

LA BAY, Arthur And Bertha – by Mrs. La Bay

Arthur La Bay was born in Arlington, South Dakota and, as a young lad, came to Canada in a covered wagon in April 1914 with the late Charlie Weed and his family. Art filed on a homestead in the Killdeer district. He then served with the Canadian army overseas from late 1915 to 1918. Following the war, he returned to the homestead and broke up his land in the Killdeer district.

In 1926 Art and I were married. He proceeded to build a barn and a couple of granaries. In 1929 and 1930 it was quite evident that the railroad was coming to Killdeer so the little hamlet of Killdeer started. There were two grocery stores, two restaurants, a lumber yard, Post Office, two elevators, two churches and a blacksmith shop.

Then came the “Thirties”, sometimes called the “Dirty Thirties”, in which nothing seemed to grow for lack of moisture. The wind swept the prairies and played havoc with the broken land – piling the top soil over barb wire fences and filling ditches. Some people tried to raise a garden but to no avail. The dark, gloomy air was filled with dust and dirt. There as very little money in the country, hut people survived as best as they could. It was patch upon patch where clothes were concerned with no money except for the bare necessities of life. In 1936 our little girl Ruth was born – God’s gift to us. She was horn in Assiniboia Hospital, and, as there was no money to pay the hospital bill, it was agreed that we could pay it with dressed turkeys and chickens. The doctor’s fee was paid in installments as we got a little money ahead.

Most people tried to keep a cow or two to supply them with milk, cream and butter, a team of horses, a pig or two, a few chickens and a wagon or Bennett buggy. Cow and horse hides were tanned on the farm and the leather used to make or repair harnesses. Arthur made a rope machine with which he was able to make rope and halters from binder twine and very good rope it was!

The women of the district did what they could to economize. They made butter, cheese, bread, homemade soap, coffee substitute, yeast and even vinegar.

The men dug lignite coal for both cooking and heating stoves. There were underground lignite mines in the district. I remember one year when there seemed to be a few Russian Thistles scattered about here and there. The farmers thought they’d put these up for feed for the stock, when the Army Worm made its appearance and ate everything edible in its path. There were Army Worms everywhere!!! They even got into the houses around doors and windows. Then too, I remember the year the grasshoppers made their appearance. They were so thick in the air they seemed like dark clouds passing overhead.

Eggs sold for five cents a dozen, butter fifteen cents a pound. I remember Art sitting outside waiting for the last hen to lay an egg so he would have a dozen eggs to trade for a small package of poor tobacco.

Although these were “trying times” people never gave up hope and were very hospitable. They always welcomed you into their homes. They created their own amusement gathering together for baseball games, bronc riding, calf and steer riding and the like.

The government shipped in some feed for the stock. The people of Ontario and some other eastern provinces donated clothing, fruit and vegetables. Each family was allowed so much.

In 1938 it looked as though there would be some grain hut the grain rust put an end to those hopes. From this time on things started to improve somewhat and we were able to get ahead by erecting more buildings, putting in running water and the like. We remained on the land until 1967 when Art’s health began to fail. Our daughter Ruth and her husband Larry Bloom took over the farm. They have three children; Lynn, Kevin, and Cheryl. We moved into the town of Rockglen where Art passed away in 1974.

LACE, Charles Noel And Hattie

Charles Noel Lace came from England to Canada in 1913 and filed on his homestead. His homestead was the N.E. quarter Sec. 12, T. I, R. 29, W. 2nd.

Born near London when the war began, he enlisted and went overseas. He was wounded in France, and while in hospital in England he met Hattie Minshall, an English nurse. Hattie's husband, Captain Minshall, had gone down when his ship was torpedoed. Hattie and Charlie were married, and after the war came to Canada to Charlie's homestead. They brought with them Hattie's daughter, Margaret. In 1922, a son, Basil Kipling was born to Charlie and Hattie.

Charlie had many hardships on the farm. Hail, grasshoppers and drought seemed to plague his farming efforts.

Mrs. Lace was very helpful in the community, as a midwife, and in many cases of illness she was called in.

