until twelve noon the next day.

ELLERT, Andrew And Agatha – by Gail Mattson

My grandfather, Andrew Ellert, was born in St. Agatha, Ontario, in 1884. As a young man he traveled to Sanborn, North Dakota, where he worked for a farmer named Mr. Hoffart. Wanting a farm of his own, he soon moved on to Bethune, Saskatchewan, where he homesteaded and later he bought land at Gull Lake.

In 1912 he ventured back to Sanborn to marry Mr. Hoffart's daughter, Agatha, who had been born at Ada, Minnesota, in 1889. The newlywed couple returned to the farm at Gull Lake where they resided until 1926.

In November of that year they decided to leave Gull Lake and along with Grandpa's brother, Tony and his family, moved south to the Little Woody area. This was quite a move for my grandparents and their eight young children as they crowded into their 1924 Chevrolet touring car and began the journey to their new home. Their machinery and livestock were shipped

down by train to Lisieux. The family arrived at the farm on November 11, 1926, and spent the winter settling into their new home in anxiety for spring seeding.

The 1930's brought many hardships to the large family but they learned to cope with the harsh times as best they could. Since the farm was located on the northern edge of Fife Lake, they found that when coal was hard to come by, they could mine their own by the lakeshore. Even the younger children learned to gather "buffalo chips" when the fuel supply for the cook stove ran low. The farm also hosted several butchering "bees" and neighbors gathered from all around to share the fresh meat. Grandma started making her own sausage and soon became an expert at sausage making.

By 1939 the Ellert family was completed with the arrival of their thirteenth child. With such a large family to feed and clothe they cursed the hardships that had fallen upon them but summer or winter they continued to make the nine-mile journey to church on Sundays in crowded sleighs or buggies and prayed fervently for the end of a bitter decade.

There were many times during those trying years when Grandma would look down the long dining-room table at thirteen hungry faces and wonder how she would provide the next meal for the family. Little did she know how many good bread crusts were carefully stuffed in the corners under the table when she wasn't looking.

Some of the best times remembered by the children were the winter months spent in the construction of an outdoor hockey rink on the lake. The boys worked diligently cutting ice blocks to form the edges of the rink and even added a professional touch by rounding the corners of the ice surface. The finished product was a better than-average sized rink. Throughout the winter it was the gathering spot for friends and neighbors from the entire district.

My grandparents spent twenty-five years on the farm and finally decided to retire to Assiniboia in 1951. My grandfather passed away in 1966 and my grandmother followed in 1977. Their thirteen children are scattered from Alberta to Ontario and the family farm is still owned and operated by my father and mother, Lloyd and Fern Ellert.

ELLIOTT, Arthur And Rose

Arthur Edward Elliott was born in Goderich, Ontario, 1892. He came west at the age of seventeen, in 1909.

He stopped at Yellow Grass where he had cousins, then came on down to his brother's at Little Woody. He stayed and worked for Garnet Elliott until Garnet married Ada Chilson. He then took up a homestead one mile south of Quantock. He met Rose Chilson at his brother's and in 1916 married her and they moved to the homestead.

A few years later they moved to the farm one mile west of Quantock. They had five children. Edna, Lucy, Delbert, Calvin and Glen.

Arthur helped build the road west in the twenties.

In 1928 he started a business in Rockglen. He had the Hart Parr, John Deere, Oliver, and Ford dealerships. Later, the Prairie City Oil, Massey Harris and Chrysler Plymouth were added. During the thirties when things were rough he sold what machinery he could and took horses, cows and even mules as trade-ins. Then when the C.P.R. went west he sold horses to them.

In 1931 they moved back to the farm to save expenses. He bought horses with a horse buyer from the east. It was a case of doing a little of everything to keep what little one had. They moved back to Rockglen in 1936.

In the forties he bought more land and also had a Massey Harris agency in Coronach. During the mid-forties he served as Mayor of Rockglen. He kept his business going until 1964. They then returned to Regina and lived there until his death in 1968.

ELLIS, Victor Ans Allis

In 1913 I came to this country. The CPR had extended a line from Weyburn to Viceroy. Another man who had land in the township to the north was along. He had arranged for a neighbor of his to meet us and take us out with a team of mules and a very light wagon. We came in sight of the Wood Mountain range the second day. The sun was sinking – it surely was a beautiful picture. All the trees were in full leaf; the grass was long and green; the country had not been scarred by the hand of man. I wondered how a team and wagon would get over the Wood Mountain Ridge, but the old Indian trail showed us.