Margaret, because there was no local school, attended the Convent School in Willow Bunch. She then trained as a nurse at St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg, and became a Public Health Nurse.

In January, 1931, the Lace's house burned. They spent some time with Engel's, while Charlie and the neighbors built a new house for them. In the fire, Hattie lost a very valuable heirloom – Stradivarius violin, and two of her Wedgwood china vases that lay in the burning basement for a week, were removed in perfect condition.

The insurance adjuster was flown down by R. J. Groome, the first Canadian pilot to carry mail by air. It was agreed on the telephone that Pete Engel would find a good landing spot as the plane was equipped with skis. However, the pilot did not land on that spot, but picked a spot that looked to have a good snow covering. It was gravel, and we were all out pushing to get the plane off that evening. In those days a plane caused some excitement in the country, for we seldom ever saw one.

In 1935, after many dry years, Charlie sold his farm and moved to New Westminster, B.C., where he worked on a ship. He died in 1970, and Mrs. Lace died in 1973. Basil is with the R.C.M.P. and lives in Prince George, B.C., Margaret is retired in Wales.

LAMONTAGNE ,Ernest And Marie

Ernest Lamontagne was born in Louiseville, Quebec, in 1857. There he married Marie Frigon, on April 27, 1878.

They moved to St. Eustache, Manitoba, in 1911 and two years later came to Joerville and took up a homestead on what is today known as the Ed Lamontagne farm. They had ten children, Herve, Mary Ann, Rosa, Anna, Wilfrid, Alfred, Emile, Aldea, Edmond and Florain.

Marie passed away March 19, 1925 and Ernest passed away in 1948 at the age of ninety-one. Mr. Ernest Lamontagne was the father of Alfred (Fred), who homesteaded in Lisieux in 1911. Fred married Clara Lanoie on April 23, 1924. They had five children, Florence, Lawrence, Adrien (Red), Elaine and Dora.

Fred was an active member in politics. Fred and Clara retired to Lisieux in 1947. Fred passed away on October 9, 1959.

LAWRENCE, Ernest And Isabelle

Ernest Alexander Lawrence was born in Bradford, Ontario in 1878.

He enlisted in the Boer war, but it was over before he embarked for South Africa.

In 1915 he enlisted in the Canadian Mounted Rifles. He went overseas, but was hurt by a horse before he was in action.

He returned to Saskatchewan in 1917 and married Isabelle Mackenzie from Moose Jaw.

They moved to Stonehenge and tried farming but frost and drought changed their minds about wheat farming and they moved on to Assiniboia. There Ernest was a town policeman for

a few years and his wife altered and made fur coats. During the flu of 1918 he took soups to homes in need of food and helped carry out the dead.

Their daughter Jean was born there in 1919.

In 1921 the family moved to Willows and Ernest was a blacksmith. He loved horses and was very knowledgeable about their ways.

Daughter Isabelle was born in 1922 and Florence in 1924.

He was instrumental in starting a school in Willows and also a skating rink.

In 1929 Ernest had just started an Insurance Agency (Sun Life). It was at the beginning of the depression and nobody could afford to buy insurance. When the crash came the Lawrence's lost everything they owned.

Until 1932 the family had a very difficult time. It was then he took over the job of postmaster at Rockglen. He started the first golf course and skating rink in this town.

Mr. Lawrence liked classical and opera music, and made his daughters listen to the finest programs that came over the air at that time.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence came from long established Ontario families that were Irish, English and Scotch.

Mr. Lawrence died in 1938 and Mrs. Lawrence continued to be postmistress with the help of her daughter until she retired. She died in 1964.

LAYTON, David And Agnes

David F. Layton, Senior, was born in 1883. As a young man of sixteen, in 1899, he came west from Nova Scotia to Wood Mountain with the North West Mounted Police.

He had many stories to tell of his years in the Mounties, about the Indians, the cowboys and cattle rustlers of that time.

He left the Mounties to marry a young lady of sixteen, Agnes Cruikshank, whom he had met when she came from Pennsylvania to visit her aunt, Mrs. Emily Allen (later Mrs. J. Henderson).

Dave worked as a blacksmith in Willow Bunch after their marriage in 1907. In 1910, they moved with their two young children, Isabel and David Jr., to Hay Meadow district west of Scout Lake and began farming. They raised a family of six: Isabel (Beirele), Dave Jr., Gertrude (Barbour), Rae (Hanson), Lorne and Almo. The children attended Hay Meadow and Joeville schools.

In 1944, Dave, Agnes and Almo sold their farm and moved to Moose Jaw. After Agnes' death in 1947, Dave and Almo returned to Rockglen where Dave was the school janitor for several years. Almo was killed in an accident in 1952, the year he graduated.

Lorne married a girl from Holland after World War I and farmed near Rockglen prior to moving to Edmonton.

After Dave Junior's marriage to Hilda Barnsley in 1935, they farmed west of Lisieux. Four years later the family bought a farm in the Poplar Valley district where they farmed until moving to Rockglen in 1954. Dave continued to farm until 1971. He passed away at his home in 1974. Dave and Hilda have four children, Beverly (McKee), Darrell, Lorrie, and Barbara (Olsen).

LENIUS, John And Mary – by Wilf L. Lenius

My father, John F. Lenius, was born in Maenthal, Austria, on February 20, 1884. He came to Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1902 when he was eighteen years of age.

My mother, Mary Stadtherr, was born in Belgrade, Minnesota. Her grandfather was a German emigrant. She came with her family to Winnipeg in 1904. Mother and Dad were married July 3, 1909. About 1910 they moved from Winnipeg to Saskatoon, where Dad went into partnership with a friend in the wallpaper and paint business.

In 1911 Dad decided to take advantage of the Government offer of a free homestead in southern Saskatchewan so moved into the Lacordaire district. Dad made a very wise choice in selecting a homestead as there was a fresh spring flowing in a coulee just below the barn. This supplied us with water during winter and summer for the farm animals.

The period from 1911 to 1914 is somewhat sketchy as I do not know whether Mom and Dad stayed at the farm all year, or whether they spent the winters in Winnipeg and came back to the farm in the spring. However, they built an "adobe" house to take the place of the tent that they originally lived in during the summer of 1911. They also dug a well in a coulee near the house. The well was only four feet deep. It was enclosed by a wooden frame to keep rodents from falling in. I can remember us kids hooking our toes around this wooden frame, lowering ourselves up-side-down into the well and drinking the water. I also have a faint recollection of a "sod" barn being built south of the house and I believe it was demolished by a cyclone. Dad bought four broncs, broke them to harness and with a sulky plow proceeded to break up the sod on his homestead. Since I was born in Winnipeg, in February of 1914, it would indicate that the winter was spent in that city.

Although I was too young to remember this, a very unfortunate accident occurred in our home in December, 1915 which must have caused a great deal of anxiety and hardship to my parents. It seems that, while playing with my uncle on the kitchen floor, I backed into a tub of hot water and was severely scalded. Two-thirds of my body was burned by the hot water and the nearest doctor was forty-five miles away in Scobey, Montana. It is related that 1915 was one of the severest winters on record with a very heavy snowfall. However, neighbors were notified and very soon the fastest and toughest "broncs" in the district were hitched to a "cutter" and with me resting in a "feathered-bed" and kept warm by heated rocks, the trip to Scobey was started. At the half way house, a place called "Humbert's Ranch" the exhausted horses were exchanged for four fresh horses from the ranch and the balance of the trip was completed. It is said that I was not expected to live; and indeed, I guess I did hover and between life and death for many days. However, I did recover and Dad went back to the farm but Mother and I stayed in Scobey until the spring "break-up".

In 1917, my brother Ted was born at our farm home with a local midwife, Grandma Kaczmariski, in attendance. My brother Frank was born in Winnipeg in 1918, but my next brother Johnnie was born back on the farm. The district was now fortunate to have a farmer whose wife was a registered nurse. For a number of years Mrs. Lace acted as doctor and nurse to the community.