We camped that night with Jimmy Thompson, the telegraph operator and custom officer. He was an old timer in the district and lived in a pole and mud house with his wife and quite a few children. I wondered how he could put us up but everyone seemed to go off to some spot and find a bed. I know we fared well. I thought Jimmy was a wonderful old man. He now lies buried in a grave only a few yards from his home.

The Mounted Police also were stationed at Wood Mountain.

The next day we proceeded south and crossed what is known as "The Divide". Here the water runs both ways, one to the north into Twelve Mile Lake, and the other south into the States. We continued on the old Indian trail and came at last to our journey's end.

The next day I walked down south to my location, and the grass was something to gladden the heart of any stockman, but the mosquitoes were something again. It was almost impossible to go outside without a net over one's head. That thick mat of grass made a real hatching spot. The man I came out with, Lig Johnson, from Viceroy, asked me to drive a breaking plow for him, and I could also break ten acres for myself. I had to admit I had never done any plowing in my life, but he insisted I try my hand, and so there was I on a plow with a team of mules and a team of high strung drivers (horses). The mules were lazy and the drivers were a going concern. I did a great deal of breaking on nine different quarter sections including ten acres on the SW1/4 28-1-4-3, my homestead, and wasn't I a proud farmer when I saw that black patch of earth.

The CPR had now extended to Assiniboia so I hired a rancher's son from northwest of here, Leonard Anderson, to go to Assiniboia and haul out lumber, seventy-five miles, and the first lumber shack twelve by fourteen came into this township. Some more settlers came in. One family from the States joined me to the west and they intended to stay all winter in only a tent, so when I left for the army, he and his family of six moved into my small shack for the winter.

In 1914, I joined the army – the 60 Rifles at Moose Jaw, later renamed the 46th.

In 1914 and 1915 the rest of the land was settled. A colony of Russians came from North Dakota, where they had been dried out – they were hard working, being Seventh Day Adventists. It seemed funny to see them all quit working Saturday and work on Sunday, but I believe they kept to their belief better than most.

By 1916 the township was fully settled. There were some Norwegians, a few French, one Irishman, two Scotchmen, a few Americans and half a dozen English. This "mixture" decided a school was needed so a meeting was called by George Henderson and it was decided to go ahead. By fall a new school had come to the district. The nearest railway point was now Limerick. A teacher had to ride from there in a buggy, a day and a half trip. It's a wonder they were able to get a teacher.

The years 1914-15-16 were all wet years but 1917 was dry. In the spring of 1918 I returned to my farm. How the country had changed. Instead of miles of prairie with its solid grass mat, there were houses on every half section. Lots of breaking had been done; the Russians had erected a church for themselves where services were held every Saturday. The rest of the residents attended service at the school when a traveling preacher would 'show up'.

The flu came in 1918. We had no doctors nor nurses. People who had it were put in one building and the neighbors took turns in caring for them. It's a marvel, out of five stricken, not one died.

The greatest need for this district was a railway and roads. Because of the dry years and no crops, no railway could see any use in building, so stock had to be trailed out to Limerick.

1925-26-27-28 were again wet years so better crops were raised. Until 1928 this grain had to be hauled to Limerick, over fifty miles, three and a half day's journey. In 1928 the CPR extended a line from Assiniboia through Wood Mountain and west so now we were only twenty-four miles from a railway.

In 1931 the CPR came west from Rockglen to Killdeer a distance of eight miles from us. What a difference! Again we were in a bad way for 1929-30-31 were dry and each year after that until 1938, when we had lots of rain and a good crop in sight, but again disaster from rust came with no crop to harvest. These continued hardships had thinned out the population and today you see farms scattered.

Now the main market roads are graded. We have a train occasionally. There are quite a number of livestock raised. I doubt if this country will ever be closely settled again.

This township started out in 1910, with horses and some oxen used for farm work. Today, in a country that was a rancher's paradise, you seldom see a horse doing any work, outside of the saddle horse. There is up-to-date machinery now on the farms and roads.

How times have echanged!

ENGEL, Peter And Clarabelle

Peter Engel, of German origin, was born at Beckersdorf, Poland, in May 1884. He came to Canada, at the age of thirteen, to the home of his brother at Beausejour, Manitoba. He lived with his brother and worked in logging camps around Bemidji, Minnesota, during the winter. For two years he was employed as an interpreter at the Immigration Office in Winnipeg. He was able to speak five languages. Coming to Weyburn, where he was employed by George Beischel, an I.H. dealer, he went out setting up binders and other machinery as far west as Willow Bunch. He filed on his homestead in 1913, and continued to work.