Mr. Larsen, a Scandinavian bachelor neighbor, was always around to help Mom with the chores when Dad had to be away. He wore his grey hair long and this along with his grey beard, which reached to his waist, made him a very imposing sight. I best remember him for his intelligence. It seemed there was no question for which he did not have an answer. I was in his shack only once and remember it quite vividly. There were books and magazines wherever you looked. He must have been an avid reader. Mr. Larsen chewed "plug" tobacco. When he had chewed out all the juices, he would take the remainder of the tobacco and roll it into balls and allow it to dry. He would then smoke this in his pipe. All the window sills were loaded with little round plugs of tobacco.

Then there was Gus Tangwall. He was a big brute of a man with a very explosive temper. I don't think he liked children - I was deathly afraid of this man. A story is told that one of his oxen, which pulled the plow, refused to move. Since he could not get the ox to its feet, it is said Gus dug a hole under the ox filled it with prairie wool and lit it. Needless to say the ox moved.

Another neighbor was Jim Hislop. He was an Englishman with a great sense of humour. We were always glad to see him come. He must have been very poor as I have never seen a more raggedly dressed person in my life. One day he dropped in on us when we boys were sparring with boxing gloves. He watched us awhile and then suggested that one of us put the gloves on with him. I can still remember the surprise, when I was unable to hit him although he never moved his feet. We found out then that he had held a lightweight title of some kind in England. He became our coach and the Zopf and Lenius boys became pretty good boxers.

And then there were the Stevens' – Dave and Etta. They loved to play cards and were always such enjoyable company. Dave used to have a habit of running his hand over the inside of a plate before he put food on it. One evening his wife scolded him and said, "Dave. why must you do that?"

"When I am home, I have to do it, and when I am in company, it is a habit," replied Dave dryly.

Another time they had just stopped briefly with a team of horses. While they were in the house for a minute, the team took off for home. Mrs. Stevens ran after the horses, while Dave just stood in the yard and watched. As she was running she began to discard clothes – off came her toque, then her scarf, followed by her jacket and then her sweater. Dave just watched her and finally he turned to Dad and said, "I hope that team stops soon or she'll be nude."

About 1920 Dad purchased a third quarter of land from the Hudson Bay Company. He was now considered to be a large farmer. About this time he also built a two storey barn along with a shiny metal ventilator with a weather vane on top of it. However, the ventilator never did get mounted on the roof – it rested in the hayloft of the barn as long as I can remember.

My brother Norbert was born on May 11, 1924 at the farm, followed by my sister Marjorie on February 27, 1928. She was born in the Red Cross (outpost) Hospital in Rockglen. That year produced a "bumper" crop in the district; however, a good portion of the country was wiped out by a hail storm in July. Our farm was fortunate as we just missed the storm.

The old three-room adobe house was getting pretty small now and so a new two-storey house was built in 1928 to accommodate the growing Lenius family. This dwelling was built for less than five thousand dollars.

My youngest brother, Dennis, was born on the morning of July 17, 1931, the morning of the Rockglen fire which wiped out five business places on Main Street.

When the stock market crashed in 1929 followed by a crop failure in 1930, things looked pretty grim on the farm. Thus began the "dirty thirties" which was a period of world depression coupled with lack of rainfall in Saskatchewan, resulting in total crop failure. The period between 1930 and 1939 was the most disastrous in Saskatchewan history. Can you imagine having just three inches of rainfall in a twelve month period? The land was so dry that nothing but Russian thistle would grow. The cattle learned to eat this thistle; I remember stacking this weed for feed. There wasn't much nutrition in this and I remember my Dad killing a new-born calf because the mother could not supply enough milk for the calf and the family. Those of you who have never seen a "dust storm" have no idea of what they were like! It would be a hot sunny day with hardly a breeze. Suddenly you would see a small blue-black cloud on the western horizon. As you watched, this cloud would get larger and more ominous and finally it would be right above. The clouds would be swirling every which way and then the wind would strike bringing with it the dust and the Russian thistles. It would completely blot out the sun and I can remember many times lighting the kerosene lamp during a storm.

I can also remember driving to Rockglen for relief feed, which was allotted on a "first come first served" basis. We would leave home in the early hours of the morning hoping to be first in line only to find when we reached the distribution point, which was a boxcar on the track, there were already two or three teams waiting for the inspector to open the car. Fruit and vegetables were also shipped in from Eastern Canada. Dried codfish, that looked like snow

shoes, was also shipped in from the East. We had no idea of how to prepare these fish and our neighbor ended up patching the holes in his granary with them.

I hired out to a farmer about this time. I received ten dollars per month – not per hour – per month!

When the war broke out in 1939, Canada became a beehive of activity. Overnight, jobs were available and rates of pay were increasing. In other words the depression was over. Our family split up very quickly after this. Some went into the forces, some moved to the city, two of the boys started farming on their own and I went back to finish my education. Mother and Dad moved off the farm shortly after this and returned to Winnipeg in their retirement. My brother took over the family farm and operated it until his retirement in 1975.

Mother and Dad have passed on now. The old homestead is no longer in the family. A feeling of nostalgia engulfs me when I drive by and see the beautiful groves of trees where I laboured and sweated while cultivating and pruning, the mounds of dirt piled high from our coal mining, the water hole in which we swam and almost drowned a hired girl we didn't like.

I have a lot of cherished memories of the old homestead. Once in a while I drive by the old place just to make certain that it is still there. Mom and Dad would have wanted it that way.

LEVER, Russell

Mr. Lever writes:

"I was born in Flesherton, Ontario, in 1894 and came to Ceylon, Sask., on a harvest excursion in 1911. I worked there until the early spring of 1926. Then I heard about a new railroad going into Fife Lake and Rockglen districts. I was told that Fife Lake would be a good town to settle in so I packed my tools and got into my Ford coupe car and hit for Fife Lake. When I got there, there was no sign of a town so I inquired of a farmer by the name of Boyer Kessler about the town . . . just run to your left at this corner and go back until you hit the railroad and on the right hand side is the town site".

Mr. Lever goes on to say in his letter that he built many buildings in this area including Peter Engle's barn, Louis Chartrand's big sheep barn, several business places, granaries, schools and the like . . . all in and around Fife Lake and Rockglen.

"One day when I went to Assiniboia for my mail I met a girl that I knew from Bracken. She was on her way to Moose Jaw to get work, I told her she better come and work for me as I needed a housekeeper. We went into Moose Jaw that afternoon and were married. This was June 5, 1926", writes Mr. Lever.

They moved to Fair View in 1930. They have lived in Penticton, Oliver and Keremeos, but have resided in Dawson Creek since 1964.

LEVESQUE, Ernest

Mr. and Mrs. Levesque were originally from France. While Mr. Levesque was sitting in a hotel in Forget, Saskatchewan, he overheard two men talking about "open land". He jumped the train for Moose Jaw and filed on the numbers he remembered. The Levesque's had a store and post office on that homestead along the border for many years. There he farmed with the two registered Percheron stallions he had purchased on a return trip to France.

Mr. Levesque once gave Art McCutcheon three hundred and fifty dollars (no small amount in those days), all in silver, to purchase supplies in Verwood. Because the Levesque's did much of their business with the Americans they had accumulated many American "cart wheels". Art tired of carrying the heavy silver and stashed it in his horses' feed oats until he arrived in Verwood.

Mrs. Levesque succumbed in the 1918 flu epidemic. Mr. Levesque left for Chicago where he became a professor.

LINK, John And Alice

In 1912, when John Link was five years old, he immigrated to Canada from Kronstahl, Russia, a town near Odessa. He came with his parents, three brothers and two sisters, one of whom is Elizabeth, (Mrs. Ted Nein). The family homesteaded at Morse, Saskatchewan.