Peter also operated the ferry across Lake Willow Bunch. He was married to Clarabelle Abbott in June 1916, in Winnipeg, and they came to live on the homestead. Mrs. Engel was born and grew up in Belfast, North Ireland. She came to Elgin, Manitoba at the age of eighteen. Life on the prairies meant a great adjustment for her, after the kind of life she'd been accustomed to. However, she was very happy, and enjoyed the many new friends she had found. A son, Irvine was born in Oct. 1917, at Elgin, Manitoba.

Mr. and Mrs. Art McCutcheon came to call, and invited the Engels to attend the church service held in Lacordaire School. A minister came from Luella District, near Coronach to conduct services.

In 1917 there was a bad prairie fire. Mrs. Engel and Mrs. Carpenter were going for the mail to Earl Post Office, in George Goudie's home. When they reached the top of the bill, the fire was coming up the hill. The horse wheeled about and ran home. That fire burned the Chartrand ranch, and burned down into Montana as far as Charlie Humbert's. Many lambs were burned.

Mr. F. Walter Sr. broke up some of Peter's land, until he bought a Mogul tractor and then Peter began breaking the sod himself.

The men worked together, digging coal along the Poplar River in the first years to meet their needs. Joe and Len Pratt and Jeromes mined coal with Peter.

In the early years, the grain was sold in Scobey. There was a Canadian dump, many farmers sold their wheat to Americans and got a better price. Joe Nadeau was an American who

bought grain right on the farm and hauled it. The trail to Scobey was right past the Engel house. Mrs. Engel always kept a lamp burning at the windows at night. One night, three Zopf men spent the night at Engel's during a blizzard.

In October 1918, Peter and Frank Carpenter went to Scobey. Mrs. Carpenter stayed with Mrs. Engel, and they slept with a revolver under the pillow. The men stayed at a hotel where several people had died of the flu. Within a few days, the Carpenters, Mrs. Engel and Irvine were very ill. Peter went to Mr. Anton Kaczmariski's for brandy. The threshers were all sick there, many of them lying on the floor. Anton had a boiler of hot water on the stove, and was caring for the men. He needed the brandy, but he had shared it with Peter. Peter maintains it was the brandy that saved the lives of the family. Celuis Olsen and Len Pratt died of the flu.

Three daughters were born to the Engels-Pauline, Margaret and Leila.

In 1924, Peter built a new house, and in 1928 built a barn. The lumber for both these buildings came from the O.B. England Lumberyard. Before any feed was put into the barn, two dances were held in it, and the proceeds given to the Red Cross Hospital, which was being built in Rockglen.

O.B. Eglantine of Scobey was a well-known person in the community. He always carried canned and fresh fruit in his car. If he happened to call on an elderly person, he left fruit with them.

In 1925, Mrs. Engel, Julius Karst, Harry David and others were interested in getting a school in the district. Mrs. Engel went to Regina to see the Minister of Education. The result of their combined efforts was the building of Goose Creek School, No. 4606.

Nineteen twenty-eight was the year of a most devastating hail storm. It went right across the country and most people were hailed a hundred percent, windows were broken in homes and schools. Many lambs were killed on the Chartrand ranch. To save some lambs Mr. Chartrand put them into his two new Hudson cars.

Mr. Frank Walter Sr. had a huge threshing outfit, and did most of Peter's threshing. One day he sent Mrs. Engel word that she'd have thirty-two men for supper. Mrs. Engel, with the help of Minnie Walter, cooked for several of the bachelors during threshing time.

The Engel home became the home of the teacher for fourteen years, commencing with Mrs. Hayward in 1931.

Mrs. Engel also grew a large garden, and sold cabbage, carrots, cucumbers and corn in Fife Lake. She watered the garden with water pumped from a trough. Though cream and butter brought very little, Mrs. Engel sold both to buy other necessities. She took the cream to Fife Lake, a distance of fourteen miles, to catch the train which left at 8:30 A.M.

The fruit trees, gooseberries and strawberries planted in the early homesteading years yielded an abundance of fruit in the dry years. Ice, cut in the river and hauled home, where it was stored in the ice-house was used during the summer to keep milk, cream and meat cold. It was also used to make gallons of ice-cream.

This combined with the advantage of living near the border, where clothing could be bought economically, made the Engels feel they did not suffer very much as a result of the thirties. The men talked of fifty cent shirts; while pretty print was twelve or thirteen cents a yard.

Getting to high school was probably one of the greatest difficulties. Irvine and Pauline took Grades IX, X and XI by correspondence, and Grade XII in Rockglen. Margaret and Leila took XI and XII in Rockglen. Pauline attended Normal School in 1937, Margaret went to the Misericordia Hospital to train, and Leila worked in the War Savings Department of the Bank of Canada in Ottawa. Irvine was married to Ella Nein, and served in the Canadian Army for five years, three and one-half years of that with the Royal Canadian Engineers overseas.