In the fall of 1929 John moved to Rockglen where he found employment with the C.P.R. It was while he was an employee of the C.P.R. that John made the acquaintance of Alice Borgerson, fair-haired daughter of a district farmer. Alice was born in Hamar, North Dakota and had come to the Rockglen district with her parents in 1913. John and Alice exchanged wedding vows, May 15, 1934.

With John working on the railroad, they moved a few times, but still had a soft spot in their hearts for Rockglen. In 1945, John bought the Pool Hall and Barber Shop from John Hoffas and the family returned to Rockglen.

After twelve years of "lowering ears" in that little shop they left our midst and moved to Moose Jaw. John continued to barber until his retirement in 1975.

Alice and John have four children, Mavis, Karen, Norman and Dennis; eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

LINTHICUM, John And Magdeline – by Vera Linthicum

John Linthicum came from North Dakota and filed on a homestead southwest of Rockglen in 1911. The railroad had only come as far as Ogema at the time, so all of his equipment and stock had to be trekked from there. With the help of his two eldest sons, Frank and Bob, he built a sod house and broke some land. The rest of the family moved up in 1913. By then they were able to come as far as Assiniboia by train. Frank, Bob, and Bill all filed on land in the district. The first years were hard, as they were for all early pioneers, but they had their good times too. They all took an active part in the community, baseball being their favorite sport. Mr. Linthicum was a big help to his neighbors with his blacksmith work, and he was also very good at veterinary work. Mrs. Linthicum was always willing to help in time of sickness and acted as midwife in the district. They had the country Post Office in 1922-25.

Bob married Ethel Glase of Montana in 1915 and in 1919 he gave up his homestead here and moved to Nebraska, later to California. They had three children, Larry, Lillian and Dale.

Frank married Hilda Moen in 1916 and farmed in the district till his death in 1949. They had three girls, Hazel, Mildred and Violet.

Ruth was the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Linthicum. She returned to Montana and worked in Scobey. Later she married Ellis Guy and they lived in Flaxville, Montana. They had two children, Ron and Betty.

Bill married Louise Murphy in 1917. He farmed in the Rockglen district till 1944 when he bought a ranch south of Glentworth. They had six children, Merle, Donald, Beth, Jane, Bob and Frank.

Sammy (Charles Waldo) was the youngest in the family. He married the school teacher, Vera Russell, in 1929. They had three girls, Gladys, June and Carol. Sam my, Frank and Bill farmed adjoining lands in the Boundary School district for many years. Sammy and Vera had the country post office which served most of the Boundary district and the settlers on the C.P.R. Colony which was two miles west of them. Sammy hauled the mail from Rockglen once a week. Mail day was just like a picnic for many of the neighbors. The whole family would pile into the wagon and come early so they would have the afternoon to visit.

During the 20's and most of the 30's the Boundary district was well-populated. Between twenty-five and thirty children attended the school. The school house was just two miles from the U.S. border and the Spear's children attended from Montana. It was impossible for farmers to pay taxes during the 30's so keeping the school running was a problem. The teacher boarded around, a month or two at each home where there was room, and the cost of board and room went on taxes owed. Teachers were hard to find as salaries were low, so for one

term Vera taught and let her wages all go on taxes. They felt proud to know their taxes were all paid up, then the following spring the government cancelled all back taxes.

Sammy played both the violin and the drums and was much in demand at house parties, and at that time there were many house parties. He was also able to make a few extra dollars playing for school dances at five dollars a night. House parties, school dances and Sunday visiting were the main social activities.

The Linthicum's land was only a mile from the Montana border, and they had many good friends and neighbors among the Montana farmers. Martin Grove farmed just south of the line and had a country store in his home. Many people went down there to do their buying or to order through him to Sears and Roebuck. Of course the line was quite open and seldom patrolled.