In 1931, a man was brought to the Engel home from Coronach. He was German, so Peter was able to talk to him. Before long, we noted that he had some strange habits, and two weeks later, when Peter went to call him, he sat up and pointed a revolver at Peter. He thought some one was after him, and was very afraid of any neighbour who called.

Peter and Frank Carpenter decided to get the R.C.M.P., and phoned for them. While Peter was away, Mrs. Engel was making the beds, and looking after her incubator, she heard the man coming down the stairs. He had the gun in his hand and was pointing it at her. She slipped out the west door and over to her parents' home. One bullet was shot in the house, but no one was hit. Later he left the house, and, it was on the road that he was picked up, wearing a German army officer's coat a cap, and waving his gun. When his luggage was open he had several revolvers, a knife with a long blade. plus ammunition. The Engels later received a letter from his father in Germany apologizing for the actions of his son. He was a manufacturer of armaments and ammunition and because his son was mentally disturbed, had sent him to Canada thinking it would be good for him. It was quite evident that he had been well-educated. He was deported to Germany.

In the early years there was quite a lot of smuggling across the boundary line. On two occasions Peter had pull a loaded truck out of the Poplar River. One truck contained jam and cheese, and the other miscellaneous goods.

Peter was interested in all community activities and was on the Goose Creek School Board for many years. Mrs. Engel served as local attendance officer, and with the money she received, bought goods for the school.

Like many others of that time, Peter rebuilt batteries, and installed electric lights in the house, using a wind charger to charge the batteries. The radio was also operated on an "A" battery, kept charged by the wind.

When the dry years first came, Peter bought hay at Quill Lake, and had it shipped to Fife Lake. Later on relief feed was shipped into each town by train. Everyone gathered at the telephone on train nights, waiting for the "general" ring which would announce whether or not feed had come, and how many bales each would get. The Engels were at the end of the telephone line, and usually had several bachelors waiting to hear. They seldom went away without a meal, some butter or a loaf of bread

In 1935, in Mid-March, because of the abundance of rabbits, it was decided to have a rabbit drive. At that time the Municipality was paying ten cents a pair for Jack Rabbit ears and two cents for gopher tails. A circular fence was put up in a field near Anton Kaczmariski's. The rabbits were chased for a radius of six miles around. Everyone in the neighborhood took part in the chase, with some men on horseback to keep the rabbits moving. The rabbits were chased into the corral, and the gates were closed. Only a few men killed them, as humanely as possible. The carcasses were sold to the fox farms and the ears brought quite a lot of money. Everyone took lunch. Mrs. Kaczmariski made a huge boiler of coffee, which everyone enjoyed.

Later that month, Sammy Cochrane and others built a corral, near the Louis Werdahl farm and a second rabbit drive took place.

A few of the dust storms of the thirty's were memorable. Many days were dusty, but in 1937, the storms were the worst. About May 27, a black cloud of dust came rolling out of the southwest in the evening, filling the house with dust. You could not enjoy being up so the only thing we could do was to go to bed. The next morning the dust was gathered up with a shovel.

The year 1937 was the climax of the dry years. No rain fell until July 12th when it rained for several days. The Russian Thistles grew everywhere. Shortly after this came the army worms, crawling up the houses, and stopping trains on the track. That summer, too, the sleeping sickness attacked the horses. Peter, accompanied by Irvine, had gone to Manitoba to work and get livestock feed. Mrs. Engel was left alone to look after the sick horses. Mr. Jack Dauphinais was a wonderful help to her, as it was very tiring work, keeping ice packs on the horses'

heads. Though the horses never completely recovered, none of them died. Peter came home in the fall, bringing a carload of hay, some Thatcher Wheat for seed and garden vegetables.

In 1938, the R.C.M.P. were looking for a place to stay, and inquired at the Engel farm. Peter had some oats in the granary and a good barn; they decided to stay. Constables Douglas Minor and Pat Beach were with the Engels most of the summer until October. There were a few embarrassing moments, when the American neighbours called without reporting. The policemen spent most of their nights out on the border coming in in the early hours.

In January 1931 the home of Charles Lacey burned, and the family made their home with the Engels for some time until a house was rebuilt. In 1930 Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Kornum stayed with Peter and Mrs. Engel, so that Mrs. Kornum might be cared for.

From 1938 on, Peter's health began to fail. He and Mrs. Engel retired to Rockglen in 1945, when Irvine returned from serving overseas. Peter passed away in June 1948. Mrs. Engel sold her home in Rockglen, and spent the winters caring for an aged aunt in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She then bought a home in Regina, where she lived for several years, and now resides with her daughter and son-in-law, Pauline and Orval Belsher at Rockglen.