Many of the people in the district drifted away in the late 30's and 40's, and Boundary School was forced to close. When Sammy's youngest daughter was ready for school he was forced to move near a school and bought land four miles south of Rockglen near the Wheat Bench School. In 1951 he was completely hauled out so decided to try something else. He went into partnership with his brother Bill and bought the hotel, bar and cafe in Glentworth. Sammy returned spring and fall to operate his farm land. They sold the house in 1954 and returned to the farm. They moved to Rockglen in 1961 and Sam my farmed his land from town until his death in 1971. Sammy's oldest daughter Gladys became a teacher, then took her nurses' training in Toronto. Later she attended Bible College in Toronto and became a missionary. After a year of language study in Puerto Rico she went to Lima, Peru to work in the mission there. June tried her hand at many things but never moved far from Rockglen and home. She passed away in 1966. Carol married Bud Morrison. They have five children.

SPRING

*Ha! once again spring is here
'Tis the most beautiful time of the year.
The grass, we see, is a carpet of green
And flowers peeping through can soon be seen.
From the buds on the trees, the leaves pop out
And everything about us seems to shout.
"I-la! spring is here"
The prettiest season of the year.
Oh! nature is a wonderful thing
It gives the world beauty and birds that sing.
And the little brooks that flow along
Singing the tune of nature's song.
If only people would stop to see
Just how beautiful nature can be.
They would have the feeling of being content
That would stay with them wherever they went.
But most people, this feeling will never find
Because they have too much on their minds.
Oh! how I wish I could make people see
Just how wonderful nature can be.
June Linthicum
Age 15 years.*

LIVINGSTON, Kelly

Kelly Livingston was born in Nebraska in 1884 and moved with his parents to Hettinger, North Dakota. He worked in the coal mines and ran a small tire repair shop at Haynes, North Dakota, before migrating to Saskatchewan.

Bill Livingston, Kelly's brother who had homesteaded two miles south of the Quantock cemetery, suddenly passed away at his home in 1931. In 1933 Kelly came to Rockglen to take over Bill's homestead with his sister, Amy. With encouragement from Ray Rouse, who at the time was mining the Nerpel mine, Kelly began opening a mine that fall. He started pulling coal in 1934.

From this underground mine lignite coal was loaded into steel-wheeled, half-ton cars that ran on two by four tracks. These cars were pulled to the surface by a team of Clydes. As well as supplying coal to the surrounding area, Kelly delivered coal to the school, business places and homes in Rockglen with a Samson truck that he had bought from one of the Hansen brothers. In later years, Bud McCabe, who owned the first two-ton Chev truck in the country, hauled and delivered coal for Kelly. Kelly operated his mine until 1944.

Llewellyn Cartwright, a nephew who mined with Kelly for three years, recalls many hair-raising rides while traveling with Kelly to fetch explosives for blasting from Willow Bunch and Scobey. One such incident occurred when they had crossed the border and went to Scobey without going through the customs.

About eleven-thirty that Saturday night, after they had loaded the Model A truck and parked it in an alley, Kelly and Llewellyn nonchalantly went into a cafe for lunch. There they got wind of a patrolman who was supposedly snooping around town. The sheriff was a friendly cuss not about to harm anyone but they did fear the border patrol. Without further adieu they jumped into their truck and pulled west out of Scobey. They were soon being followed by a set of lights. Fearing it was the patrol they turned out their lights and 'beat it for the line' as fast as the old over-loaded truck could safely travel. They sneaked past Gordon Crandall's and on up into Canada past the John Elrick farm. It was after two o'clock in the morning when they finally pulled into Kelly's and breathed a sigh of relief. Their contraband was four cases of dynamite, a dozen twenty-five pound cans of gun powder and a couple hundred caps and squid!!

"If one of those caps would have went off," Llewellyn and Kelly later smiled, "There wouldn't have been a piece of anything big enough for evidence!" The next time they were in Scobey the sheriff chuckled, "You boys sure got outta town in a hurry!"

Kelly Livingston was a very big and strong man. It was possible for him to lift and hold a Model T car while a tire was being changed. Though his hands were huge and his fingers looked clumsy on the delicate strings of a violin, he was a talented violinist. It was delightful to see him turn out a tune with his violin behind his back, under his leg or over his head . . . as long as he could reach his violin he could produce music. Kelly, along with his sister Amy on the guitar and his sister Lily's husband, Jay Henry, on guitar, banjo or violin, made music for many school dances and house parties. From Wood Mountain to Scobey, from Joeville to Poplar Valley, Kelly displayed his musical talents on both the violin and banjo as he played along with many of the old-timers.

When Kelly's father passed away, his mother, Mary Livingston, left North Dakota and joined Amy and Kelly at Rockglen. Mary Livingston passed away in 1942 and was laid to rest beside her son Bill. They were joined by Kelly in 1956.

LOUCKS, Willis And Annie

In 1900, Willis and Annie Loucks and their five children moved from Cambellford, Ontario to Deloraine, Manitoba. In 1909 they moved south of Weyburn. After the crop was in, Willis drove to Little Woody and filed on a homestead.

1910 found Willis and his two sons Irwin and Joe planting oats and potatoes and building a house and barn on the prairies. Unfortunately Joe broke his leg while hauling water. The Schmidt family was kind enough to care for him while Willis and Irwin returned to Weyburn.

In July of 1910 the family began its one hundred mile journey to their homestead. Annie and the youngest children rode in a democrat. The chickens, in crates, and the furniture were loaded on a hayrack, the cows, Jersey and Daisy, were tied behind. Meals were cooked, cows milked and eggs gathered en route. Life on a prairie homestead began!

In the fall the men went back to Weyburn to thresh. Annie and the small children dug the potatoes, milked the cows and made butter. Willow Bunch was the closest store. Sometimes they had only porridge to eat but were never hungry.

For summer fuel they gathered cow chips; for winter they dug lignite coal and cut poplar poles.

In the winter of 1910-11 Willis and his boys freighted from Moose Jaw to Willow Bunch using a sleigh with four horses. This was a year of heavy snow so they encountered many problems.

By 1911 grain was seeded with horses and a drill and cut with a binder. It was stacked until Fife Lake was frozen and then hauled across the ice to John Anderson's to be threshed.

Annie's tasks like all pioneer women's were many and varied. She made bread, butter, vinegar and laundry soap, scrubbed clothes on a washboard, ironed with a flat iron, filled and cleaned coal oil lamps, sewed clothes and knit socks.

The Louck's door was always open to people from south and west of what is now Rockglen, who were traveling to the end of the railway at Ogema.

Entertainment consisted of picnics, house parties and skating on the lake in winter.

The family grew up and drifted away. Irwin filed on a half section north of Constance. In 1912, Pearl married Boyer Kessler and homesteaded near Fife Lake. In 1915, Irwin attempted to swim across the lake and lost his life. Annie married Carl Bean and moved to Pangman. In 1916, Jessie married Allan McLeod of McCord. Irene and Sam Ruffo were married in 1920. In June of 1923 Joe married Blanche Bliven and went to live on the Louck's farm southwest of Fife Lake. Bill and Vera Morden were married in 1927 and Edith and Ed Hetherington in 1926.

Two pioneer treats were the saskatoons, choke cherries and pin cherries picked in the fall and ice cream made with ice cut in the winter and stored in ice houses for summer use.

The first Louck's car was purchased in 1917, a Model T Ford with top and curtains. They traveled in style except when the snow was too deep or the weather too cold.

The Louck's family were famous for their mules. At one time they owned sixteen. Six good mules could haul a large grain tankwagon to Verwood or to Scobey in three days.

In 1925 the family was all home for a reunion.

In 1926 with the help of Chris Solberg a new home was built to replace the homestead adobe. 1927 saw further improvements with a Case combine (pulled by mules), and the installation of a barb wire telephone.

Then came the "dirty thirties" but everyone survived. Some of the family left for the coast or Peace River.

In 1939 Willis and Annie celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. In 1944 the Louck's family farm was sold to Art Tindall. Mr. and Mrs. Loucks spent their last years in B.C.

Willis passed away in Nov. 1944 at age seventy-seven, Annie in February, 1947 also at seventy-seven years of age.

This is a tribute to the parents of the Louck's family for their courage in overcoming the many hardships they faced and making their family and our community what it is today.